



International Labour Organization

Supporting Resilient Labour Markets to Drive Inclusive Economic Growth and Decent Work for All

A Summary of Emerging Lessons Learned from
ILO Syrian Crisis Interventions in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon

2013-2017

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Introduction

Large mixed migration movements continue to top the global political agenda, as reflected through the 2016 UN New York Declaration,¹ and remain at the forefront of concerns, discussions and collaboration across the multilateral system. These movements create considerable challenges for countries of first asylum, transit and destination, as well as countries of origin, including through impact on labour markets and livelihoods of host countries, particularly where these may have been under pressure prior to new arrivals and there is high unemployment.

The majority, well over 80 per cent, of refugee populations are hosted by low- and middle-income countries and the ILO joins with others in commending the long-standing generosity of these countries in keeping borders open to those desperately fleeing conflict and crisis in their home communities.

As displacement has become increasingly protracted – UNHCR calculates that refugees are displaced for 17 years on average – responses have turned towards identifying durable solutions that would support more dignified and inclusive programmes for refugees to facilitate self-reliance and strengthen social cohesion. At the core of self-reliance is access to decent work, livelihoods and training.



Impacts on labour markets

While some host governments are taking significant steps towards exploring ways to facilitate access of refugees to decent work opportunities, the numbers being able to access employment in the formal economy remains limited. There are many reasons for this, including due to policy and legislative limitations, and as a result many refugees who do find work do so mostly in the informal economy. The precarious situation of these populations renders them vulnerable to discriminatory practices which can lead to exploitation, the denial of fundamental principles and rights at work and situations of forced labour, bonded labour and child labour. The highly crowded informal economy, where most refugees are forced to search for work, can lead to situations of competition for unauthorized and

¹ The UN General Assembly's first High-Level Summit on Addressing large movements of refugees and migrants was held in New York, 19 September 2016, resulting in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. This includes commitments to improve migration governance and refugee responses, including through the development of two Global Compacts (one on Refugees and one on Migration) by 2018. The Declaration and its Annexes include many references to issues of key relevance to the ILO and its constituents, including a call for the ratification of all relevant ILO standards. In addition, US President Barack Obama co-hosted the Leaders' Summit on Refugees on 20 September 2016 that resulted in a Call to Action for private sector commitment to assist refugees, including through increased employment opportunities, financial inclusion and economic integration.

unprotected jobs. This downward impact on working conditions and rights at work may have a knock-on effect more widely across labour markets, ultimately affecting all workers, including nationals.

At the same time, there is widespread recognition that refugees and other forcibly displaced persons can contribute to host societies by bringing skills, competences, extensive social capital and a high level of entrepreneurial spirit that can foster positive development of host communities and countries. In some circumstances, they can also help to meet labour shortages due, for example, to changing demographics in the form of ageing populations and declining workforces.

Unfortunately, protracted displacement can lead to other socio-economic impacts where, for example, public services may come under strain, such as health, transport, housing and education, and some macroeconomic development gains may be at risk of being reversed. Sometimes these pressures translate into social tensions between host and refugee populations, especially in already poorly served and overcrowded urban areas where refugees might settle.

Humanitarian and development nexus

In light of these challenges, a paradigm shift is taking place among international development and humanitarian actors and donors to look beyond humanitarian assistance and include early engagement of development cooperation. Decent work sits at the intersection between humanitarian



action and development cooperation, reinforcing the critical role of the ILO in supporting refugee response programmes, including through strengthening of institutional policy frameworks that can respond more efficiently and effectively to these situations.

In November 2016, the ILO Governing Body adopted a comprehensive set of “Guiding Principles on the Access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market” to assist member States and other

national and international partners in formulating sustainable labour market and livelihood responses. (http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/genericdocument/wcms_536440.pdf).

In addition, in June 2017, the International Labour Conference adopted a new landmark standard, the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205) that 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, such as children, young people, women and displaced people.

Engaging development approaches at a much earlier stage in crisis response enables refugees to participate in and contribute meaningfully to the economies and societies of host countries, while not disadvantaging national workers and host communities. This is essential to mitigate fiscal stress, limit macroeconomic shocks, stabilize and support longer term development, alleviate labour market pressures and promote sustainable livelihoods that harness the productive capacities of refugees and their hosts.

For its part, the ILO can bring significant added-value and specialized knowledge and expertise to address many of the challenges that host countries may face. These include:

- Assistance in defining the terms of access to labour markets which also meet the needs of host communities and the local workforce;
- Improving skills development and recognition, including recognition of prior learning to address the challenge of refugees not being in possession of their certificates and diplomas that can affect labour market entry;
- Enhancing enterprise development through identifying growth and market opportunities through value chain assessments;
- Providing technical advice on improving occupational safety and health;
- Addressing informality through providing support for businesses to transition to the formal economy;
- Protecting workers' rights through awareness-raising with employers and refugee workers and supporting the meaningful engagement of trade unions and strengthening social dialogue mechanisms;
- Working with relevant government ministries, development and financial institutions and regional development bodies to identify and establish employment-intensive investment programmes.



