



ISSUE 16: AUGUST 2021

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET (ESSN)

Thanks to European Union funding and a partnership between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRC), 1.5 million refugees living in Turkey are receiving humanitarian support through monthly cash assistance.

August snapshots



1,499,124 individuals
reached with cash assistance



304,650,220 TRY
transferred to 241,268 households



4,901,908,460 TRY
transferred since April 2020

Sweepbacks: In August, 692,926.74 TRY in total was swept back in total, 191,845.00 TRY being swept back from 265 uncollected cards and 501,081.74 TRY from 796 dormant accounts). The total amount of funds swept back since April 2020 is 16,312,258.44 TRY.



Check our latest focus group discussion report: Exploring the livelihoods of women refugees in Turkey

Highlights

Cash transfers and its linkages with complementary programmes

The ESSN operations continued without disruption in the face of COVID-19 and numerous challenges. TRC and IFRC have not ceased to adapt and align all the activities with preventive measures implemented across the country and the dynamic changes and developments. The necessary adjustments were made prior to the C-ESSN cash transfers, while some of the ESSN recipients were shifted to the Complementary Emergency Social Safety Net (C-ESSN) pool. Despite these complex changes, all payments to this date have taken place without any delays. In August, 1,499,124 ESSN recipients received 304,650,220 TRY, including 72,286,000 TRY quarterly top-ups.

Research on Livelihoods published

In addition, various efforts have been directed at referring ESSN recipients through the livelihoods/socio-economic empowerment referral mechanism between the ESSN programme and the TRC Community Centres (CCs), with the aim of fostering their self-resilience, which has been ongoing since April 2021. These efforts have been supported by studies such as Exploring the Livelihoods of Women Refugees in Turkey. Find on more on page 4 and by accessing this [link](#).

As one of the remote Focus Group Discussion (rFGD) series conducted under the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme, this study aimed at exploring the understanding of refugee women under temporary and international protection about participating in the labour market, the opportunities available for them, and the challenges faced from the perspectives of the ESSN applicants. The study is based on ten remote FGDs conducted in September 2020 with 35 ineligible and 24 eligible women from five provinces, namely Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Gaziantep, and Hatay.



Funded by
the European Union



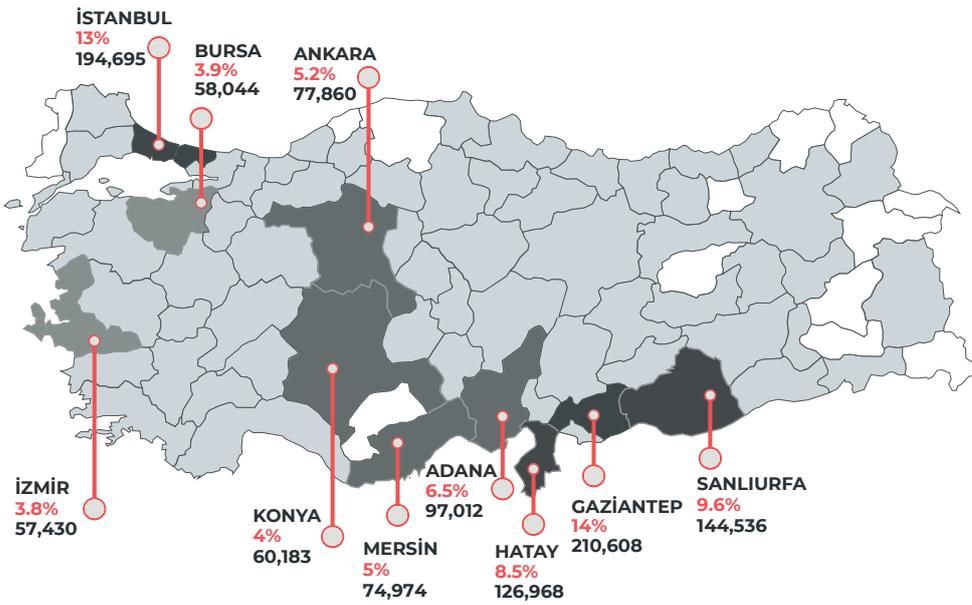
ESSN APPLICATIONS

In August 2021, a total of 3,358 household applications were received by the SASF offices and TRC Service Centres. Of the aforementioned number, 43.9 per cent were received by TRC Service Centres and 56.1 per cent at SASF offices. The total number of household applications received since the beginning of the ESSN III Programme reached 626,559, with 36.2 per cent of the total application having been received by the TRC Service Centres. After the decrease in May 2021 as a result of nationwide lockdown as a pandemic mitigation measure, application levels reached the usual level and June, and steady at this level in July and August with small fluctuations.

