



ON THE BRINK OF A LOST GENERATION

“I can’t read. I can’t write.
I want to go to school.”

*Challenges to the education of Syrian Refugee Children and
Youth in Turkey*





The Open Society Foundation Turkey

Founded in 2008, OSF Turkey aims to create a more open society in Turkey with improved responsiveness to human rights, democracy, and universal values. The Foundation offers partial grants on project or institution basis to initiatives in accordance with its primary areas of interest, such as Turkey's EU membership process, reform, gender, education, reducing regional disparities, disadvantaged groups, and strengthening of civil society. OSF Turkey has supported hundreds of projects and reached out to nearly 800,000 people. As of 2016, the Foundation has identified challenges to the education of Syrian refugee children in Turkey as a core issue to intervene.

Kaya Heyse

An award-winning Turkish journalist, Kaya Heyse was born 1974 in Munich, Germany. A graduate of Istanbul's Bogazici University's International Relations and Political Science Department, he started working as a TV journalist in 1997. His coverage of the Afghanistan War in 2001 and Iraq War in 2003 won him national recognition. He has been working exclusively on the Syrian Refugee Crisis since 2014.

PREFACE

Preventing a 'Lost Generation' Is Everybody's Responsibility

60 million people all over the world live as refugees. Millions of people, violently torn from their homes, roots and countries... It is the highest number of refugees since 1945. In the past few years, Turkey has become a hub for this human movement of unprecedented scale: 3 million Syrians, escaping the brutal civil war in their own country, have found sanctuary. Turkey, in extraordinary fashion, opened them her borders.

Half of the Syrian refugees who have all but lost hope to return to their country are children. And half of these children are school-aged.

When the World Leaders convened for the Incheon World Education Forum in 2015, they made a promise to all the children in the world: To provide them with 12-year, free education by 2030.

But millions of refugee children, wherever they are, either do not have the right to education or face challenges in access.

The report *"On the Brink of a Lost Generation: I can't read. I can't write. I want to go to school"* focuses on the educational challenges Syrian refugee children and youth in Turkey face and emphasizes the extraordinary struggle of the government and civil society to take down these barriers. This report is the story of the children, the teachers and the parents. By listening to them we are able to better understand the difficulties they encounter.

The Open Society Foundation (Turkey) has identified challenges to the education of Syrian refugee children in Turkey as a core issue to intervene. This report clearly states that the main barrier to these children's access to a sustainable education is the lack of a common language. Nearly all of them do not speak Turkish.

Then there are other problems: Psychosocial issues, an incoherent curriculum, the lack of teachers, a lack of infrastructure...

In order to deal with an issue of such magnitude, we firmly stress the importance of cooperation between public administration and civil society. We believe that in order not to face a "Lost Generation" in 10 years, we have to act. Now.

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR: FIVE YEARS ON – WHERE ARE WE NOW?

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN TURKEY

- 1) Growing up in a violent environment: Psychosocial impact
- 2) Foundations of integration: The Turkish language
- 3) Money, money, money: Economic hardship
- 4) Where are the schools? Lack of infrastructure
- 5) Who is going to teach? Syrian teachers
- 6) What to teach? The curriculum
- 7) And more: Other problems

ENROLMENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN TURKEY: A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

FIELD RESEARCH

- 1) Temporary Education Centers (TECs)
 - *Syria Nour Association TEC, Fatih, Istanbul*
 - *Syria Can Association TEC, Okmeydani, Istanbul*
 - *Elbeyli Refugee Camp, Kilis*
 - *Ibn Rushud TEC, Eyüp, Istanbul*
- 2) Public Schools
 - *Zühtü Senyuva School, İkitelli, Istanbul*
- 3) Private Schools
 - *Zahra University, Gaziantep*
- 4) Community Centers
 - *IKGV Community Center, Esenler, Istanbul*
 - *International Blue Crescent Foundation Community Center, Sultanbeyli, Istanbul*
 - *Yuva Association Community Center, Kirikhan, Hatay*

WHAT THE NGOs ARE DOING

APPENDICES

- APPENDIX 1 – List of interviewed NGOs, international and governmental institutions
- APPENDIX 2 – OSF Education Support Program literature research

INTRODUCTION

A Syrian Teacher, November 2015

On November 3, 2015 I received a message from one of my contacts, a human smuggler. A group of 25 Syrians was stuck on a beach in Dikili, north of Izmir. They had failed to pay the outstanding amount for the passage to Greece. So the smugglers just rendered the dinghy unusable and left. The group had been there for a week.

“That’s just the story for you” my contact said, sarcastically.

I was in Dikili the next day. I grabbed a cab and hit the road to find that beach. After half an hour, I found the group. The beach was hard to spot from the main road. Trees were blocking the view. I had to climb down, as there was no marked path.

The group was living a hell in this actual paradise. Almost all their savings had been stolen by the smugglers. All that was left on the beach was the destroyed boat and the made-in-China life vests scattered all over. The men were searching for firewood while the women were trying to bring some kind of order to the camp site. It was a hot day, and the light breeze was carrying the stench of a makeshift toilet in my direction - a rocky portion of the beach was cordoned off with cardboard. Getting food and water was a logistical nightmare. They had to walk to Dikili. Fortunately, a few individuals from a nearby village had provided them with bread, some fruit and beverages.

The group was from the Syrian city of Kamishli. The men had decided to flee with their families in the face of imminent conscription. Their journey had started almost a year ago, but they had come to a dead end on this beach. Their worst fear was to be taken back to Izmir by the Turkish security forces. They were adamant that they would find the money and complete their voyage to Greece. Lesbos could be seen in the distance, despite a light wall of fog. So close, you could almost touch the island.

I had been on the beach for more than two hours. Everybody was telling me their story. The children were staring at me with curiosity, sometimes touching me. As I photographed them, they posed and laughed uncontrollably.

Then, something interesting happened. One of the women called out for the children. Without hesitation, all twelve children hurried in the direction from which that authoritative voice was coming. They sat in a circle and the woman started handing out notebooks, textbooks and pencils. I could not believe my eyes. She was reading out loud, the children repeating. Then the children began reading by themselves, one by one. The woman listened intently; praising those who read correctly and making the others work harder. An hour later, class was over.

I had just had experienced an amazing moment. This teacher had refused to give up. Long ago, she had concluded that Syria was facing a lost generation and had decided to fight against that outcome, on her own. She was not going to leave these children alone.

Throughout the research, I never forgot about that teacher. She should be an inspiration to us all.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

This report is not intended as a piece of academic research. It aims to identify the barriers to education of Syrian refugee children in Turkey, to document what civil society, the international community and the Turkish government are doing for them, and to understand what more needs to be done. It aims to document gaps and needs in the educational provision for Syrian refugee children in Turkey and to identify themes and areas where the Open Society Foundations may be able to contribute to filling some of those gaps and meeting some of those needs.

At the heart of the document lie the interviews of those affected and those who are trying to be a part of the solution. This report is based on research and interviews conducted in Istanbul, Ankara, Hatay, Gaziantep and Kilis, between February 22 and April 13, 2016.

I contacted more than 100 Syrian refugee children, Syrian and Turkish teachers, experts, journalists, aid workers and government officials face to face, via telephone or email. I visited temporary education centers (TECs), public schools and community centers for the field research. I conducted interviews with children in schools, community centers and homes under the supervision of their parents or teachers. I did not ask the children about their ethnic or religious backgrounds. I contacted more than 30 NGOs; their ongoing or planned projects are listed in this report. Some of them refused to cooperate or provide information. The complete list of the contacted NGOs is available in the appendices.

All interview subjects were informed about the subject and purposes of the research matter and nobody was paid. I have adhered to the wishes of people who asked to remain anonymous or did not want their voices to be recorded.

A literature review was conducted as part of the research process. I used web references for all the documents to which I referred. Some of the documents are only available in Turkish. There is no bibliography section in the document. Appendix 2 contains a list of literature prepared by OSF's Education Support Program.

In the first section, the problems identified during the interview process are outlined. The second part analyses the Turkish Government's handling of the issue and how its response has evolved. The third section reports on field investigations into the experiences of schools that I visited. The last part maps the activities of NGOs to try to understand what they are doing.

Note on currency conversion: This report uses an exchange rate of 2, 83 TL per US Dollar and 3, 22 TL per Euro.

THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR: FIVE YEARS ON – WHERE ARE WE NOW?



Khadija, 10, Aleppo: "I do not know if I'll ever grow up."

Syria was plunged into a brutal civil war in March 2011, when the Government violently repressed peaceful demonstrations advocating more democracy, which were partly inspired by similar popular uprisings elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa, known as the "Arab Spring". After five years of endless fighting, the body count is harrowing: hundreds of thousands dead, millions of refugees and internally displaced persons, a country on the brink of collapse and the growing threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Although a cease-fire was negotiated in February 2016, a political solution to stop the bloodshed is still not in sight.

Deaths

Nobody knows exactly how many people have died in the war. Estimates range between 250,000 and 470,000. The main sources of information about casualties are aid organizations that have a network on the ground. According to one of them, the Syrian Center for Policy Research, life expectancy in the country has dropped from 70 to 55 in the past five years.¹

Refugees

Nearly half of Syria's pre-war population of 22 million are now refugees (4.6 million currently registered)² or internally displaced within Syria (over 6.6 million).³ Hundreds of thousands have already



Shihid, 9, Aleppo: "When I grow up, I want to go back to Aleppo."

¹ <http://scpr-syria.org/publications/policy-reports/scpr-alienation-and-violence-report-2014-2/> p.9

² <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/3RP-Regional-Dashboards-December-20151.pdf>.

³ <http://www.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/figures-analysis>.

made the perilous journey across the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Thousands have died during those crossings.

In March 2016, according to Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management, there were almost 3 million Syrian refugees in the country.⁴

What is the international community doing?

Not much. In London, February 2016, the 'Supporting Syria' conference convened under the auspices of the UN with more than 70 countries attending. World leaders pledged to make sure that there would not be a 'Lost Generation'. According to the final resolution these countries were to finance education projects worth USD 1.4 billion per annum over the next five years. Another ambitious aim is to make sure that, by the end of 2017, all Syrian school-aged children are enrolled.⁵

⁴ http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713

⁵ <https://www.supportingsyria2016.com/news/co-hosts-declaration-of-the-supporting-syria-and-the-region-conference-london-2016/>

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN TURKEY



Hasan, 8, Aleppo: "I can't read, I can't write. I want to go to school."

Hasan is 8 years old. He is from Aleppo. He attended school in Syria for only two months. He experienced all the horrors of the Syrian civil war. His house was levelled and his school bombed. First, his family fled to the nearby countryside. But the fighting did not stop and they decided to leave the country. Hasan entered Turkey via Kilis in the summer of 2015. Today they live in Istanbul's Sultanbeyli district, home to thousands of refugees. He tries to adapt to his new environment. During his short time of schooling in Syria, he was not able to learn to read and write. Here in Turkey he is not in school yet. He is bored with sitting at home, wants to play football and see the city. Since January 2016, he has been attending a community center run by the International Blue Crescent Foundation, where he is taking Arabic and Turkish classes. Hasan is just one of the thousands of Syrian children who are out of school.

According to the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM), in March 2016, there were 1,353,000 Syrian refugee children in Turkey. This is almost half the total refugee population. 856,900 of these children are 5 to 17 years old, which means school-aged.⁶ The Ministry of National Education (MONE) has announced that the number of enrolled children is 325,000.⁷ This means that more than 500,000 children are still out of school. In this section, the barriers to enrolment in and success at school, described by interviewees, will be analyzed. To demonstrate interviewees' perceptions of the relative importance of these barriers, they have been categorized as 'most important', 'important' and 'less important':

MOST IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	LESS IMPORTANT
Psychosocial impacts	Lack of infrastructure	Access to information
Language	Lack/Quality of teachers	Registration
Economic hardship	Curriculum	

According to MONE, on the other hand, the main issues are as follows:⁸

Language
Economic hardship
Challenges of Syrians' integration into Turkish schools
Lack of infrastructure
Differences in education systems

⁶ http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713

⁷ MONE education expert Metin Catar's presentation at Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) conference, held in Ankara on March 17, 2016.

⁸ Ibid.

1) Growing up in a violent environment: Psychosocial impacts



Gais is 13 years old, he was born in Hama. He was eight when the war started. Gais has been out of school since 2013. He lost a sibling. He witnessed Hama's destruction by aerial bombardment. He came to Turkey in January 2016. Gais should be in middle school now, but he was not able to attend school in his country regularly nor is he enrolled in Turkey. He likes mathematics and sports. Gais cannot speak Turkish yet, but wants to learn the language. He is having "fewer nightmares" since coming to Turkey, he told me.

Being a refugee has a mental health aspect as well, encompassing normal reactions to abnormal situations. Around 20% of people who have witnessed war can have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which needs to be treated. Even if they do not have PTSD, people in exile are confronted with two kinds of difficulty. Firstly, to overcome traumas experienced before going into exile, coping with the loss of nearest and dearest at home, property and friends, and also adapting to the new unfavorable life circumstances, the experience of material vulnerability, loss of professional identity, dependence on others, helplessness and social marginalization. To succeed in dealing with all this while preserving mental health, finding new meaning in life, and strengthening constructive decision-making ability, refugees need structured and well-targeted support.

The needs of refugees can be summarized as follows:⁹

Loss of domestic social network
Bad experiences with people, disappointment, emotional harm
Social isolation, life in a ghetto
Exclusion, xenophobia, rejection
Being deprived of normal leisure pursuits and other activities such as play and sports
Not speaking the language of the asylum country and related difficulties
School and learning difficulties
Difficulties in integration in the new environment because of being unfamiliar with patterns and rules of social behavior
General impoverishment and deprivation
Psychological traumatization resulting from war-related trauma and loss

Research on the impact of the war on Syrian children is insufficient.¹⁰ One reason for this may be down to sheer numbers, but the Turkish Government also chose to keep the camps closed to NGOs

⁹ <http://www.interventionjournal.com/sites/default/files/1209%20Anica%20Kos%20et%20al..pdf> p.52

¹⁰ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/FCD-Sirin-Rogers-FINAL.pdf> p.2

and researchers for a long time and was reluctant to share information. For Murat Erdogan of Hacettepe University's Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO), this comes as no surprise:

"Doing any kind of research in the camps is close to impossible. Everything depends on personal relations. You have to know someone".

