

CHAPTER III

THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY'S OPEN TO REFUGEE

This chapter will discuss about on how Turkey implementing the open door policy for refugees from Syrian. What steps have been taken by Turkey along with its response in responding to refugees from Syria, especially when facing a large influx of refugees.

In the previous chapter, it was explained that Turkey experienced a very great change in handling and responding to refugees from time to time. These changes started from the Turkish was still in the form of the Ottoman Empire then changed to the Republic of Turkey, even to apply the open door policy.

Turkey's contribution to refugees from various countries, especially those from Syria is quite large. Starting from acceptance openly, provision of shelter, access to public facilities to the workplace. What has been done by the Turkish government has received a lot of praise from various parties such as the Macedonian president. Gjorge Ivanov expressed his respect for Turkey for showing his humanity by opening the door to 4 million Syrian citizens (Rufinaldo, 2019).

Apart from the many compliments received by the Turkish government, it cannot be denied that Turkey also feels a significant obstacle in implementing open door policy, but the Turkish government continues to improvise every aspect to be able to facilitate refugees from Syria and other asylum seekers as well. The efforts made by the Turkish government in implementing the open door policy for refugees from Syria are as follows.

A. Giving Temporary Protection

At first, Turkish officials refer to the refugees from Syria strictly as “guests,” lest they inadvertently suggest that the Syrians were refugees with Geneva Convention rights. On October 2011, the Turkish government declared that it would recognize them as people under Temporary Protection (TP). With Turkey having begun to establish its own structure for managing the Syrians, Turkish officials began to use the terms “refugees” and “guests”. In general, Turkish media often refer to Syrians people as "refugees" (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

On the part of the temporary protection regime in October 2011, Ankara has been committed to welcoming all those who crossed the Syrian border in search of safety in Turkey. Therefore, the Turkish government will provide for their basic needs and will not force them to return to their country. Turkey upholds that promise despite having a difficult time due to the large number of Syrian citizens.

Ankara inaugurated a temporary protection regime with article 91 of the LFIP which was passed in April 2013. Article 91 is as follows:

Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection¹.

¹ The Government of Turkey. (2013). *Law on Foreigners and International Protection about Other Provisions on Temporary Protection and International Protection*. Ankara: State Secretariat.

Temporary protection includes the right to health and education for those who are protected. This is in accordance with what was stated at the Geneva Convention 1951. This shows the high commitment of the Turkish government to the convention that it has ratified (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

Syrians under TP are granted a legal stay in Turkey and are protected against non-refoulement. With this status they can also enjoy free access to health, education, social aid, and translation services, as well as access to the labor market. In return, Syrians need to obtain a Temporary Protection Identification Document issued by the DGMM (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

Temporary Protection provides registration procedures, and then issues Temporary Protection Identification Documents to TP beneficiaries at the time of registration. Beneficiary of TP will get the card as the document asserting. The Provisional Protection Identification Document includes a Foreigner Identification Number (YKN) given to each beneficiary. The document was provided by the Directorate General of Population and Citizenship Affairs. All foreigners who legally settle in Turkey are given YKN as an access to all government services. International protection applicants and status holders within the LFIP framework are also granted the YKN. At present, YKN is given to all categories of foreign nationals living legally, including beneficiaries of temporary protection, with categories starting with the number 99 (Asylum Information Database, 2019).

B. Provisioning Refugees Camp

After the Turkish government gave permission to come to Turkey, Turkey then accepted the refugees. Turkey provides refugee camps called Temporary

Shelters Centers (TSCs) for refugees who roam from settlements which are totally or partially damaged houses in their area of origin (Tas, 2019).

At the start of the crisis, most refugees were placed in unused schools, sports buildings, warehouses and factories. When the number of refugees continued to increase, AFAD established camps for refugee homes. Temporary accommodation centers or temporary shelter centers are refugee camps equipped with the best equipment in the world. According to the report, the camps were built to a high standard on the advice of technicians from UNHCR. Existing facilities in the camp included clinics, schools, markets, mosques, electricity, football pitch, three playgrounds and a child protection center, food cooked to the famous washing machine (Tas, 2019). Additionally, many tents and mattresses are ready to be replaced. The camp can also be regarded as the best refugee camp in the world. So that the camps received a lot of international praises and recognition of the quality, both of housing and the services. As of 2015, AFAD runs 25 camps in 10 cities with a total capacity of 330,000, housing approximately 272,000 refugees out of the 1,650,000 refugees that the agency has registered. AFAD ensures that each camp has doctors, teachers, and imams who are already civil servants working for the Turkish state. For instance, the Religious Affairs Administration appoints imams, the Agriculture Ministry is responsible for organizing food deliveries, the Ministry of Education provides teachers, and local governors are responsible for the day-to-day running of the camps (Kanat & Ustun, 2015).



