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► Promoting Decent Work in Refugee and Mixed Migration Contexts

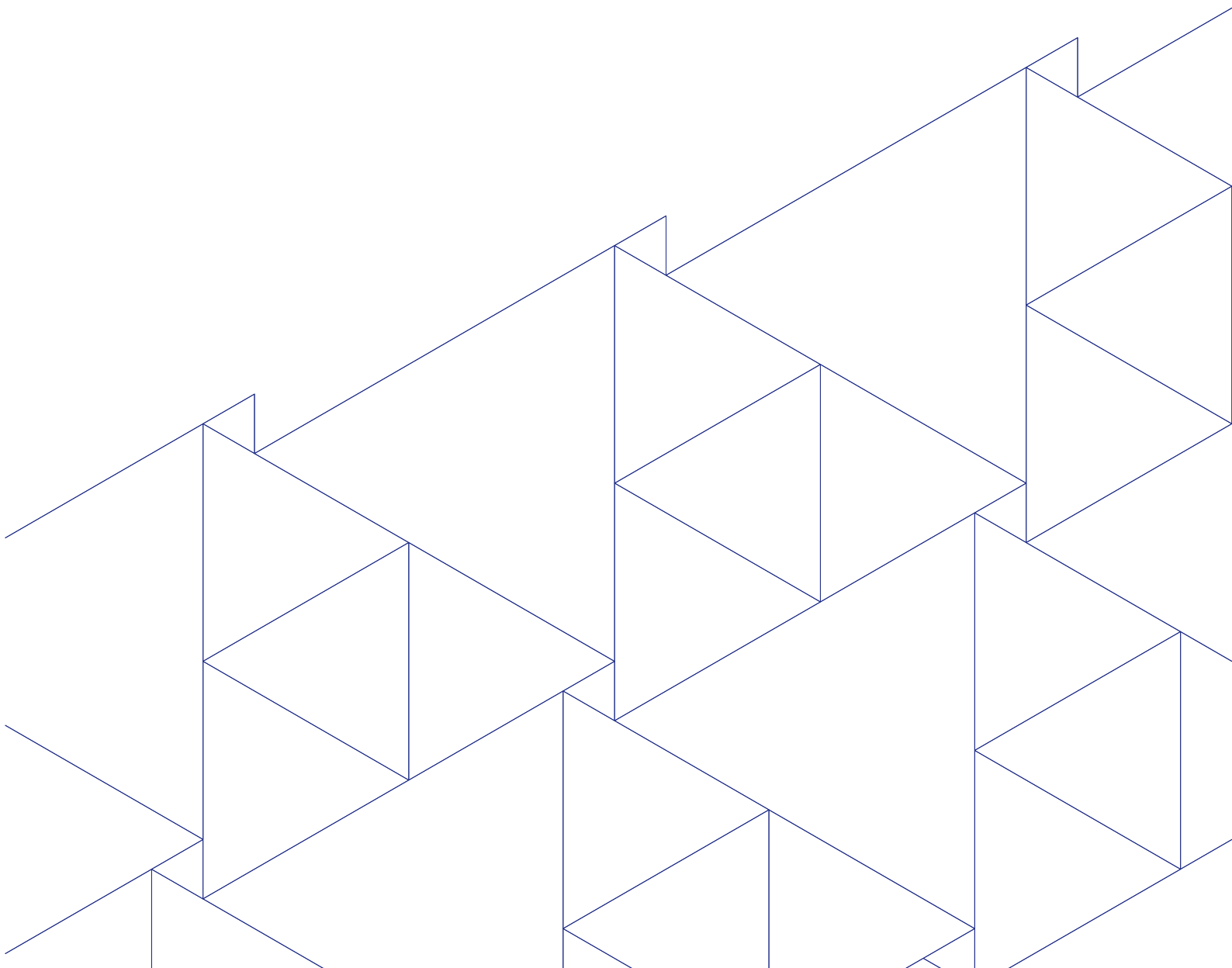
A South-South Triangular
Cooperation (SSTC) Initiative
Between Turkey and Colombia



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Between Turkey and Colombia

International Labour Office • Geneva



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The study was technically reviewed by Anita Amorim, Head of the Emerging and Special Partnerships Unit of the ILO; Isabelle Kronisch and Gizem Karsli from the ILO country office in Turkey and Donna Cabrera from the ILO country office in Colombia.

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► Introduction

Turkey and Colombia stand as suitable South-South Cooperation partners. South-South Cooperation is defined as “a process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how, and through regional and inter-regional collective actions” (UN, 2012). As Turkey and Colombia share a recent experience in receiving large-scaled refugee and migratory flows mainly from their neighbouring countries, social partners in both countries can learn from each other and share lessons learned, challenges and good practices on how to promote access to decent work opportunities for migrants and refugees. Differences as well as similarities between these two countries are valuable learning opportunities. Standardized approach in humanitarian assistance cannot be applied in different contexts of displacement and development conditions (Zetter, 2019).

According to the UNHCR statistics, more than 80 million people, across the world, are forcibly displaced by conflicts, violence and human rights violations¹. Most refugees live in low- and middle-income countries, where they face challenges in accessing the decent job opportunities. Since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria in 2011, around 5.5 million Syrians have fled their country.² 3.6 million of them are being registered in Turkey.³ In addition, there are around 400,000 international protection applicants and holders, in majority coming from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. By the end of 2020, 5.4 million Venezuelans fled their country amid political and economic turmoil. This Venezuelan exodus might soon surpass the Syrian case in

numbers. It is estimated that the numbers of Venezuelan refugees and migrants could rise to 7 millions in 2021 (OAS, 2020). Colombia hosted about 1.82 million in March 2020 (ACAP, 2020a). The arrival of such large numbers of people present many challenges in terms of livelihoods and economic integration in the host country.

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a crisis within the crisis for refugees and migrants. Uncertainties caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the on-going global recession, have led to grave labour market consequences. In 2020, 8.8 per cent of global working hours were lost that is equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs. This decline of working hours translated into employment and income losses. In 2020, there were 114 million job losses globally (ILO, 2021). Furthermore, the coronavirus pandemic has had disproportionate effects on vulnerable populations, including migrants and refugees. Refugees and migrants are often employed informally in sectors that are highly impacted by the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic affected particularly women refugees’ and migrants’ ability to access decent work. Refugees and migrants have experienced increasing difficulties to cover their basic needs and they are often excluded from support schemes due to the informal nature of their employment relationship. It should be noted that similar adverse effects of the pandemic on vulnerable host community members have further challenged the socio-economic integration of refugees and led to social tensions.

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>

² <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

³ <https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27>

This report aims to set the stage for a South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) between Turkey and Colombia by portraying good practices and lessons learned (during pre- and post-COVID19 period) on how to promote access to decent work for refugees and migrants as well as vulnerable host community members. More specifically, it distils good practices and lessons learned by analysing the activities implemented in Colombia and Turkey in relation to socioeconomic recovery, support to businesses and job retention/creation as well as protection of labour rights of migrants and refugees, including support for formalization and access to social protection.

The report is composed of five sections. The first section provides an overview of the macro-economic structure in these countries, focusing on the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees. This section also provides data on

the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. The second section discusses the legal regulations and policy responses concerning the labour market categorized into labour market governance, employment policies and social protection supporting refugees' and migrants' access to decent work. The third section raises the major challenges to be addressed to promote decent work for refugees and migrants. The fourth section identifies major ILO action responses in both countries. The fifth section focuses on good practices to strengthen fair and inclusive labour market governance and policies with extended social protection. It details the existing employment policies that strengthen skills development, recognition of prior learning and entrepreneurship as well as support to existing enterprises. Finally, the report concludes by assessing the implementation of the good practices.



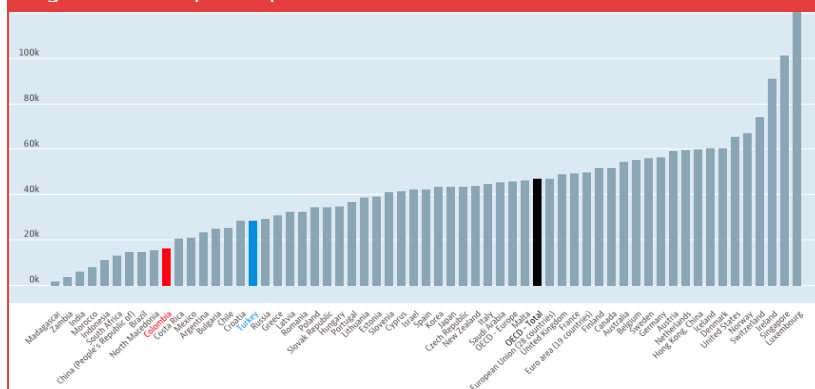
► 1. Macroeconomic Contexts and COVID19 Impact

This section compares the macro-economic structure of both countries, as well as the unemployment and work-force participation. It also provides a brief analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic context with regards to policy measures and impact on the economy at large.

1.1 Macro-Economic Context

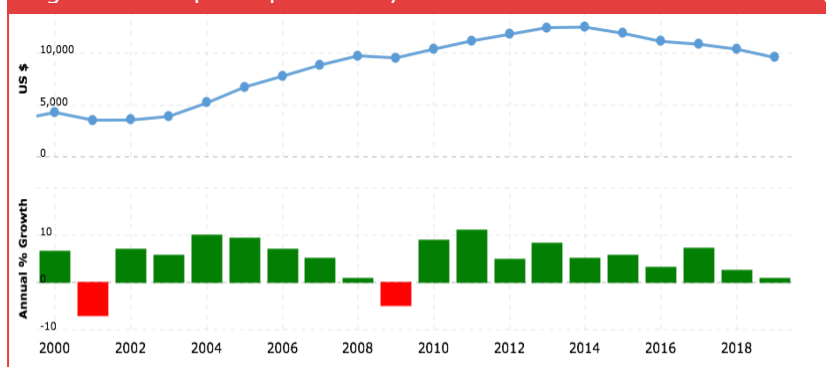
Both Turkey and Colombia are categorised by the World Bank as upper middle-income countries based on Gross National Product (GNP) per capita index (see Figure 1).⁴ The GNP per capita in Colombia with its 50.3 million inhabitants is 6,510 USD, while in Turkey with 83.1 million inhabitants the GNP per capita is 9,610 USD. Both Turkey and Colombia show signs of pressure on the GNP per capita since 2013 onwards (see Figure 2-3).

Figure 1. GNP per Capita in OECD Countries



Source: OECD

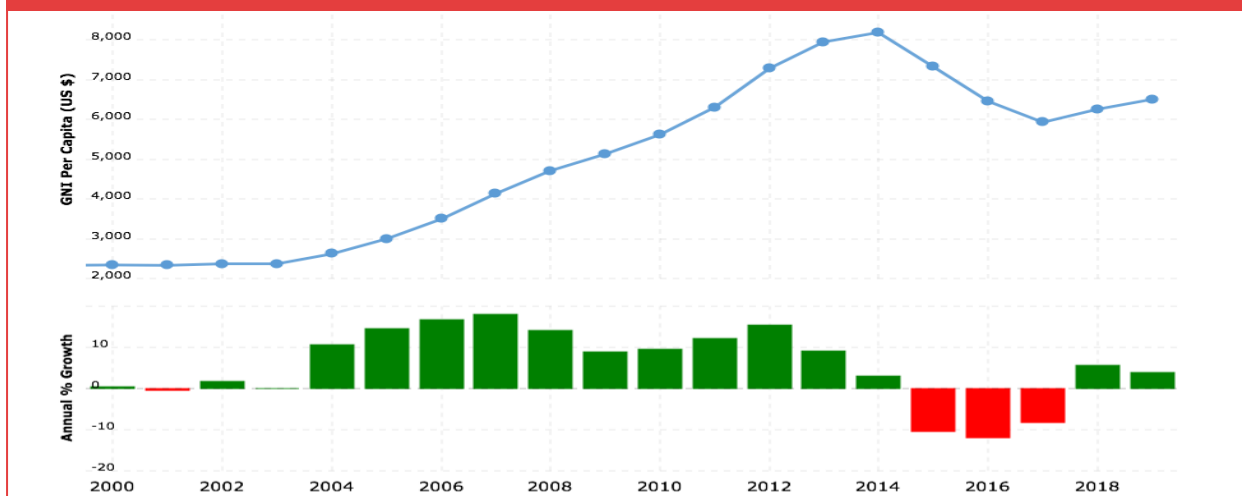
Figure 2. GNP per Capita Turkey



Source: World Bank

⁴ The category of upper middle-income countries includes a rather wide range of countries with GNP per capita between 4,046 and 12,535 USD. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-world-bank-country-classifications-income-level-2020-2021>

Figure 3. GNP per Capita Colombia

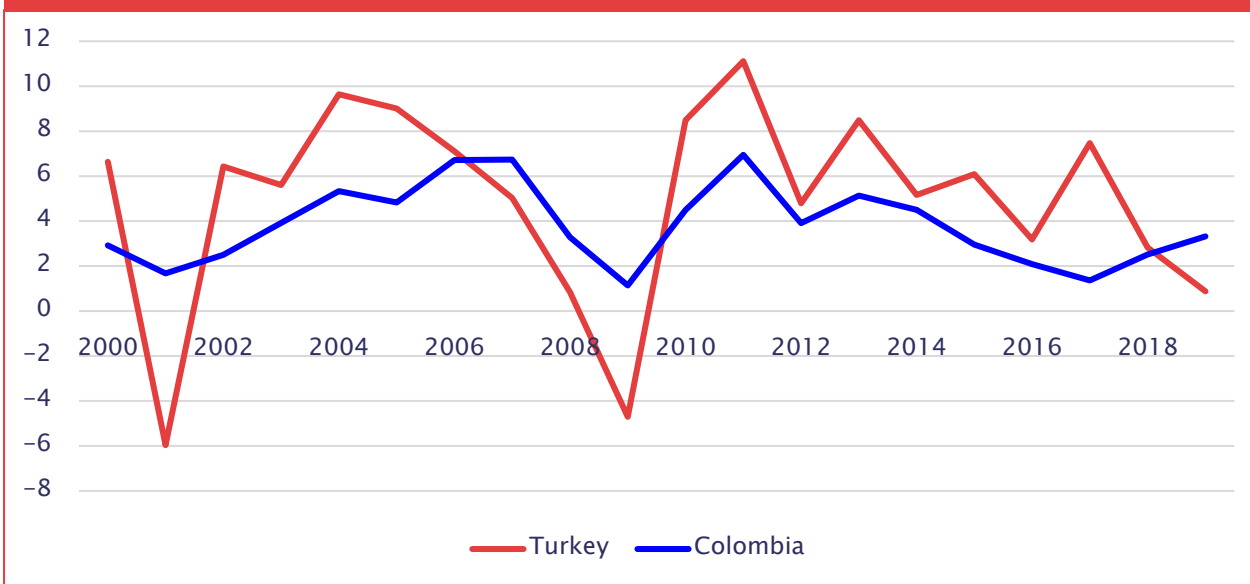


Source: World Bank

In Figure 4, the GDP growth rates in Colombia and Turkey show the impact of the 2008 crisis in 2009, followed by a quick recovery for two years. Since 2011, both Turkey and Colombia

show signs of instability with downslope heart beat lines in Turkey, and a decreasing trend in Colombia, with a slight recovery in 2018 and 2019.

Figure 4. Growth rate

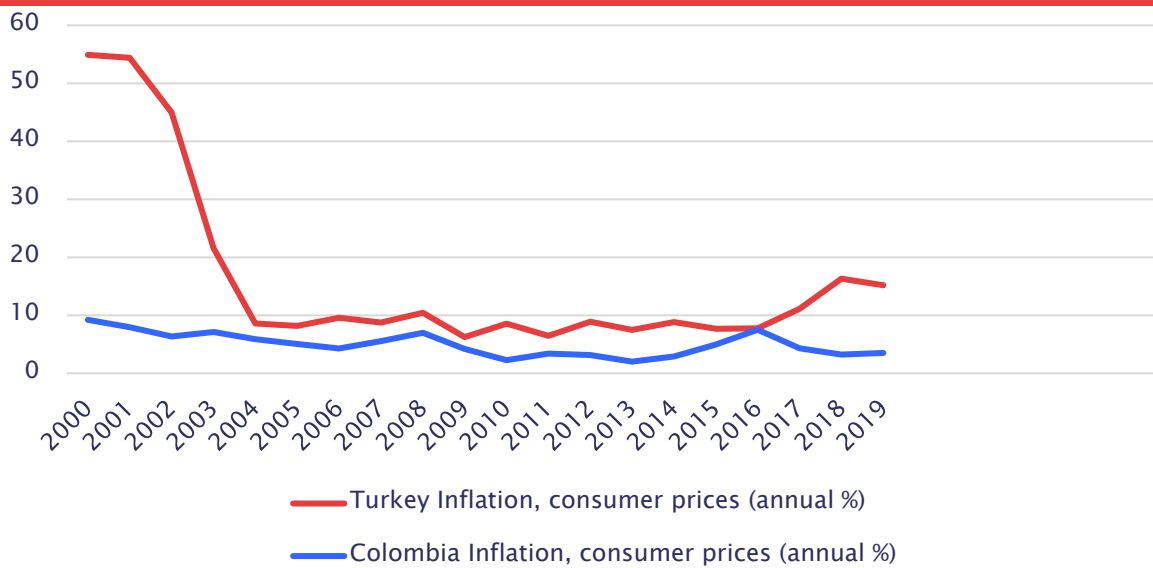


Source. World Bank

The inflation rate is another important macroeconomic indicator for the increase – or decrease – of the cost of living in a country. The data for Turkey and Colombia in Figure 5 show that the inflation rate in Colombia has remained

below 10 per cent, while in Turkey the inflation rate drops sharply below 10 per cent in 2004, remains around 10 per cent until 2016, then rises above 10 per cent since then.

