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VAKFI

2023

Research
on Violence against
Refugee Women
in Southeast Türkiye

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Disclaimer: This research project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Department (DG ECHO). Neither the European Union nor DG ECHO can be held responsible for them.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research study aimed to understand the determinants of violence against refugee women in Southeast Turkey and barriers to reporting. Its overarching objective was to inform programming and advocacy for prevention, mitigation, and response regarding incidents of violence. This report presents the findings of this research project.

The study involved 400 quantitative interviews with refugee women in the cities of Gaziantep, Hatay, Adana, and Sanliurfa in Southeast Türkiye along with 200 interviews with refugee men in the same provinces. In addition to these, the other methodologies that were included in the study were: a literature review, 28 in-depth interviews with refugee women and men, 10 key informant interviews with representatives of various stakeholders who are experienced on the subject matter, and data analysis of 162 refugee women who reported being subjected to violence.

The following is a summary of the key findings and conclusions:

1. Encouraging Reporting:

The research highlights the importance of encouraging refugee women to report incidents of violence. Building social capital emerges as a crucial factor, fostering connections and empowering women to share experiences. Traditional social norms restricting women to households can be overcome by expanding social networks.

- Building social capital crucial for women to report violence incidents.
- Social programs fostering connections among women enhance reporting and support-seeking.
- Traditional social norms limit women to households; expanding social networks empowers them.

2. Community-Based Approach:

This key finding emphasizes the need for community-based interventions that go beyond individual assistance. The interaction between different groups and engagement within neighborhoods can strengthen community bonds, contributing to effective intervention strategies.

- Programs should strengthen entire local community, not just assist individuals.
- Interaction between different groups is beneficial; group activities promote collaboration.
- Engaging people in the same neighborhood enhances community bonds.

3. Psychosocial Support Groups:

The research underscores the significance of psychosocial support groups overseen by skilled professionals. These groups provide a platform for daily interaction, sharing problems, and receiving updates, ultimately fostering a sense of safety and empowerment among refugee women.

- Long-term groups overseen by skilled professionals.



- Facilitates daily interaction, sharing of problems, receiving updates, and developing affinity.
- Group therapy led by mental health practitioners transcends emotional release.

4. Economic Empowerment:

Addressing the economic aspect, the findings stress the link between women's economic dependency, violence, and limited exit strategies. Entrepreneurship is presented as a viable opportunity for economic integration, with a focus on avoiding gender stereotypes in employment.

- Women's economic dependency increases violence and limits exit strategies.
- Entrepreneurship offers opportunities for economic integration.
- Cooperation between support structures and economic integration actors is essential.

5. Role of Men:

Violence against women is contextualized within patriarchal power dynamics, prompting the need to engage men and boys in transformative programs. Promoting responsible fatherhood is identified as a key instrument for achieving non-violent and more equalitarian lifestyles.

- Violence against women rooted in patriarchal power inequalities.
- Engaging men and boys in gender-transformative programs is crucial.
- Programs promoting responsible fatherhood can lead to healthier lifestyles.

6. Legal and Social Support:

The research points out obstacles rooted in fears of deportation and concerns about refugee status. Cultivating trust in legal authorities among refugee women is identified as a critical factor, necessitating support from figures of authority for effective intergroup interactions.

- Obstacles to seeking assistance linked to fears of deportation and concerns about refugee status.
- Cultivating trust in legal authorities among refugee women is essential.
- Support from figures of authority crucial for intergroup interactions.

7. Diversity within Refugee Community:

Acknowledging diversity within the refugee community, the study identifies differences based on location, income, and education. The evolving nature of societal perceptions underscores the importance of consistent support services.

- Differences in knowledge, attitudes, and practices based on location, income, and education.



- Societal perceptions can evolve over time; consistent support services are essential.

8. Self-Empowerment and Inclusivity:

The concept of self-empowerment is highlighted as crucial for refugee women. Access to diverse support services is emphasized, with the understanding that societal perceptions are shaped by consistent experiences, requiring ongoing inclusivity for effective change.

- Enhancing independence and self-reliance crucial for refugee women.
- Access to diverse support services strengthens women's sense of self-empowerment.
- Social perceptions shaped by consistent experiences; one-time interventions less effective.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

CARE International in Türkiye, with funding from DG ECHO, engaged INGEV to undertake a research project concentrating on violence against refugee women in Southeast Turkey. The primary objective of this study was to provide evidence for informing programming and advocacy interventions aimed at preventing, mitigating, and responding to violence against refugee women by attaining a thorough comprehension of the risk and protective factors associated with such violence among refugee women residing in Southeast Turkey. Through an examination of observed trends, root causes, and barriers hindering reporting and seeking support, the research aimed to illuminate the severity of the situation within the framework of Southeast Turkey and provide valuable insights and recommendations for effective intervention strategies.

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. Explore the perceptions, beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of refugee men and women concerning violence against women in urban areas of Southeast Turkey.
2. Identify the risk and protective factors associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence among women living in urban areas of Southeast Turkey.
3. Gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges and barriers encountered by women when reporting incidents of violence and accessing essential services for survivors of violence in Southeast Turkey.
4. Identify effective practices and support mechanisms to enhance services and support for survivors of violence in Southeast Turkey.
5. Identify effective programmatic approaches and strategies aimed at enhancing the reporting of violence and facilitating improved access to and utilization of services for survivors of violence.

In line with the stated objectives, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of both women and men regarding violence among refugees residing in urban areas of Southeast Turkey?
2. In what ways do the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of men and women differ? How are these differences associated with risk factors for violence, whether as survivors or perpetrators?
3. How do survivors of violence navigate their experiences in terms of reporting incidents and seeking support services?
4. What barriers do survivors of violence encounter when it comes to accessing and utilizing services, as well as reporting incidents of violence?

To address these research questions comprehensively, the study investigated various essential topics, including:

- Identifying trends in violence against women: Exploring the underlying patterns and dynamics behind acts of violence.



- Examining daily life obstacles: Investigating the challenges that women face in their day-to-day lives, which may exacerbate their vulnerability to violence.
- Understanding the timeline of violence: Determining whether instances of violence occurred prior to or following migration, providing insights into the specific contexts and factors contributing to such violence.
- Assessing coping mechanisms: Investigating the strategies and mechanisms women employ to cope with and navigate situations of violence.
- Identifying barriers to seeking help: Analyzing the most significant obstacles that prevent women from seeking assistance and reporting incidents of violence.
- Availability of support services: Exploring the availability of support services to refugee women, types of services provided (if any), identifying the barriers refugee women encounter in accessing them.
- Awareness of available support services: Evaluating the knowledge and awareness among women regarding the existence of women's centers operated by public institutions or NGOs in their respective cities.
- Impact of Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes of February 2023: Analyzing the impact of the catastrophic Kahramanmaraş earthquakes on incidents of violence against women within the refugee community, while also considering any additional difficulties or vulnerabilities that may have arisen during this period.

Through this exploration, the research aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of violence against women among the refugee community in Southeast Turkey, while also providing valuable insights and recommendations for addressing this critical issue.

This report presents the findings of this research study. The first section provides background information on the research objective and methodology. The second section offers a review of previous research and studies on the subject as well as a summary of the legal framework in Türkiye with respect to violence. The third section presents the findings of the fieldwork on primary data sources such as quantitative surveys with refugee women and men from low-income backgrounds, in-depth interviews with these same groups (to delve deeper into the underlying reasons of their perceptions, attitudes, and practices), surveys with women who have experienced violence, key informant interviews with experts working on the issue of violence, and a steering committee of leading experts on the subject.

This project involved joint efforts between CARE, INGEV, and the KAMER Foundation. INGEV undertook a multitude of responsibilities, encompassing the organization of the steering committee, the development of data collection tools, the assembly of a fieldwork team for interviews and surveys, the execution of statistical data analysis, the generation of reports, and the overall supervision of project coordination. Conversely, the KAMER Foundation assumed responsibility for collecting and sharing anonymized data pertaining to women who have experienced violence and sought assistance from their centers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed a mix of methodologies to ensure a holistic view of the issue at hand.

Literature Review (Desk Research): The study commenced with a thorough review and analysis of existing studies and literature related to violence against women in Türkiye. This initial phase involved a comprehensive examination of available resources, focusing first on women in Türkiye and then in Southeast Türkiye as well as subsequently delving into the specific context of refugee women in Southeast Türkiye.

Steering Committee: The establishment of a research Steering Committee served a vital purpose in ensuring the effectiveness and credibility of the study. The committee consisted of representatives from international organizations and key grassroots women's rights organizations who brought their diverse expertise and perspectives to guide the research process. The Steering Committee acted as a critical review body for the research findings. They assessed the data, analysis, and conclusions presented by the research team, offering valuable feedback, and ensured the accuracy and reliability of the results. This process of review and validation strengthened the credibility of the study and enhanced confidence in its outcomes. Another important function of the Steering Committee was to reach consensus on recommendations. Based on the research findings, the committee members collectively discussed and deliberated on potential strategies and interventions to address the issue of violence against refugee women. Their diverse perspectives and expertise enabled them to develop well-informed and contextually relevant recommendations that could guide policymaking, program development, and advocacy efforts. Steering committee consisted of the following individuals:

Name	Institution
Aydan Faus	UNHCR
Canan Arın	Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation
Canan Güllü	Confederation of Women's Associations
Didem Rastgeldi Demircan	KEDV
Fidan Ataselim	We Will Stop Femicide Platform
Meriç Çağlar	Sabancı IPC - specializing in forced migration and gender studies
Nebahat Akkoç	KAMER
Nurten Demirbaş	KADAV
Reyhan Aktar	TÜRKONFED
Sercan Gergerli	Şanlıurfa Bar Association

Survey Studies: Two survey studies, one with refugee women (n=400) and another with refugee men (n=200), were conducted as part of this research. These studies aimed to understand the knowledge levels, attitudes, perceptions, and practices of the target group with respect to issues around violence against women. The survey with refugee women targeted those who were 18 years old or above. The selection of participants did not include any specific



quotas, except for age and socioeconomic status. No specific quotas were set for economic, psychological, or emotional violence. The research study aimed to include a diverse range of refugee women from the target population, focusing on those who were more likely to experience social and economic disadvantages. The women's samples size is 100 for each of four cities (Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, and Adana), coming up to a total sample of 400. At the 5% confidence level, a 100 women sample at the city-level will have 80% power to estimate the prevalence of attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, or experiences with a 10% margin of error and 5% margin of error across the entire sample of 400 women. A sample of 100 women for each city has 80% power at the 5% confidence level to detect a 20% difference in factors with a 50% prevalence in one group, a 15% difference in factors with a 75% prevalence in one group, and a 10% difference in factors with an 85% prevalence in one group.¹

Cities	Numb. of Interviews	Margin of Error (at 95% Confidence Level and 50% Prevalence)
Gaziantep	100	±9.8
Sanliurfa	100	±9.8
Adana	100	±9.8
Hatay	100	±9.8
Total	400	±4.9

Interviews with refugee men were conducted in the cities of Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Adana, and Hatay. The survey included refugee men aged 18 years and above. A total of 200 refugee men were interviewed, with 50 men from each city where the research was conducted. With a sample of 50 for each city, there was not sufficient power to analyze city-level differences or to estimate factors at the city level with sufficient statistical precision (more than 10% MoE for percentage point estimates and more than 20 percentage point differences for comparing two samples). However, the main objective of the men's survey (coupled with the findings from the qualitative methodologies in the project) was to understand the attitudes and perceptions of refugee men in general. With an overall sample of 200 and 50 in each city, there was sufficient statistical power to identify any major differences across cities. With a sample of 200 men and 400 women, there was 80% power to detect at least approximately 13% difference in relevant factors at the 95% confidence level.²

Cities	Numb. of Interviews	Margin of Error (at 95% Confidence Level and 50% Prevalence)
Gaziantep	50	±13.9%
Sanliurfa	50	±13.9%
Adana	50	±13.9%
Hatay	50	±13.9%
Total	200	±6.93

¹ Calculations were made using the following formula for the sample size n : $n = (Z_{\alpha/2} + Z_{\beta})^2 * (p_1(1-p_1) + p_2(1-p_2)) / (p_1 - p_2)^2$,

where $Z_{\alpha/2}$ is the critical value of the Normal distribution at $\alpha/2$ (e.g., for a confidence level of 95%, α is 0.05 and the critical value is 1.96), Z_{β} is the critical value of the Normal distribution at β (e.g., for a power of 80%, β is 0.2 and the critical value is 0.84) and p_1 and p_2 are the expected sample proportions of the two groups.

² This is calculated using the same formula as above, using 50% prevalence of a factor in one of the groups.

Interviews with refugee women took place in districts, neighborhoods, formal and informal settlements in the selected cities and neighborhoods which were densely populated by refugees. The data pertaining to the socioeconomic status of the designated neighborhoods was retrieved from [<https://www.endeksa.com/en/analysis/turkiye/demography>] and subjected to thorough analysis. The validation of this analysis was confirmed by supervisors appointed to each city. These supervisors were chosen from the refugee community residing within the region. Female interviewers with solid experience in data collection were responsible for conducting all interviews with refugee women, while male interviews were conducted by male interviewers. All interviews were conducted in Arabic, and all interviewers spoke Arabic as their first language.

Conducting interviews with both women and men in the same districts and neighborhoods enhanced the comparability of the two samples, as they were more likely to share similar socio-economic backgrounds and cultural contexts. This approach eliminated the influence of certain confounding variables that could otherwise impact the research outcomes. However, interviews with male participants could also be carried out outside of their homes for higher fieldwork efficiency.

The selection of both female and male participants was carried out using random sampling techniques and walking rules in low-income neighborhoods of each city.

Distribution of the Neighborhoods for Each Target City

ADANA	GAZIANTEP	HATAY	SANLIURFA
Akıncılar	60.yıl	Adabucak	Ahmet Yesevi
Atakent	Akın	Alsancak	Akabe
Denizli	Atatürk	Bağlar	Atatürk
Dumlupınar	Attar Ali (Saha Mahallesi)	Bahçelievler	Bağlarbaşı
Emek	Belkıs	Bayır	Bahar
Gülbahçesi	Cumhuriyet	Cumhuriyet	Bahçelievler
Gürselpaşa	Çağdaş	Emniyet	Bamyasuyu
Hanedan	Deniz	Esentepe	Buhara
İsmetpaşa	Fatih Sultan	Fidanlı	Cengiz Topel
İstiklal	Fevkani	Fidanlık	Devteşti
Kiramithane	Fevzi Paşa	Göktepe	Direkli
Kocavezir	Fırat	Gültepe	Esentepe
Kurttepe	İstiklal	Haci Kemal	İmam Bakır
Mithatpaşa	Mimar Sinan	Kurtuluş	İpekyol
Namık Kemal	Saray	Mustafa Kemal	Kadioğlu
Narlıca	Üniversite	Narlıca	Kurtuluş
Orhangazi	Yeşilevler	Pınarbaşı	Mimar Sinan
Osmangazi	Zeytinlik	Reyhanlı Tent City	Refahiye
Selahattin Eyyubi		Urgan paşa	Süleymaniye
Serinevler		Yeni Toki	Şair Nebi
Şakirpaşa		Yenimahalle	Şehitlik
Toros		Yenişehir	Veysel Karani

Ulubatlı Hasan			Yavuz Selim
Yavuzlar			Yenişehir
Yeşiltepe			Yeşil Direk
Yeşilyurt			
Yeşilyuva			
Ziyapaşa			

The interviews with refugee men were not limited to household interviews, given that most of the men from the target group worked or socialized during the day, so it was not efficient to solely target them at home. The technique here involved street interviews which could take place at other places than households, such as community centers, coffeehouses, streets, small-business store entrances. The interviews were arranged in neutral and safe locations, ensuring the privacy and comfort of the participants. These settings also included community centers or other suitable areas. By conducting interviews in such spaces, the research team aimed to foster an atmosphere of trust and openness, encouraging participants to share their experiences and perspectives as well as maintaining a sensitive and secure environment while collecting data from male participants.

In-depth Interviews (IDIs): As part of the research, a total of 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with refugee women, and 8 in-depth interviews were carried out with refugee men to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives, complementing the findings of the quantitative interviews. These in-depth interviews provided a more comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding violence against women and related factors. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives, specific subgroups of refugee women and men were targeted for these interviews. This targeting was based on various factors such as age, gender, education type, household size, employment status, or other relevant variables. By specifically selecting participants from these subgroups, the research aimed to capture a more nuanced understanding of the impact of these variables on the experiences of refugee women and men and their attitudes towards violence against women. The selection of subgroups for in-depth interviews was guided by the quantitative findings of the study. By analyzing the quantitative data, patterns and trends emerged that indicated the need for further exploration within specific subgroups. For IDIs with refugee women, subgroups were: 18-25 years old with lower education level, 40-65 **years old** with lower education level, 18-25 **years old** with higher education level, 40-65 years old with higher education level, widowed/divorced women. One refugee woman from each subgroup was interviewed in all target cities. For IDIs with refugee men, subgroups were; 18-25 years old with lower education level and 40-65 **years old** with lower education level. One refugee man from each subgroup was interviewed in all target cities. Lower education level indicates primary school degree or lower, while higher education indicates university degree or above. This targeted approach enhanced the research's ability to uncover unique insights and highlight the complexities of the issue.

Methodology	Target Audience	Gaziantep	Şanlıurfa	Hatay	Adana	Total
In-Depth Interviews	Refugee Women	5	5	5	5	20
	Refugee Men	2	2	2	2	8

Key Informant Interviews: 10 Key informant interviews (KIs) were conducted as part of the research methodology to gain in-depth insights into the underlying factors and determinants of violence against refugee women. These interviews aimed to analyze the root causes of violence and explore the various economic, cultural, physical, and social barriers that prevented women from seeking assistance or reporting incidents of violence. By conducting KIs, the research sought to complement and triangulate the data obtained from other research methods employed in the study.

List of Institutions included in KIs
Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (KEDV)
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality
Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality
Gaziantep University
SGDD-ASAM
Association for Migration Research (GAR)
KAMER
Hürriyet (Campaign to End Domestic Violence)
Harran University
SRP (Solidarity, Respect & Protect)

Data of Women Exposed to Violence (n=162): In addition to the methodologies listed above, throughout the research period the KAMER Foundation (<https://www.kamer.org.tr/eng/>) shared anonymized data of women who applied to their centers after being subjected to violence. This data was utilized along with the survey data to analyze the barriers, perceptions, attitudes, and practices of the target group. Because the KAMER Foundation had no data from Adana and Hatay, INGEV research team organized a field study to interview women who expressed being subject to violence in these cities. Snowball sampling method was utilized in order to reach the target group. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which research participants are asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential subjects, often used when the population is hard-to-reach or hidden. This study utilized the exact same information form used by the KAMER Foundation. In total, data of 162 women were collected from 4 cities.

Target Audience	Gaziantep	Şanlıurfa	Hatay	Adana	Total
Women Exposed to Violence	59	51	27	25	162

LITERATURE REVIEW

Terminology of Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a human rights violation caused by, and a consequence of, unequal power relations between men and women embedded in patriarchal structures. Gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women are terms mostly used interchangeably as gender-based violence affects women disproportionately.

