



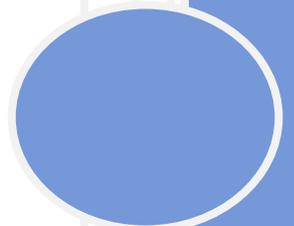
imece
İnisiyatifi

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İMECE İNİSİYATİFİ **ASSOCIATION**

Activity Report 01/2017

1.1.2017



Mission Statement

“Imece is a collaborative initiative concerning culture, thought, and action. It is not the youth wing of a party. We do not aim to take advantage of others rather we hope to be of benefit. We are a group of youth whose guiding principles are to read, think critically, be and stay honest, to share, to strive for solidarity, and seek out the truth while rejecting what is presented to us as ultimate truths by the relationships of profit and exploitation. We aim to attain understanding of reality and genuine knowledge by trying to find solutions to the issues and problems around us through generosity, civility, decency and caring for the common good. Independent and humble, far from the narratives forced upon us through the media we aim to read each other, talk to each other, and to listen to each other with the ultimate aim of pursuing a better tomorrow.”

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Who We Are:

We are a small association, initially founded by a group of mostly local students. Founded in 2014 and headquartered in Çeşme district of Izmir we operate in the larger Izmir area in the Aegean region of Turkey. Our aim is to support people who are impacted by the social, economic, and political consequences of capitalism and the strictly for-profit system currently in place. Initially, we supported underprivileged locals, since November 2015 our main focus has shifted to the thousands of refugees mostly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq who are trying to make their way to the European Union but are stranded in Turkey. Most of them are forced to live in makeshift tents in the countryside deprived of basic humanitarian needs. We have and continue to provide these refugees with basic humanitarian needs. Concurrently, we recognize that their presence is long-term and we understand that our assistance to them must also reflect the reality at hand, so we are developing and working on various projects especially focusing on the matters of education, empowerment and financial independence of these refugees to facilitate a better future for them.



PAST ACTIVITIES

We are looking back onto a very eventful year 2016. The situation of the refugees in Turkey has changed several times during the last 12 months and we were able to react to those changes quickly and adjust our work according to the new situations every time. We also managed to start all the projects we have planned. In the following, we give you an overview over last years' activities and implemented projects.

DISTRIBUTIONS IN CİFTLİKKÖY AND CESME

From autumn last year until March 15th 2016 our main work consisted of supplying refugees passing through Cesme with basic humanitarian needs such as food, water, baby supplies, clothes, shoes and also raincoats and blankets for the many unlucky refugees who had to spend their nights outside. During this time, around 70 000 refugees passed through Cesme to reach the island of Chios. Usually they stayed in Cesme area between 2 and 7 nights. We distributed approximately 85 tons of water, 7 tons of bread, over 2500 packages of diapers and many more items.

Also, we were and still are called by the Cesme Coast Guard and the Jandarma to distribute emergency goods when refugees are picked up by them.



BUILDING THE NEW HEADQUARTER

With our workload and the amounts of aid donated and given out growing rapidly, we found ourselves in need of a proper headquarter. In the first quarter we used a private café as a meeting point and a separate warehouse we could use for free for a few months. The volunteers we need here constantly to get the work load done had to find accomodation in one of the hotels in Cesme which are very expensive, especially in summer. Thus, our aim was to find a building we could rent to use as a headquarter and gather all functions under one roof: meeting space, accommodation and storage.

After finding a suitably big hall, a thorough construction phase started which lasted **from April until June 2016**. We built in walls, doors, electricity, sanitary facilities and renovated the premises. As a result we have space for up to 12 volunteers to sleep, a kitchen, a shower as well as a big café and meeting space.

