

# **Educational Needs Assessment for Urban Syrian Refugees in Turkey**

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## Executive Summary

Since the civil war in Syria started in 2011, over 1,100,000 Syrians have streamed across Turkey's borders. Only about 220,000 of these refugees live in refugee camps.<sup>1</sup> The majority of Syrians in Turkey (about 80 percent) live outside of refugee camps, without access to systematic services. A report released by AFAD indicates that there are large disparities in access to basic necessities between Syrians living inside and outside of camps, none more striking than those differences regarding access to basic education. Currently, about 80 percent of school age (ages 6-17 years) Syrians are attending school in camps, while only 27 percent of their peers in host communities are attending.<sup>2</sup> This extremely low attendance rate is alarming. Further, according to UNHCR, 75 percent of the Syrian refugee population is women and children. In Turkey, it is estimated that about 22 percent of Syrian heads of household outside of camps are women, although this number could be much higher.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the importance of access to education in emergencies, the large percentage of the Syrian population living outside of camps in Turkey, the low school attendance rate among the non-camp school-age population, and the large percentage of women comprising the Syrian population, this assessment will focus on the educational needs of Syrian children and adults, including a special emphasis on the needs of women and girls.

The objective of this needs assessment is to answer the following questions:

1. What educational opportunities are available for Syrians outside of camps, including adult education opportunities? Who is providing them? What is their capacity?
2. What is the quality of education available to Syrians outside of camps in Turkey?
3. Why do Syrians and Turkish people choose to participate in certain educational activities? What are the reasons why they choose not to participate? What are barriers to school attendance? How do these reasons/barriers vary by gender and age?

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<sup>1</sup> Hurriyet Daily News. (2014). *Turkish deputy PM concerned over growing Syrian refugee population*. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-deputy-pm-concerned-over-growing-syrian-refugee-population.aspx?pageID=238&nID=69872&NewsCatID=341>.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF. (2014). *UNICEF Syrian education response host community*.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR. (2014). *2014 Syria regional response plan Turkey*.

4. What educational and psychosocial support needs are not being provided for Syrian and Turkish children, youth, and adults? How do these needs differ by gender and age? What should be done to address them?

To answer these questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with government authorities, Turkish and international organization staff, and researchers working with Syrians in Turkey. In addition, the city of Kirikhan was used as a case study to better understand educational needs for Syrians living in this area near the Syrian border. In Kirikhan, a household survey, focus groups, and interviews were conducted with Syrians and Turks.

## **Findings**

School participation and quality: Few school age Syrians attend school in urban areas. School quality remains a concern, due to the potentially limited capacity of teachers and low or nonexistent salaries, as well as the Ministry of Education's limited ability to monitor and support Syrian schools. Further, for those Syrians attending Turkish schools, language barriers limit their quality of learning. In Kirikhan, 52 percent of school age Syrians attend school. With the exception of secondary schools, attendance rates are actually slightly higher for girls than boys. Those Syrians who are attending school are all attending Syrian schools. Syrians in Kirikhan also expressed dissatisfaction with the poor quality of the Syrian school in the community.

Barriers to school participation: Lack of school facilities, economic vulnerability and financial needs, distance from schools, limited teacher capacity, and lack of funding for teacher salaries remain huge barriers to education participation for Syrians in Turkey. Some staff members of international organizations and Turkish NGOs also argue that lack of residence permits needed to enroll in Turkish public schools and limited Turkish language abilities also create serious challenges for Turkish school enrollment. In Kirikhan, barriers to school participation were similar for girls and boys. The majority of those interviewed did not think the reasons for not attending school were different for boys and girls. Lack of schools, long distances to schools, and overcrowding were the most common reasons among the Syrian households surveyed in Kirikhan for not sending their children to Syrian schools. The need to work is also a significant barrier to education across all age groups and among both girls and boys. For Turkish schools

specifically, Turkish language barriers are the main reasons Syrians in Kirikhan do not attend Turkish schools.

Educational needs: Those interviewed from international organizations and Turkish NGOs said more Syrian schools are needed for Syrians. Some also argued for better access to Turkish schools. Almost all of those interviewed said that Syrians need to learn Turkish, and would benefit from vocational courses with clear links to employment. Like those interviewed from international and non-governmental organizations, Syrian parents who participated in the survey want more Syrian schools for their children and youth. However, while there is clearly a strong preference for Syrian school facilities, 80 percent of adult respondents said they would send their children to Turkish schools if attendance was possible.

Further, language activities were in high-demand for both girls and boys among Syrians in Kirikhan, especially Turkish language and English courses. Regarding adult education, Turkish language and English classes were also in high demand for both Syrian women and men. They also said they want to participate in vocational courses. For Turkish respondents, handicraft courses were most in demand, especially for women. Syrian respondents said that food assistance and transportation would help them participate in educational activities, while Turks said that a certificate of participation would be most likely to motivate people to participate in activities at the Kirikhan Community Center.

Community Center Participation: Among Syrian households that participated in the assessment, 54 percent have at least one family member who has attended the Kirikhan Community Center, while 42 percent of Turkish households have had at least one member participate. Among those Syrians who have participated, Turkish and English classes are the most popular activities, while handicraft courses are most popular among Turks. For those not attending the community center, the most common reason for Turks was because they are working, while the most common reason for Syrians was because they do not have information about the Center.

Psychological support needs: Most, if not all, Syrians in Turkey are in need of psychological support, but access to this support is limited. All Syrian respondents in Kirikhan said they are not

receiving psychological counseling, suggesting there may be a lack of these services or information about these services available, despite a clear need for support expressed by those interviewed.

Social needs: There was some concern about the social isolation Syrian women may face in the host community. In Kirikhan, About 50 percent of Syrian respondents said they often or sometimes participate in social activities, such as festivals, in the community. The rate of social interaction was not substantially different for women and men. They frequently communicate with both Turks and Syrians. While stakeholders outside of Kirikhan said fear might play a role in Syrian women's isolation in host communities, 88 percent of respondents said they feel safe in Kirikhan. According to interviews and focus groups, however, Turkish language barriers do seem to create challenges for interaction. While Syrians say they frequently communicate with Turks, Turks say they infrequently interact with Syrians.

Child Marriage: Child, or early, marriage (marriage that occurs under the age of 18 years) is a concern amongst those who are working with Syrians in Turkey and Syrians themselves. The Syrian girls and women interviewed in Kirikhan agreed that early marriage is much more common for Syrian girls in Turkey than it was in Syria. The most common reason identified for girls to get married young was because of families' financial difficulties. Some also said that girls were getting married because there was nothing to do and they had no way to complete their education. To help prevent child marriage, those interviewed in Kirikhan suggested raising awareness among families, especially for fathers, and also providing financial support.

Future Plans: In Kirikhan, the majority of Syrian respondents said they plan to return to Syria within the next 1 to 2 years. If respondents do stay in Turkey, the majority said they would learn Turkish and work.

## **Recommendations**

1. To help reduce barriers to education, more funding is needed for Syrian schools, especially in the southern provinces near the border with Syria. There is a particular need for secondary and high schools. Additionally, transportation should be provided to make

it easier for students to travel to and from school. To help improve teacher retention and stability, as well as potentially attract more qualified professionals, funding is needed to provide monetary incentives for educators teaching in Syrian schools. Advocacy for accreditation of Syrian schools is needed so students can receive proof of completion and diplomas. Capacity development at the Ministry of Education is also needed to help develop accreditation and monitoring procedures for Syrian schools.

2. While Syrian schools provide a short-term solution, and also may be more appropriate for older Syrian students, access to Turkish public schools should be expanded for Syrian children. To achieve better access to Turkish schools for Syrians, organizations should advocate for alternative IDs that would provide legal status similar to a Foreigner's ID and allow Syrian school age children to formally enroll in Turkish schools, even without formal documents from Syria. If Syrian students are able to attend Turkish schools in larger numbers, the Ministry of Education and Turkish schools will likely need support developing capacity to conduct placement tests for Syrian students and help support those students as they adjust to a new curriculum, in a new environment, in Turkish. To help Syrian children transition to Turkish schools—including universities—and to help them thrive in Turkish society, organizations need to expand certified Turkish language training for Syrians. Organizations should work with Public Education Centers to provide certified Turkish language courses for Syrian children and adults.
3. To help reduce child labor and reduce early marriage, financial support should be provided to families. Outreach efforts should also be coordinated to raise awareness among Syrian families, specifically targeting fathers.
4. Vocational courses should be provided for Syrians and Turks in partnership with Public Education Centers based on a market analysis. Partnerships with potential employers could also help link these programs to employment.
5. To further facilitate communication and interaction between Syrians and Turks, organizations should coordinate social activities in neighborhoods and public places. Organizations could identify Syrian and Turkish women partners to lead outreach efforts for women in harder to reach areas and organize social activities, such as sharing coffee and snacks, in neighborhoods. Organizations can build from these activities, according to what is in-demand from these women.

6. Organizations should also prioritize hiring more psychologists and training community workers to help provide support and identify targeted psychological support needs. They also need to develop systems for identifying and referring those who need psychological support.
7. Lastly, more broad-reaching and rigorous research is needed to understand Syrians' opportunities and needs in Turkey regarding education, health, housing, and protection.

## Introduction

Since the civil war in Syria started in 2011, more than 1,100,000 Syrians have streamed across Turkey's borders.<sup>4</sup> About 220,000 of these Syrians live in 22 camps designed and operated by the Turkish Government's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) in 10 provinces near the Syrian border.<sup>5</sup> The Turkish government has spent over \$2 billion providing shelter, food, health, and education services to Syrians living inside of the camps. However, the majority of Syrians in Turkey (about 80 percent) live outside of these camps, without access to systematic services.

There are many reasons Syrian families live in urban areas outside of the Turkish camps, but the possibility of freedom of mobility certainly plays a role in the decision for those families who are able to make that choice. In the Turkish refugee camps for Syrians, movement in and out is heavily monitored and restricted. Outside of camps, freedom of mobility has the potential to allow Syrians to find employment and provide for their families, to move closer to friends and loved ones and find suitable housing, and to send their children to the schools of their choice. There are also potential benefits to Turkish society, most notably through the vast professional skills and experiences the well-educated Syrian population brings to the country. However, with this freedom comes the risk of acute vulnerability for Syrians: that jobs will be scarce; that those available jobs will under-pay and under-utilize skill sets; that housing will be expensive and of poor quality; that schools will be scarce and legal and language barriers will prevent school-age Syrians from attending. Further, language barriers may restrict interactions between Syrians and Turks in host communities and information about Syrians in Turkey may be limited, potentially fueling tensions and misunderstandings between the two groups.

Therefore, in these urban contexts, economic challenges, financial barriers, and host community interactions likely play a key role in family decision-making and wellbeing. Because the majority of the Syrian population in Turkey is surviving outside of camps under the threat of economic vulnerability and largely without regular support services, it is important for the government,

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<sup>4</sup> Hurriyet Daily News. (2014). *Turkish deputy PM concerned over growing Syrian refugee population*. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-deputy-pm-concerned-over-growing-syrian-refugee-population.aspx?pageID=238&nID=69872&NewsCatID=341>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and donors to understand their needs so that policies and programs can be designed to meet those needs.

