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# Mavi Kalem's Adaptation to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The newly discovered **COVID-19** virus is transmitted from person to person very rapidly and it has quickly become the most important news in the whole world, being declared a global pandemic. Mavi Kalem, as with many governments and organizations all over the world, started taking protection measures. We started working from home on March 17th. During these times when people needed support more than ever, our motto was "*Physical distance, social proximity.*"

## EVDEN ÇIKARKEN COVID-19'dan nasıl korunabiliriz?

COVID-19 salgınına yavaşlatmanın en etkin yolu zorunlu olmadıkça evden çıkmamak ve evde kalma düzenlemelerine uymaktır.



Evde kaldığımızda başka kişilerle temasımız azalıyor ve hem kendimizi hem de çevremizi salgından korumuş oluyoruz.



### Dışarı çıkmamız gereken durumlarda ne yapmalıyız?

- Maske takalım.
- Kişilerle 1-2 metre fiziksel mesafemizi koruyalım.
- Ellerimizle yüzümüze dokunmayalım.
- Öksürme ve hapşırma sırasında tek kullanımlık kağıt mendille kapatalım ve mendili hemen kapalı bir çöp kutusuna atalım, cebimize koymayalım.
- Kapıları açmak, lamba düğmesine basmak gerektiğinde ellerimiz yerine dirseğimizi kullanabiliriz.
- Cep telefonunu yüzümüze yaklaştırmayalım.



## Hepimiz COVID-19 taşıyıcısı olabiliriz. Maske kullanarak bulaşma riskini azaltabiliriz.

 COVID-19 TAŞIYICISI	 BULAŞMA İHTİMALİ % 70
 COVID-19 TAŞIYICISI	 BULAŞMA İHTİMALİ % 5
 COVID-19 TAŞIYICISI	 BULAŞMA İHTİMALİ % 1.5

mavi kalem

WWW.MAVIKALEM.COM FİZİKSEL MESAFEYİ KORUYOR DAVANIŞMAYI DESTEKLİYORUZ

We moved our work, which was founded on face-to-face communication and being in the field, to the digital.

We followed the work of public institutions to better guide our beneficiaries and reshape our work. We started providing consultancy by telephone. We moved our psychosocial support activities and information meetings to digital platforms.

Mavi Kalem supported people on their financial needs with two distributions, other than directing them to other organizations that provide financial support. One was collaboration with İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Mavi Kalem distributed food and hygiene materials provided by the municipality to its beneficiaries. The other one was a baby kit distribution to families with a newborn. The kits were obtained with the money raised on a campaign supported by Global Giving.



In June, we have reopened our offices as a part of the normalization process. We took precautions to protect from COVID-19 in our offices. In our offices, we formed the Pandemic Prevention Stations where we measure the temperature of everybody who comes to the office, give out preventive materials, and remind the prevention precautions. We still give consultancy through telephone and do all our activities online. ●

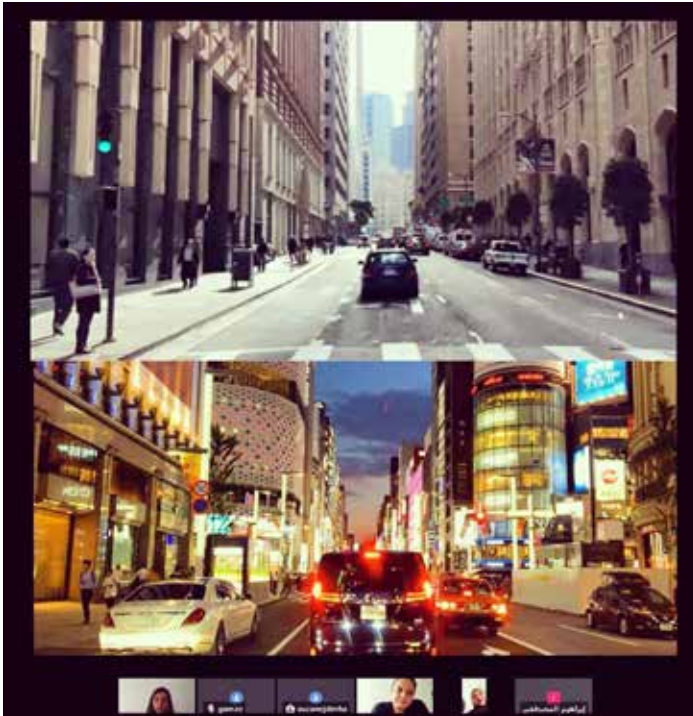
To spread information about COVID-19, ways to support well-being, and activities to do at home we have prepared original content by getting support from health and communication experts and by following trusted resources such as the World Health Organization (WHO). The content were posted on our website, on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube), and was spread by Mavi Kalem's volunteer groups. (1)

