Support to Life
Panorama

supporttolife

2021
This report contains the works conducted by Support to Life’s Headquarter and field units in 2021 and the relevant data.
The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the entire world since 2020, continued to be our primary concern in 2021. Issues with access to core rights and services and financial issues increase the protection risks faced by all vulnerable segments of the society, notably the refugees living in Turkey.

As of 2021, 134 different countries around the world are housing refugees who had to leave their homes due to war or natural disaster. Turkey, where over 4 million refugees under temporary protection and international protection status live, houses the highest number of refugees in the world. In the regular needs analyses we performed across Turkey as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) partners, we found that the economic situation of 70% of the refugees taking part in the assessment worsened due to the pandemic. Almost all these persons mentioned that they resorted to negative coping strategies such as foregoing core food items against the challenges they faced.

While a decision was made in 2021 across the country to return to traditional classroom education, the fact that risks continue on a local level requires suspension of education from time to time. Throughout the academic year of 2020-21, for 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11th year students, schools remained open for only 20 days in high and very high risk provinces and 56 days in medium to low risk provinces. School enrolment and attendance data indicate that difficulties with access to education continued for refugees and host communities throughout 2021. Considered with the economic damage caused by the pandemic, these children are at risk of permanently being deprived of education and starting to work at an early age.

2021 has been a difficult year for Turkey regarding natural disasters as well. In total 53 provinces were affected by the forest fires that continued throughout August and 170,000 hectare forest areas were burned down. 81 people died in the floods in Bartın, Kastamonu and Sinop and at least 454 buildings were heavily damaged.

The ‘State of Civil Society Report 2021’ report, which covers 196 countries and issued by CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation mentions that the pandemic creates unprecedented challenges for non-governmental organizations and that one can’t imagine a world without civil society. All the challenges we’ve faced reminds us, once again, that we need to work together to build disaster-resilient communities.

We conducted Emergency Aid response after the fires in the Mediterranean region while carrying out our Refugee Support, Child Protection in Seasonal Agriculture and Capacity Building programs through our teams working in Istanbul, Adana, Mersin, Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Batman, Mardin, İzmir and Ankara in 2021. We supported the lives of a total of 61,302 persons during our works last year.

conducted in coordination with all the relevant stakeholders in the region.

After completing our cash assistance, we started our beekeeping support activities in Muğla, which is of critical importance in pine honey production and which was quite affected by the fires. Working in collaboration with the Muğla Beekeepers Association, we provided 22 tons of bee bread, which we distributed to 201 beekeepers. We also reinforced beekeepers to increase productivity in the recovery after the fires with the provision of production equipment such as honey extracting machine and settling tanks.

**Our Works**

Under the scope of our **Emergency Assistance and Response Program**, we conducted many activities regarding natural disasters and the pandemic during a challenging year.

**2021 Forest Fires**

We provided 4,000 TL cash assistance for 88 households who were affected by the fires threatened the southern provinces of Turkey during the summer months and who made their living through small scale agriculture and livestock business. We concentrated our efforts on Antalya and Adana provinces while the work was conducted in coordination with all the relevant stakeholders in the region.

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**An innovative solution for cash transfer during emergency response: DestekApp**

We were granted 10,000 USD in July 2021 with our DestekApp project, having completed the first stage in the BOOST Civil Society Technology Expedition Program, which was realized in collaboration with Koç Holding, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Koç University Entrepreneurship Research Center (KWORKS).

DestekApp is an e-cash mobile app that allows persons affected by disaster to use the cash assistance provided by non-governmental organizations covering their core needs while shopping at local shops. We completed the DestekApp development process and pilot applications in the second stage, which began in September 2021. DestekApp can also be used by various non-governmental organizations operating in emergency assistance and response after disasters. It will contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by mitigating the economic losses from disasters and increasing the resilience of 100,000 households and 1,000 local merchants against disasters until 2030.

Under the scope of our **Refugee Support Programme**, we supported 25,050 people in 2021. We structured and improved our remote access and support activities as we continued to provide support through our Support to Life Houses and Support to Life Hubs.

We accelerated our infrastructure works to provide widespread use of **Support to Life Information and Support Line**, which we launched in 2020 to facilitate access to accurate information as it became more critical than ever with the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to Turkish, Arabic and Kurdish, we also added Persian and English to our languages of service, and our information line became a tool where various refugee communities can obtain support. We answered about nine thousand calls throughout the year. We shared over 140,000 information SMS with our beneficiaries using the SMS panel that we created. We allowed our beneficiaries to obtain professional support by referring incoming requests to our relevant units or stakeholder organizations in areas such as legal, health, social services, labor, psychological and socio-economic support through our information line. We continued our works via hayatadestek.online as a Turkish-Arabic platform which we built to provide direct access to accurate information.
psychologists offered support to increase and protect the welfare of a total of 639 children and adults through individual and group consultations. They conducted works to instill mental health awareness through psycho-education sessions with 3,265 people.

