



Support to Young Refugees Project  
**Young and Refugee**  
Good Practices International  
Conference 23-26 May 2017  
**Results Report**







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# 24 May 2017, Wednesday

## Session: Opening

**Speakers:** Ahmet Malla, Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) Diyarbakır Youth Center, Turkey

Suzan Bayazıt, Community Volunteers Foundation, Turkey

Cansu Taşdemir, Youth Approaches in Health Association (Youth Peer Turkey), Turkey

Alanna Armitage, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Director

# youth



## Ahmet Malla

Community Volunteers Foundation  
Diyarbakır Youth Center, Turkey



*"Sometimes I forget that  
I am also a refugee."*

The conference began with the opening remarks delivered by Aleppo-born Ahmet Malla. As an individual with first-hand experience of being a young refugee, Ahmet shared his experience, the journey which took him to Turkey and the challenges he faces as a refugee: *"I was born in Aleppo. I was studying law in Aleppo. But I had to leave and come to Turkey because of the war. The journey was difficult just as it was for every refugee. I wasn't sure if I wanted to live in Turkey, I wasn't sure if I could. It was very hard to leave my family and my school behind."* Malla, described the Ministry of National Education's 2014 Circular on Higher Education as *"the turning point that helped him start a new life"* in that the Circular allowed him continue his university training from where he had left off in Syria:

*"Through a decision of the Turkish Ministry of National Education, young refugees started to be integrated into education and that changed the course of my life. I moved to Diyarbakır in 2014. I resumed my undergraduate studies. At the start of my second year at university a friend introduced me to Community Volunteers Foundation and to Support to Young Refugees Project. The Project looked interesting. I talked to the Youth Center Coordinator. Now, in 2017 we are working together at the same Center. I work at the center alongside my studies. Sometimes I forget that I am also a refugee."*

He also talked about his first encounter with the TOG Diyarbakır Youth Center as well as the activities carried out with Syrian and other refugees at the center where he has been following an internship program for almost a year: *"Here, we also assist people coming from Iraq or other countries. We are not interested in where they come from. We conduct weekly or daily household visits. We try to learn more about the issues that they face in education or healthcare in order to be able to raise their quality of living. I think we can do more. I intend to support them not only through our services but also with interpretation after working hours. We try to help the people who come to the center in a range of areas where they experience challenges, we step in if they do not receive proper attention at hospitals in particular. We accompany them to provide interpretation for better communication. We try to make sure that they do not feel alone. We explain to the refugees their rights and tell them they have the same rights as the local population, nothing more nothing less. We explain that they have the right to file a lawsuit if necessary. Our efforts are underway."*

Ownership amongst refugees is very high for the center which is appreciated and recognized by the refugee population in Diyarbakır. Ahmet describes this as follows: *"Refugees in Diyarbakır know us and they smile as they look at us. When we visit the neighborhoods where they live they take ownership of the center. They always smile when*

*they look at us. They ask any question they may have in our area or in others without any reservation. When we visit those neighborhoods we are met with a sense of ownership and they approach us and open up to us.”*


The center conducts weekly or daily household visits in the neighborhoods with a refugee population and listen to the various issues that individuals may be facing. They offer support in a wide range of areas such as information about refugee rights, referral for free-of-charge legal counsel, language courses, handicraft workshops, weekly information sessions delivered by young female volunteers in the team, information about early marriages and health, health support for those who need to be referred to hospitals. Ahmet ended his speech by remembering Bulut Öncü\* who passed away early this year.

\*Bulut Öncü has pioneered many programs in Turkey in the field of sexual health and reproductive health and worked for Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for many years and became the founder of Youth Approaches to Health Association (Y-PEER Turkey). He had also launched the Support to Young Refugees Project and coordinated the project between 2015-2016.



## Suzan Bayazıt

Community Volunteers Foundation,  
Board Member, Turkey



*"Let us talk to each other and stay in touch so that can live in peace, lead healthy lives together and coexist while respecting our difference. For this, we need to run faster."*

The second speech of the opening session was delivered by Suzan Bayazıt, Board Member of the Community Volunteers Foundation. Bayazıt began her remarks by greeting the volunteers, the United Nations Population Fund, Y-PEER Turkey, representatives of the Red Crescent and Ministry. She made a brief introduction about the history, current activities, and volunteer profile of TOG for international guests. At the outset, she placed particular emphasis on the primary aim of TOG, "empowerment of the youth". She also explained that TOG developed and grew through university clubs and that the organization is currently present in 129 universities through university clubs. As of 2017, Bayazıt added, TOG has 5 youth centers.

Bayazıt talked about the importance that the youth attaches to participation within decision-making mechanisms in TOG. *"I and other colleagues decide together with the youth represented in the Board."* Bayazıt added. After outlining the objective of TOG projects, empowering the youth, the Chair of the Board went on to talk about TOG's key principles. She summarized these principles as follows: respecting diversity, team work, accountability and transparency, local participation, lifelong learning and social entrepreneurship. Bayazıt pointed out the youth's strong ownership of the principles. *"At TOG, our volunteers are responsive, they do not criticize, they are determined and driven. When they work in a project they believe that everyone is different but equal. Sharing and understanding makes them happy. We are definitely an energetic community."* Bayazıt added. She also talked about the number of people TOG has reached out to date: *"How many people lives have we touched in 2016? I am not a big fan of football but it's around 90,000, i.e. enough to fill 7.7 football stadiums."* she said.

Bayazıt talked about TOG's volunteer profile explaining that there is an equal gender distribution amongst young volunteers and that 95% of the volunteers go to a state university, 63.7% are more educated than their mothers, and a majority of them (76%) are hopeful about the future. Bayazıt also looked back at the results of the first year of operation for two newly established youth centers in Diyarbakır and Hatay: *"The results show that the centers has worked with 27,000 participants, Turkish and Syrian, in Diyarbakır and Hatay. Of course, this does not represent the whole picture, but the results of the first year are truly incredible."*, she added. 'How can stronger impact be achieved for TOG and other stakeholders?', Bayazıt asked.


*“Let us talk to each other and stay in touch so that can live in peace, lead healthy lives together and coexist while respecting our differences. For this, we need to run faster. We need to work harder particularly in the aftermath of the incident which took the lives of many young people in the UK yesterday. While we are trying to do good others are trying to do harm. So, we need to run faster.”*

Bayazit concluded her remarks by thanking all the stakeholders as well as the Japanese Government for their financial support.

## Speech Summaries:

### Cansu Taşdemir

Youth Approaches in Health Association |  
Y-PEER Turkey, Turkey

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white shirt and a blue lanyard, is speaking at a conference. In the background, a banner is partially visible with the text "Youth and Health", "Good Practices International", and "23-26".

*"Humanitarian crises affect women, children and the youth the most. The youth represents a group with a different set of needs and expectations."*

Cansu Taşdemir, a Board member of Youth Approaches in Health Association, began her remarks by introducing herself. "I am a candidate sociologist and a young woman", she said. She also thanked TOG and the UNFPA for their contributions to the conference. Taşdemir pointed out to the crisis in Syria which started in 2011 and continues to affect many people including in Turkey. She shared relevant statistics: *"Every ten minutes a child dies in Raqqa. Humanitarian crises affect women, children and the youth the most. According to official statistics, more than 3 million refugees live in Turkey. More than 700,000 of them are young people. The number of refugees who have sought refuge in countries such as Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan is now over 5 million. Two thirds of the global refugee population which is over 5 million are young people. That is why, every step towards transformation and improvement counts."*


Taşdemir said that the conference agenda includes discussions on the basic needs and rights of young refugees:

*"The youth represents a group with a different set of needs and expectations. We will focus on what has been done in the area of best practices. In this sense, it is important and meaningful to look at best practices."*

Taşdemir talked about the importance of centers which were established in the past couple of years in opening up a social space for refugees: *"Youth and women centers open up a social space where they meet their needs and move on with their lives."* Taşdemir concluded her remarks by thanking first of all Bulut Öncü, youth worker and founder of the Young Approaches in Health Association and Y-PEER Turkey National Coordinator and also the Community Volunteers Foundation for linking youth work to humanitarian assistance.

## Alanna Armitage

UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central  
Asia Regional Director



*“Young people are the leaders of their own communities in times of crisis. That is why, we have started the Youth Compact at the World Humanitarian Summit a year ago. The Compact commits us to placing the youth at the front and center of humanitarian response in times of crisis.”*

Alanna Armitage, UNFPA Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia began her speech by thanking TOG, Y-PEER Turkey, the UNFPA and the Government of Japan. In reference to the title of the Conference, she began by asking an important question: *“Looking at the title of this Conference I was struck by the central question: What does it mean to be young and refugee? Being young and embarking on the passage between adolescence and adulthood means facing many risks and vulnerabilities even in times of peace and security. Being young and refugee significantly heightens the risks. About half of the people affected by crises are under the age of 20. But often their needs are not properly addressed in humanitarian responses.”*

Armitage pointed out to gender-based risks in humanitarian crises and went on to make the following remarks: *“Girls and young people are at particular risk. In fact, during humanitarian crises being young and female is one of the greatest risk factors. Take, for example, the many reports of gender based violence or the reports of child marriage involving underage girls or the many cases of pregnancy among teenage refugees who fled from Syria and other countries affected by conflict.”*

Armitage said that in times of crisis children and adolescents have to take on the roles and responsibilities that adults would normally assume. *“As a result, young people might never reach their full potential, early marriages increase the risks. While still children themselves, adolescents often take on adult responsibilities. They have to generate revenue for their families and thus often lack certain opportunities.” she said.*

UNFPA Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia emphasized the potential of the youth despite crises and pointed out to the role that the Youth Compact plays in highlighting this potential: (<http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3829>)

*“Young people are often among the first to step in to help their communities. It was exactly one year ago at the World Humanitarian Summit the Compact that commits us to placing young people at the front and center of humanitarian response.”*

She also talked about the goals and activities under Youth Compact which aims at making the youth leaders of humanitarian assistance and summarized the efforts carried out so far as follows: *“It commits us to make sure that young people, young women and young men, girls and boys affected by displacement are informed, consulted and meaningfully engaged. The Security Council Resolution 2250 acknowledges the role of youth in promoting peace and security. Some 40 governments, international organizations, NGOs and young people have been discussing this topic. We are working to make sure that every young person including the most marginalized can make informed choices. We provide education and health support. In Turkey alone, over 100,000 refugees received sexual and reproductive health services. The NGOs are providing great support in training and education. This event will help realize the promises of the World Humanitarian Summit.”*

She concluded her remarks by thanking TOG, Y-PEER and UNFPA Turkey and also thanked the Government of Japan for its financial support.

## Highlighted Issues:

- Humanitarian crises affect women, children and the youth the most. The youth represents a different group in terms of their needs and expectations. Although most of the people affected by humanitarian crises are under the age of 20, humanitarian assistance does not reach this group.
- While being young increases certain risks, the risks are greater for refugees.
- Certain risks are overlooked in humanitarian assistance: being a woman and gender-based violence in particular. Being young and a woman is the biggest risk in humanitarian crises. Gender related cases such as gender-based violence or early marriages occur. As a result, young people cannot fulfill their potential. In addition, young people have to take on adult responsibilities while still children, which affects their development negatively in all aspects.
- Challenges faced by young refugees: dropouts, inability to have a profession, being separated from family, relatives or friends, taking on adult tasks and responsibilities while still children or adolescents, gender-based violence, early marriages.
- Young people can lead their communities in times of crisis too. It is important to equip youth with the skills needed to overcome challenges. When young refugees are given opportunities in education or social areas they can become leaders in contributing to their communities.
- The importance of setting up safe and warm spaces in neighborhoods.
- Emphasis on equality with the local population in terms of rights (nothing more nothing less).
- According to official figures, there are 3 million refugees in Turkey. 700,000 of them are young. There is a need to talk about the basic needs and rights of these young people.
- The Conference aims at contributing to the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and under Youth Compact.

