#gogreen

2018 activity report

green thought association
About Us

We founded the Green Thought Association in 2009 with the aim of widening the reach of green thought and green policies. Our work encompasses national and international campaigns.

Our key areas of activity are:

» Ecology and Sustainability

» Democracy and the Media

» Climate Change and Energy

» Green Economy
Our Team

Savaş Çömlek  
President

Meltem Düzel Ayral  
Comptroller

Emine Özkan  
Board Member

Alper Akyüz  
Board Member

Barış Gençer  
Baykan  
Board Member

Sevil Turan  
General Coordinator

Cihat Demirtaş  
Communications Officer

Melisa Kutluğ  
Assistant
#gogreen
2018 activity
Making Thought Visible: Body and Image

10.01.2018

In this workshop we conducted with Jale Karabekir, artistic director for the feminist theatre collective, Tiyatro Boyalı Kuş, based on Image theatre from among Brazilian theatre personality Augusto Boal’s the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, we built images using our bodies and discovered how we can express our thoughts using corporal means of expression.
In this workshop we conducted with Pınar we talked about why we need to seek the answer near by when it comes to composing texts and, what seems just one step away, utilising creative writing.

At the same time, we exchanged views on whether and how to find the fundamentals that consist the raison d’être of civil society organisations, and write our texts based on these.
We gave training to Bornova Municipality employees on combating climate change.

17.01.2018

Member of the Board of Directors of the Green Thought Association and Assist. Prof. Dr. Barış Gençer Baykan who participated in this seminar talked on the effects of climate change in cities and what citizens and local authorities can do to tackle climate change.

The project, which started in September 2017, aims at the capacity building of citizens, individual entrepreneurs, co-operative initiatives and local governments in climate change, adaptation and mitigation in climate change, and renewable energy. The one-year project was completed in September 2018.
Nonviolence Training

25.01.2018

In the Non-Violence Training with Filiz Kasap and Birsen Atakan from the Non-Violence Training and Research Centre we were introduced to the Centre, their work and workshops. In the drills and exercises we did together, we had a basic introduction to nonviolent methods and nonviolent communication.
Interview and Signature with Zeynep Yılmaz

31.01.2018

Zeynep Yılmaz, the author of the Veiled Women’s Introduction to Psychiatry, talked about the story of the book.
Green Thought Association is 9 Years Old

11.02.2018

We celebrated the 9th anniversary of the founding of our association in our office, together with our members and friends.
Conscience, Ethics and Shelter Workshop on the basis of Volunteering

28.02.2018

In this workshop we conducted with Animal Rights Activist Tolga Oztorun, we overviewed violations of animal rights in shelters and talked about what we could do as shelter volunteers.
Bornova Climate School - 1

05.03.2018

We organized a two-day training program on March 5-6 within the scope of the “Green Climate, Green Municipality Project” which we conducted with the Bornova Municipality.

In the programme which took place on Monday, March 5, President, Global Balance Society, Environmental and Political Scientist Nuran Talu chaired a discussion titled “Climate Change and Woman”, as part of Bornova Municipality’s March 8 International Women’s Day celebration which was to last throughout the week… Talu said that women should be more effective in the issue of climate change and its solution, both of which concern the whole world.

In the Climate School Programme that took place on March 6th in Dramalılar Mansion, we discussed the scientific background of climate change and its effects on agriculture, energy, gender and cities. A short workshop was held in which different actors took up the problems of climate change.
We were in Berlin

06.03.2018

As part of the Civil Society Exchange Programme, we met with many NGOs from throughout Europe in Berlin. With this programme, we are starting work on the localisation and democratisation of renewable energy with our partner Nordisk Folkecenter.
Ecological Literacy Training

10.03.2018

Over a weekend, together with the Yuva Association, we conducted an Ecological Literacy Training! For two days, through fun and productive group work, we talked on the world and the journey of life, the basic concepts of ecology, the problems of the planet and the solutions to it.

