

ABSTRACT

The conflict inside Syria has resulted in displacement unseen in recent years. More than five million Syrians are currently living in the neighboring countries, with over 6.5 million Syrian people are displaced internally and the crisis has spread over the region, producing further displacement into safer areas. The overwhelming influx of Syrian displaced people into Turkey has reached more than 3.5 million in Turkey as of April 30. Considering the unregistered Syrians and registered and unregistered people from other countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, etc.), this number might be even higher.

As an auxiliary to the Turkish Government, Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) has been supporting Syrian people that are living in Turkey since the crisis in Syria erupted in 2011. With increasing population movement to Turkey, TRC strengthened its efforts to provide support to Syrians and people in need, and established its first community center in Şanlıurfa in January 2015 to respond to emerging needs. As of 2020, protection, health, psycho-social support, livelihood and social cohesion services are provided with 16 community centers in 15 provinces that hosts approximately 90% of people under international protection (IP) and temporary protection (TP).

TRC Protection Programme is designed to prevent, mitigate, or eliminate the risks, threats, and consequences, which are associated with violence, exploitation, or abuse faced by vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities. The challenges the current situation poses to people under TP and IP as well as unregistered ones in Turkey, in terms of protection are many and complex. People who are under TP and IP and unregistered are at serious risk of violence, exploitation, and abuse and high numbers are reporting exposure to protection-related incidents. Children are often more vulnerable to all protection risks and considerable number of children cannot access school, which is an important “safe space” for them. Lack of family support, negative coping mechanisms, placement in classes well below their peers because of language barriers and other issues related to bereavement, etc. cause children not to access school, widen the gap between host communities and those people. Destitution, precarious living situations, and socio-economic barriers result in negative coping mechanisms leading directly to child protection risks. To respond to some of these protection needs, TRC Protection Programme has been promoting access and attendance to education by children by providing different supports on referral, case management, in-kind assistance, legal counselling, awareness raising, and advocacy. Since 2015, at the beginning of each semester, hundreds of children were supported for their school registration.

As a part of the comprehensive work for “promoting access and attendance to education”, the data on children who were “not enrolled at school” and “enrolled and dropped out” for the 2018-2019 academic year were analyzed. A considerable number of indicators about access and attendance were identified and in the lights of all indicators, a comprehensive workshop with the key local national and international actors –including governmental organizations, (I)NGOs, UN agencies- was held on November 26, 2019, to debate on solutions and policy recommendations.

Elaborating the issues identified by the Protection Programme regarding children “who had never enrolled” and “who had dropped out”, as well as offering essential recommendations and solutions to address these issues, this report can be described as an advocacy document in the context of the school access and attendance by children under international and temporary protection in Turkey.