

**Evaluation of Project “Capacity  
Building for Local Community-Based  
Organizations in the Middle Anatolian  
Region of Turkiye”**

**Evaluation Report  
August 2024**

**Submitted by**

**NSDation Consultancy Services**



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AAR Japan</b>	Association for Aid and Relief, Japan
<b>ARSA</b>	Afghan Refugee Solidarity Association
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organizations
<b>ET</b>	Evaluation team
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>FCRM</b>	Feedback and Complaint Response Mechanism
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence
<b>HH</b>	Households
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview
<b>KI</b>	Key informant
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>PSS</b>	Psychosocial support
<b>PWD</b>	People with Disabilities
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>JPF</b>	Japan Platform
<b>TOT</b>	Training of Trainer
<b>UGDD</b>	International Migration Solidarity Association
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

## I. Executive Summary

As of August 2023, Türkiye is the world's largest host country for refugees, with approximately 3.31 million Syrian refugees under temporary protection<sup>1</sup> and an additional 320,000<sup>2</sup> refugees from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. Many more refugees live outside the official protection system, making the actual numbers higher. About 300,000<sup>3</sup> Syrian and non-Syrian refugees reside in the Konya and Kayseri provinces, the focus areas of this project. The temporary protection system in Türkiye provides some legal stay and access to public services for Syrian refugees, but it does not offer long-term solutions or meet international standards for refugee protection. Non-Syrian refugees often lack any form of registration or access to services and face the risk of deportation.

Despite the significant influx of refugees over the past 12 years, their needs remain unmet by both the Turkish government and international organizations. Financial constraints have led many foreign aid organizations to reduce their presence in Türkiye. This project aims to empower local organizations to fill this gap, supporting refugees in rebuilding their lives and promoting social harmony. This initiative aligns with the Iraq-Syria Humanitarian Crisis Response Plan and Türkiye's broader strategy to strengthen domestic support for refugees. The longstanding friendly relations between Japan and Türkiye, along with the trusted presence of Japanese NGOs, enhance the project's potential for success.

In response, the project "Capacity Building for Local Community-Based Organizations in the Middle Anatolian Region of Türkiye" is implemented by AAR Japan. The project activities focus on building the capacity of two selected CBOs in Konya and Kayseri provinces through training in business management, legal procedures, and humanitarian standards, followed by six months of project implementation with ongoing support and monitoring to ensure compliance and effectiveness. Coordination with UNHCR and Turkish authorities aligns the project with the 3RP framework. After selection, these CBOs will implement projects to support refugees. The first CBO, ARSA in Kayseri, will provide case management, raise awareness on legal matters, health topics, and gender-based violence (GBV). The second CBO, UGDD in Konya, will establish case management services, a protection coordination unit, and conduct awareness-raising sessions on temporary protection legal rights and protection mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), Last accessed on 15 August 2023. <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

<sup>2</sup>3RP (Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan) Türkiye Country Chapter 2023-2025, p. 5. [https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/3RP-2023-2025-Turkiye-Country-Chapter\\_EN.pdf](https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/3RP-2023-2025-Turkiye-Country-Chapter_EN.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> 2023 project plan

## Conclusion

The capacity-building project has significantly enhanced the operational efficiency, project management capabilities, and service delivery of ARSA and UGDD. The training provided by AAR Japan has been effective in enhancing the knowledge and practical skills of CBO staff, with both organizations demonstrating improved abilities to facilitate collaboration with local authorities and adhere to protection principles. Despite these successes, challenges such as the limited presence of protection actors, lack of coordination mechanisms, and the unique operational environment in the Anatolian region highlight the need for continued support and tailored training. The positive feedback from Afghan refugees underscores the impact of these efforts, while the mixed feedback from Syrian refugees indicates areas for further improvement.

## Key Findings

### 1) Project design

Overall, the project's approach to identification, scoring, and capacity building has been efficient and relevant, and it could be successfully replicated in other contexts with appropriate tailoring.

The capacity building approach, which integrates formal and informal components, has proven to be highly relevant. This dual approach not only enhances the capacity of CBOs but also fosters a relationship of trust and open communication between the CBOs and AAR Japan, allowing for effective discussion of project related issues and challenges.

Beneficiary engagement revealed high satisfaction among Afghan refugees, while Syrian refugees expressed frustration due to unclear mandates and perceived lack of tangible assistance. This disparity underscores the need for more realistic objectives in capacity building programs, especially given the contextual challenges of limited protection actors and coordination mechanisms. Planning such projects for longer durations, such as two years, would allow for more realistic goals and stronger capacity building.

The relationship between the CBOs and AAR Japan has been based on a positive partnership model rather than a traditional donor-recipient dynamic, which is often observed with international NGOs working with national partners in other parts of Türkiye. AAR Japan has cultivated this partnership through strategic planning, effective communication, and experienced staff, a model that should be replicated in similar projects elsewhere.

At AAR Japan, two primary staff members are responsible for managing direct interactions with CBOs, providing daily communication, technical support, monitoring, and follow-up. They also facilitate support and coaching sessions from other AAR team

members, including the Procurement and Logistics Manager, Accountability Manager, and HR/Admin and Finance Manager and Officer. This approach has proven to be highly effective and efficient. However, relying on just two staff members for daily interactions and follow-ups with the CBOs can sometimes be insufficient to meet all capacity-building needs and requests.

In the Anatolian region, where protection and case management actors are scarce and coordination mechanisms are virtually non-existent, the operational environment is significantly different from more resource-rich areas like Gaziantep. This disparity poses additional challenges in addressing the capacity-building needs of CBOs.

## **2) Capacity Building Effectiveness**

Both ARSA and UGDD have shown notable improvements in operational efficiency, project management, and service delivery due to AAR Japan's training. Improvements include enhanced HR processes, the development of FCRM systems, better financial procedures, and more effective communication with beneficiaries.

The capacity building project incorporated training, workshops, on-demand support, and coaching. This multifaceted approach has successfully enhanced capacity and built trust between the CBOs and AAR Japan. As a result, a positive partnership relationship has been established, moving beyond the typical donor-recipient dynamic.

There is a demonstrated need for advanced training in humanitarian aid sectors such as livelihoods, and persistent reinforcement in areas of accountability and compliance. While AAR Japan has introduced CBOs to international humanitarian and protection standards, consistent application of these standards in the field requires ongoing support. The initial training has laid a strong foundation, but continuous effort is necessary to fully equip CBOs to operate independently and effectively.

## **3) Output Achievement and Impact**

Household surveys among Afghan refugees indicate a generally positive perception of services provided by ARSA and UGDD, with 43% "very satisfied" and 29% "satisfied." However, Syrian refugees expressed frustrations, citing unclear mandates and a lack of tangible assistance.

ARSA and UGDD's project implementations have led to specific improvements in beneficiaries' lives, such as better financial situations, health practices, legal awareness, and housing conditions.

## **4) Challenges and Limitations**

The Anatolian region's operational environment is challenging due to the limited presence of protection and case management actors and the absence of coordination

mechanisms and cluster systems. This contrasts with the eastern and southern parts of Türkiye, where regions like Gaziantep serve as hubs for humanitarian projects.

Both CBOs need advanced training in additional humanitarian aid sectors and continuous reinforcement in accountability and compliance practices.

### **5) Sustainability and Exit Strategy:**

Both CBOs have made strides towards independent operation but require ongoing support to sustain their improvements. Their proximity to UNHCR and potential funding opportunities bolster their capacity to attract funds independently.

Continuous efforts are needed to reinforce international humanitarian and protection standards introduced by AAR Japan, ensuring these are consistently practiced in the field.

## **II. Introduction and Project Background**

### **Context Overview**

As of August 2023, Türkiye is the world's largest host country for refugees, with approximately 3.31 million Syrian refugees under temporary protection<sup>4</sup> and an additional 320,000<sup>5</sup> refugees from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. Many more refugees live outside the official protection system, making the actual numbers higher. About 300,000<sup>6</sup> Syrian and non-Syrian refugees reside in the Konya and Kayseri provinces, the focus areas of this project. The temporary protection system in Türkiye provides some legal stay and access to public services for Syrian refugees, but it does not offer long-term solutions or meet international standards for refugee protection. Non-Syrian refugees often lack any form of registration or access to services and face the risk of deportation.

Despite the significant influx of refugees over the past 12 years, their needs remain unmet by both the Turkish government and international organizations. Financial constraints have led many foreign aid organizations to reduce their presence in Türkiye. This project aims to empower local organizations to fill this gap, supporting refugees in rebuilding their lives and promoting social harmony. This initiative aligns with the Iraq-Syria Humanitarian Crisis Response Plan and Türkiye's broader strategy to strengthen domestic support for refugees. The longstanding friendly relations between Japan and

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<sup>4</sup> Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), Last accessed on 15 August 2023. <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

<sup>5</sup>3RP (Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan) Türkiye Country Chapter 2023-2025, p. 5. [https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/3RP-2023-2025-Turkiye-Country-Chapter\\_EN.pdf](https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/3RP-2023-2025-Turkiye-Country-Chapter_EN.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> 2023 project plan



Türkiye, along with the trusted presence of Japanese NGOs, enhance the project's potential for success.

