

mamidi

managing migration and diversity through
local government capacity building

IO1 – National report on
identification and anticipation of
future skill needs for LG in the
area of migration and diversity
management



Erasmus+

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1. Introduction to the Report

The number of refugees in Turkey has reached over 3.2 million, making Turkey the host country with the largest refugee population in the world, including Syrians, Iraqis, Afghan, Iranian, Somalian and other nationalities. Out of the close to 3 million registered Syrian refugees in the country, some 260,000 people are hosted in 26 camps run by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey (AFAD), where refugees have access to shelter, health, education food and social activities. Despite these efforts from the government, local authorities and the generosity from host communities, 90% of Syrian refugees (over 2.5 million persons), as well as many refugees from other nationalities, live outside the camps under very challenging circumstances with depleted resources. Registered refugees have, in principle, access to public services, including education and healthcare. However, for many, access to these basic facilities is often limited for various reasons, including problems in registering with local authorities and the language barrier¹.

Turkey had spent around 25 billion dollars for Syrian refugees in Turkey according to official statements. The expenses have mostly been on housing and schooling for the refugees, according to officials' reports. Around 500 thousand of 800 thousand Syrian children have been involved in schools².

This Report is part of MAMIDI Project, which aims to build a capacity of Local Government in order to be better prepared for the changes coming from present challenges of EU, namely migration and diversity.

The Report is consist of a questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews and a focus group study. In this context;

- Questionnaire survey: Sampling, 32 representatives of local government employees in Turkey.
- Semi-structured interviews: 3 people in Turkey.
- Focus group session: One focus group with 9 migrants living in Turkey more than 2 years.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/turkey_syrian_crisis_en.pdf

² <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/13016/Infografik/grafik/14955> (01.05.2017)

The target groups of report are project partners, related individuals and institutions.

2. Methodological approach to elaborate the report

As briefly mentioned above, the report based on data obtained from three different studies. All forms used in the fieldwork for deliveries are prepared in a project-specific manner to apply without modification in four countries under the scope of the project, except mandatory modifications. According to this rules, relevant forms' restricted mandatory adaptations and translated into Turkish made. The methodological information on the studies is below.

Questionnaire survey: A closed-end questionnaire applied to 32 local public personnel. Participants selected from Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, Ankara Yenimahalle Municipality, Yenimahalle National Education District Directorate and Kayseri Pınarbaşı Municipality, Kayseri National Education District Directorate to provide institutional diversity. In addition, participants' gender, age, task and title diversity issues also considered.

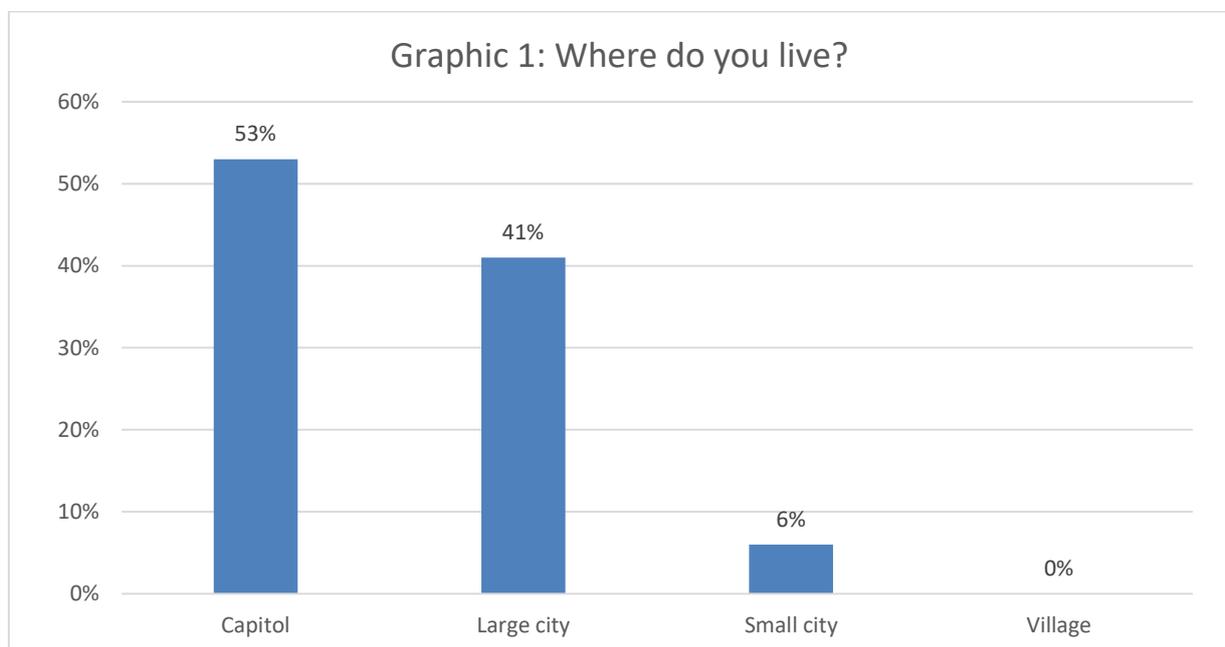
Semi-structured interview: The interview form applied to three persons who informed about the subject. However, the fact that the number of questions is excessive and open-ended made it difficult to evaluate. In order to overcome this difficulty, we try to analyze them under the common heading. When the employers to whom the form applied were determined according to sector, city, size and sex and age parameters. Two of the employers in this framework selected from Kayseri, one from the capital (Ankara). One of the employers chosen from the service sector, one from the industrial (manufacturing) sector and one from the logistics and another consultancy. While the employer in the industrial sector has intensive connections abroad and they have imports and exports connection, other employers offer more domestic market services. Again, one of the employers has 50+ employments while the other two employ 1-9. Two of the employers are the owners of their own enterprise, while the other is the representative of a multinational company. On the other hand, two of them are male and one is female. In addition, employers ages are 55, 50, 30 and all are married and have children. In the framework of the quality study, comments on the forms subjected to a secondary evaluation.