Figure 5. Inflation rate

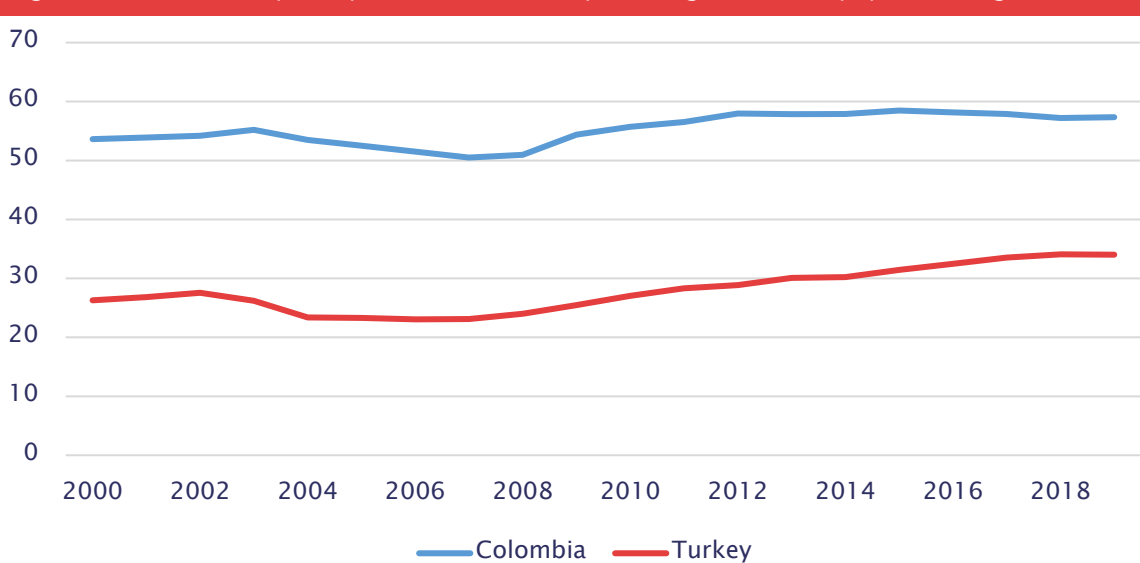


Source: World Bank

As Figure 6 shows the labour force participation rate for the female population is significantly lower in Turkey than in Colombia. The male labour force participation rate, in Figure 7, is also lower in Turkey, yet the difference is much less than in the female labour force participation. In Figure 8, data on the youth labour force participation presents similar

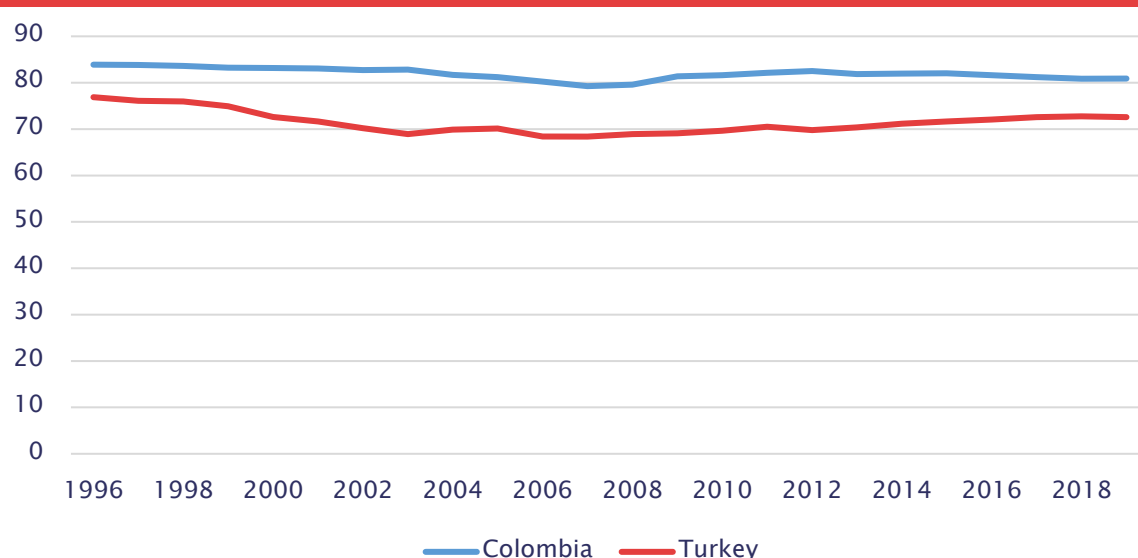
tendencies, mainly due to the low labour force participation of women in Turkey. This data shows that there are structural barriers that curtail women's full integration into the labour market, which inevitably have implications on the labour market integration of female migrants and refugees.

Figure 6. Labour force participation rate, female (percentage of female population, ages 15+)



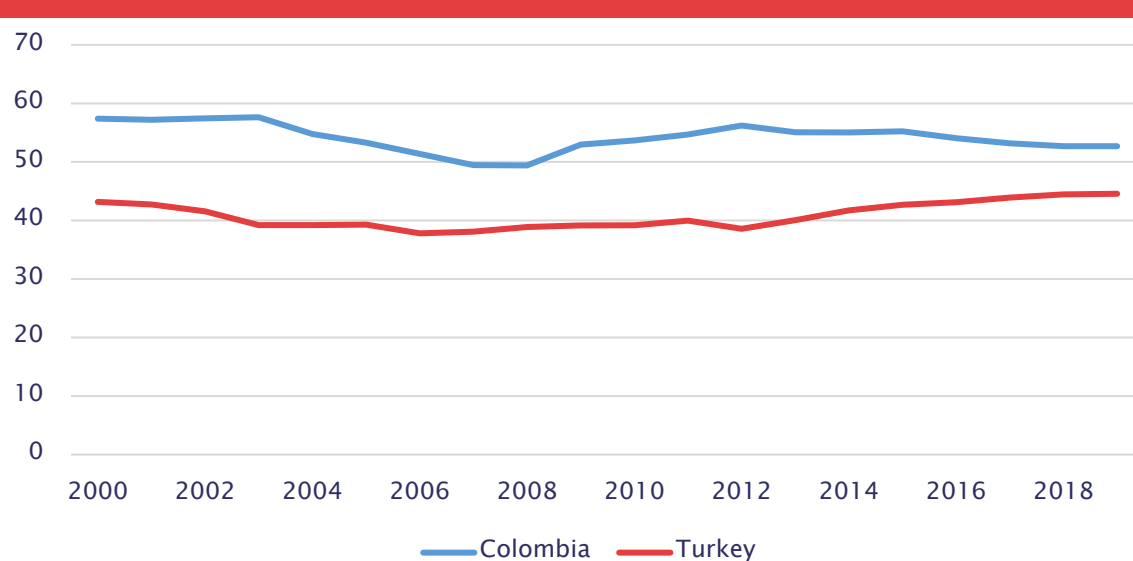
Source. World Bank, World Bank Development Indicators (Based on ILO Estimations)

Figure 7. Labour force participation rate, male (percentage of male population, ages 15+)



Source. World Bank, World Bank Development Indicators (Based on ILO Estimations)

Figure 8. Labour Force Participation Rate for Ages 15–24

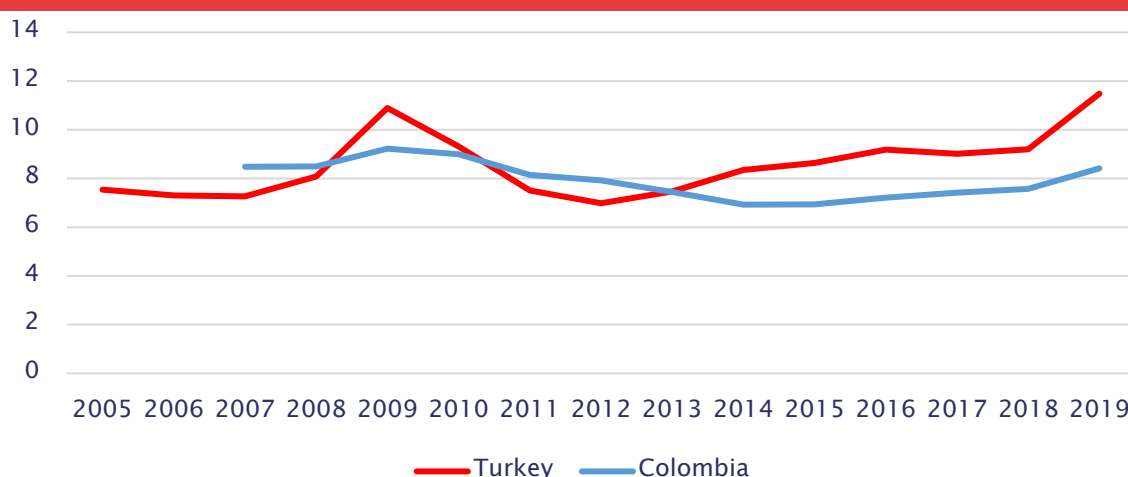


Source. World Bank, World Bank Development Indicators (Based on ILO Estimations)

In Figure 9, unemployment rates in Turkey and Colombia show similar tendencies: the effects of the 2008 economic crisis with the peak point in 2009; signs of recovery in the following years; slight upward move in the second half of the 2010s with a steeper trend since 2018. The unemployment rates for youth present a parallel situation, as shown in Figures 10 and 11. The

years 2012 in Turkey and 2014–2015 in Colombia appear to be turning points where unemployment rates have been increasing. This data indicates that unemployment had already been an important issue before refugee and migrant populations arrived in these countries in a high number.

Figure 9. Unemployment Total (percentage of total labour force, ages 25–74)



Source: OECD

While unemployment has always been an issue for both countries, statistics show that labour force participation of Colombian and Turkish nationals is generally higher than for migrants and refugees.

For instance, the Colombian National Planning Department reported that in 2018 about 157,594 Venezuelans were unemployed in Colombia, constituting 6.6% of the country's

total unemployment⁵. In border cities such as Arauca, Riohacha and Cúcuta, Venezuelans represented more than 20% of the total unemployed⁶.

The table shows that the same applies in Turkey, where higher rates of Syrian men and – especially – women are either unemployed or in NEET.

Table 1: Key labour market statistics, by sex and nationality

	Rate (%)			
	Group	Participation	Unemployment	NEET
Syrian	Men	81.0	12.3	19.6
	Women	13.7	18.2	82.2
	All	47.5	13.1	50.1
Turkish	Men	77.9	9.6	12.6
	Women	37.6	14.3	30.7
	All	57.8	11.1	21.5

7

⁵ DNP — Departamento Nacional de Planeación (2018), Estrategia para la Atención de la Migración desde Venezuela. Documento CONPES 3950, Bogotá, DC, DNP.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labour Market Luis Pinedo Caro, ILO Office in Turkey February 9, 2020

The higher unemployment rate of migrants and refugees is explained by multiple factors, including lack of knowledge of employers on

how to hire foreigners, low number of migrants with educational qualifications validated by the State authorities, among others.

Figure 10. Unemployment, youth male (percentage of male labour force, ages 15–24)

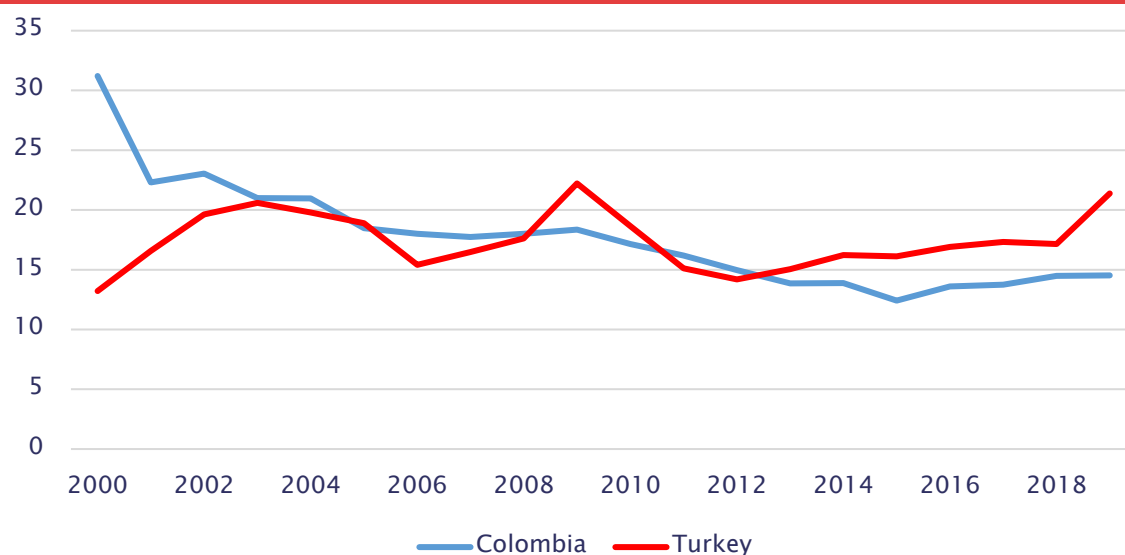
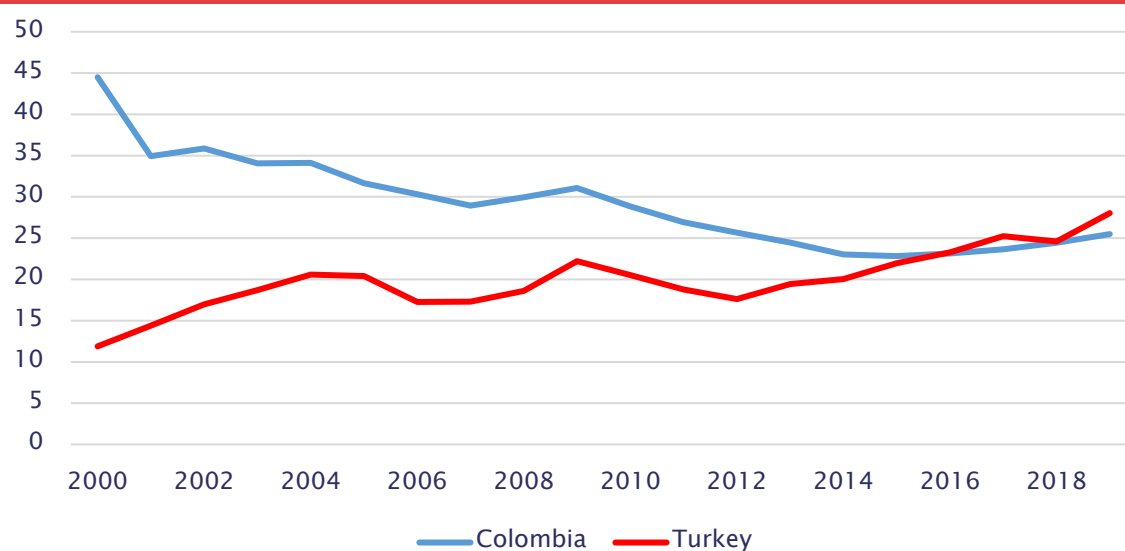


Figure 11. Unemployment, youth female (percentage of female labour force, ages 15–24)



Source. World Bank, World Bank Development Indicators (Based on ILO Estimations)

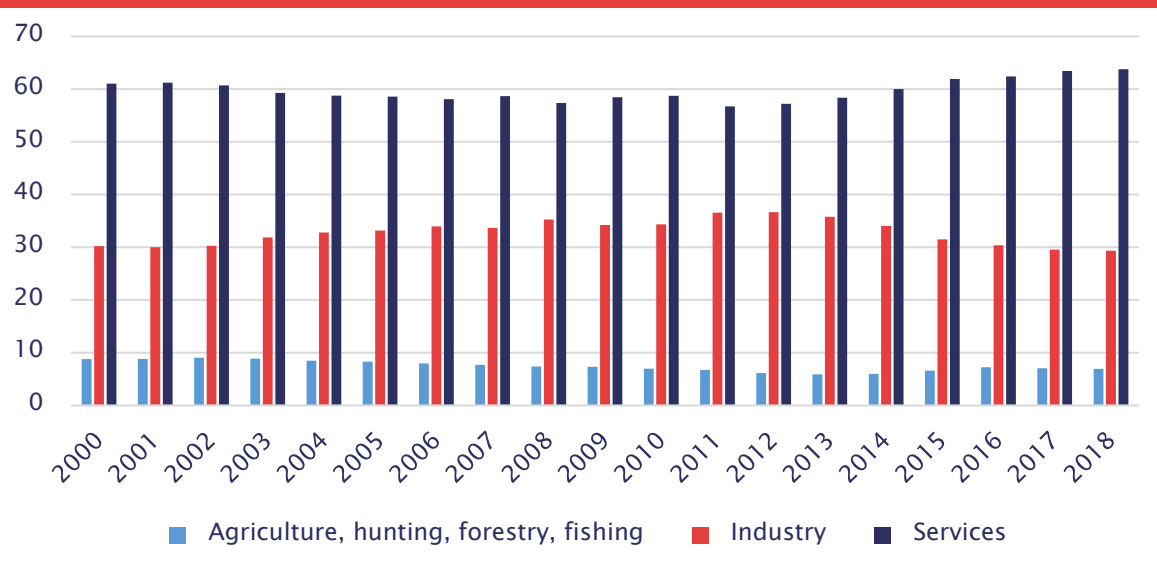
in terms of GDP share and employment capacity. In Figures 12 and 13, the Turkey-Colombia comparison shows that these two economies are comparable with regards to GDP shares of

the agriculture, industry and services sectors. The employment capacities of these sectors in Turkey and Colombia depict a slightly different pattern. As shown in Figure 15, the early 2000s in Turkey witnessed a drastic loss of the

employment capacity of the industry sector that is gradually replaced by the services sector. This transformation indicates the process of deindustrialisation in Turkey, which had been experienced in the 1990s in Colombia (Hoyos López, 2017). The fall in the manufacturing share in Colombia and in Latin America at large

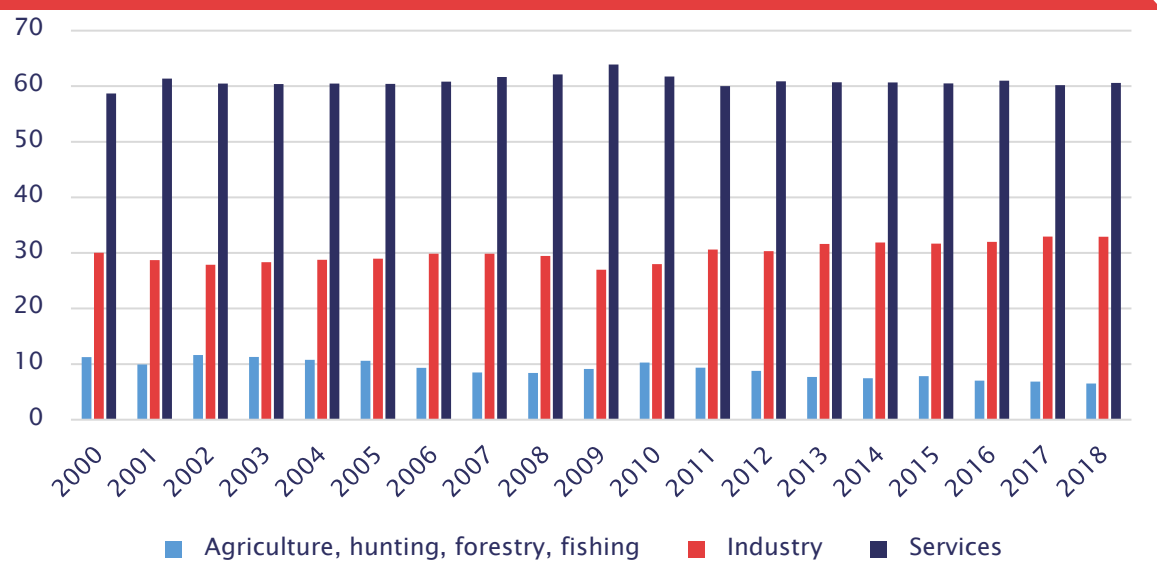
is defined as premature deindustrialisation (Rodrik, 2015). This data shows that both Turkey and Colombia need new industrial policy scheme to boost the production of manufactured goods for more employment opportunities.

