



MAKING a DIFFERENCE **One**
PHILANTHROPIST at a time...



Turkish Philanthropy Funds
2008-2009 Annual Report

philanthropy [fi-lan-thruh-pee]. **Origin (1600–10): love for mankind.** (1)

altruistic concern for human welfare and advancement, usually manifested by donations of money, property, or work to needy persons, by endowment of institutions of learning and hospitals, and by generosity to other socially useful purposes. (2) the activity of donating to such persons or purposes in this way: to devote one's later years to philanthropy. (3) a particular act, form, or instance of this activity: The art museum was their favorite philanthropy. (4) a philanthropic organization.

In this report you will find:

Mission and Vision

From the Executive Chairman

From the President & CEO

LEAD by EXAMPLE

Understanding TPF

Our Journey

Financial Highlights

TPF Founder's Society

TPF Legacy Society

CHANGE with PASSION

Donor Services: Making Connections for Donors

Donors List

CONNECT to INSPIRE

Grantmaking: : A Wide Spectrum of Giving

Board of Directors

Advisory Board



"I have chosen TPF for my philanthropic endeavors primarily because my personal goals match those of TPF and I feel my funds are secure there since the organization is so transparent. Having a donor-advised fund gives me flexibility to select various organizations over any period of time without worrying about the tax burden each year. Furthermore, the organizations I am involved with will gain familiarity with TPF and potentially build alliances, helping TPF to grow."

Aylin Kim

MISSION AND VISION

TPF's mission is to help donors realize their philanthropic goals to meet community needs in the US and in Turkey. While guiding donors, TPF supports innovative projects that have the potential to create social change.

We know that there is no single or simple answer to how social innovation occurs. We understand that social change is the result of a tremendously complex mix of ingredients: conditions (social, cultural, economic and environmental) and individual actors colliding to spark world-changing ideas. Therefore, to understand these conditions and to stimulate idea generation, we build relationships with everyone we collaborate with from grantees to strategic partners. Our experience and trajectory tells us we are on the right path.

Our main focus is to:

Increase the effectiveness of resources that strive to empower individuals, strengthen communities, and create a lasting impact for future generations.

Provide the utmost flexibility in creating tailored solutions for each donor in achieving their philanthropic goals.

Practice and promote trust and transparency in our business processes, as well as among our grantee partners.

Maximize the value of the donors' contributions by ensuring at least 97% of philanthropic dollars reach the specific cause.

Work closely with partner organizations to monitor and evaluate the impact of philanthropic investments.





FROM THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN & THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear Friends,

In today's interconnected world, the role of individuals to effect social change is very powerful. Turkish Philanthropy Funds (TPF) is a creation of social entrepreneurs who believe in the impact of philanthropy. Today, we are very privileged to say that since the very first day, the energy, intellect and commitment of our *Founding Partners* have been astonishing. We feel incredibly honored and inspired to be in their company.

We remember being asked frequently – and with great skepticism - whether philanthropy among Turkish-Americans could ever scale. It has however been exciting to see that along with the circle of Founders, Named Fund Donors, and Friends growing, hundreds of people are being served by TPF's efforts. As a young Diaspora Community Foundation we are encouraged by the support we have been receiving. Many Turkish-Americans and American friends of Turkey are excited to see a sound platform that TPF has created for effective giving to Turkey. Dozens of donors have trusted TPF towards the realization of their philanthropic goals. They have already witnessed the delivery of their donations to support projects in Turkey and the United States. Our combination of innovation and passion is certainly a promising path to the future of the communities we serve.

Before we sit too comfortably on our laurels, we also recognize that we are headed for new challenges. With social equality gap increasing in Turkey, we need to strengthen our skill set in order to provide the right support to organizations in Turkey. We are hoping to confront these issues jointly with our donors, founders, grantees, and partners; and continue to build a collective brand that is trustworthy, transparent and efficient.

At TPF, we are driven by values that guide our aspiration to combine a keen focus on financial and operational excellence with high ethical standards. With significant learning experience and accomplishments to date we are confident in our continued growth ahead. We feel grateful for the incredible team with whom we are privileged to work: our wonderful board, advisors, staff and interns; the partners, our donors, and the friends who bring their passion, dedication and expertise to TPF.

