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of the

Facility for Refugees in Turkey

2016-2019/2020

Final Report

**Volume II: Sector Report on
Socio-economic Support**

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Strategic Mid-term Evaluation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, 2016-2019/2020

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Acronyms

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
ALMP	Active Labour Market Programmes
ASAM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
CCTE	Conditional Cash Transfer for Education
CPI	Consumer price index
CVME	Comprehensive vulnerability monitoring exercise
DG	Directorate-General
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG ILF	Directorate-General for International Labour Force (Turkey)
DG LLL	Directorate-General for Lifelong Learning, Ministry of National Education (Turkey)
DG TVET	Directorate-General for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Turkey)
DKH	Diakonie
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EC	European Commission
EQ	Evaluation question
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syria crisis ('Madad Fund')
FGD	Focus group discussion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoTR	Government of Turkey
HC	Host community
HHs	Households
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HUMA	Humanitarian Aid Instrument
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing partner
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
İŞKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
JC	Judgement criterion
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
KIGEP	The Formal Employment Transition Programme
KII	Key informant interview
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation of Turkey
LMNA	Labour market needs assessment
MEB	Minimum expenditure basket
MoFLSS	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (Turkey)
MoFSP	Ministry of Family and Social Policy
MoNE	Ministry of National Education (Turkey)
MTR	Mid-term Review
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OJT	On-the-job training

PAB	Pre-assistance baseline survey
PDM	Post-distribution monitoring survey
PEC	Public education centre
QIN	Quarterly information note
SASF	Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation
SC	Steering Committee
SDA	Severe Disability Allowance
SES	Socio-economic support
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SSI	Social Security Institution
SUMAF	Technical assistance to support the monitoring of actions financed under the facility for refugees in Turkey
SuTPs	Syrians under Temporary Protection
TRY	Turkish lira
TOBB	The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TRCS	Turkish Red Crescent Society – Türk Kızılayı
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VEC	Vocational education centres
VQA	Vocational Qualifications Authority
VTHS	Vocational and technical high schools
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHH	Welthungerhilfe

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the ‘socio-economic support’ sector report

This report forms part of the Strategic Mid-term Evaluation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. It presents the evaluation team’s in-depth assessment of socio-economic support to refugees in relation to the main evaluation question posed in this focal area (EQ10), namely:

***Evaluation question 10:** To what extent has the Facility contributed in an inclusive and equitable way to basic needs, employment prospects, livelihood opportunities and social cohesion – and as a result contributed to an improved socio-economic situation of refugees?*

This report has been prepared on the basis of findings that were presented at the end of the evaluation’s desk phase, in a desk report, which was finalised in February 2020. These findings were further developed and preliminary hypotheses tested through remote data collection methods in lieu of the previously scheduled fieldwork in Turkey, which was cancelled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, as discussed further below. Further primary data collection has also taken place to enrich the quality of the evidence by capturing the beneficiary perspective with regard to socio-economic support. This report presents the final synthesis of the evidence collected by the evaluation team, in direct response to the evaluation question posed. It constitutes one of four sector-specific studies which are annexed in Volume II of the evaluation’s Final Report (Volume I)¹. The Final Report also provides a summarised version of these findings.

1.2. Methodology

The detailed design of the socio-economic support sector analysis is provided in the evaluation matrix for the overall evaluation, which can be found in Volume III (Annex 2) of the Main Report. The evaluation matrix details how the evaluation team has structured its assessment of the Facility’s effectiveness in improving the socio-economic situation of refugees in Turkey, specifying the judgement criteria, indicators, key data sources and modes of analysis.

As explained below, the evaluation’s assessment of effectiveness focuses on the Facility’s ‘contribution’ to socio-economic support and the socio-economic situation of refugees (and host communities)– as defined in its intervention logic. This presents some challenges. First, at this mid-term stage, there is a lack of clear outcome-level data on whether refugee employment and livelihood prospects have improved or not, and the evaluation can only present what can be ‘observed’ or expected in relation to those outcomes, based on a variety of sources. Further to this, such ‘observed’ outcomes in the areas of basic needs, livelihoods and social cohesion are influenced by many other factors outside of the European Union’s (EU’s) support; for example, participation in the informal labour market, macro-economic conditions and associated political rhetoric/public opinion on refugee hosting. The Facility has been designed to complement and strengthen the state’s and the host community’s support for refugees, not to deliver long-term outcomes through only its own resources. This is why the evaluation focuses on the ‘contribution’ of the Facility rather than suggesting ‘causality’ or seeking to ‘attribute’ results to EU support alone.

Conducting this type of analysis in practice is challenging in such a complex environment, and the evaluation has been designed to generate as much evidence as possible on the basis of both Facility-specific data on its interventions to deliver socio-economic support and results *and* national data on the socio-economic situation of refugees, the characteristics of the Turkish economy/labour market and social cohesion indicators. In addition to examining the whole portfolio of Facility interventions and results in relation to socio-economic support, a sample of interventions were identified and examined further, to understand all aspects of their progress and explore key issues in-depth. This and other data, from a wide range of external secondary and primary sources, has been used to gradually build the

¹ The official use of the term ‘Sector’ has evolved throughout the lifespan of the Facility and continues to vary somewhat between stakeholders; for example, the Facility’s Updated Strategic Concept Note adopts the term ‘Priority Area’ instead of ‘Sector’ for Health, Education, Socioeconomic Support and Protection. In line with this evaluation’s original Terms of Reference and also for consistency across all evaluation products, the team chose to apply the term ‘Sector’ throughout all final reports. This choice of wording does not imply a judgement on or a preference for one term over the other.

evidence over the course of the evaluation, as part of an iterative process of ‘contribution analysis’ as described below.

1.2.1. Contribution analysis

As explained, isolating the contribution of the Facility in meeting its multifaceted objectives in terms of socio-economic support, is methodologically challenging, given the broader context of macro-economic conditions, refugee participation in informal labour and the evolving political rhetoric on refugees in Turkey and other external factors.

Therefore, as specified in the evaluation Terms of Reference, the evaluation team has used a theory-based approach, analysing the data and evidence according to a ‘contribution analysis’, which has been adapted from the original method developed by John Mayne and tailored specifically to the context of the Facility.

In such a complex context, this approach has allowed the evaluators to present a balanced assessment of the EU’s contribution, based on all the evidence available, also highlighting key aspects for future learning.

Box 1: Adaptation of contribution analysis methodology for the evaluation

The evaluation team has developed a ‘contribution story’ on the basis of the following logic with regard to socio-economic support:

- 1) *What outcomes did the Facility support seek to achieve in relation to the sector of socio-economic support, and what kind of support did it provide to realise these outcomes – otherwise referred to as the ‘intervention logic’?*
- 2) *What evidence is there that the expected outcomes have been realised?*
- 3) *What have the achievements of the Facility been in relation to these outcomes and, to what extent have other contextual factors played an influential role?*

With an absence of concrete data on the outcomes of Facility interventions in the socio-economic support sector, the evaluation has used quantitative and qualitative data to determine whether, at the mid-term of the Facility, there is evidence that the expected outcomes defined in the intervention logic can be observed in practice. The evaluators then analysed in-depth the results achieved by the Facility using both quantitative, output-level data (from Facility results monitoring) and qualitative aspects, which were mainly explored through stakeholder interviews and beneficiary surveys. By examining the national context in terms of key policies, legislation, socio-economic and cultural factors, the evaluators were able to make a judgement on what the role and the contribution of the Facility has been, relative to those other factors.

1.2.2. Data collection methodology

During the desk phase, mainly secondary sources were used to develop the preliminary findings of the evaluation, although stakeholder interviews were held with the European Commission (EC) to inform the evaluation team’s general understanding of the Facility in terms of its establishment, structure and key actors involved. A full list of documents and other secondary source data are provided in Volume III (Annex 3) of the Final Report.

Following the desk phase, the evaluation originally planned to explore the issue of socio-economic support during a field trip, with stakeholder interviews and visits to Facility-supported projects, scheduled for June and July 2020. Perspectives and opinions from beneficiaries themselves would then be collected by means of focus group discussions (FGDs). Unfortunately, however, the field phase of the evaluation was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and it was not possible for the evaluation team to travel to Turkey to conduct the socio-economic support fieldwork in-person. In order to compensate for this, an alternative data collection methodology was developed to collect primary data on socio-economic support, as detailed below.

Following preparation of interview guides, based on the evaluation matrix and gaps remaining after the desk phase, an agreed programme of remote-based data collection took place. Interviews were carried out through videoconferencing and phone between June and August 2020, in English or in Turkish, using translators. All of the main implementing partners for the socio-economic sector were interviewed, as well as all of the main EC staff responsible for designing, managing and monitoring the Facility in Brussels and Ankara. In addition, a range of contextual interviews were carried out with academics and researchers who are involved in research on the socio-economic sector in Turkey. A more limited

number of interviews were carried out with staff directly involved in managing the delivery of services in Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASFs) and Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) centres. A summary of all stakeholders interviewed is contained in Volume III (Annex 4) of the evaluation's main report.

i. Quantitative data from refugee households

The quantitative data analysis examined a number of data sets collected by World Food Programme (WFP) and TRCS from 2017 to 2020. These comprise a pre-assistance baseline survey (PAB), post-distribution monitoring surveys (PDMs) and comprehensive vulnerability monitoring exercises (CVME). PAB and PDM surveys are representative of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) applicant population and allow us to look at the trends for applicant population over time using cross-sectional data. PAB is a baseline survey of the applicant population pre-assistance and includes beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the ESSN, though it does not include any of the ESSN non-applicant population². The CVME surveys are collected by phone interviews and are hence shorter and more concise. CVME3, CVME4 and CVME5 are the surveys representative of the whole refugee³ population in Turkey; hence they give us valuable insights about the overall refugee population. These surveys are collected face-to-face and provide more detailed information about the refugee population compared to the PAB and PDMs. Details of surveys analysed for this evaluation are contained in Annex 2 (Volume III) of the evaluation's main report.

ii. Qualitative data from refugee households (FGD alternatives)

To reach out to beneficiaries during the remote-based field phase, other sources of data were used in the absence of collecting primary data through FGDs. These are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Data collection methods to obtain beneficiary perspective

ESSN FGD data 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 FGDs carried out with ESSN beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and non-applicants in October and November 2017⁴. • The data provides insights on the daily problems that participants face, their coping mechanisms, ESSN application process challenges, application process problem-solving strategies, their perception of coverage and social integration/cohesion.
Webscraped social media data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'TRC-SUY' Facebook page – comments posted on the page between February 2017 and April 2020 were selected based on random sampling. There were 2,171 comments collected and analysed in total. The collected data was then analysed to understand basic needs, application barriers, perception of fairness, suggestions to strengthen programme targeting and problem-solving strategies raised by comment owners. • UNHCR Information Board Facebook page – the team randomly selected comments written between December 2018 and May 2020 on the UNHCR page. 399 comments were collected and analysed in total. The data collected from the UNHCR page has provided the team with an important source to understand protection risks as defined by comment owners as well as their concerns about resettlement and their problem-solving strategies.
Online survey and follow-up phone survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey includes a demographic questions section in the introduction and then four main sections (education, health, socio-economic support and protection). It received 365 responses, 75 of which were directed to answer the socio-economic support questions section.

² A non-applicant is an individual/household that has not applied for the ESSN. This does not necessarily mean that the household does not meet the eligibility criteria – some non-applicant households do but have not applied.

³ There are important differences in Turkish law and in service access between asylum seekers, different classes of international protection beneficiaries (refugees, conditional refugees, supplementary protection beneficiaries), and beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. Although the Government of Turkey does not recognise all of the above categories as refugees, the term 'refugee' is used in this report very broadly to refer to all the above categories, except when specific distinctions are made.

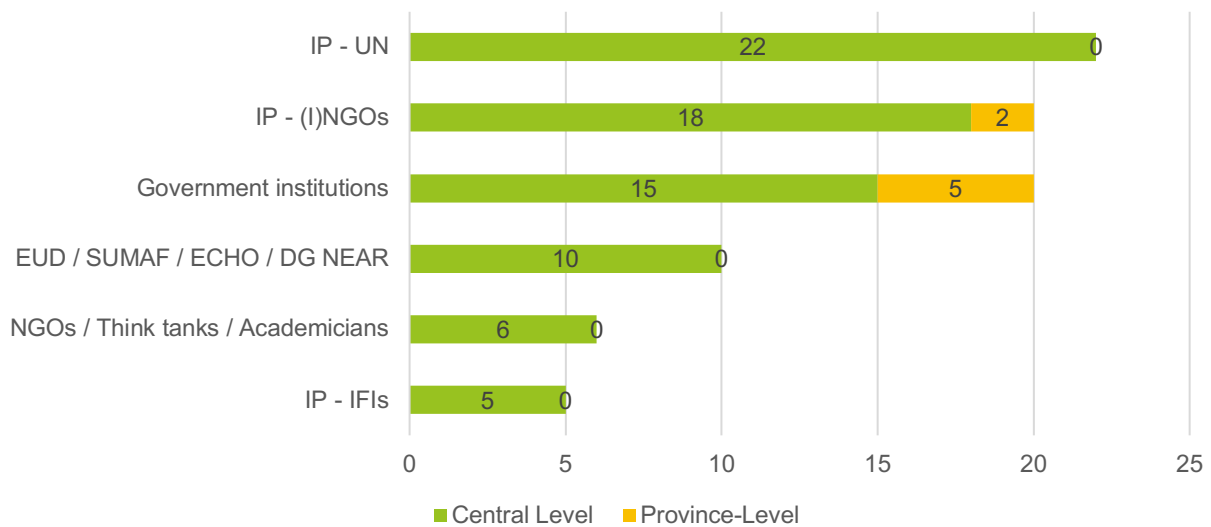
⁴ Carried out for a previous evaluation of the ESSN commissioned by WFP and conducted by Development Analytics and Oxford Policy Management. Recoded and reanalysed by this evaluation against the evaluation matrix to serve as something close to qualitative 'baseline'.

- Those that shared their phone numbers and gave their consent to be contacted were contacted in August 2020 with a follow-up phone call/discussion. This **phone survey** reached a sample of 38 people, 9 of whom responded to questions on socio-economic support.

iii. Key stakeholder interviews

The fieldwork design of socio-economic sector interviews was based on providing a variety of interviews with different stakeholders including implementing partners (IPs), general directorates and department heads under the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, TRCS community centres, think tanks, and academics between 5 June and 30 July 2020 via online platform WebEx. A total of 33 central-level and seven province-level key informant interviews (KIIs) were carried out remotely in this time period. Figure 1 provides a summary breakdown of these interviews.

Figure 1: Distribution of stakeholder interviewees in the socio-economic support sector



1.2.3. Scope of ‘socio-economic support’

The analysis of socio-economic support in this report covers all the interventions that were intended to contribute to the achievement of the long-term outcome that ‘socio-economic conditions for refugees and host communities in Turkey are improved’, covering each of the four outputs in the Facility Results Framework, namely: (i) refugees are provided with monthly resource transfers; (ii) refugees and host community participation in employment-related services increased; (iii) entrepreneurship capacity promoted among Syrian refugees⁵ and host communities through small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) support; and (iv) social interaction promoted between refugees and host community members. The report covers, in the main, interventions that were implemented as part of the first tranche of the Facility, as well as the continuation particularly of basic needs support as part of the second tranche.

1.2.4. Limitations and data gaps

The main limitations faced were due to carrying out data collection remotely, which primarily meant that it was not possible to interview a full range of staff involved in managing and directly delivering services in the field. This limitation was mitigated in part through carrying out a focused set of remote interviews and, in the main, through interviews and data collection with researchers who have been carrying out research in Turkey in relevant areas throughout the period of the evaluation. There is a significant amount of high-quality data emanating from the support for basic needs, which this evaluation has used to the full. It has been supplemented through the reanalysis of previous FGDs data, an online survey

⁵ Turkey’s Temporary Protection Regulation establishes that ‘Syrian nationals, stateless people and refugees who have arrived in Turkey, whether individually or as part of a mass movement of people, due to events unfolding in Syria, are eligible for temporary protection in Turkey’ (Article 1). As such, the term Syrians under Temporary Protection, and the acronym SuTPs, is commonly used by the Government of Turkey, certain EC services, and Facility implementing partners to refer to any Syrian person who has arrived in Turkey after a cut-off date in 2011. This report prefers to simply use the term ‘Syrians’ or ‘Syrian refugees’ and does not use the SuTP acronym except when directly quoting external sources.

and innovative approaches to examining online discussion forums. The main data gaps have been in the areas of socio-economic support and social cohesion, where it was found that there were significant disparities between the data at the output and outcome levels.

1.3. Structure of the report

This report has been structured according to the EQs and judgement criteria (JCs) of the evaluation matrix. Section 2 describes the theory of change (also referred to as the intervention logic) for the Facility's socio-economic support; Section 3 presents the evaluation's main findings in response to the EQ on socio-economic support; Section 4 analyses the Facility's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and Section 5 presents the evaluators' conclusions.

2. Rationale

Evaluation question 10: *To what extent has the Facility contributed in an inclusive and equitable way to basic needs, employment prospects, livelihood opportunities and social cohesion – and as a result contributed to an improved socio-economic situation of refugees?*

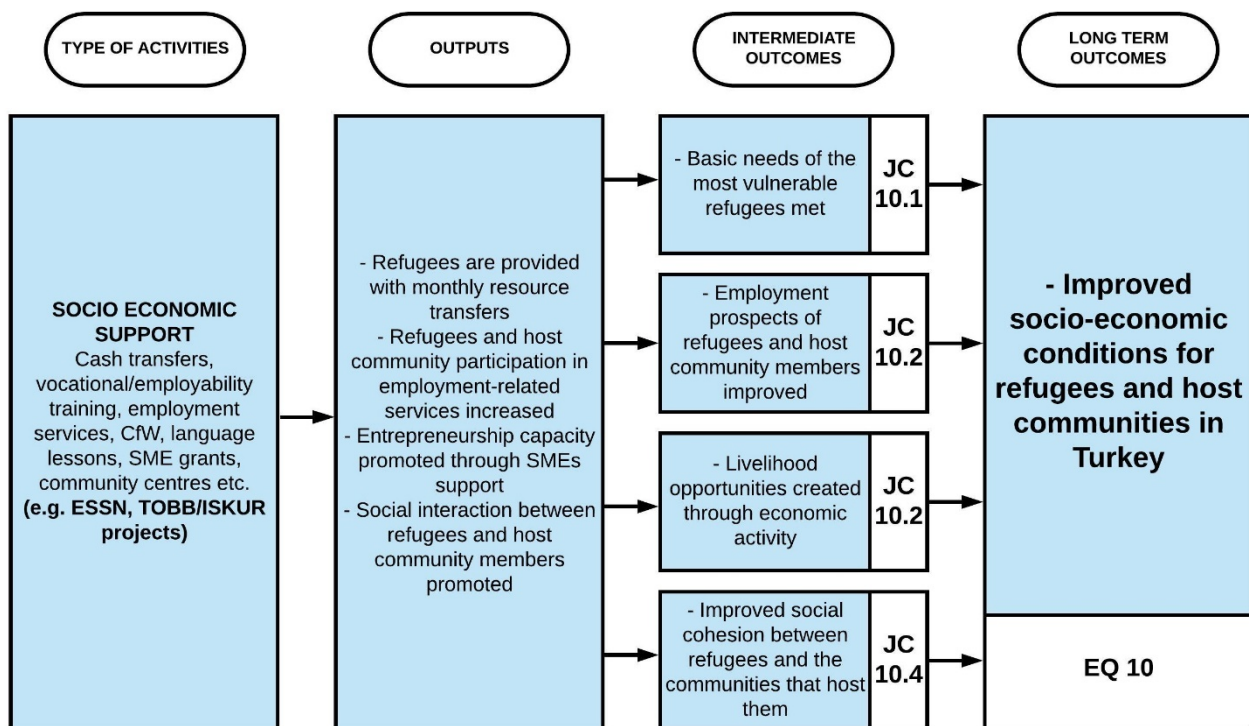
This report evaluates the overall effectiveness of the Facility’s socio-economic support. It explores EQ10 through an in-depth examination of the extent to which Facility interventions have contributed to the intermediate outcomes as set out in the Facility theory of change.

These are:

- basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees are met (JC10.1)
- employment prospects of refugees and the host community members are improved (JC10.2)
- livelihood opportunities are created through economic activity (JC10.2)
- improved social cohesion between refugees and the communities that host them (JC10.3).

As shown in the diagram below, these intermediate outcomes are considered to be pre-requisites to the achievement of the long-term outcome that ‘socio-economic conditions for refugees and host communities in Turkey are improved’. As a mid-term evaluation, it is appropriate to examine progress towards achieving the intermediate outcomes, and reflect on learning to improve the possibility of achieving the Facility’s long-term socio-economic support goals.

Figure 2 Intervention logic for socio-economic support provided through the Facility



For this evaluation, these intermediate outcomes have been developed into a series of judgement criteria (JCs) around which evidence has been gathered in order to (i) identify the extent to which the intermediate outcomes have been achieved; and (ii) assess the extent to which the Facility has contributed to the achievement of these outcomes.

For example, JC10.1, is broken down to look at the extent to which socio-economic support has been provided and has met the needs of different vulnerable groups, including registered Syrian refugees, non-registered Syrian refugees and non-Syrian refugees, gender and age groups, and people with disabilities. In the evaluation, these aspects have been translated into a series of indicators which have guided the collection of data, and which provide the backbone of the evidence base.

JC10.2 looks at support to refugees and host communities to improve their employment prospects to enable them to engage in livelihood opportunities.

JC10.3 looks at facilities and community-level activities that aim to improve social cohesion between refugees and host communities.

The JCs for the evaluation's overall response to EQ10, therefore, are as follows:

- **Judgement criterion 10.1** The Facility has ensured the coverage of basic needs, including the most vulnerable refugees.
- **Judgement criterion 10.2:** The Facility has contributed to improved employment prospects of Syrian refugees and has enabled engagement in livelihood opportunities.
- **Judgement criterion 10.3:** The Facility's community-level activities have contributed to an improved social cohesion between refugees and the communities that host them.

In this report, we present the data and evidence (findings) for our assessment against each of these judgement criteria by applying the following logic: (i) the extent to which the 'expected' intermediate outcomes have been achieved, and can be observed; (ii) a description of the Facility interventions that were designed to achieve the expected outcomes in the intervention logic; (iii) a contextualised analysis of the achievements of the Facility vis-à-vis other internal and external factors; and (iv) a qualitative judgement, based on the evidence available, of the extent to which the Facility has contributed to the observed outcomes. Throughout the analysis, the report identifies where unintended consequences, both positive and negative, have occurred.

Based on this systematic assessment, this report then presents its main conclusions, which constitute a synthesised interpretation of the evidence, in response to the main evaluation question. This is followed by a set of recommendations to inform the future direction of the Facility in the socio-economic support sector, and to ensure that measurable progress is made towards the longer-term outcomes.

3. Key findings

3.1. Judgement criterion 10.1: The Facility has ensured the coverage of basic needs including the most vulnerable refugees

3.1.1. 'Coverage of basic needs including the most vulnerable refugees' as an outcome

In the reconstructed intervention logic, the intermediate outcome is stated broadly as the basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees have been met. Over the period 2016 to 2020 it was stated that this general outcome has evolved and, at the same time, the set targets have increased considerably, as can be seen from the relevant policy documents.

In terms of understanding the outcomes that can be observed and where there is data that can be assessed, two areas are considered:

- The coverage, in terms of numbers supported, and particularly the coverage of vulnerable groups.
- The extent to which the basic needs of refugees have been met and whether living conditions of the most vulnerable have been maintained and negative coping mechanisms avoided.

i. Coverage

Coverage can be thought of in several different ways: the absolute number of refugees reached; the percentage of the refugee population; and the degree to which the most vulnerable were prioritised.

The original target for basic needs support under the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in 2016 was one million refugees, from just under three million registered Syrian refugees. The Turkey Management Framework 2016–2018⁶ included a statement of the overall objective: 'As part of the Government of Turkey provision of services to refugees ... [the Commission] will ensure an initial one million vulnerable refugees in Turkey are protected from harm, until lasting solutions are modelled and integrated into government systems – resulting in sustainable and equitable access to services.' The HIP for 2016⁷ states that: 'the overall objective ... is to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable refugees (and other persons of concern) in Turkey through predictable and dignified support addressing basic needs and protection.'

Two years later, at the end of 2018, the target for basic needs support was 1.5m, the overall number of registered Syrians having increased to 3,548,000. In terms of understanding and targeting vulnerability, the HIP for 2019⁸ stated that: 'The refugee population is quite homogenous regarding economic vulnerability. Analysis from the ESSN shows 71% are economically vulnerable, with 86% working in the informal sector and so at risk of exploitation.' There was also a shift in 2019 HIP in the overall objectives to:

- continue to address the basic needs of refugees and persons under subsidiary protection through the ESSN. The ESSN uses a single cash platform to deliver monthly, unrestricted, multi-purpose cash transfers to support basic needs;
- improve the targeting approach to mitigate exclusion errors for the most vulnerable refugees who still do not have access to the ESSN and reduce inclusion errors for less vulnerable refugees.

By 2019, the target for basic needs support had become 1,772,000, from 3,577,000 registered Syrians and perhaps a further 400,000 non-Syrian refugees (refugees under international protection)⁹. In terms of objectives, the HIP for 2020¹⁰ states that: 'Most refugees and persons eligible for subsidiary protection cannot cover their basic needs. While the fall in the Turkish lira and rising inflation further increase refugees' vulnerability, the protracted nature of the displacement has eroded capacity to recover from shocks and meet subsistence, health and education needs. Continued regular and predictable support is needed to limit the risk of resorting to negative coping mechanisms.'

⁶ ECHO Turkey Management Framework 2016–2018, Version 3.0, 23/3/2017.

⁷ ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan, 2016, Version 1 – 02/06/2016.

⁸ ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan, 2019, Version 01 – 11/10/2018.

⁹ For a more detailed treatment of these figures and registration – refugee numbers generally please see the protection sector report of this evaluation.

¹⁰ ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan, 2020, Version 01 – 29/01/2020.

By the end of 2019, the Facility monitoring report recorded that the basic needs of 2.464m refugees were met through support mechanisms: 1.75m receiving support from the ESSN; and 0.713m through other mechanisms. Separately, and with significant overlap with the ESSN, 600,000 refugees are also supported through Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE). The percentage of the refugee population covered by various basic needs support increased from 43% in 2018 to 60% by 2020.

The degree to which the ‘most vulnerable’ were covered is a more complex issue. The ESSN had considerable exclusion (and inclusion) errors related to its targeting criteria (see Section 3.1.3 below for a more detailed treatment of this issue). There were various attempts over the lifetime of the Facility to correct these exclusion errors, although ultimately with limited success. A further complicating factor was – as recognised above by the Commission – the economic homogeneity of the population, which increased over time. Initially there was a mildly pro-poor (progressive) bias in the targeting, but by 2020 this had all but disappeared. There were robust attempts to target people living with disabilities from the outset.

ii. Meeting basic needs

The ESSN has had a positive impact on beneficiary households in terms of improving their food security and their reliance on consumption coping mechanisms within the first year of the transfer. According to the mid-term evaluation of the ESSN, beneficiaries were better off after the transfer, more food secure, had lower debt levels and were less likely to resort to negative coping strategies. In comparison, the welfare of non-beneficiaries had declined according to most measures of welfare analysed in the report.

One good measure of this is that the share of beneficiary households with an acceptable food consumption score improved after the ESSN transfer and they became better off compared to non-beneficiaries for a while through 2017 and early 2018. When the pre-assistance baseline was measured, beneficiaries were quite similar to non-beneficiaries in terms of their food consumption diversity (See Figure 4). Over time, beneficiaries became better off compared to non-beneficiaries (as results from PDM3 and PDM5 indicate). The differences were statistically significant for the post-distribution monitoring round three (PDM3) and PDM5. By the time of PDM7, however, the proportion of people with an acceptable food consumption score was lower than at baseline, indicating deteriorating economic conditions, for both groups. This is explored further in Section 3.1.3 and relates largely to deteriorating overall economic conditions.

Figure 3: Refugee consumption coping index

While beneficiaries were slightly worse off at the time of baseline measurement (May 2017) in terms of their consumption coping behaviour, after 2 years the situation is reversed...¹¹

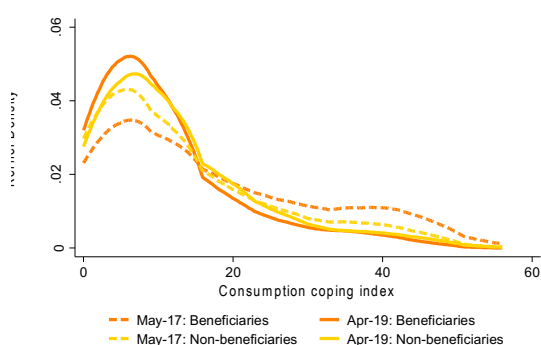
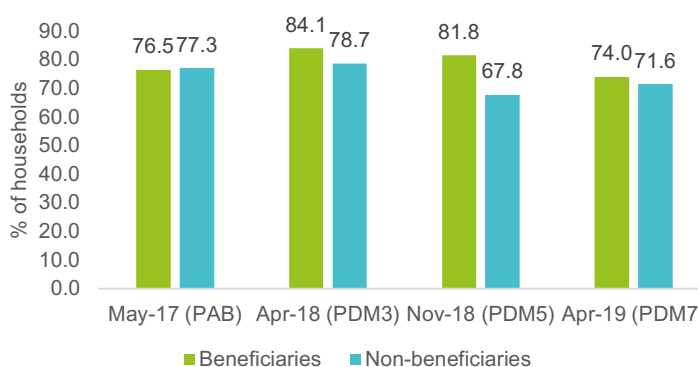


Figure 4 Percentage of refugees with an acceptable food consumption score (ESSN beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries)

...the share of beneficiary households with an acceptable food consumption score is higher than non-beneficiaries in 2018¹²



Source: PAB and PDM surveys 3,5,7

The mid-term evaluation found that the transfer was mostly spent on rent, food and improved access to education. Beneficiaries in FGDs reported that the transfer was principally used for house rent, buying

¹¹ Figure 3 shows the consumption coping index whereby movements to the right along the x axis indicate a higher level of consumption coping (hence the household becoming worse off). The consumption coping index was higher for beneficiaries at the time of baseline data collection in 2017 (PAB) compared to non-beneficiaries while the situation was reversed by December 2018 (PDM 7) such that beneficiaries were better off compared to non-beneficiaries after they started receiving the ESSN. Non-beneficiaries were especially more likely to ‘reduce the number of meals’ and ‘reduce the portion size of meals’ compared to beneficiaries.

¹² Source: Panels a and b are drawn using PAB. Panel c is drawn using panel data from PAB and PDM6. Panel d is drawn using panel data from PDM1 and PDM6. Panels g and h are drawn using PAB and cross-sectional PDMS PDM3, 5, 7.

and consuming better quality and variety of food, sending their children back to school, and paying back their debts (or not borrowing any more). Even though refugees did not find ESSN funds fully sufficient, the cash transfer has reduced their need to resort to negative coping strategies. Beyond ESSN's positive impact on accommodating food and shelter needs partially, it has a positive impact in terms of reducing their stress and improving their mental well-being:

Without the Red Crescent card support, it is impossible to survive. We have had the cards for 6 months now and we have started to calm down a little bit for the first time since we came to Turkey. It is not a sufficient amount of money but thank God! All of my children are attending school now.

Beneficiary Syrian woman, Hatay

Before having the card, I struggled a lot. I was barely paying the bills and the rent. I have five children; they were asking for allowances and they have several needs. When I got the card, I felt relief, and now I feel more comfortable about getting my children the things they need.

Beneficiary non-Syrian woman, Afyon

As a result of the ESSN, households were able to rely less on debt, so that a clear link between reduced debt levels and ESSN beneficiary status can be seen. The mid-term evaluation states:

The PDM 1 confirms that, post-transfer, ESSN beneficiaries are better off in terms of food security as measured by their food consumption score, while the food security of non-beneficiaries has declined. Debt has reduced after transfer for beneficiaries, with average debt per adult equivalent falling by TRY 57 among beneficiaries and rising by TRY 81 among non-beneficiaries. ESSN beneficiary households are post-transfer less likely to use stress, crisis and (especially) emergency negative livelihood coping strategies compared to the pre-transfer period. The opposite is true for non-beneficiary households.

In later rounds of the CVME, this pattern is even more visible. The CVME5 data (collected in 2019/2020) shows that, controlling for other household-related variables, being an ESSN beneficiary is negatively correlated with total household debt (and household debt as a percentage of household expenditure). The same significant relationship cannot be observed between beneficiary status and food consumption score or consumption or livelihood coping indices. Hence it is possible to say that the main medium-term impact of the ESSN has been the support it has provided to households in managing household debt.

However, satisfaction with the ESSN transfer value declined after the economic crisis, as the decline of the Turkish lira effectively eroded the value of the benefit. While the number of beneficiaries who are 'very satisfied' with the quantity of the transfer amount decreased after the crisis, most ESSN beneficiaries still report being satisfied with the quantity of the ESSN transfer. At the time of PDM3, 65.9% of the beneficiaries reported being 'very satisfied' with the quantity of the transfer while this rate dropped to 44.5% at the time of PDM5 and rose back to 53.7% at the time of PDM7. Yet the majority (95.1%) of beneficiaries report being satisfied (i.e. 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied') with the quantity of the transfer at the time of PDM7.

Looking at the current situation, in the survey data collected for this evaluation, of the ESSN beneficiaries who responded, the vast majority stated that the amount is not sufficient to cover basic needs. This is a view backed up by those who work most closely with refugees seeking support from ESSN¹³, that the amount of support is sufficient only to cover housing needs and that most beneficiaries also rely on work in the informal sector and other forms of support. In the online survey distributed through social media channels, the ESSN beneficiaries were asked about ESSN support and whether it was sufficient to cover their basic needs (including rent water, electricity, food and other expenditures); only 11% of beneficiaries in the sample said that the ESSN support was sufficient to cover these needs. This finding is consistent with the reporting that for most households, the ESSN complements household labour and other income sources for covering basic needs. One should note that the ESSN was never designed to fully cover basic needs but to top them up.

¹³ KIIs: SES 29, SES 30, SES 34, SES 35.

