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FINAL REPORT

**A YOUTH CENTERED
PARTICIPATORY
ASSESSMENT IN TURKEY:**

**UNDERSTANDING REFUGEE AND
HOST COMMUNITY YOUTH'S
PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES
AND NEEDS**



Save the Children

JANUARY 2021



Save the Children

A YOUTH CENTERED PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT IN TURKEY:

UNDERSTANDING REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITY YOUTH'S PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Title	A Youth Centered Participatory Assessment in Turkey: Understanding Refugee and Host Community Youth's Perceptions, Challenges and Needs
Date of Report	January 2021
Copyright	Save the Children International
Type of Report	Final Report
Principle Investigator and Author	Assoc. Prof. Aysegul Kayaoglu <i>Department of Economics, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey</i> <i>Co-founder and Research Director at DataHive Research and Consulting</i>
Field Research Assistant	Zeki Akyol <i>Department of Economics, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey</i>
Project Start and End Dates	Start date: 6 November 2020 End date: 6 January 2021
Project Duration	8 weeks of simultaneous work (2 weeks of desk research; 1 week of cross validity analysis; 5 weeks of field research; 4 weeks of data analysis and report writing)
Project Locations	Istanbul
Thematic Areas	Perceptions; discriminations; needs; challenges
Sub-themes	Refugee youth; host population youth; education; crisis
Donor	Save the Children International's Regional Office
Estimated Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee youth • Host population youth • Policy Makers • NGOs, INGOs
Overall Objective	To provide policy suggestions for the governmental and non-governmental programs and services already in place to prevent and respond to social tensions among different youth groups, particularly between refugee and host population youth.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
SC Turkey	Save the Children Turkey Office
SuTP	Syrians Under Temporary Protection Status
TurkStat	Turkish Statistical Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



This report is the product of tireless work of only a handful of researchers who have considered making sense of socially critical phenomena their life purposes. In a period as limited as two months, they have arranged and conducted over 100 interviews, and in doing so, compiled their own qualitative data, which they have later analyzed together with three sets of relevant quantitative data, and eventually reflected all that they have produced into putting this report together. As the lead researcher and author of this study, therefore, I would like to first thank my Turkish and Syrian assistants Zeki Akyol, Nour Alian and Hamza Alhabbal. They have always been central to this exhausting yet beautifully productive process.

This gigantic task could not, however, have been completed if we, as a team together, had not had quite a few brilliant people and organizations offer us invaluable contributions and support. They deserve not any less than open recognition and sincere appreciation either. It is, thus, an honor to name them as long as they have not rather chosen to remain anonymous. So, I want to take this chance to also thank Irem Mirzai, Eylül Gür and Catherine O'Connor from the Save the Children International's Turkey Office.

In respect for their preferences, around hundred Turkish and Syrian youth together with over a dozen key informants from Turkish and Syrian NGOs are not named here. Nonetheless, I feel equally indebted to acknowledge their substantial contributions to the completion of this research.

Assoc. Prof. Aysegul Kayaoglu
Istanbul Technical University

GLOSSARY

Below is a list of terms fundamental to this study.



Terms Linked to Age in This Research

Adolescence: It refers to the transition period between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines this period between ages 10 and 19. Thus, any individual in this phase of development can be defined as an adolescent.

Youth: According to the WHO, youth refers to individuals aged between 15 and 24. This period, therefore, consists of middle adolescence (ages 15-17) and late adolescence/early adulthood (ages 18-24).



Terms Linked to Gender

Gender: Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for girls, boys, women, and men.¹

Gender Roles: Distinct duties and responsibilities for males and females that have been determined by a society. These roles vary across cultures, context, and time.²

Gender Sensitive: It describes an approach or intervention in which the different needs, abilities, and opportunities of girls, boys, women, and men are identified, considered, and accounted for.³

Gender Vulnerabilities: These are distinct risks that men, women, boys, and girls face due to their power or social standing in a society.⁴

Gender Bias: It is the prejudice or discrimination based on the gender or sex of a person. This can occur at any age including the childhood. The UN Committee on Rights of the Child produced a General Discussion report on “the girl child” in January 1995, which states that:

“Addressing the questions of inequality and discrimination on the basis of gender did not imply that they had to be seen in a complete isolation, as if girls were a special group entitled to special rights. In fact, girls are simply human beings who should be seen as individuals and not just as daughters, sisters, wives or mothers, and who should fully enjoy the fundamental rights inherent to their human dignity. Within the larger movements for the realization of women’s rights, history had clearly shown that it was essential to focus on the girl child in order to break down the cycle of harmful traditions and prejudices against women.”⁵

¹ Save the Children Gender Equality Program Guidance & Toolkit, p. 178
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/8503/pdf/gender_equality_program_toolkit_2014.pdf

² Ibid

³ Save the Children Gender Equality Program Guidance & Toolkit, p. 179
https://www.savethechildren.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/gender_equality_program_toolkit_2014.pdf

⁴ Rapid Gender Assessment, Fry, Save the Children, p. 4.
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/gender_analysis_report_sci_29_oct_2017.pdf

⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child, Report on the eight session, January 1995, CRC/C/38. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3f4773364.html>



Terms Linked to Migration

Migrant: There is no universally accepted definition of migrant but, through a *residualist* approach, this umbrella term is used for all types of movements other than those who flee wars or persecution.⁶ That being said, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines a migrant as “a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. This term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movements are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.”⁷

Asylum Seeker: Where individualized procedures apply, an asylum seeker is someone whose request for a protective, legal relocation has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Thus, not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker.⁸



⁶ J.Carling, What is the meaning of migrant?, <https://meaningofmigrants.org> (last accessed 3 May 2020).

⁷ IOM (2019), Glossary on Migration, p. 132. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf

⁸ Adapted from UNHCR (2006), Master Glossary of Terms, p4. <https://www.refworld.org/es/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opensslpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=5d82b8fa4>

Refugee: Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to his/her country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.⁹



Syrians Under Temporary Protection (SuTP):

In 1961, Turkey signed the 1951 Geneva Convention, which defined the ‘refugee’ as stated above. However, the country has reserved certain temporal and geographical limitations, which have allowed only European asylum-seekers to be granted a refugee status in Turkey. Accordingly, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection¹⁰ adopted in April 2013 defines SuTP as Syrians “who have been forced to leave their homeland, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx, seeking immediate and temporary protection.” Thus, Syrians in Turkey are internationally referred to as refugees but they are not legally recognized as such locally. Instead, they have been given a temporary protection status. Nonetheless, in order to be in line with international usage of the term, this report uses ‘refugee’ to describe Syrians in Turkey.




⁹ UNHCR, “What is a Refugee?”; from 1951 Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees;

<https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-a-refugee.html>

¹⁰ It can be accessed through <https://en.goc.gov.tr/kurumlar/en.goc/Ingilizce-kanun/Law-on-Foreigners-and-International-Protection.pdf>

EXECUTIVE SUM



Over the next dozens of pages, this report contains an in-depth analysis of the perceptions, needs and challenges of the youth in Turkey. Covering the cases of both natives and Syrian refugees, it is based on information derived from over 100 interviews conducted by members of that particular age group as well as insights of civil society workers with direct experience of addressing them in policymaking and implementation.

MARY

With a total population of some 12 million natives and also 800 thousand Syrian refugees between the ages of 15 and 24, Turkey carries an enormous potential for comprehensive development and progress but also risks for social tension and conflict. In an attempt to be a guide for the construction of effective interventions, the researchers here have studied the country's latest situation in those regards. In a nutshell, they have concluded that:

The Turkish youth live in annoying uncertainties in terms of finding a decent job and attaining a reliable level of income regardless of their education. In the absence of such prospects, they have grown weary of what they consider an unjust distribution of both governmental and non-governmental assistance. They largely blame the Syrians for getting the lion's share and complain that too little is channeled towards them. In such perceptions of neglect, they say they feel alienated in their own homeland while foreigners receive a priority treatment.

What strengthens those perceptions is what they believe to be an abnormally high fertility rate among Syrians. The Turkish youth is not generally tolerant of Syrians enjoying their lives at shopping and in cafes, either. Any image that does not conform to being a refugee in their minds is a source of unease.

The Turkish youth also think that the Syrians give the appearance of having other motives than fleeing a civil war to relocate to Turkey. They are deeply displeased with dense Syrian populations in parts of the country and inside cities. They consider the increasing Syrian visibility a problem particularly when they see the Syrian youth forming "gang-like" groups.

On the other hand, the Syrian youth report being subjected to discrimination and racism everywhere including at school, at work and even on public transportation and on streets. They say they often have to try hiding their identities to avoid being attacked physically as well as verbally. They reckon that the fundamental reason why there is too much hatred against them is the rampant disinformation particularly on social media about the Syrians.

Besides, the Syrian youth are not yet fully over the trauma the civil war has caused. Most have at least a core family member killed or still trapped in Syria. The thoughts of separation and loneliness make it even harder for them to cope with challenges, they say, are present in Turkey and do not seem to vanish before they obtain citizenship and speak Turkish like a native speaker would so that they could be no longer considered foreigners. Only then, they believe they would be able to stop being a refugee and, perhaps, start leading a normal life.

The report features all those accounts and many more in the own words of both Turkish and Syrian youth as well as the researchers' observations and expert knowledge from on the ground. It also presents plenty of tables, figures and maps prepared to visualize relevant data.

BACKGROUND

Turkey is home to a sizable young population. Those aged between 15 and 24, roughly 12 million people, made up 16.4 percent of its total population as of 2019. In addition, it has rapidly become the country with the world's largest children and youth refugee population as a result of the Syrian civil war. According to the December 2020 statistics of DGMM, there were more than 3.6 million "Syrians under Temporary Protection" in Turkey and 21.65 percent of this population, nearly 800 thousand people, aged between 15 and 24.

Despite Turkey's huge youth population of both natives and refugees, the extent of research focusing on their perceptions, needs and challenges is extremely limited. This unfortunate scarcity of scientific investigation also runs against efforts by international organizations to increase global awareness in these areas. The UNDP and ILO, in particular, try to advocate and stimulate youth empowerment. While the former launched its first 'Youth Global Program for Sustainable Development and Peace' in 2016, the latter runs multiple relevant projects, particularly targeting the employment of NEET (neither in employment nor in education or training) in developing countries. The youth, however, is still not paid the attention it deserves since such programs were designed only after massive refugee movements happened due to the Syrian civil war and are, therefore, far from being comprehensive.

Today, it goes without saying that a human development perspective should characterize any plan on economic development and understanding how best to empower youth is an inseparable element of that perspective. Only then can nations around the world unlock their potential and let their whole societies benefit, not suffer, as a result. Should it drag however, neglect will continue to erect barriers and decrease their overall life satisfaction, not to mention its impact on brain drain, social tension and crime rates.

In regards to the specific situation of youth in Turkey, unemployment is an enormous problem. Further complicating it is the fact that a majority of those without a job are not enrolled in any educational or training program either. A surge in the feelings of exclusion and distrust in the society, then, becomes inescapable. Although unemployment mainly stems from adverse macroeconomic conditions in

Turkey, there is also a crucial skills mismatch in the country. It either stops university graduates from being employed in occupations that respect their educational investments or make them choose to remain unemployed altogether. The persistent youth unemployment and the social tension it worsens have led international organizations as well as the Turkish government to focus on youth entrepreneurship but those efforts have fallen short of solving the problem. Besides, youth in the country also suffer from discrimination, ethnic intimidation and peer pressure while perceiving that the bright future they once imagined is getting farther away. Unsurprisingly as a result, there is an overall lack of life satisfaction among the youth and an alarming level of tension between different groups within. These problems predated the arrival of Syrian refugee but they have only deteriorated afterwards and the darkening economic outlook due to the coronavirus pandemic has added insult to injury.

Speaking of one disease, one cannot help but draw parallels with another, albeit this time without a physiological causality. A social environment with increasing levels of polarization and lower trust has detrimental effects on younger generations because these, too, are conditions that are transmitted across generations. The impact of social surroundings during youth is discussed in the relevant academic

literature as well. For instance, 'impressionable years hypothesis' suggests that ages 18 to 25 (Krosnick and Alwin 1989) are crucial in shaping attitudes and behaviors of an individual because beliefs and values formed in these years are found to shape attitudes in later stages of life (Newcomb 1943; Newcomb, Koenig, Flacks and Warwick 1967). This hypothesis has been tested in the literature and validated in various contexts. The work of Akbulut-Yuksel, Okoye, and Yuksel (2018) is one example. They have showed that those young people who experience Nazi expulsion of Jews in their impressionable years have a higher likelihood of being apolitical. Moreover, Aksoy, Eichengreen and Saka (2020) have found that exposure to epidemics during impressionable years of one's life decreases the institutional trust levels of those individuals even in the long run. Thus, living these years in a highly polarized society with disinformation and conspiracy theories about 'others' not being questioned enough would cause unwanted results for the social cohesion of a society. Therefore, there is an indubitable need to understand the youth, their needs and challenges so that better policies/programs could be designed to promote both their and next generations' well-being. This issue is particularly important for Turkey because it now hosts the world's largest refugee population and the coronavirus pandemic has fuelled tensions in an already fragile social fabric.

16.4%

of Turkey's Population Is
Aged Between 15 and 24

3.6M

Syrians Are Under
Temporary Protection

21.65%

of Protected Syrians Are
Aged Between 15 and 24

Moreover, published research shows that the level of hostility among natives who come across refugees is higher (Hangartner et al. 2019). Kayaoglu (2020), for example, has analyzed native attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Turkey and found that natives who live in provinces with higher proportions of refugee populations exhibit higher levels of hostility towards Syrians. In that research, she argues that employment prospects, income inequality, disinformation and gender are all important mechanisms behind this hostility but higher level of social interaction with refugees actually decreases negative attitudes towards them. This implies that social segregation and social exclusion is an important source of discrimination in those provinces with a higher Syrian refugee population. Although urgently needed, there is no research about the perceptions and attitudes of youth in a gender-sensitive framework where girls, boys, women and men from within the Syrian refugees and the native society are heard equally.

There are currently around 4 million Syrian refugees registered in Turkey and the size of their population steadily grows. In addition, research shows that only a fraction of them intends to return to Syria even when the civil war ends (Kayaoglu et al., 2020). Widening economic hardships and diminishing livelihoods particularly since the summer of 2018 when Turkish lira nosedived against major currencies, triggering a bout of high inflation, have added to social tensions both within and between communities. Unfortunately, those tensions do affect children and youth as well. Increased levels of hate crimes, even in the horrible form of homicides, have been observed against Syrian children and youth over the past few years as a result. Therefore, effective and sustainable policies to improve social cohesion are of crucial importance.

In this context, the aim of this study, which is designed as youth-centered, holistic and gender-sensitive participatory assessment using a mixed methodology, is to analyze the perceptions, needs and challenges of both Turkish and Syrian youth. The researchers are hoping to draw an increased attention to this area to address well-being and resilience of the youth, their families and communities to ultimately promote social cohesion in Turkey.



SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The assessment in this research covers Istanbul's different municipal districts in qualitative surveys; however, the complete geographical focus is whole of Turkey in the quantitative analysis section. The primary audience is staff at Save the Children International's Turkey office, its current and potential partners. The secondary audience is the community of service providers for refugee and most vulnerable host-communities.

2.1. Preferred OECD/DAC Criteria

This project does not include an intervention but is rather an assessment of a highly relevant issue through an extensive field research: youth's perceptions, needs and challenges. The aim is to contribute to the knowledge and analysis of youth's well-being both among the host and Syrian refugee population in Turkey. Its findings are hoped to contribute to future program design and development of future strategies of Save the Children and its partners in a way that could ensure sustainable positive effects for their programs on the lives of adolescents and youth in Turkey.

2.2. Key Evaluation Questions

The purpose of the study is to understand perceptions of refugee and host community youth, girls and boys, in five main domains: perception of self, other and their environment, how crisis situations impact their opinions and well-being on collective level, their opinions on social inclusion and cohesion, and communication practices within a multi-ethnic society as Turkey. This research is completed in line with the following research questions, and provides inter-sectoral recommendations based on the findings to inform SC Turkey's future program designs in order to promote longer-term and sustainable solutions for refugee and host community adolescents/youth and their families.



1. Perception of Self

This study aims to analyze the similarities and differences between refugee and host community youth with regards to primary problems that they face as identified below (e.g. unemployment, bullying/ethnic intimidation, discrimination, identity issues, and intergenerational conflict), by considering environmental, societal, familial, and individual levels. The researchers have investigated the following issues in particular:

- a. What are the differences in host and refugee youth's primary needs, problems, priorities, daily routines, roles and responsibilities, thoughts of future?
- b. What are their expectations from civil society, collectives, and community structures?
- c. How do refugee and host community youth describe concepts of identification, stereotypes, discrimination, violence, conflict, and peace among their correspondences in Turkey?

2. Perceptions on Others

The researchers have also analyzed the refugee and host community youth's perception towards each other, specifying sectoral characteristics (i.e. livelihoods/access to labor market, education, social services, health) and focused on these questions:

- a. What are the grievances, subjects of tension, anger, areas of empathy, and solidarity?
- b. What do refugee and host community youth think of each other's daily lives, needs, challenges, responsibilities, well-being, and future?
- c. Who makes the strongest influence (creating or changing the attitudes) when forming attitudes towards the society, family, and individuals (for both groups)?

3. Impact of Crisis Situations on Perceptions

Another goal of this study is to analyze the spectrum of opinions within refugee and host community youth in crisis situations (i.e. as a result of sudden rise in

number of refugees, Covid-19, deteriorating economic conditions, increasing/decreasing conflict) and the researchers have been particularly interested in exploring following issues:

- a. What are the differences between refugee and host community youth's coping strategies, resilient traits, and protective strategies in times of crisis?
- b. How do adversities effect their thoughts and behaviors towards one another?

4. Social Inclusion

This study's research design also probes the factors that facilitate or act as barriers to social inclusion/cohesion of refugee and host community youth (environmental, familial and personal) through finding answers to the questions below:

- a. What do refugee and host community youth understand from social cohesion/integration?
- b. What do refugee and host community youth think of one another's integration/getting accustomed to their communities?
- c. What are the primary factors/actors that enhance or inhibit refugee and host community youth's integration/cohesion?
- d. What kind of policy/future actions do refugee and host community youth think should be followed to enhance integration of communities?

5. Communication

The researchers have also explored the role of communication means to analyze how different channels and spaces shape youth's perception of one another by mainly focusing on the answers to the following questions:

- a. How do refugee and host community youth engage with one another/under which circumstances/spaces?
- b. What is social media's role in social inclusion, exclusion, and cohesion?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overall Research Approach

This research is designed as youth-centered, holistic and gender-sensitive participatory assessment using a mixed methodology. Firstly, the researchers have analyzed two quantitative data, namely KONDA Barometer Surveys, of 456 and 503 Turkish adolescents (aged 17-25), collected randomly in 2017 across 23 provinces in Turkey. Secondly, Turkish Statistical Institute's (TurkStat) nationwide survey on Life Satisfaction has been analyzed using the specific data it contains on young individuals. These three survey analyses have shed light on the factors related to life conditions and perceptions of the Turkish youth, and their attitudes towards Syrian refugees. Thirdly, in addition to quantitative data analysis, the researchers have conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with Turkish youth (both girls and boys from ages 15 to 25) to clarify the mechanisms behind their attitudes. Qualitative data are collected in five domains: (1) Perception of self; (2) Perceptions on others; (3) Impact of crisis situations on perceptions; (4) Social inclusion; and (5) Communication.

In addition to understanding host community youth, the researchers have collected qualitative data from the Syrian youth in Istanbul. They have conducted both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with Syrian adolescents again with an aim to understand their views on the five domains listed above. These qualitative data have provided information about the recent attitudes and perceptions of both host-community and refugee youth. It is important to note that the researchers have paid attention to gather information from each gender in both communities so that the voices of females, who usually remain invisible particularly within the Syrian refugee community, could be heard, too. With that in mind, the researchers have pursued a balanced data collection from both population groups and also with respect to different age and gender. They have contacted adolescents and youth with disabilities to ensure their views are included as well.

In addition to directly collecting data from the youth in both population groups, the researchers have conducted key informant interviews with NGO representatives, school heads, teachers, and adults in neighborhoods with higher densities of Syrian population in Istanbul. This holistic and gender-sensitive approach has allowed the triangulation of findings.

As explained in detail below, following research methods have been employed:

- ✓ Desk/literature review
- ✓ Quantitative data analysis
- ✓ Key Informant Interviews
- ✓ In-depth Interviews
- ✓ Focus Group Discussions

3.1.1. Socio-ecological Model

This study employs a holistic approach using a socio-ecological model in research design to understand risk and protective factors at individual, family, community, and society level. Therefore, the issue is analyzed in a multilayer framework. Ultimately, the multilayer research design ensures a holistic perspective, helping identify a long list of risks and challenges together with resilience strategies and means of protection, both internal and external.

The first level of research explores the factors behind individual attitudes, responses and strategies towards or in coping with 'othering' in addition to individual capabilities, perceptions and aspirations. Therefore, it can be referred to as the intrapersonal phase. The second level is where rather interpersonal factors are sought. It particularly focuses on factors related to families, friends and social networks. Thus, this level helps explain the social and parental environment and their role in explaining the perceptions, needs and challenges of the adolescents and youth. They are captured through an analysis of peer effect and physical environment for the children. At the third level, organizational and institutional factors are analyzed. The fourth phase focuses on the role of cultural values and norms about perceptions towards others among the youth. Finally, as part of the fifth phase, structural factors are searched for to make sense of the role of public policy and laws.

3.1.2. Gender Sensitive Framework

This study engages with and collects information from both male and female stakeholders at all levels to find answers to the research questions listed in Section 3.2. In doing so, it follows a meticulous approach to sampling, reaching out to get as many interviewees as necessary from both genders to ensure a strong sample from which scientific conclusions could be drawn. Its gender-sensitive framework necessitated not any less.

Specific attention has been paid to strike a gender balance within the team of researchers and assistants as well. Gender-specific design is especially important in conservative societies as women might, otherwise, tend to conceal their views on sensitive issues in the presence of men. Thus, in-depth interviews and FGDs with female Syrian refugees have been conducted by female researchers. This was not a problem with Turkish interviewees and girls and boys are mixed, for example, in FGDs because they did not ask to have a gender-specific research group even if they have been informed of that possibility. Still, two researchers from each gender have attended FGD meetings with the Turkish youth as well.

3.2. Data Sources and Sampling Strategy

A. Quantitative Data

Considering the limited schedule of the research and the Covid-19 precautions, the researchers have preferred to use quantitative data that are already collected with a robust sampling strategy so that they could be able to focus solely on the collection of rather qualitative data. With this purpose, two survey data sources are used: (1) two barometer surveys conducted by KONDA Research and Consultancy Company and (2) a nationwide survey conducted by TurkStat.

B. Qualitative Data

After the first two weeks of desk/literature review and completion of qualitative survey questions, the researchers have pursued a non-purposeful sampling strategy for the qualitative data collection. In order to increase sample size, they have used snowball sampling. This method is especially useful in vulnerable groups or in groups with low level of generalized trust.

