ANALYSIS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY
A Study of Out-of-Camp Refugees in Hatay, Kilis and Şanlıurfa

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SUPPORT TO LIFE / HAYATA DESTEK DERNEĞİ
www.hayatadestek.org/ www.supporttolife.org

Contact Person:
Sema Genel Karaosmanoglu
Director, Support to Life/Hayata Destek

Phone Number: +90 216 336 2262
Fax Number: +90 216 336 2925
sgenel@supporttolife.org

Mailing Address:
Katip Salih Sokak 48/1 Koşuyolu 34718 Istanbul, Turkey
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1. OVERVIEW

Turkey is hosting a large number of Syrian refugees since the beginning of the conflict on its neighbor’s soil. UNHCR reports 1,707,299 refugees in the region – Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and the Middle East. The number of registered refugee population has been increasing at a rate of approximately 27% since the beginning of 2013.

![Figure #1: Registered Syrian Refugees by Date, UNHCR](image)

In Turkey, 392,481 Syrians are now registered, of which 200,012 are settled in the 20 camps run by AFAD, the Disaster and Emergency Management Agency of Government of Turkey. 169,768 are outside the camps, and another 22,701 are awaiting registration. These figures don’t take into account the refugees who have yet to register with the authorities. A large number of Syrian refugees are also found outside the camps, either with host families or in rented housing facilities, mostly in the border villages and cities of Hatay, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, and Gaziantep, but now increasingly moving deeper inside Turkey. There is no precise data on the number of unregistered Syrian refugees staying out of the camps. Unconfirmed sources of information estimate this figure to be well over 300,000. In terms of their legal status, Syrians have been given “temporary protection” by the Turkish government, the details of which remain ambiguous.

The main reasons for staying outside the camps by interviewed Syrian refugees are reported as the bad conditions in the camps, detailed as overcrowdedness/lack of privacy, poor quality infrastructure, security risks and restricted mobility. Indeed, many of the refugees choose to settle near the border areas to be able to go back and forth between Turkey and Syria for commercial activities or for visiting family members.

Recent assessments show that as stay-time in Turkey becomes longer and as the violence escalates, fewer refugee families feel the need to go in and out. Similarly, fewer Syrians live with their relatives in host families. When coupled with rents becoming higher in the border areas, Syrian families are observed to move inland into other provinces, with more and more families coming to Istanbul to settle. While searching for cheaper rents, one of the main triggers for moving to cities outside the border areas is the search of jobs. This is the case as Syrian refugee families start depleting their savings and resources.

Support to Life (STL) has recently been conducting assessments with Syrian refugees in Istanbul and unconfirmed sources indicate a figure of 80,000 Syrians currently settled in Istanbul. When put together, the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey could be as high as 600,000.
2. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a door-to-door interview of a total of 3,602 Syrian families living in Hatay, Kilis and Şanlıurfa provinces. Even though the survey was undertaken with each family, STL came across up to four Syrian families living together, making up a much larger household under one roof.

STL assessment team has met with each one of these families at their homes, between mid-April and mid-June 2013. During the visit, a two-page questionnaire (see Appendix) as filled in collecting data on the profile of the family, their shelter and hygiene conditions, education services being benefitted from, and an understanding of their coping mechanisms.

The 3,602 Syrian families were reached in the following settlements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVINCE / District</th>
<th>Number of HHs</th>
<th>Number of individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HATAY</td>
<td>1,885</td>
<td>10,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirikhan</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reyhanlı</td>
<td>852</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KILIS</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>3,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŞANLIURFA</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>8,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akçakale</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceylanpinar</td>
<td>421</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viranşehir</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,602</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,615</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional data have been collected in Şanlıurfa province about the family’s hometown, people with disabilities and age of the children. These data are presented in this report, although it doesn’t enable comparison with Hatay and Kilis.

