



# INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

## Protection and learning for all Syrian children and youth

March 2019

The Syria crisis is now entering its ninth year and having a disastrous impact on the lives of children, youth and their families. Collective efforts of governments and the international community have prevented at least another 2.5 million Syrian children from being out of school. However, every year, over one third or nearly 3 million school-age Syrian children remain outside of formal or non-formal education. In 2019, many children are not safe or do not feel safe, and their future is challenged.

The rapidly evolving context requires key actors in the Syria response to adapt and look beyond short-term access-oriented responses. Urgent reflection is needed to design longer term and sustainable strategies to make up for the loss of human capital. Innovative approaches need to be explored to ensure children and youth continue to be protected and have opportunities to engage in meaningful learning that provides them with the skills necessary to build a peaceful and prosperous future for themselves, their families and their communities. At the current pace, many will be left behind and progress towards meeting the ambition of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, particularly towards SDG4, will be challenged, not only in Syria, but also in the host countries.

During the London pledging conference in 2016, partners, donors and the international community made a commitment to ensure protection and learning pathways for children and youth affected by the Syria crisis. Since then, annual reports have been produced under the No Lost Generation (NLG) Initiative to document the progress made towards this promise and to contribute to the discussions of subsequent conferences in Brussels.

The present paper, prepared by NLG partners at the regional and country levels ahead of the third Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' in March 2019, represents

### The No Lost Generation initiative

The No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative was launched in 2013 to focus attention on the plight of children and youth affected by the Syria and Iraq crises. It brings together humanitarian and development partners from United Nations agencies, local and international non-governmental organizations, donors and host governments to collectively address challenges as a shared responsibility.

For more information on NLG please visit [nolostgeneration.org](http://nolostgeneration.org).

an update of the 2018 report: *We made a promise: ensuring learning pathways and protection for Syrian children and youth*, and includes:

- An update on the situation of education and protection for Syrian children and youth in Syria and the five host countries;
- A brief reflection on the way forward and key priorities for the Syria crisis education and protection response at this critical time; and
- A review of progress made in 2018 towards the key recommendations set out in the 2018 report: *We made a promise: ensuring learning pathways and protection for Syrian children and youth* (see Annex).

# 1 The situation of education and protection for Syrian children and youth

The conflict in Syria has uprooted more than 11.6 million Syrians from their homes. Over 6 million have been internally displaced while 5.6 million, almost half of them children, have sought refuge in five host countries: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of 2018, the intensity of fighting lessened in several parts of Syria, while in others, violence and large waves of displacement continued. Across the country, infrastructure has been destroyed. Access to basic services and socio-economic opportunities continues to be hindered by safety concerns, insecurity, and physical risks. Refugee return has gained increased attention and has driven the development of preparedness plans, however, conditions that guarantee voluntary, safe and dignified return of refugees are not yet fully in place. The number of recorded self-organized returns remained low in 2018. As the future is uncertain, it is expected that the need for services in the host countries in the region will remain high throughout 2019.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 Overall participation in formal and non-formal education

Inside Syria and the five host countries, **two thirds of the school-age population** or an estimated over 5 million school-age Syrian children<sup>3</sup> are enrolled in formal and non-formal education<sup>4</sup>. This leaves one third or **nearly 3 million school-age Syrian children without education**,<sup>5</sup> with **more than 40 per cent in the age range of 15-17 years**.<sup>6</sup>

### Host countries

In the host countries, slight **progress in enrolment in formal education** of Syrian school-age children was made (from 1.09 million in December 2017 to 1.14 million in December 2018). However, the number of Syrian **children enrolled in regulated non-formal education decreased** from 159,782 in December 2017 to 120,656 in December 2018. In addition, the school-age refugee population increased (from 1.95 million school-age refugee children in December 2017 to 2.06 million in December 2018) due to population growth.<sup>7</sup> As a result, 801,763 (39 per cent) school-age Syrian refugee children are out of both formal and regulated non-formal education.

**Nine out of ten children** who engage in learning **are in formal school**. This demonstrates that national governments continue to make a significant contribution by keeping their systems open to refugee children. Particularly primary school age children, many of whom were born in the host country, benefit from this. The Syria crisis continues to put pressure on both host country education systems and host-community children and youth. In areas with elevated levels of Syrians, research shows that donor-funded second shifts have helped mitigate both over-crowding and concerns about the quality of education for refugee and host community children.<sup>8</sup> However, after eight years, the absorption capacity of national education systems has reached its limits in areas with a concentration of refugee population.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR and UNDP. 2018. *The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview: 2019/20*. The order of mentioning countries in this paper (Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt) is made on the basis of the scale of the crisis and refugee influx.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Enrolment figure includes a small number of Palestine refugee children inside Syria.

<sup>4</sup> Non-formal education (NFE) in this paper refers to accredited and non-accredited non-formal education. For Turkey, it includes accredited and non-accredited non-formal education programmes and language classes; for Lebanon, it includes basic literacy and numeracy for children and youth, and an accelerated learning programme; for Jordan, it includes certified catch-up and drop-out programmes, learning support services and non-formal kindergarten.

<sup>5</sup> 'School age' in this paper refers to ages 5-17 years. Inside Syria, school-age children not enrolled in formal education are considered as out of school. In the five host countries, children not enrolled in either formal or non-formal education are considered as out of school.

<sup>6</sup> While the population data for inside Syria is from August 2018 (higher than the 2017/18 level), the registration of enrolment was done before November 2017, which did not reflect the recovery in areas such as Aleppo.

<sup>7</sup> Refugee population growth is higher than in the host communities. In Jordan, the fertility rate for Syrian refugees is at 4.4 births per woman, about one third higher than the Jordanian rate. Figure cited from Sieverding, M., Berri, N. and Abdulrahim, S. 2018. *Marriage and Fertility Patterns among Jordanians and Syrian Refugees in Jordan*. Economic Research Forum Working Paper No.1187.

<sup>8</sup> Assaad, R., et al. 2018. *Impact of Syrian Refugees on Education Outcomes in Jordan*. Working Paper.

In 2018, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided **regulated non-formal learning opportunities** for over 350,000 Syrian and host-community school-age children, of whom 120,656 were out-of-school Syrian children. As non-formal education provision was scaled down in some countries due to funding shortages, fewer children were reached through this channel of education.

