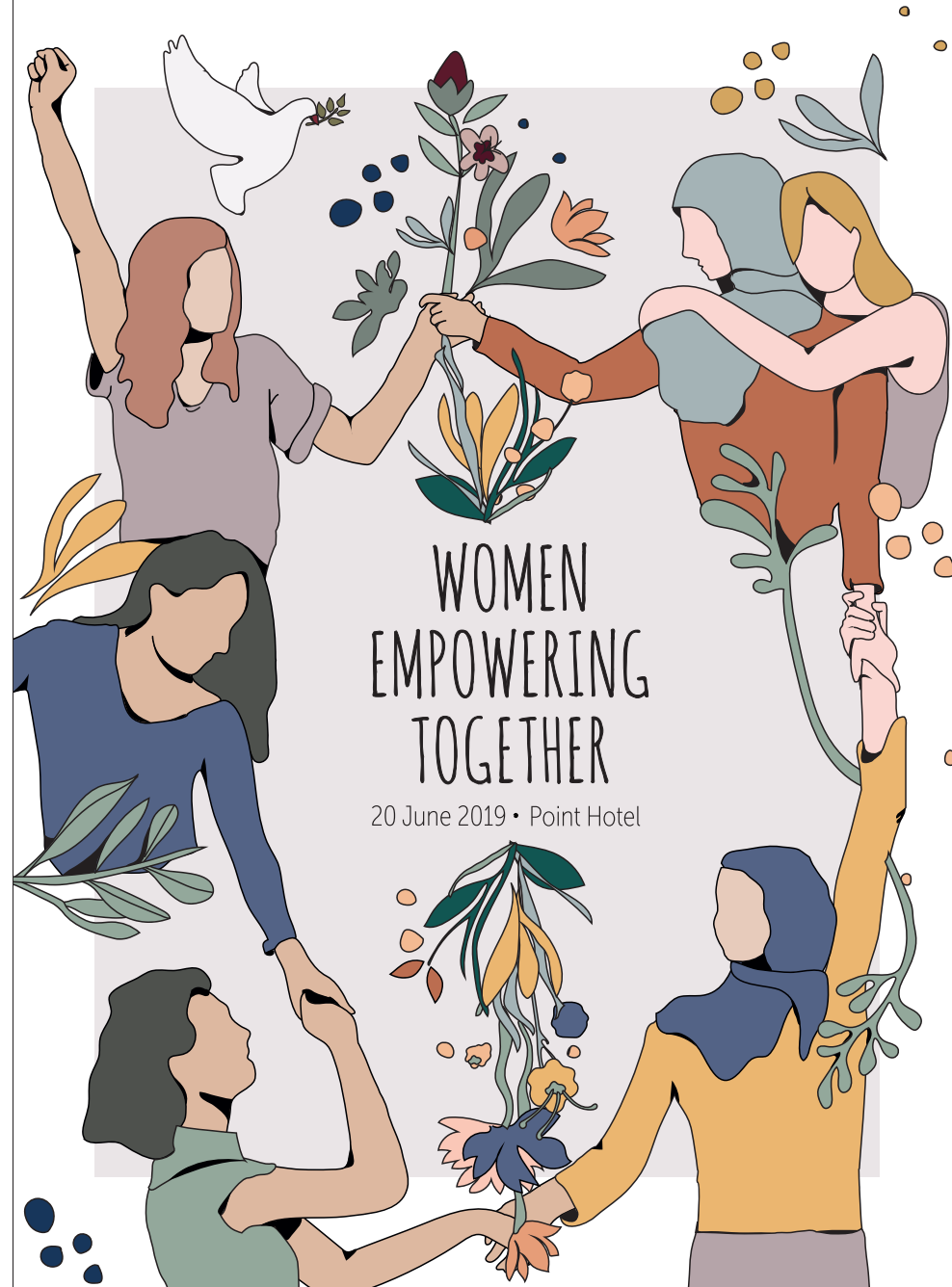


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Funded by  
European Union  
Civil Protection and  
Humanitarian Aid



