



## EVALUATION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STRATEGIES IN THE TURKISH BANKING SECTOR

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**Abstract:** Social responsibility has become an important concept today, with a perspective that businesses should also consider social impacts rather than focusing only on financial success. The aim of this study is to examine and evaluate the social responsibility strategies of businesses in the Turkish banking sector, to understand what type of strategies they focus on and to reveal the prevalence of the practices throughout the sector. The research was conducted and interpreted on the basis of literature review and content analysis methods. Businesses' social responsibility policies and strategies based on them have been evaluated in areas such as transparency, environmental awareness and social contributions. By investigating the prevalence of social responsibility strategies of businesses in the Turkish banking sector and the general importance of these strategies in the sector, the sustainability and social impact-oriented approaches of businesses are taken into consideration. It is expected that this study will be beneficial to the sector and society as a valuable resource in order to understand the steps taken by businesses in the Turkish banking sector in the field of social responsibility and to evaluate the effects of these steps on the sector.

**Keywords:** Social Responsibility, Banking, Strategy

**JEL:** M14, L10, G21

### INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving business world, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has emerged as an important element of sustainable and ethical business practices. This study examines the Turkish banking sector and aims to examine and evaluate the CSR strategies used by businesses. The main aim is to gain insight into the specific focus areas of these strategies and to reveal the extent of their prevalence in the sector (Banks Association of Turkey, 2022). CSR has become a crucial concept as businesses navigate an environment where social impacts are seen as important as financial success. The research methodology uses a comprehensive approach combining literature review, content analysis, and sector-specific analysis to interpret the CSR landscape in the Turkish banking sector (Carroll, 1999).

The importance of CSR strategies cannot be ignored, especially in the context of the banking sector. Beyond financial performance, businesses are increasingly expected to contribute positively to society, increase transparency, demonstrate environmental awareness and make meaningful social contributions. This study aims to shed light on the specific policies and strategies adopted by Turkish banks to fulfill their social responsibilities and provide a nuanced understanding of their practices (European Banking Federation, 2022).

As the study progresses, various CSR practices envisaged in the Turkish banking sector will be examined. These practices can range from community engagement initiatives, environmental sustainability efforts, ethical banking practices to transparent reporting mechanisms. By examining these specific issues in depth, the research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the social responsibility activities carried out by banks in Turkey.

The research will be structured around basic themes such as transparency, environmental awareness and social contributions, allowing a holistic evaluation of CSR policies. Additionally, the importance of sustainability and socially effective approaches in the Turkish banking sector will be emphasized, and how these strategies align with the sector's broader goals will be explored.

This study aims to serve as a valuable resource for understanding the CSR environment in the Turkish banking sector, contributing insights that can inform industry practices and benefit society at large.

### METHOD

In the study, the Turkish banking sector was considered as the universe, and 13 banks, which are among the important actors in Turkish banking sector, and the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey were selected as samples as accessible businesses. Banks in the sample are; Akbank, Albaraka, Denizbank, Garanti BBVA, Halkbank, Türkiye İş Bankası, Kuveyt Türk, Türkiye Finans, Vakıf Katılım, Vakıfbank, Yapı Kredi, Ziraat Bankası, Ziraat Katılım and the Central Bank.

The social responsibility policies that were publicly shared on the websites of the sample banks (some businesses shared them as strategies instead of policies) were listed and subjected to content analysis both individually and collectively, and the topics they focused on were evaluated by revealing trends. Due to limitations, not all banks could be reached, some banks shared their social responsibility projects, therefore the social responsibility projects of some of them could not be reached.

### FINDINGS AND APPLICATION

Social responsibility policies and strategies open to the public of Akbank, Albaraka, Denizbank, Garanti BBVA, Halkbank, İş Bankası, Kuveyt Türk, Türkiye Finans, Vakıf Katılım, Vakıfbank, Yapı Kredi, Ziraat Bankası, Ziraat Katılım Bankası and the Central Bank, which are important actors in the Turkish banking sector are summarized below.

