

Working towards Durable Solutions

CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES

UNHCR promotes three durable solutions for refugees as part of its core mandate: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement.

The legal framework for refugees in Turkey does not refer to ‘local integration’ as a concept. Efforts of increasingly including refugees in services provided through the national system continue, in line with the **principle of harmonization** put forward by both by the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and the Government’s National Strategy on Harmonization and a National Action Plan adopted in February 2018. The objectives of harmonization are to reduce dependency on third party support, create an environment where foreigners and international protection beneficiaries live in harmony with the host community, and for all activities to equip refugees with the knowledge and skills required to be independently active and contribute to society. To contribute to increasing self-reliance, UNHCR continues its support to education and livelihoods in 2019.

With regard to education, namely **higher education** and language training as part of higher education preparation, UNHCR will pursue its cooperation with the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) and continue working with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) and the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) to improve **access to the labour market** for refugees.

Advocacy for an increase in resettlement quotas is on-going, with a total of **20,000 resettlement places as the target for 2020**.

UNHCR is also increasing its presence in **voluntary repatriation** interviews, monitor trends and update the preparedness plan for return, in cooperation with the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM).

Education

UNHCR’s education strategy **promotes access of refugees to a broad continuum of educational opportunities**, ranging from formal education to higher education and opportunities for adults to learn new skills. A core element of this strategy is to promote the effective inclusion of refugees in the national education system. The operationalization of this strategy takes into consideration both the national policy context and the work of other stakeholders in the education sector, including UNICEF with a focus on children’s access to education. In Turkey, a substantial part of UNHCR’s education programming focuses on persons over 18 years of age, requiring effective linkages with livelihoods programming and the promotion of smooth transitions from learning to work.

Cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of National Education to promote effective inclusion of refugees in education

In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for formal and non-formal education, including for refugees and pursues, based on the applicable legal framework, a policy of inclusion of refugees in the national education system. In the school year 2018/2019, some 61.3% of Syrian children of school-age were enrolled in formal education in Turkey. UNHCR works closely with MoNE in order to **disseminate information** to refugees on available education opportunities. Through **engagement with refugee communities**, UNHCR also works to identify the difficulties that refugees face in accessing education and discusses solutions with the Ministry and other education stakeholders.

The **ability to communicate in Turkish** is essential for the meaningful social inclusion of refugees and for social cohesion. For adults, the ability to communicate effectively in Turkish facilitates access to the labour market and promotes social cohesion through the ability of refugees to communicate with the communities in which they live. Support for refugees to learn Turkish will continue throughout 2019, including through a wider range of skills training courses and the establishment of child care facilities in Public Education Centers.



Almost 1M

Turkish Language learning books for children procured by UNHCR to support MoNE



Over 40,000

Textbooks for adult language learners procured by UNHCR to support MoNE to be used in schools, temporary education centres and public education centres

Supporting access to higher education

UNHCR works in close coordination with both the Higher Education Council and YTB to facilitate access to higher education by refugee youth. In 2019, there are over 25,000 Syrian youth attending Turkish universities. YTB is a key partner in implementing higher education programmes and works with UNHCR to offer higher education preparation programmes for high school graduates and to provide scholarships. The **UNHCR-YTB higher education preparation programme** provides a nine-month intensive Turkish language course that helps refugee youth meet the language proficiency requirements for enrolment in Turkish universities. In 2019, some 2,500 youth are enrolled in this programme.



2,500

Syrian youth at the start of the 2018/2019 academic year enrolled in UNHCR-supported higher education preparation programmes



1,069

Syrian youth started the 2018/2019 academic year with full scholarships supported by UNHCR

The **scholarship programme for refugees**, best known by its **DAFI** acronym, was introduced in Turkey in 2014 and has since grown into the largest programme of its kind, implemented by UNHCR in the world. More than 820 refugee students have been awarded DAFI

scholarships in Turkey since 2014, most of whom are still studying. 82 students, whose studies were supported through a DAFI scholarship have graduated. The programme is implemented in partnership with YTB, which has extensive experience in scholarship management and is responsible for the government of Turkey's international scholarship programme.

Under the One Refugee Policy, to ensure that **refugees from countries other than Syria** are also supported to access higher education, UNHCR introduced cash grants in 2017 to assist refugee families with the costs of university tuition fees. Under this programme students apply for cash-based assistance that is conditional on university enrolment. Over 500 students have benefited from the programme, which will continue in 2019.

