

Chairman's Award - Team 7466

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2021 - Team 7466

Team Number

7466

Team Nickname

Cymurghs

Team Location

Istanbul, Istanbul - Turkey

Describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on team participants within the last 3 years. This can include but is not limited to percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, and in *FIRST* programs as mentors/sponsors.

Thanks to their pre-uni experiences in FIRST, 100% of our alumni have graduated from high school and are majoring in STEM related fields at the world's leading universities such as MIT and Hong Kong University of Technology. They have been awarded by \$525000 scholarship just by the means of their FIRST experience. Besides our successful alumnis, our team members have the chance to have internships about their interest in global companies such as General Electrics and Schneider Electrics.

Describe your community along with how your team addresses its unique opportunities and circumstances.

As the first community team of our country, we were being observed by our community since the beginning. With our team members from 15 different cities, we have the opportunity to reach 15 centers of Turkey. Thanks to this, our team is able to contact any school whenever we need. On the other hand, we continue our teamwork online for 3 years. With the pandemic process, we helped 3700 people across the globe with our documented resource on online business management to share our past experiences.

Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the *FIRST* message in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative. How does your team measure results?

In the way of our vision, we organized FRC Turkey community's first online programming contest&first safety themed hackathon consisting of a total of 401 participants. We organized 19 conferences & reached 1674 students throughout Turkey. Besides those countrywide events, we also created the world's first & only FIRST program specific online learning platform. Conversely,we became role models of protecting the environment & helping disabled people by collecting blue caps during the FRC Regional.

Please provide specific examples of how your team members act as role models within the *FIRST* community with emphasis on the past 3 years.

Taking the responsibility of being the first independent robotics team,we inspired people to form new teams with their enthusiasm. After that, dozens of young people continued to walk on this path by forming 4 FRC and 4 VEX teams across Turkey.As a team that has members from different cities, we were managing our team online even before the pandemic. So we helped different FRC teams to use the online business management tools and the methods of keeping team spirit alive as an experienced team.

Describe your team's initiatives to Assist, Mentor, and/or Start other *FIRST* teams with emphasis on activities within the past 3 years.

By spreading the values of FIRST, we started 2 & assisted 3 FRC teams and are currently continuing the process of forming 3 more. Also 1 of the formed teams is being mentored by us. We also mentored 4&assisted 6 FLL teams especially selected from disadvantaged cities such as Sirnak and Sinop. One of them consists of refugee students within the collaboration of Global Mind Association, Germany GIZ&Turkey's Ministry of Youth and Sports. We also work on forming 10 new FLL teams for the next season.

Beyond starting teams, what initiatives have you done to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What results have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?

Within the concept of our project Sinir Tanimayanlar, we gave robotics and coding lessons to 290 students from 2 schools. After that, we sent 50 science and robotics kits to 5 village schools and inspired 1595 children to work on projects and give them a chance to meet STEM. We also helped a lot of children after our FIRST programs focused conferences and decided to form new teams in their schools. After the conferences we had a lot of feedback on changing their majors to a STEM field.

Describe the partnerships you've created with other organizations (teams, sponsors, educational institutions, philanthropic entities, etc.) and what you have accomplished together with emphasis on the past 3 years

We are not only talking about the team's budget with our sponsors, we are also getting mentored and being partners with them by including them among our FIRST journey. For the Children's Day, we are organizing a STEM event for one of our sponsor's children and forming an FLL team at the end of it. We also organized conferences with the collaboration of 13 different educational institutions by reaching 1674 students and partnered with 6 foundations for our projects.

Describe your team's efforts in the past 3 years to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within your team, *FIRST*, and your communities.

Towards our motto Robotics for Everyone, we are a team that applies its values both in&outside. Cymurghs has a gender equality of 50% and has members from 15 cities and 7 regions of Turkey. We also created the hashtag #lifeisfairwithFIRST and this movement by collecting blue caps during the regional and continued it by designing a driver station for walking disabled students, publishing & delivering Turkey's first Braille alphabet tech magazine & giving a workshop to visually impaired children.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will continue to run effectively for the foreseeable future

Cymurghs describes its own values such as Peer to Peer Experience Transmission, Learn by Doing and Career Mentoring. In terms of our values, we give weight to student leadership and team management. In our team, everyone has the ability of creating a project from nothing but a scratch. Cymurghs' key to success is having fun while working to achieve a common purpose: learning. In order to do so, we organize motivational events regularly and let everyone feel the spirit of FIRST.

Describe your team's innovative strategies to recruit, retain, and engage your sponsors within the past 3 years

As Cymurghs, we always attached importance to sponsorships by making sure about mutual financial and networking benefits. We always provide a platform of win win policy. We have an authorized person for each sponsor to prevent miscommunication both for the sponsors and us. We prepare projects according to their willings and become project partners. By doing so, we are not only helping them to spread their brand's name, but also create a sustainable relationship with our sponsors.