### Education snapshot in the five host countries: December 2018 and December 2017<sup>9</sup>

School-age Syrian refugee children <sup>10</sup>							
Country	Year	Total number of children	Number of children in formal education <sup>11</sup>	Number of children in only non-formal education <sup>12</sup>	Number of children in education (either formal or non-formal)	Number of children and % of children out of formal and non-formal education	
Turkey	2018	1,047,536	645,140	17,727	662,867	384,669	37%
	2017	976,200	610,515	20,000	630,515	345,685	35%
Lebanon	2018	666,491	290,102	67,456	357,558	308,933	46%
	2017	625,222	257,723	92,617	350,340	274,882	44%
Jordan	2018	235,616	134,121	17,575	151,696	83,920	36%
	2017	233,052	130,668	29,247	159,915	73,137	31%
Iraq	2018	66,919	29,730	16,629	46,359	20,560	31%
	2017	66,514	46,335 <sup>13</sup>	17,549	63,884	2,630	4%
Egypt	2018	47,507	42,557	1,269	43,826	3,681	8%
	2017	46,441	43,643	369	44,012	2,429	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2,064,069</b>	<b>1,141,650</b>	<b>120,656</b>	<b>1,262,306</b>	<b>801,763</b>	<b>39%</b>
	<b>2017</b>	<b>1,947,429</b>	<b>1,088,884</b>	<b>159,782</b>	<b>1,248,666</b>	<b>698,763</b>	<b>36%</b>

In 2018, in Turkey, the Ministry of National Education enrolled the largest number of Syrian school-age children to date, with more than 645,000 children in formal education, which is double the number of Syrian children enrolled in schools less than 3 years ago. However, the impressive increase does not match the growing<sup>14</sup> number of Syrian school-age children in Turkey, which exceeded 1 million in 2018. While the gradual transition of Syrian children from temporary education centres into Turkish public schools has brought opportunities to promote social inclusion, it has also exacerbated capacity limitations in the most affected provinces, offsetting education quality.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in Lebanon supported 290,102 refugee children (mostly Syrians aged 3-18 years) with access to formal education (KG-G12), an increase compared to last year. For those refugee children who did not qualify for formal schooling, the MEHE's Non-Formal Education (NFE) Framework facilitated access for 67,456 children (aged 3-18 years) to certified NFE programmes.

<sup>9</sup> Calculation based on the UNHCR data portal, 3RP monthly updates and UNICEF Syria Crisis Situation Report. While 3RP data is updated monthly, this paper is based on reporting in December, when a thorough data analysis is conducted, double-counting is examined and corrected in consultation with education stakeholders and information management focal points in each country. Historical data is also reviewed and corrected when necessary, which is why some figures reported for December 2017 are different from those reported in last year's NLG report.

<sup>10</sup> 'School-age Syrian refugee children' refers to children aged 5-17 either registered with UNHCR or the host country, with two exceptions: for Lebanon, the Syrian refugee children population corresponds to the total number of 3-18 year olds known to UNHCR to reflect the age group targeted by the country response plan. For Egypt, population and education data pertain to the age group of 3 to 17 years to reflect the country response plan.

<sup>11</sup> Enrolment to basic education has been a priority in refugee response plans. For example, Lebanon has marked a success in enrolling non-Lebanese children with high enrolment figures of 209,382 in 2017-18 and 223,119 in 2018-19 in Grades 1-9.

<sup>12</sup> In 2018, 3RP partners have reached over 350,000 Syrian and host-community children with NFE programmes. Some of these children were also enrolled in formal education and NFE was supporting their learning. The table above reports the estimated number of Syrian children that were only enrolled in NFE programmes and not enrolled in any other form of education as of December 2018. Due to financial constraints, there was a drop in number of those "only in non-formal education" in Lebanon and Jordan, contributing to increased numbers and rates of out-of-school children.

<sup>13</sup> Iraq's formal education figure for 2017 was calculated solely based on the reporting on ActivityInfo with a higher risk of double-counting. In comparison, the figure for 2018 is from EMIS triangulated with ActivityInfo, is more accurate and is unlikely to have double-counting, though also much smaller than the 2017 figure.

<sup>14</sup> As a result of population growth.

The NFE programmes provided learning opportunities to the most vulnerable and at-risk refugee children, now also including children with disabilities. While the absolute number of refugee children enrolled in formal education increased, the percentage of children out of learning opportunities continues to rise due to reduced NFE provision and the large number of school-age refugee children. In 2018, the plateauing funding landscape has adversely impacted formal education, despite reported progress, and the number of spaces available for children in non-formal learning programmes.

In Jordan, despite growing economic hardship faced by vulnerable refugee families, the number of Syrian school-age refugee children enrolled in formal education in December 2018 increased by 3 per cent over 2017 enrolment data. Financial constraints led to the closure of 127 Makani centres and scaling down of transportation services for Syrian refugees in temporary settlements – which limited access to learning support services<sup>15</sup> and other learning opportunities. As a result, together with an increase in the total population of Syrian school-age children, the number of Syrian children out of school has increased.

An increase in the number of **host-community children and youth** who benefit from refugee education programmes has been reported despite the difficulty in obtaining an accurate figure. In Turkey, for example, with preschool education becoming compulsory for all five-year-olds by 2020, NLG partners are supporting the Ministry of National Education to implement the policy which benefits both Syrian and Turkish children. This includes the development of various early childhood education (ECE) models and parental involvement. Different types of ECE programmes were supported by NLG partners including community and home based ECE benefiting more than 17,000 children in 2018. In Jordan, over 113,000 vulnerable Jordanian children enrolled in certified catch-up or drop-out programmes or learning support services.

## In Syria

In Syria **school enrolment in 2017/18 increased compared to 2016/17**, from 3.7 million to 4.1 million children. In addition, over 520,000 children, in school or out of school, benefitted from regulated non-formal education programmes, such as catch-up classes and self-learning programmes.<sup>16</sup> Palestine refugee children in Syria have been affected by displacement, violence and poverty. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is now providing basic education to 49,682 Palestine refugee children, with the support of the Government of Syria in “loaning” schools and the UNRWA Education in Emergencies programme.<sup>17</sup> It is estimated that in the 2017/18 school year, the number of out-of-school children stayed similar to 2016/17 at around 2 million, or one third of the school-age population.

## 1.2 Secondary, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and tertiary education

It is at secondary and tertiary levels that a comparison between Syrian refugees and their host-community peers reveals the greatest gap. While the enrolment rate of children in basic education (ages 6-14 years) is around 60 per cent or higher for refugees,<sup>18</sup> it **decreases dramatically at the secondary level**. The gross enrolment rate for Syrian students in upper secondary education remains under 25 per cent in all host countries except Egypt, with variation between countries. For example, participation in Lebanon is estimated below 10 per cent.

In 2018, over 70,000 Syrian youth in Syria and almost 100,000 Syrian youth in the host countries enrolled in TVET programmes. However, a total of 170,000 youth enrolled in TVET only represents a fraction of Syrian youth. In 2018, a total of 1,044 Palestine refugee students were enrolled in 30 long-term courses and 939 students in 37 short-term courses.

