



Rupture, Remembrance, Resiliency: The Impact of Displacement on Syrian Women Refugees in Turkey

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SREO takes full responsibility for all omissions and errors.

Contact: communications@sreo.org

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The SREO team responsible for this study consists of Kristine Anderson, Heather Hughes, Megan Northey, Abdulhamid Qabbani, Daniel Seckman, Murat Subasi, and Matthew Trevithick.

ABOUT SREO

Syria Research and Evaluation Organization (SREO) is an independent research and evaluation center incorporated and headquartered in Gaziantep, Turkey. SREO's mission is to develop practical strategies for stakeholders and donors engaged in Syria to effectively respond to the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis. SREO also provides a number of other services, including Russian, Farsi, Arabic and Turkish translation and project evaluation.

SREO is staffed by personnel with extensive experience in research implementation and international development.

Syrian Women Refugees in Turkey: An Introduction

Though seldom involved in combat, women are especially vulnerable to violence and displacement in war, a reality which can be observed in multiple aspects of the Syrian Conflict.¹ Both within Syria and as refugees in neighboring countries, women remain susceptible to violence, gender-based violence, and economic exploitation. Loss of or separation from male relatives and partners might aggravate these conditions; additionally, the stress of war and migration might increase the likelihood of domestic and intimate partner violence.²

When women are forced to leave behind their homes and seek refuge in a foreign country, they are often confronted with new responsibilities and changing family roles in their host environments. While Syrian refugee women might no longer be directly threatened by the conflict in host countries, displacement presents additional obstacles to their well-being. Dynamics of the war in Syria might affect social relations amongst refugees and with host communities. Health services constitute a challenge due to linguistic barriers and an inability to assert rights. In short, even when women and families manage to leave Syria, they have not entirely left the turmoil of the conflict behind them, and are faced with the challenge of rebuilding their lives.

At the same time, given the monumental scope of the Syrian refugee crisis, host countries face considerable challenges in accommodating displaced Syrians. Of the approximately two million Syrian refugees, over 500,000 currently reside in Turkey. While there are no reliable figures on female-headed households in host countries, women and children make up 75% of Syrian refugees.³ Therefore, understanding women refugees' experiences is critical to ensuring that they have access to support and services. SREO's study on Syrian women in Turkey is prompted by the need for

¹ UN Women. (2000). *Women and Armed Conflict*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/fs5.htm>.

² UNHCR. (2013). *Syria Regional Refugee Response: Turkey*. Retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>.

³ UNHCR (2013). *Stories from Syrian Refugees*. Retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/syria.php>.

information to more effectively address this crisis by identifying points of both vulnerability and resiliency for Syrian refugee women and assessing the resources available to them.

Executive Summary

SREO's project on Syrian women refugees in Turkey sought to discover how their lives have been affected by displacement and loss of home related to the Syrian Conflict. To this end, research addressed themes relating to the well-being of each individual, including social relations, feelings of personal security, and physical and emotional health. Through considering these issues, SREO worked to identify how women are coping with displacement, and how donors can empower women in doing so. In short, SREO hopes to bring attention to women refugee needs in a holistic manner.

In light of the trauma experienced in a war setting and the rupture caused by leaving one's home and social network, how do women reconstruct their lives in host communities, and what resources are available to aid them? SREO sought to answer this question through interviewing both refugee women and donor organizations providing services to refugees in southeastern Turkey. By interviewing women in three refugee camps and four cities, SREO sought to obtain a diverse sampling of experiences and viewpoints among Syrian refugees. The donors interviewed in these areas varied from Syrian civil society organizations and opposition groups to Islamic-oriented Turkish charities.

By comparing women's stated needs with how donors identify and prioritize services offered to women, SREO hopes to draw attention to areas of achievement, as well as any gaps that need to be addressed in supporting refugees. Host countries and refugees face a monumental task: host communities in accommodating refugees and refugees in physically and mentally sustaining themselves. Given the protracted nature of the conflict, this is an ongoing issue that merits continuous study.

Review of Literature

Prior to SREO's assessment, a review of the pertinent literature relating to refugees--their personal geographies, community resilience and mental health--was consulted and used to inform this study. There is a growing body of literature on Syrian refugees, mostly from Lebanon and Jordan.⁴ Within this literature, there is a significant portion dedicated to female refugees,⁵ with a focus on gender-based violence (GBV).⁶ While there have been some general studies on Syrian refugees in Turkey,⁷ to date there has not been a study conducted exclusively on Syrian women in Turkey. While there are similarities in the refugee experience in all host countries, the unique context of each host country merits further examination, and SREO aims to fill this gap in the literature with this study on Syrian women in Turkey.

In order to better approach the subject of displacement and loss of home, this study was grounded in literature on the concept of home and its deeper significance in peoples' lives. Hazel Easthope writes that homes "are 'places' that hold considerable social, psychological, and emotive meaning for individuals and for groups" (135).⁸ This definition is helpful in recognizing the importance of home in identity and the social networks that also make up one's sense of home. This definition also brings attention to the collective conception of home, which in turn is a collective loss in the case of refugees. The loss of "home" is larger than the loss of a house, it is the greater loss of "place," and scholars have drawn attention to the larger and smaller geographic dislocations that refugees

⁴ See CARE (2012). "Care Jordan Baseline Assessment of Community Identified Vulnerabilities among Syrian Refugees living in Amman." IOM (2013). "Refugee Site and Shelter Assessment."

⁵ See Oxfam and Abaad (2013). "Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon." Retrieved from <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/rr-shifting-sands-lebanon-syria-refugees-gender-030913-summ-en.pdf>.

⁶ See Anani, Ghida (2013). "Dimensions of gender-based violence against Syrian refugees in Lebanon." Forced Migration Review. UN Women (2013). "Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian Refugees in Jordans, with a Focus on Early Marriage."

⁷ See the Brookings Institution and International Strategic Research Organization (2013). "Turkey and Syrian Refugees: The Limits of Hospitality." Ozden, S. (2013). "Syrian Refugees in Turkey." Migration Policy Centre. Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/MPC-RR-2013-05.pdf>.

⁸ Easthope, H. (2004). "A Place Called Home." *Housing, Theory and Society*: 21.

experience. In her work on Sudanese refugees, Tania Kaiser draws attention to the “intangible losses” of refugees, and argues that “place should be understood as a multi-dimensional category with meaning and significance located in its non-material as well as material aspects” (377).⁹

Given the significant losses that refugees have experienced, and additional trauma that Syrians might have been exposed to related to the conflict, what are the mental health issues that arise in these situations, and how do refugees and refugee communities cope and recover in the host community? Mental illness remains stigmatized in the Middle East,¹⁰ and Western conceptions for diagnosis and treatment of mental health conditions do not always apply. Additionally, becoming a refugee induces a trauma which is often causally linked to mental disorders.¹¹ In their report on Syrian refugees in Jordan, Unicef and the International Medical Corps observe that while psychological distress is normal for people who have experienced trauma, others may develop more long-term problems such as depression and anxiety. According to their findings, social activities are one of the most prevalent coping methods for refugees.¹²

Given the reliance of refugees on social support networks to cope with their situation, it is necessary to consider the social-connectedness of refugees and the larger community in order to effectively consider refugee conditions. Community in this case refers to the refugee and host communities both in isolation as well as together. The literature suggests that post-migration conditions are important in the resilience of displaced people,¹³ and this includes social conditions. It has been argued that literature has focused too much on the effect of trauma on individuals, as trauma can

⁹ Kaiser, T. (2008). “Social and Ritual Activity In and Out of Place: the ‘Negotiation of Locality’ in a Sudanese Refugee Settlement.” *Mobilities*: 3(3).