We would like to close with a quote from *Celleleddin Rumi*: “*Let the beauty of what you love be what you do.*”

Sincerely,

Haldun Tashman
Executive Chairman

Özlenen Eser Kalav
President & CEO



LEAD

by example

"A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history." Mahatma Gandhi

Turkish Philanthropy Funds has succeeded in creating an ever-growing network of like-minded individuals. We are committed to impacting change through philanthropy that is TRUSTWORTHY, EFFICIENT AND PASSIONATE. Our leadership INSPIRES, ENERGIZES AND SUPPORTS TPF every day. Their guidance not only strengthens our foundation of sustainable change but also helps us obtain our vision of being stewards of donors' investments in TPF.



UNDERSTANDING TPF

TPF's distinction lies in its unique model: We believe that anyone can be a **philanthropist through** our foundation!



"Education is my passion since it can make dreams come true by creating opportunities. TPF caters to donors' dreams and goals, so as my giving power changes, the sky becomes the limit as to how I can fulfill this passion. TPF helps make charitable giving simple for me."

Anonymous Donor

TPF offers a platform that asks you *"What is your philanthropic goal and how can we help you achieve it?"* so that you can start creating the change you wish to see in the world.

Five Reasons Why Donors Choose TPF for Their Philanthropy:

FLEXIBILITY.

We provide a wide variety of options to suit donors, from the assets we accept and the types of funds we offer to the range of issues we try to address with our grants. Whatever your philanthropic goals are, TPF works with you to achieve them.

TAX-EFFECTIVENESS.

You cannot give directly to Turkish NGOs and receive tax benefits, but you can give *"through"* TPF and get a tax deduction.

GUIDANCE.

We work to ensure that your interests and actions are in compliance with increasingly complex laws and regulations in international giving.

KNOWLEDGE.

We understand community needs in Turkey and connect you with established and credible organizations in Turkey to fulfill your philanthropic goals.

IMPACT.

Through our collaborations with like-minded organizations in Turkey and the United States, grants made possible by your gift can leverage additional dollars from outside sources, resulting in greater community impact.



OUR JOURNEY

2008

WINTER: TPF receives its 501(c) 3 public charity status in January and opens its doors officially to donors... TPF's website, which is designed by mezun.com and hosted by tulumba.com goes live...TPF receives its first grant from Salesforce.com Foundation...*Nihal & Haldun Tashman* pledge a matching gift of \$1.5 mm... *Elisa & Haluk Soykan, Aylin & Louis Kim, and Murat Agirnasli* join initial 4 pioneers, *Nihal & Haldun Tashman, Ozlenen Kalav, Erinch Ozada and Mustafa Abadan* as "Founding Partners."

SPRING: First TPF Reception in Washington, DC hosted by *Drs. Leyla & Zafer Ecevit...* *Craig Kennedy, Leona Forman and Steve Mittenthal* join TPF's Advisory Board... *Ramerica Foundation and Ilgar Peker* become "Founding Partners" ... First donor-advised fund is established... First grant to Turkey...Reach \$550K towards our goal of \$1.5 million.

SUMMER: *Elisa & Haluk Soykan* increase their commitment levels... Number of Donor-Advised Funds reaches 6. TPF collaborates with *Sabancı Foundation* to support "United Nations Joint Program on Promoting and Protecting the Human Rights of Women and Girls," through *Sabancı Foundation Grant Program...* *The Attar Family* joins TPF's Founders' Society... TPF launches its "Internship Program." ... Grant to start the first community foundation of Turkey is given to *Bolu Community Foundation*.

FALL: TPF moves to its new office... First TPF Reception in Boston hosted by *Ayşe & Nick Porcaro...* *Drs. Serpil & Yalcin Ayasli* join TPF's Founders' Society...\$1.4 is raised and/or pledged towards \$1.5 million matching gift of *Nihal & Haldun Tashman*.

2009

WINTER: First competitive grants in Turkey to TOG and YGA... First planned gift from the late *Dr. Sevkett Turgut Nese*, and establishment of TPF's "Legacy Society" ... Establishment of first "Friends of Fund" with *Sabancı University*.

SPRING: First visits to TPF's grantees in Turkey... First grant to commission a study on Women Entrepreneurship in Turkey... Launch of TPF's new website with enhanced social media tools to give through TPF...Foundation's name change from Turkish Philanthropic Fund to Turkish Philanthropy Funds.

