



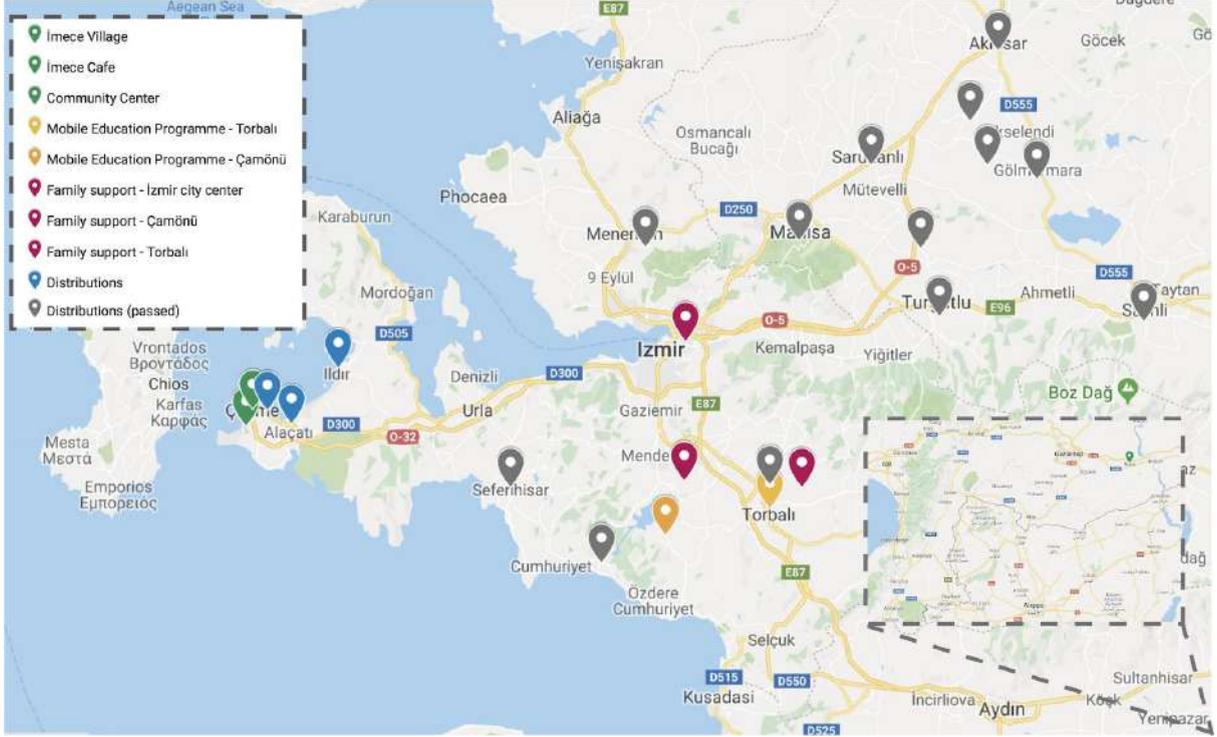
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EMPATHY MAKES US HUMAN

ACTIVITY REPORT - YEAR 2018

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I. MAP OF ACTIVITIES



II. THE YEAR 2018 IN BRIEF

After having completed the infrastructures at the education centre “Imece Village”, Imece started the Summer Education Programme from June to October 2018 and taught more than 70 refugee women, plus their children. From October to December 2018, 16 refugee women followed the first step of Imece’ solar engineering programme: the Solar Age.

Throughout the year 2018, Imece carried on working at the refugee settlements in Izmir Region. 2 052 kits (food, clothes, hygiene) were distributed. The Mobile Education programme “Back to School” proceeded in Menderes and Torbalı, two times a week. 120 children participate in this programme. Imece registered into school and followed the scholarship of 26 children in 2017 and 57 in 2018.

At the same time, Imece distributed food and items at the police, gendarmerie and coastguards stations to the refugees that were caught while trying to cross the sea. This represents 2 722 meals in 2018.

The Solar Age programme continues in 2019 and aims to be developed in the next years. From now, June 2019, 46 women learned the first step. Step 2 started in May 2019 and 5 women began to earn money out of the Energy For Everyone (EFE). In April 2019 Imece opened a community centre in Gaziantep, where livelihood and sexual health programmes are given to refugee women, while their children follow a course to help them integrated into Turkish schools.



