



# TURKEY

## National Refugee Youth Consultation

### Summary Report

14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016



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# Global Refugee Youth Consultations

## Background

The Global Refugee Youth Consultations (GRYC) were launched in July 2015 at the UNHCR-NGO Consultations in Geneva. A joint initiative of UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission, supported by the Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group (YAE)<sup>1</sup>, the GRYC are supported by a Coordinator, Project Officer, and Advisory Committee (consisting of national and international NGOs, youth representatives, and an independent youth expert).

Refugee youth are often left out of activities and programmes organised by the UN, NGOs, and other organisations. Youth have skills, capabilities, aspirations, and needs that often go unrecognised and are not understood. There is a need to reach out and hear from them about the challenges they face, their visions, and what support they need to shape positive futures. The consultations provided opportunities for refugee youth to discuss issues that affect them with host country youth and representatives from the United Nations, international NGOs, national NGOs, and other organisations working with youth in each country. The process aimed to place youth at the centre of decision making processes that affect them and to recognise their potential. The target group for this project was young refugees that fit the United Nations definition of "Youth", which is all boys and girls, young women, and young men between the ages of 15-24 years.

The consultations took place between November 2015 and June 2016. They included national-level consultations in Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and North Africa. The "National Consultations" were led by national NGOs from each country with UNHCR and an international NGO partner. Similar consultations were held with refugee youth in North America, Australasia, and Europe. Opportunities to participate in smaller consultations and online were also provided through a designated toolkit and a Facebook platform. The process culminated in a global consultation in Geneva in June 2016 and participation by young people in the 2016 annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations, the overarching theme of which was Youth.

## Objectives and design

Underpinning the design of the national consultations were the four core objectives of the GRYC:

1. To create structured spaces for young refugees to have a voice and engage in participatory dialogue with other youth and relevant stakeholders at local, national, regional, and global levels;
2. To improve access for young refugees to local, national, regional, and global youth alliances and networks;
3. To foster and support participation, leadership, and empowerment opportunities for young refugees; and

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<sup>1</sup> The Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group (YAE Group) includes representatives from more than 15 humanitarian organisations that are committed to achieving better outcomes for young people in humanitarian situations.

4. To consolidate and channel the learning from the consultations into the development of guidelines and policy recommendations on youth-inclusive programming, to improve the humanitarian sector's understanding of, and work with, young refugees.

A participatory approach was used throughout. The session plans were developed by the GRYC Coordinator, in consultation with UNHCR and WRC. They were designed through a collaborative and iterative process, including:

- An extensive review of literature and other materials relating to consultations with youth, displaced populations, and participatory research methods, in order to learn from previous experience and to adapt relevant pre-existing models.<sup>2</sup>
- The active input of a group of young refugees and asylum seekers during a two-day residential workshop in Malta in October 2015, organised in partnership with UNHCR Malta and a Maltese NGO, Organisation for Friendship and Diversity (OFD). The group consisted of males and females representing the full age range of the global consultations (15-24 year olds), and five countries—Libya, Somalia, Mali, Eritrea, and Palestine.
- Input into the development of the session plans and the content of the national consultations was also sought from members of the GRYC Advisory Committee—in person with the Regional Leads representing Africa, Asia Pacific, and Latin America during a two-day meeting in Geneva, and by email and Skype with the full GRYC Advisory Committee.<sup>3</sup>
- A full pilot national consultation in Uganda that provided an opportunity to learn from the participants and adapt the approach and session plans accordingly.

## Turkey National Consultation

### Context for refugees in Turkey

Turkey is a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention but with a reservation that it will not recognise refugees who are not from Europe. Before 2011, Turkey did not host a significant number of refugees. However, it now hosts approximately 3 million refugees, more refugees than any other country in the world. This includes 2.7 million Syrian refugees, who live in 23 camps in the south-eastern regions of the country and in urban areas throughout Turkey, and approximately 280,000 other persons from Iran, Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, who are seeking asylum or have been recognised as refugees.<sup>4</sup> The Government of Turkey manages refugee registration; UNHCR plays a support role and provides livelihoods support, cash, or health assistance on a very limited basis to highly vulnerable individuals. Due to the influx of refugees, it has been challenging for the government and civil society to keep pace in terms of registration and provision of services. There are different regimes in place for Syrians than there are for Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, and refugees of other nationalities. In 2015 an unprecedented number of persons transited through and

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<sup>2</sup> Some examples of key resources accessed include: *Youth Consultations for a Post-2015 Framework: A Toolkit*. Youth in Action (2013); *A Kit of Tools for Participatory Research and Evaluation with Children, Young People and Adults*. Save the Children Norway (2008); *Listen and Learn: Participatory Assessment with Children and Adolescents*. UNHCR (2012); *Community Consultations Using Extended Dialogue Methodology*. UNHCR (2010-11); *Post 2015 Youth Engagement Event Planning Kit*. World Vision (2012); *Considering Consulting? A Guide to Meaningful Consultation with Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds*. The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (2007).

<sup>3</sup> The Advisory Committee Regional Leads include: Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APPRN) in Asia Pacific, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Save the Children in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), RET International (RET) in Latin America, Plan International and Terre des Hommes (TdH) in Europe, Vulnerable Minors Working Group (VMWG) of Refugee Council in the USA (RCUSA) and World Vision International in Africa.

<sup>4</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Language%5B%5D=1&Country%5B%5D=224> and the UNHCR Turkey Fact Sheet (September 2016) [downloaded as of 03 October 2016].

from Turkey to reach Greek islands, which presented a huge challenge for the government and UNHCR. Youth comprise an estimated 40-45 percent of the refugee population country wide and a particularly high percentage of Syrian refugees are youth. Turkey guarantees basic rights for all refugees, including free access to primary and secondary education and healthcare at the same cost as for nationals. If they are accepted, refugees can attend tertiary education and pay the same tuition as do Turkish nationals. Nevertheless, the language barriers and ancillary costs associated with education and healthcare are often prohibitive given refugees' difficulties to work and earn a living.

### National NGO Partner

The national NGO, Refugee Support Centre (RSC), organised the national consultation in Turkey with close cooperation and support from the regional lead organisation, Plan International (Plan), and with extensive support from UNHCR Turkey, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), and Save the Children. RSC, ASAM, Plan, and UNHCR Turkey supported the consultation process during preparation, delivery, and debrief. These organisations worked together to coordinate the logistics, including recruitment of facilitators and interpreters, selection of youth, planning for the stakeholders' meeting, and preparation of materials. The GRYC team, including the GRYC Consultant, GRYC Project Officer, and a global representative from UNHCR in Geneva, worked with them closely to run the consultation.

### Facilitators

External facilitators, identified by UNHCR Turkey, ASAM, and Refugee Support Centre, led the Turkey national consultation and supported small group work. The lead facilitation team included a facilitator who led the GRYC national consultation in Jordan, another who worked with Plan International in Jordan, and a third who worked with ASAM in Turkey. All three had prior experience working with young refugees. Four small group facilitation teams, each comprised of male and female facilitators who spoke either Turkish or Arabic, facilitated the small groups. Most of small group facilitators were in their twenties, which helped the participants feel more at ease in expressing themselves.

### Interpreters and translation

Language is a major issue for refugees in Turkey and translation proved to be a significant challenge at the Turkey consultation. Most of the refugee youth speak Arabic or Farsi as their mother tongue and some speak Turkish and/or English. The Turkish youth speak Turkish and some English. One of the difficulties with regard to translation/interpretation is that Farsi and Arabic could only be translated from English or Turkish, which entailed double translation. The facilitation team and interpreters adapted and conducted the facilitation in English and Arabic with consistent whispered interpretation into Farsi for those who needed it and some whispered interpretation into Turkish as needed.

