



PROTECTING THE PROMISE OF A GENERATION

EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES AND THE FORCIBLY DISPLACED

APRIL 2018



INTRODUCTION

Millions of children, including 6.4 million refugees, are displaced from their homes, and often, their schools. For them, access to education is critical. Not only does education offer an important form of protection for children, education also engenders hope as it prepares refugees to meet future challenges. Education provides stability and a sense of normalcy, and acts as a form of vital psychosocial support to children whose lives have been affected by crisis.

Yet, more than half of all school-age refugees are out of school. Only 61 percent of refugees are enrolled in primary school; 23 percent in secondary school, and the lucky few – only one percent – have access to tertiary education.¹

MORE THAN
HALF OF SCHOOL-AGED
REFUGEES ARE NOT IN
SCHOOL

The global response to this tremendous need has not kept pace. In 2016, only 2.7 percent of all humanitarian aid dollars were spent on education.² While new and existing multilateral partnerships like Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education are helping to place a focus on the need for investing in education in crisis and conflict settings, much more needs to be done.

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A student presents in a JRS classroom in Herat, Afghanistan (Jesuit Refugee Service)

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

PRIORITIZING EDUCATION

All too often, education is not seen as a priority and is overlooked at the onset of an emergency. However, early investment and ensuring that children are quickly provided with a safe educational setting can prove critical. Education can be an important tool in helping refugees to see beyond their displacement. Education for displaced children can also lessen vulnerabilities to child labor, sexual violence, recruitment into armed groups, or early marriage.³

This prioritization of education is particularly important for vulnerable groups, like girls or children with disabilities. For example, secondary-age refugee girls are only half as likely to enroll in school as their male peers, even though girls make up half of the school-age refugee population. Challenges faced by girls include cultural norms that prioritize enrolling boys

OUR COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

Built on centuries of Jesuit expertise, education is the cornerstone of Jesuit Refugee Service. JRS considers education a life-saving intervention and is committed to ensuring displaced people have access to education.

JRS offers a variety of opportunities for refugees and displaced persons to achieve an education both in refugee camps and in non-camp settings. JRS currently operates education programming in more than 40 countries serving over 173,000 refugees and displaced persons. These include access to pre-primary, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. In addition, JRS offers vocational and teacher training programs, targeted outreach to women, girls and those with disabilities, and supports the building of new schools and distribution of school books and materials.

In 2015, JRS launched a Global Education Initiative to increase its focus and investment in education programs. By 2020, we hope to open the doors of education to a quarter of a million students at a cost of \$35 million.



Children in a JRS classroom in Mae Hong Son, Thailand learn English, reciting phrases back to their teacher (Elizabeth Ward/ Jesuit Refugee Service)

over girls in school, dangerous travel conditions where they may face harassment or sexual assault on the way to school, and a lack of appropriate toilet facilities and menstrual hygiene supplies.⁴

We must seize the opportunity to make education a priority in responding to refugee needs. In 2018, the United Nations will adopt the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration, two landmark initiatives to transform the way the global community responds to the needs of refugees and migrants. The two-year process to develop these Compacts began in September 2016 with the signing of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which states “We are determined to provide quality primary and secondary education in safe learning environments for all refugee children, and to do so within a few months of the initial displacement.”⁵ The Compacts are key elements in a critical year that has the potential to create real change in the lives of the forcibly displaced around the globe.

DEVELOPING EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNIQUE TO REFUGEE NEEDS

Providing access to education for refugees, and those caught in crisis and conflict settings presents a number of challenges.

In conflict zones, schools are often destroyed, or the threat of violence makes it dangerous for children to go to school. Once a refugee, a child faces a long list of obstacles in gaining access to school in their host country. This can include a lack of infrastructure and materials, language barriers, inability to pay fees, psychosocial challenges due to trauma experienced, discrimination and lack of security, and learning gaps.⁶ Many refugee children have missed out on months or years of education - on average, a refugee is out of school for three to four years.⁷

This requires creative programming that meets the needs of children and adolescents who are facing significant educational gaps and have suffered the effects of war and conflict. As a result, accelerated

education programs, language training programs, ongoing tutoring and learning support, and psychosocial services are important ways to ensure a child's success.

