



## Capacity Building in Support of Young Refugees in Metropolitans\*

*An Overview and Recommendations on Social Inclusion from the Perspectives of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Education and Employment*

Turkey hosts the highest number of refugees in the world with over 2.7 million refugees from Syria. Only 10% of these refugees live in camps, the rest make a life in cities, towns and villages.

### INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of the public protests in March 2011, the crisis in Syria has created one of the gravest humanitarian tragedies. The atrocities of the Assad regime and radical extremist factions like the Islamic State (IS) have left 7 million Syrians internally displaced and approximately 4.8 million seeking refugee in neighboring countries in the region.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey is the largest host country offering safe heaven to over 2.7 million refugees from Syria. With no current opportunity for a safe and sustainable return to the Syrian Arab Republic after five years of conflict, many Syrian refugees have moved further afield from the camps and their surroundings to larger cities, mainly to the metropolitans in pursuit of better, safer, and more dignified living conditions.

\* "Capacity building in support of Young Refugees in Metropolitans" is a research undertaken by Human Development Foundation (INGEV) with the coordination of UN Habitat and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Youth Council to be presented during the World Humanitarian Summit for its first meeting in Istanbul in May 23-24, 2016 as a side-event. VTE Research carried the field research and statistical data analysis of the research.

<sup>1</sup> Haidar Darwish. "Global Responsibility Sharing Through Pathways For Admission Of Syrian Refugees." UNHCR Refugee Agency Report, 2016.

In March 2016, Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister declared that only 10 percent of the refugees live in camps.<sup>2</sup> The remaining 90 percent make their lives in cities, towns, and villages. The refugees who have chosen to reside in urban areas face different and direr challenges than those who stay in camps. Since they are more dispersed, their access to various public and social support mechanisms is limited, which makes them more vulnerable as opposed to those who stayed in the camps.

After Urfa, an urban capital in southeast Turkey with the highest number of settlements, Istanbul hosts the second highest urban population of refugees in the country, with an estimated 400,000 Syrians alone (excluding unregistered refugees). Based on the estimation, half of the settled refugees consist of youth between the ages of 12 to 24, who have joined or will join the ranks of a social enclave within the urban poor demographic.<sup>3</sup>

The influx of refugees into the major cities has imposed enormous challenges on the host communities. The social tensions that are predominantly associated with competition for already limited resources (housing, job opportunities, education, etc.) and perceptions between host communities and refugees make up the majority of challenges. The increased arrival of Syrian refugees to metropolitan areas has led to a weakening of the local communities' ability to absorb population growth. Furthermore, competition for resources has skyrocketed.

With youth employment affecting over one in five young people and the labor market suffering from widespread informality and low-quality jobs, the competition fueled by Syrian refugees inevitably exacerbated social discontent and tensions between the refugees and host communities.<sup>4</sup> Concomitantly, social inclusion efforts are vital in such crisis management strategies. Stripped from these strategies, communities are destined to descend into entrenched social tensions, crime, trafficking, forced marriages, human right violations, radicalization, and ultimately violent conflict.

For major cities, efforts to decrease social polarization and manage diversity rely on the bedrock social policies of public education, health care, housing and income support, which are the major components for social integration. These components are usually the responsibility of national and local governments. However, perceived lack of available and clearly defined channels of communications between the Syrian refugees and official bodies, from local authorities to the central government, preclude the effectiveness of such efforts of social inclusion.

Social inclusion depends on the quality of the countless interactions that occur among individuals, social groups, and institutions that exist in the city. Municipalities are the frontlines and critical players in the response to the Syrian crisis and are facing an additional burden, having struggled to meet people's needs even before the crisis. Faced with issues such as greater competition for jobs, higher housing costs, increased pressure on service delivery systems, increasing insecurity and loss of

---

<sup>2</sup> Hürriyet Gazetesi, 10 Mart 2016. "Başbakan Yardımcısı Akdoğan Suriyeli mülteci sayısını açıkladı." <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/basbakan-yardimcisi-akdogan-suriyeli-multeci-sayisini-acikladi-40066605>. Accessed on May 4, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> According to the data collected by UNHCR, 52% of the Syrian refugees in Turkey are under the age of 18, where young women constitute almost half of the given ratio. Syrian Regional Refugee Response, Inter-Agency Information Portal. UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>. Accessed on May 4, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Based on TUIK (Turkish Statistical Institute) data, the rate of unemployment among the young is 21.2% for the age group 15-19, and 18.9 for age 20-24. <http://www.tuik.gov.tr>.

social cohesion, municipalities are trying their best to meet the growing challenges while facing critical limitations linked to their mandates and legal frameworks, capacities, and fiscal situations. They suffer from weak data collection and implementation mechanisms to integrate newcomers into dynamic social, economic, and political environments of the metropolitan.

Turkey, along with Europe, has been confronted by the world's worst refugee crisis since World War II. The governments at both national and local levels never had to respond to a refugee crisis of this magnitude before. The odds appear to be low for creating definite solutions. What we aim to do with our research is to address at least some of the challenges put forward by the young Syrian community in Istanbul. The outcome of our research might also address some of the experiences of the young refugees in major cities in general and set a case study in global level in pursuing possible solutions for social integration through entrepreneurship, innovation, education and employment.

## RESEARCH

Management of diversity and creating the conditions for social inclusion are challenges that primarily target local governments and communities. Our research aims to contribute to defining the areas where a cooperative work by all parties (local governments, public institutions, private sectors, NGOs, and civil society) could be carried out to facilitate the social integration of the Syrian youth in Istanbul and lead up to public and mainly private sector driven solutions to the posed difficulties through entrepreneurship, innovation, education and employment.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

- Understand the demographics of young Syrian population
- Understand their habits, preferences and expectations
- Measure the perception and effect of support activities
- Analyze their level of education and tendency towards career education & vocational courses

## METHODOLOGY

A quantitative field research was carried out in April 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey.

A total of 378 face-to-face interviews with young Syrian refugees who reported their current status as “refugee in Istanbul” and three in depth meetings from each age group were conducted. The distribution figures of the young Syrian population in Istanbul is unknown due to lack of statistical research focused on this group. Therefore, age- and gender-based quota sampling was used and raw results were analyzed in this study. Weighting methods were not applied.

The respondents were clustered based on three age groups: 12-14, 15-19, and 20-24. This grouping was grounded on the life stages of their related ages. As a category, age group that described Syrian youth is more fluid than other fixed age groups. Based on the particular relation to education and employment, ‘youth’ is often referred to a person between the ages of leaving compulsory

education, and finding their first job. The UN Secretariat, for statistical purposes, defined 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. For many refugee families, the children become part of the family work force as soon as they are turned to age 12. So in the unique case of Syrian urban refugees we believed the outcome of the research that would be conducted between the ages of 12 to 24 would provide more precise and in depth information on the current situation.

The field research was carried in the municipalities of Istanbul where the majority of the Syrian refugees were settled. The neighborhoods covered in the field research are namely Fatih, Balat, Bagcilar, Esenler, Gungoren, Sultanbeyli, Basaksehir, Esenyurt, Avcilar, Bayrampasa, and Zeytinburnu. The number of the respondents interviewed within each region was allocated according to the refugee population ratio of the given district.

