

How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?

March, 2023



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Rapid Assessment Report

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Table of Contents

Rapid Assessment Report	01
How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?	02
Executive summary	02
Objective	03
Background	04
Scope and methodology	05
Research Findings	06
<i>Pre-earthquake situation of cooperatives</i>	06
<i>Status of cooperatives and cooperative members affected by the disaster</i>	07
<i>Resumption of cooperative activities</i>	11
<i>The needs of cooperatives</i>	13
Proposed actions for the reconstruction of the cooperative economy	17



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Rapid Assessment Report

How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?

March, 2023



Youth Deal Cooperative is a non-profit research, development and training cooperatives that offers capacity building and research services to empower communities deprived of livelihoods through cooperatives. Founded in Izmir in February 2015, as Turkey's first youth-led social cooperative, Youth Deal Cooperative now operates with 11 members and two volunteers. The Cooperative aims to build an egalitarian, democratic, and sustainable economy through cooperatives.



This report was prepared by the Youth Deal Cooperative Research Division with input and feedback from the constituents of the New Generation Cooperatives Community.



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Executive summary

- This rapid assessment report seeks to identify how cooperatives were affected by the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes and their short, medium, and long-term needs. The report includes the results of a survey conducted with cooperative and social solidarity economy representatives in the disaster area between March 6-15, 2023. A total of 68 cooperatives were reached, and data was collected from 38 cooperatives and 8 organization representatives.
- All respondent cooperatives have been active and operate in the manufacturing, accommodation and food services, agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors. Communication among cooperative members, administrative operations, financial situation, production, sales, and access to basic rights such as housing, education, and health have been negatively affected by the earthquakes. Activities have been disrupted due to psychological devastation, members losing their homes or moving to other locations, supply chain disruptions, marketing restrictions, logistical uncertainties, and damage to machinery/equipment.
- Despite the obstacles, all respondent cooperatives are optimistic about continuing their activities in the same province. In 56 percent of the cooperatives interviewed, members moved to different provinces due to the earthquake. Preventing migration and facilitating returns are only possible with support.

Rapid Assessment Report
**How did the
Kahramanmaraş earthquakes
affect cooperatives in Turkey?**
March, 2023



- After the disaster, two-thirds of cooperatives are partially or fully operational. Some cooperatives have participated in relief efforts. Most cooperatives have stated that they can contribute to the economic and social recovery process in the earthquake region.
- Short-term needs include income support for members, strengthening sales and marketing channels, and improving the supply chain. Cooperative members, including those in districts that were relatively less affected by the earthquake, need regular minimum basic income support.
- There is migration between urban and rural areas. Cooperatives need to provide broad social opportunities such as housing, income support, and social care to ensure the continuity of agricultural production. Some agricultural inputs have been disrupted in areas with severe drought, such as Kahramanmaraş and Osmaniye, and additional agricultural advisory support is needed.
- If the needs of cooperatives are met, it is expected that the access of vulnerable groups to social rights will be facilitated in the disaster area. Basic income support, psychosocial support, and social care should be provided for recovery. Resilience, disaster risk reduction, gender equality, digitalization, and inclusive governance should be promoted.
- The research recommends six concrete actions for rebuilding the cooperative economy (Table 1).

Objective

This rapid assessment report seeks to identify how cooperatives have been affected by the February 6, 2023 earthquakes in Kahramanmaraş, and to determine their short, medium, and long-term needs. The report aims to provide data-driven evidence that need to be observed for the reconstruction of cooperative economy in the disaster-affected provinces.

Rapid Assessment Report
**How did the
Kahramanmaraş earthquakes
affect cooperatives in Turkey?**
March, 2023



The research has been constructed around the following pillars:

- (i) the safety of cooperative members,
- (ii) communication, governance, finance, production, sales, and access to fundamental rights of members within cooperatives, and
- (iii) the continuity of cooperative activities and the needs of cooperatives.

Background

On February 6, 2023, two major earthquakes struck the southern provinces of Turkey. The first, centred in Pazarcık, Kahramanmaraş, measured 7.8 on the Richter scale, while the second, centred in Ekinüzü, Kahramanmaraş, measured 7.5. More than 48,000 people lost their lives in these earthquakes (as of March 15, 2023), and hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless.¹ The earthquake affected Adıyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Osmaniye, Gaziantep, Malatya, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, and Adana, where a total of 14 million people live. According to the International Organization for Migration, 2.7 million people left the disaster zone due to the earthquake.² The United Nations Development Programme announced that the material damage caused by the earthquake would exceed USD 100 billion.³ Approximately 218 thousand cooperative members reside in the 11 provinces affected by the earthquake. Of the cooperatives falling under the responsibility of the

1. IBC. 16 March 2023. Situation report. <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/devastating-earthquakes-southern-turkiye-and-northern-syria-friday-16-march-2023-situation-report-17-entr>
2. IOM. 2023. Türkiye and Syria 2023 earthquakes response update. https://mcusercontent.com/fl68130a2468533abfcb10d45/files/203a23c2-f93c-943b-b6b9-22a9004d3f00/flash_NEWUPDATE_7March_R2.pdf

Rapid Assessment Report How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey? March, 2023



Ministry of Commerce, around 15 percent (approximately 1,400 cooperatives) and 11 percent of cooperative members (approximately 163 thousand people) are in the affected provinces. Additionally, 6 percent of cooperatives falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (700 cooperatives) and 2 percent of cooperative members (approximately 55 thousand people) are also located in the affected provinces.⁴

A comprehensive study on the exact extent of the damage inflicted on the cooperative movement, including loss of life, has not yet been conducted. Preliminary field observations indicate that many cooperative members have lost their lives, and many others are seeking shelter with their families. There is still a deprivation of fundamental human needs such as food, medicine, healthcare services, clean water, sanitation, and transportation. The profound impact of this disaster on the cooperative economy is inevitable.