ILO-UNHCR reaffirm joint commitment to durable solutions

Amid rising levels of global forced displacement and in the context of increasing attention to the humanitarian-development nexus, UNHCR and the ILO agreed to a new understanding on the promotion of employment opportunities for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. The MoU, signed on 1 July 2016, opened a new and deeper phase of collaboration between the two agencies, identifying eight common priorities, including the promotion of solutions and protection of refugees' rights, inclusive and equal treatment in access to decent work and livelihoods, as well as social protection. It also seeks to ensure support to local communities, countering the economic exploitation of those displaced and eradicating child labour.

The two agencies also agreed to enhance their cooperation through systematic collaboration at the global, regional and country level, taking a cross-border approach wherever possible. Cooperation includes joint assessments, research, data collection and analysis, training and capacity building, as well as integrated policy approaches. Joint advocacy activities are developed to promote an inclusive approach to integration in labour markets and access to livelihood opportunities and social protection, as well as other measures. A joint action plan has been developed to define more clearly the concrete steps to be taken based on the areas of collaboration identified in the MoU. This has been informing existing or planned joint activities in Jordan, Turkey and, more recently, Ethiopia.

Moving Forward Together for all Workers

The ILO, in collaboration with its tripartite partners and through its reinforced intervention framework, is giving shape to a comprehensive and coherent set of responses to the widespread challenges regarding access of refugees to decent work.

An initial step on the path to improving decent work outcomes for refugees is a review of governance frameworks on access to labour markets, considering the adaptation and/or formulation of relevant policy responses and national action plans. These response mechanisms should be underpinned by

international labour standards, decent work principles, humanitarian and human rights norms and should be developed in consultation with relevant ministries and representative organizations of workers and employers.

Good practice suggests that governments, in collaboration with the social and other partners, should formulate economic growth strategies that support investment in job creation that benefit both national workers and refugees and displaced persons, including measures to enhance the capacity of public and private employment agencies to support the access of these groups to the labour market. They should also strengthen efforts for the inclusion of youth and women into the labour markets, as well as those with disabilities. In addition, steps should be taken to ensure the coordination of work-related entitlements, such as social security benefits, including pensions, and skills accreditation.

An essential element underpinning these efforts is the promotion of labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment. As such, national policies should include measures to combat and prevent all forms of discrimination in law and in practice, promoting the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Alongside these national efforts, the international community should ensure the availability of adequate, sustainable and predictable support. In addition, further national, bilateral, regional and global dialogue on the labour market implications of large movements of refugees is vital in identifying sustainable solutions and for the sharing good practices.

Lessons Learned from ILO's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis

The Syrian refugee crisis embodies one of the largest and most protracted and complex humanitarian emergencies of modern times. Since 2011, the bulk of refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria have found refuge among host communities in neighbouring states. As of May 2017, UNHCR estimated that over 5 million Syrians have fled the country with another 6.3 million displaced internally.

Among the Arab States, Jordan and Lebanon already had to contend with difficult socio-economic conditions before the Syrian crisis, but now experience additional challenges including:

- A significant increase in labour supply, particularly in low-skilled occupations, which has led to downward pressure on wages and working conditions;
- Growth in the informal economy;
- A rise in market demand which has exerted upward pressure on consumer goods and housing;
- A decrease in access to and quality of public services;
- An increase in child labour among refugees;
- Rising social tensions between refugees and host communities.

As part of the wider UN response to the Syrian crisis through the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States has adopted a cross-cutting, development-focused strategy which supports both refugees and host communities to strengthen social and economic stability, as well as to realise the rights of both to decent work and social justice. The ILO strategy builds on existing country programmes and national development strategies and focuses on the following areas of response:



- Building the resilience of host communities to facilitate access to employment and livelihood opportunities.
- Strengthening institutional capacity and coordination mechanisms at local, regional and national levels to combat unacceptable forms of work with a focus on child labour.
- Supporting policy development to ensure an employment-rich national response, embedded in the principles of decent work.

Similarly, the ILO Office in Ankara is supporting the Turkish response to the Syrian refugee crisis, particularly through skills and language training, building the capacity of public employment services, identifying employment and business creation opportunities through local labour market assessments targeting both refugee and host communities. With more than 3.1 million Syrians, Turkey is the largest refugee-hosting country in the world. Approximately 10 per cent of Syrian refugees reside in 26 state-run camps which are mainly located in provinces near the Turkish-Syrian border and which have historically experienced high rates of unemployment. It is estimated that out of the 1.5 million working age population, 0.5 to 1 million Syrians are currently working, mainly in the informal economy.



The ILO Office in Turkey is pursuing a five-point strategy for 2015-2017:

- Policy advocacy: Supporting the development of a comprehensive national policy enabling an employment-rich response with better working and living conditions both for the Syrian refugee and host communities.
- Capacity building: Building the institutional and technical capacities of national and local public institutions, as well as social partners, to better address the labour market challenges and increased demand for services.
- Improving the knowledge-base: Collecting reliable data and information on the impact of Syrian refugees on the labour market through local and national level research, studies, surveys and analysis.
- Improving employability and job creation: Improvement of the employability of Syrians and members of host communities through skills development and recognition, vocational and technical training and local economic development based on fundamental principles and rights at work, supporting job creation and fighting informal employment and child labour.
- Awareness raising: Raising the awareness of refugees, employers, workers, public institutions and the general public about the labour market access of the refugees, their rights and obligations, as well as the challenges and opportunities.