Figure 12. GDP by Sectors in Colombia



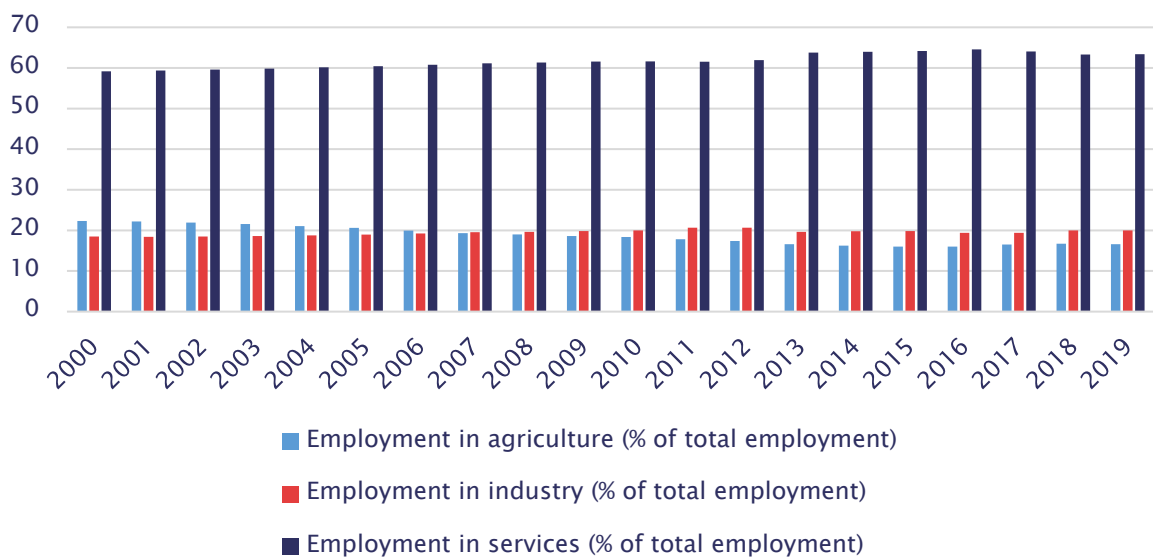
Source: World Bank

Figure 13. GDP by Sectors in Turkey



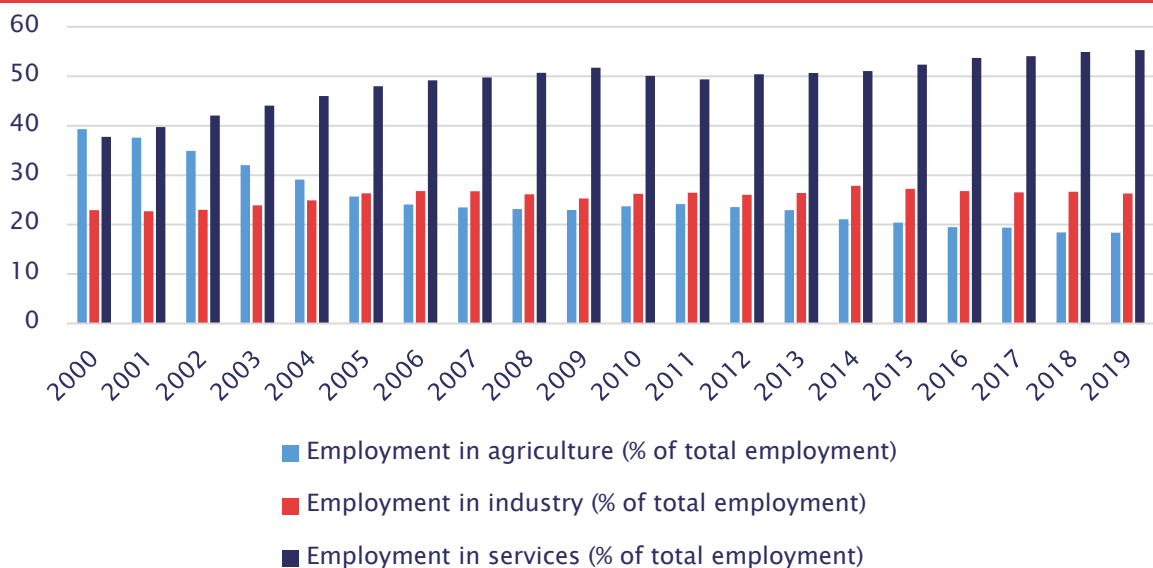
Source: World Bank

Figure 14. Employment by Sectors in Colombia



Source: World Bank

Figure 15. Employment by Sectors in Turkey

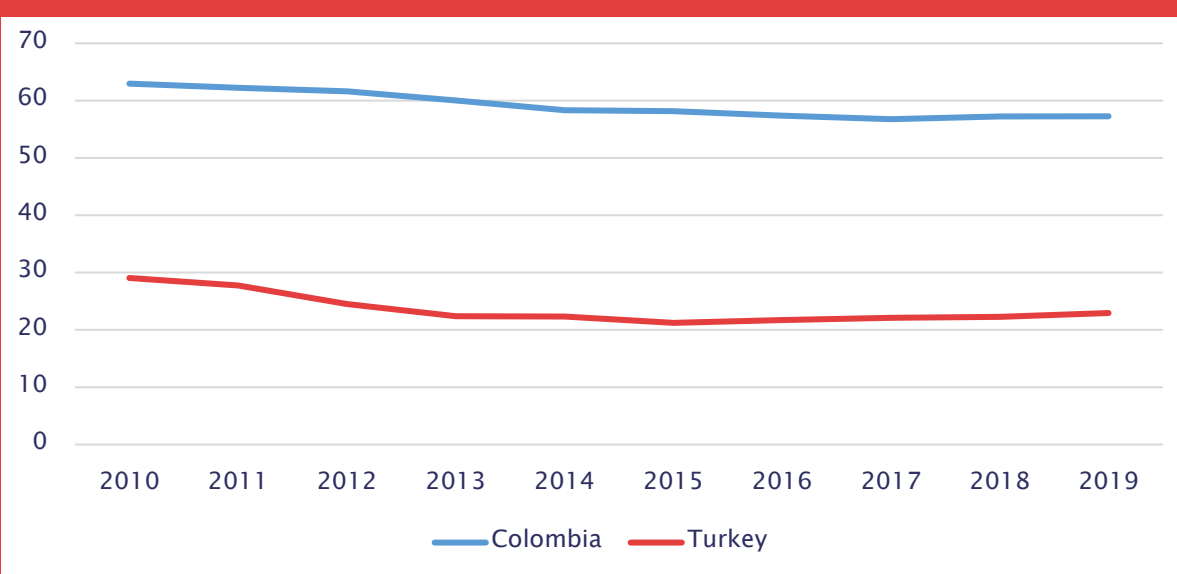


Source: World Bank

The transference of labour from the industry sector to new service sectors goes in tandem with the informalisation of the economy. Although the exact magnitude of the informal economy is not exactly known, when the most reliable data sets for the estimates of the size of the informal sector are combined in Figure 16,

it shows that the size of the informal economy in Colombia is overwhelmingly larger than it is in Turkey. Through the 2010s, there is a slight decrease in the size of the informal economy in both countries, arguably due to policies for regularisation.

Figure 16. Informal Employment (percentage of total non-agricultural employment)



Source: ILO for Colombia; Social Insurance Institution for Turkey⁸

Migrants and refugees are also more likely to be working informally. And since informal workers have fewer workplace protections—which can prevent job and income loss—they may experience even more severe impacts from COVID-19. According to Report of the Refugees International and Center for Global Development, 46 percent of employed Venezuelans were working informally, compared to 35 percent of employed Colombians⁹. Also in Turkey, despite the possibility to obtain a work permit the large majority of Syrians under temporary protection work informally in low-skilled sectors. As of the end of 2019, 132,497 work permits were granted to Syrians¹⁰. However, taking into account that this number also includes work permits granted to Syrians with residence permits and work permit extensions, the annual number on work permits issued gives a better

indication of how many Syrians are working formally. According to the latest data of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) Directorate General for International Labor Force (DG ILF) around 55,000 work permits were granted to Syrians in 2019, including 30 per cent to set up businesses. This means that roughly 7 per cent of the estimated Syrian labor force is now working formally¹¹, a considerable increase as compared to figures of 2016 but still at a very low level.

This is due to the fact that a number of barriers at the individual (such as issues to obtain visas or work permits), organizational (such as the lack of knowledge by the employers of the procedures for the employment of migrants and refugees) and societal level (such as prejudices and preference for local workers) make it more difficult for refugees and migrants to find formal jobs.

⁸[http://www.sgk.gov.tr/wps/portal\(sgk/tr/calis/kayitdisi_istihdam/kayitdisi_istehdam_oranlari](http://www.sgk.gov.tr/wps/portal(sgk/tr/calis/kayitdisi_istihdam/kayitdisi_istehdam_oranlari)

⁹ Refugees International and Center for Global Development, October 28, 2020

By Jimmy Graham and Martha Guerrero Ble

¹⁰ Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP): Turkey Country Chapter 2021–2022.

¹¹ Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP): Turkey Country Chapter 2021–2022.

1.2 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Macro-Economy

The first case of COVID-19 was reported on March 6, 2020 in Colombia, on March 11 in Turkey. Both countries started their containment measures right away. The President in Colombia declared a national health emergency on March 12, an initial state of emergency on March 17 and a national quarantine on March 24. Like in Colombia, preventive measures were implemented right after the first confirmed case in Turkey. To prevent the spread of the virus, a series of measures were taken ranging from ban on flights, closure of schools and transition to remote education, halting all non-essential economic activities, restrictions on mobility of people over the age of 60 and below 20.

Turkey launched a stimulus package worth 15.4 billion USD to alleviate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Turkish government implemented a wide range of support measures for households and businesses.

► Socio-economic recovery:

- Credits for household and businesses were made more widely available. On March 17, the Turkish Central Bank cut its key interest rates by 100 basis points. Public banks were made especially active in offering cheap (with interest rates lower than the inflation rates) loans for businesses and households. Private banks were also incentivized by expanded government loan guarantees and newly introduced lending and prudential regulations (OECD, 2020).¹²

- The Cash Transfer Programme¹³ was launched as early as in March. In March 2020, the funds of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations, the major cash transfer agency, were increased to 180 million TL from 135 million TL – among other social policies. Furthermore, a call for a new cash transfer programme was made for young members of families in need according to the criteria defined by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services. The total budget of two billion Turkish Lira is projected to benefit two million beneficiaries, with up to 1000 TL each. Selected beneficiaries register with the Employment Agencies, begin receiving the grant whilst actively searching for a job.

► Job retention/creation:

- In order to prevent unemployment, the government implemented a short-term work allowance scheme. The scheme involved subsidizing salaries in case working hours were reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and application criteria were eased. The applications were made online by employers, who had to prove that the COVID-19 conditions had led to a decrease in the income of the enterprise. When the inspection based on the documents provided were concluded, payments (between 1752.40 TL and 4380,99 TL) were directly made to the employees. The short-term work allowance was extended until the end of March 2021.
- In order to promote job retention and reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on the wage earners, cash wage support was provided for the employees who have taken unpaid leave, for the employees who cannot benefit from short-term work allowance. Case wage support is also targeting

¹² See also <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/turkey-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html> for the extent of the measures taken as part of the recovery plan.

¹³ This cash transfer programme was implemented under the name of “nakdi ücret desteği”.

- employers whose labour contracts had been cancelled after March 15, 2020 but was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance payment.
- To ensure job retention, employers are barred from laying off the workers during the pandemic period. This measure was first implemented in April 2020 for three months, then extended until the mid-March of 2021 with a possibility of further extension until June 2021.

► Support to businesses:

- Support for businesses were offered in form of tax and loan deferrals as well as additional credits. This support was provided for self-employed professionals such as lawyers, financial advisors, architects, engineers, doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, software developers, among others.
- Social security premiums were deferred for retail, iron and steel industries, shopping malls, automotive, entertainment and hospitality sectors, food and beverage businesses, textile, as well as events organisation sectors.

Colombia launched a stimulus packages worth 3.7 billion USD to counter the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic.¹⁴ Preventive sanitary measures and working conditions in different sectors were regulated.

► Socio Economic recovery:

- Protection of the unemployed through cash transfers and VAT rebates.
- Bank credits more easily accessible.

- Housing Lease Agreements were regulated. All evictions were suspended between April 16th and June 30th of 2020. All the current leases were automatically extended until June 30th. All annual adjustments were frozen for this period. Late payment interests and any penalties for the monthly payments in this term were not allowed.

► Job retention/creation:

- The Ministry of Labour launched employment protection measures within which collective dismissals or suspensions of employment contracts were not allowed. Paid leaves, modifications of the working hours and salaries were regulated. Employers' discretion to call a health emergency as the reason for dismissals was banned. Harmonization of working life with personal life was also regulated for the workers in the private sector.
- The Formal Employment Support Programme (PAEF, for is Spanish acronym) was initiated to support and protect formal employment through monthly monetary contributions. The beneficiaries of this programme are employers whose enterprise was established prior to January 1st, 2020. If the employer can prove that at least 20 per cent of the income loss was experienced during the pandemic period, the enterprise would be eligible receive PAEF support corresponding to the 40 percent of the minimum wage of all the employees. PAEF supports should solely be used for the payment of the employers' salaries.
- The Semi-Annual Bonus Support Programme (PAP, for its Spanish acronym) was implemented to regulate that 50 per cent of the June semi-annual bonuses for employees would be compensated by the state.

► Support to businesses:

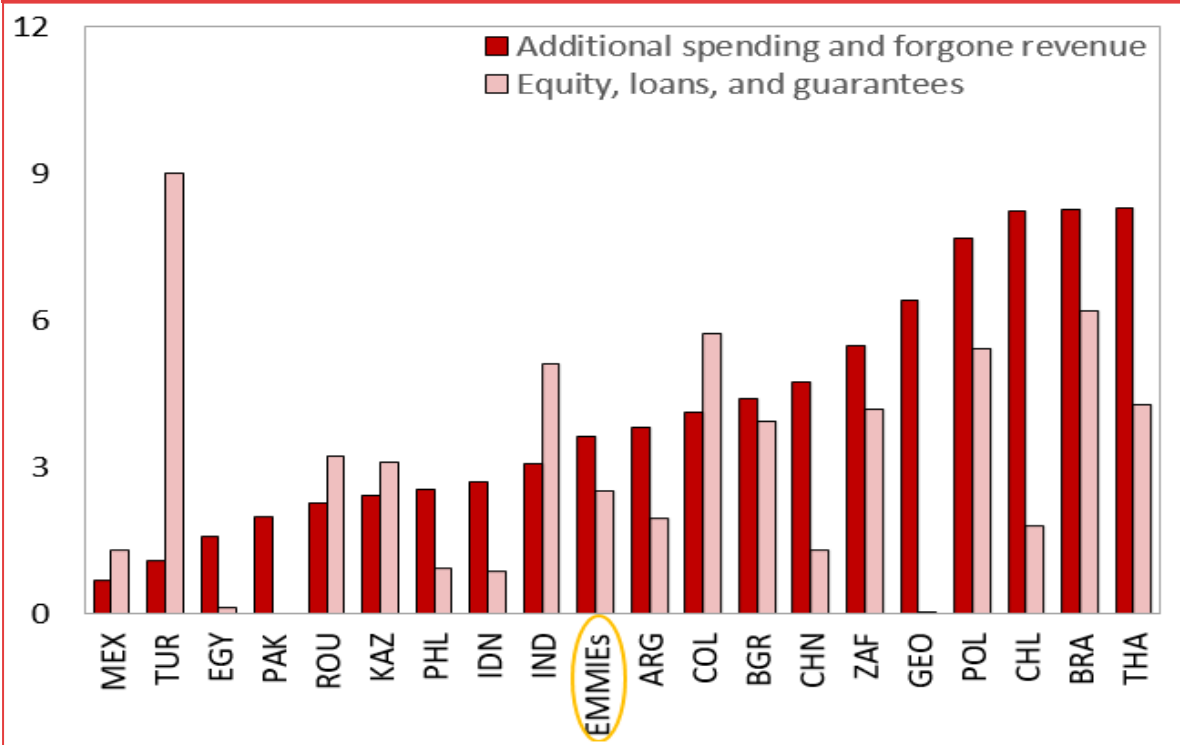
¹⁴ <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/colombia-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>

- The first support was extended for the tourism and aviation sectors.
- Construction and manufacturing sectors were authorised to continue their economic activities.
- Tax deferrals for companies and financial support for SMEs were provided.
- Default interests of the General Social Security System were deferred.
- Companies that have lost more than 20 per cent of their income are allowed to defer the payment of the semi-annual bonus provided that there is an agreement with employees.

A comparative database summarizing the key fiscal measures that the governments implemented in response to the COVID-19

pandemic as of December 31, 2020 shows that the Turkish and Colombian governments had different emphasis with regards to allocation of resources among these measures. The Turkish government allocated 1.1 per cent of its GDP to additional spending and forgone revenue (treatment expenses, hospitals, performance pay for medics, cash assistance for families, short-term work allowance, tax reductions for firms in affected industries). 9 per cent of the GDP is allocated for equity loans and guarantees (treasury guarantee loans, credit guarantee funds, all public bank loans). Compared to Turkey, the Colombian government has allocated a higher percentage of the GDP for additional spending and foregone revenue (4.1 percent), while the equity, loans and guarantees correspond to 5.7 per cent. Figure 17 shows that with the difference between two items of the fiscal response, Turkey presents an exceptional case compared to the other countries.

Figure 17. Fiscal Response to the COVID-19 Crisis in Emerging Markets and Middle Income Countries (as percentage of 2020 GDP).