III. IMECE INISIYATIFI: ORIGINES

In 2014 Imece was founded by a group of people who wanted to develop ways to serve the community. While the original work consisted of providing aid for local people in need, upon the beginning of the refugee crisis, the priorities changed. Though Çeşme and Chios have always been important points for population movement, the security situation of the Middle East in 2015 created a massive influx of people trying to cross into Europe. Most of the help Imece provided were emergency distribution of goods needed to ensure these families' survival (food, water, baby formula, basic first aid, medical rescue, etc).

Prior to the EU-Turkey Agreement of March 2016, many people were crossing illegally into Chios, where they could easily arrange legal and secure transport into European soil. Since the Agreement, refugees now need to complete all their administrative authorizations within the Greek islands, which can take up to two years to complete. During this time, many are staying in camps with very poor conditions. Because of this, many refugees have opted to stay in Turkey.

In March 2016, Imece received legal authorization as a nonprofit organization, and this made it possible to continue its work at a larger scale. With an increase of unofficial settlements, Imece began emergency distribution to various settlements in the Izmir region. However, Imece's members realized that while distributions are needed and indispensable, they do not promote autonomy for the people. Because of this, they decided to develop the Imece Village Project. Here they offer a variety of programs that promote independence and sustainability for their beneficiaries, but at the same time self-sustainability, as an organization, by introducing a different model for living in the Imece Village.

At the beginning of 2017, Imece Village started a collaboration with Barefoot College in India in order to learn new ways to empower the women that come to the Village. After learning about the Solar Engineering Program for Women of the Barefoot College, they sent their own staff to participate to the training, so that they would come back and teach the ins and outs of solar energy. By giving them a trade skill, Imece hopes to give the women in the Solar Age programme a chance to develop a career, to become integrated and financially independent.

IV. IMECE INISIYATIFI'S BENEFICIARIES

At the unofficial settlements

Syrian people registered in the region where they live can access Turkish public services for free, under a legal status called "Temporary Protection". That includes hospitals and schools. Though, a lot of people get registered in the Southern regions of Turkey, just after having crossed the border. Those who reach the Izmir region need to update their administrative situation to become official and send their children to public Turkish schools. However, many families living in settlements work in agriculture fields and move from one region of Turkey to another according to their work. And because of their Doms origins, they are the most vulnerable persons among the disadvantaged. Moreover, few are literate, which makes the administrative procedures a real struggle.

While the vast majority of the refugees lives in the cities, more than 10% of the refugees in Izmir province are residing in rural areas¹. Most of the unofficial makeshift tent camps are set up in agricultural areas where the parents can more easily find work, though under conditions that can be described as modern slavery. As nearly every refugee works in an unofficial contract, they lack integration into social security systems and have no legal assistance to secure their rights as employees. The people are exploited and take part in this oppressive system to earn at least a small amount of money. Because of their financial struggles, children start to work full time at the age of 13 and also have to join these unjust power structures in order to contribute to their family's survival. Furthermore, the lack of clean water and access to sanitary facilities or waste disposal may have serious effects on their health and well-being.

The few refugee children that actually can attend school are disadvantaged by their limited Turkish language skills which affect the ability to follow the lessons and to successfully communicate with teachers and other children. This often leads to social exclusion, discrimination and racist harassment. Additionally, the children are negatively affected by the lack of clear structure, domestic violence they experience and traumas which have not been dealt with.

¹ Officially, 113.882 Syrians under temporary protection are registered in Izmir province. With our distributions we reach approx. 13.000 people in rural areas. Furthermore, we expect some families not yet reached by us. http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik
Last visited 29.5.2017

Women and children at the cities

The other target group of the Imece Education project are mothers and children living in Izmir's Syrian neighbourhoods. Mothers fleeing alone with their children are the most vulnerable group among all refugees; they are at the highest risk to homelessness and child labour. For this reason, we chose to focus on this group.

During our work in the cities, we have met many lone mothers, sometimes with no less than five children. Usually, they stay in flats in the bigger cities where they often struggle to pay the rent: It is nearly impossible for them to make a living outside their homes due to the need of taking care of their children. In most cases, the financial insecurity results in children working from a considerably young age or being instrumentalized to contribute to their family's survival. As a consequence, these children are hindered from attending school and thus generally lacking to experience a secure and joyful childhood.