Table 2: Summary of intermediate outcome: basic needs of the most vulnerable met

Expected outcome	The basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees have been met
<p>Observed outcome</p>	<p>Target rose from 1m in 2016, 1.5m in 2018, to 1.772m in 2019.</p> <p>Objectives shifted from improving living conditions of the most vulnerable refugees in 2016, to addressing the basic needs of refugees and persons under subsidiary protection and improving the targeting approach to mitigate exclusion errors for the most vulnerable refugees who still do not have access to the ESSN, and reduce inclusion errors for less vulnerable refugees in 2018.</p> <p>However, in terms of most outcome variables other than debt levels (food security, consumption and livelihoods coping), after 3 years of the programme, there are no statistically significantly different results between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.</p> <p>Overall, it can be concluded that the socio-economic situation of refugees in Turkey has not improved between 2016 and 2020. However, it can be stated that a significant decline in the socio-economic situation of refugees has been prevented through the support provided through the Facility and that wide coverage and consistency of support have been major contributions.</p> <p>Exclusion errors remained high in the ESSN programme, and targeting ‘the most vulnerable’ was overly emphasised¹⁴. A more inclusive and uniformly targeted cash transfer may have been more suitable to the widespread needs of the refugee population.</p>
<p>Facility results contributing to the outcome</p>	<p>A total of 1.75m refugees were receiving support from the ESSN (at 31 December 2019) and another 713,765 received other forms of support provided by other actions before the ESSN’s roll-out.</p> <p>The share of the refugee population covered by the ESSN increased from 43.1% in 2018 to 60.8% in 2020.</p> <p>The ESSN was a lifeline for many of the beneficiaries who received the support. Among ESSN beneficiaries, household debt levels are significantly lower than non-beneficiaries and, particularly, non-applicants. Dietary diversity of ESSN beneficiaries (as measured using food consumption score) improved over time, but deteriorated and became worse than the baseline levels in 2019 following the worsening economic conditions.</p>

3.1.2. Description of Facility interventions aimed at supporting the ‘meeting of basic needs of the most vulnerable’

Turkish nationals benefit from a relatively small, but increasing, level of social protection provided by the Turkish state, originally established to provide support to the elderly, disabled, orphaned and widowed. In 2014, social assistance expenditure was TRY 22.9 billion, or 1.31% of gross domestic product (GDP), an increase from 0.57% in 2003¹⁵. Social assistance in Turkey is managed at the national level by the Directorate-General Social Assistance within the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS)¹⁶ and is implemented by 1,000 locally based Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASFs). The system now uses an integrated electronic platform which holds data on applicants, determines eligibility, and brings together various support programmes from 24 ministries and institutions across government¹⁷.

The Facility actions with support to the basic needs of refugees among their objectives are listed in Table 3 (full list of Facility interventions providing socio-economic support is presented in Annex 1)¹⁸.

¹⁴ The exclusion error is commonly defined as the percentage of the poor who are excluded from the programme.

¹⁵ World Bank – Turkey’s Integrated Social Assistance System.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/401541468307671282/106847-WP-P148963-OUO-9-MISC-Case-Turkey-ENf.docx>

¹⁶ The Ministry of Family and Social Policy was merged with other ministries and renamed the Ministry of Family Labour and Social Services in 2017.

¹⁷ World Bank, Turkey’s Integrated Social Assistance System.

¹⁸ Actions highlighted in orange are judged by ECHO to have used a majority of their budget on basic needs support, actions in grey are judged by ECHO to have addressed basic needs with a minority share of the available budget.

Table 3: Facility actions aimed at supporting basic needs of refugees

Inputs		Activities			Sampled
Instrument	EU contribution to socio-economic support (EUR)	Action	IP	End date	
HUMA	650,000,000	Emergency social safety net (ESSN) assistance to refugees in Turkey	WFP	- ¹⁹	X
HUMA	348,000,000	ESSN assistance to refugees in Turkey	WFP		X
HUMA	39,999,999	Food and other assistance to vulnerable refugee populations in Turkey	WFP	Jun 2017	
HUMA	9,095,593	Unconditional cash assistance and protection for out-of-camp Syrian and Iraqi refugees settled in south-eastern Turkey	DKH	Dec 2016	
HUMA	6,995,016	Humanitarian emergency response to Syria crisis	Concern	Dec 2017	
HUMA	6,691,723	Turkey population movement	IFRC	Mar 2017	
HUMA	6,224,614	Increased access to protection and basic needs support for vulnerable refugee children and families	UNICEF	Dec 2017	X
HUMA	3,884,725	Urgent basic humanitarian assistance, and coordination of information needs, for refugees in Turkey	CARE	Mar 2017	
HUMA	3,742,880	Addressing the issue of food insecurity through cash card assistance in Turkey	GAC (WHH)	May 2017	
HUMA	3,414,932	Humanitarian response to Syrian vulnerable refugees in southern Turkey	DRC	Dec 2016	
HUMA	1,133,306	Enhancing access to effective services and protection for people of concern in Turkey	DKH	Dec 2016	

Support has been provided through a range of interventions and implementing partners, but all of it financed by the Humanitarian Aid Instrument (HUMA). Most of the basic needs interventions have involved cash/voucher transfers, varying by scale and geographic scope. After an initial period of INGO/UN agency-provided cash and vouchers, from 2016 most recipients of EU-funded cash transfer programmes were subsumed into the *Emergency Social Safety Net* (ESSN), delivered by World Food Programme (WFP) and the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS). The ESSN is a nationwide programme that uses existing government systems, and targets vulnerable Syrians under temporary protection and non-Syrians under international protection based on demographic eligibility criteria. At the time of writing, the ESSN is the largest humanitarian programme ever funded by the European Commission. The CCTE, implemented by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in partnership with TRCS, MoFLSS and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), has been of similar importance in terms of addressing basic needs (this is evaluated within the education portfolio in this mid-term evaluation and not covered by this report).

¹⁹ The Facility I contributions to the ESSN were implemented by WFP (ESSN 1 and 2). ESSN 3 is currently implemented by IFRC under Facility II and the choice of IP for future implementation is yet to be determined at the time of writing. Additional funds (not from the Facility envelope) have also been made available for the continuation of ESSN and CCTE, as of July 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1324

The Welthungerhilfe (WHH) action, *Addressing the issue of food insecurity through cash card assistance in Turkey* was designed to assist refugees who were not eligible for the ESN but still require basic needs and protection services. Over the life of the programme from June 2015 to May 2017, WHH supported 27,276 people with cash cards that were loaded with TRY 60 per month, plus additional winterisation payments for 15,120 people. Targeting was based on proxy criteria for vulnerability, namely; female-headed households, child headed households, elderly people, pregnant or lactating women, the chronically sick, disabled persons and households with members under 5 years of age. The action also provided psychosocial and legal counselling and a special needs fund²⁰.

The Concern Worldwide-implemented action *Humanitarian Emergency Response to Syria Crisis* aimed to provide at least 12 months of livelihood support to 27,000 Syrian refugees living in Turkey – 24,000 with e-vouchers, 4,200 newly arrived refugees with emergency non-food items, and assistance for basic needs for 3,000 most vulnerable refugees through a special needs fund. The e-voucher support eventually reached 36,822 individuals (12,822 more than targeted), but many did not receive support for the full 12-month period²¹. The Special Needs Fund was accessed by 430 out of a planned 500 households²².

The Diakonie (DKH) action, *Unconditional cash assistance and protection for out-of-camp Syrian and Iraqi refugees settled in south-eastern Turkey* was the largest basic needs programme funded in the early years of the Facility. Approximately EUR 9 million of its EUR 11 million budget provided monthly cash transfer support to refugee families over 4-month periods between April 2015 and December 2016. Initially, recipients could only purchase food with their transfer but after mid-2016 the transfer could be used for food and non-food items. Winterisation grants were made by loading cards with additional funds once in 2015 and once in 2016. During the programme, 417,599 individuals received cash transfers, exceeding the initial target of 400,000, while 33,753 individuals benefited from winterisation support, exceeding the target of 29,250. Although these numbers appear impressive, the evaluation of the EU's humanitarian assistance in Turkey (2016/2017) and Commission experts themselves identified a number of issues with this project, including:

- The vast majority of assistance was directed to the provinces Diyarbakir and Batman which collectively hosted less than 4% of the registered caseload in the five provinces in which the programme was operational.
- The final reported beneficiary number includes a significant amount of double counting.
- The intervention was implemented largely by the national non-governmental organisation (NGO) Support for Life, and the EC found little evidence of the value added by Diakonie other than some capacity building.
- Vendors participating in the e-voucher scheme were found to be paying commissions to take part. Although these commissions were paid back into the project budget, the true cost was borne by beneficiaries who reported that prices of goods were raised (by around 8%) on the days that they came to the shops to purchase goods²³.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) action set up one new community centre and provided food and non-food items to more than 170,000 refugees in either camps or cities across Turkey between 2016 and 2017. UNICEF reached an estimated 270,000 beneficiaries with one-off voucher assistance and winterisation grants in a similar time frame²⁴. CARE, GOAL, World Vision, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Danish Refugee Council also delivered temporary food, non-food items and cash assistance to refugees with Facility funding between 2015 and 2017.

Actions implemented by the WFP are by far the most significant Facility-funded assistance in this area. Between April 2016 and June 2017, the EC provided EUR 40 million to *Food and other assistance to vulnerable refugee populations in Turkey* (which had a total budget of EUR 86 million including contributions by other donors). This was followed by two tranches of EUR 348 million (2016) and EUR

²⁰ ECHO HOPE Database: 91004_2017_00841_RQ_01_03_GAG-DE_SingleForm; 91033_2015_00734_FR_01_01_GAC-DE_SingleForm [Active]; 91033_2015_00734_GAC-DE_FichOps; 91033_2015_00734_MR_04_03_GAC-DE_SingleForm

²¹ 15% of these were only reached in the last month of the activity.

²² ECHO HOPE Database: 91009_2015_00495_CONCERN WORLDWIDE-IR_FichOp; 91009_2015_00495_MR_04_01_CONCERN_WORLDWIDE-IR_SingleForm; 91002_2016_01168_CONCERN_WORLDWIDE-IR_FichOps; 91002_2016_01168_IR_02_01_CONCERN_WORLDWIDE-IR_SingleForm [Active].

²³ Evaluation of the European Union's response to the Refugee Crisis in Turkey, 2016-2017 – Basic Needs Desk Report – Unpublished; ECHO HOPE database: 91035_2015_00582_DIAKONIE-DE_FichOps; 171017_Comments on Final Payment advice_Diakonie_Katastrophenhilfe

²⁴ ECHO HOPE database: UNICEF 2016_01124_FR_01_01_31-May-18; IFRC 2016_00656_FR_01_01_14-Sep-17.

650 million (2017) for the ESSN funded under the Facility's first tranche, and two further contributions totalling EUR 857.8 million under the Facility's second tranche. In 2020 a new envelope of EUR 485 million was allocated by the EU budgetary authorities for the continuation of the ESSN and the CCTE at least until the end of 2021. This additional funding is not part of the Facility, and at the time of writing this report, this amount had not yet been contracted²⁵.

The first EUR 40 million action's objectives were to:

1. Distribute cash-based assistance to 245,000 off-camp and 150,000 in-camp refugees under secure conditions and uploaded in sufficient quantity, quality and in a timely manner to target vulnerable refugees in Turkey.
2. Develop, through building on to existing structures, a harmonised cash-based resource transfer ESSN-approach to deliver food and livelihood interventions in Turkey, including vulnerability-based targeting, information/data analysis, studies and technical exchanges.²⁶

By June 2017, the first WFP action was reaching 210,648 off-camp and 142,436 in-camp beneficiaries with e-vouchers, and had established the framework for the ESSN²⁷. Similar to the DKH action, these cash transfers were initially restricted to food, but in December 2016 the KizilayKart, to which transfers were made, was opened up for use at any point-of-sale card machine. From January 2017 people could use the card to withdraw cash through any HalkBank ATM and by April the same year all refugees who had previously been receiving cash via INGOs using EU funds were incorporated into a single caseload, which would become the ESSN.

The ESSN itself began in December 2016 with an initial target of reaching 1m refugees by April 2017²⁸. The programme's specific objective is to stabilise or improve living standards of the most vulnerable out-of-camp refugee households (HHs). To this end, the ESSN includes four intermediate results:

- the provision of monthly basic needs assistance to vulnerable households through multi-purpose cash transfers;
- support national partners in implementing the ESSN;
- efficient and effective coordination of the humanitarian response; and
- monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Starting in 2016 most recipients of EU-funded cash transfer programmes were subsumed into the ESSN, delivered by WFP and TRCS. ESSN is a nationwide programme that uses existing government systems, and targets vulnerable Syrians and non-Syrians based on demographic eligibility criteria. The main features of the ESSN were set out in the HIP for 2016²⁹, specifically:

- [The Commission] will support an Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) to allow an estimated one million vulnerable refugees to meet their basic needs in a dignified manner and at scale all over Turkey. The ESSN is a hybrid social assistance scheme anchored on and aligned with government systems and integrating crucial humanitarian safeguards.
- The package of assistance will be based upon a minimum expenditure basket (MEB), and transferred directly to beneficiaries on a monthly basis through unrestricted and unconditional cash transfers ... [The Commission] will retain the ability and flexibility to adapt eventual support depending on context-specific circumstances and the evolution of the situation over time through the most appropriate modality, i.e. in-kind, cash or voucher or a combination thereof.
- The ESSN will build upon the existing architecture and expertise of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MoFSP³⁰) in partnership with the national implementation partner Turkish Red Crescent (*Türk Kızılayı*). The involvement of the MoFSP in the implementation of the ESSN is necessary for the longer-term ownership, sustainability and integration into the national system. However, in the absence of EU funding, the continuation of the ESSN programme and its integration into the Turkish system, is not to be taken for granted.

²⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1324

²⁶ ECHO HOPE database: 91009_2017_00972_MR_01_01_WFP-IT_SingleForm; 91009_2017_00972_MR_01_01_WFP-IT_SingleForm; 91012_2016_01199_WFP-IT_FichOp

²⁷ Though it should be noted that the ESSN programme started before this operation finished.

²⁸ December 2016 target was 500,000 refugees.

²⁹ ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan, 2016, Version 1 – 02/06/2016.

Partly inspired and informed by the challenges of food and non-food items assistance actions described above, the ESSN marks a shift of focus from food security to basic needs, and a transition from an electronic-voucher to a multi-purpose cash transfer system. By December 2019, 1,750,008 refugees (Syrian and non-Syrian) were receiving the ESSN each month. Registered families living in Turkey under international protection or temporary protection can apply for the ESSN. As was set out in the ESSN Evaluation of 2018³⁰: The original intended implementation schedule for the ESSN, was for the first payments scheduled in September 2016 and for 500,000 refugees to be reached by December 2016, with the aim of achieving the programme objective of supporting one million refugees by April 2017. The transfer value was initially designed at TRY 180, but was negotiated with the Turkish authorities down at the start to TRY 100 (approximately USD 27) per person, per month. The programme has provided each successful applicant household with TRY 120 per person per month to help cover their basic needs starting in June 2017³¹. In addition, quarterly household-level top-ups have been provided since August 2017, reflecting household size. Larger top-ups are allocated to smaller families who do not benefit from economies of scale. Initially, the top-ups were TRY 250 for a household of one to four people, TRY 150 for a household of five to eight people and TRY 50 for households with nine people or more³². In August 2019, the quarterly top-up to ESSN-assisted households was increased, ranging from TRY 100 to 600.

ESSN was implemented by the WFP (and subsequently by IFRC as of 2019/20) and the TRCS in collaboration with MoFLSS and HalkBank. The programme is operationally integrated with the Turkey's existing social assistance system, which is managed at the national level by the Social Assistance Directorate-General under MoFLSS and is implemented by the SASFs under the provincial and district governors. Responsibilities of the different partners are as follows:

- **MoFLSS:** receives applications to the ESSN through the SASF offices; leads the eligibility assessment and verification process, including the household visits.
- **TRCS:** supports implementation and accountability, including the information dissemination and feedback mechanism (including the call centre, Facebook page, SMS centre); outreach (sensitisation and advocacy); verification and operational monitoring, supporting SASF to receive applications through service centres, such as translators, vehicles, administrative staff, equipment; contracting the financial service provider; referrals of protection cases, support logistics for card distribution.
- **Facility Implementing Partner: WFP** (now IFRC): oversight and accountability; technical support; monitoring and evaluation.
- **HalkBank:** provides financial services including the distribution and loading of ATM cards (KizilayKart).

Unlike the national social assistance system in Turkey, which largely uses vulnerability-targeting criteria, the action aims to reach the poorest and most vulnerable refugee households in Turkey by using demographic criteria as proxy measure of welfare. These criteria are detailed in Box 2.

³⁰ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey.

³¹ WFP ESSN Market Bulletin, Issue no.2, 2017.

³² WFP ESSN Market Bulletin, Issue no.3, 2017.

Box 2: ESSN eligibility criteria

To apply for ESSN assistance, people must:

- Be a non-national living in Turkey under international protection or temporary protection (according to the Foreigners and International Protection Law 6458, dated 04/04/2014), and living outside camps.
- Have a valid Directorate-General of Migration Management (DGMM) ID card with an ID number starting with 99.
- Have registered their address at the Population Department office in their area of residence.
- Have an adult family member as the primary applicant.
- Those employed with a valid work permit or who own registered assets in Turkey are not eligible to receive assistance.

Households matching the following criteria are eligible for assistance:

- Single woman (between 18 and 59) with no other people in the family.
- Single parents with no other adults (between 18 and 59) in the family and at least one child under 18.
- Elderly people, 60 years or above, with no other adults (between 18 and 59) in the family.
- Families with one or more people with disabilities. They must have a disability of 40% or more, evidenced by a disability health board report from an authorised state hospital. This was adjusted from two or more disabled people in 2017.
- Families with four or more children.
- Families having a high number of dependents (i.e. children, elderly and people with disabilities) defined as families that have at least 1.5 dependents for every able-bodied adult (between 18 and 59). This was subtly adjusted in 2017 from a ratio of **more than 1.5** to a ratio **equal to 1.5**.

Recognising the considerable scope for exclusion error within the ESSN, the partners introduced the 'SASF Discretionary Allowance' in November 2018. This scheme enables each SASF office to select a small number of vulnerable applicants who are not eligible under the proxy criteria to be included as ESSN beneficiaries. Each SASF office is entitled to a quota of allowances calculated as 5% of total applications received by that SASF by 30 October 2018. Since August 2019, 19% of the total quota has been used; 4,775 households across 63 of Turkey's 81 provinces³³.

In 2018, the ESSN also started to provide additional top-ups called the Severe Disability Allowance (SDA) for ESSN eligible persons with severe disability with more than 50% disability. Sign-up to the programme increased rapidly after launch, with beneficiary numbers doubling between August 2018 and May 2019. Sign-up rates have slowed and by September 2019, 7,584 households had received the SDA, short of the 10,000 beneficiaries target originally envisioned. The slowing of the sign-up rates indicates that most of those able to meet the requirements of the application process have signed up³⁴.

3.1.3. Contextual analysis of Facility interventions

In the following text, we present a contextualised analysis of how the support provided through the Facility has sought to realise the outcome of meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees. This includes an examination of the achievements of the Facility, and the strengths of its approach, as well as challenges faced and some of the complexities of such an ambitious programme. The contextual analysis reflects on those external factors that also have an impact on the Facility's contribution.

While the Facility supported a number of interventions under the rubric of basic needs (as outlined above in Section 3.1.2), by far the most significant was the ESSN. Section 3.1.2 describes its development from a fairly standard WFP cash-based food security programme – albeit already quite large – to the largest humanitarian unconditional cash transfer programme ever implemented. The ESSN absorbed more than EUR 1 billion, and as such constituted about a third of the entire Facility I assistance. As can be seen by the figures in Section 3.1.1, the ESSN is reaching 60.8% of all refugees in Turkey at the time of this evaluation in 2020. This is clearly a remarkable achievement, all the more so given the speed in which it was implemented.

³³ OPM/Development Analytics (Feb 2020). *ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019*.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

The effectiveness of the ESSN will be hotly debated for years to come. There have already been two evaluations of the scheme (by WFP), and in addition to this strategic evaluation of the Facility, another evaluation is being commissioned by the EC. The coverage and reach of the scheme is beyond question – as outlined in 3.1.1 above and in numerous reports. The larger question of the contribution to the livelihoods of refugees will probably only become clear once these and other studies have been completed, and with the passage of time.

This evaluation has heard from one academic who described the ESSN as ‘miraculous’ in its contribution to the stability of the country at a challenging time. For this (senior, well-regarded and knowledgeable) academic (with extensive research experience in migration studies, the Syria crisis and Turkish policy), the visible effect of the ESSN was a reduction of begging and other ‘negative coping strategies’; something borne out by the data (see below). Clearly this is subjective, but it is worth noting before a technical discussion of the various aspects of the ESSN that there is a wider social and political aspect that is less straightforward to quantify than the purely economic, which because of the availability of data tends to consume the greatest attention.

This is also true of the ‘benefit’ of the scheme – again not in purely economic terms (which is dealt with in the analysis below) but in terms of how the majority of recipients used the ESSN. It served primarily as a ‘top-up’ for wages that fall short of covering families’ needs. The data is clear that the majority of ESSN beneficiaries were working, almost entirely in the informal sector, and almost all for lower wages than their Turkish counterparts. Informal sector working is by its nature insecure, and so the ESSN served both to supplement low wages, and to ‘smooth’ income so that people could pay rent and utilities. Without this major contribution, it is possible that life would have not been viable for many – perhaps even the majority – of refugees.

With these high-level observations framing the discussion, there are a number of technical aspects that deserve closer scrutiny, particularly the targeting methodology and the level of the benefit. This analysis also considers the institutional arrangements that made the rapid scale-up possible and the trade-offs that entailed. The ESSN also benefited in the first tranche of the Facility from a robust monitoring and evaluation system that fed learning and course corrections. Finally, this analysis will consider the sustainability and future of the ESSN.

i. Institutional arrangements and the rapid scale-up

The ESSN was based on, and managed through, the existing Turkish social assistance infrastructure. The decision by both the Government of Turkey and the European Commission to go down this route was critical in enabling the rapid scale-up, and in particular the massive reach of the programme. Without this decision it is highly unlikely that a programme of this size could have been achieved.

There was a significant existing government infrastructure that ESSN was able to build on, specifically the social assistance system, the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASF) and the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS, or Kizilay), which had a pre-existing ‘card’, underpinned by an innovative digital platform. The Turkish social assistance system was originally established to provide support to elderly and disabled poor people and now brings together various support programmes, including a Conditional Cash Transfer programme for education and health, into an electronic system that integrates 24 ministries and institutions across government³⁵. Although this forms the basis of a social assistance system, those who have analysed it have concluded that the Turkish system is fragmented and that the support provided is not in itself sufficient to support basic needs³⁶.

An important aspect of the system is the network of more than 1,000 SASFs across the country, which provide a strong presence at the local level for oversight and technical uniformity. Finally, TRCS’s debit cards (Kizilaykart) provided the means for implementation of the ESSN support, as well as having an information management system that was able to cross-check with existing government systems. At the same time, all of these features of the existing infrastructure brought with them challenges for the development and implementation of the ESSN, which will be explored below.

Implementation has been through a highly effective partnership between the UN World Food Programme (WFP), which as outlined above was the contract holder, and the TRCS, working closely with their government counterparts, a view supported by all of those involved in implementation³⁷. WFP brought international expertise, experience of working to scale and a strong focus on monitoring for

³⁵ World Bank, Turkey’s Integrated Social Assistance System.

³⁶ KII: SES 24.

³⁷ KIIs: SES 16, SES 27, SES 25.

effectiveness and accountability. TRCS brought the linkages with government and local infrastructure, an understanding of the context and the capacity to be able to respond to a rapid roll-out and to continue to scale up. In 2018, a mid-term evaluation of the ESSN (hereinafter called the ESSN Evaluation) found that: 'The partnership arrangements established were generally appropriate to implement the ESSN, but links to protection services were limited. While the partnership arrangements for implementation were complex, each agency was included to fulfil a necessary and clear role, based on their own comparative advantages.'

The SASFs initially provided the local infrastructure, although there was the need to bolster this infrastructure to respond to the scale of ESSN. TRCS had to play an auxiliary role through 18 service centres focused on refugees only. As stated in the ESSN Evaluation³⁸: 'The ESSN design provided temporary operational [surge] support through TRCS to reinforce SASF capacities.'

While there were significant strengths in the partners involved in the implementation of the ESSN, there were also significant limitations, particularly in the capacity of SASFs. In the use of demographic proxy criteria for deciding where support should be provided, household visits to verify eligibility were not used. Related to this point, the Mid-term Review (MTR) found considerable variation in how potential candidate households (HHs) were selected for visits to assess their eligibility for the SASF Discretionary Allowance. In theory all non-eligible applicant HHs should receive a visit. In situations where the SASF offices were only responsible for a small refugee caseload this had proved relatively straightforward and SASF teams reported they conducted regular visits to all applicant HHs. This facilitated the process of identifying deserving, but excluded, cases. However, it proved more problematic where an SASF office was responsible for large numbers of refugees – sometimes in the thousands. In these contexts, the review found that SASFs had developed different strategies to implementing the SASF Discretionary Allowance³⁹.

Nevertheless, the SASFs were responsible for accepting and screening applications for all categories of refugees in Turkey for ESSN assistance. The ESSN Evaluation⁴⁰ concluded that: 'It is unclear what (if any) direct support was anticipated by donors or requested by Ministries to bolster the capacities of the state institutions partnering on the ESSN—Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services and the SASFs responsible for implementation of social assistance.' SASF capacity had to be augmented with TRCS support, both on a temporary basis and in the medium term through the establishment of 18 TRCS centres. However, no additional capacity building for staff has been implemented. From available resources and interviews, it is unclear if this was due to a lack of sufficient demand by the Ministry and SASFs or whether these resources were not made available by the Facility.

As originally envisaged, the ESSN support was not designed to cover education needs, and the CCTE programme was implemented in parallel by UNICEF (see the education sector report of this evaluation for a detailed discussion of the CCTE). Nevertheless, many of those interviewed who know both programmes well view ESSN and CCTE as having worked well together, both in terms of providing a rapid response and in the extent of coverage and consistency of support⁴¹. The overall contribution made has been widely welcomed⁴²: 'First and foremost, it provides some regularity and predictability of income for refugee households.' A number of those interviewed have concluded that the coverage and consistency of basic needs support has made a major contribution to ensuring a stable situation in Turkey over the last 5 years and to Syrian refugees feeling settled in the country⁴³. According to the regression results using CVME5 survey data, controlling for several household and child characteristics, compared to children living in households that do not receive ESSN or CCTE, children living in households that receive CCTE alone or ESSN and CCTE are more likely to attend school. Households receiving ESSN and CCTE together seems to increase the likelihood of children attending school more than those only receiving CCTE (i.e. the coefficient is higher), which points to the possible synergy between ESSN and CCTE⁴⁴.

³⁸ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey.

³⁹ WFP (2020), ESSN Mid-term Review.

⁴⁰ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the ESSN.

⁴¹ KIIs: SES 18, SES 25, SES 22.

⁴² Cetinoglu and Yilmaz, (2019). A contextual policy analysis of the cash programme in a humanitarian setting: The case of the Emergency Social Safety Net.

⁴³ KIIs: SES 22, SES 18.

⁴⁴ Yet it should also be noted that there is an endogeneity issue here due to the school attendance condition of CCTE, such that the children who are already more likely to attend school are also more likely to be receiving CCTE.

This issue is also raised in the recent evaluation of CCTE in the data collected through FGDs with beneficiary parents⁴⁵. The evaluation reports that ‘Many parents of CCTE beneficiaries said their children would attend regularly with or without the cash transfer, but others also noted that the transfer helps them send their children more regularly.’ However, these findings do not establish a causal relationship between receiving CCTE and school attendance and this relationship should be identified with an impact evaluation study. This is done for ESSN in a recent paper which finds no significant positive effect of ESSN on school attendance of children⁴⁶. Yet the evaluation of the CCTE programme states that the overlap between ESSN and CCTE beneficiaries made the transfer amount under CCTE more ‘meaningful’ as reported by respondents⁴⁷. According to the same report, 83% of CCTE beneficiaries are also ESSN beneficiaries. Furthermore, the evaluation report points out that early and constant coordination between ESSN and CCTE led to efficiencies and synergies including a shared payment platform and a shared call centre.

The clear process and the communication and sensitisation campaign were generally found to have been effective in ensuring wide coverage of ESSN support, although there were negative impacts. The ESSN Evaluation⁴⁸ concluded that: ‘Beneficiary communication mechanisms took time to become established, but ultimately have been well-used and valued by beneficiaries. However, no appeals mechanism⁴⁹ was established within the ESSN.’ This certainly contributed to the ESSN’s significantly increased coverage of refugees, compared to preceding cash assistance. As recorded in the ESSN Evaluation⁵⁰, one-third of refugees in Turkey were covered by the ESSN in February 2018, a fourfold increase in coverage, with about half of all card holders being women.

The use of the existing Turkish social safety net system has meant that there were several contextual factors that affected the development and implementation of the ESSN, including:

- limitations on the data available
- the level of support provided and the effects of the targeting criteria
- institutional limitations.

There was no comprehensive needs assessment carried out to support the development of the programme. Instead, a rapid needs assessment from a prior WFP programme in the south-east of the country was used as an extrapolation for this and other settings where Syrian refugees living. ESSN mid-term evaluation⁵¹ concluded: ‘There was no beneficiary consultation during design and little information on the needs of particularly vulnerable groups. Consequently, ESSN assistance was initially relatively undifferentiated according to age, gender or ability.’ There were continuing issues about accessibility of data, as the European Court of Auditors report⁵² pointed out that: ‘The main limitation was the Turkish authorities’ refusal to grant access to beneficiary data for the two cash assistance projects. In fact, neither the Commission nor the ECA [European Court of Auditors] was able to track the project beneficiaries from their registration to the payment.’ While the data collected for ESSN monitoring purposes provides a strong basis for assessing the achievement of outcomes, there are still a number of areas where a solid evidence base is not available, such as: whether specific vulnerable groups (and non-Syrian refugees) have been reached; and disaggregated data on the gender and age groups that have been reached with support. The Data Protection Law in Turkey made it impossible for implementing partners that were holders of the beneficiary data (in this case, TRCS) to share any contact/confidential information of the beneficiaries with donors or other implementing partners⁵³.

The ESSN amount was capped at a level in line with the social assistance support provided to Turkish citizens. This was a high-level decision made within the Turkish government in order to keep a balance between covering needs and not creating tensions. This meant that the agreed value of support (agreed at TRY 100 per person) in 2016 amounted to around 42% of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) for a household, and that the value of the support has declined over time to around 30% of the MEB (see Section iii. below for further treatment of the level of the benefit). It is generally concluded, as

⁴⁵ https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_Turkey_CCTE_Eval_Report_FINAL.pdf

⁴⁶ <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/996581604677892185/pdf/Children-on-the-Move-Progressive-Redistribution-of-Humanitarian-Cash-Transfers-among-Refugees.pdf>

⁴⁷ https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_Turkey_CCTE_Eval_Report_FINAL.pdf

⁴⁸ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey.

⁴⁹ A process by which an applicant can appeal against a decision made relating to eligibility for assistance, if they believe they have been unfairly treated or excluded from assistance by mistake, etc, with the possibility of the decision being revised.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey.

⁵² European Court of Auditors. (2018). Special Report: The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money.

⁵³ Law on the Protection of Personal Data can be found in Turkish at this link: <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6698.pdf>

the ESSN Evaluation found, that: the ESSN transfers were effective in improving refugee welfare, providing access to shelter, food, utilities, education and other basic needs. At the same time, it was also an underlying assumption that most households receiving support would continue to work in the informal sector, as discussed in several places elsewhere in this report.

While the partnerships are viewed as having worked well, with a blend of international skills, national capacity and fast and flexible finance delivered at scale, there were issues in the institutional arrangements that made implementation complex. As is inevitable with such large and multifaceted institutional arrangements, there were issues around oversight and accountability that caused tensions; however, the pragmatism of all parties ensured this did not hamper implementation⁵⁴.

ii. Monitoring and evaluation

Although an initial needs assessment was not carried out, the monitoring, review and evaluation processes undertaken have had a major impact on the responsiveness of the ESSN. For monitoring purposes, regular post-distribution monitoring surveys (PDMs), covering ESSN beneficiaries, and Comprehensive Vulnerability Mapping Exercises (CVMEs) covering the refugee population more generally, have provided the most detailed and reliable data available, which has enabled analysis and identification of problems with coverage⁵⁵. Problems identified and lessons learned were used to make further modifications to the programme, both as they emerged in response to analysis carried out through the monitoring⁵⁶ and in response to the conclusions and recommendations of evaluations. During the period of implementation, the first evaluation of the ESSN was published in April 2018, and was followed up with a Mid-term Review produced in May 2020. The conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation were used to develop and implement mechanisms to respond to problems identified, including the Discretionary Allowance and the Severe Disability Allowance. Nevertheless, problems remain around access to data and the relative rigidity of the system effectively excluding vulnerable groups – again issues to be explored below.

A range of evaluations were carried out in 2016 and 2017 of the INGO implemented interventions. The evaluations of the humanitarian response carried out by Danish Refugee Council⁵⁷ and by Mercy Corps and World Vision of protection support⁵⁸ found significant gaps in the support provided. The Danish Refugee Council evaluation in particular, concluded that cash-based interventions have not led to safer livelihoods; and, while such interventions have been an important gap filler, they have not protected people from unsafe employment or enabled them to pursue more resilient livelihoods. There are similar findings in a range of other assessments and research reports⁵⁹ – see Support to Life (2016), IFRC (2017), Barbelet and Wake (2017).

iii. Coverage and targeting of vulnerable groups

One of the main factors in the ESSN scaling rapidly to reach 1.75m by 2020 were the simplified demographic criteria that were used for ensuring access to support. There was a clear process, based on having an ID card and address registration; and the commitment to keeping the scheme open to enable the continuing scale-up.