## Recommendations:

- Beyond the services provided at the centers, more integrated support could be provided after working hours for assistance in other problems encountered in daily life.
- Young people are typically the primary group to step in within their communities and take initiative. Youth can play a leading role in ensuring peace and security in times of humanitarian crisis. They can move beyond being part of the problem and become part of the solution. For this, skills building and resilience-building activities targeting the youth could be carried out.
- Most of the people affected by humanitarian crises are under the age of 20. But they are not receiving enough humanitarian assistance. We need to ensure that they receive assistance.
- Efforts should go into ensuring that young people and the most marginalized can make informed decisions.
- Youth and women centers provide a social space where these people meet their needs and move on with their lives. It is important to sustain these centers.

## Session: Youth and Humanitarian Settings: Current Situation and Problems

Moderator: Karl Kulesa, UNFPA, Turkey

Speakers: Leana Islam, UNFPA, Jordan

Irina Isomova, UNHCR, Turkey

Assoc. Prof. Emre Erdoğan, İstanbul Bilgi University, Turkey





## Leana Islam

UNFPA, Jordan



*"There is one particular outcome among the UNFPA's goals for the next 5 years in sexual and reproductive health: young people are able to claim their rights and lead and participate in sustaining peace."*

UNFPA Jordan representative and youth worker. Leana Islam began her speech by indicating that she would be talking about how humanitarian crises affect the youth and adolescents, the UNFPA's role in the area, the importance of the Youth Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and giving a general overview with regard to humanitarian crises and youth. At the outset, she mentioned that young people cannot transition into adulthood in a healthy manner during crisis: *"During an emergency situation the family and community structure might be have disrupted. That affects the ability of youth to make the transition into adulthood, from school to work or other adult roles in the normal way. Adolescents who are in situation may suddenly find themselves faced with roles and responsibilities that they have not been prepared for."*

Islam also talked about the problems encountered in transitioning into adulthood. : *"Especially for adolescent girls, being separated from local or family networks can lead to being in a very vulnerable situation that can also include also rape and sexual exploitation and abuse. Many adolescents will be put in a position where they have to resort to risky behavior that can lead to risk of recruitment by armed forces that can itself lead to the increase of vulnerability to exploitation, to HIV, to sexually transmitted infections as well as unwanted pregnancies, drugs and alcohol."* she added. Islam also explained that the situation faced by young women make sexual and reproductive health issues all the more important in humanitarian crises: *"The lack of access to sexual and reproductive health information can lead to unwanted pregnancy abortions, sexually transmitted infections and so on."*

Islam pointed out the need to access specific services needs by taking into account the various circumstances that young people may be experiencing and went on to outline the UNFPA's work in this area: *"How does UNFPA respond to this area? We send equipment, medical supplies. We provide training for health workers and midwives, we also lead the distribution of hygiene kits to women and their families. We are well-known for our role in data collection in order to be able to do effective relief but also to do needs assessments. The UNFPA chairs or co-chairs humanitarian assistance coordination groups and youth sub-working groups within the UN."* Islam also talked about the UNFPA's 5-year plans:

*"We work closely on working for youth in relation to sexual and reproductive health. I'd like to draw your attention to one particular outcome: young people are able to claim their rights*

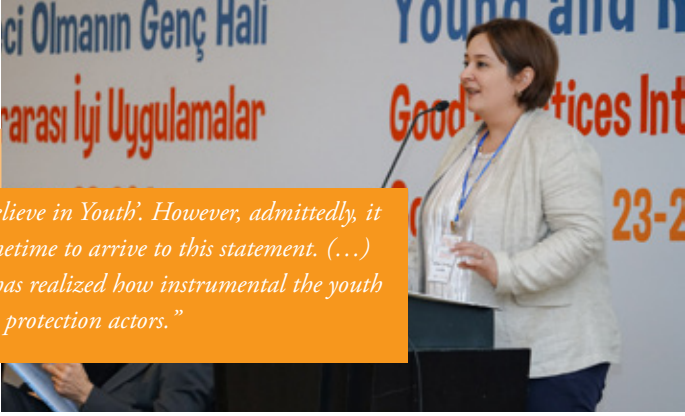
*and lead and participate in sustaining peace. These issues are very new on the global scene related to the UN Resolution 2250, you can see here that the UNFPA takes it very seriously. It is included in our terminology for all of our regional offices and headquarters.”*

Islam elaborated on how this objective came on the agenda and what led to the development of Youth Compact: *“The Compact emerged as a result of the humanitarian crisis. The Compact was very strongly supported. It is chaired by UNFPA together with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and it has currently 49 members.”* Islam talked about the 5 key actions under Youth Compact for young people and provided information on those areas: *“For the first one we have: promote and increase age and gender responsive and inclusive programs. The second is to support systematic engagement and participation with youth in humanitarian action. Action 3 is to recognize young people’s capacities to be effective humanitarian actors. The fourth action is about increasing the resources to address the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth. Action 5 is to ensure the generation of data. Again this is something that the UNFPA is very much involved in. It fits very well with our mandated area. Among the 49 members, there are NGOs, the private sector a few member states. Everybody is working together in the different task forces to take the actions (5 key actions) further.”*

Islam also talked about the risks existing in countries with a large young population: *“Countries with a larger young population are at higher risk of violent conflict. Young people might be more vulnerable and women may be more likely to be victims in conflict regions. However, the majority of young people do not participate in violence. But, young men are often portrayed as ruthless perpetrators and young women are portrayed as helpless victims. This bias limits youth’s participation in restoring peace and security. Young people’s positive contributions to peace building (Youth & Peace and Security) are important and the Youth Compact recognizes that. UN Resolution SCR 2250 recognizes the role that young people have to play. This role is broken down into five parts: participation, protection, prevention, partnership and the reintegration of young people.”*

Islam concluded her remarks by talking about the activities of the UNFPA in Jordan: *“The UNFPA is working to improve the coordination regarding the needs of youth during armed conflicts. There is a UN study on the progress of young people, peace and security. In Jordan we were requested to contribute what we have been doing. We have commissioned research on the role of young people in peace. We have developed a position paper youth, peace and security. We prepared background document for the Amman Global Youth Forum, and we have been doing advocacy with member states.”*

Irina Isomova  
UNHCR, Turkey



*"We Do Believe in Youth'. However, admittedly, it took us sometime to arrive to this statement. (...) UNHCR has realized how instrumental the youth could be as protection actors."*

The second session of the first day continued with a speech by Irina Isomova, representative of UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Turkey. Isomova thanked all the stakeholders for their contributions in organizing the conference. She began her speech with the same title as the title of the report they had brought to the Conference: "We Believe in Youth":

*"My presentation carries the same name as the report that we had a chance to bring to the conference event. We simply call them 'We Do Believe in Youth'. However, admittedly, it took us sometime to arrive to this statement. As it was mentioned by previous speakers, youth and adolescents undergo a very critical period in their lives in development as they transition from childhood to adulthood. It can be compounded by further challenges and new responsibilities. The refugee youth aged 15-24 often remain unable to participate fully in decision-making processes that affect them in the first place. They also have limited opportunities to realize their aspirations, express their concerns, materialize their abilities to a better extent. So, engaging meaningfully with youth and addressing their protection needs requires support on the part of the state, humanitarian stakeholders."*

Isomova talked about the challenges faced by young refugees in transitioning into adulthood and reminded the important role that the NGOs and public sector have to play in this process. She went on to talk about how the UNHCR's work was transformed with emerging issues in the context of the main developments and processes taking place at the global level.

*"The youth makes up a large portion of our population of concern. Young refugees did not receive the attention deserved by the nature of their specific needs up until recent years. It was only in 2013 when UNHCR launched a global review process which focused on our engagement with the displaced youth. The global review helped to identify that we did not collect disaggregated data on the population we are talking about but we also did not have feasible policies addressing this particular population. The survey showed that 70% of our staff have worked directly with youth in different sectors, however there was no dedicated staffing resources to work with the youth at the global policy level. "*

She continued her speech by explaining the UNHCR's efforts aimed at addressing the gaps in question from 2014 to date. The first one is the Youth Initiative Fund which can be cited amongst the best practices outlined throughout the Conference:

*"In 2014 the Youth Initiative Fund was created. This could be brought to your attention as one of the good practices that has been field tested for the last 3 years. It's not a big fund in terms of financial remuneration. But, it's a very important initiative that builds on the capacity of the young people that we are working with. It creates an enabling environment that provides young people with the support necessary to act as active protection actors. This fund has been actively*

*supported by the UNHCR since 2014 and it's still implemented in almost all the parts of the world. The initiative gave support to 62 youth-led initiatives with several projects implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and this year we have an opportunity to promote this in Turkey. The Youth Initiative Fund assists young people in unlocking their potential and also to build on the skills which they will carry throughout their life."*

Isomova talked about another UNHCR activity Youth Global Consultations jointly organized with Women Infants and Children in the following words:

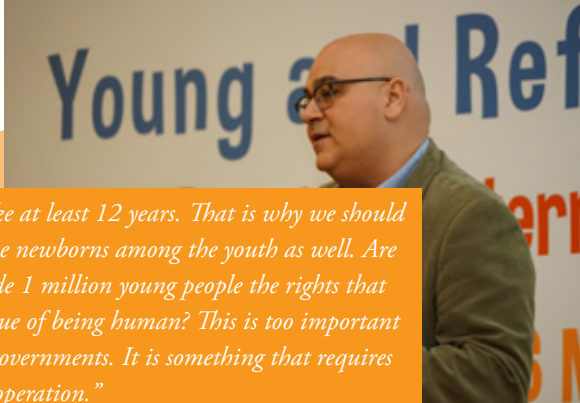
*"Starting from 2015, the process that we call Global Refugee Youth Consultations was launched. These consultations brought together more than 1200 young people from different nationalities. These consultations had 4 key objectives: The first is to create structures for young refugees to engage in participatory dialogue with the relevant stakeholders at the micro and macro level. The second objective was to improve access for young refugees to local, national, regional and global networks. To foster and support participation and leadership, as well as empowerment opportunities amongst young refugees. And also these consultations serve as an important to consolidate and channel learning from consultations into development of guidelines and policies. Although the context of each country was very specific. It was 23 countries who participated in the process. Young refugees and their peers from the host countries had the chance to deliberate and come up with very specific definitions of challenges that they are facing. Just to flag a few: difficulty with legal recognition, obtaining personal documents, difficulty in accessing quality learning opportunities, xenophobia, cultural clash, realizing their skills, limited access to job opportunities, discrimination, challenges in relation to gender equality, violence targeting the youth with LGBTI profile."*

Isomova also talked about the results of the consultations: *"As a result of these consultations, a set of core actions for refugee youth were produced. 7 core actions provided a framework for future action. These core actions include: empower the refugee youth through meaningful engagement; recognize, utilize and develop refugee youth capacity and skills; ensure refugee youth focused protection; support refugee youth's physical and emotional well-being, facilitate refugee youth networking and information sharing; reinforce refugee youth as connectors and peace-builders, generate data and evidence on refugee youth."*

Finally, Isomova talked about the activities of Youth Compact and the UNHCR's current approach to the topic: *"I will briefly talk about the Youth Compact. So far, this initiative has been supported by 40 humanitarian partners including the government and UN system. The compact commits signatory organizations to inform and meaningfully engage young people throughout all stages of humanitarian action. UNHCR has been taking a lead role in terms promoting a framework on collection of age and gender disaggregated data. Every year, an event where all participating states come together is organized. In 2016, the Executive Committee resulted in the 'Executive Committee (EXCom) Conclusion on Youth'. This Conclusion highlights that there is a need to increase support programs that foster leadership, ensure the participation of adolescent girls and young women; support the active participation of youth of concern; strengthen the engagement and participation of youth of concern through education and life skills building. The same framework highlights the urgent need to undertake further measures to engage with stateless youth. UNHCR has realized how instrumental the youth could be as protection actors. UNHCR remains committed to learn together and accompany and support youth in operationalizing the key policies throughout the specific implementation modalities."* Isomova ended her remarks by thanking all the stakeholders.