Our thanks to all the participants, the volunteer trainers and to the Yuva Association!
World Hour

22.03.2018

We talked about the World Hour action organized by WWF worldwide, its effects and what we can do with WWF Turkey Communications Director Tolga Yücel.
As part of Açık Radyo’s 15th Listener Support Broadcast, our Communications Coordinator Cihat Demirtaş was guest to Ümit Şahin and Ömer Madra’s programme. We talked about events and plans by the association, the Green Gazette and the work we did together. Our gratitude to Açık Radyo for their hosting.
UN Special Rapporteur Başkut Tunçak was in Istanbul

02.04.2018

The United Nations (UN) Hazardous Waste and Human Rights Special Rapporteur Başkut Tunçak has met with institutions and individuals working on public health, environmental health, occupational health and safety, environmental rights and environmental law fields in Turkey, at the conference conducted by Green Thought Association and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

In the opening ceremony of the meeting moderated by Istanbul Policy Center Senior Scholar and Public Health Specialist Ümit Şahin, Başkut Tunçak shared information about current researches and reports on chemical wastes, human rights, environmental right and law.
Following the presentation by Tunçak, representatives of institutions shared their views on the problems in the field of occupational health and safety, public health, environmental rights and environmental law in Turkey.

Among the questions asked, the emphasis was on the power of the rapporteur’s sanctions. Tunçak stated that he also sent a letter to the government and companies to collect information on toxic substances and human rights cases. He added that this was also a paperwork record and that the country had been taken into consideration in the UN Universal Periodic Review. Tunçak also said that the rapporteur’s duty allows him to make press statements about the cases and that this is effective in raising public awareness about toxic pollution and human rights problems, and that the pressure both from the citizens and the shareholders arising from falling reputation and share prices are effective. Tunçak states that as a rapporteur he therefore encourages citizens and non-governmental organizations to reflect on the cases of toxic pollution. Related topics can be sent to the reporter via e-mail or on the website in a simple way.

Professions and Activism Workshop with Emrah Kurum

12.04.2018

We had the Professions and Activism Workshop with Emrah Kurum, one of the founders of Sürekli Adımları (Steps of Sustainability) on Thursday, 12 April in the Green Thought Association office.

The workshop started with presentations on Professions and Activism 101 (introduction) and examples of activists in different professional fields in Turkey.

After introductions, group work was done based on 17 sustainable development goals by dividing into 6 different teams. In the group work, problems were pinned down and possible solutions and ways of action were discussed.
Kanal Istanbul’s Ecological, Economic, and Social Dimensions

21.04.2018

We had discussed in the International Mega Projects Conference hosted by the Green Thought Association in October 2013, the results of growth-oriented urban development. Since then, the third bridge over the Bosporus has been completed, construction licenses has been granted for the reactor buildings for Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant, and the Kanal Istanbul project, a true nightmare for the city has been tabled again. With such a tenuous state of affairs, we decided to publish the finding book for the conference, focusing on the ecological, economic, and social costs of mega-projects. In the book-launch, we had a panel and discussion forum on the Kanal Istanbul Project and its cost on our future.

Cihan Uzunçarşılı Baysal, Hande Paker and Akgün İlhan presented in the panel moderated by Journalist Pelin Cengiz.
The 8th Green Economy Conference took place at Cezayir meeting hall on April 24, Tuesday through the joint efforts of Green Thought Association, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Turkey Office and Troya Environmental Association. The theme of the conference was Energy Financing.

In the first session of the conference, the current status of energy financing in Europe and relevant good examples were discussed with guests from Europe. The session took place with the moderation of Prof. Begüm Özkaynak from Boğaziçi University. The first presentation made by Daan Creupelandt from
Rescoop about renewable energy financing models and creative investment examples. During the presentation, a project called CITYnvest, focused on supporting and augmenting innovative financing energy efficiency upgrades in public buildings was introduced. Creupelandt also explained other models based on Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), Third Party Financing, floating capital and cooperatives.

Later, Dirk Holemans, a member of a Belgium based organisation called Think Tank Oikos talked about energy democracy and energy financing. He explained how renewable energy production became widespread in Europe as an alternative to nuclear based, central energy production and talked about the production-consumption model established through participation of local authorities, local companies, energy cooperatives and citizens in the city of Ghent.

