

# THE LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION CONFERENCE

## FINAL REPORT

11-12 DECEMBER 2019  
ISTANBUL





## THE LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION



## GEÇİM KAYNAKLARINA ERİŞİM VE EKONOMİK KATILIM

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## Management's Message

It is known that more than 200 million people worldwide need humanitarian aid, and around 70 million persons have left their living environments for various reasons and are on the move. According to current data, Turkey has the largest refugee population in the world. Following the start of the Syrian Crisis in 2011, millions of people moved to various countries, including Turkey. According to official records, the number of Syrians given temporary refugee status in Turkey is 3,6 million. Approximately 1,2 million thereof consist of young people between the ages of 18–30. These young people are trying to continue their lives in Turkey, and finding solutions to problems regarding their adaptaion to economic life and access to means of livelihood are at the top of the agenda. Determining what the economic needs of the young people are, how much of it is satisfied, and how to improve the ways and means of accessing means of livelihood are among the main subjects to be discussed. Access of young people under temporary protection to safe employment opportunities would sustainably solve many needs such as education, training, health, safety and social integration.

Although the employment rights of Syrians having temporary protection status have been legally regulated with the Temporary Protection Act, strengthening the economic inclusion of the labor market, and creating a regular, comprehensible and safe work environment for the employer and the employee is important for the provision of a better qualified, active and productive workforce to meet the needs and expectations of the employers in different sectors. This conference has been organized with the objective of identifying the obstacles in front of the young Syrians which prevent them from reaching means of existence, studying good examples, in different sectors, of how economic cohesion can be achieved, and increasing employment possibilities, as well as sharing solution suggestions. At this conference, with the participation of public establishments, local authorities, international establishments and institutions, universities, civil sector organizations and private sector representatives contributing to the conference, room was allowed for the young people, the objects of the event, to contribute their knowledge and experience.

This conference, where actors in Turkey and the world have shared their good examples and applications, has become one of the important studies carried out in this field, as a platform where all participants have contributed, and important outputs regarding the access to livelihood sources and integration of young refugees have been achieved.

**Muhammed Bahri Telli,**  
Support to Young Refugees Programme,  
Program Manager



## Management's Message

According to numbers recorded by UNHCR, since 2011, when the Syrian war started, 5,2 million Syrians have had to migrate to Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and Turkey. Over 3,5 million Syrians whose basic needs are being met according to the Temporary Protection Regime in Turkey, are continuing living, some in camps, but mostly in the cities, together with the native population.

According to the present conjuncture, the majority of Syrian youths between the ages of 15 – 30, living in cities, have had to give up, or interrupt, their educations due to economic reasons. These young people, obliged to work in informal jobs with long working hours, where they have no securities, which limit their access to basic human resources and which create important drawbacks in their access to formal livelihood sources.

The data and analysis results of the field studies, conducted in İzmir and Hatay provinces, by Save the Children Turkey Country Office and Community Volunteers Foundation, with the financial support of the German Federal Economic Cooperation and Development Ministry (BMZ), were shared with the participants and the public at the "Acces to Livelihood Resources and Economic Participation Conference" held in İstanbul on 11-12 December, 2019. At the

conference, attended by public institutions, local authorities, international institutions and establishments, universities, non-government organizations, and private sector representatives from different nations, studies within the scope of access to sustainable livelihood resources by young refugees, obstacles and limitations they encounter, analyses, and good application examples from different countries were shared. Within the extent of the conference, a better understanding of the lives, perspectives and communication networks by means of sessions presenting field studies to determine current needs, and young people's methods of taking part in the labor market, their demands, needs, and preferences, and their shared experiences was achieved.

At the point reached by the war that has been going on for nine years, and the humanitarian crisis, an in-depth discussion of current employment policies is necessary. For the creation of platforms where young refugees can make their voices heard regarding their various needs, public institutions and humanitarian aid organizations must take in hand traditional help and support programs; a self-sufficient, long term, sustainable model that is focused on empowering young Syrian individuals must be developed. Within this concept, it is essential for the public, private sector and civil sector organizations to cooperate, and to provide the means for such cooperations to develop.

**Ezgi Yazg  l     zt  rk Alqassab,**  
Save the Children Turkey  
National Office Project Manager



# THE PROGRAM

December 11, 2019

## Opening Speeches

Murat Çitilgölü, Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)  
Oben Çoban, Save the Children International

## The Situation of Young Refugees and Requirements Analysis

Moderator Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ulaş Sunata, Bahçeşehir University  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gökay Özerim, Yaşar University  
M. Bahri Telli, Support to Young Refugees Programme  
Diego Alberio, Associazione “Il Mondo Nella Citta” Onlus  
Prof. Dr. İbrahim Sirkeci, Regent’s University London  
Metin Çorabatır, Research Center on Asylum and Migration  
Saif Yaper, Y-Peer Palestine

## Activities Carried Out by Public and International Institutions on Refugee Employment

Moderator Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erhan Keleşoğlu, Migrant Solidarity Association  
Damla Taşkın, United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)  
Gül Erdost, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)  
Berna Yıldırım, Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)

## The Approaches and Suggestions of Civil Society on Refugee Employment

Moderator Nilüfer Sayılan, Save the Children International  
Elçin Cavlan, Women’s Associations Federation of Turkey (TKDF)  
Akgül Öneri, Human Development Foundation  
Mustafa Özer, Habitat Association  
Nuha Boğa, EMBARK Project

# THE PROGRAM

December 12, 2019

## Good Practices on National Level

**Moderator Verda Yüceer**, World Food Program (WFP)  
**Cihan Arsu**, Turkish Red Crescent (TRC)  
**Ayşegül Yalçın Eriş**, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)  
**Erdem Vardar**, Yuva Association  
**Emine Kaya**, C@rma  
**Burak Uyan**, Refugee Support Center (RSC)

## Good Practices on International Level

**Moderator Berkin Şafak Şener**, Youth Deal Cooperative  
**Fabio Ballerini**, La Cooperativa Sociale Odissea  
**Elif Aksoy**, IDEMA  
**Nermeen Abdelaziz**, United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees Egypt Office  
**Emel D. Andrews**, RET International  
**Semiha Elif Yazarbaş**, NaTakallam Research Presentations  
**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ulaş Sunata**, TOG İzmir-Hatay Field Research Presentation  
**Hande Soğancılar Taşdemir**, SCI/ Labor Market Assessment Presentation

## Research Presentations

**Moderator Lemi Karaca**, Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)  
**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ulaş Sunata**, TOG İzmir-Hatay Field Research Presentation  
**Hande Soğancılar Taşdemir**, SCI/ Labor Market Assessment Presentation

# THE PROGRAM

December 12, 2019

## Private Sector's Approach to Refugee Employment

**Moderator Doğan Çelik**, Innovation for Development (I4D)

**Mehlika Gider**, MG Holding

**Olgun Aydın**, Senior Expert Supply Chain Sustainability

**Muhammed Seyid Pehlivan**, Ankara Development Agency

**Reşit Hamui**, Syrian International Business Association (SIBA)

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### List of Abbreviations

ASAM	- Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
EU	- European Union
CSO	- Civil Society Organization
GIZ	- German Development Agency
NGO	- Non-Profit Organization
RSC	- Refugee Support Center
İŞKUR	- Turkish Employment Agency
ILO	- International Labour Organization
SCI	- Save the Children International
TKDF	- Women's Associations Federation of Turkey
TOG	- Community Volunteers Association
TRC	- Turkish Red Crescent
UN	- United Nations
UNHCR	- United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	- World Health Organization
YUVA	- Yuva Association



**December 11, 2019**

**First Session**  
**Opening Speeches**

**Murat Çitilgölü**  
Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)

**Oben Çoban**  
Save the Children International (SCI)

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The young people are present everywhere and in every part of our lives and their access to livelihoods and employment opportunities is really important.

**Murat Çitilgölü,**  
Community Volunteers  
Foundation (TOG)

The conference started with the speech of Murat Çitilgölü who briefly introduced the Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) to the audience. Çitilgölü started his words stating that TOG has been contributing to the social peace by supporting young people in 80 different cities around Turkey with the help of 135 volunteers.

Concerning the refugees in Turkey, Çitilgölü further mentioned that TOG

- Started supporting the young ones in 2015,
- Up until today has given service to more than 150,000 people,
- Together with the Save the Children International Office in 2019, started to increase the resilience of the Syrian refugees,
- Supports refugees in order to integrate them to the social mainstream.

## Murat Çitilgölü, Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)

Çitilgölü highlighted that visibility of the young people on the public side and their economic inclusion is very important. He further said;

**"The young people are present everywhere and in every part of our lives and their access to livelihoods and employment opportunities is really important. We should also give them a chance to speak out their voices."**

Çitilgölü claimed that there are certain obstacles for young people to enter business life. Therefore he further suggested that necessary guidelines should be presented to young people as they enter business life. In other words, he proposed the creation of proper working environments for them.

Additionally, he suggested that young people need support for their self-realization, not only for their individual development but also for social development due to the fact that young people also represent the future.

We should support these young people in order to provide them a chance for self-realization.

He concluded his words by thanking the German Federal Ministry (GIZ) for economic cooperation and development and the project partner Save the Children International (SCI) and the participants.

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As SCI, we believe that even one child can change the world.

**Oben Çoban,**  
Save the Children  
International (SCI)

Followed by the speech of Murat Çitilgölü, Oben Çoban shortly mentioned the scope of Save the Children International and its activities regarding the Syrian refugees living in Turkey.

He stated that the international organization, which was founded in 1919 in London, has its field offices around the world and consists of 25.000 employees.

Çoban highlighted SCI's aims as below:

- SCI aims is to reach out to every child,
- Provides psycho-social support programs and follows the trends of the field all the time,
- Portrays strategic flexibility to take into consideration the needs and requirements of those in need.
- And in this field, tries to shape the policies in a global sense.

## Oben Çoban, Save the Children International (SCI)

Çoban highlighted that SCI has been providing children's needs in the last hundred years as a reaction to the deteriorating rights of children since industrialization. Likewise, including, but not limited, to Africa, SCI has satisfied children's needs in many instances of crisis, to develop sustainable and honorable conditions for human beings.