Focus group session: The focus group interview was conducted with Syrian immigrants in the Örnek District where the Syrians live in Ankara. The meeting was held with a group of about ten people after Friday prayers at the Örnek Mosque allocated to them by the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Participating in the interview between 13:30-16:30 on Friday, 17.03.2017, was the interpreter. Despite taking photographs of the participants, they were not included in the study due to their safety.

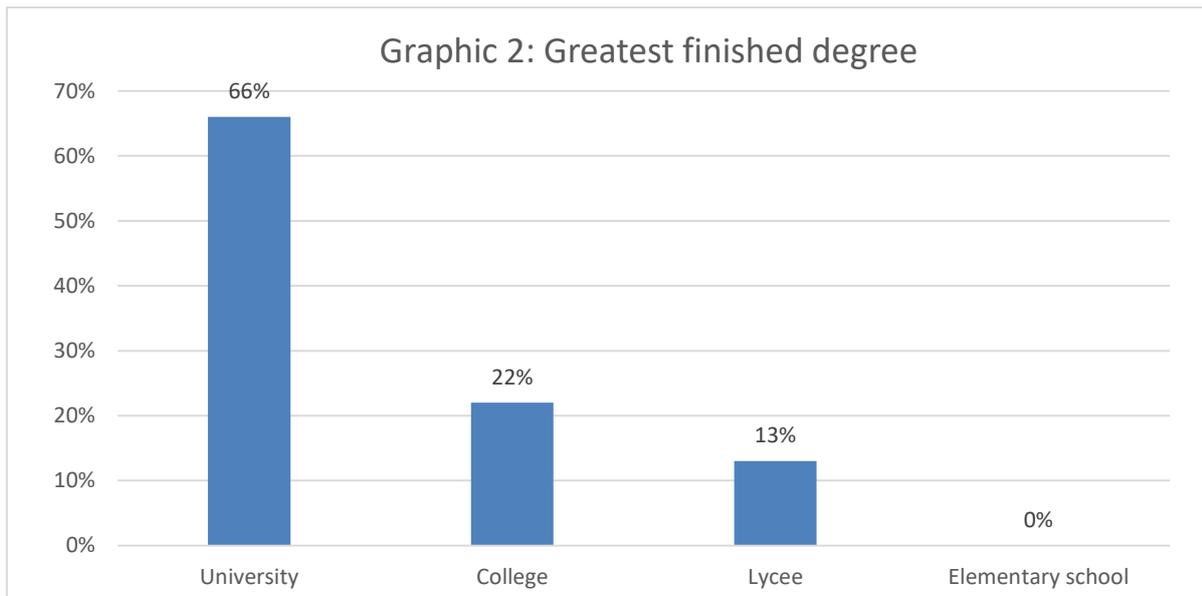
3. Major findings of the questionnaires

We have 32 answers in total. The age range of the staff vary between 27 and 61, the average is 40.

