

Evaluation Report

ISTANBUL BAĞCILAR COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT FOR SYRIAN PEOPLE UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION IN TURKEY



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Contents

1. Background / Situation	3
2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation.....	3
3. Team composition and evaluation methodology	4
4. Key findings and observations	5
5. Recommendations.....	13
6. Lessons learned	16

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge and thank the staff of the community centre as well as the colleagues from the Turkish Red Crescent for their valuable assistance in logistical and administrative support during the visit and also for interest, commitment and active participation in the community centre's evaluation mission.

1. Background / Situation

The conflict in Syria has now entered its sixth year and created an overwhelming and enduring humanitarian crisis, resulting in internal and external displacement, loss of thousands of lives and severe damages to infrastructure, roads, buildings and livelihoods. Currently, some 4.96 million Syrian people are living in the countries alone neighbouring Syria, with further displacement beyond the region into other areas. About 3.2 million registered refugees are living in Turkey, including Syrians, Iraqis, Afghan, Iranian, Somalian and other nationalities. Out of them, as of 8 June 2017, there were over 3 million Syrian people living in Turkey,¹ some 247,638 people are currently living in camps under the protection of the Turkish Government.² Majority of these people consists of the most vulnerable portion of the population: mainly women and children.

In the protection camps, the Turkish Red Crescent (TRCS) is offering a variety of services including nutrition, shelter, and psychosocial support, thus contributing to the Turkish Government led operation for Syrian population.

Due to the influx of Syrian people into Turkey, the Turkish Red Crescent increased its efforts to provide support to Syrians living in urban areas. The assistance provided to the Syrian population was primarily maintained through the branches of the TRCS. The needs and vulnerability of Syrian people living in urban areas are increasing as their previously available resources are getting depleted. Thus, realizing that there is a structured system in place for supporting the protected Syrian population living in camps, the Turkish Red Crescent has been further expanding the scope of its activities to address the needs of these people and aims to engage in action in urban areas as well through the launch of its community centre project.

In its community centres, the Turkish Red Crescent has been providing: (a) information on registration and services; (b) protection; (c) psychosocial support (PSS) and children and youth-oriented activities; (d) capacity-building and strengthening community links through cultural lessons and harmonization activities (e) livelihood support including language and vocational training; and (f) hygiene and healthy lifestyle promotion.

Currently, there are ten operational community centres run by the Turkish Red Crescent in Adana, Ankara, Bursa, Istanbul-1 (Sultanbeyli), Istanbul-2 (Bağcılar), Izmir, Kilis, Konya, Mersin and Sanliurfa. Several more community centres are envisaged to be opened until the end of 2017.

In the framework of its community centres` network, the Turkish Red Crescent is providing the displaced population – among others – with information on registration and referral for obtaining health and other services offered by the Turkish Government, vocational training, language courses child friendly space, activities for youth and children and psychosocial services and support for social cohesion and integration with the host community. The TRCS, through its coordination and needs assessment capacity, is also aiming at referring people to the competent institutions for reaching services not offered by TRCS, including referral of cases to Government institutions and other community centres working in the area.

2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this mission was to assess and evaluate the services provided by the community centre in Istanbul-2 (Bağcılar), as well as to conduct a Beneficiary Satisfaction Survey (BSS). A basic BSS training was also organized for the staff and volunteers of the community centre.

Taken into account the fact that since of the start of the community centre`s operation more than nine months have passed³, it was considered to be essential and important to assess the services (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, impact, coherence, sustainability, etc.) the community centre is providing to the affected population.

With the objective to improve our services and accountability through a two-way communication to people receiving assistance, after conducting the assessment on the received services and delivering the necessary support, we ask the beneficiaries to tell their thoughts and provide feedback on the services they received. Improving our accountability also enhances our credibility and the trust from the

¹ Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

² Source: <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/2374/Barinma-Merkezlerinde-Son-Durum>

³ The community centre started its operation in August 2016.

affected populations, and the process is also focusing on long-term community support for displaced people to help them cope with their new situation and to enhance their integration into the local (Turkish) community.

As indicated above, the results of the assessment will be used in the further improvement of the quality of the operations and the services provided by the Bağcılar community centre situated in Istanbul based on the assumption that gathering feedback from the beneficiaries will result in learning from the affected population through sharing of experience and gained knowledge, and that the assessment results will be followed up and if necessary and required, will lead to changes in operational practices and/or policies.

The results will also serve as a good practice and example for the other, to be opened community centres in Turkey under the International Appeal operation.

The aim of the mid-term evaluation was to analyse and comment on the project progress up to date and review the process of implementation of the project. The evaluation saw how the project is progressing, documented lessons learnt, achievements and challenges, and provides recommendations and ideas to take forward to 2017 and onwards.

3. Team composition and evaluation methodology

The team of evaluators composed of the IFRC Regional Office for Europe (ROE) PMER Manager and the IFRC Integrated Programme Coordinator based in Ankara. Two TRCS staff from Ankara were also present during the evaluation. The TRCS community centre project manager also formed a part of the team and provided support as a connector between the evaluation team and the staff of the community centre.

The mission timeframe was from 3 to 6 April 2017. The assessment covered the period from August 2016 to end of March 2016. The geographical coverage of the review was a field visit to the community centre managed by the Turkish Red Crescent in Istanbul, Turkey. The community centre is located in the European side of Istanbul, in Bağcılar district.

The review used a consultative and participative approach. The methods of data collection were defined and discussed during the first day of the evaluation, and it was jointly decided that it shall include:

- Interviews and discussions with key stakeholders including project staff and volunteers;
- Interviews with clients of the services at individual or/and group meetings (including the conducting of the beneficiary satisfaction survey (BSS) and focus group discussions (FGD)).

With the objective in mind that the staff shall learn the methods and processes of how to measure the satisfaction of the beneficiaries with the provided services, it was decided that the staff itself will conduct the focus group discussions. Special attention was paid that the groups shall be formed in a way that the staff member responsible for a certain course shall not be the part of the FGD to avoid bias. A facilitator, a note taker and a translator was part of each focus group.

Altogether 15 focus group discussions were organized, with the participation of an average 8-10 people per group.

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR
9.30	Meeting	Turkish 2 Büşre Suat	Staff Meeting 9.30 / 11.00	Hair Dressing 2 Ela Büşre
12.00		Handicraft Ela Bulut	Büşre Suat (Turkish)	Children Büşre Suat
13.30	Turkish course Bulut Suat	Computer Bulut Suat	Needle 2 Ela Bulut	
16.00	Hair Dressing Büşre Ela	Hair Dress 3 Büşre Ela	Parents Büşre Suat	
15.30		Pilates Büşre Ela		
17.00				
19.30		Turkish (men) Bulut Suat		
21.00				

Schedule for FGDs. Photo: Dorottya Patko, IFRC

The following focus groups were set up⁴: 1. Turkish language course (4), 2. Handcraft (1), 3. Hairdresser (3), 4. Sewing course (1), 5. Children (3), 6. Parents (1), 7. Staff of the community centre (2).