At the start of the development of the ESSN in 2016, a number of initial limitations had to be dealt with, specifically, the lack of data from a full needs assessment of refugees in Turkey and the decision not to carry out household visits to assess eligibility⁶⁰. The relative homogeneity of needs among the refugee population also led to a decision to use a set of six demographic criteria as proxy indicators for vulnerability. The ESSN Evaluation⁶¹ reached the conclusion that:

The underlying analysis of refugee needs was limited, especially given the scale of the need, the innovativeness of the approach and the stage of maturity of the crisis. Beneficiary

⁵⁴ KII

⁵⁵ Seven rounds of PDMs were carried out between 2017 and 2019 and five rounds of CVME were carried out and published between 2017 and 2020.

⁵⁶ KII: SES 16.

⁵⁷ Danish Refugee Council (2017). Evaluation of the DRC Humanitarian Response; DRC (2016) Cash Transfer Programming for Syrian Refugees: Lessons Learned on Vulnerability, Targeting and Protection.

⁵⁸ Mercy Corps (2016). A Protection Study on Syrian Refugees in Izmir; World Vision (2017) Evaluation Study: Providing Life-improving Protection Support.

⁵⁹ See: Support to Life (2016). Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Turkey; IFRC (2017) Community Centre Project Evaluation Report; Barbelet and Wake (2017). The Lives and Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Turkey and Jordan.

⁶⁰ KII: SES 16.

⁶¹ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey.

consultation on the needs, preferences and constraints of specific vulnerable groups (including women, the elderly and people with disabilities) was limited. Consequently, the initial design offered relatively undifferentiated support to refugees [...] [T]he targeting approach facilitated transparency and a predictable caseload and was to some degree progressive, with 48 percent of the transfer going to the poorest 40 percent. However, the homogeneity of refugees and the scale of needs made targeting challenging, and many vulnerable households remained excluded.

The choice to use the demographic targeting criteria had the major benefit of simplicity, thus enabling a quick roll-out. It also had consequences in terms of coverage – particularly in terms of inclusion and exclusion errors, which we explore in detail below.

The Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) in 2017 indicated that an initial ‘one million vulnerable refugees’ would be ‘targeted based on ‘socio-economic proxy criteria demonstrated to have maximum inclusion and minimum exclusion criteria’. The document also suggested that this target may be adjusted based on vulnerability identification and ‘approaches that integrate vulnerable refugees with pending registration or households who do not fulfil the ESSN beneficiary eligibility criteria who are nevertheless identified as being highly vulnerable into the ESSN platform’, would be considered.⁶² The decision that the ESSN would be a targeted cash transfer was already formulated by the Commission in the HIP document, so that the implementing partners then sought to find the best means possible to fulfil this targeting goal. It was then iterated in the WFPs’ vulnerability analysis and mapping food security analysis document in 2017 that ‘the ESSN is intended to provide multi-purpose cash to one million refugees in Turkey. With an estimated three million refugees in Turkey, and assuming that roughly 80% will apply, the ESSN should select the most vulnerable 40%’⁶³.

The initial targeting criteria were designed on the basis of limited available data in Turkey and the urgent need to scale up the ESSN across the country. Following the agreement on the EU–Turkey Joint Action Plan in October 2015, a comprehensive needs assessment on the refugee crisis in Turkey was carried out by the European Commission. This highlighted that (i) ‘there is a lack of a comprehensive and systematic mechanism for understanding the vulnerabilities of Syrian refugee population’, and (ii) ‘there are different assessment tools and criteria being used by different stakeholders’. Because of this gap in understanding and assessing vulnerabilities and designing relevant targeting criteria, the WFP pre-assistance baseline (PAB) survey was undertaken in the southern provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa between June and October 2015⁶⁴. The need to quickly scale up cash assistance and implement the assistance nationwide spurred discussions on how to design cost-effective, and operationally feasible, targeting criteria across the country⁶⁵. A vulnerability analysis and mapping mission to Turkey from the Regional Bureau and Headquarters initiated discussions on targeting options for the ESSN in March 2016⁶⁶. As explained by WFP, ‘the mission conducted a regression analysis on the pre-assistance baseline (PAB) data to inform the targeting strategy and criteria recommendations’⁶⁷. A targeting working group – comprised of WFP, UNICEF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and TRCS – decided on targeting criteria in April–May 2016⁶⁸.

Accordingly, a restricted number of straightforward demographics targeting criteria were agreed to enable a fast scale-up among all ESSN stakeholders and are listed as follows: (i) families with a dependency ratio higher than 1.5; (ii) with two disabled members (proven with medical reports); (iii) with four or more children; (iv) single females; (v) single-parent households; and (vi) elderly headed households⁶⁹.

⁶² ECHO (2017). Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Turkey. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/hip_turkey_2017_ver_2.pdf (pp.10).

⁶³ WFP (2017). Emergency Social Safety Net Targeting Criteria: Background and Evidence. Ankara: WFP VAM Food Security Analysis Turkey Country Office Retrieved from https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000100401/download/?_ga=2.108776833.260393168.1575898388-110979015.1570093817 (p.1).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ WFP (2017). Emergency Social Safety Net Targeting Criteria: Background and Evidence.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Referring to descriptive findings from the PAB survey as well as carrying out the regression analysis to find out statistically significant predictors of household welfare, six targeting criteria were defined as aforementioned before. Some additional criteria such as ‘single females’ and ‘elderly headed households’ were included into ESSN demographic criteria not because they had been proved statistically significant predictors using the PAB dataset, but rather due to the fact that they had been evaluated as ‘universally accepted’ targeting criteria⁶⁹.

In May 2017, the targeting criteria were changed as the ‘planned number of beneficiaries was falling behind the actual number of beneficiaries’⁷⁰. Accordingly, households with a dependency ratio equal to 1.5 and households with one disabled person became eligible, as summarised in Table 4. The exclusion and inclusion errors implied by the old and new eligibility criteria were calculated, considering the MEB as the poverty line and the target population of the ESSN (i.e. the poorest 40% of the households) as part of the ESSN Evaluation commissioned by WFP Turkey Country Office in 2018. The evaluation report indicated that the new criteria were more inclusive in terms of increasing inclusion and decreasing exclusion rates, and ‘the new eligibility criteria are doing a comparatively better job in reducing exclusion error’⁷¹. Nevertheless, of particular importance here is that, even with this new targeting criteria, 26% of the poorest 40% of applicant refugees were still excluded from the ESSN cash transfer when the evaluation team assessed the eligibility criteria with the target population of the ESSN.

Table 4: ESSN Targeting criteria in comparison

Targeting criteria in 2016	Revised targeting criteria in 2017
Dependency ratio >1.5	Dependency ratio >=1.5
At least 2 disabled members with a medical report	At least 1 disabled member with a medical report
	At least 4 children
	Single-female household
	Single-parent household
	Household head aged 60+

Source: WFP (2018) *Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey November 2016–February 2018 Volume 2: Final Evaluation Report Annexes*

In the first 2 years of the programme, those implementing the ESSN sought to meet the refugees’ immediate needs⁷², and the targeting criteria were expected to serve this urgent goal. The choice of criteria were mainly driven by ‘programme objectives, the characteristics of the poor and vulnerable, the availability of data and funds, institutional capacity, and political acceptability’⁷³. These choices had implications in terms of the inclusion and exclusion errors of the model as well as the degree of transparency and acceptability of the whole programme⁷⁴. One important decision in targeting was that the programme chose to target households based on certain demographic criteria of the household members – and when households were included in the programme, **all individuals were included as beneficiaries and the benefit level was calculated based on the total number of all individuals in the household.**

The ESSN proved to be relevant to the needs of refugees, capitalising on the capacities of the national social assistance system. The programme has also updated its targeting formula based on learning from new data and evidence collected over time⁷⁵. ESSN’s targeting criteria were easy to implement, transparent and initially achieved a slightly pro-poor distribution of benefits. However, the programme had a high exclusion error⁷⁶ and the benefits were not always distributed evenly across groups that needed the transfer. The refugee population is one that is particularly difficult to target, given their asset and welfare distribution. The poor and most vulnerable among the refugees are extremely difficult to distinguish. As of May 2017, when the baseline data for the ESSN was collected, 80.2% of the ESSN applicant refugee population were living below the absolute poverty line⁷⁷. Hence, four out of five

⁷⁰ WFP (2018). *Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey November 2016–February 2018*, Volume 2: Final Evaluation Report Annexes.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² ECHO (2016). Humanitarian Implementation Plan(HIP) for Turkey https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/hip_turkey_2016.pdf

⁷³ Arnold, Conway & Greenslade (2011). Cash Transfers Literature Review <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/cash-transfers-literature-review.pdf>

⁷⁴ Battistin (2016). Impact Evaluation of the Multipurpose Cash Assistance Programme

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LCCImpactEvaluationforMCAFebruary2016FINAL.PDF>

⁷⁵ WFP (2018). *Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey Volume I: Final Evaluation Report* https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000100401/download/?_ga=2.108776833.260393168.1575898388-110979015.1570093817

⁷⁶ The initial exclusion error of the programme is found to be 51.1% in the baseline. We note that when changes were made to the targeting criteria in May 2017, the exclusion error of the programme dropped to 35.5% (PDM7).

⁷⁷ Poverty line is calculated based on MEB and taken as TRY 503.6 per adult equivalent.

refugees among the ESSN applicant sample were poor – and could not afford the minimum expenditure basket⁷⁸.

Figure 5: Proportion of ESSN applicants below poverty line

A high level of poverty was observed in the baseline, with 4 out of 5 applicants to the ESSN being below the MEB poverty line...

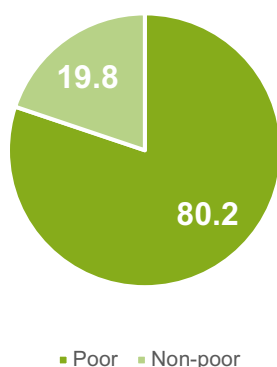
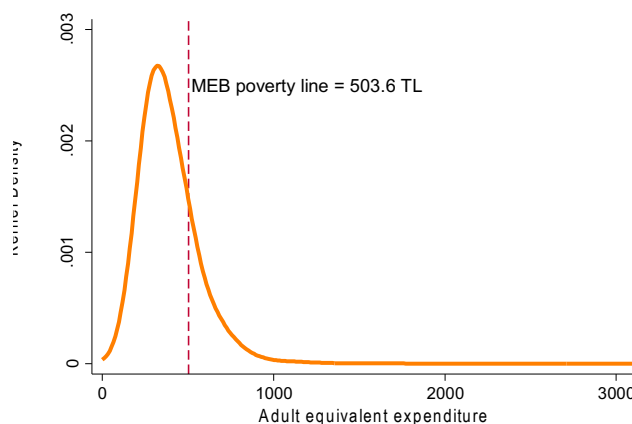


Figure 6: Distribution of applicant refugee population

...the distribution of the applicant refugee population was highly 'equal' and homogenous, making targeting of the most vulnerable an extremely difficult task.



Source: PAB survey data

The target population was quite homogenous in terms of their level of monthly expenditure. Using their per adult equivalent monthly household expenditure, the Gini index was calculated as 23.4 for the applicant population in the baseline⁷⁹. This level of consumption inequality is lower than any other country in the world for which data exists in the World Development Indicators between 2012 and 2017. Figure 6 provides a depiction of per adult equivalent expenditures of the refugees in the applicant pool in the baseline showing the homogeneity and close alignment of the distribution.

Due to the fragility of their life conditions and changes to their livelihoods, the relative position of the refugees compared to one and other are in constant change. It can already be seen from the baseline that the most vulnerable refugees (the bottom 40%) were extremely hard to target. However, even if there was a mechanism to **perfectly** target the bottom 40% of refugees in the baseline, the dynamics of the population have been in constant flux since then, so they would not necessarily have remained in the most vulnerable group through the next couple of years of the ESSN.

Following the same set of households from PAB (May 2017) to PDM6 (December 2018), it can be observed that the relative position of refugee households changed quite dramatically over time. Some households that started off in the top quintile, ended up in the bottom quintile in 2 years; and some who were most vulnerable ended up on top⁸⁰. Figure 7 shows the dynamics of these changes in quintiles (based on adult equivalent expenditures) from May 2017 (before the launch of the ESSN) to December 2018. While 42% of the richest quintile stayed in the same quintile, the rest of the initially 'richest' population moved to lower quintiles. In fact, close to a third of the population who were initially in the richest quintile in PAB ended up in the lowest three quintiles by the time of PDM6. Similarly, 34% of the poorest quintile moved up to the highest three quintiles⁸¹.

⁷⁸ This is a lower-bound figure for the overall refugee population as non-applicant refugees were on average more vulnerable at the launch of the ESSN. Source: WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey Volume I: Final Evaluation Report https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000100401/download/?_ga=2.108776833.260393168.1575898388-110979015.1570093817

⁷⁹ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey November 2016–February 2018 Volume 2: Final Evaluation Report Annexes <Annexes.pdf>

⁸⁰ Population in the panel data was divided into quintiles using their baseline per adult equivalent expenditure and per adult equivalent expenditure in PDM6. Note that this analysis considers the relative position of refugee households in the distribution. It is possible that in the same time period, based on absolute measures all or most households may have experienced worsening conditions. Hence moving up to the top quintile does not mean the households are better in absolute terms compared to the baseline.

⁸¹ One may argue that part of these changes in quintiles was due to the ESSN itself, so we carry out the same analysis after the distribution of the ESSN and compare the pictures. The dynamic nature of the population remains when the population is monitored after ESSN transfer as well (from PDM 1 to PDM 6 as depicted in Figure 8). We find that 56% of those who were at the richest quintile at the time of PDM1 moved down at the time of PDM6 and 57% of who were in the poorest quintile at the time of PDM1 moved up at the time of PDM6.

Figure 7: Poverty dynamics in refugee population (May 2017 – Dec 2018)

The refugee population has poverty dynamics that are in constant change

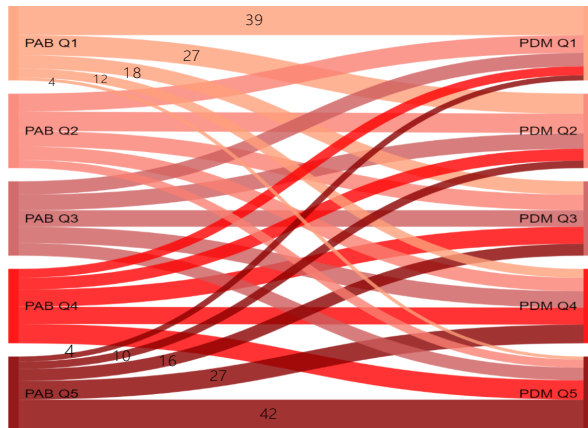
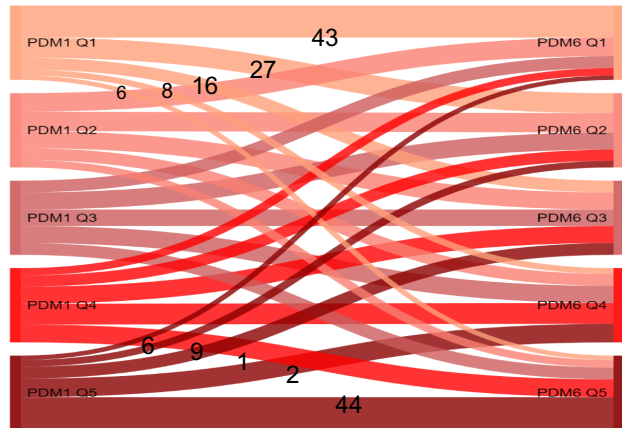


Figure 8: Poverty dynamics in refugee population (Dec 2017 – Dec 2018)

... the dynamic nature of the population remains even when two time periods after ESSN transfer is compared



Source data: PAB, PDM1 and PDM6 Panel surveys, as analysed by the MTR 2019.

The coverage of the ESSN programme has increased significantly over time reaching about three in five of the refugee population in Turkey as of 2020. Figure 9 provides a depiction of coverage of the ESSN among all refugees in the CVME3 and CVME5 data. Whereas at the time of CVME3 data collection (Mar–July 2018), 43% of refugee households were covered by the ESSN, this level increased to 61% of refugees at the time of CVME5 data collection (Nov 2019 to Feb 2020). The Evaluation of the EU Humanitarian Response⁸² found that: ‘The rapid scaling-up and universal scope of the ESSN and CTE programmes allowed ... [the Commission] to quickly cover most of the needs of the vast majority of the refugees – and to an extent that would not have been possible if specific household needs had been assessed individually prior to implementation.’ Looked at more broadly, the analysis of the data from the CVME surveys carried out by WFP and TRCS shows that the support provided by the ESSN has been successful. The evaluation team agrees with the assessment that a more detailed (and econometrically advanced) targeting strategy would have reduced the speed of implementation. The initially selected demographic targeting criteria were transparent and had certain benefits for rapid expansion of the programme. However, it is clear that while the ESSN has had wide coverage of the refugee population, there is also a significant group of refugees that remained outside of the coverage of the ESSN that were vulnerable.

As a result of the difficulty in targeting this homogenous population that is also constantly in flux, the exclusion error and inclusion errors have been high in the programme. The exclusion error is commonly defined as the percentage of poor people who are excluded from the programme. The level of the exclusion error is therefore highly sensitive to the choice of the poverty line in the calculation. When the MEB poverty line is used for the analysis, the initial exclusion error of the programme is found to be 51.1% in the baseline. We note that when changes were made to the targeting criteria in May 2017, the exclusion error of the programme dropped to 35.5 % (PDM7). With this change the inclusion error has also increased from 14.1% (PAB) to 31.2% (PDM7). Hence, reducing both exclusion and inclusion errors has not been possible in the programme. This is driven mainly by the underlying distribution of the refugee population – and the difficulty of coming up with a system for consistently targeting this group.

Given the dynamic nature of the population, the benefit incidence (targeting of benefit across quintiles) which was initially pro-poor, has become more uniform across the quintiles over time. The benefit incidence figure (Figure 10) shows the distribution of the total funding of the ESSN across the per adult equivalent quintiles. It is noted that, while the benefit incidence of the ESSN was slightly pro-poor in the baseline, it has become more uniform over time. By the time PDM6 was collected in December 2018, the distribution of benefits across quintiles became more even, where the poorest quintile received 20.1% of the total benefit, while the richest quintile received 18.4% (See Figure 10). This suggests that

⁸² Final Report of EC Evaluation of the EU's Humanitarian Response to the refugee crisis in Turkey, 2019.

uniformly or randomly allocating the benefit without any targeting criteria may have achieved a similar targeting outcome.

Figure 9: Coverage of the ESSN over time

The coverage of the ESSN has increased in time for the population

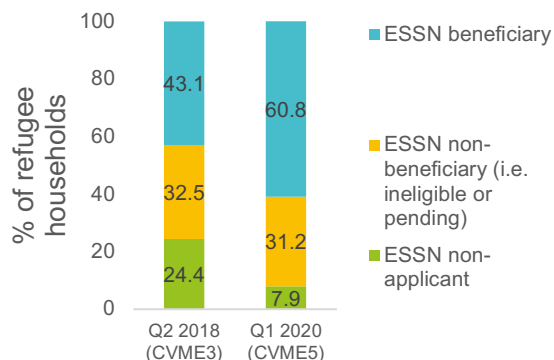
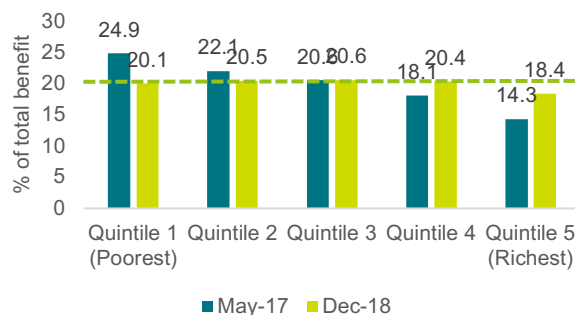


Figure 10: Benefit Incidence of the ESSN⁸³

(Targeting performance)

... while the targeting performance was initially pro-poor, it has approached uniform targeting by Dec 2018



Source data: CVME3, CVME5 and WFP 2020, ESSN Mid-term Review 2018/2019.

The first round of assessments⁸⁴, carried out in 2018, concluded that the targeting criteria ensured coverage of 68.6% of the highly vulnerable population, but that there was a significant exclusion error, so that 31.4% of the highly vulnerable population have been excluded from the programme. Similarly, the ESSN Evaluation 2018⁸⁵ found that: ‘The decision to provide application-based assistance left a significant number of vulnerable refugees outside of the footprint of the ESSN. No mechanism was established to provide bridging assistance to those who were unable to assemble the supporting documentation, those who faced a protracted wait for a decision on eligibility or those deemed ineligible but highly vulnerable.’

The qualitative assessment of enumerators that visit ESSN beneficiary and non-beneficiary households during the collection of CVME5 data is also revealing in terms of how the vulnerability profiles of ESSN and non-ESSN beneficiaries compare. According to their assessment 33% of ESSN non-beneficiaries are in ‘extremely vulnerable’ households while 39.4% of ESSN households are considered to be in extremely vulnerable households⁸⁶. This is consistent with the targeting analysis presented above, that while the ESSN has been slightly pro-poor targeted, it has also not been able to cover all the of the vulnerable refugee households, mainly due to the strict nature of demographic criteria applied.

The ESSN uses demographic targeting criteria, focusing on the most vulnerable households, with a focus on single-parent households, the elderly, people with disabilities, large families, unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups. However, in some cases, demographic criteria fail to include deserving vulnerable families, such as families with fewer than three children. The fairness of distribution was discussed among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries during focus group discussions conducted for the strategic evaluation of ESSN in Turkey⁸⁷. Out of 52 refugees who attended FGD, 32 believed that the ESSN programme did not include people who are in need. Most of the beneficiaries based their argument on the inability of the demographic criteria to include vulnerable families with fewer than three children:

I was rejected twice since I have only three kids. Then they changed the criteria and my family was included into the programme. That makes me think ‘don’t people with two kids have a family to support?’ They are still paying their rents. Milk and diapers are still expensive.

Beneficiary non-Syrian man, Afyon

⁸³ Benefit incidence is defined as the percentage of total benefits that are distributed to each quintile. The quintiles are constructed based on per capita adult equivalent expenditures and each quintile has the same number of individuals.

⁸⁴ ESSN Vulnerability Profiling 2018, Analysis Results (August 2018).

⁸⁵ WFP (2018). Evaluation of the DG ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey.

⁸⁶ Analysis of CVME5 data by the evaluation team.

⁸⁷ WFP Evaluation of the ESSN, 2018.

Some of the refugees cannot benefit from TRCS card due to the number of kids in the family. It is not fair. A father who has two kids still needs to buy two cartons of milk and each carton costs money. How is he supposed to buy them?

Beneficiary non-Syrian man, Afyon

Some beneficiaries mentioned that the programme should take into attention the economic situation of the applicants, rather than the size of the family:

The TRCS offices should make an inquiry about the financial status of the applicants. Checking only medical report and the number of children should not be sufficient to make the applicants eligible. I know some families who have large household size, but all members of the family are working. On the other hand, there are families, who have two young children and only the father is working but they are not eligible.

Beneficiary Syrian woman, Istanbul

There is no corruption in the system, but the distribution is not fair. There are families with three kids but all of them are working and making contribution to the income. However, there are families with two kids but both of them are infant and in need of money but excluded.

Beneficiary Syrian man, Istanbul

The fairness of the distribution of ESSN was also discussed in TRC-SUY Facebook Page, which the evaluation team conducted a sentiment analysis out of web scraped data from the Facebook page. The discourse over the targeting fairness of programme clusters around similar complaints over time and the themes of complaints, such as ‘complaints about small households with less than four children not being able to receive the ESSN’ are aligned with ESSN FGD data collected in late 2017. In addition to the demographic criteria, the inclusion error (such as including people in the ESSN despite their relatively better conditions) was discussed on the webpage as well:

I am very curious to know how your system works. What are the standards for accepting applications? My family's conditions are extremely bad. Is my application being rejected because I only have two children (small families)? Well, bigger families who receive the aid have more family member that can work. Some of the beneficiaries even have cars! This is not fair!

Q1 2017

When will you accept four-member families? This is not fair. Others are getting the aid and we do not. Having two children does not mean we do not have rent and bills to pay. We are not able to cover these expenses. It is not fair.

Q1 2019

In response to the criticisms of targeting, and the declining value of the benefit as a result of the economic situation (discussed below) a number of additional mechanisms were brought in that sought to address the issues identified. This followed detailed discussions between WFP, TRCS, the government and the Facility⁸⁸. While all acknowledged the declining value of the benefit, and the problem this represented, it was deemed politically challenging to raise the amount against a backdrop of hardship in the general population. In the end a ‘top-up’, or discretionary allowance was deemed to be the solution, as this was both complex and not available to all and therefore would not be visible in public (while still channelling extra resources to those in greatest distress)⁸⁹.

The ESSN Mid-term Review⁹⁰ looked in detail at the mechanisms, specifically: the SASF Discretionary Allowance, outreach teams, protection referrals, and the Severe Disability Allowance (SDA). The SASF Discretionary Allowance was a welcome addition to the ESSN allowing the SASFs to provide ESSN access to households they could identify as being highly vulnerable. The aim was to increase coverage

⁸⁸ KII

⁸⁹ KII

⁹⁰ WFP ESSN Mid-term Review, 2020.

and reduce exclusion error⁹¹. However, the total amount of applications submitted by the SASF was designed not to exceed 5% of the total number of ESSN applications that the SASF had received by 30 October 2018, and the nationwide quota for all SASFs was 23,879 households⁹². As of June 2019, 209 SASFs had started to use the Discretionary Allowance among 503 SASFs⁹³. One should note that only 15.6% of this quota, which was equivalent to 3,735 households (14,988 individuals), had been utilised, as reported in the ESSN MTR.

The take-up of the SASF Discretionary Allowance was slow and varied by district and province. There were several reasons for low take-up: (i) many of the SASFs viewed this strictly as a quota and reserved it for a time when there might be an additional in-flow of refugees; (ii) some of them reported not being willing or able to advertise the additional benefit available, as it would have negative implications on social cohesion and would also significantly increase the workload of the SASFs; and (iii) the SASF allowance required costly household visits that were not necessarily budgeted by the ESSN (in terms of staff time and travel costs) which also reduced the likelihood of the allowance being used by the SASFs. The MTR mentioned: 'Resource constraints, specifically insufficient SASF staff time, lack of transport budgets and interpreters for household visits, were key constraints in the roll-out of the allowance, despite Turkish government support with vehicles, staff and interpreter support' and a shortage of IT equipment was also a constraint. It was recommended that 'the ESSN should continue to liaise with the MoFLSS to find the most appropriate and effective ways to support the SASF offices with the necessary support to complete household visits.' Even though the exact budget distribution of household visits is not clear in terms of required cost allocated by SASFs and ESSN, the report reveals that SASFs allocate their resources to facilitate household visits but do not have enough resources to visit all households. Overall, the Mid-term Review⁹⁴ concluded that: 'The focus on improved targeting efficiency was logical and relevant, given the evidence of persistent exclusion and inclusion errors in the ESSN. However, the results of the main changes to targeting criteria and processes in rectifying these errors were mixed.' While the household visits were a useful way to reduce inclusion error, reducing the exclusion error would have required a more fundamental revision of the targeting criteria.

In conclusion, the use of demographic criteria comes with the risk of vulnerable groups being excluded, while the requirements for receiving ESSN support being based on having an ID card and having a registered address compound the risk. Efforts were made to tackle the problems identified through analysis of monitoring data; In the 2018 Evaluation, specifically via the SASF Discretionary Allowance, referral and outreach teams and the SDA. All of these measures were assessed in the ESSN Mid-term Review⁹⁵, which concluded that: of 17,977 cases referred, 78% were solved; and 7,584 households received the SDA. What remains missing are comprehensive data and a broader assessment of whether vulnerable groups of refugees are being reached. As the ESSN Evaluation concluded: the homogeneity of refugees (relating to their economic needs) and the scale of needs made targeting challenging, and many vulnerable households remained excluded.

With the benefit of data collected through the ESSN programme, it is possible to analyse a variety of alternative targeting strategies. While there are likely to be trade-offs and there may be as yet other risks associated with alternative strategies, this would be a highly beneficial exercise for the Facility and its government partners to consider. It would also be extremely useful for future large-scale humanitarian cash transfer schemes.

One such example could be the consideration of a uniform targeting strategy and to rely more on self-targeting by reducing the benefit level per household. After the expansion of the programme, in order to reduce remaining inclusion errors at the top, household visits would have been required over an extended period of time, cutting off beneficiaries from the programme who were considered ineligible based on their existing welfare level. Reducing the benefit level per household would have increased self-targeting into the programme, giving better-off households less incentive to apply. A lower benefit level distributed equally across refugee households (based on number of children, elderly and disabled people in the household) would have increased the coverage of the ESSN.

Based on simulations run by the evaluation team, the poverty impact of such a transfer (in term of reducing poverty headcount) would have been even higher for the same level of budget and the exclusion error of the programme would have been reduced significantly. A micro-simulation was

⁹¹ WFP (2019). Standard Operating Procedures: ESSN Household Visits and SASF Discretionary Allowance.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ WFP ESSN Mid-term Review, 2020.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

conducted using CVME3 data collected by WFP and TRCS, and the impact of allocating benefits to households using a universal targeting approach was examined. A similar targeting approach at the household level was used, but benefit calculation was calculated at the individual level giving benefits per (i) children ages 0–17, (ii) adults aged 60+, (iii) people living with disabilities having a medical report and (iv) women living alone. This new targeting approach ends up covering 91% of the households as opposed to current coverage of 47.9%. Poverty headcount (the percentage of the population below the MEB poverty line) decreases slightly when the transfer amount is kept the same (TRY 120 per individual) and decreases further if the transfer increases to TRY 160 (baseline household expenditure of households is estimated by subtracting current benefit from the household expenditure of current beneficiaries and then the new benefit is added to the household expenditure based on new targeting criteria). The poverty gap and poverty severity – which are both measures of the poverty depth increase when the transfer amount per individual is kept at the same level as in the baseline. However, the poverty gap and poverty severity all decrease when the transfer amount is increased to TRY 160 per person. Since targeting is almost universal in the revised benefit distribution, the exclusion error drops significantly while in contrast, inclusion error increases in the simulation scenarios.

iv. Adequacy of the transfer

The ESSN Evaluation⁹⁶ sets out the process by which the ESSN was set, first that: ‘the cash transfer amount was estimated based on a calculation of the MEB for an average-sized household of six members and an expenditure gap analysis. Based on these figures, the gap was calculated at TRY 174 per person, per month.’ However:

the final level of the ESSN transfer took into account Turkish Government concerns on comparability with the benefits provided to poor Turkish citizens through the national social assistance system and wider stakeholder concerns on sustainability and social cohesion. Based on this, the agreed value was TRY 100 [approximately USD 27] per person, per month. This remained a point of contention, and humanitarian actors argued that the needs of refugees were greater than those of poor Turks. The standard monthly transfer value was subsequently reviewed and increased ... to an equivalent to a monthly average of approximately TRY 133.

This is a view that is supported by those who were directly involved in developing and implementing the support for basic needs⁹⁷, and that there a balance should be found between covering needs for refugees and not contributing to social tensions.

While the ESSN was used by beneficiaries to cover basic requirements, the expenditure levels of beneficiaries were still not reaching the MEB post-distribution. The initial transfer value was not enough to meet basic needs. However, this was partly in the design of the ESSN as there were concerns that the too high benefit amount may have negative implications for social cohesion, as poor Turkish citizens were not receiving this type of consistent social assistance from the government. In 2017, post-transfer, 97.1% of beneficiary households reported that they were satisfied with the amount of ESSN they received, but at the same time 44.4% of them thought that the amount was insufficient to cover their basic needs (PDM1 analysis).

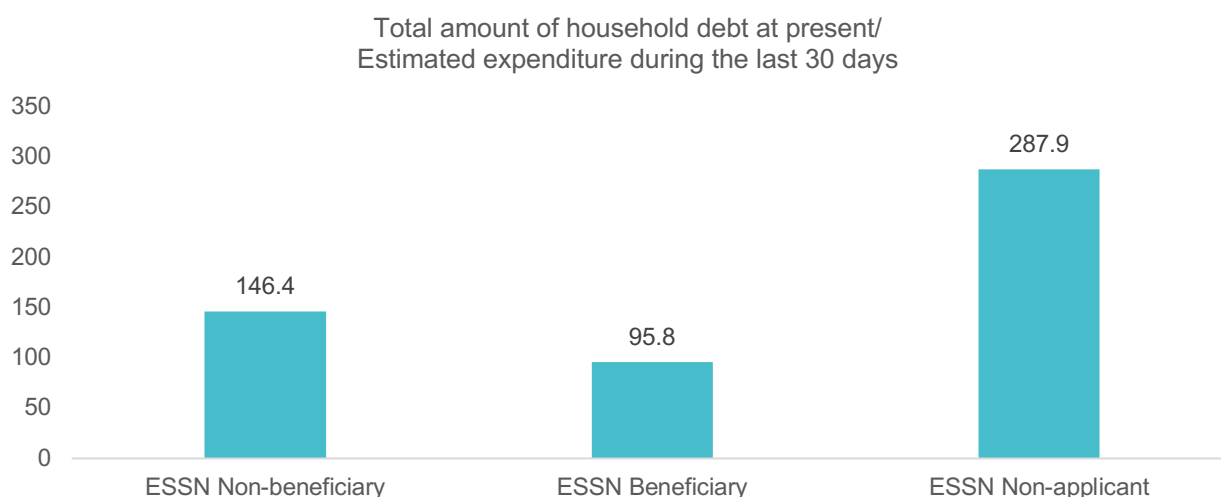
In terms of this coverage, the ESSN transfer was insufficient to cover the MEB, initially covering 42% and declining to 30% in 2020⁹⁸. The analysis of the monitoring data collected for the ESSN clearly demonstrates that the real value of ESSN support has declined significantly over time, even accounting for the top-ups that have been introduced. According to the ESSN mid-term evaluation: ‘The informal understanding was that the ESSN transfer would be reviewed and adjusted for inflation every 2 years in line with the practice for Turkish social transfers.’ However, the adjustments in the value of the ESSN have not kept pace with the increase in the Turkish consumer price index (CPI) in recent years (see Figure 12).

⁹⁶ WFP Evaluation of the ESSN, 2018.

⁹⁷ KII: SES 37, SES18, SES 25.