3. UNDP. 8 Mart 2023. UNDP, Türkiye'nin deprem den etkilenen bölgelerinde toparlanma faaliyetlerine başlıyor. <https://www.undp.org/tr/turkiye/press-releases/undp-turkiyenin-depremden-etkilenen-bolgelerinde-toparlanma-faaliyetlerine-basliyor>
4. Tarım ve Orman Bakanlığı'nın sorumluluk alanına giren kooperatiflere ilişkin veriler için bkz. FAO. 2023. Initial Assessment on possible impacts of earthquake in 11 provinces. <https://reliefweb.int/report/>

Scope and methodology

This research report includes the results of a survey conducted with cooperative representatives and social solidarity economy in the provinces affected by the disaster. The survey for cooperative representatives was prepared online using the Microsoft Forms program and was filled out in two ways:

1. Representatives who learned about the survey through social media filled out the form directly.
2. Data collection experts who contacted representatives via a contact list conducted interviews and entered data into the form.

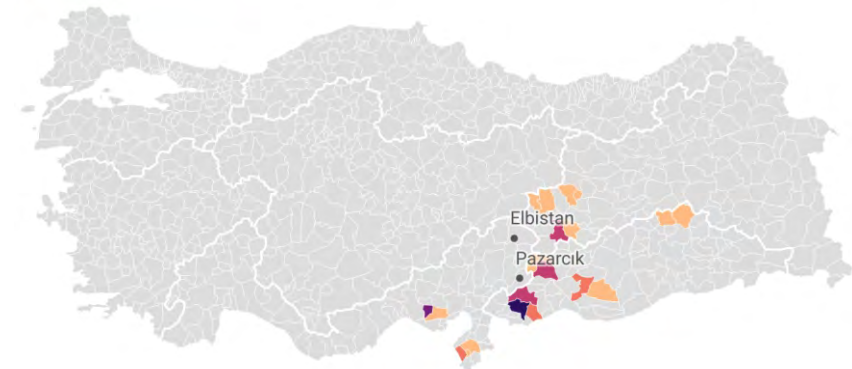
Semi-structured interviews with social solidarity economy representatives were conducted by phone, and the data was computerized instantly. The survey and interviews were carried out by five interviewers between March 6-15, 2023. The interviewers received training on ethical rules to be observed when communicating with individuals after the disaster before making calls.

The interviewers reached out to 68 cooperatives and interviewed 38 cooperative representatives. Responses were collected from the districts where the earthquake caused the most destruction as well as from districts relatively on the periphery of the disaster area. No data could be collected from cooperatives in Kilis, Osmaniye, and Kahramanmaraş. In order to collect data from these provinces and validate responses, interviews were conducted with eight representatives of NGOs and public institutions working on the field. This study, which is a rapid assessment research, does not represent all cooperatives affected by the disaster, but provides an overview of the cooperatives in the region.



Rapid Assessment Report
**How did the
Kahramanmaraş earthquakes
affect cooperatives in Turkey?**
March, 2023

District-based distribution of respondent cooperatives



Adana: Seyhan; **Adıyaman:** Besni, Tut, Gölbaşı;
Diyarbakır: Kulp, Lice; **Elazığ:** Karakoçan, Ağın;
Gaziantep: Şahinbey, Şehitkamil, Oğuzeli;
Hatay: Antakya, Güzelburç, Samandağ, Altınözü, Defne;
Malatya: Hekimhan, Battalgazi, Kuluncak, Arapgir, Yeşilyurt;
Şanlıurfa: Haliliye, Karaköprü

Map 1 District-based distribution of respondent cooperatives

Research Findings

Pre-earthquake situation of cooperatives

- The majority of the cooperatives surveyed (79 percent) were established between 2018 and 2022, while a portion (21 percent) were established between 2006 and 2017.
- Among the cooperatives surveyed, women's cooperatives (72%) and agricultural cooperatives (13%) are at the forefront.
- The main activity areas of the cooperatives surveyed include manufacturing (50 percent), accommodation and food services (22 percent), and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (13 percent), are the most frequently selected areas. In addition, there are cooperatives among those surveyed that operate in the fields of education; vocational, scientific, and technical activities; culture, arts, entertainment, leisure, sports; and human health and social services.

Rapid Assessment Report

How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?

