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Workshop Report: Integrating Syrians into the Turkish Higher Education System
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Introduction

How can we facilitate access to higher education for Syrians in Turkey? This was the overall question of a workshop that brought together Syrian university students to discuss their current educational needs and possible solutions on how to improve the situation of Syrian students at higher education institutions in Turkey. This report intends to present the results of the two-day closed workshop on “Integrating Syrians into the Turkish Higher Education System: Discussing Solutions among Syrian Students,” which was conducted at Istanbul Policy Center, September 14-15, 2017, under Chatham House Rule.¹ The workshop was a significant part of a larger research project on the conditions and opportunities for Syrians in the Turkish higher education system that was conducted by 2016/17 Mercator-IPC Fellow Wiebke Hohberger. The aim of the event was to provide a platform for Syrian students to raise their voices and share their experiences at higher education institutions in Turkey, as well as to discuss their ideas and solutions on how to improve conditions for Syrians at Turkish universities.

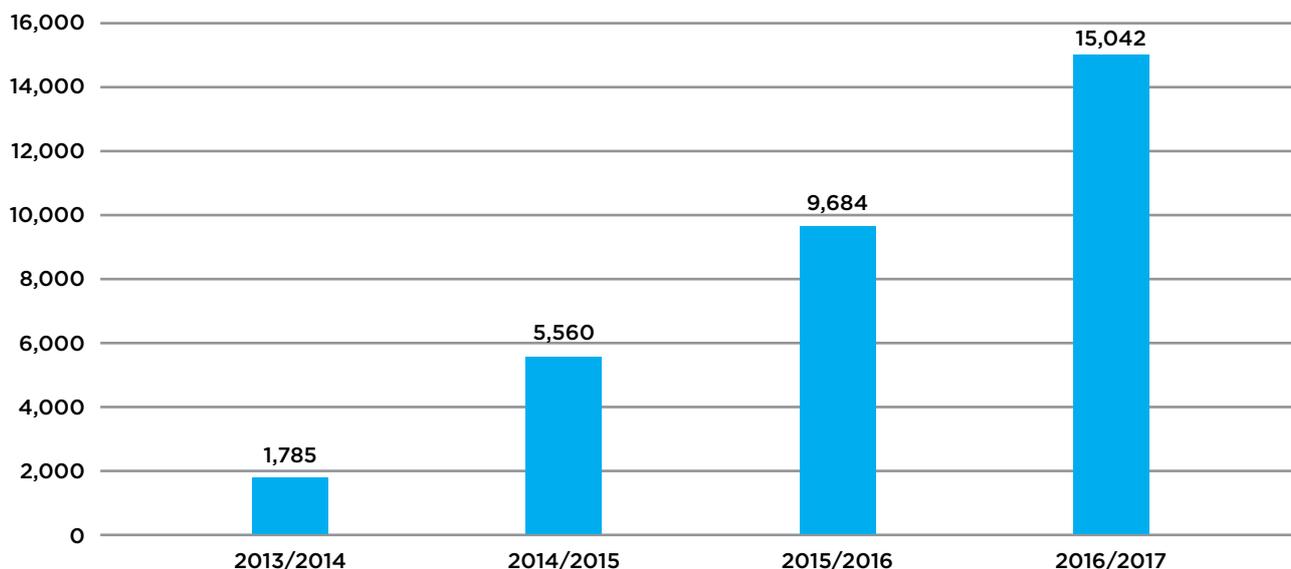
The workshop group consisted of 21 students from Syria who now study at different universities in Turkey. Out of these 21, eight were enrolled at Gaziantep University, six at Karabük University, and six others at three different universities in Istanbul, among them Istanbul University. Gaziantep University, Karabük University, and Istanbul University currently enroll the highest number of Syrian students in Turkey.² One participant was currently not enrolled at a Turkish university but was applying for a scholarship for a graduate degree at Gaziantep University. The students differed in respect to their field of study, their education backgrounds in terms of having received a high school diploma in Syria or Turkey, their current level of study, as well as their socio-economic situation.

