To address the global refugee crisis, CIPE and a Consortium of international partners developed the Livelihoods Innovation through Food Entrepreneurship (LIFE) Project. The LIFE Project supports and encourages entrepreneurship, job creation and cross-cultural engagement in the food sector in Turkey. The LIFE Project launched the **first food incubators in Turkey**, where members from the refugee and host communities start and scale businesses, contributing directly to their livelihoods and economic development in their communities.

**FOOD ENTERPRISE CENTERS (FECS)**

Two FECs, in Istanbul and Mersin, serve as hubs for training and business development support. Modern facilities offer commercial grade kitchens, coworking and meeting space, and are venues for networking, community events, and workforce development.

**ENTREPRENEUR INCUBATION**

Anchored in the FECs, the LIFE Project incubates fledgling businesses, equipping entrepreneur members with the knowledge, skills and networks necessary to build successful food businesses. Activities include training, business coaching, support services and pitch competitions.

**SOCIAL COHESION**

Gastrodiplomacy - the practice of using food as a medium for cross-cultural engagement - is interwoven through all aspects of the LIFE Project by bringing refugees and host communities together through the shared language of food.

**WHY THE FOOD INDUSTRY**

Food provides pathways for cultural preservation among displaced populations and introduces host communities to new cuisines. Entrepreneurs who introduce new products or cuisine to a market also have a competitive advantage.
“It’s amazing to be with other future food entrepreneurs, side by side in the same project.”

Ahmet Yellice
TURKISH, ISTANBUL

“The business pitch competition developed my character and gave me a chance to meet people.”

Waad Mutlak
SYRIAN, MERSIN

“The LIFE Project's support helped me to test my business idea and implement it.”

Nahed Al-Ahmad
SYRIAN, ISTANBUL

**OUR IMPACT**

- **83%** of members developed or improved food products
- **60%** launched or are running food businesses
- **50%** of members reduced their business costs
- **20%** increased their income

**CONSORTIUM PARTNERS**

- CIPE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE
- idema
- STIMSON
- William Davidson Institute AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
- UNION KITCHEN

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