

# Scaling Up Quality Education Provision for Syrian Children and Children in Vulnerable Host Communities

REPORT OF THE SUB-REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
17-19 June 2014, Amman, Jordan





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CONFERENCE REPORT  
JUNE 2015

Sometimes, a problem can look very different when it's approached from another perspective, a new point of view. This was the purpose of the Sub-regional Conference on Scaling up Quality Education Provision for Syrian Children and Children in Vulnerable Host Communities, to bring fresh ideas and new perspectives to the daunting challenges confronting children in the region. The following poem illustrates this point. When it is read from the bottom up, it provides a very different outlook than when it is read from the top down.

**What the critic says**, by Robert Prouty

What the critic says...  
I do not believe  
A real future for Syrian refugee children is possible  
To give every child a chance to learn  
To give every child hope for a better future  
We will fail  
I do not believe  
We have the collective will to do it  
It is too big a task  
I certainly do not believe  
We can prevent a lost generation  
The rich countries of the world will fail to do their part  
And  
The host countries will fall short  
I do not believe  
Our efforts really do matter  
Millions of children will remain out of school  
I do not believe  
We can find the strength to change

# Preface

The crisis in Syria has caused enormous suffering and destruction in the country and triggered a massive displacement of people within and to neighbouring countries. More than 3.3 million people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries: half of them are children and one third of them are children in school age (5-17 years). The children of Syria and those in vulnerable host communities are exceedingly bearing the brunt of the conflict. Many of them have been deprived of their childhood along with their right to education. Receiving and continuing education in times of conflict is of crucial importance. In the face of enormous challenges relating to access, language barriers, dropout, and quality, Syrian refugee children and youth express a steady eagerness to learn, and children and families place a special value in education.

As duty-bearers of their right to education, host governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs have poured tremendous efforts to ensure the education of Syrian children, address the long term impact that the Syria crisis has had on them, and thwart the fear that Syria will lose a whole generation.

More than 140 government officials, UN, NGOs and private sector staff members, educators and practitioners came together from 17-19 June 2014 in Amman, Jordan, to identify lessons learnt, shortcomings and challenges of existing efforts and envision a way forward for policies and programmes to expand and accelerate access, improve quality of teaching and learning and strengthen underpinning frameworks of education for the children of Syria and those in vulnerable host communities.

Education can play a critical role in reducing conflict and its effects on individuals and societies. Across the spectrum – from early childhood development to upper secondary and higher education – education must be an integral part of humanitarian responses as it serves as a channel to address other basic needs. The Syria crisis, in its unprecedented magnitude, has called for a shift of paradigms. Not only should education have a prominent role in the humanitarian response, but the crisis should also be seen as an opportunity to review education policies and strategies to support children, address disparities in access and quality in the sub-region, and thus make the transition from humanitarian aid to human development.

Looking ahead, challenges do not solely rest in expanding access to education but also in providing quality education to equip Syrian children and youth with the necessary skills, knowledge and competences, including the values of citizenship, they need to stop the cycle of violence, reconstruct their country, and become agents of change and reconciliation. Vital to this, are the discussions around curriculum, assessments, accreditation, and certification, and actions that need to be taken for clear frameworks to be established.

Acknowledging the magnitude of the crisis and the dramatic numbers of Syrian children out of school, conference participants applauded ongoing concerted efforts and programmes and called for the development of more comprehensive and inclusive approaches to the education of Syrian children and youth. Recommendations touched upon all fields of education, including developing professional frameworks to enable teachers provide support to vulnerable children, widening access through the increase of alternative education opportunities and developing a wider range of education programmes adopting innovative, flexible, quality and community-based approaches. Participants also called upon the need to ensure coherent frameworks within the education sector and the refugee groups dispersed across the region. To guide these processes, an active community of practice was envisaged during the conference. The conference itself represented a remarkable milestone in the emergence of such a community and in advancing consistent and comprehensive programming across the sub-region.

Amman, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014

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- Tasleem Hemani Tuan drafted the conference minutes.
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# Abbreviations and acronyms

ALP	Accelerated Learning Programs
CRC	Convention of the Right of the Child
DfID	Department for International Development
ECD	Early childhood development
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INEE	International Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International non-governmental organization
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NLG	No Lost Generation
PRS	Palestine refugees from Syria
PSS	Psychosocial support
RACE	Reaching All Children with Education
RRP	Regional Response Plan
SOC	Syrian Opposition Coalition
SHARP	Syria Humanitarian Action Response Plan
SVS	Syrian Virtual School
TLS	Temporary learning spaces
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# Introduction

It has been said that crisis begets crisis, that today's tragedy is the child of yesterday's tragedy and the parent of tomorrow's. This is why the conference reported in these pages was convened, and why the education needs of the region's children must be given far greater priority – because when education is itself a victim of crisis, when children lose hope for the future, when teachers are unable to help rebuild that future, peace when it does arrive is all the more fragile and all the more easily lost.

The current Syrian crisis began in March 2011. By mid-2012, it had become a full-scale civil war. It has resulted in upwards of 150,000 deaths and the displacement of millions of individuals. Millions of school-aged children are at risk of losing out on their education – many have already been out of school for three years or more. In the five countries<sup>1</sup> that are host to most of the Syrian refugees and in Syria, there has been a wide range of efforts to improve schooling opportunities, both for the Syrian children and for vulnerable children in the host country itself. In spite of daunting challenges, there have also been promising developments that could be scaled up in order to improve the support children receive, and to improve outcomes in a sustainable way that could help ensure 'no lost generation'.

The purpose of the conference reported in these pages was to ensure that educational opportunities of good quality are available to Syrian children, as well as to the children in vulnerable host communities. Building on the needs and gaps identified in the December 2013 conference, organized by UNESCO and UNHCR, and entitled: "Exploring an Education Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis", the conference was set in the context of several regional response initiatives, such as the *Syria Humanitarian Action Response Plan* (SHARP) and the *Regional Response Plan* (RRP), as well as the *No Lost Generation* (NLG), an international initiative by governments, the United Nations (UN), and international agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The latter builds on the SHARP and the RRP to address the immediate and long-term impacts of the Syria

crisis on a generation of children and youth in Syria and its neighbouring countries (see NLG Strategic Overview in Annex III). It aims to expand access to education, to provide direct protection support, to promote peace building, and to restore hope to millions of Syrian children.

The conference took place in Amman, Jordan over a three-day period. It included representatives of Syria and of five countries hosting Syrian refugee children: Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq (the majority were from the Kurdistan Regional Government), and Egypt.<sup>2</sup> It also included representatives of the broader international community, including UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNRWA, DfID, World Vision International, Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee, the American University of Beirut, USAID, as well as the private sector and many more (see List of Participants in Annex II). Representatives of national NGOs were also present. The conference was facilitated by the Centre for Lebanese Studies, UNESCO, UNHCR and UNICEF who jointly organized and sponsored this event as part of their efforts to enhance synergies and coordination at sub-regional level with a view of scaling up education access and quality in the context of the Syria crisis.

This report presents the main topics discussed at the conference and summarizes the key recommendations given (see Conference Agenda in Annex I). However, it does not provide a linear reporting of the conference in chronological order. Rather, it provides an analysis of issues in terms of priorities, opportunities, risks, and lessons learned, as well as observations and recommendations for next steps.

The report acknowledges and supports the three main objectives of the conference which would result in the development of recommendations for policies and programmes:

- a) to accelerate the access of Syrian refugee children to education;
- b) to improve the quality of teaching and learning; and

<sup>1</sup> Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Host countries are listed according to the number of registered school-age refugee children.

- c) to strengthen the underpinning frameworks of education: curriculum, accreditation, certification, assessment, and rights.

As implied by the title of the conference, these objectives were to be met in part by identifying promising policies and programmes, and agreeing on approaches for making them available to Syrian refugee children on a much larger scale.

The report is structured in three parts:

- i) Crisis and response: the context of education within the Syrian crisis. This section presents an overview of the education sector within the context of the Syrian crisis across the host countries;

- ii) Analysis and opportunity: understanding the issues. This section generally follows the five sessions of the conference itself, providing an analysis of issues linked to: legal and political frameworks; scaling up access; improving the quality of teaching and learning; empowering teachers within the context of crisis; and curriculum, accreditation and certification of learning; and

- iii) Recommendations, caveats and messages: finding the way forward. This section presents recommendations, many of them developed through the breakout sessions and presentations during the conference. It also discusses potential pitfalls on the way forward and ends with a series of messages for advocacy purposes intended to increase visibility and support for the international response to Syria's education crisis.



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# CRISIS AND RESPONSE: THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION WITHIN THE SYRIAN CRISIS



# 1 Crisis and response: The context of education within the Syrian crisis

Many crises have their biggest long-term impact on children, and the Syrian crisis is no exception. It is above all, a crisis of children and youth. Half of all registered Syrian refugees are children;<sup>3</sup> half of registered school-age refugee children are

out of school. In Lebanon, the hardest hit of all the host countries, there are more Syrian refugees of school age than there are Lebanese children in public school.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.1 Complexity of the crisis

It is the fourth year of the Syrian crisis. The overall humanitarian response to the crisis has proven particularly challenging and complex for a range of reasons:

- 1 Refugees are spread across five countries. These countries represent a socio-economic range from lower middle income to upper middle income, with widely varying capacities to support the refugee population.
- 2 The impact of the crisis on host countries is unevenly distributed. The total number of registered refugees is over 1.1 million in Lebanon, over 1 million in Turkey and 615,000 in Jordan. It is over 225,000 in Iraq.<sup>5</sup> But whereas in Turkey, the refugee population is relatively small compared to the overall population – under 5 per cent, in Lebanon, by contrast, Syrian refugees now constitute between one quarter and one third of the total population. The World Bank estimates that the crisis caused Lebanon \$2.5 billion in lost economic activity in 2013 alone and may push 170,000 Lebanese into poverty.<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, tensions in the country are mounting, and there is an increasing risk that the burden on Lebanon will create a backlash that will further worsen conditions for the Syrian refugee population. This is a particular problem in that the majority of Syrian refugees are settling in disadvantaged areas (such as in the northern parts of the country and in the

Bekaa valley) where most Lebanese children are already considered vulnerable.

- 3 As noted above, to a large extent, this is a crisis of children and youth. Half of all registered school-age refugee children are out of school, and this figure soars for youth, where very few of whom have access to secondary and tertiary schooling, vocational training, or non-formal education of any kind. Prior to the crisis, the vast majority of these children and youth were in school in Syria.
- 4 Many humanitarian and development partners, including both international agencies and NGOs, do not have a long history of engagement in education in many of the countries in the region (except Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine), and did not have an infrastructure that could be readily called on to mitigate the burden on host governments. While space for action availed to organizations by host governments varies in each of the six countries, actors are engaging with a crisis of unprecedented magnitude and have to develop capacity under difficult circumstances to respond to the ever changing nature of the crisis. Shifting paradigms from responding to short-term immediate needs to providing long-term sustainable responses for systems to cater for the needs of vulnerable children also calls for the involvement of more partners with varied expertise and knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> From 0-18 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> From 'A Lost Generation: A Strategy for Children Affected by the Syria Crisis' – background paper for the sub-regional conference of June 2014.

<sup>5</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>, 25 November 2014.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank (September 2013). Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict.



## 1.2 The crisis in education

Within the education sector, in spite of good will and good efforts at the host country level, the above factors have led to continuing crisis, one where many indicators such as the number of out-of-school children are deteriorating daily. Differing capacity of host countries to provide services for children have led to widely differing experiences for the children of refugee families, and a wide range of practices across countries. Over one million children of school age are refugees in surrounding countries, with the greatest number in Lebanon, followed by Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt (see chart below, with the caveat that the chart represents the situation as of July 2014). Some of the host countries are themselves facing crises which will further impact the lives and future prospects of thousands of children.

While much has been done to promote education as an integral part of the emergency response and there have been significant efforts to improve coordination and management, the financial response of the international community to date has not been commensurate with the existing needs. The overall SHARP 2014 request was 2.28\$ billion. Of this, the education sector ask was only 5 per cent (103 million). As of July 2014, SHARP was 32 per cent funded, while the education sector was only 16.6 per cent funded. The education sector ask for the Regional Response Plan (RRP6) was 11 per cent of the total appeal (3.74\$ billion). As of July 2014, the RRP6 was only 30 per cent funded and the education sector was 41 per cent funded. In spite of a shared international commitment to ensure 'no lost generation', the educational opportunities for Syrian refugee children have worsened rather than improved, and increasing numbers of children are being added daily to those already seeking a place in school. It is hoped that initiatives such as NLG will contribute significantly to identifying additional support so as to better respond to scaling up needs.

The vast majority of registered Syrian refugee children have not succeeded in finding a place in

school – the estimates range from as few as 22 per cent in formal schooling in Lebanon to 57 per cent in Jordan. Egypt is an exceptional case, with 99 per cent enrollment, although absolute numbers are relatively small (around 41,000 children enrolled).<sup>7</sup> The UNHCR estimates that at current levels of funding, the target of 172,000 refugee children in Lebanese schools this year will not be met. Given that this is itself a very modest target representing barely a third of the registered school-age children, it is critical that new approaches be explored and that momentum be created, especially with the prospect of a protracted crisis. The purpose of the conference was to do just that, to gain a better understanding of why these shockingly low numbers have not been improved, to take stock of achievements, and to learn from promising practices in order to better tackle scaling up needs. The challenges to education systems in the region are unprecedented given the large numbers of refugees adding pressure to (relatively) frail social and education systems in the sub-region. Both immediate and long-term solutions must offer good quality schooling to Syrian and vulnerable host-country children, along with real hope for the future.

Education in emergencies faces extraordinary challenges and it must be bold and flexible if it is to succeed. The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) has created a set of minimum standards for ensuring that all children have access to an education of good quality, which it defines as education that is "available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable".<sup>8</sup> These standards derive in part from human rights laws, which are taken as the basis for educational planning. They are organized in five broad domains:

- foundational standards;<sup>9</sup>
- access and learning environment;
- teaching and learning;
- teachers and other education personnel; and
- education policy.

<sup>7</sup> Data as of July 2014.

<sup>8</sup> INEE (2010) Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery.

<sup>9</sup> The INEE Foundational Standards include community participation, coordination and analysis. These standards are critical for an effective education response. Effective emergency education response is based on active community participation that empower people to take part in decision-making processes and take action on education issues. In addition, education authorities should lead the coordination of the education response, and the local context and the evolving nature of the emergency need to be analysed and understood in order to respond effectively.

