



LESSONS LEARNED OF ILO'S REFUGEE RESPONSE PROGRAMME IN TURKEY: SUPPORTING LIVELIHOODS OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
ASAM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DG ILF	Directorate General of International Labour Force, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services
DGMM	Directorate General for Migration Management, Ministry of Interior
EC	European Commission
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
EU	European Union
FRIT	Facility for Refugees in Turkey
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IHKIB	Istanbul Apparel Exporters' Association
ILO	International Labour Office/Organization
İŞKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
ITC-ILO	International Training Centre of ILO
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey
LDC	Least developed countries
LED	Local economic development
MoFLSS	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
OSH	Occupational safety and health
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (ILO)
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SSI	Social Security Institution
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VCA	Value chain analysis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the Syrian conflict begins its ninth year, Turkey continues to host the highest number of refugees in the world for the fifth year in a row, with over 3.6 million Syrian refugees¹ and an estimated number of 400,000 from other countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.² The prolonged stay of refugees as well as the scale of Turkey's refugee population makes it among the most important examples for learning what is effective when it comes to responding to refugee needs – from both relief and development perspectives. As the situation is now considered protracted,³ government actors, international organizations, development actors, civil society and refugees themselves are increasingly shifting their focus towards building resilience, with a view to moving from humanitarian to development outcomes, with a focus on access to the labour market.

This has come about in the wake of extensive policy guidance and research demonstrating that including refugees in the economy and fostering self-reliance is better for all involved – hosts and refugees – than prolonged aid. **The ILO has been active in supporting refugees in Turkey in finding decent work⁴ opportunities since 2015.** The need could not be more urgent: many refugees have depleted any savings they arrived with, and as many do not have access to decent work,

this has serious consequences on their ability to provide food, housing and other basic needs for their families. At the same time, Turkey has faced an economic downturn since 2018, making it increasingly difficult for some Turkish citizens, as well as refugees, to support themselves.⁵

This report examines lessons learned in the **ILO Turkey's Refugee Response Programme**, which targets mainly Syrian refugees, but also includes non-Syrian refugees. It is based on a desk review and fieldwork in four provinces in October 2018, and was written between October 2018 and May 2019. The report draws on data gathered from semi-structured interviews and observations, as well as analysis of projects, and presents lessons learned and emerging good practices from this research.

The report focuses on the projects that the ILO has been implementing in Turkey since 2015. Hence, some of the lessons learned are specific to Turkey; they relate to specific laws, policies and approaches in the Turkish context. Many others, however, are relevant to other country contexts and could be drawn upon and applied in other refugee situations around the globe. Furthermore, the report relates these lessons learned and emerging good practices to a broader context – most notably, the New York Declaration and

¹ Turkey is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, but maintains the original geographical limitations of the definition of a refugee, meaning that only those fleeing events in Europe are considered refugees. Those fleeing from other countries may receive temporary and international protection status. Syrians receive temporary protection – and hence, they do not enjoy refugee status according to the Geneva Convention. However, throughout this report, holders of temporary and international protection status will be referred to as refugees.

² See Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), Migration Statistics, Temporary Protection, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik; International Protection, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/international-protection_915_1024_4747_icerik

³ The UNHCR considers a refugee situation to be protracted if it has 25,000 people or more who have been in exile for five years or more (UNHCR, 2004).

⁴ The ILO defines “decent work” as work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

⁵ See, for example, World Bank, 2019; Zutt et al., 2018.

the Global Compacts. Indeed, Turkey is an excellent place to continue carrying forward the momentum on the international stage: particularly ways to address protracted displacement, reduce the gap between relief and development, improve host community-refugee relations, and reduce long-term reliance on humanitarian aid, potentially contributing to the economies of host countries.

Put in a global context, then, **the ILO in Turkey represents an important model for how a development actor can work to address large-scale, protracted displacement.** The ILO with its tripartite structure, normative framework and decent work agenda is in a unique position to address challenges and develop inclusive strategies to support the access of refugees to decent work. The ILO's Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market (2016; see Annex) have in fact helped to frame the ILO's support to the Turkish Government in addressing the current challenges. Further, the Government's high level of engagement and openness to protection and the provision of sustainable livelihoods presents unique opportunities to support refugees' access to decent work in Turkey.

Above all, the ILO has an important role to play in **bridging the humanitarian-development divide.** Specific to the Turkish

context, this means strengthening linkages between the protection/basic needs sectors under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) country chapter and the livelihoods sector, so that protection issues and basic needs are addressed and durable solutions are found.

More specifically, this report highlights lessons learned under the three pillars of intervention as well as under cross-cutting issues of the Refugee Response Programme. As such, under the **first pillar**, which aims to improve skills and employability, lessons learned are drawn on the design of skills development measures, on outreach to refugees as well as on supporting access to the labour market. Under the **second pillar** concerning support to job creation and support to entrepreneurship opportunities, lessons learned relate to activities to assess labour market needs and support new and existing businesses as well as transition to formality. Under the **third pillar**, which focuses on labour market governance and compliance, lessons learned concern activities that support cooperation and coherence as well as labour law enforcement, transition to the formal labour market and outreach to refugees by labour market institutions. Finally, under **cross-cutting** issues, lessons learned are drawn with regard to social dialogue, gender, equality of opportunity and treatment as well as social cohesion.

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the Labour Migration Branch) and Numan  zcan (Director of the ILO Office for Turkey).

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1.

INTRODUCTION

As the Syrian conflict begins its ninth year, Turkey continues to host the highest number of refugees in the world for the fifth year in a row, with over 3.6 million Syrian refugees⁶ and an estimated number of 400,000 from other countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.⁷ The prolonged stay of refugees as well as the scale of Turkey's refugee population makes it among the most important examples for learning what is effective when it comes to responding to refugee needs – from both relief and development perspectives. As the situation is now considered protracted,⁸ government actors, international humanitarian and development actors, civil society and refugees themselves are increasingly shifting their focus towards building resilience.

The Syrian refugee population in Turkey is young: **the average age of Syrian refugees is estimated to be 23 years old and more than 2.1 million are of working age; around 65 per cent are women and children** (Ministry of Interior, DGMM, 2019). It is estimated that around one million Syrian refugees are working, the majority informally. Fewer and fewer refugees are found in temporary accommodation centres: only 4 per cent of the refugee population, compared with 30 per cent in 2014 (UNHCR, 2014; Zutt et al., 2018). Most refugees from other countries who participate in the labour market are also estimated to work informally. Having refugees residing in urban areas and non-camp settings has meant that local municipalities are now at the forefront of supporting refugees in Turkey. Many refugees have depleted any savings they arrived with, and as many of

The average age of Syrian refugees is estimated to be 23 years old and more than 2.1 million are of working age; around 65 per cent are women and children.

them do not have access to decent work, this also has serious consequences on their ability to provide food, housing and other basic needs for their families. **Most work informally and in low-skilled jobs such as seasonal agricultural work, construction and manufacturing, including textiles in urban settings, where they receive below minimum wage rates and work in unsafe conditions.** The language barrier further accentuates these challenges (ILO, 2019a).

The Turkish Government has shown strong leadership in response to the arrival of Syrian refugees, and has adapted its response and legislation through the years, while being supported by UN agencies. At the beginning, Syrian refugees were viewed as guests whose stay was envisaged as temporary. Since 2014 they have been able to apply for temporary protection, and by 2016 were granted the ability to obtain work permits – a significant step in their access to the formal labour market and in achieving self-reliance. Similarly, non-Syrian refugees have also been able to obtain work permits since 2016.

As the situation continues to evolve, the ILO has an important role to play in bridging

⁶ Turkey is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, but maintains the original geographical limitations of the definition of a refugee, meaning that only those fleeing events in Europe are considered refugees. Those fleeing from other countries may receive temporary and international protection status. Syrians receive temporary protection – and hence, they do not enjoy refugee status according to the Geneva Convention. However, throughout this report, holders of temporary and international protection status will be referred to as refugees.

⁷ See Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), Migration Statistics, Temporary Protection, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik; International Protection, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/international-protection_915_1024_4747_icerik

⁸ The UNHCR considers a refugee situation to be protracted if it has 25,000 people or more who have been in exile for five years or more (UNHCR, 2004).

the humanitarian–development divide. Specific to the Turkish context, this means strengthening linkages between the protection/basic needs sectors under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) country chapter and the livelihoods sector, so that protection issues are addressed and durable solutions are found.⁹ **The ILO, with its tripartite structure, normative framework, and importantly, its Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market (see Annex) and decent work agenda is in a unique position to address challenges and develop inclusive strategies to support the access of refugees to decent work.** This report highlights lessons learned and emerging good practices of the ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey.

1.1 BACKGROUND: REFUGEES AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN TURKEY

Turkey has evolved in its response to refugees. In 2013, it adopted the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which entered into force on 11 April 2014. The Law sets out the pillars of Turkey's national asylum system and established the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) as the main entity in charge of policy-making and proceedings for all foreigners in Turkey (UNHCR, 2018a). Owing to the protracted nature of the refugee situation, Turkey has adopted a resilience-based development approach, as expressed in the Temporary Protection Regulation of 2014 – the regulation provides a number of rights and responsibilities of Syrian refugees and a framework of access to the labour market. Subsequently, Turkey

adopted the 2016 Regulation on Provision of Work Permits for People under Temporary Protection as well as the Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders, **which allows officially registered refugees under temporary protection and international protection respectively to obtain a work permit through their employer six months after registration.**

The work permit regulations marked a turning point in Syrian and non-Syrian refugees' access to the formal labour market in Turkey. Further, Turkey's national development plans and legislation form an important backdrop to its refugee response. In particular, Turkey's Tenth Development Plan, Goal 2.1, emphasizes "Qualified People, Strong Society", and seeks to expand social welfare, raise the quality and qualification of people in the society, and guarantee human rights. Similarly the National Employment Strategy is also geared towards developing policies that provide equal opportunities to all, preventing discrimination, protecting workers and promoting social dialogue.

Despite these advances, however, refugees face a number of challenges when accessing the formal labour market.

These challenges have increased since the economic downturn in 2018 which saw market volatility and inflation of the Lira (The Economist, 2018). Further, informality creates a competitive advantage for those who hire refugees informally to work for lower wages (see box 2.2). This in turn creates downward pressure on wages and working conditions for all workers, including host community members. This situation – compounded by the language barrier – has also incentivized negative coping strategies such as child labour among refugees.

⁹ Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2019–2020 (3 RP). 2019. "Turkey Country Chapter", <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/68618>.