Gender shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men. (Article 3, Istanbul Convention³)

Gender-based violence refers to any type of harm that is perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their factual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. (Gender Matters, 2019⁴)

Gender-based violence against women shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. (Article 3, Istanbul Convention)

Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (Article, 3, Istanbul Convention)

Domestic violence shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the survivor (Article 3, Istanbul Convention)

Intimate partner violence is defined as behaviour by an intimate partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. It covers violence by both current and former spouses and other intimate partners. (WHO, 2013⁵)

Causes of Violence against Women

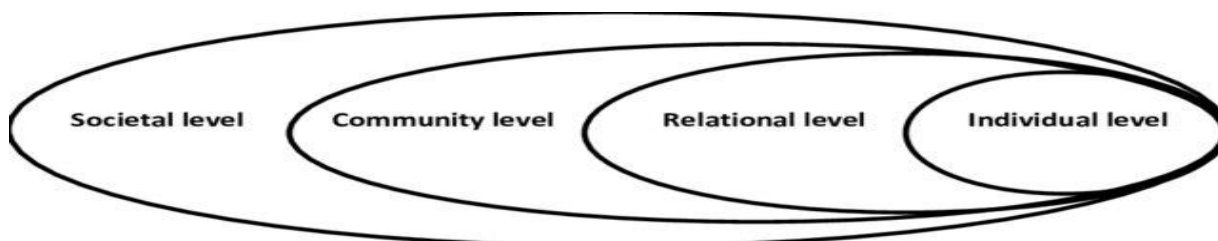
Violence against women is a complicated phenomenon rooted in power dynamics and inequality between women and men. According to the “ecological framework” developed by

³ Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, entry to force 01.08.2014. <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

⁴ Council of Europe, Gender Matters: Manual on Addressing Gender-Based Violence Affecting Young People, 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/gender-matters-a-manual-on-addressing-gender-based-violence-affecting-/16809e1c34>

⁵ World Health Organization, Responding to Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence Against Women: WHO Clinical and Policy Guidelines, 2013. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548595>

Lori Heise⁶, it is possible to distinguish the risk factors at four levels: the individual, the relational, the community and the structural level.⁷



A) Individual-level Factors

At the personal level, young age, low level of education, (un)employment, low income/economic status might be risk factors for both experiencing or perpetuating violence. Experiencing or witnessing violence during childhood might be a risk factor. Some studies show a positive relation between alcohol and drug use and perpetration of violence. Perceptions towards violence and perceiving violence as an acceptable behavior might increase violence.

B) Relationship-level Factors

Relationship with peers, intimate partners and family members might contribute to the risk of violence. For example: disparities in education status or income between partners, power imbalance in the family and, changing family dynamics due to forced migration might be risk factors.

C) Community-level Factors

These risks are related to the tolerance of violence in a given social context.

Research found that societies that had community sanctions against violence, including moral pressure for neighbors to intervene, in place and where women had access to shelter or family support had the lowest levels of intimate partner and sexual violence.

⁶ Lori L. Heise, "Violence against women: An integrated, ecological framework." Violence against women 4.3,1998: 262-290.

⁷ UNFPA, Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, 2015. <https://www.unfpa.org/publications/minimum-standards-prevention-and-response-gender-based-violence-emergencies-0>
IASC, Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventionism Humanitarian Action, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/femm/dv/gbv_toolkit_book_01_20_2015/gbv_toolkit_book_01_20_2015_en.pdf

Furthermore, gender roles and norms of a given community, perceptions, and attitudes towards violence, such as tolerance or normalization which exempts perpetrators from social stigma contributes to risk of violence against women.

Also, while all forms of violence do cut across all socio-economic groups, several studies found women living in poverty to be disproportionately affected. It has not been clearly established whether it is poverty as a structural factor that increases the risk of violence or rather other socio-economic group dependent factors accompanying poverty. Rather, poverty can be seen as a “marker” for a variety of social conditions that combined increase the risk faced by women.

D) Society-level Factors

These factors include the cultural and social norms that shape gender roles and the unequal distribution of power between women and men.

Violence occurs more often in societies where men have economic and decision-making powers in the household and where women do not have easy access to divorce and where adults routinely resort to violence to resolve their conflicts.

In addition to the personal, interpersonal, communal, and societal causes, the lack of a malfunctioning legal system might contribute to increase of violence.

Legal Factors⁸;

- Discrimination, condoning or normalizing the cases of violence against women
- Lack of legal protection for women’s and children’s rights
- Lack of laws against violence against women
- Lack of trust in the law enforcement authorities
- Application of customary and traditional laws and practices that enforce gender discrimination
- General insensitivity and lack of advocacy campaigns condemning and denouncing violence against women
- Discriminatory practice in justice administration and law enforcement
- Under-reporting of incidents and lack of confidence in the administration of justice
- Lack of willingness to effectively and fairly prosecute all cases reported to authorities
- Low number of prosecutions obtained in proportion to the number of cases reported

⁸ Support to Life, Guide for Gender-based Violence in Humanitarian Settings, 2019.
<https://www.supporttolife.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/publication-guide-for-gender-base.pdf>

- Police and courts inaccessible because of remote location of camp / settlement
- Absence of female law enforcement officers
- Lack of administrative resources and equipment on the part of local courts and security officials
- Laws or practices in the administration of justice that support gender equality.

Some conditions such as forced migration or humanitarian emergencies might exaggerate the risk of violence. However, the underlying cause of violence is associated with attitudes, beliefs, norms and structures that sustain power inequality between genders. A root-causes approach to gender-based violence needs to meet the immediate needs of the affected populations while promoting long-term gender transformative social and cultural change towards gender equality.

Approaches to Violence Against Women

Addressing prevention of violence against women and providing protection to survivors requires a holistic and comprehensive approach as explained below:

Survivor-centered approach: A survivor-centered approach creates a supportive environment in which the survivor's rights and wishes are respected, their safety is ensured, and they are treated with dignity and respect.

Rights-based approach: A rights-based approach seeks to analyze and address the root causes of discrimination and inequality to ensure that everyone, regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity or religion, has the right to live with freedom and dignity, safe from violence, exploitation and abuse, in accordance with principles of human rights law.

Community-based approach: A community-based approach ensures that affected populations are actively engaged as partners in developing strategies related to their protection and the provision of humanitarian assistance. This approach involves direct consultation with women, girls and other at-risk groups at all stages in the humanitarian response, to identify protection risks and solutions and build on existing community-based protection mechanisms.

Humanitarian principles: The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality should underpin the implementation of the Minimum Standards and are essential to maintaining access to affected populations and ensuring an effective humanitarian response.

'Do no harm' approach: A 'do no harm' approach involves taking all measures necessary to avoid exposing people to further harm because of the actions of humanitarian actors.

Violence Against Women in Turkiye

Despite the legal and political achievements of the women's movement in Turkiye since the 1990's, translated into policy making and legal steps taken by the government such as Turkiye's signing of international agreements and ratifying national laws targeting violence

against women and girls, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Law on Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women (Law 6284, 2012) and 4. National Action Plan on Combating Violence and Women (2021-2025) violence against women, in all its forms, continues to be a major problem in Türkiye. In other words, while the Turkish government has been committed to make legal improvements towards prevention of violence against women, such complicated social problem embedded in gender inequality and power imbalance still requires structural change within the society. On 20 March 2021, Türkiye withdraw from the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) which was originally signed in 2012 with a Presidential decree due to its incompatibility with the country's social and family values, while stating its commitment to combat violence against women in line with the national law, reaffirmed as well on 25 November 2023 Presidential decree⁹ addressing the issue.

From a legal perspective, **bringing Turkish legislation and policies regarding gender equality and prevention of violence against women in line with international norms and standards**, as well as **straightening the implementation of laws and the legal system to promote good application of the laws with a gender-sensitive approach** are the first steps to end violence against women. From a socio-political perspective, however, **addressing culturally sensitive issues regarding violence against women in all forms, such as child, early and forced marriages, honor killings and other forms of harmful social norms deeply rooted in patriarchy and gender inequality requires further transformative approach to gender norms**, which can only be achieved through long term active involvement of not only women and girls but also men and boys as agents of change.

⁹ Turkish Official Gazette, Combat Against Violence Against Women, 25 November 2023, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2023/11/20231125-26.pdf>

Drivers and Patterns of Violence Against Women in Türkiye

While it is impossible to know the exact numbers regarding violence against women in Türkiye due to under-reporting of incidents, some official statistics, research conducted by NGO's and experts, and academic studies gives us an insight about the prevalence, drivers, and patterns of gender-based violence in Türkiye.

While domestic violence appears as the most common form of violence against women in Türkiye¹⁰ harmful traditions such as honor killings¹¹, virginity checks, early and forced marriages are also considered as a form of socio-cultural and political violence against women in Türkiye.

According to the National Research on Violence Against Women in 2014¹²

- 4 of 10 women in Türkiye are exposed to physical or sexual violence;
- 3 of 10 women in Türkiye are married before they turn 18;
- 48 per cent of girls in Türkiye married by age 18 are exposed to physical violence;
- Only 1 of 10 women in Türkiye exposed to violence apply to an institution for help;
- One third of girls in Türkiye are not allowed to go to school by their families;
- 11 per cent of women in Türkiye are prevented from working by their families.

It is crucial to note that while these trends are believed to be still ongoing, as the issue of violence against women is not on the academic and research agenda, there are no current available data. Since violence against women is still an important problem in Türkiye, there is strong need for further detailed data, particularly focusing on most vulnerable populations such as refugees and asylum seekers living in Türkiye.

Despite the lack of more current and comprehensive research on violence against women, some civil society organizations and news outlets are keeping track of reported incidents. According to the digital The Monument Counter¹³, in 2022, 403 women were killed by men, while in 2023 they were 333 women killed by men by November. News outlet Bianet is also reporting monthly incidents of various types of violence against women in Türkiye (Bianet, October 2023¹⁴) such as male violence, femicides, injuring, violence against children, attempt of murder, sexual violence, rape, and harassment. Similarly, the We Will Stop Femicide Platform¹⁵ also reports data of women suspiciously killed in Türkiye monthly. While these numbers do not reflect the totality of the current reality due to under-reporting of the cases, it gives a general picture of how violence against women still remains as an important epidemic in Türkiye.

¹⁰ Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yeşim Arat, Violence against women in Turkey: A Nationwide Survey. Punto, 2009.

¹¹ Dicle Kogacioglu. "The tradition effect: Framing honor crimes in Turkey." Differences: a journal of feminist cultural studies 15.2 (2004): 119-151.

¹² Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, National Research on Violence Against Women, 2014. https://hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/tr/turkiyede_kadina_yonelik_aile_ici_siddet_arastirma-101

¹³ The Monument Counter, <http://anitsayac.com/?year=2023>

¹⁴ Bianet, <https://bianet.org/haber/erkek-siddeti-ekim-2023-287312>

¹⁵ We Will Stop Femicide Platform, <https://kadincinayetleriniidurduracagiz.net/kategori/veriler?sayfa=2>

The meta-analysis of the literature on domestic violence in Türkiye¹⁶ indicates that both **low education level and unemployment** were found to be the major risk factors. In addition, studies find that partners who have **witnessed domestic violence in their families as a child** tend to resort to violence more often. According to some studies, **husbands who have less power sources such as income, education, and employment or take lower occupational positions than their wives use violence as an instrument to gain power and position**. As an example, according to research conducted by Aysegül Altınay and Yesim Arat¹⁷ on perceptions and experiences of violence against women in Türkiye, while 1/3 women state that they were subjected to physical violence, **in cases where women earn more money than their husbands, the ratio increases to 2/3. Being subjected to violence as a child, doubles the risk of violence for women as well as for men to be perpetrators. Education level** also appears as an important indicator where 43% of illiterate women have experience of domestic violence, this number reduces to 12% for women with college degree.

Bringing a deeper explanation to these patterns, in their research Kocacık, Kutlar and Erselcan¹⁸ argue that while perpetrators' personal history of violence in their childhood increases the risk of domestic violence, **the women who have such history and grow up in this environment tends to tolerate violence further** and have more difficulty leaving potentially violent relationships. According to the research by Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Türkyılmaz and Heisse¹⁹ prior experience of abuse in childhood significantly increased the odds that a woman would experience current physical or sexual violence by her husband and the odds of current husband violence were also 1.76 times higher among women whose husband was physically abused during childhood.

In addition to these personal and interpersonal risk factors, community and structural level factors also plays a significant role in increasing the risk of violence against women. From an intersectional perspective, women who live in more conservative communities, where unequal power relations between men and women are more common, are at higher risk. As an example, according to limited cross-regional research, women who live in the **Eastern and Southern regions of Türkiye have almost 2 times higher risk of physical or sexual violence**, compared to women who lived in the Western region²⁰. Also, according to the findings of Yüksel- Kaptanoğlu, Türkyılmaz and Heisse²¹, women who experienced **forced and arranged marriages** are more in risk of experiencing domestic violence.

On the other hand, the existing literature shows us that **women who have personal incomes and are economically independent are less likely to face domestic violence**. However, they also argue that if a woman works outside for pay, she is more likely to be abused by her husband. Although these two outcomes seem to contradict, one should keep in mind that being paid does not necessarily mean retaining significant **control over the income**. Another

¹⁶Neslihan Keser Özcan, Sevil Günaydın, and Elif Tuğçe Çitil, "Domestic violence against women in Turkey: a systematic review and meta analysis." Archives of psychiatric nursing 30.5 (2016): 620-629.

¹⁷Altınay, Ayşe Gül, and Yesim Arat, 2009.

¹⁸Faruk Kocacık, Aziz Kutlar, and Feray Erselcan, "Domestic violence against women: A field study in Turkey." The Social Science Journal 44.4 (2007): 698-720.

¹⁹Alknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Ahmet Sinan Türkyılmaz, and Lori Heise, "What puts women at risk of violence from their husbands? Findings from a large, nationally representative survey in Turkey." Journal of interpersonal violence 27.14 (2012): 2743-2769.

²⁰ibid.

²¹ibid.

important finding of Kocacik, Kutlar and Erselcan²² is that in “democratic households” where women also participate to decision making, women are less likely to be subjected to violence by their partners. In this regard, for women, **working outside for pay reduce the risk of domestic violence, only if it translates to economic independence and having equal power within the household.**

There are also conflicting findings in the literature on domestic violence in Türkiye. While some research indicate that younger women experience more violence than those who spent more years in the marriage, some did not find correlation between age and the risk of violence. Secondly, regarding economic class, while some research suggests that there is a negative correlation between income and risk of violence, others mostly relate the risk of violence to women’s economic dependence and lack of power within the household. It is important to note that while these indicators such as age and socio-economic background are not found to be statistically significant risk factors per se, intersecting with other level factors, they might have an accelerating effect on the risk of violence.

Although violence against women has been on the political agenda since the early 1990’s in Türkiye and femicides cause public outcry regularly, the number of women subjected to different forms of violence has been increasing drastically in the country. According to Elif Gozbasoglu Küçükalioglu²³, the seriousness of the problem does not only originate from the increasing number of women who lost their lives or have been subjected to different forms of violence, but most importantly from the “normalization” of violence. Having news about violence against women on day-to-day basis contributes to overall normalization of violence against women in the country.

According to Deniz Kandiyoti²⁴, epistemic levels of violence in Türkiye are blamed on the ill-defined notion of patriarchy, implicitly stating it as a deeply rooted pattern of culture, or conveniently characterized as pathologies of perpetrators without addressing the systematic and institutional underpinning of the phenomena. In other words, violence against women is considered either as a **sociological issue, a direct outcome of harmful practices rooted in the culture of patriarchy** or rather as **an individual level problem through “pathologicalization” of the perpetrators** while the political context harboring, if not legitimizing, and the rise of these individual and social causes go unnoticed.

Kandiyoti²⁵ argues that the policing of gender norms and enforcing conservative family values such as women’s principal and preferable sole vacation is home-making and motherhood, as a biological and divinely ordained nature (fitrat), gender becoming a marker of difference between the national ‘us’ and ‘them’, and normalization of violence in everyday political discourses and practices all together contribute to increase of violence against women in Türkiye. Kandiyoti uses the term ‘normalization’ in the Foucauldian sense to refer to social processes that transform ideas and actions into taken-for-granted ‘natural’ realities. Exploring how these processes play out in the case of violence against women may suggest useful points

²² Faruk Kocacık, Aziz Kutlar, and Feray Erselcan, 2007.

²³ Elif Gozbasoglu Küçükalioglu, “Framing gender-based violence in Turkey”. *Les cahiers du CEDREF. Centre d’enseignement, d’études et de recherches pour les études féministes*, 2018 (22), 128-157.

²⁴ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Locating the politics of gender: Patriarchy, neo-liberal governance and violence in Turkey." *Research and Policy on Turkey* 1.2 (2016): 103-118.

²⁵ *ibid.* p:105

of entry for a broader exploration of the suspension of the rule of law and the operations of impunity more generally.

Indeed, **normalization of overall violence and violence against women in the culture and media, in addition to impunity of crimes committed against women, arbitrariness of the justice system, failing to punish the perpetrators accordingly contributes drastically to the increase of violence and the fact that such cases go unnoticed or under-reported.** Perceived female disobedience and insubordination act as primary triggers: women murdered by husbands they wish to divorce, or ex-husbands they have dared to divorce, rejected suitors, and obstinate girls refusing to fall in line with their fathers' or other male kin's wishes jostle on the pages of dailies. According to a survey conducted by the We Will Stop Femicide Platform **the most commonly reported cause of femicide was women's autonomous decision-making regarding their own lives.** Reports from women's rights organizations and the existing research on violence against women in Türkiye clearly shows us that **women's empowerment and rising aspirations clash with male resistance** - what Kandiyoti calls masculinist restoration - manifest itself as use of violence as a way to tame women.

Above findings indicate that on political level, long term activism of women's movement and the achievement of women's NGO's such as KAMER, Mor Cati, We Will Stop Femicide Platform, KADAV have an important effect on the society where violence against women is not tolerated by women themselves. However, **on the individual level, vicious circle of inter-generational violence as well as the backlash on women's economic empowerment on the inter-personal level seems to continue increasing the experiences of violence.** The mismatch between women's perceptions regarding violence and their actual experiences is a clear indicator that a **successful approach to end violence against women cannot only target women but should also address men and boys** who themselves are affected by patriarchal norms in numerous ways, as well as decision and policy makers willing to prevent violence and remove structural barriers to reporting.

Legal Framework of Violence Against Women in Türkiye

In addition to institutionalization of the fight against violence against women, international involvement of both of State and civil society level played an important role in the development of legal and policy mechanisms addressing prevention of and response to violence against women.

In the Turkish case, the most important international factor was the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985. During the 1990s, women's organizations played a crucial role in forcing equality legislation and policies for implementation. As a result of women's long-term activism, The Turkish Parliament ratified the first law on domestic violence entitled "the Law on the Protection of the Family No. 4320" in January 1998.

As violence against women became an important part of the global political agenda, especially in the United Nations, Türkiye also concentrated its efforts on developing governmental policies on gender equality and elimination of violence against women. Over the last decade, much of state action has focused on legalistic and prosecutorial measures in responding to violence. With contributions from international donors such as UNFPA, UNDP and the World Bank specific programs were developed and implemented with a specific focus on the issue of domestic violence, child, early and forced marriages (CEFM) and honor killings²⁶.

Another important factor promoting gender equality policies in Türkiye was the EU accession process. Since the adoption of Accession Partnership in 2003, Türkiye initiated comprehensive legal reforms including Constitutional amendments as well as changes in fundamental laws such as the Turkish Penal Code, Civil Code, and Labor Code.

Another major step towards the elimination of gender-based violence in Türkiye was the adoption of the New Penal Code in 2004 in order to meet the Copenhagen Criteria's of the EU accession process. This legal reform meant a change of legal attitude towards treating women as individuals and as controllers of their own bodies. The new Penal Code:

- Includes more than thirty amendments towards gender equality and the protection of sexual and bodily rights of women.
- Also includes progressive definitions and higher sentences for sexual crimes; criminalizes marital rape.
- Eliminates all references to patriarchal concepts like chastity, honor, morality, shame or indecent behavior.
- Abolishes previously existing discriminations against non-virgin unmarried women.
- Eliminates provisions granting sentence reductions in rape and abduction cases.
- Criminalizes sexual harassment at the workplace and considers sexual assaults by security forces as aggravated offences.
- Provides heavy penalties for all types of honor killings.

In 2005, The Parliamentary Commission on Prevention of and Measures to Combat Violence against Women and Children, and Custom and Honor Crimes was established in order to understand causes of honor killings and examining various dimensions of violence against

²⁶ Elif Gozbasoglu Küçükalioglu, 2018.

women and children. As a result, a National Action Plan for Combatting Violence Against Women 2007-2010 was put in place to promote legal arrangements, societal awareness, establishment of protective services and rehabilitation services.

In 2012, Türkiye signed and ratified the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and on 8 March 2012, The Turkish Parliament adopted the most comprehensive law on violence against women since, Law on Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women (Law 6284, 2012). This new Law established provisions on protective and preventive measures in order to protect women, children, and family members who have been subjected to violence or are at risk of violence, to provide services such as shelters, financial aid, and psychological and legal counselling, and to prevent violence of people who commit or are likely to commit violence. Finally, the third and fourth National Action Plan on Combating Violence Against Women 2016-2020 and (2021-2025) were prepared in accordance with international conventions particularly the Istanbul Convention.

