

# 3RP LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT DATA ANALYSIS

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2017 Progress and Way Forward  
for 2018-2019

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## Summary

The “3RP Livelihoods and Employment Data Analysis” briefing provides an overview of the progress made by 3RP partners towards fostering jobs and income opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities. While the Government generous policy framework opens up access to the labour market for Syrian refugees, only 40,000 of them currently hold a work permit. In parallel, poverty and negative coping mechanisms remain prevalent among refugees, while frustrations and tensions among the host community related to lack of employment opportunities are mounting. This situation requires 3RP partners to step up efforts related to job creation. The report estimates that the response is currently supporting around 27,100 jobs through the efforts of various sectors (livelihoods and food security, but also hiring of volunteer teachers, of translators for public institutions, etc...). However, reaching the necessary scale on job creation would require significantly expanding the livelihoods sector, notably through better integration of programming and through increased partnership with the private sector.

## Introduction

The fourth strategic objective of the Turkey Refugee and Resilience Response Plan (3RP) for 2018-2019 is to “Expand livelihood and job opportunities for people in need”. Under this objective, 3RP partners aim to reach two outcomes:

- Increased employability of Syrian Refugees and vulnerable members of the Host Community.
- Increase income of Syrian Refugees and vulnerable members of the Host Community as a result of having a job or other income generation.

The response thus seeks to facilitate the access of affected populations to decent work opportunities, or to formal jobs. Formal jobs are understood by the 3RP to be “jobs for which work permits or work permit exemptions have been granted. Thus, it refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are covered by formal arrangements”.

This note examines how much progress the 3RP partners have made towards realizing this objective, based on the reporting and information available from the various sectors and partners. It encompasses the results achieved across all relevant sectors including, most notably, the Livelihoods Sector itself. The report complements the monthly dashboards from the Livelihoods Sector and the annual 3RP Progress Report by offering a more strategic-level analysis of the collective efforts of the 3RP partners, the challenges which they have faced, and the results achieved to date.

## Government Policy Framework

Turkey's 3RP has consistently stood out for its strong national ownership and leadership, with the partners playing a supporting role to the Government of Turkey within the established national asylum framework. The Temporary Protection Regulation<sup>1</sup> provides Syrians with access to national systems such as health, education, social services and employment. The framework for employment is provided by the Regulation on Work Permits of Refugees under Temporary Protection of January 2016 (hereafter Work Permit Regulation), which grants all beneficiaries of Temporary Protection the right to apply for a work permit and access formal employment. This framework is considered conducive to enabling the Syrians under temporary protection to become more self-reliant and resilient.

As of 31 March 2018, the number of work permits granted to Syrians under Temporary Protection was 19,925. In addition, 20,970 Syrians with residence permits held regular work permits, making for a total of 40,895 Syrians with work permits. The figure for work permits issued to Syrians with residence permits refers to the regular work permits for which any foreigners can apply, and is therefore unrelated to the Temporary Protection regime. However, it would seem that refugees are also using this channel to obtain work permits, as the number of regular work permits granted to Syrians has been increasing steadily since the onset of the crisis (see table 1). Meanwhile, as of the same date, a further 13,776 permits had been granted to Syrians setting up their own businesses, bringing the total number of Syrian working in Turkey legally to 54,671. This total does not include seasonal agricultural workers exempted from the work permit requirement (to benefit from this exemption, Syrians under Temporary Protection intending to engage in seasonal agricultural work must apply to the governorate of the relevant province).

**Table 1.** Regular work permits issued to Syrian nationals with residence permits: 2011-2017

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Male	96	194	724	2,384	3,739	12,145	19,326
Female	22	26	70	157	280	1,145	1,644
Total	118	220	794	2,541	4,019	13,290	20,970

**Source:** Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Work Permits Statistics: <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/home/contents/istatistikler/yabancicalismaizinleri/> and Ekonomistler ("Economists") website <http://www.ekonomistler.org.tr/arsivler/7467>

While regulations have become less restrictive and jobs are generally more accessible, the implementation of the Work Permit Regulation continues to face substantial challenges:

- The work permit application must be initiated by the employer, not the refugee. The procedure is easily accessible online. However, the cost and length of the process, combined with the size of the informal labour market, limit the incentives for employers to formalize the status of their Syrian employees. Here it should be noted that the fee charged for work permits for Syrian nationals under Temporary Protection is only TRY228.90 (as of 2018, excluding the price of the card) compared to TRY615.20 for the regular work permits issued to other foreigners.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the procedure as a whole may act as a deterrent, and formal businesses may be reluctant to hire Syrians rather than Turkish workers.
- The above does not apply to Syrians willing to start their own businesses, who do initiate their own applications. This, however, involves fourteen different steps which may be easier for larger businesses to go through than small ones.

