



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth

**UNESCO Regional Education
Response Strategy for the
Syria Crisis (2016-2017)**





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FOREWORD

As the conflict in Syria has entered its sixth year in early 2016, a profound humanitarian and development crisis continues to unfold in the whole region. Every part of society is affected. The impact on children and youth is particularly devastating. As UNESCO publishes an updated version of its Regional Education Response Strategy, 4.3 million children and youth are out of school and require education assistance, even as education services and systems are under severe strain in Syria and in neighboring countries hosting large populations of Syrian refugees.

Since the conflict began, UNESCO and its partners have taken an active part in the national and regional education response. UNESCO has also been active in setting the global agenda for education in emergencies within this context, namely through the 2016 London Conference Supporting Syria, which recognized, for the first time, the strategic role of education and the critical need to make long term commitments on education and to ensure adequate financing for Syria and the region.

Through four years of engagement with a regionally-coherent, nationally-responsive education programme, UNESCO has gained considerable experience and reached concrete results. In light of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on inclusive and quality education, UNESCO calls for intensifying joint efforts to address education in emergencies and protracted crises. UNESCO acknowledges that there will never be real progress towards achieving the goal without concrete commitments and actions supporting crisis-affected countries and ensuring quality education for all Syrian children and youth, as well as vulnerable populations in host communities.

Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth, UNESCO's Regional Education Response Strategy for 2016–2017, is anchored in SDG4 implementation in the Arab States region and focused on scaling up successful interventions and expanding their outreach, while continuing to align priorities with the changing realities that Syria and neighboring countries face. UNESCO will maintain its focus on youth and their access to, and participation in, quality post-basic


education. It will also scale up actions to provide out-of-school youth with targeted, relevant and quality learning opportunities.

Over time, the global response to the conflict has shifted to a resilience-based agenda focusing on long term, development-related interventions, while at the same time addressing humanitarian needs. This means interventions to improve existing systems and policy and legal frameworks. In line with this more sustainable approach, UNESCO will renew its efforts to strengthen national education systems, including capacity development and policy dialogue, so Syria and its neighbors can better cope with the conflict's impact by supporting the resilience of communities and education systems.

Education can save and sustain lives, offering physical, cognitive and psychosocial protection when delivered in safe, neutral spaces. Investing in education at all levels has become a development and security imperative for stability and lasting peace in the region. Making education a real force for peace requires special attention to the needs of young people as they become increasingly exposed to marginalization, manipulation, abuse and violent extremism.

Capitalizing on achievements thus far, Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth outlines how UNESCO will help to increase access to quality secondary, technical and vocational education and training as well as higher education for affected youth aged 15 to 24, both in Syria and in the wider region, while improving quality and strengthening national education systems to sustain their resilience.

The future of youth in the region depends on what we do today. Their access to quality education, and resulting acquisition of knowledge and skills, is the cornerstone for reconstruction in the region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Irina Bokova'.

Irina Bokova
Director-General of UNESCO

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INTRODUCTION

The Crisis: Magnitude and Impact in Syria and the Region

Five years after the conflict in Syria began, it continued to constitute an unprecedented humanitarian tragedy and reverse development gains in neighbouring countries. Almost 6.6 million people have been internally displaced within Syria¹ and nearly 4.8 million Syrians have sought refuge in nearby countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey². Dealing with the influx of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) requires an annual humanitarian budget of US\$4.55 billion for these host countries and US\$3.18 billion in Syria³. More than half the IDPs and refugees are children and youth under age 24.

¹ OCHA. March 2016. <http://www.unocha.org/syria>.

² UNHCR. 2016. Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> (Accessed 19 March 2016).

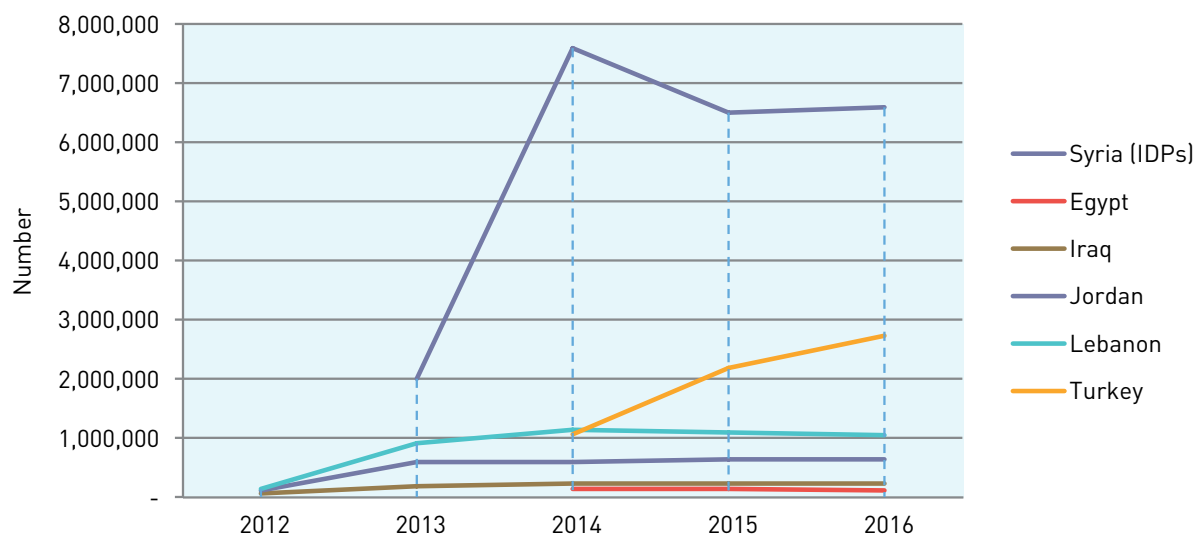
³ The 2016-2017 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/>.