Although all of these developments are crucial steps for progress on the issue of gender-based violence, the gap between legislation and its implementation remains a major problem. Within the scope of domestic violence, the persistence of traditional cultural norms, along with low economic and educational statuses, form strong impediments to the access to available legal rights and services by individual women (ibid).

However, in the last 10 years, rising traditionalism and gender backlash depicting women's equal rights, empowerment, and autonomy over their bodies as a threat to traditional family values all over the world had legal and political implications. Similarly, Türkiye withdrew from the Istanbul Convention on 20 March 2021 with a presidential decree.

Violence Against Refugee Women in Türkiye

Since the starting of the crisis in Syria in 2011, millions of Syrians seek refuge in neighboring countries including Türkiye, particularly in the larger and the neighboring cities of Syria. According to UNHCR²⁷, by October 2023, there were 3,274,000 registered Syrian refugees in Türkiye. According to PMM data from July 2023, while 72,47% of Syrians are women and children, the men make up 52,61% of the total number.

The cities with the highest number of Syrians are listed in the table below:

No	City	Number of Syrians
1	İstanbul	531.996
2	Gaziantep	434.045
3	Şanlıurfa	317.716
4	Hatay	298.830
5	Adana	239.600

²⁷UNHCR <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/113>

Source: Presidency of Migration Management, 17 August 2023

Forced migration is a phenomenon that reshapes the gender dynamics and power relations within families and communities drastically, exposing refugee women to further economic hardship and physical insecurities, where new risks of violence may occur. The existing literature on gender-based violence against Syrian women in Türkiye combines both these harmful coping mechanisms and emerging of new types of violence against women.

Harmful Coping Mechanisms

The limited, existing research²⁸ on Syrian refugee women's experiences of violence in Türkiye particularly focuses on child, early and forced marriages (CEFM). Due to increasing security risks in public places, risk of harassment outside of the house, economic hardship and limited educational and livelihood opportunities, child, early and forced marriages or even becoming co-wives (kuma) as negative coping mechanisms (re)appeared among the Syrian community. The mass migration of Syrian refugees to bordering region, the Southeast Türkiye, increased the number of child, early and forced marriages and polygamy in the region²⁹. According to these studies, due to financial hardship some families have forced their daughter to marry elderly Turkish men in return of dowry.

According to Zeynep Kivilcim³⁰, polygamous and child marriages are legally prohibited but still socially accepted in many regions of Türkiye. Legal measures are ineffective or in many cases are not implemented. The arrival of Syrian refugees in Türkiye, and the fact that that children and women represent almost 80 % of them, greatly extends these already existing practices of child, forced and polygamous marriages. The government's inaction in terms of preventing and sanctioning the trading of Syrian children and women as 'brides' makes possible and amplifies the domestic violence inflicted on Syrian female refugees as forced sex and house workers. On the other hand, the government's tacit approval of these partnerships does not provide legal recognition for these religious marriages and legal rights for Syrian women. The law reinforces the abusive dynamics governing relationships between male Turkish nationals and female Syrian refugees, generating the precariousness of Syrian female refugees' lives

²⁸ İnci Aksu Kargın, "War Hits the Women: Marriages as Syrian Women's Coping Mechanism and Its Impact on Turkish Women", *Electronic Turkish Studies*, (2018), 13.7.

Osman Bahadır, Dinçer et al., *Turkey and Syrian refugees: The limits of hospitality*. International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), 2013.

Aysun Dogutas, Aysun, "Gender based violence against syrian refugee women in Turkey." *Border Crossing* 9.2 (2019): 113-124.

Alison Wringe, Alison, et al., "Altered social trajectories and risks of violence among young Syrian women seeking refuge in Turkey: a qualitative study." *BMC women's health* 19.1 (2019): 1-8.

Mazlumder, *The Report on Syrian Women Refugees Living Out of the Camps*, (2014)
[https://istanbul.mazlumder.org/webimage/files/The%20Report%20on%20Syrian%20Women%20Refugees\(1\).pdf](https://istanbul.mazlumder.org/webimage/files/The%20Report%20on%20Syrian%20Women%20Refugees(1).pdf)

Zeynep Kivilcim, "Legal violence against Syrian female refugees in Turkey." *Feminist Legal Studies* 24.2 (2016): 193-214.

²⁹ Osman Dinçer et al. 2013.

³⁰ Zeynep Kivilcim, 2019.

as unpaid house and sex workers who become targets of different kinds of domestic violence (2016, 203-204).

As Kivilcim argues, these harmful coping strategies reinforce restrictive gender norms, contribute to power imbalance in the household, increase refugee women's legal and economic dependency on men, thus increase risks of violence. In other words, while these harmful coping mechanisms constitute violence against women by itself, they also drastically increase the risk of domestic violence due to the unequal power dynamics among partners.

The existing research on Syrian women's experiences with domestic violence is quite limited due to the invisibility of the issue. However, Hassan and Cankurtaran's³¹ research on barriers to reporting intimate partner violence by Syrian refugee women gives us inside about the phenomena.

According to Hassan and Cankurtaran, both cultural and legal reasons prevent Syrian women in Türkiye from reporting incidents of violence. While domestic violence is considered a private matter that must be kept in the family, the women who complaint or reach out to family members or friends are afraid to be stigmatized and criticized. For some women, culturally, domestic violence is not an issue to report but to tolerate.

Secondly, as women are economically dependent on their partners, they are afraid to report their husbands due to the fear of detention and deportation, which would mean loss of the main provider of the family.

Finally, most Syrian women are not knowledgeable of the reporting mechanisms or do not trust the protection actors and service providers to provide a conclusive solution to their situation.

Institutional reports published by UN Women³² (2018) and Support to Life (2018)³³ repeats similar points. According to the reports, the most preeminent problems refugee women are facing in Türkiye are:

- Language barrier is a major obstacle that stands in the way of Syrian women to access rights and services.
- The majority of Syrian women do not know where to seek assistance related to violence or harassment. They are also unaware of various support services and do not know about free legal counselling.

³¹ Mawahib Khalil M. Hassan, and Özlem Cankurtaran, "Barriers to Reporting Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) By Syrian Women Refugees: A Case Study of Syrian Women Refugees in Ankara-Turkey." *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet* 33.2 (2022): 387-405.

³² UN Women, Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey, 2018.

<https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/Country/Turkey/The%20Needs%20AssessmentENGWEBcompressed.pdf>

³³ Support to Life, Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Setting, 2018. <https://www.supporttolife.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/publication-guide-for-gender-base.pdf>

- Cultural interpretations of violence: Violence against woman is considered a private matter of the family in some cultures.
- Behavior of the public authorities, police officers and gendarme: In the case of violence against woman, refugee women should first go to the police station to describe the violence they are exposed to and file an official complaint. However, some police officers are not knowledgeable about particular vulnerabilities refugee women have and do not understand the seriousness of violence against women. In these cases, those security forces not equipped to receive these cases might dismiss the cases as unimportant or consider it as a private family matter. The lack of interpretation services is also an important barrier to reporting for refugee women.
- Identification: Syrian women are entitled benefit from their legal rights and stay in a women's shelter only if they are legally registered and hold a temporary protection ID provided by the Migration Management Office (PDMM). In principle, registered refugee women can benefit from their social rights like healthcare and legal rights such as seeking protection in the case of violence against woman similar to women from the host community. While Syrian women are legally entitled to stay in women's shelter up to six months, in practice there are some barriers that prevent them from accessing these shelters. Firstly, **the registration and ID requirement put unregistered Syrian women and girls in a particularly vulnerable situation as all Syrians are not officially registered or reside in cities where they are registered.** Furthermore, those willing to apply for the women's shelter are expected to submit a medical report with the police records. **As some refugee women are reluctant to report with the police, they cannot access to women's shelters.** Also, **there is limited space in shelters to accept all applicants, the duration of stay might change arbitrarily and Syrian women might be reluctant to stay in these shelters due to discrimination they might face.**

In addition to these listed above issues, the earthquake, which took place in Southeast Turkey in February 2023, effected the local as well as the refugee community living in the region. According to the most recent (21 July 2023³⁴) report of GBV sub-sector of Türkiye Protection Sector under UNHCR leadership, **the earthquake did not only disrupt the ongoing GBV prevention and protection efforts in the region, but also exacerbated the already lacking infrastructural capacity, particularly regarding access to health services, psychosocial**

³⁴ Türkiye GBV Sub-Sector GAP Analysis Results, July 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/turkiye-gbv-sub-sector-gap-analysis-results-presentation-21-july-2023>

support, case management and legal aid/access to justice services. According to the report, in terms of access to legal aid and to justice in the case of violence against women, the main barriers remain as lack of information on access to application mechanisms, lack of survivor-oriented application mechanisms, discrimination against the refugee community in the justice system and the lack of trained police officers. The structural barriers of the protection and prevention system for violence against women in the region have been strongly affected by the earthquake, putting refugee women at risk due to their intersectionally vulnerable position.

FIELD RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the key insights of the research based on the findings and observations from the fieldwork on primary data sources. **The objective of this section is to present the main observations and data from the fieldwork study.** The following section titled “Recommendations” provides potential action steps based on the findings from both the fieldwork study and literature review.

This section on field research findings is organized around the key insights from the fieldwork methodology mix. The section is divided into 12 subsections, each focusing on a different core finding from the primary data sources. Within each of these subsections, data from the different components of the methodology mix is presented in a coherent manner to clarify the observations leading to that finding.

Each finding explained in this section draws from three main quantitative methodologies as well as qualitative methodologies such as in-depth interviews with the target group women and men along with key informant interviews with experts.

The three main quantitative data sources utilized in this section are as follows:

1. **Women’s Survey** (n=400)- This is the face-to-face computer-assisted interview study carried out with refugee women by INGEV data collection team in Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, and Sanliurfa. This sample consists of a general target group of refugee women from low-income households and the sample **was not** limited to women who experienced violence. This survey aimed to understand overall knowledge, attitudes, and practices prevalent in the target group.
2. **Men’s Survey** (n=200)- This is the face-to-face computer-assisted interview study carried out with refugee men by INGEV data collection team in Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, and Sanliurfa. All men’s interviews took place in the neighborhoods where women’s interviews were also conducted.
3. **Violence Exposure Data** (n=162)- These data consist of the anonymized beneficiary application data from the KAMER Foundation in Gaziantep and Sanliurfa as well as the household interviews conducted by the INGEV fieldwork team in Adana and Hatay. This primary data source involves interviews with **women who reported incidents of violence** (of any type).

Each table in this section presents the output of one of these three data sources. The exact source of the given data is indicated in the heading of each table in parentheses.

All quotes written in italic represent statements or questions from the data collection tools. E.g., “Women face more *discrimination in the workplace compared to men.*”

All non-italic quotes represent input from in-depth interviews or key informant interviews.

Note on Cluster Analyses:

Some of the quantitative findings in this section will include the outcome of Cluster Analyses conducted on the data from the refugee women’s and men’s surveys. Cluster analysis is a statistical technique used to process data and it operates by categorizing items into clusters or

groups based on their degree of similarity. When research participants exhibit similar responses to the research questions, they are grouped together to create clusters. **Within each cluster, each subject's responses are more akin to those of other subjects in the same cluster than to those of subjects outside the cluster.**

For the women's survey, three main clusters emerged based on the cluster analysis. Tentative «aliases» are given to each cluster to summarize their discerning traits and for ease of understanding.

#1. Cluster 1: «**Excluded Loners**»;

An overall sense of helplessness, stemming from fear and their low level of knowledge, is the key discerning trait of this cluster.

- This cluster is most strongly differentiated by the fact that they are more significantly affected by almost all barriers to reporting of violence to a higher degree than other clusters.
- While their top barriers to reporting are similar to those of the other clusters, they react quite differently in terms of the other barriers, with this cluster (unlike other clusters) being much more strongly deterred by the following :
 - “Fearing to further anger the perpetrator.”
 - “Lack of trust in authorities.”
 - “Not knowing which institution to ask for help.”
- Majority of them are from Adana and Sanliurfa.

#2. Cluster 2: «**Traditionals**»:

- Most strongly differentiated by their exposure to (and familiarity with) violence in their childhood and their current social circle.
- Their higher agreement level with the following statements:
 - “Men can hit women in some cases.”
 - “If a man has committed violence against a woman, she must have done something to deserve it,”
 - “*The unity of family will be broken if the mother enters the workforce.*”
- Among the three clusters:
 - Their average education rate is the lowest.
 - Their literacy rate is the lowest.
 - Their average age is the highest.
- Majority of them are from Adana and Sanliurfa.

#3. Cluster 3: «**Egalitarians**» / «Gender Egalitarians»;

- Most strongly differentiated by their complete rejection of all statements related to tolerability or justification of violence.
- Among the three clusters:
 - Their average education rate is the highest.
 - Their average age is the lowest.
 - Their marriage rate is the lowest.

- They are predominantly from Hatay and Gaziantep.
- They possess the lowest experience of or past exposure to violence in their childhood and their social circle.

For the men's survey, two main clusters emerged. Differentiating traits of each cluster are as follows:

#1. Cluster 1: «**Traditionals**»:

- In similarity to the cluster analysis from the women's survey, this men's cluster is also most strongly differentiated by their higher familiarity with and exposure to violence in their childhood and their social circle.
- Another discerning trait is their higher agreement level with the following statements:
 - "Women need men to protect them."
 - "Even if her husband hits her, a wife shouldn't talk about this to others."
 - "*Protecting a woman's honor is the responsibility of the men in the family.*"
- Compared to the other men's cluster:
 - On average, "Traditionals" have lower monthly income and employment rate.
 - Their literacy rate is lower.
 - They have much higher marriage and paternity rate.
 - Their average age is higher.

#2. Cluster 2: «**Egalitarians**» / «Gender Egalitarians»;

- Similar to the case of women's survey, this cluster is most strongly differentiated by their rejection of the statements related to tolerability or justification of violence.
- They have had much lower exposure to violence in their childhood and in their current social circle.
- Compared to the other cluster:
 - They have higher employment rate and monthly income.
 - They have lower literacy rate.
 - They are younger on average.
 - They have much lower marriage and paternity rates.

Throughout this report, cluster names are always written in quotation marks. E.g., "Loners."

After this introduction detailing the organization of this section and use of the cluster analyses for women's and men's surveys, the main findings from the field research are presented in the following points:

1. Notions of honor, shame, and purity are the leading drivers of domestic violence.

Before discussing the perceptions and attitudes of the target group, the output of the violence exposure data will be examined to better understand the profile of women who reported incidents of violence.

The quantitative findings indicate that most incidents take place within the family. **85% of those who reported an incident of violence stated that the perpetrator was a family member.** This makes domestic violence one of the most prevalent type of violence against women.

Table 1- **Perpetrator of Violence** (Violence Exposure Data)

Perpetrator of Violence	Overall
Domestic Violence (Perpetrator is a family member)	85%
Non-Domestic Violence (Perpetrator is not a family member)	15%

Various forms of violence have been documented, and, according to insights from key informant interviews, it's crucial to recognize that they often implicitly overlap. For example, **the most frequent forms of violence that were reported consisted of psychological violence and verbal abuse**, but many instances of these are believed to involve implied (covert or overt) threats of physical harm. Almost half of those who experienced violence (49%) reported economic violence.

Table 2- **Type of Violence** (Violence Exposure Data)

Perpetrator of Violence Type of Violence	Overall
Psychological Violence	80%
Verbal Abuse	73%
Economic Violence	49%
Physical Violence	36%
Sexual Violence	15%
Cyber-Bullying	4%

Approximately half (47% in total) of those who reported physical violence had a visible sign of violence on their body indicating the magnitude of the incident.

Table 3- **Type of Physical Harm** (Violence Exposure Data)

Physical Harm due to Physical Violence	Among those who reported Physical Violence
No visible physical marks	53%
Aching and/or pain as a result of violence (Waist, arm, neck, nose, etc.)	22%
Cuts and/or Bruises	17%
Deep Cuts and/or Bruises that require stitches	5%
Broken Bone(s)	2%
Scar or Trauma that requires surgery	2%

Most of the incidents are perpetrated either by the father or spouse. “Other women in the family” are reported to cause 4% of the incidents.

Table 4- **Perpetrator of Domestic Violence** (Violence Exposure Data)

Perpetrator of Violence Domestic Violence	Overall
Spouse / Partner	49%
Father	18%
Ex-spouse / Ex- partner	10%
Other Men in the Family (apart from son, brother, father-in-law, or brother-in-law)	9%
Other Women in the Family	4%
Son	4%
Brother	3%
Father-in-Law, or Brother-in-Law	2%
Other	0.7%

Arranged marriages are most common among those who experienced violence in their family. It is also important to note that one in four women experiencing violence had forced marriages. Those who had self-initiated marriages are the least prevalent group. 74% of the violence exposure dataset consists of women who were married before or are currently married. 62% are currently married. 15% of the dataset consists of women who married when they were 15 years old or younger. In total, 43% of the dataset consists of refugee women got married at an age younger than 18.

Table 5- **Type of Marriage** (Violence Exposure Data)

Type of Marriage of those who Reported Violence	Among Married Women (includes those who were married in the past but not currently)
Arranged Marriage ("spouse recommended by family, I agreed")	61%
Forced Marriage (spouse decided by family against <i>one's</i> wishes; includes those who became co-wives)	23%
Self-initiated Marriage	16%

"There is violence everywhere I go, everything is changing but violence is always there."

*Female, aged 22, Adana
IDI participant*

To recap, domestic violence experienced by the refugee women is much more prevalent than non-domestic violence, according to the Violence Exposure Dataset. It is thus important to explore the main drivers behind domestic violence. The survey study detailing the perceptions and attitudes of refugee women and men can provide crucial insights into these main drivers. For that reason, it is necessary to turn to the outcome of the Cluster Analysis from the women's survey on knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding violence.

Based on the findings of this analysis, cluster 3 ("Egalitarians") displays highly differentiated views on perceptions toward gender equality in comparison to the other clusters (Table 6- **Perceptions toward Gender Equality** (Women's Survey)). As noted, "Egalitarians" form the cluster of women who are most likely to reject violence in any form. The differences between clusters regarding the concepts of honor and shame center on whether violence is justifiable with respect to the protection of honor and whether there are any situations that should compel a woman to tolerate violence.

"Egalitarians" are less likely to agree with these notions while both "Loners" and "Traditionals" are more (and approximately equally) likely to adhere to them (Table 6- **Perceptions toward Gender Equality** (Women's Survey)). However, it is worth noting that even the majority of the "Egalitarians" cluster think that it is the duty of the men in the family to protect a woman's honor, underlining that the notion of honor is also an important consideration for majority of this cluster as well.

The "Traditionals" cluster differs from the "Egalitarians" in their normalization of violence (For more information, please see the "Note on Cluster Analyses" on page 29). Other points of differentiation between "Traditionals" and "Egalitarians" may thus provide clarity on why this difference in attitudes toward violence occurs: the "Traditionals" have much higher level of agreement with the idea of committing violence on women to protect family honor. The notion

of honor thus emerges as a key point of differentiation among the two clusters. This is a strong indication that the concept of family honor plays a key role in shaping attitudes toward violence.

Table 6- Perceptions toward Gender Equality (Women’s Survey)

Perception Towards Gender Equality Marriage and Family Life T3B %	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
If necessary, a man can use violence against his wife to protect the family honor.	29%	25%	4%
Protecting a woman's honor is the responsibility of the men in the family.	74%	80%	55%
If they have children, a woman should not divorce even if she is subjected to violence.	34%	29%	13%
Even if her husband hits her, a woman shouldn't talk about this to others.	27%	21%	5%
Men can hit women in some cases.	0%	11%	0%
If a man has used violence against a woman, the woman must have done something to deserve it.	1%	13%	7%

The clusters differentiate among themselves with respect to the barriers they perceive when it comes to reporting incidents of violence (Table 7). “Loners” are similar to “Egalitarians” in rejecting statements such as “if a man has used violence against a woman, the woman must have done something to deserve it” and “Men can hit women in some cases” (Table 6—for more information on clusters, please see the “Note on Cluster Analyses” on page 29). “Loners” in a sense are thought to be more aware of gender equality issues compared to “Traditionals” and are more concerned and focused on the social barriers entailed by the act of seeking help against violence. However, notions of shame and family honor drive the “Loners” cluster to justify violence. For instance, while “Loners” (by definition) form the cluster that perceive all barriers relatively stronger than the other clusters, one of the largest margins of difference between “Loners” and the other clusters emerge in connection to the barrier related to the perceived shame in talking about domestic violence to someone outside the family. Almost half of the “Loners” cluster strongly agree that “it would be shameful to tell someone else about such a matter,” which is a level that is considerably higher than the other clusters. “Loners” perceive all barriers more strongly than others and the widest margin of difference is related to the perceived shame. These two observations are thought to signify the underlying role played by notions of honor and shame in shaping the attitudes of this cluster.

