SDG
IMPACT ACCELERATOR

SDG
IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Pilot Phase Report

SDGIA.ORG

SDG
IMPACT ACCELERATOR

SDG Impact Accelerator
Pilot Phase Report

July 2020

Delivered by PlusValue (co-authored by Andrea Bertoni and Filippo Addarii)

A general thank to all interviewees as listed at the end for their honest and can did feedbacks

Photos:

Hilaneh Mahmoudi

Seda Açıkoğlu

Murat Pulat

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword(s) 3

Executive Summary 5

1 The Story: From the Beginning to the Acceleration Process (2018 – 19) 7

2 The Mission: Innovation for the Most Vulnerable 10

3 Platform Organisations: Enabling Stakeholder Collaboration 11

4 Acceleration: A Global Trend for Change 12

5 Location: Turkey, Hub for Propose-driven Innovation 13

6 Original Blueprint for Purpose-driven Innovation 15

7 Pilots to Address Grand Challenges 16

8 SDGia Acceleration Process Step by Step 18

9 SDGia Start-up Portfolio 25

10 Feedback from SDG Impact Accelerator Team 27

11 Feedback from SDG Impact Accelerator Entrepreneurs 30

12 Feedback from SDG Impact Accelerator Stakeholders 33

13 SDGia 2020 onwards: The Next Phase 42

Appendix 1 – List of Interviewees 43

References 46

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Foreword(s)

Mustafa Osman Turan - Co-Chair of the SDGia Project Board on behalf of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SDG Impact Accelerator has been one of the most innovative policy initiatives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of international development cooperation, to date. By bringing together Turkish and international partners both from public and private sectors, it has been an embodiment of the achievement of SDG-17 on partnerships and means of implementation.

Turkey has long been an advocate of the role of private sector in development, hence established, in partnership with UNDP, the Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development back in 2012.

Turkey has also placed inclusive growth, thus not leaving the world's 47 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) behind, high on its development cooperation agenda. That policy priority has led to the inauguration of UN Technology Bank for LDCs in 2018, marking the achievement of the first SDG target, i.e. target 17.8.

Furthermore, Turkey is the country which hosts the highest number of refugees in the world, thereby having been qualified as the "world's most generous country"[1].

Turkey's SDG Impact Accelerator has been designed to be founded upon and benefits from these policy choices and institutions.

There are also considerable novelties introduced in the design and the implementation of the SDGia platform: namely, the focus on the power of entrepreneurship and innovation in dealing with complex development challenges related to low income groups with a focus on displaced groups and LDC populations; the multi-stakeholder and public-private partnership; the enabling collaboration ecosystem for start-ups and large private sector companies; the system approach to address grand challenges; the field visits; and the in-house systems lab and impact investment fund.

With all these features, SDGia presents a testbed for innovative solutions and a striking model for SDG implementation.

More urgently, I believe what we have tested in 2019 can now be deployed to design a rapid response to the risk of exposure to COVID-19 pandemic that is faced by refugees and displaced people in LDCs who are the most vulnerable during this global health and economic crisis.

The absence of adequate sanitation services, a problem that the SDGia aimed to tackle in its first piloting phase, together with severely limited medical care, pose enormous risks for inhabitants of the densely populated refugee settlements, especially in LDCs.

This pandemic will disproportionally affect the vulnerable segments of the populations. How can a refugee with pre-existing health conditions and without identification take the necessary precautions to avoid COVID-19 when s/he lives in a high-density informal camp? Would the population that witnesses the death and hospitalisation of its own citizens consider refugees on par with its nationals?

These are important questions that we will need to address in the months and years to come. COVID-19 is a game changer and I believe that we need to design the next programme of the SDGia to make a contribution to the global response that UN Secretary General has called for.

I am proud of being one of prime movers to support the SDGia, and I am personally committed to make sure that our achievements are put at service to solve the new challenges that the world faces.

1 https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2019/10/01/turkeys-streak-as-most-generous-country-in-the-world-continues

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Seher Alacacı Arıner - Co-Chair of the SDGia Project Board on behalf of UNDP

In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which provide a framework and set the vision and targets for the transition to a sustainable and resilient society by 2030; acknowledging the complexity of the development challenges that the world faces today and the urgent need of more integrated solutions. We have seen over the years that the speed and complexity of today's development challenges are growing exponentially and tackling them effectively requires innovation.

The SDG Impact Accelerator (SDGia), the joint initiative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and UNDP Turkey which started in 2018 has addressed this need through highest level of cooperation of diverse actors and pooling of the financial resources, knowledge and expertise to achieve the SDGs. It aims to support the generation of market-creating innovations initially for refugees and Least Developed Country (LDC) populations through a broad range of services spanning mentoring, funding and networking. It is also recognized globally as a unique multi-stakeholder partnership model and a good practice towards achieving the SDG 17 "revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development."

I would like to start extending UNDP's appreciation and special thanks to our partners Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, World Food Programme (WFP), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Qatar Fund for Development (QFfD), Limak Holding and Eczacıbaşı Holding. The success of the initiative mostly relied on the strong commitment and ownership of all parties involved.

Turkey hosts 5 million refugees, predominantly those who fled the war in Syria, but also those who left countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan or Somalia to seek better life prospects. This is only a small portion of around 70 million displaced people around the world, mostly from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Seasonal agricultural work is a livelihood opportunity for refugees. There are around 1 million seasonal agricultural workers in Turkey. Most seasonal agricultural workers do not have access to a stable toilet infrastructure. The problem is global at scale – poor sanitation causes 80% of infectious diseases; for women 20% drop out of school because of lack of access to toilets, and the probability that they will be sexually violated increases by 50% when their access to toilets is restricted.

The central premise of the SDG Impact Accelerator is to bring entrepreneurs together with the stakeholders from different spheres to establish collaborations on specific challenges around displacement. During its piloting phase throughout 2019, the SDGia addressed above-mentioned humanitarian-development challenges in Turkey, specifically focusing on access to basic services and livelihood opportunities through digital identification solutions and access to sanitation through a non-sewage portable toilet design. In its first program, SDGia has engaged with 25 teams of entrepreneurs from 14 different countries. Innovative solutions developed to improve the lives of refugees in Turkey were presented on 23 September 2019 at the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York and on 16 December 2019 at the first Global Refugee Forum in Geneva. Two startups presented their experiences and solutions at each event.

It was an exciting journey as well as a testing and learning process for all the parties involved. This report provides all the details of this journey step by step and it also elaborates the concepts that frame the intervention logic of the initiative such as innovation for the most vulnerable, platform organizations and acceleration.

UNDP works to find practical and innovative solutions to Turkey's development challenges since 1957. We believe that we can achieve SDGs only if we work together. To accelerate our steps towards Global Goals, we need new ideas, new solutions and new partnerships. 2020 is a year that will be remembered with the Covid-19 pandemic. All nations are experiencing the rapid changes and impacts of the pandemic at several fronts and we need to rethink our development paradigms and be able to react, change and adopt faster.

As UNDP, we are proud to support innovative solutions to improve the lives of people. This is what we aim to achieve with the new vision of UNDP, which we call NextGenUNDP. Performing better, faster and creating impact at a larger scale, with innovative solutions to the biggest problems of our time, changing lives of millions for the better. We look forward to seeing how this initiative will contribute to making a positive impact in lives of refugees and disadvantaged people in Turkey and all around the World.

Introduction

Murat Pulat

In 2018 the Turkish government embarked in a journey to develop a new approach to solve the travails of refugees and displaced people– an approach meant to steer institutional power, entrepreneurship, technology, and capital all together and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Turkey hosts the largest community of refugees in the world – 4m people - because of its proximity to one of the hottest conflict zones worldwide and being the crossroad of global migration flows. The country has also recently joined the donor community for international development. Therefore, it was natural for Turkey to be willing to make a difference and doing it without being constrained by consolidated patterns which, have often been done not more than managing the situation.

Under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) a multi-stakeholder platform was convened bringing together prominent experts and institutional key-players from all sectors to design a novel and comprehensive model to tackle specific challenges refugees face in daily life and integrating in hosting countries. Founders included, besides the MFA, the UN Development Programme (both the country and regional offices together with the Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development), the World Food Programme, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Turkish corporations Limak Holding and Eczacıbaşı Holding – Qatar Fund for Development joined later in 2019.

The model was designed by an international group of experts as a 3 legs organisation: Systems Labs, SDG Impact Accelerator (SDGia), and Impact Investing Fund. In the initial design, the first leg was to function as a think-and-do-tank to collect inputs from all relevant sources, elaborate them, inform the design of the accelerator and evolution of the entire system. The second leg, the accelerator, to attract entrepreneurs and enterprises that generate solutions, support their evolution from ideation to providing a capacity building programme and facilitating collaboration between entrepreneurs as well as with both public and private sectors. The third leg to provide capital to implement and scale the successful solutions selected within the acceleration process. Such model improves by learning from feedbacks generated in every step and iteration.

In 2019, a pilot project was kicked off. The goal was to test the effectiveness of this new model. However, due to material constraints and urgency in implementation only the SDGia accelerator component was launched. This report documents all the steps of the pilot from the very beginning when digital id and non-sewage sanitation were selected as challenges, up to the proof of concept of selected enterprises in the field. The year-long pilot has shown to be a great feat in bringing together such a variety of expertise and partners as it is not common to witness especially for humanitarian projects, finding a balance between the power of a top down approach with the innovation of bottom up. Best results have been showcased at the most prominent international meetings in 2019. At the same time, several shortcomings were observed and noted due to learning by doing process and constant adaptation to change. Governance and management are the areas that proved to be the weakest in the overall enterprise. Challenges were welcome in the design of any innovative process and learning from mistakes was the aim of the pilot.

In the report the reader will also find a description of every step in SDGia acceleration process and, in chapters 10 and 11, feedbacks of all participants who have been interviewed having the chance to provide their individual views on strengths and weaknesses of the pilot phase. Ultimately, the goal of the pilot, and this report as part of it, is to improve the overall model providing, equally, genuine and original insights to purpose-driven innovators in all sectors and inform the upcoming programmes.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

1 The Story: From the Beginning to the Acceleration Process (2018 - 19)

The SDG Impact Accelerator (SDGia) is a novel initiative that leverages the SDGs to serve disadvantaged groups – particularly refugee populations - by funnelling highly innovative solutions and convening private and public stakeholders around specific development challenges. The SDGia is a story of successful partnership building where multi-stakeholder platforms allow social entrepreneurs to develop unprecedented solutions to the increasingly multifaceted humanitarian challenges. More importantly, the SDGia is a reminder to all parties – such as institutions, governments and private sector - that the world of entrepreneurs is prepared to strengthen its engagement in addressing complex development issues. In doing so, the SDGia framework shifts the paradigm of problem solving by initially identifying a challenge through a top-down approach for challenge mapping, and by subsequently scoping specific entrepreneurs developing bottom-up solution propositions.

