

**NEEDS ASSESMENT REPORT ON WOMEN  
EMPOWERMENT IN ADANA AND GAZIANTEP  
FEBRUARY 2022**





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## ABBREVIATIONS

**CCTE** Conditional Cash Transfer for Education

**ESSN** Emergency Social Safety Net

**FGD** Focus Group Discussion

**GIZ** Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German International Cooperation)

**GoT** Government of Turkey

**ILO** International Labour Organization

**INGO** International Non-governmental Organization

**IOM** International Organization for Migration

**IP** Implementing Partner

**KII** Key Informant Interview

**NGO** Non-governmental Organization

**STL** Support to Life (Hayata Destek Derneği)

**TRC** Turkish Red Crescent

**UNDP** United Nations Development Programme

**WEF** The World Economic Forum

**WFP** World Food Programme

**WHH** Welthungerhilfe

**WSA** Women Support Association

## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In the 11th year of the Syrian crisis, and with a new crisis emerging in Afghanistan, migrant and refugee women's economic empowerment in Turkey is considerably being impeded and thereby detrimentally impacting their wellbeing and resilience.<sup>1</sup> A thorough understanding of the current situation of migrant and refugee women's economic situation and setbacks encountered in their empowerment endeavors is necessary to better support this particular group of individuals.

This needs assessment report aims to contribute to reducing the current information gap to better understand the current needs of migrant, refugee, and host community women in livelihoods and protection. This study focused on Adana and Gaziantep provinces of Southeast Turkey, where a high population of migrant and refugee women reside. The report starts with an overview of the previous research conducted in this area focusing on the social, formal, and structural challenges and barriers encountered in the economic empowerment of migrant and refugee women in Turkey. It then lays out the methodology adopted to best represent the current needs of migrant, refugee, and host community women in Adana and Gaziantep, followed by an overview of the demographic information of the sample group chosen to participate in the assessment. The report then summarizes the key findings of the assessment, including an overview of the strengths and limitations of the assessments and concluding remarks. Lastly, the report outlines key recommendations to contribute to reducing current barriers to accessing livelihood opportunities and to promote and foster the protection and resilience of migrant, refugee, and host community women in the region.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's inclusion in the Turkish labour market has been limited. The World Economic Forum (WEF)'s annual 'Gender Gap Report 2021' focusing on the Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment of Women ranks Turkey as 133 among 156 countries in its global ranking and 140 under its Economic Participation and Opportunity section.<sup>2</sup> As compared to WEF's 2018 and 2020 reports, the situation in 2021 for women's inclusion in the Turkish labour market has worsened.<sup>3</sup>

In response, the Government of Turkey conducted official research on women's overall situation in the country, including their access to labour markets.<sup>4</sup> However, their findings demonstrate that women's employment in the labour market has increased from 25.3 per cent to 34.2 per cent from 2002 to 2018.<sup>5</sup> The country has also included women's empowerment in its 11th Development Plan (2019-2023).<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the state aims to provide counselling and guidance to female entrepreneurs to improve women's economic activities along with conducting research and developing projects to increase women's economic and social empowerment.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ugur Dolunay, *Care International in Turkey, 'Women's Economic Empowerment in Protracted Crisis: Syrian Migrant and refugee Women in Southeastern Turkey'*, 2019, p.5.

<sup>2</sup>World Economic Forum (WEF), 'Global Gender Gap Report 2021', 2021, p.377, [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>WEF, 'Global Gender Gap Report 2020', 2020, p.9, <[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf)>; WEF, 'Global Gender Gap Report 2018', 2018, p.11, <[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf)>.

<sup>4</sup>Directorate General of Women's Status, 'Turkiye'de Kadın' (Women in Turkey), 2019, p.41-42 <<https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/19172/tr-de-kadin-eylul.pdf>>.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p.40.

<sup>6</sup>The Eleventh Development Plan (2019-2023)' approved in the 105th plenary session of The Grand National Assembly of Turkey on 18.07.2019, p.154

< [https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Eleventh\\_Development\\_Plan-2019-2023.pdf](https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Eleventh_Development_Plan-2019-2023.pdf) >

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 151.

Despite recent efforts, migrant and refugee women tend to be overlooked in these endeavors, mostly due to their status being interpreted as temporary residents.<sup>8</sup> Research conducted on migrant and refugee women's inclusion and access to both the formal and informal labour markets in Turkey is limited and mainly focuses on Syrian women, with the quantitative research findings differing considerably.<sup>9</sup> While one research finds that 8.8 per cent of Syrian women are included in the Turkish labour market,<sup>10</sup> another one suggests that 11.2 per cent of Syrian women actively work,<sup>11</sup> while a third and a fourth report find that 15 per cent of women actively work.<sup>12</sup> The reason behind this may be the differences in sampling as some research only focus on one province while others analyze data from all over the country. However, most of these analyses tend to identify similar reasons for the limited inclusion of Syrian women in the labour markets. These are summarized below.

Desk research shows that the limited research conducted on migrant and refugee women's economic empowerment tend to focus on the following points: the social reasons behind the exclusion of migrant and refugee women from the labour market and the role of gender, formal barriers to migrant and refugee women's access to the labour market, and structural challenges faced by migrant and refugee women in Turkey.