Recently, Kayseri, Türkiye, has seen heightened sensitivity and violence against Syrian and Arab refugees. This tension erupted following allegations that a Syrian national molested a child. The news quickly spread, igniting mass protests that turned violent, with local residents setting fire to Syrian-owned businesses and vehicles. This incident, which led to significant property damage and unrest, reflects broader national challenges. The Turkish government and judicial authorities launched investigations, emphasizing the protection of children's rights and public order. However, the events fueled xenophobic sentiments and hate speech, worsening the situation for refugees and highlighting the need for improved integration and protection measures.

## **Project Details**

The project "Capacity Building for Local Community-Based Organizations in the Middle Anatolian Region of Türkiye" was carefully designed and implemented through a series of well-structured and methodically executed activities. These activities ensured the selection of capable CBOs and provided them with the necessary support and training to enhance their operational and programmatic capacities. The key steps involved in the project are detailed below:

### **1. Initial Assessment and Identification of CBOs?**

**a. Establishing Criteria and Initial Research:** The initial step involved defining clear criteria for the selection of CBOs. The criteria included legal registration in Türkiye and alignment with AAR Japan's vision and goals, particularly in promoting protection and protection networking. The project team scanned official pages of the Directorate of Associations to identify potential local CBOs. Following this initial identification, the team conducted preliminary research and outreach, explaining the project's intentions and plans.

**b. Collaboration with UNHCR:** In consultation with UNHCR, a list of 7 potential CBOs was compiled in Kayseri and Konya to evaluate their potential to fulfil ARR Japan's objectives of the capacity building project. The team arranged face-to-face meetings and conducted mapping and field visits to the offices of these CBOs to evaluate their teams and operations.

**c. Scoring and Selection:** A dynamic scoring system was developed to evaluate the 7 CBOs based on their knowledge about protection, capacity in finance and HR, and overall alignment with AAR Japan's interests. The scoring system included both operational and programmatic criteria, with a total score of 100. CBOs with scores within a predefined range were shortlisted. Additional considerations included the scope of work and vision alignment with AAR Japan. Based on these evaluations, two CBOs were selected.



## 2. Pre-Implementation Assessment

**a. Field Visits:** Field visits were conducted from November 7th to 9th, 2023, by a joint team from AAR Japan and UNHCR Ankara Office. The team included various specialists from AAR Japan Türkiye Mission and protection officers from UNHCR.

**b. Baseline Assessment:** The field visits served as a baseline assessment, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of potential CBOs. This assessment measured the CBOs' operational systems and program capacities, particularly their ability to conduct individual and group interventions. The findings from these visits facilitated the selection of the final two partner CBOs, one in Kayseri and one in Konya.

## 3. Training and Capacity Building

**a. Coordination and Planning:** Following the selection, detailed coordination and planning sessions were held to establish minimum requirements and specific training needs. The project team worked closely with the selected CBOs to tailor the training programs to their specific needs.

**b. Training Delivery:** Training topics were developed based on evolving needs and feedback from the CBOs during the project implementation phase. Specific teams within each CBO received targeted training in areas such as business management, legal procedures, and humanitarian standards.

**c. On-the-Job Support:** Ongoing support was provided through various means, including remote support, face-to-face interactions, emails, and sharing of resources. This support was adapted based on the CBOs' specific needs and requests.

## 4. Project Implementation and Monitoring

**a. Implementation Phase:** During the six-month project implementation phase, the selected CBOs began executing their projects with continuous support and monitoring from AAR Japan. This phase involved practical application of the training received and real-time adjustments to improve effectiveness.

**b. Monitoring and Evaluation:** The project will be including an endline assessment to measure the impact of the activities. Continuous monitoring is in place to ensure compliance and effectiveness, with regular feedback loops between AAR Japan and the CBOs to address any emerging challenges.

The project locations are strategically chosen and displaced in the following map.

## Project locations map



## Project Details and Plan

As per the project plan, the project aims to build the capacity of CBOs so they can perform high-quality support activities consistently by developing their organizational management and project implementation skills. The project logframe is as follow:

<p><b>Current status (before commencement of business):</b></p> <p>While there are many refugees in central Türkiye who need public services, the number of support organizations is small, so there is no connection between refugees and public services.</p>	<p><b>Desired outcome:</b></p> <p>CBO in the field will be able to carry out high-quality support activities in a stable manner by acquiring organizational management and project implementation capabilities.</p>	<p><b>Indicators and Targets for Outcome Achievement (Confirmation Methods)</b></p> <p>Improve and improve the organizational management and project implementation capabilities of CBO2 organizations, reaching 70 points out of 100 in the ex-post assessment. (ex-ante and ex-post evaluations)</p> <p>A total of 360 refugees will participate in or be supported by CBO2 organizations (attendance books, individual support records).</p> <p>Eighty percent of beneficiaries selected voluntarily from beneficiaries supported by CBO2 organizations report satisfaction with the support they received. (interviews)</p>		
<p><b>Current status (before commencement of business):</b></p> <p>CBO is not able</p>	<p><b>Desired output:</b></p> <p>CBO staffs will be</p>	<p><b>Indicators and targets for measuring the degree of output achievement (confirmation methods)</b></p>	<p><b>Activities to achieve output</b></p>	<p><b>Prerequisites</b></p> <p>The security of the project site is stable.</p> <p><b>Risk</b></p> <p>The Turkish</p>

<p>to implement the project because it is not sufficiently knowledgeable about organizational management, business administration, global standards, etc., and it is not sufficiently funded.</p>	<p>trained in organizational and business administration, global standards, etc., and well-informed CBO will work with the Society to provide support.</p>	<p># of CBO personnel trained: 16 (attendance book)          Correct answer rate in the post-comprehension test: 75% (comprehension test)          MoU of CBO with the association: 2 entities (concluded)          Achieve 70% of the indicators set by CBO2 organizations in their projects. (Completion Report)          No. of CBO to formulate, implement and complete projects in 7 months or less on schedule: 2 organizations (submit completion report)</p>	<p>Identification and assessment of CBO          Selection of CBO          To train CBO          Conducting comprehension tests          Development of the business programme of the selected CBO          Conclusion of MoU with selected CBO          Conduct on-the-job training of selected CBO          Project implementation by selected CBO          Monitoring of business</p>	<p>government changes its policy on accepting refugees.</p>
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### Project Stakeholders

**Japan Platform (JPF)** is an international emergency humanitarian aid organization which offers more effective and prompter emergency aid, in response to the world situation, focusing the issues of refugees and natural disaster. JPF conducts such aid with a tripartite cooperation system where NGOs, business community, and government of Japan work in close cooperation, based on equal partnership, making the most of the respective sectors' characteristics and resources<sup>7</sup>.

Since its inception in 2000, the organization has provided humanitarian aid to more than 60 countries and regions, with a total of more than 84 billion yen and over 2,100 projects (as of September 2023). Some of the countries and regions that have received aid include Afghanistan, Yemen, Israel, Iraq, Iran, India, Indonesia, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Cambodia, Cyprus, Guatemala, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Syria, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Slovakia, Somalia, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Tajikistan, Chad, China, Chile, Türkiye, Niger, Japan, Nepal, Haiti, Pakistan, Vanuatu, Palestinian Territories, Hawaii, Bangladesh, East Timor, Philippines, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Vietnam, Venezuela, Peru, Poland, Madagascar, Malawi, South Africa, South Sudan, Myanmar, Mozambique, Mauritania, Moldova, Morocco, Mongolia, Jordan, Laos, Liberia, Romania, Lesotho, and Lebanon<sup>8</sup>.

**Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan)**, established in 1979, is a non-governmental organization focused on providing humanitarian aid and relief globally.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.devex.com/organizations/japan-platform-49339>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.japanplatform.org/about/profile/index.html>

Initially assisting Indochinese refugees, AAR Japan has since expanded its operations to over 65 countries, addressing needs in refugee assistance, mine action, disability support, disaster relief, and more. The organization's mission is to offer comprehensive support to vulnerable populations, emphasizing sustainable development and community building.

In Türkiye, AAR Japan's efforts are centered on supporting Syrian refugees, particularly unaccompanied children and individuals with disabilities. Their interventions include providing essential life-saving supplies, facilitating access to education, and implementing livelihood support projects to help refugees integrate into host communities and achieve self-reliance<sup>9</sup>.

