

NEWSLETTER

The Official Bulletin of Caritas Turkey

WHO WE ARE

Caritas Turkey's action is rooted in the Catholic social teachings. We work to empower and give dignity to vulnerable families and communities, understanding their needs and supporting them through community and parish mobilization and networking and cooperation with civil society and public actors.

Caritas Turkey wants to create an active, equal, and cohesive community and society that takes action to support and advocate for the vulnerable and poor without discrimination of race and creed.

WHERE WE WORK

The organizational structure of Caritas Turkey is composed of a National Office located in Istanbul, and three Diocesan Offices located in the dioceses of Anatolia (Iskenderun), Istanbul, and Izmir. The main working areas are: support to refugees, migrants, and vulnerable groups, and response to major natural disasters.

WHAT WE DO

NATIONAL OFFICE

Currently, Caritas Turkey is in a process of transformation which aims at strengthening its governance according to Turkish Bishops' Conference (CET) indications. The first step concerns the creation of a new legal entity necessary to increase its operational capacity in the complex local legislative framework. The National Office is actively working on the organizational development of Caritas Turkey, in line with Caritas Europe's ODSS program. At the same time, Caritas International Management Standards are applied in the ongoing process of drafting new policies and procedures. In this regard, an OD workshop was implemented in Istanbul from 26 to 28 April to work on the elaboration of the 2021-2025 Caritas Turkey Strategic Plan.



IZMIR DIOCESAN OFFICE



Currently, Izmir Diocesan Office is engaged in supporting people in need in 12 cities of the diocese. Just in February and March 2021, we have distributed 328 food coupons to refugee and local vulnerable families. We have contributed to the housing expenses of 38 refugee families, the medical expenses of 21 refugees, and 9 Turkish citizens in need. Furthermore, thanks to the generosity of Caritas Japan, Italy, Spain, and CRS we were able to support local families hit by the earthquake on the 30th October 2020.

ANATOLIA DIOCESAN OFFICE



Since the beginning of 2021, Anatolia Diocesan Office has supported more than 350 families of ten different nationalities working in 24 cities of the region. Every month in Anatolia we distribute around 400 packages and food coupons. In 4 villages, winter clothes were distributed, and 43 families were provided with coal and stoves, while for another 109 families a contribution was made for household expenses (rent, bills, etc). In addition to hygienic items, medicines were distributed to 45 families while a contribution for hospital support was provided to 7 people. 123 children attended Turkish, English, and Arabic language courses.

ISTANBUL DIOCESAN OFFICE



Currently, the National Office is implementing the activities of the Istanbul Diocesan Office (IDO) through an IDO *ad interim* director pending the appointment of the new bishop. IDO supports vulnerable groups working in collaboration with partners such as IIMP, Sen Jorj Hospital, şevkat-Der, Little Sisters of the Poor, Salesian Community, and many different church bodies/ communities in Istanbul. Furthermore, IDO is an open door to everyone in need thanks to the listening center providing direct support nutrition, health, education, and social adjustment.

A STORY FROM OUR COMMUNITY

BERKANT FAMILY

Berkant Bekfelavi is 53 years old man living with his two sons in Iskenderun. After brain surgery, he reported physical and cognitive damages that resulted in limited mobility of upper and lower limbs and difficulties in speaking. Since he is not able to perform his profession he is now relying only on a monthly income of 900 TL from social services.

The outburst of the COVID- 19 pandemics worsened the family's condition since the elder son also lost his job reducing the family's income. To survive they sold all their belongings keeping only the father's mattress, but when they had no more money to pay the rent they lost the house as well; Berkant ended up living in the park. After 4 weeks as homeless, Berkan's story reached our Anatolia Diocesan Office, which decided to help the family. First of all, we provided a house with all the utilities and furniture to reunite the family in a decent and safe house. Monthly food packages were given to the family since the extremely low income was not enough to support three people. Our ultimate goal is to find a job for Berkant's older son who is now 21 years old since the family cannot survive with the social assistance pension (900 TL, less than 100 EUR). The pandemic is, unfortunately, slowing the whole process down, but we keep on working to support this and many other families in need.



Sezar (Anatolia Diocesan Office) and Berkant Bekfelavi