
Project Evaluation Report

JAPAN Platform (JPF)

Information Sharing and Case Management for Syrian
Refugees in Erdemli, Mersin, Turkey

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1. Acronyms:

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|----------------|---|
| JPF | : Japan Platform |
| REALs | : Reach Alternatives (Formerly JCCP) |
| Maharet | : Maharet for Capacity Building/Maharet Kapasite Geliştirme Derneği |
| FGD | : Focus Group Discussion |
| KII | : Key Informant Interview |
| HH | : Household |
| FHH | : Female Headed Households |
| CFS | : Child Friendly Space |
| DRC | : Danish Refugee Council |
| IP | : Implementing Partner |
| UNHCR | : United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| PwD | : Person with Disabilities |
| GBV | : Gender Based Violence |
| PDMM | : Provincial Directorate of Migration Management |
| TP | : Temporary Protection |
| TPR | : Temporary Protection Regulation |
| TAC | : Temporary Accommodation Centers |
| ID | : Identification |
| DGMM | : Directorate General of Migration Management |
| CHS | : Core Humanitarian Standards |
| NGO | : Non-Government Organization |

2. Project Monitoring Information:

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|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|-------------|----------|
| Program | Iraq and Syria Humanitarian Assistance | | | | |
| Project Name | Information Sharing and Case Management for Syrian Refugees in Erdemli, Mersin, Turkey | | | | |
| Start date | 9 May 2020 | End date | 4 May 2021 | Days | 242 days |
| Member NGO | REALs | Contact Person | Kyoko Nishimura | | |
| Implementing Partner | Maharet | Contact Person | Luey Halef – Project Coordinator maharet.luey@gmail.com | | |
| Project Implementation Status | Ongoing | | | | |

3. Evaluation Purpose:

As part of its mandate and responsibility, Japan Platform (JPF) needs to ensure the quality of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the projects that it funds. JPF monitoring and evaluation aims to assess progress towards project objective and results, to identify and document lessons learned, including human interest stories and to contribute to the development and improvement of the projects of NGO partners. Thus JPF monitoring and evaluation aims to serve both accountability and learning functions.

4. Context

As of January 2021, Turkey hosts the world's largest refugee population, with almost 3,6 million registered Syrians under temporary protection, including more than 1,6 million children and close to 330,000 refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities.¹ Only 58,687 Syrians (1,6%) live in Temporary Accommodation Centers (TAC) run by the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), with the rest living in private housing throughout Turkey.

As the Syrian crisis became protracted, Syrian refugees in the TACs and towns near the border started to move to urban centers to seek employment. Currently, over 98% of Syrian refugees live along with the host communities in mostly urban and peri-urban centers. İstanbul (519,171) is home to the highest number of Syrian refugees, followed by Gaziantep (450,325), Hatay (434,420) and Şanlıurfa (421,955), Adana (252,462), and Mersin (222,982).²

The Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR), effective since October 2014, provides Syrians access to a number of services, including education, healthcare, the right to apply for work permits, and social services, after registration with authorities.³ However, the specific needs of Syrian refugees under temporary protection and the vulnerabilities caused by forced displacement exceed the resources, infrastructure and expertise of public institutions, straining the capacity and quality of public services.⁴

Furthermore, the contraction in the Turkish economy in 2018 and the rising inflation meant that the vulnerable refugee households increasingly felt forced to use negative coping strategies such as withdrawing children from school, sending children to work, accumulating debt and reducing health expenditure, in order to meet their basic needs.⁵ A number of assessments indicated that in 2019, 64% of urban Syrian households lived below the poverty line, including 18% living under the extreme poverty line.⁶

Covid-19, on the other hand, has added unprecedented and acute challenges to the already difficult circumstances of Syrian refugees. Turkey reported its first positive case of Covid-19 in 11 March 2020 and the first loss of life on 17 March. As of 24 January 2021, the total number of cases stood at 2,429,605, with 25,073 reported losses of lives.⁷ As a result of Covid-19, many public services that were already overwhelmed due to high demand have now adopted reduced and remote working modalities. Even before Covid-19, refugees faced difficulties in accessing public services due to language, economic or social barriers. Due to the strain that Covid-19 has put on the public services and the restrictions to slow down the pandemic, the Syrian refugees have greater challenges in accessing services at the moment.