In addition to the student participants, two employees of the HOPES (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians) project—a project funded by the EU’s “Madad Fund”³—attended the workshop. The insights these participants provided on higher education opportunities and scholarship selection procedures were highly useful. Based on HOPES’ close cooperation with Turkish state authorities, their participation enabled students to learn of some important background information on Turkish authorities’ current efforts and designs on how to better facilitate access to higher education for Syrians.

Context: Higher Education Opportunities for Syrians

In the 2016/17 academic year, more than 15,000 Syrians were enrolled at Turkish universities.⁴

Figure 1: Total Number of Syrian Students at Turkish Universities



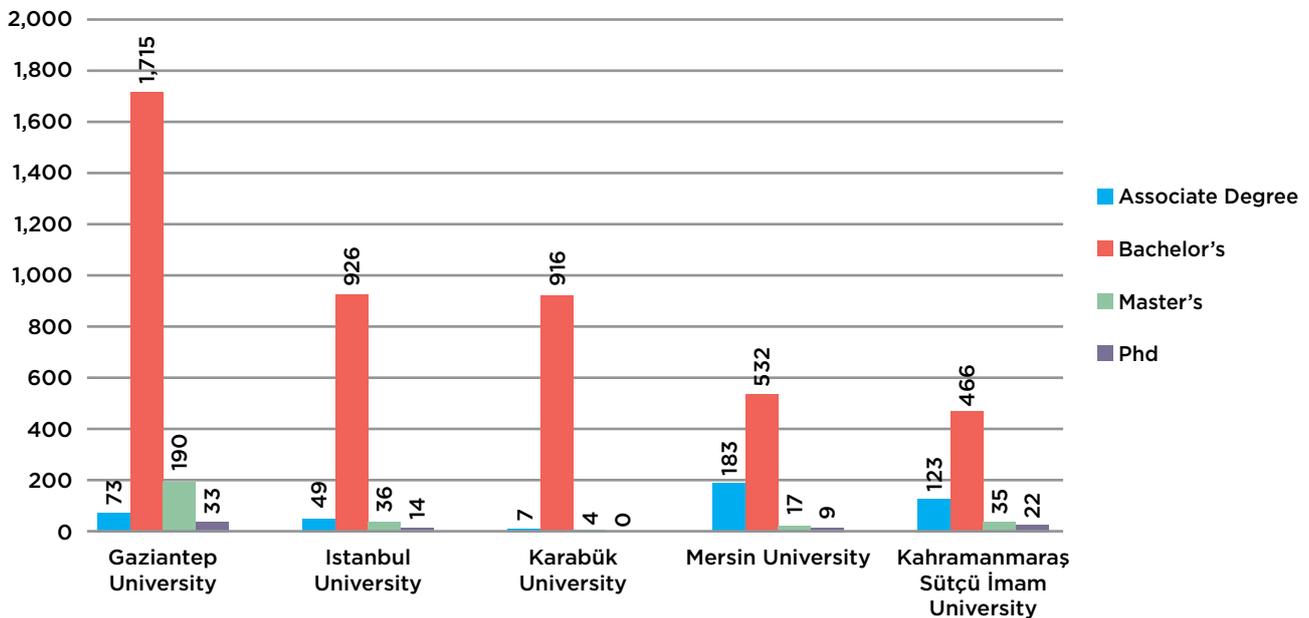
Source: Statistics website of YÖK (Council of Higher Education).

Even though the number of Syrian university students has increased by about 5,000 students each year over the last two years, the current number of enrolled students still only represents about 3% of university-age Syrians. In pre-war Syria, in contrast, about 20% of university-age Syrians attended higher education institutions. Syrians can enter Turkish universities as international students by applying at universities individually. Unlike other international students, however, Syrians do not have to pay tuition fees as a result of the Turkish state's recognition of their specific status as displaced persons.