1.1 THE ILO REFUGEE RESPONSE PROGRAMME IN TURKEY

The ILO's mandate is to protect all workers, including migrant and refugee workers. This has been an issue of importance for the ILO since its foundation in 1919. The Preamble to the ILO Constitution refers to the necessity for “protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own”. Further, the ILO has adopted two migrant specific conventions, Convention Nos. 97 and 143, which promote equality of opportunity and treatment for migrant workers, and also apply to refugees as workers.

In Turkey, the ILO has been supporting refugees' access to decent work¹⁰ opportunities since 2015. **The ILO adopted a comprehensive, holistic and integrated Refugee Response Programme** (see box 1.1). The programme builds on ILO interventions supporting Syrian refugees in Turkey since 2015, as well as interventions with non-Syrian refugees that started in 2017, promoting comprehensive short- and medium-term employment-rich measures to be implemented within the framework of Turkey's overall response and the 3RP. Five projects are currently implemented under the Refugee Response Programme targeting the major Syrian refugee-hosting provinces and satellite cities accommodating non-Syrian refugees (figures 1.1 and 1.2).

¹⁰ The ILO defines “decent work” as work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

Box 1.1 The ILO Refugee Response Programme: Three pillars

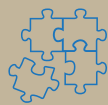
The ILO Refugee Response Programme is based on three integrated pillars, to facilitate the early entry of refugees and host community members into the formal labour market. The three pillars are:



Increase the availability of a skilled, competent and productive labour supply to facilitate access to decent work for refugees and Turkish host communities



Support local economic development in specific sectors and geographic locations to stimulate job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities for refugees and Turkish host communities



Provide support to strengthen labour market governance institutions and mechanisms to assist Turkey in implementing inclusive development strategies

ILO's Refugee Response Programme

Scope

- **5 on-going projects**, interventions started in 2015
- **Overall budget** interventions, over **35 million USD**
- Supporting **Syrian, Afghani, Iranian, Iraqi** refugees (under TP and IP)
- In cooperation with **tripartite constituents and UN agencies**, contributing to the LH sector of the 3RP
- Funded by **EU-MADAD, US-PRM, KfW**



Skills Assessments, skills and language training, skills recognition, workplace adaption programmes.

LM assessments, job placement support, supporting formality and sustainability, supporting enterprise creation.

Labour law compliance and enforcement, strengthening capacity of tripartite partners , improving service delivery.

Figure 1.1 Description of the ILO Refugee Response Programme implemented in Turkey

Cutting across these pillars are critical areas of action, notably the strengthening of social dialogue, the knowledge base, awareness-

raising and advocacy, the application of fundamental principles and rights at work, and gender equality.



Figure 1.2 Map of the ILO Refugee Response Programme in Turkey

Among the ILO's key partners are the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS), including DG International Labour Force and its related agencies which are the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) and the Turkish Social Security Institution (SSI), the Ministry of Interior and more specifically the Directorate General of Migration

Management (DGMM) and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), social partners, regional development agencies, municipalities, chambers of merchants and artisans, NGOs, and relevant UN agencies and other development organizations.

1.3 REGIONAL AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

At the regional level, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) constitutes a strategic partnership mechanism between governments, donors, UN agencies and NGOs, which has led to the creation of a refugee response combining humanitarian and development elements. **The Turkey chapter of the 3RP combines a humanitarian response addressing basic needs, with longer-term interventions that bolster the resilience of refugee and host communities, while also building the capacity of national systems.** As time passes, the focus is shifting to the strengthening of refugees' and host community members' resilience.

At the global level, **responding to the increased need for resilience-focused interventions in refugee-hosting countries, in 2016, the ILO developed Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market – an important framework for its work** (ILO, 2016, see Annex). These were subsequently endorsed by the ILO's Governing Body at its meeting in October–November 2016. They set out core principles to support member States on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced people to the labour market, and to assist those members affected by such situations,

Indeed, the GCR refers to decent work, and the ILO's Guiding principles and Recommendation No. 205 are explicitly referenced.

particularly frontline States. They also aim to ensure responses that meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholders – host, refugee and forcibly displaced communities. The Guiding principles have been foundational to the development of the Programme of Support for Turkey and they helped frame ILO support to assisting refugees and nationals to assure durable impact.

Further, in June 2017 the ILO adopted the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (No. 205), which provides a normative framework for world-of-work related measures to prevent and respond to the devastating effects of conflicts and disasters on economies and societies, paying special attention to vulnerable population groups like children, young people, women and displaced persons (see ILO, 2017).

Moreover, the mandate of the ILO enables it to play an important role in the nexus between humanitarian aid and resilience-focused development interventions. In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the New York Declaration, which gave way to the creation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), both of which have since been endorsed by the UNGA in December 2018. The Compacts are meant to be complementary, and the GCR in particular emphasizes greater responsibility-sharing among countries hosting large numbers of refugees, and a reaffirmation of the

principles, standards and practices of the international refugee regime. The GCM is particularly relevant to the ILO's work, but the GCR is also important, as it seeks to enhance socio-economic conditions for both refugees and hosts. **Indeed, the GCR refers to decent work, and the ILO's Guiding principles and Recommendation No. 205 are explicitly referenced.**

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

This report was produced between October 2018 and June 2019. It draws upon qualitative methods during field research – primarily semi-structured interviews – and a thorough desk review of documents. The lessons learned and emerging good practices are based upon ILO projects in Turkey from 2015 through to the present. The main focus is in Syrian refugees, though attention is also given to a project concerning non-Syrian refugees.

After the desk review, the consultant compiled tables of key questions for interviews that would take place while on mission. These questions were arranged into issue areas for each interview (and adapted depending on the interviewee), which were filtered through the organizational lens of each pillar.

The issue areas included:

- Basic tenets of the programme (interviewees lay out essential components and activities)
- Structural: Relating to how the programme is carried out
- Relational: Pertaining to the range of actors (Government, social partners, NGO, civil society, and UN)
- Internal to the ILO: Relating to matters of ILO operation, staffing, financing, etc.

Issue areas then included probes within the key question matrices, which were designed to pull out causal factors and their effects.

While they do provide insight and analysis, lessons learned studies are not an evaluation; they do not systematically analyse each aspect of a project to evaluate how and whether they meet objectives. Rather, they are detailed reflections on projects, activities, initiatives or other work, and may be understood as positive (successes) or negative (failures). They serve as learning points based on experiences and results achieved, and can be based on evidence that is quantitative or qualitative. They may come from monitoring or formal evaluations.¹¹

11 “A lesson learned is knowledge or understanding gained by experience. The experience may be positive, as in a successful test or mission, or negative, as in a mishap or failure ... A lesson must be significant in that it has a real or assumed impact on operations; valid in that it is factually and technically correct; and applicable in that it identifies a specific design, process or decision that reduces or eliminates the potential for failures and mishaps, or reinforces a positive result” (Secchi, 1999). A second definition, based on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), defines lessons learned as “Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programmes, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact” (OECD, 2010, p. 26).

The goal is to frame lessons, based on experience, in a manner that will facilitate use in future areas and applications, and will actively facilitate learning from experience in order to avoid repeating past mistakes or reinventing the wheel. According to the LDC Expert Group of the United Nations Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat (2011), a high-quality lesson must:

- concisely capture the context from which it is derived;
- be applicable in a different context (generic), have a clear “application domain” and identify target users; and
- suggest a prescription and should guide action.

See also UNICEF, 2015.





2.

**THE THREE PILLARS
OF THE ILO REFUGEE
RESPONSE PROGRAMME**

When starting to support refugees in Turkey to access decent work, the ILO focused on skills interventions. As time went by, the ILO adopted a more comprehensive approach looking at both sides of the labour market. As such, it has become **crucial to design skills development measures that are linked to actual job opportunities. Labour market assessments have helped to identify these.** Also, to make a meaningful contribution to compliance with decent work principles, the ILO has strengthened the capacity of government actors and social partners and, for example, has brought together relevant actors who would usually have limited space for exchange of knowledge and experience. Cutting across

these three pillars of intervention, the ILO pays special attention to including different target groups and supporting equality of opportunity and treatment by always including affected host communities and different refugee populations, and paying special attention to the inclusion of women (see below, box 2.1).

An overview and some of the lessons learned under each pillar of the ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey are presented below. Afterwards, lessons learned under cross-cutting issues are discussed and finally, a concluding section summarizes lessons learned.

2.1 PILLAR 1: IMPROVING SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Pillar 1 of the ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey is to support employability and refugees' access to labour markets through skills-related interventions. Amidst high rates of informal labour among refugees and comparatively higher exposure to labour rights abuses, this pillar seeks to **increase the availability of a skilled, competent and productive labour supply to facilitate access to decent work for refugees and members of host communities.**

In response to refugees tending to work in low-skilled sectors and unsafe working conditions, the ILO has implemented a range of skills training courses that target both refugees and the communities hosting them. To develop and further improve the skills of refugees and host communities, the ILO together with partners offers technical

and vocational education and training (TVET) and entrepreneurship training as well as language classes. Basic labour market skills training as well as information sessions on public employment services complement TVET courses by providing graduates with soft skills and informing them about their rights and obligations as well as available employment services.

Further, the ILO has supported referrals to the apprenticeship system and on-the-job training programmes. The ILO has also developed tailor-made occupational safety and health (OSH) training for refugees, host communities, and employers, and sought to raise awareness of İŞKUR community centre and municipal staff on relevant legislation, labour rights and the importance of formal work as well as risks and hazards in the workplace.

2.1.1 LESSONS LEARNED

DESIGN OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT MEASURES

Skills profiling studies help to assess refugees' skills and needs, and design skills training that supports access to the labour market beyond low-skilled sectors.

Most refugees work in low-skilled sectors such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing, and refugees face major obstacles to accessing middle- or higher-skilled occupations. As such, the lack of recognition of prior learning – be it the recognition of diplomas and certificates or of acquired skills – and importantly, the lack of tailored skills development measures represent considerable challenges that are accentuated by the language barrier. Often, employers prefer to hire refugees for simple tasks, where communication is limited. Hence, a large number of overqualified workers can be found.

Skills development
measures are not
necessarily adapted to
refugees' needs.

Most importantly, **skills development measures are not necessarily adapted to refugees' needs.** As such, a recent assessment conducted by the European Union (European Commission, 2018, Livelihoods section) to evaluate assistance provided under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey underlined that it is not only about training an unskilled labour force, but often a question of upskilling given refugees' outdated practices, especially as there is a demand for



semi-skilled workers in sectors in which Turkish citizens are reluctant to work.