¹⁰ Mowafi, H. (2011). “Conflict, displacement, and health in the Middle East.” *Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*: 6(5).

¹¹ Karam, E. & al. (2006). “12-month prevalence and treatment of mental disorders in Lebanon.” *Lancet*.

¹² International Medical Corps and Unicef. “Displaced Syrians in Za’atari Camp: Rapid Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Assessment.”

¹³ Porter, M. & Haslam, N. (2005). “Predisplacement and Postdisplacement Factors Associated with Mental Health of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.” *The Journal of the American Medical Health Association*: 294 (5).

also affect a group of people.¹⁴ Somasundaram and Sivayokan ground the mental health of individuals who have experienced a disaster in family and community settings, observing that “when the family and/or community regained their equilibrium and healthy functioning, there is often improvement in the individual member’s well-being as well” (2).¹⁵ Individual resilience is thus related to the availability and functioning of family and social support. The importance of social support in coping and resiliency has been observed in both camp and urban refugee populations, and this was consistent with SREO’s findings. As the Syrian Conflict has separated women and families from various forms of social support, SREO’s study looks at how women refugees are coping with this rupture in both urban and camp settings, as well as in cities with differing ethnic, economic, and geographic characteristics.

Methods

SREO’s study on the effects of displacement on Syrian female refugees utilized a multidisciplinary approach consisting of ethnographic and narrative-based analysis, which was supplemented with quantitative, survey-based data. This mixed-methods approach was adopted in order to gain comprehensive insight into the multi-dimensional and complex implications of displacement on Syrian female refugees in southeastern Turkey, as well as to assess the extent to which donor organizations in the area are addressing their unique needs. To this end, two separate sets of tools were developed, consisting of semi-structured interviews and survey questions specific to donor agencies and female informants. These tools were developed simultaneously and designed to counterbalance one another in the interest of assessing the extent to which the issues raised in women’s interviews were being addressed by donors.

Syrian interviewees were selected based on specific criteria intended to obtain a diverse data sample encompassing a range of urban areas, age, place of residence (camp versus urban) and

¹⁴ Suedfeld, P. (1997). “Reactions to Societal Trauma: Distress and/or Eustress.” *Political Psychology: 18* (4).

¹⁵ Somasundaram, D. & Sivayokan, S. (2013). “Rebuilding Community Resilience in a Post-war Context: Developing Insights and Recommendations—a Qualitative Study in Northern Sri Lanka.” *International Journal of Mental Health Systems: 7*(3).

socioeconomic background. A total of 30 interviews with Syrian female informants (n=30) were conducted, divided into two groups comprising 15 camp residents and 15 urban residents. Informants were selected from three provinces in southeastern Turkey, including four different urban areas (Gaziantep, Akcakale, Sanliurfa, and Antakya) and three refugee camps. The intent behind this selection criteria was to identify any patterns or disparities in the effects of displacement observed between informants, as well as to determine any factors that may lead to increased vulnerability or significantly impact the coping capacity of refugees. In particular, the issue of urban versus camp refugees was emphasized, given that previous studies have shown significant disparities between these two groups in access to services and living conditions, as well as differences in general well-being.¹⁶

Data from Syrian female informants was collected via semi-structured qualitative interviews and verbally administered quantitative surveys with SREO researchers. Qualitative interview questions were designed to elicit organic responses on the physical and emotional effects of displacement on the individual and her family. All efforts were made to design questions that were culturally sensitive and approachable to all socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Interviews were conducted in both private one-on-one settings and in focus groups, always in the native language of each informant. All interviewees participated voluntarily without compensation, and were fully informed of the study's objectives and their rights as participants prior to agreeing to the interview.

Narrative analysis was primarily utilized to interpret qualitative data from interviews with Syrian women. This approach is best suited to comprehend the complex subjective experiences of these female refugees, in which emotional, cultural, and social factors intersect with the physical realities of displacement. Quantitative data from survey questions was largely meant to grant significance to the themes addressed as well as obtain demographic information that would provide further insight into the qualitative data. Findings were analyzed within the context of the existing body of literature examining issues of loss of home, social-connectedness, and resilience in refugee communities.

¹⁶ See Buscher, Gabos, A. & Kibreab, G. (2007). "Urban Refugees: Introduction." *Refuge: 24 (1)*. Retrieved from [http://roar.uel.ac.uk/264/1/Fabos,%20A.%20H.%20\(2007\)%20Refuge%2024\(1\)%201-19.pdf](http://roar.uel.ac.uk/264/1/Fabos,%20A.%20H.%20(2007)%20Refuge%2024(1)%201-19.pdf).

Donors were selected primarily on the basis of whether they provide services and/or aid to Syrian refugees in southeastern Turkey, regardless of the nature of these services. A total of 15 donor organizations were interviewed in this assessment, comprising an ideologically diverse and multinational sampling, including Turkish, Syrian, and European organizations. Structured interviews consisting of targeted qualitative questions designed to determine priorities and agendas of each organization were balanced with quantitative surveys which quantified the reach of services delivered as well as provided demographic information on the beneficiaries of these services. Qualitative and quantitative analysis were utilized to determine the nature and extent of resources available to women. This data was then assessed against qualitative data from female refugee interviews to identify the gaps in services available to refugee women.

Findings from Interviews with Syrian Women Refugees

Throughout qualitative and quantitative data obtained in interviews with Syrian women, significant patterns could be observed in how displacement affected women's identity, social relations, security, and psychological well-being, including practices that contributed to resilience. Findings showed that displacement has necessitated a renegotiation of collective and individual identities among refugee women, which has destabilized family dynamics for many refugees. SREO's field research also revealed that displacement has disrupted women's social networks and caused feelings of alienation within the Turkish host community. These problematic social relations were seen to compromise women's sense of emotional and physical security, limiting their mobility. The sum of these stresses significantly impacted emotional health of female refugees, with all women reporting symptoms of lowered mood, increased anxiety, and stress-related illness. In response to these significant challenges, many women engaged in coping behaviors that strengthened their resiliency. The fact that these themes appeared throughout interviews and cut across socioeconomic, geographic, and age differences speaks to their centrality in women's experiences of displacement.

Changes in Collective and Individual Identities

Interviews with Syrian women revealed that displacement has precipitated a shift in both personal and collective identities, which has occasioned a renegotiation of family roles. For many women, displacement has destabilized both their individual identity as well as their identity within the family. It is significant to note that for many informants, individual identity and family identity were not referred to as binary entities, but were inherently intertwined and interactive. An overwhelming majority of informants conceptualized their personal identity within the context of their membership in a family unit and their role in this unit. The extent to which informants expressed individualistic versus family-based identities fell on a spectrum that correlated with socioeconomic status and education. Informants of more modest socioeconomic status tended to merge their own identity with their family role; this is evident in one urban interviewee's statement: "of course I have changed (after coming here). My family is not with me and I am not the same without them." However, even informants expressing higher levels of individualism still maintained a strong identity as part of the family unit. Given this entwinement of personal and family identity, changes in the dynamic of family roles can be seen as impacting personal identity.

