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2019

ANNUAL REPORT

From Refugee to Employee

United Work

United Work is a joint initiative founded in 2016, focusing on increasing the socio-economic conditions and prospects for Syrian refugees in Turkey, who were obliged to leave their country after the Syrian Civil War.

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INFORMATION

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Message from the Directory Board

Frank Damen
Board of Directors

Dear readers,

2019 was a very successful year. United Work was able to train, mentor and place a large number of Syrian refugees in sustainable jobs. We are proud to report that we were able to help 1868 refugees this year of which 8.3% were women!

Despite these wonderful figures realized by United Work, we also faced very significant and substantial challenges in 2019. When it became known that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be ending its financial support for United Work in mid-2020, a great deal of energy and time was necessarily invested in searching for new opportunities and new market openings.

So this year a lot has been invested in the search for new sponsors and funds and with some relief and in full satisfaction we can report that together with new partners in 2020 we can continue to make the so important and sustainable contribution in the interest of the Syrian refugee in Turkey. For the coming years we have many ambitions to further expand the work of United Work together with our partners with the aim to give even more refugees a future and their children a deserved and carefree childhood where education is a natural part of it.

We are on the right track but unfortunately not yet on the main road which should bring the necessary certainties for the future. But despite these uncertainties, we are proud that in the three years of our existence we have been able to give more than 2.500 refugees a better life during their stay in a host country. We are also proud that thanks to the commitment of all United Work employees, we have achieved all the agreed results and have exceeded most of our objectives. Everything we achieved comes down to our people. We are grateful to our associates, whose hard work and dedication made it all happen. They are there for our customers and communities in countless ways, every day. Our largest client in 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will also recognize and appreciate our work.

We will continue to follow the path we set at the end of 2019 with confidence. With our partners SPARK, ILO, fair wear foundation, GIZ, UNDP, QATAR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we will succeed in our mission to, as Prime Minister Mark Rutte put it in 2016, “How can we improve the lives of the Syrian refugee during their stay in the host country of Turkey?”

And this is why United Work exists!

I wish you all the best in 2020

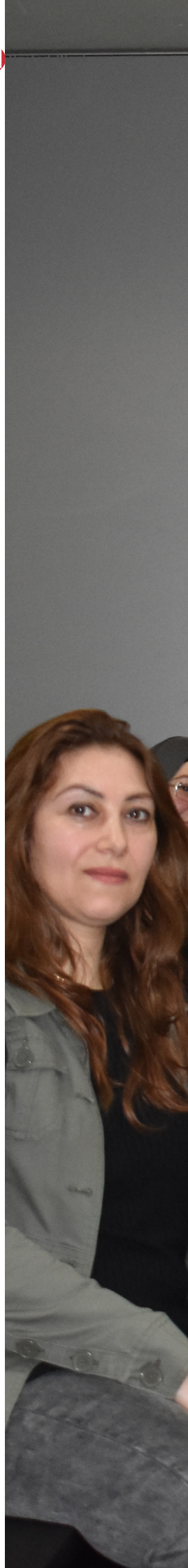
About Us

United Work is a joint initiative founded in 2016, focusing on increasing the socio-economic conditions and prospects for Syrian refugees in Turkey, who were obliged to leave their country after the Syrian Civil War.

It was primarily established as an initiative by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following the survey launched among Dutch companies operating in Turkey, which aimed to grasp their potential and alacrity for the employment of refugees in their operation. The survey result revealed the keen interest of companies in employing Syrian refugees and the need for intermediation between labour demand and labour supply among counterparts. Thereby, successfully placing refugees into jobs at these companies would be beneficial for both refugees and the companies involved. Ultimately, with the help of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "United Work" started to operate in Istanbul in 2017, after establishing the necessary infrastructure to initiate the job placement process.

The aim was to improve the lives of refugees during their stay in a host community by facilitate the job search process of refugees and remedy major issues for refugees and employers. In a short period, the project proved to be a success, and its initial target (200 job placements for refugees by the end of 2017) was achieved earlier than the envisioned date. Evidently, job placement and training services offered by United Work filled a significant gap in the humanitarian services field in Turkey. According to UNHCR data published in November 2016, over 400 educational centres in Turkey provided various training courses aimed at refugees, as well as over 60 community centres equipping refugees with social assistance.

However, until the foundation of the United Work – and until today –, there was no other qualified intermediary agency with a capacity to build a network of employers, offering job placement services, and providing training in relevant skills to increase the employability of refugees.



Following its successful job placement experience in Istanbul, United Work expanded its operations. Turkish employers were included in the project, and it led to the enlargement of the network of employers that United Work associated. The geographical scope of the project was spread, and new offices were opened in Bursa and Izmir in 2018. Service operations were improved by providing not only 'internal training' (at United Work offices) but also external and online training and offering work permit support on job placement locations. Projects aiming to formalize informal businesses of refugees were included in activities of the United Work. As a result, these combined efforts have led to more than 3500 job placements since its establishment. In addition to all these, in accordance with its foundation principals, United Work has started to co-operate for the implementation of separate projects funded and supported by various INGO's and governmental bodies aiming to support Syrian refugees in Turkey.

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Introduction & Background

As of the end of 2019, Turkey continues to be a country hosting the largest refugee population in the world. According to the latest data released by the Ministry of Interior, there are 3.9 million registered refugees, including 3.6 million Syrian refugees who accommodates under the Temporary Protection Status, in Turkey at the end of December 2019. Starting from the first arrivals in 2011, and during the progressed time, EU, UN, and non-profit organizations have been putting tremendous efforts in various interventions to stand together with Turkey against one of the biggest humanitarian crises of the century.

While the civil war has been protracting in Syria, the residence period of the refugees has been prolonged in Turkey. Therefore, the needs and demands of Syrian refugees in Turkey have changed over time. Notably, while the initial emphasis was mostly on securing immediate assistance (housing, food, and safety), the next step is now to improve the longer-term socio-economic prospects for refugees and their families, including better economic and social integration in their host communities during their residence.

When refugees' accommodation analyzed on a city scale it is observed that İstanbul, Gaziantep, Hatay, and Sanliurfa stand as prominent cities where refugees mostly reside.

Figure 1

Directorate General of Migration Department Retrieved from: https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27

Below, Figure 2 demonstrates the 20 cities hosting the largest refugee population in Turkey. Therefore, these 20 cities occupy a significant place in the project's agenda due to the density of the refugee population. The project aiming to make a significant contribution to the lives of both host community members and refugees should initially focus on these cities. In this context, United Work focuses on these cities predominantly.

