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## Social cohesion in Turkey: refugees and the host community

Online survey findings rounds 1-5

WFP Turkey Country Office



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Programme

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## Summary

Turkey currently hosts approximately 3.6 million refugees, the majority of whom live out-of-camp, in cities and villages, integrated with the host (Turkish) communities and they therefore share the same environment, resources, and developments in all spheres (social, economic, etc.). In the earlier years, refugees in Turkey were widely welcomed, with empathy, and considered as guests with the expectation that the unrest in Syria would be short-lived. However, as the Syrian conflict continued (now in its tenth year), the refugees started to build their lives in Turkey and the host community attitude evolved: while many are still welcoming, some have become more reserved towards the refugees.

The social cohesion index indicates that relations between the refugees and the host community in Turkey were improving in the first three rounds of the survey (July 2017–January 2018). However, this reversed in the following rounds (February and June 2019), probably influenced by; i) the economic slowdown in mid-2018 that notably resulted in competition for limited informal employment opportunities between refugees and hosts and ii) the political discourse on refugee returns during the election period in March 2019.

Triggered by the motivation to survive in a new environment, the refugees are more willing to have interaction with their counterparts in the host community. Despite their willingness, limited Turkish language ability remains the main barrier to relationship building. The refugees who can communicate in Turkish at any level feel significantly safer and think that there is a future for their children in Turkey compared to those who do not speak Turkish at all. In addition to the language problems, it was also found that the more educated the refugees are, the more likely they were to have good relations with the hosts.

Personal interaction is a significant factor for the host community in forming their attitudes towards refugees. Turkish nationals who do not know any refugee or who merely have refugee acquaintances (e.g. from their neighbourhood or workplace) are indifferent in their attitudes towards them. Having refugee friends promotes social cohesion among Turkish people.

Approval of children's friendship with their counterparts is more common in both communities compared to other kinds of interaction such as intermarriage, business relations or sharing neighbourhood. Even though refugees are more open to such friendship, they have concerns over possible conflict among children. Refugees are also more open to intermarriage (between their children and the hosts) but prefer marriages within their nationality for family unity as their future in Turkey is unknown and return to their home country is likely.

The percentage of host community members who think refugees are more vulnerable than the Turkish poor has decreased over time, perhaps due to the fading of the "emergency" with the longer stay of refugees and the ESSN assistance. However, even the ones who think that refugees are not very vulnerable believe that the international community should provide them with assistance. Despite the decline through time, many Turkish people are willing to share public facilities with the refugees.

In fact, almost half of the Turkish people believe that the refugees are likely to settle in Turkey even if the conflict in Syria is resolved. Around two-in-five host community members believe that the cost of living in their neighbourhood increased due to the presence of refugees across. Even so, one can say that the host community, willingly or with concerns, accepted the possibility of living together with the refugees in the long run, which is an important milestone for social cohesion. Furthermore, the proportion of refugees who state that they are charged higher rental fees than the Turkish people has decreased over time, indicating an increase in fair treatment by landlords.

However, the financial struggle people face seem to affect negatively the social cohesion between the two communities in the labour market. The support for equal payment for the refugee employees declined in 2019, when the unemployment rates and job competition in both communities increased. Some Turkish people believe that the refugees are more favoured in the welfare system, while many refugees state that they earn less than their Turkish co-workers for the same job while working in unfair conditions, and without social security.

## Introduction



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The instability in Syria resulted in the displacement of people across the region, affecting the neighbouring countries the most. The first 250 Syrians arrived in Turkey on 29 April 2011 through the Hatay-Cilvegözü border crossing. As of June 2020, there are approximately 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey.<sup>1,2</sup> In addition, there are around half a million refugees of Afghan, Iraqi, Iranian, and Somali nationality under Temporary/International protection.<sup>3</sup>

The high influx of refugees not only affected the lives of the refugees, but also impacted Turkey from many aspects including in Education, Healthcare, among others. In the last decade, Turkey became the largest refugee hosting country

in the world far ahead of the other countries (*figure 1*).<sup>4</sup> The majority of refugees in Turkey live out-of-camp, in cities and villages, integrated with the host (Turkish) communities. Only about 62,580<sup>5</sup> refugees are hosted in camps in the South-East of the country. The out-of-camp refugees live in all 81 provinces in Turkey, and half a million of them live in Istanbul. In the provinces bordering Syria such as Kilis, the population ratios of refugees to the host community are as high as 76%.<sup>6</sup> Thus, both the refugees and the Turkish communities found themselves sharing the same environment, resources, and developments in all spheres (social, economic, etc.).

1 Erdogan, M. (2020). "Onuncu Yılında Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler" International Relations Council. Retrieved from: <https://www.uikpanorama.com/blog/2020/04/29/onuncu-yilinda-turkiyedeki-suriyeliler/>

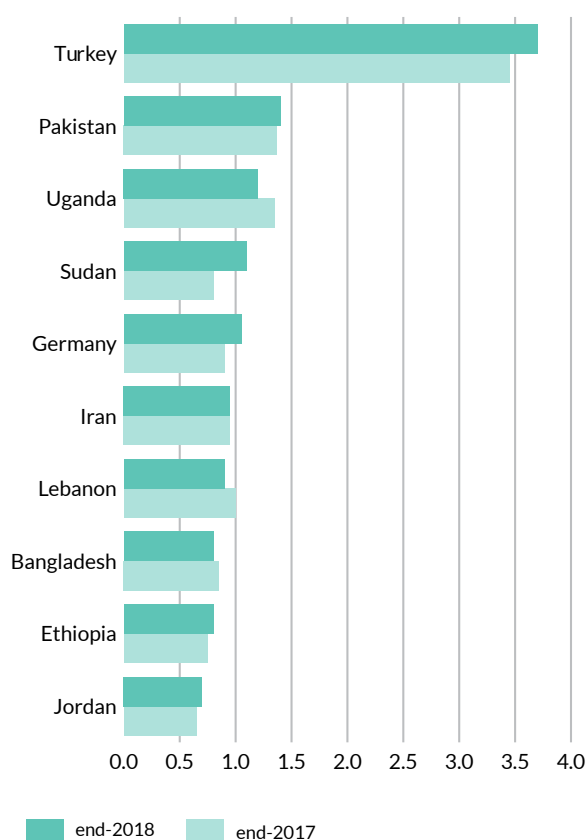
2 Directorate General of Migration Management, retrieved on June 8th, 2020.

3 Even though Turkey gives refugee status only to the people from European countries, temporary or international protection is granted to other nationalities under the Foreigners and International protection law (2013) which also provides for free access to services such as education and health once they have registered with the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM). For convenience, in this report, the people under protection will be referred as 'refugees'.

4 <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2018/>

5 Migration Statistics, DGMM, retrieved on July 10th, 2020.

6 <https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi/>

**Figure 1 Top refugee-hosting countries 2017–2018<sup>7</sup>**

Studies show that the attitudes of the host society matter significantly on the adaptation of the newcomers (Reitz, 2020). The likely changes in the labour markets, housing costs, use of public services as a result of the increased population with the influx of migrants have the potential to cause competition and therefore increase tension. Furthermore, welfare assistance or any humanitarian intervention for the vulnerable people migrated involuntarily might be perceived as favouritism and create disturbance.

In the earlier years, refugees in Turkey were widely welcomed, with empathy, and considered as guests with the expectation that the unrest in Syria would be short-lived. However, as the Syrian conflict continued (now in its 10th year), the refugees started to build their lives in Turkey.

Along with refugees' continued stay in Turkey, the host community attitude has evolved and, while many are still welcoming, some have become more reserved towards the refugees. The literature on migration does not have an agreed definition to refer to the relationship between the host-migrant communities. Therefore, the term 'social cohesion' is used in this study and defined as "absence of social tension between refugees and host communities in non-camp urban areas".<sup>8</sup>

Approximately one-third of the Syrian population are children under 10 years of age,<sup>9</sup> born and raised in Turkey without any memories of their home in Syria. In addition to that, a considerable number of Syrians (about 25%) are youths aged 10–20 who arrived at early ages have grown up in Turkey. Overall, close to 60% of the Syrian refugee population were either born in Turkey or have spent a significant part of their childhood in Turkey, and may be more accustomed to life in Turkey. Thus, in reality, majority of Syrian refugees may be less inclined to return to their home country having spent most of their lives in Turkey. In this regard, social cohesion is a fundamental aspect of refugee programming in Turkey.

<sup>7</sup> The image is retrieved from UNHCR Global Trends – Forced Displacement 2018. <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2018/>

<sup>8</sup> The definition is used by the WFP Regional Bureau of Cairo on their social cohesion studies.

<sup>9</sup> The 5–9 years olds among refugees is the largest group in age pyramid in 2020. Please see WFP Turkey Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise report for details

## Methodology

In line with the humanitarian principle of ‘do no harm’ while alleviating the suffering of the affected population,<sup>10</sup> this study aims to assess the attitudes of the Turkish and the refugee communities towards each other. WFP has partnered with Turk Kizilay (Turkish Red Crescent -TK) to implement the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme I and II to assist over 1.7 million refugees in Turkey between December 2016 and March 2020. The ESSN programme provided monthly unconditional cash transfers (about 145 TRY per person as of August 2019) to eligible refugee households. The Turkish name of the programme “*Sosyal Uyum Yardımı*” which is translated as ‘social cohesion assistance’ reflects the broader purpose of the programme not as merely supporting the refugees financially for their basic needs, but also as contributing to their social relations with the host community.

This study focusses on the social cohesion between the refugees in Turkey and the host community. A mixed methods approach was adopted for the study: quantitative data was collected through five cross-sectional surveys from July 2017 to June 2019 to monitor the trends; while qualitative data was collected through two rounds of focus group discussions with refugees intended to explain/interpret findings from the quantitative analysis.

The quantitative component involved a total of 16,498 participants from both Turkish and Arabic-speaking refugee communities in all five rounds (table 1). During the sampling process, the confidence interval was determined as 90% with 5% margin of error (first three rounds) and below 3.3% for rounds 4 and 5. In each round of data collection, the surveys were representative at regional and national level for both Turkish and refugee populations.

Data collection was conducted through an online platform managed by the RiWi Corporation using their patented Random Domain Intercept Technology (RDIT) that allows random sampling of internet users in specific locations,

10 Crawford, N. Pattugalan, G. & Simmons, L. (2013). Protection in Practice: Food Assistance with Safety and Dignity. World Food Programme, Rome, Italy.