Many informants revealed that the disruption of the previously held family structure had destabilized roles by re-shifting responsibilities within the family. One urban informant explained this stating that "everyone has their role in the family. When we came here, all these roles fell apart." This destabilization of the family unit has also been observed in assessments of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.¹⁷ Many married interviewees commented on the change in roles brought on by unemployment or underemployment of their husbands; for some women, this shifted more responsibility onto them, as they needed to contribute to family income in addition to performing their pre-existing duties of caring for the home and family. Others felt that the increased presence of their husbands in the residence undermined the power that they had held in their former homes. As one woman stated, "at home [in Syria] there was a natural order to things. I was responsible for everything in the house, and my husband went to work. Now, he sits at home all day and takes an interest in things he never cared about before...he's making me crazy." For other informants, the absence of husbands or male relatives re-ordered family roles and the amount of responsibility they

¹⁷ Oxfam and Abaad (2013). "Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon."

held. As one camp informant whose husband remained in Syria stated “I have a double role now. I have to be both the father and the mother since my husband is not here.”

In contrast, several interviewees indicated positive changes in their family roles as a result of their increased responsibilities. One camp informant who had been a stay-at-home mother in Syria felt empowered due to her newfound economic role in the family: “I feel I’ve changed positively. I have more authority since I have more responsibility now that I work.” Similarly, two young unmarried interviewees, one camp and one urban, indicated that they had acquired new and constructive roles in their families since displacement. “I was the baby of the family and I’ve grown older now. I feel the need to help my family and support them,” stated one. Both expressed pride in acquiring more contributory roles in their families.

Apart from changes observed in family identities, the physical loss of (or separation from) homes in Syria was overwhelmingly seen as injurious to collective identity, and therefore personal identity. Many informants were unable to articulate the exact sense of loss, stating that they “were not as they were” in Syria, and that they experienced an ineffable sense of incompleteness. “[We are all safe together here] but it’s as if something is broken,” explained an urban informant, describing her family’s experience in displacement. Another urban woman stated that she missed the feeling of “waking up in the morning, and looking around you and all your things are where you put them, where they belong.” Another urban refugee described her sense of incompleteness by stating “even if I prepare a dish exactly the way my mother would [in Syria], it doesn’t taste right here.” Such comments speak to how the inability to engage in culturally situated social and personal rituals, especially those inherently linked to home, disrupts the sense of self.

In addition to changes in collective identities, some interviewees had acquired alternative individual identities in displacement, often via new pastimes or work outside the residence. One urban informant, a former pharmacist who had become socially active as a volunteer for a humanitarian organization felt that she had lost her professional identity but had built an equally constructive identity as an activist. Likewise, several informants who had indicated more powerful roles due to their contribution to family income had also discovered a more defined and important identity within the family unit as a breadwinner.

Conversely, two informants indicated no change in the way they identified their family role since coming to Turkey. "I was the one who gives support [for my family] then, and I still am," stated one urban informant. One camp refugee explained that she had always held a considerable amount of responsibility in her family and displacement had not changed that: "I was everything to them [to my husband and children] there [in Syria], and I'm everything to them here. That hasn't changed." Both women indicated that they held disproportionate amount of responsibilities in caring for the family prior to displacement, and that the balance of family roles had remained intact.

Findings clearly show that collective identities of many Syrian refugees have been fractured by the stresses of displacement, which has in turn disrupted personal identities and occasioned shifts in family dynamics for many Syrian women. While these changes in family dynamics have enabled some refugee women to expand on personal identities with positive implications, changes in family roles were largely seen by Syrian women as one of the most distressing impacts of displacement.

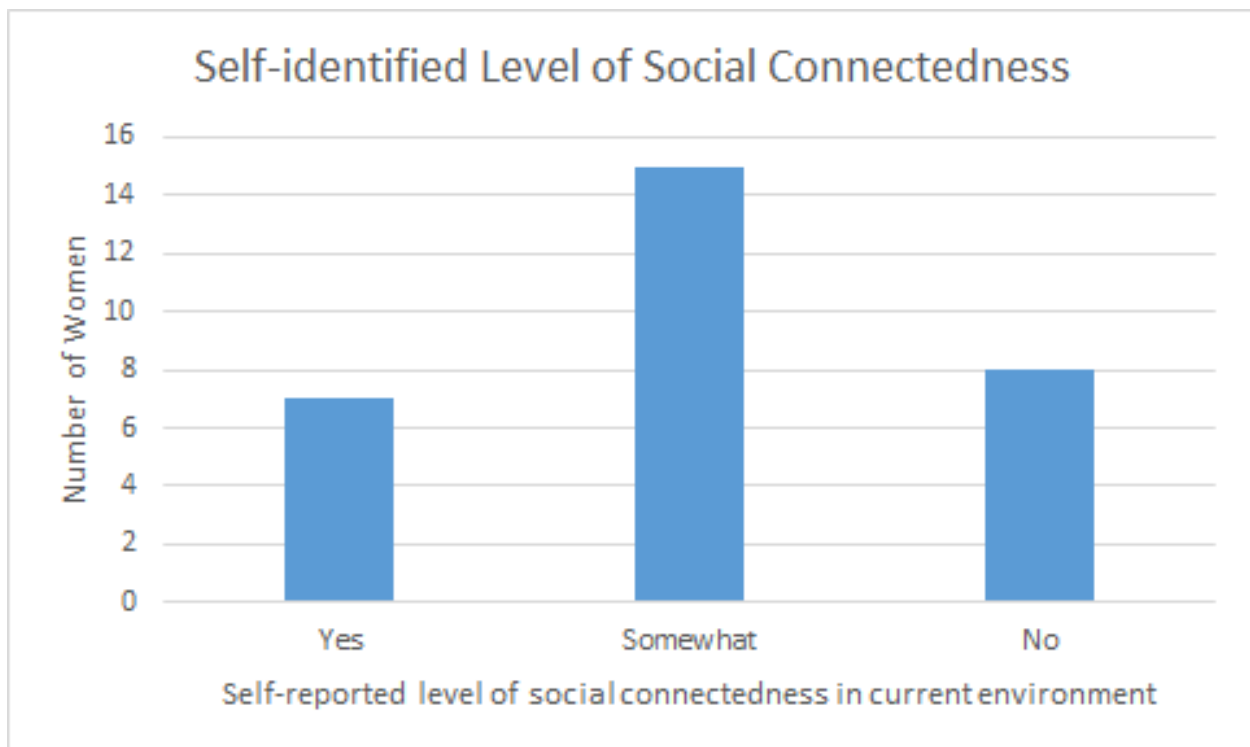
Redefining and Rebuilding Community in Displacement

Many women indicated that separation from previously held social networks - combined with limitations on socializing in the host community - impeded their social connectedness. Syrian women tended to compare their current situation unfavorably with the positive social environment in Syria where family, neighbors, and friends provided an extensive support network. Women had varying levels of success in rebuilding social networks with the host community and other refugees in Turkey: factors such as living in a camp as opposed to an urban area, geographic location, and engagement with activities outside the home were found to impact the social connectedness of women.

Almost all women addressed the pain of separation from previously held social networks. Many also discussed the positive familial and neighborly relations they had in Syria, and expressed a sense of loss for their community there. These social networks were seen as supportive on several levels: they provided pleasurable social interaction as well as material support during times of need.

However, even prior to migration to Turkey, two women reported that the Syrian Conflict had a negative impact on their social relations in Syria. One woman recounted that after the start of the violence, political divisions affected both her friend and family relationships. She explained that “we used to love our neighbors, we’d have coffee with them every day. But after the Revolution I couldn’t just sit there and be quiet while they talked (about their political opinions).” The breakdown of relationships in Syria was not just related to the political divisions, but also the material needs introduced by the conflict. One interviewee expressed grief over the loss of a 25-year friendship, due to her inability to pay back a debt. Such data suggests that the rupture of social networks for some refugees began prior to their displacement and extended into their social lives in Turkey.

