BUILDING SAFER SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

Increasing disaster resilience for school-age children

AT A GLANCE

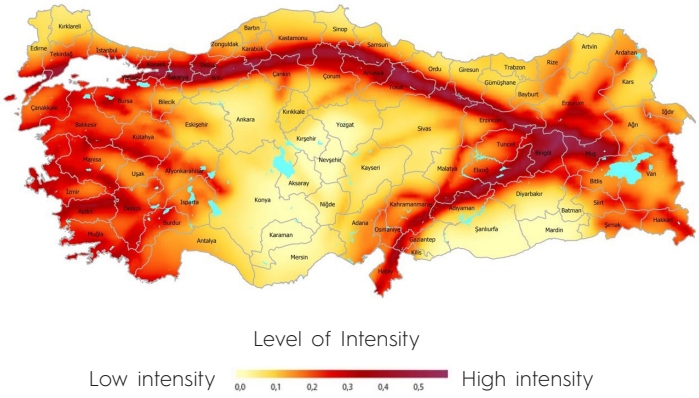
Country Turkey

Risks Seismic hazards exacerbated by climate change, forced displacement and rapid urbanization

Area of Engagement Promoting resilient infrastructure

Turkey is building earthquake-resistant schools across priority provinces over the next 3 years to ensure access to education to school-aged Syrian children and host communities.

Map of peak ground acceleration in Turkey



Source: AFAD National Earthquake Research Program (UDAP)

MILLIONS OF NEW RESIDENTS

Turkey hosts nearly 3.6 million of the 5.7 million refugees from the seven-year Syria crisis – more than any other country. This influx has put tremendous strain on the government to meet the urgent needs of refugees and their host communities. Access to education is among the most critical of these needs – especially as 50 percent of Syrians under Temporary Protection (SuTP) are under the age of 18. The government of Turkey, by establishing temporary education centers (TECs) in and outside of camps and by accelerating the enrollment of school-aged Syrian children into formal education facilities, was able to provide access to education facilities to nearly 60 percent of the 1.1 million school-aged SuTPs.

As one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world with more than 70% of its population located in areas at risk of earthquakes, many educational facilities are in seismically-active areas. In 1999, the country faced one of the world's deadliest earthquakes on record, with more than 18,000 lives lost and over 700 schools damaged beyond repair. Ensuring the safety of students and teaching staff, as well as the operational resilience of the country's educational infrastructure, is a primary goal for the government of Turkey and its development partners. As the country provides refuge for a growing number of school-age children originating from Syria, ensuring that schools are as resilient as possible is essential to protecting both refugees and host communities from natural hazard risks.

INCREASING RESILIENCE AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

To support the Turkish government's efforts in accommodating growing refugee populations, the World Bank, with technical assistance from GFDRR, is administering a $160 million EU-funded project to help Turkey build safer schools in priority provinces. Delivered through the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRiT) and administered through the World Bank's Education Infrastructure for Resilience Project, these funds are enabling Turkey's Ministry of National Education to build 56 earthquake-resistant schools (equivalent to some 1,500

classrooms) over the next three years, ensuring safer access to education for 40,000 school-aged Syrians and their host communities annually.

The project is informed by technical support provided by the government of Japan as well as the Global Program for Safer Schools, which was launched by GFDRR in 2014 to identify scalable and sustainable solutions to ensure that educational infrastructure is resilient to climate and disaster risk. These large-scale investments can provide an important model moving forward to provide safer schooling facilities for the nearly 875 million estimated school children that currently live in earthquake-prone regions globally. Alongside these efforts, Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) is also working to scale up seismic resilience more broadly through updated earthquake hazard maps and more robust building regulation, and is even partnering with neighboring countries to reduce risk throughout the region.

LESSONS LEARNED

Smart infrastructure investments can be leveraged to fulfill a wide range of community needs.

As the needs of vulnerable populations extend far beyond education alone, the new facilities being built will also serve as centers for refugee services, such as language training and psychosocial support. By integrating services like these into safer educational infrastructure, Turkey can support other critical needs both in the refugee population and host community.

Investments in disaster resilience can help tackle a range of complex development challenges.

Turkey's goal to ensure the safety and continued education of Syrian children complements its sustained investments in disaster risk reduction. Such efforts can be a model for other governments looking to achieve different community-level benefits, especially for displaced populations or vulnerable communities, through strategic investments in climate and disaster risk reduction measures.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION PROVIDED

More than 40,000 new students are expected to benefit from the 56 newly constructed disaster-resilient education facilities, which will help prevent long disruptions to education for both SuTPs and host-community schoolchildren. Moving forward, GFDRR will assist the government of Turkey on its goal of improving seismic safety of all schools nationwide.

DISASTER-RESILIENT SCHOOLS

The new education facilities being built comply with Turkey's latest regulations regarding seismic safety, energy efficiency, land use planning, shelter, fire, safety at workplace, access for people with disabilities, and more.

"Our Department intends to pursue this fruitful cooperation via the implementation of a Safe Schools Program with technical and financial support from the World Bank and GFDRR to help render the existing school building stock safe and compliant with the latest seismic code, given that the assistance offer extended by the Bank to our Ministry and the Turkish Treasury is favored by respective authorities."

-- Mr. Ozcan Duman, Head of Department
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