**Table 1 Registered school-age children in Syria and host countries<sup>10</sup>**

Country	Number of registered school-age children (5–17 years)			Number of projected school-age children (5–17 years) <sup>14</sup> at end 2014	Number of school-age children in formal education <sup>15</sup> (July 2014)	Number of school-age children in non-formal education <sup>16</sup> (July 2014)	Number of school-age children out of school		
	August 2013 <sup>11</sup>	January 2014 <sup>12</sup>	July 2014 <sup>13</sup>				August 2013	January 2014	July 2014
<b>Syria</b>	School-age children: <sup>17</sup> <b>5.3 million – 5.7 million</b> (2013/2014) <b>6.1 million – 6.5 million</b> (2012/2013)				<b>3,684,664</b> <sup>18</sup> (3.5 million – 2012/2013) (5.6 million – 2011/2012) (5.5 million – 2010/2011)		<b>1.6 million – 2 million</b> (2013/2014) <sup>19</sup> <b>2.7 million – 3 million</b> (2012/2013)		
<b>Lebanon</b>	194,014	295,418	365,822	510,000	80,771 (66,679 – January 2014) (34,547 – August 2013)	80,284 (36,420 – January 2014) (24,833 – August 2013)	134,654	192,319	204,827
<b>Turkey</b>	110,000	206,356	276,708	350,000	107,714 (75,711 – January 2014) (33,400 – August 2013)	7,285 (no data – January 2014) (no data – August 2013)	76,600	130,645	161,709
<b>Jordan</b>	181,000	205,418	209,317	238,000	120,555 (108,046 – January 2014) (44,098 – August 2013)	30,102 (4,161 – January 2014) (3,625 – August 2013)	133,277	93,211	58,660
<b>Iraq</b>	38,350	55,806	56,836	65,000	21,056 (20,645 – January 2014) (10,415 – August 2013)	no NFE programming	27,935	35,161	35,780
<b>Egypt</b>	33,700	40,157	41,625	42,000	41,240 (16,181 – January 2014) (18,700 – August 2013)	No NFE programming	15,000	23,976	385
<b>Total</b>	<b>557,064</b>	<b>803,155</b>	<b>950,368</b>	<b>1,205,000</b>	<b>371,336</b> (287,262 – January 2014) (141,140 – August 2013)	<b>117,671</b> (40,581 – January 2014) (28,458 – August 2013)	<b>387,466</b> (70%)	<b>475,312</b> (59%)	<b>461,361</b> (49%)

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR and UNICEF, September 2014.

<sup>11</sup> School-age population calculated using UNHCR registration as of beginning of August 2013.

<sup>12</sup> School-age population calculated using UNHCR registration as of 9 January 2014.

<sup>13</sup> School-age population calculated using UNHCR registration as of 15 July 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Projection of school-age children is calculated using UNHCR registration of 5-11 and 12-17 year-olds and total projected refugee population from RRP6 MYR.

<sup>15</sup> August 2013 data: Data from UNICEF SitRep, 8 August 2013. January 2014 data: Data from UNICEF SitRep, 09 January 2014. July 2014 data: Data from Regional Education RRP6 Monthly Update – July 2014 and from UNICEF SitRep 15 July 2014. Data for Egypt does not include children enrolled in early childhood programs and in private schools. Data for Turkey includes 6,000 school-age children in Turkish schools.

<sup>16</sup> August 2013 data: Data from UNICEF SitRep, 8 August 2013. January 2014 data: Data from UNICEF SitRep, 09 January 2014. July 2014 data: Data from Regional Education RRP6 Monthly Update – July 2014 and from UNICEF SitRep 15 July 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Average of population estimations using data from UNPD, Syria 2011 Statistical Year Book, Syria 2004 Census and Population projection of the U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>18</sup> 2013/2014 Data: Data refers to students in pre-school, basic, general secondary and vocational secondary in 12 governorates. Data from Raqqa and Deir-er Zour (the 2 other governorates out of the 14 ones in Syria) is not available. Earlier Data (2010-2012): Data refers to students in pre-school, basic, general secondary and vocational secondary in 13 Governorates. Data from Raqqa is not available. All Data is from MoE EMIS.

<sup>19</sup> The figure is calculated using data from MoE EMIS, UNPD, Syria 2011 Statistical Year Book, Syria 2004 Census and Population projection of the U.S. Census Bureau.

These categories map well onto the dialogue and discussion during the sub-regional conference and could serve as a basis for developing more operationally targeted country-specific programmes moving forward.

INEE has provided tools to help 'contextualize' its minimum standards to specific local circumstances.<sup>20</sup> Its website lists nine examples of this over recent years, including Lebanon in

2014, an exercise led by INEE and the Lebanon Education Working Group.<sup>21</sup> Given that education working groups have been established in each of the host countries to provide coordination, an effort to 'contextualize' the standards across the set of countries hosting the Syrian refugee children could help to create a broader community of practice for dialogue and action, and to strengthen the cohesiveness of the Syrian refugee community across borders.

### 1.3 Country-specific challenges

The sub-regional conference opened with strongly supportive statements of intent on the part of representatives of all host countries and regions to overcome political differences and challenges in the provision of opportunities for a good quality education to all Syrian children. Further, given the impact of the refugee populations on the host communities, it was recognized by various speakers that the conference would also need to give attention to the needs of host communities, many of which also face a crisis of low educational access and quality for their own children. The continuing Palestinian crisis was also noted, with several speakers pointing out that many of the challenges faced by Syrian refugee children are shared by Palestine refugee children, and that many of the host communities for Syrian refugees are also host to Palestine refugees. Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) face an even more daunting challenge.

The first day of the conference was an opportunity to understand and discuss the varying challenges faced by each of the host countries, and the differing responses that have come about as a result of both of these differing challenges as well as differences in capacity and financing. In the section that follows, each of the host country's context is discussed in turn.

#### Syria

In Syria, the challenges faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) are both very real and very immediate. While there are said to be 3.68 million children enrolled (Grades 1-12) in school for the 2013/2014 academic year, it is certain that many of these children will be unable to continue their schooling. Already at the start of the school

year, between 1.6 million and 2 million were out of school. There were over 4,000 damaged schools and many more that were unusable for educational purposes because they were used by IDPs as shelter. The education system has been unable to address all emerging critical needs such as alternative education for IDPs and vulnerable host communities and refugees in hard to reach areas, the provision of education supplies, the provision of protective temporary learning spaces (TLS), and life skills and psychosocial support for children and adolescents. This work is rendered all the more difficult by on-going security issues, limited movement, and a lack of adequate human and financial resources.

#### Lebanon

Lebanon typifies the challenges in responding to the Syrian education crisis within a context of urban displacement where refugee camps have not been officially established and refugees are spread all over the country and concentrate especially in underprivileged areas, such as in the North and in the Bekaa valley. The government and partners have made unprecedented efforts in the face of the highest per capita concentration ever recorded of refugees, of refugee children, and of registered school-age refugee children. Lebanon is where the challenges are most acute, most transparent, and where it is most obvious that education in emergencies cannot be an afterthought but rather a starting point and an opportunity for broader impact. The UNHCR estimates that it is registering more than one refugee every minute in Lebanon. Since half of these refugees are children, this means that another child is registered every two minutes and another unregistered child arrives every five min-

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ineesite.org/en/minimum-standards/contextualization>

<sup>21</sup> The Lebanon Education Working Group is a coordinating mechanism for Lebanon led by UNHCR comprising representatives of MoE, UN and other international agencies, INGOs and NGOs.

utes. In Lebanon, education is not a luxury to be encouraged over the long term; it is a lifeline and a sine qua non of any attempt to manage the immediate crisis and restore some semblance of normalcy.

As noted by the Lebanese team, the situation in the education sector is deteriorating. A potential positive for Syrian children is that they have access to all public schools, but in reality, there are many barriers. School infrastructure and equipment are rapidly deteriorating and school spaces are inadequate. The UN has asked for almost \$2 billion overall in 2014 but has received only about one dollar for every seven requested. Education has received about one dollar of every seven received.

In many communities, there are almost as many Syrian children as Lebanese children, which creates a sense of competition for space and services. Tensions between the Syrian and Lebanese communities are on the increase, particularly when aid targets only Syrian refugee children and not all vulnerable children. Syrian refugee teachers could potentially help to meet the need for qualified teaching personnel but this also is a contentious issue politically, where the crisis is already costing Lebanese jobs and pushing tens of thousands of families in the host country into poverty. The teachers' syndicates in Lebanon and MoE have supported a policy under which only Lebanese teachers are employed to teach the Lebanese national curriculum.

Many public schools face the challenge of deteriorating quality, a concern addressed by MoE even prior to the crisis. Syrian students face these challenges in addition to barriers of language, costs, and an unfamiliar curriculum. Funding support from UN agencies and NGOs has fallen short of what is needed to address these weaknesses. The Lebanese Education Working Group has provided coordination across partners and with government, but capacity has been stretched to the limit and beyond. The recent initiative launched by the government, Reaching All Children with Education (RACE), presents a three-year educational programme for Syrian and vulnerable children, which aims to bridge short and long term planning, embracing and coordinating other existing response frameworks (RRP, NLG, etc).

## Jordan

In his welcoming speech as host to the regional conference, the Minister of Education from Jordan eloquently stated that when people face humanitarian crises, they "speak the same language". The successes that have been achieved in Jordan are attributed in part to legal and policy frameworks that "do not discriminate between Jordanians and Syrian children". Syrian children are welcomed into Jordanian schools, where they represent about 10 per cent of the total school population. Nonetheless 58,660 registered school-age refugee children remain out of school. More than half of these children, including many of lower and upper secondary school age, are not considered eligible for formal schooling, as they have lost more than three years of education. Schooling conditions in both refugee camps and out-of-camp settings are sub-optimal: to increase capacity, schools have had to go back to double-shifting in spite of a policy decision to implement only single shifting. Jordanian authorities cite a clear need for accredited alternative education opportunities, expansion of good quality informal education and greater intake capacity for schools.

## Turkey

Turkey has far greater resources for accommodating Syrian children and has not been characterized by the same degree of crisis as those faced by other host countries. Its 2013 *Law on Foreigners and International Protection* provides a comprehensive framework in line with international standards. The registered Syrian refugee children also represent a much smaller percentage of the school-age population than in many other host countries, although the figures given for the total number of school-age refugee children in Turkey vary widely. A figure of 70,000 given at this conference may reflect numbers of children in camps, but the number in country is believed to be well over 276,000. Children attend schools in camps and in non-camp public schools. Children are taught by about 400 Turkish teachers and 2,750 'voluntary' Syrian refugee teachers.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of a generally more positive context, even in Turkey the majority of school aged children are out of school. There is no provision for non-formal education for young people (it is an option for some adults) and the Turkish language

<sup>22</sup> Data refers to June 2014.

constitutes a major barrier to learning. The government is aware of these issues, and states that it is currently working towards the “elimination of barriers to Syrian children’s access to the schools of all types and levels affiliated to Ministry of National Education (such as language barriers, legislative barriers, and technical infrastructure gaps)”.<sup>23</sup>

### Iraq – Kurdistan Regional Government

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has provided a relatively high degree of stability for Syrian refugee children (who make up only about 3.5 per cent of the school age population). There has been good government support and a supportive policy environment. Teacher training has been widely available, with strong coordination among all actors including the government itself. Registered refugee children have been able to attend both existing schools and schools in refugee camps.

The 600<sup>24</sup> Syrian refugee teachers in the camps, however, can only teach in the camp and there is greatly reduced access to basic education in non-camp settings. Infrastructure is insufficient, although tents have now been largely replaced by prefabricated structures. The ongoing budget dispute between KRG and the central Iraqi government means that teachers have gone unpaid in recent months and there is a widespread lack of qualified teachers. This has constituted a major barrier to expansion of programmes.

There are almost no non-formal education opportunities for children or youth – the few programmes that do exist are limited in scope and not endorsed by the MoE. There is also very little

opportunity for secondary schooling. This creates an important demographic (youth) for whom there is little by way of schooling. There are also very few development partners or NGOs operating in the region, placing an increased burden on the MoE.

### Egypt

In Egypt, Syrian students are allowed to receive formal education of any type under the same regulations as Egyptian children. Public schools are free and they are allowed to attend these. Syrian children without documentation are allowed to attend school, which has helped to alleviate a crisis where there is a widespread lack of documentation among refugee families. Those without documentation are enrolled under a ‘temporary registration’ and families are given a grace period to provide their full documentations. When ‘temporarily registered’, children are not included in the EMIS and therefore their records do not reach the central MoE. If children do not formalize their enrolment, they cannot receive score cards or certificates at the end of the academic year. The Egyptian MoE at the conference explained that ‘temporarily registered’ children constitute a third of the overall number of enrolled Syrian children. In general, Syrian children are quite few in number as compared with the broader Egyptian population, yet the capacity to absorb Syrian children remains a challenge. There is a UNHCR protocol for nine schools in nine governorates – while UNICEF is supporting schools with high concentrations of Syrian children, the system is far from reaching the full capacity needed. The integration of Syrian refugee children with Egyptian children remains an issue, one that is recognized but has not yet been fully resolved.

## 1.4 Areas of consensus/similar approaches across countries

The *INEE Minimum Standards* framework places an emphasis on community participation and coordination as a key part of rebuilding education systems. These are included as part of the Foundational Standards domain and would highly benefit vulnerable host communities and children in host communities who may face as many disadvantages as Syrian children. The Syria experience may be an opportunity to extend this concept to the creation of a virtual community

– one with common experience and a shared purpose, but which is physically or geographically scattered. Indeed, there was a widely shared sense among participants at the conference that the creation of such a community is critical to creating a stable cadre of individuals who will be able to re-establish basic services in their country when peace is restored. Conference participants expressed the belief that Syrian refugees and their partners should work jointly across countries on

<sup>23</sup> From Turkey MoNE presentation in the conference.

<sup>24</sup> Data refers to the time of the conference.



issues such as accreditation, curriculum content, teacher training, etc. The extent to which this sentiment is representative of host country governments was difficult to gauge and should not be overstated. Nonetheless, opportunities for exchanging experiences across host countries, such as at this sub-regional conference, are important and should be followed up with some urgency. There has been cooperation among UN agencies and other stakeholders already, including joint assessments, workshops and capacity building initiatives, and this provides a strong platform for building something more sustainable and consistent.

Given the potential importance of developing a coherent virtual community as a vital contribution to long-term rebuilding efforts, it was encouraging to note that a good deal of consensus on key issues is already emerging across countries. For instance, there was widespread agreement at the conference that the No Lost Generation (NLG, see Annex 2) provides a helpful, user-friendly framework for the Syrian context. This approach, first articulated in 2013 at the UN General Assembly has already mobilized significant commitment globally. The aim of NLG is to provide Syrian children, both in Syria and in host countries, with responses in terms of protection, access to education, and opportunities to build a future for themselves and their country. NLG's key areas are education and protection; it has provided forceful arguments for the need to see education as an integral part of the humanitarian response – one that serves as a channel for addressing other basic needs.

A second point of agreement was the importance, indeed the urgency, of ensuring a comprehensive approach that includes the entire education

spectrum, from early childhood development to upper secondary and university education, as well as non-formal education. There was particular concern expressed that the education response to date has given insufficient attention to the needs of youth in Syria and neighbouring countries, as they are a social segment at risk, one whose future is at stake. Several speakers called upon the international community to recognize the importance of youth, particularly in a crisis setting, to invest in them, educate them and empower them.

A third widely shared perspective among conference participants is the principal that Syrian children as a whole should be considered a single coherent group. This viewpoint respects the need for country-specific approaches that take into consideration the capacity and context of host countries, and that respect the sovereignty of host country processes. However, from this perspective, there are also common needs for Syrian children across host countries and common rights, including the right to quality education. These rights can best be safeguarded by considering the group in toto. There was, for instance, a call to develop national and regional frameworks, with multiple and alternative routes into further and higher education. There were also several calls (discussed below) for common curricular frameworks and certification.

