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WHY YOUTH SHOULD BE IN THE CENTER OF INTEGRATION POLICIES FOR REFUGEES? THE CASE OF SYRIANS’ LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION IN TURKEY

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INTRODUCTION

Labour market access is one of the gateways for young refugees to facilitate their integration into host societies. Deprivation of young refugees from necessary support mechanisms for labour market integration can cause their economic and social exclusion while it can also result with their exploitation in shadow sector. However, access to labour market is generally limited for young refugees due to a number of reasons. These reasons do not only include structural challenges such as political and legal restrictions in refugee hosting countries but also other factors. The UNHCR lists these factors under eleven headings as language, health, recognition of qualifications and experiences, mobility, networks, childcare, administrative and information problems, housing, discrimination, asylum process and age (UNHCR, 2013). Since young refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups, their employability is highly dependent upon the facilities and support mechanisms, which are devoted to these factors listed by the UNHCR.

The recent economic and financial crisis of Europe has coincided with an unprecedented refugee flow that created so-called migration crisis. This fact increased the number of difficulties for young refugees’ access to labour market. As a result, labour market integration of these groups has transformed into a permanent challenge both for them and

also for the hosting societies in Europe. Within this picture, Turkey portrays a distinctive example, which has been hosting around 2.7 million Syrian refugees as of November 2016 and according to existing data, almost 2/3 of the Syrian refugees in Turkey is under the age of 30. Correspondingly, Turkey as a country already with a youthful population, faced with the challenge of integrating young refugees to society and to the labour market.

While diverse group of stakeholders in Turkey have been involved in the process for formulating policies and strategies to resolve the problems of young refugees, NGOs and youth volunteerism have been transformed into one of the primary mechanisms by producing quick responses to the problems. In spite of the challenges and relatively short history of the refugees in the country, several initiatives by various NGOs in Turkey managed to provide services and implement projects for young refugees' problems. Within the projects and activities of these NGOs, youth has a prominent role. By underlining the significance of youth for integration of refugees, the purpose of this study is to reveal examples from the initiatives and projects in Turkey, which were developed by NGOs and youth groups as to address young refugees.

The first part of the study will briefly explain the history of Syrian migration flow to Turkey and related administrative efforts for their integration into the society, with a particular emphasis on labour market integration. The rest of the study will discuss and explain the significance of youth groups and youth work for refugee integration by providing examples from the existing initiatives and projects of the NGOs in Turkey.

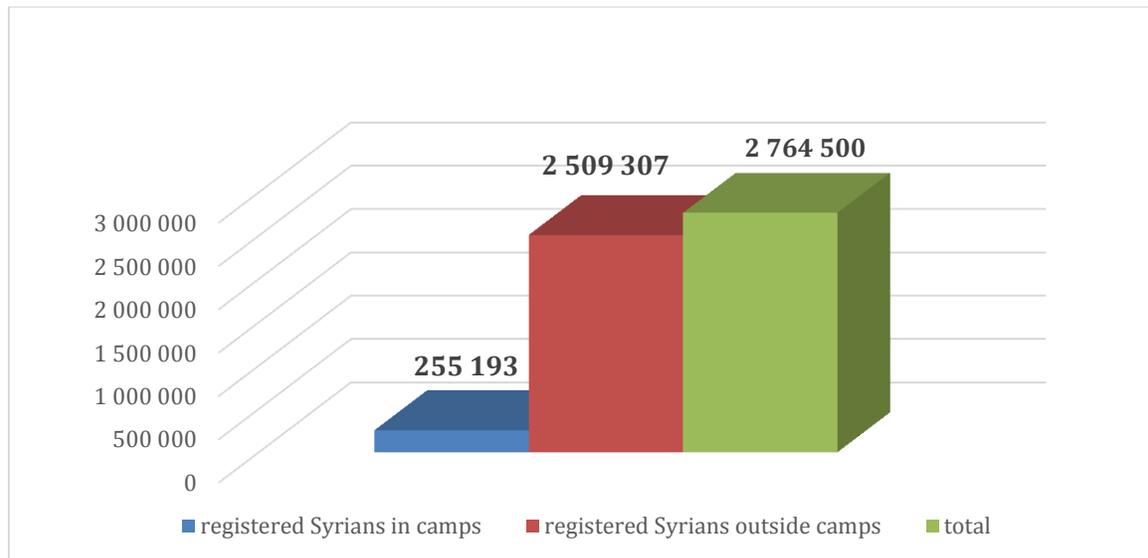
BACKGROUND: IMMIGRATION OF SYRIANS TO TURKEY

Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey has experienced several immigration flows such as the ones from Greece, Iraq, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia.¹ However, the numbers of these flows were relatively small and Turkey traditionally has been identified by the roles of a transit and emigration country in migration flows. On the other hand, the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War simultaneously caused displacement of around 7.6 million Syrians within the borders of the country and

¹ Directorate General of Migration Management; http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/history-of-migration_915_1026

flow of 4.6 million Syrians out of the borders. As one of the neighboring countries of Syria, Turkey implemented an open-door migration policy for the Syrians between 2011 and 2015. By respecting non-refoulement principle², it witnessed an unprecedented flow and accumulation of Syrian refugees within its borders. As a result, Turkey has transformed into the leading hosting country for the Syrian refugees with a population of around 2,7 million, which is almost the half of all Syrian refugees that internationally displaced after the beginning of the civil war in 2011. According to available data, only 10% of all Syrians are in the camps and non-camp Syrians, which are spread around cities of Turkey, constitute 90% of the Syrians in Turkey.

Graph 1: Syrians under temporary protection staying in and outside of camps in Turkey



Source: Directorate General of Migration Management
http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik

These developments brought new migration and refugee related challenges to Turkey by casting it a new role as an immigration country. It has been the largest immigrant flow within the history of the country and the necessity of a rapid response to the needs of the

² “Non-refoulement is a concept which prohibits States from returning a refugee or asylum-seeker to territories where there is a risk that his or her life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”, UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/419c75ce4/refugee-protection-international-law-scope-content-principle-non-refoulement.html>

Syrians speeded up the institutionalization process of migration management in Turkey. On the other hand, management of migration flows is just one aspect of the issue. Such a large number of refuge populations require initiatives also in social, economic and political spheres.

Turkey is a signatory of both the Geneva Convention on the Legal Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol on the Legal Status of Refugees. However, Turkey applies “geographical limitation” to the Convention which means refugee status is only given to the people coming from member countries of the Council of Europe. For others, a limited protection status is provided and in light of these principles, Turkey embraces 2.7 Syrians with the status of “temporary protection”.

In the first phase of the Syrian refugee flow, Turkey preferred to call them as “guests” since they could not be classified as neither asylum-seeker nor refugee due to Turkey’s geographical limitation to the Convention. However, the growing number of Syrian immigration to Turkey and complex structure of their status resulted with the institutionalization and further regulation of the Turkey’s migration management policy.

In order to provide an official and legal response to the increasing number of Syrians, the Ministry of Interior in Turkey prepared the “Law on Foreigners and International Protection” (Law 6458), which was ratified and published in April 2013.³ This law was prepared by the purpose of regulating foreigners’ entry, stay in and exit from Turkey and it also established the Directorate General of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior. It is the first comprehensive national law that regulates asylum processes in Turkey and it includes provisions on visas, residence permits, process and rules of international protection, rights and responsibilities.

