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Syrian University Students in Turkish Higher Education: Immediate Vulnerabilities, Future Challenges



**Bologna Process
Researchers' Conference**
Future of Higher Education

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THIS PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE DAAD'S SCHEME OF HOPES



HOPE: HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYRIAN STUDENTS

DAAD      



ELITE DIALOGUE II

Research Background

Higher Education is a strong tool for personal, social and economical empowerment and integration into the host country

ED I and II research aims

- to analyse the conditions/needs and challenges of Syrian students and academics in Turkish higher education
- to investigate the ways to mediate between their community and Turkish society.
- The main question of the research is
 - «how do the Syrian university students adapt to the Universities and integrate into society in Turkey?»

Global Setting

The diagram consists of two large, stylized arrows pointing in opposite directions. The left arrow points left and contains text about migrants in developed countries. The right arrow points right and contains text about refugees in poor countries. A horizontal line connects the two arrows, with a small grey tab-like shape on the right side of the line.

**MORE THAN 80% OF
MIGRANTS ARE IN
DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES**

- **CONTRIBUTE TO THE
ECONOMY**

**MORE THAN 85 % OF
REFUGEES ARE IN POOR
COUNTRIES**

- **DO NOT HAVE THE SAME
CHANCE**
-

Syrian Crisis and Turkey: Key Facts

Turkey is hosting the largest numbers of refugees in the world since 2014

4.1 Million (3.6 million Syrians)

Rapid and large numbers of influx
58 thousand in 2011
4.1 million in 2019

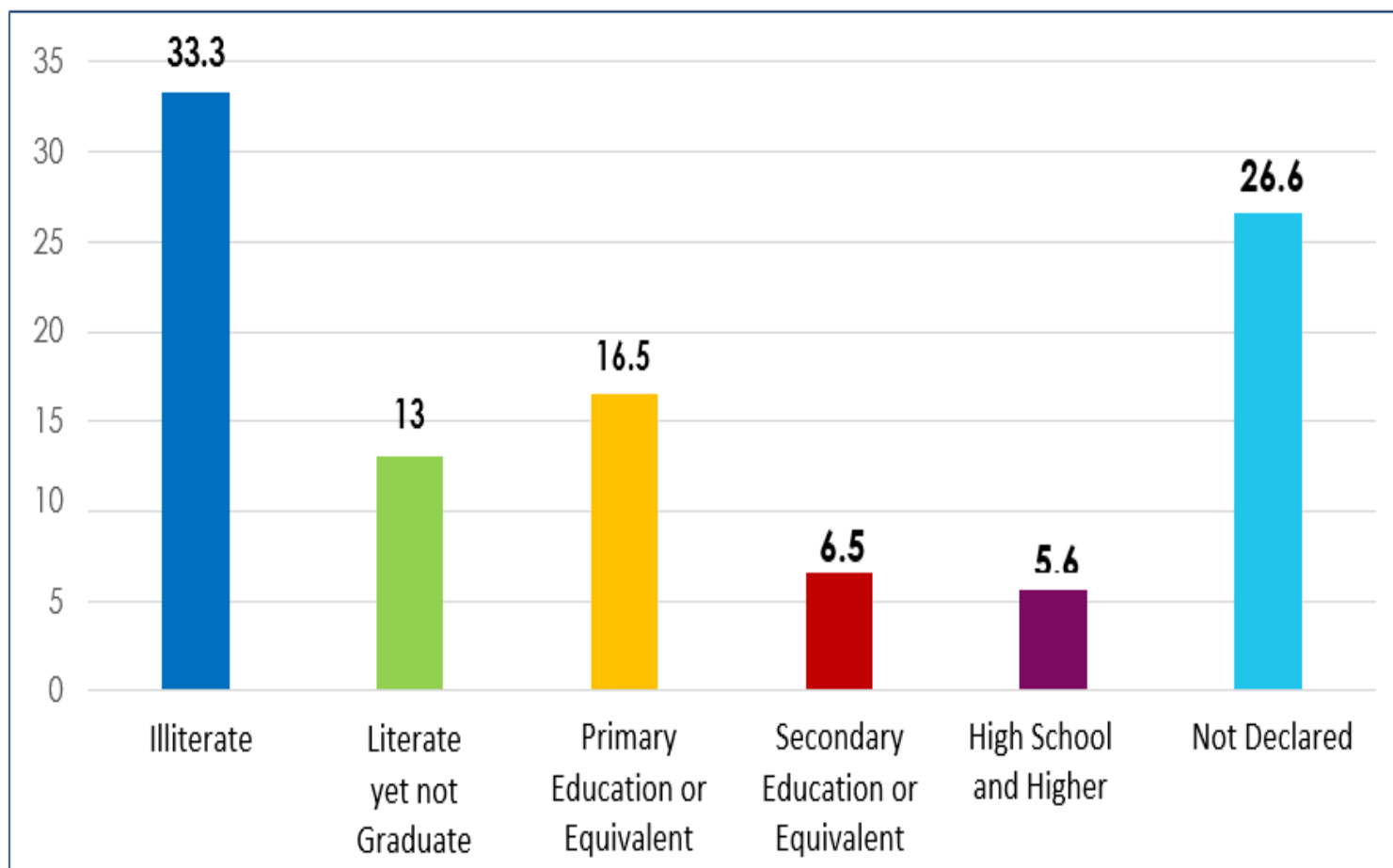
Very young age
778.044 between 15-24 age group
1.234.000 between 5-17 age group