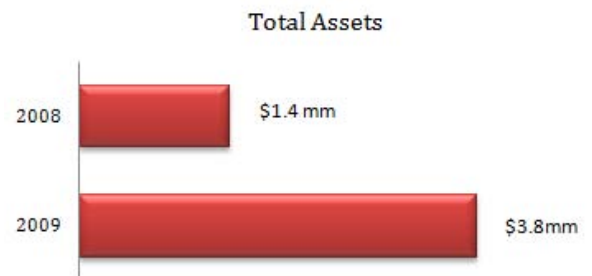
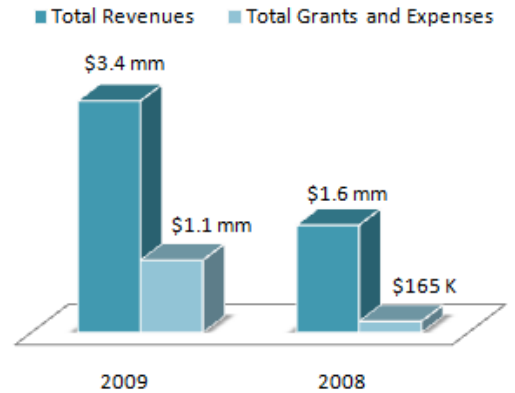


FINANCIALS

Audited Financial Summary

as of 06/30/2009

Assets	2009	2008
Cash	\$3,074,763	\$1,458,154
Investments	\$582,370	-
Receivables	\$186,230	-
Total Assets	\$3,843,363	\$1,458,154
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$11,370	\$5,000
Grants Payable	\$27,725	\$20,000
Total Liabilities	\$39,095	\$25,000
Net Assets		
Permanently Restricted	\$1,268,425	220,000
Unrestricted	\$2,535,843	\$1,213,154
Total Net Assets	\$3,804,268	\$1,433,154
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$3,843,363	\$1,458,154
Revenues		
Contributions	\$3,390,616	\$1,592,081
Investments	\$20,537	\$6,781
Unrealized and realized gains	\$37,408	-
Total Revenues	\$3,448,561	\$1,598,862
Grants and Expenses		
Grants	\$897,495	\$111,000
Management and General	\$169,758	\$53,532
Fundraising	\$7,194	\$1,176
Total Grants and Expenses	\$1,077,447	\$165,708
Change in Net Assets	\$2,371,114	\$1,433,154
Net Assets		
Beginning of Period	\$1,433,154	-
End of Period	\$3,804,268	\$1,433,154



TPF FOUNDERS' SOCIETY



"We have decided to join TPF to contribute to a dedicated charity that is focused on humanitarian projects including social and cultural issues, education and health care initiatives in Turkey. We wanted to do something on our own, but when we learned about TPF's initiatives, we were very excited to be a part of this effort. It is a privilege to work with such dedicated professionals who share common goal."

Elisa and Haluk Soykan

Our Founding Partners are a diverse group of engaged and committed investors who provide vital financial and human capital to support our work. Our growing community of Founding Partners is what makes TPF a sustainable organization.

Leadership Circle

Drs. Serpil and Yalçın Ayaslı
Mrs. Özlenen Kalav
Mr. and Mrs. Elisa and Haluk Soykan
Mr. and Mrs. Nihal and Haldun
Tashman

Pioneering Partners

Mr. Mustafa Kemal Abadan

Keystone Partners

Mr. Murat Ağırnaslı
The Attar Family (One Foundation)
Dr. Nakiye and Mr. Ziya Boyacıgiller
Mrs. Aylin Z. Kim
Dr. Şevket Turgut Neşe
Mr. Ilgar Peker
Ramerica Foundation
Mr. Erinch Özada



"We have long wanted a vehicle to be able to make tax deductible contributions to Turkish causes. This need was especially acute right after the tragic earthquake in 1999 when so many of our Turkish and American friends wanted to send money to Turkey and we were unsure of the most secure method. TPF is for us a dream come true!"

Nakiye and Ziya Boyacıgiller





"I joined TPF not only to build an inclusive bridge between Turkey and the US, but also show leadership in philanthropy. My passion is the advancement of modern civil society in Turkey. TPF helps me achieve my passion through supporting education and gender equality while also honoring my parents."

