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# TURKISH RED CRESCENT COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

ORSAM

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مركز الشرق الأوسط للدراسات الاستراتيجية



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**Prepared by:**

Başak Yavçan, PhD, *TOBB University of Economics and Technology*

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## PREFACE

As the Syrian refugees duration of stay in Turkey is prolonged, many new challenges are arising. Access to basic services, particularly by refugees living outside camps, has emerged as an essential need, which has prompted many public and civil society institutions to develop new projects. In this context, determination of local needs plays a key role in the coordination of services delivered to refugees in an efficient manner.

This study aims to put forth the findings of a field study carried out as part of a needs assessment for a Community Centre built through the funds of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Şanlıurfa Eyyübiye in order to provide Syrian refugees who live outside the refugee camps with vocational training and psycho-social assistance. The aforementioned field study was carried out on 12 January-12 February 2015 in order to demonstrate the state of Syrian refugees to tailor the services of the proposed Community Center to the necessities of the society which it aims to serve.

As part of the needs analysis carried out towards this aim, the non-governmental organizations working in the same region and providing similar services were located, their representatives have been contacted and their services and capacities have been determined via in-depth interviews. Subsequently, house visits to the Syrian homes were paid for several interviews, which were then supplemented with three focus group interviews carried out with groups of women, men and children to provide the foundations of the baseline survey and also to enable an in depth understanding of the problems evident in the field and the problems the refugees face. With reference to the findings of the aforementioned preliminary field research and the expectations of the IFRC, a baseline survey was designed to gather information about the displaced people's basic demographical information (gender, age, education), unit income, basic expenses (rent, fees, food, heating, education) marital status, number of individuals per unit, (occupational features, health condition) social perceptions, problems faced in social life, assessment on relations with the locals, trust in local and international institutions, social and psychological concerns, individual and societal expectations, future plans, date and the cause of arrival to Turkey, social services accessed since arrival to Turkey and satisfaction with them (health, education, religious and consulting services) as well as the basic needs of children.

The needs analysis survey was conducted with 328 refugees living in the neighborhoods surrounding the community center through face to face interviews via door to door visits. With the findings, the needs of the refugees have been brought into attention and the inter-group conditions in the region are presented. Lastly, in the light of these findings, several policy suggestions have been presented following a SWOT analysis, through which the internal and external factors that can affect the success of the project have been outlined.

The findings of this project are shared in this new ORSAM report. I am pleased to bring this report to your attention, hoping that the findings and the new methodology introduced here will make an important contribution toward an increasing number of similar projects, supported by national and international organizations.

*Assoc. Prof. Şaban Kardaş*  
*President of ORSAM*



Prepared by: Başak Yavçan, PhD, TOBB University of Economics and Technology

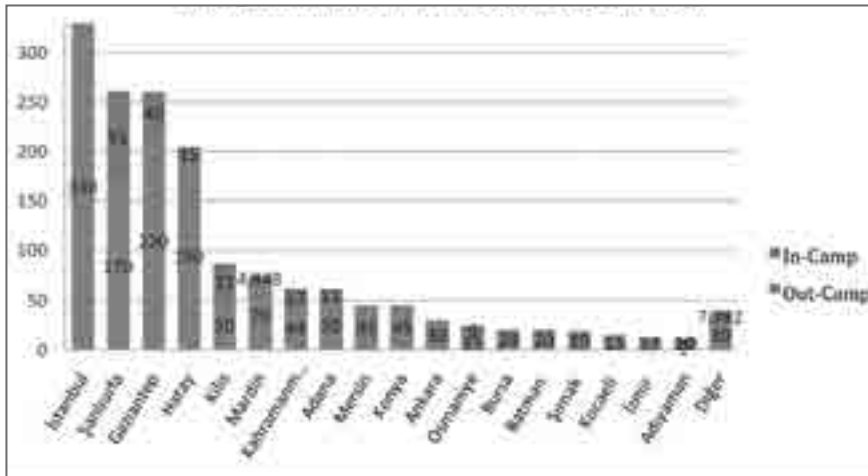
# TURKISH RED CRESCENT COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the civil war that started in Syria four years ago, the number of people fleeing their country to seek refuge in neighboring countries is rising by day. According to 2015 statistics nearly 2 million people sought refuge in Turkey,<sup>1</sup> 1.2 million in Lebanon, a 600 thousand in Jordan and a 250 thousand in Iraq, resulting in a total of at least 4 million Syrians that were displaced. Registered Syrian refugee

population in Turkey is over 1.8 million while there is no official number on un-registered population. This number is in constant rise and only 220 thousand live in the refugee camps and the remaining (approximately 87 percent) live in cities making their own living.<sup>2</sup> Data on the registered Syrian refugees living in-camp or out-camp were used in producing the graph below:<sup>3</sup>

**Graph 1.** Distribution of In-Camp and Out-of-Camp Refugees Across Provinces (in thousands)



Istanbul is the city with the highest number of Syrian refugees when only out-of camp refugees are considered. It is followed by Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay, all three

having important in-camp refugee population. These cities are followed by Kilis, Mardin, Adana and Kahramanmaraş, with each hosting over 50 thousand refugees.<sup>4</sup>



When the out-of-camp refugees are considered, the seasonality and frequent in-camp and out-of-camp transiency should also be taken into account. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the out-camp numbers change rapidly and while the numbers of unregistered refugees cannot be estimated, there are unofficial data that show a greater number.

The existing studies of Syrians mainly focus on refugee camps due to several reasons such as the ease in pursuing field study, since the camps are the first stop of incoming refugees, and the immediate need to understand the needs of the camps to improve their conditions.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the limited number of studies that focus on Syrian refugees who live outside the camps and compare the in-camp and out-camp conditions, show that out-camp refugees have much worse life conditions than those who live in the camps.<sup>6</sup> These studies also highlight the various problems they face in their relations with the local population in Turkey and their specific vulnerabilities due to their unprotected status. All these findings confirm the increased need for the services targeting out-of-camp Syrians such as the community centers initiated by IFRC and Turkish Red Crescent.

Graph 1 illustrates the dispersion of the refugee population in different cities, where the high number in Şanlıurfa is no-

table. Recent field studies also show that Şanlıurfa, indeed, is the city that is home to the largest in-camp and one of the highest out-camp Syrian refugee population.<sup>7</sup> As noted, the in-camp refugee population number also assumes importance, as most refugees go in and out of camps and at least try to live in cities during the cold months of winter as well as summer when labor market conditions for temporary workers improve in their favor. In addition, geographical location, family ties between the Syrians and some locals, and the cultural ties between Turkish Arabs and the refugees are important factors making Şanlıurfa an attractive destination<sup>8</sup>. Finally, forced migration to this area continues in full force with the recent clashes in Kobane and Tel Abyad.<sup>9</sup>

In the light of these external factors, for this project to reach its goals, it is of great importance to identify the background of the beneficiaries and their demands and needs from community center in Şanlıurfa. Through this report, prepared in this direction, the entire field study carried out in a month's time including interviews with the representatives of NGOs, home visits, focus groups and the findings of the survey will be presented. Based on the results, possible policy advises will be suggested following a SWOT analysis outlining the internal and external factors that can affect the success of the project.