The fact that the “Loners” cluster has 0% agreement level with the statement “Men can hit *women in some cases*” but agree that “a man can use violence against his wife to protect the *family honor*” at a similar rate as “Traditionals” seems to be contradictory (Table 6- **Perceptions toward Gender Equality** (Women’s Survey)). A possible reason for this discrepancy came up in the key informant interviews: a disproportionately high rate of “Loners” resides in the city of Sanliurfa. Men in Sanliurfa however heavily fall under the “Traditionals” cluster. Women in the “Loners” cluster are observed to have higher sensitivity and awareness than those in the “Traditional” cluster, but they seem to be living in traditionally minded environments along with

“Sometimes women behave in ways that force men to resort to violence.”

*Female, aged 63, Adana
IDI participant*

“If woman is wrong, man has no choice but to use violence in order to protect the woman and the family.”

*Female, aged 22, Sanliurfa
IDI participant*

men who have considerably lower awareness. This pronounced contradiction between their attitudes and their environment is thought to be one of the core reasons why “Loners” tend to perceive all types of barriers more sharply than other clusters. That’s also why they are more likely to regard the protection of family honor by men as a justified reason for violence, even though they generally reject violence: the notions of family honor and shame held by the men in their social environment seem to spill over to the women in this cluster. This underlines the importance of interventions targeting the social environment and community as a whole (to be further discussed in Finding #3 on page 41, and in Recommendations #1 and #2 on pages **Error! Bookmark not defined.** and **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

As opposed to the “Loners” cluster, the “Traditionals” (being the cluster that is most exposed to experiences of domestic violence) don’t seem to regard shame as a strong barrier to reporting violence (Table 7). This appears somewhat paradoxical since both clusters have similar levels of agreement with the notion that protection of family honor justifies violence on women (Table 6- **Perceptions toward Gender Equality** (Women’s Survey)). According to key informant interviews, the reason for that is as follows: “Traditionals” come from social environments that leave women especially isolated from the society in general. The act of engaging with legal authorities and service providers itself is “very foreign to them” or “unthinkable.” That is why, when asked, they tend to express functional and rational barriers such as fear of deportation and language barriers instead of socially ingrained and unquestioned barriers such as shame and stigmatization.

“Egalitarians” on the other hand are from social environments where they find it easier to enter work life and/or progress through higher education levels. They have much lower exposure to

violence in their social environment. For this reason, they face most barriers to a lesser degree than other clusters do. However, the engagement with legal authorities and service providers makes up the strongest barriers for them as well.

Table 7- Barriers to Reporting the Incidences of Violence (Women’s Survey)

Barriers to Reporting and Accessing Social & Legal Services T3B %	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
Believing it would be shameful to tell someone else about such a matter.	49%	18%	27%
Stigmatization and fear of rejection/disapproval by family/community members for reporting incidents.	42%	25%	38%

“Depending on who you share information with, either they may find a solution or make the situation worse, so you should be careful about who to tell.”

*Female, aged 19, Hatay
IDI participant*

“Women accept their husbands' abuse because they are afraid of becoming more vulnerable to other men's abuse after divorce.”

Key Informant

Table 8 indicates that level of education has a strong relation to the attitudes towards violence and family honor. Agreement level with statements that justify violence are considerably lower for those who have undergraduate degrees or higher. According to the key informants, this is because of the underlying reason that families and social environments that encourage women to progress through higher levels of education also tend to normalize violence to a lower degree. For instance, those who have undergraduate degrees or higher seem to be relatively less likely to accept that “a man can commit violence against his wife to protect the family honor” (

Table 8).

Table 8- Perceptions toward Marriage and Family Life (Women’s Survey)

Perception Towards Gender Equality Marriage and Family Life T3B %	No education or Primary School	Middle School	High School or Equivalent	Undergraduate, Graduate or Higher
If necessary, a man can commit violence against his wife to protect the family honor.	20%	24%	18%	13%
Protecting a woman's honor is the responsibility of the men in the family.	66%	74%	77%	58%

The connection between protection of family honor and violence also applies to refugee men. The cluster analysis from the men’s survey indicates that the statement “a man can commit violence against his wife to protect family honor” generates the strongest differentiation between two clusters (4% vs. 81%- for more information on differences between men’s clusters, please see “Note on Cluster Analyses” on page 30). This core difference between the two clusters signifies the use of the notion of honor as a justification for domestic violence: men who come from environments where violence is prevalent (i.e., the “Traditionals” cluster) seem to agree at a much higher rate that “a man can commit violence against his wife to protect *the family honor*.” The other statement related to honor, which asserts that “*it’s a man’s duty to protect a woman’s honor*” can be said to create a justification for men’s perceived superiority over women in the domestic setting through the concept of honor. This observation also applies only to the “Traditionals” cluster.

Table 9- Perceptions toward Gender Equality (Males’ Survey)

Perception Towards Gender Equality Marriage and Family Life T3B %	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
If necessary, a man can commit violence against his wife to protect the family honor.	4%	81%
Protecting a woman's honor is the responsibility of the men in the family.	1%	24%

2. Root causes of domestic violence differ in urban and rural areas.

According to information gathered from key informants, rural areas of southeastern Türkiye adhere to a socially traditional structure where a patriarchal system prevails, with men are more involved in the public sphere and women more involved in the private sphere. These gender roles are thought to be deeply ingrained: they are rarely questioned and so they rarely become subject to conflict. As a result, there is a lower incidence of reported violence in rural areas compared to urban counterparts. Key informants suggest that the **underreporting in rural areas may be attributed to three main factors: a low awareness level regarding violence, a reluctance to report due to various barriers, or a genuinely lower occurrence of violence due to heightened harmony between women and men.** It is important to note that this form of harmony occurs through suppression of one's own self-expression on the part of women: it emerges out of a tendency to "keep one's head down and stay away from confrontation." Contrastingly, in urban settings, women exhibit greater awareness and activism, actively seeking their rights.

Observations from key informants indicate that the relationship between the host community and the refugee community in rural areas is characterized as close and positive, driven by their shared economic activities. In communities engaged in agriculture, where social cohesion is notably high, instances of domestic violence may be less prevalent.

In urban areas, social tension between host and refugee communities is most pronounced in regions with a lower socio-economic status. Local communities grappling with economic challenges perceive refugees as an added strain on "already insufficient livelihood resources," resulting in an uptick in negative attitudes towards them. Refugee men, confronted with economic difficulties and frequent exposure to unfavorable attitudes, may resort to domestic violence as a means of relieving stress, either consciously or unconsciously. Low social cohesion is thus one aspect that affects the prevalence of violence and is thought to affect urban environments more significantly, according to key informant interviews.

"I think men deal with a lot of stress and tough situations outside the home, and that's what makes them act out violently."

*Female, aged 45, Hatay
IDI participant*

The use of violence as a negative coping mechanism is further emphasized by women participating in in-depth interviews (IDIs), who highlight that men experiencing high stress due to financial difficulties, poverty, and unemployment often direct their frustrations towards their families, particularly women and children.

The accessibility of reporting and support mechanisms for refugee women residing in rural areas is significantly impeded by various physical barriers. Challenges include the difficulty in reaching reporting and support mechanisms, insufficient financial resources for transportation, unsafety of transportation routes, limited familiarity with the region, and the language barrier, making it challenging to navigate directions. These challenges stem from and contribute to perpetuating traditional gender roles and norms that put women at risk and hinder their ability to seek help and support. On the flip side, key informants conveyed about the Gaziantep rural region that, despite the existence of physical barriers, accessing reporting and support mechanisms is not challenging. They highlighted the feasibility of accessing these mechanisms through various assistance hotlines, originating from both governmental and civil society entities. Nonetheless, it was observed that women in the region often exhibit a more hesitant approach towards utilizing these mechanisms. This, coupled with a diminished recognition of violence as a serious issue, contributes to a lower inclination to report incidents of violence in rural areas as opposed to urban areas.

Upon analyzing in-depth interviews with women, those in Nizip (Gaziantep) exhibit a higher degree of hesitation when asked to provide examples of incidents they categorize as violence. In contrast, women in Adana, Hatay, and Sanliurfa express themselves more articulately, offering extensive narratives, specific details, and elaborating on relational aspects when providing examples of incidents that they perceive as violent. The Nizip sample commonly responds with "I cannot provide an example at the moment," while respondents from Adana, Hatay, and Sanliurfa elaborate, for example stating that "violence persists through the existing societal roles of men and women"; or "violence in my life originated in childhood through inattentive parenting styles and instances of yelling, beating, neglect, and insults by the family." Considering that the Nizip sample represents a rural setting, while the samples from Adana, Hatay, and Sanliurfa are urban, these findings substantiate the hypothesis that a lower level of awareness is more widespread in rural areas. Refugee women may not be fully aware of their rights or the availability of reporting and support mechanisms in rural settings. Consequently, they may inadvertently normalize instances of violence, or if face violence, struggle to navigate the process of seeking help and support. This lack of awareness and knowledge contributes to a reduced inclination among refugee women in rural areas to report incidents of violence.

3. Social environment is a key determinant of attitudes toward violence—for both women and men.

The variable that best sums up how the "Traditional" cluster differs from other clusters consists of the statement, "I witnessed my father hitting my mother when I was a child" (Table 10- **Personal Life Experiences** (Women's Survey)). This difference in personal life experience is one of the aspects that sets this cluster apart from the others. While the greatest margin of difference is observed for this statement, statistically significant differences among clusters in past life experience is not limited to it. The "Traditional" cluster also is more likely to state that children experienced domestic violence in the neighborhoods that they grew up in and 2 out of every 5 women in this cluster also express being subjected to violence as a child (39%-Table 10- **Personal Life Experiences** (Women's Survey)).

The difference between the “Traditionals” and “Loners” clusters gets relatively smaller compared to other variables when it comes to the statement, “there are many women around me who suffer from violence by their husbands or male family members” (Table 10- **Personal Life Experiences** (Women’s Survey)). This statement marks a point of differentiation among “Loners” and “Egalitarians” as well, since the “Loners” cluster are almost doubly more likely to agree with this statement in terms of percentage points. Even if they are differentiated with respect to their childhood experiences, “Traditionals” and “Loners” are more akin in terms of their current social environments with both clusters express possessing social circles where domestic violence is prevalent to a much higher degree than “Egalitarians” do.

Table 10- **Personal Life Experiences** (Women’s Survey)

Personal Life Experiences T3B %	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
I witnessed my father hitting my mother when I was a child.	1%	51%	2%
In the neighborhood where I grew up, children witness domestic violence.	29%	51%	25%
I was subjected to violence (pushing, hitting, beating, slapping etc.) by my parents as a child.	0%	39%	2%
There are many women around me who suffer from violence by their husbands or male family members	45%	57%	24%
My father used to take away my mother’s money from her	3%	13%	1%

The refugee men’s survey also indicates a similar relationship between past life experience and the “Traditionals” cluster—albeit to a lower degree (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The male cluster “Traditionals” are more likely to be subjected to violence as a child and to state that children witness domestic violence in the neighborhood they grew up. The largest margin of difference between the two male clusters is observed for the statement, “There are many women around me who suffer from violence by their husbands or male family members.”

Table 11- **Personal Life Experiences** (Males' Survey)

Personal Life Experiences T3B %	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
There are many women around me who suffer from violence by their husbands or male family members	2%	24%
In the neighborhood where I grew up, children witness domestic violence.	2%	17%
I was subjected to violence (pushing, hitting, beating, slapping etc.) by my parents as a child.	1%	11%

It is also worth noting that a key insight from the key informant interviews was that being a refugee in a foreign country affects one's "social capital." Local host community women who are subject to violence have a greater opportunity to rely on family, friends, and their social circle in general. For refugee women, however, community ties are more likely to be broken or seriously reduced in the aftermath of the domestic conflict in Syria and through the forced displacement process. Thus, refugee women have a much more limited social network to receive support from.

The findings in this subsection point to the importance of interventions that carry out localized targeting that aim to reach out to individuals sharing a local community rather than beneficiaries who are not connected to each other in daily life. **Considering the social component of attitudes toward violence, community-wide interventions that target as many beneficiaries as they can within a specific locality (such as a neighborhood or workplace) have a better chance of generating permanent impact.**

Local targeting in programming is strongly recommended in this respect. Rather than targeting beneficiaries over a wide geographical area, social programs should target smaller-scaled localities such as neighborhoods and ensure that the average awareness and sensitization level with respect to violence and maltreatment goes up in that entire target setting. The issue is explored further in Finding #3 and Recommendations #1 and #2.

4. Tailored support services are needed for different cities.

The cluster analysis indicates that the clusters are distributed differently across cities (Table 12), which will have ramifications with respect to the particular action steps that can be taken in each city. The differences among cities can be summarized as follows:

- **Hatay:** Both women and men in Hatay are more "Egalitarian" than the overall target group.
- **Gaziantep:** Women are more "Egalitarian"; men are more "Traditional" than the overall sample.
- **Sanliurfa:** Women are more "Loner" than overall, and men are more "Traditional."
- **Adana:** Women are more "Traditional" than overall, but distribution of men's clusters in Adana are like that of the overall target group.

Table 12- **City Breakdowns** (Women’s Survey)

City Breakdowns	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
Adana	28%	35%	15%
Gaziantep	14%	22%	39%
Hatay	19%	18%	35%
Sanliurfa	39%	25%	11%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Looking at the men’s survey findings (Table 13), it is worth noting the difference between women and men in Gaziantep and Sanliurfa with respect to their overall attitudes. These two cities are exceptional among the four surveyed in that women and men prevalently feature in different clusters. Men in Gaziantep and Sanliurfa have higher weight among the “Traditionals” cluster, while women in Gaziantep and Sanliurfa are more prevalent within the “Egalitarians” and “Loners” cluster. This may be taken as an indication that, **apart from the existing social environment in the city, activities of NGOs and other stakeholders that aim to support women have created higher awareness of gender equality among women** (especially considering that “outreach work in my neighborhood” is the top medium through which women in the target group learn about support mechanisms against violence; 62%- for more information please see Table 21 on page 51). In general, there appears to be a need for further activities targeting men in Sanliurfa and Gaziantep.

Table 13- **City Breakdown** (Males’ Survey)

City Breakdown	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
Adana	29%	21%
Gaziantep	11%	35%
Hatay	58%	3%
Sanliurfa	2%	41%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Cities also differ among each other with respect to the education level distribution of women (Table 14). Women in Sanliurfa have the highest rate of those who possess undergraduate degrees or higher. It should be noted that women in the “Loners” cluster feature a disproportionately high ratio of women from Sanliurfa. Higher levels of education seem to be

expanding the “Loners” cluster in Sanliurfa whereas in Hatay there is a stronger relationship between higher education and the “Egalitarian” cluster. As noted in Table 13, Sanliurfa has considerable weight among men’s “Traditionals” cluster whereas Hatay has considerable weight among men’s “Egalitarians” cluster. In other words, refugee women in Sanliurfa are much more likely than those in Hatay to be living in a social environment where men are from the “Traditionals” cluster. As noted in Finding #1, women with higher education levels in Sanliurfa (who possess higher awareness on gender equality issues) are living along a predominantly traditional male population (In Finding #1, this tension caused by differing awareness levels was considered to be one of the reasons why the prevalent “Loners” cluster in Sanliurfa perceive all barriers to reporting violence more strongly than other clusters). Thus, considering the traits of the “Loners” cluster, women with higher education in Sanliurfa may require different types of support than those in Hatay. The most prominent difference is related to the barriers against reaching support mechanisms, including those that have to do with language barriers, refugee status, stigmatization, and security risks related to the retaliation from the perpetrator. These are more prevalent for women in Sanliurfa. Men in Sanliurfa should be targeted with awareness-raising activities (discussed in detail in Recommendations #6 and #7 on pages **Error! Bookmark not defined.** and **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). On the other hand, economic support is a higher priority in Hatay, especially in the aftermath of the February 2023 earthquakes in southeastern Türkiye (importance of economic support will be investigated in Finding #7).

Table 14- **Education Level - City Breakdown** (Women’s Survey)

Education Level	Adana	Gaziantep	Hatay	Sanliurfa
No education or Primary School	53%	45%	9%	18%
Middle School	23%	30%	35%	20%
High School or Equivalent	9%	12%	33%	27%
Undergraduate, Graduate or Higher	15%	13%	23%	34%

“If I could make a difference in preventing violence, I'd focus on making sure girls aren't denied their right to education which lead them to poverty.”

*Female, aged 35, Gaziantep
IDI participant*

Refugee women in Adana have the lowest education and literacy levels among the refugee women in the four cities included in the survey. Women from Adana also have the highest proportion within the “Traditionals” cluster. Considering these findings, core awareness activities regarding legal rights, gender equality, and access to support mechanisms seem to be more urgent in Adana city. The majority of the “Traditionals” cluster (55%) report that they know how to access support mechanisms (at higher rate than other clusters). That’s why it is

thought that the problem with awareness-raising activities is not simply that they have never been reached out with support mechanisms but that these services were not effective even if the women in this cluster accessed them. Various best practices for providing these services in an effective manner are provided in Finding #12 on page 66 and throughout the Recommendations section starting on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

Table 15- Literacy - City Breakdown (Women’s Survey)

Literacy	Adana	Gaziantep	Hatay	Sanliurfa
Illiterate	32%	7%	3%	8%

Refugee women in Gaziantep have the lowest rate of agreement level with statements gauging the quality of the communication in their relationship with their spouse (Table 16). They have significantly lower agreement with statements such as “I can comfortably talk to my spouse when I have a problem.” This is another indication that there could be a lag between refugee women and men in that city in terms of overall attitudes and gender equality awareness. Refugee women in Gaziantep also provide the lowest levels of agreement among women in four cities to statements gauging attitudes to gender equality such as “If they have children, a woman should not divorce even if she is subjected to violence.” They are also least likely to report that “there are many women around me who suffer from violence” (Table 16). Refugee women in Gaziantep have a stronger sense of awareness towards gender equality and this awareness could be one reason why the reported levels of violence on women in the city is lower. In other words, women here are more likely to stand up for themselves when their rights are disrespected: higher awareness means they are better able to protect their rights. Thus, there is less violence and fewer incidents to report. On the contrary, refugee women in Sanliurfa very strongly agree with the statement arguing that many women around them suffer from violence (Table 16). This group also have the highest rate of agreement with the notion of men committing violence on women for honor. Awareness-raising activities seem to be a key priority in this city. As mentioned, Finding #12 on page 58 and Recommendations section starting on page 61 provide tips on carrying out effective interventions in general, including awareness-raising activities.

Table 16- Perceptions toward Gender Equality - City Breakdown (Women’s Survey)

Perceptions toward Gender Equality T3B %	Adana	Gaziantep	Hatay	Sanliurfa
I can comfortably talk to my spouse when I have a problem	79%	58%	92%	82%
We can comfortably talk about the problems in our marriage with my spouse	64%	53%	88%	78%
There are many women around me who suffer from violence by their husbands or male family members	33%	15%	42%	71%

If they have children, a woman should not divorce even if she is subjected to violence.	35%	12%	20%	35%
If necessary, a man can use violence against his wife to protect the family honor.	11%	8%	26%	31%

Women in Gaziantep again display highly differentiated response behavior when it comes to barriers against reporting incidents of violence. While their leading barriers have to do with language barriers and fears related to immigration status (in a somewhat similar pattern across all four cities), they report other barriers to a much lower degree than women in other cities. **Not knowing where to seek help, thinking they would bring shame upon themselves, fear of rejection by their community, and fear of further angering the perpetrator are all less prevalent among women in Gaziantep, signifying higher awareness on issues around violence and how to react to it (Table 17). Sanliurfa, on the other hand, is the city where social fears such as stigmatization and shame as well as fear related to retaliation by the perpetrator come most strongly to the fore, indicating lower levels of social awareness among Sanliurfa women on these issues.**³⁵ In both Adana and Sanliurfa, not knowing where to seek help becomes a more significant barrier compared to other cities. Hatay, on the other hand, is more similar to Gaziantep than either Adana or Sanliurfa in that the leading barriers have to do with immigration status and language barriers as is the case in Gaziantep.

