

# EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL AND  
STICHTING UNITED WORK



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

Stichting United Work carries out an employment project under BRIDGES programme in coordination with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The project provides career counseling, assist individuals in job placement, covers the work permit fees for refugees and offers wage subsidy for the first two months of employment for certain groups.

In the project implemented by the partnership of Stichting United Work and the Danish Refugee Council, 732 beneficiaries were placed in various sectors through registered employment in 18 months. Implemented in partnership with SUW and DRC, one of the project's main objectives is to increase women's employment in the business world. 308 out of 732 beneficiaries are women, corresponding to 42%. Accordingly, this project carried out within the scope of the BRIDGES 3 program, has acted with a gender-based approach and achieved very positive results.

233 out of 732 of the candidates placed in the job within the scope of the project are white-collar, corresponding to a rate of 35.96%.

On the other hand, 534 out of 732 (72.95%) of the candidates placed in the job within the project scope are SuTPs beneficiaries, and 198 out of 732 (27.05%) LHC members are beneficiaries.



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The BRIDGES Programme is implemented in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KFW-German Development Bank.



## ESRA BENGİSU

**Esra Bengisu Şamlı Böke is a 27-year old Turkish mother. She lives in Istanbul and she has a two year old son.**

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Bengisu has a diploma in Tourism Management. She has been actively working in the tourism industry since she started university. “Many people study at universities but cannot work in their fields,” she said. “I was lucky to continue to work in the sector I wanted.”

Like many other sectors, experience is essential in tourism. Bengisu worked hard to improve her skills in the field she loved before graduation in addition to the compulsory internship period. “Schools provide you with language and technical

knowledge that you can use in your career,” she says. “Whether you are a high school graduate or a university graduate, it is an industry entirely based on experience.”

Bengisu, who went on maternity leave when the pandemic reached Turkey, never thought of turning to another sector for work after returning from her leave. When she started searching for a job again, she looked for jobs with weekend holidays and regular working hours to be with her child, but it was not easy in her field where people are requested to work on weekends and holidays.

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# CELİLE AYDIN

**Celile Aydın was born in Muğla, and she graduated from the Industrial Engineering department in İstanbul; she is living in İstanbul with her schoolmates. She is very intellectual and open-minded; she believes in women's power, and she wants to stand on her own two feet.**

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Currently, Celile is a Human Resources assistant, and she is delighted with her position and company location. "Most of the institutions' locations are far from where I lived. For this reason, I consider myself very lucky to be in the institution where I am currently working because my living area is very close and very convenient in terms of transportation," she said. Celile is happy with her colleagues and work conditions, and Celile mentioned that "On the other hand, we got a good rapport with my colleagues, and they are very open to helping me in every field I need. This makes me feel comfortable and relaxed. I see myself in this institution for a long time".

Celile always wanted to work in the field of Human Resources as her career goal, and it was a great passion for her to improve herself in this field. For this reason, when she applied for a job, she acted in line with her career goals and followed her dreams as an idealist woman. Celile is very satisfied with her company's high-stress environment and versatility, and she believes that it is an excellent opportunity to improve herself.

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## SOUAD ALMBAYED

Souad was born in Duma near Damascus city in Syria. She is 42 years old and is a mother of two. Souad managed to leave Damascus for Turkey in November 2015. Currently, Souad and her family live in Istanbul and her extended family members are living in Jordan.





Souad was a housewife and never worked in a full-time job when she was in Syria. Still, she worked as a freelance tailor in her free time. Willing to be self-reliant and have her own income, she started to work as a cleaner in a kindergarten for almost 1.5 years when she came to Turkey. Later, she and her daughter got very sick, so she had to leave her job at that time as she was working without any social security. After a while, she heard about Stichting United Work (UW) through her friend, which works on a project under the BRIDGES Programme in coordination with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KFW-German Development Bank, the project aims to assist refugee and host communities' members in finding jobs through career counseling and job matching.

“I contacted Stichting United Work after seeing their Facebook page and they helped me get this job and get a work permit. They were very helpful and cooperative since the beginning and answered any questions I had. They even helped me open a bank account,” she said. Stichting United Work also paid for her work permit and covered her wages for the first two months as a part of the project.