### Social reasons behind women's exclusion from the Turkish labour market

Despite there being different outcomes in the resources reviewed, social reasons behind migrant and refugee women's exclusion from the Turkish labour market are a point of agreement across existing research.<sup>13</sup> Gender norms and gendered roles are frequently underlined as reasons for women's exclusion from the labour market<sup>14</sup> as household and care responsibilities are culturally assigned to women. As mentioned by Koc and Sarac, 'conflict-induced migration reshapes family structures, not only in the refugees' country of origin, but also at their destination.'<sup>15</sup> They further highlight that 51 per cent of Syrian households in Turkey comprise of nuclear families with children, while 34 per cent are three-generation households where the elderly live with their children and grand-children.<sup>16</sup> The average number of persons living in a Syrian households is six (6).<sup>17</sup>

Further research on the matter demonstrates that Syrian women's fertility rate is remarkably high compared with their local counterparts, with the average number of children per woman being 5.3 within the Syrian community, against 2.3 per Turkish woman.<sup>18</sup> Resources also show that 90 per cent of these households are male headed.<sup>19</sup> All these factors combined with a patriarchal social structure point to an immense reproductive labour responsibility on women, implying the unpaid work for the sustenance of the household lies heavily on women.<sup>20</sup> Among these responsibilities are child care, the care of the elderly, and infirm family members.<sup>21</sup> Earlier Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with migrant and refugee women showcase these responsibilities with many women confirming that their duties as caregivers to children and the elderly pose one of the main reasons for their exclusion from the labour market.<sup>22</sup> In addition, patriarchal behavioral patterns are noted across studies, implying that husbands and other decision-makers in the household, largely men, oppose to the idea of women entering the labour market.<sup>23</sup>

### Formal Barriers to Migrant and Refugee Women's Access to the Turkish Labour Market

Formal barriers in refugee women's access to the Turkish labour market seem to be a diverse point for researchers where opinions differ.<sup>24</sup> One of the barriers suggested by Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz is the impact of education on employment and procedural challenges in the recognition of degrees.<sup>25</sup> The authors demonstrate in their research that among their female interviewees from Sanliurfa province, only 5 per cent attended higher education, while 16 per cent completed secondary education and 43 per cent received primary school education. This leaves a total of 36 per cent of women who have not received any form of formal education or who had to leave school early.<sup>26</sup> The authors further deduced from the correlation between education levels and employment that the chances of entering the Turkish labour markets increased as the education levels increased.<sup>27</sup> The research further suggests that as Syrians were forced to flee their country, many of them were not able to bring their diplomas in the urgency of their situation, which made it impossible for them to get the necessary recognition of their certificates from the Turkish Higher Education authorities.<sup>28</sup> As argued by Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz,<sup>29</sup> and supported by Pinedo Caro,<sup>30</sup> the lack of certification in turn affects their employability.

<sup>8</sup>Abbasoglu Ozgoren, Ayse and Arslan, Hilal, 'Syrians in Labour: A Matter of Integration Through Informality' in "Syrian Migrant and refugees in Turkey: A Demographic Profile and Linked Social Challenges", Ed. Cavlin, Alanur, p.125. date?

<sup>9</sup> Pinedo Caro, Luis; 'Syrian Migrant and refugees in the Turkish Labour Market', p.1, ILO Office in Turkey, 2020 < [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms\\_738602.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms_738602.pdf) >; Abbasoglu Ozgoren and Arslan, " p.125.

<sup>10</sup> AFAD, 'Field Survey on Demographic View, Living Conditions and Future Expectations of Syrians in Turkey', 2017, p.58 < <https://www.afad.gov.tr/suriye-raporlari> >

<sup>11</sup> Pinedo Caro, p.6.

<sup>12</sup> Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 'Exploring The Livelihoods Of Women Migrant and refugees In Turkey: A Qualitative Study On The Emergency Social Safety Net (Essn) Applicants. A Remote Focus Group Discussion Report', p.10; Ozturk, Lamiha; Serin, Zehra Vildan and Altinoz, Hamdiye, 'Challenges and Obstacles for Syrian Migrant and refugee Women in the Turkish Labour Market', Societies, 2019, p.8.

<sup>13</sup> By social challenges we want to indicate the challenges faced by women within their community.

<sup>14</sup> Abbasoglu Ozgoren and Arslan, p.128.

<sup>15</sup> Syrian Migrant and refugees in Turkey: A Demographic Profile and Linked Social Challenges, P. 44

<sup>16</sup>Koc, Ismet and Sarac, Melike, 'The Impact of Conflict-Induced Migration on Family Structure of Syrian Migrant and refugees in Turkey: A Comparative Analysis of Pre-Conflict and Post-Conflict Periods, 2006-2018', in "Syrian Migrant and refugees in Turkey: A Demographic Profile and Linked Social Challenges", Ed. Cavlin, Alanur, 2021, p.40

<sup>17</sup> Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies. (2019). 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey Syrian Migrant Sample. Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, T.R. Presidency of Turkey Directorate of Strategy and Budget and TÜBİTAK, Ankara, Turkey, p.7.

<sup>18</sup> Cagatay, Pelin; Keskin, Faruk and Ergocmen, Banu, 'Fertility Behavior of Syrian Women in Turkey: the Crosscut of Intention and Regulation', in "Syrian Migrant and refugees in Turkey: A Demographic Profile and Linked Social Challenges", Ed. Cavlin, Alanur, 2021, p.87.

<sup>19</sup> Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, p.9.

<sup>20</sup> Ugur, p.25.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> TRC & IFRC, p.4.

<sup>23</sup> Ugur, p.19.

<sup>24</sup> Formal barriers can be understood as challenges set by legal requirements in host country.