ILO Knowledge Management Strategy

In the course of 2018, the ILO will be focusing attention, among others, on the operationalisation of its refugee response framework, particularly the Guiding Principles and Recommendation No. 205, developing knowledge, reference, guidance and training products, tools and programmes. These activities are directly linked to those included in the ILO-UNHCR joint action plan and will also

contribute significantly to the implementation of the CRRF and the programme of action, further reinforcing the collaboration between the agencies.

A key element of this knowledge management strategy is the identification, analysis and compilation of lessons learned from the previous three years of programme and project activities in the ILO's response to the Syrian crisis in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. This exercise will be critical in understanding better what needs to be done and can be done at different phases of crisis response and in collaboration with a broad range of government, non-government, national and international partners. It will also enable the ILO, in collaboration with partners such as UNHCR, to develop intervention models that can be adapted and applied in different refugee situations, ensuring a more rapid and effective development-oriented response complementing critical humanitarian action. The model can become a key component of the CRRF coordinating mechanism, supporting member States as they seek to address large movements of refugees in a manner which does not undermine national economies and labour markets, displace national and migrant workers, increase informality and exploitation, create situations of social dumping and labour market segmentation or heighten social tension and instability.

This work is ongoing and publication of the lessons learned from these countries will be completed in the first quarter of 2018. In anticipation of this year's High Commissioner's Dialogue and its focus on the Global Compact on Refugees, the ILO has produced this non-exhaustive and informative summary of the emerging lessons learned to inform the discussions and exchanges. What follows, therefore, are several lessons learned that are emerging from ILO's labour market-based response to the Syrian crisis. The lessons learned are framed around the first four of the six thematic areas (A to D below) of the Guiding Principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour markets:

- A. Governance frameworks on access to labour markets;
- B. Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets;
- C. Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment;
- D. Partnership, coordination and coherence;
- E. Voluntary repatriation and reintegration of returnees;
- F. Additional pathways for labour mobility.



Summary of Emerging Lessons Learned from ILO Syrian Response

A. Governance frameworks on access to labour markets (based on ILO's Guiding Principles)

Guiding Principle 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.

Guiding Principle 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: (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.

Regulatory and policy reform to grant labour market access through work permits

Turkey

Turkey has been revising national policy and programmes to ensure better access to the labour markets for the refugee population and host community. **The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP)** was adopted in 2013 as the first asylum law in Turkey and came into force in April



2014. The LFIP constituted a significant amendment in the process of legal protection for asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey and was developed in close consultation with UNHCR, the Council of Europe and civil society organizations in Turkey.

The new legislation assisted ILO's programme interventions by allowing labour market integration and facilitating social inclusion of refugees. A new institution, the Directorate General for Migration

Management (DGMM), and its regional offices have overseen the management of asylum and migration policies as well as registration and documentation of "temporary protection" beneficiaries.

Complementary to the LFIP, the government has also planned and executed several policy reforms. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS) introduced the "Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection (FuTP)" on 15 January 2016. Work permit applications are submitted through the online e-government services portal (www.turkiye.gov.tr) by the intended employer. Temporary protection status holders may also apply for an independent work permit application. Approximately 20,000 work permits have been issued since the introduction of the regulation. The main elements of the Regulation are as follows:

- Applications to the MOLSS to obtain work permits may be made six months after the date of registration of temporary protection.
- The number of FuTP in a particular work place cannot exceed 10 per cent of the Turkish citizens employed at that same work place, unless there is difficulty in hiring a Turkish citizen who can perform the same professional duties during the 4 weeks prior to the date of the work permit application.
- FuTP cannot be paid less than the minimum wage. The rights and obligations of the FuTP and their employers related to labour and social security legislation shall be reserved.
- Health care and education professionals are required to obtain prior approval certification from the respective authorities, for example, Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Education or Presidency of the Higher Education Council, in order to apply for work permits in those sectors.

The ILO has been supporting the implementation of this new legislation and Act no. 6735 on International Labour Force in close collaboration with MOLSS through national and local level consultations and awareness-raising seminars for employers and Syrians. Through its field operations, the ILO Syria Response Team collected critical information on how to further enhance the enabling environment for livelihoods security and strengthen the implementation of the work permit regime. The team also explored potential areas of collaboration with local, national and international stakeholders operating in the regions. These consultations have provided further feedback for implementation or modifications to the regulation and legislation to improve efficiency and impact.

Ongoing support

The ILO has identified areas requiring future interventions and support to address remaining obstacles and limitations and ensure the full benefit of these positive policy reforms. The number of Syrians working in the formal labour market remains low, especially when compared to the working age population of the Syrian refugee population in Turkey. Self-employment and/or informal employment remain the predominant option for most Syrians. In addition, some employers who have hired Syrians informally argue that applying for a work permit, especially for Syrian employees, is cost prohibitive and complicated, noting that it could be possible to hire several refugees for the same amount or less than one Syrian with a work permit or a Turkish citizen.