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# SELAM NABIŁSİ

**Selam Nabılsı is a 30-year-old refugee from Daraa, Syria. She is a very energetic and positive person and speaks fluent Turkish. She met her husband while studying geology at Damascus University and got married. She fled Syria in 2016 before she was able to graduate from the university.**

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During her journey from Syria to Turkey, they had their newborn child. Afterwards, they arrived in Sanliurfa, Turkey, and started their new life there. “We had to start from zero,” she says. Job opportunities in Sanliurfa were limited, so they decided to move to Istanbul. Soon, her husband found a job as a restaurant chef and she worked with him as an assistant. “We didn’t have any family members here to help us, yet we tried to manage our life,” Salam says. After having another child, she could not continue working in the restaurant due to the long hours required there.

Most Syrian women face challenges while trying to find decent job opportunities and taking care of their kids at the same time. Salam thought of working as a teacher since it does not require long hours. Despite her previous teaching experience in Syria, she could not find any jobs. She could only tutor children in her neighborhood which provided an unstable income. Meanwhile, her husband faced many challenges in different workplaces, such as not receiving his salary or being compensated for less than initially agreed on.

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## ENAS TORFA

Enas Torfa, a Syrian refugee. She studied chemical and vital biology and came to Turkey in 2017. After she arrived, she worked temporarily as an intern at laboratories for to get some experience in the medical field. After her first year in Turkey, she got pregnant and didn't look for a job until her boy grew enough.

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***“I still can do something for myself and my career “***

Yet she started selling handmade crafts and sweets for to support the housing economy. “It was simple according to my capabilities and the ability to deliver the products as dealing with the customers and the delivery.” For Enas, there were more permanent solutions. For her, it’s very important to be an independent woman and support herself even when married.

“Honestly, I stayed at home for the first year and the following year too, then I got pregnant and got a baby boy. My son got little old enough, and I thought this was the chance to work now. So I started looking for a job and have experienced many places, but many problems appear like they are not hiring right now or need a work permit or other issues. Then I found a post on Facebook about Stichting United Work and their services and started contacting them. “

Most Syrian refugees are having trouble finding a job due to their lack of experience, language barriers, and because of the work permit process. Sometimes refugees have to work in different jobs rather than suitable positions for their profile to continue their lives. Stichting United Work foundation assists job seekers and refugees on a project under the BRIDGES Programme in coordination with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Funded by the German Federal Ministry



for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW-German Development Bank, the project aims to assist refugee and host community members to find jobs through career counseling and job matching.

After Enas contacted Stichting United Work consultants, she sent their CVs, and the consultants looked for a suitable position for her skills. GMD Company works in the medical field, and they have laboratories where some tests must be done. “I came here and did an interview and started working here 7-8 months ago.”

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# ALRAYAN ALJAJI

Alrayan Alajaji was born in Al-Raqqah city in Syria, and she is 18 years old. She came to Turkey 9 years ago, and she is living in Istanbul with her family. She is seeking to improve herself all the time because she wants to learn new things and she is ambitious, and she believes that she can achieve all things to her goals.

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She lives with her family, and she looks after her family members, who are 2 kids, one is 1.5 years old, and the other is 4 years old and also her parents, who are in the 70s.

When Alrayan came to Turkey, she was only 9 years old, and her priority was continuing her education. For this reason, she does not have any previous work experience. On the other hand, the need to work has emerged in the current period, and he has actively sought employment. “I was really in need of this employment project as I needed to find a job, especially in this current time and circumstances as I was facing many personal challenges. I hope these projects will continue to reach more people looking for work and this kind of support.’ she said.

Alrayan is an 18-year-old single woman who is obliged to take care of her family. Since their parents are very old, they are not able to work. On the other hand, since other siblings are also working on daily jobs or temporary periods., she is the only person in the household who works regularly. “I feel powerful and strong as I’m a woman working with work permit and taking care of my family and providing their needs,” she said. Al Rayan is very open to improving herself. Still, the circumstances made her move away from being a pharmacist, which was her biggest dream, and she started working after completing her high school education. However, she continues her life with hope for the future and focuses on her career.