Therefore, **to better tailor skills training to refugees' needs, the ILO is conducting skills profiling studies targeting Syrian and non-Syrian refugees.** With regard to Syrian refugees, three studies are targeting 2,000 Syrian households (5,000 individuals) as well as 100 Syrian-owned enterprises in three provinces. These studies will provide information on the socio-economic profile of Syrians as well as their labour market

To better tailor skills training to refugees' needs, the ILO is conducting skills profiling studies targeting Syrian and non-Syrian refugees.

situation and also give some indications on the situation of Syrian-owned enterprises. In a similar vein, a study on the socio-economic profile of non-Syrian refugees was carried out covering 1,000 households (6,000 individuals). Preliminary findings highlight how diverse this group of refugees is – most come from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq and they have very different educational levels. For example, Afghans tend to be lower-skilled and work in agriculture, whereas Iranians tend to be highly educated, but still do not have access to middle- or higher-skilled jobs. This information will help to implement more targeted training.

Further, since 2017, the ILO has been supporting recognition of prior learning and is supporting refugees to take examinations at vocational test centres to acquire official qualifications of their skills. However, efforts on a larger scale will be needed with regard to recognition of prior learning.



Since 2018, more than 7,300 beneficiaries have been reached (see figures 2.1 and 2.2). As many training courses take place in chambers' training centres, chambers are able to connect some participants to job opportunities after participating in training, but the number of those who found a job has remained low.

To ensure a link to actual job opportunities, the needs of the labour market and the validity of existing training programmes have to be assessed in partnership with chambers.

A recent draft impact assessment on ILO's vocational training courses has shown that there are several areas for improvement when designing and implementing them. **Often, vocational training has become a goal in itself, rather than an instrument to support employability and access to the labour market.** Reasons for this can include time constraints or donor preferences. Most importantly, short training courses following the lifelong learning curricula of the MoNE do not adequately respond to the needs of employers. As the assessment has shown, training often focuses on very specific skills, which is not sufficient to access the labour market. **To ensure a link to actual job opportunities, the needs of the labour market and the validity of existing training programmes have to be assessed in partnership with chambers.** To identify these, the ILO started conducting comprehensive labour market assessments as well as value chain analyses in 2018 under pillar 2 of the ILO Refugee Response



Programme, which focuses on the labour market demand side. This will be explained further below.

Language classes need to be better designed to respond to the needs of refugees and the labour market.

Unlike other countries in the region where Syrian refugees do not face language barriers because Arabic is spoken, the ability to speak Turkish is essential to entering the formal labour market in Turkey. Studies found that even after a prolonged stay in Turkey, language remains the biggest challenge when accessing the labour market – as such, **language training is often mentioned as the most urgent need**



and advanced language skills greatly enhance the chances of finding a job. On the contrary, without language skills, even skilled refugees have to resort to low-skilled and poorly paid jobs, as they fail in job interviews or when performing tasks once employed.

In response to inadequate language skills on the part of refugees, the ILO has supported language training across several projects, a foundation to their pursuing other training as well. Indeed, interviewees reported that language courses were good complements

to vocational training, and an important component of overall preparation for work in Turkey.

However, it has to be noted that participating in one language course without follow-up is likely to have limited impact. Also, ideally, refugees should participate in language classes before attending TVET courses. Further, it should be assessed if better tailored language classes, which take into account refugees' specific needs and educational levels, could be designed. Finally, as found by the recent assessment conducted by the European Union to evaluate assistance provided under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, **language courses need to be more in-depth, tailored and targeted at refugees able to work in priority sectors within the Turkish economy** (European Commission, 2018, Livelihoods section).

Entrepreneurship training can be an impactful tool to build the skills of refugees while supporting job creation and economic growth.

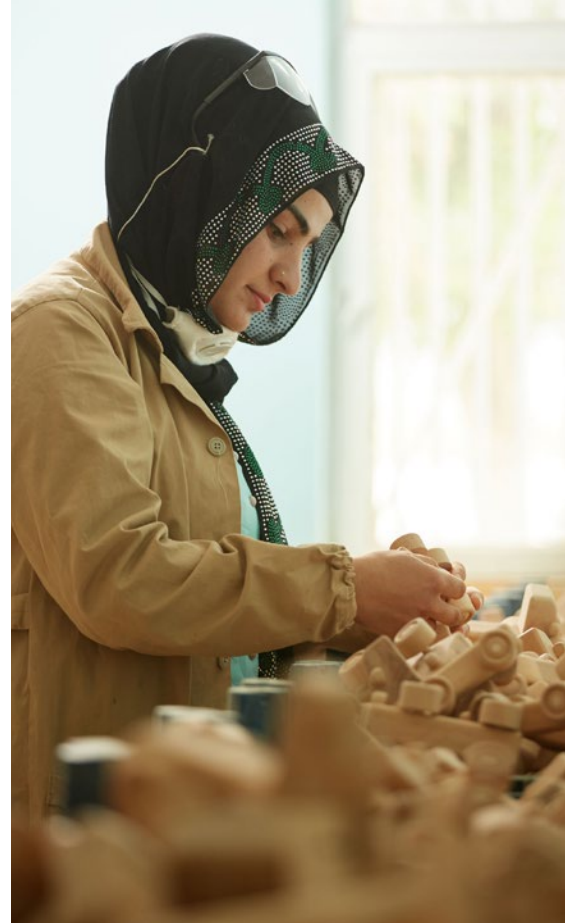
According to the figures from the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Syrians have become the largest group of foreign entrepreneurs in Turkey.¹⁴ It is estimated that Syrian-owned businesses in Turkey, including informal ones, exceed 10,000. Given that these businesses employ 9.4 people on average (European Commission, 2018), **entrepreneurship training is a great tool not only to build the skills of refugees but also to support job creation and economic growth**, as will be explained below under pillar 2 of the ILO Refugee Response Programme.

¹⁴ See tobb.org.tr, 2019.

The ILO has implemented entrepreneurship training to reach refugees with business ambitions. Thus far, 300 Syrians and 87 host community members have graduated from entrepreneurship training. The ILO offers entrepreneurship training in partnership with universities and technology parks following the training modules of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey (KOSGEB). The entrepreneurship training assists with creating a business plan and pitching it, and provides a certificate – an important proof of participation for students. It also presents a good networking opportunity, and is an important step to supporting young entrepreneurs. After completing the training, young entrepreneurs gain access to start-up funding with KOSGEB, which was proven especially useful at supporting young and more educated entrepreneurs.

In the future, the ILO will support the inclusion of Arabic-speaking trainers in the KOSGEB pool of trainers. In addition, the ILO is already supporting access of refugees to further business incubators that also give grants. As such, the ILO is looking into possibilities to support Syrian refugees' access to grants given by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK).

Interviewees pointed to a need to ensure that refugees do not complete endless training without an endpoint of decent work.



OUTREACH TO REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES

Outreach to refugees and host communities has to target a wider audience to ensure that those who are willing and able to work participate in training.

The recent draft impact assessment (mentioned above) on ILO's vocational training courses has shown that outreach to potential trainees does not necessarily target those willing and able to work. Rather, it has been observed that some refugees will bounce from one training to the next in order to collect stipends, making them 'professional vocational training students'.

ILO's basic labour market skills training and information sessions on public employment services were reported to support better labour market access, effective job matching and sustainable employment.

This was a common concern among those interviewed and represents a challenge in tracking and coordinating amongst training providers. **Interviewees pointed to a need to ensure that refugees do not complete endless training without an endpoint of decent work.** It is also indicative of the concern that the same pool of beneficiaries is being targeted, and the need to reach outside the same groups of beneficiaries.

As such, outreach campaigns have to be designed to reach wider audiences. Often, outreach is target solely to former training participants and through social media – hence reaching only a fraction of potential training participants. The above-mentioned impact assessment on vocational courses suggests extending outreach by involving schools to identify refugees eager and able to work or by announcing training courses in areas densely populated by refugees.

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Basic labour market skills training as well as information sessions on public employment services can support access to the labour market.

Next to supporting the development of technical skills, it is essential to build core skills for employability as well as to inform refugees about their rights and obligations. Nearly all interviewees across programmes and staff acknowledged that vocational training did not on its own lead to work. **The ILO's basic labour market skills training and information sessions on public employment services were reported to support better labour market access, effective job matching and sustainable employment.**

Basic labour market skills training and information sessions on public employment services have been implemented since 2018 and the majority of vocational skills graduates have participated in this complementary training. While information sessions on public employment services last for half a day, the basic labour market skills training is a two-day training covering different topics ranging from labour law, OSH and financial literacy to job-searching skills and tools. So far, refugees have appreciated this service which is tailored to their needs and which gives them an opportunity to clarify questions they have with regard to their labour market access.

Work-based training programmes, such as apprenticeship programmes, hold great potential to build work-related skills and support access to the labour market.

In 2018, the ILO started supporting referrals to the apprenticeship system as a pilot, and so far, 301 Syrian refugees and 71 host community members have been referred. The ILO works in cooperation with chambers of merchants and artisans, vocational

Caution must be taken, however, to ensure that refugees are not taken advantage of as cheap labour.

training centres and vocational training specialists to conduct workplace visits, identify those that would like to take part in the apprenticeship programme, provide information to Syrian refugees about the apprenticeship system in Turkey and refer them to vocational training centres to be registered.

Among ILO partners implementing skills training and **apprenticeship programmes, apprenticeship programmes were seen as more effective because they combine theoretical and practical training.** Under the apprenticeship programmes, refugee youth are trained in a given profession during two to three years, depending on the type of occupation. During this time, the apprentices spend one day per week at a vocational training centre to complement their work-based training with theoretical courses. During the other workdays, apprentices are supervised by master trainers at their workplaces. The apprenticeship approach is part of the formal education system in Turkey, and therefore is natural to replicate in the refugee context. **Caution must be taken, however, to ensure that refugees are not taken advantage of as a cheap workforce** (apprentices earn one-third of the minimum wage) who does not need a work permit as an apprentice. The fact that the maximum age limit for apprentices



was recently lifted has increased the risk of potential abuses in the system if people with experience in an occupation, but no formal certification, are hired as apprentices.

The apprenticeship programme has also been successful so far because master trainers at the workplaces have been very responsible and receive training on supervisory and pedagogical skills. The trainers from the vocational training centre follow up with apprentices at the workplace through regular visits to make sure that they progress, follow the work requirements of their employers, and are treated well. The trainers from vocational training centres have also been available to the employers to help mitigate workplace conflicts, including on job performance, attendance and relationships with other workers.

At the same time, the ILO has supported referrals of refugees to on-the-job training organized by İŞKUR. The objective of this work-based training programme is to increase the employability of those who lack vocational experience and give employers an opportunity to train trainees before employing them. As these programmes have been deemed effective in supporting labour market integration, the **ILO will tailor on-the-job training programmes to refugees' needs to support them in gaining work-related skills and accessing the formal labour market.** Similar to apprentices, trainees do not need a work permit and remuneration is subsidized, hence it is important to ensure that they are not seen as a cheap workforce.