March, 2023



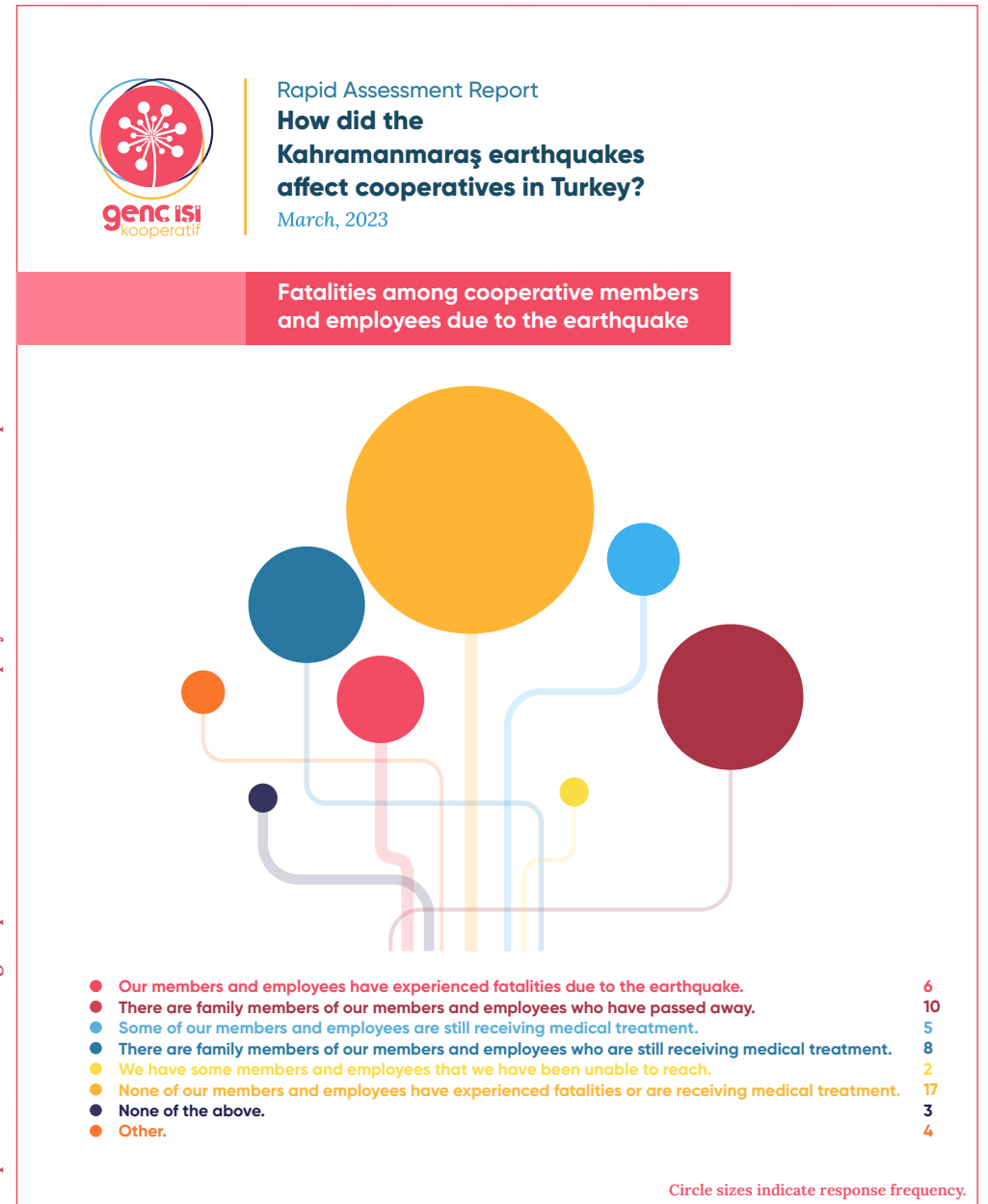
- Among the cooperatives surveyed, women's cooperatives (72%) and agricultural cooperatives (13%) are the most prominent. In women's cooperatives, the number of women members is higher, while in agricultural and other types of cooperatives, the number of men members is higher, or equal to that of women.
- All of the cooperatives participating in the survey are active and have stated that they generated income regularly (36 percent) or irregularly (64 percent) for their members before the earthquake.

Research Findings

Status of cooperatives and cooperative members affected by the disaster

- Among the cooperative members surveyed and their close relatives, there have been casualties due to the earthquake (Figure 1).

Graph 1. Fatalities among cooperative members and employees due to the earthquake