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# HUMAM

Humam Salih. He is a young, very energetic person. He came to Turkey six years ago and continues his middle school here in Turkey. After middle school, he started night school for his graduation.

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For to support his family, he started looking for a job. His brother saw Stichting United Work's job advertisement, and they applied for his opportunity.

With funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through KfW-German Development Bank and in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Stichting United Work conducts job placement by matching employers and job-seekers. The project helps people from refugee and host communities to find jobs. It supports obtaining work permits for refugees so all people of concern can equally access opportunities in the job market.

Stichting United Work consultants interviewed him for possible opportunities. After an interview with GMD company, he got accepted for an open position and started working. After his performance, the company found an open position more suitable for his skills, and he was immediately promoted.



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# MHMAD ALOTHEN

Mhmad Alothen is a 33-year-old refugee from Damascus, Syria. He came to Turkey in 2015. He lives in Istanbul, but his family is still living in Syria. So, he is currently taking care of his family. Mohamad had a work experience in textile sales in Syria.



At the beginning of Mhmad's carrier journey in Turkey, he could not find a suitable job for himself in the textile retail sector because of the language barrier he was facing. Thus, he started to work in various cafes, which helped him learn and improve his Turkish. Nowadays Mohamad can speak Turkish clearly. After gaining some experience, Mohamad started working in restaurants.

Mhmad mentioned that Covid-19 affected his life. "After Covid-19 reached Turkey, I had to change my work and I started to apply for different jobs. So, I sent my to the Stichting United Work team. Followingly, they arranged an interview with the hotel management. After the interviews, I got accepted here in the restaurant department," he said.

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## FATÌMA EL RAHMUN

Fatima is a 24-year-old refugee from Hama, Syria. Fatima was studying Chemistry at Homs University, but she could not graduate because of the situation in Syria

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After she came to Turkey, she got married. Now she is living with her husband and his family. “I do not have any children yet but I am taking care of my sick in-laws. My seventy-five-year-old father-in-law had a brain stroke in the past, and my sixty-year-old mother-in-law has diabetes.”

Fatima does not have any previous work experience because she could not find any job opportunities when she came to Turkey. “I have faced then I found Stichting United Work’s Facebook page and contacted them and they find me this job. This is the in my life as I didn’t have the chance to work before. I love my work here. Currently, I am under the , but I want to improve myself in my job. I am responsible for contacting customers, answering their questions and explaining our company’s services. It gives me the chance to be a productive person and improve my job skills simultaneously. I want to keep improving myself and move to or higher positions in this company. I am focusing now on gaining experiences..”

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## HANADI KAROOT

Hanadi is a hardworking person. She was born in Homs city in Syria and she is 33 years old. She graduated from English literature when she lived in Syria.

*“This work changed me and improved me as a person.”*





She used to work as an English teacher in kindergarten and other educational institutions in Syria. Also, she worked on a United Nations project before moving to Turkey in 2017. Hanadi strives to improve herself continually.

Hanadi is currently living with her husband in Istanbul, and they have one baby, but she is taking care of her parents who are still in Syria. According to the UN, 80% of people in Syria live below the poverty line. “I take care of my family financially as much as I can, as they are still in Syria and the economy is bad there,” she said.

Hanadi did not work in her first three years in Turkey, because she didn’t speak Turkish and had a newborn baby. The language barrier was a

problem in achieving social harmonization and finding a sustainable job. When Hanadi decided to look for a job in kindergartens, she faced difficulties. She couldn’t teach because Turkish law has strict rules for hiring foreign teachers. At the time, her baby was less than one year old. That is why she waited until her baby was two years old, then she learned about Stichting United Work.

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STICHTING UNITED WORK CARRIES OUT THE EMPLOYMENT PROJECT UNDER BRIDGES PROGRAMME IN COORDINATION WITH THE DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL (DRC). PROJECT FUNDED BY THE GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (BMZ) THROUGH KFW-GERMAN DEVELOPMENT BANK.