**Afghan Refugee Solidarity Association (ARSA):** Established in 2009 and officially registered in 2014, ARSA is a rights-based organization primarily catering to refugees, encompassing Afghan, Syrian, and Iraqi individuals. Over the years, their focus has broadened to empower various refugee groups, welcoming all vulnerable populations, including LGBTQ+ communities. Their commitment to protection concerns and addressing educational needs aligns closely with AAR Japan's humanitarian approach.

Presently, ARSA operates with a diverse scope, engaging in gender equality, education, protection, social cohesion, and awareness sessions. They offer language courses in Persian and Turkish, limited case management facilitated by a referral mechanism, and psychosocial support activities like support groups. Additionally, their initiatives span pandemic and earthquake responses, research endeavors concerning refugees, and collaborations with various donors, including UNHCR, TPF, GIZ, and governmental institutions<sup>10</sup>. They are mainly active in Kayseri and other provinces.

**International Migration Solidarity Association (UGDD):** Established initially as a Youth-focused NGO in 2011, UGDD changed their focus toward refugees and thus the name to be "International Migration and Solidarity Association". They hold field offices in Kilis, Mersin but centered mainly in Konya.

Their activities encompass various projects, including livelihood programs, social entrepreneurship, leadership skill enhancement, educational initiatives, emergency response after earthquakes, and projects focusing on press member awareness regarding refugee-related stigmatization and misinformation. They serve refugees (Syrian, Afghan, Iraqi, and Iranian) and the host community in Konya, maintaining a focus on children and vulnerable groups<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://aarjapan.gr.jp/en/what-we-do/refugees/>

<sup>10</sup> CBO pre assessment baseline

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

### III. Evaluation Methodology

#### 1) Scope and Purpose

The evaluation of Japan Platform (JPF) project is geared towards achieving accountability and enhancing learning. It is structured to assess the project's processes and outcomes, document successes, highlight challenges, and formulate recommendations for improving the quality of programme design and implementation. The findings are expected to contribute to JPF's and partners project development, and organizational learning, thereby fostering continuous improvement in humanitarian efforts. The evaluation will cover phase 2 of the project.

**Specific Evaluation objectives:** According to the TOR and communications, the evaluation will focus on several key objectives:

##### **Assess Capacity Building Effectiveness:**

- Determine the extent to which the selected CBOs have improved their organizational management and project implementation capabilities.
- Evaluate the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the training provided to CBO staff.

##### **Evaluate Output Achievement and Impact:**

- Measure the success of the CBOs in implementing projects to support refugees.
- Assess the refugee beneficiaries and their satisfaction levels of CBO activities

##### **Evaluate Exit Strategy:**

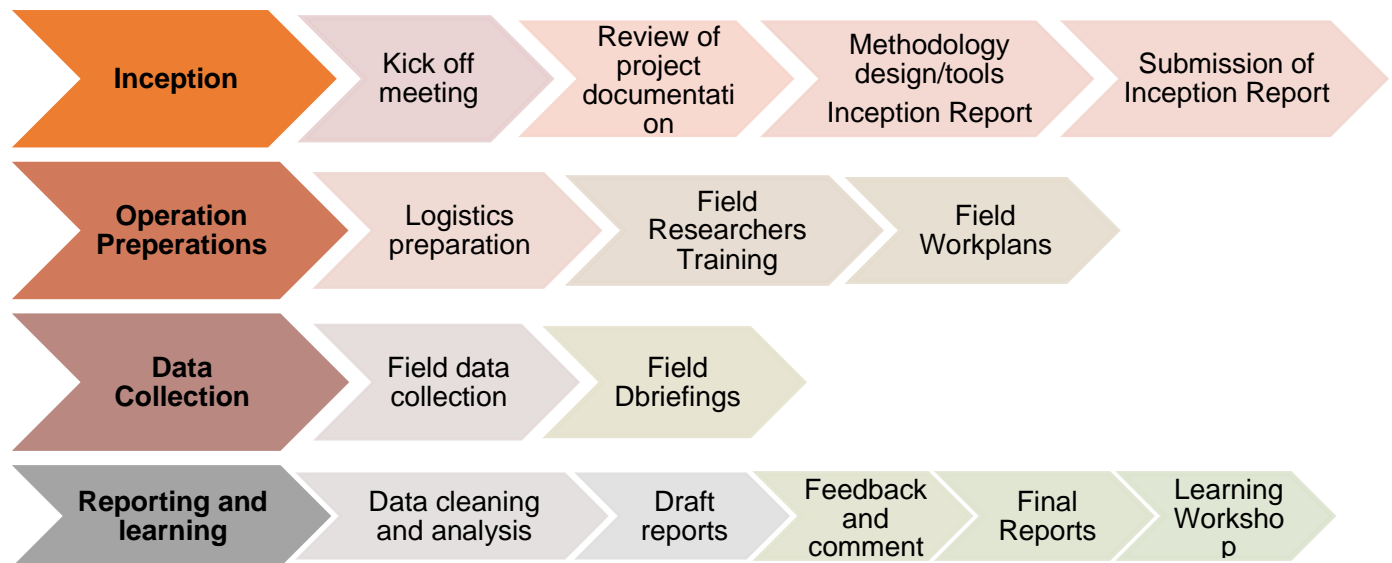
- Assess the readiness of CBOs to operate independently after project conclusion.

To comprehensively address these objectives, the evaluation questions provided as Annex A have been formulated. These questions will guide the evaluation process, ensuring a thorough and impactful assessment of the response.

#### 2) Methodology

The evaluation methodology was systematically implemented across four phases as shown in the below graph.





In the inception phase, a kick-off meeting with the JPF M&E Consultant initiated the process, where objectives, plans, and field operations were discussed. A WhatsApp group was created to facilitate coordination. A comprehensive desk review of project documents followed, forming a foundational understanding of the project’s progress and implementation details. The ET then developed the Inception Report, detailing the evaluation methodology, including data collection and analysis plans, and addressing potential obstacles.

Participatory mixed methods were employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative tools such as key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and household (HH) surveys. During the operational preparation phase, coordination with local partners was established to confirm data collection plans.

The sample design considered the two provinces, with HH surveys and FGDs planned to include both Afghan and Syrian refugees. This approach was followed for the ARSA partner in Kayseri. However, for UGDD in Konya, the beneficiary list shared for the evaluation was very limited, including only seven beneficiaries (three Afghan and four Syrian). Consequently, the data collection approach was adapted to conduct HH surveys with Afghan refugees and an FGD with Syrian refugees, resulting in a planned sample of three HH surveys and one FGD for Konya.

At the data collection stage, additional contextual challenges impacted the completion of the sample size. As a result, the FGD with Syrian refugees was not conducted. This issue is further explained in the limitations section.

The below table illustrate the planned sample distribution vs the actuals:

**Sample distribution:**

Planned VS Actuals	Province/District	# of Survey	# of FGDs	# of Klls
Planned	Konya	3	1	2
Planned	Kayseri	4	1	2
Actual	Konya	3	0	2
Actual	Kayseri	4	1	2

Whereas the Klls was conducted with internal and external project stakeholders as per the below:

- 2 interviews with AAR Japan team
- 2 interviews with CBO staff from Konya (UGDD)
- 2 interviews with CBO staff from Kayseri (ARSA)
- 1 interview with UNHCR representative

Data analysis included processing quantitative data using Excel and coding qualitative data based on content analysis techniques. Finally, the reporting phase involved drafting the evaluation report. The report will be submitted to AAR Japan and JPF for feedback and comments.

**3) Challenges and Limitations**

The evaluation's limited scope in terms of beneficiary sample size did not allow for an in-depth review of all project activities. Instead, it provided a snapshot of beneficiaries' perceptions regarding some of the services received. It is recommended that the evaluation findings be systematically triangulated with ongoing monitoring and feedback collected during the project implementation to generate a more comprehensive understanding.

Furthermore, due to the violent protests and heightened tensions in Kayseri, some Syrian refugees, who were the main respondents for the FGD in the evaluation, felt unsafe leaving



their homes. Despite proposals to transport them using partner organization vehicles, they were uncomfortable coming to the office to participate in the evaluation. Consequently, the evaluation data collection could not be completed as planned, underscoring the impact of the local unrest on the project's ability to gather necessary feedback and insights from the refugee community.

#### **4) Ethical Considerations**

The ethical approach for the JPF Project Evaluation is rooted in the principles of impartiality, objectivity, and a deep respect for the rights and dignity of all individuals involved. By grounding statements and judgments in evidence and applying critical thinking to triangulate information, the evaluation aims to achieve a credible and trustworthy understanding of the intervention's impact. This methodological rigor, despite the evaluation's limited scope and beneficiary involvement, ensures that the findings provide a valuable snapshot of the project's outcomes.

Central to this approach is an emphasis on the experiences and perspectives of project participants and partners. This focus reflects a commitment to understanding the outcomes of the project in ways that are relevant and beneficial to those at the heart of the humanitarian endeavor. The evaluation design reflects a responsibility to prevent any harm to communities or stakeholders and adheres to JPF's policies and procedures, including the organization's code of conduct and safeguarding policy.

