The objective of this study is to find out the opinions of school administrators, teachers, staff, benefiting students and parents and other stakeholders of “Let the Schools Become Life” project being carried out in order to reveal the effectiveness and efficiency of the project. Data in this qualitative research was gathered by purposive convenience sampling from a school principal, a deputy principal, two teachers, a municipality officer, three parents and two students by using a semi structured interview. The data gathered was analyzed by content analysis. All the data gathered was coded and various dimensions and appropriate themes were recorded. It was concluded that the stakeholders were satisfied with the project in general, despite the problems faced like physical and material insufficiencies, problems caused by uncertainties in job and duty, which resulted in further problems in planning and coordination, prevented the project from running smoothly.

Key words: Lifelong learning, “Let the Schools Become Life” project, stakeholder opinions.

INTRODUCTION

Education is defined as the process of creating intended changes on an individual’s behavior by the means of his/her own life and is a lifelong process (Ertürk, 1994). This process starts right after the birth, provided by the family and gradually widens up in the environment the child grows in until he/she starts to school, which then becomes formal education. Non-formal education is defined as the education type which serves the education needs that cannot be met by formal education programs and is planned for individual or social development and open to individuals from all ages (Karakütük, 1990). Formal and non-formal education is understood to be complementing each other which together promote one of the main principles of Turkish education system, continuity. Education in Turkey is not limited to schools or pre-defined programs, but spread to the entire life, and may vary in layout in order to meet changing necessities. Lifelong learning is sometimes used interchangeably with adult education and continuing education. Aksoy (2008, p.35) defines lifelong learning as identifying individuals’ areas of interest with an individual, social, cultural, economic and employment related approach and certifying any formal or non-formal education and learning from life activities and learning outcomes of these activities that the individual has attended in order to develop his/her knowledge, ability, attitude or behavior. Friessen and Anderson (2004) say lifelong learning covers any kind of learning from non-formal to classified-by-age formal
education, obtained either by planned and intentional or random/coincidental processes, and all kind of socially compulsory or optional knowledge, while Candy (2003) defines it as a process which enriches and strengthens the knowledge, values, masteries and understanding and encourages their usage. Lifelong learning was first time presented in an article by Paul Lengrand in 1970 as a key concept on restructuring education which was presented at UNESCO Conference named as “Introduction to lifelong learning”. Lifelong learning then has become a UNESCO policy in 1970’s (Friessen and Anderson, 2004). Later in 1972, International Commission on the Development of Education issued the document “Learning to be”, which emphasized on education as a lifelong activity in order to prepare the individuals to a yet non-existing society through formal and non-formal channels. In 1996, UNESCO has stated the objectives of lifelong learning and European Union have announced 1996 as Lifelong Learning Year (EURYDICE European Unit, 2000:9; UNESCO World Report, 2005: 76).

European Union’s Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig programs used to be in action in Turkey, as well as ongoing Erasmus+ program. These programs bring new opportunities in mobility for learning and exchange of knowledge and experience for qualified European Union citizens (http://www.ua.gov.tr). One of the projects on lifelong learning in Turkey is called “Let The Schools Become Life” which is being run by Ministry of Education General Directorate of Lifelong Learning (http://okullarhayatolsun.meb.gov.tr). The main objective of this project is to open up the schools to the parents and local people in order to turn them into lifelong centers and ‘secure areas to live’ that give opportunities in sports and arts activities to the students and especially to the adults (http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr). The project has started by a trilateral protocol signed between Ministry of Education, Ministry of Forest and Waterworks and Turkish Association of Municipalities on December 13, 2011, while duty of coordination was given to Ministry of Education General Directorate of Life Long Learning (http://okullarhayatolsun.meb.gov.tr).

The website of the project prepared by the Ministry of Education explains the rationale of the project as to use scarce resources more effectively, to increase school facility utilization which is as low as 30% of the total day time, to increase utilization of present educational resources and facilities by the families and public, to decrease the problems caused by the lack of playground and sports areas for the children and youngsters, to protect youngsters and children from violence and harmful habits by utilizing the schools as secure areas, to meet the increasing demand to education and lifelong learning services in the information society, to overcome high construction, maintenance and other costs to provide these services from scratch, to minimize the problems caused by the lack of areas with similar capacity to serve as learning, entertainment and recreational activities in neighborhoods especially in metropolitans, and to fulfill municipalities’ responsibilities to provide education, healthcare and sports activities as well as campaigning against bad habits as a consequence of economically, socially and physically responsible understanding of municipality administration and necessity of municipal services as a requirement of locality principle (http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr).

