

MAKESHIFT LIVES

THE STATE OF

ARMENIAN-CITIZEN

MIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

LIVING IN ISTANBUL

HRANT DINK FOUNDATION

Hrant Dink Foundation was established after the assassination of Hrant Dink in front of his newspaper Agos on 19 January 2007, in order to avoid similar pains and to continue Hrant Dink's legacy, his language and heart, and his dream of a world that is more free and just. Democracy and human rights for everyone regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural origin or gender is the Foundation's main principle. The Foundation works for a Turkey and a world where freedom of expression is limitless and all differences are allowed, lived, appreciated, multiplied and conscience outweighs the way we look at today and the past. As the Hrant Dink Foundation 'our cause worth living' is a future where a culture of dialogue, peace and empathy prevails.

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THE STATE OF ARMENIAN-CITIZEN MIGRANTS AND
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Berghof Foundation



**İstanbul Bilgi University
CENTER
FOR MIGRATION
RESEARCH**

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INTRODUCTION BY HRANT DINK FOUNDATION

Encouraging direct contact between Armenia and Turkey in all possible spheres has been one of the priority missions of the Hrant Dink Foundation since its establishment in 2007. The Foundation carries out activities to foster people-to-people contacts, to develop common areas of cooperation and to set up initiatives towards normalisation of relations between the two neighbouring countries.

Since 1993, the land border between Turkey and Armenia remains sealed, and the two countries do not have diplomatic relations. The protocols signed in 2009 for the establishment of diplomatic relations and opening up of the border were not ratified in both countries. Despite the stalled normalisation process and the lack of relations and contact at the political level, there is a vibrant climate of exchange and collaboration at the civil society level.

As the Hrant Dink Foundation, being inspired and empowered by the existing collaborations in civil society, in an effort to take the civil society dialogue to a next level towards public diplomacy, we convened the Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group in 2016 in cooperation with the Berghof Foundation.

The Dialogue Group - including members from Armenia and Turkey, with background in politics, academia and civil society - started its work towards preparing a list of confidence-building measures aiming at the normalisation of relations between the two neighbours. Having convened in Istanbul, Ankara and Yerevan for five times so far, the Group strongly identified its main focus as the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey. The Dialogue Group members have started their joint work by inviting subject-specific experts to analyse the lessons learned from previous initiatives in Armenia-Turkey normalisation including the protocol process as well as comparative confidence-building experiences from the region and around the world. The Group continued its work by mapping the existing obstacles in various fields as well as by having brainstorming sessions about the opportunities, with a view to exploring appropriate confidence-building measures.

The Group prioritized working on confidence-building measures that will address the issues people experience in the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Group thus decided to focus on possible steps to be taken for addressing the humanitarian issues faced by the Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey, the group which is being affected by the lack of relations the most. Before formulating any measure for recommendation, the Group felt the need to take a photograph of this community through scientific means and identify their needs and problems. This is how the idea of conducting the research you will read in this report has come to light.

As we have observed throughout the research process, Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey are facing various problems from accessing education and healthcare to employment. For instance, in case of an emergency, there is no official body that has the mandate to provide direct service/assistance to Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey. As we came to learn during the field work, migrants whose family members pass away in Turkey are experiencing problems while registering their death, obtaining death certificate and transferring funerals from Turkey to Armenia. In another case we have encountered, an Armenian-citizen woman ended up in a public hospital in Turkey suffering from memory loss. As she did not have any ID, her identity and nationality could only be established through her fingerprint. The public hospital in Turkey could not identify any official body either in Turkey or Armenia to complete the procedures needed for her treatment and to seek support.

We do hope that this report compiling the findings of the research will raise awareness about the needs of Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey who continue their lives under fragile circumstances in the absence of consular relations between the two countries. We do also wish that this study will contribute to possible joint steps and projects to be developed by both countries for addressing the humanitarian issues they face in their day-to-day lives.

The Dialogue Group will continue its work in an effort to encourage tangible steps that will contribute to the addressing of issues featured in this report. Building on the findings of the report, the Group will work on various measures that can be developed through shared wisdom, such as studying the legal aspect of the subject and exploring possibilities for the establishment of support mechanisms that will engage subject-experts from both countries.

On this occasion, we would like to express our gratitude to Istanbul Bilgi University Centre for Migration Research for their meticulous work and due diligence; to all the Armenian-citizen adults and children for sharing their stories with us through focus groups, interviews and questionnaires; to the Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group for prioritizing this understudied subject and for their close follow-up and valuable input in all stages of the research.

ASAF SAVAŞ AKAT

Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group member
Professor of Economics

This study on the state of Armenian-citizen migrants and their children living in Istanbul was commissioned by the Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group, which was first convened by the Hrant Dink Foundation in 2016. As members of the Dialogue Group, we wanted to focus on the humanitarian problems that citizens of the two neighbouring countries face as residents of the other in the absence of formal political relations, dialogue, and consular representation between their two countries. As Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey are the larger of the two groups, we believe that efforts to understand their needs and problems can help lay the groundwork for reciprocal steps towards addressing these problems and towards rebuilding confidence and resuming dialogue between the two neighbours.

During the Dialogue Group's first meeting in Turkey, we visited Armenian-citizen children who were taking informal classes at an Armenian church in Gedikpaşa. This visit allowed us to observe firsthand some of the issues these children face. We met Armenian-citizen children born in Turkey who do not have any state-issued identity documents and who are subject to visa-overstay fines in Turkey. We also met families who could not renew their expired passports or obtain passports or other identification for their children because of the lack of consular relations between Armenia and Turkey and the absence of a consular representation they can apply in Istanbul. This makes the situation of Armenian-citizen migrants unique among the various economic-migrant groups who came to Turkey after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is difficult to find another similar case in the world, where countries have generally been able to find solutions that allow them to directly serve their citizens abroad even in times of war and tension.

Having witnessed this situation, we felt the need to 'take a picture' of this group, the members of which have distinct needs due to their lack of access to consular services. In order to accurately identify the profile, needs, and problems of this group, we approached Istanbul Bilgi University's Centre for Migration Research, a prestigious academic institution with extensive expertise in working with vulnerable groups and children. The result is the study before you, the first study on

the topic conducted by an academic institution and the first to focus on the needs of children. For the study, the research team reached out to all Armenian-citizen children aged 8 and above currently attending school in Istanbul, either as guest students at Armenian minority schools attached to the Turkish Ministry of National Education or as informal students following the classes organised at Gedikpaşa.

This report contains the full findings of this study. To summarise its main findings, the biggest problems faced by Armenian-citizen migrants and their children living in Istanbul relate to the lack of access to consular services, the difficulties they face in routine bureaucratic procedures, and problems in the spheres of education and health. According to the findings of the research, one in two Armenian-citizen children who was born in Turkey does not have an identity document. Armenia-citizen children going to schools in Istanbul are not granted diplomas and are thus unable to continue their education after high school. Adult migrants have problems accessing health-care and are forced in effect to become their own doctors.

Even the smallest step taken by the two neighbouring countries to address the humanitarian problems featured in this report will be of great symbolic importance and stands to contribute significantly towards a solution. Both governments have a number of opportunities they can explore and support mechanisms they can put in place to this end, and the fact that Turkey has its own Armenian community promises to simplify the implementation of any such measures.

For instance, after the media covered the state of the children at Gedikpaşa for the first time, as a goodwill gesture, Turkey amended its Regulation on Private Educational Institutions in 2012 to allow Armenia-citizen migrants to attend Armenian minority schools in Istanbul as guest students. This has been a giant step forward that has kept children off the street and given them a chance to continue their education. Likewise, the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science has decided to recognise the informal transcripts issued to Armenian-citizen children at Armenian schools in Istanbul and to allow these children to take exams in Armenia so that they can continue their education in Armenia and ultimately earn their diplomas.

Any future step taken in this direction – such as granting Armenian-citizen guest students in Turkey the right to a diploma and establishing consular services in Istanbul to issue passports and IDs to Armenian-citizen residents there – will be of the utmost importance for these children, who see their future in Armenia as well as in Turkey, and prevent them from becoming a lost generation.

ARA GHAZARYAN

Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group member
Human Rights Lawyer

This study was initiated by the Armenia-Turkey Expert Dialogue Group in the framework of its confidence-building activities to normalise relations between the two neighbouring societies of Armenia and Turkey. The study is the first of its kind, one all the more significant given the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the tense relations between the governments of both states. The lack of official relations between the state bodies of Armenia and Turkey does not stop ordinary people on either side of the border from cooperating in many spheres – including the economy, trade, culture, history, education, research, and many other areas – in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. Even though the borders remain closed today, many people on both sides continue to dream of the day they will be able to visit their neighbours by walking through the nearby border checkpoint rather than taking a long third-country journey.

Turkey is known as a country of immigration, and the purpose of this research was to study the state of Armenian migrants in Turkey, their needs, and the risks they face in coming to work temporarily or to live permanently in the country. In this respect, the report has both a practical and an academic value. It may serve as a guide to policy-makers, lawyers, and ordinary citizens of Armenia who plan to make a short- or a long-term visit to Turkey. What makes Armenian migrants in Turkey different from other migrants is that they are especially exposed to uncertainty and to the general risks of migration, as the public authorities of Armenia have no direct access to them through consular bodies or other channels because of the lack of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey. The study covers a wide range of aspects of Armenian migrants' lives in Turkey, such as their living standards, immigration status, social environment, employment status, and health situation. This makes it a comprehensive study about the lives of a community of migrants in Istanbul.

The report concentrates on the children of migrants as well. They are often the group most vulnerable to the difficulties of migrant life, especially in cases where their basic needs and rights – such as access to education, health-care, and identi-

fication documents – are not respected. It covers findings for age groups 8 to 11 and 12 to 18 and provides assessments of different aspects of the life of minors, including school life, neighbourhood conditions, material conditions, and family relations.

This study is a valuable source of information for anyone who wants to understand the prospects of Armenian migrants in Turkey in the face of the lack of official ties between the host country and the country of origin of emigrants. It identifies situations and people that require attention either from Turkey or from Armenia, and I am sure that it will be of benefit to many. With that in mind, I would like to thank all those who have worked on this report and to assure them that their efforts have contributed to the even larger goal, still yet to come, of normalising relations between Armenia and Turkey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkey is known as a country of emigration, but over the past 25 years, it has also been examined and studied as a country of immigration and transit migration. As of 2018, Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees of any country in the world, with more than 3 million 500 thousand Syrians fleeing the civil war in Syria now living in Turkey under temporary-protection status. While Turkey is going through a process to achieve social integration of migrants, this report aims to present the findings of a study on the situation of migrants from Armenia in Istanbul based on questionnaires conducted with adults and with children aged 8 and older attending school in Istanbul, interviews with relevant stakeholders in the field, and focus-group discussions.

Statistical data about the number of Armenian citizens residing in Turkey is not openly available. There are however various assumptions about the possible number of Armenian migrants. Various sources, including officials and researchers, have at various times estimated this number to be as low as 5 or 10 thousand or as high as 70 thousand, with many claiming that the actual number is somewhere in between, around 15 to 20 thousand.

It is important to point out to both the specific character of the migration from Armenia to Turkey and the distinctive factors that make Armenian migrants more vulnerable. The events of 1915 and the debate on how to interpret these events; the closing of the land border between Armenia and Turkey, the cutting off of direct trade and the failure to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute that escalated into a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1992-1994, make the situation of Armenian migrants distinct from other migrant groups in Turkey. The lack of an Armenian embassy or consulate in Turkey means that Armenian citizens have no access to consular ser-

vices. The absence of diplomatic relations and the threat of a possible escalation in tensions between the two countries make the situation of migrants from Armenia uniquely vulnerable.

The presence of ethnically Armenian citizens of Turkey makes the situation of Armenian migrants more peculiar. Though migrants' relations with ethnically Armenian citizens of Turkey are not always reported to be positive, existing Armenian schools, hospitals, and churches in Turkey frequently help to solve the problems faced by Armenian citizen migrants.

METHODOLOGY

This research, conducted with migrants from Armenia living in Istanbul and their children aged 8 and older attending school in the city, encompasses both a questionnaire and a qualitative study including interviews and focus groups. All Armenian-citizen children at the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School aged 8 and older participated in the study, as did those who are guest students at the Armenian minority schools in Istanbul, which are attached to Turkey's Ministry of National Education (MoNE). An adult questionnaire was also conducted with the parents of some of these children. The questionnaire was also distributed to members of other households who were reached using the snowball method. This research is the first study on the subject to focus on both children and household data.

The household data generated from the questionnaires conducted with 153 adults (136 female; 17 male) provided us with information about 528 people. However, it should be noted that this sample may not be representative of all migrants from Armenia in Istanbul and that one ought therefore to be careful when generalising based on these findings.

The most general statement that can be made about the structure of the research is that all children from Armenia above the age of 8 who are currently going to school in Istanbul (to Armenian minority schools attached to the MoNE and to Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School) have participated in this research. A simple questionnaire was conducted with 102 children aged 8 to 11 and a more comprehensive one with 58 children aged 12 to 18. Separate meetings were conducted with officials from 14 out of 16 Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the MoNE and a focus group discussion was held with some of them. A focus-group discussion was held with children from Armenia aged 13 to 18. We also solicited the views of members of the Armenian

community in Istanbul, including business people, pedagogues, representatives of religious institutions, and medical and legal experts, and met with the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration.

ARMENIAN-CITIZEN MIGRANTS LIVING IN ISTANBUL FINDINGS OF THE ADULT QUESTIONNAIRE

Fifty per cent of the respondents surveyed live in households with three people or less. Households with more than five people make up 13 per cent of the sample. For migrants with live-in jobs, the household members of the workplace were not counted and these were coded as single-member households. Out of the 528 people living in the respondents' households, one-third are male and two-thirds are female. In the families surveyed, the number of women aged 30 to 44 is almost twice that of men. There were 77 women aged 45 to 60, with 18 men in the same age group. There were 13 men and 42 women above the age of 60. The 'feminisation of migration', as also expressed in previous studies, can also be observed here. However, it seems this is not the case for children and the male-to-female ratio among young migrants is almost equal.

The most common household structure among those surveyed is extended family, followed by nuclear family. Of those living in households, 51 per cent of those over age 18 are formally married.

Seventeen of the respondents came to Turkey before 2000. While the number of arrivals in 2000 was nine, 67 people arrived from 2007 to 2012, suggesting that this increase may be somewhat related to the softening of relations between the two countries in that period. Arrivals to Turkey have declined since 2013, with only 27 arrivals after 2013. When asked about their reasons for coming to Turkey, 69 respondents cited the presence of family relations or connections in Turkey as well as recommendation of friends as a primary reason.

When respondents were asked why they left Armenia, 67 per cent reported having left their country to look for a job. When we add the 9 per cent who cited their financial situation as their reason for leaving, we can say that the most important reason for leaving Armenia is to improve one's economic conditions.

Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents were found to have returned to Armenia at least once for a reason other than visiting family members, while 41 per cent of

them have not travelled to Armenia. The most important reason for returning to Armenia is to renew or extend passports.

Of the respondents, 54 per cent have no residence permit, work permit, or valid visa (82 people). In other words, these people reside in Turkey as irregular migrants. These people entered Turkey with a 30-day tourist visa obtained on the border post or from the Internet, then they continued to stay in Turkey without obtaining the necessary residence or work permit. If one is found to have stayed or worked as an irregular migrant, the case is referred to the bureau of the Provincial Migration Management Authority attached to the local governor's office, which may issue a deportation order. Residing in Turkey without a residence or work permit is subject to criminal sanction; visa overstay involves the risk of deportation and requires the payment of a visa-violation fine in order to be able to re-enter Turkey. The amount of the fine can only be found out while exiting the country at the border-control station.

Concerning the 40 per cent of respondents with a residence or work permit (61 people), on average, there is a seven-year difference between the length of stay in Turkey and the time of obtaining such a permit. When those staying in Turkey without a work permit, residence permit, or visa were asked why they did not make any effort to regularise their status, most cited financial problems.

LIFE IN ARMENIA

When respondents with relatives in Armenia were asked how often they visited their relatives, half of them responded 'almost never'. Of the respondents, 46 still have children living in Armenia. When we look at the age distribution, nine of these people left their children under the age of 18 in Armenia. These children are taken care of by the parents of the respondents (seven people). It has been found out that 17 of those who have their children in Armenia financially assist their children.

LIFE IN TURKEY

Out of the 108 people who are currently working, 43 are employed by citizens of the Republic of Turkey, while 33 are employed by ethnically Armenian citizens of the Republic of Turkey. When respondents were asked how they found the job in which they are currently employed, the most frequently reported channel was via friends. The vast majority of those with jobs work almost every day. When we look at average monthly earnings, we see that 52 people earn an amount close to the minimum

wage. Five people earn 750 TL or less, while 31 people earn between 751 and 1,500 TL. There are 17 people earning above 2,500 TL per month.

When asked about their subjective perceptions of the subsistence status of their families, 21 per cent of respondents answered, 'We often do not have enough money to cover basic needs like food and rent'; 37 per cent said they 'barely make ends meet'; 23 per cent said they 'get on well so long as we avoid buying expensive and unnecessary things'; and 13 per cent reported 'living comfortably'.

Almost all of the respondents were found to live in flats (94 per cent). Seventy-nine per cent reported living in a house with only their own family. The rest share a house either with another family or with friends. Eighty-seven per cent of the respondents live in a rented house. When the respondents were asked what they complained about in the houses where they live, the most frequently reported problem, with 29 per cent, was that they did not have a room of their own. When asked to compare their economic situation with that of other families in the vicinity, 74 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as 'of moderate means'.

CHILDREN'S SITUATION

There is at least one child in 81 of the households we surveyed. In 77 of the 81 households, Eastern Armenian is spoken with children. Children attend school in 74 of the 81 households, and there are children who have abandoned education in eight of the households. The primary reason for dropping out is reported to be financial problems: the family cannot afford to send the child to school, or the child needs to work to contribute to the family budget.

Of the children who attend school, 28 children attend the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School and 44 go to one of the Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the MoNE. When asked where their children will continue their education, 22 people said they would continue their education in Armenia and 15 people said they would do so in an Armenian school in Istanbul. Four people said they would go to a Turkish school in Turkey, and three people said they would drop out of school. There are 29 people who did not answer or said they did not know the answer to this question.

Issues considered to be important by parents in the education of their children are reported to be as follows: to learn English well, to learn Armenian language well, to

learn about Armenian identity, and to be able to continue education in Armenia. The parents are generally satisfied with their children's education in Turkey.

Both the adults and children mostly spend their free time at home, 79 per cent of the respondents reported spending time with their families when they do not work. While the respondents generally feel safe in the neighbourhood they live in, the number of those feeling safe in Istanbul is lower.

HEALTH SITUATION

Of the respondents, 57 have a chronic disease or a condition that requires regular care. Of these, 37 have a disease that requires regularly visiting a doctor, but they cannot. There are 15 people who need to take medication regularly but cannot. 30 people can take medication regularly. Hence, it can be said that there is a problem with access to health-care.

When asked which health-care institution they apply to when ill, 47 of the respondents said that they do not apply to any health-care institution at all. Twenty-seven people reported applying to Armenian hospitals in Istanbul, 20 people to institutions like dispensaries/outpatient clinics, and 20 people to private hospitals. Sixteen people reported going to public hospitals and 10 to a community health-care centre. Great majority of the respondents cover their health-care expenses out of their own pocket.

RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AND PEOPLE FROM TURKEY

Forty-six per cent of the respondents fear being deported from Turkey one day. Thirty-nine per cent said they had been stopped by police officers who asked to see their ID cards. Twenty-four per cent have had to leave Turkey due to an expired visa or residence permit. Compared to the anxiety caused by legal problems, it is noteworthy that only 6 per cent of respondents have experienced any physical or verbal aggression in Turkey.

When the respondents were asked, 'Will you return to your country when you reach your goal, for example, when you improve your financial situation?', 58 per cent said that they would definitely return. When we add the answers 'I would probably return', we can say that 67 per cent intend to return to Armenia in the future. Sixty-seven per cent of the respondents reported not being 'aware of the rights

they have in Turkey as a citizen of Armenia'. This rises to 84 per cent among citizens of Armenia staying in Turkey informally. Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents said they knew what to do to apply for or extend a residence permit. Forty-five per cent of the Armenian citizens who stay in Turkey without a work permit, residence permit, or visa reported not knowing what to do to apply for or extend a residence permit. This rate is 11 per cent among other respondents having legal residence in Turkey.

FINDINGS FOR THE 8-11 AGE GROUP

A total of 102 children in the age bracket 8, 9, 10 and 11 have participated in our questionnaire and completed the self-reporting questionnaires prepared in Eastern Armenian. Half of the participating children were boys and half were girls. Fifty-nine were students at the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School, and the remaining 43 were guest students at the Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE).

Nearly half of the children reported speaking and understanding Turkish very well. Ten per cent of them do not speak Turkish at all, and six per cent do not understand it at all. Seventy-five per cent of the children aged 8 to 11 reported being born in Armenia, as for the rest relations with Armenia continue. We observe that almost all of the children surveyed are satisfied with their lives. Likewise, the rate of those who are satisfied with their school lives is 94 per cent. Eighty per cent of the children feel safe in school. Eighty-eight per cent of the children surveyed reported being satisfied with life in their neighbourhoods, but they mostly spend their time at home rather than in the neighbourhood. Ninety-four per cent of the children reported having a good time with their family. Twenty per cent of the children surveyed do suffer from diseases that require regular care. Out of this 20 percent, 12 percent reported getting the necessary doctor's care for the treatment of their disease; while 8 per cent reported not having access to a doctor's services for treatment.

One out of every two children surveyed feel worried about the financial situation of their family. Yet, ninety-seven per cent of them the necessary materials for the school, 97 per cent have Internet at home, 83 per cent have a bed of their own, many have a bookshelf and a study desk at home. Children who have these opportunities and children who do not have them are almost equally concerned about their families' financial condition. Despite being in the age bracket 8-11, 10 per cent of the children work in a job other than family-run business. One-fifth work at a

family-run business. When asked about what they wanted to have in their homes as an open-ended question, children mostly responded a pet, a room of their own, and computer at home, a big yard and gym at school.

FINDINGS FOR THE 12-18 AGE GROUP

Thirty-two of the children surveyed were boys (55 per cent) and 26 of them were girls (45 per cent). Twenty-eight of them were students at the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School, and 30 of them were guest students at various Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the MoNE.

Ninety per cent of the children reported having a good comprehension of Turkish. Eighty-one per cent of the children surveyed in the 12-18 age group were born in Armenia, and 98 per cent have visited Armenia at least once, which shows that their connections with Armenia continue.

One-third of children have their mother or father living in another country. The issue that children are most concerned about is not having a room of their own. We see that the children surveyed are generally satisfied with their school life. Seventy-nine per cent feel safe at school. Seventy-six per cent of the children surveyed said they would continue their education. When children were asked where they would continue their education, 59 per cent said they would do so in Armenia and 26 per cent in Turkey.

There are significant problems concerning formal enrolment to schools and receiving diploma. The 'Foreign Students' communiqué the Turkish Ministry of National Education communiqué MoNE issued in 2010 states that no study visa shall be required for the children of foreigners authorised to reside and work in Turkey. However, our field studies show that even the children of migrants from Armenia with work and residence permits do not continue their education in that way. Thanks to the amendments made to the Regulation on Private Educational Institutions in 2012, Armenian-citizen migrant students are able to go to Armenian minority schools in Istanbul as guest students. These students do not have formal enrolment and are not granted diplomas.

Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School offers classes until 9th grade based on the curriculum of Armenia. Children who follow classes here can continue their education in Armenia once they return. Armenia-citizen children who are attending the Ar-

menian minority schools attached to MoNE as guest students, are following the curriculum of these minority schools in Turkey; which makes it difficult for them to continue their education in Armenia. There are problems concerning obtaining equivalency.

Sixty-six per cent of the young people surveyed are concerned about what might happen in their lives in the future. One out of every two children, worry regularly about the financial situation of their family.

CONCLUSION

For the Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey, the unregistered irregular migration process involves many uncertainties and ambiguities for both adults and children. The question is actually about which country they see their future in. As life in Istanbul is viewed to be temporary and short-term, it leads to makeshift solutions on the part of a number of different actors in a number of areas, from obtaining the necessary permits to children's education, and ultimately to 'makeshift' lives for the migrants concerned. As life goes by, many needs emerge, but the inability to obtain proper registration and the lack of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey make even simple matters complicated. There are various reservations before possible steps that can be taken to address the problems. While in Turkey, there are efforts to avoid encouraging 'irregular migration', in Armenia, there are differing opinions and reservations about migration to Turkey and the possibility of such migration becoming permanent. And amid all these uncertainties, migrants and their children try to live their makeshift lives as best they can.



INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

Turkey is known as a country of emigration, but over the past 25 years, it has also been examined and studied as a country of immigration and transit migration. As of 2018, Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees of any country in the world, with more than 3 million 500 thousand Syrians fleeing the civil war in Syria now living in Turkey under temporary-protection status.¹ This situation has required Turkey to review its institutional structures and to debate its social perceptions. While Turkey is going through a process to achieve social integration of migrants, this report aims to present the findings of a study on the situation of migrants from Armenia in Istanbul based on questionnaires conducted with adults and with children aged 8 and older attending school in Istanbul, interviews with relevant stakeholders in the field, and focus-group discussions. The informality of Turkey's economic sector, particularly its labour market, has always had a pronounced impact on the situation of migrants in the country. The profiles and living conditions of migrants, which used to be characterised almost exclusively by irregularity, has evolved with each legal regulation introduced. Moreover, Turkey presents huge disparities in economic and human development at a regional level, and these disparities are reflected in the wide variation in income levels and living conditions in Istanbul. Istanbul is a megacity with a population of over 15 million, and many of the sectors of its economic and social life are marked by a pronounced degree of informality. Some 327 thousand foreigners from 140 different countries hold residence permits in the city. Alongside these foreigners holding permits, there are irregular migrants as well as 550 thousand Syrians 'under temporary protection', who also live in Istanbul. Each unregulated and unmanaged area of life creates an overlooked and makeshift grey area – and for the people living there, a limbo of anxious and makeshift lives.

The first labour migration from Armenia began after the 1988 earthquake in the country and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Since then, an ever-increasing number of Armenian citizens have travelled to other countries, particularly

¹ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management. http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363-378-4713 Accessed on August 25, 2018.

Russia, in search of work, often settling there on a permanent basis. The scale of the migration and permanent settlement of Armenian citizens abroad has come to be viewed as a significant problem in Armenia.

Statistical data about the number of Armenian citizens residing in Turkey is not openly available. There are however various assumptions about the possible number of Armenian migrants. Various sources, including officials and researchers, have at various times estimated this number to be as low as 5 or 10 thousand or as high as 70 thousand, with many presuming that the actual number is somewhere in between, around 15 to 20 thousand.

Alin Ozinian, in her 2009 research, has attempted to estimate the number of Armenian-citizen migrants in Turkey by examining data on the number of annual visitors from Armenia to Turkey. Assuming that the difference between the entries and exits corresponds roughly to the number of incoming migrants, Ozinian estimates that 5,807 Armenian citizens migrated to Turkey between the years 2000 and 2007.²

Between 2011 and 2016, this number falls to 2,745.³ Even though this methodology is inexact, it provides an approximate idea about the scale of the human flow between the two countries, meaning around 10 thousand incoming migrants between 2000 and 2017.

The number of Armenian-citizen migrants who hold short-term, long-term, or family residence permits in Turkey is likewise not readily available. However, the number of Armenia-born residents who have an official address registration in Turkey is 2,691 (2016)⁴ – a fraction of the estimated total number of migrants.

As for work permits provided by the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security, until 2011, very few Armenian citizens had applied for work permits; however, from 2012 to 2013, work-permit applications more than doubled rising from 84 to 188.⁵ In the following years, this number is more or less consistent: 180 applica-

2 Alin Ozinian, "Identifying the State of Irregular Armenian Migrants in Turkey". (Eurasia Partnership Foundation, 2009).

3 Border Entry-Exit Statistics, Directorate General for Investments and Enterprises, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Turkey. <http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,9854/sinir-giris-cikis-istatistikleri.html> Accessed on August 25, 2018.

4 Address-Based Population Registration System, Turkish Statistical Institute. <http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,9854/sinir-giris-cikis-istatistikleri.html> Accessed on August 25, 2018.

5 Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Statistical Management Information System

tions in 2014, 197 in 2015, 174 in 2016, and 150 in 2017. Around 86.5 per cent of applications came from women and around 44 per cent were from applicants aged 50 or older. Between 2012 and 2014, a majority of work-permit applicants – 320 out of 452 – were first-time applicants, yet between 2015 and 2017, there were more applications for extension than first-time applications, indicating an increasing number of migrants who are consistently maintaining a legal status.

Applications have been made both from inside Turkey and at diplomatic representations abroad, though the latter in lesser numbers. A significant majority – around 70 per cent of employers of Armenian-citizen migrants – were individual households employing domestic helpers.

In this context, it is important to point out to both the specific character of the migration from Armenia to Turkey and the distinctive factors that make Armenian migrants more vulnerable. The events of 1915 and the debate on how to interpret these events; the closing of the land border between Armenia and Turkey, the cutting off of direct trade and the failure to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute that escalated into a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1992–94, make the situation of Armenian migrants distinct from other migrant groups in Turkey. The lack of an Armenian embassy or consulate in Turkey means that Armenian citizens have no access to consular services. The absence of diplomatic relations and the threat of a possible escalation in tensions between the two countries make the situation of migrants from Armenia uniquely vulnerable. Compounding this vulnerability are the fears and anxieties Armenian-citizen migrants harbour towards Turkey and Turks. An additional factor specific to these migrants is that many have family roots in Turkey. The presence of ethnically Armenian citizens of Turkey makes the situation of Armenian migrants more peculiar. Though migrants' relations with ethnically Armenian citizens of Turkey are not always reported to be positive, existing Armenian schools, hospitals, and churches in Turkey frequently help to solve the problems faced by Armenian citizen migrants. However, while such institutions try to provide as much support as they can, their own circumstances make them hesitant to support irregular and unregistered migrants.

The report before you presents the findings of a study carried out in order to identify the living conditions, problems, and expectations of migrants from Armenia living in Istanbul under such delicate circumstances, with a particular focus on the situation of their school-going children.

METHODOLOGY

This research, conducted with migrants from Armenia living in Istanbul and their children aged 8 and older attending school in the city, encompasses both a questionnaire and a qualitative study including interviews and focus groups. All Armenian-citizen children at the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School aged 8 and older participated in the study, as did those who are guest students at the Armenian minority schools in Istanbul, which are attached to Turkey's Ministry of National Education (MoNE). An adult questionnaire was also conducted with the parents of some of these children. The questionnaire was also distributed to members of other households who were reached using the snowball method. This research is the first study on the subject to focus on both children and household data.⁶

The household data generated from the questionnaires conducted with 153 adults (136 female; 17 male) provided us with information about 528 people. However, it should be noted that this sample may not be representative of all migrants from Armenia in Istanbul and that one ought therefore to be careful when generalising based on these results. The most general statement that can be made about the structure of the research is that all children from Armenia above the age of 8 who are currently going to school in Istanbul (to Armenian minority schools attached to the Ministry of National Education [MoNE] and to Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School) have participated in this research. A simple questionnaire was conducted with 102 children aged 8 to 11 and a more comprehensive one with 58 children aged 12 to 18. These questionnaires comprised questions we have been using

6 Few studies have been conducted on migrants from Armenia. What follows is a partial list: Alin Ozinian, "Identifying the State of Armenian Migrants in Turkey" (Eurasia Partnership Foundation, 2009); Nvart Taşçı, "Armenian Migrants in Turkey: History of Journey" (unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University Atatürk Institute, 2010); Hanna Rutishauser, "Önyargıları Yıkma ve Ortak Nefreti Yumuşatmak: İstanbul'daki Ermenistanlı Kadın Göçmenler", in *Türkiye'de Uluslararası Göç*, ed. B. Pusch and T. Wilkoszewski (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2010); Lülüfer Körükmez, "Ulus-ötesi Göç Ağları ve Sosyal Alanların Oluşumu: Ermenistan'dan Türkiye'ye İşgücü Göçü Üzerine Sosyolojik bir Araştırma" (unpublished master thesis, Ege University, 2012); Lülüfer Körükmez, "Ermeni'nin Bavulu Her Zaman Kapının Arkasındadır: Sınır Dışı Edilme Korkusu ve Çelişik Sınır Dışı Etme Uygulamaları", in *Yabancıların Sınırdışı Edilmesi ve Sınır Üzerine Disiplinlerarası Bakışlar*, ed. D. Danış and İ. Soysüren (Istanbul: Notabene Yay., 2014); Anna Muradyan, *An Island within an Island: Educational Needs Assessment of Armenian Migrants in Turkey* (Istanbul: Yuva Derneği, 2015); Fabio Salomoni, *Migrations, Borders and Boundaries: Post-Soviet Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Turkey* (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 2016); Lülüfer Körükmez, "Göç Sürecinde Etnik Sınırların Yeniden Çizilmesi: Ermenistanlı Göçmenler ve Türkiyeli Ermeniler", in *Mühürlü Kapı: Türkiye Ermenistan Sınırının Geleceği*, ed. A. Yılmaz (Istanbul: Hrant Dink Foundation, 2016); Monika Paksoy, "Encountering the Armenian Community in Istanbul: Experiences of Armenian Immigrant Domestic Workers" (unpublished master's thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2017).

since 2008 in different field surveys conducted on child well-being in Turkey as well as internationally developed questions included to yield comparative data.⁷

Questions for this field study were revised and pilot questionnaires were administered before being finalised. In addition, the questionnaire prepared in Turkish was translated into the Eastern Armenian language, then back-translated to Turkish for control purposes.