Table 1: IDPs and refugee registration, cumulative totals, 2012–2016

Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016*
Syria	2,000,000	7,600,000	6,500,000	6,600,000
Total (internally displaced persons)		2,000,000	7,600,000	6,500,000	6,600,000
Egypt		...	140,130	127,681	118,512
Iraq	67,625	210,612	215,387	245,134	246,051
Jordan	117,321	576,354	619,376	630,776	636,040
Lebanon	129,106	895,835	1,125,122	1,075,637	1,067,785
Turkey		...	1,065,902	2,181,293	2,715,789
Total (refugees)		1,682,801	2,614,699	4,260,521	4,784,177

* As at March 2016

Source: UNHCR and OCHA (for Syria)

Figure 1: Trends in IDPs and refugee registration status by country, 2012–2016

The UNHCR inter-agency regional update reported as of March 2016 that some 475,000 refugees were accommodated in refugee camps. Among refugees living outside of camps, it was estimated that more than half lived in substandard shelter. Some 2.5 million Syrians (1.23 million refugees and 1.25 million IDPs) needed 2015/16 winter season assistance, and 2 million required food aid. The humanitarian situation was worsening daily and showing no signs of abatement.

The massive displacement of Syrians has had enormous political, economic, security and social consequences, derailing countries' development path and severely affecting development gains. In Syria, millions of IDPs have had to abandon their homes and livelihoods and to look for refuge elsewhere, living in harsh conditions with little if any services. In recipient countries, local communities and authorities have been hit with huge costs because of the impact of the crisis on the national economy, infrastructure and social services, including education.

The coping capacity of host communities has been overwhelmed by the scale of the refugee crisis, particularly in Lebanon, where most refugees have settled in the already deprived North and Bekaa regions. Mounting tensions are evident, with communities fearing, and in many cases

experiencing, a loss of jobs, wages and access to public services. With unemployment affecting over one in five youth and the labour market experiencing widespread informality and low-quality jobs, competition from Syrian refugees fuels social discontent.

Jordan has accommodated more than 630,000 registered refugees. While some 83% have settled in communities, particularly Amman and towns in the northern governorates, the rest live in camps. Jordan has received support from the international community but it is not commensurate with requirements, resulting in problems with public finance and overall public service performance. Estimates suggest the needs are increasing in some economic and social sectors, often straining cohesion of the social fabric, and host communities are becoming increasingly vulnerable.



©UNESCO/Jordan - Young Syrian students celebrating having completed the UNESCO-EU 3 month informal education cycle at Za'atari camp

Impact of the Crisis on Youth and on Education and Training

The crisis has had a detrimental impact on the lives of over 11 million Syrians and millions of citizens in host countries. It has become a major barrier to quality education for all in Syria, reversing development gains in the country. In addition to causing widespread destruction of learning spaces, the crisis has forced more than 2.1 million children and youth out of school in Syria; an additional 3.3 million in Syria need educational assistance, and 1.4 million Syrian children and youth are refugees in the five main host countries. In 2011, Syria had achieved universal primary enrolment and was near universal enrolment in lower secondary education⁴. More concretely, 91% of primary school-aged children

© UNESCO/Iraq - Students attend class at a TVET institution



⁴ Ibid.

were in school in 2011, but by 2015 the rate had plummeted to 37%. The situation is particularly catastrophic for youth, a stark majority of whom is deprived of learning opportunities and of hope for a meaningful life.

In **Iraq**, for instance, 62% of refugees live in urban areas outside camps and have limited access to secondary schools. Only about 5% of youth aged 15 to 17 are in formal secondary education⁵.

Jordan has welcomed all Syrian children into its public schools, but thousands remain out of school. Youth aspiring to vocational education, in particular, were denied free access until late 2015. Although the government has recently outlined some encouraging policy shifts, Jordanian universities, for example, are willing to welcome Syrians eligible for higher education only if they have required documentation and can pay fees applicable to international students, which are unaffordable for most Syrian families. Hence, some 92% of young Syrians eligible for higher education are left idle, hopeless and potentially vulnerable to radicalization.



© UNESCO/Jordan - Sana, one of the girls enrolled in the education programme, arrives early at the centre to prepare for the lesson

Through its national programme entitled 'Reaching All Children with Education (RACE),' **Lebanon** has progressively reached out to Syrian refugee children and youth by opening second shifts in public primary schools and providing them with lifeskills programmes. Despite significant efforts, 50 percent of Syrian refugee children are out of school⁶, while a study conducted by UN (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR) and Save the Children revealed that more than 90 percent of the Syrian youth between the ages of 15 to 24 were out of school⁷.

⁵ 3RP. 2016. Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016-2017 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Iraq.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Situation Analysis of Youth in Lebanon Affected by the Syrian Crisis. 2014.

⁸ UNESCO. 2011. EFA Global Monitoring Report: The Hidden Crisis – Armed Conflict and Education.

The impact of armed conflict on education has been widely neglected worldwide, and what is happening to Syria is a case in point. The 'hidden crisis' of education during conflicts reinforces poverty, undermines economic growth and holds back countries' progress⁸.

The fact that millions of children and youth have had their education interrupted or have been left with no educational opportunities for years will hinder any eventual recovery and reconstruction effort inside Syria as well as in the region. And if they are exposed to harm, abuse and lack of opportunities, it could fuel conflict further.



