



# Building Markets

Connecting **Entrepreneurs**. Creating **Jobs**. Sustaining **Peace**.

Press Contact: Kavya Raman

Phone: +1 212 785-0400

Email: [newyork@buildingmarkets.org](mailto:newyork@buildingmarkets.org)

\*\*For immediate release\*\*

## American Nonprofit Launches Platform to Help Syrian Refugee Entrepreneurs

NEW YORK, December 12, 2017 — A new platform launched by the U.S.-based nonprofit, Building Markets, will help businesses operating in Turkey create jobs for Syrian refugees.

The Syrian civil war has displaced twelve million people, forcing six million to flee across the country's border to seek refuge in neighboring countries and Europe. This has left half of Syria's pre-war population dependent on life-saving assistance, and has contributed to what is being called the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II.

While many countries are working to support Syrian refugees, Syrians are also taking significant steps to help themselves. Jennifer P. Holt, CEO of Building Markets, notes, "Although it goes mostly unnoticed, displaced Syrian entrepreneurs are starting new businesses in countries like Turkey that are driving economic growth and creating much needed jobs."

Building Markets, which has already helped create over 69,000 jobs in places like Afghanistan and Haiti, has launched a platform to help these refugee entrepreneurs reach new customers and capital ([refugees.buildingmarkets.org](http://refugees.buildingmarkets.org)). It addresses one of the biggest barriers to working with these businesses – a lack of visibility. Building Markets has started with 230 formal Syrian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), but plans to continue adding new firms to the Platform weekly, with a goal of reaching 2,000 in 2018. Behind the site, they have over 150 data points on each business featured that can help facilitate investment and supply chain opportunities. Building Markets will also begin posting tender opportunities.

The Platform is being launched after Building Markets released its report *Another Side to the Story: A Market Assessment of Syrian SMEs in Turkey*, in partnership with the Syrian Economic Forum. The report revealed that Syrians have started over 6,000 formal businesses in Turkey since 2011, mostly SMEs, which have collectively invested over three hundred million dollars in Turkey.

The study also found that refugee-owned businesses are employing 9 people on average, and over half plan to hire 8 additional employees in the coming year. In addition to the jobs these SMEs are creating, the revenue their businesses are generating can also help offset the cost of the Syrian crisis.

Businesses that have already been verified by Building Markets can claim a listing and customize their profile. If a new business would like to be profiled, they can add a listing. Building Markets is currently targeting refugee SMEs in Turkey, but will be expanding in the region. Visit [refugees.buildingmarkets.org](http://refugees.buildingmarkets.org) for more information.

\*\*\* Building Markets' Syria work has been made possible through the generous support of Global Affairs Canada.

### About Building Markets

Building Markets, headquartered in New York City, U.S.A., is a nonprofit social enterprise that creates jobs and encourages economic growth in crisis-affected countries by connecting local SMEs to new business opportunities. Through its approach, the organization has profiled and built a network of more than 23,000 local SMEs, assisted those businesses in winning \$1.3 billion in contracts, and helped create over 69,000 jobs. For more information: [www.buildingmarkets.org](http://www.buildingmarkets.org). Twitter: @buildingmrkets