

# **JOB SEARCH GUIDE**

## FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN TURKEY



**SI.** Funded by  
**Swedish  
Institute**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

“Get me on Board” is a one-year project funded by the Swedish Institute within the Creative Force Programme. The project is a collaboration between Internationella Kvinnoföreningen (International Women’s Organization in Malmo, Sweden) and International Refugee Rights Association in Istanbul, Turkey.

The project has two aims: 1) to show the Syrian refugee women’s strength, challenges and needs during their job search process in Turkey through a short documentary and 2) to create this job search guide in order to increase their knowledge about job searching, work culture and work rights in Turkey.

The job search guide has been created with the information collected in interviews conducted with 25 Syrian refugee women and literature reviews. All participants are 20-55 years old and treated anonymously with fictitious names. They are reached through the IRRA’s network and its partner organizations. They are either currently working or have had work experiences. During the interviews, they shared

their experiences, challenges, and recommendations with the intent of creating awareness and motivation for other Syrian women during their job search in Turkey. The guide basically includes:

- Necessary information for the Syrian refugee women with and without a diploma, who would like to find employment in Turkey.
- Their life stories, experiences, and challenges during their job search.
- Information and tips about the Turkish labor market including CV preparation, vocational courses, and rights as an employee in Turkey.

The participants are currently trying to support themselves and their families despite all the difficulties such as discrimination and unstable labor conditions. The real-life stories in this guide will hopefully raise awareness about their challenges and show their strengths and determination in Turkey.

## 1. COMMON JOB CHANNELS

As all over the world, there are many different ways to find a job in Turkey. The following options are the most familiar and easiest ways to find a job:



### 1.1. NEWSPAPERS

Some employers are looking for employees through daily newspapers. Most of the job advertisements are for drivers, cooks or waiters. You do not need to have a higher education. Each newspaper has their own job advertisement pages. The job advertisements are Turkish, but easy to understand.



### 1.2. INTERNET

You can also look for job opportunities through the internet by checking the websites below. Most of the jobs may require a high school or higher education diploma. You make the applications online and you need a CV to submit your applications. Most popular websites are:

[www.kariyer.net](http://www.kariyer.net)

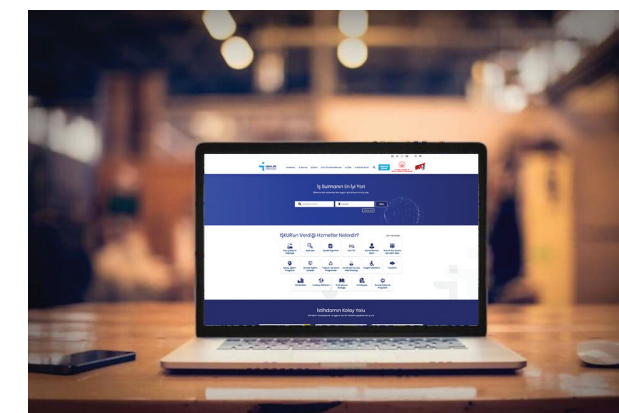
[www.yenibiris.com](http://www.yenibiris.com)

[www.gelbasla.com](http://www.gelbasla.com)

[www.tr.linkedin.com](http://www.tr.linkedin.com)

If you cannot find the right opportunities for yourself or you do not have high school diploma, you can follow the paths below:

### 1.3. İŞKUR



This organization is the Turkish Public Employment Agency. It belongs to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. You can follow the announcements and job postings by registering on their websites. The agency also carries out projects to employ people with Temporary Protection Identity Certificates. İŞKUR also organizes Vocational Training Courses. [www.iskur.gov.tr](http://www.iskur.gov.tr)

### 1.4. VISITING WORKPLACES

If you have some skills or experiences such as being a sales expert, hairdresser, waiter or cook, the best method is to introduce yourself by visiting workplaces and ask if they are recruiting. Workplaces put their job advertisements in their store window.

