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The Turkish-German Exchange Project on the Integration of Syrian Refugees into Host Communities

*Support to Refugees and Host
Communities (SRHC) Cluster*





Shared challenges
Joint learning
Strong partnerships
E x c h a n g e



About the Exchange Project

Since the onset of the war in Syria in 2011, the Government of Türkiye has made tremendous efforts to welcome and support more than 3.6 million Syrian refugees who are currently registered under Temporary Protection. However, due to both the scale and duration of this crisis, Turkish institutions have been stretched beyond their capacity to provide services and build social cohesion.

To support the Turkish authorities and local partners in the Refugee Response, the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** commissioned the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to implement two pilot projects in 2015. A year later, the GIZ Country Office Türkiye established the **Support to Refugees and Host Communities (SRHC)** Cluster to coordinate the projects funded by the BMZ, the European Union (EU), and bilateral donors.

Since 2015 over 13 projects have been implemented within the framework of the SRHC Cluster, building on impact data, partner feedback, and best practices.

Within this context, the BMZ commissioned GIZ to implement the **Turkish-German Exchange Project on the Integration of Syrian Refugees into Host Communities** – subsequently referred to as the Exchange Project. The Exchange Project began in December 2017.

The Exchange Project Objective

We aim to strengthen the capacity of central and local government institutions to better integrate Syrian refugees and vulnerable groups from host communities into existing public services across a wide range of sectors.



The Exchange Project Approach

We organise exchange platforms and support institutional partnerships between key central and local government actors from Türkiye and Germany to facilitate peer learning and capacity development. We also promote dialogue amongst Turkish stakeholders – particularly amongst municipalities – through joint learning, technical partnerships, and capacity development.



The Exchange Project Partners



Our direct target groups are the central and local Turkish authorities. By strengthening the capacities of these institutional partners, refugees and host communities will benefit from improved public services.



We work with **GIZ Support to Refugees and Host Communities (SRHC) Cluster** projects and their partner institutions, including central and local government partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academic institutions. The SRHC Cluster projects are active in the targeted sectors of employment and skills development, education, protection, mental health and psychosocial support, social cohesion, and capacity development.





The German partners of the project include:

- ★ Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)
- ★ Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)
- ★ Federal Foreign Office (AA)
- ★ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
- ★ Federal Employment Agency (BA)
- ★ Federal ministries of various states and districts
- ★ German Association of Towns and Municipalities (DStGB)
- ★ German Centre for Migration and Integration Research (DeZIM-Institute)
- ★ Bertelsmann Stiftung (BS)
- ★ National Network for Civil Society (BBE)
- ★ Engagement Global (EG) and their Service Agency for Communities in One World (SKEW)
- ★ Centre for Turkey Studies and Integration Research (ZfTI)
- ★ Municipalities, including: City of Berlin, City of Cologne, City of Hannover, City of Hamburg, Berlin Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf

The Exchange Project's political partner in Türkiye is the Vice Presidency's Office (TCCB)



Further Turkish partners of the project include:

- ★ Ministry of Labour and Social Security (ÇSGB)
- ★ Ministry of Youth and Sports (GSB)
- ★ Ministry of National Education (MEB)
- ★ Presidency of Migration Management (GİB)
- ★ Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (TBB)
- ★ Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation (KOSGEB)
- ★ National Volunteering Committee (UGK)
- ★ Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay)
- ★ The municipalities of various Turkish provinces and districts, including: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, Şanlıurfa Eyyübiye Municipality, Izmir Buca Municipality, and Istanbul Şişli Municipality

Action Field 1: Turkish-German Exchange



The exchange of knowledge between German and Turkish state actors on the integration of refugees into the public service system through a range of formats. These include: study visits, conferences, training events, peer-to-peer learning networks and institutional partnerships.

Action Field 2: Intra-Turkish Exchange



The exchange of knowledge and the improvement of coordination mechanisms between Turkish state actors on the integration of refugees and vulnerable groups from the host community into the public service system.

Action Field 3: Competence Development



The provision of human capacity development measures and technical assistance on the **gender-sensitive** integration of refugees and vulnerable groups from the host community into the public service system.

40+ Exchange
Formats

Over 40 exchange formats have been implemented by the project, including study visits, conferences, panels, round tables, and capacity building measures on topics ranging from social cohesion, labour market integration, and volunteerism to education, protection and women's empowerment.

1.000+
Participants

Through these formats, over 1.000 participants have gained knowledge of policies and practices that they can apply to their daily work.

100+
Participants

Over 100 participants have taken part in tailor-made gender-sensitive capacity building measures. It is intended that the activities will create a ripple effect, directly improving the provision of public services for refugees and host communities.

Exchange in Action – Stories from Our Project

Municipalities connect at the First German-Turkish Urban Diplomacy Forum 2022

Action Field I



Over 150 representatives from German and Turkish municipalities, central government bodies, NGOs and academic institutions, who share an inspired vision for building German-Turkish relations, gathered for the first Urban Diplomacy Forum (UDF22) in Berlin in May 2022.