Doç. Dr. Emre Erdoğan

Bilgi University, Turkey



*"Return will take at least 12 years. That is why we should include define the newborns among the youth as well. Are we able to provide 1 million young people the rights that they have in virtue of being human? This is too important to be left to the governments. It is something that requires international cooperation."*

*"Return will take at least 12 years. That is why we should include define the newborns among the youth as well. Are we able to provide 1 million young people the rights that they have in virtue of being human? This is too important to be left to the governments. It is something that requires international cooperation."*

Assoc. Prof. Emre Erdoğan from İstanbul University began his presentation titled "Turkey and the Syrian Crisis" by providing a conceptual background on legal status such as refugee or temporary protection status. He also gave statistics while defining the challenges that the Syrians in Turkey are facing. While defining Syrian refugees living in Turkey Erdoğan emphasized the need for planning from age 0 onwards: *"Looking at the makeup of the population, if we take as a basis the 19-24 year old group 60% are women and the rest are men. We have to take into account the newborns and develop policies that would include them. It will take 12 years for Syrians to go back to Syria. So, refugees who are children today will be young people that we will be living side by side."*

*The goal is not a temporary fix. We need to develop permanent solutions. Are we able to provide 1 million young people the rights that they have in virtue of being human?"*

Erdoğan talked about the key problems that young people from Syria experience. He addressed those issues under various headings such as education, employment, accommodation, access to social services and psycho-social problems. First of all, he highlighted insufficient enrollment rates and the existing gender inequality in enrollment: *"Almost 400,000 people are trained in temporary education centers. There are Syrians studying in universities. There is a misperception in Turkey in higher learning. There is no such thing as placement without an exam, they have to take an exam in order to be placed at a university. There are 15,000 university students. Only 5,000 of them are women. There is a substantial gender gap. Enrollment rates before the civil war were very high in Syria. And what does this mean?: Young people who used to be at school have to undertake different responsibilities now."* he pointed out. He also spoke about the causes behind limited access to education among youth due to various other responsibilities. He also tackled structural problems such as the opportunity cost of education: *"Financial problems prevent access to education. They need to be registered (refugee, temporary protection) in order to exercise their right to education. About 15% are not registered. They also have to provide their completion certificates for enrollment in secondary and higher education. Otherwise, they have to take a test for recognition of prior learning. Then, there is the issue of curriculum: Now the Libyan curriculum is being used, the problem persists. There are not enough teachers who can teach in Arabic language. The schools do not have sufficient capacity. There is a need to develop a new curriculum. There is an opportunity cost in education: work or get married. Will they send their children to work or to school? They prefer sending them to work instead of school. When it's a girl, then the issue of marriage comes up. So, children drop out of school."*



Another problematic area concerning the youth is employment and participation in the labor force: *“Only 6000 people are granted a work permit. The legal arrangement is technically not working. That leads to informal employment. The wages are incredibly low, bosses withhold pay, do not ensure occupational safety... Because, they give them the work that they cannot get the Turkish citizens to do. There is intense competition in unskilled work. That leads to intolerance in Adana, Urfa and Kilis. This is seen as a factor that increases unemployment and leads to social tensions. That shows how important social cohesion is.”*

Erdoğan also pointed out to a lack of data concerning refugees in Turkey: *“Unfortunately, not enough research has been done on the topic. There is no data that identifies Syrians: There are a number of needs analyses conducted by Support to Life Association and some NGOs. That is why, Humanitarian Development Foundation’s (INGEV) study<sup>1</sup> (included in the Young Refugees Report) carried out with 378 participants is so important.”* he said before sharing the findings based on the results of the study. *“Most of them lack job security and insurance. There are women and girls who stay at home. The majority of women do not work. The result is poverty.”* he said. Poverty is a major issue for young refugees. Erdoğan also pointed out to a clear problem in accommodation: *“They live in decaying neighborhoods of provinces such as Antep, Urfa and Adana. Sky-high rents are paid in abandoned, derelict neighborhoods. The local population does not want Syrians as neighbors. Rents are as high as rents paid in İstanbul. Children living in decaying neighborhoods need a place to go to. These are places where crime is rife and it is very difficult to keep the children away. That is why, the work done by community centers such as TOG’s is very important... There is a need to create alternative spaces for children and youth.”*

Erdoğan also talked about the key issues in access to social services and healthcare: *“As Ahmet Malla mentioned earlier the Syrians do not feel comfortable as a result of alienation. They have a right to access healthcare but they cannot exercise this right. They do not know where to go. Even if they do, they cannot talk about their problem due to the language barrier. When they can some doctors do not want to attend to them. Here, the role that the volunteers have to play is very important.”* he commented. The academic also emphasized that there is a stronger risk of depression among young refugees who cannot exercise their rights and suffer from poverty and deprivation. *“The result: Depression and deprivation. Here, I would like to borrow the terminology used by UNICEF: ‘Lost generation’. We are rapidly losing a generation.”*

Erdoğan concluded his remarks by questioning whether the NGOs can be a solution to this long-term crisis : *“The exact number of NGOs and specialized personnel working in this area is not known. There is limited NGO capacity. There is a language problem and a lack of experience in project implementation. There are not enough resources and it has become harder to find resources. There is a lack of coordination among local NGOs. Cooperation between the state and local NGOs is not strong. International organizations are working in a more difficult setting. These organizations cannot work properly due to security concerns. There is also a civil society under state control. I would like to share a sentence from our recent report. ‘This is too important to be left to the governments.’ It is something that requires international cooperation. It is too important an issue to be left up to the concerns of a few governments. We should be talking about ‘refugee rights’ just as we talk about child rights.”*

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1- [goo.gl/zNW8ZW](http://goo.gl/zNW8ZW)

## Highlighted Issues:

- Lack of sufficient data on refugees and importance of data collection

The status of refugee girls and the vulnerable situation of young women, early marriages, dropouts and the frequency of problems

- Lack of awareness among the youth about their rights
- The Youth Compact and its importance for young refugees
- The potential role that the youth can play in humanitarian crises
- Children living in decaying neighborhoods need a place to go to. Children are at risk of being pushed to crime, health problems, vulnerability event death, which makes community centers all the more important for the youth.
- Refugees have certain challenges in accessing social services. They cannot access healthcare due to the language barrier. Although they have a right to healthcare they cannot exercise this right. Volunteers have an important role to play in providing support in this area.

## Recommendations:

- It is expected that it will take at least 12 years for the Syrian population to go back to Syria once peace is restored. Lasting solutions should be created and problems need to be resolved. Overcoming problems in healthcare and accommodation are priority issues. Turkey needs to consider the services provided to 1 million people (Syrian youth) based on their refugee status. There is a need to resolve not only the urgent issues but also other important issues which are not considered as urgent in times of crisis. We need to make sure that 1 million people can exercise their rights.
- Policy-making for young refugees needs to take into account and encompass the newborns as well. The process is expected to take at least 12 years and they will have become children/young people by then.
- There is a need to increase the number of Arabic speaking teachers and develop new curriculum.
- TOG needs to increase the number of community centers such as Youth Centers. There is a need to offer alternative spaces for refugee children.
- There is a need to develop a poverty strategy.
- There are rights and support that stem from their refugee status. Yet, they cannot benefit from those. Information and support mechanisms are needed to make sure they exercise their rights and benefit from the support.

## Session: Youth and Humanitarian Settings: An Overview of Health and Protection Sectors

Moderator: Başak Tuğsavul, Community Volunteers Foundation, Turkey

Speakers: Gökhan Yıldırım kaya, UNFPA, Turkey

Zeliha Ünal dı, UN, Turkey

Dr. Gün Akı, Turkey


Mahmut Akkaya, Young Approaches in Health Association, Turkey





## Gökhan Yıldırım

UNFPA, Turkey



*"While expressing oneself and receiving services that respect one's privacy is a right for young people, this is much harder for a young refugee. The reason is the lack of a youth-centered approach."*

The first speaker of the session was Gökhan Yıldırım, UNFPA Turkey Reproductive Health Program Coordinator. Yıldırım has experience in a number of fields such as maternal-infant health, seasonal agricultural work, HIV/AIDS. He began his speech by saying *"Healthcare and youth is already a topic that in itself is a bundle of problems that awaits solutions even when considered apart from refugees."* And went on to give some statistics: *"65 million people are affected by crisis, conflicts, immigration and emergency situations and two thirds are young people. 1 in every 7 people live in a fragile conflict zone and 1 in 3 are young people."*

Yıldırım placed particular emphasis on the primary focus on the needs that have emerged due to a loss of life among the youth and pointed out the diversity of needs in this group. He also stated that being a young immigrant creates challenges in meeting certain needs particularly health services:

*"As for health, it seems as if issues such as food, water, accommodation and safety are being prioritized, what if you are a young person in an emergency? In extraordinary circumstances when a young person is detached from a safe and positive environment certain problems emerge such as healthy nutrition, psychological problems, self-care needs, infectious diseases, physical and psychological problems due to violence, lack of access to services in one's own language. While expressing oneself and receiving services that respect one's privacy is a right for young people, this takes on a much harder dimension when you think of a young refugee. The reason is the lack of a youth-centered approach."*

Yıldırım said that young Syrians are more likely to suffer from health problems compared with youth from Turkey: *"A study carried out in Hatay found that 4 in every 5 young Syrians think that they have serious health problems. This figure does not exceed 1 in 5 when applied to youth from Turkey. The situation is different with young immigrants. That is why, there is a need to provide health services with a rights-based approach towards groups with special needs. A gender equality focus is needed."* he added.

The UNFPA representative emphasized that refugees' health problems is a supranational issue. He pointed out to the following sustainable development goals which are part of the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and talked about the importance of practices that are focused on *"ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages; reducing inequality within and among countries, ensuring*

*equity service provision, promoting peaceful societies and providing access to justice for all”*

Yıldırımkaaya also addressed the importance of a local plan for Turkey to increase the resilience of refugees and the 3RP Refugee Resilience Plan (2017-2018). Yıldırımkaaya explained that (<http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/the-3rp/turkey/>) Health Sector Strategic Plan for Turkey which was drafted as part of 3RP considers individuals suffering from poverty and deprivation, people with chronic diseases, disabilities, individuals living alone as well as young people, adolescents, girls, individuals who are at reproductive age, children younger than 6 years old, those who need psychosocial support, individuals with HIV and LGBTI as priority groups.

