

**EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL  
LEARNING FROM AN INSPECTION REPORT PREPARED IN  
THE FIRST YEAR OF THE ALPHABET REFORM**

**HARF İNKİLÂBİ'NİN İLK YILINDA HAZIRLANAN BİR  
TEFTİŐ RAPORUNDAN OKUL DIŐI ÖĐRENMEYE  
YÖNELİK UYGULAMA ÖRNEKLERİ**

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## ABSTRACT

If out-of-school learning environments are used effectively, they'll make learning permanent by reinforcing it, help learners keep motivated and develop their skills and attitude. Acting on this fact, the Ministry of National Education has taken some steps in its directive Vision 2023 of Education. When the curricula have been looked into beginning from the declaration of the Turkish Republic up until the present day, it is possible to see that the learning objectives along the lines of the learning outcomes expected to attain through out-of-school learning have been present under a variety of headings even if they were not as clear as they are today. The objective of this study is to investigate the examples of out-of-school learning activities pointed out in *the General Inspection Report of Academic Year 1928-1929 in the educational precincts of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy in the Amasya Province*, which was laid out in the first academic year during which the alphabet reform was introduced and the primary school curriculum of year 1926 known as the first comprehensive curriculum of the Republic was in effect. The data were gathered through the document analysis method within the qualitative research. The findings indicate that the rate of literacy in the inspection precinct was much lower than average across the country and all that seemed to give people hope for the future in an area struck by poverty and hardships was the fact that the local people had embraced and fully supported the values set forth by the Republic. The examples of out-of-school learning activities came under three headings in the inspection report: school trips, practical on-site trainings and visits to museums and libraries. School trips were the visits to the historic sites, the post office and the courts. Examples of practical on-site trainings included planting trees and child and aged care in hospital settings. Visits to libraries and museums were regarded as an important part of education, but they often failed to take place as desired due to the lack of venues as well as equipment. However, the report has it that the museum and library at the Merzifon American School were often visited by the local students and people. Based on these devoted efforts in the past, we should include out of school learning activities, which we postpone due to some reasons such as logistical, financial or procedural difficulties, into our education more effectively without wasting time.

**Keywords:** Out-of-school learning environments; alphabet reform; inspection report; history of Turkish education.

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## ÖZ

Okul dışı öğrenme ortamlarının etkili kullanılması durumunda; öğrenmeyi pekiştirerek kalıcı hale getirdiği, öğrencilerin ilgilerini artırdığı, tutumlarını ve yeteneklerini geliştirdiği gerçeğinden hareketle, Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı 2023 Eğitim Vizyon Belgesi'nde bu konuda çalışmalar başlatmıştır. Cumhuriyetin ilanından günümüze kadar hazırlanan eğitim programları incelendiğinde, okul dışı öğrenme ortamı kavramı ile hedeflenen kazanımlara benzer hedeflerin bugünkü kadar net olmasa da farklı başlıklar altında yer aldığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada, Cumhuriyetin ilk kapsamlı programı kabul edilen 1926 ilköğretim programının uygulamada olduğu ve Harf İnkılabı'nın gerçekleştirildiği ilk eğitim-öğretim yılında hazırlanmış olan *Amasya Vilayeti Merzifon ve Gümüşhacıköy Maarif Müntekasının 1928-1929 Sene-i Tedriyesine Ait Umumi Teftiş Raporunda* okul dışı öğrenme uygulamalarına yönelik gerçekleştirilen etkinlik örneklerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma kapsamında doküman inceleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Teftiş bölgesinde okuryazarlık oranının ülke ortalamasının çok altında olduğu, bölgede tam anlamıyla yokluk ve yoksulluk hâkim iken geleceğe umutla bakmayı gerektiren tek şeyin bölge insanının Cumhuriyet idaresinin kazanımlarını benimsemiş ve sahiplenmiş olduğu görülmüştür. Teftiş raporunda okul dışı öğrenmeye yönelik uygulama örnekleri; okul gezileri, sahada uygulamalı eğitimler, müze ve kütüphane ziyaretleri olarak üç başlık altında toplanmıştır. Okul gezileri olarak bölgenin tarihi mekanları, postane ve adliye ziyaretlerinin gerçekleştirildiği görülmektedir. Sahada uygulamalı eğitimlere, ağaç dikme etkinlikleri ile hastane ortamında yaşlı ve çocuk bakımı örnek olarak verilmiştir. Kütüphane ve müzelerin eğitimin önemli bir parçası olarak görüldüğü ancak gerek mekân gerekse araç ve gereç yetersizliğinden dolayı bu faaliyetlerin başarılı bir şekilde yapılamadığı görülmüştür. Fakat raporda Merzifon Amerikan Okulu müze ve kütüphanesinin bölge öğrencileri ve ahalisi tarafından aktif olarak kullanıldığına dair bilgiler mevcuttur. Geçmişte ortaya konulan bu özverili çalışmalardan hareketle, günümüzde lojistik, finansal veya prosedürel zorluklar gibi bazı gerekçelerle ertelediğimiz okul dışı öğrenme etkinliklerini daha etkin bir şekilde zaman geçirmeden eğitimlerimize dahil etmeliyiz.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Okul dışı öğrenme ortamları; harf inkılabı; teftiş raporu; Türk eğitim tarihi.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Education is the entirety of the activities to shape, improve and develop the thoughts and behaviors of human beings in order to increase their harmony and productivity for the present and future in line with predetermined goals. The knowledge, skills and attitudes gained through education improve individuals' personalities by increasing their awareness for personhood and contribute to their value in the society (Matheson, 2014). Today, the qualifications expected from the manpower needed by societies are changing rapidly; directly affecting the education systems. Therefore, in parallel with the developments in information and communication technologies, education systems need to renew and improve themselves constantly. In this process, schools, defined as formal learning environments, have important duties since they are among the main branches of the education system in which educational services take place (Rose, 2014). Schools bear the responsibility of creating a wider range of mobility for students by directing individuals to be more conscious and selective, by enabling them to discover the ways and methods of learning and by systemizing the ways to access information. Schools have assumed such important roles but today out-of-school learning has to be taken into consideration as well because individuals spend 85% of their waking hours outside the school (Medrich, Roizen, Rubin & Buckley, 1982).