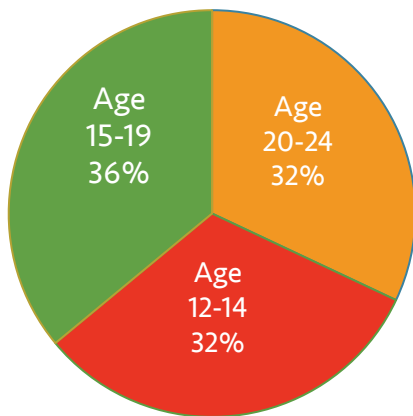
An important note on the limitations of the research: We faced major challenges during the interviews of the youth age group 12-14. Especially the children who work and live in ateliers (textiles, mechanics, begging activities, etc.) were prohibited to speak to the research team. The interviewers encountered resistance from the bosses (most of the times who were Syrians themselves) of these children. Therefore, our research lacks their perspective of being a young refugee. In Istanbul

# FIELD RESEARCH FINDINGS

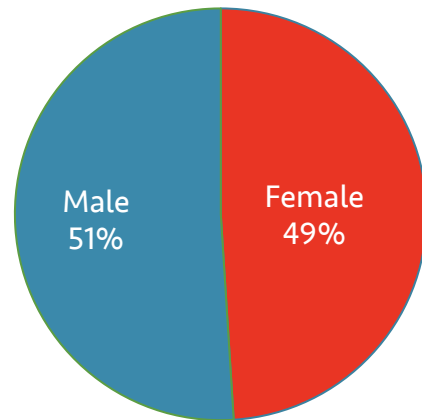
*“Capacity building in support of young refugees in metropolitans” is a research undertaken by Human Development Foundation (INGEV) with the coordination of UN Habitat advisory board and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Youth Council to be presented during the World Humanitarian Summit for its first meeting in Istanbul in May 23-24, 2016. VTE Research carried the field research and statistical data analysis of the research.*

# SAMPLING DISTRIBUTION: DEMOGRAPHICS, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION ANALYSIS OF YOUNG SYRIAN REFUGEES

Age Distribution

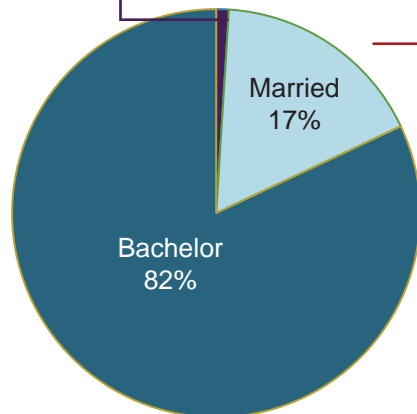


Gender Distribution



Marital Status  
(Ages 12-24)

Divorced/  
Widow  
1%



Between the ages 15-24  
**24.4%**  
are married

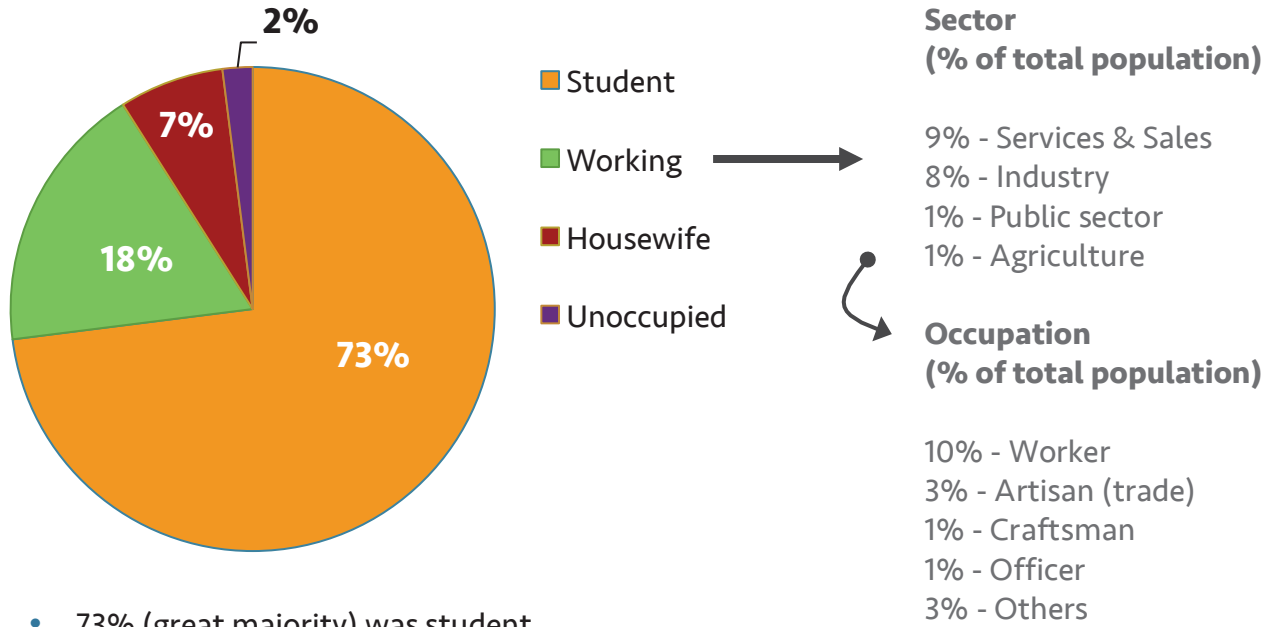
12% have  
children

% Marital status	Overall	12-14 age	15-19 age	20-24 age	Male	Female
Bachelor	82	100	89	58	91	74
Married	17	-	11	39	9	25
Divorced / Widow	1	-	-	2	-	2
Have children	12	-	6	32	6	19

## THE LENGTH OF STAY IN ISTANBUL

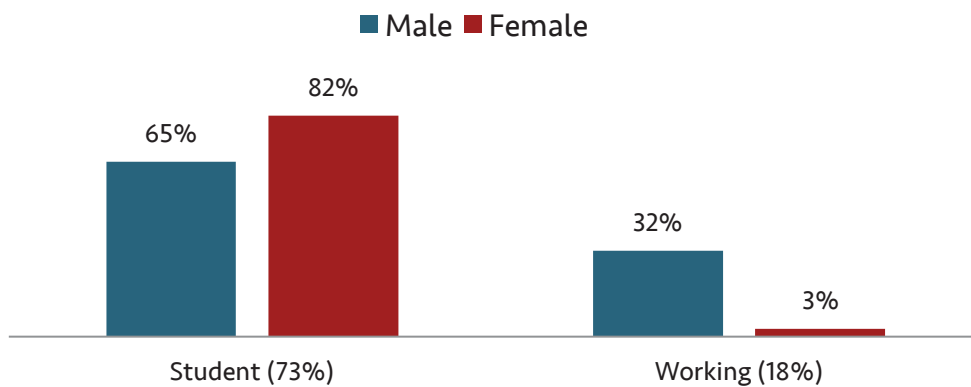
FOR HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN ...	ISTANBUL
LESS THAN 1 YEAR	39%
MORE THAN 1 YEAR / LESS THAN 2 YEARS	29%
MORE THAN 2 YEARS	32%

