



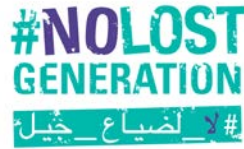
© UNICEF/UN0272789/Herwig
© UNICEF/UN0603135/
© UNICEF/UN013173/Saker

Keeping the Promise of a No Lost Generation: Support Education for all Syrian Children, Adolescents and Youth

An Overview:

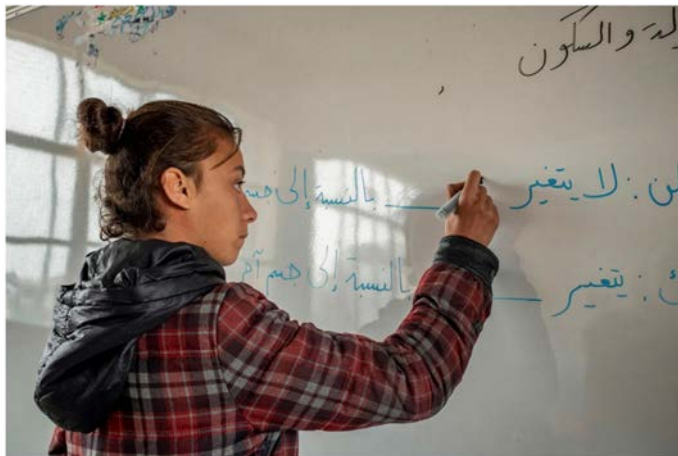
Over a decade into the conflict in Syria, lifelong relevant learning opportunities for quality inclusive education and skills acquisition services need to remain available, accessible, predictable, and continuous for all children, adolescents and youth in Syria and the five key host countries namely Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

Within the framework of Regional Refugee Response Plan (3RP) and Humanitarian Response plans, the efforts by national governments and partners to support the continuity of learning for both Syrian refugee and host community children are to be commended. The latest comprehensive data available reveals that an estimated 5.6 million Syrian children are engaged in learning opportunities inside and outside of Syria. However, with countries grappling to address learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic on top of existing barriers and challenges, there is an estimated 4 million out of school children in Syria and host countries, which represents an increase of 4 percent compared to 2020. The disruption of learning for children and youth exposes them to increased protection risks, such as gender-based violence, child marriage, child labor, and exploitation.



In **Syria**, as per the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview, there are 6.6 million children, teachers, and education personnel in need of education assistance. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools closed a few months earlier than usual in the 2020-2021 academic year, leading to additional learning loss. Many students continue to learn in uncondusive and unsafe learning environments. In 2021, there were 28 verified attacks on schools and education personnel¹. Yet despite the protracted nature of the conflict, economic duress and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, communities continue to prioritize education.

The interventions by education partners focus on improving education and protection services to enable out of school children to access learning, supporting children who are behind in their learning trajectory to catch up and to ensure that students continue to learn. This includes increasing educational and skills acquisition services for adolescents and youth including technical and vocational training opportunities and foundational learning needs, through enhancing the availability and access to formal and non-formal education (in person or remote). The range of support may include expanding and rehabilitating learning spaces including WASH facilities, specialized services for children with disabilities, support to parents to navigate online and blended learning, provision of mental health and psychosocial support to learners and teachers, integration of social and emotional learning opportunities in the curricula, distributing teaching and learning supplies, cash-based interventions, accreditation, and winterization efforts. This needs to be reinforced with sufficient investments in the well-planned professional development of teachers and education personnel.



© UNICEF/UN0603187/Deeb 1

¹ Reports of the SRSB CAAC for Syria, and UNICEF MENA, 2022



Host Countries:

In **Turkey**, which hosts the largest refugee population globally, the government prioritized resources to meet its quality education objective with targeted strategies to include and retain refugees in its national education system. As of January 2022, there are 730,806 Syrian refugee children and youth enrolled in Turkish public schools, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET). As per university enrolments, the number of Syrian refugees enrolled increased to 47,482 students in 2020-2021 academic year, bringing the overall enrolment to 8 per cent amongst the youth between 18 and 24 years. Nonetheless, the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the discontinuation of face-to-face learning, and the lack of regular social interaction among students and their teachers have adversely impacted the advancement of children's right to education and reversed the progress made on refugee children's enrolment and continuation of learning. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) together with education partners continued to provide support to the most vulnerable children and tackle the impact of the pandemic on learning. The response will continue to prioritize addressing financial barriers to education through the provision of cash grants and higher education scholarships, teacher training, support to skills acquisition programmes that promote social cohesion, youth empowerment and enhancing access to formal and non-formal education opportunities.