## I. NEEDS ANALYSIS

### Purpose of the Needs Analysis

The main purpose of this needs analysis is to maximize the benefit the community center is to offer, and its goals are as follows:

1. To get to know about the region the community center is located.
2. To get an understanding of the background of the target population of the community center.
3. To learn the problems and vulnerabilities of the target population.
4. To learn about the needs of the target population and their expectation from the community center.
5. To detect the number of the most disadvantaged among the target population and to learn their specific needs.

### Introduction to Methodology

Data collection is concentrated in a region that homes a dense population of out-camp refugees by creating a triangulation of methods. Together with a multi-method field study, a large sample population with higher level of regional representation, compared to earlier studies, has been analyzed. The first stage of the field study consists of NGO interviews in conjunction with home visits to the target population. Following that, three focus group interviews have been conducted to acquire a pre-evaluation for the needs analysis survey and gain an in-depth understanding of the problems and needs of the population to be followed by a large-N survey with high representation power. In this report, the abovementioned research method will be presented step by step with their re-

spective results followed by suggestions to be made in the light of the findings.

### Method I & II: Interviews, Focus Groups and Their Results

In this first step of the field study, seven local NGOs have been contacted, and asked about their institutional capacity in relation to their activities directed at the refugees and their experiences with this population in the area. Although this was neither a proposed or requested step of this needs analysis, in this case it allowed for a deeper understanding of the problems faced and services provided and a basis of comparison for the prospective services of the IFRC Community Center by measuring the quality of the works similar institutions pursue and their capacity. These interviews proved that the community center can indeed benefit the target population through its central location and the services it is to offer.

This stage of the fieldwork suggested that there are two notable community centers in the region, the first one is funded by Şanlıurfa Municipality located in the south of Eyyübiye in Hayati Harrani neighborhood, and the second one is the IMPR community center funded by the Danish Refugee Council and is located in more to north in the Haşimiye neighborhood. However, both centers are located far away from the neighborhood with the most densely populated ones by the Syrian refugees, such as Onikiler, Şih Maksut, Muradiye, Hacibayram and Eyyübiye, thus are not able to meet the needs of these neighborhoods. This indicates a great apt in the location choice of the Red Crescent's community center which is located in Onikiler neighborhood. The

interviews also suggested that courses offered are never short of demand and that the refugee population is very engaged in activities in the center. The interviews also suggested some methods to recruit instructors from the refugee population which usually poses various advantages to engage in the community and success of outreach.

The next method in this field study is focus groups; this method is not chosen to enable generalizations but to acquire preliminary information on the region and to find out the many perspectives on the subject of the field study. It also serves as the basis and even a pre-test of the survey stage with regards to the inclusion of relevant response categories for the questions in focus. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the needs of the out-camp refugees in Şanlıurfa, three focus group interviews have been conducted with women (N=12), men (N=8) and children (N=7), in the presence of interpreters and moderators who speak the specific dialect of Arabic mostly spoken in Syria. The questions asked in the focus group interviews were shaped around the aims of the project and by the findings of the interviews with NGOs and home visits. Open ended questions were used in these interviews to give depth to answers, and the full text of questions asked can be found in Appendix 1.

As the location for focus group interviews, a place known by the Syrian refugees was used: a cultural center (NOFARA) that was also built by a refugee himself. Snacks were offered prior to and during the meetings, separate meetings have been scheduled with men and women, to enable women to express themselves more freely. Effort has been made to choose participants coming from diverse backgrounds of income level, education and regions.<sup>10</sup> Their consent has been taken for their participation, for the meeting to be tape recorded, and for a group photo to be taken with the ones volunteered. To ensure anonymity, only their first name

was asked during the interviews. In choosing the participants, hosts during previous home visits were informed about the focus groups and asked about their acquaintances' participation and an announcement at NOFARA Cultural Center has been made.

The focus group interviews with women and men were conducted on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, with half an hour breaks after each interview. In presence of two moderators, each session started with introducing the IFRC community center and its aims, followed by discussions centered on the refugees' living conditions, complaints and problems, the services they receive in Turkey, their satisfaction of these services, the difficulties they face in social life and in workplace, psychological problems. In order to enable comfort in discussing the topic of inappropriate approaches/harassment by men towards women, the male translator has been asked to leave the meeting room, and the female translator led the discussion on this topic.

These intense meetings each took around two to two and a half hours with active participation, participants also thanked, expressing the positive effect that sharing their problems had on their psychological wellbeing. Lastly, in accordance with the standard focus group conduct protocol, a symbolic payment has been presented to the participants for their time and mental efforts, with an emphasis that it is given from the account of the consultant and not the community center. The participants had also shared their experiences with other institutions that contacted them for data collection making unfulfilled promises and yet have themselves benefited on these private information they acquired from the refugees. Therefore participants presented their thanks for the different approach of this project in the process of data collection in terms of this small contribution as well as the services offered to them in the community center.

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, a third focus group interview has been conducted with the participation of children between the ages of 8 to 12. The purpose of this method was to give a voice to the potential young beneficiaries of the services at the community center, targeting children, namely psycho-social support and children hobby/play room. While some information about the children has been collected through the parents, especially women, hearing the opinions of children directly were thought to provide further insights. This meeting took place in the community center with snacks. After several activities to break the ice with the participants, moderators asked questions about what the things they liked in Turkey, what they miss from their country, and what they don't miss, their friendships, education and their social life.

It has been concluded that both children attending school and not attending school share great enthusiasm towards playground facility in the center as well as psycho-social assistance (Answers will be handled in detailed in the conclusion section). Later the participants were asked to draw their dream instructor, in the notebooks and with the colored pencils given to them. Several of these drawings are shared in Appendix 2. After this activity, participants were inquired about the personality and occupational traits their preferred instructors should have.

Shaped with the observations during the home visits and expected to provide a starting point for the survey, these focus group interviews met with high participation with in depth and detailed discussions on experiences and bear the following results:

Issues that the participants are happy about while living in Turkey

- Security
- The free of charge services they receive and humanitarian aid

- Hospitality of some locals
- The welcoming attitude of the Turkish government
- Proximity to the point of origin
- Greater cultural similarity with the locals compared to other regions of Turkey.

The aspects that nearly all participants complain about

- Being subjected to “guest law” and not the “refugee law”
- Expensive rents and landlords’ demands for 12 months of rent in advance
- Concerns about their future
- Concerns about fair and transparent distribution of aid
- The scarcity of job opportunities, high number of job-seekers, low wages, exploitation of labor due to being worked uninsured
- Experiencing communication problems in everyday life, work, education and public institutions, since although there are Arabic speakers among the locals, in the above areas Turkish is the dominant language.
- Experiencing discrimination in local administrated areas and in hospitals, and lack of authority to report discrimination.
- The children being prevented education as the limited number of Syrian schools is working full capacity and the Turkish schools not reject the refugee children
- Children need an environment to overcome isolation and engage in a friendly, punishment and homework-free learning and socialization environment

The aspects that a large proportion of the participants are unsatisfied:

- Participants themselves and especially their children living in constant fear and worry and in need of psychological assistance.