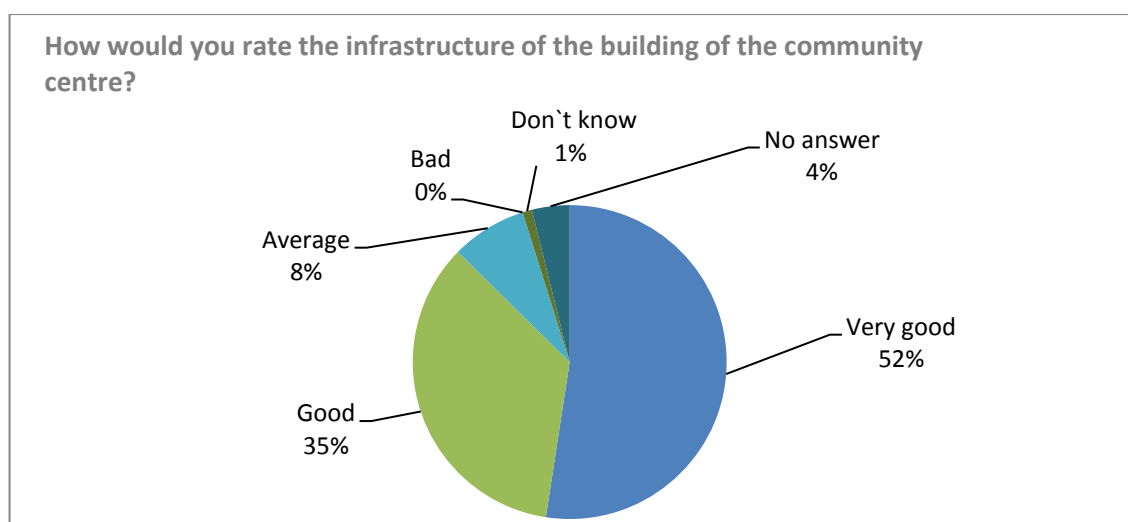
The data collected in the review is gender sensitive, checking among other if and how vulnerability of women differs from that of men and will be confidential.

4. Key findings and observations

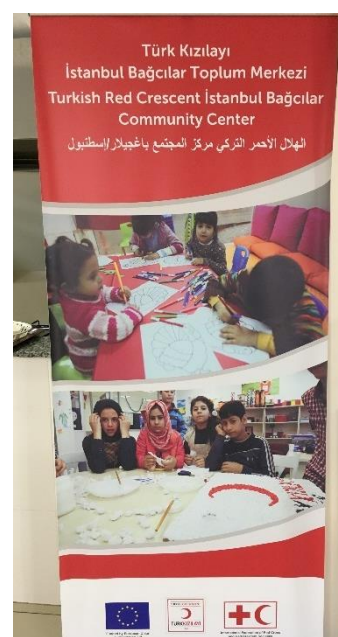
This section will divide the key findings and observations into three parts, namely, the key observations about the facility of the community centre, the feedback from the beneficiaries (outcomes of the focus group discussions, together with the results of the BSS, which will be shown with charts and clear reference), and the outcomes of the discussions with the staff of the community centre.

Facility and infrastructure

- The community centre is located in Bağcılar district of Istanbul, on the European side. Bağcılar host 40,000 people the biggest Syrian population in Istanbul.
- The general condition of the building is appropriate. The centre is not too crowded, properly furnished and there is still place for extra furniture in case it is needed. 87 per cent of the beneficiaries interviewed during the BSS rated the infrastructure of the community centre's building very good or good.



- When entering the community centre from the street, there is a closed yard. There is also another yard/playground on the other side of the building (approachable via the child-friendly space), ensuring that the children visiting the community centre can play in safe environment. On the ground floor of the building, the reception area and the Child Friendly Space (CFS) are situated. There are several course rooms, sewing room, room for the hairdresser course, for the medical/health staff (nurse), for the case workers and the psychologist as well in the building. Most of the rooms can be used for multiple purposes (classes and internal meetings as well). Rooms have been organised for the staff of the community centre (project manager, assistants, finance staff etc.), the kitchen and dining area can be used jointly by the staff, volunteers and beneficiaries visiting the centre.



⁴ The numbers in brackets show the number of focus group per type.

- Most of the rooms in the centre are big enough to accommodate a class of at least 20 people. The Child Friendly Space is very spacious, can accommodate 30+ children. All course rooms have whiteboard and markers.
- As far as the hygiene facilities are concerned, there is an English and a Turkish-style bathroom for on every floor. Separate toilets are available for children opposite to the CFS. All bathrooms are equipped with soap, toilet paper and paper towels.
- All course and meeting rooms and also the CFS are equipped with air condition, thus being cool and comfortable in the extremely hot summer weather conditions.
- The community centre fits to people with disabilities, there is an elevator in use in case it is needed.
- The logos of the Turkish RC and EU is very visible on the outside part of the building. In some rooms there are flags, banners or photographs of the activities in which the logos are shown. The logos are shown in the hallways and corridors. The staff is wearing the vest of the TRCS with the logo clearly shown.
- Fire extinguishers are available in the building. Security guard is in place in the building.

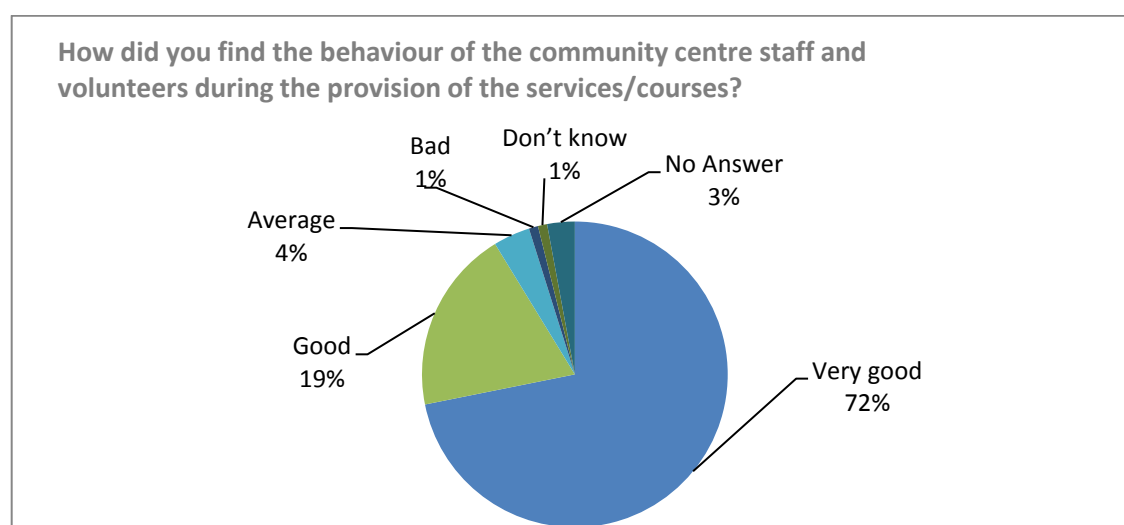
Outcomes of the FGDs and BSS results

Altogether 103 beneficiaries were interviewed and filled out the Beneficiary Satisfaction Survey during the evaluation mission. This number includes 22 children/youth of 0-17 years were involved in informal focus group discussions.

