



IENE 6



Contemporary large migration waves into Europe: Enabling health workers to provide psychological support to migrants and refugees and develop strategies for dealing with their own emotional needs

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Intellectual Output 8

Bitesized Learning Tool No3: The Ethnohistory of Syria

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The Ethnohistory of Syria

Learning Objective

To raise awareness and knowledge about factors which influence the culture and refugeedom of the Syrian people whom healthcare workers and volunteers may provide services to.

Geography

- Syria is a country in the Middle East. It is bordered by Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan.
- The capital of Syria is Damascus.
- It is a country with mainly arid land but it has mountainous and fertile grassy areas. The climate is hot and dry and sometimes it snows.
- The main export and natural resource of Syria is Petroleum.
- The Syrian economy has recently suffered because of the ongoing war.
- The majority of Syrians live in poverty.

Population

18,028,549 (July 2017 est.)

Ethnic groups

Arab 90.3%, Kurdish, Armenian, and other 9.7%

Languages

Arabic (official), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, French, English

Religions

Muslim 87% (official; includes Sunni 74% and Alawi, Ismaili, and Shia 13%), Christian 10% (includes Orthodox, Uniate, and Nestorian), Druze 3%, Jewish (few remaining in Damascus and Aleppo)

Civilisation and history

The following information has been sourced from the Wikipedia's page

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria>

Since approximately 10,000 BC, Syria was one of centres of Neolithic culture where agriculture and cattle breeding appeared for the first time in the world. Archaeologists have

demonstrated that civilization in Syria was one of the most ancient on earth, perhaps preceded by only those of Mesopotamia.

Syria was conquered by the Greek Macedonian Empire, ruled by Alexander the Great circa 330 BC, and consequently became Coele-Syria province of the Greek Seleucid Empire (323 BC – 64 BC). It was the Greeks who introduced the name "Syria" to the region.

The Roman Empire captured Antioch in 64 BC, turning Syria into a Roman province.

Control of Syria eventually passed from the Romans to the Byzantines, with the split in the Roman Empire. Syria's large and prosperous population made Syria one of the most important of the Roman and Byzantine provinces, particularly during the 2nd and 3rd centuries (AD).

Christianity in Syria was the major religion until the 7th century AD. Syria is significant in the history of Christianity; The Apostle Paul, was converted on the Road to Damascus and emerged as a significant figure in the Christian Church at Antioch in ancient Syria, from which he left on many of his missionary journeys.

Muhammad's first interaction with the people and tribes of Syria was during the Invasion of Dumatul Jandal in July 626 where he ordered his followers to Invade Duma, because he received intelligence that some tribes there were involved in highway robbery and preparing to attack Medina.

Arabic became the dominant language, replacing Greek and Aramaic of the Byzantine era in 887. In 1516, the Ottoman Empire conquered Syria. The Ottoman system was not burdensome to Syrians because the Turks respected Arabic as the language of the Quran, and accepted the mantle of defenders of the faith. Damascus was made the major entrepot for Mecca, and as such it acquired a holy character to Muslims, because of the beneficial results of the countless pilgrims who passed through on the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

In 1946 Syria became the Independent Syrian Republic.

Current Politics and Economy

- The elected president is Bashar al-Assad (since July 2000)
- The conflict in Syria began in 2011.
- Since then there has been unrest between different religious factions and political groups which has turned into a civil war.

- There are approximately 4.5 million Syrian refugees. Many people have fled to the neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq. Many people have also gone to Greece to seek refuge.
- Approximately 6.5 million people in Syria are internally displaced.

ACTIVITY: QUIZ

1. When did the conflict begin in Syria?
 - a) 2007
 - b) 2011
 - c) 1988
 - d) 1977
2. What is the official national language of Syria?
3. What is the major religion of Syria?

Answers at the end of the tool.

Reflections: use this space to write down your reflections about the topic of this learning tool

References and useful resources

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html>

<https://searchingforsyria.org/en/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria>

Answers to Quiz:

- 1) Conflict started in 2011
- 2) Official language: Arabic
- 3) Major religion: Muslim