In the context of the civil war in Syria, Çoban said, **"The civil war in Syria has been going on for over 9 years, and lots of children, fathers, and mothers have been left in despair. More than 1 million children in Turkey have been the greatest victims."**

He mentioned the changing dynamics in the field after 9 years of the crisis and proposed that sustainable solutions are therefore essential, such as sustainable aids that could be provided with the emergency based distributions.

He further emphasized that, again, in these last 9 years, Syrian problems have become multidimensional and likewise, everybody is seeking different methodologies to solve those problems. On the one hand, SCI strived to place the families into the core of the activities. Çoban illustrated that SCI provides deserved welfare standards for the children and families from the Balkans to Africa, from Asia to Latin America. As well as the methodologies that seek efficient economic models, the child safeguarding issue has not been ignored.

In terms of these issues Çoban recommended we should remind state institutions about the values and we should speak out on behalf of the needy ones.



## Oben Çoban, Save the Children International (SCI)

He claimed that the NGOs have never given up trying to solve these issues, although their financial resources are limited.

As Çoban said, SCI tries to support the Syrians who have been hosted by Turkey since 2013. Moreover, more than 4 million Syrian refugees were forced to encounter a variety of different problems.

Some of the responsibilities of SCI for the Syrian refugees in Turkey has been as follows:

- To provide the most efficient solutions to the families and to try to normalize the lives of the families to enable them to have honorable lives without making them dependent on any institutions,
- To base its programs on psycho-social welfare of partners and to benefit from any resources that will ensure that young people will not be deprived of employment and education opportunities.
- To offer programs that are also the voice of young people, to increase their awareness.

After having mentioned the programs that SCI offers for Syrian refugees, Çoban claimed that integrating sustainable solutions to the lives of people is the ultimate goal of every NGO.

He finalized his words by mentioning their efforts to overcome problems concerning the refugees, together with TOG and their other partners.

Lastly, he stated that " "

Çoban gave his special thanks to The Republic of Turkey for their contribution, and to their partner TOG for their collaboration.

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THE LIVELIHOODS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION



**Second Session**

**The Situation of Young Refugees and  
Requirements Analysis**

**Moderator Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ulaş Sunata,**  
Bahçeşehir University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gökay Özerim**  
Yaşar University

**M. Bahri Telli**  
TOG Support to Young Refugees Programme

**Diego Alberio**  
L'associazione "Il Mondo nella Città" onlus

**Prof. Dr. İbrahim Sirkeci**  
Regent's University London

**Metin Çorabatır**  
Research Center on Asylum and Migration

**Saif Yaper**  
Y-Peer Palestine

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Turkish and Syrian young people should not compete, a common ground that concerns the problem of both sides is needed...

**Assoc. Prof. Dr.  
Gökay Özerim,**  
Yaşar University

The main axis of Özerim's presentation was based on the study he carried out in the last two years, titled "Reviewing the status and requirements of young refugees through employment issues". Özerim stressed that both the population of Syrians in Turkey and the Turkish population are majorly composed of young people; thus, resolving their problems is highly important.

With this study, Özerim brought out the issue of how youth is not taken into consideration. Özerim designed the research project with volunteers by framing questionnaires that grasp 7 different needs of young refugees in Turkey such as; education, employment, social cohesion and communication, health, future and living in Turkey, Youth Center Services. The attendees were from Somalia (0.8%), Iran (0.3%), Iraq (1.8%), Afghanistan (0.6%) and Syria (96.6%). The report that focuses on the income and employment side of the mentioned issue will be shared at the beginning of 2020.

The research;

- Has taken into account UNHCR's perception of defining young refugees.
- Has targeted young people from 4 different cities in Turkey, as follows: Adana, Diyarbakır, Hatay and İzmir.
- Was based on the responses of 1200 people who participated in the survey.
- Is finalized as a report with 87 pages that include social inventions, youth, needs of young refugees and how these needs are perceived.
- Has organized focus group meetings that helped to define the perceptions of the young refugee situation.

Özerim mentioned that the most striking part of the study circled around the word "responsibility". The questions that clarified their responsibilities revealed a clue about their needs and mirrored necessary guidelines for their integration. The study showed that their biggest responsibility is to take care of their house, their family. Moreover, 28% of refugees have crowded families to look after.

The Analysis of the study showed that:

- Syrians have a different status, only 43% have a permanent job in Turkey.
- The ratio of those who are working in Turkey is 11%.
- 70% are working in sectors like industry and agriculture.
- Those who were educated before, have shown a wide spectrum.
- One of the obstacles of their integration and finding a job is the language barrier.
- 52% of them found jobs.

**Doç. Dr. Gökay Özerim, Yaşar University**

- There are differences between female (have family responsibilities) and male refugees.
- Males indicated that they have to work and that is why they cannot attend education programs.
- Social integration questions showed that they are willing to integrate into social life.
- Syrian youngsters mostly don't have friends outside of their jobs.
- Their social actives are limited due to their insufficient income

With regards to the research outcomes, he claimed that in Turkey there are many ways to a solution, but it is complicated because the population is fragmented.

He concluded his presentation by saying that Turkish and Syrian young people should not compete, a common ground that concerns the problem of both sides is needed. Therefore, we should create a future with a sense of togetherness. Lastly, he repeated that young refugees are shown great interest in being integrated and civil society has a big role in this process.



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46% of refugees have a regular job. However, paper collectors count themselves as having a regular job. This means that the unemployment level is high.

### **M. Bahri Telli,** TOG Support to Young Refugees Programme

In addition to the current status of the young refugees that the previous speakers have mentioned, Bahri Telli briefly spoke about the perceptions about them. Likewise, He also clarified the common definitions of young and youth.

He criticized the definition used by some non-profit organizations and said, **“Institutions generally define youth by age. For instance, WHO defines youth as being between the age of 20 to 24, and different UN institutions define young as the people between the age of 15-29. However, this is not the right definition, because a definition based on age is not enough.”**

One evidence he supported his argument with relied on the fact that increasing education spans actually led one to define more people as young. Therefore, saying that every person between the ages of 15 to 29 is a young person is not the right definition. He further said that definition limited to age brings along a

## M. Bahri Telli, TOG Support to Young Refugees Programme

homogenous perception although we know that each young person does not have the same needs.

He stressed that assessing the identity of young people could bring along more resilient policies. He emphasized that for their resilience, discrimination against the young people should be avoided and their historical development should be taken into consideration.

He argued, saying, **"Being a young person is not a transition period between childhood and adulthood, we should define this period as a separate entity,"** and, **"To do so we need to understand the identity of the young people and respectively develop the right policies."**

Some of the statistics given by the speaker are as follows: 25% of the Turkish population is comprised of young people; and among them, unemployment is the biggest problem.

- 2019 figures show that 27% of the young population in Turkey is unemployed.
- According to the Directorate General of Migration Management, 1,2 million out of approximately 3,6 million Syrian refugees are young.
- According to the Higher Education Council in Turkey, approximately 28,000 young refugees are enrolled in universities. However, 900,000 of them are at university age. The biggest barrier to their education is the language problem.
- 46% of refugees have a regular job. However, paper collectors count themselves as having a regular job. This means that the unemployment level is high.

## M. Bahri Telli, TOG Support to Young Refugees Programme

- There's also an informal economy. Syrians are forced to work in the informal economy. Telli called these industries "invisible places" that offer no social security and give low wages; these inhumane conditions put these young people's lives in jeopardy.
- The unemployment rate is higher for Syrians and there is not a sustainable program for them.

Telli exposed the important issues in respect to young people. Moreover, he informed that approximately 50 NGOs organize activities for youth activities. However, he argued that we should not focus only on supportive activity development for young people; otherwise we will not be able to develop a sustainable policy for them.

He claimed that young people represent "the fragile" section of society. As the ministry of development defines, one is a member of a fragile community if they are not able to secure a decent job. Women and young people are actually listed as fragile parts of the community.

He also mentioned a report that claims young people are "angry". In other terms, they are going through traumatic periods and they have huge concerns about unemployment.

For future concerns of this issue, Telli mentioned the population concerns about the Syrian refugees. He said, since 2011, there have been Syrian newborns and the young population is on the rise. Moreover, unless the right precautions are taken, social peace might deteriorate in the near future.

As Telli disclosed, another issue regarding the young refugees is that they are "targeted". He illustrated that in the media we see



## M. Bahri Telli, TOG Support to Young Refugees Programme

"young refugees swimming in the beaches" which gives us a clue about the fact that they are pinpointed and become objects. We should perceive the young outside of the nationality frame.

Telli finalized his presentation suggesting that,

1. Certain standards should be taken into consideration when young refugees are the subject,
2. We should integrate young refugees into the decision-making mechanisms for their democratic inclusion.

He claimed that "young people should not be objects but subjects." Putting forward a retrospective analogy, Telli mentioned how the changing political balance in Turkey in the 1980s changed the perception of the people and led to the formation of a young generation's identity, based on employment. Coupling the relation between change and identity in the given example, Telli pointed out that, right now, young people have different demands and they have security concerns for their future employment; he suggested that in order to solve these issues we should focus on their identities and come up with sustainable development programs.

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The SIPRIOMI system was established to manage a reception center of asylum seekers and refugees together with the local authorities.

**Diego Alberio,**  
L'associazione “Il Mondo  
Nella Città” Onlus

On behalf of the Italian non-profit association “Il Mondo nella Città,” Diego Albiero briefly mentioned the accommodation and integration activities for refugees, and subsidiary protection in Italy.

He mentioned that the association has been active in the North East of Italy as a refugee center since the early 2000's, and today it aims to present tools for the SIPROIMI (Sistema di Protezione Titolari di Protezione Internazionale e Minori non accompagnati - Protection System for Beneficiaries of International Protection and for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors) system that was published by the Ministry of the Interior.

Albiero briefly stated that in Italy a specific program for the young refugees does not exist; however, the SIPRIOMI system aims to support each individual in the reception system. He mentioned the role of this system as well as its pros and cons.

## Diego Alberio, L'associazione "Il Mondo Nella Città" Onlus

He also mentioned that the SIPRIOMI system was established to manage a reception center of asylum seekers and refugees together with the local authorities. Alberio emphasized the local authorities' role because they control the provision of public services. He emphasized that the local authorities have to know every single refugee living within their territories.

According to Alberio, the SIPRIOMI program has so far provided an individual plan for the social and economic independence of the refugees along with their participation. However, the system still does not cover the whole population of the 100,000 refugees. Moreover, he mentioned that nowadays in Italy the reception system is going through a transition phase that has increased the number of emergency centers, but has limited the involvement of the local authorities and integrated reception.