Resnick (1987), inspired by the famous American poet Robert Frost's (1874-1963) quote "*It takes all sorts of in and outdoor schooling, To get adapted to my kind of fooling*", opened the similarities and differences between in and out-of-school learning environments to discussion. Dib (1988) classified learning as formal learning, informal learning and non-formal learning and Eshach (2007) stated that one of the methods in which learning can be applied most effectively is out-of-school learning method, which argues that information should be obtained through contact with the outside world. Out-of-school learning is carried out in a planned, adaptable manner in environments other than formal education environments and supports the formal education at school (Eshach, 2007; Gerber, Marek, & Cavallo, 2001; Grajcevci & Shala, 2016; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Tal & Morag, 2009). Out-of-school learning environments include field trips as integrated or extracurricular activities to environments such as production centers, planetarium, museums and science centers in line with the subjects and acquisitions within the scope of education and training programs so that students can discover the cultural, artistic and geographical capacity of their regions and learn plant and animal species via hands-on learning (Fidan, 2012).

The out-of-school learning discussions, initiated by Resnick (1987), were embraced by the American Education programs in a very short time, emphasizing the necessity of taking

education beyond the walls of the school and making use of the actual resources of life and society (National Research Council [NRC], 1996). Similarly, out-of-school learning has become an integral part of educational activities in European countries such as Sweden, Norway, Scotland and England, not as an alternative to formal education, but as a supportive education pathway (Öztürk Aynal, 2013).

Studies on out-of-school learning, especially the studies starting from early childhood, revealed that out-of-school learning developed various thinking skills and competences such as awareness levels, ability to establish cause and effect relationships, observation skills, creative thinking skills, concentration and imagination in addition to improving children's cognitive, social, affective and physical-motor development (see references and therein; Andersson & Johansson, 2013; Dannwolf, Matusch, Keller, Redlich, & Siegmund, 2020; Duran, Ballone-Duran, Haney, & Beltyukova, 2009; Li, Peterson, & Wang, 2021; Rennie, 2014; Stamer, David, Höffler, Schwarzer, & Parchmann, 2021; Sevdalis & Skoumios, 2014; Wiegand, Kubisch, & Heyne, 2013).