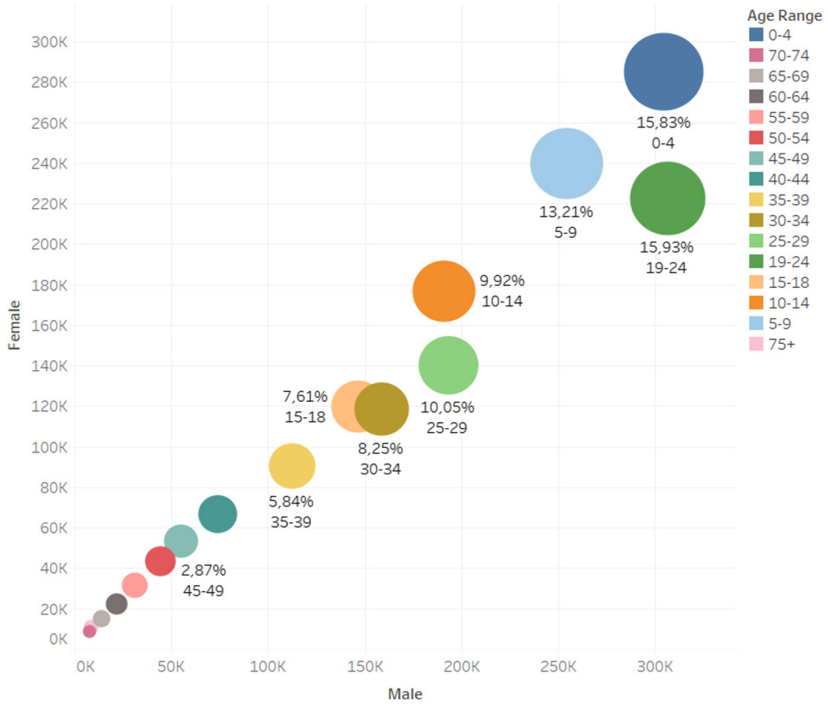
Figure 2

City	
İstanbul	474.679
Gaziantep	454.181
Hatay	440.116
Şanlıurfa	428.306
Adana	243.101
Mersin	207.680
Bursa	176.728
İzmir	147.803
Kilis	116.161
Konya	111.332
Ankara	95.933
Kahramanmaraş	93.527
Kayseri	73.452
Kocaeli	55.628
Osmaniye	49.863
Malatya	28.485
Diyarbakır	23.721
Adıyaman	20.970
Batman	15.701
Mardin	8.833

Besides, it has been observed that the Syrian population in Turkey is significantly young. As Table 1 demonstrates more than 50% of the total population is under 25 which means that more than 50% of the total Syrian population is either recently participated in the workforce and they will be part of the workforce for a considerable period of time or they will be joining the workforce in the coming years. When the protracted situation in Syria would not be resolved in short and Syrian population's tendency to stay in Turkey even after the resolution of the civil war considered, it is important to grasp that the significant number of people will be part of the available workforce. Especially, it is expected that 0 – 4 age group who were born in Turkey will have a stronger tendency to stay in Turkey since they have a stronger command of the Turkish language and culture, it would be important to create jobs for this generation in the upcoming years. Nevertheless, the creation of job opportunities for the generations who are already in the workforce is still important for both to have a better life and to provide better opportunities for further generations.

This project takes a starting point that economic integration via formal employment is one of the best available ways to reduce current and future vulnerabilities and improve the socio-economic status of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Table 1



Ultimately, having a job not only leads to more economic independence and resilience as well as enhances social integration and leads to a meaningful stay in Turkey. Therefore, United Work supports refugees with the process of finding a formal job, which includes obtaining a work permit, contract, and decent working conditions.

Thus far, unemployment among Syrian refugees in Turkey is reportedly very high, while the success rate of other labour market integration programs to assist them via formal employment is considerably low. Out of 3.6 million refugees, around 58% are of working age, but less than 2% have obtained a work permit to work in Turkey legally. [1]

The regulation on the work permit for "Foreigners Under Temporary Protection" made in 2016 was a significant milestone that allowed refugees to apply for a work permit. [2] Since then, many livelihood programs have been put into action, but the formal labour market participation of Syrian refugees remains still low. According to the last available data, Turkey issued 115,837 work permits for foreigners in 2018, among these 34,573 work permits was granted to the Syrians.[3]

Besides, since 2017 up to the end of December 2019, more than 4,400 refugees participated in the formal job market with the support of the United Work.

The low formal employment participation rates do not imply that the vast majority of Syrian refugees are unemployed. Conversely, it is a fact that participating in informal work is a prevalent practice. This condition rather suggests that the present regulation is not a practical solution against informal labour practices, which appear to be widespread. More than 2 million working-age Syrians aged 15-64 in Turkey are estimated to be working informally. Most of these are men; the low percentage of women peaks at only 7% among women aged 30 to 44.

What complicates the labour market integration of Syrian refugees is the current challenging economic environment of Turkey as a host country. General unemployment in Turkey is 13.8% in December 2020, and the youth unemployment level has been around 24.5%. [4] Given the current economic recession, finding a job has become more difficult, even for the host community employment seekers.

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[1] *Kemal Kirişçi (2020), How the EU and Turkey can promote self-reliance for Syrian refugees through agricultural trade. Retrieved from: https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-the-eu-and-turkey-can-promote-self-reliance-for-syrian-refugees-through-agricultural-trade/*

[2] *There is no official refugee status given to Syrians in Turkey, they accommodate under "Temporary Protection Status". Since January 2016, they have the right to obtain formal work permits. The initial goal was to help Syrian refugees for being economically independent, graduate from social assistance, and contribute to the Turkish economy. However, this right is limited to a workplace not exceeding 10% of the total number of employees. Also, according to the regulation, all Syrians are eligible to apply for work permission in the place where they had been registered (It is not allowed to travel or apply for work permission in other cities rather than the registered cities). United Work considers these restrictions, while providing its services.*

[3] *Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family, Work Permits of Foreigners. Retrieved from: https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/31746/yabanciizin2018.pdf*

[4] *TURKSTAT, Main Statistics 2020, Employment Status. Retrieved from: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist*

The vulnerable group of Syrian refugees on which the project focuses are unemployed and informally employed refugees. They work without a work permit and any form of labour protection. Working practices of unemployed and informally employed refugees lead to two-folded economic and social conflict. On the one hand, unemployed refugees tend to have more indigent life circumstances and less economic independence, which makes them economically vulnerable and more dependent on external aid structures. The income generated through employment promotes economic independence and allows the financial means to rebuild one's life in a host country and graduate from social assistance. Having a job also enable Syrian refugees to contribute to the Turkish economy and their host community, which reduces social segregation and promotes socio-economic integration.