To support the well-being of the Mavi Kalem team we shared what we do to stay healthy and well, and work efficiently in our Mavi Kalem Whatsapp group and on Instagram by tagging each other in our stories. We followed up our team's medical condition on a daily basis. (2)



# Women Consultation and Solidarity Center

During the **COVID-19** pandemic, we moved our general, legal, health, and psychological consultation services to telephone lines. We announced our telephone numbers on our social media accounts and through the volunteer women. With the consultancy lines we expanded to providing services to people from all over Turkey, rather than just Esenyurt. Most people who called the consultation lines requested financial support. They were directed to other or-



Mavi Kalem Danışma Hattı  
0 850 441 62 84

Danışma hattını ücretsiz arayarak haklarınız ve Mavi Kalem'in sağladığı hizmetler ile ilgili bilgi alabilir, sorularınızı sorabilirsiniz. Mavi Kalem'in çalışmalarını öğrenebilir, bu çalışmalara katılma isteğinizi iletebilirsiniz.

Mavi Kalem Danışma Hattından hafta içi 9<sup>30</sup>-17<sup>30</sup> arasında danışmanlık alabilirsiniz.

Danışma hattı sizi Türkçe ve Arapça karşılayacak. Danışmana bağlandığınızda Farsça danışmanlık da alabilirsiniz.

\* Cumartesi ve Pazar günü danışma hattını arayıp mesajınızı bırakırsanız, ilk iş gününde size geri dönüş yapılacaktır.



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ganizations that provide the services they need.

Both women and children needed support and activities to spend time with during the demoralizing days of the pandemic. In addition to the consultation services, we also moved our activities to digital platforms. One of the most interesting activities was the activity for World Refugee Day. We visited different cities online and listened to their radios using the "Drive and Listen" application.

Our communication expert worked with the people in our teams who work directly with the beneficiaries on how they can communicate better on digital platforms. Nowadays, we are reachable on our consultation lines which can be called from everywhere in Turkey free of charge. We are looking forward to being face to face with our beneficiaries again. ●

## Women

## Consultation

## and Solidarity

## Center

## Volunteers



Mavi Kalem's Women Consultation and Solidarity Center in Esenyurt has a volunteer group formed of women in the target group of the center. They are Syrian, Afghan, Iranian, and Turkish women who work to spread information about the center's services and activities. They also support shaping the activities in the center by communicating the needs of the women in their neighborhoods.

They also supported our work a great deal during the pandemic when we lost our contact with the field. They brought

messages from the women, and spread information about COVID-19 and Mavi Kalem's consultation services in their social media network. ●

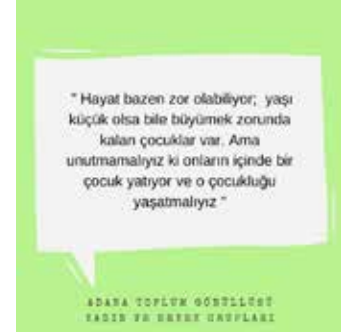
## Working with

## Volunteers

## in Adana

"This pandemic has affected refugees more. We were already living in difficult conditions but now life is even more difficult. My husband doesn't work, I'm not working. We don't know how to live. If you borrow money, how long is that going to last? We see Mavi Kalem as the address that will help us be heard," said one of our beneficiaries in the volunteer group of women.