2.2 PILLAR 2: SUPPORTING JOB CREATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Pillar 2 of the ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey is to **support local economic development in specific sectors and geographic locations to stimulate job creation for refugees and Turkish host communities.** Based on local labour market assessments, the ILO identifies sectors and occupations with growth and job potential that also meet the demand of refugees, and develops interventions to support job creation and transition to formality.

Assessments of opportunities in local labour markets inform activities such as skills training programmes under pillar 1 to

ensure that support for job creation and entrepreneurship development in different sectors and subsectors addresses labour market needs. Further, the ILO is supporting new and existing enterprises for transition to formality and increase in productivity and sustainability – including start-ups and cooperatives. The ILO has also worked in close cooperation with chambers and also directly with employers to inform them about work permit application procedures, and to provide incentives to hire refugees formally by covering work permit fees and social security contributions.¹⁵



¹⁵ According to Turkish law, companies that hire foreigners must pay for their work permits, as well as their social security taxes (a requirement for all workers). By covering these costs, the ILO incentivizes companies to hire refugees.

2.2.1 LESSONS LEARNED

ASSESSING LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

Carrying out local economic development (LED) assessments and value-chain analyses (VCAs) enables the identification of sectors with greater potential for job creation.

Systematically analysing the needs of the labour market is key to supporting the labour market access of refugees. **By having a good overview of the requirements of the labour market, it is easier to design relevant training courses.** This was also a major outcome of the draft impact assessment on vocational training courses: cooperation with employers and chambers is key to increasing employment.

By having a good overview of the requirements of the labour market, it is easier to design relevant training courses.

To address this, the ILO in partnership with individual academics and research organizations conducted LED assessments and VCAs in eight provinces (Adana, Bursa, Hatay, Konya, Mersin, Istanbul, Denizli and Sakarya) and sought to gain **an overview of local labour markets as well as sectors and subsectors with relevance to the target group and potential for economic growth**

and employment creation.¹⁶ Based on the LED assessments, the shoemaking sector in Konya, the textile sector in Istanbul, Bursa and Adana, and the furniture-making sector in Mersin and Hatay have been selected as target sectors. Through VCAs, core value chains in identified sectors were mapped, including operations and dynamics, by using secondary resources and collecting information on site. After identifying key constraints limiting growth as well as key actors, project ideas were discussed in stakeholder workshops; based on this, recommendations were drafted to support job creation. In addition, local economic development assessments focusing on non-Syrian refugees have been implemented in Sakarya and Denizli.

Key to the success of these assessments was the fact that a wide range of stakeholders were involved.

Selecting sectors for targeted interventions was appreciated by local partners. **Key to the success of these assessments was the fact that a wide range of stakeholders were involved** – including chambers and large companies, research centres and development agencies, as well as workers and also international organizations and NGOs, hence conveying a thorough picture of labour market needs.

SUPPORTING NEW AND EXISTING ENTERPRISES

Capacity-building and informative seminars for SMEs encourages enterprises to improve productivity and sustainability while recognizing the importance of decent work.

¹⁶ To conduct LEDs and VCAs, a general methodology on value chain analysis for decent work as well as a more targeted methodology was developed by the ILO together with UNHCR (Nutz, 2017).

To support SMEs, the ILO has conducted a number of capacity-building and informative seminars in cooperation with chambers as well as employers' associations.

According to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute from 2016, 99.8 per cent of enterprises in Turkey are SMEs, that is to say they are employing fewer than 250 employees. Close to 80 per cent of the Turkish workforce is employed in SMEs; therefore, supporting these enterprises can substantially contribute to sustainable development and inclusive growth.

To support SMEs, the ILO has conducted a number of capacity-building and informative seminars in cooperation with chambers as well as employers' associations. Seminars on sustainability and decent work have been conducted together with the Chamber of Industry in Gaziantep and are planned with the Chamber of Industry in Adana. In addition, social compliance informative seminars have been ongoing with the Istanbul Apparel Exporters' Association (IHKIB), reaching 26 enterprises so far; and a pilot needs-based mentorship programme has been initiated for IT-related Turkish and Syrian companies in Şanlıurfa. The objectives of these activities are to **raise awareness on decent work and its link to sustainability, while also improving productivity and competitiveness, facilitating SMEs' access to finance and supporting innovation, providing information on business advisory services and connecting SMEs to chambers and business associations.**





The main difficulty encountered in these activities was to reach Syrian enterprises. As a result, most enterprises that took part were Turkish companies employing Syrian workers. Chambers as well as IHKIB encountered **difficulties in reaching Syrian enterprises** mainly because of the language barrier and the limited interest/trust on the part of the enterprises. Also, partners reported being unable to provide any services to Syrian enterprises outside the activities organized with UN agencies. **Hence, there is a need to improve chambers' and employer associations' outreach and increase services provided to Syrian enterprises.** It will be essential to conduct more targeted outreach, ideally in Arabic, and to support more services tailored to the needs of Syrian enterprises. Future seminars in Adana will thus directly target Syrian enterprises with the help of interpretation services.

The ILO also supports formal enterprises in the manufacturing sector that employ at least 50 workers – both Syrian and Turkish – and who are mostly suppliers of international brands. The Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme is a global ILO programme that improves productivity and working conditions (ILO, 2019b). The programme is comprised of five modules covering workplace cooperation, quality management, clean production, human resource management and occupational safety and health. Each of the modules includes a joint, two-day classroom training for employers and workers, and follow-up consultations with experts in the participating enterprises. More than 20 companies have joined SCORE as of the date of this reporting and the project aims to reach a total number of 90 up to the end of 2019.

Participating enterprises reported that SCORE supported them in improving the functioning of their companies, as after

Hence, there is a need to improve chambers' and employer associations outreach and increase services provided to Syrian enterprises.

the SCORE training they had established an enterprise improvement team in each company, bringing workers and managers together in weekly meetings to discuss projects to improve productivity, sustainability and decent work. However, in the context of the SCORE programme it was equally difficult to reach Syrian enterprises as most of them do not have more than 50 employees, and further, Syrian enterprises might be reluctant to participate as most of them operate informally.

Pilot initiatives to support the establishment of new formal enterprises should be scaled up to increase formal job creation and improve working conditions.

Considering the potential of Syrian and Turkish entrepreneurs, supporting the creation of new enterprises has become an important area for ILO interventions. According to the figures from the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey, **Syrians have become the largest group of foreign entrepreneurs in Turkey,¹⁷** and employ 9.4 people on average. Further, **Syrian entrepreneurs often have had years of experience in Syria and sector-specific expertise, also bringing new products to the Turkish market such as specific types of textiles and food.** They further contribute to the increase in exports from Turkey, as they have access and links to businesses in Syria and across the Middle East and North Africa (European Commission, 2018).

Syrians have become the largest group of foreign entrepreneurs in Turkey

Next to organizing entrepreneurship training under pillar 1, the ILO has started to support the timely establishment of new enterprises. In addition to facilitating access to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey (KOSGEB), the ILO has started a grant programme from which 15 Syrian and Turkish enterprises are expected to benefit in establishing their businesses.

In addition, the ILO has initiated a pilot project to support businesses' transition to formality in Istanbul. Informal businesses profit from lower costs and hence have a comparative advantage, which is leading to complaints of unfair competition and contributing to social tensions. To enhance formalization, enterprises receive support on registration procedures as well as cash support. So far, 15 enterprises are participating in the programme and a total of 50 enterprises are expected to benefit.

Box 2.1 The establishment of women's cooperatives

The ILO has supported the establishment of cooperatives focusing on women. As such, building on the experience of the first Syrian-Turkish women's cooperative that was established in Şanlıurfa in 2017, another cooperative has recently been established under the umbrella of the SADA Women-only centre in Gaziantep, a centre managed by UN Women with the support of Gaziantep municipality, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) and the ILO. Targeting women that had participated in TVET, the ILO organized seminars on cooperative establishment and 50 founding members were selected. The cooperative was officially established on 25 March 2019 and the objective will be to sell products produced at the SADA centre (see box 3.1).

SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO FORMALITY

Providing incentives to employers to support formalization of their workforce improves working conditions while also having positive impacts on the fiscal balance.

One-third of the workforce in Turkey is estimated to work informally (see box 2.2).

The impact of informality can be observed on many levels. At the micro level, the availability of a cheap labour force has led to postponing necessary investments to improve sustainability and productivity, to

Box 2.2 Informality in the Turkish labour market

Informal work in Turkey reached 33.1% in 2018 according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT). Informal employment is prevalent in agriculture, construction and manufacturing and these sectors were showing high informality rates long before the arrival of Syrian refugees. While a trend towards formalization could be observed in the textile, clothing, leather and footwear industries between 2005 and 2014, this positive trend came to a halt with the arrival of Syrian refugees who increased the number of informal workers. Syrian workers on the one hand crowded out nationals from informal jobs (Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015) and on the other hand, complemented the Turkish workforce – performing jobs that Turkish workers are not willing to do. The number of informal Syrian workers is estimated at around 750,000 to 900,000, whereas there are no estimations available on the number of informally employed non-Syrians (International Crisis Group, 2018).

The majority of Syrian workers are employed informally in SMEs in the manufacturing and construction sectors. Almost one in every three Syrians works informally in the textile, clothing, leather and footwear industries in SMEs. Around 50 per cent of the informal Syrian workforce is found in micro-businesses.

Workers are exposed to excessive working hours, low pay and occupational safety and health risks.

the detriment of the viability of enterprises and especially working conditions within enterprises. Thus in many cases **workers are exposed to excessive working hours, low pay and occupational safety and health risks.** Next to this, the macroeconomic impact of informal labour should not be disregarded.

To support transition to formality, the ILO first implemented a pilot incentive scheme in 2017 and this pilot was built on in 2018.

In close collaboration with chambers of commerce and industry and in cooperation with United Work (an NGO that supports job placements of Syrians) as well as with job placement support consultants, the ILO has facilitated the work permit application procedure of Syrian refugees and has covered the cost of work permits and three months of social security premiums (both the employer and the worker contributions). In 2018, 76 companies from four provinces (Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Adana and İstanbul) applied to the ILO to employ Syrians, and more than 400 placements have been supported through United Work.

In 2019, this incentive scheme was further scaled up. Next to the ongoing collaboration with United Work, **the ILO signed an agreement with SSI** to support the placement of 1,100 Syrian and 1,100 Turkish workers by the end of 2019. This is an important step to support formalization, as

SSI is a crucial actor. An electronic system to facilitate the application procedure was put in place at SSI, and since April 2019 applications can be received from employers. Information days on the SSI scheme hosted by chambers and being delivered by SSI and the Directorate General of International Labour Force (DG ILF) have involved local actors such as provincial directorates of İŞKUR, governors and also enterprises and thus helped to raise awareness and build support.