A new law in 2018 transferred the emergency reception centers to ordinary reception centers. Moreover, this law would give SIPRIOMI access only to migrants who have legal status. Alberio argued that this new law undermines the principle of SIPRIOMI because the emergency center is now controlled by the government but not the local authority because of refugees' integration problems.

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Those who came under the age of 19 mostly tend to move somewhere else when they are under pressure, whereas retired and elderly people don't have that tendency as much.

**Prof. Dr. İbrahim Sirkeci,**  
Regent's University London

Sirkeci's speech mainly touched upon the situation of young refugees and their prospects. He pointed out conflict models of migration to explain why migration occurs.

He firstly cited that the social integration of the Syrian refugees in Turkey has been in progress since 2014. He illustrated his statement with an anecdote relating that a Turkish newspaper Hürriyet pinched a few words from his speech at a conference in 2014 that was held in Manisa, and the readers were sharing negative comments about him saying that we should get integrated with the refugees, despite the fact that he was only trying to mean something positive. Sirkeci added that today at the airport he could see the information signs in the Arabic language, which, to him, meant a progression in the integration of the refugees.

Secondly, Sirkeci claimed that the causes of migration can be perceived on the security and insecurity axis. He highlighted that

we have, on the one hand, a variety of conflicts, and people move in response to conflicts. He claimed that these conflicts arise from three D's (demographic, democratic, and development deficit) and facilitated by four C's (Human Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital, Physical Capability).

Demographic: Respecting the young people, Sirkeci highlighted that those who came under the age of 19 mostly tend to move somewhere else when they are under pressure, whereas retired and elderly people don't have that tendency as much. People tend to move for a better life, for lower costs of living, and for, for example, moving to South Africa for less need for money.

Development deficit: Such as Turkish migration patterns; a shift between central Anatolia.

Democratic deficit: In Syria, before the outbreak of the war, there were drought and famine, and there was massive urban unrest. Moreover, the government wasn't able to offer anything and many minorities, including the Kurds, were not recognized in the country.

He further argued that migration is one of the options to overcome insecurities; such as being a young talented artist woman born in a conservative place. He also stated that migration is a reason, not everybody moves, because it is a desire. Sirkeci supported his claim by referring to a survey that despite the massive civil war 25% of the Syrian people did not want to move somewhere else. Moreover, he said that in Turkey percentage of willingness to migrate was lower than in Europe due to the four C's: human capital (cheap labor abroad), social capital (networks, shelter, security), financial capital

## Prof. Dr. İbrahim Sirkeci, Regent's University London

(expensive adventure, passport, visa, etc.), physical capability (most vulnerable groups cannot move).

He illustrated a study that was held in the UK about international migration and the research has examined the qualifications of the minorities and how they respond to the labor market.

- The study showed that certain groups were disadvantaged, and not all were under discrimination, they have the luxury of free movement. However, Polish migrants are sharing struggles with black Muslims. Even though they are white, Polish migrants' disadvantage relies on their ethnic and religious penalties.

Lastly, Sirkeci touched upon the pillars of youth integration as follows:

- Legal frameworks: It doesn't exist in many countries, changing the employer is restricted.
- Recruitment practices: Some people are not suitable; it is soft discrimination.
- Language barriers: It is not necessarily always a problem, for instance, one can find a job with broken Turkish.
- Recognition of foreign qualifications: It is a big issue and a disadvantage.
- Pro integration publicly funded support to access the labour market.
- Alleviation of social and cultural discrimination: long term
- Discrimination and disadvantage should not be mixed. Networks and desires are key components.

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From the time the crisis has erupted, 6,5 million refugees in total are placed mostly in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey.

**Metin Çorabatır,**  
Research Center on  
Asylum and Migration

Metin Çorabatır, who is president of the Research Center on Asylum and Migration (IGAM), referred to the political aspects of social integration. He provided information about the Syrian migration and mentioned about the difficulties that the Syrian young refugees are facing.

Çorabatır added that from the time the crisis has erupted, 6,5 million refugees in total are placed mostly in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey. He questioned whether the situation would still be the same if these countries implemented the Geneva Convention fully; because, the 1951 Geneva Convention, which is about the rights and the status of the international refugees, and a prerequisite for refugees to start a new life, was either not ratified or maintained a geographical limitation in these countries. Çorabatır affirmed that since these rights are not present, it constitutes a big problem.

## Metin Çorabatır, Research Center on Asylum and Migration

He defined the issue as follows:

Syrians are not accepted as refugees and their legal status is not solid and clear. INGOs are striving to develop the living standards of Syrians; although those who are coming from the EU will not stay in Turkey because it is not possible to have 3,6 million Syrian refugees settled.

Çorabatır further questioned how these problems could be solved. As an example, he pointed out the 10 projects that are carried by IGAM that mainly aim to facilitate the social integration and social cohesion of the refugees in Turkey.

Some of the major problems regarding the refugees were highlighted by Çorabatır as follows;

- As Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gökay Özerim mentioned, Metin Çorabatır also highlighted that more than 50% of males are having difficulty in accessing livelihoods. Çorabatır added they are going through low socio-economic standards and having huge difficulties in finding a job, and when they do they stop going to universities.
- Another important problem that Çorabatır highlighted in his words was **"they do not get to know the culture and this arises a social problem"**.
- Young refugees are bullied in schools (including private schools). Adolescent bullies cause post-traumatic stress disorder and psychological support services are not enough.



- The identity problem is another topic. Being a Syrian is an important part of identity. However, most of them forget Arabic and-they are not becoming Turkish either. Moreover, political parties say that they will send them back, and that is why people who do not work stopped dreaming of finding a stable job.
- The existing social structure is another important component of the problems. For instance, in Ankara women go to school more than men because men go to work. Another example is "sisters can't go on the streets".

Çorabatır suggested that all projects regarding the refugees should take into consideration psychological issues, the fact that their psychologies are negatively affected should not be disregarded.

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Palestinians were forced to leave their land two times in the history; in 1948 and 1967, and there are now 5.8 million Palestinian refugees.

### **Saif Yaper,** Y-Peer Palestine

Saif Yaper who represented the Palestinian NGO mainly discussed the Palestinian refugees and their situation.

He started his discussion by asking why there are Palestinian refugees, and he continued answering as follows;

- **“The Palestinian refugees are the people who originally lived in Palestine.**
- **Israelis occupied the Palestinian lands.**
- **Palestinians were forced to leave their land two times in the history; in 1948 and 1967, and there are now 5.8 million Palestinian refugees.**
- **The Palestinian issue is not solved yet.”**

He argued that young people need a humanitarian solution. He pointed out that Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine, and yet it is disappearing.



### **Third Session**

## **Activities Carried Out by Public and International Institutions of Refugee Employment**

**Moderator Assoc. Dr. Erhan Keleşoğlu**  
Migrant Solidarity Association

**Damla Taşkın**  
United Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Gül Erdost**  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

**Berna Yıldırım**  
Turkish Business Council (İŞKUR)

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To promote employability and raise awareness on the work permit procedures, we have been working closely with the Turkish Business Council (İŞKUR).

**Damla Taşkın,**  
United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees  
(UNHCR)

On behalf of the institution, Taşkın mainly presented the programs of UNHCR that support the livelihoods of the refugees in Turkey. She started her speech by focusing on the global displacement issues and then continued with Turkey's case.

Taşkın highlighted the global figures and stressed that global forced migration topped 70,8 million, internal displacement, 41,3 million people and there are 25,9 million refugees and 3,5 asylum seekers in the world. She said, as well as the refugees and asylum seekers, stateless people are another concern.

She emphasized, because of the fact that every year a new refugee crisis erupts, UNHCR, which was founded after WWII, seeks for permanent solutions. According to Taşkın, UNHCR aims to provide international protection and reach out for the legal rights of refugees. She highlighted that making partnerships is crucial in order to achieve these aims. She demonstrated UNHCR's activities under its various programs. Likewise, she mentioned the

## Damla Taşkın, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

humanitarian aid and development, and competency programs. Referring to the programs, Taşkın claimed that emergency aid starts with the distribution of tents, shelter, and food, and continues with the registration of the refugees and then with social empowerment.

Aligned with the topic of discussion, Taşkın mentioned that with the competency programs UNHCR aims to provide refugees (Syrians, Afghans and other refugees in Turkey) and Turkish people equal access to opportunities, in other words, they aim for a mutual social cohesion.

As she highlighted the importance of partnership at the beginning of her speech, she explained that the institution works with NGOs and CSOs, and private sector actors and cooperates with different ministries. From her experience, she mentioned that the private sector is confused about the refugees; and is eased with a reference guideline prepared by the UNHCR for their engagement. She stated that, to promote employability and raise awareness on the work permit procedures, they have been working closely with the Turkish Business Council (İŞKUR).

Taşkın mentioned that Turkey wants to become a hub center although there are bottlenecks that get in the way of economy. She stated that, according to the statistics of İŞKUR, there are ten sectors in Turkey that have free positions;

- Machinery (sewing)
- Waitress services
- Sales experts
- Manufacture workers
- Cleaning staff
- Textile workers
- Marketing professionals
- Garment workers

## **Damla Taşkın**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- Cashiers

She added that the institution first teaches Turkish to refugees and gives them training about the labor law, provides vocational training and employs them in different sectors, and encourages entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, she also mentioned some of the trainings such as CNC training was requested by the refugees; however, in order to meet their demands they are in need of certain equipment and tools. For the young refugees, they procured equipment for training based on sectors with higher needs.

Taşkın mainly highlighted they made use of partnerships for their livelihood programs. She illustrated that Ankara Municipality gave 13 hectares of land for their cooperation and they have taken similar aid from Kocaeli Municipality, Bursa and in the provinces of Istanbul such as Zeytinburnu.

The support that UNHCR has provided to the livelihoods of refugees according to Taşkın were listed as below;

- Creating brands to market their products,
- Creating children care facilities in order to help mothers attend the economy,
- Encouraging private business. For instance, promoting entrepreneurship with the Chamber of Commerce in Gaziantep.
- 4,420 people have been given entrepreneurship training.
- To overcome the issues regarding seasonal agricultural work for Syrians and the Turkish, they have given training to workers. Likewise, the biggest importance was given to the women.
- İmece band (a musical band of refugees) was created and the fear of the unknown was eradicated.

