

PEP-Promotion of Economic Prospects

Generating Employment Opportunities for Syrian Refugees and the Host Community in Türkiye

The Challenge

More than 5.5 million Syrians are currently refugees abroad in the second decade of the Syrian civil war. With over 3.4 million Syrians granted temporary protection status, Türkiye hosts the largest number of refugees for many years. The crucial steps to support them involve programmes aimed at sustainable employment and opportunities as well as fostering social cohesion as they rebuild their lives within host communities for the long-term.

The Turkish government has established a foundation of social services committed to assisting those in need, working towards improved living conditions and a sustainable livelihood for all. GIZ has been supporting Türkiye with the refugee influx since 2014 as part of the wider regional strategy of the UN-led regional support for the Syrian Conflict, through the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). Within GIZ, projects are managed through the Support to Refugees and Host Communities (SRHC) Cluster, constituting the largest portion of GIZ's portfolio in Türkiye.

The Promotion of Economic Prospects for the Host Community and Refugees in Türkiye (PEP) Programme works within the refugee response strategy in Türkiye and is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The overall objective of PEP is to enhance the employment prospects of members of the Turkish host community and Syrian refugees.

To achieve the overall objective, the PEP Programme is comprised of three components:

1. Improving access to short- and medium-term skills development initiatives and employment measures,
2. Enhancing the prospects of Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSMEs), start-ups, and the self-employed,
3. Strengthening market-oriented business services to MSMEs and enterprises.

Embedding gender equality and social cohesion measures in all three components actively fosters inclusive learning and work environments and leads to more stable, peaceful, and resilient societies.

In the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes in February 2023 that affected 11 provinces in south-east Türkiye, tens of thousands of lives were lost, and millions were left homeless. This disaster also led to a substantial contraction in the labour market and impacted the livelihoods of large numbers of people. As a result, it was crucial to provide emergency assistance as a vital lifeline to help those in need, while also ensuring that entrepreneurs and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) can continue to operate. In coordination with the Turkish authorities, the PEP programme supports people affected by the earthquakes in Türkiye.

Programme name	PEP - Promotion of Economic Prospects for the Host Community and Refugees in Türkiye
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Programme region	Türkiye (Adana, Adıyaman, Aksaray, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Konya, Mardin, Mersin, Tekirdağ)
Lead executing agency	Vice President's Office
Duration	January 2019 to February 2024

Our Approach

The PEP Programme executes its activities by partnering with the public sector at national, provincial and local governmental levels, and the private sector, including chambers of commerce and industry, as well as national and international NGOs. Activities take place in both urban and rural areas, mainly in the provinces of Adana, Gaziantep, and İstanbul. This necessitates an interdependent yet coordinated approach in the aforementioned components.

Participants of the PEP programme are members of the Turkish host community and Syrian refugees of working age and youth. In particular, PEP further targets vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, marginalised groups, and single female-headed households and generally strives to empower women in line with the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle of the Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and BMZ's Feminist Development Policy. PEP further supports MSMEs, start-ups, business service providers, and public and private organisations to contribute to sustainable private sector development.



PEP takes a comprehensive approach to employment promotion, addressing both the supply and demand sides of the labour market. On the supply side, measures involve the provision of language and skills development courses, facilitating access to decent employment measures in the private sector and engaging in public benefit employment activities. On the demand side, employment creation is bolstered through business development services for MSMEs and start-ups, as well as supporting informal businesses during the registration process. Additionally, these measures are fostered by strengthening the business environment for MSMEs in urban and rural areas through developing the capacities of key business development service providers and facilitating Public Private Dialogues (PPD).

PEP diversified its portfolio through new and innovative areas such as the green economy and digital transformation for sustainable employment prospects. Green jobs are designated to contribute to restoring the environment in established sectors and preserving it in new, emerging environmentally friendly sectors. Digital transformation provides a competitive edge to MSMEs by streamlining their production, organization, and supply chain management, whilst enhancing market access and penetration.

Our Areas of Activity

1- Employment and Skills Development

One of the primary objectives of the PEP Programme is to enhance access to formal employment for participants. Labour market-oriented measures open doors for the target group to find decent and formal employment, maintaining alignment with the supply and demand sides of the Turkish labour market. The targeting and selection of participants takes into consideration existing knowledge, skills, and work experience. PEP, along with implementing partners, supports acquiring work permit fees and provides salary subsidies and social security contributions, ensuring decent working conditions for employees.

Additionally, participants receive conditional financial and non-financial support during Turkish and vocational training courses and are offered training on work ethics, legal counselling, life skills and occupational health and safety. In promoting gender equality, PEP provides daycare for children to make it easier for single parents, especially women, to participate in employment-oriented skills development activities, including Turkish language classes.

2- Formalisation of Unregistered Micro Businesses, Startups, and Social Enterprises

Engaging in sustainable private sector development, PEP supports the creation and safeguarding of jobs in Turkish and Syrian-led MSMEs, start-ups, and social enterprises.