One of Syrian women, Aisha came to Turkey in 2012. She is a single mother of three children under 18 years old. She has never worked or gained a higher education in Syria. She found out active Facebook job groups and explained that she has been finding jobs with this method. She said that:

*“I woke up every morning and visited the workplaces regularly in the neighbourhood. I visited Syrian workplaces and Turkish workplaces. I have been working for 5 years. I found all my jobs like this. Currently, I work as a tea seller at an institution. I’ve been here for 2 years. I am satisfied with my job. Age 33.”*

Sidra, who has five children and takes care of her husband, knew needlework when she was in Syria. Although she had not worked in Syria, she found a job here. She said that:

*“Whenever I was looking for a job, I always went to Zeytinburnu. I visited places with job postings. I did beadwork and sewed. I’m currently working as a tailor at a store. Age 37”*



As another example, Ola was going to the university in Syria and she had never worked there. She was planning to complete her studies and become an engineer. She said that:

*"I was looking for a job by visiting workplaces from Aksaray to Taksim. I entered a hotel and said I'm looking for a job and they accepted me immediately. I have worked in the kitchen for two years. Age 35"*

### 1.5. NETWORKS

The participants told us that one of the best methods to find a job is to create networks and tell them about your capabilities and skills.

If you can't find a job through your circle of friends, you can go to non-governmental organizations working in the field of immigrants and refugees. You can inform them about your job search or send them an email as well.

Isra has a 9 year old child and lives with the parents of her husband. She needed to work to help her husband and cover expenses. She said that:

*"I told my friends that I was looking for a job. I had acquaintances. People were directing me to the employers. I have a child who goes to school. I have found all my jobs for 5 years by informing my acquaintances. Now, I regularly work as a cleaner at a school. I recommend people who are looking for a job to ask around their surroundings and tell them what they can do. Age 23"*

Aya is a single mother of three children under 12 years old. She does not speak Turkish and tries to support her family independently. She said that:

*"My husband passed away. I take care of my 3 children alone. I go to the Islamic memorial services and read the Quran and the divine. That's how I make my living. I told my Turkish and Syrian friends that I can read the Quran and chaunt beautifully. They find me those events. I ask everyone to ask their acquaintances. Age 32"*

Neriman is a young woman going to the university in Istanbul. She speaks Turkish fluently and she finds jobs through her networks. She explained that:

*"I study sociology at the university. I work as a Turkish and Arabic translator at an association. Maybe I wouldn't have found a job if there wasn't somebody that I know. When I was looking for a job, I actually consulted a friend. I told my new Turkish friends that I am looking for a job as an interpreter. One day a Turkish man called me and said they were looking for a translator. Age 22"*



### 1.6. SOCIAL MEDIA

Our research shows that many Syrian employers prefer to post jobs on Facebook groups, and WhatsApp groups. You can join WhatsApp groups and find out about active Facebook groups by asking your Syrian neighbours. One of the most effective ways to find a job is through ads on social media channels such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter.

Fatma has been working from home for four years and earning money to pay for household expenses. She mentioned:

*"My husband cannot work because of health issues. I have two children and I take care of my husband. I have been working from home for 4 years. I found all the jobs by following the Facebook postings. Age 38"*

Seyma is a single mother with two kids aged 10 and 12. She has been in Istanbul for 5 years. She explained how she found her current job:

*"I have joined WhatsApp groups I have heard about since I came. Messages were coming from the WhatsApp groups. I don't know anyone in those groups. They were telling me they found job opportunities for me. I am currently working at a school canteen. Age 32"*

### 2. IMPROVING YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

If you do not have enough skills or you would like to learn new skills, you can always participate in the vocational training courses in Turkey:

Vocational training courses provide the opportunity to enter a profession that appeals to you. It will be easier to find a job with the certificate you will receive from the course.

You can study at a university or take distance education from abroad.

### 3. STARTING UP A BUSINESS / COMPANY

If you have any skills that enable you to create your own business, you can start up your own business. This can be cooking and selling local foods, sewing, tailoring or hairdressing. One of the participants told us that she used to sew clothes for her children. As she needed to earn money in Turkey, she started up her own business of tailoring children's clothes. She said that:

*"I used to work as a tailor in Syria as a side job. I wasn't selling, but I sewed clothes for my relatives and family. When I came here, I requested a sewing machine from an association. Now I make a living by tailoring. Age 46"*

All you need to start your business is courage, enough capital, an accountant and to obtain a legal licence. You can also create an online sale-based business to make an income which has become common recently.