Table. 1. Title of the table

Banks	Social Responsibility Sharing (Summary)
AKBANK	<p>Akbank Thought Club: This project, which provides Harvard summer school scholarships to selected university students, aims to support university education.</p> <p>Akbank Economy Heroes Children: This project aims to teach children to become conscious consumers and save money habits.</p> <p>Akbank One Smile is Seventy: This project, which covers teachers' book and stationery expenses, indirectly provides support to all students.</p> <p>Akbank Volunteers: This initiative, which carries out social awareness projects on a volunteer basis, carries out activities such as clothing aid to students and school painting activities.</p> <p>Akbank Jazz Festival: Akbank Jazz Festival, which supports jazz music in Turkey, shows that it attaches importance to art with its annual events and supports.</p> <p>Akbank Short Film Festival: This film festival, which started in 2004, contributes to art and short film culture.</p> <p>„Make a Wish“ Community Aid Campaign: This campaign, located on the home page, aims to help orphans and sick children. Users also have the opportunity to donate to various institutions and non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>„Good State of the City“ Volunteering Project: with Akbank Volunteers, the project supports social responsibility activities for university youth. The project aims to increase young people's awareness of volunteering and contribute to society.</p>

DENİZBANK	<p>SME: Undertaking the main sponsorship of „SME Summits“ and „SME Support Meetings“ organized by the Turkish Small and Medium Enterprises, Self-Employed Persons and Managers Foundation (TOSYÖV).</p> <p>Education: Providing full-time education scholarships to 120 students with the corporate sponsorship of the Turkish Education Association (TED). Support for the İMECE project implemented by the Community Services Foundation (TOVAK) in partnership with the Ministry of National Education.</p> <p>Art and culture: „DenizBank First Script First Film“ Competition held in cooperation with the Turkish Cinema and Audiovisual Culture Foundation (TÜRSAK). Supporting the Alacahöyük Excavation. Sponsorship of cultural and artistic events such as the International Istanbul Opera Festival and the International Bodrum Ballet Festival. Corporate sponsorship of Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra (IDSO). Renovation of Afife Jale Stage. 29 publications, 9 documentaries, audio literature, musical productions and exhibitions through DenizKültür.</p> <p>Agriculture: Within the scope of the „DenizBank Agricultural Mobilization“ project carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, book distribution to villages, computer donation to village schools and a photography contest and exhibition on „Agriculture and Human“.</p> <p>Sport: Providing financial support to Turkey’s major sports clubs (Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe, Beşiktaş, Trabzonspor, Bursaspor). Offering sports-focused financial products such as the Fan Card portfolio and Manchester United Bonus Card. of CEV.</p>
HALKBANK	<p>Overview: Halkbank focuses on the promotion and cultural development of the country by supporting projects that contribute to the economy and society. Sustainability is one of the bank’s core strategies.</p> <p>Social responsibility projects: The Bank attaches importance to social responsibility projects that add value to society and life in a wide range of areas, from education to tourism, from art to nature protection.</p> <p>Basic Principles: The basic principles of Halkbank’s social responsibility approach include developing new projects on corporate governance, environment and occupational health and safety issues in cooperation with employees and customers within the institution.</p> <p>Prioritized Projects: The Bank gives priority to projects that support economic development and aim for sustainability. Projects that contribute to the promotion and cultural development of the country in the fields of tourism, culture, art and sports are of special importance.</p> <p>Goals and Policies: Halkbank aims to continue its social responsibility activities in which it can reflect its deep-rooted history by collaborating with non-governmental organizations and public institutions in the future. Increasing the literacy rate and contributing to social solidarity for disabled people are also among the priority policy areas.</p>

<p>KUWAIT TURK</p>	<p>1010 Explorer Project:  Kuveyt Türk brings coding and robotics training to schools with the ,1010 Explorer Project‘ carried out in cooperation with the Turkish Red Crescent and the Ministry of National Education.  Volunteer employees provide education to students aged 10-14 in Regional Boarding Schools and public schools.  Coding kits are donated to schools, aiming to reach at least 1010 students every year.  Ramadan Commercial Film:  Kuveyt Türk is releasing a special commercial for Ramadan with the motto „We Grow with Our Values“.  The advertisement emphasizes many social responsibility projects, from humanitarian aid to educational support, from keeping traditional arts alive to the support given to children with cancer and their families.  Social responsibility projects:  Kuveyt Türk is preparing a commercial film that emphasizes adding value to society with the message „We are the Kuwaiti Turks of Turkey who know how to share.“  The advertisement describes the support provided to the KAÇUV Family House of the Hope Foundation for Children with Cancer, aid to refugees subjected to forced migration from Arakan, and projects aimed at national values, families of martyrs, women and children.  Historical and Cultural Projects:  Kuveyt Türk undertakes the restoration sponsorship of historical monuments and supports works such as Ortaköy Grand Mecidiye Mosque, Saliha Sultan Fountain, and Bursa Kozahan Fountain.  The bank contributes to the cultural heritage by organizing exhibitions and art events of the works of the Turkish-Islamic civilization.  It maintains its social responsibility awareness by supporting various institutions and campaigns.</p>
<p>FOUNDATION PARTICIPATION</p>	<p>Vakıf Katılım’s „Bird Houses“ Project:  is organizing a design and photography competition to revive the „Bird Houses“, one of the important works of Ottoman architecture.  This social responsibility project aims to carry the Ottoman philosophy of life based on kindness, elegance and goodness to the present day.  It aims to strengthen the bonds between humans and other living things by preserving cultural values and increasing urban architecture and environmental sensitivity.</p>