© UNESCO/Iraq – Celebrating the opening of the Derek Secondary School: the first secondary school for Syrian refugees in Domiz Camp in Duhok

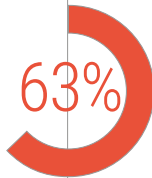
⁸ UNESCO. 2011. EFA Global Monitoring Report: The Hidden Crisis – Armed Conflict and Education.

4,320,000

SYRIANS NEED EDUCATION NOW

5-17 YEARS OLD
OUT OF SCHOOL

INSIDE SYRIA

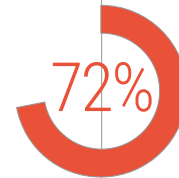


SYRIANS IN THE REGION

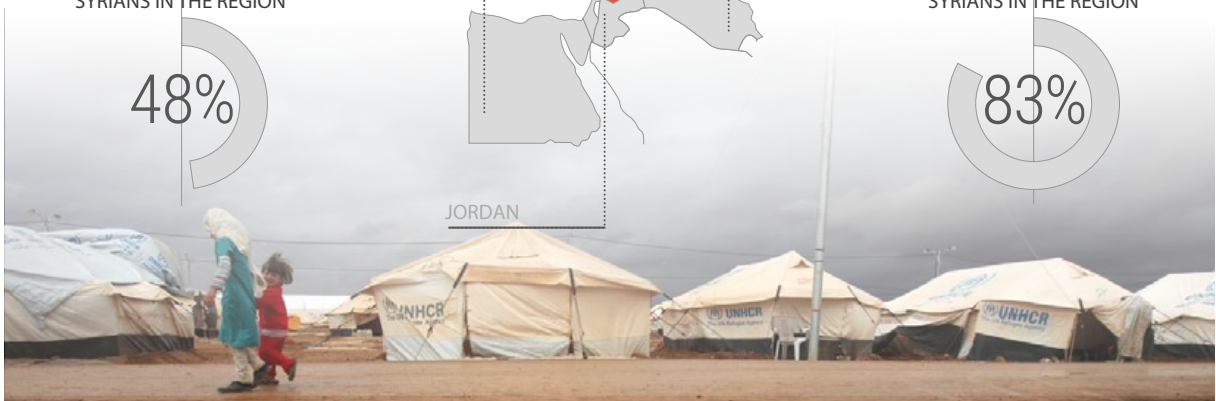
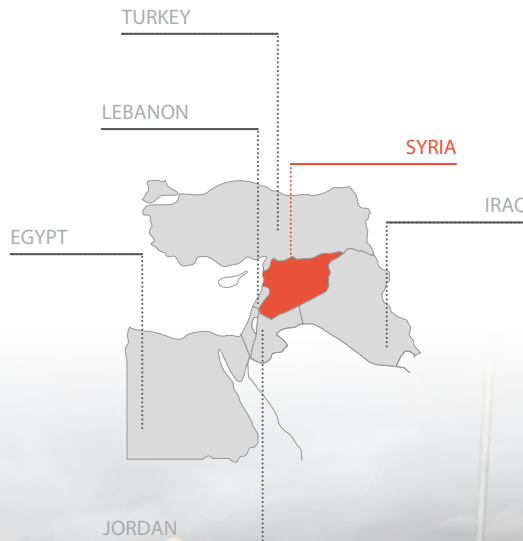
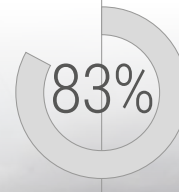


18-24 YEARS OLD
OUT OF SCHOOL

INSIDE SYRIA



SYRIANS IN THE REGION



Source: UNESCO calculations using UNHCR and IFAD data from August, October and December 2015.



BRIDGING LEARNING GAPS FOR YOUTH: UNESCO REGIONAL EDUCATION RESPONSE STRATEGY

The 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report points out the reverse cycle of education's influence on violent conflict:

1. Limited or low quality provision leads to unemployment and poverty;
2. A 'youth bulge' adds to the urgency of building a bridge from education to employment;
3. Unequal access generates grievances and a sense of injustice; and
4. Inappropriate use of school systems reinforces prejudice and intolerance. Education is seldom a primary cause of conflict.

Yet it often reinforces tensions in the political dynamic pushing countries towards violence. As the 2014 Arab Knowledge Report warned, if countries failed to provide young people with the knowledge and skills to facilitate development, the region would face greater challenges, including high levels of unemployment, violence, criminality and extremism. Education can make a vital difference in all these areas by building and sustaining resilient education systems and people, tipping the balance in favour of peace⁹.

⁹ UNDP, 2013.

'The best way to fight terrorism is not through guns. It's through pens, books, teachers and school.

*Ms Malala Yousafzai,
Nobel Peace Prize
Laureate*

While the humanitarian and development communities, together with host countries, have done their utmost to assist a large number of children and youth in formal schooling, there is still an urgent need to bridge learning gaps

for youth through quality and relevant learning opportunities, so that no young person is left behind in the quest for education and skills for work and life.

The key factor underpinning sustainable provision of education is the resilience of national education systems. Capacity development of national authorities and partners in crisis-affected countries is therefore of paramount importance. This, in turn, will contribute to sustainable recovery, reconstruction and, ultimately, development in the region.

Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth: UNESCO Regional Education Response Strategy capitalizes on achievements primarily in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and presents regionally coherent, nationally responsive programming for

2016 and 2017. It is fully aligned with the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP), supports the No Lost Generation strategy and is an integral part of nationally led response processes¹⁰.

The two-year strategy is anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, more specifically the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4), which aims to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', as well as the Incheon Declaration, adopted at the 2015 World Education Forum, which underlines 'developing more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults... including internally displaced persons and refugees'.