Today, 84 percent of refugees are hosted by developing countries whose own citizens are struggling to achieve an education and earn a livelihood.⁸ Given this, it is important to consider the impact of refugees on the host community and develop programs that work closely with local partners and host governments from the onset of an emergency. Programs that benefit both refugee and host populations offer the greatest opportunity for success.

For children in crisis situations, education is an absolute necessity. Neglecting refugees' right to education – and the protection it affords – undermines not only their future, but also the future of their societies.

Further challenging program development is inadequate data. Lack of information has consistently been cited as a key barrier to developing effective, appropriate education programs to best serve displaced populations. This includes data on population movements,

demographic details, and access to related services. Sufficient time and resources that allow for analysis, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and budget projection have not been prioritized.⁹

LIVING UP TO COMMITMENTS TO EDUCATION

Through robust funding of global education programs, and by ensuring that education is a core part of humanitarian assistance, we can ensure that more displaced children are gaining access to a quality education.

Host governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, and corporations, have come together to support education for refugees and displaced persons in a variety of ways. In recent years, critical funding and policy commitments for refugee education have been made by both host and donor governments. These commitments must be fulfilled, and additional steps must be taken to address ongoing gaps in education for those who are forcibly displaced.

FUNDING EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES AND DISPLACED CHILDREN

To support commitments, certain mechanisms have been put into place to encourage institutional and government donors to come together to focus funding and efforts on education in emergencies.

Education Cannot Wait: Established at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, Education Cannot Wait is an independent effort to transform the delivery of education in emergencies by bringing together governments, humanitarian and development actors, and the private sector to deliver a more collaborative and transparent response to the educational needs of children and youth affected by crises.

To date, ECW has raised over \$170 million, including a \$21 million contribution by the U.S. Government. With both rapid response and multi-year funding platforms, ECW has already disbursed \$78 million to support education in 14 different countries, assisting 3.4 million children and 20,000 teachers.

Global Partnership for Education: The Global Partnership for Education has increased its support for education in crisis and conflict settings, which account for approximately 60 percent of its total grants. GPE is also implementing Transitional Education Plans, which provide technical and financial assistance in the short and long term, to help account for complex and protracted crises.¹⁰

"WHEN THEY'RE IN SCHOOL, CHILDREN FEEL
PROTECTED, TAKEN CARE OF, THEY FEEL AT PEACE"

PRESCHOOL TEACHER, SUDANESE REFUGEE IN CHAD



JRS provides pre-primary through tertiary education to refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan at Mile Camp in Chad. (Christian Fuchs/Jesuit Refugee Service)



Students at the Yei Girls School, a Secondary Boarding school where JRS supports displaced students in South Sudan. (Sergi Cámara/Jesuit Refugee Service)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Access to schools and quality education is an urgent priority for all displaced children and youth, as it is a basic human right and is fundamental to a better future for their communities. To improve the quality of, and access to, education in emergencies and protracted crises, JRS recommends the following:

1. PRIORITIZE EDUCATION IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO CRISIS AND CONFLICT.

- Access to education must be prioritized in all stages of humanitarian response, including protracted crises, with humanitarian and development actors working together in planning and financing efforts.
- An effort must be made to offer equal access to all levels of education, from pre-primary through tertiary, and opportunities for vocational and livelihoods-focused training.
- Marginalized groups, including girls and those with special needs, must be targeted in an effort to increase access to education and reduce drop-out rates.
- The Global Compacts on Refugees must include specific action points to ensure that all refugees and migrants have access to quality education programs, both formal and vocational.

2. DEVELOP EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS AND ACCESS CHALLENGES OF REFUGEES

- Data collection must be integrated into all refugee education programs to better track progress and improve program delivery.
- Host governments must allow for integration of refugees into their communities including integration of children into local school systems, certification of teachers, access to employment opportunities and equitable compensation.
- Efforts to increase access to a quality education for refugees must stay on course, regardless of the possibility of repatriation or resettlement.