Overall, the number of interested students is much higher than the current number of those enrolled, and it is expected that enrollment will increase with new high school graduates every year. Thus, it is crucial that Turkish and international stakeholders search for alternative ways to provide access to higher education for Syrians. Two thinkable solutions that are currently being discussed are to invest, first, in distance learning programs and, second, associate degrees. With regard to the latter,

there are several open spaces in two-year tertiary education programs, i.e., associate degrees and vocational training, whereas study places in undergraduate degrees are limited for certain fields of studies and not sufficient in number. This situation as well as the demand for technical training on the Turkish (and possibly a future Syrian) labor market has resulted in considerations on how to increase the number of interested young Syrians in this form of post-secondary education.

With regard to online education programs, these ideas range from using international platforms such as Coursera or edX to other specific programs offered by Turkish universities. Under which circumstances online education programs and associate degrees might serve as alternatives was also discussed among the workshop participants.

Figure 2: Syrian Students per Level 2016-2017

Source: Statistics website of YÖK.

Given that most young Syrians, including their families, face a more difficult socio-economic situation in Turkey than their Turkish peers—for example, due to some barriers in receiving work permits that often result in illegal underpaid jobs as well as financial responsibilities towards family members living in Syria—Turkish and international institutions have responded by providing scholarships for Syrian university students. Nearly 3,500 full scholarships are delivered by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) within the scope of Türkiye Bursları (Turkey Scholarship), funded by the Turkish state and international stakeholders. In partnership with YTB, the scholarships of the UNHCR's DAFI program (818 in 2016/17) and those of the HOPES project (90 in 2016/17) are implemented complementarily.⁵ Additionally, some foreign NGOs offer scholarships, such as the SPARK scholarship in cooperation with Gaziantep University or the Al-Ghurair Foundation scholarship at Koç University in Istanbul.⁶

Apart from scholarships for university degrees, Turkish and international actors (e.g., YTB, UNHCR, and UNICEF) provide scholarships for one-year Turkish language courses to prospective students, since a C1 level language certificate is required to access higher education in Turkey in most cases.

During the workshop participants also discussed how to improve the conditions of Turkish language courses and scholarships.

Methodology

The workshop began with a brief overview of the research results on the conditions and needs of Syrian university students, which were primarily based on interviews with students at different Turkish universities. This was followed by a short presentation by the HOPES project's representatives, who reviewed the wide range of support that the project provides for refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, such as scholarships, academic counseling, free English courses, and funding of short-term projects.

After a round of personal introductions and ice-breakers in order to become familiar with each other and to create a safe space for open discussion, the workshop procedure followed three different stages that included working group and plenary sessions. In the first phase, the participants were asked to share their experiences at Turkish universities so far. In small groups of four to five students, heterogeneous according to different universities,

they exchanged, in a first step, their positive experiences and, secondly, their negative experiences with regard to access, procedures, scholarships, social interactions with fellow Turkish students, support mechanisms before and during their studies, and anything else the students deemed significant. The groups shared their experiences in the plenary session afterwards. While representing their negative experiences, participants jointly identified four major challenges.

The next day, in the second phase, the students split into four working groups in order to discuss each area of concern in more detail, aiming to find possible solutions and to create policy maps for each field. In the plenary session participants discussed two additional topics, namely the conditions under which online education and associate degrees might become alternative ways of accessing higher education.

In the third and final stage, the students presented their policy maps to a broader audience consisting of IPC researchers and employees, a representative of UNHCR focusing on the field of higher education, and a researcher of a university in Istanbul. The workshop participants as well as the external audience were free to give feedback on the policy recommendations so as to facilitate a fruitful discussion and exchange of ideas. In the following, the contents of the discussions and the students' final policy recommendations are presented.