- Working informally, and being denied any compensation in cases of accidents or death in workplace.
- Women participants experiencing discrimination and inappropriate approaches by men and not knowing where to appeal.
- Participants with higher education or skill levels being unable to work in their own field despite need for those skills in the region and hence being forced to work in low skill jobs.
- Participants lacking any training and experience being forced to work in the lowest level jobs.
- Research institutes that come for data collection, making false promises (mainly monetary) to the refugees, and yet benefiting their research by using private information of refugees.
- Children having scarce opportunities to interact with local children and frequently become subject to inclusion and discrimination when they engage in such relations.

After this primary evaluation, the main topics to be assessed in the survey were determined the following way: Participants will be asked to answer questions about basic demographics (gender, age, education, unit income, basic expenses (rent, fees, food, heating, education) marital status, number of individuals per unit, occupational features, health condition) about problems they face in day to day life, their social perceptions, their assessments of inter-group relations, their part-integration attitudes, their trust in institutions, social and psychological concerns, individual and societal expectations, future plans, date and cause of arrival to Turkey, social services accessed since arrival to Turkey and satisfaction with them (health, education, religious and consulting services), basic needs of children, services needed most and the characteristics and qualities of expected services.

### **Method III: Description and Results of Baseline Survey**

In order to test the generalizability and representation of the results obtained from the preliminary qualitative stage of the field study, a Large-N baseline survey with a sample of over 300 refugees has been planned. The size of its sample makes this survey the most extensive study in the region, made on out-camp Syrian refugees encompassing a wide array of issues.

Initially, a survey questionnaire is constructed, building on the information acquired through the focus group interviews and in-depth interviews, which was then reviewed by experts in public opinion research, regional experts on the politics and society in the Middle East, and experts with prior experience with Syrian refugees.<sup>11</sup> Based on the aforementioned experts' evaluation of the questions regarding the aptness of the questions, the wording of each item, respect for cultural sensitivities, several changes have been adopted. In particular, queries that would revive bad memories in an intruding way have been avoided, questions that might challenge the sensitivities of the participants have been abstained from or reworded. An introductory text informed the respondents as to who conducts the survey on whose behalf, the anonymity of the survey respondents, secrecy of the answers and their analysis collectively (as opposed to individually) has been reemphasized.

A public opinion research firm based in Gaziantep and familiar with the region has been hired. The interviewers were hired from a Turkish language school in Gaziantep and consisted of Syrian Turkmens over the age of 18 (mostly college students back home). This ensured an open channel of communication between the researcher and interviewers as they are both fluent in Arabic and Turkish. This also insured the cultural sensitivities will be respected and a friendly environment has been offered to the interviewee so that they answer the

questions of the survey more freely. The interviewers have been given two sets of a special training on the survey questions, accompanied by expert translators of Arabic.

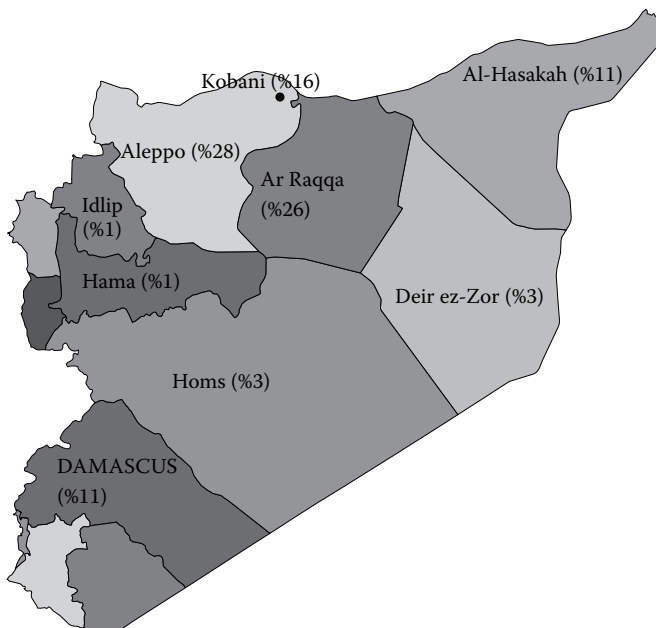
In the absence of a registry of the entire population of interest (due to lack of registration in the target population and reluctance of state institutions to share their registries due to secrecy considerations), drawing a random sampling was out of question. Thus, neighborhood maps were obtained and a minimum and maximum sample number for within a mile radius of the community center has been determined. Based on this goal, neighborhoods were canvassed through door-to-door scanning for refugees and one person per household has been interviewed<sup>12</sup>. Owing to the very cooperative attitude of the refugees, there has been a 98% response rate to the survey. The field work for the baseline survey has been completed from January 31 to February 3 2015, by a survey team (8 interviewers + 2 supervisors+ 2

researcher overseers) with a sample of 328 people.

### Information on Demography and History of Immigration

Around 40% of the respondents in the sample of the survey are women and the rest are men. Average age of the respondents is 37, and the average household size is 6. Considering most refugees reside in single room houses, this is a very high household size and points out to a major problem with accommodation. Although average level of education of the sample is over primary school graduation, 25% of the participants are not primary education graduates. This poses a serious challenge to researchers in the area who want to conduct self-administrated surveys. This finding points out to the aptness of the method chosen for this survey, namely face to face surveys. Even though they are more costly than self-administrated surveys, they overcome the potential biases associated with collecting survey data

**Figure 1.** *Cities of Origins of Syrian Sample*



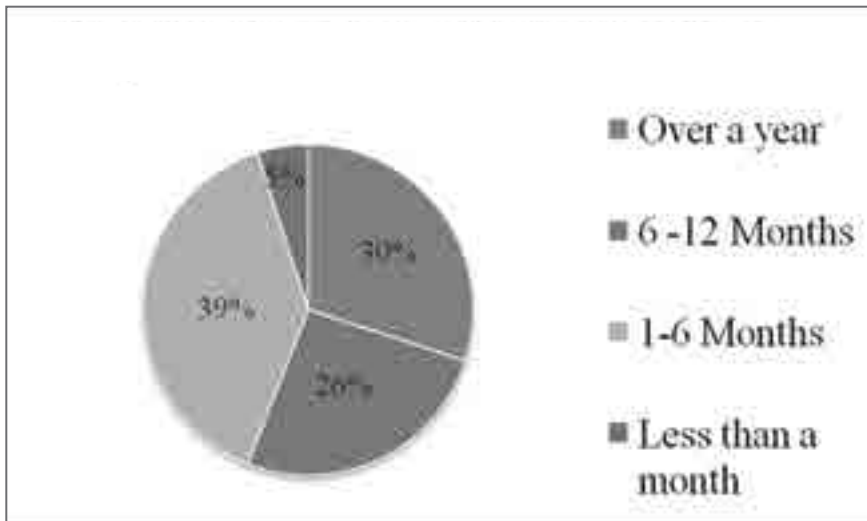
with low educated respondents. Figure 1 demonstrates the cities of origins of the refugees in Syria, and their percentage share in the sample. Accordingly, most of the refugees come from the neighboring cities of Aleppo, Raqqa and Hasakah.