3. ENSURE COMMITMENTS TO EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES ARE MET

- Education commitments made at international conferences - including the 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees; 2016 and 2017 Conferences on Supporting Syria and the Region in London and Brussels, respectively; and 2017 Regional Conference on Education for Refugees in IGAD Member States - should be tracked and governments held accountable.
- Global and regional financing conferences – including the April 2018 Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region – must place a focus on holding donors accountable for prior commitments made towards education and also generate new commitments to education, including support for Education Cannot Wait.

**"MY DREAM IS TO GO BACK TO SYRIA AND REBUILD MY HOME,
WHICH WAS DESTROYED IN WAR. I HOPE THAT CHILDREN IN
SYRIA CAN GO TO SCHOOL AND THEY CAN GET
A BETTER EDUCATION"**

**-TURK ADEL SEHMAN,
12 YEARS OLD, SYRIAN REFUGEE IN LEBANON**

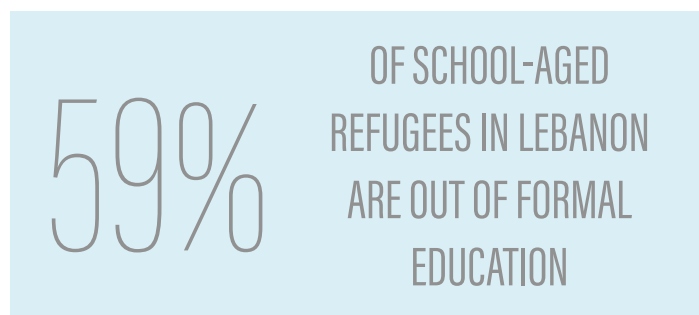
SPOTLIGHT ON LEBANON: A PROMISE UNFULFILLED



The challenge of meeting the educational needs of refugees and forcibly displaced people can clearly be seen in a country like Lebanon, which hosts one million refugees, the largest number of refugees relative to its national population in the world. Due in large part to Lebanon's proximity to Syria, and the Syrian conflict now entering its eighth year, one in six people currently living in Lebanon is a refugee.¹¹

Such an influx of refugees has posed significant challenges to Lebanon, politically, economically and socially, which has led to gaps in education for refugees.

When Syrian refugees began entering Lebanon in 2011 and 2012, no specific policies were in place for educating Syrian refugees and non-governmental organizations were primarily responsible for filling the gap. Starting in 2013, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) took the lead role in coordinating educational services for refugees, launching an initiative called Reaching All Children with Education (RACE), with the goal of targeting both Lebanese and refugee school-aged children and adolescents.



In the 2013-14 academic year, Lebanon opened the first of its "second-shift" schools, which used existing public school structures to offer instruction time for refugees in the afternoon, while Lebanese students attended school in the "first-shift," or morning. Three-hundred and fifty "second-shift" schools have been opened to accommodate refugee students and over 221,600 refugee children are currently registered in Lebanese public schools.

Despite the efforts made by the Lebanese government and by donors, a majority of refugee children are still not being reached. According to UNHCR, 59 percent of school-aged refugees in Lebanon are still out of formal education.¹²

In 2017, some started to consider the return of refugees to Syria due to a relative reduction in violence in some areas.¹³ Yet, for every Syrian who returned home in 2017, there were three newly displaced. Early 2018 has already seen a dramatic uptick in violence in the suburbs of Damascus. Attention must not be drawn away from the fact



that many refugee children and adolescents are still out of school and that funding commitments have not been met.

As donors re-convene for a second Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, this will be an important opportunity to highlight the gaps that remain in ensuring access to education for Syrian refugees and to hold donors accountable for previous commitments made.