On the other hand, refugees involved in informal employment are also economically vulnerable and at risk of being exploited. Informal employment tends to be associated with inadequate financial compensation, insecurity, unsafe workplaces, and exploitation risks. Groups that are in this position are at risk of being exploited by employers, e.g., by being underpaid relative to their Turkish counterparts, not being paid for overtime, or even physical harassment or improper working conditions.

By having a young population, Turkey falls short of creating new jobs to satisfy labour market expectations. As a result, the labour force participation rate that currently stands at %51.8 [5]. Even though the economic situation of Turkey is the main reason behind the high unemployment rates, structural features of the labour market also has adverse effects on the issue. It is a crucial problem that needs to be responded to with effective solutions. Therefore, Turkey has been responding by working on combining its education system with the needs of modern work life. Opening new vocational departments in high schools and universities, providing certificate programs in local centres, there many vocational or soft skill training courses provided by the government under complimentary services can be counted under governmental initiatives in response to unemployment issue. However, it has been observed that participants have struggled to find the right jobs after completing their programs. In job placement services, the capacity of the Turkish government does not meet the expectations of job seekers. Therefore, the project targets to fill this gap and supply job placement services to those groups in order to support governmental capacity in terms of those services.

[5] *TURKSTAT, Main Statistics 2020, Labour Force Status of Population, Retrieved from: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist*

Project Aim:

Project aims to reduce vulnerabilities among Syrian refugees in Turkey who are currently unemployed or informally employed, by providing them with training and labour market integration support. That is expected to result in an increase in formal employment, a higher quantity and quality of jobs, improved socio-economic prospects for refugees and their families, and improved social cohesion between refugee households and their host communities.

Project Objectives:

• Livelihood activities have undertaken for the most vulnerable geographic regions as those with the largest (absolute) numbers of unemployed or informally employed refugees.

• Livelihood activities have carried out for the groups that could be seen as specifically vulnerable, based on individual or household characteristics (e.g., single parents, disabled persons, etc.).

• While the above two interventions are only supply-side activities, success will be determined by the demand side. That is, it is ultimately up to employer demand for labour whether the placement will be successful. For the entrepreneurship component, success will be measured according to the scope of the services within the targeted numbers.

Program Activities and Achievements

1.1. Activities

Delivering Full-Cycle of Job Placement Services to Job Seeker Refugees and Companies Operating All Around Turkey

From the experience of the United Work, the reason behind employing a refugee is not fundamentally about taking a socially responsible initiative. In reality, companies prefer to employ refugees for some positions that they cannot fill by the local workforce. In other words, it is not a one-sided service. It can be a mutually beneficial situation for both parties.

On account of employers, Turkey has turned into one of the top touristic destinations for citizens of Arabic-speaking countries lately. This situation has engendered soaring demand for customer-related positions that require advanced Arabic language skills. Besides, the increase of investments made by Arab investors created a demand for expertise in foreign trade, real estate sales, or other marketing positions.

On the side of job-seeking refugees, searching for a job is already highly demanding and stressful for everyone. For a refugee, it becomes more challenging because of the lack of knowledge of the local job market, language barriers, lack of sufficient cultural understanding, lack of knowledge about job searching means, and any other difficulties.

Due to the relatively high costs of formal employment of a refugee, employers abstain from engaging with refugees. Nevertheless, offering full-cycle and cost-free assistance would encourage employers to recruit refugees, provided that the service can be done effectively. Implementing such a need-based project activity ensures to reach desired outputs.

Activities carried out

In 2019, United Work completed 1868 job placements. In total, it supported job placement process for more than 4400 SuTPs and refugees since its establishment. The figures in the following paragraphs contain details of the job placements performed explicitly.

Carrying Out Training Activities to Facilitate Formal Labour Market Participation and Integration of Refugees by Improving Their Employable Skills and Capacities

In Syria, corporate systems are not well improved neither in the governmental nor private sector. So, refugees encounter various challenges during their efforts for economic integration. In this context, United Work provides training on employment to ensure the adaptation of refugees to work-life, to improve the sustainability of the employment process, and to achieve social cohesion between the host community and refugees. Training includes different subjects and articles such as Job-fit Support Program for Employees, Job-fit Support Program for Entrepreneurs, Job-fit Support Program for Women, Job-fit Support Program for Textile and Hotel Industries, CV Writing, Job Interviews, Training of Trainers, Mentoring Skills, Basic Communication and Workplace, Basic Labour Law and Human Rights, Discrimination & Mobbing, Organizational Safety, and Security Communication, Talent Development Training Programs.

Activities carried out

In 2019, United Work provided training for 1858 participants. Different topics and themes are covered during trainings. Titles of trainings are Job-fit Support Program for Employees, Job-fit Support Program for Entrepreneurs, Job-fit Support Program for Women, Job-fit Support Program for Textile and Hotel Industries, CV Writing, Job Interviews, Training of Trainers, Mentoring Skills, Basic Communication and Workplace, Basic Labour Law and Human Rights, Discrimination & Mobbing, Organizational Safety and Security Communication, Talent Development Training Programs, Working during COVID-19.

Offering Assistance Services to Both Parties (Employee/Employer) About Work Permit Applications and Any Other Employment-Related State Requirements

Lack of information about Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection discourages employers from hiring refugees. Therefore, delivering cost-free assistance service while enlightening inaccurate facts gain the trust of employers to consider this mostly complicated initiative. Offering this service has a positive impact on the decisions of employers over hiring a refugee, and providing such guidance whenever it's needed also elevates their satisfaction. Since it is a type of business process outsourcing, during past implementations, it has been witnessed that after being advised from their business networks, some employers took the first step to involve in the project by giving refugees a chance to participate in the formal labour market.

Activities carried out

The work permit is obliged for all Syrian refugees in Turkey to be included in the formal labour market or to operate a business. In this regard, during this project, 1868 work permits of Syrian refugees have been received with the support of United Work. Therefore, the work permit figure contains refugee employees and entrepreneurs, the detailed information presented in the following paragraphs. The activities carried out are administrative support for employees, employers, and entrepreneurs.

