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Turkish Red Crescent Community Centers Social Cohesion Programme carries out activities for local community and migrants from various nationalities including especially the Syrians who had to migrate into Turkey due to civil war, conflict, terror etc. and aims to perform activities that support the development and strengthening of the communities’ culture of co-existence through creating projects and programmes which involve the communities and volunteers constituting the basis of the service, to strengthen the institutions through collaboration between public and local NGOs and thus, to reach the large masses to ensure that communities are more resilient.

“Social Cohesion Programme” intended for the implementation of these activities is composed of four sub-programmes.

Improving Peaceful Coexistence Culture
Volunteering
Strengthening Public and Civil Community
Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

PURPOSE OF THE SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAMME
Social cohesion programme aims to provide support for the cohesion of migrants -during the period that they continue living in Turkey- through increasing the resilience of the community for creating a self-sufficient community and developing the co-existence culture with the local community.

Total number of people reached as of April 2020 within the scope of Social Cohesion Programme

368,210
1- IMPROVING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE CULTURE

AIM AND SCOPE

“Improving Peaceful Coexistence culture” sub-programme is implemented to improve mutual empathy, understanding and tolerance of local community and migrants through ensuring that they get to know each other better in a peaceful and environment. As part of the programme, various projects, events, trainings and organizations are carried out.

Community Centers contribute to self-improvement by forming workshops which will support the social cohesion. Among these workshops, speaking clubs and language learning play the most important role in the cohesion of migrants into Turkey.

In order to ensure that migrants and local community get to know each other better from the viewpoints of culture and history, science and history talks, social activities, sportive activities for young people and children are carried out.

For the purpose of changing the image/perception of local community as “people in need” towards migrants, detecting and supporting the people with special abilities or special experiences among them as well as involving the migrants to find a solution to the issues considered as problem, deficiency or need within the community are performed as part of the positive image studies.

Community Centers conduct academic and cohesion themed meetings to keep up to date and to develop solution proposals together with the relevant stakeholders in the cities they work.

Contact meetings are performed and visits are made on-site in the subjects such as migration for the people/institutions, notably the state institutions and organizations, which provide service to the community. Furthermore, studies on these subjects are carried out to support social cohesion together with all media companies within possibility.
The aim of Speaking Club workshops designed for supporting the daily life language practices is to strengthen the sub-sections (speaking, reading and listening) of language courses opened within the Community Centers and to support theoretical information taught in the lesson through practical studies. Speaking clubs are created to support all kinds of language courses including Turkish, Arabic, English, and Persian etc. opened within the Community Centers. As part of the Speaking Clubs, the number of people reached through Community Centers is 655 as from April 2020.
Immigrating Flavors:

“Immigrating Flavors” workshop as supportive of the courses is carried out to promote the establishment of friendship and neighboring relationship among the women who come together at culinary workshops, to allow locals and migrants’ flavors become known better. As part of this workshop, the cohesion studies are promoted through performing workshop with migrants and local participants.

Total: 95 people
As of April 2020

Social Cohesion through Sports:

Due to the connecting characteristic of sports and with each person pushing the belonging personality in the background for the team spirit work, sports competitions, events and team-works for the local and migrant community are carried out. As part of this, football and volleyball tournaments under the topic of Cohesion and Fellowship were performed at many Community Centers.

Total: 2,000 people
As of April 2020
**Academic Meetings:**

Academic meetings under the subject of “Syrian Crisis: Community-Based Migration Approach Academician Meeting” are held at Community Centers to include the academic community into our studies for migrants, to add an academic perspective to our studies and to receive feedbacks from academicians. Academic meetings were held at Community Centers of Ankara, İstanbul (Bağcılar), Gaziantep and Mardin until April 2020.

**Common Culture History Meetings and Seminars:**

By bringing together the local community with the migrants on the subject of mutual history, series of conversations and meetings that will contribute to their co-existence are performed. As part of this, Çanakkale was visited on 2nd November 2019 for the migrant and local family members who martyred at 1915 Dardanelles Battle. 29 martyr family members and senior management participated to this visit.
Tolerance and Values Workshop:

Tolerance and values workshop is carried out within the collaboration of Community Centers with the Offices of Mufti in their cities or districts. As part of this, official of the Office of Mufti performs conversations on certain topics with the local community and migrants every week.

Total: 183 people

Komşuluk Projesi:

Neighborhood project is carried out in order to develop a culture of cooperation and solidarity, to increase tolerance in society, to strengthen social cohesion, and to ensure that communities get to know each other better and thus eliminate prejudices. As part of this several social cohesion activities (for neighbors get to know each other through food, coffee, city tours etc.) by bringing the migrants with local community are performed.