He also underlined that while refugees have access to emergency health services privacy and access to guidance becomes more difficult in primary healthcare; that primary healthcare provision is not youth-centered, when a when a patient is a young refugee the situation becomes much more difficult. Yıldırımkaaya stressed the vital need for service provision that takes into account vulnerable groups and gender-based differences within societies in primary healthcare as well as the need for capacity-building at all levels including primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare due to limited capacity in service provision with a particular emphasis on ensuring access to kits and birth control /contraceptive methods. He also talked about the need for specific arrangements to meet the needs of youth in healthcare provision. Below are some of the highlights from the UNFPA's recommendations on the way forward:

The first recommendation is, as previous speakers mentioned is a lack of data on refugees which leads to estimates about the needs in designing services. Yıldırımkaaya elaborated on this problem as follows: *“First of all, a field study needs to be conducted to understand the baseline situation when designing services. What are the needs of young refugees in healthcare? We need to know those. For now, the process lacks a systematic structure.”* Difficulties in obtaining legal permission for research on refugees or inability to such permission, or lack published literature on existing research was cited as a reason that increases the problem. Another recommendation put forward by Dr. Yıldırımkaaya from the UNFPA was to involve young people in designing, delivering and promoting service provision for the youth. He also mentioned that particularly in grades 8 and 9 only a tiny part of reproductive health issues are integrated in the curriculum and that more comprehensive educational modules are needed as well as the need to provide training on reproductive health in formal and informal education regardless of whether the young people concerned are refugees. He stressed the importance of providing psychosocial support for young refugees as part of healthcare provision in addition to reproductive health training as well as the importance of providing an environment that is away from discrimination and alienation for youth. After outlining the recommendations in question at the end of his speech Yıldırımkaaya concluded his remarks by remembering Bulut Öncü *“whom we remember with respect and gratitude and whose devotion, leadership and contributions in youth work did not know borders or limitations”*.

## Zeliha Ünalđı

United Nations Resident  
Coordinator and Gender  
Specialist

A photograph of Zeliha Ünalđı, a woman with dark hair wearing a red blazer, speaking at a podium with a microphone. The background is a light blue wall with the word 'tional' visible in large red letters.

*“Restoring interrupted lives and activities back to normal in a short period of time is a disaster response target. However, in doing that, it is important to remember that our gender defines our opportunities, needs and access.”*

Zeliha Ünalđı talked about the importance of a gender equality perspective and analysis in humanitarian crises. She stated that the objective of the Sustainable Development Goals was to leave no one behind and that gender equality is a human right. She also said that the issue of gender equality is too important to be overlooked in times of crisis in order not to leave women and LGBTI individuals behind. *“Women, girls and youth are affected the most by humanitarian crises. 60% of people suffering from chronic hunger are women and children. It is mostly men who die in conflicts but the point that we are missing here is that the kind of violence that women and LGBTI individuals are exposed to is gender-based.”*

Ünalđı said that there are two options before humanitarian workers and defined those options as allowing people to live in unequal conditions or helping to make our responses serve as a basis for more egalitarian structures.

She also mentioned that women’s participation in decision-making is low and it is even more so in camp settings: *“We live in a world where resources are not equally distributed. 44 out of 299 village heads are women. Women are invisible in terms of government and participation in this area as well.”* Another significant point that Ünalđı has underlined in terms of gender related issues is that the roles change in times of crisis: *“Crises change gender roles. Women move to the forefront in times of crises. Maintaining gender-based distribution of roles in such settings leads to different practices and those may be overlooked. For example, women who enter damaged houses to make bread following an earthquake... The widening gap in enrollment rates for girls and boys before and after a crisis.”*

Ünalđı stressed the need to avoid acting with presumptions in order to allow crisis responses to serve as a basis for more egalitarian structures and that it is vital to integrate gender perspective in research and policy-making. She added that ensuring vulnerable groups’ access to services in times of crisis is not sufficient, that women and girls’ access is important but ensuring that the services reach those groups is equally important.


Ünalđı stated that gender equality analyses are instrumental in determining specific needs and cases of inequality in humanitarian settings and summarized the types of indicators that gender equality analysis should use as follows: *“Development efforts should try to answer the following questions: Who does what? Who decides on what? What do young women decide? When and how? Who accesses food, when and how? etc. These are*

*the indicators to be looked at. In humanitarian crises: Who is affected by humanitarian crises? Who is affected and how? Who has access to what? What are the existing barriers to participation in decision-making and access to services? What are the existing skills and capacity and who has them?”. Ünalđı stressed that such indicators are important to know who needs more urgent responses in humanitarian crises and added that gender equality analyses provide us with data on who we are leaving behind.*

She concluded her remarks by suggesting a dual approach. According to the proposed approach, there is a need to provide responses that meet the practical needs of the target group and to mainstream the gender equality perspective through various tools. As an example, she talked about the work of the International Organization for Migration which proposes transformative solutions taking into account practical and strategic needs regardless of the gender roles for women who live in the camps.

## Gün Akı

Medical Doctor, Turkey



*“Early pregnancies and birth frequency should be closely monitored. Monitoring is not possible because they do not have IDs. Access to family health services must be ensured regardless of marital status.”*

Dr. Gün Akı shared his experiences and observations on the issues that young refugees face in healthcare. Dr. Akı stated that war losses prevent access to a healthy and safe environment particularly for children and youth. He stressed that war injuries, disabilities, psychological and physical disorders, loss of loved ones or other losses are also stress factors and displaced persons and people who are directly affected by the process often suffer from anxiety, depression and post-trauma stress disorder. He also pointed out that these problems affect the fundamental right to life, that ‘being alive’ means maintaining one’s health and being safe and that young refugees are especially vulnerable in this sense.

He cited nutrition, accommodation, clothing and hygiene conditions and “ability to determine one’s future and socializing” among the needs of young refugees. He also stressed the need to pay attention to the social habits of service beneficiaries in providing support and to provide decent accommodation to all.

Dr. Akı pointed out to the need to set up interpretation and information units at hospitals and mentioned that interpreters should be trained in health topics, have knowledge of medical terminology, be able to provide guidance and refer the beneficiaries to relevant services and know how a hospital functions. He placed particular emphasis on the need to translate information forms, approval forms and the documents detailing the nature of the response in primary healthcare.

He also underlined that refugees need to receive information in places where they are residing in order to address problems such as insufficient access to healthcare. And that young refugees should also be provided with healthy accommodation and health support that is not based on personal application.

Akı reminded that another major issue is early marriages and pregnancies in the 14-18 age group: *“Complications occur during birth. In addition, second pregnancy within 6 months after giving birth is common. Intervals between two pregnancies should be longer. Another problem that stalls response is that they do not have IDs. Marriages that are not official prevent access to rights. Early pregnancies and intervals between pregnancies should be closely monitored. Monitoring is not possible because they do not have IDs. Access to family health services must be ensured regardless of marital status.”* Finally, Dr. Akı talked about the significance of elements which threaten psychological well-being and psychosocial support. Dr. Akı also mentioned the recent case of a medical incident involving burns as a result of contact with thinner to illustrate the increased likelihood of occupational accidents among young persons with psychological problems and the lack of awareness of this likelihood amongst employers.

## Mahmut Akkaya

*Young Approaches in Health Association | Y-PEER Turkey*  
Turkey

*“Young people are not a homogenous group. They form a heterogeneous structure. Such as young people living with HIV/AIDS, or young LGBTI refugees... We are talking about a group with diverse levels of vulnerability and needs.”*

Mahmut Akkaya, Board Member of Young Approaches in Health Association talked about the significance and value of statistics in supporting arguments developed in favor of youth in advocacy work and also the benefit of statistics in making young people's voices heard. He began his speech by sharing some key figures about Syrian refugees and youth living in Turkey:

*“The degree of being affected by the crisis varies. Vulnerable groups are made up of individuals who are alone, young people, children, illiterate people, people with disabilities and so on. Adolescents and young women are considered to be more vulnerable than others. Young people are not a homogenous group. They form a heterogeneous structure. Such as young refugees with AIDS, HIV or young LGBTI refugees... We are talking about a group with diverse levels of vulnerability and needs”*

Akkaya also talked about the problems which affect youth the most. These are: being cut off from family and living environment, dropping out of school, interruptions in access to healthcare, problems in sexual health, birth control and family planning, entering a violent and stressful environment, having to undertake adult responsibilities particularly due to early marriage. Akkaya mentioned that psychological problems which follow discrimination and violence against women, unsafe abortions, and pre-term births are also common problems. Akkaya also mentioned low self-esteem and self-confidence issues as major problems seen among young women. He particularly underlined the need to add related psychological problems to the list. *“Availability of free time due to disruptions in daily routine which leads to psychological issues, lack of occupation in times of crisis is quite common and that results in a number of problems.”* he explained.

Akkaya mentioned the study conducted in Hatay in 2015 with 251 refugees: “More than half of the participants are married and more than half of those have children. 4 in 5 young people assessed their health status as poor or very poor. *In fact young people from Turkey and Syria have many problems in common. 94% of them say that they have heard about HIV/AIDS but only 5.9% are familiar with the function of condoms as a means of protection.*” He also mentioned that young people have always been affected by humanitarian crises in Syrian just as in Yemen but also pointed out to the capacity of the youth to fill that gap if they are allowed to fulfill their potential. *“The youth must be the primary actor in the whole process.”* he said. In conclusion, he talked about the joint activities implemented by Y-PEER Turkey and TOG, peer training and the board game ‘Kendine İyi Bak’. Akkaya ended his remarks by mentioning sexual and reproductive health training delivered by young peer trainers.

## Highlighted Issues:

- It is important to know who needs more urgent assistance in crisis zones.
- Gender analyses provide data on who we are leaving behind. Only access to health services is not sufficient. We need to ensure not only access to services but also ensure that the services reach the relevant groups, particularly women and girls. There is not sufficient data on the share of men and women in access to services such as food etc.
- Gender gap analyses should look at the following questions in development efforts: Who does what? Who decides on what? What do young women decide? When and how? Who accesses food, when and how? etc. Such analyses should try to answer the following questions in humanitarian crises: Who is affected by humanitarian crises? Who is affected and how? Who has access to what? What are the existing barriers to participation in decision-making and access to services? What are the existing skills and capacity and who has them?
- Services should be adapted to the needs of special groups.
- Turkey lacks an IT system for refugees in healthcare.
- Good practices- An example was women who took on tasks which are viewed as men's roles and generated income as well as creating a space in the camp.

## Recommendations:

- Whether in primary, secondary or tertiary healthcare, services and kits, birth control methods and contraceptives should be made available to refugees. Emergency response should include procedures and clear policies including details such as the preparation of reproductive health kits and provision of instruments through coordination between all the different levels.
- Healthcare provision should take place through a rights-based approach for groups with special needs. An approach that is based on gender equality is needed. Young women, young people living with HIV/AIDS, young LGBTI refugees etc. should receive customized health services. Policies should be developed for vulnerable groups (young persons, adolescents, LGBTI, people with disabilities and displaced individuals).
- A field study aimed at understanding the current situation is needed in designing services. There is a need to know existing needs among young refugees in healthcare provision. Currently, the process does not have a systematic structure. The lack of data should be addressed. Representative field studies that demonstrate health data and service needs should be conducted and results should be shared.



- Young people should be involved in the area of service provision to young refugees, the way these services are provided and scaled up. Youth participation in governance should be promoted.
- The curriculum in grades 8 and 9 does not sufficiently address reproductive health topics. There should be formal and informal training. Syrians and Turkish youth should be trained regardless of whether they are immigrants or not.
- Psychosocial support should be promoted. Psychosocial support practices should be scaled up.
- Spaces free of discrimination and alienation should be ensured.
- Youth-friendly healthcare provision should be ensured.
- Adolescent health and sexual and reproductive health information and training for the youth should be adapted to the relevant age group.
- Implementing comprehensive social cohesion and empowerment work.
- The presence of peer programs should be strengthened within and outside schools. The NGOs working in this area should be strengthened.
- Service models should be developed for young people with specialized health and support needs.
- Early pregnancies and birth frequency should be closely monitored. Since they do not have IDs follow-up cannot be done. Access to family health services should be ensured for all regardless of their marital status.
- Documents and procedures in primary healthcare must be translated.
- Training interpreters who are familiar with medical terminology as well as the procedures and can offer correct guidance.



