



# Migration and development dynamics in Yenice, Turkey

Farming is the major livelihood opportunity in Yenice, yet it is not appealing to young people. Socio-economic development is limited and internal out-migration is very common.

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Many young adults perceive life as peaceful and secure in Yenice, yet a lack of jobs and quality education are major reasons for out-migration.

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International migration is uncommon; people prefer to migrate within the province, mostly to nearby urban centres.

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The recent opening of the Çanakkale 1915 Bridge has raised new hopes for trade and local economic growth.



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Photo: Pinar Ensari for MIGNEX.

Yenice is a district in the inland part of the Çanakkale province, in the Biga Peninsula of Turkey. In contrast to neighbouring districts, the economy of Yenice is stagnating and there is a general scarcity of socio-economic opportunities.

The majority of residents live in villages around the main town. Due to the small size of the district and close-knit relations, many feel life in Yenice is peaceful, stable and secure - particularly in contrast to

large, rapidly expanding urban areas in the country.

There is some variance across the district, where rural areas lack IT infrastructure. Absolute poverty is rare, due to subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry, some factory work, and some degree of social solidarity across the district.

The opening of the Çanakkale 1915 Bridge on 18 March 2022 provides an opportunity for economic development.<sup>1</sup> There are high expectations that the bridge and its connecting highways will improve connections between Yenice and the surrounding areas, facilitating commuting and trade.

This case study brief is based on fieldwork and survey data. The MIGNEX team also conducted research in Hopa and Kilis and carried out a review of migration-relevant policies in Turkey.<sup>2</sup>

### Migration from Yenice

Internal out-migration to neighbouring districts and cities - often for work or education - is a prominent characteristic of Yenice. Some 42% of young adults know of someone who internally migrated in the past five years.

Nowadays, when compared to some other villages and cities in Turkey, Yenice could be regarded as a place that rarely sends migrants to other countries. Preference for international

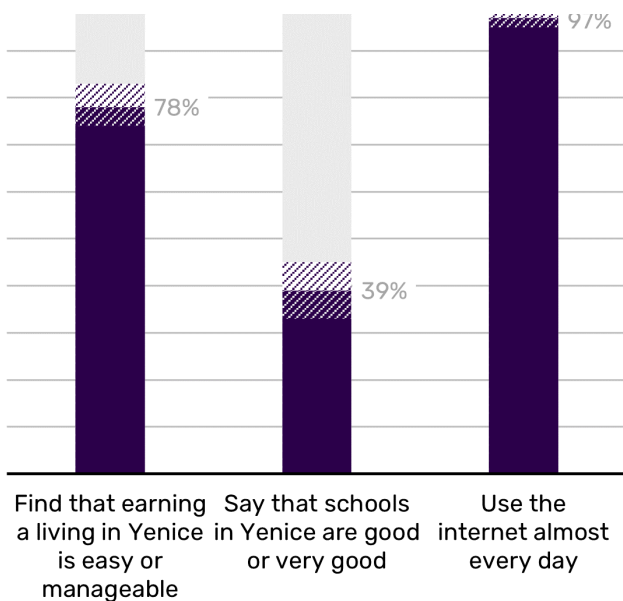
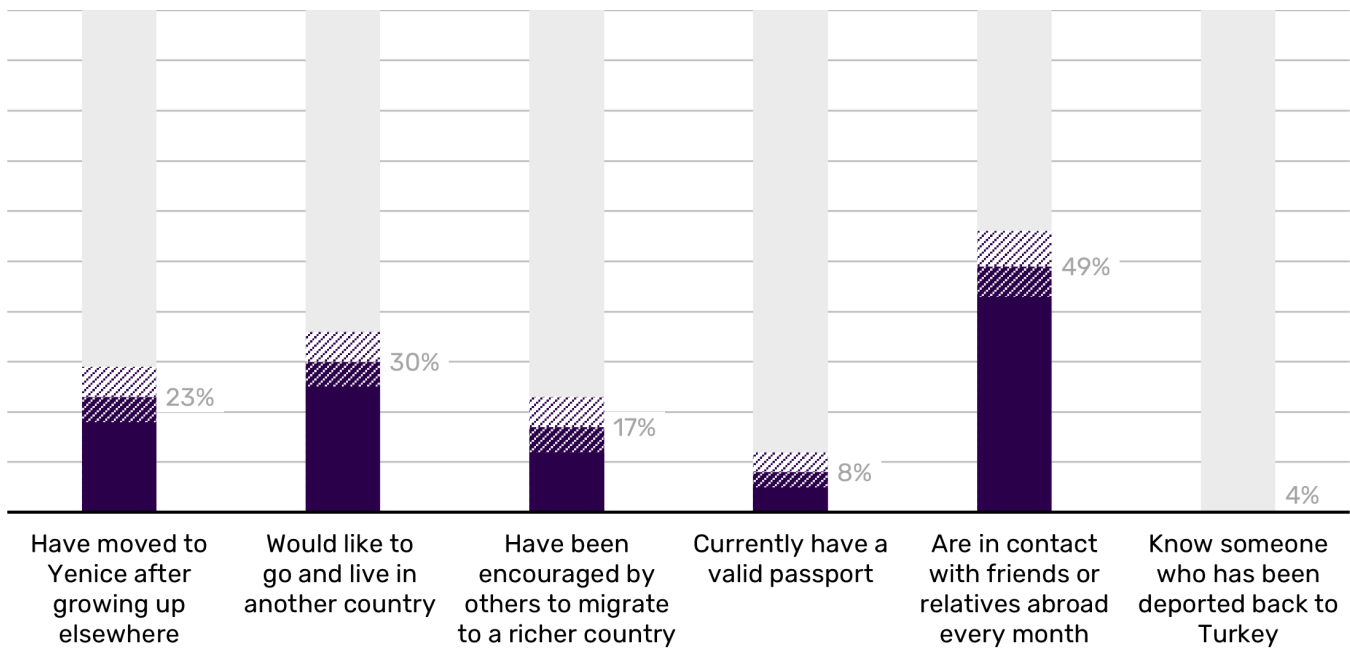


Figure 1. Indicators of development

Source: MIGNEX Survey. Hatched area: confidence interval.