<sup>25</sup> Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, p.9.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.6-7

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.8

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Pinedo Caro, p.15.

An opposite point of view is brought forward by a Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) paper, for which qualitative research with female Emergency Safety and Security Net (ESSN) applicants was conducted. In the FGDs, the paper found that as most of the job opportunities for Syrian women are irregular and limited blue collar jobs, women with lower education backgrounds had a higher level of employment compared to their educated counterparts.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the research acknowledges that accreditation of education qualification processes in Turkey poses challenges to accessing the labour market for refugee women. Research published in Societies also supports this claim, showing that knowledge of the Turkish language eases women's integration into the Turkish labour market.<sup>32</sup>

The lack of knowledge of the local language poses another barrier in migrant and refugee women's access to the Turkish labour market. Pinedo Caro mentions that the lack of access to high-skilled jobs for Syrians may be related to language barriers.<sup>33</sup> Kaptanoglu and Dayan defend that without language improvement, women will continue having a difficult time in accessing employment opportunities.<sup>34</sup> The TRC research, despite underlining the necessity of Turkish language skills to access economic opportunities, also mentions that 'the ability to speak Turkish is not a significant determinant in accessing job opportunities, rather they (migrant and refugee women) believed in factors such as experience and expertise having a greater effect on employability.'<sup>35</sup> It may be concluded then that depending on the line of work women face language knowledge as a barrier to accessing the Turkish labour market, especially if they seek high-skilled professions.

Finally, another challenge faced is the exclusion of to some specific skilled jobs. Currently, non-Turkish citizens are not allowed to be employed in several positions such as lawyers, veterinarians, pharmacists, dentists, midwives, security personnel etc. In the FGDs conducted by TRC, an interviewee mentioned that she does not have Turkish citizenship for the work she would like to conduct. The legal and procedural difficulties in the issuing of work permits are mentioned as a barrier in the compiled research material.<sup>36</sup> The Turkish labour system for foreigners requires all employees and independent workers to issue a work permit, besides agriculture and husbandry workers and persons who have refugee or secondary international protection status.<sup>37,38</sup> Employers who would like to employ foreigners must stick to a strict 10 per cent quota for foreign employees and have to prove that they could not find a better match among Turkish applicants for the same position if they want to employ more than the 10 per cent.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>31</sup> TRC & IFRC, p.4 and<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> Pinedo Caro, p.15

<sup>34</sup> Yuksel-Kaptanoglu, Ilknur and Dayan, Cansu, 'Child, Early and Forced Marriages Among Syrian Migrant Women in Turkey', in "Syrian Migrant and refugees in Turkey: A Demographic Profile and Linked Social Challenges", Ed. Cavlin, Alanur, 2021, p.80-81.

<sup>35</sup> TRC & IFRC, p.12.

<sup>36</sup> Pinedo Caro, p.2; Abbasoglu Ozgoren and Arslan, p.125; Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, p.2.

<sup>37</sup> 'Law on foreign workforce', Law No. 6735 Published in the Official Gazette No.29800 on August 13, 2016 and related regulations.

<sup>38</sup> Persons who work in agriculture and husbandry do not have to issue work permits and have to obtain a 'work permit exemption certificate', a shorter process than a work permit. For person who have a migrant and refugee status under Turkish law (migrant and refugee status not as an over-arching status but an international protection status, persons who are citizens of Council of Europe Countries) and persons who have secondary protection are exempt from issuing a work permit and can start working 6 months after obtaining their status (Article 4 of the Regulation on the Work Permits of Applicants of International Protection and Persons Under International Protection).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

As much as the Turkish state endeavors to legalize the employment status of migrants, such as bringing in laws for formalizing the employment of migrant and refugees and to safeguard their social security rights, the requirements such as additional fees to issue work permits, having to wait six months after obtaining temporary/international protection status to issue a work permit, and the geographic restriction imposed on refugees to be able to only work in their province of initial registration force most persons under temporary and international protection to seek precarious employment without any registration.<sup>40</sup> The procedures in work permit applications are not clear and this is mentioned as a slowing factor in women's access to the labour market by Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz,<sup>41</sup> and supporting this, they demonstrate in their research that 74 per cent of the working women who participated in their survey reported to be employed without a work permit or social security.<sup>42</sup> Despite not focusing solely on women, Abbasoglu, Ozgoren and Arslan also acknowledge that 'all these hurdles (complicated work permit processes) appear to discourage employers from applying for work permits for Syrian employees with temporary protection status.'<sup>43</sup>

## Structural Challenges

Structural challenges are the difficulties embedded in the construction of and means to access the labour markets in Turkey, such as the limitations on the availability of different modalities of employment and support mechanisms to mitigate personal responsibilities affecting access to work. As discussed under the social challenges section, household duties heavily rely on women.<sup>44</sup> There is therefore a need to support women in these areas. Migrant and refugee women's most common reason for being outside of the labour market is their duties to look after their children, the elderly, and infirm family members.<sup>45</sup>

A way to mitigate these responsibilities is to provide state support for the care of these family members. Childcare and elderly care services are very limited in Turkey, not just for migrants and refugees, but also for Turkish citizens. Turkish legislation foresees the establishment of daycare for children and makes it mandatory for private businesses employing more than 150 women to provide onsite daycare services.<sup>46</sup> However, the first daycare option, to be provided by the state, is a predominantly private and paid endeavor, with only three per cent of the capacities of these daycare services available free of charge. These daycare services accommodate the children of 'women who reside in a shelter, women prisoners, and martyrs and veterans.'<sup>47</sup> The second daycare option, to be provided by private enterprises, is also mostly incapacitated as the regulation does not foresee any tangible repercussions in cases where companies do not adhere to it.<sup>48</sup> A similar situation is valid for elderly care where free of charge public elderly care support is only provided to the elderly who do not have 'any family members to look after them, income, or real estate.'<sup>49</sup> These support services are not designed to ease the household responsibilities on women and their access to the labour market.

