



Meningitis education in schools: raising disease awareness in Türkiye

Türkiye had an estimated 3,440 meningitis cases in 2021, the sixth highest number in the World Health Organization EURO region* – so increasing both awareness and vaccination rates is crucial. The **Meningitis Volunteers Association (MVA)**'s 2025 World Meningitis Day Advocacy Fund project aimed to help primary school children and their parents understand meningitis, recognise symptoms early and feel confident in the importance of vaccination. Volunteers focused on providing clear, accessible information and strengthening meningitis awareness.

Organisation

Meningit Gönüllüleri Derneği
(Meningitis Volunteers
Association, MVA)

Background

Volunteer-run organisation
dedicated to raising
awareness of meningitis

Location

Türkiye

Project

MVA worked directly with teachers and school administrators to plan dedicated awareness sessions. These sessions were designed to be clear and approachable, using simple explanations supported by presentations to help children and adults understand symptoms, treatment and the role of vaccination.

MVA gave each child a meningitis-themed colouring book and pencils, as well as a brightly coloured canvas drawstring bag printed with MVA's logo and an image of the globe.

MVA's colouring books have proved to be an effective way to raise awareness in the past. The

simple images and short, clear sentences help children feel more comfortable and confident about vaccination. Messages like "The difference between illness and health is just the tip of a needle" and "Early diagnosis saves lives" encourage parents to protect their children and to act quickly if they notice symptoms. The books can

* Meningitis Research Foundation (2024). Meningitis Progress Tracker - <https://tracker.meningitis.org/>

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be used both in the classroom and at home, giving children and their families more chances to learn, talk about the information and build understanding together.

A key element of the project was the involvement of university student volunteers. Their presence added warmth and made the awareness sessions feel more relatable to both children and parents. Families responded positively to the volunteers' sincerity, which helped build trust and supported stronger engagement throughout the activities.

MVA also incorporated elements from CoMO's World Meningitis Day toolkit in all their materials. This included the "Member of CoMO" badge, translated infographics and adapted social media posts that reinforced the core messages delivered in schools. They shared these social media posts throughout their campaign.

The project and wider World Meningitis Day campaign were featured in two local newspapers, broadening MVA's reach beyond the school gates.

Outcomes and impact

The project achieved its main goal of increasing understanding of meningitis among children and families. Students responded well to interactive activities and parents reported feeling more confident about recognising symptoms and knowing when to seek medical help.

The project reached 1,500 people through school activities, 5,000 on social media and an estimated 2,000–4,000 through the newspaper articles. In the longer term, MVA anticipates earlier recognition of symptoms, greater vaccine acceptance and stronger participation in advocacy work.

Looking ahead

MVA believe the project would not have been possible without the Advocacy Fund, as their activities usually rely on personal contributions. For future work, they hope to reach more schools and involve media representatives in school visits to broaden visibility.



Further resources

<https://www.meningit.org/>

[Instagram page](#)

Contacts

Meningitis Research Foundation
and the Confederation of
Meningitis Organisations:

[meningitis.org](https://www.meningitis.org)

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The Advocacy Fund process turns commitment and passion into real action, strengthens collaboration and amplifies your voice in meningitis advocacy. It is a valuable opportunity to raise awareness, inspire communities and make a lasting difference.

Mehmet Gençel, MVA Founder