Although many research results concluded that out-of-school learning supported formal education in general, studies also demonstrated that teachers often experienced anxiety due to lack of their competencies in regards to domain, difficulties experienced in the planning phase and lack of self-efficacy and logistical and financial difficulties, procedural difficulties and discipline problems were experienced in the planning of activities (see references and therein; Anderson, Lawson, & Mayer-Smith, 2006; Anderson & Zhang, 2003; Carrier, Tugurian, & Thomson, 2013; Füz, 2018; Kisiel, 2005; McNamara, Akiva, & Delale-O'Connor, 2020; Moseley, Reinke, & Bookout, 2002).

Academic research on out-of-school learning environments in Turkey has started concurrently with international studies and has been one of the topics of interest in recent years. Saraç (2017) conducted the content analysis of 133 studies (postgraduate theses and articles) on out-of-school learning implemented in Turkey between 2007 and 2016. It was observed that the studies have increased steadily especially after 2012, that the studies were mostly conducted in the field of Science Education and that they were conducted mostly with secondary school students and teachers. It was found that these studies mostly investigated the effects of education-training problems that arised in out-of-school learning environments and the effects of these environments on student interests, attitudes and learning materials (Saraç, 2017). Today, the fact that 10 graduate theses were completed in 2019 alone on this topic is an interesting data to sum up the national interest in the subject confirmed by reviewing the graduate theses with

“*Out-of-School Learning*” in the thesis title on the CoHE (Council of Higher Education) National Thesis Center (CoHE, 2021). Another important development in out-of-school learning at the national level has been in the field of academic journal publishing. As it is known, academic journals play a significant role in terms of dissemination and use of information as a formal method of communication in the field of science. The “*Journal of Research in Informal Environments (JRINEN)*” has started its publication life with an open access and address in Turkey in 2016. The journal was established as an international peer-reviewed scientific journal publishing studies on learning-teaching activities in informal environments and the effects of these environments on different variables at all levels and fields of education (JRINEN, 2021). Moreover, two books regarding out-of-school learning at the national level are published entitled “*Okul Dışı Öğrenme Ortamları ve Fen Eğitimi/Out-of-School Learning Environments and Science Education* (Laçın Şimşek, 2020)” and “*Okul Dışı Öğrenme Ortamları /Out-of-School Learning Environments* (Şen, 2019)”, which are primarily bedside books for teachers and teacher candidates. Therefore, if it is desired to avoid coming across similar studies conducted on out-of-school learning in Turkey, it will be sufficient to examine the studies presented in JRINEN (2021), Laçın Şimşek (2020), Saraç (2017), Şen (2019).

By keeping up with the changing educational paradigms in the recent years, the Turkish education system also updates its educational programs and aims to raise individuals who can do research, question, communicate effectively, collaborate, think analytically, access information and solve problems (Ministry of National Education the Education Vision 2023 [MoNE], 2018). The Education Vision 2023 prepared for this purpose seeks to utilize out-of-school learning environments more effectively in line with the subjects and acquisitions included within the scope of education programs by associating out-of-school learning environments with pre-school, primary and secondary education programs and with the help of teacher books (MoNE, 2018). The Education Vision 2023 addresses “*Out-of-School Learning Environment*” concept as follows: “*Non-school learning environments—such as natural, historical, and cultural places, centers for science and arts, and museums—will be used effectively in line with the curricula learning outcomes*” to ensure knowledge is transformed into skills (MoNE, 2018).

With the proclamation of the Republic, a rapid and radical transformation process was experienced in education, as in all fields in our country. The education programs developed since the proclamation of the Republic included acquisitions under different headings, albeit

not as clearly, which were similar to the ones targeted with the concept of “*Out-of-School Learning Environments*” in the Education Vision 2023 (Beyaztaş, Kaptı, & Senemoğlu, 2013). As it is known, the school of thought behind the Turkish education system goes back to the Reform Period (Tanzimat) when the schools were opened in a western style. The legal basis of the national, secular and contemporary education system was the Law on Unity of Education-March 3, 1924 (Akyüz, 2020). During the first years of the Republic, the primary education level, the basis of national education, was assigned various different tasks. Naturally, raising individuals in line with the qualifications of the republican regime was regarded as the primary goal (Demir, 2021a). On the other hand, certain goals were established to equip the individuals with the behaviors required by democracy, to meet the needs of society and individuals in line with rapidly developing science and technology and to create national awareness (Kalaycı, 2004).