In **Lebanon**, over 1.2 million school-aged children (enrolled in public, private, semi-private, and UNRWA schools), of which almost 200,000 Syrian children enrolled in public schools, were affected by COVID-19 related school closures mandated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Public Health for the 2020/21 school year. While vulnerable children were supported to access formal education, much of the scholastic year was interrupted resulting in limited teaching/learning hours provided along a hybrid modality between April and June/July 2021.

The 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) in Lebanon found that only 11 per cent of Syrian children aged 3 to 5 years and 53 per cent of Syrian children aged 6 to 14 years were attending school. According to the VASyR 2021, the costs of education, specifically transportation to and from school and of education materials, remain the main reasons for children not attending school². For adolescent girls, the main reason is child marriage and for adolescent boys, it is being engaged in work. The response will continue to prioritize targeted interventions to

² VASyR 2021: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/vasyr-2021-vulnerability-assessment-syrian-refugees-lebanon#:~:text=The%20Vulnerability%20Assessment%20of%20Syrian,ninth%20year%20of%20this%20assessment>



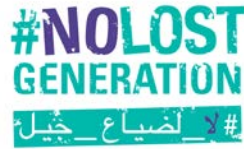
increase access, attendance and retention in formal education including the provision of learning supplies, fuel for school winterization and cash assistance for transportation.

In **Iraq**, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a learning crisis with disparities across the country and significant numbers of students failing to acquire the critical knowledge and skills needed for lifelong learning, employability, personal empowerment, and active citizenship. Available data shows an estimate of over 54,000 Syrian refugee children enrolled, with an estimate of 14,000 out of school. With the support of education partners and Government, the response focused on mobilizing and supporting both in-person and remote learning mechanisms. The adoption of the Refugee Education Integration Policy (REIP) is an important step in supporting the participation of refugees in formal education and other educational opportunities and a key approach to address challenges related to refugee education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The response priority will continue to strive towards strengthening the government's capacity to develop and deliver a life-long, sustainable, quality education through refugee integration into KRI schools, and the expansion of refugee access to formal and non-formal education opportunities for all children. In 2021, higher education scholarship programs supported over 500 youth of Syrian and other nationalities to access higher education.

In **Jordan**, the 2018-2025 Education Strategic Plan aims to ensure that the education needs of all children and youth are met regardless of their status or nationality, in the spirit of leaving no one behind, and ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable children. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges already faced by vulnerable groups of children and adolescents and has put many Syrian refugees at risk of being excluded or dropping out from education entirely. Although schools and universities reopened in September 2021, many public schools have continued to have students fully or partially on rotation owing to safe distancing requirements or COVID-19 outbreaks. The data shows that there are over 150,000 Syrian children enrolled and an estimated 81,000 learners (5-17 years) that are out of school. To address barriers to education, exacerbated by the pandemic, the MoE has prioritized system strengthening towards greater inclusion and diversity in education.

The new Vocational Education Reform Strategic Plan aims to improve the relevance and effectiveness of the national technical and vocational education and training system in Jordan, with the overall objective that adolescent girls and boys in Jordan regardless of nationality, abilities, learning attainment, will access a quality vocational education. Regarding higher education institutions, the development of a new Action Plan to Integrate E-Learning into the Higher Education System in Jordan, is an opportunity to further advocate for access to quality education at the tertiary level for the most vulnerable youth, including Syrian refugee students. At tertiary level over 6,000 refugee students were enrolled, of which 350 students who benefited from higher education scholarships.

In **Egypt**, Syrian refugee children and youth continue to have access to public education under the same conditions as their Egyptian peers. While considerable progress has been made towards



increasing school enrolment rates, some barriers related to access to education still remain. Poverty is the main reason for Syrian refugee children not being enrolled or attending school. The data shows that over 45,000 Syrian learners are enrolled in education. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated already existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, which made it even more difficult for parents from refugee communities to cover the direct and indirect costs of education and consequently leads to an increased number of children not being enrolled in schools, at-risk of dropping out or being engaged in child labor. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of supplies including access to devices and internet for online learning, language barriers, violence and discrimination in schools remain major constraints to education, particularly in areas with a high number of refugee children. Education partners supported access of Syrian refugee children through the provision of education grants for over 20,000 learners to support payment of safe transportation, tuition fees, stationery and school uniforms. Additionally, over 300 Syrian youth were supported with tertiary education scholarships. The response will continue to prioritize enhancing access to quality, inclusive education for Syrian children and youth.