3. FAMILY PROFILE

The typical profile of the family’s head is a man between the ages of **41 and 60 years**. Female headed households represent between 8% and 12% of the families interviewed.
The gender division among the 22,615 individuals composing the families is well balanced. It is important to note that the proportion of Syrian children under legal working age, which is 16 years of age in Turkey, is very high: 44% in Hatay and Kilis, and 39% in Şanlıurfa. This represents a grave challenge in terms of education continuity, as well as a risk for the employment of child labor, which is common among the lowest income families in Turkey, especially for families living in this part of the country.
In Şanlıurfa province, the families have been questioned about the age of their children. Looking at the breakdown of children under 16 years of age, it shows that the population is very young, with 27% of children under 3 years of age, and 44% of children under the age of 5.

If we take a look at the different kind of dependency affecting the individuals composing the families, we can calculate the labor force of the refugee population. The labor force includes everyone who is at the age and capacity to work, rather than having a job. This is an important factor for the families, because work represents a source of income. The figures are quite similar in the three provinces. Children under 16 years of age represent between 39% and 44% of the family's population, pregnant and lactating women represent 6-7%. Families with elderly and disabled persons represent 6% and 7% in Hatay and Şanlıurfa respectively, with a slightly lower rate in Kilis, with 3%.
Thus, the Syrian labor force represents 44% to 48% of the family’s population. We could not rely on the number of “working able” reported by the families during the interviews, because most of the time, women were automatically excluded from this category, though they are in capacity to work.

In Şanlıurfa Province, additional research has been conducted on persons with disabilities – PWDs. Of the 5,158 people interviewed in this province, 97 have been declared with disability, dispatched in 95 families. Being in charge of a person with disability affects the whole family. A PWD represents a workforce loss for the family, and is a person who needs particular attention and medical care, which has a cost. In Şanlıurfa, 10% of the families take care of a PWD.

It is important to note that 24% of PWDs are under the age of 16, many of whom have been affected by the war. At least 29% of disability among the Syrian population in Şanlıurfa is linked to old age.
Most of the families settled in Şanlıurfa province come originally from:
- Aleppo, in northwestern Syria, largest city of the country
- Al-Hasakah, capital of Al-Hasakah Governorate, far north-east corner of Syria
- Ar-Raqqa, north central Syria
- Ras Al-ayn, city of Al-Hasakah Governorate, with a border crossing to Ceylanpınar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>% of HH</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>% of HH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ar-Raqqa</td>
<td>15,2%</td>
<td>Idlib</td>
<td>0,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amuda</td>
<td>0,2%</td>
<td>Qamishli</td>
<td>1,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deir ez-Zor</td>
<td>1,6%</td>
<td>Latakia</td>
<td>0,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>9,9%</td>
<td>Ras Al-ayn</td>
<td>42,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hama</td>
<td>0,1%</td>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>3,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Hasakah</td>
<td>11,8%</td>
<td>Tel abyad</td>
<td>0,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humus</td>
<td>0,8%</td>
<td>N/S</td>
<td>12,6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure #10: Hometown (Şanlıurfa)

4. SHELTER CONDITIONS

Syrian refugees have usually found shelter in an individual accommodation, where they occupy only a single room. Sometimes, several families share a flat or an apartment. Knowing that the majority of the families comprise between 5 and 8 people, sometimes more, these shelter conditions imply lack of privacy and personal space. Refugees don’t have much choice. This is due to economic reasons – rack-rent, low incomes – and to lack of infrastructural capacities of the districts to digest the overflow of refugees. There is just insufficient number of housing facilities available to be rented in the region.

Families who are not living in a single room and are unable to find an empty apartment flat or house oftentimes occupy makeshift shelters, abandoned or unfinished constructions, or tents and barns.

Figure #11: Shelter specifications
The figures above are striking in that they indicate a shift of fewer Syrians living with host families, while these figures indicated 22% of Syrian households living with their friends and relatives, this rate has gone down to 0.5-4%. This is also an indication of host communities having become weary of hosting their Syrian guests, while Syrians have realized the need to move out to rented flats, making it even more critical and urgent for them to start earning an income for their families.

While the average size of a Syrian family is 5.6 people in Hatay and Kilis, with a maximum observed household size of 18 people, the rate is much higher in Şanlıurfa. The average family's size is 8.3 people, with a maximum observed of 41 individuals per household. Most of the households with over 25 family members appear to live in collective shelters, which has turned out to a rate of 14% of all Syrians interviewed in Şanlıurfa.