Syrian Students' Positive Experiences at Turkish Universities

The positive experiences the students shared in the plenary session can be divided into two groups in terms of the effects they had on the students: first, academic experiences resulting in personal development and growth enriching the students' lives by broadening their horizons; second, experiences that supported them in view of organizational and educational concerns.

As part of the first group of positive experiences, the students repeatedly emphasized that living and studying in Turkey was "a whole new experience" with new opportunities such as learning a new lan-

guage and culture. Moreover, they appreciated having made new friendships not only with Syrian but also international and Turkish students. This helped in coexisting with Turkish people in general, they stressed. One group metaphorically characterized studying as a bridge to make living in Turkey easier. Another effect that was mentioned was the positive impact accessing a university had on their self-consciousness regarding their origin. Meeting fellow Syrian students, helping each other, and sharing similar life stories and experiences resulted in stronger self-confidence. This was expressed through the statement, "We build ourselves [at university]."

The opportunity to educate and organize themselves at a Turkish university has influenced students' personal development: as a result, the students observed that they had become more responsible persons. Since they had managed and decided on their own to study, they felt responsible for their future. Concurrently, they agreed on the fact that being a university student has improved their general motivation and time management. Female participants also emphasized that living and studying in Turkey for them also meant enjoying more freedom, since women were not as strictly separated from men than they had been in pre-war Syria.

Within the second group of positive experiences concerning external support, all of the students mentioned that they received at least some support from Turkish professors, teachers, and students with general assistance and in learning the Turkish language. How effective these helping hands had been, however, varied. In particular, the students from Karabük University emphasized that both the university staff members, especially those in the international students affairs office, and the Turkish students were very supportive when they needed help and orientation. One group of students highlighted their appreciation for their fellow Turkish students' understanding: "The empathy that was shown from our Turkish friends towards our problems and situations regarding the difficulty of the language was huge."

Apart from that, the scholarships managed by the Turkish authority YTB (Türkiye Bursları, HOPES,

DAFI) were valued due to their duration—for a whole period of study—and the amount, awarding about 1,200 Turkish liras per month. The students further stressed the positive fact that Syrians do not have to pay tuition fees at public universities. They also appreciated the work of various NGOs, international organizations, and foreign countries' governmental organizations in the field of social and financial support specifically for university students.

Last but not least, some students were happy with certain educational conditions in Turkey. Compared to pre-war Syria, a few students assessed that in Turkey they gain more academic insights and practical knowledge through laboratory times in engineering and overall from professors with exceptional skills in transferring knowledge. A few others deemed that the infrastructure at Turkish universities is better than in pre-war Syria and were excited that they finally had the chance to study in English.

These examples show that the students consider and truly appreciate the positive aspects of studying in Turkey. It became obvious that their point of enrollment positively changed their perspectives on their own futures in Turkey. The support of various people and organizations was crucial. Certain universities, such as Karabük University, can serve as a model for implementing support mechanisms and creating a welcoming atmosphere. Based on comparisons with friends residing in other neighboring countries of Syria, living in Turkey, according to the students, was “still one of the best of limited choices for Syrians.” In that regard, independent from the higher education conditions, they referred to a more affordable cost of living in Turkey and a mentality that was “not so far from the Syrian one.”

Syrian Students' Needs and Solutions

Out of the negative experiences put forth by Syrian students, the participants altogether identified four main challenges: (1) access to higher education, (2) scholarships and students' financial situation, (3) academic concerns, and (4) social life and interaction. Four groups, about four to five students each, discussed and shared ideas about how to resolve each challenge and developed policy maps to solve these issues.

Access to Higher Education

With regard to access to higher education for Syrians in Turkey, the students in the first group observed a lack of guidance before and after enrolling. They noted that it is difficult to gather suitable information on what subjects were offered at what universities, how to decide upon which universities to apply, and where and how to apply. Also, after having been accepted, students claimed that it is not easy to orient oneself at Turkish universities; however, the degree of difficulty varied from university to university. Another specific challenge concerned the lack of information on transferring from associate to undergraduate degrees.

