

**A Global Movement Against Addiction: Green Crescent**  
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Addiction is enslavement! We, the humanity, have to be against all kinds of addiction! And, currently there is a global initiative combatting against all kinds of addiction called Green Crescent which emerged in Ottoman Turkey one century ago and now expanded worldwide.

I, first, would like to give a general framework of the problem of addiction and some brief information about the history, vision, objectives and activities of the Green Crescent; including the tactics for the mobilization of the public against addiction.

One of the ways to prevent evil and addiction is to fight through scientific methods against the power groups that promote addiction. We are aware of the fact that the addiction industry reaches out, and intends to reach out even further, to our people and our youth, legally and illegally, through various ways that change and develop by the day. We see that stopping them by using ordinary slogans and methods gets more and more difficult. For this reason, the best instruments that we can use to stop them is to conduct serious scientific studies on how the problems emerge and spread, to follow up with this scientific data and share them with the public and authorities, to research on the ways of fighting against addiction and how they can be applied through national as well as international scientific meetings.

The problems related to addiction do not only derive from our own social, administrative and moral structure, but are open to the influence area of a broader spectrum. Today, through the tools of mass communication and the tools and carriers of the global culture, a structure with an expanding influence area has emerged in our society as in the rest of the world. As the Green Crescent, we care about the world's way of fighting against this experience that it is going through, and about the scientific knowledge accumulated in this field. We think it is necessary to transfer this knowledge into healthy channels by making use of local dynamics

as well. We are initiating a more active process in the international arena, with the hope and aim that the whole world will act upon conscience.

Just as the evil does not emerge only from our own internal structure, the solution is not a process that we can handle on our own, either. We want to speed up the activities carried out in coordination with other organizations working in this field throughout the world, in the name of our goal to prevent the evil and addiction before it even starts. We believe that there is a lot to do, especially in the countries where addiction and the production of addictive substances are widespread. For this purpose, the Green Crescent, with its experience of almost a century, will remain determined to carry its knowledge and efforts to the international arena, and to mobilize the collective conscience of humanity in the fight against addiction.

There are many causes of addiction. It is impossible to focus on just one single cause and achieve results from methods based on only that specific cause, where many psychological, physiological, cultural and environmental factors exist. Taking such an easy way out is no different than what an ostrich does when it sees its hunter. Addiction of smoking, alcohol, drugs and the recently developed technology can pass through many doors and find new spaces and victims. Beside the causes of addiction, what we really need to pay attention to is the tools of addiction, namely, the means that influence and push individuals, the youth, into addiction.

When individuals step out of didactic education processes in their families and schools through the marketing strategies of the media and addiction industry, they become easier targets that are more prone to influence, under the name of freedom. This opening that comes along with getting out of teachings and restrictions of their families and schools that interfere in, limit and push in an unpleasant way, makes the children/youth open to ideas of "being free" and "realizing oneself". This

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pursuit of independence of individuals suddenly becomes a tool for addiction. This concept of freedom combined with the pressure of the ideas inflicted on has two authorities and elements. One, this idealized and marketed world; and two, the acknowledgement of the peers sharing the same interests and expectations. Peers are the only place where the individuals who turn their backs to the difficulties of being good and responsible find acknowledgement and appreciation.

This situation that we can call “the peer effect” provides two benefits to individuals. First, finding an authority that likes and appreciates the situations and tendencies that are not approved by authorities such as the family and school. Second, the psychological confidence resulted by seeing the peers also sharing the same evil by doing things considered as bad. As a result of that, the individuals isolated by the increasing criticism and pressure of the families and schools, are left even weaker in their peer groups. At that point, these individuals are now forced to behave according to the interests and tendencies of their peers, and making the expected sacrifices and attempts to get accepted by and belong to the group. And then it is difficult to predict where these individuals will stop.