Promoting livelihoods and self-reliance

As set out since 2016 in the Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection and the Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders, Turkey's national legal framework grants refugees access to formal employment, subject to obtaining work-permits.

Turkey has a dynamic economy with labour gaps in various sectors, such as manufacturing. As a direct result, government statistics indicate that **nearly 82,365 Syrians have been issued work permits** since the adoption of the relevant Regulations. In addition, in order to encourage employers to engage refugees to fill those gaps in various sectors, the **fees relating to issuance of work permits have been halved** in January 2018. These figures give an indication of the challenge ahead and the need to maintain and strengthen the efforts to facilitate formal economic inclusion of refugees.

In line with the 3RP strategy, **expanding livelihoods support and job opportunities** for Syrians and refugees of other nationalities is a strategic priority for UNHCR Turkey in an effort to support their self-reliance. In 2019, UNHCR continues to work closely with public institutions on the provision of information to refugees and employers in the private sector, in providing training to and with regard to job-matching. UNHCR's strategy for livelihood and self-reliance focuses on several aspects: the institutional, legal and administrative environment, the capacity and skills of refugees and the economic absorptive capacity and potential of local labour markets.



Over 400

Public sector partners supported to strengthen their capacity, including trainings with İŞKUR, Vocational Qualification Authority and MoFLSS



Over 3,600

Refugees received support on wage employment



Over 2,800

Individuals reached with a total of 30 events, such as conferences and briefings



Over 49,000

Refugees received counselling services



Over 25,000

Refugees received support with vocational courses



Over 280,000

Informative materials published and distributed

Cumulative data as of December 2018

Support the institutional and legal framework on access to employment

Despite a favourable legal environment in Turkey, challenges do exist for refugees to access formal employment within the existing legal framework. Specifically, the formal quota for refugees not to exceed 10 per cent of the total workforce per enterprise, and the requirement that refugees be employed only in their province of registration. In coordination with other key actors in the sector, in particular FAO, ILO and UNDP, UNHCR will continue to advocate for a more flexible and inclusive approach.

With regards institutions, an on-going priority for UNHCR is to support the provision of **counselling on services available** on livelihoods, and to **support and foster linkages** between refugees and employment services. To this end, with the support of UNHCR, the Directorate General of International Labour Force (DGoILF), MoFLSS and İŞKUR engages in joint information dissemination activities for refugees on labour market access, and supports refugee access to services provided in İŞKUR service centres. In these centres, jointly-established kiosks remain essential contact points for refugees to receive

employment counselling and job-matching support. İŞKUR also receives staffing and interpreter support, as well as tools and equipment.

To support the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) in streamlining the certification of skills and enhance the knowledge by refugees of the process, the Turkish national qualification standards are being translated into Arabic. In addition, a pilot project with the VQA to facilitate the **accreditation process for refugees** will begin in the second quarter of 2019.

Increase the capacity and skills of refugees

Currently, UNHCR is implementing vocational and language training programmes in 13 provinces of Turkey in collaboration with municipalities, governorates, sub-governorates and other partners. In 2018, over 4,200 beneficiaries were reached with vocational, entrepreneurship and/or language trainings provided by UNHCR and its partners.

The **vocational trainings** reached 2,000 beneficiaries and combine skills building with language training to ensure job readiness and knowledge of health and safety laws. For instance, the newly established Ankara Metropolitan Municipality Vocational Training Centre is an example of a comprehensive approach, in partnership with a municipality, where following Turkish language training various technical vocational training topics, such as pastry chef assistance or java and graphic design is offered.

In partnership with FAO, UNHCR continues to support the first larger scale **agricultural** livelihoods initiative aimed at expanding livelihoods opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities in the agricultural sector by enhancing their agricultural skills. Since 2017, the project has reached 2,500 people throughout Turkey, and has achieved concrete employment outcomes through private sector and İŞKUR partnerships. The project is training 800 beneficiaries in 2019, on livestock care and beekeeping, among other topics.



Entrepreneurs training at UNHCR supported training centre in Mardin. © UNHCR/Emrah Gürel

Supporting **refugee entrepreneurship** is also an important area of engagement with a view to promoting self-reliance. Turkey currently has nearly 8,000 refugee-owned enterprises operating as formally registered companies and a significant number of refugee-owned small businesses. UNHCR-implemented entrepreneurship support include trainings, mentorship and financial support, either to start up a business or to solidify an existing business. In 2018, some 1,200 beneficiaries received entrepreneurship training and mentoring, and 81 beneficiaries with sound business plans received grants.