Despite numerous challenges, including those related to access and child labour, conference participants reported a tenacious eagerness to learn on the part of refugee children and families. This eagerness is both an opportunity and an obligation to do more in providing consistent, timely support.

## 1.5 Areas of difference across countries

One of the purposes of the conference was to understand and clarify differences in host country response to education-sector challenges, and to seek consensus where possible, or to ensure that different approaches do not disadvantage Syrian children in any host country. The areas of greatest concern, where there are **marked differences in practice and in policy, are in the use of curriculum, access to existing public**

**schools, the language of instruction, and the employment opportunities given to teachers** among the Syrian refugee population.

**The range of practices and policies regarding which curriculum<sup>25</sup> to use**, and what content to include, varies widely across countries. Most host countries use their own curriculum with minimal efforts to add content of relevance to Syrian

<sup>25</sup> Throughout this report, curriculum refers principally to the educational contents and the resources for learning and teaching (in particular textbooks).



children. The INEE Minimum Standards emphasizes that flexibility is key to accommodate larger numbers of children, both providing a wide range of education opportunities to refugee children and youth and making content relevant to them. Youth are generally those who suffer the most when faced with inflexible curricula, as they are less likely to quickly adapt to change and learn new languages. In Turkey, Syrian refugee children attend schools using a revised version of the Syrian curriculum which has been modified by the removal of references to the current Syrian government and certified by the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC), amongst other modifications. Under the KRG of Iraq, some public schools in camps also use this revised Syrian curriculum.<sup>26</sup> In both Lebanon and Jordan, there has been some targeted use of the revised Syrian curriculum, especially in schools organized by NGOs and private foundations. In Jordan, for example, it was used in 2012/2013 for conducting Grade 12 examinations in the Za'atari refugee camp, Irbid and Amman governorates, however, accreditation of these programmes remains a significant challenge.

Different from the issue of curriculum, but closely linked to it, is the question of **access to accredited programmes**. Syrian refugee children may follow programmes which are recognized for accreditation purposes by the host country, but this varies considerably and there is no consistency across countries. There has been little attention to developing accreditation processes that are consistent across host countries or to establishing equivalencies that would be relevant to Syrian children upon eventual return. The SOC has certified a curriculum in use in Turkey as well as in some schools in camps in the KRG,<sup>27</sup> even though this is not widespread and the certification at present confers very limited opportunities for children to advance. The SOC also certifies Grade 9 and Grade 12 examinations taking place in Lebanon and Jordan using the content of the revised Syrian curriculum and this is also not widespread.

When it comes to language of instruction, there are significant differences in practice across host countries. In some host countries Syrian children go to schools that do not teach in their mother tongue, which is a significant barrier to learning and to successful completion of a course of

studies. In Lebanon starting from lower secondary school, the instruction of maths and science is in French or English. When these subjects are taught by teachers who themselves have not sufficiently mastered these languages, learning can be a daunting experience. In Turkey, Syrian children who study in public schools access education in Turkish, a language that not all Syrian children can quickly learn. In Kurdistan, public schools in camps and a few schools in host communities use Arabic but others use Kurdish, in a dialect different than that used by Syrian/Kurdish children.

**Syrian refugee teachers** constitute an underutilized resource across almost all host countries, although policies and opportunities differ. In Lebanon, refugees may only teach in non-formal education programmes or in the private sector. In Turkey, they may volunteer but they are not paid.<sup>28</sup> In Jordan, 262 Syrian teachers are employed as assistants in camp schools and receive salaries from UNICEF. In Egypt, Syrian teachers are recruited to work in Syrian education centres and normally only in the non-formal sector. Under the KRG, more than 600 Syrian teachers have been recruited and paid by the MoE, but payment has been disrupted by budget disputes with the central government of Iraq and the future for Syrian refugee teachers is unclear. In Syria itself, the MoE has lost more than 50,000 teaching staff (about one in four). There are acute teacher shortages in some areas and a surplus in others.

Another area of considerable heterogeneity in policy is that of the organization of schooling. This may be the most politically sensitive issue of all. In some countries (Egypt would be an example), children have access to all public schools, even though the number of spaces available may be limited. Also in Egypt, UNHCR made it compulsory for families to register their children in school as a condition for receiving support. In other countries, there is access to these schools but Syrian refugee children do not attend with host country children but rather in separate shifts. In many cases, there are political sensitivities around the organization of schooling, as refugee children may be seen as taking spaces away from host national children, or increasing class sizes. The various practices across countries tend to limit schooling opportunities for refugee children

<sup>26</sup> This curriculum has been in use in KRG in some camp schools only during the academic year 2013/2014.

<sup>27</sup> In KRG this revised curriculum has been used only during the academic year 2013/2014 and has since then been dismissed.

<sup>28</sup> UNICEF and MoNE in Turkey have signed a protocol in October 2014 to provide standard incentives to Syrian teachers.

and may result in lower levels of learning outcomes for all children, including host country children.

A final area of difference across countries, with important social and political implications, is the impact of refugee children on host country education systems and infrastructure. In several host countries, the Syrian refugee children represent a relatively minor proportion of all children who are going to school, but in several other countries, or in some regions within these

countries, they approach or even exceed the number of host country children. Not surprisingly, where refugee children constitute a larger proportion of the school age population in country, their out-of-school rates are higher and their possibilities of advancing to higher levels of schooling are increasingly limited. The sad reality is, however, that out-of-school rates are unacceptably high in all host countries, and opportunities for advancement to higher levels of schooling are far too low.



## ANALYSIS AND OPPORTUNITY: UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

## 2 Analysis and opportunity: Understanding the issues

Any effort to improve must start with an effort to understand. Any effort to scale up must start with an effort to identify what is working well and what is not. A large part of the conference agenda was devoted to understanding the core issues that underpin the provision of education in each of the host countries/regions: the legal and political frameworks (often outside the immediate control of the education sector), issues around scaling up access, issues around the improvement of

teaching and learning, the empowerment of teachers within the context of crisis, and curriculum, accreditation and certification of learning. As noted earlier, these areas map quite well onto the INEE *Minimum Standards* framework domains: foundational standards, access and learning environment, teaching and learning, teachers and other education personnel, and education policy.

### 2.1 Legal and political frameworks

The right of refugee children to an education is guaranteed by Article 22 of the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* but in reality, the legal status of refugees and their children vary by host country. Both Turkey and Egypt have ratified this convention so there is legislative clarity and authorities have taken measures to provide refugee children with an education. In Egypt, however, the decision that Syrian children would be considered as Egyptian children superseded the convention, which no longer applied to Syrian children. This has implications on how Syrian children are dealt with and explains why they fall under the categorization of ‘foreigners’ instead of ‘refugees’. Other countries are signatory to a range of other conventions supporting children’s rights to education. Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, for instance, are all signatories to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) which includes the right of all children to an education (Article 28) and the right of refugee children to receive appropriate protection and access to all other rights (Article 22). If there is no legal status for children as refugees, this can be interpreted to mean the state does not need to provide an education for them.

**Direct barriers to schooling.** In principle, all host countries have allowed Syrian children to attend state-run schools. In some host countries, though, Syrian children cannot attend regular classes

alongside host country children, for several reasons, including lack of space and/or language barriers. Some countries provide ‘second shifts’ which typically operate for fewer hours and with fewer resources. In some cases, children do not attend school because of a lack of proper documentation. Children may not have access to certification even when they have access to public schools, which in turn becomes a pull factor for dropping out.

**Indirect barriers to schooling.** The legal issues faced by refugee families often raise only indirect barriers to schooling, but these may have a major impact on children’s ability to learn. About 25 per cent of refugee births have not been documented, for instance, usually due to administrative complexities. This means that these children risk being invisible to their host countries, and therefore they will find it more difficult to access services. Many refugee families have limited ability to remain at the same location over the school year – whether because of uncertain contractual arrangements with landlords or an inability to pay, or due to the constant search for employment. This family instability means children are more likely to not enroll, receive support from community networks, and are more likely to drop out of school during the school year.

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### Main Protection and Legal Challenges Affecting Access to Education

- Challenges resulting from the lack of legal status:
    - Illegal stay;
    - Limited freedom of movement;
    - Lack of personal documentation/issue of birth registration.
  - Challenges resulting from inability to secure decent and permanent shelter:
    - Urban Refugees who are extremely mobile, less visible and more difficult for humanitarian agencies to identify.
  - Challenges resulting from inability to secure decent income: high increase in child labour (including street children).
    - Nayla Gegaea, The Right to Education for Refugees: Legislative Gaps and Opportunities
- 

**Helping children become actors in their own protection.** Dina Kiwan (American University of Beirut) emphasized how refugees should not only be seen as recipients of aid but also and more importantly as active agents who locate themselves politically and socially. UNHCR advocates for children to receive access to education as a way for them to become advocates for themselves, and actors in their own protection. When children and their families learn their rights, when they become more comfortable interacting with bureaucracies and state institutions, and when they gain higher levels of education, they are better able to articulate their concerns.

Focus on the legal right to return or on the practical advantages of integration? This is an area where the legal issues are clear, but the practical realities are much less so. Most participants called for Syrian refugee children to have access to schooling in their own language, and to have access to a curriculum based on Syrian realities. UNHCR, however, noted the increasingly protracted nature of refugee situations, which last an average of 17 years. While not questioning the importance of supporting children's right to learn in their own language, it also encourages the acquisition of the host country language as a practical avenue towards greater protection and long-term stability. UNHCR policy is to avoid the establishment of parallel systems, and to strengthen host country Ministries of Education in their ability to provide good schooling that also meets the needs of refugees, including their ability to attend regular public schools and receive accredited certificates or diplomas.

Presenters debated issues of integration and what could be appropriate models for including Syrian children in education systems while respecting their different needs and giving them hope for return. Some educators on the ground indicated that integration policies often result in segregation because they do not take into account

the rights and capacities of Syrian students in relation to language issues, curricula, content and identity building.

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*I insist on the segregation [between Syrian and Lebanese children], because our students [Lebanese] have different school bags, uniforms, and books. Even the sandwiches are different. Because I feel for the Syrians, I do not want to expose them to that difference. (Principal of a private Lebanese school)*

Maha Shuayb, Nisrine Makkouk and Suha Tutunji  
Quality education and inclusion in formal and non-formal education of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon

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These differing perspectives on the most effective approach for refugee children share much in common. From all perspectives, education is understood as the basis or focus of all other rights, and an important source of protection. Many organizations, for example, seek to increase post-primary education opportunities and training access, with the goal of improving retention and limiting the protection risks that are associated with early school leaving. Education empowers individuals to know their rights, and to insist upon them. These perspectives reflect the importance of international legal frameworks on the protection of the right to education included in international humanitarian rights conventions: UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR, CRC, etc. Many of the issues involved, such as language of instruction, can have intermediate solutions where children's first exposure to learning is in their own language, while supporting the acquisition of host country language skills. It is important that representatives of the refugee families be empowered to participate in these dialogues going forward, and that this conference led to a continuing conversation over how legal and political frameworks can best be further developed in order to provide sustainable support to refugee children and their families.



The conference made an appeal that all options should be examined and stay open. The aforementioned dilemma about whether Syrian refugees should be educated to return as opposed to educating them to integrate into their host communities should in the end not prevent their right

to quality education. Instead of 'either-or' solutions, both perspectives should complement one another with a view to equipping children affected by the Syria crisis with the competencies needed in the 21st century.

## 2.2 Issues around scaling up access

There is widespread support for the concept that education is a human right, and that the international community is in the role of duty-bearer, with an obligation to ensure that children are able to access this most basic right. Presentations and discussions at the sub-regional conference presented a range of approaches that have been developed for addressing this challenge for Syrian refugee children. These can be broadly placed in three main categories:

- a) **streamlined programmes** that focus on a narrower set of core learning objectives, such as the experience of Lebanon using a second shift that follows a streamlined Arabised Lebanese curriculum. There has also been considerable experience on a smaller scale with catch-up and ALP programmes. These programmes all seek to provide core skills and knowledge in the face of limited resources;
- b) **community initiatives** that stress mobilization efforts, transportation for children, advocacy using radio and other forms of media, peer-to-peer mobilization, and engagement with religious leaders. These programmes have been relatively small in scale, but appear to be making an impact with particularly hard-to-reach groups. Monitoring initiatives may also play a significant role in ensuring that students remain in school long after initial enrollment drives have ended;
- c) **self-learning programmes** that seek to replace formal education when this may not be a viable option because of security or isolation or other circumstances. UNRWA has developed self-learning materials for core subjects from Grades 1-9; computer-based interactive numeracy and literacy lessons for Grades 1-3; (UNRWA TV lessons Grades 4-9). A technical working group was set up by the Syrian Ministry of Education, UNRWA and UNICEF to revise the original UNRWA self-learning materials, and establish support systems using community mobilization, community learning centres, and resource personnel to provide support to the children who use the self-learning materials.

Working groups at the sub-regional conference devoted considerable time and thought to identify the kinds of actions that were most likely to result in scaled up access for refugee children. These were often very frank discussions of real-world obstacles to scaling up access for refugee children. The groups highlighted the importance of developing an overall framework to ensure that Syrian children everywhere are given the same opportunities. Several working groups and some of the presentations also drew attention to the particular situation of youth who are excluded from most of the education programmes, have particularly limited access to education opportunities and whose voice remain largely unheard by the international community. It was suggested that an independent entity linked to MoE could be identified or established to ensure education for all Syrian children regardless of political affiliation.

As noted above, the working groups addressed the political sensitivities around such challenging questions as segregation vs. integration as well as integration vs. inclusion. Some felt that full integration would inevitably lead to more problems with bullying and conflict among children. Others felt very strongly that separate schools would promote divisiveness and exacerbate the challenges for different communities to learn to live together, particularly if the crisis persists over a long period of time.

Other issues seen as priorities to increase access to schooling were to reverse the increasing incidence of child labour, to create effective child protection programmes, and to reverse language policies that do not allow children to learn in their own languages.

Several of the working groups suggested the possibility of engaging all children of school age in learning activities of some sort, whether through formal or non-formal approaches, or through community-run alternatives, including summer schools, or through self-learning with support. The idea was to ensure something for everyone so that no child would feel left out or cut off, even if full schooling could not be immediately provided.



This concept of starting with a consideration of what could be done for all children currently out of school, and then mapping backward to deepen and improve their learning experience, is potentially controversial because it could be seen as providing a sub-standard experience for the most marginalized children. But it would be an improvement over the status quo, whereby some children receive nothing. If it were coupled with a commitment to consistently improve learning experiences for all children, it could in fact be seen as much more consistent with the obligations of duty-bearers to provide some basic learning for all children as prerequisites for further quality acquisitions in terms of knowledge, skills and personal development. Such an approach could indeed be a model for broader *Education For All* efforts as an alternative way to get to the

hardest to reach children with something, and then to grow their learning experience, rather than to wait until a full package of services is available. Examples of the kinds of activities that would be consistent with this approach would be widespread distribution of simple reading and picture books for a parent or other member of the community to read to children (in their own language), development of radio-based programming, provision of stipends to parents or other members of the community to teach reading and maths skills to all children in the community who do not have access to full schooling, etc. These programmes would be done at massive scale and could then be grown as quickly as possible into more consistent and standardized schooling programmes over time.