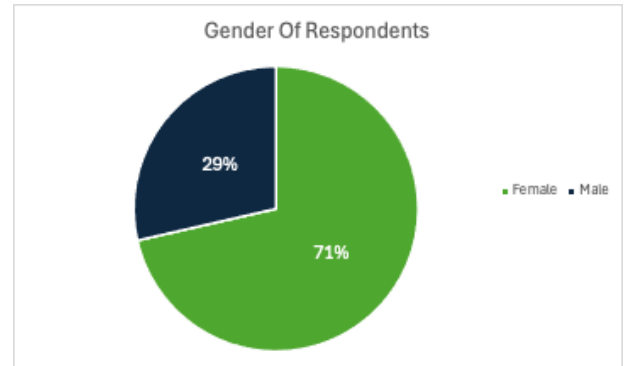
Throughout the evaluation assignment, all field team members adhered to strict ethical standards, treating respondents and key informants with respect. They emphasized voluntary participation in the evaluation study and explicitly sought consent from all participants. Despite the limited engagement with beneficiaries, no safeguarding issues were reported, ensuring the integrity and ethical conduct of the evaluation. The findings should be triangulated with ongoing monitoring and feedback to generate a more comprehensive understanding.

## IV. Evaluation Findings

### *Demographics and General Findings*

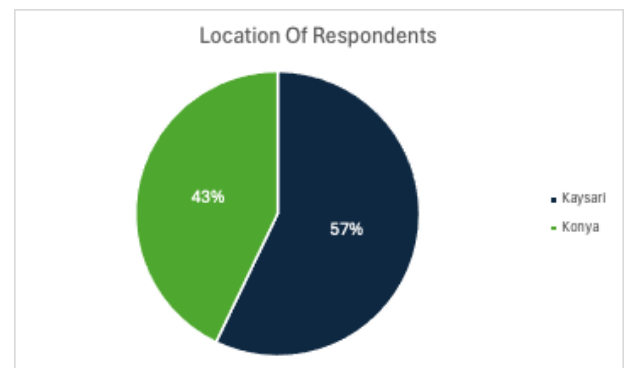
#### Gender of respondents

Gender respondents	of	Count of#
Female		5
Male		2
Grand Total		7



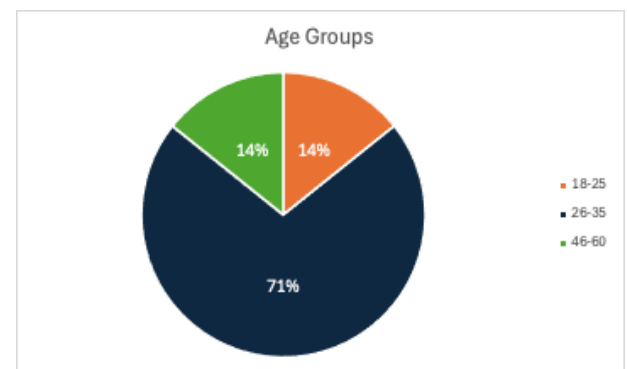
#### Location of respondents

Location respondents	of	Count of#
Kaysari		4
Konya		3
Grand Total		7



#### The respondent's age

Ranged from 18 to 60 years old, and the majority were between 26-35 years old.



## ***Evaluation Findings as Per the Evaluation Objectives***

### **I. Project Overview and Implementation**

#### **Partner: ARSA**

##### **1) Overview of partners capacity and mandate**

ARSA, established in 2009, officially began operations in 2014 under the Turkish Border Management (TBM). Initially, their focus was on aiding Afghan refugees. Recognizing the growing need, they expanded their services to include Syrian refugees in 2017. ARSA goes beyond immediate assistance, engaging in earthquake relief efforts and fostering peaceful coexistence by working to reduce tension between host communities and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kayseri. Their collaborative spirit is evident in their work with prominent organizations like GIZ, the European Union, and the United Nations on various projects. ARSA's mission is multifaceted. They advocate for refugee rights on an international stage, while also empowering women within the communities they serve.

##### **2) Primary Services and Support Activities**

ARSA offers a comprehensive package of support services to refugees. Their protection services provide legal consultancy and translation assistance in multiple languages, ensuring refugees can navigate the complexities of their new environment. Social adaptation programs go further by offering awareness sessions and advocacy initiatives, empowering refugees to integrate into their new communities. Recognizing the value of education, ARSA presents research and internship opportunities for university students. Additionally, their livelihood support program provides essential aid through rental support, financial assistance, and access to necessary social services. Through case management, ARSA evaluates each beneficiary's needs and plans tailored support. When needs exceed their capacity, ARSA maintains a referral system, connecting beneficiaries with other organizations best suited to assist them.

##### **3) General Capacity**

Despite starting without specialized staff, ARSA contributed significantly to the project design and relied on volunteers to manage their projects at the beginning. They offer a comprehensive suite of services encompassing protection, legal aid, translation, social integration support, livelihood assistance, case management, and awareness-raising. Additionally, ARSA actively collaborates with international organizations, advocates for

refugee rights, and utilizes a referral system to connect beneficiaries with the most suitable support available.

## **Partner: UGDD**

### **1) Organizational Background and Mission**

Originally established as the Youth Solidarity Association, the organization underwent a rebranding in 2014, marking a renewed focus on youth empowerment and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Their initial foray into humanitarian aid began in 2017, emphasizing livelihoods and vocational training opportunities. Recognizing the multifaceted needs of the communities they serve, they expanded their services to incorporate social cohesion programs and vital protection activities. Today, they operate across Türkiye, prioritizing capacity-building activities that enhance social participation. Their commitment to leadership is evident in their collaboration with AAR Japan, a partnership that aims to solidify their position at the forefront of the protection sector.

### **2) Primary Services and Support Activities**

The organization offers a range of services tailored to empower individuals and foster social cohesion. Their livelihood activities equip beneficiaries with vocational skills through training programs and assist them in securing employment. A case management system plays a crucial role in identifying and referring individuals who require additional support. The recent collaboration with AAR Japan has led to the initiation of protection activities, further contributing to safeguarding those in need. Social cohesion programs address the challenges of integrating into new communities and fostering understanding. Leveraging an extensive volunteer network, the organization effectively delivers services across all 81 provinces of Türkiye, ensuring a wide reach and impactful interventions.

### **3) General Capacity**

UGDD's role has grown from youth development to encompass multifaceted responsibilities in project management, casework, and resource acquisition. Their services have expanded from youth-focused activities to broader humanitarian aid and protection efforts, including vocational training, job placement, and social cohesion programs. The recent collaboration with AAR Japan has bolstered protection activities, while the extensive volunteer network allows UGDD to deliver services and promote social participation across Türkiye.

## II. Effectiveness of Project Implementation and Processes

### 1) CBOs identification

As explained under the project details paragraph, The project followed a meticulous selection process to identify suitable CBOs, starting with criteria-based research and consultations with UNHCR. This initial phase involved verifying the legal registration of potential CBOs in Türkiye through the Directorate of Associations' official pages. An initial list of local CBOs was refined through further research, phone calls, and consultations with UNHCR, leading to a shortlist of potential candidates.

Subsequently, face-to-face meetings, office visits, and team evaluations were conducted. A dual scoring system was employed to assess their operational and programmatic capacities. The first scoring system focused on Operational Capacity, evaluating categories such as Finance, Procurements, Human Resources, and Administration. Each category had specific criteria, with a total possible score of 65 points. For example, criteria like having a Mission Statement and Vision Statement each scored 5 out of 5, while Finance criteria, such as approval mechanisms and monthly transaction lists, also had maximum scores of 5 each.

The second scoring system assessed the program's capacity in two key categories: Fundamental Knowledge and Implementation Approaches, with a total possible score of 100 points. Fundamental Knowledge included Child Protection, Refugee Rights, Gender-Based Violence, and Rights of Persons with Disabilities, scoring 40 out of 60, with strong performance in refugee rights but notable gaps in disability rights. Implementation Approaches included training and practice in case management and group intervention activities, scoring 15 out of 40. The program excelled in conducting activities for peaceful coexistence but lacked in establishing community committees.

The dynamic and structured approach ensured the selection of CBOs whose work scope aligned with AAR Japan's interest in promoting protection and networking in the region. This comprehensive evaluation highlighted each CBO's strengths and areas needing improvement, ensuring that selected CBOs had a robust operational foundation and the potential for effective capacity building. This method proved effective and fair, ensuring the chosen CBOs matched AAR Japan's goals and the project's objectives.

### 2) Content and Structure of Training

Post-selection, training needs were identified through based on the scoring tables and narrative evaluations, leading to coordinated discussions with AAR Japan managers to set minimum requirements. According to AAR Japan interviews, the training structure for the selected CBOs was designed to be comprehensive and adaptive, ensuring they received both foundational and practical support.

