

## Building Resilience Through Community Participation: Advisory Committee Meetings at Community Centres

Recognizing that listening and working with communities supports addressing their vulnerabilities and leads to better quality programming, the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) uses the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach in its work at the 16 community centres (CCs) it manages throughout Turkey. These community centres provide various services in order to improve self-reliance, resilience and social cohesion of the migrant and local communities. To ensure these services are relevant to people's needs and that communities can voice their concerns, [Advisory Committees](#) have been formed at each of the CCs, comprising members of local communities, migrants, and other vulnerable groups.



The committee meets once a month, creating a multi-way dialogue between the National Society, local government and communities, and gathering feedback for adjustments to community centre activities, and advocating for wider issues affecting the relevant stakeholders. Around 30 Advisory Committee meetings have been held between May and August 2019. The format of the meeting supports the staff members to facilitate discussions effectively and manage expectations of meeting participants. At the first meeting, TRCS discussed and shared a one-pager with the members to explain the objectives, responsibilities and working modalities of the committee. The members play a key role in sharing information about the services provided by TRCS and encouraging people from both host and refugee communities to access available support at the community centres.

“The advisory committee acts as a two-way platform where we can share information about what we do, and communities can comment on our services and voice their needs. This way, we feel communities are empowered and an active partner in the work we implement, also improving social cohesion”, said Melisa Şentürk, Social Cohesion Activity Officer in İzmir.

Guided by the needs of communities, the community centre activities are tailored accordingly to improve self-reliance and resilience of migrants and host communities. In İzmir, for example, Turkish language and speaking classes have been increased after suggestions from the members during the Advisory Committee meeting. In Şanlıurfa, members discussed how communities and TRCS can work together to reach more people and disseminate information about the services at the community centre.

Haşim (21), a Syrian who attended the meeting in the EU-funded Şanlıurfa community centre says,

“The committee members share ideas from their experiences. If these are implemented, we can do wonderful and inspiring works for both Syrians and Turkish communities. There [are] a lot of people living in Turkey but not involved with [the] Turkish community. These CCs can help the Red Crescent, Syrian and Turkish people to come together and build social cohesion.”

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