<sup>15</sup> The learning support service in Jordan is a non-certified learning opportunity, designed for school-age children, regardless of their nationality and education status (in school and out of school) to improve their academic performance and prevent them from dropping out.

<sup>16</sup> It is currently difficult to disaggregate between formal and non-formal education. With ongoing effort in child-based tracking for 2019, it will be possible to precisely identify the number of participants in non-formal education who are out of school. Additionally, the recently launched School Integrated Management Information System (SIMIS) will progressively enable data collection of school-age children and youth according to types of schooling.

<sup>17</sup> UNRWA also extends education services to Palestine refugees from Syria who have fled to Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza. Currently, 5,254 Palestine refugee children from Syria are enrolled in UNRWA schools in Lebanon, 997 in Jordan (with an additional 356 Syrian national students) and 438 in Gaza. In Syria, out of the 67,242 UNRWA students prior to the crisis, attendance decreased to 21,962 students in February 2013 with 70 per cent of UNRWA schools deemed inoperative. Due to the destruction of many UNRWA school buildings and the inaccessibility of schools in certain areas inside Syria, a total of 41 UNRWA schools operate in government school buildings. These school buildings operate as public schools in the first shift and as UNRWA schools in the second shift.

<sup>18</sup> In Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, the basic education enrolment rates for host communities are much higher. In Iraq and Egypt, the basic education enrolment rates for host communities are higher but the gaps are small.



A recent study shows that enrolment of Syrian refugees in universities across the four countries hosting the largest number of refugees – Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq – reached 5 per cent in 2017, representing an improvement if compared with global statistics for refugees (only 1 per cent of refugee youth are able to gain access to higher education). The 5 per cent university enrolment reflects **a huge gap compared to global access to higher education**, which is 37 per cent.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3 Gender disparities and children with disabilities

Both in the host countries and in Syria, the gender parity index (GPI) for the gross enrolment ratio (GER)<sup>20</sup> shows a disadvantage for boys. In Syria, GPI is estimated to be 1.1 in 2018 from 1.03 in 2017, representing a decrease in the **enrolment of boys in comparison to girls**. This gender disparity is found across all levels: pre-primary, basic and upper secondary education. In the five host countries, the GPIs of formal school enrolment are all around 1.05,<sup>21</sup> meaning that a refugee girl is 5 per cent more likely to be enrolled than a refugee boy.

Lack of readily available data on the state of **children with disabilities** is alarming and requires urgent attention.<sup>22</sup> In some areas in Syria, over half of the children with a disability are deprived of their right to education, and over two thirds require specialized health services that are not available in their area.<sup>23</sup>

### 1.4 Learning outcomes

In addition to access and participation, the **quality of education and learning** remains a concern in Syria and the five host countries, although some progress has been made. In Syria, the number of Grade 9 examination candidates increased by approximately 5.6 per cent from the 2016/17 to 2017/18 academic year, although that of Grade 12 candidates decreased by 16.3 per cent during the same time period.<sup>24</sup> In the same time period, for the first time since the crisis started in 2011, the number of candidates who passed the exams for Grades 9 and 12 increased by 0.5 percent and 0.2 percent, respectively. In Lebanon, 72.6 per cent of non-Lebanese students passed the official Grade 9 exam during the 2017/18 school year, compared to 66.1 per cent the previous year.<sup>25</sup>

Data on learning outcomes remain limited. In Jordan, through the Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Project (RAMP), the Ministry of Education undertook early grade reading and early grade math assessments in 2017. The preliminary results indicate that Syrian children are performing less well than their Jordanian peers in reading across multiple skill areas, for instance oral reading and fluency. In Iraq, data collected from a sample of 355 Syrian refugee children in basic and secondary schools indicate that schools for refugee students were experiencing shortages in basic learning material and spaces, male students were at particular risk of drop-out, and most students had insufficient literacy and numeracy skills.<sup>26</sup>

Teaching quality is critical for the improvement of learning outcomes. The latest wide-scale analysis of teacher practice in Northern Syria shows that while teachers are open to participatory pedagogy and good practices underpinning socio-emotional wellbeing, extra support is needed to translate willingness into action.<sup>27</sup> For example, only 38 per cent of teachers stated that they often or always witnessed their colleagues using participatory methodologies, and only 56 per cent of school administrators screened children for special needs.

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR. 2018. *Turn the Tide: Refugee Education in Crisis*. Youth refers to those persons between the ages of 15-24 years.

<sup>20</sup> This expresses the gross enrolment ratio for girls divided by the gross enrolment ratio for boys.

<sup>21</sup> The estimated GPIs in 2018 are 1.07 for Turkey (1.078 in 2017), 1.046 for Lebanon (1.02 in 2017), 1.066 for Jordan (1.02 in 2017) and 1.055 for Iraq (1.024 in 2017). For Egypt, data does allow for an estimate for 2018, but in 2017 the estimate was 1.025.

<sup>22</sup> In Syria, for example, the education management data system captured information on children with disabilities in school, but the data is not readily available.

<sup>23</sup> Physical Rehabilitation Working Group, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Syrian Ministry of Education. 2018. *The Education Statistical Digest, 2011-2017*.

<sup>25</sup> RACE II PMU Factsheet, November 2018.

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO. 2018. *Literacy and Numeracy among Syrian Refugee Students in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Access to Quality Inclusive Primary and Secondary Education for Refugees and IDPs in Conflict Affected Areas* Project. Unpublished report.

<sup>27</sup> Integrity Global. 2019. *Research to improve the quality of teaching and learning inside Syria*.

## 2 Barriers to participation and learning<sup>28</sup>

The main barriers to participation and learning remain the socio-economic situation of refugee families; protection concerns; including documentation, implementation of restrictive policies at decentralized levels; and the impact of violence on children in the home, in school or in their surroundings.<sup>29</sup>

### Economic stagnation and increased poverty

The conflict in Syria has severely diminished economic activity, and has disrupted economic and social networks. It is estimated that between 55-67 per cent of the Syrian population in Syria is living in extreme poverty, compared to 13 per cent in 2007. The situation is not better in the host countries where poverty rates for Syrians are estimated to be between 51 and 61 per cent in Jordan and between 37 and 50 percent in Lebanon.<sup>30</sup> Increasing socio-economic hardship associated with protracted displacement has left girls and boys in the age cohort of 15-17 at particular risk of negative economic coping strategies, such as child marriage and child labour, which impede their right and access to secondary education.