However, there are also immigrants coming from Damascus and Homs, the number of migrants from Deir ez-Zor is especially remarkable among the newcomer group. As illustrated by the background of the respondents of the sample, it is not wrong to assume that every new power nexus and every new conflict in Syria cre-

ates new victims which then seek refuge in close-by locations in Turkey.

Due to the four years (and continuing) of clashes, another area of interest was the refugees' date of arrival to Turkey. This information is also shown to be an important predictor of other issues of interest such as integration attitudes of the minority populations as well as their evaluation of working conditions, expectations from the future, and life satisfaction. The description of data on arrival dates of refugees to Turkey have been demonstrated on Graph 2 below.

**Graph 2.** *Time since Arrival to Sanliurfa*



Another issue of interest for this project relates to refugees' plans for the future and specifically their intentions to relocate. In order to have an understanding of this issue, participants were asked if they would immigrate to another country if they were given the opportunity. Seventy eight percent of the surveyed indicated that they would prefer to stay in Turkey, 16% said that they would immigrate to a European country, with Germany and to Sweden the mostly referred countries, 3% answered that they would immigrate to Lebanon where many of their relatives reside in, and the remaining 3% said that they would

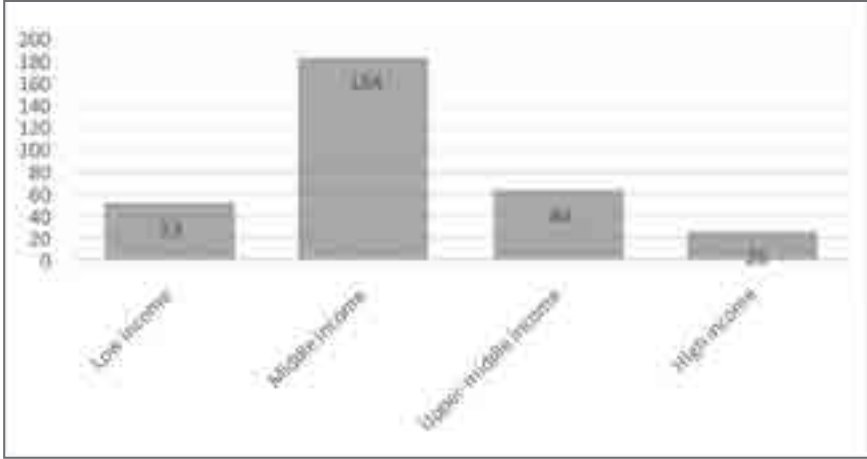
prefer to relocate to Gulf countries because of the common language and possibly more job opportunities.

As part of the demographical information, Syrian refugees' income level before immigration and their household income after immigration has been inquired about and following two graphs are produced to illustrate the results. The figures point out to a drastic change in the participants' income level which has dropped greatly after immigration. This leads to the very overrepresentation of low income group in the sample. The results also indicate

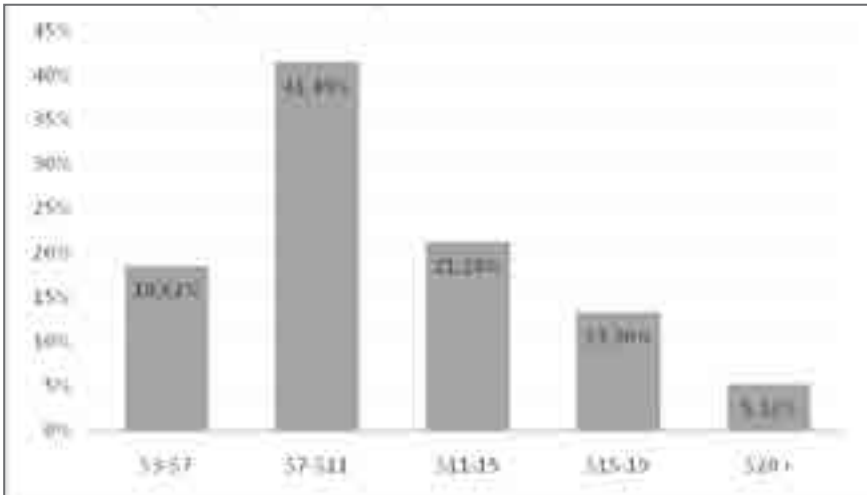
that previously high income groups becoming low income with migration and may face major poverty once they spend

up their savings, while also lacking the necessary resilience mechanisms to deal with the scarcity of resources.

**Graph 3. Income Level Before Immigration**



**Graph 4. Daily Household Income**

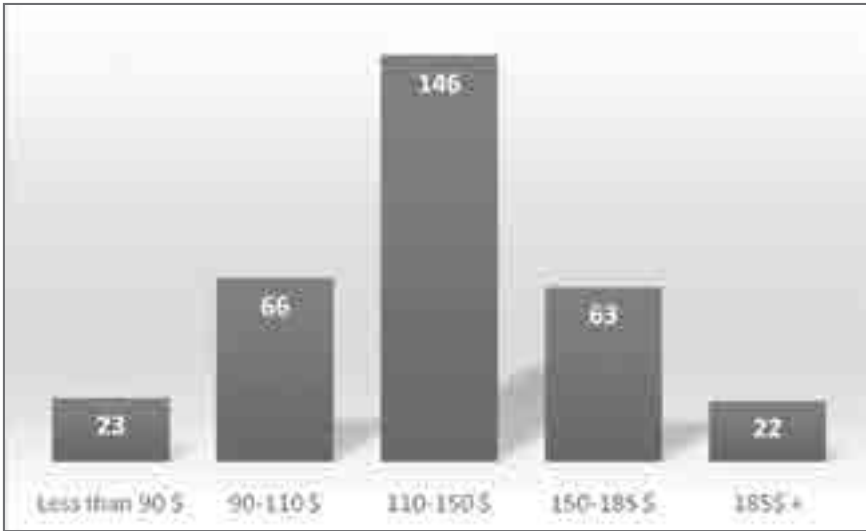


The participants were asked about their household income as it is considered a more meaningful measure of their well-being as a family. Graphic 4, above, was formed using that information and converting respondents' household income in Turkish Liras to US Dollars. Most of the refugees work on daily wages, yet for those who reported monthly wages, the number

was divided by 30. Accordingly, over 60% of the households with an income, daily earnings is less than 29 TL. Given the high number of dependent population (children and elderly) in each household together with the high house rents, nearly the whole refugee population lives under the starvation limit.