A report released by AFAD indicates that there are large disparities in access to basic necessities between Syrians living inside and outside of camps, none more striking than those differences regarding access to basic education. To understand Syrians' access to education outside of camps, it is important to understand their legal status in the country. The Government of Turkey (GoT) offers Temporary Protection to Syrians living in Turkey. According to UNHCR, under this protection, Turkey has an open door policy for Syrians and assures non-refoulement.<sup>6</sup> Syrians do not receive "refugee" status and are instead considered "guests."<sup>7</sup> Because of the growing number of Syrians living outside of camps, the GoT began registering Syrians outside of camps in January 2013. With official documents from Syria, such as a passport, Syrians are able to receive a residence permit and Foreigner's ID. Syrians without passports are still able to register, but they do not receive residence permits or a Foreigner's ID. Additionally, Syrians are not legally allowed to work in Turkey.

Beginning in April 2014, the General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM) took over all proceedings regarding foreigners under the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection. In its protection-related functions, the GDMM will be responsible for registration, status determination, access to rights, and coordination among institutions in response to the Syrian emergency.<sup>8</sup> Under the new Law on Foreigners, some interviewed from international organizations working on Syrian issues in Turkey believe that the Ministry of Education will take a more active role in the management and implementation of education for Syrians both inside and outside of the camps.

Currently, there are three different education pathways for school age Syrians in Turkey. First, school-age children in camps are able to attend schools operated by the Turkish Ministry of Education and AFAD. These schools use an adapted Syrian curriculum and conduct lessons in

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<sup>6</sup> UNHCR. (2014). *2014 Syria regional response plan Turkey*.

<sup>7</sup> According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is defined as "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Arabic. The Turkish government does not officially accredit these schools, and therefore students are unable to receive a diploma or proof of school completion. Second, Syrians living outside of camps with residence permits are able to enroll in Turkish schools. Those without residence permits are also able to attend as guest students with school permission, but are not able to receive a diploma. Third, Syrians outside of camps without residence permits are able to attend Syrian schools operated in Arabic by different NGOs, individuals, and community organizations. These schools may or may not be officially recognized by the Ministry of Education. Under a Ministry of Education framework, organizations are able to provide education for Syrians using an adapted Syrian curriculum with Ministry of Education permission. The Ministry of Education works in cooperation with these organizations to monitor the schools and provide facilities, such as land for school buildings or pre-fabricated schools. Syrians may teach in these schools, but only as volunteers, and may not receive salaries, only “incentives.” Despite cooperation with the Ministry of Education, students attending these schools are not able to receive a diploma or proof of school completion. Further, while only those schools operating under the framework are legal, there are many other schools operating outside of this framework and Ministry control.

Today, about 80 percent of school age (ages 6-17 years) Syrians are attending school in camps, while only 27 percent of their peers in host communities are attending.<sup>9</sup> This extremely low attendance rate is alarming. Education for children and youth in emergencies is crucial. Syrian children are being deprived of the psychological healing that comes from the safe space, routine, and purpose for the day that school can provide. It is causing additional psychological toll on parents who worry they are not able to provide a better life for their children. As a result, much more information is needed to understand the educational opportunities available to Syrians outside of camps in Turkey, as well as barriers to participation.

Further, according to UNHCR, 75 percent of the Syrian refugee population is women and children. In Turkey, it is estimated that about 22 percent of Syrian heads of households outside of camps are women, although this number could be much higher.<sup>10</sup> Given the large percentage of women comprising the displaced Syrian population, it is important to understand their unique

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR. (2014). *2014 Syria regional response plan Turkey*.

situation and needs, so that stakeholders can best help them take care of themselves and their families.

Because of the importance of access to education in emergencies, the large percentage of the Syrian population living outside of camps in Turkey, the low school attendance rate among the non-camp school-age population, and the large percentage of women comprising the Syrian population, this assessment will focus on the educational needs of school-age Syrian children and youth, including a special emphasis on the needs of women and girls.

The objective of this needs assessment is to answer the following questions:

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3. Why do Syrians and Turkish people choose to participate in certain educational activities? What are the reasons why they choose not to participate? What are barriers to school attendance? How do these reasons/barriers vary by gender and age?
4. What educational and psychosocial support needs are not being provided for Syrian and Turkish children, youth, and adults? How do these needs differ by gender, and by age? What should be done to address them?

To answer these questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with government authorities, Turkish and international organization staff, and researchers working with Syrians in Turkey. In addition, the city of Kirikhan is used as a case study to better understand educational needs for Syrians living in this area near the Syrian border. Kirikhan was selected because it has a large and growing Syrian population and is located in Hatay Province near the Syrian border, where many Syrians are coming when they first arrive in Turkey. There are 107,000 Turks living in Kirikhan, and officially 10,000 Syrians, but that number could be as high as 20,000-50,000. Additionally, Kirikhan was selected because YUVA Association operates a community center for Syrian and Turkish locals (the Kirikhan Community Center, or KCC) and already has a relationship with Syrians in the community. Given the sensitive nature of finding and working

with a dispersed and sometimes hidden Syrian population, the need to work with an organization that already had ties with the Syrian community was crucial.

The following report will provide background information about Syrians' access to education in Turkey, as well as Syrian women's needs in Turkey. Next, there will be a description of the assessment methodology, followed by the findings, then conclusions and recommendations.

### **Background: Syrians' Educational Needs in Turkey**

The educational structure for Syrians in Turkey has failed to provide all school-age Syrians with access to education, which stands in stark contrast to the educational situation in Syria prior to conflict. Before the conflict began in 2011, indicators show that access to education and literacy rates in Syria were high. According to UNESCO, the net primary enrollment rate in 2011 was 99 percent, and the Gender Parity Index (GPI) was 0.98, indicating a high level of gender equality in enrollment. Lower secondary school enrollment was 89 percent, with a GPI of 0.98. Further, the literacy rate was 96 percent.<sup>11</sup> This information indicates a strong commitment to and prioritization of education among Syrians, which likely affects attitudes toward their access to education in Turkey.

Comparatively, the educational situation for displaced Syrians is grave. Region-wide, only 34 percent of school-age Syrian refugees outside of Syria are enrolled in school, meaning between 500,000 to 600,000 Syrians are without access to learning. The number may actually be much higher, since this is only based on registered Syrian refugees.<sup>12</sup> In Turkey specifically, about 80 percent of Syrian children inside of camps attend school, while only 27 percent of their peers outside of camps attend.<sup>13</sup> UNICEF estimates that approximately 175,000 school age Syrians outside of camps are out of school.<sup>14</sup> According to a report released by AFAD in January 2014, of those Syrian children ages 6 to 11 who are attending school outside of camps, 31 percent are formally attending Turkish schools and 25 percent are attending as guests. An additional 33

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<sup>11</sup> UNESCO. (2014). Institute for Statistics. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>.

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, World Vision, UNHCR, Save the Children. (2013). *Syria crisis: education interrupted*.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF. (2014). *UNICEF Syrian education response host community*.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

percent are attending schools provided by NGOs, municipalities, or Syrian citizens.<sup>15</sup> According to the Turkish Ministry of Education, a total of about 6,000 Syrians attend Turkish schools. In contrast, school participation among school-age Turkish boys and girls is high. According to UNESCO, the net primary enrollment rate in 2012—the most recent data available—was 95 percent, and the Gender Parity Index (GPI) was 0.99, indicating a high level of gender equality in enrollment. Lower secondary school enrollment was 99 percent.<sup>16</sup>

While research about education for Syrians in Turkey is limited, UNHCR and UNICEF have identified specific barriers and needs through their work in country. According to them, language barriers and lack of formal documentation prevent Syrians from attending Turkish schools in host communities. Limited space and materials for learning, lack of transportation to schools, and few qualified Syrian teachers—many of whom are working on a voluntary basis—also present challenges. Further, lack of certification for school attendance and school accreditation diminish motivation for attending school. UNHCR-facilitated focus groups in camps found that lack of school accreditation was the main reason for school drop out and infrequent school attendance in the camps. Early marriage was also a reason given for why girls leave school, while working to support families was a key reason for boys.<sup>17</sup> Considering that school accreditation and economic vulnerability are problems outside of camps, it is likely that these reasons apply to non-camp Syrians as well.

A Brookings Institution report also found that access to schools for non-camp Syrians was dependent on whether they were registered or had residence permits. They found that language barriers made learning in Turkish schools difficult, and that the demand to learn Turkish was growing. While more Syrian schools were being opened, the diplomas they issue have not been recognized by the GoT. The report also raised concerns about the lack of a coherent government policy for Syrians' education, and lack of coordination among local and international NGOs working in education. While the authors acknowledged that Syrian enrollment in Turkish schools

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<sup>15</sup> AFAD. (2013). *Syrian refugees in Turkey, 2013: field survey results*.

<sup>16</sup> UNESCO. (2014). Institute for Statistics. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>.

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR. (2014). *2014 Syria regional response plan Turkey*.

would help them learn Turkish and integrate into Turkish society, it could also raise complications upon their eventual return to Syria.<sup>18</sup>

A few other Turkish and international organizations have conducted assessments to better understand the general needs of urban Syrian refugees in Turkey, particularly near the border with Syria, where a large percentage of Syrians have been migrating. From these assessments it is clear that, in the cities where they were conducted, access to school for urban school age Syrians is limited. However, the main challenges regarding access to education differ.

In an evaluation of their cash assistance and community center programs in Kilis and Hatay (cities of Altınözü, Hacıpaşa, Yayladağı, Kırıkhan, Antakya and Reyhanli), the Turkish NGO Support to Life found that access to education is a large concern for their beneficiaries. Those families living close to camps were able to send their children to AFAD primary schools in the camp, but access to university for older students was difficult, if not impossible. Additionally, most of the Syrians interviewed expressed a need for psychosocial support.<sup>19</sup> In Istanbul, IMC and ASAM found that only 17 percent of school age children were attending school. This is consistent with AFAD's report on urban and in-camp Syrians. Unlike those barriers identified by UNCHR and UNICEF, the main barrier to education was the need for children to work to support the family. They found that most children over the age of 10 were not in school and instead were working. Other barriers mentioned by respondents included lack of trust or information about the Turkish school system, concerns about safety traveling to and from school, language barriers, and lack of residence permits.<sup>20</sup> In the city of Gaziantep near the Syrian border, where over 50,000 registered Syrians live, International Medical Corps (IMC) and the Turkish organization ASAM found that only 16 percent of school-age children were attending school (14 percent of girls, and 18 percent of boys), which was consistent with their findings in Istanbul and the AFAD report. Of those attending school, 80 percent attended Syrian schools, 17 percent attended public Turkish schools, and 3 percent attended Turkish private school.

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<sup>18</sup> Dinçer, O.B, Federici, V., Ferris, E., Karaca, S., Kirisci, K., Carmikli, E. O. (2013). *Turkey and Syrian refugees: the limits of hospitality*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

<sup>19</sup> Kugu, B., Oksak, H. (2013). *Evaluation study Support to Life's response to Syrian refugee crisis*. Istanbul: Support to Life.

<sup>20</sup> International Medical Corps (IMC). (2014). *Rapid needs assessment of Istanbul-based Syrian refugees survey results-January 2014*.