**Table 1 Sample size of participants in each round of survey**

	Locations	Participants		
		Turkish	Refugee	All
<b>1st Round</b> July 2017	Istanbul	578	140	718
	Aegean & Central Anatolia	179	140	319
	Southeastern Provinces	396	141	537
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1153</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>1574</b>
<b>2nd Round</b> October 2017	Istanbul	482	216	698
	Aegean & Central Anatolia	617	136	753
	Southeastern Provinces	391	149	540
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1490</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>1991</b>
<b>3rd Round</b> January 2018	Istanbul	685	154	839
	Aegean & Central Anatolia	907	96	1003
	Southeastern Provinces	315	124	439
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1907</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>2281</b>
<b>4th Round</b> February 2019	Istanbul	1046	223	1269
	Aegean & Central Anatolia	2211	190	2401
	Southeastern Provinces	1410	564	1974
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4667</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>5644</b>
<b>5th Round</b> June 2019	Istanbul	747	216	963
	Aegean & Central Anatolia	1467	568	2035
	Southeastern Provinces	1818	192	2010
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4032</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>5008</b>



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enabling a nationally representative sample. As indicated in Table 1, the provinces in Turkey were categorized as Istanbul, South-East region and the rest of Turkey (Aegean and Central Anatolia), based on the characteristics of both the refugees (e.g. nationality) and provinces in those regions in terms of geographical, socio-cultural, and economic aspects. The most populated provinces in each region were selected, and sample selection distributed representatively.

Survey questionnaires were self-administered through the online platform which assured anonymity and allowed both the host and refugee communities in Turkey to honestly express their true feelings towards each other. The surveys included four main categories of questions: Interpersonal relationships, Economic Implications, Safety and stability, as well as demographic information. The questions were designed as statements and respondents were requested to rate their agreement level on a 5-point Likert scale; 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree” to allow respondents to express their true opinions even if these opinions are socially undesirable (*annex 1*).

### The focus group discussions

A total of 18 focus group discussions (FGDs), involving 155 refugees, were conducted in 9 provinces in June 2018 and November–December 2019. The discussions explored intergroup interactions, workplace and neighbourhood interactions, children’s relationships and the barriers to social interaction (*annex 2*).

### Limitations

The languages used for the surveys were limited to Turkish for the host community and Arabic for the refugees, in-line with the study focus on the interaction between the Turkish and Syrian refugees. The study does not therefore capture the perspectives of non-Arabic speaking refugees. Note that

more than 95% of the refugees in Turkey are Arabic speakers from Syria (91%), Iraq (3%), and Somalia (1%).<sup>11</sup>

Other limitations include the literacy of participants as a precondition for this self-administered survey. According to Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), the literacy rate for adults in Turkey is 96%, meaning only about 4% of the Turkish population was excluded<sup>12</sup> compared to an estimated 15% and 25% among male and female refugees respectively.<sup>13</sup>

Online surveys are often criticized for not including the people who do not use internet. TurkStat data indicates that in 2019, about 75% of the Turkish population used the internet,<sup>14</sup> compared to 73% and 67% in 2018 and 2017 respectively. While the coverage is increasing nationwide, there are still more male than female internet users (81% vs 66%). Among the refugees, the data from WFP’s Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise (CVME) Round 5 shows that 58% have access to the internet either through mobile data or Wi-Fi. Unlike the Turkish population however, there is less disparity in internet usage among refugees (59% among men and 57% among women).

During the study, it was not possible to organize Focus Groups with the Turkish nationals. The report therefore relies on the responses given to the open-ended question in the survey round 4 (February 2019) for the Turkish perspective.

11 Calculation is based on the number of refugees retrieved from Directorate General of Migration Management.

12 National Education Statistics, 2019: <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn=1&locale=tr>

13 WFP (2020). Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise: Round 5 (CVME 5). World Food Programme, Turkey Country Office.

14 National Computer and Internet Usage Statistics, 2019: <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn=1&locale=tr>

# Findings

## Demographics

### Respondent age and gender

Among all the participants, the majority were 18–36 years old (figure 2). This is in line with research findings which show that even though 92% of the people in Turkey have mobile data on their phones, the youth are still the most active internet users.<sup>15</sup> Across all five surveys, the ratios remained around the same levels for both the refugee and the host community members. Throughout the text, the age group 18–34 is referred as the youth, the age group 35–64 years olds are called the middle aged, and people over age 65 are considered as the elderly.

There were consistently more male participants in the surveys for both communities (figure 3), also reflecting the internet user population. Effectively, the findings in the survey may lean more towards the views held by young males, both among the host and refugee communities.

### Education<sup>16</sup>

The education levels were grouped in 4 categories: (1) Literate; who do not have any formal education, yet able to read and write (2) Low level; representing people completed elementary or middle school, (3) Medium level, for people who have a high school or equivalent degree, (4) High level; any university education including any 2-year vocational/ associate degree.

Expectedly, the majority of respondents among refugees and the host community had medium to high education level (figure 4). The proportion of respondents who reported having completed high school or university education was disproportionately higher in the sample (e.g. among the host community, 38% in the sample were college graduates compared to 20% of the population data). This is most likely a function of the methodology as people with higher level of education have more internet usage and are more likely to fill out an online survey.

Figure 2 Age of participants per round

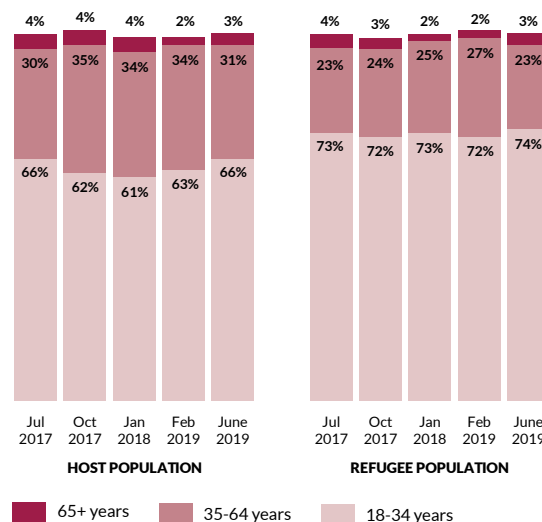


Figure 3 Sex of participants per round

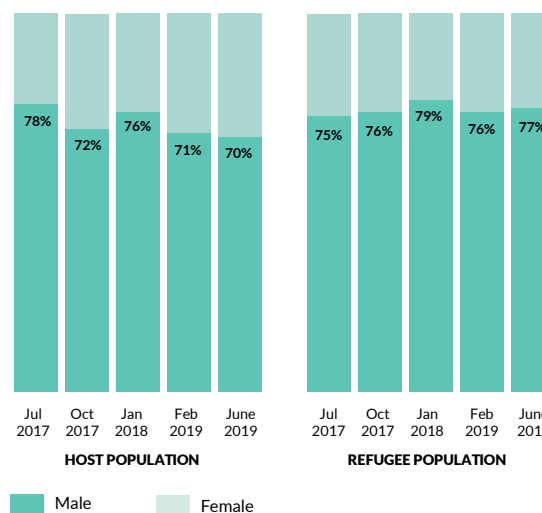
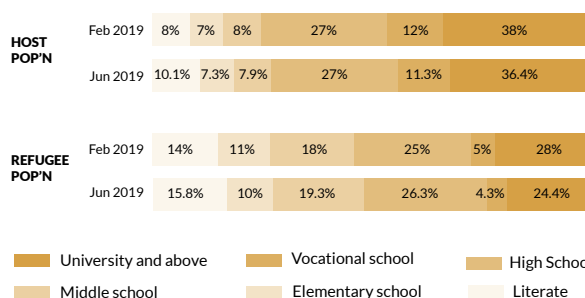


Figure 4 Education of participants per round



15 We Are Social 2020. Turkey Statistics: <https://wearesocial.com/digital-2020>

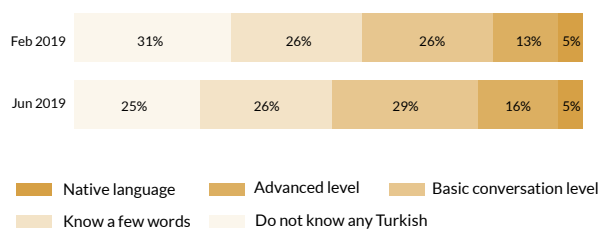
16 The education question was introduced in February 2019 (round 4) and June 2019 (round 5).



### Turkish language ability

Ability to speak the local language is an important part of refugee integration and social cohesion, promoting interaction in various spheres of life. Nearly half (49%) of the refugees who responded to the survey in June 19 indicated being able to have at least a basic conversation in Turkish, up from 44% in February 2019<sup>17</sup> (figure 5). One-quarter of refugees stated that they do not know Turkish at all.

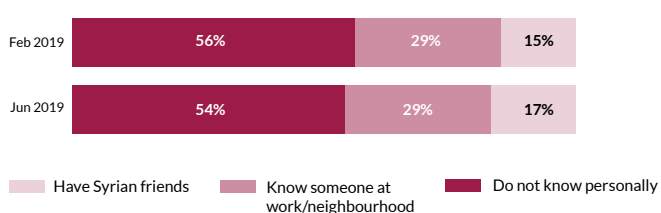
Figure 5 Turkish language ability of the refugees



### Familiarity with refugees

In the 4th and 5th rounds of the survey, the host community members were asked about their familiarity with the refugees, which plays a role on differentiating the base of attitudes towards refugees; degree of interaction or assumptions. Majority of the host community (54%) do not know any refugee at all (figure 6). While 29% of them said that they ‘know some refugees at work or in their neighbourhoods’, that is, they are familiar with some refugee faces and yet not interacting with them, and 17% of the Turkish people said that they have refugee friends.

Figure 6 Host community’s familiarity with refugees



17 Data on Turkish language ability was only collected in the 4th and 5th rounds.

## Interpersonal Relationships

Participants were asked about their opinions on sharing the same apartment building, sharing the work environment with the other community, allowing children's friendship, and inter-community marriage. Both the refugees and the host community answered those questions in reference to the other community, allowing comparison and contrast.

### 1. Sharing neighbourhood

Among both the refugee and the host communities, the willingness to live in the same building deteriorated in 2019. Communication is reported as the main barrier. The election season (March 2019) where the refugee related policies were raised in the party manifestos could have played a role.