Incentives were cited as a “guarantee” to employers that the workers would be committed

Work permit costs as well as social security contributions were seen by employers as a substantial burden discouraging formal employment – hence, the incentive scheme does tackle a major concern. Further, the **incentives were cited as a “guarantee” to employers that the workers would be committed,** and that the company would not be alone in taking the risk on new employees. Incentives therefore succeeded in expanding employment for Syrian refugees by supporting employers to hire Syrians where they otherwise would not.

An evaluation of the pilot incentive scheme in 2017 had shown that more than 75 per cent of refugees stayed in the same workplace after the three months incentive scheme had ended. However, before looking at these numbers, another challenge has to be overcome. The **turnover rate of refugees,** who are likely to move as soon as they receive a better job offer, results in limited numbers of refugees completing



"Providing incentives is not the end game. It is like a key on the door and you open the door."

the three months incentive scheme at one workplace. **To address this, the ILO is not only supporting employers to hire refugee workers, but also workers themselves.** Companies that benefit from the incentive scheme can take part in a workplace adaptation programme, where Syrian and Turkish workers are matched to support social cohesion (this will be explained further below) and Syrian workers can also benefit from language classes.

Another challenge yet to be addressed, however, is **how sustainable incentive payments are;** and how to structure and organize a phasing-out that secures formal employment in one workplace on the long run. To address this, **the involvement of SSI is crucial, as this ensures that refugees are included in the national system** instead of creating a parallel system of support. In this regard, SSI committed to raising awareness among Syrian and Turkish workers and employers on the importance of formal work. Further, with regard to piloting the incentive scheme in five provinces, it is aimed to further scale it up based on the outcomes of this pilot; an impact assessment will further help to identify challenges and good practices, which will also support the further extension

of the incentive scheme. So far, providing incentives to employers and support to refugees has indeed supported refugees in their effort to obtain and remain in decent work. As one interviewee put it: **“Providing incentives is not the end game. It is like a key on the door and you open the door.”**

Support for transition from social assistance to the formal labour market is essential to decrease dependence and build resilience.

An unfortunate obstacle to formal employment has been the fact that

Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) assistance¹⁸ is cut once refugees are registered to the SSI. Indeed, many refugees prefer to maintain informal employment so that they can continue receiving ESSN assistance and gain some money from their work informally. However, recent adjustments have been made to support transition to formal employment: ESSN beneficiaries no longer lose assistance if participating in training.

The next steps to be supported by the ILO are shown in box 2.3.

Box 2.3 Next steps in the transition to formal employment

A gradual shift to employment and supporting the transition to formality will constitute next steps to further support resilience. This is an approach that the MoFLSS is now pursuing: the recently published ESSN exit strategy will support a phasing out of those households that show some capacity to participate in the labour market, and 180,000 Syrians who are able to participate in the labour market will benefit from active labour market programmes, along with 180,000 Turkish workers. The ILO will support these efforts through its skills development measures.

¹⁸ The ESSN is funded by the European Union as part of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT) and implemented by the World Food Programme in cooperation with Turkish Red Crescent. Through ESSN, refugees receive monthly cash-transfers to meet their basic needs.

2.3 PILLAR 3: SUPPORTING LABOUR MARKET GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

The objective of pillar 3 of the ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey is to **strengthen labour market governance institutions and mechanisms in implementing inclusive labour market policies and laws**. To avoid widespread and entrenched segmentation of the labour market with increased informalization, dilution of fundamental principles and rights at work, diminished occupational safety and health and working conditions, and unfair competition across the private sector, the ILO supports efforts to reinforce governance and compliance with labour legislation protecting national and refugee workers.

To achieve this, the ILO has strengthened the capacity of relevant government institutions through several training activities aimed at applying the newly introduced national legislation: the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, and the subsequent Temporary Protection Regulation as well as Work Permit Regulations for temporary and international protection applicants and holders respectively, and the International Labour Force Law, as well as the relevant international legal framework for ensuring fundamental principles and rights at work.

Next to conducting training on migration and refugee governance for government institutions as well as social partners, the ILO is also supporting capacity-building efforts among judges and social security auditors as well as labour inspectors to support compliance with national labour law/international labour standards and formality. At the same time, support has not only been

provided to strengthen the capacity of staff, but also to strengthen institutions in delivering services. As such, vocational training centres and their infrastructure has been improved, as well as chambers supported to provide specialized services for refugees.

2.3.1 LESSONS LEARNED

SUPPORTING COOPERATION AND COHERENCE AS WELL AS LABOUR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Tailored training courses bringing together relevant government and social partners serve as platforms to exchange knowledge and experiences, thus supporting labour market governance.

Given the large number of refugees that have come to Turkey, a number of new Directorates General (DGs) and units have been created within ministries supporting the integration of refugees. For example, in 2014, the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) was created within the Ministry of Interior, followed by the establishment of DG International Labour Force (DG ILF) within MoFLSS in 2016. To support building the capacity of these new actors and to improve coordination and coherence, the ILO has conducted a number of training courses as well as study visits and conferences to give different actors **the** opportunity to exchange practices and experiences and to build knowledge.



The ILO conducted a range of training activities to support labour market governance.

In cooperation with its International Training Centre (ITC-ILO), **the ILO conducted a range of training activities to support labour market governance.** A first training was organized in 2018 on 'Establishing a Fair and Effective Governance of Labour Migration in Turkey' for staff of government institutions, specifically DG ILF, SSI, İŞKUR, DGMM, AFAD and social partners. Further building on this training, a more focused training was organized in 2019 on 'Social and Economic Integration of Refugees and Policy Coherence'. This training dealt with the access of refugees to the labour market focusing on skills profiling and formalization

while also looking at social cohesion. Another follow-up training will be organized later in 2019. Further, staff from MoFLSS and SSI participated in tailored training courses at the ITC in Turin on, for example, access to social protection and market-based livelihoods interventions for refugees and host communities.

In addition to this, the ILO in Turkey supported the **organization of international conferences and study trips.** As such, the ILO supported SSI in 2018 in organizing a knowledge and experience-sharing international conference on social protection and migration. Also, in cooperation with the ILO Regional Office for Arab States, in 2019 the ILO in Turkey organized South-South Triangular Cooperation events: a study

trip to Turkey was followed by a study trip and conference in Jordan, giving tripartite partners from four countries affected by the inflow of refugees (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience and observe ILO project activities in the field supporting refugees and host communities.

These activities were appreciated by ILO's tripartite partners, as they had the possibility to **exchange and discuss approaches with peers and to further build cooperation and coherence**. In the future, more tailored training courses will be implemented together with ITC-ILO. Turkish policy-makers requested courses to study good practices from other countries, for example to assess how other countries address in practice some of the challenges faced in Turkey, such as strategies to improve skills development measures, including language training, and approaches to support formalization and social cohesion.

Supporting the understanding and application of relevant labour laws contributes to better labour law compliance and enforcement.

After adopting the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in 2013, Turkey adopted the Temporary Protection Regulation in 2014 setting out a number of rights and responsibilities of Syrian refugees and a framework of access to the labour market. Subsequently, in 2016, Turkey adopted the **Regulation on Provision of Work Permits for People under Temporary Protection** as well as the **Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection**

To strengthen the capacity of the main actors, the ILO organized specific training courses for judges, social security auditors and labour inspectors.

Applicants and International Protection Status Holders, which allows officially registered refugees under temporary protection and international protection respectively to obtain a work permit through their employer six months after registration. At the same time, in 2016, the International Labour Force Law was adopted.

Given that these laws and regulations were introduced recently, there was and is a need for raising awareness on the legislation as well as its application and enforcement. **To strengthen the capacity of the main actors, the ILO organized specific training courses for judges, social security auditors and labour inspectors**. As of May 2019, 180 labour and law judges were trained in cooperation with the Justice Academy of the Ministry of Justice, and these training courses were appreciated as they gave judges an opportunity to better understand international law, including ILO standards, and learn about good practices from other countries. Building on this experience, tailored training programmes were developed for labour inspectors and social security auditors; 280 labour inspectors as well as 300 social security auditors were trained as of May 2019 (box 2.4).

Box 2.4 Training provided to labour inspectors and social security auditors

While labour inspectors focus on hazardous occupations and the implementation of OSH regulations and have the authority to stop work in case of major concerns/violations, social security auditors provide guidance on human resources-related matters while at the same time detecting informal employment. Therefore, the training for labour inspectors went further into detail, addressing more specific questions related to workplace inspections in the course of a two-day training event while also raising awareness on international law and good practices from other countries. In contrast, the social security auditors' training lasted one day and focused on national legislative frameworks and on the detection of informal employment, and DG ILF as well as DGMM intervened in these training courses. During both training courses, the Justice Academy was involved, and relevant court cases, including some of the Supreme Court's cases on refugees and more specifically Syrians, were discussed.

Training courses for judges and social security auditors as well as labour inspectors were effective tools to bring together the actors involved in implementing and enforcing relevant labour laws, hence **creating a platform to share knowledge and experience** and build skills. These actors had come together for the first time, and hence, **they were supported to better understand their place in the broader system.** In addition to increasing the capacity of the judiciary, auditors and inspectors, this training highlighted the important role of public officials in providing

guidance and information to refugees and employers about their rights and duties as well as existing national legislation for promoting formal employment. To reach a larger number of judges, inspectors and auditors further training courses will be conducted in the course of 2019.

SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO THE FORMAL LABOUR MARKET

Raising awareness among employers and workers on the importance of formal work and supporting the work permit application procedure is strongly needed to support transition to formality.

Since the adoption of the 2016 Regulation on Provision of Work Permits for People under Temporary Protection as well as the 2016 Regulation on Work Permit of International

Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders, employers can apply for a work permit for their refugee workforce. In addition, work permit fees for Syrians under temporary protection are subsidized and reduced to less than half the usual cost as of 15 December 2017. Since 2016, more than 60,000 work permits have been granted to Syrians (including to Syrians holding a residence permit). Syrians under temporary protection can also work in seasonal agriculture or animal husbandry within the scope of the work permit exemption (see also box 2.5).

Box 2.5 The Regulation of Provision of Work Permits for People under Temporary Protection

The Regulation provides the following:

- The right to apply for work permits following a six-month waiting period after the date of registration.
- An employment quota of 10 per cent of company workforce to be applied to refugees.
- Work permit exemptions for seasonal agricultural or livestock breeding activities.
- Insistence on the payment of the minimum wage rate for refugees.
- The potential employment of refugees in the health or education sectors, provided they have received prior approval from the respective line ministries.
- The right of refugees to participate in vocational or on-the-job training programmes.
- The possibility to overcome the employment quota of 10 per cent if a Turkish citizen of the same qualifications cannot be identified during the period the application is processed (four weeks prior to the date of the work permit application).