### Venue and Accommodation

The Koru Hotel served as the venue for the workshop and accommodation for the participants and those facilitators who did not live in Ankara. Located in a residential neighbourhood within Ankara, the hotel provided appropriate facilities.

## **Evening social activities**

RSC organised activities each evening. In the first evening, the participants went to a modern art museum and had dinner in a well-established park that is frequented by the young people in Ankara. During the second evening, participants attended an open-air concert by the French singer IMANY. These activities enabled the group to relax and have fun, get to know each other better, and have new experiences.

## **Application and Selection Process**

UNHCR Turkey office, ASAM and RSC disseminated the call for applications from refugee and national youth through their more than 30 field offices. They received a total of 55 applications from refugee youth and eight applications from Turkish youth. Representatives from UNHCR Turkey, RSC, and Plan International jointly reviewed the applications and selected participants based on the GRYC selection criteria which included:

- Age (15-24 years old);
- Willingness and ability to participate in an interactive, participatory four-day consultation;
- Proven experience as participants of an existing youth programme (for refugee youth) or national youth organisation (for host-country youth);
- Openness to engage on refugee issues; and
- A statement of motivation, which included details about why the applicant was interested in being involved in the consultation, what they could contribute, and what they hoped would be the results of the consultation.

The selection team took particular care to include an equal number of males and females and to ensure the representation of youth from all age groups, nationalities, and ethnic groups represented amongst refugee population in Turkey. They also made an effort to ensure the participation and representation of particularly vulnerable groups of refugees, such as persons with a disability and members of the LGBTI community.

## **Youth Participant Profiles**

As a result of the selection process, 25 young people participated in the Turkey consultation. A summary of their demographic data is noted below:

- 20 refugees and five Turkish participants;
- Four of the refugee participants were under 18, and three of those were unaccompanied minors residing in state facilities for assisted living;
- 11 Syrians, three Iraqis, three Afghans, one Iranian, one Somali and one Egyptian refugee;
- Refugee participants were in different living situations including camps, assisted-living institutions for unaccompanied youth under the age of 18, and urban contexts;
- 13 were female and 12 were male;
- One refugee with a disability;
- Three members of the LGBTI community;
- 16 of the participants were in informal education, two were in non-formal education;
- Ten had completed secondary education and nine had completed their undergraduate degrees;
- six worked either full-time (5) or part time (1), two were looking for a job, and one was volunteering; and
- All were single and none had children.

As part of the application form, participants were asked to state their motivation for applying to take part in the national consultation. Some examples of participants' included the following:

- *"To discuss the problem facing refugees through our life in asylum countries and how to get suitable solutions. Exchange of different ideas and views."*
- *"I have desire to help who need it and earn new experiences and to know new friends."*
- *"I am trying to help refugees and approaching more to their local problems."*
- *"Youth is the real engine of the societies."*

Participants' expectations of the consultation, as specified in the application forms, included:

- *"I wish we get solutions to the problems that we face as refugee students."*
- *"I hope to earn new experiences to open knowledge prospects and I hope to contribute the development of knowledge and experience for others."*
- *"To deliver our voice and the voice of the refugees of the world."*
- *"I hope to meet people who find their way after suffering to benefit from their experiences. I would like to start a connection group to find better activities and cooperation projects."*
- *"I believe this consultation will contribute to generating efficient solutions as it gives us a chance to explain our situation. I think I will feel better and will be able to develop coping mechanisms for the problems I experience, after meeting my peers in different cities and hearing their ideas about solutions to problems."*

Participants also shared their expectations for the consultation at the beginning of Day 1. Many of the youth had quite high expectations for the consultation and the stakeholders' meeting. As one youth said, *"I expect that these four days will be all comprehensive and allow us to address as many problems faced by refugees as possible and most importantly we will share our views with stakeholders on 17 May."* Other participants expressed additional expectations including the following:

- *"Delivering our voice to other parties and to other generations."*
- *"Spending time together."*
- *"Learning what rights Turkish youths have."*
- *"Finding solutions for refugees in Turkey."*
- *"Raising awareness of human rights."*

Group dynamics between youth

**Bringing together host community and refugee youth:** One of the objectives of the national consultations was to provide an opportunity for refugee and host-country youth to meet, exchange ideas, build friendships and alliances, and establish networks. It was hoped that as a result of the consultations, refugee and host-country youth would gain a better understanding of the common issues that they face—as youth—and that there would be opportunities for refugee youth to work more closely with national youth organisations. The participants were asked the question on day one: *"Why did we invite refugee and national youth to this consultation?"* A young woman refugee from Syria noted that *"The Arabic community in Turkey is close but the Turkish people don't know us well; this is maybe our chance to change this."* A Turkish youth said, *"To raise awareness of refugee issues among Turkish people... there is definitely stigmatisation."* A refugee from Somalia noted, *"The Turkish community doesn't know anything that is happening in Africa."* From first day, during an exercise exploring perceptions and facts about refugees, some misconceptions about refugees were

identified and discussed openly, which set the tone for the rest of the week and demonstrated the group’s willingness to open up and learn more about each other’s circumstances. As one youth noted in the evaluation, *“I learned many things from the refugee youth about the issues that they face.”* Another noted that from the consultation they learned, *“Human beings of various races various languages and various beliefs could be happy and help each other solve problems.”* Finally, another commented on *“the spirit of cooperation between the youth.”*

The consultation also afforded a valuable opportunity for refugee and national youth to build friendships and alliances across other social and cultural boundaries that can divide people, such as attitudes about sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

### National Consultation Structure

The National Consultations were run with the same structure for all locations and this included two components. The first component was a three-day consultation that brought together 20 refugee youth and five host-country youth to identify and analyse the problems that young refugees face, develop potential solutions, build alliances and networks, and contribute to improving work with young refugees globally. The second component was a half-day “stakeholders dialogue” at which participants shared the consultation outcomes and recommendations with key local, national, and international agencies and organisations and developed next steps for the post-consultation period.



<p><b>Day One</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know each other, building trust, and teambuilding</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Youth participation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Day Three</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing the issues and developing solutions</li> <li>• Advocacy/Communicating our messages and recommendations</li> <li>• Stakeholder analysis</li> <li>• Planning for the stakeholders meeting</li> </ul>
<p><b>Day Two</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and prioritising issues</li> <li>• Analysing issues and identifying causes and impacts</li> <li>• The role of youth in addressing the issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Day Four</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders meeting</li> <li>• Group action planning—what next for this group</li> </ul>



## Main themes from Turkey Consultation

The following is an overview and analysis of the key themes and issues that emerged during this consultation:

- **Youth engagement and empowerment:** During the course of the consultation many participants became more aware of how young refugees could take an active role in addressing the challenges that refugees face. By day three the group was able to generate a large number of well-formulated recommendations on how youth and stakeholders could work together on specific actions to address the problems that had been identified. In the evaluations, many participants noted how they had developed their ability to analyse, speak out and take action about the problems that young refugees face. One participant noted their favourite part of the consultation as, *“Evaluation of the problems and finding solutions for these problems and our role as refugee youth in the proposed plan*
- **Youth as connectors:** During the consultations and in the evaluations, many participants commented on how youth can communicate and work together despite differences and how youth can reach out to different ethnic or religious communities, those with different sexual orientations or gender identities, and those who are differently abled in a positive way. As a couple of participants commented as part of the evaluation on Day 1, *“I liked the communication between different nationalities...”* and *“I loved the diversity of youth!”*.
- **Language barriers:** Language as an obstacle to getting information, accessing or succeeding in school or other learning opportunities, and accessing medical care emerged strongly as a theme in this consultation.
- **Education:** Youth highlighted how important access to quality education and other formal and informal learning opportunities are for young people. They emphasised that for many young refugees in Turkey language is a barrier to education. They stressed the importance of being able to access good-quality Turkish language classes. They also noted that the costs associated with education can be a barrier. Participants indicated that tertiary education is a preoccupation for many young refugees. They are particularly concerned about obtaining recognition of their existing credentials; they want to be able to choose their area of study; and they need access to scholarships.
- **Difficulties in accessing refugee documentation:** Along with education, this was the most commonly discussed issue in this group, and it generated much debate throughout the consultation. Several of the Syrian refugees commented that they appreciated being able to learn about the different registration process for non-Syrian refugees. Participants identified difficulties with registration as the cause of many other issues relating to access to basic services, freedom of movement, unemployment, and security.
- **High cost of healthcare:** The high cost of healthcare, due to several “hidden costs”, emerged as a priority for this group of young refugees. They explained that the clinics to which refugees are referred are often over-subscribed, prompting refugees to seek private care, which is more expensive. In addition, refugees often need to employ translators to accompany them to doctors’ offices or the hospital. The cost of medication at pharmacies is also



significant for refugees who are on limited budgets.