Amnesty International's Campaign and Activism Coordinator, Begum Basdas, sees the State's lack of transparency as a defining issue: *"We can't go into the camps. This is our biggest concern. We are still talking to officials in order to gain access to not only the camp, but also the registration offices. NGOs should be able to work there."*

One official of a camp in Kilis visited for this report put it bluntly: *"Until today, we have not given anybody permission to conduct research in the camps."*¹¹

The head of DGMM, Atilla Toros, does not agree with the criticism: *"We expect everybody to empathize with us, with the refugees. We do share information."*¹²

Syrian children pay the ultimate price for the war. As long as the international community, Turkey and the NGOs do not act decisively, their future looks bleak. Education is the main tool to enable these children to reach their potential. But their right to education has been violently taken away from them, and this leads to wounds that can be very difficult to cure.¹³

The suffering that they endured during the war and subsequent displacement is one of the main reasons why these children stay away from school, fail or drop out.¹⁴

It is not only children, but also Syrian teachers who are affected by the conflict. Leyla Akca, the coordinator of Maya Foundation's Project Lift concludes that without dealing with the psychosocial impact of the conflict, enrolment will fail: *'For cultural reasons, Syrian refugees are not open to psychosocial support. Trauma is the main issue.'*¹⁵ *Traumatized teachers try to educate traumatized kids. Unless society's and lawmakers' perception of refugees change, we cannot come to a solution."*

There is general agreement that Syrian teachers, and also Turkish teachers who deal with refugee children, should be getting psychosocial support and training. But MONE does not want to finance these programs by itself. A high-ranking MONE official who asked to remain anonymous agreed: *"It*

¹¹ Interview with the administrator of AFAD's refugee camp in Kilis Metin Yildiz, Kilis, February 29, 2016

¹² Atilla Toros, Ankara, March 17, 2016

¹³ http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/FUTURES_UNDER_THREAT.PDF p.5

¹⁴ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/FCD-Sirin-Rogers-FINAL.pdf> p.6

¹⁵ Although some informants for this research used the terms 'trauma' and 'traumatized' during interviews, in this report we write rather of the psychosocial impact of conflict and of psychological distress. This is partly because an exclusive focus on traumatic stress may lead to neglecting many other key mental health and psychosocial issues. Trauma is a medical term with specific clinical meanings. The *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* caution against treating refugees and others affected by conflict and displacement as 'victims of trauma' or 'traumatized' except for that percentage of people who are suffering from severe symptoms of psychological distress, who can accurately be described as 'traumatized'. Referring to children indiscriminately as 'traumatized' may result in treatment of refugee children as helpless victims, rather than as agents of their own psychological and social wellbeing. See http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf

has been five years now, and still we have not been able to teach these children Turkish. They are all traumatized. And our teachers have not been flexible at all, either.”

Research conducted in Turkey shows that the majority of Syrian children have experienced close contact with violence ¹⁶



Syrian children are not getting the psychosocial support they need. Psychological distress is not being adequately and comprehensively addressed in public schools or TECs. In this regard, NGOs could play a more active role, which we will analyze later. While trying to address psychosocial distress, peacebuilding between communities must also be pursued.

Most of the refugees will stay in Turkey. Therefore, long-term programs need to be developed:

“There needs to be a focus on vocational training. We cannot continue to deliver aid forever. The refugees should be able to live with dignity. Refugees who have been living here for five years now want to see themselves as part of the Turkish community. But we tend to create Syrian ghettos. We have to work on peacebuilding.”¹⁷

2) Foundations of integration: The Turkish language

Almost all of the Syrian refugees arriving in Turkey, children and adults, do not speak the Turkish language. All interviewees regarded the language issue as a significant barrier to education. This is a major reason why three times as many Syrian children attend temporary education centers as use Turkish public schools. The TECs use Arabic as the medium of instruction.¹⁸

¹⁶ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/FCD-Sirin-Rogers-FINAL.pdf> p.13

¹⁷ Interview with Yuva Association’s Education Coordinator of the Support to Syrian Refugees Program Ebru Acikgoz, Istanbul, April 13, 2016

¹⁸ MONE education expert Metin Catar’s presentation at the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) conference, held in Ankara on March 17, 2016

Number of Syrian children in TECs, March 2016	247,000
Number of Syrian children in public schools, March 2016	78,000

The relationship between language barriers and enrolment varies with age. Younger children learn a new language faster.¹⁹ The current state of enrolment tends to prove this point: Although the total number of school-aged Syrian children is almost equally distributed in terms of grades they should be attending, enrolment amongst primary school children is highest.²⁰

Theoretically, Syrian children can learn Turkish via TECs, public schools, private courses and community centers.

By the start of education year 2015-2016, MONE had still not been able to devise a systemic and national Turkish language learning programme.²¹ This has now become a critical issue for MONE, UNICEF and NGOs. They are desperately looking for a lasting solution. MONE official Selman Isik is optimistic:

“Together with our partners at UNHCR, we are working on a 10 million euro project. We hope to start this year. We will train 1,000 teachers as master trainers who will be able to teach Turkish as a foreign language.”

So, if this matter has been so urgent, why did it take so long to act?

According to a MONE source, different state institutions had been fighting over access to funds and influence.

Another source told OSF that the 10 million euros for the proposed project were almost taken by the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD): *“For ridiculous reasons, the money came and went between different directorates. Everybody wanted the money. This cost us valuable time. At one point we thought we would not get anything.”*

The language issue is a very serious problem for Syrian children. They cannot make friends and end up leaving school. Another problem is that some providers of Turkish language courses tend to reject children who do not know the Latin alphabet, considering such provision a ‘waste of time.’

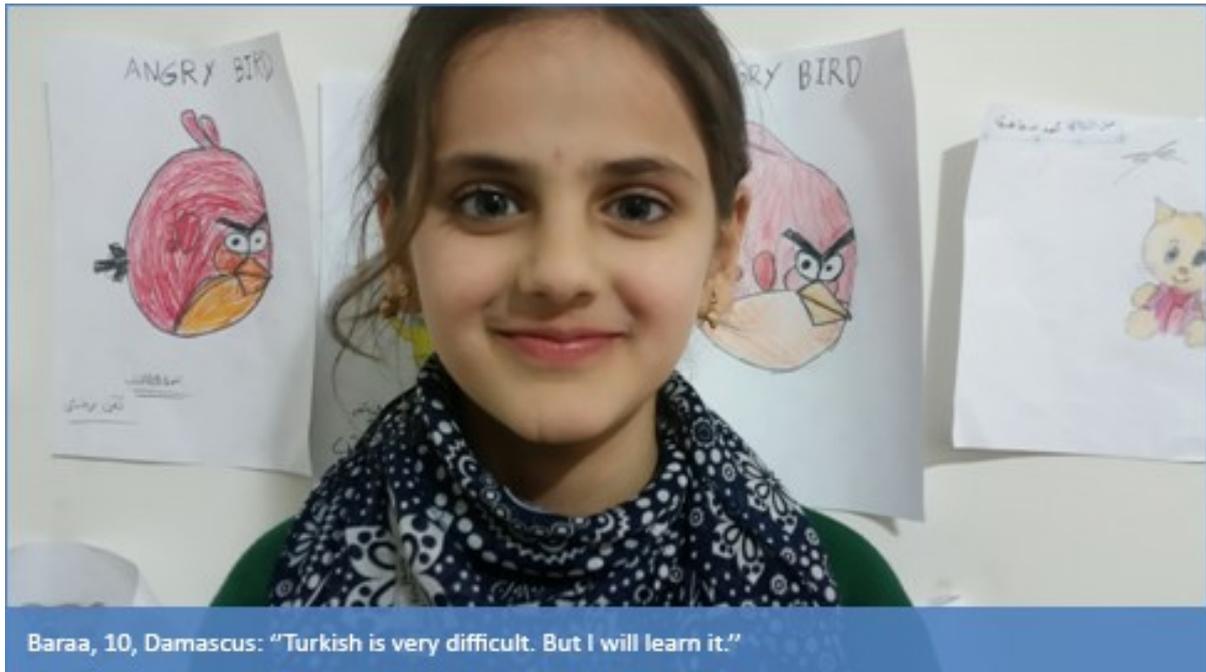
Some researchers suggest that, because of different alphabets, Syrian children do find it harder to learn Turkish.²²

¹⁹ http://www.unhcr.org/turkey/uploads/root/may_external_update_2015.pdf p.3

²⁰ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.16

²¹ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/11/08/when-i-picture-my-future-i-see-nothing/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children> p.25

²² http://www.turkishstudies.net/Makaleler/92020554_17DemirciMetin-egt_S-333-358.pdf p.354



Baraa is ten years old. She was born in Damascus. She came to Turkey in January 2016. In the relative safety of the Syrian capital she was able to attend school until the fourth grade. She lives in Istanbul now, and her family is still looking for a school. For now, she attends language courses in a local community center. She is bored sitting at home and longs for Turkish friends who can show her around. Baraa wants to be a doctor and dreams of returning to her country one day.

According to Bahcesehir University's English Preparation School Director Mehmet Atasagun, the methods of teaching Turkish must change: *"The biggest problem these kids are facing is the language and the way we teach it. Here in Turkey, teaching Turkish is mostly regarded as education for adults. We have to change this approach and take the kids into consideration."*

MONE has identified lack of Turkish proficiency as the main barrier to education. Progress is being made. Turkish courses in TECs have gained much more state support since last year. The number of Turkish teachers assigned to teaching refugee children has also been increased to 1,500, with support from organizations like UNICEF. MONE aims to continue with this increase.

Hatice Akarca, a Turkish woman, is one of these teachers. She teaches Turkish in different Syrian schools and language courses for 20 hours a week: *"I teach our language to engineers, women and children. The refugee crisis affected me deeply. I wanted to be a part of the solution. The Syrians have to learn Turkish. Otherwise they will not be able to integrate with their communities or find any jobs."*

MONE is planning to engage the Yunus Emre Institute to push for a national drive in Turkish language education for Syrians. For researcher Murat Erdogan, this is not enough: *"Yunus Emre does not have the capacity. They cannot do it on their own, and need to be supported."*



Twelve-year-old Maram, from Aleppo, came to Turkey in 2014. After a short stay in the border province of Kilis, the family moved to Bursa, an industrial city in Western Turkey, where her father and brother secured jobs. After skipping the 3rd and 4th grades because of the war, she started in a public school at 5th grade, which was difficult and led to her dropping out. The family moved to Istanbul after both her father and brother lost their jobs. As the family is struggling to find employment, Maram is still looking for a school. She speaks Turkish quite fluently. She learned it by watching television and playing with Turkish children in the streets. She wants to become a doctor.

Despite all efforts, there are just not enough qualified personnel to teach Turkish to all the Syrians who need it. A March 2016 report by the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) – a think tank with close ties to the Turkish Government – stated this fact rather critically:

“... MONE regulations have called on teachers in the language field to make themselves available for teaching the Turkish language. But these teachers refuse or choose not to educate the Syrian children because they do not speak Arabic themselves or do not have any expertise in teaching the language to foreigners.”²³

Abbas Guclu, an expert journalist on education matters, believes that the teachers have a point and that ‘stuffing the children into the classrooms’ will not help: *“What do they do? They cram the kids into the classroom. They can’t teach Turkish; they do not address the trauma. We have still not solved our own children’s education problems; how can we expect to solve the problems of the Syrians?”*

AÇEV’s Burcu Gunduz thinks enrolling Syrian children in public schools without making sure they learn Turkish first puts them at a disadvantage: *“The education system was not ready for so many children. It does not help them to go to school without learning Turkish.”*

Al Jazeera Turkey’s education correspondent, Umay Aktas Salman, agrees: *“MONE does not have a plan to teach Turkish. The most they do is just to stuff the children into the schools.”*

²³ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.21



I met 12-year-old Ibrahim Ali in Hatay's Kirikhan district, close to the Syrian border. He is from Hama and has been living in Kirikhan since 2013. He goes to a TEC, 5th grade. He likes Turkish, Arabic and mathematics. He also wants to become a doctor.

The language problem for Syrian children is twofold. They have to learn Turkish and they should not forget Arabic. TECs are crucial here, because the curriculum is in Arabic, and at the same time they learn Turkish, although to varying degrees. But teaching in Arabic is a problem in itself, as Begum Basdas from Amnesty International points out: *"The quality of teaching in Arabic is questionable. This just shows us how important bilingual education, how important the mother tongue is."*

In Turkey, bilingual education is political and a very problematic matter. If the principle of mother-tongue instruction is accepted for Syrians, some fear that a precedent may be established for the education of Kurds in Turkey. According one informant who asked to remain anonymous, MONE is nevertheless discussing possibilities: *"There was an internal discussion about bilingual education, but because of the Kurdish problem nothing materialized. Nevertheless, MONE sent its experts to Switzerland, Germany and the United Kingdom to gain some insight."*

Suna Hanoz of AÇEV said: *"We have to find a formula that does not discriminate against Kurdish children. You cannot just disregard the mother tongue."* Asylum and Migration Research Center's (IGAM) Metin Corabatir believes that the mother tongue issue should not be exaggerated. He thinks that the language programs in countries like Germany provide a model to look up to.

There are significant debates about whether to provide second language education through immersion, transitional bilingual education (often provided in a sheltered and thus segregated environment), or true bilingual education.²⁴ Bilingual education has many cognitive, academic, and social benefits, but it remains costly and difficult to implement, and in many places there is little political will to provide such services. Countries have elected different policies and many have shifted

²⁴ http://www.edweek.org/media/bilingual_pdf.pdf

approaches abruptly. There remain profound questions about how to teach the target language of wider communication. What is clear, however, is that attention to language learning is essential.

3) Money, money, money: Economic hardship

Economic problems are another serious barrier to education. According to MONE, it is the second biggest problem, after language.²⁵



Musa, 10, Aleppo: "There is no school where I live. My father can't send me to the one far away."

Musa Kibbiye is ten years old. He came to Istanbul's Balat district with his family from Aleppo in February 2016. Now they share an apartment with three other families. He doesn't go to school. Although there is a public school nearby, he doesn't want to go because he doesn't know Turkish. He takes private lessons, twice a week.

Balat is one of the main districts in Istanbul where Syrians live. The new arrivals feel the burden of economic hardship the most. It is difficult to find a place to stay and to pay the rent without work. Sending their children to school does not top the list of priorities at this point. Most of the Syrian families prefer the poorer neighborhoods of Istanbul because rents are much lower. But this leads to the creation of Syrian ghettos. Economic problems just widen the gaps between communities.



A Street in Istanbul's Balat district where Syrians live

Public education in Turkey is supposed to be free. But there are hidden costs. Schools tend to ask for informal registration fees, money for stationery and books, and contributions to school-related

²⁵ MONE education expert Metin Catar's presentation at Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) conference, held in Ankara on March 17, 2016

activities. These costs are still a stumbling block for newly arrived families who have invested most, if not all of their savings in making the journey out of Syria.²⁶

For families who do not send their children to public schools because of language barriers or economic reasons, TECs are an alternative. But these Syrian-run schools also charge different amounts per child. On top of that there are transport costs.²⁷



Research conducted for this report indicates that a low-income Syrian family needs to spend at least 108 Turkish Lira (TL) per month on one child's education.

