



# Breaking down Barriers: Getting Syrian children into school in Turkey

**Theirworld**



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS  
GETTING SYRIAN CHILDREN  
INTO SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

COPYRIGHT © 2017 by SETA

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, without permission in writing from the publishers.

SETA Publications 90  
ISBN: 978-975-2459-25-0

Layout: Erkan Söğüt, Hasan Suat Olgun  
Print: Turkuvaz Haberleşme ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., İstanbul

**SETA | FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH**

Nenehatun Caddesi No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TURKEY

Tel: +90 312.551 21 00 | Fax: +90 312.551 21 90

[www.setav.org](http://www.setav.org) | [info@setav.org](mailto:info@setav.org) | [@setavakfi](https://twitter.com/setavakfi)

**SETA | İstanbul**

Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43

Eyüp İstanbul TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 212 395 11 00 | Fax: +90 212 395 11 11

**SETA | Washington D.C.**

1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106

Washington, D.C., 20036 USA

Tel: 202-223-9885 | Fax: 202-223-6099

[www.setadc.org](http://www.setadc.org) | [info@setadc.org](mailto:info@setadc.org) | [@setadc](https://twitter.com/setadc)

**SETA | Cairo**

21 Fahmi Street Bab al Luq Abdeen Flat No 19 Cairo EGYPT

Tel: 00202 279 56866 | 00202 279 56985 | [@setakahire](https://twitter.com/setakahire)

# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS GETTING SYRIAN CHILDREN INTO SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

İpek Coşkun, Celile Eren Ökten, Nergis Dama,  
Mümine Barkçin, Shady Zahed, Marwa Fouda,  
Dilruba Toklucu, Hande Özşarp

# CONTENTS

---

FOREWORD by SETA | 7

FOREWORD by THEIRWORLD | 9

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 11

DATA & ENROLLMENT HIGHLIGHTS | 11

FINANCING HIGHLIGHTS | 12

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS | 13

TEACHING, LEARNING & INTEGRATION HIGHLIGHTS | 14

## INTRODUCTION | 17

## CURRENT SITUATION IN SYRIANS' EDUCATION IN TURKEY | 19

## RESEARCH METHOD | 25

## RESEARCH FINDINGS | 29

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SYRIANS | 29

MANAGEMENT OF SYRIANS' EDUCATION | 34

FINANCING THE SCHOOLS | 42

THE DILEMMA BETWEEN TECS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS | 44

HIDDEN FIGURES OF SYRIANS' EDUCATION: TEACHERS | 47

CURRENT SITUATION AND THE FUTURE OF SYRIAN TEACHERS | 49

TEACHING TURKISH AND COURSE MATERIALS | 57

ADAPTING TO EDUCATION | 63

TRAUMA AMONG SYRIAN CHILDREN | 67

PARTICIPATION OF DISABLED STUDENTS TO EDUCATION | 69

SYRIAN CHILDREN'S EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE | 70

STUDENTS' CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION HABITS | 72

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS | 75

REFERENCES | 78

## Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b> Syrians Staying in and outside of Temporary Refugee Centers	19
<b>Figure 2.</b> Four Provinces that Host the Majority of Syrians under Temporary Protection	20
<b>Figure 3.</b> Rate of Schooling for School-age Syrians	21
<b>Figure 4.</b> Rate of Schooling Based on Gender	22
<b>Figure 5.</b> Number of Syrian Students in 2014-17 and the 2018 Goal for Student Numbers	22
<b>Figure 6.</b> Report Preparation Process	25
<b>Figure 7.</b> 5 Provinces of the Research	26
<b>Figure 8.</b> Individuals and Institutions Included in the Field Study	26
<b>Figure 9.</b> Research Methods of the Fieldwork	27
<b>Figure 10.</b> 5 Reasons of the Out-of- School Children	29
<b>Figure 11.</b> The Institutional Chart of The Management of Syrians' Education	34
<b>Figure 12.</b> Education Fund in the Framework of FRIT	35
<b>Figure 13.</b> Priority Targets in Increasing Physical Capacity in Education	37
<b>Figure 14.</b> Three Standards for UNICEF and MoNE Cooperation	37
<b>Figure 15.</b> Cycle of finance at schools where Syrian students are educated	42
<b>Figure 16.</b> Number of TECs per Institution	43
<b>Figure 17.</b> Teachers employed in the education of Syrians	47
<b>Figure 18.</b> The most widespread book for Turkish teaching in the schools prepared by Yunus Emre Institution	60
<b>Figure 19.</b> The Determinants of Syrian Students' Adaptation to Education	63
<b>Figure 20.</b> The Cycle of Trauma for Syrian Children and Youth	67

## Tables

<b>Table 1.</b> Number of Syrian Students in Public Schools and TECs	21
<b>Table 2.</b> Rate of Syrian refugees' Schooling Based on Population Age in Different Grades	23
<b>Table 3.</b> Syrian Teachers Employed in TECs	23
<b>Table 4.</b> Visits to Temporary Refuge Centers	27
<b>Table 5.</b> Infrastructure and construction work in the framework of FRIT	36
<b>Table 6.</b> Educational Facilities that will be constructed via FRIT grant	36
<b>Table 7.</b> TEC or Public Schools: Advantages & Disadvantages	46
<b>Table 8.</b> Basic problems for Syrians and local teachers	56

---

## FOREWORD by SETA

The impact of humanitarian crises experienced in Syria since 2011 has been felt throughout the world. However, the experience of Turkey, in the context of this crisis, sets an example for the international community. With the open door policy it follows, Turkey is the country in which the largest number of refugees has taken shelter. According to official figures, Turkey has shouldered the largest part of the responsibility by receiving 3,006,298 Syrians. Considering the number of Syrians hosted in our country, it can be claimed that integration of these individuals to social life is crucial.

Education is one of the most important factors in social inclusion, especially as students are faced with the risk of becoming a lost generation when they are distanced from educational opportunities due the crisis. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has identified a road map to prevent this and taken steps towards its implementation. In this framework, 59% of about 1 million Syrian students at basic education level have already received some form of schooling. In addition, all Syrian students currently at school are planned to be integrated into the public education system gradually.

Since the first years of the Syrian crisis, SETA Foundation has supported the inclusion process through various studies on Syrians' legal positions in Turkey and their social inclusion and most primarily; their education. With special sensitivity to the issue of Syrians' education, in this study, SETA Foundation cooperated with Theirworld. Theirworld has proved to be an emphatic partner for SETA Foundation since it has a powerful position in the world with their studies and reports on the plight of Syrians.

I would like to thank PICTES Project Coordinator Haydar Şahin and Assistant Coordinator Sevgi Ernas and Ministry of National Education Lifelong Learning General Director Ali Rıza Altunel for their contributions to this report. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Ministry of National Education Deputy Secretary Ercan Demirci for his full support for this report.

*Burhanettin Duran*  
General Coordinator of SETA





---

## FOREWORD by THEIRWORLD

Just a few years ago, Syria had achieved near universal education. Children and young people benefited from one of the best education systems in the Middle East. Now, over five years into the Syrian crisis, millions of children and youth have flowed across borders into neighbouring countries. Their education prospects plunged and many found themselves vulnerable to exploitation, child labour or discrimination.

Yet despite these setbacks, host countries have invested in helping to ensure that refugee children have the same hope, opportunity and prospects as other young people. Turkey, a country which hosts over 3 million refugees, has gone to great lengths to help ensure access to education and learning. Of the nearly one million school-aged children, two-thirds have been provided with education through temporary education centres or public school integration.

Through our collaboration with SETA, Theirworld has had the opportunity to hear the stories of over 300 individuals and review qualitative and quantitative data to assess not only the state of education for Syrian children in Turkey, but also understand how the financing, education policies and classroom practices promote, or could be adjusted to improve, the learning and retention of refugee children.

The support from the international community falls far short of the need for Syrian refugees in Turkey and the report shows that it will be necessary to move from short to longer-term programming to help fully address the education of Syrian refugees in a more sustainable manner. The report also highlights the strategies to support integration of refugee students in their host communities, address trauma and psychological needs of young people to help promote learning, and uncovers the need to focus on children with disabilities and the connection between education, health and nutrition.

We hope that the findings from this report will help inform Turkish policymakers, school leaders, teachers and partners in the international community as they work together to ensure no refugee child is without education.

*Ben Hewitt*  
*Director of Campaigns and Communications, Theirworld*

## Abbreviations

<b>EU:</b>	European Union
<b>FRIT:</b>	Facility for Refugees in Turkey
<b>MoNE:</b>	The Ministry of National Education
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>PICTES:</b>	<i>Promoting Integration of Syrian Children to Turkish Education System</i>
<b>TEC:</b>	Temporary Education Centres
<b>TRC:</b>	Temporary Refugee Centres
<b>UNHCR:</b>	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugee

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

This study was conducted with the cooperation of SETA Foundation and Theirworld on two main research questions. The first question deals with the reasons why some of the Syrian students are unschooled and aims to provide policy suggestions regarding these causes. The second question focuses on the current situation of the Syrians schooled in Turkey by presenting recommendations which are supposed to enhance the current situation.

- In the framework of the study, interviews were held with Temporary Education Centers (TECs) and Public Schools in which Syrians are educated, NGOs and public institutions in five provinces (İstanbul, Gaziantep, Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Ankara) where the number of Syrians is the highest.
- In the framework of the field study, 6 separate Temporary Refugee Centers (TRC) were visited and interviews were held with students, teachers and administrators.
- Field studies were undertaken between 29th March and 21st April 2017.
- **In this study which includes the views of more than 300 individuals, the quantitative data and qualitative findings regarding the education of Syrians are analysed as follows:**

## DATA & ENROLLMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- According to current figures, 3, 006, 298 Syrians live in Turkey. 833,039 of them are school age children (5-18 years old). This means approximately one third of the Syrians living in Turkey are school age children.

- The number of Syrian students that are schooled in Turkey during 2016-2017 academic year is 492,544. Based on this figure, about 59% of school aged Syrians are in school.
- Out of these students, 65% attend TECs while 35% attend public schools.
- The target for next year is to increase the number of schooled Syrian students to 550,000 and the rate of schooling to 65%. Ministry of Education (MoNE), which has made a decision to convert TECs to Public Schools in the next three years, has planned the number of Syrian students in Public Schools to be 300,000 and the number of Syrian students in TECs to be 250,000.
- 49% of schooled Syrians are females and 51% are males.
- The level where highest enrolment is observed is primary school while high school has the lowest level of schooling. In terms of grade level, schooling is the highest at second grade with 140%. Because parents of the 1st grade age children want to send them directly to 2nd grade without attending the 1st grade. Schooling is the lowest at 11th grade with 15%.
- Rate of schooling in pre-school education is 31%.
- Currently, 6,067 still continue their education in Turkey through open education system.
- 13,116 Syrians serve in TECs as instructors.
- 5,959 educational personnel in the fields of Turkish, Counselling, Classroom and Turkish Language and Literature have been assigned for Syrian students to learn Turkish.
- Syrians' education is managed with the coordination of Department of Migration and Emergency founded in 2016 within the Directorate General for Lifelong Learning under the leadership of the Deputy Under secretariat of the Ministry of National Education.
- 41% of school age children in Turkey are not schooled yet. Parents who did not send their children to school were interviewed in the provinces where the field study was conducted. According to these interviews, five main reasons were underlined for low schooling rates: i. Single parenting, ii. Economic vulnerabilities, iii. High mobility rates, iv. Lack of information and guidance, v. Cultural reasons.

## FINANCING HIGHLIGHTS

- International funding is insufficient given the need. According to the MoNE officials, financial support covers only 10% of the current school and classroom requirements in Turkey.
- One of the most important projects in education is the PICTES Project (Promoting Integration of Syrian Children to Turkish Education System) implemented in the framework of readmission agreement with the EU with a

budget of 500 million Euro. 300 million Euro of the budget is allocated for work on increasing the quality of Syrians' education while 200 million Euro is reserved for school construction.

- Another important organization that cooperates with MoNE in the education of Syrians is UNICEF. Seven school constructions financed by UNICEF, which implements different projects with MoNE to train teachers and increase the quality of education, have been completed and one school in Adana was opened.
- Although there is not a specific share allocated in MoNE general budget in financing schools for Syrian students' education, activities are implemented with the help of school council budgets, support from local administrations and aids from NGOs and international organizations. It has been observed that TECs receive more support in this regard compared to public schools. 2017-18 education budget should be rearranged and in this sense, an affirmative action should be implemented for the public schools hosting Syrian students in particular.

## PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

- The most worrisome factor in financing the education of the Syrians, called attention by the authorities, is the fact that all the above-mentioned projects are short-term projects. Most of them are planned for two years. Turkey needs longer-term projects and support with local and international funds. With short-term projects, we could provide just short-term future for the children.
- Based on the observations and interviews during the field study, school administrators have the most critical role in the education of Syrian refugees. The management structure designed for Temporary Education Centers (TECs) which compose one Turkish and one Syrian administrator works effectively. A similar structure does not exist in Public Schools. Generating a similar structure at Public Schools or employing personnel with advanced Arabic skills who can support the school administrators can be included in the agenda.
- Ministry's decision to convert TECs to Public Schools in the next three years was the highest profile topic during the field study. The biggest reaction against conversion came from Syrians instructors who were the most concerned about the process. Syrians instructors were the group with loudest reactions since they believed they would be unemployed in case the conversion took place.
- Since Public Schools environments are regarded to be more orderly and safer, parents who were interviewed did not have strong reactions to conversion although they had concerns about loss of language and culture.

- According to MoNE authorities, Temporary Education Centers will serve as Transition Education Centers and in three year's time, they will be fully converted to Public Schools. The main motivation behind MoNE policy for this conversion is to establish a preventive model for the barrier to social integration due to the use of Arabic program and very isolated education environment in these centres.
- The biggest risks in this transition process are an increase in attendance problems and potential drop outs. A well designed integration program is necessary to prevent these risks. A preparatory class should be planned to support the transition.

## TEACHING, LEARNING & INTEGRATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Currently, Syrian instructors and Turkish teachers and educators work in cooperation in Syrians' education. In addition to Turkish teachers and teachers on the staff of public schools, more than 5,000 teachers were employed through contacts to support the education of Syrians. 2-year contracts were signed with these teachers.
- While Syrian teachers can work in TECs, they cannot be employed in Public Schools. Although it is crucial to have Syrian teachers serve at Public Schools, the biggest political obstacle to put this into practice is the existence of many Turkish teachers who have not been assigned to any schools yet.
- It has been observed that, geographically, social integration of Syrian children residing in provinces closer to Syria is relatively much better compared to Syrian children living in Ankara and Istanbul. Having similar cultures and existence of people who can speak Arabic are the main reasons for the ease of social interrogation in these cities.
- 41% of school age children in Turkey are not schooled yet. Parents who did not send their children to school were interviewed in the provinces where the field study was conducted. According to these interviews, five main reasons were underlined for low schooling rates: 1. Single parenting, 11. Economic vulnerabilities, 111. High mobility rates, 1v. Lack of information and guidance, v. Cultural reasons.
- The interviews with the teacher, parents and the students regarding the adaptation to education and school environment brought the following to the fore during the interviews: 1. Relationships with teachers and school administration, 11. Learning Turkish, 111. Coeducation, 1v. Parental attitudes.
- Coeducation was often brought up during the interviews with students, teachers and parents. Parents and students stated that they did not want coeducation even though they were provided with separate schools or classes at high school level. Teachers also stated that coeducation made the process

more difficult in terms of classroom management and integration to education since students were highly reactive to this issue.

- Psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress syndrome are important health issues especially for Syrian women and children who were forced to flee to Turkey from Syria. Teachers who stated that they do not have highly traumatic children now compared to the children who arrived during the first periods of the crisis also mentioned that children who lost especially their fathers displayed specific behavioural problems.
- Teachers cited the most common trauma symptoms as peer victimization, bedwetting and introversion. Similarly, internalizing violence was cited as a common attitude among these children.
- According to psychologists who work with Syrian children that were interviewed, war and migration trauma have been converted into domestic trauma. Although most children, especially the ones at primary school levels, came to Turkey at too young ages to recall the war, the trauma in their families can be reflected in domestic relationships.
- Each step that will be taken to overcome trauma should include a process involving especially the mothers. In this context, the number of projects that implemented by the Red Crescent in provinces such as Istanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep to support mothers and fathers in addition to children should be increased and promoted.
- Education of disabled students is one of the biggest problems in Syrians' education. Arrangements can be made in special education centers that serve disabled children in Turkey to include Syrian children by prioritizing Syrian students with physical disabilities with no mental problems due to physical infrastructure limitations that do not allow serving mentally disabled as well. The fact being that for the mentally disabled children, the special curriculum in Arabic and Turkish should be prepared beforehand according to their disability levels.
- It was observed in special education classrooms set up in camps that students with different disabilities (visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically impaired, mentally impaired) are educated in the same classroom. This is not an appropriate method for special education. Each student should receive education based on his/her type and level of disability.
- It is necessary to generate budgets in national and international projects or increase the existing ones for the education of the disabled students.
- Another problem most often reported by teachers in school visits is related to students' consumption and nutrition habits. Children with no regular or healthy nutrition habits generally consume crisps and coke at school can-

teens. It is necessary to supervise school canteens and regulate the sale of these types of food. Also nutrition literacy is imperative in all schools.

- The majority of Syrian students who were interviewed stated that they would not go back to their country even though the war is over. It was observed that the students who reported the desire to go back had problems integrating to education and school environment.

In summary, it was observed in the interviews that Turkey has covered a large ground in creating a system for the education of Syrians but especially human resources and finances will be inadequate for this mission in the upcoming years. Proposed solutions are provided in detail at the suggestions section at the end of the report.