Khalid Kadi Rihan

Khalid Kadi Rihan was born in Hama. In Syria, he used to work in a grocery shop; indeed, it was a family business. Due to the civil war, he obliged to leave his country and having his brother with him immigrated to Turkey in 2016. When he arrived in Turkey, he worked in various sectors, including construction and textile. However, available jobs were hard, penuriously paid, insecure, and had long working hours. Therefore, after saving some money from his salary, he has decided to establish his own grocery shop named Hama Market at the beginning of 2019. Having an experience in the same business in Syria, and the existence of the significant Syrian population appeared as an opportunity for him. However, he was well aware that establishing a business requires completion of legal registrations. In order to complete the process, he just visited the United Work office which is located close to his shop. Meeting with one of the project officers, he talked about his businesses' needs. Afterwards, he was supported from that moment, officers supported throughout all necessary registration process. He is grateful to project officers and United Work. Prior to the project, he did not know United Work. He feels a sense of belonging to Turkey, especially in the district where he belongs. Although he does not have an adequate command of the Turkish language, he can contact lots of people. In the future, he does not plan to return Syria because he thinks the situation is not stable in there, and he has a business, home, and his wife will come to Turkey soon; in other words, he is building his future in Turkey.

Entrepreneur Business Registration

The license - the Regulation on Opening and Operating Licenses- is the permission given by the competent authorities for the establishment and operation of the businesses. Syrian entrepreneurs are required to obtain business licenses from the authorities in order to start or maintain their activities. Licensing procedures diversify according to the type of workplace, work-area, and activities. In this context, Syrian entrepreneurs need support to carry out the process with the competent authorities and to complete the procedures. In this context, United Work supports, encourages, and guides Syrian businesses all over Istanbul to obtain the necessary licenses.

Activities carried out

In 2019, United Work assisted 93 Syrian refugee entrepreneurs accommodating under Temporary Protection Status during the formalization of their businesses. The project mainly covers activities focusing on administrative, technical and personnel support.

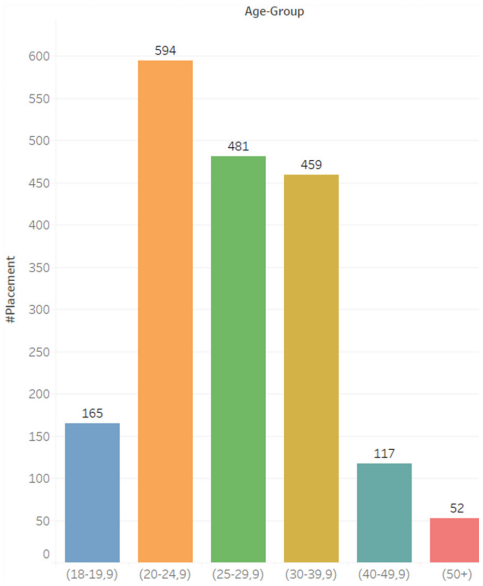
1.2. Achievements

1.2.1. Job Placement

From 01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019, United Work realized 1868 job placements. The figures below contain an explicit analysis of the job placements achieved, and an assessment of the project objectives.

Age Breakdown of Job Placements

Table 2

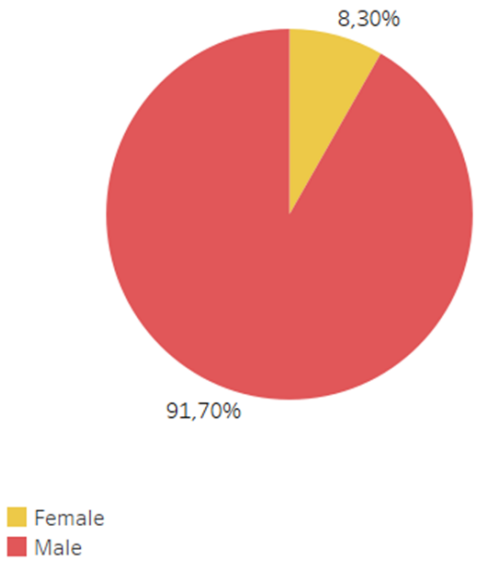


Taking into account the age distribution and age averages of the Syrian population living in Turkey, United Work conducts its job placement processes in direct proportion to the population. Young people constitute a large segment of the recruitments. Respectively, 165, 594, 481,459, 117, and 52 job placements achieved in age groups of 18 – 19, 20 – 24, 25 – 29, 30 – 39, 40 – 49 and over 50. In this context, 9% of recruitments are between 18 and 19,9, 32% of recruitments are between 20 and 24,9, 26% of recruitments are between 25 and 29,9, 25% of recruitments are between 30 and 39,9, 6% of recruitments are between 40 and 49,9 and 3% of recruitments are over than 50. In other words, among Syrian refugees accommodating in Turkey, the younger population more motivated to join the formal workforce; therefore, 66% of the placements covered in the age range of 18 – 30 in this phase.

Age Group	# Placements	Percentage
(18-19,9)	165	8,8%
(20-24,9)	594	31,8%
(25-29,9)	481	25,7%
(30-39,9)	459	24,6%
(40-49,9)	117	6,3%
(50+)	52	2,8%
Total	1868	100%

Gender Breakdown of Job Placements

Table 3



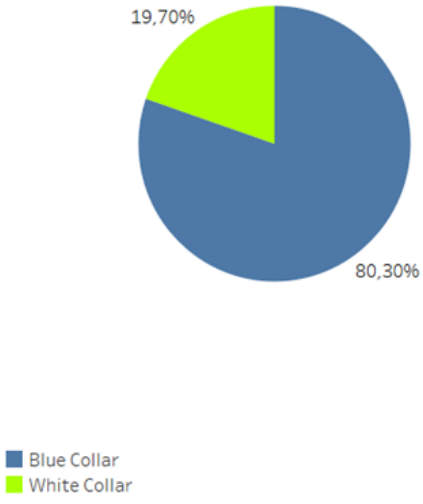
The participation of women in the labour market is one of the United Work's priorities. For this reason, United Work carefully implements and designs its activities to include more women in the project. However, it is not a simple task. On the one side, the rate of workforce participation among the female workforce is very limited in general. On the other side, this rate even decreases among refugee workforce. Therefore, the effort to place Syrian female workforce into the formal labour market is not just solely overcoming the nationality barrier but also it requires to overcome gender barriers.

