I started to learn to trust myself unconditionally, to think about my future, and to express my feelings and thoughts. Most notably, I began to understand myself,” said fifteen-year-old Cihan.

Cihan and her sister arrived in Turkey in 2014 and started a new life in Şanlıurfa, where they are currently residing with her family and pursuing their studies. “The migration journey was like playing a game for us. I remember as if I were going on a trip. We were not aware of the seriousness of the situation until realizing that we are not going back. However, I just remember how excited I was to discover new places and meeting new friends” she said.

Cihan participated in an activity titled “Voice of the Women” conducted by IOM Turkey’s Şanlıurfa Psychosocial Mobile Team (PMT), which had two main goals: improving self-awareness and teaching a traditional percussion instrument called ‘Erbane’. She wasn’t so interested in music before this activity, but now she says that music has become an integral part of her daily life.

Cihan is very happy to be a part of this activity, meet new friends and share this beautiful journey with them. “The awareness sessions contributed to my life. I started to learn to follow my curiosity. Now, I have the confidence and hope to live my life. Before the activity I wasn’t sharing my feelings with anyone, even when I felt sad, but with the help of this activity, I learned to create trustworthy relations with my friends and family. I know that I can build a good future for myself. I am not shy anymore; I have a voice.”

IOM Turkey’s operations during this period continued to focus on providing support to individuals and families affected by COVID-19. Multi-sectoral support for vulnerable migrants, refugees, and host communities included multi-purpose cash assistance, distribution of hygiene and non-food items (NFI), Protection, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). IOM also supported local authorities’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic by were prioritized in areas related to multi-purpose cash assistance, distribution of hygiene and non-food items (NFI), Protection, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). Additionally, IOM’s municipal migrant and community centres continued to operate face-to-face and online, and continued to be relied upon for the accurate information, legal and medical referral, and counselling for specific needs in social support, livelihoods, and legal cases.
IOM’s Psychosocial Mobile Teams (PMTs) continued to implement online mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities to protect and promote the psychological well-being of migrant and refugee communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. A new team was established in Sultangazi, Istanbul to assist the Sultangazi Municipality in responding to the needs of refugees and host communities in the municipality. During the reporting period, the current PMTs reached 1,212 beneficiaries through a variety of activities focused on resilience building and coping with the prolonged effects of the COVID pandemic. On 15 February, IOM started to provide transportation services for 512 school children, in line with strict COVID-19 prevention measures.

Community Centre Updates
IOM Turkey’s municipal migrant and community centres in Adana, Ankara (Keçiören), Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa, as well as IOM supported IBC Centre in Istanbul, supported migrants, refugees, and host communities. In total, through the five centres, IOM reached 22,046 beneficiaries through counselling and referral services, informative sessions, as well as educational and sociocultural activities. The Centres provided services to beneficiaries both on rotational basis, and through online platforms, in line with the preventive measures of the government of Turkey.

Community Stabilization - Livelihoods and Shelter Support Updates
Cash Grant For Small Business Start-ups: IOM provided small cash grants to 160 Turkish and Syrian individuals located in Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, and Şanlıurfa provinces, to establish small business start-ups in line with the needs and skills of beneficiaries.

Rural Development Project: IOM has supported an existing women’s cooperative in Çanakkale by providing essential processing equipment and tools to extend their activities, in addition to capacity building, consultancy, and coaching services.

Shelter Rehabilitation: 234 shelters were rehabilitated, 58 in İzmir (216 individuals), 93 in Hatay (537 individuals) and 83 in Şanlıurfa (467 individuals).

Community Stabilization: 16 projects were finalized in Gaziantep, Hatay, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, Çanakkale, Mersin, Kilis, and Kahramanmaraş (70,140 beneficiaries).

COVID-19 Response Activities

| Beneficiaries Assisted Since 2014 | Beneficiaries Assisted in Total
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<td><strong>232,657</strong></td>
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COVID-19 Response/Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
Vulnerable refugee families affected by COVID-19 received Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance from IOM after an assessment. Eligible households (HHs) received 1,000 TL in line with the amount distributed by Turkish government. In total 33,125 individuals (6,647 HHs) received IOM cash support.

Voucher Support for Winterization Items
IOM supported 1,000 households in Gaziantep who have not been eligible for the Emergency Social Safety Net with a one-time top-up cash assistance over the winter. Who have not been able to access the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN). 800 Syrian and 200 Turkish households, 5,135 individuals in total benefited from the support. Additionally, 135 individuals (24 HHs) were supported with core relief items for winter in Hatay and Şanlıurfa provinces.