<sup>40</sup> Abbasoglu Ozgoren and Arslan, p.124.

<sup>41</sup> Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, p.1

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.6.

<sup>43</sup> Abbasoglu Ozgoren and Arslan, p.125.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> 'Ozel kres ve Gunduz Bakimevleri ile Ozel Cocuk Kuluplerinin Kurulus ve Isleyis Esaslari Hakkinda Yonetmelik', published in the Official Gazette No.29342 on April 30, 2015; 'Gebe veya Emziren Kadinlarin Calistirilma Sartlariyla Emzirme Odalari ve Cocuk Bakim Yurtlarına Dair Yonetmelik' published in the Official Gazette No.28737 on August 16, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> 'Huzurevleri ile Huzurevi Yasli Bakim ve Rehabilitasyon Merkezleri Yonetmeligi' published in the Official Gazette No.24325 on February 21, 2001.

The limited aspect of different modalities of work in Turkey poses another problem migrant and refugee women face in accessing the labour markets. Part-time or home-based employment opportunities, which may be preferable for women who cannot delegate their household responsibilities, are very limited in the Turkish market.<sup>50</sup> Long working hours is another setback as it limits women's time to fulfill their household and care responsibilities, something mentioned firsthand by refugee women.<sup>51</sup>

Another structural reason that could not be overcome, despite state efforts, is the wage gap between employed men and women in the Turkish labour market, exacerbated further by being a refugee. According to a report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the unadjusted monthly wage gap for Syrian women is 23.4 per cent.<sup>52</sup> This difference among Turkish nationals is only at 4.32 per cent.<sup>53</sup> The gender wage gap is therefore also considered to be among the reasons for refugee women to be reluctant to enter the labour market.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, some authors mention that social welfare assistance may be preventing women to access the labour market.<sup>55</sup> For example, the main support provided for Syrian refugees residing in Turkey is the European Union-funded ESN, which is only accessible to refugees who do not have a constant income, among other eligibility criteria. 'Based on a cost-benefit analysis' some Syrian women in turn may prefer not to be employed.<sup>56</sup>

### III. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Research design

The design selected for this research was a survey methodology utilizing the KOBO tool. This methodology was selected for several reasons:

- To collect a relatively large amount of data in a relatively short period of time;
- To collect information on a broad range of areas including personal facts, attitudes, past behaviors, and opinions; and
- for pragmatic reasons as face-to-face data collection was problematic during COVID-19.

In addition, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with several stakeholders including different public organizations as well as (I)NGOs in Adana and Gaziantep using a semi structured open-ended questions approach to:

- Better understand the needs of individuals at an institutional level;
- Ensure non-duplication of services when implementing a project; and to
- Assess any cooperation possibilities with different institutions and key stakeholders supporting refugee, migrant and host community women in the region.

<sup>50</sup> Pinedo Caro, p.7 and 18.

<sup>51</sup> TRC & IFRC, p.16.

<sup>52</sup> Pinedo Caro p.18.

<sup>53</sup> WEF 2021, p.377.

<sup>54</sup> Pinedo Caro, p.18.

<sup>55</sup> Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, p.2 and 8.

<sup>56</sup> Abbasoglu Ozgoren and Arslan, p.127.

#### Sample Size

The sample size was calculated to obtain a margin of error of 5 per cent and confidence level of 95 per cent using a list of beneficiaries provided by programme teams in Gaziantep and Adana. The calculation produced a target of 188 individuals in Gaziantep and 186 individuals in Adana. The number of collected responses was 306 out of the 374 originally targeted. For the KIIs, a snowball method was applied to reach as many key stakeholders as possible, including different public organizations as well as (I)NGOs in Adana and Gaziantep. Overall, 14 KIIs were conducted. In Adana, five KIIs were held with the Adana Metropolitan Municipality, GOAL International, Support to Life, UNDP, and WFP, while nine KIIs were held in Gaziantep with CARE International, GIZ (two interviews), Orange NGO, Rizik, WeCan, WHH, Women Now, and WSA.

#### Data and Analysis

The data analysis process was divided in two stages, the analysis of survey findings and the analysis of KII findings. Findings were then summarized, compared and related to the evidence generated from the literature review to inform the conclusion and recommendation sections of the report.

#### Strengths and Limitations of the Needs Assessment

This was the first Needs Assessment on 'Women's Labour Market Access' conducted by IOM Turkey. Through IOM's ongoing field operations access to targeted groups could be ensured, which contributed to a high response rate, particularly regarding the Syrian refugee community and those under International Protection, as well as a high completion rate of the surveys. However, there were some limitations. All surveys had to be conducted online due to COVID-19 restrictions which posed some challenges in reaching unregistered migrants and implied that individuals without access to a phone could not be reached. To overcome the challenge of reaching only a low number of unregistered migrants, a snowball methodology was applied whereby they were asked to reach out to their network and connect interviewers with other unregistered persons in Adana or Gaziantep not participating in the study. While an additional number of unregistered migrants could be reached through this approach, the study was not able to reach the targeted number for this demographic. Possible ways to overcome these limitations in future studies include a longer survey period to permit reaching a greater number of unregistered persons. Moreover, focal points in the community could be contacted earlier to better raise awareness about the study, ensure buy in, and a commitment to participation in the study. Lastly, IOM recommends that future research takes into consideration the implications of work permit rejections which push migrants to work informally and without social security.