**Graph 5. Monthly Rent**

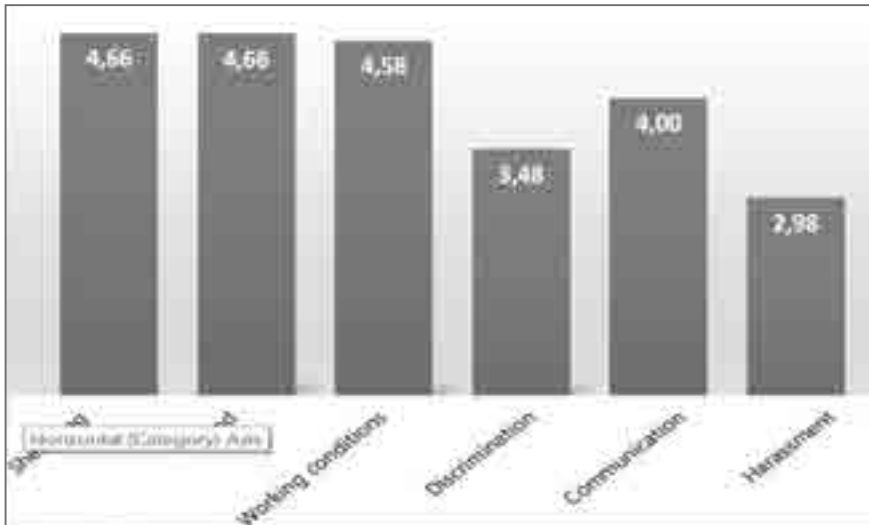


**Major Problems faced in Daily Life and Satisfaction from Services Offered in Turkey**

A wide range of problems were mentioned during the focus group interviews, and the most prominent of these problems were

made into a battery of questions in the survey. Upon presenting the prominent problem areas, participants are asked to put the list of problems into an order of priority. Answers given to this question was used in forming the Graph 6, as seen below.

**Graph 6. Most prominent problem?**



Graph 6 shows that shelter/accommodation, food and working conditions are the problems most prioritized by the refugees.

Housing is the number one problem issue for Syrian displaced people with high rents and full yearly payment of rents in

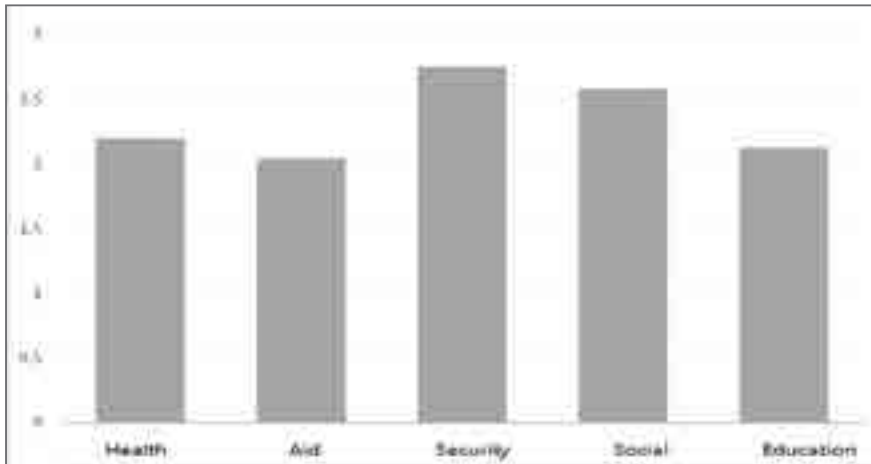
advance demanded by landlords is the basis for it. Reports of and interviews with public authorities and NGOs also point out that, the surge of refugees resulted in an at least five fold increase in rents, and led to many structures with unfit sanitary and infrastructural conditions to be offered for rent. The high food prices compared to Syria coupled with the relatively lower purchasing power of the target group is the basis of the food problem, which ranks a close second for respondents in the sample.

As discussed in the focus group interviews, work conditions is a major problem and the major area of complaints in this issue area relate to low wages, long working hours and the scarcity of jobs. The increasing size of labor supply due to rising number of refugees further accentuates this problem, resulting in a race to the bottom in wages, likely to lead to major social and economic consequences in the near future. While the first two most important issues for refugees are not immediate areas the Community Center can address,

there is a direct link with better skills and job prospects, pointing out to a potential to assuage the concerns with working conditions. Nevertheless, these vulnerabilities resulting from food and shelter conditions should be bear in mind by any authority when addressing this population and even though an immediate remedy to these concerns cannot be offered at the Community Center, via links established with other NGOs and Humanitarian Aid organizations, direction to these organizations and information on mitigating these concerns should be provided to the beneficiaries of the center

While not as pronounced as the first three, difficulties with language, experience with discrimination and being victim of a harassment by men follows these concerns and on a scale from 1 to 5, they are seen on average above 3 in terms of importance. These are the issues that the Community Center is likely to address in an immediate way with language courses, seminars on discrimination and harassment as well as ways to redress the grievances.

**Graph 7. Satisfaction with Services in Turkey**



The Syrian respondents are also asked about their satisfaction with the services they receive in Turkey, and the answers are shown in Graph 7. On this scale, “0” represents no satisfaction, “1” represents

some satisfaction and “2” represents high satisfaction with these services. According to the respondents, while security is the most satisfactory service, the least satisfactory is the provision of humani-

tarian aid. The former is mainly related to the relatively secure position of Turkish territories as compared to Syria, the latter is related to inability of public and private aid to immediately address growing necessities of the refugees. Among those who received the service, satisfaction from social services like vocational, psychological counseling was also high. Moreover while the level of satisfaction tends to be lower for newcomers, it rises as time passes, which is promising for social integration and access to services.

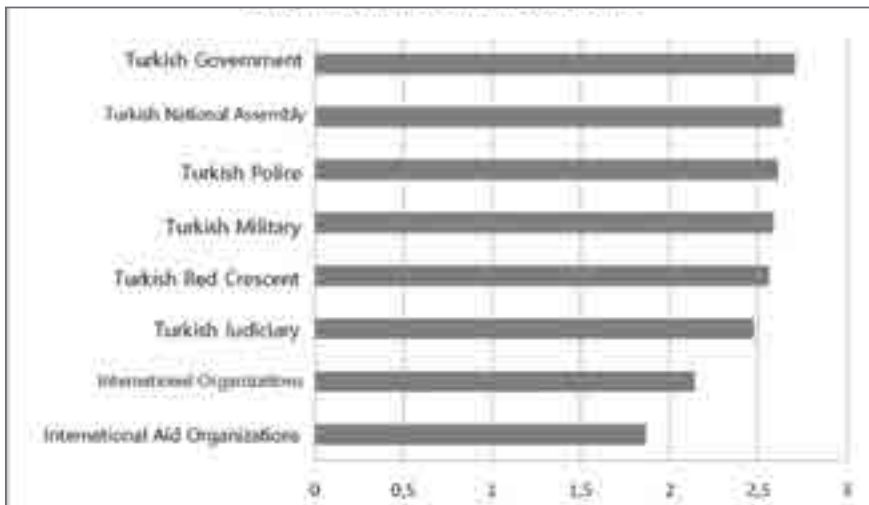
The last set of questions in this part of the survey relate to the experiences in war and its consequences. Accordingly, 60% of the participants expressed that they lost at least one relative in the war with 90% of these were reported to be immediate family members. Nearly all respondents lost a friend or an acquaintance in the conflict in Syria. Furthermore, 70% of the participants expressed that they witnessed

clashes, 11% expressed that they actively participated in the clashes. Due to these traumatic experiences 60% of the refugees state that they and their children live in constant fear and psychological breakdown. This number shows the necessity of psychological counseling not only for children but also for adults.