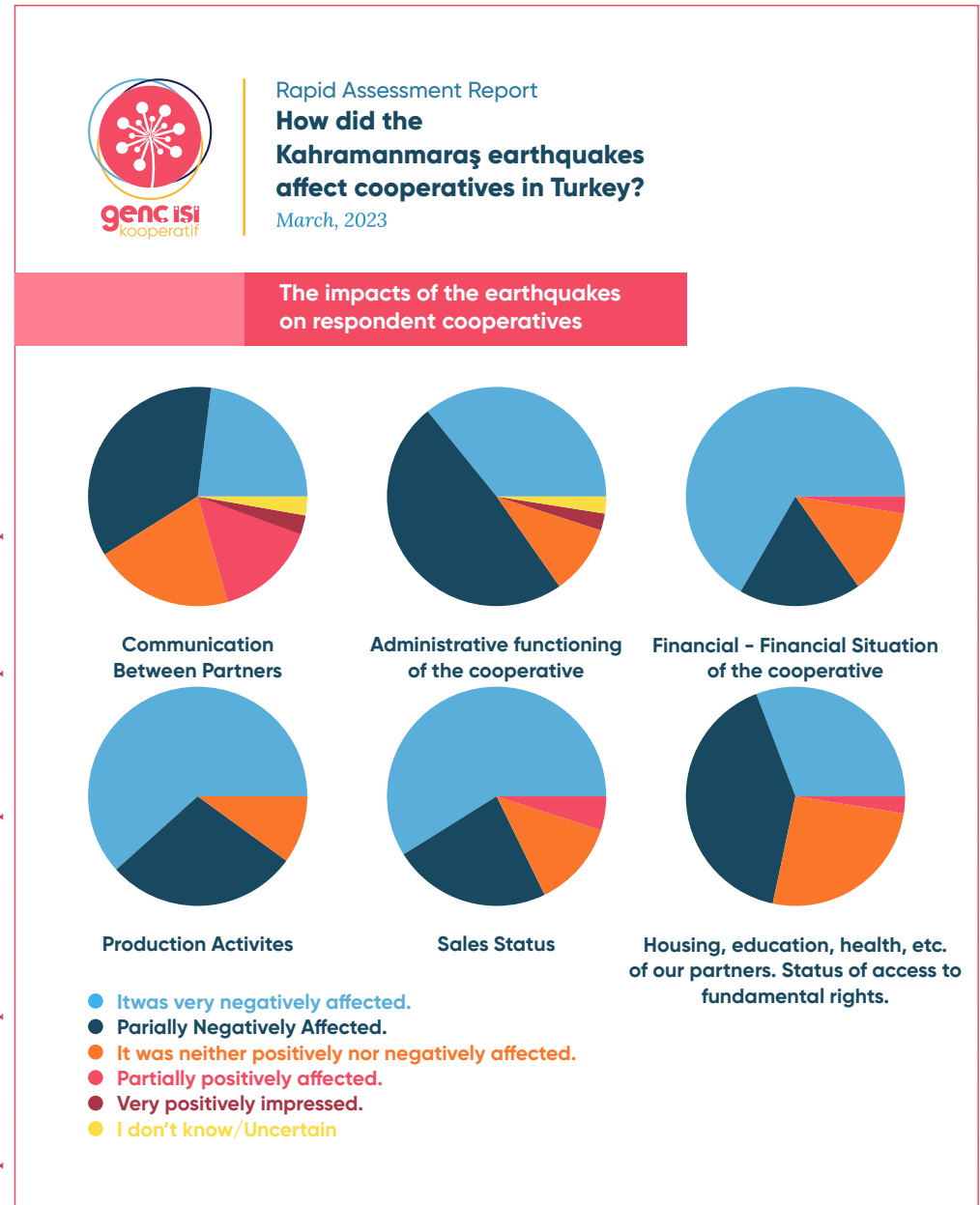


Research Findings

Status of cooperatives and cooperative members affected by the disaster

- The following are among the factors stated to be very or partially negatively affected by the earthquake: Communication among cooperative members (59%), administrative functioning of the cooperative (85%), financial status (85%), production activities (80%), sales status (82%), and members' access to basic rights such as housing, education, and health (72%) (Graph 2).
- Among the cooperatives stating that communication among their members was partly positively affected, there were cooperatives in relatively less affected districts as well as cooperatives in severely affected areas such as Hatay and Malatya in which the majority of members have been staying in tents.

Graphic 2 The impacts of the earthquakes on respondent cooperatives



Research Findings

Status of cooperatives and cooperative members affected by the disaster

- The majority of cooperatives stated that there were reasons that hindered the work of their current members (69 percent). Among these reasons, the psychological condition of the members (74 percent), the loss of their homes or moving to another province (63 percent), difficulties in accessing raw materials and disruptions in the supply chain (63 percent), marketing restrictions (59 percent), logistical uncertainties (59 percent), and damage to machinery/equipment (41 percent) were mentioned (Graph 3).
- Interviews with other stakeholders also confirmed that cooperatives have suffered significant losses in their production centers, buildings, machinery, equipment, and access to supply chains. According to the survey, almost none of the cooperatives had any insurance (such as machinery-equipment, vehicle, building insurance, etc.).

Graph 3 Obstacles to work among members of respondent cooperatives



Research Findings

Status of cooperatives and cooperative members affected by the disaster

- Despite the obstacles that hinder the work of cooperatives, all respondent cooperatives in the survey are optimistic about continuing their activities in the province they are located. 74 percent of the participants stated that they will continue their activities in the same province, while 26 percent indicated that they will partially continue their activities in the same province.

Rapid Assessment Report

How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?

March, 2023



Cooperative representative, Malatya

We had put a lot of effort into the cooperative. We were just starting to grow and institutionalize. Everything was reset due to the earthquake. If our needs are met, we can continue in Malatya. If we have a production area and equipment to work with, we can start production immediately. However, we can no longer produce daily food for the domestic market. Instead, we need to produce dry food (such as pasta). We require new machinery and equipment.



Cooperative representative, Hatay

If the housing problem in the region is solved and we are provided with the lost machinery, equipment, and raw materials, we can continue. However, the fundamental problem at the moment is housing. Many of our members are staying in tents or greenhouses. There are still some areas where tents were not distributed. Some of our members have migrated to different provinces. We may not be able to produce as much as we did before the earthquake, but if our needs are met, we can slowly start production.