On the worker side, there is a degree of reluctance to register for temporary protection, or to apply for a work permit, particularly among a population that has experienced forced displacement and armed conflict and continues to face uncertainty on their future. Furthermore, many Syrians of working age are not proficient in the Turkish language, which compromises their understanding of the work permit application process and workers' rights, forcing them into precarious and exploitative situations. On the regulatory side, it appears the government's capacity to enforce and audit the work permit regime remains limited.

Jordan

Even prior to the Syrian crisis, Jordan already faced labour market challenges that were exacerbated by the large and sudden inflows of refugees. Jordan has traditionally maintained labour market regulations that aimed to protect national workers from foreign competition. Foreign nationals do not have equal access to the Jordanian labour market and are regulated through the Labour Code (Article 12) which restricts employment to sectors and occupations where there are not readily available Jordanian workers. In order to employ foreign labour, employers are required to obtain work permits issued by the Ministry of Labour (MOL).



Grounded on evidence and research findings, the ILO has provided ongoing recommendations to the MOL to facilitate access by Syrian refugees to work in line with Jordanian labour regulations. The revision of work permit procedures has been a critical element in this regard. The gradual easing of regulatory procedures has helped more Syrians access formal employment. Gradual reforms aim

to prevent exploitation and unfair competition in the expanding informal economy, while contributing to the employment of 200,000 Syrians in line with the Jordan Compact.² Reforms have been supported by evidence from labour market assessments and in tripartite consultation with employers' and workers' organisations. Reforms have included the temporary waiving of work permit fees, the waiving of additional medical examinations and the relaxing of single-employer contracts. A number of simultaneous pilot projects enhancing employment opportunities and livelihoods in host communities for both Syrian and Jordanian workers have accompanied ILO's engagement at the policy level.

Before January 2017, work permit procedures prevented Syrians living inside refugee camps from accessing the formal labour market. In January 2017, the government announced that Syrians living inside refugee camps were entitled to obtain work permits and take up employment in areas outside their camps in certain sectors open to non-Jordanians. Refugees living in a camp who have a valid work permit can now leave the camp for up to one month and access available jobs throughout the country. This increased mobility is very important to camp refugees and helps meet work permit benchmarks set out under the Jordan Compact.

Ongoing support

A particular issue requiring continued attention is ensuring that those with work permits also benefit from social security coverage, in line with regulations. When last assessed, 20 per cent of Syrians with work permits benefited from social protection coverage, despite social security enrolment being obligatory for all workers in the formal sector in Jordan. Greater emphasis on the issue of social

² In February 2016, the Jordanian government announced the launch of the Jordan Compact with the international community to assist in its efforts to address the impact of the Syrian crisis on the country. The aim is to stimulate economic growth through a number of interventions and support mechanisms, including improved access to the European Single Market: <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-compact-new-holistic-approach-between-hashemite-kingdom-jordan-and>.

protection for workers, in line with ILO Conventions and the Decent Work Agenda, will continue to underpin ILO support in this area. This may include more in-depth research on the impact of the enrolment of Syrian workers in social security, as well as the potential for portability of social security benefits between Jordan and Syria once return might be possible.

Lebanon

In Lebanon, Syrian refugees were previously required to sign a “pledge not to work” if they wished to obtain a residency permit with attribution as a ‘displaced person.’ Following the London Conference on Syria in 2016,³ the “pledge not to work” was replaced by a “pledge to abide by Lebanese laws.” The ILO supported the government to communicate these changes to relevant groups and partners through outreach activities. Legal stipulations regarding Syrian refugee’s access to the Lebanese labour market have changed frequently over the last few years. This required continual engagement and effective outreach to Syrian and Lebanese workers and their employers. The Ministry of Labour (MOL) has also required support from the ILO for the issuance of work permits due to the unprecedented volume of requests.



Ongoing support

Promoting transparency and effective communication of work permit regulations will be a key focus for the ILO and its partners in Lebanon. Without clear channels of trusted communication, Syrians are vulnerable to labour exploitation. The ILO Guiding Principles

note that “Members should make easily available information regarding laws and regulations” including “information on the rights and obligations of workers.”

B. Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets

Guiding Principle 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.

Strengthening public employment services to meet the needs of Syrian job seekers

Jordan

In August 2017, the ILO and UNHCR, in coordination with the government, launched the Za’atari Office for Employment, the Arab region’s first employment office for refugees, to help the access of the camp’s residents to formal work opportunities across Jordan. The centre provides employment services and facilitates the issuance of work permits for camp residents. It advertises job vacancies and training opportunities through job fairs, exhibits and other means, aiming to link candidates to suitable employment opportunities, and refer them to employers for possible interviews.

³ On 4 February 2016, the UK, Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the UN co-hosted a conference on the Syria crisis in London, ‘Supporting Syria and the Region, London 2016’: www.supportingsyria2016.com/.

The Office for Employment is the first of a wider network of ten employment offices the ILO and MOL plan to establish to provide employment services for local Jordanians and Syrian refugees. The ILO-supported employment services will contribute to the Jordan National Employment Strategy, especially those components referring to the complementarity of the Jordanian and Non-Jordanian workforces. The ILO has supported Jordanian public employment services to develop their capacity to serve the employment needs of Syrian job seekers. This has involved training on relevant labour market regulations and employment strategies.