In Syria, from 2011 until the end of 2016, the cumulative losses in gross domestic product (GDP) have been estimated at \$226 billion, about four times the Syrian GDP in 2010.<sup>31</sup> In the region, the low oil price and the prevalence of humanitarian crises have severely worsened the economic situation. While globally the GDP per capita has grown by 1.5 per cent between 2012 and 2017, it has dropped by 17 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Lebanon, a country that does not rely on the oil industry, has the largest population of refugees in proportion to its own population, and Lebanon's GDP per capita has declined by 4.5 per cent since the Syrian conflict started.<sup>32</sup> The stagnating economy in the region has an impact on governments' capacities to expand and improve their national education systems.

Similar to 2017, child labour in Syria remains the top barrier to education as cited in large-scale surveys.<sup>33</sup> In the host countries evidence shows an increased recourse to child labour and child marriage as negative coping strategies among refugees.<sup>34</sup> These practices are also prevalent among vulnerable children and youth from host communities. In Turkey, anecdotal evidence suggests high numbers of Syrian child labourers working in the same sectors and under similar conditions as their Turkish peers, including in the worst forms of child labour. In addition, the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) estimates that 15 per cent of Syrian refugee children between the ages of 15-18 years were married in 2014, while a recent survey shows that more than half of the participants' age at marriage was below the age of 18 years.<sup>35</sup>

### Protection concerns and violence

**Lack of birth registration and documentation** remain major challenges for Syrian children in Syria and the host countries, and put children at an increased risk of statelessness and, in some cases, limit access to basic (education) services.<sup>36</sup> Considering that at least 1 million refugee children were born in the host countries, the issue is of considerable importance.<sup>37</sup>

Children and youth are suffering from the cumulative **psychosocial distress** resulting from individual and collective experiences of war, violence, family separation and displacement, all of which have an impact on

<sup>28</sup> Barriers identified in the previous iteration of this report in April 2018 still hold true. Refer to: No Lost Generation. 2018. *We made a promise: ensuring learning pathways and protection for Syrian children and youth*.

<sup>29</sup> These barriers were flagged in previous NLG reports for the Brussels Conferences and include a wide range of issues from language barriers (particularly in Turkey and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq) to poverty and other socio-economic difficulties.

<sup>30</sup> World Bank and UNHCR, 2019. *The mobility of displaced Syrians – an economic and social analysis*.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank. 2017. *The Toll of War: The Economic and Social Consequences of the Conflict in Syria*.

<sup>32</sup> Calculated from the World Bank dataset using current US\$ exchange rate. Data updated in on 6 July 2018 and retrieved on 11 February 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Mainly based on the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (2018), covering the whole country in summer 2018, and the Whole of Syria surveys conducted by REACH, covering opposition-controlled areas as of July 2018. Reports are forthcoming.

<sup>34</sup> Sources: Women's Refugee Commission. 2016. *A Girl No More: The Changing Norms of Child Marriage in Conflict*; Save the Children. 2014. *Too Young to Wed: The growing problem of child marriage among Syrian girls in Jordan*; UNHCR. 2013. *The Future of Syria: Refugee Children in Crisis*.

<sup>35</sup> UN Women and the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Immigrants. 2018. *Needs Assessment of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection Status in Turkey*. Sample of 1,291 participants.

<sup>36</sup> For example, children need to be registered to enroll in school or be able to sit for exams. Lebanon has waived documentation requirements for refugee children including those sitting national exams.

<sup>37</sup> UNHCR and UNDP. 2018. *The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview: 2019/20*.

their ability to learn. A 2018 survey across multiple governorates in Syria indicates that one in eight children per classroom has **psychosocial support needs** requiring specialized interventions for effective teaching and learning.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, a needs assessment conducted by UNRWA indicates that Palestine refugee children from Syria continue to suffer from child protection risks and distress.

Children's exposure to **violence, abuse and exploitation at home, in school and in communities** remains pervasive across the countries affected by the crisis and extends beyond conflict and humanitarian contexts. Prior to the crisis, over 80 per cent of children aged 2-14 years in these countries reported experiencing **violent discipline at home**.<sup>39</sup> Recent data indicate that violence at home has increased since the crisis.<sup>40</sup> Weak implementation of legislation that prohibits the use of corporal punishment against children at home and in schools leaves millions of children and adolescents at risk.<sup>41</sup> Among students aged 13-15 years, levels of **violence and bullying in school** remain significant. Violence, bullying and child labour have been identified as key reasons for school drop-out among Palestine refugee children from Syria in Lebanon.<sup>42</sup> In Egypt, lack of involvement and support of social workers for vulnerable refugee youth, as well as corporal punishment in schools and other forms of violence, are amongst the major challenges cited by both Syrian families and members of impacted communities.<sup>43</sup> More than 70 per cent of adolescents who died in 2015 due to **collective violence** were living in the MENA region.<sup>44</sup> Iraq and Syria are among the top five most deadly places in the world for adolescent boys and girls.<sup>45</sup>

**Gender-based violence** continues to be pervasive and the use of sexual violence and brutalization of women and girls, particularly those from diverse religious and ethnic communities, has been well documented. Although in Syria adolescent girls between the ages of 14-21 years were identified as the most vulnerable to sexual violence,<sup>46</sup> adolescent boys are also at risk of gender-based violence, particularly in settings such as child labour. While reliable data on prevalence of gender-based violence in emergencies is difficult to obtain, underreporting

highlights a lack of available services, fear of reprisal and stigmatization of survivors across countries. Linked to this, a significant challenge is that **children**, particularly adolescent girls, **are being kept at home** for perceived lack of safety in school and on the way to and from school. A recent report sheds light on the various forms of violence and trajectories imposed on many Syrian adolescent girls, including leaving school and early marriage.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, **detention of children** on security grounds is an issue of concern. During 2017, in Syria, 72 children were detained for their alleged association with armed groups.<sup>48</sup>

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## Children and Armed Conflict in Syria

The *Children and Armed Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic* report documents grave violations against children in Syria carried out by all parties to the conflict between November 2013 and June 2018. The findings are alarming. The United Nations verified through primary sources:

- **recruitment** and use of 3,377 children by 90 different parties to the conflict;
- **four out of five children recruited were used in combat roles**, 30 per cent of them under the age of 15 which constitutes a war crime;
- **killing or injuring** of total of **7,339 children** due to airstrikes (61 per cent), shelling (17 per cent), and improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings (9 per cent). At least 11 per cent of the child casualties were caused by prohibited or inherently indiscriminate and disproportionate weapons or methods;
- **attacks on 358 schools**, killing or injuring at least 112 education personnel; in 8 per cent of the cases schools under attack were used for military purposes by the opposing side;
- **attacks on 343 health facilities**, killing or injuring at least 188 medical personnel; in 4 per cent of health facilities under attack, their use for military purposes by the opposing side was verified.

Source: Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations Security Council, October 2018.

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<sup>38</sup> Physical Rehabilitation Working Group on Disability and Access to Healthcare in Syria: Western Aleppo, Idlib and Ar-Raqqa, 2018.