Education level is low (see table 1)

Birth rate is high
385.000 new born in Turkey since 2011

Legal status is not refugees, but under «temporary protection» according to Geneva Convention 1951 and following protocols

Syrians uTP in Turkey according to their Educational Statuses (%) March 2015



Turkish Higher Education System

- CoHE is the responsible body to plan and supervise HE.
- Number of universities: 209 HEIs (123 public, 73 foundation, 5 vocational school)
- Number of students: 7.560.371 (2017-2018)
- Access to HE:
 - Turkish citizens: highly competitive nationwide selection exam
 - 2.381.412 students took the exam 857.240 (36 %) were placed (CoHE, 2019)
 - International students: individual HEIs according to guidelines and YÖS exam
 - Refugees: different tracks
- Main challenges:
 - Young population
 - Supply-demand imbalance
 - Only route for labour market
 - Quantity-quality
 - Open education is 50%
 - High rate of unemployment in youth (25.5% in 15-24 age group)

Policies developed for **Refugees** Access to HE

2011

- First time admissions – similar to the other international students

2013

- Transfer students (**with documents**) – apply directly to HEIs.

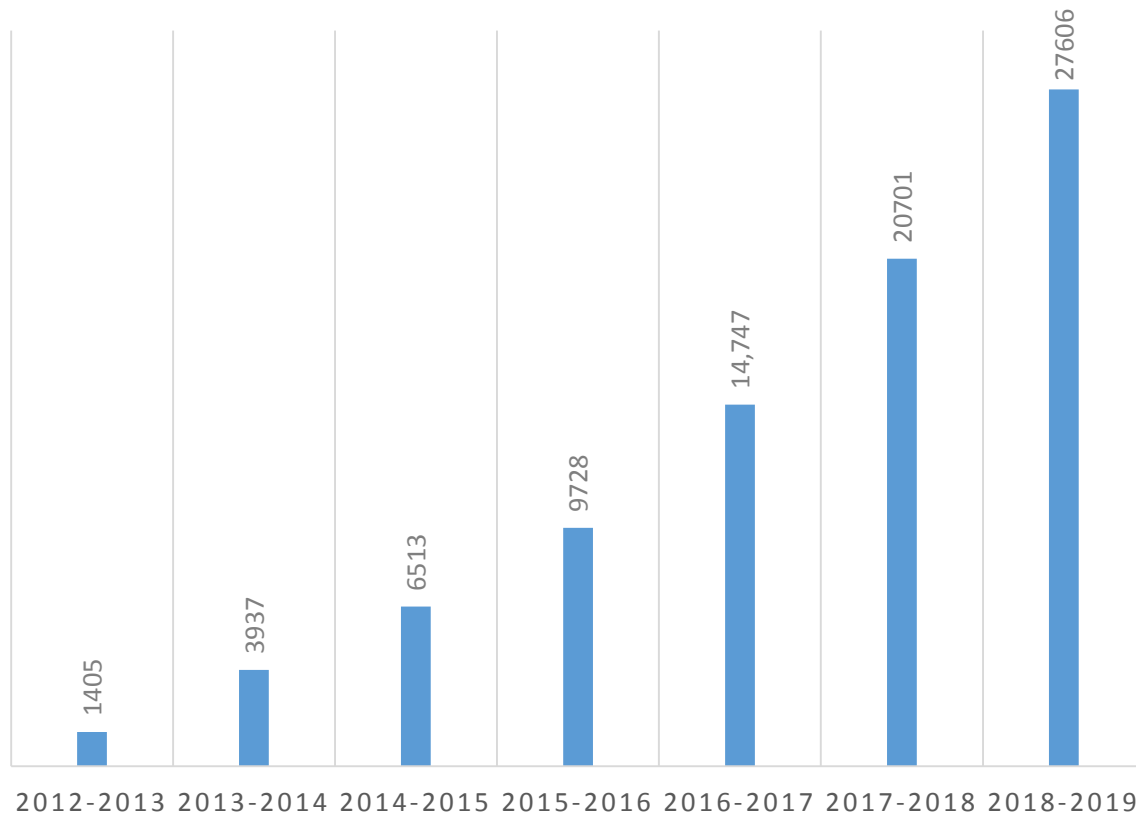