A further example for successful partnerships is the cooperation, since 2016, with the **Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce** in providing language, vocational and entrepreneurship training. The vocational training targets the knitwear sector and resulted in the establishment of a joint vocational training premises at the Vocational High School in Gaziantep with the Ministry of National Education. The entrepreneurship programme is complemented with seminars to increase awareness of refugee entrepreneurs on business registration and the Turkish tax regime system.

Resettlement and complementary pathways

A protection tool to meet the specific needs of refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk in the country of asylum. All refugees are processed in accordance with global resettlement criteria which include: legal and physical protection needs, survivors of violence and torture, medical needs, women and girls at risk, children and adolescents at risk and family reunification.

A durable solution for vulnerable refugees where other durable solutions are not viable options. UNHCR is mandated by its Statute and the UN General Assembly Resolutions to undertake resettlement as one of the three durable solutions. Resettlement remains a very limited durable solution for vulnerable refugees.

A tangible expression of **international solidarity and responsibility sharing** with Turkey to reduce the impact of hosting a large number of refugees on its territory. The 2016 UN General Assembly New York Declaration for Refugee and Migrants reiterated the specific commitment made by States to scale up and increase global resettlement opportunities as well as pursue complementary pathways.

Resettlement in Turkey

UNHCR Turkey's resettlement programme remains one of the largest globally. Indeed, over the last six years, over 114,200 individual refugees were submitted and over 54,200 individuals departed to resettlement countries. However, UNHCR is unfortunately only able to resettle a fraction of the refugees who are in need of resettlement, namely **extremely vulnerable refugees** and those facing **serious protection risks**.

Out of over 4 Million refugees in Turkey, UNHCR estimates that **420,000** are in need of resettlement. However, due to limited quotas, only **four per cent** of the refugees estimated to be in need of resettlement were submitted for resettlement in 2018. They were submitted to 19 countries: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

In 2018, a total of 16,042 refugee applications were submitted and 8,979 refugees departed to resettlement countries. Overall, UNHCR conducted 137 resettlement interview missions throughout Turkey and hosted 29 resettlement country section missions. In 2019, UNHCR plans to process 20,000 vulnerable refugees for resettlement as per the quotas allocated, and advocate for this quota to be maintained, if not increased, in 2020. So far, as of July 2019, a total of 10,690 refugees have been submitted for resettlement consideration and 7,066 have departed.



The Mahmut family are Syrian refugees who arrived to Canada, from Turkey at the end of January 2016. They are happy to be living in their own apartment in Ottawa. © UNHCR

The Resettlement Process



Complementary pathways

In order to expand solution opportunities, UNHCR is promoting complementary pathways, such as family reunification and humanitarian visas for refugees and work with States to address some of the barriers for refugees to access these pathways. Leading to unintended protection concerns, these barriers include strict document requirements, high cost of application, and narrowly defined eligibility criteria, such as the age of children able to benefit from family reunification.

Voluntary repatriation

UNHCR **cooperates closely with DGMM** on voluntary repatriation procedures of Syrians by monitoring spontaneous returns with the aim of verifying their voluntary character, analysing return trends, as well as identifying and addressing, where possible in the host country, obstacles to return related to civil status documentation changes (birth, death, marriage, divorce, custody) which occurred in Turkey.

The presence in the field has and will continue to be expanded at Provincial Directorates for Migration Management (PDMMs), where voluntary return procedures are being undertaken. UNHCR **monitors the voluntary nature of returns** by observing interviews in the PDMMs of nine provinces; namely Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, and Şanlıurfa on a daily basis and in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Manisa and Kahramanmaraş on a weekly basis depending on PDMMs' request and the intensity of returns. In cases where return is considered a result of protection-related challenges, UNHCR provides counselling on possible interventions in Turkey to enable individuals to make well-versed return decisions.

UNHCR's **supports Syrian nationals** who have expressed intention to return to Syria but lack civil documentation in line with its approach to remove obstacles to return. In coordination with DGMM, capacity development activities are pursued.

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LINKS

[Regional Portal - Syria Regional Refugee Response](#) | [Regional Portal - Mediterranean](#) | [UNHCR Turkey website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Services Advisor](#) | [UNHCR Help](#)