<sup>39</sup> UNICEF. 2018. *A Profile of Violence against Children and Adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa*.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> In Syria and Lebanon, corporal punishment in schools is prohibited by law.

<sup>42</sup> UNRWA Back to School Campaign in Lebanon, July – September 2017.

<sup>43</sup> 3RP 2019/20, Egypt chapter, forthcoming.

<sup>44</sup> Defined as injuries due to police or military intervention and those resulting from war or civil conflict. UNICEF. 2018. *A Profile of Violence against Children and Adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa*.

<sup>45</sup> UNICEF. 2018. *A Profile of Violence against Children and Adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa*.

<sup>46</sup> UN OCHA. 2019. *Humanitarian Needs Overview* (forthcoming).

<sup>47</sup> UNFPA. 2018. *When caged birds sing: Stories of Syrian adolescent girls*.

<sup>48</sup> United Nations. 2018. *Children and armed conflict – Report of the Secretary-General*.

### 3 Planning, budgeting and financing

With the rapidly evolving context, the protracted nature of the crisis and the increased severity of needs for all children and youth, multi-year planning, budgeting and financing are critical to move away from a supply-oriented model towards longer-term investments in local leadership and national education systems. This is required to meet the immediate needs of the protracted crisis; reduce vulnerabilities; and better support the continuity of learning, protection and access to decent livelihoods necessary for sustainable individual and societal development.

Despite efforts made to date (*see Annex*), longer term planning and budgeting remain a challenge due to the current political context and insecurity regarding the future of Syria and the status of refugees.

Financing for education slightly increased from US\$566 million in 2017 to US\$595 million in 2018 against the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Response Plan (3RP) for the Syria crisis, but there is still a large funding gap of US\$518 million, or 46.5 per cent, against the identified needs.<sup>49</sup>

Other forms of medium-term financing, such as bilateral and multilateral development and concessional financing, have started in many host countries, in support of systems strengthening.<sup>50</sup> For example, in Jordan, the presence of a solid national sector plan has attracted a much higher level of financing of a different nature, namely more flexible, predictable and favourable to the Ministry of Education, such as Direct Budgetary Support funds – full grants going directly to the Ministry as additional financial resources to increase its budget – and preferential loans delivered through the Global Concessional Financing Facility, as well as direct contributions to the Ministry of Education on a bilateral basis from several donors/institutions.

Lack of proper resource tracking of all types of flows, however, makes it difficult to demonstrate the different financial contributions to the Syrian response across the three NLG pillars (Education, Child Protection, and Adolescents & Youth). A feasibility study that was conducted for an observatory of financial tracking,<sup>51</sup> summarizes the major constraints in tracking funding for education as:

- The multi-dimensional aspects of the funding (channelled through HRP, 3RP, bilateral, multi-lateral and development);
- The lack of a consistent methodology for tracking multi-year funding;
- Accounting for carryover;
- Different systems and tools used for fund tracking;
- Country-specific limitations; and
- Terminology and classifications.

The inconsistency in reporting, therefore, can be significant. For example, in Jordan in 2017, US\$296 million were provided, accounting for 88 per cent of the US\$336 million requested through the Jordan Response Plan led by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. However, according to the 3RP, US\$158 million were appealed for and only US\$52 million were received. Capturing funds using one single tool and improving fund tracking continues to be a priority, and it will require commitment and efforts by all partners.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> For HRP, US\$113 million funded out of the requirement of US\$240 million. For 3RP, US\$482 million (US\$597 million if counting the 2017 carryover) funded out of the requirement of US\$873 million.

<sup>50</sup> Bi-lateral funding made by donors and IFI directly to governments outside the 3RP and HRP frameworks are not included in this analysis. An example of this is the European Union facility support made to the Turkish Ministry of National Education.

<sup>51</sup> Dara, K. 2019 (not published). *Observatory of Donor Financial Support to Education, Child Protection, and Adolescents and Youth Sectors for the Syria Crisis*. The feasibility study was commissioned by the NLG partners.

<sup>52</sup> In Jordan, an attempt was led by DFID to consolidate the funds channelled into the education sector through a tailored template. The template provides information on the different donors, the implemented programmes, the type of assistance (loan, grant, financial assistance, technical assistance), the implementation partners, total amount, time frame for implementation, budget lines, in addition to brief descriptions about each programme. The template is considered a good step toward having a comprehensive picture about funding flows to education and can be replicated in other countries. However, information about annual disbursement should be collected. Also, there should be an agreement about a common budget classification across countries in case there is a need for consolidation. The template used by Jordan can be further developed to be used as a tool to collect information on bilateral funds.



## 4 Way forward and key priorities

Eight years of war has had a disastrous impact on lives of children and youth. Every year, around one third of school-age Syrian children remain out of school, 7 in 10 of them living inside Syria and more than 40 per cent in the age range of 15-17 years. In 2018, the protracted crisis has increased scale and severity of hardship *for all children and youth*. Lack of opportunities for many children and youth to engage in meaningful learning over several years has deep implications for their future and that of the region. Time, perseverance and innovative approaches are required to mitigate the damage of war on Syria's children.

As the region is facing complex economic and political challenges, we – *No Lost Generation partners, national governments, and donors* – need to continue our efforts to live up to the promise made of providing protection and learning pathways to Syrian children and youth. NLG partners would, therefore, like to reinforce messages that were put forward in the second Brussels Conference in 2018, and stress the following priorities in the Syrian response:

- 1 Reduce socio-economic barriers to participation at the household level:** Expand social protection schemes linked to national systems (including school-feeding programmes and transportation) to ensure access to education, training and decent livelihoods opportunities, and alleviate the direct, indirect and opportunity costs of education for children, youth and families. Targeting may be required to reach the most vulnerable children – particularly adolescent boys and girls, children with disabilities, married girls and adolescent mothers.
- 2 Ensure inclusive education systems that provide quality and relevance for all:** Sustain, increase and adapt efforts to strengthen and expand education systems through mainstreaming the emergency response in long-term sector development plans to ensure all vulnerable children and youth are reached, and develop skills for further learning, employability, active citizenship and personal empowerment. This may require aspects of the response to evolve over time.
- 3 Engage in longer-term planning for continuity of protection and learning:** Prepare for the continuity of protection and learning of children and youth in 2019 and beyond, for those children and youth in the five host countries, and those who will return to Syria through:
  - a. Robust scenario-based plans; and
  - b. Legal and policy frameworks for the certification and recognition of learning (and teaching, where applicable) across countries and cross-border.
- 4 Ensure safe and protective learning spaces:**
  - a. Continue to engage with parties to the conflict and their influencers 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. Engage with the Government of Syria to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.
  - b. Ensure learning spaces in formal and non-formal settings are safe for children, and eliminate violence in and around schools through 'zero tolerance' policies and the training of education personnel to promote positive pathways to discipline and learning. Explore how lessons learned from positive experiences in Lebanon and Jordan could be replicated in other countries.
  - c. Leverage schools as platforms to provide education support and/or school-feeding programmes to improve school attendance and retention.

