



A HOME AWAY FROM HOME SUPPORTING SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

Co-funded by the



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The political and social crisis which began in Syria in 2011 has degenerated into a brutal civil war. Various armed groups are fighting the Syrian government and each other, leading to one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. More than 400,000 people have died, and 11 million have been forced from their homes. A huge number of these have fled to neighbouring Turkey, where the EU is supporting their needs as refugees.

The EU in Turkey: multiple responses to multiple problems

The European Union has been the leading donor in responding to the multiple impacts of an unprecedented emergency. Its work with refugees in Turkey mainly focuses on three areas: the immediate needs and protection concerns of the most vulnerable groups, including children, women and the elderly; education and health; and strengthening the capacity of Turkish host communities to absorb displaced Syrians. The support is wide-ranging, and goes beyond the provision of basic services to those in refugee camps.

The work also has substantial financing, reflecting the size of the challenge in Turkey. Laura Liguori, the Crisis Response Officer dealing with Foreign Policy Instruments at the EU Delegation to Turkey, says that the EU response to the Syrian crisis in Turkey is closely co-ordinated with the Turkish authorities. They have been generously providing huge resources for over five years now -

about USD 25 billion - to assist the largest refugee population in the world. For its part, the EU has mobilised €3 billion in funding since the beginning of 2016. Almost €1.3 billion of projects have already kicked off, translating into significant extra support for refugees since the summer of 2016. As part of the overall effort, in 2014-2015 and through the EU crisis response instrument alone - the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) - four large projects worth €27.5 million were funded. An additional €20 million were mobilised under the IcSP in 2016 in Turkey to save migrants' lives in the Mediterranean sea.

Key outcomes



Syrians are supported to build new lives

Displaced Syrians have access to health, education and employment opportunities



Legal affairs normalised

Refugees are able to access advice and support to deal with issues under Turkish law



Decreased tensions between host communities and refugees

Cultural and economic projects help Syrians integrate and contribute to Turkish society



Helping Turkey to help Syrians

"Priorities have shifted in the last few years, to better respond to the protraction of the refugee crisis itself," Liguori says.

“Priorities have shifted to better respond to the refugee crisis itself”

"From the short-term humanitarian response five years ago, the type of assistance has been gradually accompanied by longer term interventions aimed at enhancing the protection and livelihood of refugees, as well as the resilience of refugee and host communities."

"With the protracted crisis, more support to Turkish local authorities and local service providers have therefore become key."

Two key projects to immediately address these issues are being funded by the IcSP. They are run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The two projects are among the first non-humanitarian work supported by the EU, targeting mid-term as well as immediate needs.

involves a school, psycho-social support clinic and vocational training facility. The school provides primary, secondary and high school classes in two shifts, teaching the Syrian curriculum. This ensures that when the conflict ends, the children will be able to reintegrate into the Syrian school system. Turkish drivers have been hired to transport the 2300 students to and from school, to ensure that the host communities feel the benefit.