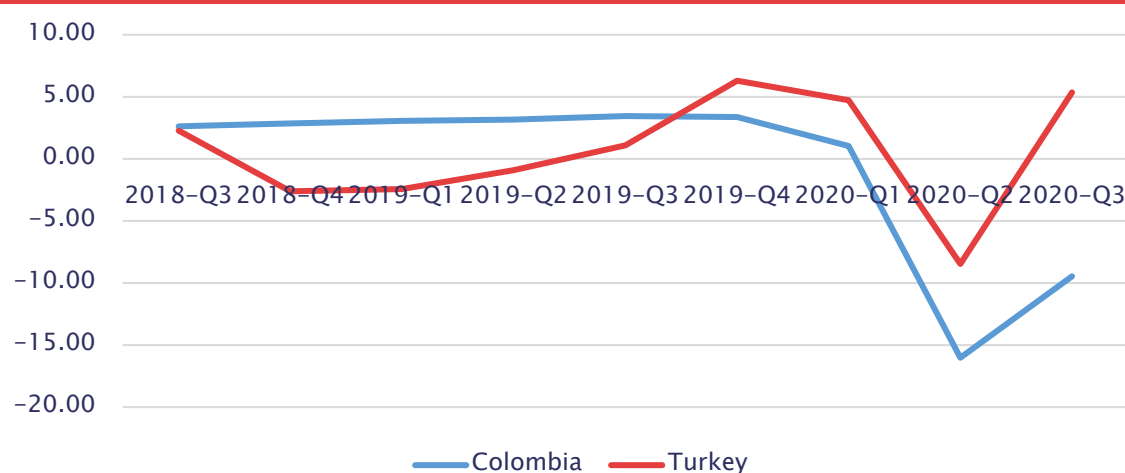


Source: IMF

As seen in Figures 18 and 19, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a sharp drop in the GDP and an increase in unemployment levels during the summer of 2020, followed by signs of recovery

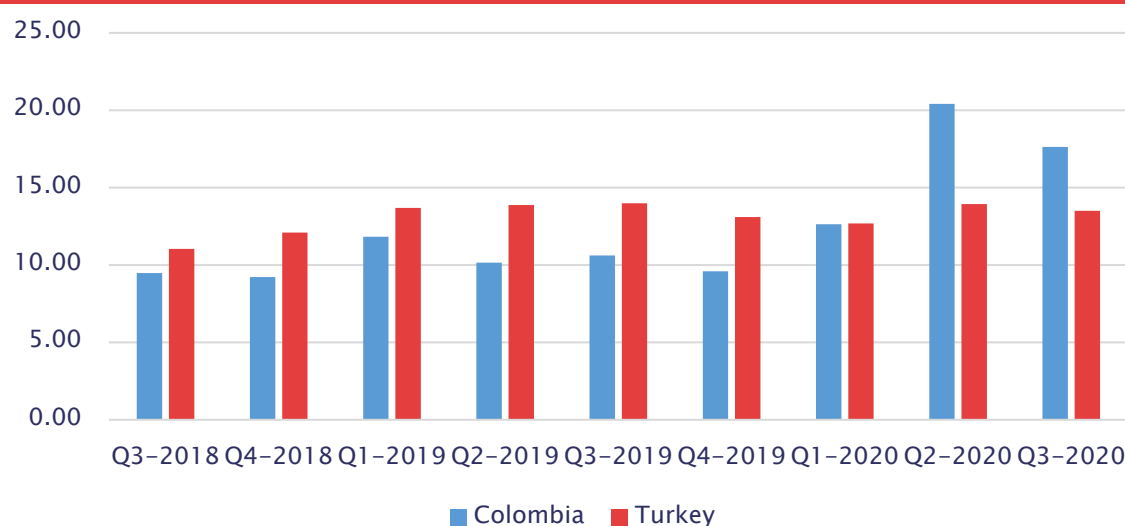
in the autumn months. In Colombia, the highest change in unemployment rate is experienced in April (19.9 per cent) from 12.3 per cent in March (Farné and Sanín, 2021).

Figure 18. GDP Growth (Variation from same quarter of the preceding year).



Source: World Bank

Figure 19. Total Unemployment (percentage of the total work force)



Source: World Bank

A comparison of Figures 20 and 21 shows that more Colombian women have lost their jobs than Turkish women. Male unemployment had increased in both countries in the second half of 2020. When the youth unemployment is considered, both in Turkey and Colombia young

women have lost their jobs (Isaza Castro, 2021). As figures 22 and 23 show, the hike in the youth male unemployment rate uncovers the severe social impact that the pandemic has caused (see also Farné and Sanín, 2021).

Figure 20. Male Unemployment (percentage of the total male labour force)

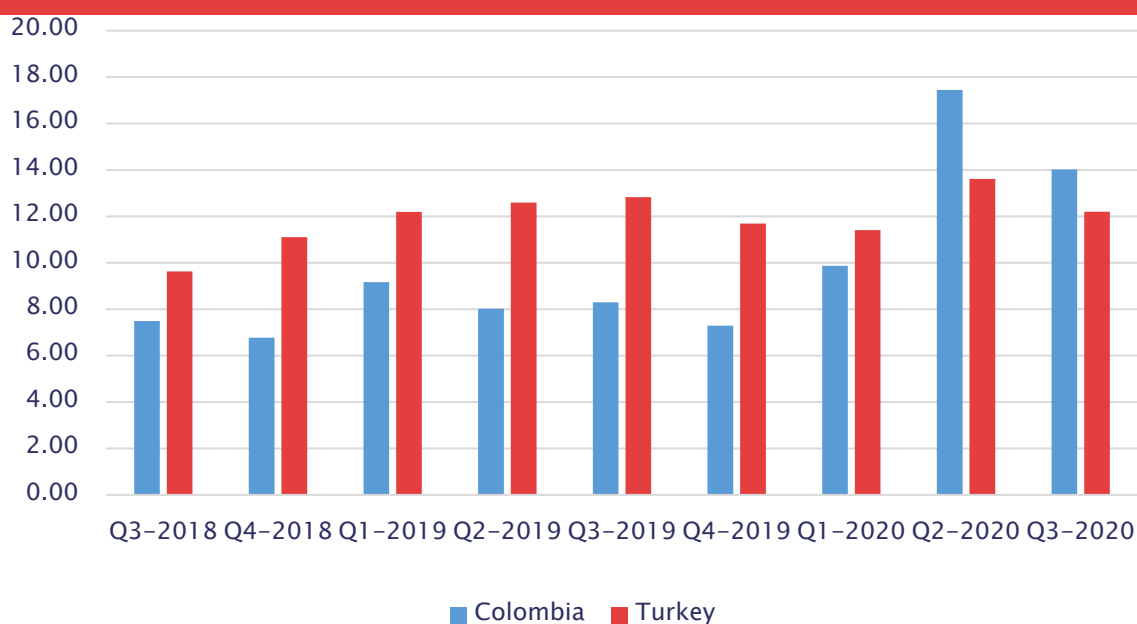
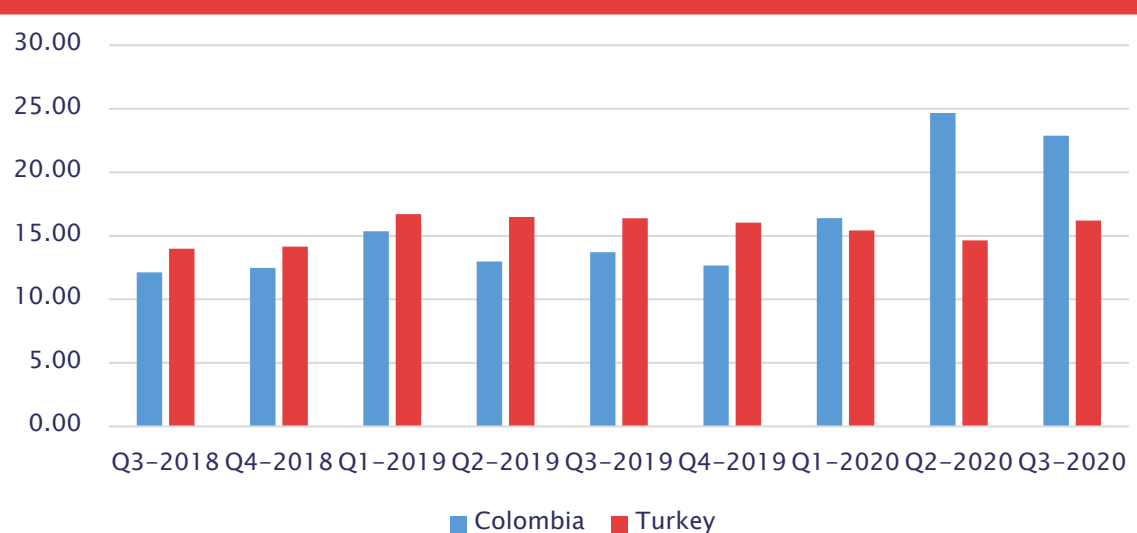
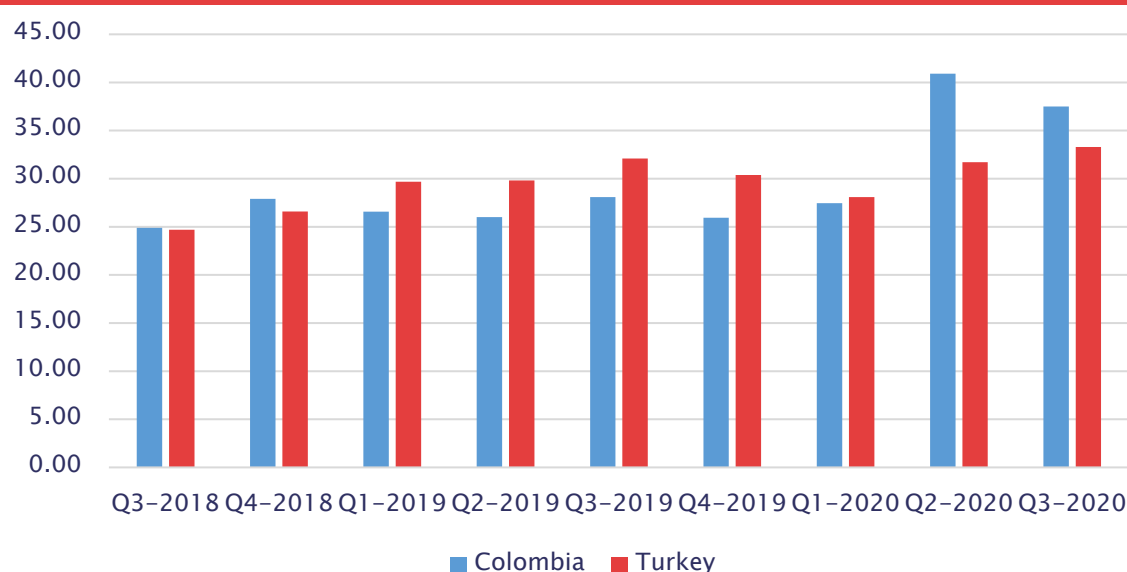


Figure 21. Female Unemployment (percentage of the total female labour force)



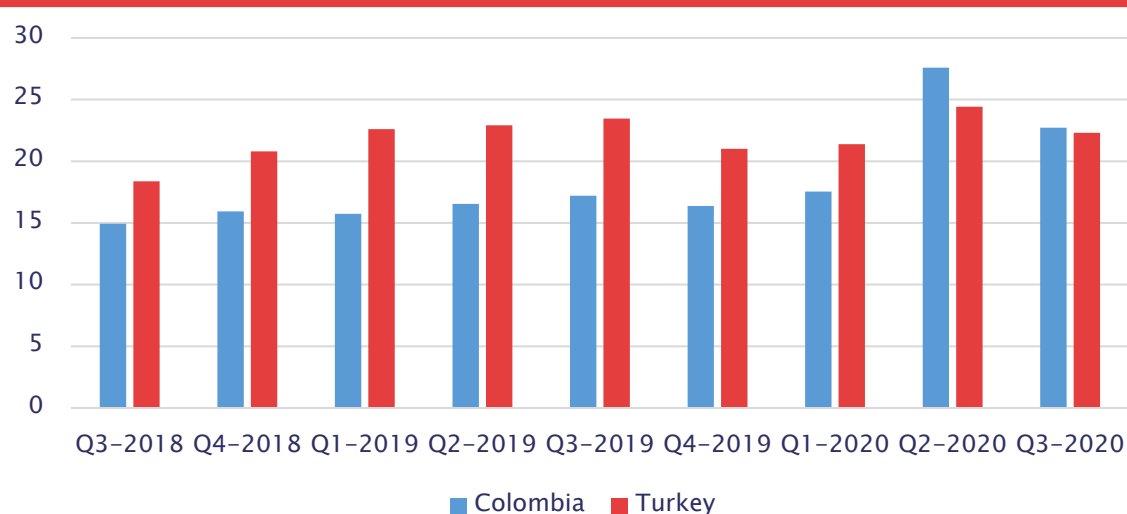
Source: World Bank

Figure 22. Female Unemployment (ages 15–24, percentage of female labour force)



Source: World Bank

Figure 23. Male Unemployment (ages 15–24, percentage of male labour force)

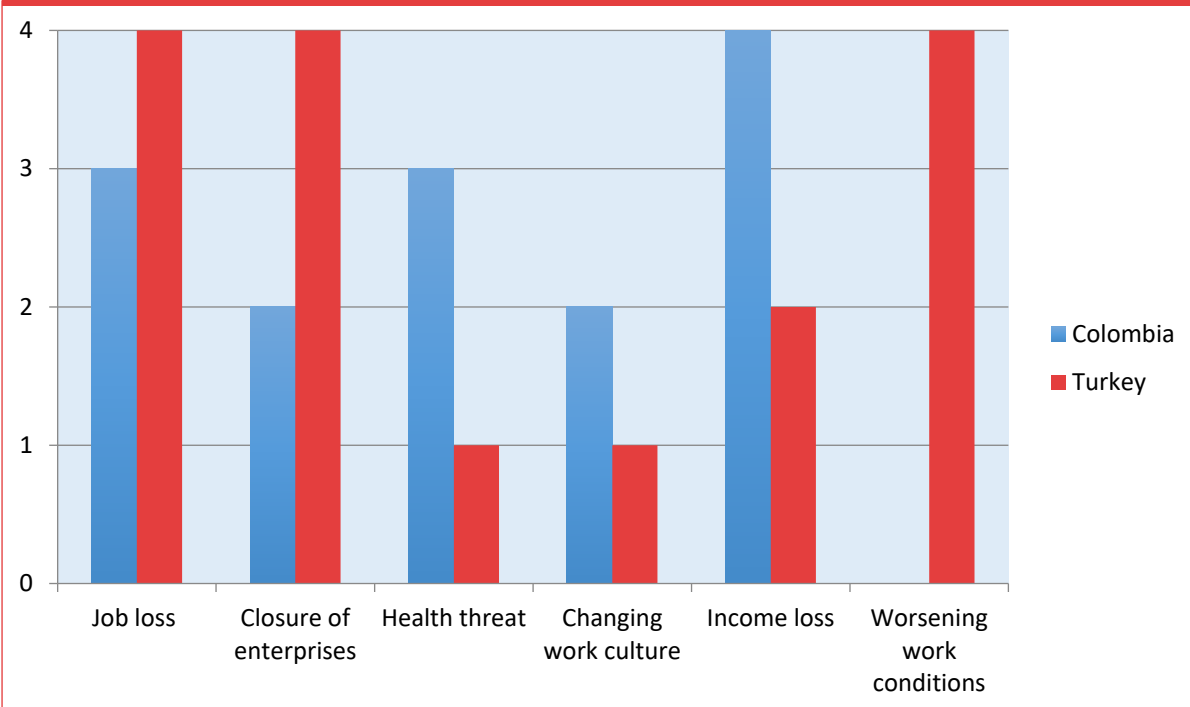


Source: World Bank

The survey responses from social partners in Turkey and Colombia concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market show that respondents in both countries are most concerned about job losses in the labour market. As summarised in Figure 24, other impacts most mentioned by the participants may be identified as the reason (closure of

enterprises) and the partial consequence (income loss) of job losses. It seems that the changing work culture happens to be least worrying impact of the COVID-19, health threat being the second less worrying impact. However, income losses should be dealt with separately since this problem has been less visible during the pandemic period.

Figure 24. Impact of COVID-19 on the labour market (according to social partners in Turkey and Colombia)



All in all, it should be underlined that beyond unemployment, labour income losses due to working hour losses have been the major effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market. Global labour income in 2020 is estimated to have declined by 8.3 per cent, which amounts to 4.4 per cent of global domestic product (Pinedo Caro, 2021). A recent ILO report warns that employment losses might only represent the tip of the iceberg in terms of the impact of the pandemic on livelihoods. It shows that in Turkey, hours worked went down by 34.9 per cent in April and 33.8 per cent in May, a period which coincides with the strictest

lockdown measures (Pinedo Caro, 2021: 11). Furthermore, the employment losses correspond to only one third of the work hours lost suggesting that the total loss of income of the households equals to a situation in which the unemployment rate would be three times as much as the current data shows. Separate ILO reports on Turkey and Colombia emphasise the need for new job creation especially for young women to mitigate the worst negative impact of COVID-19 on these economies (Farné and Sanín, 2021; Isaza Castro, 2021; Pinedo Caro, 2021).

▶ 2. Mixed Migration Contexts

This section briefly introduces the migration history of both countries. It also discusses the main policy responses in both countries. Finally, this section provides an overall analysis of the repertoire of refugee related policies in both countries.

Historically, neither Turkey nor Colombia has had comprehensive immigration policies in place, as they had been countries of emigration (cf. İçduygu and Aksel, 2013). Turkish emigration to Europe – particularly to Germany – and the Colombian emigration to Venezuela, Spain and the US, have been the main migration flows in these countries. Since the early 1960s, labour exchange agreements resulted in mass migration from Turkey to Germany and other Western European countries. In the 1990s, Colombians emigrating to the United States surpassed immigrants from the rest of Latin America. In addition to economic factors, conflicts of different kinds have also been important push factors. In the 1990s, Turkey has become a transit route for irregular migration from neighbouring countries in the Middle East to Europe. Similarly, Colombia was a country of transit en route to the United States¹⁵.

Relatively recently, both Turkey and Colombia have become the destination for migrants and people fleeing economic and political crises in their respective regions. Turkey is hosting around 4 million refugees, 90 per cent of whom are Syrians who fled their country¹⁶. When Syrians arrived in Turkey en masse in 2011, the government of Turkey implemented an open door policy. In Colombia, political conflicts paralleled with a deep economic crisis led to about 5.1 million Venezuelans leaving their country¹⁷. As a neighbouring country with a 2,219 km long border with Venezuela,

Colombia has received the major portion of this population. As of December 2020, 1,771, 237 Venezuelans were in Colombia. While 42.6 per cent of this population was officially admitted to the country, 57.4 per cent remains in an irregular situation. In addition to the Venezuelan migration, about 500,000 Colombians returned back to Colombia after the crisis started. These recent developments have put pressure for the enactment of a new legal framework and formation of new institutions in both countries.