One of our participants, Rased is a single mother of three children who are at primary and high school. She used to study chemistry at a university in Syria. She must work to support her family and her children's education, although she does not speak Turkish. She explained how she gained a new profession:

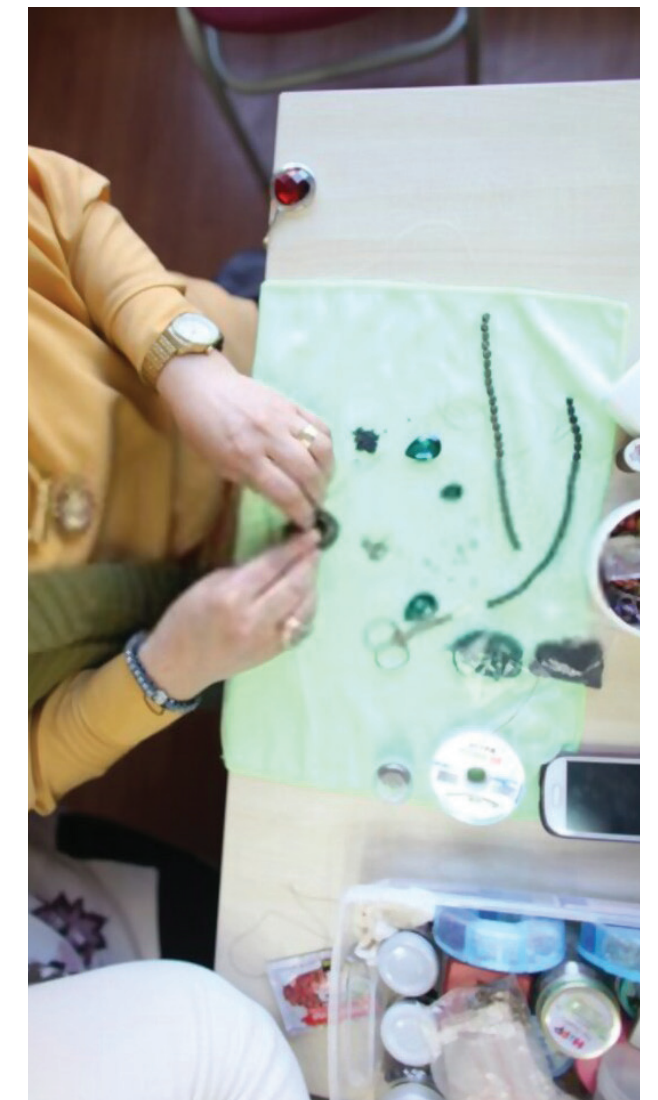
*"I was studying chemistry at a university in Syria. I have a good knowledge of English and Arabic. After I came here, I attended a distance course of Montessori teaching in America. After I got the certificate, I started teaching here at a kindergarten. Age 36"*

You can improve yourself and make it easier to find a job by attending courses for professions such as hairdressing, tailoring, construction, cooking, computer or accountancy.

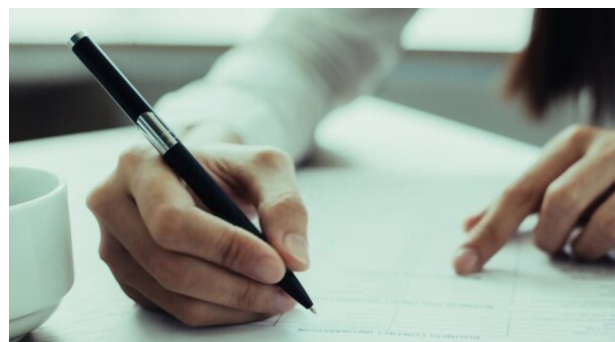
Follow the vocational training courses organized by both municipalities and non-governmental organizations. You can attend those courses for free or with a low cost. Please check out İSMEK (Art and Vocational Training Courses of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality), İŞKUR (Public Employment Agency), education centres and vocational training courses in other provinces. If you have enough budget, training courses with fees are also available in Turkey.

Another participant, Lutfiye witnessed the death of her husband and three children when their houses were bombed. She was studying Arab Literature at a university full of dreams for her career. She is now a single mother of a nine year old child. She completed vocational training despite her lack of Turkish knowledge. She shared her story by saying that:

*"I was studying Arabic language and literature in Syria. I lost my husband and children in the war. I came here with my child who has a walking disability due to the war. I had to work. I attended hairdressing courses and got a certificate. I have been a woman's hairdresser for the last two years. I have regular work, six days a week. Age 34"*







#### 4. CV PREPARATION

One of the most important steps when applying for a job is to prepare a "CV". A well-prepared CV assists greatly in gaining a job. There are CV drafts available on the internet.

Information to be found in the CV are:

##### Career Goal

A brief paragraph describing your suitability for the position applied, introducing yourself and your purpose for application

##### Personal Information

Name-surname and contact information (phone numbers and e-mail address)

##### Education Information

Reverse chronological order of the graduated programs, success documents and grade point average

##### Work / Internship Experience

Work and internship experiences, positions, responsibilities, jobs and achievements in general in reverse chronological order

##### Skills

Foreign language knowledge and computer program knowledge levels and certificates

##### Courses/ Certificates

Professional courses and training, certificates

##### Essential Tips:

Prepare your CV.