The researchers have conducted 47 in-depth interviews (IDIs) in total -- 30 with natives and the remaining 17 with Syrians -- with specific attention paid to strike a gender balance. In addition to those IDIs, the researchers have organized eight focus group discussions (FGDs) (with females and males separately in the case of Syrians) in order to fill the gaps in the quantitative data and to develop better, more accurate insights. Four of these FGDs are conducted with Syrians. In total, 22 members of the Syrian youth have been reached through these meetings. Thus, the researchers have gathered information from 39 Syrian youth combined (14 male and 25 female). Moreover, 21 Turkish youth (6 female and 15 male) have been interviewed during four FGDs. In the interviews, the principle of saturation is adopted. In the design of FGDs, the researchers have organized separate FGDs for each gender in the Syrian community just to make sure participants can freely discuss their views. Gender-specific design was

especially important in conservative societies since women might have otherwise hidden their views on such a sensitive issue in the presence of men.

Furthermore, the researchers have conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) with relevant stakeholders during the field research. In addition to KIIs and IDIs, they have organized six focus group discussions (FGDs) in order to fill whatever gaps lingered in the quantitative data and observe if the data they obtained through FGDs would provide different insights. In the design of FGDs with Syrian adolescents and youth, the researchers have organized separate meetings for each gender just to make sure participants could freely discuss their views. In total, they have gathered qualitative data from 51 Turkish and 39 Syrian adolescents and youth.

Field Access Strategy

Due to specific time period of field visits, they researchers have planned to first contact local NGOs and reach different stakeholders through advertising the research on social media not only to understand their views but also to be referred to specific contacts in order to accelerate the data collection process.

While randomly contacting individuals, they have also used a snowballing strategy after each contact. However, there is generally a risk of sampling bias in snowballing strategy as individuals are usually connected with people of similar socio-economic statuses. Therefore, the researchers have paid specific attention to include individuals from different strata (age, gender and educational background) while expanding the sample.

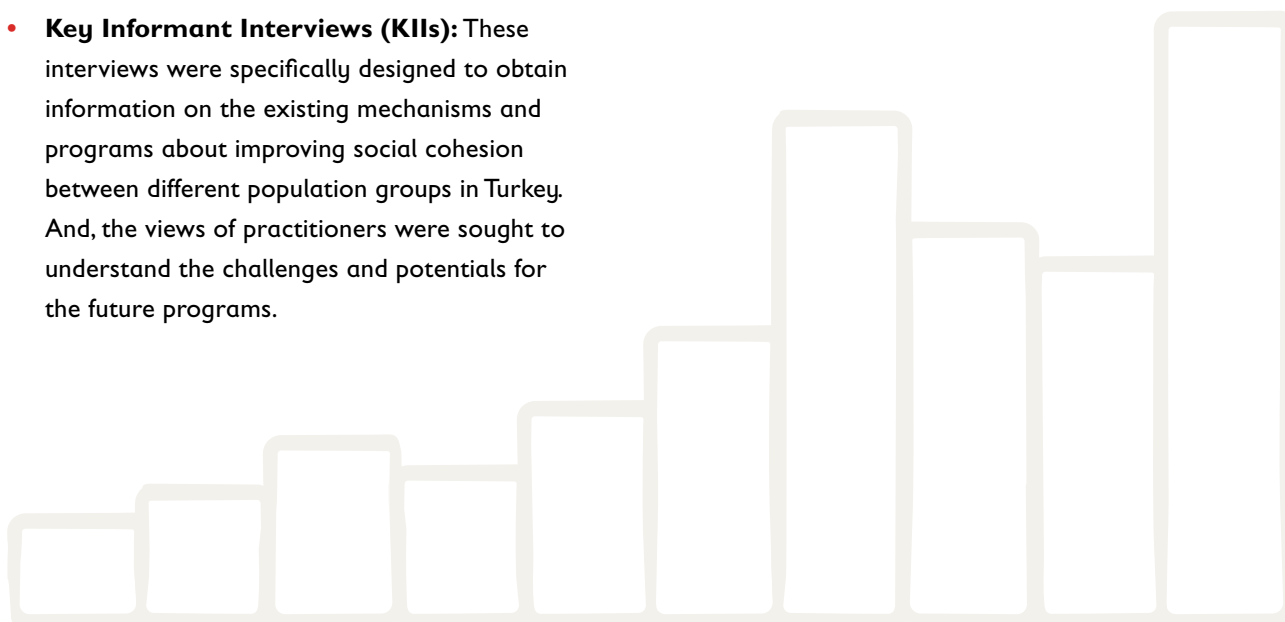
Table 1. Data Sources During the Research

	QUANTITATIVE SURVEY	IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Female and Male Adolescent (Aged 15 to 18)	✓	✓		✓
Female and Male Youth (Aged 19 to 25)	✓	✓		✓
NGOs (Turkish and Syrian)			✓	

3.3. Data Collection Methods

The following research methods have been used during the data collection phase.

- Desk/Literature Review:** A desk research of the relevant literature review, which is presented in *Section 2* and background information that is presented in *Section 1* were completed initially before designing the initial set of interview questions.
- Survey Data Analysis:** Quantitative surveys are analyzed using descriptive statistical tools in order to develop a holistic view on the factors related with perceptions, needs, and challenges of adolescents and youth both in Syrian refugee and Turkish populations.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** These interviews were specifically designed to obtain information on the existing mechanisms and programs about improving social cohesion between different population groups in Turkey. And, the views of practitioners were sought to understand the challenges and potentials for the future programs.
- In-depth Interviews (IDIs):** In addition to quantitative data and KIIs, the research team conducted IDIs with adolescents and adults aged 14-25. All IDIs are conducted via phone or online because of Covid-19 precautions.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Eight FGDs (4 with Turkish and 4 with Syrian interviewees) were conducted. Each FGD included 5-7 individuals and in total 41 people contributed to FGDs. All FGDs are held in Zoom sessions and decoded afterwards.



3.4. Research Matrix

Table 2 presents a matrix outlining the various research domains and which research tool was employed to obtain answers in those domains.

Table 2. Data Source for Each Research Question

	ADOLESCENTS (14-17)	YOUTH (18-25)	NGOs
A. Perception of Self			
1. What are the differences in host and refugee youth's primary needs, problems, priorities, daily routines, roles and responsibilities, thoughts of future?	✓	✓	✓
2. What are their expectations from civil society, collectives, community structures etc.?	✓	✓	✓
3. How do refugee and host community youth describe concepts of identification, stereotypes, discrimination, violence, conflict, and peace in their usual environments in Turkey?	✓	✓	
B. Perceptions of Others			
1. What are the grievances, subjects of tension, anger, areas of empathy, solidarity, etc.?	✓	✓	✓
2. What do refugee and host community youth think of each other's daily lives, needs, challenges, responsibilities, well-being, future, etc.?	✓	✓	
3. Who makes the strongest influence (creating or changing the attitudes) when forming attitudes towards the society, family, and individuals (for both groups)?	✓	✓	✓
C. Impact of Crisis Situations on Perceptions			
1. What are the differences among refugee and host community youth's coping strategies, resilient traits, and protective strategies in times of crisis?	✓	✓	✓
2. How do adversities effect their attributions towards one another?	✓	✓	
D. Social Inclusion			
1. What do refugee and host community youth understand from social cohesion/integration?	✓	✓	
2. What do refugee and host community youth think of one another's integration/getting accustomed to their communities?	✓	✓	
3. What are the primary factors/actors that enhance or inhibit refugee and host community youth's integration/cohesion?	✓	✓	✓
4. What kind of policy/future actions do refugee and host community youth think should be followed to enhance integration of communities?	✓	✓	✓
E. Communication			
1. How do refugee and host community youth engage with one another/under which circumstances/spaces?	✓	✓	✓
2. What is social media's role in social inclusion, exclusion, cohesion, etc.?	✓	✓	✓

LIMITATIONS AND RISKS

The research was planned in a very concise and clear way. However, there were some risks and limitations related to the novel coronavirus outbreak as well as time and location of the research.

4.1. Covid-19 Outbreak

The Covid-19 pandemic that has extended from late 2019 into 2021 has been a complete nightmare for nations around the world. By the time of this report's submission, the known global death toll exceeded a shocking 2 million and the total number of infections was nearly 50 times as many. In Turkey, whose own health crisis was dwarfed by much bigger calamities elsewhere, deaths still soared past 25,000 with some 2,5 million cases reported by the end of January 2021. In response, the Turkish government has instituted overnight

and whole-weekend curfews for over two months, which coincided with the entirety of the period this research was conducted, while strictly limiting gathering of individuals almost everywhere for other than providing or receiving services considered essential.

This exogenous crisis has inevitably led to extra limitations for this study. In-person meetings with the interviewees were not advisable to hold. The research team has had to take solace in being able to conduct all the interviews online or over the phone. Potential interviewees, particularly from within the Syrian refugee population, who sadly had no access to such means, however, remained out of reach of the researchers. Therefore, readers should keep in mind that the interviews conducted as part of this study have been able to cover the extremely poor among neither Syrian nor Turkish youth in Turkey.

4.2. Limited Time and Geographical Locations

This study is an exploratory analysis that was conducted in a five-week field research in Istanbul. That its analysis relied on data collected over such a short period of time and in only one province of the country was certainly a limitation, too. The study mitigated this challenge through:

- analyzing representative quantitative survey data for Turkish people;
- collection of data via multiple methods from multiple sources.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND DATA PROTECTION



To ensure the highest data quality, the lead researcher held weekly meetings with her team to answer their questions and check the quality of survey data. Soft copies of consent form were collected regularly and kept in a locker safe from any outside access or impact. Likewise, all audio and visual files produced during the field research were saved in line with ethical considerations. Finally, coding of the qualitative data into word files was done by using anonymous identity numbers for each interviewee and also kept in a locked folder.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All participants to the study were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they might withdraw at any point if they felt uncomfortable or wanted to do so for any other reason even without explaining themselves. All adults were interviewed only after their voluntary approval was secured and for as long as it was maintained. In the case of adolescents, the research team has also obtained approvals from the interviewees' parents or other legal guardians.

Interviews were conducted at the appointed date and time in order not to cause any unintentional losses on the part of the interviewees. Each member of the research team was familiar with UN's Nine Basic Requirements for Effective and Ethical Children's Participation and Save the Children's Child Safeguarding Policy. All field staff received Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Identification and Referral trainings before the start of the fieldwork.

As a rule, all the interviews were held in the mother tongue of the interviewee just to make sure that they could express themselves most comfortably. For the Syrian interviews, all the data that were originally collected in Arabic were later translated to English.

FINDINGS

7.1. Turkish Adolescents and Youth

As of January 2020, total population in Turkey was of 83,154,997 individuals. Moreover, 15.58 percent of its population (approximately 13 million people) aged between 15 and 24 while even a more striking 23.1 percent aged below 15. Nevertheless, Turkey's young had their voices often neglected in academic research and policymaking.

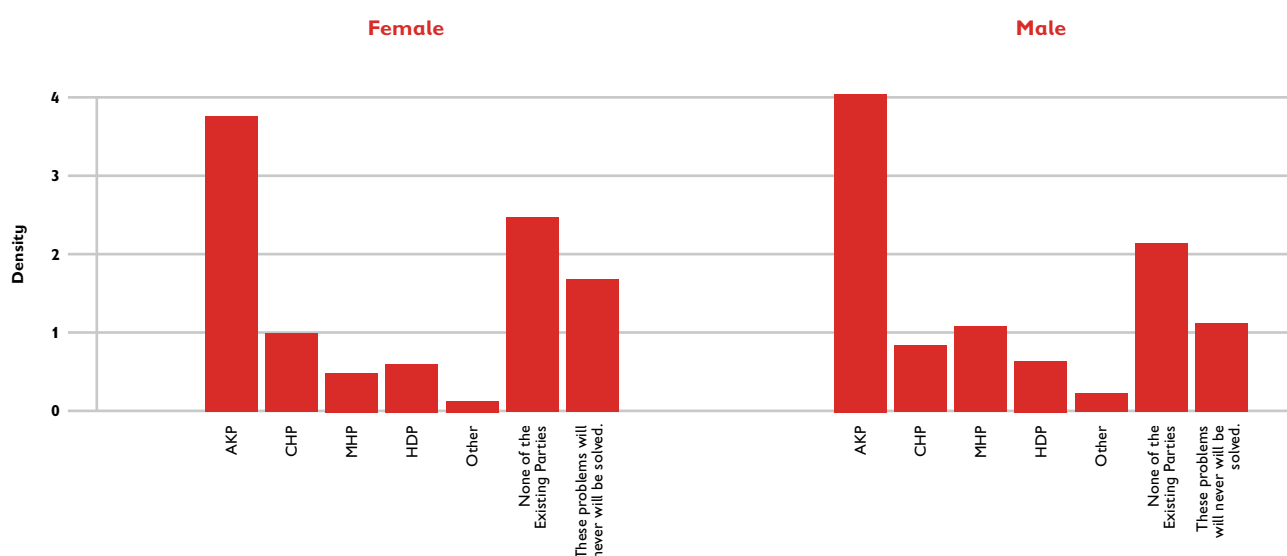
In order to understand the current situation of the Turkish youth, this study analyzes two quantitative data, namely KONDA Barometer Surveys, of 456 Turkish adolescents (aged 17-25) collected randomly in 2017 in 23 Turkish provinces. They contain participants' responses to direct questions about their ideas and attitudes towards Syrians in Turkey as well as their experiences of violence. Secondly, a nationwide poll named Income and Life Conditions Survey in 2019 conducted by TurkStat is used to understand overall life conditions of the country's youth. Descriptive analysis of these two surveys explains the factors related to different attitudes towards Syrian refugees among the host community in different geographical settings. It also represents the characteristics of the Turkish youth on average. Finally, the researchers combine their quantitative statistics with the qualitative findings they have derived from the field research conducted for the purpose of this study. An important issue to note is that the quantitative data do not cover adolescents from ages 15 and 16 who are included in the qualitative data that proudly carry in depth information about the research questions listed in *Section 2.2*.

7.1.1. General Overview of Turkish Youth

A large proportion of the Turkish youth is pessimistic about the role of political parties in providing solutions to what they consider the most important and urgent problems in Turkey. As is seen in *Figure 1*, there is a clear polarization in terms of their views. Almost 40 percent thinks the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP)

can solve those problems whereas 20 percent pin their hopes on other political groups. The remaining 40 percent, however, either reckons that those issues are just unsolvable or disbelieves in the ability of the existing political parties, be it from the government or the opposition, to render effective remedies.

Figure 1. Which political party can solve the most urgent and important problems in Turkey?



The following *Figure 2* shows that education has a role in the life styles of the youth. More educated ones describe themselves with a higher probability as modern whereas the

proportion of those who self-identify as conservative, either traditional or religious, is higher among youth with an education level below high school.

Figure 2. Life Style of Youth

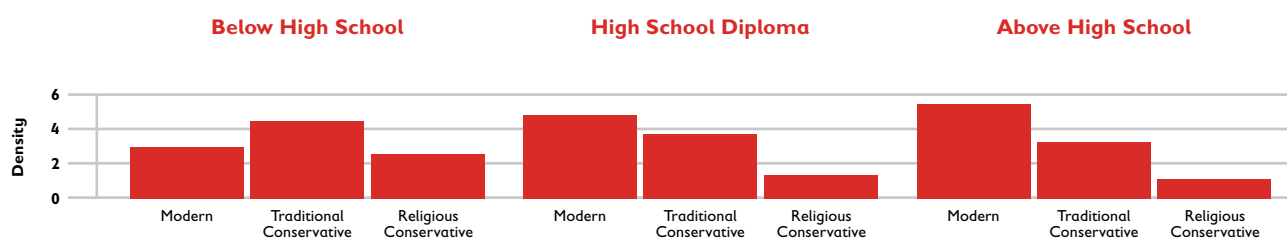
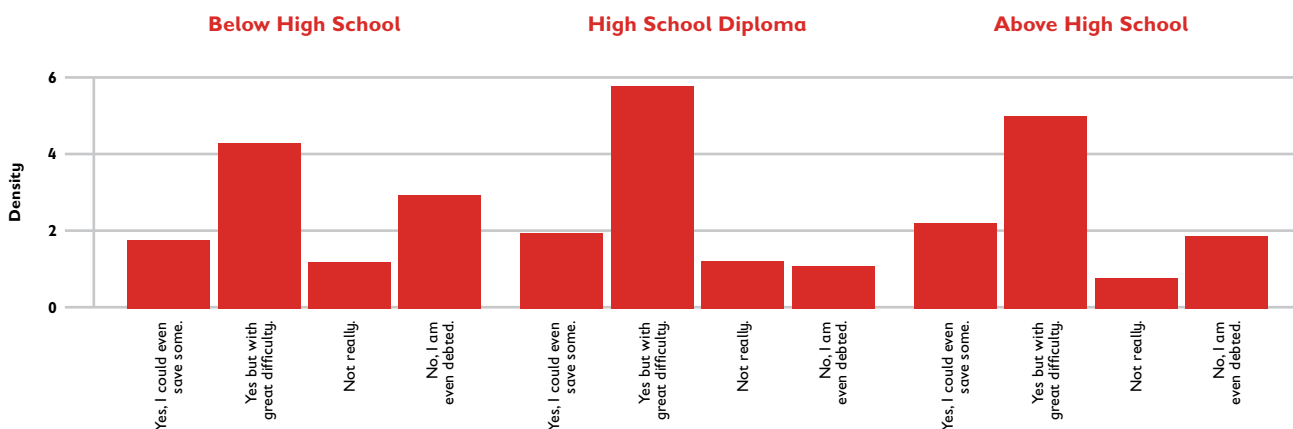


Figure 3 below presents the situation of the youth's economic power with respect to their education. It seems that education has not helped them have meaningfully better living standards. At all education levels categorized, only about 20 percent have reported being able to make ends meet the month before the interview. The rest has either

done so with great difficulties or failed to stay afloat and had to sink in debt. The distribution between different categories does not significantly change across education groups. As bitter as it may be, in other words, a whopping 80 percent of the Turkish youth have reported being in challenging financial trouble.

Figure 3. Were you able to make ends meet last month?

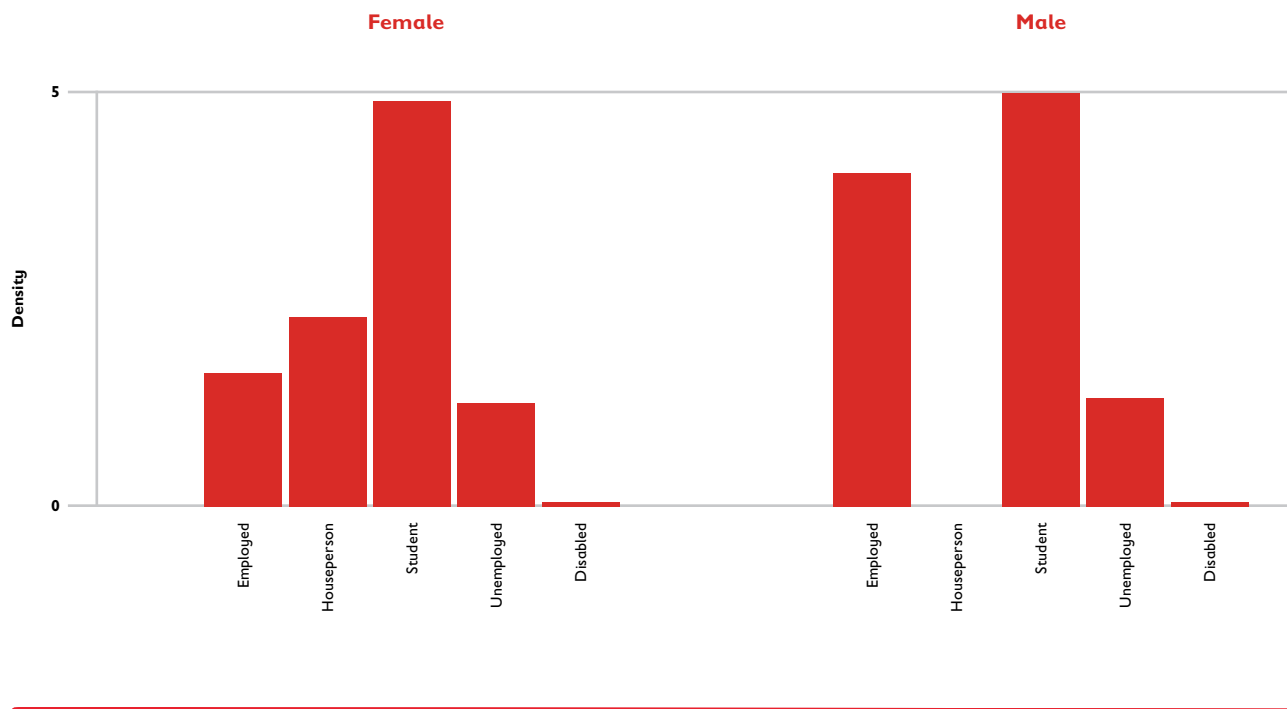


Moreover, Figure 4 below illustrates how the distribution of labor market status changes across youth between males and females. The most important gender difference, unfortunately as expected, is that the female youth have lower rates of employment and labor force participation. And, it is only the female youth who have described themselves as housekeepers. In addition, despite profound gender differences in the labor market confirmed by qualitative interviews conducted as part of this study, the country's youth employment is alarmingly low for males, too. Thus, unemployment and overall financial difficulties experienced by the Turkish youth appear to be policy targets that require prompt intervention.

What makes them particularly relevant for this study is the researchers' observation that a main

reason for social tension among youth is their financial and/or labor market situations. For participants to this study who are university students or graduates, dimming prospects of finding a job as per their disciplines is a major source of anxiety. Without one, they look for financial support from the government, which they claim is directed mostly towards Syrians now. The result, unsurprisingly, is an overwhelming anti-Syrian sentiment among them. That the Syrian students enter Turkish universities without taking a centralized examination unlike Turks is another common misperception, the researchers have observed. Plus, those with fewer years spent in education are similarly irked by a perceived Syrian competition. This third group of interviewees has complained of being replaced by Syrians at work because, they say, Syrians agree to toil for less money and under worse conditions.

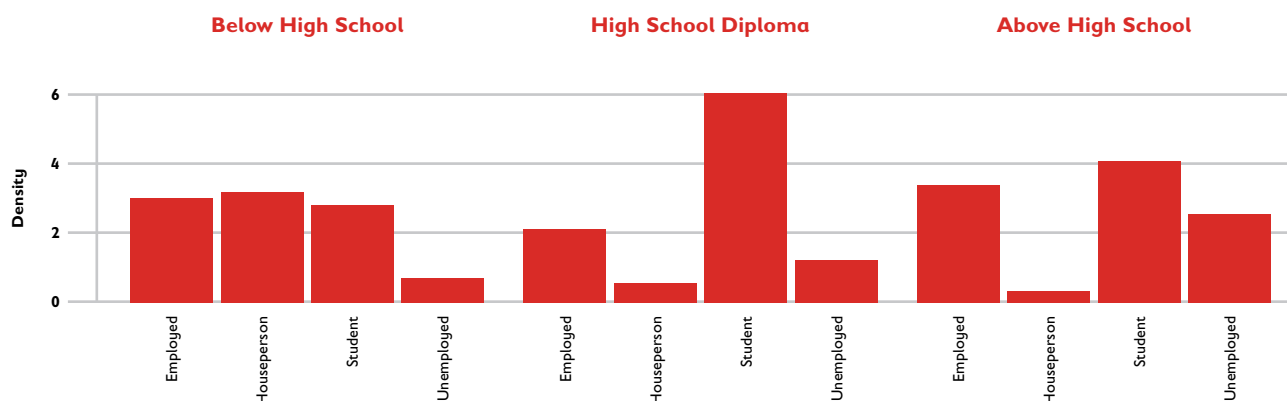
Figure 4. Labor Market Status of Turkish Youth by Gender



The researchers have studied the role of education on the youth's labor market statuses represented by Figure 5 as well. They have established the greatest returns to education among females. The percentage of female youth who are neither in education nor in employment and define themselves as a "house girl" sharply decreases for those with a high school diploma and beyond. Having an above high school degree, however, does not

seem to increase the chances of being employed overall. Worse, the share of unemployed youth is increasing with the education level and it is actually the highest for youth with a university or a higher degree. The causality link is not straightforward in strict econometric interpretation of the term but this apparent negative correlation, which has also repeatedly come up in this study's field research, should be deeply worrisome for policymakers.