2.1 Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey

Since October 2014, Syrian nationals, as well as stateless persons and refugees from Syria, who came to Turkey due to events in Syria after 28 April 2011 were provided with temporary protection (TP) by the Government of Turkey. This status gives access to a number of rights, services and assistance, including access to health, education, social assistance, psychological support and access to the labour market. Syrians with this status are defined as “guests” underlining that the granted protection status would not be permanent, but until they find a new and safe third country. Further, Syrians can also apply for a residence permit, if they fulfill certain conditions. As of July 29, 2021 there were 94,749 Syrians staying in Turkey with residence permits, 80,927 Syrian hold short-term residence permits, while 5,098

¹⁵ Colombian Migration Authority (Migración Colombia) is the main central state institutions responsible for immigration policies. Colombian Migration Authority was established in October 2011 to support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the policy making and implementation on immigration.

¹⁶ These figures exclude the unregistered and those holding resident permits.

¹⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/venezuela-emergency.html>

Syrians are in Turkey with student residence permits¹⁸.

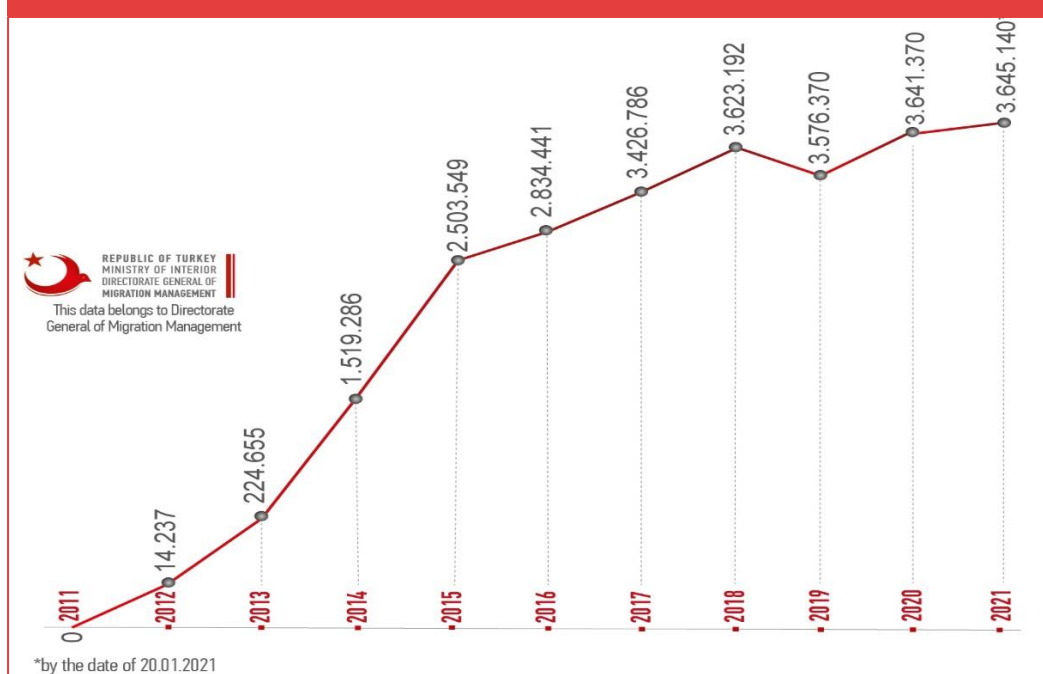
Along with modifications in the migration law, such as the Law of Foreigners and International Protection (Law no: 6458), the establishment of the Directorate General for Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior (DGMM) in 2013 was an important step. According to Article 103 of the mentioned law, DGMM is responsible for implementing policies and strategies related to migration, ensure coordination between related agencies and organisations in this matter, carry out tasks and procedures related to foreigners' entry, stay, exit and removal from Turkey, international protection, temporary protection, and protection of victims of human trafficking¹⁹.

In the summer of 2015, when a new wave of refugees arrived in Europe, Turkey and the EU agreed on an Action Plan to control and limit irregular migration (İçduygu and Şimşek, 2016: 61). This created a turning point with regard to

policies implemented towards Syrians with socio-economic integration becoming a policy priority. In January 2016, the Work Permit Regulation for Foreigners under Temporary Protection was adopted giving Syrians under temporary protection the possibility to obtain a work permit through their employer. At the same time, they received access to career and employment counseling services and activation programmes offered by the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)²⁰. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services has also been collaborating with İŞKUR in various labour market related policies, while the Ministry also plans and implements social and labour market policies addressing Syrian refugees – the Directorate General for International Labour Force (DG ILF) was created in 2016 for this purpose.

Figures 25 and 26 show the number of registered Syrians under temporary protection since the end of 2011 and disaggregation by gender and age respectively.

Figure 25. Registered Syrians under Temporary Protection, 2011–2021



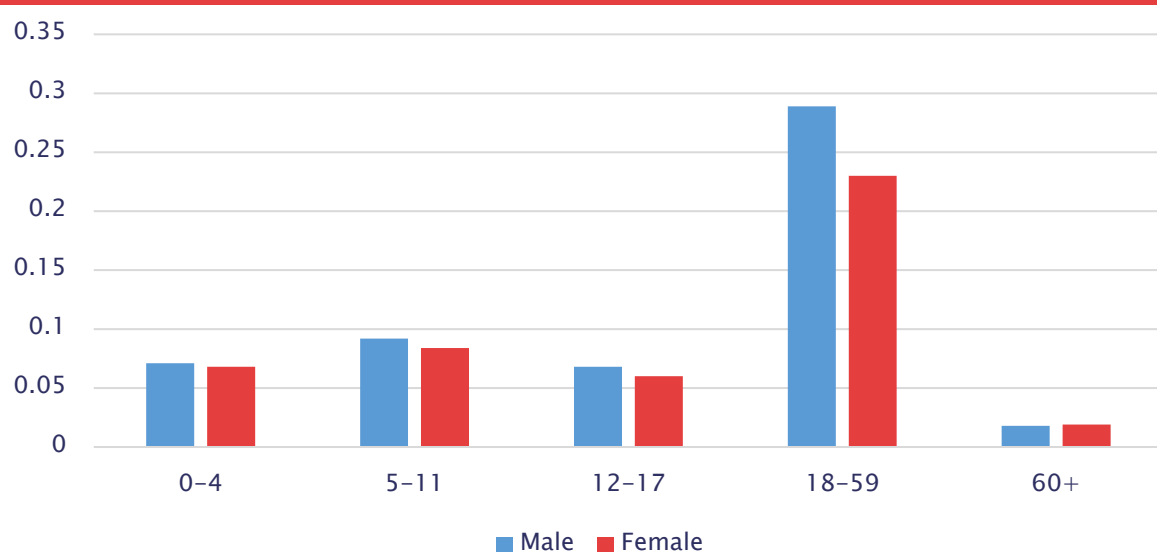
Source: Directorate General of Migration Management

¹⁸ <https://en.goc.gov.tr/residence-permits>

¹⁹ <https://en.goc.gov.tr/directorate-general56>

²⁰ İŞKUR was established in 2003 with a decree (Law no: 4904) annulling an earlier institution.

Figure 26. Disaggregation by gender and age



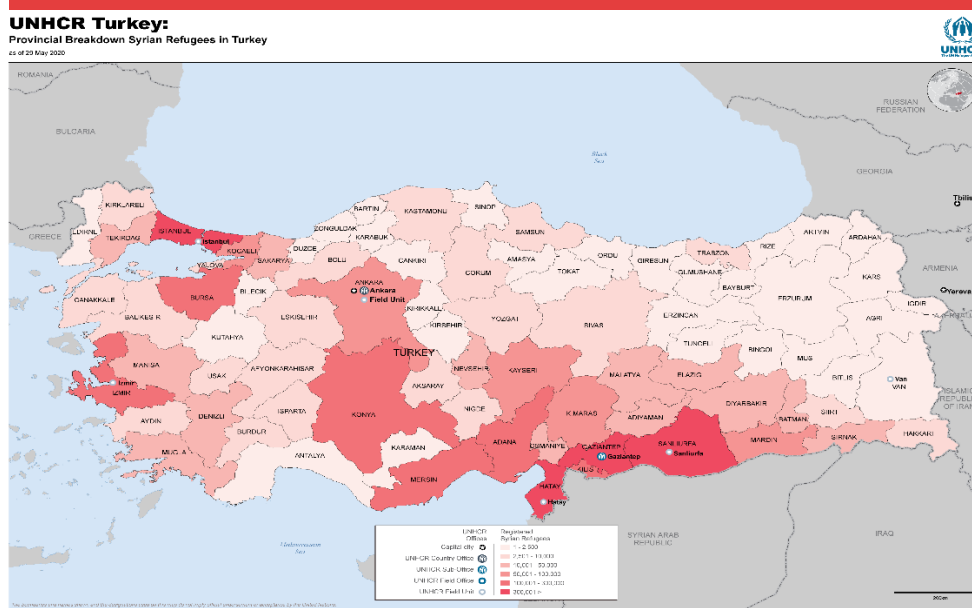
In 2016 and 2017, 26 Temporary Shelter Centres (i.e. refugee camps) were constructed in the major border provinces for lodging and provision of services. In addition to education and healthcare, social and monetary supports are provided in these centres.

In an effort to better integrate Syrians under temporary protection in the Turkish society, most of the centers were closed and only 2 per cent of the Syrian population under temporary protection (58,668) reside in the remaining 7 centres in five provinces as of 21 January 2021.

²¹ The remaining 3,586,472 Syrians under temporary protection status live scattered across the country, with the majority being

registered in the provinces of the southern border, as well as in larger metropolitan areas (see Figures 27 and 28).

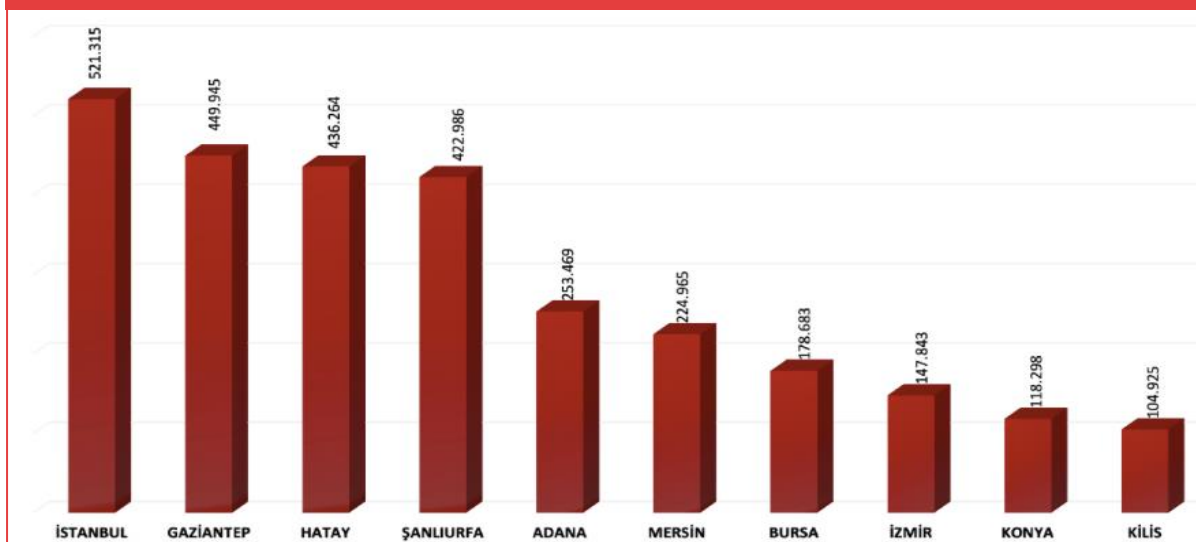
Figure 27. Distribution of Syrians under Temporary Protection per Provinces



Source: UNCHR

²¹ <https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27>

Figure 28. Distribution of Syrians under Temporary Protections by Top Ten Provinces



Source: Directorate General of Migration Management

The number of work permits issued to Syrians in 2019 was 63,789 (59,406 men, 4,383 women) according to the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services report entitled “Foreigners’ Work Permits.”²² These work permits are only valid in the provinces where Syrians are registered, with a few exceptions. This poses serious limitations to their labour mobility. Other reasons, such as the reluctance to work formally on the side of both the worker and the employer because of increased costs, the lack of access to information as well as limited employability levels and language skills contribute to the fact that a very limited number of Syrians under temporary protection possess are working formally.

The government’s efforts are complemented by efforts on the side of the international community to provide Syrians under temporary protection with humanitarian aid and development support. International financial institutions, bilateral development actors, IFRC and the Turkish Red Crescent, as well as UN agencies in cooperation with (I)NGOs implement a number of humanitarian and development

projects. Efforts of UN agencies and (I)NGOs are coordinated under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey is also funding support to refugees in Turkey with a total of 6 billion Euros in two tranches which run until the mid-2025 latest.²³

Since 2017, two major cash transfer programmes were launched with the support of the EU funds. Since then, the largest-ever social assistance programme, the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), has been implemented in Turkey, first by WFP and now by IFRC and the Turkish Red Crescent. It provides unrestricted cash assistance (120 TL per person per month) through the Turkish Red Crescent Card for refugees and asylum seekers to meet their basic needs.²⁴ Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) is national social assistance programme implemented by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services since 2003, which was extended to Syrian and other refugees with the support of EU in mid-2017. CCTE is implemented through a partnership with UNICEF. The extension of the CCTE

²² <https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/63117/yabanciizin2019.pdf>

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/frit_factsheet.pdf

²⁴ UNHCR (2017) ESSN Task Force. Access date: 1 February 2021.

programme enabled refugee children access to education, which means, according to Philippe Duamelle UNICEF representative to Turkey, hope, knowledge and a better future for everyone.²⁵ If family members do not have social security nor regular income at the time of application, the family is eligible for this bi-monthly support, the amount depends on gender and school grade.

2.2 Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees in Colombia

Political conflicts and a deep economic crisis in Venezuela forced 5.1 million Venezuelans to leave their country (Acnur 2020). Affected governments in the region agreed on the Quito Declaration (on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region). An action was signed by Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

Colombia as a neighbouring country to Venezuela, has received the major portion of this population since 2015. Despite the absence of a legal and institutional framework in the beginning, Colombia welcomed 1.82 Venezuelans as of March 2020. In addition to the Venezuelan migration, about 500.000 Colombians have returned back to Colombia after the events (retornados). In 2014, 75 per cent of the migrants and refugees coming from Venezuela are returning Colombians, while in the recent years the returning Colombians are about 10 per cent of the migrating population.

The first permit Venezuelans received upon entering Colombia was the Border Mobility Card (Tarjeta de Movilidad Fronteriza-TMF). 4.94 million Venezuelan people hold the TMF, which allows them to stay in Colombia for up to one week. Those who entered Colombia with their valid passport obtained an authorisation in form of the Entry and Permanence Permit (Permiso de Ingreso y Permanencia- PIP) issued by the

authorities at the entry point that is valid for short stay (90 days). If requested, Temporal Transit Permits (Permiso de Tránsito Temporal-PTT) were also issued for transit purposes. In short, upon entry, Venezuelans could opt for a visitor visa, migrant visa, resident visa or request asylum. Despite these regulations, most Venezuelan entered Colombia without valid documentation, as it was very difficult to obtain the official documents necessary for these permit applications. Let alone the certificates of criminal records and other documents, most Venezuelans had to flee their country without a passport or any official identification. Hence, 42.6 per cent of this population was officially admitted (migrantes regular) to the country, 57.4 per cent remain in an irregular situation. Irregular migrants and refugees either extended their TMF or PIP, or as in many cases, entered the country without any registration.

As the majority of Venezuelans crossed the border without proper documentation, regularization of refugees has become a major policy priority of the Colombian government. For this purpose, the Colombian government granted the Special Stay Permit (Permiso Especial de Permanencia- PEP) for the Venezuelan nationals who meet the conditions defined in the Resolution 5797 of 2017²⁶. Initially, the PEP would not be granted to those who entered the country without passport in an irregular immigration status. In order to regularise the Venezuelan migration, the PEP was extended to irregular migrants. For this purpose, a new registry system (Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos-RAMV) was established on 21 March 2018 (Decree No: 542). These PEP-RAMV permits were offered for about 442.000 Venezuelan with or without a passport. These permits allowed this population to access formal work opportunities as well as basic services such as health, education and social security for a period of two years. In practical terms, PEP

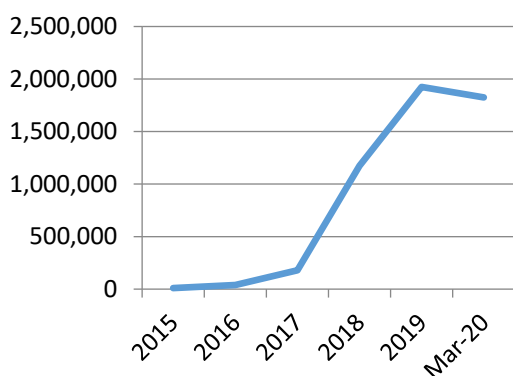
²⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/turkey/en/press-releases/conditional-cash-transfer-education-ccte-programme-syrians-and-other-refugee>

²⁶ <https://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/normativa/download/16-resoluciones-2017/70-resolucion-5797-pep-venezolanos>

status, granted for up to two years with three months renewal periods, replaced the visa or stamped passport. As of March 2020, 800.000 Venezuelan have legalized their status through the PEP system, while more than 1 million are still in an irregular situation since many of them cannot prove their date of entry.

In July 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated a new permit programme called Complementary Special Permanence Permit (Permiso Especial Complementario de Permanencia-PECP) as a temporary option to regularize Venezuelans who had filed an asylum claim between August 19, 2015 and December 31, 2018. The permits were granted to those whose PEP-RAMV applications were previously rejected due to lack of prove of the date of entry. On August 2019, with the amendment of the Citizenship Law, exceptional conditions of *ius soli* to grant nationality were defined for those children born in Colombia (Freier and Castillo Jara, 2020).