The adult questionnaire was prepared in light of a review of previous studies and the outputs of the workshop organised by the Hrant Dink Foundation on 15 December 2016 with the participation of experts from Turkey and Armenia. New questions were then added in the light of findings emerging from the in-depth interviews we conducted. Again, pilot interviews were carried out after the translation process, and the questionnaire was finalised following necessary corrections.

In addition to the quantitative research, five in-depth interviews were conducted to develop a further grasp of migrants' narratives. These five interviews attempted to capture as many different stories as possible and to provide background to the prepared questionnaire, with attention being paid to selecting interviewees from different areas of labour, different age groups, and different marital statuses: an unemployed young woman living with her husband and child; a middle-aged woman working alone and working in an office; a young single man doing construction and repair work; a middle-aged unemployed woman living alone in Istanbul; and a woman doing domestic work and living alone.

The goal of this study was to develop insights into the situation of migrants from Armenia living in Istanbul. During our fieldwork, conducted from November 2017 to April 2018, Eastern Armenian was used to interview and survey migrants from Armenia and their children. In addition, a focus-group discussion was held with

7 In preparing these questionnaires, we worked to ensure that children's status in the areas of health, education, economic circumstances, relationships, home and environment, and risk and security was appropriately represented using objective and subjective criteria. See: P. Uyan Semerci et al., *Eşitsiz Bir Toplumda Çocukluk: Çocuğun "İyi Olma Hali"ni Anlamak* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yay., 2012); P. Uyan Semerci et al., "Well-being and Children of Internal Migrant Families in Istanbul", in *New Spaces, New Times: Migration, Social Change and Their Impact on Childhood and Family*, ed. M. Stephan and C. Hunner-Kreisel (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2013); P. Uyan Semerci and E. Erdoğan, "Child Well-Being Indicators through the Eyes of Children in Turkey: A Happy Child Would Be One Who...", *Child Indicators Research* 10/1 (2016): 267–295.

children from Armenia aged 13 to 18. As part of our research, separate meetings were conducted with officials from 14 out of 16 Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the MoNE and a focus-group discussion was held with some of them. We also solicited the views of members of the Armenian community in Istanbul, including business people, pedagogues, representatives of religious institutions, and medical and legal experts, and met with the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration.

The first section of the report below will share the findings of the questionnaires conducted with adults, supported also by the findings of the qualitative study. Then the findings of the questionnaire conducted with children aged 8 to 11 will be presented, followed by those of the questionnaire conducted with children aged 12 to 18, complemented with the findings of focus groups and interviews in the field.



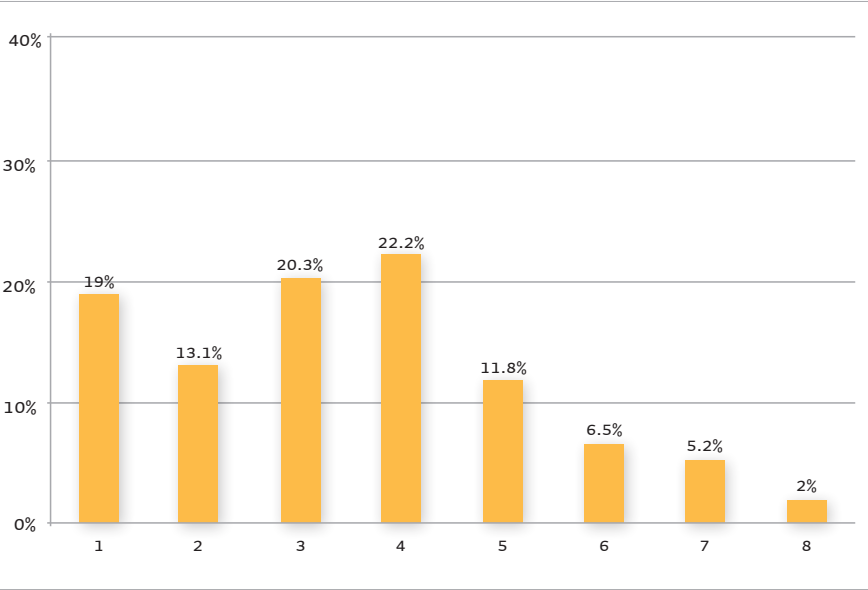
ARMENIAN-CITIZEN MIGRANTS -
FINDINGS OF THE
ADULT QUESTIONNAIRE



HOUSEHOLD DATA

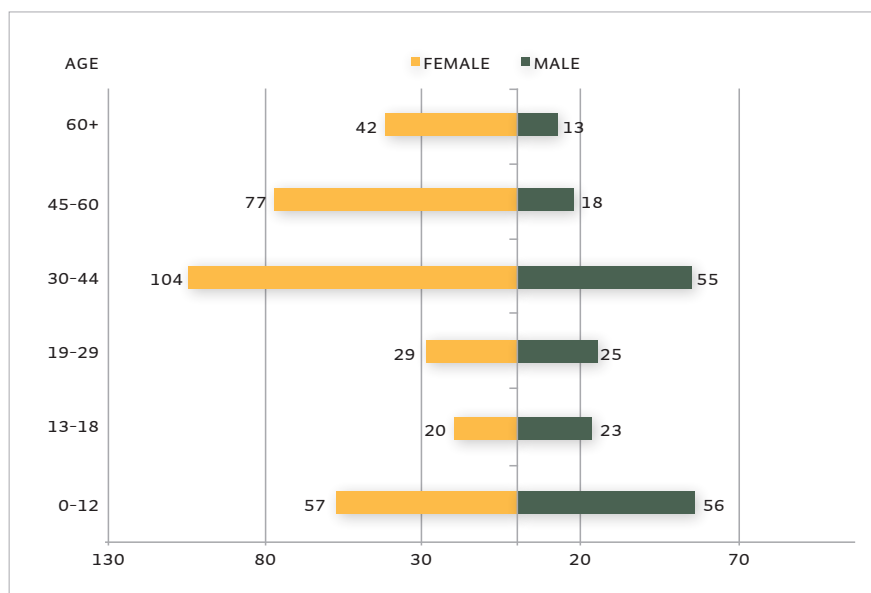
First of all, household-related information provided by the 153 adults (136 female; 17 male) surveyed will be shared. The number of household members and their gender distribution are shown below.

Figure 1. Number of people in the household (%)



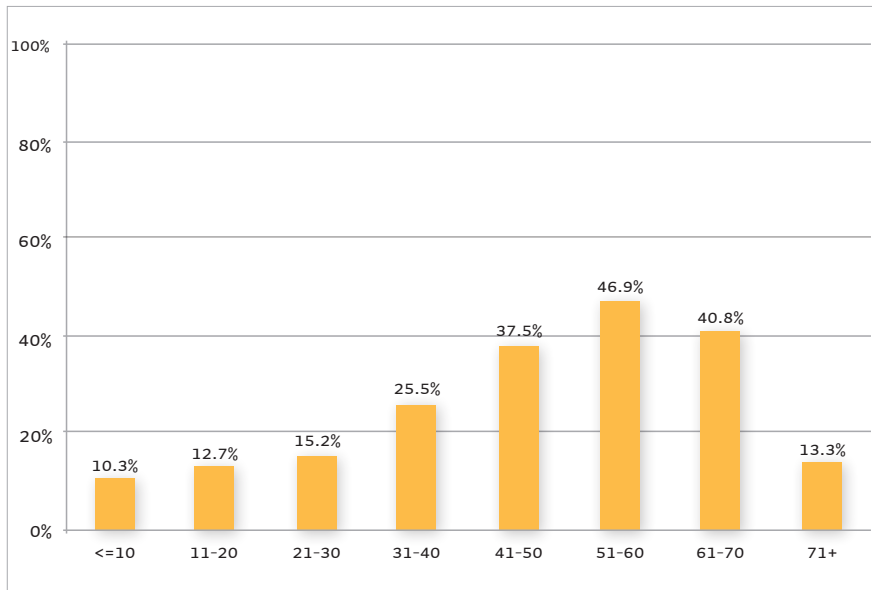
The distribution of the number of people living in the households of the respondents is shown in the chart above. The average household size is 3.4. The median value is 3; in other words, 50 per cent of the respondents live in households with three people or less. Households with more than five people make up 13 per cent of the sample. For migrants with live-in jobs, the household members of the workplace were not counted and these were coded as single-member households.

Figure 2. Distribution of population in the household (#)



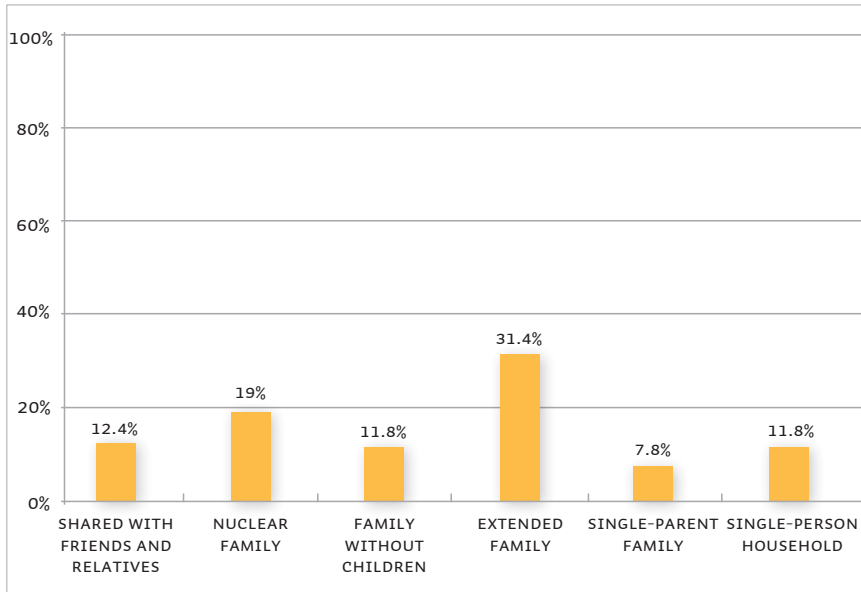
Out of the 528 people living in the respondents' households, one-third are male and two-thirds are female. The chart above shows the distribution of population in the households surveyed. As can be seen, there is a significant difference in age distribution between genders. In the families surveyed, the number of women aged 30 to 44 is almost twice that of men. There were 77 women aged 45 to 60, with 18 men in the same age group. There were 13 men and 42 women above the age of 60. The 'feminisation of migration', as also expressed in previous studies, can also be observed here. However, it seems this is not the case for children and the male-to-female ratio among young migrants is almost equal.

Figure 3. Ages of persons in the household and their chronic illness, if any (%)



Twenty-five per cent of people living in the households surveyed complain of a chronic health problem. By age group, this percentage is around 10 per cent for those under the age of 20, but goes up to 26 per cent in the age group 31 to 40 and to 38 per cent in the age group 41 to 50. It rises even higher, to 47 per cent, among those in the age group 51 to 60, and is somewhat lower in older age groups. This may be explained by the fact that people unable to work due to health issues are likely to have returned to Armenia.

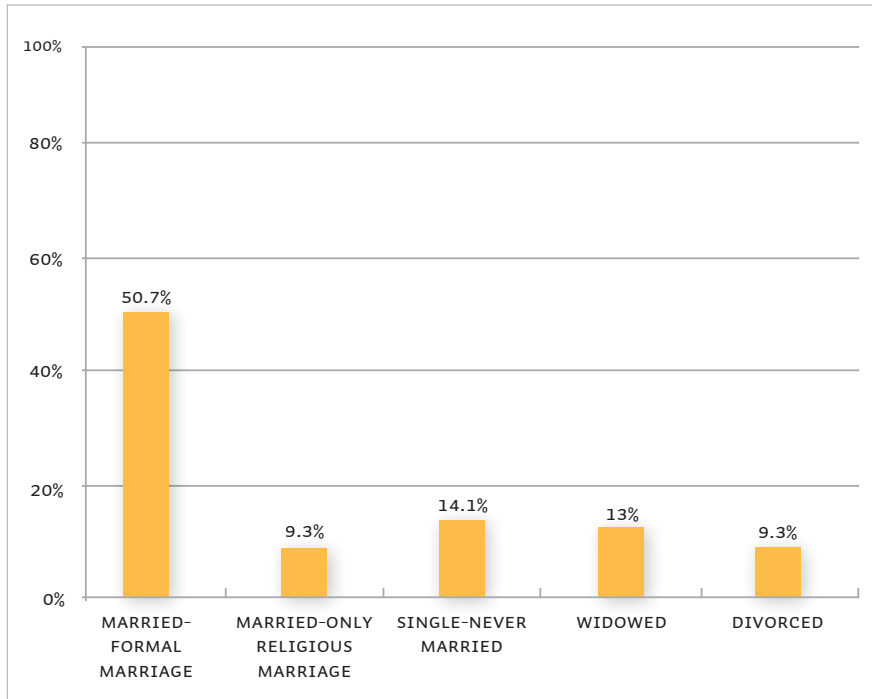
Figure 4. Household structure (%)



The most common household structure among those surveyed is what we call that of the extended family, whether on a horizontal or a vertical model.⁸ The next is that of the nuclear family, composed of parents and one or more of their children. The other household structures encountered in the questionnaire, in descending order of frequency, are as follows: households shared with friends and relatives, families without children, single-person households, and single-parent families.

⁸ 'Extended family' refers to a family unit where a mother, father, and their married children live together under one roof with grandchildren, other relatives of the father or mother, and the spouses and children of those other relatives. Vertical extended families are those where three generations live together, and horizontal extended families are those where multiple relatives from one or two generations live together.

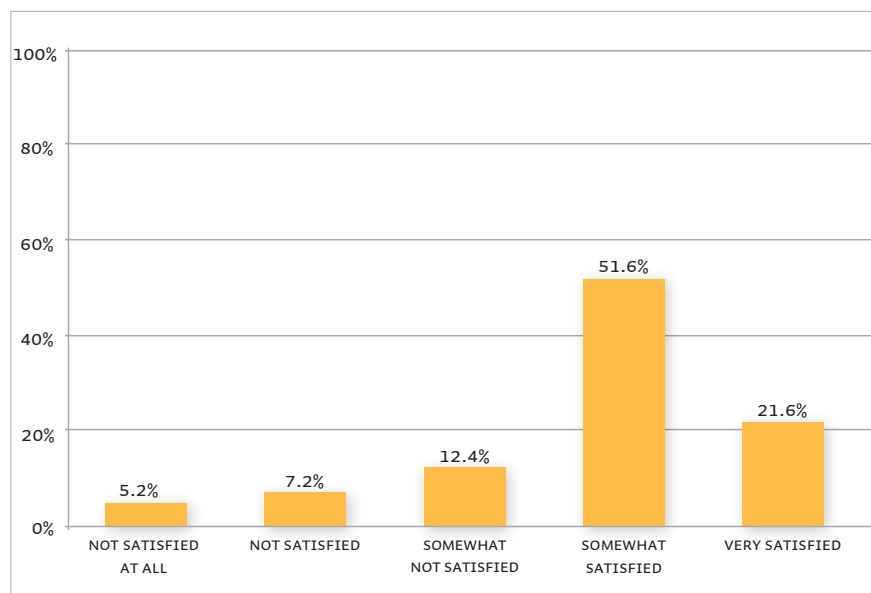
Figure 5. Marital status of persons in the household (%)



Of those living in households, 51 per cent of those over age 18 are formally married, 9 per cent live as couples with only a religious marriage, and 14 per cent have never married. Widows make up 13 per cent and divorced persons make up 9 per cent.

LIFE ASSESSMENT

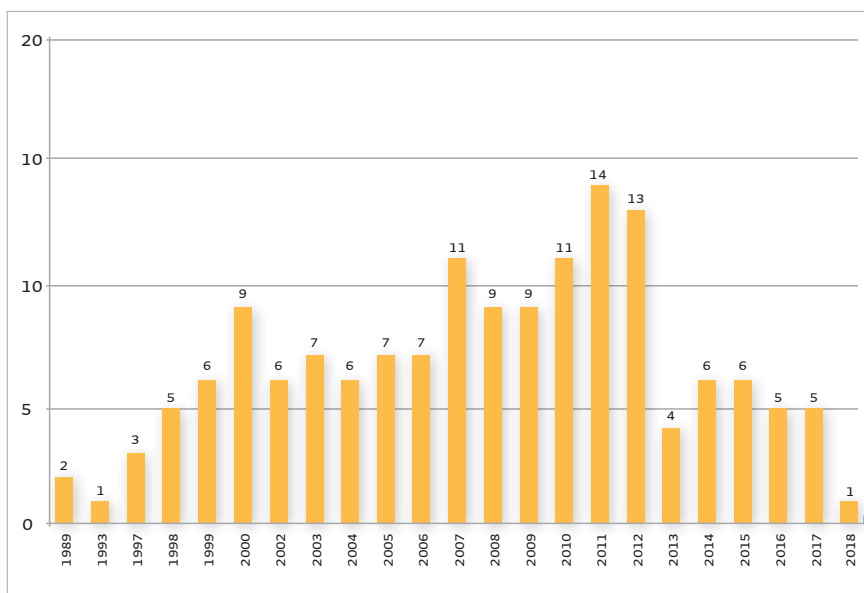
Figure 6. Satisfaction with life (%)



When asked how satisfied they were with their lives in general, 21.6 per cent of the respondents answered 'very satisfied' and 51.6 per cent answered 'somewhat satisfied'. When these two answers are added together, we see that 73 per cent of the respondents are satisfied with their lives. The answers 'I am not satisfied at all' and 'I am not satisfied' together make up 12 per cent. Based on these figures, it is possible to say that the respondents are satisfied with their lives.

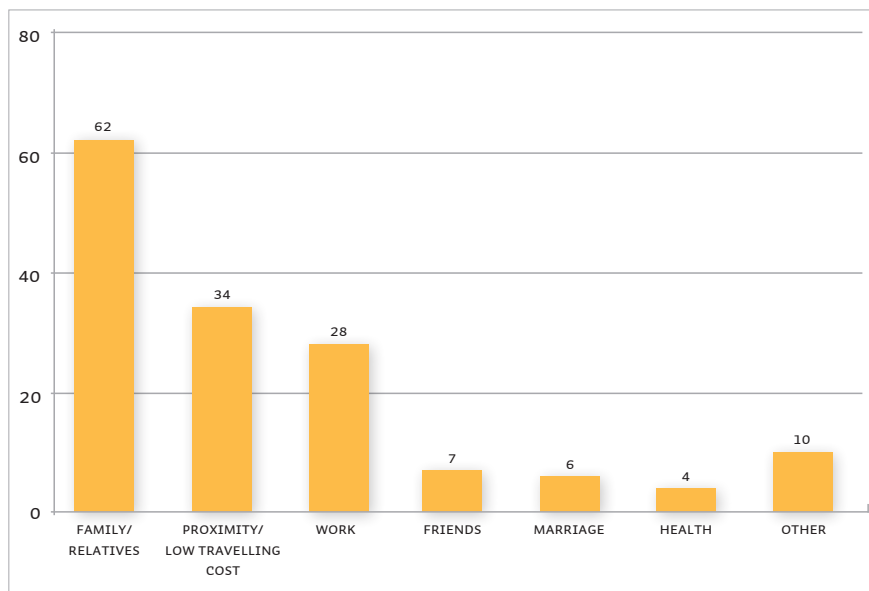
EXPERIENCES IN TURKEY

Figure 7. Year of arrival in Turkey (#)



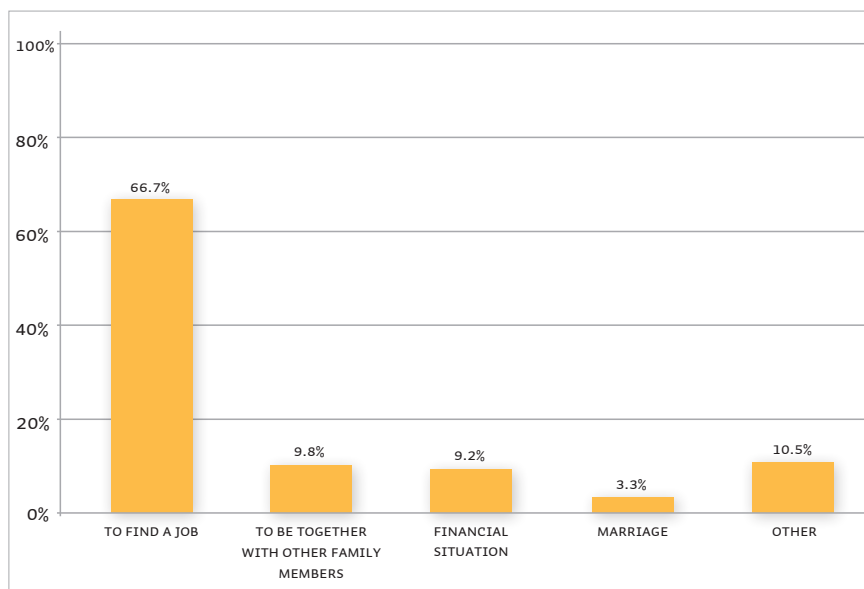
The above chart shows when respondents first came to Turkey. Seventeen of the respondents came to Turkey before 2000. While the number of arrivals in 2000 was nine, 67 people arrived from 2007 to 2012, suggesting that this increase may be somewhat related to the softening of relations between the two countries in that period. According to the respondents' answers, arrivals to Turkey have declined since 2003, with only 27 arrivals after 2013.

Figure 8. Reasons for coming to Turkey (#)



When asked about their reasons for coming to Turkey, 62 respondents cited the presence of family relations or connections in Turkey as a primary reason. Seven people came at the recommendation of friends. Thirty-four people have come to Turkey because of its convenience, namely, its proximity to Armenia and the low cost of travelling to the country. It is possible to say that these people came to Turkey with the intention of staying in the country only temporarily. These findings are consistent with the information provided in the quantitative part of our research. The proximity of Turkey, connections provided by family and friends who have moved there, social networks, and the existence of a church are also reasons that were reported during our interviews. When asked about the primary reason for coming to Turkey, one interviewee answered, 'It was the only possibility I had. With the money I had, I could only afford to come here.' There are 28 people who reported having come in search of work. A small number of people reported having come to Turkey for marriage (six people) and for health care/treatment (four people).

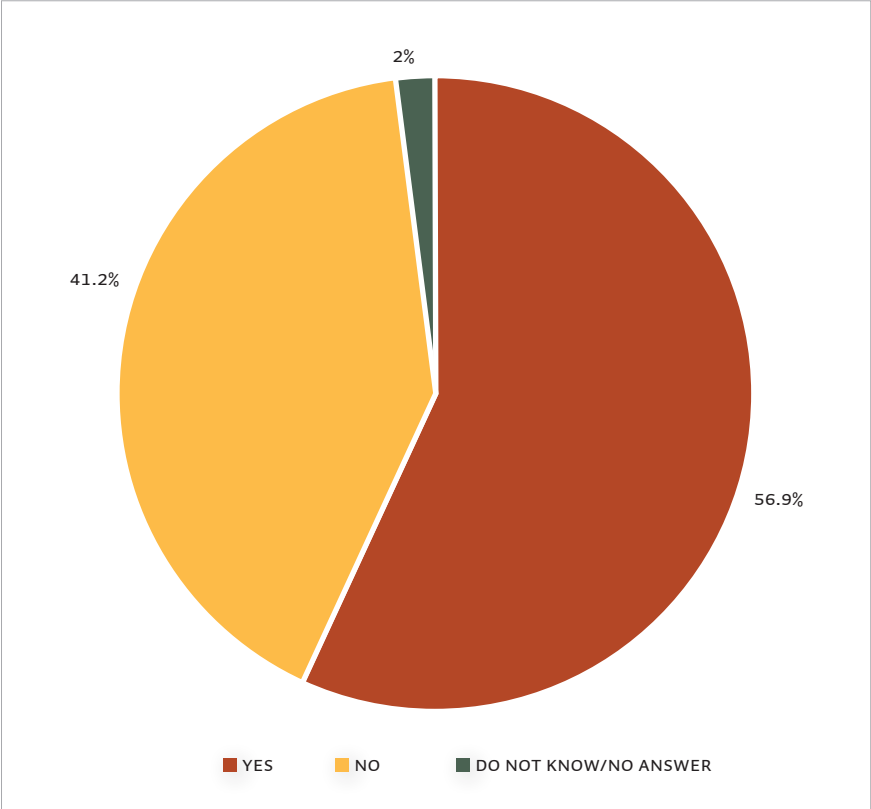
Figure 9. Reasons for leaving Armenia (%)



When respondents were asked why they left Armenia, add the nine per cent reported having left their country to look for a job. When we add the 9 per cent who cited their financial situation as their reason for leaving, we can say that the most important reason for leaving Armenia is to improve one's economic conditions. The percentage of those who have left Armenia for family reunification or marriage is less than 10 per cent. Qualitative research has shown how material deprivation and unemployment force people to migrate and put people in difficult conditions, as in the case of a 56-year-old female migrant: 'I could have bought a house until the collapse of the Soviet era, I had money in the bank, but I loved my country and I still do love it. I am deeply homesick, but I had no chance of surviving, I could not even look after myself because the Russian currency was replaced by the Dram [Armenia's currency] and the Dram lost its value, the salary you earned could only get you dry bread. We had no choice... I was offered a job... And I came. I came here, taking refuge in God. Describing how she came to Istanbul 15 years ago through her neighbour, she articulated her indebtedness the following way: 'I was in a dire situation, my grandchild had been born, we had no electricity at home and I was in debt. To pay back my debts, I was borrowing from others... I could not bring myself to borrow money and spend it without paying it back. That is why I left and came here.'

Summarising the difficulties she went through, another female migrant with whom we had an in-depth interview said, ‘I would not wish even one single day of one year of my life on my enemy.’ Some of the professionals working with migrants characterise the story of this woman, who was trained as a nurse, as one of the many ‘women who carry the burden of the entire family.’

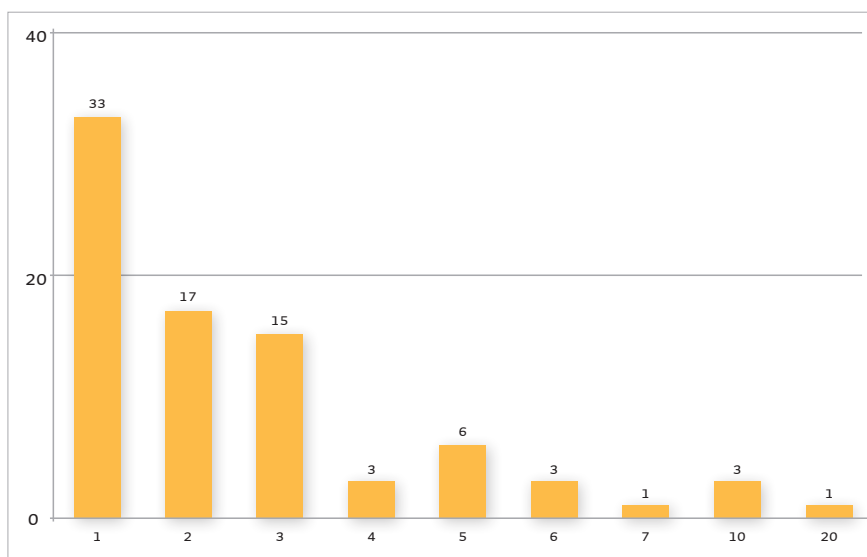
Figure 10. Since your first arrival in Turkey, have you had to return to Armenia for reasons other than visiting your family? (%)



Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents were found to have returned to Armenia at least once for a reason other than visiting family members, while 41 per cent of them have not travelled to Armenia. The most important reason for returning to Armenia is to renew or extend passports (51 per cent). Family-related problems are the second most common reason (28 per cent), with one out of four people who entered Armenia having returned to their country due to the expiry of their

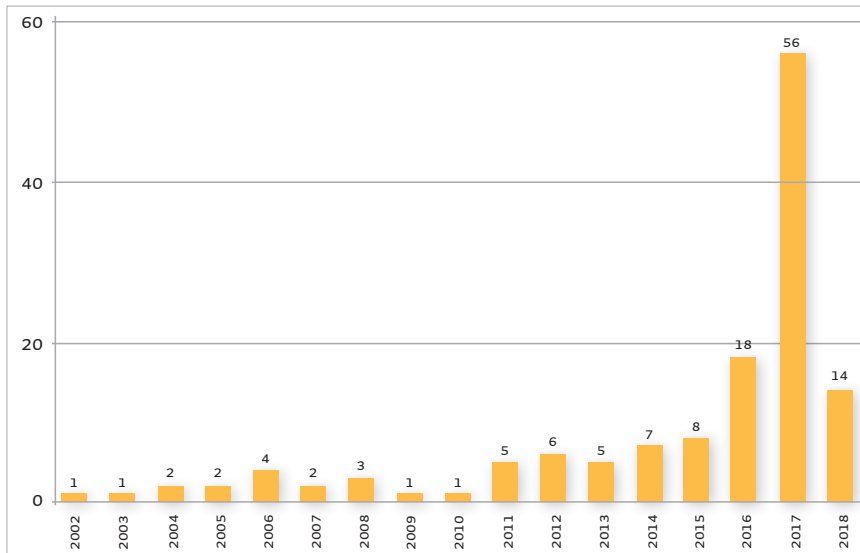
visa. Twelve per cent reported having been deported. If family-related problems and health problems (16 per cent) are put aside, it can be argued that uncertainties in migrants' legal status are the main reason for their returning to Armenia.

Figure 11. Number of entrances to and exits from Turkey (#)



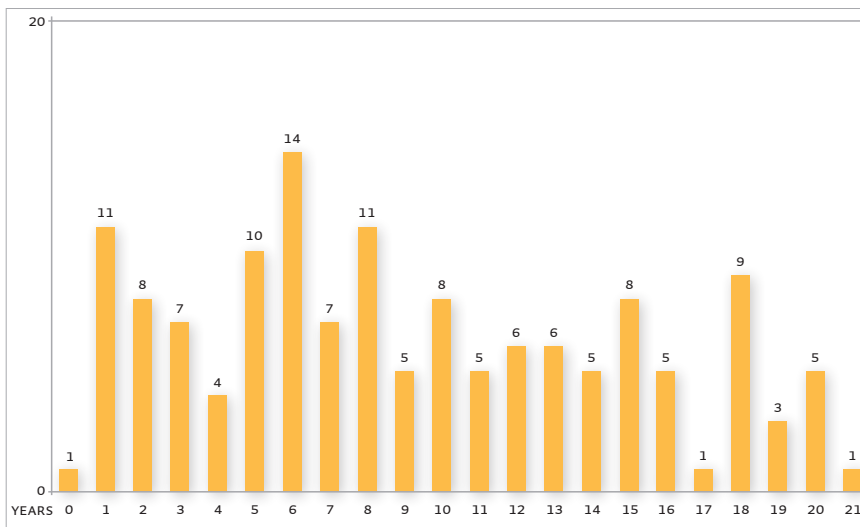
Most of those who had to exit and return to Turkey for the reasons mentioned above did so between one and three times (65 people in total). However, there were eight people with six or more exit-re-entries, indicating that some people had to exit very often. There is no correlation between the number of exit-re-entries for migrants and the length of stay in Turkey, so we cannot say that those with longer stays did more exit-re-entries.

Figure 12. When was your last entrance to Turkey? (#)



The vast majority of the respondents seem to have entered Turkey in recent years. Fourteen people entered in 2018, 56 people in 2017, and 18 people in 2016. On the other hand, there were 15 people (about 10 per cent) who entered Turkey before 2008 and have not returned to their country for nearly 10 years.

Figure 13. How long have you been living in Turkey? (#)

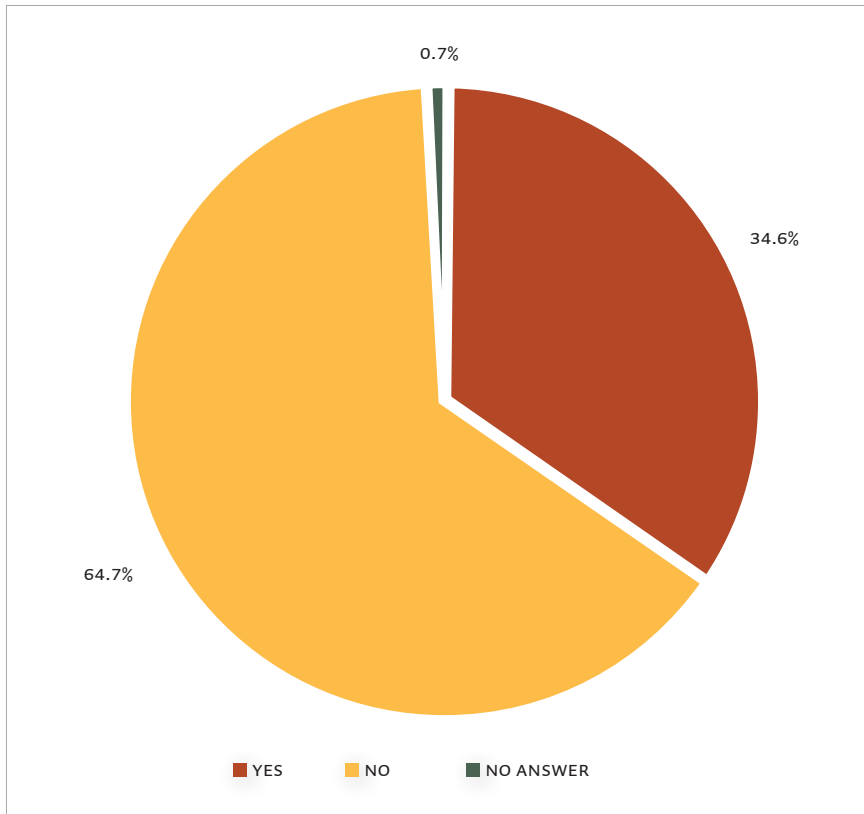


When asked how long they have been living in Turkey, the respondents reported an average of nine years. As seen in the chart above, 32 people have been living in Turkey for 15 years or more, and 31 people for five years or less. This data shows that for many people who originally planned to travel to Turkey only on a temporary basis as part of a 'makeshift' plan, life in the country has become permanent – though, according to our in-depth interviews, there is always a plan to return 'one day'. In one of our interviews with a doctor examining migrants from Armenia, the doctor suggested that migrants should learn Turkish, 'if they seriously think about leading their future life in Turkey, if they want to live and lead their lives here'.

