



Facility for Refugees in Turkey

Priority Area Brief No. 1

Education

January 2022

The Facility for Refugees in Turkey ('the Facility') was established in 2016 in order to place the EU's very large and diversified portfolio of humanitarian and development projects related to the refugee crisis within a clear planning, coordination and monitoring framework. The Facility's establishment was also intended to ensure efficiency of resource use and the overall coherence of the support programme whilst maintaining alignment with the Government of Turkey's (GoT) policies and support programmes.

EDUCATION IS A PRIORITY AREA

Within the Facility's Education priority area, the EU has been supporting the GoT in its efforts to integrate over 1.2 million Syrian refugee children into the Turkish public education system whilst helping ensure that the quality of education for the host community is maintained. Whereas the focus of support initially was on Syrian refugees, under the second tranche of Facility funding, all nationalities of refugees are supported.

Access to free education for Syrian refugees is granted by the GoT under the "Syrians under Temporary Protection" (SuTP) regulation. In the earlier 'emergency' phase of the refugee crisis, the Facility supported the GoT to establish special Temporary Education Centres for Syrian refugee children - where the teaching was conducted in the Arabic language. These were closed by the Ministry of Education in 2018-2019 and the children were transferred to existing public schools. This placed an enormous pressure on many schools in certain provinces and the change from learning in Arabic to learning in Turkish was very difficult for many children despite the additional teaching measures put in place.

THE MAIN CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION SUPPORT

The two main challenges which the Facility (with the GoT) seeks to address under its education support programme are firstly, the difficulties faced by refugee children in successfully following the curriculum, and secondly, the high number of refugee children who are not enrolled in school (known as 'out-of-school children').

There are a number of factors affecting the ability of students to integrate into the Turkish education system. Firstly, refugee children have often lost one or more years of schooling as a result of the war in Syria and their migration to Turkey. Secondly, they have problems learning the Turkish language quickly enough to be able to effectively follow their classes at school. Other factors include psycho-social issues arising from their recent life experiences, social integration issues at school and lack of ability of parents to supervise and support their children's studies.

The second problem - that of 'out-of-school children' - is often caused by parents deciding to not send their children to school because they need them at home to support the household economy (either working outside or inside the home) or because they cannot afford the costs associated with sending a child to school (transport, clothing, food, stationery etc.). In the case of secondary school-level children, the children themselves sometimes refuse to go to school because they feel unable to keep up with the classes or experience social isolation or bullying.



Photo: EU Delegation to Turkey/Berna Çetin



This project is funded by the European Union

According to a recent Facility-supported project review mission a major effort is still required to bring out-of-school children (particularly older children) back into the education system. The Ministry of Education reports that approximately 426,000 school-age Syrian refugee children were not enrolled in school in the second semester of the last school year (2020-21). This is equivalent to 36% of the school-age population.

The COVID-19 pandemic accentuated the above problems for refugee children and a number of recent studies indicate that a large majority of refugee children suffered a major loss of schooling during the latter part of the 2019-20 school year and much of the 2020-21 school year. Although the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) quickly adapted to providing education on-line and via TV using its EBA system, the majority of refugee children were not able to effectively benefit from this due to problems accessing the internet and in following the courses on-line. A lack of adequate home studying conditions and parental supervision and support were other factors.

EU SUPPORTS MoNE IN 26 HIGH-REFUGEE-CONCENTRATION PROVINCES

The Facility's Education Priority Area support strategy is designed to respond to the above-mentioned problems and is focused on the provision of support to MoNE in 26 high-refugee-concentration provinces. The strategy covers the formal school education system (including early childhood education and vocational education for children), tertiary education, and the non-formal education system delivered mostly through the government's system of Public Education Centres (PECs), but the focus of support is very much on primary and secondary level schooling.