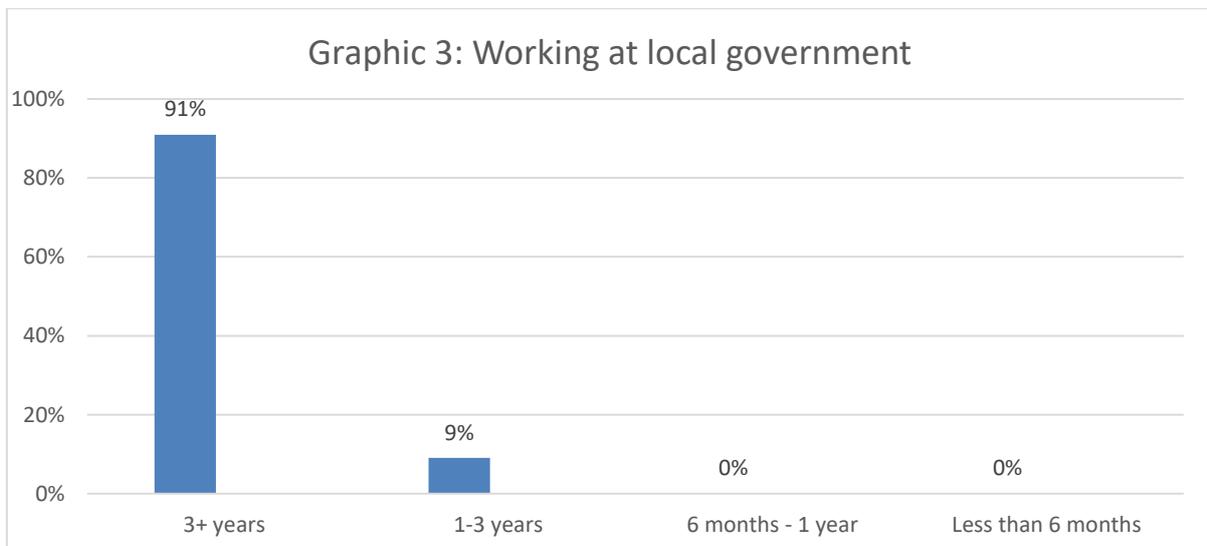
When it comes to the size of the municipality where they work in. The 53% work within capitol while 41% work in a large city and 6% work in a small city. There are not any person who lives in village in respondent.



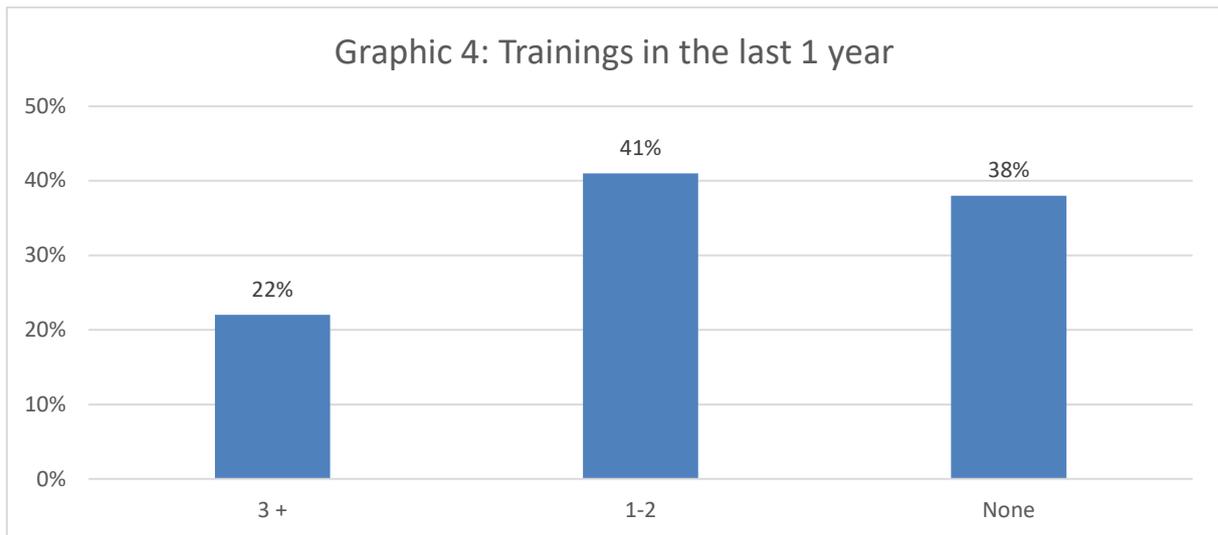
The 66% of the respondents have a university degree, 22% have a college degree and the rest 13% have lycee degree.



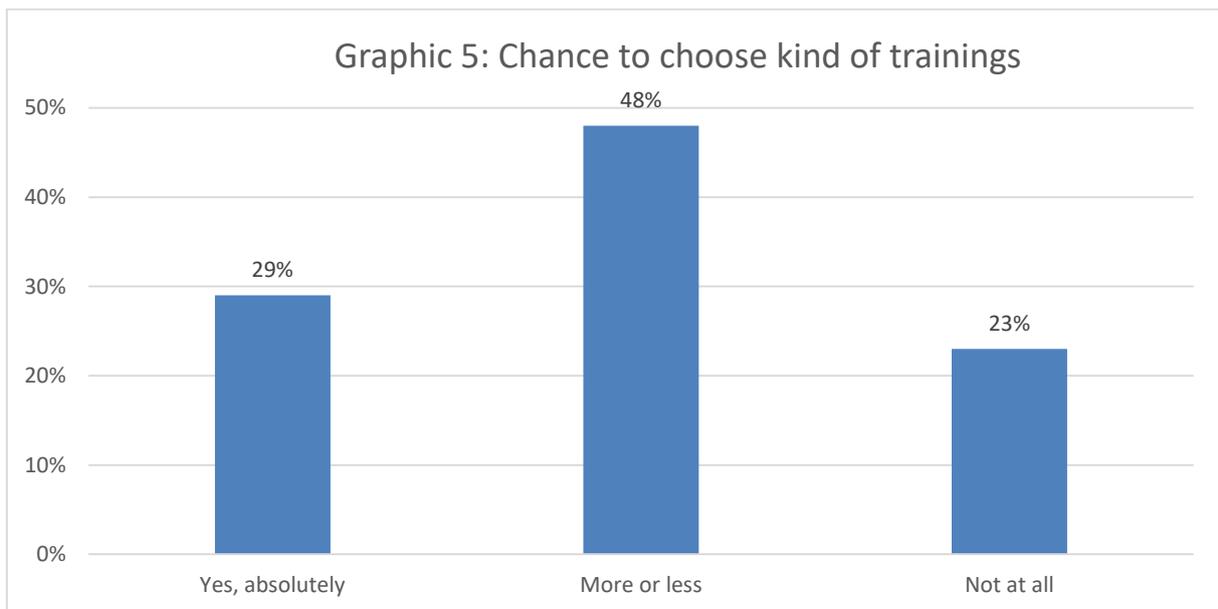
The %91 of participants have worked for more than 3 years and the others 1-3 years in the local government, which means they are familiar and have a good understanding about the operation of local governments.