Additionally, the main challenges to education were lack of information, language barriers, and expenses. According to their study, families with children attending Syrian schools pay about 150 TL every 3 months and/or between 50-100 TL for transportation. For those Syrians in Gaziantep, access to education is a priority only after access to housing, food, and healthcare. Comparing results from Istanbul and Gaziantep, IMC found that Syrians in Istanbul were more likely to prioritize education than those in Gaziantep.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, across Turkey, access to education is a serious challenge for school age Syrians. However, the reasons for these challenges seem to differ. While international agencies like UNHCR and UNICEF found that residence permits and legal status issues are the biggest barriers to education, other local organizations working have found that lack of information and the need for children to work are greater challenges for education. Moreover, the sources of information for these organizations vary in rigor and generalizability, suggesting the need for a more comprehensive and rigorous study of Syrians' educational needs across the country.

### **Background: Syrian Women's Needs in Turkey**

Like education, there is little comprehensive information about the situation for Syrian women in Turkey. The Syrian Research and Evaluation Organization (SREO) in Gaziantep conducted a qualitative study to better understand issues affecting Syrian women in Turkey. They found that Syrian women experience separation from previous social networks and difficulties connecting with the Turkish host community due to language barriers, distrust, ethnic tensions, and prejudice. Further, their concerns about personal security limit mobility, mostly due to fear of Turkish members of the host community and inadequate housing. Additionally, the pain of separation from home is a major barrier to emotional security. Women said they felt more freedom to move around in public in Syria. They also reported higher levels of stress, anxiety, and lower mood, as well as physical symptoms associated with stress. They found that having regular interactions with family, friends, or the host community and enjoyable pastimes contributed to higher levels of coping abilities. Further, more meaningful social interactions led

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<sup>21</sup> International Medical Corps (IMC). (2014). *IMC/ASAM rapid needs assessment of Gaziantep based Syrian refugees survey results*.

to better moods and stronger feelings of security.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, social isolation seems to be a major concern for Syrian women living in urban areas in Turkey.

## **Methodology**

For this report, both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods were used to answer the assessment questions. Key informant semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 stakeholders from international organizations, international NGOs, and Turkish NGOs working with Syrians in Turkey, and one Ministry of Education official. Questions were asked to better understand the educational services they provide, the educational and psychosocial support needs among Syrians they have seen in their work, and the best ways in which they think those needs should be met. An additional 10 interviews were conducted in Kirikhan: 1 with a Syrian boy, 1 with a Syrian girl, 2 with Syrian adult men, 1 with a Syrian adult woman, 1 with a Turkish woman, 3 with Turkish school administrators, and 1 with the Director of the Kirikhan Public Education Center. Seven focus groups were also conducted with Syrian children, youth and adults, and were separated by gender. Interview and focus group questions asked respondents about their participation in educational activities, their likes and desired improvements for those activities, barriers to education participation, additional educational activities and psychosocial support needed, interactions with other Syrians and the host community, and other social issues, such as child marriage and child labor. To better understand the educational and psychosocial experiences of a more representative sample in Kirikhan, a household survey was also conducted with Syrian and Turkish households there. This survey provides quantitative data on education participation, barriers to participation, educational and psychosocial support needs, and Syrians' future plans.

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<sup>22</sup> Anderson, K., Hughes, H., Northey, M., Qabbani, A., Seckman, D., Subasi, M., Trevithick, M. (2013). *Rupture, remembrance, resiliency: the impact of displacement on Syrian women refugees in Turkey*. Gaziantep: Syria Research and Evaluation Organization.

### *Kirikhan Household Survey Sample*

To select who would participate in the household surveys, 7 neighborhoods—Cumhuriyet, Barbaros, Yeni, Mimar Sinan, Kurtuluş, Gazi, and Gündüz—were randomly selected from a list of 13 neighborhoods in which YUVA Association had already conducted house visits. Due to the sensitivity of some questions, YUVA felt more comfortable doing a household survey in areas where they have already established a relationship. Within those 7 selected neighborhoods, 60 households were randomly selected within each neighborhood from a list of addresses provided by YUVA. The households were on the list because they attended the community center, were visited by a YUVA or Support to Life staff member, or were receiving a food voucher from Support to Life, so the results of the survey may not be fully generalizable to those families who had not had any interaction with NGOs.

50 Turkish and 50 Syrian households participated in the household survey, representing seven neighborhoods. 108 children (those younger than 15 years) and youth (those ages 15 to 24 years) were profiled among the participating Turkish households, and 155 children and youth were profiled among Syrian households.

Among the Turkish households, the average age of the respondent was 38 years old. 68 percent of respondents were female and 60 percent were spouses of the head of household. All heads of household were male. 88 percent of respondents were married. Households had on average 2 children (ages 14 years or younger) and 1 youth (ages 15 to 22 years). For 36 percent of respondents, primary school was their highest level of education completed, while 18 percent completed secondary school, and 34 percent completed high school. All respondents spoke Turkish. An additional 24 percent also spoke Arabic, and an additional 14 percent also spoke Kurdish.

Among the Syrian households, the average age of respondents was also 38 years old. 64 percent of respondents were female and 36 percent were male. 16 percent of respondents were the head of household, 70 percent were the spouse of the head of household, and 10 percent were the child of the head of household. All but one head of households were male. 96 percent of respondents

were married. Among those who participated in the survey, the highest education level completed for 18 percent of those who participated in the survey was primary school, while 36 percent completed secondary school, 28 percent completed high school, and 18 percent completed university. All respondents spoke Arabic, while an additional 10 percent spoke Kurdish and 14 percent spoke Turkish. The average household income from the previous month was 800 TL (about \$400), with incomes ranging from 200 to 1700 TL. 20 percent of families were receiving food assistance. The average residence contained 1.45 families, with the number of families ranging from 1 to 5. These families have spent on average 14 months in Turkey, with time ranging from 4 months to 2 years.

## **Findings**

The following section provides information on the availability of educational activities for Syrians, school participation and quality, barriers to education, educational needs, psychosocial needs, child marriage, and Syrians' future plans. All findings are based on an analysis of household survey data from Turkish and Syrian households in Kirikhan, focus groups with Syrians and Turks in Kirikhan, and interviews with government officials, researchers, international organization staff, and Turkish NGO staff from across Turkey.

### *Availability of Educational Activities for Syrians*

Not surprisingly, the educational opportunities for Syrians are largely concentrated in the southern provinces near the Syrian border. Since the end of 2013, at the request of the Government of Turkey, UNICEF has partnered with the government to focus on providing education opportunities for Syrians in Turkish host communities. They are planning to provide 40 pre-fabricated school buildings in which an adapted Syrian curriculum will be taught in Arabic. Additionally, they are planning to conduct teacher trainings with teachers in Ministry-approved Syrian schools in Hatay, Gaziantep, and Urfa, including long-term communication skills and psychological support in class. UNICEF is also working with the Ministry of Education to map all Syrian schools in Turkey. They currently work with the Turkish Ministry of Family to build staff capacity and adapt the Ministry's family training program for Syrians. The

training will target Syrians above the age of 16 and will discuss trauma, violence, and miscommunication issues. It will be piloted in the Saricem refugee camp in Adana, then will be expanded to all Turkish camps, and eventually host communities. They are also planning to open child-friendly spaces modeled after those spaces they operate in camps.

In addition to YUVA's community center in Hatay, several other organizations operate community centers offering educational and psychosocial support activities for Syrians. The Turkish organization ASAM operates the only community center for Syrians in Istanbul. Each Syrian who attends the Center is referred to a caseworker that assesses their needs and makes referrals to health workers and psychologists who provide counseling. The Center also provides legal counseling and educational courses, including Turkish. A center similar to the one in Istanbul has also been established in Gaziantep, and they are planning to open another center for Syrians in Izmir. Additionally, the Turkish organization Support to Life operates community centers and food voucher program for Syrians. Their food voucher program is in four districts in Hatay: Kirikhan, Altunizade, Rehandli, and Narlica, and also in Urfa. They also operate community centers offering educational activities in Narlica and Urfa. Additionally the International Blue Crescent (IBC) is operating child-friendly spaces in Urfa, and INPR has a center-based model like Support to Life in Mardin.

In Kirikhan, there is a Syrian primary school available, but no high school for Syrians.

### *School Participation and Quality*

Representatives of international organizations and NGOs working with Syrians in Turkey who were interviewed for this assessment agreed that school age Syrians' participation in formal and informal educational activities in host communities is low overall. However, many acknowledged that the level of participation among school age Syrians does vary from city to city, and neighborhood to neighborhood within those cities.

Representatives from these organizations also expressed concern about the quality of education being provided in Syrian schools. Staff members of domestic and international organizations

interviewed raised red flags about the capacity and retention of teachers in Syrian schools, since they are often working on a voluntary basis without regular pay, and the educational experience and backgrounds of these volunteers vary. Additionally, some NGO workers interviewed expressed concern about the quality of learning for students who would attend Turkish schools, due to the language barrier. One clinical psychologist working with an NGO in Istanbul explained that while almost all of the school age Syrians she works with go to Turkish schools, the level of knowledge gained is poor due to their lack of Turkish language skills. They do not always understand what is going on. She has seen, for example, students who should have been in 6<sup>th</sup> grade but were instead doing 2<sup>nd</sup> grade work.

Further, while the Government of Turkey has certainly made a tremendous effort to provide services for Syrians in camps, given the sheer number of Syrians in Turkey, those interviewed from international organizations in particular have concerns about the capacity of the government to provide and monitor educational services for Syrians, which would most certainly impact the quality of education provided in Syrian schools. The scale of services needed would strain any single provider, and requires planning, staffing numbers, skills, and financial resources that the government may not have, or at least may not be able to sustain. Those interviewed point out the central role that the Turkish government plays in the Syrian crisis, the need to work with them, and the logistical and political challenges NGOs face when working with Syrians in Turkey. The lack of formal policies for educating Syrians also creates obstacles for systematic coordination of educational services. According to staff members of international organizations who were interviewed, these capacity challenges and lack of policy framework mean that Syrian schools remain largely unregulated and unmonitored. This lack of oversight raises serious questions about what is being taught in these schools. Said one officer with an international organization working in Turkey, *“For the Ministry of Education to monitor Syrian schools, they need more staff. To monitor, they need more capacity. Under the new law (Law on Foreigners), there is no policy framework to monitor. The way forward is to help them develop this framework and capacity. They (the Ministry of Education) need to bring Syrian schools under their supervision.”*

Consistent with the experiences of international organizations and Turkish NGOs working with Syrians in Turkey, school participation for school-age children (ages 6 to 17 years) is a serious challenge for Syrian families in Kirikhan. While the percentage of school age Syrians attending school in the sample is higher than rates reported in other cities in Turkey heavily populated by Syrian refugees, participation still remains low at 52 percent. Further, as shown in Table 1, school participation among Syrians is highest at the primary level, and drops off precipitously at the secondary and high school levels. No university age Syrian from the sample population is attending university.