Table 17- **Barriers to Reporting Violence - City Breakdown** (Women’s Survey)

Barriers against Reporting Incidences of Violence T3B %	Adana	Gaziantep	Hatay	Sanliurfa
Fear of further angering the perpetrator.	63%	15%	34%	73%
Stigmatization and fear of rejection/disapproval by family/community members for reporting incidents.	42%	25%	38%	83%
Believing it would be shameful to tell someone else about such a matter.	49%	18%	27%	70%
[Rate your Level of Knowledge regarding] How to Access Legal Protection	43%	75%	34%	46%

³⁵ For more action recommendations in detail, please see **CONCLUSIONS AND** section.

Language barriers, making it difficult to communicate and seek assistance.	67%	53%	54%	57%
Immigration status concerns and fear of deportation.	78%	44%	68%	78%
Not knowing which institution to ask for help.	64%	19%	37%	54%

5. Functional barriers related to refugee status are just as important as social norms and trust in authorities when it comes to reporting violence.

Across the overall target group of low-income refugee women, low awareness on how to report violence makes up the most prevalent awareness barrier against access to support. Similarly low level of knowledge on how to access support mechanisms is another key barrier. It should also be noted that even the top variable, which is “knowledge on how to access legal protection,” makes up a significant barrier for half of the target group.

Table 18- Awareness on Reporting Violence – Overall (Women’s Survey)

Awareness with respect to Reporting of Violence T3B% Knowledge on.....	Overall
... <i>how to access legal protection</i>	50%
... <i>legal rights</i>	37%
... <i>how to access support mechanisms</i>	37%
... <i>how to report the incident</i>	34%

Across the overall target group, the two leading barriers against reporting incidents of violence consist of legal status concerns, fear of deportation, and language barriers. This underlines the importance of specific issues brought on by the experience of being a refugee. The refugee status generates an extra (and a very significant barrier) for women in the target group. Regardless of the city where support activities will take place, refugee women who are being subjected to violence require assistance in reaching out to authorities and support providers. Institutions that can help facilitate the engagement between refugee women and service

providers have the potential to increase the number of women who have less hesitation when it comes to making themselves heard to the relevant stakeholders.

Table 19- **Barriers to Reporting Violence- Overall** (Women’s Survey)

Barriers to Reporting Incidents of Violence T3B%	Overall
Immigration status concerns and fear of deportation.	67%
Language barriers, making it difficult to communicate and seek assistance.	58%
Stigmatization and fear of rejection/disapproval by family/community members for reporting incidents.	47%
Fear of further angering the perpetrator	46%
Not knowing which institution to ask for help.	44%
Believing it would be shameful to tell someone else about such a matter.	41%
Lack of trust in authorities.	31%

“Because of the perceived ambiguity over the legal status of Syrian refugees, women feel lost and end up enduring the violence they face.”

Key Informant

“All the racism I witness wherever I go really takes a toll on my soul.”

*Female, aged 44, Gaziantep
IDI participant*

Turning to the barriers each cluster prioritizes, “Loners” cluster perceives almost all barriers more strongly than other clusters, which, according to key informant interviews, is the core reason they appear to be isolated in the face of violence (i.e., they rate each barrier against reporting violence much more strongly than other clusters- for more information please see the Note on Cluster Analyses on page 29). This isolation applies even though the “Loners” are closer to “Egalitarians,” rather than “Traditionals,” in some key attitudes related to gender equality (such as in their agreement level with the statement, “men can hit women in some



cases”). On the other hand, the “Traditionals” cluster perceive all barriers to a lower extent than other clusters, which according to key informant interviews, reinforces their relatively stronger tendency to normalize violence, “because of which fears and concerns related to reporting loom smaller in their minds.”

The most significant barriers for each cluster are as follows:

Cluster 1 – “Loners”: Immigration status concerns and fear of deportation (78%); Language barriers (67%); Not knowing which institution to ask for help (64%)

Cluster 2 – “Traditionals”: Language barriers (53%); Immigration status concerns and fear of deportation. (44%)

Cluster 3 – “Egalitarians”: Immigration status concerns and fear of deportation. (68%); Language Barriers (54%)

As can be seen, for all clusters, fear of deportation as well as language barriers are the most crucial barriers in accessing support services. The status of being a refugee seems to generate a divide between legal authorities or service providers and refugee women. Services that inform women about the protection processes as well as those that facilitate their engagement with legal authorities represent the most crucial room for improvement.

It could be said that language barrier is related to the fear of rejection by the community as the refugee and host communities speak different languages (Arabic and Turkish), and language itself serves as an aspect that strengthens the ties of refugee women to their community. As awareness level about violence and personal rights increase, the likelihood that a community or other members of the family will frown upon a woman for taking action against violence is expected to go down.

Table 20- **Barriers to Reporting Violence – Cluster Analysis** (Women’s Survey)

Barriers to Reporting Incidents of Violence T3B%	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
Believing it would be shameful to tell someone else about such a matter.	49%	18%	27%
Language barriers, making it difficult to communicate and seek assistance.	67%	53%	54%
Immigration status concerns and fear of deportation.	78%	44%	68%
Not knowing which institution to ask for help.	64%	19%	37%
Stigmatization and fear of rejection/disapproval by family/community members for reporting incidents.	42%	25%	38%
Fearing to further anger the perpetrator.	63%	15%	34%
Lack of trust in authorities.	50%	21%	27%

6. Logistical barriers such as distant locations of service providers and lack of address information act as significant barriers to reporting violence.

One key finding from the Violence Exposure Data (data from women who were subjected to violence) is about how they have learnt about access to information on available services. The most prevalent way was through outreach by stakeholders near where they reside. In-depth interviews and key informant interviews indicated the importance of direct communication with refugee women from low-income backgrounds: their social environment is not normally conducive to motivating or encouraging them to search or learn about their rights as well as the types of support they can access through social service providers. Thus, stakeholders that can “immerse” themselves in this target group’s daily life are said to have a much higher chance of being effective. This “immersion” can be implemented through activities addressing needs such as provision of information on healthcare, child healthcare, child education, and livelihoods support. Apart from these, the importance of carrying out local face-to-face outreach and having service facilities in or around the neighborhoods densely populated by the target group is crucial in strengthening the level of access to support services.

Table 21- Source of Information about Support Services (Violence Exposure Data)

Support Access of those who experienced violence How did you learn about support mechanisms?	Overall
Through outreach work in my neighborhood	62%
Through my social circle	16%
ADH (Emergency Support Hotline)	11%
Traditional and Digital Media	4%
KAMER Centers	3%
NGO Centers/ Hotlines (Other than Kamer)	2%

Qualitative research methods (key informant interviews and in-depth interviews) also indicated other logistical barriers that prevent women from accessing support services. These include:

- Not knowing the locations of institutions
- Long distances to the physical locations of support providers
- Long waiting times for appointments/queues (in-depth interview and key informant interview participants report that, unless it’s a life-threatening situation, women seeking help can only get an appointment that’s usually months away from the public service provider they sought help from. This is thought to be because of staff shortages)
- Dissatisfaction with how cases are explicitly or implicitly categorized (Direct physical violence, threats, injuries, and situations are considered urgent if they involve risk of death. If physical violence occurs intermittently and is not thought to involve risk of death, it is not considered urgent. Women who are subject to this type of violence are sometimes discouraged from seeking help, thinking their situation will be considered

low priority or “almost an unnecessary burden taking time away from far more serious cases”). A significant concern that came out of the key informant interviews was that this classification may potentially miss cases where the individual begins to consider suicide or self-harm.

7. Livelihoods interventions are crucial for providing effective support against violence.

Among women who reported being subjected to violence, access to livelihoods support and/or multipurpose cash aid are key needs. Along with in-kind support (such as food, clothing, and personal care items) and job search support, livelihoods support in general (any type of support that increase the likelihood that women will be able to earn their own income) is among the top requirements voiced by women who experienced violence.

“Women who survived violence must be provided with financial support, shelter, employment, and protection from people who pose a threat to them.”

*Female, aged 46, Adana
IDI participant*

Table 22- Access to Support- Economic Support (Violence Exposure Data)

Support Access of those who experienced violence What kind of support do you need the most?	Overall
Psychological Support	59%
Economic Support	31%
Legal Support	27%
Medical Support	14%
Security	10%
Shelter	6%
In-kind support	6%
Job Search Support	3%
Support in Applying to Public or Govt. Services	2%
Support in Communicating with the Perpetrator	1%
Access to Early Childhood Education for their Children	1%



Only 1 in 5 women among the target group have own personal income, indicating there is room for improvement when it comes to livelihoods support. It should be noted that women who have their own income are more prevalent among those who reported violence. **This signifies that women who are more financially independent are more likely to report any violations of their rights, including their right to live without being subjected to violence.** While this was also the consensus of the experts interviewed for this research study (other indications for this reasoning are presented in subsection 8), there was also an alternative explanation that, to a degree, having a personal income could make it more likely that women will get into confrontations with male members of their household that generate higher risk of conflict and violence in traditional households.

Table 23- **Personal Income Situation** (Women’s Survey vs Violence Exposure Data)

Target Group Women Who Have Personal Income	Overall	Those who Reported Violence
HAS OWN INCOME	22%	37%
NO PERSONAL INCOME	78%	63%

“The idea that women are only supposed to be limited to raising kids makes us even more powerless.”

*Female, aged 24, Adana
IDI participant*

The overall awareness levels of the target group are brought down significantly by women from lower income households. Higher income could in general make it more likely that women from these households, through better access to education or job opportunities as well as to internet and online information sources, have more opportunities to learn about their rights and available support types. Higher livelihoods access is thus thought to increase resilience in the face of violence and maltreatment.

Table 24- **Awareness on Reporting Violence – By Household Income** (Women’s Survey)

Awareness with respect to Reporting of Violence T3B% Knowledge of.....	Lower Monthly HH Income than Minimum Wage	Higher Monthly HH Income than Minimum Wage
... how to access legal protection	32%	52%
... legal rights	20%	40%
... how to access support mechanisms	20%	28%

... how to report the incident

17%

32%

Considering the perceived barriers to reporting violence, there are certain aspects where women from lower- and higher-income households differ. These aspects consist of immigration status concerns, language barriers, and fear of retaliation by the perpetrator. Subsection 8 discusses the relationship between access to livelihoods and fear of angering the perpetrator in a more detailed manner. For concerns related to immigration status and language barriers, it should be noted that higher income could make it easier to develop the skills necessary to deal with these issues or receive help to address them. It should be noted that the income differences subject to the breakdown are relatively minor and all members of target group are from households that subsist on less than 16000 TL per month for all members of the household (at the time of fieldwork, minimum wage for a single person was 11500 TL per month). This could mitigate the margin of difference between relatively lower- and higher-income households in attitudes and practices.

Table 25- **Barriers to Reporting Violence – By Household Income** (Women’s Survey)

Barriers to Reporting Incidents of Violence T2B%	Lower Monthly HH Income than Minimum Wage	Higher Monthly HH Income than Minimum Wage
Immigration status concerns and fear of deportation.	61%	49%
Language barriers, making it difficult to communicate and seek assistance.	53%	44%
Fear of further angering the perpetrator	41%	32%
Stigmatization and fear of rejection/disapproval by family/community members for reporting incidents.	40%	39%
Believing it would be shameful to tell someone else about such a matter.	36%	34%
Not knowing which institution to ask for help.	34%	36%
Lack of trust in authorities.	21%	24%

Certain attitudinal differences also emerge under employment status breakdown. Those who are neither in employment nor education tend to have lower agreement with the statement, “earning own income strengthens a woman’s freedom,” which is the variable where the largest

margin of difference occurs between the two groups (74% vs 22%- Table 26). Those who are employed or in education, however, are more likely to think that women face more discrimination in the workplace compared to men. As this group is more likely to have direct experience of the workplace environment, any livelihoods support provided to them should factor in this perception related to discrimination in the workplace. Facilitation of the job search process, job placement support (in which a facilitating institution is in direct contact with the employer), and workplace orientation and mentoring could strengthen the target group's resilience against workplace issues and make it more likely that they will hold on to their job for the long term.

Table 26- **Gender Equality Perceptions – By Employment Status** (Women's Survey)

Gender Equality Perceptions T2B%	Employed or Student	NEET
Earning own income strengthens a woman's freedom	74%	22%
Women face more discrimination in the workplace compared to men.	38%	19%
A woman should not work if her husband does not allow it	31%	19%
A woman earning her own money triggers violence against her.	17%	10%
The unity of family will be broken if the mother enters the workforce.	9%	10%
Even if the wife works to earn money, the husband must retain the power to decide how to spend it.	9%	4%

Looking at only those who have their own income, approximately half of this group report that they don't have any decision-making power to spend money on their own needs. Those who have personal income make up 22% of the target group and 56% of this smaller group can spend their income on their own needs. **This indicates that, overall, only about 1 in 10 women in the target group have any income that they can spare for their own aspirations and needs.** This is a crucial reason why many women subjected to violence end up living together with the perpetrator, to be discussed further in the next subsection (Finding #8), and underlines the importance of access to livelihoods as way to increase the resilience of women who are subjected to violence.

Table 27- **Economic Decision-making Capability - Overall** (Women's Survey)

Spending Decisions Among Women Who Have Personal Income	Those who have personal income
Can spend own income on her own needs	56%
Can spend the income only for household needs	42%
Declined to answer	2%

8. Many women who are subjected to violence eventually end up having to share a living space with the perpetrator- even if they access support mechanisms.

Those who reported being subject to violence overwhelmingly state that they did not seek support from any institution in the aftermath of violence. Those who did, on the other hand, point to healthcare institutions as their first resort of support. In total, 35% of women who experienced violence report seeking support from a legally authorized institution. As mentioned in earlier sections, one important room for improvement is to raise this rate. However, there is also room for improvement in increasing the effectiveness of the reporting process itself.

Table 28- **Institution where Support was Sought** (Violence Exposure Data)

Support Access of those who experienced violence Which institution did you seek support from in the aftermath of violence?	Overall
Healthcare Institutions	22%
Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SYDV)	4%
Violence Prevention and Monitoring Center (ŞÖNİM)	4%
Healthy Life Center (SHM)	2%
Police Station	1%
Prosecutor's Office	1%
Ministry of Family and Social Services (Provincial Offices)	1%
Did not seek support from any institution	65%

When asked if they distanced themselves from the perpetrator in the aftermath of violence, slightly more than half of the women (who report being subjected to violence) say “no.” Including those who could only distance themselves for a limited amount of time (at most a year), total of 87% of refugee women say that they couldn’t distance themselves from the perpetrator in a permanent manner. Those who filed for divorce turns out to be 6%; approximately 1 in 20 women.

Table 29- **Current Relationship Status with the Perpetrator** (Violence Exposure Data)

Current relationship status of those who experienced domestic violence Did you distance yourself from your relationship with the perpetrator in the aftermath of violence?	Overall
Yes- but for less than a month	21%
Yes- but for less than a year	13%
Yes	13%
No	53%

Divorce after Intrafamily Violence (Violence Exposure Data)

Current relationship status of those who experienced domestic violence from spouse Did you file for divorce due to violence?	Overall
Yes	6%
No	94%

1 in 20 refugee women also report that they attempted suicide in the aftermath of violence, underlining the importance of effective psychosocial support, to be further investigated in subsection 11. Especially, some women who were subjected to violence may require psychosocial support to create positive change in their lives.

Table 30- **Suicide after Violence** (Violence Exposure Data)

Current relationship status of those who experienced violence [Did she commit suicide after the incident]	Overall
Yes	6%
No	94%

Another significant underlying reason for going back to the perpetrator has to do with children. While the situation of children is a general concern and point of conflict in a potential separation and/or divorce process, **almost half the women who report being subject to violence also report that the perpetrator also commits violence against the children in the household.** Better access to child protection as well as early childhood care and education services could prove vital in raising women’s resilience against violence.

Table 31- **Violence toward Children by Perpetrator** (Violence Exposure Data)

Current relationship status of those who experienced domestic violence Does the perpetrator also commit violence against the children in your family?	Overall
Yes	42%
No	58%

In line with the findings from the knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey, presence of domestic violence on women is thought to have a strong effect on children and plays a role in normalization and propagation of violence across generations. 52% of women who were subjected to violence think it influences their children. The psychological factors through which children can be affected by domestic violence are complex and normalization of violence is only one possible effect.

Table 32- **Effect of Violence on Children** (Violence Exposure Data)

Current relationship status of those who experienced domestic violence Do you think the violence you experience affects your children?	Overall
Yes	52%
No	48%

One potential reason for ending up back with the perpetrator could be related to lack of awareness on accessing support services. The “Traditionals” cluster is the one that normalizes the violence the most. Further exploring this cluster’s perceptions and knowledge level regarding support services could provide insights on whether there is a relationship between normalizing violence and access to support services. The “Traditionals” cluster actually has the highest self-reported awareness on how to report violence. An interpretation of this observation emerged from the key informant interviews. It is as follows: considering this in combination with the fact that the “Egalitarians” cluster (who rejects violence under all circumstances) has the lowest awareness among three clusters, it seems to be an indirect indication of the extent to which women in each cluster finds it necessary to learn about mechanisms for reporting. For “Traditionals,” learning about these mechanisms is a higher priority than it is for other clusters, which might be expected based on their higher exposure to violence in their social environment. Thus, judging by the responses of the “Traditionals” cluster, the reason most women subjected to violence end up with the perpetrator would not be that they don’t know how to access support services. According to key informant interviews, the reason could consequently be that “these services are not always effective in helping women access a better reality.” They then “inevitably have to go back to live with the

perpetrator of violence.” A somewhat similar insight was shared for “Egalitarians,” who report low awareness on reporting mechanisms even though they do not agree that “not knowing where to seek help” is a top barrier against seeking help. This is thought to be linked to their confidence in their ability to learn about these mechanisms if and when they actually need them (they have on average higher levels of education as well as higher levels of employment compared to other clusters). They report low awareness on how to access support because they rarely need to access it.

Table 33- Awareness on Reporting Violence – Cluster Analysis (Women’s Survey)

Awareness with respect to Reporting of Violence T3B% <i>Knowledge of.....</i>	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
<i>... how to access support mechanisms</i>	38%	55%	27%
<i>... how to access legal protection</i>	43%	75%	34%
<i>... legal rights</i>	41%	64%	22%
<i>... how to report the incident</i>	42%	42%	27%

A key aspect of ending up with the perpetrator is the financial limitations of women. This is also indicated by the fact that those who are not in education, employment, or training (“NEET”) are least prevalent among the “Egalitarians” cluster and nominally most prevalent in the “Traditionals” cluster.

Table 34- Employment Status – Cluster Analysis (Women’s Survey)

Prevalence within Clusters	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)	75%	80%	67%
Employed or Student	25%	20%	33%

9. Interventions targeting men are insufficient.

The cluster analysis on men’s survey results delivered two main clusters that differed from each other based on their rejection (“Egalitarians”) or relative acceptance (“Traditionals”) of violence and gender inequality. The two clusters most strongly differ on statements such as “Protecting a woman’s honor is the responsibility of the men in the family” (4% vs 81% agreement) and “A woman must get permission from her husband/father/brother to leave the house” (5% vs 77%). As mentioned in Finding #1, underlying attitudes and perceptions towards

honor and shame create the deepest divide between the two clusters. Emphasis on these notions in men can be said to have a relationship with acceptance of gender inequality.