During the presentation about good examples of Danish co-operatives, Daniele Pagani, the representative of Danish organisation Nordisk Folkecenter, explained how renewable energy investments and financing took place in Denmark. Another representative of REScoop, Stanislas d’Herbemont highlighted the most important founding purpose of energy co-operatives as less consumption and self-consumption, at his presentation about energy value-added for energy co-operatives. Last speech of the session made by Kardelen Afrodit Adsal from Nordisk Folkecenter. Adsal emphasized the good implementations in Europe regarding energy investments and the concept of self-financing.

The second session took place after the lunch break with the moderation of Derya Nazan Ünverir from an all-female organisation called Troya Energy Co-operative.

In this session, the secretary general of GÜNDER, Faruk Telemcioğlu spoke first about the opportunities, obstacles and
alternatives in the renewable energy sector in Turkey. Associate professor Sevil Acar From Altınabş University talked about a scenario in which national income will increase by 7% yearly and renewable energy will have a market share of 60% by 2040, if incentives of coal will be removed and carbon will be taxed. Dr. Değer Saygın from SHURA Energy emphasized the electric production technologies of renewable energy in Turkey and probable investment potentials until 2026. Afterwards, Business Development Manager Dr. Asuman Sönmez from Turkey Sustainable Energy Financing Facility (TurSEFF) explained their renewable energy investments. Last speaker of the session, Murat Gökçe, Turkey’s Credit Guarantee Fund İkitelli İstanbul Branch Manager, introduced financial education tools of small and medium enterprises.

The 8th Green Economy Conference was concluded with questions and remarks from guests.
On 3 and 4 May, we organized the second Climate School as part of the “Green Climate, Green Municipality Project” which we conducted with the Bornova Municipality.

For two days, with Dr. Ümit Şahin from the Istanbul Policy Center and Dr. Tugba Ağaçayak from TEMA, we discussed the state of affairs regarding combatting climate change, waste management, air quality, and carbon budget around urban policies focused on mitigation and adaptation; then we had a workshop discussing policy recommendations on transport, land use and agriculture, and buildings.

We would like to thank all the participants, educators and Bornova Municipality who hosted the training.
Green Thought Volunteers

Met

20.05.2018

We had the first meeting following our call asking for volunteers. We are on a brand new journey with 20 volunteers. We will learn together, learn from each other...
On 4 and 5 June, we organized the third Climate School as part of the “Green Climate, Green Municipality Project” which we conducted with the Bornova Municipality, themed renewable energy.

On 4 June, we had a programme on concepts in renewable energy sources, current situation in Turkey and the world, photovoltaic power systems and best practices, with climate and energy consultant Özgür Gürbüz, solar electricity expert Deniz Selkan Polatkan and Kardelen Afrodit Adsal, sustainability and business expert from Nordic Folkecenter.
On the afternoon of the same day we visited the Solar Power Plant of Bornova Municipality.

On June 5, we were at the Bornova Environment Festival organized as part of the World Environment Day. We held an interactive event with experts in the field of energy.

Başak Çağla Efe from SolarBaba, Yeditepe University’s Barış Gençer Baykan, climate and energy consultant Özgür Gürbüz, Duygu Kutluay from Greenpeace, Kardelen Afrodit Adsal from Nordic Folkecenter and energy consultant Zeynep İlhan answered questions of visitors who came to the stand as well as those on social media.
The Yeşil Kamp (Green Camp), hosted in Turkey in Çanakkale’s bay of Assos, Bektaş village by the Green Thought Association took place this year with participation by 153 people.

The participants were mostly young. We hosted 16 separate events featuring 32 guests over 3 days. Different from previous years, the camp was also host to an international event this year.

The Green School, co-hosted with the Green European Foundation (GEF), was on Wednesday, the 1st of August and featured theory presentations and workshops under three headings.

The first session of this Green School was the Rights of Nature and Environmental Constitutionalism panel, where facilitation was by Ümit Şahin, Senior Fellow at the Istanbul Policy Center. Speakers were Rana Göksu, volunteer with the Green Thought Association and Georgi Velev of the Bulgarian Green Party’s Save Pirin campaign.

The second session was on Gender Policies and Queer Ecology. Sevil Turan
of the Green Thought Association facilitated; speakers were Vesna Jesup, Member Party Relations Coordinator for the European Greens, Beatrice White from the Green European Foundation (GEF), and Teo Comet of the Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG).