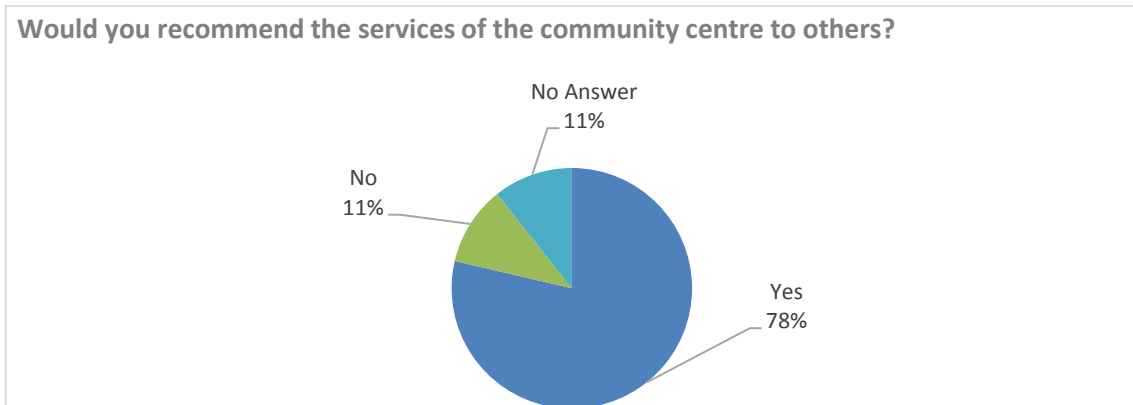
An estimated number of 1,000 people are benefitting from the services of the community centre per month. Altogether, approximately 10,642 people has used the services of the centre as of May 2017. Calculating with an average number of 1,000 visitors per month, the interview sample represents 10 per cent of the beneficiaries using the services of the centre.

- The beneficiaries – without exception – mentioned that they are very grateful to the staff of the community centre for their services, behaviour, approach and care. They emphasized that the friendly atmosphere and attitude of the staff and the centre itself make them feel more confident in Turkey and they trust and show respect towards the TRCS.

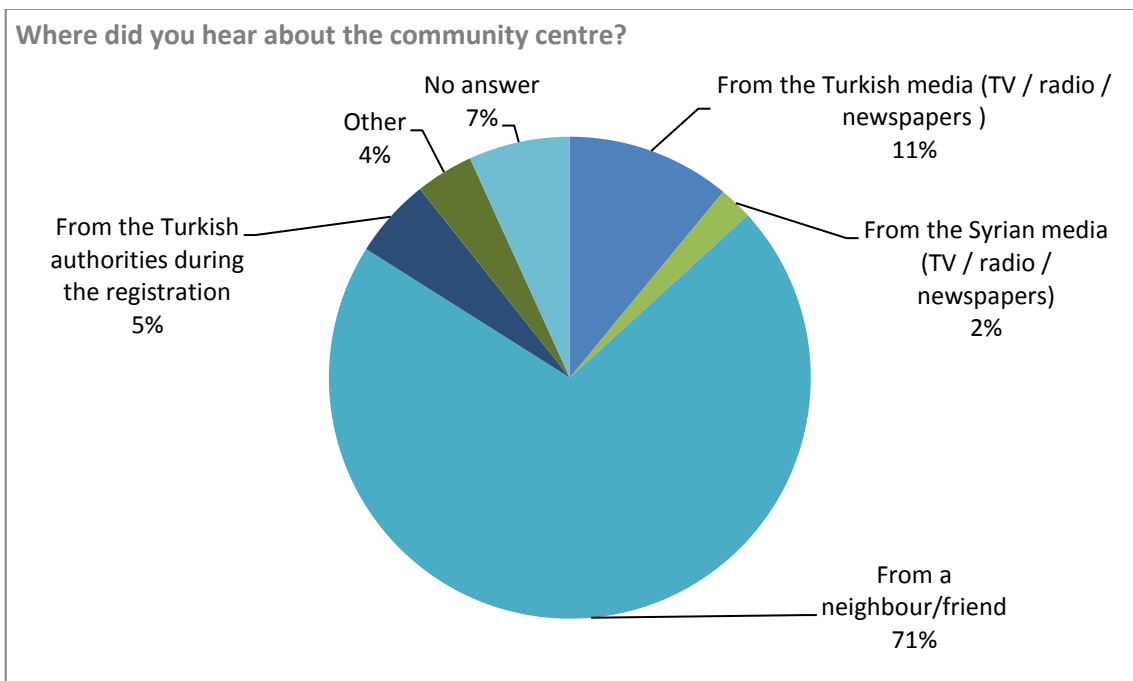
They appreciated the staff's behaviour, saying that they are treated well in the centre and being provided with help, however, they do not necessarily feel the same within the host community from time to time. The beneficiaries mentioned also that they feel safe and comfortable in the community centre, with the feeling that they are spending their time useful in an enabling environment, with the possibility to make new friends. The people interviewed emphasized that the Turkish Red Crescent helps them a lot, and it welcomed them very positively in the community centre.



- 78 per cent of the beneficiaries would recommend to others to use the services of the community centre. This clearly shows their level of satisfaction, however, there are some recommendations which might be taken into account for future activities (please see the relevant section of this report).