The preliminary training, conducted in a workshop style, took place before the activity plan was created. This initial phase focused on equipping the CBO teams with essential knowledge and skills. Training topics evolved as CBOs implemented projects, with specific training provided based on their evolving needs and direct requests, supported through various methods such as on-the-job support, remote assistance, emails, and resource sharing. This phase was less structured and more responsive to the CBOs' emerging needs, providing tailored assistance remotely or face-to-face as required.

This approach ensured continuous capacity building, enabling the CBOs to effectively manage their projects and address challenges in real-time.

### III. Capacity Building

**Determine the extent to which the selected CBOs have improved their organizational management and project implementation capabilities.**

From the perspective of the CBOs, the training and support provided by AAR Japan were transformative and comprehensive, addressing various operational and programmatic needs.

#### **ARSA's Perspective:**

ARSA highlighted the substantial support received from AAR Japan during a short-term project. The focus on human resources was particularly impactful. AAR Japan provided critical assistance in performance evaluation, interview processes, and delivering employee feedback. The supervision support was crucial for ARSA, as many of their employees deal with trauma and require ongoing assistance within the framework of case management activities. AAR Japan conducted two sessions on handling complaints and feedback effectively. They also facilitated peer-to-peer meetings, which fostered a collaborative environment and allowed for knowledge sharing among staff.

Furthermore, ARSA benefited from AAR Japan's support in the procurement department. AAR Japan helped design and establish specific forms that streamlined procurement processes. The training sessions provided when new staff joined ARSA were essential in equipping them with the necessary skills for effective case management. These sessions covered every aspect of managing cases, from the initial intake process through to follow-up and closure. Key topics included maintaining strict confidentiality to ensure the privacy and security of both beneficiaries and staff members. Additionally, specialized training on providing constructive feedback was provided mid-project, enhancing ARSA's ability to communicate effectively within the team and fostering a supportive work environment.

### **UGDD's Perspective:**

UGDD found the initial visits from the AAR Japan team particularly valuable. During these visits, detailed explanations on the case management process were provided, covering how to assess the capacity of beneficiaries and what to pay attention to when working with interpreters. For the human resources department, AAR Japan explained the recruitment process, including the types of questions to ask during interviews and how to conduct evaluations. They also provided comprehensive guidance on reporting procedures for the procurement and finance departments.

The AAR Japan team introduced various tools and forms that UGDD needed to use and complete throughout the project. They also helped establish a feedback mechanism for both beneficiaries and UGDD staff. UGDD decided that the training should be inclusive for all employees, not just those in the relevant departments, leading to participation in training sessions as a mixed team. This approach ensured that all staff members were aware of and could contribute to addressing organizational deficiencies.

Following the trainings, UGDD began addressing deficiencies within the organization, particularly in the regulatory section. Although they were not lacking in every area, there were aspects not managed appropriately for the humanitarian aid sector. Post-training, UGDD started drafting new regulations and shared these drafts with AAR Japan. After incorporating feedback, they began adopting these as official regulations. This process was applied across all units, with ongoing support provided during weekly or bi-weekly meetings. The support ensured compliance not only with donor requests and rules but also with local legislation, ensuring that UGDD adapted accordingly. The continuous exchange of ideas with AAR Japan helped optimize their regulations, allowing UGDD to update outdated parts of their regulations that did not meet current UN standards.

### **AAR Japan and UNHCR perspective:**

AAR Japan acknowledges significant improvements in the organizational management capacity of the CBOs. Both ARSA and UGDD demonstrated progress across various levels, although some limitations remained. Staff turnover in UGDD impacted project timelines, and AAR Japan faced constraints in addressing all CBO requests due to limited staffing. Nevertheless, positive changes were evident.

The training provided by AAR Japan was comprehensive, covering crucial areas such as HR, finance, reporting, and protection principles. This training led to notable improvements in accountability, compliance, and understanding of protection concepts among the CBOs. Both ARSA and UGDD, which initially had gaps in financial and project management procedures, began shifting towards a rights-based approach. Feedback from CBO staff highlighted problem-solving and collaboration, indicating that the training was well-received, though additional feedback channels could enhance the process further.



UNHCR, closely monitoring the CBOs as partners, viewed the capacity-building project as highly effective. ARSA, despite its experience in protection, benefited from the institutional capacity-building support, while UGDD significantly enhanced its protection capacity after previously focusing on livelihood activities. The training provided by AAR Japan proved instrumental in improving project implementation capabilities, particularly in cities with limited refugee protection resources.

In the Mid Anatolian region, the presence of protection and case management actors is very limited, and the coordination mechanisms and cluster systems are virtually non-existent. This operational environment is markedly different from the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Türkiye, such as Gaziantep, which serves as a hub for international NGOs, CBOs, and local partners implementing various humanitarian projects for refugees and host communities.

Despite these challenges, both ARSA and UGDD have demonstrated improved abilities to facilitate collaboration with local authorities and adhere to protection principles. UGDD's successful hosting of a meeting on refugee issues with local authorities in Konya is a good achievement in provincial-level collaboration, highlighting their capability to engage effectively in a region with limited support structures. This progress underscores the importance of capacity-building efforts in areas where established humanitarian infrastructure is lacking, ensuring that local CBOs can still provide essential services and coordinate effectively with relevant stakeholders.

AAR Japan rated the overall capacity improvements on a scale of 1-10 as 6.5, recognizing that while there were substantial improvements at every level, there was still room for betterment. The challenges faced, such as HR issues in UGDD leading to delays, contrasted with the more stable team at ARSA, which was easier to build capacity with. AAR Japan acknowledged its own staffing gaps, noting the need for an independent observer to provide closer monitoring and feedback.

Before AAR Japan's intervention, the CBOs had basic policies and procedures for finance, recruitment, and spending, but with significant gaps in practice. Post-training, both CBOs showed marked improvements in accountability and compliance, areas that were almost non-existent or unclear before. There was also a notable shift in understanding protection; the CBOs moved from a charity mindset to a rights-based and protection-oriented approach, becoming more willing to coordinate with other actors and engage in group activities without insisting on providing tangible items to participants. This shift indicated a deeper understanding of the potential harms and benefits of their actions.

## **Evaluate the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the training provided to CBO staff.**

### **1) Process**

#### **Assessing the Comprehension of the Training**

AAR Japan employed a variety of methods to assess the comprehension of training materials among CBO partners, tailoring these methods to the type of training provided. For structured training sessions, comprehension was evaluated through practical performance checks. For instance, financial training effectiveness was measured by ensuring that financial tasks were completed correctly. Similarly, program delivery training was assessed by observing case handling during weekly case committee meetings. These observational reports and dedicated case committee meetings for each partner provided a good understanding of the learning outcomes.

In needs-based training approaches, pre-and post-tests were used to assess knowledge improvement during preliminary training sessions. However, for on-the-job training, comprehension was gauged through narrative reports based on discussions and staff engagement. This approach was necessary as directly measuring ongoing learning was more challenging. The narrative reports allowed trainers to assess how well staff understood and applied their training in real-time situations.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation of partners performance**

AAR Japan's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach for the capacity-building initiative with CBOs is characterized by a structured and systematic process that ensures consistent oversight and accountability. The process begins with the monthly submission of reports by the CBOs, which are then reviewed by AAR Japan staff, incorporating specific monitoring points and language considerations. This review process allows for the identification of key indicators and metrics that align with the project's logframe, enabling clear measurement of the capacity-building efforts' effectiveness.

AAR Japan tailors its training and support to meet the unique needs of each CBO, responding to specific requests and observations. This adaptability was evident in ARSA's request for HR process improvements and UGDD's focus on case management, demonstrating a commitment to providing relevant and timely assistance. Collaborative efforts between AAR Japan and ARSA, including joint case evaluations and co-designed materials, foster a shared responsibility for M&E. Regular meetings and the use of standardized case monitoring and evaluation forms further enhance the tracking of progress and the effectiveness of interventions. Overall, AAR Japan's M&E framework not only focuses on quantitative measures through reporting but also

emphasizes qualitative aspects such as ongoing communication and tailored support, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the CBOs' development throughout the project lifecycle.

## **Measuring the Improvement**

To measure improvements, AAR Japan has planned follow-up assessments that will be conducted once the implementation of CBO projects ends. These assessments will mirror the initial selection process, involving the reapplication of the initial scoring system. This process will involve the same criteria and scoring methodology to ensure consistency.

UNHCR, as a counterpart, will also share their observations and be part of this scoring system. Feedback from beneficiaries will be crucial in assessing CBO performance. Surveys conducted with beneficiaries at the end of the project will provide insights into accountability and compliance, determining whether beneficiaries feel they can share feedback and complaints on sensitive and non-sensitive issues. These surveys will also measure beneficiary satisfaction with the CBOs, ensuring that services are delivered with dignity and respect.

