

## → Providing better services to psychiatric patients

**Country** Turkey

**Project title** Improvement of care to psychiatric patients

**Twinning** Municipality of Nijmegen (the Netherlands)

Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (Turkey)

**Project period** 1 June 2008 to 30 November 2009

**Project budget** € 58.660

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### **Project objective**

To provide better housing for the patients who are already living in the existing facility supported by the municipality, and to create shelter for new psychiatric, handicapped, and elderly patients. In addition, improvement of care services for psychiatric and handicapped patients by giving adequate training to the nursing staff.

### **Project summary**

In an effort to improve the current level of care available to the psychiatric and handicapped patients at the shelter in Gaziantep, as well as any future patients, the project focused on providing training to the staff working at the shelter in cooperation with the Gaziantep Retirement House. The infrastructural needs at the shelter had to be postponed due to financial restraints.

### **Core information**

Gaziantep is located at the south-central Turkish border and has a population of 1.2 million. It is an important trade center, thanks to its location on major highway routes and international airport. Gaziantep is also a university city. Agricultural products are the major source of income. Gaziantep is also an industrial center with various products. Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality deals with the infrastructural issues in the city and provides city planning and social services.

### **Problem analysis**

Currently, there is a shelter that houses psychiatric and handicapped patients, and demented elderly persons which sees to their basic needs: beds, food and clothes. The caretaking staff was not properly trained for this specific group of patients, with inadequate care as a result. The building needed to be expanded in order to provide proper housing for the patients who already live in the building and to provide shelter to more patients in need of care. In Turkey psychiatric patients are often stigmatized, leading to the 'hiding' of patients at

home and the unwillingness to seek proper care. Information and education of the relatives of the patients is therefore of great importance.

### **Project implementation**

One of the objectives was to extend the service building. After the planning and design, it occurred that the municipality of Gaziantep was not able – as a consequence of the global financial crisis – to invest her part of the building costs in the construction. Therefore this component of the project was postponed. Information about the existing level of care was gathered and conveyed to Nijmegen. In return, the trainers provided the tools to develop an adequate training program and produced a training manual. Following the training, an internship in Nijmegen and a second more indept training was organized. An awareness and information campaign was not realized at this stage, but will be in the near future.

### **Process management**

Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality worked closely with the municipality of Nijmegen as a twinning partner. Staff at the shelter in Gaziantep was trained through the involvement of the ROC in Nijmegen and the experiences of the Retirement House in Gaziantep to obtain and improve skills necessary to take care of such patients.

### **Recommendations: do's and don'ts**

- Assess the current situation as to infrastructure, personnel, and equipment needs on location.
- Run an awareness and information campaign to create a better understanding and a more open attitude with regard to the position of psychiatric and handicapped patients.
- Try to involve local organisations and partners in the project (Retirement House).