



Education | Development | Exchange

Project Summary: International Sports Programming Initiative for Turkey administered by World Learning

World Learning, as primary grantee, in collaboration with the Giant Basketball Academy, administered **Team United: U.S-Turkey Basketball Project** as part of ECA's SportsUnited International Sports Programming Initiative (hereinafter known as the International Sports Programming Initiative for Turkey). This engaging two-way exchange, with the aim of using basketball as a tool for developing leadership and character, and to promote tolerance and understanding, took place from September 1, 2012 to September 30, 2014. The program brought together young basketball players and coaches from Turkey and the U.S. who travelled to both countries to practice and scrimmage together, attend basketball clinics and workshops, and experience sports through school immersions. Throughout the program the students practiced and played together every day as Team United, a Turkish-American team. As the program lead grantee and coordinator, World Learning closely collaborated with the SportsUnited Division at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as well as the U.S. Embassy in Turkey on the program design and implementation.

The program was comprised of two exchanges: the U.S. based exchange from October 30 - November 12, 2013 and the Turkey based exchange from March 24 - April 6, 2014. Major program milestones included recruitment and selection, program preparation and implementation of both the U.S. based exchange and the Turkey based exchange. Moreover, two mini-grants were awarded to participants for sports related projects that aimed to serve participants' peers, school and/or community.

The U.S. based exchange saw 14 students (7 girls and 7 boys), travel with their Turkish coach to the U.S. for the first segment of the International Sports Programming Initiative for Turkey. The program focused on emphasizing linkages between sports and education, leadership, and cultural similarities and differences. The group began the program in the Washington D.C. metro area (Bethesda, Maryland), and then traveled to Marietta, GA for six days. The program then returned to Washington, DC for the last six days of the U.S. based segment.

The second segment of the exchange included travel by 12 student-athletes from Marietta High School and their coach to Turkey. Participants visited Istanbul, Adana and Mersin for a program that successfully reunited participants from the U.S. and Turkey. The exchange segment included a mini-camp and school immersion. Moreover, the program included clinics with various communities, planned and administered by former NBA player Gheorghe Muresan, creating a multiplier effect.

Overall the program was a success, promoting cultural understanding and utilizing sports as a tool for youth development.