According to the findings from respondents, migrants are ambiguous about the prospect of returning to Armenia. Though they may often continue to harbour plans to return, many continue to live in Istanbul with their families as irregular, unregistered migrants for years.

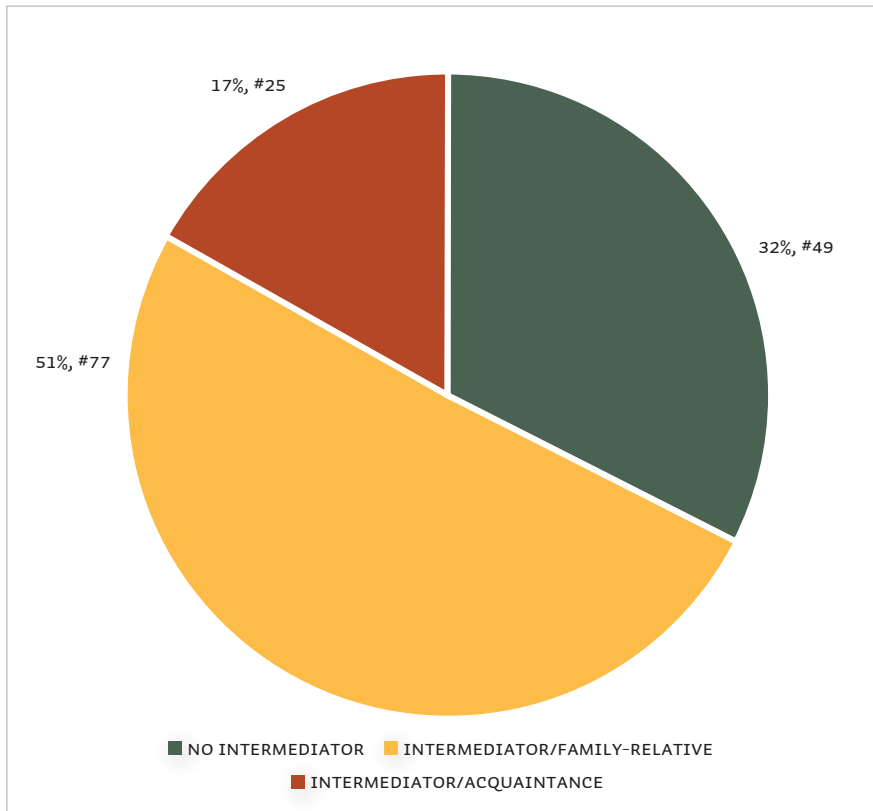
'I could not solve the problem of citizenship here in eighteen years because I was always thinking of going back. But I can't manage to leave, I always end up staying somehow. Maybe it is like, "You live where you earn your bread!"'

Figure 14. Have you ever worked in another country aside from Turkey? (%)



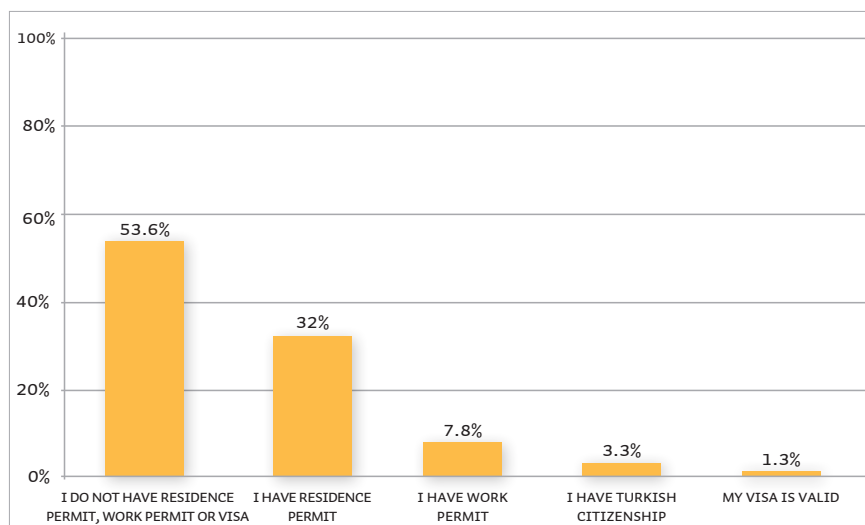
One-third of the respondents reported having worked in a country other than Turkey. In descending order, these countries are Russia (38 people), Ukraine (six people), Poland (five people), and Georgia (five people). These figures show that those who come from Armenia primarily work in neighbouring countries. The labour migration from Armenia has become increasingly permanent, leading to an important debate in the country.

Figure 15. Those who made use of an intermediary service while coming to Turkey (% , #)



In all, 102 of the respondents said that they used an intermediary to come to Turkey. While most of the respondents came through the intermediation of family members/relatives (77 people), 25 did so through the intermediation of acquaintances. Two people paid for an intermediary service.

Figure 16. Current legal status in Turkey (%)



Of the respondents, 54 per cent have no residence permit, work permit, or valid visa (82 people). In other words, these people reside in Turkey as irregular migrants. These people entered Turkey with a 30-day tourist visa obtained on the border post or from the Internet (\$25 at a customs gate with their passport or \$15 with an electronic e-visa), then they continued to stay in Turkey without obtaining the necessary residence or work permit. One-third have a residence permit, while 8 per cent have a work permit, and 3 per cent have citizenship of the Republic of Turkey. These numbers show how common irregular migrant status is. Almost everybody we interviewed in the field during our qualitative study talked about the prevalence of this situation.

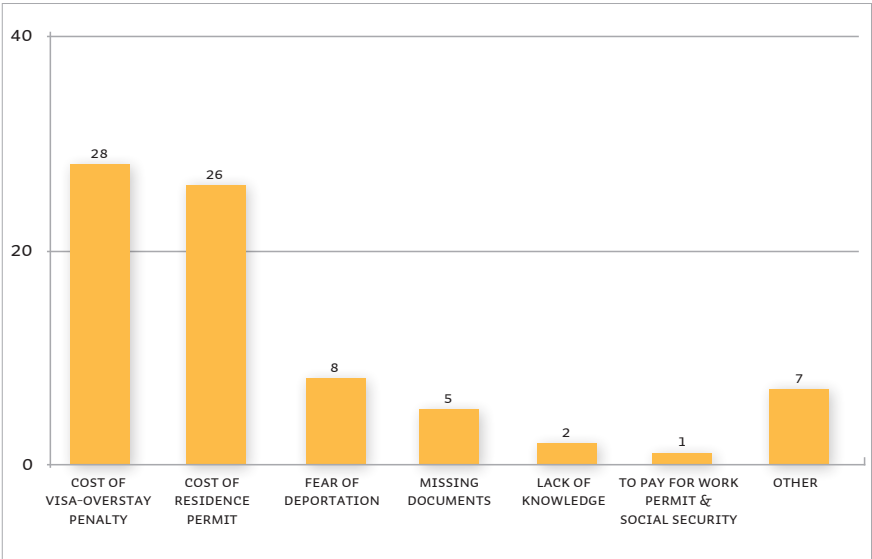
Visa overstay involves the risk of deportation and requires the payment of a visa-violation fine in order to be able to re-enter Turkey. As stated in one of the in-depth interviews, 'You cannot feel secure without a residence permit, they can deport you.' When asked what they would do if such a situation occurred, the interviewee said, 'I would come back.'

The amount of the fine can only be found out while exiting the country at the border-control station. According to the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, migrants have the right to re-enter Turkey within 10 days and apply for a residence permit so long as they pay the visa-overstay fine. However, in some cases,

even those who have paid the fine may be issued a re-entry ban. If one is found to have stayed or worked as an irregular migrant, the case is referred to the bureau of the Provincial Migration Management Authority attached to the local governor's office, which may issue a deportation order. The Migration Management Authority invites the migrant to leave the country within 15 days or as soon as possible, issues a departure order, or may place the person under administrative detention and force him or her to leave the country. If migrants in this position can afford to do so, they cover the costs associated with the return travel to their country of origin; if not, the Migration Management Authority pays for them. If the migrants cannot afford to pay the fine, they are deported and a re-entry ban to Turkey is imposed. The duration of the re-entry ban will depend of the length of the visa overstay.

Concerning the 40 per cent of respondents with a residence or work permit (61 people), on average, there is a seven-year difference between the length of stay in Turkey and the time of obtaining such a permit: 45 per cent received their residence or work permits in five years or less, while 25 per cent waited more than 10 years. Half of those with a residence or work permit declared that they received help in obtaining it, most frequently from family members/relatives (seven people), employer (10 people), lawyers (six people) and acquaintances (six people). Only nine people paid a fee for this help.

Figure 17. Reasons for not obtaining a work/residence permit (#)



When those staying in Turkey without a work permit, residence permit, or visa were asked why they did not make any effort to regularise their status, most cited financial problems: 28 people reported not having made an application because of the amount of the visa-overstay fine, and 26 said that they could not afford the expenses that would be incurred from a residence-permit application. Eight people were afraid of being deported, and five people said that they had missing documents.

Since the method of calculating the visa-overstay fine is not clearly known, the penalty one accumulates over the years for overstaying one's visa can only be guessed. When asked about the estimated amount of their visa-overstay fine, respondents' answers varied from 500 TL to 16,000 TL, with an average estimate of 4,163 TL.

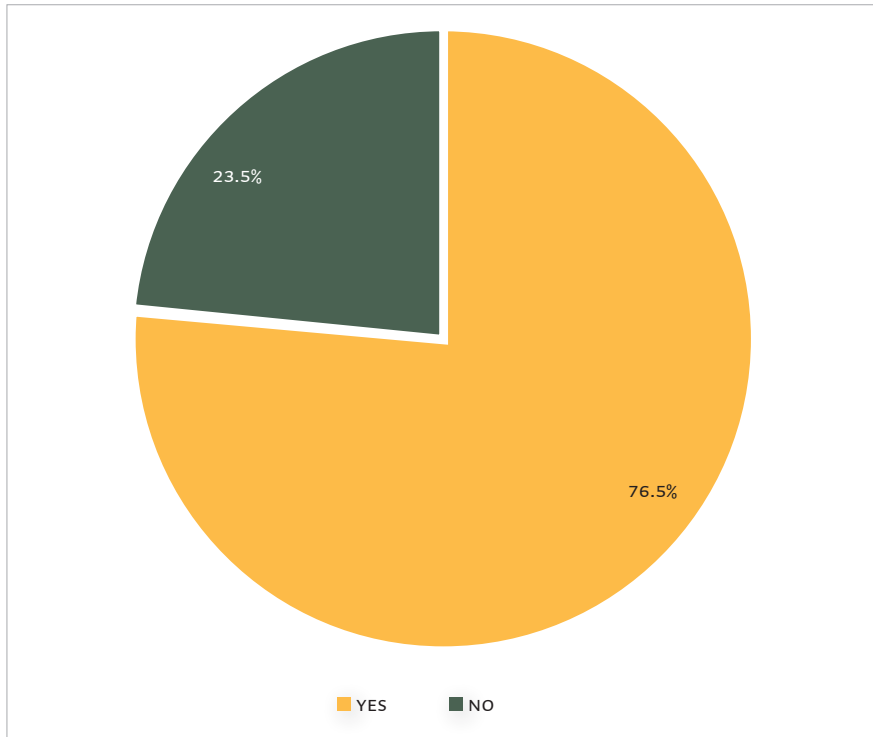
One of the migrants with whom we had an in-depth interview recounted their situation as follows:

'I don't have [a residence permit] for the time being. I had one, valid for a year, then my money and my wallet were stolen. And I could not get another one, I had no money to apply. There was just one week left before the date of my appointment, I was planning to get a new insurance to extend it for a second year. My money was stolen and I was upset. First of all, it was not possible for me to find that much money in a week to solve this problem. At the same time, we had to pay rent and we opted to pay the rent. I will have to pay a fine now.'

Another interviewee explained what a residence permit means: 'You live more legally, you feel more secure. Now, for example, when a policeman passes by... Of course I am afraid, and you have a premonition, you fear they will check you, you do not know what will happen, you may be arrested or you may be told to leave. I'm talking about the bad feeling at that moment. But if you had all the documents, and had a legal stay, then you would not be treated like a thief or criminal, it's ok then... You can walk around as you please any time you want. That's the good side of legal residence, it is very important.'

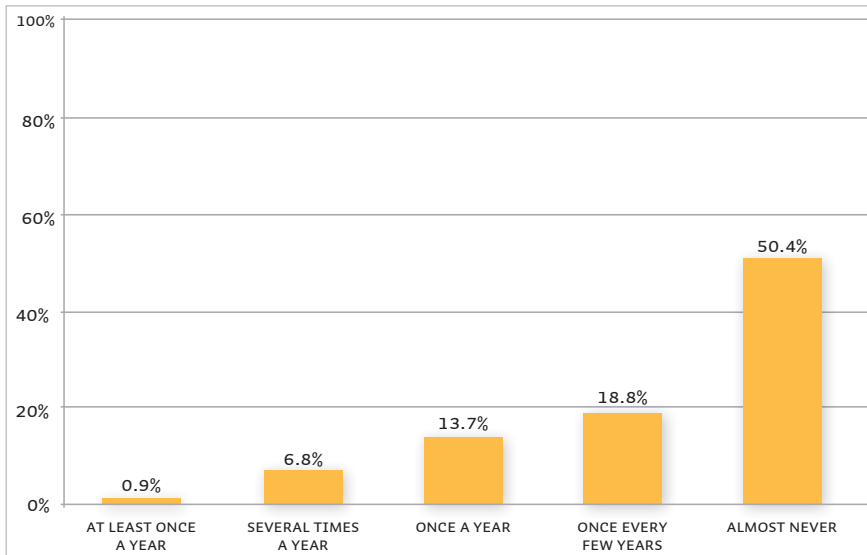
LIFE IN ARMENIA

Figure 18. Do you have relatives in Armenia? (%)



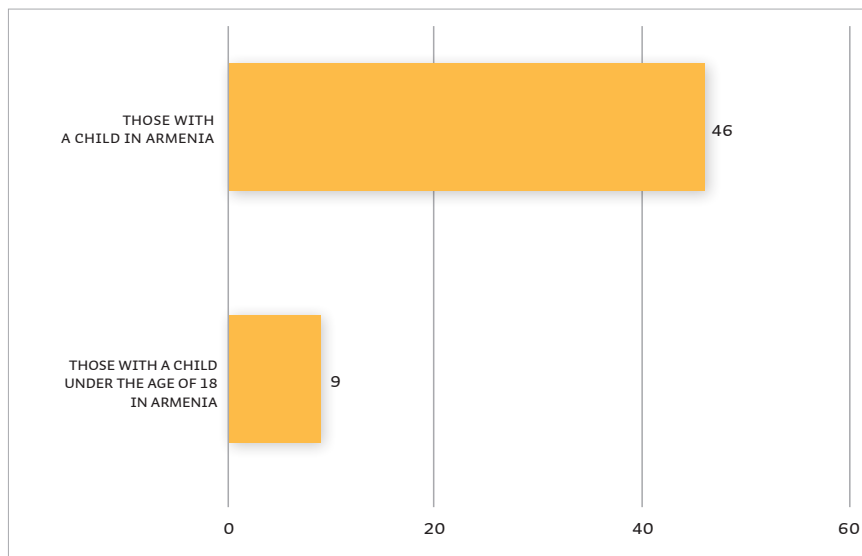
Seventy-seven per cent of the respondents reported having close relatives still living in Armenia, such as a mother, father, or siblings. Relatives mostly live in the regions of Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, and Etchmiadzin.

Figure 19. How often do you visit your relatives in Armenia? (%)



When respondents with relatives in Armenia were asked how often they visited their relatives, half of them responded 'almost never'. When the next highest answer, the 19 per cent 'once every few years', is added to that figure, 70 per cent can be said to be unable to visit their relatives in Armenia. For those who do not have legal residence, a work permit, or a valid visa in Turkey, the percentage of those responding 'almost never' is 78 per cent. While 13.7 per cent visit their relatives once a year, 7.7 per cent do so more frequently.

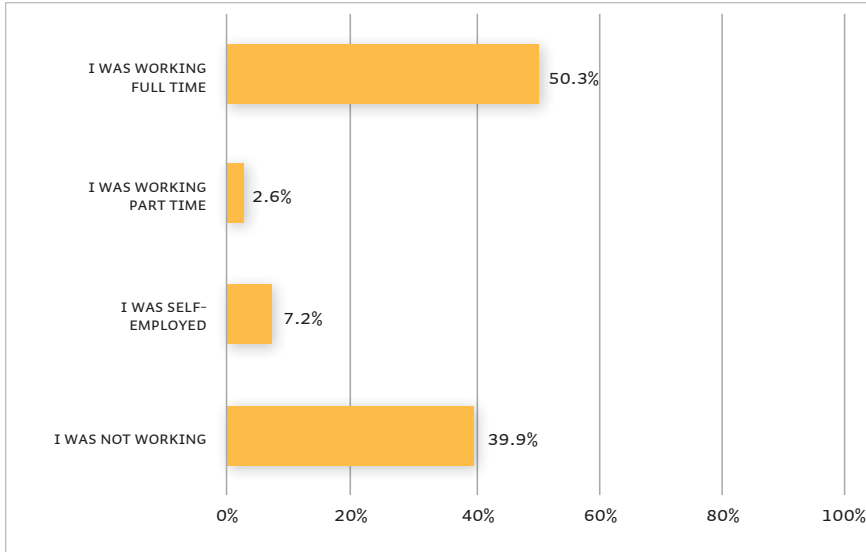
Figure 20. Children in Armenia (#)



Of the respondents, 46 still have children living in Armenia. When we look at the age distribution, nine of these people left their children under the age of 18 in Armenia. These children are taken care of by the parents of the respondents (seven people). It has been found out that 17 of those who have their children in Armenia financially assist their children; this assistance varies between 200 and 2,400 TL per month, and the median value is 800 TL.

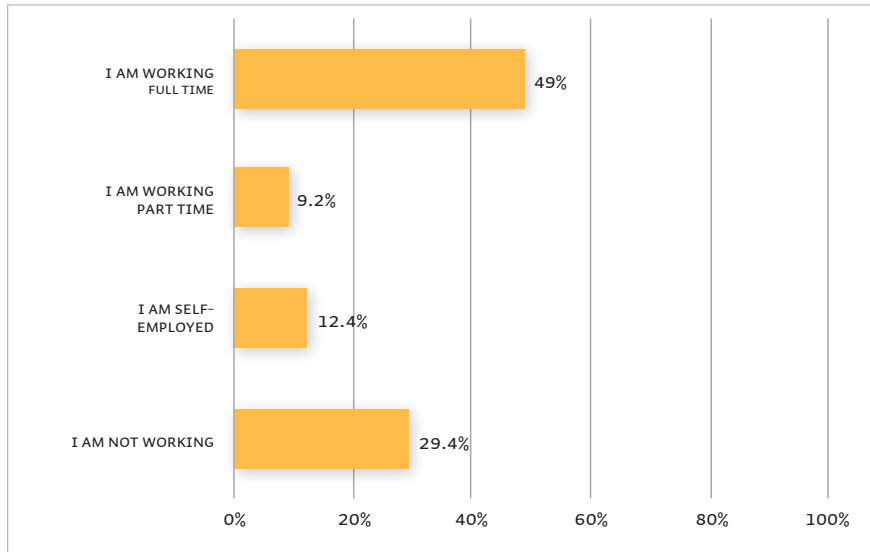
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Figure 21. Employment situation when in Armenia (%)



Half of the respondents reported they had a full-time job in Armenia. While 10 percent either worked part time or were self-employed, 40 per cent reported not having a job when in Armenia. Those who did not work said they did not work because they were unemployed (23 people) or because they were a housewife (22 people). Five respondents reported being students when in Armenia.

Figure 22. Employment situation in Turkey (%)



As for the present employment status of the respondents, 50 per cent work full time, 9 per cent work part time, and 12 per cent are self-employed. The proportion of those who do not work is 29 per cent. These figures indicate that some of those who did not work when in Armenia started working or looking for work in Turkey.

Of those who are not working, 17 are looking for work, and 15 are housewives or do housework. There are five people who cannot work because of illness or similar reasons.

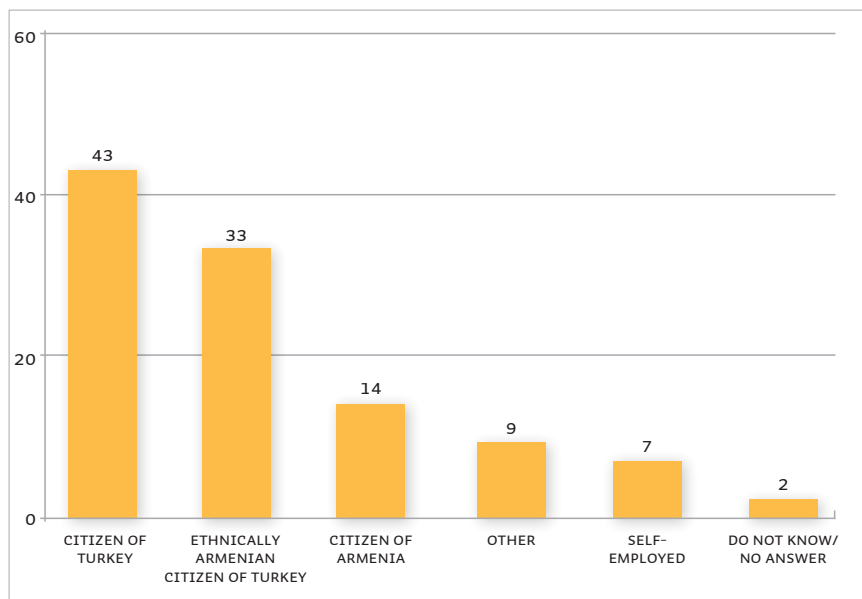
A phenomenon which requires some reflection is that there is no difference in the rate of employment between those living in Turkey with no residence permit, work permit, or visa and those who have legal residence in the country.

When one compares the jobs the respondents did when in Armenia with their professions and the jobs they do currently in Turkey, there appears another situation requiring reflection. The statistical data on this issue collected from the questionnaires does not allow for a quantitative analysis due to the small percentage distribution; however, the following examples may give an idea of the situation.

In terms of the professions for which respondents studied in Armenia, the respondents have reported a very diverse list: 16 nurses/healthcare agents; 11 accountants/salespersons; nine teachers; eight dentists/doctors/engineers; eight hairdressers; seven technicians; four writers/journalists; four musicians; and one linguist/translator/athlete. Most of the respondents did not have the opportunity to work in their area of study in Armenia. However, the most striking point arises when we look at the work they do in Turkey: 35 people report working as cleaners in houses, hotels, or offices; 24 work in elderly, child, and patient care; 11 people work as teachers; 10 people work in jewellery and shoe factories; six work as sales personnel; four people work as cooks; and three people work as couriers. The following examples serve as cases in point:

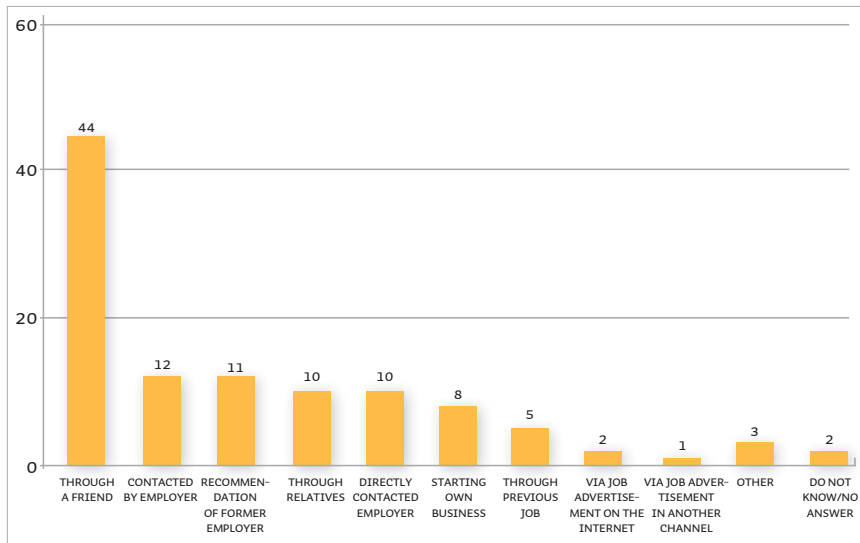
- *A migrant whose profession is civil engineering was a manufacturing supervisor at a factory in Armenia, but is now a worker in a shoe workshop in Turkey.*
- *A military doctor who worked as a warehouse porter in Armenia is now a worker in shoe workshop in Turkey.*
- *A migrant who studied mathematics and worked as a department head at a university in Armenia reported doing babysitting now.*
- *A migrant who is an operating-room nurse is currently working as a cook's assistant.*
- *A migrant who studied dentistry in Armenia reported doing trade in Armenia in a market and is now engaged in trade in Turkey.*
- *A painter who was teaching at an art school in Armenia is currently doing cleaning work in Turkey.*

Figure 23. Portrait of employers (#)



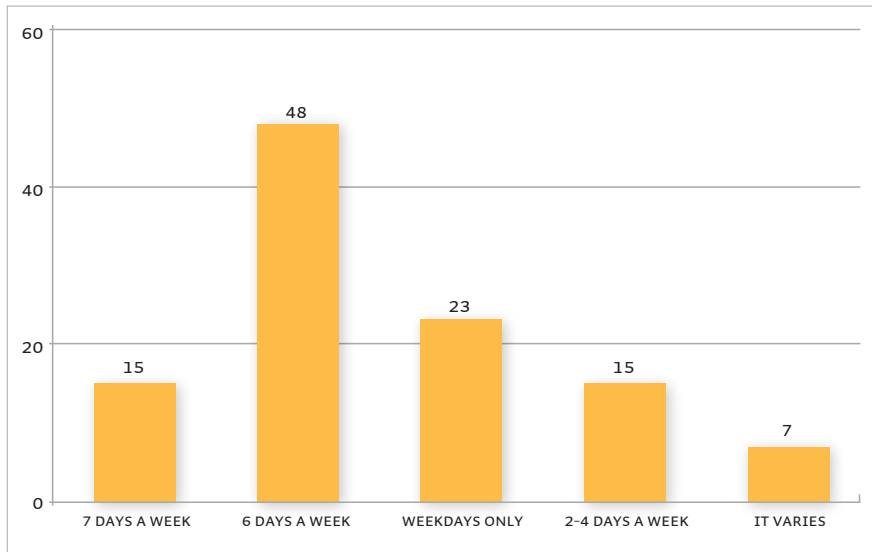
Out of the 108 people who are currently working, 43 are employed by citizens of the Republic of Turkey, while 33 are employed by ethnically Armenian citizens of the Republic of Turkey. Fourteen people are employed by migrants from Armenia. Seven people are self-employed, working on their own account. In addition, there are also people who are employed by employers who are citizens both of the Republic of Turkey and of Armenia.

Figure 24. Job-search channels (#)



When respondents were asked how they found the job in which they are currently employed, the most frequently reported channel was via friends (44 people). When we add those reporting having found their job through relatives (10 people), it is possible to argue that immediate personal connections have an important role in finding jobs. High numbers of respondents also reported finding their jobs through an employer's getting in touch with them (12 people), upon the recommendation of a former employer (11 people), getting in touch directly with an employer (10 people), and through a previous job (five people). This suggests that people who have been previously employed find their next jobs more easily. Advertisements and similar job-search channels seem less effective job-search channels. Six of the 108 people currently working paid the individual or agency who arranged their job for them.

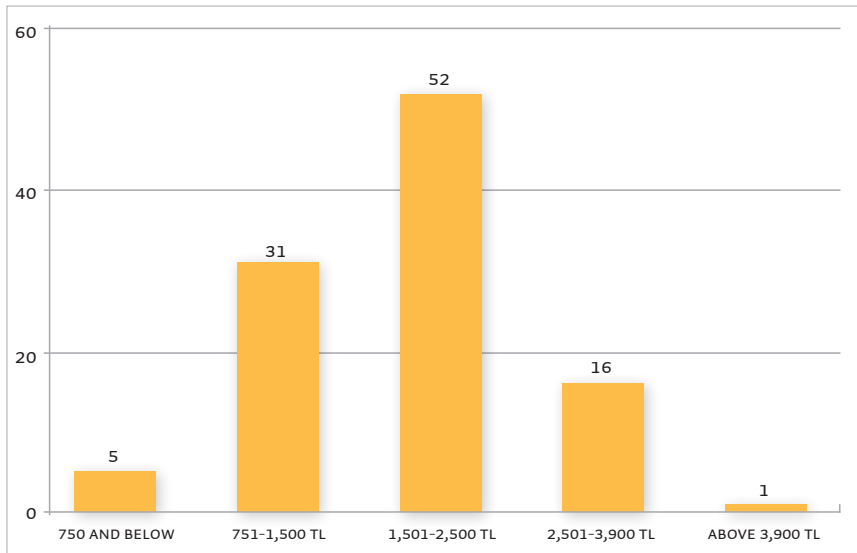
Figure 25. How many days per week do you work? (#)



As can be seen in the chart above, the vast majority of employees work almost every day. There are 15 people working every day during the week and 48 people working six days a week. While there are 23 people working only on weekdays, there are 22 people who work in what we may call 'flexible employment'.

The reported start of the weekday working hours is generally 08:30 (21 people) and 09:00 (25 people), while the end of the workday is 17:00 (26 people) and 18:00 (10 people). Those working during weekends start working at 09:00 and stop at around 17:00.

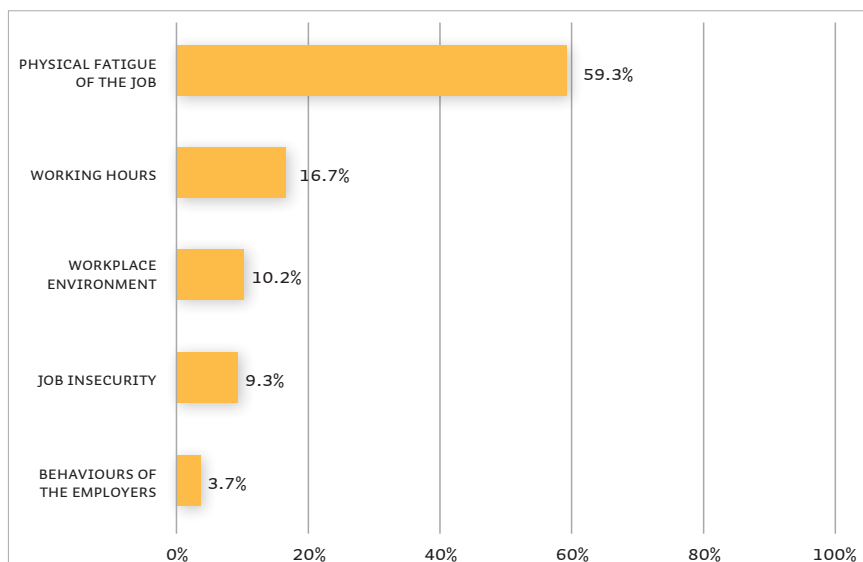
Figure 26. Average income per month (#)



When we look at average monthly earnings, we see that 52 people earn an amount close to the minimum wage.⁹ Five people earn 750 TL or less, while 31 people earn between 751 and 1,500 TL. There are 17 people earning above 2,500 TL per month.

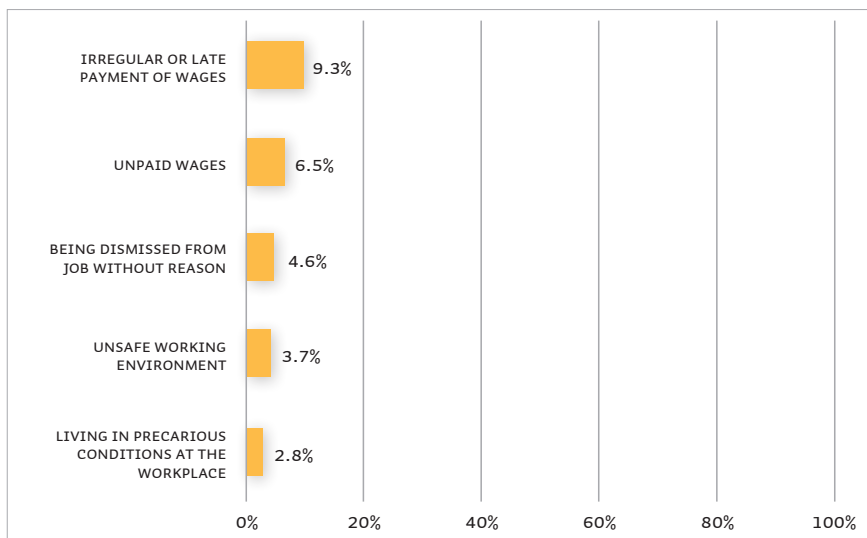
⁹ As of 2018, the minimum wage in Turkey is 1,600 TL (net amount).

Figure 27. Perceived difficulties of the work done (% of respondents answering)



A number of cases were listed to the respondents in employment and they were asked if they had any such difficulties. Physical fatigue was the most commonly reported difficulty (59 per cent), followed secondly by difficulties relating to working hours (17 per cent). Less commonly reported difficulties include the workplace environment (10 per cent), insecure/precarious jobs (9 per cent), and employer behaviour (4 per cent). Among the respondents, 12 people said their social-security premiums were being paid, which shows that employers prefer offering precarious jobs.