A recent survey by Support to Life shows that 20% of Syrian children living in Istanbul are out of school because their families are not able to meet these costs.²⁸

Eleven-year old Mahmud is from Aleppo. He and his family just recently came to Istanbul, in February 2016. Mahmud's father has lung cancer and needs treatment. He cannot work. Mahmud wants to go to school, but he cannot. He was never able to go to school in Syria either. He now sells tissues on the streets, which in reality is begging.

Syrians in urban areas experience economic hardships not in the same way as the refugees in the camps do. According to DGMM, the urban-

²⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/11/08/when-i-picture-my-future-i-see-nothing/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children> p.32

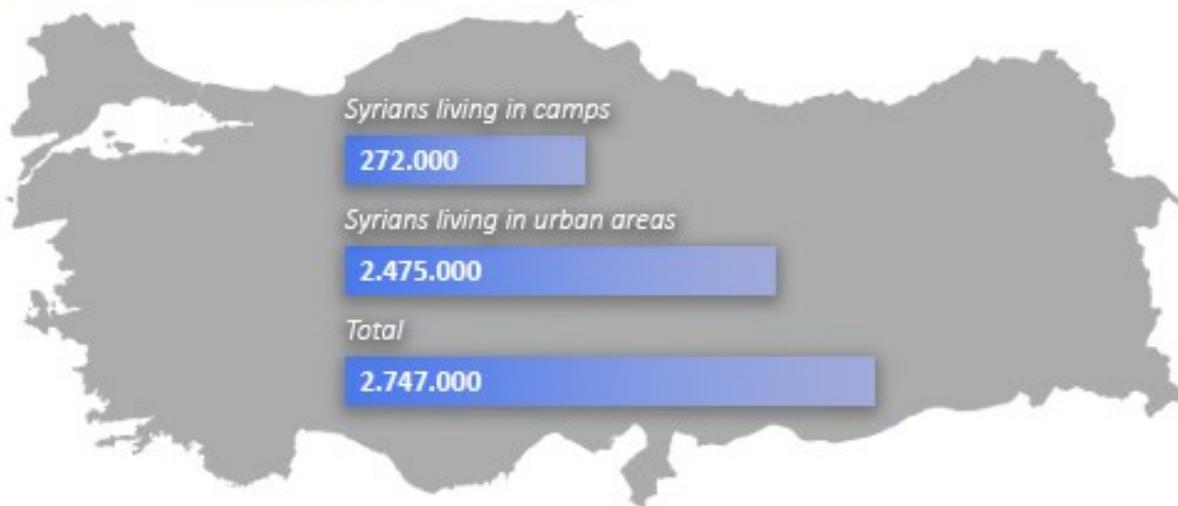
²⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/11/08/when-i-picture-my-future-i-see-nothing/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children> p.32

²⁸

http://www.hayatadestek.org/media/files/Bu_%C4%B0%C5%9F_%C3%87ocuk_Oyunca%C4%9F%C4%B1_De%C4%9Fil_Nisan_2016_eb%C3%BCIten_Yoksulluk_D%C3%B6ng%C3%BCs%C3%BC_Ve_Suriyeli_%C3%87al%C4%B1%C5%9Fan_%C3%87ocuklar.pdf

camp refugee split is as follows:²⁹

Syrian Refugees in Turkey



Camp residents are given a monthly allowance of 85 TL by AFAD. They receive food and hygiene packages twice a month. In the camps they have free schools, clinics and recreational areas. Electricity and water are free. There are markets where everything is much cheaper than in the cities. Women can earn up to 500 TL a month by selling products they weave in the workshops within the camps. Syrian teachers receive incentive payments of 600 TL in the camps.



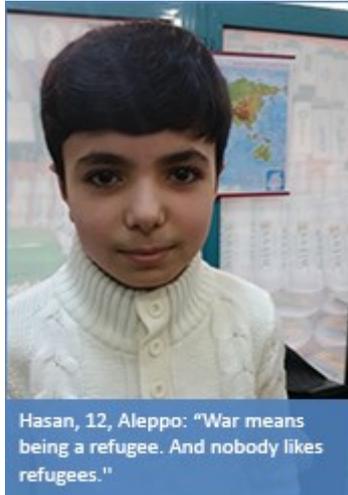
Syrians living in urban areas, however, have to find a job first in order to be able to pay their rent and other bills and to send their children to school. NGO representatives who talked to OSF stressed that Syrian refugees need to be given rights equal to those of Turkish citizens. Many argue that granting the refugees the right to work is an important step forward.

Abdullah just turned 15. He came to Turkey in 2013. He experienced the fierce fighting between government troops and ISIS in Deir ez-Zor, his hometown, witnessing a lot of deaths. His father managed to smuggle his family out of the city. They came to Damascus, but decided to leave the country shortly afterwards. Now he lives in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, close to the Syrian border. He goes to a TEC, but still does not speak the language. Private courses are out of the question he says, because they are too expensive – 1,500 TL a month. As his school is not in the neighbourhood he also needs 80 TL per month for transport. He wants to be a soldier. “if the war drags on, I will go back and fight,” he says. He explains that he cannot establish friendship with Turks and spends more time with Syrians. When is not at school, he mostly stays at home.

²⁹ Interview with Atilla Toros, Ankara, March 17, 2016

In the cities, Syrian teachers earn 900-1,500 TL. In Istanbul's districts with a high Syrian population rents vary from 300 to 1,000 TL. Human Rights Watch concludes that Syrians are paid significantly less for the same work that their Turkish counterparts perform, mostly below minimum wage.³⁰

The Turkish Government continues to prepare legislation that will regulate the right to work for Syrian refugees. But economic hardships are keeping the children out of school, which increases the risk of child labor.



Hasan, 12, Aleppo: "War means being a refugee. And nobody likes refugees."

Hasan is a 12-year old boy from Aleppo. For weeks he lived under constant bombardment and siege. In 2012 he came to Turkey. He is now in 5th grade. When the family first came to Kilis, his father refused to go to a camp. For months, they lived in the basement of a shop and Hasan started to work with a tailor. He earned 600 TL a month and worked six, sometimes seven days per week. When the family moved to Istanbul, he was able to go to school again. He has three good Turkish friends with whom he practices the language. He wants to go back to Syria.

According to official statistics one million Turkish children are working³¹. But we do not know how many Syrian children are forced to work in Turkey.

UNICEF estimates that one in ten Syrian children have to work.³²

Human Rights Watch stated in their 2015 report that the children work in garment factories, tailoring workshops, shoe factories, dried fruit processing facilities, automotive repair shops, and farms or on the streets selling goods.³³

Many of them earn less than a dollar per day.³⁴

The Government, UNHCR, UNICEF and NGOs struggle to cope with this phenomenon of child labor which is rampant especially in big cities like Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir.

A Support to Life survey³⁵ conducted in Istanbul, Hatay and Sanliurfa gives a clue about the seriousness and magnitude of the problem:

³⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/11/08/when-i-picture-my-future-i-see-nothing/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children> p.36

³¹ <http://www.imctv.com.tr/turkiyede-1-milyon-cocuk-isci/>

³² <http://www.theguardian.com/law/2014/sep/02/syria-refugees-child-labour-turkey>

³³ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/11/08/when-i-picture-my-future-i-see-nothing/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children> p.35

³⁴ http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/sciunicefchildlabourreport_july2015.pdf p.13

³⁵

http://www.hayatadestek.org/media/files/Bu_%C4%B0%C5%9F_%C3%87ocuk_Oyunca%C4%9F%C4%B1_De%C4%9Fil_Nisan_2016_eb%C3%BCIten_Yoksulluk_D%C3%B6ng%C3%BCs%C3%BC_Ve_Suriyeli_%C3%87al%C4%B1%C5%9Fan_%C3%87ocuklar.pdf



MONE is considering paying families to encourage them to send their children to school again. Many NGOs are funding, or trying to fund similar projects.

But child labor is not a Syrian phenomenon, it is a widespread Turkish problem as well: *“We need to know our limits and not fool ourselves. We are not a perfect society. Can we really think of ‘fixing’ the Syrians?”*³⁶



Fifteen-year-old Tarik is one of the Syrian children who have to work. He is a tailor’s apprentice, working six days a week for 13 hours per day. He barely makes minimum wage – 750 TL per month. His overtime is not paid and he does not complain about it so as not to risk his job. He came to Turkey in 2015. In Damascus, where he lived, he was attending school. But in Istanbul he could not enrol. TECs proved to be too expensive. I asked him why he did not attend a public school. His answer was self-explanatory: “I can’t speak Turkish; how would I have been able to make it there? Dad is unemployed and we need the money I make for paying the rent. I have to work. It’s as simple as that.” Tarik wants to go to Europe. But that prospect looks bleak as well.

4) Where are the schools? Lack of infrastructure

TECs do not meet the demands of the Syrian children. Most of these schools are improvised entities within the confines of apartments. There are no recreational areas; they lack desks, chairs and stationery. In one of the TECs I visited, the stench of the toilets hit me as soon as I entered the building. Teachers and students seemed not to mind. TECs are operating in rented buildings. Due to

³⁶ Interview with Yuva Association’s Syrian Refugee Program’s manager Ozge Sönmez, Istanbul, April 13, 2016

lack of funding, many are facing closure.³⁷ Syrians prefer these schools, and they become crowded. This has a detrimental effect on the quality of education.³⁸

To rectify the situation MONE is opening up its own schools with second shifts to operate as TECs in the evenings. A hundred more public schools are scheduled to be turned into TECs for the new education year. Although 70 more new schools were built in previous years, MONE officials believe that there is still need for more buildings.

Religious foundations aim to lead the pack in school construction. “Hayrat Foundation” has plans to build a school in Sanliurfa, a city close to the Syrian border. The same foundation just recently opened the first religious private school exclusively for Syrians in the eastern city of Kahramanmaras. The school will have 750 pupils.³⁹ The NGO Save the Children is funding the construction of two public schools in Hatay. These will be handed over to MONE as soon as they are completed. MONE will use a portion of the EU funds, referred to above, for school construction.⁴⁰ MONE’s Selman Isik says that the Government is not able to do everything on its own and asks NGOs to help meet the demand for school places, especially in Istanbul: *“There is a building shortage in Istanbul’s Fatih and Esenler counties. We need to open up schools there.”*

5) Who is going to teach? Syrian teachers

As the number of school-aged Syrian children rises, so does the need for qualified Syrian teachers. There are no reliable data on the educational backgrounds of Syrian refugees entering Turkey. We simply do not know for sure how many teachers and academics there are.⁴¹ We also do not know if all those ‘claiming to be teachers’ in the schools are trained and qualified teachers. Almost all TECs visited for this report employed some Syrians who do not have any background in education. Syrians are aware of this, so some Syrian associations are trying to bring the teachers together. The Union of Syrian Teachers is a project in the making. Union leader Mustafa al-Assad claims that fake diplomas for teachers can easily be bought for 15 USD. Because of this fraud, many real teachers are out of the workforce, he says. According to MONE, close to 14,000 Syrian teachers are working in schools.

Another contentious issue is the process by which these teachers are vetted. Religious foundations seem to play an important role here. The Turkish Diyanet Foundation and local muftis (state religious affairs officials) interview candidates and send them to schools to work.

Hayrat Foundation does not run a school in Istanbul, but employs 40 Syrian teachers. The Foundation’s Project Coordinator, Engin Dogan, says that ‘being a good Muslim’ is one of the qualities they look for: *“I will not lie to you. Some of the Syrians we employ aren’t really teachers. But all of them are good Muslims.”* According to researcher Murat Erdogan, MONE also prefers teachers with a religious background. Some Syrian associations also believe that MONE is deliberately trying to keep secular teachers out of the system. The head of the Civil and Social Relief Association Yasser Dallah states that the Government has to change this policy:

³⁷ https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/libraries/TEC%20Report%20Assessment%20TR%20FINAL_0.pdf p.7

³⁸ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.22

³⁹ Interview with Hayrat’s Program Manager Engin Dogan, Istanbul, April 5, 2016

⁴⁰ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.22

⁴¹ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.21

“Lawyers, soldiers, former state employees and religious figures are posing as teachers. Many of the real teachers are out of work. And those people have managed to teach the kids nothing in five years. Qualified teachers have been left out of the system. That is why we have to bring these teachers together.”

We contacted MONE officials for comment. There was no formal answer. One source who asked to remain anonymous rejected the allegations and said that their door is open to anybody who can prove their credentials.

This discussion will linger on as long as the vetting process stays the same. MONE is planning to centralize the appointment of teachers starting from next year.

According to a MONE-appointed TEC coordinator who asked not to be named, another pressing issue regarding the teachers is their compensation:

“The salaries are very low. I agree with that. But that is the best we can do. It is everyone’s duty to try and improve this.”

MONE, with UNICEF support, is paying teachers incentives of 600 TL in the camps, and in the cities 900 TL. But research by NGOs shows that there are problems in paying these incentives, and many teachers are choosing to quit.⁴² It is also not clear for how long UNICEF will continue to support the payment of incentives.

Introducing assistant teachers, pedagogical assistants can be yet another way to ensure high quality and sensitive teaching for minority group children and young people. There is a relatively well developed practice of including assistants and coordinators of immigrant origin, who in addition to providing support in learning can play the role of mediator between local immigrants and the wider community.⁴³

Recruiting and retaining high quality and skilled teachers is particularly important for the quality of education children receive.⁴⁴

The more vulnerable a child is, the quality of the teacher required will be commensurately higher. Yet migrant children are the least likely to experience that support. Also, refugee children may benefit from increased numbers of migrant and minority teachers, who can help compensate for teacher shortages and at the same time serve as helpers and role models for the migrant children. But in the case of Turkey, this remains a problematic field – it also a question of funding.

6) What to teach? The Curriculum

In TECs Syrian children learn a rewritten Syrian curriculum, from which references to the Assad regime have been removed. It was drafted by a group of Syrian education specialists with links to Syrian opposition politicians whom Turkey regards as legitimate alternatives to the regime in Damascus. MONE authorized the use of this curriculum by TECs and, supported by UNICEF, printed

⁴² https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/libraries/TEC%20Report%20Assessment%20TR%20FINAL_0.pdf p.6

⁴³ <http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports/activities/reports/education-and-migration-pdf> p.54-65

⁴⁴ [https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/hattie/docs/teachers-make-a-difference-ACER-\(2003\).pdf](https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/hattie/docs/teachers-make-a-difference-ACER-(2003).pdf)

and distributed textbooks to support students and teachers. Unfortunately these new text books are allegedly full of mistakes.⁴⁵

Yasser Dallal of the Civil and Social Relief Association claims that different curricula – mostly religious – are being taught in Syrian schools. Dallal believes that the best way to deal with this is that MONE should translate the Turkish curriculum into Arabic and monitor its implementation.

MONE is already working in that direction.