The third panel was on Food Sovereignty and Food Policies. Bengi Akbulut of the Ecology Collective was the facilitator here. Presenters were Leyla Aslan Ünlübay, president of the Buğday Association for Ecological Living, Ayşenur Arslanoğlu, leader of SlowFood Turkey, and Antoine Tifine of the Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG).

In the evening, Akgün İlhan, lecturer at Boğaziçi University lead a workshop titled ‘How Should We Fight the Water Crisis?,” Cihan Koral Malak lead one on Gender and Queer Ecology, and Durukan Dudu of Anadolu Meraları (Graze-lands of Anatolia) lead one on Food Policy.

On the 2nd of August, The Yeşil Kamp started.

After introductions games with participants, the Introduction to Green Politics presentation which we have every year was made by
Alper Akyüz, board member with the Green Thought Association.

Interior architect and designer Gökalp Ceylan together with participants designed fonts themed wind, sun, and coal.

Academic Sezai Ozan Zeybek gave a presentation as the last event of the day, titled Three Alternative Stories Regarding the Future of Democracy: What If Democracy is not What We Think It Is?

Participants started the day doing Yoga with instructor Tuba Yalçın on the 3rd of August. Post-breakfast, instructors from the Çamtepe School of Life of the Another School Is Possible Association discussed alternative education models and shared what they practice.

Rauf Kösemen of the Myra Social Good Agency opened up for debate how communication can create social good and in what areas this is possible.

After Lunch, lawyer Şebnem Eraş Çelebi, in her presentation Law for Life, talked on the similarities and differences between the legal rights of nature and legal rights of human beings.
Güneşin Aydemir, Green Thought Association member and founder of the Buğday Association for Ecological Living related in her presentation titled The Height of Alternatives: Nature, how alternatives presented by nature fully affects all aspects of life.

The last event of the day was the performance by trans activist Esmeray of her sketch Kestirmeden Hikayeler (Short-cut Stories).

Yoga with instructor Tuba Yalçın again started the day on the 4th of August. After breakfast, Bahar Vidinlioğlu lead a workshop on the Skinner technique of letting go as a means to rediscover harmony with nature.

Following Vidinlioğlu, Pikan Agency’s Communication Improvement Director Pınar İlkiz had a presentation on the management of human resources in improving civil society communications.

After lunch, the topic was renewable energy, on which the Green Thought Association has been working for a long time. Sevil
Turan, General Coordinator of the Green Thought Association along with Oral Kaya, Director of Troya Environmental Association had a presentation titled The Sun and the Wind Suffice for Us.

Alper Akyüz, board member with the Green Thought Association, in his presentation Alternatives in Organising and Civil Society, lead a discussion on in what political areas civil society can exist and organise.

The last event of the day and of the camp was the presentation on rethinking the body as an instrument along with Ömer Ongun, one of the dancers of the Kardeş Türküler music ensemble, where the participants joined in a percussion show.

On Sunday the 5th of August, after a group photo, we had the session where participants shared their requests and wishes and the camp closed.
September 8 #riseforclimate: We Are Rising for Climate from Sariyer

08.09.2018

Events are organizing from cities, neighborhoods and everywhere our voice sounds from all over the world on 8th of September by 350.org. The aims of that activity are; invite local governments to move against the climate change that transformed into a global crisis and demand a future does not depend on fossil fuels from local governments. We know that transformation for a fair and inhabitable planet does not come true from above. Therefore on 8th of September, we are rising for climate from all over the Earth.

We, as the volunteers of the Green Thought Association, are setting up a stand in the Environment and Art Festival, organizing by Municipality of Sariyer, on 8th of September. You can meet with us and obtain information about Green Thought Association. Besides we will play games “Find the Plastics” and “Carbon Footprint” with participants. At 15:45, Ömer Ongun, who is from the volunteers of Green Thought Association and member of Bogazici Performing Arts Ensemble will perform body percussion for climate.
3rd Conference on Renewable Energy Cooperatives
Local Movements in Energy Transition

10.09.2018

The theme of the conference, convened for the third time this year, was energy cooperatives and initiatives in the Balkans and Eastern European countries. With speakers and participants from these countries that display similarities with the approach to cooperatives we have in Turkey we discussed best practices in Turkey as well.