© UNICEF/UNI227267/AIHattab 1

Key Advocacy Asks:

As an international community we must remain committed to the promise of a **No Lost Generation**. We need to:

- ❖ **De-politicize Education support:** Education is a right which is critical for safety, social cohesion, supporting psychosocial well-being, peacebuilding, and stability. Provision of education is a form of protection for children and youth affected by the conflict and forcible displacement. Providing quality educational opportunities enables forcibly displaced children and youth



benefit from the protection of an accountable social service in which they have opportunity and support to develop their skills and build their future.

- ❖ **Continue ensuring technical and financial support to education sector with the emphasis of ensuring flexible and multi-year funding:** It is imperative that donor governments continue financing the education sector with multi-year, more predictable and flexible funding to enable the Education Sector to support the continuum from COVID-19 response to longer-term development. This includes a broad continuum of education opportunities, including technical vocational education training opportunities and higher education, as well as quality, certified lifelong learning opportunities for all learners.
- ❖ **Support cash-based education responses:** Inclusion of education in multi-purpose cash and multi-sector programming and investment on refugee youth sustainable livelihoods need to be ensured. Poverty alleviation is key to enabling families to prioritize education and reduce the numbers of children who are not in school or are unable to continue learning.
- ❖ **Invest in resilient and inclusive education systems:**
 - **Access:** Mitigation of existing barriers through supporting countries to implement integration policies that benefit children from vulnerable host communities and refugee children alike contributes to stronger education systems that can absorb and retain children, provide quality services and support learners to reach their full potential. To that effect, a more systematic approach on addressing the instances of lack of documentation, having a major adverse impact on access for children from refugee and stateless communities, needs to be promoted. Continued analysis of current policies and waivers to enable potential permanent revisions, with the goal of safeguarding the right to education for all refugee students, including those who lack legal documentation.
 - **Quality:** Teachers require continued training to enhance their overall capacities. The professionalization of the teaching profession by institutionalizing pre-service training and accrediting and certifying on-going in-service training is a must. Additional training is needed to navigate blended learning contributing to ongoing professional development, mental health, and psychosocial support to deal with their own stress and mental distress and that of their students, and that they are adequately remunerated for their efforts. This includes provision of mental health and psychosocial support to parents and caregivers in navigating blended learning.
 - **Accreditation and Certification:** The recognition of prior learning helps learners acquire a formal qualification that matches their knowledge and skills, thereby contributing to their employability, mobility, lifelong learning, and social inclusion.
- ❖ **Support efforts to engage with parties to the conflict and those who influence them to halt and prevent attacks on education** and learning spaces and implement the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict.



2021 Financial Overview:

The Syria situation remains the largest refugee crisis in the world, with millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt for many years. Over the years, the generous contributions of donor community towards the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in response to Syria crisis and the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), have enabled education access for Syrian and host community children, adolescents, and youth. The programmatic interventions implemented within the ambits of 3RP and HRP and advocacy support through the No Lost Generation (NLG) platform enabled children, adolescents, and youth to contribute to resilience and social cohesion in their communities and have expanded livelihood opportunities in line with national legislation.

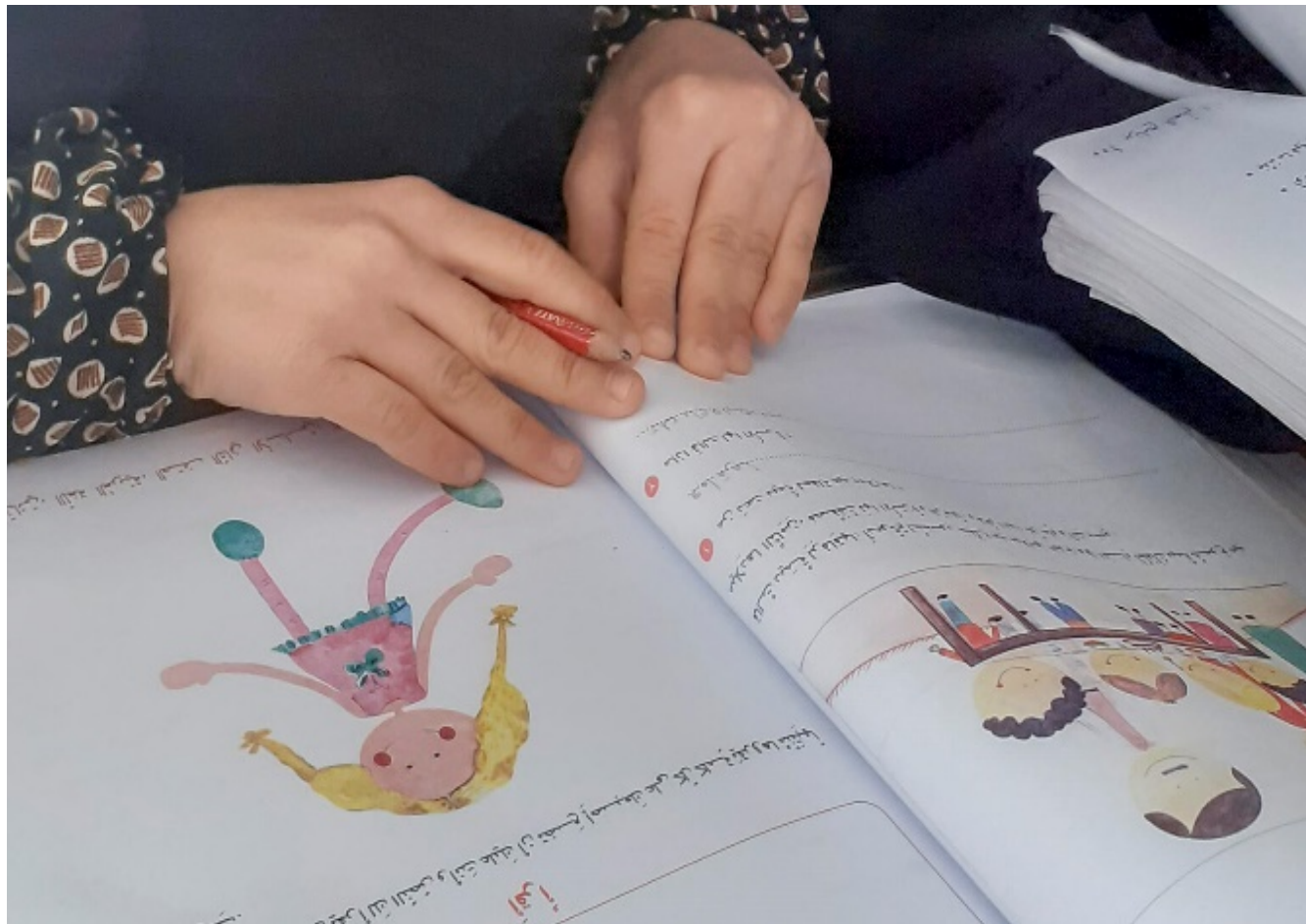
The below table is a snapshot of 3RP and HRP data, highlighting the 2021 education appeal and funding levels secured therein:

Country	Education Appeal (USD)	Funded
Syria	298,996,858	54,342,706
Jordan	63,006,403	55,233,908
Lebanon	430,101,318	123,407,961
Iraq	13,541,300	7,441,710
Egypt	23,744,948	3,861,733
Turkey	252,740,875	182,292,627

Notably, provision of education services includes a range of activities and involves multiple stakeholders, which contributes to higher costs in service provision. As indicated in the table above, on average the overall Education sector is currently underfunded by 50 – 60 per cent.

The Education Pillar of the No Lost Generation advocacy platform acknowledges the valuable support over the years by the international community. Education partners remain committed to ensuring that vulnerable Syrian and host community children continue to much receive the needed education support to live a dignified and productive life.

**We count on your support in keeping the promise of a
No Lost Generation!**



© UNICEF/UN0610599

Contact Information

NLG Education Pillar co-leads:

- Irina Isomova, Snr. Education Officer: isomova@unhcr.org | UNHCR
- Brenda Haiplik, Regional Advisor Education bhaiplik@unicef.org | UNICEF

To find out more about No Lost Generation advocacy platform:

www.nolostgeneration.org

https://twitter.com/NLG_Syria