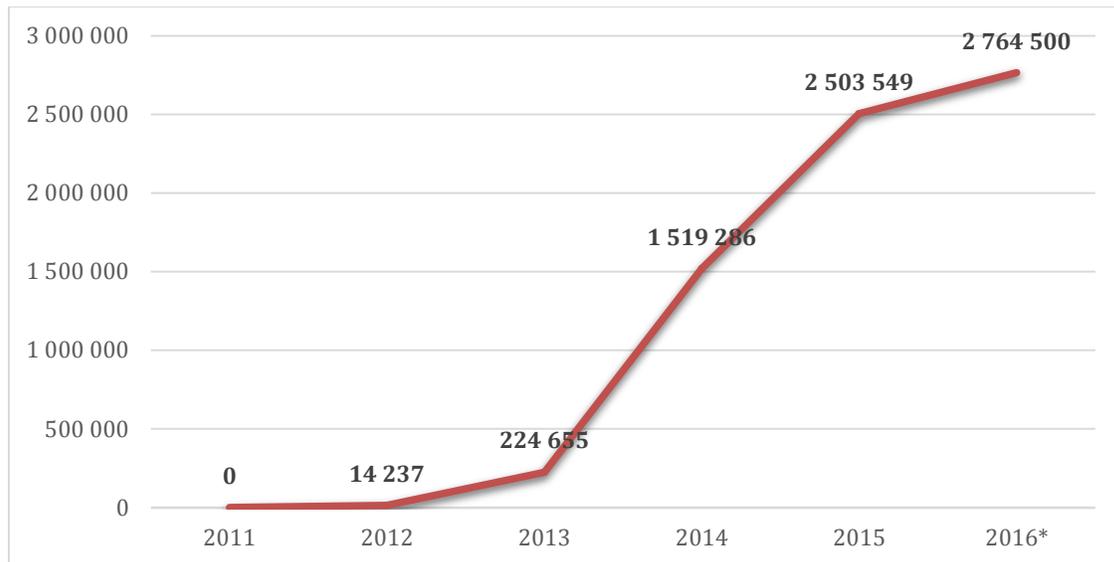
On the other hand, it became increasingly necessary to clarify “temporary protection” status of Syrians in Turkey by further legal tools. In article 91 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, it was declared that the *“Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the*

³ Directorate General of Migration Management, “Law on Foreigners and International Protection”, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/law-on-foreigners-and-international-protection-lfip_913_975 , accessed on 15.09.2016.

country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection”.⁴

Based on this article, Turkey issued Temporary Protection Regulation on October 2014.⁵ Although the regulation does not indicate a specific group and it was written for a general purpose, the major motivation of the regulation was to clarify the status for the Syrians in Turkey and to strengthen them by regulating the services and rights for the Syrians, including health services, work permit, education facilities and social assistances. By giving an identity document to all registered Syrians, it was also an attempt to encourage all Syrians in Turkey to be officially registered to the Turkish authorities in order to take advantages of these benefits under temporary protection.

Graph 2: Number of Syrians in Turkey under temporary protection per year



Source: Directorate General of Migration Management
http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik

INTEGRATION OF THE SYRIANS INTO TURKISH LABOUR MARKET AND GENERAL CHALLENGES

The major needs of the Syrians, who are staying in Turkey based on the legal status explained in the previous section, can be clustered under four distinctive categories as

⁴ Directorate General of Migration Management, “Law on Foreigners and International Protection”, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/law-on-foreigners-and-international-protection-lfip_913_975 , accessed on 15.09.2016.

⁵ Directorate General of Migration Management, “Temporary Protection Regulation”, http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/_dokuman28.pdf , accessed on 15.09.2016.

housing, education, health and work (TESEV, 2016: 2). The first generation of initiatives for helping and supporting Syrians in Turkey mostly focused on the basic needs of the Syrians such as housing, food and health. Both their increasing number and also the transformation of this process from a “temporary visit” into “permanent stay” necessitated producing initiatives and policies not only with an understanding of an immediate aid, but also considering integration aspect (Erdoğan ve Ünver, 2015: 9). As a result, initiatives and mechanisms for education and work have been recently started to develop in Turkey. According to the statistics of the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the number of the Syrians granted a work permit is just 10.000. The official work permit decree was issued just at the beginning of 2016 and it is relatively a new experience for Turkish employers.

Article 29 of the Temporary Protection Regulation had been the first legal tool that regulates the labour market access of the Syrians.⁶ This article allowed them to apply to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in Turkey for work permits. However, this conditional work permit for the Syrians could not be effective and only a limited number of Syrians applied for the permit. As a result, unregistered jobs among Syrians continued to increase. Furthermore, by 2015 it became clearer that the Syrians in Turkey under temporary protection are not guests but permanent members of the community by the prolongation of the conflict in Syria. Therefore, a specific regulation for the work permit of the Syrians became more necessary. Turkish government issued "Regulation on Work Permit of Refugees Under Temporary Protection" on 15 January 2016 and by this regulation, Syrians under temporary protection were given access to employment market in Turkey. The regulation presented provisions on their employment process. It has been an essential step as to increase the number of refugees, who are integrated in formal and legal work life. According to the regulation, Syrians can apply for employment in the cities that they have registered for temporary protection. The number of the Syrians cannot exceed the 10% of local workers in a specific workplace, but this quota becomes invalid when the employer proves that s/he cannot found the employee with required qualifications in 4 weeks.

