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Small Projects Istanbul | ANNUAL REPORT 2020
We are excited to share this annual report for 2020. We share this with you belatedly, due to the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to being an extraordinary year, I would like to point out that this report is also valuable for us, as it is the first time we have presented our annual activities. We hope you will take this opportunity to accompany our one-year journey, filled with a lot of effort, faith, hope, and solidarity.

We witness that our global society has entered an irreversible period. We see the impact of these changes on our daily lives and their future consequences. The structures, processes, and applications that make up our systems are forced to renew and transform. The more we include in this transformation the capacities and needs of individuals, communities, the environment we share, and the beautiful nature we live in, the more we include ourselves, the more we have achieved positive and sustainable outcomes. Small Projects Istanbul’s approach at this point was to improve its ability to respond to diversified, increasing needs and capacities, to expand collaborations for rights, needs, and community-based endeavors, to increase strength and resilience both organizationally and for the participant community. In-kind support for access to basic needs, counseling and guidance for access to information and services, info sessions and follow-up for access to distance education, visibility of the difficulties in accessing rights and services, informal education opportunities for
children, well-being sessions for adults and caregivers, and in-house production opportunities that support livelihoods formed our core activities during the pandemic period.

The outstanding strength of SPI has been the existence of an active Community Center that is physically accessible and provides a safe space for the participant community. The physical limitations of the pandemic and the necessity of working remotely have strengthened us in terms of reaching the community and making use of alternative methods in implementing inclusive practices, thinking more creatively, and taking faster actions. Thanks to the interest and flexibility of our team, volunteers, donors, partners, and all supporters in this process, we were able to implement the activities we shared in this report.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our stakeholders who have contributed financially, morally, and in other ways to improve the quality of life of refugees, who are among the groups most affected by the adverse effects of the pandemic.

We wish that the days to come will be filled with freedom, equality, and involvement in all areas of life, that we regain our physical contact and reinforce our inner connection.

Naz Sağlam
Director
Small Projects Istanbul
Small Projects Istanbul (SPI) is a community-based organization which has been operating in Fatih, Istanbul, since 2015. Our mission is to work alongside the local refugee community who have been displaced by conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa region to rebuild their lives in Istanbul and beyond. Our vision is community integration, societal inclusion, and empowerment, focusing primarily on children, youth, and women.

Our community comprises over 250 families and nearly 400 children and youth. The community actively participates in our activities, benefits from services offered, shares practices and experiences face to face in our Olive Tree Community Center, and, more recently, on our online platforms.

In 2018, we set up a Women’s Social Enterprise, *Muhra*, to provide refugee women with opportunities and resources to grow socially and to develop and practice professional handicraft skills to generate income for themselves and their families, promoting gender equality and self-determination.
The Olive Tree Community Center exists and thrives by promoting community building, a sense of belonging, and well-being. It offers a safe, child-friendly, and welcoming space for the community to interact and participate in various activities, while promoting access to education, protection, psycho-social support, and social services. Each month, we offer over 50 activities and services in our five-story building, with access to a computer lab, three activity rooms, and two workshop areas for Women’s Social Enterprise operations.

Due to the restrictions and challenges stemming from Covid-19 and increased needs and demand, from March 2020, our Community Center became a virtual space of connection to maintain access to quality community services.

More than 250 families participated in online educational and psycho-social activities, received consultation and referral services to improve access to rights and services.
The community is our biggest strength and the fundamental reason SPI came to exist. Our team is dedicated to working closely and flexibly with families and individuals in order to facilitate a smooth integration and peaceful co-existence with the local community.

SPI’s Community Outreach operations have various channels which offer services and activities for community building, engagement, and humanitarian development in line with the community’s needs, desires, and capacities. Active community participation and ongoing feedback are essential elements in the design and delivery of operations.

Our outreach services focus on the following areas:

- Access to Information
- Access to Rights & Social Services
- Reporting to Sector Coordination Offices
- Education Support
- In-Kind Support
The provision of up-to-date information regarding rights, services, regulations, and practices played a significant role in raising community awareness on important developments, especially concerning Covid-19. Seminars and trainings focused on improving knowledge, community interaction, and protective measures.

