

Improving the Employment Conditions and Integration of Foreigners in Turkey

Currently labour migration in Turkey occurs largely outside the regulative framework and often manifests itself as ‘irregular migration’, affecting migrant workers primarily in labour intensive and lower wage sectors. In order to address this situation the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – the UN Migration Agency – piloted a project, cooperating with the Government of Turkey to create long-term conditions to reduce irregular migration and promote regular employment and the social integration of foreigners. The initiative, which is funded by the British Embassy, kicked off in 2015 and is the first of its kind in Turkey, engaging relevant Ministries to give impartial and practical information to current and potential migrant workers about the risks and dangers of irregular labour migration as well as the opportunities to seek regular employment. Can Aydin, a Project Assistant working for IOM Ankara, explained the significance of the initiative, “We worked really hard to develop a programme that would promote ownership among the Government of Turkey. We are very happy with the results and the Ministries have really supported us in making sure that these materials are reaching the widest audience possible. The high-quality design of the infographics such as our step-by-step work permit application instructions will hopefully ease what is often seen as a daunting procedure for foreigners wanting to enter the Turkish labour market.”

The project was implemented at a very strategic time, complementing the adoption of the Law on International Labour. The law, which was enacted in August 2016, specifically called for the Turkish Government to increase its institutional ownership and visibility over its labour migration policymaking. Using eye-catching visual materials to promote registered employment, the project resulted in the development of an interactive and government-owned website (www.workinturkey.gov.tr), smart phone applications (IOS and Android), infographics, short films and posters. To encourage Government buy-in, a tailor-made training programme on “Labour Mobility and Human Development” was also developed for policy makers to promote strategies that could facilitate higher formal employment rates in Turkey. The modules included a Training of Trainers component, allowing the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) to integrate the modules in their own staff training procedures. Under this scope, the project acted as a catalyst to identify national priorities in labour migration management which will be addressed in upcoming IOM-GoT initiatives.

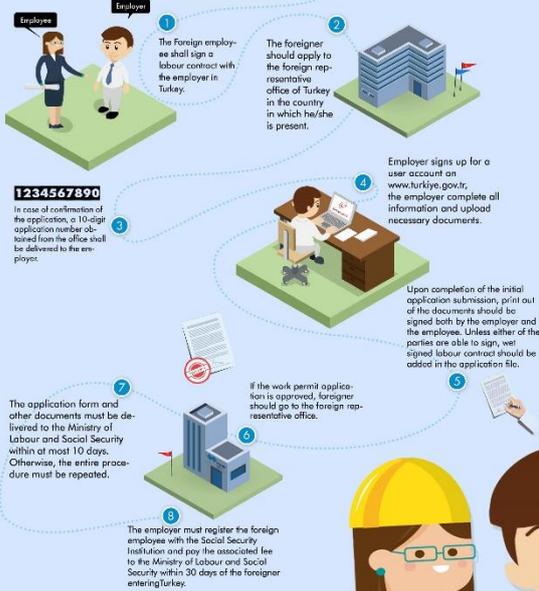
Promoting regular employment is an important part of the integration process for migrants and refugees, going hand in hand with improving their access to local service providers. In December 2016, IOM Turkey also partnered with Ankara’s Keçiören municipality to open the Keçiören Migrants’ Service Centre. The Centre is located in a district hosting one of the largest Syrian populations in the city and acts as a one-stop-shop for migrants and refugees. It provides residents with counselling to help them access public services, referrals to other institutions, targeted trainings, as well as recreational and empowerment activities, including children’s art and language courses. At the opening ceremony IOM Turkey Chief of Mission Lado Gvilava explained the important role of the Centre: “Today, more than three million refugees in Turkey – the majority of whom are from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran – are under temporary or international protection. Municipalities are often the first point of contact for refugees and migrants and therefore have a huge responsibility. Municipalities define what is needed for a peaceful co-existence between migrants, refugees and the local community and generate solutions accordingly.” Funded by the European Union (ECHO), the Centre offers a holistic approach and has already supported 1,420 beneficiaries in its first four months of operation. ECHO Representative Reza Kasrai congratulated the launch of the centre: “We recognize that the vast

majority of services to refugees are provided by public institutions, and this is why this Service Centre is so important. The Centre will assist people to access an array of governmental services, and do so in a sustainable manner because it is situated here within the municipality, which ensures ownership by the local authorities”.

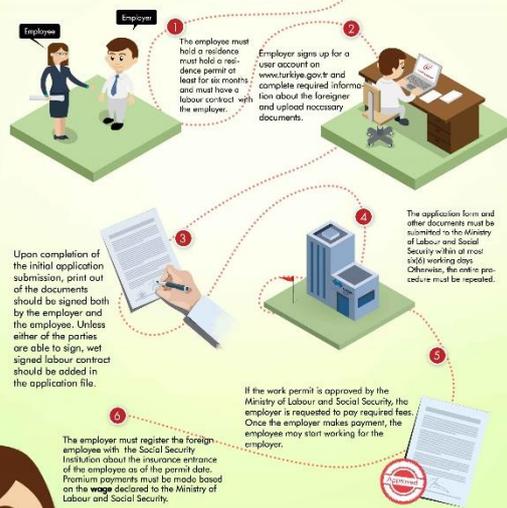
Coordinating with an existing Migrant Council and Coordination Commission, the project promotes structured and regular dialogue between migrants, refugees, state institutions and the host community. The host community has welcomed the Centre. Mayor of Keçiören Municipality, Mustafa Ak, stated that the Centre represents “an important step to accelerate the integration of migrants in our community, to overcome barriers based on cultural and language differences, and to improve decision making.” Following the pilot of this integrated service delivery model, IOM Turkey will develop a strategy to apply the Keçiören blueprint to other municipalities in the country, providing further pathways for the inclusion of refugees and migrants at the local level.

FOREIGN LABOUR INFO PLATFORM STEP BY STEP WORK PERMIT APPLICATION

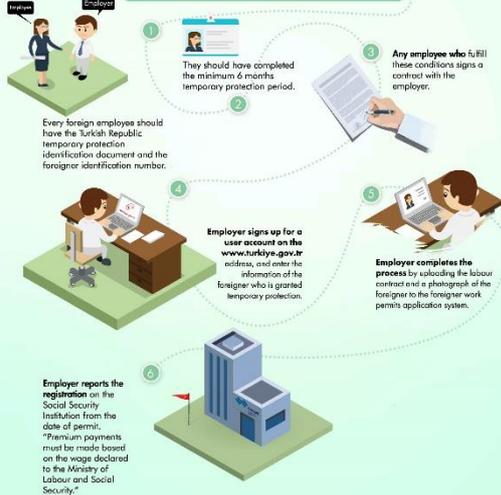
ABROAD APPLICATION



DOMESTIC APPLICATION



FOREIGNERS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION



FOREIGNERS UNDER INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