This project allows social, cultural, arts, sports and vocational courses and activities such as movie shows, playground and swimming pool utilization, fairs, shows, concerts, conferences, celebrations, panels, exhibitions, seminars, publicity events, theatrical shows, tournaments, contests, ceremonies and drills to be undertaken more conveniently. Some of the courses given under this project are literacy, English, Arabic, family education, folklore, musical instruments, applied acting, marbling, photography, painting, vocational computer applications, apiculture, carpet texturing, property dealing, cooking, web design and babysitting. Some of the sports courses given are chess, aerobics, pilates, table tennis, athletics, basketball, football, badminton, volleyball, swimming, handball, taekwondo, wrestling and karate. This project also houses Z-libraries, which provide internet access and basic books. Z-libraries are kept open until 8 to 9 pm in order to provide more service to those in need. Reading hours, reading and writing skills, mind games and Turkish and literature classes for adults are some of the activities held in these libraries. Voluntary parents can keep them open in order to let the students prepare and print their homework (MEB, 2013).

After a short study on the general objectives of the project, it could be predicted that communication and cooperation between the local people, school and local administration would increase, while the parents and local people would have wider opportunities in using their spare times and self-development. This project also proves that the schools are good for not only formal education, but also for lifelong learning too.

This research intends to identify the opinions of stakeholders in “Let the Schools Become Life” project by searching the answers of the following questions:

1. What are the opinions of the school administrators, teachers and municipality officers who carry out the “Let the Schools Become Life” project about the project?
2. What are the opinions of the benefiting individuals (students, parents, and local people) about the project?

**METHOD**

**Research model**

The study is undertaken with descriptive analysis; therefore qualitative method and phenomenology pattern is used for a broader description (Karasah, 2009). Therefore, data was gathered through semi structured interview. The study group was chosen...
Table 1. Distribution of Stakeholders according to their demographic properties.

| Variable                | Code          | Y1 | Y2 | Ö1 | Ö2 | V1 | V2 | V3 | B1 | K1 | K2 | f | % |
|-------------------------|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|
| Age                     | 22-31         | √  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 3 | 30|
|                         | 32-41         |    |    | √  |    | √  |    |    |    |    |    | 3 | 30|
|                         | 42+           | √  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 2 | 20|
|                         | K             |    |    | √  |    | √  |    |    |    |    |    | 5 | 50|
| Gender                  | E             |    |    |    |    | √  |    |    |    |    |    | 5 | 50|
|                         | B             |    |    |    |    |    | √  | √  |    |    |    | 4 | 40|
| Marital status          | E             |    |    |    |    |    |    | √  | √  |    |    | 60| 60|
| Educational status      | Associate degree |    |    | √  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 4 | 40|
|                         | Bachelor's degree |    |    |    |    | √  |    |    |    |    | 2 | 20|
|                         | High school   |    |    |    |    |    |    | √  |    |    |    | 2 | 20|
|                         | 1-5           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 0 | 0 |
|                         | 6-10          |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1 | 10|
| Duration of professional service | 11-15 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 0 | 0 |
|                         | 16-20         |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 0 | 0 |
|                         | 20+           | √  |    |    | √  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 3 | 30|
| Staff status            | Permanent     | √  |    |    |    | √  |    |    |    |    |    | 4 | 40|
|                         | Temporarily assigned |    |    | √  |    |    | √  |    |    |    |    | 2 | 20|

Findings

Findings and comments on these findings on stakeholders’ opinions on “let the schools become life” project at a participating school. Ten stakeholders have participated in the study. These stakeholders are shown as Y1 and Y2 for administrators, O1 and O2 for teachers, V1 and V2 for parents, B1 and B2 for municipality officers and K1 and K2 for students (Kuş, 2007; Mason 2002; Patton, 1990; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

Demographic properties of the Stakeholders

Age, gender, marital status, last graduated degree, professional experience, administrative experience, position, staff status and class of the participants are given in Table 1. As seen in the table, majority of the participants are under age 42. Marital status and gender of the participants are rather evenly distributed. Three administrators have associate degree, while two of them have bachelor’s degree. Most of the administrators and teachers in the project have 20 years or more experience. Although most of them have permanent positions, some of them are temporarily appointed. The study has been grouped into two as project undertakers, that is administrators, teachers and municipality officers and beneficiaries, which is students and parents. Table 2 shows the themes extracted from the opinions of the project undertakers.