⁹⁸ KII: SES 37.

Figure 11: Total debt as a percentage of monthly household expenditure is lowest for ESSN beneficiary households



Source: CVME5 analysis

Since 2018, the depreciation of the Turkish lira and the resulting inflation have reduced the purchasing power of the ESSN and put a strain on the capacity of refugees to meet their basic needs. The annual inflation rate in Turkey has reached its peak since the 2001 economic crisis, and Turkish lira plunged down to a historical level against the dollar in the summer of 2018. Thus, there has been a loss of purchasing power for both Turkish citizens and refugees⁹⁹. As reported by FAO Turkey, ‘Syrian refugees spend a large portion of their household budget on buying food from the market. This reliance on market purchases makes their food security status vulnerable to market developments, such as price hikes and income losses.’¹⁰⁰ Their vulnerability to meet basic needs has also been captured by WFP monitoring data showing that the cost of essential refugee needs, which is calculated as the minimum expenditure basket cost, reached TRY 337.50 in Q4 2018 in comparison with TRY 294 in Q2 2018¹⁰¹.

The rise in consumer prices has effectively reduced the size of the ESSN in real terms. For instance, for a household with six members, the average transfer (including top-ups) was TRY 121 in Q3 of 2017. This level declined to TRY 96 per person in the same household in Q2 of 2019 (as expressed in Q3 2017 prices). This is equivalent to a real reduction in the per capita transfer value of about 21%, meaning that the ESSN value was cut in real terms by one-fifth its value in less than 2 years. Figure 12 provides a calculation of the real transfer value (in Q3 2017 prices and including the updated quarterly top-ups) for households of size 1, 3, 6 and 9 people from Q3 2017 to Q2 2019. Although WFP argued for an increase in the transfer value in early 2019, this was not accepted by Turkish authorities on grounds of ‘ensuring social cohesion’ and making sure the transfer value was not too high for Syrian refugees. WFP Turkey Annual Country Report 2018, states that ‘after the Lira fell to a historic low against the dollar in August and the annual inflation reached 25% by October, ... WFP has observed some worrying trends such as beneficiaries starting to resort more to negative coping strategies. WFP has been advocating for adjustments in the transfer value.’¹⁰² Although programme implementers were unable to increase the ESSN amount early in 2019, ultimately, in August 2019, an increase in the transfer value was achieved through quarterly top-ups. The top-ups introduced in August 2019 led to an important increase in the amount delivered to smaller households, but did not make as much of a difference for larger households (see Figure 12).

⁹⁹ WFP (2018). Turkey Annual Country Report 2018: Country Strategic Plan 2018-2019 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000104235/download/>

¹⁰⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2018) Turkey Syrian Refugee Resilience Plan 2018–2019 http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/Fao-syrian-refugee-plan2018-19.pdf

¹⁰¹ WFP (2018). ESSN Quarterly Monitoring Report Turkey Q4/2018.

¹⁰² WFP (2018). Turkey Annual Country Report 2018: Country Strategic Plan 2018-2019 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000104235/download/>

Figure 12: The value of the ESSN transfer decreased in real terms due to rising consumer prices

Monthly CPI increase rate and monthly MEB per person increase rate (left axis)/Per capita monthly quarterly transfer value in real terms, deflated using CPI increase rate (right axis)



Source: Adapted from analysis in ESSN MTR (2019). CPI rates are obtained from TURKSTAT, monthly MEB values and ESSN transfer amounts with quarterly top-ups are obtained from WFP

v. Sustainability

One current major challenge facing the ESSN is its sustainability. Implementing partners interviewed for this evaluation identify this as their single biggest regret, that there was not a sustainability strategy from the outset¹⁰³. This is also a cautionary tale for any future unconditional cash transfers of such a large scale.

Both the Facility and the Government of Turkey have published sustainability strategies of sorts for the ESSN and the basic needs support. In 2018 the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) published a strategy outlining three main components: graduation from the ESSN; increasing formal employment; and harmonisation (of labour policy and practice). The MoFLSS strategy¹⁰⁴ identifies just under one million Syrians as ‘expected to participate’ in the Turkish labour market, which is consistent with analysis elsewhere including in this report. The Facility strategy is outlined at the 12th Steering Committee (SC) in 2019, also foreseeing a graduation of ESSN beneficiaries into the labour market with some 30% of the current caseload being unable to participate in work and therefore being absorbed into the Turkish social assistance system. At the time of this evaluation a direct grant to the MoFLSS was under discussion for this absorption. As the SC note makes clear, ‘the difficulties of integrating refugees in the formal Turkish economy are very challenging factor on the path towards more sustainable livelihoods’. The SC note also highlights one of the major sticking points to any transition, that ‘the Turkish authorities have confirmed that there is no budgetary space or policy arrangement at present for continuing funding any social assistance scheme for refugees without external support’.

The challenges of absorbing refugees into the formal labour market, as both strategies suggest, are analysed under JC10.2 below, examining the Facility programmes in this area. One clear issue identified in this analysis is the potential disincentive within the ESSN where people lose eligibility on receipt of a work permit. This may be hampering the transition envisaged.

Two further issues about sustainability were identified by the partners most closely associated with the programme. The first issue is the unconditional nature of the ESSN. The analysis above makes it clear that a simple, clear, easy to access scheme was the only way to reach scale in the time available, which was the over-riding concern. Partners interviewed for the evaluation suggest that some form of

¹⁰³ KII: Number?

¹⁰⁴ Exit strategy from the ESSN program. FRIT office of the presidency of Turkey and MoFLSS. 20/12/2018.

conditionality from the outset – even if for a small component, or to be introduced at a later date, might have set the grounds for a gradual reduction in the caseload over time. Clearly technical design would be paramount; at the very least some form of modelling should be carried out to see whether this would actually be the case (and whether it would be in line with humanitarian commitments and principles).

The second issue is that the development and planning of the ESSN was with a medium-term perspective at best. The planning cycle was based on the Commission's annual Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs), with WFP responding with an annual financial plan for the ESSN¹⁰⁵. As a result, discussion of a transition or exit strategy could be argued to have been compromised by the uncertainty about who would be delivering the scheme in the following year. While the HIPs did call for exit strategies, realistic strategies have not emerged from the contracting and implementation of the ESSN under the first tranche of the Facility. Furthermore, while the annual funding cycle and negotiations with IPs do not prevent the Commission's services from engaging in strategic, long-term discussions, they may well have consumed much of the 'bandwidth' of the units in question and possibly represented a distraction. In 2018, the ESSN Evaluation concluded that: 'Little progress has been made on determining the future of the ESSN. The distinct nature of the ESSN, coupled with its scale, are obstacles to integration into the national system. No substantive progress was made in discussions on an exit strategy.' Possible exit strategies developed under Facility II contributions to the ESSN are not evaluated here, but should be in the future. Also, as time has progressed, the negotiations around the transition have been increasingly affected by the ongoing political negotiations between the EU and the Government of Turkey over the general support provided to the country in its support of Syrian and other refugees¹⁰⁶.

3.1.4. Contribution considerations

The Government of Turkey provided the basis for the administrative infrastructure, supported and expanded by their partner TRCS, for the development and rapid roll-out of the basic needs support through the ESSN. The Turkish social assistance system and the widespread network of the SASFs provided a basic foundation. TRCS, who have worked as a close partner of the government, provided the flexibility and capacity that enabled, in part, the rapid expansion and extensive coverage of the ESSN.

The Facility provided the considerable and consistent financial support needed and, through WFP (the international implementation partner) provided the technical expertise to work at scale and to ensure flexibility and responsiveness. This ensured coverage of the most vulnerable and helped respond to problems as they were identified. Funding to cover basic needs amounted to EUR 1.08 billion out of a total of approximately EUR 1.27 billion for socio-economic support within the first tranche of the Facility. A key aspect of this has been the continued and consistent financial support provided, with a further EUR 485 million agreed to committed support to the ESSN and CTE in 2020¹⁰⁷. WFP has provided the international expert advice and experience to build the capacity of TRCS, as the implementing partner. This ensures effective monitoring and evaluation, which has made a major contribution to ensuring that the programme has been able to target the most vulnerable, often in a context where access to reliable updated data has been constrained.

Overall, it is concluded that the support to the basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees has made a significant contribution to ensuring the relative stability of their socio-economic situation, as well as potentially contributing to social stability in Turkey. The evidence from observed outcomes suggests that the extensive coverage and consistency of the support to basic needs provided by the ESSN (alongside other support, including CTE) between 2016 and 2019 has increased the proportion of refugees receiving support. This has made a contribution to improvements in the food security of refugees and to a decline in the use of stress coping strategies. As will be explored in Section 3.3, a case can be made that the provision of basic needs support has also helped to make the Syrian refugees in Turkey feel more settled and secure in 2019 than they felt in 2016.

Three years into the ESSN programme and with the benefit of retrospective data available through PDM and CVME surveys, it is clear that the ESSN might have done just as well (if not better) in terms of targeting, had the targeting condition in HIP 2017 not been specified and applied so strictly. This would have allowed the benefits of the programme to be more widely and equally distributed across all refugee households, with a view to reduce inclusion error over time. The benefit would have been

¹⁰⁵ KII: SES 16.

¹⁰⁶ KIIs: SES 16, SES 36, SES 37.

¹⁰⁷ Yet to be programmed/contracted.

distributed based on number of children, elderly and disabled in the household (with a possible Severe Disability Allowance provided as a top-up as in later stages of the ESSN). This type of distribution would have given households with two children (who may be just as vulnerable) the possibility of accessing the ESSN, and reduced potential distorted incentives that refugee households have for changing their household composition to fit the demographic criteria.

The distribution of benefits to only part of the refugee population may have brought about a situation where children have moved across households. A recent impact evaluation of the ESSN published by the World Bank using the panel datasets collected by WFP and TRCS (PAB, PDM2, PDM4 and PDM6), found that ESSN caused changes in household size and composition with school-age children moving from larger ineligible households to smaller eligible ones¹⁰⁸. In a 6-month period (comparing PAB and PDM2), household size decreased by 0.4 persons in the control group while it increased by 0.27 persons in the treatment group from an average value of six for both groups in the baseline. The authors find that the reason for this change was the movement of school-age children across households. The average number of children aged 6–17 years old decreases in the control group by 0.32 children and increases in the treatment group by 0.33 children. The WB evaluation also suggests that the movement of children between ineligible and worse off households and eligible better-off households led to a substantial decline in poverty and inequality in the applicant population. The findings of the evaluation suggest:

It is also possible that a significant amount of this churn in household composition could have been avoided. If a sufficiently small share of refugees is treated within a given network, the pressure for the beneficiaries to share the transfers with others can be high – resulting in smaller than expected treatment effects. In such a setting, lowering the eligibility threshold to increase the share of applicants assigned to ESSN would likely reduce the changes in the composition of the treatment group.

As such, it suggests that the movement of children across households could have been avoided had the benefits been more widely distributed. However, it should also be noted that the WFP did not agree with the findings of the WB evaluation¹⁰⁹.

Some have associated the eligibility criteria with an impact on fertility. In a recent paper on the fertility impact of the ESSN, the authors investigate whether the ESSN assistance encourages non-recipient households to have more children to become eligible¹¹⁰. Using administrative data from the ESSN database and a propensity score-matching method, they find that while the fertility rates of women before the war in Syria are higher than after arrival in Turkey, the ESSN beneficiaries do have more children than non-beneficiaries. According to the study, the average effect of the ESSN on fertility is about +0.05 child per year per woman for ESSN beneficiaries compared to ESSN non-beneficiaries. However, this should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence of the eligibility criteria increasing the fertility rate. Rather, it seems plausible that beneficiary couples are slightly more likely to have additional children after entering the ESSN programme, i.e. couples who could not afford to have the child they desired before the programme are able to, once they are included in the ESSN because of the monetary assistance provided. In this case the positive fertility impact of the ESSN would be explained by the improved economic security the programme provides, not due to an incentive arising from the eligibility criteria – an important distinction.

Nonetheless, the study in question also finds an impact of the ESSN on timing of births, which appears easier to attribute to the ESSN. For ineligible households the timing of the birth of a third child is moved forward (earlier) by one month. This quite small effect on behaviour could result in a sizeable fertility impact in absolute terms. If we assume that there are about 200,000 women of childbearing age in the ESSN beneficiary households, this adds up to about 10,000 additional babies per year being born to refugee families as a result of the ESSN demographic criteria and the high stakes around how benefit levels are determined per household.

¹⁰⁸ Ozler et. al (2020). 'Children on the Move Progressive Redistribution of Humanitarian Cash Transfers among Refugees', The World Bank <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/996581604677892185/pdf/Children-on-the-Move-Progressive-Redistribution-of-Humanitarian-Cash-Transfers-among-Refugees.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ The WFP regards the findings regarding children moving from worse-off households to well-off households as weak as they are made on the basis of proxy indicators. They consider that further ground level research should be undertaken to corroborate these findings. On this basis WFP questions whether the evaluation identified a genuine trend in child movement and if so whether this can be attributed to ESSN disbursement.

¹¹⁰ Fardeau, Andro, Sierra-Paycha & Bozdog (2019). *The impact of Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Targeting Criteria on the Fertility Decisions of the ESSN Applicants.*

The experience of targeting the refugees in Turkey in the ESSN programme has revealed some very interesting learning for the targeting of cash transfer programmes globally for refugees. In hindsight, we can see that the refugee population in the baseline was very equal in distribution – and targeting ‘the most vulnerable’ may not have been appropriate for this context as refugee households by definition are vulnerable¹¹¹. The initial decision to target the most vulnerable within the refugee community and whether this was necessary – and the most efficient ways of targeting to reduce inclusion error – could possibly have been revised during the lifecycle of the ESSN.

It is significant that the coverage of support has been so widespread and that the support provided has been consistent; however, exclusion could have been avoided with a more universal coverage of the refugees. The ESSN has provided relatively high coverage of the refugee households with a rapid roll-out of the programme. The initially adopted demographic targeting criteria have allowed for this rapid and transparent expansion.

The level of the ESSN transfer was determined first based on the MEB for refugees, but it has been clear from the start that the transfer level was not enough to cover basic needs (and that it would only be complimentary to other income generated by household members). The level of the benefit was not high enough to cover all basic needs, but it was higher than any social protection benefits distributed to Turkish citizens and was already a point of contention with the Turkish government.

3.2. Judgement criterion 10.2: The Facility has contributed to improved employment prospects of Syrian refugees and has enabled engagement in livelihood opportunities

3.2.1. ‘Improved employment prospects and enabling of engagement in livelihood opportunities’ as an outcome

In the reconstructed intervention logic, the intermediate outcomes are stated as:

- Employment prospects of refugees and host community members improved
- Livelihood opportunities created through economic activity.

Over the period 2016–2020, there is relatively little to identify how these outcomes are defined in more detail or how the targets have been determined. An analysis of overall labour market conditions was not carried out, though specific provincial-level needs assessment studies have been mentioned during KIIs. Similarly, no baseline data was collected or was available for beneficiaries who partook in the programmes. As described by one implementing partner agency¹¹²:

The data is very sparse still and it's very scant. So, there was essentially no baseline data in terms of İŞKUR programmes. This [target] group wasn't really part of their clientele until 2016-17. So even though there might have been people who were registered, these were very, very few. There weren't really people participating in active labour market programmes delivered by İŞKUR. At the same time, there were programmes which were delivered by NGOs sort of smaller scale programmes on apprenticeship, on livelihood support. And there is some documentation on that. There's some quality issues around the data. So, we use whatever was available.

The annex describing the Special Measures¹¹³, including socio-economic support, provides a broad description of what is envisaged: ‘Support socio-economic resilience through local economic development, microfinance and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) development/access to finance, job creation and employment opportunities, entrepreneurship for host communities, and, where feasible, for refugees/displaced persons.’

The Facility Strategic Concept Note¹¹⁴ includes a similarly broad statement on how this will be implemented, through: ‘indirect management with different international financial institutions, under the oversight of the Commission.’ The expected results are set out under each of the programmes financed

¹¹¹ Perhaps a better approach may have been targeting out the top-end of the distribution, which we suggest and analyse in the simulation presented later in the chapter.

¹¹² KII: SES8.

¹¹³ CID on Special Measures on education, health, municipal infrastructure and socio-economic support, July 2016.

¹¹⁴ Facility for Refugees in Turkey, Strategic Concept Note, 2016.

as part of the Special Measure, while the overall Facility output target is the: Number of Syrian refugees registered with İŞKUR (the Turkish public employment agency) target of 16,300.

Each of the actions supported has specific overall objectives, which broadly have similar aims of strengthening economic resilience of both refugees and host communities, through improving employability and, to a more limited extent, entrepreneurship and job creation – see Table 5.

Table 5: Actions aimed at strengthening economic resilience of both refugees and host communities

Implementing partners and actions	Overall objectives in logframe
World Bank Employment support for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities	SuTPs [Syrians under temporary protection] and Turkish citizens in selected host communities (HCs) with high presence of SuTP have improved their employability by taking part in a least one active labour market programme (ALMP)
World Bank Strengthening economic opportunities for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities in selected provinces	The Government of Turkey's (GoTR) capacity is strengthened to assess demand for skills, support job creation and entrepreneurship in selected provinces with high incidence of SuTPs and results are evaluated
KfW Social and economic cohesion through vocational education	To foster social and economic cohesion of Syrian refugees and Turkish host communities by improving their employability and qualifications
TOBB Living and working together: integrating SuTPs to Turkish economy	To integrate SuTPs and HC members to Turkish labour market by increasing their employability through vocational orientation, testing and certification
International Labour Organization (ILO)/ International Office for Migration (IOM) Job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities in Turkey	Strengthened economic and social resilience of SuTP and HCs
UN WOMEN Strengthening resilience and empowerment of women and girls affected by the Syrian crisis	To strengthen the resilience of Syrian and host community women, girls and their communities to conflict, displacement and other crises
GIZ Qudra – Resilience for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and HCs in response to the protracted Syrian and Iraqi crises	Contribute to mitigating the destabilising effects of the protracted Syrian and Iraqi crises and to better respond to the resilience needs of refugees, IDPs, returnees and HCs
UNDP UNDP Turkey Resilience Project in response to the Syria Crisis (TRP)	To strengthen the economic and social resilience of SuTP, their HCs and relevant national and local government institutions

In terms of data on what outcomes have been achieved, thus far, with implementation of many actions till ongoing, there is limited (relevant) evidence. Specific reporting from the programmes includes the following indicators relating to the outcome of employment:

- World Bank (WB) – on-the-job training, organised by İŞKUR – 15,590 participants (as of June 2020)¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ World Bank, Employment Support for Syrians Under Temporary Protection and Turkish Citizens Activities1 EU-IPA/2017/386-311 Progress Report 2020/2021

- ILO – number of SuTPs [Syrian] and host communities (HC) employed through incentives and business growth (job placements) – 2,143 SuTP, 731 HC (as of September 2020)¹¹⁶.

Overall, the SUMAF¹¹⁷ report concludes that:

The number of work permits issued to SuTPs [Syrians] in 2019, according to the Directorate-General of International Labour Force (DG ILF), under MoFLSS, is about 60,000. Since work permits require annual renewal, that number effectively represents the number of Syrians currently in formal employment, although it may overstate this number given that a work permit can be issued to the same person twice within the same year. This stands against an estimated one to two million Syrians in informal labour market. The fact that to date only 3%–6% of working Syrians have been issued work permits is sobering considering the number of measures and substantial funds aimed at fostering formal employment.

The Facility monitoring report (to June 2020) stated that a total of 247 SMEs received financing support of some form¹¹⁸.

In the online survey data collected for this evaluation, the majority of respondents (59%) reported that they had not been able to find work or the means to make a secure livelihood. Among those who lack Turkish language proficiency, this rate is higher at 76% of respondents, and looked at geographically, for those outside Istanbul, the percentage that report not being able to find work and/or the means to make a secure livelihood is slightly higher (61%, compared to 50% in Istanbul).

¹¹⁶ ILO/IOM, Job Creation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Turkey. 3rd QIN, September 2020.

¹¹⁷ Technical assistance to support the monitoring of actions financed under the facility for refugees in Turkey.

¹¹⁸ The facility for refugees in Turkey: the facility results framework – monitoring report output achievement progress (at 30/6/2020) https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/201022_fmr.pdf

Table 6: Summary of intermediate outcome: employment prospects and livelihood opportunities improved

Expected outcome	The employment prospects and livelihood opportunities of refugees and host communities have improved. Number of Syrian refugees registered with İŞKUR – target of 16,300, There is no target for support to SMEs				
Observed outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of work permits issued to Syrians in 2019, according to the Directorate-General of International Labour Force (DG ILF), under Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS), is about 60,000. This indicator is the best available measure of participation in formal employment, but naturally it does not give a picture of overall refugee economic activity, as the vast majority of working-age refugees in Turkey are working informally. 247 SMEs received financing support of some form. Labour income is among the main sources of income for all refugee households. ESSN beneficiary households continue to rely on informal labour income as one of the main sources of income. The percentage of households where no one works has increased with the economic slowdown in 2018. 92.2% of the refugees surveyed report that they did not receive any livelihood support through trainings. The cost effectiveness of livelihoods training programmes and formal sector integration of refugees remains to be seen. 				
Facility results contributing to the outcome	Indicators¹¹⁹ (excluding those for which no progress is reported to date)			Targets	Outputs achieved (as of 30 June 2020)
Source: Facility Monitoring Report (to June 2020)	Number of Syrian refugees and host community members who participated in employability skills training programmes	i3.2.1.1	Cumulative	38,820	42,492
	Number of Syrian refugees and host community members who benefited from employment-related services	i3.2.1.2	Cumulative	55,420	55,364
	Number of Syrian refugees who completed a Turkish language course outside the formal education system	i3.2.1.4	Cumulative	54,330	20,061
	Number of Syrian refugees registered with İŞKUR	i3.2.1.5	Snapshot	16,300	13,427
	Number of SMEs that benefited from coaching	i3.3.1.1	Cumulative	1,310	925
	Number of SMEs that received Facility financing (e.g. financial incentives, micro-grants)	i3.3.1.2	Cumulative	740	247

¹¹⁹ A 'snapshot' indicator reports the current value at a particular point in time within a specific reporting period. The value of a snapshot indicator may rise and fall from reporting period to reporting period, but only the current value for the selected reporting period is reported, irrespective of the historical values. 'Cumulative' indicators report the cumulative value or running total of the indicator since the start of the Facility. Additional progress made during the reporting period is added to the previous total in order to generate the next cumulative total.

3.2.2. Description of Facility interventions aimed at supporting outcome of ‘improved employment prospects and enabling of engagement in livelihood opportunities’

The Facility’s first tranche is supporting a number of actions with components that specifically aim to improve the employability of Syrians (and host community members) and enable engagement in livelihood opportunities; these are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Facility interventions aimed at improving employability and enabling engagement

Inputs		Activities		
Instrument	EU contribution to socio-economic support (EUR)	Action	IP	Start date
EUTF ¹²⁰ Madad	50,000,000	UNDP Turkey resilience project in response to the Syria crisis (TRP)	UNDP	Feb 2018
IPA II ¹²¹	50,000,000	Social and economic cohesion through vocational education	KfW	Nov 2017
IPA II	50,000,000	Employment support for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities	World Bank	Jun 2017
EUTF Madad	32,399,356	Addressing vulnerabilities of refugees and host communities in five countries affected by the Syria crisis	Danish Red Cross	Dec 2016
EUTF Madad	18,207,812	Qudra – Resilience for Syrian refugees, IDPs and host communities in response to the Syrian and Iraqi crises*	GIZ	Jun 2016
EUTF Madad	15,000,000	Living and working together: integrating SuTPs to Turkish economy	TOBB	Dec 2017
EUTF Madad	11,610,000	Job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities in Turkey’	ILO	Feb 2018
EUTF Madad	5,000,000	Strengthening resilience and empowerment of women and girls affected by the Syrian crisis	UN WOMEN	Feb 2018
IPA II	5,000,000	Strengthening economic opportunities for SuTP and host communities in selected provinces	World Bank	Jan 2018

This portfolio includes support in the areas of formal vocational education, formal apprenticeships, non-formal skills training, job placements, on-the-job training, certification of vocational qualifications, home-based work and women’s cooperatives, entrepreneurship training, SME coaching and capacity-building support to key institutional players. The interventions seek to provide both supply and demand-side measures by focusing on the development of skills of the final beneficiaries and providing capacity building for the relevant Turkish authorities. It should be noted that most of these actions are ongoing, and began much later than the ESSN and other basic needs projects that preceded it. The start date detailed in the above table also does not necessarily indicate the start of activities; these projects mostly experienced lengthy inception phases and negotiations to reach agreements with Turkish government institutions. End dates are not detailed as these are subject to movement in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹²⁰ European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to The Syria Crisis (‘Madad Fund’).

¹²¹ IPA: Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II.

i. Formal vocational education/apprenticeships

MoNE's DG TVET is responsible for formal vocational education in Turkey, which is mainly available to teenagers who have graduated from lower secondary school and are between the ages of 14 and 17. It can be accessed through two types of institution:

1. **Vocational and Technical High Schools (VTHS)** offer 4-year high school diplomas, based on a specialisation in a particular vocation. The fourth and final year provides a school-arranged internship with a business relevant to the student's chosen vocation, which splits time between the classroom and the workplace. There are around 3,700 VTHS in Turkey.

VTHS also offer an '**open programme**' for young people that are already working and cannot attend full time education. This consists of evening or weekend lessons in the chosen vocational area, supplemented by general lessons conducted remotely. It requires B1 level Turkish and access to a computer with internet.

2. **Vocational Education Centres (VEC)** provide 4-year formal apprenticeship programmes with one day a week in school, for anyone over the age of 14. Apprentices are paid 30% of the minimum wage during the course. There are 223 VECs in Turkey¹²².

Social and Economic Cohesion through Vocational Education (June 2017 to June 2021) implemented by KfW supports formal vocational education for Syrians and host community members by providing financing for the upgrading of around 700 workshops in 53 VTHSs and two VECs, student support packages (transport, learning materials, lunches) to Syrian and disadvantaged host community students, and measures to raise awareness of formal technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Turkey. The project has identified 23 occupational areas and chosen to prioritise Electronics, IT, Beauty and Haircare, and Child Development, in line with labour market demand. These activities have been significantly delayed by long procurement processes at different levels and staffing issues; no schools have been equipped/upgraded to date (procurement is ongoing), student support packages have not yet been delivered to beneficiaries and formal communications activities have not started (with the exception of voluntary home visits). In spite of these delays, enrolment and attendance by Syrian students has begun to increase as news of the programme has spread by word of mouth¹²³.

The Facility has not extensively sought to encourage the uptake of apprenticeship programmes provided by VECs. However, the ILO-implemented *Job Creation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Turkey* (signed in Feb 2018) has provided some limited support through counsellors hired to offer support to apprentices, reaching 655 Syrian and 322 host community students to date, against an overall target of 1,250¹²⁴.

ii. Non-formal vocational skills training

MoNE's Directorate-General Life Long Learning (DG LLL) is responsible for non-formal vocational education for adults (17+), which is provided through short vocational skills training courses delivered by DG LLL-certified trainers. MoNE has designed more than 3,000 different courses of 3–4 months, which can be delivered at either public education centres (PECs) (including VTHS) or at private facilities.

Given that the Turkish system provides limited options for refugees to access formal adult vocational education (there are just 223 VECs facilitating adult apprenticeships), Facility actions in this area have drawn heavily on the established curricula of short-term vocational courses already put in place by DG LLL. Delivery of these courses to Syrians by Facility IPs represents the approach most widely adopted with the aim of enhancing employability.

Courses are selected by IPs based on their own individual Labour Market Needs Assessment (LMNA) exercises, which are conducted independently of one another. They are also separate from İŞKUR's annual nationwide LMNA. These LMNAs generally agree in finding need/demand for labour in certain key sectors (construction, metalworking, furniture/woodworking, shoemaking, textile/garments, and hair and beauty). Some IPs (GIZ, Danish Red Cross, and UN WOMEN), more innovatively, design some

¹²² SUMAF (2020), MONITORING REPORT, Employability and Vocational Skills Development (Ad-Hoc Monitoring Mission No. 1, Final Version, Date: 15/5/2020).

¹²³ SUMAF (2020), MONITORING REPORT KfW Action Social and Economic Cohesion through Vocational Education (IPA/2017/389-728). Mission No. 2. Date: 18/10/2019.

¹²⁴ ILO/IOM, *Job Creation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Turkey*. 3rd QIN, September 2020.

modules of vocational courses based on demand expressed by local employers to their Chamber (whose members guarantee to employ some trainees for 6–12 months). These IPs have provided tailored courses in areas not covered or considered by others, for example agriculture and vegetable gardening.

Attendees at short-term vocational training courses are paid a daily stipend to incentivise enrolment and attendance. Due to Turkish data protection law, IPs cannot exchange the beneficiaries' personal data, making it possible for an individual to enrol in multiple courses at the same time, and to collect multiple stipends.

Table 8 below details the numbers of Syrians and host community members who have received non-formal vocational training funded by the Facility, broken down by action. Targets are set for the project end dates, which are mostly after the period of this evaluation, and also subject to extension following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 8: Numbers of Syrians and host communities who have received vocational training funded by the Facility

IP	Logframe indicator	End of action targets	Value (2020) ¹²⁵	Focus provinces	Source
ILO	Number of SuTPs [Syrians] and host community members received training on basic labour market skills including intercultural interaction and workplace adaptation	2,000 SuTPs; 1,000 HC	2,268 SuTPs 911 HC	Ankara, İstanbul, Bursa, Konya, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Adana, Mersin and Hatay	Action QIN to Sept 2020
UN WOMEN	Number of SuTPs and host community members participating in active market programmes (vocational, technical and employability skills training)	2,050	Total: 2,638 women (1,947 SuTP, 520 HC, 171 refugees from other countries)	Ankara, Gaziantep, Mardin, Kilis	Action QIN (Turkey) to July 2020
DRC	Number of individuals participating in professional skills, vocational or business development training courses	15,500	10,567	Adana, Ankara, Bağcılar (İstanbul), Gaziantep, Hatay, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Kilis, Konya, Mardin, Mersin, Sultanbeyli (İstanbul) and Şanlıurfa	Action QIN to Sept 2020
World Bank	Number of SuTP and Turkish citizens placed in on-the-job training (OJT) and skills training (OJT is excluded)	5,920 (reduced to 3,070 in recent addendum) ¹²⁶	Skills Training: 1,124	Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep. Adana, Mersin, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye and İstanbul	WB Progress Report 2020/1
GIZ	Number of Syrian refugees (aged 15–34) who have completed skills training at PECs has increased 35% by the project end (50% of the total are females)	35% increase	9,000 (1,746 Syrians) (considered indirect) ¹²⁷	Ankara, Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, Kilis, Mersin, Şanlıurfa,	SUMAF (QRBMR/OA)

¹²⁵ Exact cut off dates vary by action.

¹²⁶ Communication with European Delegation Programme Manager.

¹²⁷ SUMAF (2020), Monitoring report, Qudra Action – Resilience for Syrian Refugees, IDPs and host communities in response to the Syrian and Iraqi Crises (TF-MADAD/2016/T04.15), Qualitative result-based monitoring report for ongoing missions (QRBMR/OA), 30/4/2019. p.42.

iii. In-work training and job placements

On-the-job training (OJT) is a pre-crisis programme of incentivised in-work training organised by İŞKUR – the sole public entity mandated to organise, manage and monitor these programmes – implemented through a network of businesses willing to participate. OJT programmes take place predominantly in four manufacturing sectors (textile, garment, shoemaking, food and beverages) but OJT can also include the service sectors such as nursing in hospitals. Placements last for 6 months during which participants are paid 100% of the minimum wage plus social security premiums. Afterwards, participant organisations commit to retaining at least 50% of trainee workers for an additional minimum 6 months and covering the cost of a work permit. For Syrians the minimum employment rate is reduced from 50% to 20%.

Of the Facility IPs, only the major World Bank action is using this instrument¹²⁸. The first 70 OJT participants started in Adana in March 2019; by March 2020 a total of 12,756 participants (increasing to 15,590 by the end of June 2020¹²⁹) were registered, 24% of which were women. Around 80% are less than 35-years-old and a similar percentage have only primary-level education or are illiterate, and about 65% are Syrians. The programme has already achieved its output targets (numbers enrolled) and is so far meeting its target of 20% of participants retained by the employer¹³⁰. Data on the sectors and skills-matching process for this programme were not available at the time of writing.

A ‘job placement’ is de facto formal employment which requires a work permit. These programmes are incentivised by the ILO/IOM-implemented action. ILO has an agreement with the Turkish Social Security Institution (SSI) aimed at encouraging employers to register their existing informal Syrian workers (The Formal Employment Transition Programme – KIGEP). KIGEP waives annual work permit fees and covers the first 6 months of social security payments due for each Syrian employee (TRY 950 per month). This programme is mostly used to formalise existing employment; it does not strictly aim to create significant *new* employment. ILO has set a target of 1,800 Syrians and host community members benefiting from this programme, which has now been achieved. Table 9 below details the relevant actions’ OJT and job placement output targets¹³¹.

Table 9: Relevant actions’ OJT and job placement output targets

IP	Logframe indicator	End of action targets	Latest value	Focus provinces	Source ¹³²
WB	Number of SuTP [Syrians] and Turkish citizens placed in on-the-job training (OJT) skills training and entrepreneurship training (KOSGEB) (OJT is included)	13,525	15,590	Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep. Adana, Mersin, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye and İstanbul	WB Progress Report, June 2020
ILO	Number of SuTP and HC employed through incentives and business growth (job placements)	1,800	2,143 SuTP, 731 HC	Ankara, İstanbul, Bursa, Konya, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Adana, Mersin and Hatay	Action QIN, Sept 2020

¹²⁸ Many different agencies are offering various job training programmes, and all of these programmes are designed with different components but serving for a common goal, which is improving employability of Syrian refugees and host communities through various offerings—by means of language training, skills training, on-the-job training, cash for work – these are listed – components of World Bank’s project. The existing programmes of local partners are also influential in the design of these interventions. The World Bank partnered with İSKUR, and as ‘on the job training’ is one of İSKUR’s regular programmes. Therefore, among other international stakeholders, only World Bank’s project includes ‘on the job training’ component.