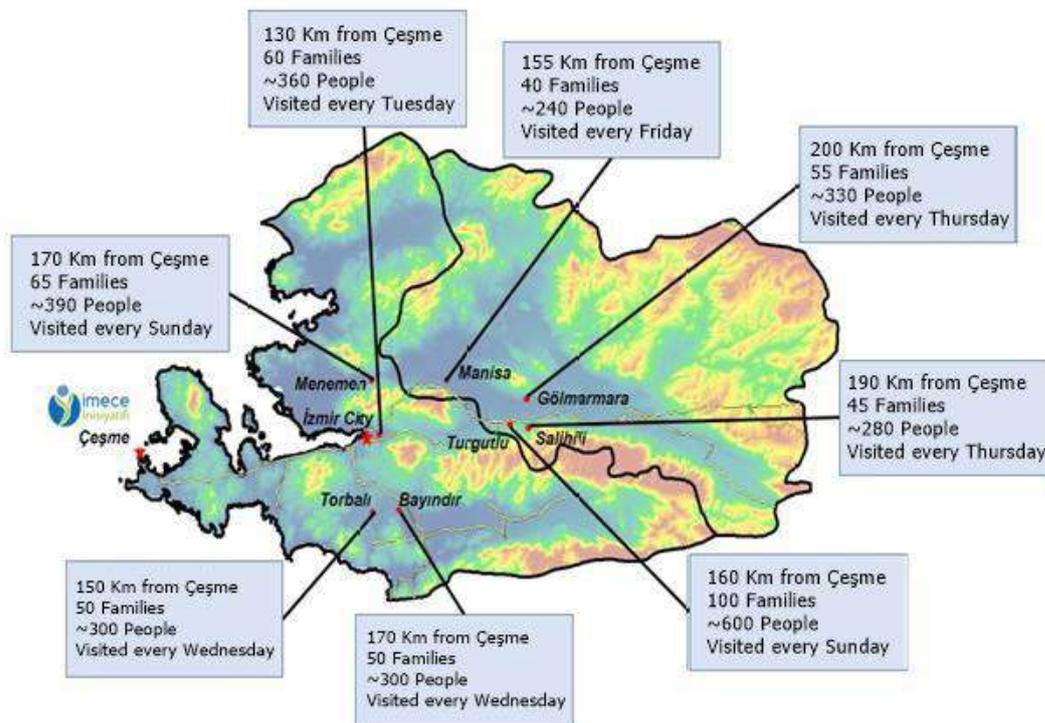


ONGOING WORK

DISTRIBUTIONS IN İZMİR COUNTY

Because the EU- borders closed in the middle of March, officially 2 million refugees, unofficially around 5 million, are stranded in Turkey of which an estimated number of 300 000 live in the broader Izmir area. We adjusted to this change of situation by finding numerous unofficial camps in the countryside and regularly supporting the refugees living there. About two thirds of the refugees we take care of are living in makeshift tent camps in the countryside, and one third live in the cities. Especially the living conditions of the refugees living in tents are very poor: None of them have access to running water or any sanitary facilities. In a large part of the camps you find more than 50% are women and children. Mostly the adults find work in the fields for local farmers or deal with scrap iron. All of them need help with all basic supplies.

By now, we provide a quite constant number of around 5000 people, 650 families, in 50-60 different spots with basic necessities. To secure their basic needs weekly, we drive 6 times a week to the areas Manisa city centre, Salihli, Turgutlu, Torbalı, İzmir city centre, Basmane, Otogar area, Karsiyaka, Bornova, Gölarmara, Foca and Menemen. Altogether they make up a radius of 250 kilometers around İzmir city.



The areas of Imece distributions

FOOD BAGS	HYGIENE PRODUCTS	BABY AND CHILDREN SUPPLIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 500 gr Rice ▪ 500 gr Bulgur ▪ 500 gr Beans ▪ 1000 gr Flour ▪ 1000 gr Pasta ▪ 1 lt Oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wet wipes ▪ Sanitary pads ▪ Tooth brush ▪ Tooth paste ▪ Soap ▪ Shampoo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Milk ▪ Diapers ▪ Wet wipes ▪ Baby food ▪ Fruit concentrate ▪ Baby biscuits ▪ Toys ▪ Colouring books ▪ Colour pencils

distributed items

We distribute all the products above to 650 families every week. Per month we spend around 25 000 Euros donations on this way of supporting the refugees in the Aegean region of Turkey.

In winter time, we additionally distribute blankets, stoves suitable for tents, warm clothes and shoes.



BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES

Beyond the help we provide on a humanitarian emergency level, we aim to help refugees to stand on their own feet on a long term and to gain back their independence and dignity. By doing so, we focus on the women who travel alone with their children predominantly. To provide an income for this particularly vulnerable group, we have started a **tailor project** in August 2016. The project consists of two branches: We set up a tailor workshop in Izmir, where the refugees are trained by a professional Syrian tailor and then are free to use the workshop's sewing machines and material.



The second branch of this project is to provide refugee mothers with machines and materials right at home where they can mind their children and work at the same time. So far, we donated sewing machines and materials to get started to three women who now successfully work from home.



The experience of the first few months shows that with this project we do not only facilitate a regular salary and a regained independence for the refugees involved in this project, maybe most importantly it strengthens our tailors' self-esteem very much. So far six refugees are working in the tailor project who now can slowly settle down, rehabilitate from the flight and start to build a new life in Turkey.