Mustafa Kemal Abadan

"TPF's Founder Society has connected me with like-minded people who use TPF for their own family giving. It gives me great pleasure to know and learn from them."

Haldun Tashman

"As the youngest founding member, I am dedicated to supporting TPF's evolution and helping it grow throughout my lifetime. I would like to help shape the organization so that it captures the interest of the coming generations who will sustain its mission."

Aylin Kim





"I was drawn to TPF because of its foundation of business principles like efficiency, transparency and accountability.

This is a cutting-edge conduit providing services like donor-advised funds for getting funds to results-driven organizations in Turkey."

Erinch Ozada

"What started as a part-time interest during retirement turned into a full-time commitment with an unbelievably dedicated team, increasingly generous supporters, and the reward of our work's impact in Turkey. It is a joy and an honor to be a part of this important philanthropic initiative."

Ozlenen Eser Kalav

"I joined TPF because it is the first and most significant organization for Turkish Americans that want to give back to community. TPF provides a crucial platform and a working mechanism for many Turkish Americans.

TPF will lead, guide and assist many individuals and institutions, and it will breed many social entrepreneurs. I am proud to be a part of this divine initiative."

Murat Agirnasli





TPF LEGACY SOCIETY

"What we have done for ourselves dies alone with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal." – Albert Pike

Turkish Philanthropy Funds honors every planned gift donor with membership in the Legacy Society. The Society is created exclusively to honor and recognize people who have helped to continue our grantmaking work through a gift to TPF in their wills, trusts or estate plans.

As a TPF Legacy Society member, donor's gift is recognized publicly, unless they prefer to give anonymously.

Our Legacy Society members are:

Dr. Turgut Sevket Nese, and Mr.&Mrs. Nihal and Haldun Tashman.

What Is the Next Step?

If you are considering such a gift, let us know so we can help you and your advisors complete your gift in a way that benefits your estate and makes clear your intention to help the Turkish Philanthropy Funds.

When you join the Legacy Society, you demonstrate your commitment to the mission of TPF and help ensure the long-term strength of the organization. You may contact us at info@tpfund.org for more information or to express your interest in joining TPF's Legacy Society.

The Power of Endowment

TPF values the power of endowments and encourages donors to make contributions through TPF, which will ensure that the effects of their gifts last more than a lifetime.

With an endowment your initial gift multiplies over time creating a perpetual fund with never ending resources and increased beneficiaries.

Dr. Sevket Turgut Nese Scholarship Fund

Late Dr. Sevket Turgut Nese was a graduate of Istanbul University Medical School and spent most of his life in the United States. He wished to have his wealth be used for a good cause in Turkey. TPF created a permanent charitable fund under Dr. Nese's name to ensure that his name and his legacy continued forever. Now, through Dr. Nese's generous contribution scholarships are given to medical students at his alma mater, Istanbul University- an opportunity for many disadvantaged students to study medicine and become successful doctors like Dr. Nese. Through the power of endowment, Dr. Nese's initial contribution will be invested overtime and the return will continue to provide scholarship for medical students in Turkey for many years to come.



PLANNED GIVING

There are a variety of forms your charitable gift can take, including whether you want to give now or set up a giving plan for the future. Turkish Philanthropy Funds offers a wide range of planned giving opportunities that help you support the community and causes you love while also offering you significant tax benefits.

Bequests

The simplest gift is a bequest in your will or trust that directs specific assets or a percentage of your estate to establish a fund or to add to an existing fund.

Charitable Remainder Trusts

Through an irrevocable trust, you receive fixed or variable payments for your lifetime or a term of years. The remainder passes to TPF, creating a permanent fund in your name to benefit the philanthropic cause that you designate.

Charitable Lead Trusts

Your income-producing asset funds a trust with a gift of the income flowing to TPF during the term of the trust. Remaining assets go to your heirs free of tax on the asset's appreciation.

Charitable Gift Annuities

A simple contract guarantees you a fixed income in exchange for a gift to TPF. Annuity rates are set by the American Council on Gift Annuities.

Life Estates

You contribute your primary home, a vacation home or a farm to TPF, but you retain the right to use it during your lifetime. You receive an immediate tax deduction, and the property is not included in your estate.