Figure 29. Venezuelans Migrants and Refugees in Colombia

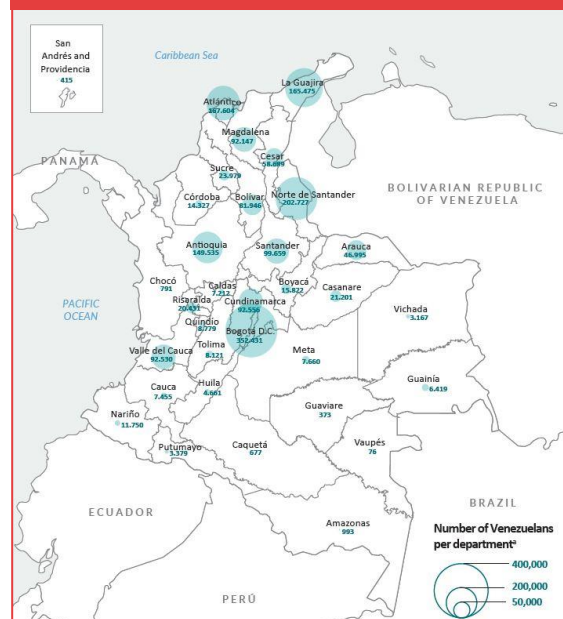


Source: UNHCR

Like Syrians, the migrating Venezuelans are concentrated in the border regions and the

capital city, Bogota. Particularly, the regions of Antioquia and the Valle de Cauca host a significant number of refugees (See Figure 30). In the end of 2019, the Colombian government enacted a new law for a regionally specific programme called Special Economic and Social Zones (*Zonas Economicas y Sociales Especiales-ZESE*). The programme aimed to boost the local economies (especially La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca) by attracting national and foreign investments.²⁷ While the programme was not exclusively targeting the Venezuelan nationals, it included the migrants from Venezuela as the final beneficiaries in accessing income-generation opportunities. This programme was put on hold with the outbreak of the pandemic.

Figure 30. Number of Venezuelans per Department



Source: UNHCR

²⁷ <https://procolombia.co/publicaciones/incentivos-tributarios-para-inversion-en-zonas-economicas-sociales-especiales-zese>

▶ 3. Major challenges

This section will outline the major challenges that migrants and refugees face as well as the challenges that are experienced throughout the policy-making and implementation stages in responding these matters.

3.1 Challenges that Migrants and Refugees Face

3.1.1 Orientation in a foreign setting: Challenges to access information and services

Migrants and refugees face challenges to access consistent and accurate information and public services. The language barrier of Syrian refugees often presents an important challenge not only for accessing formal jobs, but also, more in general, for socio-economic integration. Inability to communicate fluently presents a major challenge even for the asylum application process. According to the "Inter-Agency Protection Sector Needs Assessment Analysis" (September 2020), even if 76% of respondents stated they have enough access to information, non-Arabic speaking respondents have below average levels of access to information, showing the need for increased outreach and targeting to these groups. Even though Venezuelan migrants and refugees do not face a language barrier as such, they would face orientation problems while dealing with the official procedures in an unfamiliar social and economic and institutional context. In both cases, migrant and refugees would need orientation programmes (albeit more encompassing in Syrian case) to enhance their access to information and services and their integration into formal labour market.

3.1.2 Challenges to access the labour market

▶ *Skill Gap: lack of recognition of prior learning*

and lack of tailored skills development measures

In both Turkey and Colombia, most refugees work in low-skilled sectors such as commerce, restaurants and hotels (that employ 49% of migrants from Venezuela²⁸) and agriculture, trade, construction and manufacturing (that employ approximately 86% of migrants and refugees in Turkey²⁹).

In both countries, migrants and refugees face major obstacles to accessing middle- or higher skilled occupations. As such, the lack of recognition of prior learning – be it the recognition of diplomas and certificates or of acquired skills – and importantly, the lack of tailored skills development measures represent considerable barriers.

Vocational training programmes that enable the acquisition of new skills are one of the solutions to this problem.

To be effective, vocational training programmes should not be an isolated exercise, but should be a tool for active labour force participation through access to decent work opportunities.

As foreseen by the principle of shared responsibility, close cooperation with employers' representatives is essential to ensure that training programmes respond to the needs of the labour market. This principle is included in the recommendations of the "Working Towards a Better Future" Report of the ILO's Global Commission on the Future of Work, according to which "*governments, workers and employers, as well as educational institutions,*

²⁸ Refugees International and Center for Global Development, October 28, 2020, By Jimmy Graham and Martha Guerrero Ble

²⁹ Infographic on Syrians in the Turkish labour market, ILO, 2018

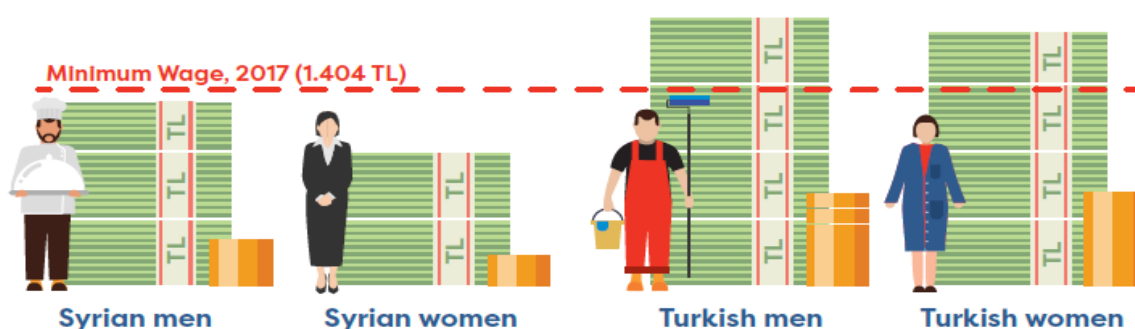
have complementary responsibilities in building an effective and adequately funded lifelong learning ecosystem".

► *Challenges on the labour market: Decent work deficits*

Working informally puts refugees and migrants in a vulnerable position and confronts them to a range of decent work deficits, such as low

wages, long working hours, lack of representation at work, occupational safety and health risks, social protection deficits and discrimination at work.

On average, Syrians earn below the minimum wage, while women are again in a more disadvantageous position. According to ILO estimations, Syrian men earn 5 per cent below the minimum wage, and the gap widens to 25 per cent for Syrian women.

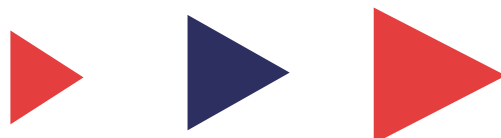


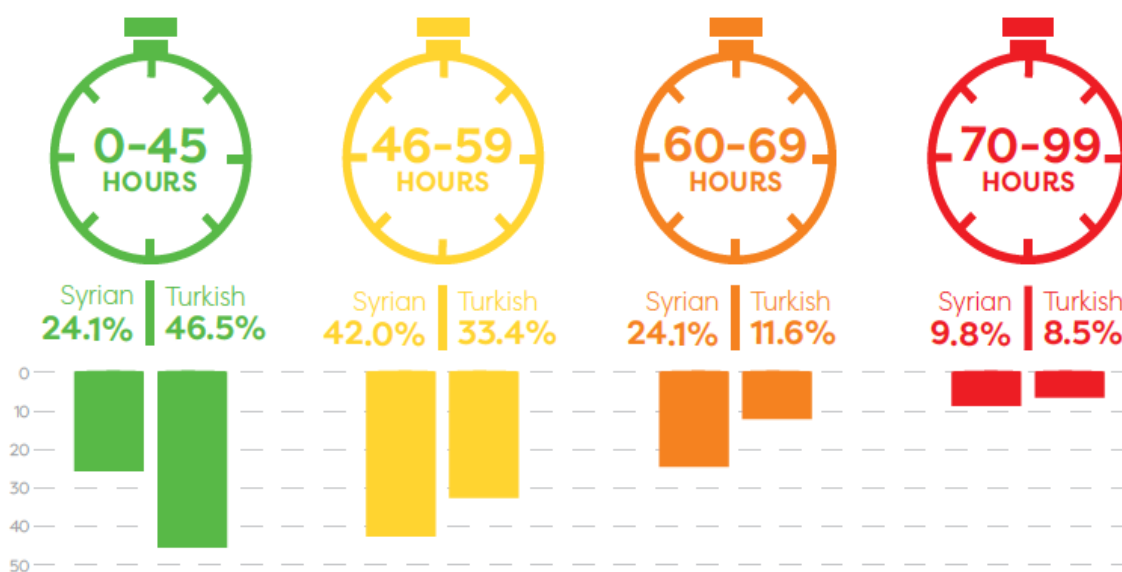
ILO. Syrians in the Turkish labour market, Data from TURKSTAT Household Labour Force Survey (HHLFS) 2017.

In Colombia, male migrants earn in average 40 USD less than their Colombian counterparts in their monthly incomes (320 USD VS. 270 USD approx.), while female migrants earn 190 USD in contrast with their Colombian counterparts who earn 230 USD (Graham, Guerrero, Panayotatos, Leghtas, Leghtas, 2020). Existing reports note that, there is a systematic pay gap between migrant workers and nationals (Amo-Agyei, 2020, ILO, 2020). It should be noted that,

female refugees and migrants are especially disadvantaged in the labour market with the impact of the gender pay gap.

Additionally, migrants and refugees tend to work longer workers hours that nationals. For instance, the ILO estimates that more than 75 per cent of Syrians work more than the legally permitted 45 hours per week.





ILO. Syrians in the Turkish labour market, Data from TURKSTAT Household Labour Force Survey (HHLFS) 2017.

Also Venezuelans migrants work, on average, 50 hours per week, while Colombians work 44 hours per week³⁰.

Lastly, migrants and refugees' presence in the informal economy is negatively impacting the local economy and host communities' livelihoods as they tend to i) push down wages, ii) increase competition on the labour market and among economic units within the informal economy and iii) deteriorate working and living conditions of host communities. Moreover, a large number of SMEs and workers from host communities operate in the informal economy and face decent work deficits.

3.1.3 Arising challenges due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Many migrants and refugees were already working in precarious conditions before the pandemic. Due to lockdowns and social distancing, reduced working activity and working hours significantly reduce the income of the refugee and migrant households. The

lack of bargaining power put refugees and migrants at higher risk of being laid off and wage cuts during the pandemic. Especially women tend to be the first losing their job in time of crisis, economic contraction and downsizing.

In the absence of sufficient savings or access to social security, the drastic decrease in their income has made it increasingly difficult for migrants and refugees to cover their basic needs.

The restrictions on their mobility and their legal status would reduce their access to the coping strategies that may be available to nationals. Different social protection programmes have conditions such as nationality, having a work permit or being formally employed. As vast majority of refugees work in informal job, they have not been benefiting from this support.

In the context of the pandemic, access to internet has become a crucial medium to access

³⁰ Panorama laboral de los migrantes Venezolanos en Colombia 2014-2019

basic need such as education. Refugee and migrant households lack the basic digital infrastructure requisites for internet access and mobile communication. Several reports document that due to a lack of technological means such as computer and broadband, student failed to follow their online classes and failed in the exams (SGDD-ASAM, 2020: 30).

It is reported that social tensions between refugee and host communities have risen during the pandemic period (HASNA, 2020). As a recent ILO report notes, “[w]omen refugees can be faced with increased exposure to gender based violence, domestic violence and a general lack of personal space due to confinement measures. At the same time, access to services, such as health and child care, and domestic violence support and other protection services, can be reduced during confinement periods.” In this same report the ILO Director General Guy Ryder warns, “[a]s the pandemic and jobs crisis evolve, the need to protect the most vulnerable becomes even more urgent”³¹ According to UNHCR, incidents of gender-based violence that affected Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia increased by 40 percent for the period between January and September 2020, compared to the same period last year.³²

If we take a closer look at Turkey, the COVID-19 pandemic has had major impacts on the already fragile labour market situation in Turkey. According to ILO statistics, in Turkey, 12.4 million jobs were lost in April 2020, down to 1.8 million in September, and the number increased again to 4.5 million in December 2020. The impact of COVID-19 has disproportionately affected workers in the informal economy, women and youth.

Several studies were conducted on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees – they converge to point out that due to informal and temporary work arrangements, Syrians were among the first to lose their jobs with limited access to government assistance schemes and protection measures, such as the ban on dismissals. As part of the COVID-19 socio-economic impact mitigation strategy, MoFLSS paid 45.2 million TRY as part of the Social Protection Guard Programme (Sosyal Koruma Kalkanı) as of the end of December 2020. Support provided as part of this programme included access to unemployment benefits, short-time work allowance and cash wage support. However, these schemes were largely inaccessible to refugees due to their informal work arrangements.

According to a study by the Turkish Red Crescent, 69 percent of surveyed refugee households reported that they had lost their job in April 2020 due to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.³³ By September 2020, 76 per cent of refugee households interviewed by UNHCR and partners had experienced a negative change in working status and conditions due to COVID-19, whereas this number rises to 79 per cent for those working informally. In addition, 84 per cent of respondents were not fully able to cover their monthly expenses and basic household needs.³⁴

The case for Syrian-owned businesses was even more striking. By May 2020, 59 per cent of the employees of the Syrian businesses surveyed were at risk of losing their jobs and 59 per cent

³¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_748485.pdf

³² <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/11/5fbd2e774/gender-based-violence-rise-during-lockdowns.html>

³³ Turkish Red Crescent: Impact of COVID-19 on refugee populations benefitting from the emergency social safety net (ESSN) programme, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/impact-covid-19-refugee-populations-benefitting-emergency-social-safety-net-essp>

³⁴ Turkey: Inter-Agency Protection Sector Needs Assessment Analysis Round 2 – September 2020, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/83595>.

of companies were at risk of closing down.³⁵ Further, additional obstacles Syrian-owned companies face given their competitive disadvantages were amplified during the pandemic. As such, Syrian-owned enterprises were confronted to a lack of available capital, information gaps and language barriers that limit access to support programs, disruptions in trade and supply chains, and operational models that do not include digital resources.³⁶

The Covid-19 pandemic had a severe impact also in Colombia. In June 2020, the employment rate was 46.1 percent, down from 57.5 percent in June of 2019, and the unemployment rate was 19.8 percent, a 10.5 percentage point increase relative to the previous year.³⁷ These are by far the worst labor market outcomes the country has seen over the past decade³⁷.

The income generation and livelihoods of Venezuelan migrants have been severely affected by the pandemic. In 2020, 64 percent of employed Venezuelans were working in highly impacted sectors (such as accommodation and food services, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail sales), compared to 47 percent of employed Colombians. Only 3 percent of employed Venezuelans were in the least impacted sectors (education, health and public administration), compared to 13 percent of employed Colombians.

Most of the refugees and migrants are in an irregular situation, so their daily livelihoods come from informal activities such as street vending. Faced with these difficulties, thousands of displaced Venezuelans in Colombia are migrating on from Colombia, and many are even returning to Venezuela in desperation. A recent survey of Venezuelans in transit indicated that the loss of employment and evictions were the main drivers of migration

from Colombia, playing a major role in forcing 77 percent and 40 percent, respectively, to relocate³⁸. While some are opting to migrate within Colombia or even to a new country, the majority are returning to Venezuela. UNHCR estimated that as of January 2021 more than 106.000 Venezuelans returned to their countries due to the pandemic³⁹.



³⁵ Business for Goals (2020): Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on Enterprises, Q2 Survey

³⁶ Building Markets Turkey (2021): COVID-19 SME Assessment – January 4, 2020

³⁷ The Impact of COVID-19 on the Economic Inclusion of Venezuelans in Colombia, Jimmy Graham and Martha Guerrero Ble

³⁸ REACH, “Evaluación rápida de necesidades de personas en tránsito, 30 julio – 9 agosto,” August 21, 2020 <https://r4v.info/en/documents/details/78475>.

³⁹ UNHCR, Acceso e Integración al Mercado Laboral, January 2021

3.2 Major Challenges for Policy-Making

3.2.1 Regularization

In Colombia the PEPFF (Special Permanence Permit for accessing formalization) provided access to regularization for those migrants with a verified job offer. It represented an opportunity for granting access to migrants and refugees to the labour market through formal employment.

With the recently issued Temporary Status of Protection for Venezuelan Migrants (ETPV). Colombia will offer temporary protective status to nearly one million irregular Venezuelan migrants enabling them to work as well as access health and education services. Irregular migrants and those who need to extend temporary visas could benefit from such a policy.⁴⁰

3.2.2 Reaching the Refugee and Migrant Communities

In an online workshop on promoting decent jobs in Turkey and Colombia held by the ILO initiative with the participation of policy-makers and constituents in both countries, policy-makers raised the challenge of accessing the refugee and migrant communities in the implementation of social programmes. As refugees and migrants are especially close-knit communities, the process of trust building is essential for reaching the target population.

3.2.3 Arising challenges due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges for policy-makers in terms of reaching the refugees. At the very least, the pandemic caused an unexpected rupture in the face-to-face policies and efforts addressing migrants and refugee. When the administrative measures were implemented in mid-March, most humanitarian and development partners had to stop or post-pone their project activities. For instance, all skills and vocational training programmes had to be discontinued with the COVID19 measures. The public offices had to decrease their working hours and personnel. In Turkey, for instance, the work permit applications and procedures were halted several weeks due to the health emergency situation until June 1, 2020. The residency permit applications between June 1 and August 17 were then transferred to an online platform. Due to low-level connectivity of the refugees and migrants, implementing assistance programmes, providing basic services have become more challenged. Similarly, all permit applications were challenged by the COVID-19 measures until they were transferred to online platforms. On March 13, 2020 all borders were closed keeping two humanitarian corridors open for returning Venezuelan nationals. On 21 August, one of the corridors was also closed keeping one exit corridor open (ACAPS, 2020b). Health care and education services for the Venezuelan migrant and refugee families were still provided along these narrowed humanitarian corridors.⁴¹

⁴⁰ <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/09/965/Colombia-offers-temporary-legal-status-to-nearly-1-million-venezuelan-migrant>

⁴¹ The provision of humanitarian aid in form of monetary transfers, sanitary products and food were coordinated by the Colombian state along with the support of international organisations. There is also an efficient intergovernmental coordination among national, regional and local level authorities.



► 4. ILO Response

As the only UN agency with tripartite structure, ILO, in cooperation with government, employers' and workers' organisations, strives to advance social justice and to promote decent work. ILO strives to synthesize humanitarian and development processes taking into consideration the Global Compact for Refugees and UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.⁴²

Recognising that refugees, migrants and the host communities deserve special attention, the ILO held a tripartite meeting in 2016 to provide technical guidance on the application of policy measures to improve labour market condition for refugees, migrants and host communities. The meeting resulted in the adoption of "The guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market"⁴³ These guiding principles have been incorporated into the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (no. 205) adopted in 2017.⁴⁴ ILO's approach is consistent with the pledge to "leave no one behind" in realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This response programmes are based on three pillars: skills, jobs and governance. First, the ILO programmes aim to increase the employability of the refugees and migrants through skills developments and workplace adaptation. Second, the ILO responses aim to boost economic growth with new incentives for enterprises, which would then lead to job retention and creation. Third, the ILO in its tripartite coordination strives to attain fair and effective labour market governance with improved labour laws ensuring the labour rights for refugees, migrants and host community members.

4.1 ILO Refugee Response Programme in Turkey

To support refugees and host communities gain a living in decent working conditions, the the ILO is implementing the Refugee Response Programme. It is guided by a Programme of Support spanning from the years 2017 to 2021 and is contributing to the targets of the Turkey chapter of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). It is based on three main pillars:

1. *Investing in people and skills by supporting employability through skills development:*

this includes assessing refugees' skills and needs, building skills through training, enhancing workplace adaptation and providing complementary skills training on, for instance, labour law, social security and OSH.