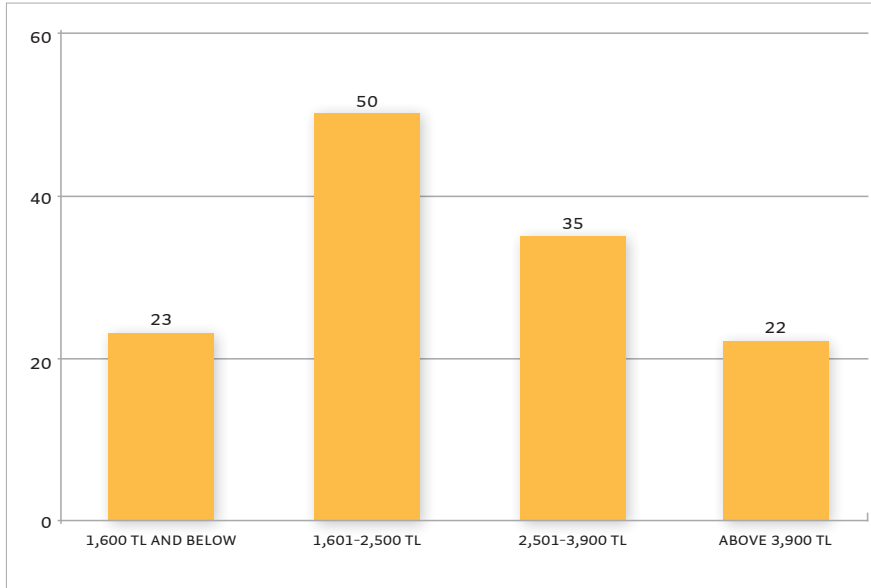
Figure 28. Negative circumstances in the workplace (% of respondents answering)



A number of negative circumstances related to work life were listed to the respondents in employment and they were asked whether they had experienced such situations. It seems the respondents have not often experienced such negative situations. Given that 9 per cent are not being paid their wages regularly and that 7 per cent are not being paid at all, it is worth noting that such situations, which are common in informal employment and in migrant employment in particular, are not common in the case of Armenian-citizen migrants. In this respect, we can say that Armenian citizens surveyed report a more 'secure' work life than other migrant/refugee groups.

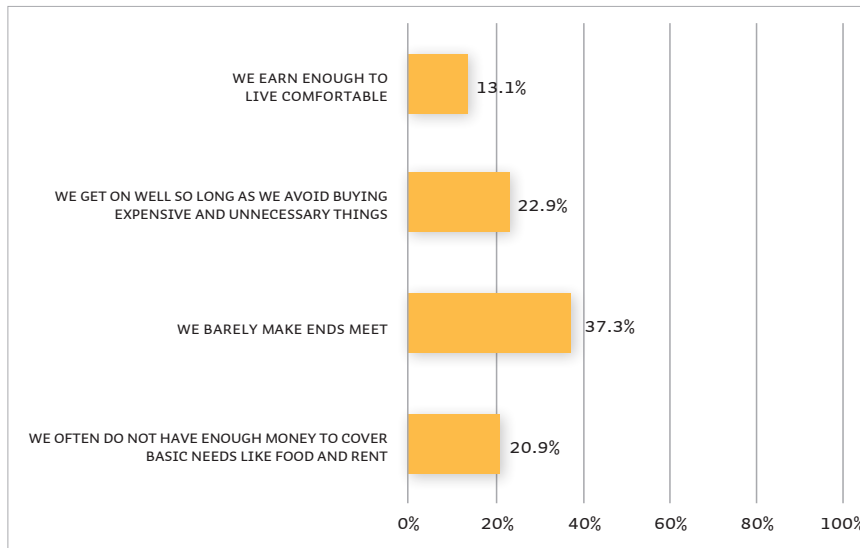
LIVING STANDARDS

Figure 29. Monthly household income (# of respondents answering)



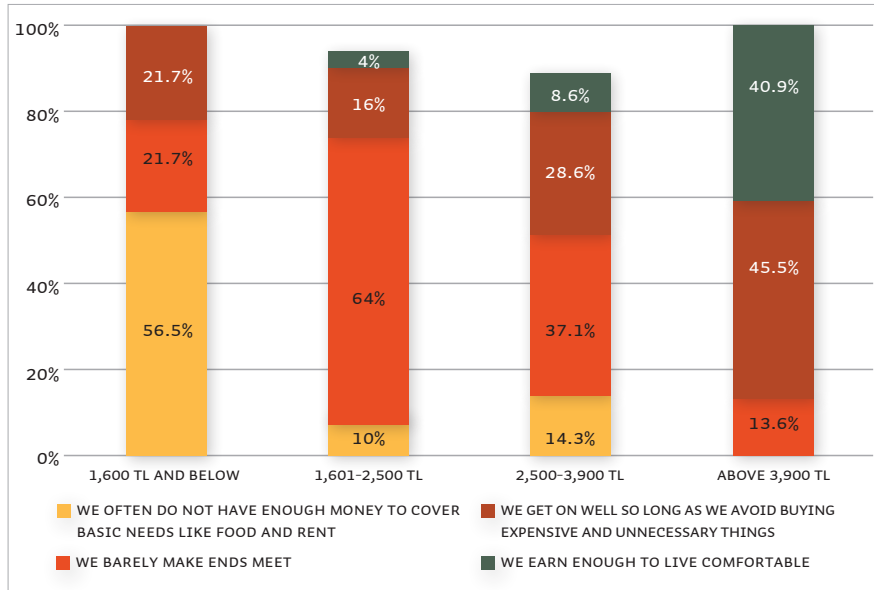
When asked about average monthly household income, 23 respondents reported an income of 1,600 TL or less. There are 50 respondents with an income between 1,601-2,500 TL. There are 35 households with an income of 2,501-3,900 TL and 22 households with an income over 3,900 TL. Twenty-three people did not answer this question.

Figure 30. Perceptions about the subsistence situation of the household (%)



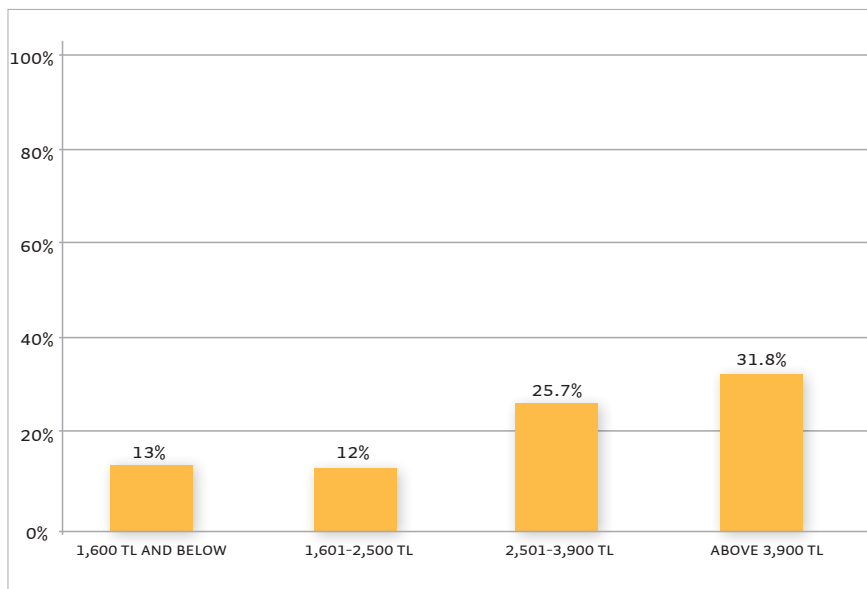
When asked about their subjective perceptions of the subsistence status of their families, 21 per cent of respondents answered, 'We often do not have enough money to cover basic needs like food and rent'; 37 per cent said they 'barely make ends meet'; 23 per cent said they 'get on well so long as we avoid buying expensive and unnecessary things'; and 13 per cent reported 'living comfortably'.

Figure 31. Perceptions about the subsistence situation of the household and household income (%)



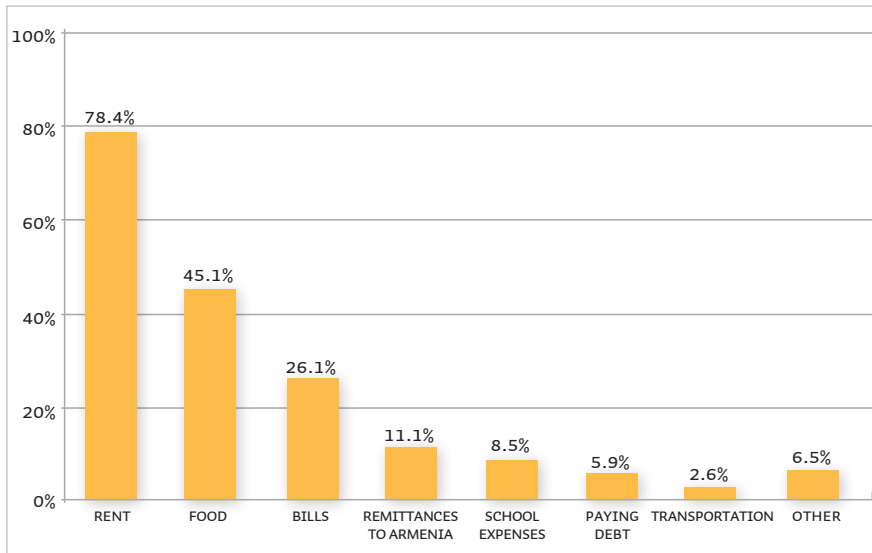
As predicted, there is a correlation between the monthly household income of the respondents and their own subjective evaluation of their family's subsistence. Of those with a monthly household income below 1,600 TL, 57 per cent report having financial hardships. This proportion goes down to around 10 per cent in higher income brackets, and there is no one who gives this answer in the highest income bracket of 3,900 TL or more. Likewise, while 41 per cent of those in that income bracket say they can live comfortably, the proportion of such response goes down as the household income decreases.

Figure 32. Percentage of those who are able to save and monthly household income (%)



Although low-income families seem to have difficulty making ends meet, 13 per cent of those with an income of 1,600 TL or less can save money during an average month. While this rate remains the same in the bracket 1,601-2,500 TL, it goes up to 26 per cent in the bracket 2,500-3,900 TL and to 32 per cent in the highest bracket of above 3,900 TL. These figures show that migrant families from Armenia are saving disproportionately as compared to their income.

Figure 33. Two highest expenditure items (two answers, % of respondents)



Respondents reported their highest expenditures as rent (78 per cent) and food (45 per cent), while 26 per cent reported bill payments as one of their two highest expenditure items. One out of ten reported sending money to Armenia as one of their two highest expenditure items, which will be discussed in more detail later. Nine per cent reported school expenses as their highest expenditure item, and 6 per cent reported paying off debt as their highest expenditure item, which will be discussed below.

Out of the respondents, 28 per cent (42 people) reported owing money to people in Turkey, and another 28 per cent (42 people) to people in Armenia. When asked to whom they owed money, those who owe money to people in Turkey reported owing money to acquaintances (14 people), the grocery store (seven people), and friends (six people). There are 37 people who owe money to a bank in Armenia. From this point of view, we can say that money borrowed from banks in Armenia creates a significant dependency.

Figure 34. Percentage of those remitting money to Armenia (%)

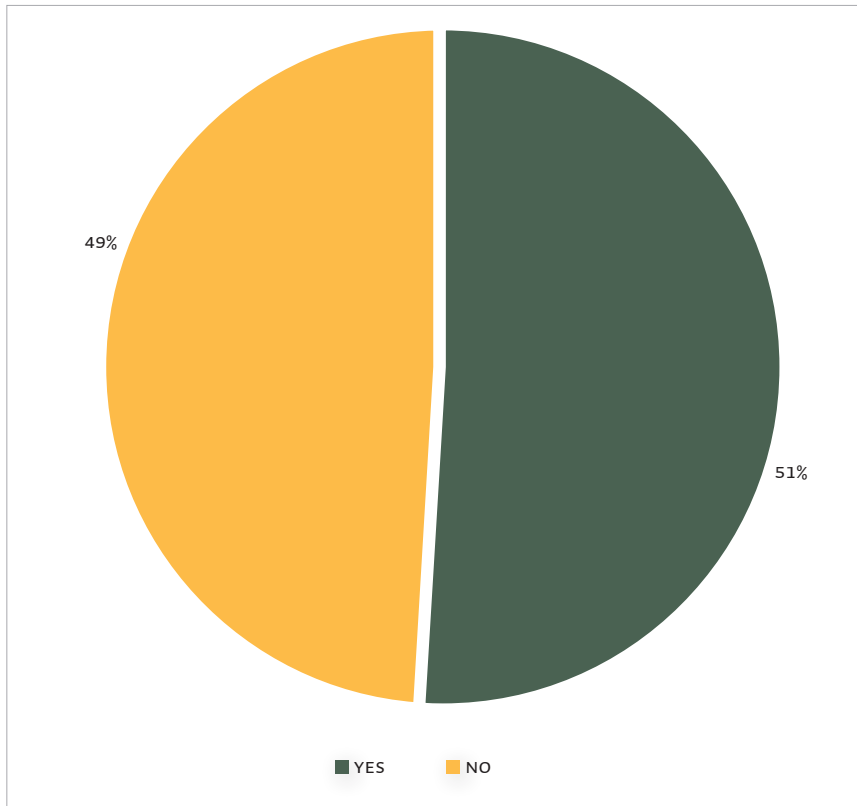
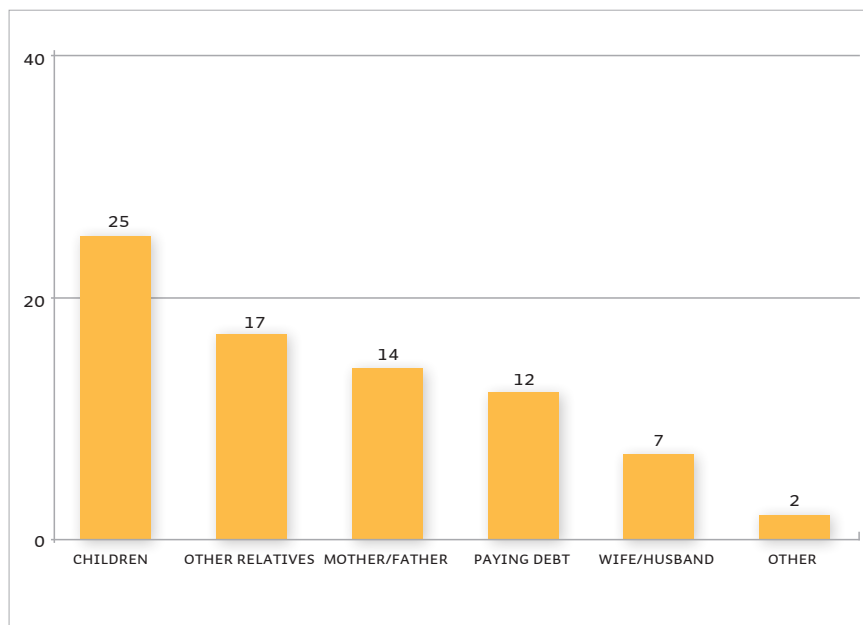


Figure 34 shows the proportion of those who remit money to Armenia. As can be seen, one out of two people surveyed remit money to Armenia on a regular basis. Fifty-six per cent of those who have close relatives such as a mother, father, or siblings in Armenia remit money to Armenia, and 80 per cent of those who have children living in Armenia do so. Connections in Armenia cause them to work in Turkey, to save money, and to remit money to Armenia.

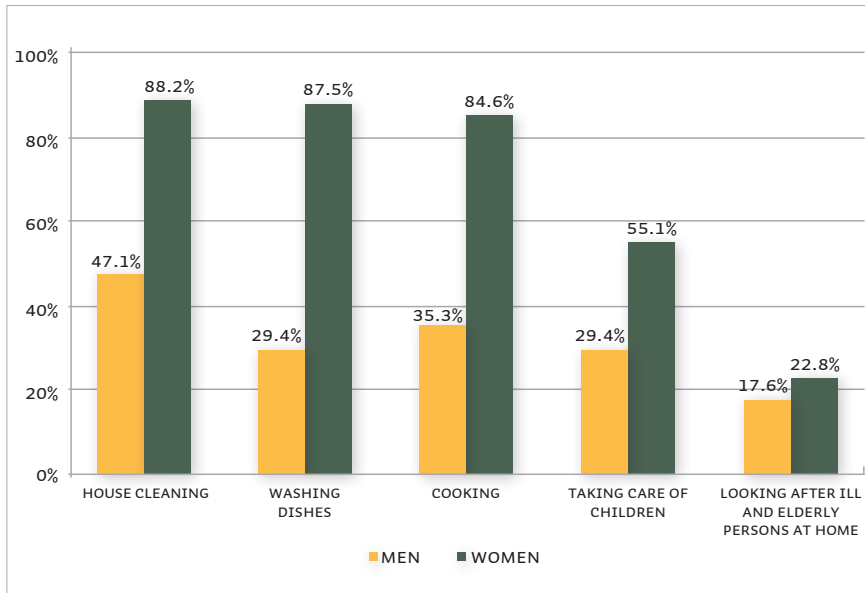
Figure 35. Recipients of money remitted to Armenia / reasons for remittance (#)



When asked to whom they sent money in Armenia, children (25 people) were reported as the most common recipient. This is followed by other relatives (17 people) in second place and parents (14 people) in third place. There are 12 people remitting money to pay a debt. As previously mentioned, these figures point to the importance of connections in Armenia. When asked how much money they sent, the majority were found to remit an amount between 400 and 800 TL (36 people). The most commonly preferred means of remitting money are money transfer agencies/services (30 people) and acquaintances who go to Armenia (27 people). There are 16 people who send money through traders. There are very few people who prefer bank transfers and other official channels. We may interpret this as a result of two factors: Armenian-citizens' not being able to open bank accounts in Turkey because of their irregular migrant status, and the problems concerning bank transfers between Armenia and Turkey.

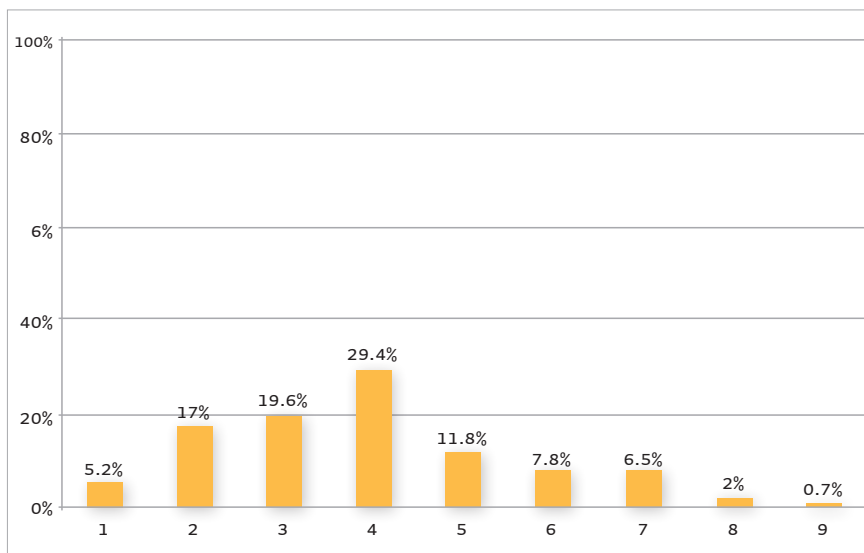
LIFE AT HOME

Figure 36. Gender and work load in the house (ratio of 'I do' answers, %)



A number of domestic activities were listed to the respondents and they were asked whether or not they did these activities. As can be seen from the above graphic, there are significant differences between men and women in terms of their workload in the home. Among housewives, 88 per cent do house cleaning, 88 per cent wash dishes, and 85 per cent cook; 55 per cent report looking after young children, and 22 per cent looking after ill and elderly people in the home. In contrast, 47 per cent of men do house cleaning, 29 per cent wash dishes, and 35 per cent cook; 29 per cent of men look after young children, and 18 per cent look after ill and elderly people in the home.

Figure 37. How many people live in the house? (%)



Almost all of the respondents were found to live in flats (94 per cent). Around 5 per cent live in places like shanties or outbuildings. When asked how many people lived in the house, the reported median value was four people; 70 per cent of respondents live in houses where four or fewer people live. This being the case, about 15 per cent were found to live in relatively crowded houses where six or more people live.

Figure 38. How many families live in the house? (%)

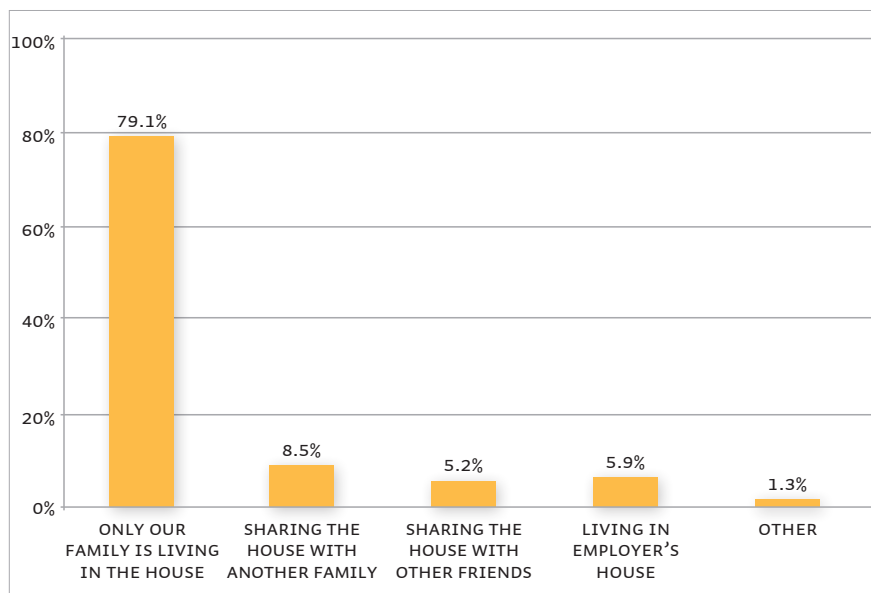
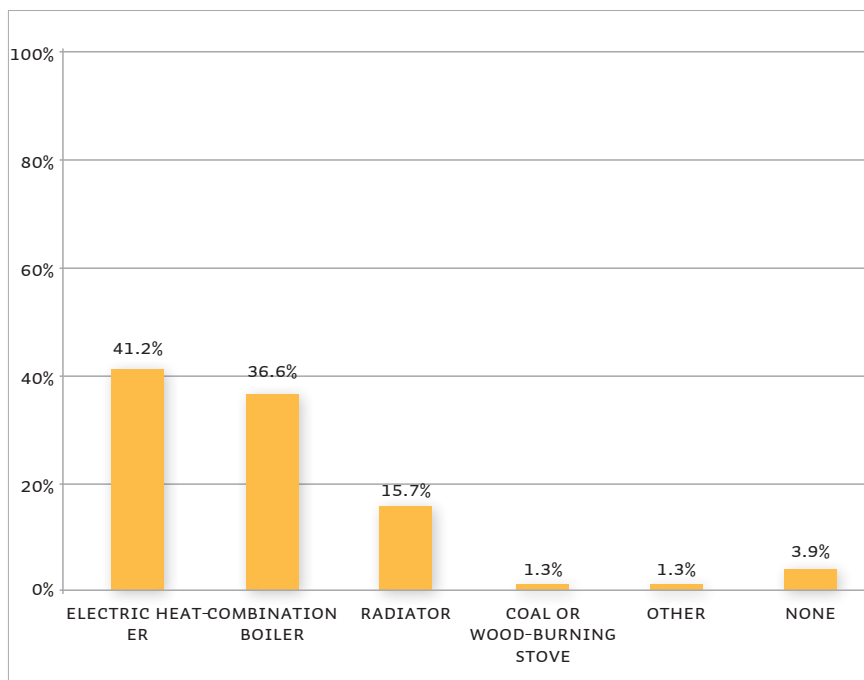


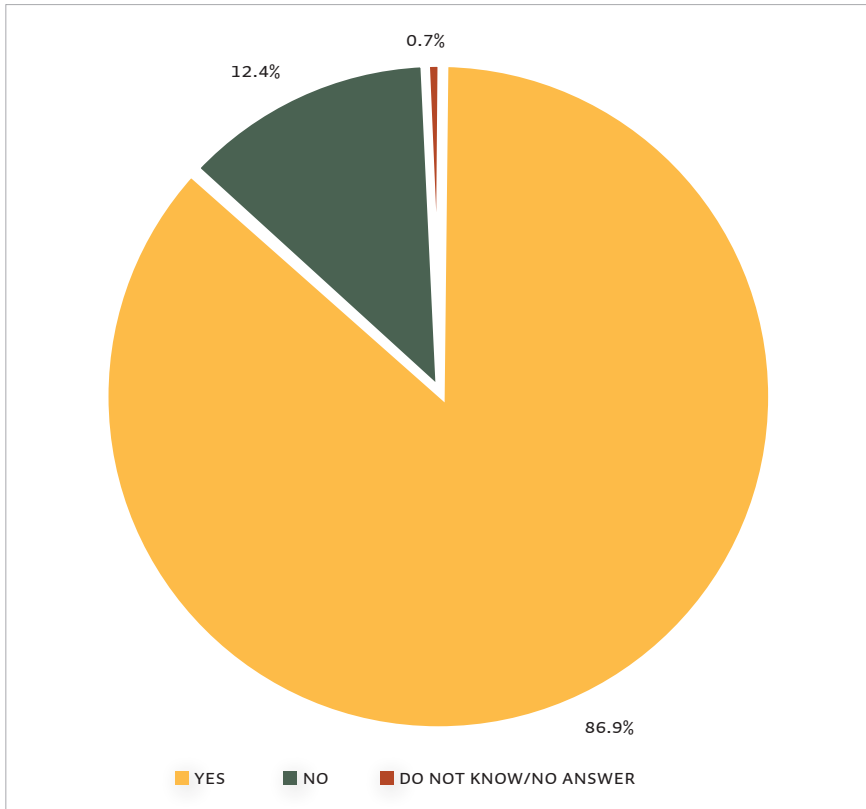
Figure 38 shows that 79 per cent report living in a house with only their own family. Nine per cent share a living space with another family, and 5 per cent share a house with friends. Six per cent live in the house of their employer.

Figure 39. Type of heating in the house (%)



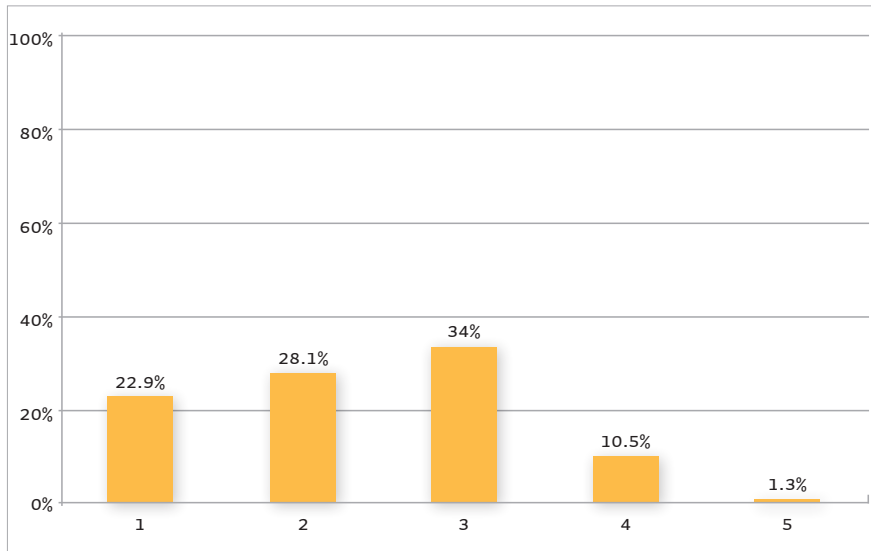
The most common heating appliance used in respondents' homes is the electric heater (41 per cent), followed by combination boilers (37 per cent) and central heating radiators (16 per cent).

Figure 40. Do you pay rent for your house? (%)



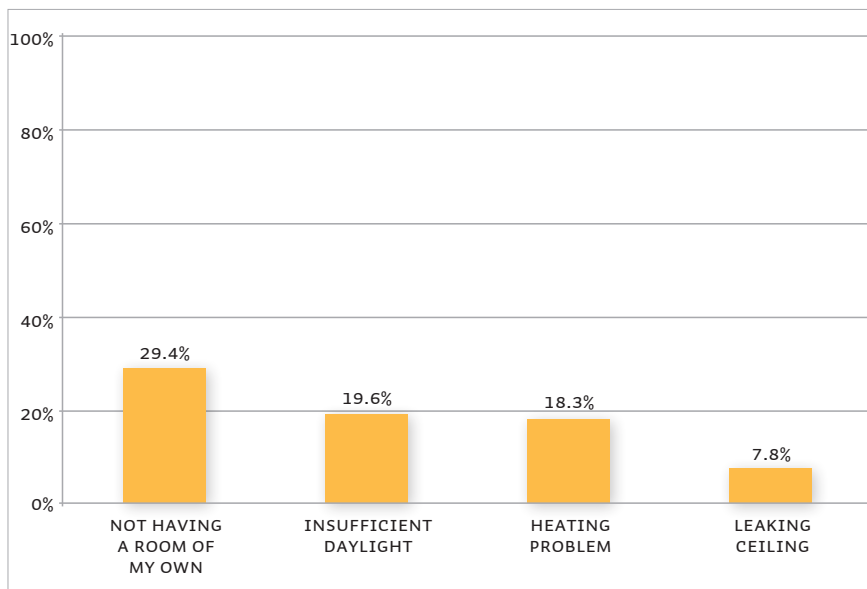
Eighty-seven per cent of the respondents live in a rented house. The median rent is 1,000 TL; in other words, 50 per cent of those who live in a rented house pay a rent below 1,000 TL. The maximum rent paid is 2,500 TL. Sixty per cent of tenants reported having a tenancy agreement for the house they live in.

Figure 41. The number of rooms in the house (including the living room) (%)



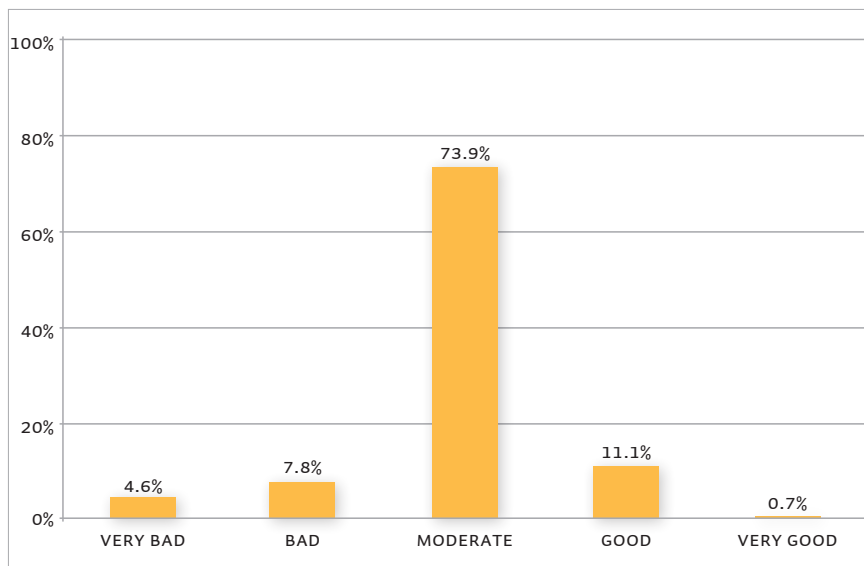
Twenty-three per cent of the respondents live in a one-roomed house, 28 per cent in a two-room house, and 34 per cent in a three-room house, including the living room. Although the houses are large, the buildings seem to be old. Only 15 per cent live in a building less than 10 years old, and more than half live in buildings that are 35 years old or older. Hence, we can say that the respondents live in the old neighbourhoods of the city.

Figure 42. Problems experienced in the house (%)



When the respondents were asked what they complained about in the houses where they live, the most frequently reported problem, with 29 per cent, was that they did not have a room of their own. Given that many respondents live in one or two-room houses, including the living room, it is obvious that they do not have much privacy. The second most common answer, with 20 per cent, is insufficient daylight, with a similar percentage reporting the problem of insufficient heating. Eight per cent complain about a ceiling leak.

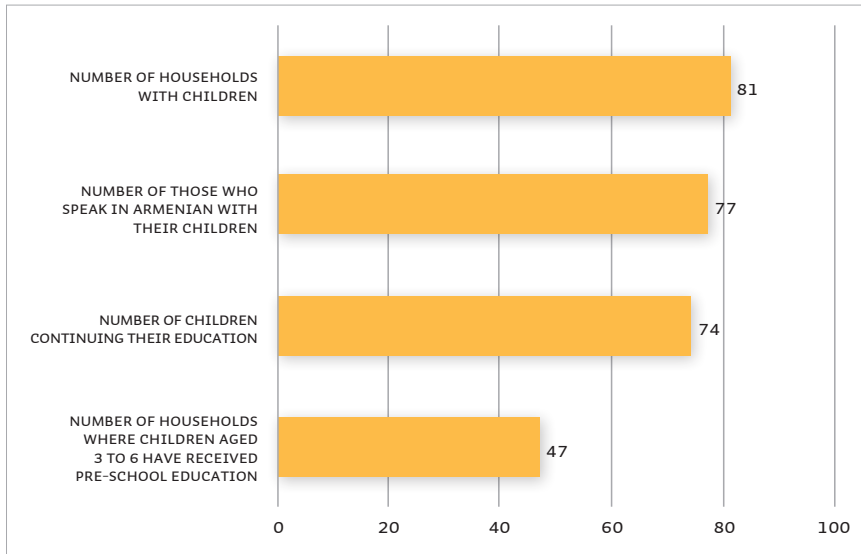
Figure 43. Financial status as compared to that of others in the same neighbourhood (%)



When asked to compare their economic situation with that of other families in the vicinity, almost none gave the answer 'very good'. The answers 'very bad' and 'bad' together make up 12 per cent, as do the answers 'very good' and 'good'. Seventy-four per cent of the respondents identified themselves as 'of moderate means'.