Another TEC coordinator who asked to remain anonymous, told OSF that it is correct to assume that a variety of curricula are implemented among the schools and argued that it will take ‘some more time’ to standardize the curriculum offered.

IGAM’s Metin Corabatir also thinks that the curriculum is not the same in every school and that religious studies are preferred. The head of the Syria Nour Association Mehti Davud has no issues with religious education:

“The curriculum is problematic, yes. Schools do not adhere to the curriculum, yes. Some teachers do what they think is best, yes. But the curriculum in its current form is simply not enough to meet the needs of a traumatized generation. It has to be rewritten in its entirety. Religion and moral values have to be emphasized.”

Curriculum choice is challenging. It can be a highly politicized issue for host governments, and an emotive one for refugee communities.

The question is simple, the answer not so:

Should the refugees be taught their native curriculum or the host country’s?

Turkey is doing both.

On the one hand there is a parallel system developing, via the TECS. On the other hand, Syrian children are being enrolled in public schools – mainstreaming.

A choice has to be made between these two approaches.

MONE aims to have integrated TECs into the public school system within eight years.

The UNHCR lists the pros and cons of these approaches, parallel vs mainstreaming, as follows and opts for the latter:⁴⁶

⁴⁵ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.22

⁴⁶ <http://www.unhcr.org/560be1209.html> p.3

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN CURRICULUM	COUNTRY OF ASYLUM CURRICULUM
PROs	
Familiar language with links to home culture/identity	Opens pathway for refugees to access national schools
Politically acceptable to both refugees and some host governments	Access to examinations and accredited certification
Facilitates repatriation	Quality – access to curricular materials, deployment of qualified teachers, teacher training, quality assurance
Option when country of asylum policy bars access to national system	Monitoring and supervision by MONE for improved accountability
	Access to higher levels of education
	Opportunities for social cohesion with host community
	Sustainable investment in enhancement of national capacity
	Possibility to access development funding
CONS	
No long-term access to examinations and certification	Perceived loss of country of origin language, cultural, religious identity
No access to higher levels of education or employment due to lack of certification	Loss of formal literacy in country of origin language can affect education/employment upon repatriation
No access to curricular materials or professional teacher training	Language can be a barrier to successful transition to new medium of instruction
No access to supervision and quality assurance	Discrimination and bullying in host community schools
Isolation from host community	Substantial investment and planning needed to ensure successful transition to new curriculum
Long term funding and capacity challenges in sustaining parallel education system	

In particular, curriculum decisions as they relate to access to examinations and certification have far-reaching implications for refugee children and their protection, including future educational and livelihood opportunities. These issues also present significant technical and planning challenges for education providers and require the development of strong partnerships between national authorities and refugee education partners.⁴⁷

MONE's electronic tracking system, Education Management Information System for Foreigners (YÖBİS), is similar to its nationwide e-School system. It tracks the Syrian children's attendance and grades. The system was devised with assistance from UNICEF and also has an Arabic interface.⁴⁸ The system monitors children in TECs as well as public schools. Children registered in YÖBİS do get graduation certificates. But data collected via this system is not deemed trustworthy at all times, especially when registration of children in TECS is not done with the approval of the MONE coordinator. Data from the system are crucial as they also track dropout rates. This information needs to be used, and more importantly, shared by MONE.

⁴⁷ <http://www.unhcr.org/560be1209.html> p.1

⁴⁸ <https://yobis.meb.gov.tr/>

An appropriate, relevant and meaningful curriculum is closely connected to access and enrolment. The responsiveness of curricula and pedagogies to migrants, and openness to diversity, are important characteristics of effective schooling. Integration of specific cultural content is not only important for the migrants, but also for the host community. Broadening the knowledge about the origin of the new neighbors can help reduce fear and anxiety and prevent bias and stereotypes.

Nevertheless, a new Syrian curriculum cannot be written without the war in the country ending. There are hundreds of groups in Syria, claiming to be a legitimate opposition and wanting to devise their own education systems – another reason why Syrian children have to be mainstreamed.

7) And more: Other problems

Some Syrian refugees claim that access to information about their rights is still limited. But to be fair, most issues in that regard have been addressed over the last year. Mechanisms which help Syrians are now in place at the local and national level. Community centers provide refugees with free legal advice; municipalities are using SMS applications to reach the refugees and inform them.⁴⁹ Registered refugees have the right to access “E-Devlet”, a network of the Turkish ministries.

The refugee registration system is also changing. DGMM has devised the software “GocNet”. All data about the refugees are now being fed into the system. Other directorates and ministries will also have access to this data, which is new. All refugees will be given new biometric identity cards, which will ease access to state hospitals and other institutions. Also, more data, including employment records, are now being collected at point of entry. Fingerprinting will also go under the jurisdiction of the DGMM. This was done by the police before, but it made the registration process much longer because the refugees had to shuttle between various institutions to finalize their application.

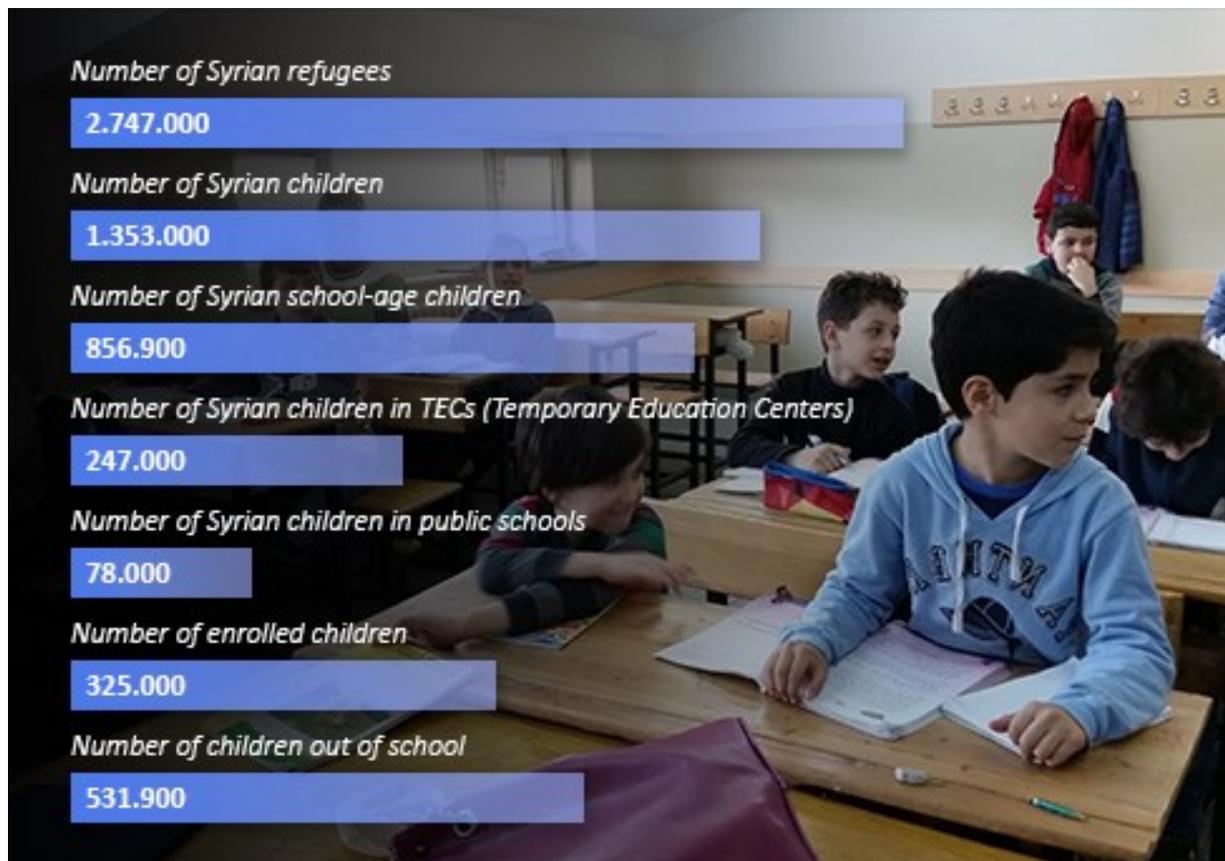
Non-registered Syrians are treated as illegal aliens and do not have benefit from many of the provisions made for registered refugees.

⁴⁹ Istanbul’s Sultanbeyli Municipality has set up such a SMS system.

ENROLMENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN TURKEY: A LONG AND WINDING ROAD



Here is a reminder of the statistics relevant to enrolment of Syrian children, as of March 2016:



The Government has set an ambitious target for the new education year 2016-2017: Raising enrolment to 450.000 children.⁵⁰ MONE is doing its best to achieve this goal. In order to do that the Ministry plans to:

- 1) Strengthen organizational capacity of MONE in cities and harder-to-reach areas
- 2) Find additional funding for TECs
- 3) Raise awareness among Syrians
- 4) In order to encourage schooling compensate families whose children have to work
- 5) Build new schools
- 6) Concentrate on procuring school materials

MONE also plans to strengthen pre-school provision for Syrian children in TECs and to issue a new syllabus for Syrian first graders to be taught in the Turkish language.

To achieve these goals and go further, MONE needs funding. Part of that will definitely come from the 3-billion-euro deal signed with the EU in March.⁵¹ MONE sources have disclosed to OSF that about a third of that money could be used for educational purposes.

As of March 2016, €95 million have been allocated for Turkey via ECHO funds. €55 million will be used for education projects, with the rest going to humanitarian relief.⁵²

The Government has spent nearly €7 billion on the Syrian refugees with only modest foreign help since the refugee crisis began in 2011 and is adamant that the burden is not shared equally, especially within the EU. High-ranking government officials vent their frustrations frequently. Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan stated that 'everybody else but Turkey is smart' after claiming five years of foreign aid stood at US \$ 455 million.⁵³

The MONE team dealing with the crisis has been increased from 5 to 14 people. Selman Isik told OSF that they have the Prime Minister's full backing and that they will achieve their targets.

Today, Syrian children have access to education via Turkish public schools, TECs, private schools and community centers:

When war broke out in 2011, the official thinking was that the regime in Syria would fall and the refugees would soon return home. Therefore little long-term planning was done; sorting out the situation in the camps was deemed enough.⁵⁴

But the crisis just snowballed. Turkey's decision-makers came to grips with the situation only in 2013, when the Government decided to take concrete steps that would address the overall situation.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ <http://www.meb.gov.tr/suriyeli-multecilerin-egitiminden-dolayi-turkiye8217ye-ovgu/haber/9896/tr>

⁵¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35486655>

⁵² http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/turkey_syrian_crisis_en.pdf

⁵³ <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1192583-akdogan-turkiye-enayi-mi-dunyanin-akillisi-sizsiniz>

⁵⁴ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.7

⁵⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/11/08/when-i-picture-my-future-i-see-nothing/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children> p.14

On April 26, 2013 MONE issued a circular addressing the Syrians living outside the camps.⁵⁶ Although not providing any solutions it was the first official document acknowledging that there was indeed a problem in the cities.

A second circular was issued in September of the same year, which laid the foundations of today's system. According to that document which aimed to deal only with Syrians in the camps, an Arabic curriculum was to be prepared, Turkish and Syrian teachers were to be mobilized and opening Turkish language courses for Syrians were to be encouraged.⁵⁷

That circular was an important but insufficient step. It brought few solutions for the hundreds of thousands of children living in the cities.⁵⁸ But Syrians had been opening schools all over Turkey since 2011. A MONE official speaking to me on condition of anonymity admitted that they were unprepared:

“Actually, we never thought of opening up TECs. We just were not aware of the immense void the war had created. We couldn't address this need. We always believed that the war would soon end and devised policies accordingly. We were never ready for what was going on outside the camps. The TECs actually filled the gap created by our mistakes. The TECs actually marked the start of fixing the problems.”

More legislation followed. In April 2014, a comprehensive migration law, “The Law on Foreigners and International Protection” came into force. Now, Syrians were legally able to live outside the camps. A subsequent regulation issued in October 2014 clarified the rules and procedures for registering temporarily protected persons, as well as their rights and entitlements. Syrian refugees, when registered, now had legal access to health, education and social benefits.

The Turkish Government is also working on legislation to grant Syrians the right to work.

According to a circular issued on January 15, 2016, Syrians registered in Turkey for at least six months will be eligible for a work permit. Turkish employers will not be able to pay them less than the minimum wage. Seasonal and agricultural workers are exempt from this. This regulation states that the number of Syrians working in a Turkish company cannot exceed 10% of the number of Turkish employees.⁵⁹

But in reality the law does not automatically offer most refugees a route out of the black market. Most problematically, the law requires an employer to give his employees a contract before they can apply for a permit. But this is an unattractive proposition for many employers, since they often employ Syrians precisely because they are easily exploited.

At the time of writing, Turkish employers have allowed less than 2,000 of Turkey's 2.8 million Syrians to apply for work permits. This is less than 1%.

⁵⁶ http://melikgazi.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2013_05/03024558_suriye.pdf

⁵⁷ <http://www.egitimmezvuat.com/index.php/Resmi-2013/uelkemezde-gecc-koruma-altinda-bulunan-surye-vatandalarina-yoenelk-etm-oeretm-hzmetler.html>

⁵⁸ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.13

⁵⁹ <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/01/20160115-23.pdf>

Government officials contacted by OSF argued that the law will take time to settle and more applications will be made once more employers know about the legislative changes.



19-year-old Luay Bushi (left) has been in Turkey since 2012. He works in an auto repair shop in Balat, Istanbul and also distributes bottled water. He works six, sometimes seven days-a-week and earns less than 1,000 TL. When I asked him whether he knew about the law, he claimed to have heard it from me.

Mohammed Shureymi (right), came to Turkey in 2015. He works in a barber's shop and earns around 600 TL per month. Mohammed is informed about the new legislation, but doubtful about its implementation: "Do you really think my boss would give me a

contract when he has the opportunity to make me work for almost free?"



In September 2014, MONE issued Circular 2014/21, which created new regulations for the education of the temporary protection beneficiaries.⁶⁰ With this document, TECs were legalized and a MONE Coordinator appointed to each of them. These coordinators are the link between MONE and TECs. They also check and make sure the weekly curriculum is implemented. These coordinators are the ones who decide which teachers are paid. Therefore TEC headmasters try to have a smooth relationship with them.

As of January 2016 there are 266 TECs in Turkey with nearly 250.000 pupils. And the number is rising.

MONE plans to integrate the TECs into the national education system within eight years. The coordinators will become 'acting headmasters'.

For Syrian children to be able to receive a formal education, registration is a must. In theory, those who are not registered cannot go to school.

But the coordinators mostly take matters into their own hands and make sure that those who are not registered also can access public education. A TEC coordinator who asked not to be named told me that she had made sure that more than 100 unregistered children got enrolled in her school.

There are also those who are not so flexible.