The sample was derived from a list of programme participants in Gaziantep and Adana. Accordingly, an initial limitation to note is that the sample is therefore representative of participants of IOM activities, and some variation may be observed if the same survey were to be conducted among the general population. The target sample size was calculated to obtain a margin of error of 5 per cent and confidence level of 95 per cent at location level. However, a high non-response rate in the Adana sampling frame meant that the target was not reached in that location, and the overall sample is therefore weighted towards Gaziantep. With 188 respondents in Gaziantep and 118 respondents in Adana, the respective margins of error are 5 per cent and 7.39 per cent, with a confidence level of 95 per cent. At the aggregate level, including participants from both locations, the sample size achieved would allow for a margin of error of 4.25 per cent and confidence level of 95 per cent. However, given the skew towards Gaziantep the margin of error at this level is likely to be somewhat higher.

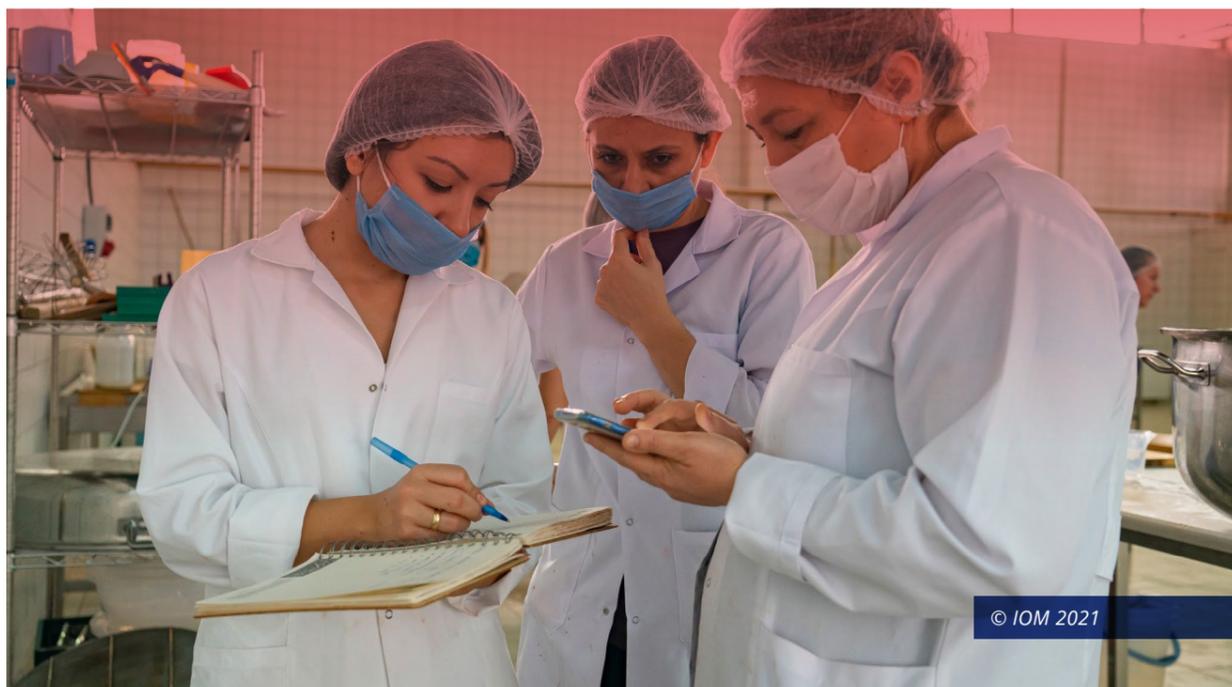


## V. DEMOGRAPHICS

In total, 259 migrant and refugee women and 47 female host community members participated in the survey, reaching a total of 306 female respondents. Of the female migrant and refugee respondents, 69 per cent were Syrian nationals, 20 per cent Iraqi nationals, six per cent Afghan nationals, and five per cent Iranian nationals. Overall, 68 per cent were Temporary Protection ID holders, 23 per cent were International Protection ID holders, seven per cent were residence permit holders, two per cent held other types of ID, while one per cent were undocumented migrants who either overstayed their visa or residency permit, entered Turkey irregularly through Turkish neighboring countries, or were forced to withdraw their asylum applications for unforeseeable reasons.

Of the female migrant and refugee respondents interviewed, 30 per cent were residing in Adana while 67 per cent were residing in Gaziantep. The other three per cent of respondents were residing in Ankara (two respondents), Bursa (one respondent), Istanbul (one respondent), and Sanliurfa (two respondents). Of the female host community respondents interviewed, 51 per cent were residing in Adana while 49 per cent were residing in Gaziantep. Moreover, of female migrant and refugee respondents, 22 per cent reported being part of a female-headed household, while 78 per cent reported not being a part of a female-headed household. Findings were similar for female host community respondents, of which 21 per cent reported being part of a female-headed household, while 79 per cent reported not being a part of a female-headed household.