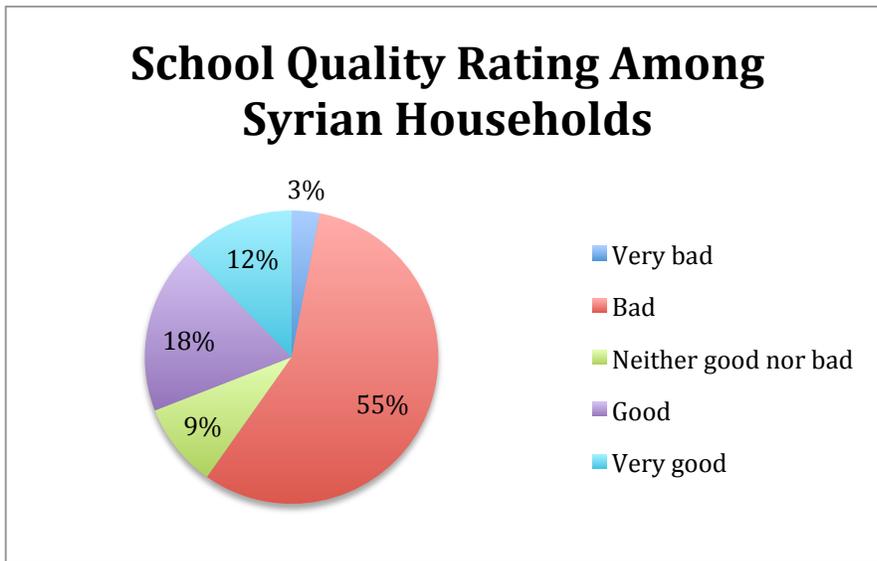
**Table 1: School Attendance by Gender-Syrian**

Age	Attendance Rate	Attendance Rate Girls	Attendance Rate Boys
School Age (6-18 years)	52%	57%	49%
Primary (6-11 years)	69%	74%	66%
Secondary (12-14 years)	41%	36%	44%
High school (15-18 years)	19%	27%	13%
University age (18+)	0%	0%	0%

Those Syrians who are attending school are all attending Syrian schools. 76 percent attend Syrian primary schools, 15 percent attend Syrian secondary schools, and only 3 percent attend Syrian high schools. All these schools use adapted Syrian curriculum. Perhaps surprisingly, with the exception of secondary schools, attendance rates are actually slightly higher for girls than boys. Those going to school attend on average 5 days a week for 5 hours per day.

In addition to school participation, educational quality among those schools Syrians are attending remains a challenge. 55 percent of Syrian respondents said the quality of their child’s school is bad, while only 18 percent said the quality of the school was good.

**Graph 1: Quality of Schools Syrians Attend**



Syrian parents, children, and teachers from YUVA’s Kirikhan Community Center (KCC) who were interviewed criticized the lack of space and materials available for learning in the school in Kirikhan, as well as raised questions about the qualifications and teaching methods of the teachers in the school. One woman described seeing a class set-up in the kitchen of the school building because there was not enough space for all of the students. Said a Syrian KCC teacher speaking about the Syrian school in Kirikhan, *“And the levels of education of their teachers are not very good. Because I can go to them and say I have a certificate in Arabic and English, but don’t provide certificate. They don’t require credentials. And there is not enough place for the children. They sit on the floor. There are no books. Not enough books. And they didn’t give them pens, books. It will be expensive for the family. Maybe my family has 5 children, have to bring 5 books, 5 pens. It will be expensive for them. And they also need money for the school.”*

Another Syrian teacher complained about the lack of educational enrichment activities at the Syrian school in Kirikhan, *“Children are getting education from a small school. Someone is giving money and support to open this primary school. It’s not good for them to see Turkish children getting their education with football and salons. But their school is small and doesn’t have all activities.”*

Discussing challenges in the schools and what would make it easier to attend, a Syrian girl said, *“The teaching staff, books, and the curriculum. The students can’t go to schools if you don’t guarantee a good education for them.”* Another girl continued, saying, *“One day I asked a boy—he studies in the 7th grade—I told him that there are schools now, why don’t you go? He said I don’t feel that attending this school is going to be good for my future. It will not make me a doctor and won’t give a certificate. It is better for me to work and earn money.”*

Some children also expressed dislike for their teachers at the Syrian school in Kirikhan. One Syrian boy described the bad behavior of teachers in the Syrian school, saying, *“Principals of the schools should be more careful, take better care of the children. For example, my brother went to the bathroom, was late returning, and was suspended from school for 3 days.”* Another girl continued, *“There are lots of cases of children leaving school because of teachers’ bad behavior toward children. For example, they hit children, or ask children to clean the school.”*

Unlike Syrian families in Kirikhan, 97 percent of school age (ages 7 to 18 years) Turkish children and youth from the sample attend school. Further, as shown in Table 2, Turkish parents rate the quality of these schools quite highly. Therefore, school participation and quality is less of a concern among Turkish families than it is for Syrian families in Kirikhan.

**Table 2: Turkish parents’ rating of school quality in Kirikhan**

Rating	Percent
Very bad	0%
Bad	0%
Neither good nor bad	18%
Good	62%
Very good	18%

### *Barriers to School Participation Among School Age Syrians*

Those interviewed from international NGOs, organizations, and Turkish NGOs have found that lack of school facilities, economic vulnerability and financial needs, transportation needed to reach schools, limited teacher capacity, and lack of funding for teacher salaries remain huge

barriers to education participation for Syrians in Turkey. Interviewees said that Syrian families often send their children to work due to financial stress. Said one Turkish NGO worker, *“Financial conditions (for Syrians) are bad, so they send children to work. They (adults) cannot find work easily.”* Another Turkish NGO worker also saw child labor as an issue. She said, *“This is happening because of workforce exploitation. I met with one kid. He was 10 or 11, and he was working in a bakery. They made a deal to pay him 20 liras for 8 days. And on the 7th day, they kicked him out. There is no security. If he is unaccompanied by male family members, there might be more possibility to exploit. Because who is going to protect him, ask where is his money? They (children) work because they are cheap, they can find work more easily than other groups.”*

In addition to these barriers to Syrian schools, some of those interviewed also argued that lack of residence permits needed to enroll in Turkish public schools and limited Turkish language abilities also create serious challenges for Turkish school enrollment and the level of learning that can occur for those Syrian students who are attending Turkish schools.

Those Syrians who participated in the survey in Kirikhan have economic and legal status vulnerabilities that may create barriers for their children’s education. According to respondents, only 44 percent of households had at least one member working in the past month. Households made, on average, 800 TL (about \$400) the previous month, and spent a large percentage of their income (about 270 TL, or \$135) on education for their children. Further, while 98 percent of respondents are registered with AFAD, only one household had a member who possessed a residence permit, which means these families do not have the legal documentation to formally enroll in Turkish public schools.

Like other stakeholders in Turkey said, the main reasons the children who participated in the survey are not attending school are related to a lack of school facilities, particularly at the secondary and high school levels (see Table 3). Lack of schools, long distances to schools, and overcrowding are the most common reasons among the Syrian households surveyed in Kirikhan for not sending their children to Syrian schools. The need to work is also a significant barrier to education across all age groups, but especially those at the high school level (ages 15 to 18

years), suggesting that economic and financial needs are also keeping Syrian children and youth out of school. Barriers to education are not substantially different for Syrian boys and girls, with a few exceptions. As shown in Table 3, girls are more likely than boys not to attend school because parents believe education is not important for her or because the quality of school is poor. Boys are more likely than girls not to attend school because the school is far away.

**Table 3: Reasons School Age Syrians do not go to Syrian Schools**

Reasons	Percent Overall	Percent Girls	Percent Boys	Percent Primary Age	Percent Secondary Age	Percent HS Age
<b>No School</b>	39%	38%	41%	18%	59%	45%
<b>School is too far</b>	30%	21%	35%	55%	18%	14%
<b>Too crowded</b>	25%	21%	27%	50%	24%	0%
<b>Work</b>	21%	21%	22%	18%	12%	32%
<b>Education not necessary</b>	15%	21%	11%	18%	12%	14%
<b>Poor quality</b>	13%	21%	8%	18%	12%	9%
<b>School certification/diploma not available</b>	10%	13%	8%	0%	12%	18%
<b>Too expensive</b>	5%	4%	5%	9%	0%	5%
<b>Married</b>	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	5%

In interviews and focus groups, Syrian adults, youth, and children overwhelmingly agreed that lack of Syrian schools in Kirikhan and long distances to the one Syrian primary school were major barriers to school attendance in Kirikhan. They gave several examples of family members who were not able to attend because the Syrian school was too crowded. For those beyond grade 6, there is no school available for them in the community. A few of the women interviewed suggested that parents might hesitate to send their girls long distances to go to school. However, the majority of those interviewed did not think the reasons for not attending school were different for boys and girls. Parents and youth complained that there were schools available for Syrians in other cities in Hatay, such as Antakya and Reyhanli, but not in Kirikhan. Said one Syrian father, *“I want to move to another city where there is school for Syrians, but I can’t move because I have no money. Because of my children I want to move there but there is no money.”*

Those interviewed also often raised concerns about job availability and family finances, and their negative impact on family's ability to send their children to school. Explaining that children need to work to support their families, one Syrian man explained, *"It's so hard to get education here, because the children are going to school and you have to work to earn money in order to survive. Especially for the small families, for example if I want to work to help my family and support them, I'm not going to be able to do it alone, because the payment here is not sufficient."* Another Syrian woman emphasized the financial difficulties they face, saying, *"When Syrian people came, housing prices went up. Even if you find work, the salary will not be enough."*

Syrian youth who were interviewed said it was common for other Syrians their age to be working. Said one girl, *"Some of the children used to study, but they quit studying and started to work instead."* Another girl followed-up saying, *"Most of them work in agriculture and they live in a bad situation."* According to those interviewed, youth also work in restaurants and shops. The most common reason for children to work was because their families were suffering financially and they needed the support.

Additionally, those Syrian families that participated in the survey are not sending their children to Turkish schools primarily because of Turkish language barriers. 89 percent of respondents said that they do not send their children to Turkish schools because lessons are in Turkish. Said one Syrian man, explaining why he tried to send his children to Turkish schools, *"They lost their chances to attend the Syrian schools. I tried to get my children into the Turkish schools, but I couldn't because they can't read Turkish. There is a school in our neighborhood and I tried to register my children there, but they didn't accept them, because my children are not good at Turkish, so they can't get any benefits."*

**Table 4: Reasons School Age Syrians do not Attend Turkish Schools**

Reasons	Percent Overall	Percent Girls	Percent Boys	Percent Primary Age	Percent Secondary Age	Percent HS Age
Lessons are in Turkish	89%	89%	89%	86%	97%	89%
Prefer Syrian Schools	17%	20%	15%	18%	21%	11%
Work	7%	7%	7%	4%	7%	15%
Certification/diploma is not available	6%	7%	6%	8%	0%	7%
Education not necessary	4%	4%	4%	0%	7%	11%
School is too far	2%	2%	3%	3%	0%	4%
Poor quality	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Married	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not registered	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

While other stakeholders, especially those from international organizations, have identified lack of residence permits and registration—in addition to lack of Turkish language skills—as a major barrier to Turkish school participation for Syrians, and this is likely a challenge, given that all but one Syrian family surveyed had a residence permit, the Syrians in this study did not perceive registration as a major reason why they are not sending their school age children to Turkish schools. However, administrators at a Turkish school in Kirikhan confirmed that they only enroll students with Turkish nationality. For other Syrian children, they explained, they can get special permission to open Syrian schools.

#### *Educational Facilities, Activity, and Assistance Needs*

Those who were interviewed from international organizations and NGOs commonly identified the need for more schools for Syrians, and increased transportation to and from those available schools to minimize barriers created by distance from schools. One officer for an international organization working in southern Turkey identified the particular need for secondary and high schools for Syrians, due to their relative scarcity compared to Syrian primary schools. However, according to one UNHCR officer, it is UNHCR policy that children need to have access to

accredited schools. Since accreditation is currently only possible through Turkish schools, they want to help Syrian children transition into Turkish public schools.

