Pioneers of Special Education in Turkey

TURKCELL, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND OTSIMO
Marketing Director of Turkcell Barbaros Yiş:

“Today, with My Gem Inside, we are capable of reaching 1000 children, in 10 cities and 11 classrooms in Turkey. Our vision is to swiftly expand our reach to 1 million people who are diagnosed with autism. Everyday our span of content and number of active users are increasing.”

Problem

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disorder of variable severity that is characterized by difficulty in social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of thought and behavior and most importantly lack of concentration. There is no cure for it, research has proved that early and intensive education of core competencies is the best form of treatment to help restrict side symptoms. However, special education is so expensive that not only many parents in Turkey cannot afford it but also it is very hard to find an institution that provides this education thoroughly.

Solution

My Gem Inside is the first mobile application of Otsimo that was funded and licensed by Turkcell. The Turkish Ministry of Education was involved in this process as the government is able to reach and provide this education in every district of Turkey. Apart from being offered in the App Store and Google Play Store, “My Gem Inside” has 11 special education classrooms that offer special education in 10 cities of Turkey as of February 2019. The application consists of a variety of games that are designed with the help of child psychologists and educators which offer an entertaining way to teach basic colors, numbers, shapes, adjectives and such. It also automatically scales the difficulty of the games depending on the child’s interaction with them, optimizing the challenge for each individual. All of the games offered, have hints, encouraging features such as stars and applause and the developers specially avoided any discouraging features. My Gem Inside is the only app of its kind that offers a platform for both child and parent, with the family module offering keen insights and statistics on how children using the game are progressing and developing over time. My Gem Inside solves one of the biggest problems, which is the lack of concentration and attention span problem with gamification techniques. By using smart devices, the attention span sharply rises up to 45-50 minutes.
Results

The result was a complete win for any party included in the process. The Turkish Ministry of Education can now provide special education more extensively and comprehensively to Turkish children with autism, without any charge. They also have increased capacity to build the special classrooms all around Turkey. At the same time, for their support, Turkcell is now the pioneer in special education in Turkey and their image was affected very positively from this campaign. Otismo is continuing working further for the special education of children with special needs. The most important part in this challenge is of course the parents. Their children can now easily compensate for the education they actually need as easy as downloading the app and doing these at home.

Ministry of Education, Special Education and Guidance Services
General Director
Ahmet Emre Bilgili:

“Our students with special needs, compose a crucial profile in HR that needs to be improved and educated carefully. While working on this subject, what we value over anything is the personalization of the content of special education. If you put your heart to what you are doing, the chances of failing are very poor. We are putting our hearts into My Gem Inside and hoping to make the special education sacred/untouchable.”

Marketing Director of Turkcell Barbaros Yiş: “My Gem Inside is our application we are currently working on, in hopes to become beneficial to the society.”