The UNESCO Regional Education Response Strategy is by design a concrete, responsible and purposeful contribution intended to fill gaps in areas of clear comparative advantage, thus adhering to the call for complementarity and synergy in the humanitarian and development communities, so that education can become a real driving force for peace, stability and sustainability of development in the region. Of its estimated cost of US\$80 million, some US\$60 million remains to be secured.

¹⁰ The Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis, the National Stabilization Plan and the Reach All Children in Education (RACE) Strategy (Lebanon) and the 2014 Syria Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP).

SDG4 - Education 2030 Framework for Action: Addressing education in emergency situations

Natural disasters, pandemics and conflicts, and the resulting internal and cross-border displacement, can leave entire generations traumatized, uneducated and unprepared to contribute to the social and economic recovery of their country or region. Crisis is a major barrier to access to education, stalling and in some cases reversing progress towards the EFA goals in the last decade. Education in emergency contexts is immediately protective, providing life-saving knowledge and skills and psychosocial support to those affected by crisis. Education also equips children, youth and adults for a sustainable future, with the skills to prevent disaster, conflict and disease.

Countries must, therefore, institute measures to develop inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in crisis contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees. The principles of prevention, preparedness and response, and established international guidelines such as the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards, should guide planning and response. Education sector plans and policies should anticipate risks and include measures to respond to the educational needs of children and adults in crisis situations; they should also promote safety, resilience and social cohesion, with the aim of reducing the risks of conflict and natural disaster. The capacity of governments and civil society for disaster risk reduction, peace education, climate change adaptation and emergency preparedness and response should be strengthened at all levels to ensure that risk is mitigated and education maintained during all phases, from emergency response to recovery. Well-coordinated national, regional and global responses and systems are needed to prepare for and respond to emergencies and to 'build back' better, towards safer and more equitable education systems.

Stakeholders should make every effort to ensure that education institutions are protected as zones of peace, free from violence, including school-related gender-based violence. Special measures should be put in place to protect women and girls in conflict zones. Schools and educational institutions – and the routes to and from them – must be free from attack, forced recruitment, kidnapping and sexual violence. Actions must be taken to end impunity for persons and armed groups that attack education institutions.

Source: UNESCO.



Response strategic areas

The UNESCO Regional Education Response Strategy addresses the learning gaps of youth in Syria and other countries in the region. The strategy comprises three response areas:

1. Access – bridging access gaps for youth;
2. Quality – restoring quality and relevance as the heart of learning;
3. System strengthening – empowering education systems for resilience.

The strategy is a direct result of UNESCO's experience, knowledge and accomplishments through interventions in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria since the onset of the crisis. The primary target groups are youth aged 15 to 24 affected by the crisis within the country, Syrian refugee youth in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, and vulnerable youth affected by the crisis in host communities. The strategy also targets educators to enable them to improve their pedagogical and managerial skills, as well as national educational institutions and stakeholders to strengthen their capacities for evidence-based planning, management and mitigation of the crisis' impact on national education systems.

Response Strategic Area 1: Access – bridging access gaps for youth

The response to the Syrian crisis has emphasized provision of access to basic education (ages 5 to 17) over subsequent levels. However, the protracted nature of the crisis makes it problematic to continue this approach because (1) children who benefitted from the support to basic education increasingly find little or no opportunity to pursue further learning and (2) very limited financial resources are made available for provision of post-basic education. Research shows that quality secondary education, especially for girls and young women and those in vulnerable groups, is vital to solidify foundational skills and convey the necessary skills for life and work. Such skills are

crucial to empower youth in crisis circumstances. Thus UNESCO has the following objectives and strategies:

Objectives

- Provide youth with opportunities for secondary education, with particular focus on young women and vulnerable groups within host communities.
- Provide youth with access to quality higher education and TVET opportunities in universities and other training centres in Syria and in host countries.

Strategic Actions

- Implement a financing mechanism for registration and access to secondary



© UNESCO/Lebanon - A public secondary school teacher giving a lesson to Lebanese and Syrian students who have received tuition support and learning materials under the EASE project



© UNESCO/Iraq - A student interacts with her teacher in a UNESCO classroom

education (grades 9 to 12) in each academic year for at least 50,000 Syrian youths affected in the crisis.

- Support provision of learning materials in the form of 'school in a box' and 'school in a bag' and other equipment's to cater for at least 50,000 youth that have accessed secondary education.
- Develop innovative approaches for accessing opportunities and scholarships in higher education and vocational skill development programmes for at least 6,000 Syrian youths aged 18 to 24.
- Support capacity development of higher education institutions to increase access and provide quality learning opportunities.



© UNESCO/Lebanon - National initiative to provide education support to Syrian children (2012-2013)

Status of UNESCO interventions

Targeted efforts have been made in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria in secondary education, TVET and higher education. In Iraq, UNESCO has already enabled 1,099 refugees of secondary-school age to enrol and learn by providing three prefabricated schools and learning materials. UNESCO also enabled catch-up classes to be given to 800 secondary-age refugees and enrolled 1,700 in 14 community learning centres. Over 100 youth have taken part in TVET programmes, development courses on entrepreneurship and classes in information and communication technology (ICT). To enhance teachers' professional development and strengthen the education systems' capacity, 65 secondary school teachers have been trained, and training workshops on the minimum



© UNESCO/Iraq - Students participating in the Education and Life Skills Training Support Programme to improve the education and livelihood of vulnerable IPDs and Syrian refugees in Mosul and Kirkuk, Kurdistan

standards of the International Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE) were held for education ministries and other key stakeholders.

Further support in Iraq will be provided to rehabilitate two schools, including provision of essential equipment, furniture and supplies, so as to facilitate access to formal and catch-up classes, together with exam support, for 1,500 refugee students; in addition, incentives will be provided for 78 school staff, along with transport, textbooks and stationery for students.