Regardless of the area of living, urban or rural, the families face many problems that develop from being marginalized; unseen and uncontacted by the major community, lack of major language acquisition and deprived of their rights.

V. THE SOLAR AGE PROGRAMME AND ENERGY FOR EVERYONE

The Solar Age Programme aims to empower refugee women and make them financially independent, side by side with giving them guidance for better integration into Turkish society. In this programme, refugee women are producing Energy for Everyone (EFE), powered by solar energy. This tool seeks to help displaced populations through their rough journey by lighting their way and by serving as a battery bank for what has become a survival device: mobile phones.

Designed for both life in the camps and long journeys, the Energy for Everyone:

1. Provides light in humanitarian crisis where electricity access is often a struggle.
2. Provides a phone charger in humanitarian crisis. Displaced people frequently stay without electricity access for weeks. With the EFE, they will be able to keep contact with their families and call rescue services in emergency situations.
3. Provides a good income for the Solar Ladies. Imece Programme distributes the revenues coming from the EFE partly to the women creating it and partly for the continual financing of the programme.

The vast majority of the refugees in Turkey are women and children. A large proportion of them have no income generating occupation². With these people often being single mothers, economic independence is a struggle. Thus, Imece Inisiyatifi decided to create a solar engineering education programme to open a new page for refugee women living in Turkey: the Solar Age Project. While being a constantly growing sector in the labour market, solar energy is the future of sustainable and environmental-friendly energy which can be a solution for many.

² 70 percent of women and children in the refugee population in Turkey - UNHCR Turkey Fact sheet – October 2017. 87% of refugee women declare having no occupation or being housewives, Tenth Development Plan of Turkish Government.

How is the Solar Age programme designed?

Step 1: The ABC of Solar Engineering.

10 full days, 7 hours a day.

Three rounds a month, groups between 4 and 6 trainees stay at Imece Education Centre (Imece Village).² Women learn the fundamentals of solar engineering. At the end of the ten-day programme, they are able to install a home solar system, which is an electrical system powered by solar panels.

Step 2: How to build EFE, the Energy for Everyone

15 full days, 7 hours of class a day.

Selected trainees from Step 1 who wish to continue in the solar engineering working field come back to Imece Village to learn how to build the EFE. After having completed Step 2, the trainees are able to build the EFE. This programme allows them to earn money whilst taking care of their children.



EFE, Energy For Everyone: a phone charger and lamp powered by solar energy.

The solar engineering course is completed by different classes:

1. **Women Health** – Let's talk about it
2. **Integration and Financial Independence** – Making soap, candle and bracelets
3. **Integration of children into the education system of the County** – Imece Classroom
4. **First Aid** (for both trainees and their children)



Hamzیه, learning colour-coded resistances during the Solar Age Programme in October 2018.

VI. SUMMER EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT IMECE VILLAGE

From June to October 2018, Imece Village hosted 70 women and their children for one-week programme. Main activities were educational, but it also included recreational activities such as going to the cinema or the beach, that most of the children have never done before.

1. **Women Health** – Let's talk about it
2. **Integration and financial independence** – Making soap, candle and bracelets
3. **Integration of children into the education system of the County** – Imece Classroom
4. **First Aid** (for both trainees and their children)

Livelihood and economic independence are the first struggles of refugee women in Turkey. However, it is tightly linked to health and social integration in Turkish society. This is why Imece Inisiyatifi has dedicated a full part of the Solar Age programme to these issues.

1. The Let's talk about it classes. During this course, which was created in cooperation with Norwegian nurses, women learn the details of the human body, contraception, protection from illnesses, and breastfeeding.

It is a class dedicated to women only, where they can express themselves more easily and more freely. This course is followed by practical Turkish lessons and simulations to teach how to communicate with Turkish healthcare services.

2. To enable Integration and empowering women to have their financial independence, the women have been learning handcrafts that would be easy to sell in the Turkish markets, such as soaps, candles and bracelets. They are also being given guidance about the ways to market the products they will produce later on.

3. To prepare **integration of children into the education system of the**

the hours the mothers are in class, their children are also spending quality time with Imece Teachers. Usually, the pupils are pre-school children. Through educational games suitable to their age, the children are being taught the basics of mathematics and Turkish language.

4. Women are also taking the **First aid training** class together with their children.

Imece is also providing educational materials for trainees who want to deepen their knowledge of the Turkish language after they leave Imece Village.



