



Cansu Güngör (centre), a national UN Volunteer, is supporting a beneficiary registration session at Turkey's employment agency in Ankara. (UNV, 2017)

Helping refugees access the labour market in Turkey

Turkey is host to more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees. As a national UN Volunteer with the UNHCR country office in Ankara, Cansu Güngör is involved in mobilizing the public and the private sector to facilitate access of refugees to the labour market. Cansu's main objective is to help them become self-reliant and to go on with their lives in Turkey.

As the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR supports the Turkish government response and coordinates the efforts of other UN agencies and partners across the country. With 90% of Syrian refugees living outside camps in urban and peri-urban areas, the needs for skills-development and employability are huge. As part of the Livelihoods Unit in Ankara, Cansu Güngör supports ways in which refugees can ensure their self-reliance.

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“ For this purpose, the Livelihoods Unit has partnered with other sectors to provide vocational and technical training, language classes, business and entrepreneurship training, start-up grants and counselling to refugees.

Cansu is involved in all aspects of the Unit, from project support to administration and communications. While she does not always directly work with beneficiaries, she plays a central role in connecting them to the labour market.

An initial but crucial step is to facilitate the registration process to ISKUR, the database of Turkey’s employment agency. To overcome legal and language barriers, Cansu and her team make sure that beneficiaries are able to register on the database and have a personnel counsellor assigned.

Another key area is to encourage the private sector to recruit refugees. In this regard, the Livelihood Unit supports work permit applications and the payment of fees. Cansu is responsible for reporting and data management for all the transactions.

As she concedes, there is still reluctance from private sector actors to employ refugees due to work permit fees, language and integration issues. Yet UNHCR is doing its best to overcome the situation, [focusing its efforts on building dialogue with national and international brands, chambers of commerce, associations, and organized industrial zones.](#)

“ It is an amazing feeling to see that, through our efforts, we have beneficiaries who have gotten a job to continue their lives with better standards and without any dependency on financial, in-kind or cash assistance,” explains Cansu.

“To be patient and to keep on working towards my objectives and targets

without a second thought are two things that my supervisor and this position have taught me," she concludes.



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This story is published as part of the campaign for [International Volunteer Day 2017: Volunteers Act First. Here. Everywhere.](#)



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