The product we started with are our Imece supportBags. One supportBag costs €18: 80% of the revenue go straight to the tailors, 20% remain with the Imece Inisiyatifi to further expand the project. Soon we will produce and offer bracelets and other products.

The second item we currently offer are t-shirts which we decorate with painted hands and feet of children in the camps. The **t-shirt making project** started in October. 100% of the revenue of this project go straight to the children's families.



Imece is constantly working to expand the working opportunities project and reach more refugees.

All our products can be purchased online via <http://imeceshop.jimdo.com/>.

MOBILE EDUCATION

None of the children in the camps receive any form of formal education. In theory, by law all children have a right to education in Turkey but there are three main obstacles for them to go to school: One is the lack of Turkish language and the latin alphabet, the second is the lack of a structured everyday life, and the third obstacle consists of the remote locations in which they currently live.

Knowing well the conditions "our" refugees live in, we created a concept for a suitable, effective form of mobile education in the camps in the Aegean area. Our concept covers all of the three obstacles mentioned above, which means the children are a huge step closer to being integrated into public schools one day. With the help of Mercy Corps we purchased an inflatable tent functioning as a mobile classroom which offers space for up to 25 students together with light and foldable furniture matching our needs.

Since November 2016 we undertake Turkish and arts and crafts lessons in the currently biggest camp area in the region of Salihli. In three different age groups, the children have first about half an hour arts and crafts workshops, and afterwards half an hour of Turkish lessons. Step by step, the children are getting used to regular school days and to sitting and focusing on a certain topic. The concentration phases will be gradually prolonged.

During the piloting phase, the school day takes place once a week, but we will heighten the frequency and include more areas into this project in 2017.



LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Besides our efforts to support refugees in as many ways as possible, we still go on with the work Imece had initially started with three years ago when the initiative was founded: Providing support for locals in need.

The core group regularly organizes an arts and crafts day for the handicapped children of the Cesme Rehabilitation Center since October 2016. The program contains clown activities, having lunch together and music, creating e.g. puppets and a dancing course for the children. The children enjoy to socialize, have a fun day out of the center and learn different crafts. In addition, we found letter friends in Istanbul for the children who they write now regularly.



Also, we distribute food, blankets and hygiene boxes to the local people in need. Every second week we supply around 120 families in the area of Cesme including Alacati, Dalyan and Ovacik.



FURTHER ACTIVITIES:

On special occasions, for example for the Asure celebration month, we distribute a traditional sweet dessert on Cesme market place.



Occasionally, the core group students approach schools in Cesme to identify and support the poorer children which are then supported with school supplies, shoes and clothes.

FUTURE PROJECTS

İMECE EDUCATION VILLAGE

We plan to create a safe space for children and women to facilitate informal education, psychosocial support and well-being activities in two phases:

The kickoff phase is a 15 day course in the yet to be built Imece Education village. We plan to transport 10 children from one camp at a time together with their respective mothers (or women guardians) to the village where we will provide them with accommodation, 3 meals a day, the school- and arts and crafts materials, materials for hygiene, life skills training, basic vocational trainings, sports equipment and language and literacy lessons/workshops. We will not only offer intensive courses but also social activities in the late afternoons. The İMECE İnisiyatifi will build the village and provide the teachers and the staff.

At the beginning, we plan to give intensive kickoff-courses in 15-20 weeks a year and gradually raise the number of courses as this program solidifies.

As follow-up phase our mobile education program already in place will be integrated in this broader concept.

Once a week, later on more often, our teachers will visit the children and women in the camps and continue the courses and trainings given to them at the center.

More precisely, the content of the syllabus will be

- for the children:
 - general informal education, e.g. Turkish lessons and hygiene education
 - psychosocial support and well-being activities
- for the women
 - workshops including literacy, women 's rights and life skills training
 - well-being activities such as sports and arts and crafts.

We already have a piece of land in Cesme for this project, and with the kind help of Bridge to Turkey Funds we have also purchased four containers. The next steps are to raise donations for building materials and wood. In spring this year we plan to start building 8 wooden huts of which 6 will serve as accommodation for the trainers, teachers and participants of the program, one will be used as teaching premises and one will be turned into a workshop.



Further, we will extend the production project to provide working opportunities for many more refugees. And finally, we are considering to build up an Imece Community Center, yet we have to investigate further in which city it is most sensitive and useful.

On a long term, we are hoping to bring all the branches together in the education village.

Further links and information about Imece:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/imeceinisiyatifi/>

Website: <http://www.imeceinisiyatifidernegi.com/>

Purchasing: <https://imeceshop.jimdo.com/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/imeceinisiyatifi>

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