As given in the Table 2, Y1 stated:

“I am the only one keeping the school. Because other
Table 2. Opinions of the project undertakers about the project.

| Theme                                                                 | Y1 | Y2 | Ø1 | Ø2 | B1 | f | %  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Difficulties of staying at school late and lack of payment for extra services | √  | √  | √  | √  | √  | 5  | 100|
| Belief of physical aids to school being beneficial and partially meeting the needs | √  | √  | √  | 4  | 80 |
| Courses, seminars, social and other activities meeting the objective of the project | √  | √  | √  | √  | √  | 5  | 100|
| Inability to cover the need for cleaning, security and technical staff | √  | √  | √  | 3  | 60 |
| Will to quit the project                                              | √  | √  | 2  | 40 |
| Uncertainties in authorities and duties                               | √  | √  | 3  | 60 |
| Problems caused by temporary assignments                              | √  | √  | 3  | 60 |
| Problems in utilizing the present facilities of the school            | √  | √  | 5  | 100|

Administrators all live in Antalya and they don’t want to stay late or come at weekends. I don’t want to stay anymore either. Because I am not paid extra for this”.

Y2 told about physical aid partially meeting the demand: “The municipality provides all kinds of support. No place in Turkey would get this much support. We are ahead of many schools in terms of physical equipment” and has shown his satisfaction.

O2 told about the courses and seminars meeting the objectives: “Our own students attend the classes too. I can continue the subjects I couldn’t finish during the daytime, or repeat them at evening or weekend classes”.

Speaking about the need for cleaning, security and technical staff, B1 said: “They assign one single staff. How can one person take care of cleaning, security and technical problems about especially things like computers all together? There must be one for each job. Librarian should look after the library; cleaning staff should look after cleaning?”

Y1 said about quitting the project: “I have told this in project meeting too. If I can quit the project, I want to quit immediately, because all this responsibility and authority is just too heavy for me. If you include the weekends too, I work 7 days a week, day and night. It’s just too much for me”.

B1 told about the problems of temporary assignments: “It’s difficult to work at this school for one month and another school for another month. It would be better for us if we were assigned to a school permanently or for a definite time. Getting used to a new school takes time too. When I get used to a school, I get assigned to another. Assignments should be for one year or for at least six months. Then the staff would feel better.”

Speaking about the problems on utilizing the present facilities of the school, O2 said: “The school is open in the evenings and the weekends but all necessary rooms are locked for security reasons. Labs are locked, lavatories are locked...No room is left open for anything could happen. Resources coming from the municipality are certain, but if we can use the other parts we could be more helpful.”

Table 3 shows the opinions on extracted themes about the project.

As seen in Table 3, V2 told about his gratitude on free course as below: “We couldn’t have sent our child to courses because of lack of money even we had, we had to pay for shuttle as the course centers are far. It is very good for us to have free courses at our own school. Besides, he used to have homework and projects. Now he can ask about them to his teachers and this is very good for us”.

Speaking about the physical aid made to school partially meeting the demand, V1 said: “The municipality distributed tablet computers to the children as a part of the project. Both the child and we got very happy. He never leaves it. We could have never afforded to buy one for him. We were given education set for once. Better be given every year because our needs change every year.”

Speaking about his gratitude on having the school open late and ability to use facilities such as library, computers, and internet, K2 said: “I can even print out. There is no need to go to internet shops anymore”.

Talking about the problems on physical facilities, V2 said: “Having some parts closed cause problems for us continuously. For example some evening even lavatories are closed. They must always be kept open. Even the canteen could be kept open and things like coffee and tea could be sold. I think attendance to the courses would increase much more there.”