Our psychosocial support (PSS) teams supported 2,288 children in acquiring new skills and maintaining their development through the Psychosocial Support Program that we prepared considering children’s personal characteristics, differences and diverse needs. Our psychologists and psychosocial support teams supported 376 adolescent girls in their journey of growing up by providing accurate, reliable and scientific information about their developmental characteristics under the Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP). Our entire mental health & psychosocial support works were adapted so they could be implemented both in traditional in-person methods and remote/online methods in order to include people who are unable to have access as well as to avoid the risks of the pandemic.

We supported 3,850 people, including 1,474 adults and 2,376 children under protection risk with our case management process through our case teams comprising social service experts, whereby we aimed to eliminate or mitigate the risks. We facilitated people’s access to rights and services and we made sure children continued their education. Our psychologists offered support to increase and protect the welfare of a total of 639 children and adults through individual and group consultations. They conducted works to instill mental health awareness through psycho-education sessions with 3,265 people.

We continued to organize our awareness sessions via free online conference rooms that can be accessed without internet and other online channels under the scope of pandemic measures. We reached a total of 19,428 people in these sessions. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, we also provided information on access to core services such as education, health, accommodation, protection, registration and social assistance, as well as rights of the child, negative impacts of child labor, prevention of child marriages, women’s rights and gender equality.

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Our lawyers continued to offer legal support to refugees under temporary and international protection as well as to applicant refugees in 2021. We worked to avoid loss of rights of the beneficiaries in areas such as civil law, business law, criminal law, administrative law, consumption law and notably on disputes regarding refugee law. We continued to keep in contact and build collaboration with public organizations and other associations, especially bar associations.

We closely followed the process where the wave of migration that emerged due to the internal conflict in Afghanistan also began to affect Turkey. We conducted field surveys in Van province, which receives heavy migration through Iran, whereby we tried to identify the needs in the area. Following the identification works, we provided cash assistance to 162 families including 146 Afghan and 16 Turkish families. We referred our Afghan beneficiaries under international protection and who faced protection risk, to NGOs working in the field of protection in Van.
Difficulties in access to livelihoods continued to be a major problem for refugees in 2021. We continued to aim for sustainable results.

We provided access to employment in different units of the Adana Metropolitan Municipality and Istanbul Küçükçekmece Municipality over 4 months for our beneficiaries in Adana and Istanbul under the project whereby we especially targeted people in need who lost their income due to the pandemic. We reached a total of 178 persons, including 79 persons in Adana and 99 persons in Istanbul. Our beneficiaries being registered in the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) system and a total of 40 persons in both provinces being permanently employed following the project closure were important steps for our objective of providing support for formal and sustainable employment.

We began to offer vocational training and hands-on training programs in the areas of e-commerce, social media management and software for refugees and individuals in local communities in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Mersin and Hatay provinces under the scope of our new project which we commenced to raise qualified personnel pursuant to the needs of the market. A total of 195 persons successfully completed their IT vocational training, including 44 persons in Istanbul, 28 in Ankara, 40 in Izmir, 44 in Mersin and 39 in Hatay. Following technical training, participants were able to practice their theoretical knowledge through 3-month hands-on training program and move to permanent employment.

We offered 133 customized support items for 10 cooperatives and social enterprises chosen under our Cooperatives and Social Enterprises Support program. These customized support items included capacity building activities and in-kind and cash assistance to reinforce the income-generating activities of entities. Capacity building activities concentrated on a series of training, workshop, consultation and mentoring works in the areas identified through needs assessments. We also provided support to increase special income-generating activities such as equipment procurement, repair and modifications, insurance, certification, branding, visibility and personnel employment.

Under the scope of our Seasonal Agriculture Child Protection Program, we aim to ensure that children who are employed or under risk of being employed in various areas and sectors in any provinces where we operate, especially in Adana tent areas and Urfa Viranşehir district seasonal mobile agricultural sites, to be protected against negligence, exploitation and abuse and to have access to their rights. We offered case management and legal consultancy support for children under risk and their families in our protection works which we continued using a hybrid model throughout 2021. We made sure children attend their schools. We offered psychosocial and psychosocial support for children and parents especially to reduce the psychological impact of child labor and to increase and protect the welfare of children. We rendered our works at the wellheads area of Mardin site more active and began to work in the agricultural areas in the Silifke district of Mersin.

