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Erasmus+ KA220-SCH Strategic Partnership in School Education

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DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION

[2023-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000166103]

INTERVIEWS

29 MAYIS UNIVERSITY



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INTERVIEWS

Interview Form 1-X (Female, 35)

1. How did you decide to migrate?

Migration wasn't a decision we actively made; it was something forced upon us. The war destroyed everything we knew—our home, our safety, and our sense of belonging. We were left with no choice but to leave. When bombs started falling near our house, and the walls we once considered our sanctuary became a prison of fear, we realized we couldn't stay any longer. Staying meant certain death, and though the thought of leaving was terrifying, we had to think of survival. It was not a decision of courage but one of desperation.

2. Can you describe your pre-migration experience?

What did you experience?

Life before migration was like watching your world crumble piece by piece. The sounds of bombs were constant, echoing through the nights, robbing us of sleep and peace. I lost my husband during one of these attacks; his absence left a void so deep that even now, it's hard to breathe when I think of it. The fear was relentless. Every moment, we wondered who would be next, what we could salvage, or if we'd live to see another day.

How did you prepare?

There was no preparation. How can you prepare to leave everything behind? To abandon your home, your memories, your identity? We grabbed what little we could carry, knowing that material things didn't matter when lives were at stake.

How did you feel?

I felt hollow, as if my soul had been ripped apart. The grief of losing my husband and the overwhelming responsibility of protecting my children consumed me. There were moments I doubted my strength, but I had no choice but to keep moving. My children depended on me, and I couldn't let them see the fear in my eyes.

Why did you choose this country?

We didn't choose Turkey; it chose us by being the nearest refuge. It was a place that opened its borders when we had nowhere else to go. It wasn't about preference—it was about survival.

3. Can you describe your migration process?

What transportation methods did you use?

We started on foot, walking for what felt like forever. The roads were rough, the



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nights cold, and the days unbearable under the scorching sun. When we finally reached the border, we were transported by buses.

How long did your journey take?

The journey lasted several days, but it felt like an eternity. Each hour dragged on with the weight of uncertainty and fear.

What did you do during the journey?

There was little to do but pray. Every step felt like a gamble, and every moment was filled with dread. I held my children close, whispering promises of safety I wasn't sure I could keep.

Who traveled with you?

I was with my children and countless strangers—fellow Syrians who, like us, were fleeing for their lives. In that shared despair, we found a fragile bond.

What challenges did you face?

Hunger gnawed at us; thirst left our lips cracked and dry. My children cried, their tiny voices filled with fear and confusion. There were moments when I thought I couldn't go on, but I had to. Giving up wasn't an option.

How did you and your family feel?

I felt a mix of fear, guilt, and determination. Fear for our safety, guilt for the lives left behind, and determination to survive for the sake of my children. My children were too young to understand fully, but their tears and trembling hands told me everything—they were scared, just like me.

4. Did you stop in another country during your journey?

No, we didn't stop. The journey was a direct path to Turkey, but it was anything but straightforward. Every step felt like a gamble, and every passing moment brought new fears.

5. Who migrated with you?

I traveled with my children. My parents didn't survive the war; their loss weighs heavily on my heart. It was devastating to flee without them, knowing I could do nothing to save them.

6. How would you describe your post-migration experience?

How did you settle?

We spent our first year in a refugee camp near the border. Living in tents was challenging, especially for the children, but it was a relief to feel relatively safe after so long.



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Did you receive help?

Yes, aid organizations provided us with food, clothing, and basic supplies. They also gave my children school materials, which brought a sense of hope amid despair.

How did you feel in the new country?

At first, I felt like a stranger, lost and overwhelmed. The language barrier was suffocating, and the cultural differences made me feel isolated. Over time, with support and determination, I began to adapt.

What were the advantages and disadvantages of migration?

The greatest advantage was safety—knowing my children could sleep without the fear of bombs. But the disadvantages were immense: losing our home, our identity, and our connection to the past.

7. Did you face cultural barriers?

Language was the most significant challenge. Not being able to communicate made everything feel impossible. My children struggled at school; they couldn't make friends initially because of the language gap. Over time, we learned Turkish, which eased the transition, but the initial months were incredibly tough.