⁶⁰ http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/yabyonegiogr_1/yabyonegiogr_1.html



MONE's circular 2014/21 also paved the way for Syrian children to gain access to public schools. As of March 2016 almost 80,000 children are now enrolled. But families still prefer TECs. Reasons for that are understandable: the language of instruction is Arabic, the curriculum is Syria's and the children face fewer problems of adaptation. MONE is aware of the situation and tries to encourage families to send their children to public schools anyway – especially first graders and pre-school pupils.⁶¹ It is now much easier for Syrians to register in public schools. Being a temporary protection beneficiary is the only formality. MONE officials at the local level immediately refer the children to the nearest school in their neighborhood.

But enrolment of Syrian children in public schools can be a divisive issue. In March 2016, the mayor of Istanbul's Uskudar district set up TECs within three public schools. As soon as the schools opened, Turkish parents staged an impromptu protest in front of the Mayor's office asking for the TECs to be closed. Some parents were heard shouting, 'We do not want our children to sit next to Syrians.' Although there can be a tendency to describe this isolated incident as an example of xenophobia, research has shown that outbreaks of feelings like these, in general, have to do with a perception that the quality of education might decline if refugees are learning side by side with the host country children.⁶²

Though a contentious issue, religious foundations also play a role in preparing Syrian children for education. The Syrian Education Association is running a program called "Opportunity Education". In collaboration with the Istanbul Mufti, more than 2,000 Syrian children are taking "preparatory courses" to ease the shift to public schools. The courses are being held in 14 mosques in Istanbul and last four months. One hundred and twenty one Syrian teachers and seven Turkish volunteers are taking part in the project.⁶³ Hayrat Foundation also conducts a similar practice. Although they do not run any schools in Istanbul, they have 'student houses' where they teach Syrian children the Turkish

⁶¹ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.20

⁶² <http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports/activities/reports/education-and-migration-pdf> p.27

⁶³ <http://www.radyodost.net/suriyeli-gocmenlerin-egitimi-muftuluge-emanet.html>

language and also give them a religious education. When asked, they did not disclose how many children were in the program.

Syrians can also open private schools where the Syrian curriculum is taught. These schools can be found in every city with a sizeable Syrian population. Although there are no reliable data available it is safe to assume that families do not prefer these schools en masse.

Many agree that MONE deserves credit for its work and that much of the praise should go to Selman Isik, the coordinator of Syrian refugee education since almost the beginning of the crisis. Isik was tasked to deal with the crisis on his own when it first began. He has been a tireless advocate for the right of Syrian children in Turkey to a high quality education.⁶⁴

But not all credit should go to MONE. MONE could not have done it without the help from UN institutions like UNICEF and the UNHCR. Since 2012, critical efforts have been made to minimize the impact of the crisis on children in the areas of education, child protection and youth participation, as well as health and nutrition. Particularly in the field of education UNICEF has three aims: Systems strengthening, increased access and improved quality of inclusive education both for Syrian and vulnerable Turkish children. Here is a list of UNICEF's achievements as of January 2016:⁶⁵

- 43 schools and TECs have been constructed, and 218 have been renovated or refurbished since the beginning of the conflict.
- Nearly 10,000 Syrian volunteer teachers are supported with monthly incentives in camps and host communities.
- 2,850 teachers received training on Continuing Education in Emergencies.
- Over 6,700 Syrian teachers in camps and host communities received psychosocial support training.
- Over 284,000 Syrian and Turkish children received school bags and stationery items in 2015.
- 21 libraries have been established in camps to promote literacy.
- 50 early childhood development (ECD) kits have been provided to preschools and CFS in all camps.
- 370 recreation kits were delivered to 33,300 children in 211 schools and TECs across the country.
- Technical support provided to MONE for the implementation of 9 Provincial Action Plans (PAPs) to strengthen the resilience of the education system to better respond to the needs of Syrian children. Plans for 10 new provinces are presently under development.
- Technical and financial support provided for YÖBİS, an information management system tracking Syrian students' grades and attendance and providing school graduation certificates.

65

http://unicef.org.tr/files/bilgimerkezi/doc/Children%20of%20Syria%20in%20Turkey_Info%20Sheet_%20February%202016_3.pdf p.2

UNICEF is also focused on creating protective environments for children and supports and trains parents to cope with their children's disorders. Affected adolescents and youth are equipped to take on positive and peace-building roles within their communities.⁶⁶

- 27 Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) have been established in 23 camps and 4 host communities.
- Nearly 350,000 children have benefitted from child protection and psychosocial support (PSS) services, of whom over 65,000 children have received structured psychosocial support (PSS) in CFSs.
- 1,256 volunteer Syrian teenagers have been empowered to support CFSs, over half of them girls.
- Almost 1,500 children have been referred to PSS units for specialized services.
- Over 700 key actors from government and civil society have received training on Child Protection in Emergencies.
- More than 20,000 Syrian parents have been equipped through the Parenting Programme with the necessary skills to address the emotional and behavioral difficulties of their children and to be more supportive.
- Over 16,000 Syrian and Turkish adolescents in impacted communities have been trained on social cohesion activities through peer support, youth mobilization and advocacy.
- Over 600 children at risk or engaged in child labor were supported with PSS programs, and of these, 100 children were referred to specialized support services.
- In the provinces of Sanliurfa and Hatay nearly 6,000 children and parents were given risk training in respect of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Over half of those trained were girls and women.

UNHCR provides policy and technical support to the Government of Turkey, to sustain temporary protection in areas such as registration, access to land, documentation and legal counseling and management of urban refugee caseloads.⁶⁷ UNHCR Turkey seeks to assist the camp officials and local authorities in finding practical solutions to protection and other technical issues coming up in the camps and urban areas where the Syrian refugee population is mainly concentrated. UNHCR also supports the Government of Turkey through the provision of mobile registration centers for the registration of non-camp refugees, prefabricated and mobile health clinics that will be used both in and out of the camps to provide health services for refugees, and also water and sanitation containers to improve sanitation in the camps. NGOs trying to help refugees are also financially supported by UNHCR.

UNICEF and UNHCR are crucial partners of MONE. But the relationship between these two institutions was problematic at the beginning of the refugee crisis. Each has accused the other of

⁶⁶

http://unicef.org.tr/files/bilgimerkezi/doc/Children%20of%20Syria%20in%20Turkey_Info%20Sheet_%20February%202016_3.pdf p.3

⁶⁷ <https://www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/assets/hilfe/syrien/faq-syrians-in-turkey-english.pdf> p.8



Syrian schoolchildren in a TEC in Istanbul

meddling in their respective affairs. Both wanted to be active in the field of education, and this created a conflict of interest that was not well received by MONE. In 2014 UNICEF's Turkey branch went through a restructuring, an effort which was labelled by a well-informed source as 'decapitation'. UNICEF and UNHCR interviewed by OSF say that there are no issues anymore. Nowadays UNHCR focuses on higher education and has left other aspects of the education field to UNICEF. The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) is an example. The Government of Germany initiated DAFI in 1992. It provides scholarships to deserving young refugees at universities, colleges and polytechnics in their host countries. Currently, there are 75 DAFI scholars in Turkey, of whom 70 are Syrian refugees. For the academic year 2016-2017, Germany will offer a total of 1,700 scholarships for Syrian students in the Middle East over a period of four years, of which 1,000 will be for Syrian refugees in Turkey. This makes Turkey the country with the highest number of DAFI scholars in the world.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ http://www.unhcr.org/turkey/uploads/root/dafi_story_hq.pdf

FIELD RESEARCH

1) Temporary Education Centers (TECs)

Summary: Nearly 250,000 Syrian children attend 266 TECs. As their name implies, Temporary Education Centers are temporary solutions to the needs of Syrian children. TECs are not 'schools' according to Turkish law, as they do not conduct instruction in the Turkish language following the Turkish curriculum, for the most part use Syrian volunteer teachers and do not comply with all of MONE's standards. MONE has made significant efforts to create the exceptional status of Temporary Education Centers with specific regulations and circulars governing their establishment and functioning. Almost all have a MONE Coordinator who functions like an executive Principal and is the main point of contact for provincial and central MONE. Nevertheless, their exceptional status makes it difficult for TECs to receive support from MONE's main departments and services. Many TECs are directly supported by UNICEF and other aid organizations. But still, they are not free.

Syria Nour Association TEC, Fatih, Istanbul⁶⁹



It is hard to believe that this is actually the entrance to a school (left). The only clue might be the stickers of pens on the glass door. This is a TEC run by the conservative Syrian Nour Association based in one of Istanbul's oldest districts, Fatih. It is crammed into a dilapidated building, which was formerly used as a shopping complex. There are 300 pupils – 130 girls and 170 boys – in 12 grades. Twenty two Syrian teachers are watching over them. The TEC employs one Turkish citizen as a language teacher. During the day primary school and middle school children attend. The afternoons are reserved for high school students. It follows a Syrian curriculum. Apart from basic subjects and Turkish, English is taught as a foreign language.

When you enter the building you immediately pass through a claustrophobic corridor.

This school opened in 2013. The association pays 6,000 TL rent per month. They have a backyard, but cannot let the children out because the neighbors complain of the noise.



Parents pay between 50 and 150 TL in monthly fees.

Teachers receive payment of between 800 and 1,500 TL. The TEC has monthly running costs of 25,000-30,000 TL.

The headmaster is a Syrian Kurd from Kamishli, Assad



⁶⁹ During the visit I was not allowed to talk to teachers and children.

Shamsi (below). He is a mathematics teacher. Shamsi came to Turkey in 2014. Back home he was employed in a private school. As the war raged on, bombings continued and ISIS closed in, he decided to flee. Shamsi wants to return to Syria.



He earns 1,500 TL a month and says that economic hardships are challenging families and teachers alike: *“Salaries are low and taking money from the families also creates problems. Because of low salaries many teachers quit their jobs or work other jobs at the same time.”*

Drawings made by the children hang on the walls. Some of these drawings depict war, some peace. An especially haunting one belongs to Jody Radif, a 13-year-old girl who is not in school anymore.

Jodi made the journey to Europe, I am told. The picture captures the horrors of the passage through the sea. Dark skies, violent waves and terrified refugees stuck in their boat.



Syria Can Association TEC, Okmeydani, Istanbul



Students of Syria Can Association's TEC in Istanbul



This TEC welcomes you with its yellow bench and most of the time an illegally parked car right in front of its entrance. Opened in 2012, it is having a hard time. Financial problems have taken their toll. Of the once 500 pupils, only 150 are left. A staff of 25 teachers has diminished to 10.

The head of the association, Ozan Akdag is visibly troubled by the turn of events. Caritas has just withdrawn their support, he says. After they began charging the families 200 TL per month, families who could not afford that amount

withdrew their children from school.⁷⁰

The classrooms are devoid of the familiar noise of children.

Teachers were paid 900 TL per month, but now they are paid much less, sometimes nothing at all. The remaining teachers stay on to support the children. The rent is 5,700 TL per month. To balance the running costs they opened a health center for children where they charge 10 TL per visit. The search for new donors is ongoing. Akdag claims that even their MONE coordinator has abandoned them: "The Coordinator doesn't care about us anymore. He just tells us not to do anything illegal."⁷¹



Ozan Akdag posing in front of his school

⁷⁰ Interview with Ozan Akdag, Istanbul, February 29, 2016. Caritas claims the association started overcharging parents for no reason. Akdag denies any wrongdoing.

⁷¹ I tried to contact the MONE coordinator, but he was not available for comment.



Akdag identifies psychosocial distress as the main obstacle to education. He believes that other issues are much easier to address.



As in most TECs, Syria Can also employs Syrians who are actually not teachers. Ferbiye Hussein is one of them.

Ferbiye Hussein (below, left) is 27 years old. She has been in Turkey for three years. Although she is trained as a construction engineer she is helping out as a Turkish teacher. The actual teacher quit after salaries were suspended.



Turkish teacher Ferbiye Hussein

“My dad took the decision to leave Syria in order to protect me and my twin sister. Damascus was relatively safe, but the situation changed after ISIS attacked the suburbs.”

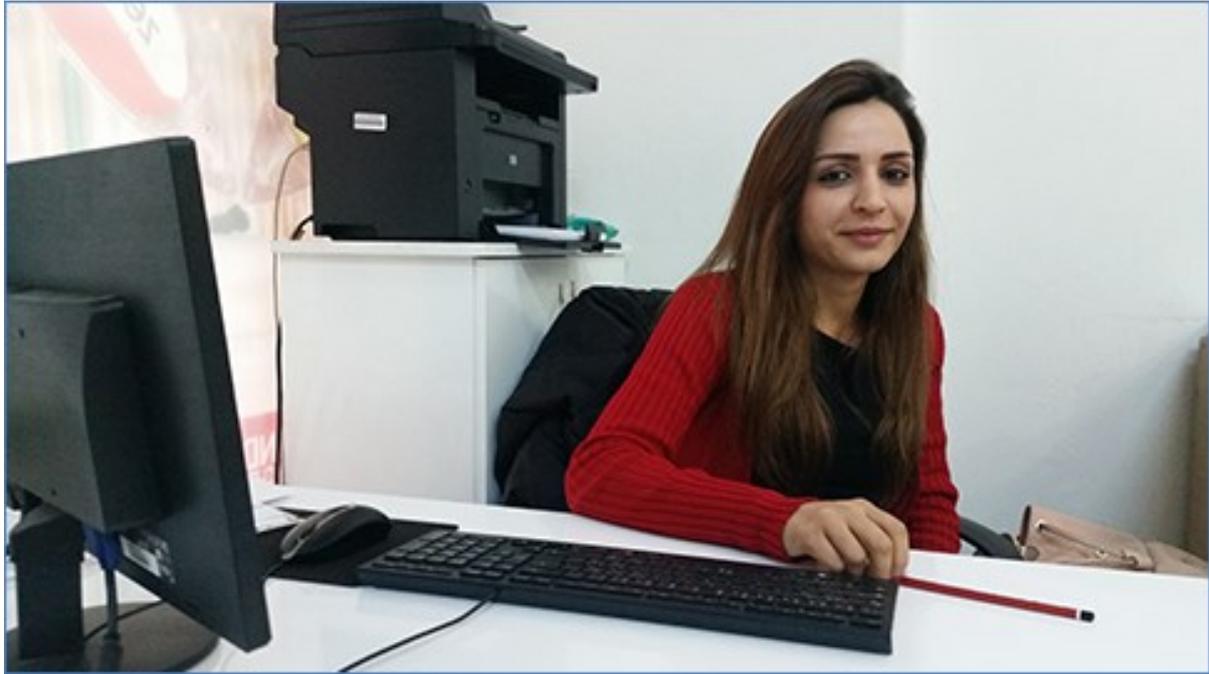
Ferbiye worked in a bookstore for four months once she came to Turkey. Then she started working for the association where she also learned Turkish.