In partnership with UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Jordanian Government's Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate, the ILO facilitated a jobs fair attended by over 50 national and international companies from across Jordan. Companies advertised over 1,300 jobs for Syrian refugees, mainly in the industrial and agricultural sectors, in accordance with Jordan's laws and regulations. So far, over **3,000 Syrian refugees**⁴ in Za'atari camp have already benefited from the office's initiatives and over 350 work permits have been issued for the agricultural sector.

Guiding Principle 18. Employment strategies should include measures to: 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.

Vocational, skills, and language training opportunities to increase the employability of refugee and host communities

Turkey

Pillar 4 of the ILO's five-point strategy for 2015-17 in Turkey focused on the improvement of the employability of Syrians and members of host communities through skills development, vocational and technical trainings and local economic development, based on fundamental labour principles and

rights at work, as well as supporting job creation and fighting informal employment and child labour.



In partnership with the Sanliurfa Union of Chamber of Craftsmen and Artisans (ŞESOB), Gaziantep Union of Chamber of Craftsmen and Artisans (GESOB) and South-eastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration (GAP-RDA), vocational, technical and skills development training programmes in 11 different

subjects together with entrepreneurship and Turkish language courses were provided to Syrians and host communities. Around 1,450 Syrians (838 women) under temporary protection and host

⁴ ILO internal report on Za'atari ESC, August 2017.

community members benefitted from these training activities. Further activities to improve employability included:

- A welding atelier was established and training given to Syrian refugees in cooperation with the Governor's Office of Harran District.
- Vocational training activities in welding, CNC programming, plastic pipe installation and auto tyre repair were undertaken in cooperation with ŞESOB. The modules were offered to both Syrian refugees and members of the host community at the Chamber's training centre in the Evren Industrial Zone.
- A vocational training programme was designed and implemented in partnership with GAP-RDA for women at multi-purpose community centres (CATOM) in Sanliurfa and Killis. Modules in hairdressing, patient admission services and traditional cooking were delivered for Syrian women and women from the host community.
- The Sanliurfa and Gaziantep branches of the Union of Chambers of Merchants and Artisans contributed substantially to the content and implementation of vocational training programmes. Training programmes were conducted at the training centres established by the MEKSA foundation (a foundation to support vocational training and small industry).
- The Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) amended its Active Labour Market Services Regulation in 2016 to provide active labour market services (vocational training, on-the-job training, guidance and counselling services) to Syrians in Turkey. Around 2,300 Syrians and over 540 host community members benefitted from non-formal training provided by Public Education Centres and Vocational Training Centres of the Ministry of National Education (MONE).



To ensure the practical application of these new skills and to ease the transition to the formal labour market, partner organizations streamlined the certification of vocational competencies. The certificates issued are formally acknowledged by MONE, ILO and Unions of Chamber of Artisans and Craftsmen. To closely coordinate with local actors and guarantee ownership, stakeholders working on vocational training were also involved in the central and local steering committee meetings of the ILO response.

In addition to vocational training, language classes were also provided. With support of the ILO, partner organizations offered Turkish language lessons in Hatay, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa and Adana provinces for Syrian refugees to gain a deeper understanding of the national language and culture. Representatives from partner organizations emphasised that refugees must have at least a basic Turkish language competency prior to their participation in vocational training courses to ensure they maximise the benefit of the training. It was noted that although many of the apprenticeship modules, such as air conditioning and elevator repair and welding, could be taken by students without basic competency in Turkish, nevertheless, language proficiency is crucial for students to understand health and safety measures and to expand employment opportunities after having completed the programme.

Ongoing support

To further affirm the impact of the vocational training in terms of quality and meeting labour market needs, ILO will conduct beneficiary tracing surveys to track how many beneficiaries were able to find and retain a job after graduating from their respective training programmes. Greater attention is also being paid to the importance of moving away from defined gender roles along which vocational training programmes have been designed. Some implementing partners indicated that they identified students who appeared capable of taking on supervisory and managerial roles and responsibilities with additional training sessions. A further area of improvement being considered is the incorporation of a needs-based entrepreneurship training programme, as opportunities in the formal labour market remain limited. Finally, the ILO is examining an integrated and innovative framework that addresses barriers to acquire and maintain a job, such as needs for child care, home health support, sick leave and transportation to and from workplaces to further improve access to the formal labour market.

Jordan

Structural differences in the labour markets of Syria and Jordan have affected the opportunities of Syrian refugees in their host communities in terms of skills and employability. A further severe consequence of limited opportunities to training and formal employment is the resulting erosion in the skills and employability of Syrian refugees, which may affect the long-term development trajectory of the Syrian economy after the crisis and in the post-reconstruction period. The ILO, in partnership with the National Employment and Training Company (NET) in Jordan, has implemented skills training for Syrian and Jordanian workers to improve the employability of these groups in occupations that are subject to licensing requirements. For example, up until October 2017, applicants for work permits in the construction sector, which employs a large number of Syrian workers, needed to hold a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certificate. This certificate formally validates the skills and knowledge that a person has gained while working.