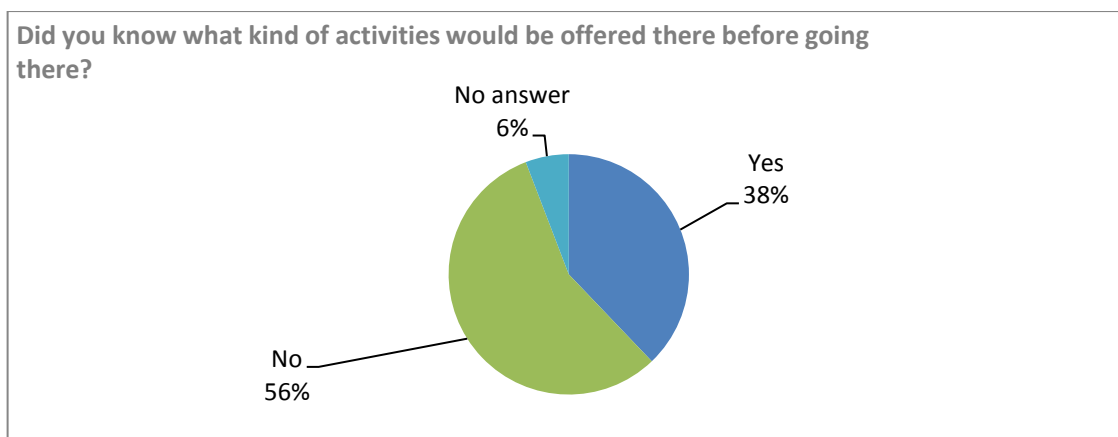


- 71 per cent of the beneficiaries were informed about the activities of the centre by word of mouth, i.e. from neighbours, relatives and friends.

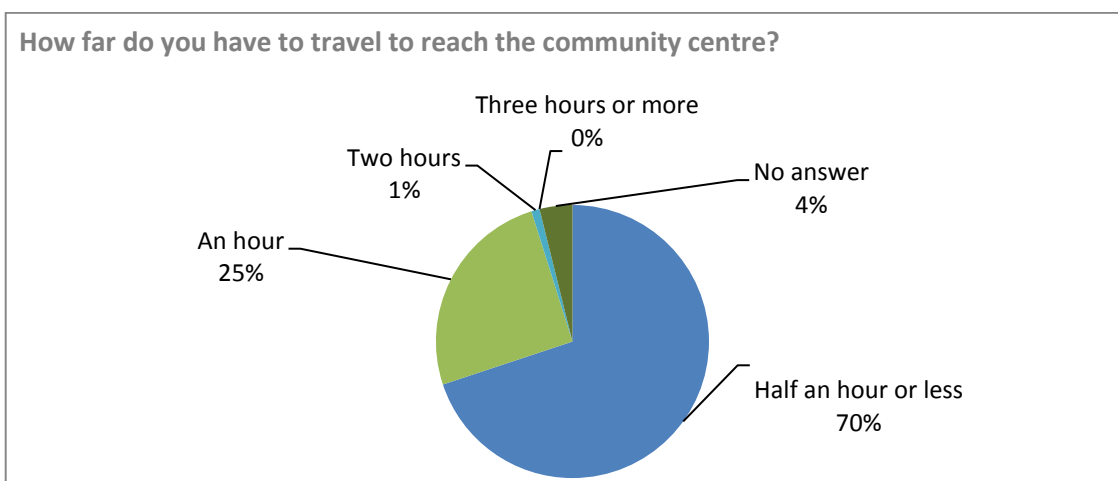


Besides the results of the BSS indicated above, during the FGDs, the beneficiaries mentioned that they received information about the community centre through outreach activities/home visits of the staff of the centre. Some of them noted that they heard about the activities in schools, hospitals/health facilities, mosques, municipality, from other NGOs, by accident walking on the street and they also mentioned that they saw it on the internet and in the social media (mainly Facebook).

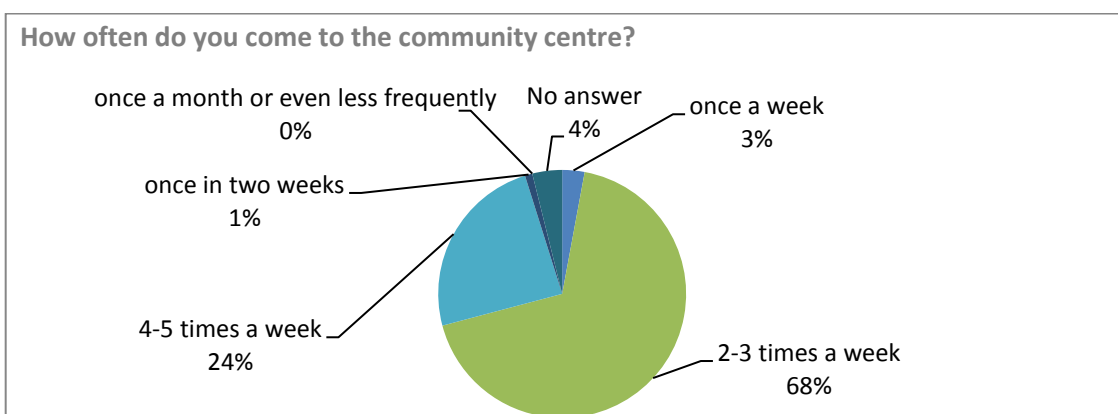
- When the beneficiaries were asked about whether they knew about the community centre and its activities prior to going there, 38 per cent of the interviewed beneficiaries answered positively. This ratio is considerably higher than the ones experienced in Sanliurfa and Istanbul-1, Sultanbeyli, however, still clearly shows that the awareness of the Syrian people shall be raised that the services of the TRCS are available for them, which shall be performed through enhancing the visibility of the centre.



- Regarding the proximity of the community centre to the beneficiaries' homes, 95 per cent of the interviewed people mentioned that they have to travel an hour or less to reach the centre. However, there were some who mentioned that it takes them close to two hours to reach the facility. The beneficiaries themselves clearly indicated that they would need some kind of transportation (organized by the community centre) so that more people could visit the centre, and even those could benefit from its services, for whom the distance is the only impedimental factor.