**Social Cohesion and Integration**

Earlier studies on migrant populations in different countries show that their attitude towards national and international institutions is an explanatory criterion in understanding their willingness to integrate to the local culture or their reliance to peace-keeping institutions<sup>13</sup>. Thus a trust index was used to understand the participants’ attitudes towards Turkish institutions as well as international organizations and Graph 8 is constructed where “1” stands for no trust, “2” for some trust and “3” represents high trust.

**Graph 8. Trust in Institutions**



There are a few interesting findings from these questions. First of all, the low trust level for international organizations is remarkable. Respondents raised concerns about the intentions of these institutions

as a basis of this lack of trust as well about being off their radar with aid. The high trust for the Turkish Red Crescent reveals the beneficiaries’ positive image of the institution, which constitutes a strength for

the success of this project. It also shows that IFRC's collaboration with Turkish Red Cross in the field is likely to boost its reputation and increase trust. It is therefore curious how this number will change in future surveys in the region where the community is likely to benefit from the Community Center.

Another interesting result is the high level trust for the Turkish government, and a comparable level of trust for police and military. These results possibly suggest that when faced with a problem in the area, the refugees would be willing to consult with the Turkish institutions. Most of the refugees do not have prior experience with judiciary in Turkey which explains the level of trust for Turkish judiciary. Related to this, refugees who have been in Turkey over 12 months have expressed greater trust to Turkish institutions than the newcomer refugees. Rise in trust for institutions as the time of residence rises, indicates a rise in the integration of Syrian refugees and higher possibility of them benefitting from the institutions.

### Attitudes of Disadvantaged Groups

As the aforementioned description of the data illustrates, Syrian displaced people suffer from several vulnerabilities, past experience with war, lowered socio economic status, linguistic/cultural difficulties, career challenges, discrimination to name the few. Nevertheless, some among the population face additional challenges which lead their categorization as disadvantaged. In this section the answers of participants from these disadvantaged groups and participants who have disadvantaged individuals in their household will be examined in comparison to those who are not disadvantaged. Potential differences will then be related to necessary social inclusion policies.

The potential pre-determined bases for disadvantage are:

- Being a woman
- Being a single mother/head of the household
- Being pregnant or nursing,
- Being disabled
- Being elderly/unable to work
- Anyone who perceives him/herself as disadvantaged in relative terms
- Being in a household with individuals belonging to any of the aforementioned groups

Firstly, women, who make up to 40% of the sample, will be examined. In addition, 40% of the households surveyed, there is at least one pregnant or a nursing woman, in 15% of the households the breadwinner is woman. Albeit it was observed that women are less educated and have lower income than men on average (For education Women=2.27; Men=2.57; for income Women=7.2; Men=12.9). This gap indicates that women are clearly disadvantaged compared to men. In addition, more women, compared to men, tend to complain about discrimination. Consequently, women participants had lower expectations, compared to men, from the future both individually and socially. This general discomfort of women contributes to their dissatisfaction of services (health, security, education, and humanitarian aids, social) and their distrust of institutions.

The attitudes of other participants who are disadvantaged or have a disadvantaged individual in their household indicate similar results. The answers of the disadvantaged participants and other participants were compared (disabled, household with female breadwinner, household with a bedridden individual, pregnant, nursing mother, or anyone who feels disadvantaged by any other reason) and the trends observed were summarized in the following way:

- The problems of shelter, food and working conditions grows more desperate for

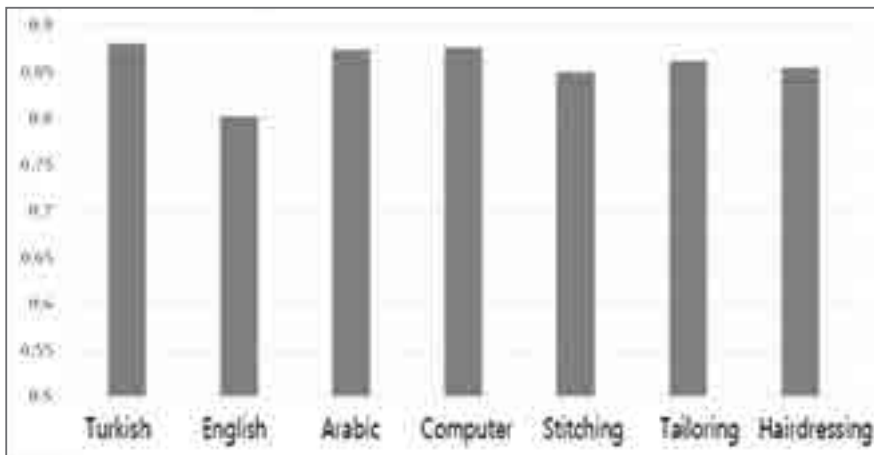
disadvantaged participants or those who are living with a disadvantaged individual in the household.

- Disadvantaged participants or those who are living with disadvantaged individuals in their households tend to be less satisfied from services they receive in Turkey.
- Except for pregnant and nursing mothers, individuals from households with disadvantaged groups have lower individual, social, political and economic expectations of future than other participants.

### Expectations from the Community Center

The last battery of questions in the baseline survey relate to the expectations from the community center. First off, it should be noted that except for 18 participants among the 328 sampled, none have ever been to a community center in Turkey. This finding supports the expectation that the community center is likely to reach a destitute population. With regards to the expectation regarding different courses, a general high appetite can be observed. As Graph 9 illustrates, while participants

**Graph 9.** *Course Preferences*



**Graph 10.** *What is Important about the courses?*



show great interest in training courses in all areas, they prefer Turkish, Arabic and computer courses more; followed by English language courses and vocational courses.

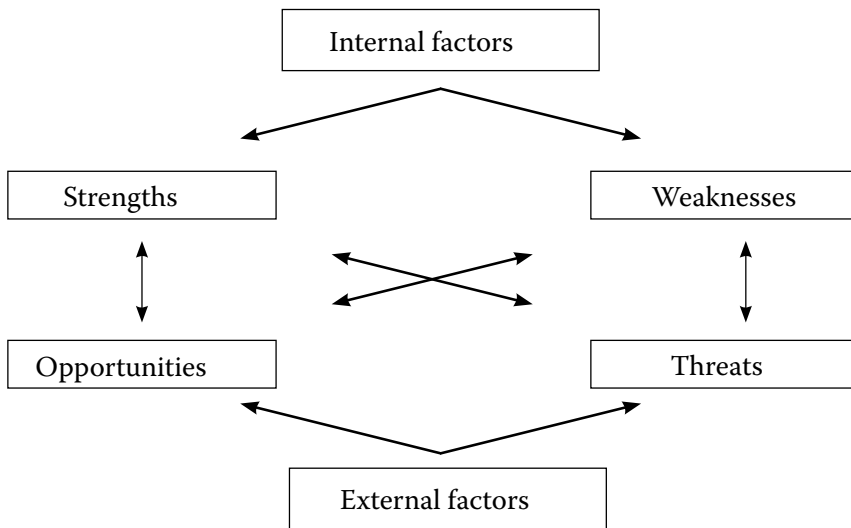
When children's needs from the Community Center were asked, adult respondents' answers expressed necessities in multiple areas. The most demanded services were courses supporting formal education, Turkish and Arabic language courses, social activities and psycho-social counseling. Another question asked was "what is most important about courses?" the answers to this question were used in forming Graph 10, below.