While K2 said: “It is very good to utilize the internet and the printers but not all websites are accessible. Some websites are blocked for the safety of the children but even some
Table 3. Opinions of the project beneficiaries on about the project.

| Theme                                                                 | V1  | V2  | V3  | K1  | K2  | f   | %  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Gratefulness for free courses                                         | √   | √   | √   | √   | √   | 5   | 100|
| Belief of physical aids to school being beneficial and partially       | √   | √   |     |     |     | 3   | 60 |
| meeting the needs                                                      |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |
| Satisfaction by ability to utilize facilities like computers, internet | √   | √   | √   | √   | √   | 5   | 100|
| and library in the                                                    |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |
| Problems in utilizing the present facilities of the school            |     | √   |     |     |     | 2   | 40 |
| Satisfaction by families and children joining the same activities     |     |     | √   |     |     | 4   | 80 |
| Necessity on organizing courses depending on the needs of the local   | √   |     | √   |     |     | 3   | 60 |
| people                                                                |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |

homework and source websites cannot be accessed. Servers should be refiltered and harmful sites should be determined better and other appropriate websites should be accessible. Of course, I see some parents using it to play games only. Maybe that is the reason of the blockage”.

Speaking about families and children being in the same activity, K1 said:
“If we had stayed home in the evenings, the kids would forcefully be doing homework while we were watching TV. Now they are joining courses and we go to school together with them. We read books at the library or at the values education corner. Sometimes we sit in the garden together with other parents.”

Speaking about opening courses according to the properties of the geographic location, V1 said:
“Always literacy or computer oriented courses are opened. If vocation oriented courses were opened and certificates were given at the end, it would be very good for us. We would have new professions.”

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study is important as it reveals the opinions of stakeholders of “Let the schools become life” project carried out by Turkish Ministry of Education, while there is no study about the subject yet. It is important to find out the opinions of the participants and take necessary precautions in this sort of projects (Ceken, 2011; Kurt et al., 2013). This study has revealed that there are problems about school administrators staying at school late but not being compensated and not having any regulation addressing this problem. Although, the teachers are paid for their extra courses, the study has revealed that they do not want to stay late at school. It is also revealed that the municipality staff assigned in the project are having problems because of uncertainties in duties and authorities.

Process of combining information technologies with education media is important. Obstacles in front of this process are increasing as well as the projects to overcome them in Turkey (Sezer, 2011), one of these projects developed for this objective is “let the schools become life” project. Benefiting students and parents of this project have stated that they thought facilities needed to be broadened but ability to utilize technological infrastructure is satisfactory.

Although, there are problems like staying at school late and inability to utilize some facilities at school, all project undertakers have stated advantageous sides of the project like seminars, courses and social activities. Besides, the school library being open until late night has been seen as a positive side, although library content needs to be updated according to the project (Torun, 2003). All stakeholders agree that the courses should be kept free and there are problems in planning and programming of the project.

Some of the project undertakers have stated that they are willing to quit the project if possible because of the problems they have been facing. Although, there are not detailed studies about the project yet, it is meaningful to see some school administrators to quit the project in the evaluation meetings. Therefore, there are lacks in terms of education administration, auditing and planning which causes administrators and other stakeholders to benefit from the project poorly.

Themes of aids to the project partially fulfilling the necessities and uncertainties in duties and authorities are spoken of by majority of the administrators. Similar problems were revealed in Ceken’s (2011) study about Fatih Project too. Stakeholders who are appointed by the municipality face problems because of not having enough knowledge about the school system.

Free of charge attendance to the courses, having school open until late night, access to facilities like computers, library and internet have been stated by all beneficiaries. But the teachers are not willing to take part because of no or very low payment for evening courses. Besides uncertainty about which administrator(s) will stay at school and take responsibility for evening and weekend courses cause unrest within the administrators. There is no extra payment for the administrator attending
the project for the time being, which causes them to perceive the project as overtime, forced labor and work overload.

Most beneficiaries perceive having a common activity with their families at school positively. Moreover, most of the parents have difficulties on helping their children's homework and even cannot understand some of them (Güven, 2008; Gelbal and Kellecioğlu, 2007; Demir, 2008). Evening and weekend accessibility to school and ability to ask to the teachers are perceived positively by all of the parents and local people. This accessibility is crucial especially for the parents who do not have computers, internet or printers at their homes (Hersan, 2008). However, a few parents have stated that they are aware of incompetency in terms of planning and coordination.

As there has not been any consideration on the attenders’ opinions on course planning, some of the beneficiaries request to have courses that fit with geographical conditions of the location. For example, cooking assistance, tourist guidance and driving are some of the requested courses. Courses which do not meet demand and needs cause economic loss. Basic courses like literacy and computer are being opened nearly everywhere. Therefore, taking local needs and demand into consideration in course planning would be more appropriate in terms of education planning and economics.

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