Keep it between 1-2 pages.

Avoid long paragraphs.

Refer to yourself in the first person.

Use an easy-to-read font such as "Times New Roman" or "Arial" with font size 11 or 12

Pay attention to spelling mistakes.

Follow chronological order.

Saime is one of the nurses who took part in this research. She suggested that a CV helps employers to better understand the job seeker's skills and competencies. She said that:

*"I graduated from a high school in Syria. I was a nurse. When I came here, I worked in workshops and factories. Then I prepared a CV for myself and gave it to all the polyclinics. One of them replied to me. I have been working at the polyclinic for a year. I recommend women to visit every proper workplace and give them their CV."*



#### 5. TIPS BEFORE JOB SEARCH

- Choose jobs carefully that suit your talents and skills.
- Feel free to show your competencies and skills.
- Don't give up on job seeking. Sooner or later, you will get a reply. Don't forget to follow up your applications.
- Go to the job interview on time with suitable clothes.

One of the participants, Sidra, who is a single mother of four children, was a nurse in Syria. She found her job by using these tips. She explained that

*"I came to Turkey five years ago. I have no husband; I have 4 children. I worked at 14 different workplaces in total. I never gave up. Every morning that I did not work, I was looking for a job. I applied for 100 places maybe. I have been working at a polyclinic for a year now. I am very happy. My advice to women is that they should not give up, they should continue. We have power and will surely find regular jobs for ourselves. Age 36"*

Working from home can also be an option for some jobs. You can discuss the details with the employer.

If you cannot work outside and need to stay home during the day, you can still work and earn money. Many workplaces and stores offer jobs that



might enable you to work from home such as in textiles. The best way to find these workplaces is to visit different districts and neighbourhoods.

Zeynep has been working from home since she came to Turkey in 2015. She is a single mother and she needs to stay home with her little children. She explained how she found her job below:

*"I have 6 children aged between 3-13. Since my husband disappeared in Syria, I must support my home, but I cannot work outside during the day. I visited the stores and wanted a job where I can work from home. I have been doing box folding and beadwork at home since I came. I go and pick them up from the shop and, when I deliver them, I receive my money. Age 34"*

Aya is 41 years old. She cannot work outside due to her illness and has small children like Zeynep. Therefore, she earns money while working at home. She said that:

*"My husband died in Syria. My kids are too small. I make a living at home by cooking stuffed vine leaves (Sarma) and baking cookies. I also sew towel edges. Age 41"*

#### 6. POTENTIAL CHALLENGES DURING A JOB SEARCH

In our interviews, the participants shared the challenges they faced during their job search. The most common challenges and solutions are listed below.

##### 6.1. AN OBSTACLE TO OVERCOME: LEARNING TURKISH

The participants told us that the main challenge was the language problem. They all expressed that if they knew Turkish, it would be easier to find a job. One of the participants, Hatice, who was a teacher in Syria recommended that:

*"I could not do my job because I did not speak Turkish. I am working at a workshop now. My first advice to women is to learn the language. Be sure to learn a language. Age 29"*

Learning the host country's language is not only necessary for your work life but also for your personal life. It is important to learn Turkish to be able to protect your rights, express yourself and to reach more job opportunities both in the short and long term.

You can communicate in your daily life much easier by learning Turkish; you can work with everyone, solve your problems without an interpreter and you can make your job applications on your own.

Zeynep and Beyyine, who speak Turkish fluently, emphasized the importance of learning Turkish for social relationships and getting their rights:

*"I was a literature teacher in Syria. You cannot defend your rights when you don't know the language. You cannot get an education. You cannot find a job properly. I learned the language first and then taught my children. When I encounter a problem, I solve it immediately. I react if they discriminate against me. I am currently the chairperson of an association. Age 51"*



*"It is absolutely necessary to learn the language. I can express myself now because I can speak Turkish. People can be afraid of me. When a woman's Turkish is weak, people mock her. I am a teacher at a school now. Age 31."*

You can attend Turkish courses offered by Public Education Centres, Municipalities and non-governmental organizations for free or with a small fee like Amine, who is a teacher in a high school in Turkey. She said that:

*"When I came here, I struggled because I couldn't interact with Turkish people. I have no husband; I have 2 children. I studied English in Syria at a university. 2 years later, I enrolled in a Turkish course. Although I worked 11 hours a day, I took the time to learn Turkish. Age 30"*

You can also work as an interpreter if you learn Turkish. Three of our participants were earning money by working at various NGOs. Aliye is one of the examples:

*"As soon as I came here, I learned Turkish. I am currently working as an interpreter. I make good money and thus do my own business. If you know the language, you will know your rights. Age 21"*

## 6.2. VALIDATION OF FOREIGN STUDIES AND DEGREE

If you have not brought your diploma with you, this may create difficulties in demonstrating your capabilities and proving your educational background. In such cases, you can convince your employer that you have relevant knowledge and work experience if you have worked before.

If you don't have a diploma equivalence in Turkey, you can receive the recognition and equivalence of your diploma by applying to Higher Education Institution. Detailed information can be found at [www.yok.gov.tr](http://www.yok.gov.tr)

## 6.3. PREJUDICES AND STEREOTYPES

As a foreigner or refugee, you may be exposed to prejudices and stereotypes during your job search. These might be revealed by questioning your knowledge, competencies, and your reliability. Remember that these prejudices are caused by lack of knowledge, unfamiliarity, and the impact of fake news.

Unfortunately, prejudices and stereotypes exist against foreigners all over the world. When you start working, you may encounter the same problems with your customers. You might need to be prepared against such a situation. It is always good to express yourself by pointing out that these prejudices are wrong. Of course, it is important to know Turkish in order to express yourself. Remem-



ber, one of the biggest causes of prejudices and stereotypes is a lack of communication among people.

We would like to share two participants' experiences who were exposed to prejudice. If you face similar prejudices, please do not give up on finding other opportunities as Muntehe and Nur did. They explained respectively that:

*"I wanted to work at a hairdresser, I knew that I was better skilled than a Turkish person. But they were saying things like 'You do the cleaning.' When a Turkish customer came, they were saying 'Do not speak, they will realize that you are Syrian.' Because sometimes, Turkish customers did not let me touch their hair if they realized that I am Syrian. Now, I found another place where I can work as myself. Age 34"*

*"I graduated from genetics and bioengineering in Turkey. I can speak English well. But, when the workplaces realize that I am Syrian, they cut the interview short. Sometimes, because of my appearance, they have prejudices against my capability. However, I believe that I will find a job that values my position. Age 23"*

## 6.4. LESS EXPERIENCE IS STILL AN EXPERIENCE!

We know that, in some countries, women are not allowed to work freely. They may also not be encouraged to work or prefer not to work. However, this does not indicate that you have no education, profession, ability or skills.

So do not hesitate to speak of your experiences and knowledge. Let us say you voluntarily helped children to study in your country but were not employed, this means you are still experienced in working with children. If you gave psychological support to your neighbours or did charity work in associations, you still have a profession and experience. Working is not just limited to earning money. Say what you can do and what skills and experiences you have.

If you only have a little experience, do not worry.

If you are sure that you can do the job and willing to do it, say this to the organization you are applying to. Showing that you are eager and open to learn will make you stand out as Fatima (34) and Munira (41) did:

*"I had never worked in Syria. However, I used to style hair nicely and my neighbours would come to my house to have their hair fixed on special occasions. As soon as I came to Turkey, I started to visit hairdressing salons. I showed them what I could do. I have worked in both Syrian and Turkish hairdressing salons for three years."*

*"I was good at sewing in Syria. Here I went to dowry stores and showed the products I made at home. I work from home now."*



## 7. LEGAL REGULATIONS FOR A WORK PERMIT IN TURKEY

If you are working in Turkey, you have the same rights as any other Turkish citizen regardless of your citizenship. We found out that many Syrian refugees in Turkey do not have enough knowledge about their rights at work and work permit requirements. This section will provide information about your rights as an employee in Turkey. For more information, check out the legislation provided below.

The right to work in Turkey, unlike the arrangements made for the Turkish citizens, is regulated by special provisions in separate legislation under the name of "foreigners".

The right to work for Syrians is specified in the following legal regulations:

- Law No. 4817 on Work Permits for Foreigners
- International Labor Law No. 6735
- Implementing Regulation of the Law on Work Permits of Foreigners
- Foreigners and International Protection Law (YUKK) No. 6458
- Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners Providing Temporary Protection.