**Figure 2. Indicators of migration dynamics**

Source: MIGNEX survey. Hatched area: confidence interval.

migration is also relatively low compared to other parts of Turkey. Over half (53%) of surveyed young adults stated they would not migrate to a richer country even if given the necessary papers. One quarter (24%) of young adults have seriously considered internationally migrating in the past year.

Preference for international migration was also relatively low compared to other parts of Turkey. Over half (53%) of surveyed young adults stated they would not migrate to a richer country even if given the necessary papers. Yet around half of young adults (51%) have family or friends living abroad.

### Migration aspirations

The overall atmosphere in Yenice is somewhat optimistic, despite the scarcity of socio-economic opportunities. While opportunities for good employment and quality education are limited, life is perceived as comfortable, and secure. Around half of young adults (52%) consider it easy to earn a living and feed a family - a further 27% find it manageable.

Young people, however, seem less content than middle-aged and elderly individuals in the community. They are often not interested in working in agriculture due to the hardships experienced by all farmers across the country, negative perceptions of these activities as a

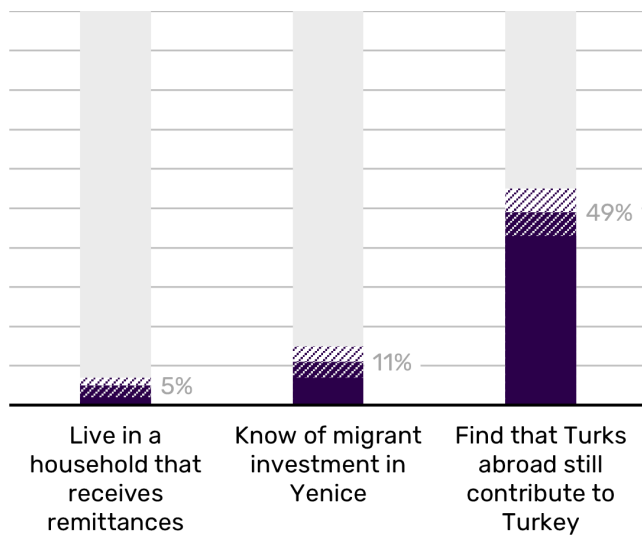
means of livelihood, and the low status ascribed to farmers.

Over three fourths of young adults (77%) consider it difficult (39%) or very difficult (38%) to find a good job in Yenice. As such, migration to other Turkish cities is an aspiration for many young adults, where stable (although often low) salaries can be found more easily.

This is also seen as a positive alternative to the small-knit community of Yenice. Common use of social media, especially among young people, also adds to the feeling of relative deprivation, which triggers higher aspirations and plans for migration. Families seem to increasingly understand these aspirations: around half of young adults (54%) think their family would approve if they migrated to a richer country.

*If everyone will go to the cities, if everyone will be a university graduate, who will provide agriculture and animal husbandry in these villages? Then what will people in this city eat and drink?*

Focus group participant



**Figure 3. Migration–development interactions**

Source: MIGNEX Survey. Hatched area: confidence interval.

Of those young adults who would prefer to stay in Turkey (69%), over half (48%) would rather leave Yenice and migrate internally. Nearly one-third of young adults (30%) have seriously considered internally migrating in the past year.

### In-migration

Yenice is generally not a destination for in-migration. Around three-quarters (76%) of surveyed young adults grew up in Yenice. In recent years, some people from Afghanistan and Syria have arrived in the district, although the overall number of international in-migrants remains low (1%). These in-migrants work in agriculture and animal husbandry and appear to be integrated in the workforce.

Recently, some people have started to speculate about possible migrant returns motivated by the opening of the Çanakkale

1915 Bridge, which is expected to make commuting and transportation easier. Land prices are also on the rise, which may suggest increased demand in the area.

### Links between migration and development

Even though one in two young adults in Yenice have family or friends living abroad (51%), ties appear generally weak.

Of those with migrant family members, relatives, or friends, few (10%) reported that their household had received remittances in the past year. No young adult stated that remittances were the most important income source for their household. Collective remittances are also rare in Yenice. Migrant investment is most often in the form of property or cattle.

Although villages such as Hamdiköy and Akçakoyun have benefited from some foreign investments, this is rare. Economic stagnation has and continues to lead to out-migration, which impedes further development of the district.

### Notes

1. Also known as the Çanakkale Dardanelles Bridge.
2. Fieldwork consisting of key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations was carried out by Nilay Kavur and Pinar Ensari in July 2021. A face-to-face survey of 500 randomly selected residents (aged 18–39 years) was conducted by Frekans Research in August 2021.

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MIGNEX – Aligning Migration Management and the Migration–Development Nexus – is a five-year research project (2018–2023) with the core ambition of creating new knowledge on migration, development and policy. It is carried out by a consortium of nine partners: The Peace Research Institute Oslo (coordinator), Danube University Krems, the University of Ghana, Koç University, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Maastricht University, ODI, the University of Oxford and Samuel Hall.

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