In collaboration with the SRHC projects and partners, we organised several panels and workshops to further the German-Turkish exchange on the key topics of social cohesion and the integration of refugees into municipal services. The research-policy dialogue session and the municipal panel discussion, for example, gave experts and policy makers the opportunity to discuss local approaches, share challenges and best practices, and network to find innovative solutions for service provision to improve the lives of refugees and host communities in both countries.

UDF22 Workshop Example: “Prevention of Violence against Women and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) as Topics for German-Turkish Partnerships

This workshop was organised in collaboration with the Engagement Global Service Agency for Communities in One World (SKEW) and the GIZ Türkiye MHPSS Project. Participants shared information on the work of their municipalities and exchanged insights into the different cultural perspectives. They also worked together to create a project framework which can be implemented as a Turkish-German partnership.



Despite the fact that displaced persons share many social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and religious similarities with host communities, we can see from the results of workshops and field studies conducted locally that they are still not accepted by the local population. My key takeaway from the UDF22 conference is that whatever the circumstances, it all depends on the ability of the host communities to accept and internalize the situation. Coming together with the municipalities in Germany showed me that a solution to the current problem can be developed by internalising it and approaching the situation in a disciplined and solution-oriented way.

*Mehmet Cengiz,
Head of Foreign Relations at Şanlıurfa
Eyyübiye District Municipality*





Cooperation on Participatory Integration Concepts in Buca and Eyyübiye

Municipalities are heavily involved in responding directly to the fundamental needs of refugees as well as promoting their long-term integration into society. To support municipal efforts, the Exchange Project is working with the district municipalities of Buca, Izmir and Eyyübiye, Şanlıurfa to develop participatory integration concepts for their local areas.

An integration concept is a local tailor-made strategy that municipalities can use as guidance to increase social cohesion and improve services for communities. All German towns and cities have their own integration concepts. In Türkiye, this is a new initiative being piloted in Buca and Eyyübiye.

The concepts are being developed in consultation with local stakeholders in both municipalities. This includes representatives of local authorities and services providers, NGOs, and, crucially, residents from the local refugee and host communities. Their perspectives are



gathered via a series of dialogues and used to identify practical action fields for addressing local needs. Once the concepts are finalized, sustainable and achievable recommendations will be presented to the two municipalities.

By piloting a German initiative in Türkiye, bringing Turkish municipal actors together for peer-exchange and increased coordination, and by working to boost the capacities of these actors, our work on the Integration Concepts links Action Field II to both of our other action fields, reflecting our holistic approach to municipal support.



The Development of Integration Concepts for Municipalities in Türkiye Project has noticeably helped to increase the capacity of our Refugee Support Office and discover its strengths and weaknesses. Through the project, we are proud to be the first local government in Izmir to organise a workshop on migration and social cohesion from 6 - 10 June 2022. During the workshop we had the opportunity to explain our work to many municipalities, NGOs and institutions, share our experiences, and take steps to strengthen local coordination on migration and social cohesion.

*Özkan Kalmaz,
Head of the Refugee Support Desk,
Izmir Buca District Municipality*

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Employment Promotion through Competence and Career Cards



The Competence and Career Cards were developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung (BS) to allow refugees and migrants to access the German labour market. They serve as a key tool for the identification of the competencies, qualifications and potential professions of refugees and migrants.

Back in 2018 the Exchange Project organized the first *Labour Market Integration Conference of Refugees and Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTTPs)*, marking the beginning of cooperation between Turkish and German institutions on this important topic. During the conference, representatives from the BS presented the Competence and Career Cards (CCC) to the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security (ÇSGB).

Adapting the CCC to the Turkish context

The ÇSGB showed great interest and excitement about the applicability of the cards in Türkiye. Since then, we have been supporting the process of adapting the cards for the Turkish context. This began in summer 2021 with a series of tailor-made interactive training sessions on the cards to staff of the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) Community Centres. Several training videos were filmed and shared to demonstrate the usage of the cards in real-life consultation sessions. The process ended successfully in October 2021 with a pilot implementation by the Turkish Red Crescent Community Centres, where the cards were used to determine the competencies of over 160 refugees. The ÇSGB has expressed interest in rolling the programme out to other Turkish organisations working to support refugees in accessing the labour market.



Identifying the qualifications and skills of foreigners in our country is of great importance to match them with the right jobs and employers in the labour market. In this context, we think that application of Competence and Career Cards can produce practical solutions and contribute to international labour policy.

*Gülcan Duran Dölek,
Labour Expert,
Ministry of Labour and Social Security*





Gender Mainstreaming Training in 2021

In 2021 we organised a 3-day series of gender mainstreaming training sessions for Presidency of Migration Management (GİB) personnel. The training addressed key concepts such as gender equality, gender mainstreaming, the rights-based approach, and discrimination. The participants learned about gender analyses and their application, gender-sensitive budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation. They also learned to apply the concepts practically by working together in small groups to design projects where gender perspectives were integrated at every stage.



I will be able to use the rights-based approach that was presented in the training directly in my work. This perspective is also very useful to convey the concept of gender to those who are not aware. The fact that there were participants working in different fields and that the training facilitators gave all participants the floor to share their experiences was very valuable in terms of seeing our common challenges and learning from each other's experiences.

*Anonymous feedback
from a participant in the training*

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