

Welcome



**MERCY
CORPS**

AGE OF UNREST

Syrian Youth at a Crossroad

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A Future of Syrian Youth



Methodology

Mercy Corps' Research Resources:

"Youth and Consequences" (2014)
"From Jordan to Jihad" (2014)
"Investing in Iraq's Peace" (2015)

Migration Policy Institute:

"The Educational and Mental Health Needs of Syrian Refugee Children" (2015)

In-depth interviews with 15 Syrian youth during a fact-finding trip to Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey in Dec 2015



More than 30 interviews with experts, field staff, outreach workers and municipal officials from the host countries

Physicians for Human Rights:

"Aleppo Abandoned" (2015)

UNICEF:

"The State of the World's Children" (2015)

Adolescents

- › Mercy Corps' definition of adolescence: 10 to 19 years of age
- › **Adolescence is a critical time** in a young person's development
- › Young Syrian refugees feel isolated, in **limbo**, alone and hopeless
- › They feel a **strong sense of responsibility**
- › They have been a largely **invisible** group



Challenges They Face

- › Building **emotional well-being** and resilience at a time of turbulence and violence
- › Continuing their **education** and gaining necessary technical knowledge
- › Getting decent **jobs** in which they are treated fairly and legally, and not exploited



I. Well-Being and Personal Resilience

“The image I have of my homeland is one of deserted houses, shattered glass, ambulances roaming the streets, people fighting for their lives, and people looking for their families” Sema, 17, lives as a refugee in Turkey

The Mental Health of Syrian Refugee Youth

- › Witnessing brutal violence
- › Difficulty re-entering school
- › Facing discrimination
- › Struggling with poverty and exploitative labor
- › Being vulnerable to sexual abuse



had **symptoms of PTSD**



suffered **from depression linked to their trauma**



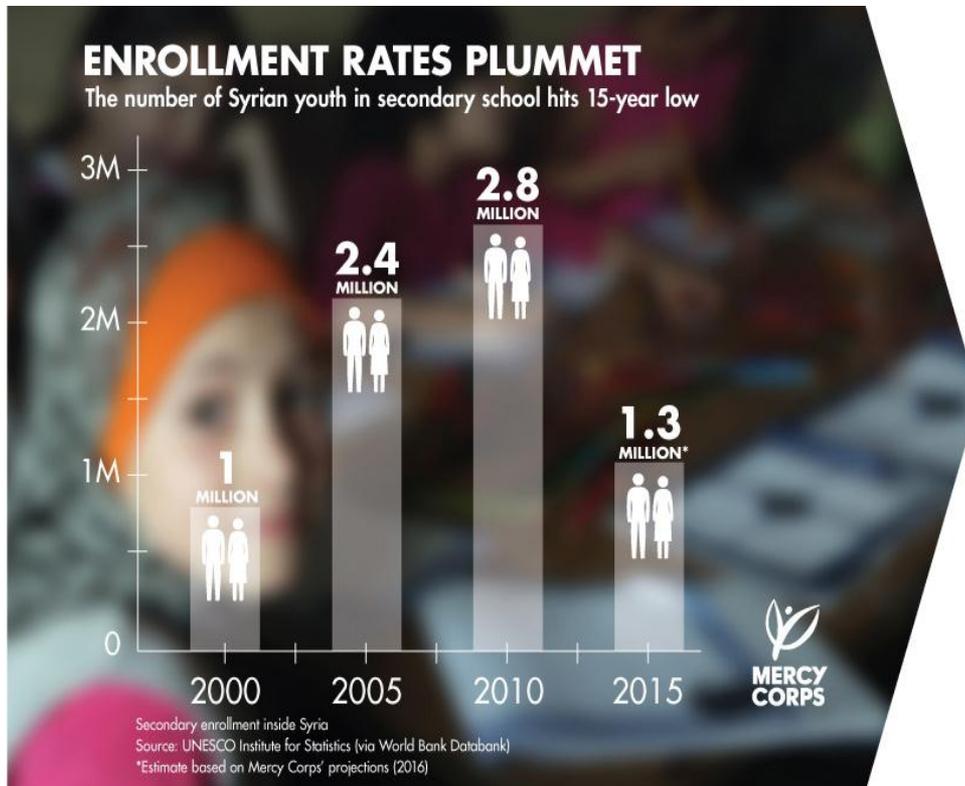
had **experienced at least one death in their family**



had **witnessed people being attacked**

II. Education

“I was always an excellent student. I’ve always wanted to become a lawyer. But I cannot continue my education because I don’t have the right documentation that proves I passed the 9th grade in Syria” Fadwa, 17, lives as a refugee in Lebanon



Barriers:

- › Lack of school capacity
- › School distance/Transportation - especially risky for girls
- › Expensive tuition fees
- › Lack of documentation
- › Difficulty of curriculum
- › Different curriculum language
- › Difficulty to integrate

III. Employment and Income

*“Working in Jordan is illegal for me. If I am caught, I will be arrested and maybe even deported back to Syria. But I need to work; I am the main breadwinner for my family”
Bassam, 17, lives as a refugee in Jordan*

Syrian refugee youth face

- › Intense pressure to support their families
- › The risk of illegal labor market
- › Exploitation
- › Tension with host communities over jobs



**Unemployment
Rates**

**# of Families
Below the Poverty Line**



I see a beautiful future. There will be lots of difficulties down the road, but they can all be overcome”

Amina, 17

Recommendations

I. Promoting Well-Being and Resilience

- › Reinforce community-based mechanisms and programs to ensure protection of youth
- › Invest in equipping young people with skills and knowledge
- › Make aid adaptive – tailored programming
- › Foster positive social engagement
- › Empower youth to build their own representative assemblies



Recommendations

II. Promoting Education for All

- › Promote life skills for adolescents to prepare them for transition
- › Recognize that Non-Formal Education (NFE) is a necessary mode of delivery.
- › Formalize a certification of learning—at both the country and regional level



Recommendations

III. Promoting Economic Growth and Employment Pathways

- › Build a legal foundation for safe, decent and fair jobs for refugees
- › Invest in workforce programs for both Syrian refugee and host country youth that respond to market demand
- › Invest in vocational training in skills needed for reconstruction —with an eye towards future economic recovery
- › Invest in industries that will be vital for post-war reconstruction in Syria i.e. construction, technology.



Call for Action



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Thank You