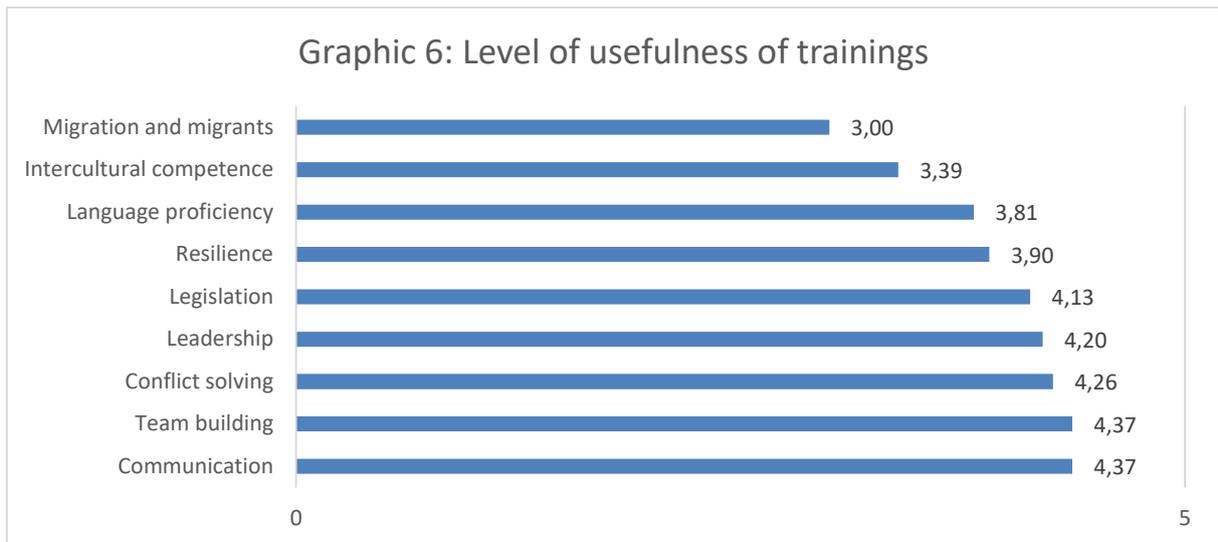
In the question about the course(s) taken during the last year, the answers were diverse. The majority has taken 1 or 2 extra courses in the last year.



Almost the half of the respondents pointed out that they had the chance to choose what kind of trainings to attend more or less.