The students noted that many universities demand different tests from foreigners as every university has formulated its own Foreign Students Exam (YÖS) since 2011. In addition, some universities require the results of international exams such as GMAT, GRE, or SAT. Travelling to different places for these exams is both time-consuming and expensive, especially when bearing in mind that prospective students usually apply to quite a few universities at the same time.

Additionally, Syrian students perceived the application processes as neither transparent nor fair: people with low grades would be accepted, while others with higher grades would be rejected from the same university without receiving any feedback. Another problem, according to the students, is the accreditation and recognition of high school diplomas and other certificates from Syria and abroad. They also indicated that there are oftentimes visa problems for those who are accepted at a Turkish university while still residing in Syria.

The policy map on how to facilitate access to higher education for Syrians included the following five solutions and recommendations:

1) The introduction of a central application system:

Instead of applying at every university individually, the students pleaded for a centralized system to award study places on the basis of a centralized entrance exam. This would result in a more reliable, transparent, fair, and less complicated application and award process. As possible authorities respon-

sible for this procedure, they considered the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), the Ministry of National Education, or the Measuring, Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM), which organizes the national central university entrance examination.

2) Transparency of the selection criteria:

As long as universities award study places for Syrians themselves, they should define their selection criteria clearly and create transparency in the whole process of application, acceptance, and rejection. In this way, the students would be aware of how to improve their chances of being accepted.

3) Information and consultancy on transferring from associate to undergraduate degrees:

Clear information on the conditions for transferring and assistance in this process is important. Clarity on the opportunities for transferring would also result in the greater attractiveness of associate degrees.

4) Advocacy on visa concerns:

Young people living in Syria who get accepted at Turkish universities should be supported in obtaining visas. NGOs could take a leading role in advocating for this.

5) Facilitating access to Turkish high schools:

Syrian youth should increasingly be transferred to Turkish high schools to avoid any accreditation problems concerning diplomas as well as educational disadvantages. This would also help students become familiar with the language and culture.

Scholarships and Students' Financial Situation

The problems identified by the workshop group on financial support concerned, firstly, the application process for scholarships; secondly, the basic conditions of scholarships; and thirdly, the financial challenges of studying without receiving a scholarship.

With regard to application processes, the main issues listed were a lack of information on all the different scholarships, complex application proce-

dures, a lack of transparency in selection criteria, a lack of knowledge about different Syrian and other non-Turkish diplomas, long waiting periods until receiving a reply, and a lack of feedback on rejections.

In terms of the conditions and the substance of scholarships, the students pointed to a lack of transparency in their rights due to complex contracts, a lack of sustainability concerning the duration and monthly amount of stipend, and arbitrary transfers from one kind of scholarship to another (less beneficial) based on organizational cooperation between two scholarship providers. They especially stressed the importance of sustainability since otherwise, when only getting a stipend for a year or even shorter, students are in a constant state of insecurity.

Summarized from the students' perspectives, the three big issues considering the conditions and application procedures of scholarships were a lack of clarity, transparency, and sustainability. However, they also emphasized that the extent of these issues varied between the scholarship providers. In the end, it became very clear that there is a lack of full and sustainable scholarships and alternative ways to finance one's study. With regard to the latter, they stressed that it is difficult to find part-time jobs. Working full-time and studying at the same time would be almost impossible; a work permit would be hard to get since there are many barriers for an employer to apply for a Syrian employee's work permit. In general, most of the available jobs were illegal, thus without a contract or any kind of insurance and financial security.