⁶ <http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/temptemp.pdf>

It is estimated that 1 million out of 2,7 million Syrians in Turkey is in the working age (Özpinar et al, 2016: 2). However, around only 10.000 work permits were issued to Syrians in Turkey by September 2016 (UNHCR, 2016a). Existing data demonstrates that Syrians are integrated to the labour market in Turkey mostly through textile, manufacturing, agriculture, and construction sectors (Ercan, 2016:3). Syrians also involved in employment life by establishing their own businesses. According to statements of Union of Chambers and Bourses of Turkey (TOBB) representatives, Syrians established around 5000 enterprises in Turkey since 2011 and became to a leading foreign national group.⁷

Since the Syrians have been arriving Turkey just after 2011 and more importantly, work permit for them was regulated just in 2016, it can be asserted that Turkey is just on the bottom rung of the ladder in labour market integration process of Syrians. Existing studies confirm that labour market integration of refugees takes time and it can vary according to the local employment parameters of the host countries. For instance, according to a study of European Parliament, the EU average period for the integration of migrants into workplace can extend to six years while it takes around fifteen years to increase employment rates of them up to 70% (European Parliament, 2016: 22).

There is a general wisdom on that labour market integration is one of its' most crucial aspects of overall integration since it is a significant tool for providing long-term integration of refugees by increasing their engagement to hosting society (European Parliament, 2016: 11). On the other hand, inclusion of new members to the society and labour market can raise questions related both with their engagement or harmonization and also on their acceptance by the host society. While Syrians are bringing a new workforce to the labour market of Turkey, they are also in competition with Turkish workforce for getting a proper and decent job. Additionally, Turkey, with its' young population and surplus labour in some certain sectors, already coping with some structural problems in employment market. This fact can easily complicate labour market integration of Syrians, in particular, by the obstacles that lower skilled Turkish citizens are also faced (Ercan, 2016:4). For instance, the results of a field research in İstanbul in 2016 remark that in spite of the high level of positive relations, it is also possible to

⁷ <http://www.tobb.org.tr/BilgiErisimMudurlugu/Sayfalar/KurulanKapananSirketistatistikleri.php>

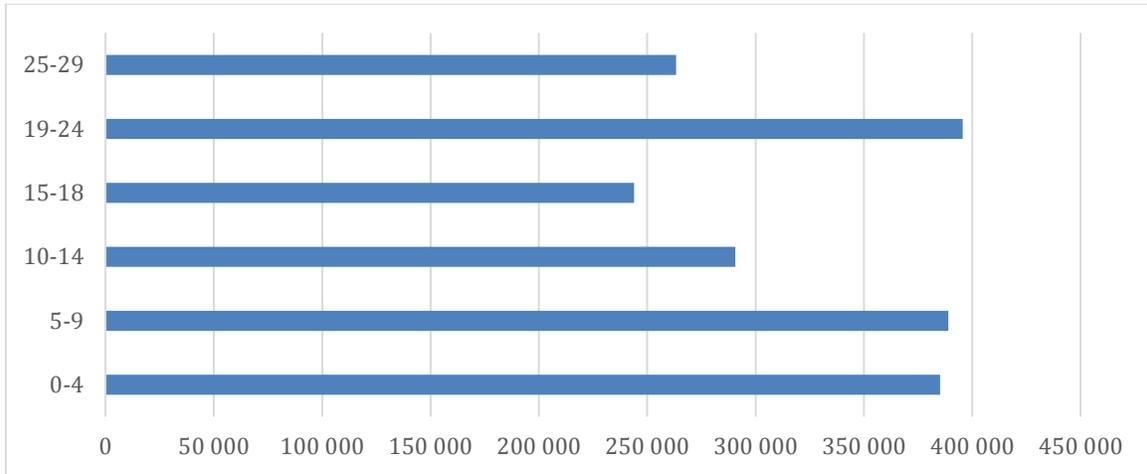
encounter some conflicts between the host community and Syrians primarily by the reason of a social dumping by the recruitment of Syrians in certain sectors, in particular in textile and shoe manufacturing sectors (Kaya and Kıracı, 2016: 5). The same study also found that unemployment is the major problem of the Syrians (Kaya and Kıracı, 2016: 23).