- **GBV and early marriage:** Refugees highlighted concerns about early marriage for girls from a physical and mental health perspective, and with respect to education. One of the small groups chose to focus on the issue as they developed their solutions to present to stakeholders. Young people stressed the need for sensitisation and advocacy work in communities in order to protect girls. This includes peer education, meetings with parents, community leaders and religious leaders, and formal and informal learning opportunities to help focus girls on developing themselves.
- **The ability to work:** Many participants highlighted the importance of being able to raise issues related to young refugees' ability to work legally and under reasonable conditions as an important issue. As one participant mentioned in the evaluations, *"I found a platform where I could raise the issue of employment, which is one of the most significant problems in Turkey."*
- **Friendship, solidarity, and teamwork:** Developing friendships was an important outcome for this group. During formal and informal discussions, participants talked about the importance of feeling less isolated, meeting like-minded people, and feeling part of something bigger than themselves and their immediate communities. As one participant noted in the evaluation, *"I liked the teamwork and working with people from different communities. I liked learning from one another."* Friendship is an important outcome in its own right. It is also a major contributor to the sustainability of the goals of this consultation.

## Main Findings from the Turkey Consultation

The following section provides a summary of the main points that arose in each session during the four-day consultation with refugee youth in Turkey. The structure of each exercise is described followed by the main findings:

### Perceptions and facts about refugees and youth

This exercise provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss in small groups the facts and perceptions associated with the words "refugee" and "youth", with their ideas recorded on flipchart paper and shared with the whole group. This exercise generated discussion and debate between the participants, and both national and refugee youth had the opportunity to consider each other's perspectives on youth and refugees. As one participant said, *"Our problems is that misperceptions are already considered by those who hold them as facts—so this creates a gap between perception and reality."* Another said, *"How do people get the perception that refugees are job stealers? They get it from their perspective on their experience... Turks believe that Syrians steal jobs, but the reality is that Turkish employers are employing Syrians at very low wages."*

**Participants agreed that other community members have a mix of contradictory perceptions regarding youth.** Participants noted that many older community members perceive youth first and foremost as part of a family and do not consider them as capable individuals. They do not perceive that young people can make their own decisions or give them the opportunity to do so. Participants expressed that there is a general perception of youth as being uneducated, irresponsible, careless, lazy, and dependent on technology. Participants noted that there is concern amongst their older community members that young people don't accept traditional culture; some perceive them as sinners who make mistakes and as trouble makers who commit crimes. When a young person's sexual orientation is different than the cultural norm, it is viewed as a bad habit or even a mental illness. On the positive side, youth are perceived as full of energy. They are envisioned as having

solutions for a brighter future. Some perceive youth as a fresh new generation that should be free of the control of the older generation. Many assume that all youth are experts at technology and social media.

**In fact, youth are ambitious and recognise themselves as the generation of the future with energy and power.** Youth are actually a diverse group who are often more open to change and differences than older people. Participants stressed that youth have dreams and the drive to realise them. Many, but not all young people are comfortable with new communication technologies including social media. Youth sometimes adhere to their communities' traditions, but many do not necessarily feel bound by them. One discussion group commented that many young people recognise that they have the right to their own sexual orientation, although they may not be able to talk about issues of sexual orientation and religion publicly.

**Participants generally agreed that perceptions about refugees in Turkey are generally quite negative.** They are also sometimes contradictory. Participants noted that some Turkish nationals think that refugees fled their countries because they are traitors or cowards. Participants noted that in Turkey and globally, many Muslim refugees are seen as terrorists. Some participants highlighted that there is a sense that refugees are people who are "taking" the rights of the local population; somehow depriving host community nationals of jobs and economic opportunities. Participants explained that many Turkish nationals perceive all refugees are poor and illiterate, with no skills or abilities. They are perceived as useless, needy, and dependent on humanitarian aid, bringing only problems to the host country. People think of refugees as weak, helpless, and in need, but not as full persons.

**Participants were clear in their discussion that in fact refugees are human beings with rights, but these rights are not realised.** As one young refugee explained, *"Refugees were citizens enjoying their rights in their home countries, then they became victims of war, and fled their country. Now they want to live in peace."* Another commented that Islam is the religion of many refugees, but has nothing to do with terrorism. Another young refugee noted, *"The reality is that many refugees want to work legally and use their skills to support their families, but they are disadvantaged due to the language barrier and difficulty to obtain work permits or to access education."* The group also made the interesting observation that in reality, *"Many refugees cannot accept themselves as refugees."*

## **Youth Participation**

This exercise was structured around a set of three questions which the young people voted on and then discussed.

### **Question 1: Should NGOs, UNHCR, or government line ministries listen/engage with youth in designing and planning their services and activities for refugee youth?**

All participants considered it important that NGOs (22), UNHCR (24), and government line ministries (24) listen to and engage with youth in designing and planning services and activities for refugee youth. One participant emphasised, *"Youth are an essential part of the community."* Another mentioned, *"NGOs are doing well, they take care of our needs; on the other side the government makes decisions according to its interests."* One participant noted that these organisations, *"...should involve youth more—to use youth energy."*

**Question 2: Have you taken any steps to communicate with NGOs, UNHCR, or government line ministries to talk about the issues you face?**

About half the participants (12) voted that they had taken steps to communicate with UNHCR/NGOs/Government. A few commented on that they have had some communication with UNHCR. One participant noted that when he turned 18 he found out that he was no longer eligible to live in the assisted-living centre where he had been accommodated as an unaccompanied child. At that time, he contacted UNHCR and was frustrated when the UNHCR Office reiterated the same policy, that he now had to live independently.

**Question 3: Do you feel it is easy to interact with NGOs, UNHCR, or government line ministries to talk about what you face?**

Many participants (11) voted that it was easy to communicate and interact with NGOs', UNHCR, and governments, while ten voted that it was quite easy and four voted that it was not easy. However most of the comments focused on NGOs. One participant expressed frustration that *"Communication [with NGOs] is easy, but there is no result."* Another participant noted, *"It is very easy to reach NGOs... but people are not going there; people are focused on certain services and they are not interested in the psychological support that NGOs are offering."*

**Youth Visions for Participation**

In the next stage of this session, the participants broke into small groups and discussed their ideas and visions for youth participation and then presented these ideas visually through posters. Many of the ideas focused on expression—how to communicate youth concerns and ideas. Participants talked about establishing youth or student clubs or youth branches under political parties. Some participants considered using video, TV, social media, or even the postal service to reach government authorities and service providers. Other participants spoke about using art, theatre, or music to share ideas, raise issues and send messages to the broader community. Discussions in the different groups also focused on teamwork, and the value of bringing diverse young people together to work on a common cause. They talked about how youth could have a stronger and more effective voice if they worked together.



