



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES:

CHALLENGES OF THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
STATISTICAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

Humanitarian Needs of Syrian Refugees: Challenges of the Neighbouring Countries

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Contents

Foreword.....	4
1 Introduction.....	5
2 Profile of the Syrian Refugees in the Neighbouring Countries	6
2.1 Regional Overview	8
2.2 Syrian Refugees Profile: Lebanon	10
2.3 Syrian Refugees Profile: Turkey.....	11
2.4 Syrian Refugees Profile: Jordan	12
2.5 Syrian Refugees Profile: Iraq	14
2.6 Syrian Refugees Profile: Egypt	15
3 Situation Analysis.....	16
3.1 Humanitarian Needs, Housing and Sheltering	16
3.1.1 Humanitarian Needs	16
3.1.2 Housing and Sheltering	20
3.2 Health.....	22
3.2.1 Situation inside Syria.....	22
3.2.2 Situation in Neighbouring Countries	23
3.3 Education	27
3.3.1 Educational Services for Syrian Refugees	28
3.3.2 Participation of Syrian Refugees to Education.....	30
3.3.3 Barriers to Education.....	33
3.4 Employment.....	35

3.4.1	Access to employment opportunities	36
3.4.2	Legal status of Syrian refugees and their right to work.....	38
3.4.3	Working Conditions of the Refugees	39
3.4.4	Impacts on local labour force	41
3.5	Social Integration and Cohesion	42
3.5.1	Heightening Social Tension	42
3.5.2	Economic Costs.....	44
4	Policy Options	45
4.1	Humanitarian Needs, Sheltering and Housing	45
4.2	Health.....	49
4.3	Education.....	50
4.4	Employment.....	52
4.5	Social Integration	54
	References.....	56

Foreword

The Syria conflict has triggered the world's largest humanitarian crisis since the World War II. Humanitarian needs continue to climb up, population displacements are increasing, and an entire generation of children is being exposed to war and violence, increasingly deprived of basic services, education and protection. The total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria has reached 13.5 million, approximately 6.5 million of whom are internally displaced. During the on-going internal war in Syria, insecurity, violence and collapsed infrastructure forced Syrian people to flee from their home. Around 4.8 million of Syrian people fled to neighbouring countries, with women and children making up three-quarters of the refugee population.

As a result, countries that have borders with Syria reached a dangerous saturation point, particularly Lebanon, which hosts almost 1.1 million Syria refugees and has, along with Jordan, the largest per capita refugee population in the world. Turkey is currently hosting more than 2.7 million Syrian refugees, the largest number of Syrian refugees hosted in one country in the world. Providing the basic humanitarian services to such a huge number of refugees is not an easy task for any country in the world. Millions of Syrian refugees still remain in need of food and safe drinking water, non-food items, shelter, emergency medical treatments and protection.

In order to contribute to the efforts towards alleviating the deprivation of refugees and designing appropriate policies for improved humanitarian assistance, SESRIC organised a two-day workshop on "Syrian Refugees: Prospects and Challenges" in Ankara on 25-26 February 2016. The objective of the workshop was to build an interactive forum for countries which are hosting Syrian refugees in order to share their experience on the Syrian refugee crisis and to contribute and benefit from each other's experiences. The workshop tried to lead for the preparation of a common way for common problems and emergency plans.

This report has been prepared with a view to providing the most recent information on the current state of refugees in the neighbouring countries and challenges faced by host communities. By benefiting from the views and observations shared by the workshop experts, the report provides several policy recommendations on how to improve the conditions for refugees, local communities and public authorities to face the humanitarian needs of these millions of refugees. It is indeed critical to take more concrete actions in restoring dignity of Syrian people at a time when the prospects for resolution of conflict are only gloomy.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya
Director General
SESRIC

1 Introduction

The Arab spring in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya inspired the Syrian people to take to the street in peaceful demonstrations in March 2011 asking for democracy and an end to dictatorship, corruption and oppression practiced by the Assad regime. Rather than heed to the just requests of the Syrian people, the Assad regime responded to the peaceful demonstrations by torturing, killing and shooting at the protesters. The fierce response by the Assad regime did not deter the Syrian people; on the contrary, it hardened its resolve and by June 2011 millions of people were taking to the streets in demonstration across Syria. At the same time, the refugee crisis started to emerge with thousands of Syrians fleeing to neighbouring countries. By June 2011, the number of Syrian refugees reached 12,000 in Turkey and 8,500 in Lebanon, in addition, the first refugees starting trickling into Jordan.¹

Starting September 2011, the demonstrators were forced to carry arms in defence of their revolution and as a result the country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle the Assad regime forces for control of cities, towns and the country side. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and the second largest city Aleppo in 2012. As a result of the expanding conflict, the number of refugees increased dramatically reaching 408,000 registered refugees in the neighbouring countries Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq as of December 2102.

The year 2013 witnessed grave developments in the Syrian civil war. Hezbollah became officially and heavily involved in the conflict helping the Assad regime launch offensives against rebel forces. The Assad regime deployed chemical weapons against its own people and the terrorist organization ISIS (داعش) was established. By the end of 2013 the number of people killed in the conflict reached 130,000 and the number of refugees reached 1.5 million.

The conflict continued to escalate in 2014 with battles raging between ISIS, moderate rebel groups, and Assad regime forces supported by Hezbollah. In September, the USA started its bombing campaign against ISIS. By the conclusion of the year 2014, the number of people killed in the conflict exceeded 200,000, while the number of refugees reached 3.8 million, with the overwhelming majority of them in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, Iraq and Egypt, moreover, 6.5 million had been displaced within Syria.

The year 2015 witnessed the direct Russian military intervention in Syria. Although the Russian intervention has come under the disguise of fighting ISIS and terrorism, Russia's intention is merely to prop up the Assad regime as evidenced by the fact that it has been targeting mainly moderate rebel groups. The year 2015 clearly showed that Syria has truly become a battle ground for many regional and international powers fighting directly or using proxies. On the refugees topic, as large waves of Syrian refugees started hitting the European shores with the total Syrian asylum applications in Europe exceeding 800,000, this has created panic in Europe and elevated the Syrian refugees crisis to the top of the global agenda.

¹ Numbers on casualties are from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and Numbers on refugees are from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

After five years since the beginning of the Syrian revolution, it has shaped to be one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the OIC and the contemporary history of the world. All in all, about 500,000 have been killed; 1.5 million people have been wounded; 4.8 million are refugees and 7.6 million have been internally displaced within Syria. For a country that had a pre-crisis population of 21 million, the just mentioned figures are nothing but staggering.

