

# Empowering Syrian Girls

## Summary;

Our project is aimed for empowerment of Syrian adolescent girls at ages 12-18 years, to build up knowledge and skills for self-protection from violence, sexual abuse, early marriage and early sexuality and awareness about their bodies, women rights and health rights.

The project will reach 40 Syrian adolescent girls by providing 6 interactive workshops addressing the young girls on empowerment by 5 Syrian women who will get ToT by Mavi Kalem trainers.

The workshop topics are:

1. What is happening in our bodies, development, change and self-care
2. Physiological and Psychological health
3. Gender roles and biological gender, what is the difference?
4. What is healthy sexuality and early sexuality related issues
5. What is violence and prevention methods
6. What is abuse, and prevention methods

Each workshop will take 3 hours, total 18 hours of interactive training and learning. We will work in 5 groups of 8 girls reaching up to 40 girls. Each workshop will be supported by leaflets on related topics which are prepared by the active participation of young girls in the workshops.

Indirectly; girls' messages will reach 1000 Syrian women and girls by distributing the leaflets within collaboration related NGOs who are working with Syrian refugees.

Project duration is 12 months.

## Project area and its background:

Fener and Balat, an area located on the seaside of the historic Golden Horn on the European side and centre of Istanbul, where Greeks, Turks, Jews, and Armenians once lived for centuries in harmony. Houses and lives were crowded into narrow, meandering streets. Clothes were shared with neighbors. Women washed down their yards with rose water--an area of Istanbul reminding us of the sea and its history. Besides starting nearly 50 years ago, many homes sat empty in Fener Balat after these earlier multi-ethnic inhabitants moved on. At this point a new population began arriving, immigrants from Turkey's East seeking a better life in the city. They came to Fener-Balat for the cheap and attractive housing.

The area houses Turks, Kurds, Romani, to a lesser extent Greeks and Armenians. In addition to all these, due to the conflict in Syria, many Syrians were moved to camps in Turkey but the rest moved into cities to settle down. This number is to be nearly around 330,000 in Istanbul and Fener-Balat is one of the areas that house most of those Syrian immigrants. The area receives non-stop migrations. Ethnic, religious and cultural differences, secluded lives, poverty and conservatism brings problems like; violence, discrimination, adaptation problems, lack of confidence, being drawn away from education, moving towards risky economic methods.

These new immigrants faced problems assimilating into the urban scene, both with their newly arrived companions as well as with the old population they found upon arrival. Customs were different, dialects were different. The social fabric frayed. The immigrants turned inward and tried to cope by themselves. Women kept to themselves and didn't leave the neighborhood. Many families were illiterate and had far too many children to be able to provide for. Young girls affected all this living conditions negatively. They stayed at home to care for their siblings and help mothers. Some of them are working for increasing family income and some of them are married off in early age.

Still, the young girls of Balat-Fatih have hope for their future and believe they can have a better life with a small support. Help us to support them.

### **Is this a new activity or part of an existing project?**

'The Empowering Young Girls' project was implemented by Mavi Kalem between December 2015 to February 2016, funded by CANADA FUND FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES addressing national young girls. The empowerment of young girls' project has reached directly 32 young girls, indirectly more than 750 women and young girls. The training modules and brochures were prepared and the training team was formed. At the end of the project, some NGOs working with youth, private schools and the women's studies units of municipalities asked for the implementation of the project in their institutions and/or regions and for the supply of brochures created as the outcome. In order to reach more young girls with these comprehensive workshops we applied to the IWI fund and the proposal for re-activating the project for national girls is approved by them. We could not help but noticing the great need for Syrian girls at this age who are mostly staying at home, not going to school for safety considerations of their families waiting for almost their only destiny of getting married at a very early age even in some cases at the age of 12. This project proposed for Global Giving is the adaptation of the empowering young girls' project to Syrian girls' language, needs, and culture and will help to build self-resilience. Three alternative components of the project are presented here which will be useful for the Syrian refugee young girls in the near future.

### **Why is this project important or urgent?**

The characteristic of this project is its gender-egalitarian approach from women's perspective. The project conveys information from women's perspective on increasing the prevalence of information on body and basic health rights, recognizing and reacting to violence and sexual abuse, and understanding the concept of gender, in order to empower young women.