Retirement Plan and Insurance Beneficiary Designations

You can create a named fund at TPF by designating us as the beneficiary of a retirement plan such as an IRA or 401(k) or a life insurance policy. At death, the assets transfer to TPF, reducing estate and income taxes.



CHANGE

with Passion

"It's not just about being able to write a check. It's being able to touch somebody's life." Oprah Winfrey

Turkish Philanthropy Funds strives to bring about SUSTAINABLE and LONG-LASTING change by connecting like-minded individuals and bringing their PHILANTHROPIC PASSIONS to life.



DONOR SERVICES: Making Connections for Donors

The Power of Giving

Giving through TPF offers an easiest way for you to realize your philanthropic interests. Satisfaction comes from knowing that your contributions have been effective and have created positive change.

Whether you make an annual gift to TPF's Social Needs Funds or you establish a fund in your name, your gift to TPF will have enduring value.



Start Your Own Fund

TPF "named funds" are established and named by a donor, family or a corporation.

Donor-advised Funds

As one of the most flexible giving options for a donor, a Donor-Advised fund permits you to suggest specific grants to be made from the fund to a variety of organizations.

Unrestricted Funds

You establish the fund, but give the Board of Directors the discretion to make grants from annual earnings for a broad range of community needs. Unrestricted gifts enable TPF to respond to changing community needs from year to year while perpetuating your generosity.

Field Of Interest Funds

These funds are similar to the unrestricted funds, in that the Board of Directors of TPF selects the final recipients, but only within a particular issue area chosen by you.

Designated Funds

These are the most specific gifts that you can make. You establish an endowed fund to benefit a specific nonprofit organization into perpetuity.

Adopt-A-Project

If there is a project that you feel passionate about and would really like bring it to life, you can adopt it! Adopting a project means doing your own little fundraising.

Choose a project that interests you, and then choose a fundraising goal to which you feel you can reach with contributions from your friends, family, or colleagues. (It could even be the whole project!)

TPF's website allows you to create your own page so that you can collect donations for and trace your results of your adopted project. This way, you can stay organized and have the necessary tools to make your project a reality.

Go to our website (www.tpfund.org) to see the list of projects you can choose to adopt.

Or Better Give to An Issue Area

To meet the widest range of community needs in Turkey.



EDUCATION

Provide access to education for all children in Turkey and strengthen the public school system.



GENDER EQUALITY

Empower women and girls through educational, financial and social resources.



LIVELIHOODS

Promote interventions which improve the quality of livelihoods.



ARTS & CULTURE

Promote cultural diversity and community well-being through art and cultural activities.





"I have chosen TPF to realize my dreams of building a new school in Turkey. My personal donation as well as donations from other USA donors would only qualify for the US charitable tax deduction if donations were placed in a recognized Foundation organized and approved by the laws of the USA. TPF is not only an approved Foundation but it also has familiarity with the Turkish philanthropic systems and laws. TPF also allowed me to painlessly set up my own donor-advised fund under their umbrella." Nick Porcaro

Donor Spotlight:

Porcaro Education Fund- *Okul Yap* Project

The Porcaro Education Fund was established in 2008 as a TPF Donor-Advised Fund to address the need of a new school in Caykisla, Adapazari after the 1999 Marmara Earthquake left the town with no proper school for the children to study in. Nick and Ayse Porcaro, along with Asli and Nesli Basgoz have created a mission for themselves to build a fully functioning school for Caykisla by the ten-year anniversary of the earthquake.

The project was officially launched after contacts in Turkey were made with the Ministry of Education, Turk Egitim Vakfi and other organizations. Nick Porcaro, an architect, designed the project himself. He and his colleagues in this endeavor were able to raise the \$510,000 projected costs of the new school and have even raised additional funds for extra costs needed to furnish and provide the school with books and supplies. The school is expected to be ready for the Spring 2010 semester.



Anne Kozlu talking with Caykisla school children.