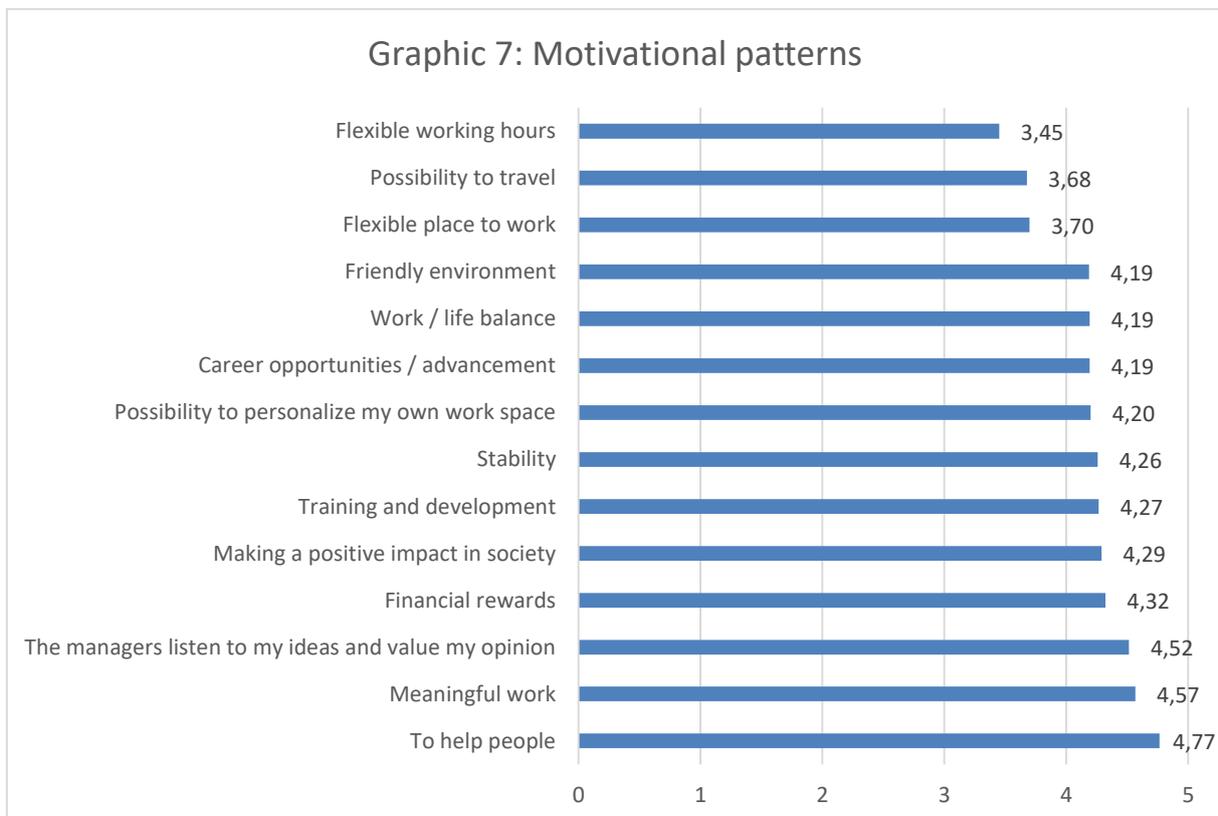


When asked about the usefulness of training, the respondents have find the most useful types of trainings related to „communication” and „team building”. The ranking of points shown below:



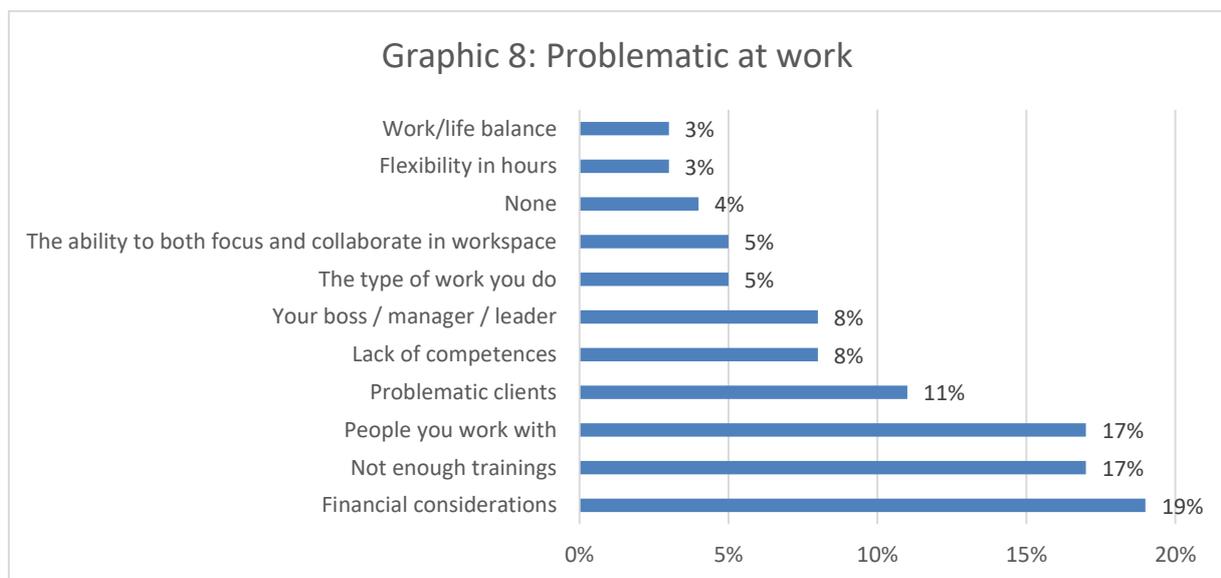
All of the options in question had a score of 3 and over, with an overall average of 3,94 points. This indicates that the types of training in the options are useful for the respondents in general terms.

