

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AND LEGAL SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE MIGRANTS IN TURKEY (PALS)

Caritas | ASAM

Donors: EU - Humanitarian Aid ECHO | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg

Project Summary:

Within the scope of the PALS Project, Foundation Caritas Luxembourg (FCL) and Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) aim to address protection needs and facilitate access to available services for vulnerable asylum seekers and migrants, including unregistered and undocumented migrants, who live in the provinces of Istanbul, İzmir, Balıkesir and Van. Protection and assistance will also be provided through ASAM offices and mobile teams in order to reach vulnerable asylum seekers and migrants in need of assistance.



Map 1: Provinces, where the project is implemented (Balıkesir, İstanbul, İzmir, Van) are indicated in dark blue. Project coordination is conducted from Ankara, which is indicated in light blue.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Working with full capacity, the team feels more confident as they reach over 50% of most of project targets.

Project teams in all four locations have been increasingly busy with more and more case referred to them and with emergency requests they had to respond to at all times.

In Izmir and Ayvalik, the mobile teams responded to 24 border incidents in a period of two months. Due to the adverse weather conditions, there are fewer attempts for border crossing in winter (to compare; 28 incidents took place in November). 976 individuals were reached by kit distributions and interpretation support while 800 individuals received information on their rights.

In Van, law enforcement units have started to request assistance for the migrants apprehended during irregular border crossings. The mobile team provides emergency kits and receives detailed information on the assistance provided but cannot conduct interviews and assess the needs firsthand so far.

In Istanbul, more protection interventions are referred by organizations; such as PDMM's referral for emergency accommodation support for an Uzbek woman saved from a human trafficking network.

Apart from the regular kit distributions, project offices have received several specific assistance requests: the coast guard in Izmir made urgent requests for soups for severely dehydrated migrants or for baby formulas for newly apprehended families.

In Ayvalık, ASAM and IOM had a meeting to coordinate their responses to the border incidents. IOM continues to refer an increasing number of protection cases to the project.

The coordination efforts with the relevant stakeholders have continued this month with visits to law enforcers, NGOs, and municipalities. In December and January, the PALS team also attended regular coordination meetings and working groups in the province and at the national level.



Photo of the project lawyer, Ayşe Güçlü, providing legal information during the mobile team's visit to rural areas in İzmir.

Summary in Numbers

Number of targeted vulnerable migrants having their critical needs identified and met through basic assistance, legal information and referral:

3,469 reached / 4,420 target

Number of persons with increased/appropriate information on relevant rights and/or entitlements through outreach activities:

1,544 reached / 1,900 target

Number of individual cases management conducted:

838 reached / 1,260 target

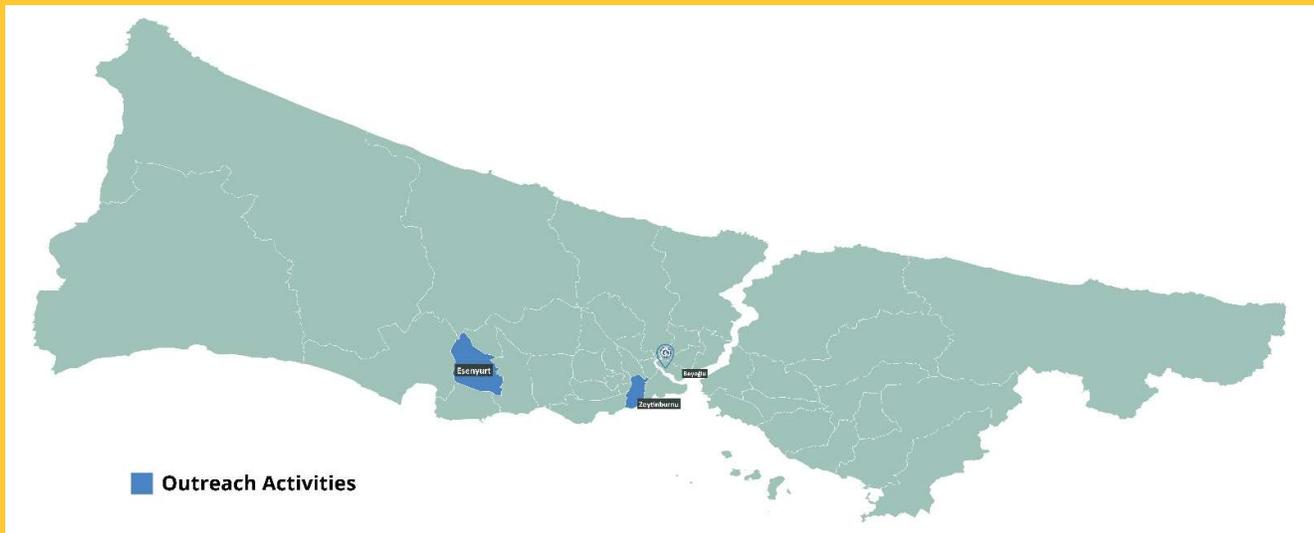
Number of individual cases supported and referred for regularization:

93 reached / 900 target

Number of individual cases at risk (SGBV/ UAM, etc.) referred to specialized institutions and organizations including internal ASAM programs:

207 reached / 600 target

PALS PROJECT SERVICE MAP FOR İSTANBUL



ZOOM IN

ZOOM IN section of this month's newsletter focuses on İstanbul office.