Murat Pulat

With the establishment of the UNDP's Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development (IICPSD) in 2011, the Government of Turkey had signalled its strong support to facilitate the public-private dialogue and multi-stakeholder partnership structures in its SDG and development agenda. For the last 5 years, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has intensively collaborated with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to design a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation plan in Turkey. During the same year – while chairing G20's development group - Turkey promoted the concept of "inclusive growth", that is the engagement of private sector to promote strong, sustainable, balanced, inclusive and resilient economic growth. Since the endorsement of "G20 Inclusive Business Framework" by the Group of Twenty[2], Turkey steered its agenda to include different segments of society – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds – to benefit from economic growth. Since 2018, Turkey hosts and funds[3] the UN Technology Bank for LDCs (UNTB), a new UN entity established by a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution, that engages with national, regional and international partners to strengthen science, technology and innovation (STI) capacity in LDCs[4].

The vision of the SDGia was conceived following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. In 2017, Deputy DG for Multilateral Economic Affairs Mustafa Osman Turan commissioned to UNDP's IICPSD - on behalf of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs - a report aimed at exploring the potential of social entrepreneurship in SDG implementation. After consultations with academics, private sector companies, and government agencies, the outcome of these conversations – together with IICPSD's report – were presented at a successful high-level side event in 2017's UNGA. Even in its early phases, the SDGia attracted the attention of leading Turkish private sector companies such as Limak Holding, intergovernmental institutions like the World Food Programme (WFP), and philanthropic institutions at the forefront of the global development agenda such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

Between 2018 and early 2019, the Government of Turkey initiated a feasibility study, jointly funded by the

2 G20 Development Working Group (2015). G20 Inclusive Businesses Framework. http://g20.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/G20-Inclusive-Business-Framework.pdf

3 UN (2016) Resolution 71/251. https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/251

4 UN (2011) Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. https://undocs.org/A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1

BMGF and UNDP's Regional Service Centre for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which aimed to develop the assumptions of the SDG Impact Accelerator model. The feasibility report brought together a team of international experts[5] and advisers[6] deeply involved in innovation, social impact, and social entrepreneurship. The SDGia published the feasibility study on 10 April 2019, during a workshop on humanitarian innovation, co-organized by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and BMGF in Ankara. The feasibility report was positively received by all stakeholders and Turkish government officials. In its perspective, the feasibility study delineated the unique intention to make Turkey a testbed for innovative solutions focused on addressing development challenges through the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

For its first piloting phase, the SDGia focused on two of the most pressing issues faced by displaced population, namely the lack of sanitation and personal identification. These challenges were identified and selected by all the SDGia founding partners consensually as well documented in the feasibility study. Following the recruitment of an experienced Management Team in May, SDGia turned the feasibility study's general guidance into an applicable program and expanded its focus to launch a global call for applications. The Scope was broadened to include Big Problems of Livelihood Opportunities and Access to Basic Services and Clean Water and Sanitation. The call specifically focused also on two specific challenges Non-Sewage Portable Toilet and Sanitation Systems and and Digital ID.

The first piloting phase of the SDGia was entirely funded by the partners' budget, where the UNDP, WFP, BMGF, Qatar Fund for Development (QFfD), Eczacıbaşı Holding and Limak Holding provided funds amounting to USD 675.000, signalling the strong success of the multi-stakeholder model. The SDGia managed to attract 150 applications from start-ups in different stages of development, from those in the validation step to those in the growth phase.

The significant number of applications for a newly established initiative are explained by three main features of the SDGia: partnerships, field-visits, and dialogue with national authorities. Indeed, the SDGia is characterised by a unique composition of partnerships able to foster collaboration with members of the private sector, international organisations, and government officials. The SDGia also offers entrepreneurs the opportunity to conduct field-visits, thus meeting end-users and gaining contextual-knowledge regarding the daily challenges faced by refugee populations in Turkey. At last, the SDGia allows the much-needed

Murat Pulat

5 The SDGia feasibility study team: Ussal Şahbaz, Alexandra Alden, Doğan Taşkent, Filippo Addarii, Indy Johar UNDP 2018

6 The SDGia feasibility study international advisory board: David Gautschi, Gifford Pinchot III, Magdalena Yesil, Micheal Free, Steven Koltai.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

dialogue between experts from national authorities and entrepreneurs, which in the case of the SDGia equips start-ups with the required awareness on how to operate in Turkey. The startups were selected to receive implementation grants at the end of September 2019 and the implementation phase is underway under the supervision of UNDP and support of Project Partners. The first graduates of the programme will receive a total funding amounting to approx. USD 230.000 conditional on the delivery of an implementation plan kicking off on February 2020. Originally, SDGia had made a commitment of "up to USD 100.000 as an impact investment offer. With the availability of an additional USD 150.000 funding pledged by Qatar Fund for Development in September 2019, the total amount of funding was raised substantially and has been converted into a "grant" rather than "investment". Investment option was not possible in the first programme since the SDGia impact investment fund was yet to be created.

For the second phase taking place in 2020 and 2021 the SDGia is planning to run simultaneously in 3 countries. This time the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has committed to support the SDGia with USD 1.000.000 in funding for this phase through UNTB. The 8 graduates of the first programme will be implementing their prototypes in Turkey, and the 2 newly established cohorts will address challenges in Uganda and Bangladesh. These two countries have been selected by MFA and UNTB in consultation with UNDP COs on the basis of their current status as LDCs which are hosting large numbers of displaced people and refugees. There is indication that, In Uganda, the SDGia might focus on agricultural sector, whereas in Bangladesh on health sector for the most vulnerable segments of society. Both programmes will be executed in in consultation with the local stakeholders and the pro-active involvement of Turkish Embassies and UNDP's Country offices. Entrepreneurs that are selected as well as partners in Bangladesh and Uganda will have the opportunity to participate in a pre-acceleration training programme run in Turkey and meet with Turkish government officials, graduates of the first phase, and stakeholders from the Turkish private sector. The implementation of the prototypes in Turkey might feed into the SDGia programme in Bangladesh and Uganda. It's an ambition for SDGia to foster cross-pollination between cohorts across countries.

2 The Mission: Innovation for the Most Vulnerable

The 2018 UNHCR Global Trends report provides evidence that we are facing an unprecedented crisis with more than 70 million forcibly displaced people, an increase of 2.3 million refugees since 2018. This data also represents the highest number of displaced people ever recorded by the UNHCR – averaging out to 37,000 new displacements every day - with Turkey serving as the largest global refugee host for the fifth consecutive year. Approximately 84% of the global refugee population is currently hosted in LDCs where existing solutions are often dispersed across individual or isolated interventions insufficient to solve widespread, complex and multifaceted global challenges. It is clear that current efforts at addressing this situation are insufficient for the growing magnitude of the problem, as the scale and breath of these solutions are currently insufficient to be considered as key drivers of social change.

The SDG Impact Accelerator employs a unique approach to achieve the SDGs while also tackling complex challenges faced by forcibly displaced populations and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The SDGia advocates for a radical shift in the global perspective by proposing a system approach to address structural problems. Indeed, the SDGia aims to accelerate the impact of Sustainable Development Goals through the acceleration of entrepreneurs for market-creating innovations offering solutions that strengthen the resilience of refugees and of its communities and relevant institutions.

In order to provide the necessary inputs to the markets, market-based solutions require access to information and high degrees of coordination among heterogeneous stakeholders. By harnessing a multi-stakeholder platform where information is efficiently shared, the SDGia seeks to empower innovators committed in achieving sustainable social change. As entrepreneurship and innovation is an abundant resource in today's society - the critical challenge remains to engage the systems as a whole - allowing the optimal allocation of human and technological capital where it is needed the most. This approach, defined as systems change, aims at mobilising all the interested stakeholders towards positive systemic change – thereby generating progress on a larger and structural scale.

Thanks to market-creating innovations, the SDGia aims at catalysing broader systemic change in LDCs by enabling access to products and services which were previously unavailable or unaffordable[7]. Market-

7 Christensen, Clayton M., Efosa Ojomo, and Karen Dillon (2019). "Cracking Frontier Markets." Harvard Business Review 97.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

generating solutions foster innovation and competition faster than large-scale institutional reforms by exporting technologies and successful business models in markets where such innovations are absent.

As thoroughly argued in the feasibility study for the SDGia, market-creating solutions provide a crucial infrastructure for other entrepreneurs – facilitating the creation of local jobs in the non-tradable sector - an industry where wages are hardly influenced by the effects of global competition. Henceforth, the SDGia aims to accelerate entrepreneurs that are involved in developing market-creating solutions for refugee populations, as well as for the LDCs. Targeted entrepreneurs include founders of start-ups involved in systems change, innovators that work through existing public, philanthropic organizations, and corporations.

3 Platform Organisations: Enabling Stakeholders Collaboration

The SDG Impact Accelerator embraces novel solutions to tackle increasingly complex and interconnected development challenges. Through its multi-stakeholder approach, the SDGia acts as a platform to breakdown siloes to mobilize different stakeholders work together for systems change towards the SDGs[8]. Broadly, platform organisations form connector nodes within the system that host the collaborative effort of actors around a shared mission. Thus, platforms allow different stakeholders from seemingly isolated sectors to work together towards a common goal. In this sense, platforms are scalable collaboration agreements transforming organisations from a way to control production, to a human-centred, impact driven way to design and sustain interactions.

Platforms are characterised by a growth mind-set and strong focus on curiosity and learning. Multi-stakeholder platform organisations also succeed in fostering the mutual-exchange of perspectives and information, while providing grounds for increased transparency in sharing resources and convening funders. Thus, transparency generates trust, a quality that serves as enabler of interactions, relationships, and collaboration between stakeholders.

The importance of platforms in the global development agenda is recognised by UNDP's Strategic Plan for 2018-2021. The SDG Impact Accelerator is one of the pioneer global initiatives in line with UNDP's platform-based strategy delineated in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan[9]. The latter sets out a vision for the evolution of the UNDP calling for the organisation to evolve into a mobiliser of larger ecosystems through platforms – a goal strongly embodied in SDGia's mission. In this plan, the UNDP (p.16) states that platforms are able to:

Facilitate countries to design and deliver integrated solutions to complex development problems that require multi-sectoral actions across economic, social and environmental issues;

Help craft national and context-specific solutions - such as addressing critical bottlenecks and accelerators;

Support governments to strengthen alignment of national development plans, budgets and implementation systems with the Sustainable Development Goals;

Create effective mechanisms for multi-stakeholder, 'whole-of-society' approaches to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals".

UNDP is currently implementing its platform-based approach in several countries across the globe. Shifting from a project-based based approach to a platform-based approach allows UNDP to accelerate and align SDG centred objectives around creators of innovative solutions, governments and partners, thereby establishing a network of traditional and non-traditional stakeholders. Existing initiatives serving as prototypes and scalable pilots of UNDP's country support platforms for SDGs are found in Armenia, Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic, India, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova and Sudan[10]. These initiatives outline nationally-owned, multi-stakeholder and 'whole-of-society' approaches to the SDGs supported by UNDP's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

8 SDG Impact Accelerator (2019). SDG Impact Accelerator Feasibility Report. https://www.sdgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SDG-Impact-Accelerator-Feasibility-Report.pdf

9 UNDP (2017). UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 https://undocs.org/DP/2017/38

10 UNDP (2017). UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 Annex 4 https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Executive%20Board/2017/Special-session/dp2017-38_Annex%204.docx

4 Acceleration: A Global Trend for Impact

Seda Açıkoğlu

Accelerators are cohort-based initiatives providing a limited number of selected entrepreneurs and/or companies, the opportunity to participate in start-up boot-camps, receive mentorship, secure resources and establish industry connections. Successful entrepreneurs graduate from the programmes by presenting novel solutions to a public pitch event or demo day. Accelerators broker partnership with prospective investors by addressing both funding and information gap. They provide enhanced access to funding networks while also developing a pipeline of chosen technologies for the market. Thus, accelerators help start-ups grow whilst are able to quickly discover innovative solutions[11].

