

Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

In line with the strategy developed within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for Turkey, expanding livelihood and job opportunities for Syrians and refugees of other nationalities in Turkey is a strategic objective of UNHCR in an effort to support self-reliance as a prerequisite to any durable solution.

Turkey's national asylum framework, as set out in the Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection in January 2016 and the Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders in April 2016, grants access to formal employment, thus providing an enabling environment to achieve the objective.

Government statistics indicate that, among the 3.5 million Syrian refugees under temporary protection and the 360,000 asylum-seekers and refugees, there are approximately 2 million refugees of working age rendering achievement of this objective particularly challenging. Several challenges exist in achieving broader formal economic participation for refugees including the large number of working-age refugees; current unemployment figures in Turkey, including youth employment; the informal economy in the country; and restrictions on employment relating to registration location.

While a large number are assumed to be engaged in the informal labour market, often under difficult working conditions, 19,000 refugees have been issued work permits, since the adoption of the Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection in January 2016 and the Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders in April 2016. These figures give an indication of the challenge ahead and the need to maintain and strengthen the efforts to facilitate formal economic participation of refugees. Even though there are various challenges that remain, it is also important to state that Turkey has a dynamic economy with labour gaps in various sectors such as manufacturing. In January 2018, the fees relating to issuance of work permits have been halved in an attempt to encourage employers to engage refugees.

2018 Strategy and Priorities

UNHCR's strategy for livelihood and self-reliance is of a catalytic nature and focuses on several main aspects: the institutional, legal and administrative environment, the capacity and skills of refugees and the economic absorptive capacity and potential of local labour markets.



Over
300

ISKUR staff members and counsellors have been supported to strengthen their capacity*



Over
1300

Refugees participated in entrepreneurship trainings*



Over
100

Syrian-owned business were supported through the licensing process*



Over
360

Refugees received entrepreneurship grant**

data as of end of April 2018

* since 2016

** since 2017

Support the implementation of the legal framework on access to employment:

- Despite the presence of a favourable legal environment in Turkey, several challenges exist for refugees to access formal employment, not least the substantial number of refugees of working age. Within the existing legal framework, barriers such as the formal quota for refugees which must not exceed 10 per cent of the total workforce per enterprise, and the requirement that refugees be employed in their province of registration, hinder broader access. UNHCR's support to the authorities in the implementation of the legal framework is essential to advocate a more flexible and inclusive approach in order to maximise access by refugees.
- This element of strong advocacy requires coordination with other actors in the sector, in particular FAO, ILO and UNDP with whom UNHCR is aiming to continue building upon its strong linkages.

Increase the capacity and skills of refugees:

- UNHCR aims to support and foster linkages between refugees and state livelihoods and employment services. In this regard, UNHCR and the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) engage in joint information dissemination to refugees and in supporting refugee access to services provided in ISKUR service centres.
- Support to the Vocational Qualification Authorities to facilitate the certification of skills.
- Joint programming with FAO on the first large-scale project aiming to expand livelihoods opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities in the agricultural sector by enhancing their agricultural skills. In 2017 and 2018, the project aims to reach some 1,400 people.
- Refugee entrepreneurship is one of the areas where refugees create added value for the host economies. Indeed, Turkey currently has approximately 7,000 refugee-owned businesses operating as formally registered companies. Entrepreneurs from the refugee community may participate in UNHCR-implemented entrepreneurship activities, including training, mentorship and financial support, which aim to foster and stimulate refugee entrepreneurship at two important entry-points:
 - Start-up support provided to refugees who wish to establish their own business.
 - Business development support targeting existing refugee businesses to develop further.

At both stages, participants are supported with small grants, productive asset support and incentives for various types of trainings provided by UNHCR.

Contribute to strengthening the economic absorption and demand aspects:

- Advancement of partnerships with development partners, including the International Financial Institutions, and the World Bank in particular, to find synergies with national development programmes for longer term solutions, such as through national systems and programmes that aim to provide opportunities for livelihoods and self-reliance. Joint analytical work to better understand the economic and absorption capacity in various labour market areas, taking into account social cohesion considerations, will be undertaken with a view to developing business models which would accelerate the number of refugees legally employed;
- Continuation of collaboration with the private sector, including international brands with supply chain in Turkey, with the objective of information sharing and awareness raising; support in work permit application procedures; expanded partnership for job training opportunities and job matching.



Activities and Progress

- With the aim of addressing practical and administrative challenges of access, UNHCR works closely with ISKUR with respect to staff capacity, to ensure uniform service delivery and support the provision to refugees of quality counselling on services related to job opportunities and issues surrounding legal challenges. Project staff are provided to ISKUR for the implementation of joint programmes. Jointly-established kiosks in ISKUR service centres continue to be essential contact points where refugees can approach as job-seekers for counselling and job-matching support
- The UNHCR-FAO joint agriculture sector project trained 900 refugees in 2017, in five cities in Turkey on citrus, olive and pistachio harvesting, vegetable production, livestock management and post-harvesting processing. The project aims to reach a further 500 individuals in 2018.
- UNHCR focuses on the provision of vocational training through various partners in line with market demand and labour market gaps. Currently UNHCR is implementing vocational training programmes in 10 provinces of Turkey in collaboration with municipalities, governorates, sub-governorates and other partners.

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External and Donor Relations

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European Union | Japan | United States | Canada | Norway | France | Germany | Private donors Australia | Finland | Sweden | Netherlands | United Kingdom | Private donors Spain | Denmark | Australia | Switzerland | Private donors Republic of Korea | Italy | Belgium

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LINKS

[Regional Portal - Syria Regional Refugee Response](#) | [Regional Portal - Mediterranean](#) | [UNHCR Turkey website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Services Advisor](#) | [UNHCR Help](#)