CHILDREN'S SITUATION

Figure 44. Data about children (#)

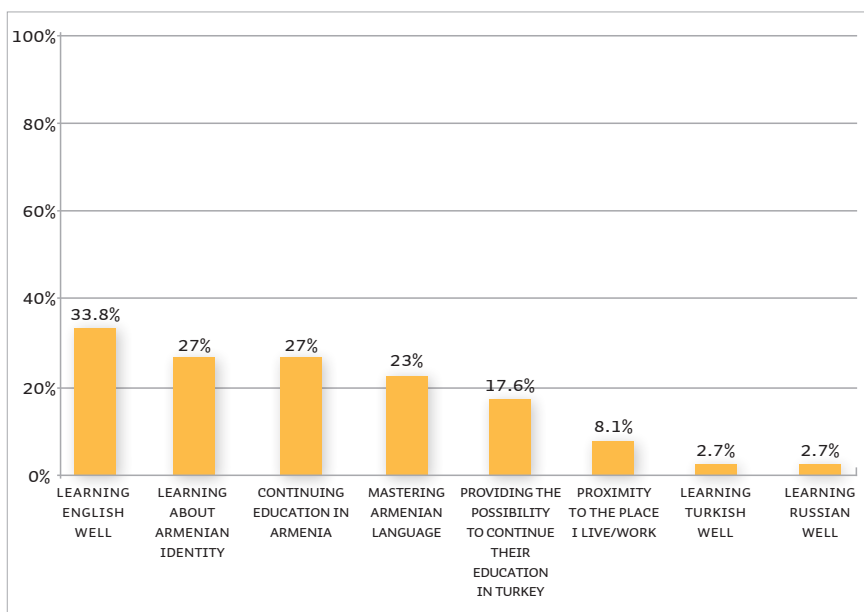


There is at least one child in 81 of the households we surveyed. In 77 of the 81 households, Eastern Armenian is spoken with children. Children attend school in 74 of the 81 households, and there are children who have abandoned education in eight of the households. The primary reason for dropping out is reported to be financial problems: the family cannot afford to send the child to school, or the child needs to work to contribute to the family budget. Likewise, in 47 of the 50 households with children aged between 3 and 6, children have received pre-school education.

Of the children who attend school, 28 children attend the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School and 44 go to one of the Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the MoNE. Two people did not give any answer.

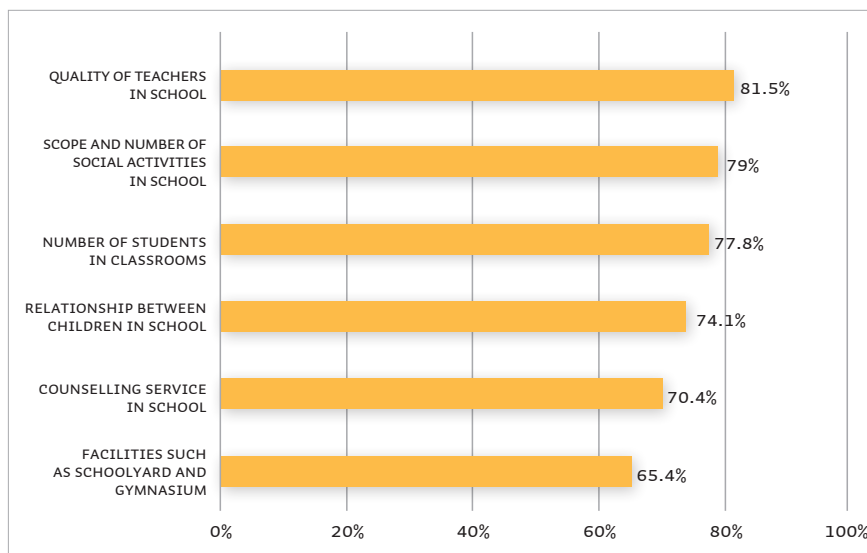
When asked where their children will continue their education, 22 people said they would continue their education in Armenia and 15 people said they would do so in an Armenian school in Istanbul. Four people said they would go to a Turkish school in Turkey, and three people said they would drop out of school. There are 29 people who did not answer or said they did not know the answer to this question.

Figure 45. Priorities in the education of children (2 answers, % of answers)



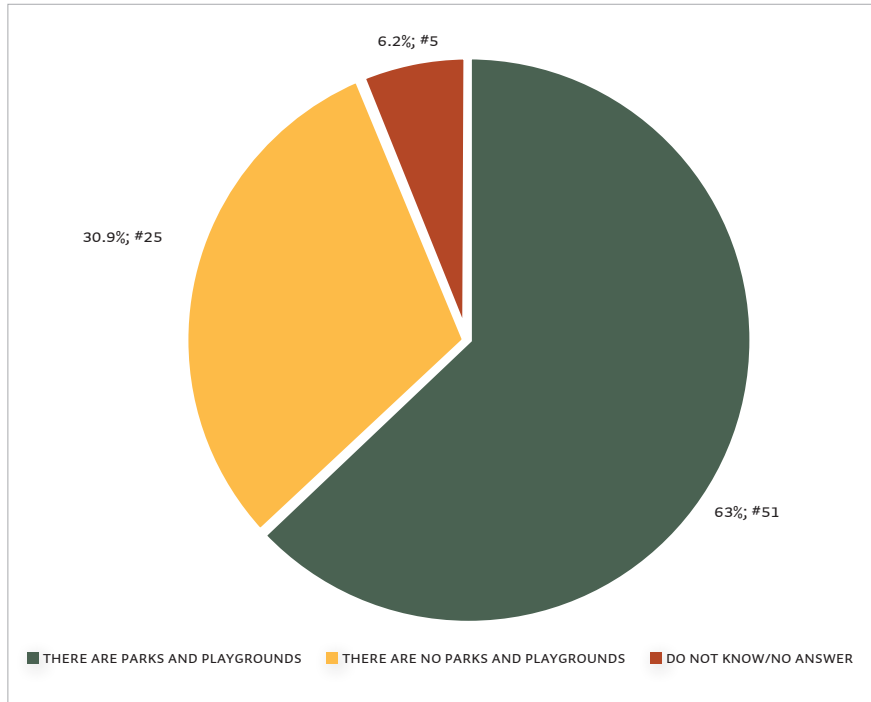
Issues considered to be important by parents in the education of their children are shown in Figure 45. The most frequently reported answer, with 34 per cent, is to learn English well. Three answers show us the importance of the Armenian identity for the parents: learning about the Armenian identity (27 per cent), continuing education in Armenia (27 per cent), and mastering the Armenian language (23 per cent). The answer 'providing the possibility to continuing their education in Turkey' was given by only 18 per cent of the respondents.

Figure 46. Satisfaction with children's educational opportunities (% of those satisfied)



A number of matters relating to children's schools and teachers were listed to those parents whose children attend school and they were asked whether or not they were satisfied on these points. The parents are generally satisfied with their children's schools and teachers. The highest 'satisfied' responses relate to the quality of teachers at the schools (82 per cent), the number and scope of social activities (79 per cent), the number of students in the classroom (78 per cent), and the relationships among the children in the schools (74 per cent). The lowest satisfaction rate, with 65 per cent, relates to the facilities at schools, such as schoolyard, gymnasium, etc.

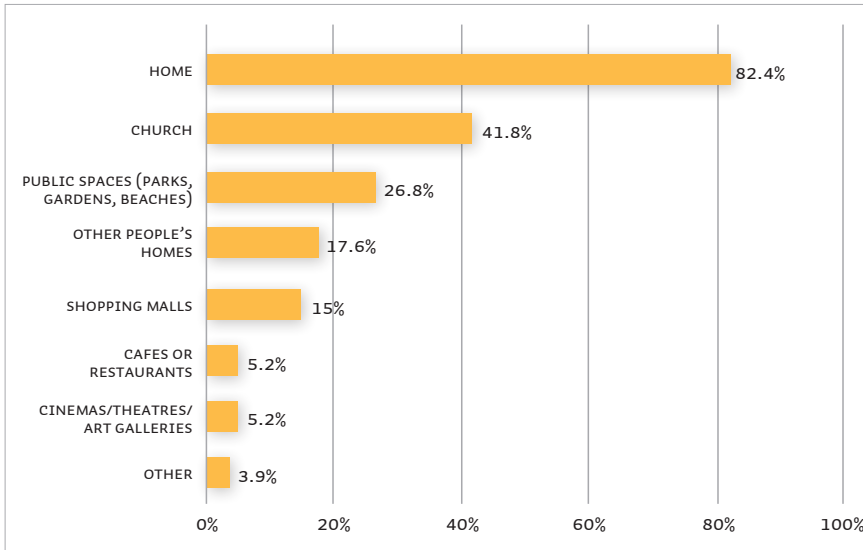
Figure 47. Are there any parks and playgrounds in the neighbourhood? (#, %)



The 81 people who have children were asked whether or not there were any parks and playgrounds for children nearby – 51 people (63 per cent) said yes, and 25 people (31 per cent) said no. Of the former group, 43 said that their children used the nearby parks or playgrounds, and 33 people said they were satisfied with the qualities of these facilities.

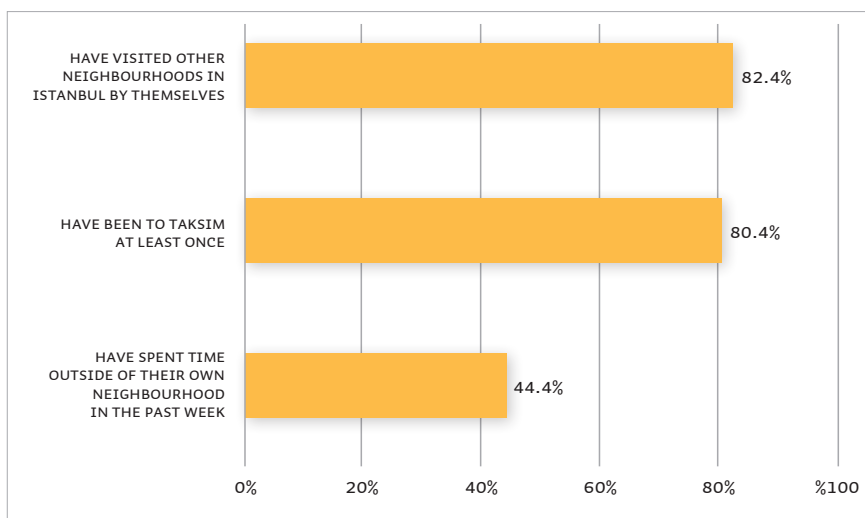
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY

Figure 48. Places where you most often spend your spare time
(3 answers, % of those answered)



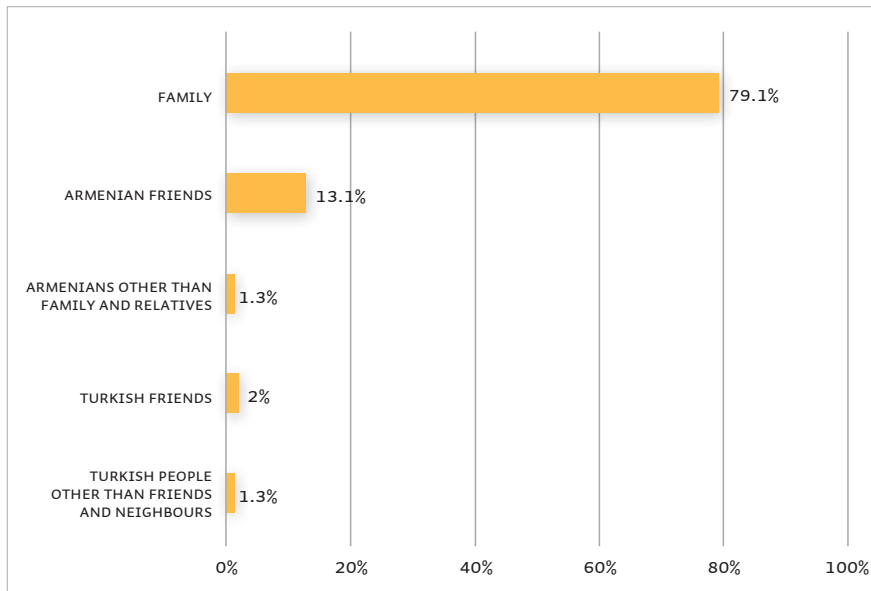
Most of the respondents spend their spare time at home (82 per cent). Many (42 per cent) also reported spending spare time at the church, and 27 per cent in public spaces such as parks, gardens, etc. There are relatively few people who visit their friends (18 per cent) or spend time in shopping malls (15 per cent), suggesting that they lead a secluded life.

Figure 49. Familiarity with Istanbul (% of those answered)



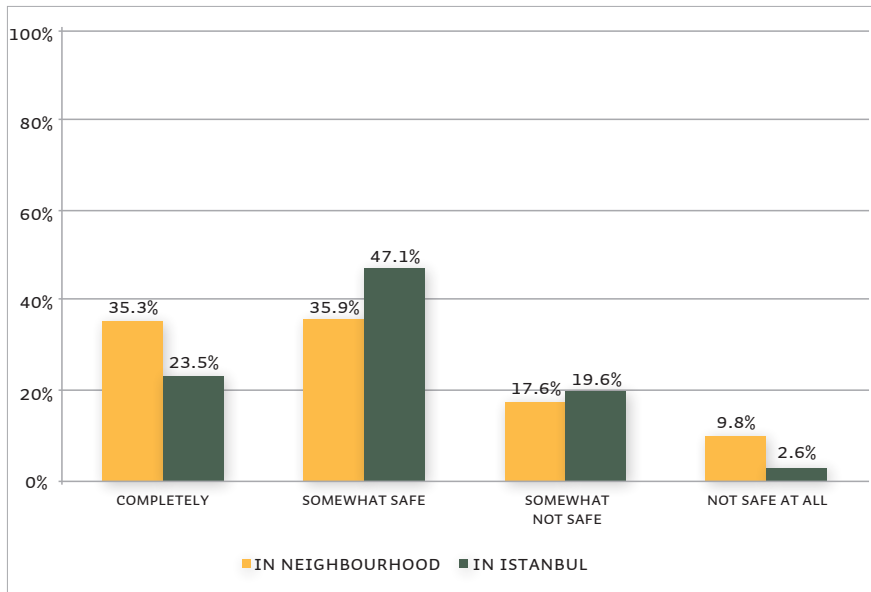
A number of questions were asked in order to understand how integrated the respondents were in urban life. Eighty-two per cent said they had visited different neighbourhoods in Istanbul alone. Eighty per cent has been to Taksim at least once. Forty-four per cent stated that they had spent time outside their neighbourhood at least once during the week before they took part in the questionnaire.

Figure 50. People with whom they spend time with when not working (%)



Respondents spend time with their families when they do not work (79 per cent). When we put aside the answer ‘I spend time with Armenian friends’ (13 per cent), we can argue that these people have a life surrounded only by their family. While 32 of the respondents stated that they have Turkish friends they see frequently, 35 respondents reported having Turkish friends they see occasionally, and 83 stated that they do not have any relationships with Turkish people outside of shopping. This data indicates that more than half of the respondents interact with Turkish people only when shopping.

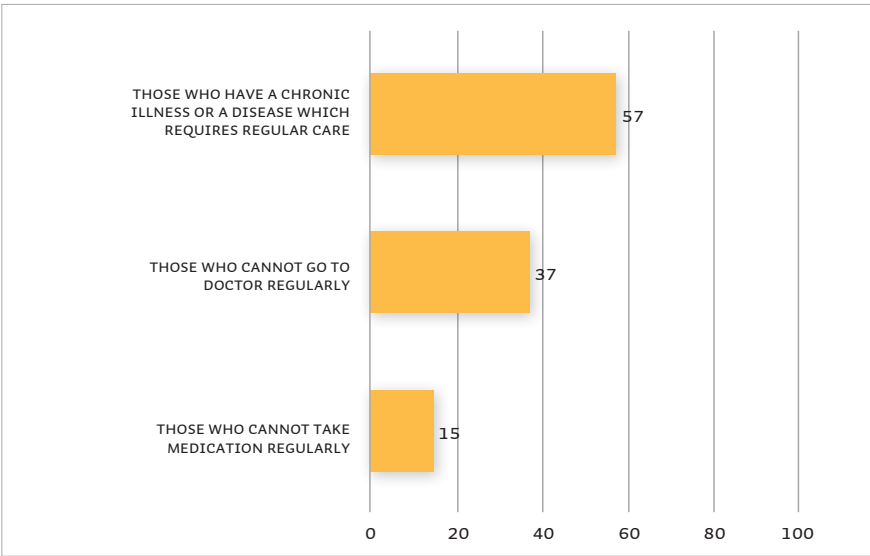
Figure 51. How safe they feel in the neighbourhood and in Istanbul (%)



As can be seen in Figure 51, the respondents generally feel safe in the neighbourhood they live in (the answers 'completely safe' and 'somewhat safe' together make up 72 per cent), and 27 per cent feel 'not safe at all'. When it comes to their feelings about the broader city, only 24 per cent feel safe in Istanbul, but the sum of the two answers remains at 71 per cent. Therefore, we can say that there is a sense of relative security.

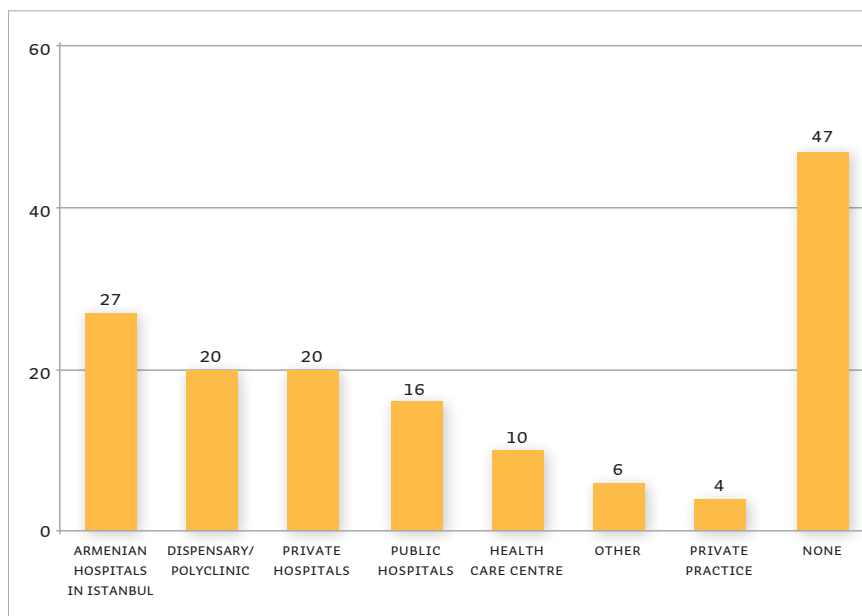
HEALTH SITUATION

Figure 52. Access to a doctor and regular medication in cases of chronic illness (#)



Of the respondents, 57 have a chronic disease or a condition that requires regular care. Of these, 37 have a disease that requires regularly visiting a doctor, but they cannot. There are 15 people who need to take medication regularly but cannot. 30 people can take medication regularly. Hence, it can be said that there is a problem with access to health-care. The reported illnesses can be classified as follows: 13 people reported suffering from heart- and blood-pressure-related diseases; 13 people from bone, spine, or joint pain; 11 people from diabetes or diabetes-related conditions; six people from pulmonary/lung diseases; four people from gastro-intestinal diseases; four people from headaches; three people from neurological issues; and two people from cancer. Some reported having more than one disease or condition.

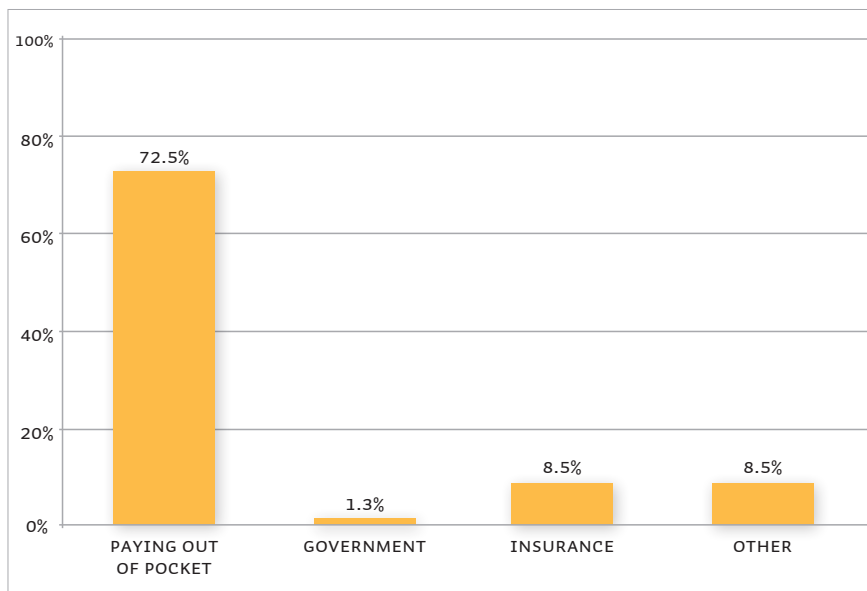
Figure 53. Health-care institution applied to when ill (#)



When asked which health-care institution they apply to when ill, 47 of the respondents said that they do not apply to any health-care institution at all. Twenty-seven people reported applying to Armenian hospitals in Istanbul, 20 people to institutions like dispensaries/outpatient clinics, and 20 people to private hospitals. Sixteen people reported going to public hospitals and 10 to a community health-care centre.

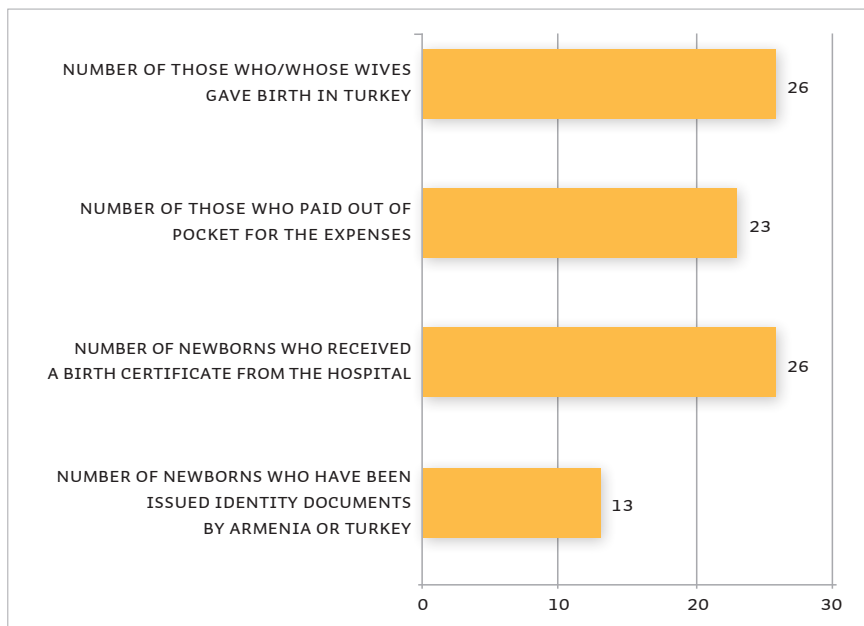
Thirty-five (43 per cent) people among those who do not have a work permit, residence permit, or visa in Turkey do not apply to any health-care institution. One of the migrants with whom we had an in-depth interview summarised this situation as follows: ‘No one looks after you, I have not been to the doctor properly either, I have many problems, but I take medication to relieve my pain. I’m looking after myself on my own... It takes both time and money...’

Figure 54. Who covers health-care costs when ill? (%)



When asked who paid for health-care costs in case of a health problem, we observed that people covered their expenses mostly out of their own pockets (73 per cent). Only 10 per cent reported other sources.

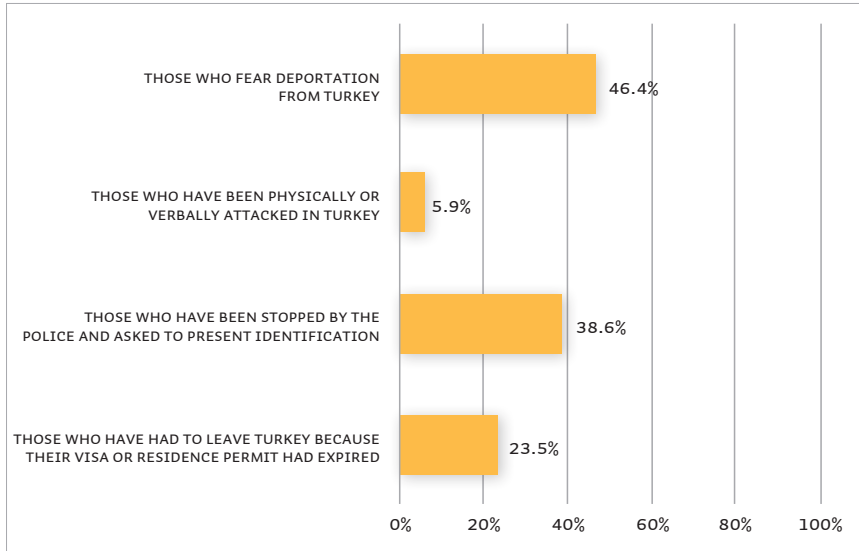
Figure 55. Giving birth in Turkey and afterwards ... (#)



Twenty-six of the respondents or their wives have given birth in Turkey. It has been found that the costs of childbirth were borne by people out of their own pockets (23 people). While 26 people received a birth certificate from the hospital after the birth, these birth certificates have not been converted into ID cards. As few as 13 of the newborns have received an ID card from Armenia or Turkey; in other words, according to the research findings, half of the babies born in Turkey have no ID card.

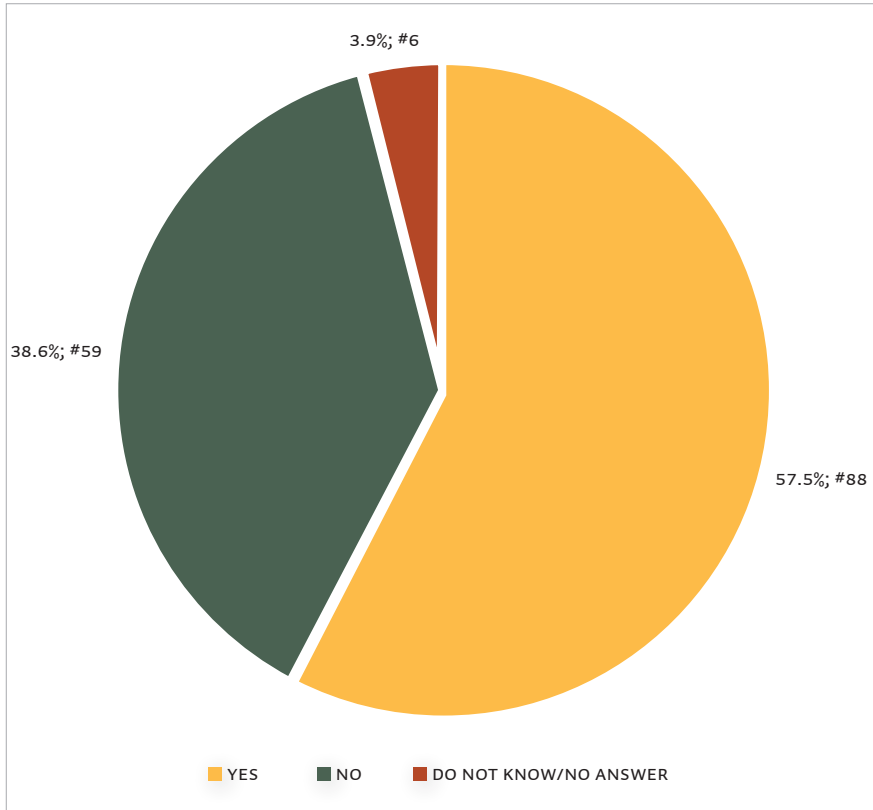
RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AND PEOPLE FROM TURKEY

Figure 56. While living in Turkey ... (%)



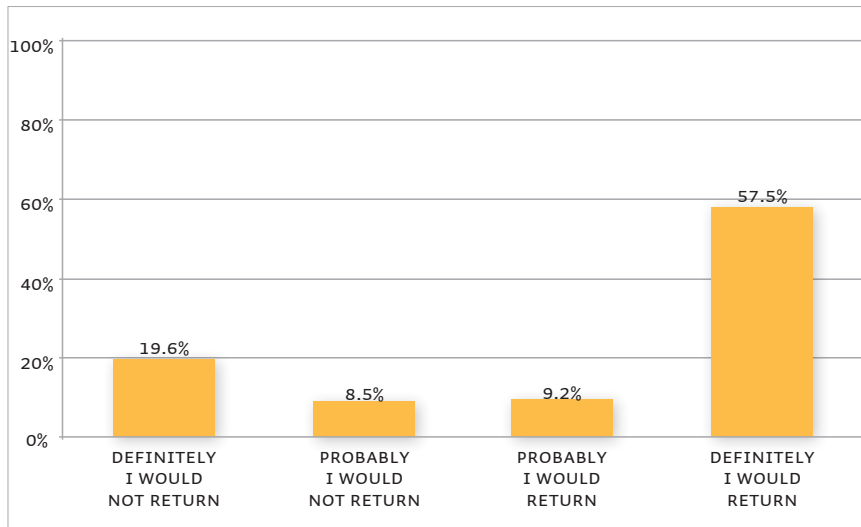
Forty-six per cent of the respondents fear being deported from Turkey one day. Thirty-nine per cent said they had been stopped by police officers who asked to see their ID cards. Twenty-four per cent have had to leave Turkey due to an expired visa or residence permit. Compared to the anxiety caused by legal problems, it is noteworthy that only 6 per cent of respondents have experienced any physical or verbal aggression in Turkey.

Figure 57. Are you thinking of working in another country? (#, %)



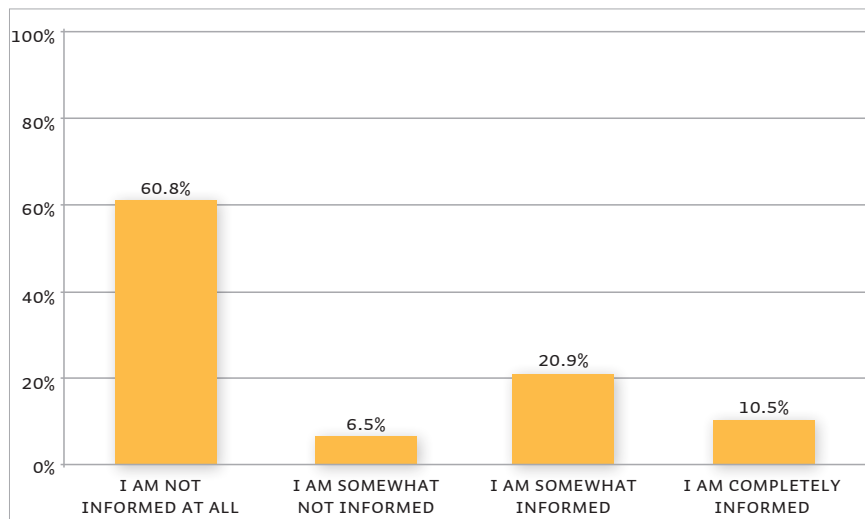
Fifty-eight per cent of the respondents (88 people) are considering working in a country other than Turkey. European countries rank first (Germany, France), and 11 respondents said they are considering working in the United States.

Figure 58. Inclination to return to Armenia (%)



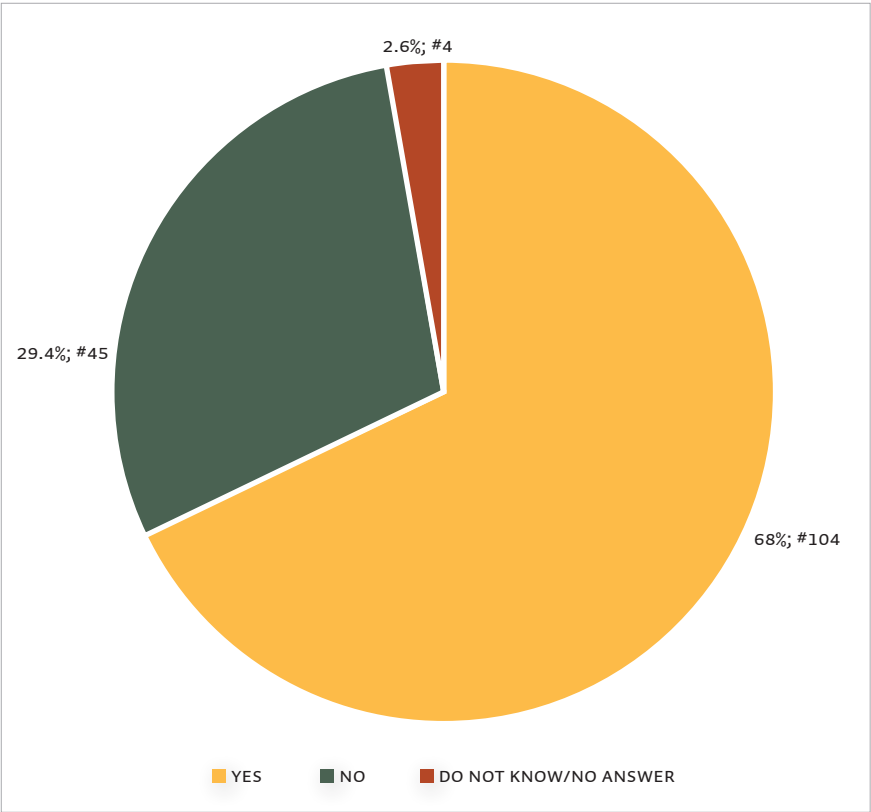
When the respondents were asked, 'Will you return to your country when you reach your goal, for example, when you improve your financial situation?', 58 per cent of them said that they would definitely return. When we add the answers 'I would probably return', we can say that 67 per cent intend to return to Armenia in the future.

