

FIRST Impact Award - Team 6989

2025 - Team 6989
Team Number
6989
Team Nickname
KAISER
Team Location
Istanbul, 34 - Türkiye
Describe the impact of the <i>FIRST</i> program on team participants within the last 3 years. Think about percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, leadership skills, and serving as mentors/sponsors in <i>FIRST</i> programs.
Experiences within FIRST encourage 99% of our alumni to prefer STEM studies for a degree in one of the 500 best universities worldwide, especially in Türkiye, USA, Germany & Switzerland(e.g. TUM, ETH Zürich, University of Chicago, Boğaziçi University). Our alumni still engage with FIRST and volunteer at FTC & FRC events. Team captains of 4 previous seasons are still assisting our team, too. Our alumni equipped with 21st-century skills demonstrate high success & self-confidence, thanks to FIRST.
Describe your community along with its unique opportunities and circumstances. Think about your geographic region, diversity of town/school, language barriers, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural expectations.
Overcoming language barriers and forming a supportive environment for people from different cultural and socioeconomic states is our main value. Our school consists of multilingual students, which we take advantage of. Our HANDBOOK website contains over 40 FIRST related (in 19 languages) and translated 200 REV DUO & 400 REV ION resources. Additionally, we collaborate with schools from different cities such as Aydın Lider Okulları, where we provide STEAM resources and hold events together.
Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the <i>FIRST</i> Mission in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative.
We focused on increasing accessibility to robotics education with our Learntech project. To increase efficiency, our monthly online weekend course 'House of Tech' reached out to more than 200+ children consistently for 3 months. In addition, we provided STEM education through workshops. With MIRAS, we have been providing face-to-face STEM education by visiting schools from 16 different cities across our country, reaching 3.5K+ children.
Describe your team's goals and the progress you have made towards them to fulfill <i>FIRST's</i> Vision.
We aim to create an environment where STEM education is accessible to everyone by overcoming barriers such as gender, abilities and finances. One of our biggest goals is to inspire young people in STEM fields, fostering equality of opportunities and empowering them to pursue their dreams. In the last three years, we have reached 11000+ children with Learntech & MIRAS. To include visually impaired children, we designed STEM kits accordingly and gave education in Beyoğlu Veyssel Vardal School.
What impact has your team seen from your efforts described in the above question? How does your team measure impact?

Feedback is an important way to measure our impact for us. We receive tens of thanks from our students' parents. Children also become more interested in design & programming after each course. When we see the progress of children that cannot use computers properly at first, we realize that we really change lives. Besides, at every school we visit, the teachers are so thankful that students have a good time. After each initiative, we value each comment, short & long-term progress.

Please provide specific examples of how your team and team members act as role models within the *FIRST* community with emphasis on the past 3 years. How do you share these best practices with other teams?

Women in Society, a webinar series of 4 years, was one of the first of its kind in our country and our collaboration with organizations such as LÖSEV & MakeAWish inspired a lot of other teams and paved the way to many other projects on the same aim. LearnTech & MIRAS have taught robotics and coding to over 9500+ children and 0 to FRC provides a beginner's guide for over 150 rookie teams across 6+ countries. Our members volunteer at FIRST events & always keep Gracious Professionalism in mind.

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

Over the past 3 years we have been a family of 22 FRC & 11 FLL teams. We start a German FRC team with Stuttgart University. We mentor 9422, 10465 & helped to #10043 by their establishment & assist them actively. In 2023, we started the Light of Future FLL team with LÖSEV children, mentoring it for 2 seasons now. We assist Believ3r FLL team of Halkalı Bahçeşehir Koleji and are also working on a new FTC team. Also upon request we started 2 new FLL teams in Anka Bilim Schule & Haliç Etap Schools.

What other initiatives have you created, grown, sustained, or participated in (*FIRST* or otherwise) to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What outcomes have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?

With our online education platform LearnTech & Kaiser*innen workshops we leave a memory of STEM behind. We also sent through "Bilim Postasi" 150 STEM kits to 3 cities in TR. Interviews with engineers take place in our FIRSTHandbook website & our handwritten magazines about social topics & new tech are published on our Farkindalik101 platform. Additionally our mentorships showed us how excited for FIRST our mentees were, creating motivation for both the parents and project volunteers.

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

Das Netzwerk allowed us to create a global community by connecting German schools worldwide, spreading FIRST & establishing an FRC team with Stuttgart University. Through FIRSTHandbook, we forged partnerships with teams from UK, Croatia etc. Besides, we collaborated with REV Robotics. We introduced STEM to children from LÖSEV by providing 320 hours of training. To expand our impact, we also teamed up with the MakeAWish Türkiye to host workshops & implanting the joyful side of STEM to children.

