implemented by:
Promotion of Economic Prospects (PEP)

Boosting the economic prospects of refugees and residents of the host community in Turkey

The challenge

Turkey has taken in more refugees than any other country in the world. Currently about 3.6 million Syrians with temporary protection status have been registered, almost half of them women. The majority have found refuge in Turkey’s southern and south-eastern provinces, causing the population of some communities to rise sharply.

Since the 2011 breakout of the war in Syria and the influx of Syrians into Turkey, the Turkish Government has made great efforts to relieve the dire humanitarian situation of Syrians fleeing their homes. With the war entering its eighth year, the situation for refugees in Turkey is becoming protracted, which is why longer-term and more sustainable approaches are needed to support Syrians and their Turkish host community.

Our approach

The access to employment of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Turkish citizens in the host community is supported by providing “short- and mid-term job and training opportunities”, in close cooperation with the private sector, municipalities, local and international NGOs. The measures take into account previously obtained knowledge, skills, and work experiences as well as the needs of the local Turkish labour market. Labour market oriented qualification measures enable the target group to find decent employment in the formal labour market. Small companies and future entrepreneurs are supported through training, networking opportunities, and the facilitation of a better understanding of the market environment, which includes Turkish legislation as well as information on access to finance and other support opportunities.

For Syrians, all measures include Turkish language training – as speaking a country’s language is the single most important skill for integration into the society and labour market. To boost women’s participation in formal employment, child care is provided. Whenever possible, the measures seek to foster social cohesion between Syrians and Turkish citizens through shared events and activities.

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<th>Project name</th>
<th>Promotion of Economic Prospects for Refugees and the Host Community in Turkey (PEP)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioned by</td>
<td>German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</td>
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<td>Project region</td>
<td>Turkey (Adana, Adıyaman, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hatay, Istanbul, Kilis, Konya, Mersin, Tekirdağ)</td>
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The project operates in three activity fields:

1. Promoting access to short- and medium-term employment and skills development: The access of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Turkish citizens to employment is supported by providing training and short-/medium-term formal employment. Activities are implemented through close cooperation and partnership measures with state institutions, chambers, and local and international NGOs. One of the primary objectives is facilitating participants a better access to the Turkish formal labour market. In cooperation with private companies, the project ensures that work permit fees, a minimum wage salaries and social security contributions are paid.
2. Strengthening entrepreneurship and self-employment: PEP supports start-ups and secure already existing businesses, thus promoting the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The project measures include, facilitation and promotion of available support mechanisms and legalizing businesses to foster the development of entrepreneurial culture and the value-creation driven, sustainable competitiveness.

3. Strengthening support structures for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): PEP connects key actors in the private sector eco-system to sharpen SMEs’ and entrepreneurs' competitiveness by facilitating public-private sector dialogue and improving the provision of business development services provision. PEP helps strengthen the resilience of Syrian and Turkish companies in the host community and thus helps safeguard existing jobs and create new ones. Capacity building of different actors supporting SMEs and facilitating exchange between key actors are core objectives of PEP and part of every activity.

The most successful tool for improving social security and participation is decent employment. The project brings about a temporary stabilisation of households and boosts formal employment opportunities. Jobs not only provide the necessary financial means to actively participate in society, but also provide people with dignity and renewed self-esteem. It is in the workplace that Syrians and Turkish people interact, cooperate, and communicate in order to get a job done. Thus, access to decent employment is the most effective measure to strengthen social cohesion and foster peaceful interaction between Turkish citizens and their Syrian neighbours.

The measures directly contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations (UN) such as: SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth, and SDG 10: Reduced Inequality.

Success factors

The project is based on the successes and experiences of two “Cash for Work” (CFW) projects (2016-2019), previously implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Turkey.

The focus of those two projects was on short-term employment and training to the benefit of host communities. Targeted were Syrian refugees and vulnerable Turkish citizens in the host municipalities. 28 different projects were implemented with a variety of partners, including the Ministry of National Education, the National Employment Agency, the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry, and various local and international NGOs. Thanks to the successful cooperation of GIZ with its partners, around 25,000 vulnerable individuals and their families directly benefitted from the CFW activities.

An example from the field

A single mother of two, Hıven Osman needed to build a normal life for her small family. After surviving the hardships of both the war and their journey to Turkey, the 44-year-old eventually came to the Culture Centre in the city of Mersin. Here she has been working for six months, earning a consistent income with regular working hours and child care provided at her workplace. The project has re-energised her life.

“Thanks to the project, I am living again a life of dignity, having social contacts, and standing on my own two feet. I am able to take care of my children – living a life of dignity is very good thing. I feel strong.”

Trying to put the dark past behind her, Hıven now fills her day with symbols of life and hope, such as the plants and flowers she carves on the flowerpots that are made at the centre.