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TOWARDS A COHESIVE SOCIETY AS ONE

Social Cohesion Activities by the Community-Based Local Initiatives Project (CLIP 2)

Context

Against the backdrop of hosting more than 4 million refugees (3,7 million Syrians under temporary protection, 330,000 individuals under international protection) and the continuing influx of new refugees (namely, from Afghanistan or Ukraine), Turkey has made immense efforts to provide access to protection and social services to all persons in need. In addition, the Turkish government supports social cohesion and harmonisation within society in the context of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmonisation. Despite many successes in the social integration and participation of refugees, there still exist prejudices and conflicts between refugees and residents of host communities. The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as economic insecurity, impacted the trend of rising social tensions. Due to the high demand for social support and services as well as needs-based social services, particularly vulnerable groups or individuals at risk (e.g. persons with disabilities, single headed households or survivors of sexual and gender-based violence) run the risk of being left behind. The general deterioration of the economy, combined with high inflation, exacerbates the economic distress of vulnerable groups, leading to an increase in the urgent need and also a competition for access to income-generating employment and affordable housing. Finally, social media that nourishes prejudice and stereotyping has also unfavourable consequences.

Project objective	Improving the personal and socioeconomic resilience of refugees and vulnerable residents of the host community
Implemented by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
Project area	Turkey wide with a focus on underserved regions
Most relevant partners	Vice-President's Office of the Republic of Turkey (Lead executing agency), Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS), Presidency for Migration Management (PMM), NGOs, CBOs, Municipalities
Target group	Refugees and vulnerable members of the Turkish host community
Overall term	January 2021 - August 2023
Total budget	EUR 6,500,000 by BMZ and EUR 4,000,000 by ECHO

To this end, fostering social cohesion and harmonisation is key to strengthen positive social relations and connectedness, provide equal opportunities and assure human-rights for all. The strengthening of social cohesion also contributes to the holistic project approach of CLIP 2 and the operationalisation of the **Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus**.





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Approach to Strengthening Social Cohesion

CLIP 2 builds upon the experiences of the previous Community Centres and Local Initiatives Project (CLIP 1) and the support provided to refugees and host community members through cooperation with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The project aims to strengthen the beneficiaries' personal and socio-economic resilience including creating a safe and supportive environment where the rights and dignity of individuals and groups are respected. This facilitates participation and positive interactions with others and improves the target groups' self-help capacities and self-esteem as well as their feeling of connectedness to their living environment and access to needs-based social services. Social cohesion activities are implemented at different relationship levels:

- **Linking:** Connecting refugees and vulnerable members of the host community to state institutions by promoting equal access to social services and participation (e.g., referrals, legal and social counselling))
- **Bridging:** Providing a safe space for interaction and exchange between refugees and host community members as well as different social groups (e.g., joint activities, intercultural exchange activities and activities designed for raising awareness i)
- **Bonding:** Strengthening the relationship within specific target groups that find themselves in similar life situations (e.g., through empowerment, self-reliance and psycho-social well-being activities)

CLIP 2 applies a holistic approach to promote social cohesion.

At community level, it strengthens coordination and cooperation between civil society and state providers of social services as well as advocacy for the situation and rights of vulnerable groups.

At institutional level, the project supports the capacity development of civil society and state institutions. The measures at community and institutional levels contribute to the creation of an enabling environment that facilitates the access of vulnerable persons to needs-oriented and good quality support services and thus safeguards their social participation and connectedness to the local community.

At individual level CLIP 2 supports the activities of partners to increase positive interactions in the social environment of the beneficiaries, fostering feelings of trust in different social settings. Both refugees and members of the host community should experience an improved confidence about understanding different social and cultural norms and feelings of being respected as a person of equal value and rights.



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CLIP2
 Ankara, Turkey

Activities that focus on these aims include:

- Social activities (e.g., art and handicraft classes, dialogue sessions, speaking clubs)
- Cultural activities (e.g., trips and city tours, visits to museums or historic sites)
- Sport activities (e.g., football matches)
- Volunteering programs
- Events and festivals, including the celebration of special days (e.g., March 8th International Women's Day, April 23rd National Sovereignty and Children's Day, December 18th International Migrant Day)

Highlights

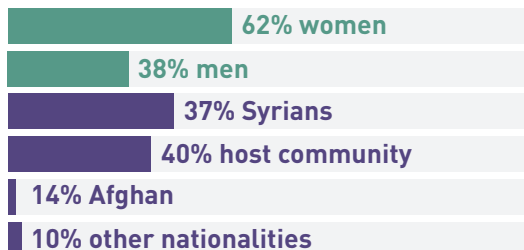
As of June 2022:



Over **15,000** individuals participated in social cohesion activities



Over **1,500** measures were implemented to promote social cohesion between refugees and the members of the host community



Over **4,000** individuals have participated in **200** moderated exchange formats to strengthen solidarity between refugees and the members of the host community (e.g., between women, persons with disabilities)



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Resistantly filling in life's cracks

Mitralli, the eldest of five siblings, fled the war with her family at the age of 16 and settled in Turkey without knowing the language or culture. Her Kurdish knowledge provided some support, but not nearly enough. She started studying Turkish at high school in Van.

She was already 19 years old when she graduated from high school. She spoke Turkish fluently enough and quickly adjusted to her new home, successfully passing the university exam to pursue her dream career. She completed her university education in four years and received a good grade. However, the COVID-19 pandemic hit her hard, leaving her unemployed for nearly two years. She became unusually reserved and a loner.

She also struggled in her first few social cohesion sessions at Leader Woman Association (LWA), where

she was on the verge of quitting. However, she met other young women and children who had fled the war and were facing similar issues with language, harmonisation, and social life as she was. She then became a volunteer for LWA's social cohesion activities, assisting the team with translation, events and office administration.

She has broadened her horizons, followed her ambition and begun to support the education of two children with special needs after volunteering for four months with LWA. At present she accompanies them to school and assists them with their language studies. Mitralli's resilience has been strengthened thanks to CLIP 2's support; she has now been offered a professional job at the private school where those two children are enrolled.

Mitralli has become a strong woman who is doing a labour of love while also assisting others with stories similar to hers.



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