<sup>1</sup> The Temporary Protection Regulation was prepared on the basis of Article 91 of Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection.

<sup>2</sup> As of 15 December 2017, the fee of TRY630 for a temporary work permit for up to one year, set in accordance with Law No.492 on Fees, was reduced to TRY228 in the case of Syrian nationals under Temporary Protection. <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/uigm/duyurular/2018-harc-miktarlari/>

- The number of Syrians who may be employed in any single business is limited to 10% of the payroll. This quota is particularly challenging in southeastern provinces, where the Syrian population averages 20% of the total population. While employers can apply for an exemption to the regulation, by proving that they cannot find qualified Turkish nationals, it is unclear how frequently such applications are made or how easily exemptions are granted.
- Livelihoods partners in Southeast Turkey also report that the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) may have insufficient capacity to process work permit applications.<sup>3</sup> In all, 87,000 regular work permits were granted to foreigners in 2017, with applications from Syrians (outside of the Temporary Protection track) representing one fourth of that total. Taking into account the work permits granted to Syrians under Temporary Protection, this means that the number of work permits rose by 40%, with a corresponding increase in the caseload faced by ISKUR (indeed, the increase may have been even greater in terms of applications). Such an increase inevitably puts the system under stress, particularly in provinces that host large numbers of refugees. There are ongoing projects to increase the capacity of ISKUR as well as to improve its processes.
- Administrative restrictions make it difficult for refugees to access the labour market outside the provinces in which they are registered.

In addition to these challenges related to the work permit process, language barriers - which constitute an overarching challenge to the integration of refugees into their local communities - are constantly cited as the key obstacle to access to employment.<sup>4</sup> Insufficient knowledge of Turkish makes Syrians less competitive in the job market, as employers show limited interest in hiring persons who do not speak the language. Moreover, differences in culture and work ethics can create tensions in the workplace, leading employers to prefer a homogenous workforce. The language barrier also makes it more difficult for Syrians to find out about work opportunities, or to understand the legal framework, whether in terms of their rights and protection or in terms of their obligations.

All these obstacles constitute the basis for the support provided to the government under the 3RP for implementing the work permit regulations in order to provide refugees with access to decent employment opportunities.

In addition, vocational training remains a key component of the 3RP strategy, involving its Education, Livelihoods and Food Security partners. Vocational training is regulated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Since 2017, MoNE has required vocational training and language education to be delivered through government-accredited service providers, as a means of quality assurance. In line with this requirement, strengthening the capacity of ISKUR to provide quality vocational training and job placement services to Syrians under temporary protection continues to be a key component of the Livelihoods sector strategy.



<sup>3</sup> 3RP Livelihoods Working Group, minutes of Gaziantep Working Group meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> July

<sup>4</sup> Ground Truth Solutions, *Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers Perceptions in Turkey*, Mixed Migration Platform, 2017.

## Trends

In March 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) shared an updated number of work permits with the Livelihoods Working Group, announcing that just over 40,000 Syrians had obtained work permits in Turkey. As mentioned above, this number includes 20,970 Syrians not under Temporary Protection, who gained work permits based on a regular residence permit, as well as 19,925 Syrians under Temporary Protection. Considering that the 3RP estimates that 657,000 Syrians of working age living in Turkey under the Temporary Protection regime (46% of them women) are in need of better livelihoods opportunities, the current situation leaves over 97% of them out of the formal labour market.<sup>5</sup>

The arrival of Syrian refugees on the Turkish labour market is therefore, first and foremost, driving up informality. Although informality was already common before the crisis, it has increased over the last five years and reached 34.3 per cent by July 2017. The level of informality is highest in agriculture, but it is also common in other sectors of the economy.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of formal job opportunities is a key factor driving high poverty rates among the Syrian population and prolonging their reliance on external support. The latest results of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise (CVME 2)<sup>7</sup> shows that while fewer than 20% of Syrian refugee households have no working members, over two thirds of them (ranging from 65% for ineligible applicants to the ESSN to 78% for ESSN beneficiaries) are unable to rely on skilled or reliable work. As a result, 59% of Syrian households are classified as multi-dimensionally poor. This has direct consequences for the living conditions and future prospects of the households in question, including higher recourse to negative coping strategies, lower school attendance, lack of access to basic health care and higher food insecurity. However, recent assessment of the ESSN beneficiaries shows that about 22.6% of the current caseload are close enough to the labour market that they could be transitioned gradually towards self-reliance through employment support programmes.<sup>8</sup>