Many refugees lack information on the process of obtaining a work permit, and often do not see the advantage of working formally.

The Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders provides for similar rights to those shown in box 2.5, but the main differences concern the cost of the work permit (which is twice as high as the cost of the work permit for Syrians under temporary protection) and the salary required to obtain a work permit: the applicant must earn at least 150 per cent of the minimum wage.

Out of an estimated Syrian workforce of one million, 60,000 are working with a work permit. The low number of work permits issued shows that **despite being attainable by law, work permits are still limited and most refugees work informally** as both employers and workers face challenges when applying for work permits.

On the one hand, **many refugees lack information on the process of obtaining a work permit, and often do not see the advantage of working formally**, as this also means that they lose social assistance provided through the ESSN. Geographical limitations are also a factor, as work permits can only be applied for in the province where the refugee is registered; if not applying in the same province, a mobility permit has to be asked for, thus de facto preventing labour mobility. Further, as most refugees work in micro- and small enterprises, **the 10 per cent quota to apply for a work permit represents another challenge** –





often micro-enterprises do not have even ten employees and so would not be able to formally employ a refugee. Around 50 per cent of Syrian refugees are estimated to work in companies with fewer than ten employees.

The 10 per cent quota to apply for a work permit represents another challenge.

On the other hand, **employers also lack knowledge or might not see the need or simply lack the willingness to apply for a work permit.** For example, some employers still hesitate to take on refugee workers because they do not want to pay the cost of the work permit, or they lack the knowledge or capacity with regard to how to apply. Some **employers are also worried that they would go through a long, arduous process to obtain a work permit for a refugee**

(which can take up to six months), only to have that refugee leave soon thereafter. In addition, refugees tend to work under temporary contracts for short-term seasonal or construction work; thus employers might not see the need to apply for a work permit for a short period.

These challenges were mainly discussed in the above-mentioned training courses for social security auditors and labour inspectors. During these training sessions, a wide range of actors came together and discussed approaches to better implement and enforce labour laws so that working conditions improve and formal employment increases. Labour inspectors in particular discussed approaches to increasing formal employment, such as raising awareness of company accountants, giving employers a certain time period to register refugees once they are found to work informally, or making the work permit application procedure more flexible.



These recommendations were then brought to the policy level and discussed with DG ILF and are now being followed up. As such, under the above-mentioned incentive scheme that supports employers to hire refugees formally, information days are being organized in cooperation with DG ILF and SSI to **raise awareness within companies about work permit procedures**. Further, work permit application procedures have been simplified and can now be completed online, and waiting periods are being decreased. Also, labour inspectors as well as social security auditors are now giving a certain time period to employers to formalize their workforce before issuing fines.

Additionally, the **ILO implemented activities targeting employers directly**. Through the above-mentioned social compliance informative seminars that have been conducted with the Istanbul Apparel Exporters' Association (IHKIB), 26 enterprises have received information on the work permit regulation and how to apply for work permits. Brochures on social compliance (covering topics such as working hours, payment of wages, OSH and child labour, but also competitiveness and productivity) will also soon be distributed to enterprises in the textile sector, and more sectors will be targeted in the future. In sum, efforts to reach both workers and employers on a larger scale will have to be scaled up to be able to meaningfully support transition to the formal economy.

SUPPORT LABOUR MARKET INSTITUTIONS IN OUTREACH TO REFUGEES

Employment services can support access to formal employment - one-stop shops tailored to the needs of refugees have proven effective in giving targeted support.

Since the adoption of the work permit regulations in 2016, refugees under temporary and international protection both **have access to the services provided by the public employment agency İŞKUR**. This is indeed crucial to support their transition to the formal labour market after they have participated in skills training. As of April 2018, 12,400 Syrians had registered with İŞKUR, 5,930 had received vocational counselling services and 1,042 had found a job, while 830 had participated in vocational training courses and a similar number in on-the-job training. These numbers show that relatively few Syrians take advantage of İŞKUR services, which can be mainly attributed to the language barrier, as well as a lack of awareness about the services available and their entitlement to access them (European Commission, 2018).

The ILO has supported the establishment of one-stop shops within chambers that provide integrated employment and guidance services both in Turkish and Arabic.

Under pillar 1 of the ILO Refugee Response Programme, awareness-raising sessions on İŞKUR services are carried out and registration to İŞKUR is supported. However, the impact of these activities has been questionable so far. Therefore, to ensure that tailored support is provided to refugees, it is crucial to build services that respond to the needs of refugees and also take into account the language barrier.

İŞKUR will be further supported to reach out to refugees and to provide tailored services

The ILO, therefore, has since 2017 supported the establishment of one-stop shops within chambers that provide integrated employment and guidance services both in Turkish and Arabic.

One-stop shops provide information about formal work in Turkey, including in relation to work permits, and also provide information on opportunities for enterprises to be formalized through counselling services, enabling them to be registered with chambers. So far, four one-stop shops have been supported in Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Adana. There are some good examples of how these one-stop shops have supported the formalization of businesses. For example, some 25 per cent of Syrian SMEs were registered with the Gaziantep Union of Chambers of Merchants and Artisans (GESOB) through the one-stop shop since its establishment in April 2018.

In the future, it will be important to support employment services in a more structured way. As such, **İŞKUR will be further supported to reach out to refugees and to provide tailored services.** According to the feedback received from local partners, there was a need for more information on employment services provided by İŞKUR. In the future, the ILO will address this issue through the establishment of one-stop shops in İŞKUR premises, reaching out to both Syrian and Turkish workers.



3.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Through the promotion of social dialogue, the ILO builds support for inclusive labour market policies and addresses challenges refugees are facing when accessing the labour market.

The ILO as a tripartite organization is built on the belief that **social dialogue is an invaluable mechanism to promote inclusive development and labour market policies** that are designed and implemented by government with the support of employers and workers. Social dialogue plays a crucial role in managing labour market governance, reinforcing compliance with labour laws and promoting the inclusion of refugees into the labour market, notably through the promotion of the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment. Further, **the ILO's tripartite structure gives it the opportunity to comprehensively address refugees' labour market challenges** by taking the observations and recommendations of the Government, employers and workers into account.

The ILO as a tripartite organization is built on the belief that social dialogue is an invaluable mechanism to promote inclusive development and labour market policies.

On the government side, the **ILO works closely with DG International Labour Force** (DG ILF) of MoFLSS, and seeks to build its capacity as a relatively new directorate.

As the DG has a specific mandate to process foreigners' work permit applications and to develop and implement policies related to the international labour force in Turkey, it is one of the main stakeholders of the ILO Refugee Response Programme and all three components (pillars) are being implemented in close collaboration with DG ILF. In addition, social partners are involved when designing new projects and they participate in capacity-building activities, conferences and project steering committees. However, one of the obstacles faced is that even though refugees can become trade union members, very few are unionized.

To support building the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations, the ILO conducted an **assessment in 2017 to evaluate the social partners' capacity** to improve decent work opportunities for Syrian refugees. During a stakeholder meeting discussing the outcomes of the needs assessment, the importance of adequate information on the situation of Syrians in the labour market was highlighted, next to the need to develop inclusive approaches on the part of the social partners to support Syrians to access decent work opportunities and to raise awareness among Turkish workers. Following the stakeholder meeting, several capacity-building trainings were organized for workers' and employers' organizations.

Social dialogue mechanisms have proven very useful in including actors at the local levels, such as municipalities or chambers. The ILO has closely worked with a range of chambers and their training centres, which has brought greater knowledge about labour market demand, employment conditions and policies, and has proven useful in building ownership and support for the integration of refugees into the labour market.



GENDER

To support working women as well as to support access of women to the formal labour market, long-term strategies that take into account women's specific challenges and needs have to be designed.

The increased labour force participation rate can be seen as a positive development, triggered by a crisis that provides opportunities for change.

The labour force participation rates between men and women substantially differ, between both Syrian and Turkish men and women. Generally, for both groups, women have a much lower labour force participation rate compared to men. However, **the labour force participation rate of Syrian women is considerably lower than that of Turkish women.**

The lower labour force participation rate of Syrian women can be explained by cultural barriers and the numerous obstacles women face when accessing the labour market, such as the fact that they have to handle care and household duties. However, when compared to the labour force participation rate of Syrian women in Syria before the war, it can be observed that **their labour force participation in Turkey did increase.** This can be explained by the fact that more women need to work, as for example they are the heads of households. Generally, **the increased labour force participation rate can be seen as a positive development, triggered by a crisis that provides opportunities for change.** However, some

closer analysis will reveal that crises are also likely to exacerbate inequalities by increasing the responsibilities of women (IASC, 2018).

There are, therefore, two issues to address when supporting women to work: first, ensure that working women are not over-burdened and enjoy decent working conditions; and second, raise awareness on the possibility of engaging in wage and self-employment, and support access to the labour market.

Often, Syrian women in Turkey do not want to work, as they were not working before and/or their spouse does not allow them to work. Even if women are willing and able to work, **they face a number of obstacles, such as care and household duties, the language barrier (only 19 per cent can speak Turkish), limited access to information, lack of safe transportation or fear of sexual harassment in the workplace.** A needs assessment carried out by UN Women (2018) covering 1,291 Syrian women and girls in seven provinces has shown that 15 per cent of the women interviewed were working in Turkey (and not previously working in Syria), but **they experienced low pay, long working hours and bad working conditions in the informal economy.** In terms of formal work, about 9 per cent of the work permits issued to Syrians were issued to women, according to the MoFLSS database (March 2018).

To facilitate women's access to the formal labour market it will not be enough to address practical barriers, such as lack of transportation and care facilities, but will also be necessary to implement measures addressing their lack of experience as well as their cultural distance to working (UNHCR, 2018b). 3RP partners provided livelihoods support to 66,867 Syrians under temporary protection, and 45 per cent were female.



UN Women reports that one-third of refugee households are female-headed – an important figure that should affect strategies and assessments on how best to support this group.

This is a positive outcome, and underlines that **Syrian women might become more open to working.** In a similar vein, more than 50 per cent of beneficiaries who participated in skills and language training provided by the ILO were women. However,

Box 3.1 Activities supporting women at the SADA women-only centre

The SADA Women Development and Solidarity Centre in Gaziantep, a centre managed by UN Women with the support of Gaziantep municipality, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) and the ILO, is a good example of how the ILO reaches out to women. The SADA centre uses a holistic approach and structures its programmes according to what women suggest – they are not seen as just beneficiaries, but have input in how the centre is run, including everything from child care to partnering with a public education centre. In addition to psychosocial and legal support, women can access language and skills training at the centre. Activities at the SADA centre are based on a value chain analysis and hence labour market needs, with the objective of selling products produced by women through a cooperative. After holding seminars on cooperative establishment, 50 founding members were selected and the SADA women's cooperative was established on 25 March 2019.

