



FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS IN
HATAY
AFFECTED BY EARTHQUAKE



This Report has been prepared by Ankara Vocational Training Association.(MESEDER)

Introduce

Through this study, MESEDER seeks to understand how well the humanitarian response in Turkey matches people's needs, priorities and expectations and how aid can be made more responsive to the needs of the affected population in Turkey, and to identify how international actors can effectively support and engage in the localized response. In this context, the aim is to listen to the experiences of individuals in different areas of the affected areas covering the processes from the first day of the earthquake to the next day and to determine the methods of intervention in the following process. At the same time, it is to keep the concepts of feedback, inclusiveness and localization alive.



Background

A devastating earthquake occurred in southern Turkey and northwest Syria, affecting 11 provinces on February 6, 2023. This devastating earthquake had severe consequences. More than 51,000 people lost their lives and more than 150,000 people were injured in Turkey. Hundreds of buildings were destroyed in the earthquake and thousands were severely damaged. At the same time, this earthquake caused damage to the telecommunications and other basic infrastructure of 11 provinces. Thousands of people have been displaced as a result and the supply chain has been severely damaged. Antakya was the most affected by this earthquake and almost 80% of its center was destroyed. Both host community members and other refugee group members were severely damaged by this earthquake. This study was carried out by MESEDER Association in Defne and Antakya of Hatay, which were seriously injured in the earthquake.



Findings

1. Housing

Individuals affected by the earthquake have had to struggle with more than one problem after the earthquake and continue to do so. The most important of these problems is shelter, which is the most basic need of human life. Individuals stated that in the first days of the earthquake, they slept in the streets, parks and cars either because their houses were destroyed or because they did not feel safe. The groups mentioned that the intervention was late in the first days of the earthquake. In the following period, earthquake victims who accessed tents had to struggle with flooding in the winter and scorching heat in the summer and still continue to do so. Container cities have been established in the region, but there are still many earthquake victims who remain outside these container cities and still try to survive in tents. The earthquake victims living in container cities complain about the lack of basic infrastructure.





2. Drinking Water

In Hatay, which is an earthquake zone, people do not have access to clean water, especially due to the collapse of the water network infrastructure. As we reach the 8th month of the earthquake, people are still experiencing difficulties in accessing drinking water due to the unrepairs water network. People have to queue for hours to access clean and potable water.



3. Other basic needs

A few days after the earthquake, while most of the participants said that they were able to access food and nutrition aid, many of the participants mentioned that this aid was not enough and that the packages were insufficient to meet the needs. However, it has been observed that the needs for food are now met by official institutions and organizations and NGOs. In the region where the destruction is unbelievable, there are common opinions that although aid is provided, especially in terms of hygiene parcels, it should be continuous. There is also a need for seasonal clothing and heating systems for winter.



4. Psychosocial support and health services

One of the biggest consequences of the earthquake is that many earthquake survivors are in need of psychosocial support. Almost all of the research participants mentioned that trauma and anxiety still greatly affect their daily lives. Many participants are also concerned about the psychological well-being of their children. A few respondents mentioned that their children's sleep was disturbed at night after the earthquake and that they had problems with bedwetting. While a number of organizations provide support in this regard, the scale of need is enormous. Mental health and psychosocial support were also the most frequently emphasized needs in interviews with humanitarian actors. There are serious traumas caused by the earthquake, and the view that these traumas will take time is frequently expressed by other organizations. There are also serious deficiencies in access to health units in Hatay. Almost all health institutions were seriously damaged in the earthquake. Although a few hospitals are active, there are still serious deficiencies in meeting the demands. Participants especially complain about the inability to get appointments and the queues at hospitals. . People reported difficulties accessing specialty medicines, making appointments for medical care and covering pharmacy costs. Access to medical care is particularly challenging for Syrian refugees, as many reported that special requests for medical records - which they do not have - can lead to difficulties in accessing the care they need.