## WOMEN EMPOWERING TOGETHER

09.00 - 09.30	Registration
09.30 - 10.00	Opening Ceremony <b>Prof. Dr. Şevkat Bahar-Özvarış</b> Director of HÜKSAM <b>Dr. Bahattin İtler</b> Ankara Provincial Health Directorate Head of Public Health Services <b>Dr. Selen Örs-Reyhanoğlu</b> UNFPA Turkey Humanitarian Aid Programme Coordinator <b>Mathias Eick</b> Regional Information Officer, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) <b>Prof. Dr. A. Haluk Özen</b> Rector of Hacettepe University
10.00 - 10.20	Short Film Screening <b>Women and Girl Safe Spaces</b>
10.20 - 11.00	Results of Research on Determining Sexual and Reproductive and Gender Based Violence Service Needs of Women Applied to Centers <b>Doç. Dr. İlknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu</b>
11.00 - 11.30	Coffee Break
11.30 - 12.10	Results of Cultural Sensitivity and Social Cohesion Research <b>Prof. Dr. Kezban Çelik</b>
12.10 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.10	Results of From Syria to Turkey: Being a Women Research <b>Prof. Dr. Özlem Cankurtaran</b>
14.10 - 14.30	Coffee Break
14.30 - 15.30	Panel <b>Women Empowering Together – Experience Sharing</b>
15.30 - 15.45	Women Tracing the Light of Hope Choir
16.00	Closing

*Simultaneous translation in English will also be provided.*



**Your participation in the “ Women Empowering Together” event which will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2019 will strengthen us.**

Prof. Dr. Şevkat BAHAR ÖZVARIŞ  
HUWRIC Director

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## NEWS

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# Refugee Women Empowered Together

20 June 2019



**20 June 2019, Ankara** - World Refugee Day was celebrated together with UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund and Syrian refugee women who are currently under temporary protection and are beneficiaries of primary health care services provided by Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) of United Nations Population Fund's which implemented by Hacettepe University Women's Research and Implementation Center (HUWRIC).

"Women Empowered Together" titled event, made it possible to present how women have been affected by medical and psycho-social consultancy services provided by WGSS Centers positively, and to display the results of academic research that has been conducted since the center opened.

## Related News



**"Sexual and reproductive health services are not a luxury in emergency situations"**



**Training on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crises**



**World must work harder to secure sexual and reproductive rights for all, says new UNFPA report**

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Prof. Dr. Şevkat Bahar-Özvarış, Director of HUWRIC

Prof. Dr. Şevkat Bahar-Özvarış, Director of HUWRIC, emphasized that the number of refugees in the world has tripled over the past fifty years and also highlighted the issue of immigration to be an issue of human rights, in her opening speech at the “Women Empowered Together” event. Bahar-Özvarış mentioned the practices about creating safe spaces and providing service inside Migrant Health Centers incorporated within Ankara Provonccial Health Directorate’s Public Health Services Department for the Syrian refugee women and girls under temporary protection in Ankara, whose population currently exceeds over 90 thousand, with ECHO’s financial support and UNFPA’s technical assistance, in order to offer a solution to problems caused by forced migration. Prof. Dr. Şevkat Bahar-Özvarış also expressed that the practices regarding sexual health, reproductive health, the fight against gender based violence and the empowerment of women and girls are being conducted in all three WGSS Centers in Ankara, with 34 female staff, 23 of whom are either from Syria or Iraq. Alongside providing services in these centers for four years, she also explained the scientific studies they have been conducting in order to produce scientifically based data as a unit within the university, and to share that data with public, academia, non-governmental organizations and international institutions.

Vice Chairperson of Public Health Services, Dr. Çiğdem Şimşek, began her speech by stating that Turkey is the highest ranking country in the world which hosts 3.7 million refugees. After stating that the first center to provide health care services for Syrians under temporary protection in Ankara was opened in Ulubey after the protocol was signed with HUWRIC, Dr. Şimşek explained that after the center has been moved to Alemdag, it has been able to provide a more comprehensive health service. Dr. Şimşek also highlighted that HUWRIC has been putting great effort in their field practices to serve both refugees and the Turkish women.