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

In our webinar series Women in Society, we discuss the importance of gender equality. Our Kaiser*innen workshops encourage young girls for STEM. Mentoring "Light of Future" & collaborating with MakeAWish TR enable us to promote children's inclusion in STEM and social life, even though they have rough times because of their illnesses. Besides, 11 of our 26 members are female, even though the percentage of girls in our school is at 26%. Plus, we ensure gender equality within sub-teams.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will be sustainable.

As a student-led team, we prioritize sustainability through our Kaiser Sustainability Program. Each year, we encourage new members to work in each sub-team to gain experience in different areas, so they can focus on what they're best at throughout the season. Our veteran members & alumni educate the rookies within pre-season training, because we believe that mutual learning is the most efficient way to improve. Thus, years of experience and knowledge are passed on to new generations of Kaiser.

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

We are proud we already have an impact on millions. Thanks to our projects we have reached out to a variety of communities, however, we believe there are still more people to inspire. So we are working non-stop on expanding our impact area. To achieve this, we have to eliminate obstacles our team faces such as limited finances and lack of institutional support. Our main focus is going to be finding corporate sponsors who would like to both financially support us and promote our projects.

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, particularly noteworthy, or had a large impact.

We make sure that all of our projects are as inclusive and sustainable as possible. Projects like Awareness101, where we partnered up with our sponsor FORTIS Energy, and Women In Society, in collaboration with YANINDAYIZ and other supportive organizations for women, are good examples of how we form strong connections for multiple seasons and ensure our projects' sustainability. We also focus on online education and workshops because of their accessibility in our community.

Judge Feedback

In which area do you think the team could concentrate more? Is there an advantage that you think we are not exploiting sufficiently? Thank you, Best Regards

An area the team has an opportunity to improve.

Something that really impressed the judges.

Essay

We are KAISER ROBOTICS, founded in 2014 within the German School of Istanbul and have been participating in FRC since 2017. We adopt the idea of spreading FIRST & STEM principles as our mission and support it with our vision of eliminating inequalities. With only 26 members we work everyday #tomakepeoplesmilemore and plant motivation & inspiration to the hearts of many. Two years of standing out with our wide-range projects, winning the Impact Award & Engineering Inspiration in a row alongside the Judges' Award in Houston, we always look forward to grow further.

The principle of being the only fully student-led team, embracing inclusivity, maintaining sustainability & the value of our name, the German word for "emperor", place us at the top of our empire. These values resulted in the Kaiser Sustainability Program which allows us to lead effectively and guarantee our team's continuity as the emperor. Not only restricted to FIRST, we also introduced STEM to 16 teams within Riders.

If there's an emperor, there's also an empress. As a team with both male & female PR & team captains, we ensure gender equality at every step we take. We identify the problem that women in particular face discrimination in business and social life. With our Women in Society webinar series of 4 years, being one of the first of its kind in Türkiye, we reached 35000+ people. These webinars, in which the importance of inclusion of women & LGBTQ+ community are discussed, with experts implanted the idea on us to empower young girls in every field of life with the

aid of STEM, just like we were inspired from the previous generations. Our workshop series “Kaiser*innen” was created based on this idea. We use STEM kits to introduce the educational and joyful side of science & physics in our workshops for children between the ages of 8-13. We organized 10 events, hosting 200 children. Our workshops vary with events that are girls-only or mixed. Additionally, we are very thankful that Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB) provides us costfree use of space for our Kaiser*innen & MAKE A WISH workshops. We contacted MakeAWish TR and organized events specifically for Wish Children introducing them to robotics.

Since we are built on different cultural foundations, we need a special place to unite & discuss any problem. Our WhatsApp groups Kaiser Support Line -domestic- & FRC Worldwide -international- host 230 members each from 130 teams worldwide & act as our guildhall. Alongside using these connections for our projects such as FIRSTHandbook, we also learned how to create a safe and supportive atmosphere.

An imperial palace owns gardens, squares and a main castle, which are connected to each other through bridges. Our empire embraces network as its bridges. Thanks to our observations as a Turkish team, we see that each team has the right to reach resources in their preferred language. That's why we created the FIRSTHandbook website last year, and added 8 new languages this season. Under FIRST Bridge, we provide all 23 FIRST resources in 18 languages. Within the Handbook title, 11 resources written by our team members, containing our experiences & knowledge, are available in 19 languages. Additionally, 21 interviews with engineers can be found in Turkish, English and German, by which we aim to spread various engineering disciplines. NEWLY in this season, we are thrilled to announce our latest project, VENDBOOK! We collaborated with REV ROBOTICS, translated and published 200 REV ION & 400 REV DUO resources in Turkish, allowing Turkish teams to read professional and official resources in their mother tongue. As the fruit of our work, we ruled out the language barrier.

As students of a German school, the absence of FIRST in Europe caught our eye. Although the importance of STEM is adopted all around the world, FIRST isn't as highlighted in Germany as needed. Additionally, we included two German students to our team last season since we believe in the importance of cultures' encounters. That's why we created our international network introducing FIRST to German schools from Nairobi, Tokyo, Addis Ababa, Toulouse, Bilbao, Cape Town, Hamburg, started an FRC team through our collaboration with the University of Stuttgart & a Maker team in Lisbon. We named these connections, acting as bridges throughout our empire, DAS NETZWERK.