## 2.3 Issues around the improvement of teaching and learning

Given the significant strains on education systems and partners generated by increasingly important scores of Syrian refugees, the quality of teaching and learning has received far less attention in the Syrian refugee context than the access of children to schooling. Yet the two are closely linked. Where schooling is of low quality, children will tend to drop out early and learning gains will be lost. The scaling-up challenge has to be now faced in terms of both access and quality.

There is almost no empirical data currently available on student learning levels within the Syrian crisis context. Of the five host countries, only three (Iraq, Jordan and Egypt) have good data on reading outcomes for national students. These are generally low, although Egypt has shown remarkable progress in reading over the past several years through the implementation of an early grades reading programme. None of these countries collects comparable data on Syrian refugee children, so most of the discussion of quality has necessarily focused on inputs and overall learning environments.

The table below illustrates enormous differences across host country contexts regarding educational policies that can be expected to have a significant impact on learning outcomes. Participants at the sub-regional conference identified each of these areas as presenting significant barriers to learning. The issues can be summed up as follows:

**a) Language of instruction:** Lack of access to learning in a language the child understands depresses learning levels. Rigid language policies mean that the child does not

understand the teacher, and perhaps more importantly, the child is unable to participate fully in classroom discourse and as a consequence, teaching becomes centred on the teacher, with minimal involvement of the child. Tamer Amin (American University of Beirut) noted that for significant learning to occur, students' contributions to classroom discourse must be extended and meaningful, and that this simply cannot happen consistently with existing language policies.

**b) Employment of Syrian teachers:** In many host countries, Syrian teachers are available to teach, but are not allowed to do so, or are limited in what they can teach, or are only permitted to teach in private schools. Frequently, this means that no teachers are available. The lack of teachers either prevents refugee children from going to school entirely, or means that they will be in larger classes, or attending for a shorter period of time. Each of these has negative consequences for the quality of schooling. It also means that Syrian teachers will lose skills and that the right of return is compromised, as many potentially experienced and qualified teachers will not be available. The lack of employment opportunities for refugee teachers in host countries contributes to instability.

**c) Curriculum relevance and familiarity:** Most host countries use their own curriculum (i.e. textbooks). This contributes to the fragmentation of the Syrian refugee community and indeed, weakens the sense of a shared community. There is reluctance to modify or adapt the curriculum (i.e. textbooks)

**Table 2 Policies relating to language of instruction in host countries**

Country	Language of instruction	Employment of Syrian teachers	Curriculum in use	Organization of schooling
<b>Egypt</b>	Arabic	No, only in non-formal education	Egyptian	Public schools
<b>Iraq/KRG</b>	Kurdish Arabic in camp schools	Yes, but only in camps and with pay disruption	Kurdish curriculum in Arabic and Syrian revised curriculum in 2013/2014	Public and camp schools
<b>Jordan</b>	Arabic	No, only as assistants in camp schools and in non-formal programmes	Jordanian	Public and camp schools
<b>Lebanon</b>	Math and Science in French/English/Arabic and only in English or French after Grade 7	No, only for non-formal programmes and private Lebanese schools	Lebanese (public schools), with other (non-accredited) curricula used in private sector (i.e. Syrian; Libyan)	Syrian children can access schools, but limited availability/ Second shifts for Syrian children present a streamlined curriculum in Arabic.
<b>Syria</b>	Arabic	One in four teachers has left	Syrian official curriculum	Double shifting increasingly used; 4000+ schools closed
<b>Turkey</b>	Turkish; Syrian schools use Arabic	No, only as unpaid volunteers	Turkish; Syrian schools use revised Syrian curriculum	Camp/host community/ public

to the needs of the Syrian children as called for by INEE standards. Students are demoted in order to fit the system and curriculum. However, if curriculums are seen as different from, and more than just textbooks, teachers could build better curriculum commonalities among countries. For example, in terms of learning key concepts and developing key competencies in the context of different learning areas/subjects and cross-cutting approaches.

**d) Organization of schooling:** Policies vary across host countries as to whether Syrian refugee children will have access to public schools and if so, whether they will be in integrated or segregated classes (see above discussion under 2.2). Several countries make extensive use of second shifts for refugee children, usu-

ally meaning that they receive fewer hours of instructional time and a streamlined curriculum. Refugee children have limited access to pre-primary programmes (Early Childhood Development) and post-primary programmes, including secondary, vocational and higher education programmes. In general, there are limited numbers of remedial and catch up programmes that support language acquisition or help children who have missed several school years. All of these factors depress demand for schooling overall and increase the risks of a lost generation. Parents are also reluctant to send their children, particularly their daughters, for fear over their safety. Further aggravating the problem is the very limited flexibility for re-integrating older children who have been out of school.

## 2.4 The empowerment of teachers within the context of crisis

A common challenge within the refugee context is a lack of teacher planning and programming, as well as little support for personnel management. There is inadequate funding for assessing teachers or providing support to improve teaching quality. Given that host country systems may not have the resources to keep pace with rapidly expanding camp schools and host community schools, and that the need for teachers is constantly growing, this constitutes a crisis of enormous proportions for the sector, and disempowers teachers. National teachers also face significant professional stress, and

frequently lack the training and support to cope with the unique set of challenges they face, including:

- Influx of complex refugee learners: psychosocial issues, language, new curriculum (i.e. textbooks), mixed academic levels
- Ensuring well-being and learning for national learners
- Fostering tolerance and inclusion between national and refugee learners
- Teaching a mixed ability classroom especially in the case of integrated classrooms

- Meeting the national requirements of the curriculum versus adapting teaching and learning to suit students' needs

Group discussions around the topic of teacher empowerment often brought up the issue of supervision, the sense that teachers were often alone in trying to navigate the complex issues they face, and in trying to make value judgments about appropriate choices. The groups suggested that teachers be given greater supervision, but that they also be given guidance in human rights issues, how to provide psychosocial support to students, how to take a more gender-sensitive approach, particularly in recognizing the vulnerability of girl child refugees.

Several examples were provided of host countries that are planning to provide additional support for teachers. Turkey, for instance, is setting up a coaching system for teachers, and establishing guidelines for Syrian volunteer teachers:

- 1 Minimum expected classroom teaching hours (15/week)
- 2 Training will be provided to improve quality
- 3 Parent-teacher associations can be set up to provide support and space for structured feedback
- 4 Peer-to-peer mentoring between head teachers, teachers, etc. to provide opportunities for on-going learning and professional development
- 5 Incentives are currently provided to the teachers (camps) linked to the training; a more sustainable approach is under development and various modalities are being explored

such as eCards and SMS-banking.

Participants in these discussions cited a host of areas in which teachers are unsupported and need (and want) guidance: special needs education, working with children who have suffered trauma, learning assessments, engaging with parents, preparing learning materials, working with heterogeneous classrooms where student abilities vary enormously.

UNESCO Office in Beirut shared their initiative in developing a Regional Teacher Policy Framework and Resource Pack that will provide consistent guidance, including for education in emergencies/crisis. Crisis/emergency situations are seen as opportunities for revisiting some main assumptions with regard to quality teaching and learning which should be followed by identifying the appropriate levers of translating such principles and policies into effective daily practice at school and classroom levels.

Overall, the group discussions led to a straightforward analysis: teachers in times of crisis are particularly vulnerable, meaning their students are particularly vulnerable, and they need additional support. Since national Ministries of Education may be overwhelmed by the rapid scaling up of enrolments, it is particularly important for agencies to ensure adequate in-house expertise and support for teacher management and overall quality control. This is further evidence of the need for a coordinated approach across host countries involving agencies and host country institutions in a consistent dialogue about how best to provide support.

## 2.5 Accreditation and certification of learning

Accreditation can best be understood as a tool to protect children's right to a good quality, relevant education – a form of user protection. This means that the time invested by children, and the resources invested by their parents, are protected against loss. Such protection is all the more important in the context of crisis, where children and their families are at their most vulnerable.

The accreditation process provides a recognized seal of approval on the content of learning – guaranteeing that the programme has met accepted standards. It also provides greater opportunities for later employment, since many employers will base hiring decisions on whether the individual has followed a recognized programme of studies. Accreditation assures

employers that the curriculum learned is relevant – that it covers the skills and knowledge needed in the job market.

The discussions at the sub-regional conference covered two broad areas: the need to develop a framework for accreditation of non-formal education and the need for an accreditation process across host countries so that Syrian children, upon return, will have comparable opportunities for further education or employment. Each of these is discussed in turn below.

A theme of particular importance, discussed largely under the rubric of accreditation, was the idea of developing what has been called the Syri-

an Virtual School.<sup>29</sup> UNICEF, in particular, has explored the possibility to use an online streamlined version of the Syrian national curriculum that could receive recognition across host countries and within Syria. This would provide some standardization and a sense of community in what has otherwise been a very scattered context. This idea is discussed below as part of the dialogue around certification, but it can more properly be understood as existing at the crossroads of access, quality, and accreditation, as the discussion raises issues that cut across each of these areas.

#### **An accreditation process across host countries.**

Certification requires some form of assessment or examination, usually administered by an independent external body. The concept of accreditation usually includes acceptance of an entity authorized to certify – the state, an agency, an organization, or the private sector. Accreditation may be delegated, or there may be recognition of certification by another party. There may also be a process of establishing equivalency across entities.

In the context of the Syrian crisis, there are clear advantages to establishing certification processes, which would safeguard the investments of parents and the rights of refugee children. It may be possible to develop some form of clearing house which is recognized by all parties and given authority to certify and to develop a common framework for accreditation.

This process may also be used to strengthen coordination and partnerships to minimize duplication and fragmentation

- Coordination – inter-agency, ministries, community and non-state initiatives
- Harmonization – between actors to avoid fragmented and multiple conflicting provision
- Coordination and harmonization between public and non-public schools (informal, community)
- Work with parents and local communities

Coordination and harmonization will be facilitated by coherent frameworks e.g. framework for admissions policy to public school including conditions of registration; status and recognition of Syrian teacher qualifications.

A certification framework for NFE. In addition to formal schooling, there are clear reasons to develop a certification framework for Non-Formal Education in the Syria crisis context. This would mean supporting host countries to develop policy guidelines and national strategies and qualification systems to regulate, standardize, and certify NFE programmes conducive for the reintegration of the children and youth in formal systems or in work life.

A certification framework is all the more important given that vast numbers of Syrian children have not had access to formal education systems. NFE certification would provide opportunities for thousands of children to rejoin the formal education system. It would allow host countries to reform and improve their educational systems not only for refugees but for their own citizens as well. Recognition of NFE is an opportunity to significantly impact the lives of the disadvantaged.

The targeted groups would be: out of school refugee children whose education was interrupted in host countries and inside Syria (IDPs), refugee children who have dropped out, Syrian children who have never been to school, children from the host countries who have dropped out, and returnee and youth groups with some basic education.

Examples of current NFE programmes that can be strengthened and then certified are: accelerated learning programmes, catch up programmes, vocational training progress, life skills programmes, literacy programmes for out-of-school children and youth, and equivalency programmes that are run by agencies or communities (self-learning, distance learning, etc.).

There are numerous challenges in developing Certification Frameworks. How do you design a relevant curriculum comparable to the formal system? How do you base certification on a comprehensive and cutting-edge understanding of curriculum as transcending textbooks? How do you deal with qualifications systems and competencies that are underpinned by values? How do you track learning? How do you monitor quality? Who would administer exams?

<sup>29</sup> This initiative has been later become known as 'Syrian curriculum and certification initiative' (SCCI).

**Table 3 Experiences from countries with equivalency programmes**

Experiences from countries with large scale equivalency programmes and certification of NFE				
Country	Target	Period and time	Curriculum	Accreditation/certification
<b>Bangladesh (BRAC Program)</b>	Out-of-school children (8-10years old)	Every week day for 4 years	Core subjects, social values, human rights, financial education	Students who finish primary schooling from BRAC transfer to formal secondary schools
<b>Indonesia</b>	School-age children who have dropped out of or have been unable to enroll in a regular programme	Once or twice a week for 2 years	Packet A, B and C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morale-building and academically oriented subjects</li> <li>• Life Skills oriented subjects in addition to basic subjects</li> </ul>	Examination certificate issued by Government and eligible to enter Formal Education

To prepare a certification framework, there must be advocacy and dialogue with Ministries of Education and partners, as well as coordination among UN agencies and partners to identify who can do what. Countries will need support to develop clear guidance on certification, including clear routes to and from formal education. Current NFE programmes and resources must be mapped, capacity building ensured, books and instruments developed. These are challenges that can be resolved. There are positive experiences already in existence where developing countries have created large-scale equivalency and certification programmes for non-formal education (see table below).

Jordan also has gained a good deal of expertise in development of certification for NFE, even if this has been implemented on a relatively small scale. In this case, three cycles of non-formal education have been developed, corresponding roughly to Grades 1-4, Grades 5-7, and Grades 8-10 respectively. The Ministry of Education conducts tests for initial entry level, for promotion, and for Grade 10 certification, while an NGO (Questscope) trains teachers in participatory learning methodologies. From 2004-2014, about 11,000 students have taken the programme, with about 3,000 non-completers and the rest either graduating and being approved for further studies, or resettling to a third country. These are small numbers, but demonstrate the potential of the model for operating with a much broader scope, and for similar approaches being adopted elsewhere.

Given the large number of Syrian registered refugee children who are currently enrolled in NFE programmes (an estimated 12 per cent, compared to 39 per cent in formal education programmes and 49 per cent out of school<sup>30</sup>), and the potential to reach many of the remaining out-of-school

children, initially at least through NFE programmes, the importance of accreditation becomes all the more apparent.

### The Syrian virtual school

**The unprecedented challenges** presented by the Syrian education crisis cannot be resolved by a single solution, or by simply doing more of the same. To scale up access to good quality education, and to do so quickly and sustainably, means that multiple solutions must be considered simultaneously. While there is a clear need for ongoing efforts to expand access to classic models of classroom-based schooling, with a number of promising approaches that should be pursued vigorously, there is also a compelling argument for considering alternative approaches: overburdened school systems and under-resourced education programmes, both formal and non-formal, have simply been incapable of meeting demand. The quality of provision has generally been low, with particular quality assurance challenges in the non-formal sector. Syrian registered refugee children have uncertain access to schooling, and are faced with curricular content (i.e. textbook content) that is often not adapted to their needs, with issues around language of instruction, second shifts, and geographic dispersion. Certification processes are frequently unclear or unavailable to Syrian children, with few prospects that their studies will be formally recognized upon their potential return to Syria. These supply-side issues are often exacerbated by weak demand linked to the perceived need for child labour, lack of stability within families, lack of security, lack of information on services available, etc.

A number of alternatives were considered during presentations and group discussions, including

<sup>30</sup> Data refers to June 2014.



the expansion of non-formal education and the development of a 'virtual school'. The Syrian virtual school would provide an online Syrian official curriculum that would offer certification in four core subject areas (Arabic, English, maths and science). It would complement existing national systems, and target the most vulnerable and excluded children using a blended approach with learning centres to complement online work. Learning would take place through interactive modules, with facilitator support, testing and quality assurance mechanisms. The concept is based on an inclusion model that brings together children with different backgrounds and identities, especially children of refugee and host communities. It would provide consistency across the region, offering opportunities for Syrian refugee children scattered across countries.