## Related Publications



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### Response

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UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Humanitarian Programme Coordinator Dr. Selen Örs Reyhanoğlu

UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund Humanitarian Programme Coordinator Dr. Selen Örs Reyhanoğlu, explained that UNFPA has been working for mothers and children health, reproduction health and rights, achievement of gender equality, fight to end violence towards women and production of scientific data about development, as well as for a world in which young people are empowered and encouraged to use their full potential for over 50 years. She also added that they have been coordinating a humanitarian programme to provide medical and psychosocial consultancy to Syrian women and girls who are under temporary protection in Turkey after the 2011 Syria crisis, with 35 WGSS Centers. She also mentioned that the positive reflections of humanitarian programmes were going to be shared during the event. She completed her speech by quoting memories of an immigrant from Raqqa. A Syrian beneficiary said, “I have learnt a lot here. I feel strong. I believe I have a very strong personality. Also I have learnt civil law. I did not know any of these; a woman has rights, she can’t be married if she’s younger than 18, violence is prohibited... I have learnt a lot about reproductive health and women’s health.” about one of the centers run by HUWRIC.





ECHO's Regional Communication Director Mathias Eick

ECHO's Regional Communication Director Mathias Eick also gave a speech at the opening of the "Women Empowered Together" event. In his speech, Eick explained that the news about the conflict in Syria show that this group is still the most affected group among all others, emphasizing that Turkey is the highest ranking country with regard to the population of immigrants hosted. Eick said that Syrian women and girls have been able to reach safe areas by the courtesy of Turkey, opening its homes and hearts to refugees fleeing a war stricken country. Eick also said that as a result of the coordinated work of Ministry of Health, UNFPA and other non-governmental organizations, successful practices have been conducted in order to provide support, regarding the problems caused by the refugee crisis. Eick, emphasizing the importance of coordinated work to reach the people effected by the crisis, explained that Syrian women gain access to the health services only through the successful collaboration of these organizations. In his speech, Eick also talked about his own experience from the time he visited the WGSS Center in İzmir. "The transformation of the beneficiary women I met at the centers impressed me very much. The women who came to seek help, became employees at these centers and contribute to the services. This significant accomplishment, is a result of the important work you all have done."

In her opening speech, Hacettepe University's Vice-Rector Prof. Dr. Burçin Şener, also emphasized that the women and girls have been the most effected group by the crisis in Syria. Explaining the necessity for a transformation within the society to overcome these difficulties, Prof. Dr. Şener said that the universities have been leading the process for the necessary transformation to occur, with their scientific researches.

The event continued with the screening of academic research that has been completed during the service time of the WGSS Center. In this order, The Research on the Reproductive Health of Syrian Women Who Consulted to the WGSS Centers and the Detection of Needs Regarding Gender Based Violence Services, Results of Intercultural Sensitivity and Joint Life Research, Being A Woman on the Road from Syria to Turkey were shared with the guests.

While presenting their research on “the Reproductive Health of Syrian Women Who Consulted to the WGSS Centers and the Detection of Needs Regarding Gender Based Violence Services” completed in August-September 2017, Assoc. Prof. Dr İlknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Prof. Dr. Şevkat Bahar-Özvarış, Psychologist Türküler Erdost, Instructor Hande Konşuk-Ünlü from Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, explained that the data for the research has been collected by face to face interviews done with 413 Syrian women. And the research revealed that the Syrian women, who consulted to the WGSS Centers in which UNFPA provides health services with the partnership of HUWRIC, have all been directly affected by the conflicts in Syria.