Various programs were developed for the primary education level especially in the Early Republican Period (1923-1943). The first primary school program of the Republic was prepared in 1924, followed by more comprehensive programs in 1926 and 1936 in accordance with the requirements of the country. Some topics that existed in the previous curriculum were removed when the 1924 primary school curriculum was developed and new subjects were introduced. The curriculum did not include general objectives and the courses did not have specific objectives either. The 1924 primary school curriculum consisted mostly of lectures and subjects. For this reason, the 1924 curriculum was more of a transition program (Tazebay, 2000). The curriculum, which can be considered as the first comprehensive primary school curriculum, was put into practice in 1926. The goal of primary schools was expressed as “*raising good citizens who can effectively adapt to the environment of the young generation*” in this curriculum (Primary School Program, 1926: 3-4.). This program, which was prepared by taking into account the opinions and suggestions of foreign experts in education and which included contemporary education principles had some important courses such as social studies and citizenship and the course contents were also organized in line with requirements of the new Turkish state and the Republic. Apart from the main purpose of the primary school education, the curriculum specified the purpose and objective of each course separately under the title of the goals of the lesson (Demir, 2021b). The curriculum also had information in regards to teaching methods and materials to be used for each course. Contemporary education principles such as observation, investigation and research were included as well. Encouraging the student to follow individual studies and centering on students’ personal interests were

accepted as principles for courses (for detailed discussion see: Budak & Budak, 2014). It was adopted as a principle to organize social studies and citizenship courses by taking into account the characteristics of the immediate environment (Primary School Program, 1926: 3-4).

In this context, literature review shows that Keçeci Kurt, Kurt and Karamustafaoğlu (2019) analyzed the documents consisting of various newspapers, magazines and archive documents from the period from the Reform Period, when Western-style schools began to be opened, to the first years of the Republic by focusing on out-of-school learning environments and it was emphasized that trips were organized to recreation areas and rural areas in the context of different courses and places such as museums, factories and pottery shops were visited. Baytop (2004) stated that a botanical garden was established in Istanbul University during the period of 1925-1929 to teach the subjects practically and to increase the permanence of the theoretical lessons given within the scope of the Botany course. Ergün (2009) also emphasized that in 1926, the village teacher schools provided theoretical lessons in the morning and practical lessons and experiments in the afternoon as well carrying out hands-on agricultural activities and providing nature field trips outside the school environment. Göksu Metin (2020) analyzed Village Institutes in detail in regards to out-of-school learning environments. The result of the research demonstrated that the areas within the school such as classrooms and laboratories were not considered as the only learning environments in these institutes and the environment starting with the school and extending to the nearby villages, districts and regions constituted the natural, social and cultural research and investigation area. In addition, it was concluded that the constructivist education approach was taken as basis in village institutes and it was emphasized that out-of-school learning environments had an important place in activating the children's thoughts about nature and life with field trips and observations. Karadeniz and Okvuran (2018), on the other hand, researched the historical development of museum education since the proclamation of the Republic due to the importance of museums in out-of-school learning environments today, and found that the acceptance and use of museums as an out-of-school learning and teaching environment in Turkey began in the first quarter of the 20th century and they provided information about the development of school museums from the first years of the Republic. In their study on school museums as educational institutions, Karadeniz and Baloş (2019) discussed the development of school museology, with its roots in the Ottoman Empire and its contributions to interactive learning in the early years of the Republic.

There is a limited number of studies on whether out-of-school learning practices existed or how they were included in the educational activities carried out within the scope of the education

programs prepared in the first years of the Republic. Studies on the history of education are very important because “*knowing the past and experiences of its educational activities accurately, each country can evaluate the present day and make solid plans for the future*” (Ergün, 2008: 321). In this content, written and visual sources (documents kept during the events, reports, official correspondence and photographs) have a special significance in all of these studies, considered as studies on the history of education (Togan, 1985).

