



# Evaluation Summary



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## “Supporting Resilience and Social Cohesion with Decent Livelihood Opportunities” Project - Final Evaluation

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	<i>Turkey</i>
<b>Evaluation Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 to 30 September 2024
<b>Evaluation Mode:</b>	<i>Independent</i>
<b>Administrative Office:</b>	<i>ILO Ankara, Turkey</i>
<b>Technical Office:</b>	<b>MIGRANT</b>
<b>Evaluation Manager:</b>	<i>M. Koray Abacı</i>
<b>Evaluation Consultant(s):</b>	<i>Tuba Uzel</i>
<b>Project Code:</b>	<b>TUR/22/01/USA</b>
<b>Donor(s) &amp; Budget:</b>	<b>US BPRM, USD 7,548,214</b>
<b>Keywords:</b>	<i>Refugees, Resilience, Decent Work, Livelihood Opportunities, Social Cohesion, Labour Market Governance</i>

### Background & Context

Thirteen years after the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, there are 5.2 million Syrians hosted in countries near Syria. As of December 2023, Türkiye is hosting circa 3.27 million Syrian refugees, of which an estimated 26.7 percent are male of working age (18-59 years), and 23.1 percent are females of working age. Over 98% of Syrian refugees live in urban settings across Türkiye. The number of non-Syrian refugees is over 550,000 in the country and represented mostly by Afghans, Iraqis, and Iranians and all reside in the Government designated satellite provinces. The International Labour Organization (ILO), as one of the leading international actors in Türkiye, have made

great efforts to support the national authorities to reduce the effects of the refugee crisis since the very first time of the crisis.

### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

#### Present Situation of the Project

The Project was implemented between April 2022 – August 2024, with the ultimate aim of strengthening the resilience and social cohesion of refugees and host communities in Turkey by promoting access to decent work and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The project is based on 3 outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Refugees and host community members have better access to the labour market and remain in employment through improved employability and employment services and, enhanced social cohesion

**Outcome 2:** More and better income opportunities provided to refugees and host communities through sustainable income generation and job creation

**Outcome 3:** Knowledge base on decent work working conditions deficits of refugees and HC members as well as the opportunities to bridge these gaps are improved through research, policy documents and training.

#### Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The final evaluation aims to ensure accountability to the beneficiary, donor and key stakeholders of the Project as well as promote organizational learning within the ILO and among key stakeholders. This

evaluation, conducted between June and September 2024, was carried out in accordance with the guiding questions based on OECD-DAC criteria, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, and sustainability.

The evaluation aims to support the ILO to further learn from the experiences gained during the implementation of the project, with a view to draw lessons learned and good practices. In addition, it aims to come up with proposals for further improvements. The evaluation also ensures accountability to the implementing partners, donors and key stakeholders and promotes organizational learning within ILO as well as among key stakeholders.

## Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation has applied mixed-methods approach, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to reach a complete picture of the Project. It is based on data collection from both objective and subjective sources; including Project documents, relevant ILO conventions, ILO standards and guidelines, existing data as well as stakeholder consultations and other relevant material shared by the ILO Project Team.

### Main Findings & Conclusions

Based upon the detailed analysis and findings of the evaluation; below are the main findings and conclusions:

**Relevance:** After the review of progress reports, field visits and interviews; it was found that the needs of the target group and beneficiaries were appropriately addressed. Representatives from the PRM Office Türkiye, project implementing partners and government representatives confirmed through interviews that there is a mechanism in place to encourage engagement of the project stakeholders. Compared to previous interventions, it is understood that the engagement of workers' and employers' organizations in the design and implementation phases has increased day over the time. However more involvement is still needed. It is seen that the project contributes to the ILO conventions, international and

national documents. The success of the project is more than numbers; the qualitative ones, which are not tangible, are the most essential part of achievement. Not only quantitative indicators but also qualitative ones should be inserted into the logical framework to measure both such as surveys, pre-tests and post-tests, focus groups, questionnaires. Bi-annual fiscal cycle may be preferred for project implementation and related budget allocation; the implementation of the interventions will be technically and practically easier. Risks and assumptions were identified during the project design with the experience and lessons learned from ILO's PoS including the PRM-funded project interventions.