Incidents Before Migration-

## Incidents Before Migration

	Total (413)	Alemdağ (117)	Gülveren (136)	Yenimahalle (148)
Being directly exposed to conflict	92	98	86	93
Harm on the house or possessions	87	95	76	90
Children's inability to continue education	50	83	51	22
Being murdered	48	55	39	51
Being harmed	38	46	37	33
Being arrested	24	22	28	23
Being threatened	20	31	9	21
Poverty and unfavorable life conditions	6	19	-	-
Fear, safety, psychological issues	5	17	-	-
Other	2	3	1	-

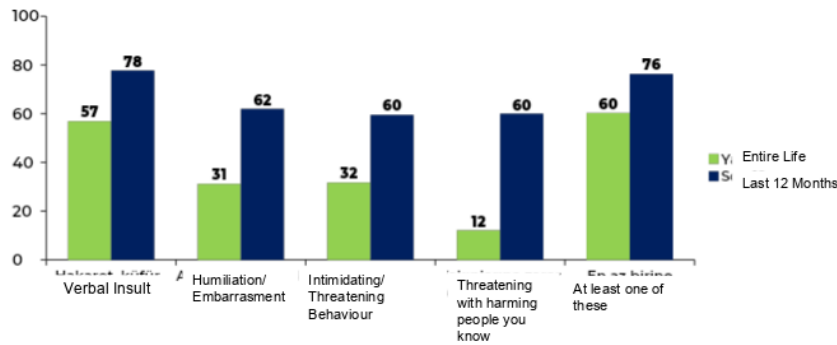
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The same research supports the findings regarding men’s tendency to act violent psychologically, physically and sexually towards their wives, triggered by the traumas the men was exposed to.

Psychological Violence -

## Psychological Violence

- Did he hurt you with swearwords or insults?
- Did he humiliate you or embarrass you in front of others?
- Did he scare you, or oppress you with threatening behavior? For instance: with the way he looked at you, by shouting or by vandalizing things.
- Did he threaten you by saying that he will cause you or people you know harm?

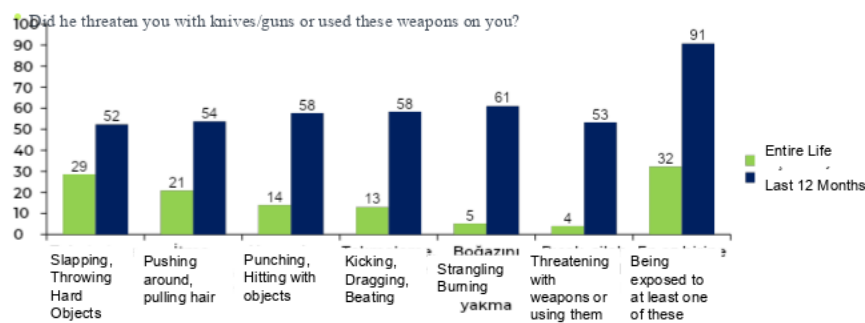


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## Physical Violence-

## Physical Violence

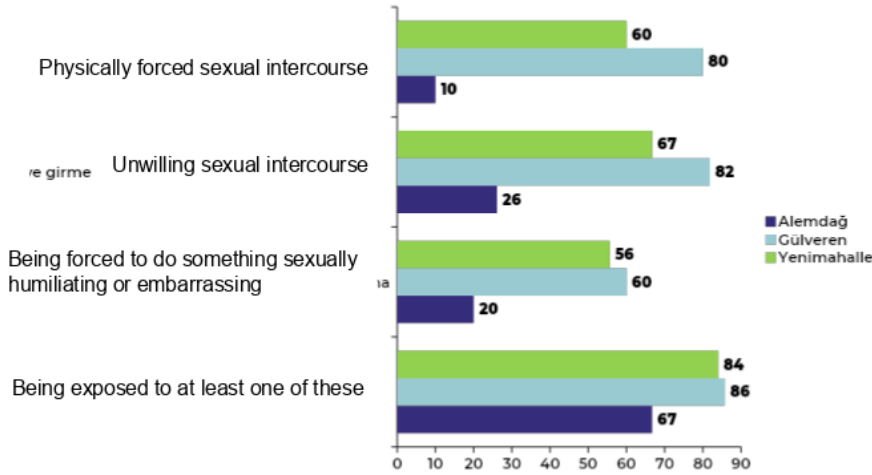
- Did he slap you or throw hard objects?
- Did he push you around or pull your hair?
- Did he punch you, or hit you with hard objects?
- Did he kick, drag or beat you??
- Did he strangle you or burn you?