Figure 5. Labor Market Status by Education Level



Interestingly, the same KONDA survey sheds light on the views of the Turkish youth towards foreigners and particularly Syrians in the country, too. *Figure 6* shows that about two thirds of its respondents believe it to be either “important” or “very important” for a foreigner in Turkey to have a high education level. This study’s qualitative interviews have also demonstrated that the Turkish youth believe so because Syrians otherwise would be a burden and not an asset for Turkey.

Another key dimension is the Turkish language proficiency. The Turkish youth argue that Turkish language proficiency and education is even more important than them being a Muslim, as is available at *Figure 7* and *Figure 8*. Actually, this should not be interpreted as a decreasing importance of religion in their lives. As qualitative interviews have showed, they already believe that socio-economic situation of youth is not bright and foreigners should not be causing additional problems for them. Thus, they appear to believe that better educated foreigners and those with a good knowledge of Turkish might have a prettier harmony with the Turkish life style. However, the conditions do not end here. Many Turkish youth, both male and female, do also believe that the Syrians have worsened their work opportunities. This can be seen in *Figure 9*. The majority thinks that the foreigners should have skills to work in areas where there are no matches for those jobs in Turkey.

Figure 6. How important is it for a foreigner to have a high education level?

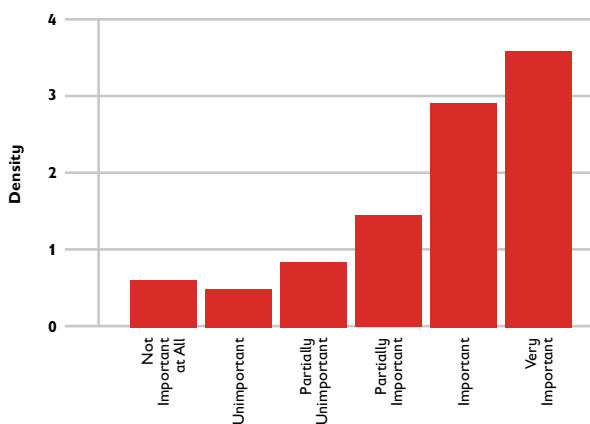


Figure 7. How important is it for a foreigner to know Turkish language?

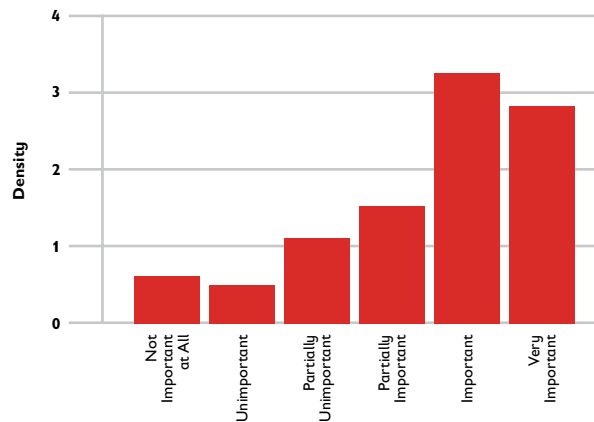


Figure 8. How important is it for a foreigner to be a Muslim?

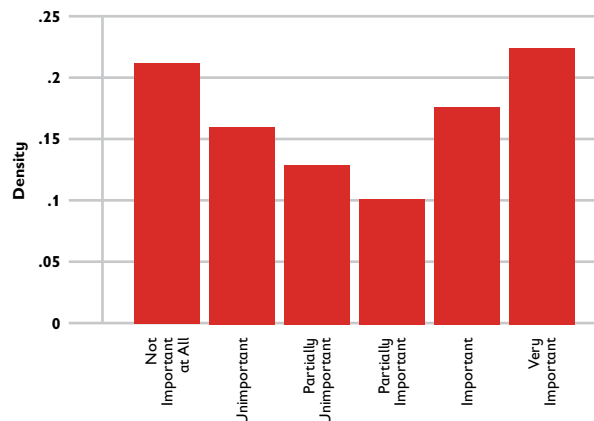
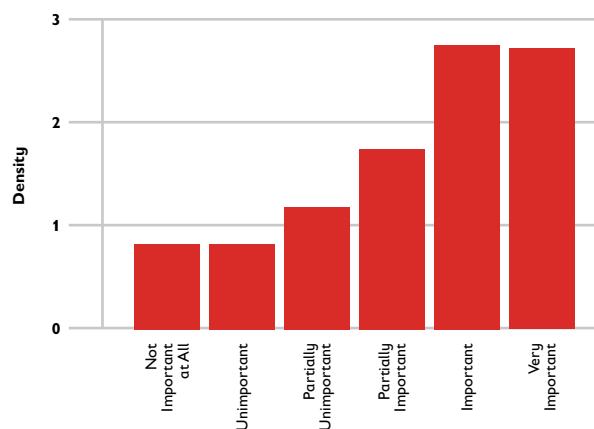


Figure 9. How important is it for a foreigner to have occupations in areas needed in Turkey?



When the Turkish youth are asked how often they come across Syrians, almost half the respondents said every day. And, as *Figure 11* presents, these two groups see each other mostly at shopping and, then, in neighborhoods. Moreover, 31.08% of them have reported that they have no personal contact with Syrians even if they casually run into them.

Figure 10. How often do you come across Syrians?

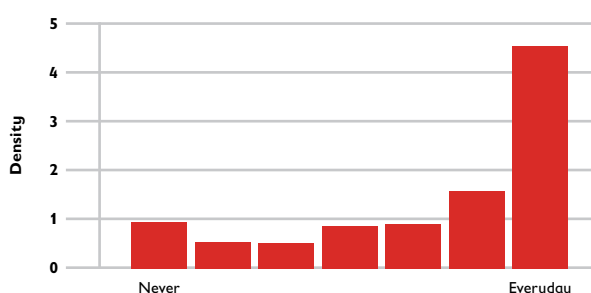


Figure 11. Where do you see Syrians in your daily life?

	ALL (%)	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)
In My Neighborhood/street	48.68	45.95	54.05
In Market Places	67.54	45.78	54.22
At School	7.68	40	60
In Mosque	7.02	37.50	62.5
On Public Transportation	8.99	29.27	70.73
No Contact	31.80	50.34	49.66

Moreover, when the Turkish youth are asked about their views on the provision of educational opportunities to different ethnic backgrounds, they have given answers that could be interpreted as ethnicity-related biases they hold. *Figure 12* to *Figure 14* below show these responses respectively for Kurdish children in Turkey, Syrian children in Turkey and Turkish children in Germany. As is illustrated by *Figure 12*, the Turkish youth is clearly polarized in terms of providing education in Kurdish for Kurdish children in Turkey. This polarized view is also present for the case of Syrians. However, at the same time, they seem to be supportive of the idea that Turkish immigrant children in Germany should be taught in Turkish.

Figure 12. Kurdish children in Turkey should be able to receive their education in Kurdish.

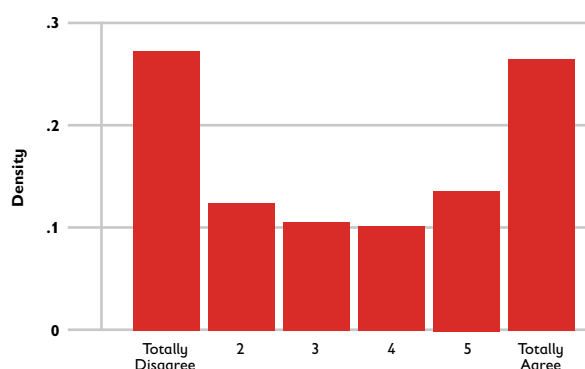


Figure 13. SuTP children in Turkey should be able to receive their education in Arabic.

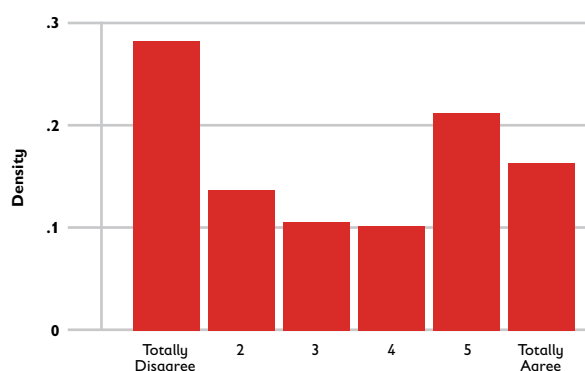


Figure 14. Turkish children in Germany should be able to receive their education in Turkish.

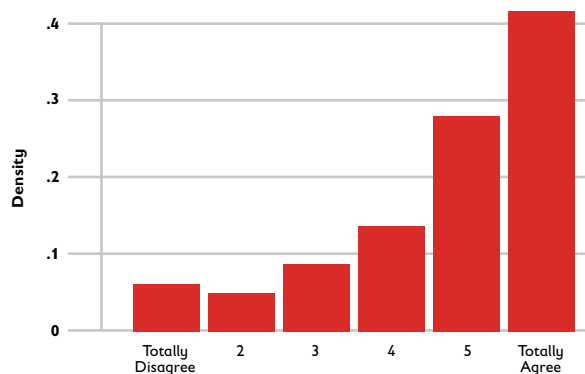
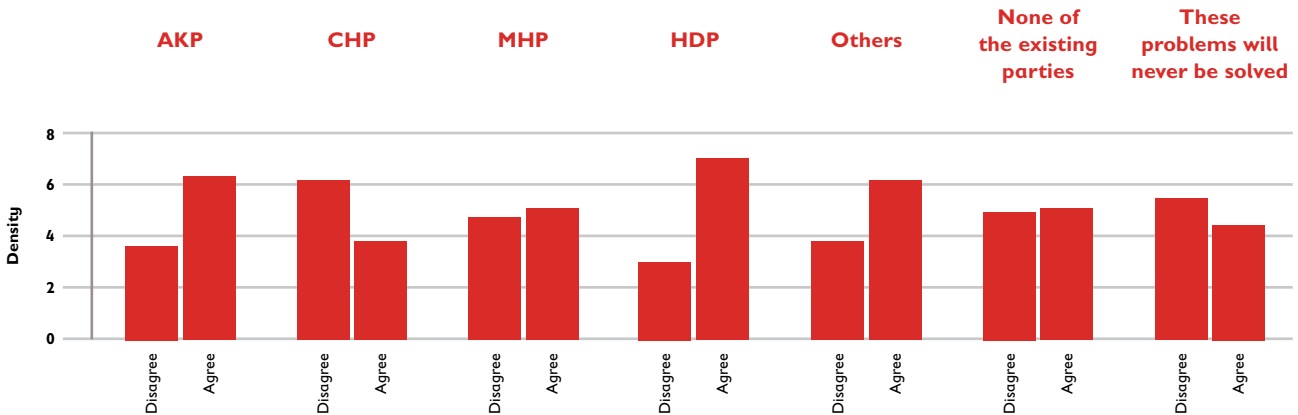
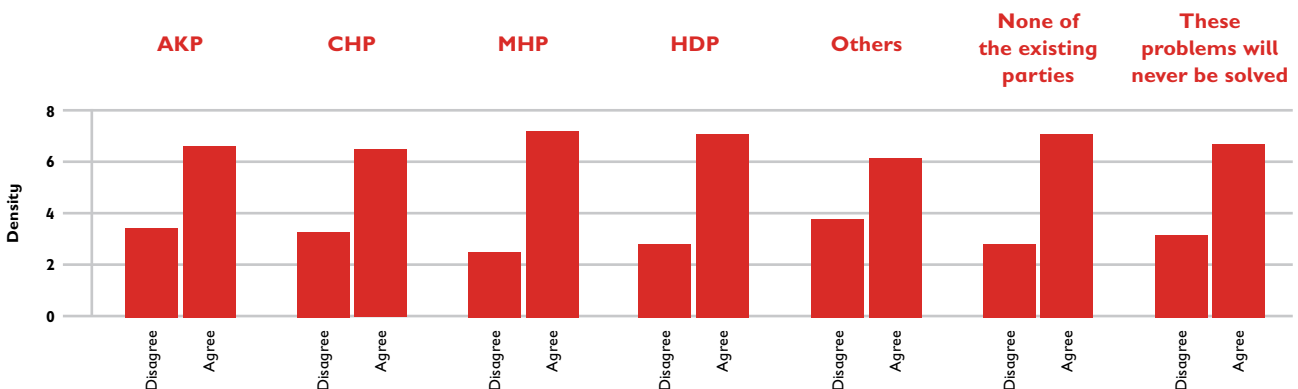


Figure 15. Hosting Syrian refugees is the historical and geographic responsibility of Turkey.

So, there is a clear positive bias towards Turkish children in Germany. This choice does not need to be only related to an ethnic bias but also to their views on the conditions of integration and, even, assimilation. This study's qualitative interviews have showed that the Turkish youth has a huge focus on the use of Turkish language by Syrians. The majority thinks that fluency in Turkish is the most important marker for an integrated Syrian. So, Figure 12 to Figure 14 can also be interpreted as their focus on the role of language in integration and assimilation into the host society and their unwillingness for Turkish children in Germany to be assimilated into the German society.

Additionally, the researchers have observed that the political views of the Turkish youth have an association with their beliefs and attitudes towards the Syrian population. For example, as shown in Figure 15, those who believe that AKP or the opposition pro-Kurdish political group HDP is able to solve the most urgent and significant problems in Turkey argue that it is Turkey's historical and geographical responsibility to host Syrians. This argument is, however, not supported by main opposition CHP's supporters. Ruling AKP's coalition partner in government, MHP has its supporters almost evenly divided on the issue.

Figure 16. Do you agree that refugees damage the Turkish economy?

In terms of the economic effect of Syrians in Turkey, *Figure 16* shows that the youth from different political views are in consensus that the civil-war fleeing refugees negatively affect the Turkish economy. Another agreement among youth is about

their belief on the cultural dissimilarity between Turks and Syrians as shown in *Figure 17*. Again, their answers are presented with respect to the political party that they believe can solve the most important and urgent problems of the country.

Figure 17. Do you agree that Turks have cultural similarity with Syrians?

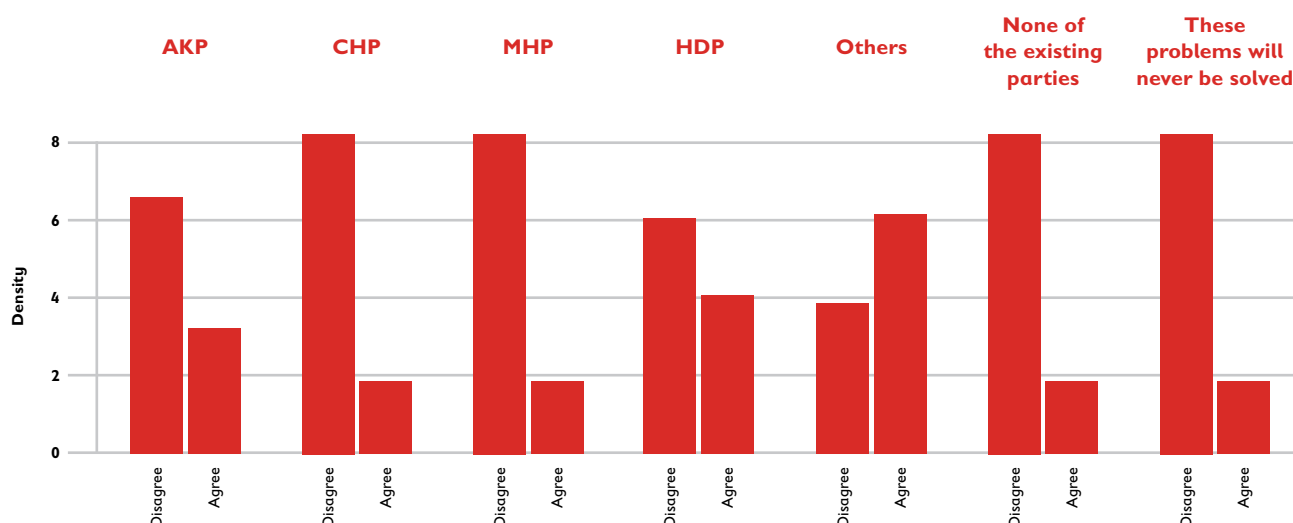


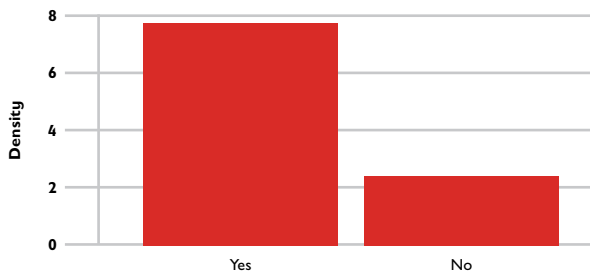
Figure 18 demonstrates the Turkish youth's accepted social distance with Syrians. It shows that their acceptance decreases with closer proximity. While around 80 percent have no problems in living with Syrians in the same province, the proportion nosedives to 12 percent when it comes to living with Syrians in the same house or family.

In order to understand the attitudes of youth, one must also understand their childhood or adolescence experiences. In this study, the researchers have therefore used another KONDA barometer survey on social violence, which was conducted in January 2017. Data include responses from 522 people aged from 18 to 25. *Figure 19* shows that they face different types of violence at different rates according to their gender. The experience of

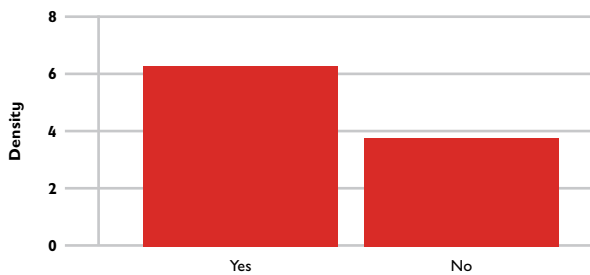
violence is particularly important to understand and interpret the bullying at schools and, in general, among youth. One might think that the attitudes of adults towards youth might have an effect on their behaviors towards their peers. Qualitative interviews have also confirmed such an interpretation. Majority of this study's interviewees have argued that they had to face disrespectful attitudes from older generations or their peers. This leads them to feel "undervalued" and "miserable" which naturally affect their life choices. Interestingly, many male interviewees have reported that they spend so much time playing video games because they feel appreciated and respected when they reach higher levels in those games. Thus, the youth who feel segregated by the general society try to find unreal but "better than real" places to spend time.

Figure 18. Accepted Social Distance With the SuTP

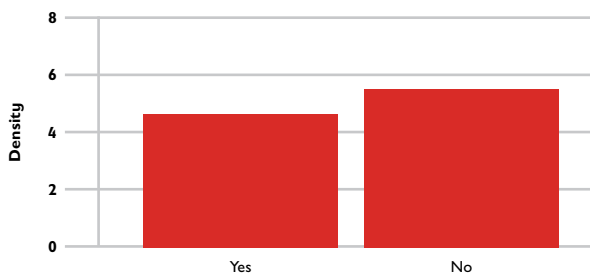
(a) Can they be in the same city with you?



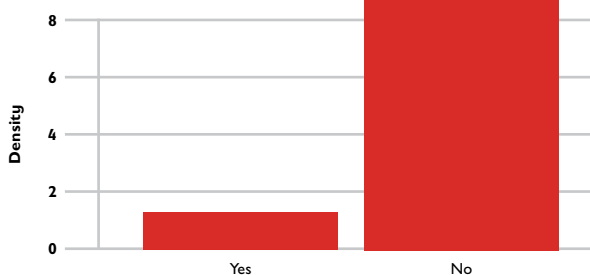
(b) Can they be in the same street, workplace or school with you?



(c) Can they be in the same apartment or neighborhood?



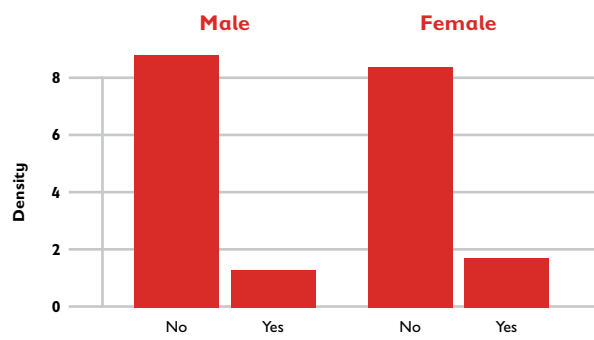
(d) Can they be in the same house, family, or social circle?



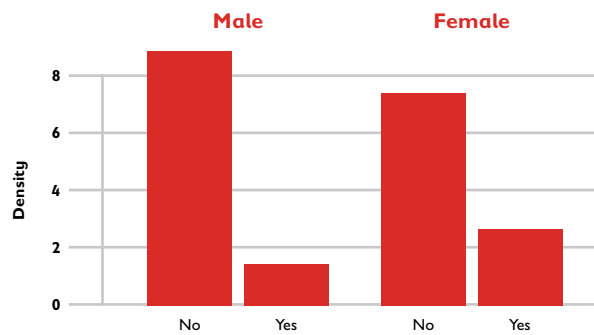
According to the Life Satisfaction Survey 2019 of TurkStat that have information about 1,246 individuals aged 18 to 25 from all around Turkey, the female youth are happier on average. The researchers have inquired of what makes or could make both genders happy during interviews. The answers converged on health, success and love.

Figure 19. Violence Against Turkish Youth

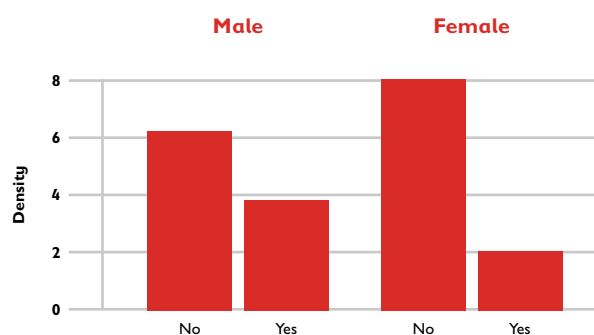
(a) Humiliated/Isolated



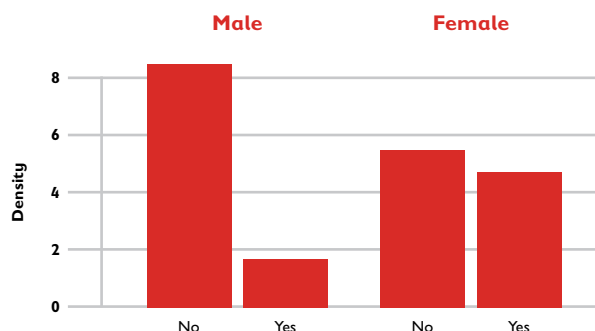
(b) Irritated in Social Media



(c) Beaten



(d) Verbal Abuse



(e) Discrimination

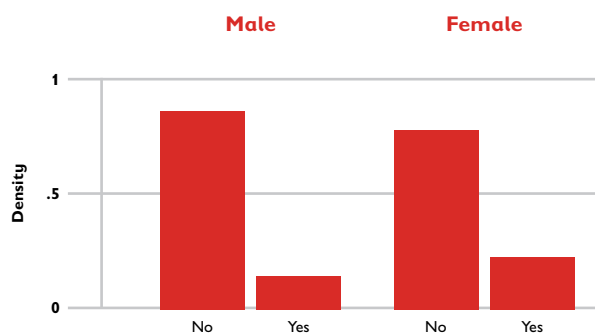


Figure 21. What makes you happy?