Overall, labour market integration of refugees is a challenge for all hosting societies. A study of European Parliament lists the reasons of these challenges as the lack of language skills, education level, restrictions for accessing to the labour market of the host societies, cultural barriers, lack of enough social networks to find a job and also health problems and traumas of the refugees due to the conflict and violence that they faced in their homelands (European Parliament, 2016:27). These problems show a great similarity with the problems that Syrians encounter in Turkey. Existing studies demonstrate that Syrians' labour market integration is challenging since they mostly do not have a proved vocational skills (with a diploma or certificate) or they have low level of education (Ercan, 2016:5), low level of Turkish language competency all of which is result in getting only lower wages in hard jobs or in unregistered jobs (Özpınar et al, 2016: 2).

THE ROLE OF YOUTH AND YOUTH WORK FOR THE INTEGRATION OF SYRIANS IN TURKEY

Based on the background explained previous sections of this paper, it can be asserted that it is necessary to produce immediate responses with long term projection for the Syrians' integration in Turkey. In order to develop these responses, addressing the needs of key groups can create shortcuts for better and quicker results. In this regard, youth should be accepted as a key group among both Syrians and also Turkish community. The importance of youth in both Syrian and Turkish society can be explained by two aspects. Firstly, the ratio of young people is significantly high among Syrians in Turkey and they constitute one of the most fragile groups within the existing community. Their specific needs require rapid and tailor made policies and actions. As of November 2016, 1.967.294 Syrians, which are almost more than 2/3 of all 2.764.500 Syrians in Turkey, are within the youth segment. Almost half of all Syrians in Turkey are under the age of 18 years old.

Graph 3: Ratio of registered Syrians under the age of 30 in Turkey



Source: http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik

Table 1: Age distribution of registered Syrians in Turkey

Age	Man	Woman	Total
Total	1,472,401	1,292,099	2,764,500
0-4	199,295	185,776	385,071
5-9	199,977	188,919	388,896
10-14	151,884	138,717	290,601
15-18	132,548	111,339	243,887
19-24	220,856	174,730	395,586
25-29	148,149	115,104	263,253
30-34	120,649	96,347	216,996
35-39	86,425	73,660	160,085
40-44	59,472	56,123	115,595
45-49	48,061	44,204	92,265
50-54	37,459	36,149	73,608
55-59	25,297	25,347	50,644
60-64	17,574	18,012	35,586
65-69	11,320	11,696	23,016
70-74	6,158	7,100	13,258
75-79	3,778	4,511	8,289
80-84	1,984	2,531	4,515
85-89	1,075	1,248	2,323
90+	440	586	1,026

Source: http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik

The challenges of these groups concerning to their integration into the society are very interrelated with each other and mismanagement on one of these problems can complicate the solutions for other related problems. For instance, without solving their problems related with the language, they will not be fully integrated to the education system. According to the UNCHR, only 2.2 % Syrian refugee youth enrolled in Higher Education in Turkey (UNHCR, 2016b). Turkey provided several opportunities and facilities for encouraging the school enrolment of the Syrians under temporary protection.

Despite these efforts, attainment to higher education among Syrians remains low due to the lack of information on the opportunities, necessity of Syrian youth to work to maintain their lives rather than getting education, low level of participation to the skill-building or language courses and insufficient civil society capacity to answer the demands (UNHCR 2016b).