## Sexual Violence -



## Sexual Violence



Prof. Dr. Kezban Çelik, Chair of TED University Department of Sociology, explained that they have conducted a research in 2017, named “Intercultural Sensitivity and Joint Life Research”, upon the request of HUWAC with regard to reaching a more comprehensive understanding of the problems between locals and refugee population in the areas the provide service in. During her presentation of research results about focus group discussions, Prof. Dr. Çelik explained the transformative effects of the “health mediator” model on the Syrian population, provided by the WGSS Centers. Çelik expressed that the health mediators act as a bridge between the counselling centers and the districts where Syrian population is higher. She also explained how the WGSS Centers do not only provide primary health services, but also enable Syrian women to leave their domestic spaces and become involved in social life. In the research conducted, it was revealed that Syrian women are concerned for their children’s education and social life most, and their greatest desire is to see their children continuing their education without feeling alienated.

During their presentation of “Being a Woman on the Road from Syria to Turkey”, Instructor from Hacettepe University Social Services Department and Board Member of HUWAC Prof. Dr. Özlem Cankurtaran and Research Associate Hande Albayrak explained discovering, after the interviews they have conducted with 26 Syrian Women, that the awareness concerning those women’s own health and rights had increased significantly, as a result of the services provided by the WGSS Centers. Prof. Dr. Cankurtaran said dropping out of school and performing the domestic responsibilities assigned to them at home, creates a misconception that Syrian girls are adults, and emphasized the importance of continuous education for Syrian girls.

The final activity of the event was a panel in which, Syrian, Iraqi and Turkish employees who work at the Women and Girls Safe Spaces shared their observations. Türküler Erdost, HUWAC’s Psychologist, said “We do not see our work as a project. We experience all the work we do. Today, we would like you to witness what we experience, too.”



Health mediator Ratiba Akili, expressed her joy about being able to provide support for Syrian women like herself, adding that women should have no concerns about consulting to these centers, as these centers provide “safe spaces”, based on their privacy policies.

Ebru Kondakçı, who provides services as a psychologist at the center, explained that she does not only work on post war trauma cases, but also provides services regarding gender inequality. Kondakçı stated that, it is impossible to offer a post-traumatic consultation, as the conflict and the trauma are still ongoing, emphasizing that people are still losing relatives and loved ones.

Iraqi doctor Seher Marwan, who provides health consultancy at the Women and Girls Safe Spaces, expressed that serving to the Syrian women who are under temporary protection is a new experience for her, and she has never worked with people who had to leave their homes before. Yet, she added that the humanitarian programme had a positive impact on her.



Health mediator S. M. A, stated that at first the Syrian women hesitated to consult to these centers, but in time, they began to trust and visiting the center often. She also said that the awareness regarding the importance of girls completing their education and preventing child marriages increased.

Another health mediator at the center, E.H, explained that she came from Aleppo, have been serving at the center for over three years. E.H also added that at first they had only been informing their own families and relatives but gradually, they began to reach larger crowds. In addition to presenting the services the center provides, she explained their efforts to inform women about the harms caused by child marriages, the health services necessary before and after childbirth, violence and women's rights.

Tuğçe Uygün, who has been working as a social services expert since 2015, expressed transforming and getting stronger with the women she provides services to. To surpass the obstacle of language, Tuğçe Uygün said she has learnt the language of emotions. Uygün expressed the crushingly heavy responsibility of witnessing the lives of women who come to the center for counsel, and yet, she said each story strengthens her.

The "Women Empowered Together" event was finalized, after the choir performance, including both the women who provide services and the women who benefit from those services at the Women and Girls Safe Spaces, sang together.