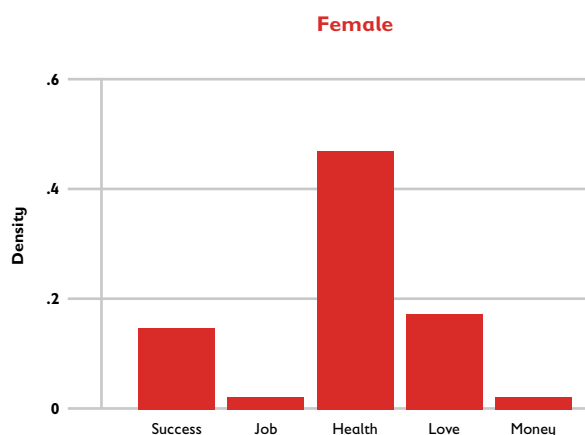
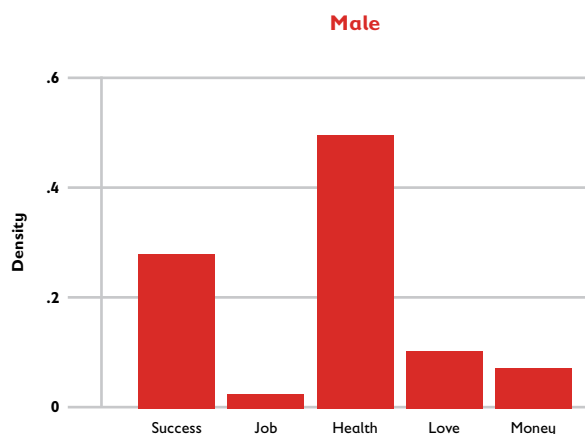
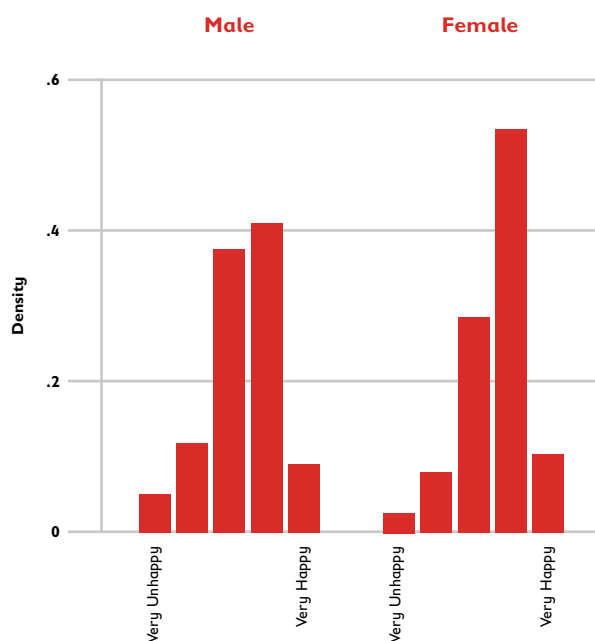
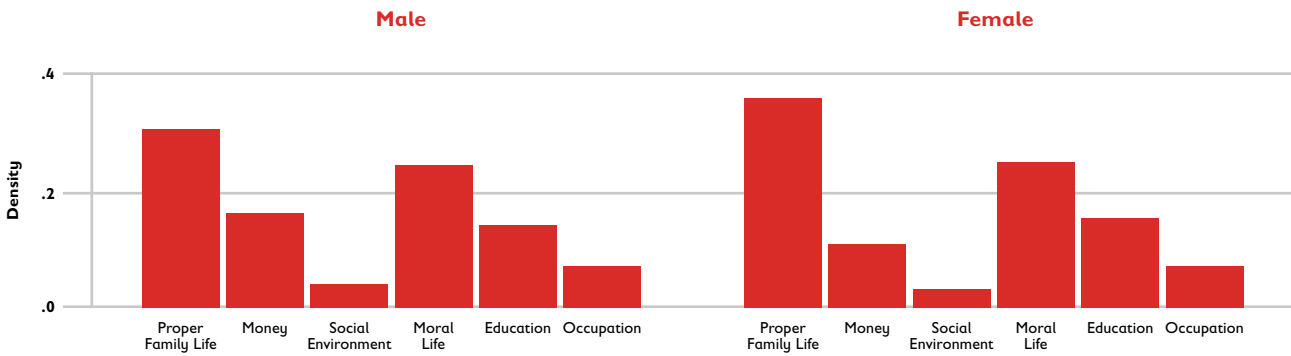
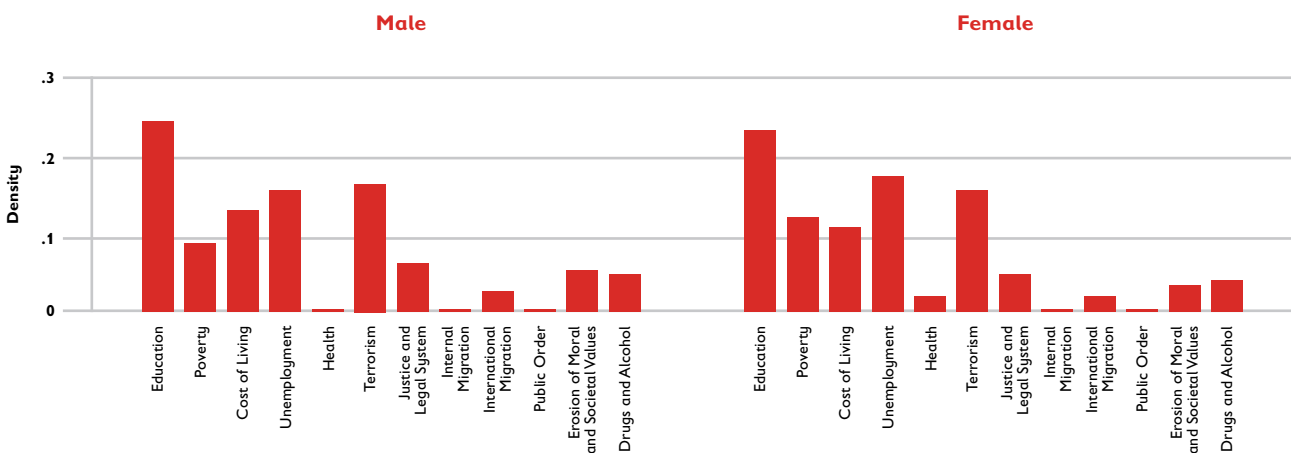


Figure 20. Do you feel happy when thinking about your life in general?



The youth's focus on success compared to having a job and money appears to be one of the important dimensions of intergenerational conflict they face. Many adolescents and young adults the researchers virtually met as part of IDIs and FGDs have focused on pressure from their families and the society in general about the "distinct importance" of certain occupations to make lots of money in the future. They have repeatedly complained that they, in many cases, had to study a discipline that they are not interested in because it was a necessity imposed by their families and the job opportunities in the country. This situation appears to affect their hopes for the future as well. They have stopped dreaming, some said, because they believe that there is no point to do so anymore since they have zero authority on their future.

Figure 22. What is the most important thing to have reputation in the society?**Figure 23.** What is the most important problem in Turkey?

Moreover, Figure 23 presents the views of the Turkish youth on what they consider the most important problem in their country. They offer valuable insights about the sources of their negative attitudes against Syrians. The Life Satisfaction Survey does not openly ask if they think refugee inflows are the most important problem in Turkey but in an indirect way, that is, if the international migration is the main problem in their country. As is clear, a very small proportion believes that foreigners or international migration is the main problem. For the overwhelming majority, it is rather the education system, unemployment, terrorism, cost of living and poverty. These are also the areas mentioned by youth during this study's interviews. They do not have, in general, a 'blind' negative attitude towards Syrians. Their negative attitudes usually stem from their misperceptions about the Syrians' on Turkey.

And, interestingly, the common themes that were drawn from the qualitative interviews are exactly the main problem areas mentioned here. In other words, those who are against Syrians' presence in Turkey believe that Syrians have negative effects on education, unemployment, security, cost of living and poverty. All these increase anger and envy they appear to harbor because they believe that as a citizen of Turkey, they are now receiving a second-class treatment because the government does not prioritize their problems but rather helps Syrians. With all these negative feelings, observing Syrian youth in their neighborhoods as "relaxed" and enjoying their lives contributes to the anger the Turkish youth feel towards them. This sensitive environment fuels disputes or sometimes fights between Turkish and Syrian youth in just instantaneous occasions such as if Turkish boys notice a Syrian boy staring at a Turkish girl.

7.1.2. Overarching Challenge of the Turkish Youth: Financial Hardship

The researchers have heard many common problems during interviews with the Turkish youth. However, the most cited individual problem was about the financial difficulties irrespective of their employment status. For those who work, the financial problem is related with low wages and cost of life in Istanbul. Some have also mentioned that they have to work long hours to overcome these financial problems, which, they complained, squeezes their lives between work and home. They have said that they cannot enjoy the beauty of their ages and find no time to have a hobby or even for simple social activities such as meeting with friends. This appears to be a major problem for all students who either receive financial support from their parents or work in part-time jobs. A 20-year-old female university student living in Kagithane was one of them:

"I am a university student but I also work part-time because the pocket money we get from our families is never enough. For instance, I would have loved to read more books but I can afford buying only a few each month. I wish they were available at a discounted rate for students. It applies to the course books at the university, too. I had studied a prep year in English and the books for that year alone cost 1500 liras. Not everybody can buy them. I have three siblings and my father couldn't have provided for all four of us if I had not pitched in with what I make from this part-time job. I must work."

20-year-old, female, student, Kagithane

Financial problems do also prevent students from focusing on their studies due to limited time left after attending classes and then going to work. In one of the FGD meetings where the interviewees were asked to discuss Turkey's future and their own, the main complaint was of financial factors

darkening both. The following dialogue plainly summarizes their views:



Interviewee 1: Frankly, I don't think there will be much difference 40 years from now in Turkey. Like we missed the industrial revolution and other countries did not, we are missing certain other things now, such as the space age. While other nations are doing space travel, we cannot.

Interviewer: Let's go then. Let's just leave. Who stops us, the youth?

Interviewee 1: The government.

Interviewee 2: Well, I am not sure I am ready for space travel now anyway. There is this mobile phone bill I need to pay first.

Another important effect of financial difficulties on the lives of the youth seems to be on their occupation choices. Many interviewees have argued that it is a luxury to perform a job that could both interest and make them happy. Instead, they said, they must choose a profession that will provide them enough income so that they could become self-dependent and, maybe one day, start their own families. Given the high unemployment rate among university graduates, however, they started to believe that their degrees will be nothing more than a piece of paper and fail to secure a bright future for them. Some of those who already completed their undergraduate education even said they wished they had never started one. They figured out that it would have been better to rather learn a craft with which they could earn a decent income. Ask them to name the biggest problem that they face and they will often suggest those that are related to the inability to provide for themselves.

“It is the unaffordability of goods and our low purchasing power that bothers us the most. There are too many other things; I just cannot name them now. Things like rights and freedoms are preceded by so many of those priorities that we cannot really discuss other issues anymore. For instance, we all choose a profession, right? But do we choose them because we love to practice those professions or do we do that because we wish to make money out of them? The only thing that matters is money.”

18-year-old, male, student, Esenyurt

Thus, these financial problems they face together with the lack of time for social activities exhaust the Turkish youth. The inescapable result is an overall dissatisfaction with their lives. In such a situation, a 23-year old male university student living in Sultanbeyli was angry with what he perceived an unjust redistribution of taxes the government collects:

“I study at Sivas University while I am also enrolled at Istanbul University as part of a distant learning program. Besides, I work somewhere. The issue of time is a real trouble for teenagers like me. The government cannot take care of students but it can so easily do that when it is the Syrians who need help. I am asking now: Why do I have to work as a student?”

23-year-old, male, student, Sultanbeyli

So far, this report discussed cases where the youth are employed but their wages disrespect their education levels or of students who have to work at the same time. There is, however, another group whose situations require at least as much attention: unemployed university graduates. Whatever little hopes they had for the future seem to have completely vanished because of the toll the Covid-19 pandemic has taken on Turkey's economy. A 23-year-old female university graduate who lives in Zeytinburnu appeared under extreme strains as a result:

“The main problem is unemployment. The reason is we have invested great efforts in our education but now we are unable to take control of our future. It is out of our hands. I was luckier than many of my friends at school. I did not have big economic problems then. Now, however, I couldn't find a job upon graduation. I am having difficulty identifying myself. I am not the usual me anymore.”

23-year-old, female, university graduate, Zeytinburnu

When the researchers asked the interviewees what they think are the underlying reasons of high unemployment among university graduates, the following five topped the list they suggested: Firstly, university education does not necessarily help with finding a job. Secondly, employers are unwilling to hire new graduates. Thirdly, there are also too many university graduates than the available jobs. Fourthly, the pay level is too low that some university graduates prefer to stay out and keep looking. And finally, most university graduates lack influential contacts who could land them in the jobs they wish to have. A female high-school student who as a salesperson is also a co-worker of university graduates at a retail chain in Istanbul says this low returns to education she observes every day at work has crushed her own hopes of attaining a bright future.

“At the store where I work now, there are many people with a university degree, like economists and teachers, doing the same job that I do. They are simply unable to find a better job. When they apply somewhere, the employers require previous experience. Nobody wants to hire fresh graduates. But how are they supposed to have any experience then? Where? Even if they do find a job, I hear that the pay is even below minimum wage.”

20-year-old, female, student, Kagithane

The cronyism that they say is shaping far too many recruitment processes around the country is inviting emotionally loaded reactions. They are angry, frustrated and heart-broken.

“This is my humble idea but I know it is shared by many other people. I have acquaintances who, without being able to even properly introduce themselves at a casual meeting, have found superb jobs. They have those jobs only because they have really powerful relatives. I am not speculating this. I know such people in person. Yet, I have friends who were really brilliant at the university but are now unemployed. For instance, the girl who topped our class at graduation does not have a job now. That is why the youth in Istanbul is really unlucky. Without cronyism, they don’t have much chance at the labor market. Or they have to struggle to find a job for a full year like I did. It hurts.”

23-year-old, female, works and studies, Zeytinburnu

They are in pain also because the monthly salaries generally offered to them are too low. They say it is an affront after all the years they spent in university education. In their opinion, the “heavily profit-oriented” employers are aware that there will always be students or Syrian refugees ready to agree to their terms even in return for an extremely low wage. The following statements reflect what they experience and how they feel:

“While it is possible to hire someone at a much lower rate, they don’t want to employ a fresh graduate for a decent pay. It is why all the recruitment processes target those who would work as a student and/or without any social security. Do I want to be abused like that? Absolutely no!”

22-year-old, female, student, Kadikoy

“Now they say ‘Turkish youth is too picky about jobs.’ No it is not true. The Syrians work at low rates and we just refuse to work for that kind of pocket money.”

19-year-old, male, student, Bahcelievler

“I have a dentist friend who has once turned down a job offer because it only paid a monthly salary of 1800 liras. At the interview, she was openly told that a Syrian dentist was waiting to hear from them to start working for as much. So, the employers prefer to hire Syrians naturally. Such problems might have an impact on youth unemployment. The thing is there are too many new graduates but too few jobs.”

22-year-old, female, student, Avcilar

“An employer could hire three Syrians for the same cost of a Turkish worker. It is advantageous for the bosses but then a Turkish worker is denied a job. And that unemployed Turkish might now be more likely to engage in criminal activity, like theft for instance. So, there is a spill-over effect and people of this country are negatively affected.”

18-year-old, male, student, Esenyurt

Some also experience skills mismatch. In other words, they have grown too tired of looking for a job in accordance with their training and are now forced to work in completely irrelevant jobs. Making the precious time and money spent for university education a sunk cost, this situation seems to deeply affect their psychologies such as causing a severe loss of self-esteem. They have also started questioning the support programs of both governmental and non-governmental bodies. Many think that they are preoccupied with helping the Syrians and are just blind to the Turkish youth’s

needs. Worse, their anger does not stop at the assistance providers but also extend to those who, they say, are vacuuming all the aid, often based on rumors or non-fact-checked social media content.

"I am really unhappy with the current Syrian situation. It is as if I have become a foreigner in my homeland. And it is why I want to leave for somewhere else. I feel like they are given priority now. I don't know that for certain but I feel that way after all that I have seen on Facebook and Twitter. We hear that they receive money from the government. I haven't seen this with my own eyes but it is what we always hear. After all, doesn't the government admit it, too? They say they have spent 20 billion dollars on Syrians. Where did all that money come from? And why was it spent on foreigners while citizens of this country are living in great difficulties?"

24-year-old, male, university graduate, Sultanbeyli

pressure mainly affects youth from poor families and those that have an introvert personality.

"People judge each other all the time because of how they look and there are also divisions formed into groups due to such judgments."

24-year-old, female, student, Kadikoy

"Social discrimination is a pressure happening because of social hierarchy. At the same time, there is economic hierarchy, too. I should also mention sexual, identity and religious discrimination as well."

22-year-old, female, student, Kadikoy

The interviews have shown that those who are bullying their classmates might have their own experience of mistreatment elsewhere.

7.1.3. Peer Pressure Among Turkish Youth

Peer pressure both in schools and social life seems to be an important problem for the Turkish youth particularly before age 18. Some interviewees have argued, however, it is prevalent at work as well.

"There is pressure with regards to clothing where we work now. And personally, I have been under immense pressure because of my weight."

25-year-old, female, works, Uskudar

However, bullying in schools is generally argued to be done by boys who, according to some of this study's interviewees, "try to prove their strength as a man" and "want to be a person who is scary and respected." Moreover, it seems that peer pressure could also be related to the victims' socio-economic status that is not always so easy to hide. So, some interviewees have suggested that peer

"Honestly, there was a time when I did that myself, too. As I grew up, I became senseless because of my despotic father. I used to insult those with low grades, threw away their belongings. It was as if every time I yelled at them, I was yelling at my father. I was actually suppressing my own psychological issues."

15-year-old, female, student, Sultanbeyli

Bullying does not necessarily stop at verbal intimidation. While victims remain always prone to physical attacks and often suffer from them, bullies might sometimes be victims of reactive violence with far worse outcomes. In one such case, an interviewee of this study witnessed a classmate kill another, who he said had been bullying the former, with a shotgun he purchased online by selling his mobile phone in Istanbul in November 2018. The appalling homicide that sent shockwaves across the country then is a stark reminder of how big the peer pressure's costs could be.

7.1.4. Intergenerational Conflict Experienced by Turkish Youth

This study's interviewees have reported major intergenerational conflicts, with their parents in particular. What came up as a main conflict area is choosing a discipline to study at the university level and relatedly a profession to practice. Some of the Turkish youth believe that their parents are overly risk averse and force them to choose "guarantee jobs" such as public employment as well as in healthcare and law. However, there are other areas of contention between the youth and older generations where the disagreements suggest a deeper mental division.

The Turkish youth believes that their parents have sharp views about different ethnicities, political and religious backgrounds and they wish their children to adopt those views without questioning. Nonetheless, the youth argue that they do a much better job in listening and understanding the others thanks to the increasing means of engagement and information available to them:

"I think the new generation is smarter in not getting into political fights. Older people, though, I see them getting really angry and confrontational when it is a political matter that is discussed."

20-year-old, female, student, Kagithane

"In our country, people mistake being a political party fan with being a soccer club fan. They blindly follow their leaders and hardly change their ideas, ideologies. When they subscribe to one, it becomes the only thing that they hear, over and over again. And after a while, they lose all ability to question it. Now, however, there are many sources of information. I don't understand how people could remain so blind but I personally can be friends with whoever they are or whichever group they support as long as they don't insult me and my values."

20-year-old, male, student, Beylikduzu

Despite claims on being a far more tolerant generation than the ones that precede them, the Turkish youth also concede that many of their friends end up being affected by their parents and various stereotypes and prejudices become cross-generational phenomena as a result.

"I have many friends who say 'I am not a racist but I just don't like Kurds'. My friends with headscarf sometimes talk badly about other girls who don't share the same way of conservative clothing. Then again, when I meet my friends without a headscarf, I often see them joking about girls with a headscarf, referring to them as 'silly and naive.' I think we have this big problem of holding stereotypes against each other among the youth. On my occasions, I have heard my friends say 'you should never trust the word of a Kurd' but I have Kurdish friends, too, and I know that those statements are just nonsense. I am afraid we learn them mostly from our parents."

15-year-old, female, Sultanbeyli

Another interviewee, a 17-year-old female from Sultanbeyli in Istanbul, discovered that her parents were harboring severe ethnicity-based prejudices after she fell in love with a Syrian and started dating him. She was not sure how her parents would react when they learned about them and worried that they would not tolerate the relationship because he was from Syria. Day and night, she had this constant thought of how best to approach them with the news. Her boyfriend, whom she was once hopeful she could marry one day, spoke Turkish well enough but had a darker skin color and, therefore, there was no chance she could trick them into believing that he was a Turk. Before she said anything, however, her parents found out she had a boyfriend and launched a bombardment of insistent questions. At the heat of the moment, she thought it was a good idea to rather tell them he was Kurdish. Here is what sadly happened afterwards:

"I told my father that he is from Mardin. It is what just came to my mind at that moment when he started to ask about him in an angry manner. Then, unexpectedly, he became even angrier and started shouting 'Not in hundred years would I betroth you to a Kurdish man. I would rather die and still haunt you in your dreams against it forever.' I was scared and did not know what to say. He then started hitting me uncontrollably. He beat me so bad that day that I can never forget it. I had to stop seeing him or otherwise he would not have allowed me to go to school anymore either."

17-year-old, student, female, Sultanbeyli

Not every interviewee experienced such abhorrent violence from their parents but almost all of them called for more respect for their ideas and ways of life:

"As Turks, we don't really have the best CVs. We don't like to discuss ideas. We live with prejudices and really strong judgments. This cycle needs to be broken. As a teenager, I want more power and voice to the youth to steer this nation towards brighter days. I don't think the youth gets the respect they deserve or in proportion to their potential contributions to this country."

23-year-old, male, student, Kadikoy

7.1.5. The Views of Turkish Youth on the Syrian Youth in Turkey

Except five (two men and three women), all of this study's interviewees had negative views about the Syrian youth. Although some of them were related with direct experiences, majority of those views appeared to be built on misperceptions and misinformation about the Syrians in Turkey. However, those that were related with reported experiences or observations were usually about Syrian men. The Turkish youth say that they are annoyed with the Syrian men's attitude

towards women in general. Although they try to add that it is not right to generalize, they could not stop themselves doing so in many cases.