On the other hand, we cannot undervalue the number of young people who have received good family discipline, good education and who have made healthy progress, and have strong personalities and characters. What needs to be done and what the Green Crescent has adopted as a method is to encourage the youth in the right direction. The youth constitutes the most important part of the purest and cleanest times in terms of emotions and thoughts, because the demand for justice and tendency to sacrifice oneself in the name of what is right, and of their ideals, exist intensively in young people. And that is why we have the opportunity to educate our youth and make them volunteer to fight against the addictions of their peers by setting good role models. Young people diverted to quests outside of the teachings and ideas of families and schools, will easily accept their peers who are mentally and physically healthy, and who look to life and the future with confidence. This way, peer groups will move from being a tool of the evil and addiction to leading the way for raising educated generations who will look to the future with confidence. Also, generations who have chosen this path of commitment to benefit and human-oriented

thinking will safeguard the future of our nations.

It must be our primary goal to bring together around an ideal the quests, which are presented to our youth under the name of freedom, and which trap them in the web of addiction industry, and to raise our youth as responsible individuals with strong minds, morals and personalities of the future.

For our social values and healthy family structure to be carried into the future in the hands of mentally and physically healthy generations, we have adopted an understanding and determination beyond daily philosophical and political debates. We aim to transform the “Green Crescent” idea into a structure that is more efficient and more active both in the service of our nation and of humanity, through ideals and ideas that we have preserved since the first day of our inception, by opposing to the misinterpretation of the definition and requirements of freedom as well as some negative mentalities that stand out as the values of our era.

The Green Crescent Society is the oldest public health organization in Turkey. It was established in 1920 in solidarity with the international temperance movements, which were significant mass movements during the post war years. Turkish Green Crescent Society was founded by a group of patriotic intellectuals from a diverse set of backgrounds in 1920, following the period when the British army occupied Istanbul, as a response to the British attempts to distribute booze and drugs free of charge in Istanbul in an effort to undermine the resistance against the occupation. The founders sensed the upcoming dangers of alcohol and drug addiction that resulted in a decline in the resistance against the occupation especially among young people. The patriotic intellectuals established the “Green Crescent”, with the name of “Hilal-i Ahdar” in Istanbul in order to warn the Turkish society.

The Green Crescent is a non-profit and non-governmental organization that empowers the youth and adults through factual information about drugs so they can make informed decisions against different kinds of addictions including alcohol, tobacco, drug, gambling etc. The society historically focused on alcohol policies until 1960. Today, however, it deals with not only alcohol, but also addiction of tobacco, drugs, gambling and recently, technology. The Green Crescent Society contributes to public health by developing evidence-based prevention programs

and advocating for legal, social and environmental changes on the fight against addiction.

We fight against addictions that destruct the mental and physical health of the youth in cooperation with the private sector, governmental bodies and international organizations. We work to develop contemporary strategies for dealing with consumption of addictive substances and for the prevention of addiction by using evidence-based scientific methods. Our efforts are especially focused on carrying out preventive social and advocacy activities aiming to create public opinion and raise awareness of the decision-makers and the general public.

Parallel to our national struggle against addiction, we have recently intended to widen our scope and promote establishment of similar institutions worldwide. First, as a decision made by FIMA Council, an "Addiction Working Group" was formed in FIMA and some member IMAs took lead in this initiative and played an important role in the enlargement process of Green Crescent. Moreover, the Turkish Green Crescent started this initiative in 2013; and so far, 40 national Green Crescents have been officially established. In addition to the national Green Crescents, the International Federation of Green Crescents was launched as a global umbrella organization with

the leadership of the Turkish Green Crescent Society in Istanbul in 2016 and later signed a protocol of cooperation with FIMA.

Speaking of its works, the International Federation of Green Crescents and member organizations will focus on prevention, advocacy, rehabilitation and coordination by using evidence-based methods in the struggle against addiction. It will seek solutions to local problems of member countries, by considering local values and cultural characteristics. The Federation will coordinate addiction-related studies, researches and activities in member countries. The Federation and member Green Crescents together will develop active collaborations with different social groups and other international organizations.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to encourage all FIMA members and responsive health professionals to take an initiative to form and improve Green Crescents in their countries for the social welfare of our ummah and the humanity in general.

I hope, in the near future, we can achieve jointly to make our world smoke-free, alcohol-free, drug-free and to protect our next generations from all kinds of addictions that are the evils of the modern world.