The ESSN is benefitting 1.3 million individuals and having positive effects with regard to poverty, debt and living conditions. Although the ESSN is not compatible with formal work opportunities, and refugees obtaining a work permit are excluded from the programme, the vast majority of the Syrian population relies on income from work in addition to assistance (an average of 65% of Syrian households rely on skilled work or non-agricultural casual labour as their main source of income; this ratio is 47% for ESSN beneficiaries and 70% for households ineligible for ESSN support).<sup>9</sup>

The scale of the need for access to employment has led the 3RP partners to increase their focus on supporting refugee self-reliance, particularly through a constant increase in livelihoods-related programming, with a focus on actual job creation and support for job placements. However, the response plan also needs to maintain a sensitive balance in supporting host communities as well. Across Turkey, the unemployment rate reached 10.9 per cent (3.25 million people without work) on average in 2017, with an even higher rates of 15.1 per cent in southeastern provinces, which were already less developed prior to the crisis.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This number does not include Syrian refugees engaged in teaching in Temporary Education Centres as 'volunteer teachers', but it does include Syrian refugees working as health staff in the public health system.

<sup>6</sup> 3RP Turkey 2018-2019, Livelihoods Chapter

<sup>7</sup> WFP, *Refugees in Turkey: Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise (Round2)*, May 2018

<sup>8</sup> WFP Presentation at the ESSN Future workshop, 20 June 2018

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> 3RP Turkey 2018-2019, Livelihoods Chapter

The World Bank assessment of the impact of the Syria crisis on the Turkish labour market concluded that the inflow of informally employed Syrian refugees led to large-scale displacement of Turkish workers from the informal sector, at a rate of around six natives for every ten refugees.<sup>11</sup> According to the World Bank, this had a positive impact in terms of pushing informal Turkish workers towards the formal sector (about three for every ten refugees). However, not all groups have benefited from the increase in formal employment and job creation in regular workplaces. Specifically, there has been no increase in the participation of women and uneducated workers in formal, regular employment. As a consequence, Turkish women have experienced large-scale net displacement out of the labour market, much of which can be explained by a decrease in part-time work.

This combination of rising unemployment and the refugee influx has increasingly led to tensions surrounding perceptions of competition for jobs and other economic opportunities. In a recent survey, 71% of Turkish respondents indicated that they believe that Syrians are taking jobs away from people in Turkey,<sup>12</sup> making job competition the highest-rated negative consequence of the refugee influx. In particular, competition from Syrian businesses, which are generally informal and therefore do not pay taxes, seems to be the most acute source of tensions related to livelihoods.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, as many as 73% of the Turkish respondents would disagree with granting Syrians the right to work or to start their own businesses, although 55% would also agree that Syrian workers are being exploited by Turkish employers.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, it is important to underline that the impact of the Syria crisis is coinciding with a slow-down in the pace of job creation in the economy. Indeed, the World Bank has estimated that even assuming economic growth of over 4% for the next few years, the net job creation of formal firms is now down to zero – meaning that the economy is currently destroying as many jobs as it creates.<sup>15</sup>

This situation of increasing needs and tensions related to employment in a deteriorating economic context provides the wider basis for stepping up efforts related to employment and job creation under the 3RP.



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<sup>11</sup> World Bank Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Turkish Labour Market. 2015

<sup>12</sup> Istanbul Bilgi University, Attitudes Towards Syrians in Turkey, Centre for Migration Research, March 2018, available at : <https://goc.bilgi.edu.tr/en/our-researches/25/dimensions-of-polarization-in-turkey-2017/>

<sup>13</sup> Hacetepe University – Murat Erdogan: Syrians Barometer 2017 & Syrians in Turkey 2014 – available at <https://mmuraterdogan.com/2016/06/06/raporlar/>

<sup>14</sup> Ekonomistler Platformu, Perceptions Towards Syrians in Turkey, September 2017. Available at : <http://ekonomistler.org.tr/english/2017/11/08/perception-towards-syrians-in-turkey/>