Highlight one area in which your team needs to improve and describe the steps actively being taken to make those improvements.

Since the beginning, our team needs to overcome the problem of not being able to meet with teammates in person during the year because of its unique structure. Year by year, our team's structure becomes a major for us to learn to continue. And that conversion made this disadvantage an advantage. With the pandemic, everyone started to become interested in virtual events and online management, so we became role models for those people and have the chance to share our previous experiences.

Describe your team's goals to fulfill the mission of *FIRST* and the progress you have made towards those goals.

A Cymurghian's vision is the same as the FIRST's vision. Describing ourselves as a team intertwined with FIRST's values is a proof of how to move forward on FIRST's path. Because the team made the FIRST's values as team values. Within the scope of our projects, we helped 389766 people to hear FIRST, form new FIRST teams, and follow FIRST events. We inspired 534 children to become science and technology leaders by our training sessions and keep in touch with them even after our events.

Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* Judges, including items that may not fit into the above topics. The judges are interested in learning about aspects of your team that may be unique or particularly noteworthy.

Cymurghs consists of students that have not got an FRC team in their school or are not able to join it because of different

reasons. So it brings people in the frame of FIRST and lets them change the world from 2D screens. The team changed all of its member's lives and left an impact on them with its unique structure, inspiring team spirit and the understanding of FIRST. All of those makes Cymurghs a project of FIRST itself.

Essay

"The Birth of the Cymurghians

2 FRC students had just turned back from the FRC Houston Championship 2018. But they aimed to reach everyone from everywhere, not just their school's students via a school club. That was why they came together with 2 of their friends, 1 girl and 3 boys in total, to create an environment that has no word of equality classification in its vocabulary: the first community team of Turkey. Those were the first Cymurghians, Cyber Simurghs, the phoenixes who rise from their ashes with more power and success every time. Those phoenixes spread around the country and now we continue our work with our members in 15 different cities of Turkey.

Transmitting Our Experience

This story turned the first gear of the box: giving training sessions. With the collaboration of Zemin Istanbul and Bilge Cocuk Academy, we inspired 90 middle school changemakers, 40 of them have special abilities, with our FRC robot and gave coding lessons. Just after that, with our venue sponsor Fabrikafa we organized a Topology Optimization Workshop to 10 FRC students to increase the usage of engineering methods during the build season. That was the time for breaking the seal, so we organized a 2 weeks robotics camp for 50 children in Erzurum with the support of Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality. And with the pandemic, we turned our training sessions online. Firstly, we are associated with the Bebar Science Community which has more than 8400 members, and gave 2 days long Introduction to FIRST Programs training.

As a community team, we aimed to reach the communities of our members, and that brought the idea of Sinir Tanimayanlar. In doing so we collaborated with 2 disadvantaged schools and gave 2 months-long robotics and programming lessons to 290 primary and middle school students.

Making Everyone Smile

Those training sessions showed us the importance of having fun, which turned the second gear: #laughterFIRST. Our experience with children showed us that what gives meaning to learning is loving the work you do and feeling the spirit of FIRST. It was the time to inspire

everyone to smile and have fun. To achieve this goal, we created a challenge consisting of 5 days with 5 smiley photos that have been taken while working. With this movement, we reached 97 FRC, FTC and FLL teams from 4 continents and 8 countries.

Bringing People Together

#laughterFIRST has reached the FIRST students, but this made us think about the ones who did not know about FIRST.

That idea turned the third gear: local outreach activities. We started by organizing Traditional Cyber Marathon, the first online programming contest of FRC Turkey, with the collaboration of Belarus ODO Biznesprogrammy, Galatasaray University Student Community, Galatasaray High School Robotics Club, and Cukurova University Defence & High Technologies Club. Within 2 years, Cyber Marathon had 288 participants from 37 different cities and 125 different high schools and universities. 76% of the participants heard about FIRST for the first time and 82% of them were first-time hackathon participants. Before the contest, we gave them a presentation about FIRST to spread the values of FIRST and had feedback to become a part of FRC teams both as students and mentors.

Our next step was to organize a hackathon with a safety theme to raise awareness on the usage of safety items in FRC regional events. The ideas will write the future, and our project got its name from here: Way of the Future. With the help of 4 judges professionalized in programming, our event paid off with 113 students from 23 different cities. With this hackathon, we also prove the role of women in tech with 47.7 percentage of the girl participants.

After 2 competitions, we decided to bring people together to brainstorm and create an environment to share innovative ideas, which gave birth to Thinkaholic. Thinkaholic is a STEM talks project for 4 weeks and with one authorized professional each. We shared the values of FIRST with 57 participants, created documentary resources, and discussed global STEM topics such as CRISPR technologies and virtual reality.

