Refugee Entrepreneurship: The Case of Turkey
WHO: Established in 2004, Building Markets is a nonprofit organization registered in the US and Canada with a HQ office in NYC.

WHAT: Building Markets creates jobs and encourages economic growth in crisis-affected countries.

HOW: By finding, building, and connecting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to supply chains, capital, and business resources.
Our Approach

1. FIND: Where information and networks are scarce and unreliable, we bring visibility to local SMEs through business verification & market research.

2. BUILD: We address local business capacity gaps by providing SMEs with the resources they need to become competitive, expand to new markets, and attract investment.

3. CONNECT: We connect SMEs to buyers and investors through on-demand requests, tender distribution, pipeline development, and events.
Our Results

Building Markets has helped create **70,000 jobs** and redirected more than **$1.3 billion** into some of the world’s poorest economies

**Other Highlights**

- Assisted more than 26,000 SMEs
- Facilitated 17,000 contracts
- Helped SMEs access more than $21m in loans
- Trained more than 5,000 SMEs
- Over a million unique data points
- Created a network of more than 2,000 refugee/migrant-led SMEs
Refugee Entrepreneurship in Turkey

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Syrian/refugee entrepreneurs in Turkey started 10,000 SMEs
- Brought over $300m in capital to the country
- Jobs for refugees and host communities
- Bring informal refugee workers into the formal economy
- Access to export markets in MENA region
- Partnership opportunities for Turkish SMEs

**CHALLENGES**

- Limited visibility and access to information/resources
- Lack of access to capital
- Vulnerable to COVID-19
- Economic pressures and unemployment lead to social tension between refugee and host communities
Building Markets in Turkey

**Identify SMEs**

1. Supply & Demand Analysis
2. SME Verification & reverification
3. Data Validation & Entry
4. Online Profiling & Access to Tenders
5. Training
6. Matchmaking with Buyers & Investors

**Feedback Loop Improves Business Data**

- 2,000+ Syrian-owned SMEs verified in-person
- $800K+ contracts facilitated
- $250K investment facilitated
- 1,000+ tenders distributed
- 200+ current online learners
- 150+ SMEs mentored

**Train, Increase Access to Capital & Supply Chains**

Support Line & Entrepreneurship Center
Legal and financial counseling
Business registration support
Our SME Network in Turkey: Who Are They?

- **80** with at least one female owner
- **21%** have more than one branch, operating in **14** different cities
- **44%** in Istanbul, **24%** in Gaziantep
- **75%** under < 10 Employees
They Are Business Friendly

- **80%** have a bank account
- **55%** have an English speaker at business
- **33%** are interested in investor or partner
- **29%** have a Turkish business partner

**Average Time to Pay Suppliers**

- Within 30 days, 93%
- Within 60 days, 4%
- Within 90 days, 1%
- Over 90 days, 2%

They Are Positive About The Future

- **66%** expect profits to increase in the next six months
- **52%** expect to hire more staff in the next six months
They Want to Bid

56% know what tenders are

70% plan to bid on tenders in the future

52% of those who have bid, won a tender

**NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL BIDS OVER THE LAST 6 MONTHS**

- NGO Bids: 555
- Private Bids: 176
- Government: 84
They Value International Clients

66% see international organizations as a chance for more business

48% had an international client in the last six months

34% export goods and services

Export Activity by Country

Building Markets
In Action

NEW MARKETS & PRODUCTS

Large Turkish grocery chain contracted with eight Syrian-owned food manufacturers to expand client base, after matchmaking services.

DIVERSE SUPPLIERS

Syrian-owned agricultural products SME won 8 tenders for $600,000 in contracts, after tender advisory services.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Syrian-owned gaming company secured $250,000 from Jordanian investor, after mentorship and legal/financial counseling.
Our Response to COVID-19

• Rapid assessments in Turkey, Jordan, and Myanmar, and more research planned
• Global and local COVID-19 Business Resources shared with SMEs
• Supporting local and international NGOs’ procurement of essential goods
• Virtual events/webinars to facilitate matchmaking
• Virtual training on priority topics, e.g. Business Resilience & Crisis Management, Digital Marketing
• Virtual one-on-one mentorship sessions with Arabic-speaking mentors
• Continued access to online learning and matchmaking platforms
COVID-19 SME Survey: Insights from Turkey

97% Affected by COVID-19
78% Has access to guidance

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CONCERN

- Losing revenue & not meeting business goals: 42%
- Firing staff due to business slowdown: 28%
- Myself, my family, and/or employees getting sick: 26%
- No concerns: 4%

WHAT DO YOU NEED RIGHT NOW

- $ to cover decreased revenue & to meet financial obligations: 85%
- Access to information to understand & respond to pandemic: 59%
- Tech & services to continue operations through remote work: 55%
- Additional employees: 7%

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WILL NEED IN 3 MONTHS

- Capital: 53%
- Expand marketing/advertising (esp. digital): 14%
- New equipment, workspace & staff: 11%
- New contracts: 9%
We Want to Support You

• Building Markets can identify local businesses, led by and employing refugees, that meet your procurement needs – especially important during COVID-19!

• We produce matchmaking reports based on your specifications, facilitate introductions, and hold (virtual) events that bring buyers and suppliers together.

• Over 2,000 of our verified businesses featured on our online platform: searchable by sector, good/service, business size, and ownership (refugee/women) https://entrepreneurs.buildingmarkets.org

• Looking to diversify your vendor pools? Send us your tenders and we will disseminate them to our network.

• Looking to support refugee-owned/ local SMEs during COVID-19? Send us your resources (e.g. loans, grants, incentives, and other support) and we will share.
Building Markets

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