8. How do you feel now?

Do you feel integrated into the culture?

Now, yes. After learning the language and building connections, I feel more integrated.

Did the local community support you?

Some people were welcoming and kind, but others weren't. There were moments when we felt like outsiders, unwanted and misunderstood.

9. Did migration change your family dynamics?

Absolutely. Without my husband, I had to step into roles I wasn't prepared for. I became both a mother and a father to my children, working tirelessly to provide for them while ensuring they felt loved and secure.

10. How did you build a new life in a different country?

It wasn't easy. We relied on government aid at first, but I eventually found work. Learning the language was crucial, as was adapting to the rules and customs of this new life. Step by step, we rebuilt ourselves.



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11. How do you stay in touch with family and friends back home?

I only speak with my brother, who managed to make it to Germany. I haven't returned to Syria, and I don't think I ever will.

12. Has migration changed you?

Yes, in every way. It has made me stronger and more resilient. It taught me to appreciate the little things and to find strength even in the darkest times.

13. What are your thoughts on migration policies?

I don't know much about policies, but I hope for a world where war doesn't force anyone to leave their home.

14. Is this country different from what you expected?

Yes, it exceeded my expectations in terms of support and safety.

15. Do you want to return to your homeland?

No, I don't think I could. The memories there are too painful.

16. What are your dreams for the future?

I dream of raising my children in peace, giving them the education and opportunities I never had.

17. What do you think when you see other migrants?

I feel an overwhelming sense of empathy. Their pain and struggles remind me of my own.

18. What advice would you give to those considering migration?



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If there's no war, stay where you are. Migration is not a choice—it's a necessity born out of desperation.

This enriched version adds emotional depth and vivid imagery to the respondent's experiences, allowing the reader to fully grasp the weight of their journey.

Would you like me to enhance additional interviews in the same enriched and vivid style, ensuring each participant's story conveys their emotional depth and experiences in detail? Let me know if there's anything specific you'd like to emphasize further!



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1. Initial Decision to Migrate

When Bashar al-Assad began orchestrating massacres against defenseless civilians in 2011, we initially considered moving within Syria. We thought we could find safety in other parts of the country. But as bombs targeted even supposed safe zones, we began living in constant fear of death. For years, from 2011 to 2014, we kept relocating within Syria, trying to shield ourselves and our children.

Eventually, it became clear that there was no safe place left in Syria. We could no longer protect our family. Every move brought us closer to danger, not further away. The moment we realized we couldn't ensure our children's safety was the moment we made the heartbreaking decision to leave Syria entirely in search of a secure life elsewhere.

2. Life-Altering Incident

My decision to leave Syria was forced upon me after I suffered a severe injury. Bombs targeting civilian areas shattered my left femur, leaving me gravely wounded. The injury was life-threatening, and I needed emergency surgery. That's how I first crossed the border into Turkey—on an ambulance stretcher, barely alive.

After my surgery at Reyhanlı Hospital, I had to stay in Turkey for physical rehabilitation. The challenges of living in a foreign land soon became overwhelming, so I brought my family to join me.

Our time in Syria before leaving was filled with unimaginable hardships. We were constantly on the move in the northern regions, seeking refuge wherever we could. We never planned to leave the country; our goal was to survive.

One of the most harrowing experiences happened when tanks attacked the mountainous area where we were hiding. My wife, who was pregnant with our son Salih, was buried under the rubble of a collapsed building. Miraculously, she survived, and emergency surgery saved our son. Salih was born into a world of death and destruction—a life that began with his own fight for survival.

We didn't choose Turkey because we wanted to. It was simply the closest border and the only path to safety at that moment.

3. Journey to Turkey and Early Adjustments

When I first arrived in Turkey, I was transported by ambulance to Reyhanlı Hospital. I underwent surgery to repair my shattered femur. The physical pain was intense, but the emotional anguish was worse. I had escaped death, but the memories of what I left behind haunted me constantly.

My family joined me shortly afterward, moving to Reyhanlı to support me during my recovery. But the psychological toll of what we had experienced stayed with us. It wasn't just the loss of safety; it was the overwhelming sense of betrayal.