Although to a smaller degree, significant differences also apply to statements on violence (“Even if her husband hits her, a woman shouldn’t talk about this to others”- 0% vs 40%; “If a man has committed violence against a woman, the woman must have done something to deserve it”- 2% vs 15%), women’s participation in work life (“A woman should not work if her husband does not allow it” - 9% vs 64%), and women’s economic independence within the family (“Even if the wife works to earn money, the husband must retain the decision-making power”- 0% vs 26%).

Table 35- Perceptions toward Violence (Males’ Survey)

Perceptions toward Violence	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
Even if her husband hits her, a woman shouldn’t talk about this to others.	0%	40%
If a man has committed violence against a woman, the woman must have done something to deserve it.	2%	15%
A woman must get permission from her husband/father/brother to leave the house.	5%	77%
Protecting a woman’s honor is the responsibility of the men in the family.	4%	81%
A woman should not work if her husband does not allow it.	9%	64%
The unity of family will be broken if the mother enters the workforce.	2%	41%
Even if the wife works to earn money, the husband must retain the decision-making power.	0%	26%

The two clusters also differ in terms of the attributes they use to define themselves. With the “Egalitarians” cluster, the differentiating negative aspects are “so depressed that nothing could cheer me up” and “I certainly feel useless at times,” both indicating an overall dissatisfaction with one’s life in comparison to one’s expectations. In-depth interviews signify that these might be related to limited access to livelihoods, capacity-development activities such as technical or soft-skills training, and socialization opportunities. Men in this cluster can significantly benefit from such support types.

For the “Traditionals” cluster, negative aspects are “nervous”; “restless or fidgety”; “[easily] discouraged by failure”; [hardship in] “mentally recovering after [unfortunate events]; and “I wish I could have more respect for myself.” These are statements that measure the level of satisfaction with oneself as well as one’s capabilities and resilience. Key informant interviews indicated that low levels of satisfaction in these variables may lead people to become more parochial and thus develop a tendency to close themselves to new social interactions, business endeavors, and pathways for skills development. This would have the indirect effect of letting one’s judgment and biases (about oneself and others) remain rather unchallenged and

become more deeply rooted. Men in this cluster could benefit significantly from gender sensitive livelihoods support as an entry point before diving into other gender transformative approaches.

An insight from the key informant interviews was that the conflict inside Syria as well as the forced displacement process reduced men’s sense of being in control in their life. This is thought to generate a sense of “insufficiency” in some men, and this may manifest itself as an over-emphasis on masculinity in family life, resulting in some cases in incidents of toxic masculinity³⁶. Support services to men could be more effective by including psycho-social support services that take this into consideration.

Table 36- Self-reported Attributes (Males’ Survey)

Defining Oneself	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
«Restless or Fidgety»	33%	55%
«So depressed that nothing could cheer me up»	45%	32%
«Nervous»	8%	32%
Under pressure I focus and think clearly	73%	38%
I am not easily discouraged by failure	71%	41%
I tend to mentally recover quickly after illness, injury or other hardships	74%	49%
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	18%	46%
I certainly feel useless at times.	34%	15%

The two clusters also differ with respect to their household income with the “Egalitarians” cluster having higher average household income. As for women, access to higher income could be increasing opportunities for capacity-development in both soft and technical skills development. Livelihoods access support is thus recommended for the men in “Traditionals” cluster as well.

Table 37- Monthly Household Income (Males’ Survey)

Monthly Household Income	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
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³⁶ Toxic Masculinity: According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, toxic masculinity is defined as <the way men are culturally trained and socially pressured to behave. Its three core tenants, toughness, anti-femininity, and power, range in expression from person to person, but all combine to create the sense of “manliness”>. According to the same source, some examples of toxic masculinity are as follows: <young boys are taught by their caretakers to “toughen up” or “suck it up” when hurt or facing challenges. Men are taught to ignore asking for help as it could show fragility and provoke ridicule. Masculine programming mandates that men should exert dominance over their romantic, work, and social life by suppressing anyone not embracing the masculine programming, and demanding unearned loyalty and respect. The resulting domestic and social conflict, including potential bullying toward marginalized groups, can lead to serious personal, occupational, and legal consequences.> Contents retrieved on November 23rd, 2023 from: <https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/what-toxic-masculinity-and-how-it-impacts-mental>

Below 8500 TL (Legal minimum wage for one person was 8506 TL net during the first half of 2023)	58%	62%
8501- 10500 TL	6%	16%
10500 – 16000 TL (Legal minimum wage became 11402 TL net during the fieldwork period; August to September 2023)	36%	22%

“It is very important to ensure that men participate in the interventions. Studies that do not include men are deemed incomplete. The source of violence is men in most cases anyway.”

Key Informant

“While working on violence against women, it is necessary to also work on family elders and men, because women can participate as much as they allow.”

Key Informant

As the “Traditionals” cluster is much more likely to justify violence, their levels of education and literacy provide information on the strength of the relationship between gender equality and education. 1 in 10 men in the “Traditionals” cluster don’t know how to read and write, which is another indication of the relationship between education and gender equality.

Table 38- **Literacy Rate** (Males’ Survey)

Literacy	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
Cannot read and write	2%	10%

The “Egalitarians” cluster has a higher proportion of employed individuals although majority of both groups are not employed. Unemployed people and NEET individuals could specifically be targeted with outreach and awareness-raising activities in order to raise community-wide awareness.

Table 39- **Employment Status** (Males’ Survey)

Employment Status	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
Employed	42%	29%



The “Traditionals” cluster is on average older than “Egalitarians.” The influence of evolving social norms and especially social media is thought to be more pronounced for younger people, according to key informants. This finding could indicate generational conflict between older and younger members of households (or communities in general). Without resorting to ageism, socialization activities such as recreational events, house visits, or group discussions targeting older members of the refugee community may mitigate this acceptance of gender inequality associated with the “Traditionals” cluster. **It is important to target older people with social activities in general and not limit the beneficiary pool to young or middle-aged individuals. Outreach strategies may have to be tweaked specifically for that purpose.**

Table 40- Age Groups (Males’ Survey)

Age Group	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
18-24	42%	16%
25-34	31%	34%
35-44	21%	27%
45+	6%	22%
Younger than 35	73%	51%
35 and older	27%	49%

Subsection 4 details the differences between prevalent attitudes in each city covered by the research study. It is important to note that city-level differences apply to men as well.

Table 41- City Breakdown (Males’ Survey)

City Breakdown	Male Cluster 1 Egalitarians	Male Cluster 2 Traditionals
Adana	29%	21%
Gaziantep	11%	35%
Hatay	58%	3%
Sanliurfa	2%	41%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Key informant interviews indicated that “effective interventions targeting men are almost non-existent in southeastern Türkiye.” In this context, religious leaders (neighborhood imams, community leaders, and their representatives, the Diyanet, etc.) are important resources that can be utilized for outreach, persuasion, and effective learning. **Utilizing neighbor-based and district-based informal groups and networks within the refugee community is**

recommended for effective intervention with refugee men. Elder members of the community are also recognized as valuable sources for men to internalize information.

10. Cases of violence against women are on the rise in the aftermath of the February 2023 Earthquakes in SET. There is a need to improve and expand the response services.

According to the “Gender-Based Violence Türkiye Protection Sector” meeting minutes and presentations, there is an increase in the cases of violence against women in the area.^{37 38 39}
⁴⁰ The consensus from key informant interviews was also similar. There are awareness campaigns in place, but the major obstacles faced by the working institutions are language barriers and the reluctance of women to leave their homes/tents. It is observed that organizations only focus on hiring staff who speak Arabic rather than specifically hiring women who both speak Arabic and are familiar with Syrian culture, which is a critical component. Lack thereof lowers the success rate of the implemented programs. The services provided through interpreters are one of the setbacks observed in reporting incidents of violence against women, both within civil society and official institutions.

In addition to physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and financial violence, key informant interviews indicate an increase in risks related to Child, Early, and Forced Marriage (CEFM), the prevalence of sex work, and second marriages, all in the aftermath of the earthquake and all categorized as forms of violence against refugee women. Key informants noted that many humanitarian assistance activities primarily focus on addressing basic needs such as food, shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion in the aftermath of the earthquake. While in regions like Hatay (and, even though outside the scope of this field research, also in Maras), humanitarian assistance remains a significant concern for refugees (starting with access to shelter), there is also a pressing need for more institutions and specialists to address violence against refugee women and protection risks, concurrently with livelihoods, education, and women's empowerment programs.

The insufficient deployment of professionals in MoFSS-VPMC (*ŞÖNİM*), along with limited personnel capacity (for protection services) in non-governmental organizations, is identified as a significant challenge.

Key informants also highlighted that some refugee women and girls face restrictions on leaving their tents because of various risks of violence against women. For instance, in certain container sites, especially in Hatay, toilets continue to operate on a shift basis, alternating between female-only and male-only hours, increasing the risk for the safety of refugee women and girls, particularly during night shifts.

³⁷ Türkiye GBV Sub-Sector Meeting Minutes, August 2023. Last accessed: 09.11.2023

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Türkiye GBV Sub-Sector GAP Analysis Results, July 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/turkiye-gbv-sub-sector-gap-analysis-results-presentation-21-july-2023> Last accessed: 09.11.2023

Another reported issue is the inadequacy of security personnel for container sites, causing discomfort among refugee women and girls due to perceived trespassing risks: this risk is especially pronounced in specific zones with high male presence such as those with internet connectivity. This poses a risk for women and girls, potentially trapping them in their tents (preventing them from using these shared spaces).

11. In the aftermath of the earthquake, there is strong need for psycho-social support as well as sexual and reproductive health services.

The Violence Exposure Data indicates that the most needed support type is psychological. This is important both to manage the trauma of violence and enact positive change in one’s life if necessary.

Table 42- Access to Support- Psychological (Violence Exposure Data)

Support Access of those who experienced violence What kind of support do you need the most?	Overall
Psychological Support	59%
Economic Support	31%
Legal Support	27%
Medical Support	14%
Security	10%
Shelter	6%
In-kind support	6%
Job Search Support	3%
Support in Applying to Public or Govt. Services	2%
Support in Communicating with the Perpetrator	1%
Access to Early Childhood Education for their Children	1%

Majority of both “Traditionals” and “Loners” state that they consider themselves to be “anxious” and agree with the statement, “I wish I could respect myself more.” “Traditionals” are also less likely than other clusters to believe that they are “strong in the face of hardships and struggles of life.” Both clusters could benefit from accessing psycho-social support services that help them with developing positive coping mechanisms against trauma and stress as well as services that will help them meet and engage with other people from similar backgrounds and/or access soft-skills and vocational training opportunities.

Table 43- **Self-reported View on Oneself– Cluster Analysis** (Women’s Survey)

Self-reported feelings and attitudes towards oneself	Cluster 1 Loners	Cluster 2 Traditionals	Cluster 3 Egalitarians
"Anxious"	52%	52%	33%
"Hopeless"	34%	35%	19%
"So depressed that nothing could cheer me up"	34%	27%	7%
"I believe I'm a strong person in the face of hardships and struggles of life"	72%	59%	72%
"I wish I could respect myself more"	64%	67%	34%
"I generally find myself unsuccessful"	28%	36%	19%

Key informants highlighted that the factors that fuel the risk of Child, Early, and Forced Marriage (CEFM) have been on the rise in the aftermath of the earthquake. As access to housing becomes more expensive or limited and access to livelihoods opportunities become scarcer in the aftermath of the earthquake, young girls face an increased risk of CEFM. Young and/or pregnant girls—fearing the deportation of the perpetrator (most likely male family members or spouse/partner) and their family members, as well as potential legal consequences (such as imprisonment) and social repercussions (like stigmatization and tarnishing the refugee community)—refrain from seeking any help (or medical checks during pregnancy). It is also important at this point to note that key informants stressed that activities and services related to sexual and reproductive health are identified as critical needs in the field.

12. There are certain programming best practices that significantly increase the effectiveness of interventions.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, coupled with global lockdown measures, has prompted an increasing reliance on online methodologies within the civil society domain. This necessary shift aims to conduct humanitarian aid and intervention initiatives targeting disadvantaged groups and sustain ongoing interventions. Throughout this period, participants engaged in assessments of program activities (which are conducted online) have recognized the advantages of virtual implementation. Nonetheless, they have voiced a clear preference for face-to-face activities, deeming that face-to-face interactions are more beneficial than their online counterparts. Key informants have underscored the critical role of face-to-face methods in amplifying the impact and success of Violence against refugee women intervention and protection programs implemented in the field, strongly recommending a continued preference for this method.

The establishment of a strong network among women and raising awareness within this network deemed impactful according to key informants working in the field. Especially in the aftermath of earthquake setting, key informants stated that forming a strong network among refugee women has become more difficult. Another critical point reported by key informants is that the involvement of family and friends as the closest societal institution does not contribute positively to the reporting of violence cases. **Coupled with the perceived responsibility (and pressure) of representing the whole refugee community, societal norms often lead to a tendency to normalize and internalize such incidents within the family context.** Therefore, establishment of a strong network among refugee women and raising awareness within this network plays a crucial role to transform societal beliefs that leads to reluctance of reporting incidents of violence.

During in-depth interviews, women disclosed that when instances of intimate partner violence ("IPV") are shared with family, friends, or another woman within the community, it rapidly disseminates, being interpreted both as an affront to the husband and as a stain on the community's reputation. This perception leads to a refusal of support or solidarity from the woman's family and close associates. Consequently, in these circumstances, the woman finds herself increasingly isolated, facing a heightened risk of the aggressor's escalating anger, potential divorce, child custody challenges, and the looming prospect of homelessness. In order to maintain unity of family and prevent separation from their children, women enduring violence, under these conditions, abstain from divulging the abuse they suffer to the familial and immediate social circles. Women participants of in-depth interviews also recommended that creating a stronger network among women and raising awareness within this network.

To enhance the impact and effectiveness of interventions, it is recommended to engage facilitators (e.g., trainers, field staff, program staff) from the Syrian community who share the same language and cultural codes as the target group. The challenge at hand is to cultivate trust in legal authorities among refugee women. Enhancing awareness and capacity among public authorities to serve the refugee population is of utmost importance, especially in neighborhoods with a high concentration of refugees.

Support from figures of authority is equally vital when it comes to intergroup interactions, particularly in situations where building social connections between refugee and host community women is a priority. When individuals in positions of legal or social authority unequivocally endorse the goal of harmony, interactions between members of different communities are more likely to foster social cohesion. These authorities should be seen as advocates for the development of friendly, supportive, and equitable relationships among members of diverse groups.

The presence of an authority figure who is perceived to endorse their communication and engagement makes intergroup contact more likely to be harmonious. On the other hand, casual interactions in the absence of such perceived support by authorities are more likely to lead to negative behaviors like stereotyping or hostility.

CONCLUSIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES

While the previous sections included detailed findings from the research process, this section presents the conclusions of the research team based on the findings from the literature review of secondary data sources and fieldwork based on primary data sources as well as the good practices in relevant points.

1. Interventions should focus on long-term community building among women.

One of the best ways for encouraging women to report the incidents of violence they experience is to help them build social capital which they can rely on to feel connected, gather advice (for instance, on how to move forward with reaching out to support providers), receive help on how to access jobs through their social connections as well as seek shelter and financial assistance, if necessary. When such linkages among women from similar backgrounds form and slowly deepen over time under the auspices of a social program (through repeated organization of events, small- or large-scaled gatherings, recreational activities, etc.), women beneficiaries also feel freer to share their experiences with program facilitators and seek help from them. Traditional social norms tend to constrain women to their households where men exercise superiority over them through financial power and notions of honor and purity. Enabling women to expand their social networks beyond household and family is an effective way to empower them and get them to open up about their experiences in an environment where they feel safe.

When designing a program, it's crucial to recognize that program beneficiaries are not isolated individuals. Instead, interventions should aim not only to assist individual recipients but also to strengthen the entire local community. A key finding of the research study is that both women and men who experience violence while growing up or who regularly observe it in their social environment are more likely to normalize it. Also, fear of family or community backlash against a woman who reports an incident of violence is one of the main barriers faced by women, when it comes to accessing legal services or seeking help. "Outreach work in my neighborhood" is the top channel through which women in the target group learn about support mechanisms against violence according to survey findings. These indicators point to the influence of social environment in shaping attitudes and practices around issues related to violence. Community-wide interactions can thus address social aspects shaping the views on violence.

People living in the same neighborhood or working in the same place share a common environment where they can foster a sense of belonging by engaging with each other. A community-based approach ensures that program beneficiaries are chosen from groups that can interact beyond the program's specific activities. It involves selecting individuals from various groups who reside, work, or study in the same location, thereby enhancing their community bonds through the social program.

Factors to be considered for community-based interventions are as follows:

Promoting interaction between different groups can have a positive impact, particularly when group members share common goals. Therefore, it is beneficial to include exercises or activities that involve beneficiaries collaborating in groups to achieve a specific objective. This collaboration can take the form of participating in recreational activities together, holding group discussions on topics of relevance to the beneficiaries, or working on group projects to develop skills. Incorporating group discussions can be an effective way to foster meaningful engagement among beneficiaries, as it helps individuals realize that the social divide between

them is smaller than they might have initially thought. These conversations may even lead to the development of friendships that extend beyond the program. Topics of discussion can revolve around issues such as challenges in the job market or workplace, general work-life matters, supporting children's education as parents, healthcare concerns, and accessing healthcare services, especially for the elderly in their families. It is essential to select topics that resonate with the target group of individuals. Events like Children's or Mother's Day festivals, religious gatherings like iftars, and regular local meetups can serve as excellent opportunities for people to come together and socialize around a common theme.

2. Community building programs should promote Self-Help Structures for refugee women to address violence against women.

The literature on the barriers to report incidents of violence among Syrian refugee women in Turkey clearly shows that in the case of violence, women first tend to turn to their families for help and guidance. However, they generally do not get the help and support they are seeking due to stigma. War and forced migration have almost destroyed women's social network and social capital, at the very local and neighborhood level and women who cannot get support from their families feel alone and helpless.

When we examine the local examples from Turkey, such as community centers of humanitarian and local organizations, women and girls' safe spaces or projects aiming to educate the refugee community about violence against women or access to justice services, there are some common patterns. These places have community building implications, meaning women and girls who have very limited access to public and semi-public places where they can socialize with other women can access those spaces. However, the trainings and sensibilization programs conducted in these spaces do not necessarily attract a lot of attention due to their didactic nature and sometimes are faced with negative reactions of men.

Good Practices: MiMi: Violence prevention for refugee women, children, and migrants, Ethno-Medizinisches Zentrum e.V. ⁴¹

The project aims to empower those affected by violence, to strengthen their potential for taking care of themselves and each other, and to develop self-help structures. It is primarily intended to promote violence prevention in refugee reception and group accommodation facilities, in families, and in the public sphere. The project also transmits knowledge about human rights, child protection and women's rights, as well as introducing options for protection and individual responses.

The project trains committed and well-connected migrants with comprehensive German language skills as trans-cultural violence prevention multipliers. Trained multipliers then independently organize first-language information events on these topics in group accommodation facilities, language schools, mosques and cultural associations, targeting refugee men, women and youth. Multipliers from more than 40 different countries come together in the MiMi project. New migrant networks and self-help structures are created in close collaboration with mainstream service provision systems.

Finding Safety: Asylum Seeking and Refugee Women Free From Violence, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australiaⁱ

⁴¹ Sources: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/mimi-violence-prevention-refugee-women-children-and-migrants>

Finding Safety aims to reduce domestic/family violence across Western Sydney by developing a model, which facilitates self-empowerment & leadership in areas of prevention, safety & reporting by providing spaces and platforms for self-empowerment and leadership amongst survivors.

The main goals of the project are;

acting as a hub for information, resources, facilitation, and collaboration for NGOs, grassroots groups, and others working separately in the domestic violence and asylum/refugee sectors in Australia.

ensuring national-level policy reform to facilitate reporting, increased access to services, and visa pathways for survivors of violence.

“Finding Safety” aims to work with key local NGOs and the local council to ensure that they mainstream approaches to hear, understand, and support asylum seekers and refugees within their spheres of influence and that a concrete strategy addressing the challenges experienced by them at risk/survivors of DFV can be developed. This is accomplished through training of women, women-led empowerment initiatives, training of professionals & volunteers, the development of referral pathways/networks and the influencing/development of a relevant strategy to respond to the challenges experienced by refugees effected by domestic violence.