Nevertheless, during 2019, United Work assisted the employment of 155 Syrian women in Turkey, and it is equal to 8,30 % of total job placement in this phase. Nevertheless, United Work regards the increase in this number as its objective, so in the upcoming years, it will maintain an increasing endeavour to increase the employment of Syrian refugee women in Turkey.

Gender	# Placements	Percentage
Male	1713	91,70%
Female	155	8,30%
Total	1868	100,00%

Collar Type Breakdown of Job Placements

Table 4



Inclusion rates of Syrians to the labour market in Turkey is observed to be higher in blue-collar positions parallel to the needs and demands of the Turkish labour market. Depending on this, during this phase, 80,30% of candidates placed in blue-collar positions, and 19,70% in white-collar positions.

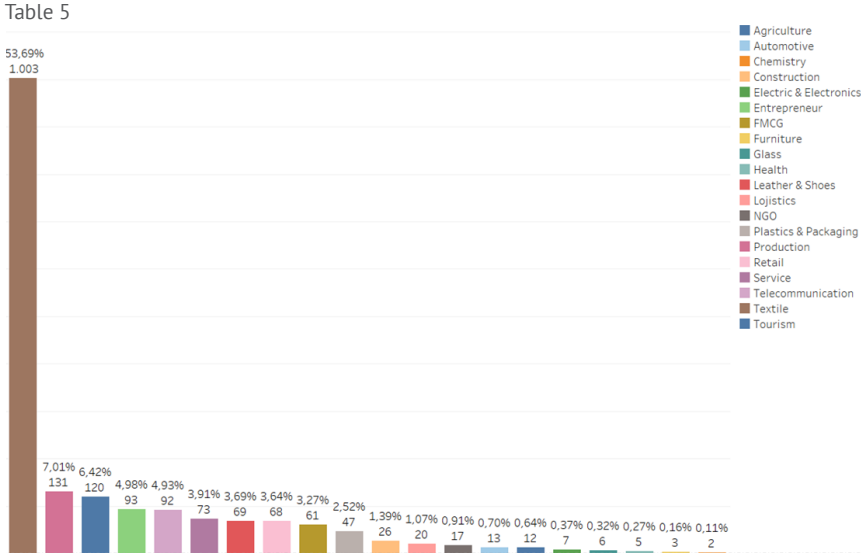
Collar	Amount	Percentage
Blue-Collar	1500	80,30%
White-Collar	368	19,70%
Total	1868	100,00%

Sector Breakdown of Job Placements

Based on the needs of the Turkish labour market and the qualifications of Syrian refugees, textile and production are the predominant sectors where refugees are most employed. Accordingly, 60% of total job placements were achieved by United Work in the textile and production sectors. Besides, placements in chemistry, furniture, health, glass, electric & electronics, agriculture, automotive, NGO, logistics, construction, plastics & packaging, FMCG, retail, leather & shoes, service, telecommunication, entrepreneur, and tourism sectors were completed. Detailed placement list shared in the following table.

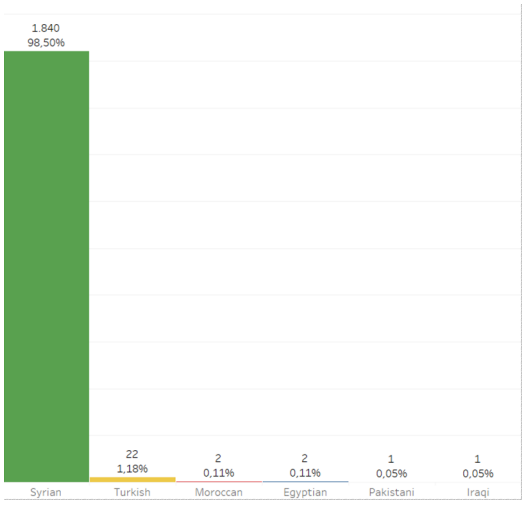
Sectors	#Placement
Chemistry	2
Furniture	3
Health	5
Glass	6
Electric & Elec-tronics	7
Agriculture	12
Automotive	13
NGO	17
Logistics	20
Construction	26
Plastics & Packag-ing	47
FMCG	61
Retail	68
Leather & Shoes	69
Service	73
Telecommunica-tion	92
Entrepreneur	93
Tourism	120
Production	131
Textile	1003
TOTAL	1868

Table 5



Nationality Breakdown of Job Placement

Table 6



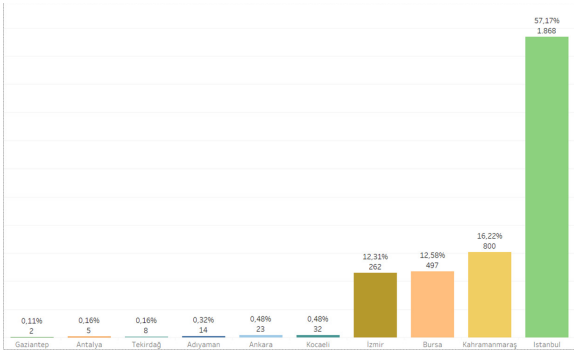
United Work is working for the inclusion of Syrian refugees in the labour market; therefore, 98,50% of recruitments have Syrian nationality. On the other hand, 1,50% of recruitments are from other nationalities. The other group contains Syrians who received Turkish citizenship, Moroccan, and Algerian refugees.

Nationality	Amount	Percentage
SY	1840	98,50%
Turkish	22	1,18%
Moroccan	2	0,11%
Egyptian	2	0,11%
Pakistani	1	0,05%
Iraqi	1	0,05%
Total	1868	100,00%

Location Breakdown of Job Placements

United Work is headquartered in Istanbul, and it has offices in Bursa, Izmir. However, United Work provides its services all around in Turkey when it is needed or demanded. Accordingly, the location distribution of recruitments accomplished in a parallel density with the presence of the offices. Overwhelmingly, Istanbul, Bursa, and Izmir have been the cities where most of the placements realized. Besides, Kahramanmaras appeared as a city where although United Work does not have an office, the second largest number of placements achieved. In total, 57% of recruitments are realized in Istanbul, 16% in Kahramanmaras, 13% in Bursa, and 12 % İzmir. In addition to these cities, as shown in the table below, job placements are realized in Kocaeli, Ankara, Adıyaman, Ankara, Adıyaman, Tekirdag, Antalya, and Gaziantep.