While refugees have more positive attitudes towards sharing the same building with the Turkish people, the trends show that the percentage of willing to share the same building has decreased over time. As of June 2019, 28% of the Turkish people and 64% of the refugees would be happy to share the same building (figure 7). When asked during FGDs, refugees stated that they do not have any problems with their neighbours, yet they are not able to interact beyond greetings because of the language barrier. Among the host community, there is a considerable number of respondents who stated that there may be problems with the refugees' stay in Turkey in the long run, so they prefer not to live next to each other.

## Barriers and bridges

### Gender

In both host and refugee communities, men tend to be more willing to share neighbourhoods/buildings with the others than the women do; 30% of the Turkish men compared to 26% of Turkish women and 70% of the refugee men compared to 58% of the refugee women would be happy to share their building. Given that men are more involved in income generating activities, it is likely that they interact more with different nationalities and are therefore more open.

### Age

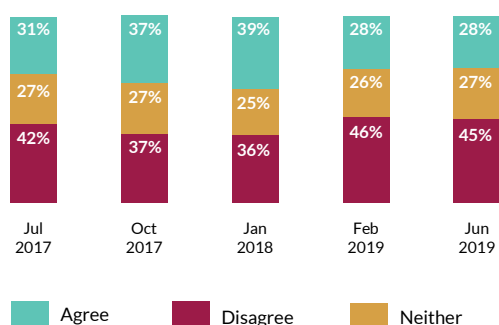
The elderly in both societies also prefer to keep a distance compared to the younger ones. Only 28% of the Turkish and 52% of the refugees aged 65 or above would like to have neighbours of the other group. Interestingly, despite the overall difference between the attitudes of both communities in figure 3, the people aged between 35-64 have the highest willingness to share buildings. On the other hand, the youth (between 18-34 years old) were mostly indifferent, with the majority choosing the response option 'neither agree nor disagree'.

### Region

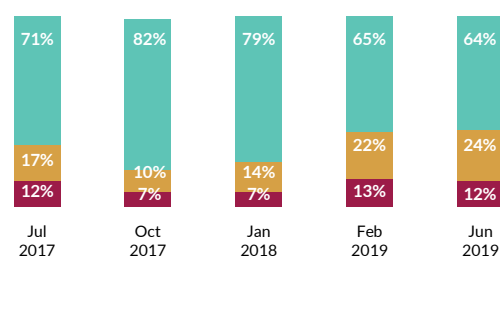
While it does not change for the host community, the refugees in Istanbul region (82%) are particularly more willing to share apartment buildings than the ones in Southeast and Central Anatolia (~73%).

Figure 7 Sharing the same apartment building

"I would be happy to share my apartment building with Syrian families"



"I would be happy to share my apartment building with Turkish families"



### Education

The more educated the refugees are, the more likely they are willing to share building with the host community. The difference in opinion is not statistically significant among the host community members with different educational backgrounds.

### Familiarity with refugees

For the host community, 'having refugee friends' increases willingness to have refugee neighbours; while 23% of the people who do not know any refugee personally and 25% of the people 'who know a refugee at work/neighbourhood' would be happy to share their buildings with refugees, this figure increases to 53% for the ones who 'have Syrian friends.'

### Behind the attitudes

Regarding the neighbourhood relationships, during the FGDs, the refugees stated that they do not have problems with their Turkish neighbours overall, except some incidents they faced in the areas where the marginalized/disadvantaged minority groups are populated – and so – competition for the resources is high. It was mentioned quite often that the refugees adapted themselves to the Turkish norms in their apartment buildings. While they used to stay up late at night before, they now go to bed early or keep their voice down to not disturb their neighbours. Female refugees said that they have close relationships with elderly Turkish women, similar to a mother-daughter connection. Even though language is a barrier, exchange of food among the neighbours is considered as a form of communication, particularly during Ramadan.

## 2. Sharing workplace

The trends show that willingness to share a workplace in both groups decreased in the last two rounds in 2019, which might be due to the aftermath of the mid-2018 economic downturn which caused contraction in the labour market and an increase in competition.

When participants were asked about willingness to share a workplace with each other, refugees were more open than the host community. Nonetheless, the trends show that the willingness in both groups has decreased since January 2018 representing a reversal of the earlier trend observed between July 2017 and January 2018 (figure 8).

The decrease in willingness in 2019 might be due to the economic downturn that started in the summer of 2018 and lasted through 2019. This led to economic contraction and reduction of job opportunities for both refugees and the host community and resulted in increased competition. In addition, while refugees described their relationship with Turkish co-workers as neutral during FGDs, they mentioned unfair conditions offered to them by the employers, partly explaining why they may prefer not to work with the Turkish people.

### Barriers and bridges

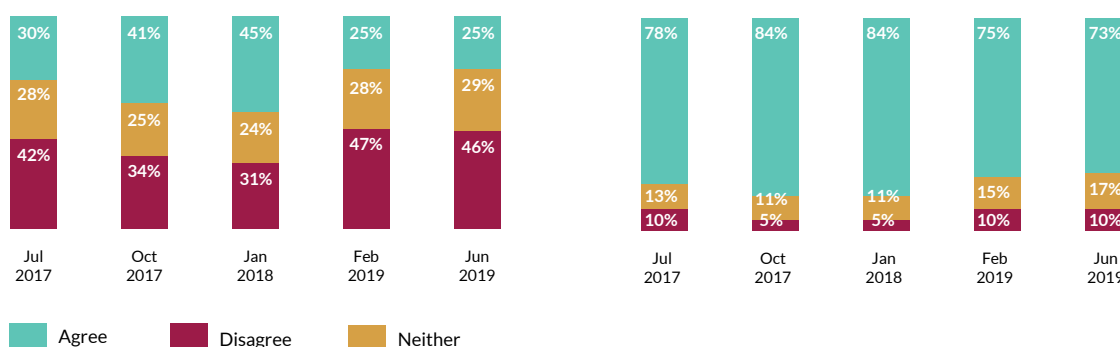
#### Gender

In both groups, men were more polarized with their opinions on sharing workplace while women were more indifferent, which might be due to limited participation in the labor market as most women stay at home.

**Figure 8 Sharing the same workplace**

*"I am/would be happy to work side by side with Syrians"*

*"I am/would be happy to work side by side with Turks"*



### Age

Middle aged (35–64 years) people among both the refugee (76%) and host communities (28%) are the most willing to work with each other. This age group is comprised of bread-winners with dependents in the family<sup>18</sup> and may therefore focus on having a job more than the profile of their colleagues.

### Education

Among refugees, willingness to work with Turks increases with increment in education level. This relationship is however counter-intuitive among the host community, as the willingness to work with refugees decreases with the increase in Education level: Turks with no formal education are the most open to work with refugees (28%) compared to 27% among those with low educated; 26% among those with higher education, and 21% among those with high school degrees.

### Region

The host community living in the Southeast (27%) is willing to share workplace with refugees slightly more than the other regions. This might be because of the locals' familiarity with the Syrians before the conflict as the Southeast region shares border with Syria and have active trading and cultural similarities. However, while a high number of refugees (73%) in the Southeast are willing to work with the host community, the refugees in the Central Anatolia (77%) shows the willingness to work with the host community the most.

### Familiarity with refugees

People who have refugee friends (48%) are the most willing to work with refugees in the same place. The people who do not know any refugee (18%) or know some from their neighborhood or work (21%) do not differ much from each other in terms of their opinions on sharing a workplace with refugees.

### Behind the attitudes

While the middle aged refugees are the most willing to work with the host community, during FGDs, refugees mentioned that it is almost impossible to find jobs after age 40, as most of the jobs available to them require physical strength. Emphasizing that they have the ability, the refugees stated that elderly people are respected in Turkish culture as it is in Syrian culture. Thus, the employers use physical strength as an excuse for rejection to prevent difficult situations like ordering an elderly to wipe the floor.

## 3. Children's friendship

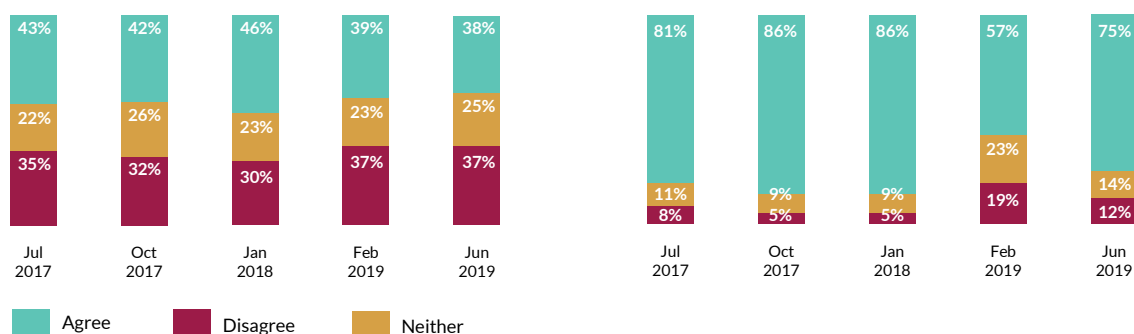
**The refugees are more open to their children having friends with the children in the host community and think that it is good for their adaptation to Turkey, but they are also concerned about tensions that could arise between the two communities due to disputes among children.**

Communication among the children of both communities is another indicator for social cohesion as the attitudes of parents influence the degree of interaction. In general,

**Figure 9 Approving children's friendship with the other community**

*"I would be happy for my children (or future children) to have Syrian friends"*

*"I would be happy for my children (or future children) to have Turkish friends"*



18 The median age for head of households in PDM8 survey is 37.

migrant children acquire language skills faster, and often become the 'brokers of communication' for their parents.<sup>19</sup>

Focus group discussions confirm that children's friendship reciprocally increase the language skills and more language skills help children interact more with the host community, that opens paths for social cohesion.

When asked whether they would be happy to have their children/future children to be friends with children from the other community, the refugee community consistently indicated more willingness than the host community. However, after a gradual increase in acceptance of children's friendship between July 2017 and January 2018, this went down for both communities in February 2019 (*figure 9*). This might be due to the atmosphere<sup>20</sup> created in late 2018 till the local elections that took place on March 31st, 2019<sup>21</sup> in which the subject of refugees and their return was widely discussed.<sup>22</sup>

## Barriers and bridges

### Gender

In the June 2019 survey, it was found that Turkish women (40%) would like their children to have refugee friends compared to Turkish men (36%); whereas refugee men (77%) approves such friendships more than refugee women (70%).