## LIFE IN SYRIA



- 73% (great majority) was student while in Syria
- 18% was working in Syria

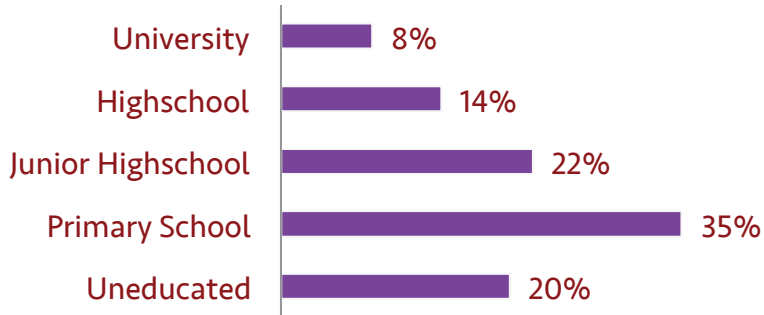
% While in Syria	Overall	12-14 age	15-19 age	20-24 age	Male	Female
<b>Student</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>91</b>	76	53	65	<b>82</b>
<b>Working</b>	<b>18</b>	3	18	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	3
<b>Housewife</b>	<b>7</b>	4	5	12	-	15
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>2</b>	3	1	2	3	-





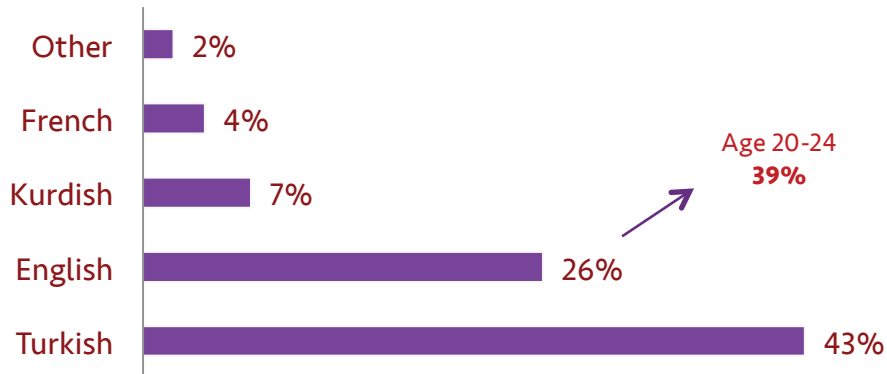
## EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

### Education (in Syria): Graduated From



**22%**  
of the respondents  
have at least high  
school education

### Languages (other than mother tongue)

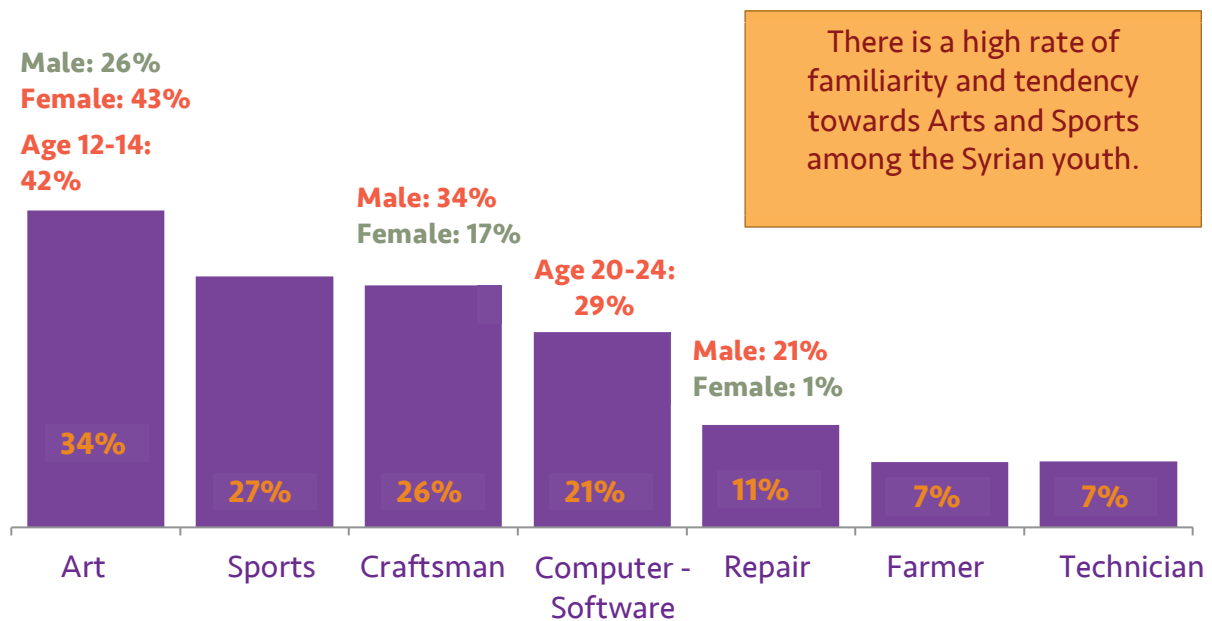


Age 20-24  
**39%**

**57%**  
of the respondents don't  
have enough Turkish to  
endure daily life

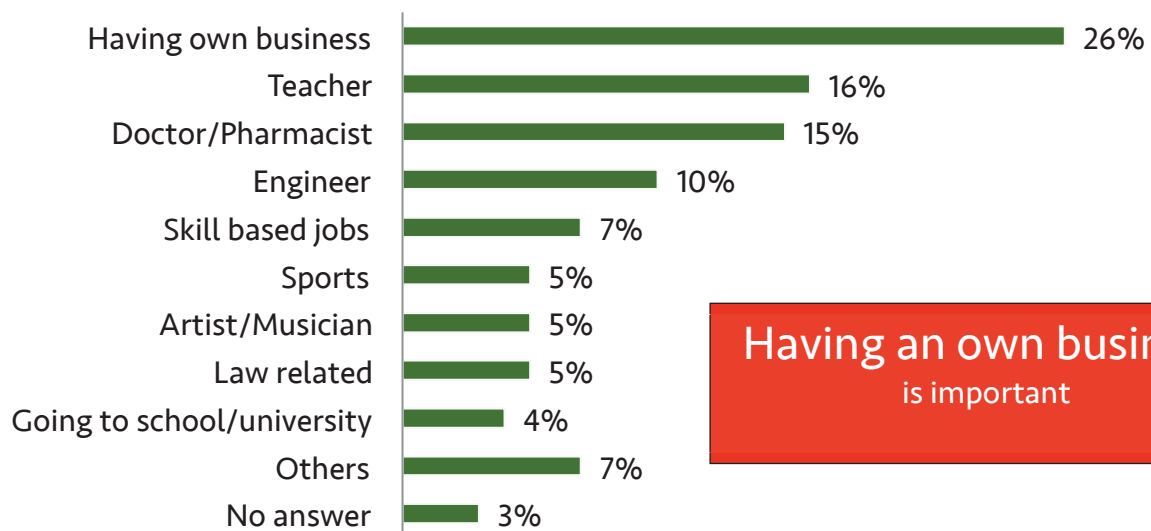
Turkish speaking  
(duration in Istanbul)  
< 1 years: 16%  
1-2 years: 52%  
> 2 years: 67%

## SPECIAL INTERESTS



## DREAM JOBS

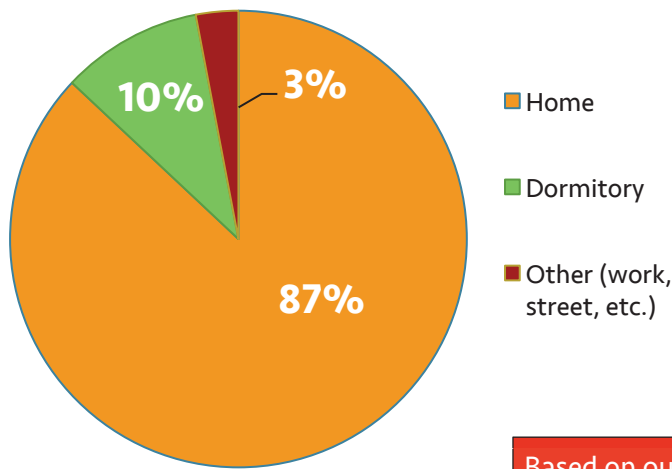
### What kind of job you would like to have?