¹²⁹ World Bank, Employment Support for Syrians Under Temporary Protection And Turkish Citizens Activities1 EU-IPA/2017/386-311 Progress Report 2020/1.

¹³⁰ SUMAF (2019). MAIN REPORT Employment Support for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities Activities (IPA/2017/386-311) Mission No. 2 Date: 2/10/2019, p.17.

¹³¹ As above, targets are set for the project end dates, which are mostly after the period of this evaluation, and also subject to extension following the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹³² SUMAF (2020). Monitoring Report, Employability and Vocational Skills Development (Ad Hoc Monitoring Mission No. 1, Final Version, Date: 15/5/2020.

iv. Certification of qualifications

The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) defines the national occupational standard for around 150 (soon increasing to 226) vocational occupations that require employees to be certified by an accredited body in order to work legally (e.g. 'hazardous' construction, manufacturing, etc.). Local accredited bodies (VocTest Centres) provide exams for VQA certification at an average cost of TRY 1,000–1,500, which is beyond the means of most Syrians and some local SMEs. The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) action covers the cost of examinations, that would ordinarily be met by employers, and 10% of social security payments for new or existing staff for 6 months. It aims to give certification to Syrian workers with existing professional skills and experience in their given vocation¹³³. As of June 2020, the action had certified 3,385 individuals (including 597 Syrians)¹³⁴, against an ambitious target of 15,000 (for an original end date of December 2019)¹³⁵. The national pass rate is 50% and the TOBB programme is achieving 60%, having offered a short preparation course to participants. Some high-demand vocations have had exams translated into Arabic by the TOBB programme, but most still require a level of Turkish that is beyond Syrian capabilities¹³⁶.

v. Turkish language courses (outside of formal education)

Turkish language skills continue to be regarded as the most essential employability skill for many potential employers of refugees in Turkey. Most IPs working in this area (World Bank, TOBB, UN WOMEN, GIZ, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Danish Red Cross) have included language training in the actions they are implementing. DG LLL delivers courses at A1, A2 and B1 levels at public education centres and issues certificates of achievement. DG LLL's courses focus heavily on grammar and writing, less so on conversational Turkish, and use a traditional classroom and book-based methods. The UNDP action *Turkey Resilience Project in response to the Syria Crisis* (Feb 2018 to Jan 2021) has been working on a new language training methodology with Anadolu University, which will blend online and in-person teaching and ease pressure on PECs. This intervention is still in its piloting phase. Across the whole Facility, as of June 2020, a reported cumulative total of 20,061 Syrian adults had completed a Turkish language course outside of the formal education system, representing approximately one-third the target value of 54,330¹³⁷.

Monitoring reports indicate that many of the language courses completed so far are the result of the UNDP action, through which a total of 31,547 students had completed A1, A2 and B1 courses as of June 2020. The action's overall target of 52,000 Syrians certified seems likely to be met by the action's end¹³⁸. A further 6785 Syrians received language training through community centres supported by the Danish Red Cross action, at A1 and A2 level¹³⁹. During 2019, GIZ's Qudra was on track (234) to provide Turkish language training to more than 300 Syrian teachers¹⁴⁰. However, the TOBB action is on track to fall very short of its ambitious target of providing Turkish language training to 2,000 already employed Syrians¹⁴¹.

The SPARK action *Higher Education for Syrians under Temporary Protection and disadvantaged host communities in Turkey* also provided language courses outside of the formal education system. This action is reviewed in the education sector report of this evaluation.

vi. SME coaching and entrepreneurship training

The larger World Bank action includes, as a component, a small grants and entrepreneurship training programme implemented by KOSGEB in Gaziantep province. By December 2019, this project had

¹³³ SUMAF (2020). MONITORING REPORT, Employability and Vocational Skills Development (Ad-Hoc Monitoring Mission No. 1, Final Version, Date: 15/5/2020.

¹³⁴ TOBB QIN, Q2 2020.

¹³⁵ Provinces: Şanlıurfa, İstanbul, Hatay, Gaziantep, Adana, Mersin, Kilis, Mardin, İzmir, Bursa, Konya, Kayseri.

¹³⁶ SUMAF (2020). MONITORING REPORT, Employability and Vocational Skills Development (Ad-Hoc Monitoring Mission No. 1, Final Version, Date: 15/5/2020. p.32.

¹³⁷ These values do not align with the sum of the figures in the paragraph below, for reasons that are not clear to the evaluation team.

¹³⁸ SUMAF (2020). Main Report, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNDP Turkey Resilience Project in response to the Syria Crisis (TRP) (UNDP), (TF-MADAD/2017/T04.76), Mission No. 2, Date: 15 November 2019, pp.20–21; UNDP QIN June 2020.

¹³⁹ SUMAF (2020). Main Report, DRC Action, Addressing Vulnerabilities of Refugees and Host Communities in Five Countries Affected by the Syria Crisis (TF-MADAD/2017/T04.30), Mission No. 1, Date: 25/10/2019, p.38.

¹⁴⁰ SUMAF (2020). Monitoring Report, Qudra Action – Resilience for Syrian Refugees, IDPs and Host Communities in Response to the Syrian and Iraqi Crises (TF-MADAD/2016/T04.15), Qualitative Result Based Monitoring Report for Ongoing Missions (QRBMR/OA), 30/4/2019, p.17.

¹⁴¹ SUMAF (2020). Monitoring Report Tobb Action: Living and Working Together: Integrating SuTPs to Turkish Economy TF-MADAD/2017/T04.68 Monitoring Mission No: 3, Date: 30/1/2020. p.47.

provided entrepreneurship training to 60 people (all Syrian), business analysis to 37 SMEs (only four were Syrian-owned) and selected 26 Syrians to receive micro-grants (which were yet to be disbursed)¹⁴². The World Bank's smaller, technical assistance, research and capacity-building action – *Strengthening Economic Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Selected Provinces* – promotes female-led social entrepreneurship among Syrians and host communities and is testing to create a new model to support Syrians.

One of the three components of the UNDP action aims to create new jobs and economic opportunities for Syrians and host communities through 'Digital Transformation Centres' and 'Innovation Centres', and entrepreneurship and business development trainings. The purpose of the Digital Transformation Centres is to demonstrate and train local SMEs on 'lean manufacturing principles' and methodologies to help them cut waste, increase productivity and reduce unit costs. The purpose of the Innovation Centres is to provide space for start-ups and SMEs to scale their business in partnership with larger, more established enterprises including corporates. Both are expected to encourage expansion and creation of new employment opportunities in the medium to long term. These interventions are already part of a Ministry of Industry and Technology strategy and are being supported in four provinces (Izmir, Gaziantep, Mersin, and Adana) by the Facility. These facilities only became fully operational during 2020. The intervention does not attach conditions to the services it provides to SMEs, for example commitments to employ Syrians¹⁴³. Other support to start-ups and SMEs included 13-day training courses for potential start-ups, events to match Syrian entrepreneurs with potential investors, and provision of 'roadmaps' for SME growth, but none of these initiatives are complemented by access to grants and finance for participants. As of June 2020, UNDP reports reaching 432 firms and 299 individuals firms with training, consultancy and mentoring services and the employment of 508 individuals following training delivered¹⁴⁴. It is unlikely that the project will facilitate employment of 1,750 people, by its current closure in January 2021.

The ILO action also provided support to SMEs by providing business advisory services and grants for the creation and expansion of enterprises that employ or could employ Syrians and host community members. ILO held training on sustainability, productivity and competitiveness for SMEs that have Syrian and host community workers. From 2018 to 2020 the action has supported the establishment or expansion of 106 SMEs, and provided technical support to 369 SMEs to help them link to national and international markets¹⁴⁵.

vii. Home-based work and cooperatives

Some Facility IPs have aimed to support Syrians, primarily (but not exclusively) women, to work from home. The UN WOMEN and Danish Red Cross protection-focused actions offer home-based work-related vocational training courses supplemented with in-kind grants; equipment, animals, etc.; and follow-up monitoring to ensure participants possess the skills to use the in-kind assistance to generate income. The Danish Red Cross programme aims to support 300 individuals to start-up or scale income-generation activities. Since late 2019, 352 people had been supported (263 men, 89 women, 255 Syrian, 77 host community and 20 other refugees)¹⁴⁶.

The SADA Women's Community Centre, with the support of UN WOMEN and ILO, has helped set up a women's cooperative aimed at generating sustainable livelihoods income as well as psychosocial support for its current 50 members. From a total of 1,200 beneficiaries of Turkish language and vocational skills courses, 50 women (12 Turkish, 36 Syrian and 2 Afghan) emerged who set up and became part of the cooperative, which comprises three vocational branches: cooking, sewing/tailoring, and shoemaking.

viii. Capacity building for key institutional players

The Facility socio-economic portfolio includes one project which primarily provides capacity building and technical assistance to the Turkish government with the aim of improving employment opportunities for Syrians and host communities; i.e. the smaller, EUR 5 million, World Bank Action, *Strengthening Economic Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Selected*

¹⁴² QIN 31 Dec. 2019. WB – 'Employment Support for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities'.

¹⁴³ SUMAF (2020) Main Report, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNDP Turkey Resilience Project in response to the Syria Crisis (TRP) (UNDP), (TF-MADAD/2017/T04.76), Mission No. 2, Date: 15/11/2019. pp.15–17.

¹⁴⁴ QIN, June 2020. UNDP – Turkey Resilience Project in response to the Syria Crisis (TRP).

¹⁴⁵ ILO QIN. June 2020.

¹⁴⁶ SUMAF (2020). MONITORING REPORT, Employability and Vocational Skills Development (Ad-Hoc Monitoring Mission No. 1, Final Version, Date: 15/5/2020).

Provinces (2017–2021). It aims to enhance government capacity to assess employer’s demand for labour/skills in refugee-dense provinces, provide technical assistance to government to promote entrepreneurship in the same areas, and to assess the effectiveness of job creation and entrepreneurship programmes with pilots, studies and evaluations. The project has six outputs detailed in Table 10 below¹⁴⁷.

Table 10: Outputs of project ‘Strengthening economic opportunities for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities in selected provinces’

Output	Description	Due be delivered by:
1	A skills module for İŞKUR’s labour market needs assessment to identify available skills of job-seeking SuTPs (supply)	December 2020
2	A skills demand analysis report to further identify skills needs from employers based on a survey of 1,500–2,000 firms	December 2020
3	Strategy document for new entrepreneurship incentives	Dropped
4	Social enterprise model report – two stand-alone social enterprises are established to generate sustainable income for SuTP women from self-employment and/or home-based activities and underlying factors behind achievements and challenges, and lessons learned are reported for scaling-up similar initiatives	December 2020
5	An impact evaluation of applied training programmes and transition to labour market programmes (ALMPs)	June 2021
6	Micro-grants pilot assessment report on the project ‘Development of new business and employment opportunities for Syrians under temporary protection (SuTP) and Turkish citizens’	June 2021

Other Facility actions in this area include components and activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of key stakeholders in the Turkish government and labour market:

İŞKUR – As Turkey’s public employment agency, İŞKUR is a key partner of most of the Facility’s actions in this area. The World Bank-implemented *Employment Support* action supports existing İŞKUR employment services and provides capacity-building training, equipment, transportation and renovations of provincial-level offices. Some actions provide Arabic translators to work in the provincial İŞKUR offices¹⁴⁸.

DG ILF – Directorate-General for International Labour Force is a DG of MoFLSS with a mandate to implement policies on foreign workers, including work permit procedures and work permit exemptions. Work permits can be granted to Syrians under the 2016 Regulation, but only following an employment contract being signed by the employer and employee. The process is initiated by the employer (online since 2018) and permits cost TRY 347.10 for each year they are renewed. Syrians engaged in seasonal agriculture and livestock works can legally work by obtaining a work permit exemption from provincial labour authorities. The larger World Bank action has capacity-building activities aimed at improving DG ILF’s IT systems to process and monitor work permit applications. These activities are in their early stages of implementation¹⁴⁹.

SSI – The Social Security Institution is responsible for implementing the social security system and providing individuals with social and health insurance, and as such holds data on employment status (which it is not able to share with Facility IPs due to data protection law). The ILO action (and several other ILO projects funded by other donors) works to improve SSI’s management capacity, aims to train 190 auditors to enforce laws on foreign workers and has provided five Arabic-speaking consultants at provincial branches to assist and monitor Syrians KIGEP job placements¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁷ World Bank (2020). Strengthening Economic Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Turkish Citizens in Selected Localities EU–IPA/2017/394-635 Progress Report Nr. 4 Date of report: 14/1/2020 Reporting Period: 1/7/2019 – 31/12/2019.

¹⁴⁸ SUMAF (2020), Monitoring Report, Employability and Vocational Skills Development (Ad Hoc Monitoring Mission No. 1, Final Version, Date: 15/5/2020.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

TOBB – The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) has 365 members in the form of local chambers of commerce, industry bodies and commodity exchanges, and is therefore the highest representative of the demand side of the labour market and a key partner for Facility employability activities. Facility actions generally cooperate with chambers to communicate with the private sector rather than going direct to individual firms. TOBB is the implementing partner (IP) of *Living and Working Together: Integration of SuTPs to Turkish Economy* which supports VQA certification of existing staff of employers and job seekers, both Syrians and Turkish citizens. The action includes a capacity-building component which is working to help certification bodies make vocational qualification tests and certification available to Syrians through translation services, applying to the VQA for approval to offer certification in new areas, covering new provinces, and mechanisms to respond to surges in demand¹⁵¹.

3.2.3. Contextual analysis of Facility interventions

In this section, we present a contextualised analysis of how the support provided through the Facility has sought to improve the employment and livelihood prospects of refugees. This includes an examination of the achievements of the Facility, and the strengths of its approach, while also identifying key areas in which Facility support is yet to meet its expected targets and where the approach might be improved.

Several supply and demand-side barriers exist for the formal economic integration of refugees. The underlying factors behind job creation are complex but include low productivity, lack of innovation, lack of digitalisation and lack of sectoral analysis data in different provinces. The limited capacity of the Turkish economy to create jobs, where there has been a tremendous increase in labour supply has been an major demand-side driver impacting on job creation outcomes for refugees.

The 2018 economic slowdown in Turkey has had a significant negative impact, slowing down the progress for job creation for refugees. The Turkish lira has experienced its largest depreciation against the dollar since the 2001 crisis in the summer of 2018, which has impacted on consumer prices as well as the balance sheets of firms with large foreign-denominated debt stock¹⁵². The World Bank (2019) estimated that between July 2018 and July 2019, the economy lost around 730,000 jobs, of which 450,000 are from the construction sector, 130,000 from agriculture, 100,000 from industrial sectors and 50,000 from service sectors¹⁵³. With the economic slowdown in 2018/2019, the percentage of refugee households that report labour as one of their three primary sources of income also declined¹⁵⁴.

The contextual analysis here reflects on the external factors that have an impact on the Facility's contribution and starts with some detailed analysis of the Turkish labour market conditions and refugee employment.

i. Characteristics of the Turkish labour market and Syrians in employment

The Turkish labour market is characterised by a low employment rate overall (with high inactivity rates among women), a high rate of youth unemployment (and inactivity) and high levels of informality. In Turkey, only 43.9% of the working-age population (aged 15+) is in employment, while 6.7% are unemployed (equivalent to an unemployment rate of 13.2%¹⁵⁵) and 49.4% are inactive as of August 2020¹⁵⁶. The unemployment rate in Turkey (at 13.2%) is almost double the level in the EU-27 countries, where the unemployment rate is 7.4% in 2020¹⁵⁷. The employment rate among men is 61%, while for women it is only 27% for the working-age group (Figure 13a).

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Akcay & Gungen (2018). Lira's Downfall is a Symptom: the Political Economy of Turkey's Crisis 1 <https://criticalfinance.org/2018/08/18/liras-downfall-is-a-symptom-the-political-economy-of-turkeys-crisis/>

¹⁵³ World Bank (2019) Turkey Economic Monitor October 2019: Charting a New Course <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/429091572623015810/pdf/Turkey-Economic-Monitor-Charting-a-New-Course.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ Comparing cross-sectional datasets PDM3 (Feb-April 2018) with PDM7 (Jan-Apr 2019) collected from ESSN applicants, households reporting labour as one of the three main sources of income decreases from 90.7 per cent to 83.8 per cent for ESSN applicants overall and from 87 per cent to 80.2 per cent for ESSN beneficiaries.

¹⁵⁵ The unemployment rate is calculated as dividing the total number of unemployed to the number of people who are in labour force and is therefore higher than the percentage of unemployed in the working age population.

¹⁵⁶ TURKSTAT, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-Agustos-2020-33792>

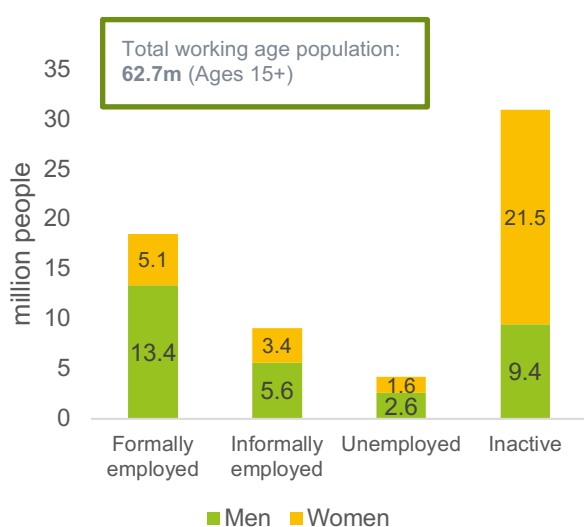
¹⁵⁷ Unemployment rate in Turkey was also higher than the EU in 2019 with 13.7% unemployment rate in Turkey as opposed to 6.7% in EU-27. Source: EUROSTAT, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database>.

The youth unemployment level is 26.1% in Turkey¹⁵⁸, and the percentage of the youth population not in employment, education or training is the *highest* among OECD countries at 27.6%¹⁵⁹. The share of informal workers among the employed declined throughout the years in Turkey but still only two-thirds of the employment in Turkey is formal, while one third work in the informal sector¹⁶⁰. Informality is especially high in the agriculture sector (85.0%) in Turkey although it remains relatively lower in the non-agricultural sector (20.6%)¹⁶¹.

The employment rate for the refugee population is close to the Turkish population overall, and labour is an important source of income for refugees. According to CVME5 data, 37.4% of the refugees in the working-age group are employed in Turkey (compared to 43.9% of Turks). The employment rates are higher for refugee men compared to Turkish men, but refugee women are less likely to be employed compared to Turkish women¹⁶² (Figure 13b). As of early 2018 (PDM3 data Feb–April 2018), 91% of ESSN applicant households and 87% of ESSN beneficiary households indicate that labour is one of the three main sources of income for their household. Among both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the ESSN, 81% of households' report that labour is one of three main sources of income.

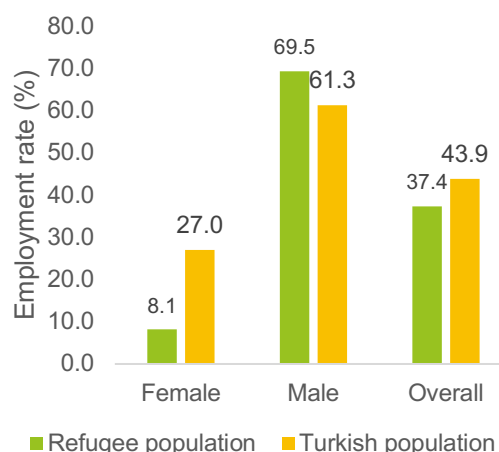
Figure 13: Composition of the Turkish working-age population and employment rates of Turkish and refugee population

a. Composition of the Turkish working-age population (age 15+)



Source: TURKSTAT, Labour force status of population aged 15 years old or older. Retrieved from: <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-Agustos-2020-33792>

b. Turkish and refugee employment rates (by gender) in Turkey



Source: CVME5 and TURKSTAT. Rates for Refugee population are for the population aged 18 or older. Rates for the Turkish population are for August 2020 and for the population aged 15 or older

Part of the gap in formal employment rates can be explained by the differences in the skills stock of Turkish host community and refugees that have stayed in Turkey. The stock of refugees remaining, and their low levels of skills and educational attainment is a further barrier to employment prospects in Turkey. While the prevalence of illiteracy is quite low in the Turkish population (with only 4.0% of the people aged 25 or older being illiterate), among the refugee population in Turkey, this rate is 22.0%. According to the Livelihoods Survey results, 63% of refugees (in the study sample) only had

¹⁵⁸ Source: TURKSTAT, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-Agustos-2020-33792>. Youth unemployment rate is reported for individuals aged 15–24 years old.

¹⁵⁹ Development Analytics (2020). Harnessing the Power of Youth: An Analysis of Youth Not-in-Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in Turkey and Policies and Civil Society Models that Promote Active Youth Engagement. In the report data is obtained from TURKSTAT for Turkey for year 2018 and for youth in ages 15-29 years old. <https://www.developmentanalytics.org/harnessing-the-power-of-youth>

¹⁶⁰ Source: TURKSTAT, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-Agustos-2020-33792>

¹⁶¹ Working informally is more common in Turkey compared to the average of other countries in Europe and Central Asia region in general with 25.1% informality rate in 2018. Source: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf

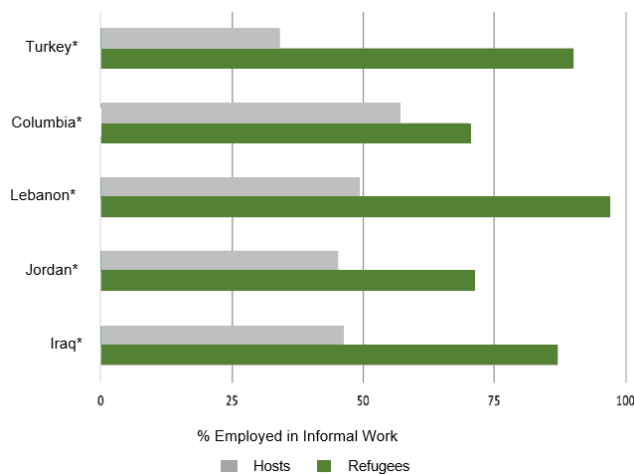
¹⁶² In pre-war Syria, the employment to population ratio was 10.1% for women hence low levels of economic activity for women was also common for Syrians prior to arrival in Turkey.

educational attainment at the primary school level or less. The percentage of the population with at least a high school or university degree is 41.7% in Turkey, while this level is 17.7% for the refugees¹⁶³.

When we compare the educational attainment of refugees in Turkey today, with the educational attainment levels in pre-war Syria (for those above 25 years old), we find that the percentage of those refugees in Turkey who have ‘at least a high school degree’ is even lower than the percentage in pre-war Syria (Figure 14b). This is partly explained by the fact that more educated refugees coming from Syria have moved onto other countries. For instance, according to TEPAV¹⁶⁴ (and based on UNHCR data), 57.6% of Syrians that arrived in Turkey had a primary school degree or did not have any education degree at all whereas this rate is 13% for those who arrived in Greece (Figure 14b). Although the data across the two data sets are not exactly the same, the comparison still gives an indication that it is likely the case that - as discussed by the UNDP and Atlantic Council report: ‘lower-skilled refugees remained in Turkey, while more skilled refugees have moved to Europe’¹⁶⁵.

Figure 14: Percentage of informal employment among refugees and educational attainment of the refugee population in Turkey, in Greece and educational attainment of the population in pre-war Syria and of the Turkish population in Turkey

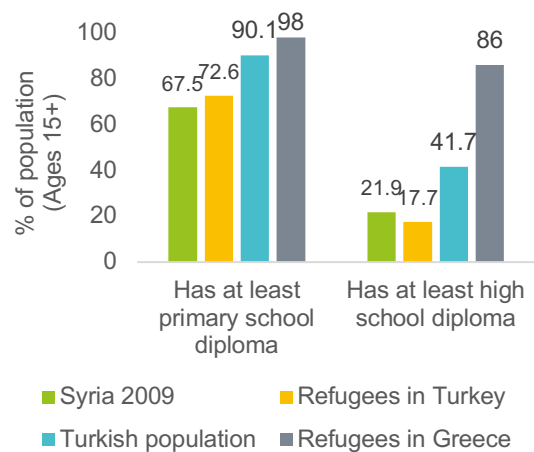
a. Percentage of informal employment among refugees and host populations by country



Source: Dempster et al. (2020)

Note: As explained by Dempster et al. (2020), ‘the percentage of employed workers ages 15 and older in each country working in the informal economy where data is available. Each sample is weighted according to the individual survey design. Asterisks indicate the differences between refugees and hosts are statistically significant at the 5% level.’

b. Refugee population in Turkey has a similar education level compared to the population in pre-war Syria, is less educated than the Turkish population and much less educated than the Syrian population that moves onto Europe¹⁶⁶



Source: Data for Turkish population is for the year 2019 and obtained from TURKSTAT, data for educational attainment in Syria is for the year 2009 and obtained from the World Bank, World Development Indicators, data for the refugee population in Turkey is for the year 2020 and calculated using CVME5 and data for the refugee population in Greece is for the year 2015 and obtained from UNHCR (2015)

While the differences in educational attainment between the refugees and the host community in Turkey may contribute to the selection of Syrians into low-skilled, informal jobs, the skills gap does not explain most of the variation in formalisation rates. For this evaluation, we have carried out a simulation exercise using the Turkish Labour Force Survey (2017) and the CVME5 data sets to understand what percentage of the differences in formal sector employment is due to the differences in skills across the host and refugee communities. In the figures below, the red lines indicate the distribution of the predicted probability of employment (Panels a and b) and predicted probability of formal employment (Panels c and d) based on the educational attainment of Turks and refugees. The yellow lines indicate the predicted probability of employment and formal employment respectively for male and

¹⁶³ Source data: CVME5 and TURKSTAT.

¹⁶⁴ TEPAV – Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey.

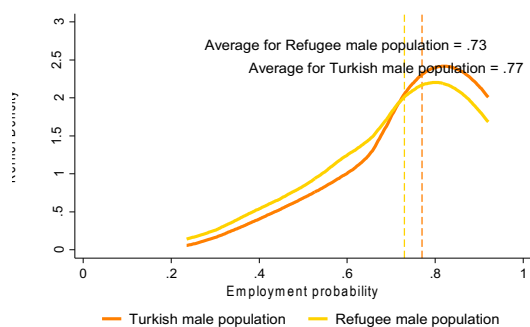
¹⁶⁵ UNDP and Atlantic Council in Turkey (2020). ‘Turkey’s Refugee Resilience: Expanding and Improving Solutions for the Economic Inclusion of Syrians in Turkey’. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/turkeys-refugee-resilience-expanding-and-improving-solutions-for-the-economic-inclusion-of-syrians-in-turkey/>

¹⁶⁶ Source data: UNHCR: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/46542>

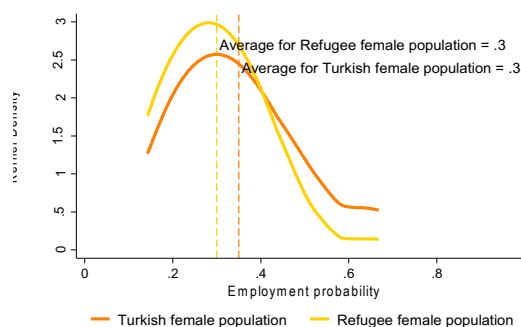
female adults in working-age population for refugees, given their educational attainment, gender and age – given the model and constraints for labour market conditions in Turkey as of 2017¹⁶⁷. The results indicate that the probability of formal employment, only based on these characteristics – meaning if there were no other barriers to the employment of Syrians in the Turkish labour market (for instance, if they were citizens and speaking Turkish fluently) only based on their age and educational profile, refugee men would be four percentage points less likely to be employed and 9 percentage points less likely to be employed formally (compared to Turkish men), and refugee women would be 5 percentage points less likely to be employed and 8 percentage points less likely to be employed formally (compared to Turkish women).

Figure 15: Employment probability and especially formal employment probability of refugees is smaller compared to the Turkish population when predicted using a basic model with education level, age and region (Istanbul)

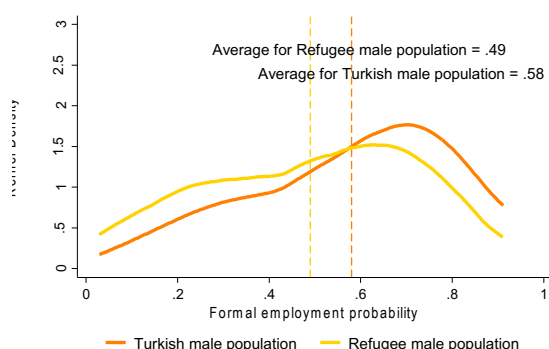
Distribution of predicted **employment** probability for males



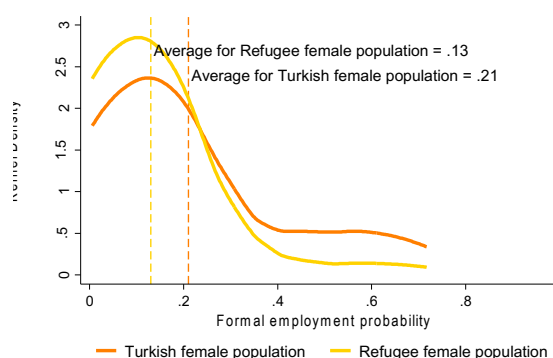
Distribution of predicted **employment** probability for females



Distribution of predicted **formal employment** probability for males



Distribution of predicted **formal employment** probability for females



Source: CVME5, Turkey LFS 2017. We build the regression model using the Turkish Labour Force Survey 2017 data, which is a nationally representative survey collected in Turkey from 378,691 individuals and 149,465 households. The employment and formal employment probability are predicted based on the three characteristics of gender, age and educational attainment in the Turkish data set. We then apply the same model parameters generated in the Turkish data, to the refugee data in CVME5 and try to predict -given the age, gender and educational attainment of the refugee population- their employment and formal employment probability. The model provides the differences in employment and formal employment probability for the refugee population, given the characteristics of the Turkish labour market, and if the only difference between the host community and refugees had been educational attainment.

The model allows us to say, given the characteristics of the Turkish labour market (in 2017, before the economic slowdown) and the skills stock of refugees in Turkey, the estimated percentage of people who can be expected to enter the formal labour market is 49% of the working-age male and 13% of the working-age female population of refugees (at maximum, assuming no other barriers to formal employment). If we assume that the working-age population of refugees in Turkey (ages 18–59) is about 1.98m adults, this would be equivalent to 486,000 refugee men and 129,000 refugee women employed

¹⁶⁷ We build the model using Labour Force Survey 2017 data, which is a nationally representative survey collected in Turkey from 149,465 households. The employment and formal employment probability is predicted based on the three characteristics of gender, age and educational attainment. We then apply the same model parameters generated in the Turkish data, to the refugee data in CVME5 and try to predict given the age, gender and educational attainment of the refugee population.

formally¹⁶⁸. The number of issued annual work permits for Syrians remained restricted to 132,497 between 2016 and 2019¹⁶⁹ and the estimate for the total number of Syrian refugees holding work permits is estimated to be between 31,000¹⁷⁰ and 60,000¹⁷¹ (depending on the source cited). This is equivalent to less than 5–10% of the refugees predicted by the model to be formally employed to actually have a work permit. Given this low level of formalisation, it is clearly the case that there are other barriers beyond the educational attainment of refugees that prevent them from entering the formal labour market, which cannot only be explained by the skills gap.

In the next section, we will focus on some of the main barriers that prevent refugees from entering the formal labour market at the predicted rates in Figure 15.

a. Lack of language skills

According to the WFP and Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) Livelihoods Survey¹⁷², when asked about the main barriers to finding employment in Turkey, language comes to the forefront as the most frequently mentioned reason by refugees¹⁷³. Thus, 46% of respondents highlighted language, followed by lack of job opportunities (37%), lack of information (24%) and lack of skills/experience (23%). Groups that had greater job irregularity are more likely to be refugees with only a basic command of the Turkish language¹⁷⁴.¹⁷⁵ Having a good command of Turkish proved to be a major factor for refugees to find a job or get a better job.

On the other hand, a more detailed breakdown of this result reveals that 'half of the respondents with low skills did not find language to be a barrier for employment. Especially in the agricultural sector, commercial services, shoe-related work and unskilled services, having basic command of Turkish was experienced as less of a barrier than in other sectors'¹⁷⁶. This finding might imply that language barrier leaves refugees facing a struggle to achieve their transition towards high-skill jobs that entail a good command of Turkish. This barrier is also hard to overcome for refugees since informal jobs requiring low skills are characterised by long working hours – and the long working hours make it even harder for refugees to attend language classes in Turkey¹⁷⁷. In other words, language as a barrier intermingles with structural problems in unskilled labour market conditions leaving refugees more vulnerable and having fewer opportunities to learn Turkish and move towards more skilled/lucrative jobs.

One Syrian refugee who has responded to our phone interview has expressed this concern as follows:

I understand how the language is quite crucial, but the problem is that I am unable to break this vicious circle between the need for learning Turkish and keeping my job at the same time. I need to be completely free to be able to learn Turkish, and I cannot leave my job during that time ... Providing language courses for everyone, this is very important. I work for 9–10 hours; I do not have time for learning, and I am demanded to know the language

38-year-old Syrian male, Ankara

¹⁶⁸ The calculation assumes 4 million refugees and simply distributes them homogeneously across the age categories (0–70), such that 18 to 59-year-olds would be 58% of the population. The population is also assumed to be equal across the genders and hence the working age men and women are about 1.12m people each. Multiplying this number by the probability of formal employment (0.13 for women and 0.49 for men), we find the predicted number of men and women that would be formally employed.

¹⁶⁹ Considering that the work permits are issued for the same person each year, this actually covers a much smaller number of total individuals who received a work permit.

¹⁷⁰ Demircuc-Kunt, A., Lokshin, M. & Ravallion, M. (2019). A new policy to better integrate refugees into host-country labour markets. Center for Global Development. Retrieved from: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/new-policy-better-integrate-refugees-host-country-labor-markets>.

¹⁷¹ 3RP Outcome Monitoring Report www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/library/syria_programme/3rp-outcome-monitoring-report.html

¹⁷² The Livelihoods Survey was conducted by WFP and TRCS in 2018 and is representative of ESSN applicants within the 19 provinces included in the survey.