In line with the Jordan Response Plan, UNESCO – together with Jordan’s Ministry of Education and other partners – has been supporting provision of alternative learning pathways to out-of-school

refugee youth through informal and non-formal education (NFE), training of teachers for quality delivery and enhancement of the ministry’s response capacity in emergencies by providing tools to address data and information gaps. A major programme is under way to improve the learning experiences of 3,000 children in 50 NFE centres, 240 refugee youth in Za’atari camp and 540 refugee youth in urban areas. A UNESCO mentoring programme in Za’atari serves 1,050 youth, with 140 trained Syrian mentors and 28 case managers coaching youth in coping strategies. This has shown promise in terms of reducing youth related violence in the camp, increased mentees’ engagement in self-defined learning paths through life-skill programmes, and improved social cohesion in Za’atari.



© UNESCO/Jordan - Refugee youth come to UNESCO’s district 10 center to complete the Jami3ti survey, ultimately linking potential students with higher education opportunities based on their needs.

In the area of higher education, UNESCO's Jami3ti website is a 'one-stop shop' platform to link young Syrian applicants seeking learning opportunities with higher education providers. Jami3ti offers analytical tools to help decision-makers better capture the prior-schooling profiles of Syrian refugees in need of post-secondary and tertiary education. More than 2,000 refugees of higher education age have registered online to express interest in pursuing higher learning opportunities. On this basis, concrete offers of learning opportunities will be provided in 2016.

In **Lebanon**, the Organization is implementing a major initiative to give young Syrian refugees access to life-skill training and to orient Syrian and Lebanese youth towards positive engagement in community development. In addition, UNESCO has made provisions to support up to 1,500 secondary school-aged youth, both Syrian and vulnerable Lebanese, in some 200 public secondary schools to ensure continuation of learning through provision of tuition, learning materials and school supplies for three academic years. An additional 5,500 Syrian and Lebanese youth will receive learning materials through the School in a Bag initiative. As regards higher education, UNESCO is working with the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education to identify higher education institutions and support their capacity development and provision of scholarship opportunities for both Syrian refugee and vulnerable Lebanese youth.

Response Strategic Area 2: Quality – restoring quality and relevance as the heart of learning

Quality and relevance in learning are often neglected in time of crisis. There is a need for innovative solutions that ensure the right of all youth to quality education and relevant learning that is inclusive and respectful of the diversity of learners' needs. Therefore, UNESCO has the following objectives and strategic actions in this area:

Objectives

- Accelerate improvement and contextual adaptation of teacher skills through innovative content, training modalities and strategies.
- Equip youth with skills for life and work.

Strategic Actions

- Develop resource requirements and professional training of 5,000 teachers for quality teaching of Syrian youth and youth in host communities.
- Conduct training on skills necessary for life and work for 20,000 Syrian youth and youth in host communities.
- Implement psychosocial-based education programmes to ensure integration and cohesion for 20,000 Syrian youth in host communities.

Status of UNESCO interventions

In this context, professional development of teachers is central to UNESCO support. In **IRAQ**, 65 secondary school teachers have already been trained in innovative pedagogy and classroom management, psychosocial support and community engagement, and a further 78 refugee teachers and about 100 IDP teachers will be trained.

In **JORDAN**, 450 ministry trainers and 2,000 teachers have received intensive training through UNESCO's strategic partnership with Queen Rania Teachers Academy (QRTA). In addition, UNESCO and QRTA are engaged in the design, pilot-testing and roll-out of a new blended learning portal with ICT-enabled training for teachers in interactive pedagogy, in psychosocial support and in mathematics and sciences. The portal is expected to provide the ministry with rapid response capability to address growing demand for continuous professional development.

In **LEBANON**, school leaders and teachers from 35 public secondary schools are receiving training, including a comprehensive programme on the INEE minimum standards. In addition, two youth information centres have been established, one in a village in the Bekaa region and the other in the south. And a radio programme by and for Syrian

refugee youth and Lebanese youth promotes exchange of information. For **SYRIA**, 200 teachers and facilitators were trained in 2014 and 2015 to improve their pedagogical skills in psychosocial support and TVET. A major programme to provide second chance learning opportunities for at-risk youth is being developed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education.



© UNESCO/Jordan - An enthusiastic teacher gives a math lesson to Syrian refugee children, as part of UNESCO's informal education project in host communities, implemented in partnership with MECI

Response Strategic Area 3:

System strengthening – empowering education systems for resilience

Both in times of crisis and during the transition towards recovery, in countries in crisis as well as refugee recipient countries, it is crucial to strengthen education systems. Those that develop and sustain resilience are best able to cope with shocks, mitigate their impact and continue service provision, which in turn can significantly contribute to peace building and social cohesion. Accordingly, UNESCO has the following objectives and strategic actions:

Objectives

- Promote evidence-based advocacy for equity and equality.
- Strengthen the policy dialogue, sharing of promising practices and decision-making on educational provision in emergencies and post-crisis situations.
- Enhance national capacities to plan and manage education systems' responsive to the crisis.

Strategic Actions

- Develop information systems to inform planning and decision making using improved data management and monitoring framework.
- Conduct capacity development programme

on policy planning and management for education officials from Ministries of Education in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria to address equitable and quality access of education for the Syrian youth affected by the crisis.

- Conduct capacity development programme for national educational institutions, stakeholders and education service providers in Syria and host communities to impart knowledge, skills and tools to improve their response to the crisis and its impact.

Status of UNESCO interventions

Capacity development initiatives have been implemented in all target countries.