<sup>15</sup> World Bank data presented at the ESSN Future workshop, 20 June 2018

## Agreed Priorities

These efforts towards increasing self-reliance, access to employment and job creation (including through self-employment and entrepreneurship programmes) are reflected not only in an increase in the budget and priorities of the Livelihoods sector plan for 2018-2019 (the budget increased by 50% from USD104 million in 2017 to USD157 million in 2018), but also in more concerted efforts to contribute to creating economic opportunities through other elements of the response. As a result, five of the six 3RP sectors are now contributing to this objective. Only the Protection sector is not listed. However, the referral of protection cases to the Livelihoods sector is a key element of the strategies of both sectors, as lack of livelihoods opportunities has been identified as a key driver of protection risks.

The 3RP contribution to economic opportunities and jobs can be summarized as follows:

Expand livelihood and job opportunities for people in need	4.1.1 Increased employability of Syrian refugees and vulnerable members of host communities	Livelihoods	Capacities of policy makers and service providers are strengthened to provide livelihoods related support services
		Livelihoods	Syrian and/or impacted host communities gained better access to economic opportunities and gender sensitive active labour market through training
		Health	Increased availability of skilled, gender-balanced human resources at health care facilities serving refugee and impacted communities
		Food Security & Agriculture	Agriculture-related vocational training, and up-skilling programmes are delivered in a gender sensitive manner, facilitating access to sustainable, dignified employment
		Basic needs	Formalised referral mechanism for beneficiaries to access livelihoods support with an aim to promoting self-sufficiency
		Education	Syrian and Turkish teachers are provided with systematic quality professional development opportunities to better respond to the needs of Syrian refugee children
	4.1.2 Syrian refugees and vulnerable members of host communities with increased income as a result of having a job or other income generation	Livelihood	Syrian and/or impacted host communities gained better access to economic opportunities and gender sensitive active labour market
		Food Security & Agriculture	Inputs and knowledge are provided to refugee households and affected members of host communities, enabling them to generate income through agricultural livelihoods

The Livelihoods, Food Security & Agriculture, and Education sector partners provide direct livelihoods support. In addition, the Education and Health sector partners provide training for service providers such as teachers and medical personnel, which increase their skills and facilitate the placement of health care staff and teachers. Overall, the 3RP partners are increasingly targeting the demand side of the labour market through job placement or income generation schemes (Livelihoods, Food Security) and supporting the creation of an enabling environment by addressing the policy environment for job creation. Over 427,000 Syrians under Temporary Protection and host community members are targeted by 3RP initiatives in 2018.



## Monitoring and Reporting

The elements contributing to the fourth strategic objective of the 3RP for Turkey in 2018-2019 referred to above are all related to activities which contribute directly to improvements in employability and access to jobs and/or to the creation of jobs. It should be highlighted that not all the beneficiaries of these kinds of support will necessarily see their livelihoods improve: experience to date has shown that even where people benefit from training, additional support in terms of actual job placements remains an urgent need. During the course of 2017, for example, the Livelihoods partners trained up to 28,803 people, of whom only 3,667 gained access either to a job (1,487) or to self-employment (2,180).

On the other hand, account must also be taken of other 3RP activities that are contributing to job creation efforts indirectly. This includes programmes the primary purpose of which is not related to employment, but which nevertheless provide additional opportunities. Examples include programmes which provide services to refugees by hiring additional front-line staff to work in service delivery gateways such as community, social and medical centres, and schools. There are also programmes which provide Syrians with opportunities to serve other Syrians – such as the provision of incentives for teachers or the recruitment of doctors and nurses. The cumulative impact, both direct and indirect, of the 3RP support provided by the partners in 2017 is shown in the graphic below.<sup>16</sup>

**Altogether, in 2017, over 27,100 jobs were supported, including the number of jobs actually created by the 3RP partners as well as the number of people placed into jobs created by external private sector entities. The figures reflect both direct impacts of the Livelihoods and Agricultural livelihoods programmes and indirect impacts of work done in other sectors (secondment of education and health staff to public institutions).**

The results of indirect job creation efforts are significant. Assuming these jobs benefitted an equal number of households, an estimated 80,000 people could be said to have benefitted from these livelihoods opportunities. However, even this number would not have been enough to address the employment needs alone. These jobs are unlikely to go to the most vulnerable, since the majority of the beneficiaries have been teachers, doctors or civil servants. This strengthens the case for specific job-creation and livelihoods programmes aiming at creating opportunities for the most vulnerable.