The programs “Community Mobilisers” project aims to train refugee women to go out to their communities to engage other on the issues of domestic violence serving as a self-help structure.

Good Practices: CARE; Women & Girls’ Safe Spaces (WGSS) Across the Globe

CARE operates Static WGSSs in urban (non-camp) settings for refugee and host community members and provides mobile outreach in form of mobile WGSS in refugee camps. The services include:

Psychosocial support services including leisure time, recreation, skills building trainings such as financial literacy, language education etc., and life skills sessions for adolescent girls and adult women.

Information dissemination and awareness raising sessions on GBV and protection services.

Community dialogues, including engaging men and boys on gender norms and social cohesion.

Adolescent-friendly SRH through the AMAL Initiative’s three components: Young Mothers Club; Community Engagement; and Health Service Provider Dialogue.

Mobile outreach through integrated teams of protection psychosocial support workers and Community Health Workers (CHWs) in refugee camps.

Other activities provided by CARE in different countries are as follows:

Tea-talk sessions to raise awareness of available response services, confidential referral pathways and the importance of timely reporting (Sudan).

Recreational activities including volleyball, football, drama, song practice and cooking demonstrations (Sudan).

Psychosocial support activities including use of art to express the challenges women and girls face, storytelling sessions, and group sessions to plan for the future and change perspectives (Egypt).

Social cohesion activities including Happiness Café, library and group breakfasts celebrating the customs and traditions of different nationalities (Egypt).

Be An Inspiration Initiative to encourage women's leadership of the WGSS (Egypt).

Girl Shine sessions for adolescent girls, including a focus on preventing child, early and forced marriage (Bangladesh).

Good Practices: Support to Life; Educating migrant and refugee women on accessing justice services⁴²

The main goal of the project "Educating migrant and refugee women on accessing justice services" run by Support to Life in partnership with UN Women is combating violence against refugee women in semi-urban and rural areas of Turkey. The program aims to teach refugee girls and women about their rights concerning marriage, divorce, and legal aid, while making them aware of their sexual rights and available protection services.

Good Practices: Psychosocial Support Groups among Beneficiaries⁴³

This refers to the formation of long-term groups among beneficiaries overseen by a skilled professional. According to key informant interview findings, this is as much a community-based and socialization activity as it is a psychosocial support activity. Members of this group get together and engage with each other on a daily basis through alternating methods such as face-to-face meetings or online social media groups (i.e., Telegram or WhatsApp groups) that allow them to:

interact regularly and keep in touch.

share the things that are important to them or their problems, and receive responses from their peers within the group or from the group supervisor/moderator.

receive regular updates and posts from the expert to better learn how to cope with the stresses in their life.

develop an affinity among themselves that goes beyond simply being co-beneficiaries in a one-time only activity or event.

An expert should be available on social media groups (such as Telegram or WhatsApp) as much as possible throughout the day (every day), both as a moderator and as a friend/ally to group members.

There can be multiple experts working in the same groups in alternative times.

⁴² Source: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/educating-migrant-and-refugee-women-accessing-justice-services>

⁴³ Some examples in Türkiye include "A Break for Myself" programme ("Kendim için bir Mola" in Turkish original) with more information on (Retrieved on November 24th, 2023) : https://www.linkedin.com/posts/pinar-kobas-sicrar-2082526_19-ekimde-disiplinleraras%C4%B1-online-bir-%C3%A7al%C4%B1%C5%9Fma-activity-7117811563096420354-Sll

Also, one expert can be involved in more than one group.

Group size could be as small as 5 people or as large as 30. Bigger groups are recommended to increase the chances of beneficiaries meeting at least a few like-minded individuals to form close friendships.

The moderator/expert should also be responsible for keeping the group active and kickstart discussions to build connections among group members. This can be done by starting discussions or carrying out online or offline group exercises or tasks with group members.

The fact that group members can share their deeper emotions on the issues affecting their life under the supervision of a professional stimulates all members to develop higher self-awareness as well as sincere relationships with some or all the participants within the group.

The facilitated environment allows individuals to express profound emotions, fostering self-awareness and authentic relationships. This structured social setting enhances the sense of safety for refugee women, expanding their social capital.

Research⁴⁴ indicates that group engagement boosts awareness of personal struggles and empathy for others' difficulties.

Consequently, professionally guided social groups become valuable tools for individuals dealing with post-crisis situations, such as forced displacement.

Led by licensed mental health practitioners, group therapy transcends mere emotional release, offering practical guidance and strategies applicable beyond the group setting.

Group formation also establishes a system of accountability for participants, motivating members to persist in their pursuits rather than reverting to destructive or negative patterns.

⁴⁴ American Psychological Association. Psychotherapy: Understanding Group Therapy. Retrieved on Nov 23rd 2023: <https://www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy/group-therapy>

3. Involving local mediators should be a priority.

Family healthcare providers, religious figures like imams and mukhtars, and individuals embedded in their local communities, such as skilled tradespeople, artisans, and association leaders, are all examples of people with extensive connections across their communities (including both refugee and host communities). Some individuals naturally possess strong social networks due to their interpersonal abilities.

Good Practices: The Adolescent Mothers Against All Odds (AMAL) Initiative by CARE in Syria

The crisis in Syria had resulted in a surge in early marriage and adolescent pregnancy, underscoring a crucial gap in the access of pregnant adolescents to life-saving sexual and reproductive health information and services. The AMAL initiative was devised to bridge this gap, enhancing the sexual and reproductive health and well-being of adolescent mothers in Syria and other humanitarian settings.

The Initiative offered Community dialogue groups, consisting of influential figures like religious leaders, teachers, community health workers, as well as mothers, mothers-in-law, and husbands of adolescent girls.

Members rallied support for project activities to create conducive environments for adolescent girls and worked to influence programmatic aspects to make them more responsive to adolescents.

Good Practices: Tipping Point Initiative by CARE in Bangladesh, Nepal and Northwest Syria

CARE's Tipping Point initiative aimed to tackle the underlying causes of child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) by advocating for the rights of adolescent girls through community-level programs and evidence generation in Nepal, Bangladesh and Northwest Syria.

In addition to tailored activities for the primary participants—adolescent girls, boys, and parents' groups—the intervention involved various other participant groups, including local government and religious leaders, as well as influencers.

The project employed participatory methods to shape innovative program activities and supported locally initiated efforts to influence social norms positively.

Tipping Point adopted an approach of coordinated engagement with diverse participant groups (such as girls, boys, parents, and community leaders) on key programmatic themes and established public spaces to involve all community members in the dialogue.

4. Implement a participatory approach.

A participatory approach ensures the involvement of those directly impacted by the program outcomes. This approach enhances the program's relevance by directly engaging the individuals affected by it in both the planning and implementation phases. It also provides an opportunity to learn from the solutions proposed by members of the target group who have already confronted the issues the intervention aims to address.

Good Practices: The Women Lead in Emergencies (“WLiE”) initiative by CARE is designed to empower women directly impacted by crises, enabling their active involvement in humanitarian efforts. This program empowers women's groups to play a pivotal role in addressing and recovering from natural disasters, conflicts, and emergencies affecting their communities. It offers practical guidance and tools to CARE staff and partners, facilitating collaboration with marginalized women's groups and promoting their participation and leadership in humanitarian activities.

During emergencies, crucial decisions on resource allocation and entitlements often lack transparent information, and gender and other inequalities can contribute to exclusion from these decisions.

The "Rapid Gender Analysis" is instrumental in understanding the dynamics of decision-making, focusing specifically on identifying barriers and opportunities for women's equal participation and leadership in emergencies.

This analysis sheds light on how gender influences participation, the organization of women, their unique concerns, and potential solutions. It serves as a practical guide for Women Lead in Emergencies project teams, offering entry points for programming that can be explored and validated with the participation of women's groups.

WLiE employs exercises to examine the impact of gender norms on decision-making and behavior. It aims to challenge and transform restrictive or discriminatory values and norms, fostering alternative ideas and behaviors related to power, participation, and leadership.

CARE and its partners utilize participatory tools to assist women's groups in identifying their own participation and leadership objectives. The program encourages these groups to determine the necessary changes for meaningful participation and leadership, as well as to develop strategies for implementing these changes.

WLiE primarily collaborates with informal women's groups and community-based organizations, including village loans and savings groups, self-help groups, solidarity groups, and faith-based organizations.

Good Practices: The Adolescent Mothers Against All Odds (AMAL) Initiative

As mentioned in Recommendation #3, the AMAL Initiative was crafted to address the requirements of pregnant adolescents and first-time mothers in crisis-affected areas, concurrently tackling the community's perceptions of gender, power, and social norms.

Since genuine participatory approaches acknowledge not only the distinct needs of beneficiaries but also their ability to generate change for themselves, the AMAL Initiative featured:

The Young Mothers' Club ("YMC"), which was a peer-based discussion group made up of pregnant adolescents and first-time mothers. The discussions centered around improving sexual and reproductive health knowledge and strengthening life skills.

Adolescent Advisory Committees (AACs): YMC graduates who had shown interest in supporting other adolescents participated in AACs and underwent a series of leadership sessions to further enhance their self-efficacy. AAC members played a pivotal role in strengthening the program's responsiveness to the needs of adolescents by (1) collaborating with relevant stakeholders to share recommendations and feedback and (2) identifying hard-to-reach and marginalized adolescents in their communities to refer them to AMAL programming, health facilities, and other support systems.

5. Promoting livelihood opportunities for survivors is essential.

The existing research of Syrian women's experiences of domestic violence in Turkey clearly shows that one of the reasons why women subjected to violence do not seek legal protection and report the incidents of violence is that the protection system is not offering them a long-term solution. Women who report violence are afraid to live with increased violence after the reporting (violence), the detention or deportation of the partner (poverty) or having to go back to their partners house after spending some time with the family or in women's shelters.

Women's economic dependency on men do not only increase violence but also deprives them from exit strategies in case of reporting.

Good Practices: CARE, Women & Girls' Safe Spaces (WGSS) around the Globe

CARE provides the following service in Static WGSSs in urban (non-camp) settings for refugee and host community members:

GBV case management including cash & voucher assistance and referrals for specialized services (including specialized sexual reproductive health services)

Livelihood support through provision of farming inputs

Psychosocial support and economic empowerment activities such as bakery, beading, knitting and wool designing, which provide emotional healing and income generation.

Skills building trainings such as financial literacy, language education etc., and life skills sessions for adolescent girls and adult women.

Good Practices: EMPOW-HER⁴⁵

The existence of violence against refugee women experienced by women engaged in the migration process requires a gender-responsive approach. Such a perspective would also enhance the impact of the support provided and address gender inequalities within the economic reintegration process.

⁴⁵ Source: <https://empow-her.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMPOWHER-RAPPORT-ETUDE-2023-EN-WEB.pdf>

Community and religious leaders represent an authority in communities. These personalities often play a role of mediation in the resolution of conflicts and in dealing with cases of violence against refugee women. It is essential that these actors be trained and involved in the promotion and support of programs related to the economic empowerment of women.

Note: In such programs, women are often directed towards heavily feminized sectors or self-employment to facilitate childcare and provide them with a degree of flexibility. However, adopting a gender perspective should enable us to rethink economic integration to avoid locking women into social roles and constructs that are often more unstable and less well-paid, and instead offer them more diversified economic opportunities.

In this regard, **entrepreneurship** can represent an interesting opportunity for the economic integration of migrant women, particularly as it contributes to the enhancement or acquisition of new technical and personal skills.

Women Dare Lisboa: Entrepreneurship, an opportunity for women refugees.

In partnership with the Pão a Pão organization and the Escola de Turismo de Portugal, Empow'Her developed a pilot entrepreneurship support program in Lisbon. Aimed at 15 refugee women, the 4-month program combined introductory entrepreneurship workshops, mentoring and events to put them in touch with the local ecosystem.

This first experience highlighted a number of lessons that have informed the orientations of this report:

The importance of a long-term approach, which enables us to focus on rebuilding the participants' confidence and capacity for action during the first phase of the program, and to assess the relevance of a more technical entrepreneurial program during the second phase;

The importance of connecting participants to a range of players to help them integrate into a new social and economic environment, and create acceptable conditions for them to project themselves into the program (childcare, housing, access to financial aid);

- Taking linguistic and cultural barriers requiring adaptations into account to encourage experience- sharing and learning.

In France, several organizations use this method for refugee women survivors. For instance, in France, the Maison des Femmes Saint-Denis has developed an employment service in collaboration with several partners, including Pôle Emploi (the national employment agency). The Maison de Soie in Brive-la-Gaillarde, which follows a similar model as a multidisciplinary women's shelter for victims of violence, has recently implemented a resilience program that includes self-esteem workshops and professional coaching. Lastly, the CIDFF Pas-de-Calais is currently conducting a diagnostic study with the aim of integrating an employment support unit within their organization.

Survivors of violence who are seeking to re-enter the workforce primarily turn to low-paying and unstable jobs in sectors such as caregiving, early childhood education, and caretaking. These choices are often driven by the need for immediate income and the search for flexible contracts that can accommodate their constraints, particularly their parental responsibilities.

Cooperation between the support structures for women survivors and the actors involved in economic integration, whether institutional, private, or associative, is therefore essential. It should be accompanied by cross-awareness of the challenges within these two ecosystems. Thus, the support structures need to be familiarized with various pathways to integration,

including entrepreneurship, and the professional support structures should, in turn, adopt a systematic gender approach and better understand the specific personal and professional journey of a woman survivor.

Other initiatives could be led by actors engaged with women survivors, such as the establishment of social enterprises to support their entrepreneurial projects.

Good Practice: A social enterprise serving women survivors: Gifted by FreeFrom

Gifted is a social enterprise created by the organization FreeFrom, based in Los Angeles, with the aim of ensuring financial security for gender minority, migrant, and racially marginalized survivors to support their reconstruction and sustainable economic empowerment.

Gifted offers gift boxes and collections that bring together products created by survivors, while the social enterprise itself employs survivors. Through this virtuous circle, Gifted ensures financial independence and security for its community, promoting a form of entrepreneurship that allows individuals to pursue individual goals while benefiting from collective support.

The following example highlights Gifted, a social enterprise based in the United States that supports and remunerates the independent activities of women survivors. **This collective entrepreneurship approach, based not on competition but on solidarity and collaboration, represents an interesting opportunity to challenge certain values associated with entrepreneurship (capital creation, competition) and offer alternative paths.**

Good Practice: KAMER – An Opportunity for Each Woman⁴⁶

A similar model has proven to be very successful in Turkey as well. Women's organization KAMER has been running projects on providing women opportunities to break the cycle of violence and change their traditional positions also with women's entrepreneurship programs since 1998. They are successfully running businesses such as restaurants and shops in many cities of Turkey following a collective entrepreneurship model.

⁴⁶ Source: https://www.kamer.org.tr/icerik_detay.php?id=562

6. Livelihoods interventions must include a gender lens.

Both women and men of the target group experience deep poverty and this factor is one of the most crucial factors shaping their lives. Livelihoods support is thus helpful in alleviating the stresses related to subsistence that they must endure on a regular basis. For these reasons, this type of support is highly relevant for the target group.

Research findings suggest that stressors related to displacement can increase the likelihood of domestic violence, particularly in areas where there is not strong opposition to violence against women based on prevailing gender norms. Displacement can lead to shifts in gender roles and identities. For many refugee men, whose identity is closely tied to their employment, provider responsibilities, and civic engagement, adapting to the loss of social status that often accompanies displacement can be challenging, especially when they are jobless or unable to work in their previous occupations. This disruption in their ability to provide for their families can also result in a loss of positive avenues to express their masculinity.

Refugee women usually live in traditionally minded households. Their entry into the workforce (or their continued formal education) is not usually supported or encouraged by their social environment. However, research findings indicate that, especially under economically straining circumstances, there is no widespread hostility for women's entry into the workforce either. A strong barrier to entering the workforce is the low familiarity of the target group with business and work life in general.

7. Engage Men and Boys with tailor-made programs.

Violence against women is rooted in social and historical unequal power relations between men and women. It is an extreme manifestation of patriarchal power inequalities, where some men resort to violence to control and power over the bodies of women.

As violence against women is an expression of masculinity, engaging men and boys into programs explicitly addressing norms, behaviors, and relations associated with ideals of manhood can be **gender transformative**.

In many countries, women who cannot approach the justice system seeks guidance from their relatives. This is the case for Syrian refugees in Turkey as well. In such incidents, violence is commonly resolved within families and communities.

As customary justice systems are historically patriarchal and focused on the restoration of norms, the violence remains unpunished or is treated as a minor issue, which makes it more difficult for women to bring the case to the justice system (UN Women 2010).

Engaging men as fathers and caregivers provide important spaces for developing healthier and **non-violent** lifestyles. The changing gender norms regarding fatherhood, and the sharing of domestic activities or care work; these may well prove to be the most profound and transformative changes in the lives of men.

The existing research on gender dynamics of the Syrian refugee community in Turkey clearly shows men's lack of interest in civil society activities as they are preoccupied with livelihood activities.

Considering violence against women sensibilization programs are historically very didactic and address men as potential perpetrators of violence, these kinds of activities would fall short in

terms of engaging men. **These programs must be structured in a fun and participatory way, where men do not feel like they are being thought something but are actively participating into the teaching process.**

Activities and Programs promoting responsible fatherhood is an important instrument to:

Engage a hard-to-reach group of the refugee community, men and boys.

Promoting healthier relations and providing a safe space for men to share their experiences of fatherhood.

Promoting a non-violent, happier, and more equalitarian lifestyle.

Achieving men's reconsideration of gender norms regarding manhood and fatherhood with a gender-transformative approach that would reduce violence against women is crucial.

Good Practices: CARE, Women & Girls' Safe Spaces (WGSS) Across the Globe

CARE provides the following service in Static WGSSs in urban (non-camp) settings for refugee and host community members:

The Community Dialogues service, including engaging men and boys on gender norms and social cohesion.

GBV prevention through approaches including **Role Model Men & Boys** (RMMB) involving awareness sessions, dialogues, and reflection meeting).

The Role Model Men and Boys (RMMB) strategy engages men and boys in a process of personal reflection to examine the constructs of masculinity in their environments and understand their impact on well-being and relationships.

This involves contemplation of unequal power dynamics, gender roles, and rigid social norms affecting the behavior of women, girls, men, and boys.

The program staff recruits men and boys who undergo a series of training modules, mentorship, coaching, and dialogue sessions.

During training, participants engage in personal reflections to challenge stereotypical forms of masculinity and are encouraged to develop positive forms of masculinity through a personal transformative journey.

The approach is guided by three main principles: Men as Clients, Men as Supportive Partners, and Men as Agents of Change.

Especially the perspective of "Men as clients" involves acknowledging men's needs and vulnerabilities, urging them to utilize various services that they might typically avoid. This includes accessing sexual and reproductive health services, counseling, psychological support, mentoring, coaching for younger men and boys, and other specialized services.

As the trained Role Models undergo positive personal transformations, they are supported to reach out to other men and boys, aiming to inspire widespread behavioral change. As these Role Models demonstrate behavioral change and adoption, they often become Role Models themselves, creating a "snowball" effect.

Good Practices: Making Responsible Fatherhood Fun (UNFPA, Ukraine)

Dads with children who live near a school, or a community center can come there at a certain time to spend a few hours together to socialize and work:

- make something for the house (if you do not have the necessary maintenance tools at home);
- make something together for the community (including for the school) – for example, equipment for a sportsground or playground, so that everyone can use it;
- teach their sons and daughters to use maintenance tools safely;
- teach their sons and daughters to make small repairs at home, as well as take care of household chores;
- communicate with other dads, including to share the experience of fatherhood;
- learn to use maintenance tools (from each other or from a teacher).
- Here you can teach your children new skills and have fun.
- We will help you teach your child to work with maintenance tools.
- We are dads just like you – come to us to communicate and have fun.

2. Dads with children who live near a school, or a community center can come there at a certain time to play sports or exercise with their children.

In the warm season, such activities can take place outdoors, on the sports ground or sports field.

During joint sports or exercising, dads with children:

- make their bodies and health stronger, get used to a healthy lifestyle;
- learn new sports;
- dads learn more about children and children learn more about dads;
- through regular physical training, dads help children to improve self-discipline.