In this context, this synthesis report provides an assessment on the current situation of Syrian refugees living in the neighbouring countries, namely in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt, based on the existing statistics, surveys and studies in the literature. After shortly discussing the profile of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries, the report investigates the current situation of Syrian refugees in five dimensions: humanitarian needs, health, education, employment and social integration. Then, it provides some policy recommendations based on the analysis as well as the outcomes of a workshop conducted by SESRIC on Syrian refugees in 25-26 February 2016 in Ankara.

2 Profile of the Syrian Refugees in the Neighbouring Countries

The Syrian crisis has dramatically affected countries in the region in many aspects since the very beginning of the conflict. However, after the influx of Syrian refugees to Western countries in large numbers over the last two years has also begun to place social and economic strain in Europe, it became more critical for international community to collectively address the crisis and its upshots. Today, significant numbers of Syrian refugees in the region cannot meet their basic needs, get access to social services and essential human rights as enshrined in international human rights law, conventions and other legal mandates including the UN Convention 1951 and Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

A review of the initiatives implemented to combat the Syrian refugee crisis in the region over the period of 2012-2016 reveals that UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (referred to hereafter as *agencies*) and relevant government institutions in the region undertook notable works. However, it is noteworthy to mention that none of the countries in the region obliged to provide *permanent refugee status* for Syrian asylum seekers, including Turkey and Egypt who are members of UN Convention 1951; for the reason that Turkey and Egypt accepted the Convention with geographical limitations only covering 47 European states. Nevertheless, all neighbouring countries are obliged to provide for the basic needs of Syrian refugees, as established in international law and the agreements that these countries are party to.



Syrian refugees crossing the Turkish border for better hopes

Aside from legal issues with regard to refugee status, not all countries in the region have sufficient capabilities to meet all necessary basic conditions and provide opportunities at the required levels to the larger Syrian population, due to their already fragile economic and social conditions. For instance, Jordan and Lebanon face internal resistance due to an already high-cost of living and increasing inflation, not to mention the relatively unbalanced ratio of refugees to residents in these countries, even prior to the Syrian crisis. Therefore, substantial funding needs to be allocated by international donor countries to support Syrian refugees in the region.

Thus far, a lack of sufficient international cooperation and funding limited the scope of implemented strategies. The UN strategy for supporting Syrian refugees in the region, as prescribed at the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), operates in 8 sectors: protection, food security, education, health, basic needs, shelter, washing, and livelihoods and social cohesion sector. The 3RP monitors and evaluates the use of international funding for affected Syrian people.

The recent international developments on addressing the issue support positive predictions related to the future of Syrian refugees and particularly with respect to the realization of 3RP 2016-2017. The Supporting Syria & the Region Conference, held in London on 6 February 2016, brought together over 60 countries, international organisations, businesses, civil society groups, as well as Syrians and other people affected by the crisis. During the conference, \$5.8 billion worth of aid was pledged for 2016 to effectively respond to the crisis and support the affected people, and a further \$5.4 billion has been committed for 2017-20 to enable partners to plan ahead.² Moreover, a

² Co-hosts declaration from the Supporting Syria & the Region Conference, London 2016, UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency, <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/news/co-hosts-declaration-from-the-supporting-syria-the-region-conference-london-2016/>

recent agreement between the EU and Turkey came into effect on 20 March 2016, signifying a positive step to tackling the Syrian refugee crisis. In addition to the benefits it brings to Turkey-EU relationships, this agreement is expected to discourage Syrians from making dangerous journey by sea from Turkey to Greece and provides extra funding for Turkey to support migrants in meeting their basic needs.



Source: UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response Information Sharing Portal data and CartoDB tools

2.1 Regional Overview

According to the latest statistics on refugees profile in the region as of March 2016:

- Around 490 thousand out of 4.8 million Syrian refugees are based on camps.
- Around \$2.6 billion USD, only 61% of the total funding requested were provided in 2015
- 51% of Syrian refugees are women
- 51.5% of Syrian refugees are children and adolescent aged 17 and below.

The number of Syrians arriving in Europe in search of international protection continues to increase. However, it remains low when compared to Syria's neighbouring countries, with slightly more than 10% of those who have fled the conflict seeking safety in Europe. Total Syrian asylum applications in Europe reached 897,645 refugees between April 2011 and December 2015, according to UNHCR data.³ During the same period the number of Syrian refugees in the

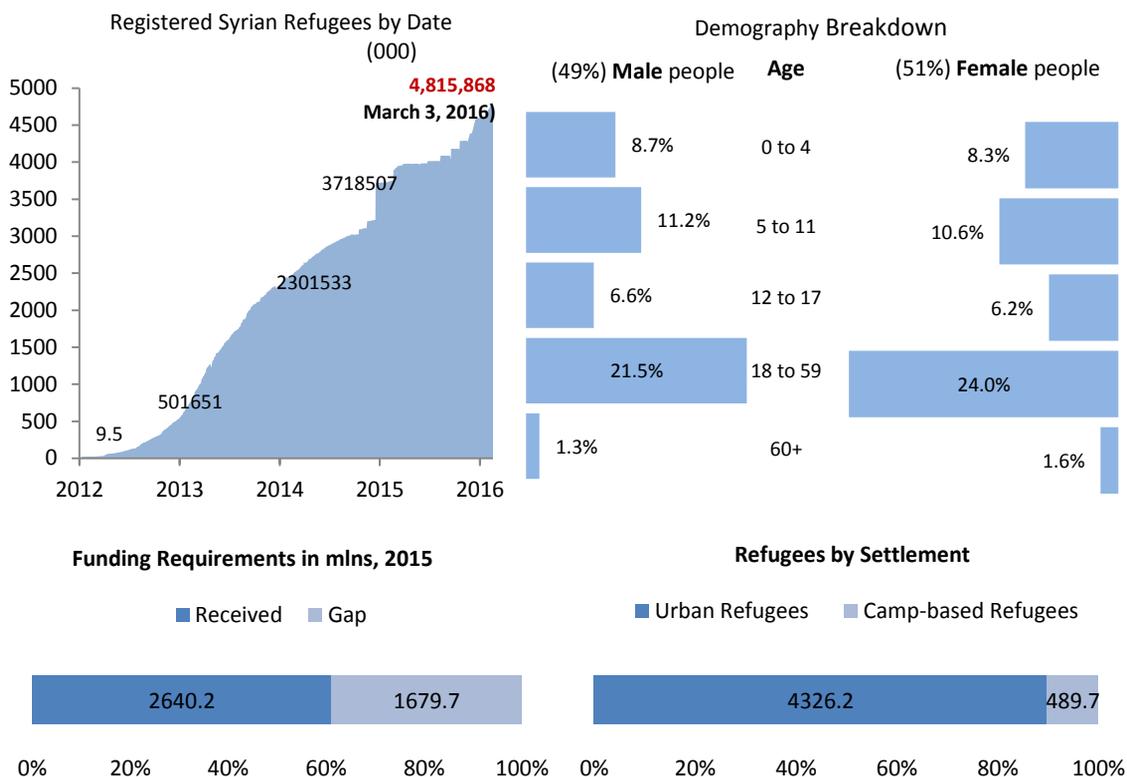
³ Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, UNHCR, available at <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

neighbouring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt) grew from under 8,000 to nearly 4.8 million people (Figure 1).