We also organized awareness sessions for families and organizations to be informed about the negative impact of child labor in order to eliminate cultural and social norms that caused to child labor and we reached 2,360 persons. We held round table meetings to address prevention of child labor and we developed solutions with public institutions, non-governmental organizations and other local stakeholders.
Under the scope of our **Capacity Building Program**, we try to establish coordination networks that will provide a basis for information flow, exchange of expertise and resource between non-governmental organizations; we give priority to humanitarian capacity building. As we build our employees’ capacity, also we provide training and support for stakeholder organizations.

With its internal and external activities, our program aims to achieve the following:

- Establish our knowledge and expertise in our organization and build our personnel's capabilities;
- Build personal capacity through technical training for professionals working in humanitarian and related areas;
- Support organizational capacity building in non-governmental organizations and public organizations that will make their works more effective;
- Build networks that will lay the foundation for information flow and exchange of expertise and resource between non-governmental organizations and improve coordination and collaboration in the humanitarian area.

We developed custom contents for non-governmental organizations and public stakeholder institutions and we provided open invitation training for the professionals in the area as well as training, mentoring and consultancy for organizations in 2021. These capacity building activities were grouped under titles such as Core Humanitarian Standard, Project Cycle Management, Financial and Administrative Affairs, Procurement and Logistics, Temporary and International Protection, Child Protection, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Protection Mainstreaming, Psychological First Aid, Monitoring and Assessment. Throughout the year, 24 organizations including non-governmental organizations, bar associations, social service directorates and municipalities used our capacity building program. We reached close to two thousand people in our in-person and online synchronized training for the professionals working in humanitarian aid.

This year, we offered child safeguarding training for 217 employees of 16 organizations under the scope of our organizational capacity building works regarding Child Safeguarding. In addition, we shared our knowledge and experience with a total of 46 attendants from 16 non-governmental organizations and 8 public institutions during the meetings held in the Child Safeguarding Academy network in 2021.

**Support to Life 360**

The most important development in terms of our capacity building program in 2021 has been the airing of our digital platform **Support to Life 360**: [360.hayatadestek.org](http://360.hayatadestek.org)

Increasing the multiplying effect of capacity building activities, Support to Life 360, which is designed as a capacity building platform that will serve relevant stakeholders and especially civil society in the field of humanitarian aid, also has a digital distance learning area that contains information and experiences regarding works conducted in the areas of disaster and humanitarian aid. Prepared by Support to Life experts and starting its journey with 7 online asynchronized training courses (in Turkish), the platform will be further enriched with the digital library and new training to be added. Training and consultancies in different forms will be gathered under its roof. The names of the first 7 training courses that can be accessed for free on Support to Life 360 are as follows:

- Psychological first aid in disaster and crises
- Child safeguarding
- Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Providing support in prevention of gender-based violence
- Temporary and international protection
- Protection mainstreaming
- Child protection

Under the scope of **Gender Equality (GE) works**, the GE work group prepared newsletters to [#supportforequality](https://supportforequality) (#eşitliğedestek).

We determined the minimum standards and mechanisms guaranteeing that all women, men, girls and boys and LGBTI+ persons who work for us or who we provide services for have access to equal opportunities and resources, are treated equally and are in a peaceful environment.

We published our **Gender Equality Policy**, which demonstrates Support to Life’s commitment based on national and international agreements and documents.

We created the training module **Empowering Women’s Access to Justice**;
We continued our works in the areas of **Coordination and Advocacy** extensively in 2021 within the framework of coordination networks and corporate dialogue. We conducted our works with the **Localization Advocacy Group (Yerelleşme Savunuculuk Grubu)**, **Disaster Platform (Afet Platformu)**, **Refugee Council of Turkey (Türkiye Mülteciler Konseyi)**, **Checks and Balances Network (Denge ve Denetleme Ağısı)**, **Seasonal Worker Migration Communication Network (Mevsimlik İşçi Göçü İletişim Ağı – MİGA)** and **Partnership Network for Preventing Violence Against Children (Çocuğa Karşı Şiddeti Önleme ve Ortaklık Ağısı)**, which we are member to, through their national platforms.