Accelerator programs have experienced an exponential growth since the launch of Y Combinator in 2005, the one that epitomises their rise. The majority of accelerators are found in high-income countries where the acceleration process is firmly established across investors and entrepreneurs. in LDCs they are a relatively new phenomenon and present several challenges. The mix of negative perceptions regarding the potential of entrepreneurs, and the mismatch between stakeholder's objectives forcibly reduce the rates at which LDCs ventures secure early-stage funding. The 2017 report of the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative (GALI) and Deloitte examines data from more than 2,400 early-stage ventures participating in accelerator programs in high-income and emerging markets. The research concludes that there is insufficient data to back-up claims that LDCs entrepreneurs have lower skills and abilities[12].

There is a growing interest in employing accelerator programs for the global development agenda. UNDP's recent initiative, the UNDP Accelerator Labs, is promoted by national and global partners, and aims to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs with 60 different labs serving 78 countries. The SDG Impact Accelerator and UNDP Accelerator Labs both adopt multi-stakeholder platforms to analyse local challenges, perform solution mappings, accelerate entrepreneurs, and conduct experimentation to address complex and interdependent development challenges. In December 2018, UNDP announced that it would establish UNDP Accelerator Labs in Turkey and other 59 countries.

Blueprints to design accelerator programs targeting disadvantaged populations or for initiatives in LDCs often fail to account for the differences in the local ecosystem. Emulating successful accelerators in high-income countries for LDCs applications leads to unproductive programs and high failure rates. Instead, the SDGia adopts a highly-contextual acceleration program able to account for variations in entrepreneurial culture, infrastructural constraints, business practises, and for broader differences results of legal, geographical, social, and cultural conditions.

11 C. Scott Dempwolf, Jennifer Auer, and Michelle D'Ippolito (2014). Innovation Accelerators: Defining Characteristics Among Start-up Assistance Organisations.

12 Global Accelerator Learning Initiative and Deloitte (2017). Accelerating Start-ups in Emerging Markets: Insights from 43 Programs.

5 Location: Turkey, Hub for Purpose-driven Innovation

The SDG Impact Accelerator is based in Istanbul, an international economic hub, a melting-pot of different cultures, and city of a country with distinguished cultural, economic and strategic relevance to the initiative's mission. The frontier between the East and the West – the 6th largest Official Development Assistance (ODA) donor among the OECD nations – Turkey also acts as the link between the Global North and the Global South. Thanks to a dynamic reform agenda and to a young and well-educated workforce, Turkey experienced strong economic growth since 2000 – transforming the nation in one of the upper-middle income countries with the highest standards of life in the MENA and EECA regions. An outlier amongst the prudent expectations for growth of European economies, Turkey's macroeconomic indicators were suggesting a positive economic outlook as growth was expected to accelerate to 3% in 2020 and to 4% in 2021[13] - making Turkey one of the fastest growing economies among the G20. However, the economic fallout of Covid-19 pandemic will negatively affect the Turkish economy as it will do so in the rest of the world.

The Turkish private sector is also thriving globally: McKinsey & Company[14] reports the unique ability of large Turkish companies in succeeding in the global business arena. Thanks to strong entrepreneurial spirits and ownership-mind-sets, rapid decision making to capture expansion opportunities, and ability to manage market-specific complexity, Turkish firms present virtues highly sought by the SDGia for its private sector partners. With approximately 550 start-ups founded every year between 2010-2018, and a projected start-up investment of USD 200 million for 2019, Turkey places itself as the leading start-up hub in South-eastern Europe[15]. Turkey also boasts a vibrant local entrepreneurial ecosystem in SDG-relevant verticals, with more than 800 start-ups producing low-cost, agile, practical and compatible solutions with developing country markets[15].

As a country that is home to more than 60% of all the refugees from the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan – and with approximately 3.6 million displaced people from the Syrian Civil War - Turkey is a fertile ground for entrepreneurs looking to catalyse positive change for displaced and disadvantaged populations. The large number of forcibly displaced people makes Turkey a unique testbed for the SDGia model. Hence, the SDGia aims at developing capacity to contribute to the development of the Turkish SDG policy agenda, while simultaneously tackling complex challenges surrounding refugee's wellbeing in the region. The focus on refugees is particular to SDGia's first piloting phase but the experience can be easily applied to LDCs and disadvantaged populations in the future.

Turkey hosts several international organizations relevant to the aims of the SDGia. Such institutions include the recently established UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries (UNTB), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Food Program (WFP), and World Health Organisation (WHO). Turkey is the only country where UNDP enjoys a multi-level partnership, ranging from the national level through its Country Office (CO) in Ankara, regional level through its Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH) for Europe and CIS and global level through Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development (IICPSD). The latter has closely assisted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in the establishment of the SDG Impact Accelerator. Turkey is the co-founder of IICPSD and a voluntary contributor to the UNDP core budget.

13 The World Bank (2019). The World Bank in Turkey. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/overview#3.

14 McKinsey & Company (2017). How Turkish Companies Can Become Global Successes.https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-turkish-companies-can-become-global-successes# .

15 UNDP and IICPSD (2019). The Impact Investing Ecosystem in Turkey. https://www.iicpsd.undp.org/content/istanbul/en/home/library/the-impact-investing-ecosystem-in-turkey.html

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

6 Original Blueprint for Purpose-driven Innovation

The SDG Impact Accelerator's blueprint adopts a 3-tiered institutional structure comprised of a Systems Lab, Accelerator and Impact Investment Fund. These three units focus on building capacity for systemic change by converting capacity into action through experimental learning[16].

The full-fledged systems acceleration framework is defined with:

Systems Lab providing access to insights and information, in particular through human-centred design techniques and systems tools, and a focus on identifying specific grand challenges / Big Questions and solution partners.

Accelerator with a cohort structure bringing different stakeholders together around specific grand challenges and provide challenge-focused – instead of generic – acceleration services towards systems change by utilizing lean enterprise methods.

Impact Investment Fund providing flexible funding to scale-up for accelerated start-ups.

In the SDGia framework, Cohort participants are recruited through an open call for each Big Question focusing at the development of sustainable and scalable products or services addressing the particular challenge. Each cohort adopts a platform structure having entrepreneurs as "solvers" at the core, context-specific stakeholders as "enablers" at the inner circle, and international experts as "supporters" in the outer circle.

During the first piloting phase, the SDGia established only the Accelerator component of the full-fledged systems accelerator. The establishment of the Systems Lab and Impact Investment Fund for the first phase was severely limited by time and operational constraints. the absence of Systems Lab was partially compensated leveraging on inputs of relevant Turkish institutions and international organizations gathered in working groups.

The implementation of the Impact Investment Fund has been rescheduled for 2021. Nonetheless, even without the investment vehicle, the SDGia managed to secure and allocate a total funding well above the set target – grants not investments. More details are presented in the final chapter exploring SDGia's 2020 future.

The SDGia offers field-visits for its acceleration process as a means to harness the potential of context-based knowledge. Field-visits are able to generate positive feedback-loops as start-ups and stakeholders collect precious context-specific information and develop context-based solutions. Throughout the piloting phase, entrepreneurs had the opportunity to conduct field-visits in informal refugee settlements and community centres to connect with the potential beneficiaries of solutions. With field-visits, private for-profit stakeholders, institutional partners, and international experts have interacted with entrepreneurs in a variety of activities including visits to offices and R&D centres, as well as providing coaching sessions to the start-ups.

7 Pilots to Address Grand Challenges

Following the publications of the Feasibility Study, the SDGia launched the piloting phase with the first working group meeting at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 2019. This meeting brought together funding partners, SDGia consultants, project board members, representatives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP Turkey, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Eczacıbaşı Group, and Limak Foundation as well as other potential institutional enablers and supporters.

The working groups defined the scope, objectives, and the road-map for the execution of the second phase with reference to two pilot projects planned with the stakeholders. With the conclusion of the first meeting, SDGia launched a call for applications for two big problems and two specific challenges to better serve refugee populations in Turkey. During this phase, working groups supported start-ups across the implementation of the pilots by partially fulfilling the role of the Systems Lab.

16 SDG Impact Accelerator (2019). SDG Impact Accelerator Feasibility Report. https://www.sdgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SDG-Impact-Accelerator-Feasibility-Report.pdf

Hilaneh Mahmoudi

The first pilot focused on access to sanitation by implementing a new non-sewage portable toilet design. This pilot brought together the challenge owners Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Water Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) team, and Eczacıbaşı Vitra, a major sanitation systems manufacturer part of Eczacıbaşı Holding and based in Turkey. The pilot project invited entrepreneurs to combine both global and local technology and design to generate a market-creating innovation. This pilot addressed the SDG 6[17] which aims ensuring availability and sustainability in the management of water and sanitation for all.

The second pilot aimed at creating new applications on digital identification ecosystems enabling displaced populations access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. This pilot, executed in close cooperation with the UNDP and WFP as challenge owners, addressed the SDG 16[18] which aims promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Throughout June 2019, the SDGia received 150 applications from 35 different countries and 11 Turkish provinces as 25 start-ups succeeded in the initial selection process. Thus, the SDGia created two cohorts; the first for the Digital ID and livelihood opportunities for refugees, and the second for clean water and sanitation for disadvantaged groups. Entrepreneurs were invited to a 6 day "Pre-Accelerator BootCamp" session in Istanbul and Ankara from the 6th to the 11st of July 2019. The pre-acceleration process ended with the SDG Impact Accelerator "Pitching Day" on the 26th of July, where 10 start-ups proceeded to the subsequent accelerator round and each received up to USD 14,000 in grant funding.

The acceleration period culminated with a "Showcase Event" on September 11th in Ankara and a final "Demo Day" on September 13th in Istanbul. In Ankara 6 "observer startups"[19] were offered the opportunity to participate. In Istanbul, 9 start-ups of both cohorts from the Netherlands, Jordan, Palestine, United States of America, India, Turkey, Kenya, and Rwanda presented their products developed in the 2-month accelerator period to a selected audience of international impact investors and potential private and public partners. At last, one graduate from each cohort were selected to attend the UN General Assembly in September 2019 in New York and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2019 in Geneva.