2014-15

- Transfer students (**without documents**) – register as special students at 7 selected universities

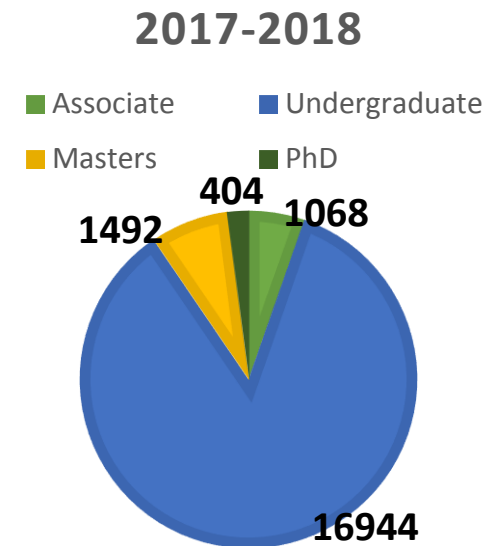
2017

- Recognition and equivalence of the degrees (without documents) is facilitated and examined by commissions established by the CoHE
- Free from the international tuition fee
- YTB gives and coordinates scholarships

Syrian Students at Turkish Universities



2010	688
2019	27.606



Number of International Students

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ ÜNİVERSİTELERDEKİ ULUSLARARASI ÖĞRENCİLERİN SAYILARI (İLK 12 ÜLKE) NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT TURKISH UNIVERSITIES (TOP 12 COUNTRIES)			
SIRALAMA	ÜLKE	ÖĞRENCİ	TOPLAM ULUSLARARASI ÖĞRENCİ İÇİNDEKİ ORAN %
RANKING	COUNTRY	STUDENTS	RATIO IN ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
1	SURİYE A.C.	20.701	16.5
2	AZERBAYCAN	17.088	13.6
3	TÜRKMENİSTAN	12.247	9.7
4	İRAN	6.418	5.1
5	AFGANİSTAN	5.826	4.6
6	IRAK	5.187	4.1
7	ALMANYA	4.012	3.2
8	YUNANISTAN	2.546	2.0
9	BULGARISTAN	2.510	2.0
10	SOMALİ	2.310	1.8
11	ÇİN	2.084	1.3
12	KAZAKİSTAN	2.065	1.3
	TOPLAM	125.138	100.0
125.138 ULUSLARARASI ÖĞRENCİNİN % <u>65.2'Sİ</u> 12 ÜLKEDEN GELİYOR.			