Received regular updates about COVID-19 regulations, public statements and services, distance education, and vocational training opportunities.

Participated in Earthquake Preparedness Trainings.

Participated in Distance Education System (EBA) Training.
In order to ensure the community continues to receive optimal support, we expanded our network and collaborated with private and public institutions.

**ACCESS TO RIGHTS & SOCIAL SERVICES**

14 ADULTS

- Referred to specialized partners and services to get support with their cases.

8 WOMEN

- Screened for breast and cervical cancer for free. This service was provided by the Euo and coordinated by SPI.

130 FAMILIES

- Received stationery for 7 to 12-year-old children. This service was provided by the Red Crescent and coordinated by SPI.

14 FAMILIES

- Received one-time cash rent support (₺630). This service was provided by the Red Crescent and coordinated by SPI.

1 FAMILY

- Received 3-months of cash rent support (₺1150). This service was provided by the Red Crescent and coordinated by SPI.
REPORTING TO SECTOR COORDINATION OFFICES

Collaboration with sector coordination offices in collecting qualitative and quantitative data enables comprehensive visibility, needs analysis, and improvements in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP).

10 CHILDREN

Who had issues with accessing formal education were reported to UNHCR.

7 PROGRAMS

Regarding Cash-Based interventions reported to UNHCR.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

EDUCATION SUPPORT

In 2020, we provided educational support to our community by distributing educational supplies and equipment and offering scholarships.

In November 2020, we launched the *SPI University Scholarship Initiative (SPI-USI)* which supports young refugees from the MENA region who stand out for academic merit and want to continue their higher education in Turkey.

80 CHILDREN

Received educational supplies to be able to participate in our activities.

2 STUDENTS

Received *The Philip Bourke* and *The Sally Bourke Scholarships* for their university studies. The scholarship is dedicated to honoring the memory of Sally Bourke.

2 STUDENTS

Received laptops donated by private donors.
IN-KIND SUPPORT

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we intensified our efforts to deliver in-kind support.

Received prepaid shopping cards to purchase food, hygiene, and basic needs items as part of the Weave a Security Net for Vulnerable Ones project, funded by the COVID-19 Community Relief Fund from the Turkish Philanthropy Funds and The Intrepid Foundation.

Received vouchers for winter clothes. This kind donation was made by Mr. Hasher Ahmed.

250 FAMILIES

113 HOUSEHOLDS
In 2020, we implemented projects and activities in the following areas:

- Education
- Psycho-Social Support
- Social Cohesion
- Women’s Skills Development & Livelihoods
- Capacity Building
- Volunteer Program
Our educational program was focused on the following goals:

**Improving the Quality and Quantity of Educational Activities Desired by the Community.**

**To Increase the Number of Children and Youth:**

- enrolled and continuing in formal education
- who are integrated and benefit from formal education and a social environment
- achieving a higher success rate in formal education
- who have access to required educational equipment and materials
- who engaged in alternative learning environments and methods
- benefiting from their improved life skills

The activities of the educational program were formed under these principles:

**Access to Formal Education**
by increasing the effective inclusion of refugees in the national education system.

**Access to Informal Education**
by offering activities in informal settings, implemented by facilitators/volunteers with wide-ranging skills and experiences.
In line with our educational goals, we implemented on average 50 educational and skills development activities per month, targeting 85 children and youth (aged 4-18). These activities include Turkish, Arabic, and English conversation clubs, tutoring activities, computer literacy courses, coding, traditional handicrafts workshops, art, sport, dance, and a cooking club.

The implementation of our educational program was funded by MTÜ Mondo and the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of the Integration and Empowerment Program for Refugee Children and Adults project, which focuses on increasing the educational access of children and youth to formal and informal education.

Thanks to the Phoenix Space project, a group of 20 high school students have improved essential skills in mathematics, electronics, physics, project management, and technical areas. The theme linking all of these classes was space science.
PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

CHILDREN

SPI participated in a series of art therapy sessions organized by Maya Vakfi. The sessions aimed to alleviate children's past traumas through artistic expression. Another workshop we have taken part in was the PhotoLift project of Maya Vakfi where children used cameras and photography as a healing tool.