Eligible
52.8%

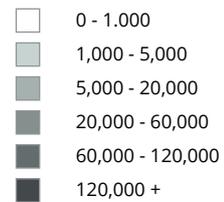


Ineligible
47.0%



Province breakdown of ESSN recipients

Number of individuals



CRITERIA BREAKDOWN ¹



55.9%
households
with four or
more children



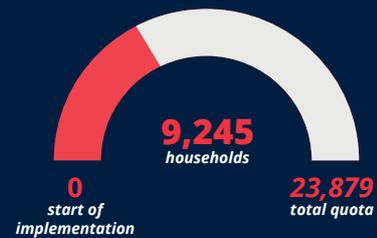
35.5%
households
with high
dependency
ratio (≥1.5)



4.8%
single female

SASF ALLOWANCE

In August 2021, 9,245 households (37,010) individuals received ESSN assistance via the SASF allowance across Turkey. The SASF allowance continues to play an integral role in minimizing exclusion errors and including vulnerable households into the ESSN.



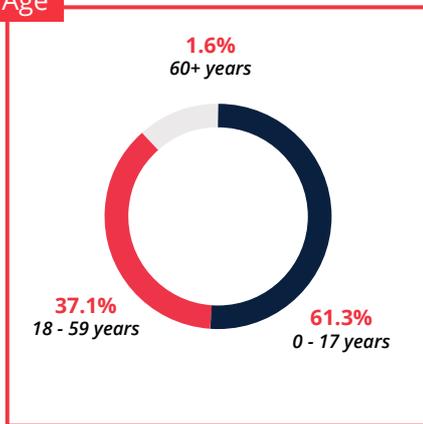
***3.8%** of households (9,245 HHs) receive ESSN assistance within the scope of the SASF allowance.

¹ 134,880 households with four or more children; 85,579 households with a dependency ratio equal to or above 1.5; 11,564 single females.



IN NUMBERS: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE WE SERVE

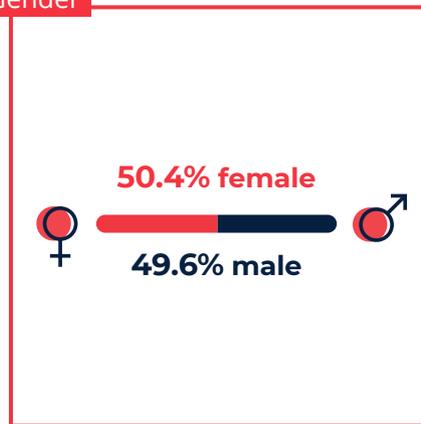
Age



Age breakdown of ESSN recipients:

0 - 17 years: 918,661
18 - 59 years: 556,101
60+ years: 24,362

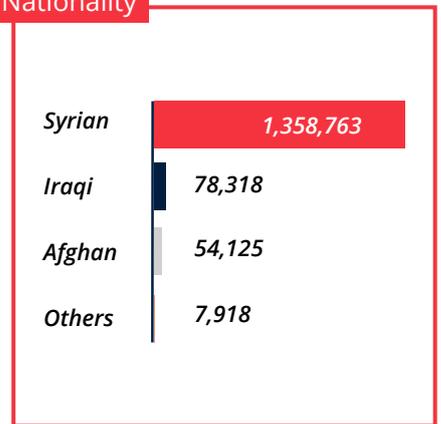
Gender



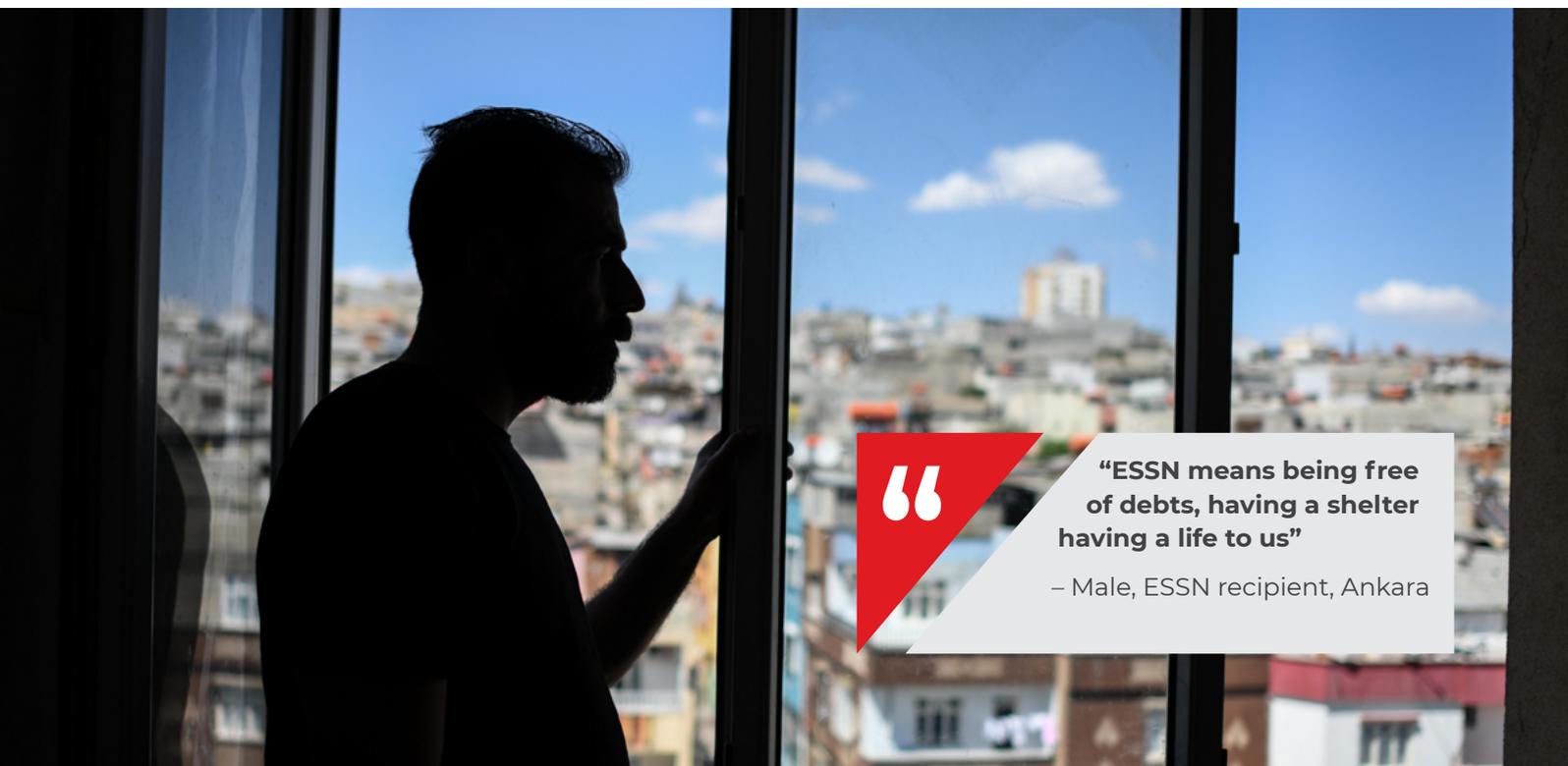
Gender breakdown of ESSN recipients:

Female: 755,836
Male: 743,288

Nationality



Among the 'others' category are Iranian, Somali, Pakistani, Chinese, Palestinian and other nationals.



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“ESSN means being free of debts, having a shelter having a life to us”

– Male, ESSN recipient, Ankara

STRONG LINKAGES BETWEEN THE ESSN AND C-ESSN PROGRAMME

Following the signing of the C-ESSN Project agreement in December 2020 among the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, TRC and the European Commission Directorate General for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and a six-month inception phase, the transfers of cash assistance commenced in July 2021 and the implementation phase is now in its third month. The donors and the implementing partners from both programmes have been working relentlessly together to promote synergies and ensure that the basic needs of vulnerable

individuals are met. Through careful planning, TRC and IFRC perform programme duties in complementarity, avoiding any forms of duplication of efforts and costs and maximizing results. The operational efforts in ascertaining that the two programmes encompass the relevant target groups while harnessing all the know-how and experience are reflected in extensive activities regarding accountability to affected populations, data verification, internal and external coordination, among others.