## 7.1. WORK PERMITS

### 7.1.1. TYPES OF WORK PERMITS

There are three types of work permits:

- 1) Temporary Work Permit:** Work permit will be valid for a maximum of one year.
- 2) Permanent Work Permit:** After having a work permit for eight years, you can apply for a permanent work permit.
- 3) Independent Work Permit:** This work permit can be obtained under the conditions of:







In Turkey, there are no legal obstacles to obtaining work permits for foreigners. However, it might take time to complete the process of obtaining a work permit.

Those who have Temporary Protection Identity Document also have the right to apply for a work permit.

The provinces where foreigners are allowed to stay are taken as a basis in applications for work permits for those under temporary protection.

In addition, the restriction on the employment quota has also been determined: The number of foreigners with temporary protection to be granted a work permit cannot exceed ten percent of the number of Turkish citizens in a workplace.

There are jobs where only Turkish people are eligible. These works are:

1. Pharmacy (as per the Law on Pharmacists and Pharmacies)
2. Dentistry, Dentistry works, nursing. (In accordance with the Law on the Execution of science of medicine and medical practices)
3. Veterinary (in accordance with the Law on the Formation of the Chambers and the Works to be Carried out by the Association of Veterinarians)
4. Responsible directorate in private hospitals (in accordance with the Private Hospitals Law)

5. Lawyer (as per Lawyer Law)

6. Notary (pursuant to the Notary Law)

7. Private security officer (Article 10 of Law No. 5188 on Private Security Services)

8. In the territorial waters, fish, clams, mussels, sponges, pearls, coral exports, diving, seeker, pilotage, captain, chief engineer, clerkship, crew, etc. (In accordance with the Cabotage Law)

9. Customs brokerage (pursuant to article 227 of Customs Law No. 4458)

10. Tourist guidance (pursuant to Article 3 of the Tourist Guidance Professional Law No. 6326)

**The employer** must apply to obtain a work permit. Foreigners' work permit applications must be submitted through the Ministry of Labor and Social Security website ([www.csgeb.gov.tr](http://www.csgeb.gov.tr)) and original documents be sent to the Ministry personally or by post. For detailed information, you can access the website of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security at [www.csgeb.gov.tr](http://www.csgeb.gov.tr)

## 7.2. LABOR RIGHTS

Employment Law in Turkey is valid for all employees in Turkey regardless of your legal or citizenship status. When you become an employee anywhere, you will have the same labor rights as Turkish citizens share.



## 1) EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Written employment contracts with a period of one year or more are mandatory. If a written contract is not made, the employer is obliged to give a written document where all the working conditions including basic wage, working time and wage payment period is stated.

A trial period up to two months can be arranged.

## 2) WAGES

Your employer must pay the wage on the date stated in the contract

### Overtime pay

Weekly working hours can be up to a maximum of 45 hours.

The wage you will receive per hour of overtime is paid by increasing the amount of normal working wage per hour by fifty percent.

Your approval must be obtained to work overtime.

## 3) LEAVE and HOLIDAYS

### Weekly holiday leave

You have the right to rest for at least 24 hours one day of the week.

### Public holiday:

In principle you do not work on public holidays. If your employer wants you to work, you will get an additional daily payment based on your salary.

### Annual paid leave:

You can have annual paid leave after one year for 14 days.

### Others

According to the law, you can have paid leave for **3 days** in the event of your marriage or the death of your mother, father, spouse, sibling, child, or **5 days** if your spouse gives birth

## EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT TO ANNUL THE CONTRACT FOR JUST CAUSE

The employee is entitled to terminate the contract, whether for a definite or an indefinite period, **before its expiry** or **without having to observe the specified notice periods**, in the following cases.



### I. For reasons of health

The employee is entitled to terminate the contract, whether for a definite or an indefinite period, **before its expiry or without having to observe the specified notice periods**, in the following cases.

**a)** If the performance of the work stipulated in the contract endangers the employee's health or life for a reason which was impossible to foresee at the time the contract was agreed:

**b)** If the employer, his representative or another employee who is constantly near the employee and with whom he is in direct contact is suffering from an infectious disease or from a disease incompatible with the performance of his duties.