In **IRAQ**, training workshops on the INEE minimum standards were held for Ministry of Education staff and other key stakeholders, while UNESCO contributed to the creation of an Education in Emergencies working group and coordination and advocacy mechanisms.

In **JORDAN**, UNESCO is providing technical assistance on voluntary rapid mobile phone surveys to collect basic data on the educational needs of Syrian refugee youth eligible for higher education. Along with UNICEF, UNHCR and Save the Children Jordan, UNESCO also supports the Ministry of Education with a dedicated information

system (OpenEMIS Refugees and Jami3ti) in camps and host communities' schools.

In **LEBANON**, UNESCO supports capacity development at the Ministry of Education towards development of a policy framework for accelerated learning programmes, to help expand access to education, and bridging programmes for transition to secondary education.

At the **REGIONAL** level, an NFE policy framework is in development to help expand access to basic and post-basic education to all refugees, IDPs and vulnerable children and youth. The aim is for such

learning opportunities to be of good quality and recognized and accredited across borders. This would enable Syrian refugee children and youth to continue their learning if they return to Syria and would help strengthen host country national education systems.

In the area of higher education, UNESCO is facilitating policy and technical dialogue on higher education in emergencies and protracted crises in the Arab region in order to address issues concerning policies, legislations, quality assurance as well as recognition and certification of diplomas.



© UNESCO/CSF-OpenEMIS. Training for Jordan Ministry of Education officials on UNESCO new Data Collection System for monitoring refugees education



ORGANIZATIONAL MANDATE AND IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

As the global coordinator of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) on education, UNESCO is at the forefront in promoting the right to education and quality learning as the critical vehicle for work and life. Its 2013-2021 Medium Term Strategy stipulates that UNESCO will advocate for a sector-wide approach for the rehabilitation of education systems in post-crisis situations and the enhancement of their resilience. This approach gives equal attention to access and quality issues and avoids gaps in response affecting specific subsectors. In the Syrian context, UNESCO will leverage its role as an honest broker to advocate for and support policy changes in favour of vulnerable youth. It will give special attention and support to peace education and psychosocial rehabilitation, as well as to critical areas for recovery and longer-term development, such as TVET and life skills, secondary education and higher education, including teacher education and training.

Building on the Education for All commitments, UNESCO coordinated global, regional and national discourse on the post-2015 education agenda by promoting and organizing inclusive, participatory policy-level and technical dialogue. In the Arab States region, this included the Arab States Regional Conference on Education Post-2015, held in January 2015 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, which UNESCO organized together with the Egyptian government, UNESCO, UNHCR and ABECS;

and the first Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030, held in December 2015 in Cairo. Attended by key UN partners, regional organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and private foundations, both meetings recognized that the most significant challenge to progress in education in the region was conflict. Therefore, education ministers, senior education officials, regional and international organizations and CSOs all committed to further collective efforts for the SDG4 agenda to ensure the right to quality education and lifelong learning for all children and others affected by emergency and crisis, primarily through long-term planning and financing and provision of special programmes and policies. UNESCO is mandated to lead and coordinate implementation of the SDG4 agenda using the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

In the context of the Syria crisis, UNESCO has been proactively supporting youth, teachers, authorities and partners in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. It has significant experience in the region on teacher policy and practice, notably through its work in Iraq and Palestine. Its international mandate in education, as a high-level intellectual forum and standard-setter with critical capacity development functions, makes UNESCO's advice, expertise and collaboration much sought after by other international agencies working in emergency and post-conflict settings,

and can contribute to enhanced synergy among education stakeholders and partners.

Implementation of UNESCO's Syria crisis response programme will rely on five principles:

1. a rights-based approach;
2. full alignment with national strategies and full involvement of national authorities and strategic partnerships with Ministries of Education, national educational institutions and development partners;
3. involvement of youth both as beneficiaries and agents for change;
4. capitalization on and mobilization of UNESCO in-house expertise, including from other regions and its specialized institutes, such as the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the International Institute for Educational Planning and the International Bureau of Education; and
5. common UN team strategies and coordinated inputs with agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, OCHA and UNDP.

The total cost of the programme is estimated at 80 million, of which US\$20 million had been secured by the end of March 2016, thanks to the generous financial support received from donors and partners, namely Bulgaria, European Union, Finland, France, Republic of Korea, Japan, Kuwait,

OCHA, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, UNHCR, Walton Family Foundation. Thus, an additional US\$60 million is needed to ensure that UNESCO fully meets its commitments to affected youth in Syria and host countries.

While the scale of refugee situations in Egypt is considerably lower than in the other three countries, UNESCO has a mandate there and thus recognizes support for Egypt. Therefore, through this strategy, support modality will be explored and, where possible, Egypt will benefit from national interventions undertaken in the other three countries.

As for Turkey, the country is hosting more than half of the externally displaced Syrians. While the country is not programmatically targeted in the UNESCO Strategy, UNESCO intends to actively promote networking and linkage to share knowledge and experiences.

UNESCO will develop and implement a communication strategy, including as part of projects at the national level, to ensure appropriate communication and visibility concerning activities, beneficiaries, and financial and technical partners.

EDUCATION

POWERFUL SOLUTION TO COUNTER VIOLENCE



© Seivan M.Salim / 19 year old Narin from Sinjar takes part in a workshop run by UNESCO where she learns English and life skills at the Kabartu IDP camp near Dohuk, Iraq



SCALING UP UNESCO RESPONSE: PRIORITY FOCUS AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Over time, Syria and neighbouring countries, as well as partners, have steadily shifted to a resilience building agenda, focusing more on longer term, development-related interventions that are more concerned with improving systems and policy environments. For education, this approach means strengthening national education systems, including capacity development, so that Syria and other affected countries can better cope with humanitarian situations and at the same time build resilience within the national education sector.