Although the shelter conditions of the refugees are rudimentary outside the camps, 97-99% of the Syrian families in Hatay and Kilis, and 69% of families in Şanlıurfa pay rent with their meager incomes. Compared to the situation in the beginning of the year, almost all Syrian households, especially in Hatay and Kilis, now occupy accommodation in rented housing facilities. Only a few are still hosted by relatives or the local community, or continue to live in collective shelters, while a larger number of families in Şanlıurfa are supported by the host community.
5. EDUCATION

The situation of Syrian refugee children in Turkey is alarming. The rate of Syrian children attending an educational program is low, despite the serious repercussions of extended periods of time away from schooling.

In Hatay, only 14% of the children interviewed reported attending an educational program, which means approximately 1 child in 7. In Kilis, 20% of the children are following an educational program, which makes 1 child in 5. In Şanlıurfa, almost none of the school-aged Syrian children get the chance to go to school or attend extracurricular activities.

Also a small minority of them participate in other extracurricular activities, which means that children have basically no occupation, no way to get instructed and, no recreative activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HATAY</th>
<th>KİLİS</th>
<th>ŞANLIURFA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of HH</td>
<td>Number of HH</td>
<td>% of HH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children attending an educational program</td>
<td>13,6%</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>19,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children NOT attending an educational program</td>
<td>86,4%</td>
<td>1349</td>
<td>80,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation to extracurricular activities</td>
<td>9,4%</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO participation to extracurricular activities</td>
<td>90,5%</td>
<td>1412</td>
<td>99,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/S</td>
<td>0,1%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. HYGIENE

The majority of the families have reported that they can afford the purchase of hygiene products, but still too many Syrians are unable to do so, especially in Kilis – 43% – and might face hygiene and sanitation problems.

![Figure #16: Access to hygiene products](image)

7. COPING MECHANISMS

The coping mechanisms of the Syrian families refer to their capacity to adapt themselves to a new situation, new life, and to overcome stressful situations and potential trauma. Fleeing their homes due to conflict, abandoning their land, property and goods, and resettling in a foreign country are all potentially traumatic experience for the Syrians who have become refugees in a foreign land.

Income is crucial for those refugees who have chosen to settle outside the camps, to cover the daily expenses of foodstuffs, accommodation, medicine, among many other needs. Syrian refugees receive support from a variety of sources, but cannot count only on solidarity from neighbors and friends. For some Syrian families, every single day is a fight for survival. Analyzing a family's sources of income helps STL to better understand the situation of these refugees and to provide an adequate response.

As STL is currently providing cash assistance to Syrian families through a system of electronic cards, it is necessary to further understand their food consumption patterns and needs. Did they change their food habit to cope with their new statute of refugee in Turkey? And how so?

7.1. Sources of income

Most of the Syrian families have access to more than one source of income. Diversity of income sources is a guarantee of security. The diversity of income sources among Syrian families settled in the different provinces is given in the figure below.
In Hatay and Kilis, income conditions for Syrian refugees are similar: the main sources of income are ‘savings’ and ‘borrowing’, what are far from being sustainable. Next in line are income from the selling of family assets, salaries, and support from the host community. Collecting salaries are a source of income for a relatively large portion of Syrians, especially for those in Şanlıurfa province. The labor force rate of 48% is similar to those in Hatay and Kilis provinces, but it seems that family members encounter fewer barriers to find work in Şanlıurfa, while a smaller portion have indicated collecting their salaries from their jobs back home. Finally, around 1% of Syrian families in all three provinces reported having no source of income.

The finding that most Syrian refugees work in Şanlıurfa is verified by the figure below showing a higher percentage of families having a daily income in Şanlıurfa, which is 61% compared with 16% in Hatay and 30% in Kilis. Hatay is indeed the province where fewer people can rely on a daily income to cover their daily expenses, and where the average daily income is the lowest.