¹⁷³ WFP and TRCS (2019). Refugees in Turkey: Livelihoods Survey Findings. Retrieved from: [https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/refugees-turkey-livelihoods-survey-findings-2019-entr#:~:text=The%20results%20show%20that%2084,one%20person%20who%20is%20working.&text=According%20to%20the%20survey%20findings,and%20artisanship%20\(10%20per%20cent\)](https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/refugees-turkey-livelihoods-survey-findings-2019-entr#:~:text=The%20results%20show%20that%2084,one%20person%20who%20is%20working.&text=According%20to%20the%20survey%20findings,and%20artisanship%20(10%20per%20cent).).

¹⁷⁴ The number of issued work permits for Syrians remained restricted to 132,497 between 2016 and 2019. Considering that the work permits are issued for the same person each year, this actually covers a much smaller number of total individuals who received a work permit.

¹⁷⁵ WFP and TRCS (2019). Refugees in Turkey: Livelihoods Survey Findings.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Leghtas, I and Hollingsworth, A. (2017). 'I am only looking for my rights': legal employment still inaccessible for refugees in Turkey. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Turkey%2BReport%2BFinal.pdf>

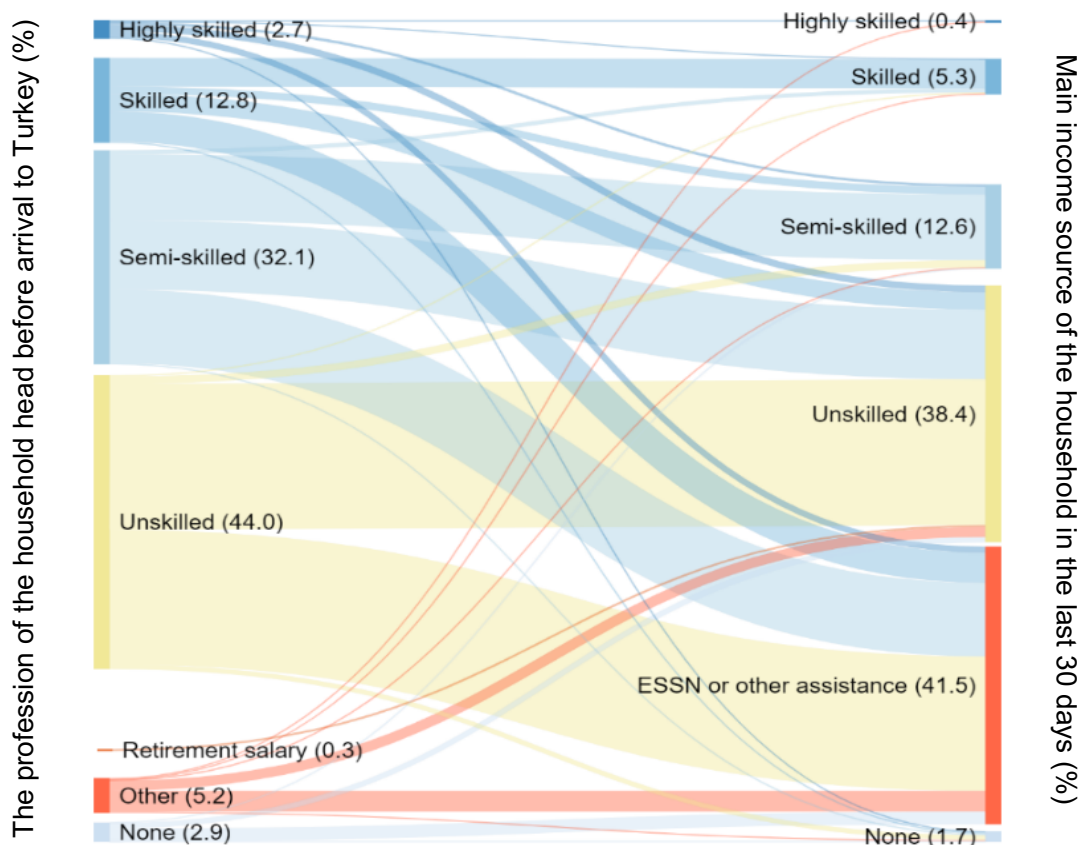
Standardised but flexible Turkish language education for refugees can, therefore, accelerate their economic integration. This is likely to be even more effective when coupled with recertification programmes that recognise prior degrees, as discussed below.

b. Recertification of existing degrees

For those refugees who have previous training, an accreditation system that provides certified qualifications for existing skills is an important next step. In the Livelihoods Survey, many of the refugees with university diplomas cited ‘the absence of diploma and/or certification’ as the main barrier to employment. More educated refugees stated that they were not able to obtain work in the same sector as their previous experience, and therefore must find lower-skilled work, which requires different skills. As a result, educated people reported a lack of skills corresponding to the employment opportunities available to them.

Using CVME5 data, it is possible to compare the profession of the household head before coming to Turkey and the main income source of the household in the last month in Turkey. The analysis in Figure 16 reveals that semi-skilled or skilled work is currently not the main income source of the majority of the households while it used to be the main source of income (for 47.6% of the household heads¹⁷⁸) before coming to Turkey. Currently, skilled labour (highly skilled, skilled or semi-skilled) is only in 18.3% of the households’ main income source; while in most of the households the main income source is ESSN or other assistance (41.5%) or unskilled labour (38.4%).

Figure 16: Around half of the household heads were semi-skilled, skilled or highly skilled workers before arrival to Turkey while their main income source of the household in Turkey is usually unskilled labour or ESSN/other assistance



Source: CVME5, note that household head in Syria and the current household head may not be the same person. The axes are not exactly defined in the same way; however, this representation is based on the best available data comparing pre-arrival sources of labour income and the current status of households.

It has been stated in beneficiary interviews that even people with degrees have trouble finding a decent job matching their skills in Turkey, primarily due to the language barrier or lack of an official diploma. Even

¹⁷⁸ In Syria, 2.7% of household heads used to be employed as highly skilled professionals (engineers; doctors; teachers, etc), 12.8% were skilled workers (shop managers; laboratory technicians; computer support technicians, etc) and 32.1% were semi-skilled workers (secretaries, bus drivers, mechanics, hair dressers, etc). In comparison, main income source of the household in the last month is not skilled or semi-skilled labour in the majority of refugee households in Turkey. (Source data: Authors’ calculations using CVME5).

for some Syrians who have been granted citizenship, this lack of equivalency can constitute a problem, if they are unable to take these exams in Turkish:

I am a teacher. I was a specialist (Physics/Chemistry) educational guide when I was in Syria, the main issue that we currently face is that our certificates from Syria are not recognised, we need to take several exams to complete the certificate equivalence process. Even though we are now Turkish citizens and we have submitted our certified documents, we do not have the right to practise our professions because our certificates are not equivalent to Turkish certificates.

53-year-old Syrian male, Gaziantep

Provision of Turkish language teaching and the more widespread recertification of existing degrees could also help a sub-group of (skilled) refugees who are unable to practise their own professions in Turkey.

c. Work permits and foreigner employment quota

There are many difficulties concerning the issuing of work permits both for employers and refugees in terms of legal procedures, employment quotas and the fee for its issuance. The Regulation on Work Permits of Refugees under Temporary Protection was ratified in 2016 that aims to regulate a work permit scheme¹⁷⁹. There are numerous reasons behind the low number of work permits issued as outlined above, and the actual cost of the work permit is not the main binding constraint. The cost of issuing a work permit for refugees under temporary protection is currently only TRY 282.20 (equivalent to less than EUR 30¹⁸⁰). Constituting a minimum cost, the fee is not a deterrent on its own to hiring a Syrian refugee. As will be discussed below, the monthly tax wedge on the minimum wage (for tax and social security premiums) is four times the cost of the annual work permit – and is likely considered to be more prohibitive by employers.

One concern with work permits is that they need to be renewed each year by the employer – this constitutes an additional bureaucratic burden on the employers: ‘many Syrians have probably received several permits over the years, even to remain in the same job¹⁸¹. The work permit application process increases the cost of hiring a Syrian for employers in addition to the fact that employers have to pay at least the minimum wage and register Syrian employees with the Social Security Institution (see part e below for a discussion on the cost of formal sector employment).

Even if employers want to take on the time and monetary cost of issuing work permit, as per the regulations, there is a 10% quota implying that the number of employed refugees under temporary protection must not exceed 10% of the employed Turkish citizens¹⁸². Furthermore, according to a 2020 report on Syrian businesses in Turkey by Building Markets, more than 10,000 companies were established by Syrians in Turkey between 2011 and 2018¹⁸³. These companies employ on average seven people and 83% are micro-sized (with a total of 10 employees or fewer)¹⁸⁴. Thus, even for most Syrian entrepreneurs, there is an obstacle to employ Syrians due to the quota regulation on the number of refugees that can be formally employed where these small companies would only be able to issue one work permit¹⁸⁵. The additional cost of employing a Syrian refugee along with legal procedures and the quota rule, therefore, increases the reluctance of employers to hire a refugee¹⁸⁶. While it is not the actual cost (monetary fee) of the permit that is expensive, this is often reflected to refugees by the employers as being the main problem.

Quotes from phone interviews for this evaluation show how the employers may be using the cost of the work permit almost as an excuse to continue hiring Syrians informally:

¹⁷⁹ Source: <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/3.5.20168375.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ Note: The indicative exchange rate is based on the banknote selling rate announced by the Central Bank of Turkey released on 9 November 2020. Retrieved from:

¹⁸¹ UNDP and Atlantic Council in Turkey (2020). ‘Turkey’s Refugee Resilience: Expanding and Improving Solutions for the Economic Inclusion of Syrians in Turkey’. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/turkeys-refugee-resilience-expanding-and-improving-solutions-for-the-economic-inclusion-of-syrians-in-turkey/>

¹⁸² Source: Employment quota described under 8-1 and 8-2 under the Regulation on Work Permits of Refugees under Temporary Protection. <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/3.5.20168375.pdf>

¹⁸³ Building Markets (2020), TURKISH-SYRIAN BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS, PART II: An Opportunity in Progress. Retrieved from: https://buildingmarkets.org/sites/default/files/pdm_reports/turkish_syrian_business_partnerships_part2.pdf

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Companies that employ fewer than 10 people, can have a maximum of one refugee employed under a work permit. (Source: Section 8-2 under the Regulation on Work Permits of Refugees under Temporary Protection. <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/3.5.20168375.pdf>)

¹⁸⁶ Leghtas, I and Hollingsworth, A. (2017). ‘I am only looking for my rights’: legal employment still inaccessible for refugees in Turkey. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Turkey%2BReport%2BFinal.pdf>

Regarding work permits, the employers are responsible for that, many of them do not issue work permits for their employees because the process is pricey.

38-year-old Syrian male, Istanbul

Another problem that we face is related to work permits; it is very hard to issue. The work-related procedures are harder for us compared to Turkish citizens. Even if we decide to enter the labour market and compete, we suffer a lot. The employer is usually responsible for work permits, but since it is a long process that costs a lot of money, they do not provide work permits for their refugee employees, those employees have to work illegally without insurance and legal documents. Employers do not care about us; they would just say 'this is my offer, if you want a work permit, issue it yourself as I will not do it for you'. Even if we complain, we are the ones that will suffer from legal prosecution.

36-year-old Syrian male, Istanbul

The complexity of bureaucratic procedures with regards to work permit applications are shown to be another slowing factor in this process. International organisations and academics interviewed for the evaluation found this problematic. Long processing times, the inability of Syrian refugees having work permits by themselves constitutes one of the biggest impediments to the economic integration of Syrians and also leading them to integrate labour market informally for low wages, without any insurance or social benefits.

By making the formalisation process for refugees 'seemingly easy' but in reality difficult, the labour market regulation makes it more difficult for refugees to integrate fully in Turkey. The perspective of refugees on this issue are represented below, collected from 'web scraping' as well as phone interviews:

I think that the refugee labour market in Turkey is difficult and cruel at the same time. To explain my point of view, I think it is difficult because of the high competition in the labour market, which is related to the high unemployment rate in Turkey. This means that to the employers, Syrians will always come as the second option... What I have noticed in Turkey is that employers are not fair in paying salaries to refugees. Many people that I trust have experienced this, they left their jobs even when the employer owed them money. They could not demand their right or file any compliant as they were not legally registered and do not have work permits.

67-year-old Syrian male, Sakarya

The unequal pay for work has also been mentioned by many refugees and is a theme that comes up regularly in our data:

We do not get paid as the Turks do even if we are doing the same job and putting the same effort. I do not understand how that makes sense, I mean, we have the same expense and expenditures, and we do the same job, but still, we are being paid less. For example, if a Turk worker gets TRY 175 per day, an equivalent Syrian worker will get around TRY 110 per day if he is hired in the first place.

38-year-old Syrian male, Şanlıurfa

We are paid about half what the Turkish workers earn.

UNHCR Q2 2019

I think job opportunities are available in case if the employee is accepting the fact that the employer is taking advantage of him just because he is a refugee and needs the job desperately. For example, one will be doing a job that is worth TRY 2,000, but the employer would offer him TRY 1,000 only. For a refugee, it is impossible to earn the salary equivalent to the job; we are always paid less.

38-year-old Syrian male, Istanbul

As of 2018, refugees in Turkey mainly worked in services and industry (i.e. textiles, shoe manufacturing) followed by construction. According to the Livelihoods Survey¹⁸⁷ results collected between June and Nov 2018 by TRCS and WFP, 20% of refugees in Turkey worked in unskilled services (i.e. home cleaning, paper collectors, street vendors, porters), followed by textiles with 19% and construction with 12%¹⁸⁸. Artisanship (10%), commercial services (5%) and handymen (5%) are the other sectors included in services that the refugees work in commonly.

While their employment rates are close to those of the Turkish population, the formal sector employment of refugees in Turkey remains low; refugees generally work informally and irregularly. There are several studies estimating the number of Syrians working informally in the labour market, and some of these estimations have a range from 750,000 to 1,000,000 Syrians¹⁸⁹. According to the Livelihoods Survey (2019) collected by TRCS and WFP, only 3% of refugees in the sample were working 'with a work permit', hence the majority of the refugees who are working are doing so informally¹⁹⁰. Additionally, a little more than half of the refugees (54%) surveyed were working irregularly (i.e. without a fixed salary or working days and hours). Dempster et al. (2020) indicate that compared to other countries, Turkey has a relatively large gap in terms of the proportion of refugees and host populations being employed informally in the labour market compared to Colombia, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq (see Figure 14a)¹⁹¹.

d. Restrictions around location/province of work

The fact that refugees have to remain in the province of their registration also adds another layer of difficulty/friction to their employment. It has been noted 'the extent to which Syrians' occupational profile match with cities' socio-economic dynamics such as types of available job opportunities or economic sectors grappling with labour shortage' is questionable¹⁹². In other words, labour market prospects and available jobs in different sectors and provinces do not always provide enough quota for employers to employ a refugee under temporary protection.

Most Syrian refugees are living in regions with already high unemployment rates. In 2019, 71.3% of the registered Syrian refugees were living in the nine regions (out of 26) with unemployment rates higher than Turkey's average (13.7%). These were the regions TR10 (Istanbul), TR31 (Izmir), TR51 (Ankara), TR63 (Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye), TR72 (Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat), TRB2 (Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkari), TRC1 (Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis), TRC2 (Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır), TRC3 (Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt). A positive correlation can also be seen between a region's unemployment rate in 2019 and the share of Syrian refugees in that province (see Figure 17).

¹⁸⁷ Livelihoods Survey was collected by TRCS and WFP between June and Nov 2018 from a sample of 5,332 ESSN applicant households living in 19 provinces of Turkey. The survey is representative of ESSN applicants in the 19 provinces.

¹⁸⁸ WFP & TRCS (2019) Refugees in Turkey Livelihoods Survey Findings <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/70508>

¹⁸⁹ See, for instance, International Crisis Group (2018) and Yucel et al. (2018).

International Crisis Group (2018). Turkey' Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions. Europe Report 248, Brussels.

Yücel, A., Utas, C., Luchsinger, G., Kavlak, I. V., Iris Bjorg Kristjansdottir, I. B. & Freizer, S. (2018).

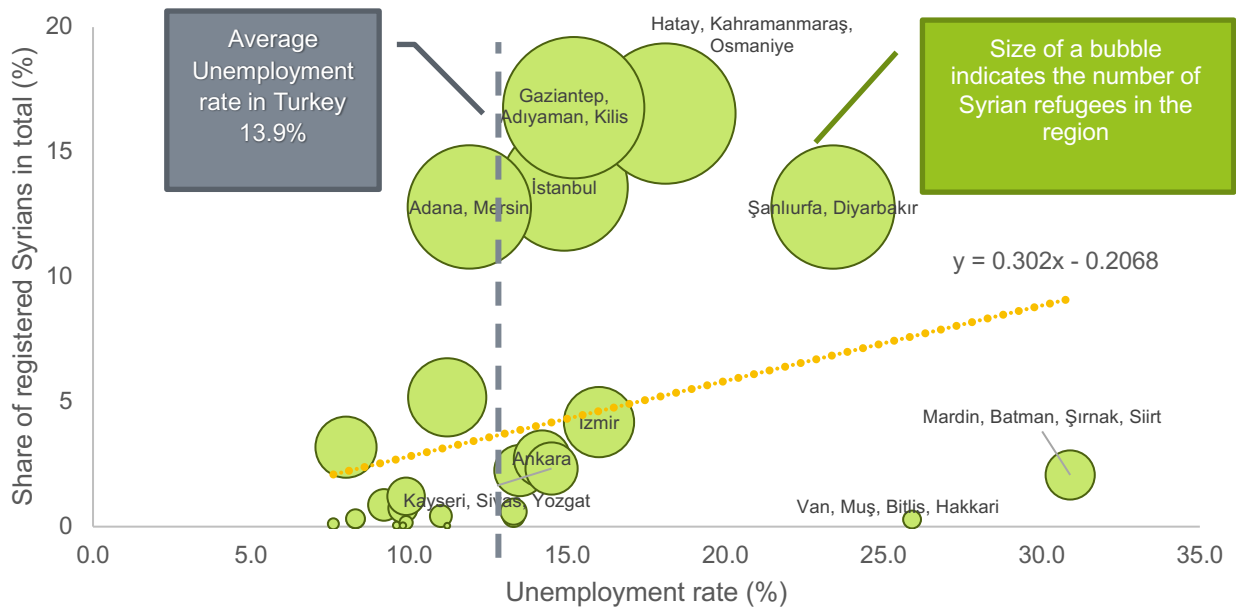
'Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey,' UN Women and the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM). Retrieved from: <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/country/turkey/the%20needs%20assessmentengwebcompressed.pdf?la=en&vs=3139>

¹⁹⁰ WFP & TRCS (2019). Refugees In Turkey Livelihoods Survey Findings <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/70508>

¹⁹¹ Dempster, H., Ginn, T., Graham, T., Ble, M. G., Jayasinghe, D. & Shorey, B. (2020). 'Locked Down and Left Behind: The Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees' Economic Inclusion.' Policy Paper 179. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development and Refugees International. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/locked-down-and-left-behind-impact-covid-19-refugees-economic-inclusion>

¹⁹² Siviş, S. (2020). Integrating bottom-up into top-down: the role of local actors in labour market integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey. International Migration.

Figure 17: A positive correlation can be seen between the unemployment rate and share of registered Syrian refugees in a region



Source: Total number of refugees in 2019 are obtained from UNHCR 2020, *SURİYELİLER BAROMETRESİ 2019* <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/09/SB2019-TR-04092020.pdf>, unemployment rates are obtained from TURKSTAT

The restriction on the location of work permits reduces the possibility of refugees to move to provinces where there might be better opportunities in terms of their livelihoods and may also increase the competition for formal jobs in the provinces where they are registered. This quote from the UNHCR Facebook page describes the frustration by one refugee for having to stay in the province of registration:

Yes, work is available in Turkey, but no one gives us our full right because we are foreigners. We are easily replaced; nobody holds onto us at work. That is why our lives are not stable. Not to forget that we are not treated the way Turkish workers are treated. How do you talk about job opportunities while you are addressing people who are forbidden to go outside their cities unless they have travelling permits?

Quote on UNHCR Facebook page, Q2 2019

e. ESN incentives coupled with the high cost of formal employment

ESN eligibility criteria currently state that a person who is formally employed cannot be eligible for the ESN. As of 2019, the WFP ESN eligibility criteria included the following statement: ‘Those employed with a valid work permit or who own registered assets in Turkey are not eligible to receive assistance.’¹⁹³ For ESN beneficiary refugees, this creates confusion and a disincentive to join the formal labour market, as once a household member has a formal job, the entire family loses the ESN benefit. Syrian refugees may not want to become ineligible for the ESN for the sake of being formally employed to sustain their lives and working-age adults in the household may have an incentive not to register themselves in formal work in order for the household to maintain their beneficiary status of the ESN¹⁹⁴.

ESN cash assistance and labour income provide beneficiaries with complimentary benefits to sustain their total well-being but may also lock beneficiaries into the informal labour market. Being formally employed (i.e. registration with the Social Security Institute) provides refugees with access to healthcare and invokes a pension liability at the same time. However, as highlighted by Siviş (2020) ‘registration with SSI provides Syrians access to the healthcare system which is already ensured

¹⁹³ Maunder, N., Seyfert, K., Aran, M. & Aktakke, N. (2020). ESN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019. Retrieved from: https://b50852f2-fdef-42e1-adf9-b42650e2a9fc.filesusr.com/ugd/b70f3f_c114147a1d64466a8646137c6febfc3.pdf

¹⁹⁴ Siviş, S. (2020). Integrating Bottom-up into Top-down: The Role of Local Actors in Labour Market Integration of Syrian Refugees in Turkey. *International Migration*. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/imig.12775?af=R>

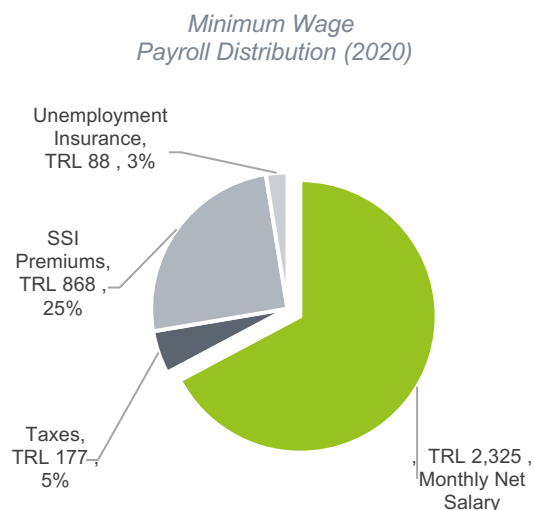
under temporary protection regime.’ The regulation also does not guarantee pension benefits, as the formally employed person needs to be in the labour market for a long time to qualify for benefits – and the system does not transparently provide the option of portability of pension benefits (if they move to another country or back to Syria)¹⁹⁵. In this regard, the trade-off between being formally employed and benefiting from the ESSN leans towards the ESSN due to the already granted health benefits and ambiguous pension liabilities and benefits. This is also consistent with the findings of Altiok and Tosun (2018) that state ‘from the refugee side if they ask for work permits, they will lose cash assistance; therefore, they prefer working informally so that they can continue getting cash assistance’¹⁹⁶. Similar findings are all proposed in the SUMAF report¹⁹⁷, that:

The majority of SuTPs [Syrians] prefer to work informally in order not to lose their ESSN payments, which still provide the basic survival security for most SuTPs, especially for larger families. Risking the basic livelihoods guarantee against the uncertainties of the formal employment (which often proves to be short-lived) is not something that most SuTPs are prepared to risk, preferring instead to work informally.

In addition, the tax wedge for formally employing workers is high for employers in Turkey, who also have an incentive to keep refugees informally employed. The tax and social security payments on minimum wage constitute one-third the total cost to the employer each month. To be specific, in 2020 prices, the cost to the employer, of employing someone at the minimum wage is TRY 3,458, while only TRY 2,325 becomes the net salary of the employee and the rest of the cost is allocated to the hefty wedge allocated for social security premiums, unemployment insurance and taxes (see Figure 18a). Turkey’s tax wedge on formal employment (even at the minimum wage level) is among the highest among OECD countries than most OECD countries. When compared to Turkey, even countries such as Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and Denmark all have smaller additional costs implied by payroll taxes (Figure 18b).

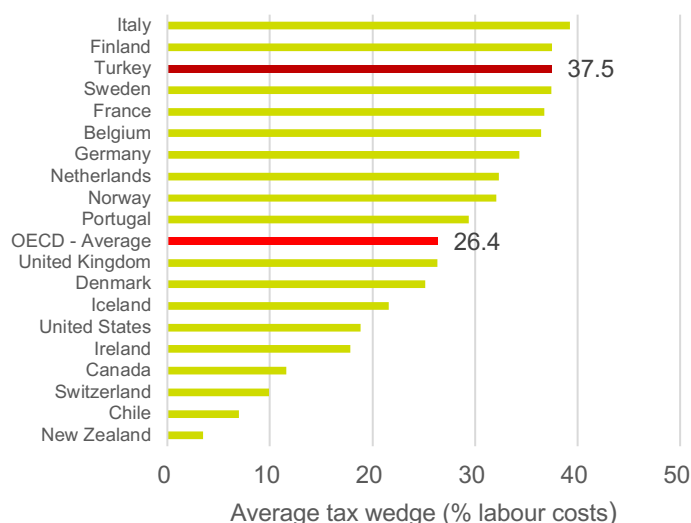
Figure 18: Monthly cost to the employer of formally employing a refugee Turkey and Turkey’s tax wedge on formal employment

a. Monthly cost to the employer of formally employing a refugee Turkey (not including work permit processing)



Source data: Turkey Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policies (retrieved Nov 2020) <https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/35788/asgari-uretin-net-hesabi-ve-isverene-maliyeti-2020-01012020-31122020.pdf>

b. Turkey’s tax wedge on formal employment is high when benchmarked against selected OECD countries



Source: Data extracted from OECD Stat (2019) OECD calculates the tax wedge for each country based on a one-earner married couple with two children at average earnings

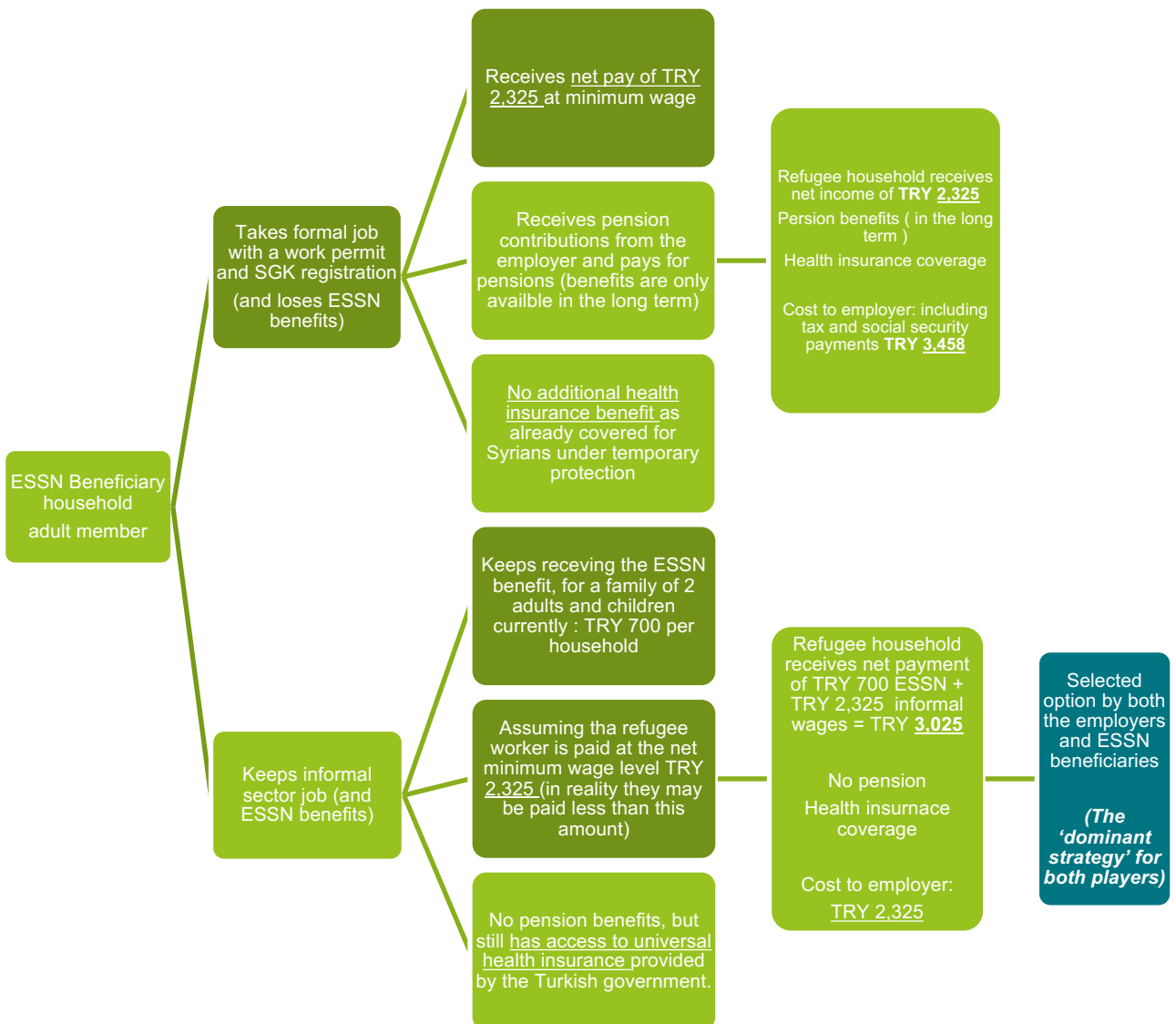
¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Altiok, B. and Tosun, S. (2018). *How to co-exist? Urban Refugees in Turkey: Prospects and Challenges*. UNESCO Chair on International Migration Policy Brief.

¹⁹⁷ SUMAF Monitoring Report: Employability and Vocational Skills Development, May 2020.

Given the incentives of ESN beneficiary households and the costs of employing formal labour by employers, the decision tree below summarises the decision model for both parties. Staying in the informal sector is the **dominant strategy** for both for the refugee household as well as the employer.

Figure 19: Employment decision tree for a refugee adult member of an ESN beneficiary household: A game-theoretic approach



The recent UNDP and Atlantic Council report also highlights this dilemma and 'the incompatibility between ESN benefits and formal employment'. According to the report, this factor was voiced by government officials to address that this incompatibility is '(...) a factor deterring refugees from looking for formal opportunities, in order to be able to cumulate ESN transfers with informal wages'.¹⁹⁸ In other words, ESN benefits are considered to complement the insufficient means provided by the informal labour market for refugees in Turkey but may also lock refugees into a situation where they are unable to leave the informal sector and take up formal sector jobs.

Beneficiaries interviewed or who have left comments on TRCS and UNHCR Facebook pages have repeatedly also expressed these concerns and questions which highlight their decision-making mechanism –provided more formally above:

My TRCS card was stopped because I have insurance as I work in a factory. But I do not benefit from this insurance at all. Knowing that I am the family's only breadwinner. We are a 5-member family; my children are young; my eldest is 6 years old.

Quote on TRCS Facebook page Q1 2018

¹⁹⁸ UNDP and Atlantic Council in Turkey (2020). 'Turkey's Refugee Resilience: Expanding and Improving Solutions for the Economic Inclusion of Syrians in Turkey'. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/turkeys-refugee-resilience-expanding-and-improving-solutions-for-the-economic-inclusion-of-syrians-in-turkey/>

My husband has insurance, but it will be expired this month. When can I re-apply? Knowing that I have three children and my application was rejected due to my husband's working permit.

Quote on TRCS Facebook Q1 2019

I got the TRCS card in January, and then it was stopped because my husband got health insurance when he issued a working permit. My husband left his job a month ago, but the TRCS card is still stopped even though my husband's insurance is no longer valid knowing that I have five children and we live in very bad conditions. I do not know what to do.

Quote on TRCS Facebook page Q2 2018

I want to ask. There is a project in the municipality of Antakya for a period of 4 months only. If I work on the project, I will get a working permit and insurance. Will my TRCS card be stopped if I get a working permit and insurance knowing that the period is only 4 months?

Quote on TRCS Facebook page Q2 2018

This charged quote posted by a refugee is particularly telling:

It seems as if you are living on another planet. Those who have working permits are looking for ways to cancel it because they lose any provided aid when a working permit is issued.

Quote on UNHCR Facebook page Q1 2020

Regarding work permits, refugees do not want to issue it as the TRCS card is stopped once the beneficiary has a work permit. It should be considered that some work permits are temporary and valid for a few months only; it would not be fair to stop the TRCS card in this case.

Phone interview with Syrian male, Adana

Given these types of distorted incentives – which are clearly understood by beneficiaries – ideally, the ESSN should be completely decoupled from the employment status of household members. This is consistent with the ESSN retargeting suggestion proposed earlier in this report where benefits will no longer be provisioned for working-age adult members of the household (and the ESSN is only provided for children and elderly/disabled dependents). In this way, ESSN beneficiary status of the household would be independent of the labour market status of adult members, allowing them to pick up formal jobs.

ii. Facility socio-economic support interventions in the context of the Turkish labour market

Given the challenging and deteriorating macro-economic outlook as well as the additional friction due to work permit legislation, the existing high cost of formal employment, distorted incentives presented by the ESSN, and supply-side labour barriers to labour market entry such as language, the Facility has tried to improve the employability, employment and livelihood prospects of refugees in Turkey in a number of ways. The main interventions, as described in Section 3.2.2 above, have included skills training, on-the-job training, language courses and support for small and medium-sized enterprises. There has also been institutional support to a number of Turkish bodies for various measures such as IT systems and training courses. In terms of addressing the issues faced by refugees in accessing livelihood opportunities, it can be concluded that there have been some modest successes as well as areas where progress has been slow. In the analysis, we provide some description of progress so far and juxtapose results against the barriers identified in the labour market analysis above.

As discussed earlier, the lack of Turkish language skills is a major barrier to employment, and there is evidence that a number of programmes have made progress towards their targets (specifically UNDP, providing courses to over 31,000 refugees). Similarly, the support for on-the-job training (OJT) implemented by İŞKUR via the World Bank has recorded modest successes, registering over 15,000 participants, around 24% of which were women and 65% of the total were Syrians. As outlined above, the OJT scheme is about job retention, as employers commit to keeping people on after the support. So far, the retention target of 20% has been met. While this is encouraging, it is worth noting this is a

reduced target from the pre-influx regular programme, where employers had to guarantee 50% retention.