This group's policy map was labeled under the overall philosophy of "Don't give me a fish, teach me how to fish!"—thus, giving students the resources to help themselves was preferable to simply accepting handouts. This included the following recommendations:

1) Full and sustainable scholarships:

The amount and duration of a scholarship should enable a student to finish a university degree. However, since the students were aware of the fact that there is not enough funding for everyone and perceived that this might result in resentment on the part of Turkish students, they recommended two alternative forms of scholarships:

1a) Volunteering at universities:

Scholarships could be connected to the duty of volunteering on campus: e.g., in the library or as assistants and consultants for new Syrian and international students. Recipients of such a scholarship could assist other students in applying to university and in explaining the university education system as well as give lessons in Turkish, English, math, etc. This would also be helpful in solving social problems since newcomers would be integrated quickly into campus life.

1b) Partnerships with private business:

Partnerships between organizations providing scholarships and private business would result in a win-win-win situation: 1. The students could manage to study and afford living expenses by working part-time; 2. Companies could display themselves as humanitarian by supporting education projects; 3. Scholarship providers could increase the number of scholarships.

2) Clarity and transparency in scholarship application processes:

The students requested transparent selection criteria and procedures, a less complicated application process, and feedback on rejections. If it was not possible to give feedback individually due to high application numbers, they suggested to publish a list with some five to ten main reasons for rejection online to better understand one's rejection and possibly be able to improve oneself.

3) Development of an online information platform on scholarships:

Aiming for more clarity, an online pool of all scholarships gathering information such as application procedures, amount and duration of the scholarship, and selection criteria would facilitate the process of the decision of where to apply.

4) Accreditation system for diplomas:

Just like the group on access to higher education, it was mentioned that an adequate accreditation system for diplomas should be created.

5) Support to Syrian students in Syria:

Lastly, the students demanded suitable application opportunities for those students still living in Syria such as offering interviews on Skype and if possible giving support for visa applications.

Academic Concerns

The negative aspects and policy recommendations on academic concerns referred both to language preparation courses, general and professional preparation courses, and the university seminars themselves. A part of the problems the students mentioned concerned general circumstances at Turkish universities that equally concerned Turkish students, as well. These were a general lack of good materials, teaching standards, and tests that were not suitable for the coursework, e.g., multiple-choice tests in math.

In addition to these general academic concerns, students mentioned the following problems that Syrian students in particular face. First, the preparatory Turkish language courses are not effective toward understanding academic vocabulary. Despite the fact that many programs are designed to be 100% English study programs, the students reported that teachers and Turkish students would often switch into Turkish during the class. Some compulsory courses such as Turkish history and literature are taught in Turkish and therefore decrease the grades of the students who did not have an academic understanding of Turkish. Second, due to different school curricula at Syrian and Turkish schools as well as at various Arabic schools and Temporary Education Centers in Turkey, one-year general preparatory courses—similar to the German *studienkolleg* system or Turkish *hazırlık*—would be valuable. Currently, there are not enough existing preparatory courses for foreigners that repeat and deepen what is learned at Turkish high schools. More extensive courses would also be helpful prior to entering a Master's degree program.

Additionally, the students discussed some cases where they felt discriminated against by some Turkish students and teachers during the seminars or when it came to finding internships and Erasmus places, as well as access to laboratories. The extent of experiences of discrimination varied again at different universities.

As possible solutions the students recommended the following:

1) Inclusion of Turkish academic language into language courses:

The preparatory language courses should include academic vocabulary. These academic language courses should be divided into different fields such as social and natural sciences. In addition, the number of courses should be increased to create smaller class sizes in order to be more effective. Students also advocated for more homogenous groups, e.g., in accordance to age.

2) Suitable tests:

Universities and teachers should prepare tests in line with learning goals.

3) Training for teachers:

Professors and teachers should be regularly trained to improve their teaching skills. They should further be trained in intercultural sensibility and understand the specific challenges of Syrians and others having fled war or similar catastrophes.

4) Raising awareness for mutual respect at universities:

Universities should raise awareness of the importance of mutual respect on campus (and everywhere else), for instance, with the help of campaigns and trainings. Moreover, teachers should be aware of their potential as role models.