### II. For immoral, dishonorable or malicious conduct or other similar behavior;

**c)** If, when the contract was concluded, the employer misled the employee by stating the conditions of work incorrectly or by giving him false information or by making false statements concerning any essential point of the contract,

**d)** If the employer is guilty of any speech or action constituting an offense against the honor or reputation of the employee or a member of the employee's family, or if he harasses the employee sexually,

**e)** If the employer assaults or threatens the employee or a member of his family to commit an illegal action, or commits an offense against

the employee or a member of his family which is punishable by imprisonment, or levels serious and groundless accusations against the employee in matters affecting his honor,

**f)** If, in cases where the employee was sexually harassed by another employee or by third persons in the establishment, adequate measures were not taken although the employer was informed of such conduct,

**g)** If the employer fails to make out a wages account or to pay wages in conformity with the Labor Act and the terms of the contract,

**f)** If, in cases where wages have been fixed at a piece or task rate, the employer assigns the employee fewer pieces or a smaller task than was stipulated and fails to compensate this deficit by assigning him extra work on another day, or if he fails to implement the conditions of employment.

### III: Forced Issues

If there are compelling reasons to stop work for more than a week in your workplace.

### EMPLOYER'S RIGHT TO ANNUL THE CONTRACT FOR JUST CAUSE

The employer may terminate the contract, whether for a definite or indefinite period, before its expiry or without having to comply with the prescribed notice periods, in the following cases:



### I. For reasons of health

### II. For immoral, dishonourable or malicious conduct or other similar behavior:

**a)** If, when the contract was concluded, the employee misled the employer by falsely claiming to possess qualifications or to satisfy requirements which constitute an essential feature of the contract, or by giving false information or making false statements:

**b)** If the employee is guilty of any speech or action constituting an offense against the honor or dignity of the employer or a member of his family, or levels groundless accusations against the employer in matters affecting the latter's honor or dignity;

**c)** If the employee sexually harasses another employee of the employer;

**d)** If the employee assaults or threatens the employer, a member of his family or a fellow employee;

**e)** If the employee commits a dishonest act against the employer, such as a breach of trust, theft or disclosure of the employer's trade secrets;

**f)** If the employee commits an offense on the premises of the undertaking which is punishable with seven days' or more imprisonment without probation;

**g)** If, without the employer's permission or a good reason, the employee is absent from work for two consecutive days, or twice in one month on the working day following a rest day or on three working days in any month;

**h)** If the employee refuses, after being warned, to perform his duties;

**i)** If either wilfully or through gross negligence the employee imperils safety or damages machinery, equipment or other articles or materials in his care, whether these are the employer's property or not, and the damage cannot be offset by his thirty days' pay.

### PAYMENT IN LIEU OF NOTICE

Payment in lieu of notice is your right arising from the labor law. If you are going to be fired or if you are going to leave, you/the employer should be informed in advance. How long before the need to inform is determined by your working time.

If you have worked 0-6 months, you must be informed 2 weeks in advance, 4 weeks between 6-18 months, 8 weeks for 18-36 months and 8 weeks for jobs lasting more than 36 months.

If the notification period is not met, the person who has not complied must pay compensation amounting to the equivalent pay for the days not worked. The employer may terminate the employment contract by paying the wage for the notification period in advance.



## REDUNDANCY PAY

Redundancy pay is the amount to be paid to the employee after the employment contract expires. In the workplace, where one year is worked, a monthly wage is paid for each year.

When the contract is to be terminated:

- The employer is obliged to make the notice of termination in writing and state the reason clearly.
- The employer must take your defense against claims about you.

If your employment contract is terminated without reason or the reason is invalid, you can file a lawsuit in a labor court within one month and ask for a return to work.

The following does not constitute a valid reason for termination:

- a) Union membership or participation in union activities outside working hours or, with the consent of the employer, within working hours;

b) Representing a union in the workplace,

c) Filing of a complaint or participation in proceedings against an employer involving alleged violations of laws or regulations or recourse to competent administrative or judicial authorities;

d) Race, color, sex, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, etc.

## Working conditions if you give birth and breast-feeding leave

It is essential that you are not employed within a total of 16 weeks consisting of eight weeks before birth and eight weeks after birth.

After birth, the employee is given a total of one and a half hours of breast-feeding leave a day to breastfeed her children under one year old. The employee determines the time and duration of this period to be used. This period counts as working time.



## 8. TESTIMONIES THAT WE COULD BRING TO LIGHT

In this section, some of the participants' stories and experiences are shared. Each of them reflects their challenges and hopes in Turkey. They are real life stories on 'not giving up', strength and determination.

"I was a teacher in Syria. When I arrived in Turkey, I first worked in textiles. Then I got into cleaning houses. There was a Quran course that everyone went to. I started teaching theology students there. I started working in the field of education. I was working a lot in Syrian schools, but I was getting a low salary. Then I learned Turkish. I worked as a translator in a hospital. Then I worked as a volunteer interpreter for associations. I worked to educate disabled youths and orphans and make their prosthetic legs. Now I am the president of the X association. We support the education of orphan children."