In this respect, *the General Inspection Report of Academic Year 1928-1929 in the educational precincts of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy in the Amasya Province* which was prepared by the primary education inspector Remzi Bey in the first years of the Republic is an original source of information (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a). The inspection report is significant because it covered the first educational period from November 1, 1928, the adoption of the Alphabet Reform to January 1, 1929, when the Nation Schools were opened. The report provided information such as the education status in the primary education level of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts, activities carried out during the education period and schooling rates. The chosen of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts does not have a very special meaning here, but it is important that the report prepared for these regions fulfills all the requirements that should be in an inspector's report of that period (Taymaz, 2015).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed to present out-of-school learning practises from a specific period based on *the General Inspection Report of Academic Year 1928-1929 in the educational precincts of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy in the Amasya Province*. With this purpose, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. As directly linked to the educational infrastructure, what were the district populations, the distribution of the population by age groups and the literacy status of the population of the Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts of Amasya Province during the preparation of the inspection report?
2. What was the educational infrastructure of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts of Amasya Province during the preparation of the inspection report?
3. What were the practices regarding out-of-school learning in the inspection report and under what conditions they were carried out?

## METHOD

### Research Model

This study on the history of Turkish education utilized document analysis method. Document analysis method is a qualitative research method used to carefully and systematically analyze the content of written or visual documents related to the research problem in cases where observations or interviews do not exist or they are very limited (Kıral, 2020).

### Data Collection Method and Tools

*The General Inspection Report of Academic Year 1928-1929 in the educational precincts of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy in the Amasya Province*, which included all the basic elements of an inspection report registered in the inventory of the Amasya Directorate of National Education, was used as the basic document in this study. Literature review techniques (Köroğlu, 2015)-catalog browsing, search engines, virtual libraries, indexes or databases providing electronic or on-line services-, were used in the process data collection and the documents used in the research were accessed from state archives, libraries and the internet. In addition, documents such as archived documents, curriculums and school regulations of the period, obtained with the help of literature review, were also used. Ethics Committee Approval was not required for this study.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were analyzed by content analysis method. Since documents containing important informations about individuals or communities shed light on the past process of the research subject, the main reason for preferring the content analysis method was the need to conceptualize and interpret the data that were similar and related under a certain concept and theme title.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Some Main Findings Directly Related to the Education Infrastructure of the Region in the Period when the Inspection Report was Prepared

With the proclamation of the Republic, regular and comprehensive population information was needed to meet the general needs of the population and to ensure economic development. For this purpose, the first census took place on October 28, 1927. During this period, the city of Amasya with a total population of 114884 people, consisted of three districts: the central district, Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy. 52.6% of this population lived in the central district,

24.5% in Merzifon and 22.9% in Gümüşhacıköy. When the distribution of the population according to age groups was examined, it was found that 1/3 of the population was composed of children:0-12 years old (Şenol, 2010; Yılmaz & Karadeniz, 2021).

According to the first general population census, only 10.8% of the population aged 7 and older were literate throughout the country. While this rate was higher in males (14.3%), it was even lower in females (2.7%). In Amasya, on the other hand, this rate was much lower than the country average: 2.3% of the population aged 7 and older living in the province was literate, while this rate was 4.6% for males and 0.2% for females. It was found that the rate of literacy was 2.12% (4.41% males; 0.05% females) in Merzifon, where the inspection report was prepared, while it was 0.95% (2.05% males; 0.04% females) in Gümüşhacıköy. On the other hand, 26.37% of the population in Amasya resided in the city center, while the remaining part (73.63%) lived in the rural areas (Şenol, 2010; Yılmaz & Karadeniz, 2021).

According to the 1927 census data, literacy rates of Amasya and especially Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts, which had an effective and important position both during the Ottoman Empire period and during the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, were found to be far below the overall literacy rate of the country. Being in a region which remained in the shadow of the wars and conflicts that took place especially in the last period of the Ottoman Empire and resulting loss of power in economic and social terms were the main reasons for the low literacy rate in these areas. Undoubtedly, the most important legacy left behind in this period was the orphans and children without fathers as well as closing of many educational institutions (Kılınç, Değirmenci, Kösterelioğlu, & Orbay, 2021).

## **2. Findings Regarding the Educational Infrastructure of the Region in the Period When the Inspection Report was Prepared**

While there were 19 primary schools open in Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts in the 1927-1928 academic year (Balcı, 2014), the number of primary schools increased to 26 in the academic year of 1928-1929 with the intense interest of the people of the region and the efforts of the Provincial National Education Administration. The number of students also increased by 30% compared to the previous year (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 95).

The most important obstacle to education in both Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts, as in the whole country, was the very limited budget and the insufficient number of teachers in the first years of the Republic. Although schools were built by the provincial budget in the district centers and by the citizens in the villages, these were far from meeting the need.