There is a tremendous amount of financial requirement to meet the basic needs of the refugees in the neighbouring countries. Overall, funding provided for Syrian refugees through relief agencies remains below the amount required to deliver the essential services. In 2015, according to UNHCR, an appeal for approximately \$4.3 billion was made to UN member-states by agencies in order to aid Syrian refugees in the region. Only approximately \$2.6 billion was received, or 61% of the total funding appealed (Figure 1). With limited international support, while Syrian refugees obviously do not get enough support to pursue a life with dignity, a significant part of the burden has to be borne by hosting countries in the region.

According to the 3RP progress report 2015-2016, food security, livelihoods and social cohesion sectors are dramatically underfunded. These sectors only received up to 10% of the proposed funding. Particularly, livelihoods and social cohesion sectors across the five host countries have received only 6% of the required funding. This is a rather significant drawback to the funding strategy. On the other hand, Syrians themselves lack opportunities to earn their living as the largest segment of Syrian working-age individuals does not have access to employment opportunities.

Figure 1. Syrian Refugees Profile in Neighbouring Countries

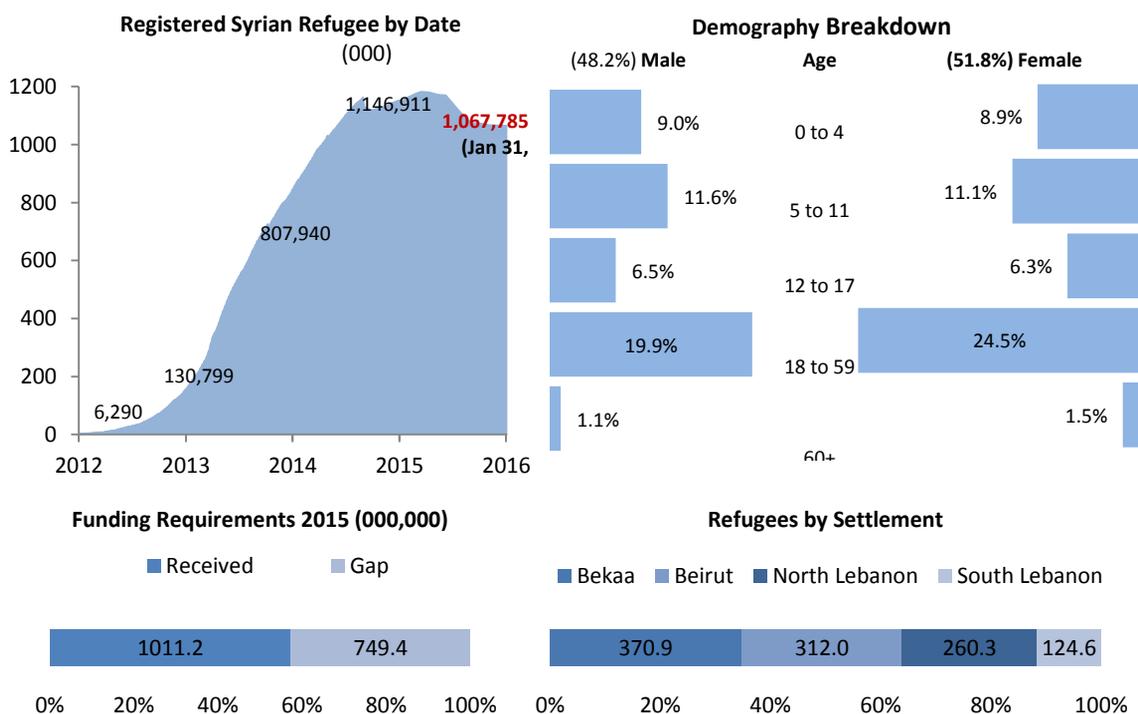


Source: UNHCR - Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal

2.2 Syrian Refugees Profile: Lebanon

The impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on the demographic, political as well as economic situation in Lebanon has been significant. Despite restrictions that the government of Lebanon placed on its border with Syria in 2014, Lebanon may nonetheless be considered as one of the countries that has most openly welcomed Syrian Refugees. In this respect, Lebanon hosts the second largest population of Syrian refugees following Turkey. The number of Syrian refugees peaked at 1,185,241 individuals on April 2015, which slightly decreased due to re-migration of refugees from Lebanon to other countries (Figure 2). As of 31 January 2016, 1,067,785 Syrian refugees were recorded by UNHCR in Lebanon. This corresponds to over 25% of the country's population. However, around 3.3 million people - including Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese – are estimated to be economically, socially or legally vulnerable, according to a 3RP progress report. It is noteworthy that the total population of Lebanon is approximately around 4.5 million people, including refugees from Syria and Palestine according to World Bank data. Thus, it has fuelled concern in Lebanon that such a substantial change in demographics may also cause political instability and insecurity in the country. In terms of geographical settlement, the largest share of Syrian refugees, approximately 64%, is concentrated in the two main cities of Lebanon; Bekaa and Beirut. Another 24% are settled in the North and nearly 12% in the Southern part of Lebanon (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Basic statistics on Syrian refugees in Lebanon



Source: UNHCR - Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal

The share of female Syrian refugees is 51.8%. In terms of age group and working-age population, 40.6% of the population falls directly within the range of ages 0-11 and 44.4% falls in the age group 18-59 (Figure 2). The livelihoods and social cohesion component of 3RP is basically aimed at creating and providing access to wages and employment. This is particularly critical for Lebanon, as the country suffered from serious unemployment even prior to the crisis. However, 3RP progress report highlights that due to serious underfunding, livelihood programs in Lebanon cannot be taken to scale, with only 1% of the targeted number of people reached by the response. There are only two livelihood partners implementing small-scale programmes in Tripoli city, where 57% of residents are deprived in one way or other.

Moreover, 35.5% of total Syrian refugees are children and teenagers aged between 5 and 17, while children aged 0 to 4 years old make up 17.9% of total Syrian refugees (Figure 2). As such, immense financial resources are required in order to provide child nutrition and other support including education and health care to this large population cross-section of youth and children.