**Effectiveness:** Close cooperation, communication and approach with DGILF resulted in influencing policies and debates on refugees' participation in the labour market. The organizations held under Outcome 3 were tools to influence the institutions working on refugees' labour market participation. The close cooperation continued with those institutions and better understanding of the relevant issues were provided accordingly. Despite the additional targets were incorporated into the PRODOC by the end of the project, it is understood from the progress reports that targets have been mostly reached. Inclusion of SMEs working in agricultural sector to the "İşimi Öğreniyorum" programme leaded unintended, but positive results that registration of workers were provided through this initiative. The project scope remained unchanged, with no additional interventions related to the earthquakes. However, a minor adjustment in the KIGEP beneficiary profile included Hatay as an implementation province, focusing on companies in the earthquake-affected areas of Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, and Kilis. It is observed that constituents participated to the design and implementation stages of the project. Interviews with DGILF, SSI, İŞKUR, DİSK showed that they played an active role during design and implementation; contributed to the decision-making process. Despite adjustments to include more disadvantaged individuals, the programme did not achieve its intended inclusiveness for women and PwDs, with targets for

both groups unmet. A monitoring plan is in place and the project team has attached importance to project monitoring as can be seen in the quarterly progress reports. In practice, the communication between the ILO Türkiye Office and the relevant institutions, implementing partners and the beneficiaries was effective according to the interviews made. It is observed that the involvement of workers' and employers' organizations into the project design and implementation periods should be increased. The most important obstacles observed are administrative delays and time limitation. As mentioned previously, biannual fiscal cycle instead of annual allocation of resources would allow more effective interventions.

**Efficiency:** Resources are allocated in an efficient manner to achieve outcomes. One of the challenges encountered is that the donor requires the budget to be utilised on an annual basis, which makes it impossible for the project team to make long-term commitments given the timeframe required for preparation and contracting procedures. The team members have experience and expertise to implement the project efficiently; most have a long working relationship with the ILO. As is seen from the field visits and project documents; the project aims to promote gender equality, social inclusion, refugees and other disadvantages. Within the scope of Outcome 1, it was stated that women and PwD will be prioritized. However, despite some adjustments to allow more disadvantaged people to participate in the programmes, the intended inclusion of women and PwD was not achieved and the targets in terms of the number of women and PwD were not reached.

**The Coherence of the Project Design:** The implementation of the project is complementary with the other projects under the ILO's PoS. All project partners are selected among the public institutions or social partners already actively involved in activities related to disadvantaged groups from refugees and HC members especially for their employability. The Theory of Change is consistent with the findings obtained during project implementation. ILO establishes close collaboration with international

organizations, especially with other UN agencies. Collaboration with local representatives of global brands, such as INDITEX, would be beneficial, as their production standards align significantly with the ILO's objectives at the local level. At the country level, DGILF is the main counterpart of ILO Office for Türkiye in public administration.

**Impact Orientation and Sustainability of Interventions:** While establishing a direct causal link between the project's interventions and the legislative changes is challenging, it can be argued that the legislative developments summarised below are consistent with the advocacy efforts and policy recommendations developed during the project. One is the contribution to two articles of Mid-Term Programme (2024-2026), published by the Ministry of Treasury and Finance & the Presidency of Strategy and Budget. The other contribution is to the "Work Permit Evaluation Criteria" which was announced by the DGILF on 1 October 2024. The involvement of ILO Türkiye on the access of refugees to livelihood opportunities had significant social, economic and inclusive effects and those effects are likely to be sustainable in the future. Efforts undertaken under the scope of the project directly or indirectly address a wide range of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Some examples for SDGs may be given as; SDG1: No poverty, SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG10: Reduced Inequalities are directly addressed by the project. KİGEP is considered to have been successful in promoting the formal employment of refugees and raising awareness among refugee workers on the benefits of formal employment. Field visits and interviews indicated that the project enjoys a high level of ownership among all stakeholders. This is particularly evident among DGILF, İŞKUR, SSI, Chambers, and the Municipalities involved. During interviews, these institutions expressed clear intentions and a strong willingness for future collaborations. The cooperation with provincial directorates and local administrations has greatly facilitated project implementation due to their strong commitment to supporting local communities. Women's cooperatives have proven to be an effective mechanism in Türkiye,

reflecting the high level of dedication among women and fostering a collaborative spirit between refugees and HC members.

