Operational Context

Turkey hosts the highest number of refugees in the world, 4 million people, of which 3.6 million are from Syria. Around 60,000 refugees reside in 7 camps located in the country’s south-east, while the majority live in cities and villages throughout the country. The Government of Turkey has demonstrated leadership and generosity in providing for the needs of these people. Since June 2014, a temporary protection regime has granted Syrians access to basic services such as healthcare and education. Refugees of other countries continue to benefit from International Protection status.

WFP re-established a presence in Turkey in 2012, in response to the Syria crisis. WFP Turkey’s Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP 2020–2021) seeks to build on WFP’s partnership with the Government of Turkey and other stakeholders to contribute to refugee households’ ability to meet their basic needs, ensuring no vulnerable refugee is left behind. Considering the protracted refugee presence in Turkey, the ICSP includes longer-term activities including direct engagement in resilience programming that creates opportunities for refugees and host communities alike.

In Numbers

53,381 people assisted
In February 2021

US$ 0.8 m distributed through value vouchers

US$ 0.04 m distributed through cash for training

US$ 12.1 million six-month net funding requirements (March 2021 – August 2021)

Operational Updates

- As of 28 February, 2,701,588 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in Turkey, 28,569 deaths and 2,572,234 recoveries. While a mass vaccination campaign is being followed, the Government decided to start the gradual normalisation process from 1 March by gradually lifting containment restrictions in place since last November on a province-to-province basis. Meanwhile, WFP continues its operations, making necessary adjustments to ensure compliance with COVID-19 safety measures and mitigate the risk of transmission.
- In February, WFP supported 51,940 refugees living in six camps in the country’s Southeast, through a monthly e-voucher payment of TRY 120 (USD 16) per person. This transfer value has been increased from TRY 100 (USD 14) since January.
- Under the cash-for-training component of the Mutfaka Umut Var (MUV)/Kitchen of Hope project, 76 participants from the second cohort completed on-the-job training (OJT) in seven provinces and OJT is ongoing for 16 others. Also, 247 participants from the third cohort are attending face-to-face vocational training in nine provinces.
- WFP designed a new application to easily track participants’ attendance, share with them contents, such as surveys, class materials, etc, and allow them to use WFP’s community feedback mechanism. The app is currently available for use in the nine provinces where the project is being rolled out.
- In January, WFP’s COVID-19 response project, the Soup Kitchens, implemented with IOM and GIZ since July 2020 came to a close. Only Sultangazi Municipality in Istanbul will remain operational. WFP sent out “Thank You” letters to the municipalities involved to express its gratitude for this fruitful collaboration. Under this project, hot meals were cooked and delivered to both vulnerable refugees and Turkish nationals in seven provinces.
- The Soup Kitchens project gave a chance to seven MUV participants to start formal employment at Adana Metropolitan Municipality, Istanbul Şişli Municipality as well as Kilis Municipality soup kitchens.
Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:
- Strengthen partnerships with national institutions and partners to improve programme implementation.
- Provide technical support to Government and partners in assisting refugees living in Turkish communities.
- Provide technical support to Government and partners in assisting refugees living in camps in Turkey.
- Provide technical support to Government and partners in assisting refugees and vulnerable populations to equitably access labour market opportunities.
- Support Turkey to exchange knowledge, experience and technology with other countries through facilitation of South–South and triangular cooperation.
- Provide common services to partners, including UN agencies.

EMPACT (Empowerment in Action) resilience programme technical classes concluded in January with a total of 112 participants (36 Syrians, 76 Turkish). Seven participants have already started on-the-job training and 28 got hired. Also, a virtual graduation ceremony for the advanced training participants was organized on 27 February and participants had the chance to present their final projects. WFP expects to extend EMPACT, to Adıyaman and Şanlıurfa with 50 participants in each province to reduce the shortage of qualified personnel. EMPACT is implemented jointly by WFP, Microsoft, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation and a local cooperating partner, ‘Kodluyoruz’, under the guidance of WFP Innovation Accelerator.

After being awarded the Innovation Accelerator SPRINT programme, WFP is ramping up its efforts to start implementing the Network Fresh pilot in Istanbul in March. A kick-off meeting with Şişli Municipality in Istanbul and Dahataze, WFP’s partners during the pilot phase, was held on 12 February and a letter of intent was signed with TÜRES (Association for All Restaurants and Tourism Professionals). Network Fresh aims to address food insecurity by making use of unsold surplus food in the food service industry. Designed as a COVID-19 adaptation of a larger WFP livelihood project, the model seeks to generate a multi-impact outcome to reduce food waste, increase access to high-quality nutritious food for vulnerable households and improve living conditions of vulnerable populations in cooperation with municipalities and a start-up called Dahataze.

Based on consultation with various Turkish academics involved in studies about refugees and economic integration, WFP drafted a concept note (CN) to research on successful models that support refugee economic integration through skills and vocation training based on MUV and other livelihood activities. Two researchers have been identified and the contracting process is ongoing and is expected to be finalized by mid-March. Those researchers will conduct an impact assessment of the livelihoods projects WFP is implementing in Turkey to see if it’s possible to replicate this model, which combines vocational and on-the-job trainings, in other countries.

ESSN Meta-Analysis

WFP, in cooperation with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and with the support of RBC, has been working on a meta-analysis for the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) since July 2020. The goal is to consolidate the impact, knowledge and lessons learnt from the ESSN implementation to contribute to operational learnings benefitting WFP cash operations as well as other humanitarian actors and academia. The results of the meta-analysis have been presented to the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the final report is expected to be shared with ECHO in April at the latest.

Success story from the field

Meet Mert, a 20-year-old MUV participant in the Southern province of Hatay. Talking about his personal experience with the project, Mert explains that MUV lifted his self-confidence, gave him a reason to set up plans for himself and encouraged him to develop his skills even more to share the Turkish flavors with the world!