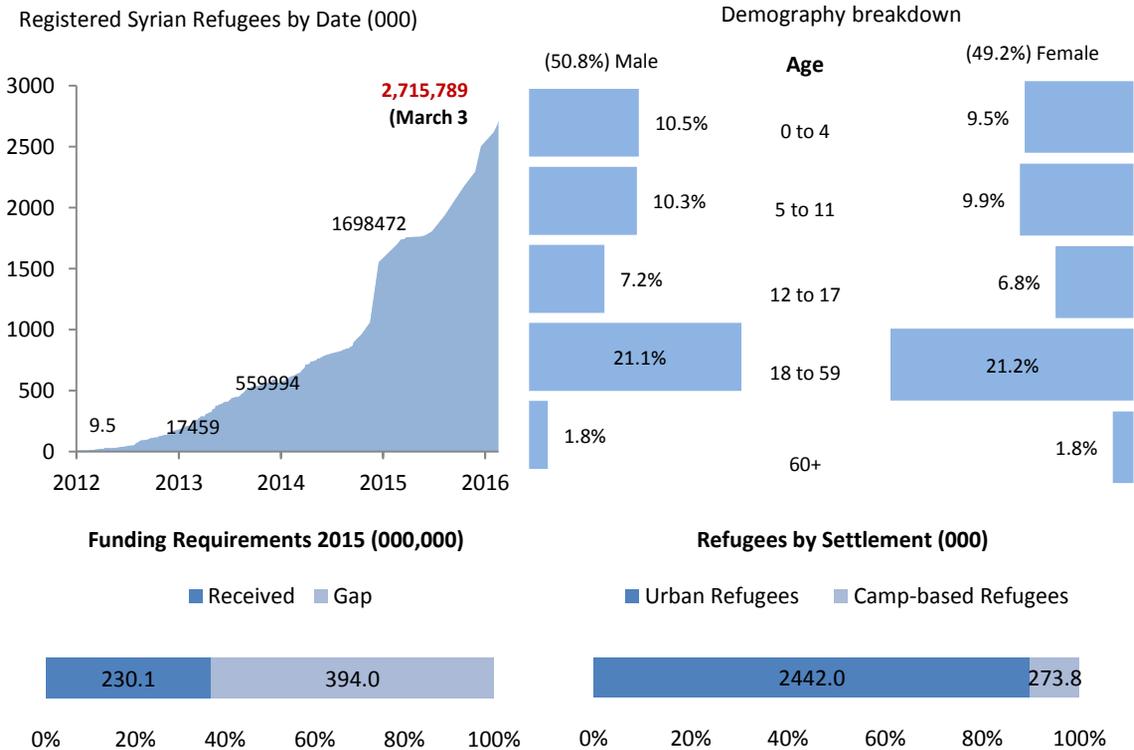
Overall, in order to support Syrian refugees in Lebanon, agencies requested \$1.8 billion from member countries in 2015. However, only 57% of this or \$1 billion has been received to date (Figure 2). Thus, the largest part of the burden has been shouldered by Lebanon, in a manner similar to that of other countries in the region. Without a doubt, this insufficient support towards meeting the needs of refugees was potentially the main drive behind the exodus and mass migration seeking refuge in Western countries.

2.3 Syrian Refugees Profile: Turkey

Since the beginning of 2012 until the end of 2015, the number of Syrian Refugees registered in Turkey increased substantially. Refugees have thus far been warmly welcomed by Turkish authorities, provided important support in meeting their basic needs, recently permitted their access to labour market and encouraged their integration to the society.

In 2011, it began as a local crisis following the Arab spring, which resulted in only a few thousand Syrian refugees seeking asylum in Turkey. By the end of the first quarter of 2012, internal war had spread over the country, posing serious security concerns for the entire Syrian population. The number of Syrian refugees registered in Turkey escalated rapidly, and on September 2012, it reached six-digit numbers. It continued to climb with progressively increasing rates as the war in Syria became more and more intensive. By the beginning of 2014, nearly 560,000 refugees had already been registered in Turkey. Since then the situation was further exacerbated. In the last month of 2014, an additional half a million Syrian refugees had been registered and the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey exceeded 1.5 million. According to the most recent data as of March 3, 2016, Turkey hosts 2,715,789 registered Syrian refugees (Figure 3). In terms of demographic profile, the share of females in total Syrian refugees is measured at 49.2%. The largest share of female and male refugees in terms of age group is found in the 18-59 year old range, at 21.2% and 21.1% respectively. People aged below 11 corresponds to 40.2% of total refugee population.

Figure 3. Basic statistics on Syrian refugees in Turkey



Source: UNHCR - Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal

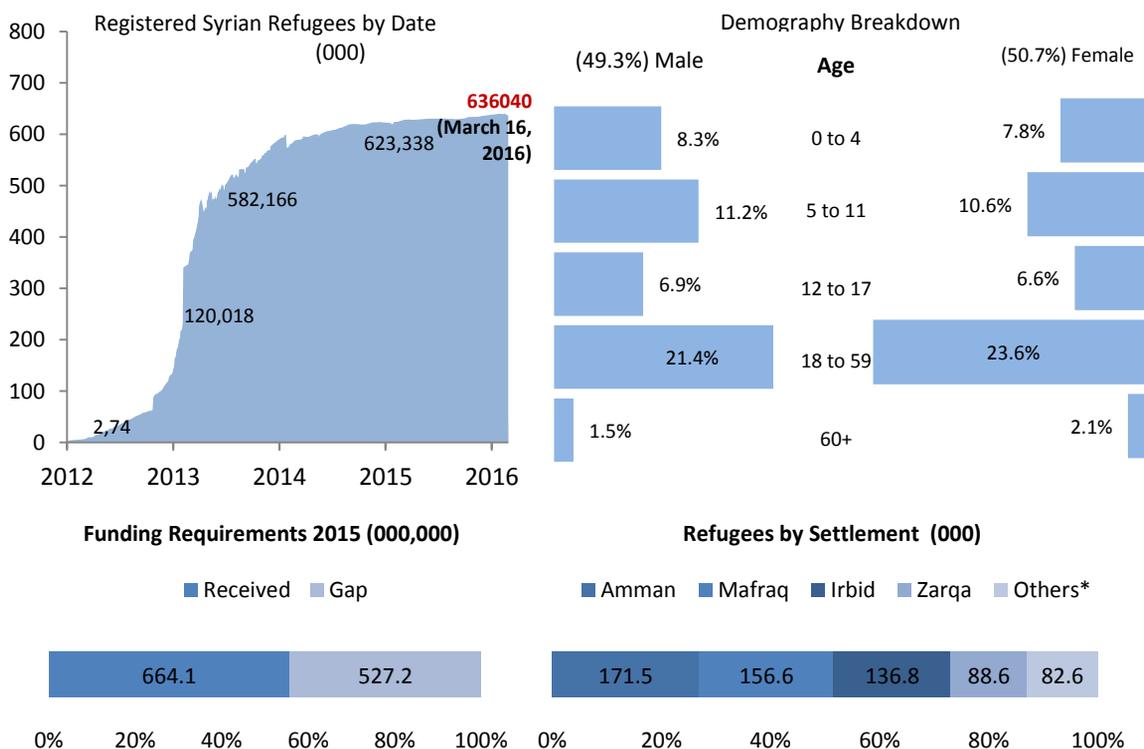
It is worth mentioning that of the total funding appeal \$624 million in 2015 for the refugees in Turkey, only 37% has been received (Figure 3). This huge gap in funding has restricted relevant agencies in providing necessary support to all refugees. On the other hand, Turkish authorities have generously spent more than \$8 billion for the protection and basic services of refugee people.