Skills training programmes for Syrian refugees and Jordanians working in the construction sector were developed as a part of the Recognition of Prior Learning initiative to ensure that learned skills were formally certified. The training included a blend of practical and theoretical learning supplemented by coaching and monitoring, with trainers providing feedback on the technical aspects of the occupation. The curriculum also included non-technical sections related to occupational safety and health (OSH).

Receiving a certificate that formally accredited both Jordanian and refugee workers nationwide was



unprecedented and helped Syrian refugees in applying for work permits, allowing them to work under a regular status in the formal labour market. In October 2017, certificates were given to 3,600 workers that took part in the training.

The ILO has also developed programming to improve employability of youth through quality apprenticeships. Young Syrians and Jordanians received training to provide them with the

skills necessary to work in entry-level apprenticeship positions with local employers. Alongside the training, participants were given placements in 81 small to medium local businesses in a range of sectors, including food processing, textiles, printing, mechanics, air conditioning maintenance, carpentry, retail and beauty care. Mentors were selected and trained to provide apprentices with basic technical training in their specific sector and occupation. Mentorship



further strengthened employment programmes by providing a link to the local labour market.

Subsequent training manuals were developed based on competency profiles for each profession,⁵ while advocacy materials were disseminated to increase awareness of employers on the importance of apprenticeship, including to improve productivity. Short cycle skills training courses taking place “on the job” proved an effective form of quality apprenticeships, including a combination of on-the-job training and school-based education, that ensured high levels of instruction and adequate remuneration. They address the immediate labour skills needs of humanitarian and development agencies in implementing their construction, transportation, education, health and security projects, while improving human capital and wage earnings.

[Guiding Principle 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’ organisations.](#)

Building an evidence base for employment policies

Jordan

In 2015, a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on the labour market in Jordan was conducted by the ILO in partnership with FAFO.⁶ The high quality and rigour of this joint research continues to be acknowledged by stakeholders in Jordan and beyond. It is cited by other agencies, government entities and development actors and served as the starting point for the development of evidence-based labour market and livelihoods interventions.

The ongoing relevance of this study demonstrates the critical importance of investing in high-quality impact assessments at an early stage of refugee situations and where there are demonstrated gaps in knowledge. The 2015 assessment built on earlier rapid labour market assessments, demonstrating the utility of smaller scale assessments that can provide baseline data or be scaled up when resources are available. Rapid value chain analysis in Jordan has also provided an entry point for the elaboration of local employment programmes. These rapid assessments have informed pro-poor development

⁵ DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) is a rapid methodology to carry out an occupational analysis at low cost.

⁶ The FAFO Institute for Labour and Social Research is based in Norway and was originally founded by the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions in 1982, before becoming an independent research foundation in 1993: www.fafo.no/index.php/en/about-fafo.

initiatives that aim to strengthen enterprises, business relationships, improving market structures and the business environment.

The delivery of high quality knowledge products has helped to develop a common understanding of key issues, promoted coherence across interventions and facilitated a coordinated approach to labour market interventions. The ILO evidence base has also helped feed into national and international policy dialogue, in particular on work permit regulations. Clear and credible labour market assessments have helped make a case for easing work permit regulations and enabling camp-based refugees to access the labour market. The evidence-base created, however, does require sustained investment over the duration of the displacement cycle.

Lebanon

The local economic development (LED) approach to employment creation builds on comparative advantages and the unique characteristics of local economies. In Lebanon, LED participatory dialogues were organised in those governorates hosting large numbers of Syrians to help identify sectors of the local economy with growth potential. For example, value chain analysis helped to identify a market opportunity for potato exports to Europe. With the involvement of Ministry of Agriculture and local organisations, the ILO supported four cooperatives in cultivating new potato varieties that could benefit from these export opportunities. The emphasis was on demonstrating that local farmers could produce different and high quality varieties suitable to other markets. The cooperatives received training on business management as well as counselling support to improve their legal and managerial status. The project also linked them with relevant suppliers and processors.





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

Employment generation through an employment-intensive investment approach

Jordan

The ILO Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) promotes employment-intensive public works and public employment programmes in times of social and economic hardship. It aims to contribute to mainstream development policy by placing the key concerns of job creation, poverty reduction, enterprise promotion and improvement of working conditions in the broader framework of nationally defined macro-economic employment and investment policy. Investment in public works can include the extension and maintenance of tertiary roads, agricultural infrastructure and schools.

These investments create short-term, direct employment during the construction period and long-term job opportunities through operation and maintenance. Induced employment effects result from a boost in local consumption when increased wages are realised on the project.

The EIIP approach was new to the Middle East in 2015. To generate interest and demonstrate feasibility in the context of the regional Syrian response, the ILO started with a pilot demonstration project in rural road improvement and maintenance and construction of water catchment for irrigation and terracing for cultivation. In Jordan, the ILO implemented the public works projects through partnership with the relevant line ministries to ensure ownership. At the same time, the ILO was able to develop the capacity of the ministries in implementing labour-intensive methods.

In Jordan, nearly 4,000 jobs were created and the MOL's national employment and empowerment programme now includes provisions for the increased capital intensity of the construction sector that generate higher-qualified employment for Jordanian workers. In both Jordan and Lebanon, local communities benefited from improved tertiary roads, expanded agricultural infrastructure, additional



classrooms to accommodate an increased student body and training for local engineers on employment-intensive methods.