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We felt abandoned by the international community. The United Nations, global powers, and nearby countries seemed indifferent to our suffering. They had the means to help—to stop Assad’s regime and its atrocities—but instead, they stood by. Assad continued to massacre his own people with the help of sectarian militias and later, Russian military forces.

When we arrived in Turkey, we felt a fleeting sense of security, but life was far from easy. Supporting a family required relentless effort. I was unable to work because of my injury, and this added to the strain. Relatives from outside Turkey helped us financially during this difficult time. Eventually, I managed to find work in office jobs, but even then, we faced exploitation. Many employers took advantage of our desperation, paying us low wages without offering legal contracts or social security.

4. Settling and Cultural Integration in Turkey

After some time in Reyhanlı, my family and I moved to Istanbul. Initially, Istanbul felt like a city of hope—a place where we could rebuild our lives. However, over the years, the atmosphere changed. Hostility toward migrants grew, and Istanbul became a city filled with tension and prejudice.

Despite this, we also found kindness. Some people in Istanbul welcomed us with open arms. They treated us with respect and humanity, forming friendships that we deeply cherish to this day. These relationships became a lifeline, helping us navigate the challenges of living as refugees in a foreign land.

We encountered both similarities and differences between Syrian and Turkish culture. Sharing a common religion helped bridge some gaps, but we faced challenges with language, societal norms, and growing nationalism. To adapt, we prioritized learning Turkish—not just for ourselves but especially for our children, so they could integrate more easily.

5. Cultural and Practical Barriers

Food wasn’t a problem for us, as Turkish cuisine is quite similar to Syrian cuisine. We continued preparing both Syrian and Turkish dishes at home, which helped us maintain a sense of normalcy.

However, access to cultural activities became difficult over time. Initially, municipal facilities allowed us to organize and participate in events that brought the Arab community together. But after the election of Ekrem İmamoğlu as Istanbul’s mayor, these opportunities dwindled. Restrictions were placed on using public spaces for cultural events, leaving us feeling excluded.

For leisure, we used to visit parks, forests, and beaches. But during the presidential election period, we began witnessing racist attacks in these public spaces. Out of fear, we stopped going out and chose to keep our children at home for their safety.



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Sports were another area of difficulty. While my children initially participated in swimming and other activities at municipal facilities, we eventually stopped enrolling them due to administrative and social barriers.

6. Personal and Family Changes

Migration profoundly reshaped our family. We became more protective of one another, understanding that in a foreign land, family is your strongest anchor. We adapted to new languages, traditions, and cultural norms. Our children became fluent in Turkish, but this shift also distanced them from their Syrian heritage.

As parents, we worked tirelessly to provide stability and opportunities for our children. We encouraged them to excel academically, knowing education was their best chance for a better future.

7. Dreams and Future Aspirations

Now, we are preparing for another migration—this time to Kuwait. Istanbul, which once symbolized hope, has become a city of growing hostility. Racism and prejudice have reached alarming levels, making it difficult to feel safe or welcome.

My dream is to live in a place where my family can thrive without fear. I envision a world where refugees are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion. I also want to contribute to society, helping others who are struggling with the same challenges we faced.

8. Reflections on Migration

Migration changes you. It opens your mind but also tests your resilience. For me, it has been a journey of loss, adaptation, and survival. I have learned to empathize deeply with other migrants because I see myself in their stories—the pain, the hope, the resilience.

To those considering migration, I would say this: only leave if you have no other choice. Migration is not an escape; it's a survival mechanism. And remember, your homeland is not defined by where you were born, but by where you feel secure, free, and valued.



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INTERVIEW 3

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

I will record this session and transcribe it later so we don't have to revisit this again. The questions I'll ask are about migrant students, and since you're a migrant student, I'd like to ask you a few related questions. To begin, how did your family decide to migrate? Why did you choose Turkey?

Speaker 1 (Participant):

At first, we didn't plan to leave our country. We wanted to stay and endure, hoping the situation would improve. But things became unbearable. People were being killed. Women were assaulted, and my father was terrified for us. He didn't want us—his daughters—to be at risk.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

I see. Please, go on.