ED I and II Surveys

ED II (2017)

1058
participants

740 fully
completed
survey

48 cities

15 months

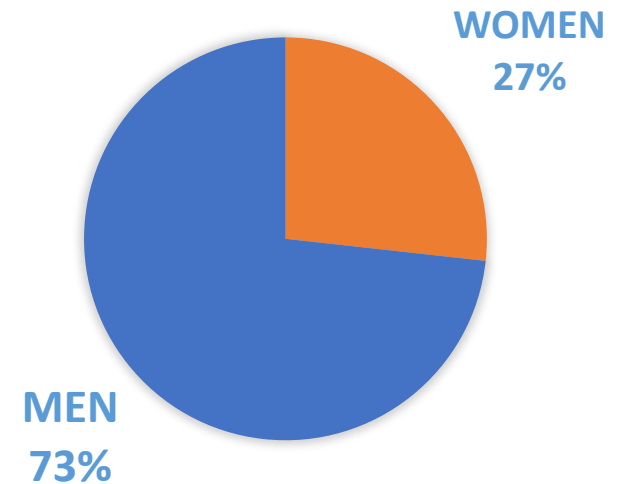
ED I (2019)

490
participants

36 cities

8 months

4 thematic
workshops with
Syrian academics



Outline of the Survey

Basic Demographics, educational background

Immigration Background: Support Network, Diaspora, Duration of Stay, Secondary Education

Satisfaction with different aspects of education in Turkey

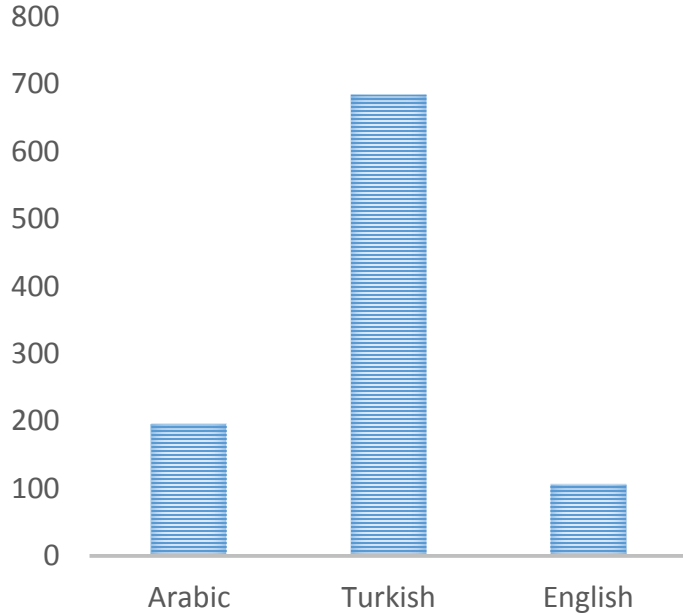
Vulnerabilities: Trauma, Housing, Income