### Education

The more educated the people are, the more likely they accept children's friendship between the two communities. Some 86% of the refugees with college degrees are fine with their children's friendship with the children in the host community compared to 55% of those who do not have formal education. Among the host community 41% of the university graduates are willing to have their children be friends with refugees compared to 32% of the literate people.

### Familiarity with refugees

Among the Turks, the people who have Syrian friends are the most willing to have their children to be friends as well (58%). There is no significant difference between the people who know a refugee in their neighbourhood (33%) or who do not know a refugee at all (34%).

### Behind the attitudes

During focus group discussions, refugees stated that their children interact the most if they are in the same school and/or living in the same neighbourhood. There are also instances where children living in the same neighbourhood go to school together and share their meals.

Many refugees emphasized that the children under 10 tend to have more disputes and the refugee parents prefer to limit their interaction to avoid disputes with their Turkish neighbours. Refugees nonetheless praised the Turkish culture for being protective of children: One refugee stated that his Turkish neighbour punishes his own children for not treating the refugee children nicely, thus the refugee limits his children's time together to prevent such conflict.

## 4. Intercommunity marriage

**More than half of the refugees and one-quarter of the host community members are willing to accept an intercommunity marriage but are concerned about cultural differences and possible family unity challenges in case of return to Syria. Inter-marriage is more common between refugee women and Turkish men.**

Along with approval for children's friendship, inter-marriage also helps to measure the social distance between communities. The question on marriage required participants to assume the role of a parent to prevent any personal preferences in marriage to intervene the respondents' attitudes towards the other community.

While both communities are more open to friendship among children, in both communities, the approval rate for intermarriage is much lower, at 23% among the Turkish and 53% among refugees (*figure 10*).

## Barriers and bridges

### Age

Among the host community, the people aged between 35-64 are the least likely to approve of intermarriage (16%). In

19 Katz, V. (2014). Children as brokers of their immigrant families' health-care connections, *Social Problems*, 2(61), 194-215.

20 The refugee issue in Turkey has not been a significant parameter for voting behaviour, yet refugee return was included in the manifests of many political parties

21 <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/31-mart-2019-mahalli-i-CC%87dareler-secimi/77916>

22 Cicek, A., Arslan, E. & Baykal, O.N. (2018). 2018 Secim Beyannamelerinde Suriyeli Gocmenler Sorununun Ele Alinisi ve Cozum Onerileri (Syrian Migrants Problem in 2018 Election Documents and Proposed Solution), 12th International Public Administration Symposium Proceedings, Kirikkale, 25-27. 10.2018.

the refugee communities, while the people below 35 and the ones between 35-64 show similarity with around 47% approving such marriages, percentage is highest among the elderly (54%).

**Education**

Refugees’ approval of inter-marriage increases with education level. However, for the host community, the people who do not have formal education (30%) or who have low education (27%) are more open to having refugee in-laws, unlike high school graduates who are more reserved (19%).

**Familiarity with refugees**

For the host community, having refugee friends more than doubles (41%) the chance of approving intermarriages than the people who know that there are some refugees in their neighbourhood or work place (20%) or do not know a refugee at all (18%).

**Gender**

Compared to women, men in both communities (24% of the Turkish men and 56% of the refugee men) would not mind having their children married to someone from the other community.

**Behind the attitudes**

During focus group discussions, refugees mentioned that they would not oppose intermarriage if their children intended to marry someone in the host community. However, they expressed concern given the uncertainty of their future in Turkey. Due to possible returns to Syria, they expressed

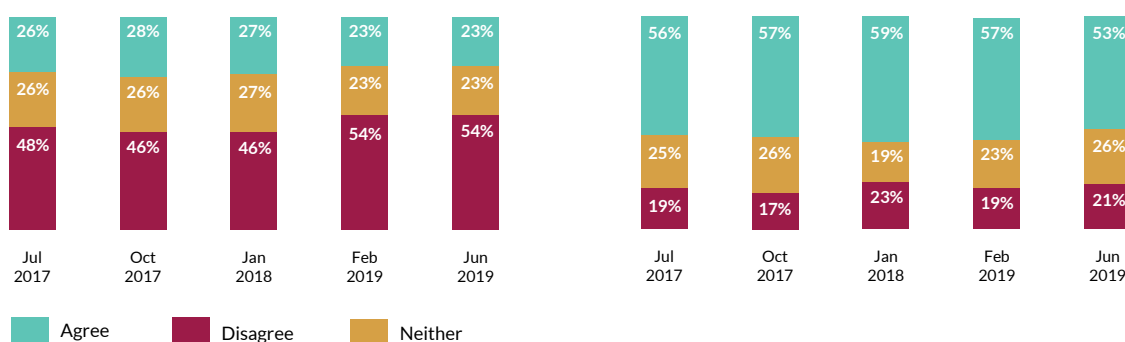
preference for marriages among Syrians which would allow them return together as a family.

Refugees stated that the marriages between Syrian men and Turkish women are quite few because in Turkish culture, men are expected to provide a house and furniture, which Syrian men can not afford. They added that the main motivation behind the few cases of Syrian men marrying Turkish women is to obtain Turkish citizenship. On the other hand, marriage between Syrian women and Turkish men is more common. Refugees believe that Turkish men prefer Syrian women because they are less demanding and more family oriented. However, it was also highlighted that most Syrian women are married to Turkish men as second wives. They are therefore only recognized in the religious context but remain unofficial marriages with no legal rights for the women as per the Turkish family law.

**Figure 10 Approving children’s marriage with someone from the other community**

*“I would not mind if my children (or future children) married a Syrian person”*

*“I would not mind if my children (or future children) married a Turkish person”*



## Perceptions of the economic implications of hosting refugees

### 1. Cost of living

Approximately two-in-five host community members believe that the cost of living in their neighbourhoods increased with the presence of refugees, particularly in 2019, as the high inflation rates might have been attributed to the refugees.

Turkish participants were asked whether they felt the presence of refugees affected the cost of living in their neighbourhood. Since July 2017, at least two-in-five people believe that the arrival of refugees has increased the cost of living (figure 11).

#### Barriers and bridges

##### Region

Some 50% of the people living in the Southeast region and 48% in Istanbul said that the cost of living in their neighbourhoods increased because of the refugees. The population ratio of the refugees to the locals is highest in the Southeast as it borders with Syria and, while the population may have led to increased demand (particularly in the housing sector),<sup>23</sup> it is noteworthy that mere presence of refugees could have influenced this perception.

##### Gender

There are slightly more men (47%) who think the cost of living increased due to the presence of refugees than women (45%).

##### Age

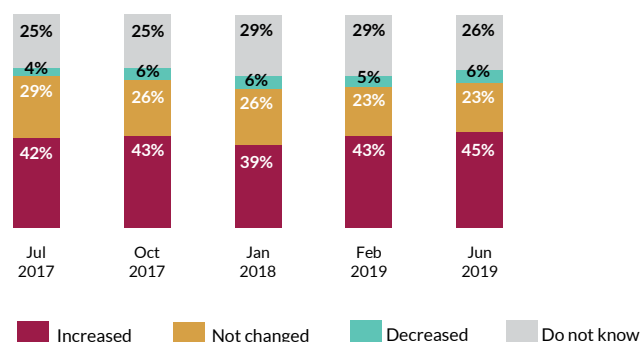
The elderly are more likely to perceive refugees as the reason for the increase in costs (50%), followed by the youth (47%). However, youth differs from the elderly with a higher number of people who said ‘the prices remained the same’ (20% vs 15%). While still high, the middle-aged people (44%) associate the price increase with refugee presence less than the other age groups.

##### Education

Host community members who do not have any formal education (35%) are less likely to associate the increase in cost of living with the presence of refugees whereas high

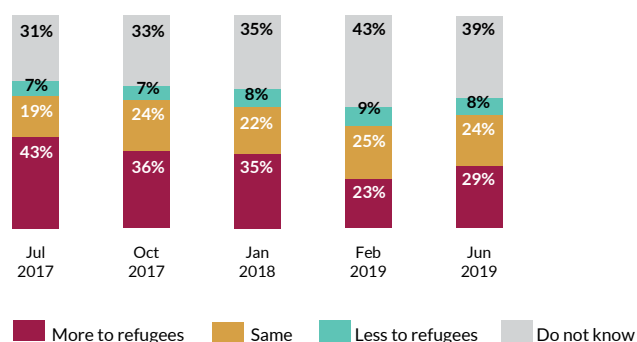
**Figure 11** Perception of increase in cost of living and refugee presence

*“The presence of Syrians has affected the cost of living in my neighbourhood”*



**Figure 12** Rent costs for refugees

*“In my neighbourhood, landlords charge the same rent to refugees as to Turkish people”*



school graduates associate the two phenomena the most (49%).

### 2. Rent cost of refugees

Since the refugees did not have many options, it was a common claim that the refugees are charged more than the host community. Thus, refugees were given the statement ‘In my neighbourhood, landlords charge the same rent to refugees as to Turkish people’ was given to refugees with the options, ‘more to refugees’ ‘less to refugees’ ‘it is the same’ and ‘do not know’. In June 2019, 29% of the refugees stated that they pay more rent than their Turkish neighbours, 14% lower than July 2017 (figure 12).<sup>24</sup>

23 Aydemir, A. B & Duman, E. (2020). Effects of ESSN cash transfers on national and local economy in Turkey. World Food Programme & Sabanci University.

24 Here it is assumed that the refugees compare the rent cost they pay to their Turkish neighbours in the same apartment building and/or in similar conditions in terms of size and quality.

On the other hand, the percentage of refugees who said they pay the same as Turkish neighbours increased by 5% since July 2017. These findings may suggest that landlords increasingly give equal treatment to refugees.

### Barriers and bridges

#### Education

The more educated the refugees are, the more likely they are to say that the rent prices are higher for the refugees. Some 34% of the people with tertiary education said that the landlords charge the refugees more for rent whereas 26% of the people with no formal education stated so.

#### Turkish language ability

Refugees with more Turkish language proficiency were less likely to say that they pay higher rents, with only 21% indicating they pay higher rent, compared to 40% among those who speak basic Turkish.