The average age of female migrant and refugee respondents was 34 while the average age of female host community respondents was 36 years. Of the 259 migrant and refugee respondents interviewed, 74 per cent reported being married, 11 per cent reported being widowed, 7 per cent reported being single, 5 per cent reported being separated, and 3 per cent reported being divorced. Of the 47 female host community respondents, 72 per cent reported being married, 15 per cent reported being divorced, 6 per cent reported being single, 4 per cent reported being separated and 2 per cent reported being widowed. On average, female migrant and refugee respondents lived in a household of six members while female host community respondents lived in a household of five members.



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## VI. ANALYSIS

### Survey Findings and Analysis

#### Educational backgrounds and language skills

Both participant groups showed **low education levels** with 47 per cent of refugee and migrant women and 38 per cent of host community women having completed only primary school, and 12 per cent of refugee and migrant women and 21 per cent of host community women having no education at all. Moreover, among the refugee and migrant community, most participants **only have basic, elementary or no Turkish language skills** (78 per cent).

#### Main sources of income, fields of employment and employment status

While both groups receive income mostly through **formal and informal employment**, more host community members are employed formally compared to the refugee and migrant community. However, this percentage difference is small. Moreover, while host community members receive assistance through family, government or social protection mechanisms, migrant and refugee community women receive assistance foremost through ESSN/CCTE support. These findings suggest that refugee and migrant women may not have the same social and government networks and support to rely on to receive financial assistance outside of in/formal employment opportunities.

When trying to better understand who in the household is employed, the assessment identified that **many participants never worked** (44 per cent of host community, 60 per cent of refugee and migrant community). Of those participants who have worked, host community women have worked predominantly in daily work such as cleaning and portage (24 per cent), while refugee women worked in semi-/skilled labour like hairdressing (9 per cent), and home-based production and small trade (7 per cent). Overall, **few women have worked in jobs requiring high skills/training** which can be related to the low education and language skills levels identified above. At the time of the assessment, most women were not working (81 per cent of the host community, 85 per cent of the migrant and refugee community).

#### Decision-making power in the household

Both groups predominantly **share decisions on total income spending** with their husbands and have a role in financial decision making in the household. However more host community women reported that their husband decides on income spending compared to refugee and migrant women. For those women who are unable to take part in financial decision-making (6 per cent host community women, 3 per cent refugee and migrant women), this is largely due to them **not having their own income or because they are not allowed by household members to make decisions**, as well as a range of other reasons. While minor, these findings highlight cultural barriers in place which are preventing women from being involved in financial decisions in the household. Moreover, **most women are unable to spend any income** on personal needs or leisure, which is largely due to the little resources available to the household or limited ability to utilize the financial resources available.

To increase women's decision-making power in the household a range of different suggestions were made by participants. Refugee and migrant women reported the need to have increased access to education, access to the labour market, mental health and psychosocial support provision to feel more empowered, and having increased family support. Host community women raised the need for increased family support, followed by increased access to education, mental health and psychosocial support provision to feel more empowered. These findings again highlight cultural expectations, namely to fulfil household and family duties which prevent women from gaining access to education and the labour market, as posing barriers to women's decision-making power.

### Reasons for unemployment, areas of interest, barriers to employment and types of support needed

Most women reported **family responsibilities** as the reason for not working (56 per cent of host community, 43 per cent of refugee and migrant community), followed by their **husbands or family not permitting them to work** (14 per cent host community, 18 per cent refugee and migrant community). When asked which areas they would like to work in, women who are not employed reported a range of fields. Interestingly, 47 per cent of the refugee and migrant women reported that they **are not interested in working** or that would like to work in home-based production (27 per cent). Comparatively, 21 per cent of host community women are interested in working in home-based production while 17 per cent do not want to work. These findings are surprising given that women reported an interest in greater access to the labour market to have greater decision making power on financial spending in the household.

For host community women the **main barriers to employment include cultural barriers** (28 per cent), domestic responsibilities (20 per cent) and the **lack of child care facilities** (14 per cent) among others including education levels, discrimination, and the lack of job opportunities. For refugee and migrant women the main barriers to employment are more diverse but include the **language barrier** (16 per cent), lack of job opportunities (13 per cent), domestic responsibilities (12 per cent), education levels (11 per cent), the lack of childcare facilities (7 per cent), and others.

Host community women named a range of diverse **needs to support their employment**. Most prominently, they mentioned **vocational courses** (18 per cent), **access to financial resources** (13 per cent) and **business training and linkages to the market** (10 per cent). Refugee and migrant women reported the need for **language courses** (26 per cent), vocational courses (26 per cent), and access to financial resources.

Moreover, most women are interested in a program in which they can have the opportunity to **gain new or develop existing vocational skills meanwhile receiving support to feel more encouraged and empowered to perform those skills in their lives**. Both groups listed a range of different activities they are interested in, most prominently, they mentioned **vocational training, support to have access to markets to sell home-produced goods, skills training, and job placement**. Concerning protection activities, both groups are very interested in **information sessions on protection, mental health and psychosocial support sessions, life and soft skills, and information sessions on labour rights in Turkey**.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

Most women **feel comfortable in expressing their feelings and thoughts in the household or with friends and neighbours**. Among the host community, 32 per cent reported not feeling comfortable while 6 per cent of refugee and migrant community members reported not feeling comfortable. Moreover, **most women feel comfortable speaking in public**. Again, host community women are less comfortable speaking in public (30 per cent) compared to refugee and migrant women (7 per cent).

