

## ***Application form***

### ***A. Name of the project:***

THE BLUE HORSE CAFÉ AS A PROTESTATION, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION MILIEU

### ***B. Summary:***

Blue Horse Café is a social responsibility project that focuses primarily on schizophrenia patients. The main purpose to this end is to demonstrate that these patients can indeed serve as a regular member of the work force of the society. As a by-product, the self-stigma imposed by the disorder is aimed to be diminished as much as possible which catalyses the destruction of the social stigma. At the end, a social perception that accepts the patients as members of the work-force is what is desired.

### ***C. Association:***

1. Name of the association: TURKISH FEDERATION OF SCHIZOPHRENIA ASSOCIATIONS (Solidarity Association)

2. Address: Street+ nr: Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak Str. 31/8 Beşevler

Postal code:

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Country: TURKEY

3. Project leader

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## THE BLUE HORSE CAFÉ

### AS A PROTESTATION, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION MILIEU



### BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

With the exception of the sixties, mental health policies had almost always a low priority from the Turkish Governments' perspectives (Soygür, 2007). Although there has been a recent work on the mental health with the emphasis on the essence of the community mental health (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey, 2006), it was another disappointment mostly due to both its weak content and the methods followed to prepare it. During the processes of preparing the mental health policy and construction of the mental health centers as a reflection of this policy, national NGOs and all relevant stakeholders are only asked for their opinions, but none played a major role for shaping the final script. More dramatically, associations such as Turkish Psychiatrists Association, Turkish Psychologists Association, and patients and patient relatives are kept out of the circle during policy making process. When we look at the shortcomings of the community mental health policies related to governmental actions, according to us as members of NGO and data stem from WHO (World Health Organization, 2001, 2005), we can summarize them as follows:

- Low priority assigned to mental health policies,
- Lack of mental health law in Turkey,
- Lack of financial resource allocations and/or non-transparent utilization of them,
- Inadequate number of psychiatric beds and the mental health professionals,
- Lack of network of structured and widespread psychosocial interventions and rehabilitation programmes,
- Ambiguity of how to utilize human resources dedicated to mental health,
- Insufficiently educated and skilled staff who are working in the community health centers,
- While preparing reform of mental health care, to take ideological interest of the governmental ideas

Our observations listed above very interestingly matches the views and critics are supported by scientific psychiatric authorities (Thornicroft et al., 2011). Under these conditions, there is a great need for actively working with efficient NGOs who are established together by the chronic serious mental health patients, their relatives and mental health workers in order to give effective voice which should reach the governmental forces.

Beyond all these facts, it is obvious that like in the all countries of the world, in Turkey as well, the patients with mental illness face stigma and discrimination (Taşkın et al. 2006; Üçok 2006; Thornicroft, 2011). Lack of sufficient community awareness, stigma and discrimination are the bricks forming the major barrier obstructing the initiatives towards community mental health projects (Thornicroft, 2011). Until now, the governmental organizations have done nothing about it, and the entire struggle against stigma shouldered by non-governmental initiatives. Being the Federation of Schizophrenia Associations in Turkey, we find as our duty and responsibility to struggle against stigma and discrimination like we have done previously.

Current data indicate that there are three effective strategies that can be utilized to deal with stigma: “protesting”, “education”, and “social contact” (Corrigan&Penn, 1999; Thornicroft, 2011). At this very point, after establishing the Federation of Schizophrenia Associations, we implemented the Blue Horse Café project which aims to deal with stigma by utilizing the three aforementioned strategies. The Blue Horse Café is the most concrete project of the Federation of Schizophrenia Associations for the purpose of fighting against stigma.

The Blue Horse Café has been founded on June 5, 2009 by the Federation of Schizophrenia Associations in Ankara, Turkey. Primary goal of Blue Horse Café was to provide supported work for schizophrenia patients, and through this path, to strengthen their self-esteem, functionality, life quality and to contribute to their target in becoming part of the society. Secondary goal of the Blue Horse Café is, for individuals consisting the society, to receive services from schizophrenia patients and through their social contact, to create opportunity for them to change their negative prejudice and attitude towards such patients. The budget of the project was 120.000 Turkish Liras, 80.000 was funded by support of Biofarma Pharmaceutical Co. The Blue Horse project was established with no collaboration with other projects or associations.

***Where does the name of the Blue Horse stem from?*** Actually, the story of Blue Horse Café stems from the psychiatric reform of Italy. In the beginning of 70's in Italy a movement started towards closing down and to encourage the cure understanding in the society. In 1974 in Trieste Mental Hospital's locked doors opened, the hospital was knocked down and the hospital staff together hand in hand with the public built a wooden blue horse two and a half meters high and placed the horse in the entrance of the hospital. In the past, while the hospital was functioning, except the staff, no one was permitted to go out, the only living creature was the horse who was carrying dirty laundry was permitted. With a radical change, this horse is symbolizing the freedom and the attachment to the society.