According to the UNHCR officer, because children need to know Turkish to attend Turkish schools, they are working with the MoE to have Public Education Centers teach Turkish to Syrians. Public Education Centers provide free lifelong learning courses, such as certified language and vocational courses, for Turkish citizens or those with residence permits, and are operated by the Ministry of Education in almost all cities across Turkey. The UNHCR officer said language certification is what is needed, and certification can be provided through these Centers. A Lifelong Learning Ministry of Education Officer who works with Public Education Centers agrees that Syrians need to learn Turkish to be able to attend Turkish public schools. Both the MoE and UNCHR officers said that any NGO interested in expanding access to Turkish language learning for Syrians should work with the Public Education Centers and the Provincial Ministry of Education. However, the MoE officer acknowledges that the issue of registration and identification continues to be a barrier for Syrians. According to the Director of the Public Education Center in Kirikhan, Syrians can attend the Center as guest students, but would not be able to receive certification for the courses they completed. To receive certification, a Turkish National ID or Foreigners ID from the Turkish government are needed.

Officers from international organizations said that they anticipate that the new Law on Foreigners will address some of Syrians' legal barriers to Turkish schools, and other services, by providing identification equivalent to a residence permit even for those Syrians without passports or other official identification from Syria. Further, it is anticipated that under this law new policies will give the MoE a greater role in the provision and monitoring of education for Syrians both inside and outside of camps. With this expanded role, those interviewed from international organizations acknowledge the need to help the Turkish government expand their capacity. This could mean hiring new staff, helping them develop policies for monitoring education for Syrians, and developing other skillsets necessary for education management for refugees in crisis. Several interviewees emphasized the need to provide support to municipal governments in host communities in particular, so they do not feel strained in their provision of additional services for Syrians.

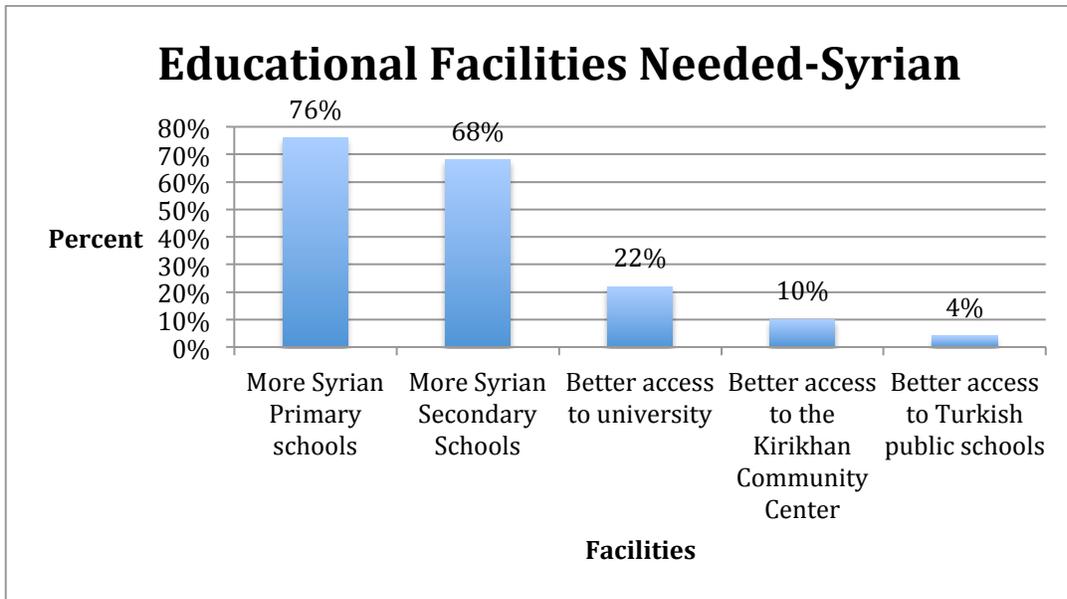
Additionally, some of those interviewed argue that teacher trainings are needed to further develop teachers' skills, motivation and retention. In particular, UNICEF is planning to conduct trainings for teachers in approved Syrian schools in host communities. These trainings would include long-term communication and psychosocial support skills in classrooms, as well as reactive and effective teaching methods. The need to address the lack of consistent salaries for volunteer Syrian teachers was also a concern among those interviewed from international organizations. UNICEF is working with the MoE to develop a system of incentives for teachers in Ministry-approved Syrian schools.

Regarding educational activities needed, the majority of those interviewed from international and Turkish organizations agreed that Syrians of all ages should have access to high-quality Turkish language courses. They said Turkish language skills would help Syrians interact with their community and find employment. Additionally, many acknowledged that vocational courses would also be very useful, and that these courses should have clear links to employment opportunities. There was, however, less certainty about what opportunities should be provided. One officer with an international organization suggested that a market analysis be conducted to better understand the sectors in which there is room for Syrians to be hired in Turkey, the skills to be developed in order to be employed in these sectors, the professional skills Syrians already bring with them, and the vocational skills that would be useful upon eventual return to Syria.

Like those interviewed from international and non-governmental organizations, those Syrian parents who participated in the survey want more Syrian schools for their children and youth. 76 percent of respondents said they want more Syrian primary schools, while 68 percent said they want more Syrian secondary schools. Said one Syrian father, *"If I had to work more, morning and night I would do that, to help my children to go to school. Not only me, everyone can do the same. We are the only people who are deprived of education in all of Turkey, and I need everybody to hear that. I don't know why."* He continued, *"We need more schools. We don't need high-class schools, just all we need is a place to teach these students and a professional academic staff of teachers. We didn't come here for entertainment or having fun. We ran away from the war and we need to educate our children. A building like this would be good. We are*

*not asking for something impossible; we are not asking for first class building. We are asking for any building that could protect our children from the heat of the sun. Even a tent could work, if they make a tent with chairs we can send our children to study there. Finding chairs it is not a hard issue."*

**Graph 2: Educational Facilities Needed-Syrian**



As shown in Graph 2, Syrians were much less interested in expanding access to Turkish public schools for their children. However, while there is clearly a strong preference for Syrian school facilities, 80 percent of adult respondents said they would be willing to send their children to Turkish schools if attendance were possible. During interviews and focus groups, Syrian children and adults expressed mixed views about attending Turkish schools, some recognizing the benefits of learning Turkish, interacting with Turkish children, and being able to continue their education, while some worried about the potential loss of Arabic and connection with their culture. Some also questioned how children would be able to go to Turkish schools if they do not know Turkish. One Syrian woman said, “ *Children first need to learn the Turkish language, which will take a long time.*” Another woman disagreed, arguing, “*If children are attending Turkish school, they will learn Turkish faster.*” A third woman said, “*If our children are going to Turkish school, it is only useful for language, but for curriculum, it would take time.*” Another

parent worried, *“If our children need help with lessons (in a Turkish school) or homework, we cannot help them, because we do not know the language or the curriculum.”*

Pointing to the mixed benefits of attending Turkish schools, one Syrian woman said, *“It’s a good and bad idea at the same time. It’s good because they learn in another language and they will keep learning and they don’t have to stop, but at the same time they will forget the Arabic education. But also it’s a good way to meet new people and to learn in a new way. But not all the Turkish people would accept the idea of Syrian students learning with them. So that might affect them psychologically.”*

Further, regarding additional educational activities study participants said they want to have available in the community, Syrian respondents were less likely to request educational enrichment activities and more likely to request activities in-line with traditional educational content for their children. This is not surprising, given that Syrians’ options for traditional forms of education are more limited. As shown in Table 5, language activities were in high-demand for children, especially Turkish language and English courses. 84 percent of respondents said they want their children to take Turkish language courses, while 82 percent said they want them to take English language courses. Women were more likely to want psychosocial support activities for their children, and men were more likely to want university exam preparation, tutoring, and sports activities for their children.

During interviews and focus groups, Syrian children and youth frequently requested Turkish language, computer, and math classes. Teenagers commonly requested Turkish language courses with certification, such as TOMER, because many Turkish universities require students to pass a Turkish language exam and/or provide proof of Turkish language abilities. Syrian children and youth also wanted music, dancing, art, creative writing, and handicraft courses, such as sewing. Many girls also requested that sports activities and hairdressing courses be organized just for girls. Some young girls also wanted to participate in outdoor activities, such as picnics and gardening. Said one Syrian girl, *“When we were in Syria we got angry when we had a lot of things to do in school. But now we understand that it is better to be busy than having a lot of free time and do nothing like here.”*

Like Syrian children, Turkish language and English classes were in high demand for both Syrian women and men (See Table 6). 82 percent of Syrian adults said they wanted to take Turkish language courses, and 74 percent said they want to take English language courses. An additional 62 percent of Syrian adults also said they wanted to participate in vocational courses. Interestingly, vocational courses were in slightly more demand among women than men, as were psychosocial support activities. During focus groups, women most frequently requested hairdressing and handicraft vocational courses, while men said Turkish language courses were most important for employment.

**Table 5: In-Demand Educational Activities for Children By Gender-Syrian**

Activity	Percent overall	Percent Female Respondents	Percent Men Respondents
Turkish	84%	81%	89%
English	82%	78%	89%
Computer	56%	56%	56%
Courses based on Syrian curriculum	30%	28%	33%
Math	28%	25%	33%
Psychosocial support activities	26%	31%	17%
Arts	26%	22%	33%
Vocational courses	24%	25%	22%
University exam prep	22%	13%	39%
Tutoring	20%	16%	28%
Music	16%	16%	17%
Sports	14%	9%	22%
Picnics	8%	3%	17%
Dance	2%	0%	6%

**Table 6: In-Demand Educational Activities for Adults By Gender-Syrian**

Activity	Percent overall	Percent Female Respondents	Percent Men Respondents
Turkish courses	82%	84%	78%
English courses	74%	75%	72%
Vocational courses	62%	69%	50%
Computer courses	40%	44%	43%
Handicrafts	28%	28%	28%
Psychosocial support activities	8%	13%	0%
Social activities	6%	6%	6%

Unlike Syrian participants in Kirikhan, Turkish respondents most commonly requested more handicraft courses, followed by sports activities. However, as shown in Table 7, women were more likely to request handicrafts and sports activities, while men were more likely to suggest psychosocial support and English activities.

**Table 7: In-Demand Educational Activities by Gender-Turkish**

Activity	Percent Interested All Genders	Percent Interested Women	Percent Interested Men
Handicrafts	36%	50%	6%
Sports	10%	15%	0%
Music	4%	3%	6%
Psychosocial support	4%	0%	13%
Math	4%	3%	6%
English	4%	0%	13%
Computer	2%	0%	6%
Tutoring	2%	0%	6%

Additionally, as shown in Table 8, 76 percent of Syrian respondents said that food assistance and transportation to and from educational facilities would be most helpful in improving their children's ability to participate in educational activities.