Total: 183 people
2- VOLUNTEERING

AIM AND SCOPE

The manner of work based on volunteerism is one of the fundamental principles of Turkish Red Crescent being one of the National Societies. Therefore, the volunteers are the essential elements that are included in all processes for all the activities performed. It is aimed that the works are adjusted, policies are created, and volunteers are recruited and executed in the determined areas within the framework of collaborations found appropriate as per the coordination in the voluntarism studies which are carried out by Community-Based Migration Programmes in coordination with Turkish Red Crescent Directorate of Volunteer Management. The volunteers are aimed to take a certain training programme and improve themselves while the Community Centers are aimed to reach larger people.

Community Center volunteer contributes to various areas carried out within the center as a volunteer and has a chance to attend to many workshops which will improve him/her. On the other hand, added value is provided for the studies through the collaborations with the institutions in the area of volunteering.

In many activities carried out inside or outside the community center, under the supervision of Red Crescent staff; you can be volunteer in Child Friendly Area, Child Activity Area, Vocational Courses, Activities and Events by performing as Translator or Educator, in Community Center’s Office affairs, Information and Guidance (Helpdesk), at the Field and during household Visits as well as in the areas of Media and Communication or as Healthcare Provider.

In order to add value to the activities carried out in community centers and to carry the activities to a wider ground, a volunteer cooperates with institutions/organizations, notably such as the Young Red Crescent, the Community Service Practices of Universities or related student communities, United Nations Volunteering programme, and Ministry of Youth and Sports.
This project, aiming to support the migrant and local students (living in the cities) for their schools courses was firstly realized in Adana, Bursa, Gaziantep, İstanbul (Bağcılar), İzmir and Şanlıurfa. As part of the project, the following lessons were provided: Turkish, Mathematics, Geometry, and Chemistry. 23 teachers out of 86 approved teachers actively provided courses. 50 students out of 143 approved ones received courses. Hour of lessons completed is 154.

In order to ensure voluntary attendance to the courses for practical purposes of the universities (social service etc.), Turkish Red Crescent Community Centers presentations are performed and the programmes are explained in details. Within this scope, collaborations are made with the universities in the cities where each Community Center is located. Upon recruiting volunteers, a field of activity is determined according to the qualifications of the volunteer at the Community Centers and training are provided. The number of volunteers carrying out activities as part of the Social Cohesion Programme is 92.
3- STRENGTHENING PUBLIC AND CIVIL COMMUNITY

AIM AND SCOPE

There are local NGOs which carry out programmes to make contributions to migration-themed policies of the government that is authorized in the regions of Turkey where migrants mostly live. It is aimed to provide service to larger masses by means of increasing the capacities of these institutions through making collaborations with them.

The good practices of NGOs providing service in the field of migration are determined and these are integrated to the Community Centers through collaborations. In addition, studies are carried out to evaluate the possible collaborations of NGOs who are specialized in a particular subject according to their areas of expertise and to provide services in this regard.

Considering the diversity of the serviced mass, there is a need for various curricula. These needs are conducted through supporting the models performed by the reliable NGOs that are expert in their areas and through realizing these at the community centers.
Şafak Radio:

Gaziantep Community Center participates in Şafak Radio as a guest every week in order to raise awareness of the society about migration and to provide information about Turkish Red Crescent activities via radio. Guests can be Community Center staff as well as people who will raise awareness and have a reputation in the eyes of the public. One guess participates in the programme and provides information on several topics every week. Turkish lessons are also given through this radio programme.

Social Cohesion Neighborhood Meetings in Collaboration with DGMM:

With the Neighborhood Meetings project developed by the Directorate General of Migration Management, Department of Harmonization and Communication, it is aimed to bring together local and migrant communities, provide a social environment, strengthen the neighborhood culture, highlight success stories, inform about rights and obligations, and organize various activities. As part of this, 4 Neighborhood Meetings were carried out in collaboration with GIGM as the Turkish Red Crescent Social Cohesion Programme during May 2019 (Ramadan).
Social Cohesion Trainings in Collaboration with DGMM:

“Support to Refugees Transitioning to Communities Project” was realized in collaboration with Director General of Migration Management, World Bank and Turkish Red Crescent. With this project, social cohesion trainings are provided for the migrants who want to transfer from camps into the city life and activities ensuring the social cohesion are carried out.

Social Cohesion without Barriers Workshop:

The beneficiaries of the project, which was realized with the joint participation of Gaziantep Community Center Social Cohesion Programme and Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality Center for Barrier-Free Living, are as follows: totally 10 (18-45 years old) beneficiaries including 5 male disabled beneficiaries from local community and 5 Syrian disabled beneficiaries.
AIM AND SCOPE

Improving the communications, community engagement and accountability in the programmes and activities carried out within the scope of the community center is at the heart of our work.

