



**HIGHER DEMAND FOR WORKSHOP:** Although the two-day oral history research workshop was only announced through the museum's Web site, demand was higher than expected and only 200 people were accepted. The profiles of applicants to the workshop are diverse, bringing together people from various vocational and age groups.

# Oral history research workshop breaks record

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Interest in oral history has increased in Turkey in recent years. Hundreds of people from around the country applied for a two-day oral history research workshop, recently organized by the Ottoman Bank Museum in Istanbul's Karaköy district. Although the workshop was only announced through the museum's Web site, demand was higher than expected and only 200 people were accepted.

The profile of those who applied for the workshop is diverse, bringing together people from various vocational and age groups. The workshop was led by Sabancı University member and anthropologist Professor Leyla Neyzi, who is known for her successful work in the field of oral history.

"Turkey is undergoing a change. This is the most important fact that this workshop shows us. People have started questioning their recent history," said Neyzi, speaking to Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review.

Among the workshop participants, retired history teacher Nimet Renkliyıldız and Galatasaray University department of Political Science master's student Eda Demirtaş also provided information about the project.

## Remaining distant to oral history

In recent years, the Ottoman Bank Museum has contributed to adult education through its very comprehensive archive, and conferences, exhibitions, workshops and publications, Neyzi said. She said Turkey was late in beginning oral history

**A two-day oral history research workshop, which took place at the Ottoman Bank Museum, showed Turkey's interest in oral history and received a record number of applicants from all around the country. The quota was limited to 200 people because of high demand**

work. "The history of science remains distant to oral history in Turkey. But history and oral history are two important fields that should coordinate," she said.

During the two-day workshop, participants were informed about the definition of oral history on the first day. On the second day, they discussed working methods and the projects on which they wanted to work.

## High demand in recent history

"The projects that were presented during the workshop revealed Turkey's multi-colored cultural structure," said Neyzi, adding that the projects mainly focused on the incidents in recent history and family history. She said the oral history project, carried out by the museum, had been presented to the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture executive board, and the work would be shared with society through books and exhibits.

Workshop participant Renkliyıldız said it was a large deficiency that Turkey lacked written corporate and family history. "Our society has problems in writing and listening. If we can succeed in listening to each other, we can create social peace more easily."

Renkliyıldız will carry out research on the history of one of Turkey's oldest educational institutes, Darüşşafaka, where she also works.

"I spent an important part of my life with the things that I should have never heard and

known. As if the whole world was our enemy: the Armenian problem, the Kurdish problem, the danger of political reaction, Masons, Greece," said Demirtaş. She also said her visit to Mardin in 2006 was a turning point for her.

"For the first time in my life, I learned of the existence of a language called Kurdish. My meeting with Kurds and knowing them made me curious about the others," Demirtaş said. As her project topic, she chose people who have come to Istanbul from eastern and southeastern cities and try to survive in bachelor rooms under very bad conditions. She will be working in Küçük Pazar in Istanbul's Eminönü district.



**ORAL HISTORY:** Anthropologist Leyla Neyzi, who is known for her successful work in the field of oral history, led the workshop. DAILY NEWS photo, Hasan ALTINIŞIK