Furthermore, many Syrians refugees were working informally before Covid-19. With the economic slowdown and the shutting down of businesses due to Covid-19, many refugees have lost their jobs. In the protection sector, the provision of protection through remote modalities such as phone counselling, individual legal support, follow-up on active cases and referral to active services has emerged as a priority. Furthermore, because of the ongoing closure of schools due to Covid-19, the learning of 19 million children in Turkey, including 680,000 Syrian refugee children has been disrupted. Accessing education remotely has been a challenge for the most disadvantaged children.⁸

¹ DGMM Temporary Protection Statistics, 2020. <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

² DGMM, Temporary Protection Statistics, 2020. <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

³ 3RP Outcome Monitoring Report for Turkey, 2018-2019.

https://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/library/syria_programme/3rp-outcome-monitoring-report.html

⁴ 3RP Outcome Monitoring Report for Turkey, 2018-2019.

https://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/library/syria_programme/3rp-outcome-monitoring-report.html

⁵ WFP ESSN Post Distribution Monitoring Report, Cross Section Round 2, PDM 5, April 2019; WFP ESSN Fact Sheet, 2019.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/essn-post-distribution-monitoring-report-cross-section-round-2-pdm-5>

⁶ 3RP Outcome Monitoring Report for Turkey, 2018-2019.

⁷ Turkish Ministry of Health Covid-19 Information Website, 2020 <https://covid19.saglik.gov.tr/TR-66935/genel-koronavirus-tablosu.html>

⁸ 3RP Turkey's Response to Covid 19, May 2020. www.3rpsyriacrisis.org

5. Evaluation Methodology

5.1. Methodology and approach

This JPF Monitoring and Evaluation has assessed REALs/Maharet Information Sharing and Case Management project in Erdemli, Mersin, Turkey. It is intended to serve both accountability and learning functions.

The monitoring and evaluation of REALs/Maharet Information Sharing and Case Management project in Erdemli, Mersin was originally planned as an M&E field visit by JPF M&E team. JPF M&E team, REALs and Maharet had agreed on 30th November – 2nd December as the field visit dates. However, Maharet informed the JPF M&E team that they conducted almost all the project activities through distant methods and that house visits or in-person interviews with the beneficiaries by the M&E team would therefore not be feasible. Furthermore, the same week the government of Turkey introduced a number of strict restrictions including curfews and the closures of a number of non-essential businesses due to the record number of Covid19 cases in Turkey.

In light of these unfortunate developments, in place of a field visit to Erdemli, Mersin JPF M&E team suggested a number of distant monitoring tools to REALs/Maharet. With the approval of REALs/Maharet and JPF, the M&E team conducted the monitoring of REALs Information Sharing and Case Management project through distant methods, e.g. document review, Zoom meetings, WhatsApp calls, phone calls, and a household survey with beneficiaries conducted on the phone. The interviews with the Maharet staff and volunteers took place during the third week of December 2020 based on the availability of the Maharet staff.

5.2. Methods & Tools

The starting point for the JPF M&E was the Monitoring Matrix which provided the key Questions. The monitoring followed OECD-DAC criteria and added Beneficiary Complaint and Response Mechanism and Beneficiary Satisfaction components. The evidence was gathered from a combination of document review, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and a household survey with the randomly selected beneficiaries.

A mixed method approach included:

- KIIs with Maharet Information Sharing and Case Management Project staff members (4 KIIs).
- KII with REALs representative (1 KII)
- KIIs with relevant stakeholders who were selected because they worked in relevant sectors and with similar target groups (4 KIIs, including one UNHCR representative, two national NGO representatives (Support to Life and Maya Association), and one Turkish Red Crescent representative).
- FGD with Maharet volunteers (1 FGD with 8 volunteers).
- Household survey conducted via telephone which asked both close and open-ended questions, with 5 randomly selected project participants.

JPF M&E team randomly selected 10 beneficiaries and Maharet called these beneficiaries beforehand to get their initial consent and inform them about the call they would receive from the JPF M&E team translator. Upon the confirmation of Maharet that these 10 beneficiaries could be reached by JPF M&E team, the JPF M&E team translator telephoned the 10 randomly selected beneficiaries. However, 1 beneficiary had their phone turned off; 1 beneficiary did not pick up the call; 1 beneficiary picked up the call but told the translator that

she was not willing to participate in the survey; the phone number for 1 beneficiary did not work; and 1 number seemed to represent two different beneficiaries on the list but it represented only 1 beneficiary. Thus, the JPF M&E team was able to reach 5 out of 10 randomly selected beneficiaries. The surveys were conducted on the phone by a female Arabic speaking translator.