As presented, this approach would offer one possibility for scaling up formal education access, especially in non-formal settings. It could enhance the quality of learning and contribute to a sense of social cohesion.

The discussion: pros and cons. The Syrian virtual school concept was vigorously discussed at the working group level by conference participants, with key comments then relayed to the group as a whole. On the positive side, the virtual approach was seen as a way to reinforce learning of basic skills, and to provide an opportunity for children to take their learning into their own hands, rather than passively waiting in the hope that it would be provided. Self-paced learning was seen as a benefit of the approach, and the ability for children to move out of isolation and to connect with the broader world. This could provide greater access for children with disabilities, or for children for whom travel would expose them to insecurity

and risk. The notion of building community across host countries and across scattered populations was also seen as a potential strength, as was the possibility of using such an approach to anchor an accreditation system that could have broader application.

The group discussions also raised a number of challenges that would need to be met for the concept to become operational. These could be placed in the broad categories of the understanding of the curriculum, pedagogy, materials, and management. On the pedagogy side, participants in the group discussions felt that the approach could bring real value to basic learning skills, but that it would face greater challenges in addressing non-academic issues such as provision of psychosocial support, life skills, etc. In terms of materials, there were questions raised about how marginalized children would gain access to computers, and how access for girls would be assured. On the management side, it was noted that a core group of teachers would need to be shifted from a classroom teacher role to that of facilitator. Other concerns were more technical in nature: could data security be ensured? Could a 'passive' system be designed and managed in such a way as to support creativity and higher-order thinking? Would it really be possible to get authorities from differing political factions to support a shared approach in the best interest of children? Could a protective environment for children be provided?

It was agreed that further opportunities would be found for additional discussions of the Syrian virtual school, seeking the input of all stakeholders, and that this would be done as quickly as possible, while ensuring a participatory process of dialogue.





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# RECOMMENDATIONS, CAVEATS AND MESSAGES: FINDING THE WAY FORWARD

# 3 Recommendations, caveats and messages: Finding the way forward

Embedded throughout the conference were opportunities to reflect on challenges and to provide recommendations for moving forward. These recommendations were often accompanied by caveats, for potential roadblocks that could lead to slippage or with the potential to cause harm to children. There was also recognition of the need to increase international awareness of

the particular nature of the Syrian crisis and its impact on children. Hence, there were many suggestions for messaging that would help advocacy groups and service providers to support these efforts. These recommendations and messages are provided below in an effort to give a voice to individuals and communities that might not otherwise be heard.

## 3.1 Recommendations

The three main objectives of the conference as stated in the agenda were to develop recommendations for policies and programmes:

- a) to accelerate the access of Syrian refugee children to education,
- b) to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and
- c) to strengthen the underpinning frameworks of education: curriculum, accreditation, certification, assessment, and rights.

These recommendations can be further divided into two categories: those that are specific to a given host country context and those that are shared across countries. This section begins with the country-specific recommendations for improvements to access, quality and the frameworks of education, and concludes with those that are held in common across countries. The recommendations were developed by the country delegations, but reflect a broader range of input and feedback.

### Syria

**Access.** Given the ongoing violence that has left many children out of school, community-based approaches to improve access should be given priority, to help mobilize education delivery in hard-to-reach areas for the most vulnerable children. Remedial and accelerated classes, and self-learning programmes could be supported in this way. Temporary learning spaces should be provided and sector coordination should be strengthened at all levels with the sharing of

information and good practices for scaling up access.

**Quality.** In order to improve teaching quality, there should be greater support to teachers, development of standardized materials and tools on key issues (PSS, risks education and survival skills, peace education, bullying, teaching to large class sizes).

### Lebanon

**Access.** In order to support activities to scale up access, transitions from non-formal to formal education should be defined, and a clear strategic direction should be set. Language policies must be better operationalized, and the possibility of Syrians accessing exams through the policy of independent examination candidates should be explored.

**Quality.** In order to strengthen quality, a teacher professional framework and teacher management processes should be developed. Teachers should receive training on: language, special needs, psychosocial support, addressing mixed abilities.

**Frameworks.** Processes of learning assessments should be developed, including early grade reading and numeracy assessments which teachers could use in class. There should be additional support for monitoring systems, and to support school-level management. Finally, support should be given to the creation of parent committees and literacy support programmes for adults.

## Turkey

**Access.** To increase physical capacity, safe, high-quality educational areas for Syrians should be established in and outside camps; current safe educational environments should be improved and quality educational material should be provided.

**Quality.** To improve teacher management and support, Syrian teachers should be identified and given support. The role of Turkish teachers in educational operations for Syrians should be supported, and incentives and motivational support should be provided.

**Frameworks.** To increase institutional capacity, there is a need for legislation and regulation around the legal status and management of schools, as well as the curriculum.

## Jordan

The overall goal is to reinforce current education systems through flexible policies such as enrollment, placement and reintegration. The rationale for this is the poor absorptive capacity of the Ministry of Education and the rigid policies which cannot meet the needs of children/youth in times of emergency. It is recommended that alternative education options (catch-up, virtual learning, temporary learning spaces, etc.) be developed, along with community-based education. This could be supported by a fast-track approval of NGOs working in this area.

Other areas that should be given priority are to scale up post-basic education, and to establish minimum standards that are widely known and demand-driven. More emphasis should be placed on empowerment at the school level, with school-based initiatives to improve teaching quality. Finally, it would be useful to establish a directorate responsible for addressing all emergencies, natural and man-made, and to ensure the provision of rosters of trained temporary teachers.

## Iraq – Kurdistan Regional Government

**Access/quality.** There has been insufficient attention to access in urban areas, and for the provision of learning spaces at the secondary school level. The concept of inclusive education must be further developed and implemented as part of an effort to introduce new approaches to reach out-of-school children. The introduction of non-formal education programmes such as ALP and other non-formal education programmes should be explored, while addressing the need to

assure quality as well as opportunities for a transition from non-formal programmes to formal.

Beyond these priorities, Early Childhood Development (ECD) should be scaled up, with greater and more inclusive access and higher quality. Kurdish ECD should also be scaled up to promote cohesion and school readiness. Education should be used to build peace and social cohesion. This should be part of efforts to strengthen learning outcomes and school environment, along with the capacity building of teachers through pre- and in-service training, and systematic assessment and monitoring.

## Egypt

**Access.** Priority must be given to investments in institutional capacity, investing more effectively in available human and financial resources to increase access. Community participation should be extended and monitoring and evaluation systems strengthened. It will also be important to ensure sustainable professional development for leaders, teachers and specialists.

**Quality.** In order to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, there should be much greater attention to the management of educational content for both Syrian and Egyptian children. This will have the result that learners will receive support to adapt to the new teaching and learning environment. It is also critical to develop an overall learning environment to support inclusion.

## Recommendations across countries

Five broad recommendations for actions across countries emerge from the many points discussed above and over the course of the sub-regional conference.

### Access.

- 1 Alternative approaches to education provision should be proactively developed, so that all children share in the right to an education – they should not have to wait until the full range of services can be provided to everyone. It is a responsibility of duty-bearers to define and support such approaches, with a commitment to continually improve the quality of services for all children. Non-formal education will be a part of this response; ‘virtual schooling’ also merits consideration as part of this response.
- 2 There is a need for greater attention to adolescents and youth, who are among the most underserved and most vulnerable segments of Syrian refugee society. This will

include more attention to skills training, secondary education, and non-formal education. It will also mean increased access to higher education.<sup>31</sup>

### Quality.

- 3 Evidence-based dialogue should be engaged by all partners around core education policies such as language of instruction, greater use of Syrian teachers, and use of a Syrian curriculum. There has been very little attention to date on the assessment of learning outcomes such as early grades reading and mathematics skills, and little attention to elements such as the number of hours available for teaching and learning – often an issue for second shifts. These should now be systematically monitored and reported.
- 4 Teachers in far too many instances are working without systemic support. Both host country teachers and Syrian teachers should be given far greater support to deal with the challenging circumstances of the current crisis, including both academic challenges related to improving quality, as well as the need to support children (and teachers) who have been the victims of trauma.

### Frameworks.

- 5 There is a need to ensure the emergence of a true community of practice within the education sector across the scattered Syrian refugee groups and host country actors. Coordination between agencies, ministries, communities and non-state initiatives should be strengthened to avoid fragmented, multiple and conflicting education provision. Coordination frameworks should also ensure harmonization between public and non-public schools (formal, non-formal/informal, community-based). Conferences such as this one can support this development and should provide opportunities for the regular exchange of ideas, research results and emerging best practice. Unifying programmes such as the Syrian Virtual School, or its equivalent, and efforts to establish accreditation mechanisms can provide further consistency across groups.
- 6 Curriculum and accreditation/certification frameworks to be ideally developed for the sub-region should be based on a comprehensive and cutting-edge concept of curriculum that should include learning concepts, objectives, expected outcomes (i.e. learner competencies), as well as teaching and learning (including assessment) strategies. Quality learning will never be attained if 'curriculum' is understood as only textbooks, which implies that learning is comprised of memorizing and reproducing (prefabricated) textbook content.

## 3.2 Caveats

Building a more cohesive approach across the scattered Syrian refugee population will require continuing efforts such as the sub-regional conference on scaling up quality education provision. However, it is important that the refugee populations be well represented at such events. While there was indirect representation of refugee groups at this conference through NGOs and others who work closely with them, and through researchers reporting on surveys, etc., the refugee groups from the various countries were not directly represented. There is no easy fix, but support will need to be given within the

sector for building up representation, ensuring that there is a true voice for raising issues across groups, and ensuring access to decision-makers for such representatives on an ongoing basis.

A final caveat, one of the foundational humanitarian principle, especially appropriate when working with vulnerable groups: *primum non nocere*. First, do no harm. There should be boldness in trying new approaches, and there need be no fear of some failures (there will never be a one hundred percent success rate) provided that the rights of children are safeguarded

<sup>31</sup> The conference also tackled the issue of Higher Education by emphasizing the existing needs and solutions provided by Governments, HED institutions, international agencies, INGOs and NGOs. Participants referred to existing studies, such as those by the International Institute for Education (IIE) on Lebanon and highlighted good practices, such as the establishment of academic consortia in support of Syrian students and scholars. However, more needs to be done in assessing both the existing needs and the capacities of HED institutions in the Region to accommodate Youth affected by the Syria crisis so as to better balance HED demand and offer.



throughout. All decisions, even such seemingly innocuous ones as integration vs. segregation, or increased use of Syrian teachers, will contain unforeseen complexities and should be the subject of transparent debate and a willingness to hear all sides. In a conflict context, where the state may be absent from certain arenas, the

international community will be called on to play a more significant role in arbitrating decisions. It is critical that these be done in a reflective, participative context. It is also clear that the ‘do no harm’ principle should not prevent the taking of bold decisions – the status quo in education will not meet the needs of Syrian refugee children.

### 3.3 Messages

In addition to the above recommendations, there is a need for concise messaging that will draw the attention and understanding of the international community to the challenges presented by the Syrian refugee crisis. These core messages should be consistently expressed by advocacy groups and others engaged in the international response:

- 1 This is a crisis of children. Half of all registered Syrian refugees in five host countries are children. But even in crisis children have the right to dream, and to receive support for making dreams come true.
- 2 If children are given opportunities for good quality schooling, the slogan ‘No Lost Generation’ can be translated into reality. Without such opportunities, the crisis will deepen rapidly and there will not just be one lost generation – there will be many lost generations.
- 3 The education crisis is not a crisis of Syrian children alone. It is a crisis for vulnerable host country children as well, with many of them also in urgent need of support. The world has never seen a crisis such as this one, where host country children and their needs may be overwhelmed by even greater numbers of refugees.
- 4 Education cannot be an afterthought in the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis. It must be the leading edge of that response – many other rights are inextricably bound up in whether or not children are given their right to education.



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# Annexes

## Annex I Agenda

Sub-regional conference on

### **Scaling Up Quality Education Provision for Syrian Children and Children in Vulnerable Host Communities**

**17-19 June 2014 InterContinental Hotel, Amman, Jordan**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Since the onset of the Syria crisis, important efforts have been made by Governments, international agencies and civil society organizations to respond to the education needs of Syrian children and children in the vulnerable host communities. However, despite an impressive response to provide timely and adequate education services, both in Syria and the neighbouring countries, there are major challenges in terms of access and quality, curricula taught and the certification that Syrian children can receive for their learning. With the Syria crisis having now entered its fourth year, there is a need to review the current policies and programmes in order to better respond to the growing scale of needs in education provision and improve alignment of education demand and supply within more conducive policy frameworks.

In Syria, during the academic year 2012/2013 around 1.9 million children dropped out of school (around 900,000 left the country) and 1.3 million are at risk of dropping out. As of April 2014, there are more than 911,000 school-age children in the five host countries of which more than 479,000 are out of school (53 per cent).<sup>32</sup> More than 4,000 schools have been damaged, destroyed or are no longer available in Syria. There are continuous attacks on schools, students, teachers, and school personnel.

In host countries, the following are the key challenges in terms of access: overburdened and stretched public systems and non-public providers; weak national coordination frameworks; poor and overburdened host communities; and weak policy frameworks. In terms of quality, several challenges persist: overcrowded classrooms and over-burdened and untrained teachers; language of instruction; different curricula and weak remedial education (and anxieties of Syrian refugee communities about content); psychosocial stress and trauma; hostile, discriminatory and exclusionary school environments; and weak mechanisms to support Syrian students.

Except for Turkey and some camps in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, the host country curriculum is used for teaching Syrian children. Certification in these host countries is provided by the Ministry of Education (MoE) based on the host country curriculum and tests/assessments. In Turkey, the Syrian Education Commission (SEC) revised and edited the Syrian (Government) curriculum and this version was endorsed by the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC). Despite the fact that the SOC provides certification for the revised Syrian curricula for Grade 9 and 12, recognition of this certification is currently problematic. Several other versions of the Syrian curriculum are used in informal so-called 'Syrian schools'; however, these schools do not provide quality education and certification. Remedial education modules are used in all non-formal settings in all countries. However, accreditation of this learning remains a challenge.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

In view of this context, and in light of the many challenges facing education in the fourth year of the Syria crisis, the Centre for Lebanese Studies, UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNHCR are organizing a sub-regional Conference in Amman, on 17-19 June 2014, entitled: Scaling up Quality Education Provision for Syrian Children and Children in Vulnerable Host Communities. This Conference builds on

<sup>32</sup> UNICEF data and UNHCR registration data. Also see: UNHCR RRP6 Education Monthly Update, April 2014.

the needs and gaps identified in the December 2013 Conference, organized by UNESCO and UNHCR, and entitled: Exploring an Education Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis. The present Conference focuses on scaling up quality provision for Syrian children in Syria and the five host countries, as well as for vulnerable children in host communities who also bear the burden of the crisis. The objectives of the conference are to come up with recommendations for policies and programmes in three areas:

- Scaling up and accelerating education access to formal and non-formal education for different age groups.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning, including the enhancement of teacher capacity.
- Strengthening the rights/equity and legal framework related to the education of Syrian children, including in relation to assessments, accreditation and certification of learning.