- *"We need to collaborate; youth need to collaborate together not wait for NGOs."*
- *"Maybe draw youth holding a giant pencil. They [youth] are holding it—this is a symbol that they are working together for better education."*
- *"The important thing should be different types of individual youth should be represented. The differences—diverse types of youth should be represented. Some blocks are NGO assistance, but it can't be built without youth. "*
- *"We could draw a big market fill it with small pictures of different kinds of people."*

One group focused on collaboration between youth and different organisations. They envisioned constructing a building in which the stones symbolise the NGOs, UNHCR, and social media as the foundation; a depiction of a cement mixer shows the importance of peace, love, unity, and trust as being the cement that holds the building together. The workers are youth who need the support

from NGOs, such as scholarships, volunteer work, and access to social media. Another group depicted NGOs on one side and refugee communities on the other side and youth as being the “bridge” or the “connectors” who serve as the voice of their communities.

### **Identification and prioritisation of needs and challenges**

During the second day of the consultation, the youth participants worked in small groups to identify and discuss challenges and issues of importance to them. While this exercise focused primarily on the “needs” and “issues” faced by refugee youth, national youth participants were encouraged to participate and use this exercise as an opportunity to ask questions, learn more about the challenges facing their refugee peers, and identify commonalities. Through this exercise, participants identified the following issues:

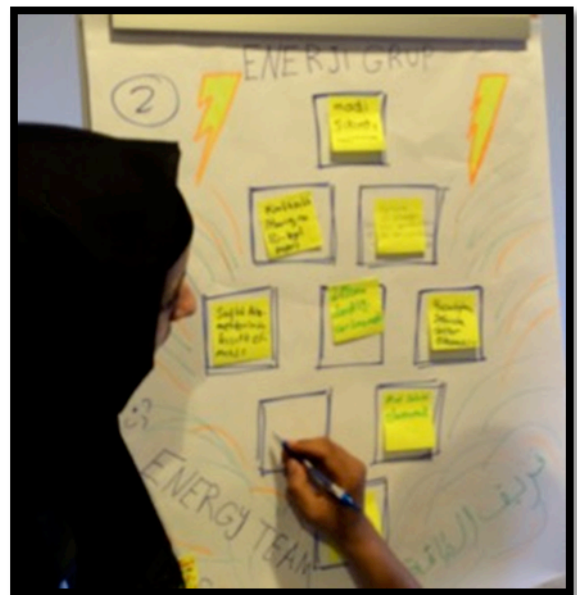
- **Access to quality education and other learning opportunities:** Youth talked about the difficulties that impede access and undermine the quality of education and learning opportunities. They stressed the language barrier which impedes access to formal education and the limited availability of language classes to allow refugees to learn Turkish. They also noted that the poor education infrastructure and the poor attendance of teachers in some areas discouraged young refugees from trying to attend school. They emphasised the need for more workshops and other informal learning opportunities to help young refugees stay busy and develop academic, vocational and life skills. They also highlighted the lack of scholarships and the limited choice in terms of what to study for those enrolled at the university level (a refugee youth who studied mechanical engineering in Syria reported only being allowed to study Turkish literature in Turkey; another young refugee who studied to be a pharmacist in Syria reported only being allowed to study mechanical and civil engineering in Turkey). Finally, they highlighted recognition of their existing studies and accreditation as a huge challenge.
- **Work/job opportunities:** The lack of work opportunities and the difficulties involved in obtaining work permits emerged as a huge issue. Participants emphasised young refugees’ need and willingness to work and stressed that if youth can’t earn any income, they cannot cover costs for housing, food, medical care, or educational materials.
- **Housing:** Participants highlighted finding affordable housing as a huge issue for many youth and their families not living in the camps. Participants particularly noted the difficulties associated with finding housing and support for unaccompanied youth because when they turn 18 and “age-out”, they are no longer eligible to live in the government run assisted-living centres and it is very difficult for them to find safe housing that they can afford.
- **Accessibility and cost of health care:** In Turkey, once individuals are registered and documented as refugees, they have the right to access healthcare at the same cost as nationals. However, in the event that refugees don’t have savings or an income, these costs are prohibitively expensive. Furthermore, refugees must hire a translator to help translate with doctors, which is an additional cost. Medication is also an expense that many young refugees and their families cannot afford.
- **Difficulty to attain legal and personal documents:** Participants stressed that it was difficult for young refugees to obtain refugee registration documents and other personal identification documents, such as residence permits or work permits. Refugee documents are necessary in order to access services.
- **Freedom of movement including internal and international travel permissions.** Young refugees noted intense frustration that they could not obtain travel documents. One participant who is a

competitive athlete noted, *“Although I have won several medals in Turkey, I can’t participate in international events like the Olympics...”* Another participant noted that he had won an Erasmus scholarship to study in Western Europe, but couldn’t accept it because he couldn’t obtain travel documents.

The effort to identify needs and challenges sparked considerable discussion about the challenges that young refugees face. One participant noted, *“The basic challenge we faced was differentiating between the issues and needs for all youth and those relevant for refugee youths.”*

### Prioritisation

After identifying the core issues faced by refugee youth in Turkey, participants were asked to work in small groups to prioritise the top nine issues they faced, through an exercise called “Diamond Ranking”. This activity is designed to encourage debate and deeper analysis of the issues and to teach participants about the importance of reaching consensus and compromise. Most of the participants found the exercise relatively easy *“because we deal with these issues on a daily basis.”* Another commented that it was *“Easy in a team, but not by yourself.”* Some participants found it difficult because all the issues discussed are significant problems for refugee youth. As one participant noted, *“They are all priorities.”* The top five issues prioritised by the participants were:



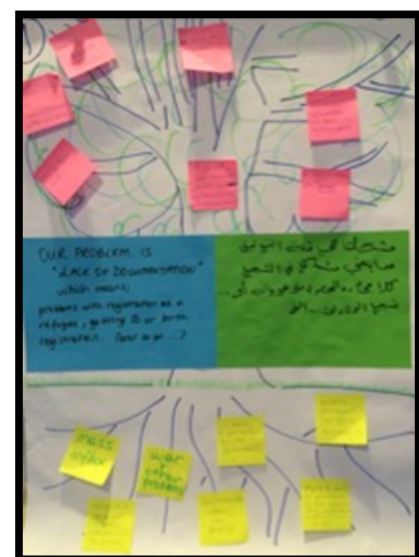
1. Personal documentation, including residence permits, work permits, and travel permits;
2. Financial difficulties and lack of work opportunities;
3. Languages, including language as a barrier to education the need for language courses, and access to education;
4. Education, including quality of education and scholarships to access education; and
5. Psychosocial counselling.

Other issues that ranked high were housing, healthcare, social integration.

### Analysing problems using problem trees

In a follow on exercise, each group selected one of their top three priority issues and used problem trees to analyse the root causes of each issue and its impacts in more depth. Each small group worked on one of the following problems:

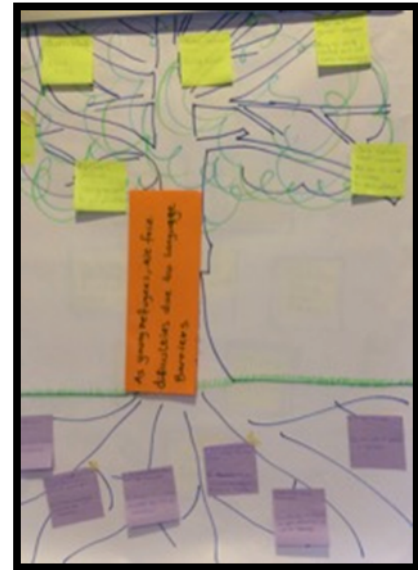
- Lack of documentation;
- Difficulties with education due to language barriers;
- Lack of psychosocial guidance; and



- Health services are too expensive to access.