Primary education inspector Remzi Bey summarized the current situation in his inspection report as follows:

*“... There are also a few villages that started to build solid wooden buildings in their own villages without the need for government impetus and inducement. The public's desire for education is very satisfying. The only sad thing is that, the schools built with the efforts of the people will remain empty for a few years due to lack of teachers, and perhaps some of these schools will be ruined and destroyed by the ignorant ... ”*(Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 7)

In addition to the economic problems, one of the most important deficiencies in the field of education in Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy was the absence of a secondary school. On the other hand, the *“Marsovan Anatolia Girls' School (1865-1921)”* established by the American Board was continuing its educational activities by opening the *“American Girls' School of Life”* which gave basic education in 1924, within the existing education campus (Stone, 1984). This school was referred to as *“Merzifon American School”* in the inspection report (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018b).

Primary education inspector Remzi Bey stated in his report that the number of school age children in the Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts was 7322 and the number of students attending school was 2231. This points to a schooling rate of 30.46%. 27.66% of the students continuing their education were females. The start of the campaign for education and the transition to co-education throughout the region were the main reasons for the schooling rate of females to be much higher compared to the rate of female literacy in previous years (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 93-96).

The inspection report included a separate section for each school under the heading *“Physical Aspect/Characteristics of the School”*. This section provided information about the current situation of the school buildings, their coordination and cleaning, the status of the furniture, the condition of the course materials, existence of a library and a museum. When the physical characteristics of the schools were examined in general terms, it was concluded that the primary schools in the district centers were in a better condition than the schools in the villages.

Primary education inspector Remzi Bey provided the following information for Merzifon Çaybaşı (Löşdiğin) Village School, where education and training continued at the time:

*“It is a dilapidated madrasah room in the courtyard of the mosque. There are no furniture in the school. Students sit on the floor and do their lessons. There are no course materials and equipment...”* (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 37)

Similarly, he reported the following for Gümüşhacıköy Çayköyü Primary School:

*“... The school building is about to be completed. Education is temporarily provided in a suitable house this year. There are no course equipment and materials. There is no library or museum.” (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 89)*

At the end of the inspection report, under the heading “General Evaluation”, the inspector emphasized that the most important problem regarding the educational infrastructure and activities of the region was the lack of physical space in schools, lack of funds, lack of regular attendance, not delivering textbooks on time, and the insufficiency of the number of teachers in some schools (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 93).

For example, the Inspector expressed the issue of insufficient funds in the following sentences:

*“... Schools should receive funds every year in proportion to their size. No teacher should seek help from the public. A solution must be found to this problem. How ridiculous is it to ask a peasant and a child for wood and a broom... ” (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 94)*

In summary, although the schooling rate and the number of active schools increased during the period when the inspection report was prepared, the educational infrastructure of the schools was found to be highly insufficient. However the people of the region were very eager for receiving education and hence made all kinds of sacrifices (Balcı, 2014; Taşdemir, 2009).

### **3. Findings Regarding Examples for Out-of-School Learning Practices in the Inspection Report**

#### **a. School Trips**

The inspection report stated that some schools organized various trips outside of the school under the supervision of their classroom teachers within the scope of History and Social Sciences courses during the school year. The historical monuments of the region, the post office and the courthouse were some of the places that were visited in this framework. The report documented the school trips with photographs as well (Photos 1-2).



*Photo 1. Kara Mustafa Paşa Primary School 5th grade students at the history lesson in Karamustafapaşa (Marınca) Village (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 11).*



*Photo 2. Alıcık Village Primary School 3rd Grade Students on a post office, court and historical artefacts inspection tour in Merzifon (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 36).*

The map of transportation routes between Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy districts and their villages (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a; 201) presented in the inspection report provides valuable

information to understand the conditions under which the school trips were organized. These routes are still actively used today. The distance of Karamustafa (Marınca) and Alıcık villages to Merzifon district is 4 km and 12 km, respectively. In the specified period, the roads connecting Amasya to its districts and villages were either very rough or did not exist at all, one of the most common complaints of the public. The construction and repair of the roads connecting Merzifon to the surrounding provinces and districts started after these complaints (Balcı, 2014; Taşdemir, 2009). Therefore, considering that one of the biggest problems of the villages in the early years of the Republic was the transportation problem (Durgun, 2006; Müderrisoğlu, 1998) and considering the means of transport and roads of the time, it can be thought that the transportation from Karamustafa Paşa (Marınca) and Alıcık villages to Merzifon district was possible on a horse carriage at best. Some data strengthening such predictions can also be found in the report. Namely, the report stated that transportation between Amasya-Merzifon took 8 hours (today it takes half an hour) and transportation between Amasya-Gümüşhacıköy took 12 hours (today it takes 45 minutes) (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a; 51 and 91) . Considering that vehicles for transport in the said period had a speed of 3-4 km / hour (Durgun, 2006; Müderrisoğlu, 1998), it is obvious that out-of-school learning activities were conducted with immense difficulties and required great sacrifices.