In Hatay province, average daily income, calculated among all interviewed families, amounts to 5.6 TL per day, compared with 14 TL, more than double in Kilis. In Şanlıurfa, it was not possible to calculate an average daily income, as many families have reported a range of income, without being specific. Nevertheless, there are clear differences among the three provinces as to the amount of average daily income earned by working Syrians. It is important to note that this is daily income per family. Considering the average size of 5.6 persons for Hatay and Kilis, the average daily income per capita represents actually a really small amount of money: 1 TL on average per day and per capita for Hatay, and 2.5 TL per day and per capita for Kilis province.
For confronting the difficulties encountered in Turkey, and especially the financial situation, one of the coping mechanisms are to adapt food consumption amounts.

On average, the number of meals taken per day is 3 for children and 2 for adults in Hatay and Kilis. In Şanlıurfa, adults also consume 3 meals a day on average, while 10 families, which is 1% of the total, stated having normal food consumption, like before. But 6.5% of the families stated skipping sometimes entire day without eating, what is much higher than in the other provinces. It shows that there is a disparity in living conditions among families living in Şanlıurfa.

**Figure #18: Daily income per family**
Changing food consumption consists mainly of purchasing less expensive foodstuffs, even if it is not the most preferred food, and to reduce the size of portions eaten. A family can combine several tactics to reduce its costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of meals/day</th>
<th>HATAY Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>KILIS Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>ŞANLIURFA Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,6%</td>
<td>1,4%</td>
<td>1,6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>69,1%</td>
<td>43,5%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>36,8%</td>
<td>31,8%</td>
<td>20,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>27,2%</td>
<td>49,2%</td>
<td>19,3%</td>
<td>58,9%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 3</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5,9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3,1%</td>
<td>0,8%</td>
<td>8,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/S</td>
<td>0,2%</td>
<td>0,2%</td>
<td>0,4%</td>
<td>3,2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure #19: Number of meals per day**

The figure below, showing the food groups consumed at least once in the last few days, confirms that Syrian refugees rely on cheap foodstuffs in order to save income for covering some of their other needs. The choice is to purchase essential yet nourishing and high-energy foodstuffs such as cereals, oil, vegetables, and sugar. The expensive foodstuffs such as meat are rarely eaten.
8. EXTERNAL SUPPORT

In Hatay and Kilis, the Municipality and Muhtars are very active, supporting the refugee population in different ways. In Hatay, 11% of the families benefited from the assistance provided local, national and international aid agencies. In Şanlıurfa, the refugee population has been receiving support mainly the Turkish Red Crescent, and Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı, the Social Welfare Foundation of the Directorate of Social Welfare Assistance under the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. The local authorities have been distributing food packages to Syrian refugees in Şanlıurfa.
Figure #22: Aid received by Syrian refugee

Figure #23: Sources of support
9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings presented in this report reflect how much the Syrian refugees settled outside of the camps are in need, and how any form of support is important. It reinforces the legitimacy of STL's interventions in the region, and points out the priority needs of the Syrian refugees.

There is a need for educational support for Syrian children. Children under 16 years old represent a high percentage of the Syrian refugee population, ranging from 39% to 44%. These children are of school age, but a few of them actually get the chance to continue their education, although in sub-standard conditions. The probability that these children are going to stay in Turkey for several more years is quite high and this new generation needs to receive an education now. This education should take into account the specific situation of Syrian children and the language barriers. Any external support for the continuation of formal education as well as extracurricular activities for the social, mental and physical development of Syrian children is crucial.

Moreover, adolescents need to be occupied with productive and creative pass-times in order to prevent risks of delinquent behavior, especially in the urban settings. Community Centers are thus necessary to provide various psychosocial activities for children and youth in order to give them the tools and means to express themselves, mobilize their networks and gain hope for the future. Intercultural dialogue and language courses are particularly important to encourage contact and interaction with the youth of the host communities.

In each of the three provinces, approximately 7% of Syrian women are pregnant or lactating. The findings in Şanlıurfa show that 27% of the children are between the ages of 0 and 3 years old. A program to support pregnant and lactating women is highly critical for the nutrition needs of babies and infants. Considering the lower rates of breastfeeding among Syrian women compared to Turkish women, role models can be created and Syrian women can be encourage to practice healthy breastfeeding. Activities to prevent malnutrition among Syrian babies and children would be highly beneficial.