Table 7

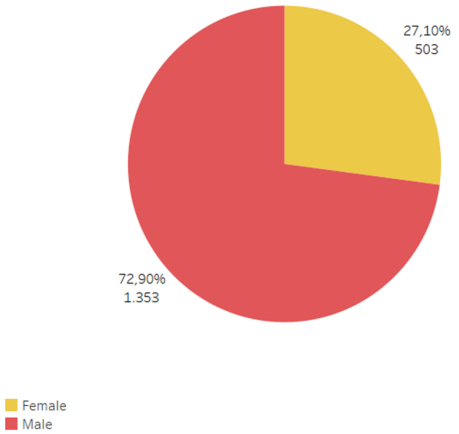


Location	Amount	Percentage
Gaziantep	2	0,11%
Antalya	3	0,16%
Tekirdağ	3	0,16%
Adıyaman	6	0,32%
Ankara	9	0,48%
Kocaeli	9	0,48%
İzmir	230	12,31%
Bursa	235	12,58%
Maraş	303	16,22%
İstanbul	1068	57,17%
Total	1868	100,00%

1.2.2. Training

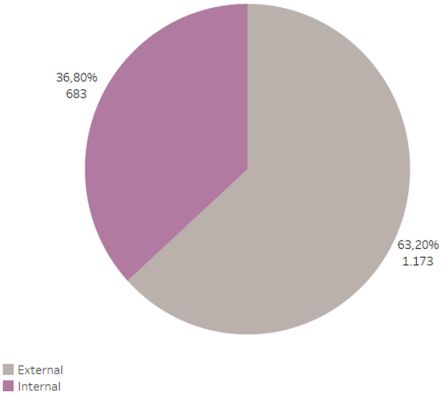
In 2019, 1856 trainees participated in training provided by United Work. 27% of trainees were female, and 73% were male. In other words, a significant number of women participated in online training provided by United Work. The participation of women in the workforce is one of United Work's priorities; therefore, including women in training activities is critical to contribute to the improvement of their related skills to possess a competitive advantage in the job market.

Table 8



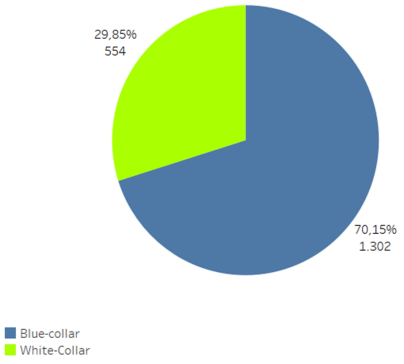
United Work is capable of providing training through different channels, including internal and external training. Internal training refers to the activity taking place in the United Work offices. External training refers to training undertaken in the workplaces, factories or other cities, depending on the needs and demands of participants. As a result, in 2019, among 1856 training participants, 683 internal, and 1173 external trainings.

Table 9



The majority of trained refugees were blue-collar. It is a compatible result with the distribution of collars among refugee workforce. Nevertheless, although blue-collar workers generate the bigger portion, United Work targets to embrace more white-collar workers in its activities in order to increase the number of placements.

Table 10

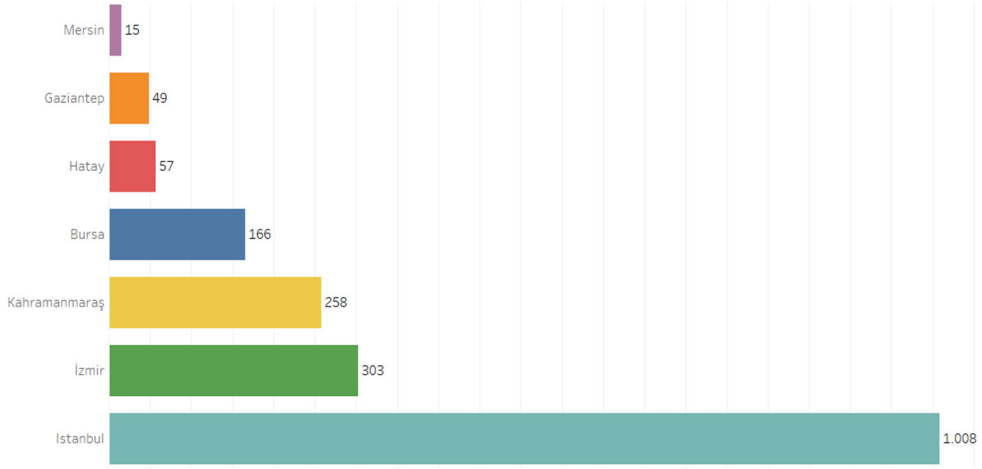


> In 2019, 1856 trainees participated in training provided by United Work. 27% of trainees were female, and 73% were male.

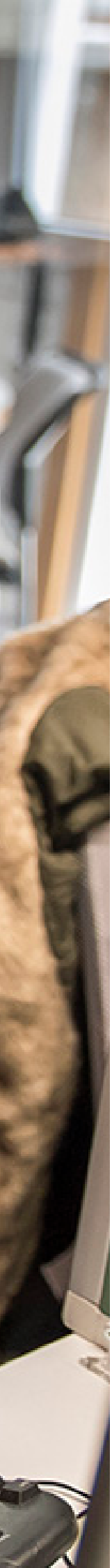
Lastly, when training analyzed according to location, it is observed that there is high coherence with the placement locations. As seen in Table 11 below, Istanbul, Izmir, Kahramanmaraş and Bursa are cities where most of the training took place.

In other words, placements are mostly realized in cities where training took place. Accordingly, the situation is a clear demonstration of the success and effectiveness of training activities.

Table 11



ANYWHERE



İbrahim Abdulkarim

İbrahim Abdulkarim is 23 years old Syrian; he came to Turkey from Aleppo in 2015. Before his arrival in Turkey, he had been living in Saudi Arabia for 14 years since he was 7 years old. Therefore, he knows Saudi culture, is fluent in the Saudi accent.

As he could not study in Syria because of the civil war, he decided to immigrate to Turkey. He started to study Electrical Engineering at the university in the northern Turkish city Karabük, close to the Black Sea coast. In Karabük, he could not afford living and decided to move to Istanbul to seek for a job. A friend informed him about United Work. Later, he paid a visit to the United Work office, had an interview and was called later by the Turkish online wedding marketplace. At the end of this process, he started to work.