% of wanting to have own business gets higher as age increases and among males  
 % of being a teacher is higher among younger ages (12-14) and among females

# EXPERIENCE OF THE CITY : ANALYSIS OF THE YOUNG REFUGEES LIFE IN ISTANBUL

## LIVING IN ISTANBUL



Average population living together in household or shelters (including him/herself) is **6.6**

Ratio of the Household	
with 1-4 people	14%
with 5-7 people	44%
with 8-11 people	33%
with +12 people	9%

Based on our field observation, the housing conditions are very poor. Many families live in abject poverty, often in unsanitary, even dangerous, housing conditions. (abandoned houses, barracks, etc.).

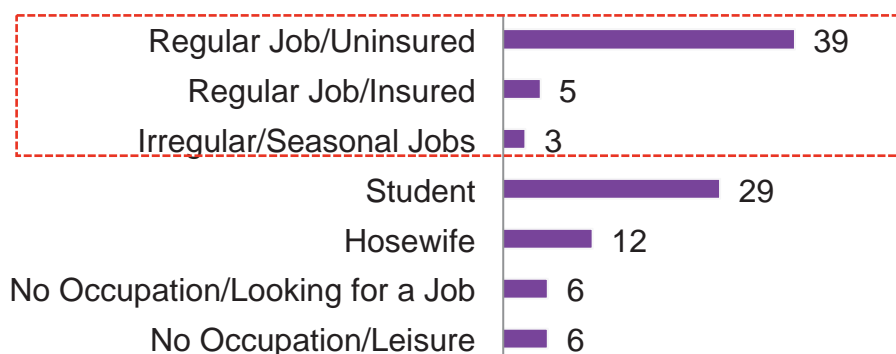
Ownership of ...	%
Kitchen	93%
Toilet	87%
Fridge	83%
Washing mach.	83%
Mobile phone	80%
Heating system	64%
Television	63%
Internet access	61%
Computer	20%
Own room	11%

Mainly married couples

% Living in Istanbul	Overall	12-14 Age	15-19 Age	20-24 Age	Male	Female
Home	87	98	87	75	75	98
Dormitory	10	-	10	19	19	-
Other	3	2	3	6	6	2

## EMPLOYMENT

### Working in Istanbul



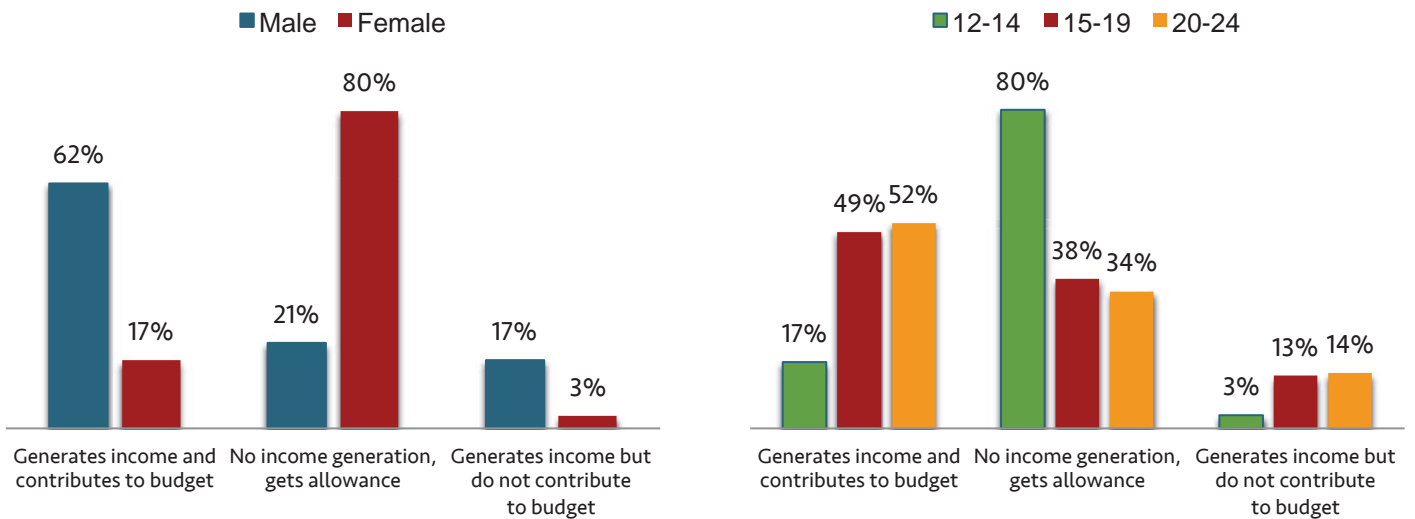
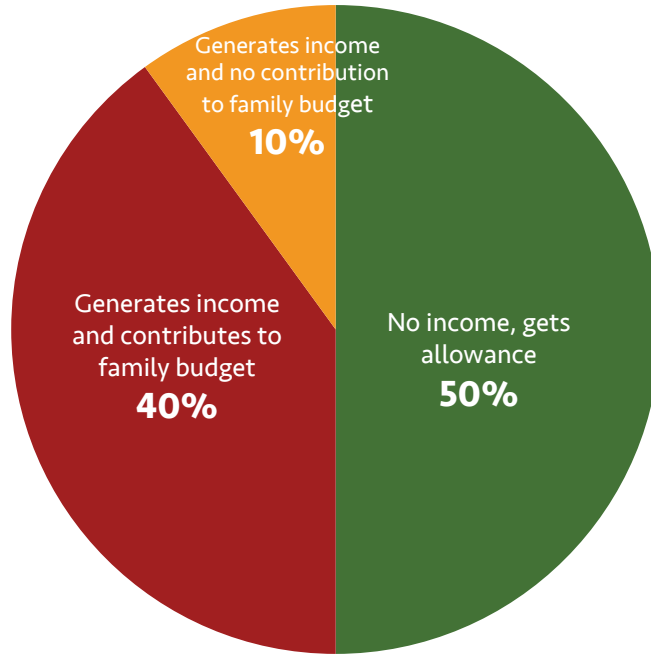
Only **5%** are employed with social security coverage

A significant ratio of young Syrians transferred from being students to workers, from education to labor market.

