



European Union
Civil Protection and
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für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Community Centres and Local Initiatives Project (CLIP)

Community centres and local initiatives in Turkey provide services for refugees and host communities. They reach out to vulnerable persons to leave no one behind.

The challenge

Since 2011, millions of Syrians have been forced to flee their homes. Among Syria's neighbouring countries, Turkey currently hosts almost 4 million registered refugees (of which nearly 3.6 million are Syrians). The world's largest refugee population poses significant challenges for the Turkish government to ensure access to quality services such as education and social services and guaranteeing their livelihood and protection. As the conflict in Syria continues, greater efforts must be made to leave no one behind. The necessity of addressing the most pressing needs may result in increased vulnerability for particular communities. Groups at a high risk include refugees who are not registered, seasonal migrants, persons with disabilities, LGBTI+ individuals, women, single parents and child labourers.

To address these challenges, community centres and local initiatives have been established throughout Turkey. Often run by non-governmental institutions, community-based organisations as well as municipalities, these centres are designed to complement the governmental efforts in service provision to refugees and host communities. The efforts are also aimed at filling some of the gaps that have emerged in addressing hard-to-reach groups.

Our approach

In recent years, major progress has been made in establishing and expanding the range of services that community centres offer in Turkey. Nevertheless, social services, including intercultural exchange and dialogue, are still lacking in quality and quantity.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) has been supporting the establishment and improvement of community centres and local initiatives since 2015. The Community Centres and Local Initiatives Project (CLIP) provides technical and financial support to up to 12 community centres and over 20 local initiatives.

In order to optimally provide the needed support, the project focusses its efforts through four action fields:

1. Support for community and social service centres

GIZ cooperates with community centres that provide needs-based social services to refugees and host communities. These are open to everyone -

Project name	Community Centres and Local Initiatives Project (CLIP)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with 15,000,000 EUR
Co-funded by	European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) with 10,000,000 EUR for the Action "Leave No One Behind – Support to Localised Assistance Interventions" (from February 2019 onwards)
Project region	Turkey
Lead executing agency	Vice President's Office of the Republic of Turkey
Duration	October 2017 to December 2020

regardless of origin, age or gender - and implement multiple activities in the fields of protection, education and intercultural exchange and dialogue.

2. Local Initiative Fund in Turkey (LIFT)

Through LIFT, the project supports over 20 big and small, non-governmental local organisations that offer specific assistance and protection services to vulnerable persons. This action field specifically targets the most exposed and at-risk groups (child labourers, seasonal migrants etc.) and focusses on reaching underserved areas.

3. Harmonisation

GIZ supports the development of formats for public and civil actors/organisations to exchange ideas and to share practices with the goal of aligning with official state requirements. This is also intended to improve the quality of the social services that the community centres and local initiatives provide to the vulnerable groups.

4. Capacity development

At an individual and organisational level, the project implements measures to further develop the skills and capacities of community centres and local initiatives. To widen the impact, GIZ also reaches out to secondary target groups, so that local authorities, technical staff and the broader circle of our partners may also benefit from these efforts. Simultaneously, an understanding of the shared benefit is promoted.



Language classes help refugees and host communities to better communicate and break down barriers.

Capacity building activities allow Community Centres to provide improved services and better reach out to most vulnerable persons.

Multi-Donor Action “Leave No One Behind” (Feb 2019 – Oct 2020)

In a first-of-its-kind cooperation between DG ECHO and BMZ Transitional Development Assistance, GIZ implements in 2019 and 2020 a multi-donor action aiming at “improving the access to and provision of services for particularly vulnerable and at-risk persons through localised assistance interventions”. The action is embedded in the CLIP project. Through these additional funds, the grant scheme “LIFT” for supporting protection and other humanitarian-oriented projects was created (see Action Field 2), and the community centres (see Action Field 1) are particularly strengthened to increase their activities directed to the most vulnerable refugees. Also, the capacity development measures and harmonization measures (see Action field 3 and 4) have increased their focus on strengthening capacities and cooperation between the actors in the field of protection. In total, more than 61,000 people in vulnerable conditions shall benefit from these additional activities to “leave no one behind”.