Each group first analysed the problem and then developed a creative way to express their ideas.

Group 1 focused on **refugees' difficulties in registering as a refugee and obtaining personal identification and other legal and personal documents**. They identified the mass influx of refugees due to the conflict in Syria, which overwhelmed the administrative process as a root cause. They also note that refugees sometimes lack information about the registration process and don't know where or how to apply. Also refugees themselves are often missing some or all of their documents, due to the conflict and their flight, which also slows down the process. Finally, some people are trying to deceive authorities by making fake applications and that slows down the process for legitimate asylum seekers and feeds the misperception of the government.



The group also analysed the multiple impacts of this problem, which are related and complex. Without registration and personal documentation, refugees are not able to work, access education and health services, or open a bank account. Without personal documentation, they don't have a legal status within Turkey and they can't obtain birth certificates, which leaves children at risk of statelessness. Without documents, young refugees can't obtain travel documents, so their travel is restricted both within and beyond Turkey, which limits their ability to take advantage of any opportunities to participate in workshops or conferences. The group considered using different approaches to express this problem including a poem, a pantomime showing the difficulties caused by lack of documentation, or a play reflecting the problems related to documentation. Finally, the group decided to combine these elements and develop a drama that included reading of the poem written by one of the participants.

Group 2 focused on **difficulties in education due to language barriers**. They identified multiple causes including the challenges faced by young refugees in learning Turkish because they can't take language courses until they have obtained refugee documents. In addition, there is a common perception amongst young refugees that the free language courses offered are often low quality, while private Turkish classes are too expensive for most refugees to attend. Participants explained that they are not able to access education in their own native language, but they are not able to speak Turkish well enough to attend Turkish school or university, so they are effectively obstructed from accessing education. Others commented that some young refugees speak enough Turkish to attend school, but text books and materials are

*"I am a refugee  
I am a human being  
I am in the corners of  
everywhere  
I am a house without  
address  
I was sentenced by life  
War scattered me  
everywhere  
Other countries collected  
me  
I'm left without identity  
and  
A prison without walls  
I'm on the side of things  
I'm a building with no  
structure  
I'm cuffed in a jungle  
inhabited by humans,  
being born like street cats  
not like human beings"*

all in Turkish, and many don't have a good enough command of Turkish to read the books and materials.

The group highlighted the impacts of difficulties in education due to language barriers. They noted that not being able to access education results in refugees being unable to develop academic, vocational, or professional skills and qualifications. Even for those who are able to attend school, difficulty with the language can result in difficulty understanding the course materials, being unable to understand social and scientific terminology, and difficulty in realising their academic potential. The group decided to use drama to express their ideas. They worked on a skit depicting a young refugee recently enrolled in Turkish school who cannot speak Turkish, making it difficult for the refugee to communicate with students and teachers. At the end, this same student becomes an important scientist because she was able to get appropriate Turkish language courses and continue her education.

Group 3 focused on **lack of psychosocial guidance**. Participants commented that everyone may need a psychosocial counselling at some point in their lives, but people affected by conflict need psychological support more urgently. Participants identified several factors that make it difficult for refugees to access the psychosocial help and support that they need. They noted that there is a lack of information or publicity about existing psychosocial services and sometimes the places where refugees could access information are far away from where they live. Participants noted that there is an insufficient number of psychosocial counsellors, and there is a sense that existing services expect refugees who need support to come to them, but in fact there is a need for much more outreach. They also identified the language barrier, which makes it hard for young people to access a counsellor to whom they can talk in their own language. Finally, they noted that people, those in need of help and others, are not giving priority to these issues.

The group identified several impacts of this problem. Participants commented that not addressing psychosocial distress fuels a general lack of awareness and trust. They also pointed out that psychosocial distress can lead to depression, isolation, and a sense of helplessness, all of which can contribute to young people getting involved in negative activities. This group discussed different ways to portray the absence of support and help for psychosocial problems. They decided to stage a border crossing scenario to show how they need for psychosocial support is connected with other issues.

Group 4 focused on analysing the **high cost of health services**. They explained that even though refugees are entitled to basic healthcare at designated clinics for the same fees as Turkish citizens, many of them have no way to pay these fees because they are not able to work. Participants noted that refugees need to wait for long time to get an appointment for health services at designated clinics, which may cause them to miss work or school. The delays are due in part to a practice of referring all refugees to a specific doctor's office or clinic, which then becomes overwhelmed by the caseload, resulting in long waits. Participants also





noted the need for interpreters to translate within doctors' offices, clinics, and hospitals. As a result of these factors, refugees go to private doctors to access medical care more quickly, but at a cost. In some cases, they travel to another city in search of better and faster care. Refugees also have to pay for medications, and for translators, which is expensive. The impacts of the high cost of healthcare include missing work or school to go to the doctor or take a family member to the doctor, spending limited financial resources, and worrying about personal health, or the health of a family member. The group developed a skit to depicting the hidden costs of healthcare for refugees.

### **Finding more solutions to priority issues**

After discussing and analysing the problems, the "World Café" exercise was used to encourage youth to brainstorm creative solutions to the problems they face. Four issues were selected from the diamond ranking exercise, which although not ranked in the top three, were the focus of much discussion and debate. These included:

1. Expensive accommodation;
2. Lack of employment opportunities for young refugees;
3. Early marriage; and
4. No support for scholarships.

After brainstorming solutions, youth were then asked to consider what role youth could take in making these solutions a reality. The groups had very animated discussions focused on clarifying the problems, brainstorming solutions, and considering how youth could be engaged in realising those solutions.

Group 1 worked on finding **solutions for expensive accommodation**. Youth noted that it is important to consider accommodation for youth living on their own, but also for youth living with their families. For youth on their own, they suggested that local families could take in young refugees, that the government could provide some cash for rent for refugee youth, or that host communities could provide alternative accommodation. Turkish youth noted that Turkish students have the same problems as refugee students as regards difficulty to find affordable housing. They suggested that the focus should be on enabling refugee students to access to work in order to cover rent. Considering youth on their own as well as youth living with their families, the group also emphasised the importance of having a contract to regulate the rental agreements. They proposed some policy approaches that the government could take, including mortgage support to enable refugees to buy property with subsidised loans or imposing rent control to limit the increase in rents or allow refugees to live for free in dormitories.

In terms of how youth could work on solutions to address expensive housing, participants proposed that youth should form a committee, undertake an assessment of young refugees in need of housing document this in a database, and then use that information to address the problems of housing and rent to government and other organisations. They noted that youth could use social media and public media to highlight the difficulties that young refugees and their families face. They also suggested providing a service via social media to connect those in need of housing with those who have properties that refugees could live in. They also discussed that young refugees together with Turkish youth could form a construction company to access loans and employ young refugee to refurbish abandoned building or build new housing for young refugees. Finally, they had the idea of involving young multi-lingual refugees as mediators between house owners and tenants to address problems related to high rents and lease agreements.

Group 2: worked on finding solutions to the problem of **“Lack of employment opportunities – for young refugees”**.

They looked at actions that the government authorities could take to address the lack of employment opportunities for young refugees, including allowing young refugees to work without work permits, preventing abuse of youth and employers in term of payment, providing incentives for businesses to hire refugees, and monitoring and penalising employers who abuse foreigners. They also suggested joint initiatives involving



government, non-governmental agencies, and businesses to help refugees find work, and prevent abuse. They proposed creating job centres specialised in receiving young refugees’ resumes and referring them to work opportunities.