On the second day, we discussed energy efficiency and cooperatives with the Association of European Renewable Energy Cooperatives.
The Green Climate Green Municipality Project closing meeting was held on 12 September Wednesday in Bornova Dramalılar Mansion. At the opening of the meeting, Bornova Municipality External Relations Director Başak Turhan and Project Coordinator Sevil Turan shared the outputs of the 1-year project.
29.09.2018

Our General Coordinator Sevil Turan joined the meeting with the theme of Istanbul Gatherings hosted by the Chamber of City Planners, and informed participants on the work of the Association.
Nordisk Folkecenter Visit by Green Thought Association Team

10.10.2018

As the Green Thought Association, we are conducting a cooperation project with the Nordisk Folkecenter as part of a Nongovernmental Exchange Programme in order to expand the democratic use of renewable energy. In the scope of this Programme, we participated in various activities over 6 months to assess the situation in the two countries, to learn about best practices and model in Denmark, Turkey and other countries in Europe to strengthen their cooperation and communication networks. Recently, we visited the Nordisk Folkecenter center in Denmark as a Green Thought Association team.
3rd Community Supported Agriculture Workshop

08.12.2018

As the Green Thought Association team, we too got together with producers, procumers, cooperatives, initiatives, and those who want to reach healthy food in the 3rd Community Supported Agriculture Workshop.

With hope that the examples of coming together, making decisions, discussing, producing together increase...
Turkey: Civil Society Calls for Urgent and Ambitious Climate Action

11.12.2018

As civil society organizations working on climate change in Turkey, we believe that global actors within the new climate dynamics should be well differentiated, and that countries with bigger historical responsibility should take even more urgent and ambitious action. The Turkish government can also give constructive contributions in the improvement of the existing Annex system within the convention framework.

Unfortunately, we are already living in a “more-than-1°C degree warmer” world. We think that countries should be real about preventing the disasters that a “over-1.5°C” world would bring. We don’t have time to step back. Therefore, we ask the Turkish government to immediately step up, take the leadership flag in global climate efforts and ratify the Paris Agreement, and strengthen its climate pledges.
Common Call from 11 Organizations: Let the Bees Live!

13.12.2018

As all around the world, an important proportion of bees are dying in Turkey too. If we don’t take the necessary steps in the near future, not just bees but all other species who are living together in the unique diversity of life and our food will be in danger.

We believe that banning the neonicotinoid class pesticides to protect the biodiversity and the food security in Turkey is a necessary and essential first step.

Human is just another creature in the nature. It is possible to produce without hurting, ruining, poisoning the nature and to live together with a harmony along with all other species by the circular logic of nature. In the hope of a world without need of protection the nature...
In this year’s Green Dialog, the issue in discussion was the stories and activities of individual and collective initiatives that create solidarity, ecological and egalitarian alternative spaces in the city and the countryside.

In the first section which discussed the boundaries, concepts and practical applications between the urban and the rural, Güneşin Aydemir from Green Thought Association and Mehmet Ali Çalışkan from YADA Foundation made presentations on “the meeting guide for non-villagers and non-urbanites” and “in peace but how?”

In the second part of the dialogue which was divided into 3 sections, many institutions and individuals including ‘EkoHarita’ ecological struggles mapping initiative, the Chamber of City Planners, ‘Bir Tohum’ Autism Foundation, ‘Anadolu Meraları’ (Anatolian Grazing Lands), the refugee solidarity initiative ‘Komşu
Kapısı’ (Neighbour’s Door), GEF / SGP, ‘Maide Mutfak’ (Maide Soup Kitchen), Good4Trust online fair-trade platform, ‘Kır-Kent Ağı’ (Rural-Urban Network), ‘Kokopelli Şehirde’ (Kokopelli in the City), and ‘Bisikletli Kadın İnsiyatifi’ (Women on Bicycles Initiative) share their projects and stories of success and failure. In discussions with all participants, this session focused on what we should do in the city and in the countryside.

The open-forum in the third session of the Green Dialogue questioned and pondered on the local politics from practices in daily life to the upcoming local elections. Political alternatives and current politics were an important topic of discussion. Anne De Bouer of the GroenLinks too presented on the rise of a Green wave in recent European politics.