**Table 8: Assistance Needed to Participate in Educational Activities-Syrian**

Assistance	Percent overall	Percent Female Respondents	Percent Men Respondents
Food assistance	76%	88%	56%
Transportation	76%	81%	67%
Better access to healthcare	38%	34%	44%
Better access to income generating activities for family	30%	34%	22%
Language course certifications	30%	28%	33%
Shelter assistance	26%	28%	22%
HS Certification	16%	19%	11%
Books, notebooks, etc.	16%	16%	17%
More school facilities	12%	9%	17%

At the Kirikhan Community Center specifically, Turkish respondents most commonly said that a certificate of participation would be most likely to motivate people to attend. Better access to healthcare was the second most common recommendation, suggesting illness and other health concerns restrict participation among the Turkish community in Kirikhan.

**Table 9: Assistance Needed to Participate in KCC-Turkish**

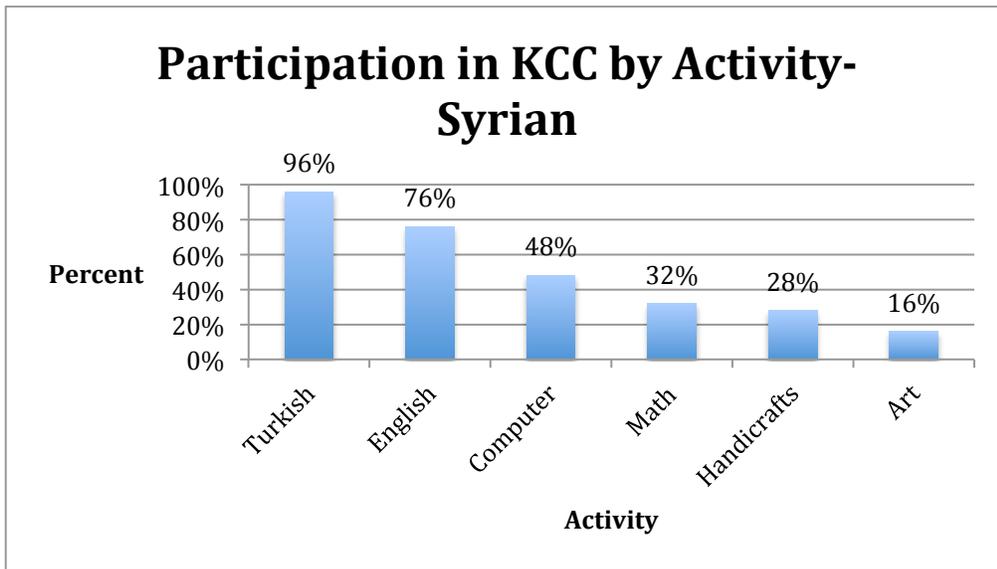
Assistance	Percent Interested All Genders	Percent Interested Women	Percent Interested Men
Certification of participation	44%	47%	22%
Better access to healthcare	32%	38%	22%
Books and stationary supplies	20%	19%	0%
Transportation	20%	13%	33%
Nothing	16%	13%	22%

### *Kirikhan Community Center Participation*

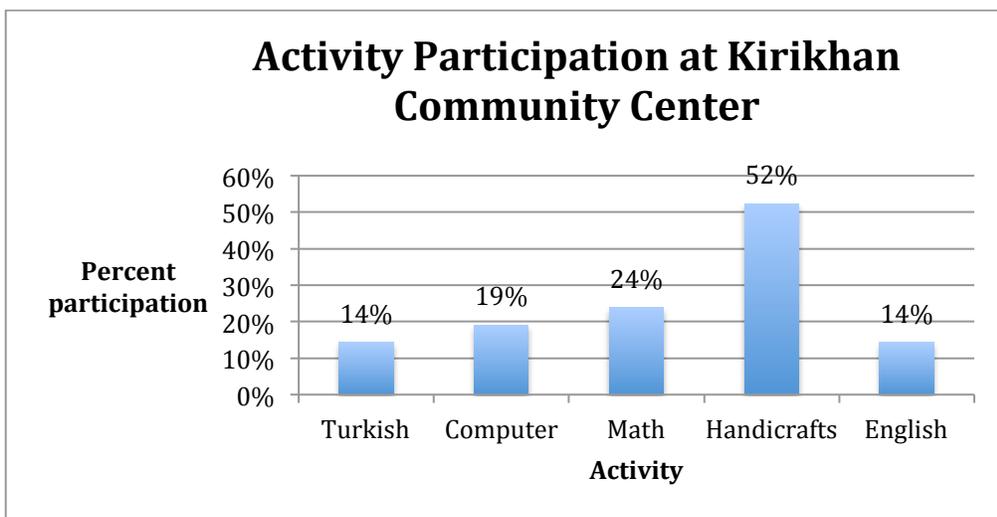
Within 42 percent of Turkish households that participated in the survey, at least one family member has attended the Kirikhan Community Center. As shown in Graph 4, Handicrafts are the most popular activity. Among Syrian households, 54 percent have at least one family member attending the Kirikhan Community Center. As shown in Graph 3, Turkish language courses are by far the most common activity in which they are participating, followed by English language courses. This is not surprising, given that language courses are the most in-demand educational activity among Syrian participants in the study.

Additionally, those Syrians who had attended the Kirikhan Community Center had very positive things to say about the Center. They were particularly happy with the teaching staff. Said one Syrian girl, “*We feel comfortable in communicating with the employees. We feel like we are all like brothers and sisters. They pay attention to us.*” Another Syrian child said, “*When learning in Syrian schools, here or in Syria, if you tell the teacher that you don’t understand, they say you were not paying attention, but [at the community center], if you don’t understand, you can ask, and the teacher will explain, and do it in a fun, joking way. Learning is fun.*” Some women also praised the socialization that occurs at the center. One Syrian woman said, “*Without the community center, we wouldn’t be able to meet each other.*” Said another woman, “*It gives space to discuss problems, like how to deal with strangers [Turkish people].*” The main recommendation people gave was to make courses longer and add more advanced levels.

**Graph 3: Activity Participation at KCC-Syrian**

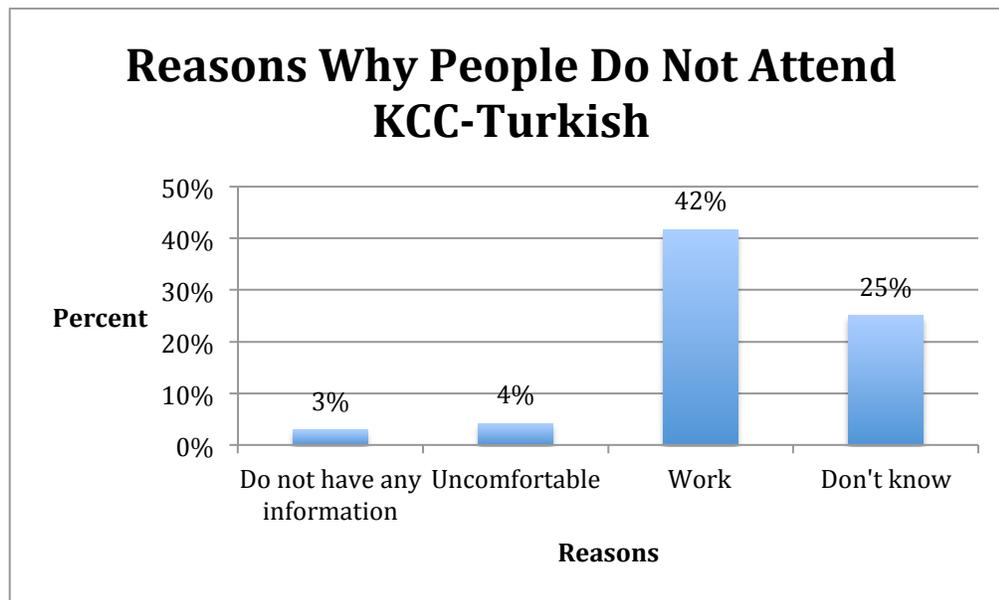


**Graph 4: Activity Participation at KCC-Turkish**



For those not attending the KCC, the most common reason among Turkish households is not for a lack of interest or information, but because they are working, suggesting the schedule of activities does not fit with their work schedule. Among Syrian respondents, the most common reason they did not attend was because they did not have any information about the community center.

**Graph 5: Reasons People Do Not Attend KCC-Turkish**



### *Psychological Support Needs*

Those interviewed working with international and Turkish organizations agree that most, if not all, Syrians in Turkey are in need of psychological support. Said one staff member of an international NGO providing psychological and other support to Syrian refugees in Turkey, *“Everyone is suffering from trauma. They need psychological first aid. To my knowledge, everyone is experiencing this. It is related to violence.”* Said another officer with an international organization, *“All age groups need psychological support. Adolescents and children are the most critical. They are living [their] childhood here without experiencing their own culture and environment.”* Many working with Syrian children emphasized the need for children to have a safe place to play and experience something of a normal childhood.

Regarding the differing psychosocial needs of Syrian women and men, one researcher at an organization studying the Syrian crisis in Turkey said, *“The fact that men are either absent or working low paid jobs has really disrupted the family structure and made everyone very economically vulnerable, and the psychological impact of that rupture is huge. There are a lot of articles coming out about women marrying really young. That has to be because of economic vulnerability. And there are some women complaining of Turkish men marrying Syrian women*

*as second wives. Men need to get jobs. Women do need psychosocial support, but not just going to a counselor. Most women just want their men to get work. We must be careful not to impose our notion of empowerment, which can just cause more stress in the family.”* Another researcher said, *“Another main issue is education. It’s very prioritized outside of camps that their children go to school. Syrian women say they want their children to go to school to have a better life than they did. It’s a psychological thing. Women and men want to be providing a better life for their children.”*

A few of those interviewed said they had heard of parents taking their stress and anxiety out on their children in negative ways, possibly through verbal or physical abuse. Describing an experience from his work, a staff member from a Turkish NGO said, *“Like there was a woman, she lost her husband, lost her job, so she started to hit her children and treat them badly. So the children started to hit each other. The consequences will not be good for their future.”* Said one officer with an international organization, *“Because of trauma, there is miscommunication. The role of the male has changed. They used to take care of the family, earn money, now that is destroyed.”* As a result, they identified the need for family training and support programs in host communities, similar to programs that are happening in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps and in some Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, including discussions on effective family communication, and support for those who have experience violence and trauma.