#### Behind the attitudes

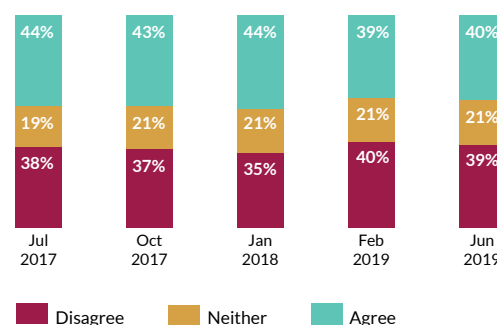
During focus group discussions, refugees stated that language is the biggest barrier to communication with landlords. Most of them said they pay the same rent as the Turkish tenants, however landlords are less tolerant with payment delays as refugees are not able to express themselves adequately. In Istanbul, one refugee said that some landlords ask for rent in advance (e.g. 6–12 months), and some said landlords are more tolerant during winter when they are aware there are limited job opportunities.

### 3. Wage equality

The proportion of host community members in favour of equal wages for refugees decreased in 2019, probably due to the

**Figure 13 Opinions on refugees and wages**

*“Syrians should be paid the same wages as Turkish people”*

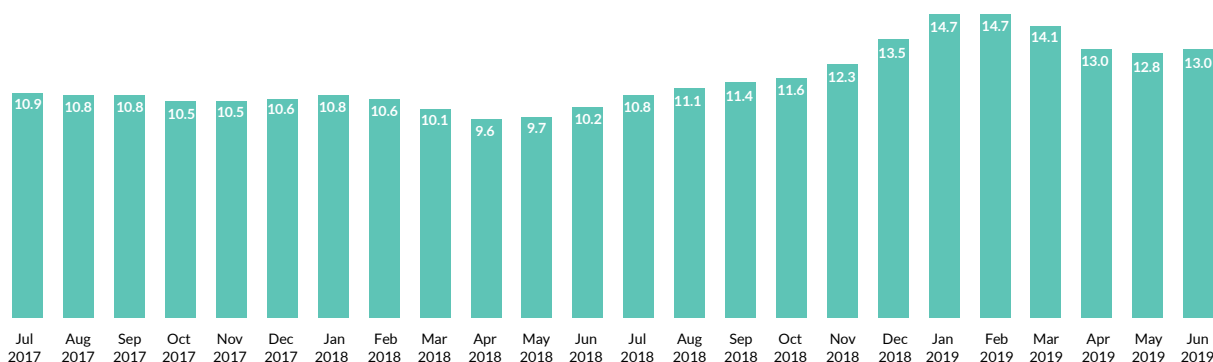


increase in unemployment rates and the ensuing competition for jobs between the host community and refugees.

When asked about wages during focus group discussions, refugees stated that they are paid less than the Turkish people; one refugee in Gaziantep said that the Syrians get 1000 TRY per month while the Turkish workers are paid 1400 TRY for the same job. The refugees also mentioned that they experience delays or unpaid wages, along with unfair treatment like having no social security, working for longer hours, and being threatened with loss of wages or the job when they ask for days off or sick leave. Stating that finding a job is already difficult for the refugees and they have to put up with any unfair treatment at work, a female participant said that “Our husbands do not want to get involved in any conflict at work because they are afraid of losing their jobs.”

As of June 2019, there was an equal proportion of Turkish people (two-in-five) for and against payment of similar wages to refugees, while one-in-five was indifferent (figure 13). The trends show that the host community believed the refugees should be paid the same wages as the Turkish people

**Figure 14 Unemployment rates in Turkey during the survey period, July 2017–June 2019 (percent)**





when the unemployment rates were below 10%. Figure 13 indicates that such support was the lowest (35%) when the unemployment rates were the highest at 14.7% in January 2018, as seen in figure 14.<sup>25</sup>

### Barriers and bridges

#### Gender

Even though there is a statistically significant difference between genders, women (41%) are slightly more supportive of equal wages for the refugees than the men in the host community (38%).

#### Age

The support of equal wage is slightly higher among the middle-aged host community members (41%), compared to the elderly and youth (both are 38%), yet the difference is statistically significant across age groups.

#### Education

People with the highest (44%) and lowest (37%) education level agree most with the statement “refugees should be paid the same wages as Turkish people” while 35% of people with low or middle education levels think so.

#### Familiarity with refugees

The people who have refugee friends (51%) support equal wages than the people who know someone in distance or do not know at all (both around 36%).

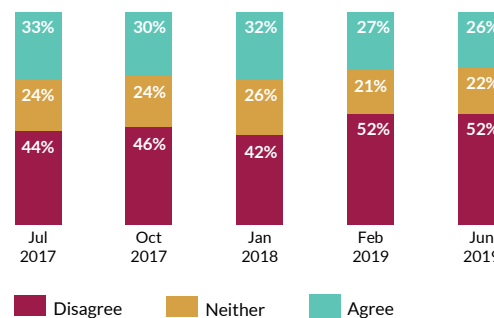
## 4. Perceptions on vulnerability

**One out of four host community members believe that the refugees are more vulnerable than the Turkish poor, the figure increases to 43% if the participants have refugee friends.**

When asked about how vulnerable they think refugees are, more than half (52%) of the host community disagree with the assertion that Syrian families are more vulnerable than Turkish families. The trends show a significant change in this proportion from 42% in January 2018 to February 2019 (figure 15), coinciding with the 2018 economic slow-down in Turkey that likely rendered more Turkish families vulnerable. Besides the negative impact of the crisis on the Turkish poor, it is possible that the host community also observed that the refugees were more adapted to Turkey compared to when they first arrived and, combined with the perception

**Figure 15 Perceptions of vulnerability**

*“Syrian families are more vulnerable than poor Turkish families”*



that many receive ESN assistance, thus influencing the perception refugees as less vulnerable.<sup>26</sup>

### Barriers and bridges

#### Age

About 30% of middle aged (35–64 years) Turkish people think refugees are more vulnerable, compared to 27% of the elderly and 23% of the youth. Majority of the elderly (57%) and the youth (52%) do not believe that the refugees are more vulnerable than the Turkish poor.

#### Education

There are more people with informal or lower education (around 29%) who think that the refugees are more vulnerable than the people who have high school degree (23%) or above (26%). In most cases, refugees start up their lives from scratch in the absence of economic, social and human capitals, therefore usually integrate into the lower socio-economic class.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore interesting to see that the people at the lower social classes view refugees as more vulnerable than the Turkish poor compared to the host community members from higher social class.

#### Familiarity with refugees

The people who are friends with refugees are more likely to say that refugees are more vulnerable (43%) compared those who do not know any refugees (20%) or merely know someone at work or in the neighbourhood (22%).

<sup>26</sup> WFP Turkey Comprehensive Vulnerability Monitoring Exercise reports (1–5).

<sup>27</sup> Tcholakova, A. (2013). Working-class against their will: “Recognized” refugees in France and Bulgaria in the early twenty-first century” Clio [Online], 38.

<sup>25</sup> Turkish Statistical Institute, Unemployment Figures, January 2019.

## 5. International assistance

Half of the host community members believe that international community is responsible to assist the refugees, particularly the people aged 35–64 and the highly educated.

Even though the refugees are not perceived as more vulnerable by many, as shown in figure 16, about half of the Turkish people believe that they should be assisted by the international community. In fact, 37% of those who think refugees are not more vulnerable than Turkish families nonetheless agree that refugees need assistance. This suggests that majority of Turkish nationals recognize that refugees are vulnerable, even though not necessarily much more vulnerable than the Turkish poor.

The trends show a gradual decrease in the percentage of people who agree with the need for international assistance starting from 2018. This might be a result of the long stay of refugees in Turkey that led refugees to adapt into the economy in one way or another, increased self-reliance among them, and therefore led to fading of the emergency of the refugee crisis for humanitarian intervention.

### Barriers and bridges

#### Gender

Among the participants from the host community, men are more opposed to providing refugees with assistance (32%) compared to women (27%).

#### Age

Middle aged (35–64 years) Turkish nationals see the international community as responsible to assist the refugees (52%), compared to 46% among the youth. The elderly split in between; 42% agree with the statement that the international organization should provide care for the refugees while another 41% oppose it.

#### Education

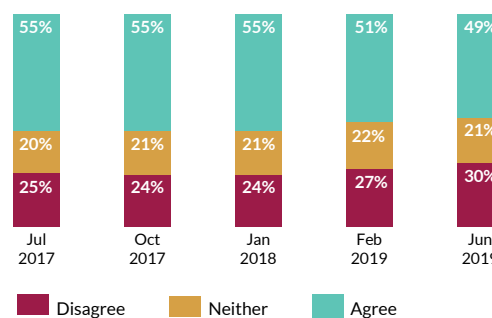
People with high education (54%) believe that the international community is responsible for refugees' well-being most, those with informal education least (40%).

#### Familiarity with refugees

The majority (60%) of Turkish nationals who have refugee friends believe that the international assistance is needed for the refugees, compared to the people who do not know a refugee or only merely know any (both around 45%).

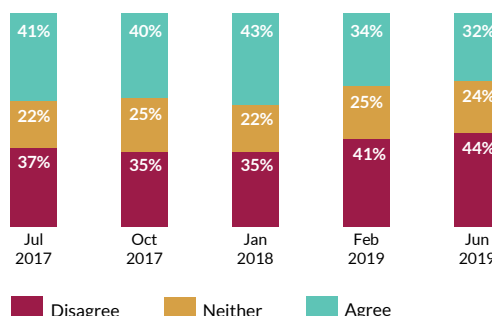
**Figure 16** Opinions on assisting refugees – international community

*“Refugees should be assisted to cover their basic needs by NGOs, international organisations and/or foreign governments”*



**Figure 17** Opinions on assisting refugees – Turkish government

*“The Turkish government should provide assistance to Syrian families so they can meet their basic needs”*



## 6. Government assistance

The support among the host community for governmental assistance for the basic needs of the refugees reduced in 2019 compared to previous years, particularly among the elderly, likely to be due to concerns over welfare distribution during economic contraction.

While there is a significant number of people in the host community who believe that refugees should be assisted by the international community, there are fewer people who think that the Turkish Government should provide assistance to refugees. In June 2019, one out of three people expects the Turkish Government to help the refugees with their basic

needs (figure 17) majority of whom also support international assistance.

The trends show a decrease in the last two rounds in 2019, which was the time when Turkish economy was experiencing hardship with negative growth rates. Overall, the refugee crisis is perceived as an international problem; and international assistance is required more than the assistance by the Turkish Government.

### Barriers and bridges

#### Gender

Among the host community, men (32%) are slightly more agree that the government should assist the refugees compared to the women (29%).

#### Age

Among the people who think that the Government should assist refugees, the people aged 35-64% stands out (35%) the most compared to youth and elderly (around 29%) On the other hand, findings show that majority of the elderly (51%) do not want the Government to assist the refugees, which might be due to concerns over their retirement pensions and might see the governmental assistance for refugees as a rivalry for their welfare payments.