CONNECT

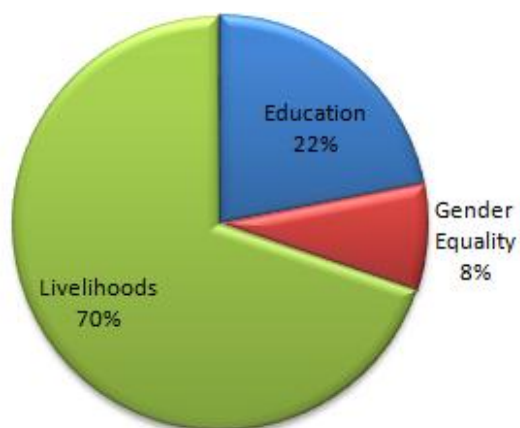
to Inspire

Turkish Philanthropy Funds utilizes its EXPERTISE and knowledge in grantmaking to connect philanthropists with organizations in need of support. Through our efforts to bring out the PHILANTHROPISTS in everyone, we have inspired individuals to be a part of greater community of giving and creating SUSTAINABLE CHANGE.



GRANTMAKING: A Wide Spectrum of Giving

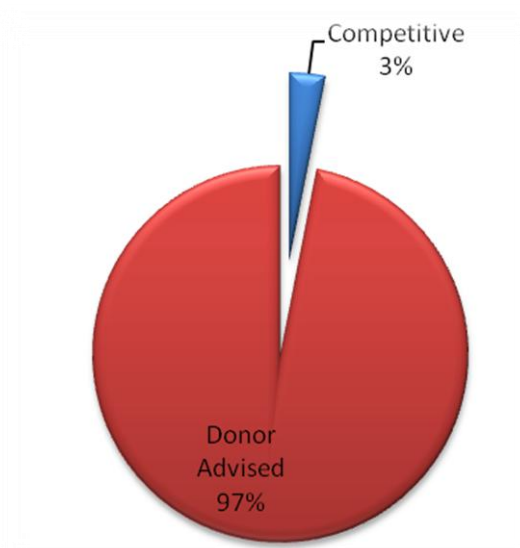
Funding from TPF is awarded year-round to organizations in Turkey and in the United States in two-ways:



Grants By Program Area	Competitive		Donor-Advised		TOTAL
	Int.	Dom.	Int.	Dom.	
Education	\$16,580		\$231,275	\$20,000	\$267,855
Gender Equality	\$20,000		\$80,000		\$100,000
Civil Society Empowerment			\$850,000		\$850,000
Arts & Culture		\$1,000			\$1,000
TOTALS	\$36,580	\$1,000	\$1,161,275	\$20,000	\$1,218,855

Competitive Grantmaking: TPF provides an opportunity for foundations and NGOs in Turkey to submit applications in the areas of Education, Gender Equality, Livelihoods and Arts & Culture. Proposals are evaluated by staff and grantmaking committee and final decisions are made by the Executive Board. Based on the evaluation and selection process, projects are selected and awarded support.

Donor-Advised Grantmaking: TPF offers certain fund types including advised, designated and friends of the fund that allow donors to remain engaged in the grantmaking process by suggesting uses for their gift. Donors make grant recommendations for a grant to a specific organization or a project. Once TPF staff have ensured the recipient organization is a 501c3 equivalent (for Turkey) or in good standing (for US), and that the organization is financially sound and has filed the necessary tax documents, the grant is issued from that particular donor's fund.



Grantee Spotlight:

Toplum Gonulluleri Vakfi (Community Volunteers Foundation) Youth and Social Rights Project

Toplum Gonulluleri Vakfi (TOG) was established in 2002 to realize their mission of creating social peace, solidarity, and change through the leadership and activism of youth in Turkey. Their efforts to educate and empower youth in Turkey has resulted in many successful projects and have touched the lives of millions of people and volunteers.

Turkish Philanthropy Funds has partnered with Toplum Gonulluleri Vakfi to support TOG's Youth and Social Rights Project. The project aims to create a ground for dialogue on social rights for youth, and to create a platform for communication among politicians, academics, NGO representatives, bureaucrats and youth to discuss existing problems and to come up with possible solutions together on social rights issues related to the youth of Turkey.

Since the launch of the project, TOG has successfully organized educational training sessions in Izmir, Istanbul and Samsun, which brought together university students from across the nation to educate participants about their social rights. The three-day conferences exposed participants to different aspects of legal and social rights youth in Turkey are entitled to through interactive workshops and lectures.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

There were totally 294 applications for trainings and 20 young volunteers were invited for each training.