2.4 Syrian Refugees Profile: Jordan

Jordan shares a long common border with Syria, which made it another destination for Syrian refugees. The largest share of Syrian refugees entered Jordan during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2013, when the civil war increased in intensity and threatened the lives of the entire Syrian population (Figure 4). In the following years, Jordan had to implement the measures to restrict the number of Syrian refugees entering the country. The inflow of a large number of Syrian refugees into Jordan created instability and made the country largely dependent on international aid. Unfortunately, however, international aid was not provided in sufficient amounts and therefore, the Government of Jordan was forced to set severe border control restrictions with Syria to limit the number of refugees.

Syrian Refugees are concentrated in the main cities of Jordan. The largest four governorates of Jordan, Amman, Mafraq, Irbid and Zarqa, host around 87% of total refugees. Regarding the demographic profile of Syrian refugees, females comprise 50.7%. School-aged children aged 5-17 make up a significant share of 35.3%, while children below 5 make up 16.1% of Syrian refugees hosted in Jordan (Figure 4). According to a 3RP progress report, more than 150,000 Syrian children in Jordan will not be able to continue their education due to the unavailability of textbooks, teachers, and safe learning environments. In total, to support the critical range of sectors of 3RP in 2015, agencies requested \$1.191 billion but received funding made up of only 64% of the total appeal.

Figure 4. Basic statistics on Syrian refugees in Jordan



Source: UNHCR - Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal

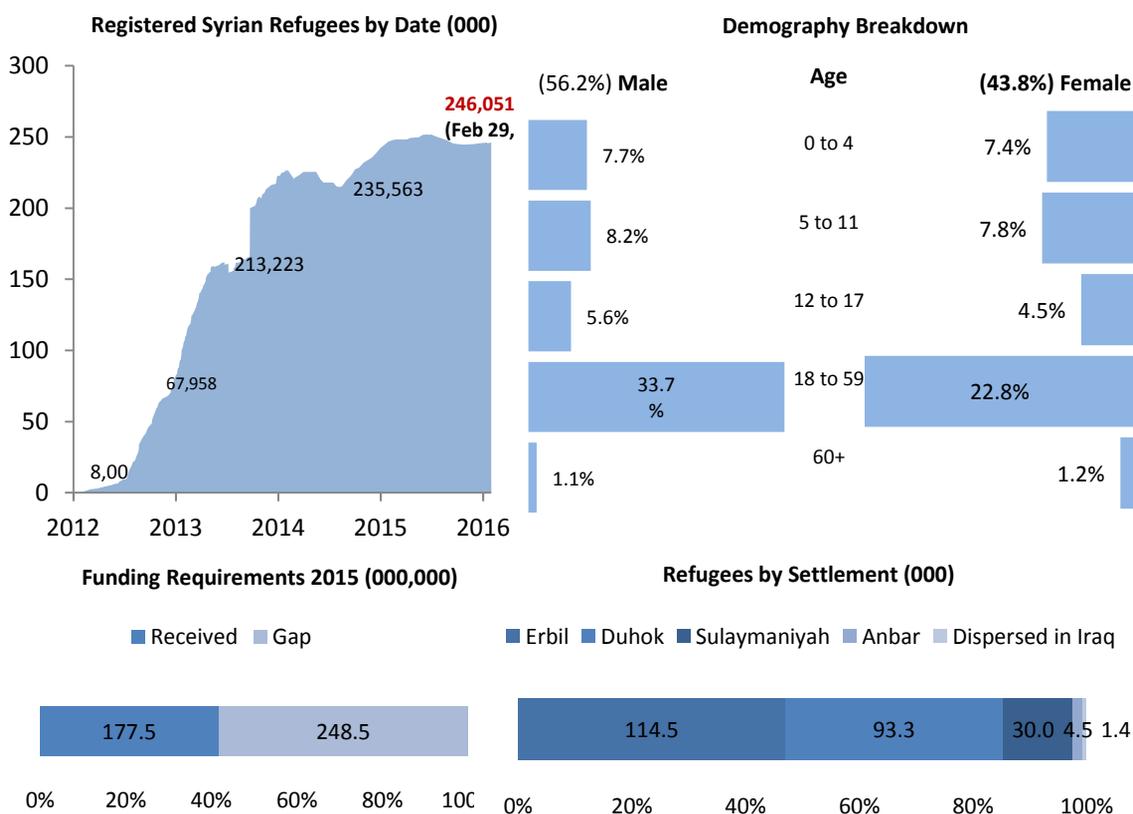
45% of the Syrian refugees are aged 18 to 59 years old, who could normally contribute to the economy of the hosting country. However, in reality, there is only limited opportunity provided for Syrians to enter into Jordanian labour market. In this respect, Syrians compete with some of the poorest Jordanians for low-paid casual jobs in the informal employment sector that accounts for approximately 44% of employment in the country. The 3RP progress report highlights that the consequences of underfunding in Jordan will consequently lead to severe drawbacks at the economic and social levels within host communities, affecting both local communities and refugees.

2.5 Syrian Refugees Profile: Iraq

The inflow of Syrian refugees in Iraq is comparatively lower than the other neighbouring countries, but it demonstrates a similar pattern. Numbers inflated between 2013 and 2014 due to the escalation of conflict in Syria despite severe border controls. The overwhelming majority of Syrian refugees, 97%, are hosted in the Governorates of Erbil, Duhok, and Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan. These refugees are mainly Kurdish nationals who were living in Kurdish-majority regions of the Syria (Figure 5).

In relation to the demographic profile, the male refugees with 56.2% share constitute a larger share of the refugees. Moreover, a rather significant share of the refugee population is composed of Syrian refugee children of a schooling age (26.1%). Moreover, 15.1% of refugees are children aged 4 and below, while another 2.3% consist of elderly people aged 60 and above. In contrast, the largest group of Syrian refugees, around 56.6%, is aged between 18 and 59, who present promising potential should they become part of the Iraqi labour force, rather than being fully aid dependent.

