International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation has been operating a community center in downtown Kilis since September 2012, in partnership with Malteser International and GIZ. The center has been offering courses suitable to Syrian refugees of a wide range of backgrounds and age groups, constantly enlarging its diverse spectrum of courses.

Courses offered at the center include but are not limited to: Languages, Computer literacy, First Aid & Healthcare, Rug & Carpet Making, Graphic & Media Design, Knitting & Crochet and Outdoor Activities. Each course module takes about three months before participants move onto the next level and new beneficiaries are registered through the waiting lists that are often full to the brim.

Batool Allo has migrated to Kilis from Aleppo four years ago with her family of 11. She attended a temporary education center and took classes in Arabic for a year but quit soon after. It was then when her friends told her about the IBC community center where she could learn and practice languages as well as take courses such as drawing as an artistic outlet. Although she would have studied to become a computer engineer had she not left Syria, she had to find different means of making a living once deracinated.

Now, at 20 years of age, Batool is working as an IBC staff member, on children’s activities. She talks about how friendly and devoted beneficiaries and both Turkish and Syrian staff are to each other, giggling about how they have tea and coffee between classes as friends. She also mentions now that she has more responsibility she can’t attend the courses offered at the center. When asked why she tells the heartbreaking story of her father’s passing away. Being an unmarried daughter she had to become the breadwinner around the same time her peers worldwide graduated from high school and went off to college. After taking Turkish, English and drawing lessons at the center; she started working as a volunteer. She assisted her drawing teacher during classes, helped with children’s activities and made exquisite paintings for the center all the while working outside tutoring women. As her need for a permanent job became more prominent she applied to work as a community worker at the center. Today, although unsure of what the future holds for her and her family, she is content with the work she does helping, supporting, and encouraging others the same way she was helped.

For detailed information:
Programs Director
Tolga Baca
tbaca@ibc.org.tr
Projects Assistant
Gizem Korun
gizemkorun@ibc.org.tr