Many interviewed also highlighted the need for psychological training for educators working with Syrians. In addition to their students, educators likely need psychological support themselves. Said one officer with an international organization, *“Since working closely with teachers and children, of course, they need to first understand the situation that they are in. As you know, psychosocial support has not been fully given still after 3 ½ years. Also, how to adapt to situation they are in, plus one of the most important thing, I think, is sometimes teachers think they should give this support to the children, but it should be clearly given as part of a referral system. And there should be a referral system. [Teachers] should be trained on how to identify and refer.”*

Overall, Syrians' access to psychological support and counseling seems limited. One researcher said, *"I haven't really seen any real psychosocial support. There is a disconnect between wealthier and poorer citizens. There are some civil society organizations getting started that are planning to offer psychosocial support activities, but this is not really happening."*

Consistent with the observations of other stakeholders working in the field, all Syrian respondents in Kirikhan said they are not receiving psychological support counseling, suggesting there may be a lack of these services or information about these services available, despite a clear need for support expressed by those interviewed. Describing what causes stress among Syrians in Kirikhan, one Syrian man said, *"First of all, fears about future. Secondly, and the biggest fear is about the future of their children in terms of education."* A Syrian teacher and NGO staff member said, *"We used to have a life, now we have no life. We all need psychological support. We used to have friends and home, and somebody took that. So surely all need psychological support. For children, they used to attend school everyday, get home, and play with friends or neighbors. Now they are working. Even if they attend school, they are working when they are done. They may not attend school, and are working instead of learning and playing. And for families that loss their children, some of them left their children in Syria because they cannot afford them. They left them with relatives. I think they need psychological support. It's difficult to complete people's lives. If you are losing your life, it's difficult to help. Now, most of their concerns now is how to support their families, supply their food needs. If they are settled down and have enough food and clothes and they are working and their children are going to school. Maybe if these things can be done. We are associating with Turkish community. But the problem is, but we used to have a life rhythm, now it's stopped. And we start it again."*

Identifying what psychological support is needed, one YUVA staff member, said, *"They need someone to trust him or her. Someone you can put your trust in. You can talk with them and feel comfortable. I don't know for boys, but I know for girls they need someone like this. They need someone to be available to her."* Speaking about Syrian teenagers in particular, another Syrian woman said, *"The most important thing is to make them feel safe, because one day this war must end, and to [raise awareness] about their future. And giving them love and safety."* To meet their educational needs, she said, *"[The teachers] must build a friendship with them because this is*

*going to motivate them to learn, because when the student loves the teacher, he/she would love the subject and he/she would be more able to participate, and when they feel that someone is taking care and understand them, this would make them forget their bad memories, as we know everybody has a bad memories in Syria, so that will help them to forget.”* For people who are feeling sad, she said courses can be offered, and awareness raised, but *“I don’t think that is going to help them to forget what happened to them. So we can try to help them to get back their self-confidence.”*

### *Social Needs*

Among those stakeholders interviewed outside of Kirikhan, a few expressed concerns about the social isolation Syrian women may face in host community, although this was clearly of less concern than other issues experienced by the Syrian community. Said one Turkish NGO staff member, *“The main thing I realized in the field is that the women are not in the public space. They are sitting in their houses. Here they have no place to socialize because they are living in a foreign country, they have security concerns, they don’t know the language. This is for all females. I’m sure it will affect the rate of attendance at school. Because they don’t know this culture and there is a mistrust.”*

A few of those interviewed recognized women’s desire to experience life like it was before they left Syria. One researcher studying Syrian women in Turkey said that to reduce isolation, women need a safe space to come together, bring their children, have coffee and talk, just like they did in Syria. She pointed out that poorer Syrian women are usually more isolated, less educated, and have a more conservative cultural background than more economically advantaged Syrian women. In addition to not being able to speak Turkish, which can be a significant barrier, these women may not leave their homes because their husbands do not want them to leave. She found that middle and upper class women go to community centers, not the poorest, most needy among them. She suggested that donors work with females in the community who would be willing to be ambassadors. She says efforts to reach the most isolated, often poorest women would be more successful if they were coming from women in their community who share the same economic and ideological background. These efforts could be simple at first—opening homes or places in a

neighborhood where women can bring their children, have coffee and talk. Then additional programs or services can grow from there, depending on what the women want.

In Kirikhan, About 50 percent of Syrian respondents said they often or sometimes participate in social activities, such as festivals, in the community. The rate of social interaction was not substantially different for women and men, although, as shown in Table 10, a slightly higher percentage of women than men said they, “often” participate in social activities. Additionally, while only a small percentage of Turkish respondents said they regularly interact with Syrians, 56 percent of Syrian respondents said they often communicate with Turks, and 21 percent said they sometimes communicate. Communication between Syrians is similar, with 56 percent of respondents saying they often communicate with other Syrians, and 31 percent saying they sometimes communicate. While stakeholders outside of Kirikhan said fear might play a role in Syrian women’s isolation in host communities, 88 percent of respondents said they feel safe in Kirikhan. According to interviews and focus groups, however, Turkish language barriers do seem to create challenges for interaction. Said one Syrian girl, *“Not speaking Turkish is annoying. It is hard to speak with someone who doesn’t understand you, and you don’t understand them.”*

**Table 10: Social Participation-Syrian**

Social Participation	Overall Percent	Percent Women	Percent Men
Often	31%	35%	23%
Sometimes	19%	13%	29%
Rarely	21%	19%	24%
Never	27%	29%	24%

**Table 11: Communication with Turks and Syrians-Syrian Households**

Communication with Turks	Overall Percent	Percent Women	Percent Men	Communication with Syrians	Overall Percent	Percent Women	Percent Men
Often	56%	68%	35%	Often	56%	58%	53%
Sometimes	21%	16%	29%	Sometimes	31%	26%	41%
Rarely	19%	13%	29%	Rarely	10%	13%	6%
Never	0%	0%	0%	Never	0%	0%	0%

Similar to Syrian respondents, 53 percent (56 percent of women and 46 percent of men) of Turkish respondents in the household survey said they participate in social activities in Kirikhan. However, it is not common for Turks in Kirikhan to regularly interact with Syrians in their community. 84 percent of Turkish respondents said they never or rarely communicate with Syrians.

### *Child Marriage*

Child, or early, marriage (marriage that occurs under the age of 18 years) is a concern amongst those who are working with Syrians in Turkey and Syrians themselves. It is a protection concern and also creates barriers for girls' continued education. The Syrian girls and women interviewed in Kirikhan agreed that early marriage is much more common for Syrian girls in Turkey than it was in Syria. They said early marriage mostly affects girls. Said one Syrian girl, *"Because the families here care so much about their girls, some of the Syrian girls here get married with a Turkish man here, but that usually end up with a divorce, because they share nothing in common, not even a language or culture, so the girls get married here only because of their beauty."*

The most common reason identified for girls to get married young was because of families' financial difficulties. Said one girl, *"Sometime it is because of the economic situation of the family. Her father may force her to marry to reduce the expenses of the family."* Another girl explained, *"Because of the family stability here in Turkey. Families here would like to stay and live in Turkey instead of going back to Syria to live in the war, so some of them give their daughters only to have a stable life here in Turkey."*

One Syrian staff member at YUVA said about child marriage, *"Boys work more than girls. The parents of the girls prefer to make her marry. I have seen this happening in Hatay. I guess this is very common. Because (maybe) the father has a lot of children. He needs a lot of help. He can't work alone, so he makes his child work and he makes his daughter marry. Both marriage and working are for financial reasons. I am speaking about Syrians. When I was writing a form for a girl, I said you are married, and she has a baby. But she said she was happy. She was 15. She's*

*happy, she loves her husband. She said she lives in a beautiful home. There are lots of reasons girls marry at this age. The father may be angry, may not have money. Mostly it's the father is the reason for marriage. This is happening here because of the war. They are not in their home. The father has difficulty finding work. That's why."*

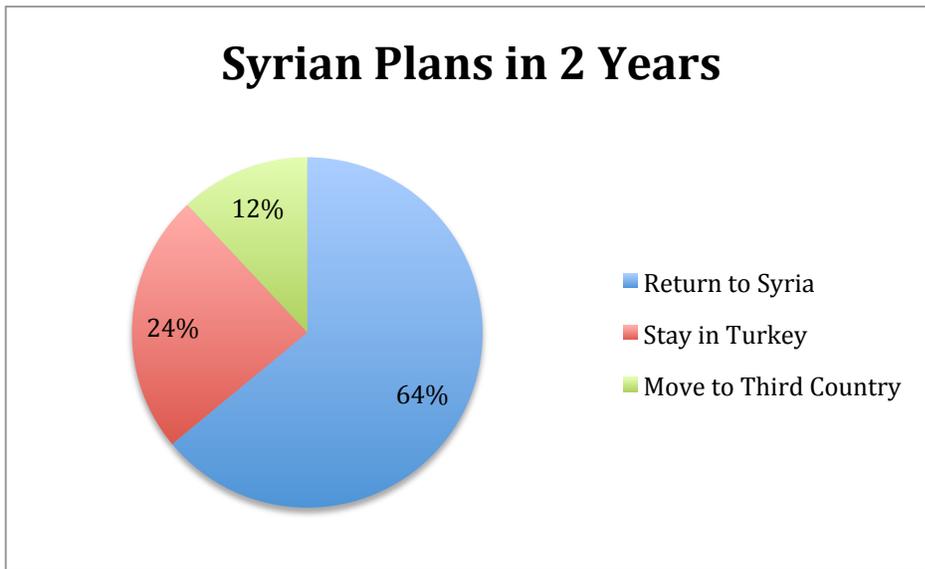
Some said that girls were getting married because there was nothing to do and they have no way to complete their education. One Syrian girl said, *"Because of the bad situation, and the girls here do not go to schools, so before the girls were studying to have a certification, but since they are not studying now their families have them married. It is a big problem. And when the girls get married, they stop going to schools after the marriage."*

To help prevent child marriage, those interviewed in Kirikhan suggested raising awareness among families, especially for fathers, and also providing financial support.

### *Future Plans*

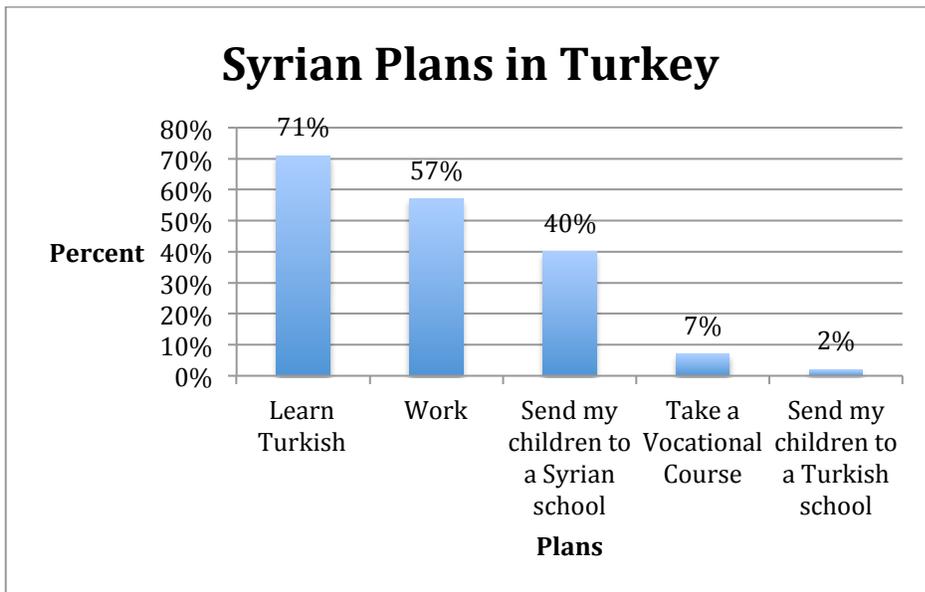
In addition to issues such as access to facilities, perceptions of educational quality, and psychosocial needs already discussed, Syrians' plans for their future could play an important role in educational planning. Whether they intend to return to Syria, stay in Turkey, or move to a third country could have implications for the types of curriculum and skills that will be most useful for Syrian children and youth. In Kirikhan, the majority of Syrian respondents said they plan to return to Syria within the next 1 to 2 years. As shown in Graph 6, 64 percent said they plan to return to Syria, 24 percent said they plan to stay in Turkey, and 12 percent said they plan to relocate to a third country. Regardless of whether return to Syria will actually be possible in the next two years, it is clear there is a strong preference among Syrians in Turkey to return home eventually.