In Turkey, gender-based risks that women may face from the moment they are born affect their chance of living, health, social identity, access to and use of equal rights, and access to education. Even if we make a short list of risks, we see conditions that fundamentally affect and change women's lives: forced marriages and child marriages, sexual relations and birth at early ages, violence against women, women killings upon the theme of "honor", sexual violence and assault, abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, prevention of education, difficulty in accessing and enjoying health rights, and many more. However, against these conditions we do not see a strong, rights-based women's movement. The most important reason for this lack is that most women do not have a gender equality perspective and their perception of themselves may support the reproduction of gender inequality.

The most important factors that nurture a perception of inequality are a woman's presuppositions on her body, health and the social attitudes and behavior that she experiences. Lack of knowledge on such issues also supports the situation, which in turn become one of the major obstacles to women's awareness and claim on their own rights.

The knowledge that women need, however, is not sufficient on its own; what would make a difference in women towards gaining gender equality is a spread of knowledge through "women's perspective". As an example, if the information given to women on their own health and body is limited to fertility and reduced to healthy motherhood, this would never be the same as giving information to women with a perspective that all her "different" conditions including fertility are her basic rights.

Our project is basically designed to change women's perception of themselves, and to support them imagine and construct themselves as equal individuals from early stages (puberty-youth) in life.

The Syrian refugee women and girls are at the bottom of gender inequality since they are refugees and deprived of their previous standards. As a result they become sufferers and they have to face early forced marriages, marriages against payment, all kinds of abuse, prostitution, rape, unofficial co-wife and so on. The problems they experience are more intense.

## **What is the problem?**

Struggling with the new challenging circumstances that Syrian families are facing in the hosting country, Syrian young girls often contribute to their families' coping mechanisms by giving care for siblings, elderly, disabled family members, helping mother in daily routine, working, if ever, in low paid jobs before forcibly agreeing arranged marriages at incredibly early ages even at 12 years old. Syrian girls between the ages of 12 to 18 often stay in their household, do not blend in the new society or discover alternative ways for resilience. They find themselves growing up in the close circle of their own society, afraid of getting out, lose hope for attending the school ever again, burdened with domestic labor, consequently lose faith for a better future entirely and end up with the conclusion of breaking the circle by not following their mother's gender stereotypic path is impossible.

## **How will this project solve the problem?**

Empowerment of Syrian adolescent girls via young Syrian women mentorship will increase the girls' knowledge and awareness on gender inequality, stereotypical roles in the society causing women girls' deprivation, and on the health rights, and rights of women and girls, acceptance of their body as it is and welcoming the changes of puberty, growing into women's physiology, will learn interactively how to defend and protect themselves against violence and sexual abuse, and will be aware of the consequences of early marriage and early pregnancy on their growth. Young, educated and dedicated women will receive capacity building in these subjects, and will play an exemplary role in the girls' life to build insights for same gender role models. With the increased knowledge and awareness on prevention mechanisms and methods against the violence and abuse will help the girls grow stronger and less vulnerable to such risks that they can build confidence and their families will be less hesitant for letting their girls to get out of their close circle.

The project will reach 40 Syrian adolescent girls directly, 1000 Syrian girls and women indirectly. The project consisted of 6 interactive workshops with young girls on empowerment.

### ***Our Bodies Ourselves workshop series themes;***

1. What is happening in our bodies, development, change and self-care
2. Physiological and Psychological health
3. Gender roles and biological gender, what is the difference?
4. What is healthy sexuality and early sexuality issues
5. What is violence and prevention methods
6. What is abuse, prevention methods

### **Potential Long-Term Impact**

- Participating young girls will have gender equality from women's perspective.
- They will start to perceive themselves as individuals and to have positive self images.
- They will have increased knowledge and awareness on issues of violence, abuse, their bodies, development, healthy sex and general health issues.
- Strengthened women solidarity among Syrian community.
- Beneficiaries' messages will reach 1000 Syrian women and girls by brochure distribution within collaboration NGOs who are working with Syrian refugees.

**Project Goals:**

- Improving the beneficiaries' awareness about their bodies and women rights
- Improving the beneficiaries' awareness against violence, abuse and early marriage risks.
- Improving their awareness on issues of discrimination, guiding them to removing the habits and factors in their life that lead to discrimination.
- Supporting their development to living in the City.
- Encouraging the girls' development of self-confidence.
- Strengthened women solidarity among Syrian community.

**Project Activities:**

- Focus group with Syrian girls.
- Adaptation of training modules to Syrian language and culture
- Translation training modules (Turkish to Arabic)
- Messages are transferred to girls by Syrian young women
- Empowering workshops with Syrian girls

**Project Budget:**

Within GG campaign;

- Project donation will reach to 16.740 USD; we will implement 1<sup>st</sup> Section of project.
- Project donation will increase every 38.900 USD after first section; we will create and implement each workshop group.

<b>EMPOWERING SYRIAN GIRLS PROJECT BUDGET</b>							<b>1st component Cost (4 months)</b>	<b>2nd component cost (8 months)</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>PROJECT STAFF</b>	<b>person</b>	<b>time/month</b>	<b>cost /USD</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>\$17,400.00</b>	<b>cultural adaptation and translation</b>	<b>workshops, 5 series @six workshops</b>
1	Program director % 10 time	1	12	300	3600		\$1,200.00	\$2,400.00
2	project coordinator % 60 time	1	12	900	10800		\$3,600.00	\$7,200.00
3	finance director % 10 time	1	12	250	3000		\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
<b>B</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>							
<b>B.a</b>	<b>Cultural adaptation and translation</b>	<b>person</b>	<b>month</b>	<b>cost /USD</b>		<b>\$8,240.00</b>		
1	communication expert % 40	1	3	750	2250		\$2,250.00	
2	advisors /psychologist, MC % 30	2	3	300	1800		\$1,800.00	
3	social worker % 60 time	1	2	720	1440		\$1,440.00	
4	translation (Arabic – Turkish - English) % 50	1	3	750	2250		\$2,250.00	
			<b>unit/day</b>				\$0.00	
5	TOT for 5 Syrian women (stationery +refreshment + participants)		5	100	500		\$500.00	
<b>B.b</b>	<b>empowering workshops for Syrian girls</b>	<b>unit</b>	<b>times</b>	<b>cost /USD</b>		<b>\$22,200.00</b>		
1	rent for classroom	1	30	20	600			\$600.00
2	stationary	1	30	10	300			\$300.00
3	interactive training materials	1	30	20	600			\$600.00
4	brochures (translation + design + publishing)	1000	6	1	6000			\$6,000.00
		<b>person</b>	<b>times</b>	<b>cost /USD</b>				
5	motivation gifts (for each workshop X 8 girls)	8	30	10	2400			\$2,400.00
6	transportation (for 8 girls end 2 Syrian trainer)	10	30	3	900			\$900.00

7	Syrian women trainers	2	30	150	9000			\$9,000.00
8	field worker (1 Syrian, 1 Turkish women)	2	80	15	2400			\$2,400.00
<b>C</b>	<b>PROJECT EQUIPMENT AND GENERAL EXPENCES</b>	<b>unit</b>	<b>time</b>	<b>cost /USD</b>		<b>\$6,300.00</b>		
1	note book computer	1	1	600	600		\$300.00	\$300.00
2	offices expenses (communication/electricity etc)	1	12	75	900		\$300.00	\$600.00
3	assistant staff (cleaner/secretary/administration officer/IT staff etc)	1	12	400	4800		\$1,600.00	\$3,200.00
<b>D</b>	<b>Independent Financial Audit</b>	1	1	1500	1500	<b>\$1,500.00</b>	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
	<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>				<b>55640</b>	<b>\$55,640.00</b>	<b>\$16,740.00</b>	<b>\$38,900.00</b>

Empowering Syrian Girls Project time plan												
activities	1st month	2nd month	3rd month	4th month	5th month	6th month	7th month	8th month	9h month	10th month	11th month	12th month
Focus group with Syrian girls (coordination fee included)	x											
Adaptation of training modules to Arabic culture		x	x									
Translation training modules (Turkish to Arabic)			x	x								
TOT for Syrian women			x	x								
Workshop implementation (trainer cost, rent of classroom, transportation and coordination costs included) (1 group girl will join 6 workshops)					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Motivational gifts (sanitary pad, hand cream, hygiene materials etc.) (5 workshop groups / each group will consist of 8 girls)				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Creating brochures and distribution (translation & designing& publishing included)					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
project reports			x			x			x			x