

# »»» German development cooperation in the education sector in Turkey



## Support for Syrian refugees

**Education is a human right. It is a key prerequisite for development, sustainable economic growth and long-term poverty eradication. Education opens doors for people, allowing them to lead an active life and participate in society.**

Since war broke out in Syria in 2011, Turkey has taken in 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees – nearly two-thirds of those seeking refuge away from their homeland. In addition, there are more than 400,000 refugees from other countries living in Turkey. Around 1.7 million – more than half – of the Syrian refugees are under the age of 19. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has been supporting refugees and host communities in Turkey in the wake of the crisis in Syria, providing around EUR 617 million since 2015. This has mainly been accomplished through the Tackling the Root Causes of Displacement – Reintegrating Refugees special initiative. Geographically, the measures are focussed on the provinces in the southeast of the country (Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Hatay, Kilis, Mersin, Adana) and the large cities of Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir. The implementing organisations – GIZ, KfW and sequa – are carrying out the projects on behalf of the BMZ. The Turkish education ministry and Turkish educational institutions, UN organisations, and local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are project partners. The efforts are centred on three priority areas: education, vocational training and promoting employment. At the same time, all the projects – including those in the educational sphere – are geared towards helping to improve social cohesion between the different sections of the population based on a do-no-harm approach. This, it is hoped, will have a de-escalating effect on the increasing tensions between Syrian refugees and the local population in host communities.

### What are we doing specifically?

#### 1. Early childhood education

Turkey lacks the resources and capacity to provide a style of education that promotes development. Only 31,000 children of pre-school age attend a nursery (24%). Public educational institutions (e.g. nursery schools) are not available in sufficient quantity and are often unable to offer a high-quality education to Turkish and Syrian children and young people. Despite considerable efforts, it remains a challenge for Turkey to integrate Syrian children and young people into the education system.

For this reason, the BMZ is supporting a GIZ programme aimed at promoting early childhood development for Syrian and Turkish children. Specifically, this involves equipping pre-schools and public educational institutions with teaching and learning materials as well as providing additional training to nursery teachers, educators, other professionals and management staff. This, in turn, strengthens their skills, enabling them to provide targeted support to Syrian child refugees and disadvantaged Turkish children. At the same time, parents are brought into the fold and encouraged to adopt a positive parenting style to foster their children's curiosity and creativity.

#### 2. Primary and secondary education

More than 500,000 Syrian children have already been born in Turkey. Despite great efforts, there is still a great deal of catching up to do in terms of their school enrolment rates. Only

770,000 of the school-age refugees go to a state school (64%). In addition, many child refugees stop attending school after year eight because their families have too little information about vocational training opportunities. Given this state of affairs, the aim is to prevent a lost generation of Syrian child refugees by providing schooling opportunities.

Since the 2016/2017 school year, KfW – via its implementation partner UNICEF – has been assisting Syrian teachers with teaching child refugees. Funding has gone to salary payments, training courses and, in 2020, special support measures in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The teachers act as an important link between the Syrian community and the Turkish public education system, and they provide basic support for the children's learning and integration process by imparting their language skills. The project is improving the Syrian children's educational opportunities while ensuring a stable income for Syrian teachers (and their families). The programme currently provides funding to around 12,000 Syrian teachers in Turkey each year, who serve around 300,000 Syrian schoolchildren.

### **3. Vocational training for young people**

Vocational education and training is an integrated approach in which both “soft” and “hard” skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes are taught. It facilitates integration into the workforce, promotes opportunities for participation in society and strengthens individuals' opportunities to earn a living and forge their own way. Working together with its partners the ILO, WHO, DRC and UNDP, KfW is implementing short-term and long-term basic and advanced training measures to improve refugees' employability under the umbrella of the Middle East Employment Offensive. This includes sharing both professional and practical (e.g. business) skills as well as providing language learning courses. In addition, efforts are being undertaken to improve job seekers' opportunities to find work (e.g. institutional development of the Turkish employment agency, ISKUR) and increase demand (e.g. via start-up grants, social security contribution grants and SME promotion). Specific training courses also offer Syrian professionals a chance to work in the Turkish education system, where, for instance, they can help to improve the medical services available to refugees.

As part of a programme to promote economic opportunities, GIZ works with private-sector partners such as chambers of commerce to offer vocational training and Turkish language courses geared to local needs. And to help young people choose their career path, GIZ is strengthening career guidance and counselling capacity at middle schools and vocational schools.

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