“



Recruitment and follow-up mechanisms, as well as mentorship, are very important.

**Gül Erdost,**  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Erdost briefly mentioned the activities of UNFPA considering the situation in Turkey after the Syrian crisis. According to the information given by Erdost, UNFPA has been working hard since 2012, especially about improving reproductive health and rights, empowering young people and women and encouraging disadvantaged groups to fulfill their potential.

Referring to the Syrian population in Turkey, she added there are 1 million newborns. As Erdost said, one of the reasons why UNFPA cares mostly about women is that 71% of the people living under protection in Turkey are women and children.

Erdost highlighted the following concerns;

- She criticized the sustainability of the budgets and said that “we are all working on a project basis according to funds,” and therefore, all these employments and attends are not being sustainable. For sustainable support, UNFPA improved women's health

## Gül Erdost, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

consultancy services with the ministry of health, continues to operate women's health centers, and has been giving support to youth centers. However, she again claimed the future is unknown, in other words, no one yet knows what will happen after having completed these projects.

- She mentioned that capacity building studies are essential. Moreover, so are creating awareness in the public, such as introducing what is discrimination and what being a refugee means.
- She said one of the problems with the activities is not having a certain standard between institutions. Some institutions sometimes ignore important facts.
- She claimed humanitarian aid is crucial and local people have also started to seek temporary solutions.
- Recruitment and follow-up mechanisms, as well as mentorship, are very important. She suggested local governors should be opening centers and when they have problems they should organize awareness creation activities.
- Supervisions are very important; for example, some beneficiaries perceive cash aids as income; thus, instead of money, food or other necessities should be provided.
- A coordination mechanism is needed; a website could be useful to collect and classify what is useful and what is not in terms of the activities.





11-12 ARALIK 2015  
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THE LIVELIHOODS  
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In order for refugees to benefit from the opportunities at İŞKUR, they have to become registered first.

**Berna Yıldırım,**  
Turkish Employment  
Agency (İŞKUR)

Yıldırım mentioned that İŞKUR has been providing services for refugees and asylum seekers and their main problem is the language. İŞKUR tackles with an active labor force and increasing corporate and institutional capacity. She clarified that in order for refugees to benefit from the opportunities at İŞKUR, they have to become registered first, because they can only seek a job with an ID and they can seek jobs without a work permit for a certain time. Likewise, İŞKUR seeks suitable jobs for them.

She stated that,

- Many of the candidates speak English, and İŞKUR tries to prioritize their language skills accordingly.
- Turkish is really important to integrate into society and to the Turkish market. Thus, İŞKUR has language courses and provides certificates.

## Berna Yıldırım, Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)

- Newborns speak Turkish, so in the future, there will be less problems regarding language.
- İŞKUR provides vocational training courses and other theoretical courses for the refugees, that are mostly organized in Antep and Urfa.
- It focuses on manufacturing and service sectors.
- A survey applied to private sector employers.
- Showed that, 90% of the survey participants do not want to employ refugees. This prejudice creates a bottleneck in the private sector. Yıldırım also said the private sector has no financial burden when they hire a refugee, İŞKUR actually pays their costs for 6 months.
- İŞKUR cannot project how long Syrians work in the jobs that they found for them.
- İŞKUR reimburses 200 Turkish Liras for refugees' work permit, but the infrastructure is not fully established.



#### **Fourth Session**

### **The Approaches And Suggestions Of Civil Society On Refugee Employment**

**Moderator Nilüfer Sayılan**

Save the Children International

**Elçin Cavlan**

Women's Associations Federation of Turkey (TKDF)

**Akgül Öneri**

Human Development Foundation

**Mustafa Özer**

HABİTAT Association

**Nuha Boğa**

EMBRAK Project



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Employment policies are indispensable for training programs under employment, to create sustainable impact.

**Elçin Cavlan,**  
Women's Associations  
Federation of Turkey (TKDF)

Cavlan briefly mentioned about gender-sensitive livelihood programs.

She highlighted that;

- The immigrant and refugee women majorly participate in the labor market due to their low household income. Although, employment also causes women an extra burden in the domestic work-load.
- A family-oriented approach contributes to gender equality but not to the labor market.
- Turkey is the one that has the least employment rate for women among EU and OECD countries.
- Both the labor market and domestic work is highly gendered.
- There is a high rate of informal employment of the Syrian Refugees.
- Considering the current 50% rate of the informal employment rate of women in Turkey, it is almost impossible for the Syrian women to engage in the Turkish labor market officially.

## Elçin Cavlan, Women's Associations Federation of Turkey (TKDF)

- Syrian women are mainly domestic workers, due to two reasons:  
Lack of Education and patriarchal gender roles.
- Poverty is a common problem not only for women but also LGBTI persons in daily practices in a harder way.

About the livelihood programs in Cavlan mentioned that,

- The women's employment and livelihood programs mainly cover the following titles: Increasing the awareness level of women, encouraging women entrepreneurship, and efforts to extend the regulations in the job market.
- Lack of education does not necessarily affect unemployment rate.
- Employment policies are indispensable for training programs under employment, to create sustainable impact.
- One criticism that Cavlan brought out was about the cash for work programs. She criticized that these programs focus on short term employment and most of these occupations oppose the "do not harm principle"; she illustrated that these programs are gender-oriented and also added that donors are politicized, and funds are not that generous.

In order to improve the livelihoods of women, Cavlan suggested that;

- We need to create an awareness about gender equality and give consultancy to women,
- We need to cooperate with women's associations to support the economic participation of women,
- The demands of humanitarian aid organizations should be heard
- Throughout the training processes, we need to create conditions of sustainability and continuity,
- We need to create policies for sustainable programs.

“



The Syrian war caused uncontrolled influxes to Turkey and in that regard economic and social problems emerged.

**Akgül Öneri,**  
Human Development  
Foundation (INGEV)

Öneri presented a deepened perspective of looking at the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey and explained what different actors have been doing to support their livelihoods.

She firstly listed 5 key features of the Syrian migration as;

**“Uncontrollable, fast, intertwined, countrified, hardly-communicative”**

She explained that the Syrian war caused uncontrolled influxes to Turkey and in that regard economic and social problems emerged. Moreover, the majority of refugees came from rural areas and accordingly the paths to their urbanization have been quite difficult, in addition to the language barrier. Öneri highlighted that it is crucial to speak of Syrian's lifestyle indicators in the realm of social integration. Likewise, she listed them as;

- Feeling safe in the neighborhood,
- Worrying about the future of the family,
- Men who support women to work,
- Natural for men to have more than one wife,
- Practice religious rules.

## Akgül Öneri, Human Development Foundation (INGEV)

Referring to the research of INGEV, Building Markets and TOBB she added some important statistics regarding households;

- The large majority of the household heads are men between the ages of 19- 54,
- 82,5% of Syrians had 112,36 USD (650TL) a month or less,
- Participation of women in the economy is 7,9% whilst it is 48,6 % for men and 32% of the men who support their wives to work.
- 25% of the men support having more than one wife,
- 31% of the Syrians work on legal grounds and 52% are not working and not seeking for jobs either. Moreover, some people are not fit for work.
- 67% have a university degree,
- 30% cannot speak Turkish, 55% of them can only speak daily language,
- 71% had businesses in Syria and 29% started businesses in Turkey,
- 29 % of them started a business; however, only 2% of women have businesses and companies,
- Top seven sectors are; wholesale trade, construction, retail trade, traveling, consultancy, transportation, food, and textile,
- Average capital is 50 thousand US Dollars.

In the light of these statistics, Öneri mentioned what INGEV, that is a newborn civil society organization, has been doing, as the following:

- Consultancy services for strategy and program development,
- Applicable research and impact measurement,
- Program management and field implementation
- Advocacy campaigns,
- Social marketing for behavioral change.



## Akgül Öneri, Human Development Foundation (INGEV)

The examples she gave under these titles were;

- Call-center Turkish and Arabic Support Line,
- Delivering the tools of managing a business plan with face-to-face meetings or calls, company, establishment/registration, and accounting support,
- Project consortium with Building Markets & Habitat,
- Providing entrepreneurs with capacity building training,
- Empowering them to establish their own networks, especially with SMEs and organize mentee meetings,
- Helping them to open bank accounts, because Syrian refugees cannot open one themselves, and need a trustworthy person by their sides.

Öneri herein put forth the fact that Syrians have to increase their limited knowledge of Turkish legislation. She also mentioned that work permits are costly and even though some of the manufacturing businesses are popular in Syria, there is a misperception about them and local people prefer not to work in these businesses. Another challenge that Öneri said is the biggest, was the lack of travel freedom for Syrians, because they have to undergo a lot of procedures.

In order to overcome these issues, Akgül Öneri recommended;

- Expansion of semi-skilled labor force (i.e. we do not need hairdressers),
- Training in Turkish language,
- Matching employers with employees,
- Improving the delivery of information about their rights and obligations,
- Supporting partnerships and mentoring between Turkish and Syrian businesses.

“



Should civil society organizations or KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey) be providing entrepreneurship training.

**Mustafa Özer,**  
HABİTAT Association

Özer started his words claiming that for social cohesion Syrian refugees should distance themselves from humanitarian aid.

He continued his presentation asking whether civil society organizations or KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey) should be providing entrepreneurship training.

Özer mentioned the entrepreneurship program of HABİTAT that started in 2017, and he said in the beginning language barrier was a problem because half of the time dedicated to the training was lost due to translations. As a solution, among the attendants, volunteers were found to give the trainings, so that the language problem was eliminated. However, due to the language barrier, Turkish and Syrian people cannot receive training together. He also added that training that last for 8 weeks enable participants to come together with the mentors.

He highlighted that with UNHCR they have been giving 4,500 people entrepreneurship training.

He also discussed they cooperate with the young people, whom they define as people between the age of 18 to 45, but their focus is on the age of 18 to 35. Özer suggested they should have access to technological training. Likewise, along with the UNHCR funded project called "imece", they have been providing resource access for Syrian refugees.

He mentioned that in Turkish banking there is no legislation that prevents Syrians to receive loans but due to the foreigners' financial legislation they are indirectly excluded from receiving loans; therefore HABITAT provides loans to entrepreneurs so that they can be linked to the Turkish economy. This is, as he illustrated, a "comprehensive development".

