

Storytelling mobile app for children who are deaf or blind

TÜRKİYE / TURKEY İŞİTME ENGELLİLER DERNEĞİ (TIED) – BILINGUAL STORIES

The Turkish Deaf Association (TIED), an NGO based in Istanbul, introduced an interactive video app in 2019. Focusing on children with hearing impairments, the app functions like an audio-visual library, offering three different segments: watching, reading, and learning. All videos are translated in Turkish sign language. Audio description, which has been introduced in 2022, makes the library also accessible for children with visual impairments. In 2022 the app has been downloaded more than 1,000 times.

Problem targeted

More than 90 per cent of deaf children in Turkey have hearing families. Young readers do not get much exposure to sign language at home and at school.

Solution, innovation, and impact

TIED localized and implemented a storybook mobile application in Turkey, previously developed by Gallaudet University for children with a hearing impairment. The application İki-Dilli Öyküler (Bilingual Stories) includes pictures, graphics, and a direct word-to-video translation function from Turkish to Turkish sign language (TİD), targeted at children over four years. Each story in the app has three segments: watching, reading, and learning. The first segment includes visuals and story imagery with sign language. Stories



An interactive video app for children with hearing and/or visual impairments.

“I attended a workshop and learned about animal experiments. Using the app is very easy.”

Hüseyin Mahmutçepoğlu, 7-year old project beneficiary

in this segment also include a voice-over and audio descriptions for blind children. The second segment (reading) narrates the story through text and images. Each page consists of highlighted words that, when selected, open up into a box with the sign meaning of the word. The last segment (learning) includes a list of words from the stories that children can learn and understand through signs. As of early 2022 the application has a 900-word TİD-Turkish dictionary.

Outlook, transferability, and funding

TIED has developed the mobile application with grants from the Sabancı Foundation, a Turkish

philanthropic organization. Users do not pay any fees to use the application. The application has been downloaded in countries other than Turkey, such as Azerbaijan, France, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom. TIED hopes to translate stories into additional languages and to cooperate with other countries to produce similar projects in the future. Looking forward, TIED plans to expand the application's library to include 15–20 stories and reach at least 5,000 deaf children by 2027.

FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- Between 2019 and 2022 the application has had 688 downloads on iOS and 249 on Android.
- The app won the Turkey Accessibility Award in 2020.
- A project related to ICT.



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