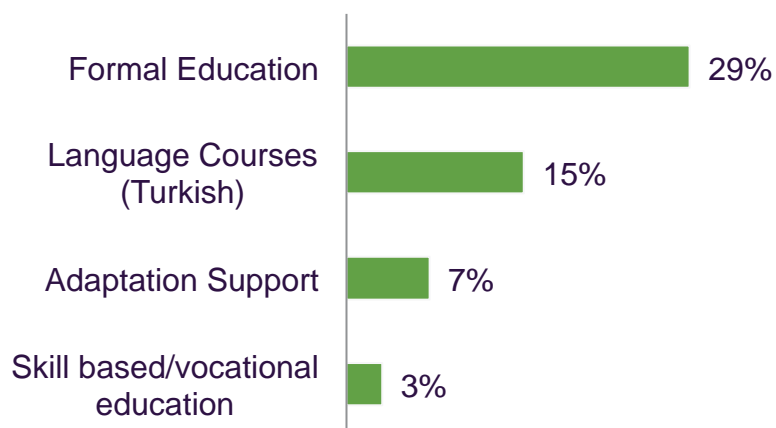
	Syria (Before)	Istanbul (Now)
Student	73%	29%
Working	18%	47%

Works in (%)	Overall	12-14 Age	15-19 Age	20-24 Age	Male	Female
Regular job: Uninsured employee	39	13	48	54	61	16
Regular job: Insured employee	5	3	7	5	9	1
Irregular job (seasonal job)	3	3	4	4	5	2
Student	29	60	24	3	14	44
Housewife	12	3	10	24	-	25
Unemployed - Looking for a job	6	2	6	9	8	3
Unemployed - Leisure	6	16	2	1	4	9

## CONTRIBUTION TO FAMILY INCOME



## EDUCATION AND TRAININGS RECEIVED BY THE YOUNG SYRIAN REFUGEES

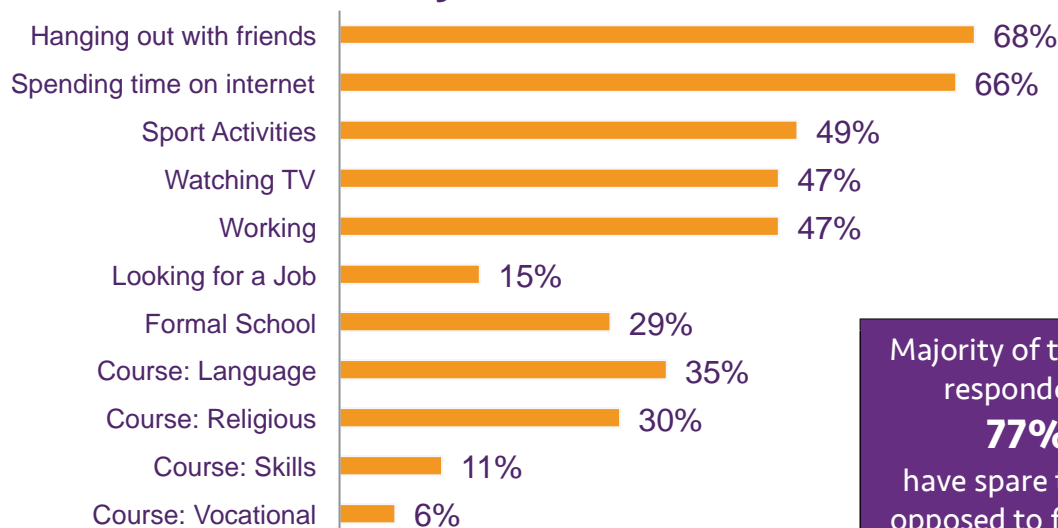


Overall, the share of getting an education related services in Istanbul is very low and no clear information on who is providing these services: municipality, public or private

% Services received	Overall	12-14 Age	15-19 Age	20-24 Age	Male	Female
Formal education	29	60	24	3	14	44
Turkish language courses	15	25	12	10	10	21
Adaptation support	7	7	8	6	6	8
Skill based / occupational courses	3	2	1	7	3	3

## DAILY LIFE IN ISTANBUL

### Daily activities



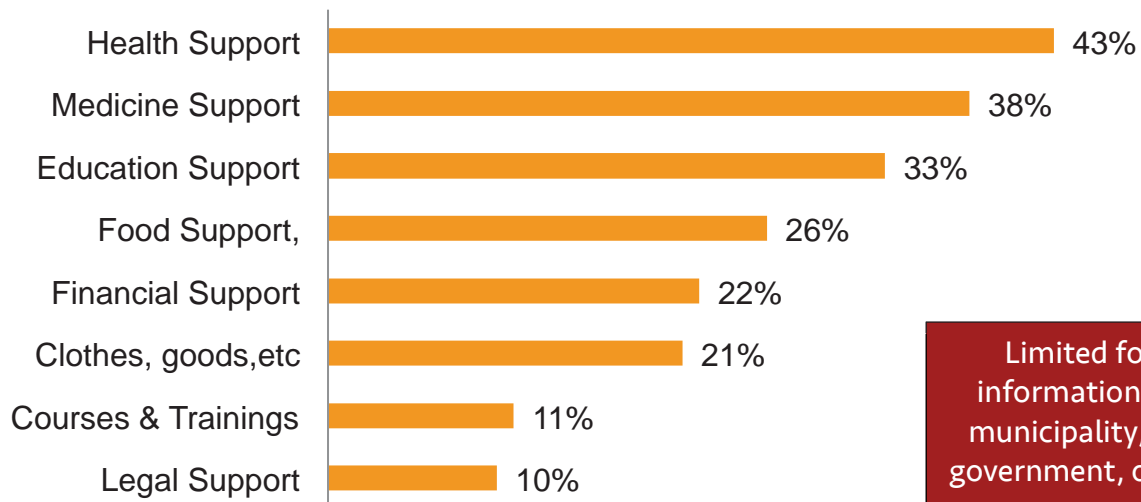
Majority of the male respondents  
**77%**  
have spare time as opposed to females.

### DISTRIBUTION OF DAILY ACTIVITIES BASED ON AGE AND GENDER

Activities (%)	Overall	12-14 Age	15-19 Age	20-24 Age	Male	Female
Hanging out with friends	68	64	71	68	77	59
Spending time on internet	66	47	72	79	72	60
Sport activities	49	53	57	36	56	41
Watching TV	47	58	46	38	39	56
Working	47	22	54	59	70	20
Looking for a job	15	4	21	20	22	8
School	29	61	20	3	13	42
Course: Language	35	49	29	27	30	40
Course: Religious	30	43	32	16	25	35
Course: Skills	11	13	9	11	9	12
Course: Occupational	6	9	7	3	7	6

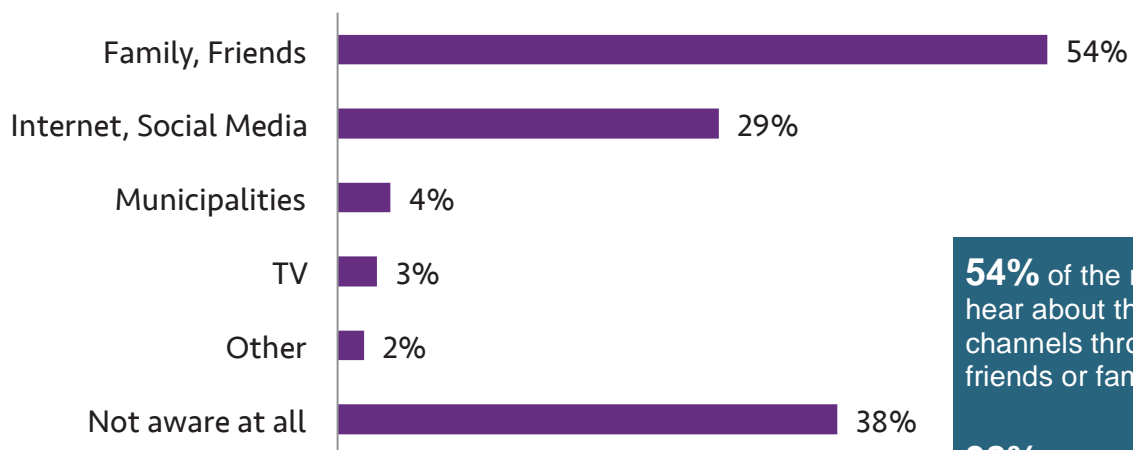
## ANALYSIS OF THE SUPPORT MECHANISMS

### Types of Support Received



Limited formal information on the municipality, public, government, or private supports

### Source of Information

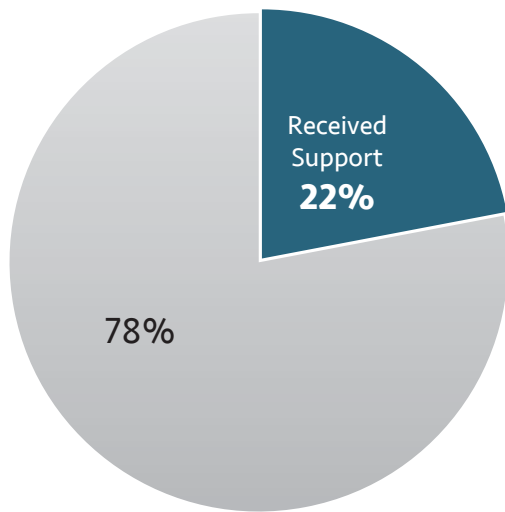


54% of the respondents hear about the support channels through their friends or family, while

38% of the respondents were not aware of the various supports provided by different public and private agencies.