The majority of informants noted a contrast between the social support they received in pre-conflict Syria to that in Turkey, where many women have difficulty connecting with the host community. In Turkey, Syrian women are confronted with the challenge of developing new social relations, both within the host community and the refugee community. Relations with the host community differed from woman to woman, with some reporting positive experiences, some reporting negative experiences, and others not interacting with the host community in any significant way. The graph below represents women’s self-reported levels of social connectedness in their new environment.



Several barriers to positive social connections with Turks were brought up in interviews, ranging from the language barrier to reports of prejudicial treatment and ethnic tensions. While the language barrier was cited as a factor preventing interactions with Turks, the ability to communicate with the host community did not necessarily mean that refugees had increased social interaction. One Syrian woman who spoke Turkish more comfortably than Arabic was discouraged from interacting with her Turkish neighbors, due to poor treatment at the hands of her Turkish landlords. Similarly, an urban informant of Syrian Kurdish origin residing in Sanliurfa was not able to form ties with the Turkish Kurds there, despite the fact that they share a common language, explaining that “(people from) the Kurdish community here wouldn’t even greet me.”

In Antakya, ethnic and religious tensions were mentioned as another problematic factor in social relations. Two urban women residing there reported sharp tensions between Syrian Sunni refugees and Turkish residents from the Alawite sect, whom they claimed would “harass” Syrian female refugees for being Sunni. These tensions were confined to this urban area, and were not brought up by refugees in other areas.

Even though the majority of female participants reported negative perceptions and interactions with the host community, a small number of women indicated positive relations. An urban informant who spoke no Turkish was able to gain the sympathy of her Turkish neighbors; when the landlord threatened to evict her for not being able to pay rent, they came to her defense and were able to convince him to allow her to stay. Similarly, two camp informants residing in a camp located inside a village indicated harmonious relations with Turkish residents, with whom they enjoyed friendly daily interactions.

Many informants reported that their main source of social interaction in Turkey was with other Syrian refugees, yet women reported different levels of success in creating social networks with other Syrians. In particular, disparities between camp and urban women were observed, as the close proximity of living in camps offered women the opportunity to connect with other refugees more easily. For example, participating in a camp sewing workshop brought a group of women of different ages and backgrounds together. In addition to having an activity to occupy themselves, all women

described the other women in the workshop as their main source of social support. One woman in a camp even described her social life in Turkey as better than in Syria due to her increased social interactions. This trend was not universal in camp women: one camp informant felt constrained and described her social life as “nonexistent.” Interestingly, this woman did not participate in any organized activities in her camp such as the aforementioned sewing workshop, which may have limited her access to structured social interaction.

Urban women’s social relations with other refugees outside their family in Turkey were dependant on their activities outside the home, with women holding employment or volunteer positions reporting wider social networks. One woman engaged in activist work promoting Syrian women’s political participation emphasized the connectivity of her community, stating that “Syrians help one another here. Here we get to know each other and hold each other up.”

Women who were not engaged in activities outside the home, whether by choice or because of inhibiting factors, reported higher levels of social isolation. Except for one young woman, all urban refugees in SREO’s study were married and had children, which was seen as a factor preventing activities outside the home. While one of these mothers worked as a seamstress in the home, all others had no regular work, and were mainly responsible for raising children. With the exception of the two volunteers, none of the mothers participated in activities outside the house that facilitated social interaction. Although some of these women reported interacting with and having friendships with their Syrian neighbors, other urban women only socialized within their families and extended families.

Proximity to Syrian neighbors and activities outside the house were all factors that aided women in developing relations within the Syrian community. While social tensions appear to be predominant in the relationship between Syrians and the host community, some Syrians did report positive relations with Turks, even in the absence of a common language or culture. The social networks that women have forged with both refugees and Turkish citizens are a testament to their resilience in the host environment, and were affected by and impacted their conceptions of security.

Personal and Emotional Security

The issue of security was addressed by informants in both the literal sense of their and their family's physical safety, and in the abstract emotional sense of ease and personal freedom. Concerns over security in the host community were seen to limit women's mobility and prevent them from feeling settled. These concerns were primarily articulated as fear of Turkish members of the host community and inadequate housing - both seen as threats to physical security - as well as the pain of separation from the home, which was a barrier to emotional security.

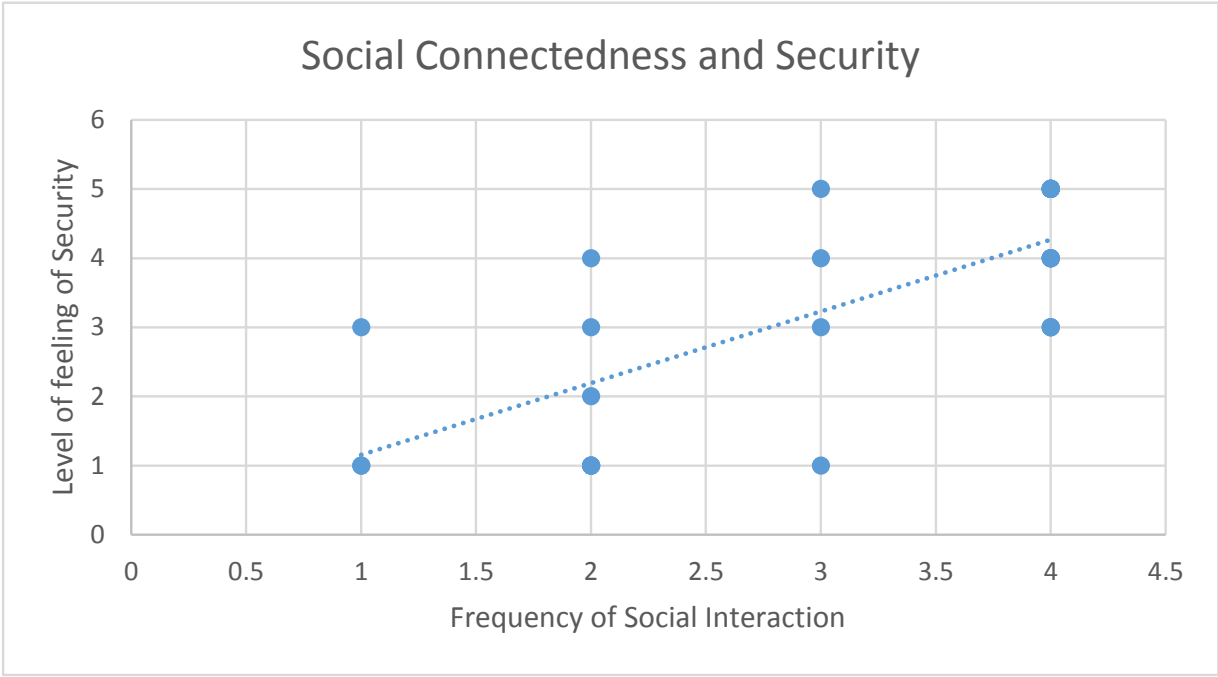
Distrust and fear of Turkish members of the host community was cited as a major barrier to personal security inside and outside of the residence. As one urban informant stated, "In the beginning [when I first came here], I couldn't tell who I could trust." Many urban refugees also attributed their lack of security to the aforementioned language barrier, stating that they felt less in control of their surroundings because they could not speak the language. A significant number of informants specified a pervasive distrust of Turkish men in their host communities, with women expressing fears of exploitation and sexual predation, and complaining of disrespectful treatment. One urban interviewee claimed that Turkish men were disrespectful in comparison to Syrian men, adding that when she stands in a crowded bus with her small children they do not give up their seats. Several women indicated that they did not like the "looks" Turkish men gave them on the streets. While fear of predation was a larger concern for urban women who lived within Turkish communities, several camp residents echoed these statements: one informant expressed anxiety over rumors of Turkish men driving past camps to "buy Syrian girls," which made her fear leaving the camp unaccompanied. Likewise, several informants expressed distrust of the Turkish camp guards and camp administrators, whom they feared could be exploitative and predatory towards female camp occupants.

