

## **Latest Update on Nişantepe Social Empowerment Project - October 2020**

Dear All,

As you know, with our yaklaş\_nişantepe project, we have “approached” our neighborhood, and identified -to some extent- what we can do for our neighborhood. Nişantepe Social Empowerment Project is a culmination of our yaklaş\_nişantepe project which we endeavor to sustain. During our empowerment project, we have undertaken numerous initiatives -both on a small and big scale- in the Neighborhood. We are confident that all our initiatives will guide us to the right path to take even bigger steps to redress existing disadvantages in our neighborhood.

As we keep working on our initiatives through different channels, we would like to also bring you up to speed with our latest developments below :

### **Basic Needs**

When the Le Cordon Bleu kitchens were closed due to the pandemic, we distributed the remaining food items to the locals with the recommendations of Ms. Defne Tüysüzoğlu. Later, with the support of our Rector Esra Gençtürk and the contributions of Nişantepe Primary School, we delivered food and hygiene boxes to 35 families. Also, we distributed dry food left behind by our residents in the dormitories to the locals with the contributions of Ms. Aysel Kırkoç, Dormitory Manager, and the support of Nişantepe Primary School. Meanwhile, Ms. Gülbahar Coşkun and Alp Çakıcı produced face shields at OpenFab, which we delivered to Nişantepe Primary School and Nişantepe Primary Care Clinic. We were also pleased to see that Ms. Nazan Kılavuz, our Gastronomy program certificate student, continued to share the recipes she made with the families in need during the pandemic.

These are -hopefully- some of the initiatives that we just know of.

Nişantepe District has also been incorporated into our academic curricula.

### **Contribution of the Faculties**

As part of MIM 201 course, Ms. Nevşet Gül Çanakçıoğlu took the lead in building a community center in the unused mukhtar's building. We take pride in being on the jury of this important project, which is still ongoing in the same place. Also,

in recognition of our efforts in the neighborhood, the Interior Architecture Department at Kltr University requested support and guidance from us to work in Niřantepe to contribute to the solution of real-world problems in the neighborhood. We will evaluate this request over the coming days.

Our junior Architecture student Yaęız Eray Esgin is also working on a project as we speak regarding the community center we are planning to launch in the long run under the leadership of Prof. Hasibe Akin. Yaęız also shared with us the attached video which offers a clear and concise answer to the question "Why Niřantepe?", which we believe you will also find interesting.

The neighborhood suffers from multiple disadvantages. In particular, to raise awareness about women's and children's rights and increase access to social rights, including rights against violence, we developed a new law clinic project with which we applied for a fund. The result of applications will be announced within 2-3 months. Although the fund will make things easier for us, , we are thrilled that our exclusive law clinics will be brought to life regardless of whether or not we receive the funds as Ms. Cansu Demir, Law Clinics Coordinator, has placed Niřantepe at the heart of her law clinic initiatives.

There are also many initiatives to take both at the Gastronomy Department and the Department of Psychology. We are currently working on these potential initiatives as we speak.

### **Contributions of the Units**

In addition to courses, the yaklař\_niřantepe process has also triggered other processes at OzU. As you know, in collaboration with HES, we had developed a project to effectively collect paper waste and sell it to recycling firms in order to transfer the revenue to the Niřantepe Social Empowerment Project. Although currently our project has been interrupted, it will resume in the future.

Meanwhile, we are currently working on several long-term projects in collaboration with the Athletic Center. Our discussions are still ongoing with Gneř Viter and Sercan Aydın and we will be keeping you up to date soon.

### **Local Government & NGOs**

As you know, our yaklař\_niřantepe project was brought to completion in December 2020. Following yaklař\_niřantepe, our biggest wish was to build a

community house in Nişantepe which will serve as an interface between OzU and the locals. In collaboration with the Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) and Çekmeköy Municipality, we have covered a lot of ground. Although the pandemic has caused a disruption, we need to forge ahead with our efforts in this area with unwavering commitment.

We have immense confidence that all the hard work we put in to keep our projects alive and going will eventually pay off.

We will continue to keep you posted of our latest developments. Meanwhile, we would be pleased if you could let us know if you have any comments and suggestions about what have been done or what more can be done for Nişantepe or if you have any course or project about Nişantepe.

Best Regards,

Özlem & Okan

Nişantepe Social Empowerment Group