- 5 Develop multiple flexible learning pathways to respond to the extensive and diversified needs of children and youth**, based on profiling of out-of-school children and youth,<sup>53</sup> and design tailored and flexible programmes that tackle the root causes of children and youth not being in school and provide options to re-engage in learning according to individual needs and capacities (including alternative skill development schemes combined with foundational skills and language courses or workplace experiences). Recognition, accreditation and certification of education programmes, with policies for mobility amongst these should be ensured. Attention should be given to the recognition of prior qualifications and acquired competencies for students of TVET and tertiary education to facilitate realistic and achievable pathways towards becoming productive members of the labour force according to regulations in host countries and in Syria.
- 6 Generate evidence and knowledge:**
- a. Improve efforts to strengthen comprehensive in-country<sup>54</sup> monitoring systems to inform strategies for improving education services and targeting for affected children and youth.
  - b. Widely share analysis, learning from different experiences, data and relevant studies amongst stakeholders, to build a mutual understanding of challenges to children and youth in accessing safe and quality education and to act upon this data.
  - c. Actively engage children and youth in efforts directed at shaping their futures.
- 7 Secure medium- and long-term financing:** Ensure adequate financing and sustainable schemes to support host countries' education systems, including UNRWA's education system, to guarantee the availability of a continuum of relevant education opportunities for affected children and youth (from pre-primary through post-secondary level and for vulnerable children, including those with disabilities). This implies the need for equitable, needs-informed distribution of financing within the education sector.

Education must remain an urgent priority, as an inalienable human right, and a powerful tool to rebuild what has been destroyed. Ensuring inclusive national education systems, multiple and flexible pathways to learning, safe schools, and social protection/livelihoods opportunities for children and youth and their families remains more crucial than ever.

<sup>53</sup> The most vulnerable, those working in exploitative situations, survivors of child marriage, and other forms of gender-based violence, girls at risk of child marriage and girls already married, and children with disabilities.

<sup>54</sup> Systems that include data on transition rates from non-formal to formal education, retention rates, disaggregated data for children in non-formal education and measurement of learning outcomes.

## ANNEX Progress towards our commitments

In 2018, NLG partners, donors and governments worked together to address challenges that children, youth and families affected by the Syria crisis face to access quality learning opportunities by:

- Expanding **multiple pathways to learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings**, focusing on youth, including technical and vocational training and access to tertiary education;
- Ensuring that **learning is recognized and certified, and learning outcomes monitored**;
- Improving **multi-sectoral responses** that link education, protection and livelihood interventions;
- Promoting **multi-annual planning, budgeting and financing** to address longer-term impact of the crisis on learning of children and youth.

### Multiple pathways to learning

In Syria, work is ongoing to finalize a non-formal education framework with the Ministry of Education to define complementary educational pathways for out-of-school children and youth. Within the framework, a new tailored and flexible programme for out-of-school children aged 11-14 years is under development. Scale-up of complementary education pathways, such as the Curriculum B and the Self-Learning Programme, provided education opportunities to more than 628,000 children and youth (51 per cent female).<sup>55</sup> UNRWA expanded its computerized Interactive Learning Programme and the UNRWA TV channel to provide additional learning opportunities for students from Syria. In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education accredited Accelerated Learning Programme was launched in mid-2018 and has, to date, reached 6,600 children between the ages of 10 and 18 years who have missed three or more years of schooling. In addition, 15,377 students completed catch-up classes, and 24,012 children and adolescents attended accredited and non-accredited non-formal education. In Lebanon, 67,456 Syrian and Palestinian children from Syria were reached by programmes including community-based early childhood education, basic literacy and numeracy for children and youth, and accelerated learning. The MEHE will soon launch its national NFE policy and a standardized package of BLN targeting out-of-school children between the age of 10 and 14. Within the regulated non-formal education framework, the launch of the Youth Basic Numeracy and Literacy package represents a key achievement in reaching over 6,000 out-of-school youth and providing them with functional literacy skills in addition to life skills. In Jordan, through catch-up and drop-out programmes and the learning support services, partners were able to reach over 244,000 Syrian and vulnerable Jordanian children and youth, and 1,150 out-of-school children were reintegrated in formal education. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the Ministry of Education is developing a non-formal education policy that provides pathways for children out of school to move from non-formal education to formal education.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, UNRWA invested in its **TVET programme** to meet the needs of the Palestine refugees in Syria, and to better link students with the job market and increase the employability rates of TVET graduates. In Lebanon, a sector-wide approach has brought together the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Affairs, national and international partners and the private sector towards the launch of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training National Strategic Framework (2018-2022). The Framework outlines three main strategic axes including expanded TVET access and service delivery, enhanced quality and relevance of provision, and improved governance and systems.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Curriculum B is an accelerated learning programme for children who have missed education and is run by the Ministry of Education. It is considered as formal education under the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan. The Self-Learning Programme is based on condensed and fast-tracked material for Grades 1 to 9 in the four core subjects of Arabic, Math, Science and English. It is meant to support children who are out of school to study at home or in community centres so that they can eventually access formal examinations in school and reintegrate into formal education. Here the figure of 628,000 refers to those children who benefited from Curriculum B (107,474) and from non-formal education including the Self Learning Programme (520,868) in the 2018 calendar year.

<sup>56</sup> Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, ILO, and UNICEF. 2018. *National Strategic Framework for Technical Vocational Education and Training in Lebanon 2018-2022*.

At the **tertiary education** level, the cumulative number of scholarships expanded from 9,639 in 2017 to an estimated 15,271 in 2018, a 58 per cent increase.<sup>57</sup> In addition to scholarships, programmes in the region focused on career preparation and school to work transitions according to countries' regulations. These included extra-curricular activities and training for successful graduation and employability<sup>58</sup> and language courses designed to give students the requisite skills to complete their degrees and to access employment opportunities in a post-conflict Syria.<sup>59</sup> Increased efforts were exerted to pursue the use of academic scholarships as complementary pathways to durable solutions, and 154 students from Lebanon and Jordan accessed third-country scholarships outside the region.<sup>60</sup> Two roundtables with host governments were organized in Lebanon and Jordan to advocate for increased access to quality Connected Learning programmes for refugee and host-community learners and to explore avenues for capacity building for host governments for local accreditation of these courses. At the system level, work on the revised Arab Regional Convention commenced with Member States on recognition of higher education qualifications, diplomas and certificates, including those held by refugees, as the basis for their further education and employment.<sup>61</sup>

Several **innovative and technology-enabled** interventions were implemented. In one of the regional collaborations facilitated by the NLG Tech Task Force, the *Hakeem chatbot* was co-designed with and for conflict-affected youth to provide an easy way to access further educational resources online. In Jordan, ten community learning and innovation hubs were established to support educational outcomes for refugee children and lifelong learning for youth and adults. In Iraq, the Tech for Food project, through training in information technology, digital skillsets and coaching, reached 1,674 trainees among Syrian refugees, internally displaced youth and affected communities, to acquire mobile skills and access the digital marketplace.