Changing Someone's Life

With our local outreach projects, we have reached the people who are interested in STEM and engineering. But we need to let people learn about FIRST and STEM. The fourth gear of our box turned to spread the FIRST values and robotics to early ages who do not have this opportunity yet. Within the context of Intercity Impactors, we have reached 1674 students from 11 cities. In our conferences, both virtual and in-person, we talked about FIRST and how to start the journey of their STEM life. During this project, our team members acted as the ambassadors of their school's communities and got feedback to form new FIRST teams. Currently, we are working on forming 3 FRC and 10 FLL teams with the schools we kept in touch.

Counting Everyone In This Journey

Our fifth gear turned to complete the vision of spreading FIRST values to everyone, in other words, the other half of Intercity Impactors: #lifeisfairwithFIRST. To start this mission, we collected blue caps from waste bottles during the Istanbul Regional 2020. We donated all the caps to The Spinal Cord Paralytics Association of Turkey to help donate a wheelchair to people with walking disabilities.

To show everyone is equal, we designed Driverly, an FRC driver station for walking disabled students. With this project, we aimed to raise awareness of cerebral palsy, paraplegic, and tetraplegic diseases, encourage disabled students to attend FIRST programs and also create an opportunity to make them drive the robot in an international competition with the spirit of FIRST. To start our campaign, we approached 8 foundations to find a student who is interested in robotics to donate our first product. Currently our team is working on the industrial design of the system to change that boy's, Baran's, life.

The third step was for our visually disabled friends. To do so, we published Turkey's first tech magazine written in Braille alphabet: M5. With the collaboration of the Association of Blinds of Turkey, we send M5 magazines to 1071 visually disabled students from 14 cities and 18 schools. We also vocalized M5 and created an audio version and added it to schools' libraries.

The fourth step of #lifeisfairwithFIRST was our hearing-impaired friends. To reach them we have collaborated with the Association for Child Education and gave a workshop to 20 hearing impaired students to cut across all boundaries. Life is fair means fair for everyone, so we organized a webinar for the gifted students selected from 128 science and art centers of Turkey. We reached 55 students and 7 teachers and agreed to form 3 FLL teams and build a FIRST laboratory in Izmir.

Helping Everyone to Try

With our projects, we introduce FIRST and STEM all over Turkey, and that turned the sixth gear: gaining experience with CymKit. To give everyone the chance to meet STEM, we designed 5 experiments and turned those ideas into STEAM Kits. We summed up the necessary materials in 50 science and robotics kits, donated them to 5 disadvantaged schools and inspired 1565 students. We are also producing the art and elementary machine kits with our sponsor to use on the Children's Day with Cymurghs festival.

Introducing How to FIRST

After experiencing STEM and FIRST via CymKits, the next destination for the enthusiastic students is to learn how to FIRST. Firstly, we created the world's first and only online learning platform for FIRST programs: profesornazif.com. With Professor Nazif, our team mascot, we helped newly formed FLL and FRC teams to learn FIRST values and how to become ready for FIRST programs during the pandemic with more than 45 videos and 7 tutors. The videos consist of lessons of different departments of FRC and judging categories of FLL. We also added a part for booking online lessons on any topic for free to reach more students and give everyone the chance to learn.

Whether Professor Nazif is mostly specific to learning, we also created the FIRST dictionary for FIRST veterans and newcomers to get used to the community. To explain the FIRST jargon in a fun way, we construe the words as Cymurghians. And via social media, we reached more than 446000 people around the globe.

Since we are a community team consisting of members from different cities, we were acting like we are in the pandemic before the pandemic. To share our 3 years of experience in online team management, we created a documented resource named "Online Business Management", reaching 3700 people, to help FIRST teams on managing their work easily during the pandemic.

Beyond the Limits of FRC

Our ninth gear turned for the motto of FRC is more than robots, and FIRST is more than FRC. To help other FIRST teams, we formed 2 and assisted 3 FRC teams; and mentored 4 and assisted 6 FLL teams. Within the collaboration of the Global Mind Association, Germany's International Cooperation Institution and Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports, we became a part of the Next Generation Science project and mentored the FLL team Legostro consisting of refugee and Turkish students in Gaziantep.

To support the FLL teams, we organized a precipitated camp before the official FLL tournament consisting of 3 steps. Within the scope of FLL Camp 2021, we organized an instructor training with 29 team coaches and team coach candidates for 3 days. We gave lessons about FLL, Mindstorms coding and connection of lego parts. 55.2% of the participants were first-timer STEM teachers. For the next step, we created the FLL in 5 Minutes video series. In doing so, we took more than 35 videos about robot build, Mindstorms blocks & core values to reach students alongside the team coaches. The last step was an FLL Off-Season Tournament within the teams we mentor and other FLL teams willing to gain pre-season experience. That last gear gave the power to open the box, the box of determination: the secret of the Cymurghians"