Figure 1. Refugee Camp in Turkey

Source: Daily Sabah Turkey. (2016, January 05). *Hospital latest addition to Turkey's largest refugee camp*. Retrieved December 08, 2019, from Daily Sabah Turkey: <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2016/01/05/hospital-latest-addition-to-turkeys-largest-refugee-camp>

The camp administration is handled professionally by official camp administrators appointed by the government and community leaders chosen by camp residents. Afterward, all camps are divided into several sectors, each of which chooses one refugee as a leader of that sector. These leaders are the main point of contact for camp residents to share their concerns and views with management about the running of the camps. This joint administration has contributed to the relatively smooth functioning of the camps. On the other hand, the government also provides security personnel to protect refugees and prevent security problems in the camp. Although so far there have not been any security issues in the camp, the camp administrator was very sensitive to the safety of the refugees so, he decided to take preventative measures in the camp and surrounding areas. In addition, each camp is equipped with a fire department with personnel who are ready to respond (Kanat & Ustun, 2015).

Refugees who choose to live in camp sites or outside camps and are not registered are increasing. In

2013, the number of urban refugees reached 400,000. After that, the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) implemented a temporary protection law to institutionalize the registration of refugees and coordinator between various institutions to provide services for urban refugees. AFAD is responsible for establishing and managing refugee camps and confirming emergency assistance for new arrivals (Krisicy & Ferris, 2015).

As of August 2015, there were more than 1.9 million refugees registered with more than a quarter million of them currently living in 25 refugee camps. The refugees are registered and those cared for by HDP, there are another 200 to 250,000 refugees who have failed to register for a variety of reasons. Among them were fears that registration would make it difficult for them to return to Syria if the Basar Al Assad regime remained in power. In addition, there was a rumor that if they were registered, they risked being sent to camp and might not be able to move to Europe. DGMM at the same time is also responsible for processing individual asylum seekers coming from other third countries (Krisicy & Ferris, 2015).

Syrians can obtain passes to enter and leave the camp, and if they have sufficient resources, they can leave the camps indefinitely. For example, approximately 80,000 Syrian refugees were granted permits to return temporarily to Syria to visit relatives during the main Muslim religious festival season, after which they were readmitted to Turkey and returned to their places in camps (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

As of September 2018, the cities hosting the highest population of Syria are: Istanbul (563,874 the equivalent 4% of the population), Şanlıurfa (470,827, 24%), Hatay (442,357, 28%), Gaziantep (390,860, 19%),

Mersin (208,587, 12%), Adana (221,325, 10%), Bursa (151,943, 5%), Kilis (130,448, 96%), Izmir (138,330, 3%) and Mardin (91,955, 11%). In some of these cities, the percentage of refugees equals or exceeds 20 percent of the total population, like the case of Şanlıurfa, Hatay, and Gaziantep. An extreme case is Kilis, where the refugee population roughly equals the local population (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

The number of temporary accommodation centers continues to decrease. Six camps were closed in 2018, three in Gaziantep, one in Mardin, one in Adıyaman and one in Şanlıurfa, mainly due to financial constraints. Of the 132,990 refugees accommodated in six camps, around 101,000 received cash assistance and rented apartments in urban areas, while the remainders were moved to other temporary accommodation centers. It is said that the authorities were reportedly in the process of establishing a large camp in Cilvegözü, Hatay near the Syrian border. Given that the closure of the camp has been a relatively new development, the results are expected to become more visible in the near future (Asylum Information Database, 2019).

As of 10 October 2019, there were six such large-scale camps spread accommodating a total of 59,027 temporary protection beneficiaries, across five provinces in Southern Turkey in the larger Syria border region. The cost of operation of the camps and service provision therein is significant (Asylum Information Database, 2019).