***How does Blue Horse work?*** Excluding the Responsible Manager and her assistant of The Blue Horse Café, all of the staff consists of schizophrenia patients. The Responsible Manager is a relative of a patient (She lost her brother who was a schizophrenia patient due to a suicide). The assistant of the Manager does not have any mental disorders and is working for a minimum wage. The patients give services in four shifts from 10 a.am to 10 p.m while Café's doors are open. Their task areas are, client service, kitchen and cleaning. Besides services provided in the Café, various events requiring production and creativity were organized. Through events such as movie presentations, days for signing books and talks by and with authors, musical performances, used book sale, sale of patients' products, efforts has been spent to make The Blue Horse Café as an attraction center. Furthermore, anti-stigma activities we organized protest demonstrations, educational meetings with public. The number of working patients in the Blue Horse Cafe is 28 with 5 drop outs during three years. Among the patients in Blue Horse Cafe, three of them had psychotic episode and the duration of the episodes were 16, 7, and 25 days.

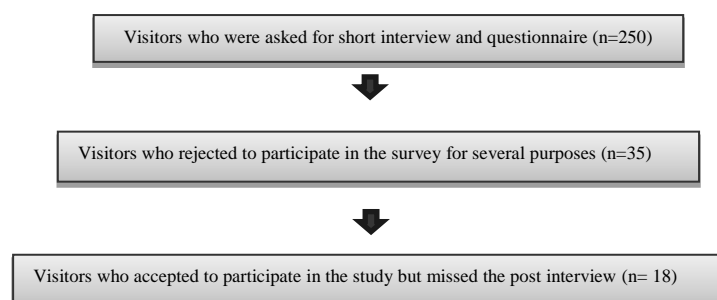
Throughout the last three years, several qualitative and quantitative studies have been conducted to evaluate the utility and effectiveness of The Blue Horse Café Project. Since this is a running project, all of the results haven't been published yet and they are being presented as pilot studies currently.

## **STUDY- I**

A randomly selected sample group of the first study conducted on measuring the paradigm shifts induced on the perceptions of the people towards schizophrenia patients consisted of the visitors of the Blue Horse Café. The data collection procedure was made up of a questionnaire focusing on stigma and a five minute interview which had open ended questions.

A sample scenario can be described over a hypothetical couple that has decided to spend their evening in The Blue Horse Café. Upon their arrival and after giving their orders, they are kindly asked to participate in our research. Almost all customers responded positively to this request which is not that surprising since we expect a certain positive bias towards schizophrenia in our client profile. The data collection procedure is concluded with a doorway interview with the leaving customers.

When it comes to the technical details of the study, the questionnaire used was designed to evaluate the perception of the object towards schizophrenia in various aspects, such as their attitudes towards the employments of people with schizophrenia, their potential threat level towards the society, how they should be treated and most importantly, the curability of this disorder. The participants were asked to select among the responses “I agree” or “I disagree” in response to the statements such as “Schizophrenia patients cannot work”. The complete set of questions (Üçok, 2006) with the pre-post “I Agree” responses of the visitors is given below (see Table 1). The responses of the visitors to several items changed significantly after their visit to Blue Horse Café, the results of the doorway interviews with the leaving costumers indicated that only one contact with the patients have a meaningful effect on their view towards schizophrenia.



**Table 1. The complete set of stigma questionnaire**

	PRE-TEST (%) (n=197)	POST-TEST (%) (n=197)
1. Patients with schizophrenia can work.	65%	72%
2. Would oppose if one of his/her relative would like to marry someone with schizophrenia?	34%	27%
3. Schizophrenia patients could be recognized by his/her appearance.	82%	68%
4. Schizophrenia patients are dangerous.	40%	25%
5. Would not like to have a neighbor with schizophrenia?	34%	32%
6. Schizophrenia patients are untrustworthy	20%	12%
7. Schizophrenia patients could harm children	13%	6%
8. Schizophrenia patients should be kept in hospitals	37%	25%
9. I don't worry about examining a person who is diagnosed with schizophrenia	50%	59%
10. Would a patient with schizophrenia be treated in the appropriate department of the general hospital?	65%	66%
11. Schizophrenia could be treated	67%	79%
12. Patients with schizophrenia could not comprehend nor apply suggested treatment	65%	45%
13. Schizophrenia has the chance of recovery	20%	75%