Özer disclosed that out of 4,000 people they have given grants to more than 150 refugees, and according to an impact analysis that was conducted in the past, each enterprise provides 2,4 extra employment for the refugees. As well as the entrepreneurship programs, cultural projects are also an important source of income for the refugees. HABITAT has been supporting two musical bands.

He emphasized that in 2007, technological incentives have started to take place and we are coming to the starting point, but they are not creating a rapid income, it takes a minimum of two to two and a half years. Incentives are becoming the main source for households. In a nutshell, he affirmed that the dynamics are changing.

“



EMBARC embraces “reverse mentoring”, so that young people with fresh insights can help senior leaders learn cultural and technological changes.

### **Nuha Boğa,** Embarc Project

Nuha Boğa defined the EMBARK project as being a leadership program that has appeared from the private sectors, and it aims to increase the employability of young people in Turkey through online and offline services (such as; online mentoring, coaching, training, surveys, workshops, youth camps, etc.).

Boğa added that EMBARK embraces “reverse mentoring”, so that young people with fresh insights can help senior leaders learn cultural and technological changes.

She defined that each round of mentoring pairs young refugee mentors with business leaders; they agree on their objectives and meeting agenda, then they engage in a series of mostly face-to-face conversations over three months.

Boğa illustrated that the first implementation was realized in April 2018 between 13 managers from the company Unilever, Turkey, and 13 Syrian young refugees and they mostly elaborated on topics such as marketing, finance, media, and entrepreneurship. At the moment the preparations for the new term are being carried out with the support of Unilever and Mastercard Turkey offices.

She highlighted that the program is accessible for those who are between the ages of 20 and 28, resident in Istanbul, speak either English or Turkish, and interested in the field of at least one of the companies that are involved in the program. It is also open to Turkish university students or new graduates of the same age group.

Boğa stated that;

- Embark helps refugee mentors gain new soft skills, develop career plans and receive support for personal growth, feel empowered to start their own business, and, in many cases, secure jobs.
- Also, help business leader mentees deepen their understanding of the refugee demographics, improve their strategy for recruiting overlooked talent, and learn about new tech, trends, and social media.

And in future EMBARK aims to;

- Involve sectors that understand the potentials of the refugees in Turkey and build partnerships with civil society organizations in order to broaden the impact of the project.

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## Underlined Topics:

- The majority of the Turkish population is composed of young people; thus resolving their problems is highly important.
- Refugees' biggest responsibility is to take care of their homes, their families.
- Only 43% of the refugees have permanent jobs in Turkey, 70% of them are working in sectors like industry and agriculture.
- One of the obstacles to their integration and finding a job is the language barrier.
- There are differences between female (have family responsibilities) and male refugees (have to work).
- Majority of the Syrians have the willingness to integrate in social life.
- Psychological support services are not enough.
- Syrian youngsters mostly don't have friends outside of their jobs, their social activities are limited due to their insufficient income.
- They do not get to know the culture and this arises a social problem.
- Institutions generally define youth by age and almost each institution uses a different definition and yet institutions' perception of defining young refugees determines the basics of projects.
- 25% of the Turkish population is composed of young people; and among them, unemployment is the biggest problem.
- 2019 figures show that 27% of the young population in Turkey is unemployed.
- According to the Directorate General of Migration Management, 1,2 million out of approximately 3,6 million Syrian refugees are young.
- Syrians are forced to work in the informal economy.
- Young people represent "the fragile" section of the society.
- Syrian newborns and the young population are on the rise.

- 
- The roles of local authorities are important in the emergency centers because they control the provision of public services.
  - Conflicts arise from three D's (demographic, democratic, and development deficit) and facilitated by four C's (Human Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital, Physical Capability).
  - Young people need protection, access to education, and social empowerment.
  - Both the labor market and domestic work is highly gendered.
  - Syrian women are mainly domestic workers, due to two reasons: lack of education and patriarchal gender roles.
  - Majority of the refugees came from rural areas and this is another important reason why their integration to urban areas has been so difficult.
  - 31% of the Syrians work on legal grounds and 52% are not working and not seeking for jobs either. Moreover, some people are not fit for work.
  - Top seven sectors are wholesale trade, construction, retail trade, traveling, consultancy, transportation, food, and textile.
  - Due to the language barrier, Turkish and Syrian people cannot receive entrepreneurship training together.
  - In 2007, technological incentives have started to take place and we are coming to the starting point, but they are not creating a rapid income.





## Suggestions:

- Turkish and Syrian young people should not compete, a common ground that concerns the problem of both sides is needed.
- We need to understand the identity of the young people and respectively develop the right policies.
- Assessing the identity of young people could bring along more resilient policies.
- Certain standards should be taken into consideration when young refugees are the subject.
- We should integrate young refugees to the decision making mechanisms for their democratic inclusion.
- All projects regarding the refugees should take into consideration psychological issues.
- Sports activities will enhance social integration.
- Some projects should make use of art therapy.
- We need to create an awareness about gender equality.
- We need to cooperate with women's associations to support the economic participation of women.
- We need to create policies for sustainable programs.
- Expansion of semi-skilled labor force is important (i.e. we do not need hairdressers).
- Partnerships and mentoring between Turkish and Syrian businesses should be supported.
- Matching employers and mentors with employees/candidates is important.



# KONFERANS: GEÇİM KAYNAKLARINA ERİŞİM ve EKONOMİK KATILIM

## THE LIVELIHOODS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION



**December 12, 2019**

### **First Session**

#### **Good Practices on National Level**

**Moderator Verda Yüceer**  
World Food Program (WFP)

**Cihan Arsu**  
Turkish Red Crescent

**Ayşegül Yalçın Eriş**  
Association for Solidarity with  
Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)

**Erdem Vardar**  
Yuva Association

**Emine Kaya**  
C@rma

**Burak Uyan**  
Refugee Support Center (RSC)

“



The program aims to increase the employability of refugees, as well as the local people, to increase employability and to encourage entrepreneurship for their self-sufficiency.

**Cihan Arsu,**  
Turkish Red Crescent (TRC)

Arzu presented the activities held within the Livelihoods Development Program of TRC. He stated that the program aims to increase the employability of the needy people living under temporary protection and international protection, as well as the local people, to increase employability and to encourage entrepreneurship for their self-sufficiency. These activities cover vocational training, entrepreneurship training, work permit and employment, agriculture and animal husbandry, and Turkish language courses.

He mentioned that,

- TRC can measure the skill sets of the refugees and therefore can help them find jobs accordingly.
- The fees are being paid from funds, and their progress is followed, and if everything goes well, the agreements are renewed.
- For those who cannot find suitable jobs, soft skills development is also given.

## Cihan Arsu, Turkish Red Crescent (TRC)

- TRC carries out studies with the chambers and with other NGOs
- They have organized entrepreneurship training, and approximately 1,000 people have been trained during these programs (for beginners, intermediate, and advanced levels). People who participated in these programs have drawn up business plans that were evaluated by a jury, and those who were successful were rewarded with 50,000 Turkish Liras to establish their own companies. Those who established their companies were given support to develop their structure in Ankara, Adana, Mersin, Antep, Hatay, Urfa. By 2020, the procedure will be repeated in İstanbul, İzmir, Konya and Bursa.
- Independent accountants are given support to their programs.
- Other supports are given for in-house productions. For instance, women sometimes cannot work outside of their house; this way they could work at home. Likewise, related equipment are purchased by TRC.
- Agricultural and training programs are in collaboration with food and agricultural faculties and work with cooperatives.
- All of the community centers are going to be transferred to Turkish employment agency branches according to their agreements.
- In the field of SAP, TRC is partnering with different universities in 15 different cities to support students in gaining expertise. For example, a program has been carried out with Çukurova University, and thanks to the program fifty engineering graduates will be employed in different factories in Adana.

He concluded his speech saying that as TRC, they are ready to collaborate with other stakeholders to empower their activities.

“



ASAM's projects are not only limited to livelihoods but child safeguarding, access to health services, and access to educational services are also integrated into the projects.

**Ayşegül Yalçın Eriş,**  
Association for Solidarity  
with Asylum Seekers  
and Migrants (ASAM)

Eriş started her speech saying “the beneficiaries are not homogenous.” Since we are human beings, we all have different needs and we should be aware of that. Therefore, ASAM's projects are not only limited to livelihoods but child safeguarding, access to health services, and access to educational services are also integrated into the projects.

She continued presenting ASAM, and provided the following information: ASAM was established in 1995 in Ankara and holds 74 offices in 45 different cities, and for the last 25 years it has been supporting refugees. It covers different themes such as livelihood, social cohesion, capacity building, research, and having access to basic rights. Moreover, it expects to reach almost 250,000 people by the end of 2019 in which approximately 150,000 people have had their chance to meet with ASAM for the first time. It regionally works with the women.

## Ayşegül Yalçın Eriş, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)

Touching upon the topic of discussion, Eriş mentioned the vocational training and language courses that the association has been organizing in 2019. Moreover, she added that the beneficiaries of these programs have been allocated to private sectors and their numbers are almost 1,600.

She continued her presentation emphasizing the importance of social cohesion within the programs of the institution. Furthermore, she claimed the term social cohesion has many different definitions and ASAM is cooperating with lots of different institutions for social cohesion. She also stated that whenever social cohesion is missing the violation of human rights would increase, which is a major obstacle for social and economic development.

Another important project that Eriş indicated, was carried out with the academy last year. Referring to the good results of the seminar they organized with Hacettepe University in Ankara, together with different stakeholders, she highlighted the importance of academic participation.

Eriş repeated the sentence she used at the beginning of her presentation, "refugees are not homogeneous," to affirm that having many activities enhance social cohesion. Accordingly, she mentioned the various activities that ASAM organizes along these lines:

- ASAM also organizes youth camps, in which Turkish and non-Turkish young people come together, and friendships are constructed; and then different projects often come out of this camp.
- Musical activities that are also crucial in terms of strengthening social cohesion.
- With the public education courses, ASAM has provided lots of

## Ayşegül Yalçın Eriş, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)

language and vocational training courses. Likewise, in the center for developing life skills, they have given these courses in the city of Adana and also in İstanbul.

- ASAM has published a book, "Mültecilerle Çalışmak (Working With Refugees)," which is another important output of their activities.