## **2) Communications**

Both CBOs, ARSA and UGDD, report positive communication experiences with AAR Japan, highlighting the accessibility and responsiveness of their support. ARSA particularly values the open lines of communication, noting that AAR Japan is more approachable than other donors, allowing them to promptly address issues without feeling intimidated. This reliable communication fosters a collaborative environment, especially with the case management team, ensuring effective support for beneficiaries. Similarly, UGDD utilizes various communication platforms, including email, WhatsApp, and phone calls, to maintain frequent contact with AAR Japan. This accessibility allows them to consult AAR Japan before making critical decisions, enhancing project coordination. The overall sentiment expressed by both CBOs emphasizes the ease of communication with AAR Japan, which facilitates a productive working relationship and ultimately benefits the beneficiaries they serve.

## **3) Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

### **ARSA's Perspective**

#### **Strengths**

1. **Operational Efficiency and Compliance:** ARSA has made significant strides in enhancing their operational efficiency and compliance. Key improvements include the development of a Feedback Complaint and Response Mechanism (FCRM) system and updates to procurement forms. The FCRM system has facilitated smoother consent

management and increased operational transparency, while the new procurement forms have strengthened financial oversight and regulatory compliance. These enhancements have streamlined ARSA's processes, enabling more effective resource allocation and management across the organization.

2. **Case Management Success:** ARSA's case management activities have shown tangible positive outcomes. A notable example includes assisting a beneficiary without health insurance who urgently needed medical treatment. The case committee, benefiting from diverse perspectives, facilitated the hospital visit and covered the treatment expenses, ensuring the beneficiary received the necessary care. This case underscores the practical impact of the case management training provided by AAR Japan.
3. **Financial and Procurement Improvements:** Transitioning from manually handling donor funds to processing transactions through banks, as recommended by AAR Japan, has streamlined ARSA's financial processes. Renewed procurement forms have further enhanced efficiency in activity implementation, simplifying workflows and improving overall task efficiency.
4. **Enhanced Communication and Supervision:** ARSA's staff now exhibit greater confidence in participating in case management meetings, particularly with the assistance of interpreters and the implementation of a new feedback system. Supervision support from AAR Japan has been highly effective, enabling systematic evaluation of session progress. ARSA key informant respondent estimates their confidence in these areas at around 80-90%<sup>12</sup>, acknowledging the value of consistent support for case management activities.
5. **Strong Foundation for Project Management:** ARSA benefits from a large volunteer network, a robust online presence, and enhanced case management skills. These elements provide a solid foundation for project management and implementation, positioning ARSA as a capable and proactive organization.

### Areas for Improvement

1. **Institutional Development:** Despite these advancements, ARSA needs to focus on institutional development. Key areas include the segregation of duties, financial controls, and decision-making processes. Enhancing these aspects will strengthen ARSA's organizational structure and operational integrity.
2. **Managerial Capacity and Collaboration:** ARSA would benefit from mentoring programs for staff to assume managerial roles and additional support in collaborating with local authorities. Strengthening managerial capacity and fostering local collaborations will enhance ARSA's effectiveness and reach.
3. **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Practices:** Further development is needed in MEAL practices to ensure systematic evaluation and learning from project activities. Implementing robust MEAL frameworks will improve project outcomes and accountability.

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<sup>12</sup> Based on ARSA KII

4. **Human Resources (HR) Practices:** Refining HR management practices, including performance evaluation and strategic planning, is essential. Specific policies for disabled individuals and comprehensive complaint mechanisms will ensure inclusivity and responsiveness.
5. **Future Support and Training Needs:** ARSA seeks additional training on confidentiality, complaint mechanisms, MEAL practices, HR management, performance evaluation, strategic planning, and policies for disabled individuals. Support with case management supervision and psychosocial support (PSS) services will further enhance their capacity to provide effective and comprehensive services.

## UGDD's Perspective

### Strengths

1. **HR and Communication Improvements:** UGDD reports advancements in HR meetings and processes, leading to more efficient operations. The establishment of case management committees has notably improved communication with beneficiaries, resulting in well-informed recommendations that greatly benefit them. This has empowered UGDD staff to speak confidently about case management with public institutions and other NGOs, thanks to the foundational concepts they have learned.
2. **Project Management and Organizational Growth:** Although UGDD initially lacked experience in case management, their efforts in Konya have positioned them as leaders in this field. They have gained recognition from public institutions and other NGOs for their effective case management practices. Organizationally, UGDD has activated a feedback and complaint mechanism, which has enhanced their operations and filled gaps in their documentation systems.
3. **Team Capacity and Dynamics:** UGDD's adherence to their proposed format throughout the project has resulted in significant enhancements in team capacity, particularly in intervention skills. Team dynamics have improved, addressing practical shortcomings successfully. While the team possessed theoretical knowledge beforehand, the project has provided the practical experience necessary for effective implementation.
4. **Protection Sector Development:** UGDD has strong initiatives in livelihoods and education and aims to further develop their efforts in the protection sector. Collaboration with AAR Japan has been crucial in transforming the confidence and approach of their case management officers, enabling more effective engagement with beneficiaries. This partnership has been instrumental in enhancing UGDD's capabilities in protection activities.
5. **Established Network and Expertise:** UGDD demonstrates a well-developed network with NGOs and government agencies, expertise in supporting immigrants, and a robust financial and administrative structure. They excel at integrating protection activities into projects and have established protocols with relevant ministries.

## Areas for Improvement

1. **Establishing Protection Systems Across All Offices:** UGDD requires further support in establishing comprehensive protection systems across all their offices. This includes improving data management, verification processes, and digitalization of HR practices to ensure consistency and efficiency.
2. **Capacity Building in Child Protection Activities:** UGDD identified a need for capacity building in child protection activities, such as creating safe spaces and implementing safeguarding initiatives. This would enhance their ability to provide specialized support for vulnerable groups like children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.
3. **Supervision and Training in MEAL Practices:** UGDD suggested the need for earlier supervision in case management and further training in Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) practices. This would improve their ability to systematically evaluate and learn from project activities.
4. **International Training Opportunities and ToT:** UGDD recognizes the importance of international training opportunities and Training of Trainers (ToT) programs to enhance their staff's skills and knowledge. This would enable them to train other staff members effectively and ensure consistent application of best practices.
5. **Child Safeguarding and Staff Well-Being:** UGDD prioritizes specialized support for vulnerable groups and seeks training on child safeguarding activities, stress management, and access to psychological support services. Enhancing staff familiarity with international humanitarian standards and relevant terminology is also crucial for their development.

### Most Useful Aspects of Capacity Building:

ARSA valued the supervision provided in case management and sensitive topics handling. UGDD pointed out the technical support in case management and the collaborative approach in project management as the most beneficial. The training in logical frameworks and PCM was also instrumental.

## AAR Japan Perspective

AAR Japan's evaluation of the current capacity of CBOs reveals both significant improvements and remaining gaps. The primary goal of building CBO capacity is to enable them to independently secure funding and deliver high-quality protection services. The CBOs, given the lack of protection actors in their regions, have a high potential to attract funds. Their proximity to UNHCR and the ongoing partnership and funding opportunities further bolster this potential.

Despite these positive developments, challenges remain. The context and environment in which these CBOs operate present unique difficulties, particularly in case management and protection services. The staff's engagement and improvement are evident, but the mentality and enabling environment vary, making the project more challenging in regions like Konya and Kayseri.



Strengths and gaps are identified for both locations. For UGDD, case management and general management are at a good level, though internal coordination between management and staff remains a challenge. For ARSA, while the CBO had basic policies and procedures for finance and HR, they require more significant improvement in case management and coordination.

Both CBOs have demonstrated a need for advanced training in humanitarian aid sectors such as livelihoods, beyond their current focus. Accountability and compliance are areas with gaps, as these are not fixed systems and require constant reinforcement.

AAR Japan has introduced the CBOs to international humanitarian and protection standards, referring them to relevant resources and consistently mentioning these standards in meetings. However, the practice of these standards in the field needs ongoing support and reinforcement. The training provided has laid a strong foundation, but continuous effort is needed to address these gaps and further build the capacity of CBOs to operate independently and effectively.

## IV. Project implementation and Effectiveness

### **Measure the success of the CBOs in implementing projects to support refugees.**

The implementation processes of ARSA and UGDD for their specific projects demonstrate a methodical approach but also reveal certain challenges and areas for improvement. ARSA follows a structured process where beneficiaries are registered and interviewed to identify their needs, which are then reviewed by a Case Management Committee. This committee meets weekly to decide on the cases, with a strong focus on women, children, disabled individuals, and those with health concerns. ARSA's network includes connections with immigration authorities, and they conduct awareness sessions to inform beneficiaries about their activities. However, the high volume of beneficiaries sometimes strains their registration and follow-up procedures, and there is a reliance on established referral mechanisms that may not always be swift or efficient.

