



Taiwan - Reyhanli Centre for World Citizens

Building quality, equality, and sustainability of life for all in response to Syrian refugee crisis and Turkiye-Syrian earthquake.



The view of the Center (refugee camp)

Reyhanlı is a small town located in the south-eastern Turkish province of Hatay adjacent to Syria. As the gateway to Aleppo in Syria, the town became the main entry point for asylum seekers during the escalating civil conflicts and subsequent Syrian war. In the past decade, the population in Reyhanlı has grown from 120,000 to 270,000 people. The recent Türkiye-Syria earthquakes in 2023 had severely damaged most cities in Hatay, and Reyhanli has received an estimated 200,000 environmental refugees.

Cho and his student team at Bilkent University programmed and designed the Centre with the aim of stimulating socio-cultural, economic and political integration and inclusion between Syrians and Turkish locals. Research for the Centre's architectural program and site investigation started in 2016, while the construction was between April 2020 and September 2021. The team works closely with the Turkish government, NGOs, INGOs and the grassroots to realise a joint vision: to build quality, equality and sustainability of life for all.

Key Words: [Human Right](#), [Women Empowerment](#), [Circular Economy](#), [Climate Action](#), [Net-zero](#), [Education Inclusiveness](#), [Social Innovations \(impact business models\)](#) - It's amazing that this project includes various SDGs in depth.

The successful establishment of the Centre and women's association, cooperative and social enterprise is the result of time-intensive collaboration between the Centre, Reyhanli municipality and the disadvantaged groups in the local communities. Our team conducted a community survey over 3 years to identify and engage with the disadvantaged groups most suitable for participating in the Centre's programming, design and construction process. The whole development initiatives set the foundation for building trust, creating a larger and yet more integrated and inclusive community.



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The Center's managers, users and beneficiaries all participated in the centre establishment, thereby creating a social bond that promotes self-sufficiency. The joint ownership also created collective responsibility in generating incomes to fund the Centre's activities. In effect, the Centre is not just a "transitional shelter" for people in need, but also a place that serves diverse functions, such as children's education, women's empowerment, community services, recreation and leisure. In 2023, the Center is engaging with >200 people, offering them basic living supports, and providing free educational and recreational activities to >300 children onsite.



Women work for our social enterprise.

Because of the earthquake in February 2023, we found the fragility of the local infrastructure (e.g. grid) and the urgent demand for the stable electricity. Therefore, we have worked with several suppliers & donors bringing the renewable solution to the Center. According to our design, the energy shall be 100% powered by renewables (mostly the solar and some vertical axis wind turbine, VAWT), and very likely 15-20% of the total energy output can be provided to local communities. The renewable energy allows the Centre not just net-zero, but "net-positive" that produces more energy than it uses via renewable sources.

Key Words: [The world's first net-zero refugee camp.](#)



So far, we have partnered with many local & international stakeholders, including UN IOM, Danish Refugee Council, and some private sectors. In a long term (perhaps lifelong), the Center shall create more impact-driven programs and capacity-building activities for the people in need, which will also require more partners and supports from different sectors, professionals, and resources.

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