17 UN (2020). https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/

18 UN (2020). https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/

19 SDGia Project Board has decided to accept those promising startups as "observers" in the programme if they applied with a solution relevant to the challenges. This was to create the possibility of a potential for collaboration. In fact, one of the observers joined in a consortium with two graduates of the digital ID cohort at the end. Observers did not receive grant funding and could only participate in the Showcase event in Ankara but not in the Demo Day in Istanbul.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

8 SDGia Acceleration Process Step by Step

- 27 May 2019 — Call for Founders for two pilots
- 6-11 July 2019 — Pre-Accelerator Bootcamp
- 25 July 2019 — Pre-Accelerator Pitch Day
- 2 August 2019 — Announcement of Accelerator Teams
- 20-23 August 2019 — Field Visits
- 12 September 2019 — Showcase Event
- 13 September 2019 — Demoday Event
- 23 September 2019 — Attendance to UN General Assembly
- 31 October 2019 — Completion of Acceleration Phase
- 16 December 2019 — Attendance to Global Refugee Forum
- January 2020 — Launch of Implementation Phase

Pre-Accelerator Bootcamp

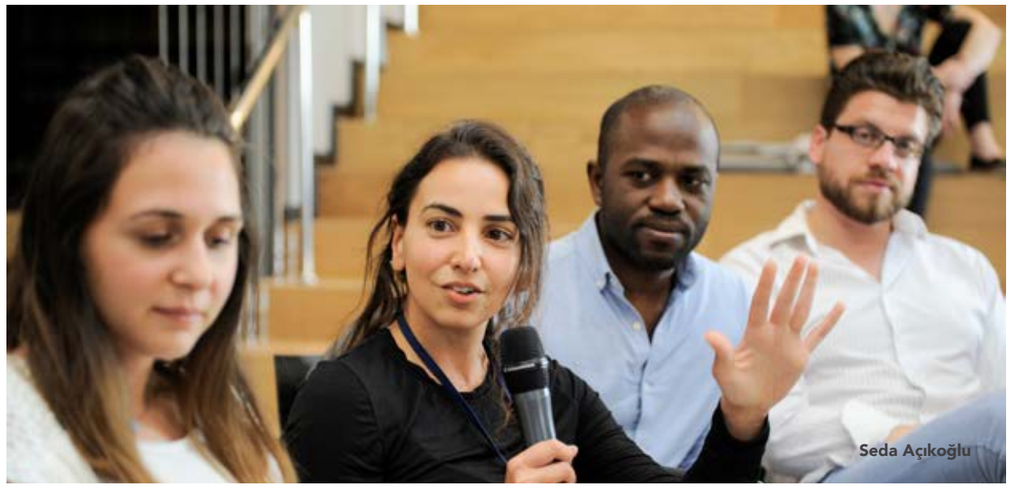
The SDGia programme kicked off with a 5 day "Pre-Accelerator Bootcamp" on July 6th - July 11st 2019 in Istanbul and Ankara. The Pre-Accelerator Bootcamp brought together 45 entrepreneurs of 25 start-ups from 14 countries. The first day of the Bootcamp featured an introductory session with a meet-and-greet of all of the various partners involved in the program such as:

- Mustafa Osman Turan - Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Co-Chair of the SDGia Project Board)
- Seher Alacacı Arıner - UN Development Programme (Co-Chair of the SDGia Project Board)
- Beliz Bediz Sinan - SDGia Accelerator Operator & Startup Value Creation Leader
- Duygu Ercan Mörel - Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Alternate Member of the SDGia Project Board)
- Mahmut Aslan - World Food Programme.
- Melih Özsöz - Limak Holding (Member of the SDGia Project Board)
- Neslihan Tamsu Selli - Eczacıbaşı Holding
- Ozan Sönmez - SDGia Accelerator Program & Network Design Leader.
- Sun Gil Kim - Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (SDGia Sanitation Consultant)

Following the introduction, the SDGia delivered sessions covering topics on impact funding, impact measurement methodologies, development of value proposition, and skill mapping for social entrepreneurs. Speakers of these keynotes included international experts such as:

- Amal Dokhan – Global Entrepreneurship Network;
- Burak Dalgın – Darby Private Equity (SDGia Pro-Bono Board Member)
- Cheryl Edison – Edison International (SDGia Pro-Bono Global Business Strategy consultant).
- Filippo Addarii – PlusValue (SDGia Consultant)
- Jason Lau – Core Strateji
- Rabyal Mirza – UNDP Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development;

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR


Seda Açıkoğlu

The second day of the Bootcamp highlighted the specific challenges the accelerator aimed to address. Entrepreneurs joined SDGia's program & network design leader Ozan Sönmez to perform additional start-up development work, as a team from the UNDP presented on the Sustainable Development Goals by bringing strong examples of achievements from the field.

Representatives from UNDP and the WFP worked with the digital ID and livelihood cohort, while representatives from the BMGF and Eczacıbaşı collaborated with the non-sewage portable toilet cohort. Additional talks brought personal experiences regarding WFP's Building Blocks project in Jordan, and BMGF's transformative technologies related to non-sewage sanitation systems:

- Houman Haddad – UN World Food Programme (SDGia Digital ID Consultant);
- Sun Gil Kim – Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (SDGia Sanitation Consultant).

Following the expert mentoring sessions, entrepreneurs had the chance to speak with key partners of the SDGia in one-to-one pitching sessions. This exercise allowed partners to better understand the kind of companies present at the Bootcamp, while entrepreneurs had chances to practice their pitch and pitching skills. After a brief wrap-up session, day two ended with social gatherings with the participation of Turkish Impact Entrepreneurship Ecosystem.

The third day focused on mentorship sessions with mentors and investors from Turkey's social entrepreneurship ecosystem. The SDGia welcomed a number of external mentors providing each entrepreneur with at least 3 different sessions enabling start-ups to collect valuable insights and business connections. External mentors and experts included:

- Ayşe İnal - Galata Business Angels MD;
- Burak Büyükdemir - Founder of Startup Turkey and ETohum;
- Deniz Duygu – Co-Founder Arya Women Investment Network;
- Ebru Elmas – Co-Founder of Fongogo and Angel Network MD;
- Patrick Bosteels – Co-Founder Stage Co;
- Semi Hakim - Founder of Kok Projekt;
- Semih Boyacı - Founder of Impact Hub Istanbul.

The fourth day began in Turkey's capital city, Ankara. Different representatives of the enabler institutions introduced themselves, shared their perspectives on the goals of the accelerator, and discussed with regard to the problems the start-ups are encouraged to solve.

Representatives of enabler institutions introduced themselves and conducted one-to-one pitching session with entrepreneurs. On average, each team had the opportunity to meet with at least 5 stakeholders. During these sections, the SDGia brought together representatives of the following institutions:

- Directorate General of Migration Management;
- Edison International.
- International Labour Organization;
- International Organization of Migration;
- Middle East Technical University (ODTU);
- Presidency of Turkey: Strategy and Budget Directorate;
- Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK);
- Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA);
- Turkish Employment Organization;
- Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry;
- Turkish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services;
- Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Turkish Ministry of Health;
- Turkish Red Crescent;
- UN Development Programme;
- UN Food and Agriculture Organization.
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees;
- UN World Food Programme;

Herby, cohorts had once again the chance to be briefed with one-to-one-mentoring-sessions. The digital ID and livelihood cohort were briefed by representatives of the Turkish Red Crescent in the light of the upcoming visit to the Red Crescent's community centre for people under temporary protection in the Altındağ district of Ankara. The non-sewage portable toilet cohort was briefed by a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture in regard to the seasonal agricultural workers' camp visit in Polatlı, a district in Ankara. The briefings were followed up by a wrap-up to the day in Ankara with Mustafa Osman Turan from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Beliz Bediz Sinan and Ozan Sönmez of the SDGia Accelerator Team.

The fifth day marked the beginning of the first field visit. The non-sewage portable toilet cohort visited a seasonal agricultural workers' camp in Polatlı with representatives from the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture, whereas the Digital ID and livelihood group was taken to a Turkish Red Crescent community centre in Altındağ.

The non-sewage portable Toilet met with Polatlı District Governor and developed preliminary information about the region. Entrepreneurs observed the living conditions on the camp-site, as they also held one-

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Hilaneh Mahmoudi

to-one meetings with people residing in Turkey's first pilot temporary agricultural workers' camp. With this visit, entrepreneurs had the chance to collect direct feedbacks regarding the problems faced by end-users. The cohort had the opportunity to examine first-hand the toilets, washroom conditions, and drinking water supply in the camp.

The Digital ID group was toured around the Turkish Red Crescent community centre facility. After a thorough introduction into the work of the Turkish Red Crescent and its facilities, the entrepreneurs had the opportunity to meet with a diverse group of beneficiaries supported by the community centre. With the help of translators, the founders were offered a deeper insight into the struggles of being a person under temporary protection and the distinct problems part of their daily life.

The final day of the program was hosted at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara. After a brief welcome by Faruk Kaymakcı - Turkey's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs - Mustafa Osman Turan (MFA, Co-Chair of the Project Board), Ömür Budak (MFA), and Seher Alacacı Arıner (UNDP, Co-Chair of the Project Board) conducted a Q&A Session where they also shared their thoughts on the program, its findings, and its future. A final wrap-up briefing was led by Ozan Sönmez.

Pre-Accelerator Graduation and Accelerator Selection Pitching Day

On July 26th 2019, partners and entrepreneurs reunited in Istanbul to take part in the "Pitching Day". During this event, 20 of the selected start-ups were given the opportunity to pitch their product and company among fellow entrepreneurs and SDGia stakeholders. The event was introduced by several SDGia board members that shared their vision and explored the roadmap of the initiative. Thus, private sector and institutional partners discussed the importance of SDGia's work, with a particular reference to innovation, SDGs and challenges faced by displaced populations. The opening remarks were conducted by board members also representatives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP, WFP, Limak Holding and Eczacıbaşı Holding:

- Emre Eczacıbaşı - Eczacıbaşı Holding (Entrepreneurship and Innovation Coordinator);
- Melih Özsöz - Limak Holding (Member of the SDGia Project Board);
- Mustafa Osman Turan - Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Co-Chair of the SDGia Project Board)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

- Nils Grede - UN World Food Programme (Member of the SDGia Project Board);
- Ozan Sönmez - SDGia Accelerator Program & Network Design Leader.
- Pelin Rodoplu - UN Development Programme (Member of the SDGia Project Board);

After the introductions, start-ups proceeded to pitch their solutions to the audience with the objective to move from the pre-acceleration to the acceleration phase. Those that succeeded to progress towards the next step gained the opportunity to receive additional mentorship from international experts and partners, including the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP, WFP, BMGF, Eczacıbaşı Holding, and Limak Holding. Moreover, every winning team, would be eligible to receive an equity-free funding of up to USD 13.000 if they completed the acceleration programme. Thus, successful start-ups gained the opportunity to participate in further field trips in both Istanbul and Gaziantep. Conclusively, 10 start-ups proceeded to acceleration phase and 6 start-ups were invited to participate as observers who did not receive any funding but had the chance to take part in the programme and join forces with selected teams.

Digital ID and Livelihood Opportunities Cohort:

- Cambridge Motorics - Selected as Observer
- FazlaGida - Selected as Observer
- Gravity.Earth - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding
- Inid - Selected as Observer
- Mark Labs - Selected as Observer
- Migport - Selected as Observer
- Monicont
- Nanomed Diagnostic - Selected as Observer
- Sertifier - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding

- Smart Forest World
- Tykn.tech - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding
- ZAKA ID - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding

Sanitation Cohort:

- AKYAS - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding
- Blue Filter - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding
- change:WATER labs - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding
- FlowLess
- GARV Toilets - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding
- I Water Robot X Co.
- Nepser A.S. - Selected for Acceleration Phase and Initial Funding
- Tierra Grata

Field Visits to Istanbul, Gaziantep and Ankara

The SDG Impact Accelerator's second field visit was organized by WFP, UNDP and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs between August 20th and 23rd in Istanbul, Gaziantep and Ankara. Entrepreneurs visited the action ground in Istanbul and in Gaziantep, and had subsequently the chance of meeting Turkish government entities, representatives from UN Agencies, and impact professionals in Ankara.