Table 1. Refugee Camps in Turkey 2019

Province	Camp Name	Total	
Hatay	Altinozu Container Camp	2,678	7,012
	Yayladagi Container Caamp	4,334	
Adana	Saricam Container Camp	19,187	19,187
Osmaniye	Cevdetiye Container Camp	13,293	13,293
Kilis	Elbeyli Besiriye Container Camp	8,538	8,538
Kahramanmaras	Merkez Container Camp	10,997	10,997

Source: UNHCR Turkey. (2019, October). *UNHCR Turkey: Syrian Refugee Camps and Provincial Breakdown of Syrian Refugees Registered in South East Turkey*. Retrieved November 30, 2019, from Relief Web:
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/71999.pdf>

With the overall size of the temporary protection beneficiary population sheltered in the camps steadily declining, the vast majority of the current populations subject to Turkey’s temporary protection regime reside outside the camps in residential areas across Turkey. More than half of the 3.6 million Syrians were registered in four out of the 81 Turkish provinces (Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Gaziantep). Another 300,000 to 400,000 unregistered Syrians are estimated to be living in urban centers (Asylum Information Database, 2019).

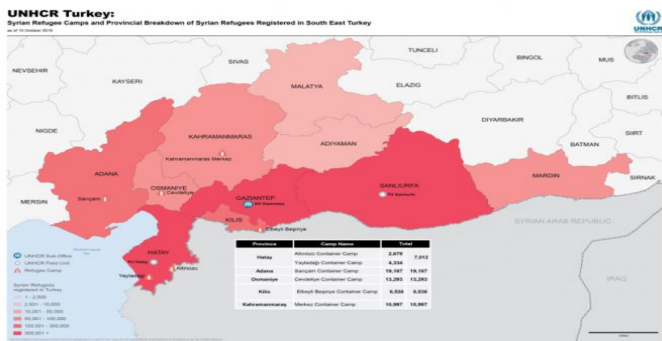


Figure 2. Refugee Camps in Turkey 2019

Source: UNHCR Turkey. (2019, October). *UNHCR Turkey: Syrian Refugee Camps and Provincial Breakdown of Syrian Refugees Registered in South East Turkey*. Retrieved November 30, 2019, from Relief Web: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/71999.pdf>

Besides providing camps for refugees, the Turkish government also provided free food. In the beginning, the camps provided pre-made warm meals three times a day but the refugees did not like Turkish food. To solve this problem, AFAD partners with the World Food Program (WFP) to provide vouchers for refugees. They can use these vouchers to shop at grocery stores in camps. However, the portion paid for by the WFP is subject to funding by the international community and it has stopped intermittently for lack of funds. Vouchers allow larger families to pool their funds and feed themselves more cheaply compared to the families with fewer members. The grocery stores are private enterprises and set up in pairs run by different companies in one camp. This is done to avoid

monopolies and offer competitive prices. Thus, in this way the refugees can manage their own budget and shop according to their own tastes and preferences. Additionally, the Turkish Red Crescent plans to partner with the WFP to also distribute vouchers to refugees outside the camps (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

C. Providing Access to Education

Education is prominent thing for everyone as well as for Turkey. As stated in Turkish national law that all children, including a foreign national have the right to benefit from free basic education. Basic education, which is up to grade 12, is mandatory under Turkish law. In the other side, LFIP article 89 also mention about “Applicant or international protection beneficiary and family members shall have access to primary and secondary education” (The Government of Turkey, 2013). Additionally, the right to education is also recognized by Article 42 of the Turkish Constitution, which stipulates that “no one shall be deprived of the right of learning and education”. Furthermore, the Basic Law No: 1738 on National Education also explicitly guarantees non-discrimination in extension of education services to children, “regardless of language, race, gender, religion” (Asylum Data Information, 2015).

1. Phases of Turkish Educational System

Since the beginning of the crisis, Turkey has implemented a dual education system for refugees. Initially, Ankara opened access to Turkish public schools for Syrians by following the Turkish curriculum. But then since September 2014, Ankara began building Temporary Education System Centers (TECs) which are available in urban areas and in some

refugee camps by following a modified Syrian curriculum in Arabic with the majority of Syrian teachers (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

On September 23, 2014, the Turkish Ministry of Education released a circular No.21 / 2014 concerning "Educational Services for Foreign Citizens". The circular aims to better guide and frame the application process for all migrant children to have access to education services and certain options for Syrian refugee children. (İçduygu & Şimşek, 2016).

The Turkish education system can be divided into three strategic phases, which are:

a. Impromptu Emergency (2011-2014)

During 2011-2014, Turkish teachers, managers and members of the Syrian community began operating a number of community-based Temporary Education Centers (TECs). The curriculum used is the Syrian curriculum which has been modified by using Arabic as the language of instruction (Cloeters, Osseiran, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

b. Systematic Emergency and Regulatory (2014-2016)

During this phase, the Ministry of National Education (MONE) intensifies its regulatory function and adopts stronger emergency measures. The 2014 Circular of the Ministry of National Education emphasizes the responsibility of public authorities with regard to international agreements on children's rights and the right to education. This means that procedures regarding education services are provided to all non-citizens in Turkey.