Participants proposed that youth could use social media to form legal aid societies in order to help young refugees be aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to employment laws and regulations in Turkey. They stressed that young refugees should encourage other young refugees to actively look for work by translating their CVs to Turkish and sending them to all different kinds of humanitarian organisations and private sector businesses. They proposed that youth could establish youth committees to support young refugees to find employment. Such a committee could communicate with organisations to publicize young refugees’ skills; establish an internet platform to share information about job openings and employment law; run a hotline to identify and document cases of employment abuse and injustice involving young refugees; and generally act as a type of clearing house to receive refugees’ applications or curriculum vitae (CVs) and disseminate them to potential employers.

Group 3 worked on finding solutions to **“Early Marriage”**. The group agreed that NGOs and UNHCR have a responsibility to raise awareness about the risks of early marriage and to follow up on early marriage cases while the government has the responsibility to issue and enforce rules and laws. Participants noted that there is a need for education and counselling sessions at schools and social centres to help young refugees, especially girls and young women and their parents, to understand the risks of early marriage. Such counselling sessions should highlight: why it is better for girls to marry when they are older, that they have the right not to be forced into marriage, and how to report early marriage to the police. These services need to be coupled with a hotline to the government and UNHCR for reporting early marriage cases and seeking assistance. Participants also agreed on the need to reach out to the religious people who are performing the marriages to explain to them that it is illegal. Participants also noted that it would be good to reach out with education and awareness raising through TV and social media, particularly to conservative families who are less likely to allow their children to attend awareness raising sessions. They also proposed opening youth centres for so that young refugees have a place to go and constructive activities to keep them busy.

Youth had great suggestions as to what youth themselves could do to discourage early marriage. They suggested using different forums, including TV talk show hosts, street performance art, posters, and banners. They suggested trying to involve successful young leaders and celebrities to

grab the attention of young people and inspire them not to get married, but also doing street performances and making banners with key messages discouraging early or forced marriage. Whatever the format, they suggested that the key messages should focus on the negative physical and emotional impacts of early and forced marriage for young people, including high divorce rates and interrupted education.



Group 4 worked on finding solutions to the problem of “no support for scholarships”. Participants discussed the perception in Turkey that young refugees are not educated, don’t need to be educated and are not able to integrate into universities. They expressed frustration that there is not a wider recognition of young refugees’ academic capacities and desire to study. Participants suggested holding public events and using billboards, brochures, and social media to highlight young refugees’ talents, their drive to study, and the difficulties that they face, and to explain how they need financial assistance to realise their education. The group suggested forming a youth group and facilitating an information exchange between refugee youth and UNHCR, NGOs, the government, Turkish citizens, and business people to share locally specific information about possible sources of financial assistance. They also suggested that the government develop programmes together with private sector business so that they can support scholarships. Finally, they suggested that UNHCR should help young refugees to access online education resources.



In debriefing with participants about the exercises to identify and analyse problems and to develop solutions, one participant commented that it was easier to identify problems than to develop solutions. Another participant commented that she liked working on solutions because it gave her more hope than talking about problems.

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### **Solution Storyboards**

Participants worked in groups through storyboards to develop more focused and detailed solutions for the problems they had earlier analysed using the problem trees.

Group 1 developed a storyboard on how to address the issue of “documentation for refugees”. They suggested forming a youth network to reach out to people who don’t have documents in order to help them understand the importance of registering with the government as refugees and informing them how to register and obtain refugee documents. They noted that effective outreach could include providing information in front of registration buildings and also going to refugee homes to explain that they must obtain refugee documents in order to access health care and education. They suggested that it would be important for the youth to work together with UNHCR, DGMM, the police and NGOs for those organisations to recognise the youth volunteers as legitimate providers of information. The group noted that informing young refugees where and how to register as refugees, would make it easier and quicker for young refugees to register and obtain refugee and other personal identification documentation.

Group 2 identified that the problem of **“difficulties in education due to language barriers”** could be solved by a two-pronged approach: 1) Translation of resources and 2) Teaching students in their native language. They proposed that youth could take an active role in supporting these solutions by doing translations, teaching Turkish to others, and asking Turkish friends for help with the language. They identified support that they would need from the Ministry of Education, university rectors, school masters and teachers, municipal authorities, UNHCR, and NGOs, including editing and proofreading translated materials, and providing more books in different languages. The group felt that the impact of solving the problem of the language barrier in education would be significant and would include enabling young refugees to be good students, graduate, and become professionals with the capacity to contribute to society in Turkey and also in their home countries when they return. As one young woman commented, *“We can really help Turkey if we are successful and we can also help our own countries when we go back.”*



Group 3 worked on finding solutions to the problem of a **“lack of psychosocial guidance”** for young refugees. They proposed that youth could work with UNHCR, government, and NGOs to create **“meeting points”** for young refugees and national youth. These meeting points could employ multi-lingual refugee and national youth to direct young refugees to the services that they need. The meeting points could provide space for government services and NGOs to offer legal and psychological assistance. These meeting points could have a positive impact by helping youth to: understand their rights, access the information and services that they need, and connect with other young people.

Group 4 developed a storyboard to map out how to address the **“limited access to healthcare due to high costs”**. The group suggested that NGOs, government authorities from the Ministry of Education, and businesses should support Turkish language courses to help young refugees to learn Turkish. Young refugees with Turkish language skills could form a network of young people to volunteer or work for small fees as translators to help refugees access healthcare. They would need to coordinate and have support from authorities like Ministry of Health and local clinics or hospitals in order to be in contact with those who need assistance. The impact of this solution would be that young refugees would learn new skills that could eventually help them find work. At the same time, they would feel useful and engaged to be able to help other community members to access healthcare.

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Recommendations, Solutions and Core Actions

**Recommendations: “We the youth recommend that stakeholders work with us to ....”**

During the four-day consultation, youth were encouraged in their breaks and through formal



activities to consider what recommendations they would make to a global audience that would improve the lives of young refugees. A graffiti-style wall provided the informal space to record their recommendations at any point during the consultation. On the third day, participants had a very productive and focused brainstorming session and produced more than 200 recommendations that articulated how youth could work together with specific stakeholders to tackle the problems that young refugees face. Another important outcome of

this brainstorming session was that youth came up with recommendations for important and complex issues that had not previously been raised as part of the group discussion. These included: protection concerns and support for unaccompanied children living in state-supported group homes, support for persons with disabilities, and prevention of recruitment into terrorist organisations. Each of the brainstorming groups shared their ideas with the full group and then participants used sticky dots to vote for their top five choices.

The top three recommendations that received the most votes were the following:

**With regard to concerns about radical groups recruiting young refugees, youth recommend that the Ministry of Education, NGOs and other organisations** work with youth to enlighten refugee youth about potential exploitation by radical groups and help them to find constructive activities on which to focus their energy. The young people emphasised that the best weapons against radicalisation are good healthcare, good education, and something to do. They stressed that while young refugees can't always catch up in school, they can go to vocational training, participate in other informal learning opportunities, and be involved in youth activities. They stressed that staying busy with constructive activities can prevent recruitment. Young refugees emphasised *"We the youth should be the ones who enlighten the refugee youth about this exploitation."*

**With regard to the language barrier in education, youth recommend that the Ministry of Education and publishers** work with and support youth to translate books and sources from Turkish to other languages so that refugee students can understand and study.

**With regard to travel documents, youth recommend to Turkish Government to give temporary travel documents to young refugees who are successful in sports, academics, and the arts** to enable them to travel to international competitions or other events.

The other recommendations that received the most support have been noted below, grouped thematically as follows.

**With regard to health, youth recommend** to ministry officials to allow young refugees to serve as translators in hospitals and government offices. They also recommend that the Ministry of Health provide vaccinations for refugee children and women at clinics near to where refugees are living, noting that because parents have to go too far to reach clinics where vaccinations are offered, they have stopped vaccinating their children. Finally, youth also recommended that young refugees should be provided with sexual education courses, health counselling services specific to refugees, and psychological assistance.