In Bozöyük – where the largest toilet systems manufacturing plant in MENA is located - the participants of the water and sanitation cohort were hosted by Eczacıbaşı Innovation Center. There, senior management explained how the large-scale operations of the Holding are preserved and developed. Entrepreneurs toured the facilities as employers held information sessions on the work done at the centre.

The digital ID and livelihood cohort was hosted by Turkish Red Crescent Community Centre in Bağlarbaşı (Istanbul) as entrepreneurs spent time with the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) beneficiaries discovering

Murat Pulat

their problems and tapping into the complexities of creating more permanent livelihood opportunities. The cohort also visited WFP's offices in Istanbul and met with field officers and NGOs collaborating with WFP in addressing the needs of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey.

Subsequently, teams spent 2 days in Gaziantep conducting meetings and field visits to informal houses in Nizip (sanitation cohort) and in the Vocational Training Centre in Gaziantep (digital ID cohort). The cohorts were welcomed by field experts who gave insights to the unique challenges faced in Gaziantep, a province that hosts about half a million of Syrians refugees. Sanitation cohort has also had the chance to interview the inhabitants of the informal housing for refugees.

The Vocational Training Centre staff explained to entrepreneurs how the vacant positions in the city's developing export-oriented businesses were surveyed, and how job programs had been developed in partnership with international and national donors. During the last day in Gaziantep, more than 10 regional and international experts representing aid organizations, INGOs, and government entities met with founders in deep one-to-one sessions aimed at building concrete action-oriented plans of implementation with respect to the needs identified by start-ups and field experts. In Ankara, UNDP hosted the entrepreneurs following the conclusion of the visit. More than 16 experts of institutions ranging from UN Agencies and Government departments participated in the meeting with the entrepreneurs. More than 100 mentorship and interaction sessions were conducted, therefore enabling start-ups to build and refine their implementation plans for the final stages of the accelerator.

Showcase Day and Demo Day

The SDGia acceleration process culminated with a Showcase Day in Ankara and a Pitching day in Istanbul on the 12nd and 13rd of September 2019. Start-ups joined the stage to present their final pitch in front of an audience of fellow entrepreneurs, potential investors, government officials, SDGia stakeholders and board members. Start-ups that participated in the Showcase Day and Pitch Day for the sanitation cohort are GARV Toilets, AKYAS, Nepser A.S., Blue Filter, and change:WATER labs, whereas for the digital ID and livelihood opportunities are Tykn.tech, ZAKA ID, Sertifier, and Gravity.Earth. The observer teams had a chance to present their solutions in Ankara.

During their final pitches, entrepreneurs shared their personal experience with the SDGia - highlighted what they had learnt from this programme – and explained why they are passionate in creating positive impact. With their presentations, start-ups unveiled their solutions, defined the business models, proposed their research and implementation partners, indicated their funding requirement, and illustrated the implementation timeline. Upon the concluding remarks, the challenge owners for the two cohorts - Eczacıbaşı Holding and BMGF for sanitation, WFP and UNDP for digital ID and livelihood opportunities – announced two teams invited to attend

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Hilaneh Mahmoudi

and present at the 2019 UN General Assembly's high-level side event in New York; namely Change Water Labs and Gravity-Sertifier-Mark Labs consortium – the 3 teams joined forces to form a consortium.

SDGia at the 74th UN General Assembly in New York

The high-level side event - co-organised by the Government of Turkey and UNDP on the occasion of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in New York - was hosted by H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, and Mr. Mourad Wahba, UNDP's Associate Administrator. In his key-note address, H.E. Mr. Khalifa bin Jassim Al-Kuwari, Director General of Qatar Fund for Development (QFfD) announced the decision to join the SDGia platform. Together with representatives of Limak Holding and WFP, Mr. Hassan Damluji - Deputy Director for Global Policy and Advocacy of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation - and Mr. Stefano Manservisi - DG for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission – have also participated in the meeting.

As announced during the SDGia Demo Day, two start-ups – one for each cohort – had the opportunity to present their experience and solutions at the event. For the digital ID and livelihood opportunities group, challenge owners invited Gravity.Earth – in consortium with Mark Labs and Sertifier - to participate and showcase their innovative solution. For the sanitation cohort, challenge owners called change:WATER labs to attend and present their solution to the audience.

SDGia at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum in Geneva

The SDGia participated in the Spotlight Session co-organised by the Government of Turkey and UNDP on the occasion of the first Global Refugee Forum in Geneva on the 16th of December 2019. The event was hosted by H.E. Mr. Yavuz Selim Kıran, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, and Ms. Asako Okai, United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Director of UNDP Crisis Bureau. The spotlight session's panellists included also Mr. Joshua Setipa, Managing Director of UN Technology Bank for LDCs, Ms. Ebru Özdemir, Chair at Limak Investments and Limak Foundation, Ms. Valerie Nkamgang Bemo, Deputy Director, Emergency Response Global Development of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Mr. Brian Lander, Deputy Director of WFP's Geneva Office.

The session, moderated by Mustafa Osman Turan - Co-Chair of the SDGia project board - explored how public-private partnerships can foster innovative and scalable solutions for refugee populations by bringing the example of the SDG Impact Accelerator. During this event, the SDGia invited Tykn.tech for the digital ID and livelihood cohort, and GARV Toilets for the sanitation cohort to share their experiences with the SDGia and present their innovative solutions.

9 SDGia Start-up Portfolio

In December 2019, the SDGia announced 8 start-ups that proceeded from the first piloting acceleration programme to the prototyping implementation phase. Entrepreneurs that reached this stage received an additional aggregate implementation funding amounting to approx. USD 230.000. Currently, the SDGia portfolio is divided between 3 start-ups from the sanitation cohort (i.e. Akyas, change:WATER, Garv Toilets) and 5 from the Digital ID and livelihood cohort (i.e. Gravity Earth – Marklabs –Sertifier consortium, ZAKA ID, Tykn.Tech).

AKYAS / Jordan

Akyas helps users access a complete sanitation system that can be installed anytime - in any place - and that disinfects pathogens within the wastes in just 3 days to prevent disease transmission. Akyas system is a 0 water, 0 energy product that can be integrated into existing facilities with minimal cost. AKYAS's goal is to provide safe andaffordable sanitation solutions to people around the world.

change:WATER / United States

Change:WATER Labs is developing the "iThrone", a portable waste-shrinking toilet that aggressively evaporates (or "flush" away) 90-95% of daily sewage onsite. Therefore, this technology cleans up communities and drastically reduce the costs, volumes and frequencies of waste collection, thus enabling decentralized sanitation servicing in becoming more scalable and sustainable. Their 2 core technologies are: (1) a low-cost evaporative membrane that soaks up and dissipates the water content of liquid and solid waste; and (2) a "pee-powered" battery to power a ventilation system that eliminates odour. This product allows to conserve water by recovering it from waste.

GARV Toilets / India

GARV Toilets provides integrated WASH solutions to densely populated underserved communities. Their journey started with the development of an indestructible, portable and smart public toilet. Most of their target communities depend on community sanitation which are often unhygienic or vandalised, thus leading to open defecation practices and subsequent diarrhoeal diseases.

Gravity Earth / Kenya

Gravity offers a cloud platform where everyone can receive, store and manage trusted digital credentials in a secure digital wallet. Their solution helps small businesses access cheaper credit by leveraging data from suppliers, utilities, and payment providers. Therefore, payment providers can monetize their data in a GDPR compliant way and benefit from more solvent customers, as lenders have easy access to verifiable data helping them better assess creditworthiness, thus reducing risk and broadening their customer base.

Mark Labs / United States

Mark Labs is a mission-driven data analytics software company. Their technology exponentially improves the ability of investors, companies, governments, and the philanthropic sector to assess, manage, and optimize the ROI on their sustainability, social impact, and charitable investments and activities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Sertifier / Turkey

Sertifier is a web application that enables its users (i.e. universities, NGOs, private sector companies that require in-firm training, etc.) to design, distribute and store smart certificates and open badges. Certificates are stored on a blockchain based system along with tags that represent the skills gained by qualifying to these certificates.

Tykn.Tech / Netherlands

Many people affected by natural or man-made disaster find themselves without an easy way of proving their identities, making it hard to gain access to aid or public services. Tykn's digital identity platform allows public and private institutions to issue and verify digital identity credentials, alongside an innovative way of sharing and requesting personal data proofs. Users are provided with an app - a digital identity wallet - that works on every mobile device and allows access to digital services from institutions in a private and secure manner. Their aim is to transform the identity component within the aid-delivery process, ensuring value creation along the entire aid delivery chain.

ZAKA ID / Rwanda

Zaka ID helps individuals who need to access digital and physical services immediately and safely. They do so by providing consumers with a secure mobile application which helps them to proactively create, store and use their personal ID credentials that can then be automatically verified by issuing authorities or trusted third parties through the app. Zaka ID's Digital ID wallet helps those who own a phone or who can reach relevant centres to use services they weren't able to access before due to the inability to present needed credentials on time, if at all.

10 Feedback from SDG Impact Accelerator Team

In this section, the report presents evidence collected from interviews with SDGia's key team members actively involved in the making of the initiative. The evaluation is conducted thanks to the feedback of:

- Beliz Bediz Sinan - SDGia Accelerator Operator & Startup Value Creation Leader
- Cheryl Edison - SDGia Global Business Strategy Consultant (Pro Bono)
- Mustafa Osman Turan - Co-Chair of the SDGia Project Board (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Ozan Sönmez - SDGia Accelerator Program & Network Design Leader
- Pelin Rodoplu – Member of the SDGia Project Board (UNDP)
- Seher Alacacı Arıner – Co-Chair of the SDGia Project Board (UNDP)
- Ussal Şahbaz - Feasibility Study Team Leader and SDGia Consultant

Achievements

As highlighted in all interviews, the SDGia succeeded in achieving a high level of business diplomacy. Crucially, the SDGia managed to gain attention and momentum in the global news, and leveraged on the diplomatic power of its public stakeholders to engage with private sector companies, intergovernmental

Seda Açıkoğlu

institutions, and entrepreneurs. This initiative successfully brought together diverse stakeholders to cooperate on the SDGia platform, thus strengthening the start-up ecosystem in Turkey. Indeed, the SDGia is a story of building partnerships, a process made possible by its multi-stakeholder platform involving public and private partners. Throughout the first piloting phase and with the prospect of 2020, the SDGia succeeded in keeping the interest of the Turkish institutional counterparts and the UN ecosystem. Indeed, UNDP made the SDGia a flagship project in Turkey, whereas WFP contributed financially to the first piloting phase. The UN Technology Bank for LDCs has accepted to partner with UNDP and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the second piloting phase, and UHNCR expressed its interest to join the platform. Overall, the SDGia team succeeded in creating and running an acceleration programme in a short period of time.