All of the 5 beneficiaries were from Syria. Their ages ranged from 29 to 73. 3 of the beneficiaries were female and 2 were male. 3 of the beneficiaries lived in Erdemli whereas 2 of them lived in Mersin city centre (Mezitli neighbourhood). All of the participants reported to be literate. 1 survey participant reported to know good Turkish whereas 3 of them knew medium Turkish and one of them knew no Turkish. The number of children in the survey participants' households ranged from 1 to 7. 1 child was reported to work and 2 children were reported to not go to school.

5.3 Limitations

In-person M&E field visit would have enabled observations and a more interactive exchange of ideas and perceptions. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, this was not possible. The list of beneficiaries reached in October and November 2020 included 101 beneficiaries. JPF M&E team selected 10 beneficiaries randomly to be able to survey 10% of the beneficiaries reached at the point of the M&E. However, it was not possible to reach 5 of the beneficiaries although they had been vetted by Maharet as reachable by phone. For this reason, JPF M&E team was able to reach 5% of the beneficiaries with the telephone survey.

6. Key Findings

6.1. Relevance

Key Finding - 1: Project relevance to the needs of the beneficiaries

REALs/Maharet Information Sharing and Case Management for Syrian Refugees project is relevant to the needs of Syrian refugees in Erdemli, Mersin, Turkey. The project aims to provide legal advice to Syrian refugees through individual legal counseling and group information sessions, psychosocial support (PSS) through information provision and individual counseling sessions, and Turkish translation support. All of the Maharet team members, REALs representative and NGO and UN representatives KII talked about the ongoing legal support and PSS support needs of Syrian refugees in Mersin. All of the NGO and UN representatives explained in the KIIs that Maharet was the only organization working with Syrian refugees in Erdemli. Some of these KII participants pointed out that since Maharet is an NGO that grew out of the Syrian community itself, Maharet's access to the Syrian refugees and role in reaching Syrian refugees was particularly important.

The surveys with the project beneficiaries showed that for 3 out of 4 Case Management beneficiaries, the beneficiaries' cases posed complex problems and required referrals to other organizations, or additional support such as transportation support and advocacy. However, the beneficiaries did not report that Maharet had referred them to other organizations that could provide the services that Maharet could not. In these 3 cases, the beneficiaries were provided basic information support by Maharet but since the additional support needs were not met, these complex cases still had needs waiting to be met. Thus, an updated service map, close coordination with other partners (governmental and non-governmental service providers) and a better functioning external referral mechanism would increase the relevance of REALs/Maharet project in Erdemli, Mersin.

As for the changing needs of Syrian refugees in times of Covid-19, all of the KIIs with NGO and UN representatives pointed to the increasing need amongst Syrian refugees in Mersin in the following areas: financial and material need, mental health support needs, the needs of disabled refugees, the increase in child labour and children dropping out of school due to Covid-19, difficulties in accessing free state-provided health services due to the pressure on the hospitals due to Covid-19. The changing needs and priorities of Syrian refugees should be reflected in the ongoing program design of REALs/Maharet project.

Furthermore, some of the beneficiaries mentioned in the household survey that Maharet told them that they needed to go to the Maharet office for certain services and they could not go to the office due to Covid-19 or because they do not have the time or money for this. Maharet office is in the centre of Mersin and some of the beneficiaries are in Erdemli. The volunteers of Maharet expressed that beneficiaries in Erdemli have a hard time getting to the office since it is in Mersin but the beneficiaries try to go to the office although it is troublesome for them because they are in need.

Key Finding - 2: Project relevance to 3RP Protection priorities in response to Covid-19

The project is in alignment with 3RP protection priorities. *3RP Response to Covid-19 in Turkey* report in May 2020 had identified the following amongst the priority areas in protection: “Continue to engage with refugee communities through different modalities, and conduct targeted awareness raising and information dissemination...”; “Continue remote support to protection cases, including through referral to operational service providers.”; “Provide protection support through remote modalities such as phone counselling, individual psychosocial counselling, individual legal support, follow-up on active cases, referral to operational service providers (p. 6)”. The REALs/Maharet Information Sharing and Case Management for Syrian Refugees project in Erdemli, Mersin, Turkey provides legal advice to Syrian refugees through individual legal counseling and information sessions through phone, WhatsApp and in-person in Maharet office, psychosocial support (PSS) through information provision and individual counseling sessions through phone, WhatsApp and in-person in Maharet office, and Turkish translation support. The project also provides information on Covid-19 and holds awareness raising sessions on gender-based violence.