<p>CONSTRUCTION LOANS</p>	<p>Culture and Art Projects: The „culture and arts bank“ vision expressed by founder Kâzım Taşkent in 1944 turned into Yapı Kredi’s strategy.</p> <p>Yapı Kredi Culture and Arts Publishing: A publishing initiative established to enrich the cultural and artistic life of our country.</p> <p>Yapı Kredi Afife Theater Awards: Turkey’s prestigious theater award aims to keep the memory of Afife Jale alive and honor theater workers.</p> <p>Educational Projects: I’m Reading I’m Playing: Yapı Kredi supports the training program organized in cooperation with the Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation (TEGV).</p> <p>from Vadaas: Yapı Kredi World’s mascot Vadaa was turned into a plush toy and used for education.</p> <p>Scholarships and Academic Collaborations: An effort to provide educational and development opportunities to successful students through scholarships and academic collaborations.</p> <p>Environmental Projects: Afforestation Works: The goal of reducing paper consumption, encouraging the use of e-invoices and minimizing environmental impacts with environmentally friendly practices.</p> <p>Supporting Biodiversity with WWF: Supporting biodiversity by collaborating with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).</p> <p>Earth Hour: Support for the „Earth Hour“ movement led by the World Wildlife Fund to draw attention to global climate change.</p> <p>Volunteering Projects: Yapı Kredi Volunteers: A digital platform that encourages employees to participate in volunteer work with an awareness of social responsibility.</p> <p>NEWS FROM PROJECTS: Science Migration to Anatolia: Young Guru Academy’s social development project aims to instill a love of science in children at the Children’s Home, with the support of Yapı Kredi.</p> <p>Discovering Role Model Teachers: Introducing science to children with role model teachers from all over Turkey in the second stage of the Science Migration to Anatolia project.</p> <p>Barrier-Free Banking: The program, which was implemented to enable disabled citizens to access banking services more easily and in a modern way, is developed with new applications every year.</p>
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<p>ZIRAAT PARTICIPATION BANK</p>	<p>Ziraat Katılım Vefa Group Pandemic Solidarity: Ziraat Katılım Vefa Group, acting with the spirit of solidarity during the pandemic period, distributed tablets to students receiving distance education in 8 provinces and 25 districts across Turkey. The group operates under the umbrella of Ziraat Katılım with the slogan ‚More by Sharing‘ and based on the spirit of sharing. It was decided to continue its activities within the scope of social responsibility. Artificial Intelligence Workshop Opening: Ziraat Katılım, in cooperation with the National Education Bank of the Republic of Turkey, established the ‚Artificial Intelligence Workshop‘ at ARGEM (Research Development Training and Application Center Secondary School) to BİLSEM (Science and Art Centers) through evaluations made in accordance with the determined criteria, are entitled to become ARGEM students. Artificial Intelligence Workshop was held as a cooperation project aiming to provide opportunities to successful students registered at ARGEM and BİLSEM.</p>
<p>ALBARAKA</p>	<p>As Albaraka Türk, we see our participation banking activities as a reflection of a social responsibility approach that focuses on creating value for society. While continuing our activities, we aim to be a leading financial institution in the field of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility; In this regard, we support the United Nations‘ 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It supports economic and global development in order to improve the quality of life of the society; We work to minimize the effects of our activities on climate change and cooperate with our stakeholders for a sustainable world. Pursuing policies that are sensitive and respectful to people and the environment through our work, and supporting projects prepared for social and cultural purposes in this direction are among our basic corporate values. Within the scope of the Corporate Social Responsibility Program within Albaraka Türk’s Sustainable Banking Program, we prioritize the fields of education, health, environment and sensitive groups, and with the contributions of our employees, we carry out social responsibility projects that are sensitive to people and the environment and will support economic and global development. We aim to increase social awareness by reporting our work every year as of 2017 and sharing it on our website.</p>
<p>GARANTİ BBVA</p>	<p>UNICEF Turkish National Committee Support: As of 2017, Garanti BBVA Emeklilik participated in the work of UNICEF Turkey National Committee to support children’s access to survival, development, health and education services. He received a ‚UNICEF Silver Wing‘ and contributed to long-term projects in addition to meeting the basic needs of children. Community Volunteers Foundation Cooperation: Garanti BBVA Emeklilik, which has collaborated with the Community Volunteers Foundation since 2006, supported young people in school repairs in villages, mentoring street children and various educational projects. Mobile Health Services Project: In the Mobile Health Services project, carried out in cooperation with the Ayhan Şahenk Foundation, services were provided for 12 years to people without social security and with limited financial means in eye health, general health and child health throughout Turkey, with specially designed health tools. Banking and Insurance Program: Garanti BBVA Emeklilik started the ‚Banking and Insurance‘ program at Cappadocia Vocational School in the 2007-2008 academic year. Company managers periodically gave lectures on private pension and life insurance and offered internship and job opportunities. Additionally, ‚Garanti BBVA Pension Library‘ was established on the restored old madrasah.</p>