Research Findings

Resumption of cooperative activities

- Two-thirds of cooperatives are partially or completely operational after the earthquake. Cooperatives in districts with relatively less damage continue their activities physically. In addition, some cooperatives that produce with traditional methods have continued their production at home.
- 63 percent of cooperatives do not conduct any activities to meet the needs of their members. Most cooperatives that help their members have carried out activities related to food distribution, hygiene material supply, and shelter needs.
- Some cooperatives have participated in wider relief efforts for communities affected by the disaster. In districts that were relatively less affected by the earthquake (such as Gaziantep city centre or Adana), cooperatives produce food and provide hot meals in coordination with public institutions and humanitarian aid organizations. For example, the Şahinbey Women's Cooperative serves 3,000 hot meals a day to earthquake victims with support from Welthungerhilfe (WHH).⁵

5. WWF. 2023. Women in the earthquake zone: Solidarity on display. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. (n.d.). from <https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/earthquakes-in-syria-and-tuerkiye/women-in-the-earthquake-zone-solidary-on-display>

Rapid Assessment Report How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?

March, 2023



Cooperative representative, Gaziantep

Our cooperative store has been used as a shelter area, so it will continue its activities on-site as of March 13, 2023. Our cooperative members used our store for heating and accommodation purposes in the first days of the earthquake. We have been trying to contribute to solidarity through online activities by taking part in coordination since the first day of the earthquake.



Cooperative representative, Malatya

Our cooperative building collapsed. All documents, raw materials, and machinery and equipment belonging to the cooperative were buried under the rubble. We could only save one of our machines that was outside. Since we produce daily bakery products, we had no inventory. Our members are staying in tents or migrated to western provinces. The entire supply chain is broken.



Research Findings

Resumption of cooperative activities

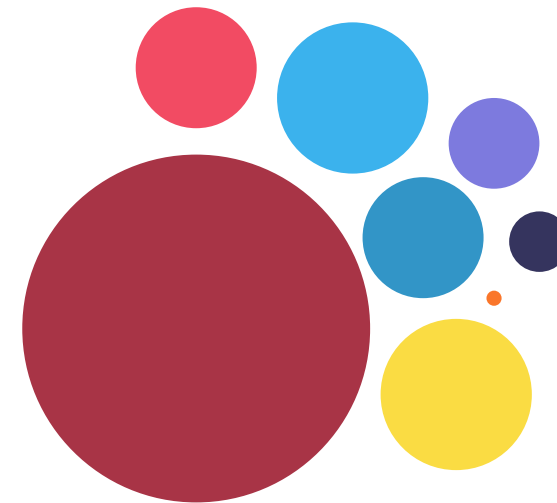
- It can be predicted that economic activities in affected provinces will concentrate in recovery and reconstruction. Most of the cooperatives surveyed stated that they could contribute to the economic and social recovery process in the earthquake zone in the medium and long term. Fifty-nine percent of cooperatives indicated that they could contribute to recovery in coordination and communication, 26 percent in meeting basic needs, 26 percent in providing employment, 21 percent in sharing their facilities, and 15 percent in sharing digital infrastructure.

Graph 4 Willingness of cooperatives to contribute to economic/social recovery in the medium and long term after the earthquake



Rapid Assessment Report
How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?
March, 2023

Willingness of cooperatives to contribute to economic/social recovery in the medium and long term after the earthquake



● It is not possible.	8
● Coordination and communication in the earthquake zone	23
● Providing fundamental needs (food, hygiene items, clothing, medical, etc.)	10
● Sharing facilities (field, office, workshop, kitchen, etc.)	8
● Employment (direct employment, vocational training)	10
● Logistics support	1
● Digital infrastructure (e-commerce websites to be operated on behalf of the cooperative/support for the sale of products, etc.)	6
● Other	4

Research Findings

The needs of cooperatives

- Cooperatives have identified the need for short-term minimum basic income support for members (77 percent), strengthening of sales and marketing channels (69 percent), and needs related to raw materials and supply chains (56 percent) in order to continue their activities.

Rapid Assessment Report
**How did the
Kahramanmaraş earthquakes
affect cooperatives in Turkey?**

March, 2023



- According to an assessment by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, a significant portion of women's cooperatives supported by the FAO are facing problems in production, sales, and supply chains due to loss of life and property. The FAO report also expects women's cooperatives to be more affected by earthquake-related economic damage due to difficulties in accessing production tools and obstacles to participation in decision-making processes.⁶