While training for women at the SADA centre was designed to take into account labour market needs, to enhance employability and to support income generation, the training seemed to primarily enhance psychosocial wellbeing and social cohesion. As such, women placed far more emphasis on the relationships built with host community women and the sense of community it generated, rather than the employment opportunities it offered. Although a small number of women thought they might use their new skills to run small businesses out of their homes, only a handful of women expected to enter the formal labour market to apply those skills and support their families. Nevertheless, these courses can be seen as a first stepping stone supporting women's access to the labour market.

ILO is the first UN agency in Turkey implementing an employment-related project for non-Syrian refugees

the majority of women participated in skills training but did not access the labour market afterwards. Another challenge is that many women prefer classes that give them skills to work from home, such as hairdressing or handicraft, which however presents limited possibilities to access the formal labour market. At the same time, **typical skills training programmes** contribute to getting women out of their home so that they can socialize with other trainees, workers and employers – **a preliminary step in facilitating access of women to the labour market**, which requires a long time frame.

The establishment of the women's cooperative at the SADA women-only centre (box 3.1) was an important step to empower women, improve social cohesion and give women an opportunity to learn about business procedures. At the same time, the sustainability of the cooperative will have to be assessed. However, one has to be careful to not overburden women, who already struggle with a range of care and household chores. Outreach to men to achieve a more balanced distribution of tasks as well as to give women the possibility to access the labour market can help in this regard.

UN Women reports that one-third of refugee households are female-headed – an important figure that should affect strategies and assessments on how best to support this group. In the future, the ILO will continue to seek out ways to offer women a fuller range of vocational opportunities and also to offer a greater variety of support for income-generating activities. Further

Additional good practices that support women in accessing the formal labour market in Turkey include:

- Having separate spaces for women's training and activities – a practice that supports women to feel at ease to learn and engage.
- Cooperatives and entrepreneurship support provide specific platforms for women, and should be watched closely for future prospects that go beyond the current training, whilst also remaining sensitive to the burden that many women already bear. Many are in female-headed households or are expected to maintain traditional household roles.
- The psychosocial aspects of gathering for classes at the women-only centre show how interlinked and valuable psychosocial outlets and care for women were to their employability.
- In Turkey, language barriers are affecting many women's ability to learn other skills. Mentorships, inviting successful women to speak, and other training initiatives help to address this challenge.

alternatives such as support to female entrepreneurship could be assessed, as also recommended by other UN partners.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND TREATMENT

Programming with non-Syrian refugees should not be overlooked and their specific needs and challenges have to be taken into account.

Throughout this report, the focus is placed on the support that the ILO has provided to Syrian refugees. However, it should not be overlooked that the ILO is the first UN agency in Turkey implementing an employment-related project for non-Syrian refugees, and more awareness of their situation is slowly happening.

The main lesson learned from recent activities focusing on non-Syrians is that this group's labour market situation and needs are different and that they **face different challenges**. The cost of a work permit is more than twice as high than for Syrians under temporary protection, and the applicant is required to earn 150 per cent of the minimum wage in order to be able to obtain a work permit. **Preliminary findings of an assessment on the socio-economic situation of non-Syrian refugees** covering 1,000 households (6,000 individuals) highlight **how diverse** this group of refugees is – as noted previously, most come from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq and have very different educational levels. Thus, assessing their skill sets and vocational background is a challenge in itself. For example, Afghans tend to be lower-skilled and work in agriculture, whereas Iranians are highly educated, but still do not have access to middle- or higher-skilled jobs. This assessment will help to design targeted and tailor-made interventions.

In addition, the non-Syrian refugee inflow into Turkey is ongoing, with some seeing Turkey as a transit country. This, too, complicates the planning of interventions. Moreover, some non-Syrians are easily confused with Syrians or are mistakenly lumped into one group, which also leads to a lack of information about their needs and assets. The level of vulnerability is high among this group, particularly Afghans who are mostly low-skilled. This group requires

further analysis and attention in order to promote decent work opportunities.

Information days for government officials (including the Ministry of Labour and the DG) have proven to be a valuable tool in raising awareness about the labour market situation of non-Syrians – particularly that the vast majority works informally and is in a vulnerable position. Indeed, strengthening the capacity of public institutions as well as local authorities regarding non-Syrians should be continued with the aim of legislative improvements for non-Syrian refugees, and to assist these institutions in better understanding the refugee situation, which affects their administrative and operational work.

SOCIAL COHESION

Workplace level interventions targeting both Syrian and Turkish workers build social cohesion and foster integration and should be scaled up.

Perceived and potentially real competition for jobs and economic opportunities is one of the main causes for social tension between refugees and host communities, which has become a serious concern. An International Crisis Group report indicates that “incidents of intercommunal violence increased threefold in the second half of 2017 compared to the same period in 2016” (International Crisis Group, 2018). The Syrians Barometer report (Erdoğan, 2017) indicates that **“the deepest concern is the fear that [the Syrian refugees] will put a strain on the Turkish economy”**. Indicative of this is the fact that since 2014 there has been a marked increase in the number of respondents opposed to Syrian refugees having access to work permits. The same report also notes that the real tensions with

the Turkish communities pertain not to the fact that Syrians are working but rather to the fact that they are establishing new businesses. Further, a 2017 survey indicated that around 70 per cent of Turkish people think that **Syrian refugees are causing unemployment**, as they are working for lower wages (Ekonomistler Platformu, 2017). To address social tensions and correct some of the misperceptions, the ILO is carrying out a number of activities. Affected host communities are always included in such activities; the formalization of both Syrian workers and businesses is supported to address perceptions of unfair competition; and ILO is assessing skills of refugees to make better use of the potential they bring, also to complement the Turkish labour force.

The ILO has started implementing a workplace adaptation programme where Syrian and Turkish workers are matched.

In addition, the ILO has **started implementing a workplace adaptation programme**, Syrian and Turkish workers have been matched across 15 different workplaces in Gaziantep, Adana and Mersin reaching more than 150 Syrian and Turkish workers in 2018 (79 Syrian refugees and 74 host community members participated). The programme has a rights-based approach and includes basic information on labour rights, gender mainstreaming and occupational safety and health as well as intercultural and interpersonal communication.

Different cultural and work ethic practices were emphasized among Turkish employers as an ongoing problem. Soft

and non-technical skills as well as knowledge about the norms, rules and institutions of the local labour market are delivered for a better integration process. In this respect, focusing on workplace adaptation of Syrian workers and fostering constructive dialogue between migrant and host community workers working at the same workplaces has become an important field of action.

The programme proved useful at building relationships between workers of different nationalities, and at improving safety. For example, Turkish “mentor” workers would take Syrian “mentee” refugee workers on a tour of the work area, noting safety signs that were written only in Turkish but that contained important safety information. It also fostered language skills, as the pair had to communicate, thus forcing them to practise speaking with one another. Employers also took part in this programme, particularly for identification of pairs and main messages to be included in the programme. Employers provided positive feedback on the impact of workplace adaptation programmes for **strengthening the dialogue between workers** and consecutive productivity gains, and reducing OHS risks.

The workplace adaptation programme will be disseminated in new project provinces in 2019. The ILO is currently exploring ways to combine these programmes with the incentive schemes for employers, to support adaptation at those workplaces that benefit from incentives.

Nine years into the Syrian conflict and five years and two years respectively into the ILO supporting Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in Turkey to access decent working conditions, **this report highlights numerous lessons learned, which will inform future strategies and activities.** Hosting around four million refugees, Turkey is facing tremendous challenges which now go beyond providing basic needs so that resilience is strengthened and sustainable livelihoods become a reality. Out of 3.6 million Syrian refugees, 2.1 million are of working age and one million are estimated to participate in the labour market. Most work informally and in low-skilled jobs, such as seasonal agricultural work, construction and manufacturing, including textiles in urban settings, where they receive below minimum wage rates and work in unsafe conditions. The language barrier further accentuates these challenges. The majority of non-Syrian refugees is also estimated to be working informally.

The ILO's expertise in labour markets and accessing decent work has proven essential to assessing and eliminating some barriers to formal employment

The ILO has not had a traditional role in humanitarian situations, in that it is not a relief actor, or one that is explicitly focused on refugees. However, **its expertise in labour markets and accessing decent work has proven essential to assessing and eliminating some barriers to formal employment** faced by Syrian refugees and other groups of refugees in Turkey. This is particularly important, as the 3RP is prioritizing transitions from basic needs to livelihoods. Moreover, its formal commitment to displacement-related

4. CONCLUSION

issues as outlined in the Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market and the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205) further signal engagement in addressing labour aspects in displacement contexts.

The ILO with its tripartite structure, normative framework and decent work agenda is in a unique position to address challenges and develop strategies to support the access of refugees to the labour market.

In Turkey, the ILO is implementing a comprehensive Refugee Response Programme that currently consists of five projects. Under this Programme, the ILO with **its tripartite structure, normative framework and decent work agenda** is in a unique position to address challenges and develop strategies to support the access of refugees to the labour market. The Turkish Government's high level of engagement and openness to the protection and provision of sustainable livelihoods presents unique opportunities to support refugees' access to decent work in Turkey.

To support access to decent work, the ILO is on the one hand assessing and building the skills of refugees, and on the other hand assessing the needs of employers and businesses and supporting formalization. Further, the ILO is closely working with the Government and social partners to support cooperation between actors to achieve fair and inclusive labour market governance. **This report demonstrates the need for comprehensive, holistic approaches** that defy some of the traditional thinking on

livelihoods, work closely with the Government and social partners, and draw upon participatory, gender-sensitive approaches.

When starting to support refugees in Turkey to access decent work, the ILO focused on skills interventions. As time went by, the ILO adopted a more comprehensive approach looking at both sides of the labour market. **It has become crucial to design skills development measures that are linked to actual job opportunities.** Work-based learning can be a good example of supporting the matching of workers, who lack of vocational experience, and employers, who get the opportunity to build relevant skills and thus a qualified workforce. Also, **to make a meaningful contribution to compliance with decent work principles**, the ILO has brought together relevant actors who would usually have limited space for exchange of knowledge and experience. Learning about challenges on the ground, be it with regard to working conditions or the issuance of work permits, is crucial to the design of future strategies to support access to the formal labour market. Raising awareness among employers, workers and local actors, and adopting approaches tailored to local contexts, have become equally important to achieving this goal. Cutting across these three pillars of intervention, the ILO pays special attention to including different target groups and supporting equality of opportunity and treatment by always including affected host communities and different refugee populations, and paying special attention to the inclusion of women.