<p>TURKIYE İŞ BANKASI</p>	<p>General Corporate Social Responsibility Policy: İşbank has a corporate social responsibility policy that aims to contribute to the country with long-term social projects, in accordance with the basic principles of its founder Atatürk, in a way that protects and develops the basic values of the Republic.</p> <p>Social Projects Under Main Headings (2009): Education, Environment, and Culture and Arts.</p> <p>Chess Sport and Education: İşbank supports chess as an educational tool that contributes to the mental and personality development of children and young people. It has become the main sponsor of the Turkish Chess Federation and aims to popularize the sport of chess among children, eliminate educational deficiencies and achieve international success by reaching talented children. He encouraged the opening of chess classes in primary schools, and by the end of 2009, chess classes were established in 2,000 schools across Turkey. İşbank has made a significant contribution to the sport of chess with 76 medals won worldwide.</p> <p>Educational Projects: „Show Your Report Card, Get Your Book Campaign“: The campaign that delivered books to 2 million students. „81 Students from 81 Provinces“: A project where education and living expenses are covered for students who rank first in their provinces. Other education projects include the Firefly Mobile Learning Unit and the Traditional Golden Youth award.</p> <p>Environmental Projects: „81 Forest Project in 81 Provinces“: In cooperation with TEMA Foundation, 950,000 saplings were planted on an area of 600 hectares in 32 provinces.</p> <p>Culture and Art: İş Sanat: 46 concerts, 27 children’s events and 7 poetry recitals were held. It brought together world-famous artists with Turkish audiences. İşbank Museum: Turkey’s first and only museum specializing in the economic history and banking of the Republican period. Gallery Activities: It maintains Turkey’s largest private painting collection and has two galleries in Istanbul and Izmir.</p> <p>Awards: İşbank’s social responsibility projects have been recognized and rewarded with various awards such as the SABER Award, the Active Academy Award, and the Golden Compass Public Relations Award.</p>
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<p>TURKIYE FINANCE</p>	<p>Türkiye Finans launched the social responsibility project called „Give Heart to Children“ in 2018.</p> <p>Within the scope of the project, a campaign to establish book piggy banks was organized in areas in need.</p> <p>Book piggy banks were placed in the Head Office building and branches and nearly 10 thousand books were collected in a short time.</p> <p>The „Give Heart to Children“ project continued in 2019.</p> <p>The exteriors and classrooms of the schools in Silvan and Çermik districts of Diyarbakır were painted with the members of the Kindness Club.</p> <p>„Türkiye Finans Give Heart to Children“ playgrounds were established in village schools in Mardin and Erzurum.</p> <p>Through the Kindness Club, winter shoes were sent to 1400 children in 50 village schools in 14 provinces.</p> <p>More than 8,000 books were collected with the „Let a book be from you, let our future be filled with hope“ campaign.</p> <p>With the support of the Kindness Club, story books collected by visiting 6 schools in 6 provinces were delivered to nearly 1000 children.</p> <p>Türkiye Finans aims to instill the habit of reading in children and establish more children’s libraries with the campaign they will continue in 2019.</p> <p>Additionally, within the scope of the „Turkey Koruncuk Cooperation“, a computer donation was made to the Koruncuk Foundation and the „Turkey Finance Informatics and Language Laboratory“ was opened.</p> <p>With this support, an effort was made to ensure equality of opportunity in education.</p>
<p>VAKIFBANK</p>	<p>Education:</p> <p>VakıfBank, which produces projects to support children’s dreams, supports Science and Art Education Centers (BİLSEM) in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of National Education.</p> <p>Since 2017, it has undertaken the construction of a total of 54 mechatronics, mind games and artificial intelligence workshops and more than 170 information technologies laboratories.</p> <p>It helps 10 thousand specially talented children who receive training in these workshops to discover their individual talents and use them at the highest level.</p> <p>He will continue his work in the field of special education and child development in the future.</p> <p>Culture:</p> <p>In 2018, cultural publishing started with VakıfBank Cultural Publications (VBKY).</p> <p>Acting with the principle of „And Unique Book“, VBKY publishes books with reliable sources in categories such as literature, history, economics, philosophy and art.</p> <p>By the end of 2020, it continues its goal of enriching its publishing pool with horizon-opening books that enlighten the society by bringing 85 books to readers.</p> <p>Sport:</p> <p>Believing in the importance of sports for social benefit, VakıfBank’s longest-running social benefit project is VakıfBank Sports Club.</p> <p>It introduces sports to little girls through volleyball schools and infrastructure investments and makes the club’s success sustainable.</p> <p>More than two thousand girls have been supported through sports schools for six years.</p> <p>VakıfBank Women’s Volleyball Team has the title of „Turkey’s team with the most trophies“ by winning many international championships.</p> <p>At the same time, it emphasizes the potential of Turkish women in sports with their achievements that entered the Guinness World Records.</p>