# INTRODUCTION

---

The Iraq War and conflict in Syria put Turkey in a position to host millions of refugees. Turkey, implementing an open door policy to more than 3 million Syrians since the first periods of the crisis in Syria, sought to design appropriate living environments for the refugees who fled the war by establishing Temporary Refugee Centers (TRC).

Today, in the sixth year of the crisis when the number of refugees still displays a tendency to increase, Turkey should put aside the presupposition that the Syrians would go back one day and produce and present sustainable long term policies just like the many European and Middle Eastern countries that host immigrants. In this context, especially the steps that will be taken in education are crucial.

Education should be offered to immigrant children in a manner that will include no gaps in order to ensure the social integration of refugees and social acceptance of the local public.

As of today, Turkey has managed to school 59% of school age Syrian children and youth. The increase in schooling has been an important development considering the fact that this rate was 35% the previous year. However, there is a need for more and better-coordinated work in schooling the rest of the 41%.

MoNE needs to display higher performance to keep the refugee children at school and register the unschooled children to the system. This study intends to contribute to the education of refugees via focusing on the steps that should be taken through these two strategies by analysing the field study undertaken in the five provinces where refugees most densely reside. This report prepared in line with the

views of more than 300 interviewees in five provinces aimed to analyse the current situation of Syrians schooled in Turkey, to determine the reasons why 340,495 students are unschooled and to develop policy suggestions based on the findings.



A TEC in Fatih district of Istanbul.

# CURRENT SITUATION IN SYRIANS' EDUCATION IN TURKEY

---

As a result of the Syrian Civil War that started in 2011, many immigrants have had to take refuge in neighbouring countries including Turkey. According to Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management May 11, 2017 data, currently there are 3,006,298 Syrians in Turkey under temporary protection.<sup>1</sup> The number of school-age (5-18 years of age) children is 1,009,355.<sup>2</sup> The fact that one third of the Syrian population residing in Turkey is composed of school-age children points to the significance of assessing their current educational situation.

**FIGURE 1. SYRIANS STAYING IN AND OUTSIDE OF TEMPORARY REFUGEE CENTERS**

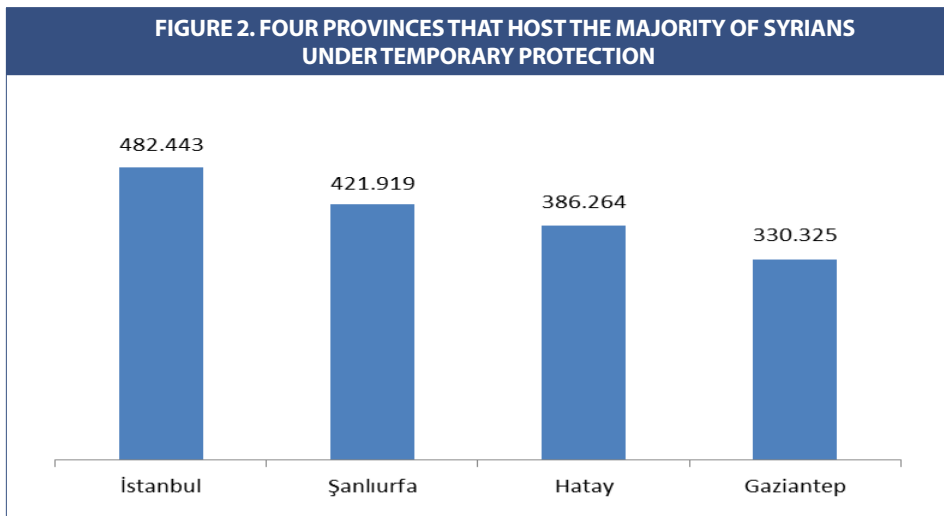


Source: DGMM.

1. Migration Statistics, DGMM, 2017.

2. Depends on the August 2017 statistics of DGMM. The number of school age children has increased in this month.

Only 8% (246,000) of the Syrians living in Turkey reside in the 23 Temporary Refugee Centres located in 10 provinces (Figure 1). The rest live in other provinces throughout Turkey. At the beginning of the refugee influx into Turkey, most of the Syrians were placed in the TRCs, but later they have moved to the city centres. There are different reasons behind this preference; first of all they want to normalize by more interactions and to continue their ordinary life by employment and education.



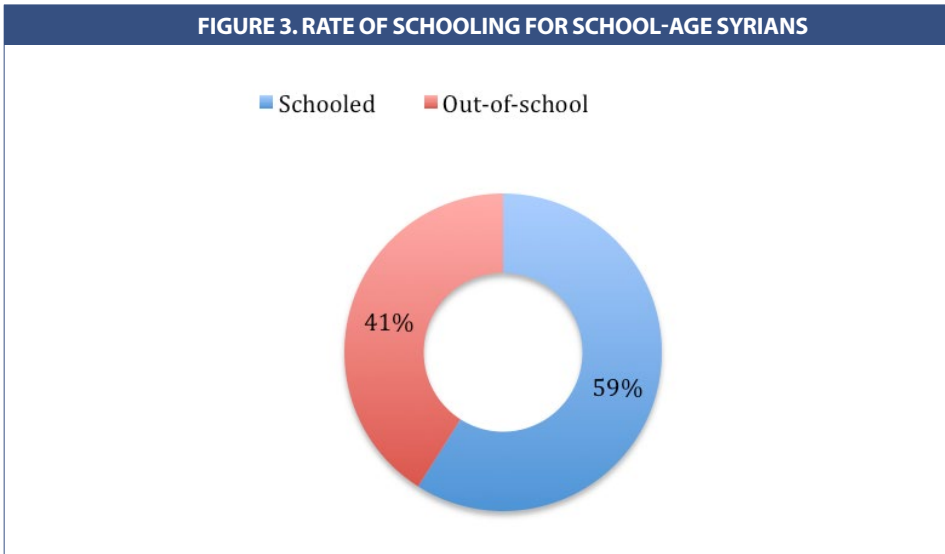
Source: DGMM.

The provinces with the largest number of Syrian population are Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay (Figure 2). Lack of classrooms, which was a prevalent issue in provinces such as Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay even before the Syrians arrived, continues to constitute problems with the extensive refugee flow. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the current situation of education especially in the provinces with dense Syrian populations.

**The number of Syrian students that are in school by 2016-2017 academic year is 492,544.** An additional 15,000 students are reported to be currently in education but this number is not reflected in official records due to problems with these students' ID cards.<sup>3</sup> The majority of school-age Syrian children (65%) are educated in Temporary Education Centers (TEC)<sup>4</sup> owing to the fact that part of the classes in TECs are taught in Arabic and Syrian teachers work in TECs as educators. However, this number is expected to decrease in the future since the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) made it a requirement that Syrian

3. Ministry of National Education Official.

4. SETA Education and Social Policies Directorate, "Education Data and Rate of Schooling for Syrian Children by Year", *SETA Infographic*.



Source: Data obtained from MoNE interview

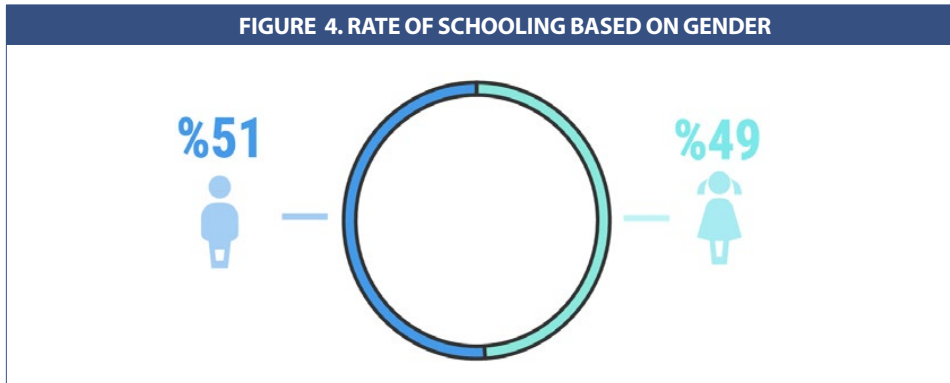
students that would start kindergarten and first grade in 2016-2017 would enrol in public schools and TECs would be transformed. According to the MoNE authorities, this transformation is very essential, because in TECs, half of the 30 hours per week are in Arabic, a matter that cannot provide sustainable communication tools for adaptation to the host community. TECs are known to be more isolated than the public schools, because in public schools, Syrian children have the chance to receive co-education with local students, a matter that makes them adapt easily into the society.

<b>TABLE 1. NUMBER OF SYRIAN STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TECs</b>		
	Number of Schools/Centers	Number of Students
<b>PUBLIC SCHOOL</b>	14,742	201,505
<b>TEC</b>	421	291,039
<b>TOTAL</b>	15,174	492,544

Source: Data obtained from MoNE interview

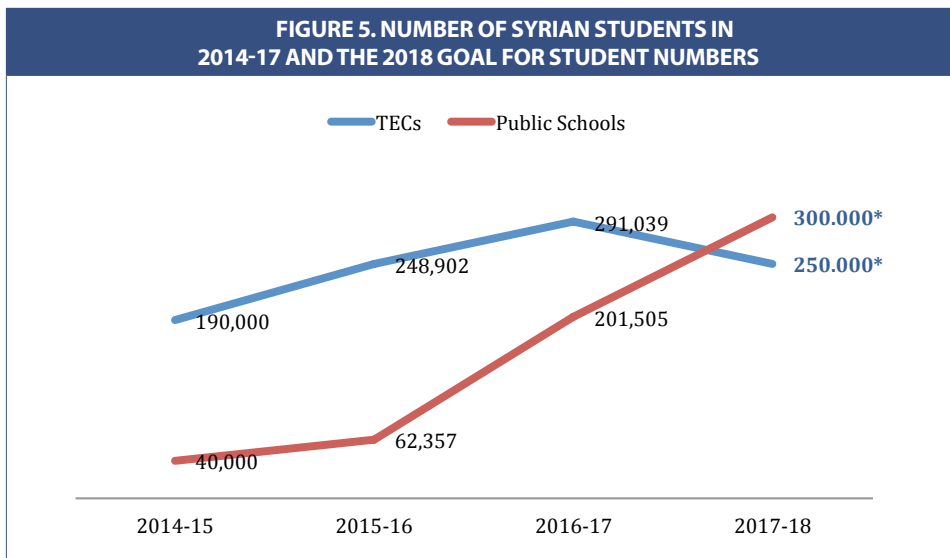
In addition, the rate of inclusion in education can be increased with the requirement of registering the children under 18 that live in camps in TEC. While number of students educated by TEC is 753 per TEC, the number of students enrolled in Public Schools is 12 per school.<sup>5</sup> **The reasons why Syrians favor TECs should be analyzed accurately and adaptation programs should be put into practice to guide more Syrian students to enroll in Public Schools.**

5. Data obtained from MoNE interview



Source: Data obtained from MoNE interview

It is observed that, based on gender, rate of schooling is similar for male and female Syrian students. This proportion changes against the female students at the secondary schools. Because of the cultural reasons, we found that some parents of the female students are not eager to send their daughters to the schools.<sup>6</sup>



Source: Data obtained from MoNE interview

The number of Syrian students has significantly increased since 2014. MoNE officials report that at least 150,000 new Syrian students will be included in the education system in the following academic year. In this context, MoNE aims to increase the number of students in Public Schools to 300000 during 2017-18 academic year.<sup>7</sup>

6. This issue will be discussed in detail in the research findings.

7. estimated numbers by MoNE

TABLE 2. RATE OF SYRIAN REFUGEES' SCHOOLING BASED ON POPULATION AGE IN DIFFERENT GRADES					
	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	TECs	Total	Population	Schooling Rate
Pre-School (Age 5)	20.738	5.023	25.761	82.866	31,09%
1. Grade (Age 6)	70.451	5.280	75.731	80.807	93,72%
2. Grade (Age 7)	25.640	81.766	107.406	76.586	140,24% <sup>8</sup>
3. Grade (Age 8)	17.592	54.357	71.949	76.473	94,08%
4. Grade (Age 9)	13.504	40.048	53.552	70.561	75,89%
5. Grade (Age 10)	18.068	16.672	34.740	61.557	56,44%
6. Grade (Age 11)	7.048	22.681	29.729	62.408	47,64%
7. Grade (Age 12)	5.200	17.869	23.069	55.518	41,55%
8. Grade (Age 13)	3.714	15.005	18.719	53.032	35,30%
9. Grade (Age 14)	6.829	7.630	14.459	55.688	25,96%
10. Grade (Age 15)	2.189	9.020	11.209	55.002	20,38%
11. Grade (Age 16)	1.530	6.206	7.736	52.082	14,85%
12. Grade (Age 17)	999	9.290	10.289	50.459	20,39%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201.505</b>	<b>291.039</b>	<b>492.544</b>	<b>833.039</b>	<b>59%</b>

Source: Data obtained from MoNE interview

Rate of schooling is the highest at primary school level. As table 2 displays, rate of schooling at primary grades is above population age. This is mainly because these students who are older than primary school students with lost school years are now included in the process of education starting with primary education. The rate of schooling is the lowest at high school level followed by pre-school level.

TABLE 3. SYRIAN TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN TECs	
Turkish Teaching Staff	5,959
Syrian Teachers	13,178
Other Staff	52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,189</b>

13,178 Syrian educators and 5,959 Turkish teaching staff provide support for educational services in TECs. Since November 2016, voluntary Syrian educators are given a monthly 1,300 TL incentive payment according to a protocol signed with UNICEF. 19,700 voluntary Syrian educators and teacher candidates were provided with training in teaching formation and successful ones were certified.<sup>9</sup>

8. Since the parents of 6-age children want to send their children directly to the 2. grade without attending the 1. grade, the rate mount on the percent (140%).

9. Interview with MoNE Officials





A public school in Gaziantep.



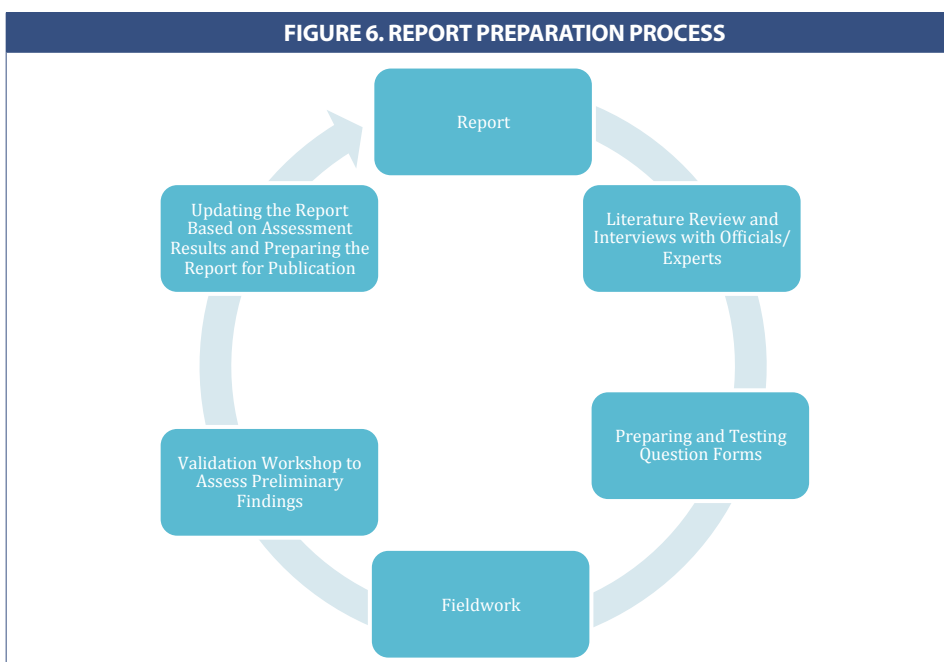
A school library in Nizip.



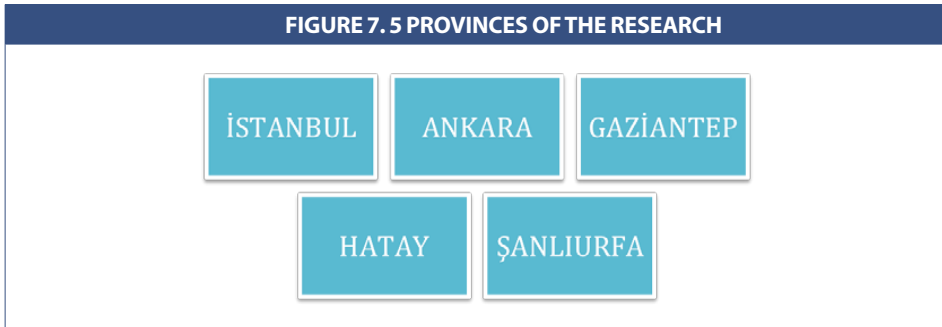
# RESEARCH METHOD

---

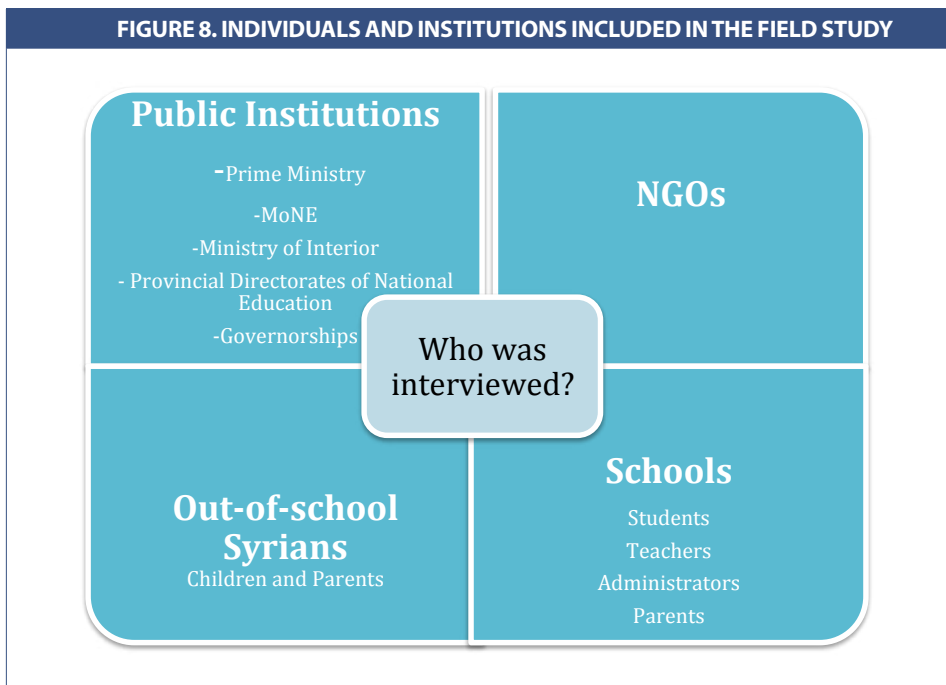
This study, which intended to analyse the current situation of education for Syrians- one third of whom is composed of children- that have been taking refuge in Turkey since 2011 and develop policy suggestions, utilized qualitative research methods along with observations. The face-to-face interviews were used in the study to obtain more in-depth data and to understand the background stories behind the education of Syrian children



Prior to the study, pre-interviews were conducted with officials from the MoNE and some relevant NGOs and problem areas were identified. Provinces that would be included in the study were determined based on these problem areas and question forms were prepared accordingly. Separate question forms were prepared for teachers, administrators, parents, officials and NGOs in Turkish, English and Arabic.