Main achievements:

- Employability of more than 20,000 refugees and host community members increased through vocational, language and core skills training.

⁴² https://globalcompactrefugees.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/print_ready.pdf

⁴³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_536440.pdf

⁴⁴ https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/previous-sessions/106/reports/texts-adopted/WCMS_559852/lang--en/index.htm?ssSourceSiteId=global

- ▶ Social cohesion supported through design and implementation of a workplace adaptation programme matching Syrian and Turkish workers.
- ▶ Gender equality supported through provision of gender-sensitive training (more than 60% of training graduates were women).
- ▶ Skills matching enhanced through an increased focus on work-based training (on-the-job training, apprenticeship).

2. Enhancing economic growth by supporting the creation and retention of formal jobs:

this includes incentivizing formal employment, providing entrepreneurship training, supporting new and existing enterprises; formalizing informal businesses

Main achievements

- ▶ Assessment of potentials to integrate refugees into value chains. For example, the shoemaking sector in Konya as well as the furniture-making sector in Hatay have shown great potential to integrate Syrian refugees into value chains.
- ▶ 900 entrepreneurs trained and 150 micro grants awarded to support innovative business ideas.
- ▶ First women-led cooperative composed of Syrian, Turkish and Afghan women established in Gaziantep in March 2019.

- ▶ More than 600 SMEs supported through business advisory services and support for formalization.
- ▶ Incentives covering work permit fees and social security contributions provided to employers to employ 3,300 refugees and host community members formally.

3. Strengthening fair and effective labour market governance and promoting decent work for all:

this includes fostering coordination between institutions and improving service delivery, strengthening labour law compliance and enforcement; increasing knowledge of labour rights for refugees and supporting employers to obtain work permits for their workers.

Main achievements

- ▶ The capacity of public officials, workers and employers organizations to better respond to new challenges in the labour market was improved.
- ▶ 15% of all social security auditors, 20% of all labour inspectors and 20% of all labour and social security judges trained in the legal framework protecting refugees in the labour market.
- ▶ Service delivery capacity of public institutions improved.
- ▶ Awareness raised on the importance of decent work, especially formal work and the elimination of child labour.



Transition to Formality Programme

The Transition to Formality Programme (KIGEP) is a support scheme implemented within the framework of the "Promotion of Decent Work for Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTP) and Turkish Nationals Project".

The programme aims to rise formal employment levels for both Turkish citizens and Syrians under Temporary Protection by providing incentives to employers.

The programme aims to prevent the loss of rights that can result from informal employment, to ensure that Syrian and Turkish workers work under better conditions and to prevent unfair competition. The strategic objective of the programme is to promote a "formal employment culture" through an employment support approach.

The Programme is jointly implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Office for Turkey, the Directorate General of International Labour Force (DG-ILF) of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS), the Social Security Institution (SSI) in close cooperation with the social partners. Additionally, SSI Provincial Directorates of Adana, Bursa, Hatay, İstanbul and Konya where KIGEP was implemented have contributed significantly to the programme as liaison and application offices.

The Programme covered the costs of social security premium payments for Turkish nationals and newly recruited Syrian workers for up to six months, as well as work permit fees for Syrian workers.

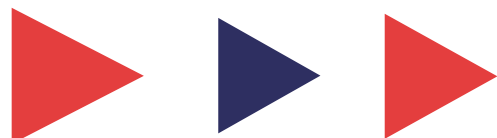
Any employer, fulfilling their obligations under the labour and social security legislation, may apply to the Programme for Syrian and Turkish workers employed.

It is necessary to have equal numbers of Syrian and Turkish workers or more Syrian workers than Turkish workers to benefit from the Programme. It is necessary to employ the workers full-time (by paying social security contributions for at least 20 days, except for valid reasons), and fully pay their premiums.

The objective of KIGEP is to promote a culture of formal employment and to encourage employers to fulfil their social security obligations. Therefore, where any employer fails to fulfil their social security obligations to SSI, their claims on account of the Programme will be set off against their debts to SSI. Where beneficiaries fail to timely pay their said debts, SSI reserves the right to exclude any such beneficiary from the Program following the offset. Further, the support payments will be terminated where it is established, through a system check, that Syrian or Turkish workers are no longer insured or that they are not actually employed through a workplace visit.

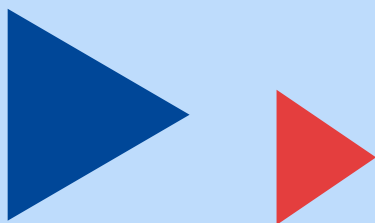
Impact of KIGEP:

- Looking at the inception and ending periods of KIGEP, the number of workers at the enterprises in the same sectors increased by 4.5 % in the 5 provinces where it was implemented, and the number of workers at the enterprises receiving support from KIGEP increased by 20.5 %.
- While the number of Turkish workers at all enterprises benefiting from KIGEP was 19,931 in March 2019, it increased by 12 % and went up to 22,342 in the same month of 2020. As of the said period, the increase in the number of Turkish workers on the basis of all enterprises in 5 provinces under KIGEP is 4 %
- Looking at the number of Syrian workers, only 1,054 Syrians were working at the enterprises receiving KIGEP support at the beginning of the Programme. However, the number of Syrians working at these enterprises increased to 3,184 in January 2020. The number of Syrian workers at these enterprises was 2,962 in March 2020.
- 41 % of Turkish workers indicated that after starting to work with Syrians, their opinion about working together changed for the better. 24 % of Turkish workers stated that they realized that cohesion would take a long time.



- Additionally, enterprises state that Syrian workers showed significant progress in the areas of language, professional knowledge, work discipline and performance. The average rate of respondents who stated there was partial or major improvement in each category was 95 %. The fact that enterprises have a positive opinion of Syrians in any category shows that their likelihood to keep the Syrians in employment even after support ends is high.

The programme was followed by the KIGEP Plus. The project helps also Syrian and Turkish employees to keep on their occupation by supporting employers. 563 companies and 3,810 employees benefited from KIGEP Plus since November. Enterprises averagely receive support for 6 workers in order to help them to access or to maintain their social protection. KIGEP Plus includes 10 cities and it is undertaken by the Promoting Decent Work for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Turkish Citizens Project. It is sponsored by the Federal Republic of Germany through the KfW Development Bank and it will last until the end of 2022⁴⁵.



Work Based Learning (WBL) Programme



Work Based Learning (WBL) Programme (İŞMEP, in Turkish) is a support scheme implemented within the “Promoting Decent Work for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Turkish Citizens Project” under the Refugee Response Programme of the ILO Office for Turkey. The Project is implemented in coordination with the Turkish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services.

The objectives of the WBL programme include:

- build the skills of Turkish and Syrian workers so that they are qualified to participate in the formal labour market;
- increase decent work opportunities, giving special attention to women, youth and disabled persons;
- fill skills gaps and reply to the needs of employers for a qualified workforce.

During the programme, lasting generally for six months, participants will spend 90 per cent of their working time in the company acquiring new skills on the job. Ten per cent of their working time is dedicated to off-the-job training, covering topics such as labour standards, the importance of safety and health at work, workplace adaptation as well as gender equality.

The WBL scheme targets at least 1,000 beneficiaries by the end of 2022 and aims to reach an equal number of Syrian and Turkish workers. It gives utmost importance to include women and persons with disabilities and 30% of beneficiaries are targeted to be women and 5% persons with disabilities.

⁴⁵ https://www.ilo.org/ankara/areas-of-work/covid-19/WCMS_762089/lang--en/index.htm

4.2 ILO Response in Colombia

Since 2017, with the continuous outflows from Venezuela, the needs to respond to various problems scaled up. In September 2018, The Inter-Agency Regional Coordination Platform (R4V) was established by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Working closely with both agencies ILO assumed the coordination role in the area of intervention on socio-economic and cultural integration within R4V. Additionally, Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) provided the framework for an inter-agency response and coherent packages of intervention (ILO, 2019b). The Plan addressed the protection, assistance and integration needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the affected states of Latin America and Caribbean.⁴⁶ ILO response in Colombia is also part of the RMRP developed by 95 partner organisations involved in the operational response in 16 countries.

Declaration of Quito as agreed by the affected governments recognised the importance of ensuring Venezuelans' access to employment opportunities. ILO has been supporting the implementation of the road map of the Quito process by providing technical assistance to its participating countries including their labour ministries. Furthermore, ILO launched support programmes for Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru, committing US\$ 2 million fund for the socio-economic integration of the Venezuelan migrants and refugees in these three countries. In Colombia, the programme focused particularly on Barranquilla and Cali. The programmes included data collection about the work profiles of the displaced Venezuelans, promoting the entrepreneurship among the Venezuelans, raising awareness about the fair participation of the Venezuelan migrants and refugees into to labour market, explore sectors

with capacity to grow with the entry of the Venezuelans work force.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ILO is promoting social cohesion in host communities through interventions that ensure the visibility of Venezuelan workers' contribution in the mitigation of COVID-19, with a special focus on health sector and other essential activities.

Overall results:

- ▶ Data collection and systematisation about the labour market and existing skills of the refugees and migrants enabled to bring the demand and supply for labour together.
- ▶ With the ILO interventions, law, policies and regulations concerning refugees and migrants have been improved.
- ▶ ILO informative campaigns provided Venezuelan refugees and migrants with the necessary information concerning the available programmes and services.
- ▶ ILO's "Latin America and Caribbean Free of Child Labour" programme was put enforced to prevent Child labour among Venezuelan refugees and migrants.
- ▶ Support programmes for SMEs, such as SCORE⁴⁷, helped the establishment of new enterprises by the Venezuelans in Colombia.
- ▶ Through skill development training programmes in the sector with greater demand in the labour market, ILO helped reduce the skill-gap of the Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

For instance:

- The ILO and WFP implemented the programme Oportunidades sin Fronteras, with the aim of closing gaps and mitigating barriers to access

⁴⁶ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_697195/lang--en/index.htm

⁴⁷ <http://www.scorecolombia.org/scorecolombia/>

employment. The project improved the employability of 238 Venezuelan migrants and Colombian returnees by providing technical training based on the needs of the productive sectors, such as training on warehouse management, customer services, and sales. The project also included the provision of food assistance for three months, through vouchers, that were conditional upon participation in the training⁴⁸.

- INNOvación Migrante is an entrepreneurship programme for Venezuelan migrants and

Colombian returnees implemented by the ILO and WFP in the city of Cali. During 6 months, the programme trained 50 entrepreneurs on topics such as soft skills, financial education and digital marketing. WFP helped the beneficiaries of the programmes to develop urban gardens with the aim of fostering a culture of self-sufficiency among the participants, and also contributing to the strengthening of their food security and that of their families⁴⁹.



⁴⁸ https://www.ilo.org/lima/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_761602/lang--es/index.htm

⁴⁹ https://www.ilo.org/lima/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_763557/lang--es/index.htm

► 5. Good Practices

This section will identify good practices in Turkey and Colombia separately. It will analyse policies implemented in each country that can be qualified as good practices with regards to labour market, employment policies and social protection.

5.1 Turkey

The Turkish government enacted new legal framework regulating employment relations and implemented support packages to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 measures. Most of the packages implemented had important implications on the livelihood of refugees. Enhanced access to health services had a particular importance given the circumstances.

Labour Market Governance

The ILO Refugee Response Program in Turkey: supporting livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities was launched by the ILO in 2015.

The objective of pillar 3 of the Programme is to strengthen labour market governance institutions and mechanisms in implementing inclusive labour market policies and laws.

► To achieve this, the ILO has strengthened the capacity of relevant government institutions through several training activities aimed at applying the newly introduced national legislation: the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, and the subsequent Temporary Protection Regulation as well as Work Permit Regulations for temporary and international protection applicants and holders respectively, and the International Labour Force Law, as well as the relevant international legal framework for ensuring fundamental principles and rights at work. For

instance, a first training was organized in 2018 on 'Establishing a Fair and Effective Governance of Labour Migration in Turkey' for staff of government institutions, specifically DG ILF, SSI, İŞKUR, DGMM, AFAD and social partners. Further building on this training, a more focused training was organized in 2019 on 'Social and Economic Integration of Refugees and Policy Coherence'. These activities were appreciated by ILO's tripartite partners, as they had the possibility to exchange and discuss approaches with peers and to further build cooperation and coherence⁵⁰.

► To strengthen the capacity of the main actors, the ILO organized specific training courses for judges, social security auditors and labour inspectors. As of May 2019, 180 labour and law judges were trained in cooperation with the Justice Academy of the Ministry of Justice, and these training courses were appreciated as they gave judges an opportunity to better understand international law, including ILO standards, and learn about good practices from other countries. Building on this experience, tailored training programmes were developed for labour inspectors and social security auditors; 280 labour inspectors as well as 300 social security auditors were trained as of May 2019.⁵¹

► Additionally, the ILO has since 2017 supported the establishment of one stop shops within chambers that provide integrated employment and guidance services both in Turkish and Arabic. One-stop shops provide

⁵⁰ ILO; "Lesson Learned of ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey", June 2019

⁵¹ ILO; "Lesson Learned of ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey", June 2019

information about formal work in Turkey, including in relation to work permits, and also provide information on opportunities for enterprises to be formalized through counselling services, enabling them to be registered with chambers. So far, four one-stop shops have been supported in Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Adana. There are some good examples of how these one-stop shops have supported the formalization of businesses. For example, some 25 per cent of Syrian SMEs were registered with the Gaziantep Union of Chambers of Merchants and Artisans (GESOB) through the one-stop shop since its establishment in April 2018⁵².

Inclusive Labour Market Policies

► A good practice in Turkey is the **combination of vocational training programs with language courses, basic labour market training and soft skills training**. This approach strengthens sustainable employment and social cohesion. Based on the experience acquired, trainings should take into account the following aspects in order to be more successful:

- Language courses should be provided at different levels, in line with adult learning principles, and meet different needs (such as professional Turkish courses).
- Language courses should be a complementary part of vocational and technical training programs, rather than as stand-alone programs.

In addition to Turkish language courses, the ILO delivers other types of trainings to support access to decent jobs and social cohesion, such as basic labour market trainings and workplace adaptation programs.

► **Work-based training programs**, such as apprenticeship programs, which are widely implemented by İSKUR, can be considered another good practice in terms of gaining professional experience, putting theoretical knowledge into practice and ensuring harmony in the work environment. Turkey has a well-established apprenticeship training

system, in which refugees and immigrants are supported by free Turkish language courses. In Turkey, apprentices spend one day a week at a vocational training centre to supplement their job training with theoretical courses. During the other working days, the apprentices are supervised by master trainers at their workplaces. The apprenticeship approach is part of the formal education system in Turkey and it has been replicated also in the refugee context. However, care must be taken that refugees are not exploited as cheap labour.

An example of work-based training program implemented by the ILO is the ISMEP Program, already described above.

► Public employment services include identifying job vacancies and providing job placement services to job seekers, including immigrants and refugees, and informing them about employment opportunities. **Job and vocational counselling services** can be considered as a good example of public employment services. These services include:

- clarifying personal skills and characteristics
 - identifying training needs and opportunities,
 - establishing goals for career development and develop viable strategies to achieve these goals.
- These services can also be provided through private employment agencies accredited by İŞKUR.

In addition to supporting technical skills development, it is essential to build basic **employability skills, as well as inform refugees of their rights and obligations**.

As mentioned in the "Guiding Principles on Labour Market Access for Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons" (point 23), national policies should ensure that workers receive information and training on labour rights and obligations, in a language they understand.

⁵² ILO; "Lesson Learned of ILO's Refugee Response Programme in Turkey", June 2019



The ILO Workplace Adaptation



The Workplace Adaptation Programme aims to support workplace adaptation and orientation to work culture, while contributing to collegial rapport among Syrian and Turkish workers in the same workplace, for the establishment of an efficient and peaceful working environment.

The program has been developed specifically for Turkey, based on international best practice examples. The program has been developed with the principles of "decent work" and "competitive and responsible enterprises" supported by the ILO worldwide.

The Workplace Integration Program led by the ILO Office for Turkey has a holistic approach that aims to improve the livelihoods and resilience of refugees living in Turkey.

The Workplace Compliance Program has two main purposes:

1. to guide refugees and non-refugee community members on violations of the right to work and potential abuses in the workplace by developing their knowledge and skills on labor standards, rules and institutions;
2. Support adaptation processes in the workplace by strengthening social interaction and cultural communication between refugee and non-refugee community members, both in the workplace and outside of labor relations.

Social Protection Coverage

Refugees under short-term work allowance benefit from social protection programmes only if they have a formal employment. Social Protection Coverage encompasses health care, drug plans, educational services, and monetary support. Nevertheless, a huge number of refugees work informally, thus they have not received this support. In addition, language barriers, bureaucratic obstacles, discrimination, overburdened facilities and changing state policies prevent the access to Social Protection Coverage.

- ▶ However, Syrians under Temporary Protection Regulation have access to free health care in the state system, but Turkish government attempted to ease access to care for Syrians through the establishment of the Migrants Health Centres staffed by Syrian doctors, that is an EU-financed project since 2016. The Migrant Health Centers were also strengthened through the EU-funded SIHHAT project to improve Syrian refugees' access to healthcare. In collaboration with the World Health Organization, the Ministry of Health trained Syrian doctors and nurses to staff Migrant Health Centers and migrant health units in governorates with large refugee populations. These clinics opened gradually starting in 2018 and continued to open well into 2020, with translators, technicians, psychologists, and other support staff increasingly embedded in state health institutions.

The ILO is exerting pressure for providing work permits to informal Syrian employees since formal occupation permit includes not only access to health care, but also the provision of decent work, a pension after retirement and other labour rights provisioned by the law.

- ▶ ESSN is the Emergency Social Safety Net Program funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services.

ESSN provides cash assistance to vulnerable people who enjoy temporary protection and international protection in Turkey, have an identity document and aims to enable refugees and asylum seekers living outside camps throughout Turkey to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing with dignity. Registered families living in Turkey under international or temporary protection can apply to ESSN for assistance. ESSN selects those most in need, such as large families, the elderly, single women, single-parent households and persons with disabilities. Employed persons with a valid work permit or who own registered property in Turkey are not eligible for assistance.

Each eligible family receives a card that can be used at ATMs or to pay in stores. Each month it is topped up with 155 Turkish lira, which is about \$19, for each family member. Families also receive periodic "top-ups". Refugees with severe disabilities receive an additional monthly payment.