In October, 2020, 3RP Protection Sector Inter-Agency Needs Assessment in Turkey showed the highest-ranking protection concerns are related to increased stress and anxiety both at the individual (58%) and community levels (60%) levels. Respondents in this needs assessment also reported increasing levels of conflict amongst household members (36%) as well as domestic violence within their communities (31%). Thus REALs/Maharet project’s PSS component and sessions on gender-based violence help meet significant protection needs identified recently by 3RP in Turkey.

6.2. Effectiveness

Key Finding – 3: Project goal, achievements and adjustments

The project goal is to improve the access of Syrian refugees to their rights and services through the provision of information support, legal support and Turkish translation support as well as improving psychosocial wellbeing of Syrian refugees through the provision of individual sessions with a psychologist and information sessions. The KIIs and FGD with the project staff and the document review revealed that the legal support included issues such as registration with the Directorate General of Migration Management, Temporary Protection ID card issues, work permit application, travel permit application, rights and procedures related to divorce, marriage, child custody in Turkey.

The REALs/Maharet project also support the beneficiaries in relation to their legal issues in Syria since the legal counsellor is a lawyer who received his degree from a Syrian University. This is an area that is not covered by national or international NGOs or state service providers. This is an added value of Maharet as an NGO that grew out of the Syrian community in Turkey.

The Turkish translation support also included accompanying the refugees to the hospital and the provision of a vehicle to take the beneficiary to the hospital when necessary. During debriefing meeting, Maharet explained that the accompaniment service continued at all hospitals during the pandemic except for one hospital which did not allow translators to accompany the patients. Maharet informed the JPF M&E team that this was a problem that other NGOs also experienced and tried to solve with advocacy with the hospital administration but could not solve yet.

The PSS component of the project includes information sessions on violence, domestic violence, early marriage and peer bullying among children as well as individual counselling sessions with the psychological counsellor at Maharet who is a psychologist.

The project started its activities in October, 2020 and in order to adapt to Covid-19 risks and restrictions, provides its activities over the phone, WhatsApp and at the request of the beneficiary or based on the complication of the case in the Maharet office.

The project informs the beneficiaries about its goal and activities by using Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, distributing leaflets and brochures at the places most frequented by Syrian refugees, by using Maharet's existing database of beneficiaries and by the snowball method whereby the existing beneficiaries tell the others in need about REALs/Maharet project and activities.

The project employs 8 volunteers who are paid based on the number of days they work. All the volunteers are young Syrian university students or recent university graduates. The volunteers are managed by the Case Management Officer who assigns each volunteer two cases a day. The volunteers telephone these cases and ask questions from a Questionnaire for Registration which is a concise needs assessment survey with parts on demographics, PSS status, Covid-19 needs, information needs, work and income, basic needs, need on access to education, early marriage and GBV and work permit. The Case Management Officer reviews the responses to the Questionnaire for Registration with the volunteer and refers the cases internally to the Legal Counsellor, Psychological Counsellor or Translator. The Media Officer is responsible for promoting the project on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. After the provision of services and activities by Maharet, the volunteers telephone the beneficiaries to ask them about their satisfaction with the services and Maharet staff and explain that Maharet cannot meet some needs if the beneficiaries ask for support and services that Maharet is not offering as part of the current project.

According to the list of beneficiaries for October and November, 2020 provided by Maharet, the project reached 101 beneficiaries, 56 female and 45 male. 30 of these beneficiaries had received translation support, 18 had received PSS support and the remaining 53 had received legal support. 21 of these beneficiaries lived in Erdemli, 43 in Mezitli in central Mersin, 25 in Akdeniz in central Mersin, 10 in Yenişehir in central Mersin, 1 in Adana, and 1 in Tarsus.