ADULTS

Under the Direct Aid Program of the Australian Embassy, we organized Women Solidarity Groups, consisting of 30 refugee women. The group aimed to provide psychosocial support to those in need. The sessions took place before and during Covid-19. The main objective was to support women in expressing their experiences and challenges as refugees in Istanbul. The sessions aimed to recognize existing resources and enabled the sharing of collective solutions within the group. The topics focused on women's social and personal resources, problem-solving, self-care, and understanding events within and outside our control. The sessions used therapeutic expressive art techniques such as body movement, games, drawing, and drama therapy techniques.
Within the social cohesion program, we aimed at strengthening relationships and the sense of solidarity among members of a community and the local youth through participation in various activities. We created a network of university student volunteers who supported our mission by developing and implementing engaging educational and recreational activities.

We conducted an activity program focused on building bridges between young refugees and local students through interactive educational and recreational activities. We implemented the project in collaboration with Robert College and its volunteers.

In collaboration with Koç University, we implemented a girls-only project to build bridges between young refugees and local Turkish pupils and volunteers.

At the same time, the children and youth participated in various movie screenings and excursions (Rahmi Koç Museum, Pera Museum, Çekul Center, Istanbul Modern Art Gallery, Miniatürk Museum).
A SMILE BEHIND THE MASK: Production and Distribution of Reusable Face Masks Handcrafted by Refugee Women

Under the Humanitarian Volunteers in Action (HVA) project, our EU Aid Volunteers started implementing a project focused on producing and distributing reusable masks with and for the community. Within the project *A Smile Behind the Mask: Production and Distribution of Reusable Face Masks Handcrafted by Refugee Women*, SPI collaborated with 2 EU Aid Volunteers and involved 11 refugee artisan women in the training and production of 2,000 reusable face masks, promoting vocational skills development, and giving back to the community.
**VOCATIONAL TRAINING & INCOME GENERATION**

The project funded by the Intrepid Foundation enabled 42 women to get involved in an intense program offering vocational and soft skills training, local integration, and livelihood activities. The skills development training program offered learning opportunities in computer literacy, leadership, retail, sales, and technical handicrafts skills (basic sewing, advanced tailoring, printing, and jewelry design) and hands-on experience in production activities. The project was enriching from various perspectives to achieve increased technical and social capacities essential for economic inclusion. One of the project’s aims was to enhance sales, marketing development, and outreach of the Women’s Social Enterprise (Muhra) to maintain vocational learning, in-house production, and livelihood activities for refugee women.
CAPACITY BUILDING

HUMANITARIAN VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION (HVA) & SUDHAV3

Under the EU AID Volunteers program, funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), in partnership with MTÜ MONDO, ADRA Slovakia, and ADICE, we hosted 3 EU Aid Volunteers Martin, Lucia, and Aya. They supported communication and fundraising, programs and volunteer coordination, income-generating activities, and strengthened the organizational capacity of our organization.

UNHCR’S CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Within the UNHCR’s Capacity-Building Program, we participated in a series of training sessions aiming at organizational development. The program was designed for NGOs engaged in refugee response and supporting the sustainability of humanitarian aid and development activities.

MARIELLE - NEVER STOP RISING:
Strengthening Gender Empowerment and Preventing Violence Against Women at Risk of Marginality

Within the project Marielle - Never Stop Rising, our project team participated in capacity-building activities to stimulate the development of life skills for women at risk of violence. The project is supported by the KA 2 – Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education (Exchange of good practices) of the Erasmus+ Program, and in collaboration with Per Esempio Onlus (coordinator, Italy), Fundació SURT (Spain), Association Merkuri (Georgia), Social Empowerment Hub (Greece), Association Euni Partners (Bulgaria), and Associazione Handala (Italy). The project started in September 2019 and will continue until April 2022.
Volunteering has always played an integral part in our mission. Throughout the year, we collaborated with 50 local and international volunteers. They have participated in various activities, such as Turkish, English, and Arabic conversation clubs, homework club, arts, sports, and other educational and recreational activities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that we facilitated all the activities online, our volunteering practices have also changed. Volunteers utilized SPI’s online communications platforms to facilitate activities and interact with children.