As described above, another significant barrier to employment for refugees has been a lack of skills certification. Here, however, there has been less progress, so that less than 4000 have been certified, against the target of 15,000 (to be achieved by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) action's original end date of December 2019), with the level of Turkish required being a barrier to achievement. There has been even less progress made in the support to SMEs, with 247 receiving grants and a further 925 receiving training of some sort. When compared to the level of employment need, these are very small numbers. It is also particularly concerning when the Turkish government ESSN exit strategy identified Syrian SMEs as a major employer for refugees in the formal sector¹⁹⁹.

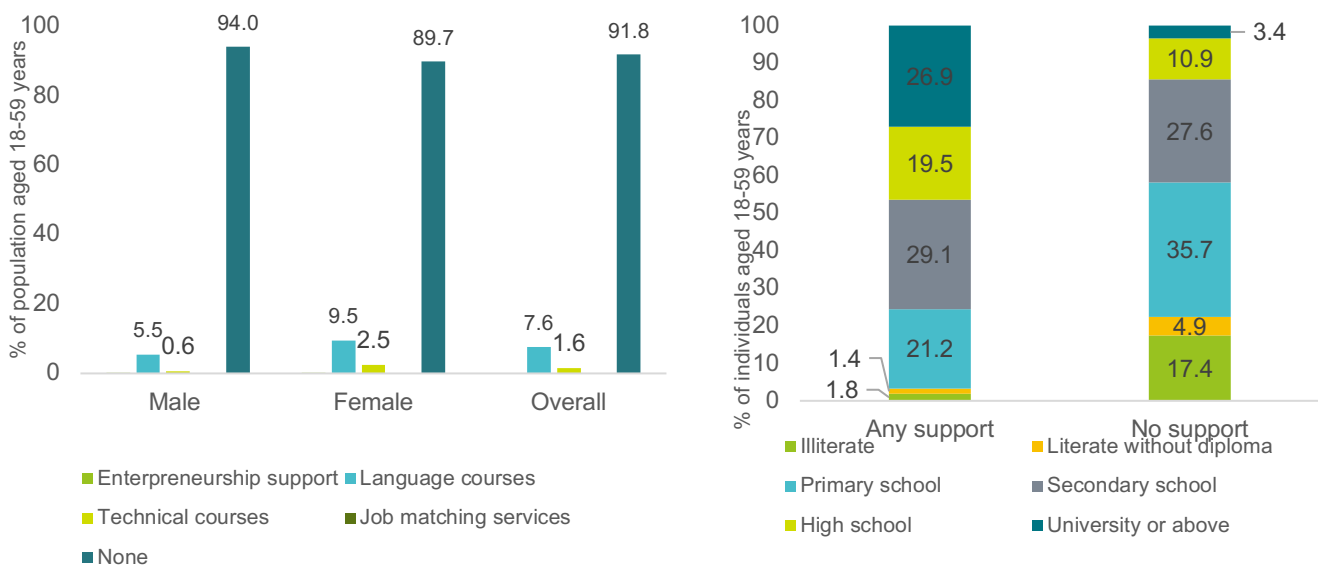
By far the largest intervention in this area then has been the provision of employability skills training programmes. Despite this being the largest activity in this area for the Facility, the latest household-level data available to the evaluation suggests that the coverage of livelihoods programmes that aim to provide skills training remains extremely small. According to the CVME5 data analysed for this evaluation, only 8.2% of the 18 to 59-year-old refugees have received any form of livelihood support, including language courses.

A majority of the livelihood support is in the form of Turkish language or technical/vocational courses²⁰⁰: 92.3% of the individuals who are receiving livelihood support received Turkish language courses, and 18.9% received technical/vocational courses. Receivers of livelihood support are more likely to have university-level education, less likely to have lower than secondary school education and less likely to be living in a household in the lowest asset quintile (i.e. poorest) compared to the individuals in the same age group (18–59) who are not receiving livelihood support.

Figure 20: Livelihood support among the refugee population aged 18–59 years old

a. Coverage of livelihood and training programmes remains low

b. Livelihood support receivers are more educated than the rest of the refugees



Source data: CVME5 and evaluation team calculations

The main factors affecting the implementation and effectiveness of the programmes were: (i) lack of coordination in the sector and the number of programmes; (ii) difficulty with the host community's acceptance of these programmes; (iii) lack of data collection and measurement of outcomes; and (iv) the underlying assumptions that have affected the overall outcomes. We will next discuss each of these challenges in more detail below.

¹⁹⁹ Exit strategy from the ESSN program. FRIT office of the presidency of Turkey and MoFLSS. 20/12/2018.

²⁰⁰ In the CVME5 sample only two individuals report receiving job matching services and another two individuals report receiving entrepreneurship support.

a. Lack of coordination in the sector and the number of programmes

While the programmes were agreed relatively quickly, the processes of implementation have been relatively slow, compared to basic needs support. As for the basic needs support, many implementation partners identified one of the initial challenges faced was working without the benefit of access to data on actual needs of refugee groups²⁰¹. To address this, a number of programmes have included surveys and situation analyses, with the aim of directing the implementation of interventions. However, as a recent SUMAF report on Employability and Vocational Training²⁰² has highlighted, there is now a proliferation of these Labour Market Needs Assessment, in addition to those conducted annually by İŞKUR. The report concludes that:

The IPs conduct their own LMNA [Labour Market Needs Assessment] in the target regions, independently of each other and without coordination. According to the feedback provided by stakeholders such as DG ILF, they tend to come to similar conclusions regarding the type of vocational courses to offer. This approach has led to duplication of efforts.

In terms of the development of the programmes, the overarching objectives and the components that they employ are all somewhat similar, as well as employing a similar set of approaches to achieve them. This is, in part, due to the fact that there are a number of key partners in the sector who already operate programmes on a considerable scale, such as İŞKUR²⁰³ that provides 500,000 courses annually, and that all of the implementing partners already had existing relationships, sometimes built up over several decades. However, the effectiveness of jobs programmes has not been established in Turkey's own İŞKUR programmes²⁰⁴ and the effectiveness of new interventions have not yet been developed by any of the implementers.

These issues have been compounded by the numerous actors involved in training and support and that there were few effective mechanisms for coordination. A number of those interviewed in the sector stated that there were too many organisations working in the field²⁰⁵ with an overall lack of coordination²⁰⁶. When the programmes were being developed, there were already a number of organisations, including international NGOs, who were providing various sorts of training to refugees. The recent SUMAF report²⁰⁷ concluded overall that: 'there is little evidence of such strategic coordination at the Facility level, or strategic division of labour and core competencies between the different IPs when seen from the level of implementation of the Actions in the field.'

The IPs took time to develop the programmes, having to negotiate relationships either with new or existing partners²⁰⁸, as well as having to get used to new administrative requirements²⁰⁹, all of which has considerably delayed the implementation. A number of those interviewed specifically mentioned issues with multiple levels of administrative and reporting requirements, as having resulted in slow implementation processes²¹⁰.

The primary government institution facilitating the labour market access of refugees in collaboration with the EU and other international donors is the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency) which operates under the Ministry. İŞKUR is currently implementing or developing several Facility projects totalling EUR 130 million and projects with other international partners related to active labour market policies for Syrian refugees²¹¹. These projects support ALMPs' targeting refugees by improving technical vocational education and training and facilitating capacity development and modernisation of digital infrastructure²¹². Furthermore, the MoFLSS is responsible for work permit verification and approval, conducting labour market surveys and coordinating the Facility

²⁰¹ KII: SES 8, SES 9.

²⁰² SUMAF Monitoring Report: Employability and Vocational Skills Development, May 2020.

²⁰³ KII: SES 10, SES 17.

²⁰⁴ World Bank. 2013. Turkey: Evaluating the Impact of Iskur's Vocational Training Programs. World Bank. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17561> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

²⁰⁵ KII: SES 1, SES 3, SES 6.

²⁰⁶ KII: SES 25, SES 5, SES 8.

²⁰⁷ SUMAF Monitoring Report: Employability and Vocational Skills Development, May 2020.

²⁰⁸ KII: SES 17, SES 5.

²⁰⁹ KII: SES 9, SES 11.

²¹⁰ KII: SES 17, SES 9, SES 5.

²¹¹ UNDP and Atlantic Council in Turkey (2020). 'Turkey's Refugee Resilience: Expanding and Improving Solutions for the Economic Inclusion of Syrians in Turkey'. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/turkeys-refugee-resilience-expanding-and-improving-solutions-for-the-economic-inclusion-of-syrians-in-turkey/>.

²¹² Ibid.

projects for the socio-economic sector²¹³. There are also other institutions involved in improving the labour market uptake of refugees including the Directorate-General of Migration Management for collecting information on refugees' skills and educational background; KOSGEB for developing and implementing projects targeting Syrian entrepreneurs; TOBB for identifying the vocational skills of refugees; TEPAV for monitoring and researching Syrian businesses and labour market demand; and TISK (Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations) for conducting training for skill matching, doing research on and monitoring employer and Syrian employee relations²¹⁴. However, there is a need to comprehensively and systematically assess the effectiveness of these programmes implemented or coordinated by several agencies or institutions in Turkey.

The SUMAF report specifically highlights the impact that the lack of coordination has had in two provinces:

*Achievement of targets for two provinces (Adana and Hatay) with the KIGEP (Transition to formal employment) programme under outcome 3, is undermined by another support (İŞKUR–WB) provided to the similar target group with a more advantageous option for employers. While the Action supported employers with reimbursement of work permit (TRY 372) and social security premiums (TRY 950/worker) for formal employment of SuTPs [Syrian] and Turkish workers, İŞKUR support was for reimbursement of the minimum wage (TRY 2,020 net) which is being preferred by the employers.*²¹⁵

Both of the national partners, İŞKUR and MoFLSS, raised the problem of coordination, which is also linked to the problem of quality of these courses. Even though the share of attendants into vocational training courses among the Syrian refugee population is low²¹⁶, there are many actors in the field, providing these courses under various projects.

With regard to the lack of coordination in skills training, there are concerns that this has given rise to what has been described as, 'an artificial vocational training economy', where refugees have turned to training courses as an alternative source of income: 'Stipends tend to create a dependency culture among some Syrians who have discovered that 'training for employability' has become a form of quasi-employment in its own right.'²¹⁷ There is no straightforward solution to this issue, because, as previously mentioned, Turkish data protection law prevents IPs from freely exchanging the personal data of beneficiaries.

Several project partners, both national and international, acknowledged that some of the beneficiaries of these training courses have become 'professional trainees' since they get paid for each course they attend.

As one government stakeholder described:

*Many different organisations have been providing training courses to integrate Syrians into the labour market, but what we observed is that there is no coordination, there are 'professional students' attending these courses to get stipends; therefore this causes waste of resources*²¹⁸.

During one phone interview conducted with beneficiaries, a young Syrian refugee distinguished between training programmes that people attend just to get the stipend, and the wage subsidy programmes that he views as more effective in improving access to jobs:

Vocational programmes are quite routine, especially regarding programmes where they provide the participant with TRY 20–25. So, people attend just to receive money not to benefit from the programme itself. Other programmes, on the other hand, help people finding jobs and sometimes cover their SGK [insurance]. These 'good' programmes encourage employers to hire refugees as the insurance is covered by the service providers; the employer does not have to pay for it.

32-year-old Syrian male, Gaziantep

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ SUMAF Monitoring Report: Employability and Vocational Skills Development, May 2020.

²¹⁶ Based on TEPAV's recent survey, out of all Syrians surveyed, only 15% attended vocational training courses. Without language courses, this dropped to 8%.

²¹⁷ Ibid. SUMAF Monitoring Report: Employability and Vocational Skills Development, May 2020.

²¹⁸ KII: 25.

b. Difficulty with the host community's acceptance of these programmes

Some of those interviewed referred to the fact that, while Turkish people have generally been supportive of efforts to meet the basic needs of refugees in the country, there were growing concerns about refugees gaining access to formal employment or receiving support to set up businesses. Key informant interviews (KIIs) suggest that it is not politically feasible to support more refugees to access jobs in the formal sector at a time when more Turkish people have to move to informal jobs²¹⁹. Similarly, there has been some disquiet about the support specifically available to refugee entrepreneurs, although there is less concern when businesses are set up with joint capital²²⁰. Overall, concerns among the Turkish population have been growing about unemployment rates, which are particularly high for young Turkish people, at around 25%²²¹. These general concerns have in turn had an effect on the pressure for programmes to focus on Turkish people as much as on refugees.

For national stakeholders, these programmes created a level of discomfort among the host community. One İŞKUR staff explained the need to cover the host community with these programmes, in these terms:

We tried to explain [to Turkish people] this is not a hiring programme but an active labour market programme where we try to help refugees acquire new skills. However, it was promoted by media as refugees being placed in jobs, although it is not the case. Therefore, as İŞKUR, we insisted on 50% host community, 50% Syrian participation. Despite this conditionality, we still encounter these problems. We have started working on preparations for FRIT 2 [Facility Tranche II] last year with the World Bank and held meetings with EUD [European Union Delegation]. They insisted on the fact that we need to have more Syrian refugees' coverage than Turkish citizens with the second tranche. We strongly disagree. EU should take general local sensitivities into consideration – that would be very useful.

c. Lack of data collection and the measurement of outcomes

A significant handicap regarding the provision of vocational training courses is the lack of recruitment data. In other words, it is still unclear how many of these people attending the courses could find a job in the formal labour market. Although the evaluation team requested this data from İŞKUR, it was not forthcoming:

We cannot share the specific data, but within the project, the beneficiaries we received are reported in the quarterly report. As of March 2020, 26,000 Syrians have been registered in İŞKUR in four pilot provinces of the project. Among all, some of them are directed to some of our active labour force programmes. Some of them found jobs and [are] employed. Employment figures, again, cannot be specifically shared as it is subject to Ministry approval.

İŞKUR

The response from the Ministry of National Education when asked about how many students were employed after they attended TVET courses, was somewhat similar:

We don't have such kind of data. Due to COVID-19, enterprises were closed down. Therefore, there are no figures around that

MoNE

As the programmes are relatively new, there is currently no evidence on their effectiveness and no mechanism/data that allows for the measurement of impact. However, the anecdotal quotes and qualitative data collected currently point that the training programmes have generally not been very effective in increasing employment:

There are a lot of certificates (over 300,000 certificates) given to Syrians for vocational education. But it is not effective. Early efforts at technical training were a big waste of effort because the training was not linked to market demand. If we make vocational courses, it must

²¹⁹ KII: SES 22.

²²⁰ KII: SES 28.

²²¹ KII: SES 24.

*lead to real needs and the real economy. Even if they get a real certificate, their chance to have an official workplace is very limited*²²².

An academic working in this area, interviewed by the evaluation team, suggested that INGOs are offering such courses to provide opportunities for social interaction, more than to increase employment opportunities:

*They [Livelihood programmes managers] were honestly telling me that these trainings that they are running are not increasing people's employment, but it is to create safe space for Syrian refugees to interact each other. They basically function as 'get-togethers', which is important, but not related to employment in terms of their function*²²³.

A beneficiary post on UNHCR's Facebook page also highlights the hopes raised by these trainings, that are ultimately not fulfilled by labour demand:

I studied for 6 months in order to get a certificate in operating heavy equipment. I succeeded after so much trouble and got this certificate. The shock was when I went to İŞKUR, and they told me that they could not offer me any job because I am a refugee, and I do not have a permanent work permit. I used all legal procedures to get a job, but it all failed, even though I speak Turkish well, and I have been in Turkey for 3 years. So please don't tell a refugee to go to İŞKUR. This is just a lie.

Quote on UNHCR Facebook page, Q2 2019

d. The underlying assumptions that have affected the overall outcomes

Perhaps one of the main factors affecting the programmes' effectiveness has been the underlying assumption that greater 'employability' will lead to greater numbers finding formal employment. As discussed in Section 3.2.3, informality in the Turkish labour market is a long-standing issue²²⁴, with high levels of informal employment, particularly in agriculture²²⁵. As discussed in the analysis above, informality is closely linked to high costs of formal employment in general in Turkey – for both Turkish citizens and refugees.

The programmes have focused primarily on the supply side, on increasing employability, while failing to consider the demand side, and whether formal employment opportunities are available²²⁶. The SUMAF report²²⁷ similarly concludes that: 'All seven Actions are focused on the supply side, preparing beneficiaries with quick-fix solutions (short TVET courses) for long-term jobs that are scarce and not easily accessible for Syrians. At the same time, there is little focus on creating new sustainable jobs in those enterprises that are supposed to employ Syrians.'

Another concern relates to the assumption that the host community would be open to integrating Syrian refugees in the formal labour market. While fresh labour in the form of refugees has been welcomed in some sectors (such as agriculture and textiles) there has been considerable opposition from the Turkish population to refugees gaining access to formal employment, making the issue a political one²²⁸. This also then translates into the prolonged difficulty and friction in issuing work permits, making inter-province travel more difficult for refugee workers – all issues and constraints discussed earlier in this section.

The continued disincentives for formal sector employment by the ESSN eligibility criteria also add to the difficulties of formalisation of Syrian refugees.

While the exit strategy from the ESSN is for refugee households to integrate into the formal labour market²²⁹, the prospects of this integration happening look difficult in the foreseeable future. The transition out of the ESSN programme and into livelihoods programmes is not likely to be smooth, and the effectiveness of these programmes given the difficult macro-economic conditions in Turkey, remain

²²² KII: SES 28.

²²³ KII: SES 24.

²²⁴ KII: SES 10.

²²⁵ KII: SES 28.

²²⁶ KII: SES 24.

²²⁷ SUMAF Monitoring Report: Employability and Vocational Skills Development, May 2020.

²²⁸ KII: SES 22.

²²⁹ 'Exit Strategy from the ESSN Program', FRIT Office of the Presidency of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (2018).

to be seen. In the meantime, it is important that the ESSN continues to support the basic needs of refugee households for the medium term until a transition is made with the eventual integration of the younger generation of refugees into the Turkish labour market. It is also important that the ESSN eligibility criteria are redesigned to make sure the disincentives for formal sector employment are annulled – including removing working-age adults from the benefit formula for the household benefit calculation.

There are a wide range of ALMPs used by European governments to facilitate the labour market integration of refugees in their own countries: language and introduction courses, job search assistance, training programmes, and subsidised public and private sector employment²³⁰. Butschek and Walter (2014) performed a meta-analysis of 33 relevant evaluation studies on ALMPs using 93 effect estimates in seven European countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland). Their findings suggest that ‘subsidised employment in the private sector is significantly more likely to have a positive effect on immigrants’ labour market outcomes than training. For the other ALMP types, our meta-analysis yields mostly insignificant results’²³¹. In this regard, wage subsidies work better than other ALMPs in terms of providing job prospects for refugees. Subsidies have a positive impact on their employment even in countries with more formal and developed labour markets, and where the refugees looking for work have a higher skill-stock. Integrating refugees into the workforce is a medium to long-term challenge, and not only for the specific case of Turkey.

Furthermore, as outlined by the UNDP and Atlantic Council in Turkey (2020), ‘while both the strategy and the funding of livelihoods programmes represent major progress, it is also worth pointing out that they only occurred in the eighth year of the crisis and will take time to make an impact on the living conditions of Syrian and Turkish communities’.

For this reason, these policy steps will need to be strategically designed to address the long-term presence of refugees; their complex needs related to their social and economic integration and evolving labour market conditions. In doing this, being aware of the specific constraints, rigidities, costs and incentives in the Turkish labour market will enable the improvement of the design of these programmes to focus more on reducing labour market constraints and distorted incentives.

Advocating for changes in labour legislation advocacy (for instance in terms of province-level work permit legislation or reducing costs of formal employment for refugees and minimum wage-earning Turks), reducing the distorted labour market incentives already existing in the ESSN criteria, scaling-up recertification programmes for skilled migrants, continuing to fund wage subsidy programmes that integrate refugees directly into jobs may be better ways of achieving results in the Turkish context – rather than focusing mostly on the delivery of short-term skills-building programmes, which have so far shown little or no effectiveness in the Turkish context with Turkish citizens or other country contexts with refugees.

3.2.4. Contribution considerations

There are a number of significant partners in the employment and skills training sector, including DG ILF, İŞKUR and TOBB, who have provided an essential context for the support provided in the socio-economic sector. A number of implementing partners had existing relationships with these stakeholders, which have been used to a certain extent.

The Facility has provided financial support of more than EUR 200 million to eight partners over the period of the evaluation. While the support has been considerable, the results in the short and medium term are very modest. Available data shows that coverage of the programmes has been weak or modest at best compared to the population in question. The numbers of Syrians and other refugees in formal employment is extremely small, representing only an estimated 3% – 6% of those currently estimated to be working in Turkey.

There have been a number of significant barriers to increasing employment and livelihoods opportunities for refugees. The understandable reluctance of the Turkish government to allow access to the formal labour market at a time of high unemployment is the number one factor, and an initial reluctance to see any such programmes has slowed implementation.

²³⁰ Butschek, S. and Walter, T. (2014). ‘What active labour market programmes work for immigrants in Europe? A meta-analysis of the evaluation literature’, *IZA Journal of Migration*, 3 (48).

²³¹ Ibid.

Overall, however, the largest issue has been that there was a disjuncture between programmes focusing on the supply side of ‘employability’ and livelihood creation, while little attention has been paid the demand side, in terms of whether jobs were available to refugees. Neither has there been sufficient attention paid to the available data on barriers to employment for refugees, with language skills being the foremost issue.

A less critical but still significant issue has been that programmes’ implementing mechanisms have overlapped considerably and they have been particularly affected by a lack of coordination, both between programmes and in the sector as a whole. Overall, the evaluation concludes that socio-economic support to refugees has made only a very modest contribution to increased employability and improved livelihoods. At best estimates, only 10% of working-age Syrians have found formal employment, and 247 SMEs have received financial support in the period considered. The effect of Facility programmes in improving the employability of refugees and host community members for opportunities in the informal labour market is also of relevance, given the economic situation in Turkey and the reality that the vast majority of refugee employment remains informal. However, there is naturally limited data available to measure such an outcome.

3.3. Judgement criterion 10.3: The Facility’s community-level activities have contributed to an improved social cohesion between refugees and the communities that host them

3.3.1. ‘Improved social cohesion’ as an outcome

The Facility Results Framework has as an intermediate outcome: social cohesion between refugees and host communities is increased. There are two indicators for this outcome:

- Ratio of Syrian refugees to host community members among users of community centres
- Percentage of Syrian refugees reporting feeling welcome in their communities

To understand how the approach to social cohesion has developed over the period of implementation, there are broad strategic statements in the HIPs. While these are not stated as outcomes, they do serve as general guidance for objectives:

HIP 2016²³² – [the EC] will continue to focus on neglected and underserved out-of-camp refugees with the dual aim of providing short-term humanitarian relief while also supporting social cohesion of refugees.

HIP 2018²³³ – Recognising that refugees are destined to stay in Turkey until the conflicts in Syria and Iraq are resolved, government assistance is evolving toward social cohesion, from health and education to legal employment and opportunities for citizenship.

HIP 2019²³⁴ – [humanitarian] activities are expected to adopt a do-no-harm approach, and to mainstream social cohesion principles in ongoing programming.

Looking for evidence of broader ‘observed outcomes’, the Third Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) Annual Report for 2019²³⁵ states that 204,000 host community members and Syrians were involved in social cohesion programmes, while 124,000 youth were engaged in empowerment programmes.

The third main component of the Facility’s socio-economic support strategy is aimed at achieving an increase in social cohesion between Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. Most projects funded under this socio-economic sector consisted of activities aiming to increase social cohesion as an ‘add-on’ component. As a result, various social interaction activities were designed and implemented and a significant number of community centres were established under this output. The projects having a social cohesion component were mostly still ongoing during the field phase of this evaluation (except one by GIZ), and there were no final impact evaluation reports available. Hence we are unable to

²³² ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan, 2016, Version 1 – 02/06/2016.

²³³ ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan, 2018, Version 2 – 16/07/2018.

²³⁴ ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan, 2019, Version 1 – 11/10/2018.

²³⁵ 3RP 2019 Annual Report, April 2020.

comment in this report on the specific impact of these programmes on beneficiaries and social cohesion within these communities where projects were implemented.

Social cohesion is difficult to define. Even humanitarians have yet to articulate or agree on what it is, how best to measure it, what causes it or how it increases, etc. Furthermore, it takes time to reduce resentments, mistrust and intolerance between the communities. There needs to be several follow-up studies conducted to better analyse whether there is any positive change in terms of social cohesion between the communities.

In Turkey, social cohesion surveys were conducted by WFP between 2017 and 2019: According to WFP:

Results from the social cohesion surveys of July 2017, October 2017 and January 2018 show that refugees continue to have positive and open attitudes about social interaction with the Turkish community. In particular, refugee women's attitudes regarding their interactions with the host community have evolved in a positive direction. Refugees have a sense of stability and an optimistic outlook, with the majority feeling safe and settled in Turkey and hopeful that their children face a bright future²³⁶.

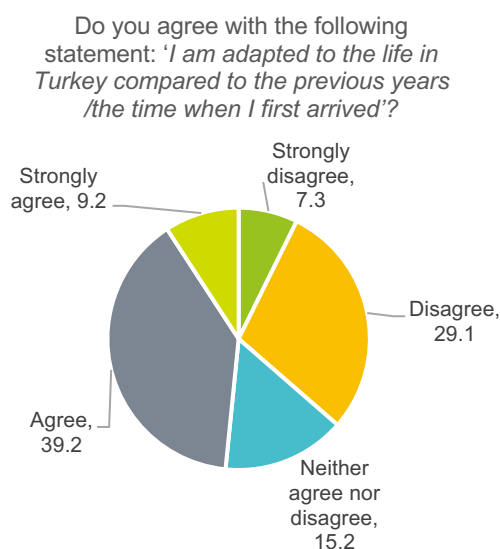
According to the social cohesion index, relations between the refugees and the host community in Turkey were improving in the first three rounds of the World Food Programme survey conducted between July 2017 and January 2018. However, this trend got reversed in the following rounds conducted in February and June 2019. The underlying reasons might be (i) the economic slowdown in mid-2018 that triggered the competition for limited informal employment opportunities between refugees and host community; and (ii) the political discourse on refugee returns during the local election period in March 2019.

The CVME5 survey has included a module on social cohesion in the latest round of data collection (Nov 2019 to Feb 2020) which has been analysed for this evaluation. According to the CVME data, close to a half of refugees (48%) feel that they are now more adapted to life in Turkey than when they arrived, although a third still feel that they are not yet adapted to life in Turkey (See Figure 21a). The majority of refugees in the CVME5 sample report that they agree with the statement that Turkish and Syrian people share similar culture and lifestyles (65%) which can be a proxy for how comfortable they feel living within Turkish culture. The survey also asks about the refugees' network of friends and neighbours and whether they socialise with Turkish people. Most refugees (85%) reported they have Syrian friends 'to talk to when upset, get financial advice from, get advice for getting things done or to visit'; while only about a third of refugees reported having Turkish friends with whom they can carry out these activities (see Figure 21b).

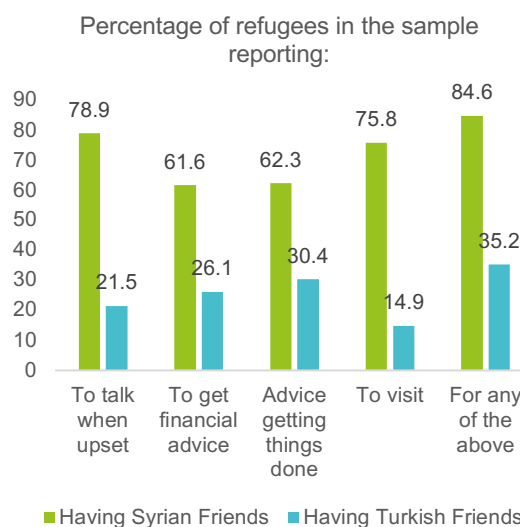
²³⁶ World Food Programme (2018). 'Social Cohesion Index in Turkey Rounds 1,2,3' Published July 2018.

Figure 21: Subjective assessment of refugees on how adapted they feel to life in Turkey and whether they have Turkish friends

Panel a



Panel b



Source data: CVME5 and evaluation team calculations

The Syrians Barometer for 2019²³⁷, a comprehensive field study on Syrians in Turkey conducted simultaneously with the Turkish society and Syrians, includes mixed results in its conclusions, stating that:

The responses received for the question that asked Syrians to what extent they experience problems in the spheres of working conditions, communication, accommodation, nutrition, discrimination, health and education show that there was a decrease in the problems in SB-2019 compared to SB-2017. This suggests that with their problems are getting smaller, Syrians' satisfaction in Turkey is growing.

Even though the high level of support and solidarity displayed by the Turkish society towards Syrians continues, there appears to be a considerable decrease in the level of this acceptance and solidarity, with an increase in society's anxieties. In other words, the acceptance of Turkish society has largely turned into 'toleration'. It can be suggested that Turkish society's support towards Syrians, which remained strong for a long time, has significantly been eroded. The growing anxieties among society concerning Syrians are also causing an increasing politicisation of the process.

The ability to speak the local language promotes interaction in various spheres of life and is an important part of refugee integration. Almost half of the refugees (49%) who responded to the social cohesion survey by WFP (in June 2019) indicated being able to have at least a basic conversation in Turkish, up from 44% in February 2019¹⁷. However, one-quarter of refugees stated that they do not know any Turkish²³⁸. Language ability is also found to be related to communication and relations with the host community in the online survey conducted with the refugee community for this evaluation. While among those who indicated they have Turkish language proficiency, 82.5% reported 'having Turkish friends or any communication with Turkish neighbours', among those who did not have any Turkish proficiency, this level was down at 52.1%²³⁹.

The findings from the CVME5 survey indicate that the vast majority of refugee households report that they have not faced security issues in Turkey with only slightly more than 4% reporting issues including feeling generally unsafe, harassment or theft. Similarly, the survey carried out for the evaluation found that the vast majority of respondents (87%) said that they feel secure where they live. This feeling of

²³⁷ Erdogan, M. (June 2020). Syrians Barometer 2019.

²³⁸ World Food Programme (2020). Social cohesion in Turkey: refugees and the host community / Online survey findings, Rounds 1–5 https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000118922/download/?_ga=2.109370437.1396920293.1600685931-944305830.1600685931

²³⁹ Source: Online Survey results, evaluation team calculations.

security is positively correlated with being proficient in the Turkish language: among those who reported feeling secure where they live, 95% have Turkish proficiency²⁴⁰.

According to the WFP's latest report on social cohesion survey in Turkey:

Personal interaction is a significant factor for the host community in forming their attitudes towards refugees. Turkish nationals who do not know any refugee or who merely have refugee acquaintances (e.g. from their neighbourhood or workplace) are indifferent in their attitudes towards them. Having refugee friends promotes social cohesion among Turkish people²⁴¹.

According to the survey, among the Turkish people who have refugee friends, 48% of them think that the government should provide assistance for the refugees, compared to just 27% of people, who do not know a refugee or know a refugee only from their neighbourhood or work, expect the government to assist the refugees. For the host community, 'having refugee friends' increases willingness to have refugee neighbours; while 23% of the people who do not know any refugee personally and 25% of the people 'who know a refugee at work/neighbourhood' would be happy to share their buildings with refugees, this figure increases to 53% for those who 'have Syrian friends.' People who have refugee friends (48%) are the most willing to work with refugees in the same place. The people who do not know any refugee (18%) or know some from their neighbourhood or work (21%) do not differ much from each other in terms of their opinions on sharing a workplace with refugees. Some of the recommendations in the report include: 'more one-on-one activities between refugees and host community members to encourage closer interaction'. As the data shows, closer contact reduces stereotypes and prejudice because it demystifies 'the other'. This would nurture the friendship and mutual exchange of information to open paths for social cohesion.

Table 11: Summary of intermediate outcome: employment prospects and livelihood opportunities improved

Expected outcome	Social cohesion between refugees and host communities has improved.			
Observed outcome	<p>According to the most recent CVME survey data: around half of refugees feel that they are adapted to life in Turkey; and the vast majority (90%) feel secure.</p> <p>According to the CVME5 survey, 48% of refugees sampled feel they are more adapted to life in Turkey (compared to previous years).</p> <p>Only 35% of refugees report that they have Turkish friends they can 'visit, talk to when they are upset or get advice from'.</p> <p>According to the Syrian Barometer 2019, Syrians' satisfaction with Turkey is growing, while Turkish society has turned from acceptance and solidarity to 'toleration'.</p>			
Facility results contributing to the outcome	Indicators (excluding those for which no progress is reported to date)		Output Targets	Outputs Achieved (as at Dec 31, 2019)
Source: SUMAF, Facility Monitoring Report, May 2020 (to 31 Dec 2019)	Number of operational community centres supported	i3.4.1.1 Cumulative	30	50
	Number of refugees and host community members who participated in social cohesion activities	i3.4.1.2 Cumulative	136,430	455,906

3.3.2. Description of Facility interventions aimed at supporting outcome of 'improved social cohesion'

The Facility Results Framework identifies two indicators of outputs from community-level activities that may contribute to improve social cohesion. These are support to 'operational community centres' and refugee and host community participation in 'social cohesion activities'.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ World Food Programme (2020). Social cohesion in Turkey: refugees and the host community online survey findings for rounds 1–5 WFP Turkey Country Office.

The Danish Red Cross action supports 15 TRCS community centres across Turkey from December 2016 to December 2020. The action's impact objective refers to 'peaceful coexistence among vulnerable refugee and host communities' and one of its stated 'outputs' is that 'target communities are empowered to promote social cohesion and active community-driven development'. Activities aiming to contribute to this output by facilitating greater interaction between the displaced population with the local host communities include 'False Facts' seminars, orientation in Turkish culture and traditions, joint social activities, cultural expeditions, kitchen workshops for both Syrians, non-Syrians and host communities and sports activities for children²⁴². Danish Red Cross reports that by the end of 2019, 256,822 people (104,411 Syrians, 140,606 host community members, and 11,805 others) had 'attended social, cultural or networking events arranged by the TRCS community centres' and 'reported positive benefits'. It is not clear if this number is unique individuals or if it includes a level of 'double counting'²⁴³.