ZIRAAT BANK	<p>Ziraat Bank Banking Museum:  Ziraat Bank Banking Museum, Turkey's first banking museum, was opened in 1981. The museum exhibits the 151-year history of Ziraat Bank in the historical Head Office building in Ankara.</p> <p>It contains important information about the history of the Ottoman and Republic, as well as antique objects and works of Turkish painting.</p> <p>Support for Art and Artists:  Ziraat Bank supports art and artists with the slogan „In Art for Art's Sake“.</p> <p>It supports Turkish art through venues such as Kuğulu, Tünel, Kızıltan Ulukavak Art Galleries and Ömer Nafi Güven Exhibition Hall.</p> <p>A total of 34 exhibitions were held in Ankara and Istanbul in 2014.</p> <p>Ziraat Bank Painting Collection:  Ziraat Bank has been supporting the arts since 1863, embracing the importance of culture and art reaching society.</p> <p>The collection includes a wide range of works of art from the 19th century to the present day, from romantic landscapes to contemporary works.</p> <p>The collection will be exhibited as the „Ziraat Bank Painting and Sculpture Museum“ in the historical building in Istanbul.</p> <p>Protection of Cultural Heritage:  Ziraat Bank evaluates 52 registered buildings in many provinces, especially Ankara and Istanbul, as cultural heritage and keeps them under protection.</p> <p>The buildings are renovated in accordance with their original form and their original architectural designs are preserved.</p> <p>Support for Turkish Volleyball:  Ziraat Bank Sports Club supported Turkish volleyball and initiated free sports schools and national athlete training projects.</p> <p>With the sponsorship of Ziraat Bank, the naming rights of the Turkish Cup were obtained, and support was also provided for the Aroma Men's 1st Volleyball League.</p> <p>In the 2014/2015 season, commercials called „Shadows“ and „Football Machine“ were broadcast.</p> <p>Other Support and Projects:  supports scientific publications, historical and cultural projects, children's education projects and the „Traveller - In the Footsteps of the Great Plane Project „,</p> <p>It supports projects that contribute to the renovation of schools, the establishment of libraries and the personal development of young people.</p>
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<p>Central Bank of Turkish Republic</p>	<p><b>Art Collection:</b>  The Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey has been purchasing works of art since its establishment and has a rich collection documenting the development of Turkish Painting in the Republic Period.  The collection reflects the development of Turkish art with events covering different periods and themes.  Among the works, there are works by artists from various periods, from 1914 to the present.</p> <p><b>Exhibitions:</b>  Malatya First Step Towards Modern Exhibition (2018):  48 works of 43 artists from various periods of Turkish painting were exhibited.  The exhibition discusses the representatives and development of Turkish art under various themes.  Gaze Exhibition - Bursa (2018-2019):  29 works of 26 artists were exhibited in Bursa.  The exhibition covers various aspects of art and its representatives.  Our Villages Exhibition (2019):  The event, exhibited at Antalya Culture and Arts, focused on examining plastic arts in Turkey through landscape paintings.  Narrative, Place and Time Exhibition (2019):  Erimtan Archeology and Art Museum focused on artistic development during the Republican period.  Language of Modern Exhibition - Amasya (2019):  The exhibition, held at Amasya Saraydüzü Barracks Building, National Struggle Museum, discussed the development of Turkish painting in 5 different sections.  Language of Modern Exhibition - Sivas (2020):  The exhibition opened at the Sivas Atatürk and Congress Museum includes the evolution of Turkish painting and its representatives in different periods.</p> <p><b>Photography Contests:</b>  1st International Photography Competition Themed Economy and People (2017):  4,781 photographs of 1,362 artists from 30 countries were participated.  Economy and Human Themed II. International Photography Competition (2019):  2,500 artists from 74 countries participated with 9,000 photographs.  Exhibitions were held in Ankara Cer Modern Arts Center and Istanbul Taksim Cumhuriyet Art Gallery.</p> <p><b>Virtual Museum:</b>  The virtual museum of the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey exhibits the cultural values of the bank with various images and information and aims to reach a wide audience.</p>
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### Content analysis

