

THE DISTRICT MOST DENSELY POPULATED BY THE SYRIANS

**"Refugees in Şahinbey
Overcome the Language
Barrier"**

ŞAHİNBEY MUNICIPALITY





Background

- The district of Şahinbey is the biggest district in the Southeastern Anatolia Region and the 3rd biggest in Turkey. Being a center of industry and trade, our district always receives immigrants from neighboring cities. The population of Şahinbey district is 902,424 based on TURKSTAT's address-based population registration system data from 2017. In parallel, Şahinbey Municipality provides services to a population of 902,424 residing in 195 neighborhoods across the district with its 2,393 staff members.
- Due to the war breaking out in Syria in 2011; over 300,000 Syrians have been added to the already existing district population of 902,424. For sure, it was a substantial problem for a district to include such a big population. First and foremost, accommodation problems and immediate needs of the community had to be met and their adaptation issues with our host community had to be handled. All Directorates of Our Municipality Have Used Every Means for Immediate Aids. However, the Most Important Problem was Language Barrier.



Organizational Environment

Acting on article 13 of the Municipal Law no. 5393 stipulating that **"Everyone is a fellow townsman in the town where it resides"**, we knew that our Syrian fellow townsmen would adapt to our district very quickly if they learned Turkish language.

Method

- We started studies in cooperation with Gaziantep University Tömer (Turkish Language Teaching Center).
- In 2012, we started making announcements about the Turkish Language Course in our Social Facilities located in the areas densely populated by the Refugees.
- At the Social Facilities, registrations have been made quickly, educational environment and the instructors have been completed and the Turkish Lessons have been started.





Deliverables

- Since 2012, our 7,951 Syrian Citizens have completed the Turkish Language courses.
- The trainees, who have attended Turkish courses at our facilities, have become ready for receiving education in occupational courses and other social and cultural fields as our own citizens.
- The Refugees, who know Turkish, have become capable of guiding the refugees that do not know the language at the public institutions.
- The Refugee Students Learning Turkish Language have been relieved in integrating to our educational system.
- The people, who have learned Turkish language, have an advantage in taking livelihood opportunities.

Lessons

- We've seen that the most important step in correctly detecting the needs of Syrians is to overcome the language barrier. In this frame, we've ensured Turkish Language Courses for the Syrians in cooperation with Gaziantep University TÖMER (Turkish Language Teaching Center).
- How far would it be possible to sustain good communication with refugees having a different language and a different culture, with whom we will perhaps live together for many years?

Transfer



- First of all, dissemination of the activities we conducted in the localities densely populated with refugees may vary by the socio-economic and cultural development level of subject locality.
- The most important criteria for the success of the implementation, is gathering the people, who voluntarily perform this work, together.
- In accordance with article 13 of the Municipal Law no. 5393 stipulating that "**Everyone is a fellow townsman in the town where it resides**", it is necessary to consider the Syrians as our citizens and to render equal services within the legal framework.
- With social cohesion, social inclusive activities should be carried out for the Syrians and our citizens. (Training, Conference, Seminar, Concert and Tour Activities etc.)