The main sources of income for Syrian families, mainly borrowing, savings, and selling of family assets, are unsustainable and not sufficient. One of the main difficulties for the families is to generate income. Refugees are in need of more stable sources of income. Given the fact that most Syrian youth comprising the labor force are unemployed, it is crucial for them to be given the tools, such as language skills and vocational trainings, to be able to tap livelihood opportunities and to increase their employability capacity.

Daily income of Syrian families is low, or non-existent, especially in Hatay province. Support is needed for those families who have no source of income. The low daily incomes justify and highlight the necessity of food assistance and cash disbursement carried out by aid agencies including STL.

Findings show that supplementary support to food consumption is critical. Even though data show that most Syrian families eat regular meals, coping mechanisms adopted by the refugees in order to decrease their expenses, such as the purchasing of cheap foodstuffs and limiting portion sizes, might affect their dietary and nutritional intake in the long run. Nutritional advice would be needed, to complement food safety.
Shelter condition is a real concern. Rooms are overcrowded, causing privacy violations and sanitary problems. If this is due to infrastructural problems, there is not much to do, unless relocate the refugees in the camps or in other parts of the country. Otherwise, if this is due to economic reasons, as most of the families are trying to pay rents, will put stress on employability, which could have an impact, in the long-term, on shelter conditions.

Provision of hygiene kits would increase family access to hygiene products and improve the overall sanitary situation. Due to meager income levels, the purchase of hygiene products is not necessarily the priority of Syrian families. That’s why awareness raising on good hygiene practices would be a plus. Hygiene is essential for preventing spread of diseases and preserving personal dignity.
APPENDIX: HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Surveyor ____________________________
2. Date of Survey ______________________________
3. Village/Neighbourhood ______________________ District _________________________
4. Name of the head of the family ____________________________
5. Duration ____________________ Hometown _______________________
6. Address ___________________________________________________
7. Telephone number _________________________

8. Is the person benefiting from any other food security /hygiene programs?
   ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Does not know

9. If ‘Yes’, please specify ______________________

10. Is the family male or female-headed?
    ☐ Female-headed ☐ Male-headed ☐ Other

11. If ‘Other’, please specify: ______________________

12. How old is the person in charge of the family?
    ☐ 1. Less than 16  ☐ 2. Between 16 and 20
    ☐ 3. Between 21 and 30 ☐ 4. Between 31 and 40
    ☐ 5. Between 41 and 60 ☐ 6. Above 60

13-19. How many people are living in your family/household (under the same roof, eating the same meals)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Family Size</th>
<th>______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Female</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Male</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children under working age (16)</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dependent members (non-working, disabled, elder, etc)</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of working able people</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pregnant or lactating women</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. How much money comes into your family daily? ____________________

21. Can you tell what is the current source of income in your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Working family members □</th>
<th>6. Migration of family members □</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Savings ☐</td>
<td>7. Support from host community ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Financial support from relatives □</td>
<td>8. Support from aid agencies or government □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sell of family assets □</td>
<td>9. Other (Specify) □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Borrowing □</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. Can you tell me what is your current food consumption compared to Syria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Limit portion size</th>
<th>4. Reduce number of meals per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Rely on less expensive but less preferred food</td>
<td>5. Skip entire day (no meal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. If 'other', please specify ______________________

24. If 'other', please specify ______________________

25-26. Currently, how many meals are eaten per day by the following members of your family?

0: None, 1: One, 2: Two, 3: Three, 4: More than three, 5: Does not know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By adult members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. Can you check the following food group, when one of its components has been eaten at least once in the previous day?

- Cereals
- Roots and tubers
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Meat/poultry
- Eggs
- Milk and milk products
- Oil/fats
- Sugar
- Tubers
- Miscellaneous

28. Do you have any access to hygiene products?

- Yes
- No

29. Type of shelter of the family

- Collective
- Individual
- Relative
- Host community

30. The shelter...

- Rent being paid
- Free of charge
- Other ______________________

31. Shelter specifications (choose appropriate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Unfinished /abandoned construction</th>
<th>5. Apartment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Barn</td>
<td>6. Single room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tent</td>
<td>7. Other (Specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. Are the children following any educational program?

- Yes
- No

33. Are your children participating extracurricular activities outside the home?

- Yes
- No

Anything else you would like to add? __________________________________________