Enrollment in public schools is sufficient to use foreign identification documentation. The Circular regulated the curricular, educational, and managerial processes in TECs and public schools in order to ensure all activities would comply with national standards (Cloeters, Osseiran, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

c. Institutional and Long-Term (2016-now)

Turkey is implementing a long-term vision for refugee policy, which aims to integrate the entire Syrian school-age population into the national education system. In 2016, the MoNE founded the Migration and Emergency Education Department (MEED) within the Directorate General for Lifelong Learning (DGLLL). The MEED is the main unit responsible for planning, law, implementation and coordination of education and complementary services for all refugees living in Turkey (Cloeters, Osseiran, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

In 2016, the Project to Promote the Integration of Syrian Children into the Turkish Education System (PICTES) was initiated through a EUR 300 million grant agreement between the European Union and Turkey. For students, PICTES provides Turkish language classes, repair courses, educational materials, school transportation, outreach, counseling, and psychosocial support services. For teachers, PICTES provides training and capacity building services. PICTES aims to facilitate the transition of all Syrian children to Turkish schools. It also includes program development components such as new Turkish language testing and monitoring/evaluation

modules (Cloeters, Osseiran, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

2. Early Childhood Education and Care

Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) is a safe place for children in emergencies, and a safe place for parents to leave their children if needed. Most CFS offer Turkish language courses, catch-up classes, art and plays activities, and organizes social events such as national day celebrations for refugees and host community children. CFS was supported by UNICEF and UNHCR in Istanbul, Gaziantep and Sanliurfa (UNHCR, 2016).

3. Higher Education

In the 2017/2018 academic year, around 20,700 Syrian students were enrolled in Turkish universities. Syrian people are registered as international students and must apply individually at the university. According to Turkish regulations, each university determines the number of international students they accept in which the number must not exceed the number of Turkish students. Documents required for university registration in Turkey in general are valid high school diplomas and transcripts and equality certificates obtained from the MoNE. TECs also offer "TEC High School Benefits and Equivalency Examination". Additionally the Turkish language certification required is Turkish C1 level, but can also be obtained in the first year of registration. Most universities ask for the results of the Examination for International Students (YÖS) (Cloeters, Osseiran, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

Since 2013, the Turkish government has waived school fees for Syrian students at state universities. In

2014, Türkiye Bursları (the State scholarship program) had issued scholarships for Syrians covering 5,000 full scholarships over a five-year period. In addition, civil society and international and foreign organizations also contribute in facilitating access to Turkish universities for Syrian citizens. The examples are providing scholarships, Turkish and English language courses, or counseling. To handle an increasing number of applicants in the future, distance learning programs will play a more important role, not only in Turkey but also globally (Cloeters, Osseiran, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

4. Turkish Language Training

Learning Turkish is very important for Syrians to attend public schools, to continue to tertiary education, to get a job, and generally to live a productive life in Turkey. In 2015, UNHCR established two special Turkish language teaching centers in Southeast Turkey to enable Syrian children to integrate in Turkish schools. In addition, UNHCR is also working with TÖMER (a Turkish language and cultural training institution) to enable promising students to learn enough Turkish to gain access to universities (UNHCR, 2016).

5. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The Turkish government has established “Special Provincial Commissions for Increasing Access of Syrians under Temporary Protection to TVET.” To facilitate the registration of Syrian youth’s enrollment at TVET, a new legal framework was established in 2017. Students can obtain a vocational diploma after four years of training and education. During this time, Syrian students will receive social

insurance and pocket money. After fulfilling the requirements for their degree, students are allowed to open their own shops or apply for jobs. The Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services (MoFLSS), in collaboration with international organizations, have worked to improve work to improve competency and validate previous learning and non-formal learning for refugees (Cloeters, Osserian, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

Table 2. Data Enrolled Syrian Children in Turkish Schools

Years	Number of students registered in public	Rate of students registered in public schools	Number of Students Enrolled at TECs	Percent age of Students in	Total registered student	Total school aged population	Enrol l- ment rate
2014-2015	40.000	17,39%	190.000	82,61%	230.000	756.000	30%
2015-2016	62.357	20,03%	248.902	79,97%	311.259	834.842	37%
2016-2017	201.505	40,91%	291.039	59,09%	492.544	833.039	59%
2017-2018	351.135	57%	267.813	43%	618.948	976.200	63%

Source: MoNE Document 2017. Retrieved from Çiğdem, Yücel, İ., Hazneci, H., Ali, M., & Aydın, M. (2018). Syrian in Turkey. *The Ombudsman Institution of the Republic of Turkey*, 76.