Though the opportunities to work with international volunteers have decreased, the situation enabled us to reach more local Turkish volunteers and fostered social cohesion and local volunteering culture.
WAYS TO SURVIVE

Ways to Survive is a beautiful book created by the poet Berna Kahraman and visual artist Donna Haig Friedman. “We intend this little book of poems and paintings to be a meditative handbook. We hope that, when you open up any of these pages, you will allow yourself to be still, letting the words and images nourish your inner spirit” - Berna & Donna. The authors offered all the proceeds from the sales of this collection to organizations or causes that are making a positive difference in the world, and we were honored to be included in this inspiring project.

CHILDREN’S RIGHTS ADVOCACY

The monitoring project, Research on Children’s Access to their Rights in Different Settlements of Istanbul, funded by the Etkiniz EU Program, aimed to determine the level of children’s access to their rights in at-risk and vulnerable areas during the Covid-19 pandemic. It identified ways of offering support through special protection measures. At the same time, the project revealed the areas in which rights could not be accessed, their impact on the children, and the short and long-term measures which needed to be implemented. The research was designed in collaboration with the Başak Culture and Arts Foundation (BSV), Sulukule Volunteers Association (SGD), and Tarlabası Community Center (TTM). The research will continue in 2021.
The *Proverbs for Parleys* project aimed at increasing the tools and capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) to promote intercultural dialogue between Turkey, Estonia, and Lebanon. It strengthened the social harmony of different communities living together within the partner countries by using language, a significant element of cultural heritage. The project will continue in 2021 and will be carried out in partnership with Mondo (ES) and DPNA (LB).

Project activities included youth workshops to reveal essential cultural components reflected in each language and an anthology that promoted the roots of languages spoken in the partner organizations. The similarities and differences in commonly used classic proverbs and idioms from Estonia, Turkey, and Lebanon were recorded in the book to increase dialogue and cultural interaction between the partner countries.

We hope that the book will encourage the exchange of linguistic practices and social harmony within the different partner communities. The book will be a long-lasting and significant contribution to cultural dialogue and could be included in school curricula in the future.
During 2020, 40 women artisans have been supported with livelihood activities. They were provided with a workshop area, equipment, material, marketing, and sales support which enabled the in-house production of handicraft jewelry, clothes, and accessories. The skills and the empowering messages of artisans were spread on the global market through the Muhra Store as well as by partnerships and brand ambassadors around the world.

WOMEN'S SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
MUHRA

The Women's Social Enterprise Muhra was established in 2018 to enable SPI's women community members to engage in a new social network, develop soft and vocational skills and create a livelihood for themselves and their families. We created and launched Muhra as a socially conscious and empowering brand, which features handmade clothes, accessories, and jewelry produced in the workshop and the renowned 'Drop Earrings Not Bombs' collection.
OCKENDEN International’s four cash prizes recognize and reward innovative work that delivers evidential self-reliance to refugees and/or IDPs, the hallmark of Ockenden International since its inception in 1951.

SPI was one of the winners for self-sufficiency and the commercial success of SPI’s Women’s Social Enterprise, Muhra.
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## INCOME

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<th>Donor</th>
<th>Amount (TL)</th>
<th>Amount in Foreign Currency</th>
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<td>Mondo MTÜ</td>
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<td>ADICE</td>
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31.12.2020 valuation currencies:

1 EUR = 9.0079 TRY  
1 USD = 7.3405 TRY  
1 GBP = 9.9438 TRY  
1 AUD = 5.6076 TRY
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

EXPENDITURE

- Food & Hygiene Support: 7%
- Social Cohesion: 8%
- Integration & Empowerment Program for Refugee Children and Adults: 9%
- Child and Youth Psycho-Social & Life Skills Development Program: 11%
- Capacity Building: 15%
- Women Empowerment / Skills Development: 18%
- Other: 19%
- Integration & Empowerment Program for Refugee Children and Adults: 9%
- Social Cohesion: 8%
PROJECT PARTNERS

- MTÜ MONDO
- Per Esempio Onlus
- Associazione Handala
- DPNA
- Association Merkuri
- Social Empowerment
- Fundació Surt
- Sulukule Volunteers Association
- Tarlabası Community Center
- Başak Culture and Arts Foundation
- MAYA Foundation
- Robert College
- Koç University
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