The benefits

Within the scope of the project’s implementation, refugees and members of the Turkish host communities gain access to services that are offered based on need. These include advisory and information services, awareness raising, advocacy and empowerment activities, education and skills development activities, psychosocial support and counselling as well as cultural and other activities that strengthen social cohesion. The services help refugees find their way around Turkey and bolster their self-reliance. Both refugees and Turkish beneficiaries develop skills required to lead a healthy life, secure their livelihoods and gain access to the labour market. They also get to know each other and break down barriers and prejudices.

Since October 2017, more than 180,000* individual persons have already benefitted from a range of services provided by community centres. As some beneficiaries attend multiple courses, the staff have recorded an attendance of 370,000* participants across the entire offering. In addition, nearly 19,000* persons with special needs and vulnerabilities have been reached. 23 capacity development measures

and 34 exchange and discussion formats between state and non-state parties have been implemented. *Figures from December 2019

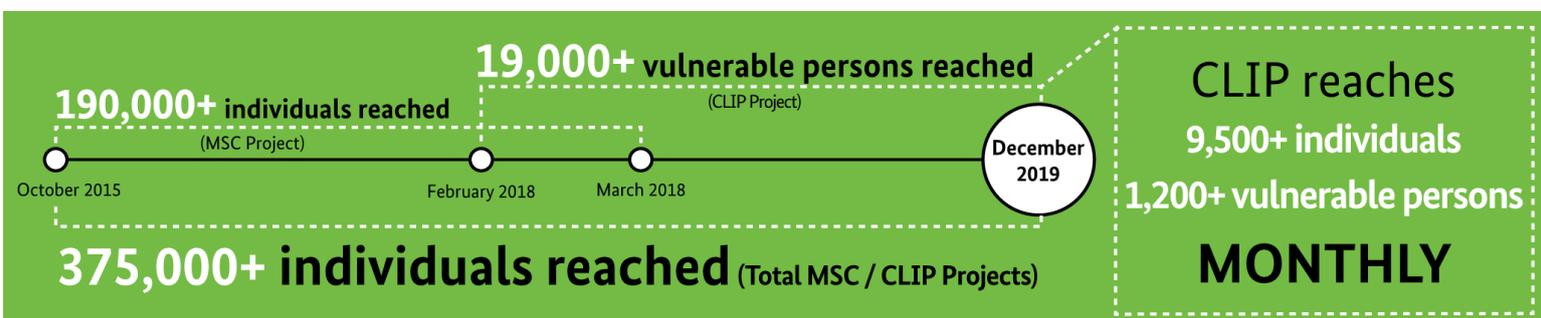
Persons in need of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) are often in vulnerable situations such as forced migration. Inequalities in terms of education, income generation, accommodation etc. are significantly important risk factors and the effects go beyond individual. CLIP therefore, acknowledges that psychosocial distress is a main problem that needs proficient care and support. Psychosocial support in the context of forced displacement and violence combines psychological and social aspects of human experience and aims to create safe spaces. Community centres and local initiatives provide or refer to inclusive and accessible MHPSS activities such as individual and group counselling, art therapies, emergency assistance etc. Since October 2017, nearly 13,000 individuals have benefitted from various PSS services provided by CLIP partner organisations.

Success factors

The project builds on the know-how and structure gained from the previous ‘Strengthening Social Cohesion between Syrian Refugees and Turkish Host Communities - Multi-Service Centres’ project which ran from October 2015 until May 2018 has reached 190,000 individuals and implemented 1,052 educational courses and more than 400 events and activities for social cohesion. Successful approaches, such as regular coordination meetings between GIZ and implementing partners, peer-learning mechanisms and providing context-specific and needs-based services are being continuously improved and extended.

CLIP strongly emphasises participatory approaches during the implementation of its projects such as setting up refugee councils that are involved in planning and implementing activities.

CLIP firmly believes that for the best support of refugees and host communities an alliance of many actors is needed. Thus, the project brings together diverse partners, such as state and non-state, local, national and international, and newly emerged and more experienced parties. This allows them to exchange and adopt best practices and develop collaborative solutions to identified challenges. This leads to a better and more efficient service provision for refugees and host communities and creates more sustainable structures.



Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

CLIP - 'Improving Social Services for Refugees and Host Communities in Turkey by Supporting Community Centres and Local Initiatives'

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As at

March 2020

Photo credits

ASAM: page 1

GIZ/Ali Saltan: page 1

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GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)