In June, around 2,300 students were enrolled in the 2018-2019 cohort of the Higher Education Preparation Program implemented with the Presidency for Overseas Turks and Related Communities (YTB) through 32 language centers in 18 provinces. A total of 980 refugee students (898 Syrians and 82 from other countries) were given a university scholarship by UNHCR through the DAFI scholarship program as well as support to expand the coverage of the Türkiye Burslari YTB program (UNHCR, 2019)

D. Providing Access to Health Care

Refugees from Syria under Temporary Protection are entitled to the same health care as Turkish citizens covered by national health insurance. Medical services in emergencies are also given to unregistered refugees. This has applied since 2011 in eleven cities in southern Turkey. In addition, Syrian people also have the right to access free health care services provided by community health institutions, both for primary and secondary care. A subsidy of 80% applies to medical expenses that were covered by AFAD, starting from March 2018, covered by DGMM (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

In September 2013, AFAD expanded access to health services for refugees from Syria nationally but was bound to access Syrian refugee registration with the authorities. Then for certain medical treatments have procedures that require them to get the approval of the provincial governor (Cloeters, Osserian, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

In 2016, the Ministry of Health (MoH) collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) in developing a fast-track training course for pacifiers and Syrian nurses who were trained and worked as medical professionals in Syria. The course makes it possible for

the MoH to employ these professionals in the Migrant Health Centers (MHCs) that are run across Turkey with EU funding. According to the Sihhat Project, as of November 2017, 90 clinics were operational, with the target of making a total of 178 operational clinics in the near future. The MoH has trained almost all health professionals out of the 1,580 expected participants. Syrian health professionals working at MHC offer primary health services for Syrians and other Arabic-speaking refugees. Each MHC is expected to offer primary care to 2,000-4,000 patients. In 2017, it was estimated that one million consultations were given at MHC. With 158 clinics now in operation, the number of consultations was expected to increase in 2018. In addition, MHC also facilitates patient access to secondary and tertiary medical services (public, research and university hospitals). In the other hand, MoH and WHO have trained more than 960 bilingual system guides that will be assigned to government clinics and hospitals to help patients' access medical services. Efforts to train Syrian health professionals and complementary staff continue as part of a strategy to develop existing capacity and increase the resilience of health care institutions (Cloeters, Osserian, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

Beside primary health care services and public hospitals, Syrian residents can also approach one of 170 Migrant Health Centers, usually located in the provinces with high refugee population density. The centers are managed by doctors and surgeons, as well as bilingual Turkish-Arabic medical staff. The costs of construction, furniture and operation of many centers are funded by the EU. In May 2018, 1,515 medical staff (75% became Syrian refugees, 16% of Syrian Turkish citizens) provided primary health care services in 169 migrant

health centers supported by the project (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

Syria under the TP can also utilize mental health services provided by public health care institutions. More than 124,000 refugees have received support and care in this area delivered through various partners. In addition, some NGOs also offer mental health and psychological support in various locations around Turkey. In 2017, the first community mental health center was opened by the Ministry of Health, with funds coming from the Facility. Nine more centers are expected to open in the near future (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

However, there are two major obstacles in this sector. Firstly, is about language. In most health care facilities, translators are not available. This makes communication with health care providers hampered. Even though the government of Turkey has provided translators to assist in health care provision, but it has not been able to fully meet the scale of demand. Some NGOs, including the Turkish Red Crescent, are trying to close this gap. Secondly, is about the high mobility of the refugee population. Access to health care services is only possible in the provinces where Syrians are registered. Therefore, they risk losing this right if they decide to move to another place. The only exception is when someone who needs special care is referred to another province because it is not available in the registration province (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

Local hospitals have been enlarged and equipped to meet the current needs. The government has also developed an information campaign, including communication materials in Arabic about disease prevention and available health care services (World Bank Group, 2015).