5. Long-term needs

Many workplaces in Hatay were either damaged or destroyed due to earthquakes. Especially Antakya Industrial Site was heavily damaged by the earthquake and many shops became unusable. Therefore, the need for new business areas in the region is quite high. However, livelihoods have been given less space among the intervention methods. This, in turn, causes a serious deficit in terms of livelihoods. The idea that livelihoods should be seriously emphasized after the emergency needs in the region is frequently expressed by the participants. Although re-employing people is an important step in re-establishing self-sufficient communities, it seems to be a very distant possibility for the participants. At the same time, earthquake survivors in the region stated that their agricultural work was severely affected and that the shortage of water, fertilizer and fuel made them unable to work. At the same time, the fact that many agricultural lands have been turned into container cities has rendered farmers unable to farm and made their livelihoods very difficult. Another important factor is education. Most schools in Hatay are either unusable or are used by official institutions and organizations.

Although schools have reopened, education needs remain. Children need support to continue their education. Especially children who cannot go to nearby schools due to the earthquake have great difficulties in transportation. Most of the participants cannot send their children to school due to the problems they face in transportation (increasing bus prices). A Syrian mother living in Antakya said, "When the schools opened, I tried to hire a shuttle service for my child. I paid for it out of my own pocket, 1000 TL." People also see student scholarships, especially in the earthquake zone, as a step to help rebuild communities in the long term. Therefore, this necessitated action by NGOs and other institutions and organizations. The lack of action by humanitarian actors in addressing these ongoing needs is a dangerous process that leads the community to anxiety.

Discrimination

Individuals from different communities perceive unequal treatment in terms of services provided. Local community members believe that aid is mainly provided to Syrians, while Syrians believe that services are mainly provided to local community members because they are foreigners. Syrian respondents claim that Turks are prioritized, especially in terms of containers. At the same time, the Alevi community participants stated that they were discriminated against during the response. They noted that aid was slower to reach Alevi communities and that Alevi communities received less aid than Sunni communities.



Recommendations

All the individuals who participated in the research are in a serious state of hopelessness and anxiety. The fact that they were not included in decision-making mechanisms in the process from the first day of the earthquake until now is quite thought-provoking for the masses. Another situation that disturbs the masses is that local organizations have lost their functionality and they are not informed about the activities or innovations to be carried out in the area where they live. Participants suffer from the decrease in aid and the uncoordinated distribution of aid. At the same time, there is a consensus that the aid should be distributed in cash or market cards. The biggest demand of the participants is to find an interlocutor to make their voices heard and then to have a say in the construction of the city and to have a say in the establishment of a safe city for them in every sense.

Another suggestion is to have feedback mechanisms in place, especially in any applications they make to official institutions and organizations.

- In addition, comprehensive interviews should be conducted with disadvantaged groups and different segments of society and their needs should be listened to. - In addition, local committees should be established outside the official camps and their effective work should be ensured and localization should be supported.- In addition, participants should be informed about the feedback mechanisms of local or NGOs and they should serve as a bridge between the masses and NGOs.

The way people get news online should be improved.

There should also be sensitivity to and assurance of privacy in formal and informal spaces. (The community is very concerned about privacy) It has also revealed a number of specific barriers and challenges for women in these spaces. Many women receiving assistance reported that the chaotic and aggressive crowds at distribution points made them feel unsafe. concerns about domestic and gender-based violence. Humanitarian actors also reported that incidents of domestic and gender-based violence have increased since the response. One factor that may contribute to this trend is the lack of dedicated and safe spaces for women in the camps. One focus group participant explained that they had to go to the toilet in unsafe areas in their gardens because there was no other space they could use. Another participant said that she had to take a shower at the home of a stranger. Humanitarian actors also confirmed that the lack of private and dedicated spaces for women is an ongoing problem in the response. One NGO worker stated: "There are also many protection risks related to the safety of women and children. There are communal shower areas and toilets in these camps." A representative of a local NGO specializing in women's rights confirmed that the scale of the problem is very serious and that some women even use the toilet at night to avoid having to use it. that he stopped drinking water in the evening.