“Of course I want to go back to Syria. The only thing that is left for me is hope. And even that is not so much anymore.”

Kifah Murad (right) is running the school. She is a 38-year old mother of three from Afrin. An Arabic-language teacher by profession, she now teaches and does administrative work.

“I was doing my master’s degree in Arabic Literature when the war started. I was not able to finish my studies. I was happy in Syria, excited to build a life. We were in Aleppo when the first bombs fell. We moved back to Afrin, but it was impossible to find a job. So we came to Turkey. That was in 2013. My children have started school only this year. They were not able to attend for the past three years. I am a teacher, but I have not been able to make my children go to school for three years. Turks do not want to rent houses to Syrians. They also tend to overcharge us. This is blatant discrimination.”





26-year old Hosanna Ismael (above) is from Kamishli and teaches history and geography, but is not a teacher. She is an agricultural engineer. She found refuge in Turkey in 2013.

“With the donor gone, I am not being paid my salary regularly any more. The amount also changes from month to month. In Syria, my brothers were about to be conscripted. That is why we fled. Baath army or the YPG, my brothers did not want to choose and definitely didn’t want to fight. We can’t explain ourselves to Turks. They have to understand that we didn’t come here because we wanted to.”



Ahmet Menlev (left) is twelve. He is a Turkmen from Aleppo who came to Turkey in 2013. His family first lived in Gaziantep for more than a year. After his father lost his job they moved to Istanbul. He should be in 6th grade, but is attending 5th. Due to his Turkic heritage, he did not have problems learning the language.

“I miss those football matches we had back home, in our garden. Sometimes I still dream about the bombs. The voices won’t go away.”

Elbeyli Refugee Camp, Kilis⁷²



Refugee children in Elbeyli camp

The border province of Kilis has recently become the first Syrian-dominated city in Turkey. Since January 2016, the Syrians living in Kilis have outnumbered the Turks. There are now 130,000 refugees and 90,000 Turkish citizens.⁷³ The refugee camp in Elbeyli, close to Kilis, is the biggest in the area. The camp opened in 2013. It stretches over 420,000 square meters. The main aim was to provide humanitarian relief, but the camp has evolved into a town. There are 25,000 refugees living in the camp in more than 3,500 shipping containers.



Refugees in the streets of Elbeyli camp

The camp is surrounded by barbed wire fences and observation towers. Security inside the camp, which has been outsourced to a private company, is tight 24/7. Two fire brigades are on stand-by. A total of 600 people work in camp administration.

When you enter the camp, the first thing you notice is the cleanliness and order. AFAD's Kilis office decides who can stay in the camp. There are daily shuttles to Kilis and other provinces. Children can leave camp only with their parents. Leaving camp for good is allowed. The camp has reached its limits and cannot grow any further.

⁷² I was allowed only to take indoor pictures of designated areas during my visit to the camp in February 2016. The outdoor images were photographed by Dutch journalist Joris Hentenaar in April 2016 and are used with his kind permission.

⁷³ <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/bir-sehir-iki-vatan-kilis>



A refugee (left) who spoke to me under the watchful eyes of a security official said that life in the camp is good. *“We will go back once the war is over. We’ll definitely return. I love my country, but I am also grateful to Turkey. Thanks to them, we have everything we need.”*

The containers, which are 21 square meters in area, are designed to accommodate a maximum of eight people. 20,000 square meters have been allocated as football pitches, basketball and volleyball courts. Parks are built over 19,000 square meters. The camp also houses a mosque with capacity for 1,200 worshippers. There is also an authentic Syrian bazaar, based on the Aleppo Bazaar. Health services in the camp are free. Since the camp opened, 4,000 babies

have been born.



All Syrians living here are given an allowance of 85 TL per month. Each container receives food and hygiene packages twice a month. Social services like marriage or divorce are available in camp. The camp administration also prefers to solve legal disputes in house. Only when the problem is too serious to handle internally are legal authorities contacted. Camp statistics are not disclosed.

Elbeyli has a preschool which is attended by more than 1,000 children. It has two primary schools and one middle school – 4,000 students in total. There are 1,053 attending high school.



To date, 43 high school graduates have continued their education in various Turkish universities. The schools in the camp are TECs; teachers are paid 600 TL a month.



Syrian children attending one of the camp's workshop

Women attend handicraft shops. There are also language courses for adults. To kill time, they can go online, play chess or paint. The 25 refugee camps in Turkey are home to 34 TECs, which are attended by almost 80,000 children. The number of teachers employed in these camps is close to 3,000. High school attendance is much lower, because children of high school age have to work.⁷⁴ In Turkey, 12 years of education is compulsory, but the decision to send children to TECs is left to the families. In some camps, the administration takes the initiative and makes education compulsory. Elbeyli is one of those.



A Syrian boy playing video games

⁷⁴ http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20160309195808_turkiyedeki-suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-pdf.pdf p.18

İbn Rushud TEC, Eyüp, İstanbul



It is 2 pm and there is silence in this big public school in İstanbul's Eyüp district. 3,000 Turkish students have just left the premises, together with the Turkish teachers. Even the security and cleaning staff have gone home. Slowly, Syrian teachers enter the building. The pupils follow. Classrooms are hastily rearranged, corridors cleaned, Arabic pamphlets are being put on billboards and Syrian coffee replaces its Turkish cousin in the teachers' room.

This is how this school 'mutates' from a Turkish entity into a Syrian one, every day.





MONE has allowed this school to be used as a TEC between 15.00 and 19.30 since November 2015. There are 300 pupils. Headmaster Mazen Rashid (left) is also an Arabic teacher. He is proud of the school and aims to increase its population..

"After the TECs gained legal status, I went to the local MONE office. It took time to win them over, but I convinced them to use this school as a TEC in the afternoons. I am very grateful."

The school employs 31 Syrian teachers, all of them vetted by Rashid: *"MONE has not appointed any of our teachers, but that will change next year."* Teachers are paid 900 TL monthly and receive Turkish language lessons at weekends.

The school charges better off families 100 TL per month. The rest of the children are not being charged. Rashid says that transport is an issue and that finding sponsors would increase enrolment: *"Do you know what I want? To pay my staff more, to provide the kids with uniforms, to give out food. Oh, and we need a copier."*

Rashid says that many children have been out of school for years. The trauma is hard to cope with, he says. He believes that economic hardship affecting families and teachers leads to dropouts and a decline in teaching quality.



Ibn Rushd TEC in Istanbul

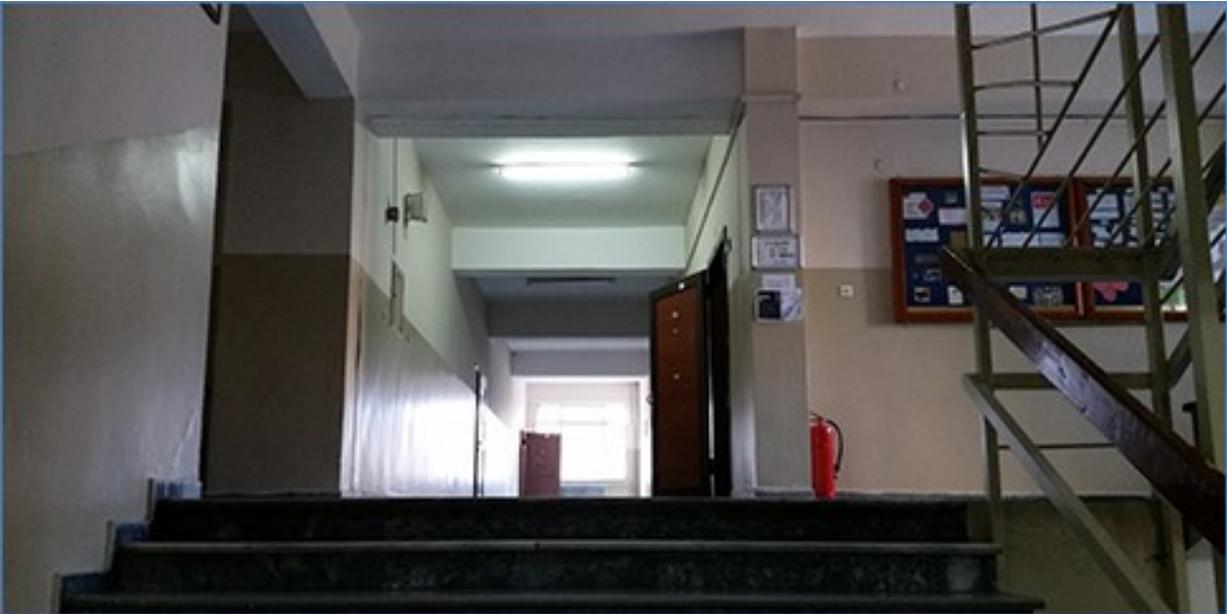
While chatting with Rashid, English teacher Vafa Umar enters the room. She wants to take the rest of the day off, because her little child is sick. She is uncomfortable making the request. Suddenly she turns to me and tells me that she knows she has already taken too much leave, but has to, because there is no one else to care for her little girl other than her eldest daughter. *"My husband is still in Syria"* she says. Mazen Rashid consoles Vafa and signs the paper. *"Look,"* he tells me, *"Not just the*

kids, the teachers also have experienced hard times in Syria. It'll take time for them to pick themselves up. Everybody has to help."



A student learning Arabic

As the bell signaling the end of school rings, orderlies rush into the classrooms and make everything ready for the Turkish children, who will come in the next morning.



The empty corridors of Ibn Rushd TEC

2) Public Schools

Summary: Syrian refugee children can attend public schools in Turkey. As of 2016, there are about 80,000 children enrolled. MONE wants to increase the number of children going to public schools, but there is a lack of school places and teachers are not sufficiently equipped to deal with refugees. Syrians continue to prefer TECs. There are also reports of discrimination and bullying of Syrian children. MONE aims to train teachers, provide students with psychosocial support and speed up Turkish language education.

Zühtü Senyuva School, İkitelli, İstanbul⁷⁵



This is a Turkish language lesson in class 4-L.

The pupils are reading passages from a book, and the teacher is asking them questions. Mohammed Sheikh Mustapha and Hamza Ismael are trying hard to understand what they read and are reluctant to answer the questions. They have difficulties in expressing themselves. They are 4th grade students, but are just learning to read and write in Turkish. It is their first time in school since they left Syria.



Mohammed and Hamza are two of the 150 Syrian children attending this public school of 2,900 students. Mohammed (left) is 11 years old. He came to Turkey in 2014. As his classmates read their books he goes over his spelling exercises.

"Whenever the teacher tells me to read something, I say I don't know. It makes me sad. The teacher writes something in Turkish on the board

⁷⁵ This section is used with kind permission from Al Jazeera Turk's Umay Aktas and Guray Ervin. I had still not been granted access to public schools at the time of writing. The original report can be found here: <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/iki-dil-bir-sinif>

and then asks me to do the same. While I am still trying, my classmates have already finished. The teacher cleans the blackboard. But I am still not finished. Anyway, I am happy to be here. Some of my friends from the neighbourhood also attend this school."

Hamza Ismael came to Turkey in 2013. After stints in Gaziantep and Kilis, his family finally settled in Istanbul. In Kilis, Hamza attended a camp TEC. After leaving the camp he did not go to school. After they came to Istanbul he went to a Koran class.



"It's good to be in school. I want to be successful. I know how to read and write, well, maybe just a little. But I am learning. "

Their teacher Burcu Sert's main objective is to make sure the boys learn how to read and write first. But in a classroom of 51, it is easier said than done.

"My Syrian students know Turkish, but if I notice that they have difficulties in understanding some words I repeat and explain them. Their classmates are also helpful. The other kids have embraced them, there is no discrimination. They help them. Sure, more could be done, but this is a very crowded class."

Syrian children who don't know how to read and write but start from the first grade are a bit luckier. Despite the language barrier, they will learn together with their peers. 4 of 43 children in class 1-K are Syrian.

The school administration is working hard to make sure the Syrian children adapt as well as possible. Headmaster Ramazan Telseven is aware of the challenges, but says that it will take time to overcome them.

"We will teach them only our curriculum, make them understand Turkish. We will teach them our culture. Meanwhile we will also be able to identify our shortcomings. It is a process. Our teachers, too, have to try harder. There might be a need for additional training. Those kids come from a war zone."

3) Private schools

Summary: Private Syrian schools can also be opened in Turkey. But for economic reasons, the vast majority of families prefer to send their children to TECs or public schools (or not at all). Also, questions about whether these schools are authorized to issue certificates and diplomas have not been resolved. As of 2016, the exact number of private schools is not known: estimates point to more than 60⁷⁶. These private institutions also include universities. The Turkish Government is trying to regulate the diploma issue and is looking for international scholarships to encourage Syrian young people to attend higher education. According to MONE figures, there are now 5,000 Syrians attending universities.⁷⁷

Zahra University, Gaziantep



Zahra University is located in the Turkish city of Gaziantep. It opened in 2014. It is housed in a building which was formerly a TEC, but which had to close for economic reasons.

The founder of the university is Mustapha Muslim. He is the brother of Saleh Muslim, leader of the Syrian armed group Democratic Union Party (PYD), which is regarded as an offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The university has 300 students. Male and female students do not mix. The faculties are religious studies, economics, education, engineering, literature and science. Annual fees range between US \$ 1,000 and 2,000. Academics earn between US \$ 800 and 3,000 per month. Freshmen are all admitted free of charge. Students have to pay yearly fees only if they fail to reach benchmark grades set by the faculties.

The University is funded by the Zakat Foundation, an Islamic charity based in the US. The monthly rent is 30,000 TL.

The foundation is also running two TECs in Gaziantep. One of the biggest Turkish aid organizations, the Islamic IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, is sponsoring 15 university students. . The degrees are conferred by Sudan and are said to be recognized as having equivalency in Turkey.

The University's Secretary-General Usama Mohammed says that they are dependent on sponsors: *"Our facilities are inadequate. Rent and salaries are too high. We will have to close if our sponsors pull out. The prices for text books here are ten times more expensive than in Egypt. But we are not allowed to import them. We expect help from the Turkish Government on the issue of equivalency as well."*



⁷⁶ <http://www.haberler.com/2-milyon-suriyeli-multeci-arap-yatirimciya-onlarca-7488106-haberi/>

⁷⁷ MONE education expert Metin Catar's presentation at the conference of the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), held in Ankara on March 17, 2016



Zahra University segregates male and female students



20-year old Abdulhadi Kharruz (left) is a student of economics. He came to Turkey in 2013 and started attending university this year. He still has not learned Turkish: *"I lost my uncle and a couple of friends in the war. My best friend is still in prison in Syria. If I hadn't escaped I would have been conscripted. I like Gaziantep and get along with the Turks, but finding a house is a really tough job. I am staying with seven friends, but it is too crowded. My father, who is in Lebanon, sends me money. I wouldn't be able to study without his support. This war took away my future. I am trying to take it back."*

Ahmed Shamiye (right) is 21, from Aleppo. He came to Turkey in 2012: *"In 2011, I attended anti-government demonstrations in Syria. They put me and nine of my friends in jail. We were tortured, and one of my friends was killed. When I was released I decided to leave Syria. I walked from Aleppo to Turkey. I would not be able to continue my studies if it was not for the support of my parents. I am also trying to learn Turkish, but the courses are too expensive. I am not happy in Turkey."*



4) Community Centers

Summary: Community centers are important means of education for Syrian children who for various reasons do not have access to schools. Besides providing children with psychosocial support these centers also teach Turkish, English and Arabic and are important in bringing communities together. There are not enough of these – only six in Istanbul, where more than 500,000 Syrian refugees live. NGOs aim to open more, so as to enable more than 120,000 Syrians to benefit from them.