A comparison of the above results with the 3RP targets for 2018 suggests that Food Security activities alone could double the 3RP partners' impact on employment if fully funded in 2018. The sector is targeting 21,350 beneficiaries with income opportunities through greenhouse construction/management and the establishment of 4,125 establishing agro-businesses. If the job placement rate of 20% recorded in 2017 is maintained, this could result in 2,235 beneficiaries of skills training being placed in jobs. The efforts of the Livelihoods sector partners will need to increase in terms of delivery at scale even to reach the current sector targets. This will require, among other things, a significant shift in the focus of support programmes to ensure that training activities are followed up by, or well connected to, job placement efforts. Indeed, due to the lack of available jobs and/or insufficient linkages between initiatives, the number of beneficiaries placed in jobs by the Livelihoods partners was only the equivalent of 8% of the number of people trained (1,487 placements for 18,303 persons trained) in 2017. In 2018, the sector aims to reach 25,920 refugees and host community members with increased income and 16,392 with support for starting/developing a business (22.5% and 14%, respectively, of the caseload of 115,555 beneficiaries of skills training).

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted here that the graphic focuses on the direct and indirect results of the partners' programmes. It does not look at the larger employment generated by the 3RP partners' presence in Turkey, which would also include staff hired by partners' crisis response programmes and the staff of contractors and consultants. Nor does it consider induced effects such as the labour needs generated by infrastructure programmes or the multiplier effects of the injection of cash into the economy.

Reaching this objective will require added emphasis on the following:

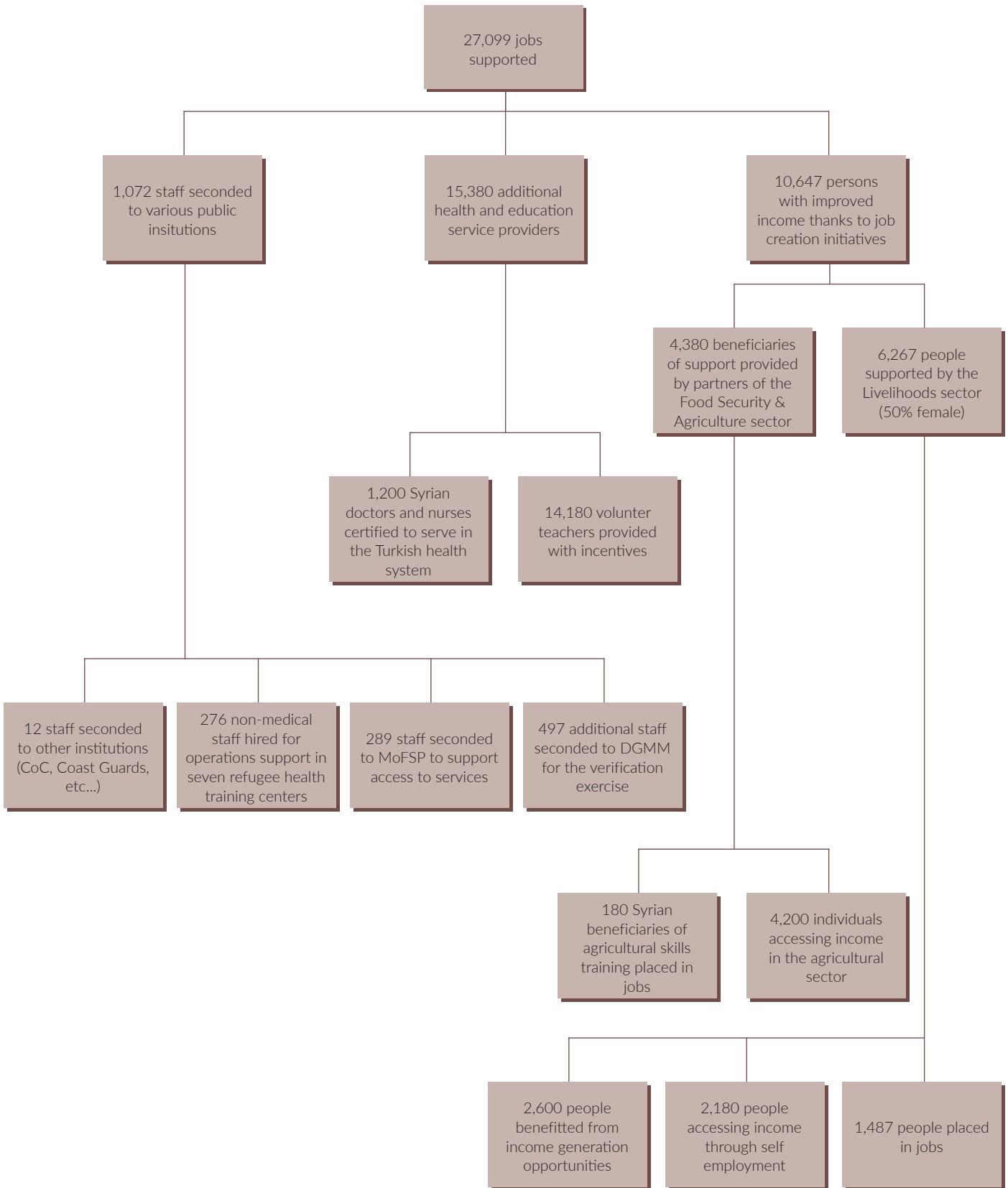
1. Targeted local labour market research and value chain assessments to identify sectors and value chains with inclusive growth potential and to ensure that the training provided is tailored to market needs. This work could also support the conflict-sensitivity of livelihoods programming by identifying sectors that are not prone to competition between refugee and host communities.
2. Increased engagement of private sector partners, creating and facilitating pathways to employment for trainees;
3. The identification and promotion of opportunities for enterprise development (including the formalization of businesses) and entrepreneurship that can also fill value-chain gaps identified through the assessments;
4. The exertion of every effort, in relation to points 1,2 and 3, to link the work to local economic development assessments and value chain approaches so as to maximise the impact of the activities by addressing specific gaps identified by the assessments and better integrating the different aspects of livelihoods programming;
5. Increased multi-year funding of livelihoods programmes to allow the partners to have an actual impact on the value chains that are identified and hence to expand sustainable job opportunities;
6. Increasing the proportion of beneficiaries coming from the host community and maintaining it at a high level in order to ensure the conflict-sensitivity of programming and to reduce social tensions related to employment;
7. Increased short-term employment opportunities (cash-for-work and labour-intensive programming) to provide additional income, reduce dependency on unconditional cash transfers (i.e. ESSN) and create opportunities for enhanced employability. Such short-term, intermediary (stopgap) programmes are still necessary as longer-term economic development programmes take time to deliver results. They help to reconnect beneficiaries to the labour market on the one hand and to reduce competition for low-skilled jobs by providing a larger number of opportunities on the other. However, at this stage of the crisis response, such programmes need to be connected to other efforts.
8. Strong collaboration with the Basic Needs, Protection and Food Security & Agriculture sectors to identify cross sectoral-activities, avoid duplication in training activities and develop the Basic Needs-Livelihoods referral mechanisms needed to support the transition from cash/food-based assistance to livelihoods opportunities;
9. Strong collaboration with government institutions in terms of policy and advocacy support to address the challenges outlined above in refugee access to work permits, employment and mobility. This is particularly important for the MoLSS and ISKUR, which have already shown their willingness and ability to take initiatives in these areas, and now need support to take the matter forward. This collaboration should focus on strategic bottlenecks and would therefore need to be based on sound policy analysis of the challenges and gaps which currently prevent the full implementation of the legal framework.
10. Enhancement of the Monitoring & Evaluation capacities of the partners to ensure that they can monitor beneficiaries properly and keep track of them during and after support has been provided with a view to acquiring a better understanding of the actual impact of the support provided and of the challenges which people continue to face in accessing the job market even after they have received support. This is particularly important for training and employability programmes, where proper tracking of beneficiaries would help to test certain assumptions, such as the assumption that training automatically increases the chances of finding employment.



*With the UNDP-supported coding trainings provided to 28 Syrian and Turkish students for seven months in Şanlıurfa, young people learned universal language of coding and improved their ability to work as developers.*

**Graphic - Cumulative direct and indirect impact of the 3RP on employment in 2017.**

The diagram below accounts for the impact of the 3RP partners in all sectors on jobs, including their efforts both to create jobs in supported private sector entities and institutions, and to place beneficiaries of skills training into jobs. The information given is based on data provided by the partners through their reporting of activities and obtained from them during the tracking exercise conducted with respect to their support to public institutions.



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