## Recognition and certification of learning

Recognition and certification of learning have been prominent issues throughout the refugee crisis in consideration of return of refugees. Continued advocacy around the availability of national mechanisms for equivalency and recognition of academic and professional qualifications (certificates or diplomas) acquired in the host countries is high on the agenda of the Durable Solutions strategy and interagency preparedness plans on refugee returns.<sup>62</sup>

In Syria, in an effort to systematize information about enrolment requirements, a guidance note was compiled on documentation required to enrol in formal education and register for the national exams (Grades 9 and 12), including for children and youth who have missed school years or return (internally displaced and/or refugees).<sup>63</sup> While the Ministry of Education in Syria is keen to remove barriers to enrolment, obtaining the Grade 9 school-leaving certificate is a precondition for youth to access higher levels of education (and to register for the Grade 12 examination) and the lack of the Grade 9 school-leaving certificate may significantly hinder progression.

A study is underway to better understand the teaching and learning situation of children and youth in Syria in terms of programmes available, teacher development, accreditation of programmes, and certification of learning for both teachers and students.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Data provided by the European Union Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians (HOPES) Project, SPARK Higher Education Services (HES) Programme, UNHCR DAFI Programme and UNESCO. The Government of Turkey also provided 3,301 full scholarships for Syrian students in 2018 and continues to waive tuition fees for Syrian students. UNHCR and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) supported the participation of 6,542 students in language courses to prepare them for university entry in Turkey.

<sup>58</sup> Through the SPARK programme, 1,134 students participated in various economic empowerment activities, 744 students participated in leadership trainings and the implementation of community initiatives, 361 students received additional English language courses and 211 students received psychosocial support based on student needs.

<sup>59</sup> The HOPES project offered 4,807 new participants places in language courses in the project's Higher Education English Access Programme (HEEAP).

<sup>60</sup> World University Service Canada (18); France (19); Catalan universities (18); United Kingdom (33); Czech Republic (8) and Japanese Initiative for the future of Syrian Refugees (JISR, 20).

<sup>61</sup> UNESCO is establishing the Arab Network for the National Information Centres on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, Diplomas and Certificates in the Arab region (ARIC).

<sup>62</sup> Regional and country interagency preparedness plans on refugee returns are rooted in the "Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Strategy: Protection Thresholds and Parameters for Return to Syria"

<sup>63</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council and UNHCR. 2018. Guidance Note on Documents Requested for School Enrolment and National Exams in the Syrian Arab Republic.

<sup>64</sup> The Curriculum, Accreditation and Certification (CAC) study, commissioned by the Whole of Syria, represents an update of a similar study conducted in 2015 in Syria and the five host countries. This iteration of the study focuses only on Syria. Research findings will inform advocacy and programming around certification and recognition of learning for displaced children, returnees and those in non-formal education programmes.



## Monitoring of learning outcomes

Within the Syria Education Dialogue Forum efforts, a brief **holistic learning assessment tool** for measuring reading, maths and social emotional skills is being developed to support the education of crisis-affected children in Syria.<sup>65</sup> The tool, which will be completed in mid-2019, will provide the feedback loop that enables improved teacher interventions, and more informed teaching and learning policies and practices, as well as critical information about foundational learning skills of crisis-affected student populations. Important milestones towards better learning outcomes also include the finalization of the curriculum framework, change in students' score cards to move away from overemphasis on determining learning only through examinations, and an overhaul of assessment system through teacher capacity continuous assessment.

In the host countries, ministries of education collect learning assessment data on Syrian students through their national assessment systems. In Iraq, the development of a learning assessment system to measure learning outcomes in math and science is underway, with ministries in both the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Baghdad having expressed interest in including schools for internally displaced and refugee children in the assessment. In addition, UNRWA continues to monitor learning outcomes using a range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.<sup>66</sup>

## Multi-sectoral responses

Increasing attention has been given to **social protection frameworks**, including the use of cash-based interventions. In Syria, a cash transfer programme seeks to address both economic and social vulnerabilities of children with disabilities and their families. In Turkey, the conditional cash transfer for education programme expanded in 2018 to reach over 410,000 children under temporary protection (from pre-primary to Grade 12) including students of the accelerated learning programme.<sup>67</sup> In Lebanon, 50 per cent of refugee children enrolled in second-shift schools were provided with cash to enable their retention in school. In Jordan, the *Hajati* cash for education programme reached more than 55,000 vulnerable children (86 per cent are Syrian children).<sup>68</sup> In Iraq 4,038 learners at risk of dropping out were assisted with cash for education, and in Egypt, education grants supported the enrolment of more than 15,000 children in pre-primary education (58 per cent of these Syrian children).<sup>69</sup> School-feeding and/or take-home entitlements in Syria and the region reached more than 1 million students in 2018. In Egypt, school feeding was complemented by a comprehensive education package to enhance the school-learning environment through physical rehabilitation, teacher training on positive discipline, emergency preparedness and nutrition.

The development of a **Regional Accountability Framework to End Child Marriage** in MENA/Arab States has been instrumental in highlighting the challenge of child marriage across the humanitarian-development continuum. The framework offers an opportunity for resource mobilization through a coordinated platform of organizations across civil society, United Nations agencies and academia. In Turkey, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, together with other governmental and non-governmental institutions has developed a Turkish **National Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour** (2017-2023), which is a comprehensive policy framework to guide institutions and organizations working to prevent and respond to child labour.<sup>70</sup>

Inclusive interventions for **children with disabilities** were scaled up in Syria, Turkey and Lebanon. In Syria, schools and other service-delivery centres were made physically accessible to children with disabilities. In Turkey, a nationwide inclusive education teacher training was delivered to over 150,000 Turkish teachers and school administrators, while work is ongoing with the Ministry of National Education to increase the capacity of counselling and research centres to manage the needs of Syrian families and learners.

<sup>65</sup> The Education Dialogue Forum brings together actors working on humanitarian and development programmes to achieve system-level improvements at national, governorate and school levels.