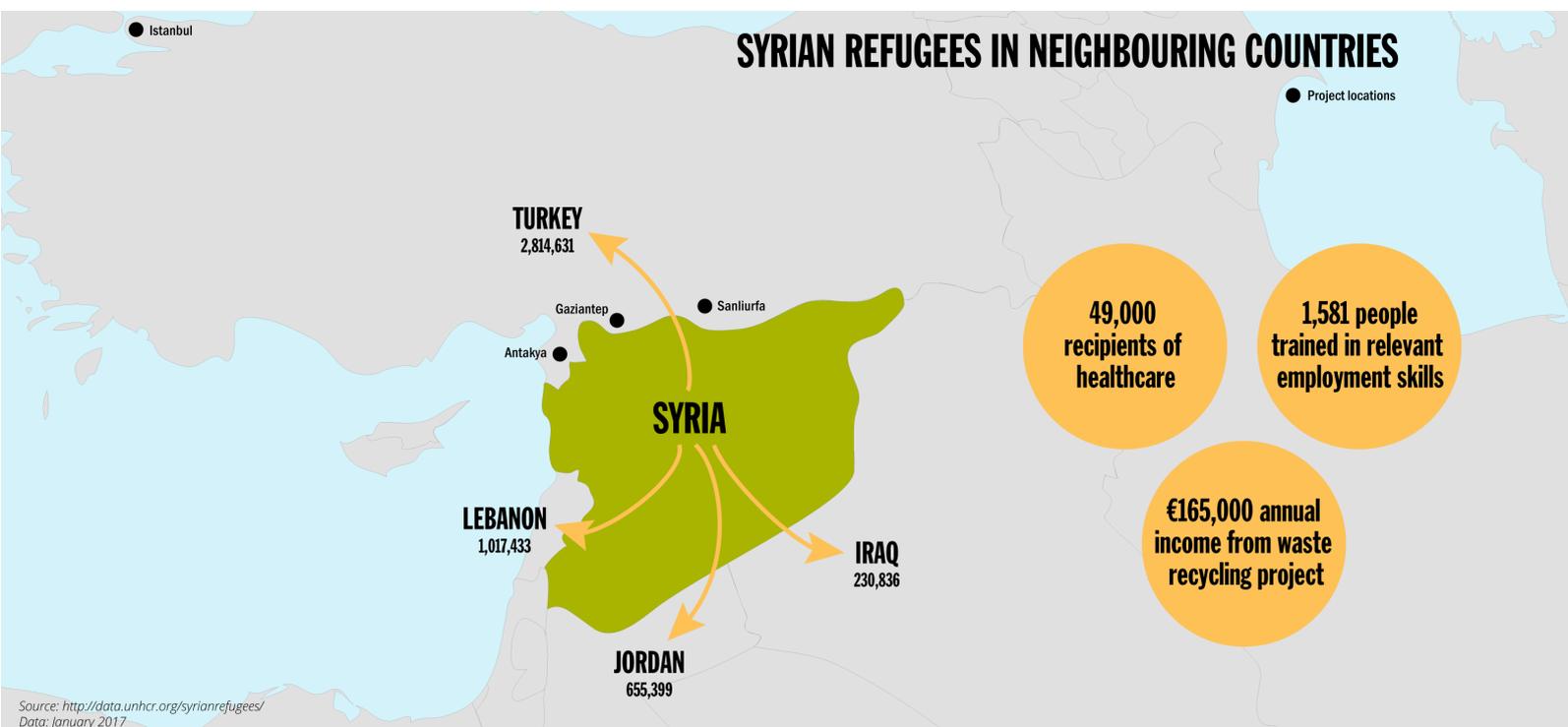
About Hosn explains that both centres are accessible to all Syrians. By December 2016, almost 125,000 Syrians had benefited from them, and over 49,000 had also received healthcare from a primary health clinic in Fatih district, in Istanbul. This ranged from free medical consultations to pharmacy services.

Temporary protection and the law

The community centres in Antakya and Sultanbeyli also provide legal assistance for Syrians. Their rights and duties are considered under the Temporary

“Community centres provide legal assistance for Syrians in Turkey”

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Antakya and Istanbul: culture, health, and community

In 2015, the EU, in partnership with the IOM, set up multi-service community centres, to assist Syrian refugees who live in urban centres in Turkey - that is, not in refugee camps. One centre is in Sultanbeyli with a medical clinic in Fatih, working-class suburbs of Istanbul, and the other is in Antakya, near the Syrian border.

In Istanbul, the centre runs a wide range of activities. These include cultural activities, such as joint musical events for Turkish and Syrian young people, and getting women from both communities to mix and work together through joint actions like cooking traditional food.

Mazen About Hosn, an emergency coordinator at the IOM, says that these projects convey the simple message that refugees have their own cultural heritage, and Turks can see them as cultural richness. The activities are proof that integration can be achieved despite the language barrier, he adds.

The Antakya centre is close to the Syrian border. It is bigger and

Protection Regulation, which was introduced into Turkish law in 2014, and has specific provisions for Syrian refugees in Turkey. This is an important difference from Lebanon and Jordan, where there is no such legal protection.

Refugees can access legal advice related to various issues. There are questions relating to marriage: many Syrian girls are married before they are 18, while this is illegal in Turkey. Turkish law also forbids polygamy. So Syrian women who are second wives are denied any rights in Turkey, as the union itself is illegal. A female lawyer helps with domestic violence issues, while others provide information on working rights. Some Syrians have also started seeking legal advice on the fate and status of their land and property back home.