**Graph 6: Syrian's Plans in the Next 2 Years**



If respondents do stay in Turkey, the majority said they would learn Turkish and work. As shown in Graph 7, many more Syrians are planning to send their children to Syrian schools than Turkish schools.

**Graph 7: Syrian Plans in Turkey**



## Conclusions

School Participation and Quality: Those interviewed from organizations working with Syrians in Turkey say that few school age Syrians attend school in urban areas. They argue that quality remains a concern, due to the potentially limited capacity of teachers and lack of salaries, as well as the Ministry of Education's limited ability to monitor and support Syrian schools. Further, for those Syrians attending Turkish schools, language barriers limit their quality of learning.

In Kirikhan, 52 percent of school age Syrians attend school. While the percentage of school age Syrians attending school in the sample is higher than rates reported in other cities in Turkey heavily populated by Syrian refugees, participation still remains low. Participation is highest in primary school, then drops off at the secondary and high school levels. Those Syrians who are attending school are all attending Syrian schools. With the exception of secondary schools, attendance rates are actually slightly higher for girls than boys. Syrians in Kirikhan also complained about the poor quality of the Syrian school in the community. School participation and quality is not a problem for Turks in Kirikhan.

Barriers to school participation: Those interviewed from international NGOs, organizations, and Turkish NGOs have found that lack of school facilities, economic vulnerability and financial needs, distance from schools, limited teacher capacity, and lack of funding for teacher salaries remain huge barriers to education participation for Syrians in Turkey. Some also argue that lack of residence permits needed to enroll in Turkish public schools and limited Turkish language abilities also create serious challenges for Turkish school enrollment.

In Kirikhan, the majority of those interviewed did not think the reasons for not attending school were different for boys and girls. Lack of schools, long distances to schools, and overcrowding are the most common reasons among the Syrian households surveyed in Kirikhan for not sending their children to Syrian schools. The need to work is also a significant barrier to education for boys and girls and across all age groups. Turkish language barriers are the main reasons Syrians in Kirikhan do not attend Turkish schools.

Educational needs: Those interviewed from international organizations and NGOs said that more Syrian schools are needed for Syrians. Others also argued for better access to Turkish schools. Almost all of those interviewed said that Syrians need to learn Turkish, and many also said that vocational courses based on a market analysis, and with clear links to employment, would be beneficial.

Like those interviewed from international and non-governmental organizations, those Syrian parents who participated in the survey want more Syrian schools for their children and youth. Syrians were much less interested in expanding access to Turkish public schools for their children. However, while there is clearly a strong preference for Syrian school facilities, 80 percent of adult respondents said they would send their children to Turkish schools if attendance were possible. Further, language activities were in high-demand for children among Syrians in Kirikhan, especially Turkish language and English courses. Like Syrian children, Turkish language and English classes were in high demand for both Syrian women and men. They also said they want to participate in vocational courses. For Turkish respondents, handicraft courses were most in demand. Syrian respondents said that food assistance and transportation would help them participate in educational activities, while Turks said that a certificate of participation would be most likely to motivate people to participate in activities at the Kirikhan Community Center.

Community Center Participation: Among Syrian households that participated in the assessment, 54 percent have at least one family member who has attended the Kirikhan Community Center, while 42 percent of Turkish households have had at least one member participate. Among those Syrians who have participated, Turkish and English classes are the most popular activities, while Handicraft courses are most popular among Turks. For those not attending the community center, the most common reason for Turks was because they are working, while the most common reason for Syrians was because they do not have information about the Center.

Psychological support needs: Those interviewed working with international and Turkish organizations agree that most, if not all, Syrians in Turkey are in need of psychological support, but access to this support is limited. A few of those interviewed said they had heard of parents taking their stress and anxiety out on their children in negative ways, possibly through verbal or physical abuse. Many interviewed also highlighted the need for psychological training for educators working with Syrians.

Consistent with the observations of other stakeholders working in the field, all Syrian respondents in Kirikhan said they are not receiving psychological counseling, suggesting there may be a lack of these services or information about these services available, despite a clear need for support expressed by those interviewed.

Social needs: Among those stakeholders interviewed outside of Kirikhan, a few expressed concerns about the social isolation Syrian women may face in the host community, although this was clearly of less concern than other issues experienced by the Syrian community. A few of those interviewed recognized women's desire to experience life like it was before they left Syria.

In Kirikhan, About 50 percent of Syrian respondents said they often or sometimes participate in social activities, such as festivals, in the community. The rate of social interaction was not substantially different for women and men. They frequently communicate with both Turks and Syrians. While stakeholders outside of Kirikhan said fear might play a role in Syrian women's isolation in host communities, 88 percent of respondents said they feel safe in Kirikhan. According to interviews and focus groups, however, Turkish language barriers do seem to create challenges for interaction. While Syrians say they frequently communicate with Turks, Turks say they infrequently interact with Syrians.

Child Marriage: Child, or early, marriage (marriage that occurs under the age of 18 years) is a concern amongst those who are working with Syrians in Turkey and Syrians themselves. It is a protection concern and also creates barriers for girls' continued education. The Syrian girls and women interviewed in Kirikhan agreed that early marriage is much more common for Syrian girls in Turkey than it was in Syria. The most common reason for girls to get married young was

because of families' financial difficulties. Some also said that girls were getting married because there was nothing to do and they had no way to complete their education. To help prevent child marriage, those interviewed in Kirikhan suggested raising awareness among families, especially for fathers, and also providing financial support.

Future Plans: In Kirikhan, the majority of Syrian respondents said they plan to return to Syria within the next 1 to 2 years. If respondents do stay in Turkey, the majority said they would learn Turkish and work.

## **Recommendations**

To help reduce barriers to education, more funding is needed for Syrian schools, especially in the southern provinces near the border with Syria. Syrians want more Syrian schools, and those interviewed from organizations working in the field said more Syrian school facilities are needed. There is a particular need for secondary and high schools. These schools should be free or extremely affordable for families to reduce financial barriers to education. Further, international organizations with experience providing education in emergency situations should partner with local organizations to operate these Syrian schools through the Ministry of Education framework, especially at the secondary and high school levels. These partnerships could help international organizations anchor educational programs in the local community, while also providing local organizations more stability in their programs. Moreover, with local partners, organizations could help identify buildings that could be effectively used for Syrian schools in lieu of constructing a new building, which could be more cost-effective. Considering the legal and language hurdles preventing enrollment in Turkish public schools, more Syrian school facilities provide a short-term solution. Moreover, it is likely more practical and useful for older Syrian children in particular to be taught Syrian curriculum in Arabic, since they have spent years building skills according to that curriculum.

Next, transportation should be provided to and from school facilities to make it easier for students to travel to and from school. Transportation should be prioritized in areas where the nearest school is more than 1 km away. Additional funding may be needed to provide buses or

vans for this purpose, but it may also be possible to coordinate volunteer transport or walking systems to help people feel safer traveling to school.

Additionally, to help improve teacher retention and stability, as well as potentially attract more qualified professionals, funding is needed to provide monetary incentives for educators teaching in Syrian schools. Efforts should be made to recruit teachers from the Syrian community, both with prior teaching experience and with other professional skills that could be useful in classrooms. All teachers would likely benefit from additional training based on their needs, from actual curriculum content, to learner-centered teaching pedagogy, to methods for identifying psychological needs in the classroom.

Further, advocacy for accreditation of Syrian schools is needed so students can receive proof of completion and diplomas. Capacity development at the Ministry of Education is also needed to help develop accreditation and monitoring procedures for Syrian schools. They may also need assistance bringing on new staff to assist with these processes, especially at the provincial and municipal levels.

While Syrian schools provide a short-term solution, and also may be more appropriate for older Syrian students, access to Turkish public schools should be expanded for Syrian children. Attending Turkish schools as formal students would help Syrians better integrate into Turkish society, allow them to develop skills, and receive a diploma. To achieve better access to Turkish schools for Syrians, organizations should advocate for alternative IDs that would provide legal status similar to a Foreigner's ID and allow Syrian school age children to formally enroll in Turkish schools, even without formal documents from Syria. Advocacy efforts with the MoE at municipal and provincial levels, and at individual schools themselves, to allow primary age Syrian students to formally enroll in Turkish schools even without these alternative IDs may also be a solution. This more local approach is likely to be more effective for organizations that already have good working relationships with authorities in the communities where they work and are established. Partnerships with UNHCR and UNICEF may also help facilitate advocacy efforts.

Additionally, if Syrian students are able to attend Turkish schools in larger numbers, the Ministry of Education and Turkish schools will likely need support developing capacity to conduct placement tests for Syrian students and help support those students as they adjust to a new curriculum, in a new environment, in Turkish. Additionally, awareness raising and communication training for educators would likely be needed.

To help Syrian children transition to Turkish schools—including universities—and to help them better thrive in Turkish society, organizations need to expand certified Turkish language training for Syrians. Because Public Education Centers are located all over Turkey and already offer certified Turkish language courses, organizations should work with these Centers to provide Turkish language training for Syrians. These courses may need to be adapted to help children develop the language skills they need in school and to function in day-to-day life.

It should be noted that, while accreditation for Syrian schools and formal enrollment in Turkish schools would allow Syrian students to receive diplomas and proof of school completion recognized by Turkish authorities, whether these diplomas would be recognized in Syria remains a larger issue. Currently, they are not recognized. This issue is particularly important given the large percentage of Syrians who reported wanting to return to Syria and will need to be addressed, potentially as part of a longer-term solution to the conflict in Syria.

Regarding adult education, organizations should also work with Public Education Centers to provide certified Turkish language courses for Syrian adults. They may need to be adapted to help develop language skills necessary for employment and day-to-day life. Turkish language development will likely help Syrians interact with Turks in their communities and feel more comfortable and confident.

Additionally, vocational courses should be provided for Syrians and Turks in partnership with these Centers based on a market analysis of the sectors that can absorb more employees, the skills needed for these industries, the skills Syrians bring with them, and skills that would be useful upon return to Syria. Partnerships with potential employers could also help link these programs to employment.

To further facilitate communication and interaction between Syrians and Turks, organizations should coordinate social activities, such as meals, festivals, and exhibitions, not just at a community center but also in neighborhoods and public places. Additionally, arts and handcraft courses, which were in-demand among Turkish women in Kirikhan, could be offered for both Syrian and Turkish women. For women especially, organizations could identify Syrian and Turkish women partners to lead outreach efforts for women in harder to reach areas and organize social activities, such as sharing coffee and snacks, in neighborhoods. Organizations can build from these activities, according to what is in-demand from these women. Community organizers could also be used to share information about activities and courses provided through a community center, and these activities should be provided at a variety of times to accommodate various work schedules. These activities would also help facilitate community interaction and psychosocial support care.

Additionally, more psychologists are needed to identify psychological support needs and provide targeted psychological counseling and support activities for Syrian children and adults when needed. Turks could also benefit from access to psychological support services. Organizations should prioritize hiring more psychologists and train community workers to help provide support and identify additional support needs. They also need to develop systems for identifying and referring those who need psychological support.

To help reduce child labor and reduce early marriage, financial support should be provided to families. Outreach efforts should also be coordinated to raise awareness among Syrian families, specifically targeting fathers.

Lastly, more broad-reaching and rigorous research is needed to understand Syrian's opportunities and needs in Turkey regarding education, health, housing, and protection. Conditions change quickly for Syrians in Turkey, so regular research is needed to understand how those opportunities and needs change with them.

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