Speaker 1 (Participant):

It was chaotic. Men stood by helplessly as women were assaulted. If anyone tried to intervene, they would be shot on the spot. My father couldn't bear the idea of such horrors. We lived with relatives in a small house, cramped with over 15 people—children, women, and men. Resources were scarce.

We stayed in Urfa for over a month, trying to find a way out. Conditions were terrible. There was no running water, no food, no safety. Babies cried for milk, but there was none. Adults risked their lives entering the city to get basic supplies. I still remember one night vividly—it was the worst night of my life.

That night, bombs exploded so close to us that the ground shook violently. We prayed, thinking it would be our last night alive. The crying of children and screams of women filled the air. By morning, we realized the bomb had narrowly missed us. We were alive, but only just.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

So, this pushed your family to leave?

Speaker 1 (Participant):



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Not immediately. We went to another city first, but it was no better. War followed us there. We stayed for seven months in a mountainous area. There was no food, and danger lurked everywhere. Planes flew low, and soldiers came close to our shelter. My father said we had to leave; staying was no longer an option.

My uncle, who had come to Turkey earlier, encouraged us to join him. He was being hunted by soldiers who wanted to recruit him or kill him if he refused. He managed to escape, but he warned us: “They will come for you next.”

We decided to leave for Turkey. It wasn’t an easy journey. Crossing the border required a lot of risk. Soldiers guarded the area, and we had to find a way through without being caught.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

How did you cross the border?

Speaker 1 (Participant):

We traveled by bus to the border, carrying only what we could. At the border, soldiers took our IDs and interrogated us. After hours of waiting and pleading, we were allowed to enter. From there, we went to Gaziantep and then to Istanbul.

The journey took about a day, but it felt much longer. We didn’t do anything but sit and think. I was only 12 at the time, and all I could think about was the home, friends, and family I had left behind.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

How did your family feel during this journey?

Speaker 1 (Participant):

My younger siblings didn’t fully understand what was happening. They thought we were on some kind of adventure. My parents, on the other hand, were deeply afraid. My father was constantly on edge, and my mother cried silently most of the time.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

Once you arrived in Turkey, what was the settlement process like?



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Speaker 1 (Participant):

My uncle helped us find a place to stay. It was a small, run-down house, but it was all we could afford. Neighbors brought us basic items like a refrigerator and a washing machine. Their kindness helped us survive those first difficult months.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

What challenges did you face after settling?

Speaker 1 (Participant):

Language was the biggest barrier. At school and work, people often got frustrated with me because I didn't understand Turkish. It was humiliating. There was also a lot of prejudice. Some people treated us like we didn't belong.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

Do you feel accepted now?

Speaker 1 (Participant):

At first, no. I felt like an outsider. But over time, I've built connections and found supportive people. However, the recent rise in hostility toward Syrians has been disheartening. I often hear people say, "Go back to your country." It hurts because we didn't choose this life.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):

Do you have any dreams for the future?

Speaker 1 (Participant):

I want to help people, especially migrants. I've experienced firsthand how important psychological support is. Without it, people can't rebuild their lives. My dream is to create programs that provide mental health support to refugees so they can heal and contribute to their communities.

Speaker 2 (Interviewer):



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What advice would you give to someone considering migration?

Speaker 1 (Participant):

If they have a choice, I'd tell them not to migrate. It's not an easy life. It's full of uncertainty, loss, and struggle. But if they have no choice, I'd tell them to stay strong and seek help when they can.



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INTERVIEW 4

Interview Form 2-Y MAN-42 (Recording Not Allowed)

Dear Participant,

This study is part of a project supported by the Turkish National Agency (European Union) that aims to understand migration from the perspective of migrants. The project documents the life stories of individuals forced to migrate due to war, famine, or severe economic hardships and transforms these narratives into comic books. These materials will be used for educational purposes to raise awareness and foster empathy. Participation is entirely voluntary, and your identity will remain confidential.

1. How did you decide to migrate?

There was no decision to be made. War left us with no choice but to flee. When survival is at stake, you don't weigh options—you simply run to preserve your life.

2. Can you describe your pre-migration process?

a. What did you experience?