Figure 59. Awareness of one's rights in Turkey as a citizen of Armenia (%)



Sixty-seven per cent of the respondents reported not being ‘aware of the rights they have in Turkey as a citizen of Armenia’. This rises to 84 per cent among citizens of Armenia staying in Turkey informally.

Figure 6o. Do you know how to apply for residence permit or how to extend it? (#, %)



Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents said they knew what to do to apply for or extend a residence permit. Forty-five per cent of the Armenian citizens who stay in Turkey without a work permit, residence permit, or visa reported not knowing what to do. This rate is 11 per cent among other respondents.



**THE STATE OF ARMENIAN
MIGRANTS' CHILDREN -
CHILDREN'S QUESTIONNAIRE**





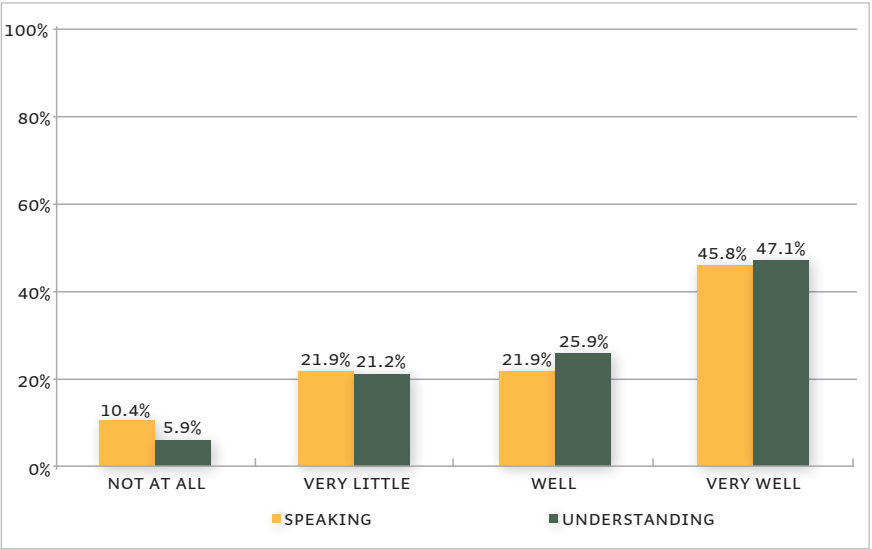
THE STATE OF ARMENIAN MIGRANTS' CHILDREN - CHILDREN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of this study, two separate questionnaires were conducted with children aged 8 to 11 and 12 to 18. Since both groups were reached through schools, the findings reflect the self-assessment of only those children who are continuing their education. As stated in the introduction, a questionnaire consisting of shorter and simpler questions was given to the younger group.

FINDINGS FOR THE 8-11 AGE GROUP

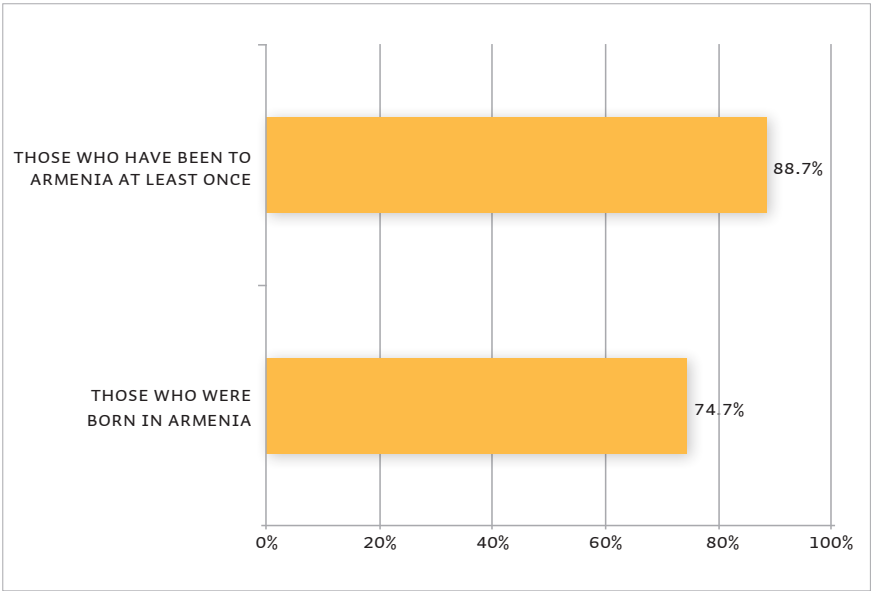
A total of 102 children in the age bracket 8, 9, 10 and 11 have participated in our research and completed the self-reporting questionnaires prepared in Eastern Armenian. Half of the participating children were boys and half were girls. Fifty-nine were students at the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School, and the remaining 43 were guest students at the Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE).

Figure 61. Speaking and understanding Turkish (%)



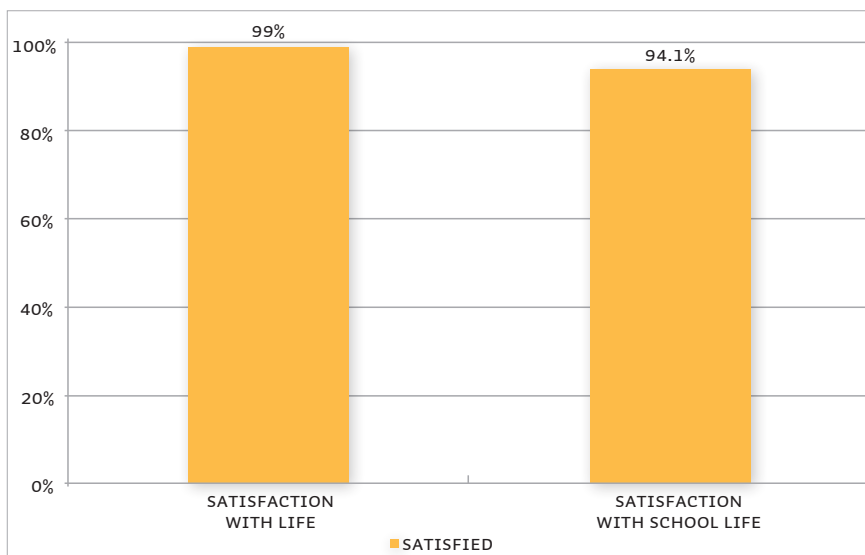
The children who participated in the questionnaire were asked how well they speak and understand Turkish. As can be seen in the Figure 61 according to the self-reports of the children, there is not a big difference between their levels of speaking and comprehension in Turkish. Nearly half of the children report speaking and understanding Turkish very well, and when we add the answer ‘well’, we observe that 67 per cent of the respondents speak well and very well and that 72 per cent understand it well and very well. Ten per cent of them do not speak Turkish at all, and six per cent do not understand it at all.

Figure 62. Ties with Armenia: birth and visiting (%)



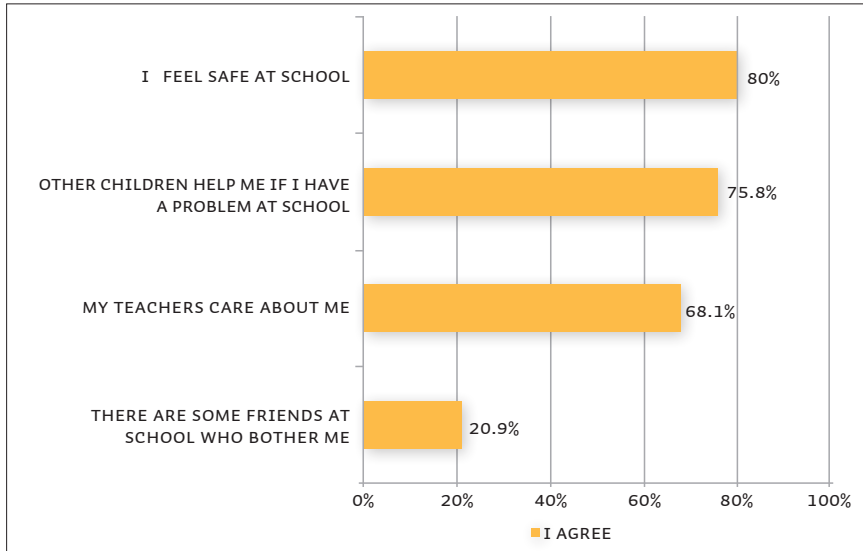
Seventy-five per cent of the children aged 8 to 11 reported being born in Armenia, while 22 per cent were born in Turkey, and the rest in other countries. Eighty-nine per cent of the children have been to Armenia at least once, and only about 10 per cent of them have never been there, which shows that relations with Armenia continue for children.

Figure 63. Satisfaction with life and school life (%)



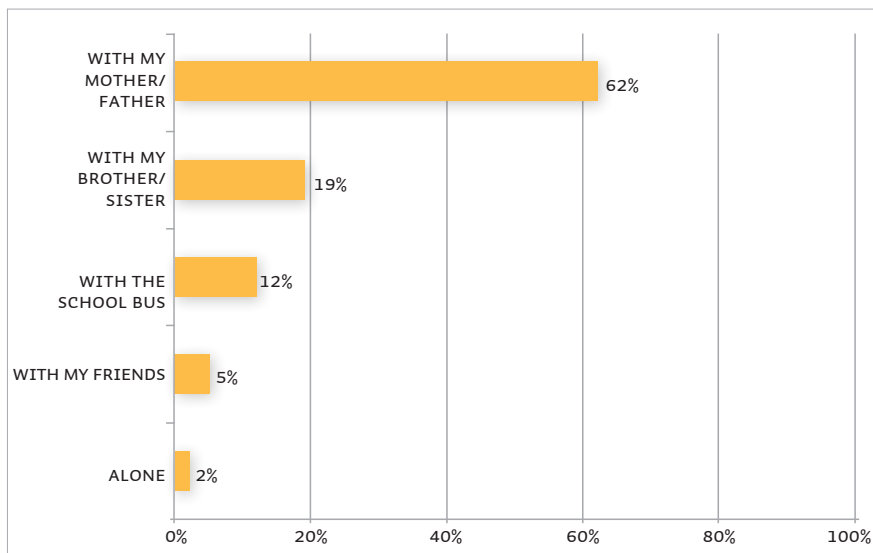
We observe that almost all of the children surveyed are satisfied with their lives. Likewise, the rate of those who are satisfied with their school lives is 95 per cent. Although other surveys conducted in Turkey also reveal high satisfaction rates, it is interesting and significant to see that there is almost no case of dissatisfaction here.

Figure 64. Assessments of school life (%)



A number of cases about the school were listed to the children and they were asked whether these applied to them. Eighty per cent of the children feel safe in school, and 76 per cent report getting support from friends in school. Around 70 per cent report that their teachers pay attention to them. Only 21 per cent of the children agree with the statement 'there are friends who are bothering me at school'.

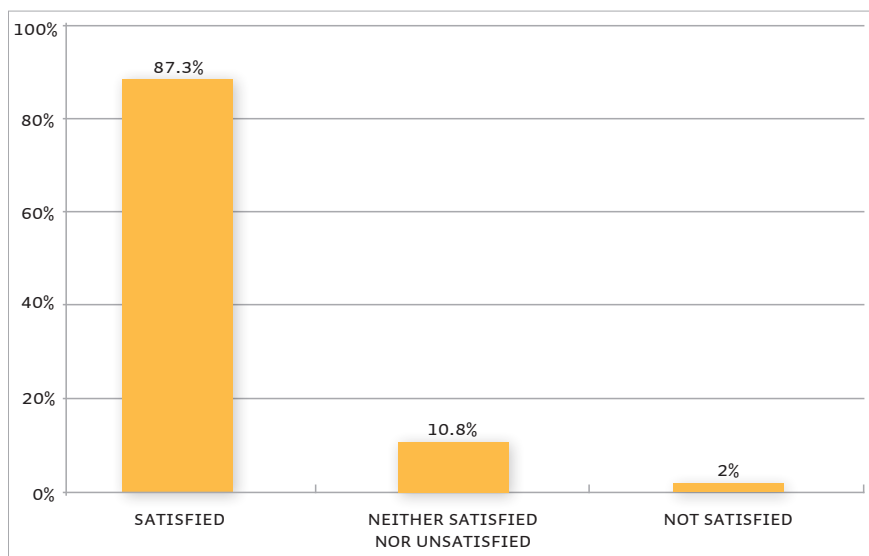
Figure 65. How do you get to school? (%)



Sixty-two per cent of the children report that their parents take them to school, and 19 per cent state that an elder sibling does. Twelve per cent take a school bus to get to school. When children were asked whether they felt safe when traveling to school, 91 per cent reported feeling safe. Six children who travel to school with their family members (mother, father, siblings, or elder brother/elder sister) reported not feeling safe, which shows that the sense of security is related to the environment rather than the accompanying persons.

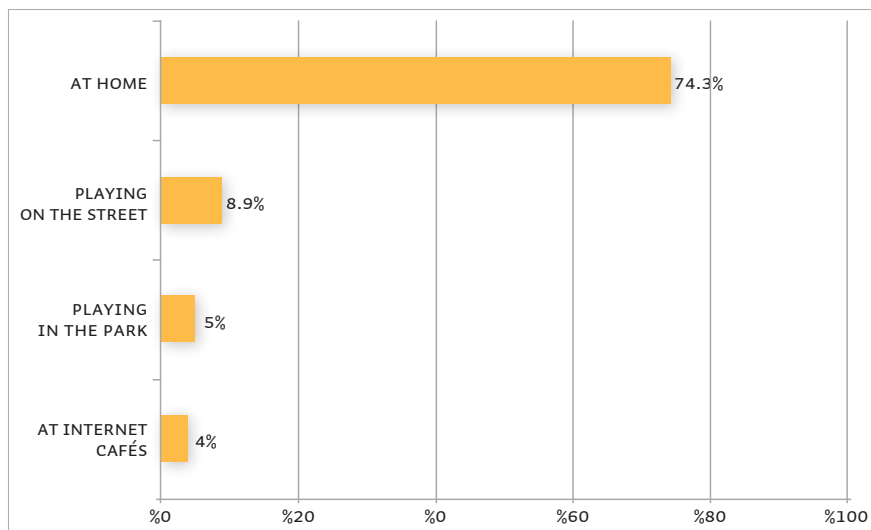
LIFE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Figure 66. Satisfaction with life in the neighbourhood (%)



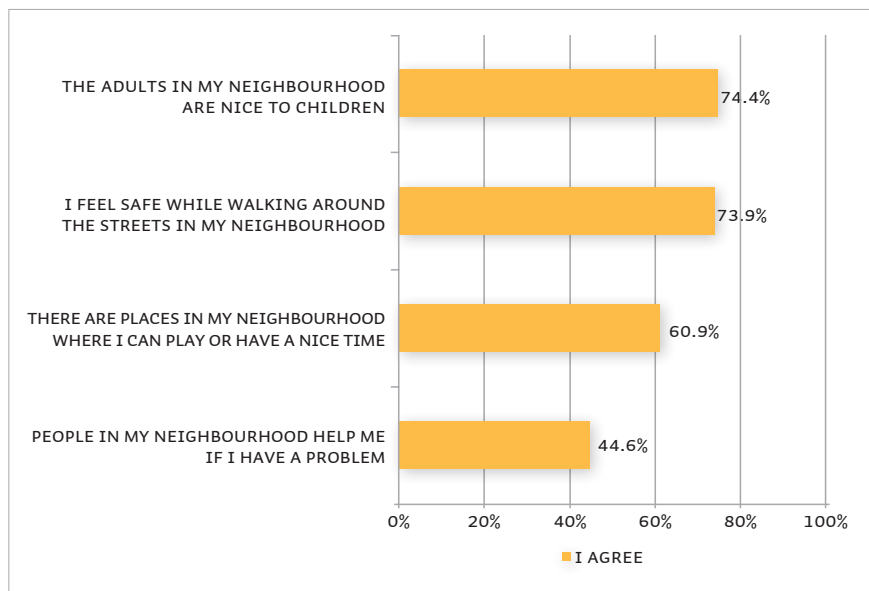
Eighty-eight per cent of the children surveyed reported being satisfied with life in their neighbourhoods. Two per cent of the children are not satisfied with the neighbourhood where they live.

Figure 67. How do they spend their free time? (%)



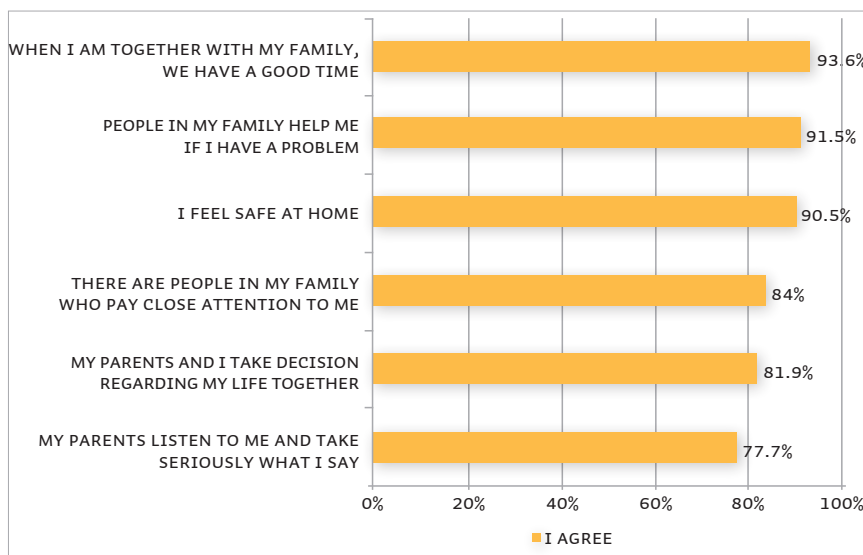
Children reported being satisfied with the neighbourhoods they lived in, but Figure 67 shows that children mostly spend their time at home rather than in the neighbourhood (74 per cent). Nine per cent play on the street, 5 per cent play in the park, and 4 per cent spend time at Internet cafés.

Figure 68. Assessment of life in the neighbourhood (%)



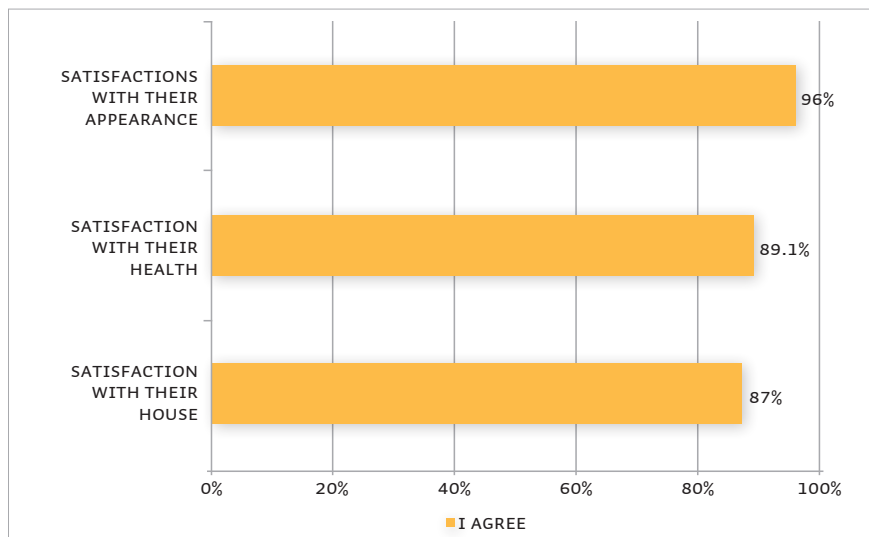
A number of opinions about the life in the neighbourhood were listed to the children and they were asked whether or not they agreed with those opinions. Seventy-five per cent of children agree with the opinion that adults in the neighbourhood treat children well, and a similar percentage of children feel safe. On the other hand, the percentage of children who agree that there are places to play/have a good time in the neighbourhood is 61 per cent (the 14 per cent who did not respond to the question is not included in these calculations), and the percentage of those who believe people in the neighbourhood would help them if they had a problem is relatively low at 45 per cent (19 per cent non-response). From this point of view, it is possible to suggest that children are not receiving adequate social support in the neighbourhoods they live in.

Figure 69. Assessment of relations with the family (%)



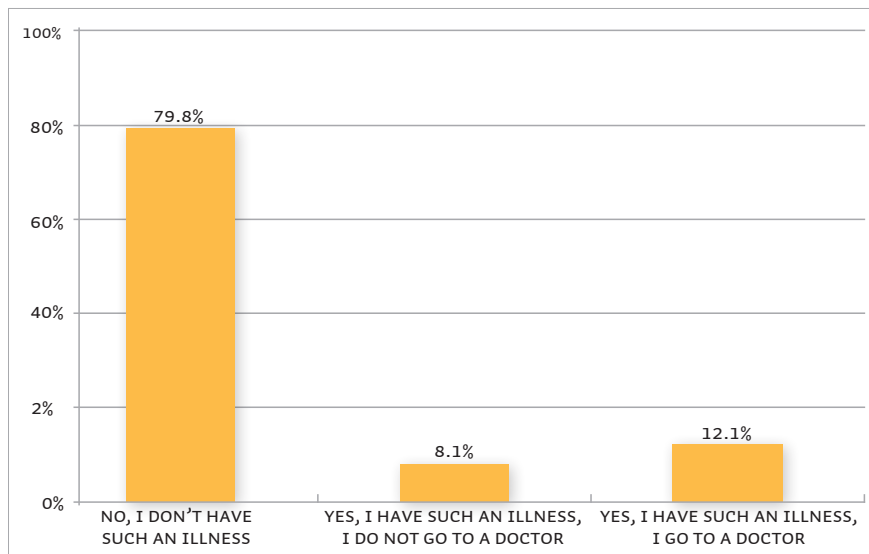
While children are able to get only limited support in the neighbourhoods where they live, one can say that the opposite is true in the case of their families: 94 per cent of the children report having a good time with their family, and more than 90 per cent think their family members would help them if they had a problem. Home is considered a safe environment for 90 per cent of children. On the other hand, the rates of participating in decisions and being listened to are respectively 82 per cent and 78 per cent, suggesting that at least some children report not being consulted when decisions are taken.

Figure 70. Satisfaction with appearance, health, and the house (ratio of those satisfied, %)



The subjective ratings of children show that they are satisfied with their looks (96 per cent), their health (89 per cent), and their houses (87 per cent).

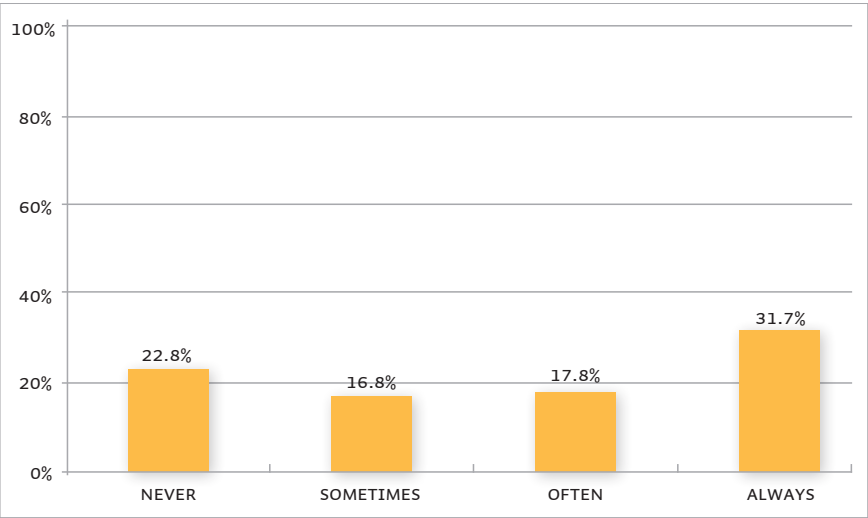
Figure 71. Do children have an illness requiring regular care and do they have an access to doctor? (%)



Twenty per cent of the children surveyed have diseases that require regular care. Out of this 20 percent, 12 per cent reported getting the necessary doctor’s care for the treatment of their disease; 8 per cent reported not having access to a doctor’s services for treatment.

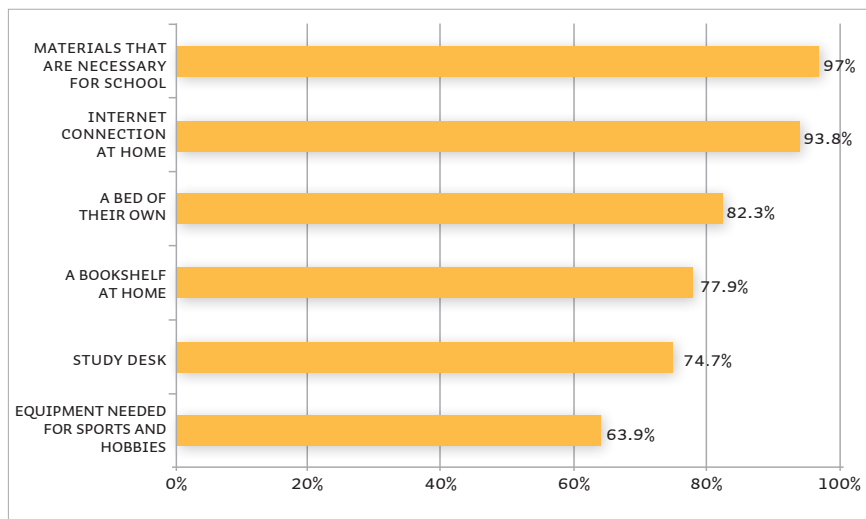
ASSESSMENT OF FINANCIAL SITUATION

Figure 72. Are children concerned about the financial situation of their families? (%)



When the children were asked how often they worry about their families’ financial situations, 32 per cent answered ‘always’ and 18 per cent said ‘often’. When we add up these two answers, it is possible to observe that one out of every two children surveyed feel worried about the financial situation of their family. This seems to contradict their reported levels of satisfaction with life. Half of the children aged 8 to 11 are concerned about the financial situation of their families, while 23 per cent report having never worried about this issue.

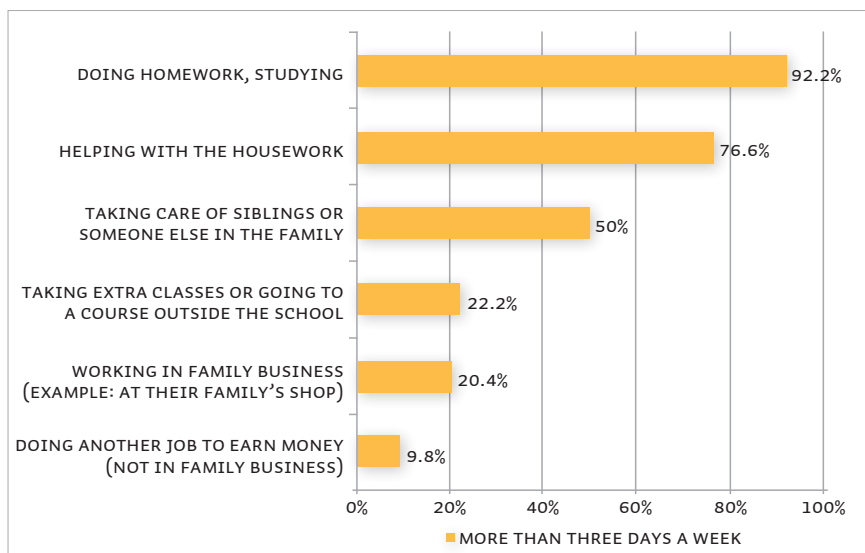
Figure 73. Opportunities children have (ratio of those who have, %)



The children surveyed were asked whether they had a number of items out a list of opportunities given to them. Ninety-seven per cent of the children have the necessary materials for the school, 94 per cent have Internet at home, 83 per cent have a bed of their own, 78 per cent have a bookshelf at home, and 75 per cent have a desk. Sixty-four per cent of children have the materials they need for sports and hobbies. An opportunity variable was calculated by grouping the answers that children gave to these questions. 24 per cent of the children have three or fewer of the items/opportunities listed, while 76 per cent have four or more.

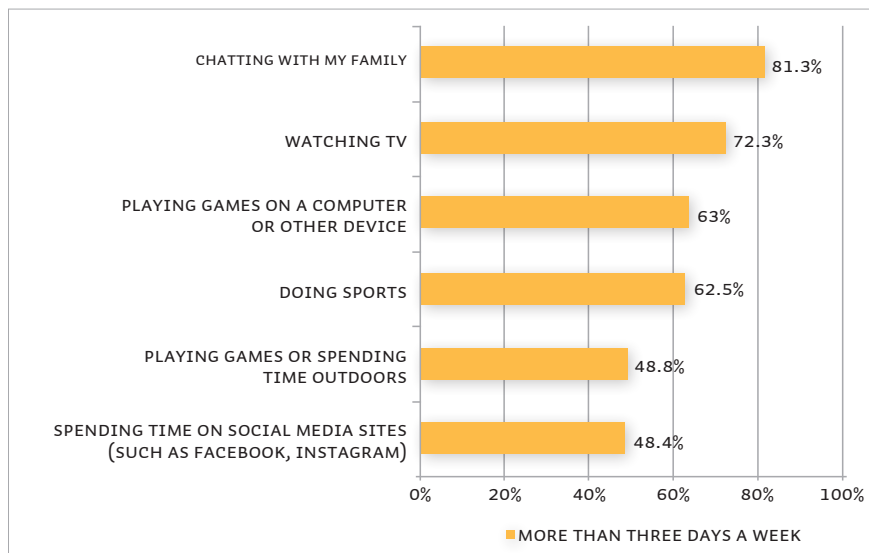
When one looks at what children have and their subjective assessments of the financial situation of their families, it is possible to observe that the opportunities they have do not have an effect on these perceptions. Children in both groups are almost equally concerned about their families' financial condition (50 per cent versus 45 per cent) and are equally satisfied with what they have (99 per cent in both groups), and rate of those who work during the summer vacation or after school is the same (14 per cent). Hence, children's concerns about the financial situation of their families are not related to objective conditions.

Figure 74. Daily activities (ratio of those who perform them more than three days a week, %)



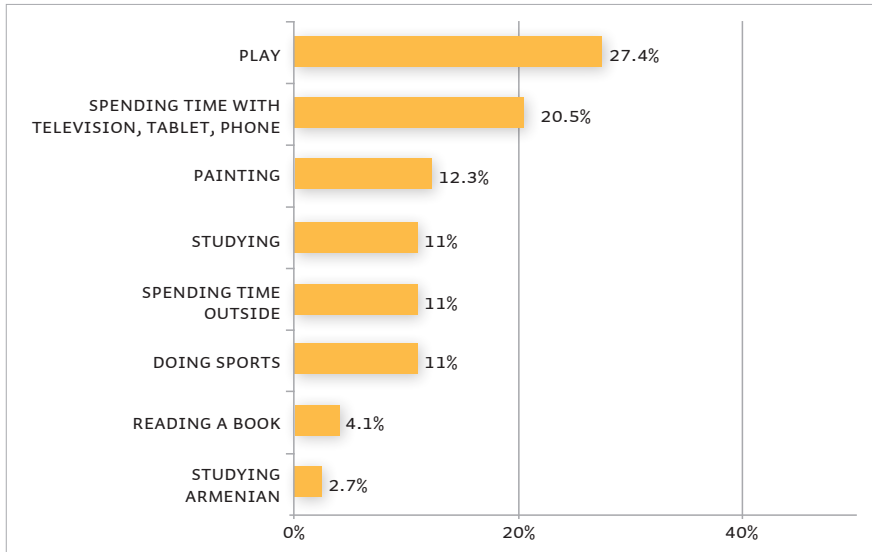
As for everyday activities, children report school-related activities such as homework/study as their main activities (92 per cent). Seventy-seven per cent help with housework more than three days a week, and 50 per cent look after their siblings or another person in the family. These rates indicate that children also have workloads at home. Twenty per cent of children take lessons outside school or attend private centres or courses. One-fifth of the children work at a family-run business and 10 per cent in another job to earn money. Given that the children in this age group are in the 8-11 age bracket, it should be noted that this amounts to child labour. It should further be underlined that a rate as high as 10 per cent should not be observed under any circumstances and deserves to be examined in detail. Likewise, the burden of working at a family-run business and providing domestic care is a responsibility that should not be assumed by children in that age group.

Figure 75. Free-time activities (ratio of those who perform them more than three days a week, %)



When children were asked what they do in their free time, they mostly reported 'chatting with the family' (81 per cent) as the most common activity. The rate of watching television more than three days a week is 72 per cent, and the rate of playing games on a computer or another device is 63 per cent. Two out of three children do sports. On the other hand, less than 50 per cent of children play or spend time outside, indicating that children mostly spend time at home. Although the ages of the children surveyed are between 8 and 11, 50 per cent spend time on social media, and such rates of using social media in this age group may point to a problem.

Figure 76. What would you like to do in your free time? (%)



When asked what they liked to do in their free time, 27 per cent said they liked to play, 21 per cent liked to spend time watching television or using a tablet or phone; and those slightly higher than 10 per cent liked to spend time painting, studying, or outside and doing sports.

