

Discussion:
School Integration of Refugee Children in Turkey
Kirdar, Koc and Dayioglu (2023)

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Summary

- A great paper which investigates the native-refugee gaps in school environment in the context of Syrian refugees in Turkey for the first time
- Convincingly shows that school integration can help close the native-refugee gaps vanishes for both girls and boys for early arrivers (before age 8)
 - this is an important finding for policy-makers.
- Contributes to the literature in three significant ways:
 - Using representative data to evaluate enrollment gaps in a middle income context,
 - Making a distinction between economic immigrants and forced migration,
 - Documenting the strong association between the timing of school dropouts and timing of labor market entry among refugee boys.
- Enriches the analysis by exploring how NEET differs between native and refugee children.

Potential for further research

This is an important paper which opens up several interesting questions for further research on refugee children's integration using the DHS data.

- 1 **Do refugee parents' Turkish language skills play a role in their children's school integration?** According to The UN Women Needs Assessment Report (2018) Syrian women list language barriers as the main obstacle for establishing relations with native communities (47 percent), followed by discrimination (19.4 percent). Mothers' ability to communicate with native teachers and parents improve academic performance and reduce the likelihood of dropping out from school. Documenting this channel with representative data would contribute to policy making.

Potential for further research

Syrian women find that the language barrier is most pressing in health and education situations where communication is key. A. (38 years old, married with three children, living in Şanlıurfa) said: *“Language barrier is my main problem here. We can’t make ourselves understood at the hospital and we don’t understand how our children are performing in school when we visit.”* The women worry that not being understood adversely affects them and their children.

Other areas of concern are places, such as police station or the Migration Office, where legal procedures and applications need to be followed.

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UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION STATUS IN TURKEY

Potential for further research

- ② **How does refugee boys child labor affect mothers' probability of employment?** Fieldwork by Korukmez, Karakilic, and Danis (2020) show that the main reason why refugee women start working is the economic hardships faced within the household and thus, most of the employment is involuntary. And when refugee women work, they prefer to work where other family members are employed due to security and harassment concerns. Therefore the interplay between boys's child labor and refugee women's labor could be an interesting dimension to explore.

Potential for further research

Figure: Perceptions on Selected Social Norms in DHS

<i>Opinion: better to educate sons than daughters</i>	Women from Syria	Women from Turkey
Disagree	89%	93%
Agree	10%	7%
Don't know	1%	0%
<i>Opinion: women should not work</i>	Women from Syria	Women from Turkey
Disagree	29%	57%
Agree	68%	41%
Don't know	3%	2%
<i>Opinion: marriage should not end</i>	Women from Syria	Women from Turkey
Disagree	46%	14%
Agree	52%	86%
Don't know	2%	0%

Potential for further research

- ③ **Mothers' role in refugee girls' labor supply.** OECD (2020) documents that having had a working mother at age 14 (as opposed to a mother staying at home) increases the employment probability for native-born children of immigrants from a non-EU country by about twice as much as for their peers with native-born parents (4 percentage points).

Potential for further research

- ④ **Effect of having a sibling born in Turkey.** Access to childcare is among the most important problems women in Turkey face as a constraint. The inadequacy of affordable childcare services put Syrian women at a disadvantage relatively more than native women, as Syrian women are likely to have separated from their parents and thus have less childcare support from grandmothers (see Akyol and Yilmaz, (2021)). Therefore, having a sibling born after arrival to Turkey might increase the likelihood of dropping out from school and at the same might explain why the timing of dropping out is not associated with the timing of marriage.