Dads communicate with other dads, share the experience of fatherhood.

The result of this project is an active community of dads with children who regularly play sports, show children the importance of regular exercise, spend time with their children, teach and study, and tell their friends about sports and dad's participation in raising children.

A similar project – Daddy's Gym (PapaZal) – has been operating in Gomel (Belarus) for several years. Interestingly, women are not allowed to attend these classes. This is explained by the fact that children begin to behave differently when their mothers come. Several schools in Gomel are taking part in the project. Classes are free for dads and children. Dads not only play sports, but also practice braiding, share experiences of raising children, and help children adapt to kindergarten or school – teach them to play in a team, win or lose with dignity, and share toys. Dads are more encouraged to come with both sons and daughters.

Father's Club (Kyiv, Ukraine) has been organizing one-day Daddy Football tournaments for dads and children for several years. They play in mixed teams. Moms come to cheer. During tournaments, what matters the most is sports, team spirit, communication between dads and children.

For such activities, it is possible to collaborate with UNFPA MENENGAGE team, ACEV (a Turkish NGO promoting healthy fatherhood activities), and benefit from sources of Critical Manhood Studies Initiative on non-violent manhood.

8. Involving authority figures is essential for successful interventions.

A key finding from the research study emphasizes that the primary obstacles to seeking assistance in the aftermath of violence are rooted in fears of deportation (i) and, in general, concerns linked to refugee status (ii). One key informant aptly expressed it as follows: **"Refugees generally aim to stay under the radar with the police due to their fear of potential trouble, believing that their refugee status makes them appear suspicious in the eyes of the host community."** The challenge at hand is to cultivate trust in legal authorities among refugee women. Enhancing awareness and capacity among public authorities to serve the refugee population is of utmost importance, especially in neighborhoods with a high concentration of refugees.

Support from figures of authority is equally vital when it comes to intergroup interactions, particularly in situations where building social connections between refugee and host community women is a priority. When individuals in positions of legal or social authority unequivocally endorse the goal of harmony, interactions between members of different communities are more likely to foster social cohesion. These authorities should be seen as advocates for the development of friendly, supportive, and equitable relationships among members of diverse groups.

The presence of an authority figure who is perceived to endorse their communication and engagement makes intergroup contact more likely to be harmonious. On the other hand, casual interactions in the absence of such perceived support by authorities are more likely to lead to negative behaviors like stereotyping or hostility.

9. Tailored services are needed for diverse groups within the refugee community.

Research findings indicate that the refugee community is not a uniform and homogeneous group. There are differences between knowledge levels, attitudes, and practices related to violence. These differences emerge based on city or geographical location; income level; and education level. A cluster analysis based on response behavior revealed further differences that apply across these demographic breakdowns; these can be based on the overall lifestyle of respondents as well as prevalent social norms in each environment.

10. Effective interagency coordination is crucial as it is hard for a single organization address all the different types of needs required by refugee women who are subjected to violence.

One key finding from the research study is that women who were subjected to violence usually end up back with the perpetrator or perceive a variety of different barriers to reporting the incident and seeking help. Alleviating this issue requires enhancing independence and self-reliance of refugee women. This encompasses a range of dimensions, requiring simultaneous support across various services and mechanisms. It is crucial to ensure that refugee women can access diverse support services, (which would signal to them the possibility of a better alternative reality), particularly in cases of violence. When refugee women think that their varied needs can be met, this helps significantly in strengthening their sense of self-empowerment. Integration for refugee women hinges on the availability and accessibility of services and tools, including legal counsel, healthcare, and financial instruments.

Societal perceptions and behaviors are dynamic and can evolve over time. Therefore, preserving a diverse array of support services for refugee women over time is essential. The belief in self-sufficiency is more likely to take hold when inclusive components and service access remain consistently available, whereas irregularities or interruptions may diminish this belief. Social perceptions are shaped by repeated experiences with individuals or institutions, making one-time interventions less effective in altering an individual's views of their prospects.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) & CIVIL SOCIETY

Community Building and Engagement

- Any program aiming to increase women's resilience to violence and remove the first barriers to reporting must seek **building (or rebuilding) of women's social capital and networks** at the very local level.
- As socialization and community engagement are key aspects of prevention of and respond to violence against women, **increase the number of community-level spaces** (e.g., women and Girls Safe Spaces, Community Centers etc.) to provide a space for women and girls for access peer support and specialized GBV and MHPSS support.
- Design programs that aim **long-term community building** among Syrian women with safeguarding and women empowerment principles such as women and girls' committees which will function as self-help structures where they can access and share information about protection services, access to legal aid and livelihood opportunities.
- **Engage women and girls** in the design of these neighborhood based easy-to access women's committees to ensure self-sustainability and women and girls' involvement in decision making.
- **Engage local women** from the host community to these programs later on in order to strengthen overall community resilience and overcome community-based barriers to access to protection services.
- As violence against women is considered a private matter which Syrian women are reluctant to share with family members, humanitarian actors, and the authorities, **promote establishing of women's committees** as a first contact to access institutional support.
- Projects aiming to promote community resilience through female social networks, women's committees, and self-help structures should first aim at the foundation **of women's share and care groups** where they can just come together for a purpose, such as language classes or handcrafts, and discuss their daily experiences and struggles.
- **A more participatory and non-hierarchical approach** based on information sharing rather than being provided in a more formal setting such as education programs would attract more women and girls to participate and create a safe social environment where they would feel safe enough to talk about violence which is a sensitive subject.
- The use of a participatory method should be consistently and regularly employed to gather feedback on the progress of program activities. It allows for adjustments to be made to mechanisms and delivery methods that prove ineffective or irrelevant to the beneficiaries' needs. As part of the participatory method, program facilitators can be selected directly from women within the target group.
- Establish programs **targeting hard-to-reach groups** such as adolescent girls and elderly women in order to ensure the inclusiveness of these community-level spaces.
- As programs solely focused on GVB prevention and women's empowerment do not receive a lot of interest from the beneficiaries, or even are met with resistance from the communities, make sure to **include protection, safeguarding and empowerment**

component in all programs, particularly recreational and skills development activities, and language classes.

Involvement of Local Actors and Intermediaries

- **Involve local actors** such as family healthcare providers, religious figures like imams, local authorities as mukhtars and gate keepers from the community such as skilled tradespeople, artisans, and association leaders into your activities to promote long-term social transformation for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Engaging with local intermediaries as part of a social program and involving them in program activities can greatly **enhance the sense of community**. Additionally, offering them gender equality awareness and communication training can ensure they promote a more positive perspective on gender issues and influence social norms within their communities.
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- Building trust between the local Syrian community, potential survivors and local authorities is the key. The **participation of local legal and social authorities into decision making**, design and implementation of programs would show their commitment to promoting social cohesion and increase the trust in public authorities.
- **Identify key actors** working in social services and access to justice system, especially in neighborhoods with a high concentration of refugees, and incorporate them into your referral mechanisms for easier access.

Men and Boys

- Livelihood interventions are seen as an effective means of reaching out to men. **Include gender mainstreaming and GBV prevention components to livelihood projects involving men.**
- **Promote responsible fatherhood:** Programs aiming to promote responsible fatherhood and men's involvement in reproductive activities with their wives and children would have a long-term positive impact on promoting non-violent parenting and break the intergenerational cycle of violence.
- Create safety for **stepping out of the "gender box"** for men and boys.

Livelihoods

- Programs that **offer livelihood support and training**, help women address GBV risks, and enable them to build stronger social connections with the broader community can significantly contribute to strengthening gender equality.
- **Elements of economic integration can be integrated into various types of social programs** (such as psychosocial support or protection services) through training,

mentoring, and consultancy services related to entrepreneurship and employment support.

- Empowering women and facilitating their economic integration, particularly in single-female-headed households, can be achieved through **vocational skills development and support for employment or entrepreneurship**.
- Livelihoods support might entail **raising awareness of legal rights** and help in navigating legal frameworks concerning employer and employee rights, legal access to job market and work permits, business ownership and registration, and other relevant areas.
- **Incorporate measures to mitigate gender-based violence (GBV) risks throughout the livelihood related program** design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes aimed at refugees in Turkey. This approach ensures that potential GBV risks and concerns are proactively addressed, providing a level of safety for program participants, especially women and girls, and enhancing outcomes specific to each sector.
- All program elements should be subject to a **gender analysis**, utilizing every interaction with male beneficiaries to implement a gender-transformative approach.
 - Strengthen the **gender-transformative component of livelihoods intervention**: Reducing dependency would mean changing power dynamics in the family and promote a more equalitarian and non-violent relationship between partners.
 - **Empowering women by facilitating their economic integration**, particularly in single-female-headed households, which can be achieved through vocational skills development and support for employment or entrepreneurship.
- Elements of **economic integration can be integrated into various types of programing** (such as MHPSS or protection services) through training, mentoring, and consultancy services related to employment.
- **Promote livelihood opportunities for survivors**: programs and activities should aim to increase women's financial independence and provide a sustainable and long-term exit strategy to women.
- **Including a childcare component** in any livelihood intervention targeting women is crucial, particularly for single female-headed households.
- Livelihood interventions are seen as an effective means of **reaching out to men**. By integrating gender considerations into livelihood projects involving men, awareness of gender issues can be raised.
- Conduct **household visits to assess their livelihood needs** and provide information on relevant support. During these visits, meeting separately with women and men in the household and provide accurate information to refugee women, and identify gender-related risks, challenges, and priorities in that household.
- Use **livelihoods support programs to strengthen gender equality and help women empower** themselves.
- Mentorship and Networking: Setting up mentorship programs where accomplished women entrepreneurs or professionals guide and support those who are in the early stages of their job search (or ventures—for entrepreneurs). Creating networking opportunities for women to connect with each other, nurturing a supportive community and fostering collaboration is, as mentioned throughout this report, quite important in building social empowerment.
- Skill Development Training: Especially for those with low levels of formal education, helping refugee women develop qualifications that can be supportive in earning income is crucial. Offering specialized training programs to enhance the skills of women in

areas such as vocational skills, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy would help them develop a stronger network among themselves and get more familiar with alternative social scenes that are outside of the influence of the males in their family. The trainings should be customized to align with local market needs, thereby boosting the employability and income-generating potential of refugee women.

- **Market Linkages:** Establishing connections between women entrepreneurs or cooperative members and the business market in general ensures a consistent demand for their products or services. Forming partnerships with local businesses, retailers, and markets would help the entrepreneurs among refugee women tap into broader economic opportunities.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements and Home-based Work:** Through job placement programs, it could be possible to promote and facilitate flexible work arrangements, especially for women with caregiving responsibilities. Employers could also be persuaded to provide on-the-job training for developing the qualifications of refugee women through incentives (so that refugee women are not seen as cheap sources of labor). Supporting the establishment of home-based businesses could also address the unique challenges faced by women in low-income settings, however home-based vocations should always be supplemented by organization of social events or activities that help women still develop their social capital, even if they are working from home. Otherwise, home-based livelihoods support risks entrenching the parochial circumstances refugee women already live in.
- **Technology Adoption:** Many social interactions in today's world take place on social media. The Internet is also a crucial medium for learning about support mechanisms against violence. It also helps refugee women keep in touch with support providers and keep track of their contact information. Supporting women with in-kind grants to increase their internet access and helping them increase their digital skills through trainings would all be helpful in empowerment. Digital skills also matter in terms of livelihoods access. Providing training in digital skills, online marketing, and e-commerce platforms empower women in reaching a wider customer base or increase their employability. This will also help them search for jobs more effectively.

Programming

- **Develop tailor-made programs for different localities** as the Syrian community is heterogenous and there are locality-based differences regarding knowledge levels, attitudes, and practices related to violence against women. Focus on developing PSEA, GBV and MHPSS programs for hard-to-reach groups living in rural areas.
- **Integrating components related to health and well-being into the program** is a good way to convey the significance of physical and mental health along with coping positively with stress for sustained livelihoods. Helping beneficiaries develop a mental framework for mindfulness, protecting their own mental health, and better understanding the role of various stressors in damaging their inner peace is helpful in building resilience against gender inequality and violence (of all types including psychological, physical, or economic).
- **Providing access to healthcare services** and initiatives addressing women's specific health needs such as SRH is also helpful in supporting individualization of women.

- Enhance women's **access to transportation**, such as increased funding for integrating transportation services into interventions, to reduce isolation and improve access to services for both women and children, while also promoting independence.
- Address **childcare responsibilities**, which are typically shouldered by women (as per the prevailing social norms within the target group), as a more inclusive approach. Include a childcare component in any livelihood intervention targeting women. Both transportation and childcare issues are particularly challenging for single female-headed households.
- Organizing programs in ways that are **accessible to women** should be a top priority, such as scheduling sessions during daylight hours, providing transportation and childcare services, and offering home tutor options.

Advocacy

- Advocate for **strengthening of legal framework, public protection and prevention mechanisms, referral mechanism for survivors and easier access of Syrian women to women's shelters.**
- **Advocate for confidentiality of survivors of violence against women and a legal Chinese Wall system** among social protection and legal services to promote trust between legal authorities and survivors who are reluctant to report incidents of violence due to possible negative legal consequences of reporting.
- **Advocate for the development of public programs targeting Syrian women**, focusing on developing PSEA, GBV and MHPSS programs for hard-to-reach groups living in rural areas.

Locality-Based Recommendations and Earthquake Response

- For Hatay, the key factor is the devastation generated by the earthquake. Some of the possible activities in the aftermath of the earthquake are as follows:
- As the earthquake had a strong impact on the legal aid and access to justice infrastructure in Hatay, focus your effort on **reestablishing comprehensive referral mechanism and easier access to protection services.**
- **Immediate Relief and Basic Needs:** Access to emergency shelter, food, clean water, and medical assistance should be ensured immediately after the earthquake. While the immediate aftermath of the earthquake has long passed, certain items such as personal hygiene products, childcare products, and clothing continue to be in demand, according to key informant interviews. Humanitarian organizations and local authorities should collaborate to distribute relief supplies and provide medical care to those affected. According to key informant interviews, refugee communities are occasionally left behind in delivery of assistance.
- An effective way to involve public authorities is to collaborate with them to enhance the strength and capacity of public services.
- Collaboration may include helping **public service providers extend their services to refugee women** by offering information about their rights, legal procedures, and available services.
- Establishing cooperation or referral systems can strengthen the connections between public authorities and refugee women.

- **Simplifying refugees' access to public services increases** their trust in public authorities. Municipalities can incorporate refugees into the provision of social services such as livelihood training, healthcare, and community activities.
- Municipalities, mukhtars, imams, and other local authorities and service providers are well-placed to disseminate information widely, giving it greater credibility and ensuring effective targeting of beneficiaries with the greatest needs.
- Adana on the other hand is home to the refugee community with the lowest level of formal education and literacy among the four cities.
- Especially **rural areas of the city should be targeted with interventions.**
- It is again highly recommended to include a **livelihoods component** for these interventions.
- Apart from that interventions should also include protection and MHPSS measures.
- **Social and recreational activities and events that include men** are also recommended to form a network among the beneficiaries and create opportunities for raising awareness on gender issues.
- For Gaziantep and Sanliurfa, the research findings indicate that there are considerable attitudinal differences between women and men, with women being more sensitive about gender equality as well as aware of their rights.
- For these cities, **awareness raising programs targeting men** is crucial as such interventions offer a considerable room for improvement.
- **Such programs would also be helpful for women** as, according to research findings, financial dependence is one of the leading reasons why most women end up living with the perpetrator of violence committed against them.
- The rural areas of these cities are especially at risk of being left behind. All livelihoods and MHPSS services should cover the rural areas of these cities as well.
- Strong referral systems between protection stakeholders and action-based collaboration are essential.
- Such collaboration should result in the provision of various support types to each beneficiary by different stakeholders, extending beyond simple information sharing among representatives of different institutions.
- **MHPSS services:** Counseling services and mental health support should be offered to individuals traumatized by the earthquake.
- **Community-based support groups** should be established to foster resilience and emotional recovery. It should be ensured that these programs don't only target urban areas but are implemented in rural areas as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS

- Prioritize programs that aim to **increase Syrian women's access to livelihood opportunities** and microfinance in order to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, particularly in earthquake affected areas. These programs might include:
 - Job Placement and Training: Job placement services and vocational training programs should be facilitated to enhance the employability of those who have lost their livelihoods. These individuals should be especially targeted as they form a particularly disadvantaged community. Collaboration with local businesses should be undertaken to create job opportunities for earthquake survivors.
 - Livelihoods Support and Economic Recovery: Targeted livelihoods support programs should be implemented to re-activate key economic sectors affected by the earthquake. Financial assistance, grants, or low-interest loans should be provided to help individuals and businesses rebuild and resume operations. Agriculture, food production, and textiles (both apparel and shoemaking) are especially high priority in Hatay region. Refugee women entrepreneurs and job seekers can be supported particularly in these sectors.
 - Access to Microfinance: Facilitating the availability of microfinance services, encompassing small loans and savings accounts, would assist women in initiating or expanding small businesses as well as increasing their access to finance, which is a key component of financial independence.
- Focus on supporting **capacity-building and straightening long-term collaboration** among humanitarian actors as well as local authorities for more clear and effective protection efforts and referral pathways regarding prevention of and protection from domestic violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- **Provide training for all frontline service providers**, irrespective of their sectors, in GBV prevention and the existing safe referral pathways. This initiative will enhance the timely access of GBV survivors to life-saving services, reaching individuals who may not be aware of these services or face challenges in accessing them due to various reasons such as restrictions on movement, threats from perpetrators of violence, and other impediments.
- **Prioritize reestablishing the referral pathways effected by the earthquake** in collaboration with humanitarian actors.
- **Ensure that local referral pathways are clear, comprehensive, and survivor-focused** by promoting closer coordination, cooperation, and communication among GBV prevention and protection stakeholders.
- **Develop programs that would provide an overall familiarity with Turkish the legal system** and initiate a network among legal experts and local bar associations that can help refugee women better understand and protect their legal rights against violence and that can provide them legal counseling during reporting.

- **Enhance awareness and capacity among public authorities** to build skills such as survivor-focused and trauma-informed approaches, language skills and cultural sensitivity.
 - **Awareness campaigns addressing the increased risk of domestic violence** post-disaster should be implemented.
 - **Safe spaces and shelters for individuals** at risk should be established, providing counseling and legal support.
 - **Provide legal aid and translation services** to help individuals to navigate legal issues related to property, inheritance, and employment in the aftermath of the earthquake.
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Disclaimer: This research project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Department (DG ECHO). Neither the European Union nor DG ECHO can be held responsible for them.

About INGEV:

INGEV was established with the mission of contributing to human development in Türkiye through evidence-based research and livelihoods support services to ensure inclusion for all. INGEV's Social Research Center carries out needs assessment and situation analysis studies on disadvantaged communities and societal issues to raise awareness and provide strategic support to partner stakeholders so that their social programming can be better designed and more effectively implemented. INGEV Social Programming Division provides livelihoods support to jobseekers and entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities through consultancy, mentorship, career coaching, job placement, and information hotline services as well as organization of networking events, business and career fairs, provision of business grants, and facilitation of applications for business registration, licensing, and incentive programs.

About KAMER:

KAMER was founded in 1997 to identify the local practices that harm women and children as well as to develop alternatives and enable their implementation. KAMER aims to create a participatory society that is free from all forms of discrimination, violence, and structural hierarchy. KAMER thus strives to recognize, question, and transform women's traditional statuses and the violence in their lives. KAMER organizes awareness-raising activities such as awareness workshops, hall meetings, house visits; implements emergency support for women who were subjected to violence through protection, psychosocial support, and referral services; works to increase access to early childhood education; and strengthens women's entrepreneurship in Southeastern Türkiye. KAMER Foundation provides services in most provinces of Southeast and Eastern Anatolia through their women's centers.

About EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid:

The European Union and its Member States are the world's leading donor of humanitarian aid. Relief assistance is an expression of European solidarity with people in need all around the world. It aims to save lives, prevent, and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises.

Through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian aid Operations department (ECHO), the European Union helps millions of victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, the EU provides assistance to the most vulnerable people on the basis of humanitarian needs.



Funded by
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on Violence against
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in Southeast Türkiye

2023

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