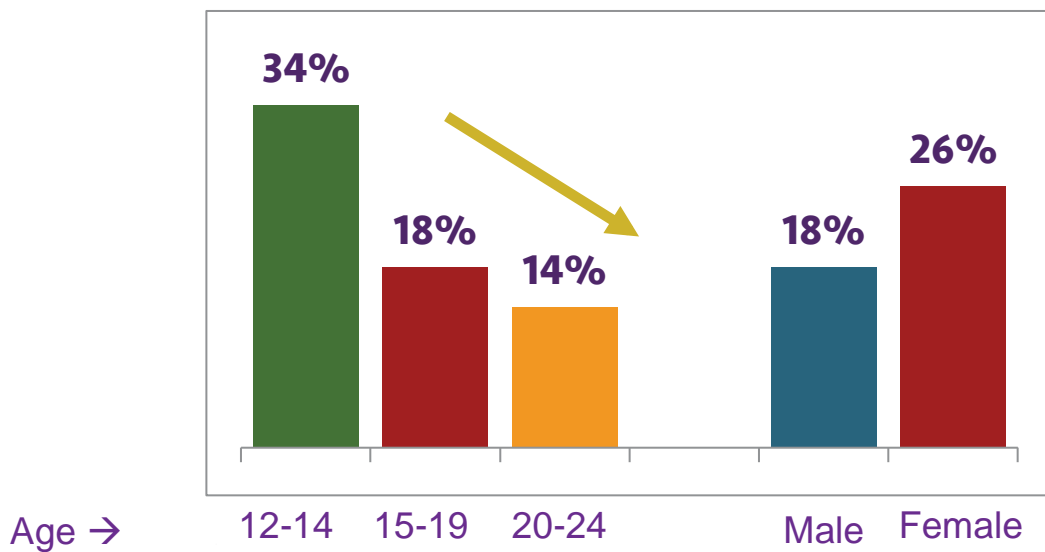


## SUPPORT RECEIVED



As the awareness levels implies, the share of people that receives any type of support in Istanbul is extremely low !

## LEVEL OF AWARENESS



## SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Among the ones that received support



According to our respondents the contribution of public or private organizations into support mechanisms are limited.  
Half of the respondents (52%) gets the support from individuals rather than public or private organizations.

Support from	%
Individuals	52%
Municipalities	34%
NGO (Syrian)	29%
NGO (Turkish)	11%
Gov. Org. (Turkish)	5%
UN Organizations	5%
NGO (Others)	2%
Do not recall	15%

## SUPPORT: CATEGORIES

Among the ones that received support



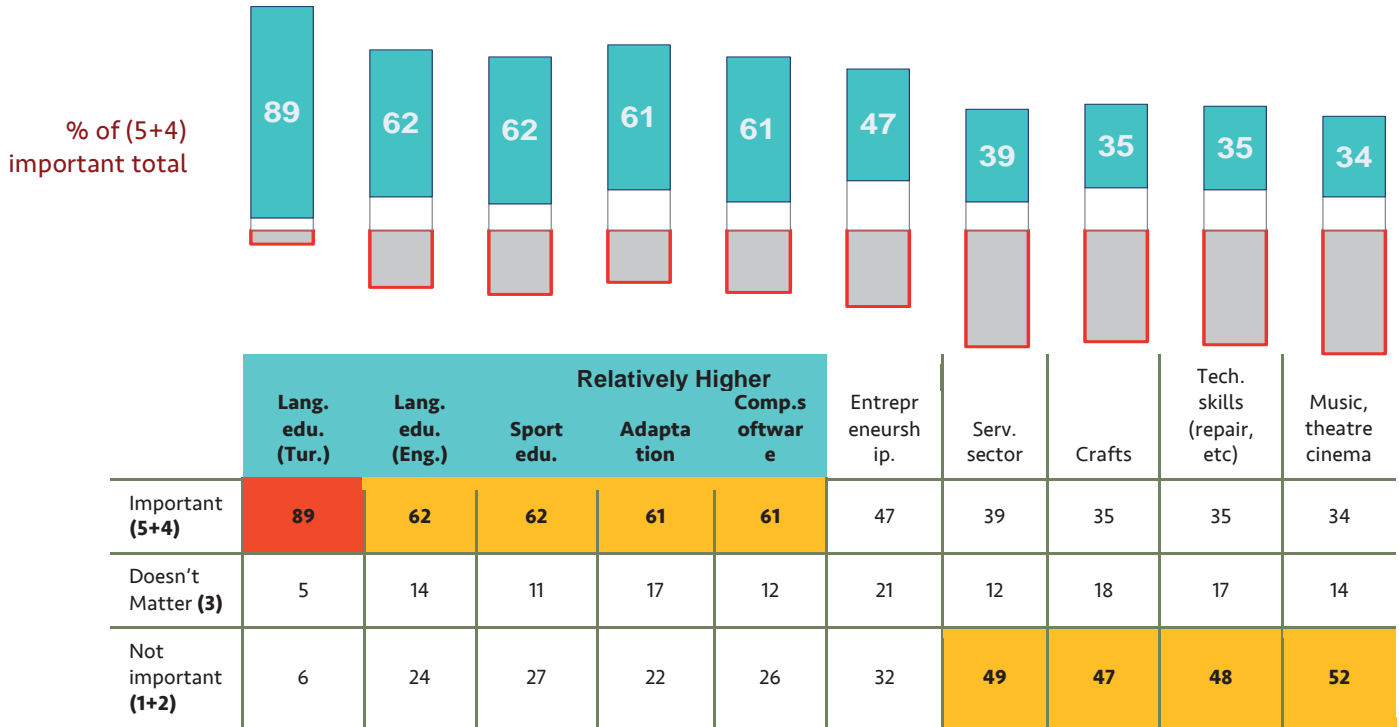
Support categories	%
Food	59%
Monetary	31%
Health	23%
Education	22%
Place to live	21%
Adaptation	10%

According to our respondents:

- Most common support they received was for Food (59%).
- Support for education perceived insufficient