In addition to delivering timely and accurate information, maintaining a two-way dialogue with communities is important to ensure that the needs, complaints and suggestions of people are timely and regularly listened to and acted on. It makes programmes and activities at the Community Centre more effectively and increasing the sustainability. For this reason, activities are carried out to raise awareness by ensuring the participation of communities in certain processes of the performed activities, identifying and bringing solutions to issues such as prejudices, rumors and false facts against the local and migrant community in the society.

It is important to share accurate information on the right time and to maintain the two-way dialogue with the community as well as listening to their complaints and suggestions regularly. Creating a feedback system within the humanitarian aid programmes and ensuring two-way dialogue increase the quality and effectiveness of the programmes. As part of this, feedbacks are received through various communication channels and according to these feedbacks; the required adjustments are made in the programmes and activities.

Rumors within the community may sometimes cause hate speeches and tension among the local and migrant community. In order to prevent these, it is ensured that the communities reach to exact information through performing various empathy and awareness activities.

In order to monitor the rumors among the migrant and local community, a complaint and feedback mechanism having multiple communication channels (face-to-face, tablet, opinion and suggestion box) is set up at each community center.
Advisory Committees:

Advisory Committees is formed to share and discuss expectations, feedback and possible problems related to the services of Community Centers or to the subjects affecting the community. The advisory committee comprises of 15 community member migrants and local community leaders between the ages of 18-65. The members are changed once every sixth months. Advisory Committees which started on May 2019 are established at 16 Community Centers. As of April 2020, 104 Advisory Committee meetings were held.
Young Advisory Committees:

Young Advisory Committees were established to create an area where young people under the age of 18 can discuss their expectations, feedbacks and possible problems regarding the Community Center. Young Advisory Committees put into operation on September 2019 realized 28 meetings.
False Facts Seminars:

In order to break the false perceptions of the society about migrants and to inform them correctly, ‘Syrian Perception: False Facts’ brochures were prepared and distributed by Community Centers. Moreover, Presentation and Video was prepared as part of the False Facts and seminars were organized for several occupational groups (teachers, police, soldiers, health officials etc.) As of October 2019, 205 seminars were organized and 7876 people were reached.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) Training:

A 3-day basic CEA training prepared by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is translated into Turkish language and is given to Turkish Red Crescent staff within the scope of capacity building by Turkish Red Crescent Community Based Migration Programme and IFRC.
CEA Guide:

CEA Guide prepared by IFRC was translated into Turkish and disseminated with Turkish Red Crescent staff and stakeholders.

CEA Assessment:

CEA assessment aims to provide an analysis of migrant and local community’s communication channels that are accessible and preferred by people, community structure, social cohesion, behavior, preferred mechanism for raising concern and sharing feedback in Turkey. This was conducted in six locations of five cities and involved 420 individual surveys and 24 focus group discussion (FGD). The findings of this assessment will guide adjustments to ongoing operations.

Knowledge and Information Needs on COVID-19:

To understand the knowledge, attitude and information needs on COVID-19 of communities, both migrant and local people, along with their preferred channels for communication, Turkish Red Crescent has conducted online meetings with pre-established community forums, the Advisory Committee, in each of 16 Community Centers from 26-27 March 2020. The study outputs are on the attachment.

While the non-essential activities of the Community Centers are suspended and people are advised to stay indoors, Turkish Red Crescent is aiming to maximize its reach to people with access to information on COVID-19. At the same time, Turkish Red Crescent is focusing on having two-way dialogue with community members instead of one-way messaging. Given that the understanding about this virus and the resulting outbreak is rapidly evolving, any information gaps among people can potentially lead to misperceptions, rumours, mistrust and panic. Hence it is critical to capture and act on the feedback and concerns of the communities we work with, to provide relevant information, adjust programmes and build long-term trust.
Complaint and Feedback Mechanism:

It is of great importance to listen to the needs, complaints and suggestions of the society in a timely and regular manner, and to design programmes according to the needs of the society as well as maintaining two-way communication with the community, and providing timely and accurate information. Setting up feedback mechanism within humanitarian programmes ensures that the communities we work with can hold us to account and will improve the quality and effectiveness of our work. Handling feedback and complaints is an essential part of an organization’s commitment to being liable to its stakeholders. It can offer to validate whether specified goals are being met and signal well-timed changes or decisions to remedy or mitigate potential problems.

A Complaints and Feedback Mechanism was created to deal with and respond explicitly and transparently to the local and migrant community’s complaints (sensitive or not), feedback, questions and rumors about Community Centers in a safe and confidential manner. Complaints, feedbacks, questions and rumors will be obtained with the Feedback Mechanism through face-to-face, tablet, opinion and suggestion box, 168 call center line, advisory committees and young advisory committees. This system initiated at 5 pilot Community Centers on February 2020 will be disseminated to other Community Centers.