Moreover, most women reported that they **do not have any mental health or wellbeing concerns** (91 per cent of refugee women and 72 per cent of host community women). More host community women reported feeling uninterested in things they used to like, feeling severely upset, feeling angry, and feeling afraid. However, more refugee and migrant women reported feeling suicidal. These findings are particularly interesting as many women reported the need for mental health and psychosocial support sessions in the above sections. The finding suggests that while participants may seek the services, they might not be comfortable reporting on their wellbeing needs.

### Access to basic services and activities of interest

**Both groups are largely unaware of the basic services and support offered to their community.** Moreover, some host community women are aware of the services but do not know how to access them (14 per cent). When needed, host community women have limited access to social support (33 per cent), employment opportunities (9 per cent), and health care (9 per cent). This is largely **due to lack of money to reach the services** (43 per cent), not **knowing where the services are located** (28 per cent), and the **distance and difficulty in transportation** (17 per cent). Refugee and migrant women report not having access to healthcare (25 per cent) and work (25 per cent), followed by legal support (18 per cent) and social support (12 per cent) among others. This is largely due to not knowing where the services are located (21 per cent), **language barriers** (21 per cent), **family responsibilities** (21 per cent) and a **lack of money to reach services** (14 per cent). Moreover, refugee and migrant women report **facing legal barriers** which include the difficulty in obtaining work rights (22 per cent), getting work permits (16 per cent), registering marriage (11 per cent), obtaining a residency permit (9 per cent), registering birth (6 per cent), and reporting or getting legal support (5 per cent).

### Key Informant Interview Findings and Analysis

In Gaziantep, KIIs were conducted with CARE International, GIZ, Orange, Rizk, WeCan, WHH, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, TRC, Women Now, and WSA organizations; while in Adana, KIIs were conducted with Adana Metropolitan Municipality, GOAL, STL, UNDP, and WFP. Their current services in Gaziantep and Adana are mapped below in green.

### GAZIANTEP

|  | Care Int. | GIZ (through IPs) | Orange | We Can | WHH | Women Now | Rizk | Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality | TRC |
|--|-----------|-------------------|--------|--------|-----|-----------|------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Micro Credit, Loans, Cash for Work                           |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |
| Language Training  |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |
| Business-related Training (marketing, entrepreneurship etc.) |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |
| Case Management & Awareness Raising                          |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |
| Shelter & Basic Needs  |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |
| Vocational Courses   |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |
| Job Placement / Employment                                   |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |
| Community Engagement   |           |                   |        |        |     |           |      |                                     |     |

**ADANA**

|  | Adana Metropolitan Municipality | GOAL Int | STL | UNDP | WFP | TRC |
|--|---------------------------------|----------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Micro Credit, Loans, Cash for Work                           |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |
| Language Training  |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |
| Business-related Training (marketing, entrepreneurship etc.) |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |
| Case Management & Awareness Raising                          |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |
| Shelter & Basic Needs  |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |
| Vocational Courses   |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |
| Job Placement / Employment                                   |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |
| Community Engagement   |                                 |          |     |      |     |     |

As the tables highlight, the existing livelihood opportunities and strategies in place to support women’s access to the Turkish labour market vary in Adana and Gaziantep. However, it can be argued that across the two locations, the main trends for women’s empowerment through livelihood projects include **on-the-job training, vocational courses, and entrepreneurship support for start-ups**. Moreover, **women cooperatives** are increasingly put in place for women empowerment projects with all institutions highlighting that livelihood projects for women must be holistic to cover different dimensions to achieve sustainability – such as cultural norms, psychological well-being, skills development, communication etc.

**Main needs of women to access the Turkish labour market**

The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) highlighted that the main needs of refugee and migrant women to access the Turkish labour market is **language support**, especially for older people. Further, 20 per cent of participants also highlighted **social acceptance** and the **need for more activities** to increase the communication between communities as a key need. In other words, KIIs highlighted that women need more integrated activities that support communication with the other community while they are receiving any type of service. For instance, as a woman is receiving a job placement service, she also needs continuous psychosocial support to foster self-confidence. Moreover, provided the **cultural norms** and **women’s role in childcare**, kindergarten and/or any childcare facility during the work was mentioned by 30 per cent of the participants as a key need for both communities of women to access the labour market. While these findings are mostly sociological findings, the KIIs also brought to light important considerations about the Turkish labour market. Specifically, 40 per cent of participants highlighted that there is a **need to diversify sectors** as most of the projects to support women are focused on agriculture and textile sectors regardless if those projects are providing job placement, training, or any other related livelihood activities.

**Main challenges women face in accessing the Turkish labour market**

More broadly, the challenges host community, refugee and migrant women face in accessing the Turkish labour market can be grouped into two main barriers: **cultural norms** that may need protection-focused interventions and the **current market situation given legal regulations**. With regard to the first point, 65 per cent of participants highlighted the women’s **husbands who do not allow women to work**, do not allow them to work with male colleagues, or permit the women to work only inside the home. This barrier makes it extremely difficult for the women to gain employment and impacts their social life and empowerment in their daily life. With regard to the second barrier, the current market situation, due to the lack of knowledge on how to access the market and rapid changes in the market which have been fueled by the pandemic, 50 per cent of participants mentioned that beneficiaries **cannot access or stay in any market** they have been working in with most projects not providing any form of sustainability to the beneficiaries. While these structural challenges pose considerable barriers to women accessing the labour market, they are also coupled by operational challenges for women empowerment projects. Foremost, institutions that mainly work with governmental bodies mentioned bureaucratic processes that do not allow for rapid project implementation when needed. Of all participants, 33 per cent criticized the selection criteria and needs assessments required before the launch of livelihood activities.



