Alper Akyüz has completed his PhD in Organisation Studies program on July 2010. Before starting the program he had a MSc and BSc degree in Aeronautical Engineering. However, he has been active in various civil society organisations and movements and worked both as volunteer/activist and paid professional in environment and rights based organisations. He has been employed in Non-governmental Organisations Training and Research Center of Istanbul Bilgi University as training programs coordinator and trainer throughout his enrollment in PhD program as well as being an instructor in Faculty of Communication. During his enrollment to our PhD program he has published various handbooks on NGO management, volunteering and European Union and took part in trainings aimed at capacity building of civil society organisations. He is recently appointed as assistant professor at the Department of Art Management in Bilgi University and also keeps his involvement in NGO Training and Research Center. His field of interest for further research is civil society development, empowerment and corporate social responsibility. He adopts a critically informed analysis and empowerment and participation based qualitative research.

Thesis Abstract: Issue-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) claim that they act on behalf of a social or environmental issue or vulnerable groups affected from problems in these cases. They are essentially voluntary initiatives (part of a bigger social movement) and they don't work for material profit shared by individual shareholders. On the other hand, professionalisation has been a significant trend among these organisations in Turkey together with other developing countries as well as developed ones. With the increasing number of NGO professionals working in the field, work place feature of the organisations (including management control practices) overlap and create a number of tensions with the voluntary and political background of these organisations, reflected in power relations among organisational members and construction of meaning as sense making. This study deals with the dynamics of these relations and efforts of sense making within work organisations of issue based NGOs in the special case of Turkey from a labour process frame. The study uses a qualitative method: starting from a initial survey to derive key issues to be deepened during a modified process of 'provoked and accompanied self-analysis' developed by Pierre Bourdieu and 'sociological intervention method' by Alain Touraine, where a conversion of interviewee towards sociological knowledge/objectifying takes place during the process. Each individual process is
composed of a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews constructed together with the interviewee. The research question is whether increased tendency for hiring paid staff as 'professionals', therefore introduction of labour process in a formerly voluntary way of work in issue-based non-governmental organisations of Turkey undermine the search of a 'meaningful work' as civic/democratic agencies of those employees', who usually bear strong individual commitment and an identity aspect by identifying themselves with the issue or affected target group even before being recruited to the job. The study revealed a complex labour process and a dynamic process of professional identity construction, which lead to new grounds for resistance and self-organising around 'employee status', and the reconstruction of self as agency. The interactive and interventionist methodology used is also promising to reveal rich information by establishing a dialogue of reflection between the researcher and the interviewee, which contributes to empowerment of both sides.

Publications: