

Human interest story

Mersin, Turkey
September 2017

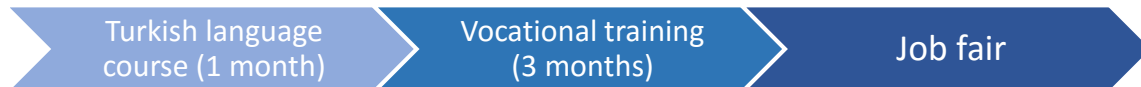
Originally Palestinian, Nour* fled Baghdad with her two children at the beginning of 2016 when armed groups started to physically threaten her family. Amira*, a mother of three, lost her husband in the battle of Mossul and left for Mersin in February 2017.

Settling in Turkey provided them with a sense of safety and security but both stay-at-home mothers are still dependent on a family member to provide for their household.

"I tried many times to apply for schools but they rejected my application...I do not have issue here except for the language barrier which is why I cannot get employed"

Nour, Mersin, September 2017

Lack of income generating opportunities and the language difference remain a great obstacle for refugees. While praising the Turkish people for their hospitality, both face daily struggles. Nour had several issues with her landlord and Amira recalls that *"my biggest hardship is registering my children in schools"*. Both women acknowledge the importance of learning Turkish and interacting with the local population. Nour stated that *"I want to get in touch with the Turkish people ... language is culture."*



Nour and Amira were introduced to the project through their relatives. They aspired to learn Turkish to facilitate their integration in their host country and improve their living conditions. The provision of stipends was also an important incentive for refugees that have to deal with depleted livelihoods.

Both women spoke highly of the Turkish course they attended for one month. Nour and Amira recorded that the teacher was very attentive to their needs and that the course helped them bond with other students in the same situation.

Learning the basics in Turkish helped them deal with important tasks; after taking the course, Nour stated: *"I was able to go and register my children and my brother's children at the school alone, without a translator"*.

"I was exhausted at the time and when this course happened I was really happy and considered it a step towards getting a job. I was completely broken because of the war and the stress endured but attending the course made me feel normal again and that I can go back to having a normal life"

Amira, Mersin, September 2017

The two women have now started attending vocational trainings which will support their integration and help them accessing employment opportunities.

Nour chose to learn about Internet programming and hopes it will help her get employed. Amira has the same objective *"I would love to work and provide for my children."*

* both names have been changed.