Focusing on the last reason indicated by the UNHCR, mobilization of civil society and involvement of youth work can contribute to creating solutions for integration problems. Further involvement of youth and NGOs to the management of this process can strengthen existing efforts and institutional structures. There are around 280.000 registered NGOs in Turkey. Although only around 5% of the board members of these NGOs are under the age of 30⁸, the involvement of youth as members is much higher. The initiatives for the refugee groups are fairly new issue for most of these organisations. These NGOs, particularly the ones driven by the youths can be encouraged to do more youth work for the Syrian refugees by raising their awareness about refugees' problems and also by developing their capacities on how to bring solutions. Through the mediating role of NGOs, youth initiatives and youth volunteerism can be more concentrated on the problems of the Syrian youth. Complementary initiatives can be developed by youth initiatives to increase Syrians' level of education, language proficiency and vocational skills, which eventually will contribute their employability and integration into the labour market in Turkey. Failure in integration of youth groups into labour market can cause poverty and deprivation by causing social exclusion and marginalization. On the other hand, responding adequately to the education needs of this group will contribute not only to their general integration into the society but also it will influence their employability levels in the medium term.

Secondly, Turkey is a fairly young society and it is very crucial to provide a dialogue between Syrian youth and Turkish youth to construct a sound dialogue and social cohesion in the future. The 16,6 % of the total population in Turkey is between the ages of 15-24 (TUIK, 2013) and it is higher than the average of EU28 countries. If we also include children, Turkey constitutes a very perplexing case by having almost more than half of its' population under the age of 30. As previously mentioned, Syrian refugees in

⁸ <https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/organ-uye-yas.aspx>

Turkey has also young profile and this fact can create both opportunities and challenges for the labour market integration of the Syrians in Turkey.

Without long-term strategies that address the labour needs and an education system that corresponds these needs, the Syrian and Turkish youth could perceive each other as the competitors in the same labour market rather than the members of the same society. Increased rate of unemployment in the provinces that Syrian refugees are highly populated could cause a conflict in society by creating the idea that Syrians are stealing the jobs of Turkish community. For instance, a study in 2014 supports the existence of stereotypes concerning to the labour market participation of the Syrians by demonstrating that 56% of Turkish respondents carry fear on this issue while almost half of the respondents are negative to Syrians' integration into the labour market (Erdoğan and Enver, 2015: 58). However, these prejudices and related problems can be managed. In order to prevent the conflict resulting from these sorts of misconceptions, youth NGOs and youth groups can play a primary role by creating common platforms to bring Turkish and the Syrian youth together.

YOUTH RELATED INITIATIVES FOR THE SYRIANS IN TURKEY

In its studies, The European Parliament emphasizes that effective integration can be accomplished through the cooperation of civil society organisations, local communities, business environment, and non-governmental organisations (European Parliament; 2016:30). Youth work for the refugees and migrants in Turkey is a recently developing area and even the works and activities of civil society on this issue have a relatively shorter history when it is compared to some European countries. As explained, this is quite related with the fact that, in spite of some small-scale experiences before, Turkey has already transformed into migrant and refugee hosting society for such a big refugee groups just after the arrival of Syrians by 2011.

Nonetheless, there is huge potential of civil society considering the number of young population and youth organisations. According to the comprehensive analysis of “youth map” study, there are more than 450 organisations in Turkey specifically working on youth issues⁹, including federations, youth centers and youth parliaments, unions,

⁹ <http://www.genclikharitasi.org/istatistik-s4.html>

university youth groups and communities. Despite its short history of the Syrian refugee flows to Turkey, there are several active NGOs and youth organisations in the field that have been supporting refugees for accessing their rights, providing legal consultation, food and sheltering support, health assistance (Kutlu, 2015). During the first years of the Syrians in Turkey, alongside with voluntary philanthropy of Turkish community, several NGOs have provided required complementary assistance, in particular for the non-camp Syrians. After the transformation of their flow into a permanent stay in Turkey and following the work permit regulations for these groups in 2016, it can be expected that a new generation of NGO activities will correspond the long-term integration needs of the Syrians beyond immediate aid. On the other hand, there are already existing youth related initiatives in Turkey that supporting labour market integration of the Syrians directly or indirectly.