Living under constant bombardment is something words cannot fully capture. Every day, the sound of explosions, the cries of people, and the sight of destruction surrounded us. I did everything I could to protect my family, but I failed. I lost my wife and children in the chaos. The pain of that loss is something I carry with me every moment.

b. How did you prepare?

There was no time to prepare. I left with nothing but the clothes on my back. My only goal was to escape the war and find safety.

c. How did you plan?

Planning was impossible amidst the chaos. When your entire world collapses, survival becomes your only plan. I relied on instinct and the hope that I could reach a safer place.

d. How did you feel?

The loss of my family left me shattered. I felt powerless, angry, and deeply heartbroken. But I also felt a glimmer of hope—a desperate hope that I could survive and rebuild something from the ashes.

e. Why did you choose this country?

Turkey was the closest country that offered a safe haven. I had heard that Turkey welcomed Syrians and provided assistance. It was the only viable option for me at the time.

3. Can you describe your migration process?



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a. What means of transportation did you use?

I was transported to the border in vehicles provided by volunteers. Without their help, I wouldn't have made it.

b. How long did the journey take?

The journey itself took only a few days, but it felt like an eternity. Every second was filled with fear and uncertainty.

c. What did you do during the journey?

I don't know how to answer this. What can someone do in such a nightmare? I tried to survive, holding on to what little hope I had left. The sound of bombs followed me, and the memories of my lost family haunted me.

d. Who did you travel with?

I traveled with hundreds of people—strangers who were as desperate and broken as I was. We shared no words, just the same pain and fear.

e. What challenges did you face?

Hunger, exhaustion, and fear were constant companions. Some of us were injured, while others were overwhelmed with grief. The emotional toll was unbearable.

f. How did you feel?

It felt like I was losing my mind. The sounds of war echoed in my ears, and the pain of my loss weighed heavily on me. There were moments when I wasn't sure if I wanted to keep going.

4. Did you stop in any other country during your journey?

No, I didn't stop. The journey to Turkey was direct but agonizing. It felt like I was wandering in a never-ending nightmare. My body was in motion, but my mind was trapped in the horrors I had left behind.

5. Who migrated with you? Did all your family members migrate?

I lost my entire family before I could escape. Traveling alone, knowing I had failed to save them, was the most excruciating part of the journey. It was an experience I wouldn't wish upon anyone.

6. How would you describe your post-migration process?

a. How did you settle?

I spent six months in border camps before moving to Hatay and later Istanbul. The camps provided the basics—food, water, and shelter—but they couldn't fill the void left by my loss.

b. Did you receive any help? From whom? How?

The government and humanitarian organizations provided support. I also relied on my ability to work. I knew Turkish and Istanbul from before, which helped me navigate the challenges more easily.



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c. How did you feel when you arrived in the new country?

Initially, I felt like an outsider, unwelcome and misunderstood. Society seemed to fear us. But I kept working and tried to adapt to this new reality.

d. What are the advantages of migration?

Migration gave me a chance to survive, but that's all. It's not a life; it's survival.

e. What are the disadvantages of migration?

The biggest disadvantage is the loss of home. I miss my homeland deeply and dream of returning one day.

7. Did you face cultural barriers?

a. Food

I enjoyed Turkish food; its variety and flavors were comforting in a strange way.

b. Access to cultural activities

I participated in free cultural events, which helped me feel less isolated over time.

c. Entertainment

Entertainment was not a priority for me, but I noticed the diversity of opportunities available here.

d. Sports

I didn't engage in sports, but I saw how they provided an outlet for others.

8. How did you feel after migrating?

Post-migration, I felt lost and hopeless. Living as a migrant is not a life—it's an existence. The locals feared us at first, but over time, I learned to navigate my new surroundings. The government's support was vital, but the emotional scars remain.

9. Did you experience any changes in your family after migration?

I lost my family to the war. Migration didn't change my family—it destroyed it.

10. How did you build a new life in a different country?

I focused on work. Finding a job and keeping myself busy helped me adapt. But my heart is still in Syria, and I dream of returning.

