

Good Practice: TR GP1

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"Integrated Community Centre for Syrian Refugees"

Main features of the GP programme:

Type of programme	Type of organisation	Field of practice for organisation	Programme scope	Programme duration	Programme occurrence/frequency	Type of funding for GP
VET	Non-profit organisation	Education, Advocacy, Consultancy, Health	Local	4 months (each level) 3+4 months	continuous	External (project based)

Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP) is a Horizon 2020 research project focusing on adult education among young adults at risk of social exclusion. Particular attention is paid to educational policies and practices needed to foster active citizenship among vulnerable young people.

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1. What – Focus (theme, orientation)

GP1 is an example of how an ad hoc initiative has quickly turned into a much more integrated institution with a solid structure and a strategic vision. It operates in its 5-floored premises, with each floor being specifically designed to serve a specific function in service of the refugees from emergency services to VET, personal development and psychological/legal counselling and so forth. The first floor contains a very busy information and guidance desk that receives queries from refugees as well as handling their first time registration. There are medical clinics, a pharmacy providing free medicine, psychological and legal guidance services, a cafeteria serving free meals, and finally several classrooms and VET training workshops offering a wide variety of educational courses.

2. For whom – Target group(s)

GP1 is an NGO affiliated with a local municipality and serves refugees from all backgrounds, but a vast majority of the people it serves are Syrians living in this district and its immediate neighbourhood. The district is one of the smaller and poorer district in the peripheries of Istanbul. However, it has received and is currently hosting a large number of Syrian refugees. The number of registered Syrian refugees in the district is more than 20,000, accounting for around 4% of Syrians living in Istanbul.

3. Requirements and access

The programmes are open for all the refugees. However, in terms of main beneficiaries of the programmes, the language and hairdressing courses are attended by women, while the construction courses are attended exclusively by young men. There is a greater variation in the ages of the women who attend the courses that ranges from 18 to 50+ year-olds. Since the GP1 offers medical/legal/psychological support as well as economic advice and emergency needs for refugees all in their own language through experts who are refugees themselves, access of the refugees to the programmes are easy. They are being informed about upcoming courses, putting in their demands for prospective courses and provide feedback on previously attended ones. In order to attract the male learners the GP1 provides cash payments for those who are attending fully.

4. Elements of good practice

The strongest aspect of the GP is the close relationship that SAR has established with the learners as well as their families. They are welcomed by experts, doctors, lawyers who are refugees themselves. Mixed-gender classrooms are rare amongst courses offered to refugees, due to cultural (i.e. religiosity and conservatism) and socio-economic (i.e. adult men have to work and therefore much less inclined/able to attend such courses) reasons. The VET courses, therefore, are designed to attract women by choosing vocations that are deemed more suitable for women (e.g. hairdressing, tailoring, etc.) both in terms of the contents of the course and the actual vocation to be had after the course.

To attract young men, the construction course offers a small payment in cash money

for every class attended so that they can remove the pressure for earning income from the young learners. While this has been mentioned as a strong motivator by many of the learners, it is also possible to see it as a potential challenge as learners could be participating in the programme solely for the money. Even so, however, they would receive the training and obtain a certificate at the end, which may change their attitude, widen their horizons, and increase their employability.

The AE programmes provided by the GP1 help refugees build up their human capital and improve their Active Participatory Citizenship (APC) competences in several ways.

Firstly, these courses teach the learners Turkish, thereby providing them with a crucial basic skill required to lead an active life in society. This point does not merely refer to Turkish language courses but also applies to the VET courses because they require initial language learning as a precondition. Secondly, attending the courses make it possible for refugees to socially interact with other individuals, make new friends, and escape social isolation.

Another element of the GP is the Social Assistance Software (SUKOM) developed to solve the registration problem of refugees coming to Turkey, to facilitate their follow-up, to determine their needs and to provide these needs from a single centre. Web-based software, SUKOM, can be used on all devices connected to the internet. Comprehensive information of individuals and families can be entered into the system and easily reached when needed.

5. Perceived challenges

Although there are many elements of good practices, some challenges also are perceived in this GP. One is to the need to increase the practical components within the education programmes. Due to the high numbers of the refugees, programmes cannot extend their contents for more practical work. Another significant challenge is the issue of training and qualifications of educators. There has been no official guide concerning the required and desired skills and qualifications of potential educators although everyone agrees that educating vulnerable individuals, refugees that escaped a civil war in this occasion, is different than regular teaching and requires specific skills and attitudes. Another challenge is ironical: Sustainability and funding of the new programmes. Some funders believing that the GP is one of the best examples start to support some other initiatives who start up newly. Being a good example in this sense becomes a challenge for the sustainability.

6. Testimonials

The learners reported that they believed that these courses will help them find employment and this belief and motivation was listed as the most important. In fact, some former learners from the language courses did find employment as Turkish-Arabic translators. Crucially, attending these courses appear to help refugees build up their self-confidence: "I had to quit my education at primary school and always

felt incomplete. I wasn't sure I could do it. I thought of quitting the course in the first week because I was afraid. But my teachers showed me that I could do it. I finished the course as one of the top students in my class. Now I know that I can do anything" (Learner). For many of the individuals who suffered from the negative psychological effects of civil war and forced displacement, these courses have meant support and solidarity: "We saw people who cared about us, who valued us. That gave us hope." (Learner); "If nothing else, we met people who supported us, who struggled to help us which is more than enough because we didn't see this anywhere else" (Learner).

7. More Information

EduMAP project's publications:

[Books and articles](#)

Academic publications that address key themes of the EduMAP project

[Deliverables and reports](#)

EduMAP's official deliverables, related reports and publications

[Good practice cases](#)

Key features from 40 'good practice' cases from 20 countries

[Working papers](#)

A selection of findings from desk and field research in 20 European countries

[Other resources](#)

Other types of resources made for the project (illustrations, comics etc.)