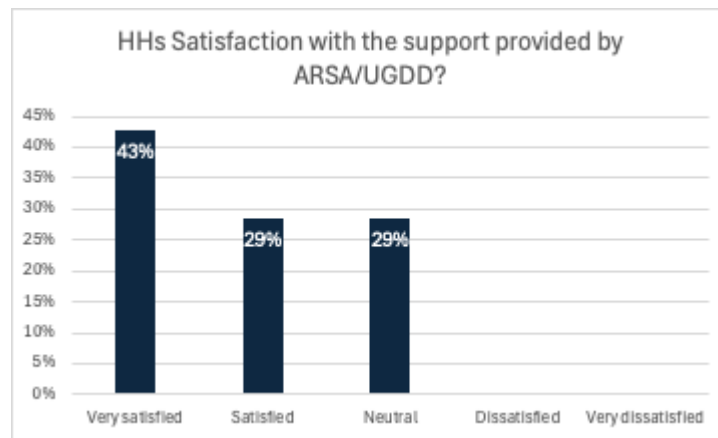
Similarly, UGDD employs a detailed process involving preliminary interviews and case evaluations with participation from AAR Japan. They have expanded their service reach through outreach efforts and referrals, including those from UNHCR. UGDD's weekly committee meetings, which include AAR Japan's input, lead to collaborative decision-making on case plans. They prioritize emergency cases through immediate phone contact with beneficiaries, demonstrating flexibility in urgent situations. Despite these efforts, the process can be cumbersome, particularly with the involvement of multiple stakeholders and the need for regular consent and follow-up, which can delay timely support.



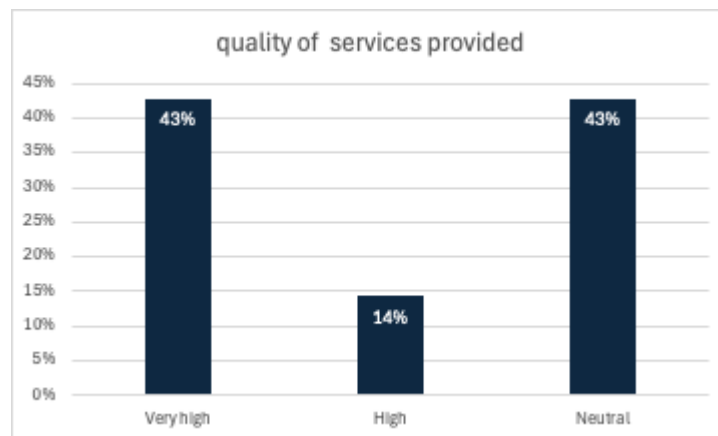
Additionally, while both organizations have made strides in improving their processes, the inherent challenges of staff turnover, capacity constraints, and the evolving needs of beneficiaries suggest that there is still room for further refinement and efficiency in their project implementation strategies.

## Assess the refugee beneficiaries and their satisfaction levels of CBO activities

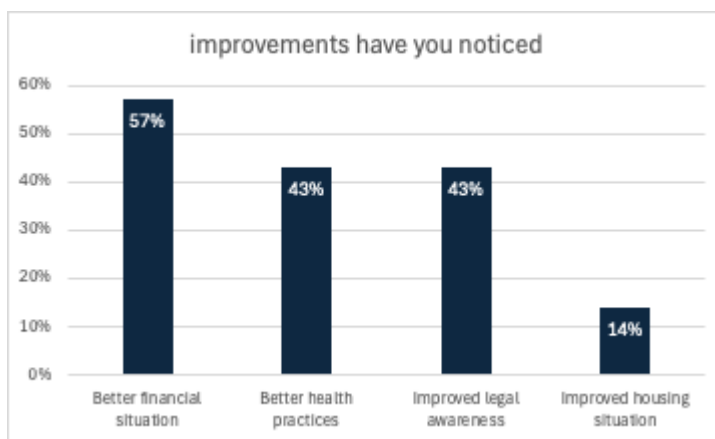
The household survey results with Afghan refugees indicate a generally positive perception of the services provided by ARSA and UGDD among beneficiaries. A significant 43% of respondents reported being "very satisfied" with the support they received, while 29% were "satisfied," and another 29% felt "neutral" about the services.



Notably, there were no reports of dissatisfaction, underscoring a broad acceptance of the assistance provided. In terms of the quality of services, 43% of the respondents rated it as very high, 14% as high, and 43% as neutral.



The beneficiaries also reported several specific improvements in their lives due to the support: 57% noted a better financial situation, 43% observed better health practices, 43% experienced improved legal awareness, and 14% saw an enhanced housing situation. These results highlight the positive impact of the services on various aspects of the beneficiaries' lives, though there remains a portion of respondents who feel neutral, indicating room for further improvement in service delivery.



The FGD with beneficiaries of ARSA revealed a mixture of frustration and unmet needs among Syrian refugees. While some participants acknowledged receiving limited financial assistance, the majority expressed dissatisfaction with the overall support provided by ARSA, particularly regarding the accessibility and effectiveness of services such as health and legal support. Many participants reported not benefiting from these services despite being registered for months, leading to a sense of disillusionment and a perception that the organization was unresponsive to their urgent needs, including healthcare and mobility assistance. Although awareness sessions were attended, participants largely felt these sessions did not offer practical benefits.

Moreover, a significant gap in understanding the organization's services and complaint mechanisms further compounded the beneficiaries' frustration. The consensus among participants was a reluctance to recommend ARSA's services to others in their community, emphasizing the need for the organization to enhance its outreach, improve communication about available services, and address the pressing challenges faced by refugees in Türkiye.

It is worth noting that the timing of this FGD with Syrian refugees presented a challenge. The same group had previously engaged in a coordination meeting with UNHCR and anticipated a follow-up meeting. When invited to participate in the FGD, some participants mistakenly believed it was a continuation of their prior meeting with UNHCR, despite the purpose and objectives being clearly explained by both the partner and the evaluation team. This misunderstanding may have influenced the participants' responses, as they entered the discussion with negative sentiments. However, after discussing these findings with the AAR Japan team, it was clarified that the respondents' perceptions remain relevant.

The analysis underscores the positive impact of the services on various aspects of beneficiaries' lives, though the neutral ratings suggest room for improvement in service delivery. Conversely, the FGD highlighted significant frustration and unmet needs, particularly concerning the accessibility and effectiveness of health and legal support.

## V. Exit Strategy

### **Assess the readiness of CBOs to operate independently after project conclusion.**

AAR Japan's exit strategy for its CBO partners is designed to ensure the sustainability of their activities beyond the project's conclusion. By linking the CBOs to funding opportunities and local protection mechanisms, including direct connections with UNHCR, AAR Japan is positioning them to continue their essential work in the community. The organization encourages the CBOs to consult with them for funding opportunities, emphasizing that support remains available even after the project ends. Training in writing concept notes and proposals has enhanced the CBOs' fundraising capabilities, although AAR Japan recognizes that the primary challenge lies in leveraging this capacity to impact the broader protection landscape, especially given the limited channels for protection initiatives in the region.

Furthermore, AAR Japan has urged the CBOs to establish a local protection unit in Konya, which would facilitate collaboration with other actors and enhance protection efforts on both civil and governmental levels. Ongoing collaboration with UNHCR, which involves case referrals, technical support, and participation in city-level meetings, lays a solid foundation for future partnerships. Although UNHCR faces challenges due to decreasing funding, their commitment to providing complementary support amplifies the impact of AAR Japan's capacity-building efforts. Overall, AAR Japan remains confident in the CBOs' ability to operate independently, particularly highlighting UGDD's competent case management team, which effectively communicates with beneficiaries.

## VI. Achievements and Successes

The capacity-building component of the project has led to several notable successes for both ARSA and UGDD.

ARSA has successfully utilized the Special Needs Fund (SNF) as part of its case management activities, allowing them to respond effectively to urgent needs that the

referral system failed to address. They have provided critical support to individuals in precarious situations, such as assisting those living in gardens with financial support for accommodation. Additionally, the establishment of a formalized case committee and the integration of supervision activities represent significant advancements in their operational processes.

For UGDD, the project has enhanced their organizational capacity and communication effectiveness, resulting in an increased number of referrals that have improved their visibility within the community. The implementation of better translation services has facilitated smoother interactions with beneficiaries during case meetings, ultimately leading to improved service delivery. Furthermore, the establishment of a protection unit within UGDD and the growing awareness among other NGOs and public institutions about their role in protection activities will be critical for sustaining their impact in the sector moving forward.