Field study was undertaken in 5 provinces - İstanbul, Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Ankara- between March 29 and April 21. These provinces were selected based on the following criteria: 1. Population density of Syrians, 11. Population age and rate of schooling. Months of March and April were selected to implement the study since data regarding the outcomes of educational activities could be collected in this period.



In addition to TECs and Public Schools; relevant public institutions in Ankara and at local level, NGOs and parents of unschooled Syrian children were included in the framework of interviews in the field study. NGOs were especially helpful to facilitate access to parents of unschooled Syrian children. Almost all interviewed parents were mothers or aunts.



47 interviews and 29 focus group interviews were conducted at 24 schools in 5 provinces. Almost all student interviews conducted at different grades were focus group interviews. Focus group interview method was preferred since one-on-one interviews with individual students are not suggested by experts. Especially, the interviews held with primary and secondary school students were conducted under the supervision of their teachers as well as the psychologist included in our team.

**TABLE 4. VISITS TO TEMPORARY REFUGEE CENTERS**

Province	Temporary refugee centers
Gaziantep	Nizip 1 Tent City Nizip 2 Container City
Hatay	Altınözü Container City Güveççi Tent City Yayladağı Container City
Şanlıurfa	Akçakale Tent City

Field study included camp visits in 3 provinces and camp and school officials in these locations were also interviewed. Since no refugee camps were located in Ankara or Istanbul, camp visits were not possible in these provinces.

In addition to local researchers, two Arab research assistants - were included in the research team so that the interviews would be more effective. During the study, Syrian university students in these provinces were welcomed in the re-

search team following a brief orientation and they participated in the interviews.

After analysing the preliminary findings of the fieldwork, a validation workshop was held to discuss findings with the participation of expert academics and representatives of NGOs and public institutions. Feedback from participants was noted down in detail during the 4-hour workshop and reflected in the final report.

A total of 317 individuals were contacted and interviewed during the study.



A TEC using public schools for education in Bağlılar district of Istanbul.

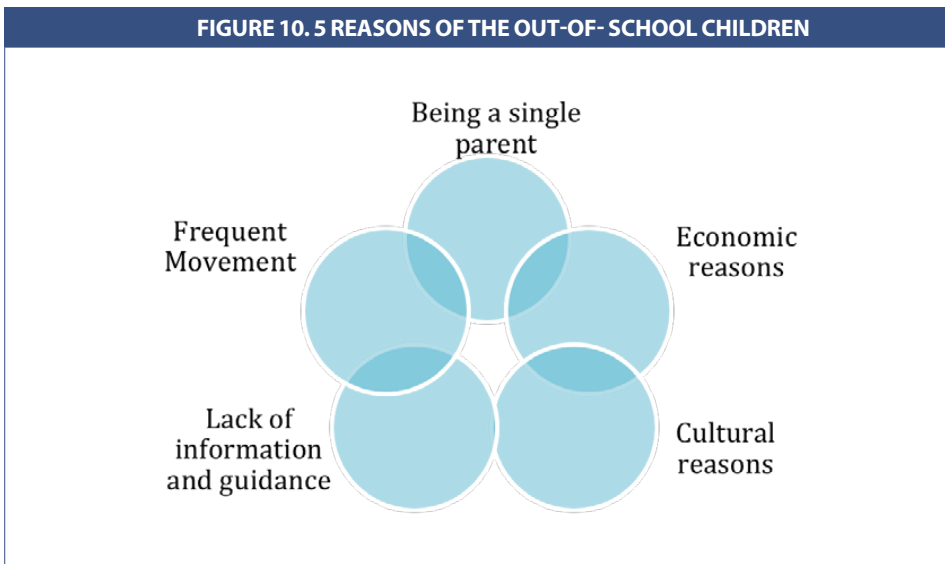
# RESEARCH FINDINGS

---

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL SYRIANS

Today, 41% of school age Syrians in Turkey are still out of school. There are still 450,000 school-age Syrian children and youth in Turkey that do not attend school. It is observed that problems related to schooling are more prominent in metropolises such as Istanbul and Ankara. According to Ministry officials, all Syrian children who want to go to school are enrolled. Even when they are not registered by the Directorate of Migration Management, children can start schools without being issued ID cards and Directorate General of Migration Management expe-

**FIGURE 10.5 REASONS OF THE OUT-OF- SCHOOL CHILDREN**



dites their procedures and provides them with IDs in a short time.<sup>10</sup> Families who have not enrolled their children at school were identified during fieldwork and were interviewed to determine the reasons why these children are out of school.

Interviews conducted with both parents and officials presented five main findings: i. single parenting, ii. High mobility, iii. Lack of information and guidance iv. Economic reasons, v. cultural reasons

Actually, based on their nature, these five reasons are interconnected and directly affect one another.

### Single Parenting & Economic Reasons

Single parenting and economic reasons were often mentioned during the fieldwork. During the Syria war, thousands of women lost their spouses in the conflicts and became widows at an early ages with their children. They have fled to the neighboring countries and found a secure place to start a new life. The vast majority do not live in camps, but in cities and villages, often surviving in deplorable conditions (Van der Zee & Van Den Berg, 2016). Generally their brothers or the eldest son substitute the gap of the fathers. In an interview conducted in a neighborhood mosque in Gaziantep with a group of mothers whose children did not attend school, it was identified that they had lost their spouses in the war. It was found in the interviews that they did not send especially the oldest child to school since he was needed as the “head of the family”. Usually, this and economic reasons are cited for not sending the males to school at secondary or high school levels. The mother in Gaziantep who did not send her eldest son to school summarized the situation:

We would of course want to send him to school but who will work then? There is no father in the house. The rent, the bills. His younger brothers are going to school but my eldest son has to work. I would have wanted him to be educated too of course but the conditions necessitate this.

In economic terms, having their children work to contribute to family budget is very important for the families, as well. This is also due to the difficulties of the parents in obtaining a work permit. This creates the problem of child labour related to Syrian students.

Statistics throughout Turkey shows that 41% of Syrian children still do not have access to schooling. Many interviewees in the field mentioned that many of the school age children who are not at school were working. In this context, an NGO representative in Istanbul verbalized his opinions in the following manner:

Children are employed up to 16 hours a day as child workers especially by textile companies.

---

10. Interview with MoNE Officials

### Cultural Reasons

The cultural reasons leaving the Syrian children and youth out of school come in sight with the female students' education; they are the most vulnerable part of this process in comparison to male peers at secondary school education in particular. According to the research finding it was found during fieldwork, families especially those who reside outside camps, regarded early marriages with suspicion but they did not find the environmental conditions safe enough to send their daughters outside. In this regard, distance between schools and houses are quite significant. If schools were closer to the homes of Syrians, families might be encouraged to send their children to school. The use of public transportation is still regarded as a security concern for some Syrian parents. All in all, economic and security issues can be designated as the main barrier that lie in the face of sending Syrian students to school. This matter was highlighted by parents who demanded alternative transportation arrangements for their daughters.

Although some families have been against early marriages, there are still families inclined to marry their daughter at an early age. A camp manager in Hatay expressed that many female students "left school because they were married". In another interview conducted with Syrian students in a TEC outside the camp about school attendance, Syrian female students reported that "they did not see a future for themselves at school and therefore they thought of getting married". Many students interviewed at schools in Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Gaziantep expressed that their elder siblings "married" or "started working". This situation is directly related to Syrians' view on marriage as well. Marriage under the age of 18, which is prohibited in Turkey, is considered to be normal by Syrians. Since inclusion in the Turkish education system, training and continuing the educational process is hard and costly in tangible and intangible ways, they regard marriage as an attractive option to start a new life for themselves. When Syrian students were asked who among their elder siblings were married, they stated that marriages were with familiar Syrian individuals.

### Frequent Movement & Lack of Information

Another important factor in keeping children out of school is the high mobility rates in the lives of Syrians. For instance, during a school visit, a Syrian child waiting at the school door said that he was not going to school but he would like to. When a visit was paid to his home, it was learned that he came with his family from Istanbul a week ago. His mother explained that they lived in Kilis before Istanbul. It was observed that the majority of unschooled children in Istanbul and Ankara just migrated to these cities from southern provinces. In this context, especially Istanbul receives heavy Syrian domestic flow and it becomes highly difficult to monitor the Syrians. While general policies are implemented

for information and guidance, there is a need for more systematic information geared towards immigrants/refugees at local level. A family that could not send their children to school expressed that their children would not be accepted to school in Istanbul since they received their IDs from Hatay. However, regardless of the location they obtained their IDs, they only need the identity documents to enrol in schools affiliated with the MoNE. This family was not informed about this issue and therefore did not apply to any schools.

Provincial Directorates of National Education and local governments need to provide regular information about this issue. However, it was identified that the desired impact regarding parent information, which provides general information and guidance on educational facilities and opportunities for Syrian children in Turkey was not generated at the local level. The main reason behind this may be related to the lack of human resources caused by the intensity still experienced at Syrian crisis point and high population of Syrian refugees. By the way, no negative attitudes were observed in interviewed parents towards public schools and none of the families was found to keep all of their children out of school. As mentioned above, mostly the eldest children were unschooled due to both cultural and economic reasons.

Finally, In the interview conducted with Ministry officials to increase schooling, the decisions cited below were taken to be implemented at the beginning of the year:

- By 2016-2017 academic year, it was decided to direct Syrians students under temporary protection to public schools led by religious vocational schools or other vocational schools.
- It was mandated to enrol pre-school and 1st grade students to in public schools and it was decided to enrol the students in other grades in an upper class at public schools after providing them with extensive Turkish training.
- 800,000 introductory and informative leaflets were printed and distributed in the provinces where Syrian population is high.
- The number of students targeted in the framework of PICTES (10,000) reached 48,000 this year.

#### **Actions:**

- Identify the students that are out of school by socio-economic and cultural indicators
- Make work permits easier for Adult Syrians to obtain- something that is a major factor in child poverty
- Provide scholarship opportunities for the children who could not attend the schools because of the economic reasons
- Strengthen the interaction between MoNE's local representatives and the mukhtars, micro level administrators of the highest Syrian refugee populated areas.



- Condition the social and humanitarian aid upon school-age children being sent to schools. Red Crescent Card could be conditioned upon this.
- Provide support for the transportation and the free meal for the Syrian students at the schools
- Enhance distance education alternatives for the Syrian children in secondary school age who must work for contribution to their family budget.
- Use the mass media alternatives (TRT El Arabia etc.) to inform the Syrians about the social and educational opportunities for them in Turkey



2nd grade class in a public school in Ankara.



1st grade reading-writing class in a public school in Gaziantep.

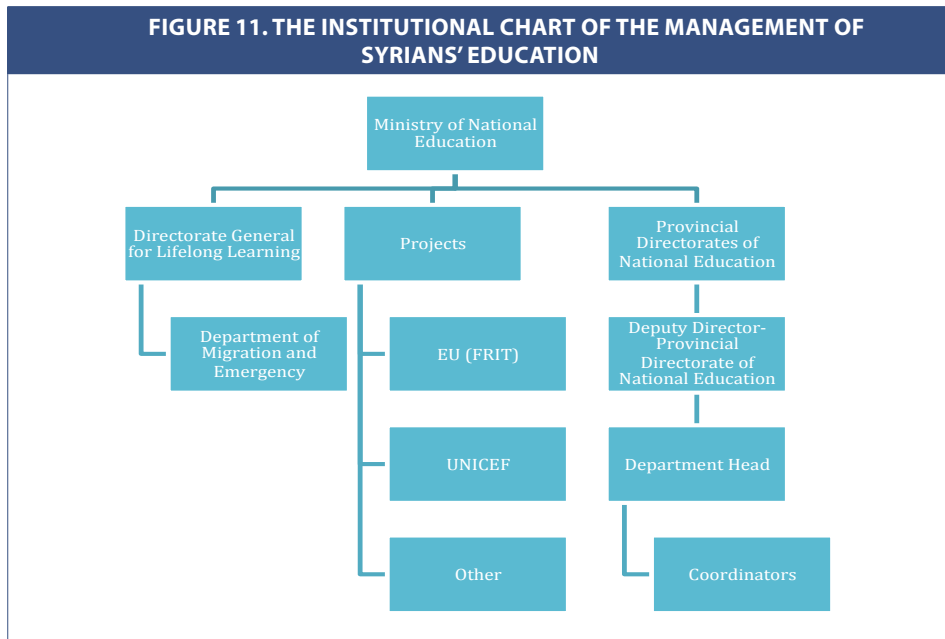
## MANAGEMENT OF SYRIANS' EDUCATION

In Turkey, policies related to Syrians are managed at the level of Prime Ministry. All work generated from the Prime Ministry which directly or indirectly concerns Syrians is handled via cooperation among relevant ministries and public institutions. In this context, Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management serves as the institution responsible for the formalization of the Syrians in addition to Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), which has a significant role since the commence of the crisis.

Similarly, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Security and Ministry of Family and Social Policies are prominent public institutions in this regard. Ministry of National Education is the highest decision making authority for the education of Syrians in Turkey under the coordination of the Prime Ministry.

Department of Migration and Emergency was founded in the Ministry in 2016 under Directorate General for Lifelong Learning coordinated by the Deputy Undersecretary to handle the education of Syrian refugees in Turkey (MoNE, 2016).

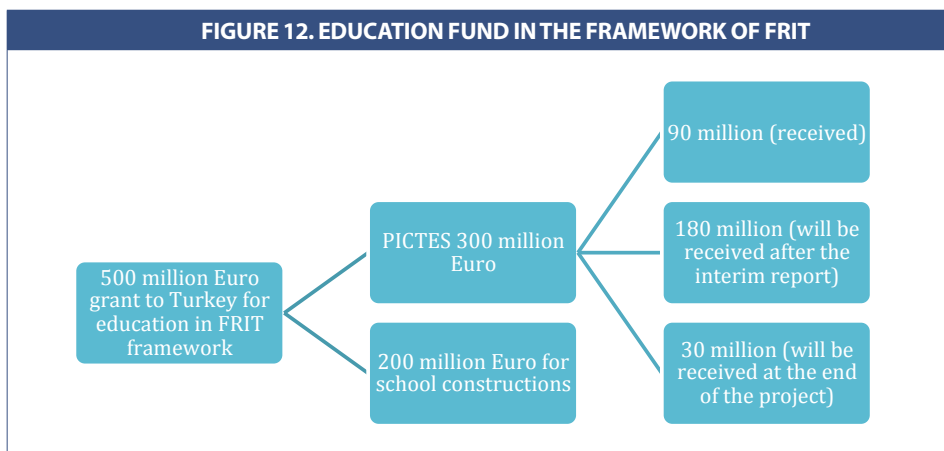
The educational opportunities led by NGOs for the first refugee flow at the time of the crisis in 2011 were addressed on legal grounds by the MoNE circulars in April 26, 2013 and September 26, 2013 and several activities. The document titled *Measures for Syrian Citizen-Guests Hosted outside Camps* is the first document prepared by MoNE related to this issue. Later, a more comprehensive circular titled *Educational Services for Syrian Citizens under Temporary Protection in Turkey* was issued in September 26, 2013. Hereby, MoNE moved on to a more institutional level in Syrians' education (Coşkun & Emin, 2016).



Projects implemented in coordination with the Directorate General for Lifelong Learning are crucial in Managing Syrians' Education as well.

### EU- Turkey Agreement

As part of the EU-Turkey deal in 2016, the EU made a commitment to Turkey to allocate financial support and, when necessary, technical support including the allocation of 3 billion Euro in order to carry out the needs of irregular immigrants and increase reception capacity (Ekinici, 2016). 500 million Euro of this amount is allocated for education by the EU Delegation in the framework of Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT).<sup>11</sup>



Promoting Integration of Syrian Children to Turkish Education System (PICTES) Project and current UNICEF work towards teachers are noteworthy. In the context of PICTES, 90 million Euro was received and relevant activities were implemented. According to the agreement with EU, PICTES Interim Report will be submitted in September, 2017. PICTES Project will terminate in September, 2018. According to the agreement made with the EU, 200 million of the 500 million Euro provided to support education is allocated for school constructions.

This amount will be paid through World Bank (WB) and German KfW Development Bank. **According to Ministry officials, this financial grant covers only 10% of total demand for schools.** Based on the analysis of Ministry of Development, the number of classrooms needed by Turkey to teach Syrians is 26,615. The number of classrooms planned to be constructed with EU support is **2,510 (105 schools)** (68 M€ KfW 30 schools, 200 M€ EU 75 schools). World Bank and German KfW Development Bank will act as intermediary institutions in school constructions planned in 17 provinces.