When asked about the motivational patterns in their job, they find the following patterns:

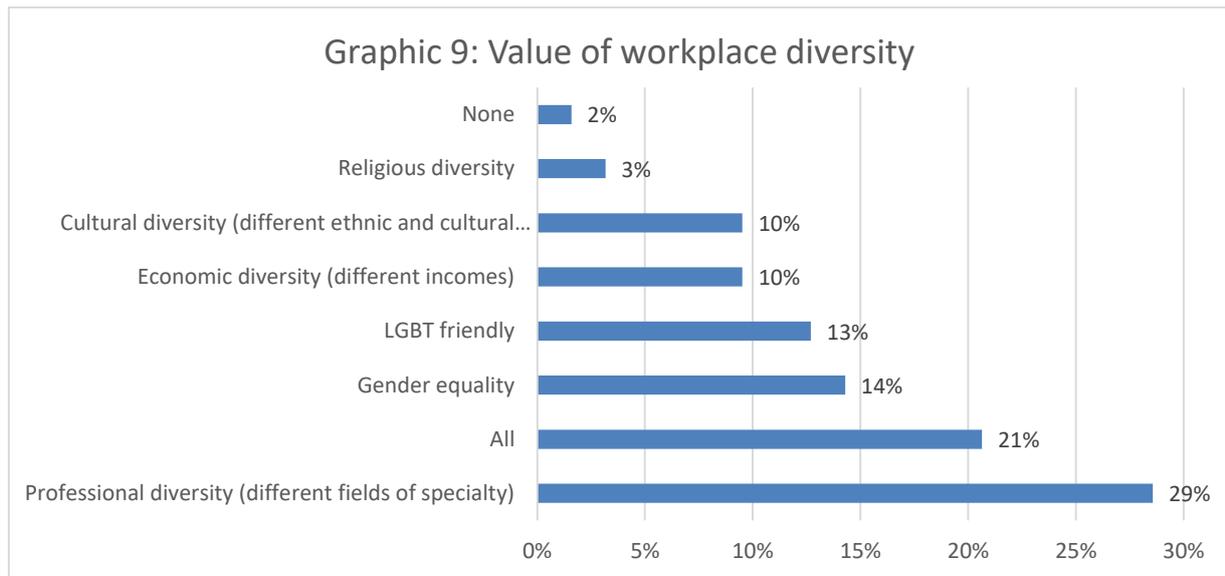


All of the options in question had a score of 3,45 and over, with an overall average of 4,19 points. This indicates that the types of training in the options are useful for the respondents in general terms.

The 19% of participants considered financial considerations as the most problematic area at their work. Moreover, people working with and not enough trainings are defined as the most troublesome areas at their work. The least problematic areas at the work were sorted as “flexibility in hours” and “work/life balance”.



In the case of what type of workplace diversity they value, 29% of the respondents marked “professional diversity (different field of speciality)”. However, 21% considered “all” types of workplace diversities as valuable.



They think the followings issues are the most needed ones to communicate with people with migrant background more effectively during work:

- Language
- Culture knowledge
- Tolerance / empathy
- Communication

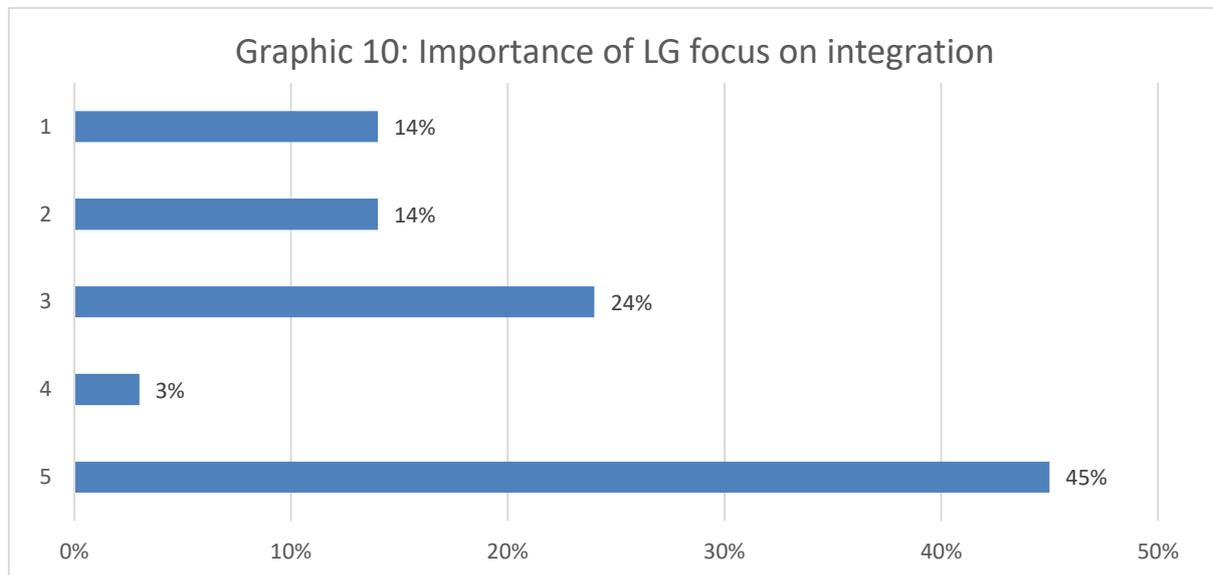
In this regards, the answers of respondents show the importance of language for communication and mutual understanding.