Figure 5. Basic statistics on Syrian refugees in Iraq



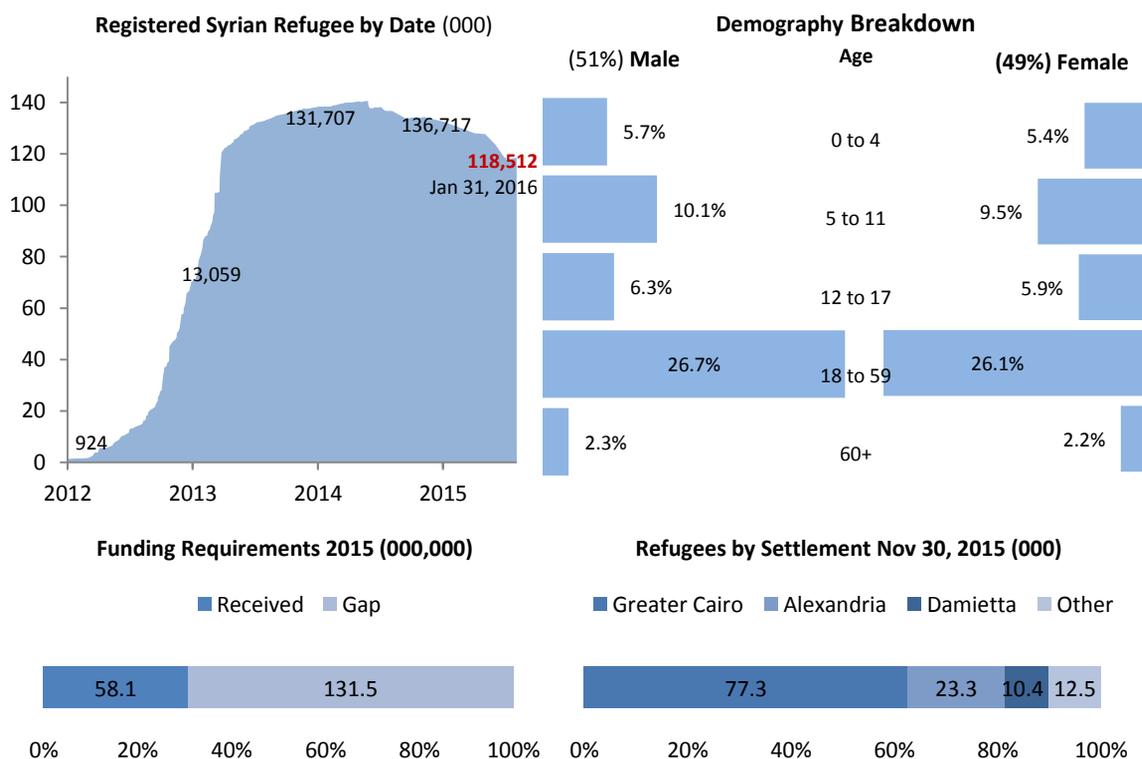
Source: UNHCR - Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal

According to the 3RP progress report, in Iraq, 26,000 or more Syrian children will not be able to attend school, as the construction of schools and support to teachers are underfunded. Regarding the funding requirements, agencies appealed for \$426 million in 2015 to support Syrian refugees in Iraq; however, only 42% of the total appeal was delivered (Figure 5).

2.6 Syrian Refugees Profile: Egypt

Egypt hosts the fifth largest number of Syrian refugees. The largest inflow of refugees occurred during the second and third quarters of 2013, from around 25,000 to 125,000 individuals. Following this, the numbers of refugees continued to grow at a slow, gradual rate, peaking at 140,649 people in November 2014. The number of registered Syrian refugees in Egypt dropped to 118,512 people at the end of January 2016. The dynamics of Syrian refugees entering Egypt followed a similar scenario to other neighbouring countries in the region (Figure 6). There was a large influx as a result of the intensification of the war in Syria, but these numbers were reduced afterward by means of the imposition of severe border restrictions. The needs of Syrian refugees in Egypt has been neglected and significantly underfunded. In 2015, for example, total agencies appealed for \$189.6 million in necessary funding, while only 31% was covered (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Basic statistics on Syrian refugees in Egypt



Source: UNHCR - Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal

According to the demographic profile, 51% of Syrian refugees in Egypt are male, and 49% are female. Again a considerable share of refugees at 52.8%, are aged between 18 and 59. Another significant share consisting of children and adolescents below 18 is at 42.9%, while children 4 years and younger make up 11.9% of the refugee population (Figure 6).

The Greater Cairo area hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees, at around 65% or 77,300 people, followed by Alexandria with 23,300, and Damietta with 10,400 Syrian refugees. Around 12,500 refugees from Syria are dispersed in other cities.

3 Situation Analysis

The Syria conflict has triggered the world's largest humanitarian crisis since the World War II. Humanitarian needs continue to climb up, population displacements are increasing, and an entire generation of children is being exposed to war and violence, increasingly deprived of basic services, education and protection. As highlighted in the previous section, the total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria has reached 13.5 million, approximately 6.5 million of whom are internally displaced. Around 4.8 million of Syrian people fled to other countries that they became refugees due to the war in Syria.

As a result, countries particularly have borders with Syria are reaching a dangerous saturation point. Therefore providing the basic humanitarian services to such a significant number of refugees is not easy task for any country in the world. In this regard, millions of Syrian refugees still are in need of food and safe drinking water, non-food items, shelter, emergency medical treatments and protection in order to survive. To this end the following sub-sections will look at major problems faced by refugees from housing to education and employment in details.

3.1 Humanitarian Needs, Housing and Sheltering

3.2 Humanitarian Needs

For the subsistence of refugees, it is crucial to provide them basic humanitarian needs from food and safe drinking water to sheltering. Failure to effectively provide these basic services to refugees reduces their quality of life and let them suffer from various health related problems caused by insufficient nutrition, improper sheltering and poor heating of shelters. In this regard, this sub-section broadly overviews what has been done in five refugee hosting countries (Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt) in meeting their humanitarian needs.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), as of August 2015, the number of Syrian refugees reached with food assistance in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey was equal to 1,580,000. It is evident that the efforts of WFP are far from sufficient to meet the nutrition increasing needs of refugees, which increase the vulnerability of refugee people.



Syrian refugee school children walk at the Zattari refugee camp near Mafraq city, Jordan.

The results from Jordan's 2015 Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise and Lebanon's 2015 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees indicate that refugee households are more food insecure than during the previous year (UNHCR, 2016). In Jordan, only 14% of refugees were food secure compared to 53% last year.

