

MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

SULTANBEYLI MUNICIPALITY
TURKEY



CATEGORIES

- S** Overcoming Division
- A** Connecting activities & community events

PRESENTER

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DESCRIPTION

To address some challenges posed by a large number of refugees moving into the municipality we established a multi-purpose community centre open to locals and refugees: it hosts a designated social cohesion unit and organises various activities encouraging people to spend time together. The centre offers health care, protection, legal support, education, and employment.

MOTIVATION

The aim is to improve the cohabitation of local people and refugees living in the district as increasing awareness of social cohesion has been one key motivation. Preventing hate speech in the district was also one main purpose of our project. We aim towards inclusivity in the regions where we implement our activities; leaving no one behind is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs of United Nations programme. We want to reach both every refugee and local person who needs assistance.

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

The initial hospitality of Sultanbeyli citizens decreased when it became clear that refugees would stay permanently. This has led to discontent, tensions, discrimination, and xenophobia in the community.

MORE DETAILS

We serve the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our area and give them priority in our planning processes.

Sultanbeyli Municipality Community Centre project gives free support and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers regarding health care, education, culture, law, rehabilitation, interpreting, employment, humanitarian aid, and shelter. We collaborate with many international, national and local institutions and work with various ministries, municipalities, and NGOs.

There are two clinics who support those in need of psychological help and those who have physical disabilities due to war. We also offer various workshops on language, sewing, hairdressing, music, and IT courses. Our legal department provides legal counsel and guidance. Our employment desk provides consultancy services, gives assistance to refugees looking for work, and offers vocational training. Our social cohesion unit organizes activities and carries out projects that increase social cohesion between the local community and refugee groups living in the district of Sultanbeyli. We have also established specialised assemblies for children, women, and men as part of our social cohesion activities. Our women's assembly has attracted many women's attention and increased the dialogue amongst them.

OUTCOMES

We've created a system that provides systematic support to refugees and responds well to their needs of refugees, and we've established a holistic community centre. We've further successfully collaborated with public institutions, civil society institutions, and the private sector, both within and outside the district, and ensured their involvement in the process of migration management policies.

LESSONS LEARNED

- all stakeholders need to be involved in the process in order for it to be sustainable
- the capacity of local governments needs to be increased
- social cohesion has to be achieved first at the local level
- strategies to address increasing population numbers must be developed and local populations must spend time with refugee groups
- refugees must be included in decision-making processes
- inclusive projects must be created