The least demanded feature was seminars on current topics and preference Syrian instructors. Although most of the participants reside in 10-15 minute distance to the center, demand for transportation was high since they want their children to get to the center unaccompanied by parents. This service could also remedy the physical challenges of the large disadvantage groups in the target community. The second most demanded feature is courses helping children get over the traumas of war; followed by demand for official recognition of course certificates. Availability of Arabic speaking instructors and professionals as instructors, as well as psycho-social assistance for adults are among highly demanded features.

## II. SWOT ANALYSIS

The focus group interviews and the large scale survey have shown similar needs and attitudes of out-camp Syrian refugees in Şanlıurfa. Hence a SWOT analysis will be carried out to define strengths of this

Project, possible improvement strategies, external opportunities and threats. Lastly, several suggestions will be made in the light of the SWOT analysis.



Strengths of the Community Center Project:

- **Institutional Identity:** Turkish Red Crescent was well received through every step of the field study, especially former camp residents know of the Turkish Red Crescent. The trust index also indicated greater trust for the Turkish Red Crescent compared to international organizations. In this sense its reputation is a great asset in the success of this project.
- **Professional Human Capital:** The field study indicated an expectation of professional instructors. As Turkish Red Crescent is a prestigious institution, which can offer stable/secure jobs, it can easily recruit well educated and

professional instructors as volunteers, full-timer or part-timer.

- **Location:** The field study revealed great interest for a community center in the region, as other centers in the region are either distant to needy or have low capacity. Thus there is a high possibility the project will become a center of attraction for the beneficiaries.

Potential weaknesses of the Community Center Project:

- Currently, the center lacks motivation for satisfying immediate needs of the refugees. While this will not be an issue for people interested in attending courses, it will be indifferent to people with immediate needs. As Turkish Red

Crescent is known as an organization maintaining the camps, this project might cause confusions. In this direction, counseling service regarding the information and access points of immediate relief organizations should be provided to the community center beneficiaries.

- Certification and guidance: Lack of an officially recognized certification system that enables course graduates to work in other institutions may cause problems on the side of the beneficiaries and evoke a feeling of inefficiency. Certification is more crucial for language courses in case the clients are interested to pursue higher education. It can also pose a problem with regards to compatibility with Turkish apprenticeship training institutions.
- Lack of a network of volunteers: As a newcomer into the area, Turkish Red Crescent lacks a wide network of volunteers to draw its immediate staff. This weakness can easily be coped with through active communication with other similar organizations.

#### Opportunities:

External factors that may facilitate the success of the project are as follows

- Vertical and horizontal spillover: The success of the project may encourage other organizations to similar projects and the pilot experiences of Turkish Red Crescent's center may assist the similar ongoing projects in the region. Spillover effect may also expand the scope of services. Here, the researcher favors the former as the project can benefit from the transfer of this knowhow to other regions greatly.
- Constant Immigration: The increasing population of the beneficiaries as the new waves of refugees arrive, provides the center with beneficiaries, if planned strategically the center may deliver as-

sistance in their transition to the labor market.

- Refugees' acceptance to formal education: Increasing rate of refugees' acceptance into schools working under the Ministry of National Education will raise the importance of language education which will in turn increase the demand for the courses offered in the center.

#### Threats:

External factors that may hinder the success of the project are as follows:

- Local Population: As the project aims to provide service to the refugees the local residents to feel left out and turn towards discriminating the refugees. Thus dissemination and collaboration projects inclusive of and integrating the locals should be realized especially regarding the children.
- After courses: If the qualifications acquired through the courses do not find a field of application, it may give rise to a significant threat. Difficulties in entering the labor market will negatively affect the beneficiaries' attitude towards the institution. To prevent this active dialogue should be maintained between employers via representatives of local chambers.
- Drop-Out: Since the beneficiaries have limited resources they might have long working hours and may be reluctant to cut from their working hours to attend courses, which may cause them dropping out of the courses. This might pose ineffectiveness of the resources of the institution and hinder the project from reaching its aims. To prevent drop-outs, course hours should be flexible and potential drop-outs should be detected based on attendance and be contacted individually to be rejoined into the courses.



## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the light of all the information and analysis, several suggestions to increase the success of the Community Center Project can be found in the below:

- Refugees live in crowded, single-room households, working for very low wages in aggravated conditions facing discrimination. Buildings formerly used as storerooms or barns are being rented out at five times the price paid before the refugees came, and they pose great dangers to the health and material well-being of the refugees. Thus, it is expected from the center to provide the refugees with services aimed at solving more immediate problems. It can only be expected that the refugees will be interested in vocational training the center offers only after they have solved their more immediate problems like food and shelter. However, the center does aim at solving these problems indirectly by providing courses for improving the beneficiaries' communication and vocational skills. Therefore, sufficient guidance should be provided to these refugees to be put in contact with aid organizations.
- The survey put forth the heterogeneity of the refugees in education and occupational background. While the high skilled have no work permit, the uneducated group have no skills, and this poses ineffectiveness in their employment. Both groups are limited by the difference of language, which also poses problems in employment. Thus, first and foremost, the center should prioritize Turkish language courses since it will benefit both abovementioned groups.
- Vocational courses are a particularly attractive service to the Syrian refugees

who are entering the labor market for the first time. Focus here should be on certification and channeling to employment. Courses to be offered should be decided not only according to the demands of beneficiaries, but also the demands of the employers. For example, the interview with Şanlıurfa Chamber of Commerce and Industry revealed an opening in the textile industry in the region. Hence the graduates of potential courses in different areas of textile industry are expected to be able to find jobs easily. Although areas like hair-dressing and stitching demands mostly on entrepreneurship, as the beneficiaries are expected to lack necessary capital for this, they may work on wage for some time. Therefore, courses to be offered should be decided in accordance with the employers' needs.