JRS LEBANON AND EDUCATION

JRS has been implementing education programs for refugees in Lebanon since 2012. JRS Lebanon's education programs focus on early childhood (Kindergarten– 5 years old) and formal basic education and learning support (6 to 15 years old) in both urban and rural areas. JRS addresses gaps in access to quality education for children

by enhancing school enrollment and performance in Lebanese institutions, or offering quality formal education in areas where access to public schools is hindered by limited capacities and/or distance.

JRS Lebanon staff have observed where there are gaps in education for refugees and have found success in programming to meet refugees' needs. These observations include:

PRIORITIZATION

JRS Lebanon has found that there is a clear lack of equal access to all levels of schooling for refugees. This is particularly true for adolescents, with low enrollment rates for secondary school and little or no vocational training options available. With this lack of equal access it is clear that education needs to be prioritized by the host community and by a larger humanitarian response.

JRS has found that it is critical to work with both the host community and refugees to foster peace-building, collaboration and integration. This peace-building ultimately leads to a more conducive environment for refugees to gain access to education.

UNIQUE NEEDS OF REFUGEE STUDENTS

JRS Lebanon works closely with students and their families to address the unique needs for refugee students and the barriers that are keeping them out of school. The barriers JRS Lebanon has identified are:

- Early marriage
- Child Labor
- Systematic bullying
- The effects of trauma and stress on learning and assimilation
- Missed school due to displacement
- Lack of food, or proper nutrition
- Inadequate hygiene

JRS Lebanon has also found that when these barriers are addressed, through support services for both students and their families – literacy, life skills, home visits, Youth Clubs, awareness sessions, counseling, and support groups – children are more likely to both come and stay in school.



Students work diligently on a worksheet at the Dar Al Hannan school in Baalbek, Lebanon. (Giulia McPherson/Jesuit Refugee Service)

UNMET COMMITMENTS

The Lebanese government has received record support from the international community to manage this effort. In 2016 and 2017, donors came together in London and Brussels to discuss how to support Syrian refugees and the countries hosting them. These donors made commitments on jobs, education and protection for Syrian refugees, including a commitment to ensure that all refugee and vulnerable children in host communities would have access to quality education by the end of the 2016/17 school year.¹⁴

According to UNHCR, only 25 percent of funding required to meet the educational needs of refugees in Lebanon has been received.¹⁵ Further, MEHE noted that only 47 percent of its 2018 work plan had been funded.¹⁶



Sara, Palestinian Refugee and student at the Noor School in Baalbek, Lebanon, hopes for a good education and for her family to be reunited.
(Giulia McPherson/Jesuit Refugee Service)

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: FRANS VAN DER LUGT CENTRE



Kindergarten students at the Frans van der Lugt Centre.
(Giulia McPherson/Jesuit Refugee Service)

Outside Beirut, in a neighborhood called Bourj Hammoud, JRS is providing learning support and early childhood education for Syrian refugees at the Frans van der Lugt Centre, named for a beloved Jesuit who lost his life defending displaced Syrians.

The Kindergarten program alone serves 240 students who are receiving critical instruction in a loving environment to prepare them for entry into the Lebanese public school system. Open since 2014,

the Centre runs eight Kindergarten classes with both morning and afternoon shifts, and provides breakfast and snacks. Some of the children served suffer from trauma and stress due to the trials they and their families have been through and continue to endure. The Centre is a safe haven for them and provides peace of mind to their families.

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Cover Photo: Students at the Frans Van Der Lugt Center outside of Beirut "reach for the stars." (Giulia McPherson/Jesuit Refugee Service)



Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organization serving refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Founded as a work of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1980, in direct response to the humanitarian crisis of the Vietnamese boat people, JRS today works in 51 countries worldwide to meet the educational, health, and social needs of more than 750,000 refugees.

JRS/USA is the U.S. office for JRS based in Washington, DC. JRS/USA provides support to the broader JRS network - through funding, oversight, monitoring, and evaluation - to JRS projects and programming throughout the world. JRS/USA also serves forcibly displaced migrants in the US through our Detention Chaplaincy Program.



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visit www.JRSUSA.org to get more information and get involved
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