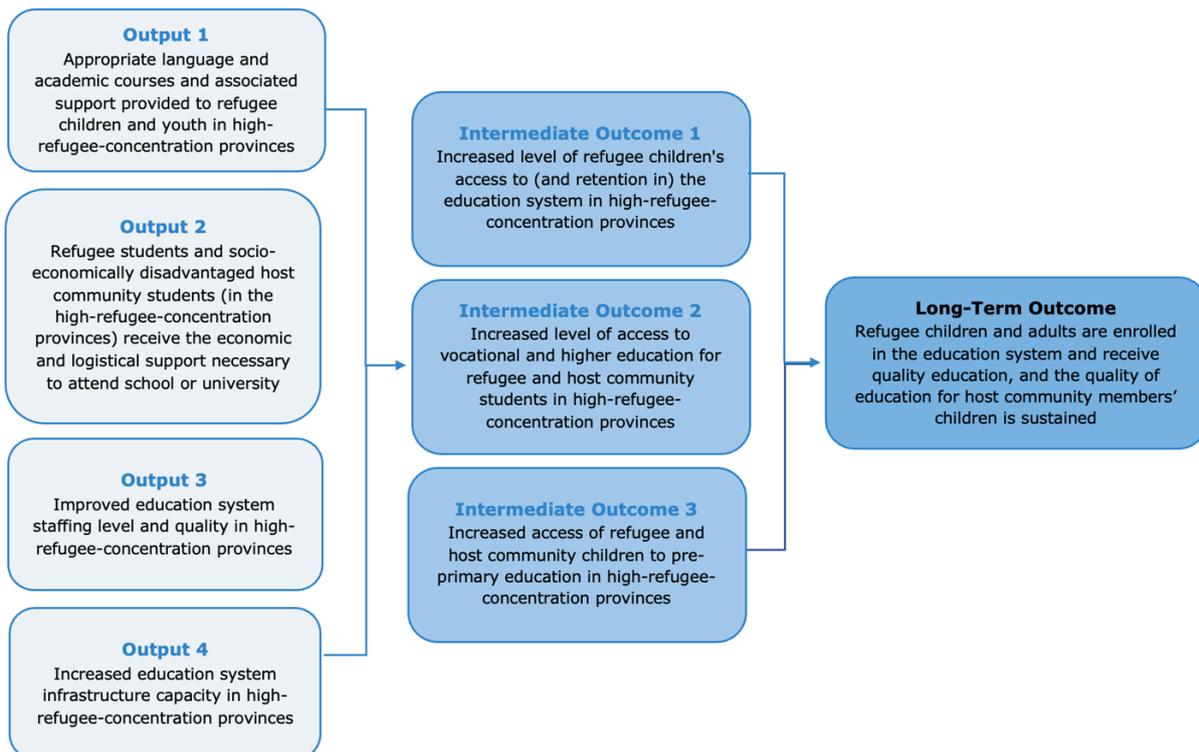
The strategy is summarized in the chain of expected results presented in Figure 1 below. It consists of providing a range of additional educational services and courses within targeted schools (Output 1); providing material and financial support to families (refugee and economically-disadvantaged host community) to help them be able to send their children to school (Output 2); developing the school system's staff to be able to adapt their services to the needs of the target groups (Output 3); and the construction and refurbishment of schools to cope with the high pressure of student numbers in certain provinces (Output 4).

EUR 1.6 BILLION CONTRACTED

By mid-2021, a total of EUR 1.6 billion had been contracted under the Facility for the implementation of projects in the education sector, representing about 30% of the total amount of EUR 6 billion contracted by the Facility. A total of 12 education projects had been completed by June 2021 and 7 were still ongoing. Eight projects were financed under the development strand of the Facility whilst four were under the humanitarian strand.

Although the Education support strategy seeks to support the GoT at the national level, the bulk of the support is focused on 26 provinces where there is a high concentration of refugees. Certain aspects of the support strategy were broadened under the Facility's second tranche of funding and support is now provided to economically disadvantaged host community students to encourage school enrolment and attendance.

The Facility's Education Support Strategy





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The approach taken and results obtained to-date in the implementation of the Education Priority Area strategy are presented below.

PROVIDING LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC COURSES AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORT

The Facility's major project in the education sector is PIKTES (Project on Supporting the Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education System), which started in 2016 with an initial budget of EUR 300M and was extended in 2019 with an additional budget of EUR 400M. PIKTES is implemented in 26 provinces with high refugee populations and implements a range of activities aimed at supporting the successful integration of refugee children into the public school system. Specific activity areas include early childhood education (ECE), back-up (remedial) teaching, catch-up teaching and Turkish and Arabic language training.

While catch-up classes are intended to provide children who have missed schooling with short intensive courses to enable them to re-join the school system at the appropriate level for their age group, back-up (remedial) classes are for children who are falling behind in their classes. By mid-2021, 46,766 refugee children had received catch-up training and 60,472 refugee children back-up training with Facility support.

PIKTES also supports the provision of psycho-social support (PSS) and counselling services to children and trains teachers to be able to respond to the particular needs of refugee children.

In order to better prepare infants to be able to start formal schooling, PIKTES also provides support to the government's policy of significantly increasing the level of access to ECE in its focus provinces. Whilst no Facility-supported ECE was provided in the 2020-21 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 25,000 students were supported to receive ECE courses over the summer of 2021.

Turkish language proficiency is a prerequisite for the integration of refugee children into the public education system. Hence, the Facility provides extensive support to improve the Turkish language skills of refugee children (and adults). In addition, the provision of Arabic language teaching is supported.

PIKTES employs 325 Guidance Counsellors to provide psycho-social support to refugee children to help them cope with the various challenges they face in integrating into the Turkish education system. Over the first half of 2021, it supported over 115,000 children using both face-to-face meetings and phone and online communications (during periods of school closures).