GIZ's Qudra action in Turkey includes a module on activities to strengthen social cohesion through multi-purpose centres, such as 'Satellite centres'²⁴⁴, mobile units and PECs and any other relevant institutions. They provide needs-based services in education, health, livelihoods, sports, culture, artistic activities and, in some centres, specialised services in case management, psychosocial counselling, legal advice, skills training and certified language classes. Qudra aims to establish one youth development centre and one mobile unit in Istanbul and support three PECs in Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Hatay, and provide socio-cultural activities for 13,700 Syrians and host community members at these centres during the lifetime of the project. Qudra also aims to reach a further 4,500 people with similar activities organised by trained youths at three GIZ bilaterally supported centres.

The UN WOMEN action aims to strengthen social cohesion among and within the host and refugee populations through community-level activities implemented in partnership with Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), Habitat Association, Foundation for Supporting Women's Work (KEDV) and RET International. As of December 2019, 2,256 women (1,444 refugees and 812 Turkish) had participated in community projects with these four national NGOs. The action supported 17 CSOs to provide cross-cultural dialogue, social events, celebration of international/national days and conflict resolution trainings, and establish women's committees²⁴⁵.

The ASAM action (not categorised as a socio-economic support action by this evaluation and largely covered by the refugee protection sector report) includes quite extensive social cohesion-related activities. By the end of 2019, the project had organised 846 individual 'integration activities' in which 15,510 people participated, the majority of which were non-Syrian refugees (8,051 Iraqi, 3,410 Afghan, 1,034 Iranian, 555 Syrian, 1,597 Turkish, 296 other, 567 not reported). These activities included multi-cultural awareness raising events, community-based activities, celebration of special days, training in informal skills, and recreational and environmental activities. All are counted by the Facility as social cohesion activities, which appears to be a broader definition than that applied to the social outputs of other actions.

The ILO's work to increase awareness on 'fundamental principles and rights at work' touches on social cohesion issues in its one-day seminars and 'Empathy Workshops' (which reached 125 HC and 112 Syrians by September 2019). Its workplace mentorship programme also seeks to enhance social cohesion at the enterprise level by linking Syrian workers with Turkish counterparts to foster mutual learning and enhance mutual understanding, but this intervention reaches very small numbers of participants (20 HC and 20 Syrian)²⁴⁶.

Two UNICEF-implemented actions entitled 'Support for Every Child of Syria' and 'Education and protection programme for vulnerable Syrian and host community children, in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey' also include some social cohesion activities (which feed into the Facility's social cohesion output indicator), but as these are largely delivered within the context of education rather than socio-economic support, they are covered in the education sector report of this evaluation.

²⁴² SUMAF (2020). Main Report, DRC Action, Addressing Vulnerabilities of Refugees and Host Communities in Five Countries Affected by the Syria Crisis (TF-MADAD/2017/T04.30), Mission No. 1, Date: 25/10/2019, p.17.

²⁴³ QIN TF-MADAD/2017/T04.30 Q4 2019.

²⁴⁴ 'Satellite Centre' is GIZ's working term to refer to the public buildings/spaces through which GIZ is implementing social cohesion activities in Turkey.

²⁴⁵ QIN – UN WOMEN – Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey – Q4 2019.

²⁴⁶ SUMAF (2020). Main Report ILO/IOM Action – Job Creation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Turkey (TF-MADAD/2017/T04.70) Mission No. 2: Date: 29/11/2019.

3.3.3. Contextual analysis of Facility interventions

In the following text, we present a contextualised analysis of how the support provided through the Facility has sought to improve social cohesion. This includes an examination of the achievements of the Facility, and the strengths of its approach, while also identifying key areas in which Facility support is yet to meet its expected targets and where the approach might be improved. The contextual analysis reflects on those external factors that also have an impact on the Facility's contribution.

Almost certainly the most comprehensive, and most widely used framework for social cohesion in Turkey is outlined in the UN 3RP. Their Social Cohesion Framework²⁴⁷ was developed in 2018 to determine priority areas of programming. The document sets out an approach programming for social cohesion with three areas:

- specific activities aiming at improving social cohesion
- mainstreaming of social cohesion in other programming
- adoption of safeguards in line with the 'do-no-harm' principle.

Facility monitoring and reporting has focused primarily on the first of these areas. The problem identified in interviews²⁴⁸ with this specific focus and with the way in which interventions have been implemented is that the aggregated figures for participation in 'social cohesion' activities provide only a cumulative figure, without giving any understanding of either what the activities entail or who attends and for what reasons. However, the main issues in terms of contribution are the lack of an overall strategy for social cohesion, the small scale of support and the very limited delivery of outputs, all of which make it difficult for this evaluation to report that there has been any significant contribution to social cohesion, to date. In terms of a strategic approach to social cohesion, the lack of a clear overall picture of what is to be achieved and the limited engagement with wider efforts, particularly the 3RP Social Cohesion Framework, show the lack of importance given to the issue in the Facility. The relatively small scale of support (a number of components in six interventions identified) and the delivery of an undefined set of outputs again supports this view, that social cohesion was seen as a secondary issue.

A similar perspective has been noted in the support to the education sector, where there was strong evidence of the responsiveness of project design to changing needs, with specific attention being given to social cohesion in response to social tensions in strategic documents. However, it is concluded that social cohesion as a response to social tensions was conceptualised in rather shallow ways, again with programming being seen in terms of 'activities', such as sports and cultural activities, and that support provided was inadequate.

While drawing a direct link from the Facility's social cohesion activities to the overall social cohesion outcomes is not possible (due to other Facility interventions and external social/economic and political factors also influencing outcomes), it is clear that these types of joint activities contribute to greater possibilities for interaction among the host and refugee communities in Turkey and likely contribute to improved social cohesion. It is important to continue to design and implement social cohesion activities bringing the refugee and host communities together, as survey findings indicate that familiarity with refugees is correlated with lower levels of resentment and prejudice against refugees and may therefore help increase social cohesion. These activities facilitated between the host community and refugees on a day-to-day basis, encourage closer interaction, which carries a potential of reducing stereotypes and prejudice, and potentially reduces levels of intolerance and mistrust. This is expected to nurture the friendship and mutual exchange of information to open paths for social cohesion. At the same time, both quantitative and qualitative measurement should be carried out to enable a better and ongoing understanding of the impact of these activities on refugee and host community relations.

Looked at from another perspective, there is some potential that because efforts were made to ensure that programmes did not contribute to social tensions, the significant and consistent support to basic needs has contributed, at the very least, to continued relative stability in Turkey. A number of those interviewed noted that efforts were made to strike a balance between ensuring the coverage of basic needs and keeping support to a level that did not increase tensions, what could be seen as efforts to mainstream a social cohesion approach²⁴⁹. These efforts, alongside the success of support provided to the basic needs of such a significant proportion of the refugees, has meant that the socio-economic

²⁴⁷ 3RP Turkey, Social Cohesion Framework Document, 2018.

²⁴⁸ KIIs: SES 6, SES 13, SES 15.

²⁴⁹ KIIs: SES 37, SES 16.

situation of refugees in Turkey has been kept relatively stable and that, as a result, this has contributed to refugees feeling more settled and secure²⁵⁰.

The Syrian Barometer findings, from 2014 to present, show that concern among Turks over competition with Syrians for jobs in the formal economy is decreasing each year. People are not worried about losing their job to a Syrian refugee. There appears to be some acceptance by the Turkish authorities, Turkish private sector and Turkish public that participation by Syrians in the informal Turkish economy is beneficial to Turkey, through providing cheap labour to businesses, not threatening the formal employment of Turks and reducing the need for the Turkish state to provide social assistance to Syrians (beyond the EU-funded ESSN). Although informal employment is unsatisfactory for many reasons, it may make a positive social cohesion contribution²⁵¹.

3.3.4. Contribution considerations

On the basis of the cumulative figures for the outputs reported it is unlikely that there has been any significant contribution to the 'observed outcomes' in terms of the improvements (or lack of deterioration) in social cohesion reported above as a result of Facility interventions specifically labelled 'social cohesion'.

There are two aspects of Facility programming, however, that in the judgement of the evaluation team have made a significant contribution to social cohesion. First, there were efforts to 'do no harm' within programmes and although patchy there were clear contributions to reducing potential social tensions. Second, the consistent support to basic needs has contributed to the relative stability of the socio-economic situation of refugees in Turkey and that in turn has prevented negative coping and competition, potentially contributing to social cohesion.

3.4. Evidence confidence

Overall, the evidence available for the socio-economic sector is strong, coming from a range of sources, comparable across the full period of the evaluation and can be triangulated. This is particularly the case for the support for basic needs, where there is strong evidence from extensive surveys carried out by the implementing partners, which can be triangulated against considerable research carried out by other organisations and the evidence collected as part of this evaluation. In the areas of socio-economic support and social cohesion, the evidence confidence is less strong, due in the main to the more limited monitoring data currently being collected by the implementing partners, and because many of the actions are still ongoing. There is, however, more robust evidence available from research in these areas, which can be triangulated with the evidence collected for the evaluation. While the programmes have been regularly monitored and output data exists for most programmes, we were unable to find rigorous impact evaluations for most projects implemented. Using the monitoring evidence available, and triangulating some of the data with the KIIs conducted with key stakeholders, and beneficiary data from web scraping and phone interviews, the evaluation team has drawn conclusions about likely programme impacts that the interventions will have, despite the limitations on the availability of impact evaluation studies for most projects implemented.

²⁵⁰ KIIs: SES 18, SES 22, SES 24, SES 25, SES 28.

²⁵¹ KII: SES 28.

4. The Facility response to the COVID-19 crisis

This section of the report summarises the findings of an additional ad hoc study on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on refugees in Turkey and the Facility's response. The full study, including a more detailed analysis is presented in Volume II (Annex 1).

4.1. Impact on refugees in the socio-economic sector

COVID-19 has deepened pre-existing vulnerabilities of refugees in Turkey across all sectors including education, health, basic needs/livelihoods and protection. However, the biggest challenge of COVID-19 for refugees in Turkey is economic²⁵².

Refugees mostly work informally and in sectors most vulnerable to the pandemic crisis. This implies that the majority of working Syrians are not under the coverage of the mitigation regulations on layoffs, reduced work time and wage subsidies, and they work in a more vulnerable position in the labour market with the pandemic: 74% of refugees work in highly impacted sectors, whereas 46% of the host population work in those highly impacted sectors²⁵³. Almost 85% of refugees are employed informally in Turkey compared to approximately 35% for hosts²⁵⁴. Bearing in mind that overcrowded and inappropriate working conditions combined with COVID-19 risks can increase the vulnerability of workers in the informal economy, refugees are expected to be disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in the labour market.

Refugees lost their jobs in Turkey due to COVID-19, and this sudden loss of income prevents them from covering their basic needs. According to the survey carried out by ASAM, 18% were not working before March 2020, but this rate increased to 88% after March 2020²⁵⁵. Some 36% of respondents who are still working reported that their salaries had been cut by employers. This unexpected shock to incomes implies that the already dire situation of households has worsened, and their situation has been compounded by the fact that most of the refugee households were already resorting to the use of negative coping strategies in early 2019²⁵⁶.

COVID-19 has also hit Syrian-owned enterprises and led to a drop in their business activity and increased difficulty in making payments²⁵⁷. There are approximately 10,000 companies that have been established by Syrians since 2011 in all of Turkey²⁵⁸. Of Syrian-owned enterprises, 81% were not aware of the allowance for part-time working²⁵⁹ provided by the government²⁶⁰. Furthermore, 41% of Syrian-owned enterprises reported that they have 'insufficient working capital or would suffice at most for another month the crisis continued'²⁶¹.

²⁵² Kirişçi, K. and Erdoğan, E. (2020). Turkey and COVID-19: Don't forget refugees. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/04/20/turkey-and-covid-19-dont-forget-refugees/>. [Access date: October 2020].

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ ASAM (2020). COVID-19 Salgınının Türkiye'de Mülteciler Üzerindeki Sektörel Analizi [in Turkish]. Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/76640>. [Access date: October 2020].

²⁵⁶ Maunder, N., Seyfert, K., Aran, M. & Aktakke, N. (2020). ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019. Retrieved from: https://b50852f2-fdef-42e1-adf9-b42650e2a9fc.filesusr.com/ugd/b70f3f_c114147a1d64466a8646137c6febfc3.pdf [Access date: October 2020].

²⁵⁷ The Business for Goals Platform (2020). Survey on Impact of COVID-19 on Enterprises in Turkey: Report on Results of Third Survey (1–18 September 2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.business4goals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/B4G-Report-on-Results-of-Third-Survey.pdf> [Access date: November 2020].

²⁵⁸ TEPAV and EBRD (2018). Syrian entrepreneurship and refugee start-ups in Turkey: leveraging the Turkish experience. Retrieved from: https://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1566830992-6.TEPAV_and_EBRD_Syrian_Entrepreneurship_and_Refugee_Start_ups_in_Turkey_Lever....pdf [Access date: November, 2020].

²⁵⁹ World Bank and UNICEF Living Paper explains the short terms allowance in Turkey as follows: 'For firms that reduced working hours or halted operations during the outbreak, a Short-term Work Allowance covers the wages of workers. The allowance provides 1,752 TL/month (around \$271) for those that receive minimum wage in the last 12 months. The allowance can be provided for a maximum of 3 months and can be extended to 6 months through a Presidential decree. This payment was initially until the end of June, but is currently extended for another month for the current beneficiaries' (Gentilini et al. 2020).

Gentilini, U., Almenfi, M., Dale, P., Palacios, R., Natarajan, H., Rabadan, G.A.G. Okamura, Y., Blomquist, J., Abels, M., Demarco, G. & Santhos, I. (2020). *Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures*. World Bank and UNICEF.

²⁶⁰ Business for Goals (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on Enterprises in Turkey: Syrian-Owned Enterprises. Retrieved from: https://www.business4goals.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Infographic_Syrian_owned_Enterprises.pdf [Access date: November 2020]. Note: The analysis carried out by Business for Goals is based on responses from 32 Syrian-owned enterprises.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

4.2. Facility response

The Facility COVID-19 contribution in the socio-economic sector in Turkey is being channelled through the reallocation of existing funds within Facility action budgets and mobilisation of savings and contingencies at action level and Facility level²⁶². The EU has mobilised around EUR 65 million of which more than EUR 48 million has been used to address challenges in the socio-economic sector²⁶³. The basic needs allocation for the ESSN top-ups was funded from the exchange rate savings of the ESSN allocation under Facility Tranche II, therefore no additional funding was allocated to the ESSN as a result of COVID-19. Similarly, for other projects in the socio-economic sector, mainly savings in the projects, or remaining budgets were allocated to COVID-19 related activities²⁶⁴. The scope of these funds covers a variety of needs by addressing basic needs, incentives for small enterprises and entrepreneurs, skills learning and training as well as incentives for job placements. Nevertheless, one should note that 84% of savings and contingencies mobilised (i.e. EUR 40,435,000) has solely been directed towards basic needs assistance for refugees.

The most prominent response to the pandemic under the Facility in socio-economic support is ESSN top-ups delivered in two tranches in June and July 2020. To address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, each ESSN beneficiary household received additional TRY 1,000 in two payments²⁶⁵. This additional top-up has provided refugee households with an additional source amid COVID-19, albeit without a study to indicate the impact of this amount on refugee households. Nevertheless, this top-up is particularly vital given that 78% of ESSN beneficiary respondent households have faced an increase in their expenses, mainly food and additional hygiene items²⁶⁶. However, it is also significant that these basic needs funds only target ESSN beneficiary households. Some vulnerable non-beneficiary households have been reached with TRY 1,000 grants. However, this is outside of the Facility envelope with a EUR 8 million allocation under ECHO's 2020 Humanitarian Implementation Plan.

In terms of supporting the livelihoods of refugees, the COVID-19 response was mainly a reallocation of existing funding. Although IPs were not formally restricted to the continuation of their already existing activities in their responses to COVID-19, most have continued to deliver adaptations of the same activities with the same outcome objectives, albeit with extended time frames in some cases. Within the existing project frameworks, budget portions have been reallocated to further support refugees in the labour market such as continuing to provide financial incentives to the companies (TOBB T04.68), providing incentives for job replacements (ILO T04.70) or supporting a women's cooperative through the SADA centre (UN WOMEN T04.72). However, sector expert interviews with project partners revealed that these activities could be evaluated as a continuation of existing activities to reach or exceed the project target rather than developing new actions or targets specifically addressing the livelihood challenges of refugees²⁶⁷. Most of the newly proposed and implemented activities observed by the evaluation team were in the form of data collection and needs assessment.

COVID-19 funding components mainly focus on basic needs, but more emphasis should be put on supporting refugees who lost their job due to COVID-19 and their livelihoods. Because 85% of refugees are expected as working informally in the Turkish labour market as mentioned above²⁶⁸, they do not have unemployment benefits and, thus, cannot endure such a household income shock. However, currently, the EU support mainly focuses on providing only ESSN beneficiary households with TRY 1,000, which cannot complement the loss of employment income due to the pandemic within a long time frame starting in March 2020.

²⁶² Team Europe (2020). Turkey: Team Europe Covid-19 response tracker – last update on 01/10/2020.

²⁶³ European Commission Team Europe. (2020). COVID Reprogramming in Turkey. (October 1).

²⁶⁴ Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the Delegation of the EU to Turkey asked Implementing partners how they could reallocate the funding from their existing project budgets so as to develop a response to COVID-19 as stated during interviews with implementing partners from UN Women, TOBB and ILO.

²⁶⁵ IFRC (2020). IFRC provides largest single-cash transfer to respond to the socio-economic needs amid COVID-19. Retrieved from: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/2020/08/04/ifrc-provides-largest-single-cash-transfer-respond-socio-economic-needs-amid-covid-19/> [Access date: November 2020]

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ KII: 3, 4 and 5 on 23/11/2020.

²⁶⁸ Dempster, H., Ginn, T., Graham, T., Ble, M. G., Jayasinghe, D. & Shorey, B. (2020). 'Locked Down and Left Behind: The Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees' Economic Inclusion.' Policy Paper 179. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development and Refugees International. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/locked-down-and-left-behind-impact-covid-19-refugees-economic-inclusion> [Access date: November 2020].

4.3. Impact of COVID-19 on socio-economic sector results

There were certain responses given by implementing partners to alleviate the negative impact of COVID-19 on the outcomes of the socio-economic sector projects: (i) suspension and extension of projects' activities; (ii) mitigation strategies.

In line with the closure of the schools, all face-to-face trainings, collective activities that are the outputs of projects under the socio-economic support sector, were also suspended. These suspensions caused different results in each project. Although some projects will now fail to achieve their pre-COVID-19 targets, others had already achieved (or were close to achieving) targets when the pandemic struck. For example, ILO, which was responsible for carrying out the vocational and language training within the UN WOMEN project had already reached targeted numbers by the end of 2019, therefore COVID-19 did not have a negative impact on the progress of ILO's implemented part of the project. However, the KfW-implemented project, *Social and Economic Cohesion through VET in Turkey*, had only reached 3,000 students before the COVID-19 of a target to reach 10,000 students in 55 schools. Due to the closure of schools and the continuous impact of COVID-19, the target of reaching 10,000 students will most likely not be met soon. Therefore, KfW showed an interest in applying for a one-year extension of the implementation period (until June 2022) to ensure all targets are reached.

A more important consideration than whether a project can reach an output target number within this year or next year is the sustainability of the results that the Facility has already achieved, which COVID-19 may put at risk. For example, some of the main goals of the ILO project – to increase the employability of refugees, and some small increases in formal employment, as well as establishment and expansion of new SMEs – have been achieved. There is a very high risk that these fragile gains will be eroded by the economic consequences of COVID-19 pandemic.

There are some positive indications that Facility support provided through the TOBB action, focusing on certification, may have facilitated some job retention during the pandemic. TOBB surveyed samples who had certificated their skills by examination with the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) and those that had not. The survey found that 40% of those with certificates reported no change to their employment status due to COVID-19, while 29% of those without certificates reported no change. Similarly, among those without a certificate, 36.7% were 'asked to take unpaid leave', were 'laid off' or 'were already unemployed'; while the figure for those with a certificate was much lower (13%)²⁶⁹. This is a positive indication that the certification process may have helped refugees retain their jobs during the pandemic²⁷⁰.

Understandably, social cohesion activities were cancelled due to COVID-19. Naturally, opportunities for activities that may improve social cohesion between refugees and host communities have been dramatically reduced. For the projects tasked with the implementation of such activities, the pandemic has also reduced the opportunity to measure the effectiveness of such activities. One implementing partner NGO mentioned the difficulty of conducting post-activity surveys, which were intended to measure the impact and quality of social cohesion activities on the attendants:

To understand whether our activities are successful or not, we carry out surveys. Due to COVID-19, we are not conducting surveys anymore. We also normally have FGDs after activities. This is super useful. However, we can't hold FGDs anymore²⁷¹.

One of the main mitigation strategies often used by IPs was to ask for a no-cost extension of the project deadlines in order to reach the target output numbers.

In sum, it is inevitable that the already ambitious overall outcome targets of the Facility's livelihood projects will not be achieved within the timeline of each project. Since the projects under the socio-economic support sector started around 2017, the economic conditions were already becoming increasingly challenging. The negative effects of COVID-19 as well as the deteriorating economic outlook will make job creation and formal employment targets unrealistic.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Note that the difference in outcomes cannot be fully attributed to the impact of the certification programme, as there is likely to be a selection bias and endogeneity as the unobserved characteristics of refugees who take the certification exams are likely to be correlated with their probability of keeping their jobs in this time period.

²⁷¹ KII: 23.

5. Conclusions

Evaluation question 10: *To what extent has the Facility contributed in an inclusive and equitable way to basic needs, employment prospects, livelihood opportunities and social cohesion – and as a result contributed to an improved socio-economic situation of refugees?*

5.1. Overall conclusion

Over the period of the evaluation, it is concluded that the socio-economic situation of refugees in Turkey has been maintained through the economic slowdown since 2018, although their situation cannot be said to have improved. The rapid roll-out, the scale of coverage and the consistency of the support to basic needs have all generally ensured that this support has been inclusive and equitable for Syrians, although not necessarily for other groups. The ESSN is the largest unconditional humanitarian cash transfer ever attempted, and as such should be celebrated as a remarkable success.

While the majority of refugees rely on employment (particularly in the informal sector) as their main source of income, the support to employment prospects and livelihood opportunities has not yet been responsive enough or at sufficient scale to significantly contribute to their socio-economic situation. Similarly, the specific approach taken to social cohesion, focused on cumulative numbers of centres and attendance at activities, has not made a significant contribution to improvements in social cohesion. However, it could be argued that the scale and consistency of basic needs support has significantly contributed to Syrian refugees feeling more secure and settled in Turkey and thus to improved social cohesion.

5.2. Detailed conclusions

The Facility has made a significant contribution to the overall basic needs of refugees in Turkey and to the most vulnerable refugees and has thus made a significant contribution to ensuring the relative stability of their socio-economic situation, as well as potentially contributing to overall social stability in Turkey. The evidence from observed outcomes suggests that the extensive coverage and consistency of the support to basic needs provided by the ESSN (alongside other support, including Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE)) between 2016 and 2019 has increased the proportion of refugees receiving support and has made a contribution to improvements in the food security of refugees and to a decline in the use of stress coping strategies. A case can also be made that the basic needs support provided has also made a contribution to Syrian refugees in Turkey feeling more settled and secure in 2019 than they felt in 2016.

The Government of Turkey has provided the strong basis for the administrative infrastructure, supported and expanded by their partner TRCS, for the development and rapid roll-out of the basic needs support through the ESSN, with the widespread network of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASFs) providing a basic foundation and TRCS providing the flexibility and capacity that enabled, in part, the rapid expansion and extensive coverage of the ESSN.

The Facility provided the considerable and consistent financial support needed with funding to cover basic needs amounting to EUR 1.08 billion out of a total of approximately EUR 1.27 billion for socio-economic support within the first tranche of the Facility (EUR 3 billion). WFP, the international implementation partner, provided the technical expertise to work at scale and to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to ensure coverage of the most vulnerable and to respond to problems as they were identified. A key aspect of the support from the Facility has been the continued and consistent financial support provided, with two further ESSN tranches totalling EUR 857.5 million provided under Facility Tranche II and EUR 485 million agreed for the ESSN and CCTE combined in June 2020, in response to the current crisis (outside of the Facility envelope). WFP has brought the international expertise and experience to build the capacity of TRCS, as the implementing partner, to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, which have made a major contribution to ensuring that the programme could target the most vulnerable, often in a context where access to reliable updated data has been constrained.

The socio-economic support to refugees provided by the Facility has, to date, made only a modest contribution to increased employability and improved livelihoods and thus to the socio-economic

situation of refugees. The evidence from observed outcomes suggests that 60,000 Syrians have obtained work permits and 152 SMEs have received financial support in the period considered, against an estimated working population of one million refugees, the majority of whom work in the informal sector.

There is an active and significant skills training scale sector in Turkey and major organisations including İŞKUR, which delivers training to half a million participants every year, and TOBB, representing 178 chambers of commerce across the country, have formed the backdrop for the support provided in the socio-economic sector.

The Facility has provided financial support of more than EUR 200 million to eight partners over the period of the evaluation. While the support has been considerable, the implementing partners have worked to unrealistically short time frames, resulting in 'chasing targets'. In addition, programmes' implementing mechanisms have overlapped considerably; and they have been particularly affected by a lack of coordination, both between programmes and in the sector as a whole. However, the largest issue has been that there was a disjuncture between programmes focusing on the supply side of 'employability' and livelihood creation, while little attention has been paid the demand side, in terms of whether jobs were available to refugees.

Based on the narrow approach used to social cohesion in the Facility it is unlikely that there has been significant contribution to the 'observed outcomes' in terms of the improvements (or lack of deterioration) in social cohesion. The Facility monitoring and reporting has focused primarily on the provision of community centres and of 'social cohesion' activities. The reported and aggregated figures for participation in 'social cohesion' activities provide only a cumulative figure, without giving any understanding of either what the activities entail or who attends and for what reasons. Overall, the main issues in terms of contribution are the lack of an overall strategy for social cohesion; the small scale of direct support; and the very limited delivery of outputs – all of which do not suggest that there has been any significant contribution to social cohesion.

However, the efforts that were made to ensure that programmes did not contribute to social tensions and the significant and consistent support to basic needs have contributed, at the very least, to continued relative stability in Turkey. The efforts that were made to strike a balance between ensuring the coverage of basic needs and keeping support to a level that did not increase tensions, alongside the success of support provided to the basic needs of such a significant proportion of the refugees, has meant that the socio-economic situation of refugees in Turkey has been kept relatively stable; and that, as a result, this has contributed to refugees feeling more settled and secure.

6. Recommendations

This section presents the recommendations made by the evaluation team to the European Commission. These are the result of the evaluation findings, conclusions and a participatory process with EC staff to arrive at recommendations that are relevant and actionable. Recommendations 1 and 2 are also presented in the overarching strategic recommendations (Volume I) but are duplicated here due to their particular relevance to socio-economic support. Recommendations 3 and 4 are technical and sectoral and are presented here only because of their connection to the more detailed analysis presented in this report.

Recommendation	Links to conclusions and EQs	Timeframe
Recommendation 1 (strategic): Overhaul economic support programmes to match current economic and labour market realities (also Strategic Recommendation 10 in Volume I)	Strategic conclusion 10 (Volume I)	
Who: EC services, in cooperation with GoTR		
How:		
1.1 Refocus supply-side programmes to primarily concentrate on Turkish language training and skills certification	EQ 10	Immediate
1.2 Introduce new programmes, policies and advocacy activities to improve the employability of refugees, including demand-side incentives and regulatory adjustments (i.e. simplified work permit procedures, changed ratios of permitted refugee to host workers, lower qualification thresholds for work permits)	EQ 10	Immediate
1.3 Advocate for measures to improve the conditions of informal and agriculture labour (possibly advocating for expansions of the regulations currently governing agricultural labour, to cover more classes of entry-level employment), and to facilitate the regularisation of refugees working outside their province of registration	EQs 10, 11	Medium term
1.4 Accelerate and expand support for small businesses, especially those run by refugees, while also ensuring that any support enhances social cohesion	EQ 10	Medium term

Recommendation	Links to conclusions and EQs	Timeframe
Recommendation 2 (strategic): Continue cash support to meet basic needs, with increased focus on the most vulnerable refugees, and in line with similar support to Turkish citizens (also Strategic Recommendation 10 in Volume I)	Strategic Conclusions 2, 10 (Volume I)	
Who: EC services and Member States		
How:		
2.1 Continue social assistance in the form of unconditional cash transfers for a further 2–3 year period (if support continues after the Facility)	EQs 10, 11	Immediately a decision is made to continue support after the Facility
2.2 Evaluate the delivery of social assistance through the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) before considering scaling it up (if support continues after the Facility)	EQs 10, 11	If a decision is made to continue support after the Facility
2.3 Shift support for basic needs to a new, multi-annual, implementation construct as outlined in strategic recommendation 6 above (if support continues after the Facility)	EQ 10	If a decision is made to continue support after the Facility
Recommendation 3 (technical): Revisit and revise the demographic targeting criteria for cash support for basic needs, as part of a longer-term transition strategy	Socio-economic sector report	
Who: Relevant EC services, in cooperation with GoTR		
How:		
3.1 Remove ‘ <i>not being enrolled with SGK</i> ’ from the ESN (and subsequent cash programme) eligibility criteria, in order to remove the disincentive for adult members of cash beneficiary households to take up formal jobs	EQ 10	Immediate
3.2 Undertake micro-simulation modelling, using existing data, to determine the optimal targeting criteria with the least exclusions, focusing on coverage, as well as poverty reduction effectiveness	EQ 10	Immediate
3.3 Consider removing working-age adults from the per household benefit calculation and focusing the benefit on a per child, per elderly person, per disabled person basis to all refugee households, without targeting. This would allow for wider coverage of the benefit, and remove any distorting incentives,	EQs 10, 11	Immediate

Recommendation	Links to conclusions and EQs	Timeframe
including those that increase protection risks, associated with the current targeting criteria. After increasing coverage of all refugee households, focus on reducing inclusion errors at the top, through household visits		
3.4 Design the targeting strategy for future cash support (through the continuation or successor to the ESN and the direct grant to MoFLSS) comprehensively in order to reduce overlaps and gaps in targeting. While doing this be aware that identifying and targeting ‘the most vulnerable refugees’ is not an easily achievable task, partly because the most vulnerable in the refugee population are constantly changing	EQ 10	Medium term
3.5 In the second phase of the Facility, rather than transferring a percentage of the caseload to the MoFLSS direct grant, work with MoFLSS to focus on types of beneficiaries to be covered under the direct grant (e.g. disabled and elderly covered through the direct grant, and support for children covered by ESN). Allowing a split of targeting to the same households through different programmes will ensure that coverage is not reduced dramatically in the transition to the direct grant, and alignment with Turkish social assistance	EQ 10	Medium term
Recommendation 4 (technical): Support further research and analysis of refugee employment in Turkey	Socio-economic sector report	
Who: Relevant EC services, in cooperation with GoTR		
How:		
4.1 Commission or support further research to determine the main obstacles to refugee employment in the Turkish context, taking into consideration current market realities and social cohesion	EQ 10	Immediate
4.2 Examine successful demand-side measures for employment in other European countries and determine the degree to which these might be applicable in Turkey (with careful consideration of social cohesion implications)	EQ 10	Medium term
4.3 Based upon this additional analysis, advocate for regulatory and incentive adjustments, and redirect supply-side measures to address well-evidenced blockages to employment	EQ 10	Medium term

Annex 1: List of socio-economic support interventions financed by the Facility²⁷²

Inputs		Activities	
Instrument	EU contribution to socio-economic support (EUR)	Action	IP
HUMA	650,000,000	Emergency social safety net (ESSN) assistance to refugees in Turkey	WFP
HUMA	348,000,000	ESSN assistance to refugees in Turkey	WFP
EUTF Madad	50,000,000	UNDP Turkey resilience project in response to the Syria crisis (TRP)	UNDP
IPA II	50,000,000	Social and economic cohesion through vocational education*	KfW
IPA II	50,000,000	Employment Support for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities	World Bank
HUMA	39,999,999	Food and other assistance to vulnerable refugee populations in Turkey	WFP
EUTF Madad	18,207,812	Qudra: Resilience for Syrian refugees, IDPs and host communities in response to the Syrian and Iraqi crises*	GIZ
EUTF Madad	15,000,000	Living and working together: integrating SuTPs to Turkish economy	TOBB
EUTF Madad	11,610,000	Job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities for Syrians under temporary protection and host communities in Turkey'	ILO
HUMA	9,095,593	Unconditional cash assistance and protection for out-of-camp Syrian and Iraqi refugees settled in south-eastern Turkey	DKH
HUMA	6,995,016	Humanitarian emergency response to Syria crisis	Concern
HUMA	6,691,723	Turkey population movement	IFRC
HUMA	6,224,614	Increased access to protection and basic needs support for vulnerable refugee children and families	UNICEF
EUTF Madad	5,000,000	Strengthening resilience and empowerment of women and girls affected by the Syrian crisis	UN WOMEN

²⁷² This list is based on the assessment of the evaluation team, rather than the internal categorisation of the European Commission which may differ slightly.

Inputs		Activities	
Instrument	EU contribution to socio-economic support (EUR)	Action	IP
IPA II	5,000,000	Strengthening economic opportunities for SuTP and host communities in selected provinces	World Bank
HUMA	3,884,725	Urgent basic humanitarian assistance, and coordination of information needs, for refugees in Turkey	CARE
HUMA	3,742,880	Addressing the issue of food insecurity through cash card assistance in Turkey	GAC (WHH)
HUMA	3,414,932	Humanitarian response to Syrian vulnerable refugees in southern Turkey	DRC
HUMA	3,013,345	Multisectoral assistance to Syrian refugees displaced by the conflict in Turkey and provision of humanitarian assistance to migrants rescued at sea	IOM
HUMA	2,005,595	Enhancing protection in the humanitarian response in Turkey through better addressing basic needs, supporting access to education and integrated service provision	IOM
HUMA	1,133,306	Enhancing access to effective services and protection for people of concern in Turkey	DKH
Total	1,289,019,541		