Many women stated that these fears of male predation combined with the language barrier significantly hindered their sense of mobility. Some urban refugees indicated that they avoided leaving their residence alone for these reasons: "if I want something from outside the house, my husband goes with me," explained one woman. Another urban informant complained that her

husband did not want her leaving the house because of his mistrust of Turkish men, and another disliked leaving the house as she feared leaving her young daughters unaccompanied.

The majority of informants contrasted their perception of security in displacement with their lives in pre-conflict Syria, where they felt a sense of freedom in moving about in public. As one camp interviewee described, “my sister and I, other women, we could go out to a wedding and come back at three, four in the morning.” This loss in mobility was seen to be a significant source of emotional distress for women, and limited their social connectivity.

Significantly, social interactions outside the home were found to correlate with feelings of security: according to survey questions represented in the graph, women reporting higher frequencies of social interactions tended to feel more secure in their environment.. These factors could mutually reinforce each other.



Many women also expressed a sense of loss in personal and emotional security due to the physical loss of their former home and the instability or inadequacy of current residences. For informants living in low-quality housing, physical security of the home was a concern. One urban informant living in an abandoned shopfront stated “in Syria I could close my door, and I would be inside my house. I didn’t feel exposed in my house, like I do here.” Likewise, some urban refugees raised

concerns over inadequacy of residential facilities including lack of heating and indoor plumbing (on which several informants blamed their children's increased incidence of illness), and small kitchens that prevented them preparing food as they were accustomed to in Syria. Several camp women also pointed to inadequacies in their residences that detracted from their security, such as the non-robust nature of tents in camps and general overcrowding, which in one camp had caused several fires. Two of these women also mentioned an instance of a revenge fire occurring in the camp, and expressed fear of this reoccurring. Whether this had happened or not, this fear reflected how dynamics of the Syrian Conflict play out across the border.

Throughout most interviews, the issue of security was addressed as an abstract feeling grounded in the idea of home and sense of belonging. Specifically, many equated their former homes in Syria with emotional security, often qualified as "psychological ease," "comfort," or "warmth," and described the forced separation from or loss of this home as the point of rupture in their feelings of wholeness. The absence of the sense of security was noted even by refugees who felt their residences in Turkey were structurally satisfactory; in displacement they had a "house" but not a "home." As one urban informant described, "[we have] tried to make [our apartment here] a home, but it's just not the same as it was in Syria. The warmth is gone." Such comments speak to how sense of place, and the involuntary separation from or destruction of this place, can disrupt the internal feeling of security.

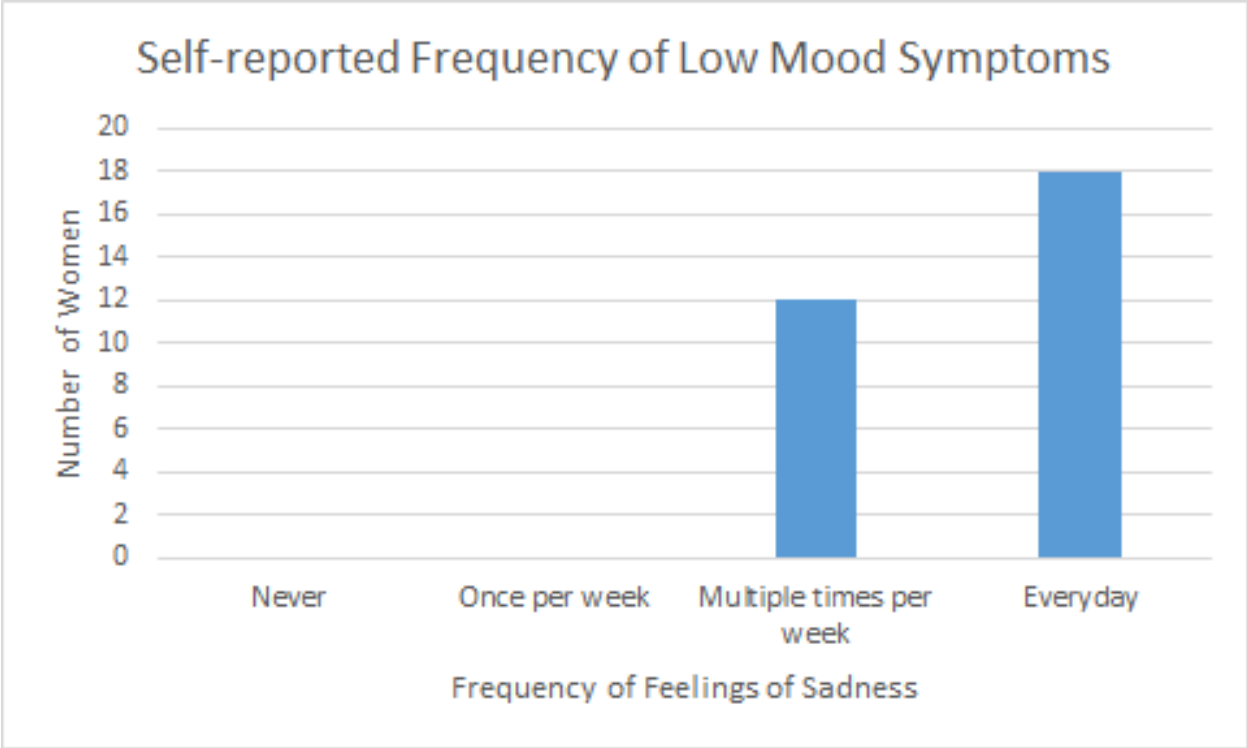
Findings unequivocally show that women's sense of emotional and/or physical security is disrupted in displacement, precipitated by perceived threats to their safety, feelings of social alienation, as well as the forced separation from their homes. Feelings of insecurity in turn limit women's mobility and ability to obtain basic resources and engage in social activities outside the residence. Anxieties over security, combined with problematic disruptions in collective identities and the other stresses of displacement, inevitably impact psychological health of refugees.

Psychological Well-being

Displacement frequently impacts the psychological well-being of refugees, precipitating feelings of distress and potentially causing more long-term psychological symptoms such as mood disorders, which has been documented by other assessments of Syrian refugees. Data collected in this study echoes these findings, with informants reporting stress-related physical symptoms, lowered mood, and anxiety.

More than half of the study's participants indicated that they had experienced stress-related sickness since their displacement; these symptoms were confined to chronic headaches and stomachaches, and were pervasive among camp and urban refugees. Three women also reported difficulty sleeping due to stress. Additionally, complications with pregnancy and deliveries were reported in one camp and with one urban informant; both individuals had fled Syria during their pregnancies and had experienced similar complications during childbirth, necessitating caesarean sections. Both informants attributed their difficult deliveries to the stress of displacement.