#### Familiarity with refugees

Among the people who have refugee friends, 48% of them think that Government should provide assistance for the refugees, whereas only 27% of both the people who do not know a refugee and know only from their neighbourhood or work expect the government to assist the refugees.

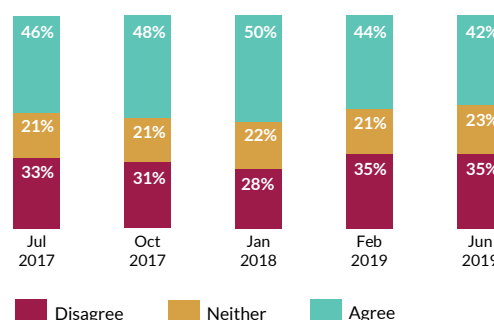
## 7. Sharing public services

Despite some deterioration through time, more host community members are willing to share the government provided hospitals and schools with refugees. Women, high educated and not-elderly people tend to be more open for refugees to benefit from public services.

When the Turkish people were asked whether the refugees should benefit from public services such as health and education, 42% of the participants agreed with the given statement in June 2019 (figure 18). Even though there is less support for direct governmental assistance for the refugees, the host community is more open to share the public service facilities with the refugees.

**Figure 18 Sharing the public service facilities**

*“Syrians should be allowed to benefit from government-provided health and education facilities in Turkey”*



### Barriers and bridges

#### Gender

Women (44%) are more willing to have refugees benefit from the public hospitals and schools compared to men (39%).

#### Age

Elderly people (31%) are the most reserved towards refugees going to hospitals and schools, which might be due to their frequent need for the hospitals and concerns over the welfare system. The middle-aged people are the most willing to share the public services with 43% and the figure is 40% among the youth between 18 and 34.

#### Education

Support to refugees' access to public services seems to go up with increase in Education level: 35% among those with no formal education, 39% among those with low education; 37% among those with high education and 47% among those with university degrees are in favour of public service access by refugee population.

#### Familiarity with refugees

People who do not know any refugees (36%) are the least in favour of refugees benefiting from the public services compared to 38% among those who merely knows some refugees and 59% among those who have refugee.

### Behind the attitudes

During FGDs, refugees were grateful to the Government for the services they receive in the hospitals and coverage of the medical costs. However, some said that they have to

take their sick or disabled family members to the hospital by taxi as there is no other option available, which gives their neighbours the perception that refugees are rich and do not deserve free healthcare.

## Safety, security and stability

While refugees involuntarily leave their countries seeking for safety, security and stability, migrants around the world are often associated with crime by the host communities.<sup>28</sup> This section aims to investigate the perception of the Turkish community on the crime rates and what the refugees think about their stay in Turkey.

### 1. Security

The perception of increase in crime rates in the neighbourhoods as a result of refugee presence remained the same through time, and at high rates despite the low crime rates the refugees involved. Refugees, however, feel safe in their neighbourhoods, despite slight decrease compared to previous years.

#### Security perceptions of the host community

Turkish participants were asked if they agreed with the statement that “the presence of Syrians has affected the crime rates in my neighbourhood.” 47% think crime rates in their neighbourhood increased since the arrival of refugees. Except for a slight decrease in January 2018, the trend has been stable across time (figure 19).

It is noteworthy that according to official statistics from the Ministry of Interior, refugees were only involved in 1.46% of crimes committed between January and September 2018, down from 1.53% in 2017<sup>29</sup> suggesting the views held by the host community are mainly perceptions.

#### Barriers and bridges

##### Education

The education level was the most strongly associated with the perceptions held by Turkish nationals on the relationship between the presence of refugees and security: 36% of

Figure 19 Crime rates in neighbourhoods

“The presence of Syrians has affected the crime rate in my neighbourhood”

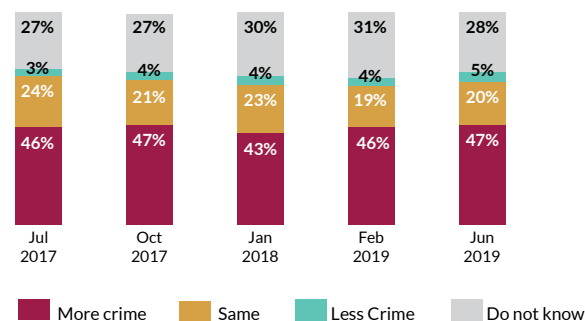
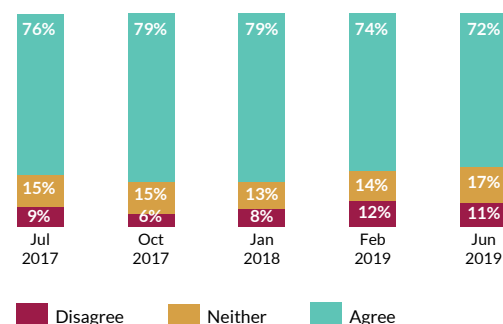


Figure 20 Refugee opinions on safety in the neighbourhood

“Most of the time I feel safe in my neighbourhood”



those with no education think that the crime rates in their neighbourhood increased with the arrival of refugees, compared to 45% among those with low education and 51% among those with high school education.

#### Security perceptions of the refugees

Refugees were also asked how safe they feel in the neighbourhoods they live. The majority (nearly three-quarters) feel safe and this has been consistent through time (figure 20). The slight decline in February 2019 may be a result of feeling insecure during the election season (January 1st 2019–March 31st 2019)<sup>30</sup> which the return of Syrians was a prominent issue.

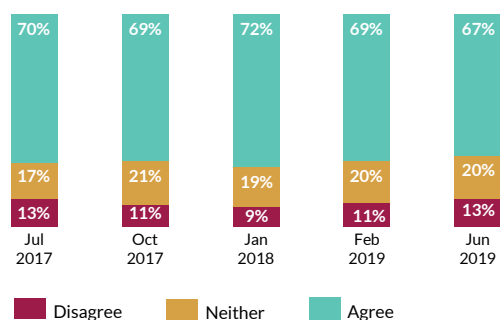
28 Fasani, F., Mastrobuoni, G., Owens, E., & Pinotti, P. (2019). Immigration and Crime: Perceptions and Reality. In Does Immigration Increase Crime?: Migration Policy and the Creation of the Criminal Immigrant (pp. 9-25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

29 <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/suriyelilerin-karistigi-suc-orani-yuzde-1-46yadustu/1289461>

30 <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/2019-mahalli-ic-coc%87dareler-secim-takvimi/77915>.

**Figure 21** Refugee opinions on stay in Turkey

*"I feel my children have a chance of a bright future in Turkey"*



## Barriers and bridges

### Education

The more educated the refugees are the more they feel safe in their neighbourhoods. 81% of the people with high education feels safe as opposed to 60% of the people with no formal education. This might be because more educated is likely to be equipped with more know-hows such as how to call police, seek help, or defend their rights in cases of trouble compared to people with low education who may not feel as confident. Furthermore, the more educated might be able to find housing in relatively better neighbourhoods as they are likely to be preferred by the landlords assuming they are more lettered.

### Turkish language ability

The refugees who speak Turkish at an advanced level (84%) feel safe the most in their neighbourhoods, while those who do not speak any Turkish feel safe the least (61%). Around 74% of the people between these two groups and the native speakers feel safe where they live.

### Behind the attitudes

During the focus group discussions, some refugees stated that the neighbourhoods they live include some of the marginalized members of the host community, who are inclined to pick up fights over the assistance the refugees receive. One refugee stated that he received some coal assistance and his neighbour put his coal-storage on fire out of a grudge. Such incidents may have the overall effect of increasing safety concerns among refugees.

## 2. Stability

An overwhelming majority of refugees see a bright future for their children in Turkey, despite the slight decrease over time, driven by the difficulty in finding jobs.

About two-thirds (67%) of the refugees believe that their children would have a bright future in the country, while 13% of them do not think so (figure 21).

### Barriers and bridges

#### Gender

More men (69%) than women (59%) believe that there is a future for their children in Turkey.

#### Education

The higher the education level is, the more likely refugees to see a bright future in Turkey for their children. Refugees with college degrees (74%) believe that Turkey is a stable place for their children's future the most, followed by the people with high school degrees (70%). Those with lower or no formal education (57%) are the ones believing in a future in Turkey the least. Furthermore, one fifth of people with no formal education disagree with the statement and do not see a bright future for their children in Turkey.

#### Turkish language ability

The refugees who do not speak Turkish at all have relatively less share of people feel that their children have a future in Turkey (56%) compared to around 70% among the rest of the refugees – from the ones who know a few words in Turkish to the ones speak Turkish natively.

### Behind the attitudes

During focus group discussions, refugees stated that they like Turkey and they are happy to live here, but economic concerns dominate their future plans. One woman in Ankara said that she has three sons around their 20s who have failed to find jobs despite a relentless search. Even though she loves being in Turkey, she was sad that her family started to think about the opportunities in the third countries.

## 3. Stability and opinions on return

Majority of refugees believe that they can live in Turkey as long as the conflict continues in their home countries, whereas almost half of the host community members believe that refugees would return after the conflict is over.

### Perception of the refugees on staying in Turkey

It has been almost a decade that Turkey has been a home for the Syrian refugees. While the instability in Syria continues, as of June 2019, 69% of the refugees believe that they can stay in Turkey as long as the conflict continues in their countries (figure 22). The trends show that there has been a gradual decline since January 2018, which might be due to the contraction in the economy that led to fewer employment opportunities (and increasing hardship), and the increased discussion of their stay in the election manifests.

### Barriers and bridges

#### Gender

Men seem to be more inclined to stay in Turkey for long (72%) compared to women (63%).

#### Education

The higher the education level is, the more refugees think that they can stay in Turkey for a long time. The people with higher education is the largest group (76%) believing they can stay in Turkey. Even among the people with no formal education, the ones who think they can stay in Turkey until the end of the conflict (57%) is three times larger than the ones who disagree with the given statement.

#### Turkish language ability

Contrary to what would be expected, there is no clear relationship between ability to speak the Turkish language and the possibility to stay if the conflict continues in Syria. While 80% of advanced Turkish speakers think they would stay, the ratio is only 65% among native speakers. Even among those who do not speak Turkish, more than half (55%) would stay while the rest would either leave or are undecided.