"I don't like their approach to women. This example will be a kind of extreme but I think it will explain what I mean. I used to work near Taksim Square and, after dark, I have seen that there was a difference between Turkish and Syrian abusers of women. As annoying as they were, Turkish abusers always confined their abuse to within verbal abuse. They used to throw slurs after women but never touched them as they walked away. However, Syrian abusers often went ahead and attempted on physical abuse, too. It was gross."

23-year-old, male, student, Kadikoy

One interviewee claimed of being a victim of sexual harassment by a Syrian man in her neighborhood and she could run away only when a group of Good Samaritans intervened. On the other hand, there was another female interviewee living in Sultanbeyli with a high Syrian population in her neighborhood, who argued that it is generally the Turkish men, not Syrians, that make it difficult to even walk on the streets for women sometimes.

Besides their alleged treatment of women, Syrian youth were criticized by the Turkish youth during interviews because of giving gang-like appearances, always hanging out in groups of 4-5 individuals. As will be seen in Section 7.2, the Syrian youth do accept of having formed such groups intentionally because they say they wish to discourage Turkish youth from attacking them. So, it was clear to the researchers that in the absence of a well-mediated interaction, the Turkish and Syrian youth were both fearful of each other, which seems to create a vicious cycle of deeper separation and more fear. Many Turkish interviewees have even used the term "invade" when they discussed what they thought is the Syrians' motive for being in Turkey. Such sentiments are often mixed with complaints regarding unjust competition for jobs.

“They always are in groups. They are like a gang. Here in Sultangazi, there are Syrians everywhere. At our factory, there are about 40 Syrian workers because they are cheap labor and work without social security. I dislike it economically because they force average pay level lower. If I were an employer, though, I guess I would have hired Syrians, too. Bosses think of only themselves after all, don’t they?”

24-year-old, male, student, Sultangazi

Moreover, high population density of Syrians in certain districts leads to negative views. The Turkish youth sharing such views argue that the majority of Syrian men are poorly educated and create disorder in the Turkish society. In addition, they say that having many children is not in line with being a refugee, which, in their view, gives away that they are in fact not in need of as much financial assistance as they get from the government.

“Well, if it was the war that they fled, then there should have been only the women, elderly and the kids here. What do able men do here? I think they all have betrayed their homeland by running away. Besides, why does Turkey take every sort of Syrian? I mean, European countries have taken them, too, but they have selected the best among them, like university professors and other educated Syrians. And also, now I see Syrian families growing each year with new babies. They have children at all ages. I don’t understand it.”

23-year-old, female, unemployed, Kucukcekmece

In the same FGD meeting where the statement above was offered as an idea on why Syrian refugees do not deserve to be helped financially, there was only a single interviewee who thinks that the Syrians were right in escaping the civil war. All the rest agreed that they should have stayed and

fought for their homeland, rather suspecting of other motives behind Syrians’ mass migration to Turkey.

Interviewee 1: Wait a minute; there is a difference here. You want to leave your homeland to have a better life. They have left theirs to survive.

Interviewee 2: Okay I get it but how can they go back then for a visit, like during religious holidays? I mean, if it is the war that they have escaped, how could they return like they would go on a summer vacation?

Interviewee 1: Still the same, your and their reasons to leave are different. You want to move elsewhere. They had to migrate with whatever little they could bring all of a sudden.

There were also some interviewees who had negative views about Syrian women. They argued that Syrian women are even worse educated than Syrian men and they are so much dependent on their husbands. Moreover, there were also some views from Turkish female youth that the Syrian people, but particularly the Syrian female youth, are judging them a lot and accusing them of not being “a proper Muslim.” They say that is one of the reasons why they prefer to stay away from them.

Researcher: You said there are Syrian students at school but you have never engaged in dialogue longer than casual greetings upon running into each other at the hallways or in class. Is there a reason why?

Interviewee: I am a little scared actually.

Researcher: Of what?

Interviewee: That they could be judgmental.

The truth is I am a very secular person and I like to choose my clothes as per my comfort, not according to a set of religious way. And I know Syrians are very religious. That's why I don't want to try being friends with them but, of course, I always say 'hi' and talk to them like you said casually. It is just I don't want them to be my close friends.

Other reasons for the Turkish youth of being annoyed by the Syrian youth were related with their experiences. Almost in uniformity, the interviewees complained of Syrians because they allegedly make too much noise and disturb their neighbors particularly at late hours, often engage in fights among themselves, and do not follow city guidelines like responsible citizenry requires such as when placing their garbage at the right time and on the right location for municipal pick-up.

"Three Syrian families share a duplex apartment across the street. I experience them at first hand. Every one of our neighbors leaves their trash at 9 a.m. for pick-up but these Syrians just throw their bags down from the fourth floor. We warned them but there is no change. Also, they hold shisha parties and all the smoke pillows into our apartments. They have fun till 4 a.m. and keep the lights on till then. We cannot really sleep when such things happen. And each family has five children. Five, unbelievable! Plus, they fight a lot between themselves. They fight all the time."

23-year-old, female, unemployed, Kucukcekmece

"Where I live, there is this street full of Syrian shops, like from the butcher to the jeweler. They are all Syrian. We call it the Aleppo Street. And I cannot take this lightly. I mean, how could they open all those shops while we, Turks, cannot? Plus, I find the smell of their food really odd. When I walk on that street, all the smells coming out from Syrian restaurants

turn my stomach upside down. I cannot be thankful that the Syrians came and started businesses here."

23-year-old, male, student, Sultanbeyli

Moreover, these negative views that often have a racist tone should not mean that the Turkish youth do not empathize with the Syrian youth at all. Even then, though, the nearly common belief that the Syrian people in Turkey do not live in accordance with Turkish value judgments might just suddenly pop up:

"I should say that because Syrians are refugees here, people think that they are and should always remain inferior. So, there is a hierarchy in people's minds."

22-year-old, female, student, Kadikoy

"I am really sorry for all that is happening. I see them collecting scrap paper from trash bins. I ask them what they used to do in their homeland and learn that they were lawyers, dentists etc. Now, they have to live like this because they don't have a work permit here. The truth is they are the victims of big nations' designs and ambitions."

23-year-old, female, studies and works, Zeytinburnu

"There is so much prejudice against Syrians, not Kurds. My lover was Syrian. All my friends agreed that he didn't deserve me. They were all mad about the way they looked, the way they ate, and the way they enjoyed their hookahs. They all say the same thing: 'Those Syrians betrayed their homeland and now they live a better life than we do here in Turkey.' They also make fun of them a lot, particularly at school. Every Turkish that comes out of their mouths is a reason for mockery."

18-year-old, female, student, Sultanbeyli

"I am sure it must be really hard to be alienated, discriminated, robbed by landlords and made by employers to work for less money. I get all that. But, the problem for me is their population is continuously getting bigger and denser. They always are in large groups. It is as if they are getting ready to do something dangerous. Besides, they push crime rates up and harm public order. I don't mean that our society was perfect before them and everything that is bad today is their fault but it is a fact that they have had a detrimental impact in certain areas. Don't get me wrong! Our next-door neighbor is a Syrian family and my little brother plays with their children at the playground. They still make too much noise in the middle of the night and often disturb us. It is a fact."

20-year-old, female, student, Kagithane

It seems that a problem faced because of a few Syrians can easily be generalized into the total Syrian population in Turkey. And, this is fueled by the racism or scapegoating of Syrians for the problems of natives like other migrant receiving countries. Thus, unemployment and financial difficulties natives appear to directly lead to discriminatory and even racist attitudes. When it comes to the Turkish youth, they say that they feel the Turkish government treats them as second-class citizens compared to the Syrian youth because the latter have various priorities and service provisions. Such misinformation are mainly about a few issues such as all Syrians receiving monthly salaries from the government, the ability of Syrian youth entering universities without taking exam but with scholarships, benefiting from free health services at any age and work status. Moreover, the Turkish youth seems to have an image of a 'refugee' and, when any Syrian youth opposes that image, it creates tensions such as Syrian males smoking hookah in cafés.

"The problem for Syrians is that there is now a slowly rising racism within

the Turkish society. I see it too often on social media. For us, on the other hand, the problem is being offered lower standards than those offered to them here. I mean, it is frustrating to see it since we have our own economic problems to deal with. Besides, there may be cultural differences as well."

20-year-old, male, student, Beylikduzu

Furthermore, it would not be wrong to suggest that discrimination and negative attitudes are at higher levels towards Syrian males. They are commonly seen as "cowards" and "traitors" by the Turkish youth and the reason is that they left their own country during the war. Moreover, the Turkish youth state that they are getting angrier when they see "Syrian youth having their hookahs while Turkish soldiers are martyred to secure Syria for them." It is important to note that these misperceptions and misinformation together with negative experiences lead to further social segregation between the two groups. In the absence of any mechanism to correct this misinformation, this increased level of social segregation would threaten to nullify any chance of social harmony. Then, even a tiny gesture towards the other risks inviting an angry reaction from within as exemplified in the following statement from an interviewee.

"Once we owned an apartment to lease and there was this Syrian family willing to rent it. We thought about it at length and decided not to sign a contract with them because we were worried about what our Turkish neighbors would say about it. It is because once a Syrian family relocates to a neighborhood, then there is often others who follow them. Then, there becomes a growing Syrian community and they fight and make a lot of noise. People get easily tired of them. The truth is that family looked like a really decent one but we couldn't take the risk of being the ones who opened the Pandora's box in our neighborhood."

23-year-old, male, student, Sultanbeyli

7.1.6. Turkish Youth's Suggestions for Social Cohesion With Syrians

When asked of what they believe is essential to building social cohesion with the Syrian youth, the Turkish youth have suggested that both the governmental and non-governmental bodies should treat them equally. They say that they feel discriminated against in their own country and all the affirmative action addressing the Syrians should end.

"It is really annoying that our government helps Syrians while it has its own nation in hunger and need of aid. It should have helped its own people first."

25-year-old, female, works, Uskudar

"I know it is not right to accuse war victims but what can a Turkish breadwinner in great economic difficulties do while he witnesses that the Syrians are taken care of by the government? I mean there must be a way for that man to channel his anger and frustration. I think we accepted far too many Syrians. We should have done like what Europe did and taken much less of them. They are just too many here."

20-year-old, male, student, Beylikduzu

"There must be equality in social rights. I am sure Syrians have experienced discrimination at schools and elsewhere in their lives here. We, however, have also seen that they have benefited from some affirmative action and this has led us to wrongly be somewhat defensive. After all, we are not living a discrimination-free life ourselves, either."

22-year-old, female, student, Kadikoy

"They enter universities without an examination like the one that is compulsory for us. They also get monthly payments from the government while we cannot even be paid unemployment benefits because of the pandemic. All this injustice must end first."

25-year-old, male, unemployed, Buyukcekmece

Another source of the social tension that needs to be addressed for social cohesion, according to the Turkish youth, is the uneven distribution of the Syrian population in Turkey. The interviewees think that the Syrians should rather be scattered across the country so that they could not appear like they are forming their own settlements in Turkey. In the young Turkish minds, this could also mitigate the negative impact the Syrians have in the labor market while helping them learn the Turkish value judgments more quickly, rather than, for instance, trying to impose their own interpretation of Islam on Turks.

"The size of their population is a problem. And their visibility on media is really bad. All those news stories about Syrians committing crimes are having an impact on people. Actually, those crimes can be and are committed by all people regardless of their ethnicity but the Syrians are really a big group and they draw attention."

20-year-old, male, student, Beylikduzu

"There shouldn't be a Syrian neighborhood per se. And Syrians must conform to the way of life here. They cannot just throw their trash bags down from their windows on to the streets. When they live in large groups, they just don't. So Syrians should live amongst Turks to be able to integrate."

23-year-old, male, student, Kadikoy

“Prejudices arise because of the language barrier. There is lack of communication between Turks and Syrians as a result. There are also differences in terms of culture and ideas. In addition, Turks are irritated when Syrians look like they try to impose a more rigid interpretation of Islam here.”

22-year-old, female, student, Kadikoy

Moreover, it seems that the Syrian women are pitied by the Turkish youth because they believe them to be silent, obedient to Syrian men and spending most of their times in their houses looking after many children. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of the interviewees do not see them as a source of problem.

“The Turkish youth is somewhat know-it-all and we also love to discriminate. I think all the fights are because of us. Boys in particular are not raised with love. They are raised like kings and they don’t experience much love from their fathers. So they become bullies. It would have been the same with girls if they were raised the same way”

18-year-old, female, student, Sultanbeyli

“I would have wished to change their paternalistic behaviors. There is a sickening level of masculinity within Syrians. I haven’t seen many Syrian women and cannot talk about them really. I guess they live a much quieter life and should discover new things while in Turkey. Aside from that, Syrians are fun. I like the jokes they make.”

23-year-old, male, student, Kadikoy

Finally, the Turkish youth blame the media, particularly the social media, for disseminating biased and inaccurate information. In the absence of effective and well-mediated interaction, they believe, all the justified negative sentiments about the Syrian

youth are made even worse as a result of rampant misinformation and hearsay on those platforms.

“Social media is a big polarizer in Turkey. When you are on Twitter, you can easily see a sharp division on all topics trending. I mean it is totally absurd. Like when there was this earthquake in Izmir [on October 30, 2020], people were arguing over completely irrelevant, political stuff while there were so many deaths, injuries and still people waiting to be rescued from under piles of rubble. Nobody cares about people’s sufferings. It is the same when there is some humanitarian aid distribution. It always turns into a political show off. So, I think the solution is only through education in Turkey. Without it, it is just like a political circus here.”

24-year-old, male, student, Sultangazi

7.1.7. Expectations of Turkish Youth for Their Future

The gist of the Turkish youth’s expectations is related to their careers and all the material benefits of having a good one. However, the researchers have realized that a surprisingly big group among the interviewees locates their lives to outside Turkey, where they think they could be happier.

“My expectations from the future are a good job, a good house. And, of course, working abroad. It is my biggest expectation.”

When the researchers asked why they want to leave their homeland, the most cited reason was the bleak economic outlook of the country. They do not complain only of lack of jobs, low wages and constantly declining purchasing powers but also of having to live with an incurable level of anxiety, which they suggest is making grow older faster.

“Our expectations from the future should not be having a car or a job or to maintain our income at a certain level. We should already be sure of all that. For God’s sake! We are in our 20s; our expectations should be travelling around the world, not migrating abroad. We can dream of establishing a company and inventing something but they should never be earning enough income and not be in hunger.”

23-year-old, male, student, Beylikduzu

“I believe the common characteristic of Turkish youth is being in depression. Depression includes many things: financial difficulties, worries about future, not getting returns on your efforts. It is very expensive to even have a small hobby. The youth is not getting any sort of support at all. I read an article the other day. It was about the old good days when even primary school graduates could become public employees. Now, people speak two languages, have masters and PhD degrees, and return Turkey after receiving education abroad but still they cannot be at the position they deserve.”

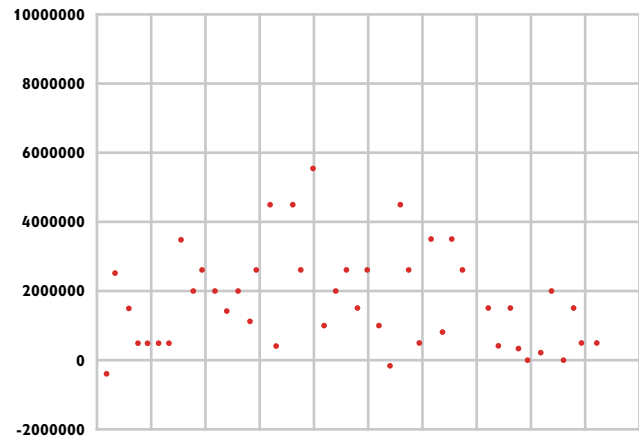
7.1.8. Perceptions About the Syrian Population

Researchers also asked Turkish youth their perceptions about Syrian population in Istanbul and the districts they live in. Difference between their perceptions and reality is immense as you can see in *Figure 24* and *Figure 25* which is also signalling their perceptions about the impact of Syrian refugees both in their lives and Turkish society in general.

According to DGMM statistics, there was 549,380 Syrian refugees in Istanbul. Perceptions of each Turkish interviewee about the total population of Syrians are on the y-axis of *Figure 24*. As you can see, except 2 of all had a huge discrepancy from the reality. One of the interviewees even stated

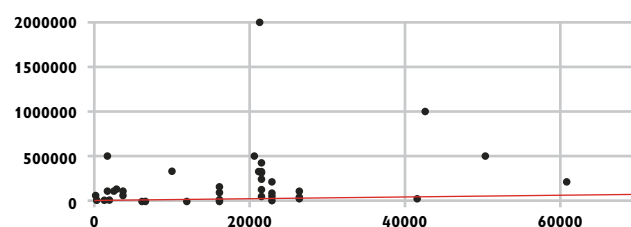
that there are, in his view, almost 10 million Syrian refugees in Istanbul.

Figure 24. Perceptions of Turkish Youth About the Syrian Population in Istanbul



Assuming that Turkish youth could have a better reflection on reality due to their interactions and experience, researchers expected a better prediction of Syrian population in their districts. Our Turkish interviewees were from 23 different districts around Istanbul including those with a high population of Syrians such as Esenyurt and Sultangazi and the ones with a very low number of Syrian residents like Besiktas and Kadikoy. *Figure 25* predicted and real Syrian population in each district. Predictions are presented on the y-axis while real population numbers are given in x-axis. Moreover, red line reflects the 45-degree line. Thus, any data point above this line implies an overprediction and vice versa. As you can see, again the majority assumes that total Syrian population in their districts is very high compared to real values.

Figure 25. Prediction vs. Reality of Syrian Population in Districts of Istanbul



7.2. Syrian Adolescents and Youth in Turkey

According to the DGMM statistics, there were more than 3.6 million Syrians who have sought refuge in Turkey and a striking 98.4% were living outside temporary protection camps by January 6th, 2021. The number of Syrians inhabiting Istanbul alone was over 120,000. Of the entire Syrian population registered in the country, some 22% (or 788,903 people to be exact) were also between the ages 15 to 24.

In bicontinental Istanbul, the municipal districts that host the largest Syrian populations, in alphabetic order, are Avcılar, Bağcılar, Bahçelievler, Basaksehir, Esenler, Esenyurt, Fatih, Gaziosmanpaşa, Küçükçekmece, Sultangazi, and Zeytinburnu on the European side and Sultanbeyli on the Asian side. Figure 26 shows on a density map the geographic distribution of the registered Syrian population across the city. With the following Figure 27, it is also seen that the districts with the largest Syrian populations are usually the ones with the lowest development indices. Presence of lower housing prices, higher chance of informal employment, ethnic enclaves and local provisions towards Syrians might all help explain

why there is such a skewed distribution. However, the geographical locations of the Syrians could also be one of the important sources of social tensions with the native Turkish population because local people in those less developed districts have a higher probability of perceiving Syrians as their competitors in the labor market or when it comes to benefiting from social services.

For this study, the researchers have interviewed Syrian youth to understand their perceptions, needs and challenges the first-hand. They have also conducted KIIs with members of several Syrian NGOs active in Turkey to add their experience and insights to the power of analysis within. In total, 39 Syrians between the ages of 14 and 25 were interviewed in four FGDs as well as through one-on-one meetings online or over the phone. The study is significant also in terms of the attention it has paid to including the generally unheard voices of female Syrians. Of those 39 interviewees, 25 were females and 14 were males. All FGDs with the Syrian youth were gender-specific since the interviewees felt more comfortable that way.

Figure 26. Share of SuTP Population Across Istanbul, 2019

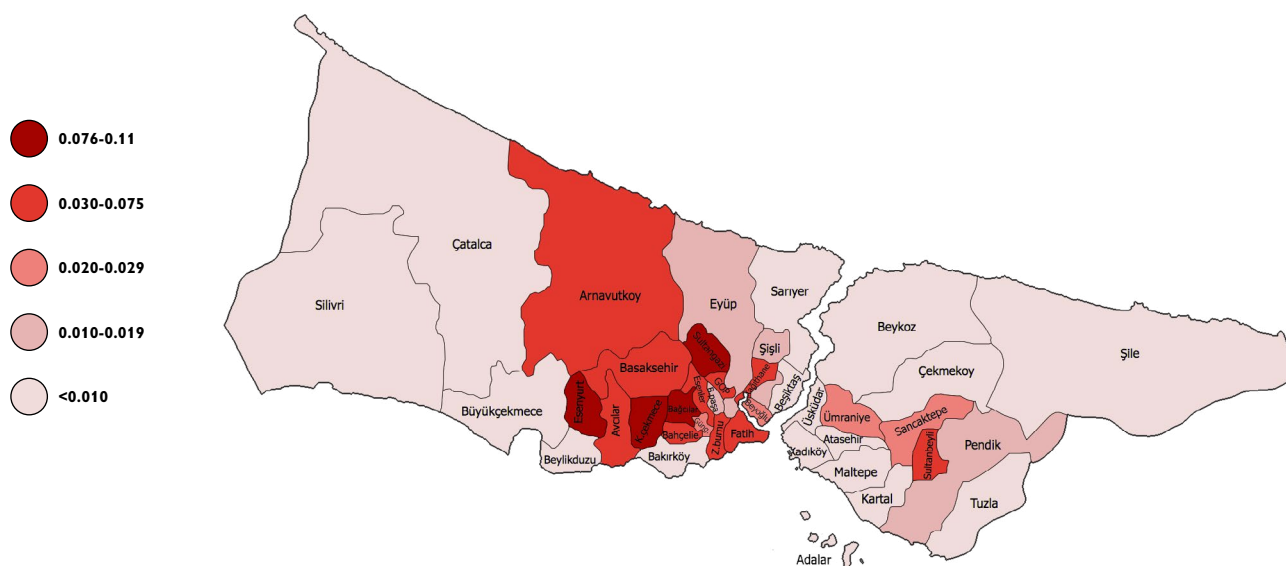
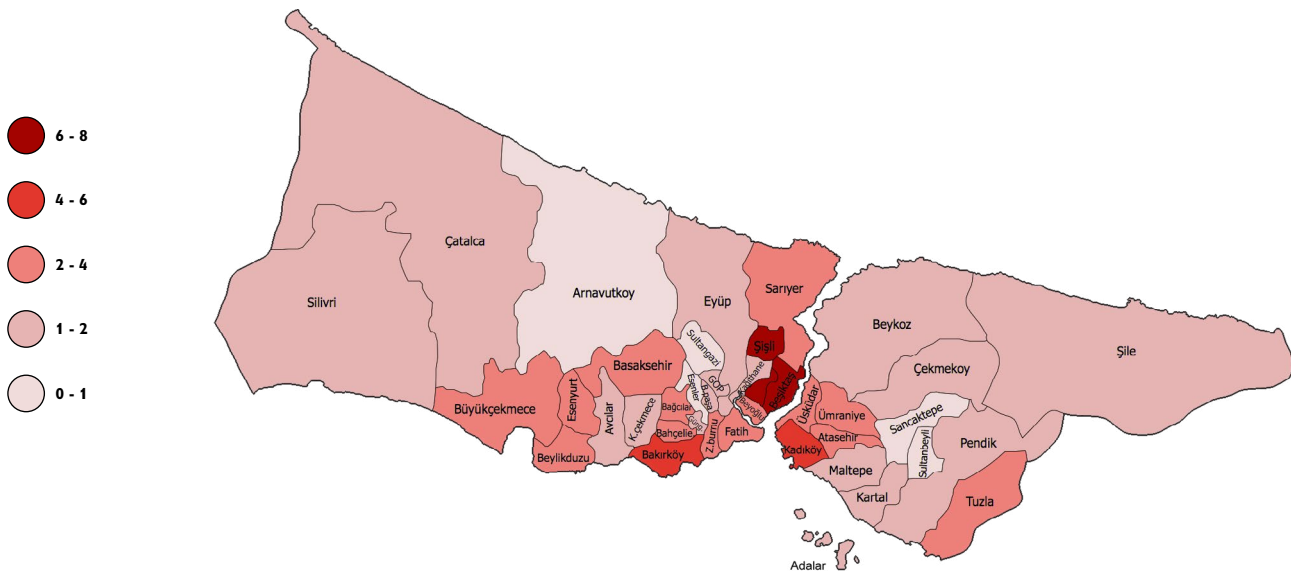


Figure 27. Development Indices of Istanbul's Districts, 2017

7.2.1. Main Problems of Syrian Youth

The researchers have asked Syrian boys and girls about the main problems they face in Turkey. The commonly reported problems are related to *Turkish language proficiency, financial needs, feeling of instability, heavy burden of responsibilities, inability to find employment, discrimination and alienation*. However, female Syrians have also mentioned some emotional issues such as *being alone, missing their relatives and their social relationships* back in Syria as well as their concerns about finding a *suitable partner to marry* should they continue to live in Turkey.