## Session: Good Practices: Health and Gender Based Violence

**Moderator:** Ozan Çakmak, UNDP, Turkey

**Speakers:** Robert Thomson, Sexual and Reproductive Health & Youth Expert, Geneva

Emine Kaya, TOG, Turkey

Manar Amro, Quest Scope Foundation, Jordan

The session on “good practices” included practices implemented with young refugees with regard to health and gender based violence. The first speaker was Robert Thomson, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Youth Expert who took the floor to talk about the “Boys on The Move” project implemented in Greece.



**Robert Thomson**  
*UNFPA & Faros Greece*

*"The aim is to help unaccompanied, displaced young boys to catch up with their peers. These children are on the move so it should be a short-term program which will build life skills."*



Robert Thomson began by talking about the adolescents who may benefit from the work implemented in Greece, unaccompanied male migrants and refugees younger than 18 years of age and who have been displaced due to conflict, poverty or both. The life skills program BOYS on the MOVE aims at building useful competences in this population. Robert stated that the main participants so far have been those coming from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria including Kurds, and who stay in Greece due to political reasons and children and young individuals who come from Africa and who are deprived of family support, social contacts and health services due to the crisis. He said that such young people are exposed to risks such as sexual abuse, exploitation, violence or health problems such as HIV/AIDS.

As stated, some of these young people have to go back to their countries of origin due following administrative decisions, while some move to other European countries or stay in Greece. It was underlined that these adolescents often lacks the skills needed to make a success in life whether they go back to their countries or live in other places they would like to go to. They need to build such skills as decision-making, self-esteem, planning to face common problems that all of us experience as well as those arising in the context in which they live on the move. Human trafficking is the biggest risk faced by boys and young men along with exposure to sexual or physical violence as victims or perpetrators.

Referring to research from UNHCR and Harvard, Robert pointed out that some boys and young men have entered into a cycle of survival sex: *"they have sex with older men for money ... then pay for sex with women. They are exposed to gender based violence and discrimination, sexual, physical or psychological violence."* In addition to drug trafficking and substance abuse in organized crime gangs, early marriage of girls and marriage without consent seem to become more common as families struggle the economically. Sharing further information on the experience of the most vulnerable state of being young and refugee, Robert shared his recommendations on how to respond to them: *"They are trying to hitchhike to Sweden from Afghanistan and wish to stay in Greece for a brief time Most are children have never completed school, never talked about sexuality, never had sex and do not know much about the world. The aim is to help these young men and boys on the move catch up developmentally with their peers. The short-term program will build life skills useful whether these young boys are on the move from one country to another."*

Robert Thomson showed an introductory video clip prepared for youth which you can

access by following the link <sup>2</sup> before providing detailed information on the program that to be implemented in Greece by government authorities and civil society organizations. He explained that the BOYS on the MOVE program aims at building life skills for unaccompanied boys and young men who are on the move. As explained and shared in his presentation, the table below summarizes the 10 steps in four modules of the program:

### Boys on the Move Progressive Learning Program: Step By Step (10 steps)

Module	Theme	Step	Objective
	Personal development	1. Health 2. Emotions 3. Harmony	<i>"Know and understand yourself"</i>
	Developing interpersonal relations	4. Communication 5. Relationships 6. Sexuality	<i>"Know and understand others"</i>
	Interactive interdependence	7. Culture 8. Planning 9. Money	<i>"Know and understand society "</i>
	Clarifying values	10. Connections	<i>"Focus on the bigger picture"</i>

The methodology used as part of the program was described, consisting of five active learning methods: learning by having fun, doing and trying; watching informative content; assessing by questioning relevant information; implementing and reinforcement with competence exercises; expressing thoughts to reflect oneself. An example of training materials that use the described methodology was shared with the audience. It was also explained that young men and boys who participate in the program receive a certificate after completing all 10 steps; that the young people who participate in the program are happy to be recognized; it is a source of motivation for them to gain specific but simple useful skills and that the program provides a space that keeps them away from abuse, violence and organized crime.

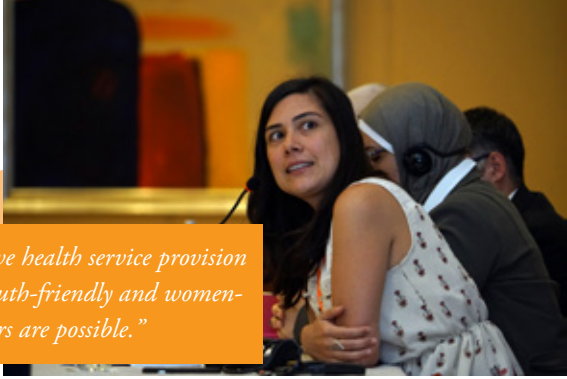
At the end of his presentation Robert expressed thanks to all the stakeholders, UNFPA, the Greek Scouts and the Faros shelter for adolescent boys and young men in Athens for their willingness to design and pilot the program. The material is available to authorities and volunteers across Greece and elsewhere who wish to implement it with all the refugees on the migration routes. Robert also added that they are looking for ways of integrating the program with the official cash transfer policy, funding procedures and transfer of funds. He concluded his remarks by thanking the participants of the conference for their engagement.

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2- For Arabic: [goo.gl/14Wbbt](http://goo.gl/14Wbbt) ; For English: [goo.gl/zhB45i](http://goo.gl/zhB45i)

## Emine Kaya

Community Volunteers Foundation,  
Turkey



*"An alternative health service provision is possible. Youth-friendly and women-friendly centers are possible."*

The second speech of the session was delivered by Emine Kaya, project coordinator from the Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG). Kaya talked about the "Support to Young Refugees" project which is jointly implemented by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Community Volunteers Foundation, Young Approaches in Health Association (Y-PEER) and is aimed at empowering the youth. She mentioned the centers in Ankara, Diyarbakır and Hatay Kırıkhan as well as the activities carried out in the centers and youth-friendly health service models.

She explained that the process started with a needs analysis and the attention paid to a multi-stakeholder needs-based planning in line with the results of the needs analysis. She mentioned TOG's work within and outside the centers in the implementing provinces.

The project consists of two pillars, namely, strengthening the activities of the youth centers and co-existence work as well as youth-friendly health service units. The centers are places where youth-friendly spaces are created through these two key areas of activity; young people are able to express themselves; they are involved in decision-making; a gender equality perspective is adopted. She also stated that the youth centers have been structured as safe spaces for women and girls. Humanitarian crises cause serious sexual and reproductive health problems among women and the youth. The needs analysis which was carried out under the project showed that rapid and effective solutions are needed in the area of sexual and reproductive health and the existing gaps in Turkey in correct referral and youth-friendly advisory services. That is why, units with Arabic-speaking psychologists and health personnel were set up under the project. She cited information through psychologists and health personnel, guidance and referral to secondary healthcare services, awareness-raising seminars, birth follow-up and neonatal information services among the services provided.


Kaya reiterated that the centers and service units also provide psychosocial support since the refugees suffer from serious traumas. Kaya said that activities outside the centers are also implemented under the project: *"In fact, our activities are not limited to those held in the centers. Youth workers, young friends said that they consider hairdressers, football pitches, neighborhoods... almost everywhere a center."* She said that in addition to household visits they collect data through integrated, targeted surveys and carry out constant and regular analyses in line with existing needs at the local level and develop solutions.

Kaya talked about the qualities that make a center youth-friendly and described them as being orderly, enabling easy access to information, not involving redtape, being respectful of sensitivities, mindful of gender equality, following every step through, being service-friendly, responding to the needs, monitoring individual needs, being a platform where young people can express themselves. She went on to elaborate on these issues as follows:

*“Young people have common needs and it was seen that they have a special identity and that efforts that recognize this special identity can mobilize their potential. Young people are learning to demand services responding to other needs and to express themselves. They bring out their potential when we shape our services in this sense. We have learnt from studies that young people are more comfortable in relations in which they are equal counterparts and they are not judged. We understood once again that the main actors of our work are young people as well as the importance of peer training. We saw that we can find solutions when we try to understand the individual needs of each and every young refugee. The most significant alternative which is now recognized is that advancing towards a solution is possible when we involve young people in health. It is very important to be flexible in youth work. An alternative healthcare provision is possible. Youth-friendly and women-friendly centers are possible.”*

## Manar Amro

Quest Scope Foundation, Jordan



*"Have trust in refugee youth. Young people are not part of the problem. They are part of the solution."*

The last speech of the last session of the first day was delivered by Manar Amro from the Quest Scope Foundation. Amro talked about the Al-Zaatari camp where they are working together with the UNFPA and the work carried out in the camp. She said that the activities carried out in the camp are similar to other youth centers, that the aim is to ensure participation of the youth in humanitarian programs and provide some services to the community: vocational skills, responding to education and other needs based on needs analysis, awareness-raising about reproductive health. Amro said that young people are exposed to gender based violence and exploitation in camps and underlined the need to create safe spaces inside the camps: *"The camp is a lot different than the city environment. First, you need to understand the structure of the community. These people came here because they had to. Efforts should take into account neighbors, relatives, plans and needs. We have involved the local community from the very beginning."*

Amro also talked about two good practices that they have been implementing in the camps. The first one is a "Creative Ideas Fund". She said that although the fund is a small amount it helps collect and put into practice new ideas in the interest of the community and the youth.

Another good practice is a "Friend Program". This is a mentorship program where girls, young women and young men in the 15-30 age group share their problems and look for solutions. Amro also talked about the challenges faced when working in the camp. *"It was difficult to convince the local people, but their participation is very important. It was difficult to convince young married women to participate too. But we could do so after talking to their parents. Because we are in the Zaatari camp, we need to do all the work inside the camp. We are continuing the work with Y-PEER and UNFPA."* Following a video screening demonstrating the work in the Zaatari camps Amro ended her remarks by saying *"Have trust in refugee youth. They are not part of the problem. They are part of the solution. Thank you all."*

## Highlighted Issues:

- Young people who are on the move, who try to cross from one country to another or go back to their own country are a particularly vulnerable group. These young people are lagging behind their peers in terms of life skills and knowledge. Unaccompanied children and young people with no experience in interpersonal relations, in knowing oneself, understanding the community, knowing their rights are exposed to various risks. These are human trafficking, organized crime, sexual exploitation and entering a cycle of survival sex.
- Practices for unaccompanied young people who are on the move should be designed as short-term, compact and targeted solutions.
- The importance of working with the youth and not for the youth was emphasized.
- The importance of safe spaces for young refugees and particularly for young women.
- Understanding the camp environment and the out-of-camp settings in which the refugees live. The importance of understanding the social structure and dynamics in these settings.
- The difficulty of convincing the local people about the work implemented in the camp.

## Recommendations:

- Carrying out comprehensive needs analyses before working with young refugees.
- Being flexible, understanding the specific needs of youth and responding to those needs.
- Providing an alternative space for healthcare, putting in place women-friendly and youth-friendly health services.
- Youth-friendly, safe spaces are particularly important for girls and young women. Increasing the number of and breadth of such safe spaces. It was stated that the aim was to extend the program which is currently implemented with transit countries on the migration route to the next period and expand it to cover all refugees on the migration route.
- Integrating programs developed for unaccompanied children who are on the move from one country to another into official cash transfer policy and procedures on transfer of funds.
- Giving opportunities to youth in camp settings to put their ideas into practice with the “Creative Ideas Fund”.
- Doing work which involves the local population.