In accordance with social cohesion, Eriş added that there are some issues that everyone should be sensitive about towards the Syrian refugees, such as the media, because prejudices are rooted in social media. To overcome this issue, she mentioned that ASAM organizes seminars for media members and more than 2,750 journalists were reached out to in different cities - but the journalists did not want to listen to ASAM, they preferred to listen to their "gurus" in the field. Therefore, ASAM first spoke to these gurus.

She also commented on the other cultural activities that ASAM has been organizing such as a second film festival that reached out to an audience of 3,000 with bilingual (Arabic and Turkish) theatrical performances.

As she emphasized at the beginning of her presentation, she finally mentioned that one of the priority topics of ASAM is women. Herein, she touched upon the SADA women cooperative which is a project for the empowerment of women with a different mechanism and stakeholders (Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, ILO and UN Women).

She spoke about SADA women cooperative as in the following two paragraphs:

- The project aimed to create economic and social stability. 9,069 women and girls have participated in social cohesion activities.



**Ayşegül Yalçın Eriş**, Association for Solidarity with  
Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)

What differentiates this program from others is that they also took men and fathers into consideration; to illustrate, fathers with their daughters participated in cooking pizza.

- SADA women cooperative was established by fifty Turkish, Syrian and Afghan women in 2019. The name SADA was chosen by the women, and means “sound” in these three languages. They do not always attend the executive committee meetings; however, they have established trust. The project was launched in 2017 and the cooperative was established in 2019; during this transition year, ASAM tried to establish the feeling of trust to prevent any conflicts. SADA opened a social media account as well. She added that the development of their soft skills is crucial for the sustainability of their program. They are making plans for the manufacturing of new products. They also cooperate with workshops.

She finalized her presentation saying that, as well as women cooperative projects, child safeguarding, livelihoods, and many other projects, have been successful thanks to having been supported by different mechanisms.





“



As a sustainable institution, YUVA aims to reduce poverty, to provide training programs and to raise awareness...

**Erdem Vardar,**  
Yuva Association

Vardar started his sentence with a clarification saying that since 2012, Yuva Association has been tackling with refugee projects, however it is originally a sustainable development association dealing with adult training programs.

Moreover, he highlighted that YUVA,

- Mainly seeks a holistic approach through many activities,
- As a sustainable institution, it aims to reduce poverty, to provide training programs and to raise awareness about climate change issues,
- In a broader aspect, it tries to enhance and develop climate and human rights.

In terms of social development, the association has been promoting vocational and language training programs. Vardar pointed out that, especially, language is the key component for social cohesion, employment, and protection, because it constructs the social realm. Thus the institution carried out in-depth studies and created new projects.

Vardar further mentioned that,

- In the last 3 years, 8,000 people had vocational training from the association, and were also employed.
- YUVA has had some projects regarding the vocational and language training.
- One part of these trainings is vocational Turkish training that help the Turkish learners grasp the terminology of the business they are involved in.
- YUVA is dealing with similar projects that UNHCR and TRC encompass, such as matching employers and the employees and covering their fees for registrations. Soft Skill development projects were also one of the other main activities.

Herein, Vardar mentioned the “cash for work project” organized by the association, to share an example of their holistic approach. Within the framework of this project, Vardar revealed the positive aspects. He claimed that one of the positive aspects has been to promote many women who were not working in the past including the disadvantaged Turkish women to have jobs. In some state schools, a collaboration with GIZ and the Ministry of Education was made.

Followed by his example, Vardar brought out the question of why the presence of these kinds of projects are important and what our gains are. He answered that 1000 teachers, working staff, and parents have started to have an additional force to cope with this community service. He added, thanks to soft skill, women started getting involved in the business although YUVA is not able to employ them after a certain term. On the other hand, after the conclusion of the project, some employers kept them. He mentioned that 1.500 people have been employed under the umbrella of this project and in the payroll, there are some legislative issues. He remarked his opinion by saying there should be more support on this kind of project.

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“Ekip” is a consortium project financed by EU and managed by World Bank to promote a sustainable work model for women.

**Emine Kaya,**  
C@rma

Emine Kaya shortly mentioned about the outcomes of the “Ekip” project of C@rma. She first introduced the “Ekip” as being an EU funded program and that the World Bank is involved in this project which is a sustainable business model, and mentioned that it is a consortium which means it also frames impact analysis, gender equality and so on. She added that they share a cooperative experience with Spain.

For a holistic work finding supporters and partners are crucial. Within the project fifty Turkish and Syrian women will be employed and their structure will be based on a cooperative model, because they will not have a “boss”, and it encompasses a general council where all of the members are equal and are making decisions together and all methodologies are being audited together; therefore it is a sustainable model and Syrian women and women from different origins can write together, decide together. Target people are Syrian and Turkish women who would like to get

involved in the project. They will receive training programs and skill building activities. Some of the activities she listed were as follows;

Turkish lessons and workshops, training and activities about living together, women empowerment programs, digital literacy, cooperation, management, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, kitchen training, sales and marketing, communication and teamwork, family meetings, group sharing meetings, and monitoring and evaluation assessment meetings.

Kaya added that they also invite male relatives of their participants. Moreover, she also said, activities related to discussions and evaluations to support the participant's psychological well-being are carried out, and they are also given psycho-social support. As she started to discuss their business model, she mentioned that the participation of women is 29% and they aim to change this figure.

As the name of the project implies, they even decide what to cook as a team. Kaya also stated that the Ekip project is environmentally friendly, therefore they try to consume healthy and local productions.

Lastly, Kaya completed her speech by saying, employment models are nearly developing in Turkey, thus, defining the target audience and offering flexible solutions are highly important.

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RSC was founded in Ankara in 2014, to help asylum-seekers, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, stateless persons, and persons seeking international protection.

**Burak Uyan,**  
Refugee Support  
Center (RSC)

Burak Uyan first introduced RSC and then spoke about RSC's Worker Support Center platform. As Uyan defined, RSC was founded in Ankara in 2014, to help asylum-seekers, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, stateless persons, and persons seeking international protection across twenty-five provinces in Turkey. They have been cooperating with readymade garment infrastructures and create projects with them. He said, through the protocol they signed with the Ministry of National Education, they provide language lessons and vocational training courses. Together with SCI they facilitate the livelihoods of young refugees and adolescents, and they get support from ASAM.

Other partners he mentioned were two clothing brands, GAP and the C&A Foundation (the foundation of the clothing brand), and with them they have been trying to empower the economic life of women. With the C&A Foundation, first they carried out field research, then focus group meetings. He emphasized that the

## Burak Uyan, Refugee Support Center (RSC)

boundaries of association are limited but when support comes from a brand their hands get stronger. In four cities they have organized focus group meetings and came up with the user-friendly website of the Worker Support Center. The interface of the website eliminates language barriers and thereby users who speak Arabic, English and Turkish can access the system easily.

He also summarized the benefits of Worker Support Center to workers, employers, and brands as it is shown in the below table. In terms of the Syrians, Uyan mentioned that the project made contracts with six brands and they employed thousands of Syrian refugees. To refer to the segment of users that are interested in the Worker Support Center, he mentioned that 60,000 different users visited the website and 87 % of visitors are men. Moreover, he indicated that those who register are mainly between the ages of 24 to 35. Another statistic that Uyan shared about the users is that they

Benefits for Workers	Benefits for Employers	Benefits for Brands
Access to rights in four languages	Acquiring information regarding employment of persons under TP/IP.	Improved management of supply chain.
Free counseling service in four languages	Receiving free support on work permit processes of persons under TP/IP.	Direct communication with Syrian workers.
Providing information on work permit and other rights and services.	Interpretation support.	Interpretation support.
Improving conditions at the workplace	Cooperation with a partner that provides support for off- work problems of Syrian workers	Cooperation with a partner that provides support for off- work problems of Syrian workers.
Benefiting from services provided by RSC and ASAM		

## Burak Uyan, Refugee Support Center (RSC)

are mostly having problems with work permits and low wages. He criticized that Syrians are unaware of their rights at work and so are the Turkish people. He said 80% of the users are Syrian and the rest are from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and then notably mentioned that even Turkish workers apply.

Lastly, Uyan claimed their project is as effective as an e-commerce company. He underlined that taking legislative precautions have been therefore important.





## **Second Session**

### **Good Practices on International Level**

**Moderator Berkin Şafak Şener**

Youth Deal Cooperative

**Fabio Ballerini**

La Cooperativa Sociale Odissea

**Elif Aksoy**

IDEMA

**Nermeen Abdelaziz**

UNHCR Egypt Office

**Emel D. Andrews**

RET International

**Semiha Elif Yazarbaş**

NaTakallam



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La Cooperativa Sociale Odissea is trying to build more settlements to accommodate refugees in villages and neighborhoods.

**Fabio Ballerini,**  
La Cooperativa Sociale  
Odissea

Fabio Ballerini started his speech by saying that La Cooperativa Sociale Odissea, a non-profit NGO located in an area 1 hour from Florence, provides shelter for refugees and asylum seekers. Instead of opening more refugee camps, Ballerini said, they are trying to build more settlements to accommodate them in villages and neighborhoods.

He mentioned that the system that is called “First welcome for refugees” was established through a protocol signed between Ministry of Interior, Union of National Municipalities and UNHCR and then it was converted into a national asylum program (SIPROIMI) in 2002; and since 2011, they have been trying to respond to the demands of migration and asylum demand accelerated by the Arab Spring through this program. Subsequently, Ballerini continued his speech by mentioning Cooperativa Sociale Odissea.

## Fabio Ballerini, La Cooperativa Sociale Odissea – Italya

The organization, which has been operating in the Toscana region since 2006, has more than 70 employees from many different branches, including social workers, youth workers, mediators, legal experts, psychologists, anthropologists, and teachers. Ballerini listed the activities as follows:

- To provide the first conditions of accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees,
- To provide shelters for women victims and victims of domestic violence,
- To provide Italian language education for immigrants,
- To provide peer education and non-formal learning projects on conflict management, active citizenship, human rights, intercultural dialogue and sustainable development.

Stating that they have been involved in the SIPROIMI system since 2011, Ballerini mentioned that they have tried to provide shelter, food distribution, legal and psychological support, training and courses for integration as well as employment in local companies through the system.