<sup>66</sup> These include: (i) periodic Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) tests in Grade 4 and Grade 8 Maths and Arabic, (ii) an agency-wide classroom observation study carried out every three years to measure the quality of teaching and learning practices in UNRWA classrooms, (iii) a Perceptual Survey on the different dimensions of UNRWA education service delivery.

<sup>67</sup> Administrative data from the programme show that 76 per cent of the beneficiaries attended school regularly in 2018, and 87 per cent of those attending at the beginning of the school year were attending at the end of the school year.

<sup>68</sup> Post-distribution monitoring has demonstrated that the programme prevented drop out for 3.5 per cent of beneficiaries and supported the enrolment back in school of 24 per cent of beneficiaries.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Turkey Ministry of Labour and Social Security. 2017. *National Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023)*.

In Lebanon, 1,000 children with disabilities were reached within the education programming, including the non-formal education programmes. Children with disabilities were included in 30 existing public schools with specialized medical and educational services. Identification and referral of children have been strengthened, disability-responsiveness is being incorporated into teacher training and classroom management while a continuous assessment of this model underpins its potential expansion. UNRWA further worked to embed its inclusive education approach in all of its schools. In Jordan, school- and community-based approaches to inclusive education were promoted to expand access to learning services for children with mild to moderate disabilities. In 2018, 47 schools benefitted from inclusive education capacity building, awareness raising and accessibility improvement activities. A total of 444 children with disabilities were enrolled in formal education, and 233 teachers and supervisors were trained on inclusive education. Community-based protection and home-based interventions reached 392 beneficiaries and 212 parents of children with special needs.

In Syria, **psychosocial training** was conducted for 1,093 front-line workers focusing on the intervention framework defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guideline and the national manual developed with the Ministry of Education. In Turkey, almost 500 guidance teachers and counsellors were employed to provide psychosocial support to refugee children. An improved psychosocial support module, including guidebooks and training for school counsellors and teachers, was developed to support all students, including those suffering from psychosocial distress. In Turkey, almost 13,000 Syrian volunteer education personnel continue to support the education of Syrian children and are being paid monthly incentives. An Education Personnel Management Strategy is being developed to frame the evolving roles of Syrian volunteer education personnel, including transitioning from temporary education centres into Turkish public schools and to other educational institutions to support the successful integration, adaptation and learning of Syrian children. In Lebanon, 1,000 psychosocial counsellors and health educators were deployed in second-shift schools in the 2017/18 school year, in addition to 56 school counsellors in UNRWA schools to improve children's psychosocial wellbeing, prevent violence in school, and educate children about health, hygiene, mine risks and other relevant topics. In Jordan, 150 Makani centres continued to provide vulnerable children, youth and parents with access to integrated services, including learning support, community-based child protection and life skills. In Syria, **mine-risk education** on how to best protect oneself from explosive remnants of war/mines was also prioritized as a lifesaving intervention for almost 885,000 children and 430,000 caregivers. In Iraq, more than 3,300 children and youth benefitted from life skills and citizenship programmes in formal and non-formal settings.

Cross-sectoral efforts to address **school-based violence** against children led to the launch and roll-out of the Protection of Students in the School Environment Policy in Lebanon. This introduced a mechanism to address cases of violence in school by identifying roles and responsibilities on child protection, prevention and response. In Jordan, a three-year strategic framework and sustainability plan for the *Ma'An* programme towards safer schools was developed in a public-private partnership with the aim of ending violence against children by addressing legal and policy frameworks and social norms. In addition, the Safe and Stimulating School model is being implemented by NGOs. In line with its Framework on 'Addressing Violence Against Children', UNRWA launched several activities in 2018 to identify and address children's protection concerns. In Egypt, child safeguarding systems have been created in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in over 100 schools in close coordination with the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood in the framework of activating Child Protection Committees.

Joint efforts of NLG partners have significantly reduced the percentage of Syrian refugee children born in the region without any form of **identity documents** from approximately 35 per cent in 2012 to 1.8 per cent in 2017.<sup>71</sup> To ensure the regular issuance of **birth certificates** for all children born in camps in Jordan, civil registration offices were established in the two largest camps, along with mobile registration for other locations.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> "This is more than violence": An Overview of Children's Protection needs in Syria; Whole of Syria Child Protection Area of Responsibility 2018.

<sup>72</sup> Instructions were issued to facilitate the issuance of birth certificates for all Syrian refugee children born in the country, including waiving fines for late registration. Official courts were also established presiding over family law issues and mobile judicial services in all camps to improve access to official marriage registration.

In Syria, a first-ever **National Multi-Sectoral Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth Engagement**, focusing on education, health, labour, participation and social protection, was prepared and is currently under revision by the Ministerial Cabinet for endorsement. In Turkey, additional linkages to community social cohesion were made through the Adolescents and Social Cohesion Programme implemented by the Turkish Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, and the South Eastern Anatolian (GAP) administration that reached over 100,000 Syrian and Turkish youth. In Jordan, a National Youth Engagement Programme aims to enable young people to become skilled and employable by providing opportunities to engage through volunteering and training. **School rehabilitation/maintenance schemes** were also supported throughout Syria and the host countries. In Lebanon, 23 schools were rehabilitated, while in Jordan, vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees are being supported with livelihood opportunities to rehabilitate assets such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools located in identified poverty pockets across the country.

### **Multi-year planning and budgeting frameworks**

In Syria, planning within the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is further enhanced through the development of a multi-year resilience programme facilitated by Education Cannot Wait and aimed at increasing access and the continuity of quality education for crisis affected children. This multi-year resilience programme builds on the objectives and activities of the HRP and aims to align with a Transitional Education Plan, currently in development by the Ministry of Education, that anchors its medium-term priorities within its long-term vision towards SDG4-Education 2030.

In the host countries, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Response Plan (3RP) covers humanitarian needs (refugee component) and ensures resilience of systems and host communities (resilience component) through two-year planning. In Lebanon and Jordan, 3RP planning is based on country multi-year plans (the Reach All Children with Education and the Jordan Response Plan, respectively). In Lebanon, the second iteration of the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE II) five-year plan (2017-2021) continues to guide the sector response and supports the National Education 2030 Strategy, which will inform the next sector planning process. In Jordan, an Education Strategic Plan (2018-22) was launched in 2018 and the Sector Working Group has initiated technical discussions on how to align the 2019 Jordan Response Plan with the Strategic Plan.

To meet the needs of Palestine refugees affected by the Syria crisis, UNRWA capitalized on its ability to mobilize both humanitarian and development interventions, continuing to implement its Education in Emergencies approach, building upon seven decades of education provision and the achievements of its Education Reform (2011-2016). With the altering context, UNRWA is now focusing its intervention on supporting the resumption of educational services in newly accessible areas.

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