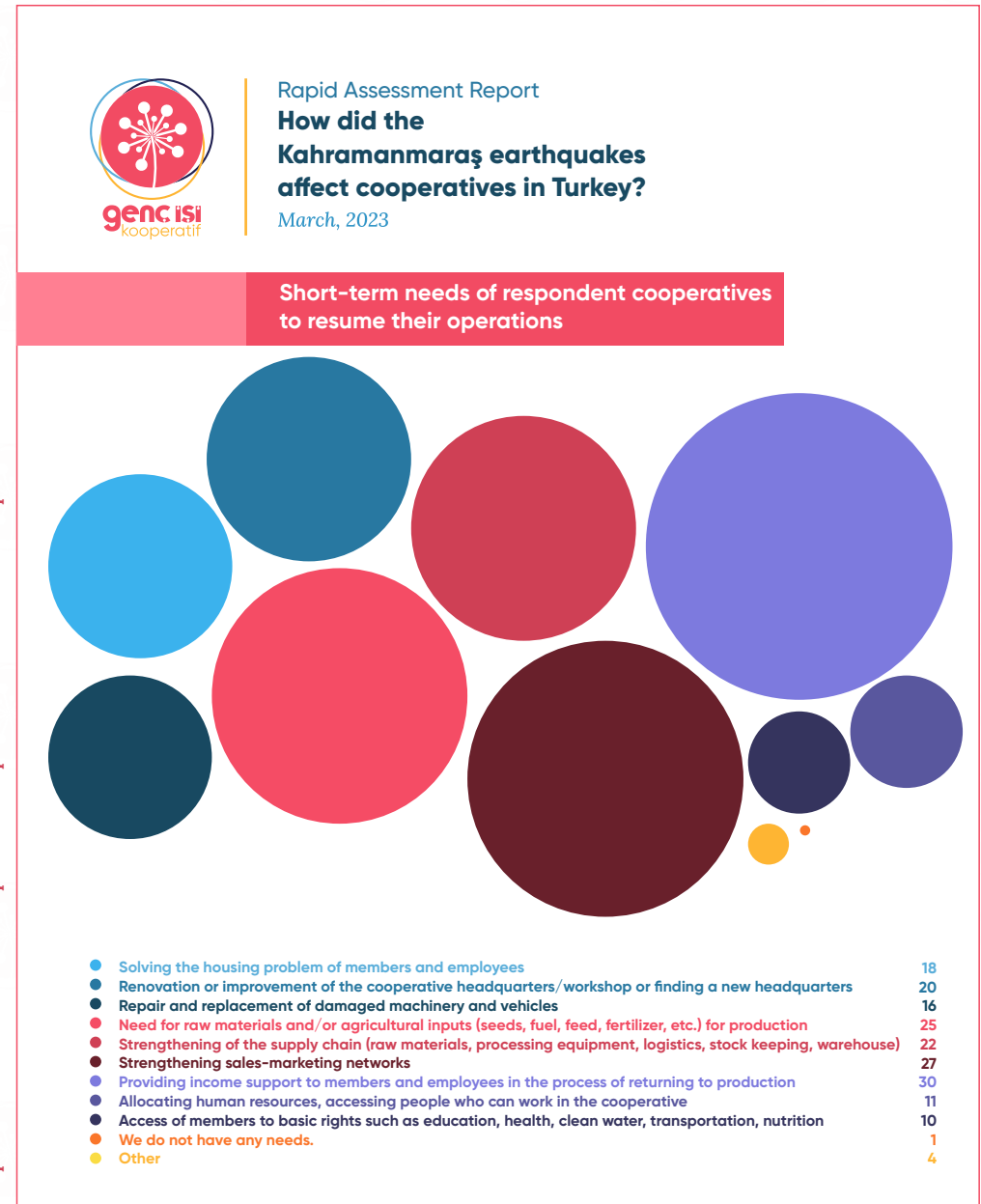
6. FAO. 2023. Initial Assessment on possible impacts of earthquake in 11 provinces.
<https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/fao-turkiye-initial-assessment-possible-impacts-earthquake-11-provinces>

Research Findings

The needs of cooperatives

- The likelihood of post-disaster migration due to lack of shelter, the possibility of aftershocks, loss of income and lack of public services is higher in districts that were relatively more affected by the earthquake. Considering that more than half (56 percent) of the cooperatives' members moved to different provinces due to the earthquake, it can be said that the lack of human resources will be a serious constraint in reconstruction (Graph 5). In fact, 28 percent of the cooperatives surveyed stated that human resources need to be found in the short term for the cooperative to continue operating (Graph 4).