Individuals Supported Under Essn and C-Essn Programmes



Both programmes aim to support the people who need it the most. After three years of continuous basic needs support to more than 1.8 million individuals, several analyses and assessments showed the necessity to distinguish between the ESSN recipients' who have the capacity work and the ones who will need social support of a long-term nature. Therefore, the applicants and recipients who are in need, yet are deemed as employable and have the potential to be referred to socio-economic initiatives remain in the ESSN caseload, while the most disadvantaged groups in terms of livelihood capacities are being transferred to the C-ESSN pool. To compensate for the difficulties to engage in economic activities, the most vulnerable groups supported under the C-ESSN are assisted through a higher transfer amount.

Exploring the Livelihoods of Women Refugees in Turkey

Since April 2021, the ESSN recipients seeking opportunities for capacity development activities or socioeconomic opportunities have been referred to TRC Community Centers. Adding a livelihoods referrals component to the ESSN Programme was devised through a multitude of studies. One of the products of TRC and IFRC's efforts in this regard is the report of the Exploring the Livelihoods of Women Refugees in Turkey research, a qualitative study which was conducted recently through remote focus group discussions (rFGDs) with participation of ESSN applicants. Results shed light on the opportunities and challenges perceived by the refugee women in the labour market, as well as their understanding and willingness to participate in the economy. The indirect benefit of the research were the observations as to the importance of sensitization when it comes to referrals and mechanisms that have been developed by TRC and IFRC. In parallel, TRC is co-chairing the Task Team on Referral and Transition to Livelihoods together with 3RP Inter-Agency Coordinators, with the objective of outlining key elements of a collective and coherent approach to the issue of referral and transition of refugees and host communities to livelihood opportunities.



PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring and evaluation:

Onsite monitoring, card distribution monitoring, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were the main activities conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation Teams in August. During onsite monitoring, 202 local institutions were visited in 85 districts in 17 different cities. Card distribution monitoring took place at 28 Halkbank branches in 22 districts in 8 provinces. Observations confirm that the operations were carried out smoothly and successfully. The 5th round of FGDs is conducted under the title of Trends in Expenditure and Coping Strategies and it aims to explore the changes in choices of expenses during the pandemic and how this affected the households' daily life. The PDM11 data collection and analysis has been completed and the report will be released in the upcoming days. The data collection cycle of PDM12, which is designed as a panel study, is ongoing and is expected to be finished as of early September.

Referral and Outreach:

In August, the Referral and Outreach (R&O) field teams conducted more than 380 local authority visits in 32 cities within the scope of sensitization and advocacy activities. During SASF visits, it was noted that the duration of the "State of Emergency" was extended until 30 September 2021 (as life has not yet returned to normal and the risks associated with the pandemic continue) and therefore it remains not obligatory to conduct household visits apart from situations where households are at high risk.

No substantial increase in the number of Afghan refugees was observed during PDMM visits; their applications were being evaluated within the scope of International Protection (IP) with interviews in progress. In case an individual's IP application is rejected, PDMMs consider the current situation in the application holders' country and work on other options.

Accountability to affected populations:

Everyone has a good story to tell! On 30 August, TRC and IFRC launched a training and mentorship programme – the "Storytelling Project" - to train 10 storytellers who currently benefiting from the ESSN programme, for them to share their unique passions, voices, and stories with the world.

Collecting feedback from the field has been a crucial part of the AAP/CEA activities to create up-to-date and needs-based sensitization for the programme target group. In August, the teams conducted regular field missions to Istanbul area to visit the TRC Community Centres (CCs), Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASFs) and NGOs. The teams made inquiries and collected feedback regarding people's access to programme related information and messages. The routine AAP activities continued throughout August. The 168 TRC Call Centre received and recorded 13,702 calls. 49.54 per cent of these calls were received from female individuals, while 50.45 per cent of the calls received from males. Various information requests and questions were received through the Kizilaykart website and Facebook page, with more than 500 questions/inquiries that were responded to in August. About 538 thousand information provision SMSs were sent out regarding eligibility and card distribution, monthly removal, discrepancy, dormant and uncollected card warning, sweep back process and upload categories.

Coordination:

In terms of coordination, TRC and IFRC organized the ESSN Programme Task Force Meeting with the participation of 38 individuals from 16 national, international, and UN agencies. The meeting included presentations on the latest programme updates alongside significant observations obtained during the monitoring and evaluation activities. The meeting also highlighted issues noted within the referral and outreach activities to tackle the applicants' barriers during the application process.