Chapter 17

The Problems That School Administrators and Syrian Teachers Encounter During the Educational Process of Syrian Refugee Children: Ankara–Altındağ Example

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to determine the problems that school administrators and Syrian Teachers encounter during the educational process of Syrian Refugee Children continuing their education in basic education institutions Ankara–Altındağ province. So as to identify and diagnose in detail the views of the school administrators and Syrian teachers in basic education institutions regarding the problems they face while teaching Syrian refugee and asylum-seeking children, the research was designed using a qualitative pattern. Syrian teachers who migrated to Turkey from Syria and Turkish school administrators who work in four primary schools; Fatih Sultan Mehmet Primary School, Nazife Hatun Primary School, Şili Primary School and Taşçka Primary School, affiliated to the General Directorate of Primary Education of Altındağ district of Ankara province, constituted the population of the research. The interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis with four school principals and 16 teachers from among the 86 Syrian teachers who are working in these schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of immigration, together with globalization, is among the very first agenda items of developed and developing countries, in particular the ones facing waves of immigration. Even though it has been experienced for so long that humans have to leave behind their houses, homelands due to a fair number of reasons such as natural disasters or the ones caused by other humans and wars, the fact that international society’s concentrating upon this notion is a relatively novel situation.

Almost all the countries around the world have been affected by immigrations especially during the second half of this century and immigrant population has been on the increase. This is apparent particularly when United Nations’ estimated data pertaining to immigrant population is analyzed: on the condition that it continues to rise maintaining its existing speed of the last 20 years, it is presumed that international immigrant population will reach 405 million people in 2050 (Turkish Republic Ministry of Internal Affairs Immigration Directorate General “2015 Turkey Immigration Report”, n.d.).

Being an indispensable part of all the norms of law; education, constitutes a piece of every individual’s social and cultural development. It is stated in the 26th item of Universal Declaration of Human Rights that all people hold the right of education. Besides, according to the 22nd item of International Refugee Convention, it is underlined clearly that the countries are accountable for providing basic education, higher education and vocational education rights for refugees sheltering in their land. To this end, it is condemned that “apart from basic education, educational process of refugees will be carried out to their advantage as much as possible through accepting their diplomas/certificates of graduation obtained abroad and by exempting them from any kind of tuition fee. Also, it will be made possible for refugees to have access to scholarship opportunities available (Gündüz, 2016).

Since 2011, Turkey, hosting around 3 million of them, has been carrying out numerous policies for Syrians about issues ranging from accommodation to employment, from health to education.

Owing to the fact that the war continues in Syria, for Syrians who are estimated to stay in Turkey for longer periods of time, long term policies are sought instead of short term ones.

Without doubt the most critical area considering the adaptation and integration of Syrians in Turkey as well as their individual and collective development is education. What is more, almost half of the Syrians in Turkey consists of children and teenagers. A longer term road map is required for education bearing in mind around 1 million of Syrians who are in need of education.

IMMIGRATION AND EDUCATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Immigration can be defined as changing places of people on account of social, economic, political or natural reasons. (Adıgüzel, 2016). In other words, immigration can be described as individuals or groups’ moving/emigration from one settlement to another place; to a country because of political, economic or social causes (TDK, n.d.).

Although it effects all individuals, children who are called passive immigrants are the most vulnerable group to immigration. Immigrants who have not received adequate and quality education experience significant economic problems in the destination country. This is why differences in the education levels of the societies of the countries receiving immigrants and the immigrants themselves profoundly affect both the immigrants and the countries to which they immigrate. Because it has been stated that children who are exposed to immigration and hence displaced have difficulties in complying with the
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