Many interviewees have suggested that they are 'forced' to not only learn Turkish but also to speak it without an accent. They have said that those who are able to do this are luckier because they could "hide" their identities, which they believe is key to escape discrimination in public spaces. However, it seems that it is not so easy for the majority of Syrian boys to have such a Turkish level because they have discontinued their education to be able to work and the long work hours they now have to abide by make it too difficult for them to attend language courses either. Therefore, those who have

low levels of Turkish language proficiency, and particularly boys face difficulties in communicating with the natives. This is also an important source of barriers for social integration. Those who do not have a Turkish language level "well enough" to convince the natives that they are "different" from "other" Syrians have said that they prefer to restrict their social interactions to only with other Syrians to avoid discrimination. Unsurprisingly the result is a widening social gap between Syrian and Turkish youth.

Although agreeing with the disadvantage of Syrian boys in learning Turkish, some female Syrian interviewees have told the researchers that the specific traditional way they cover their heads is an important marker that instantly separates a Syrian girl from a Turkish girl with similar religious values. Many have suggested that even if they possess an advanced level of Turkish, therefore, they still face discrimination due to how they look.

Another important problem the Syrian youth face in Turkey is *instability*. Instability is mainly about

their current lives and future prospects. Some have suggested that they are in constant fear of losing all that they have built from zero after their arrival in Turkey. Some have reported fears of being deported if the current Turkish government loses power because they believe that people who support other major political parties are against their presence in Turkey. Moreover, the Syrian youth are of the idea that the Turkish youth is more involved in politics and this creates an additional barrier between the two groups. Another source of instability is the lack of prospects of finding a proper job. Many interviewees have told the researchers that they have to accept working in worse conditions than their Turkish peers to survive. They have also complained of having to change jobs too often because their employers could fire without any legal hurdles. The following statement from an interview with a Syrian female aged 22 who lives in Gungoren exemplifies the multiplicity of problems the Syrian youth and their families have:

“My brothers cannot find a job easily and, even when they somehow do, they have zero stability in retaining it. They may literally be fired at any time. Plus, my father is totally unable to find a job because he is often considered too old to work now and, worse, he does not speak Turkish well enough.”

22-year-old, female, Gungoren

Lack of family relations and support are another source of instability. Among the interviewees, there were many who have lost at least one close member of their families in the civil war or have part of their core family (that is, parents or siblings) still living in Syria. Throughout the field research, it has become clear that the trauma their loss or absence creates hardly heals on their own. Finally, some interviewees have reported a feeling of instability due to Turkey's own economic and social issues. Many of them have told the researchers that their lives were dealt a heavy blow due to the attempted military takeover in

the summer of 2016 and during election periods because they experienced even a higher level of discrimination during those times.

It is beyond any argument that the Syrian refugees terribly suffered because of the civil war in their homeland and their sufferings are far from over even years after they fled it. Millions of them have arrived in a foreign land and started a new life but they had to work hard to build it from scratch. It is an experience that they understandably do not want to relive. This is why an overwhelming majority is hoping to obtain Turkish citizenship and to never have to start over elsewhere. Syrian youth, in particular, believes that this would give them better life standards such as free travel, less discrimination, choosing a subject in the university as they wish and other legal rights. The experience of a male interviewee who migrated from Idlib to Istanbul in 2015 illustrated how, indeed, that could be the case, albeit with certain imperfections:

“My situation has improved since I obtained the Turkish citizenship. All the problems the others talk about, like difficulty faced in government procedures, the issue of possessing property, housing and all the legal issues attached to it... they all disappeared with my new status. What has remained, though, is the general attitude of the natives. Despite the citizenship, they still consider me a Syrian because I have an accent. There is also a common misbelief that the Turkish government favors Syrians over Turks in distributing social provisions. It is racism, really nothing less.”

Male

Syrian youth generally hope to have better jobs that offer legal rights, a higher pay and room for self-development so that they could invest in their futures. Another male Syrian interviewee who migrated from Homs to Istanbul in 2016 discussed what he expects the most out of the Turkish citizenship he looks forward to with some skepticism:

“My main problem is the inability to legally enter the labor market and obtain university education in an area that I choose. I hope with citizenship this will cease to be a problem. Without it, however, I am afraid finding a solution would be easier outside Turkey.”

Male

Therefore, life in general seems to be difficult for both genders but in different ways. Although financial responsibility is more on the shoulders of males and therefore they have a higher probability to discontinue their educations, females face heavier household responsibilities and other gender related challenges. Discrimination and alienation cause additional psychological and emotional problems in the case of females. Some interviewees have said that they became highly introvert after certain types of mistreatment they were subjected to. For a 16-year-old female interviewee, even the most casual of daily activities outside her home have become a source of stress.

“Once, two strangers -- a woman and a boy -- physically attacked me just because they have somehow discovered that I am from Syria. So, when I walk on the street now, I fear I might be exposed to another act of hate.”

16-year-old, female

The following experience of 24-year-old Syrian female living in Bayrampasa who is currently a university student also show that Syrian women can easily become target of racist behavior because how they look quickly reveal their national background:

“One day, I was in a bus in Taksim and a man started shouting and cursing Syrians, pointing at me. I think it was my hijab that gave me away. Maybe he was drunk and beside himself but I cannot describe how much danger I felt I was in at that moment.”

24-year-old, female, student, Bayrampasa

For another female interviewee who, too, is a university student, being subjected to racist treatment, though non-physically, is an everyday experience.

“I am afraid in the Turkish view; we refugees are just inferior human beings. I am constantly the object of irony by my Turkish classmates and I hate going to the university because of that.”

Female, student

Another common complaint of the Syrian adolescents and young adults covered in this study is about the job opportunities in Istanbul. They voice concerns very similar to the Turkish youth as provided in the previous section. The main problems related to employment that appeared specific to the Syrians are the language barrier and lack of flexibility in choosing to work or not. It has become clear to the researchers after the interviews that the Syrians could be easily locked out of the labor market if they do not speak Turkish well and that they have a much lower bargaining power with potential employers since they are poorer and obliged to take a job whenever it is available regardless of its pay.

Besides, lack of decent job opportunities leads to a skills mismatch in the case of Syrians with a university degree. Turkish university graduates have complained about the same problem but Syrians have reported being discriminated also because they are Syrians. A 22-year-old Syrian female living in Gaziosmanpasa had none other than the following blunt words to describe the situation on the ground:

“I have friends of about my age who have a university degree but they cannot find a proper job according to their specialization. Pushed to a corner, they accept to do anything to let their families survive. That is, despite all the mistreatment and insults you can imagine... Their bosses are just bad people, offering the worst deals to employees who they know are without a better choice”

22-year-old, female, Gaziosmanpasa

7.2.2. Main Problem in Schools: Bullying

For many Syrian interviewees, impossibility of continuing their education is a major problem. However, many of those who do attend schools have reported negative experiences. All of the Syrian youth interviewed as part of this study have mentioned either they or their friend(s) experienced bullying. Although there might be several reasons related to individual student characteristics, school environment and family behind it, there are two major reasons according to the Syrian youth: language related problems and prejudices of Turkish students. Moreover, it seems that bullying results in physical or psychological problems for Syrian youth, forcing them to skip school or even completely drop out in some cases. This is particularly the case for Syrian youth who have arrived in Turkey at a rather later age, had educational gaps both in Syria and Turkey, and who, therefore, have lower Turkish language proficiencies. In addition, Syrian youth who have experienced bullying at schools told the researchers that it affects their self-confidence although in some rare cases it seems to have pushed them rather to study more and prove themselves in their schools such as in the case below:

"I entered school with detestable language skills. At the time, the number of Syrians was quickly increasing so the natives hated us. They were mocking Syrians all the time, even laughing at us after making sounds of explosion and bombing nearby. It was terrible. I came back home crying many times but I never did that in front of them. I had to be strong. At first, I couldn't respond or say anything but then I thought maybe I didn't have to say anything to respond and maybe all I should do was study harder. So I did. When I look back, those laughs have ultimately had a positive impact, motivating me to get better as a student."

16-year-old, Syrian, female

Moreover, both male and female interviewees have spoken of being subject to violence because they were Syrian. The following cases are only a few examples those experiences:

"In middle school, I didn't speak Turkish fluently and was the only Syrian in my class. I was physically assaulted."

19-year-old, Syrian, male


"I studied in three different schools and at each one there was bullying by peers but our teachers were neutral and not racist. Also, not every Turkish student treated us badly or wanted to do harm because we were Syrian. There were so many among them with a rather friendly approach towards us. I have then realized that the bullies were from poorer families because they thought we stole their income, or they themselves were newcomers to Istanbul from elsewhere in Turkey. In the 7th grade, I was physically assaulted but I couldn't even explain the situation to our teacher at the time because I was yet to speak Turkish fluently."

20-year-old, Syrian, male

"On the first day at school, I was beaten by some students. I was shocked and could not give any reaction. I kept asking myself why they are doing this. They used to accuse me of things I had no relation to or even an idea about. I stayed at the same school because I had no choice. Also, I did not know how to deal with these issues because of the language barrier and other difficulties associated with relocation in a new country and new environment. Once when I was in the 7th grade, a boy tried to grab me and then took my hijab off. I started going to a psychiatrist but I couldn't continue doing so because it was too expensive for my family. The truth is I still have psychological problems. I am always nervous for ridiculous reasons."

16-year-old, Syrian, female

Bullying and ethnic intimidation at schools create giant problems for the social integration of Syrian students. Those with traumatizing experiences as illustrated above and a low level of Turkish language proficiency generally tend to limit their contacts with the natives, both in and outside their schools. The result is sometimes an introvert or even a reclusive individual and sometimes one who engages with only the people of the same national or ethnic background as they are. Such segregation, whether imposed or self-induced, makes social integration, let alone cohesion, virtually impossible. Some interviewees have even spoken of formation of gang-like groups within Syrians in an attempt to shape a social power structure they perceive.



“My little brother has faced some bullying before but he was always trying to defend himself and his friends. Now at school, they have their own group to scare others.”

22-year-old, Syrian, female

Moreover, according to some interviewees, even intra-ethnic alienation starts once a Syrian student befriends a Turkish classmate. That Syrian student then becomes a “traitor” in the eyes of his or her Syrian friends while still struggling to receive a general acceptance by the natives because of his or her national background. Some of this study’s female interviewees, in particular, have reported of feeling in-between Syrians and Turks because of such pressures. They say their psychology is under immense strains as a result. The following dialogue is from one of the FGDs conducted as part of this study and serves to exemplify how.




Interviewee 1: One of the challenges is that the Syrians themselves are telling me, “You have left us and gone with the Turks.” I feel now that I must choose between them. The Syrians should integrate with the Turks so that ethnic groups do not form.

Interviewee 2: I agree. The Syrians in my class have started to ignore and isolated me since I have some Turkish friends.

Interviewee 1: I’d be better off if they stopped at isolating me alone. They even call me names now. Everywhere I go, I see fingers pointing at me, driving me paranoid.

Final finding on the issue of bullying is that it is very much linked with the political and social developments in the country. The youth who can easily be affected by the outer environments might exhibit extra reactions particularly in times of crises. And it could be about many things such as elections, their families’ economic situation, experiences of other hardships and so on. Those factors might help explain why some interviewees feel that the discrimination they face has worsened over time and depending on certain incidents that took place.



“Between 2013-2015 there was no such problem as bullying at school. On the contrary, they were good with Syrians. But then things changed. Turks started to express a growing discontent with our presence in the country. Once, a friend of mine even received a death threat from a Turkish student who was agitated by some disinformation against Syrians on social media. Of course, my friend was completely blameless. He was just another Syrian.”

21-year-old, Syrian, female

7.2.3. Intergenerational Conflict

Like the Turkish youth, the Syrian youth accepts intergenerational conflict as normal and inescapable. During the interviews, they seemed to have internalized it with some arguing that the older generations just do not understand the changes

technological advancements bring. A main area where this conflict manifests itself is planning of the future's youth. Many interviewees have complained of being forced to choose a discipline that, according to their parents, is respectful and guarantees a job in the future.

Moreover, again similar to the Turkish youth, Syrian girls believe that it is a deeper problem for them compared to boys because traditional and religious values of older generations usually have gender-biased discrimination against women. Some of the female interviewees have mentioned that living in Turkey has provided them with more freedoms in that sense. However, the ones who say so are university students in Turkey, which are very few in number so the situation of the majority of Syrian female adolescent and youth might be very different. As we see from the literature, the incidence of early marriage is higher among girls and the lives of even those who continue their education are usually restricted between home and school. A 16-year-old Syrian female student appeared deeply troubled because of such limitations.

"My parents think we still live in their old times. They are not aware of the changes happened. And they do not understand the differences between our situations. My father bans me from having some extra tutoring out of my school time. He thinks it is not important. I try to convince him by explaining all the advantages of the thing I want to do and give him all the details of what I would do when I go out but he still refuses. He thinks girls should not go out of home as they want."

16-year-old, Syrian, female

This may be an important factor to consider when NGOs or INGOs design any program targeting the girls. Those programs would do better to target families, particularly fathers, at the same time as their daughters. Without gaining their trust first, it seems that the Syrian girls will continue to be largely invisible in the society.

There also appear to be some gender norms inside the Syrian community that came up as a source of complaint by many female interviewees. These gender norms restrict their lives as can be seen in the following statements:

"For my society, a girl must never make mistakes but a boy can always make them."

22-year-old, Syrian, female

"My parents do not allow me to publish any of my pictures on social media but I want to be famous because my future depends on it since I study journalism. Leave it to them and I would be better off marrying the next suitor to come knocking on our door. I am doing all that I can to persuade them for the future I want to have but so far there has not been a strong show of support."

22-year-old, Syrian, female

7.2.4. Reasons, Places and Effects of Social Tensions, Ethnic Intimidation, and Discrimination

This sub-section summarizes reasons, places and effects of social tensions between Turkish and Syrian youth as well as discrimination against Syrian youth according to their own views and experiences. Although these reasons are listed in an order, one can understand that they are all linked to each other in different ways. Thus, even targeting one of these issues should help improve social cohesion in the society.

The first reason of social tensions between the two groups is the language barrier. Syrian youth believes that the intensity of discrimination they experience is strongly correlated with how poorly they speak Turkish. The researchers have discovered six main effects of possessing a proficiency in Turkish

for a Syrian youth. Firstly, a better knowledge of Turkish helps them hide their true identities and escape discrimination. Secondly, it provides them the opportunity to report discrimination and mistreatment. Thirdly, it enables them to handle official procedures since they then could more easily understand what to do where and also the public employees are reportedly showing a greater degree of tolerance towards Syrians with advanced Turkish skills. Fourthly, it increases their awareness of the rampant disinformation and discrimination particularly on social media but this might also affect their psychology negatively. Fifthly, Syrian adolescents and young adults who are comfortable in communicating in Turkish have better connections with the Turkish youth although such connections may sometimes invite hostile attitudes from other Syrians who equate them with betrayal. Finally, an advanced knowledge of Turkish might also make Syrian youth replace their parents in the labor market earlier than advised or before they personally wish. Therefore, speaking Turkish well is not without challenges for a Syrian but the list of difficulties associated with not being able to do so is incomparably longer. The following statements from interviews might allow revisiting those difficulties discussed in detail earlier in this report.

“Getting picked on for the simple reason of speaking a different language is creating a hostile environment that surrounds everything and everywhere mentally. It is especially the case for teenagers and youngsters, making them fear all that is around them.”

22-year-old, male, works and studies

“When Syrians do not learn Turkish, it creates an impassable barrier for integration. Turks and Syrians do not get to know each other enough. Then, Syrians create their own community, engage with Syrians alone, and they also study at Arab schools. Some of them

recognize not a single Turkish neighbor. This is a breeding ground only for more problems in the future.”

24-year-old, university graduate, female, Basaksehir

Fluency in Turkish has proved an important resilience factor against discrimination and violence in many cases such as the one below:

“Prior to university, I didn’t experience any racism, but then I was exposed to sexual harassment. A Turkish guy tried to assault me in broad daylight because I guess he thought I would accept anything as a Syrian refugee in this country. I am not scared, though. I am fluent in Turkish and I know I have rights against wishful perpetrators of such attacks. Before I mastered the language, however, I feared everything.”

20-year-old, female, studying, Gaziosmanpasa

Despite such benefits, the researchers have also learned that discrimination they have faced in the process has led some members of the Syrian youth to quit learning Turkish.

“A big percentage of the Syrian youth experience ethnic intimidation, especially in the last two years. They have even given up learning Turkish and only stayed in their circle surrounded by Syrians alone, which is provocative. Sometimes we have to hide our identity to stay safe and avoid friction with the natives. To cope with discrimination, honestly, I would pretend to be from any nationality other than a Syrian.”

20-year-old, male, university student

Another important source of social tensions, according to the Syrian interviewees, is their perceived incomppliance with the image of a “typical Syrian” in

the eyes of the natives. They have repeatedly raised this issue during the interviews. They have suggested that the Turkish people always want to see them vulnerable, in deep sadness and grief because of the civil war. Therefore, they believe that the Turkish youth grow angry when they see Syrian youth enjoying their lives, going to cafés or even at shopping. A 24-year-old Syrian woman has summarized this situation with her own experiences as the following:

“Turks have a problem with Syrians who could enter Turkish universities and study. They have a problem when they come across Syrians in playgrounds with their children. Turks have a problem with Syrians who could enjoy their lives, laugh and wander around. Once in a bank, they did not allow me to get my money although I had no problems in my ID and other documentation. The officer asked me: ‘How as a Syrian can you have a money transfer?’ Another day, I was shopping at IKEA; a person waiting line before the cashier said to me that ‘Syrians must all be so rich actually because you spend a lot of money on silly stuff.’ But, of course, I do not generalize. I know brilliant Turkish people who do not think the same way.”

24-year-old, female

Strikingly in consensus, the whole group of Syrian youth interviewed also believes that misperceptions fueled by politicians and media about Syrians in Turkey play a major role in creating intercommunity tensions.

“On the streets, people often confront me with hateful slurs like ‘You Syrian! Go back to your country. Why did you not stay and fight in Syria like we did against coup plotters on July 15 (2016).’ Other children always beat my little brother. Once, his classmates yelled at him in almost identical words like they did at me on the streets. Where is all this hate coming from?”

16-year-old, Syrian, female

“Local media says that the Turks, not Syrians, are fighting in Syria, while constantly labeling us as rapists and killers who know nothing but to attack. There is also the inaccurate claim that Syrians have taken all the available jobs and that they are also the reason for the sudden increase in rents. Alas, the accusers never think of the fact that those who have raised the rents were Turkish property owners, not the Syrians.”

20-year-old, Syrian, male

“Turks wrongly believe that we, Syrians, enter universities without an entrance exam, receive large financial support out of taxes they paid and also choose to work without working permits. All that is the result of lack of integration between the two peoples. When it is absent, anything could be considered the truth.”

19-year-old, Syrian, male

“The reasons of social tensions are the language gap and the spread of lies among the Turkish people like, for example, ‘all Syrians are getting a monthly salary from the government’ and ‘getting into universities without taking tests.’ Whenever a crime such as rape or robbery takes place, Syrians are the first to be blamed even if they have nothing to do with it, which is actually the case in majority of those instances. We are scapegoats for all the bad that happens in the country.”

22-year-old, Syrian, male

As should already be clear from the views of the Turkish youth provided in Section 7.1, the misperceptions Syrian interviewees talk about above do exist within the Turkish community. Therefore, it appears to be an important dimension of intervention for policies and

programs aimed at fostering social cohesion between Syrian refugees and the natives in Turkey. Effectively countering waves of disinformation may not be straightforward but it is clear that, in the absence of such efforts, these problems would only get more complicated. When designing projects, however, it would be critically important to pay attention to any selection bias for the target audience. Those projects should definitely reach out to the parts of the Turkish society where such misperceptions are common.

Expectedly, the stereotypes do not only exist among the Turkish youth. There are certain misperceptions the Syrian youth carry towards their Turkish peers, such as “All Turks are racist, greedy and irredentist,” which are equally harmful and impede social cohesion. They are discussed in detail in Section 7.2.8.

When the researchers asked about the common places of social tension, the Syrian interviewees said they experienced discrimination and unwarranted hate at schools, in government offices, playgrounds, on public transport and when they look for an apartment to rent as well as randomly on the streets.

At schools, in particular, it has become clear to the researchers that teachers could play a significant role in efforts to reduce discrimination and bullying.

“I did experience discrimination at school, where teachers preferred Turkish students over Syrians, which deeply hurt and made me hate my surrounding community. There were contests that didn’t allow Syrian participation. They were for Turkish students alone. I never understood why. Also, whenever there was a fight between a Syrian and a Turkish student, the Syrian students were always the ones blamed for all that fuss. Everyone was innocent except the Syrians.”

15-year-old, male, high school student

“There are some activities in which Turkish students were preferred like school trips, contests or applications. My sister once ranked first in a Quran reciting contest, but they said they couldn’t give her the winner’s prize because a Turkish student must take it. In my experience, Syrians were usually getting the highest grades at school. Turkish students were generally underperformers at public schools because most of the truly brilliant among them were enrolled in private schools.”

20-year-old, male, university student

Since Syrian youth have usually better Turkish skills than their parents, they are often the ones who look for an apartment when they need to move. Doing so, however, exposes them to some discrimination as well.

“Once, I was searching for a flat to rent for my family and did sign a contract with a property owner. I paid a deposit as well as the first month’s rent upfront but, when I took my family over to let them see the apartment, some people living in the building suddenly came and pressured the property owner to not rent it to us. It turned out that they were unhappy only because we were Syrians”

20-year-old, female, university student

Syrians are subject to random attacks mostly on public transport and on the streets. The main two things that give away their identity was the language they spoke, and specifically in the case of Syrian women, the way they put on their hijabs. Syrian male youth, therefore, could more easily escape racism if they do not talk in the presence of others but Syrian female youth had also to change how they look if they wanted to be as sure.