In addition to stress-related physical symptoms, prevalent patterns in mood emerged, with findings showing that women experienced varying degrees of anxiety, chronic worry, sadness, and anger outbursts. Low mood, often described as feelings of sadness, proved to be the most frequently-occurring of these effects. Survey data shows that informants reported feeling sad either "multiple times per week" or "everyday." Many women qualified these findings describing that they frequently cried, with one stating, "I'll cry for 15 minutes every day." One informant indicated a level of low mood requiring medical intervention, explaining that she had experienced a "nervous breakdown" for which she was hospitalized and administered anti-anxiety medication.



In addition to low mood, all interviewees reported experiencing varying levels of chronic worry and/or anxiety directly resulting from factors related to their displacement. Meeting basic daily needs such as food and rent was a major source of worry for a number of urban informants, with several stating that their main concerns were for their husbands to find employment so as to have a stable income. Worries about safety of family members and friends also constituted an ongoing source of anxiety, with one refugee stating, “My husband, my daughter, thankfully we are here and we are fine, we have everything we need. But I am always worrying about my family (who remain in Syria), I am always afraid for them.”

Likewise, many urban and camp refugees reported experiencing chronic anxiety over their political and social status in Turkey. One camp resident feared that the camp guards could “throw them out any day” to make room for a family who had paid bribes. Significantly, three urban informants expressed fear that the political and social opinion in Turkey would turn against Syrians and they would be forced to return to Syria. One resident said, “I worry about how long we can live here. I’m afraid that what happened in Egypt will happen here, that they will force us to go back to Syria.” For

some women, this fear was compounded by the fact that in Turkey, Syrians are denied refugee status and the rights this would accord them.

The vast majority of interviewees expressed anxiety over the uncertainty of the likelihood and timing of returning to their former homes in Syria. One urban woman stated “we are afraid that we won’t be able to return home. I’m afraid that our stay here will drag on and that our savings will run out.” Some interviewees indicated feelings of hopelessness regarding this uncertainty, with one stating that “in my dreams I return home. But I know that our destiny is to sit here and wait.”

Many participants also reported increased irritability causing outbursts of anger, particularly with children and family members. This was observed in both camp and urban refugees. Informants experiencing temper attributed this to a sense of loss of control and increased responsibility in displacement. “Here I have to go get everything myself, do everything myself,” stated one informant, which made her feel overburdened and impatient.

The issue of confined physical space was raised by camp and urban informants as a source of emotional distress contributing to feelings of anxiety and being trapped. Many refugees reported that their current residences were smaller and more crowded than their previous homes in Syria, which caused many women to feel “choked” or “cagey.” One camp refugee explained that “when you go from having lots of space to less than 10 meters (to live in), you really feel like you’re in a cell.” Several camp refugees commented on feeling confined given that they required permission from camp administrators to come and go from the camp. “Someone else is always in control of whenever you come and go, and they close the camp gates at night,” one informant said.

Additionally, the issue of memory emerged as a recurring factor affecting women’s emotional well-being, serving a dual purpose as a source of temporary comfort and also of haunting. A number of informants indicated that bad memories of the conflict or the journey to Turkey were a chronic source of stress for them or for their children. Four informants mentioned that the sound of planes triggered involuntary bad memories, with one explaining that “I keep hearing the sound of the planes even though they are not here in Turkey. I used to love the sound of planes.” Another woman stated that she was concerned about the effect of bad memories on her children, who were

constantly imagining the sound of planes at night and had nightmares about their experiences in Syria.

Conversely, nostalgia and revisiting positive memories was cited as both an individual and collective coping mechanism. Discussing shared positive memories with friends and family was described as a pleasurable pastime and temporary means to lift mood. Several individuals also mentioned how listening to Syrian songs or looking at old photographs had a palliative effect on their mood. A number of informants commented on how nostalgia exerted a dual effect on their well-being, in that it temporarily lifted mood but also compounded their sense of a lost past and reinforced the uncertainty of the future. One informant described this saying that she would listen to a song reminding her of her former life, and then would cry and feel worse. "If I could just live one week of my former life, then die, I would," she added.

Informants across all socioeconomic strata consistently reported negative psychological symptoms directly resulting from the stresses of displacement. An overwhelming majority of women indicated lowered mood, varying from transient feelings of sadness to levels of depression necessitating medical intervention. Similarly, all participants indicated experiencing anxiety and chronic worry, with such stresses often manifesting physically in the form of chronic headaches and stomach pains. Many women also brought up the mixed effect of memory on their psychological well-being: while some women cited bad memories as another source of distress, nostalgia and shared positive memories were utilized by some women as an antidote to low mood and boredom. This emerged as one of the practices utilized by some women to counter the considerable negative impacts they experienced in displacement.

Factors in Resiliency

In spite of the prevalence of negative psychological impacts, some women displayed a striking ability to develop coping strategies that contributed to their resiliency. These coping mechanisms were described by informants as consisting of two main behaviors: consistent engagement in rewarding social interaction, enabling informants to access community coping mechanisms, as well as

participation in enjoyable pastimes outside the home. These behaviors in turn contributed to feelings of personal agency, mitigating negative psychological symptoms and feelings of powerlessness experienced by most refugees. Notably, all informants self-reporting higher coping abilities engaged in one or more of these behaviors.

Having regular and engaging social connection with others-whether family members, friends, or members of host community- was unanimously observed to contribute to higher levels of coping ability. Those who held regular, meaningful social interactions tended to feel more secure in their environment and reported better mood. Many informants in camp and urban settings referred to the support of their social network as their primary way to withstand the stresses of displacement. "When I see my friends here [in Turkey], we are all going through the same things, we can relate to one another. I feel that I am coping when I'm with them," stated one urban informant.

Interestingly, a number of both camp and urban refugees stated that they had become "more social" since their displacement than they had been in Syria. One urban woman indicated that prior to her displacement her social network had consisted only of family, close friends, and colleagues; however her volunteer work with a Syrian NGO significantly increased the amount and variety of her social interactions. Several camp interviewees indicated that the close quarters of their camp and their boredom had compelled them to expand their social network and allowed them to develop new and rewarding social ties.

Reliable and consistent social support was seen to increase individuals' access to community coping mechanisms. Findings of this study revealed humor to be a prominent community coping mechanism utilized by many participants. Humor was found to be a mitigating factor for low mood symptoms and challenges faced in refugee life in Turkey. One camp informant said that she and her friends would laugh, cry, and dance together on the same day. An urban interviewee said that humor was how her family contended with their overwhelming sense of loss. "In spite of everything [that has happened], we still laugh together a lot," she said. Humor was also mentioned by some participants as an antidote to boredom.

In addition to social connectivity and humor, pastimes were also shown to be important tools for women to combat boredom and distract themselves from worries. Women who engaged in pastimes that they perceived to be constructive or enjoyable reported higher levels of resiliency; pastimes that involved social interaction and leaving the residence were found to be especially rewarding. This was witnessed in the aforementioned example of the camp informants who worked in a sewing workshop: many cited that coming to the workshop and talking and laughing with the other women there while working was an enjoyable pastime that made them feel socially connected and useful.

Finally, the theme of agency, defined as the power to exert choice in life, reappeared throughout interviews. Findings unanimously show that refugees who have an increased sense of agency in their lives demonstrate higher levels of resilience. This is significant to note, in that many interviewees across socioeconomic levels mentioned feelings of “being forced” as a prominent and bitter effect of their displacement manifesting itself on practical and emotional levels. This feeling of “being forced” affected participant’s feelings of freedom, mobility, and personal power.