Participants from 14 different universities and 11 different cities joined the Istanbul training. Half of the participants were female. The Izmir training welcomed participants from 18 different universities and 12 different cities. Participants were from 14 different universities and 11 different cities at the Samsun training. In each of the trainings, 5 trainers planned methods and gave the trainings. Totally, 14 different instructors took part in trainings.





Grantee Spotlight:

Trabzon Turk Kadınlar Birliği (Turkish Women's Association, Trabzon Chapter)
"Kasik Tutan Elden Para Tutan Ele" Project

Established in 1924 to protect and improve the rights of women that were gained with the republic, the Turkish Women's Association has more than 70 branches all around Turkey. The Trabzon branch was established in 1995, serving the women of Trabzon and nearby cities.

With a grant from
 Turkish



Philanthropy Funds, the Turkish Women's Association of Trabzon launched the "Kasik Tutan Elden Para Tutan Ele" project to strengthen the role of women in the workforce and provide them with financial stability to contribute to their community. The project aimed to empower women and increase women employment rate in the region through culinary training and entrepreneurship.

Through 480 hours of training sessions in the kitchen and through other social and entrepreneurial activities, 20 women from the region successfully learned how to utilize their traditional cooking skills to address the need for culinary workers in the region as well as provide financial independence and stability for themselves. After the completion of the program, 10 of the 20 women were placed in jobs where they could utilize their newly learned skills and the other 10 were encouraged to start their own culinary business with the support of microcredit from other organizations.



“Çalışmak çok güzeldi. Sorumluluk duygusu... Beğenilmek...”

*The interview is edited into a story by Inanc Misirlioglu, Program Coordinator at Sabanci Foundation. The story is published in a book with stories from other projects by Sabanci Foundation.

1978’de ikiz olarak dünyaya geldim. Çiftçi aynı zamanda esnaf bir babanın çocuğuyum. 11 kardeşlik. Çok mutlu bir çocukluğum olmadı. Ortaokul çok uzaktı, bu nedenle ilkokuldan sonrasını okuyamadım. 4 ablam da hiç okula gitmedi. Dayımın oğlu askerdeyken beni istediler. Aile arasında nişan yaptık. Nişan yüzüğünü takıp ona telefon açıp “biz nişanlandık” dedim. 17 yaşında kendimi evlenmiş buldum. İnsan küçükken evlenmemeli. Evlendikten sonra evliliğin ne olduğunu fark ettim. İnsan küçükken evlenince çok eziliyor. Bir keresinde, köyde ekmek pişirdiğimiz soba evin dışındaydı, ekmeği pişirdim ama çok bekletmişim yaktım. Bir şey diyecekler diye çok korktum. Ekmeği tarlaya attım. Sonra kaynatam gördü ekmeği, kızmadılar ama insan korkuyor küçük olunca.

Çok anlayışlı bir kişiyle evlendim. Hep beni korurdu. Mesela İstanbul’da yaşadığımız zamanlarda arkadaşları yemeğe gelirdi. Ben köyde büyüdüğüm için şehir yemeklerini bilmezdim. Yemekleri eşim yapardı ama ne onu ne beni küçümsemesinler diye benim yaptığımı söyledik. Birbirimize karşı çok anlayışlıydık. İki çocuğum oldu. Hayal edemeyeceğiniz kadar güzel bir evlilik yaşıyordum. 17 Ağustos depremine kadar. Depremden sonra eşim iflas etti. Yeni işlere girmeyi denedi ama bir türlü eskisi gibi olamadı. Sonra ailesi bize destek olabileceklerini söyleyerek bizi memlekete çağırdılar. Bir süre sonra Trabzon’a döndük ve burada yaşamaya başladık.

Bir gün göğsümde bir şey hissettim. Doktora gittim tahlil yapıp eve yolladılar. Beni gören ağlıyordu. Oruç tutma sen dediler bana. Ne olduğunu anlamadım ama kocam yüzüme bakamıyordu üzüntüden. Sonra görümcem kanser olduğumu söyledi. O zaman 26 yaşındaydım. Hemen ameliyat edilmem gerekiyordu ama yeşil kartım da yoktu. Paramız da... İnsanlardan aldığımız ramazan fitreleriyle ameliyat oldum. Ameliyat sonrasında gördüğüm tedavilerle iyileştim.