Human Resource Development Foundation (IKGV) Community Center, Esenler, Istanbul

The IGV has been UNCHR's implementing partner since 2007. They run three community centers for Syrian refugees. They have reached approximately 40,000 people since the crisis began.

The Esenler center is one of its biggest. 21 staff are working full time in this five-story building, which has 1,000 square meters of accommodation. The building belonged to the Hizmet movement, an outlawed organization led by the prominent Turkish cleric Fethullah Gülen.



IKGV's Project Coordinator Alp Biricik is in charge of the center. He claims that the number of Syrians in Istanbul is much higher than the registration numbers indicate: *"Nobody knows how many Syrians live in Istanbul. According to registration numbers, we have 13,000 here in Esenler. But our research shows that the number of Syrians who are not registered is as many as 20,000. We try to reach out to everybody, but it is tough."*

The center provides Syrian children with psychosocial support and language education in Turkish, Arabic and English. But there is a twist. Children who know the Latin alphabet are accepted into the language classes. The center also provides refugees with legal support.

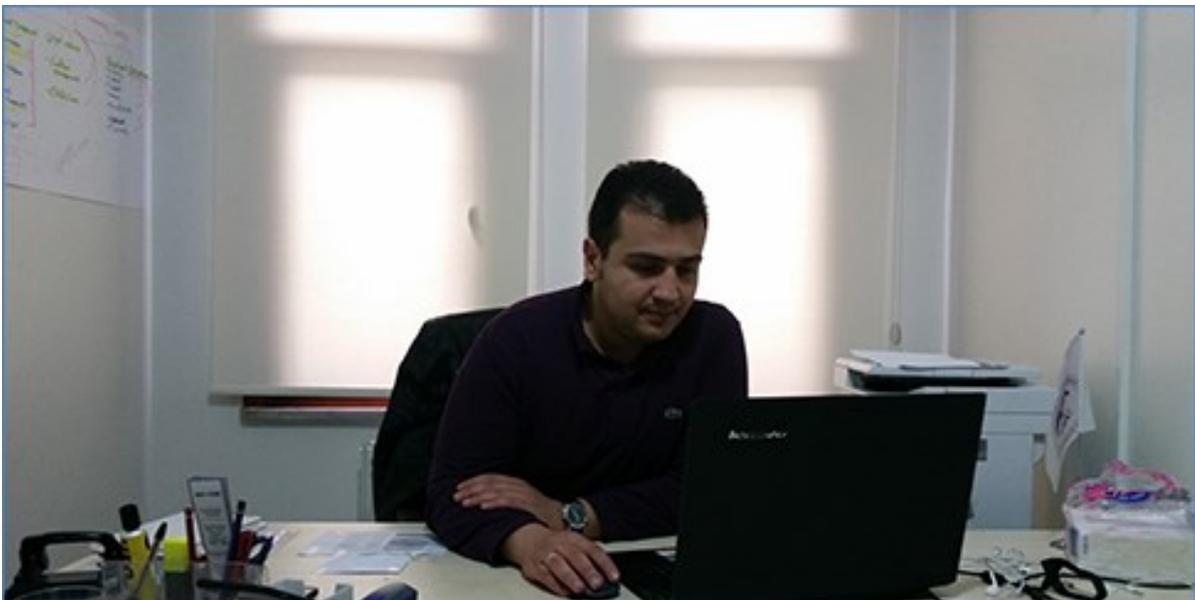
According to Biricik, the main barrier to education access for Syrian children is psychosocial distress. He lists other problems as lack of Turkish language proficiency, child labor and issues related to registration.

International Blue Crescent (IBC) Foundation Community Center, Sultanbeyli, Istanbul



Children attending IBC's community center in Istanbul

The foundation is operating three community centers in Kilis, Sanliurfa and Istanbul. It is reckoned that IBC has reached 20,000 Syrian refugees in recent years. The center in Istanbul opened in January 2016. The dilapidated building, for which they pay 2,500 TL monthly rents, has been partially renovated. It was used for illegal gambling before.



Tarek Ali of IBC

Tarek Ali, a young Syrian lawyer is running the center. He came to Turkey in 2013 and has been with the foundation since 2015. According to Ali, Syrian schools need to be monitored more closely: *“The*



TECs are growing out of control. Everybody who finds some money wants to open private schools. The situation is getting out of hand, and NONE seem not to care.”

The center provides psychosocial support for children, and teaches Arabic, Turkish and English. Children can take part in painting and music as therapy through art. Refugees can also get legal support on migration issues and

the protection regime. All services in the center are free of charge. The center has Syrian and Turkish staff. Salaries are in the 1,000-2,000 TL range. 400 people were given direct help in January and February 2016. They want to increase their outreach. In order to do that, they have launched an SMS-system in collaboration with the municipality.

Fatma Numan (below), a 23-year-old psychology graduate from Syria, is working with children. She takes care of the four to six-year-olds. The children seem happy: *“We try to help them to get over their horrific experiences. We play games and teach them the (Arabic) alphabet. While helping the children, we normalize as well.”*



Syrian teacher Fatma Numan playing with children

Fatma came to Turkey in 2011. She is a Turkmen from Latakia, but does not want to return. She thinks of applying for Turkish citizenship, once the legal waiting time is over. For her, Turkey is home.



Art class at IBC's community center

Yousef Al-Zaray (above) is an arts teacher. He is 26 years old and came to Turkey in 2015. Before finding a teaching job in the center he was working in textile factory. He told me that his former boss still owes him one month's pay. *"It was quite a journey. I was worried whether I would be conscripted. Therefore I fled my home in Damascus, first to Idlib and then to Hatay in Turkey, on foot. There was no work in Hatay, so I moved to Istanbul. I had a terrible job in a textile factory where I worked 13 hours a day. Then I met Tarek. I still cannot believe it."*

Yousef now earns 1,000 TL per month and shares an apartment with four friends. They were six before: *"Two of my roommates went back to Syria after they were not able to find work. I believe they are fighting the government now. They will die, for sure. I will go back once this war is over. Syria used to be a country accepting displaced people. Now we have become refugees."*



31-year-old Mohammed Khilal (left) is teaching computer class. He left Aleppo in 2014, stayed for just two days in a refugee camp in Kilis and finally came to Istanbul. He lives with his family of twelve in a two-room apartment which costs them 500 TL monthly. He earns 1,000 TL per month. Before joining the center he was carrying bags in a supermarket: *"I lost my home and computer shop during the regime's*

bombardment. Also, two of my cousins were killed. If I had not escaped, I would have been conscripted. Nobody sees us as humans anymore. For the world, we are just numbers."

Mohammed told me that not knowing the language is his main problem: *'We do not speak Turkish, so we are being misled, cannot stand up for our rights and have to work longer hours for less pay.'*



Fahed Daweal (left) from Aleppo is an English teacher. The 27-year-old was already an internally displaced person in his own country before he came to Turkey in 2015:

"I witnessed two separate barrel bomb attacks. They are the worst, you know? But Assad is worse, he is even worse than ISIS. Syria used to be one of the safest countries. Now it is the most dangerous. Nobody saw this coming."

Hadja Attar (below) is also from Aleppo. She is a 28-year-old Psychologist and provides the children visiting the center with psychosocial support, although she needs the same support as well. She came to Turkey in 2015 with her mother and older sister and used to work in a tailor's shop. She is the sole provider of family, earning 1,500 TL, of which 700 TL are immediately spent on the apartment's rent:

"I endured bombardments and fighting for years. The war took my father and my brother is still in Syria, fighting Assad. I might be alive, but I feel dead inside."



Khalil Rukeyah is a 30-year-old psychologist from Hama. He fled the country with his wife. He earns 1,500 TL per month and spends nearly half of it on rent: *"I came to Turkey in December 2015. I did not want to leave my country, but the situation became too dangerous, and there was forced conscription going on in the area where I lived. On foot, I came to Reyhanli. I worked in an auto repair shop and sold food in the streets. If you want your dreams to come true, set up schools."* Rukeyah thinks the number of TECs must be increased.

I also talked to the children at the center. Nearly all of them had arrived in Turkey just recently. None of them goes to school, and none of them speaks Turkish. Here are their stories:



Moayed, 12, Damascus: "I miss Damascus. I miss my friends."

Moayed came to Turkey in January 2016. He does not attend school yet, but wants to. He does not speak Turkish, but is eager to learn. In Syria, he was in 5th grade. He told me that he likes Turkey, but does not know anything about Istanbul. "I do not have Turkish friends yet", he says showing me the drawing of a house he just completed. He wants to be a PE teacher.



Davud, 6, Hama: "I miss my home."



Isra, 8, Aleppo: "I do not want to be afraid again"



Raid, 10, Aleppo: "I should be in school, but I am out in the streets, every day."

Davud, a shy little 6-year-old boy from Hama, is the youngest in the room. He never went to school: not in Turkey, nor in Syria. He wants to learn Turkish so that he can play football with the boys he sees in his neighbourhood, he told me. Davud wants to be a doctor. Isra never went to school. Her family fled Syria in 2015. She has not learned Turkish yet and told me that she finds the language classes very difficult. She has no Turkish friends and spends most of her time with her siblings. When I asked her what she wanted to become when she grows up, she laughed and said that it was the first time anyone asked her a question like that. 10-year-old Raid is from Aleppo. His family came to Istanbul in the summer of 2015. Despite not going school or taking any courses, he is the only one in the room who speaks a little Turkish. When I asked him where he learned it, he told me that his Turkish friends taught him. In Syria he finished 2nd grade. He said he wants to go to school again so that he can become a doctor

Yuva Association Community Center, Kirikhan, Hatay



Yuva Association's community center in Kirikhan

In February 2016, the Turkish province of Hatay at the Syrian border had a Syrian population of 402,000 of which 132,000 were children.⁷⁸ 50,000 of these refugees live in the Kirikhan district in Hatay. A small town of 40,000 inhabitants before the refugee crisis began; Kirikhan was neglected by NGOs and aid organizations. This has

changed since 2013, when Yuva Association opened its community center.

The center has 20 staff, Syrians and Turks. They provide children and adults with language lessons in Turkish, Arabic and English and psychosocial support and give legal advice. They also have skills courses for women. The teachers' wages range between 1,600 and 2,000 TL.

Germany's DVV International is funding the center, but Yuva believes the financial support is not enough, so they have asked UNICEF for additional support. At the time of writing, Yuva had not received an answer.

Ozlem Colak, the center's administrator told me that TECs in Kirikhan also lack support. She claims that MONE-appointed coordinators do not care about these schools as much as they should.

"This has led to a decline in teaching quality", she said.



Salah Kadi (left) a 33-year-old Syrian from Idlib teaches computer class and also runs the PR department of the center. Among the many problems Syrian refugees in Turkey face, he thinks that granting the right to work will solve many of them. For children in particular, it is the psychological distress war and displacement has caused: *"The war has destroyed Syria's social*

fabric. It is very difficult for the children to adapt to this new environment."

Fatima Aleyvi is a 25-year-old primary school teacher from Hama. She teaches at a TEC in Kirikhan and also believes that without adequate psychosocial support many children will not return to school: *"It is not enough to put these children into schools. We have to rebuild their feeling of trust which the war has destroyed."*

⁷⁸ <http://www.mynet.com/haber/guncel/hatay-valisi-topaca-15-milyon-nufuslu-kentimizde-402-bin-suriyeli-yasiyor-2326327-1>

I spoke to the children during their English class. All of them are enrolled in TECs; none of them attends public school. They are here to strengthen their language skills. All of them have difficulties in speaking Turkish. The walls of the center are decorated with paintings Syrian children made:



Mariam, 10, Hama: "I miss Syria so much. It is my home."

Mariam came to Turkey in 2013. She lost her father in the war. Mariam is attending a TEC and is in 4th grade. She told me that she started the Turkish course in the center because her family believed that the language education at her school was not good enough. She lost her father in the war and lives with her mother and sister. She wants to become a mathematics teacher.

11-year-old Mohammed Bitar's family fled Syria in 2013. He is attending 4th grade in a local TEC. He is happy with his school and is also eager to get better in Turkish – the reason why he takes these additional language

classes at the community center. He told me that he is worried about his best friend Abdullah, whose family has not left Syria yet. Mohammed wants to be famous footballer.



Mohammed, 11, Idlib: "My best friend's name is Abdullah. He is still in Syria."

WHAT NGOs ARE DOING

Summary: Relations between civil society and the Turkish State have always been problematic. The Syrian refugee crisis is forcing the State and NGOs to work together. Religious foundations are more successful in accessing funds, and the Government also prefers to work with them. Foreign NGOs still have a hard time getting permits and expanding their operations, although some have succeeded. On the other hand, secular Turkish NGOs claim that the Government does not work with them and does not share information. They also bemoan difficulties in access to funds.

Turkey's political landscape and history have never been a fertile ground for NGOs. The State has never wanted civil society to flourish as an organized political force. NGOs have been restricted in their access to funds and have been tightly controlled.⁷⁹

Turkish NGOs actually want to cooperate with the Turkish Government, especially with regard to the refugee crisis. Describing her association's relationship with the government as 'Let's say there are no problems', Yuva's Özge Sönmez makes her point: *"We want to have a closer relationship with the Turkish Government. They are the ones who will actually solve the problem. The NGOs can only support them by devising and implementing programs. All NGOs should have one ultimate goal: to cease to exist. When there is no problem left, we should be gone as well."*

When the Syrian refugee crisis broke, the Government of Turkey first took a centralizing approach. In the first years of the crisis, the government, with its orderly, clean and exemplary refugee camps, sought to convey the message: "I can deal with this problem." Even UNHCR was denied access to the camps for years. Foreign NGOs, which now have the right to forge partnerships with their Turkish counterparts, still encounter months of waiting for permits.