Graph 5 Short-term needs of respondent cooperatives to resume their operations



Research Findings

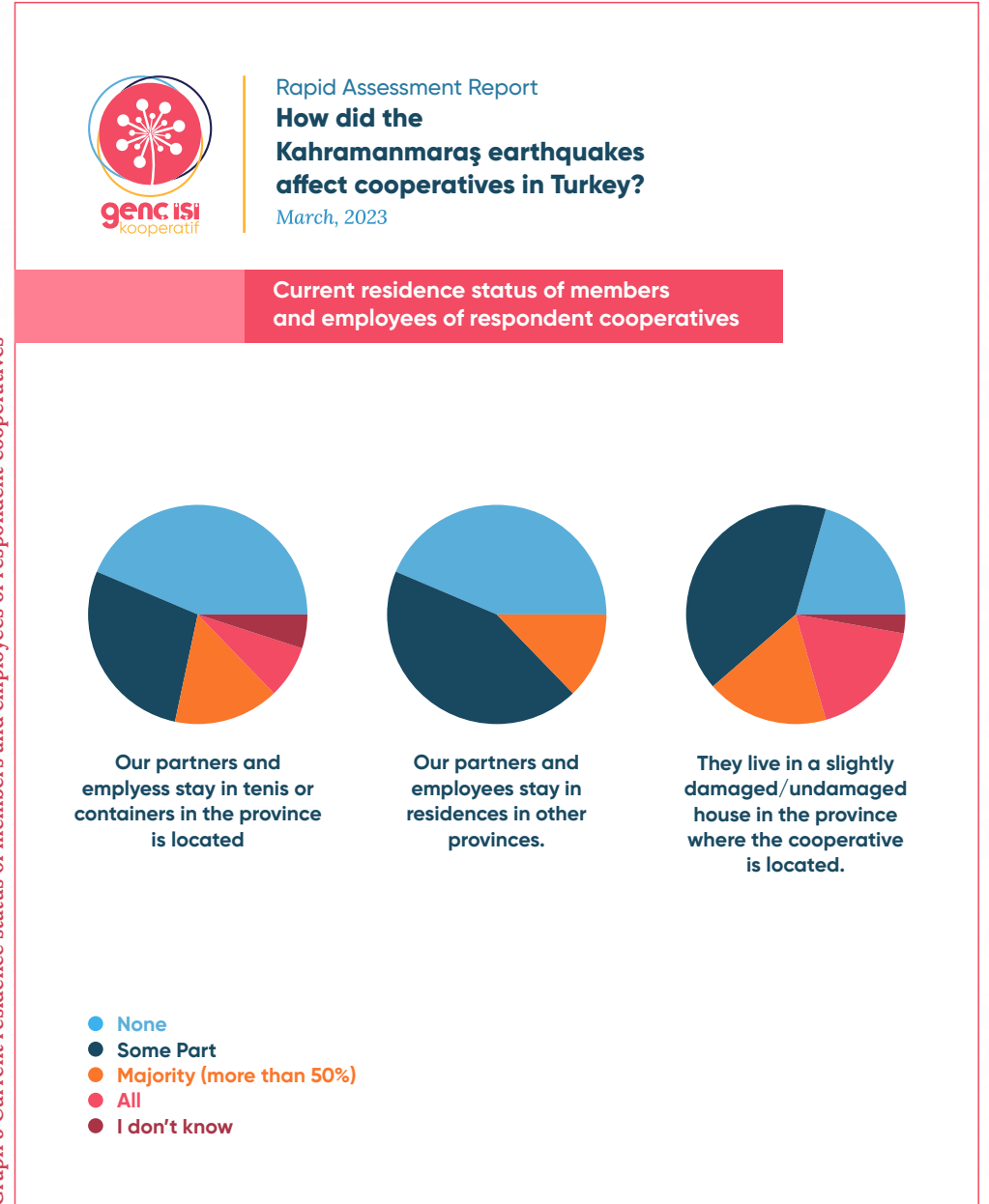
The needs of cooperatives

- According to the FAO report, since Adana, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Kilis and Şanlıurfa were relatively less affected by the earthquakes, losses of human and physical capital are expected to be limited in these provinces. FAO concludes that economic activity, the labor market and the agricultural sector will recover quickly in these provinces.
- According to a survey conducted by INGEV with Syrian entrepreneurs, the percentage of entrepreneurs who left their place of residence before the earthquake is 40 percent in Hatay, 17 percent in Gaziantep, 13 percent in Şanlıurfa, and 7 percent in Kilis.⁷ This finding indicates that the shortage of human resources will be more pronounced in the provinces that were highly affected by the earthquake.⁸

7. FAO. 2023. Initial Assessment on possible impacts of earthquake in 11 provinces. <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/fao-turkiye-initial-assessment-possible-impacts-earthquake-11-provinces>

8. İNGEV. 2023. Deprem bölgesi kobi'lerin durumu - ara sonuçlar. <https://ingev.org/haberler/deprem-bolgesi-kobilerin-durumu-ara-sonuclar/>

Graph 6 Current residence status of members and employees of respondent cooperatives



Research Findings

The needs of cooperatives

- Cooperative members, including those with relatively less affected by the earthquake, need regular minimum basic income support. Households experiencing income loss after disasters may resort to negative coping mechanisms such as pulling children out of education, selling productive assets in rural areas, and cutting back on healthcare expenditures. Similarly, negative measures such as withdrawal from cooperative membership, dissolution of the cooperative, and selling the cooperative's productive assets can be experienced in cooperatives. To prevent this, cash transfers should be provided to cooperative members conditional upon, for example, continuation of children's education and access to regular healthcare services.
- The cooperative members' disconnect with public social safety net mechanisms must be addressed. Cooperative members who engage in production in both urban and rural areas should be covered by public social security systems.
- There is a widespread deprivation of insurance in cooperatives. Insurance options should be included, especially in post-disaster machine-equipment recovery and reconstruction schemes. This way, cooperatives can increase their resilience against natural disasters caused by earthquakes or climate change.
- Interviews with stakeholders have pointed out to migration between urban and rural areas in affected provinces. Cooperative members who moved from rural production areas destroyed by disasters to temporary housing areas in cities are

Rapid Assessment Report How did the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes affect cooperatives in Turkey?

March, 2023



detached from rural production. Especially for the continuity of agricultural development cooperatives, there is a need for temporary housing units in rural areas.