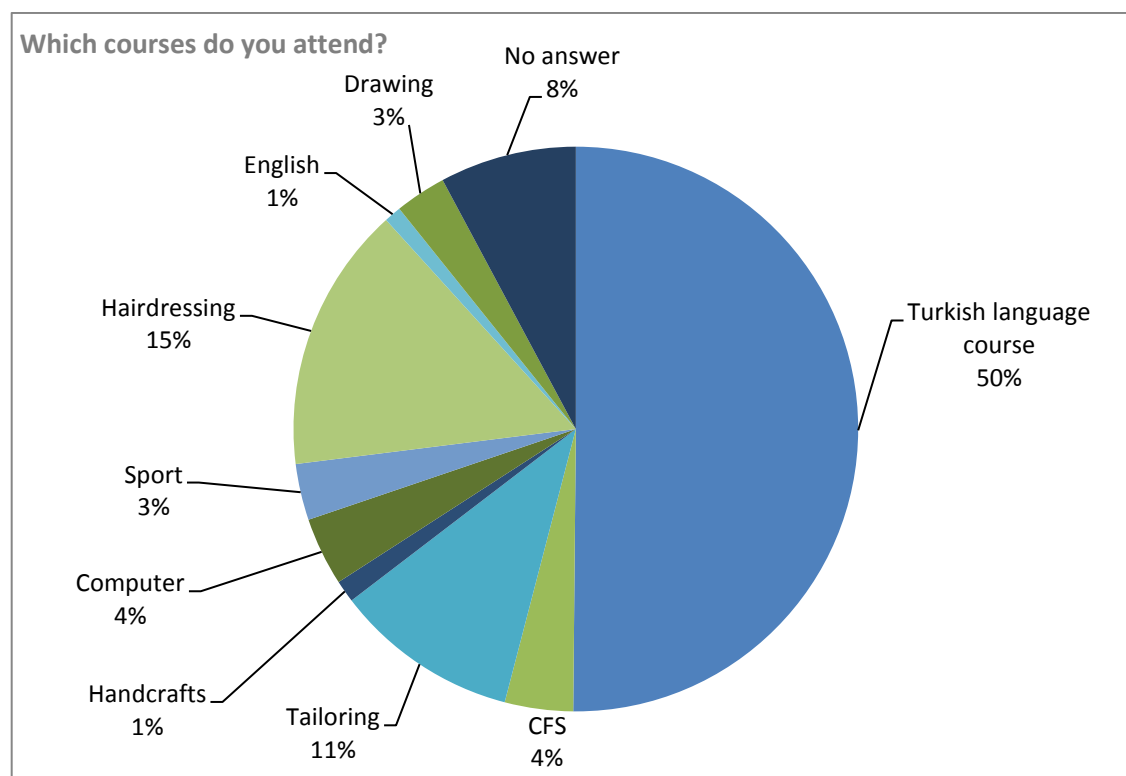


- As far as the frequency of the beneficiaries' visit to the centre is concerned, 68 per cent of them are coming to the centre 2-3 times a week, and 24 per cent 4-5 times a week. These data show that there is a definite interest from their side towards the activities and services of the community centre and also indicate that they are satisfied with the currently running activities. When interviewed, the beneficiaries made some recommendations, which will follow in the coming section of the report.



- The centre currently provides the following services to them: Turkish language course, handicraft course, art/drawing course, hairdressing course, sewing/tailoring course, computer course and Pilates classes. There is a special programme for children in the framework of the Child Friendly Space (CFS), and the centre is also providing referral and psychological services to the ones in need. For example, cases of referral to psychological support, education, health care, one-on-one interviews with the psychologist and registration were mentioned.

Comparing the results of the BSS (see below) and the outcomes of the focus group discussions, it is clear that the Turkish language course, followed by the hairdressing course and the sewing (tailoring) classes are the most popular and attended ones.



Regarding the Turkish language course, the beneficiaries mentioned that the opportunity to learn Turkish is one of the greatest added value of the centre, as such they can better adapt to and integrate into the host community; and also, they have better opportunities to find a job as well.

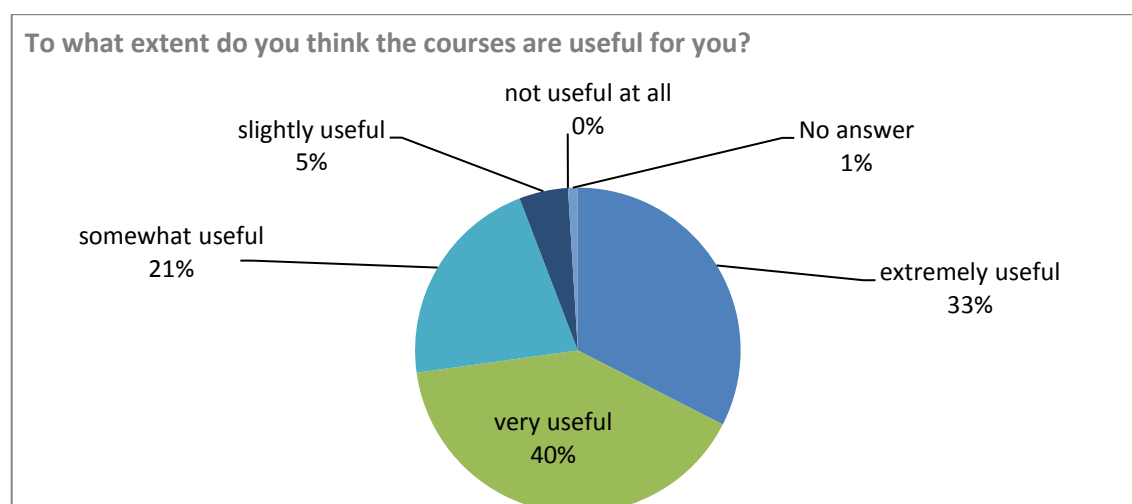
The knowledge of the local language (and thus learning about Turkish culture, traditions and customs) makes the lives of the beneficiaries considerably easier, both in the private life and work-wise, as it creates the feeling of “being part of the local context”, and also raises their cultural awareness. Also, it is valid from the other way round: the host community also understands the Syrians better, thus creating the environment of acceptance.

The beneficiaries mentioned that with Turkish knowledge they get on well with their Turkish neighbours. When explaining this, one of the interviewed beneficiaries mentioned the “five-fingers` example”, referring to the existing difference between the Turkish and Syrian population, still, they have something in common, which enhances their cooperation. Majority of the beneficiaries mentioned during the FGDs that Turkish knowledge is beneficial for them when going to the hospital as they can communicate more fluently and easier with the medical staff. Speaking the local language “gives me relief”, as one of the beneficiaries mentioned. In general, the interviewed persons emphasized that in possession of Turkish knowledge, they can reach such services which they were not able to earlier, thus they benefit enormously from the services of the community centre.

As far as vocational courses are concerned, the interviewed people noted that it is very important for them to improve their vocational skills and learn new activities in the framework of training and education, as it is a potential for them to generate income and also a long-term solution to

integrate themselves into the society. The beneficiaries mentioned that they could not sew earlier, so it is really good that they can now occupy themselves with some useful activities. One of them told that *“I will remember how to sew even when I return to Syria”*.

When asked about why the courses are useful for them, the beneficiaries among others emphasized that they are good activities to spend their time in a useful way, the environment is relaxing, they can make new friends and socialize, essential from psychological point of view and they can learn as well, which experience can be used for a job-finding opportunity in the future. However, possibilities shall be explored how they can sell their own, hand-made products at the local market and how to be self-sustainable. The beneficiaries mentioned that they are aware that no cash donations are distributed through the community centre, however, it is more important for them to receive *“non-material, emotional support”*. As one of the beneficiaries mentioned, *“the community centre helps me to get over my life and everyday problems”*.



They also mentioned that the community centre is the place where they have the feeling that people are not judging them, there is no discrimination, they can express their views and feelings freely. The staff is professional and friendly, treating them kindly and the environment is safe. One beneficiary noted that *“if I cannot come for some reasons, I feel the centre is missing...”*.

The beneficiaries have the feeling that someone cares about them (even through the outreach activities) and they are precious. Their voices are heard, they have the impression that they are important and feel the ownership in the project. The interviewed persons noted that the community centre protects them, they do not fear and feel comfortable.