- ▶ According to the ILO study about the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey and the Arab States, the pandemic crisis led Syrian refugees and host communities to a deterioration in living and working conditions. The study shows that during the confinement periods access to services, such as health and childcare, has been reduced. In order to mitigate the negative effect of the COVID-19 crisis, Turkish government adopts new legal framework with regard to employment relations and support

packages. These packages are relevant to the improvement of refugees' livelihood and to enhance access to health services, and they include:

► ***Social Protection Coverage:***

employees, including Syrian refugees, who do not assess benefits from short-term work allowance could receive a cash wage support. It also addresses to employees who have not a labour contract since March 15, 2020 and are not eligible to obtain unemployment insurance payment. This support is a good practice for broadening the coverage of social protection.

► ***Cash transfers:***

Cash transfers administered by national and international organizations and funded by the EU were extended for refugees until the end of 2022. In June and July 2020, the ESSN provided cash to 1.7 million refugees to help cope with some of the impacts of the pandemic. In addition, periodic top-ups were provided from May and August 2020, providing refugees with four months of additional support during a very difficult time in the pandemic.

► ***Access to health services:*** Access to health services for refugees through the public Medical Health Centers continued to provide primary health services to refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the health services provided in Arabic at these centers,

708 doctors, 966 nurses and other health service workers – some of them Syrian nationals – were recruited at the secondary health service hospital to provide health services in Arabic (SIHHAT Projesi, 2020). In addition, information leaflets with necessary health and sanitary measures against COVID-19 were prepared in Arabic as well as in other languages spoken by immigrants and refugees for distribution in health care facilities. Presidential Decision number 2399 of April 13, 2020 ensured that everyone, regardless of whether they have social security or insurance, could access personal protection materials, diagnostic tests and medicines free of charge.

► ***Social Protection Guard Programme:***

Through the Unemployment Fund, İŞKUR provides wage support to persons on unpaid leave and persons who lost their jobs with the aim of reducing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on social and economic life. Wage support provides income support to citizens who are ineligible for unemployment benefits and to citizens who are on unpaid leave. Wage support is granted during the time when people are on unpaid leave and health insurance premiums are paid through the Unemployment Insurance Fund. However, because of their informal work arrangements several migrants and refugees did not received this economical support.



5.2 Colombia

Around early March, the Colombian government launched measures to alleviate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable sections of the population. In principle, all Venezuelan migrants and refugees are included in the social support programmes implemented as part of COVID19 measures. In addition to the border regulations, the measures aiming regularisation, and promoting decent work and provision of social assistance were implemented.

Labour Market Governance

- ▶ The Refugee and Migrant Response Plan 2020 included policies aiming protection, humanitarian assistance, and social and economic integration of refugees and migrants. This plan became a common platform for all international organisations and donors to organise the international technical and financial cooperation. The UN agencies and other INGOs, combined their efforts with the Colombian government for an effective coordination and implementation of the programmes. Workers and employers organization have maintained close relations with regards to the new labour market regulations concerning Venezuelan refugees and migrants under the COVID-19 circumstances. Furthermore, intergovernmental coordination through local to central authorities made the labour market governance open to multi-scalar agencies.⁵³
- ▶ To improve the occupational profile of Colombian women and regular migrants in Colombia and to mitigate barriers to labour market access, in 2020 the National Learning Service of Colombia (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje – SENA) launched a programme for the evaluation and certification of skills gained by female workers, both migrants and nationals⁵⁴. In 2020 and 2021 this initiative

was carried out virtually, which provided more opportunities for migrants and refugees.

- ▶ The Colombian government granted a Special Permit to Stay (Permiso Especial de Permanencia – PEP) to Venezuelan refugees who meet the conditions defined in Resolution 5797 of 2017, including irregular migrants. These permits allowed them to access formal job opportunities, as well as basic services such as health, education and social security for a period of two years. In 2019, a new permit program called Permiso Especial Complementario de Permanencia (PECP) was introduced as a temporary option to regularize Venezuelans who had filed an asylum application between 2015 and 2018. To extend protection, the government took another important step in January 2020 by creating the the Permiso Especial de Permanencia para el Fomento de la Formalización (PEPFF). The PEPFF allowed Venezuelans who are in Colombia irregularly to regularize their status if they are offered a formal work contract. This created an additional path to regularization and formal labour market access that was not previously available.
- ▶ In order to protect labour rights of Venezuelan refugees and migrants and to ensure that employers are abiding by the contracts, employers were asked to register their foreign employees in the system. For that purpose, the use of an online platform for Foreign Workers in Colombia (*Registro Unico de Trabajadores Extranjeros en Colombia – RUTEC*) was reinforced. If employers do not comply with the RUTEC registry, they can be sanctioned from 260 USD to 1.3 million USD.
- ▶ With the objective of improving labour market governance, the ILO provided training on labour migration to ILO constituents. For instance, 75 representatives of local

⁵³ <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/colombias-6-point-plan-venezuelan-migrants-during-covid-19>

⁵⁴ https://www.sena.edu.co/es_co/Noticias/Paginas/noticia.aspx?IdNoticia=4634

governments, trade unions and employers' organization from the departments of Norte de Santander, Atlántico, Nariño and Valle de Cauca attended a training co-organized by the ILO and the Universidad del Norte on international labour migration and public policy advocacy on migration. The ILO, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour, also designed a training module on international labour migration for labour inspectors.⁵⁵

Inclusive Labour Market Policies

It is often noted that the most important challenge of Venezuelan nationals in Colombia has been the absence of a valid identification document that would enable them to start any formal process such as regularization, as well as gaining access to basic services. To address this problem, a new alternative for accessing the Temporary Permit (PEP) was issued in September 2020⁵⁶ For the same purpose, foreigners whose permits had expired during the pandemic were given the opportunity to renew their permits and visas.

► To regulate the work conditions of Venezuelan migrants and to guarantee their access to decent jobs, a formal status is crucial. Since January 2020, to regularize the work conditions of Venezuelans, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a decree that created a **Special Permit of Permanence for Promotion of Formalisation (PEPFF)**. With the PEPFF status, Venezuelan migrants (without an immigration card – *cédula de extranjería*–, work visa, or PEP) have access to fixed-term employment through labour or service contracts. PEPFF applications were facilitated through an online platform

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, on June 26, provisional PEP and PEPFF statuses were implemented with expedited verification processes. However, the validity of this permit was maximum two years to be renewed only once.⁵⁶ The Colombian government improved the time frame significantly with a new temporary protective legal status was enacted on March 1, 2021. The new permit, Temporary Protected Statute for Venezuelan Migrants (EPTV), will be more accessible for Venezuelans regardless of their status in the country. This permit will grant legal status to Venezuelans up to ten years and will open the door for longer-term residency in the country.⁵⁷



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⁵⁵ ILO Publication “Gobernabilidad de las migraciones mejorada en Colombia para promover empleos y trabajo decente”, 2021

⁵⁶ <https://www.mintrabajo.gov.co/empleo-y-pensiones/movilidad-y-formacion/grupo-de-gestion-de-la-politica-de-migracion-laboral/pepff>

⁵⁷ <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2021/3/18/thomson-reuters-foundation-what-nations-can-learn-from-colombias-integration-of-venezuelans>

- ▶ In the context of COVID-19, in order to boost integration of Venezuelans into the Colombian labour market, the recognition and equivalency of degrees earned in Venezuela was essential. While definitive solutions for these problems are yet to be found, there have been attempts to facilitate the procedures. For instance, to promote access to decent work, the government started an online certification programme (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje– SENA*) to help Venezuelans verify their earlier profession and education. Skills certification programmes were adapted to the online platforms. The most vulnerable participants of these programmes also gained access to tablets. The certification training accelerated the process of accreditation of the earlier qualifications. The period of the training programmes was kept short, since the main aim of the certification program was to simply verify previous skills. Rather than providing new skills, these training programmes concentrated on providing participants with necessary information regarding the legal and institutional framework of the labour market. SENA programmes involved international agencies, local public authorities and employers.⁵⁸
- ▶ Colombian law provides **free access to regular and irregular migrants to the services of the Public Employment Service**. These services are:
 - **Registration:** Those interested in finding or changing jobs or getting better job opportunities can register their résumé in an online virtual portal or go in person to the more than 650 service points.
 - **Occupational Guidance:** Those who are already registered and approach an agency or employment exchange authorized by the SPE Unit where they can receive occupational guidance,
 - **Pre-selection:** In order to fill the vacancy registered by the employer in the public employment service, the employment exchange or agency authorized by the PES makes a pre-selection of potential candidates who meet the requirements requested by employers.
 - **Referral:** This is the process by which the employment exchanges and agencies authorized by the PES send the resumes of the pre-selected candidates to the employers, so that the employer can continue with the selection process.
- ▶ Colombian government bodies in coordination with international cooperation agencies launched a **Labour Orientation Guide** for the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Population Seeking Employment in Colombia, which aims to guide and support their inclusion in the labour market. The guide presents information on the authorized institutions that, free of charge, provide advice to refugees and migrants seeking formal employment. It also helps to improve the competitiveness of future applicants and explains in detail the different phases of the selection process. The Guide also provides information on the labor rights and duties of migrants and refugees in Colombia, the different existing contractual modalities and the documents requested by formal companies to candidates who decide to participate in a recruitment process.
- ▶ In 2020 the ILO and the National Learning Service (SENA) have joined forces to improve the **occupational profile of Colombian women and regular migrants in Colombia and to mitigate barriers to labour market access**. During the first quarter of the year, UN Women and the Presidential Council for Women's Equality joined the alliance to carry out the Certification of

⁵⁸ www.sena.edu.co



- ▶ Labour Skills to assist, train and contribute to the access and permanence of Colombian and Venezuelan women. 479 women received certificates recognizing their competencies in areas such as:

- administrative management,
- sales and customer service,
- food handling,
- floriculture and
- personal security.

The participants also received orientation on topics such as resume design, strategies for job interviews, personal finance, psycho-technical tests, and effective job search.

- ▶ In June 2021, the ILO, SENA and UNDP launched a new call to certify migrants' skills and mitigate their barriers to access to the labour market.

This call was addressed to 4.000 migrants, so that they could certify their work skills for free. It provided a good opportunity for migrant workers with skills and abilities in different occupations to be certified, and thus access more and better job offers, or grow within an organization and improve their quality of life⁵⁹.

Social Protection Coverage

Multi-purpose cash transfers for housing, food, water, sanitation and hygiene needs have been extended to migrants and refugees, representing an immediate and efficient safety net. In addition to this, a cash transfer program (Solidarity Income Programme) and food aid programme (School Feeding Programme) was implemented to address the most vulnerable, including Venezuelans, as eligible beneficiaries.

Emergency health-care services are provided for migrants and refugees regardless of their status. Treatment of the potential and confirmed COVID-19 cases is provided to all

individuals. However, a differentiation was made between irregular Venezuelans and PEP holders. While PEP documents were accepted as sufficient documentation for health promotion agencies, irregular migrants only receive health services through emergency mechanisms in the health facilities dependent on the local authorities.

- ▶ The framework of Colombia's social assistance and social security policy is set by the Constitution, which determines the universality of social security, under the terms established by law (Article 48). Article 100 establishes that foreigners will have the same guarantees as nationals.

- ▶ Within the context of the migration crisis in country, Colombia, besides offering various visa which options which are part of its migratory regulatory framework, also adopted ad-hoc regularization mechanisms to guarantee regular status for Venezuelan migrants. For instance In the specific case of Venezuelans, the **Special Permit to Stay (PEP)** issued by Colombia grants work permits for two years to migrants. The PEP allows access to the health system for migrants and refugees that are employed in the formal sector and contribute to the health system. According to a detailed determination of the access to health care that Venezuelan migrants have in Colombia (a total of 1.7 million Venezuelans), only 7,589 participated in the contributory health system, while 35,548 made part of the subsidized system, according to 2018 data.

- ▶ For applicants for refugee status whose request has been rejected, or who have not been granted refugee status, there is the **Special Complementary Permit to Stay (PECP)**, which allows them to carry out any legal activity or occupation in the

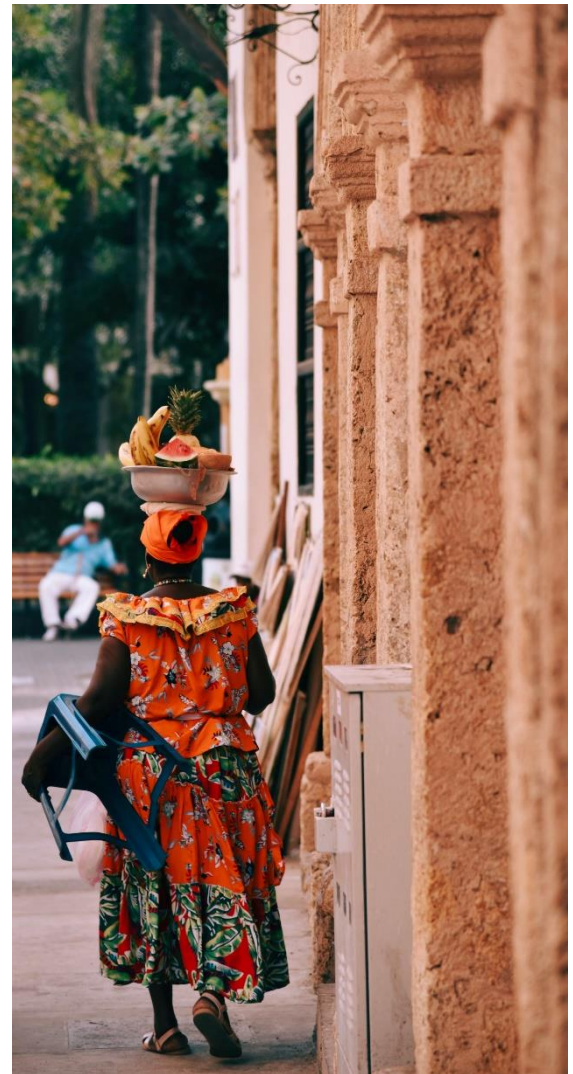
⁵⁹ https://www.ilo.org/lima/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_803095/lang--es/index.htm

country for a renewable period of 90 days.

- ▶ The Colombian government also seeks to promote the migratory regularization of Venezuelan nationals through the **Special Permit of Permanence for the Promotion of Formalization (PEPFF)**. It consists of a work permit granted only to those Venezuelan citizens who are in Colombia and have a formal job. The idea of the PEPFFT is that the Venezuelan citizens with a formal job begin to contribute to the social security system, reducing the social security burden, while promoting the economy and generating new labor force for those productive sectors that are in need.

- ▶ Benefits connected to a regular immigration status include the following:
 - The creation of the Single Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, through which information will be collected for their identification and characterization for the formulation and design of policies.
 - Granting of regular immigrant status and authorization to exercise any legal activity or occupation in the country, including those carried out under an employment relationship or contract.
 - Equal access to public and private employment services and fair and equitable treatment as a member of society with legal rights and obligations.
 - The possibility of moving to the visa regime.
 - Access to the health system, social services and social protection system.

- ▶ The ILO was also active to mitigate one of the main barriers to social security access: disinformation. In partnership with WFP and the Ministry of Labour, the ILO launched the programme “Seguridad Social sin Fronteras”, an information and education campaign on General Social Security in Colombia for Venezuelan migrants and host communities. The objective of the campaign was to provide clear information on how to access social security and describe the benefits included. The campaign is hosted on the “Seguridad Social sin Fronteras” portal and more than 40 partner organisations are involved in its dissemination.



Source unsplash.com



▶ 06

► 6. Conclusion

The conclusion will discuss how both the negative and positive lessons learned in these countries could inform the policy-makers in promoting access to decent work for refugees and migrants. Finally, the report will identify the issues that could be improved under the light shed by the good practices.

Regularisation of the Venezuelan Migration:

The major issue to be addressed in Colombia is the regularisation of the migration. It is evident that forcible displaced population leave their home under extraordinary conditions. Hence, Most Syrians and Venezuelans have crossed the border without official documents necessary for the visa or residence permits. Turkey's national asylum system was effective to regulate the refugee situation evading the problem of irregularities to a great extent. Venezuelan migration showed that the rigidities of the bureaucratic procedures with regards to migrants and refugees would lead to irregular border crossing. Colombian government has been implementing new policies to encourage irregular migrants and refugees to apply for regularisation with addition incentive mechanisms. Finally the most recent legal permit for Venezuelans, the temporary Protection Status for Venezuelan migrants (EPTV for its acronym in Spanish) aims to provide access to regularisation to a larger extent of Venezuelans in the country, it will develop a registry for migrants with updated information to be use in the policy making process, and will gave them a longer-term residency permit in the country (up to 10 years).

Formalisation of Job Opportunities:

The informal employment of migrants and refugees is part and parcel of the macroeconomic problem of informalisation of economy at large. Therefore policies targeting this problem would consider addressing the issue within its macroeconomic context. Both in Turkey and Colombia, there have been important efforts in terms of formalisation of the labour market such as KIGEP in Turkey and

PEPFF in Colombia. These employment policies have been aiming at providing equal opportunities for all, preventing discriminations and protecting vulnerable workers for social cohesion and dialogue. Along this line, the job retention support schemes to support workers and employers as part of the COVID19 measures were extended to Venezuelans in Colombia and Syrians in Turkey.

Gendered Protections:

It should be noted that refugee/migrant women are facing double challenges as refugees/migrants and as women. Violence against migrants and refugees based on gender needs to be addressed in a very determined fashion. Elimination of abuses and exploitation of female refugee workers should be a policy priority of the authorities.

Online Learning and Digital Democracy:

Digital learning and teaching techniques have been developed in these months both in Turkey and Colombia. Following the good practices in both countries (SENA in Colombia, ILO online training platform in Turkey), new online training services would be developed for migrants and refugee to increase their employability.

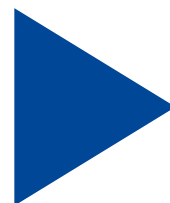
To facilitate digitalization of learning, public authorities would have to assume their commitment to enable the access to the internet especially for the vulnerable. It should be noted

that as of 2016, Human Rights Council of the United Nations General Assembly defined access to the internet to be a basic human right, as part of allowing individuals to "exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression." The report also noted that "the Internet is one of the most powerful instruments of the 21st century for increasing transparency in the conduct of the powerful, access to information, and for facilitating active citizen participation in building democratic societies."

Going Beyond Standardized Strategies Bridging Humanitarian–Development Nexus:

Humanitarian and developmental aims can

complement each other. Short-term emergency support policies that were implemented in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic could be seen in coherence with sustainable development objectives benefiting refugees, migrants and their host communities in the long run. Detailed analysis of different contexts of displacement and development conditions are vital to go beyond standardized remedies. To this end, this report focused on differences as well as similarities between the mixed migration context in Turkey and Colombia as valuable learning opportunities for crafting resilience-building humanitarian–development strategies for forcibly displaced Syrians and Venezuelans.



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