The SDGia achieved a high level of engagement with start-ups at different stages of development. Thus, the initiative brought together a series of highly viable and innovative companies in the area of digital ID and sanitation systems and fostered cross-pollination between cohorts. Importantly, the initiative attracted many entrepreneurs from different countries to discover the potential and the existing network of social entrepreneurship in Turkey. Similarly, the SDGia provided a platform for private sector companies where they could pro-actively engage in business-oriented projects centred around SDG implementation and refugee well-being. Indeed, the SDGia has been successful in linking the SDG agenda to better serve refugee populations through innovative and less costly solutions by establishing a harmonious relationship between private and public stakeholders.

Through its first piloting phase, the SDGia has been able to test and validate the bottom-up entrepreneurship rationale in approaching development issues. The accelerator team also emphasised the effectiveness of the field visits, an acceleration activity unique to the SDGia, and that enabled entrepreneurs to collect first hand inputs from the ground to feed into tailored models and products to better serve disadvantaged population groups displaced in Turkey. As documented, field-visits allowed entrepreneurs to connect with end-users in a deeper manner by harnessing the exchange of information between solution partners, direct beneficiaries, and (non)-governmental personnel deployed on the field. Notably, the SDGia made a case for a system approach to better serve refugee populations around the world as a scalable and repeatable process.

Challenges and Bottlenecks

The SDGia is an ambitious and the first of this kind initiative in Turkey. There were diverse challenges - mainly on the operational side - that limited the effectiveness of the programme. The SDGia has taken a path

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Hilaneh Mahmoudi

quite different to what was envisaged in the feasibility report. This was not a problem per se, as it is often part of any genuinely innovative process. The SDGia was not able to implement two – of the three-tiered acceleration components foreseen in the SDGia feasibility study: The Systems Lab and Impact Investment Fund.

In the evaluation interviews, it emerged that the Systems Lab was not initiated due to lack of time and resources. It would have required more time and efforts that were mainly taken by the Acceleration programme. That was ultimately a priority decided by the SDGia founders. On the other hand, several attempts were made to design the Impact Investment Fund but the time was premature and the institutional setting of the startup phase did not allow for most of the SDGia founders to set an investment vehicle. This is usual barrier for public bodies and humanitarian institutions. However, both changes are to be addressed in the next phase The SDGia is already in the process of defining the solution for both the Systems Lab and Impact Investment Fund for the successive phase. The establishment of these two entities will be one of the central tasks of the SDGia Foundation, a new entity for the creation and management of the investment vehicle. More details on these issues are presented on the final chapter exploring SDGia's future.

The SDGia has a novel approach to tackle complex and interdependent development challenges. As a result, some of the national institutions struggled grasping the complexity and objectives of the initiative. In response, the SDGia conducted several consultation meetings with these institutions. Yet, each meeting had different representatives, forcing the SDGia to confront with the absence of continuity between representatives of national institutions. Similarly, the continuity issue was also present in the mentorship sessions – as different mentors participated in different sessions - reducing the effectiveness of the mentorship program. This is a further issue that will be addressed in SDGia's second phase.

The delay in confirming the funding for pilot projects created disappointment in the teams, and it represented one of the major challenges of the initiative. The SDGia also modified its funding formula in favour of the Founders: from the initially proposed "up to USD 100.000 investment" for the best team -after the financial commitment of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFfD) to contribute with an additional USD 150K in September - the SDGia Project Board decided to allocate a larger sum - reaching approx. USD 230.000 - but capped at a maximum funding of USD 45.000 for each of the 8 graduate start-ups. Such a delay in the announcement was a direct result of the delay in receiving the necessary funding. This created some uncertainty regarding the follow-up of the programme, particularly for the successive implementation phase of the prototypes. With this unfortunate experience, the SDGia Project Board understood that it is imperative to secure the funding before undertaking the commitment for the start-ups.

The participation of a new partner at a later stage shows that the multi-stakeholder model is effective and able to attract new stakeholders bringing additional funds. However, in order to make informed decisions, the SDGia's governance - built on a consensus decision-making model - requires that stakeholders understand

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

comprehensively the initiative's work and goals. Moreover, SDGia's governance model suffered from shortfalls that led to several delays in the initiative's schedule. Seeking consensus from the project board for operational matters - especially when deciding how to allocate grants to winning teams on the basis of the merit of their proposals – becomes cumbersome as partners have different point of views and objectives when it comes to specific projects. A new model of governance is currently redefined through the establishment of the SDG Impact Accelerator Foundation and the creation of a committee delegated with the decision-making authority on questions related to investments and grants. A formal and clear decision-making process will be determined by the project board. The committee will be responsible for its implementation.

11 Feedback from SDG Impact Accelerator Entrepreneurs

In this section, the report presents evidence collected from interviews with SDGia's graduate start-ups. The evaluation is conducted through the contribution of key entrepreneurs that took part in the programme:

- Arda Helvacılar - Founder of Sertifier;
- Bara Wahbeh - Founder of Akyas;
- Diana Yousef - CEO of change:WATER labs;
- Jimmy J.P. Snoek - Co-founder and BD Lead of Tykn.tech.
- Johannes Ebert - Co-founder and CEO of Gravity.Earth;
- Kevin Gordon Barrow - Founder and CEO of Mark Labs;
- Khalid Maliki - Co-founder and COO of Tykn.tech;
- Mayank Midha - CEO of GARV Toilets;
- Nick Mason - Co-founder and CEO of ZAKA ID;
- Sertaç Karacaferoğlu – CEO of Nepser A.S.;

Achievements

All entrepreneurs agreed that one of the main achievements of the SDGia was the opportunity to meet and work with likeminded start-ups developing solutions in similar fields. Indeed, this was a great way for teams to rapidly introduce their technology, exchange information, and share the process of entering in a new market together as a cohort. In this regard, smaller and younger start-ups had the unique opportunity to learn from cohort teams with stronger experience. An important example of cross-pollination is highlighted by the consortium Mark Labs, Sertifier and Gravity.Earth for the implementation programme, and by the collaboration between Tykn.tech and Mark Labs. Thus, the SDGia successfully managed to enrich the network of participating entrepreneurs, while also fostering cross-pollination and exchange of knowledge between different teams.

The SDGia has been able to link high-level officials from governmental organisations, NGOs, IGOs and private sector with entrepreneurs; a process that is otherwise challenging for start-ups when entering into a new market. Indeed, the involvement of "big players" - agenda setters in the field of SDGs, sanitation systems and digital ID - provided entrepreneurs with a unique angle when analysing development issues related to these areas. Most of the start-ups described field-visits as unique and successful feature of the SDGia. Specifically, entrepreneurs were thrilled to meet end-users and beneficiaries of their solutions. As highlighted in several interviews, acquiring contextual knowledge, experiencing first-hand the reality in the field, and speaking with personnel directly assisting refugees accelerated entrepreneurs in redefining their

technology according to the needs of end-users. Thus, the SDGia succeeded in accelerating company growth by providing entrepreneurs with insights from the field, thanks to the support of its institutional partners.

The constant interaction between institutions, end-users, stakeholders and other start-ups, enabled a number of entrepreneurs – particularly those in early stages - to adopt strategies to pivot their business. Some entrepreneurs agreed that tutoring sessions and seminars generated positive interactions between experts and start-ups. Notably, pitching exercises during the SDGia Pitch Day, Showcase Event, and Demo Day, allowed entrepreneurs to practice their public speaking and presentation abilities, thereby nurturing their professional growth. Global implementation seminars and keynotes from experts in the field of digital ID and sanitation systems helped entrepreneurs to understand and shape their role within the international space. Indeed, many entrepreneurs agreed that the SDGia was also a critical thinking exercise, empowering entrepreneurs to tap deeper into the breath and complexity of the challenges that they are working to tackle.

In conclusion, the SDGia succeeded in connecting different solution partners with problem owners and direct beneficiaries, making this one of the few accelerators where there is a true link between these distinct but interconnected entities. Moreover, the SDGia allowed entrepreneurs to test many of their assumptions with stakeholders ranging from the ministry level, to UN level, including people working with end-users. The SDGia acted as "start-up within a start-up", to an extent where the initiative brought together several entrepreneurs from different sectors in a "shared room", and allowed teams to work towards a clear objective by generating different bottom-up solutions and approaches to the problem. Indeed, just as start-ups, the SDGia is founded around a problem statement. Thus, the SDGia also succeeded in fostering cooperation between different start-ups tackling similar issues, a process aligned with the principles of systems change.

Challenges and Bottlenecks

Entrepreneurs revealed multiple failures in the SDGia's acceleration process, some of which are a direct consequence of SDGia's initial governance. The most critical weakness, however, was the logistics and communication. All entrepreneurs stressed the fact that there was a significant lack of planning. Most of the field-visits and mentoring sessions were not communicated with sufficient notice. Indeed, all interviewees stated that the sudden changes of schedule, coupled with the untimely communication of updates, were a defining feature that prevented the smooth running of the programme. Without the possibility to plan ahead, entrepreneurs coming from abroad often found themselves having to abandon their previous commitments to join SDGia's activities. Similarly, numerous start-ups indicated that the request of deliverables was often communicated with too much short notice, ultimately damaging the quality of their work.

Several entrepreneurs highlighted a lack of action-oriented planning from some of the stakeholders and partner institutions, denoting a failure in establishing solid bonds between start-ups and stakeholders. A number of entrepreneurs expressed their concerns regarding the lack of opportunity to develop their business model or the product that they had on hand, stating that the SDGia moved too quickly and with insufficient support from the accelerator's team. The same entrepreneurs also stated that the SDGia failed in providing a continuous and pro-active feedback structure, forcing the start-ups to chase SDGia's acceleration team. When the feedback was given then it was patronizing or light-touch. Every interviewee suggested to increase - and therefore balance - the time allocated for meetings with end-users by sacrificing some of the activities with institutional representatives, stating that even if extremely beneficial, there was not sufficient time spent with the beneficiaries.

The majority of entrepreneurs stated that the SDGia lacked in overall clarity. Weak pre-planning and unclear future prospects were coupled by multiple changes in the funding formula, although it ultimately resulted in greater funding for the entrepreneurs. When start-ups applied for the programme, the SDGia defined explicitly the roadmap and funding structure for the winning teams. In due course, funding decisions were communicated with substantial delay and with several modifications from the initial commitments, generating disappointment among teams. A few entrepreneurs suggested that one-on-one sessions with some mentors had no positive outcome. Other start-ups described the mentoring and expert session as too confusing and with substantial overlap. According to the interviewees, this happened because many of the representatives had unclear ideas about the SDGia programme and were unaware on how it could be useful for their organisations.