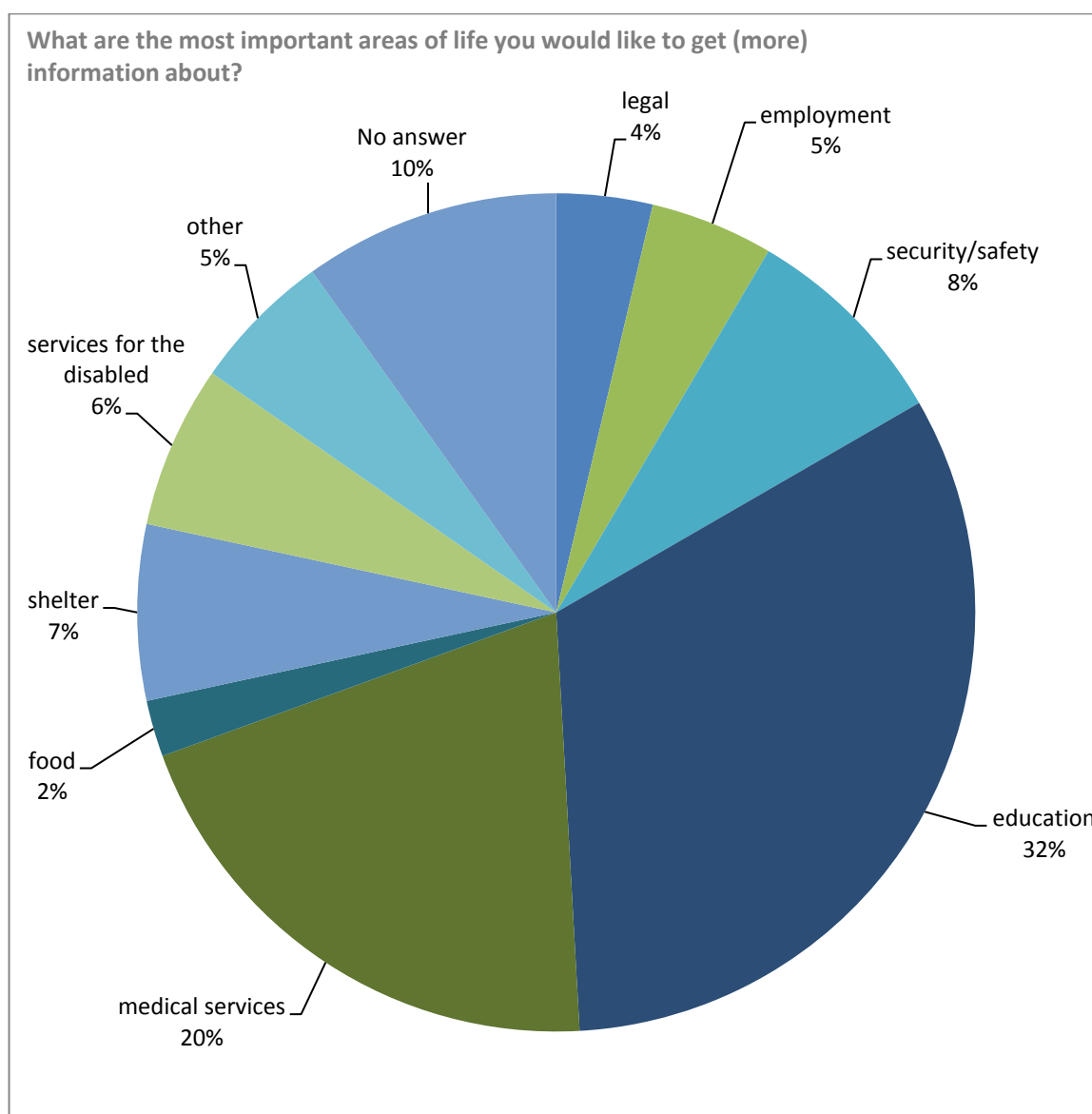
- The operation of the Child Friendly Space (CFS) in coordination with the UNICEF was highly appreciated by the interviewed beneficiaries from several points of view. They are very grateful that their children are in good hands, in an enabling environment, with possibility of playing and also learning. The interviewed people noted that they trust the staff who are dealing with their children. The beneficiaries mentioned that it is really useful to have the CFS, as when they are attending different courses, their children are handled by professionals in the CFS simultaneously. The parents mentioned that for some children the attendance at the CFS's activities mean the only possibility and opportunity to be educated. They also learn about life and how to behave with others. The feeling of socialization, being in community and with children of the same age is also an added value of the centre.

It is also essential from psychological point of view to organize different kind of joyful activities for the children, who might have been traumatized. There is definitely a need to continue the activities in the CFS as the stress and trauma of the children clearly decreases via taking part in the children-specific activities.

The teachers and staff dealing with kids are very experienced, they are motivated to play with and teach the kids and are very engaged in the activities. The community centre is promoting for the children to attend school, and also organises remedial classes. For some beneficiaries, it serves as an alternative of the school if there is no school during the year. However, the best possible option would be that the children are going to school and to the community centre simultaneously and the activities of the two institutions could run parallel and complementarily.

The results of the session held with the children show that they are very much satisfied with the services of the centre, they have friends there and they can play different games, draw, read and listen to different tales and stories, prepare some small ornaments, sing songs and also, to learn Turkish. The children looked full of hope, happy, and comfortable. According to the tutors, their self-confidence has been considerably raised since the beginning of the implementation of CFS activities, their attitude has changed from being shy to open.

- One of the key objectives of the community centre is to provide information to the beneficiaries in need of this and to refer them to further institutions. The below graph shows that they need most information on possible education opportunities (either for themselves or for their children) and medical services.



- When asked about if they have been referred to any kind of institution of social assistance, the beneficiaries told that they have received referrals to specific institutions in the area of health (one beneficiary specifically mentioned the usefulness of referrals as she needed some support regarding her child's nutrition, and she immediately got the necessary support via the referral system), psychosocial support, registration and education, which they found very useful.