With international attention increasingly focused on how to better connect relief and development actors – and how to better support refugees in becoming self-reliant through access to decent work – this report on lessons learned has provided a snapshot of how the ILO in Turkey is supporting refugees. Drawing on these lessons learned will help to adjust and improve ongoing activities and guide future interventions.

ANNEX



International
Labour
Organization

Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market ¹

The Tripartite Technical Meeting on the Access of Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market,

Having met in Geneva from 5 to 7 July 2016,

Responding to the decision taken by the Governing Body at its 326th Session (March 2016) to hold a tripartite technical meeting to “prepare guiding principles for policy measures concerning the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market”. ²

Adopts this seventh day of July 2016, the following guiding principles:

1. These guiding principles are addressed to all member States of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and employers’ and workers’ organizations as a basis for the formulation of policy responses and national tripartite dialogue on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons ³ to the labour market.
2. The principles are voluntary and non-binding, flexible in nature and not intended to generate additional obligations for member States.
3. They set out principles to support Members on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market and to assist those Members impacted by these situations, in providing responses that meet the needs and expectations of host communities, refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

¹ The Governing Body of the International Organization, meeting at its 328th Session (Geneva, 26 October – 9 November 2016) authorized the Director-General to publish and disseminate the Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market adopted by the Tripartite Technical Meeting on the Access of Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market (Geneva, 5-7 July 2016).

² GB.326/INS/14Add.(Rev.), para. 7: “This guidance would be based on an analysis by the Office of related principles contained in international labour standards and universal human rights instruments, as well as good practices implemented in the field.” GB.326/PV, para. 240.

³ There is no internationally agreed definition of “other forcibly displaced persons”. For the purpose of these guiding principles, the term “other forcibly displaced persons” does not include internally displaced persons.

4. The ILO can significantly add value to international responses through its mandate to promote social justice and the Decent Work Agenda, its international labour standards, its labour market expertise and unique tripartite nature.
5. Increased cooperation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the ILO, marked by the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two agencies in July 2016, is welcomed and further cooperation with other relevant organizations is encouraged.
6. The important contributions made by countries that host the vast majority of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons are recognized, as are the contributions these groups can make.
7. The provision of decent work opportunities for all, including nationals, refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, in countries of origin, host and third countries is important.
8. It is acknowledged that it is vitally important for member States to share more equitably the responsibility with countries hosting large numbers of refugees and to assist countries with their support to other forcibly displaced persons.
9. Account should be taken of the differing national and regional circumstances, with due regard to applicable international law and national legislation, and the challenges, capacities and burden on resources constraining States to effectively respond.
10. Further commitment is needed, where possible and appropriate, to develop or strengthen labour market institutions and programmes that support local integration, resettlement, voluntary repatriation and reintegration, and pathways for labour mobility while respecting the principle of *non-refoulement*.
11. Adequate, sustainable and predictable support from the international community should be provided, where appropriate, for the effective implementation of these principles.

A. Governance frameworks on access to labour markets

12. Members should formulate national policies, and national action plans as appropriate, to ensure the protection of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in the labour market, including in respect of access to decent work and livelihood.
13. National policies and action plans should be formulated in conformity with international labour standards, decent work principles, humanitarian principles, obligations under international law, including human rights law and refugee law, as applicable and in consultation with labour ministries as well as representative employers' and workers' organizations.
14. National policies and action plans to foster opportunities for formal and decent work that support self-reliance for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons should at a minimum include measures to:
 - (a) guide employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders, including employment agencies, on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to labour markets;
 - (b) examine work opportunities available for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, based on reliable information concerning the impact of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons on labour markets, and the needs of the existing labour force and employers;

- (c) consider removing or relaxing refugee encampment policies and other restrictions that may hinder access to decent work opportunities, lead to acts of employment-related discrimination or lead to irregular employment;
- (d) ensure, where access to work is subject to specific legal criteria or requirements, such as work permits, employment authorization for employers or quotas, that these conditions are in accordance with fundamental principles and rights at work and with applicable international labour standards, humanitarian principles and obligations under international law, including human rights law and refugee law, as applicable, including the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment in the labour market; and
- (e) identify and eliminate, where applicable, inconsistencies in legal, policy and administrative practice related to implementation of applicable international labour standards and human rights norms.

15. Members should make easily available information regarding laws and regulations applicable to entrepreneurship, such as procedures for registering a business, relevant labour and employment laws and regulations and tax requirements.

B. Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets

16. Members should formulate coherent macroeconomic growth strategies, including active labour market policies that support investment in decent job creation that benefit all workers, including men and women refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, and enterprises.

17. Members should develop and implement, where possible, together with representative employers' and workers' organizations, national employment policies that include refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

18. Employment strategies should include measures to:

- (a) enhance the capacity of public employment services and improve cooperation with other providers of services, including private employment agencies, to support the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market, particularly as regards job placements and career counselling;
- (b) strengthen specific efforts to support the inclusion in labour markets of youth and women from refugee and other forcibly displaced populations, including through access to education, life-long learning, childcare and after-school programmes;
- (c) support recognition and accreditation of acquired skills and competencies by refugees and other forcibly displaced persons through appropriate skills determination tests, if required;
- (d) facilitate tailored vocational training, including occupational safety and health training, with a strong on-the-job component (for example, apprenticeships), and intensive language teaching;
- (e) strengthen access to skills development and upgrading opportunities, and entrepreneurship and business start-up training for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons; and

- (f) facilitate increased access to decent work opportunities for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons and host communities, including by fostering transitions of employment from the informal to formal economy.

19. Members should take steps to facilitate the portability of work-related entitlements (such as social security benefits, including pensions), skills accreditation and skills recognition of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons between countries of origin, transit and destination.

20. Members are encouraged to undertake a national impact assessment on access to the labour market for refugees on their economies with the involvement of employers' and workers' organizations.

21. Members should strengthen the capacity of national labour market governance systems, including in respect of information and data collection concerning the impact of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons on host communities, labour markets and economies more generally.

C. Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment

22. Members should adopt or reinforce national policies to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all, in particular gender equality, recognizing the specific needs of women, youth and persons with disabilities, with regard to fundamental principles and rights at work, working conditions, access to quality public services, wages and the right to social security benefits for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, and to educate refugees and other forcibly displaced persons about their labour rights and protections.

23. National policies should at a minimum include measures to:

- (a) combat and prevent all forms of discrimination in law and in practice, forced labour and child labour, as they affect men, women and children refugees and other forcibly displaced persons;
- (b) facilitate the participation of all workers, including refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, in representative organizations, including in relation to their right to form and join trade unions, participate in collective bargaining mechanisms and to access justice and judicial remedies against abusive working conditions;
- (c) adopt legislative measures and facilitate information, advocacy and awareness campaigns that combat xenophobic behaviour in the workplace and highlight the positive contributions of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, with meaningful engagement of employers' and workers' organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders;
- (d) ensure that refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in the workplace are covered under relevant labour laws and regulations, including on minimum wages, maternity protection, working time, occupational safety and health, and provide information on the rights and obligations of workers, and the means of redress for violations, in a language they understand; and
- (e) provide necessary education and training for labour inspectorates, public servants and judicial bodies on refugee law and labour rights, and ensure that information and training for workers is provided in a language that workers understand.

24. The principle of non-discrimination and equality should apply for all. Access to specific occupations can be restricted as prescribed by national laws, in accordance with relevant international labour standards and other international law.

D. Partnership, coordination and coherence

25. Members should promote national, bilateral, regional and global dialogue on the labour market implications of large influxes of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, and the importance of access to livelihoods and decent work.

26. Cooperation among member States should include measures to:

- (a) strengthen the role of local government, regional bodies, and particularly regional economic commissions and regional initiatives to foster consistent regional responses, including with the support of the ILO and other international agencies, notably the UNHCR;
- (b) encourage development assistance and private sector investment for the creation of decent and productive jobs, business development and self-employment to benefit all workers, including refugees and other forcibly displaced persons;
- (c) enhance the roles and capacities of employers' and workers' organizations and civil society to promote and protect the fundamental principles and rights at work of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons; and
- (d) promote, where possible, the inclusion of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in national development planning processes, including through UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) mechanisms.⁴

27. Members should provide predictable, sustainable and adequate development assistance to support least developed and developing countries that continue to host a large number of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons and ensure the continuation of the development of these countries.

28. Employers' and workers' organizations in the public and private sectors have an important role to play and should commit to promote and support the inclusion of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons into work and society. The employers' and workers' organizations should support, at national and local levels, measures taken by member States in accordance with these guiding principles and should commit to work with governments and other stakeholders to design and develop policies to support inclusion. They should play a key role in the assessment, testing and screening of skills and competences to help validation of skills and skills matching with a view to guaranteeing equality of opportunity and treatment of workers, taking into account the objective situation of refugees and active labour market measures available to jobseekers.

E. Voluntary repatriation and reintegration of returnees

29. Countries of origin should reintegrate refugee returnees in their labour market. The ILO and its Members in a position to do so should provide assistance to countries of origin in areas

⁴ This activity would be aligned with the development of guidance by the Global Migration Group (GMG) to integrate migration and displacement into development planning.

of refugee returnees in creating employment and decent work for all, as well as livelihoods and self-reliance.

30. Members should develop appropriate protection frameworks, in consultation with countries of origin, to support refugees and other forcibly displaced persons upon their voluntary return to and reintegration in their home countries, in accordance with obligations under international law, including refugee law and human rights law as applicable.

F. Additional pathways for labour mobility

31. Members should promote labour mobility as one of the pathways for admission and for responsibility-sharing with countries hosting large numbers of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons and include such pathways for admission in their national policies.
32. Members should integrate international labour standards, the Decent Work Agenda and the Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, where possible, into national policies and regional and bilateral agreements governing the development and expansion of labour mobility pathways for refugees by granting labour market access. Such policies and agreements should involve consultations with employers' and workers' organizations.
33. National, and where appropriate regional, policies should include measures to:
 - (a) respect, where it applies in accordance with international and regional law, the principle of *non-refoulement* for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, including those participating in labour mobility schemes;
 - (b) foster inclusion and integration in host societies by providing skills development opportunities to support refugees and other forcibly displaced persons that would also help them bring new skills to their home countries, should they decide to return; and
 - (c) ensure equality of treatment in wages and working conditions, with particular attention to workers in low-skilled and low-wage work for which refugees and other forcibly displaced persons may be recruited, in accordance with international labour standards.
34. Members should facilitate the engagement of diaspora communities in developing national policy and regional and bilateral agreements to help refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to better contribute to the economic and social development of their countries of origin.

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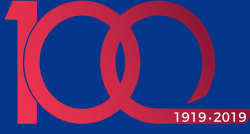
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