- During stakeholder interviews, it was stated that even in production facilities that were not damaged, there is doubt about the safety of the facilities, making it impossible to return to production. Additionally, in villages with high numbers of fatalities (such as the mountain villages of Kahramanmaraş and Hatay), psychological breakdown is an obstacle on production. Psychological support for cooperative members should be part of the recovery strategy.
- Stakeholder interviews have shown that in rural areas where destruction was less severe, such as Osmaniye and Adana, agricultural production continues, and reconstruction is relatively fast, but supply of some agricultural inputs have been affected. Seasonality must be considered, and the supply of animal feed, seeds, fuel, and agricultural workforce must be ensured. Additional support for agricultural extension services are needed in areas experiencing severe drought, especially Kahramanmaraş and Osmaniye.
- Impact assessment studies focusing on vulnerable groups, such as disabled people, the elderly, and rural women, have not yet been published. Individuals who cannot otherwise enjoy their fundamental social rights such as decent employment find that opportunity within cooperatives. Supporting cooperatives would mean supporting the social rights of vulnerable groups.

Research Findings

Proposed actions for the reconstruction of the cooperative economy

According to the research, the majority of cooperatives (79 percent) reported that they have not yet received any support from any institution to meet their needs. The reconstruction of the cooperative economy requires comprehensive support. In light of the findings summarized above, 6 fundamental actions are proposed for the reconstruction of the cooperative economy. Table 1 details the actions, objectives, target audience, expected output, and potential stakeholders.

According to the findings, in all proposed actions,

- (1) basic income support,
- (2) psychosocial support, and
- (3) social care support (aimed at alleviating care responsibilities for children, the elderly, etc.) should be provided. In addition, there are 5 cross-cutting factors that need to be considered in all actions:

Increasing resilience and disaster risk reduction: Increasing the resistance of cooperatives to economic and social risks caused by disasters and non-disaster factors. Ensuring that cooperatives are less affected by disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and droughts, including the consequences of climate change.

Gender equality: Ensuring equal access to information, economic resources, social opportunities, and decision-making mechanisms for women and men working in cooperatives. Recognizing and addressing the economic, social, and cultural needs of women and men to effectively use these opportunities.

Digitalization: Enabling cooperatives to benefit from information and communication technologies at least as much as other types of businesses.

Social inclusion and governance: Ensuring that cooperatives adopt inclusive, participatory, and sustainable governance by complying with 7 universal cooperative principles.

Table 1. Proposed actions for the reconstruction of the cooperative economy

Action	Term	Objective	Target audience	Expected outcome	Potential stakeholders
For cooperatives that can continue their production, logistics support (handling, stock management) and coordination are necessary to transfer their products to meet the needs in disaster areas.	Short	To meet the needs of disaster areas such as food, shelter, heating, health, sanitation, etc., the logistics support (handling, inventory management) and coordination need to be provided to transfer the products of cooperatives that continue their production in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cooperatives operating in the disaster zone * Communities affected by the disaster 	Local cooperative economy is protected and revitalized through sourcing of humanitarian needs from local cooperatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provincial Directorates of Ministry of Trade * Humanitarian aid organizations * Logistics service providers
Encouraging the formation of cooperatives in the sectors that will be needed during reconstruction	Medium	To facilitate the formation of cooperatives in the sectors that will experience growth, such as construction, manufacturing, logistics services, and maintenance, and enable those affected by the disaster to participate in the workforce during the reconstruction process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Communities affected by the disaster * Enterprises that engage in social procurement and those that participate in the reconstruction of the region 	Communities affected by the disaster can meet their joint social, economic, and cultural needs through cooperatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provincial Directorates of Ministry of Trade * Peer cooperatives both within and outside the disaster zone
Meeting the needs of machinery-equipment, infrastructure repair, and supply chain for the cooperatives that can continue their activities in the region.	Medium	Compensating for the physical capital damaged by the earthquake to ensure the continuity of cooperatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cooperatives that suffered material loss in the earthquake. 	Cooperative can resume their production of goods and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Machinery and service supplier enterprises * Logistics service providers
Providing agricultural inputs, human resources, and agricultural extension services that agricultural cooperatives need, taking seasonality into account.	Short	Ensuring the continuity of production of agricultural cooperatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Agricultural cooperatives * Rural communities living both in and outside the disaster area 	Through cooperatives, the continuity of agricultural production is ensured, thereby providing food and nutrition security for Turkey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provincial Directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry * Agricultural input suppliers * Logistics service providers
Providing psychosocial support to the cooperative members in the region to enable them to start production and rebuild their lives.	Short	Enabling cooperatives to reactivate and resume their activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cooperatives in the disaster area 	Cooperatives recover and resume their production in the short term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Public bodies * Professional organizations * Humanitarian aid organizations * NGOs
Supporting cooperatives to ensure continuity and sustainability of agricultural, livestock activities and food production	Medium-Long	Promote new crops, production methods (agro-ecology etc.) and rural businesses (eco-tourism, etc.) that are resilient to climate change in order to build back agricultural cooperatives stronger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cooperatives that are/can be established in the disaster provinces * Cooperatives in provinces receiving migration 	Cooperatives contribute to local development through disaster resilience and climate change adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Public bodies * Professional organizations * Humanitarian aid organizations * NGOs



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