12 Feedback from SDG Impact Accelerator Stakeholders

In this section, the report presents evidence collected from interviews with SDGia's private and public stakeholders. The evaluation is conducted thanks to the contribution of representatives of Limak Holding, Eczacıbaşı Holding, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, TUBITAK and Turkey's President's Strategy and Budget Office:

- Asif Abbas - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SDGia Project Board Member
- Boğaç Şimşir - Eczacıbaşı Holding, Member of SDGia Project Board;
- Duygu Ercan Mörel - Globesight, Alternate SDGia Project Board Member
- Ebru Özdemir - Chairperson of Limak Investments;
- Emin Sadık Aydın - Turkey's President's Strategy and Budget Office.
- Melih Özsöz – Limak Holding, SDGia Project Board Member;
- Nils Grede – World Food Programme Representative
- Sinan Tandoğan - Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK);

United Nations Development Programme

Compared to the other UNDP initiatives in the neighbouring regions concerned with refugee wellbeing – what are the most distinct aspects of the SDGia?

The uniqueness of SDGia lies on it is focus on the specific challenges and bringing all the key partners together on the selected subjects. Two very specific challenges were identified after long sessions of discussion to find best possible way to create impact on the livelihood of Syrians under temporary protection by accelerating the work of system Start-ups. In order to achieve this objective, SDGia created a unique model by including government, international organizations and private sector in all its activities on the ground and at the field. In addition, high level commitment and ownership from Government as well as private sector actors created a unique environment to bring many different expertise areas together on a joint -action.

Where do you place the SDGia within your lasting efforts in developing an accessible digital ID ecosystem for displaced populations?

As part of the 'Next Generation UNDP', we determined 13 strategic priorities to better serve the development studies around the world. Digital transformation and innovation were also included these strategic priorities to offer new means of addressing global challenges by creating sustainable solutions for people. Therefore,

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

Seda Açıkoğlu

SDGia enable us to realize where we need to go for tackling with the struggles of displaces population. Digital ID solutions created by system start-ups have potential to advance sustainability and lead to better implementation on development projects. However, it should be noted that appropriate governance mechanism, data security are the main issues that need to be taken into consideration when designing these actions.

How does the SDGia allow the UNDP to develop and redefine its Sustainable Development Policy agenda with respect to multi-stakeholder initiatives?

UNDP Country Office take a step toward to address development challenges and achieve SDGs on the focus of digitalization and innovation within the scope of Next Generation UNDP approach. UNDP has already had sound experience on displaced populations and addressed their challenges under the Syrian Resilience and Response. With SDG Impact Accelerator, we raised the awareness of entrepreneurs on the challenges of SuTP in both at the local and national level and introduced them the approaches regarding those challenges. We led them throughout their journey on accelerator program until they presented their market creating solutions. UNDP Country Office is decisive to benefit from the Digital ID solution if the pilot implementations completed with success. These solutions will contribute the transformation of UNDP's new way of working in a more digitalized and innovative way to shape and improve its Sustainable Development Policy. SDGia provided a good opportunity to raise awareness but if implementation models are not owned and find a market then it will only remain as an awareness tool.

Is there something that you believe that limited the impact and scope of this initiative? What would you have done differently?

My only concern is when pilot implementations start in the field, start-ups may be disappointed by the level of interest of local stakeholders or final beneficiaries in participating to the execution of the project activities at the local level. Time and human resources limitations may affect the level of success in the field. Local stakeholders have already been exposed to initiatives too much and may not want to collaborate in the pilot implementations. That could be the limitation on the impact of this initiative. However, I strongly believe that with the efforts of both UNDP and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on advocacy and dissemination activities, this risk could be mitigated. But for later actions longer implementation periods and more dedicated human resources will be required for stronger impact.

The biggest challenge for the UNDP was the strict time plan of the project implementation and the budget constraints for the additional staff. The UNDP staff that were allocated to this program from other

initiatives of the CO and they already have other responsibilities to manage with tight deadlines. The pace of the accelerator created a very demanding situation from the already booked out staff, and this caused considerable stress on both sides during the implementation period. Better planning on the budget, human resources and activities will be needed.

World Food Programme

Compared to the other WFP initiatives in the neighbouring regions concerned with refugee wellbeing – what are the most distinct aspects of the SDG impact accelerator?

The 2019-2020 SDGia was a multi-stakeholder partnership initiative, that brought a government institution (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey), two UN agencies (UNDP and WFP), a global civil society organization (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), two private sector companies (Eczacıbaşı and Limak) and dozens of start-ups together in a local context to find innovative solutions for global problems. This was a unique, informative and distinctive experience. Public, private, civil society and international organizations acted together to create solutions for a global problem. In addition, the Digital ID component of SDG IA was specifically in line with WFP's regional and global attempts to utilize innovative technologies in its operations to improve the accessibility of vulnerable refugee populations to available assistance and services.

Where do you place the SDGia within your lasting efforts in developing an accessible digital ID ecosystem for displaced populations?

Refugees tend to face difficulties in providing verified documents and credentials when they arrive in a new country which requires them to start building their lives from scratch. However, newly developing IT solutions can help them to carry their important personal records with themselves digitally and access assistance, services, and livelihood opportunities more easily as a result.

In the ongoing accelerator process under the SDG context, the Digital ID ecosystem is planned to be realized via constructing a digital platform that will work as a database of personal information of the displaced people, that will be accessible to them when they move to a new country. Through this digital platform, they will be able to safely keep their official documents in a digital platform and share them with relevant parties towards building their new livelihoods. The start-ups proposed different implementation options towards this goal and these proposed projects carry the potential to prove the Digital ID solutions to become much-needed tools for both the refugees and the governmental and non-governmental institutions, which work towards addressing refugees' problem of accessing and sharing trusted data. As the largest humanitarian organization in the world, WFP will benefit most from such a platform since its all operations are informed by digitally stored reliable and secure data and it always seeks innovative ways to make the technological advancement serve those who need it most.

In your opinion, how does the SDGia succeed in fostering international cooperation - or in providing a mutual learning environment for institutions, entrepreneurs and private companies?

As mentioned before, for WFP, the multi-stakeholder partnership character of the SDGia is one of its distinctive aspects. It is not always easy to bring government, international organizations, private sector, and civil society organizations together to work towards realizing a joint global target that carries great potential in improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable. Consequently, SDGia provides an efficient and valuable joint working atmosphere for all its partners which allows them to learn from each other and share experiences from their operations' perspectives. In addition, arranged workshops during the pre-accelerator and accelerator phases created opportunities for the involving partners to establish new networks and partnerships while improving existing connections between the participants.

The SDGia had limited funds at its disposal and was designed as a competition. However, throughout the process efforts were made to allow as many start-ups as possible to access some funding. In a world, where we need good solutions at scale, there was a trade-off here between empowering various founders and ensure at least one solution has the resources to make it from the drawing board to the reality. This trade-

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

off was not sufficiently recognized early on and could have been discussed earlier. I wonder whether we sacrificed some impact from inclusiveness.

Is there something that you believe that limited the impact and scope of this initiative?

The involvement of relevant government institutions during the planning phase of the digital ID can be seen as not as strong as it would have been ideally. Considering the critical role of governmental institutions in creating, collecting and verifying personal info and documents of refugees, this aspect of the start-up initiatives would have a stronger basis via more active participation of relevant institutions such as DGMM, DG for Populations and Citizenship Affairs of Ministry of Interior. As a result, there was only limited buy-in by DGMM which may limit the ability to implement any of the ideas in Turkey. The trade-off between selecting one (or two) ideas and giving them access to lots of resources rather than dividing the pie between many risks that none may in the end produce impact. The voice of (potential) beneficiaries was given too little room.

Do you have any recommendations for future steps of the accelerator?

We as WFP appreciate the tremendous efforts of all the partners in the first phase of the accelerator, primarily the labours of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

For the upcoming phases, it will be very helpful to pay more attention to the planning phase to avoid delays and disruptions during the implementation phase. A diligently conducted needs assessment plan involving or led by the main Government stakeholder (in this case DGMM), clearly defined and assigned roles of the partners according to their expertise, and active involvement of all relevant partners, specifically the governmental ones with necessary authorities of action are crucial for the success of the implementation phase and the long-term impact of the project in the lives of those in need as well as the host community. We would also recommend to return to the idea of a competition where one or at most two start-ups win the prize.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Compared to the other initiatives in the neighbouring regions concerned with refugee wellbeing, what are the most distinct aspects of the SDG impact accelerator?

The SDG Impact Accelerator stands out with three important elements that make up the underlying drivers of its success and distinguish it from similar initiatives: its unique partnership structure, its strategic location and the accelerator model it employs. Firstly, it convenes very strong partners on a global level that range from governments to private sector and international organizations, each of which is committed to solve today's complex development challenges within the framework of its own program areas. Secondly, Turkey is the largest refugee hosting nation in the world. Located at the periphery of the conflict zones, an emerging donor in global development, Turkey has a vibrant and globally active private sector and a flourishing entrepreneurial spirit. It hosts the relevant international organizations including the recently established UN Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries. These make it the right place to test such an ambitious program. Last but not least, the accelerator model has a systems-thinking axis which is the key when defining the specific challenges that the Accelerator focuses on and developing the respective solutions for these complex problems.

How does the SDGia allow the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop and/or redefine its Sustainable Development Policy agenda with respect to multi-stakeholder initiatives?

At our foundation, we focus on improving the quality of life for people and work across program areas which range from poverty to health and agriculture. We try to tackle these challenges by building partnerships at global level that bring together resources, expertise, and vision to identify issues, find solutions, and drive change. Partnerships play a significant role in achieving our shared goal with the Government of Turkey of supporting people everywhere to lift themselves out of poverty and live in a more equitable world. In this respect, SDGia has been an exemplary model for showing us how the Foundation's exploration of innovative interventions can complement Turkey's exceptional work in development and humanitarian assistance. Its

multi-stakeholder partnership structure that aims to solve challenges faced by displaced people through innovation and entrepreneurship employs the much-needed approach today for solving the complex challenges that we face.

Is there something that you believe that limited the impact and scope of this initiative?

What would you have done differently, and do you have any recommendations for the future steps of the accelerator?

The first phase of the SDGia has been designed to test the feasibility report that our Foundation co-funded together with UNDP Turkey in 2018. The aim of the testing phase was both to see if the accelerator model we identified would work and learn from any mistakes down the road by doing. To that end, we have observed that the main limiting factor was the tight timeline for the design and announcement of the calls as well as the duration of the accelerator program itself. Although the number of applications was very encouraging in such a short time, we would have reached out to a wider target group if time allowed. The time constraint was also felt throughout the accelerator program. An ambitious accelerator program like SDGia requires sufficient time allocated for both the design and implementation phases to make a real impact in line with expectations. For the specific challenges that the Accelerator aims to focus on, it is vital to adhere to global standards when available and be as specific as possible when designing the technical requirements under the respective calls. In addition, the timeline should be realistically long enough to allow for attracting the right innovators and entrepreneurs. A reasonable timeline is also an important element for the accelerator program which aims to develop prototypes to solve the specific development problems in the field.

Limak Holding

How does participating in the SDG impact accelerator align with your objectives, and what attracted you most of the SDGia?