## Holding Hands Through the Screen

In Mavi Kalem Adana Representation we aim to stay in close contact with the field by working with volunteer groups of women and men. We have supported social proximity and solidarity while we have to maintain a physical distance. We found ways to get together with beneficiaries on digital platforms. To ensure the continuity of this communication, we formed Whatsapp groups of women and men. We have shared confirmed information about COVID-19, while there was a lot of misinformation around.

Working with the volunteer groups, we organized activities to support our beneficiaries during the difficult pandemic process. We listened to each other's problems and shared our coping mechanisms.

Now, we have returned to our offices but we still have to communicate with our beneficiaries on digital platforms. Therefore, volunteers are still supporting us through digital platforms. ●

Working remotely was a very novel experience for us because we have been working in the middle of the field for 20 years. In the first days of the pandemic when we started working from home, we looked for an answer to the question "How are we going to support people when we are not together?" together with our teams.

We started giving consultancy on the telephone. We followed the services of



other organizations to better inform the beneficiaries about the support they can get. Also, we started adapting our activi-



ties to the digital platforms.

As always, we contacted the beneficiaries in our work environments to let them know they can communicate with us through our consultation lines. We talked about whether the children at home follow their classes through Eğitim Bilişim Ağı (EBA), and the children's attendance in the online activities we were planning to do. Of course, we reminded them the importance of staying at home.

There were many things to consider while adapting the activities to the digital platforms: How do we ensure the access of the beneficiaries to the platform? What

kinds of activities can we do? Which materials can we use? Which hours are suitable? How do we get the parents' approval for children to attend the activities? And many more.

While preparing the content of the Child Protection Project activities we aimed to support the mental wellbeing of the children. We shared information about the pandemic with them because just like adults children want to understand what is happening around them. The best way to do this was to discuss about the precautions by playing games and answering questions honestly. We



talked about our favorite songs and washed our hands for 20 second by singing them. We hugged ourselves and said hello to each other to talk about physical

distance. We talked about what we do in a day. We started every activity by washing our hands and hugging ourselves to say hello to each other.

We planned the activities with our activity team, social workers, and communication team. We looked at the local and international examples of online activities. All of the activities were approved by a child psychologist. One of the main differences of the online activities other than not being face to face was the amount of materials that could be used. In our offices, we used to provide materials. However, for the online activities we had to plan activities without any materials or with materials that would be present in every home. We made rhythms with plates and glasses, puppets with socks; we visited online museums; had online drama activities, and such.

We started our by using Skype but we learned that TeamLinks was a better option for us in the process, because it can be used by only clicking to a link which was much easier for the beneficiaries.

Between March 18th and September 1st we have organized 68 activities in which 506 beneficiaries form İstanbul, Kocaeli and Adana attended. Even when we could not be side by side physically, we held hands through the screen and we continue to have online activities until we can come together safely again. ●





# We Gathered “I’m well”s From Our Colleagues, We Supported Their Wellbeing

When we faced the pandemic, we were anxious. This was a very novel virus with a lot of unknowns. We could change our work fields, and methods but first, we had to be well.

For this reason, we aimed to form a system to follow the medical conditions of the Mavi Kalem team. We researched the current data about the virus. We prepared a database with all of our colleagues’ health information: chronic illnesses, medical history, and daily symptoms. We got feedback from our colleagues daily asking whether they had symptoms or

whether they had contacted anybody who was COVID-19 positive. Our purpose with this was to detect early on if someone in the Mavi Kalem team showed the confirmed symptoms of COVID-19, direct to a healthcare organization, and support community health.

We added the newly confirmed symptoms to our system. When we saw that we could make things better, we did not hesitate to change the system. We followed the ongoing symptoms of our colleagues. Sometimes, our stress and anxiety made us think we had COVID-19





symptoms. Sometimes, we had another illness, or allergies.

While working remotely, many colleagues had emotional difficulties and motivation loss about work. We shared content on Instagram and in our Whatsapp group to support the well-being and motivation of the Mavi Kalem team. We

tagged each other on Instagram while washing our hands, watched the yoga and physical activity videos prepared by our colleagues.