## **STUDY-II**

The sample group of the second study was consisted of the students that are brought by their teachers for a social responsibility project. The main difference between these sample groups is their possible bias towards the disorder. One expects to find a positive bias in the first group of participants, whereas it would not be surprising to observe an enhanced negative bias on the latter one which is possible due to the fact that the rebellious youth will object any imposed field trip. Apart from the questionnaire and the interview, there was an extra anti-stigma activity only for this group: a documentary called “Us, You, Them” is a 52 min. documentary film about schizophrenia directed by Aylin Eren and Çağdaş Kaya (2007). The documentary features cross-sections from the lives of eight patients with schizophrenia. The patients talk about how they were diagnosed with the mental illness and how they have struggled with life since then. Some of them are cured and they can go on with their everyday life, but some are still looking for a job and a support for living. The society's stigma for schizophrenia is exposed by the interviews realized by one of the main character in the film. “Us, You, Them” tries to build empathy between “normal” people and the schizophrenia patients.

The same tools and methods are used for this group, as described in the previous case. The outcome of the activity with the high school students in the Blue Horse Café was found to be

promising for further activities with the youth. The results of the survey and short interviews indicated that they have experienced a great amount of paradigm shift while having a pleasant contact with the patients. One of them stated that *“It was an incredible scene, he smiled at me so warmly while giving my drink to me and you cannot believe that he was one of the insane men that I saw on the television, not wild, not crazy, not dangerous, and not uncontrollable. He was just so kind and friendly.”* Above mentioned questionnaire was also filled by the students after one-day social responsibility activity, and we determined some significant positive changes in several items such as “Schizophrenia patients could harm children”, “Schizophrenia patients are dangerous.”, “Schizophrenia patients should be kept in the hospitals”, “Schizophrenia patients could be recognized by his/her appearance.”

### **STUDY -III**

The sample group of this last study was consisted of the students of school of nursing that attended the café for a term project. Their main responsibility was to supervise the patients during which they were to gain field experience. Interestingly enough, their initial attitudes towards the patients were overly negative although they are expected to be familiar with the patient profile. They were applied a stigma questionnaire for health professionals (Kassam, 2012) consisting items such as “Despite my professional beliefs, I have negative reactions towards people who have mental illness.”, “I struggle to feel compassion for a person with a mental illness.”, “More than half of people with mental illness don’t try hard enough to get better.”, “There is little I can do to help people with mental illness”. The students were asked to select among the five responses “Strongly agree”, “Neither agree or disagree”, “Agree”, “Strongly disagree” in response to the statements. Results showed that attitudes towards schizophrenia changed positively after attending a course and having a strong contact with the patients. One of the students stated that *“During this project, I understand that the concept of schizophrenia doesn’t seem as same as it seems in the psychiatry textbooks when you lively meet with them, it’s something different to look at them closer, spending time together or learning their story first account. Although having a lot of knowledge, I had been still prejudiced towards them since I came to fabulous working/living environment.”*

### **INDICATOR-A**

In this part, we briefly discuss an indicator that is used to evaluate the efficiency of the Blue Horse Café Project. The metrics obtained for this end is summarized below.

Last item begs further explanation. In this case, the experience gained during their time spent in Blue Horse Café combined with the decreased self-stigma imposed by the disorder helped them to survive in a demanding environment to which they are relatively unfamiliar with. Considering the harsh living standards of Turkey, this is a remarkable outcome.

The number of working patients	28
Drop-Outs	5
The number of patients started to work within disability quota	2
The number of patients started to work in competitive workplace	2



### **INDICATOR-B**

The results of a collection of informal interviews conducted with the workers of the café indicated that the most of them gained precious self-esteem along with significantly decreased self-stigmata imposed by both the disorder itself and the attitude of the society that they try to be accepted within. As an example, one of the subjects V.T. (35 yrs) who suffered from the disorder for 12 years by then stated that “*I started to feel important and I am filled up with a*



*sense of belonging. This was something I have never experienced in my life, and yet this is the thing I have been craving for, obviously for years.”* Another patient, Y.S. (32 yrs), *“My time spent here is unique and inexplicably wonderful. I have always hated domestic work but I love working in the café which demands some low level physical work. I feel ordinary here, among my family members, living towards a sacred goal. We are not so much different from the ones that call them ‘Normal!’”*. One of the severely ill patients reported that he has been employed in three different places but he was fired as soon as the owners learned his disorder. These kind of unfair treatments made him feel, unsecure towards the society and his self-esteem has been impacted dramatically. His life has changed for good once he started to work in the café.



## INDICATOR-C

A broader impact of the café project is further observed from the paradigm shift of local media towards schizophrenia. There has been a significant increase in the amount of news appearing on the audio-visual media on this topic. The headlines took a dramatic turn – from schizophrenic axed butcher to social responsibility achievements of the certain projects like our café. Some of such news is presented below.