As Limak, we are the first private sector company partnering with SDGia. We have been a part of the Project since the beginning, starting from the feasibility study. Being a global company from Turkey, mainly focusing on construction, infrastructure, investments, energy, tourism, cement and other sectors, Limak has been an active company not only in business, but also its efforts towards sustainability in business. Supporting SDGia is not charity, not philanthropy, nor corporate social responsibility. But is instead one of the smartest investments we make in our own future. As Limak, we have been strengthening our investments (in Turkey and abroad) with 'social projects', that I call as 'social investments'. This has been a 'tradition' of ours. In Turkey, we have established Limak Foundation in 2016, with the objective to strategically direct and manage all social investments we have in the country and abroad. The SDGia is a global project finding solutions to greatest challenges we all face – with a focus on refugee and LDCs - though the cooperation of global partners. It's not very easy in today's world to bring together different actors from public institutions, private sector, civil society (national and international ones), and academia. The SDGia successfully managed to create a multi-stakeholder platform with different actors and with different interests working towards one, unique goal: sustainable development. Last but not the least, as Limak, both as a company and as a Foundation, has a lot to learn from the experience of all different and global partners like UNDP, Qatar Fund for Development, and especially from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Similarly, we should also mention that we have a lot to give to other partners as well.

In your opinion – and from your experience with the SDGia – what are the main challenges that you're faced with when developing plans to scale-up these entrepreneurial solutions?

The first challenge, from a business perspective, is to persuade more private sector actors into the project. As I have already mentioned, to scale up initiatives like the SDGia and bring more private sector actors into the board, we need to convince the private sector to come and join in a 'public mission'. This is not an easy task. Why? First of all, most of them don't see supporting such initiatives as their 'core business'. Secondly, companies already have their own initiatives and areas of social investment (or as they would mostly call - corporate social responsibility). Last but not least, most private sector companies are not used to operate in such multi-stakeholder platforms and are not familiar with concepts as 'impact investing' or 'social investment'. This is an important challenge that we need to face as partners. I believe in order to overcome this challenge, financial instruments that are marketable and that speak the language of the market need

to be created. By defining a policy framework and innovative financial instruments aligned with the SDGs, I trust that we can increase the number of private sector actors taking steps on similar initiatives. A second challenge, I believe, is about the narrative. A narrative that yields results and does satisfy the public sector, the private sector, international organizations equally and at the same time. This is also not very easy to provide. Last but not least and specific to SDGia, a challenge that stands ahead of all partner institutions is time. It has only been 2 years since the SDGia was established from an idea. In order to scale it up, I believe we also need more time and create more 'success stories'.

Eczacıbaşı Holding

How does participating in the SDG impact accelerator align with your objectives, and what attracted you most of the SDGia?

Our commitment to redesign sanitation systems for the most vulnerable segments of society in Turkey dates back before the beginning of the SDGia. Indeed, we were already looking for partnerships and projects having shared objectives in this field. We discovered the SDGia though talks with officials from the Government of Turkey. As a matter of fact, Eczacıbaşı was present at the beginning of this initiative. The composition of the partnerships – from the Turkish MFA to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the sanitation cohort – was a decisive factor for us joining the SDGia platform. We approached the SDGia as a mutual learning experience, an opportunity for us to gain and provide ideas from and to entrepreneurs and other stakeholders, while also creating positive impact. Moreover, as Eczacıbaşı Vitra – one of the largest manufacturer of sanitations systems in the world – we feel a social responsibility to serve the society and provide sanitation systems to those that cannot afford it. This is also demonstrated by the "Eczacıbaşı Hygene Project", an initiative aimed at renovating the bathrooms in schools serving students from rural and low-income regions in Turkey. Thus, we hope that our partnership with the SDGia will accelerate the process of providing innovative and sustainable sanitation systems to these segments of the population.

The SDGia provides an innovative framework to tackle global challenges thought the use of a multi-stakeholder platform. What were in your opinion the challenges of the SDGia?

In this context, what you think are the major contributions that Eczacıbaşı was able to bring in the project?

Thanks to the SDGia, we have tapped into the potential of the collaborative effort of multi-stakeholder platforms. The partnership structure with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – a global leader in sustainable systems – allowed us to establish relationships with entrepreneurs and institutions at the forefront of the development agenda. We have encountered, however, challenges related to this type of platforms. SDGia's governance – structured around a consensus decision-making - sought to accommodate the needs of all the stakeholders. This was a cumbersome process that had often brought uncertainty and delay to the initiative. With respect to this, we also believe that resources should be targeted only to a few winners, and not to the entire cohort. As Eczacıbaşı, we have a leading experience in the sanitation systems market. We trust to have helped other members of the platform - entrepreneurs and stakeholders – to understand how ideas could perform as products in real life. Through the visit to our Eczacıbaşı Innovation Centre, we hope to have transmitted to entrepreneurs our extensive experience in developing innovative solutions for sanitation products.

Feedback from the Partners in the Government of Turkey

The most innovative side of the SDGia has been its bottom-up approach to problem solving where entrepreneurs brought solution hypothesis as planners made top-down decisions. As highlighted, this approach is new to Turkish public departments, but the SDGia was weak in explaining it – at the technical and decision-making level - to the relevant departments. This challenge should be addressed in the next phase because the SDGia did not take a significant step in disseminating the potential of this initiative. Nonetheless, the SDGia provided precious contribution to learning in international cooperation.

A multi-stakeholder approach was a great opportunity for the Government agencies to engage with new global stakeholders such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. For example, as TUBITAK runs several startups support programs, the bottom-up hypothesis driven solution approach was not novel, but allowed them to further expand their knowledge on this matter. The most significant challenge of the SDGia was the

Hilaneh Mahmoudi

lack of a clear road-map to institutionalize the initiative. Thus, the pilot mode created poor credibility among the public institutions, and weakened the overall support from these departments.

13 SDGia 2020 onwards: The Next Phase

Vulnerable segments of the global population are still confronted with increasingly interconnected challenges. Today's world is home to a globalised society where the unrestricted flow of information enables people to tap into the harsh reality of many refugees and displaced populations. Indeed, the world is experiencing a much-needed growth in environmental, social and economic awareness. This global consciousness is driven by all that actors such as ordinary citizens, governments and entrepreneurs, which decided to act rather than just be spectators. The SDGia is undoubtedly part of this global movement. Through its early efforts with refugees and displaced people in Turkey, and its bottom-up approach to problem solving, this initiative showed to partners and stakeholders that the world of entrepreneurship is prepared to lead systemic change.

To be more effective from 2020 onwards, the SDGia will redefine its acceleration, operational and governing structure by learning from successes and shortcomings of the first piloting phase. The roadmap for 2020 is ambitious and potentially source of new challenges.

At the beginning 2020, SDGia kicked of by three intertwined workstreams running in parallel and marking a step towards its next phase:

- Establishment of the SDG Impact Accelerator Foundation by the private sector
- Implementation of prototypes of the start-up graduates in Turkey
- 2 new SDGia cohorts in Bangladesh and Uganda for the years 2020 and 2021

On the 6th of January 2020, members of leading Turkish corporations representing Limak Holding, Eczacıbaşı Holding, Özaltın Holding and IC Holding, signed the Foundation Act which enshrined the incorporation of the SDGia Foundation in an effort to support Turkey's work on development and SDG implementation. With the objective of reaching operational capacity by the end of 2020, the SDGia foundation will gradually take over the management and governance of the SDGia from UNDP and Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs thus

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR

improving its operational capacity, long term sustainability and tacking with the investment constraints faced by the governmental and intergovernmental institutions. Nonetheless, with the honorary presidency of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the full endorsement of both UNDP and Turkish MFA, the SDGia Foundation starts with the best institutional backing.

Thanks to the change in its organisational structure SDGia's operational capacity and government structure is meant to address the weakness manifested in the pilot phase. The SDGia Foundation will be independent from the SDGia Project Board, allowing the initiative to undertake swift decisions for operational matters based primarily on results. The SDGia Foundation will also have a decisive role in the design and implementation of the Systems Lab and Impact Investment Fund. Both entities will be configured by the principles outlined in the SDGia feasibility report.

The second workstream, prototype implementation in Turkey, will mark the official end of the first piloting phase. Graduate teams will closely work with their implementation partners and with SDGia's acceleration team to deploy their solutions in the field.

The third and final workstream will be the launch of SDGia's second phase in Bangladesh and Uganda. Thus, the SDGia will recruit new entrepreneurs developing novel solutions to tackle challenges faced by disadvantaged groups of Uganda, Bangladesh and other LDCs. Currently, proposed "Big Questions" range from financial inclusion, to the use of technology in the agricultural and/or health sector in these countries. For this phase, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already committed 1m US dollars channeled through the partnership with the UN Technology Bank. The SDGia aims to foster an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship, with the aim of generating cross-pollination between start-up graduates in first cohort in Turkey and future teams participating in Bangladesh and Uganda.

The establishment of the SDGia Foundation and the simultaneous running of 3 different programmes in Turkey, Bangladesh and Uganda will present the SDGia not only with an unparalleled opportunity to showcase its unique value proposition in different geographies, but also present new, complex operational and strategic challenges. Considering the feedback collected in the making of this report, the SDGia will finetune its acceleration programme for the 2020-21 by addressing the shortcomings and issues faced during the first piloting phase in Turkey to raise to the challenge.

Appendix 1 - List of Interviewees

Arda Helvacılar	Sertifier
Asif Abbas	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Bara Wahbeh	Akyas
Beliz Bediz Sinan	SDGia Accelerator Team
Boğaç Şimşir	Eczacıbaşı Holding
Burak Dalgın	Darby Private Equity
Cheryl Edison	Edison International
Diana Yousef	change:WATER labs
Dicle Yurdakul	Systems Labs Consultant
Duygu Ercan Mörel	Globesight
Ebru Özdemir	Limak Investments
Emin Sadık Aydın	President's Strategy and Budget Office
Jimmy J.P. Snoek	Tykn.tech
Johannes Ebert	Gravity.Earth
Kevin Gordon Barrow	Mark Labs
Khalid Maliki	Tykn.tech
Mayank Midha	GARV Toilets
Melih Özsöz	Limak Holding
Mustafa Osman Turan	Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nick Mason	ZAKA ID
Nils Grede	WFP
Ozan Sönmez	SDGia Accelerator Team
Pelin Rodoplu	UN Development Programme
Seher Alacacı Arıner	UN Development Programme
Sertaç Karacaferoğlu	Nepser A.S.
Sinan Tandoğan	TUBITAK
Tuba Atabey	Systems Lab Consultant
Ussal Şahbaz	SDGia Accelerator Team

References

C. Scott Dempwolf, Jennifer Auer, and Michelle D'Ippolito (2014). Innovation Accelerators: Defining Characteristics Among Start-up Assistance Organisations.

Christensen, Clayton M., Efosa Ojomo, and Karen Dillon (2019). "Cracking Frontier Markets." Harvard Business Review 97.

G20 Development Working Group (2015). G20 Inclusive Businesses Framework

Global Accelerator Learning Initiative and Deloitte (2017). Accelerating Start-ups in Emerging Markets: Insights from 43 Programs.

McKinsey & Company (2017). How Turkish Companies Can Become Global Successes.

SDG Impact Accelerator (2019). SDG Impact Accelerator Feasibility Report.

The World Bank (2019). The World Bank in Turkey.

UN (2011) Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

UN (2016). UN Technology Bank for LDCS 3-year Strategic Plan -- Supporting the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries

UNDP (2017). UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021

UNDP and IICPSD (2019). The Impact Investing Ecosystem in Turkey.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT ACCELERATOR