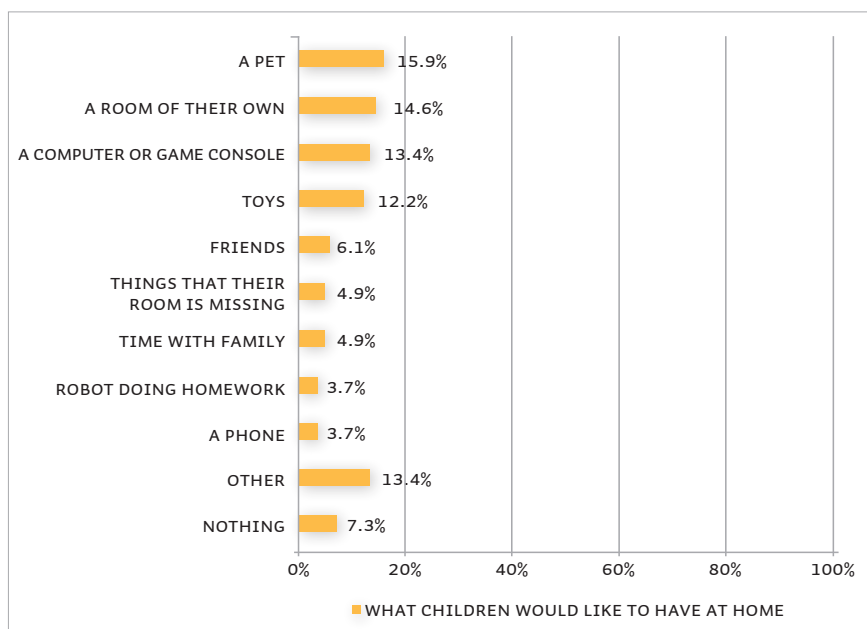
ASSESSMENT OF SUBJECTIVE SITUATIONS

A number of subjective situations were listed to the children and they were asked to assess them. Answers show that:

- 97 per cent are satisfied with their lives;
- 95 per cent enjoy life;
- 95 per cent say that their lives are going well;
- 92 per cent are often or always happy;
- 9 per cent feel sad.

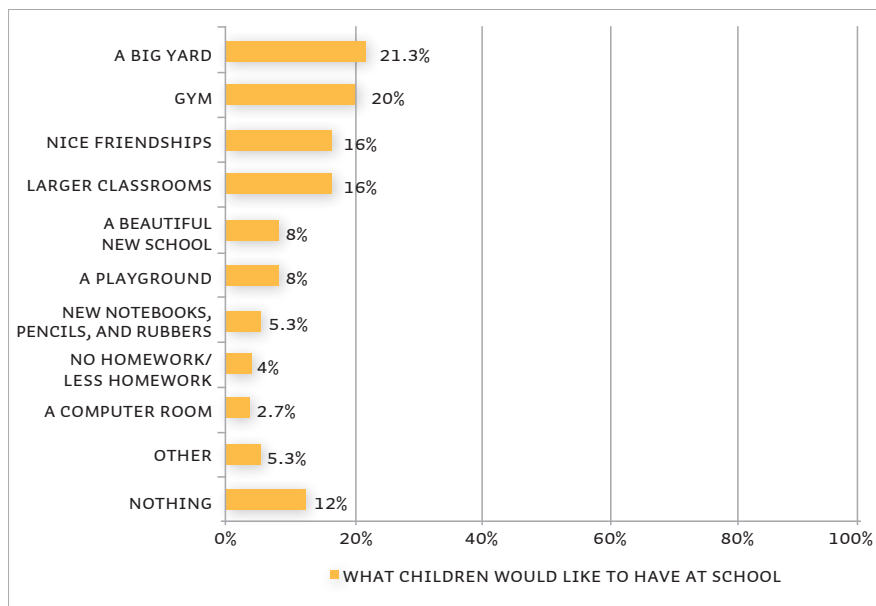
In the light of these findings, we can say that children are subjectively happy.

Figure 77. What children would like to have at home (%)



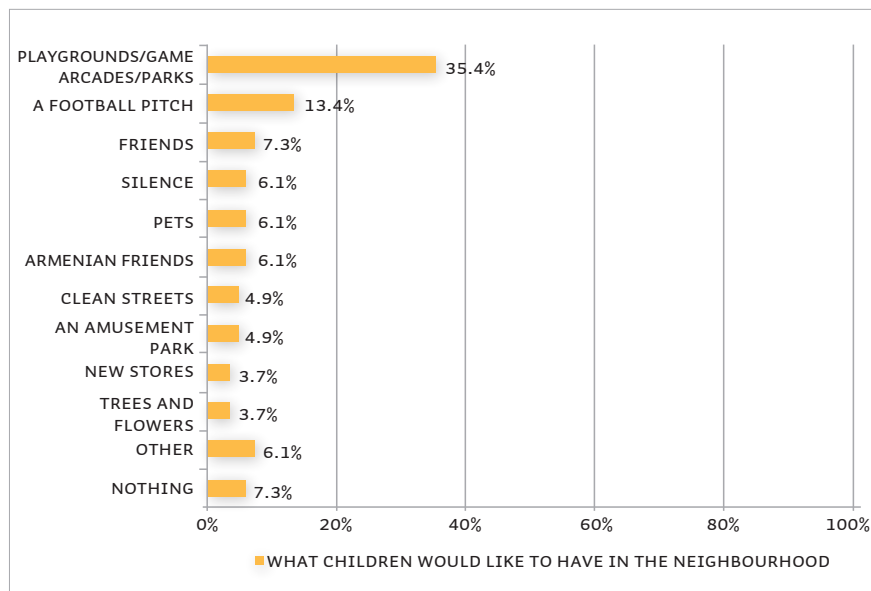
When asked about what they wanted to have in their homes as an open-ended question, children mostly responded a pet, a room of their own, computer and toys. Seven per cent reported they did not want anything.

Figure 78. What children would like to have at school (%)



When we classify the answers to the open-ended question of what children would like to have at their school, 20 per cent seem to want a big yard and gym. Likewise, their desire for larger classrooms (16 per cent), a beautiful new school (8 per cent), and a playground (8 per cent) are also related to the infrastructure of the school. In addition, 16 per cent of children aged 8 to 11 stated that they wanted nice friendships.

Figure 79. What children would like to have in the neighbourhood (%)

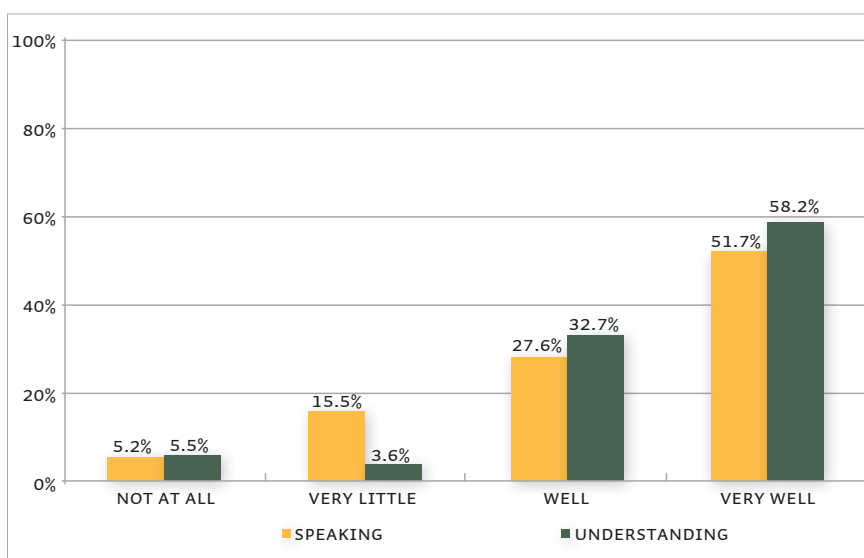


In a similar way, when asked what they wanted to have in the neighbourhood, 35 per cent reported wanting playgrounds/game arcades/parks and 13 per cent reported wanting to have a football pitch.

FINDINGS FOR THE 12-18 AGE GROUP

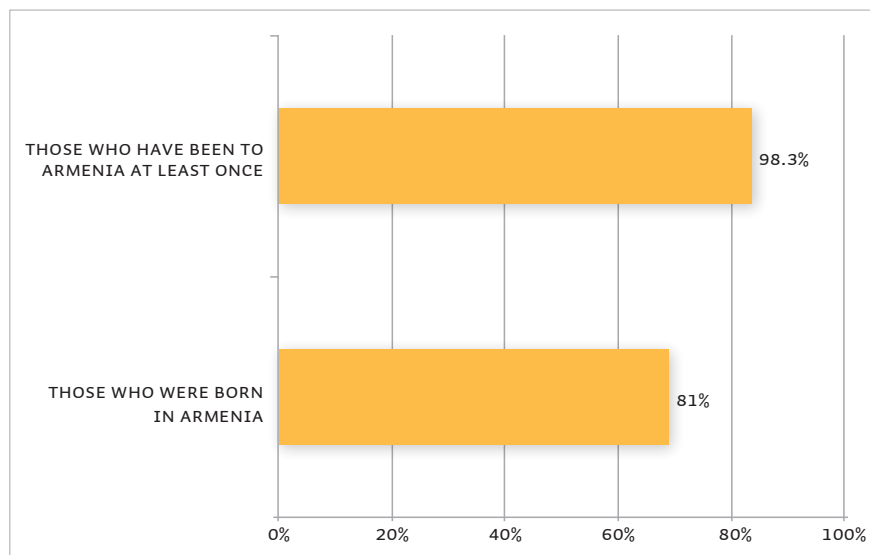
As part of the children component of the study 58 children aged 12 to 18 years were surveyed using the self-reporting method. 32 of the children surveyed were boys (55 per cent) and 26 of them were girls (45 per cent). Twenty-eight of them were students at the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School, and 30 of them were guest students at various Armenian minority schools in Istanbul attached to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE).

Figure 80. Speaking and understanding Turkish (%)



Fifty-eight per cent of the children surveyed understand Turkish very well and 33 per cent of them understand it well. Adding these two answers together, it is possible to say that up to 90 per cent of the children report having a good comprehension of Turkish. Ten per cent said they understand very little or nothing. On the other hand, when it comes to speaking, 52 per cent say that they can speak very well, 28 per cent say they speak well, and 20 per cent say that they speak very little or not at all. Although this shows that there is a relationship between the two answers, the surveyed children seem to understand better than they speak.

Figure 81. Ties with Armenia: birth and visiting (%)



Eighty-one per cent of the children surveyed in the 12-18 age group were born in Armenia, and 98 per cent have visited Armenia at least once, which shows that their connections with Armenia continue.

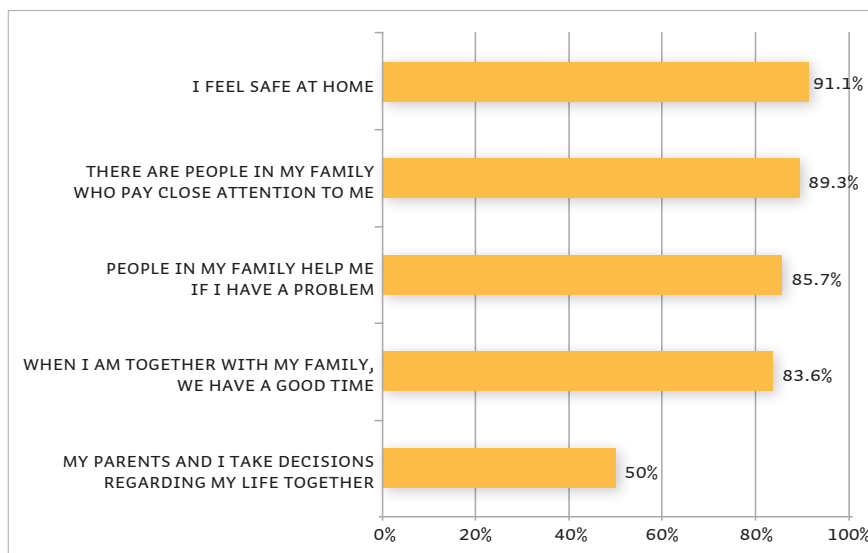
RELATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

Figure 82. Do your father and mother live out of town or outside the country? (%)



Twenty-nine per cent of the children have fathers who reside in a country other than Turkey, and 12 per cent have mothers who reside in a country other than Turkey. Almost none have a mother or father who resides in a different city within Turkey. These figures show that at least one-third of children live in a single-parent family.

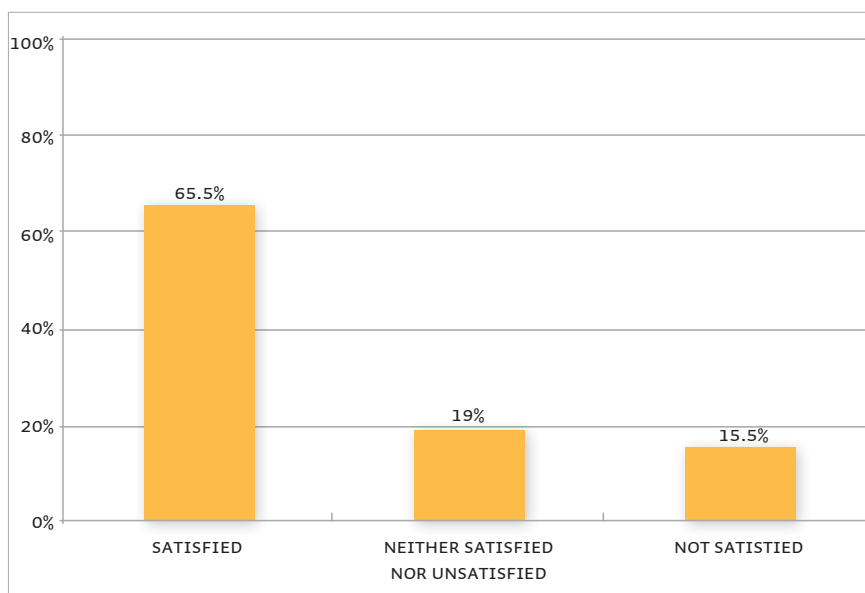
Figure 83. Assessment of family relations (ratio of 'I agree' answers, %)



According to children's assessment of their families, they seem to have good relations with them. Almost all of the children feel safe at home (91 per cent) and feel that there are people who pay close attention to them in the family (89 per cent). Among the children, 86 per cent believe people in their families would help them if ever they had any problems. Eighty-four per cent of children think that they have a good time when they spend time with their families. However, half of the children report that they do not take part in the making of decisions about their lives.

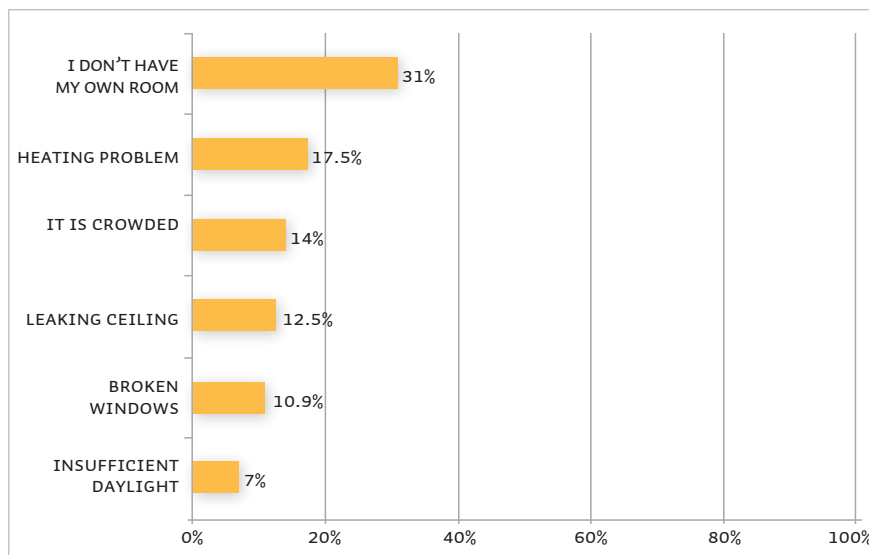
ASSESSMENTS RELATING TO THE HOUSE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Figure 84. Satisfaction with the house (%)



Two-thirds of the children are satisfied with the house they live in. While 19 per cent of the respondents were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with their house, 16 per cent reported not being satisfied. Seventy-seven per cent of the children live in houses with three or fewer rooms, and 33 per cent live in houses with two or fewer rooms. Two or fewer rooms are used for sleeping (69 per cent). So half of the children sleep alone, half in a room shared with others. Seventy-eight per cent of children have an environment in which they can study comfortably. From this point of view, we can say that the house provides a comfortable environment for children.

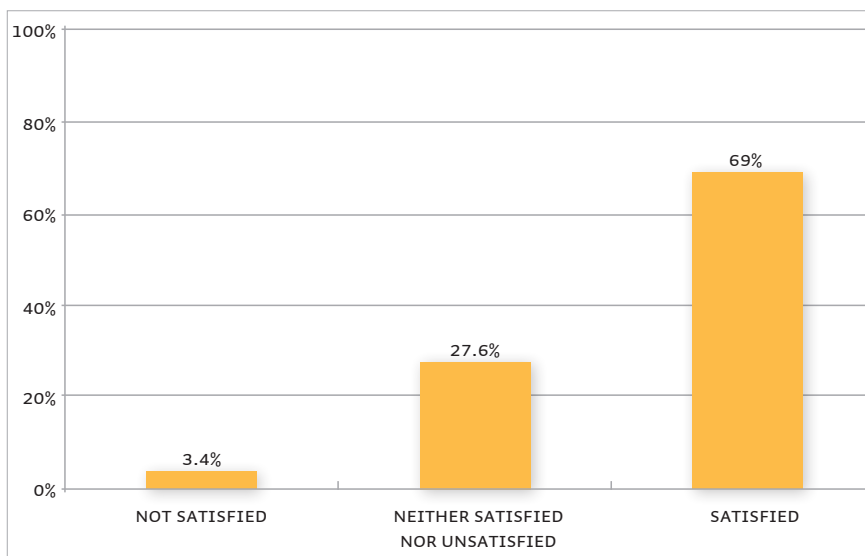
Figure 85. Assessments relating to the house (ratio of those experiencing the indicated problem, %)



A number of potential problems relating to the house were listed to the children and they were asked if there were any such problems in their houses. The issue that children most complain about is that they do not have a room of their own (31 per cent). Eighteen per cent complain about the heating in the house, 14 per cent complain about overcrowding, and 13 per cent complain about a leaking ceiling. The ratio of those who complain about other matters is even lower.

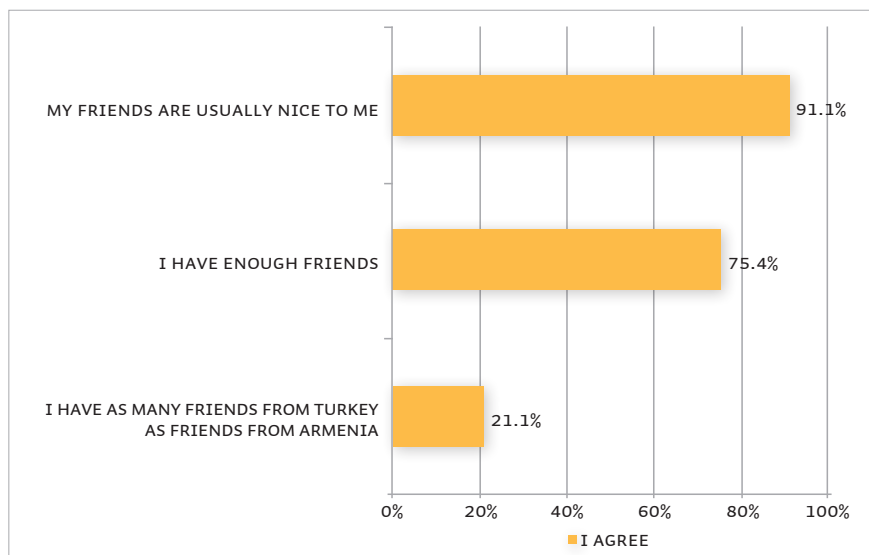
ASSESSMENT OF RELATIONS WITH FRIENDS

Figure 86. Satisfaction with relations with friends (%)



Sixty-nine per cent of the children surveyed are satisfied with their relationships with their friends. Twenty-eight per cent reported being neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, and there are hardly any children who are not satisfied.

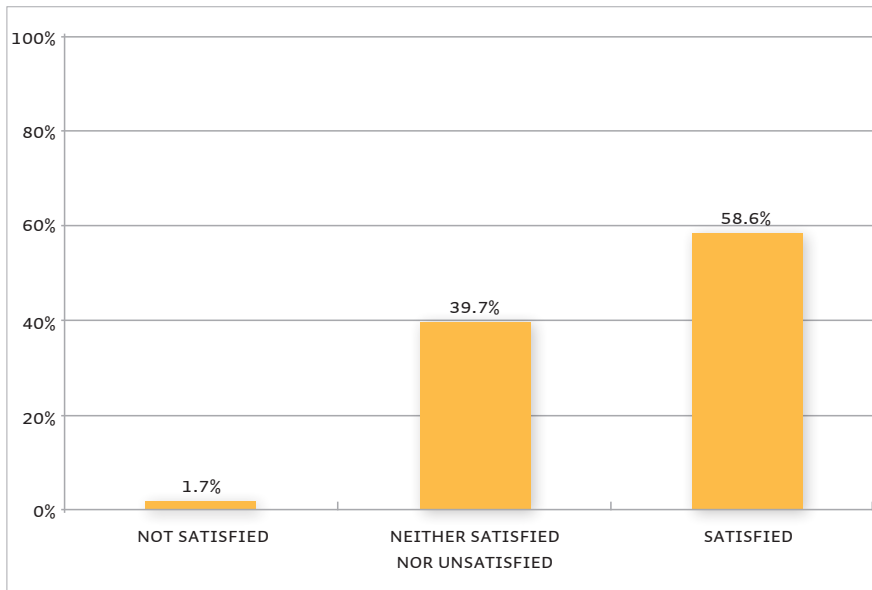
Figure 87. Assessment of relationships with friends (ratio of 'I agree' answers, %)



The chart above shows that children receive enough support from their friends. Ninety-one per cent say that their friends treat them well and 75 per cent say that they have enough friends. On the other hand, it may be said that their friends are Armenian, and not Turkish. Only 21 per cent say they have as many friends from Turkey as they do from Armenia.

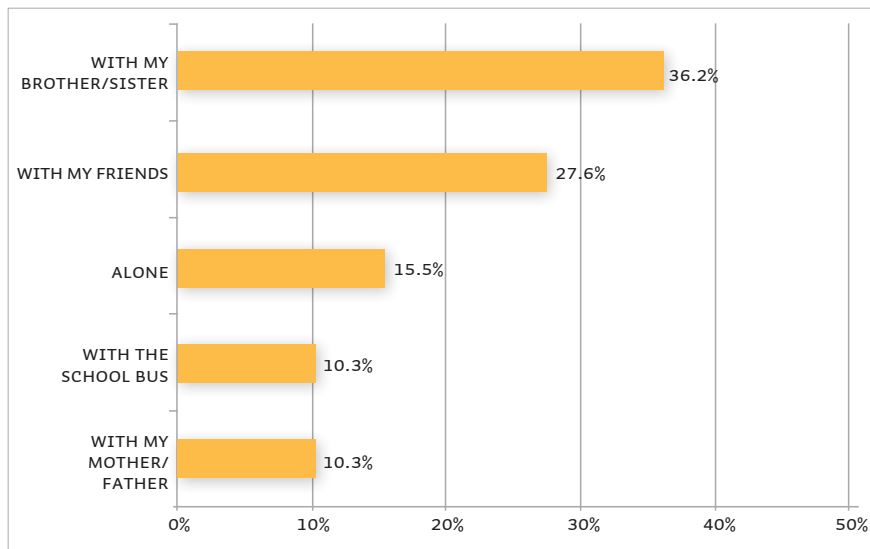
ASSESSMENTS OF SCHOOL LIFE

Figure 88. Satisfaction with school life (%)



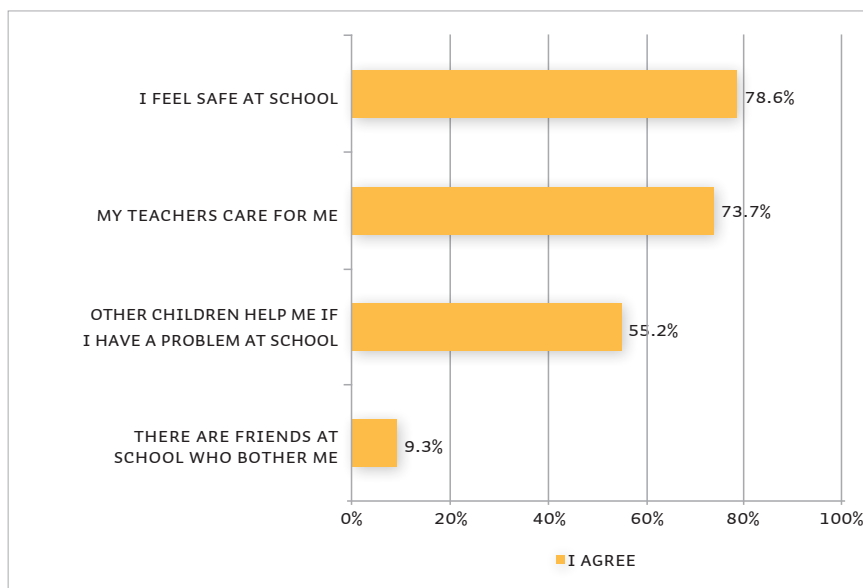
We see that the children surveyed are generally satisfied with their school life: 59 per cent report being satisfied with their school life, while 40 per cent are moderately satisfied. We met only one single child who reported not being satisfied at all.

Figure 89. How do you get to school? (%)



The above graph shows that children travel to school mostly with their siblings/ elder brothers/elder sisters (36 per cent) and with friends (28 per cent). Sixteen per cent travel to school alone. Ten per cent take the bus to school, and another 10 per cent travel are taken there by their families. In general, 76 per cent of children feel safe when they travel to and from school, which is independent of with whom they go to school.

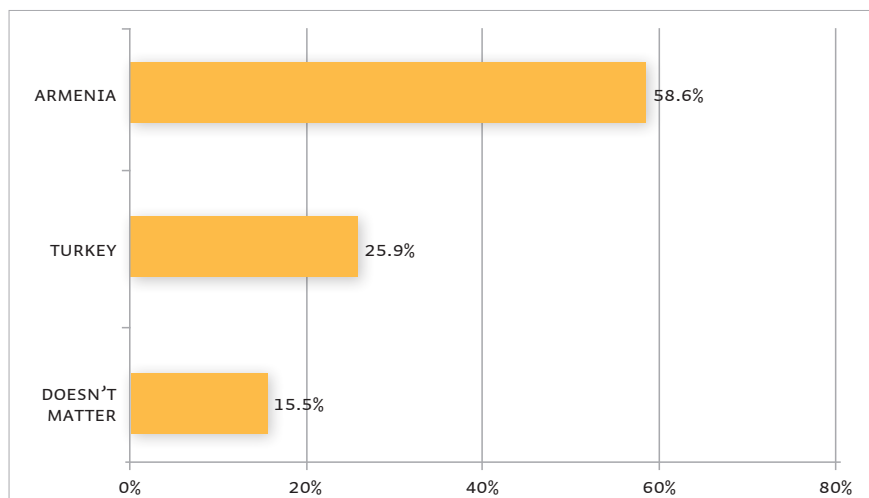
Figure 90. Assessments of school life (%)



The children surveyed are generally satisfied with the school setting: 79 per cent feel safe at school, 74 per cent think that their teachers pay attention to them, and 55 per cent think that their friends in school would help them if they faced a problem. But 9 per cent say that there are children who bother them at school.

One can say that the school environment also affects children's school attendance. Eighty-three per cent of the children surveyed regularly go to school every day, while only 11 per cent miss more than a few days of school a month, so it seems that children do not have problems with school attendance.

Figure 91. Where will they continue their education? (%)



Seventy-six per cent of the children surveyed said they would continue their education. When all the children were asked where they would continue their education, 59 per cent said they would do so in Armenia and 26 per cent in Turkey. Sixteen per cent expressed no preference. Five per cent of those who prefer continuing their education in Armenia do not intend to continue education, but all those who prefer studying in Turkey are willing to continue their education.

On the other hand, only four children want to continue to live in Turkey. Seventeen of them say they will return to Armenia. Twenty-eight children prefer to live abroad, especially in the United States. These figures reveal that most of the children in this age group do not have plans to build a future in Turkey.

The 'Foreign Students' communiqué the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) issued in 2010 states that no study visa shall be required for the children of foreigners authorised to reside and work in Turkey. However, our field studies show that even the children of migrants from Armenia with work and residence permits do not continue their education in that way. Thanks to the amendments made to the Regulation on Private Educational Institutions in 2012, Armenian-citizen migrant students are able to go to Armenian minority schools in Istanbul as guest students.¹⁰ These students do not have formal enrolment and are not granted diplomas.

¹⁰ Regulation on Private Educational Institutions of 2012, Article 51/5, Taking into account the quota of the schools, foreign students can also receive education in these schools as guest students; however these students are not granted diploma. Those who are leaving school, the school administration issues a document specifying the courses taken and corresponding grades. <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/03/20120320-5.htm>

The students who took part in the survey were those that attend the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School and those that attend Armenian minority schools attached to the MoNE under the status of guest students. The Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School, named after Hrant Dink, started to operate as a kindergarten in the Gedikpaşa Armenian Protestant Church in 2003. Today, it includes all the grades until the end of the ninth grade, which means until the end of secondary school. It asks for a contribution of \$70 per month (as of 2018) from students, and it is also supported by Armenian philanthropists who are citizens of the Republic of Turkey. This school teaches the same curriculum applied in Armenia until the ninth grade. With that education, children can continue their education if they return to Armenia.

The children of migrants from Armenia who attend Armenian minority schools attached to the MoNE are able to do so under the status of guest students. These schools receive an annual contribution of about 500 TL from parents, and as noted by the school principals, citizens of Armenia are exempted from that contribution depending on whether they are needy. There are also many support mechanisms to help children and families. The most fundamental issue revealed by our focus group with the principals from the Armenian schools attached to the MoNE is that these schools with private-school status exist in a delicate balance bound by central regulations. All focus-group participants reported doing their best for students from Armenia who attend school as guest students, but reported that a central change in practice was needed to overcome the existing legal limitations. It was also emphasised that guest-student status creates problems for both the student and the school, especially in terms of discipline and attendance. It was reported both in interviews and in focus-group meetings that efforts were made for students from Armenia to learn and speak Turkish but that the language problem was quickly solved.

One respondent related a story about helping one student who wished to take the TEOG exam (exam to transition from primary to secondary school) to be admitted to that national exam and the lengths to which they had to go to accomplish this, including getting support from members of parliament. There are also others in other schools who have tried to do the same but failed, and some of these have even faced an investigation for doing so. In addition, obtaining a temporary ID number, and using it to register on the e-Okul (e-School) system as well as the possibility of accessing students' grade records from previous years were among the issues discussed. There are both cases in which it has been possible for students

to sit an exam with a temporary ID number and cases in which others report being subject to an investigation for letting such students take the exam.

Likewise, respondents expressed problems such as a case in which a student who wanted to take the university-entrance exam in Turkey could not obtain a diploma from the high school because of being a guest student and could not obtain a certificate of equivalence from Armenia because of attending a school attached to the Turkish MoNE. In particular, many respondents expressed the anxiety and uncertainty for the future experienced by students under guest-student status in the final year of high school. Likewise, it was also reported that in case of a return to Armenia, migrant students were faced with problems related to doing military service and getting a diploma in Armenia amongst others. It was said that in the current practice, a transcript issued at the schools and sealed by the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul could be accepted by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia, and that children could thus take exams in Armenia. Some intermediate solutions were reported, including going to Armenia during the final year of high school and trying to get a diploma there. As regards the guest students attending the Armenian minority schools attached to MoNE, number of school principals referred to the lack of Russian classes at the school as the largest deficiency; while noting that as students are exposed to Western Armenian at school and Eastern Armenian at home, there is no problem in terms of the Armenian language.

It was reported that some students tried other solutions, like completing high school in Turkey under guest-student status, then going to Armenia and obtaining a diploma there, and then returning to Istanbul and taking the exam for foreign nationals in Turkey (YÖS). Again, the principals of the Armenian schools said that some schools have admitted Armenians from Syria, though not many, and that theirs was an entirely different experience. In fact, the education-related experience of children coming from Syria under temporary-protection status and their experiences relating to the functioning of the process can offer an opportunity for providing different possibilities and making necessary arrangements for children from Armenia as well.

Some respondents also expressed that the students in material deprivation have been exempted from the annual contribution received by Armenian schools, that books and clothes were provided freely, and that some schools with the necessary infrastructural facilities even provided free accommodation. It was reported that there was no problem with accessing health-care services through schools when children

had health problems. Some of the Armenian schools in Istanbul reported that their students have private insurance to cover any accidents taking place within the school and that Armenian-citizen migrant students also benefit from this insurance despite not being formally enrolled at the school. It is also reported that in cases when the Armenian-citizen migrant students from the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School and the guest students at Armenian minority schools attached to the MoNE have health issues, the school principals issue a letter stating that the migrant children are their students and that with this letter they can receive free-of-charge medical examinations from the Yedikule Surp Pırgiç Armenian Hospital. However, some school officials reported serious difficulties in accessing health-care services, particularly for unregistered families.

In summary, the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School offers an opportunity for the children of Armenian migrants who think they may return to Armenia at some point because its curriculum is fully compatible with the curriculum in Armenia, including particularly the teaching of Eastern Armenian and Russian until the ninth grade, as taught in Armenia. But the fact that the school is not officially recognised and the presence of spatial and material constraints are important problems. It is preferred by Armenian families who can afford a monthly fee under current conditions and have no problems with transportation. As one of the educators said during the interview, ‘the families who see their future in Armenia send their children to Gedikpaşa and those who do not see their future in Armenia send their children to our [Armenian] schools’. Although it is unclear what would happen if families wanted to enrol their children at other public schools in Turkey rather than these Armenian schools, it should be noted that such a possibility exists legally.