**ŞİZOFRENİ HASTALARI SİZİ KAHVE İÇMEYE BEKLİYOR**

### Şizofrenler kahvesi

"Ne, burada şizofren kahvesi mi, ya burada kahve mi o zaman?" "Durun, korkmayın. Bu öyle bir hastalık değil, onlar sadece kaygıya kapılıp konuşmuyorlar." Bu diyalog Ankara Beyoğlu'nda yeni açılan Mavi At Kafe'nin sorumlularından biriydi. İki misafiri arasında geçen diyalog Dernekleri Federasyonu Türkiye'de bir ilki gerçekleştirerek şizofren hastalarından oluşan bir kahve içti. Federasyon Başkanı Doç. Dr. Halim Seygür'ün yıllardır hastalıkla mücadele eden şizofren hastalığı tedavisi edilebilirlikte günlük hayatlarına devam edip çalışabildiklerini keşfettiler. Üstelik çalışmak, toplumdun sorulmasınadıkları için daha da iyi olmalarını sağlıyor.

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Mavi At Kafe'de tüm günün boyunca hastaların beklemediği kadar hızlı ve kaliteli hizmet sunuluyor. Kahve içtikten sonra hastaların bir kısmı Mavi At Kafe'de oturup sohbet ediyor. Kahve içtikten sonra hastaların bir kısmı Mavi At Kafe'de oturup sohbet ediyor. Kahve içtikten sonra hastaların bir kısmı Mavi At Kafe'de oturup sohbet ediyor.

**TAM VAKTİNDE İŞBAŞI**

Akifin kahvesi. Hastaların bu kahve ile birlikte hayatlarına devam etmeleri için Mavi At Kafe'nin sunduğu hizmetler. Akifin kahvesi. Hastaların bu kahve ile birlikte hayatlarına devam etmeleri için Mavi At Kafe'nin sunduğu hizmetler.

**Bu kafeye gidilir**

RUHSAL rahatsızlığı olan insanların kucağına bu kafeyi işletenler de gönüllü annelerden ve şizofreni hastası yakınlarından oluşuyor. Ankara Şizofreni Hastaları ve Yalnızlıklar Dayanışması Derneği'nde çalışan Nilüfer Girgin, "Çocuklar dernekte eğitim gördükten sonra kafede çalışmaya başladılar. Amacımız onları soyaletirmek ve topluma kazandırmak" diyor.

**İŞ BULAMIYORLAR**

Kız da şizofren rahatsız olan Girgin, "Toplum bu hastalara öeli gibi davranıyor. Bu çocuklar zararsızlar. Burada dayanışma içinde gönüllü olarak görev yapıyoruz. Ben rahatsızlanmam bu çocuklar bir araya gelip benim görevimi bile yaparlar" diyor. "damdan düşenin halini damdan düşen anlar diye espi yapıyor."

Ayrıca şizofreni hastalarının verimliliğini desteklemek için almış oldukları destekler de şizofreni hastaları için önemli bir adım. "Baskılarını derinleştiren destekler, yaşamları rahatsız etmiyorlar" dedi.

**Sizofreni hastalarının çalıştığı kafelerin misafirleri her gün izliyor**

**Mavi At hep kossun**

24. gününde...

## YENİ ADRES MAVİ AT KAFE

Evet, Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi üzerinde açılan bu kafeterya hem çok özel, hem de Türkiye'ye örnek. Zira orada çalışanlar, şizofren hastalarının olmalarını yanısıra, normal yaşama dönüş sağlarlar.

**Oku, Düşün, Paylaş projesi**

**Yıldızhan 15. haftasını yaşıyor**

**Uzlaşma çalışmaları**

**Yeni adres de açıldı**

**Viking**

**İzmir'den yeni bir adres**

**New address is The Blue Horse Café**

*Schizophrenia patients invite you to have a coffee... This Café worth attending!!!*

**LET THE "BLUE HORSE" RUN**

Last but not the least, the most valuable indicator for us is the happiness we share with the patients working in the café that they derive from their contributions in this precise place. People, who are fed up even with the daily routines of the so-called” normals”, such as taking a walk in a park, talking to a neighbor, became individuals whose happiness shines through their eyes. Those beaming eyes challenged to all blunted affect subscale in the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale when we saw them at the prejudice-free environment of the Blue Horse Café.



## **CONCLUSION**

All in all, The Blue Horse Café is a promising anti-stigma project on its own with the “protesting, education and social contact” features. The further studies should be conducted in the Blue Horse Café within a more systematic, comprehensive and scientific framework using our preliminary evaluations and experiences.

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