"From the way I am wearing my headscarf, people recognize that I am from Syria. One day inside a hospital, I heard a woman yelling 'we do not want Syrians here' after pointing a finger at me."

21-year-old, female, university student, Esenler

learning Turkish, however, I became a different person."

20-year-old, female, university student

"I am afraid of losing my composure and unconsciously start speaking in Arabic while in a public space. It is because I try very hard not to since I know random people might insult me if I did so. It is a shame that we are made to suppress Arabic like that, when it is the language of Quran, our common holy book."

20-year-old, female, university student

"At the migration office in Beyazit one day, the officers and the security guards treated us like flies. I do not even know what we did or did not do. They were angry from the moment they discovered we were from Syria."

22-year-old, female, university student

"I experience discrimination almost every day because I'm the unwanted Syrian who does not leave."

22-year-old, male, works and studies

"I was verbally abused numerous times for speaking Arabic in public and it did have a negative impact on me at first because I felt watched all the time, which led me subconsciously to isolate myself. But later on, I got used to it. Not that it is a good thing to do but I'm trying to find a way to fit in while not losing a side of who I am."

22-year-old, male, works and studies

Experiencing these discriminatory behaviors impacts them in different ways. The commonly mentioned effects are a drop in their productivity, increase in social distance with the natives, having to hide their identities and all the psychological traumas related with that, anger, feeling of inferiority, lack of self-confidence and finally formation of stereotypes about Turkish people such as "All Turks hate Syrians".

In some cases, Syrian interviewees have reported being mistreated by public employees because they did not speak Turkish well enough to be respected. Following statements from different interviews provide some examples.

"I experience discrimination at all levels. It makes me feel inferior to Turks, destroying my self-confidence. That feeling of imperfection follows me everywhere."

22-year-old, female, student, Basaksehir

"At the migration office once, I was helping my sister fill some official papers and the officer treated us very badly in a condescending way. He was unhappy with our Turkish. We came back home with tears in our eyes that day. After

"Discrimination causes psychological trauma, anger and, after a certain extent, reinforces ideas of leaving Turkey for somewhere else, anywhere else."

15-year-old, male, student

7.2.5. Suggestions of Syrian Youth for Social Integration

Syrian youth hope that the natives would show a greater acceptance towards Syrians once more contacts are established between the two peoples. During the interviews, they have offered the researchers certain suggestions on how to make it happen in an effective way. And their expectations are not only of policymakers, NGOs or the host society. They believe that the Syrian refugees have responsibilities, too, at least in the form of learning Turkish to prove that they are willing to integrate into the life in Turkey.

More specifically, Syrian youth interviewed as part of this study have suggested that the Turkish government should first make it clear to the general audience that the financial aid some Syrian families receive are actually coming from European Union funds, not from Turkish taxes. They believe that such a clarification would help counter the common misperception among the native community that Syrians are a burden on the country.

Another main proposal of Syrian interviewees is increased provision of integration courses for Syrians. They have told the researchers that such trainings would really help if they include information on the value judgements of the Turkish society, their customs, traditions, and “red lines.”

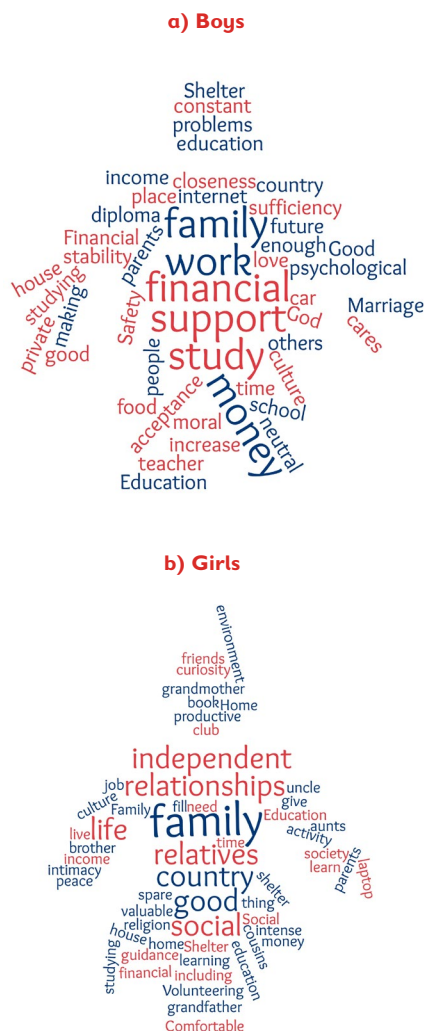
Equally commonly, the Syrian interviewees have suggested that any effort aimed at improving social cohesion between Turks and Syrians should also pay specific attention to the labor market. It is because while Syrians work longer hours for lower pay without any social security, Turks wrongly attribute all the damage done by economic downturns to Syrians, accusing them of stealing their jobs. According to the interviewed Syrian youth, there should be more inspections of businesses and employers should be held to account for all types of secrecy and abuse victimizing Turks and Syrians alike. They believe that once there is more transparency and equality of opportunity, there would be much less friction between the two peoples.

7.2.6. Priorities and Primary Needs of Syrian Youth in Turkey

We had also asked the priorities and primary needs of Syrian youth. The *Figure 28* and *Figure 29* summarized their answers separately by each gender. For boys, priorities and primary needs are focused more on work, family and continuing their education. Whereas for girls, these are more about family, social relationships, their relatives, education and religion.

Figure 28. Priorities in Life for Both Genders



Figure 29. Primary Needs in Life for Both Genders

7.2.7. Expectations for the Future

Like the Turkish youth, expectations of the Syrian youth are generally related to completing their education and finding a good job afterwards, which they hope would provide them a stable income. However, there are major differences related to the intrinsic nature of being a refugee.

The Syrian youth is also willing to see stability in Syria and even be a part of it. They believe that being successful in Turkey is necessary to accomplish that. Moreover, it must be noted that it is usually boys who have mentioned of a willingness to be part of the process to rebuild Syria. Another

important thing to note that they do not plan to leave Turkey totally in the future even if they plan to return to Syria. Finally, they have also expectations about forming a family in the future. An important issue about the marriage expectations is that some of the Syrian females have mentioned that finding a suitable partner to marry is very difficult for them because a higher percentage of Syrian males cannot continue their education in Turkey and instead have to work to finance their families. Therefore, they believe that there will be a huge educational gap between Syrian men and women in Turkey and this makes them worried about forming a sustainable family here.

“My expectations from the future are successful completion of my studies, entering the labor market with a good pay, marrying and also seeing stability restored in Syria. I will be one of those who return and rebuild it but I will always stay between Turkey and Syria. I cannot leave either.”

23-year-old, male, works and studies

In the future, I hope to have a good family and education, financial stability, and a life in safety. If that day comes and stability returns to Syria, I will then be between the two nations, Turkey and Syria. Despite everything, Istanbul has many of our memories and dreams.”

22-year-old, male, student

“I wish to study political science and steer the world away from injustice, build my own future while helping stop racism. I will not be silent about the truth and discrimination against girls at school. I want to empower them and show everybody that they can accomplish anything and should never be locked in the house.”

16-year-old, female, Bayrampasa

7.2.8. The Views of Syrian Youth About Turkish Youth

For the purposes of this study, it was very important to detail how each youth group sees and evaluates the other. Unsurprisingly, the Syrian youth were found to have certain stereotypes of the Turkish youth. The most commonly proposed characteristic of Turkish youth by them, is closed-mindedness. Moreover, they believe that Turkish youth pay more attention to materiality and less on morality and religion. However, many have also stated that the Turkish youth are sentimental and they appreciate the humanitarian help of Turkish neighbors in the early years of the Syrian conflict.

“In my opinion, the Turkish people are a kind of sentimental people, I mean, they can change their opinion with one news, even if it is incorrect or a sudden decision can change their mind very quickly. The people are also workaholics. Young people in particular are lost because of their view of a purely material life and intellectual orientation towards a Western way of life. My feelings, however, are feelings of brotherhood and love, especially because we are governed by the same values and principles.”

23-year-old, male, works and studies

“I do not hate the Turkish people but I think they are not open minded and do not accept a foreign element so easily. It is less the case for Turkish youth, though.”

23-year-old, male, student

“Turks have an ambitious youth that always strives for the best of themselves but there are always political agendas that exploit them.”

20-year-old, male, works and studies

The views of Syrian female youth, in particular, about Turkish youth have appeared to be more negative.

“The Turkish youth is lost and stray. The percentage of adherence to Islam is less than zero among them. Their golden example is Europe. Some of them have even become atheists. Some of them are better because they are from more religious families.”

20-year-old, female, student

“The Turkish youth is really sad. They do not smile or enjoy their lives. They are unsocial, unnatural and closed-minded. Their principles are strange. They put material values before intangible: money and certificates before a relationship.”

22-year-old, female, student

“Turkish youth is a powerful generation but shows resistance against any change. They are stubborn and never listen to you even if they are clearly on a wrong path. They show unwillingness to experience new things and are never ready to change their ideas.”

18-year-old, female, student

When the researchers asked of similarities between the Syrian and the Turkish youth, only a handful of interviewees have suggested that there was none. A majority, on the other hand, have said that cursing, smoking, being Muslim, having prejudices towards each other were their common traits.

When the researchers then inquired of their differences, the answers strongly depended on the gender of the interviewee. For male Syrian interviewees, one major difference is the gap between their responsibilities. They have argued that the Syrian youth is forced to take big responsibilities although many Turkish youth enjoy living in their own country without any difficulties.

20-year-old, male, works and studies

22-year-old, male, works and studies

For Syrian female youth, however, the focus is more on religion. Interestingly, they seem to disagree with the Syrian male youth when it comes describing the religious orientation of the Turkish youth. However, they also believe that women are freer in the Turkish society and also are more valuable compared to what they argue the Syrian culture imposes.

22-year-old, female, student, Basaksehir

16-year-old, female, student

22-year-old, female, student, Esenler

Despite their experiences of discrimination and various struggles in their lives, the Syrian youth have appeared harboring very positive feelings towards Turkey. Many of them appreciate that Turkey has embraced and rescued them from a very difficult situation. Those who are in the country since early childhood see Turkey as their second home or new homeland. Besides, a majority of the Syrian interviewees refer to Turkey as an Islamic country. Among all interviewees, there was only a single female who has stated that she does not belong here. These views are summarized in *Figure 30* as a word cloud.

Figure 30. Views of Syrian Youth About Turkey



7.3.Views of NGO Representatives

As part of this study, the researchers have interviewed five representatives from three Turkish NGOs and nine representatives from four Syrian NGOs as well. All those organizations and their members whose insights are represented in this section have had direct experience working with Turkish or Syrian youth or both. In recognition of their wishes to remain anonymous, however, they will not be named here. Instead, references will include 'TUR' for a Turkish NGO and 'SYR' for a Syrian one while numerical values are assigned to identify each organization and their representatives.

While the services those NGOs provided for the 14-18 age group focused more on schooling of children and prevention of child labor, their services that targeted those older rather aimed at capacity building through professional and linguistic training. All their representatives have suggested that it is important to continue working with the same beneficiaries in the long term rather limiting such assistance to within a few training sessions and expecting reliable outcomes in the short term. The researchers have also discovered in this study that the lack of long-term projects severely restricts the impact of social cohesion activities.

During the interviews, the researchers realized that the Syrian NGOs enjoyed an advantage in working the Syrian refugees in Turkey thanks to their focus on dispatching Syrian practitioners to the field. In doing so, they have not only been more authoritative on Syrian value judgments but also able to win the trust of their beneficiaries faster. The Syrian NGOs also appeared to be placing more attention on family wellbeing and capacity building, trying to include whole families in their program coverage. This was not without good reason.

“When we invite parents to attend an activity, we see that fathers in particular never care about their children in many

cases unfortunately. After the sessions, however, they feel that they have responsibility for their children, too. So, we encourage and help them to support their children as a family.”

SYR-NGO-1, Representative 1

Those NGOs also work on Syrian single mothers. These are women who either lost their husbands during the civil war or have been separated as a result. Some NGO representatives have suggested that those women usually feel unable to do anything and believe that they cannot do without constant financial support. Once those women attend parenting and capacity building workshops, however, they exhibit a change for the better. And as could be expected, the impact of empowering mothers does not stop at them. The almost immediate beneficiaries of such an improvement are their children.

“The mothers then realize that they, too, can do certain things on their own to support their children. What we often observe is a self-discovery. And it is a wonderful sight.”

SYR-NGO-1, Representative 1

According to the Syrian NGO representatives, an important problem for the Syrian youth is their low schooling rates. Even those who continue their education find themselves obligated to work part-time and perform poorly at school both because they have much less time to study on their own and their parents are unable to tutor them at home due to their low command of Turkish. They also face immense pressures from their Turkish peers at school and find it too difficult to feel included. The result is increasing school dropout rates.

Another commonly reported issue by the NGO representatives, both Turkish and Syrian, was rather specific to the female youth. The interviewees have suggested that the Syrian women and girls have

much less visibility in public spaces and, therefore, their interaction with and chances of integration into the host society is incomparably smaller. Reaching out to them to make a difference, however, is more difficult, too.

“There are specific difficulties associated with outreach to girls and women in Istanbul. To overcome those difficulties, we try to coordinate our activities with municipalities, public authorities and other NGOs. We also try to diversify our channels of contact with them, particularly when it comes to young women and girls. They use social media a lot. So we focus on those platforms and maintain a strong visibility there. There is also a snowballing effect. We, for instance, are working in Kucukcekmece since 2015 and have been able to develop a large Syrian audience”

TUR-NGO-3, Representative 1

Those with a higher success rate in reaching out to Syrian girls are those that focus on including parents in their activities. They invite key family members to their offices and hold at least an information session to introduce planned programs and their potential benefits. Moreover, they do all these in a way that respects Syrian value judgments, like via arranging female instructors and interlocutors in sessions with female participants. Next step is ideally of one-on-one meetings with the beneficiaries particularly when they are addressing a sensitive issue like early marriages. And because gender norms within the Syrian refugee community places Syrian girls in a more disadvantaged situation compared to Turkish girls of the same ages, the NGOs make sure of focusing on training male family members, too.

“Conservative families hesitate to send their female children to school alone. It may be the case with other families due to the security risks around. So we often see the girls trapped at home. The boys, however, spend more time

outside because they are seen as means of earning the family income. Because they are married off at early ages, girls continue to be confined to within the walls of their homes after marriage, too.”

TUR-NGO-2, Representative 2

“One particular beneficiary of one of our programs once told us that she could take part in trainings only after her husband was invited and started to join some sessions at our center. Only then could she leave home, she said.”

TR-NGO-2, Representative 1

“There are more problems for girls because some families, particularly under the influence of fathers, do not want to send their daughters to school. There are also some families that do not prefer to allow girls and young women to work. It is either the fathers who do not accept or husbands who do not approve an employed wife. Thus, girls continue to spend most of their times at home from childhood to adulthood.”

SYR-NGO-4, Representative 1

Another important problem of both the Turkish and the Syrian female youth is related to their domestic responsibilities. According to the interviewees, this is again linked to the gender norms in families who have migrated from rural areas.

“Girls are burdened with having to perform domestic chores. There are even those who, at the age of six, are made to take care of their younger siblings. After they start having their periods, they are almost completely barred from leaving their homes. Another 2-3 years later, they are married off under duress. In our field research, we have observed that it is much better to target raising awareness

on such matters as children and women rights at the entire family level, specifically including male members of those families.”

TR-NGO-2, Representative 1

Furthermore, female adolescents and youth can also be regarded as a financial burden on their families, which might result in early marriages for girls. Although this can be also the case in some Turkish families with a very low economic standing and with a rural culture, it seems that this is of a bigger problem in the Syrian community.

“Families with poor economic means married off their daughters at early ages to cut back on spending. Yes, culture did play a role in that as well but they did it more because they wanted to decrease the number of members in their household for economic reasons.”

SR-NGO-2, Representative 1

However, early marriage problem cannot be only linked to family characteristics. When women lack necessary capacities and are unable to receive education or even leave their homes, the options in front of them are not that many anyway.

When the researchers raised the issue of social cohesion and the ways to achieve it, all interviewees uniformly agreed on the pivotal role of using a common language. Thus, any barrier for Syrians' learning of Turkish must be removed. Admittedly, there may be quite a few of those barriers. Women with small children, for instance, cannot take part in language courses unless they are offered a reliable child care service nearby, preferable at little to no cost to their families. Any disregard for such barriers, however, risk crippling planned programs right from the beginning and it is very clear that the task ahead is monumental.

“The 14-25 age group is where we observe the highest school drop-out rates. Let alone Turkish, those individuals don't even speak Arabic well. Imagine a child who had to relocate to Turkey at the age of 10, for instance. He came here with little formal education and then had to stop going to school for years. In the meantime, his family grew weary of waiting and rather sent him to work somewhere. Such children cannot write in any language. And we unfortunately have lost that generation. They have started working and there is no chance that they could restart their education now.”

SYR-NGO-2, Representative 2

On the other hand, NGO representatives do not consider every phenomenon on the ground a challenge. In the case of spatial segregation between Turkish and Syrian people including the youth among them, for instance, interviewees appeared to be at ease and even considering the situation desirable. They said it is part of the refugees' integration process and in fact helps certain groups within the refugee community, like women for example, to have a comfort zone where they could freely speak their mother tongue.

Streets of dense populations of Syrians are quite normal and part of the integration process. Some even argued that it helps Syrians and particularly Syrian women to have a comfort zone.

“I think segregated streets are normal. We have to accept it first of all, in my personal opinion. For example, Gaziantep and Aleppo have similar food but, at the end, each culture has its own aspects and characteristics. So, why do Turkish people not enter Syrian restaurants? It is because it is not common for their culture. Even for me. I am Syrian and I live in Turkey for more than 10 years now and food in Gaziantep still tastes too spicy.”

SYR-NGO-1, Representative 1

“Here in Gaziantep, Syrians who live outside those segregated areas feel much more alienated. For those who live together, however, there is an important neighborhood support factor. In return, though, the divide between the Turkish and Syrian communities may widen.”

SYR-NGO-2, Representative 1

“The biggest problem is the lack of necessary support for social cohesion. And behind it is a web of interdependent issues. There are major difficulties observed in access to fundamental education. Informal employment and child labor are real problems, too. Besides, girls in particular suffer from gender-specific challenges. Whole families should be included at every level of policy implementation in those areas.”

TUR-NGO-3, Representative 1

“In the Esenyurt area in Istanbul, both Syrians and Turks report an increased level of uneasiness with each other’s attitudes. In segregated areas, we have not heard of such complaints. They probably feel safer there.”

TUR-NGO-2, Representative 2

At the end of this section, it is worthwhile to pay some special attention to the case of disabled Syrian youth whose needs and challenges are often leaving in the dark. Luckily, one Syrian NGO whose representatives have agreed to be interviewed by the researchers had a specific focus on that group of refugees. That particular organization had over 1,300 disabled Syrian beneficiaries in 2019 alone and a mind-blowing 43 percent of those beneficiaries were younger than 18. This special youth refugee group face additional and more complex challenges. They have no access to free education, for instance. As a result, the literacy rate among the disabled Syrian youth older than six was around 30 percent, the researchers have learned from the interviewees. Worse, it was only 18 percent among females of the same profile. In other words, a shocking three quarters of the Syrian disabled youth cannot read or write.

In summary, NGO representatives agree about the following needs for both Turkish and Syrian youth: capacity building, focusing on parents or families to integrate them to support their children, technical skills for those who do not continue their education so that they can work in better conditions, need for community centers specifically for women, and finally entrepreneurship trainings and facilitating their ideas. However, for Syrian youth there are additional important needs such as linguistic and psychosocial support as well as policies and programs specifically designed for women.


“The most urgent needs are women-only policies and areas. The problems of the female youth are alike to a large extent in Turkish and Syrian communities. Their families are all economy stricken, have very low access to basic services and find themselves in marriage at very early ages. I know it is almost unbelievable but we have seen Turkish and Syrian women in their early 30s who have grandchildren now.”

TR-NGO-2, Representative 2

“When it is both a refugee and an economically-challenged family, there may be a tendency to offer disabled children a second-class treatment in terms of channeling resources to address their special needs. Sometimes, families stop doing so altogether. Access to education then becomes extremely limited.”

TUR-NGO-3, Representative 2

The list of other problems that the disable Syrian refugees have got longer and longer as interviewees discussed more cases that they became aware of in their own field work.



“Over the past few years, they had difficulty even getting an ID because some of them are severely handicapped and cannot leave their homes without well-equipped assistance provided. Unfortunately, we have seen many of them without any records anywhere. Legally, therefore, they do not exist. In 2017 alone, we helped about 300 such people get their IDs.”

SR-NGO-2, Representative 2

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report presents a wealthy trove of findings from an 8-week field research in Istanbul aiming to understand the perceptions, needs and challenges of both Turkish and Syrian youth in Turkey. Due to Covid-19 restrictions and necessary health precautions, the researchers have mainly interviewed high school and university students who had access to mobile phones and a reliable Internet connection without meeting them in person.



For the Syrian population, this could be considered a rather privileged group within the whole youth population, given the frustrating presence of many Syrian child laborers as well as those who were married off at early ages or could not continue their education for various other reasons. Thus, the analysis on the Syrian youth has remained admittedly conservative. Regardless, however, the researchers have gathered qualitative data from 51 Turkish and 39 Syrian adolescents and youth in total. In addition, they have conducted over a dozen interviews with Turkish and Syrian NGOs.



The research proposes the following fields to be addressed in order to increase the wellbeing of youth, irrespective of their ethnicity, which is hoped to provide a higher degree of social cohesion between Turks and Syrians within the 15-24 age group:

- Adolescents and young adults are strongly affected by their families and teachers. Thus, policies might have a better chance in building better perceptions towards 'others' among the youth if polarization among adults is addressed and mitigated.
- The Turkish education system must be renewed in such a way that trains students in critical thinking instead of memorizing.
- Each municipal district with a sizable Syrian population next to natives should have facilities to offer free sports and arts activities for the youth to socialize and interact.
- The Syrian population mainly lives in underdeveloped districts. NGOs and INGOs should particularly target these areas in planning their activities. However, any such activity should not leave Turkish youth behind since it appears to invite new social tensions because the Turkish youth already believe that the Syrian youth are prioritized. Such grievances might even exist between different refugee groups between whom there is an unbalanced distribution of assistance.
- Disabled youth are usually neglected in designing programs and policies. However, their arduous migration journeys and the traumatic experiences they had before hitting the road have resulted in a large disabled population among the Syrians. Those individuals are in urgent need of educational support because they are not able to receive any education in Turkey as special schools for the disabled are not free for the Syrians unlike public schools.
- At every level of schooling, there should be training on human rights, teaching students the values while not burdening them with their complicated legal dimensions.
- NGOs and INGOs should design integration courses for the Syrian community, informing them about different value judgments in the Turkish society.
- NGOs and INGOs should not design their social cohesion activities only to their own beneficiaries or those who are interested in joining such activities because they are probably already tolerant or and have favorable ideas towards different cultures. A bigger impact could be reached if those social cohesion activities are provided at schools and universities. Moreover, empathy circles or events such as living libraries can be used to increase awareness about the problems of youth from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Although empathy and interaction would decrease social tension between the two youth groups to some extent, it would be naive to believe that it could be completely erased by these events without improving the wellbeing of Turkish youth and their future prospects. Thus, structural changes are required to provide job opportunities for the youth.
- Relevant authorities should regularly inspect businesses to discourage informal and discriminatory work conditions.
- NGOs, INGOs and governmental organizations should rethink their vulnerability definition considering both Turkish and Syrian population and their life conditions. If, for instance, a Turkish or Syrian lawyer is rather working at a textile atelier to survive, it should be considered vulnerability as well. Such skills mismatch is incredibly common within both youth groups.
- Finally, human rights trainings should urgently address members of the press in particular because both the Turkish and the Syrian youth uniformly complain of the presence of non-fact-checked, inaccurate and hate-inciting news coverage on both conventional and non-conventional media platforms.