In the company, he has different responsibilities. He fixes the data on the websites, edits customer comments, calls back the customers, and looks for new data.

In the Summer of 2018, Ibrahim got his Turkish citizenship. That's why he doesn't need a work permit. He earns more than the monthly legal minimum wage of 2,020 Turkish Lira (€320, -). For this reason, he is really happy that he found this job with the help of the United Work.

Ibrahim speaks four languages: Arabic, English, Turkish and Spanish. For him learning Turkish was the easiest. He had a course for two months, that was it. At the university, there were maybe ten Turkish students who spoke English, but that was all. He had no other choice than to communicate in Turkish. Spanish is much more difficult. He learned it online through his friends from Colombia. The Internet also helped him to learn English.

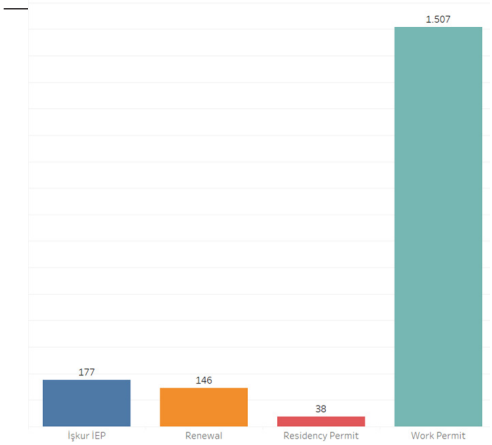
He would like to go back to university to continue his education in the future. Now, he enjoys his job here, and he does not make plans. He lives in the moment.

Ibrahim is the only person living in Turkey among his family. As a Turkish citizen, he might stay in Turkey. He doesn't know yet. Going back to Syria isn't on his mind still. When the war is over, and peace returns to his ravaged home country, he will look at what the opportunities are for making a career in Syria. But one thing is clear for him: "As long as Assad is in power, I will not return".

1.2.3. Work Permit

The work permit is a legally necessary document that must be acquired by Syrian refugees in Turkey to participate in the formal labour market. In this regard, during this quarter, 1868 Work Permits of Syrian refugees are obtained with the support of the United Work. Among these work permits, 1507 were new applications, 146 were renewed work permits, 177 of them received within the framework ISKUR (Turkish Employment Agency) Education Program, and 38 work permits obtained for the Residency Permit holders.

Table 12



1.2.4. Entrepreneur Business Registration

In 2019, United Work had been in coordination with the municipality of Sultanbeyli to complete the legal registration of refugees' businesses. United Work glad to announce that effort to register enterprises has become more robust, and it has apprehended an opportunity to support more businesses. In this year, within the framework of this project, 93 refugee-owned entrepreneurs' businesses were registered. This effort will be maintained with a greater effort in the coming period.

1.2.5. Monitoring System

One of the crucial goals for United Work was the establishment of a monitoring system for project activities. In other words, it is aimed to monitor the results of the placements and training in the medium and long term.

In this context, United Work uses a two folded monitoring method. First, workers are regularly called. These calls are realized in 3-month, 6-month and annual intervals. Through these calls, the workers are followed up by asking whether they continue their jobs, whether they

are satisfied with their jobs and employers, about their business life and their opinions and other related questions.

On the other hand, employers are also called and followed at similar intervals. Employers are also asked about their employees' compliance, their satisfaction with their employees' work. In addition, at the end of the first year, employers also contact for United Work during work permit renewal periods usually.

Additionally, in order to enhance the monitoring and evaluation process, United Work had agreed to receive service from the professional company named as Economical Research Agency. With this agreement, United Work receives high-quality monitoring, evaluation, and reporting services, and it enables United Work to evaluate the success and effectiveness of its projects in a more professional and concrete way. In line with the reports provided by the company, United Work adjusts and tailors its activities to develop its project implementation process.

Developments and Context

Sustainability

Susatanibility is the key element of the United Work in order to pursue

Sustainability is a key element for United Work. To gain sustainability, United Work not only have to be successful in its work (which has been proven in the previous sections), but it is essential to co-operate with other major organizations in this field and seek long term funding for activities which would make the United Work independent of the funding of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

In 2019, the grant received from the Foreign Affairs Ministry had continued to be a main budget for the United Work. The fund that had foreseen to end on 31.10.2018. However, it was extended by the ministry due to the changes in exchange rates favouring the Euro against Turkish Lira until 30.06.2019. During this period, United Work sought for additional funds while maintaining the implementation of the project.

On 30.06.2019, The Ministry had agreed to provide bridge fund covering the remaining six months of 2019, ending on 31.12.2019. During this period the target was revised and project implementation continued. With a conscious of the bridge fund, United Work enhanced fund-raising activities. As a result, United Work applied for 18 different tenders. During the stated period, United Work contacted ILO, UDNP, GIZ, Spark, and other possible donors.

However, some of the United Work's applications were not considered by the donors due to the non-NGO status of the United Work. Results of some applications were postponed to 2020 and United Work still awaits for the responses.

Nevertheless, as a result of these contacts, United Work has also received project. The first project was providing hotline support for the Fairwear Foundation starting in June. The second project was funded by Spark in July. The initial target of the project was providing training for a closed list provided by the Spark and achieving at least 15 job placements among these trainees. As a third project, United Work agreed with GIZ to implement a formalization project for the Syrian refugee owned businesses in Istanbul in the first sixth month of 2020. Finally, talks have proceeded with UNDP regarding the project that is planned to be implemented in 2020. The ex-ante project is planned to contribute to the development of the legal employment of Syrians who live in Turkey under the Temporary Protection Status (TPS). To achieve this objective, activities to enhance the transition to legal employment and to match employees and employers to increase employment are being realized. In addition to these additional funds, the Foreign Affairs Ministry decided to provide additional funding for the first six months of 2020 as a response to the successful implementation of the project.

Developments and Context

Sustainability

Partnership with Fair Wear Foundation

Fair Wear Foundation is a Dutch organization that focuses on garment production, explicitly sewing, cutting, and trimming processes–the most labour-intensive parts of the supply chain. FWF works with its 130 member brands, who are committed to finding a fairer way to produce clothing materials, and FWF engages directly with factories, trade unions, NGOs, and governments to find solutions to the problems. United Work and Fair Wear Foundation have started to cooperate for the implementation of the project named "Support Line Project'. Within the scope of the project, United Work provides 24/7 hotline support to employees of Fair Wear Foundation members for problems that they might face for any reason in their workplace. The hotline is available in two languages, Arabic and Turkish.