5) Turkish history courses in English language:

Concerning compulsory Turkish history and literature courses, the students clarified that it should not be the class itself but the language of instruction that should be changed. Students from Istanbul University mentioned their university as a good example in this regard since it provides these courses also in English and modifies the courses for foreigners.

6) Advocating for internships and Erasmus places:

Universities should advocate for Syrian students finding internships and Erasmus places. The students also encouraged other Syrian students to be more self-confident and speak up for their demands such as accessing labs or receiving Erasmus places abroad.

7) Preparatory courses for foreign students:

Universities should provide more preparatory courses for foreign students to repeat and deepen what is learned at Turkish high schools. Such courses would also be useful prior to entering a Master's degree program.

Social Life and Interaction

With regard to Syrian students' social lives, including social interaction both on and off the campus, the students believed that integration problems were the result of both speaking a different language and living amongst another culture. Beyond any language difference, some perceived an emotional distance from both sides. Another problem was the lack of guidance and social inclusion when entering a university. Additionally, in their view, Turkish students would look at Syrian students in a different way in comparison with other international students. The workshop participants traced it back to a general fear within Turkish society that Syrians would stay in Turkey long term, taking away their jobs, their study places, and boosting rent. With a special look at the situation at universities, the students also perceived that because Syrians did not have to take the Turkish central university entrance exam, this was another point of discrimination. The feeling of being discriminated against was reported across different aspects of life: when trying to find a job, a rental house, a dormitory, or an internship. Many landlords, for example, would charge higher rents, higher deposits, ask for many documents, insurance, etc. Especially for Syrian women, it was reported that it is difficult to find a safe and affordable space to live. Moreover, the students described the permanent existence of legal uncertainty, e.g., due to expired passports and residence permits, as a major burden in their daily lives.

With the aim to increase the social acceptance of Syrians in Turkey, both in general and on campus, as well as to facilitate their daily lives in Turkey, the students suggested the following solutions:

1) Orientation events and buddy programs:

For an easier start and better social integration, Syrian students and university clubs should organize more joint events such as football and chess tournaments at the beginning of every semes-

ter. In addition, older students could be assigned as advisors for first-year students. The students emphasized that, according to their own experiences, such a “buddy program” would need to be under the official umbrella of a university office in order to develop trust between students.

2) Integration at earlier stages:

Integration should start as early as possible, especially when children are of school age, both in and out of schools.

3) Handbook for legal questions:

An online handbook should explain the basic steps of living legally in Turkey, including any and all rights and duties.

4) Support to find a safe and affordable living space:

Universities could arrange connections with landlords and housing administrations to provide trustworthy, safe, and affordable living spaces. Also, local organizations could assist in finding living spaces for students, especially for newcomers.

5) Partnerships between universities and private businesses:

To fight against discrimination in finding part-time jobs and internships, universities could establish partnerships with private businesses, e.g., with the help of the chamber of commerce. Furthermore, fairs and exhibitions at universities could bring students and companies together.

Online Education and Associate Degrees as Alternatives

Turkish authorities’ current approach to solving the issues resulting from the increasing number of interested Syrian students in higher education is to increase the number of students in online education programs and associate degrees. In the workshop, these two alternative forms of higher and further education were discussed in the plenary session.

With regard to **online education** programs, the students first of all made clear that they are not

used to online education; currently, it is still considered as an additional educational opportunity rather than an alternative to four-year undergraduate university studies. It would surely take time for universities to adopt such programs, they assessed; however, it might soon become a serious alternative, not least since online education has the important advantage of flexibility. Students could balance family, work, and studying much easier. With the exception of some subjects that require considerable practical experience, such as medicine and engineering, the students believed that online education might become a respectable alternative form of higher education given that the following criteria are fulfilled:

1) Mixture of physical and online courses:

The students feared that purely online programs would result in a lack of students’ motivation; physical courses in regular intervals would provide additional motivation. The best solution for better attachment and motivation, according to the students, is to link these programs to physical universities. The cooperation between Istanbul Aydın University and KIRON, an NGO providing open higher education courses, was given as a good example. An online education program on business administration at Istanbul University was also mentioned positively.