Livelihoods: Scholarships/Work

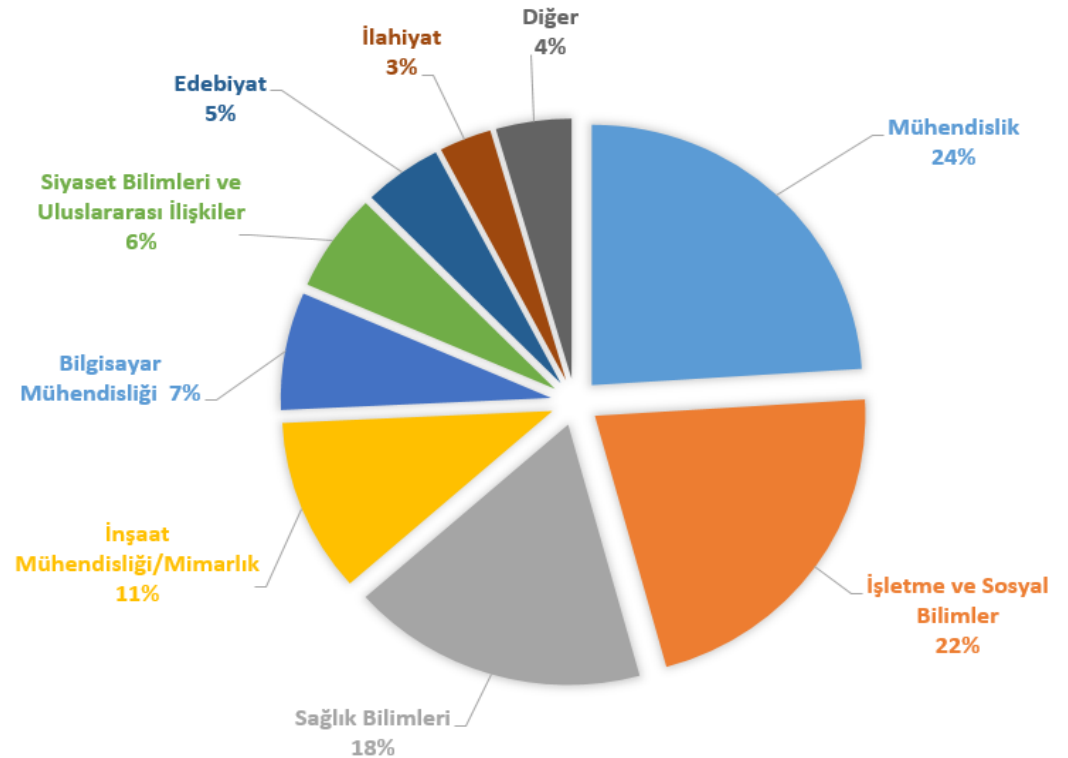
Economic Integration Attitudes/Future Prospects

Social Integration Attitudes: Prejudice, Social Distance, Institutional trust