Methodology

Method:Qualitative Data Collection including , Focus Group Discussion

Target Group: The population affected by the earthquake

Time Duration:22.05.2023 – 07.7.2023

Enumerator: M&E Specialist, native speaker of Turkish and Arabic

The work was generally carried out in informal tent areas and places where destruction was high.



Data Collection Method

The data was collected between 22.05.2023 and 07.7.2023. Focus group discussions were held face to face. Turkish responses were recorded using laptops and smartphones and later translated into English. Focus group discussions lasted 30 to 50 minutes.

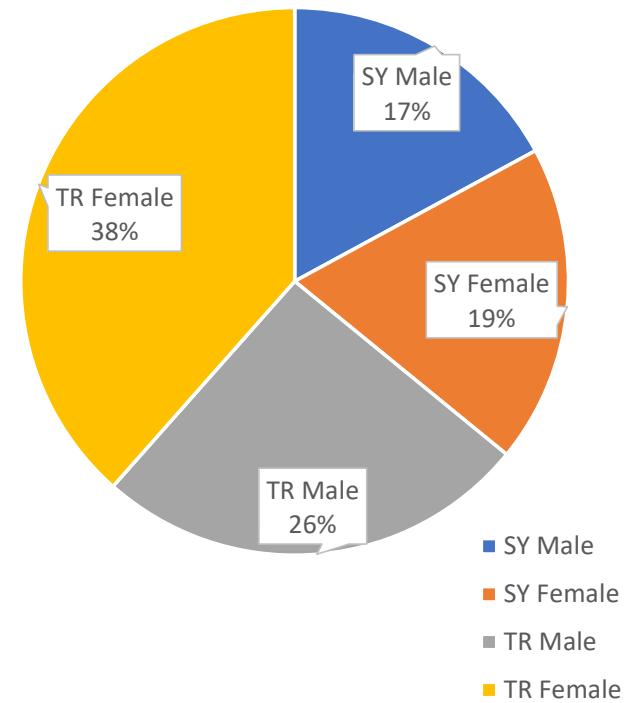


Neighborhoods Visited

- Harbiye
- Narlıca
- Çekmece
- Odabaşı
- KüçükDALYAN

• FGD Participants Profile	Number
• TR Male	9
• TR Female	12
• SY Female	12
• SY Male	12
• Total	45

Gender And Nationality Distribution



The table below shows the number of participants by location.

Focus Discussion Group

NO	PARTİCİPANT GROUP	LOCATION	DATE	ACTİVİTY	NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANT
1	Turkish People (Male)	Hatay/Harbiye	22.05.2023	FGD	7
2	Syrian, Turkish People (Female, Male)	Hatay/Narlıca	27.05.2023	FGD	9
3	Turkish people (Female, Male)	Hatay/Çekmece	15.06.2023	FGD	11
4	Turkish People (Male, Female)	Hatay/Odabaşı	25.06.2023	FGD	12
5	Syrian, Turkish People (Female, Male)	Hatay/Küçükdalyan	7.07.2023	FGD	6

Sampling was done to ensure equal representation of gender and nationality. Targeted points in Hatay (Odabaşı, Küçükdalyan, Çekmece, Narlıca, Harbiye) were selected based on the priorities of the humanitarian response and the severity of damage in these regions. Participants were identified through focal points in each community and then by adopting a sampling approach in accordance with sampling criteria.

Challenges encountered during data collection

First of all, focus group interviews were conducted in unofficial tent sites. This is because official sites are subject to permission. Also, participant comments and insights here cannot be attributed to the community as a whole. . At the time of data collection, estimates suggest that approximately one-third of IDPs in the affected area were in formal camps and the remaining two-thirds were in informal camps. At the same time, it is impossible to verify the information provided by respondents. Many of the respondents have received some form of assistance. At the same time, the person collecting the data has no ties to this community. In order to alleviate the concerns of the beneficiaries, they were informed that these interviews would not cause any harm in terms of stopping the aid.