Ballerini said that they created a network of local companies and educational institutions for the refugees to find jobs in the local area and added that personalized training programs could be realized thanks to this network.

Lastly, he mentioned that they started a social enterprise called "Terra di Tutti" in 2018, which aimed to convert waste materials into traditional handicrafts with the skills of artisans and artists. Ballerini said that they have collaborated with the University of Florence for training on the development of traditional handicrafts skills within the scope of Terra di Tutti initiative. He concluded his speech by saying that they have been working on putting products such as t-shirts, notebooks, bags, chairs, and wooden objects in the market by pointing out the importance of such projects that could facilitate cultural cohesion and financial support.

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Food Incubation Centers and training programs realized in these centers that were established to ensure the economic sustainability of the target audiences.

**Elif Aksoy,**  
IDEMA

Elif Aksoy, who started by saying that IDEMA is a “good for profit” company, explained that they are not a non-governmental organization and that they work for profit but can be considered as a social development company that does not do any business that does not involve social benefits.

Aksoy said that IDEMA, which has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, and Mersin, has implemented a consortium L.I.F.E project with many international partner institutions; and she continued to point out that, with the L.I.F.E (Livelihoods Innovation through Food Entrepreneurship) project, they aim to support intercultural understanding between the different communities in Turkey, promote integration to create opportunities to do with innovation, economic flexibility and empowerment.

Aksoy talked about the Food Incubation Centers and training programs realized in these centers that were established to ensure the economic sustainability of the target audiences.

She also stated that they work with the host community as well as all other refugee groups whose native language is Arabic. Furthermore, she also mentioned that food connects people using the following sentence; "There is a unifying aspect of food, it is common to everyone and you can turn it into something joyful that brings people together around a table."

She added that there are two Food Incubation Centers, one in Mersin and the other in Istanbul. The following activities are held within the incubation programs and they are held every 4 months in incubation centers;

#### Food entrepreneurship trainings

- Use of test kitchen
- Gastro diplomacy activities
- Mentoring programs
- Business support services
- Business plan competitions
- Co-working area
- Labor force development training.

Aksoy claimed that because of language barriers, the training that are held in the Incubation Programs cannot host Turkish and refugee participants together; however, she stressed the importance of making use of common areas for activities such as gastro diplomacy to bring together all communities.

She highlighted that the large industrial kitchens that are found at the Food Incubation Centers can be used with the support of chefs by the participants who want to prepare food and beverage products besides the training. Gastro diplomacy activities that are performed every 2 months can be on various themes such as zero-waste and iftar (fast-breaking meal of the Muslim religion). She also added that women can receive entrepreneurial support from a pool of mentors of marketing and finance experts specialized in the food sector and from experts in food-related topics.



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The idea of Professional Community Cuisine has been developed along with the civil society, public and private sectors in the field of subsistence, to enable a collaborative environment.

**Nermeen Abdelaziz,**  
United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees  
Egypt Office

Nermeen Abdelaziz, who represented the Egyptian Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), briefly explained the Professional Community Cuisine, an example from Cairo.

Abdelaziz mentioned that the idea of Professional Community Cuisine has been developed along with the civil society, public and private sectors in the field of subsistence, to enable a collaborative environment. She stated that they came up with a project plan by following the result of a research which revealed that refugees preferred to work in the food sector.

Abdelaziz stated that they have been trying to ensure that refugees in Egypt can work in the food sector by implementing the project that was developed with the funds; however, she also claimed that capacity building training, mentoring and financial grants given to

**Nermeen Abdelaziz, United Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees Egypt Office**

refugees are not enough to overcome the difficulties in the marketing process of the products.

She also mentioned that they were looking for a new method because collaboration networks that were built for the sale of products do not provide a professional solution anymore, when they reached “Mumm,” one of the marketing and sales platforms in the food sector. She said that Mumm is the name of a local dish, and in this platform, homemade dishes made by the Egyptians are sold.

Abdelaziz said from the configuration of the kitchen to the production of the dishes, the Mumm sales platform has a number of criteria for the food that is being produced, there are many rules to be followed, but yet the production opportunities of refugees do not meet these criteria. She said that, through a collaboration with the private sector, a professional kitchen was established for the use of the women.

Abdelaziz stated that this professional kitchen established with the partnership of public, private sector and non-governmental organizations have also been transformed into a training center, where women can receive training on many subjects and that they have the opportunity to practice. She concluded her speech by saying that they called it the multi-stakeholder approach.

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The project aims to reach vulnerable refugee women who have no access to any economic resources and who are systematically exposed to at least two mechanisms of social violence.

**Emel D. Andrews,**  
RET International

As Andrews mentioned, since 2016, RET has been working with the intention of reaching the most disadvantaged women.

She stated that, RET International has been carrying out Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment Project with the workshops of four different provinces in Turkey, namely,

- Çorum Wood Printing and Natural Dyeing Workshop,
- Kilis Natural Toy Workshop,
- Mardin Natural Soap Workshop, and
- Şanlıurfa Vegetable and Fruit Drying and Packaging Workshop.

The project aimed to reach vulnerable refugee women who have no access to any economic resources and who are systematically exposed to at least two mechanisms of social violence. The support mechanisms and activities of the project were designed according to the needs determined by the profile research of this target group.



## Emel D. Andrews, RET International

Andrews said that they are working to strengthen the capacity of the staff to establish the right team before the project implementation process and to adopt the peacebuilding approach. She also mentioned that, in the planning phase, they have been seeking answers for the following questions; 'Where and with whom do we work? What are our sources? What can we produce with these resources? How and to whom do we sell the products?'

She claimed that the workshops are also important for social cohesion. Safe social harmony and cultural activities were also carried out with the social environment in the region, thanks to the identification of the working areas where the workshops were located.

Stressing that a solution to provide livelihoods cannot be produced with one-to-one or one-time work, Andrews underlined the importance of vocational training and social cohesion activities, creating job opportunities and empowering women in this regard. With the soaps produced in the "Mardin Soap Workshop", women who are aiming to become an international brand under the name of Leap Natural added their own anonymous stories to each product sold. Andrews stated that, women have a strong connection with nature and production thus it is very important to keep the bond between the producer and the consumer to reveal this power. She completed her speech by stating that they support women who want to take part in the production, to create a livelihood, and to create their own brand from product determination to social media marketing.

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The NaTakallam project is aimed to provide income to the refugees for self-sufficiency, and to make use of their existing skills for this purpose.

**Semiha Elif Yazarbaş,**  
NaTakallam

In the session where international good practice examples were shared, the NaTakallam project was one of them. To emphasize the importance of language support -that they provided to refugees Yazarbaş said that **"refugees do not have access to education and they cannot integrate into economic life."**

The refugees are not only connected to each other but also to the outside world, Yazarbaş says, **"the phone is the life for them"** and added that "there is a serious demand for online education and language learning programs".

NaTakallam mainly works in 3 fields;

- Language learning
- Academic programs
- Professional translation services

## Semiha Elif Yararbař, NaTakallam

NaTakallam, as an innovative model, brings together those who want to learn Arabic and their native Arabic refugees online, to practice. In this way, refugees not only provide, income for the language practice service they provide, but also strengthen human integration by establishing a human connection.

The NaTakallam project is aimed to provide income to the refugees for self-sufficiency, and to make use of their existing skills for this purpose. The project, which was originally designed only as an Arabic language education, began to develop in different languages. In addition to the support of language practice, refugees can also provide professional translation support. Academic education programs are, on the other hand, offered to universities who wish to acquire educational content in Arabic.

In addition to the envisaged benefits of the NaTakallam project, Yararbař also mentioned that, it was also in demand by educators working on issues such as social integration and anti-discrimination, independent of language service. Educators who want their students to meet with refugees may ask NaTakallam for assistance.

Yararbař shared that, with NaTakallam, in four years, refugees earned more than \$600,000 in income, working with more than 6,000 users from 90 countries and more than 200 schools and universities. She stressed that the most important thing is the human dimension as well as being able to generate income and that people would actually lose communication without translation.;

**Semiha Elif Yararbaşı**, NaTakallam

**“Machine translation is not a substitute for human translation, it is very important to develop language skills that are human to human.”**

Lastly, she shared that 40% of the people in NaTakallam try to go to university, 60% live only on the income from this project. With this project, the developing network contributes to the establishment of new partnerships among refugees, the development of their business and digital skills and their adaptation to the business world.



11-12 ARALIK 2019  
ISTANBUL

## KONFERANS: GEÇİM KAYNAKLARINA ERİŞİM ve EKONOMİK KATILIM

THE LIVELIHOODS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Supplementary Trainings



### Third Session Research Presentations

**Moderatör Lemi Karaca**  
Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)

**Doç. Dr. Ulaş Sunata**  
TOG İzmir – Hatay Field  
Research Presentation

**Hande Soğancılar Taşdemir**  
SCI/ Private Sector  
Research Presentation

“



Ideal job and working conditions reveal that young refugees want secure, well-paying jobs that provide training opportunities.

**Assoc. Prof.  
Dr. Ulaş Sunata,**  
TOG İzmir – Hatay Field  
Research Presentation

The session, which shared the results of the research on refugees' access to livelihoods, began with the presentation of the results of Sunata's Access to the Livelihoods Survey of Young Refugees under Temporary Protection.

With the support of TOG and Save the Children International, a mixed model including survey and focus group studies was applied and the sample was limited to young refugees in İzmir and Hatay.

The study showed;

- Internal displacement and access to livelihoods in the context of the city
- Youth and young refugees
- Self-sufficiency, self-confidence, human dignity, sustainability
- Training and work.

The research questions were grouped under 10 different headings;

- Demography
- Socio-economic status
- Migration story
- Education
- Employment status
- Unemployment
- Ideal working conditions
- Social life
- Life satisfaction
- Migration and living conditions

The results were as follows;

- More than half of the respondents were young women. More than half of the participants were primary or secondary school graduates, and 18% were high school graduates. The proportion of those continuing their education after coming to Turkey is 30%, while 15% have graduated from high school in Turkey.
- 29% of the young Syrians say they are working and that many are looking for work. While the rate of men working is 7,4%, this rate rises to 59% for women. Young women who do not have access to education cannot participate in business life. Most of them live in families of 3-4 or 5-6 people. Only 4% of young refugees benefit from social assistance, while 54% say it is very difficult to borrow if needed.
- Young refugees mostly have urban registrations. Only one out of every four young people have access to formal education. The rate of those who go to language courses is 41%, while the proportion of those who receive vocational training drops to 7%. According to

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ulaş Sunata**, TOG İzmir – Hatay  
Field Research Presentation

their intensity, the problems they face are education, xenophobia, language barrier, difficult curriculum and formal registration problems.