The household surveys with 5 program beneficiaries revealed that for 2 program beneficiaries whose children received individual psychological counselling via several sessions, the program had achieved its goal whereby the psychological wellbeing was improved. In the case of other 3 beneficiaries who participated in the survey, the project provided basic information provision, legal support and translation. The beneficiaries' responses in the

survey suggested that through external referrals, more effective remote service provision, more specialized legal support and more effective case follow-up, the project can fulfill its goal to a greater degree.

All 5 beneficiaries reported that they were satisfied with the behavior of Maharet staff. 4 out of 5 beneficiaries answered yes when they were asked if they were satisfied with the support they received from Maharet. 1 beneficiary reported that she was somewhat satisfied with Maharet's support.

Key Finding - 4: Factors that promote and hinder program effectiveness

4.1 Factors that promote program effectiveness

- Eager and dedicated staff who are well-aware of the needs and challenges of the community.
- The program collects basic beneficiary data aggregated by gender and age.
- The project uses phone calls and WhatsApp as remote service provision tools. This increases the accessibility of the project. If the project used sophisticated software or only WhatsApp, beneficiaries without a smart phone or sufficient Internet package could not access the services provided by the project.

4.2 Factors that hinder program effectiveness

- The lack of clear vulnerability criteria.
- The lack of an updated service map that is known and actively used by all staff for external referrals.
- The lack of technical project forms such as informed consent form, case follow-up form, case support plan, case closure form, case referral form.
- The lack of technical guidelines and procedures.
- The lack of an effective M&E system, such as an M&E plan, M&E forms and tools.
- The lack of technical expertise to identify, support and refer sensitive protection cases such as sexual abuse, self-harm, gender-based violence, child marriage, child neglect and child labour.
- Terms of Reference of each staff is not known and in some cases adhered to by other staff members.
- Acute financial and material needs in most Syrian households increase the stress and deteriorate the wellbeing of refugees.
- Increasingly strict Covid-19 restrictions confine people further to their homes and the record numbers in Covid-19 cases and the loss of lives increase the stress.

6.3. Efficiency

Key Finding – 5: Trainings the staff received and would like to receive

5.1 Trainings the staff received

In the KIIs and FGDs, the Maharet staff members reported that they did not receive any trainings as part of the current project yet. However, they mentioned that they gave each other presentations regarding their expertise such as stress management presentations by the Psychological Counsellor and presentations on project activities. Maharet volunteers mentioned that they received trainings from Maharet staff on how to communicate with the beneficiaries and legal and PSS seminars as well as a training on GBV by the REALs representative.

5.2. The trainings and support the staff would like to receive

Maharet staff reported that they would like to receive trainings on management, proposal development and Turkish. In the FGD, Maharet volunteers explained that they would like to receive trainings on case management and that they had been promised new trainings by Maharet but the trainings did not take place due to Covid-19.

Key Finding - 6: Communication and cooperation with stakeholders

Maharet has built relationships and maintains communication with relevant Ministries, governmental service providers, relevant UN agencies and national and international NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. The KIIs with Maharet project staff and NGO and UN representatives showed that Maharet mostly referred cases to Turkish Red Crescent, Hayata Destek and Directorate General of Migration Management. Hayata Destek and Maya Association representatives reported that they referred the protection and translation support cases in Erdemli to Maharet since there are no other organizations supporting Syrian refugees in Erdemli. The KII with Turkish Red Crescent representative and UNHCR representative showed that they cooperated with Maharet effectively in the distribution of non-food items (NFIs) to Syrian refugees and appreciated Maharet's support and access to the Syrian refugee community.

All NGO and UN representatives confirmed that Maharet joined the NGO Coordination meetings in Mersin regularly. REALs representative participated in the Protection Working Group meetings in Ankara since Mersin is part of the Ankara Protection Working group. All 4 NGO and UN representatives in the KIIs knew about Maharet's project and appreciated the fact that Maharet was an organization that grew out of the refugee community itself, finding it highly important that Maharet improve its organizational and programmatic capacity. Support to Life explained that they were going to start working with Maharet soon as part of a mentoring project whereby Support to Life was going to identify Maharet's organizational and programmatic capacity needs and support Maharet with trainings and help develop key procedures and guidelines. The UNHCR representative explained that if UNHCR secured enough funding, UNHCR would like to fund Maharet's projects and support it in the development of key procedures, guidelines and technical expertise to manage protection cases.