As the largest city in Europe with a population of over 15 million residents, İstanbul is a challenging city to work in.

Istanbul hosts Turkey's highest population of refugees and migrants. DGMM's data indicate that 534.579 Syrian nationals under temporary protection are registered in İstanbul. Additionally, a vast number of migrants from different communities live in the province.

The project team in İstanbul consists of 7 staff members, including a lawyer, a caseworker, a mobile team protection assistant, support staff and interpreters in French, Arabic, and Persian.

Targeted District and Municipalities in İstanbul:

Municipalities are key actors at the district level, and some of them are very involved in migrants' issues. There are 39 districts in İstanbul, and each district elects its own municipality. All district municipalities are under the administration of the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

Istanbul is an attraction point for migrant population for various reasons: job searching, livelihood, community network, social support mechanism, access to healthcare, education, etc. Each district has a specific socio-economic structure and hosts various communities of refugees and migrants.

ASAM mobile team is focusing its intervention on few districts with large population of migrants:

In Esenyurt, the number of refugees and migrants exceeds 220,000 and accounts for 24% of the total population. While the largest community is from Syria, there are more than 90 nationalities recorded by an IOM study conducted in 2019.

NGOs are active in the district. On the 15 December, the 6th multi Stakeholders Protection Meeting took place in Esenyurt, led by Save the Children, it was an opportunity to exchange on the project.

In Zeytinburnu, which is a much smaller district, migrants account for 23% of the total population. With a large Syrian community, this district hosts Afghan and Chinese Uyghur communities, as well.

Zeytinburnu municipality and its network of NGOs (Mavi Kalem, Family, Women Support and the Disabled People Center) are active on migrants' issues: some hygiene kits were distributed through these institutions, which also referred vulnerable cases.

The district of Bağcılar is known for its Georgian, Afghans and Azerbaijani communities. The team made efforts but failed to coordinate with the municipality as they were not open to cooperation.

The İstanbul team conducts face-to-face interviews, with the beneficiaries who come to the ASAM office in Dolapdere, and over the phone, with the beneficiaries who call the counseling line.

The mobile team has started holding information sessions to various actors and is planning to organize legal information sessions in the districts at the offices of the local associations such as with SCF in Esenyurt.

For the survey on irregular migrants, İstanbul is a key place for different migrant profiles that can be encountered. With her extensive knowledge of the city, the consultant recruited by Caritas will provide valuable support to the survey.



The PALS team in İstanbul.

PALS Agenda for February

The PALS project plans to present you the outcomes of these developments in the following newsletter:

SGDD-ASAM will start voucher card distribution in February 2022

One of the assistance modalities foreseen by the project is the distribution of e-vouchers for protection cases. This new approach for irregular migrants will be tested in Izmir. The procurement procedures have been completed and ŞOK Market was selected for its extensive network of supermarkets and good prices.

The M&E consultant for the PALS project started working as of January 2022

Caritas Luxembourg has recruited an external consultant to support M&E activities and the survey component of the project. Gizem Demirci Al-Kadah has extensive experience in migration and have started to support to project as of January. In the following months, more updates will be shared on the research component.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Laila is a young trans-woman from Afghanistan. Because of her gender identity, Laila has suffered physical and psychological violence from her father and brothers. She is also a sexual violence survivor, and was abused at a very young age.

When fleeing became the only option, she and her mother entered Turkey through the Ağrı province illegally a year ago and reached Istanbul. During the journey, Laila was subjected to physical violence and rape by smugglers. Together with Sarah, a trans-woman, they started working in a textile workshop while living in highly inadequate conditions. While carrying out field operations, the PALS team met with Laila and her partner. They do not want to reside in Istanbul due to the discrimination and threats they face because of their gender identity.

Project team searched for provinces still open to International Protection registrations, where LGBTI+ individuals can live safely. The ASAM office in the new city was contacted and, with its involvement, the registration procedures for Laila and her partner were successfully completed with PDMM. They obtained international protection IDs. Our teams will continue to follow-up their case and procedures.

Updates from earlier months

***Habibeh (from October's Newsletter):** Habibeh continued to live with her roommate Samira in Van. Several violent incidents occurred, with Samira being attacked on several occasions in front of Habibeh and her children. Habibeh contacted the Van team again. Upon our team's referral, Habibeh was accepted into the shelter of Violence Prevention and Monitoring Center (ŞÖNİM). During her stay in the shelter, Habibeh was able to apply for international protection in Van and requested a referral to another city due to safety risks.*

***Marieme (from November's Newsletter):** Marieme started to live in an apartment with her friends of the same nationality in Basmane, Izmir. After the babies were discharged from the hospital, the expenses for the baby formula and medicines prescribed by the hospital were covered by the project and delivered to the beneficiary. ASAM's lawyer supported her in a legal petition requesting international protection to PDMM. Marieme is currently waiting for a response to her application.*