Gaziantep and Sanliurfa: business and livelihoods

Meanwhile, in the south-east, the focus is on the practicalities of supporting the over half a million Syrians who live in Gaziantep and Sanliurfa provinces.

"In partnership with the UN Development Programme, the EU is working along with the Turkish authorities to alleviate

pressure on basic services in local communities,” says Liguori, from the Delegation in Ankara.

“In particular, this includes waste management, which is a key issue both for refugees in camps and host communities.”

The refugee community generates 160,000 tonnes of waste a year, and some of it has started being dumped in rural areas, she explains. But the waste project is particularly innovative.

Driven by a tailor-made training and awareness campaign directed at Syrian residents, it aims to improve refuse management by segregating rubbish at source, as well as supporting direct recycling carried out by refugees themselves. All the recyclable solid waste is sold to local commercial recycling companies, which generates €165,000 euros a year. The project also paved the way for the establishment of integrated waste management in the region.

This is practical evidence that the presence of refugees can be an opportunity to create jobs, for both locals and those displaced. This work has also been replicated in the neighbouring region of Kilis funded by other donors, and could also be replicated beyond Turkey, for instance in Jordan and Lebanon, in particular, which is struggling with a garbage crisis and a financial burden blamed on Syrian refugees.

The project also aims to improve access to employment and livelihoods. It provides training and employment services for out-of-camp refugees and host communities. This is important, as the area has the highest number of refugees – and so feels the biggest impact – outside of Istanbul. So although Gaziantep has also benefited somewhat from the Syrian crisis economically, the competition caused by the influx of Syrians into the labour market has also led to some social tension.

But to date, 1581 people have been provided with locally-relevant vocational training, including in electronic and hydraulic systems, mechanical installations, air conditioning, textiles, chemicals, woodworking, knitting, baking, child nutrition and child care, disabled and elderly care, and IT systems. And 3873 Syrians to date have been provided with Turkish language training and basic life skills, further supporting their integration.

Partnering with the local Chamber of Industry, a dedicated vocational education centre has been erected; the workshops installed include spaces for construction, metal work and welding, wood work, air conditioning works, textiles and 3D printing. Monthly work permit seminars are also being conducted, with content designed specifically to inform Syrian residents about the legal procedures necessary for employment, as well as their rights.

The Syrian crisis is a human tragedy. But as this work shows, those displaced by war survive - and can thrive - if they are given the chance to do so.

“ The focus is on the practicalities of supporting half a million refugees ”

“ The presence of refugees can be an opportunity for both locals and those displaced ”

Syrians in Turkey



“My name is Aya. My house was bombed so it was difficult to stay in Syria. My cousin who was 15 years old died. After that, my family decided to come to Turkey. It was hard to adapt, with a new place and no friends. The community centre helped me. It’s a school, so we have a lot of classes, learning about everything. Our teacher is very nice. I have a lot of friends here and there are a lot of activities. It’s fun and good to study here. I want to become a doctor because I love helping people, and my plan is to stay here in Turkey and study in Istanbul. When I become a doctor I want to go to other countries where there is a similar situation as in Syria, and help people there.”



“My name is Adel. I am a civil engineer. I had my own contracting company in Syria. I lost my business because of the conflict. After the war spread across the country, we had to leave. And we came to Turkey. The culture here is very similar to Syria. But the difference is the language. The challenge here is that we could not speak Turkish. If you want to ask for anything, you need the language. I am learning Turkish as a back-up. I am afraid because the future is unknown to us. The centre helped me. I managed to learn enough of the Turkish language to manage in my daily life. Now I can understand others and explain myself, even if it’s not perfect. I hope to go back to my country and work as a civil engineer again. I want to raise my young children and finish educating them.”

Source: <http://bit.ly/2hIF2vT>

Project information

Location	Turkey: Istanbul, Antakya, Gaziantep and Sanliurfa Provinces
Implementing partners	International Organization for Migration UN Development Programme
Project durations	13/07/2015 - 14/01/2017
Type of project	Assistance to migrants and host populations
EU funding	€12,000,000

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