11. How do you stay in touch with family or friends back home?

I visit my relatives in Syria whenever possible, usually once a year. Those moments are bittersweet, filled with both joy and sadness.

12. Did migration change you? How?

The war changed me more than migration ever could. Losing my family left me with an overwhelming sense of despair and longing. Migration only added to the weight of those losses.



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13. What are your thoughts on migration policies?

I want to return to my homeland. I don't belong here, and I never will. My dream is to rebuild my life in the place I truly call home.

14. Is life here different from what you expected?

Yes, living as a migrant is far harder than I imagined. It's a constant struggle to find acceptance and stability.

15. Do you want to return to your homeland?

Yes, more than anything.

16. What are your dreams for the future?

I dream of returning to Syria and living in peace. I want a world where no one has to experience the pain of war or the loss of loved ones.

17. What do you think when you see migrants from other countries?

I see myself in them—their pain, their fear, and their hope for a better future.

18. What advice would you give to those considering migration?

Don't migrate unless you have no other choice. Migration is not freedom; it's survival at its most basic level.



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INTERVIEW 5

Interview Form 3-Z WOMAN-37 (Recording Strictly Not Allowed)

Dear Participant,

This study is part of a project aiming to understand migration through the eyes of migrants. The project collects life stories of individuals forced to migrate due to war, famine, or severe economic hardships and transforms these stories into comic book formats. These comics will be used as educational materials to raise awareness and foster empathy toward migration. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and your identity will remain confidential.

1. How did you decide to migrate?

The decision to migrate was entirely due to necessity. The war in our country made daily life unbearable. As the bombs fell and fear consumed us, we realized there was no other choice if we wanted to keep our children safe. It was a decision driven by survival instincts.

2. Can you describe your pre-migration process?

a. What did you experience?

The devastation of war affected every aspect of our lives. Living under constant bombardment meant facing the possibility of losing loved ones at any moment. Many of our relatives either lost their lives or were seriously injured during this period. Our lives were turned upside down overnight.

b. How did you prepare?

We barely had time to prepare. Everything happened so suddenly that we could only grab a few basic necessities before setting out. There was no time to think about what to take; survival was our only focus.

c. How did you plan?

We had no opportunity to plan. Everything unfolded chaotically, and we learned what to do and where to go along the way.

d. How did you feel?

Fear, sadness, and helplessness consumed us. Leaving behind our home, our past, and our memories was deeply painful. Yet, the hope of ensuring our children's safety kept us moving forward.

e. Why did you choose this country?

We chose Turkey for several reasons. Firstly, it was geographically the closest and most accessible. Secondly, we had heard that Turkey was welcoming Syrian refugees and providing assistance. This gave us a sense of trust and hope.



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3. Can you describe your migration process?

a. What means of transportation did you use?

We received help from people who provided vehicles for transportation. Trucks and minibusses were used to take us across.

b. How long did the journey take?

The journey lasted about 2-3 days, but it felt like an eternity. Every moment was filled with uncertainty and fear.

c. What did you do during the journey?

We tried to survive. There was very little time to rest or address our basic needs. I focused on keeping my children calm and ensuring they didn't go hungry.

d. Who did you travel with?

We traveled with other people who were fleeing their countries, just like us. We shared the same fears and hopes, creating a sense of solidarity among strangers.

e. What challenges did you face?

Hunger, exhaustion, cold weather, and constant uncertainty were our greatest challenges. The fear in my children's eyes was the hardest to bear. We also faced security risks along the way.

f. How did you feel?

The journey tested both our physical and emotional limits. Fear, sadness, exhaustion, and helplessness were constant companions. Seeing my children scared and crying broke my heart.

4. Did you stop in any other country during your journey?

No, we traveled directly to Turkey. The journey, though relatively short, was immensely challenging and full of hardships.

5. Who migrated with you? Did all your family members migrate?

I migrated with my family, including my children and spouse, as well as a few relatives. Other people fleeing similar conditions were also part of our journey. It was a harrowing experience, but we found strength in supporting each other. This experience was both terrifying and a testament to the power of human resilience.

6. How would you describe your post-migration process?



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a. How did you settle?