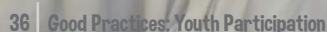
## Session: Good Practices: Youth Participation

**Speakers: Bothaina Qamar, UN Women, Jordan**

**Elif Türkmen Elbirler, Support to Life Association, Turkey**

**Belgin Açar, Genç Hayat Foundation, Turkey**


# TOGETHER





## Speech Summaries:

Bothania Qamar  
UN Women, Jordan



*"We do not only need water and food, we are trying to get our human dignity and life back through work."*

Bothaina Qamar talked about the work carried out in Women's Oasis set up in the Zaatari Camp, Jordan to empower women. She began her presentation by sharing the work in the Zaatari Camp and comments of the participants. She informed that a safe space model is implemented in Women's Oasis set up for women and that activities related to access to employment, vocational courses, life skills training and psychosocial support are provided.

She said that they pay attention to two points to prevent gender based violence. One is to strengthen women and the other one is to provide income generation opportunities for women, involving young men and young boys in the activities. She stressed that they pay attention to ensuring youth participation and women's participation in all their activities. She said 80% of the employment related activities they carry out target women.

Qamar summarized the work they do in the area of youth participation as follows: *"When it comes to youth participation, various committees and commissions were set up. Because the voices of women were not being heard. No one would understand the problems that women go through better than women themselves. The goal was to ensure young women's participation through commissions, raise awareness and support their empowerment... So, last year we set up the Young Women's Committee."*

She also underlined the need for platforms where especially young women can express themselves in line with their needs and areas of interest.

She also stated that they have ensured young men's participation in GBV prevention under the "He For She" campaign. She stated that around 300 young people participated in the campaign and awareness-raising activities.

### Speech Summaries:

Monica Prisacariu

UNV, Lebanon



*“UN volunteers program bring the youth from across the world with UN agencies, help them volunteer and develop certain skills and experience, thus contribute to their empowerment.”*


Monica Prisacariu briefly talked about the UN Volunteers program and the work that they carry out with the youth in Lebanon as part of the program. “UN volunteers program bring the youth from across the world with UN agencies, help them volunteer and develop certain skills and experience, thus contribute to their empowerment. There are around 7,000 volunteers working in the UN Volunteers program, with 375 working directly in the regional programs related to the crisis in Syria. For example, our volunteer Moustafa Boudria from Algeria is currently working in Gaziantep in monitoring humanitarian assistance supplies” Prisacariu said.

She also mentioned that 100 Palestinian voluntary teachers born and raised in Lebanon are teaching Arabic and English to refugee children and that they are looking for ways to implement a similar program with young Syrian refugees in Turkey. She said that young refugees are agents of change and their support for other refugees will have an empowering effect and contribute to dialogue.

### Speech Summaries:

Elif Türkmen Elbirler

Support to Life Association, Turkey

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red blazer over a white shirt, is speaking at a conference. Behind her is a banner that reads "Young and Refugee Good Practices International May 2017".

*"Sometimes a cooking activity, sometimes another cultural activity may bring people together. That is why, it is important that the idea comes from the community, that the community determines the activity"*

Elif Türkmen Elbirler gave information about the Support to Life Association's Community-Based Protection Program implemented in Hatay, Urfa and İstanbul. She explained that the participants identify their needs themselves in the Community-Based Protection Program and youth participation is ensured via committees. She also stated that the activities are identified, planned and implemented based on stakeholder analysis and mapping methods.

The Community Centers hold psychosocial support, skills development, social cohesion, information and awareness-raising activities. Some activities are coordinated and implemented by young people themselves.

*"We see this especially in social cohesion work. Sometimes a cooking activity, sometimes another cultural activity may bring people together. That is why, it is important that the idea comes from the community, that the community determines the activity."* she added. Finally, she stated that community-based approaches are thus empowering and that they form a connection rather than dependency helping empower the participants.

### Speech Summaries:

## Belgin Açar

Genç Hayat Foundation,  
Turkey



*“Through “Mahallenin Sesi” (Voice of the Neighborhood) project, neighborhood and household visits were conducted, social cohesion and arts activities were carried out at schools and Turkish language and handicrafts courses were provided for women”*

Belgin Açar provided information on the “Mahallenin Sesi” (Voice of the Neighborhood) project which is implemented by the Genç Hayat Foundation to contribute to empowering Syrian refugees and strengthening the dialogue between Syrian refugees and the local community. The project started with financial and technical support from the International Medical Corps and was carried out in Küçükçekmece District, a district with a large Syrian refugee population. Among the project goals are: identifying refugee needs, strengthening relations with the local population and other stakeholders, implementing work that would support social cohesion with children and supporting women’s empowerment.

To this end, neighborhood and household visits were conducted, social cohesion and arts activities were carried out at schools and Turkish language and handicrafts courses were provided for women. Meetings and interviews were held with other stakeholders in the neighborhood and cooperation efforts took place. But as Açar also stated, there were problems in obtaining permits and cooperating with the public sector due to the state of emergency. That made it difficult to reach participants and implement planned activities.

## Highlighted Issues:

- It was stressed that ensuring the participation of the youth and young women through various tools (commission, committee activities etc.) was important in empowerment activities.
- It was stated that integrated approaches that are centered on a participatory gender equal perspective are effective in empowerment and protection programs in humanitarian assistance.
- 91% of women who have been involved in “safe space” activities implemented to empower women said that their self-confidence has improved and they personally feel more empowered.
- It was observed that the number of domestic violence cases decreased by 20% following the creation of the program in the Zaatari camp. The main reason is thought to be the ability to go outside one’s home and revenue generation.
- Young men who have to grow in camp settings are more conservative than the adults in gender equality matters.
- In the work carried out by Syrian refugees in Turkey, the NGOs had difficulty in obtaining permits and occasionally cooperating with the public sector due to the state of emergency.

## Recommendations:

- Youth and young women’s participation should be prioritized through various tools (commission, committee, platform etc.) in activities carried out to empower young refugees.
- It is important to plan programs towards labor participation and income generation for women as long-term sustainable programs aimed at employment creation rather than short-term interventions.
- It was stressed that innovative and creative methods are effective in overcoming gender bias. For example, a bicycle rally was held with young women and girls in the Zaatari camp and it was effective in overcoming bias, increasing the mobility of young women as well as access to transport vehicles.
- It was suggested that volunteering programs where refugees take part as main actors and support each other be increased and more widely implemented in the field.
- It was also stressed that community based protection programs which are centered on participation should be scaled up.

## Session: Good Practices: Social Cohesion

Moderator: Elif Elçi Çarıkçı, UNFPA Turkey

Speakers: Nilgün Çavuşoğlu, UNICEF Turkey

Osman Çakıroğlu, KIRON Open Higher Education for Refugees

Soner Çalış and Ahmet Hacı Ahmed, Mülteciyim Hemşerim

Sharafdzhon Booborakhimov, Y-PEER, Tajikistan

# peace



Nilgün Çavuşoğlu  
UNICEF Turkey

*“Dropouts, high unemployment rates, low-paid jobs, risk of child/early marriages, challenges in the integration process of Syrian refugees and the lack of communication/tensions between the Syrian and Turkish communities”*



Nilgün Çavuşoğlu shared information about UNICEF's Social Cohesion Program for Syrian and Turkish adolescents in Turkey implemented by UNICEF Turkey. The presentation began with an overview of key global data on adolescents and the youth. Çavuşoğlu stated that according to 2016 data, there are 1.8 billion young people between 10-24 years of age globally and this figure grows much more rapidly in poorer countries. She also stated that adolescents and youth are experiencing challenges in access to basic rights and services and that 600 million adolescent girls around the world have special needs and face certain challenges.

Çavuşoğlu continued with information about the No Lost Generation initiative and regional commitments made for adolescents and youth. The objective of the initiative consisting of child protection, adolescents and youth for 2017 is to increase the number and quality of youth programs and reach over half a million young people by the end of the year through inclusive participation activities.

*“16% of Turkey's population consists of young people. 35% of Syrians Under Temporary Protection are between 10-25 years of age. Dropouts, high unemployment rates, low-paid jobs, risk of child/early marriages, challenges in the integration process of Syrian refugees and the lack of communication/tensions between the Syrian and Turkish communities.”* were cited among the challenges faced by adolescents and youth.

Çavuşoğlu said that the commitment made by UNICEF Turkey was to *“provide opportunities for Turkish youth and adolescents as well as refugee youth and adolescents to increase their meaningful engagement and ensure their communication with their peers by 2020.”*


She said that the model aims at reinforcing the system, increasing local capacity, access to the community and social cohesion through various activities. She said that they are working with various stakeholders from the public sector and civil society. Çavuşoğlu concluded her presentation by talking about the next steps. She said that one of the key lessons learnt in terms of the challenges faced in the process was that *“adolescents and young people could peacefully come up with ideas and mobilize when given the opportunity to come together in platforms where they can exchange information.”*



## Speech Summaries:

### Osman Çakıroğlu

#### *KIRON Open Higher Learning for Refugees*

A photograph of Osman Çakıroğlu, a man with glasses and a blue shirt, speaking into a microphone at a conference. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the image.

*"In reference to UNHCR data, Çakıroğlu said that 59.9 million people are displaced and more than 50% of those are younger than 18. He also added that unfortunately only 1% of the young refugees have access to higher Learning."*

Osman Çakıroğlu provided brief information about KIRON Open Higher Education for Refugees with its headquarters in Germany and offices in Jordan and Paris. In reference to UNHCR data, Çakıroğlu said that 59.9 million people are displaced and more than 50% of those are younger than 18. He also added that unfortunately only 1% of the young refugees have access to higher Learning. As for the factors which constitute a barrier to higher learning for young refugees, according to UNHCR data, he mentioned, cost, legal framework, the universities' capacity and language.

KIRON set up an online educational model for young refugees to facilitate access to higher learning and to develop solutions for existing problems through partnership with the public sector the private sector and civil society using innovative educational technologies.

Students who are registered with KIRON Higher Learning Program for Refugees take courses under a 2-year flexible open learning program. At the end of 2-year period they receive an additional two-year face-to-face training and complete the program in a partner university. In addition to online learning, mentorship, language, psychological support and career counseling are provided to the students.

Çakıroğlu expressed their willingness to launch the program in Turkey and that they have initiated a pilot with Istanbul Aydın University and Yaşar University.

Soner Çalış and  
Ahmet Hacı Ahmed  
*Mülteciyim Hemşerim*



*"We are rather a group of volunteers that think along and come together with refugees. For the last couple of months, we have started to work with groups of high school students."*

Soner Çalış and Ahmet Hacı Ahmed talked about the activities of Mülteciyim Hemşerim Association which was set up as a neighborhood solidarity network in 2015.

Çalış explained their activities as follows: *"Since 2015, we have been working in various neighborhoods in impoverished areas on the so-called periphery. Syrian and Afghan refugees also live in these neighborhoods. In fact, we are not an organization that tries to do something for, bring something to or think about refugees. We are rather a group of volunteers that think along and come together with refugees. For the last couple of months, we have started to work with groups of high school students."*

He identified the problems faced by the young refugees in the neighborhood at follows: interruptions in daily life, low paid jobs, efforts to adapt to a new culture, the rising discriminatory rhetoric in Turkey. They particularly pointed out to the discriminatory rhetoric as it takes on a militarist nature concerning youth and is replicated in calls to rather have "young Syrians serve in the military."

Ahmed Hacı Ahmed mostly talked about his experiences living as a young Syrian refugee in Turkey and his work at Mülteciyim Hemşerim Association. Ahmed, who is now 22 year old, came from Aleppo. He lives in Yarımburgaz and works in the textiles sector. He works at the center over the weekends.