Language of Instruction and Study Fields



TÜRKİYE'DEKİ SURİYELİ YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BRANŞLARI 2018



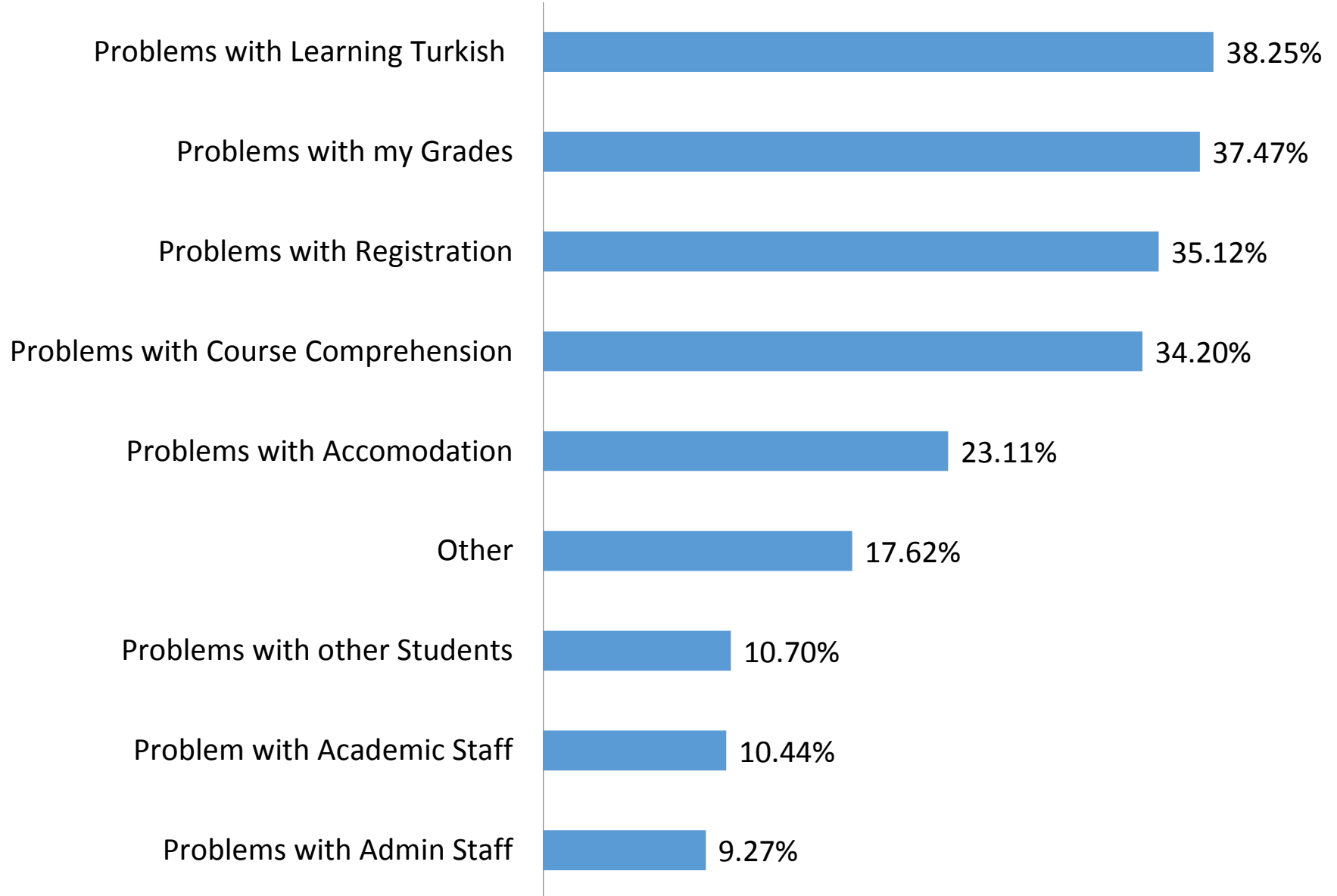
Comparing the Quality of Education in Turkey with Syria?

