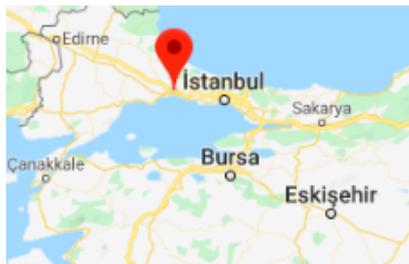


The Increase Teams' Gathering: Reflect and Envision Istanbul, 14-19 November 2019



Increase is an Association of church-based training movements, led and governed in Asia. Increase's vision is to see

**“churches equipping all Christ's followers in their contexts,
so that many millions are disciplined and empowered for mission, ministry and leadership”**



The Increase Teams' Gathering brought together almost fifty people from nearly twenty different nations, including some restricted countries. We met in Silivri, near Istanbul, Turkey.



Increase, as a network Association, depends on the volunteer work of many people working together with a shared vision and goal. Increase's volunteer teams usually work at a distance, through skype and email, saving money and carbon emissions. Much is achieved on a small budget.

But sometimes it's really important to meet face to face. These rare opportunities bring much fruit, when bathed in prayer. They refuel the personal relationships which allow the work to continue across the time zones for the years ahead.

This Teams' Gathering brought together:

- the *Equippers' Team* - twenty people who give time each year to serve member movements of the Association in many countries
- the *Increase Committee* - which gives oversight and accountability for the Association
- the *Support Team* - currently two people, in administration and communications
- the *Intercessors' Team* - who pray for all kinds of needs around the Association
- the *Increase Trust UK* - trustees of the UK charity that supports Increase
- the *Diaspora Task Group* - a team helping the Association respond to the opportunities for using TEE to disciple Asian Christians outside their homelands
- the *Course Writers' Trainers* - who are equipping new course writers in Increase member movements.

We also invited leaders of selected newer TEE teams so they could be strengthened and connected.

The 'feel' of the Gathering

Some invited guests, who had not previously been to an Increase event, commented on the sense of "family, unity and common purpose". This is God at work, and we are especially grateful!

The Programme included:

- moving and powerful small group discussions studying God's Word using lessons from newly written TEE courses on persecution, the spirit world and believers of Muslim background;
- a fun time with lots of creativity introducing participants to one another;
- useful and insightful sessions charting the stages of development of different Increase member organizations, and Increase itself;
- focussed prayer and attention on the process for choosing a new General Secretary for Increase;
- very valuable *Reflect & Envision* tracks for both the Equippers and the invited TEE Practitioners;
- lots of smaller focus groups looking at e.g. smartphone TEE, TEE in North India, TEE & integral mission, TEE in Europe, and more.



What are we particularly thankful for?

1. We started a clear process to find new leadership for Increase

This was done intentionally and prayerfully together, before God. All participants were involved in this process and a search committee has started its work. Increase seeks an expanded leadership team in place before Tim Green hands on the baton as general secretary in March 2021.

2. Connections were strengthened within and between increase teams

A sense of 'team' was strengthened within teams that usually can only meet virtually. And many more relationships were made and deepened between members of different teams. These strong and healthy relationships are vital for the way increase works.

We had invited some TEE leaders from selected countries so they could connect with Increase, dream dreams for their futures and resolve some issues. Many found this helpful and encouraging.



3. We understood organizational development for Increase and its members

Helpful sessions on 'Stages of Organizational Development' showed that Increase member organizations are at almost every stage of development from 'new born' to 'old age in need of renewal'. The Increase Association itself is needing consolidation after rapid growth and change in the last decade.

4. We made progress on our vision for diaspora TEE

In 2017, we had committed to the vision of TEE as a tool for mother-tongue discipleship of diaspora believers living far from their homeland. Two years on, diaspora TEE is not just an experiment but a reality. In Istanbul we shared what we have learned from catalyzing several diaspora TEE start-ups.

This 'Diaspora Challenge' urges us to move out beyond Asia. There are so many possibilities! Europe is a leading region for action. Yet since we also need to consolidate, it would be unwise to undertake major new initiatives requiring big structural changes. However, we could send or help train small yeast-like task forces to assist diaspora initiatives outside Asia.

5. The Increase Association Equippers formed a progress plan for 2020.

The Increase Equippers are experienced people volunteering up to two weeks a year to serve members of the Association with advice and training. We see them as the 'hands and feet' of increase. The team agreed specific priorities and individual contributions for the next two years, e.g. to train course writers in Russia, run a TEE consultation in South East Asia and strengthen partnerships with selected non-TEE training providers.



6. We forged closer partnerships with some key partners.

We had guests from the Overseas Council International, from Cornerstone Trust, and from Tearfund. We so much enjoyed and appreciated their wisdom. Good fruit will surely follow.

7. We formed two new Task groups.

Increase task groups are formed for a specific task with timebound outcomes.

- The task group on *Sharing our Courses* will produce principles and a template for Increase members to share with each other the new TEE courses they are creating in their contexts.
- The *Strategic Publications* task group was also formed. Our book *TEE in Asia* is helping many to see what God is doing through TEE. We see the need for a thorough, in-depth follow-up publication that gives solid foundations for TEE for academic readers. This task group will commission papers and case studies that can form such a book.

The feedback

On the final day, people were asked what was the best thing about the Gathering... Here are some of the things they said:

- "To experience that basic TEE lessons are really profound"
- "To see national TEE groups in new countries"
- "To sense the family of God in unity and purpose. There is a lot of work being done and there is also a deep sense of family. It feels like a foretaste of heaven."
- "To see how the diaspora ministry can benefit my country"
- "It's both spiritual and business. It does not feel like a conference but like a spiritual retreat. And yet we get a lot of work done."
- "It's a blessing to hear about grassroot level and new courses for new contexts."

The finances

Right up to the start of the gathering we were concerned about an expected deficit. But some participants kindly covered their flights in other ways, so expenditure was less than expected. Also the income was more than expected due to some last minute donations. So God generously provided all that was needed!

The total expenditure was £26,376.75 (US\$34,038.91) and total income was £27,718.23 (US\$35,767.61) plus another gift carried forward to the next Increase event. So we are deeply grateful to the donors and to the Lord. More detailed figures can be supplied on request.

Report submitted by the Increase executive team (Tim Green and Graham Aylett), December 2019.