As a result of the content analysis, banks' social responsibility projects and practices seem to generally focus on the following areas:

*Art and Culture:* They operate in the field of culture and arts through art collections, exhibitions and photography competitions.

*Education:* Banks have focused on education-related projects, especially targeting the younger generations. For example, financial literacy training, scholarships or educational material distribution.

*Social Development:* The aim is to contribute to social development through various projects. In this context, economic and social awareness raising projects have an important place.

*Environmental Awareness:* Banks show sensitivity to environmental problems with environmentally friendly projects and carry out activities in line with the principle of sustainability.

*Health:* Projects carried out in the field of health generally aim to increase the health awareness of the society. Health screenings, campaigns and awareness projects can be included in this category.

*Social Participation and Solidarity:* Banks carry out aid and solidarity projects for various segments of society, aiming to provide support especially to disadvantaged groups.

**Some social responsibility areas that banks frequently focus on:**

**Financial Literacy Programs:** Educational programs aimed at raising individuals and societies' awareness of financial issues.

**Educational Scholarships and Support:** Projects to provide scholarships, educational materials and school infrastructure to students.

**Environmental Awareness Projects:** Various environmentally friendly projects and sustainability-focused initiatives.

**Social Participation and Solidarity Projects:** Extending a helping hand to different segments of the society, social aid projects and providing support to disadvantaged groups.

**Health Campaigns:** Health screenings, vaccination campaigns and health awareness projects.

**Technology and Innovation Projects:** Technology and innovation-focused projects that support digital transformation.

**Culture and Art Projects:** Cultural events, art collections, exhibitions and art support projects.

**Social responsibility areas that banks often ignore:**

Banks often address a range of social needs through social responsibility projects, but there can always be areas that are left out or need greater emphasis. Here are some areas that can be considered as social needs, apart from the areas that banks highlight in their social responsibility projects:

**Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Banks can encourage innovation by supporting more entrepreneurial projects. Financial support and mentoring programs, especially for small businesses, can be useful in this area.

**Fighting Poverty:** Banks can increase social impact by providing more support for economically disadvantaged groups and investing more in poverty alleviation projects.

**Digital Literacy and Access:** During the digitalization process, they can carry out projects focusing on reducing social inequalities in digital literacy and internet access.

**Educational Technologies:** Projects that support the use of technology in education can respond to social needs, especially during challenging periods such as distance education.

**Social Justice and Diversity:** Banks can place greater emphasis on projects that promote diversity and social justice, especially in the areas of workforce, equal opportunities and gender equality.

**Health Services and Crisis Management:** More investments can be made in crisis preparedness and public health through projects in the field of health.

**Solutions for Global Problems:** Banks can offer solutions to global problems by focusing on more effective projects on climate change, sustainability and environment.