# UNDERSTANDING THE EXPECTATIONS, PREFERENCES, AND VALUES

## IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL COURSES



Important (5+4)	Overall	Age 12-14	Age 15-19	Age 20-24	Male	Female	Employed	Unemployed	Student	Housewife
Language education (Turkish)	89	89	89	88	91	87	91	93	90	74
Language education (English)	62	70	61	57	59	66	59	73	71	47
Sport education	62	68	66	52	73	51	66	50	77	23
Adaptation for Turkish edu. sys.	61	61	60	63	67	55	63	68	67	36
Computer & software	61	63	60	62	70	53	64	64	64	45
Entrepreneurship support	47	28	53	59	60	33	59	43	37	30
Courses for service sector	39	27	44	45	51	27	49	52	27	15
Courses for craftsman.	35	38	38	30	39	32	39	32	34	26
Courses for tech. skills (repair, etc)	35	33	40	33	42	29	39	32	35	28
Music, theatre, cinema	34	47	30	25	34	34	37	34	38	13

## VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

	GENERAL OUTLOOK	Agree %
	Family is the most important criterion	98
	Living in a safe area is very important for me	98
****	Religious faith gives me power	96
	Will never forget Turkey's support	93
	I have hope for the future	92
	Would like to live in a place that I protect my culture and traditions	89
	I feel safe in Istanbul	82
***	I want to go back to Syria	77
	A good place to work is very important for me	75
	To have a better job, I would like to get decent education	74
	I like to spend time on social media	70
	I understand the 'feeling of riot' of some young Syrians	66
	Istanbul is easy to adapt	65
**	Would like to reside in an area with Syrian population	65
	I do not understand what NGOs can offer for me	61
	Likes Turkish music	60
	I believe I can be at important positions in Turkey in the future	59
	Plans to live in Turkey anymore	48
*	Want to have a job as soon as possible	48
	Likes to watch Turkish TV channels	34
	I don't want people to find out that I am Syrian	28
	I prefer to go to a European country	22

Values such as family, religion, etc. are highly important for young Syrians living in Istanbul along with the feeling of security. Employment related concerns come next.

## VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS (CONT.)

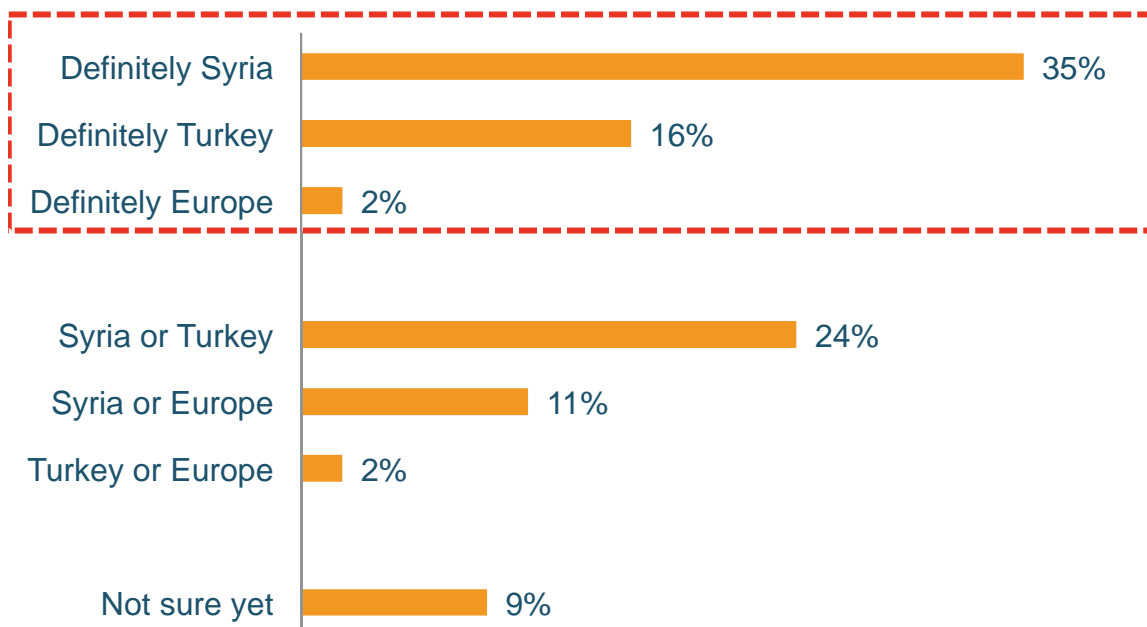
<b>TURKEY ENTHUSIASM</b>	<b>%</b>
Will never forget Turkey's support	93
Istanbul is easy to adapt	65
Likes Turkish music	60
Plans to live in Turkey anymore	48
Likes to watch Turkish TV channels	34
<b>VALUE FOCUSED</b>	<b>%</b>
Family is the most important criterion	98
Religious faith gives me power	96
Would like to live in a place that I protect my culture and traditions	89
Would like to reside in an area with Syrian population	65
<b>SAFETY CONCERNED</b>	<b>%</b>
Living in a safe area is very important for me	98
I feel safe in Istanbul	82
<b>JOB FOCUSED</b>	<b>%</b>
A good place to work is very important for me	75
To have a better job, I would like to get decent education	74
Want to have a job as soon as possible	48
<b>HOPE FOR FUTURE</b>	<b>%</b>
I have hope for the future	92

I believe I can be at important positions in Turkey in the future	59
<b>NEGATIVE ATTITUDE</b>	<b>%</b>
I understand the 'feeling of riot' of some young Syrians	66
I do not understand what NGOs can offer for me	61
I don't want people to find out that I am Syrian	28
<b>LEAVERS</b>	<b>%</b>
I want to go back to Syria	77
I prefer to go to a European country	22
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>%</b>
I like to spend time on social media	70

Agree %	Overall	Age 12-14	Age 15-19	Age 20-24	Male	Female	Employ.	Unemp.	Student	Lives home	Lives Other
A good place to work is very important	75	53	82	89	91	59	94	80	52	72	94
To have a better job, I need good education	74	68	77	76	81	66	83	73	65	73	78
Want to have a job as soon as possible	48	20	55	68	65	31	65	59	21	44	77
I can be at important positions in Turkey	59	50	60	67	59	60	59	48	67	60	55
Plans to live in Turkey anymore	48	40	49	56	49	48	49	43	48	50	41
Likes Turkish music	60	44	68	68	60	61	65	46	60	59	67
I want to go back to Syria	77	88	74	68	76	77	72	84	82	76	80
Would like to reside with Syrian population	65	80	59	58	65	66	60	73	74	65	65
I understand the 'feeling of riot'	66	58	75	65	72	61	70	66	61	65	75
I like to spend time on social media	70	51	77	82	80	60	79	59	63	68	84

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

### Where to Live in the Future



**54%** of the respondents are sure about their future settlement plans.

Where **35%** definitely wants to go back to Syria.

**37%** is undecided between at least two countries



## OUTCOMES

- ❖ The majority of our respondents (82%) between the ages of 12-24 were bachelors.
- ❖ Majority of the respondents were students while they were living in Syria. As the consequence of the crisis, and their status as urban refugees, nearly half of them (47%) joined the city's labor market.
- ❖ Only 27% of the 73% can effort to continue his/her education since their settlement in Istanbul.
- ❖ Majority of our respondents (87%) live in deprived housing conditions, in fairly crowded homes. The average number of household is about 6.6 persons, and most do not have their own rooms.
- ❖ 40% of our respondents contribute to the household budget with the money they earn.
- ❖ Rates for educational services (schools, vocational education, etc.) are fairly low.
- ❖ Important part of the respondents was not aware of the public or private supports provided by public institutions, local or international NGOs, or civil society. Only 22% of them received some kind of support. Lack of effective channels of information might be one of the causes for lower rates of awareness on the support mechanisms. Mainly the family members or friends informed respondents on the various support channels.
- ❖ Among the training/educational activities, Turkish Language education is the most popular one. Young Syrians in Istanbul are willing to learn Turkish. In addition to language skills, male respondents were also interested in vocational trainings.
- ❖ In terms of their values family, religion, and traditions hold the first places while employment had secondary importance.