An interview was made with Mukime Fıratoğlu (1914-2020), who witnessed the period, was mentally vigorous and could remember the educational activities of her time in detail. She can be seen in Photo 1 sitting to the left of the classroom teacher. The daughter of a martyr, Mukime Fıratoğlu, who was also one of the first teachers of the Republic, expressed the following in her interview:

*“... Our teacher, Veysel Bey, would take our class on country trips from time to time, we would study some of the Objects and Nature courses in the school yard and our teacher in the Citizenship Course would give on-site information about the historical artifacts of Merzifon...”* (Orbay, 2018).



*Photo 3. Interview with Mukime Fıratoğlu.*

### **b. Hands-on Trainings in the Field**

Primary education inspector Remzi Bey, who inspected the Merzifon American School, stated that the school was in a perfect physical condition (building, materials, library, organization and order,...) (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 25). The secondary school which served only females, provided courses on childcare, nursing, embroidery, typewriting and home economics in addition to culture courses so that school students could become good housewives (Stone, 1984: 271). It can be seen from the inspection report that these courses were mostly hands-on (Photos 4-5).



Photo 4. Patient care and changing of the patient's bed sheets (Orbay & Kılınç, 2018a: 29).



Photo 5. Training on how to give a bath to a baby (Orbay and Kılınç, 2018a: 30).

Remzi Bey, who inspected the Gümüşhacıköy Mehmet Paşa Primary School, emphasized in his inspection report that the school principal and teachers were very successful and included a photograph of third grade students performing a tree-planting activity in the school yard under the supervision of their teacher İsmail Hakkı Bey (Photo 6).



*Photo 6. Third Grade Students in Gardening Tasks (Orbay & Kılınc, 2018a: 66).*

### c. Museum and Library Visits

The 1926 primary school curriculum included information about the materials and equipment to be used by the school during education and training and the necessary equipment to create school libraries and school museums (Karadeniz & Okvuran; 2018). Merzifon American College Museum, established outside Istanbul, was one of the first school museums of the Ottoman Empire. The college had a library of more than 10000 volumes and a museum displaying more than 7000 plant and animal species. The museum, which was open on two weekdays between 14.00-16.00, was open to students and local people and the number of museum visitors per week approached 200 people (Maksudyan, 2013).

The inspection report stated that most of the village schools and the central schools did not have libraries and museums and the existing ones were very insufficient. On the other hand, the report contained the following statements about the museum and library of the American School;

*“The school has both a library and a regular museum. This museum is also open to local people. From time to time, our schools make use of this museum as well” (Kılınc & Orbay, 2018a: 25).*

These statements show that the museum and the library were actively used by our schools as an out-of-school learning environment. The college which attracted attention with its

missionary and separatist activities in the Ottoman period (Alan, 2008) led more positive activities in the Republic era which left important marks in the social life of the district such as donating books, materials and equipment to schools and sharing the museum, library and cinema halls with other schools (Yılmaz, 1938).

On the other hand, the primary education inspector Remzi bey emphasized the past experiences regarding this school and expressed the need for urgently opening a secondary school in Merzifon for the children of the region to attend to after primary school.

*“...Since this school was opened for a political purpose, it is necessary to be careful and vigilant. We should not be fooled by the visible attitudes of the foreign administrators and teachers at this school because there is falsehood, delusion, and hypocrisy in all of their actions. It is not very difficult to feel this hypocrisy because of the pretentiousness in their attitudes ” (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 31)*

Primary education supervisor Remzi Bey guided the school administrators and teachers in the inspection area to establish school museums and libraries or to improve their current situation, informed and encouraged them about what needed to be done. It was observed that some of the schools that he inspected for the second time were making efforts to establish school museums and libraries.