When we asked about the 5 words which come to their minds instantly when we are talking about migrants, they mostly listed:

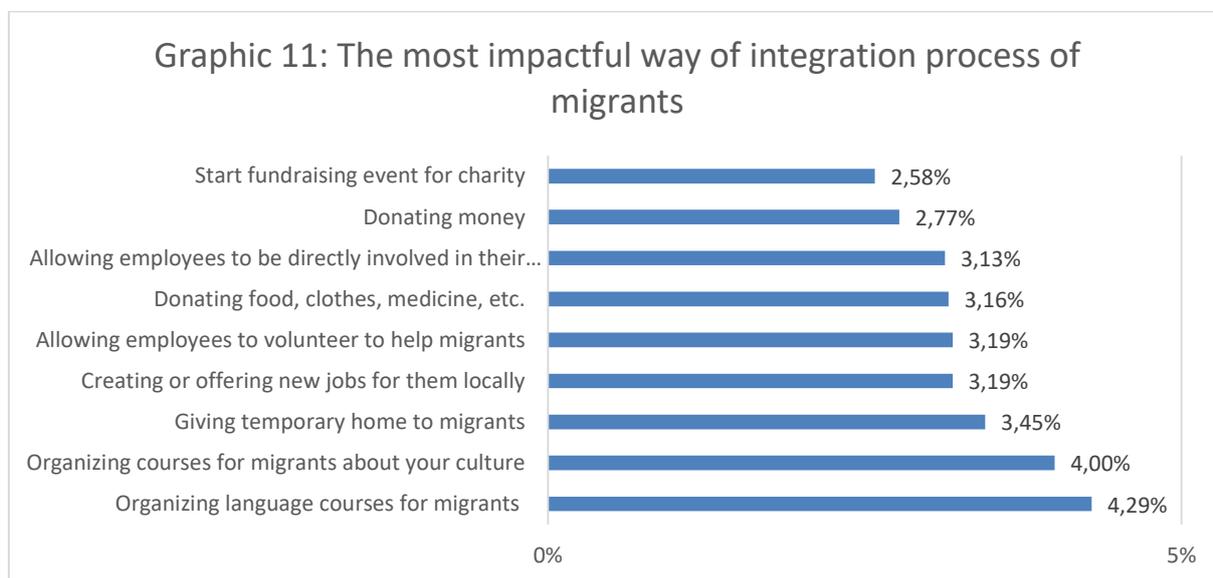
- Economic problems
- Unemployment and poverty
- Crime
- Syrians
- War

According to answer, the general thought on migrants is not positive in Turkey. This may be due to various reasons. Ex. the majority of respondents were not approve the spending of general budget for migrants.

The 45% of respondents pointed out that the local governments focus on the integration process of migrants is very important. Only 14% thought that the local governments focus on the integration process of migrants is not important at all.



They think the following issues as very effective way where local governments support the integration process of migrants:



- Organizing language courses for migrants
- Organizing courses for migrants about our culture
- Giving temporary home to migrants
- Creating or offering new jobs for them locally

4. Major findings of the interviews

As mentioned above, the answers delivered by e-mail and all answers collected under related questions. We have 3 interviews and the responses obtained in this frame can be summarized in the following order.

About the role of local governments in managing migration and diversity, the participants pointed out that important tasks have been assigned to local governments in this regard. of the participants seemed to agree with this view that "at present, the subject institutions do not provide services in this framework".

Two of the participants think that local governments should be part of the integration process because "the main responsibility of the matter are the local governments, so they can better evaluate and solve the problem than the central government". The other participant states that "more local officials need to take charge, but priority must be given to their own citizens".

When we asked about the features that allow the employers to do their job best at their workplace, the respondents did not give a common answer. The answers are as follows: "To have competent colleagues", "... our company ... values man ..." and "the possibility of self-actualization".

Two of the participants told that they do not face any difficulties at their workplace which make them hard to manage diversity. On the other hand, the other participant complained about negative approach of some employees on the diversity affecting him.

Regarding the most effective ways to communicate with others, participants responded as in turn to "listening", "sincerity and reality" and "empathy".

While only one of the respondents pointed out that s/he did not experience much stress during her/his work, the other two participants thought the opposite. They expressed that

"access to finance ... and the effects of political life on the business world" and "the nature of the (logistics) sector" were causing stress.

The two participants prefer a human-focused and solution-oriented relationship with their clients and to establish a face-to-face contact with customers.

According to two respondents, they can not help integration of migrants because of language problem. The third respondent mentioned the lack of vocational knowledge as a deficiency in helping migrants' integration.

When we asked about how they handle with migrant clients, the two participants pointed to the same point, even if they had different expressions. According to this; "They did not show different treatment from other customers". The other participant stated that he "always tries to do his best."