From the outset, UNESCO has focused on both humanitarian and development needs of Syria as well as Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Its current funding total for this effort, about US\$20 million, is being used at regional and national levels, but to scale up Organization-wide efforts through implementation of the rest of the programme, UNESCO requires further resources of approximately US\$60 million in key focus areas that have represented major gaps for at least five years (Table 2). UNESCO also needs to start support to Egypt, which is providing much needed support to Syrian refugee youth, while promoting linkage with Turkey for the sharing of knowledge and experience.

Table 2: Resource requirements in the three response strategic areas

Response strategic area	Focus	Target countries	Resource requirements
1. Access	Filling access gaps (including school rehabilitation) for young Syrian IDPs inside Syria , with particular focus on girls and young women, to support reconstruction of the country with skilled youth and tackle elements of radicalization and extremism through higher education and skills development	Syria	US\$25 million
	Expanding access to post-basic education for Syrian refugees and vulnerable youth (especially girls and young women) in host communities	Egypt Iraq Jordan Lebanon	US\$20 million
2. Quality	Improving education quality by supporting professional development for teachers and school leaders	Egypt Iraq Jordan Lebanon Syria	US\$10 million
3. System strengthening	Strengthening national education systems' resilience via improved policy environments, quality standards and regulatory frameworks, including stronger monitoring via new or improved information systems to inform evidence-based planning and budgeting	Egypt Iraq Jordan Lebanon Syria	US\$5 million
Total			US\$60 million

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Bridging Learning Gap for Youth:

UNESCO Education Response Strategy for the Syria Crisis (2016-2017)

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
<p>Goal: Empowerment of youth affected by the Syrian crisis through bridging learning gaps in access to and participation in quality post basic education systems towards stability and resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of the crisis affected youth are enrolled in established learning places Percentage of education budget allocated by host governments for education of youth affected in Syria crisis 	<p>80%</p> <p>5%</p>	<p>Host country reports, UNESCO annual report and M&E reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale of conflict Operationalized education support platform in host countries

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Response Strategic Area 1: Access - Bridging access gaps for youth				
Expected Result 1.1: Increased opportunities for the youth to access secondary education, with particular focus on young women and youth within vulnerable communities	Number of out of Syrian refugee youths accessing secondary education	50,000	Project Reports, EMIS, UNHCR	Host government support for crisis affected youth
Output 1.1.1: Built schools and annexes to existing schools, and renovated existing secondary schools to increase capacity for grades 9 to 12	Number of learning spaces (prefabs) renovated and constructed to support access to secondary education	150	Project Reports, EMIS, UNHCR	
Expected Result 1.2: Improved quality of teaching and learning provided to the youth affected in the Syrian crisis in host communities	Percentage of the students and teachers utilize the teaching and learning materials	90%	Project Reports, EMIS, UNHCR	Host government support for crisis affected youth

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
<p>Output 1.2.1: Provided learning materials for IDPs, refugees and vulnerable youth in host communities</p>	Number of learning materials supplied to the schools for the youth affected in Syrian crisis in host communities	50,000	EMIS, MEHE and UNESCO	
<p>Expected Result 1.3: Increased scholarship opportunities for the youth to access higher education for better academic competencies and professional skills</p>	Number of scholarships availed to Syrian refugee youths to access TVET and higher education institutions	6,000	EMIS, MEHE and UNESCO	Learning a priority and support from country higher education institutions
<p>Output 1.3.1: Provided scholarships to Syrian refugee youth (18 - 24 yrs) and IDPs to access universities/training programmes in Syria and host countries</p>	Percentage of Syrian refugees provided with scholarships	80%	EMIS, MEHE and UNESCO	

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Output 1.3.2: Enrolled Syrian refugees(50% female) in host countries universities training programme towards employability	Number of youths benefited from universities training programme towards employability	6,000	EMIS, MEHE and UNESCO	
Output 1.3.3: Built capacity of higher education institutions in host countries addressing access and quality assurance for refugee youth	Number of higher education institutions in host countries with improved capacity	20	EMIS, MEHE and UNESCO	
Strategic Response Area 2: Quality - Bringing back quality at the heart of learning				
Expected Result 2.1: Improved teacher competencies in delivering quality teaching to Syrian youth in host communities	Number of teachers with improved teacher competencies in delivering quality teaching to Syrian youth in host communities	5,000	MEHE and UNESCO	Qualification and certification accepted by host country

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Output 2.1.1: Trained teachers with adaptive skills in delivering classroom learning to youth in crisis affected areas	Number of teachers trained on adaptive skills in delivering classroom learning to youth in crisis affected areas	5,000	MEHE and UNESCO	
Output 2.1.2: Trained teachers to use interactive digital pedagogical resources was part of continuous professional development	Percentage of teachers trained on use of interactive digital pedagogical resources	90%	MEHE and UNESCO	
Output 2.1.3: Developed standardized NFE or ALP curricula and certification framework equivalent to formal education in each host country	Standardized NFE or ALP curricula and certification framework equivalent to formal education in place	NFE/ALP in place	MEHE and UNESCO	

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Output 2.1.4: Developed tailor designed vocational programs for online delivery specifically for Syrian young boys and girls in host countries	Number of online delivery vocational programs developed for the youth in host countries	5	MEHE and UNESCO	
Expected Result 2.2: Increased opportunities for diversified and more attractive skills sets for the youth	Percentage of youth obtaining diversified and more attractive skills sets	90% of eligible youth	MEHE and UNESCO	Host government support for crisis affected youth
Output 2.2.1: Developed online learning courses adapted with Open educational resources(OER) in partnership with Massive Open Online Courses(MOOCs) for crisis affected youth in host countries	Number of online courses adapted with Open educational resources(OER) for the youth	1	MEHE and UNESCO	