Partnership with SPARK

In 2019, United Work has started to collaborate with Spark, which works in the field of humanitarian aid and development, to support refugees. As part of the cooperation, United Work

commits to provide the "Self-Support Training Program" to students who received Spark Education Support and Scholarships in Hatay and Gaziantep and completing job placement of 15 scholars among the list. Initially, the list contained 344 scholars, and 128 scholars among this group received training from the United Work. As a result of training and job placement activities, the initial target was overachieved and 20 scholars were placed in jobs.

Partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Believing in the vision of United Work within its social mission to support livelihoods and its keenness to increase societal participation by integrating the small, medium, and micro-enterprises in the local community and empowering them economically and socially, "Şirketim" Project was launched. The "Şirketim Project" operates within the framework of the "PEP-Promotion of Economic Prospects" programme, which is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in cooperation with United Work. In Istanbul, the project aims to support small and medium-sized business owners to obtain the necessary commercial registration and business operating licenses following the Turkish law. During this period, the project will cover all official expenses resulting from the registration processes. The initial target of the project was supporting 150 Syrian refugee entrepreneurs in the first six months of 2020.

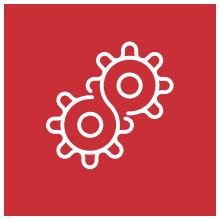
Key Challenges

Non-profit Status and Funding

United Work Reintegration and Placement Services, which is the representing office of Stichting United Work in the Netherlands, has started to operate as a Limited Company in January 2017 in order to begin its operation as soon as possible. Because obtaining Foundation status in Turkey requires a long time in slow-running bureaucracy. United Work has already completed all necessary procedures; however, unfortunately, there has been no progress in non-profit status application to the Ministry of Interior Affairs until now. This situation is a major obstacle to ensuring the financial sustainability of the United Work. Because donor organizations working in the field of humanitarian aid and development such as UN Agencies, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Development Agencies, and others seek non-profit organization status as a requirement in almost all projects and grant processes. So far, many fundraising applications made by United Work have technically failed due to legal status.

Lack of Service Areas

United Work continues to work primarily in four areas, which are job placement, training, work permit support, and business registration. Depending on changing circumstances, United Work aims to expand its areas of operation and services in the field of women's economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, and employment of disabled people. It would contribute to the development of a more holistic and unique approach by the United Work in order to create more livelihood opportunities for refugees and the host community. However, actions in these areas cannot be taken and developed due to a lack of adequate funding sources.



Governmental Relations

United Work's operations require close and sustainable cooperation with governmental and public institutions such as the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), Municipalities, and other institutions. In particular, obtaining approval from public authorities for the work permits and other relevant procedures delays, and it disrupts operational processes. In this context, the Dutch Government and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs are expected to take a more facilitative role in the relations of the United Work with governmental and public institutions since the organization founded in the Netherlands.

Lessons Learnt

2019 had been a year that United Work experienced various changes. Therefore, these experiences had been fruitful for learning various lessons as well as seizing various opportunities. As mentioned in the sustainability chapter, the main lesson had been related to funding management. Until 2019, United Work operated in the comfort zone provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs fund. In this way, it was able to entirely focus on project implementation. However, in 2019, United Work had to learn fund seeking and fund management processes in order to become a truly sustainable organization. During the year, United Work participated in 18 different tenders, some of these applications were rejected due to the status or some of them were postponed to 2020. However, United Work did not halt its fundraising activities.

As a result of the paramount effort, United Work received different project from different donors. As of the ending months of the year, the new project was learnt United Work to work with multi donors at the same time, as well as working in an international environment. In other words, United Work shifted its operation from project management to program management.

Another lesson had been reaching locations where United Work does not have a physical existence. During the year, United Work realized on-site training and placements in cities where region or city office does not exist. This situation led United Work to embrace more cities and more people. These lessons are valuable to utilize in the upcoming years.

Financial Management

BALANCE	2019	2018
Assets		
1.Fixed Assets		
A. Tangible Fixed Assets	-	-
B. Financial fixed Assets	-	-
Total Fixed Assets	-	-
2.Current assets	€ 30.280	€ 128.765
A. Receivables & Accruals	€ 3.784	€ 702.749
B. Cash & cash equivalents	€ 34.064	€ 831.514
Total Current Assets		
Total Assets	€ 34.064	€ 831.514
RESERVES AND LIABILITIES		
1.Reserves		
A. Allocated reserves	-	€ 814.015
B. Continuity reserves	€ 19.177	10.970
Total Reserves	€ 19.177	€ 824.985
2.Liabilities		
A. Allocated funds	-	-
B. Payables & accruals	€ 14.887	€ 6.529
Total Liabilities	€ 14.887	€ 6.529
Total Reserves and Liabilities	€ 34.064	€ 831.514

INCOME AND EXPENDITURES	2019	2018
1.Income		
A.Government grants	€ 1.356.384	€ 1.337.195
Total Income	€ 1.356.384	€ 1.337.195
2.Expenditures		
A.Programme expenditures	€ 1.339.754	€ 1.321.691
B.Accounting & legal	€ 5.875	€ 9.050
C.Financial income/expenditures	€ 2.550	€ 1.995
Total Expenditures	€ 1.348.179	€ 1.332.736
Total Income and Expenditures	€ 8.205	€ 4.459

Conclusion

United Work successfully completed 2019, despite the developments and challenges and provided more livelihood opportunities for refugees through recruitment, training, business registration, and work permit services.

During the reporting period, all of the project objectives and targets were completed and exceeded. As a result of the work carried out, 1868 people were supported during their job placement process, 1858 people were trained, and 93 new entrepreneurs participated in the project in order to complete their legal registration process with the support provided by the United Work.

United Work expects to sustain and develop its services, including various projects in various locations. Due to increasing of needs refugees and host community, United Work's effort close a major gap in the field. Besides, United Work targets to include women economic empowerment, entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities for disabled refugees, as well as their current services and programs if it ensures itself sustainability.

In order to achieve this objective, it has already started to fundraising activities to reach out different funding sources and donors but most probably it would not be able to sustain all services and itself due to termination of support provided by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and due to legal status in Turkey. As a result of fundraising activities, United Work has just started to a partnership with Fairwear Foundation, Spark, and, International German Cooperation Organization (GIZ) for different projects.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

From Refugee to Employee

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