We provided active support for the works of the **Localization Advocacy Group**, whose number of members reached 35 in 2021. The advocacy group created the Localization Strategy and Minimum Standards Document and took important steps on managing risks. Financing, capacity, partnerships and advocacy themed work groups were also realized during the new period. We supported the works on creating first response teams, creating preparation plans with local governments, creating risk maps and especially creating awareness and providing training in order to drive creation of a disaster-resilient community under the roof of the Disaster Platform. We contributed to popularization works conducted by AFAD since 2021 was the Year of Disaster Training in Turkey. We also conducted negotiations with decision makers on disaster policies. We submitted our opinions and suggestions regarding disaster and emergency management to the GNAT Commission on Investigating Measures to be Taken Against Earthquakes in February 2021.3

We were elected the member of Board of Directors of the Refugee Council of Turkey in 2021 as we continued to contribute to its works. We provided support for an online workshop addressing how the local humanitarian system could be organized better and supported better in order to improve processes that help refugees living in Turkey reach permanent solutions in the most effective way. A report containing comprehensive permanent solutions and policy suggestions for populations affected by displacement in Turkey was issued following the workshop organized by Support to Life, Watan Association and International Blue Crescent.4

We continued our works as member of the **NEAR (Network For Empowered Aid Response)**, which brings together local non-governmental organizations and experts in the humanitarian field on a global scale in 2021. For the first time, a research under the title ‘localization’ was conducted while assessing the performance of the humanitarian aid sector in the report of Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) ‘**State of the Humanitarian System**’. As the research was conducted in Turkey and Somali, we conducted its Turkish leg in collaboration with Advocacy Decentralization Group, NEAR and Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG).

Our Director Sema Genel Karaosmanoğlu conducted the ‘Collective Advocacy’ session at the **Encouraging Principled and Effective Humanitarian Action From the Local to the Global Arena** workshop held in Istanbul and hosted by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), a global humanitarian platform, on November 11–12, 2021. The workshop was attended by 14 non-governmental organizations from Turkey.

Under the scope of our advocacy works, we brought together non-governmental organizations founded by Afghans and conducting works for Afghan refugees in Turkey and relevant stakeholders together with a round table meeting in December. We created a roadmap regarding the current status of Afghan refugees in Turkey, the issues they encounter, their needs and suggestions for solutions on necessary improvements. Moreover, our Director Sema Genel Karaosmanoğlu wrote the article ‘**Will Afghanistan ever see the spring?**’, highlighting the humanitarian works she was a part of 20 years ago in Afghanistan and focusing on the struggle for a humane living that have been going on for decades in the country, which began to be governed by Taliban in 2021.

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We continued to disseminate our advocacy messages throughout the year with our communication activities and campaigns. Children’s rights, refugee rights, women’s rights, awareness on climate crisis, importance of localization in the civil society and the events in Afghanistan from the perspective of human rights were some of the themes of our advocacy discourse.

On April 23 Children’s Day, we said “All children are natural playmakers” and said #OyunlaBüyüyorum (I Grow as I Play) for the children’s right to play; highlighted major games that could be played at home in the pandemic conditions. On November 20 World Children’s Day, we focused on the Children’s Mind / Children are Right board game which we prepared with a view to children’s rights. We also wanted to remind people of the seasonal agricultural children on June 12 World Day Against Child Labour. We prepared a multimedia content and drew pictures of tent areas and we named it the Big Picture. We tried to demonstrate through objects the rights of children that the living conditions in these areas hamstring and how they do it. Our call was: Let’s take a hard look at the big picture and see how invisible and ignored children live on the migration routes, farms and gardens. On June 20 World Refugees Day, we said #GeçimKaynağıYaşamKaynağı (Source of Income, Source of Living) and gave the mic to four persons whom we supported in having access to employment and listened to Syrian Gade and Muhammed and Turkish Şenay and Erhan. We emphasized the reformative, integrative influence of listening to each other and producing together. On August 19 World Humanitarian Day, we focused on the climate crisis and broadcasted our video call to join, all together, the #İnsanlıkYarışı (Race of Humanity) led by humanitarian workers in our country and in a world gradually more threatened by disasters.

destekar is the shopping spot for those like to give their support to life. destekar’s sole ‘profit’ is to support life. It invites both consumers and producers to be a ‘destekar’ with the social design market it created, and turns your shopping experience into an opportunity to support a fairer and more equal world for everyone.

All items on destekar are works of talented designers from various disciplines, carrying their expressions of people affected by disaster or their experiences. destekar’s entire revenue is transferred to humanitarian works of Support to Life Association.

Destekar is a Support to Life Association brand.

Every time you shop through destekar, you are contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

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