**With regard to documentation, youth recommend** that the government accelerate the processes for young refugees to obtain refugee documentation and other personal identification and for the

government to support refugees to be able to have temporary travel documents. They also recommended that university students should have the right to naturalisation as Turkish citizens.

**With regard to the language barrier, youth recommend:** *“Give us the chance to learn Turkish through free language courses and we will be more than happy to be part of solution for language problem between locals and refugees.”* Participants recommended that young refugees could work together with Turkish youth to organise language exchange courses in which young people would teach each other their languages. They also proposed that the Ministry of Education and NGOs establish free or very low cost language classes throughout the country.

**With regard to education, youth recommend** that the Ministry of Education work with businesses and young refugees to support scholarships, loans, and subsidised or free dormitories. They also proposed that the same actors establish youth learning centres to provide short-term vocational courses informal learning opportunities and also support activities like drawing, sports, and performing arts to give young people something constructive to do. They suggest that youth could conduct home visits to refugee families to involve them in the youth learning centres.

**With regard to work opportunities, youth recommend** that the Ministry of Labour and the private sector work with youth to provide work permits, particularly for skilled and qualified refugees in fields in which there is a demand like medicine and engineering. They also recommend providing work permits for young refugees, particularly for humanitarian work with NGOs or government offices. They also proposed that the government provide tax breaks or subsidies for private businesses that hire refugees.

**With regard to protection concerns and access to psychosocial support, youth recommend** to UNHCR and NGOs to reach out and identify refugees in need of information about psychosocial services and to address protection issues like child abuse and early or forced marriage. Youth also proposed establishing social support centres for young refugees with special attention paid to persons with disabilities or others who may be vulnerable or in risky situations.

**With regard to challenges for unaccompanied youth, youth recommend** more regular monitoring of the government’s assisted-living centres where young refugees under the age of 18 are accommodated. They also suggested providing more educational opportunities, particularly to learn Turkish, for those young people so that they have something constructive to do. Finally, they highlighted concerns about how access to support and housing ends abruptly for young people when they turn 18 and recommended allowing older youth to stay at the assisted-living centres until they are 21 and supporting them to learn Turkish.

Participants commented that it was satisfying to develop these recommendations. As one young person commented, *“The activities and team work make me think deeply. This is the first time I try to focus on all the problems that I face as a refugee youth and the solutions for each of them.”*

## Stakeholders Dialogue

The Stakeholders Dialogue took place on the morning of the fourth day. The meeting was attended by 31 stakeholders from 23 organisations and government agencies, including:

- Min. of Family and Social Protection
- Min. of Interior
- UNHCR Turkey

- UNDP
- UNICEF
- Intern. Medical Corps
- Human Resource Development Foundation
- Women and Youth Entrepreneurship Centre
- Community Volunteers Foundation
- Embassy of Denmark
- Embassy of Ireland
- Embassy of the USA (BPRM)
- UNFPA
- ICMC
- IOM
- Embassy of Switzerland
- Mother and Education Foundation
- ASAM
- RSC
- UNHCR

### **Stakeholders Dialogue objectives and structure**

The objectives of the stakeholders dialogue were:

- To share youth experiences, ideas, and recommendations;
- To influence others and gain support for youth ideas;
- To showcase the importance of involving youth in planning and decision making; and
- To build partnerships.

Four youth participants opened the meeting with a welcome speech outlining the purpose of the consultation and providing an explanation of the previous three days, using the flipcharts and images that had been produced to explain the activities.

### **Group presentations**

Working in their groups, the youth had developed creative presentations to showcase the issues they had been analysing and to explain the actions youth could take to bring about solutions and their recommendations for what stakeholders could do to support and supplement these actions.

The topics selected included:

1. **Lack of documentation:** This group developed a skit with percussion accompaniment and used the refrain “I am a refugee; I exist” to highlight the importance of documentation.
2. **Difficulties in education due to language barriers:** This group developed a skit to show the difficulties of the language barrier and to suggest how youth could be part of the solution.
3. **Early marriage and the need for psychosocial guidance:** This group created a video to serve as a background while group members each spoke about a different aspect of early marriage.
4. **Health services are too expensive to access:** This group put on a skit to show the different hidden costs of healthcare for refugees including translation, going to private clinics due to overcrowding, and the cost of prescriptions.

## Round table discussions with stakeholders

After the presentations, round table discussions afforded youth and stakeholders the opportunity to engage in more focused conversations. This part of the stakeholders dialogue was structured as a “World Café” and involved participants rotating from one table to another to enable the youth to engage with different stakeholders. Many of the youth took the opportunity to express themselves and ask direct, and often challenging, questions of the stakeholders or to bring issues of concern to their attention. Some of the main topics discussed included:



- Monitoring and support for unaccompanied children living in state run group homes. One participant who is himself an unaccompanied child had documented protection concerns for unaccompanied children and was able to share them along with recommendations for how to better address them;
- Threats related to recruitment of young refugees into radical groups;
- The need for access to psychosocial support;
- The challenges related to accessing education, including language barriers and cost and the need for more scholarships;
- Lack of capacity building and leadership opportunities for youth; and
- The need for economic empowerment opportunities for families, and barriers to accessing employment.

## Recommendations and Open Discussion

Space was then provided for an “open mic” session. This involved active engagement between youth and stakeholders, and was chaired by two young people with support of the facilitation team. This session allowed anyone in the room to speak in response to what they had heard or discussed during the morning, with a focus on concrete suggestions and actions to ensure sustainable outcomes from the meeting. One young woman who has been actively working to prevent recruitment of youth into terrorist organisations spoke passionately and effectively about this issue. Another young refugee expressed the need for more scholarships.

Several participants specifically noted in the evaluations that the stakeholders dialogue was a highlight of the consultation and that they really appreciated the opportunity to present the issues and challenges facing young refugees directly to government and NGO actors. A few participants expressed frustration with the format. One person noted that they were not able to address specific issues, such as registration, directly to those with the power to solve them. Another expressed that he had hoped for more specific and action-oriented commitments from the stakeholders.

## Next Steps/Future Action

During the final debrief meeting with youth on day four and in their final written evaluation forms, many of the participants expressed an interest in future engagement. They suggested creating a Facebook page for the group, starting a WhatsApp group to stay in touch, and setting up a Skype group to meet regularly and help each other to develop their advocacy skills. The youth agreed to work together on the identified solutions. A few of the participants who live in the camps proposed



that they facilitate similar consultations in the camps and then share outcomes with international and national NGOs. They also proposed setting up a youth assembly involving refugee youth and Turkish youth.



## Evaluations

### Daily Youth Evaluation

Evaluation tools were used at the end of the first two days to capture ideas, learning, and recommendations from the participants. At the end of day one, participants were asked to indicate what they enjoyed, what they did not enjoy, and what they would recommend for the next day by sharing comments anonymously on a prepared flipchart sheet. The results showed that the majority of participants had enjoyed the day in terms of the activities, the topics, the interactions and group dynamics, and the opportunity to self-reflect. The negative comments focused on the challenges related to translation. Constructive recommendations included better time management, more time to discuss issues, and more help with translation. At the end of day two, participants were asked to share one word to describe the day. Examples of the responses included: fun, consuming, useful, productive, interesting, great, beautiful, effective, good, shining, and productive.

### Final Participant Evaluation

At the end of day four, participants had the opportunity to comment on the extent to which the consultation had contributed to the intended GRYC outcomes, to share their opinions about the consultation process and outcomes, and to recommend changes for future consultations. Forms were provided in English, with interpreters available to support the non-English speaking youth to ensure that they felt comfortable and confident in expressing themselves. The results of the evaluation, including comments, are noted below.

**GRYC Outcome 1:** Through my participation in this consultation, I had the opportunity to identify and discuss issues that are important to me and my community, and to develop and suggest solutions.