Initially, we stayed in tent camps. These camps were set up to provide basic necessities such as food and clothing.

b. Did you receive any help? From whom? How?

Yes, we received help from both government agencies and humanitarian organizations. We also received support from locals at times. These aids were crucial for our survival.

c. How did you feel when you arrived in the new country?

At first, we felt very foreign and isolated. Not knowing the language made communication nearly impossible. However, over time, we overcame these challenges.

d. What are the advantages of migration?

The biggest advantage was ensuring our survival. Our children are now safe and can receive an education, which gives us hope for the future.

e. What are the disadvantages of migration?

Cultural adaptation, language barriers, and the emotional pain of leaving our home behind were the most significant challenges.

7. Did you face cultural barriers?

a. Food

Adjusting to Turkish cuisine took some time, but we eventually grew to enjoy it, and it has now become part of our daily life.

b. Access to cultural activities

Initially, we were unaware of these activities, but over time, we began participating in them, particularly through our children.

c. Entertainment

Our children started playing with Turkish friends, which greatly helped their adaptation process.

d. Sports

Sports activities were particularly beneficial for our children, both physically and emotionally.

8. How did you feel after migrating?

At first, we felt very lonely and excluded. Some people didn't understand us or didn't want us there. But over time, we adapted to the society and were eventually accepted. Now, we feel more integrated and supported.



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9. Did you experience any changes in your family after migration?

Our lifestyle changed completely, adapting to the customs and ways of this country. However, our family bonds remained the same and even grew stronger. Facing these challenges together brought us closer and helped us rebuild our lives.



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INTERVIEW 6

Interview Form 4-Q (Female, 42)

1. How did you decide to migrate?

Migration wasn't something we decided—it was forced upon us like a storm sweeping through our lives. The war stripped us of everything we knew: our home, our safety, and even the hope of a normal life. The decision to leave came in a moment of desperation. It wasn't a calculated choice but an instinct for survival. We never imagined leaving our country, our roots, but when survival is at stake, you realize there's no time for contemplation—only action. If there had been no war, I would still be in my home, living the life I once cherished.

2. Can you describe your pre-migration experience?

What did you experience?

Before the migration, life was a nightmare. The streets were filled with fear—bombs raining down, the screams of those who were injured or grieving, the constant sound of gunfire. Every day, we wondered if it would be our last. My parents didn't survive; they were caught in an airstrike. I couldn't even bury them properly. The pain of their loss is something I carry with me every day.

How did you prepare?

There was no time to prepare. The war didn't give us the luxury to plan. We simply followed the crowds, grabbing whatever essentials we could carry. We left behind our memories, our belongings, and the life we had built.

How did you feel?

I felt broken, like a part of my soul had been ripped away. Fear consumed me, and I worried endlessly for my children. I didn't know if I could protect them or if we would make it to safety. It's hard to describe the mix of grief, guilt, and desperation I felt during those days.

Why did you choose this country?

We didn't choose Turkey—it chose us. It was the nearest place of refuge, the closest border where we could escape the horrors of war. It wasn't about preference but necessity.

3. Can you describe your migration process?



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What transportation methods did you use?

We started on foot, walking for what felt like forever. My children clung to my hands, and I carried my youngest as far as my strength allowed. When we reached the border, aid organizations helped us with transportation, arranging vehicles to take us further into safety.

How long did your journey take?

The journey lasted 4–5 days, but it felt like an eternity. Each day was filled with uncertainty, and every moment was weighed down by exhaustion and fear.

What did you do during the journey?

There was little to do but move forward and pray. I whispered prayers for strength, for safety, for mercy. I tried to keep my children calm, telling them stories to distract them, even though I felt anything but calm inside.

Who traveled with you?

I traveled with my husband, our children, and a group of strangers who had also fled their homes. In that shared desperation, we found a fragile sense of unity—each of us carrying our own losses and fears but moving together toward an uncertain future.

What challenges did you face?

We faced hunger, thirst, and exhaustion. The nights were cold, and the days were unbearably hot. My children cried for water, for food, for rest, and it broke my heart that I couldn't give them what they needed. The loss of my parents weighed heavily on me, and the fear of what lay ahead was almost paralyzing.