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Output 2.2.2: Enrolled youth from the Syrian refugee crisis in an e-learning program delivered with scale up quality assurance framework	Percentage of youth from the Syrian refugee crisis enrolled an e-learning program	90%	MEHE and UNESCO	
Output 2.2.3: Enrolled students in higher education from each host country in online quality higher education programs	Percentage of youth from the Syrian refugee crisis enrolled in online quality higher education programs	90%	MEHE and UNESCO	
Output 2.2.4: Enrolled youths in co-curricular programs that foster resilience with peace co-existence in host communities	Percentage of youth from the Syrian refugee crisis enrolled in co co-curricular programs that foster resilience with peace co-existence in host communities	90%	MEHE and UNESCO	

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Expected Result 2.3: Improved support to the crisis affected youth with psychosocial based education programs	Number of crisis affected youth benefitting from the psychosocial based education programs	20,000	MEHE and UNESCO	Cohesion and integration priority of Host government for crisis affected youth.
Output 2.3.1: Designed psychosocial-based educational programmes for the youth in Syria and in host communities	Number of psychosocial-based educational programmes implemented in host communities	4	MEHE and UNESCO	
Output 2.3.2: Enrolled the youth in psychosocial programs that applying better coping mechanism in facing the crisis	Percentage of young people that have gone through psychosocial-based educational programmes	80%	MEHE and UNESCO	

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Strategic Response Area 3: System strengthening–Empowering education systems for resilience				
Expected Result 3.1: Policy decisions enacted at national and regional levels towards ensuring equitable access to, and participation in quality education for youth affected by the crisis	Number of Policy dialogue/forums on addressing concerns on equitable access to, and participation in quality education for youth affected by the crisis in place	4	MEHE and UNESCO	Host government support for crisis affected youth
Output 3.1.1: Evidence base policy dialogues promoted to remove barriers of access to education	Number of workshop held for policy advocacy of removal barriers for accessing education	4	MEHE and UNESCO	
Output 3.1.2: Regional policy dialogues on accreditation and certification advocated in host countries in favor of refugee youths	Number of policy dialogues in place	1	MEHE and UNESCO	

Project Description	Indicators	Target	Source of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
<p>Expected Result 3.2 A Syrian youth crisis national plan on education systems response in place and being implemented</p>	Number of initiatives in place that support the Syrian youth crisis education response	1	MEHE and UNESCO	Host government support for crisis affected youth
<p>Output 3.2.1: Developed a youth crisis plan for addressing the barriers that prevent learners from accessing quality education in host countries</p>	Number of national authorities and education service providers engaged in the Syrian youth crisis	5	MEHE and UNESCO	
<p>Output 3.2.2: Trained national authorities and education service providers in Syria and the host communities on how to respond to the Syrian Youth crisis</p>	Number of capacity development initiatives conducted for the Syrian youth access to quality education	5	MEHE and UNESCO	

ANNEX II: KEY INDICATORS IN SYRIA AND SYRIAN REFUGEES HOST COUNTRIES

Table 1: Socio-economic and Education Indicators, 2014

Indicator	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
Total population (thousand)	89,580	34,812	6,607	4,547	22,158
Annual population growth (%)	2	(2)	2	1	2
Population aged 14 years and younger (in thousands)*	28,605	14,102	2,605	1,264	7,069
Rural population (% of total population)*	56	34	17	13	44
Poverty headcount ratio at 2 PPP\$ a day (% of population)*	15.4	21.4	1.6	-	-
GDP per capita-PPP \$*	6,614	4,177	6,037	14,373	5,347
GDP in Billions- PPP \$*	534	136	36	64	120
Annual GDP growth (%)	2	7	3	1	2

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics and World Bank

* Year 2013 data

Table 2: School Age Population, 2013

Indicator	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
School age population by education level, pre-primary (age 4 - 5 years)	3,880,280	2,017,459	359,875	220,016	1,473,931
School age population by education level, primary (age 6 -11 years)	10,707,263	5,283,400	1,006,537	510,970	1,931,709
School age population by education level, secondary (age 12 -17 years)	9,533,226	4,600,755	908,641	600,578	3,678,290
School age population by education level, tertiary (18 - 24 years)	8,172,161	2,931,488	644,366	535,279	1,911,326

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics

Note for age cohort: Lebanon (3-5 years) and Syria (3-5; 6-9 years)

Table 3: Syrian Refugees Age Cohort Breakdown in Host Countries, 2016

Indicator	Sex	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon
Number of Syrian refugees by age group and Sex (0 - 4)	All	12,961	35,430	100,660	177,735
	Female	6,288	17,421	48,927	86,881
Number of Syrian refugees by age group and Sex (5 - 11)	All	23,091	39,185	138,565	245,046
	Female	11,217	19,079	67,402	119,523
Proportion of Syrian refugees by age group and Sex (12 - 17)	All	14,278	24,901	85,341	138,211
	Female	6,899	11,192	41,482	67,709
Number of Syrian refugees by age group and Sex (18 - 59)	All	62,062	139,248	285,250	476,202
	Female	30,684	55,999	149,723	261,838
Number of Syrian refugees by age group and Sex (60+)	All	5,219	5,766	22,842	28,215
	Female	2,561	3,066	13,311	15,825
Number of Syrian refugees by Sex (total)	All	117,611	244,530	632,658	1,065,409
	Female	57,649	106,757	320,845	551,776

Source: UNHCR.



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