6.4. Impact

Key Finding - 7: Overall impact

While commenting on the impact of the PSS component of the project, it should be kept in mind that PSS is a process and can take a long time to achieve a positive impact. Furthermore, the current program operates in a context where financial difficulties and restrictions due to Covid-19 pose unprecedented challenges for the majority of the Syrian refugees. As for the Case Management component of the project, case management support for sensitive and complex protection cases emerges as the challenging aspect for the REALs/Maharet project.

The household surveys with 5 Syrian beneficiaries through interviews via phone calls showed that the immediate good effects of the program were in line with the program goal: all of the beneficiaries had received the information support they asked for and in the case of the PSS support, the 2 beneficiaries had received a number of successive individual sessions with the Maharet psychologist, which they were satisfied with.

The following excerpt from the surveys with one beneficiary whose child benefitted from REALs/Maharet PSS counseling is testimony to the immediate good effects of the project: *"My friend gave me Maharet's phone number and I went there. Maharet office gave me a brochure and they told me about the services that they can provide us with. I told the*

counselor that I 'm a teacher and I don't have a job. She said that they can put an announcement on their Facebook for me to get a job opportunity. My daughter has involuntary urination and the counselor provided her with two sessions (one session a week). Her mother attended one of the sessions with her (for one hour) and I attended the other session as her father (for 40 minutes). Also, the counselor followed up my daughter's situation by phone calls four times and the duration of each call was 30 minutes. My daughter benefited from these sessions 40%. We did not benefit from ASAM organization. The therapist there used to tell us that your daughter should wear diapers, but the counselor's method in Maharet is different and useful. She said that your daughter should not wear diapers and you must wake up her every one hour at night as an alarm to prevent bedwetting. I think her method is a successful method. She asks about the reasons of involuntary urination and she talks with our daughter to provide her with psychosocial support. We noticed the improvement in our daughter's condition."

Key Finding - 8: Unintended effects

8.1 Unintended negative effects

- The household surveys revealed no negative effects of the program reported by the participants.
- One potential negative effect might be due to the lack of specialized and advanced trainings and expertise amongst Maharet staff and volunteers who encounter sensitive child protection and protection cases such as gender based violence, sexual abuse, self-harm, child marriage, child neglect and child labour.

6.5. Sustainability

Key Finding - 9: Opportunities for sustainability

- As a Syrian NGO that grew out of the Syrian refugee community, Maharet has unique access to and knowledge of Syrian community and its needs and capacities. So, the services and solutions it develops for the refugee community are more likely to be owned and sustained by the refugee community. With improved organizational and programmatic capacity, Maharet can identify the needs in the refugee community better and deliver services and support for refugees more effectively.

Key Finding - 10: Challenges for sustainability

- Maharet needs to identify its programmatic and organizational capacity needs, develop core procedures, tools and guidelines, and gain a more in-depth and expanded knowledge of the service providers and other actors that it can cooperate with for programmatic, advocacy, fund-raising and institutional purposes.

6.6. Feedback, complaint and response

Key Finding - 11: Beneficiary feedback, complaint and response

- The KIIs and FGD with Maharet staff showed that there are complaint boxes in Maharet office but they are not used by the beneficiaries.
- As part of a post-assistance survey, the volunteers call the beneficiaries to ask about their satisfaction with Maharet services and staff. If there are issues with the staff, they report this to the Case Management Officer who refers the issue to the relevant manager. However, the volunteers reported that the complaints they receive are about services that Maharet cannot provide and requests from beneficiaries for assistance. Other Maharet staff did not give any examples of beneficiary complaints either. 4 out of 5 beneficiaries of the project who participated in the household survey reported that

they knew who to contact if they had a comment or complaint. Thus, it seems that the regular post-assistance calls by the volunteers are seen as a way to provide feedback and complaint by the beneficiaries. In this case, Maharet needs to make the calls by volunteers a part of a broader complaint and feedback mechanism (via email, phone calls, complaint boxes, complaints to staff members that are recorded).

Key Finding - 12: Staff feedback, complaint and response

- There is no formal staff feedback, complaint and response mechanism. The resolution of disputes is addressed in the Maharet Code of Ethics. Staff are advised to talk to the person with whom they are having a dispute in the workplace and if they cannot resolve the issue amicably, the staff are then advised to go to the executive director. If the issue cannot be resolved by the executive director, an outside third party mediator might be called upon. However, there was no reference to the reporting of sensitive complaints by staff members in the documents, KIIs or FGD.