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QUESTIONNAIRES



10

10.1. In-depth Interview Questions for Turkish Youth

A. Demographics:

- A1.** Gender:
 - A2.** Month and Year of Birth:
 - A3.** Ethnicity: (1) Turkish (2) Kurdish (3) Roma (4) Others
 - A4.** Are you currently working or studying? (1) Working (2) Studying (3) Both (4) Neither working nor studying
 - A5.** What is the last diploma you obtained?
 - A6.** If you are currently studying, at which level?
 - A7.** If you are currently working, at which sector/job?
 - A8.** What is your father's education level?
 - A9.** What is your mother's education level?
 - A10.** What is your household size? (How many people live in your house?)
 - A11.** Which district in Istanbul do you live in?
 - A12.** If I ask you to define yourself in a few sentences, what would be your answer?
 - A13.** What are your daily responsibilities?
-

B. Perception of Self:

- B1.** Can you please tell us the primary/main problems you face in your life?
- B2.** Do you believe that unemployment is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?
- B3.** Do you believe that bullying is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?
- B3_a.** Did you have any experience of bullying? If yes, can you please mention it and whether it has affected your life in any way?
- B4.** Do you believe that discrimination is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?
- B4_a.** Did you have any experience of discrimination? If yes, can you please mention it and whether it has affected your life in any way?
- B5.** Do you believe that ethnic intimidation is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?
- B5_a.** Did you have any experience of ethnic intimidation? If yes, can you please mention it and whether it has affected your life in any way?
- B6.** Do you believe that your identity creates problems for your life in Istanbul? Why or why not?
- B6_a.** How do you cope with these identity problems that you have experienced?
- B7.** Do you experience intergenerational conflict? If yes, can you please explain your ways of coping with these problems?
- B8.** Thinking about your life as a whole, what are your primary needs?
- B9.** Thinking about your life as a whole, what are your priorities?
- B10.** What are your expectations from your future?
- B11.** According to your opinion, what are the definitions of the following terms:

Identity	
Stereotypes	
Discrimination	
Violence	
Conflict	
Peace	
Civil Society	
Trust	
Turkish youth	
Syrian youth	
Refugee	

C. Perception About Others:

C1. Please tell us about the level of difficulty you have in this country for the following issues:

	VERY EASY (1)	SOMEHOW EASY (2)	NEITHER DIFFICULT NOR EASY (3)	SOMEHOW DIFFICULT (4)	VERY DIFFICULT (5)
To access labor market					
To get a good education					
To reach social services					
To get health services					

C2. Please tell us about your perceptions on the difficulty the refugee youth have in this country for the following issues:

	VERY EASY (1)	SOMEHOW EASY (2)	NEITHER DIFFICULT NOR EASY (3)	SOMEHOW DIFFICULT (4)	VERY DIFFICULT (5)
To access labor market					
To get a good education					
To reach social services					
To get health services					

C3. When you think about lives of Syrian youth, what are their basic challenges?

C4. According to your opinion, what are the main similarities between Turkish and Syrian youth in Turkey?

C5. According to your opinion, what are the main differences between Turkish and Syrian youth in Turkey?

C6. According to your opinion, what are the main grievances and subjects of tension between Turkish and Syrian youth in Turkey?

C7. What are your feelings about Syrian youth in Istanbul?

C8. If what happens, you would have a better feeling towards Syrian youth in Turkey?

C9. In the last years, there were many newspaper articles about the Syrian children and youth who work so hard to survive and help their families in Turkey but paid so little and work in bad conditions. How do you feel about their conditions?

C10. Did you help Syrian refugees in your district?

D. Impact of Crisis Situations on Perceptions:

D1. How do you cope with difficulties in your life particularly in times of crisis such as economic crisis, Covid-19 and so on?

D2. According to your opinion, how difficult will the following issues get if economic situation in Turkey deteriorates?

	WILL BE EASIER (1)	WILL NOT BE CHANGED (2)	WILL BE DIFFICULT (3)
To access labor market			
To get a good education			
To reach social services			
To get health services			
Social tensions between Turkish and Syrian youth			

D3. According to your opinion, how difficult the following issues will get if Covid-19 is not solved until 2023 in Turkey?

	WILL BE EASIER (1)	WILL NOT BE CHANGED (2)	WILL BE DIFFICULT (3)
To access labor market			
To get a good education			
To reach social services			
To get health services			
Social tensions between Turkish and Syrian youth			

D4. According to your opinion, how difficult will the following issues become difficult if there is a sudden increase in the number of Syrian refugees?

	WILL BE EASIER (1)	WILL NOT BE CHANGED (2)	WILL BE DIFFICULT (3)
To access labor market			
To get a good education			
To reach social services			
To get health services			
Social tensions between Turkish and Syrian youth			

D5. How do adversities and difficulties in your life affect your attitudes towards Syrian youth?

E. Social Inclusion:

E1. According to your opinion, what is social integration?

E2. According to your opinion, what should be the characteristics of a Syrian refugee who is integrated into Turkish society?

E3. Do you have family members who are against the presence of Syrians in Turkey?

E4. Do you have close friends who are against the presence of Syrians in Turkey?

E5. What are their reasons of having this view?

E6. Do you agree with them?

E7. Do you believe that Turkish and Syrian youth can get accustomed to each other in the near future?

E8. According to your opinion, what are main reasons for these two groups having conflicts and tensions?

E9. How can integration of communities be enhanced in Turkey?

F. Communication:

F1. Please tell your level of interaction with the Syrian youth:

	NO INTERACTION (1)	SOMETIMES (1)	OFTEN (2)	VERY OFTEN (3)
Conversation				
Friendship				
Social media friendship				
Interaction during work				

F2. Do you believe that social media is a barrier or facilitator for the social integration of Turkish and Syrian youth? Please explain your views.

F3. According to your opinion, what is the total Syrian population in Istanbul?

F4. According to your opinion, what is the total Syrian population in your district in Istanbul?

10.2. In-depth Interview Questions for Syrian youth

A. Demographics:

A1. Gender:

A2. Month and Year of Birth:

A3. Ethnicity: (1) Syrian (2) Roma (3) Dom (4) Others (please specify)

A4. Are you currently working or studying? (1) Working (2) Studying (3) Both (4) neither working nor studying

A5. What is the last diploma you obtained?

A6. If you are currently studying, at which level?

A7. If you are currently working, at which sector/job?

A7a. If you are currently working, what are the reasons of not being in education?

A7b. If you are not working not studying, what are the reasons?

A7c. What is your Turkish level? (1) No knowledge (2) Can speak only (3) can speak, read and write (4) other (please mention)

A8. What is your father's education level?

A9. What is your mother's education level?

A10. What is your household size? (How many people live in your house?)

A11. When did you migrate to Turkey?

A12. Which district in Istanbul do you live in?

A13. If I ask you to define yourself in a few sentences, what would be your answer?

A14. What are your daily responsibilities?

A15. Does your family receive ESSN (KizilayKart) assistance?

A16. Does your family receive the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education?

B. Perception of Self:

B1. Can you please tell us the primary/main problems you face in your life?

B2. Do you believe that unemployment is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?

B3. Do you believe that bullying is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?

B3a. Did you have any experience of bullying? If yes, can you please mention it and whether it has affected your life in any way?

B4. Do you believe that discrimination is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?

B4a. Did you have any experience of discrimination? If yes, can you please mention it and whether it has affected your life in any way?

B5. Do you believe that ethnic intimidation is an important problem for the youth in Istanbul? Why or why not?

B5a. Did you have any experience of ethnic intimidation? If yes, can you please mention it and whether it has affected your life in any way?

B6. Do you believe that your identity creates problems for your life in Istanbul? Why or why not?

B6a. How do you cope with these identity problems that you have experienced?

B7. Do you experience intergenerational conflict? If yes, can you please explain your ways of coping with these problems?

B8. Thinking about your life as a whole, what are your primary needs?

B9. Thinking about your life as a whole, what are your priorities?

B10. What are your expectations from your future?

B11. According to your opinion, what are the definitions of the following terms:

Identity	
Stereotypes	
Discrimination	
Violence	
Conflict	
Peace	
Civil Society	
Trust	
Turkish youth	
Syrian youth	
Refugee	
Turkey	

C. Perceptions on Others:

C1. Please tell us about the level of difficulty you have in this country for the following issues:

	VERY EASY (1)	SOMEHOW EASY (2)	NEITHER DIFFICULT NOR EASY (3)	SOMEHOW DIFFICULT (4)	VERY DIFFICULT (5)
To access labor market					

	VERY EASY (1)	SOMEHOW EASY (2)	NEITHER DIFFICULT NOR EASY (3)	SOMEHOW DIFFICULT (4)	VERY DIFFICULT (5)
To get a good education					
To reach social services					
To get health services					

C2. Please tell us about your perceptions on the difficulty refugee youth have in this country for the following issues:

	VERY EASY (1)	SOMEHOW EASY (2)	NEITHER DIFFICULT NOR EASY (3)	SOMEHOW DIFFICULT (4)	VERY DIFFICULT (5)
To access labor market					
To get a good education					
To reach social services					
To get health services					

C3. When you think about lives of Syrian youth, what are their basic challenges?

C4. According to your opinion, what are the main similarities between Turkish and Syrian youth in Turkey?

C5. According to your opinion, what are the main differences between Turkish and Syrian youth in Turkey?

C6. According to your opinion, what are the main grievances and subjects of tension between Turkish and Syrian youth in Turkey?

C7. What are your feelings about Turkish youth in Istanbul?

C8. If what happens, you would have a better feeling towards Turkish youth in Turkey?

D. Impact of Crisis Situations on Perceptions:

D1. How do you cope with difficulties in your life particularly in times of crisis such as economic crisis, Covid-19 and so on?

D2. According to your opinion, how difficult will the following issues become if the economic situation in Turkey deteriorates?

	WILL BE EASIER (1)	WILL NOT BE CHANGED (2)	WILL BE DIFFICULT (3)
To access labor market			
To get a good education			
To reach social services			
To get health services			
Social tensions between Turkish and Syrian youth			

D3. According to your opinion, how difficult will the following issues be if Covid-19 is not solved until 2023 in Turkey?

	WILL BE EASIER (1)	WILL NOT BE CHANGED (2)	WILL BE DIFFICULT (3)
To access labor market			
To get a good education			
To reach social services			
To get health services			
Social tensions between Turkish and Syrian youth			

D4. According to your opinion, how difficult will the following issues be affected if there is a sudden increase in the number of Syrian refugees?

	WILL BE EASIER (1)	WILL NOT BE CHANGED (2)	WILL BE DIFFICULT (3)
To access labor market			
To get a good education			
To reach social services			
To get health services			
Social tensions between Turkish and Syrian youth			

D5. How do adversities and difficulties in your life affect your attitudes towards Turkish youth?

E. Social Inclusion:

E1. According to your opinion, what is social integration?

E2. According to your opinion what are the main barriers to facilitate social inclusion between Turkish and Syrian youth?

E3. Do you have family members who had disputes with Turkish residents in Turkey?

E4. Do you have close friends who had disputes or negative views towards Turkish youth? **E5.** What are their reasons of having these views?

E6. Do you agree with them?

E7. Do you believe that Turkish and Syrian youth can get accustomed to each other in the near future?

E8. According to your opinion, what are main reasons for these two groups having conflicts and tensions?

E9. How integration of communities can be enhanced in Turkey?

F. Communication:

F1. Please tell your level of interaction with the Turkish youth:

	NO INTERACTION (1)	SOMETIMES (1)	OFTEN (2)	VERY OFTEN (3)
Conversation				
Friendship				
Social media friendship				
Interaction during work				

F2. Do you believe that social media is a barrier or facilitator for the social integration of Turkish and Syrian youth? Please explain your views.

F3. According to your opinion, what is the total Syrian population in Istanbul?

F4. According to your opinion, what is the total Syrian population in your district in Istanbul?

10.3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Questions for Turkish Youth

Date of FGD:

Full name of interviewer:

Language used in interviews:

Started at:

Ended at:

Hello, my name is

I am from Istanbul Technical University.

I am currently running a research about the refugee and host population youth's perceptions, needs and challenges funded and supported by Save the Children. With this aim, we try to get views of both female and male youth from different backgrounds in order to understand a holistic picture of the current situation of youth in Turkey.

There will be no in-cash or in-kind payment and/or support in return for participation to this work. However, the information you will share with us will help us to advise both national and international organizations and policy makers to design better programs/projects to improve the well being of youth.

The interview will take approximately an hour. You can leave at any moment you feel uncomfortable.

Thank you in advance for your time and support in this research.

Focus Group Participants

NO	NAME-LAST NAME	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION LEVEL	MARITAL STATUS	DISTRICT IN ISTANBUL
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

1. Introduction Questions

- a. Since when do you live in Istanbul?
 - b. If you are not in education, what are the reasons of it?
 - c. If you are not working but also not in education, what are the reasons of it?
-

2. Challenges, Needs and Perceptionss

- a. How satisfied are you with your life in Turkey? What are the things that make you happy or unhappy when you think about your daily lives?
- b. What are your main needs that you wish met in the near future?
- c. When you think about your life in Turkey, what are your main challenges? And, how do you cope with them?
- d. What are your feelings about Turkish people in general and, Turkish youth in particular?
- e. In your opinion, what are the stereotypes for Syrian youth according to Turkish youth (in other words, according to your opinion how are Syrian youth perceived by Turkish people?) Do you agree with any of these stereotypes? How do you feel about these stereotypes?
- f. Thinking not about your personal lives but about Syrian youth population living in Istanbul, what are the three most common problems you observe?
- g. What are the troubles you face in having better social relationships with Syrian youth? What can be done to overcome these challenges?
- h. Thinking about your lives, what are your future expectations?
- i. What are the factors that give rise to concerns about your future?

10.4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Questions for Syrian Youth

Date of FGD:

Full name of interviewer:

Language used in interviews:

Started at:

Ended at:

Hello, my name is

I am from Istanbul Technical University.

I am currently running a research about the refugee and host population youth's perceptions, needs and challenges funded and supported by Save the Children. With this aim, we try to get views of both female and male youth from different backgrounds in order to understand a holistic picture of the current situation of youth in Turkey.

There will be no in-cash or in-kind payment and/or support in return for participation to this work. However, the information you will share with us will help us to advise both national and international organizations and policy makers to design better programs/projects to improve the well being of youth.

The interview will take approximately an hour. You can leave at any moment you feel uncomfortable.

Thank you in advance for your time and support in this research.

Focus Group Participants

NO	NAME-LAST NAME	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION LEVEL	MARITAL STATUS	DISTRICT IN ISTANBUL
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

1. Introduction Questions

- a. From which part of Syria are you from?
 - b. When did you arrive in Turkey?
 - c. Where have you been since arriving in Turkey?
 - d. When did you settle in Istanbul?
 - e. How did you decide about migrating to Istanbul but not other provinces in Turkey?
 - f. If you are not in education, what are the reasons of it?
 - g. If you are not working but also not in education, what are the reasons of it?
-

2. Challenges, Needs and Perceptionss

- a. How satisfied are you with your life in Turkey? What are the things that make you happy or unhappy when you think about your daily lives?
- b. What are your main needs that you wish met in the near future?
- c. When you think about your life in Turkey, what are your main challenges? And, how do you cope with them?
- d. What are your feelings about Turkish people in general and Turkish youth in particular?
- e. In your opinion, what are the stereotypes for Syrian youth according to Turkish youth (in other words, according to your opinion how are Syrian youth perceived by Turkish people)? Do you agree with any of these stereotypes? How do you feel about these stereotypes?
- f. Thinking not about your personal lives but about Syrian youth population living in Istanbul, what are the three most common problems you observe? What kind of support do you receive to overcome those? Are these sufficient?
- g. What are the troubles you face in having better social relationships with Turkish youth? What can be done to overcome these challenges?
- h. Thinking about your lives, what are your future expectations?
- i. What are the factors that give rise to concerns about your future?

CONSENT FORMS



11.1. Consent Forms for Turkish Interviewees

KİŞİSEL VERİLERİN İŞLENMESİNE İLİŞKİN İZİN FORMU

- ☐ Save the Children için yapılan çalışma kapsamında kişisel verilerin korunmasına ilişkin kanun metni hakkında saha araştırmacısı tarafından bilgilendirildiğimi beyan ediyorum.

Save the Children tarafından yürütülen programlar ve projelerin amaç ve kapsamı doğrultusunda, kayıt formları, proje faaliyetlerinin çerçevesinde kullanılan diğer formlar ve faaliyetler esnasında çekilen fotoğraf, video, ses kaydı dâhil olmak üzere kişisel ve özel nitelikli kişisel veri niteliğindeki bilgilerimin, başta 6698 sayılı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanunu (KVKK) uyarınca, gizlilik ilkesine bağlı kalarak ve gerekli tedbirler alınarak:

- Toplanması, işlenmesi, kullanılmasını, yasal süreler aşılmamak üzere yurt içinde ve/veya yurt dışında yazılı/dijital arşivlere kaydedilmesini;
- Faaliyetler kapsamında çekilen, içerisinde olduğum fotoğrafların, kimliğimi gösteren herhangi bir ibare olmaksızın, Save the Children veri havuzunda saklanması ve internet sitesi, sosyal medya ağları gibi kanallarda veya faaliyet raporu gibi basılı kaynaklarda kullanılmasını;
- Veri sorumlusu Save the Children ile Save the Children'ın ortakları, fon sağlayıcı kurumlar, halefleri ve/veya bunların belirleyeceği üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmasını;
- Bir çocuğun sağlığı veya refahını riske atan bir durum olması durumunda yine yürürlükteki kanunlar ile sair mevzuatta sayılan diğer şekillerde ve bunlara uygun olarak açık rızam aranmaksızın ilgili adli ve idari makamlarla paylaşılacağını;

ilgili yasal haklarım hakkında bilgilendirilerek ve tereddüt etmeksizin açık rızam ile izin (onay) verdiğimi beyan ederim.

KİSMİ RIZA

- ☐ **Anonim Hale Getirme:** Vermiş olduğum kişisel verilerimin sadece anonim halde veya benimle ilişkilendirilemeyen hale getirildikten sonra işlenmesine izin veriyorum.
- ☐ **Yazılı Olarak Toplanan Veriler:** Vermiş olduğum kişisel verilerimin alanıdaki şekilde işlenmesine izin vermiyorum (veri türü veya içeriği, işlenme şekli, örneğin kaydedilmesi, üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılması vb.):

.....

.....

Görsel-İşitsel Veriler: Katıldığım etkinlik sırasında fotoğraf, video ve/veya ses kayıtları üzerinden verdiğim görsel veya işitsel verilerimin sadece aşağıdaki şekilde işlenmesine izin veriyorum:

- ☐ Yüzüm gösterilmeden
- ☐ Kaydın yapıldığı yer belirtilmeden
- ☐ Diğer (.....)

☐ **Mesaj Gönderimi İçin Onay:** İletişim bilgilerim üzerinden tarafıma bilgilendirme mesajı gönderilmesini ve/veya iletişime geçilmesini kabul ediyorum.

Adı Soyadı: Tarih: İmza:

18 YAŞINDAN KÜÇÜK VEYA YASAL HAKLARI KISITLANMIŞ KİŞİLER İÇİN

Danışanın/faydalanıcının adı soyadı (çocuk ise çocuğun adı):

☐ Bakım Yükümlüsü'nün:

☐ Vasi'nin:

☐ Yasal Temsilci'nin:

Adı Soyadı: Tarih: İmza:

11.2. Consent Forms for Syrian Interviewees

استمارة القبول الخاصة بالبيانات الشخصية

☐ تم إبلاغي من قبل الباحث الميداني عن النص القانوني الخاص بحماية البيانات الشخصية في إطار الدراسة المتبنية من قبل منظمة حماية الأطفال Save the Children

وفقا لغرض ونطاق البرامج والمشاريع التي تنفذها منظمة حماية الأطفال، نماذج التسجيل، بياناتي الشخصية والخاصة، بما في ذلك الصور الفوتوغرافية والفيديو والتسجيلات الصوتية التي تم التقاطها أثناء القيود والأنشطة الأخرى المستخدمة في إطار أنشطة المشروع وفقا لقانون حماية البيانات الشخصية KVKK رقم 6698 ؛ وفقا لمبدأ السرية واتخاذ التدابير اللازمة:

- جمع ومعالجة واستخدام البيانات بشرط ألا تتجاوز الفترة القانونية، ليتم تسجيلها في الأرشيفات الرقمية | المكتوبة محليا أو في الخارج:
- استخدام الصور الفوتوغرافية الملتقطة ضمن نطاق الأنشطة على أن يتم حفظها في قاعدة بيانات منظمة حماية الأطفال وفي المصادر المطبوعة مثل مواقع الإنترنت أو شبكات الوسائل الاجتماعية أو تقارير الأنشطة، دون أن تتضمن أي إفادة تدل على هويتي:
- مشاركة مسئول البيانات للمعلومات مع منظمة حماية الأطفال وشركائها والمؤسسات الداعمة وإأو الأطراف الثالثة التي يحددها هؤلاء:
- مشاركة المعلومات مع السلطات القضائية والإدارية المختصة وفقا للقوانين السارية وغيرها من الأشكال المدرجة في التشريعات الأخرى دون الحصول على موافقة صريحة بما يتوافق مع ذلك، في حال تعرضت صحة الطفل أو رفاهته للخطر:

أقر بأنني قد أبلغت بحقوقتي القانونية، وأني قد أبدت موافقة صريحة مني دون أي تردد.

قسم القبول

☐ إخفاء الهوية: أسمح بمعالجة بياناتي الشخصية فقط في حال إخفاء الهوية أو صياغتها بشكل لا يدل على شخصي.

☐ البيانات المجمعة كتابياً: لا أسمح بمعالجة بياناتي الشخصية على النحو التالي (نوع البيانات أو المحتوى، طريقة المعالجة ، كيفية الحفظ ، والمشاركة مع أطراف ثالثة ، إلخ).

.....

.....

التأكيد على تبادل الرسائل: أوافق على تلقي الرسائل والاتصال بي عبر معلومات الاتصال الخاصة بي. من خلال الصور ومقاطع الفيديو و التسجيلات الصوتية على النحو التالي:

☐ دون إظهار وجهي

☐ عدم تحديد مكان إجراء التسجيل

☐ أخرى (.....)

☐ التأكيد على تبادل الرسائل: أوافق على تلقي الرسائل والاتصال بي عبر معلومات الاتصال الخاصة بي.

الاسم والكنية: التاريخ: التوقيع:

للأطفال الذين تقل أعمارهم عن ١٨ عامًا أو الأشخاص مقيدي الحقوق

اسم وكنية العميل أو المستفيد (إذا كان طفلاً: اسم الطفل):

☐ الملزم بالرعاية ☐ الوصي ☐ الممثل القانوني

الاسم والكنية: التاريخ: التوقيع:



Save the Children