## OUTCOMES (CONT.)

- ❖ Significant indicator for religious activities such as joining religious courses, etc address a need for centralized and regulated religious education for Syrian youth.
- ❖ An environment for nurturing young Syrians' own cultural and traditional values should be considered.
- ❖ A considerable size of the respondents is willing to go back to Syria when the conflict is over. The ratio decreases as the age increases.
- ❖ One fourth of the respondents are willing to establish their own business in Istanbul.

## EVALUATION

The social integration of the refugee youth in major cities and metropolitans has its own challenges and requires the analysis of the concepts of “belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition, and legitimacy.”<sup>5</sup> These concepts can be put in flesh and blood through effective implementation on language and cultural knowledge, employment and self-sufficiency, and housing. In that perspective our research sustains as a case study of the needs assessment of the young refugee community in Istanbul for delivering potential solutions of social integration both in local and global levels.

Young refugees, as one of the most vulnerable part of the disadvantaged groups along with women and children, often face similar challenges to those of the urban poor; however, they are further deprived by the inherent trauma and challenge of displacement from conflict that affect a person’s sense of identity and power.<sup>6</sup> In our research we underlined mainly the issues and opportunities of the refugee youth living in a major city. We wanted to understand whom they were, what they used to do while they were in their own country, what they are doing right now as refugees, what are the challenges they encounter, how they are seeing their future in Istanbul, and finally how they want to perceive their goals for self-sufficiency.

Our findings demonstrate that the long-term accommodation of refugee youth in the major cities can typically occur through the creation of the necessary conditions and environment for job opportunities through entrepreneurship and employment while enhancing existing systems of education and innovation, and promoting social cohesion and community integration initiatives at the community, private sector and municipal levels. Young refugees (Syrians in our case) need to feel that society they live in has a place for them. They need to feel that they have a voice, that their presence matters, and that in the face of a new life, their future is still within sight.

### Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

There is a serious effort among individuals, organizations, and corporations for developing and implementing solutions for the young refugees’ employment, but the current level of initiatives is not adequate and not harmonized to meet this tumultuous challenge. To reach the scale required it is necessary that all the actors of the society work together to create more resilient communities and increase local capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from such crises. Accomplishing these feats, however, requires lending an attentive ear to the plight of young refugees, while empowering them with a real voice in shaping real decisions.

---

<sup>5</sup> Jenson, J. (1998). Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research. CPRN Study No. F/03. Ottawa: Renouf Publishings.

<sup>6</sup> Given the refugees legally dubious positions, many urban refugees are paid less than citizens of the country, leading to deprecation in wages and increasing unemployment among unskilled locals. As of Jan 15, 2016, Ministry board decided to the issuance of the work permits for the Syrian refugees under “temporary protection.” The permit will facilitate the employment of the Syrian refugees within the limits of the set quotas. Ministry of Labor and Social Security is responsible from the issuance of the permits except for the temporary seasonal employment in agriculture. Refugees become eligible for work permit only after six months of residency. Regulation on working permits for refugees with “temporary protection.” Ministry of Labor and Social Security. <http://www.calismaizni.gov.tr/baskanlik/sikcasorulansorular/>. Accessed 5 May 2016.

- Empowering the representation of young refugees in youth councils that function on local, national, and international levels should be the first prerequisite. Especially local governments, or municipalities can initiate the formation or integration of such councils through their institutional capacity. Youth councils can be more effective in problem specification, looking for potential solutions, piloting those solutions, and scaling them where appropriate. Such effort would be more effective in producing solutions for various problems of vulnerable groups living in major cities like “young refugee women.” An action plan needs to be developed through these councils on which the refugee youth will be represented. These councils can also serve as platforms to forge a strong voice for non-violent change and get involved in deciding the shape of support programs that seek to help the young refugee community. A networking system should be empowered between the youth councils worldwide to better formulate solutions for social integration of young refugees and to exchange experience on global level.
- Education is probably one of the most critical issues for the young refugees who are trying to outlive in their new environment. Most of the young refugees encounter major changes in their daily routine. They are taken away from their schools, and as it was in this study of Syrian refugees, they are forced into the labor market, with ultimate low rates of formal education. Governments in national and local levels should work with private businesses to consider investing especially in non-formal education (entrepreneurship, special skills and vocational trainings) that can reach many youngsters who have dropped out of school and won't be going back. Through the need-based models, young refugees and other marginalized youth can get the critical skills that are in demand on the labor market. Both national and local governments need to create an environment and policies that would enable the building of skills through the non-formal educational models and the creation of jobs for empowering young refugees in the cities.
- Private companies must actively invest and be involved in finding and empowering young refugees, especially the young refugee women who might contribute to their labor force, suppliers, and even customers. Private sector has much to offer in terms of improving humanitarian response, from use of new technologies to expanding distribution networks, to more cost efficient delivery mechanisms, and even creating opportunities for entrepreneurship (training, mentoring, microfinance, and business incubation – through Refugee Innovation Centers, for example). In response to such level of employment crisis, fostering entrepreneurship might be seen as an additional way of allowing youth into the labor market and to promote job creation, which will contribute to the establishment of new enterprises, rather than fostering competition for jobs and driving down wages.<sup>7</sup>
- Municipalities in collaboration with private businesses have the potential to provide mechanisms that will foster innovation among the refugee youth. Innovation is about adapting to context. It is a methodology for change, often used in the private sector but which is, with few exceptions,

<sup>7</sup> Humanitarian Innovation Project by Oxford University, Refugee Studies Center. <http://www.oxhip.org/about>.

neglected in such humanitarian crisis. Local governments and private sector should invest on enhancing innovation and entrepreneurship among refugee youth through the establishment of urban spaces such as youth entrepreneurship centers or youth innovation centers.

- A foundation for safe, decent and fair jobs for refugees might be initiated. Youth councils might lead such initiations both in national and global level. In our case, there are still a significant number of young refugees who are willing to go back to their country after the conflict is over. Through the investments of such foundations, these youngsters can be channeled in industries that will be vital for post-war reconstruction in their related countries, including construction and technology.
- Refugees with potential investment capabilities might be an important part of creating sustainable and professional employment solutions for the young refugees.<sup>8</sup> Unions for such investors under the commerce unions or chambers (Syrian Businesses Union under Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, for example) might serve as mediums for the regulation of working conditions of the young refugees in major cities and establishment of a proper labor market.
- Public and private foundations, donors, NGOs (with the inclusion of INGOs), and academics have to channel their resources to seek out and amplify effective models of social inclusion through continuously conducted comprehensive researches on the needs assessments of the young refugees. The experiments young refugees envisage vary in tandem with their location. Challenges of living in a metropolitan versus small-scale city, to camps are very dissimilar, and each has their own unique requirements. To provide sustainable solutions for social integration and cohesion of the young refugees, these needs have to be defined clearly.

All the actors of the hosting society along with its local and national governments must work together with international actors to determine how best to create livelihood opportunities for young urban refugees. But more than the institutions, youngsters with their joint councils and organizations should take their future into their own hands and create socially cohesive communities to live in. With expanded opportunities, affected refugee youth will be better able to contribute to local economies and move towards self-sufficiency.

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/istanbula-yabanci-yatirimci-ilgisi-artiyor-40089686>