We shared the memories we missed and our emotions about them. We also shared content on how to protect ourselves from COVID-19 with the Mavi Kalem team. ●



## Mavi Kalem Art Trainer Explains

I would like to tell you about how I adapted my activities to the digital platform:

On March 17th, I was going back home from İstanbul to Dalaman, without completing some of my activities. Just like many other organizations, Mavi Kalem had decided to work remotely and postpone all activities. Fortunately, very early on we started to talk about how to continue our activities.

Could I do my activities digitally? My field is different from other trainings. Dance, music, and drama require one on one contact. I imagined myself in front of



We hugged ourselves and said hello to each other while imagining hugging each other. We learned how to wash our hands for 20 seconds while singing our favorite songs. With some music, some rhythm, and some drama I understood that I could do this with these children. I realized that children are much better than us in adapting to this new situation. I was also thinking of my colleagues. How were they adapting to this new situation? I decided to share my experience on yoga and sports with them to support their wellbeing. I was going to take videos of myself and share it with my colleagues. Videotaping myself was a little difficult at first but then I succeeded and shared my videos three times a week with my colleagues.



the computer camera and it felt funny. I researched for examples and developed ideas on what I could do. I practiced in front of the computer camera. After a lot of work, I felt ready.

On the day of my first activity, I was very excited. I had worked very hard but this was a first time experience for me. I told myself "You can do it," and I opened the camera. The children were there. We had missed each other so much.

Then, I also videotaped myself reading the book "My Hero is You", which was prepared by World Health Organization for children about COVID-19, to share with children. (3)

We also had activities with women. We made new and useful things from waste products. We made vases from soda bottles, doormats from plastic bags... We gave each other food recipes, sang songs.

In these times when many people around me were bored, I used my time efficiently and enjoyably. Women and children beneficiaries and my colleagues say that I was very supportive to them during these times. I also felt their support very much and I am thankful to them. ●

## Going Back to the Offices “Our Normal is New but Our Togetherness is Old”



With the local and international movement of normalization, we started to structure our new normal too. With the pandemic, we were going to have to establish new practices in our offices to protect our teams and work environments from COVID-19. We evaluated all of our offices considering the physical properties of the office, the number of COVID-19 cases where the office is, and the number of people working in the office. We thought about all the commonly used objects in the offices. We identified an emergency person in every office so that our colleagues contact this person in case of an emergency.

Our new normal was physical distance and social proximity. We are wearing masks and we cannot work in the same room but we know that we are together in this.

On June 8th we opened our Adana Representation Office and on June 22nd we opened all of our İstanbul and Kocaeli offices. We reduced the numbers of people working in the rooms and passengers in our vehicles. We stocked preventive materials and made our informative texts visible.

We still follow our colleague's medical condition on a daily basis. We established Pandemic Prevention Stations in the entrances of every office where we measure the temperature of everybody who come to our offices, give out preventive materials, and remind of the protection measures. Everybody working in the offices has signed the rules established in Mavi Kalem for protection from COVID-19. Our normal is new but our togetherness is old. We are welcome in our offices. ●

# Pandemic Prevention Station

## “If One Person is Protected, Society is Protected”

One of the most important new changes in the new normal is the Pandemic Prevention Station. This station is set up in the entrance of every office to develop preventive systems and attitudes.

Every day, one person from every office is the Pandemic Prevention Station



Responsible. On that day, this person's only responsibility is the station. Their responsibilities are: Applying and following the preventive measures; reminding people about the preventive measures; keeping the station records such as temperatures, the number of masks used, etc. If anyone has high fever, the station responsible directs them to a healthcare organization. The materials in the station are digital thermometer, masks, cologne, sanitizer, tongd to give out masks. There are also Pandemic Prevention Station Forms which are: Temperature list for personnel, temperature and contact information list for visitors, preventive materials delivery record list, station tasks checklist. These forms are filed Daily to be used when there is risk of contagion. ●

### Videos:

- (1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJXE6zVcy8s&t=1218s>
- (2) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S\\_1Nj4C4OFo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_1Nj4C4OFo)
- (3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZmmp06-U8E&t=2s>



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