For instance, the **Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)** is one of these NGOs that established in 2002 by the purpose of encouraging young people to participate in the social responsibility projects for supporting personal development of young people.¹⁰ They initiated Young Refugees Support Project in 2015 in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The project aims to support integration processes of the Syrian youth between 18-30 years old in 2 provinces of Turkey (Hatay and Diyarbakır) by reinforcing them through youth work and humanitarian work. In scope of the project, a field research was also conducted by TOG for identifying the needs of Syrian youth concerning to the employment and education.

The Turkish Red Crescent is another example of active organisations both in youth work and also refugee support.¹¹ Young people can be engaged to the refugee and immigrant aid programs of the Turkish Red Crescent through its' branches and youth organisations, while the organisation encourages youth volunteerism in many issues. The Turkish Red Crescent has a directorate for immigration and refugee services and provides shelters, health services, nourishment and also education facilities in refugee camps. They also collaborate with local administrations to deliver vocational trainings. The Turkish Red Crescent has also organized a workshop in 2016 by bringing NGOs and public

¹⁰ Further information about the organization is available at: <https://www.tog.org.tr/en>

¹¹ <http://www.kizilay.org.tr/neleryapiyoruz/education-and-youth-services>

bodies in Şanlıurfa province of Turkey to discuss and produce solutions to employment problems of the Syrian refugees.¹²

Another NGO, **Support to Life Association (Hayata Destek Derneği)** operates in İstanbul, Hatay, Batman and Diyarbakır towns of Turkey and provides financial aid and protection programs for poverty reduction of the Syrian refugees.¹³ By 2012, they have started to implement “Relief Aid for Syrian Refugees” program and expanded this program in 2014 by transforming it to a wide scale protection project including health support, skills development and legal consultancy. The association also focuses on the awareness raising activities concerning to the child labour and since 2014 they have been coordinating a project entitled “combating child labour”.

The Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), which was established just after the Iraq War in 1995, supports asylum seekers as one of the implementing partner of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Turkey Office.¹⁴ The Association provides not only regular supports such as legal consultation and food assistance but also delivers language courses for refugees, music and art courses, awareness raising activities about refugees among society, activities for increasing harmonization between refugees and local community and skills development trainings such as web design, handicrafts, carpet weaving and cake decoration. The Association has active employees in addition to support of volunteers.

YUVA is another Turkish association, which designs and implements activities on social integration and intercultural dialogue for Syrian refugees under their Syrian Refugees Program since 2013.¹⁵ Their target group includes young refugees. Via their two community centers in Hatay and Gaziantep provinces of Turkey and through vocational trainings, YUVA provides support to refugees by improving their self-sufficiency and developing their professional skills. The association also delivers Turkish language trainings for the Syrians by the aim of facilitating their access to services of public institutions, health and labour market. They provide psychosocial support and social integration activities, too.

¹² <https://www.kizilay.org.tr/Haber/KurumsalHaberDetay/3042>

¹³ Further information about the organization is available at: <http://www.supporttolife.org/en/>

¹⁴ Further information about the organization is available at: <http://en.sgdd.info/>

¹⁵ Further information about the organization is available at: <http://www.yuva.org.tr/en/>

Several NGOs in Turkey implement activities and projects for the integration of Syrian youth in Turkey also through the EU funded programs. There are various initiatives developed within scope of the Civil Society Dialogue program of the European Union, which aims to bring together civil society organisations from Turkey and the EU to exchange knowledge and experience. **The Research Center on Asylum and Migration (IGAM)** is one of these associations and implemented “Harmonization of Refugees” project as to adapt the Refugee Integration Evaluation Tool to Turkey.¹⁶ The organisation has also several other projects and a comprehensive study on the activities of non-governmental organisation for Syrian Refugees in Turkey was prepared and published by IGAM in 2014. Other EU funded youth project titled “**Empowering Youth Workers to Reach Out Young Migrants and Refugees (REACH-OUT)**” is funded by Turkish National Agency and it is coordinated by Yaşar University in cooperation with five partner organisations from Italy, Greece and Austria. REACH-OUT project aims to develop and test an innovative training curriculum for youth workers to support them in reaching out to young migrants and refugees, and increase youth workers’ competences and foster their professional development.¹⁷

The Ministry of Youth and Sports in Turkey also provides funding for the youth projects related with refugees. According to the data provided by the Ministry, six different youth projects were funded just in 2015 by providing around 200.000 Euros financial aid and around 2250 Syrian young people have been the beneficiaries of these projects.¹⁸ The projects funded by the Ministry aims to deliver language course and vocational trainings, education consultancy for the young refugees as to cope with their social integration problems.