Various projects carried out by the Turkish banking sector reflect the institution's comprehensive understanding of social responsibility. With projects carried out in the fields of art, culture and education, banks have a rich collection documenting the development of Turkish art. While exhibitions increase cultural interaction by presenting works representing different periods of Turkish painting to large audiences, photography competitions bring together national and international artists by dealing with the theme of people and economy. Through the virtual museum, cultural values and works of art are delivered to a wide audience, regardless of physical limitations. In addition, banks' economy and people-themed photo contests aim to raise social awareness with projects that combine economy and craft. Combining the financial field and art with its banknote collection and contemporary art projects, the bank continues to support cultural heritage and modern art.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This review provides an overview of the social responsibility projects of the Turkish banking sector and discusses the contributions of banks to social needs. Banks' social responsibility projects generally cover various areas such as education, art, culture, environment, health and economic development. These projects aim to go beyond the role of simply providing financial services and add real value to society.

Social responsibility projects aim to influence societies and contribute to sustainable development by going beyond companies' ways of doing business that focus only on profit. These projects, which generally take place in areas such as education, health and culture, aim to increase the welfare of societies, increase customer loyalty and strengthen employee loyalty by creating a positive image of companies in society. Additionally, companies aim to contribute to a sustainable future by producing solutions to environmental and social problems.

Social responsibility projects specifically for banks aim to fulfill their social responsibilities in areas such as increasing financial literacy, providing support to small businesses, and encouraging entrepreneurship by emphasizing the effects of the financial sector on society. These projects support banks to be seen as institutions that add value to society, rather than just being financial service providers, and to create a reliable image in the sector. Banks' adoption of sustainability principles and taking an active role in various social responsibility areas contributes to the financial sector shaping its social and environmental impacts in a positive way.

Projects, especially in the field of education, constitute the cornerstones of social development by making significant contributions to the development of young generations. The art collection of the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey and the exhibitions it organizes stand out as important steps towards the protection and development of culture and art.

However, in addition to these projects, there are also areas that banks can emphasize more or leave incomplete. More comprehensive projects in areas such as digital literacy, poverty alleviation, social justice, diversity and solutions to global problems can further increase banks' social impact. In the future, banks are expected to further increase their social responsibilities by expanding these projects, focusing more on social needs and producing more effective solutions in various areas.

The Turkish banking sector stands out with its wide-ranging social responsibility projects. Studies carried out in the fields of art, culture and education contribute to the banks' rich collections documenting the evolution of Turkish art. While exhibitions increase cultural interaction by presenting works from different periods of Turkish painting to large audiences, photography competitions bring together national and international artists by dealing with the theme of human and economy. Through virtual museums, cultural values and works of art are delivered to large audiences, regardless of physical limitations. Banks' economy and people-themed photo contests aim to raise social awareness with projects that combine economy and craft, and include banknote collections and contemporary art projects.

#### **Recommendations for banks:**

**Diversified Social Responsibility Projects:** Banks can create more impact in different areas by increasing their social responsibility projects. They can support social needs more comprehensively with a wide range of projects such as education, health and environment.

**Technology-Focused Education Projects:** Banks can focus on education projects to increase financial literacy and digital skills. Technology-focused education programs, especially targeting younger generations, can strengthen financial awareness.

**Entrepreneurship and SME Support:** Banks can work on projects that support entrepreneurship and SMEs. Projects that will strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem in areas such as financing, consultancy and education can make significant contributions to economic development.

**Environmental Sustainability Projects:** By focusing on environmental sustainability projects, banks can create social and environmental impact on issues such as green energy and carbon footprint reduction.

**Digital Customer Experience Improvements:** They can increase customer satisfaction with innovation and user experience improvements in digital banking. User-friendly apps and digital services can help them reach customers more effectively.

**Diversity and Inclusion Policies:** Banks can diversify their employee profiles and management level by focusing on the principle of diversity and inclusion. This fosters a work environment that is enriched by different perspectives.

Sensitivity to Local Communities: Banks can develop projects to identify and meet regional needs by showing greater sensitivity to the local communities in which they operate.

Support for the Transition to Digitalization: They can encourage the use of technology by developing training programs and digital financial tools that will support customers in the transition to digitalization.

Innovation and Start- up Support: Banks can contribute to the start- up ecosystem by supporting innovations in the field of financial technology (Fintech).

Open Communication and Transparency: Banks can increase transparency by clearly communicating their work and expenditures on social responsibility projects. They can also focus more on customer and community feedback. se supports cultural heritage and modern art by combining the financial sphere with the arts.

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