Lebanon

The Lebanese government highlighted the importance of assistance in infrastructure work to enable communities to cope with increased demand for services. While at the time the government did not have the capacity to implement intensive investment approaches, it did have an existing structure for infrastructure development and employment creation. The Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme (LHSP), under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), had been one of the main vehicles for creating productive infrastructure/assets, while also creating work opportunities for the most vulnerable. The ILO supported the LHSP through the integration of an EIIP approach. The project included a series of training programmes for contractors and public institutions.

C. Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment

Guiding Principle 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.

Information campaigns and the realisation of labour rights

Jordan

Outreach activities have been critical to ensure that refugees are aware of policy changes that impact their access to social protection, labour markets and other benefits. Restrictions on Syrian's access to

work have had lasting impacts in Jordan. Misperceptions about the right to work are widespread among Syrian and Jordanian workers and employers. In some instances, accurate information can be withheld or distorted which enables exploitation.

Through key informant interviews, it was discovered that Syrians who received benefits from humanitarian actors were avoiding formal employment for fear that it could result in losing their benefits.⁷ UNHCR and ILO subsequently communicated accurate information to dispel this misperception.

Turkey

At the beginning of the Syrian crisis, public opinion in Turkey approved of the government's decision to provide immediate protection and humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees. However, as the conflict became more protracted, the number of Syrians who were forced to seek refuge in the country continued to increase, raising concerns within host communities. The presence of Syrian refugees was perceived as placing significant strain on social services and threatening employment opportunities for members of host communities. The ILO, with the government, launched an awareness campaign in cooperation with media outlets and partner organizations to address these emerging negative perceptions, while also informing Syrians of their rights at work and employers on the benefits of refugee access to work permits.

A robust and comprehensive communications strategy was developed in March 2016 to promote and disseminate information on ILO interventions related to the Syrian crisis. Key messages were formulated around the establishment and promotion of a balanced and carefully crafted positive agenda regarding support for refugees and affected host communities. The communications strategy objectives



were aligned with the ILO's actions and expertise in the response framework, including:

- Raising awareness of employers, workers and the general public on labour legislation and regulations in communities most affected by the refugee influx to reduce unacceptable forms of work, exploitation and child labour, particularly among Syrian refugees.
- Raising awareness on labour market challenges and opportunities both for refugees and host communities.
- Addressing misperceptions related to the impact of allowing work permits for refugees to access the labour market in Turkey to help de-escalate existing social tensions between refugees and host communities and promote more peaceful co-existence.

The communications strategy and awareness-raising campaigns were coordinated in collaboration with stakeholders from relevant institutions, consultants and other local partners. The national and local Turkish media as well as Arabic media channels were included in the media outreach strategy to

⁷ ILO-KfW study on labour wages for EIIP.

facilitate positive awareness-raising regarding project goals in the host communities. Other areas of the communications strategy included:

- The ILO worked with a wide range of communications partners to develop and convey some of the following key messages in a diverse range of national and regional contexts:
 - “Work permits help prevent the growth of informal economy and exploitation of the work force.”
 - “Refugees who benefit from a work permit fill a demand in the labour market and contribute to local economic development, benefiting local businesses and creating a more attractive environment for investment.”
 - “Syrians as investors help create jobs for all.”



- An awareness-raising campaign was designed to diffuse tensions between local host and Syrian refugee communities. All of the campaign messages and materials were developed and validated through focus groups representing refugees and host communities.
- Accessible and informative leaflets and brochures in Arabic were developed to help refugees learn about where, when and how to apply for work permits, working conditions and labour rights and responsibilities, as well as to provide information about employment and training opportunities.
- In cooperation with MOLSA, ILO produced booklets and other materials relating to “Syrians under Temporary Protection” and “Work Permits for Foreigners” in both Turkish and Arabic. The objective was to inform Syrian and Turkish employers and workers and to raise their awareness on the importance of formal employment, work permits and the application process. These booklets were distributed to the 81 Provincial Directorates of İŞKUR.
- A series of short videos was developed to portray key areas of ILO’s work addressing Syrian refugees, including decent work, the elimination of child labour, occupational safety and health, non-discrimination and the right to work. The videos were made available on social media and were also registered as a public service announcement so that they could be broadcast on national and local TV stations free of charge. In addition, it is planned that they will be made available on inflight entertainment systems of AnadoluJet and Turkish Airlines.
- Workshops were organised for local media representatives to share information and discuss the challenges that Syrian refugees face in the labour market. Media representatives took great interest in the ILO project activities, developing strong and clear messages to express their support, such as “Migration has transformed into power – Göç güce dönüştü.”



Ongoing support

One of the key lessons emerging from this experience is that media relations are critical in a refugee response framework. It is important to develop a specific outreach strategy at the outset of a refugee response, including as to employment, ensuring enhanced support for communications departments to be able to manage relations with national and local media in a timely and effective manner.