Significantly, all of the aforementioned behaviors represent factors that also contribute to an increased sense of agency in that they mitigate feelings of powerlessness. Informants who had frequent and meaningful social connections and who participated in positive activities outside of their home reported feeling more powerful in their lives than those who did not. One refugee described her volunteer work, saying that “helping others who have been wounded in the revolution...gives me a sense of accomplishment. When I do that, I feel like I’ve done something good for others.” This in turn made her feel like she had agency in the “future of her country.”

It is important to note that the coping mechanisms utilized by study participants were observed to intersect with one another: women who held pastimes outside the home had more social interaction and felt more secure, and those who had social connections tended to engage in pastimes outside the home. Both of these factors increased individuals’ access to community coping mechanisms and contributed to feelings of personal agency. The fact that these behaviors are directly correlated with higher levels of resiliency emphasizes the need for donors to create environments conducive to them.

Findings from the interviews with Syrian women mirror those documented in studies of other Syrian refugee populations, as well as highlighted several areas that are unique to Syrian female refugees in Turkey. These include the language barrier and the lack of political rights accorded to Syrian refugees. Data revealed that the stresses of displacement have destabilized individual and collective identities of refugees, which has given rise to a renegotiation of identity. Study participants also indicated that their sense of security was diminished by the experience of displacement, resulting from the rupture from their former homes and social routines. Impacts on women's psychological well-being were observed in the form of lowered mood, increased anxiety and worries, and a prevalence of stress-related illnesses. Finally, the data revealed patterns in the individual and collective coping mechanisms utilized by refugees to feel more socially connected and powerful. These findings show that while Syrian women face significant stresses as a result of their displacement, certain factors increase their coping capacity. These conditions can be encouraged by donors wishing to support female refugees.

Findings from Interviews with Donor Organizations

Interviews with donors operating in southeastern Turkey shed light on the nature and extent of the services provided to Syrian refugees in both camps and cities, and revealed the obstacles donors face in delivering these services. Findings showed that services were offered in the key areas of humanitarian aid, psychological support, health, and community development. Donors expressed different priorities in determining their programming, and discussed the obstacles that prevented them from addressing the substantial needs of Syrian refugees. Ultimately, it was found that despite donors' rigorous efforts, there exists a gap between available services and refugee women's self-identified needs.

Organizations providing services for Syrians in Turkey include the Turkish government, Turkish NGOs, international aid organizations and nonprofits, and Syrian organizations. These organizations differ in terms of priorities and capacities, and many organizations and institutions were still in the process of establishing themselves at the time of data collection. Presently, only the Turkish

government and organizations affiliated with the government are able to provide services in Turkish refugee camps. Indeed, with the exception of registration and medical services, the Turkish government has almost exclusively focused on the camp population. The response to urban refugee needs has been less coordinated than the efforts made in the camps. This, combined with limitations imposed on foreign aid organizations working in Turkey, has left local aid organizations, local government, and religious charities to deal with the overwhelming influx of urban refugees.

Most organizations professed to an even distribution of services between women and men. Some indicated that the majority of their aid recipients were women because, according to them, women constitute a majority of the refugee population and bear the primary responsibility for the household. Also, one organization noted that “men are ashamed to ask for help,” and therefore women were more likely to seek donor support. Although not all organizations had women-specific programming, all expressed an awareness of women’s unique needs. Some organizations indicated that even if they did not specifically target women, they prioritized vulnerable populations, which by their definition included women and women-headed households.

Given the responsibility of women in preparing food and raising children, women’s needs remain a critical factor in the allocation of humanitarian aid. As family needs might be articulated through women, they assume responsibility in demanding aid for their families. Accordingly, many donors revealed an awareness of women in providing humanitarian aid. For example, the director of AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management), the primary agency administering aid in Turkish refugee camps, revealed that they had changed their food distribution policy due to women’s preferences. “We used to provide ready-made food, but now they make their own food. Shopping and preparing food is a way for them to occupy their time, and they get satisfaction from this activity, and they can decide when to eat,” he said. This statement is in line with findings from interviews with Syrian women on the importance of meaningful activities such as cooking as a coping mechanism.

This study found that humanitarian aid for urban refugees largely depended on the activities of local actors, and varied in each city. The city of Sanliurfa seemed particularly mobilized to help Syrians as compared to other cities included in this assessment. The Syrian Aid Platform based in Sanliurfa, a coordinated effort between the local government and NGOs, collected aid in the community for

Syrians. The Sanliurfa branch of IHH, a prominent Islamic aid organization, showed themselves to be proactive in assessing people's needs through house visits, generally through women volunteers. Their reliance on female volunteers further demonstrates the gendered nature of humanitarian aid. Only one Syrian organization was significantly involved with the provision of humanitarian aid, and they demonstrated a commitment to meeting women's needs in these provisions. They distributed women-specific humanitarian aid such as sanitary products and milk for mothers with small children.

Psychological support was also a prominent service provided by donors. Ten of the fifteen donors reported providing psychological services, whether through formal office visits with psychologists or through informal in-house visits from volunteers. As Kimse Yok Mu (Is Anyone There?), a Turkish aid organization, explained: "we do family visits and provide psychological support, volunteers go house to house to try to make people feel less alone, show our fondness and brotherhood for the Syrian people." Given the decreased mobility that many Syrian women reported, such outreach is critical in ensuring that women receive support. Advice and referrals were also services highlighted by organizations under the broader category of psychological support.

Other organizations provided more formal psychological services on their premises. Two Turkish NGOs - Support to Life and the Sanliurfa Community Center - maintain psychologists in their community centers specifically for counseling Syrian refugees, with special attention paid to women's needs. Syrian organizations also reported offering counseling for women refugees. A branch of the Syrian National Council provides counseling to refugee women both inside Syria and across the border in Reyhanli. Programming targets widows with children and female heads of households who are particularly vulnerable. The Syrian Emergency Task Force (SETF) also provided some counseling support to refugees in Syria and Turkey, often in the form of "transitional justice" sessions for widows and mothers of children who have been killed in the war.

Interviews with donors also revealed that there were few programs specific to Syrian urban female refugees. The Sanliurfa Community Center stated their intention to start a women's health club to discuss issues such as health concerns and family planning, and Support to Life offers a nutrition

program for pregnant and lactating women. Most other organizations indicated that they offered health support in the form of referrals.

Community development proved to be a common service offered by donors, with eight of the organizations reporting involvement in this area. Three organizations maintained community centers that provided safe spaces for women to expand their social networks, a necessity given findings on refugee women and their needs for social support. "Our community center is a safe space for women, it's hard to get them to come, maybe their husband won't let them or they cannot get childcare, but once they come they become really active," a staff member at Support to Life said.

Many of the Syrian organizations concentrated heavily on community development, which generally constituted workshops or trainings with a focus on civil society and political participation. Baytna in Gaziantep focuses on connecting Syrians and maintaining a sense of cultural unity via cultural activities. These activities are directed towards all Syrians, not just women, and include film screenings and discussions. Other Syrian organizations targeted women specifically in their community planning. SETF provides "political empowerment" services to female refugees, including courses on female leadership, and workshops on increasing female participation in the political process. The Syrian Women's Network holds capacity building workshops and trainings, most of which are held in Turkey or Lebanon. That same organization has also held "economic empowerment" trainings near Reyhanli, including sewing workshops where women can learn skills with which to support themselves. Similarly, AFAD provides vocational trainings to camp women, in which women receive instruction in hairdressing and sewing. Qamishlo House, a Syrian civil society organization in Antakya, held a workshop in October that promoted awareness of rape victims and women who were imprisoned, which was meant to "empower rape victims' role in the Revolution."