7. Conclusions

- REALs/Maharet Information Sharing and Case Management for Syrian Refugees project is relevant to the needs of Syrian refugees in Erdemli, Mersin, Turkey.
- The surveys with the project beneficiaries showed that in 3 out of 4 Case Management beneficiaries, the beneficiaries' cases posed complex problems and required referrals to other organizations, or additional support such as transportation support and advocacy. However, the beneficiaries did not report that Maharet had referred them to other organizations that could provide the services that Maharet could not. In these 3 cases, the beneficiaries were provided basic information support by Maharet but since the additional support needs were not met, these complex cases still had needs waiting to be met
- The project is in alignment with 3RP protection priorities.
- The household surveys with 5 program beneficiaries revealed that for 2 program beneficiaries whose children received individual psychological counselling via several sessions, the program had achieved its goal whereby the psychological wellbeing was improved. In the case of other 3 beneficiaries who participated in the survey, the project provided basic information provision, legal support and translation. The beneficiaries' responses in the survey suggested that through external referrals, more effective remote service provision, more specialized legal support and more effective case follow-up, the project can fulfill its goal to a greater degree.
- All 5 beneficiaries reported that they were satisfied with the behavior of Maharet staff. 4 out of 5 beneficiaries answered yes when they were asked if they were satisfied with the support they received from Maharet. 1 beneficiary reported that she was somewhat satisfied with Maharet's support.
- In the KIIs and FGDs, the Maharet staff members reported that they did not receive any trainings as part of the current project yet. However, they mentioned that they gave each other presentations regarding their expertise and project activities. Maharet volunteers mentioned that they received trainings from Maharet staff on how to communicate with the beneficiaries and legal and PSS seminars as well as a training on GBV by the REALs representative.

- Maharet staff reported that they would like to receive trainings on management, proposal development and writing and Turkish. In the FGD, Maharet volunteers explained that they would like to receive trainings on case management.
- Maharet has built relationships and maintains communication with relevant Ministries, governmental service providers, relevant UN agencies and national and international NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. The KIIs with Maharet project staff and NGO and UN representatives showed that Maharet mostly referred cases to Turkish Red Crescent, Hayata Destek and Directorate General of Migration Management. Hayata Destek and Maya Association representatives reported that they referred the protection and translation support cases in Erdemli to Maharet since there are no other organizations supporting Syrian refugees in Erdemli.
- The household surveys with 5 Syrian beneficiaries through interviews via phone calls showed that the immediate good effects of the program were in line with the program goal: all of the beneficiaries had received the information support they asked for and in the case of the PSS support, the children of 2 beneficiaries had received a number of successive individual sessions with the Maharet psychologist, which they were satisfied with.
- The household surveys revealed no negative effects of the program reported by the participants. One potential negative effect might be due to the lack of specialized and advanced trainings and expertise amongst Maharet staff and volunteers who encounter sensitive child protection and protection cases such as gender based violence, sexual abuse, self-harm, child marriage, child neglect and child labour.
- As a Syrian NGO that grew out of the Syrian refugee community, Maharet has unique access to and knowledge of Syrian community and its needs and capacities. So, the services and solutions it develops for the refugee community are more likely to be owned and sustained by the refugee community.
- It seems that the regular calls by the volunteers are seen as a way to provide feedback and complaint by the beneficiaries. In this case, Maharet needs to make the calls by volunteers a part of a broader complaint and feedback mechanism (via email, phone calls, complaint boxes, complaints to staff members that are recorded).
- There is no formal staff feedback, complaint and response mechanism. The resolution of disputes is addressed in the Maharet Code of Ethics.

8. Recommendations

Although the recommendations below focuses on Maharet, it is expected REALs to support its partner on these subjects to improve the project implementation quality.

- Maharet should develop an updated service map and make sure it is known and actively used by all staff for external referrals
- Maharet staff should gain more in-depth knowledge of other service provider's support and activities, particularly in their area of expertise and responsibility.
- The changing needs and priorities of Syrian refugees in times of Covid-19 should be reflected in the ongoing program design of REALs/Maharet project.
- Considering both the fact the Maharet office is far away from the beneficiaries in Erdemli and the risks posed by Covid-19, Maharet should consider designing remote service provision in a more systematic and accessible way.
- REALs/Maharet could also consider renting a small office space in Erdemli.