How did you and your family feel?

I felt an overwhelming sense of guilt for not being able to shield my children from this suffering. My husband was stoic, trying to be our pillar of strength, but I could see the worry in his eyes. My children were terrified and confused, asking questions I couldn't answer. It was a mix of grief, fear, and the tiniest spark of hope that kept us moving.

4. Did you stop in another country during your journey?

No, we didn't stop in any other country. The journey was direct but relentless. Those 4–5 days felt like a lifetime, filled with fear and the constant awareness of what we had lost.

5. Who migrated with you?



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I fled with my husband and children, but we lost my parents in the war. Their absence is a wound that will never fully heal. Traveling with my family was bittersweet—I was grateful to have them with me, but the loss of my parents was a constant ache. I carried their memory with me every step of the way.

6. How would you describe your post-migration experience?

How did you settle?

Our first stop was a refugee camp near the border. We lived in tents for months, trying to adjust to this new reality. Later, we moved to Gaziantep and then to Istanbul. Every step of the way was a struggle, especially because we didn't speak the language. Enrolling in language courses as a family was the turning point in our journey toward integration.

Did you receive help?

Yes, we received support from aid organizations and kind individuals. They provided us with food, clothing, and school supplies for the children. This help was invaluable and gave us a sense of hope during those early, difficult days.

How did you feel in the new country?

Initially, I felt lost and alienated. Everything was unfamiliar, and the language barrier made even simple tasks daunting. But over time, as we learned the language and built connections, I began to feel more settled.

What were the advantages and disadvantages of migration?

The greatest advantage was safety—I no longer had to fear for my children's lives. But the disadvantages were profound. We lost our home, our community, and a part of ourselves. Starting over in a new country is never easy, especially when it's not by choice.

7. Did you face cultural barriers?

Yes, adapting to a new culture was challenging. The language barrier was the most significant obstacle. My children struggled to make friends at school, and I found it difficult to communicate with others. Even food, clothing, and daily customs were different, but we made a conscious effort to adapt. Over time, these barriers became less daunting.

8. How do you feel now?

Do you feel integrated into the culture?

It took time, but yes, we've managed to integrate. Learning Turkish and building relationships with locals made a significant difference.



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Did the local community support you?

Some people were kind and welcoming, but others were not. There were moments when we felt like outsiders, but as we adapted, the community's perception of us seemed to improve.

9. Did migration change your family dynamics?

Yes, migration changed everything. I had to step into roles I never imagined, working to provide for my family while also being the emotional anchor for my children. Despite the challenges, the experience brought us closer together.

10. How did you build a new life in a different country?

We started by learning the language, which was essential for integration. I began working, something I had never done in Syria. It was a slow process, but with determination and the support of kind individuals, we gradually rebuilt our lives.

11. How do you stay in touch with family and friends back home?

I stay in touch with my brother, who managed to migrate to Germany. We speak on the phone regularly. I haven't returned to Syria, and I don't think I ever will.

12. Has migration changed you?

Yes, in profound ways. It has made me stronger, more resilient, and more appreciative of safety and stability. But it has also left scars—memories of loss and trauma that I carry with me every day.

13. What are your thoughts on migration policies?

I don't have specific opinions on policies, but I dream of a world where war doesn't force people to leave their homes.

14. Is this country different from what you expected?



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Yes, it exceeded my expectations. The support we received and the opportunities we've found here have given us a second chance at life.

15. Do you want to return to your homeland?

No, I don't. The pain and memories tied to Syria are too overwhelming.

16. What are your dreams for the future?

My dream is to give my children the best possible education and to ensure they grow up in a world free from war and suffering.

17. What do you think when you see other migrants?

I feel an immediate connection and deep empathy. Their struggles remind me of my own journey, and I wish I could do more to help them.

18. What advice would you give to those considering migration?

Migration should never be a first choice. If there is no immediate danger, stay and fight for your home. But if survival demands it, know that you have the strength to start over, no matter how hard it seems.

This enriched version weaves emotional nuance, personal growth, and cultural adaptation into the respondent's narrative, creating a vivid and humanizing account of their migration journey. Let me know if you'd like to refine or expand any sections further!