Ahmed explained how he came to know the center as follows: *"I have learned Turkish but my Turkish is still not that good. I met new friends at the association and I decided to overcome the problems I was going through. I was telling myself that I was no longer a young person but after meeting the Association I have changed my mind."*

He said that in general one of the problems of youth from Syria and Turkey was that they could not get along with each other or understand each other. He said that young people from Turkey approach the issue with concern that the Syrians came and took away their jobs and explained that Syrians, however, are paid very low wages and work without insurance. When they want to take a day off they cannot and in some cases they cannot even receive their wages.

Concerning the discrimination that they have faced, *"Most of our problems were due to a lack of mutual understanding. For example, they were saying Syrians should have stayed in Syria. They should have fought there. But who were we supposed to fight? It was an anonymous war with anonymous enemies."* he said.

*"I studied until high school but I could not finish high school in Syria because of the war. Now I cannot go to school because I have to work. My father cannot work because he is sick, so I have to work. I am about to get married, I do not want to marry but I have to. What can I say about being young, I don't feel young."*

Sharafdzhon Booborakhimov  
Y-PEER, Tajikistan



*"Many people in Tajikistan are finding it difficult to find a job. For example they go to Russia and they have many difficulties there because they do not speak the language. These people are targeted by radical terrorist groups."*

Sharafdzhon Booborakhimov talked about the "Youth Against Extremists" project implemented by Y-PEER with local organizations. He stated that young people in Tajikistan are vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist organizations just like in many countries in Central Asia due of long years of internal conflict, and economic hardship and economic migration.

In Booborakhimov's own words:

*"Many young people in Tajikistan are targeted by medical groups. They take advantage of young people's lack of awareness of the matter. They also provide economic support."*

*"Many people in Tajikistan are finding it difficult to find a job. For example they go to Russia and they have many difficulties there because they do not speak the language. These people are targeted by radical terrorist groups."*

He stated that the project covers the 14-18 age group living in rural Tajikistan and 500 high schools that they go to and that they have initiated peer training and awareness-raising activities. He said that at the end of the project they organized a youth forum and shared their policy recommendations with the public institutions, carried out advocacy work to declare the year 2017 "Youth Year" and achieved their objective.

## Highlighted Issues:

- The primary cause of death among adolescent girls between 15-19 years of age is suicide followed by HIV/AIDS.
- According to 2013 data 12% of 232 million immigrants across the world are adolescents and youth (UNICEF).
- Only 1% of young refugees have access to Higher Learning. As for the barriers to higher learning for young refugees, these are cost, legal framework, the capacity of universities and language.
- The main problems faced by young Syrians who mostly live in poor neighborhoods of Istanbul are as follows: interruptions in daily life, low paid jobs, efforts to adapt to a new culture, the rising discriminatory rhetoric in Turkey. The discriminatory of rhetoric was pointed out as it takes on a militarist nature concerning the youth and is replicated in calls to rather have “young Syrians serve in the military.

## Öneriler:

- Investing in adolescents and the youth will help increase opportunities around the world helping to reduce disparities between societies. Given the chance to come together in platforms where they can exchange information and freely express themselves, young people can peacefully come up with ideas and mobilize themselves.
- There is a need to develop educational models which are innovative, practical, feasible and which can increase the access of young refugees to higher learning.
- Local and institutional services should be provided in line with age and needs of young people and adolescents.

## Session: Good Practices: Health, Gender Based Violence, Social Cohesion

Moderator: Berat Erdoğan, Young Approaches in Health Association, Turkey

Speakers: Kamil Yücel and Onur Kutay Özertürk, Turkish Red Crescent

Khaled Al Azraq, SAWA, Lebanon


Zeynep Kurmuş Hürbaş, Periodic Support, Turkey

Nurgül Elçik, Yuva Association, Turkey



## Speech Summaries:

Kamil Yücel and  
Onur Kutay Özertürk,  
Turkish Red Crescent, Turkey



*"We come together with Syrians and design the programs that they need together with them. We created a voluntary pilot program together with Ankara University's Faculty of Education. This is a project which can eliminate the language barrier for the youth"*


Onur Kutay Özertürk provided brief information on how Turkish Red Crescent works and the organisation's programs for refugees. He said that there are currently 3 million registered Syrians in Turkey and that the Turkish Red Crescent provides assistance at the border, distribute food via e-card, distributes non-food humanitarian assistance, soup kitchens, child programs and community center programs as part of its humanitarian assistance efforts.

Kamil Yücel shared information about community centers which have been holding activities to empower Syrians who live in cities since 2015. Yücel said that the community centers, which hold 10 activities in 9 cities, implement psychosocial support, protection and social cohesion activities. He also indicated that they are in cooperation with national, international civil society organizations and local authorities.

To explain the problems on the ground and recommendations for solutions: *"We come together with Syrians and design the programs that they need together with them. We created a voluntary pilot program together with Ankara University's Faculty of Education. We developed a pilot with Yunus Emre Institute. This is a project which can eliminate the language barrier for the youth. If it proves to be successful we would like to roll out the project in other parts of Turkey."* Yücel said.

### Speech Summaries:

Khaled Al Azraq  
SAWA, Lebanon



*"We held activities with 15-19 and 20-28 age group. The two groups had different needs. Throughout the process we have seen that we can express ourselves much better with theater"*

Khaled Al Azraq, talked about the SAWA Association's projects with young Syrians, Palestinians and Lebanese together with the UNFPA in Lebanon's Bekaa valley. The work conducted for youth empowerment consists of needs analysis, capacity development, awareness-raising about reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections. Azraq said that they apply a peer training model in their work and that they also use innovative models such as the social media and 'show&tell' activities.


*"Later, we have decided to involve high school students in this activity. We held activities with 15-19 and 20-28 age group. The two groups had different needs. Throughout the process we have seen that we can express ourselves much better with theater. We have started to hold theater activities. 12 adolescents start to work as peer trainers. They used the social media a lot, shared all our activities on social media."* Azraq added. He also expressed that operating in a patriarchal and conservative society resulted in some challenges throughout the project but that over time they were able to overcome that resistance to some extent by sharing their work and convincing people.



## Speech Summaries:

Zeynep Kurmuş Hürbaş

Periodic Support, Turkey



*"Among neighborhood associations, we have Kadın Kadına Mülteci Dayanışma (Solidarity Among Refugee Women) and Yarımburgaz Solidarity Association. Neighborhood associations do all sorts of activities. They offer literacy courses, plays for children and humanitarian assistance. They perform miracles."*


Zeynep Kurmuş Hürbaş talked about the activities of Periodic Support, an initiative which was set up and implemented by 4 women for about 8 months in order to provide support to asylum-seekers and refugees living in İstanbul. When sharing the reasons for which she has started to provide voluntary support and the process which followed her decision Kurmuş Hürbaş said *"if you ask me how this work has started, I shared a photo of Aylan Kurdi, the little boy who had drowned. I made the list of items that were needed and shared it on social media. We were compiling lists of needs on Facebook, supplying the items needed and taking the items to those in need. But then we realized that this was not sustainable. Mülteciyim Hemşeriyim and neighborhood associations stepped in at that point. Among neighborhood associations, we have Kadın Kadına Mülteci Dayanışma (Solidarity Among Refugee Women) and Yarımburgaz Solidarity Association. Neighborhood associations do all sorts of activities. They offer literacy courses, plays for children and humanitarian assistance. They perform miracles."*

Kurmuş Hürbaş informed that they distribute assistance from centers in Balat and Okmeydanı under the Periodic Support initiative and that they have been providing supplies to 130 families for 7 months. She also mentioned cooperation with Turkey Volunteers who conduct voluntary work to support refugee children and young refugees. She also stated that, due to these contacts and encounters, she observed some of the problems that young refugees are faced with, namely, challenges in access to education, poor working conditions without security and early marriages.

### Speech Summaries:

Nurgül Elçik

Yuva Association,  
Turkey



*“For young women volunteering is a way of socializing and going outside. They may not be able to go outside to meet their friends but they may go outside to attend a language course.”*

Nurgül Elçik talked about the community center work implemented by Yuva Association in Hatay, Kırıkhan. Elçik presented the challenges that they are facing in their work in the community center and stressed the challenging effect of frequent changes in legal procedures and differences in legal procedures at the provincial level. In addition, she said that the frequently used term “guest” results in a hierarchical relation and when the state and the local community this rhetoric the Syrian refugees feel “inadequate”.

She expressed the importance that they attach to youth participation and particularly young women’s engagement in the work implemented in community centers and that they created committee in this direction. Elçik said that young Syrian women do not leave their homes because they do not feel safe and that makes the work of the community all the more important. “For young women volunteering is a way of socializing and going outside. They may not be able to go outside to meet their friends but they may go outside to attend a language course.” she added.

## Highlighted Issues:

- Language constitutes one of the biggest barriers to activities aimed at empowering refugees in Turkey.
- It was stressed that in patriarchal and conservative societies, the participation of youth in activities related to reproductive health meets resistance at first but when parents are convinced and results are shared this attitude changes.
- The most frequent problems faced by the refugees living in Istanbul are access to education, working in poor conditions without security and early marriages.
- As spaces where young refugees and especially young refugee women feel safe, the community centers have very positive effects in terms of socializing and empowerment.

## Recommendations:

- There is a need to develop innovative programs aimed at lifting the language barrier in activities conducted with refugees in Turkey.
- Promoting the use of Facebook and other social media will be effective in that they are platforms where young people coming from different countries can receive information and express themselves freely.

## Session: Working with Refugee Youth: Useful Tools

# education



### Workshop 1: Theatre Based Training, Y-PEER Algeria

**Objective:** Awareness-raising on sexual and reproductive health, providing information, sharing Y-PEER Algeria's experiences

**Content:** The participants were informed that currently there is no project targeting specifically Syrians in Algeria but common training is provided with other refugees from African countries primarily Chad. A peer training model is implemented for various age groups in sexual and reproductive health in Algeria. Role-playing, case studies are used to empower young activists in sexual and reproductive health so that they can develop solutions to existing problems.

Similar activities were implemented throughout the workshop. Sexual and reproductive health were held based on case studies during group exercises.



## Workshop 2: Kendine İyi Bak: HIV/AIDS Board Game

**Objective:** Providing basic information to youth on HIV and AIDS through a fun tool that can be rolled out.

**Target Group:** Young people between 15 – 25 years of age

**Content:** The board game is played with at least two and at most six people. The game is played on a shared board. The players make their moves one by one. They get information on “HIV / AIDS and sexually transmitted infections” in each move.

Through information indicated on game cards used in the game, a platform which enables conversations, discussions and information exchange on ‘HIV / AIDS and sexually transmitted infections’ is created.

Throughout the workshop, the participants played the HIV / AIDS board game and participated in relevant discussions.

### Participants’ Experiences:

*“I learned very specific information. Although I was familiar with the topic it was a learning experience for me too. It was good to experience this through a game.”* Ozan Karaçam

*“It was a nice and useful game. It was good in terms of receiving useful information.”* Ayabi Halabi

*“The game can be an effective learning tool for those you are not familiar with the information.”* Sabah Ali Nokazuizi

*“I really got into character while playing, I developed empathy for people with HIV, it was very useful. A person who may not be willing to go to a panel to get this information could do so by playing this game.”* Muhammed Shehady.

*“It was a nice, mind opening and informative game. I can recommend it to everyone who does not have sufficient information on these topics so that we can live peacefully with people who are living with HIV +.”* Asmar Tiba

*“I learned new things, it was fun, I wish we could play longer.”* Serena Sorenti.