Unregistered MSMEs are supported with a comprehensive business registration service package including notary, chamber registration, work permit, and municipality licensing assistance. Entrepreneurs receive additional business development services such as training in Turkish legislation, financial and business literacy, Turkish business language, coaching, business plan development, and access to finance. Social enterprises and cooperatives are supported in their capacity and innovation development while connecting them with resources to facilitate sustainable development.

These programmes and activities foster social cohesion by offering opportunities for enterprises to connect, share ideas, meet potential investors, and form joint businesses.



3- Strengthening the Business Environment, SMEs and Business Services Providers

PEP helps to elevate the resilience of Syrian and Turkish companies in Türkiye by mobilising local resources towards the goals of the programme.

In cooperation with chambers of industry and commerce, tailor-made business development services and coaching sessions focus on enhancing competitiveness in conjunction with the future key issues of digitalisation, green transformation, and sustainability, to safeguard and create employment in the long run.

PEP additionally facilitates a multi-sector and inclusive PPD in three provinces (Adana, Gaziantep, and İstanbul). PPD expedites the active involvement of relevant public, private, and civil society stakeholders in the designation of priorities, building roadmaps, and implementing solutions oriented toward employment growth and business development.

The Benefits

PEP interventions utilise a comprehensive and integrated approach to improve the economic prospects of households. As such, the programme aims at alleviating household financial constraints through a regular and/or secured income. Being an employee or employer provides the necessary financial means to be involved in socio-economic life and, more importantly, cultivates feelings of dignity, self-worth, and resilience. Workplaces serve as essential spaces where Syrian and Turkish people can interact, communicate, and cooperate to accomplish tasks in an inclusive setting. Thus, promoting decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities are the most compelling measures that nourish social cohesion and peaceful intercommunication between Turkish and Syrian individuals, communities, and businesses.



Success Factors

The PEP Programme has cooperated with 47 different implementing partners in Türkiye since January 2019. So far, 72 different projects have been implemented with a variety of partners including ministries, chambers, and various local and international NGOs. Below are a few of our most recent accomplishments:



More than 11,000 individuals and their families have directly benefitted from the PEP activities.



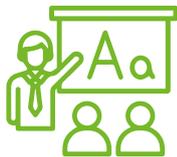
The overall participation rate for women is 48%.



Around 5,200 participants have benefitted from private and public sector benefit employment opportunities and received a salary according to national standards and social security insurance.



Around 5,000 participants have attended skills development courses.



Around 5,500 participants have improved their Turkish skills.



Across 8 provinces up to 5,900,000 meals are cooked and distributed in Municipal Soup Kitchens.



More than 1,000 companies finalized the registration process. Two hundred companies receive additional business development services and/or access to finance.



Training, coaching, business development, and seed funding were provided to 48 start-ups.



13 cooperatives are provided with tailor-made mentorship and capacity-building services. 300 women are business partners in cooperatives.



250 industrial and trading companies (with an average of 120 employees each) received mentorship and training on foreign trade, green- and digital transformation.



To facilitate trade relationships 165 import and export companies from the food sector were matched in a business-to-business event.



More than 2,200 work permits have been issued to Syrians.



More than 500 social cohesion activities attended by 24,000 participants were held to improve connectedness and solidarity among Syrians and Turkish citizens.

As part of the earthquake emergency response



Cash compensation for operations related to running contracts that are on hold is provided to 138 participants.



There will be 1,452,000 meals provided in different provinces.



200 container homes will provide shelter to residents of Hatay.



A former engineering student, Sibah left Syria and settled in Türkiye, got married, and had two children. Inside, she desired a livelihood that would benefit society.

She eagerly seized the opportunity to be trained specifically in healthcare through the PEP Programme, after she completed an A2 level certificate Turkish language course. Improving her language skills enabled her to engage with the community, boosted her self-esteem, and opened up a new world for her future.

After Sibah completed geriatric and patient care vocational training, PEP provided a job placement for six months. She is currently providing patient care in an intensive care unit of a public hospital under the supervision of nurses.

“Each morning I have a reason to wake up, and helping others motivates me a lot. It’s paying back to the community which once embraced us. With the salary, I support my family in Syria, buy new clothes for my beloved ones, and pay my rent”

The PEP Programme assists participants in obtaining work permits, organises language and vocational training courses, and pays their wages and social security contributions for the first 6 months of their employment.

Sibah adds, “I feel more secure now and would like to continue in this career. It benefits me but most of all, it benefits the people around me.”

An Example from the Field

“ I was so excited hearing about this project through a friend. I never had a chance to work before. I immediately applied. **”**

Sibah, 24, spends her days in intensive care. It has been a six-year journey from Syria to a hospital in İstanbul. Fleeing her home due to civil war, Sibah has been in search of a place where she can be of service to the community that opened its arms to her.

PEP Programme adheres to Sustainable Development Goals



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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