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A lot better	79	22.77%
Better	175	50.43%
Same	69	19.88%
Worse	21	6.05%
A lot worse	3	0.86%
Total		

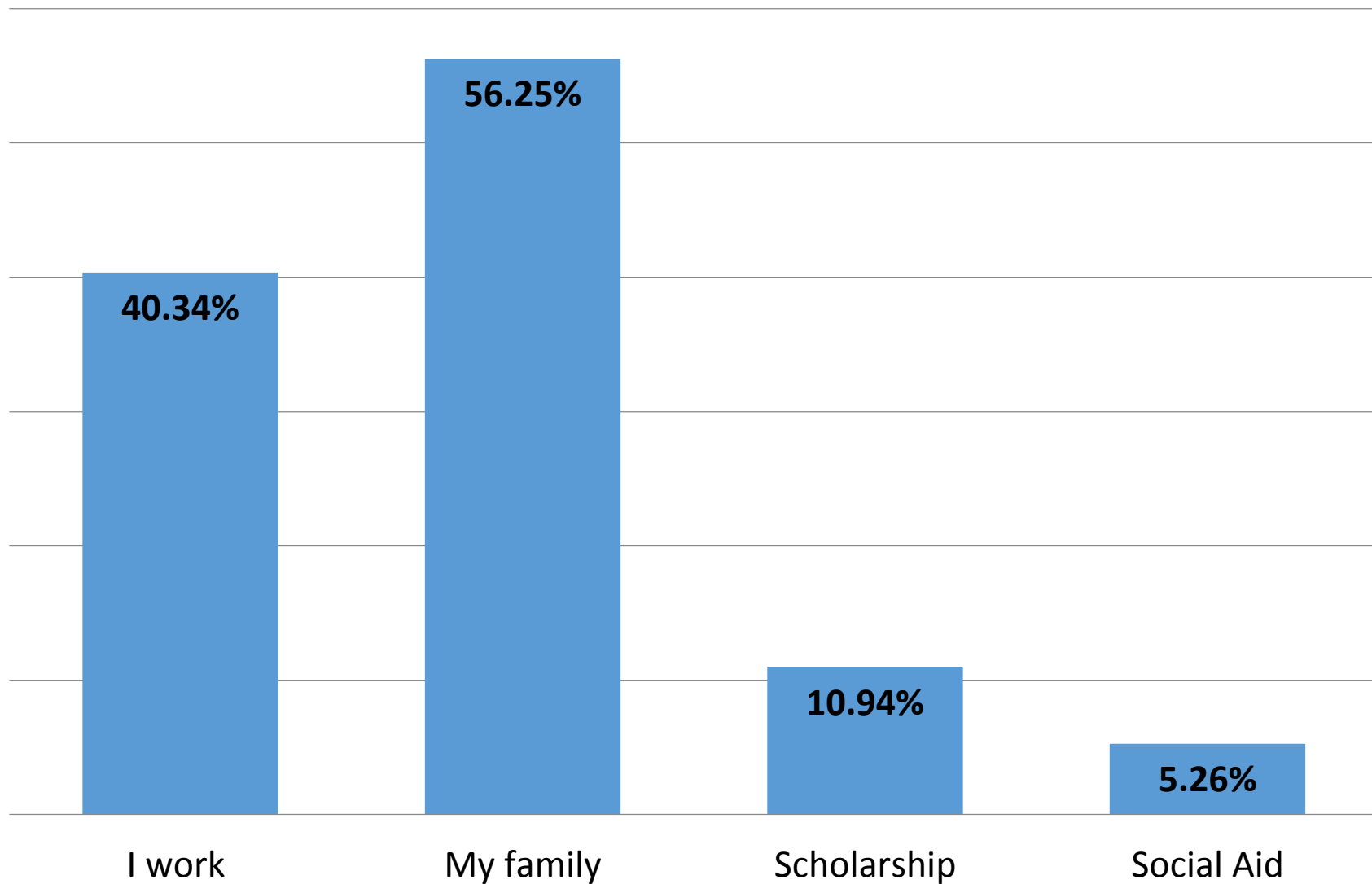
Difficulties Faced Getting Access to Universities

Responses	ED II	ED I
None/ No problems	20.85%	19.00%
I could not find information on universities and programs	10.29%	14.25%
I had difficulty in paying for the expenses related to higher education	28.74%	24.80%
I had difficulty preparing application and registration documents	14.43%	15.04%
I had difficulty because of the language problem	18.85%	11.61%
Other	10.82%	15.30%