Photo: EU Delegation to Turkey/Berna Çetin

PROVIDING ECONOMIC AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO ENABLE ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

In order to encourage and support refugee families to send their children to school, the Facility has provided funding since 2017 to the Conditional Transfer for Education (CCTE) project which is implemented by UNICEF. With a budget of over EUR 150M, the project provides bimonthly payments to economically disadvantaged refugee families.

By June 2021, the total number of refugee children enrolled in schools supported through the CCTE project amounted to 695,556. Almost half of the beneficiary children (47%) were attending primary schools, whilst most of the rest (38%) were enrolled at the lower secondary level (only 11% were enrolled at upper secondary level).

The CCTE project continued to provide payments when the schools were closed because of COVID-19 to ensure that supported children continued their education through attending EBA TV and online classes. However, school attendance was not recorded by MoNE.

An evaluation of the CCTE programme in 2020 found the project to be effective in incentivising regular school attendance (before COVID-19) and efficient partly due to the way in which it was linked to the GoT welfare institutions and ESN's "KizilayKart" payment system. The project's child protection component was also found effective in helping to ensure high school attendance rates.

Various Facility-funded projects furthermore provide scholarships to facilitate students to pursue Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) or higher education institutions. By June 2021, almost 13,300 students had received a scholarship. The majority of these students were refugees and half were female. Most of the scholarships provided (about 12,000) were



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for secondary school students to attend TVET courses at Technical and Vocational High Schools and Vocational Education Centres. The PIKTES project provides the vast majority of these scholarships. Additionally, over 1,100 students received scholarships to attend university. This type of support has been discontinued under Tranche II of the Facility.

Other Facility-supported measures to promote enrolment include the distribution of stationery kits. Almost 1.2 million children had benefitted from this type of support by mid-2021 after the PIKTES project completed the procurement and delivery processes. Some 46% of these were host community children from economically disadvantaged families. Turkish language books have also been provided to refugee children.

Finally, as the cost of school transportation is often a major contributor to the withdrawal of refugee children from school by their families, the Facility supports the provision of such services in supported provinces. Due to the school closures during the pandemic, the number of children benefitting from such services was comparatively low. However, just prior to the start of the pandemic almost 50,000 students were being supported with free transportation services by PIKTES.

EMPLOYING AND TRAINING EDUCATIONAL STAFF

The Facility invests significant resources in hiring and training education services staff to cope with the challenges of teaching, supporting and administering refugee children. It currently contributes to the employment of almost 5,500 staff working in the education sector. Additionally, almost 1,500 more MoNE staff received remuneration for the delivery of special education services such as providing back-up classes outside the normal school curriculum.

Over 5,800 staff members received training from PIKTES during the first half of 2021 and over 177,000 education sector workers have been trained to-date. Three other projects also provided training. Together, these projects bring the total number of staff trained to almost 6,900 for this period. During the first half of 2021, PIKTES trained 3,500 teachers in online teaching using WEB 2.0 technologies and in the preparation of digital education materials.

A key component of the training involves developing staff capacities to be able to help and manage the successful adaptation of Syrian children to the public education system.

The social integration of refugee students at school is a challenge. In some cases, the children have been traumatized by their experiences of war and migration. There are also problems related to the bullying of refugee students in some schools.

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Facility support also covers the construction of new schools as well as the upgrading of existing educational facilities. The latter includes (small-scale) renovations and the provision of new teaching equipment. Both refugees and host communities benefit from these projects.

The equipping of existing schools received a boost with a recent modification to the PIKTES project. A major achievement in the first half of 2021 was the delivery and installation of 8,700 smartboards to Facility-supported primary and secondary schools. To date, over 12,000 facilities have been upgraded with Facility support. Some 58% of the facilities upgraded were primary schools whilst 25% were ECE centres.



Photo: EU Delegation to Turkey/Berna Çetin

In addition, the Facility has been supporting MoNE to introduce energy-saving technologies and solar power generation in 120 of its schools. These measures contribute to a reduction of CO² emissions and lower energy bills for schools.

Finally, three Facility-supported projects implemented by two international development finance institutions are building new schools in high-refugee-concentration provinces. Progress to-date has been affected by a range of factors such as the new earthquake-related regulations and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. By June 2021, 86 out of a planned 410 new schools had been completed.

Note: All data valid as of June 2021

The **Facility for Refugees in Turkey** is a programme financed by the European Union aimed at supporting the Government of Turkey manage the pressures upon its society and economy caused by the influx of approximately four million refugees from neighbouring countries (over 90% of whom are from Syria). The Facility's budget is EUR 6 billion. A total of 105 Actions - both ongoing and completed - have been implemented under the Humanitarian (62 Actions) and Development (43 Actions) streams of the Facility, covering humanitarian assistance, education, health, municipal infrastructure, social cohesion, livelihoods and migration management.

This Brief has been prepared by the SUMAF Technical Assistance Team which provides monitoring and reporting services to the Facility for refugees in Turkey.

For more information go to: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/migration