



Integration and Well-Being of Syrian Youth in Turkey

Our research concerns one of the most vulnerable groups within the Syrian refugee population: youths whose futures are being put on hold.

Our research assesses the needs of Syrian refugee youth in Turkey and aims to provide policy recommendations for their integration. Before the war in their home country, Syrian youth between 18 and 30 years of age would have attended university or entered the job market, but many are finding that their plans of education and training, or marrying and building a family, must be deferred.

Our research examined their backgrounds, including educational levels and skills; their education, work, and health needs; and their visions of the future. Our recommendations aim at addressing youth integration needs and harnessing the human capital represented by the young Syrian population in Turkey.

Our research:

- Survey with 500 youth in 5 cities
- In-depth interviews with 100 youth
- Interviews with stakeholders, officials, and civil society organisations
- Ethnographic research in 5 cities



Findings and recommendations

Higher education and training

Despite government and international efforts and policies, there still exist important barriers of access to higher education. Many youth also have difficulty completing high school because of language barriers, the limited capacity of schools, and an unfamiliar curriculum.

- **Problem:** The need to earn money as a barrier to education
Recommendation: Expand opportunities for open education, especially online.
- **Problem:** Syrian youth have difficulty navigating the transition from high school to university because of different types of universities, multiple entrance exams, limited scholarships, and difficulty getting their Syrian degrees approved.
Recommendation: More support to provide information about universities and preparation for entrance exams, including night courses.
- **Problem:** Being displaced to another city for university has both financial and social implications. Many students lose their support networks, and some experience higher degrees of discrimination, also on the basis of gender.
Recommendation: Consider university placement based on residence and further financial support to Syrian university students.

Language and Culture

Many youth report insufficient integration in local communities, often due to continuing language barriers. Language learning opportunities are complex, and many youth work long hours. Women may be at home with small children and have insufficient opportunity to practice speaking.

- **Problem:** Working rather than learning.
Recommendation: Provide financial support to take classes and link classes to the job market.
- **Problem:** Language education too complex
Recommendation: Provide more instruction and individual guidance.
- **Problem:** Insufficient opportunities to practice
Recommendation: Open local spaces where Turkish volunteers will be able to engage in social activities, particularly with women.

Health

Access to health is recognized as one of the most successful governance areas, as it is linked to the system serving locals. Yet some issues remain.

- **Problem:** Understanding how to access government health services.
Recommendation: Awareness campaigns regarding services and access.
- **Problem:** Many Syrian youth still struggling with the traumas of the war.
Recommendation: Make more mental health services available specifically for refugees and in their native language.

Employment

The labour market is characterised by a high level of informality and difficult working conditions for refugees in particular.

- **Problem:** Discrimination in the workplace
Recommendation: Access to in-house anti-discrimination training.
- **Problem:** High level of informality and precarity
Recommendation: Unlink social assistance programs from employment, increase support for successful employment programs.
- **Problem:** Gendered participation in the labour market
Recommendation: Fund childcare, develop skill building in line with women's needs.

Recommendations to donors:

Funding direction - improving economic conditions of refugees **AND** hosts

Sustainability of results - addressing structural issues in collaboration with government

Need for expertise - more research needed on driving forces for secondary migration decisions.

Contact us

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