They all agreed that their workplaces were open and accepting diversity. However, all respondents described their culture and its effects on their workplaces differently. The answers are as follows: "Educated, assimilated enough differences to understand and live in unity, accepting it in business and telling it to colleagues." "As a society, we are a country trying to have a tradition, customs and cultures. ...", "I define myself and my culture as humanists. Cultivation has an facilitating role when I do my work."

Our respondents pointed out that they did not have enough information about migrant's country, culture and the education level.

When we asked about whether they had enough information about diversity, only two participants answered the question. Accordingly, one of the participants answered "partially" and the other answered "yes".

While two respondents pointed out that they had enough information about religious diversity, the other participant told that "not exactly".

5. Major findings of the focus group

The focus group interview was conducted with Syrian immigrants in the Örnek District where the Syrians live in Ankara. The meeting was held with a group of about ten people and a lawyer participated in the interview as the interpreter.

The respondents pointed out that they migrated compulsorily and as a human and family they had some needs and demands and they expected local governments to be more sensitive in meeting these needs in the integration process.

The participants thought that local governments should definitely participate more in the decision-making process because the local units are better informed of the problems. Also, they told that “the better the problems are known, the easier the solution will be.”

The biggest problem experienced by immigrants is the language problem. Both sides do not know each other's language. For that reason, some local government officers are prejudiced because they are Syrian. They have encountered difficulties arising from the inappropriate management of diversity. They think that if a good manager is at the head of these officials, their problems will not end, but will diminish.

They consider knowing the language of the host country is the most effective way to communicate with others. They expressed that they had experienced much stress especially in the first days they came to Turkey, but as learning Turkish their problems lessened.

Participants stated that local government employees are generally helpful, understand problems and are willing to help.

It is stated that the biggest shortcomings of the local governments in helping the integration of immigrants are that they do not know the language of immigrants the law.

The respondents think that the role of local governments is very important in the management of migration and diversity. They also said that “There may be a lot of work to be done. For example, local governments can allow us to tell our culture in Turkey, so we know each other mutually and we can be closer.”

When we asked them to tell a positive and a negative story about your experiences in local governments, they told us the following stories, respectively.

- “My credit card was swallowed by an atm machine. The officers there did not help, but I went to the bank in Kızılay and the officer was very interested in it and helped me.”
- “My son would be enrolled in first-grade elementary school. The director of the school, which is 100 meters away from the house we are sitting in, did not want to enroll my son, although he had to. The director raised difficulties by requesting residence document, etc. However, when I went with another Syrian who was a lawyer, his attitude suddenly changed and he made school enrolment. Meanwhile, a teacher who saw us started shouting, "The Syrians again?"”

They describe their religion as the basic of themselves and their culture. According to their religion, if you see a stone on the road, you should remove it and they are trying to apply this rule to their lives. Therefore they adopt “good moral, good behavior” as their life philosophy. They think that they are open to the culture of Turkey because Turkish people believe in the same religion. So there are common features between two nations. Thus, they do not want to go to Europe even if it is possible because the culture is far away from them.

They do not have enough information about the level of education and the culture of Turkey. On the other hand, they have knowledge about diversity of Turkey. Especially with the contribution of their past in Syria, they have enough information about people belonging to other races and religions.

6. Conclusions and remarks

After the analysis of the data that we have through the interviews, questionnaires and focus group interview we can better understand the needs of the local government staff in Turkey. The principal idea is the lack of knowledge about migrants' culture. The staff have stated that they have excellent skills and knowledge about their tasks and work but they do not have the practical knowledge about how to treat with migrants and how to deal with diversity. Two factors are important in this reflection: first, the language is essential, most of the participants on this research have admitted that they would like to have language courses and about how to effectively communicate with the others. Knowing the language could facilitate and simplify the relationship between LG staff and migrants and this will make them feel more comfortable; second, LG staff need information about the other culture. They need to understand and know how the others behave, communicate, deal with public institutions, etc. in order to better develop their work. It is important to make them feel understood and try to adapt the treatment to their necessities, just in order to make easier all the procedures.

Another remark is the idea that the staff feel that local governments are not doing enough and that they are giving most of the work to NGOs which is not good. Local governments should be the ones managing diversity because they are the one that have the legal and official power and decision. Local government staff admit that they are open to work with and for migrants, however the problem comes from up. If there are not clear methods and procedures, they cannot develop their work. LG staff mentioned that central government should take care of opinion and decision of LG on this issue. Because LG's are living the problem cause of migrants directly. They have many experiences on this issue. By doing this the services can serve more effectively to the immigrants.

On the other hand, immigrants mentioned the importance of language. Because of not speaking of Turkish, they cannot reach some of the LG public service. Now they think the situation is better according to beginning of process. Many of them started to learn Turkish and Turkish community started to learn Arabic. In addition, they learnt more information about Turkish culture as Turks learnt more about their culture. They believe in that, these improvements will have a positive effect on mutual understanding.

7. Annexes

- a) Turkish questionnaire form
- b) Turkish semi-structure interview form
- c) Turkish focus group interview form