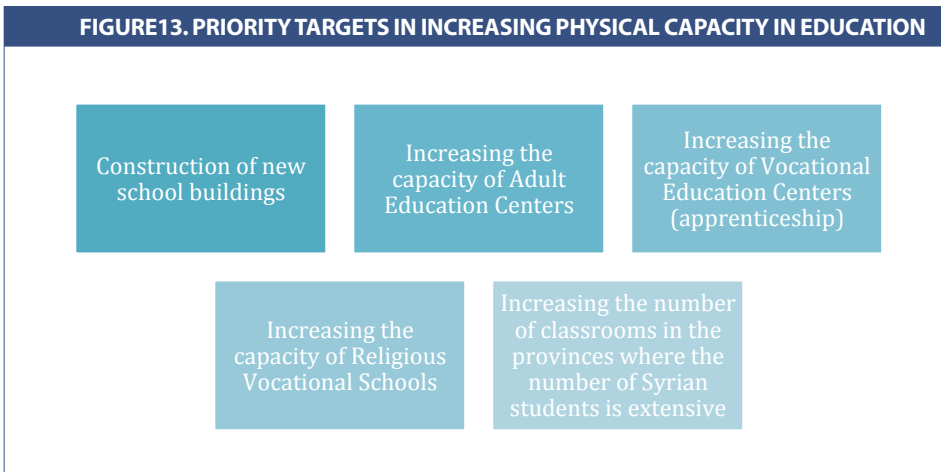
11. Interview with MoNE Official.

TABLE 5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION WORK IN THE FRAMEWORK OF FRIT		
SUGGESTED PROVINCES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EU FINANCIAL SUPPORT		
PROVINCE	NUMBER	INTERMEDIARY
Şanlıurfa	6	KfW
Kilis	6	WB
Adana	6	WB
İstanbul	6	WB
Ankara	6	WB
Bursa	6	WB
Gaziantep	5	KfW
Mardin	5	KfW
Kahramanmaraş	5	WB
Mersin	5	WB
Konya	5	WB
Hatay	5	WB
İzmir	4	WB
Diyarbakır	2	KfW
Kayseri	1	WB
Osmaniye	1	WB
Adıyaman	1	KfW
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	

TABLE 6. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES THAT WILL BE CONSTRUCTED VIA FRIT GRANT	
Educational Facilities	Number
Primary Education Facilities	36
Secondary Education Facilities	25
Vocational Education Facilities	13
Adult Education Facility	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>

Based on the interview with Ministry officials, a small amount of the grant that will be used for construction was deposited to MoNE a short time ago. As of now, prefabricated classrooms are still used as additional classes in many

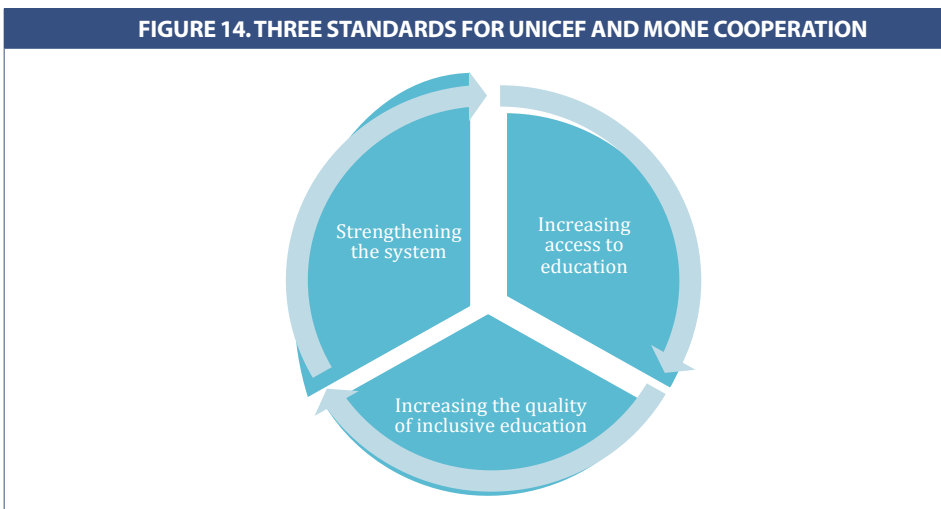
schools. Ministry officials have stated the priorities in developing school infrastructures as follows:



However, according to the officials, school construction has not yet started given bureaucratic delays and therefore no additional spaces for children in schools would be available for the 2017-18 term.

### Other Initiatives

The EU fund could not keep up with the urgent need for the new schools and classrooms construction. That's why the MoNE is seeking for the alternative funds for the constructions. A plan to construct new buildings or removable steel construction classrooms at the schools with suitable yards has been put forth. School and classroom constructions are going on with the help of non-EU funds from Kuwait, New Zealand, Taiwan, Republic of South Korea.



Source: Based on UNICEF data.

UNICEF provides support for incentive payments for volunteer instructors, training of volunteer Syrian instructors and training of trainers for Turkish teachers employed in schools where Syrian students are enrolled. Similarly, UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), another UN organization active in Turkey, supports the educational processes by distributing educational sets to schools, providing Turkish learning materials and preparing and distributing educational leaflets.


**PICTES**  
Promoting Integration of Syrian Children to Turkish Education System

***PICTES** has been implemented by the Ministry of Education since October 4, 2016 with direct grant management under **Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT)** program developed by the EU to support Syrians living in Turkey in humanitarian aid, health, psycho-social support, education and migration management issues.*

*The project is implemented in 23 provinces where the population of Syrians under temporary protection is the largest. The project includes activities for in-school and out-of-school Syrian children such as teaching Turkish, Arabic language training, remedial/catch-up and support/back-up courses, transportation services, supplying educational materials, increasing awareness about educational opportunities, preparing an examination system to identify students' and teachers' level of education including their Turkish levels, guidance and counseling services, providing necessary educational equipment, teacher training, training for MoNE administrative staff and other personnel and monitoring and evaluation.*

*A total of **7400 individuals** will be employed in the framework of the project: 5600 Turkish instructors, 500 guidance counselors, 100 Arabic teachers, 1200 security and cleaning staff. As of May, **5959 personnel** have been employed in the project.*

*The project is implemented in 23 provinces.*



**Based on these goals, the activities completed by May, 2017 in the framework of the project are as follows:**

- **Remedial/Catch-up Training:** Training offered to 10,000 Syrian children at different educational levels will continue during the months of June, July, August and September.
- **Training Administrative Personnel:** “MoNE Administrative Personnel Training-1” was organized between January, 30-February 3, 2017 and “MoNE Administrative Personnel Training-2” was organized between March 27-31, 2017 in Antalya in the context of MoNE Administrative Personnel Training. With Provincial Coordination Teams Meeting organized between March 01-04, 2017, **total number of trained administrative personnel is 2129.**
- **Transportation Services:** 40.000 Syrian students will be provided with transportation services. “Syrian Student Transportation Module” work has started.
- **Provision of Educational Materials:** “Workshop for Developing Arabic Teaching Programs and Materials” was organized in Gaziantep between January 16-20, 2017 and “Board of Review to Procure Turkish Supporting Materials” was held between April 17-21 in Ankara in the context of purchasing, revising and developing educational materials. Second part of this activity was completed in Ankara between May 08-12, 2017.
- **Examination System:** Work has started with MoNE Directorate General for Measurement, Assessment and Examination Services in order to develop and implement an exam system for placement.
- **Guidance and Counseling Services:** In the context of school guidance and counseling services for Syrian students, **491 guidance counselors** were employed in 23 provinces via assignments in March 2017.
- **Field Visits:** 40 TECs and 29 Public Schools were visited in 11 provinces in the framework of field visits and monitoring reports were prepared for each province. Indicative interface templates were prepared for the Web monitoring portal. Monitoring forms and report templates were prepared to ensure standardization in field monitoring activities.

## Provincial Directorates of National Education

The most important and difficult task in managing Syrians’ education falls to Provincial Directorates of National Education at the local level. The special desks for Syrians refugees have been teamed up with the provincial directorates in 23 provinces of Turkey.<sup>12</sup> The authorized institutions to implement the decisions

12. Adana, Adıyaman, Ankara, Antalya, Batman, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Kilis, Kocaeli, Konya, Malatya, Mardin, Mersin, Osmaniye, Sakarya, Siirt, Şanlıurfa.



taken centrally are the Provincial Directorates of National Education that work in coordination with the governorships.

Interviews were conducted with officials from Provincial Directorates of National Education in the context of the fieldwork and their needs were analyzed. According to officials, the number of personnel who work with Syrians was insufficient and they emphasized that human resources should be enhanced both qualitatively and quantitatively. Officials in Provincial Directorates of National Education reported that when there was a speculation about teacher recruitment, especially Syrian teachers swamped the organization and they had a difficult time dealing with the queries.

Besides, the officials from the directorates underlined that the coordination with the directorates in the other provinces worked quite well thanks to the monthly meetings organized by the Deputy Under Secretariat of the MoNE, at this meeting the representatives from 23 provinces have chances to report the local problems and demands to the MoNE's central representatives and also they could exchange their views with the other provinces' representatives.

### School Management

School administrations are the principal actors in effective continuation of processes both in TECs and Public Schools where Syrian students are educated. In TEC management, there is a Syrian administrator in addition to the local school administrator. This Syrian administrator is responsible for supporting the school administrator in coordinating Syrian students and teachers.

Both administrators were interviewed when TECs were visited in the framework of the study. Syrian administrators do not receive more payment than Syrian teachers for their work. Syrian administrators are identified by Provincial/District Directorates of National Education. The main criterion for being assigned as a Syrian administrator is competence in Turkish. Administrators are assigned from among Syrian teachers with sufficient competence in speaking and writing in Turkish.





The tandem administration model found in TECs does not exist in public schools. Public schools are managed by local school administrators and deputy administrators. Generally, one of the deputy administrators is assigned to the education of Syrian students at the school. Designing public schools' management models in a similar fashion to TEC administration model may have positive impact since it will expedite the adaptation processes for students and teachers.

The interviews pointed to the fact that the lack of strategy development for schooling out-of-school Syrian students was the weakest area for school administrations both in public schools and TECs. It is observed that school administrations do not have a plan and time to motivate unschooled children to attend school. It means at the local level, the schools are individually supposed to detect the unschooled children living in the same district. However the lack of strategy in this arena stems from time constraints to lack of contact of out-of-school children due to the extensive work put in adapting current school students. The Syrian coordinator interviewed in Istanbul, Ümraniye explains the situation in the following statement:

Actually, we already know that too many children are out of school in this region but due to extensive work in the school and our efforts to find solutions to our students' and teachers' problems, we are not left with much extra time. Maybe non-school organizations like NGOs may identify these children and guide schools in this regard.

As expressed by the Syrian coordinator and revealed by our observations at the schools, the administration can only pay attention to their student profiles and NGOs may support them in this respect, however, it is crucial to activate an action plan by mapping unschooled children with the cooperation of local governments and neighborhood administrations (*muhtarlık*).

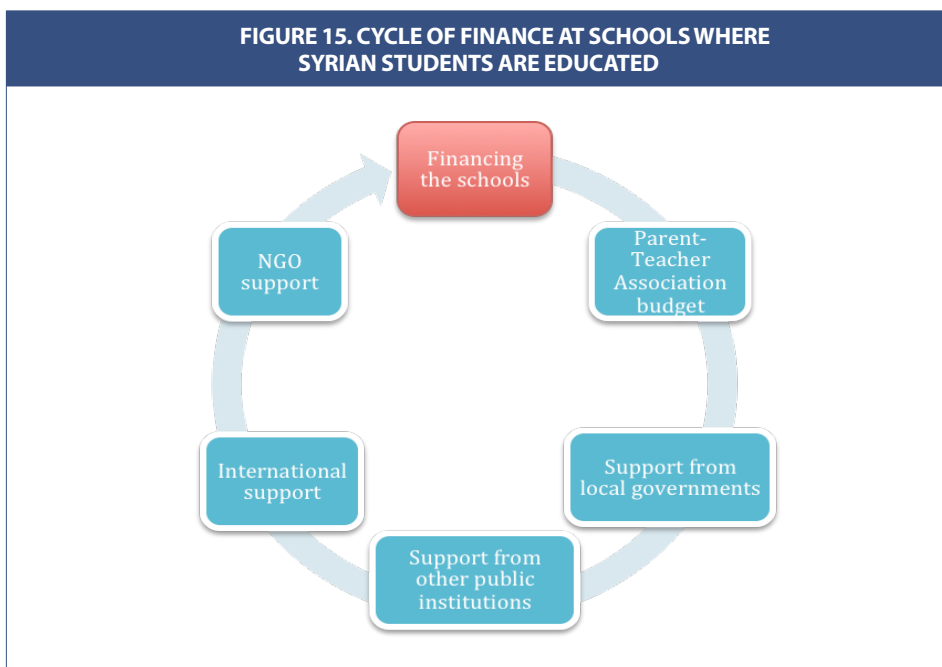
## Actions

- To increase the human resources working for the refugee students at the MoNE and the provincial Directorates of National Education
- To train the current human resources related to the management of the Syrians' education both in local and national level by different courses that international organizations could participate as well.
- To train the officials of the directorates and the school principals for the financial management.
- To develop accountability mechanism at school and provincial level
- To design public schools' management models who host Syrian students in a similar fashion to TEC administration model to expedite the adaptation processes for students and teachers.
- To make the impact analysis of the project supported by the EU and other local and international initiatives

- To meet the demand for the new schools buildings and classes some culture centres of the municipalities could be utilized.

## FINANCING THE SCHOOLS

One of the issues often addressed in the interviews held with school administrations is the financing of schools. A specific budget item has not yet been allocated for Syrians' education in the general MoNE budget. This issue was regarded as problematic by school administrators who emphasized the need for a specific budget item for the future.



Both public schools and TECs are financially supported in a manner shown in Figure 12. Of course, the school administrators are the key factors in receiving and managing this support. Using the funds coming from different resources effectively and based on need is the fundamental responsibility of a school administrator. Financial support from NGOs was essential for the sustainability of TECs when there was no international support. Similarly, teacher-parent association budgets are highly significant hence the financial source that the schools depend on in addition to MoNE general budget is teacher-parent association/school council budgets generated by parental contributions. Considering the fact that the majority of TECs are located in the buildings of public schools, where the cost of the Syrian students are met thanks to the school council budget financed by the local families not Syrians.

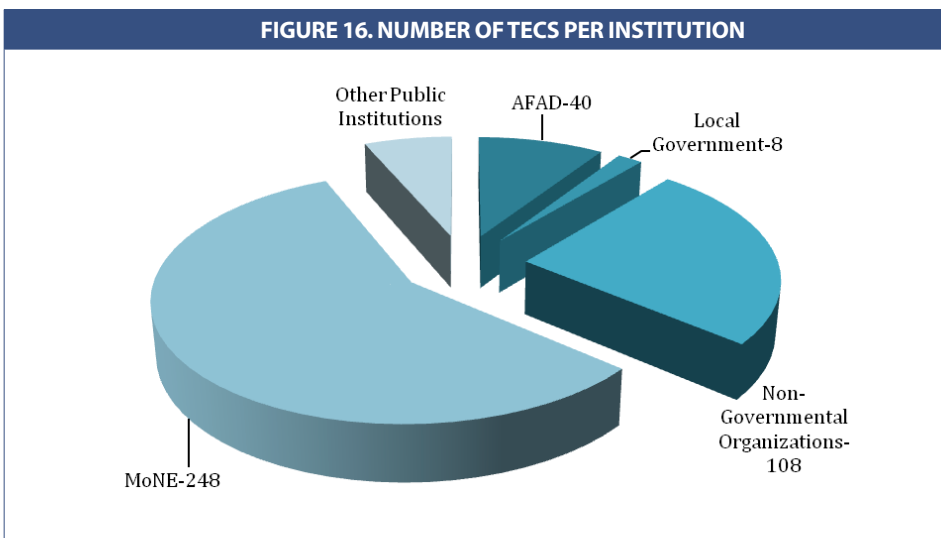


TECs are allocated different types of financial support provided by international projects. However, no systematic support exists for public schools where Syrian students are enrolled.

The fact that parents of refugee children are not able to contribute to school council budget may sometimes cause reactions from Turkish parents in metropolises such as Istanbul and Ankara. Public schools where Syrian students are educated do not receive extra grants from the government for these students. Recently, a significant financial support was given to TECs by UNICEF. TECs are provided with 30 TL education grant per student. This grant is transferred to schools by District Directorates of National Education. However, at times problems in transferring the money occurs due to intensive supervision processes and sometimes similar delays are experienced due to poor financial management skills of personnel employed in these directorates. A total 20 million liras was transferred to 21 provinces with this support. A UNICEF official stated that some provinces have not used up their allocation and the unspent amounts will be expressed as shoestring budget in the next term.

While TECs can receive support only when they use public school buildings, no support is available for public schools where Syrians are educated with a Turkish curriculum. Hence, the same external financial support should be provided to public schools where refugees are schooled. The UNICEF official who was inter-

FIGURE 16. NUMBER OF TECs PER INSTITUTION



Source: Data obtained from MoNE

viewed regarding this issue stated that plans were made to offer financial support to Public Schools as well. Similarly, coordinators in PICTES project reported that plans were under way to include Public Schools in financial support schemes.

Figure 16 shows, other governmental institutions, local governments and NGOs also have important roles in supporting TECs just like the Ministry. Although international financial support such as FRIT and UNICEF and financial aid offered by NGOs are crucial, their sustainability should be addressed separately. For instance, a MoNE official who was interviewed emphasized the fact that the FRIT grant received from EU would terminate in two years' time and added:

We cannot limit our projection related to Syrians' education with two years. We know that we will face a problem in finances in two years' time. 500 million Euro support contracted with EU is significant but it is only a short term solution to cover two years. 500 million Euro is not sufficient when you consider the size of the crisis. It helps us breathe for now but it cannot completely eliminate problems.