- Needs analysis baseline survey is believed to have introduced many of the beneficiaries of the center. However, an 'Open House' promotion day is necessary to expand the scope. On a predetermined day, potential beneficiaries can come to the center, join the courses they want, can have a talk with instructors and managers. This is expected to introduce the center and the beneficiaries to each other.
- Traumas of war are still evident on both adults and children. Means of psychosocial counseling are crucial to prevent the social isolation these psychological troubles can cause. Normalization of war and death in the eyes of children and their proneness to violence is especially alarming. To prevent lost generations in the future, special programs of social inclusion targeting such children are critical. The children focus group interviews displayed a demand for Arabic

- speaking, positive, lively instructor who abstains from punishing, and is willing to create new memories through fun activities to make the children forget the war. Moreover, demands from beneficiaries indicate great interest in psycho-social counseling not only for children, but also for adults.
- A prominent complaint concerning children is that they cannot attend school. This negatively affects both their relationship with the local children, their individual career development and also makes it more difficult to overcome the traumas of war. Ministry of National Education assigned one school building each afternoon in every district of Şanlıurfa to offer education for Syrian refugees. Although this is a hopeful start, it is very insufficient when the crowded youth population of the refugees is taken into account. This leaves the private schools established by Syrians as the only alternate for education, which negatively affects the lower income groups.
  - Besides the services for the Syrian refugee population, services specially targeting the disadvantaged groups inside the refugee population are crucial. The survey's findings also indicate how these groups are specifically vulnerable and more desperate. The formation of a structure to help them cope with their problems more effectively, to guide them towards apt workforce is critical. Thus, their inclusion in the activities of the center is to be prioritized, special public relations desk can be established specifically for this task and a shuttle service for their transportation should be considered.

## APPENDIX 1. TEXT FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Firstly, thank you for coming here. My name is Başak Yavçan; I am working as an assistant professor in a university in Ankara, in the department of Political Science. The Turkish Red Crescent built a community center for Syrians in Eyyübiye, and the reason I am here today is to research the needs of the Syrians living in the region. The community center will offer free of charge courses; vocational training courses including language, computing, stitching and tailoring among others, and will also offer psycho-social assistance aimed at children. All these courses will be opened and shaped in accordance to your needs. Now, I will ask you questions on your needs and expectations from the community center, its personnel, the content of the courses. This meeting is anonymous, identity information will not

be taken, and personal information will not be shared when your views are being shared.

There will also be a meeting with men and another with children. A survey study will be performed in the coming week with the participation of over 350 individuals from the region. You will receive immediate feedback as this needs evaluation study will shape the services of the Turkish Red Crescent's community center. Additionally the study will be shared with the governorate, several ministries, local and international non-governmental organizations. Please be clear in your answers and do not hesitate to present views that differ from the views' of other participants. Our aim is not to reach a consensus but to learn your needs and demands. Thank you in advance for you participation.

First name only.

When did you come to Turkey from Syria? When did you arrive at Şanlıurfa?

Where in Syria are you coming from?

How many people live in your household? How many children? Do the children attend school?

Do you experience problems in housing, heating or access to food?

Do you know your legal rights in Turkey?

What is your favorite aspect of living in Turkey?

What is the aspect that you dislike and complain about the most whilst living in Turkey?

Do you face hardship whilst looking for housing, looking for a job, in the workplace, in the neighborhood because you are Syrian? Do you think there is discrimination against you?

*(To be asked to women only)* It is hard to be a woman in this region. All of us face difficulties in daily life. Do you think you face different treatment because you are a woman?  
*(To be asked with great care and very sensitively)* Are you harassed? Do men leer at you?

What kinds of occupational features do the individuals in your household have? Foreign language? Technical? Engineering? Mining? Handicrafts? Hairdressing?

What courses should be offered in this center, aimed at adults? What features should these courses have? What about instructors?

What features should the place have?

Is there anything that you prefer the center shouldn't have?

What services should the center provide besides courses? Informing? Legal counseling? Seminars?

There will also be psycho-social assistance for children in the center. What kinds of personal or social problems do they face? Difficulty in making friends? Finding hobbies?

Would they be willing to come to the center for taking language courses?

What would they expect from these courses?

Thank you for your answers and participation. The community center will be opening next week. We would be glad if you inform your family and friends about the center and attend in the free of charge courses the center offers. I should also remind you that the Red Crescent will not distribute from this center any kind of aid including financial aids. However, I am consulting this project externally and I couldn't have conducted it without you. I want to make a contribution to you from my own consultancy fee, for the time you spared and your efforts. Please do accept these as the symbol of my gratitude.

APPENDIX 2. CHILDREN FOCUS GROUP







## ENDNOTES

- 1 <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>
- 2 M. Murat Erdoğan, Kasım 2014, “Türkiye’deki Suriyeliler: Toplumsal Kabul ve Uyum”, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Göç ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Merkezi (HUGO).
- 3 For in-camp refugee numbers, AFAD’s data (<https://www.afad.gov.tr/TR/IcerikDetay1.aspx?IcerikID=848&ID=16>) from March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and for out of camp refugee numbers Turkish Ministry of Interior Data from ORSAM report number 195 ( Oytun Orhan, “Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Türkiye’ye Etkileri” ORSAM Rapor No: 195, Ocak 2015) is used. The numbers exclude recent migration to the region from Kobane and Tel Abyad.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 İçduygu, Ahmet (April, 2015) Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Long Road Ahead, Migration Policy Institute Report <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/syrian-refugees-turkey-long-road-ahead>
- 6 See the 2013 report of the “Platform for Monitoring the Status of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul” <http://www.esithaklar.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/YokSay%C4%B1lanlar-Raporu.pdf>
- 7 AFAD Population Influx from Syria to Turkey report 2014. <https://www.afad.gov.tr/Dokuman/TR/14820150202172457-11549547929971633783.pdf>
- 8 Oytun Orhan, “Suriye’ye komşu ülkelerde Suriyeli Mültecilerin Durumu: Bulgular, Sonuçlar ve Öneriler”, ORSAM Rapor No: 18, 9 Nisan 2014,  
[http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/2014424\\_orsam%20rapor%20189tur.pdf](http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/2014424_orsam%20rapor%20189tur.pdf)
- 9 <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/turkiye/binlerce-siginmaci-turkiyeye-giris-yapti-190089.html>
- 10 I owe special thanks to Turkish Red Crescent staff İzzettin İri and for their help in recruiting the participants.
- 11 I am thankful to Doç. Dr. Emre Erdoğan, Doç.Dr. Burak Bilgehan Özpek, Doç. Dr. Cengiz Erişen, Doç. Dr. Haldun Yalçınkaya ve Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hakan Övünç Ongur for their comments and feedback on the draft questions.
- 12 The list of neighborhoods where the sampling through door to door scanning is conducted is as follows: Eyyübiye, Onikiler, Muradiye, Hacıbayram, Kendirci, Şih Maksut, Gümüüşkuşak, Türk Meydanı, Ahmet Yesevi
- 13 Kääriäinen, J.T.. (2007) Trust in the Police in 16 European Countries. European Journal of Criminology Vol 4: pp. 409-435

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Süleyman Nazif Sokak No: 12-B Çankaya / Ankara  
Tel: 0 (312) 430 26 09 Fax: 0 (312) 430 39 48  
[www.orsam.org.tr](http://www.orsam.org.tr), [orsam@orsam.org.tr](mailto:orsam@orsam.org.tr)