#### **Gender Equality & ILS and Social Dialogue:**

According to the feedback received from the participants, the strategy and objectives are mostly appropriate for promoting gender equality. However, some limitations were encountered during the project implementation. Although some arrangements were made to enable more disadvantaged people to participate in the programmes, the inclusion of women and PwD was not succeeded and the targets in terms of the number of women and PwD were not achieved. Finding ways to support women for skills development purposes and to reach work opportunities is more efficient when women-specific needs are concerned. The project team is fully aware and sensitive to the concept of gender equality. Visits and interviews also revealed that stakeholders place high importance on gender equality and consider it as much as possible in project outreach activities.

The fundamental conventions adopted by ILO, as well as instruments related to migrant and domestic workers, such as Migration for Employment Convention, Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention and Domestic Workers Convention were relevant to the project. Regarding social dialogue, the activities for promoting an enabling environment for business development and economic growth bring together many social actors to create more and better entrepreneurship and job opportunities for refugees and host communities. When the project design, outcomes and outputs are reviewed, the collaboration between different social actors and ILO's tripartite structure is visible. The majority of the activities reflect the project approach on the principles of social dialogue with the full participation of workers' and employers' organizations. The interviews also supported this dimension and demonstrated the efforts made by the project team to ensure the participation of relevant social actors.

#### **Lessons Learned**

Some of the lessons learned from the project is as follows:

- It is essential to establish clear and concrete definitions of the green economy and green jobs and to consistently communicate these across all project documents, interviews, and contracts with implementing partners.
- The incentives provided directly to participants created tension between newly recruited employees and existing staff in some beneficiary enterprises of “İşimi Öğreniyorum” Programme, which led to disruptions in labour peace. Existing employees may view the incentives as favouritism, leading to divisions within the workforce.

The Project has the ability to demonstrate some good practices:

- The SME grant program has effectively enhanced the capacity of SMEs through strategic support, contributing to sustainable economic growth and job creation in alignment with the project's overarching goals.
- Through close cooperation with the ILO, the beneficiary cooperatives of the project have been able to strengthen their organizational structures and foster a culture of collaboration between refugees and HC members, contributing to their long-term economic and social empowerment. This support has been particularly valuable for women, who have become economically and socially empowered through their participation in these cooperatives.
- Workplace Adaptation Programme (WAP) was strategically developed to address labour market needs by fostering a fair and harmonious working environment within workplaces.

## Recommendations

### Main recommendations and follow-up

The following recommendations were developed based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation and comments from the stakeholder interviews.

1. Provide flexibility of making longer term commitments to ILO project management team. The project is designed as a two-year intervention, but the annual budget allocation, as required by the donor, complicates the management of activities needing longer-term commitments and leads to repeated efforts each year.
2. Continue employee skill development without providing direct incentives. It is recommended to proceed with the skill development of employees, focusing on enhancing their professional capabilities, without offering direct financial incentives to the training participants.
3. Continue collaboration with other UN Agencies. It is essential to maintain and expand this cooperation to further enhance the effectiveness of interventions. Joint efforts should be directed toward complementary projects to prevent duplication of activities and to maximize the impact of shared initiatives.
4. Strengthen relationships with Employers' and Workers' Organizations within the tripartite structure. The engagement of workers' and employers' organizations during the design and implementation phases of projects has shown a steady improvement when compared to previous interventions. To enhance the effectiveness of future projects, it is essential to increase this involvement and support. Resistance to refugee inclusion remains prevalent among certain segments of workers' and employers' organizations. To address these ongoing challenges, efforts should be directed toward encouraging broader engagement across all organizational levels.
5. Establish clear and concrete definitions of the green economy and green jobs. It is essential to establish clear and concrete definitions of the green economy and green jobs and to consistently communicate these across all project documents, interviews, and contracts with implementing partners. This approach will ensure that all stakeholders are aligned with the project's environmental objectives and can work toward common goals with a shared understanding.