Candle-making lesson, children activity and hospital simulation, summer 2018

VII. “Back to School” Mobile Education Programme in Izmir Region’ settlements

Each week since May 2016, more than 120 children from 2 to 18 years old participate in the programme “Back to School” in unofficial settlements of Menderes and Torbalı, in Izmir region. This mobile education programme aims to facilitate the integration into Turkish schools of children living in settlements.

Children under 5 years old follow workshops about:

- **Hygiene:** washing hands, brushing teeth,..etc.
- **Holding pencils:** drawings, colouring and Latin alphabet letters shapes.
- **Social behaviour:** using building toys in cooperation with other children, staying seated and attentive during the workshop, handling negative emotions, etc.

Children from 5 to 18 years old learn about:

- **Hygiene:** washing hands after using the toilets and before eating, brushing teeth...etc.
- **Body parts and practical vocabulary** in the Turkish language. Children living at the margin of society are more exposed to violence and trafficking. They need to be able to contact emergency services and express their problems.
- **Latin alphabet and Turkish language**, for better integration into Turkish society.
- **Basic mathematics**
- **Social behaviour, non-violent communication.** These children often have been confronted with traumatic events, and have no access to psychological care. Few of them access to school, and they are not used to focus their attention on lessons, listen to a teacher, follow instructions, etc. When they can go to Turkish schools, they have to learn a new language, as well as all the school behaviour. Activities with Imece aim to bridge those gaps.

The Mobile Education Programme is developed in two different rural zones of the Izmir region, with different contexts:

In Torbalı, most of the families move every agricultural season to a different region of Turkey, following the work they can find. Consequently, they often are not registered in the Izmir region, and children have never been to school. The Mobile Education Programme in Torbalı focuses especially on hygiene, social behaviour and Turkish language.

In Menderes / Çamönü, families are installed for more than two years. Therefore, Imece Inisiyatifi helped them getting registered to the official a they negotiated with the parents and the local school to inscribe 26 children in September 2017, and 57 in September 2018. Imece' members observed a clear positive change in the behaviour, skills, and management of emotions of the Çamönü children who go to school. Thus, the Mobile Education Programme is extended and includes help for homework in cooperation with the local school teachers.



*Little girl during a “teeth brushing” hygiene workshop of the Mobile Education Programme, June 2016.
Mobile Education Programme in Çamönü, autumn 2018.*

VIII. DISTRIBUTIONS IN İZMİR REGION' SETTLEMENTS

During the year 2018, İmece İnisiyatifi continued to distribute food and necessary items to settlements in Çamönü, Menderes and Torbalı. **4 052 kits** were distributed in **11 settlements**. Each kit is made for one family, on an average of 8 persons per family.

- **Food bags** (oil, sugar, flour, lentils, pasta, rice, milk): **536**
- **Baby formula**: **1 017**
- **Clothes bags**: **300**
- **Hygiene kits** (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, baby powder, washing powder, shampoo, anti-lice sanitary pads): **199**
- **Baby diapers (packet)**: **2 000**
- **Various necessary items**: in summer children **hats (300)**, in winter children **rainboots (80)** and **heaters (26)**.

In case of **specific need**, İmece İnisiyatifi provided particular beneficiaries with specific items. For instance a **child wheelchair**, or **money donations** for persons unable to work.



Heaters and food distributions in Torbalı, winter 2018

IX. DISTRIBUTIONS AT THE POLICE, GENDARMERIE AND COASTGUARD

When refugees are caught while trying to cross illegally the Aegean Sea to the Greek island of Chios, they go to the police, gendarmerie or coastguards stations. Then, they are sent to Izmir' administrative centre. They are not supposed to stay a long time at the coast stations, so the coast authorities don't have a budget to provide them with food and water. But the reality is different. Refugees cross by waves when the conditions are favourable, which means that sometimes hundred of persons are arrested the same night and Izmir administrative centre get congested. Consequently, they have to wait up to maximum two days in the coast stations. When it happens, the authorities call Imece Inisiyatifi, which come and provide the refugees with food, water and necessary items.

During the year 2018, 2 722 meals were distributed. It includes water, bread, conserves, sandwich, milk, children toys, baby formula, sanitary pads, blankets, dry clothes...etc.



Distribution at the Cesme gendarmerie station, summer 2018