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- الأهمية الآتية (3)  
- النظافة والتغذية (1)  
- الأعضاء التاجلية والمحل  
- وسائل منع الحمل  
- التربية الجنسية للأطفال  
والبالغين

## VII. CONCLUSION

This assessment aimed to contribute to reducing the information gap to better understand the current needs of refugee, migrant, and host community women livelihoods and protection programming in Adana and Gaziantep provinces in Southeast Turkey where a high population of migrants and refugees reside.

The literature review followed by a mixed-method assessment methodology permitted IOM to better understand the challenges host community as well as refugee and migrant women face in accessing the Turkish labour market, both from their respective perspectives, as well as from key stakeholders who implement projects to facilitate women's employment. The approach provided a great oversight which highlighted many correlations regarding needs and barriers between the 306 women participants, the 14 key informants, and current literature.

The literature review highlighted that there are three main **barriers** to women's exclusion from the Turkish labour market, which were confirmed by the assessment. These include:

**1. Social barriers:** gender norms and gender roles which follow patriarchal social structures assigning women to household and care responsibilities and prohibiting them from working.

- a. Women participants reported social barriers as a key reason for their exclusion from the labour market with family responsibilities and their husbands or family not permitting them to work. Interestingly, host community members faced greater socio-cultural barriers compared to refugee and migrant women.
- b. KIIs also highlighted cultural norms as a main barrier to women's access to the labour market with many highlighting husbands not permitting their wives to work as a key issue.

**2. Formal barriers:** levels of education, language abilities, and legal barriers (such as a lack of certification, lack of work permit/citizenship, and a lack of knowledge on rights) ultimately force women to take up informal labour or work in low skilled jobs.

- a. Women participants reported formal barriers as a key obstacle to employment due to their relatively low educational and Turkish language levels. For refugee and migrant women, legal barriers also posed a considerable formal barrier. Overall, refugee and migrant women face greater formal barriers to access employment, due to language and legal barriers.
- b. KIIs highlighted the need for language support to women to facilitate their employment.

**3. Structural barriers:** limited modalities of employment, lack of childcare facilities, wage gaps between men and women, ESSN vulnerability criteria (individuals cannot be formally employed and receive ESSN assistance). Women participants reported the lack of child-care facilities, limited employment opportunities, and discrimination as primary structural barriers.

- a. Women participants reported a range of structural barriers but foremost the lack of childcare facilities and limited job opportunities.
- b. KIIs mentioned challenges associated with investing in businesses given the instability of the Turkish economy and legal restrictions and regulations imposed on migrants and refugees. They also flagged the need to diversify the sector away from agriculture and textile projects and instead to focus more on women cooperatives.

These barriers resulted in many women participants never having worked and interestingly, not being interested in working. However, the latter may be ascribed to the considerable social, formal, and structural barriers identified in the assessment. The assessment then went on to better understand the **needs** of women to facilitate their employment. Host community women named a range of diverse needs concerning **livelihood activities** to support their employment. Most prominently, they mentioned:

- Vocational courses
- Access to financial resources
- Business training and linkages to the market

Refugee and migrant women reported the need for:

- Language courses
- Vocational courses
- Access to financial resources

Regarding **protection activities**, both groups are very interested in:

- Information sessions on protection
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support sessions (see findings on mental health and wellbeing)
- Life and soft skills sessions
- Information sessions on labour rights in Turkey (migrant and refugee women)

Moreover, most women are interested in a **joint livelihood and protection program** in which they can have the opportunity to gain new or develop existing vocational skills meanwhile receiving support to feel more encouraged and empowered to perform those skills. Both groups listed a range of different activities but most prominently they would like to participate in:

- Vocational training
- Support to have access to markets to sell home-produced goods
- Skills training
- Job placement

With most women being largely unaware of basic services and support offered to their community, further areas of support identified in the assessment include:

- Financial assistance to reach services (both communities)
- Information about where services are located (both communities)
- Language courses to navigate the services (migrant and refugee women)
- Legal awareness sessions (migrant and refugee women)

These findings resonate with the KII findings, where language support was the key need identified for refugee and migrant women, alongside activities that promote social acceptance and childcare support.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOINT LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

|                            | Protection Aspect  | Livelihood Aspect                                     | Recommended Activities   |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Social barriers</b>     | Strict cultural barriers due to gender norms   | Limited training and marketing options                | Home-based goods production activities, market access facilitation, awareness raising session on gender structures, psychosocial support, protection information sessions, life and soft skill sessions            |
| <b>Formal barriers</b>     | Lack of knowledge on labour-related rights such as certification, work permits etc.  | Lack of education and language skills                 | Access to financial resources and business training, linkages to the market, skills training and job placements, legal awareness sessions on certification, work permits, citizenship, and labour rights in Turkey |
| <b>Structural barriers</b> | Limited modalities of employment and support mechanisms to mitigate personal responsibilities affecting access to work for women | Lack of diversity concerning employment opportunities | Shifting away from a focus on agricultural and textile projects and promotion of holistic projects that include women cooperatives   |

Lastly, while findings from the surveys and KIs largely overlap, the recommended actions from the surveys somewhat differ. This finding highlights that the empowerment process is a unique process that requires an in-depth understanding of the varying needs of different communities.