Problems Faced During Studies



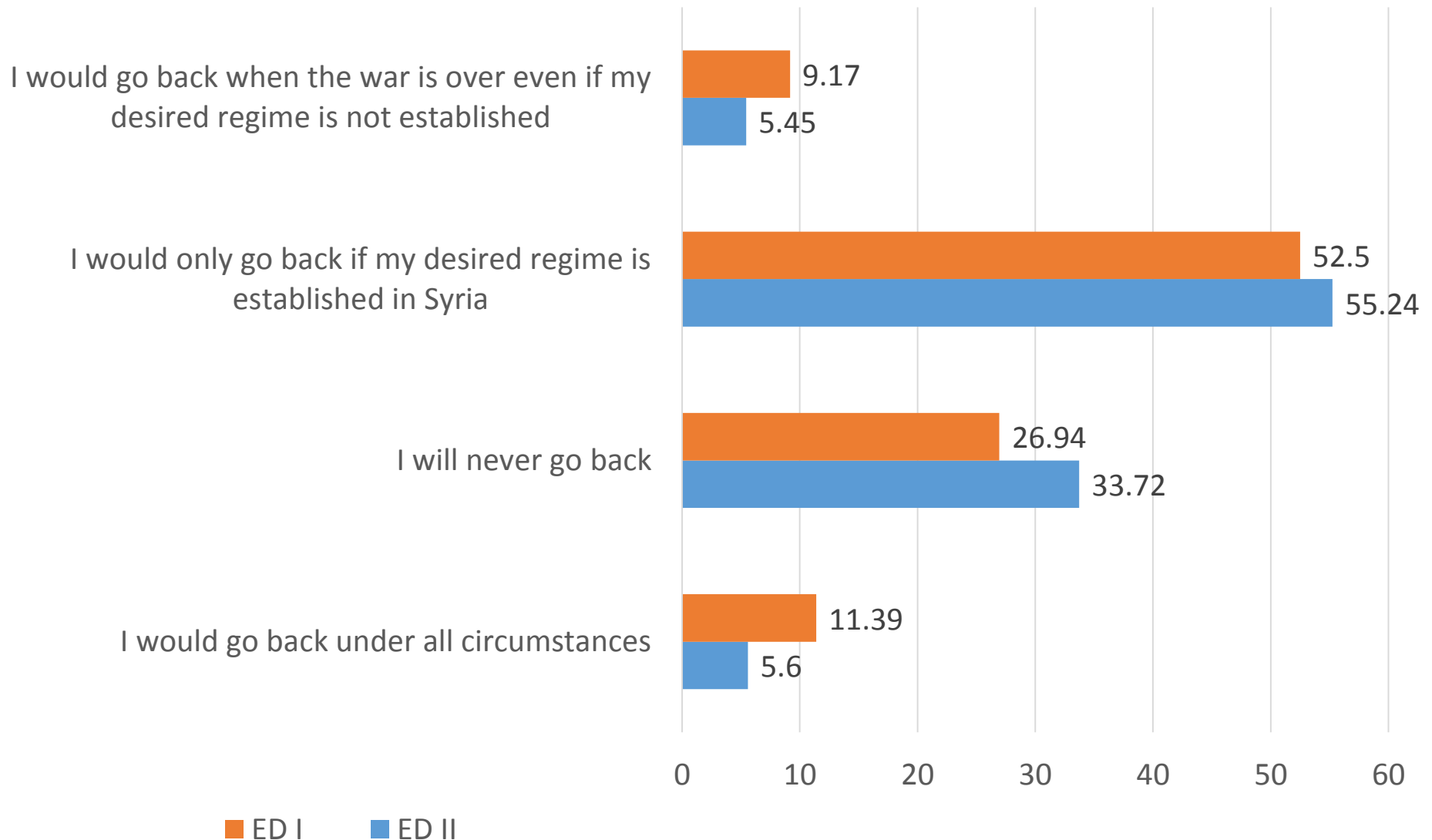
Sources of Income



Expectations for employability after Graduation in Turkey

RESPONSES	RESPONDENTS	%
YES	439	63.17% ???
NOT SURE	231	33.24%
NO	25	3.60%
TOTAL	695	

Future Plans to go back to Syria



Relations with other Students at the University

RESPONSES	ED II	ED I
POOR	9.50%	19.79%
AVERAGE	23.74%	20.32%
ABOVE AVERAGE	15.08%	8.97%
GOOD	33.80%	24.54%
VERY GOOD	17.88%	26.39%

Recommendations

No national integration policy is prepared yet

Communication and coordination between institutions and with the refugees

Inclusive decision making processes

Speedy and transparent recognition and equivalency process

Open data-base for research and new policies

More guidance, counselling and monitoring

Introducing role models to both communities

More and flexible programs for language learning

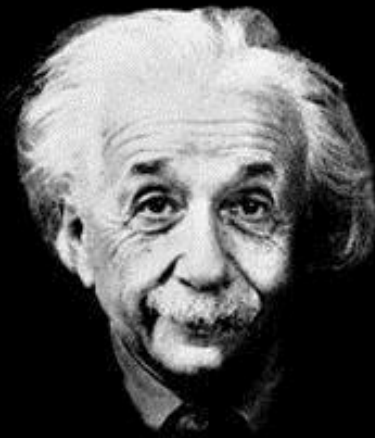
Communication strategy for Syrians, Turks and international partners

Advocacy to inform international society for the good practices and to receive more funding for students

**Temporariness
hinder their
integration**

**Tension areas:
Access to
university,
unemployment
rate, NEET rates
in Turkey**

**A bundle of belongings
isn't the only thing a refugee
brings to his new country.**



Einstein was a refugee.