While host and refugee integration constitutes an important part of community development, only two organizations described it as part of their agenda. One of these, Support to Life, indicated an intention to bring the refugee and host community together through their community center. Likewise, the Arab Association also professed intentions to hold a conference to combat increasing tensions between Arabs and Kurds. Apart from this, host and refugee community integration appeared to be absent within donor programming.

Findings show the accomplishments of donor organizations working in southeastern Turkey, as well as the extent to which they incorporate women's needs into their programming. Although the services and activities provided by donors address some of women's numerous needs, there is still a gap in services for Syrian women refugees, particularly for those residing outside camps. This is compounded by the scope of refugee numbers and a lack of standard services implemented at the local level, as well as the presence of numerous challenges faced by donor organizations.

Obstacles Faced by Donors

The obstacles encountered by donors included limited funding, cultural and linguistic barriers, a lack of information to facilitate distribution of aid, and state barriers to operation. Funding proved to be the most commonly-experienced of these obstacles, as even well-funded organizations encountered needs that exceeded their capacities. Syrian Emergency Task Force, despite being relatively well-funded, said that prioritizing their goals and deciding how to allocate funds was their main obstacle in Turkey, given the high demand for services. Other organizations reliant on community donations indicated that while giving has decreased, the demands of refugees have increased.

Other organizations encountered logistical impediments due to Turkish government restrictions as well as ongoing instability in Syria. One international organization, still waiting for its office to be registered in Turkey, identified the national bureaucracy as an obstacle to their work. The country director stated, "here we're going to have to advocate for ourselves and what we want to do." Two organizations cited the difficulty of moving people and resources within Syria and across the border as obstacles to providing their services. This was most relevant for organizations which conducted empowerment workshops and leadership trainings for refugee women.

A lack of data on urban refugees prevented some donors from delivering services to women. As one international NGO stated, "There is a lack of information (about non-camp refugees) in order to effectively respond to needs." While most NGOs and aid organizations had means to reach their target group without official records of refugees, Support to Life cited the absence of any

registration process in the Hatay Province for non-camp refugees as an issue. Additionally, organizations stressed the need to spread awareness of their services in order to reach beneficiaries.

Cultural and linguistic barriers also impeded the provision of services. Two organizations noted the difficulties of finding qualified counselors and psychologists proficient in Arabic to work at their community center. The Gaziantep AFAD director acknowledged that lack of knowledge about Syrian culture could present problems, particularly for service providers working in the camps. In a similar vein, one Turkish humanitarian aid organization cited rising tensions between the host community and refugees as an obstacle, which had prevented them from pursuing community programming in one city.

All organizations interviewed for this study varied in priority, outlook, and capacities regarding women's needs. While only one of the organizations was specifically geared towards women, organizations aiding Syrian refugees are by default providing services for Syrian women. Despite the differing priorities of each organization - which varied from emphasis on humanitarian aid, psychosocial support, or political participation - there was a widespread recognition of the need to provide psychological support. Ten of the fifteen donors interviewed expressed plans to either provide or expand upon their counseling services.

The long-term stay of Syrian refugees in Turkey has necessitated that donors expand their priorities beyond the distribution of humanitarian aid to include integration, which involves programming related to education, professional training, and mental health. The directions and priorities of local and international organizations are encouraging, yet the paucity of resources and start-up nature of some programs makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of these programs. Although it is encouraging to see support directed towards women, more needs to be done to meet the basic needs of refugees while facilitating their social connectedness in order to empower women and increase their resiliency.

Conclusion

SREO's interviews with Syrian women show that effects of war and displacement are far-reaching, profoundly impacting women's entire selves and extending to their families and communities. This study provided a holistic examination of the implications of displacement on Syrian women refugees, showing how women cope with changes in their sense of identity, disruptions in their social networks, diminished feelings of security, and the psychological stresses brought on by these changes. Interviews with Syrian refugees revealed that displacement destabilized individual and collective identities and rearranged responsibilities within families, which occasioned distress for many refugees. Displacement also disrupted pre-existing social networks and support systems relied upon by women, which in turn affected women's sense of security and mobility. These stresses negatively impacted women's emotional well-being, contributing to lowered mood and increased anxiety. This study also pointed to behaviours and factors that allowed refugees to cope more effectively with the enormous challenges presented by displacement, the most prevalent of which were social connectedness and engagement in meaningful activities outside the residence. In short, although Syrian women in Turkey face considerable practical and emotional challenges in their displacement, many are able to cope with these challenges when equipped with the tools do so.

Donor organizations providing services for Syrians demonstrated different ways of prioritizing women's needs, as well as different capacities to address these. Donors consistently brought up needs related to basic survival, health care, and psychological support. Some donors also displayed an awareness of the coping mechanisms utilized by women, such as cooking, work, and socializing, and tried to incorporate this in their programming. While many of women's needs articulated by donors were consistent with the self-identified needs of refugee women, few of the urban women interviewed had reported receiving any services. The high numbers of urban refugees and their scattered existence means that serving their considerable needs are outside the scope of the current level of aid offered by donors, and many women are left without the material and emotional support they need.

It is SREO's express hope that these findings will be used to improve the level and quality of services provided to women.

Although this study yielded consistent and promising findings on Syrian women's experiences and capacities to cope with displacement, future study is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the holistic effects of the Syrian conflict on women. Future studies will ideally examine a larger number of informants to ensure that trends are consistent across wider samplings of the female refugee population. Additionally, future research should encompass other urban areas and refugee camps in Turkey, so as to note disparities and identify the most pressing needs in each community. Finally, as the Syrian Conflict continues, perpetuating a protracted refugee situation, continuous study will be needed to understand how refugee women are meeting the demands of long-term displacement, and whether they are integrating within their host communities.

Recommendations for Donor Organizations

- Increase humanitarian aid for urban refugees to support them in meeting survival needs. This includes housing support to pay for rent, food vouchers, and money for transportation. Having basic survival needs met would afford urban refugee women more time and energy needed to access services and engage in coping-encouraging behaviors, such as socializing.
- As social connectivity was shown to be a major factor in resiliency, donors should create community meeting spaces that are physically and culturally accessible to refugee women. These spaces would ideally provide women with opportunities to connect with other refugee women and engage in culturally meaningful social practices that they may have lost when they left their homes behind, and should be available to camp and urban women. These spaces should also offer childcare so that mothers are able to participate.

- Orientation should be provided to newly registered refugees arriving in Turkey regarding health care and legal rights, to ensure that refugees are aware of what they are entitled to. Additionally, registration should be encouraged and facilitated.
- Psychological counseling services should to be expanded for women of all ages, in both camp and urban settings. Counseling should not only focus on GBV issues, but also the other practical stresses caused by displacement, such as feeling trapped, overburdened, or bored. Additionally, psychological counseling needs to be made available in geographically and culturally accessible locations, and must be confidential so as to avert negative cultural stigmas associated with mental illness. Female doctors and counselors should be available per women's requests.
- As women are often highly dependent on husbands' or male relatives' salaries, efforts should be made to facilitate the legal, regulated employment of Syrian men, as well as women wishing to work.