For example, he stated the following in the Merzifon İstiklal Primary School inspection report:

*“... There are around 260 books, booklets and magazines in the library. There are some books on vocational courses. This year, steps were taken for the construction of the museum, projects that would be beneficial to the lessons in the school where the museum would be were implemented to help them learn better and make learning more permanent, and the museum was tidied up ” (Kılınç & Orbay, 2018a: 13).*

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study aimed to present examples of a out-of-school learning practices included in “*The General Inspection Report of Academic Year 1928-1929 in the educational precincts of Merzifon and Gümüşhacıköy in the Amasya Province*” prepared during the first academic year of the 1926 program, considered to be the first comprehensive primary school program of the Republic and at the time when Alphabet reform was adopted.

For this purpose, statistical information that was directly related to the educational infrastructure of the region such as the distribution of the population of the inspection area by age groups and the literacy status of the population were included to better understand the conditions under which the out-of-school activities were carried out. Subsequently, the

educational infrastructure and schooling rates of the inspection area and the current problems of education were mentioned.

Despite all those positive developments, the educational infrastructure of the schools was very insufficient and the lack of funds was extreme. Although some schools were prepared for by the citizens for education, they could not be opened due to lack of teachers.

In summary, while “poverty” and “hardships” reigned in the inspection area and while the schooling rate was so low, adoption and assimilation of National Sovereignty and the acquisitions of the Republic administration was the only thing that gave people hope for the future. As a matter of fact, this was the scene encountered almost everywhere in the first years of the Republic and reserved in the following statement of Mustafa Necati, the Minister of National Education at the time, who was identified with the educational revolutions of the Republican Enlightenment: *“I will not leave a child who cannot find a school in my country!”* A statement indicating principle, belief and decisive stance (Ari, 2009).

Findings regarding the examples for out-of-school learning practises were grouped in the inspection report under the following headings: school trips, practical trainings in the field and museum and library visits. Under each heading, examples of out-of-school learning practices enriched with photographs were discussed by the primary school inspector Remzi Bey, especially focusing on the transportation difficulties in regards to school trips. The historical places of the region, post office and courthouse visits were organized as school trips within the scope of out-of-school learning practises. On the other hand, tree planting activities and caring for the elderly and children in the hospital environment were given as examples of hands-on trainings in the field. According to the inspection report, libraries and museums were regarded as an important part of education, but these activities could not be carried out successfully in schools due to the lack of venue and materials. However, the richest Library and Museum (10000 volumes of books and over 7000 animals and plants are exhibited) within the borders of the Ottoman Empire were established in the Merzifon American College, outside of Istanbul. The inspection report showed that this museum and the library continued their activities under the umbrella of Merzifon American School and was open to the use of the students and residents of the region. The inspection report informed about the active use of this museum and the library.

It was observed that the principle of *“organizing social science and citizenship courses especially taking the characteristics of the immediate environment into consideration”* included in the 1926 primary school curriculum was tried to be fulfilled with out-of-school learning

activities. In the activities carried out, it was obvious that the teachers of the period made great sacrifices despite all the physical difficulties of the period. In addition, considering that contemporary education principles such as observation, examination, application and research were included in the 1926 primary school curriculum, the hands-on activities in the field and museum and library visits were out-of-school learning activities to meet these goals (Primary School Program, 1926).

Based on the discussions in the field of education from past to present, the most effective strategies are believed to center on an understanding of teaching where the students take an active role in learning, learn by doing, associate the subjects with the environment and establish connections with their social lives. In this context, the Turkish education system constantly updates its educational programs, keeping up with the ever-changing educational paradigms. The concept of “Out-of-School Learning” environments, whose importance is rapidly increasing, is given an important place in the Education Vision 2023 besides schools, in the acquisition of several behaviors such as meeting the individual needs of students, conducting research, using scientific methods and developing critical thinking skills.

A plethora of national and international literature on “Out-of-School Learning”, including academic knowledge and application results and getting richer with each passing day, has been created in a very short time. For this reason, effective use of out-of-school learning environments in line with the acquisitions provided in the curriculum requires more responsibility and self-sacrificing work than ever by our teachers and all stakeholders of education to transform academic knowledge into skills. Without any further delay, we should build into our education system the out of school learning activities which we have had to include out for a variety of reasons such as financial, logistical or procedural difficulties.

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