In addition, MoNE has taken the management of TECs from NGOs, It is possible to experience problems in identifying new financial sources for school administrations in case the management of TECs is taken from NGOs

## Actions

- To report the schools' financial needs annually
- To allocate financial support to the public schools which host Syrian students
- To train school principals and coordinators for the methods of the outsourcing of the school budget
- To create a NGO coordination, which provides a financial pool for the disadvantaged schools

## THE DILEMMA BETWEEN TECS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As we know, there are currently two alternatives in Syrian students' education: TECs and public schools. TECs established with NGO initiatives since 2011 have been highly effective in the education and training of Syrian children and youth. However, it is rather difficult to claim that TECs provide a good model for taking sustainable steps in socialization. Hence, since last year, the Ministry has started work to transform TECs to public schools. A senior executive in the Ministry addressed the dilemma of TECs and public schools in his interview and stated the following:

In 2011, it was expressed in Ankara that a possible civil crisis would be at our door in case the number of Syrians reached 250,000. The TEC model was generated during that period for a population of 250,000 and thinking that this population would return to their country. Today, 3 million Syrians are living in our country and we do not foresee

that many of them would return to Syria. Therefore, we need to have long term planning in education. For this reason, TECs do not meet the demands in the existing situation. TEC became a brand name but it is not sustainable in education. We are planning to convert TECs into Public Schools in the next three years. Hence, these centers are not called Temporary Education Centers anymore but Transition Education Centers.

**The first and most important steps for the transition have taken place this year. According to the plan, students starting 1st, 5th and 9th grades will have to continue their education with a Turkish curriculum even when they attend TECs.** During the interviews held at schools, teachers and administrators were asked about their views on the effectiveness of this practice. The interviewees stated that progress was made for 1st and 5th graders but the practice did not provide the desired outcome for 9th graders. This finding was also confirmed in the interview conducted with the officials from the Ministry.

The interview conducted with Ministry officials especially focused on Public Schools' readiness for this transition because readiness of schools' physical infrastructures for the new students is an important concern in the transition. The interviewed authorities stated that the number of Syrian students in Public Schools is expected to increase to 300,000 the following year and that next year the administration will have a harder time due to this increase.<sup>13</sup> A TEC administrator in Ankara who used a public school building, which the highest number of Syrian students attended, expressed his concerns about the transition:

By founding TECs, we saved hundreds of thousands children from the streets. To shut down TECs at a moment's notice is very wrong. If we do that, we will send them back to streets, we have to progress gradually.

Among the interviewees, Syrian teachers gave the harshest reactions to the conversion of TECs to Public Schools. However, their reactions were mostly to the possibility of losing their jobs rather than the fact that education will be provided in Turkish. Syrian teachers stated that they would be unemployed when the transition of TECs were completed.<sup>14</sup> Similar concerns were expressed by classroom and Turkish teachers employed in TECs for teaching Turkish. Local teachers also stated that this new model is sustainable but did not want the centres to be closed since they would be unemployed when the transition is complete.

Also teachers suggested that priority should be given to Turkmen students who speak Turkish fluently in the transition from TECs to Public Schools. These students are still taught with the curriculum provided in TECs. According to teachers, these students should urgently be transferred to public school curriculum and taught with local students.

13. Interview with Ministry official- Interview with officials from Provincial Directorates of Education.

14. This issue came up in all interviews held with Syrian teachers employed in TECs.

When the situation in the Public Schools and TECs visited in the framework of field visits were taken into consideration, the necessity of preparing an analysis regarding the advantages and disadvantages as in Table 4 became evident. The experts who attended the workshop organized to debate the preliminary findings of the fieldwork discussed the issues using this analysis. According to this analysis, while TECs provide significant solutions in short term, they will not be sustainable models in the long term to ensure Syrian students’ adaptation to Turkish educational system.

TABLE 7. TEC OR PUBLIC SCHOOLS: ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES		
	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>TEC</b>	Education is provided in the mother tongue Education is provided by teachers that use the same language	Delays social adaptation Has no validity Creates ghettoization in education Includes poor monitoring and supervision Offers unsafe physical and environmental conditions
<b>PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	Expedite social adaptation Offer internationally recognized certificate Offer the opportunity to become bilingual Offer safe educational environments	Risk of absenteeism Increase in drop outs

However, the aspect that needs to be taken into consideration by the Ministry in the transition from TECs to public schools is the risk of increased absenteeism and drop outs. It is necessary to create a process of adaptation at Public Schools in order to minimize this risk. Adaptation processes are mainly handled by schools and several different models exist in this regard based on the performance of school administrations and teachers. There is a need for standardization in adaptation. For instance, it was suggested in the same workshop that preparatory class model can be used in adaptation. In short, **quick steps that will be taken without planning a standardized adaptation model in transition to Public Schools will result in student losses and will create the most undesired outcome for the Syrians’ education.**

On the other hand, the majority of TECs continues their services in the buildings of Public Schools since it proved difficult to monitor and inspect detached TEC buildings rented in physically and environmentally unsafe locations. With the practice of using Public Schools as TEC locations, it was possible to monitor TECs better. TEC students who start their education when local students

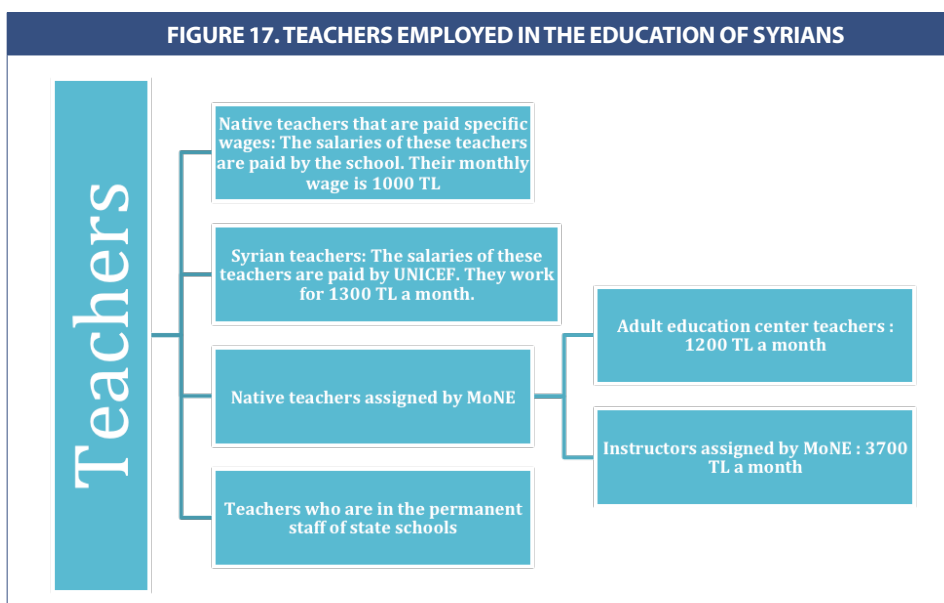
are done for the day (about 14.30) at schools with full-time schooling receive 6-7 hours training every day. TECs provide block scheduling so that students are not out too late in the evening especially in the winter.

### Actions:

- Create a transition model from TECs to public schools such as a preparatory year.
- Monitor the academic development of the students who transferred to public schools from the TECs.
- Monitor the language development of the students and transfer them to public school if the Turkish competence of them is enough to get Turkish curriculum.
- Entitle the parents to make the school choice
- Monitor the drop out and absenteeism rates of the students studying at the public schools and TECs as well
- Make a needs assessment for the disadvantaged public schools and equip their needs like classroom material, technological equipment etc.
- Standardize the security measures for all schools

## HIDDEN FIGURES OF SYRIANS' EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Both local teachers and Syrian teachers provide services in the education of Syrian students. Syrian teachers started to provide voluntary services in TECs from the moment they were founded. Local teachers also started to work in TECs after the majority of TEC administration was passed over to MoNE in 2013. Syrian teachers were preselected by TECs using oral, written or both types of exams. Local teachers were employed in TECs since 2013 especially to teach Turkish.



As can be seen in Figure 17 a standard wage is paid to Syrian teachers employed in the education of Syrians, but no standard wages exist for assigned teachers other than teachers in MoNE staff. Standardization in wages can be more motivating for teachers especially when they work for low wages. In addition to wage issue, teachers employed both in TECs and at Public Schools for the education of Syrians were observed to experience extensive concerns for the future. Since the assignments of the majority of teachers will be terminated in the next two years, they experience intense anxiety about what they will do after this period. Hence, teachers are seeking alternatives. A young classroom teacher in Ankara summarized the situation in the following words:

We are wondering what will happen to us at the end of two years. Actually, this anxiety occupies our minds all the time. Therefore we are preparing for exams on the one hand to transfer to teaching on permanent staff. Of course we would like to develop materials instead of studying for PPSE but the uncertainty of our situation impels us to study for PPSE.

Similar concerns were addressed by a Turkish teacher assigned in March 2017 and interviewed in a primary school in Gaziantep who made note of the fact that they were in a more negative position in terms of professional deformation<sup>15</sup>, and Turkish compared to other teachers:

Believe me; our professional deformation is higher compared to teachers who teach local students. It is a whole new world and you need to determine your route. Of course we feel the moral support of the government in this process but we have serious exhaustion in terms of materials and classroom management. We are a bit left to our own devices.

During the fieldwork, while teachers, who started work in November, 2016 attended an adaptation program, no adaptation program was provided for teachers who were assigned in March, 2017. Actually, these programs should be planned before teachers start their posts and it should be ensured that they are more prepared. Teachers were asked whether they received any training on topics such as the education of refugees during their undergraduate training. Almost all teachers stated that they did not take any courses related to immigration but teachers graduated from Department of Turkish Teaching expressed that they took a semester of teaching Turkish as a foreign language in the 3rd year. The reason why teachers feel unprepared to teach refugees is related to the lack of courses and professorships at universities regarding these issues.

In Syrians' education, the profile of local teachers is younger compared to

---

15. The local teachers of the Syrian students are mostly very young and inexperienced and they are supposed to teach both Turkish and their fields like math, science etc. that's why these teachers could wear out faster than the other teacher who don't teach the Syrian students.



teachers from Syria. Teachers expressed that primary school teachers had a hard time especially in classroom management and this fact was also observed in school visits. For instance, it was observed that a local teacher in the 1st grade of TEC in Ankara was not able to provide in-class management and asked for help from a Syrian teacher in the middle of the class hour. Similar cases were observed in different TECs in different provinces.

However, the education of Syrians is completely undertaken by local teachers in public schools. While local teachers can work in TECs, Syrian teachers cannot yet work in public schools. Planning should be done to employ Syrian teachers in public schools in the long run. However, in this case, immense reaction should be expected from local teachers who cannot be appointed to Public Schools.

## CURRENT SITUATION AND THE FUTURE OF SYRIAN TEACHERS

Common findings were obtained from the interviews held with Syrian teachers who serve with “voluntary” status and are reimbursed for their services in the education of Syrians in TECs including the camps. One of the most critical issues for Syrian teachers in their adaptation to educational processes in Turkey was found to be the differences in their pedagogical formations. While pedagogical formation is compulsory to teach in Turkey, there are differences in the pedagogical formations of Syrian teachers based on needs and conditions. In an interview conducted in Nizip, an authority expressed the situation with the following statements:

In the summer, we assigned many Syrian teachers with an oral interview. There is no formation system in Syria like the one in Turkey. You don't even need to finish university to teach in rural regions. It is sufficient to graduate from high school. I know all these since I often used to go to Syria before the war.

These teachers did not receive any systematic teacher training in Turkey before 2015-2016 either. The first steps to train Syrian teachers were taken by the micro work of NGOs especially in the early periods. This work was organized at local level and mostly at TEC level. It is reported by local administrators that this work was not systematic (Coşkun and Emin, 2016). Ministry and UNICEF cooperated in 2015-2016 to provide more systematic teacher training. 514 Syrian teachers were trained as teacher trainers in the framework of the first activity organized with Ministry of Education Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development and UNICEF cooperation. Training of trainers was provided by 21 academicians from different universities for 2 weeks and 90 hours. The trainings were given to the first group composed of 257 teachers in August 08-19, 2016 and to the second group composed of 257 teachers in August 22- September 2, 2016. Following this training, 514 teacher trainers trained approximately

20,000 Syrian teachers for 90 hours in two weeks in the cities they resided. The trainings were organized in two groups and the training for the first group composed of 10,000 teachers was completed in August 22-September, 2, 2016 while the training for the second group composed of 10,000 teachers was completed in September 5-23, 2016 (Coşkun and Emin, 2016).

## Certification

Another issue often addressed in the interviews related to Syrian teachers' formations is the difficulty to obtain the original diplomas for many of the teachers. During field interviews, it was stated that teachers whose diplomas were either lost or damaged in the process of immigration to Turkey had to try different methods to prove that they indeed had diplomas. This fact shows the need for an assessment program that can be used by Syrian teachers to prove their competencies before this necessity creates a new sector for "counterfeit diplomas". Depending on the diploma as the sole document to prove competence will pave the way for the creation of an illegal sector that would exploit Syrian adults and harm students. A Syrian coordinator expresses this issue in the following manner:

*Counterfeit diploma; yes, that exists, but they came from war, they could not collect their documents; that is why it happens, bombs are exploding in the house, they come without their diplomas or they lose them on the way here. But we can assess who are teachers and who are not. We ask questions etc.*

Statements of a Turkish teacher employed in a camp as coordinator also confirm this situation:

*Individuals who work in our school are not teachers actually, they produce a diploma and teach; they are somehow accepted since there is a shortage.*

An authority in Şanlıurfa Provincial Directorate of National Education expressed the following:

A doctor can easily discern whether someone is a colleague but the same is not true for us, they come to us saying they are teachers but we don't know if it is true or not. Even if they have a diploma, the language on the diploma is different; it is easy to make counterfeits. Naturally we take them out of the system as we determine counterfeit diplomas or make use of them in different capacities.

Another authority in the same institution expressed that they worked with Syrians to identify such teachers:

There are also incompetent teachers; I conducted a research on my own. We organized a commission composed of Syrian academicians etc and gave oral interviews to all Syrian teachers in Urfa. I was not able to understand but the Syrians could know what the interviewee studied by asking his/her university etc. We completed the task and learned who was who, now we know which one teaches mathematics and which one does not.

Having Syrian teachers start teaching after an exam or assessment program with identified content and limits will remove question marks. A program implemented at institutional level in the selection of Syrian teachers that will be assigned to all TECs and camps will ensure systematic operations without leaving anything to initiative while identifying teachers' level of competence.

On the other hand, even in cases where university diplomas existed, it was observed that the majority of teachers were not graduates of faculties of education in the provinces other than Şanlıurfa and Antep with large Syrian populations. In such cases, the university graduates that completed courses that were closest to the lesson content taught the classes.

The views of a local coordinator interviewed in a TEC which provides dual education in Istanbul are as follows:

I cannot say that a high quality education is provided here; none of the Syrian teachers are working in their fields, a graduate of economy is teaching mathematics, etc.

Having a different field of graduation than the branch that is taught and being able to teach despite graduating from different faculties other than education are not new for Turkey. However, pedagogical formation, considered the backbone of teaching profession, is a valid certificate for all teachers. Therefore, having Syrian teachers teach at schools in spite of having graduated from different branches or departments does not create a robust example for Turkish education system. Hence, all Syrians that teach in Turkey should follow a teaching program based on teaching profession and teaching perceptions ingrained in Turkey. This program ought to provide insights on the barriers and opportunities of the Turkish educational system and the central curriculum model of Turkey. The teacher recruitment requirements could be among the themes Syrian teachers should be informed about. This way, adaptation of Syrian teachers to education system will be ensured and that is the first stage of adapting Syrian students to the education system as well. Otherwise, unfamiliarity and inexperience of teachers who are regarded as role models will lengthen the duration of adaptation and complicate the process.

Another issue related to subject matter expressed during the interviews in all provinces is the lack of Syrian guidance counsellors who could provide psychological support and guidance to Syrian children and parents in their mother tongue. Although there are not many local guidance counsellors, who are responsible for providing psycho-social support for Syrian children and their parents in their own mother tongue, they are still trying to close the gap. However, due to local teachers' language barriers, an interpreter is required to attend student-teacher meetings. This makes meetings harder for students who underwent traumatic experiences and still could not get over trauma. Local teachers who speak Arabic and therefore do not have language barriers are observed to experience problems

due to being distant to Syrian culture, being foreign to reactions of Syrians and tendency to evaluate problems with local outlooks. Since guidance and counseling creates a private and trusted relationship, the existence of a third party risks the relationship that will be formed between the teacher and the student.

The principal of a high school in Şanlıurfa expresses the situation in the following words:

The guidance counselor here is not in rapport with the Syrians due to language barriers and it is necessary to provide an Arabic teacher for meetings. It is also necessary for a teacher to understand psychology in order to understand students.

### **Reliability of Syrian Teachers**

According to the findings, reliability of Syrian teachers is also an important aspect that needs to be taken into consideration in addition to their competence. Dimension of reliability is important since the individual who forms direct relationships with students and has the same sense of identity including language, culture and nationality is their teacher. One of the reasons why NGO representatives want to take part in the education of Syrian students is related to reliability. NGOs established by Syrians and individuals that are close to Syrian culture claim that they can most easily confirm the information provided by Syrian teachers. An NGO representative who led the establishment of a TEC in Şanlıurfa expresses this situation in the following words:

When we assign teachers, we pay attention to factors such as seniority, diploma and competence; the difference between the Syrian teachers in Turkish schools and the ones here is this: we know Syria; when someone from Raqqa states something (related to diploma, branch etc.) we can have it researched. MoNE does not have the power to research this.