26 May 2017, Friday

Session: Working with Refugee Youth:  
Innovative Ideas for Turkey and the Region

# communication





### Group I: Gender Based Violence and Health

**Moderator:** Robert Thompson

#### Speech Summaries:

The group work on gender-based violence and health began with a recap of the previous day's discussions and an emphasis on the problems identified as common problems. Some of the shared problems identified in other sessions are as follows:

- Collecting, disaggregating and updating data
- Language barriers
- Differences in implementation of legislation and rapidly changing procedures
- Difficulties in access to basic rights (particularly education and health)

#### Highlighted Issues:

- In some cases, the recommendations put forward by psychologists and health personnel working in community and youth centers are not considered as solutions that can be put into practice by refugees in daily life. Therefore there is a need to focus on more concrete and feasible road maps.
- It was stressed that involving young men in gender and GBV work is important and effective.
- Since public organizations do not sufficiently provide quality services in sexual and reproductive health the need for policy-making and service delivery by NGOs is greater.
- It was discussed that young people should be involved in identifying and addressing problems as the main actors and that by doing so they can fill the gaps in the process of data collection, disaggregation, analysis and access to up-to-date data.
- It was stressed that typically in countries of the region young refugees have common or in some cases similar problems at the local level.
- The systems should recognize the vulnerabilities of specific groups and should be structured on that basis. Particularly in the area of gender-based cases there are systemic problems. For example a young Syrian woman who was subject to gender-based violence at the age of 16 decides not to go to a shelter because she cannot bring her child with her.

- Young people, particularly vulnerable groups such as of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex (LGBTI) individuals, and sex workers have very limited access to health services. They refrain from sharing their experiences or seeking their rights for fear of experiencing legal problems, stigma and discrimination or being excluded. Particularly, public services should be designed and policies should be developed in a way that covers vulnerable groups' needs.

## Recommendations:

- NGOs should play a larger role particularly in work related with vulnerable groups, their work should encourage and support state institutions and influence them more widely.
- Training in sexual and reproductive health and gender should be integrated in other training topics on a wider level. For example, in life skills training. Such training should be structured and promoted in line with the needs of young refugees.
- Safe spaces and centers where young people can express themselves and share their experiences should be promoted. Particularly, youth centers and platforms for adolescents (and their various needs) should be created. Life skills and vocational training should be provided.
- There is a need to strengthen vocational training for refugees who are specialized in a specific area (health personnel, education personnel etc.) as well as ensure their participation in the labor force. This will make it possible for young refugees to work in adolescent health services.
- In addition to health services, psychosocial support and arts activities carried out in centers are extremely important in coping with post trauma stress disorder and providing psychological support.
- Turkish and Arabic speaking (and other relevant languages) young people could be employed in healthcare and education, could be trained through online training and could serve as intermediaries in places where language is a major barrier.
- More systematic monitoring and evaluation is needed in humanitarian assistance. As such, the impact of completed work can be measured and future work can be planned more effectively.
- It would be good to provide online services for refugees. This could make services more accessible.

## Group II: Youth Participation and Social Cohesion

**Moderator:** Başak Tuğsavul, Nilgün Çavuşoğlu

Nilgün Çavuşoğlu made a recap of the first two days of the conference and stressed which topics were to be focused on and how recommendations would be put forward throughout the presentations. Başak Tuğsavul launched the final session by asking the participants: “We have already stressed the importance of youth participation. We have discussed how young people can be involved in problematic areas as well as identifying problems. Which area has the biggest priority in youth participation?”

### Highlighted Issues:

- The need to inform and empower young people and equip them with the necessary skills to move on with their lives.
- There is a lack of data. There isn't enough data on the number and needs of the refugees in Turkey.
- The lack of awareness among young refugees of their rights was discussed as another issue. It was stressed that there is a lack of awareness about post trauma stress disorder, as well as sexual and reproductive health.
- The key areas of need for young refugees at arrival were summarized as follows:
  - Accommodation
  - Nutrition, food, supplies,
  - Health and hygiene: drinking water, clean water, hygienic environment, wastewater discharge,
  - Communication, language learning facilities
  - Education
  - Employment
- It was stressed that there are challenges in data collection and maintenance with regard to refugees in Jordan.
- Existing problems in camps in Jordan and Turkey were discussed. A special emphasis was placed on how the needs differed and security challenges were emphasized. Another issue that was identified was a lack of interpreters in some of the camps.

## Recommendations:

- There is a need to develop up-to-date data effectively in camp and out-of-camp settings. The state and the NGOs should play an active role in data collection.
- Young people from Turkey and Syria should actively participate in data collection. Research should be conducted with youth participation with the Participatory Action Research method. Thus, the existing situation in Turkey and refugees' needs will be identified and youth participation in research and problem identification will be ensured. Young people may be involved in areas they have identified in health and education in later processes.
- Positioning youth as service providers instead of just beneficiaries, increasing their competences in this area.
- The need to map needs was stressed. Mapping needs via NGOs and making sure that the right services reach the right people in the right manner.
- Safe employment settings should be created for refugee youth.
- Meaningful youth participation should be ensured within the institutions too. Social media and similar tools should be used to ensure the active youth participation.
- A greater number of social activities should be organized as part of social cohesion bringing together young people from Syria and Turkey. The concept of social cohesion should cover not only refugees but the local community as well. Therefore, social cohesion activities should be designed in a way that involves and supports the local community and the role of the local community should be underlined. There is a need to bring together the local community and refugees on the basis of shared interests and needs.
- Young people could be informed about civic engagement and social responsibility, relevant courses could be added to the curriculum.
- Youth work should be designed together with young people in a way that suits them. Youth is an heterogeneous group with different needs. The place, time and content of interventions should be determined based on programs to be designed together with youth. Necessary support (transport, food) should be provided to ensure youth participation.

## Conclusion:

Young and Refugee International Good Practices Conference was an inspiring platform where the existing situation and challenges in humanitarian assistance were identified; good practices implemented to ensure the well-being of young refugees were shared and rethought in connection with concepts such as health, gender based violence, youth participation and social cohesion.

At the end of 3-day conference the results and recommendations were compiled under 4 main headings: health and gender based violence, youth participation and social cohesion. The recommendations put forward with regard to the situation of young refugees are closely linked with the objectives and commitments made under the Youth Compact.

The “World Humanitarian Summit” was organized for the first time in 2016 with various stakeholders in order to develop solutions for the problems of people who have been displaced by war, conflicts or natural disasters and who are in ‘need’ of assistance; and to assess the current humanitarian assistance system and make it more effective.

One of the most significant results of the World Humanitarian Summit was the Youth Compact which was formed in order to put an immediate end to the negative effects of humanitarian crises on the youth; lift the barriers before youth’s access to basic rights and services; to empower youth to unlock its potential to make a difference in society.

The Youth Compact pledges to make young people leaders in humanitarian assistance and active actors in developing solutions in times of crisis. The Compact consists of 5 key actions:

- Increase participation from all age groups and genders
- Ensure that youth plays a systematic and effective role in humanitarian crises and ensure youth involvement in identifying problems and developing solutions
- Strengthen the capacity of youth and their role at the local level
- Develop resources for the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth
- Ensure collection of up-to-date and effective data in the field

The key problems identified throughout the discussions on health and gender based violence, youth participation and social cohesion were: lack of data, lack of youth involvement as main actors in developing solutions and lack of a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance.

The participation of young refugee activists who shared their observations and experiences as people with firsthand experience of being young and refugee showcased that young people are essential actors throughout humanitarian crises. Refugee youth and local

youth presented the activities that they carry out at centers and safe spaces providing services to refugees and highlighted the importance of supporting youth empowerment by increasing youth participation. Perhaps, one of the most important outcomes of the conference was that it showed concretely that young people are part of the solution.

One of the highlights of the 3-day conference which hosted discussions on ways of achieving these objectives was the recommendation that young people be trained and engaged in data collection and needs assessment efforts for refugees. Another recommendation was to engage youth in identifying challenges at the local level within their communities through Participatory Action Research (PAR); involve them in decision-making and engage youth as parts of the solution.

Throughout the conference, ideas emerged on how to reach out to stakeholders such as the public sector, local actors and the private sector to initiate and implement good practices. Potential areas of cooperation and advocacy were identified.

In conclusion, Young and Refugee International Good Practices Conference has been a platform where discussions were held and recommendations were developed to assist the commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Youth Compact to make the needs and priorities of refugees from different countries more visible; share good practices from the field; and support direct youth engagement in the solution process.



## “Young and Refugee” Good Practices International Conference Results

Participant	Organization
Gökhan Yıldırım kaya	UNFPA Turkey (United Nations Population Fund)
Zeliha Ünal dı	UN RCO (United Nations Resident Coordinator Office)
Robert Thomson	Expert
Sarah Al Ghazou	UNFPA Jordan (United Nations Population Fund)
Manar Amro	Quest Scope Foundation
Leana İslam	UNFPA Jordan (United Nations Population Fund)
Aya Al Halabe	Nabaa (Developmental Action Without Borders)
Sabah Al Nakouze	Nabaa (Developmental Action Without Borders)
Khaled Ahmad Al Azraq	Sawa for Development and Aid
Anass Salah Hayek	Sawa for Development and Aid
Mohamad Chehade	Sawa for Development and Aid
Bothaina Qamar	UN Women (The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women)
Osman Çakıroğlu	KIRON (Open Higher Education for Refugees)
Rahman Warde	Y-PEER Algeria
Fatma Hacıoğlu Sarıdağ	UNFPA Turkey (United Nations Population Fund)
Elif Elçi Çarıkçı	UNFPA Turkey (United Nations Population Fund)
Karl Kulessa	UNFPA Turkey (United Nations Population Fund)
Mohammed Fatih Alkadah	UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees )
Irina Isomova	UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees )
Nilgün Çavuşoğlu	UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund )
Monica Prisacariu	UNV (United Nations Volunteers)
Ozan Çakmak	UNDP Turkey (United Nations Development Programme)
Kamil Yücel	Turkish Red Crescent
Onur Kutay Özertürk	Turkish Red Crescent
Kamil Erdem Güler	Turkish Red Crescent
Zeynep Kurmus Hürbaş	Periodic Support
Beril Sönmez	“Refugees, We Are, Neighbors” Solidarity Network
Belgin Açar	Genç Hayat Foundation
Nurgül Elçik	Yuva Association
Elif Türkmen Elbirler	Support to Life
Harika Halat	Yuva Association
Tuğba Bakırcı	Yuva Association
Emre Erdoğan	Academician, Bilgi University
Gün AKI	Expert
Sharafdzhon Boborakhimov	Y-PEER Tajikistan



Participant	Organization
Hakan Karaoğlu	Turkish Cultural Foundation - AFS Turkey
Görkem Argun	AIESEC (Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales')
Nurullah Turan	Ministry of Family and Social Policies İstanbul Office
Meltem Arıoğlu	Mavi Kalem Association
Umut Dilara Baycılı	Mavi Kalem Association
Ece Saka	Mavi Kalem Association
Emine Kaya	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
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Zehra Güveren	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Buket Ezgi Uzel	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Onur Soysal	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Aynur Marangoz	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Başak Tuğsavul	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Ahmet Malla	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Walid Abdi	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Menal Elömer	Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
Pelin Zenginobuz	Youth Approaches in Health Association/ Y-PEER Turkey
Cansu Taşdemir	Youth Approaches in Health Association/ Y-PEER Turkey
Berat Can Erdoğan	Youth Approaches in Health Association/ Y-PEER Turkey
Fatma Turgut	Youth Approaches in Health Association/ Y-PEER Turkey
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