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

Monitoring decent work under the Jobs Compact

A new trade agreement between Jordan and the EU as part of the Jobs Compact allowed for the relaxation of the rules of the European Union Association Agreement and the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, enabling Jordan to export industrial items duty-free to the EU Single Market for a period of ten years. One sector targeted through the agreement is the apparel sector. The ILO Better Work Jordan programme⁸ which has been operational for over eight years in the country has the primary role to ensure that all those employed in Jordan's apparel sector are working under decent conditions. Given its experience and global and national reputation, the programme has been engaged in the refugee response to provide third-party monitoring services for compliance programmes in the factories exporting under the EU trade agreement. It has also provided training to Jordanian labour inspectors to enhance their capacity.

⁸ Since 2009, Better Work Jordan has joined forces with workers, employers and the government to improve working conditions and boost competitiveness of the garment industry: betterwork.org/where-we-work/jordan/.



Better Work Jordan oversaw the development of a **unified contract for employing refugees**. Under this contract, refugees can obtain the same salary as Jordanian workers, plus overtime and free transportation. Better Work Jordan is also working closely with UNHCR to create an internal protocol for referrals and building the capacity of Better Work staff to handle sensitive cases involving Syrian refugees.

Gender sensitive approaches in employment strategies

Jordan

In Jordan, the ILO has adopted a proactive strategy to encourage greater labour force participation of women by incorporating gender sensitive approaches in project design and implementation. Based on consultations with Jordanian and Syrian women, it was evident they all had a strong preference to work close to or at home. In responding to this preference, the ILO supported skills training and business development in relevant sectors and occupations, for example, confectionery.

This programme gave both Syrian and Jordanian women the chance to learn new skills through on-the-job training, as well as find job opportunities either by working for Syrian-owned confectionery businesses that provided the training for the women, or by starting up their own small businesses from their homes. Additionally, the women participants took part in an e-learning programme launched by the ILO to assist online marketing and sales. Generally, the programme helped in terms of ensuring flexible working hours for women, particularly those with family responsibilities, such as women who have young children. The ILO aims to expand its pilot programme by partnering with employers in other sectors to train and employ more women.

Ongoing support

The ILO recognizes the need for further gender studies and analysis on the participation of refugee women in the labour market to develop better targeted action. There tends to be a strong focus on interventions in male-dominated sectors, such as construction, which affects efforts to address the critical issue of refugee women's access to the labour market. Gender mainstreaming in vocational training and employment programmes should be strengthened and should focus on: (a) selection of occupations that are directly available for women; and (b) championing the participation of women in non-traditional occupations.

D. Partnership, coordination and coherence

Guiding Principle 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.

Coordination through a regional Syria response

The ILO's engagement in the refugee crisis in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey has been varied and broadly focused on four areas in the initial phase:

- Assessments of labour market impacts;
- Supporting job creation through local economic development;
- Assessing the situation of child labour and other unacceptable forms of work; and
- Collaborating with UN inter-agency working groups on livelihoods and contributing to national resilience plans.

As of early 2015, the ILO became increasingly concerned at the growing pressures on host countries in terms of access of refugees to formal work and therefore sought to engage more meaningfully with national and local partners in supporting the development and implementation of appropriate policy



and programme responses. In this context and in an effort to examine the regional dimensions of the crisis and foster cooperation between a range of stakeholders, the ILO organised a high-level regional dialogue in Istanbul, Turkey, 28-29 July 2015, bringing together representatives of governments, non-government and some international partners from Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq.

Participants welcomed the opportunity to meet and discuss the crisis for the first time since it began in 2011. The main objective was to facilitate a detailed exchange of views and experiences on the challenges that each country was facing regarding the labour market impacts of the crisis and to deliberate on options to develop appropriate policies and strategic frameworks. The meeting provided an opportunity to clearly articulate major barriers regarding the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market, as well as spurring ideas for policy development and mobilising ILO constituents to devise strategies for employment creation. Discussion outcomes provided ideas on how to proceed in a manner most beneficial to each of the countries hosting Syrian refugees, taking into account the need for all responses to adapt to different national environments and contexts.⁹

Guiding Principle 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.

Work permit issuance through cooperatives

Jordan

The host government has the right to set the terms and conditions of labour market access based on national circumstances and in line with human rights and labour standards. Taking into account the sectors and professions where Syrians were legally permitted to work in Jordan, the ILO, in close collaboration with the MOL, recommended sector specific changes to work permit procedures. In the agricultural sector, cooperatives play a large role in rural communities. These existing structures were mobilised to sponsor the work permits of Syrian refugee workers, free of cost to the cooperative and the Syrian worker. The approach of working through cooperatives may be reinforced in the future through an integrated programme for local development.

In the construction sector, the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions has adopted a similar model to agricultural cooperatives and sponsored 1,300 work permits for Syrians to date.

Working through these local institutions has added value to the ILO work and embedded an understanding of how different groups of workers (Syrian, Jordanian and other migrant workers) are impacted by labour market interventions. In some instances, local institutions may not have the capacity to respond and will require capacity-building and measures for institutional strengthening.

For more information on the ILO's response to the Syrian crisis, please visit:

Turkey – www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/WCMS_379375/lang--en/index.htm

Jordan – www.ilo.ch/beirut/areasofwork/syrian-refugee-crisis/jordan/lang--en/index.htm

Lebanon – www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/syrian-refugee-crisis/lebanon/lang--en/index.htm

⁹ The full workshop report and summary of outcomes can be found here: www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_408999.pdf