In the interviews, one of the main differences between Syrian teachers and local teachers was found to be related to using violence, while Syrian teachers were engaged in violence, Turkish teachers stay away from violence in the process of education and do not use violence as a tool in education. The fact that Syrian teachers used violence in the educational process was expressed by students who stated that “Syrian teachers hit them”, whereas the fact that local teachers stayed away from violence was expressed in a student statement in a TEC: “We love our teachers, we have a good relationship, they (Turkish teachers) do not hit us”. However, existence or lack of violence can create two different reactions.

Lack of violence especially affects Syrian students’ attitudes towards local teachers. The fact that Turkish teachers are loved more than Syrian teachers; the general discourse that points to local teachers as the first individual to go despite language barriers when they experience problems and expressing their love for local teachers by name show that local teachers have earned the trust and love of

Syrian students. However, this positive relationship between Syrian students and local teachers is negatively reflected to classroom management. Use of violence as a tool of discipline makes Syrian teachers more dominant in classroom management compared to local teachers. It was expressed that local teachers cannot exert authority since they do not use violence in classroom management, problems arise due to this issue between teachers and students and student behaviours change when a Syrian teacher enters the classroom. This situation generates loss of self-confidence in local teachers and causes lack of motivation for teaching.

While Syrian students do not observe in local teachers violent behaviours that they accepted as normal in Syria, the fact that Syrian teachers remind violence even verbally creates a control mechanism on students. This approach by Syrian teachers is replicated in many of the provinces. A local coordinator interviewed in Istanbul mentioned that Syrian children told their teachers that “You do not beat us therefore we don’t respect you”. The statements of parents in Gaziantep to the effect that “Syrian teachers use violence, therefore local teachers are more compassionate” shows that local teachers are found to be compassionate both by parents and students however; compassion sometimes causes lack of discipline.

### **Communication gap between Syrian and Local Administrators & Teachers**

Another prominent issue in the adaptation of Syrian students to the system is related to communication problems between Syrian teachers and local teachers/administrators. Syrian teachers have a hard time expressing their problems to school administration due to language barriers and communication is generally provided by Syrians with Turkmen origin and Syrian students who learned Turkish. It was observed that critical attitudes developed among local teachers, administrators and Syrian teachers as a result of lack of communication. A Syrian teacher interviewed in Istanbul stated that “the school administrator only asked the opinions of Syrian teachers when he believed they would approve the idea” and that was disconcerting. Another Syrian coordinator in a dual education organization said, “The principal of the Turkish school constantly came to inspect them to see whether there was damage to the school”. This point was mentioned in a focus group meeting held with teachers in another school:

There is constant pressure from the principal; he comes all the time to apply psychological pressure and checks to see whether the walls are scratched etc.

The communication problems experienced with local teachers and administrators are indirectly reflected on Syrian students’ education. The local teachers and administrators, the actors who know and implement the Turkish education system the best are impotent sources for the orientation of Syrian teachers. However, difficulties experienced in the process of communication in-

crease the distance between these parties and decrease interaction. In this case, Syrian teachers are obliged to develop different alternatives when they need guidance regarding any issues or problems rather than going to local teachers and principals. The fact that Syrian teachers with whom Syrian students do not experience language barriers cannot communicate with local teachers and administrators makes it harder for students to adapt to the education system in Turkey. In this context, meetings between Syrian teachers and local teachers/administrators at regular intervals, having their work coordinated, supporting them with language programs and implementing a common work in the education of Syrian students seem crucial.

Syrian teachers' disadvantages based on language barriers that impede their communication with local teachers and administrators are not applicable in regions where local population has Arabic roots such as Şanlıurfa and Hatay. The fact that school administrators and even the Turkish teachers at some schools can actively speak Arabic facilitates the socialization between Syrian teachers and local teachers and allows Syrian teachers to convey their demands to the administration without an intermediary. This situation wins the general approval of the Syrians since "it allows them to tell everything they need to the principal" and it facilitates their tasks. Similarly, it was found in the interviews conducted with local administrators that Syrians could directly communicate in Arabic with district or provincial authorities in the directorates of national education.

Syrian teachers in TECs are taught Turkish in order to overcome this problem. However, many Syrian teachers stated that although they wanted to learn Turkish, they could not attend these classes due to doing extra work outside school hours and undertaking family responsibilities. Syrian teachers' obligations to work in different jobs in order to make a living and family obligations make it hard for them to attend Turkish courses. A Syrian coordinator in Şanlıurfa expresses this situation in the following manner:

As teachers, we would like to learn Turkish as well, we attend some classes here but some of us work in extra jobs, some of us are old, some have children. We cannot attend the weekend courses organized for us as effectively as students can.

Syrian teachers teaching in camps are more disadvantaged in terms of learning Turkish compared to Syrian teachers employed in TECs. Limited opportunities for practicing Turkish inside the camps makes it harder for Syrian teachers to learn Turkish. While rather good physical conditions of camps create positive factors for the quality of education for Syrian students, isolation from daily life in the camps causes Syrian teachers not to encounter Turkish at all and increases their alienation towards the language of the country that they live in. On the other hand, Syrian teachers that reside in provinces with intensive Arab populations expressed that the local public preferred to speak Arabic with them and therefore

they did not speak Turkish with the local public in their economic and social lives and hence could not practice Turkish.

### Extra job for survival

The obligation to work in extra jobs, which is presented as a reason for not attending Turkish classes, show the difficulties Syrian teachers experience regarding their salaries. Insufficient wages and delays in payments create uncertainties. While Syrian teachers employed in TECs complained about their wages given to cover their living expenses, Syrian teachers employed in camps stated that their wages were sufficient since they do not pay for accommodation. However, this is limited to camp environment. Syrian teachers employed in TECs outside camps in all provinces where interviews were held expressed having difficulties due to low wages.

Explanation by a Syrian coordinator in Şanlıurfa provides the rationale for the common complaints by Syrian teachers about low wages:

*(Syrian teachers) compare themselves with Turkish teachers, they receive 3700 TL but we receive 1300 and this is hard and the amount is insufficient.*

Another Syrian teacher interviewed in Istanbul reported that “he was paid every two months” and “local teachers and Syrian teachers were not paid equally”, therefore he had to undertake “tasks at school including cleaning that were not in his job definition”. However, Syrian teachers did not go through same process like local teachers. Differences in wages compared with the local teachers should be evaluated by taking into consideration the fact that Syrian teachers are employed as a result of the conditions brought by the current events. A Syrian teacher in Şanlıurfa talked about his own situation:

*I earn 1300 TL, I pay 700 TL for rent, paying for the transportation to school etc. leaves me with almost nothing. My brother abroad helps me. We get assistance from Red Crescent, even that is 30 TL.*

### Future of Syrian Teachers in case of the TECs shutdown

Syrian teachers are concerned with becoming unemployed when Syrian students are transferred to public schools (Turkish schools/local schools). They expressed that they could not work in any other jobs since they do not speak Turkish and on-going education in TECs inside and outside camps was a job guarantee for them. However, they develop alternatives without ignoring the fact that it would not be possible to fully integrate Syrian students to Turkish education system with the help of TECs and therefore TEC system was not sustainable. One of these alternatives is learning Turkish and finding employment in Public Schools. If Syrian teachers are employed at public schools, this will create the basis for local reactions due to the large number of unassigned Turkish teacher candidates.



However, Syrian teachers’ priority is to transfer their teaching tasks in TECs to public schools. A teacher group interviewed in Şanlıurfa expressed this desire:

“We want to work in Turkish schools (Public Schools) after we learn Turkish well”.

“When Syrian students are transferred to Turkish schools, a Syrian assistant will be given to per 30 students. That would be very good for us if Syrian teachers are employed in this manner”.

Uncertainties related to Syrian teachers’ tasks create the anxiety experienced by Syrian teachers and students’ resistance towards integration to Turkey and learning Turkish. Moreover, these uncertainties are not only limited to teachers but are reflected in their students and families. Explanations of an official from Şanlıurfa Provincial Directorate of National Education show that this uncertainty was not limited to teachers themselves but affected many others:

We have to solve these individuals’ concern for the future; therefore, we insist to teach them Turkish; for both teachers and students but the teachers think that the government will teach Turkish to these students and they will take them to Turkish schools and there will be no students left so that they will be fired. Hence, they do not support students in learning Turkish very much. Nobody articulates these thoughts but there is a hidden resistance.

Love and gratitude for Turkey is one of the common findings of the interviews the various problems experienced by Syrian teachers. In addition to taking refuge in Turkey after running away from the war in Syria and depending on Turkey’s “open door policy” both students and Syrian teachers were provided with updates in the system of education when the periods of their stay were prolonged. Syrian teachers appreciate Turkey and feel grateful for restarting Syrian students’ educational processes in Turkey and undertaking prominent steps in addition to meeting their basic needs such as accommodation, nutrition and health.

**TABLE 8. BASIC PROBLEMS FOR SYRIANS AND LOCAL TEACHERS**

SYRIAN TEACHERS	LOCAL TEACHERS
Intense concerns for the future	Intense concerns for the future
Salaries- Problems in livelihood	High professional deformation
Diploma accreditation	Hardship of classroom management
Communication with local teachers and administrators	Lack of orientation
Attitudes and behaviors towards Syrian students	Turkish teaching by classroom teachers in further levels
Poor support in learning Turkish	



## Actions:

### For the local teachers:

- Provide individual support to overcome the problems they face with the education of Syrians
- Work with NGOs for training of the teachers
- Standardize the salaries of the all teacher who teaches Syrian children and establish positive discrimination policies for these teachers to be tenured
- Provide psycho-social support for the teachers
- Create teacher councils or commission regionally to discuss the problems they faced and to share the best models to teach the Syrian children
- Provide basic level Arabic lessons to the local teachers

### For Syrian Teachers

- Create more platforms for Syrian and local teachers working together and sharing ideas
- Assist teachers to learn Turkish by the well-established Turkish classes in the schools
- Select the teacher who get improved his/her Turkish skills and employ them at the public schools.
- Provide social insurance for all-Syrian teachers.
- Determine the current salary for the teachers as minimum and make salary increase by purchasing power parity (ppt) according to the places they live (in-camp, out of camp, metropolis etc.)
- Analyse the reasons behind the teachers' needs for the extra job

## TEACHING TURKISH AND COURSE MATERIALS

One of the most critical titles in Syrians' education is teaching Turkish. Teaching Turkish effectively is crucial for integration to education and finally for social integration and cohesion. A significant emphasis was placed on teaching Turkish since the beginning of the crisis to increase rates of schooling and to ensure a more productive integration process. In this context, institutions such as MoNE, UNICEF, AFAD, Yunus Emre Institute and TÖMER are cooperating to develop various projects for Syrian students to learn Turkish (Büyükkiz and Çangal, 2016).

One of the most significant undertakings in the context of Syrian students' integration to education is teaching Turkish at public schools and TECs. Education and training at public schools were reorganized in the process of Syrian students' integration and TECs were included in afternoon part of the dual program. **Schools at camps also follow the same program. Syrian teachers are employed at the programs at TECs and follow the Syrian curriculum and 15-hour**

**Turkish classis taught to these students.** TECs are designed as Turkish intensive teaching areas. Turkish classes which were taught for five hours previously were increased to 15 hours during 2016-2017 academic year. In addition, a program titled “Teaching Turkish for Foreigners aged 6-12” was prepared. 800,000 leaflets were distributed by MoNE at public schools and TECs to inform parents.<sup>16</sup> Turkish classes are taught by classroom teachers, Turkish language and literature teachers or teachers from other branches that have not been assigned to the permanent staff yet<sup>17</sup> (Emin, 2016: 14). According to the data provided during the interview held with MoNE officials, 5,468 teachers were assigned to teach Turkish to Syrian students during 2016-2017 academic year.

Teachers who participated in the program stated that the courses were taught resembled teaching mother tongue and not foreign language teaching. They expressed that classes were more theoretical rather than applied, some of the course titles did not correspond with the content and some elements included in the program such as lesson planning, evaluating the unit based on skills, organizing activities, material development, utilizing instructional technologies were taught rather weakly. It was observed that teachers that are new to their posts had a hard time teaching Turkish as a foreign language. They tended to confuse teaching Turkish as a mother tongue and teaching Turkish as a foreign language. **It is evident that this learner group with no experience in teaching and teaching Turkish to foreigners were left alone with a dilemma.** Ignoring the differences in the alphabet and sounds, inability to explain vocabulary and syntax according to foreign language instruction rules, giving vocabulary lists to be memorized, having long dictation exercises and using activities with no focus on specific skill were also found to slow down the acquisition of Turkish. Active learning methods that include effective participation should be used rather than direct instruction method.

### Turkish Teaching and Classroom management

Another explicit problem faced by Turkish teachers after assignment is related to classroom management. Existence of two different teacher groups at TECs composed of Turkish and Syrian teachers and lack of communication and cooperation between them make this problem permanent. Turkish teachers complain about their inability to ensure classroom discipline and lack of interest/existence of resistance on the part of Syrian students towards Turkish. While the problem related to lack of discipline and interest are more easily overcome at primary school levels with games, drama and various other activities, it becomes more compelling at secondary and high school levels.

---

16. Interview with MoNE official

17. Economy, Theology, Counseling, etc.

## Resistance Towards Learning Turkish

According to the interviews at the fieldwork, there is a resistance towards learning Turkish due to fear of assimilation. Conflicts of identity brought by adolescence and the process of integration and the requirement to work to make contribution to family income make young Syrians question the necessity to learn Turkish and quit training. Due to the conditions of their lives, going to university and having a high standard job beyond daily/weekly labor are not priorities for these young persons. Contributing to family and basic needs such as accommodation and food are priorities. Housework, childcare, and negative experiences with the environment have prevented the development of strong school-parent cooperation.

It should be noted here that rate of achievement at public primary schools where Syrian students attend is increasing. It was observed that the Syrian students equally distributed to classrooms learn how to read and write at the end of the first semester, took part in activities and shows along with their Turkish classmates at the end of the second semester and catch up with and pass the classroom average. This achievement is based on administration-teacher-parent cooperation and solidarity. Continuous inspection and monitoring the quality of education by the school administration, implementing and maintaining school rules and curriculum, having experienced teachers, developing materials and organizing activities according to needs, interest and classroom level of students, taking individual differences into consideration during in-class activities and keeping the dialogue with parents make this cooperation successful.

As class materials, “Turkish for Children” and “Turkish Teaching Set for Seven Climates<sup>18</sup>” prepared by Yunus Emre Institute are generally used but the following materials are also utilized “Gazi University Turkish Teaching Set”, “Ankara University New Hittites”, “Istanbul University Language Teaching Set” along with Turkish textbook used in by Primary School First Grades. According to teachers, the book prepared by Yunus Emre Institute especially for young learners is above their level and it is mostly focused on speaking rather than reading and writing.

During the interview with the officials from the Ministry about the textbooks, PICTES official stated that diversification would be under way next year for different age groups in the upcoming academic year and added that:

37 publishing houses were contacted for the new textbooks. Dictionaries and story sets were brought from 15 of these publishers. They were pre-examined according to three topics. 20 stories and dictionaries arrived and a commission of 18 composed of teachers and MoNE personnel evaluated these, evaluation was completed in

18. 490.000 copies of Yunus Emre Institute’s “Turkish Teaching for Foreigners” were bought and distributed to Syrian students

FIGURE 18. THE MOST WIDESPREAD BOOK FOR TURKISH TEACHING IN THE SCHOOLS PREPARED BY YUNUS EMRE INSTITÜSÜ



five days. Content analysis is still under way. Materials sent by five different publishers are good. Two of the publishers are really good at what they do. Probably, we will continue with their books in the next year. The books appropriate for age and learning differences.

Another point we would like to underline in this context is related to TECs situated at camps that are different from the TECs situated in the school buildings of the Ministry. TECs situated at camps are the units that have played the most active role during the process of schooling. According to the observations at the camps, it is imperative to restructure camp school programs and Turkish education urgently since it is the first step for integration and starting a new life in Turkey. **Although the rate of schooling is now 100% at camps, the rate of learning Turkish is not at the desired level.** Language is communication. Although lesson periods become more intensive and make up courses are added, they will not go beyond being extra course loads when they are not aimed at communica-

tion. It is necessary to concentrate on integration activities with the local public. Active use of Turkish can be ensured by enlisting sports activities and vocational workshops in an intercultural manner. But, in the case of Hatay, the fact that local people also knows Arabic in this region weakens the communication. This situation requires taking other measures as well.

### **Turkish Courses outside of the Schools**

We must also note that attention should be given to monitor Turkish courses provided outside of school and MoNE certified institutions like TÖMER, İS-MEK and Adult Education Centers should teach Turkish courses and language training levels should be identified. Arabic and English are used as supporting languages at many of the TECs supported by NGOs from abroad and Turkish has been alienated as a target language. The programs of NGOs that support schools are given more priority than those of MoNE. Care should be given to use the ELAN system included in the MoNE program for teaching especially young groups. Materials that support reading and writing such as sentence cut-outs, reading book series, puzzles, word puzzles, coloring books and hand craft materials (yarn, construction paper, glue etc.) should be provided. While teaching reading and writing methods to adults and young person, methods that best address communication and their needs should be selected.

### **Learning Turkish for Professional Life**

In many of the interviews, it was observed that Syrian teachers and parents desire to learn Turkish and stay in Turkey. They want to continue their careers, develop themselves and educate their children. They are also uncomfortable about TEC practices because TECs do not have a specific training curriculum, sufficient textbooks and social, cultural and artistic activities. Also, they express that having inexperienced Turkish teachers slow down learning Turkish. They complain that the Turkish courses focus on grammar, they do not contribute to the socialization of their children and teachers teach their lesson and go home. However, more positive outcomes can be achieved if Syrian and Turkish teachers converse not only about the Turkish program, but also about the shortcomings of the program as a whole and share information about students.

