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.

Operational Updates

- Under its e-food card programme, WFP supported 50,261 refugees residing in six camps across southeastern Turkey, through a monthly e-voucher payment of TRY 120 (USD 15) per person.
- 156 participants from the Mutfaka Umut Var (MUV)/Kitchen of Hope project (third cohort) continued on-the-job training (OJT) in nine provinces. OJT of 30 participants was postponed until 1 June due to the nation-wide lockdown between 29 April and 17 May that led to the temporary shutdown of some restaurants. In mid-June, MUV will expand its geographical target areas to include Konya and Kayseri, taking the total number of provinces where the project is operational to eleven.
- From July 2021 onwards, WFP will expand its livelihoods portfolio to include new sectors, such as housekeeping and food packaging.
- WFP continues to support Sultangazi Municipality’s soup kitchen in Istanbul to help cook and deliver hot meals to Syrian refugees and vulnerable Turkish citizens. This support, which will keep running until the end of July 2021, is part of the trilateral collaboration between WFP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) that started in July 2020 and came to a close in January 2021 for all soup kitchens with the exception of the Istanbul one.
- EMPACT (Empowerment in Action) IT programme reached a total of 112 participants (44 Syrians, 68 Turkish) through its technical classes. So far, five participants completed OJT, 33 continue OJT, 14 are in the interview process with IT companies and 16 have been referred to IOM. Furthermore, 36 participants have either started formal employment or set up their own businesses in the IT sector. This project is implemented jointly by WFP, Microsoft, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation and a local cooperating partner, Kodluyoruz, under the guidance of WFP Innovation Accelerator.
- Two Turkish academics selected by WFP started research on successful models that support refugee economic integration through skills and vocation training based on MUV and other livelihoods activities. The desk review is almost completed, and the field study will begin in June 2021. The study, expected to be finalized in October, aims to deliver a model that can be replicated in other countries.

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In Numbers

50,476 people assisted in May 2021 (estimated OJT figures used)

USD 0.73 distributed through value vouchers
USD 0.01 distributed through cash for on the job training
USD 10.7 m six-month net funding requirements (June - November 2021)

Photo Caption: Two Syrian refugees living in Boynuoğun camp in Hatay studying together. WFP/Mehmet Cemtaş
ESSN Meta-Analysis

- The meta-analysis on the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme implemented between 2016 and 2020 is at its final stage and will be shared with relevant parties upon its completion. WFP has been working on this exercise since July 2020 in cooperation with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and with the support of RBC. Also, based on this meta-analysis, WFP and OPHI are jointly drafting two papers, on the impact and the targeting of the ESSN.

Challenges

- As of 31 May, 5,249,404 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in Turkey, 47,527 deaths and 5,114,624 recoveries. The Government eased the coronavirus restrictions following a full lockdown enforced between 29 April and 17 May. This means that restaurants will reopen, and weekend lockdowns will only be in place on Sundays as of 1 June.
- To minimize the risk of dropouts, WFP and its partners provided lockdown exemption letters to MUV participants who couldn’t proceed with the OJT due to the closure of restaurants between 29 April and 17 May. Also, EMPACT participants who had to stop OJT resumed the training at the end of the lockdown.

MUV Success Story

Muhammad Ali, a Syrian refugee in Turkey, opened a restaurant in the province of Izmir after completing the Kitchen of Hope training. His passion for cooking and his past experience in the culinary sector led him to this project. He explains that his business is successful and that “he will do his best to keep it running no matter what”.

STI Forum

On 5 May, Baraah, a Syrian EMPACT participant, took part in an event called “Gender Equality in Science, Technology and Innovation: Towards and Inclusive STI Ecosystem and Connectivity for All” and shared her experience as a working mother in the IT sector.

Donors

Ireland, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, USAID/BHA, WPD AGCO Agriculture.

Photo caption: Muhammad Ali opened a restaurant in Izmir after completing MUV programme. Photo: WFP/Mohammed Albar