At this point, it should be noted that no generalisation can be made about the families of children from Armenia. There are cases of very successful students about whom school officials said ‘the top-scoring student of the school is actually from Armenia, but we cannot document it because the student is not registered’, as well as other cases in which it was said that ‘Families from Armenia do not care about education’.

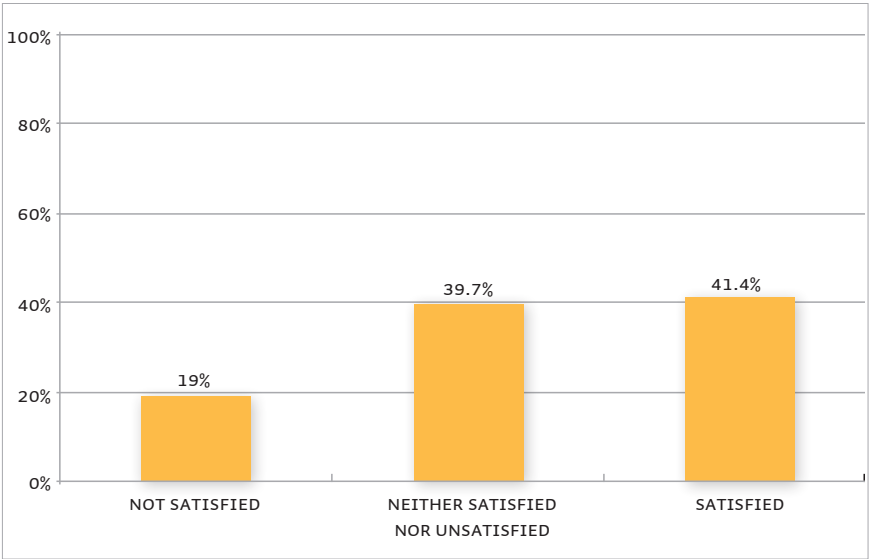
During the focus-group meeting held with children above 13 years old attending the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School and Armenian minority schools attached to MoNE, this difference was clearly reflected in children’s approach to Istanbul and to Turkey in general. For three participants attending the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School, Istanbul was not part of their plans for the future or even for the present; what was expressed was the desire to return to Armenia – and, for one participant, to

Russia – and to continue education there. They described their lives in Istanbul as going back and forth between the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School and their homes and as limited to the activities organised through the school. One of the children who attends one of the Armenian minority schools in Istanbul reported having come to Turkey unwillingly and expressed a desire to return to Armenia and continue education there. She said the saddest thing in life was ‘coming here’ and that she is ‘only waiting here for the day to go back to Armenia’. The other two participants attending Armenian minority schools reported having grown used to Istanbul and life in Istanbul and wanting to settle there. Aged 17 and 18, these two participants reported being accustomed to both the Turkish language and the conditions in Istanbul and expressed satisfaction with being in Turkey as compared to Armenia.

Those participants who have very positive assessments about schools tend to attend schools that are strict and tightly disciplined and where they receive a great deal of attention. The anecdotes told in both focus-group sessions corroborated this. School officials reported that they were aware of the individual circumstances and conditions of every child and that they did all they could to help them.

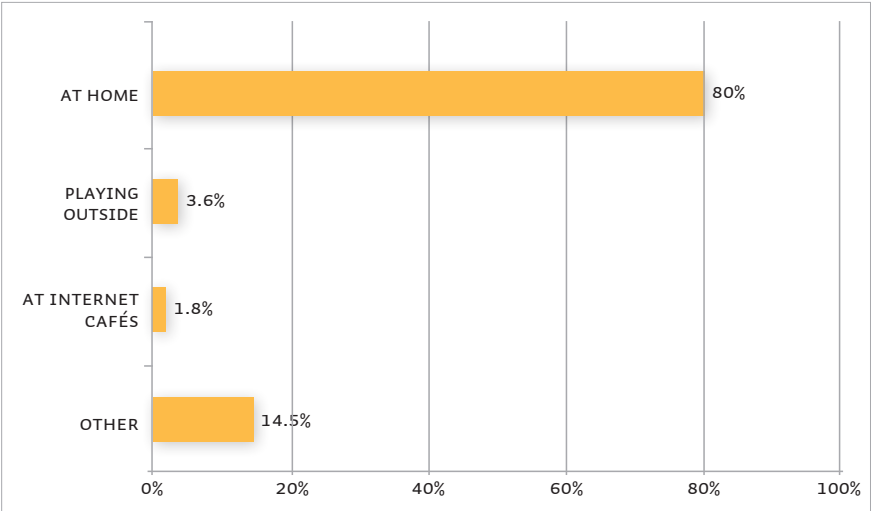
ASSESSMENTS ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Figure 92. Satisfaction with the neighbourhood (%)



Forty-one per cent of the children surveyed were satisfied with their neighbourhood, while 19 per cent were not satisfied. Forty per cent were moderately satisfied.

Figure 93. Where do they spend most of their time? (%)



The chart above shows that 80 per cent of children spend most of their time at home. There is almost no child who spends time on the street or at an Internet café.

Figure 94. Assessments about the neighbourhood (%)

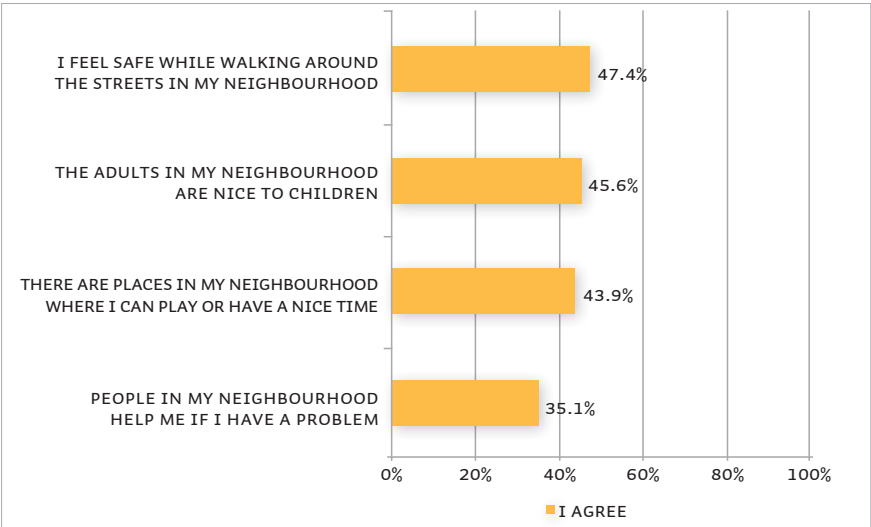
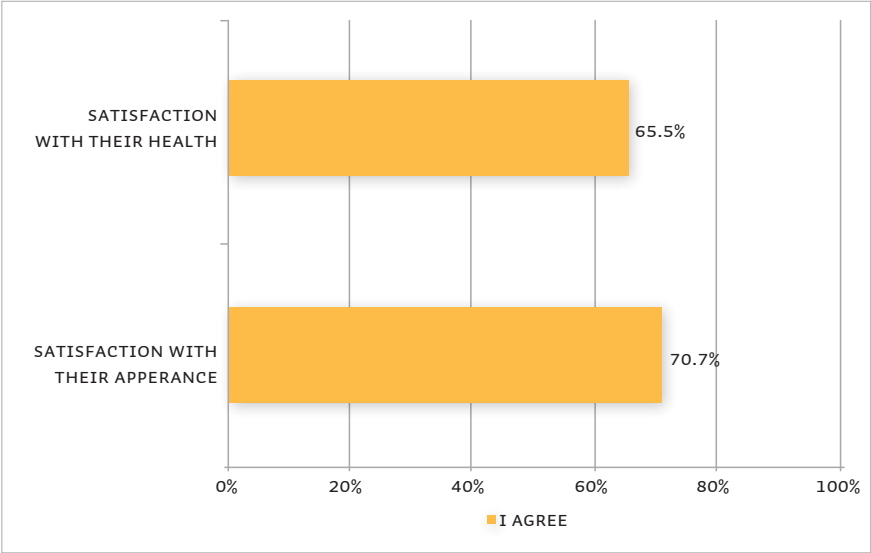


Figure 94 shows the children’s assessments of their neighbourhoods. Forty-seven per cent of the children surveyed feel safe when walking in the neighbourhood or on the street and 46 per cent think adults in the neighbourhood treat children nicely. Forty-four per cent think that there are places to play or have fun in the neighbourhood, compared to 35 per cent who say that people in the neighbourhood would help them if they faced a problem. These figures suggest that children in this age group have low levels of satisfaction with the neighbourhood.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS

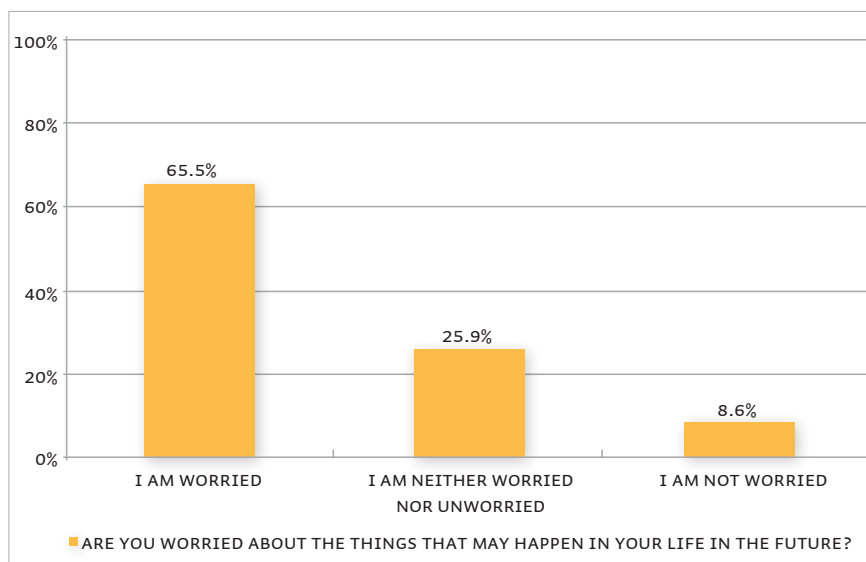
Figure 95. Subjective assessments (ratio of ‘I am satisfied’ answers, %)



As seen above, 71 per cent of children are satisfied with their appearance, and 66 per cent are satisfied with their health status. Seven of the surveyed children had a disease requiring regular care, and two of them could not receive this care.

SATISFACTION WITH MATERIAL CONDITIONS

Figure 96. Concern for the future (%)



Sixty-six per cent of the young people surveyed are concerned about what might happen in their lives in the future. Only 9 per cent gave the answer 'I am not worried'.

Figure 97. Are children concerned about the financial situation of their families? (%)

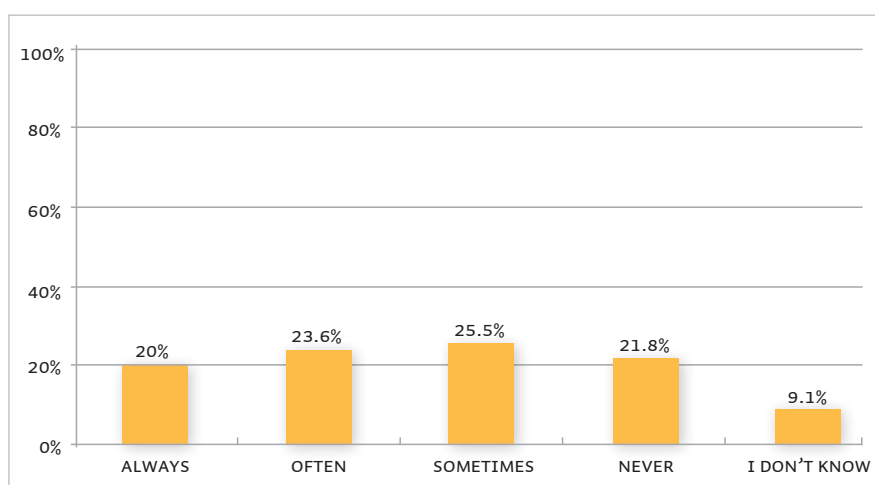
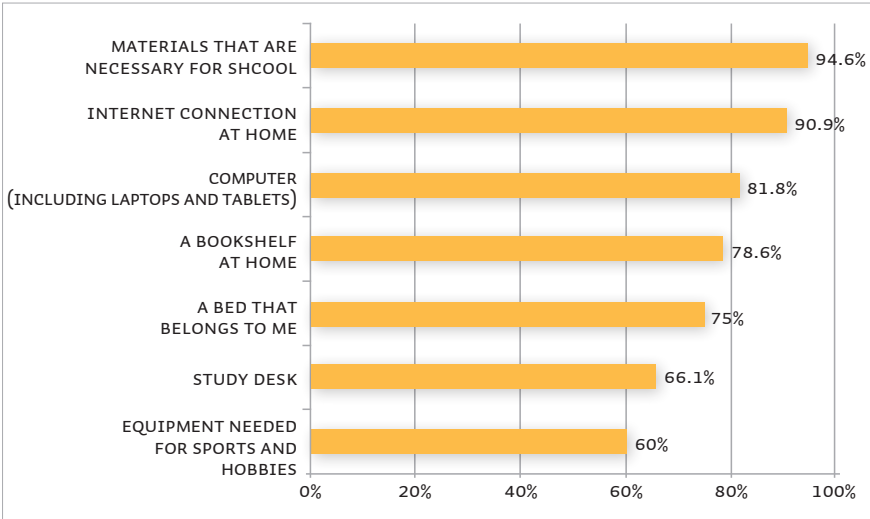


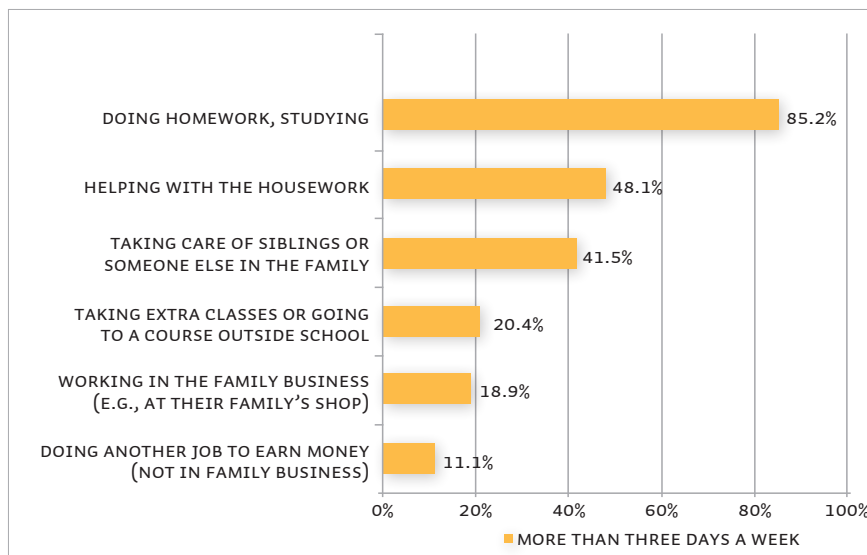
Figure 97 shows that 20 per cent of the children surveyed are always worried about the financial situation of their family and 24 per cent are often concerned. By adding these two rates, one finds that 44 per cent of the children, that is, about one out of every two children, worry regularly about the financial situation of their family.

Figure 98. Opportunities children have (ratio of those who have, %)



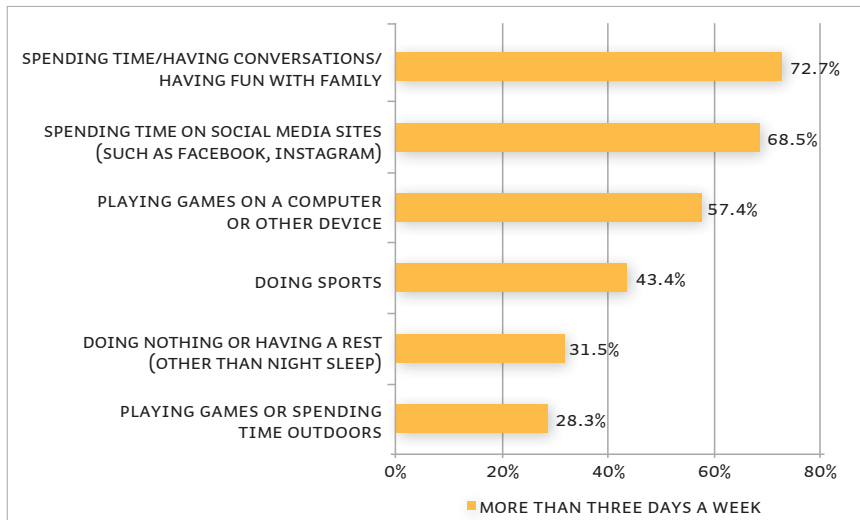
The graph above shows the opportunities available to the children surveyed. Ninety-five per cent of the children surveyed report having the necessary materials for school, while the ratio of children who have Internet at home has reached 91 per cent. Eighty-two per cent have a computer, 79 per cent have a bookshelf at home, and 75 per cent have a bed of their own. Two out of every three children have a desk, while 60 per cent have access to the materials they need for sports and hobbies. Only six of the 58 children surveyed have three or fewer items out of the six items listed above, which is low enough to prevent cross-analyses. Eighty-three per cent of the children are satisfied with the material possibilities they have.

Figure 99. Activities at home (%)



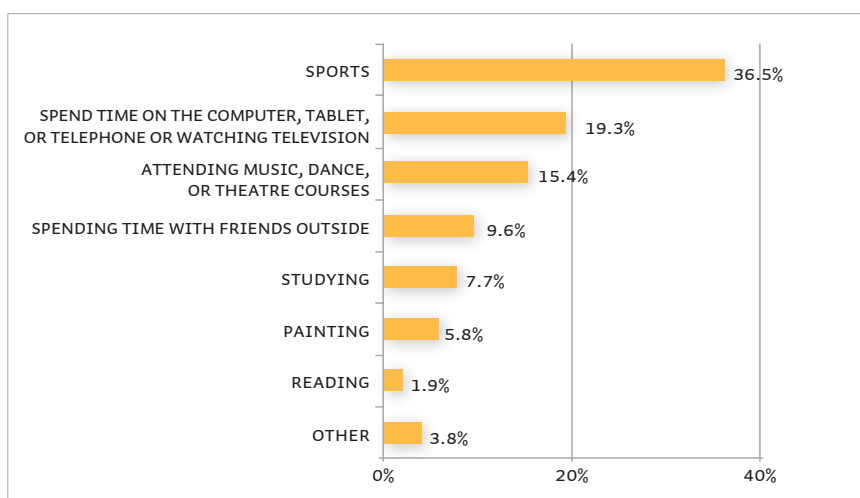
The graphic above shows that school-related activities take up the bulk of children's time, with 85 per cent of them performing activities such as doing homework and studying more than three days a week. Children also help with housework (48 per cent) and look after their siblings or other people in the family (42 per cent). There are not many children who work at a family-run business (19 per cent) or in another job (11 per cent).

Figure 100. Free-time activities (ratio of those who perform them more than three days a week, %)



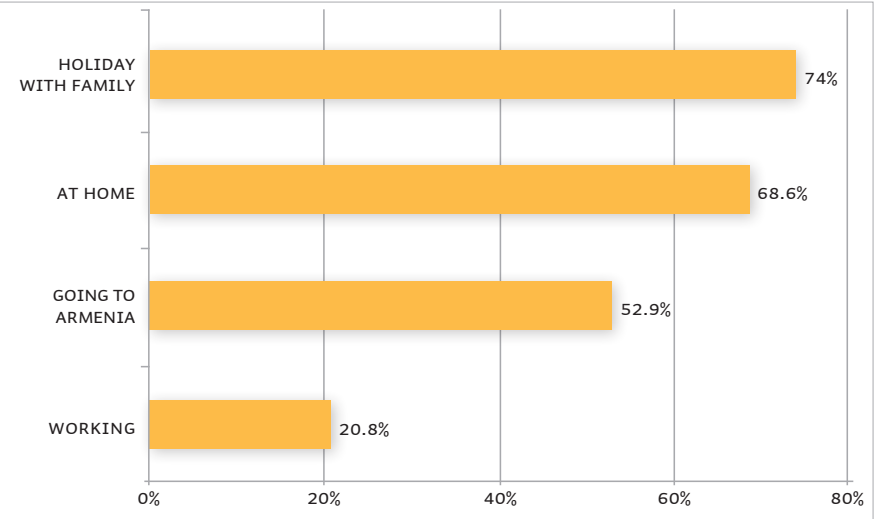
When asked about their free-time activities performed more than three days a week; 73 per cent of the children surveyed responded ‘spending quality time with the family’, 69 per cent ‘spending time on social media’ and 57 per cent ‘playing with computers’. While children spend most of their time at home, 43 per cent do sports and 28 per cent play or spend time outdoors.

Figure 101. What children would like to do in their free time (%)



Children stated that they mostly wanted to do sports in their free time, followed by activities with communication tools such as the television, computer, tablet, or telephone, followed by the desire to go to courses about artistic activities such as music, dance, and theatre.

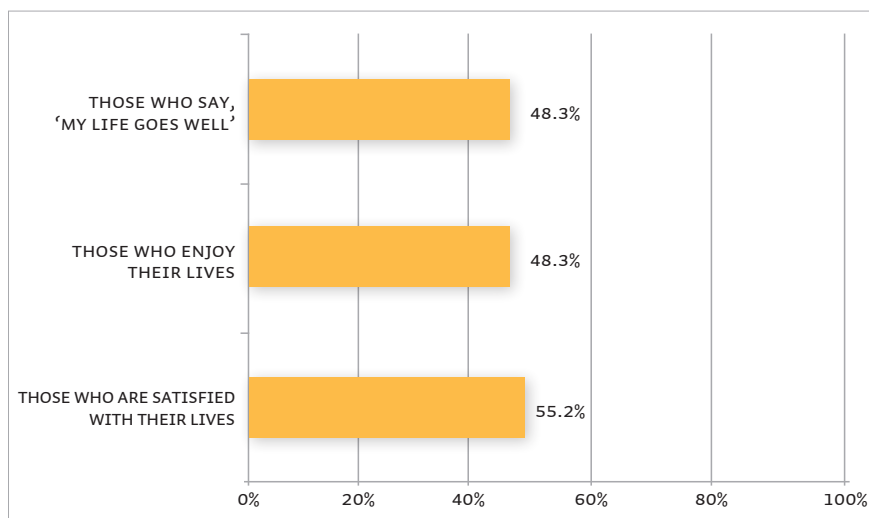
Figure 102. How children spend their summer time (ratio of those answering 'I do', %)



Seventy-five per cent of the children surveyed spend their summers with their family. Sixty-nine per cent spend summers at home, 53 per cent go to Armenia, and 21 per cent spend summers working.

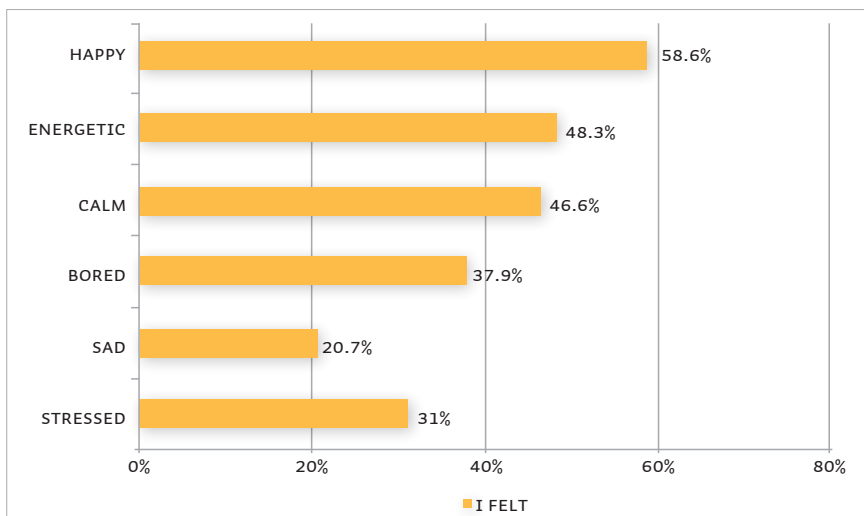
ASSESSMENTS ABOUT LIFE

Figure 103. Assessments about life (%)



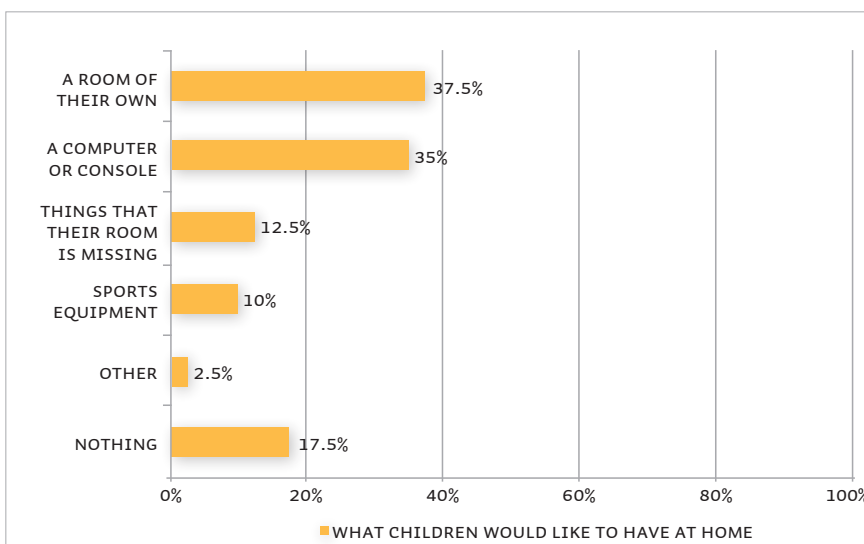
The chart above shows that 55 per cent of children are satisfied with their lives and 48 per cent enjoy their lives. Forty-eight per cent say that their lives are going well.

Figure 104. Emotional states (%)



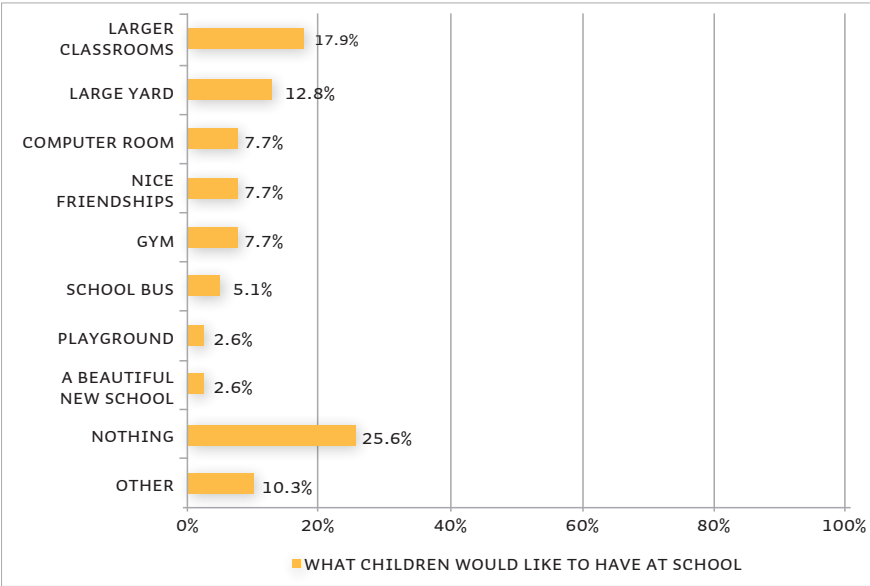
The emotions felt by the children surveyed during the last two weeks before the questionnaire are shown above. The most common emotions are positive emotions such as feeling happy (59 per cent), energetic (48 per cent), and calm (47 per cent). The most common negative emotions reported were boredom (38 per cent), stress (31 per cent), and sadness (21 per cent).

Figure 105. What they would like to have at home (%)



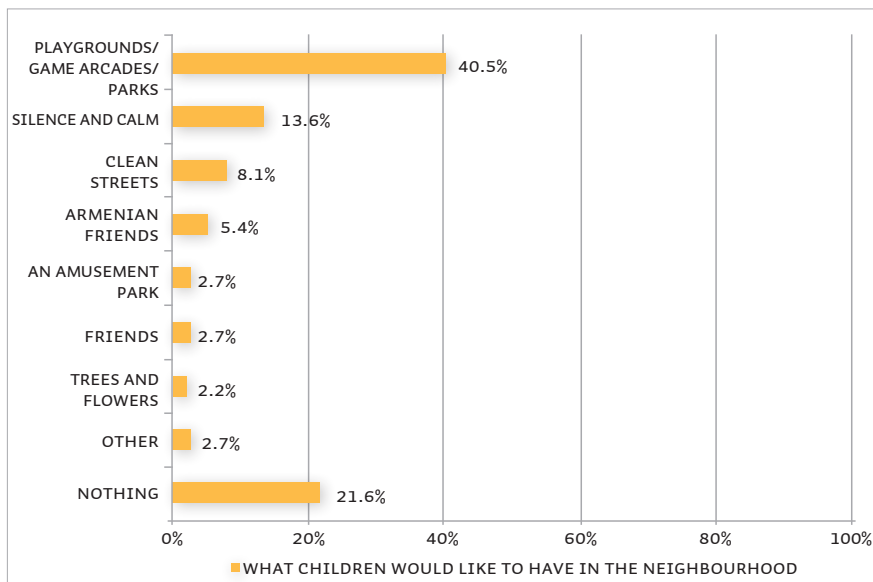
When children were asked in an open-ended manner what they wanted to have at home, 38 per cent wanted a room of their own and 35 per cent wanted a computer. Twelve per cent wanted things that their rooms were missing, and 10 per cent wanted sports equipment. It is striking that 17.5 per cent did not want anything at all.

Figure 106. What they would like to have at school (%)



When asked what they wanted to have at school, a similar ratio, 26 per cent, said that nothing was missing from their school. This means that 1 out of every 4 children surveyed feels that nothing is missing at school. Apart from this, most of the other wishes mentioned were related to spatial and physical infrastructure. They reported wanting larger classrooms, a large yard, and a gym. To a smaller extent, but again regarding the physical infrastructure, they reported wanting a computer room, a beautiful new school, and a playground. Another 10 per cent included other individual wishes that did not constitute their own category.

Figure 107. What they would like to have in the neighbourhood (%)



When the children surveyed were asked what they wanted to have in their neighbourhood, 20 per cent said there was nothing missing in their neighbourhood, and 40 per cent said they wanted to have playgrounds/game arcades/parks. Fourteen per cent reported wanting silence and calm, and 8 per cent said they wanted cleanliness.



CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

This report – supported by focus-group sessions conducted in the field, in-depth interviews, and the assessments of relevant stakeholders – reflects the findings of the questionnaires conducted with 153 adult migrants from Armenia living in Istanbul as well as with 160 children aged 8 and above (102 children aged 8 to 11 and 58 children aged 12 to 18) who follow classes at the Gedikpaşa Hrant Dink School as well as those who are guest students at Armenian minority schools attached to the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Labour migration from Armenia, which started in the 1990s, has continued in spite of the absence of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey. This study, conducted in Istanbul in the winter and spring of 2017-2018, provides a snapshot of the present profile of migration, addressing specifically and in detail the state of Armenian citizen children living in Istanbul.

Turkey currently hosts the largest number of refugees in the world under temporary-protection status, and there is a high prevalence of informal labour despite recent attempts to regulate this field. In terms of socio-economic status, although the respondents fare slightly better than the most vulnerable segments of citizens of the Republic of Turkey, it is noteworthy that 54 per cent are irregular migrants, which means they do not have a residence permit, work permit, or visa. This state of being unregistered is difficult and problematic in every respect.

An illustrative example in this regard is the story of a couple from Armenia who came to work in Istanbul in 2004 with their child and continued to stay in the city after their tourist visa had expired. The family had a second child in 2011 and, since the parents were not legally registered in Turkey, the child was recorded with the mother's surname in the birth certificate. In 2015, the mother returned to Armenia with her children. She tried to obtain a new birth certificate in Armenia bearing her husband's surname for the child born in 2011, but she was told that the birth certificate given by the hospital in Turkey was valid and there was no need to issue a new one. Authorities told the parents that they would be un-

able to change to existing certificate because of the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries, suggesting instead that the father apply to the appropriate authority in Turkey. The mother then applied to various institutions in Armenia to solve the problem, but she was unable to register the child under her husband's surname. The father who was working in Istanbul without any registration could not apply to any institution for this change either.

Another illustrative example involves a social media campaign launched to raise funds for a family from Armenia who had pre-term twins born two months early in Istanbul. The pre-term twins needed special care under a doctor's supervision, but all that the family could afford was the caesarean operation the mother required to give birth safely. The couple – who came to Istanbul in 2010 on tourist visas and started to live in the city without proper registration – were required to leave their passports with the hospital until they paid off their hospital bill. At last, the problem was overcome thanks to the support found over the social networks, as it is often the case. The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul ultimately covered the remaining hospital debt and the Armenian hospital took over the care of the twins.

The two examples given here shed light on a few of the various problems faced by unregistered migrants. The unregistered irregular migration process involves many uncertainties and ambiguities for both adults and children. As discussed in this report, the question is actually about which country they see their future in. As life in Istanbul is viewed to be temporary and short-term, it leads to makeshift solutions on the part of a number of different actors in a number of areas, from obtaining the necessary permits to children's education, and ultimately to 'makeshift' lives for the migrants concerned. As can be seen in the two examples above, as life goes by, many needs emerge, but the inability to obtain proper registration and the lack of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey make even simple matters complicated. In Turkey, efforts to avoid encouraging 'irregular migration' are put forward as a reason for not taking steps to address such issues, while Armenia, for its part, has its own reservations about migration to Turkey and the possibility of such migration becoming permanent. And amid all these uncertainties, migrants and their children try to live their makeshift lives as best they can.

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