Outcomes of the meeting/discussion with staff members and volunteers

- As mentioned earlier, the FGDs were conducted by the staff of the centre. Before the action, they had a briefing with the evaluators on the methodology of organizing the discussions. As it was a completely new experience for them, they had the opportunity to clarify any technical issues with the evaluators regarding the process of the interviews prior to them. After each focus group discussions, the facilitators briefed the evaluators about the outcomes of the meetings. In the framework of the discussions, the BSS questionnaires were filled out.
- The staff feels responsible for the work they are doing day by day and they have a real ownership in the project. They mentioned that they were the ones who set in motion the whole community centre – at the beginning of its operation, there was a serious lack of staff, when everybody was doing everything and they had to do multitasking, but as the weeks were passing by, the centre started to reach its current form – filled up with furniture and also with visitors. The staff and volunteers are helping each other, which makes them feel they form a “family-like” team. They highlighted that the operation of the community centre is all staff’s success, they work in harmony and feel the positive outcomes of good teamwork.
- They expressed that they are aware of the trust coming from the beneficiaries and they, in return, would like to provide them as much as experience and knowledge as possible. The staff is thinking positively and motivated by their important work. It is clear that the proper level of trust is built between the staff and the beneficiaries, which is inevitable for conducting the activities and providing the services of the centre. The staff expressed that they feel the responsibility of having an impact on the beneficiaries’ lives, they try to do their best for them to feel comfortable and feel like at home, however, the employees are sometimes feeling unsuccessful as they see many unsolved issues (e.g. child labour or issues around children’s schools), and they also realize that *“you cannot help everyone in each field of life, which causes you frustration.”* The staffs have strong emotional connection to their work and also towards the beneficiaries.
- As the staff mentioned, compared to the first weeks and months of the operation of the community centre, the beneficiaries are more confident also towards the staff and the services, and they feel comfortable in the centre, having the opportunity to have courses, a fixed daily schedule/program, and not feeling bored while sitting at home. Through socializing, and meeting their peers of a more or less same background and history, they are step by step gaining more self-confidence.
- The community centre’s staff and the TRCS is seen as an organization to provide support to people in need. By now the TRCS’s community centre became a model on the process, on the way of dealing with beneficiaries, and other NGOs are checking its services. As the community centre is now in the position of social networking, activities are harmonized and coordinated between the different organizations so as to address the beneficiaries’ needs to the utmost extent and to avoid duplication of activities. Cooperation with other organizations is working properly and constant coordination is maintained.
- There has been a very hard and effective job done by the community centre’s manager and all the staff that the centre has reached its current form and state now: they considerably increased the number of staff, they have reached some 10,642 people with the services as of May 2017. Besides the provision of different courses, the centre performs outreach activities and has a well-established referral, information and case management system, where they not only conduct household visits, but also following up on the respective cases, thus reaching even the most vulnerable with their services.

5. Recommendations

Taken into account the key findings and outcomes of the BSS and focus group discussions, the following recommendations have been made based on the feedback received from the beneficiaries as well as the observations of the evaluators, which shall be taken into account for the future.

Visibility

One of the most essential issues is how to enhance the visibility of the community centre, i.e. how to attract and reach more people to use the services of the centre. It might be useful to seek for possibilities to set up information boards, billboards, posters, awareness raising materials/brochures/leaflets in public places (hospitals, pharmacies, schools, roads, even on local buses etc.) both in Turkish and in Arabic languages, as well as inside the centre (more visible board at the reception promoting the courses, activities, their schedules; etc.). The beneficiaries mentioned that they themselves would be happily involved in distributing these information materials (which describe the services of the community centre in details) in their communities. The use of the social media platforms would be also an added value, as more and more beneficiaries have access to internet. Outreach activities can be also a way to have more people benefitting from the services provided by the centre, which shall be enhanced in the future through more home and field visits.

Children`s education

The issue of education of children is definitely an area where the community centre could take its part. As child labour is unfortunately quite common in this region – not only among the Syrian, but also among the Turkish population due to the level of poverty –, and most children do not attend school, the community centre shall promote the importance of attending school among its parent visitors, and due to its spill-over effect, among children. A possible way of promoting school activities is teaching Turkish from the basics to children (which is ongoing in the framework of the CFS), and, even more importantly, supporting those children who have language-problem at schools with the provision of back-up classes, help with their homework, etc. Remedial courses should be organised more often for children during the summer holiday. Support to register children in the schools is also marked as needed by their parents, so the community centre`s staff may be further engaged in this area as well to come over administrative and language barriers. The CFS`s activities were highly appreciated by the parents of the attending kids, however, they highlighted that even more educational activities can be introduced besides the several playing sessions.

Psychosocial support (PSS)

There are currently two psychologists employed in the centre, who are dealing with the staff`s PSS needs, as well as organizing separate PSS case sessions for the beneficiaries. Both the staff of the community centre and its beneficiaries highly appreciated the psychosocial support (PSS) provided to them. Most beneficiaries mentioned that they are aware of PSS services, however, according to the feedback received from the staff, availability of PSS shall be better promoted as psychotherapy is not that known among the visitors. There are some challenges faced when it comes to referral of psychosocial cases: beneficiaries do not feel comfortable to go to the hospital with such cases – not to mention that they are also reluctant to take medicines as they consider it embarrassing. Psychologists are paying home visits to see the children and their parents in an environment they feel comfortable, and they also organise outreach activities in schools on anger management. They often experience with children that they are victims of violence at work also, being bullied in schools by Turkish children, so PSS is very much needed for children.

Harmonisation activities

Although the beneficiaries were expressing that as a result of using the services of the community centre they can communicate better and have enhanced relations with the local population, more harmonisation activities are encouraged to be organised for the beneficiaries visiting the community centres – let them be Syrians or people from the local communities. Currently, there are no specific activities related to the Syrian culture, which is apparently missing. This is strongly in connection with the point below on teaching also Arabic to children so as to keep their cultural identity. It might be good to consider the employment of more Syrians in the community centre (even if first as volunteers). It may enhance the two-way communication between the Turkish and Syrian communities, as well as the centre could also benefit from the experience of the Syrians (see the survey`s relevant section about the professions of the interviewed beneficiaries). The fact that the Syrians` diplomas cannot be accredited in Turkey causes considerable problems with their employment in general. However, as

volunteers of the centres, the Syrians may receive some incentives and it would contribute also to their well-being as they would feel that their contribution is important towards achieving the main goals of the community centre. An issue of concern expressed by the staff of the community centre is the fact that the children are stuck between two languages, and thus two cultures. Harmonisation activities should address these issues to promote cultural closeness. It is recommended to develop guidelines and specific sessions on the cultural issues/background, how to handle cases like this, etc.

Health-related issues

The majority of the interviewed beneficiaries experienced some issues when accessing the health and care system in Turkey. The expressed during the FGDs and in the survey`s comments sections as well that the system is bureaucratic, the referrals (many times between different doctors and hospitals) are complicated – especially without the proper knowledge of Turkish language. Thus, they made suggestions that besides the already existing nurses, doctors might be also employed in the community centre. Solutions shall be sought to improve the current issue of children`s vaccination as well as the situation of people living with chronic illnesses, especially how to ensure their continuous treatment. The staff of the centre mentioned that it is especially difficult to reach pregnant woman and elderly, so more frequent outreach visits shall be conducted to these groups as well.