It is necessary to organize social activities and orientation programs for both Turkish and Syrian teachers, parents and students. Teaching practices guide should be prepared for Syrian teachers so that they can be informed of the Turkish education system. Informative bilingual leaflets should be prepared for Turkish teachers to present the education system, to develop intercultural competences and inform about traumas. Teachers should be shown how to use the textbook and how to arrange units according to grade levels and the activ-

ities that will be organized with specific acquisitions and goals should include practices that will activate students' cognitive, social and communicative skills and sense of responsibility.

It is possible to restructure the Turkish program. Forming classes based on the level of Turkish in areas other than Arabic will expedite learning Turkish. Teacher groups should meet at the beginning of the academic year to prepare the programs, to decide on the materials, to create a pool for materials and activities. Also working in cooperation with the Turkish school administration, providing pedagogical formation to Syrian teachers and renewing the information of Turkish teacher specifically about special education methods, material development and counseling-coping with trauma will develop this structure positively.

Having mixed classrooms with Syrian and Turkish students will ensure peer support and will facilitate the transition to the Turkish education system. Including intern teachers with required backgrounds, teacher candidates that take Social Services Classes and Turkish as Foreign language Classes in Faculties of Education to activities under the supervision of the school administration and receiving support from TÖMER will contribute to the process. In addition to these, teaching Turkish to Syrians can be implemented more effectively and systematically in the framework of the suggestions provided below:

### **Actions:**

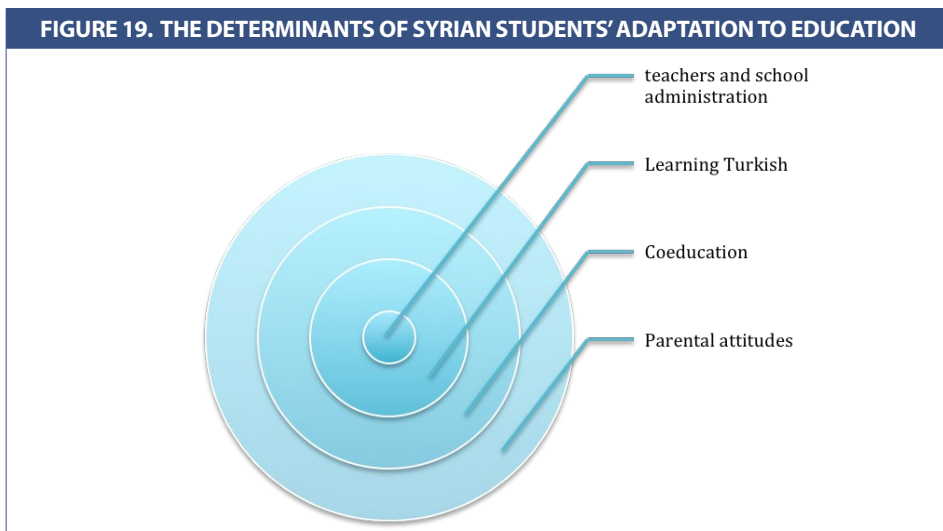
- Create compensation/make-up classes for grades 5-12 according to the characteristics of each compensation class.
- Provide Turkish and Turkish Language and Literature teachers priority to teach at the courses that will be provided at the camps.
- Ensure that successful teachers employed at previous years are assigned posts in future projects in order to complete the process in a more robust and productive manner.
- Provide Arabic courses for the school administrators, teachers or some other personnel at the school to maintain and develop communication.
- Equip the classrooms with the tools such as projectors, instructional visuals, posters, maps etc.
- Set extra hours in the schools for activities such as poetry, school chorus, drama, plays, projects, shared tasks and sports. Also Cartoons like Kukili and Guards of Istanbul and Turkish movies with subtitles attract students' interest very much.
- Identify sounds of Turkish that will prove to be difficult for the foreigners by taking the language(s) and alphabet(s) they know into consideration, beginning with pronunciation, patterns and simple sentences.
- Teach all the skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing concurrently.

However, writing skills that includes all cognitive skills is the one that is acquired the last and with most difficulty. The individual that provides writing skills instruction should have competence in communication, discourse, and use of grammar and transfer of culture.

- Allow the Syrian students to firstly express themselves comfortably in spoken and written language rather than memorizing rules and use of grammar. The main aim of language teaching for them is to clearly expressing themselves.
- Create and use alternative assessment and evaluation tools such as rating scales, control lists, observation forms, performance homework and portfolios in the transition process; set the assessment and evaluation rules identified by Syrian teachers.
- Support activities that especially reflect common intangible values such as sports, exhibits, celebrations, handicrafts and music should be supported.
- Provide vocational-technical Turkish classes for the students who will be admitted to the vocational schools.

## ADAPTING TO EDUCATION

Integration of Syrian students in the education system has been the topic of many national and international projects. Hence, designing efficient adaptation processes will not only increase schooling but will also ensure sustainability. Adapting to education can be defined as a child or youth's academic and behavioral adaptation to educational processes at schools. According to the opinions of students, teachers, administrators and parents who were interviewed in the framework of the fieldwork, different factors stand out in adapting Syrian students to Turkish education system.





### **The Relationship with the teachers and school administration**

Analysis based on statements points out to four factors in adaptation processes as shown in Figure 18 led by relationships with teachers and school administration. Positive school climates are clearly discernible in TECs and public schools where school administration is effective. Examples show that it is possible to overcome difficulties in schools where teachers work in cooperation with school administration even though number of students in the school is rather high. Practices geared for students can immediately be carried out at schools where coordination with crisis management is ensured. For instance, school administration, local teacher and Syrian teacher cooperated to regain a student who dropped out of a school in Ankara with more than one thousand students; they met the parents and convinced them to send the student back to school. Similarly, students in focus group interviews held with the 3rd and 4th graders who continued their education at the same school for three years stated that they wanted to continue their education at public schools. When they were asked the reason for this desire, they replied that they liked their teachers very much and regarded them as role models. Interviews were conducted with the teachers who were mentioned by the students. Almost all the teachers cited by these students were female and supported their students' educational processes with out-of-class activities and catch-up classes.

### **Learning Turkish**

Turkish competence is another key factor in the integration of Syrian students' to both TECs and public schools. Turkish speaking levels of male students were observed to be higher than those of female students. This finding may be related to the fact that compared to female students; male students have more interactions outside the school. Since it will be easier for students who speak Turkish to contact local students and to communicate with their teachers, they feel more ownership to their schools. It can be argued that the TECs located inside camps are the schools with highest number of problems in terms of Turkish. Although rate of schooling is very high in the camps, integration to education in camps is relatively more problematic. Hence, it is impossible to expect integration in education without removing the language barrier. Therefore, it is crucial to design a language learning process that will help students preserve their mother tongues and remove parental concerns over cultural loss. At this point, Ministry policies should be guided by teachers. Teacher competence and ability to use developmentally appropriate educational techniques will play key roles in determining student attitudes towards the schools and teachers.

### **Parental Attitudes**

Parental support to educational processes is another significant issue in integration to education. Hence, according to teachers, parental beliefs in education are



directly reflected in students' classroom performances. Parents are considered to be the weakest link in the Syrians' education because of the language incompetency. That's why schools need to ensure parents participate in more activities both for their language competency and parental support. A school environment in which parents can comfortably take part is crucial for parents who can only wait for their children at the school door for now<sup>19</sup>. Of course, it is important for parents to be enthusiastic about participation but it is also important for school administration and teachers to be motivating as well. A young mother interviewed in Gaziantep expressed that as parents, they were not able to be supportive in their children's education due to extensive work hours of the father but they could take on active roles with the support of teachers.

We want our children to continue their education in Turkey but of course, we cannot support them in their classes very much. We cannot follow up much since their father is working. I can only teach Quran. Our education is not much and when the lessons are in Turkish, we are having a hard time. Maybe it would be better if we can work something out with the teachers. It is difficult for us to act on our own.

Here, including mothers to student activities by teachers may be effective in increasing parental support. For instance, an interview conducted in a TEC in Istanbul provided information about a charity sale prepared by the mothers of both local and Syrian students and the income from the charity was donated to school budget. Increasing such examples will ensure that parents feel closer to school and therefore facilitate students' integration to education.

## Coeducation

Finally, coeducation was the most commonly mentioned factor regarded as a barrier facing the integration to education. The majority of schools still provide coeducation in Turkey. While all of the primary schools provide coeducation, some secondary schools or high schools cater to only girls or only boys. In addition to religious vocational secondary and high schools, some other vocational schools do not offer coeducation. However, these schools are limited in number, therefore education is generally continued as coed. During the interviews held in the framework of the study at TECs and public schools, parents, children, and youth were found to have a strong reaction against coeducation. As previously mentioned, this was presented as an important cultural reason for keeping female students at home. A teacher interviewed at a TEC in Şanlıurfa explained the situation:

Syrians do not want it (education) to be coed; even when we have one girl and one boy at the board, they laugh; when there is coeducation, schooling rates will drop,

19. It is a conceptualization coined by the researchers to describe the parents who wait at the school door only to leave and pick up their children.

there will be problems; if we convert to coeducation, we will have to face many problems, if there is coeducation, girls will drop out.

A classroom teacher teaching the 2nd grade in Ankara reported that although the students were very young, they had strong male and female identifications and they were quite distant to the other gender compared to their ages. The teacher also added:

Even at very early grades, girls and boys do not want to sit side by side. Some students react to that by saying “haram”. Even at circles during games, they do not want to stand by each other. We still could not get past this but I believe families are very effective. Otherwise it is not possible to develop these harsh attitudes at those early ages.

This situation was also discussed with parents who were interviewed. In a manner that confirmed teachers’ observations, parents stated they would be happier to be offered separate schools for boys and girls at all levels incusing primary school. The parents explained their sensibilities mostly over female students. Finally, an inverse proportion was observed between ages of Syrian children and youth and their social integration levels. The students at upper levels were found to be more reactive to education compared to students at lower levels. This can be explained by the fact that the four main factors cited above become more difficult by age.

### **Students’ Daily Routine**

A counselling teacher who worked with Syrian students for three years at a public school in Gaziantep was interviewed and explained all these integration processes through children’s routines. According to the counselling teacher, Syrian students can be classified as students with or without routine, meaning the students with or without stable conditions after the immigration. Students who have some stability after the immigration can have a more organized attitude towards school and classes but if they still do not live in a home and if their families constantly move, it is not possible for these students to follow educational processes regularly. This irregularity is reflected in the way they use their lesson materials. The teacher also added that the number of students that are provided with notebooks and pencils every day is not small, that there are students who come to school with no school bags and that teachers do not have high expectations about students’ bringing textbooks. The counselling teacher was asked whether this was related to traumas experienced by these students. The counselling teacher stated that the important thing is the ability to regroup rather than the degree of trauma and added that the students with no regular home lives have more behavioural problems.

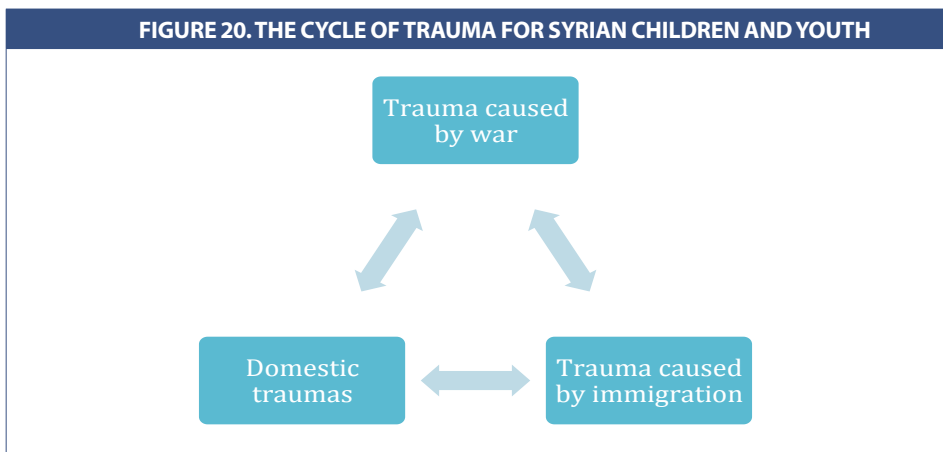
### **Actions:**

- Inform families regularly about the opportunities of the schools
- Recruit Syrian psychological guidance teachers to the public schools

- Train the local teachers and administrators about the culture and traditions of the Syrians
- Create more teacher-parent platforms like the charity bazaar or picnics to create a sustainable relation between the Syrian families and the schools and for icebreaking.

## TRAUMA AMONG SYRIAN CHILDREN

Psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome are important health issues especially for Syrian women and children who were forced to migrate to Turkey due to the crisis in Syria (TTB, 2013). Although supportive mechanisms were tried to be established inside camps, there are not many options to receive psychological support for immigrants that live outside camps. During the field study, in addition to teachers, psychologists that work with Syrian children and youth were also interviewed about the traumas experienced by Syrian students living in and outside camps and the best examples used to overcome trauma. Based on observations on students' in-class attitudes, their drawings and compositions, teachers also expressed less traumatic attitudes compared to previous years.



This observation does not mean that trauma has completely disappeared but we can talk about a transformation: the trauma of war is replaced by the trauma of immigration and domestic traumas. According to experts, while war and immigration can increase intrafamilial cooperation, it can also cause domestic traumas if the family integrity is disrupted by war or immigration. Many teachers stated that some students with behavioral problems in class had lost their either father, mother or both during the war. A classroom teacher teaching second grade at the TEC in Ankara talked about the behavior of a student who lost his father:

We still have children with traumas. Most of them are the ones that had lost their fathers. There was a really naughty child. At the second grade. He used to topple the desks and all that. He was impossible to stop. Later we learned that he had lost his father.

**The teachers reported peer victimization, bedwetting and introversion as the most common symptoms of trauma. Similarly, internalization of violence was also reported to be a common trait among these children. Hence, teachers often reported that use of physical violence in education was suggested for especially local teachers by students and even the parents of these students.**

Syrian teachers expressed that students' problem behaviours and attitudes decreased by time compared when they first arrived to Turkey and their drawings included less violence and depictions of war. The Syrian counselling teacher interviewed in Nizip Tent City reported that children were normalized and added:

Students started to heal; there are no children now with heavy traumas. You cannot see weapons and blood in their drawings, like you used to. What they see in daily life has completely changed now. And also, the majority of children who are at primary school now do not remember the war.

Teachers expressed that they could not pay enough attention to the children with trauma the way they should due to overcrowded classrooms and extensive educational activities during the day. They also mentioned that they did not have comprehensive training about how to communicate with these types of children and they were scared of making mistakes. The public school administrators that were interviewed stated that having a counsellor with good Arabic skills at the public schools where Syrian students attend would make this contact much easier because having support in the mother tongue would ensure more effective outcomes. Also, during the analysis of migration trauma; individual characteristics such as a powerful sense of self, strong and flexible cultural identity, effective bonding skills, effective coping strategies and sufficient social support can act as protective factors for immigrants. Variables such as culture shock (cited in: Mazzetti, 2008), loss of social status (especially in refugees) and therefore the emerging poverty (cited in: Mazzetti, 2008) can be risk factors. Resistance has two factors in managing immigration trauma: individual characteristics and immigration plan. Another effective factor is the social support received throughout the process (Mazzetti, 2008). Refugees can cope with the hardships, overcome the heavy traumas they experience and integrate with the host country only thorough supportive interaction with the social environment (TTB, 2013). It was observed in the five provinces in the framework of the study that the mechanisms that would ensure these types of interactions were provided by the NGOs but these practices were still not very common. For instance, sports activities and theatre practice for Syrian children provided by Sultanbeyli Municipality Association of Refugees are good practices in the context of local governments' support

to these processes. <sup>120</sup> It was reported by psychologists that activities attended by families especially the mothers would provide better outcomes. At this point, the activities of Red Crescent Community Centres and UNICEF that were previously mentioned are significant. Expediting social integration processes by empowering mothers and increasing their awareness will directly contribute to children's resistance and will support them in coping with traumas.

### **Actions:**

- Develop diverse psycho-social strategies to overcome the diverse trauma types seen in children.
- Found specialized migration and war trauma units at the psychology, sociology and the psychiatry departments of the universities and the hospitals.
- Avoid singling out traumatised children out from the peers
- Rehabilitate the traumatised children with the sports and arts in which their local and Syrian peers participated either.
- Make a collaboration with the community centres of the NGOs to create out-of-school activities for traumatized children

## **PARTICIPATION OF DISABLED STUDENTS TO EDUCATION**

In Turkey, special education centres were founded in 2011 by taking a step forward in the education of disabled students (MoNE, 2011). Accordingly, these institutions financed by the Ministry are managed by special initiatives. A similar implementation can be designed for Syrian students as well. A Research and Guidance Centre official who was interviewed in the framework of fieldwork reported that there were many disabled children and youth among Syrian refugees and quotas can be set for Syrian students at special education centres starting with Syrians with physical abilities. It is necessary to provide Syrian students with special education support that local students receive.

Special classrooms for disabled students are only implemented inside the camps. However, it was observed that these special classrooms cannot provide a good classification based on disability levels. It was found out that children with advance mental disorders are trained alongside with children that only had physical disabilities. Special education classroom established at Nizip Tent City TEC was visited and it was observed that visually impaired students were trained with severely autistic students. However, visually impaired students do not have mental disorders that make learning difficult; they will only need different materials in their education.

20. <http://multeciler.org.tr/tag/sultanbeyli-belediyesi/>.

At camps, these groups are not taught by special education experts but classroom and Turkish teachers with no expertise on the topic. A Turkish teacher interviewed in Gaziantep stated that they were expected to teach these classes:

We are expected to teach special education classes as well by the school administration. While we were coming here, we were neither informed that we would take care of special education students; nor were we trained to do so. We can somewhat study with physically disabled students but we only act as the caregivers for students with mental disorders. It is crucial to have training to teach these children.