From AAR Japan perspective, the achievements and successes of the capacity-building component of the project reflect significant progress at both the organizational and program levels. Notably, there has been a marked change in mentality among the CBOs, shifting towards a protection-oriented mindset. This transformation is particularly noteworthy in Konya, where the conservative environment presents challenges for NGOs working with refugees. The initiative to hold monthly protection coordination meetings represents a crucial step forward in fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, allowing for more effective engagement with other organizations and public institutions.

The first meeting, which took place last month, set the groundwork for ongoing dialogue and coordinated efforts in protection activities, further reinforcing the commitment to improving services for vulnerable populations. In addition to these developments, ARSA and UGDD have made strides in establishing formalized case management processes and increasing their visibility within the community, thereby enhancing their overall capacity to support beneficiaries effectively.

## **VII. Challenges and Recommendations from CBOs Perspectives**

Both ARSA and UGDD have faced various challenges during the implementation of the project. For ARSA, the introduction of a case management committee posed initial difficulties, as the concept was new to them, and adapting to the weekly presentation of new cases took time. However, ongoing support from AAR Japan has helped them recognize the committee's value. Additionally, while improvements were made in creating HR forms and discussing employee rights, further support is needed in areas such as MEAL processes, as well as enhanced supervision for case management activities and increased focus on activities for disabled individuals.

UGDD, on the other hand, encountered challenges during the transition from WFP procedures to AAR Japan's guidelines. Establishing effective communication between the two organizations was crucial for overcoming these initial hurdles. Furthermore, language barriers have emerged as another challenge, particularly in finding an Arabic translator who is also proficient in English, which is highly desirable. Moving forward, UGDD requires specific supervision for case management personnel and additional training on handling cases involving children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

The challenges and recommendations highlighted by AAR Japan underscore the complexities faced by CBOs in the Mid-Anatolian region, where prevailing mindsets are often rooted in charity or religious frameworks, leading to resistance when discussing human rights standards. While ARSA and UGDD have demonstrated some differentiation, they remain influenced by the broader environment. Additionally, building connections with protection actors in Konya presents a significant challenge due to the limited presence of such stakeholders, which restricts opportunities for collaboration.

Recommendations include adopting a more flexible approach that aligns with the specific needs and priorities of the CBOs, particularly in light of strict budget constraints that limit their operational flexibility. AAR Japan suggests that working with one or two CBOs may not yield substantial results in a short time frame, emphasizing the need for longer implementation periods to allow for a more thorough acclimatization to local dynamics. A two-stage project approach is proposed, which would provide additional time for capacity-building and concept integration.

Furthermore, AAR Japan has identified a critical gap in support for unregistered informal refugees, such as those from Afghanistan, and recommends that future programs actively include assistance for these vulnerable populations. Finally, appointing dedicated monitoring and evaluation personnel would enhance oversight and support the effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken by the CBOs.

## **VIII. Capacity Building and the HDP Nexus**

### Capacity building

The overall capacity-building project module has proven to be a vital framework for enhancing the operational effectiveness and sustainability of CBOs like ARSA and UGDD in a challenging context. By providing structured support through training, resources, and ongoing collaboration, the project has successfully fostered a shift toward a protection-oriented mindset within these organizations, enabling them to better address the needs of vulnerable populations, including refugees and marginalized groups.

The effectiveness of this module is evident in the establishment of improved case management systems and the strengthening of communication channels with stakeholders such as UNHCR. However, to further enhance the impact of this project, it is recommended to implement a phased approach that allows for longer engagement periods and greater flexibility in meeting the evolving needs of the CBOs. Additionally, increasing focus on integrating unregistered and informal refugee populations into capacity-building efforts would ensure that support reaches the most vulnerable, thereby maximizing the overall effectiveness of the initiative.

### Current Nexus Considerations

Nexus considerations are crucial in shaping the response to the ongoing challenges faced by refugee populations and the organizations supporting them in Türkiye. The integration of humanitarian aid, development initiatives, and peace-building efforts is essential for creating sustainable solutions that address the complex needs of vulnerable communities. This capacity-building project module effectively embodies the Nexus approach by enhancing the capabilities of CBOs like ARSA and UGDD to provide comprehensive support to refugees while promoting local ownership and resilience.

By fostering partnerships with key stakeholders, such as UNHCR, and encouraging the inclusion of marginalized groups, including unregistered refugees, the project can significantly enhance its impact. However, to fully realize the potential of the Nexus approach, it is essential to ensure ongoing coordination among various actors and to allocate resources flexibly to adapt to the changing dynamics on the ground by advocating for and developing flexible funding models that allow CBOs to adapt their programs based on evolving community needs and opportunities. This may include multi-year funding commitments that provide stability and enable strategic long-term planning.

Strengthening local capacities through tailored training and support not only to enhance service delivery for immediate humanitarian needs but also to equip CBOs with skills for long-term development planning and implementation. This could include training in sustainable livelihoods, social entrepreneurship, and community mobilization.

will enable CBOs to navigate the intersection of humanitarian and development efforts more effectively, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for the communities they serve.

## IX. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 1) At project level (for JPF and AAR Japan)

1. Extend the duration of capacity-building project, recognizing that CBOs often have basic capacities that require more time to absorb training, improve internal systems, and processes, and ultimately provide quality protection and case management services.
2. Offer longer-term funding agreements that provide stability and enable CBOs to plan strategically for the future, reducing the pressure of short-term funding cycles.
3. Create mechanisms for CBOs to request additional funding in response to emerging needs or changing circumstances, ensuring that they can adapt their strategies effectively.
4. Allow CBOs to adjust their budget allocations as needed throughout the project, enabling them to address unforeseen challenges or opportunities without needing formal approval for each change.

### 2) Capacity Building Effectiveness

**Conclusion:** The capacity-building initiatives provided by AAR Japan have led to noticeable improvements in the organizational management and project implementation capabilities of the selected CBOs. Both ARSA and UGDD have reported enhanced operational structures, particularly the establishment of case management committees and improved communication practices. Training sessions on HR processes, project proposal writing, and M&E have equipped staff with critical skills to manage their operations more effectively. However, while there has been progress, challenges remain, particularly in adapting to new procedures and overcoming language barriers.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **For AAR Japan:**

1. Provide additional training on confidentiality, complaint mechanisms, MEAL practices, HR management, and strategic planning to further strengthen the operational capacities of ARSA and UGDD (on the longer run).
2. Develop specialized training modules for addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, including creating safe spaces and implementing safeguarding initiatives.
3. In the final phase of the project, shift the capacity-building approach to emphasize mentoring and refining processes related to case management while granting greater ownership and management roles to CBOs. Focus on enhancing technical case management skills without introducing new training topics.



### 3) Output Achievement and Impact

**Conclusion:** The output achievements of the CBOs indicate a general positive impact on refugee beneficiaries, with many reporting improved financial situations and better access to support services. Surveys revealed high satisfaction levels among beneficiaries, with particular appreciation for financial assistance and support for accommodation needs. However, there remains a gap in awareness and utilization of certain services, such as GBV support, indicating areas where further improvement is needed. However, focus group discussions reveal a gap in meeting the needs of Syrian refugees, who expressed frustration and a lack of clarity regarding the available services.

#### Recommendations:

##### For CBOs:

1. **Enhance information-sharing strategies** to effectively communicate the organization's mandate, activities, and services to beneficiaries, ensuring they are well-informed about available support and resources.
2. **Enhanced Awareness Campaigns:** Implement targeted outreach activities to inform beneficiaries about all available services, particularly focusing on those perceived as less useful, like GBV sessions. This could involve community meetings and partnerships with local organizations to increase visibility.
3. **Improve the FCRM** by not only establishing the system but also ensuring that target beneficiaries are aware of the feedback channels, feel comfortable using them, and monitoring their utilization to enhance effectiveness.

##### For AAR Japan:

1. **Support in Service Refinement:** Assist CBOs in gathering and analyzing feedback from beneficiaries to continuously refine and improve service offerings, ensuring they remain relevant and effective.

### 4) Exit Strategy

**Conclusion:** The readiness of CBOs to operate independently after the project conclusion shows promise but also reveals significant gaps. While both ARSA and UGDD have expressed confidence in their operational abilities, challenges such as the limited protection mechanisms in Konya and reliance on AAR Japan for technical support indicate that full independence is not yet achievable. The absence of

established protection actors further complicates their ability to sustain initiatives independently.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **For CBOs:**

1. **Strengthen Local Partnerships:** Encourage CBOs to build connections with other local organizations and protection actors to foster a collaborative network that can sustain services post-project. Regularly scheduled protection coordination meetings in Konya and Kayseri should be institutionalized to enhance collaboration and resource sharing.

#### **For AAR Japan:**

1. **Phased Exit Strategy:** Develop and implement a staggered exit strategy that allows for the gradual transfer of responsibilities to CBOs. This could involve a two-stage approach, providing CBOs with more time to adapt to the new dynamics and enabling AAR Japan to support them effectively during the transition.