The government has also worked with WHO and other international agencies to conduct routine mapping and needs assessments to improve Syrian under TP access to essential health services. This includes fast response treatments as needed. For example, the vaccination campaign in Suru district was held after the entry of around 190,000 Syrian refugees. In addition, along with Turkish University Gaziantep, WHO also completed the Refugee Doctor Adaptation Training (ReDAT) module in Turkish and Arabic to help Syrian doctors understand Turkish standard operating procedures, treatment guidelines, and referral structures (World Bank Group, 2015).

E. Permitting to Workplace

The Turkish government continues to hold its commitment in implementing the open door policy. Not only open access to education, health and living in a refugee camp, Turkey also provides other facilities for Syrian refugees, namely permission to work.

In 2011, Syrian refugees and their employers were asked to apply for work permits through the same process as all other foreigners working in Turkey. Regulations for work permits maintain limits on the work of foreigners, where they cannot work in certain sectors or provinces depending on the economic situation. In addition, the work permit system uses a quota system. For example, foreign employees can comprise not more than 5% of the workforce in a particular workplace and include certain conditions regarding minimum salary, social security, etc. Due to conditions that need to be met and labor restrictions in certain sectors and locations, the majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey work across different sectors without official permission. TP regulations were issued in October 2014 stipulate that people under TP have the right to work in Turkey only if they obtain the appropriate

authorization (Cloeters, Osserian, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

The TP regulation maintained limitations on Syrians' access to labor markets based on sector and location. While the regulation legalized Syrians' right to work in Turkey, the process to apply for work permits as persons under TP did not come into effect until 2016 (Cloeters, Osserian, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018).

In January 2016, the Turkish government through the Ministry of Labor and Turkish Social Security issued a regulation related to labor markets, namely the Turkish government gave work permits to Syrian refugees (Cloeters, Osserian, Bieh, Hohberger, Üçkardeşler, & Paker, 2018). In 2016, the MoFLSS issued a Regulation on Refugee Work Permits in Temporary Protection, which includes the rights, conditions and processes for Syrians and their employers to apply for work permits. While the regulation makes it possible for applicants and their employers to apply online, Syrians can apply for their work permits independently if they first establish and register a company in Turkey. The regulation uses restrictions on employment and quota systems (Syrians under the TP must amount to less than 10% of the workforce at any workplace). The decision of the MoFLSS to grant permits still depends on the sector, province and location where the application was made. However, those who work as seasonal agricultural workers or on farms are exempt from applying for a permit. Because of the restrictions, many Syrians continue to work without permission in many different sectors and provinces. According to several sources, more than 20,000 work permits have been issued so far (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

In 2018, there were around 25,000 work permits granted to Syria under the TP. This represents a small portion of the more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees between the ages of 19 to 64 who are part of the workforce in Turkey. There are two main reasons for this low number. Firstly, employers do not have sufficient incentives to employ Syrians in the formal labor market and prefer to employ them informally. This is due to avoid taxes and social security payments. Secondly, Syria is wary of accepting formal employment contracts because it will make them not claim state benefits. In this case, there are general disincentives on both sides to resolve formalities. To overcome this problem, the government has implemented measures such as reducing the cost of work permits from 600 to 250 Turkish liras to promote work for refugees but more incentives are needed to reduce this problem. Encouraging Syrian refugees to move to the formal economy is also important to reduce the perception of unfair competition in an economy where the employment rate among Turkish citizens is around 10% (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

While in some cases, Syrians are seen as competitors for work, they have also proven their entrepreneurial talent by starting economic activities that enhance their own and others' livelihoods. According to the Turkish Chamber and Commodity Exchange (TOBB) "Syria has invested nearly \$ 334 million in 6,033 new formal companies since 2011 and they rank number one among the founders of new foreign companies every year since 2013". It is estimated that Syrian investment in Turkey is around 463,000 USD (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

Another challenge that needs to be addressed immediately is the phenomenon of child labor, which involves not only Syrians but also Turkish children. In response to this, the government declared 2018 as a year

of war against child labor in Turkey accompanied by a comprehensive National Action Plan to prevent this phenomenon. Another important issue relates to the situation of seasonal and agricultural workers. While work permit requirements can be excluded for such work, most refugees continue to work informally and represent vulnerable subclasses among Syrian refugees. While most attention has recently been given to urban refugees, Syrians working in the agricultural sector should not be ignored (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

Thus, facilitating access to the labor market by removing existing barriers is crucial for Syria's integration into society and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families. Encouraging the process of starting a business in Turkey, as well as easing the investment environment can be a way of expanding employment opportunities for refugees (Batalla & Tolay, 2018).