The Conference will provide a platform for informed, in-depth discussion on the challenges of education provision for children affected by the Syria crisis, for exchange of experiences on policies and programmes, and for the generation of recommendations for policy makers, implementers and donors.

## PARTICIPANTS

- Country delegations from the six Syria crisis affected countries constituted of MoE representatives, NGOs, and multilateral agencies.
- Institutions at regional and global level (NGOs and other organizations, universities and think tanks, private sector, multilateral and bilateral agencies).
- Experts and resource persons.

## AGENDA

17:00-22:00 **16 JUNE: Conference pre-registration (check with Hotel reception)**

TIME	DAY ONE: 17 JUNE
8:00-9:00	<b>REGISTRATION</b> (coffee will be served)
9:00-10:00	<p><b>Opening: Education within the framework of the fourth year of the Syria crisis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction – Maha Shuayb (Director CLS)</li> <li>• Welcome – HE Prof. Mohammad Thneibat (Minister of Education, Jordan)</li> <li>• Opening statements               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maria Calivis (UNICEF MENA Regional Director)</li> <li>• Francois Reybet-Degat (UNHCR MENA Deputy Director and Deputy Regional Refugee Coordinator)</li> <li>• Costanza Farina (UNESCO Director Jordan Office and Jordan Representative)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10:00-10:15	<b>Ice breaker</b>
10:15-11:20	<p><b>Introduction: Current education provision in the six Syria crisis affected countries</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Maha Shuayb (CLS, Lebanon)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt</li> </ul>
11:20-11:30	<b>INFORMATION ON LOGISTICS</b>
11:30-11:45	<b>Coffee break</b>
11:45-13:15	<p><b>Session 1: Legal and policy frameworks and their implications on the education rights in the six Syria crisis affected countries</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Prof. Taysir Al-Noaimi (QRTA, Jordan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right to education for refugees: legislative gaps and opportunities – Nayla Jajae (Human Rights Legal Consultant, Lebanon)</li> <li>• Challenges facing Palestinian, Syrian and Syrian Palestinian refugee students in the Lebanese educational system – Dina Kiwan (AUB, Lebanon)</li> <li>• Creating a protective environment through education – Ita Sheehy (UNHCR, Geneva)</li> <li>• The Right to Education during Insecurity and Armed Conflict in the MENA Region – Yusra Ahmed Diab (OHCHR, Doha)</li> <li>• INEE Minimum Standards in the context of the Syria crisis – Chris Talbot (INEE, NY)</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>

13:15-13:30	<b>GROUP PHOTO</b>
13:30-14:30	<b>Lunch</b>
14:30-15:50	<p><b>Session 2: Scaling up access to education through formal and non-formal provision in the context of the Syria crisis</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Chris Talbot (INEE, NY)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back-to-School? Lessons learned on the integration of Syrian refugee children within the Lebanese public school system – Soraya El-Rida (Amel Association, Lebanon)</li> <li>• Community mobilization and scaling up access in Jordan – Abeer Ziadeh (Save the Children, Jordan)</li> <li>• Self-learning in Syria and potential for scaling up access – Alberto Biancoli (UNRWA, Jordan) and Tomoya Sonoda (UNICEF, Syria)</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
15:50-16:00	<b>INTRODUCTION TO GROUP WORK</b>
16:00-16:15	<b>Coffee break</b>
16:15-17:30	<p><b>Group work: Scaling up access to education through formal and non-formal provision in the context of the Syria crisis</b></p> <p><b>Process (refer to instructions in folder):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be 3 groups constituted of country delegations as follows: i) Syria and Egypt, ii) Turkey and Iraq, iii) Lebanon and Jordan. Regional and international participants are invited to join any of the three groups. The organizers will ensure balance.</li> <li>• <b>Facilitators:</b> i) Nisrine Makkouk (CLS, Lebanon), ii) Gabriel El Khili (UNESCO, Lebanon), iii) Habbouba Aoun (Balamand University, Lebanon)</li> <li>• <b>Note-takers:</b> i) Tasleem Hemani Tuan (UNICEF, Jordan), ii) Jennifer Roberts (UNHCR, Turkey), iii) Soraya El-Rida (Amel Association, Lebanon)</li> <li>• <b>Rapporteur:</b> Each group will assign a rapporteur to report back to plenary.</li> </ul> <p><b>Group work question:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What policies and programs are needed to scale up access to over 80% of Syrian children and children in vulnerable host communities in the different countries?</li> </ul>
17:30-18:00	<b>Meeting between organizers and country delegation focal points</b>
18:30-20:00	<b>RECEPTION</b>
<b>TIME</b>	<b>DAY TWO: 18 JUNE</b>
9:00-10:00	<b>Report back to plenary by groups of Day One</b>
10:00-11:30	<p><b>Session 3: Quality of teaching and learning in formal and non-formal settings</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Magda Eltoulouny (LAS, Egypt)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality education and inclusion in formal and non-formal education of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon – Maha Shuayb and Nisrine Makkouk (CLS, Lebanon)</li> <li>• Meeting the language challenge in the education of Syrian refugees in Lebanon – Tamer Amin (AUB, Lebanon)</li> <li>• Improving the school environment and school-based management in crisis contexts in Jordan – Susan Ayari and Deema Jarrar (UNICEF, Jordan)</li> <li>• Quality education and skills development at the secondary level in Iraq – Ali Zulfikar (UNESCO, Iraq)</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
11:30-11:45	<b>Coffee break</b>

11:45-13:10 **Session 4: Empowering teachers within the context of the Syria crisis**

**Chair:** Tamer Amin (AUB, Lebanon)

- Translating cutting-edge teacher policy into effective practice: a UNESCO Regional 'Teacher Policy Framework and Resource Pack' – Dakmara Georgescu (UNESCO, Beirut)
- Supporting refugee teachers as professionals and as learners: a framework for teacher management and development in refugee settings – Kerstin Karlstrom (UNHCR, Lebanon)
- Lessons learned for teacher professional development in Iraqi Kurdistan – Audrey Osler and Chalank Yahya (Buskerud and Vestfold University College, Norway)
- Needs analysis of teachers working with Syrian refugee children – Isabelle Grappe (British Council, Lebanon)
- Turkey's policies and programs in support of Syrian teachers – Selman Isik (MoE, Turkey)

**Discussion**

13:10-13:15 **INTRODUCTION TO GROUP WORK**13:15-14:15 **Lunch**14:15-15:45 **Group work: Quality of teaching and learning and empowering teachers**

**Process (refer to instructions in folder):**

- There will be 3 groups constituted of country delegations as follows: i) Syria and Egypt, ii) Turkey and Iraq, iii) Lebanon and Jordan. Regional and international participants are invited to join any of the three groups. The organizers will ensure balance.
- **Facilitators:** i) Nisrine Makkouk (CLS, Lebanon), ii) Gabriel El Khili (UNESCO, Lebanon), iii) Habbouba Aoun (Balamand University, Lebanon)
- **Note-takers:** i) Tasleem Hemani Tuan (UNICEF, Jordan), ii) Jennifer Roberts (UNHCR, Turkey), iii) Soraya El-Rida (Amel Association, Lebanon)
- **Rapporteur:** Each group will assign a rapporteur to report back to plenary

**Group work questions:**

- What policies and programs are needed to ensure meaningful learning for Syrian children and children in vulnerable host communities in the different countries?
- What policies and programs are needed to enhance and support teachers' performance in the context of the Syria crisis?

15:45-16:00 **Coffee break**16:00-17:00 **Report back to plenary by groups of Day Two****TIME DAY THREE: 19 JUNE**9:00-10:30 **Session 5: Curriculum, accreditation and certification of learning within the context of the Syria crisis**

**Chair:** Robert Prouty (Consultant, Washington DC)

- Curriculum, accreditation and certification for Syrian children in Syria and in host communities: status and policy framework – Yusuf Sayed (University of Sussex, UK and CPUT, South Africa) and Farida Aboudan (UNICEF MENARO, Jordan)

**Discussion**

- The Syria Virtual School: accelerating access to quality education in diverse settings while ensuring formal accreditation and certification – Dina Craissati (UNICEF MENARO, Jordan) and Milad Sebaaly (Global Learning International, UAE)

**Discussion**

10:30-10:45 **Coffee break**10:45-12:30 **Interactive discussions: Curriculum, accreditation and certification of learning within the context of the Syria crisis**

**Chair:** Robert Prouty (Consultant, Washington DC)

**Process:**

- Four rounds of questions will be organized and discussed at individual tables.
- Selected tables will be requested to provide responses in plenary.



12:30-13:00 **Session 5 (continued): Curriculum, accreditation and certification of learning within the context of the Syria crisis**

**Chair:** Robert Prouty (Consultant, Washington DC)

- Framework for accreditation of non-formal education – Idris Hegazi (UNESCO, Lebanon)
- Accreditation of non-formal education in Jordan – Curt Rhodes (Questscope, Jordan)

**Discussion**

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13:00-14:00 **Lunch**

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14:00-15:00 **Session 6: Closing the gap: higher education challenges in the context of the Syria crisis**

**Chair:** Marieke Bosman (Asfari Foundation, UK)

- The conflict in Syria, the regional refugee crisis, and higher education – Daniela Kaisth (Scholar Rescue Fund, USA)
- Closing the service gap: higher education and refugees in Jordan – Maya Perlmann (Jesuit Refugee Service, Jordan)
- Response to the Syria crisis in higher education: balancing demand and offer – Dakmara Georgescu (UNESCO, Lebanon)

**Discussion**

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15:00-15:15 **Coffee break**

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15:15-16:30 **Way forward and closing: Education within the framework of the Syria crisis: the need to scale up quality provision and further conducive policy environments**

**Chair:** Maha Shuayb (CLS, Lebanon)

- Summary of key recommendations to be taken up by country delegations upon their return – one representative by each of the 6 country delegations
  - Results of the Syria education Donor Officials Meeting (16 June) – Deirdre Watson (DfID, UK)
  - Closing remarks – UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF
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#### EVALUATION FORMS AND DISTRIBUTION OF USB AND GROUP PHOTO

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## Annex III NLG strategic overview

### NO LOST GENERATION

Protecting the futures of children affected by the crisis in Syria

#### STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

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As the crisis in Syria rages on, approaching its fourth terrible year, an entire generation of children is being shaped by violence, displacement, and a persistent lack of opportunity – and could be lost forever, with profound long-term consequences for Syria, the region, and beyond.

The **No Lost Generation** strategy proposes practical ways to avoid this harsh possibility, showing the impact that could be achieved with a critical investment today of **\$1 billion** focused on expanding access to learning and psychosocial support, strengthening social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts, and restoring hope for the future to millions of children.

There is still time to prevent the loss of a generation. With assistance to protect them from violence, abuse, and exploitation; education to foster their minds and build resilience; and support to heal the hidden wounds of a merciless war, the children of Syria can build a better future for themselves, their families, and their societies.

But we must act now, with urgency, in a coordinated global effort to champion the children of Syria and support neighboring nations affected by the crisis.

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#### Why is an entire generation at such risk?

More than 5 million children already have been affected by the unrelenting crisis in Syria. The immediate threats to their lives are many – from violence and life-threatening disease, to lack of access to safe drinking water and inadequate nutrition.

Beyond the immediate risks to children is the hidden impact of the on-going conflict – one that threatens not only the wellbeing of individual children, but the future of an entire generation.

**Threats to education:** The economic and social collapse in Syria has reversed decades of educational achievement. More than 3 million children have left school – and thousands of young school-aged children have never been enrolled. In Syria, one in five schools has been destroyed, damaged, or used for other purposes. School systems in host nations are stretched to the breaking point.

**Threats to protection:** The crisis in Syria has put already-vulnerable children at greater risk of less visible harm, including child labour, early marriage, and the recruitment of children by armed groups. Far too many children have witnessed or experienced horrific violence, or been lost or separated from loved ones, increasing the risk of abuse and exploitation and leaving deep emotional wounds.

**Threats to an entire region:** Millions of refugees have streamed across the borders to neighbouring countries – including 1.2 million children. With local resources strained, host communities are struggling to provide services not only for child refugees but also their own young citizens. Across the region, shrinking opportunities for increasingly disenfranchised youth and few chances for young people to make their voices heard further hamper recovery and reconciliation.

**No Lost Generation:** Unless we reach these children now with assistance to protect them from violence, abuse, and exploitation, education to foster their minds and their resilience, and support to heal the hidden wounds of a merciless war and strengthen social cohesion, the hopes of an entire generation could be lost forever – with profound long-term consequences for Syria, the region, and beyond.

#### How can we protect the futures of children affected by the crisis in Syria?

Averting such a harsh possibility is the driving force behind No Lost Generation, a strategy to address the hidden impact of this long conflict by expanding access to learning and psychosocial support, strengthening social cohesion and peacebuilding, and restoring hope for the future.

First proposed in October 2013 by leading international humanitarian organizations and supported by key advocates and donors, No Lost Generation brings together regional stakeholders and global champions for millions of children affected by the crisis in Syria.

The No Lost Generation strategy builds on the latest evidence of the impact the crisis is having on children generally, not least the diminished access to education and protection. It includes specific, sustainable activities to be implemented over the next year and beyond, with clearly identified targets.

- **Increasing learning and skills**, including increasing school enrolment and keeping children learning; improving quality of education; and expanding vocational and remedial secondary education and alternative ways of delivering education; and governance-related issues affecting access and learning.
- **Providing a protective environment**, including protecting children and upholding their human rights; providing psychosocial support, including teacher training; promoting birth registration; providing mine-risk education; monitoring the child protection situation and assessing children's vulnerability; strengthening institutional and community-based protection mechanisms and referral systems; and addressing gender-based violence and specific needs of adolescent girls.
- **Broadening opportunities for children and adolescents**, including building life-skills for children and adolescents; vocational training; mobilizing communities to support peace building (e.g. peace forums and opportunities for children's voices to be better heard, integrating peacebuilding into education, programmes that directly confront conflict and its causes, sports and arts, etc.).

The No Lost Generation strategy calls for **US\$ 990 million** from October 2013 to December 2014. Fully implemented, it can provide millions of children affected by the conflict in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, with learning opportunities, a protective environment and opportunities to build their future – upon all of which both reconciliation and peace-building in Syria depend.

## KEY ACTIONS

### IN SYRIA

In Syria, the crisis has pushed the capacity of basic social services to breaking point, with a devastating impact on 4.3 million children, 2.26 million children are out of school. The Ministry of Education has lost 22 per cent of its teaching staff and 18 per cent of its school counsellors. There is an acute lack of learning spaces, with one in five schools has been destroyed, damaged, or used for other purposes, and school construction halted due to insecurity and attacks on school infrastructure.

The psychosocial wellbeing of children has also been profoundly affected. Many families are keeping their children at home or marrying their daughters at an early age to keep them safe. Conversely, more children are working outside of the home, with strong indications of an increase in the worst forms of child labour.