Kriz yüzünden eşimin işleri kötüye gitti. Trabzon’da çalıştığı dükkânı kapattıktan sonra 6 ay işsiz kaldı. O süreçte Sabancı Vakfı Hibe Programı kapsamında Türk Filantropi Fonu tarafından desteklenen ‘*Kaşık Tutan Elden Para Tutan Ele Projesi*’ açıcılık kursundan haberdar oldum. Önce insanlar laf etti, “*sen yemek yapmayı bilmiyor musun, ne işin var o kursta*” diye. Ama kurs sonunda iş vereceklerini söylediler. Eğer işin yoksa bekliyorsun ki birisi para versin de çocuklara bir şeyler alabil! Kocam da başta gitmemi istemedi ama yine de gittim.

Kursa başladığımda yazmakta zorluk çektim. İlkokula kadar okumuştum. Gittiğim okulda 1. 2. ve 3. sınıflar hep bir sınıfta okurduk. O yüzden okumam yazmam çok iyi değildir. Zor olduğu için kurstan çıkmak istedim. Bu sefer de kocam istemedi. “*Madem başladın devam et*” diye beni cesaretlendirdi.

Ben de sonuna kadar devam ettim. Kursta her şey çok güzeldi. İyi ki girmişim. Ortam çok farklıydı. İnsanlar da farklıydı. Herkes neşeliydi. Hep güldük. Komşuların farklı bakışları oluyor, herkes dedikodu yapıyor, insanı küçümsüyorlar fakat kurstakiler başkaydı. Gerçek bir paylaşım ve mutluluk vardı. Kurs bitince bir otelde staja gittim. Şimdi bir sertifikam var. O sertifikadan sonra bir de köfte sertifikası aldım.

Kurs bittikten sonra Tülay Hanım bana iş buldu. Bir lokantada çalışmaya başladım. O zaman da ailede büyük baskı oldu. Saniye çalışamaz diye. Ama bunu diyenin kendi kızlarının hepsi çalışıyor. Hemşire, mimar olarak ama benim çalışmamı namus meselesi yaptı. Eşim çalıştığım yeri gelip görmedi bile. Güveniyor bana.

Çalışmak çok güzeldi. Sabah kalkıp o sorumluluğu almak çok farklı bir duygu. Yaptığın yemeklerin beğenilmesi, onlara bir şeyler veriyorsun ve o insanlar seni beğeniyorlar. Bu çok güzel bir duygu. En çok kursta öğrendiğim Meksika salatası beğenildi. Evde de bir sorumluluk var ama bu başka. Eğer o kursa gitmemiş olsaydım bu duyguyu hiç bilmeyecektim. Pek çok hocayı, arkadaşımı tanıyamayacaktım.

Eşitlik bence herkesin istediği gibi davranabilmesi, toplum baskısı hissetmeden istediğini yapmasıdır. İnsan istediğini yapamıyor ki. Mesela ablam bizle aynı köyde oturuyor ama ablama gitmeme ya da kalmama izin vermiyor kaynatam. Kadın erkek eşit olmalı. Kadın isterse her şeyi yapabiliyor. Hatta bazen erkekten daha zeki bile oluyor. Kadın erkek eşitsizliği kadının hayatını engelliyor, herkes kadınların sahibiymiş gibi davranıyor.

Proje Katılımcılarından Saniye Civan



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"The network of Sabanci University is growing day by day in the US. We wish to reach out to all partners in the US to make a difference in higher education in Turkey. TPF is the perfect fit for this! In 2009 we established the "Friends of Sabanci University Fund," and believe our impact will be greater thanks to this unique partnership."


Esra Basak, Fundraising Specialist


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“Friends of Sabancı University (SU) Scholarship Fund” aims to increase SU’s current scholarship pool so that more talented students who need financial assistance get a chance for higher education in Turkey such as Ece Gülsen.

Ece , a recent SU graduate and current MIT student says: *“Internationally renowned institutions like MIT have started to know and trust SU students, because we have already created small communities there as SU alumni.”* Sabancı has been a *“truly an intense life experience rather than a mere university”* for Ece. Friends of Sabancı University Fund hopes to expand these experiences and extend a hand to many more young students.

What Is the Next Step?

Apply for eligibility with TPF by completing “Grant Eligibility Application” with supporting information including financial statements, governing documents, and proof of in-country charitable registration.

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