- Maharet should develop the capacity of its own team in using remote communication tools. JPF M&E team noticed that the majority of the Maharet staff preferred to hold the interviews via WhatsApp whereas all of the volunteers were willing and able to use Zoom for the FGD without any problems.
- Maharet's Legal Counsellor and Case Management Officer cannot communicate (written or spoken) in Turkish or English. Maharet should consider how the linguistic capabilities of its key staff or the lack of it influence the staff's ability to inform themselves about the latest regulations in Turkey and to coordinate with governmental and non-governmental actors that speak only Turkish or only English.
- Maharet should develop its coordination with external partners (governmental and non-governmental) as well as developing internal coordination in the organization.
- Maharet should consider how it can coordinate and cooperate more extensively with external actors for programmatic, advocacy, fund-raising and institutional purposes.
- Maharet should identify its programmatic and organizational capacity development needs and seek mentoring and trainings options to help with these needs.
- Maharet should prioritize the development of key technical project forms such as informed consent form, case follow-up form, case support plan, case closure form, and case referral form.
- Maharet should give priority to the development of key technical guidelines and procedures.
- Maharet should give priority to the development of an M&E plan and key M&E forms and tools as part of establishing an M&E system in the organization.
- Maharet should develop its technical expertise to identify, support and refer sensitive protection cases such as sexual abuse, self-harm, gender-based violence, child marriage, child neglect and child labour.
- All staff members should have clear knowledge of each other's Terms of Reference and respect it.
- Maharet should conduct a training needs assessment for its staff and volunteers.
- Maharet should make sure that staff and volunteers receive compulsory trainings such as Code of Conduct, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Child Safeguarding. It is highly useful that Maharet has a Code of Conduct document. However, this document only includes PSEA and Child Safeguarding. Code of Conduct should also address humanitarian principles, issues of fraud and conflict of interest. Also, Maharet has a very useful document called "Code of Ethics" that includes issues of mission, governance, legal compliance, respect for human rights, discrimination in working conditions, dispute resolution in the workplace etc. However, this document outlines the commitments of the organization. It should be used as a framework to develop a Code of Conduct document that outlines the professional conduct expected of all staff and volunteers.
- Maharet should review its existing policies and make sure that are in compliance with Turkish law and regulations. For example, Maharet HR policy states that "The full period of the maternity leave is one month granted with pay (p. 8)". However, the Turkish Labour Law grants pregnant women employees 8 weeks paid maternity leave before birth and 8 weeks paid maternity leave after birth (4 months in total), which is paid not by the employer but by the Turkish Social Security System. Maharet HR policy also states that for women employees who return from maternity leave "...no guarantees exist that the exact position will be available on return (p. 8)", which would be deemed unlawful according to Turkish Labour Law.

- Maharet needs to make the calls by volunteers a part of a broader beneficiary complaint and feedback mechanism (via email, phone calls, complaint boxes, complaints to staff members that are recorded).
- Maharet should train its staff and volunteers on the difference between sensitive (sexual exploitation and abuse and fraud) and non-sensitive complaints.
- Maharet should develop a procedure to investigate sensitive complaints in a confidential manner.
- Maharet should inform its beneficiaries about the difference between sensitive and non-sensitive complaints and the methods to provide their complaints.
- Maharet staff and volunteers should know how they can report sensitive and non-sensitive complaints as part of a staff feedback and complaint mechanism.
- Maharet should develop more transparent volunteer employment procedures.
- Maharet should make sure its volunteers receive Code of Conduct and key programmatic trainings as soon as possible since volunteers carry out many core project activities such as needs assessment and receiving beneficiary feedback and complaints.

In the debriefing meeting, REALs and Maharet agreed to decide on which recommendations of the JPF M&E report should be prioritized and which organization should take the lead in the process. For example, it was agreed that Maharet would take the lead in updating the service map since the details of the services in Mersin would require the local access and contacts of Maharet. In another example, REALs explained that they were already working on planning trainings for Maharet staff and would continue taking the lead in the process.

JPF M&E team suggested that Hayata Destek's collaboration with Maharet to support Maharet's capacity building should be closely followed up by REALs and REALs might want to complement this technical and organizational capacity building efforts with short-term external consultancies depending on budget availability and restrictions.

During the debriefing meeting, Maharet representative shared Maharet staff's concern with their remuneration and inquired about a possible pay rise.