

Our journey started with 18 students and one mentor at Sainte Pulchérie High School in 2015. When we first started our journey, we were full of hopes and dreams and till this day we have kept on working upon those dreams and hopes. We are now a team with 47 students, 21 boys, and 26 girls. Gender equality and the balance of the number of boys and girls in our team is really important to us and in these past 5 years, we tried to maintain that balance as much as we could. Also in our team, we have 4 mentors that have helped and supported us throughout the way. We know that discipline and hard work bring success but as SPARC we are a family and we believe that working in a supportive atmosphere is as important as hard work and discipline. Our first goal is to be a self-improving team that embraces the First Core values and tries to spread those values in order to create more conscious generations.

Being SPARC has always meant constantly improving yourself and others around you. Lifting each other up by sharing knowledge and not being afraid of branching out. We created The SPARC Awareness Movement to not only recognize but also find solutions to social problems and “reaching as many as we can”. This movement covers all SPARC projects we have done so far to raise awareness on different kinds of social problems. Our first act under this movement was to spread awareness by talking about ecological problems on social media. We learned a lot about ecological problems while researching for our educational posts, so we decided to hold a conference about mask pollution which has been a new threat against our ecosystem ever since the beginning of COVID-19. FRC teams or anyone who personally wanted to participate could join the conference. In the end, we shared a form and a contract for any FRC team was interested in teaming up with us and creating our “Awareness Team”. Our main goal is to combat mask pollution which we presented in our conference. In this project we want to unite and put away our differences by finding a solution for global mask pollution. While creating this team we wanted to follow First Core Values, so we made everyone sign a contract that made sure every member would be equal. Currently, the team consists of approximately 20 people from all around the country. Every week we hold a meeting where we discuss and try to find a solution for mask pollution. In these meetings, we make sure everyone is equal and is able to participate. By creating a safe and welcoming space we allow our ideas to grow as SPARC is meant to be.

One of the most important projects that we started doing was an international project where we renovated a village in Africa. In this project, we worked together with Idea Universal Foundation. Since having access to clean water and electricity is really hard in Africa, to help solve their electricity problems we donated solar batteries. Also to help them to have access to clean water we funded the construction of a tank that collects rainwater and the water channels. To raise money for these aids we organized a raffle in our school. We also held weekly food sales to help with the funding and in the end, we were able to raise 1500 dollars. Even though we started this project 3 years ago we are continuing on developing and finding new ideas and new ways to help the village we renovated. Due to Covid - 19, we were not able to raise money in order to help them but this didn't stop us and under the Sparc Awareness Movement, we decided to work parallelly with the Idea Universal Foundation and formed a group from our team members called Youth For Future. As SPARC, we always cherish different and new ideas and our motto is to reach “as many people as we can”. Youth For Future's main goal is to promote and share our project in order to reach out to people and to show them that they can also help us with our mission to create more sensible and more responsible new generations. Also, they are responsible for the continuity of the development of the project.

As Sparc, we believe that all kids should have equal conditions and opportunities for education. Especially in our country, lots of children sadly don't have the opportunity to have technological devices that will help them. Therefore, we teamed up with Payastem Artificial Intelligence Center, one of the biggest STEM centers in our country and we worked together under the name of the 'Sparc awareness movement'. With the project that we created together, we were aiming to gather tech devices from people who were willing to help. After the devices were collected, they were renewed at

Payastem and were sent to kids in need. The project still continues to be implemented and the members of Sparc in Payastem continue working in order to help less fortunate kids, because every child should have equal opportunities in education.

By following our motto “reaching as many as we can” we have started and mentored many teams. These teams include team 7134, team 6989, team 6416, team 7140, team 7552 and Canakkale Bahcesehir Collage for the FRC teams; Mev FLL, Leg goth FLL, Sainte Pulcherie FLL, Istek Schools FLL, PAYAS Stem FLL Team, Kaiser FLL and Zapyon Middle school FLL for the FLL teams; Team 14350 and Team 14378 for the FTC teams. Aside from these teams we’ve also mentored team 6985, team 6014, team 8159, and team 7544. We have also assisted many teams. Once again we have seen the importance of teamwork. We saw that being a team requires helping others around you. For the teams that we have assisted, we’ve assisted team 1660, team 6415, team 8159, team 7611, team 6416, team 4972, team 7544, team 8181, team 6064, team 6014, team 6435, team 6415, team 7552, team 7285 and team 6436. This season we have opened 3 FRC teams, but we haven’t been able to start working since the schools are closed because of the pandemic. And also we are planning to open an FRC team in Morocco. One of the most successful teams that we mentored was Zapyon Greek High School's FLL team and our graduated member Yiğitcan still continues to give robotics education every week to 50 students who are active in this team. In addition, since 2019 we recruited Zapyon students for our team, trained them, and worked together in SPARC. We established an FRC team for them that is going to be active in person after Covid-19 ends. Also, this year we participated in Next Generation Science Project where each FRC team participating in this project was matched to mentor an FLL team formed from Syrian and Turkish children. We are honored to be working with the next generation on this project and building a more free and enlightened future together.

As you already know, a lot of children in Turkey didn’t have access to any education during the pandemic, that’s why, STEM educations are very important for us, especially during this time. Although all students are equal in terms of rights to education, unfortunately, not all students are equal in terms of educational opportunities and conditions. During Covid-19, even though the schools were closed, the kindergartens were open, that being the case, we distributed 103 early robotics education kits to the kindergartens in our country and we also taught them how to use the kits. By helping kids in kindergarten, we were aiming to contribute to equal opportunities in education and to give kids coding education, which will become a very important part of our future.

In order to draw attention to the problems that our disabled citizens experience in society daily and to raise awareness on this issue, we renewed ourselves every year and tried to produce more innovative ideas on this subject. We wanted to find a solution to the fact that after Covid-19 visually impaired people cannot understand whether the people around them are wearing a mask or not and we also wanted to minimize the dangers that they face on a daily basis, and for this reason, we decided to continue developing ourselves on this subject. We had previously made a pair of sensor-powered glasses but while trying to bring these glasses to life, we experienced some technical problems and difficulties. Although this project had its deficiencies, we did not stop thinking about a solution that could help with the problems that visually impaired citizens face. For this reason, this year, by combining the idea of producing glasses that will help visually impaired citizens with artificial intelligence, we successfully created a glasses project to join the innovation challenge. With this project, we continue to help our disabled citizens and try to show other people that we can overcome every obstacle we face with hard work and determination. Additionally, throughout the year we collaborated with TOFD (The Spinal Cord Paralytics Association of Turkey). We helped their wheelchair project by collecting bottle caps. We interviewed the secretary of TOFD at the beginning of the year. We found out that a lot of people have to spend their lives in a wheelchair because of wrong first aid. Therefore, we held an educational conference to bring awareness about proper first-aid in February

With the awareness movement we started and the Stem educations that we continue to give, we are trying to contribute to a brighter future. We continue to improve ourselves by keeping the First core values in the first place. As SPARC we believe the power of young generation and that we can form our future together. We are moving forward with determination in the light of our motto “reaching as many people as we can”.