For 2014 alone, **US\$128 million** is needed to provide a range of services to children, adolescents and young people, including:

**Providing 3.9 million children with access to learning opportunities**, including:

- Teaching and self-learning materials
- Early childhood development interventions
- Vouchers and other incentives to encourage school enrolment
- Advocacy for girls education and safe schools
- School rehabilitation and temporary learning spaces

**Providing 500,000 children with access to a protective environment**, including:

- Family tracing and reunification
- Psychosocial support services
- Gender-based violence support and prevention
- Establishment of child-friendly spaces and recreational activities
- Explosive remnants of war risk reduction
- Advocacy and awareness-raising on child protection, including child recruitment

## IN LEBANON

Planning figures indicate that by the end of 2014, as many as 1.65 million refugees from Syria will be in Lebanon – a country of about 4.3 million people. Refugees are crossing the border into a country whose public services are already overwhelmed.

The refugee surge in Lebanon has created an education crisis affecting all Syrian, Palestinian, and poor Lebanese children. Over 80 per cent of Syrian children in Lebanon remain out of school. Out of the 1.3 million affected school aged children it is estimated that some 770,000 will be out of school by end 2014. This figure far surpasses the 275,000 Lebanese school-aged children currently enrolled in public schools and will have a significant impact on scarce resources and on quality of learning. Compounding barriers include instruction of some subjects in a foreign language (English or French), differences in curricula, unfamiliar teaching methods, discrimination, and prohibitive costs of transportation.

For 2014 alone, **US\$322 million** is needed to provide:

**346,500 children with access to learning opportunities**, including:

- Improved learning space environments
- Teacher training
- Institutional support to Ministry of Education

**300,000 children with a protective environment**, including:

- Psychosocial support services
- Front-line worker training to build coping skills
- Capacity building for child protection actors
- Establishment of child-friendly spaces

**382,000 children and adolescents with initiatives to broaden their opportunities**, including life skills training

## IN JORDAN

The majority of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan are children under 18, and the burden on the public education system is taking its toll. To absorb the influx of Syrian students, the school system has re-introduced the practice of 'double shifts' in overcrowded schools, a policy that is affecting education quality and derailing on-going public education reform.

Child refugees are experiencing profound distress caused by conflict and displacement. Violence against children at home and in schools is widespread as an acceptable disciplinary practice. Boredom and aggressive behaviour is common, especially among boys and youth, potentially heightening the risk of recruitment by armed groups.

Meanwhile, as Syrian refugee families use up their savings, many are forced to send their children to work in dangerous jobs. Child poverty is also increasing for Jordanian children and 85 per cent of Jordanian youth aged 20 to 24 are unemployed.

For 2014 alone, **US\$169 million** is needed to provide:

**328,000 children with access to learning opportunities**, including:

- Alternative education services such as informal education
- Early learning opportunities
- Learning materials and supplies
- Basic life skills activities
- Resilience building activities
- Additional learning spaces

**180,900 children with a protective environment**, including:

- Strengthening community-based child protection committees
- Gender-based violence prevention initiatives
- Psychosocial support

**292,500 children and adolescents with initiatives to broaden their opportunities**, including:

- Community-based protection mechanisms, community outreach
- Post-basic and higher learning opportunities for youth

## IN IRAQ

An estimated 84,000 child refugees from Syria are currently in Iraq, and projections indicate that number could double by the end of 2014. The vast majority of these children have not had regular access to schooling for months, or in some cases years, greatly limiting their opportunities for learning and increasing the risk of protection violations and abuse.

Host communities are struggling to meet the needs of child refugees, with insufficient classroom space to accommodate all children and not enough programmes to provide appropriate psychosocial support.

For 2014 alone, **US\$84 million** is needed to provide:

**132,246 children with access to learning opportunities**, including:

- Early childhood education development services in camp and non-camp settings
- Parent training and orientation to increase participation
- School-based emergency preparedness and response training
- Teacher training

**84,500 children with a protective environment**, including:

- Assistance for unaccompanied and separated children
- Psychosocial support
- Specific initiatives to protect children from child labour; recruitment by armed groups
- Support for victims of gender-based violence
- Initiatives to strengthen institutional capacity to address GBV

**370,000 children and adolescents with initiatives to broaden their opportunities**, including:

- Technical and vocational education
- Literacy initiatives
- Life skills and entrepreneurship training
- Social cohesion and peaceful co-existence initiatives

## IN TURKEY

There are close to 300,000 registered children refugees currently in Turkey, and that number is expected to more than double, reaching more than 750,000 refugee children by end 2014. There are countless obstacles to education – from the language used in classrooms to curriculum choices, certification and recognition of learning attainments. Girls and children with disabilities are especially likely not to be enrolled, to drop out, or not attend regularly. Other reasons for early drop-out include children forced to work to support families. Children in both camp and non-camp settings thus continue to be vulnerable to exploitation, family separation, child labour, forced and early marriage, violence and abuse, while there are also pressures to return to Syria to fight, particularly for boys.



For 2014 alone, **US\$83 million** is needed to provide:

**432,480 children with access to learning opportunities**, including:

- Enrolment and retention initiatives
- Educational facilities constructed or refurbished
- Education and learning materials for camp and non-camp settings
- Advocacy for measures to assure accreditation and recognition of school certificates
- Language training

**348,900 children with a protective environment**, including:

- Identification and reporting services for child protection and gender-based violence
- Support and services for children with special needs

**911,600 children and adolescents with initiatives to broaden their opportunities**, including life skills, language training, and vocational training in camp and non-camp settings

## IN EGYPT

In Egypt, approximately 40 per cent of the 250,000 to 300,000 Syrians who fled to Egypt are school-aged children. The quality of the school environment in Egyptian public schools is a significant barrier to the enrolment and retention of Syrian children, as are the difficulties they face in adjusting to the Egyptian dialect and curriculum. Child protection concerns have also increased in the form of detention and deportation, increased number of separated and unaccompanied children and hostility against children.

For 2014 alone, **US\$36 million** is needed to provide:

**125,000 children with access to learning opportunities**, including:

- Early childhood development and learning initiatives
- Measures to promote girls' education
- Education infrastructure constructed, improved or maintained
- Safe learning environments

**50,560 children with a protective environment**, including:

- Community-based child protection and psychosocial support structures
- Increased psychosocial, health, legal, and security support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence
- Structures to identify and support children at risk and community-based initiatives to strengthen coping mechanisms
- Safe spaces for refugees and girls and women from host communities

**75,610 children and adolescents with initiatives to broaden their opportunities**, including:

- Lifelong learning opportunities
- Psychosocial support and peaceful co-existence initiatives
- Community leadership initiatives

The **No Lost Generation** strategy is an evolving one. It has already been embedded into key planning at the regional and individual country level, and nearly 60 per cent of the proposed initiatives and funding requirements are now incorporated into the existing funding mechanisms of the revised Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP5) and Regional Response Plan (RRP6). Humanitarian and development organizations are also working to integrate these initiatives in longer-term plans, such as Reaching All Children with Education and the Stabilisation Roadmap in Lebanon, and the National Resilience Plan in Jordan.

The success of the **No Lost Generation** strategy will rely to a great extent on how many children can be reached with the proposed activities, and the social environment in which they are undertaken. The strategy also calls for urgent action to safeguard the lives and future of children through sustained advocacy and engagement for:

- Unconditional, cross-line humanitarian access to besieged communities and remote areas inside Syria, to reach the most vulnerable children and families;
- Continued advocacy with all parties to the conflict to immediately demilitarize schools and cease all recruitment of children by armed groups;
- Expanded absorption capacity of schools inside Syria and in refugee-hosting countries, and greater attention to employability of young people;
- Promotion of peacebuilding, tolerance, and reconciliation across all initiatives

As the third anniversary of the conflict approaches, the children of Syria need advocates and champions more than ever – and to succeed, the **No Lost Generation** strategy depends on joint effort by global partners and sustained regional engagement on behalf of all children affected by the crisis in Syria, and on renewed public support.

## Annex IV Summary of participants' evaluation

### Executive Summary

The Evaluation Form of the Sub-regional conference on Scaling up Quality Education Provision for Syrian Children and Children from vulnerable host communities was administered at the end of last session meeting, on 19 June 2014.

The **total number of evaluation completed** is 94 as opposed to 123 participants (75 per cent of respondents).

The Evaluation Form is constituted of 7 different sections. Below the main findings:

- **Interest and relevance of sessions.** The findings show that the Conference is relevant and captures high interest of participants. Average interest across all sessions is slightly above 4 (4.08) and average relevance stands at 4.01.
- **Things learned during the Conference.** Respondents cite the Current situation in the 6 countries, Curriculum, Accreditation and Certification and the Syria Virtual School as the three major topics learned during the three days' meeting in Amman.
- **Content of the Conference and Experts' contribution.** 90 per cent of participants consider the experts' contributions extremely useful. Subject matter has been adequately covered as well as the Conference objectives met. Seven out of 10 participants agree that they were encouraged to take an active part in the Conference, validating the participatory approach adopted by the organizers.
- **Venue and Logistics.** The overall organization received a 4.23 average score, while the meeting space 4.35 (9 out of 10 respondents are satisfied with the premises). Meals and refreshment and simultaneous interpretation score above 4.
- **Conference understanding.** Nine out of 10 participants agree or strongly agree that the Conference has been successful in helping them understanding the challenges and opportunities of education provision for children affected by the Syria crisis.
- **Way forward.** Participants confirm that the Conference helped to understand and define the way forward.
- **Other Comments.** Respondents thanked the organizers, highlighted the importance of the group work and suggested to assign more time to discussions.

### 1 Interest and Relevance of Sessions

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Kindly rate the different sessions in terms of interest and relevance to your work, by circling the relevant number (from 1 meaning "least interesting/least relevant" to 5 meaning "most interesting/most relevant").

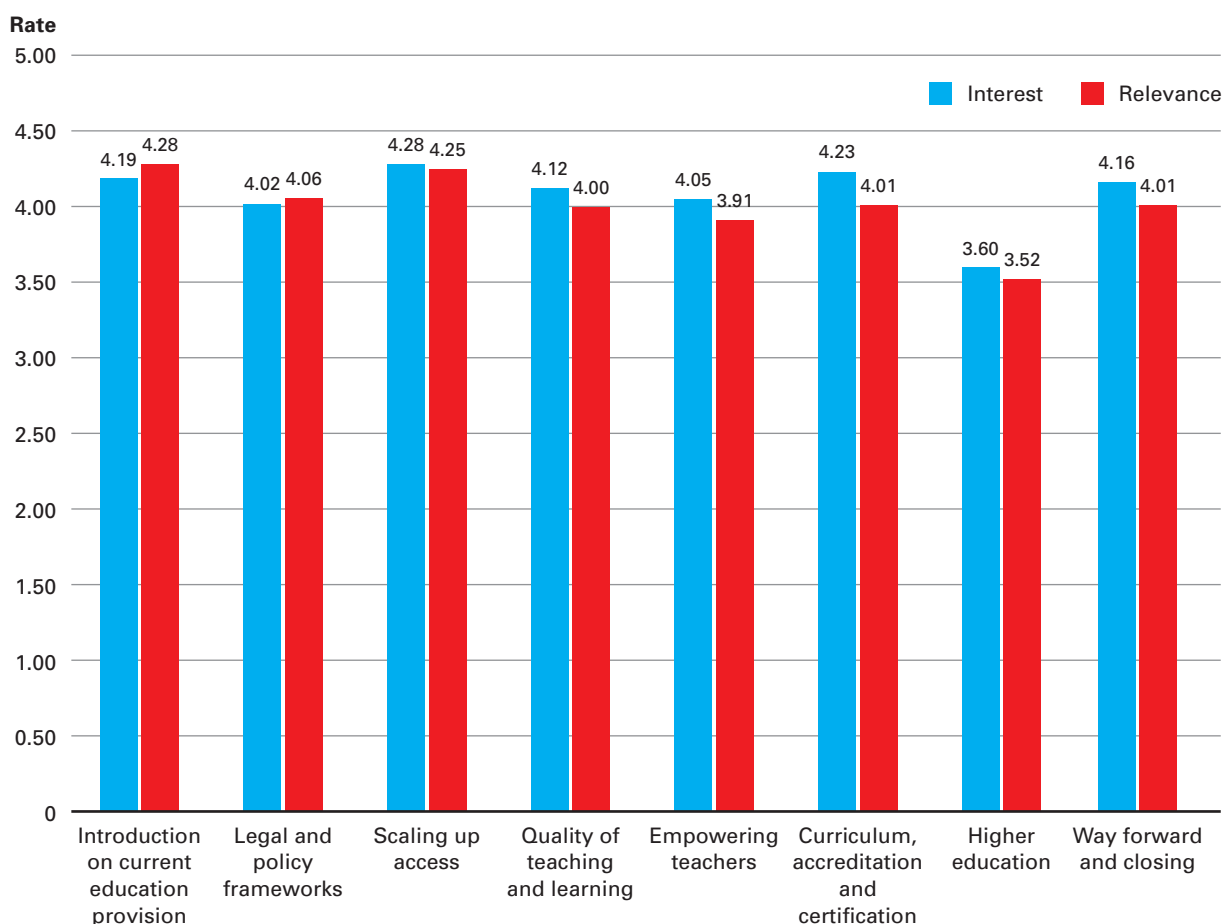
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Participants were asked to express the degree of interest and relevance of all six sessions, including the *Introduction* and the *Way forward and closing* sessions.

The average **interest** across all sessions is **4.08**, indicating that experts and countries' presentations raised high level of attention and curiosity in the respondents. In details, the highest rated sessions are *Scaling up access, Curriculum, accreditation and certification and Introduction to current education provision*.

The same trends appear when analysing the relevance of sessions; participants confirm the above mentioned sessions as the most relevant. The sessions' average score stands at 4.01. The highest score (4.28) is assigned to the session *Introduction on current education provision*, while the lowest (3.52) to *Higher Education*.

## Interest and relevance of sessions



## 2 Things learned during the Conference

Please list the three most important things you learned during the Conference.

Participants were asked to list the three most important things learned during the Conference. Responses have been clustered, as below:

**Current situation in the 6 countries:** 46 per cent of respondents (43) indicate 'Experiences of countries in dealing with Syrian children', 'Existing responses across the 6 countries', 'Current initiatives in the 6 Syria crisis affected countries' as the most important topic learned during the Conference. This confirms the high rates of interest and relevance that were assigned to the Introduction on current education provision session.

**Curriculum, accreditation and certification:** 22 respondents (23 per cent) indicate the learning around the 'Curriculum, accreditation and certification processes' as one of the main topic that captured their interest during the three days' meeting. The conference was seen as a forum where it was possible to discuss challenges and opportunities for children, families and education providers on the curricula provided and related issues of certification and accreditation.

**Syria Virtual School:** 20 per cent of the meeting's participants (19) cite 'Virtual school', indicating respondents' interest in alternative solutions to scale up access to education for Syrian and host communities children.

Participant also listed:

- Challenges linked to the language of instruction in schools.
- Host communities challenges in providing education for Syrian children as they have come under severe stress and are overwhelmed with the increasing demands placed upon them by the growing number of school age students.
- Community-based education and Non-Formal Education as a possible way to scale up access.
- Stronger coordination and partnership, primarily at the level of MoEs from the six countries and between UN agencies, NGOs and MoEs.