In another interview held in Hatay, a TEC administrator expressed that even though the students do not receive the highest quality of education, it is still better for them to come to school:

Yes, it is true that we cannot claim education in our special education classes is highly effective but even under the supervision of educators is very important in my opinion. Many of them stayed home alone because their parents worked and their siblings went to school. We take these disabled kids from their homes in the morning and bring them to school. Being in a school environment is very important, regardless of everything else.

It is necessary to provide home care and home education services at home for children and youth that have severe disability that prevents them from attending school.

## **Actions**

- To map the disabled Syrian children living in the camps and out of the camps according to their age, educational needs and types of their disabilities
- To recruit special education teachers for the education of the disabled child.
- To open more special education classes at the TECs and the public schools
- To enhance the infrastructural and human resources capacity of the MoNE's counselling and research centers (RAMs) and special education centres in 23 provinces where Syrians are highly populated in particular.

## **SYRIAN CHILDREN'S EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

In the provinces where interviews were held, Syrian students were asked about their thoughts on living in Turkey, their feelings related to being taught by local teachers along with local students and their ideas on continuing their education. The main goal of the study was to obtain Syrian students' general view on the educational process in Turkey and to identify the measures that needed to be taken so that they would not be deprived of their rights throughout their stay in Turkey. Hence, Syrian students' expectations for the future are significant since it presents their satisfaction with the current educational endeavors and their perceptions regarding Turkey.

Syrian students were asked “whether they would like to continue to live in Turkey if Syria were habitable again”. The majority of Syrian students expressed that “they considered education in Turkey to have better quality” and “they would want to return after they complete their education”. These beliefs stem from both the ongoing uncertainty in Syria and the settled life managed by the Syrians in Turkey after the crisis. In interviews conducted in Istanbul, students were asked how their local teachers treated them and they were observed to express their love for their teachers by mentioning them by name. The fact that teachers are the determinant factors in issues such as academic achievement, school attendance and ownership of school points to the need for separate program or arrangement for teachers.

When the question regarding the future was directed at a female student in Şanlıurfa, she expressed that “she would very much like to return to Syria” and that “everywhere was the same since she was not in Syria anymore”. While the desire to return to Syria in the future was expressed in many of the interviews, it was also commonly expressed that it would take time to accomplish it. Syrian students expressed that they liked living in Turkey and they were happy in this country and the source of their satisfaction was based on their teachers and neighbors who acted nicely towards them. It was observed in the interviews that a number of Syrian students, albeit a few, expressed their wish to continue their lives in Turkey. A group of students interviewed in Gaziantep stated that “they were happy to live in Turkey, “they had no desire to return to Syria” and “their parents awaited Turkish citizenship”. When the progress of events are taken into consideration, it is seen that the desire to return to Syria is only a wish in the current situation and based on realities and the conditions of the current situation, the period of their stay in Turkey can be prolonged and even be permanent for Syrian students. The positive statements show that Syrian students do not regard staying in Turkey as an obligation but are trying to adapt to the education system in Turkey.

In another interview with secondary school Syrian students held in a TEC in Şanlıurfa, one of the female students stated that “she wanted to continue her education in Turkey” and “if especially a Syrian University would be founded, she would be happier to attend there”. The main rationale behind a university for Syrians is related to language barriers. Although 15-hour Turkish training is compulsory and common in all schools, the possibilities of practicing Turkish in TECs (in or out of camps) are limited compared to Public Schools due to structuring of the institution. Therefore, Syrian students voice their suggestion for Syrian University where they would not experience linguistic problems.

When Syrian students were asked about what kind of training they would like to have after TEC, their responses showed that their preferences were influenced by cultural characteristics. It was reported in the provinces where interviews were

held that steering the Syrian students at secondary schools to vocational schools<sup>21</sup> would facilitate the educational process since these schools would meet the demand of non-coed training and they can use their mother tongue, Arabic at these schools. A coordinator in Istanbul stated that student demands also confirmed this. However, interviews held in religious and vocational schools pointed to different conflicts experienced at these schools. Syrian students interviewed in Gaziantep reported that they experienced problems since “the curriculum at the school was not strong enough” and “Arabic used by the Arabic teacher was not sufficient for them”. In this sense, many interviewees mentioned that questioning the competence of teachers created tensions between Syrian students and local teachers. While competence of teachers were not questioned in subjects such as mathematics, physics and chemistry, the quality of vocational teachers was questioned based on their mastery of Arabic language. This situation changes according to student level as well. While there were no serious criticisms regarding teacher competence and skills in the interviews held with primary and secondary school students, the level of criticisms increased when it came to high school students.

Another issue emphasized in the interviews regarding the future expectations of Syrian students is their transfer to public schools from TECs. The majority of the students who were interviewed reported that they were “against” going to public schools and “needed time to make peace with this idea”. Many students that were interviewed mentioned that they were concerned about closing of TECs because they believed “local students would not accept them”. This attitude is mirrored by the local students attending Public Schools as well. These students expressed that teachers were unfair to them” and “teachers acted as if they cheated when they got high grades in exams”. While this demotivates Syrian students, it also weakens the communication with their teachers.

## **STUDENTS’ CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION HABITS**

Balanced nutrition and regular sleeping habits are factors that directly affect achievement in education. In this study, fieldwork was conducted on Syrian students’ nutrition and consumption habits with the presupposition that balanced nutrition, regular sleep and therefore physical and mental development of Syrian students were behind their local peers. Interviews in field visits and observations mostly confirmed this presupposition. Teachers mentioned that although Syrian students regularly brought snacks to school, the food they brought was not high in nutrition, they mostly consumed a sort of lavash bread baked in their own ovens and did not consume foods with high vitamin such as fruit and vegetables. Milk and raisins daily distributed to local students at public schools are also provided for

---

21. Almost 50% of the Turkish students go to vocational schools as well. (MEB, 2017)



Syrian students who consume them both. Extending this practice to TECs may create positive results. Similarly, it was reported that especially young children came to school deprived of sleep and fell asleep during classes. According to teachers, living in very small homes and sharing the house with a large number of family members prevented the formation of healthy sleep and bedroom habits for Syrian students. When we add the culturally induced late sleep hours especially in spring and summer months, the situation becomes even more disadvantaged for Syrian students. It is evident that Syrian families need more information and guidance regarding sleep and nutrition. It is crucial to prepare informative leaflets both in public schools and in TECs and talk to especially mothers regarding these issues.

Another important issue emphasized by teachers in terms of nutrition habits is related to students' consumption habits. Especially the teachers employed at the schools in Istanbul and Ankara where interviews were conducted stated that students use canteens extensively. It was also observed that Syrian students used canteens more than local students. According to teachers, students buy potato chips and coke the most. This issue was brought up in student interviews and students confirmed their teachers with their answers. Students stated that when they had money, they preferred to purchase chips instead of consuming the bread given by their mothers for snack. A teacher interviewed in Istanbul said that:

Interestingly, the children of families who we know to have bad financial situations have extensive use of the canteen. We observed that Syrian students use the canteen more compared to local students. What they buy is junk food. For instance, you can see a coke in their hands at almost every break. The interesting thing is they drink water from the tap in the restrooms and do not purchase water but they purchase coke instead.

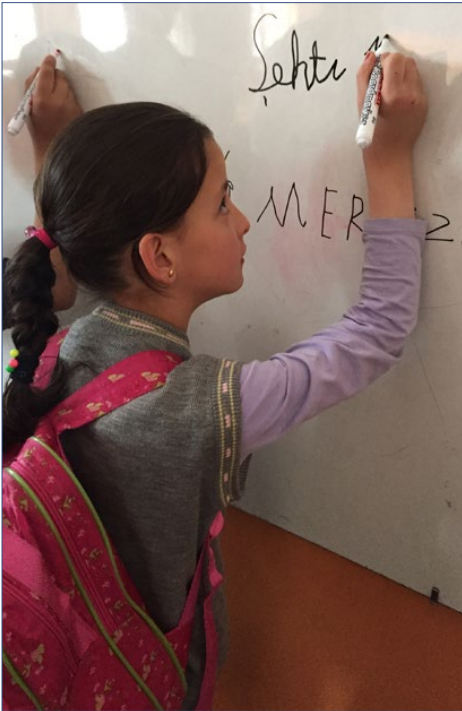
While it is accepted that these consumption habits are problematic and the Ministry has imposed restrictions for the sale of these types of products, restrictions have not been very effective. It is necessary to inspect school canteens via Provincial Directorates of National Education. In addition, different stakeholders have emphasized the need for students to take nutrition literacy training that would address their nutrition and consumption habits. Teachers have also expressed that local students can be teamed with Syrian students to prevent these types of consumption habits.

## Actions

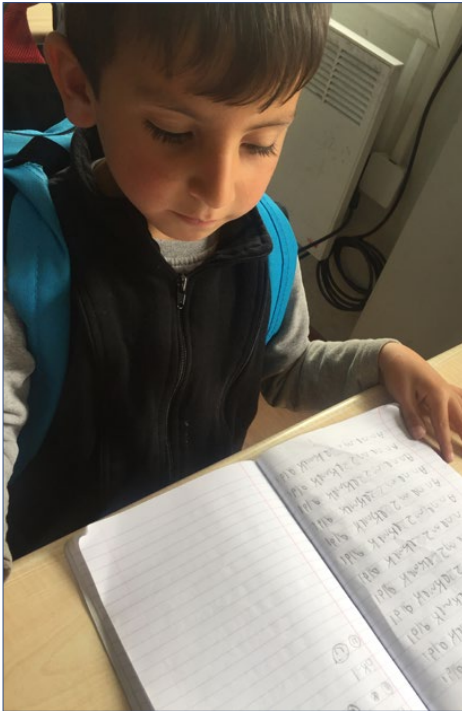
- Provide free meal to the all disadvantaged schools
- Forbid all kinds of fast foods and drinks that affects the nutrition habits of the children adversely at the school canteens.
- Supply free drinking water to the schools
- Raise awareness of the mothers in particular for eating healthy
- Prepare and deliver informative leaflets about food literacy



A public school in Onder district of Ankara.



A public school in İvedik district of Ankara.



A 1st grade student at a TEC in Nizip refugee camp of Gaziantep.

# CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

---

This research report aims to answer the different questions about the education of Syrians in Turkey. Now 59% of the school age children are in the schools whereas 41% of them are still out of school. In this regard, the most significant question is necessarily related to the reasons behind being out-of school as a refugee in Turkey. According to the fieldwork held in the 5 provinces of Turkey (Ankara, İstanbul, Gaziantep, Hatay and Şanlıurfa), five main reasons have come out; i. single parenting, ii. high mobility, iii. lack of information and guidance iv. economic reasons, v. cultural reasons. The report provides policy recommendation for all these motives that left the Syrian children behind.

The report has also highlighted the main obstacles that lie ahead in the integration of Syrian refugees within the educational system in Turkey. The language barrier lies at the forefront of the aforementioned barriers, and it has been concluded that no actual adaptation in education is likely to occur without the removal of the language barrier. This matter highlights the importance of designing a proper mechanism for language learning that would help Syrian youth acquire the Turkish language while at the same time preserving their native language and holding on to any cultural values that come along with it.

The report has also sought to identify formal education programs that could be scaled up, as well as the gaps in provision. Most of the planning that has taken place thus far has been short term. Long term projects have yet to take place, and upon that it requires careful and thorough planning to achieve efficient and effective results in the end. It is out most important that no gaps exist in the education of refugees to ensure a proper social integration takes place in

a matter that would be deemed acceptable by the local public and the refugees themselves at the same time.

Even though TECs have been rather effective in providing an education for Syrians and were among the first initiatives to take place in 2011, they do not seem to provide a sustainable model in the long run for adapting and socializing Syrians in Turkey. Adding to that, fieldwork conducted has demonstrated that a decent number of Syrian parents and teachers would certainly consider staying in Turkey in the long run provided that they learn Turkish. This matter highlights upon the importance and necessity of integrating Syrian refugees within the public school system Turkey after taking into account the extra attention and needs that Syrians require.

Among the aspects that need to be taken into consideration is the future awaiting Syrian teachers working in TECs. In case a complete merge in public schools were to take place, Syrian teachers ought to get an opportunity to teach at public schools. A matter that, given under the current situation is rather hard to accomplish due to the fact that a large number of Turkish teachers are yet to be assigned to a school. Based on the situation, a well-prepared budget sheet also ought to be designed with full transparency that would reveal how the funding will be allocated. This would stimulate international funding that is urgently needed to facilitate the education process of Syrian children and to make certain that each child gets an opportunity to learn in a decent and suitable environment. Each of these reasons requires a specific approach that also needs careful planning to properly tackle the situation and ensure that it does not pose a burden whatsoever in the education of Syrian children.

In line with the recommendations presented to help Syrians adapt in every aspect of social life in Turkey, it is also vital to create a suitable environment where Syrians would actually be encouraged to do so. To achieve this, proper infrastructure and facilities need to be provided in Public Schools through certain financial support mechanisms, in addition to providing adaptation programs for Turkish students to enhance their tolerance towards Syrians and create an atmosphere where Syrians and Turks can tolerate one another in school. Only then can integration succeed and Syrians have a larger incentive to adapt and enrol in public schools in Turkey.

Ministry of National Education	Other Public Institutions	Provincial Directorates of National Education	Local Governments	Universities	Non-Governmental Organizations	International Organizations
<p>Designing a monitoring program to monitor Syrians' academic developments</p> <p>Including local students in the catch-up programs planned for Syrians in the summer</p> <p>Designing special policies for unattended minors</p> <p>Having private schools allocate quotas to accept refugee children</p> <p>Preparatory class practices</p> <p>Assigning Syrian guidance counselor in Public Schools</p> <p>Assigning special education teachers for the education of disabled students</p>	<p>Focusing on outside the camp rather than camp based refugee policies</p> <p>Designing special refugee policies for Istanbul since the city receives extensive migration</p> <p>Increasing shared spaces for Syrians and the local population</p> <p>Host family practices</p> <p>Supporting learning Turkish during the summer</p> <p>Accepting Syrian youth to Ministry of Youth and Sports Youth Camps</p> <p>Providing sponsorships and education support to orphaned children</p> <p>Increasing the number of Arabic translators in family health care centers and hospitals in areas extensively populated by Syrians</p>	<p>Preparing provincial action plans specific to the province</p> <p>Referring Turkmen student directly to public schools</p> <p>Providing administrators training in the management of specific financial and legal processes</p> <p>Teaching local teachers basic Arabic skills</p> <p>Providing adaptation programs to local students attending schools where Syrians are educated</p> <p>Preparing needs analysis for each school</p>	<p>Including refugees in city councils</p> <p>Identifying the students that are out of school</p> <p>Identifying and mapping the number of disabled children and youngsters in households</p> <p>Replenishing drinking water at schools by municipalities</p>	<p>Founding immigration research professorship</p> <p>Supporting graduate studies and projects in the field of immigration</p> <p>Providing classes on immigration with psycho-social aspects in education, psychology and sociology departments</p>	<p>Providing humanitarian aid with the stipulation that families send their children to school</p> <p>Providing educational technologies support to schools</p> <p>Providing activities that support teachers rather than the content of training</p>	<p>Creating financial support mechanisms for Public Schools</p> <p>Increasing financial support for the training of disabled children</p> <p>Offering more support for investments related to school infrastructures</p>

## REFERENCES

- Akyol, H. (2001). *Türkçe ilk okuma yazma öğretimi*. Ankara: Pegem Yayınları.
- Büyükkız, K. K., Çangal, Ö. (2016). Suriyeli Misafir Öğrencilere Türkçe Öğretimi Projesi Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme. *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi*, 5(3), 1414-1430.
- Coskun, İ., Emin, M. (2016). *The roadmap for the education of Syrians in Turkey: Opportunities and challenges*. Ankara: SETA Report.
- Ekinci, M.U. (2016). *Türkiye-AB Geri Kabul Anlaşması ve vize diyalogu*. Ankara: SETA Report.
- Mazzetti, M. (2008). Trauma and migration: A transactional analytic approach toward refugees and torture victims. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 38(4), 285-302.
- MEB. (2017). *Millî Eğitim İstatistikleri Örgün Eğitim 2016-2017 Yılı (1. Dönem)*. Ankara: MEB Yayınları.
- MEB. (2016). Göç ve Acil Durum Daire Başkanlığının Kurulmasına İlişkin Yönetmelik [http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2016\\_05/18020117\\_gocveacildurumegitimdb.pdf](http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_05/18020117_gocveacildurumegitimdb.pdf).
- MEB. (2011). Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Özel Eğitim ve Rehabilitasyon Merkezleri Yönetmeliği. [http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/27807\\_0.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/27807_0.html).
- Schweitzer, R., Melville, F., Steel, Z. ve Lacherez, P. (2006). Trauma, post-migration living difficulties, and social support as predictors of psychological adjustment in resettled Sudanese refugees. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 40(2), 179- 187.
- TTB. (2013). Suriyeli Sığınmacılar ve sağlık hizmetleri raporu. Ankara: Türk Tabipler Birliği. <https://www.ttb.org.tr/kutuphane/siginmacirpr.pdf>.
- Van Der Zee, R. and Van Den Berg, M. (2016). Syrian refugees: Single mothers' daily fight for survival. <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2016/syrian-refugees-single-women-fight-survival/index.html>.





## Theirworld

Theirworld is an innovative charity which helps children to fulfil their potential.

Through research, pilot projects and campaigning, Theirworld is at the forefront of testing and shaping new ideas to help give children in the United Kingdom and around the world the best possible start in life.

## SETA

SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research is a non-profit research institute dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional, and international issues. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy and society and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social and cultural conditions. SETA evaluates national and international issues in an historical and cultural context.