In Lebanon, moderate food insecurity has doubled, affecting one quarter of refugee households, while the percentage of food secure households has decreased sharply from 25% to 11%. The reduction in refugees' food security can be attributed to a high dependence on food assistance, limited access to income and the overall decline in the amount of food assistance provided, which has left households more vulnerable. The results of the ongoing socio-economic assessment have indicated that in Egypt over 60% of those assessed are in situations of severe vulnerability and require interventions including cash grants to meet their basic needs. Some 42,000 Syrian refugees living in extreme poverty in Egypt need to be assisted in 2016 in order to prevent negative coping strategies.

In Jordan, to deal with reduced levels of assistance and the increased cost of living, the majority of refugees (86%) have been forced into dangerous debt levels. An additional 25% of refugee households are more than USD 700 in debt compared to 2014, according to WFP's Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise (UNHCR, 2016).

In Lebanon, the 2015 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees indicates that the proportion of Syrian refugee households living below the national poverty line (USD 3.84/person/day) has increased by 20 percentage points from the previous year (50% in 2014 to 70% in 2015). The majority of refugee households (52%) are living below the minimum survival expenditure basket, a steep increase from 29% in 2014; while none of the Syrian refugees can meet their basic needs

without engaging in severe coping strategies. According to UNHCR (2016), with current vulnerability trends, the number of people in need in 2016 will be approximately twice that of 2015 and therefore 624,000 Syrian refugees will be targeted for multi-purpose/sector cash transfers in 2016.

In Turkey, the support of the Government to Syrian refugees is well advanced compared to other countries. In 2016, 485,000 vulnerable Syrians in camps and host communities will be supported with multipurpose cash or emergency non-cash assistance. The provision of non-food items will be prioritized for 775,000 Syrians including new arrivals, camp residents in need of replenishments, and Syrians living in locations where cash schemes are not able to be implemented due to operational constraints (UNHCR, 2016).

In Jordan, all refugees in camps receive an in-kind daily allocation of bread. WFP distributes around 22 MT of fresh bread to residents from four distribution points. A food voucher valid for two weeks is also distributed, with the head of household receiving as many vouchers as the number of individuals in his/her household. This allows refugees to make shopping several times, given the limited storage facilities of camp refugees. In camps, people are mostly in need of disposable and consumable items such as gas for cooking and heating, and hygiene items (UN, 2014).

Water supply, sanitation and waste management services in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq were already strained before the Syria crisis. As a water scarce country, in Jordan's Zaatari camp, 4,000 m² of water are being supplied every day by some 270 trips of trucks, and desludging provided by up to 80 trucks per day. These costs, reaching up to USD 5 million per annum, are covered by UNICEF. This figure proves that even meeting drinking water demand of refugees is alone not an easy task for governments as well as other stakeholders. The Ministry of Energy and Water in Lebanon estimates that Syrian refugees have contributed to an increase of 28% in water demand and waste water generation, as well as an increase in solid waste, placing a major burden on municipal budgets. The lack of means to deal with the increase in solid waste is having serious repercussions in terms of environmental pollution, disease risk and groundwater contamination (UNHCR, 2016).

The Government of Turkey (GoT) coordinates the refugee response and is responsible for the registration and access of Syrian refugees to services. As of 1 November 2015, 2.1 million Syrian refugees, with over 1.2 million children, were biometrically registered by the GoT. This paves the way for Turkish government to monitor and project needs of refugees from sheltering to nutrition. This information is crucial for NGOs and international organisations working in the field that helps to identify the profile of refugees and accordingly to help meet their basic needs.

Food security remains one of the greatest needs for Syrian refugees living in Turkey. Hosting more than half of the 4.8 million displaced Syrians in the region, the Government of Turkey has borne the largest share of the refugee burden over the past three years. In camps the Government and partners implement innovative food assistance programmes that meet the daily needs of just over 260,000 Syrians. Whilst in the community, actors, including local government; UN agencies; community based organizations; and international and national non-government organizations

(NGOs) support the most vulnerable populations through various assistance modalities, such as in-kind emergency food distributions, hot-food kitchens and cash-based interventions (UNHCR, 2016b).

According to Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016 – 2017 of UNHCR (2016), Syrian Refugees in Turkey need USD 240 million to ensure food security and USD 221 million to meet basic needs. In 2016, UNHCR and other actors plan to provide food assistance to approximately 735,000 of the most vulnerable refugees living in Turkey (UNHCR, 2016).

With regard to assisting Syrian refugees who are already in Turkey, the Government plays a significant role in the response. Supporting the municipalities in delivering basic services is identified as a priority; in particular those causing increased risk of public health such as waste management (UNHCR, 2016b).

While Egypt is hosting far smaller numbers of Syrian refugees in comparison to Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, as of January 2016, there are 118,512 Syrian asylum-seekers and refugees registered with UNHCR in the country and over 50,000 refugees in Egypt are children (or around 43% of the overall refugee population). The Syrian communities are distributed in more than 10 governorates nation-wide. Some of these communities are hard to reach either because of the remoteness of the geographical areas or the socio-economic status of the target population. According to the latest UNHCR's Socio-Economic Assessment in Egypt, at the end of 2015, the number of registered refugee children in Egypt living in households classified as severely vulnerable was around 45,000, while the highly vulnerable were around 18,000 (UNICEF, 2015).

In Egypt, as of September 2015, 68,000 Syrian refugees were assessed to be food insecure and continued to receive food assistance after the application of verification exercises and vulnerability targeting criteria. Since September 2014, 82% of registered Syrians have undergone the socio-economic assessment. Preliminary key results indicate that the main expenditure for households is rent, followed by food, education and health.

Preliminary results of the socio-economic assessment by UNHCR and WFP have indicated that over 60% of those assessed (over 61,683 individuals) are in situations of severe vulnerability as they are living on less than half of the Minimum Expenditure Basket of EGP 592.4 (USD 75.6) per month per refugee, and require support - including through cash (UNHCR, 2016c). It is evident that vulnerable refugees remain in dire need of assistance and protection, which includes a vital continuation of food assistance.

Since late 2012, food assistance to Syrian refugees has been provided primarily in camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and one camp in Anbar Province. Currently, WFP supports some 50,000 Syrians in all nine camps across the KRI. According to UNHCR (2016a), only around 30% of refugees residing in nine camps in Iraq were food secure. According to Multi-Sector Needs Assessment results, only 63% of households perceive their water to be safe for drinking, which implies that continued efforts will be needed to ensure safe water provision and to improve communication regarding water safety. Findings also show diarrhoea as the most reported illness

seen amongst children under five living camps that reflects problems related with the access to safe drinking water. Sanitation gaps also need to be addressed, not only to assure equity but also to reduce the risk of spread of communicable diseases (UNHCR, 2016a).