- Completely agree – 12 participants
- Mostly agree – 8 participants
- Partially agree – 1 participant

*“Through this process I managed to express all my thoughts and my problems...”*

**GRYC Outcome 2:** Through my participation in this consultation, I have developed and improved my leadership and advocacy skills.

- Completely agree – 11 participants
- Mostly agree – 7 participants
- Partially agree – 1 participant
- Do not agree – 1 participant

*“Through this process, I managed to develop my skills... and develop of myself in terms of presentation and leadership.”*

*“In this consultation, I learned leadership skills, analysing the problems, finding solutions, social communication with others.”*

**GRYC Outcome 3:** Through my participation in this consultation, I am more aware of organisations that I can engage with at a local and national level.

- Completely agree – 11 participants
- Mostly agree – 4 participants
- Partially agree – 6 participants

*“Through my participation in this consultation I now know which organisations I am looking for and which organisations can help me.”*

*“One of the issues that the young refugee face is being in dark about the organisations that they can seek support from. I believe that this part must be longer and more comprehensive to clarify expectations”.*

**GRYC Outcome 4:** Through my participation in this consultation, I have more opportunities to develop relationships with youth groups and organisations locally, nationally, and globally.

- Completely agree – 10 participants
- Mostly agree – 5 participants
- Partially agree – 6 participants

*“We can create a ‘youth assembly’. We learned how to contact the organisations that may support this idea.”*

**GRYC Outcome 5:** Through my participation in this consultation, I understand more about the experiences of other refugee youth and national youth.

- Completely agree – 13 participants
- Mostly agree – 6 participants
- Partially agree – 2 participants

*“This will help the youth to understand that these are not only their problems and that they are not alone in this path.”*

**Do you feel that you have been listened to at this consultation?**

Based on the evaluation responses, it appears that most participants felt that they were listened to.

- *“I believe we could make our voices heard during the consultation.”*
- *“Yes. The youth were presented this opportunity at the stakeholders meeting.”*
- *“Yes, we communicated to the concerned authorities directly and talked about our problems.”*

**What specific ideas do you have for action based on your involvement in this consultation?**

Participants had a number of suggestions for specific follow-up actions.

- *“Participation in voluntary campaigns to educate refugees about the different problems.”*

- *“Establishing a centre to benefit more from academic refugees. Setting up a group of young volunteers.”*
- *“Yes, I want to teach language with foreigners and do interpretation for hospitals for sick refugees for free.”*
- *“Make the same meetings but on the city level in order to discuss the related problems to the city.”*



**Did this consultation meet your expectations? Please explain your answer:**

Based on the evaluation responses, it appears that some of the participants would have appreciated more information about the consultation, however most felt that it met or exceeded their expectations.

- *“Yes, I delivered my voice to all and I found solutions.”*
- *“Yes, it was complete in the side of information and exercises.”*
- *“Absolutely, it was a fun learning experience.”*

**What learning are you taking away from this consultation?**

Based on the evaluation responses, it seems that the consultation succeeded in supporting participants to make new friends, to analyse and speak out about the problems facing young refugees, to learn advocacy skills, and to be involved in solutions as evidenced in the quotes shared below.

- *“I am taking away the information about how a number of institutions function and how we can contact them.”*
- *“I learned that we youth have a role to solve our problems and I can be part of the solution.”*
- *“How to communicate our problems and generate solutions with different stakeholders.”*
- *“Human beings of various races, various languages, and various beliefs could be happy and help solve each other’s problems.”*
- *“I learned a lot about self-confidence, taking the responsibility, not losing the hope, feeling the others and the ability to make decisions.”*
- *“First, the work of community spirit. Second, working with different people, refugees with different countries.”*

## Lessons Learned

This consultation in Turkey was the last consultation planned in this series of consultations organised by UNHCR and WRC. The lessons from this consultation informed the Global Consultation (which took place in Geneva during June 2016), and will also feed into guidance and tools developed to support future consultations. Below is a summary of the main strengths and challenges encountered in Turkey.

## Challenges

Translation was a significant challenge throughout the consultation. In the evaluations, several participants commented that they had some frustrations related to communicating across the language barriers and would have appreciated simultaneous



translation. Unfortunately, simultaneous translation was not feasible because it would have been cumbersome and prohibitively expensive to incorporate it into the small group work and plenary sessions. Ensuring that key explanations were translated into relevant languages slowed down the process, leaving less time for groups to work on the exercises. As a result, some participants felt rushed. However, facilitators and organisers put a huge effort into trying to address the translation issues. As the consultation progressed and the facilitators and the participants themselves became more aware of the language abilities and needs of individuals within the group, the translation proceeded much more smoothly.



Managing expectations before and after the consultation is very important. In the evaluation, one youth noted, *“It would have been useful to have a better briefing before the actual consultation.”* Another participant mentioned, *“We could have been informed more about the upcoming activities.”* Some youth may have arrived with expectations that the problems identified could be solved quickly by others. One participant mentioned that they *“expected and wanted the consultation itself to be more solutions- and results-oriented.”* Instead, the consultation focused on how youth could be empowered to actively engage in order to be part of the solution themselves. However, some participants seemed to really grow in their understanding of how to cope with the problems that refugee youth face. As one participant noted, *“I realised that the solutions for some of problems are time consuming and difficult, thus I need to be patient and my expectations should cope with the reality.”*

Finally, this was quite a serious and sophisticated group, many of whom are studying at the university level. Some of the participants noted that they were not keen on the energisers and games that were part of the facilitation methodology.

## **Strengths**

A committed and versatile team was crucial in making the consultation a success. The coordination amongst the organisers and the facilitators was straightforward. The willingness of the facilitators to work bilingually contributed to managing the challenges of translation.

UNHCR Turkey and the NGOs that organized the consultation brought together a diverse group of refugee and national youth, both geographically and in terms of issues of their interests and expertise. The participants were vocal and effective in raising their issues of interest. Activists on LGBTI issues highlighted the need for inclusion and acceptance of different sexual orientations and gender identities. Likewise, the youth with a visible disability demonstrated by example and via his comments the importance of ensuring services and support for differently abled youth. Youth who were knowledgeable and active on women's issues and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) were outspoken as advocates in this regard. One of the unaccompanied young refugees had documented some protection concerns for unaccompanied youth and raised these issues to the attention of his peers and the stakeholders. Finally, a young woman who has been an active in addressing recruitment of refugee youth into radical groups raised this issue, which is sensitive, and which sparked constructive discussion amongst the youth.

The stakeholders dialogue included a mix of actors who were interested and responsive to what the youth had to say. The young people did an excellent job in using creative approaches to highlight and present some of the challenges that young refugees face, but also to showcase how youth can be involved in the solutions. As noted above, many of the youth cited the stakeholders dialogue as a highlight of the consultation. This group was particularly adept at generating and formulating realistic recommendations for how youth and stakeholders could work together to take positive action to address the problems and issues identified.

## **Conclusion**

This consultation brought together a determined and dynamic group of youth, many of whom are already actively involved in their communities. All of the participants demonstrated a keen desire to learn from each other and to work together, regardless of nationality, abilities/disabilities, gender, sexual orientation or other factors, to make their solutions a reality. That desire to make and maintain connections will be crucial to ensuring that the momentum of this consultation is sustained. Their intensive work over the four days generated many innovative ideas and recommendations to address the issues that concern them most. The new connections made with key individuals and organisations as a result of the stakeholders dialogue, can provide potential for new approaches. This consultation highlighted the importance of providing space and opportunity for refugee youth to share their experiences, voice their opinions and ideas, and be recognised as active and crucial partners.

At the time of this consultation, Turkey continues to cope with an unprecedented number of refugees. This consultation highlighted the value of investing in youth and recognising their potential as positive role models who can promote tolerance and civic engagement in their communities.