#### Projections for future generations

An overwhelming majority of the people who see a bright future for their children in Turkey (86%) believe that they can stay in Turkey as long as the conflict in their countries continue. Only 5% of the people who believe that Turkey offers a bright future for their children, also think that they would not stay in Turkey that long.

### Perception of the host community on refugees' stay

Almost half (46%) of Turkish participants believe that the refugees will stay in Turkey even after the conflict is over, while 34% think Syrians will return to Syria when the conflict is over (figure 23).

Figure 22 Refugee opinions on stay in Turkey

*"I believe I can stay in Turkey as long as the conflict continues in my home country"*

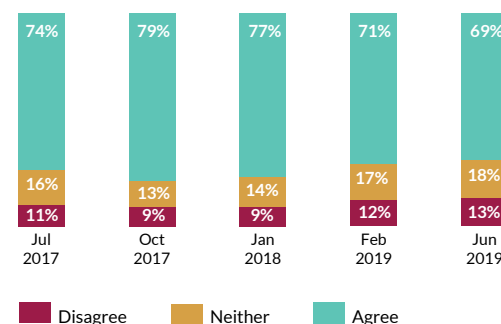
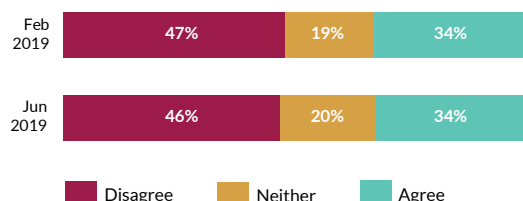


Figure 23 Host community opinions on refugee stay in Turkey

*"When the conflict in Syria is over, I think Syrians will return to Syria"*



### Barriers and bridges

#### Familiarity with refugees

Interestingly, 33% of the people who are friends with the refugees say that the refugees would stay in Turkey whereas 42% of them believe that they will return to Syria after the conflict is over. The Turkish people who are in close interaction with the refugees might witness their homesickness and yearnings to return. During the field activities, WFP staff witnessed women carrying the keys of their houses in Syria in their purses, hoping that one day they will use them again.

## Social Cohesion Index

To provide a broader understanding, a Social Cohesion Index (SCI) was developed based on responses to the survey questions (see annex 3). For each round, the answers for the selected questions in the survey that indicated positive attitudes towards the other community reflected higher cohesion. The SCI ranges from 0.2 (no social cohesion) to 1.0 (very high social cohesion).

As shown in figure 24, refugees have had a consistently higher SCI than the host community since July 2017. This may be a reflection of higher motivation to survive or fit in a new environment among the refugees. While the scores were gradually increasing in 2017 and 2018, there was a decrease for both groups in 2019, probably due to the political and economic atmosphere in the country.

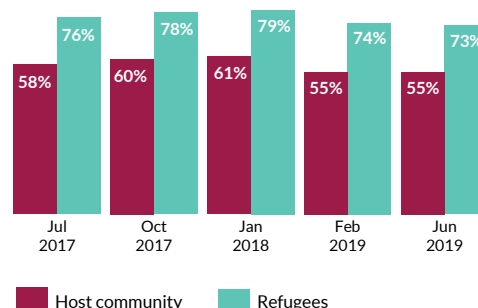
## Host community attitude towards refugees

In each survey, there was an open-ended question that allowed participants to express their thoughts about the refugees in Turkey. The data from February 2019 was analysed to help understand the perception of the host community and reasons behind their attitudes towards the refugees.

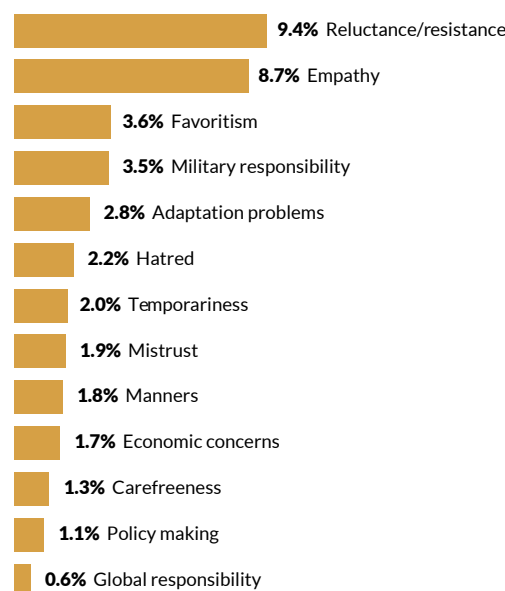
Among all the participants, 73% did not provide an additional comment. The responses provided by the remaining 27% (1,284 Turkish participants) were coded for analysis and 13 themes emerged, the main ones being *reluctance/resistance* to have refugees in Turkey, with preference for them to leave without providing a reason (9.4%) and *empathy*, including responses related to responsibility towards the vulnerable, conscientiousness, solidarity and advocating for fair treatment (8.7%) as shown in figure 25. The other feelings expressed were:

**Favouritism (3.6%)** – the belief that the refugees are prioritized more than the Turkish poor, which is more vivid especially during and after the economic crisis. Indeed, besides having the largest refugee population, Turkey is the largest donor in humanitarian aid with both direct assistance and provision of free public services<sup>31</sup>. On the other hand, in 2018 alone, 43 billion TRY was distributed to 3.5 million vulnerable Turkish households by the Ministry of Family, Labour, and Social Services through 43 different assistance

**Figure 24 Social Cohesion Index through the five survey rounds**



**Figure 25 Host community's concern over refugees**



programmes.<sup>32</sup> Thus, feeling that refugees are favoured is a misperception which could be resolved through increased public communication.

**Military responsibility (3.5%):** Some 3.5% of the host community members believe that the refugees abdicate their responsibility to 'go to war to defend their country' by being in Turkey and, instead, 'the Turkish soldiers lost their lives for them'.

**Adaptation issues (2.8%):** Some respondents expressed that refugees will not integrate in the long run as they are different from the Turkish nationals citing that; refugees have too many children, behave differently (e.g. that they

31 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, 2019. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHA%20report%202019\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHA%20report%202019_0.pdf)

32 <https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/tr-tr/haberler/bakanligimizin-2020-yili-butcesi-tbmm-genel-kurulunda-kabul-edildi/>



MFP/OZAN TOP/TAS

are loud and inconsiderate) and much too carefree. As stated by some, 'seeing them entertained on the streets and parks smoking hookah annoys me'.

## Moving Forward

Whether the refugees stay in Turkey or return to their home countries in the future, in the current situation, disentangling the economic difficulties from presence of refugees would contribute to social cohesion. Their contribution to the economy and importance of their self-reliance as an essential factor for exiting assistance programmes might be highlighted in the projects run by the NGOs. Mentioning the foreign donors of programmes such as the ESSN might help reducing feeling of favouritism. The assistance provided to the Turkish people could also be publicized more often to reduce the resentment among the host community. Another issue that needs disassociation is the security concerns and presence of refugees given the perception, at the neighbourhood level, that refugees are potential criminals or troublemakers which adds distance between the two communities.

For current and future programmes targeting refugees and social cohesion it is recommended to include more one-on-one activities between refugees and host community members to encourage closer interaction. As the data shows, closer contact reduces stereotypes and prejudice because it demystifies 'the other'. This would nurture the friendship and mutual exchange of information to open paths for social cohesion.

Telling more often the resilience stories of the refugees and their contribution to the economy would change their vulnerable image, build reciprocal interaction rather than a hierarchical relationship of dependent and caretaker. This would also help the refugee children to develop self-esteem to blend into the society. Dissemination of good examples would thin the barriers between the communities, if not break them down altogether.



# Annex 1

## Turkish questionnaire (in English)

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your level of education? *Please mark the school you have completed.*
  - a. Literate
  - b. Elementary school
  - c. Middle School
  - d. High school
  - e. Vocational school
  - f. University and above
4. What is your nationality?
  - a. Turkey
  - b. Syrian
  - c. Iraqi
  - d. Somalian
  - e. Other

### **Do you agree or disagree...**

5. I am /would be happy to work side by side with Syrians.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
6. I like, or would like, to share my apartment building with Syrian families.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
7. I would be happy for my children (or future children) to have Syrian friends.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
8. I would not mind if my children (or future children) married a Syrian person.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree

- 9. Syrians should be paid the same wages as Turkish people.**
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree, nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
- 10. The presence of Syrians has affected the cost of living in my neighbourhood.**
- Decreased cost of living
  - No change
  - Increased cost of living
  - Don't know
- 11. The presence of Syrians in Turkey has affected the crime rate in my neighbourhood.**
- Decreased crime rates
  - No change
  - Increased crime rates
  - Don't know
- 12. Syrian families are more vulnerable than poor Turkish families.**
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree, nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
- 13. I think Syrian people should be assisted by NGOs, international organizations, and other countries to cover their basic needs.**
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree, nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
- 14. The Turkish government should provide assistance to Syrian families so they can meet their basic needs.**
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree, nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
- 15. Syrians should be allowed to benefit from government provided health and education facilities in Turkey.**
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree, nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
- 16. When the conflict in Syria is over, I think Syrians will return to Syria.**
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree, nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree

**17. Which describes your interaction with Syrians the best?**

- a. I do not know any Syrians personally. (Don't have neighbours, coworker... etc)
- b. I know Syrians at my neighbourhood/work/school etc. but I rarely communicate with them
- c. I have Syrian friend(s)

**18. Do you have any other thoughts to share related to Syrians living in Turkey?**

## Turkish questionnaire (in Turkish)

1. Yaşınız?
2. Cinsiyetiniz?
3. Eğitim durumunuz (En son bitirdiğiniz okulu işaretleyiniz)
  - a. Okur yazar
  - b. İlkokul
  - c. Orta okul
  - d. Lise
  - e. Ön lisans
  - f. Üniversite ve üzeri
4. Uyuşgunuz?
  - a. Türkiye
  - b. Suriye
  - c. Irak
  - d. Somali
  - e. Diğer

**Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadelere katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtiniz.**

5. Suriyeliler ile bir arada çalışmaktan memnunum /memnun olurum.
  - a. Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - b. Katılmıyorum
  - c. Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - d. Katılıyorum
  - e. Kesinlikle katılıyorum
6. Suriyeli ailelerle aynı binada oturmaktan memnunum veya onlarla aynı binada oturmaktan rahatsız olmazdım.
  - a. Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - b. Katılmıyorum
  - c. Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - d. Katılıyorum
  - e. Kesinlikle katılıyorum
7. Çocuklarımla Suriyeli çocuklarla arkadaşlık etmesinden rahatsızlık duymam (çocuğum yok, ama olsaydı Suriyeli çocuklarla arkadaşlık etmesinden rahatsızlık duymazdım.)
  - a. Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - b. Katılmıyorum
  - c. Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - d. Katılıyorum
  - e. Kesinlikle katılıyorum