But the number of refugees outside the camps soon exceeded those in camps. As Amnesty's Begum Basdas points out, a 'capacity problem' emerged: *"The State wanted to do everything on its own, but now it is clear that it lacks capacity and know-how. They thought everybody would go back to Syria and were just prepared for emergency relief operations."*

Despite the obvious need for them, NGOs face uncertainty. The Government owns the problem and the NGOs cannot go round it. There is always the danger that whatever NGOs do might be in vain. The Government's agenda is changing daily, and they can easily scrap a project they previously decided to support. Therefore many NGOs prefer to devise projects, not implement them.

The State is still tightly controlling the camps, but has left the issue of meeting the needs of refugees living in the urban areas mainly to the realm of NGOs. Ninety percent of Syrian refugees live outside the camps. The Government has still managed to promote the interests of NGOs that it deems close.⁸⁰ The civil society is obviously divided into two main camps – secular vs faith-based. And these two camps have trust issues. The Government prefers to work with religious NGOs and foundations. And these organizations are much more active in the field. But is there really no room for cooperation between these camps? Yuva's Özge Sönmez thinks that secular NGOs are also to blame: *"Secular NGOs could do much more for the Syrian refugees. And faith-based organizations do not like*

⁷⁹ <http://www.igamder.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Suriye-STK-Raporu.pdf> p.3

⁸⁰ <http://www.igamder.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Suriye-STK-Raporu.pdf> p.4

to talk to us. But we would like to cooperate with them. They do not attend meetings, but maybe this is our fault: we do not invite them."

Mistrust towards foreign NGOs is chronic. MONE's Selman Isik claims that these organizations "don't understand Turkey."

"These NGOs mistake us for Lebanon, Jordan or some African country. They cannot come here and work as they please. We tell them all the time: 'If you send someone, it should be the best'. If you look at what's going on in the field, you will notice the lack of experience of their staff."

Filiz Ayla, the President of Mavi Kalem, a secular Turkish NGO, agrees with Isik, despite her association's constant troubles with state institutions: *"Foreign NGOs keep sending inexperienced personnel. If they continue doing this, they won't be able to work much longer."*

The Save the Children office in the Turkish province of Hatay has a close working relationship with MONE. Its Foreign Relations Coordinator Gizem Karsli is also critical: *"The State does not trust foreign NGOs, agreed. But those NGOs do not try to understand the dynamics of this country. There are still NGOs here which have not devised a programme especially for Turkey."*

Despite ongoing minor problems, most of the NGO staff members interviewed by OSF for this report stated that their relationship with the Government has much improved. Difficulties, however, persist. For example, Support to Life claims that AFAD refuses to work with them.

Filiz Ayla is also critical of donors: *"In order to do what the donors want and keep getting money, many NGOs take on projects they are unable to realize. The donors have to encourage cooperation between NGOs so that the level of service can be maintained."* Yuva's education coordinator Ebru Açıkgöz shares a similar view. She told me that because of donor organizations pressuring NGOs to reach their target numbers, they just sacrifice the quality of their work. According to her, this pressure also affects NGOs' attitudes towards each other: *"Turkish NGOs are not open to one another. There is no transparency. At all the meetings you see the same people. These are fruitless meetings which do not go beyond sharing the minutes."*

Turkish NGOs share the common belief that after five years they have accumulated the necessary experience to deal with the crisis efficiently. This experience can now be used as leverage against donors' demands and international agencies with extensive funding resources. Yuva's Ozge Sonmez says: *"Turkish NGOs have to be treated as equals. We have to redefine the notion of 'implementing partner'. The big guys still want to impose themselves on us. We have experience now. We have to devise long-term programs and make the donors understand and accept them."*

One of the main NGOs dealing with the refugee crisis, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), is concentrating on local cooperation. They work closely with small NGOs and municipalities. In Istanbul, one of their main partners is the Beyoglu Municipality. ASAM's Peacebuilding Officer Ayse Gokçek says that more should be done: *"NGOs have to work together closely. They must start sharing their responsibilities and start working with local communities."* This view is also shared by ACEV's Burcu Gunduz: *"We all want to do something. But the numbers are huge. They frighten many NGOs. They think they will not be able to handle them. There is little data from the field, and it is difficult to devise any programs."*

But some NGOs still have difficulties. They try and find ways and means of closer cooperation with local municipalities. Sometimes political differences can be defining in such relationships. Mavi Kalem Association claims that because they are known as a feminist NGO (despite doing a lot of work also for Syrian children in the last four years), the Fatih municipality in Istanbul does not want to work with them, whereas the Eyup municipality is more approachable.

Hayrat Foundation is working both in Syria and in Turkey. Project Coordinator Engin Dogan says that Turkish NGOs must work closely together in Syria as well:

“Everybody tries to help as much as they can. But inside Syria, efforts are not enough. If we could work together, there might be a possibility to stem the flow of migrants. We do not prefer to work with Syrian organizations. We don’t know them. They might be affiliated with ISIS, or the YPG [(Kurdish) People’s Protection Units]. You never know.”

Whilst Turkish NGOs did not refuse to be interviewed by me for this report, the majority of foreign aid organizations declined to share information.

To summarize the state of NGOs:

- Education, in particular, is becoming a focus for many NGOs, but it is difficult to devise any long term programs
- Religious foundations and NGOs have easier access to funds and are much more active in the field of education, due to their closer ties with political decision makers
- Psychosocial distress of the children is addressed by almost all NGOs
- NGOs do not cooperate sufficiently
- The cooperation between municipalities and secular NGOs is not enough

The following pages detail a selection of education projects that NGOs are managing and some of their future plans:

Syria Nour Association

An NGO based in Istanbul’s Fatih district, it operates also in Syria and claims to reach 100,000 people in both countries. It runs 18 schools – 15 in Syria and three in Turkey. It also has three health centers which provide for around 10,000 people monthly. It takes humanitarian aid to the border areas and to Syria.

Planned projects:

- 1) Trauma center for orphans in Istanbul
- 2) New health center in Istanbul

International Blue Crescent Foundation

They have an outreach of 60,000 people in Syria and Turkey. They manage ten TECs in Kilis and Gaziantep with 7,000 students and more than 450 teachers. In the border region they also run 18 Children Education Centers, where around 7,000 children are taught Turkish and given psychosocial support. They run three community centers in Kilis, Akcakale and Istanbul, servicing 4,500 people. They also do emergency relief and have few problems accessing funds. They plan to open three

centers for young people, three for centers for women and three health centers in Istanbul. They also aim to launch a mobile child caravan for children in remote areas and establish a Syrian-run 52-bed hospital in Kilis staffed by Syrian doctors.

Syria Can Association

This organization operates in the areas of education, health and humanitarian relief. They run a TEC in Istanbul, but had to close three others, one in Istanbul and two in Nusaybin and Batman. They have a children's health center in Istanbul. They reach 2,000 people in Istanbul, but have difficulties in raising money. At the time of writing they were not considering any new projects. They are trying to avoid the closure of their remaining school.

Support to Life

They are an implementing partner of UNHCR. Support to Life manages community centers in Hatay, Sanliurfa and Istanbul, where they teach children Arabic and Turkish and provide them with psychosocial support. They reach close to 50,000 Syrians and have no funding problems. Their planned major projects are as follows

- 1) A new child protection programme together with UNICEF. The aim is to put working children back into the education system.
- 2) They have just completed a needs assessment in Istanbul. New projects will be developed pending data analysis.

Asylum and Migration Research Center (IGAM)

IGAM conducts research on refugees. Most of the time they struggle for funds. They want to undertake comprehensive research about the educational provision for Syrian children in schools.

Bahcesehir University

Planned projects:

- 1) Teaching Turkish to 300,000 Syrian children
- 2) Psychosocial support and vocational training to 1,000 Syrian children and youth
- 3) Training teachers of a TEC in Istanbul and supervising the Turkish classes there
- 4) The University is developing a distance learning project in cooperation with Albany University in the USA for Syrian higher education students

Human Resource Development Foundation

HRDF is an implementing partner of UNHCR. They run three community centers in Turkey where they reach close to 40,000 Syrians. A respected NGO they will start a new program that addresses the issue of child labor.

Save the Children

They run their "No Lost Generation" programme in Hatay, where they reach 5,000 children. They support TECs, provide training to 174 teachers and sponsor the transport of 400 children to and from their schools. They have no funding issues. Save the Children aims to widen its transport support

program, start a project to bring working children back to school, build two schools for MONE, establish a non-formal education center for Syrian young people and be active in preschool provisioning.

Maya Foundation

They provide children psychosocial support: Project Lift is the most important of these.⁸¹ 300 children have benefitted from this project so far. They are looking for more funds in order to implement Project Lift in TECs as well. Maya is also considering training aid workers.

Civil and Social Relief Organization

This organization does not as yet have a Turkey programme. In Syria they run the E4C (Education for Children) project, with funding from the Dutch Foreign Ministry, and they claim to have reached 30,000 children. They want to bring their expertise to Turkey to increase the numbers of children going back to school.

Mavi Kalem Association

This association has stopped its ongoing education projects for some time because of a lack of funds and organizational restructuring. As I have been told, their restructuring is now complete.

Planned projects:

- 1) With Malala Foundation – Schooling 100 Syrian girls, a USD 40,000 programme
- 2) With Plan International – Supporting 100 Syrian schoolchildren, a USD 80,000 programme

Life and Sur Association

A Syrian NGO that provides logistical support to TECs in the border provinces and conducts emergency relief operations in Turkey and Syria. They aim to finalize the founding of Turkey's first 'Union of Syrian Teachers'.

Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)

An implementing partner of UNHCR, ASAM has 39 offices throughout Turkey and provides psychosocial support and language education (Turkish, Arabic and English) to children. They have no funding issues.

Planned projects:

- 1) Implementing Project Lift with Maya Foundation
- 2) Training aid workers

International Medical Corps

A US-based NGO working in Turkey since 2012, they have provided more than 9,000 children with psychosocial support.

⁸¹ <http://www.project-lift.net/about.html>

Concern Worldwide

An international NGO with headquarters in Ireland, Concern works closely with MONE. As of 2016, they support TECs, provide training for teachers and support to Turkish language programs.

Mercy Corps

They focus on building awareness about refugees and work closely with local NGOs in the border regions.

Anadolu Kültür

They focus on the integration of refugee children into the Turkish education system. Their new project is preparing a package that includes three bilingual books and two games. For 2016-2018 they will run a peacebuilding project together with Germany's Mercator Foundation. The objective of the "German Turkish Initiative for Cooperation in Refugee Crisis" is the establishment of a German-Turkish network of actors who are engaged in the field of refugee children education and integration.

Anadolu Kültür is also supporting Yezidi refugees via a project aiming to make up the shortage of educational material required for the education of the children living in the camps. In addition to this, following the recruiting of teachers to conduct classes, the implementers plan to establish a platform to accommodate workshops that will facilitate teachers' sharing their experiences. This project is supported by OSF and Chrest Foundation.

Assistance Coordination Unit

A Syrian NGO active in the border region and because of their close ties with Syrian opposition groups it operates largely within Syria. Its biggest undertaking is 'Kitabi', a one-million-dollar curriculum project aimed at rewriting and distributing two million textbooks.

British Council

They want to train Syrian and Turkish teachers in cooperation with MONE, and are looking into online education programs to implement or support. The British Council also wants to provide Syrian children with English language training.

Hayrat Foundation

A very active NGO, they have 3,000 students in Syria. Besides that, they manage a TEC in Gaziantep (1,300 pupils) and two private schools in Kahramanmaras (750 pupils). They also run five TECs in a tent city right across the border from Hatay. In Istanbul they manage religious schools where 1,500 Syrian children are taught. They are planning to open a new private school in Kahramanmaras (750 pupils), an orphanage and girls' boarding school in Idlib, Syria and a TEC in Sanliurfa, Turkey.

Yuva Association

The association has shifted its focus from protection to education. They claim they have reached 20,000 refugees since 2013. As the association believes that peacebuilding is crucial, they try to reach Turkish communities as well. They operate community centers in Gaziantep's Nizip and Hatay's Kirikhan counties. They also provide TECs in Kirikhan with material support. They are planning to

open new support, youth and job centers for Syrian refugees. Because of funding and other undisclosed reasons these projects are on hold for the time being. At the time of writing OSF was also considering withdrawing its financial support for these projects.

AÇEV (Mother Child Education Foundation)

The Foundation focuses on preschool education.

Planned projects:

- 1) 10-week summer preschool programme for 120 Syrian children aged 5-7
- 2) Advising on a preschool programme jointly operated by the Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration (GAP Idaresi) and UNICEF, addressing both Syrian and Turkish children

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF INTERVIEWED NGOs, INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

TURKEY	
NAME	WEB SITE
International Blue Crescent Foundation	https://ibc.org.tr/en/index.php
Support to Life Association	http://www.hayatadestek.org/tr/
Asylum and Migration Research Center	http://www.igamder.org/
Bahcesehir University	http://www.bahcesehir.edu.tr/
Human Resource Development Foundation	http://www.ikgv.org/
Anadolu Kultur	www.anadolukultur.org
Maya Foundation – Project Lift	http://www.project-lift.net/ourteam.html
Mavi Kalem Association	http://www.mavikalem.org/
Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants	http://www.sgdd.org.tr/
Hayrat Foundation	http://hayratvakfi.org/index.php/irtibat/
Yuva Association	http://yuva.org.tr/
Mother Child Education Foundation	http://www.acev.org
Koc University Migration Research Center	http://mirekoc.ku.edu.tr/tr
Economic Policy Research Foundation	http://www.tepav.org.tr/tr/
Hacettepe University Migration and Policy Research Center	http://www.hugo.hacettepe.edu.tr/
Ministry of National Education	http://www.meb.gov.tr/
Directorate General of Migration Management	http://www.goc.gov.tr/main/Tr_1
Disaster and Emergency Management Authority	https://www.afad.gov.tr/TR/Index.aspx
Presidency for Turks Abroad	http://www.ytb.gov.tr/
SYRIA	
Syria Nour Association	http://suriyenurdernegi.org.tr/tr/gozlem
Syria Can Association	https://www.facebook.com/Suriye-can-Derne%C4%9Fi-787880237909210/
Civil and Social Relief Association	-
Union of Syrian Teachers	-
INTERNATIONAL	
Save the Children	https://www.savethechildren.net/
Human Rights Watch	https://www.hrw.org/
British Council	http://www.britishcouncil.org.tr/
Amnesty International	http://www.amnesty.org.tr/
UNICEF	http://www.unicefturk.org/
UNHCR	http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

Hamish Association, Syrian Education Association, Hudayi Foundation, Bulbulzade Foundation, MazlumDer, Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH), Ensar Foundation, Human Rights Association, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and Kilis Common Mind Platform were also contacted, but they either did not respond to our request or declined to cooperate. Other organizations working with Syrian refugees which also refused to cooperate were Assistance Coordination Unit, International Medical Corps, Concern Worldwide, GOAL, CARE and Mercy Corps.

APPENDIX 2

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