### 3 Content of the Conference and Experts contributions

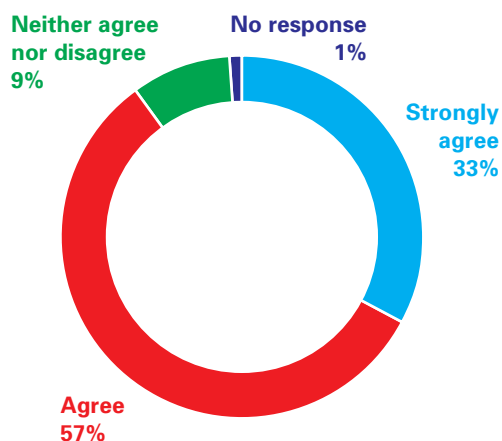
Please circle to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- Contribution of experts was useful.
- Subject matter was adequately covered.
- Content met needs.
- Participants were encouraged to take an active part, to engage and to exchange.
- Conference objectives were met.
- Group Work 1 on access was useful
- Group Work 2 on quality and teachers was useful.

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements in the above box, using a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

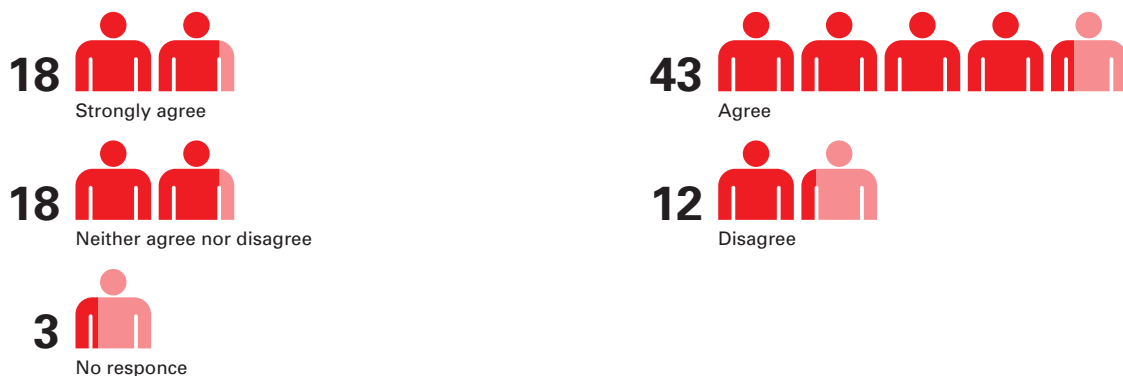
**Experts' contribution was extremely useful** for 90 per cent of respondents who either agree or strongly agree with the first statement; only 10 per cent of respondents did not agree or disagree.

#### Contribution of experts was useful



**The subject matter** of the Conference **was adequately covered** for 64 per cent of participants, as opposed to 13 per cent. Eighteen participants did not agree nor disagree and three did not express any opinion.

**Subject matter was adequately covered**



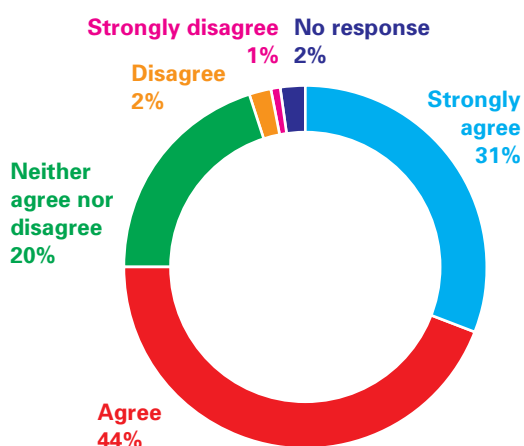
Sixty-five per cent of participants agree that the content met needs, while 23 per cent did not have any opinion.

**Content met needs**



Seventy-six per cent of respondents agree or strongly agree that participants were encouraged to take an active part, to engage and to exchange views and experiences during the Conference. This validates the participatory approach adopted by the organizers.

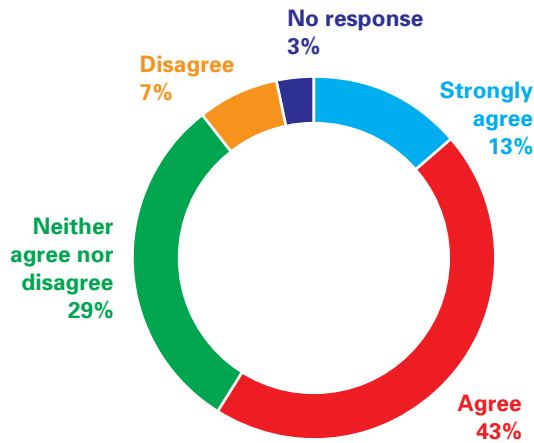
**Participants were encouraged to take an active part, to engage and to exchange**



Fifty-eight respondents (62 per cent) agree that the Conference objectives were met. Twenty-seven respondents did not express any opinion and only six participants disagree with this statement.

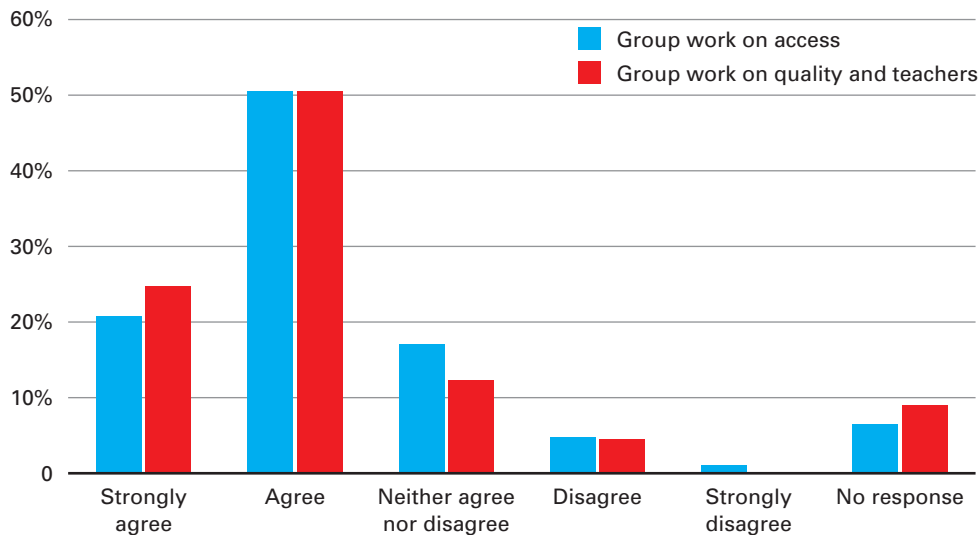


### Conference objectives were met



The **two group work sessions were useful** for 73 per cent of participants. Twenty-seven respondents do not express any opinion and only eight are in disagreement.

### Group work on access and on quality and teachers were useful



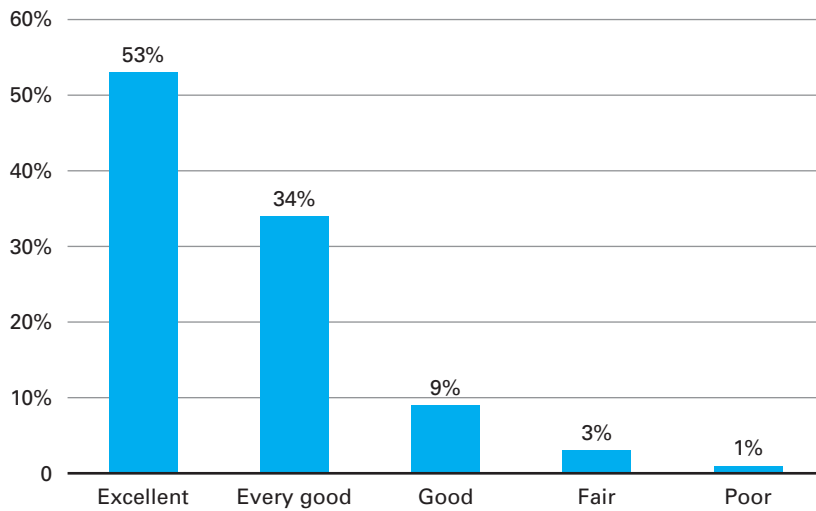
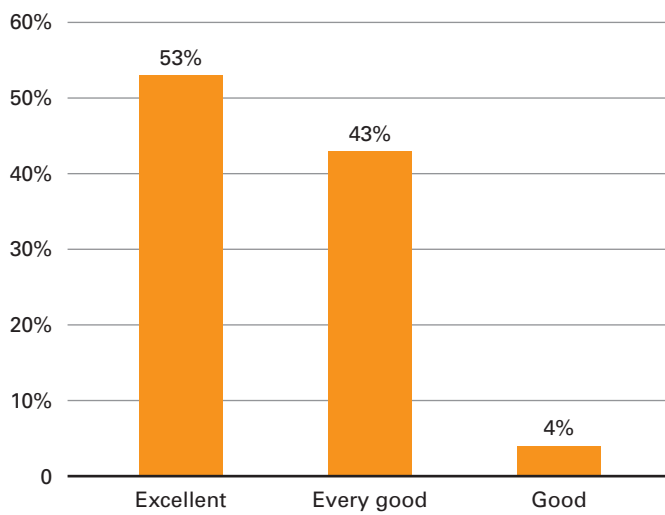
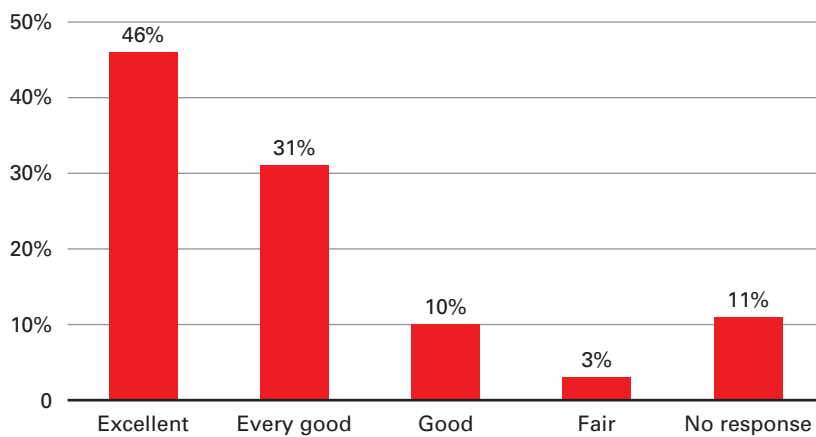
## 4 Venue and logistics

Please rate the following, as applicable (from 1 meaning 'poor' to 5 meaning 'excellent')

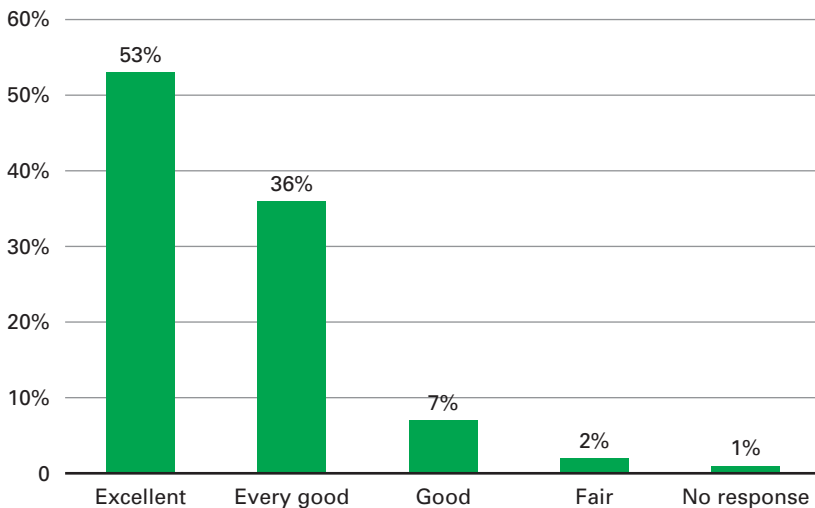
- Conference space.
- Meals/refreshments.
- Simultaneous interpretation
- Overall organization.

Participants were asked to rate the venue and the logistics of the workshop on a scale from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent).

**The Conference space** received a mean score of 4.35 ('only' 87 per cent of participants are satisfied by the premises); **meals and refreshments** received a mean score of 4.49, (53 per cent of participants consider them as excellent and 43 per cent very good); **simultaneous interpretation** received a 4.33 average score (72 participants out of 94 define it either excellent or very good); finally **the overall organization** had a 4.23 average score (53 per cent of participants consider it excellent and 36 per cent very good).

**Conference space****Meals/refreshments****Conference space**

## Overall organization



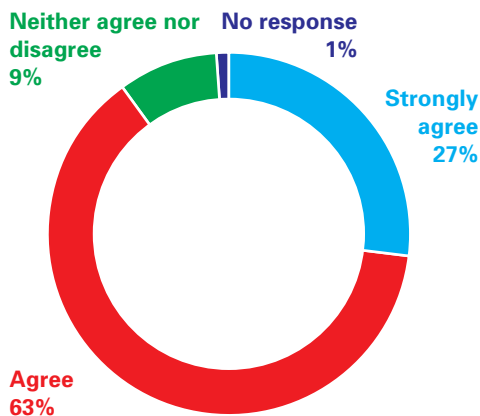
## 5 Conference understanding

Did the Conference help the participants understand the challenges and opportunities of education provision for children affected by the Syria crisis?

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement in the above box, using a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

**Nine out of 10 participants agree** or strongly agree that the Conference was successful in helping them understanding the challenges and opportunities of education provision for children affected by the Syria crisis.

### Conference helped the participants to understand the challenges and opportunities of education provision for children affected by the Syria crisis



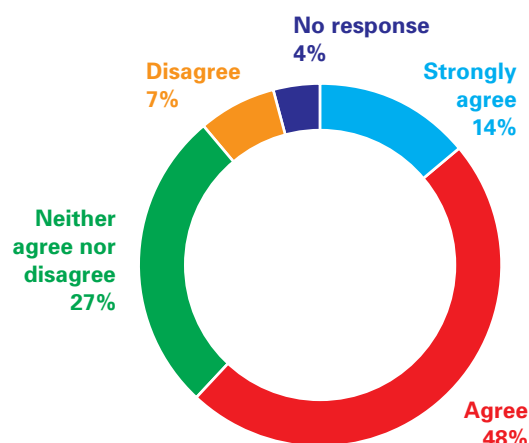
## 6 Way forward

Did the Conference help the participants define the way forward?

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement in the above box, using a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

**Sixty-two percent of respondents indicate that the Conference helped to understand and define the way forward** as opposed to 7 per cent who did not agree with the above statement. Twenty-five participants did not express any opinion.

### Conference helped the participants define the way forward



## 7 Other comments

### Other comments?

Participants were asked to indicate in an open-ended question if they had any other comments to share with the organizers.

This box was mainly left **blank** (47 per cent) or was utilized to **thank the organizers** and suggest to give more time to discussions and interactions (17 per cent). Some participants highlighted that the group work was an *'excellent way to discuss issues with diverse stakeholders in a forum which usually does not happen in-country'*.

Other comments/recommendations include:

- Consider to share Conference recommendations with larger audience and use them to guide national response plans.
- Plan a more in-depth consultation/discussions on NFE/community-based education as a way of scaling up access.
- Strengthen coordination and cooperation among different stakeholders in-country and between governments in the region.







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