8. Çocuklarımın, Suriyeli biriyle evlenmesinden rahatsız olmam (çocuğum yok, ama olsaydı Suriyeli biriyle evlenmesinden rahatsızlık duymazdım.)
- Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - Katılmıyorum
  - Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - Katılıyorum
  - Kesinlikle katılıyorum
9. Suriyeliler, aynı iş için Türklere verilen maaşın aynısını almalıdırlar.
- Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - Katılmıyorum
  - Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - Katılıyorum
  - Kesinlikle katılıyorum
10. Suriyelilerin varlığı yaşadığım muhitteki hayat pahalılığını etkiledi.
- Hayat pahalılığını azalttı
  - Değişiklik olmadı
  - Hayat pahalılığını artırdı
  - Bilmiyorum
11. Suriyelilerin Türkiye'deki varlığı yaşadığım muhitteki suç oranını etkiledi.
- Suç oranları azaldı
  - Değişiklik olmadı
  - Suç oranları arttı
  - Bilmiyorum
12. Suriyeli aileler, fakir Türk ailelere kıyasla daha zor durumdadır.
- Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - Katılmıyorum
  - Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - Katılıyorum
  - Kesinlikle katılıyorum
13. Temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilmeleri için sivil toplum kuruluşları, uluslararası kuruluşlar ve yabancı devletler Suriyeli ailelere yardım etmelidir.
- Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - Katılmıyorum
  - Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - Katılıyorum
  - Kesinlikle katılıyorum
14. Suriyelilerin temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilmeleri için Türk Hükümeti'nin onlara yardım etmesi gerekir.
- Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
  - Katılmıyorum
  - Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
  - Katılıyorum
  - Kesinlikle katılıyorum

**15. Suriyelilerin, Türkiye'deki devlet okullarından ve hastanelerinden yararlanmasına izin verilmelidir.**

- a. Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
- b. Katılmıyorum
- c. Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
- d. Katılıyorum
- e. Kesinlikle katılıyorum

**16. Savaş bittiğinde, Suriyelilerin Suriye'ye geri döneceklerini düşünüyorum.**

- a. Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
- b. Katılmıyorum
- c. Ne katılıyorum, ne katılmıyorum
- d. Katılıyorum
- e. Kesinlikle katılıyorum

**17. Aşağıdaki ifadelerden hangisi Suriyelilerle olan iletişim düzeyinizi en iyi tanımlar?**

- a. Bireysel olarak tanıdığım bir Suriyeli yok (komşu, iş arkadaşı vb)
- b. Mahallemde, iş yerimde veya okulumda Suriyeliler var ama nadiren konuşurum
- c. Suriyeli arkadaşım/ arkadaşlarım var

**18. Türkiye'de yaşayan Suriyeliler'le ilgili paylaşmak istediğiniz başka bir düşünceniz var mı? (metin giriniz)**

## Arabic questionnaire (in English)

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your level of education? *Please mark the school you have completed.*
  - a. Literate
  - b. Elementary school
  - c. Middle School
  - d. High school
  - e. Vocational school
  - f. University and above
4. What is your nationality?
  - a. Turkey
  - b. Syrian
  - c. Iraqi
  - d. Somalian
  - e. Other

### Do you agree or disagree...

5. I am /would be happy to work side by side with Syrians.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
6. I like, or would like, to share my apartment building with Syrian families.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
7. I would be happy for my children (or future children) to have Syrian friends.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
8. I would not mind if my children (or future children) married a Syrian person.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree, nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree

**9. In my neighbourhood, landlords charge the same rent to refugees as to Turkish people.**

- a. Less rent to refugees
- b. Same
- c. More rent to refugees
- d. Don't know

**10. Most of the time, I feel safe in my neighbourhood.**

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree, nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

**11. I believe I can stay in Turkey as long as the conflict continues in my home country.**

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree, nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

**12. I feel my children hold a chance of a bright future in Turkey.**

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree, nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

**13. Which statement describes your Turkish ability the best?**

- a. I do not know any Turkish
- b. I know a few words, but I cannot communicate
- c. I am able to have a basic conversation about everyday topics
- d. I know Turkish at an advanced level
- e. It is my mother language

**14. Do you have any other thoughts to share related to your experience living in Turkey?**

(open text)



## Arabic questionnaire (in Arabic)

كم عمرك؟

ما جنسك؟

ما هو مستوى تحصيلك العلمي؟ الرجاء الإشارة إلى المستوى التعليمي الذي قمت بإتمامه  
أستطيع القراءة والكتابة ولكن لم أكمل الدراسة في المدرسة.

مدرسة إبتدائية.

مدرسة إعدادية.

مدرسة الثانوية.

مدرسة مهنية.

جامعة أو أعلى.

ما هي جنسيتك؟

تركي

سوري

عراقي

صومالي

أخرى

هل توافقون أو لا توافقون على التالي ...

أنا سعيد أو سأكون سعيداً بالعمل جنباً إلى جنب مع الشعب التركي

أعارض وبشدة

أعارض

لا أعارض ولا أوافق

أوافق

أوافق وبشدة

أحب، أو أود أن أسكن في بناء يحوي عائلات تركية أخرى

أعارض وبشدة

أعارض

لا أعارض ولا أوافق

أوافق

أوافق وبشدة

في حال كان لدي أطفال (الآن أو في المستقبل) سأكون سعيداً إذا أصبح لديهم أصدقاء أتراك.

أعارض وبشدة

أعارض

لا أعارض ولا أوافق

أوافق

أوافق وبشدة

في حال كان لدي أطفال (الآن أو في المستقبل) لن أمانع زواجهم من شخص تركي.

أعارض وبشدة

أعارض

لا أعارض ولا أوافق

أوافق

أوافق وبشدة

يتقاضى أصحاب المنازل في الحي الذي أعيش فيه من اللاجئين نفس مبلغ الإيجار الذي يتقاضونه من الأتراك

إيجار للاجئين أقل

نفسه

إيجار للاجئين أكثر

لا أعلم

أشعر بالأمان في الحي الذي أعيش فيه في أغلب الوقت

أعارض وبشدة

أعارض

لا أعارض ولا أوافق

أوافق

أوافق وبشدة

أعتقد أنني أستطيع البقاء في تركيا طالما استمر الصراع في بلدي

أعارض وبشدة

أعارض

لا أعارض ولا أوافق

أوافق

أوافق وبشدة

أشعر أن أطفالنا يملكون فرصة لمستقبل مشرق في تركيا

أعارض وبشدة

أعارض

لا أعارض ولا أوافق

أوافق

أوافق وبشدة

أي من العبارات التالية الأكثر تعبيراً عن مستواك في اللغة التركية؟

لا أعرف أي شيء عن اللغة التركية

أعرف بعض الكلمات ولكن لا يمكنني التواصل

قادر على إجراء محادثة بسيطة حول موضوعات الحياة اليومية

أعرف التركية على مستوى متقدم

إنها لغتي الأم

هل لديك أي أفكار أخرى تود مشاركتها تتعلق بتجربتك أثناء العيش في تركيا؟

## Annex 2

### Some focus group discussion questions

- Q. Please tell us about your experience related to your daily interactions with Turkish community (government offices, shops, schools, hospitals...). Has it changed over time? How?
- Q. What barriers do you face in interacting with Turkish people?
- Q. On what occasions do you interact with your Turkish neighbours? Do you visit each other? Is there a conflict between you and them?
- Q. How would you describe your child's interaction with peers from the host community? What do you like and dislike about their relationship? If they do not have friends, what are the reasons they do not have friends?
- Q. How would you describe your relationship with Turkish co-workers? What do you like and dislike about having Turkish co-workers? Is there any conflict/solidarity between you and them? If yes, on what issues?
- Q. What do you think the Syrian refugees are often criticized for by Turkish people? In your opinion, which criticisms are fair and which are misconceptions? How do you think these can be corrected?
- Q. Do you plan to stay in Turkey or go to somewhere else? Do you see a future for yourself and your children in Turkey?

## Annex 3

As summarized in *Table 2*, the Social Cohesion Index (SCI) was constructed differently for the host community (based on 11 components) and for the refugee community (based on 8 components) as the number of questions asked in the survey were different for both communities. The survey questions were taken as indicators of social cohesion, with positive attitudes towards the other community and openness to interact as indicated by the responses to the questions generally treated as more “social cohesion” and vice versa.

**Table 2 The Social Cohesion Index Components**

Host community		Maximum point	Refugee community		Maximum point
1	Sharing neighbourhood	5	1	Sharing neighbourhood	5
2	Sharing workplace	5	2	Sharing workplace	5
3	Children's friendship	5	3	Children's friendship	5
4	Children's intermarriage	5	4	Children's intermarriage	5
5	Equal payment for refugees	5	5	Rent costs	3
6	Vulnerability of refugees	5	6	Safety	5
7	NGO assistance for refugees	5	7	Stability	5
8	Government assistance for refugees	5	8	Future plans	5
9	Sharing the public services	5			
10	Cost of living	3			
11	Crime rates	3			
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51</b>			<b>38</b>

The answers to the questions with a 5-point Likert scale were coded from the lowest (1) for the answer option ‘strongly disagree’ to the highest (5) for the option ‘strongly agree’. Excluding the response option ‘I do not know,’ the questions with 4 responses were reordered in a positive direction as a 3-point scale where the lowest score (1) reflects distance among communities and the highest score (3) reflects cohesion. The scores for each response (given to 11 items by the host community and to 8 items by refugees) were added up to calculate the total points for each respondent. These points then were divided by the maximum cumulative score (51 for host community and 38 for the refugees) to determine the social cohesion index<sup>33</sup>, which ranges from 0.2 (means no social cohesion at all i.e. person responded with “strongly disagree” throughout) to 1.00 (means the highest social cohesion possible i.e. person responded with “strongly agree” throughout).

<sup>33</sup> The index calculation here is benefited from the social cohesion index calculation of the WFP Regional Bureau of Cairo. The details can be found at the technical note titled “Development and Validation of Social Cohesion Score for Monitoring Livelihood Activities in Lebanon and Egypt”.

SAVING  
LIVES  
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