**Aisha (27)** "At first, I was selling seasonal fruits and vegetables. Then I started to work at a factory in the sock industry. I had a lot of difficulties. There was a woman. That woman said to me, 'You are Syrian, go and do cleaning, don't take my job away.' The business owner fired me. Then I went to another factory. Yes, I am still working there. I have a uterine disease, but I have to take care of my child. I have been working since I came to the country. I work 6 days a week from 8 a.m.- 7 p.m."

**Lutfiye (34)** "I lost my husband and 3 children in the war. I live with my 9-year-old son who has a leg prosthesis. As I was walking towards my house with my child in Aleppo, a bomb fell right in front of us. A shrapnel piece hit me. I was in a hospital when I opened my eyes. I learned that my three children and my husband had died. They said my other child lost his leg and had been sent to Turkey. I identified the bodies of my children in 3 months and I crossed the Turkish border. I was studying Arabic language and literature in Syria. Now I had started to forget everything. The NGO, Alliance of International Doctors, made my son's prosthetic leg and I have been working for my child since I came to the country. I visited many workplaces to find a job. I worked as a dishwasher, I swept the stairs in the buildings, I cleaned many houses. I took a hairdressing course. Now, I work 6 days a week at a hairdressers for 12 hours a day and on holidays, I wipe the stairs of 3 apartments. My child goes to grade 5 at the school. He speaks Turkish very well. I have enrolled him in an English course. I also send him to a Quran course so that he does not forget Arabic."

**Sidra (32)** "I was often insulted. They always said to me, 'You, Syrians have come, you took everything from us.' Sometimes, nobody sits in the seat next to us on the bus. But I like to work. My child will be more knowledgeable if I work. If the mother is determined, the child takes her mother as a role

model and works with more determination. If I let go myself, my son will too. I must be strong so that my child will be strong. He wants to be a computer engineer. I will do everything for him."

**Aya (29)** "I studied psychology at Damascus University for 4 years. Psychology is a 5-year department so I left before I graduated. Here I started to study at X University again. I studied psychology and got a bachelor's degree. I worked continuously even while studying. I worked in schools for refugees. I was an English teacher, guidance teacher, psychologist assistant and activity teacher at the schools. I am currently taking Turkish courses at a university. I know English well."

**Muntehe (23)** "I want to work in clinical psychology in hospitals and clinics. I want to work especially for refugee children with special needs. I applied [clinical psychology] many times this year, but it didn't work. An identity card, a work permit and a reference are difficult to get."

**Salime (23)** "I have two children and I am living with my husband. My 9-year old daughter goes to primary school. The other one is 2 years old. I did not work in Syria. I have been looking for a job since we crossed the border. I asked everyone. They said to me 'You are Syrian, you can only do cleaning.' I left my phone number at the real estate agents so that if they had a vacancy they could call me. I was also working at home for the cleaning service. They gave me 80 TL while the actual price was normally 180 TL per day. But I got very tired. I was looking for a job on Facebook every day. My friends who knew Turkish were looking for a job on my behalf on websites. I found a cleaning job there. I've been working there for years."

**Elif (45)** "I am married and have no children. I came here 5 years ago. I was a dentist specializing in orthodontics in Syria. When I came here, I couldn't do my profession and I always looked for a job as an assistant in dental clinics. When I could not find a job, I started to give Arabic and English lessons. I learned Turkish. This year I have been giving private lessons and trying to get my diploma equivalence for a year."

**Nur (43)** "I have 4 children and I am married. I was a teacher in Syria. I came here 6 years ago. In the first year, I worked 11 hours a day at a factory for a low wage. I couldn't find another job. Then, for 4 years, I have worked at 2 different Syrian schools at the same time for a low wage. I was leaving home at 5.30 every morning and coming back home at 9 in the evening. The distance between my work and my home takes 2.5 hours because no one would rent us a house. In the meantime, I learned Turkish very well. I am working as an English Teacher at a school now. My advice to women is that they should never give up and learn Turkish."



## 9. CONCLUSION

We believe that this guide will contribute to an increased awareness and the breaking down of stereotypes in society. It will also shed light on different lives full of challenges, struggle, and determination. We hope that the information in this guide will ease the employment process for Syrian women and help them to know their rights as an employee. In addition, it will enable employers, public & private institutions, and the people to be aware of the refugee women's strength, challenges, needs and hopes in Turkey.





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