2) Upgrading certificates:

The recognition of certificates, including international accreditation, should be improved. A suitable way to upgrade certificates would again be to connect them to universities and other renowned higher education institutes.

3) Increasing quality:

Improving the quality of online education programs would support further recognition of these programs and change the current image of online courses as being easy to pass.

4) Lower fees:

Similar to undergraduate university programs in Turkey, online courses should be free of charge to Syrian students or at least request low tuition fees.

5) Marketing and public advertisement:

Information on different online programs should be more accessible. An information platform with an overview of all online education providers would be desirable. The students believed that a spark just needs to be lit to spread the idea of online education: if there were some successful examples, it would be certain that some others would be motivated to follow. They referred to their initial distrust of scholarship programs and how once the students were exposed to how these scholarships operated, this resulted in greater enthusiasm. Provided that the four points listed above were considered, the present negative image of online education could be changed through advertising campaigns, they believed.

Associate degrees might become a second alternative to standard university degrees, the students evaluated. Important criteria in this regard are listed as follows:

1) Change of “low-level” image:

The perception that these degrees are low-level studies and only interesting for people with “bad” grades must be changed. This can be changed through the strategies mentioned in the subsequent points.

2) Raising awareness of gaining specific skills:

Higher education institutions should focus on the advantages of gaining specific skills and practical experience through obtaining an associate degree by informing students of the benefits of an associate degree on their websites and through public presentations.

3) Information on possible transfer to undergraduate degrees:

Most of the workshop participants did not know that it is possible to transfer to an undergraduate degree after two years of vocational training. This opportunity, as well as the concrete conditions for transferring, should be clearly communicated and published.

4) Information on labor market opportunities:

The students emphasized that salary, economic security, and quality of life would play a crucial role in the decision-making process regarding their field of study. Thus, universities (and other stakeholders)

should clarify the prospective opportunities for associate degree holders in the labor market.

...

In sum, the workshop allowed Syrian students themselves to discuss their conditions and needs at Turkish universities. Furthermore, this precipitated discussion on creative ideas and solutions for how to facilitate access to higher education in Turkey and improve education and socio-economic conditions. Through this process it became clear that a holistic approach to removing Syrian students’ access to higher education is necessary. Stakeholders must facilitate Syrian students’ transition from secondary to tertiary education, as well as their transition to the labor market. It goes without saying that for any stakeholder in this field, it is of the utmost importance to listen to the students’ perspectives when aiming to improve their situation.

Acknowledgments

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Endnotes

- 1 | Under Chatham House Rule, the identity and affiliations of all participants are not revealed, though they are free to use the information received.
- 2 | According to the Turkish Council of Higher Education's (YÖK) statistics website, in the academic year 2016/17 the number of enrolled Syrian students at Gaziantep University was 2,011; at Karabük University 1,025; and at Istanbul University 927.
- 3 | The "Madad Fund" is the EU's Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis. The HOPES project was implemented by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) together with the British Council, Campus France, and Nuffic. The project seeks to provide better access to further and higher education opportunities for refugees from Syria as well as young people in the host communities affected by the high influx of refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. For details on the various projects, see <http://www.hopes-madad.org/> (accessed October 3, 2017).
- 4 | All of the figures on Syrians in the Turkish higher education system are taken from the statistics website of the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK): <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/> (accessed October 10, 2017).
- 5 | For details on the scholarships, see <http://suriye.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/>; <http://www.unhcr.org/dafi-scholarships.html>; <http://www.hopes-madad.org/hopes-scholarships/> (all accessed October 19, 2017).
- 6 | For the scholarships at Koç University, see <https://graduate.ku.edu.tr/content/scholarships> (accessed October 19, 2017); for SPARK scholarships, see <http://spark-syria.eu/home/> (accessed October 19, 2017).

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