Transportation

The issue of transportation was raised several times by the interviewed beneficiaries. It would be useful to arrange transportation for those who have to travel a lot to reach the community centre. A shuttle service would definitely be an option to transfer people to the centre and back to an in advance agreed meeting point. If the issue of transportation is solved, not only the number of beneficiaries reached would raise, but also the level of the courses` attendance.

Number of personnel

The number of personnel shall be raised, as it is clear that there is a definite need for courses of different kind, there is enough place to accommodate even a higher number of participants, however, there is shortage of experienced trainers. With the employment of more staff, more people could be also reached, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the services provided. Besides, there is an urging need for more translators as well, who could provide support to the staff at the health centre, to the case and social workers as well as at the courses if needed. A higher number of social and case workers would be also optimal, who may provide counselling support when it comes to daily “problems” of beneficiaries (accompanying them to visits to hospitals, to children`s schools, providing help with signing an apartment rental agreement, etc.).

Issues around the courses (suggestions for improvement)

- The beneficiaries told that they are satisfied with the methodology of learning and the way the tutors teach them, however, **more speaking classes/establishment of speaking groups** would be necessary to practice, and learning the **language of “everyday life”**, which would be necessary for their daily communication at the schools of their children, hospitals and shops/markets.
- It would be advisable to organize **Arabic courses** for the staff and volunteers of the community centre so as to ease the communication between them and the beneficiaries. Also, it might be good to consider organizing Arabic courses for children at the CFS, so as to ensure that they do not forget their own culture, traditions, language and do not lose their cultural identity. Some beneficiaries highlighted that having a Turkish-Arabic multilingual teacher would be beneficial at some cases, as sometimes they face difficulties in understanding the explanations in Turkish. However, some others told that as they are taught in Turkish with Turkish explanations, they are “forced” to find the way to express themselves in the local language and progress faster with learning the language, even if it is harder sometimes to understand.
- Possibilities shall be explored to launch **other types of language and vocational courses** (for example on English language both for adults and children, First Aid, children development, health orientation seminars, learning software language, music classes for children, courses on the Quran for children, etc.) or more advanced and continuous courses and activities (for example intermediate level of Turkish course, a higher-level computer course or sewing course with learning some new models and styles). They also suggested that a pre-course test would be good to determine the current level of knowledge (also, factors such as level of previous

education may have an impact on this). A “mini market-research” might be useful to be conducted so as to check what are the current needs and how the community centre’s courses can be best adjusted to those. In the future, however, possibilities shall be explored on starting a greater number of income-generating courses and activities. Some beneficiaries mentioned that they would require more information about the job market and job possibilities, it is suggested to organize information sessions on laws, requirements, preconditions of working in Turkey etc. with professionals from the respective fields. Other fields of interest were also expressed, please refer to the relevant question and answer in the survey – *“What are the most important areas of life you would like to get (more) information about?”*.

- The beneficiaries expressed their need to get **more books and learning materials** also in **Arabic** language.
- It was suggested to provide some **small snacks for the children** as they are hungry after attending the sessions at the child friendly space.
- Some beneficiaries mentioned that if the **centre** was **opened during the weekends**, it may attract more people, even men.
- Both during the focus group discussions and as a result of the survey it turned out that there is a huge need to have **more outdoor, sport, recreational and off-site activities** (even during the weekend).

Day-care/nursery/kindergarten

It might be worth considering the establishment of a “day-care centre/nursery/kindergarten” for those parents, who want to attend the courses of the centre, but might be not in the position to do so, because they do not have anyone to take care about their babies/smaller children while they are in the courses. In addition, a small baby nursing room would be also good to be separated for the parents not having to change diapers of their babies in the bathrooms.

Involvement of men in the activities of the community centre

The involvement of men into the courses and activities of the community centre shall be promoted, as there is a considerably higher number of women benefitting from the services of the centre. It is to be noted that men do participate at evening language courses after having finished at their workplaces (they are mainly employed in the textile or construction sector or as assistants at barber shops), however, they are very much exhausted at the end of the day. Possibilities shall be explored how to launch tailor-made courses for men (computer, language, even vocational – carpenter, painter, etc. – typical “men`s jobs”). Some beneficiaries highlighted that through sport activities, a lot more men could be involved – who might be retained even in the longer-term for specific courses.

Infrastructure of the building

In general, the infrastructure was referred to as (very) good by the beneficiaries, however, the purchase of some more equipment and material (smartboards, devices for skincare treatments, more sewing material, etc.) might be considered for the future, along with the establishment of a dedicated ablution and praying space. The need for a bigger garden/playground was also expressed, possibilities might be explored to use the garden/outdoor facilities of a nearby school for example for children`s activities. It would be good to procure a case management software for following up health cases by the nurses.

Staffing

In general, it would be necessary to recruit more case/social workers and interpreters, especially taken into account their involvement in the referral system – they are often overwhelmed with and traumatized by cases they deal with. The need to have women interpreters was expressed several times.

Capacity building

Opportunities shall be explored for **building the capacities of the staff** of the community centre (specialized trainings for those who work in the centre and also for those who do the field visits and outreach activities). In this way, the quality of the services can be enhanced and also, the staff feels the ownership and their responsibility in the project. It shall be also explored how the development of beneficiaries can be tracked. Also, internal deadlines shall be set up in the form of an activity tables so as to be able to properly track the progress of the planned activities. The beneficiaries expressed their need to have special support for their work in the form of different trainings: PSS, First Aid, training for

translators, training on how to work and interact with children (this would be useful, essential and beneficial for all staff and volunteers, as all of them are in constant contact with children). Clear need for training of trainers in teaching techniques, communications, etc. was expressed. The staff emphasized their need to have more high-level and experienced support in the field of protection issues.

Complaint mechanism

According to the survey results, 81 per cent of the beneficiaries do not know how to make complaint about the services they received in the centre or should they have been mistreated or hurt by the staff. This proportion is very high despite the fact that a complaint/suggestion box is set up in the reception area of the centre, where the beneficiaries anonymously can express their views regarding the provided services. This mechanism should be further promoted, and it has to be emphasized by all staff and volunteers to the visitors that receiving their feedback is inevitable to improve the services of the community centre.

6. Lessons learned

In general, the community centre project has been running well since the centre opened its doors in August 2016. More and more beneficiaries are visiting the centre and are benefitting from its services. The number of people reached could be enhanced through better awareness raising and visibility, the relevant recommendations can be read above.

The beneficiaries are extremely appreciative of the services of the Turkish Red Crescent and its community centre, this has impacted their life in a positive way and they have come to realize that there is opportunity and possibility to continue living their lives after their previous struggles. They know it is not easy for them to adapt from one day to another, but the community centre is definitely an added value for this new chapter in their journey of life.

Last, but not least the host community's engagement shall be mentioned: they shall also feel the ownership and they have to be involved in the project in the future so as to create the atmosphere of "peacefully living together".

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives.
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.

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