Let us tell you the legend of the phoenix, a rise from its own ashes. Some say this bird flames out, but then a magic happens and the bird is reborn. Our journey includes many lowest points. These experiences turned into a mission to remind people that hitting rock bottom never means the end. With that being said, we ramp up our efforts for children battling illness, ensuring they never feel alone and never miss out. In Summer 2023, we collaborated with LÖSEV, an organisation for children with leukemia, and provided 6 weeks face-to-face and 90+ hours online education. With this project, we became the first ever team to introduce robotics to LÖSEV and subsequently paved the way for collaborations with many other teams. Right after, we established an FLL team with children who came around illnesses, Team Light of Future. For 80+ weeks we have been mentoring the team every Tuesday and Thursday in Tech Istanbul, thanks to İBB. An empire is truly strong when it embraces all its people without any obstacle. With this belief, we visited Beyoğlu Veysel Vardar School & Üsküdar Türkan Sabancı School and provided special STEM education using kits designed by us for visually impaired students. Through our workshops for elementary and middle school students, we proved that science can be learned through touch and experience. Believing that every child deserves access to STEM, we continue our journey by breaking barriers until there is no door we cannot reach.

Another project inspired by the phoenix is Awareness101. We first hit on the idea to help the ones who suffered from the devastating earthquake in February 2023 in our country. We share informative social media posts, publish podcasts and interviews with experts on social topics. We continue to publish the Kaiser Sustainability Magazine seasonally on our Farkındalık101 website. Not only did we arrange and design our magazines suited for people with dyslexia and reached out to NGOs accordingly, we also dubbed the magazines in order to provide an easier track for people with reading difficulties.

This year our focus was leaving a memory behind to remind them of Kaiser. This principle motivated us to design and work with STEM kits more, so with our project BİLİM POSTASI, we shipped a total of 150 STEM kits of our own design and production to 3 rural cities in our home country: Van, Siirt and Bitlis. We inspire the future engineers and scientists through conveying the principles of STEM and are proud to see how curious the little kids are.

Each team is once a rookie. We always look forward to supporting teams as we understand how challenging it can be to start an FRC team. In our 0 TO FRC video series we focus on rookie teams who need assistance. We inform teams through 70 minutes about topics, such as basic programming, strategy, PR etc. So far we've conveyed these videos to both Turkish and foreign 150+ rookie teams in 6 countries via DM, receiving tens of well wishes in return. With the announcements we made on ChiefDelphi and unofficial FRC WhatsApp groups, we reached out to 4000+ people. Besides free resource videos we also opened an online support line where teams can ask their questions. Through 5 forms within KaiserAsMentor we identify teams that need assistance and create an opportunity of free mentorship for other teams.

We have created one of the first robotics education platforms within FRC Türkiye 4 years ago. Since then, LEARNTECH has been serving children between the ages of 8-13 as online and free. With the work of our disciplined team members, we teach children coding & design on 12 platforms and 21st century skills in every holiday. In addition to the 130+ hours of lessons last year, we started HOUSE OF TECH, where we expanded our lessons to every weekend monthly for 3 months (Nov-Jan-Feb). This added 150+ hours of lessons to our statistics only this year, allowing us to reach 6k+ children. Additionally, we turned 3 programs from online lessons into a video course, reaching 60 schools in TR and carrying Learntech to 14 countries (AU, SE, NL, SR, IN, TH, MY, UAE, EG, BD, ZA, DE, USA, UZ). We treat the next generations as heirs of our empire, therefore we prioritize teaching them young.

Even though Kaiser embraces modernity and innovation, we also value tradition. Like every empire, we try to leave our heritage to the younger generations, so that our continuity is guaranteed. MIRAS, "legacy" in Turkish, is one of the most heartfelt projects of our own. Last year, inspired by LearnTech, we gave face-to-face STEM lessons in schools from 9 different cities in our country in only 5 months to children from disadvantaged regions, encouraging 2500+. This year we visited 7 more cities and reached 1000+ students in 4 months.

Through every bridge we build, every heir & knight we raise, every field we pioneer, we have grown not just as a team, but as a family bound by passion, resilience, and purpose. Since the last season, we mentor 9422&10465, have established #10043 & an FRC team with Stuttgart University, opened 2 new FLL teams in Anka Bilim Schule & Haliç Etap Schools, assisted Believ3r FLL Team and helped countless teams. In the last 3 years, we have reached out to 45K+ people, 97 schools and 300 teams through our projects. Thanks to TV programs, newspapers and social media, we managed to make our name known to 2 million people. Just like the phoenix, we rise, again and again, stronger and more determined than before. Our empire is built not on power, but on hope, inclusion, equity and the belief that the smallest acts of kindness can ignite the greatest transformations.;