- In addition to having low access to formal education, the proportion of those with work permits is only 13%. Those who do not have a work permits are either uninformed or head to informal employment.
- The answers to the question of the ideal job and working conditions revealed that they want to be in a secure job, that pays a wage, a job they love, that provides training opportunities, suitable for the training received and is a continuous job.
- While half of the young refugees are trying to return to Syria, the number of people who want to go from Turkey to another country is the other half.
- In addition to the survey studies, semi-structured focus group studies were also conducted; issues related to education, discrimination and violence, employment and working conditions, social life, expectations and demands were discussed.
- The report of the research which has just been completed will be shared with the public in 2020.



“



Looking at the assessments on the employers' expectations regarding general life skills, it is possible to say that there are opportunities for Syrian refugees.

**Hande Soğancılar  
Taşdemir,**  
SCI/ Private Sector  
Research Presentation

Taşdemir started her speech by saying that Save the Children International has realized two main projects in the livelihood program, one of which is the Multi-Sectoral Project, which is a part of this conference and the other is the Livelihoods Project, which is a development-oriented project. After giving brief information about the projects, she talked about the guiding research done for the planning of these and other projects. She stated that the Istanbul Labor Market Survey, of which the results were shared, is one of the guiding studies focusing on the supplying axis, and continued by sharing the research results.

In the Istanbul Labor Market Survey, it was aimed:

- To understand the business opportunities for action sectors and women and men in these sectors, and to understand the difficulties in accessing employment,

## Hande Soğancılar Taşdemir, SCI/ Private Sector Research Presentation

- To identify markets with growth potential for young entrepreneurs,
- To question the job opportunities in the identified action sectors in terms of gender equality.

At the end of the first phase of the research, the action sectors in which young refugees can participate are production, wholesale and retail trade, information and communication technologies, education, health, hospitality and accommodation.

The views of the employers about the Syrian employees say that;

- When they employ a Syrian person, they think that they are against the general view of the people,
- Syrians are comfortable concerning punctuality and working hours,
- Syrians do not want to obey the general rules because they regard business relations as social relations,
- Syrians have different ideas about the continuity of employment.

Looking at the assessments on the employers' expectations regarding general life skills, it is possible to say that there are opportunities for Syrian refugees. Some of these opportunities are,

- Prioritizing experience and technical skills,
- Acquiring technical education and technical skills and receiving language education through livelihood access projects,
- Especially, Arabic and other foreign language skills provide advantages in some sectors.

# KONFERANS: GEÇİM KAYNAKLARINA ERİŞİM ve EKONOMİK KATILIM

THE LIVELIHOODS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

CONFERENCE  
THE LIVELIHOODS  
AND ECONOMIC  
INCLUSION



## Fourth Session

### Private Sector's Approach To Refugee Employment

**Moderator Doğan Çelik**

Innovation for Development (I4D)

**Mehlika Gider**

MG Holding

**Olgun Aydın**

Senior Expert Supply Chain  
Sustainability

**Muhammed Seyid Pehlivan**

Ankara Development Agency

**Reşit Hamui**

Syrian International  
Business Association (SIBA)

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The programs implement social development and social entrepreneurship, financial program activities and application processes to the activities that have been completed.

**Muhammed  
Seyid Pehlivan,**  
Ankara Development Agency

Pehlivan started his presentation by introducing the Ankara Development Agency that bases its activities on economic and social developments. He spoke about their recent social responsibility platform and some of their activities regarding financials.

Moreover, upon the moderator's request, Pehlivan mentioned the outcomes of their programs. He mentioned that they implement social development and social entrepreneurship, financial program activities and application processes to the activities that have been completed and they are having an assessment and evaluation process. He further discussed their social responsibility platform that started as an internal initiative through which they collect proposals from NGOs on their website "sosyalsorumluluk.com.tr".

## Muhammed Seyid Pehlivan, Ankara Development Agency

Moreover, he mentioned that, if they reach a consensus with the proposals they shoot a promotional video for them without any fee and start seeking sponsors for them. Pehlivan added there are 700 volunteers who are present to help with these programs. He mentioned that according to a research that they made among the participants (1.006 Turkish, 350 Syrian), 53% feel in peace and social interaction is 47%. Pehlivan pointed out that 70% of the research perceived refugees as guests, and 30% said they will leave. He claimed that the activist movement is essential. He suggested that investors should lead some alternative platforms considering the Turkish so that the two sides won't be opponents.

“



Changing perspectives also give rise to huge business opportunities.

**Mehlika Gider,**  
MG Holding

Gider spoke about the project of a chemical engineer woman, called **“I am not begging; I am earning,”** that they helped in MG Holding. She mainly disclosed her observation upon the collaboration of Turkish and Syrian women.

Before moving into the example she further mentioned that in an agency that the company works with in Ankara, there is a misperception about Syrian refugees, and some perceive that they are consuming our rights labor market. In a way, she illustrated how sharp prejudices against the Syrian refugees are in the society, including herself. Gider herein spoke about how the project of the chemical engineer woman changed her perspective of looking at Syrian refugees.

She added that once, the Ministry of Agriculture wanted to bring together Syrian and Turkish businesswomen to promote making

"tarhana" (an ingredient for a national soup) and she thought of Ms. Wahiba, who is the founder of **"I am not begging, I am earning"** and the founder of a UN agency in the Middle East.

Gider mentioned that they collaborated with Ms. Wahiba, and they collected 20 businesswomen from Ankara and 20 ex-business women from Syria, through whom they contacted the Ankara Development Agency, İŞKUR, and social service experts and consulted them about their business. She highlighted that these forty women established a platform called "W-en Business". Gider also pointed out that since Syrians cannot legally open foundations they could not become members of the executive committee. She shared her observations saying that during the process she could see the behavioral change among the Turkish women towards the Syrian women in a positive way.

She claimed that changing perspectives also gave rise to huge business opportunities. To illustrate, they thought about opening a social enterprise together in other sectors such as agriculture, textile, foreign exports, construction, education, IT, communication and health. Likewise, she finalized her presentation with her lines saying that one can change people when they touch the emotions

“



PUMA wanted to promote human rights and hence they have started to take place in the business markets of Syrian refugees.

**Olgun Aydın,**  
Senior Expert Supply  
Chain Sustainability

Aydın briefly mentioned his field of work and gave his presentation on behalf of the shoe company PUMA, which was represented as a good example for the employment of the refugees. He started his words saying that they don't have a huge footprint in Turkey and they have only limited facilities. He highlighted that PUMA became sensitive to the issue because they saw how Syrian refugees were struggling and they decided to do something different and sought for lobby activities.

Aydın mentioned that, in 2016 they launched two committees; the first one was specific to create work contracts in Turkish and Arabic. They first made an agreement with a factory and five Syrian refugees were employed in this factory, and in time they could observe that their prejudice was broken down.

PUMA has STG and wanted to promote human rights and hence they have started to take place in the business markets of Syrian refugees. They gathered firms in retail sectors and pointed out that they could not hire Syrian refugees without work permits.



“



We have more than 20,000 workers who are working for companies that are registered with SIBA and the majority of them are refugees.

**Reşit (Rasheed) Hamui,**  
Syrian International  
Business Association (SIBA)

Hamui presented Syrian International Business Association (SIBA) that gathers Syrian business people around the world who went out of Syria and relocated themselves in foreign countries. He added that they have branches in France, USA, UK, in Canada and in the near future they will have branches in Egypt and in Jordan. He said that currently the Turkish branch is the biggest one. They aim to provide better conditions for Syrian refugees working in companies. One of their aims, as Hamui mentioned, is to find the biggest issues that these refugees are struggling with. He stated that they have more than 20,000 workers who are working for companies that are registered with SIBA and the majority of them are refugees.

Hamui listed the problems that they were having as follows;

- In 2019, work permits have been an issue; they were refused in general and lots of organizations tried to help.

**Reşit Hamui**, Syrian International  
Business Association (SIBA)

- Years before, the language barrier was a problem.
- In the business side, they had legal taxation problems, problems that are mainly related to the idea of being a refugee who's new to the market.
- Business people could not get funds from institutions like KOSGEB.
- İŞKUR was also unable to serve Syrian businesses.



## Underlined Topics:

- The most highlighted components for increasing the employability of the refugees are vocational training, entrepreneurship training, and Turkish language courses. These components are also the pillars of social cohesion.
- Beneficiaries have different needs and demands thus versatile activities are crucial.
- The long term assessment is lacking for almost all projects mainly due to short term funds.
- Partnerships with academia/universities are important to organize activities in order to empower young populations.
- For a holistic work finding supporters and partners are crucial.
- The language barrier is an obstacle to education and employment as well as the implementation of social cohesion programs where different communities can come together.
- Theoretical and practical training to develop professional knowledge and skills in accessing livelihoods may not be sufficient by itself. At the same time, business and marketing issues such as sales should be supported.
- In income models, the dimension of human relations is important for both personal development and social cohesion.
- Misperception about Syrian refugees in the business.
- Most Syrian women who had businesses in Syria are struggling to work in Turkey.
- Businesses that brought Syrian and Turkish people together helped Turkish people overcome prejudices against Syrian refugees.
- Work permits and legal legislation are two major difficulties that Syrian workers are facing.
- The unemployment rate is high among the Syrian and Turkish young people.
- There are different trends to follow for women in business.



## Suggestions:

- More financial support should be given to projects that integrate women in the economy.
- In addition to vocational education and financial resources, entrepreneurship and business development should be supported in order for young refugees to access self-sufficient and independent living sources.
- Especially in business development and subsequent processes, one-to-one expert support such as mentoring and consultancy should be given.
- Integrated project planning should be carried out with effective preliminary research on subjects such as target audience, working area, resources, labor market need and market demands.
- Business investments should lead to some alternative platforms considering the Turks, so that the two sides (Turkish and Syrian) won't be opponents.
- Since child care centers are limited in number, women can open up new ones.







# THE LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION CONFERENCE

## FINAL REPORT

11-12 DECEMBER 2019  
ISTANBUL