There are also other initiatives and works of NGOs, which were initiated directly by the Syrians. Among these initiatives, around 40 associations that established by the Syrians in Turkey, came together under an umbrella organisation called “**Syrian Associations Platform**”. There is also another similar initiative titled “**The Syrian Forum**” and it includes 6 different organisations providing direct humanitarian aid and assistance,

¹⁶ Further information about the organization is available at:<http://www.igamder.org/ENGLISH/>

¹⁷ Further information is available at:<http://euc.yasar.edu.tr/empowering-youth-workers-to-reach-out-young-migrants-and-refugees/>

¹⁸ <http://www.gsb.gov.tr/HaberDetaylari/1/53033/suriyeli-gencler-genclik-ve-spor-bakanliginin-destegiyle-hayata-tutunuyor.aspx>

vocational training, cultural awareness, civic training and doing research related with Syrian refugees.¹⁹

CONCLUSION and the FINAL REMARKS

By the influence of the migration flows after the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, Turkey has transformed into one of the leading refugee hosting countries of the world with around 2.7 million Syrians. Contrary to the expectations within the first years of the flows after 2011, it became clear that the Syrians would be permanent members of Turkish society rather than temporary guests.

Turkey developed immediate responses and legal tools at state level to provide required mechanism for the Syrians both inside and outside the camps. However, the size of the Syrian population in Turkey and permanency of their situation necessitate the involvement and contribution of other non-state actors. Integration policies for the Syrians in Turkey could only be properly developed and implemented by the complementary contribution of these actors.

Within this picture, non-governmental organisations in Turkey constitute primary complementary actors and involvement of youth to this process through the activities of these organisations can facilitate the integration of Syrians. This paper exclusively exemplifies the initiatives from Turkey among many others, which can contribute labour market integration of the Syrians and which have a “youth” context in terms of their beneficiaries or providers. Based on the examples analysed in this paper, the following remarks can be made concerning to the involvement of youth to the refugee’s labour market integration initiatives in Turkey:

- Youth can play a pivotal role in creating required dialogue between the Syrian refugees and Turkish community owing to the existence of large cohorts of young people within both communities. While focusing on educational needs of the Syrian youth in Turkey can be an essential step to guarantee their further integration into the society and labour market, involvement of Turkish youth to this process could also facilitate breaking prejudices and stereotypes.

¹⁹ <https://us.syrianforum.org/institutions.html>

- Although it is a relatively new experience, there are several distinguished examples of youth work contributing to the labour market integration of the Syrians. Many non-governmental organisations, which have been traditionally involved in youth work, transferred their experience to the initiatives for refugees. Since an immediate response was required for the Syrians at the beginning, these initiatives mainly focused on the basic needs of the Syrians such as housing, food and other humanitarian aids. On the other hand, after transformation of the Syrians' situation in Turkey into a permanent stay and after the development of legal tools for their employment process, the initiatives for their labour market integration became equally necessary. It can be assumed that the "second generation" of refugee work in Turkey will further focus on integration aspect rather than just an immediate aid.
- Existing examples of youth work for the Syrians' labour market integration in Turkey mostly include vocational trainings, skill development trainings and language trainings, which were their primary needs for the first steps into the labour market. However, now extra steps need to be taken in order to ensure further integration.
- The youth work could be a valuable tool for encouraging school participation, in particular, in higher education, by providing information on entrepreneurship and developing dialogue with the society.
- Surely there are many other youth initiatives in Turkey, which were not included in the context of this study but worth examining. Development of platforms to share best practices of the youth work for the refugees in Turkey can be encouraging for other NGOs and youth workers.
- Integration of refugees is a multi-dimensional issue and it is open to contribution of all NGOs rather than just the ones, which are specifically established for migrants and refugees. Providing guidance to Turkish NGOs on how to work with and for refugees could increase the number of initiatives and boost the involvement of youth.

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