Overall, the analysis shows that in each country the level and quality of provided basic services for Syrian refugees are far from being uniform. Therefore, each country needs to develop its own strategy in order to meet the basic needs of Syrian refugees effectively by taking the number of refugees, their demographic profiles and priorities into account.

3.2.1 Housing and Sheltering

Poor quality substandard shelters increase risks and vulnerabilities among dwellers. Moreover, poor housing and sheltering conditions increase women's and girls' risks to sexual and gender based violence due to overcrowding and lack of privacy. Female headed households may be at greater risk of sexual exploitation, if they are unable to meet rental payments. On the other hand, meeting housing and sheltering needs of Syrian refugees is critically important for ensuring healthy family life in unity. In this regard, providing a healthy housing and sheltering environment for refugees are vital both for their health and human development.

In Turkey, around 13% of the refugee population lives in camps, while the figure is 18% in Jordan and 39% in Iraq. Refugees living in camps need protection, sufficient housing space for families and a sense of privacy and security. More durable shelter options continue to be required to adjust to the protracted nature of the displacement. Increased influx of refugees to Jordan led to a significant increase in demand for housing and sheltering. For instance, in Jordan it is estimated that 91,000 housing units are required, 184% more than the estimated average annual domestic need of 32,000 units. Syrian refugees often have difficulties securing tenure and have no written rental agreements, which put them at risk of eviction or exploitation by landlords (UNHCR, 2016).

According to UNHCR (2016), a total of 2.5 million Syrians registered in Turkey by the end of 2015, and it is anticipated that this will reach 2.75 million by the end 2016. It is estimated that 300,000 will be hosted in the official refugee camps managed by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and 2.45 million will live within host communities. AFAD in Turkey continues to provide services in 23 refugee camps hosting Syrians in the southeast of Turkey (UNHCR, 2016b).

Stance of Syrian Female Refugees in Turkey

In the absence of a comprehensive needs assessment, an AFAD survey "Syrian Women in Turkey" of 1,500 camp households and 1,200 non-camp households in late 2014 gives a snapshot of the refugee profile (AFAD, 2014). It is shown that around 97% of female Syrians living outside of the camps have not been able to earn an income in the month prior to the survey, and 78% of the respondents indicated not having a sufficient amount of food for the next seven days, nor having money to purchase it. More than half of the respondents indicated that they or their family members require psychological support. The findings reveal that Syrian women refugees are extremely vulnerable and specific policy interventions are needed for ensuring their safety and health.

The housing conditions of the Syrian refugees in Turkey are not uniform. AFAD (2013) shows that 75% of the male refugees and 73% of the female refugees live in a house or apartment flat. However, 13% of males and 16% of females live in ruins and about 10% of each males and females live make-shift arrangements or plastic coverage. Further, almost 30% of the refugees in the camps live together with at least seven people per housing unit. In contrast, refugees out of the camps live in much more crowded conditions. In other words, almost 60% of the refugees out of the camps live together with seven or more people in a housing unit.

In Lebanon, 55% of Syrian refugees were living in substandard shelter by the end of 2014, mainly in informal settlements and garages, worksites or unfinished buildings. The most vulnerable in terms of their shelter requirements are also estimated to comprise 29% of those considered the most economically vulnerable. The remaining 45% of refugees in rented accommodation also suffer from inadequacies in the provision of basic services. By the end of 2014, 55% of Syrian refugees is projected to be living in substandard shelters. Of these, 70% of these shelters are in very grave conditions. It is estimated that USD 150 million is needed in Lebanon to meet shelter needs of Syrian Refugees (MoSA and UNHCR, 2015).

Approximately 85% of Syrian refugees in Jordan are living in urban or peri-urban settings, and only 15% live in camps settings. Most of the refugees are hosted in the Za'atari camp. Refugees in camps are fully dependent on humanitarian assistance for the provision of shelter and access to basic services. The need for decongestion and upgrading of overcrowded camp settlement sections and the need for construction of additional infrastructure, including access roads, feeder roads service roads, drainage structures, graveling, fencing, security lighting, as well as maintenance of infrastructure and basic service facilities are part of the needs and planned on the sites. Furthermore, upgrades and weather-proofing of shelter units needs to be ensured during the summer and winter seasons (UN, 2014).

60.8% of refugees in Iraq live in urban areas, whereas 39.1% reside in camps. There are approximately 250,000 registered Syrian refugees in Iraq. Out of this figure, 98% live in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). With reference to the current arrivals/ departure trends, it is expected that by the end of 2016, the total number of Syrian refugees in Iraq will remain relatively steady at 250,000 persons. In Iraq by the end of 2015, a total of 1,738 new shelter plots with tent slabs and individual kitchens were constructed in refugee camps in the KRI; at the same time, 1,515 tents were replaced. In Iraq, with the exception of Al Obaidi refugee camp in Anbar, all Syrian refugee camps are accessible, permitting regular assessment of the shelter situation and production of monthly updates which include the needs and gaps. According to Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, 96% of non-camp refugee households live in rented accommodation and the remaining 4% are hosted by relatives and friends. The assessment also highlights that, due to the presence of IDPs and the demand for housing, rents have increased as much as 20% in Dohuk governorate and 15% in Erbil governorate, where most of the Syrian refugees live (UNHCR, 2016a).

Syrian refugees in Egypt do not live in camps, but are living among Egyptian communities across Egypt, with the most impacted governorates being Alexandria, Cairo, Giza, and Qalyubia. The

general protection environment in Egypt is stable, though challenges remain for Syrian refugees. These include lengthy residency procedures, visa limitations, inflation, an increasing cost of living, limited livelihood opportunities, and potential for workplace exploitation. Unlike in camps, living in non-camp settings generates another problem for the refugees that stakeholders cannot always effectively assess and meet their housing and basic needs (UNHCR, 2016c).

3.3 Health

Health is vital for the well-being of all human beings. According to the definition of World Health Organization (WHO), health does not only mean an absence of illness or disease but it is a multidimensional concept that encompasses the state of physical, mental and social well-being of a person. It has important contributions to economic progress since healthy people live longer and are more productive. Many and diverse factors influence health status and a country's ability to provide quality health services for its people including peace and security. Conflict in Syria is regarded as the worst humanitarian crisis of the 21st century with millions of people displaced both internally and externally. Majority of the displaced people are living in precarious circumstances with limited access to basic amenities like food, shelter, health, education and employment.

3.3.1 Situation inside Syria

Over five years of civil war and armed conflict has disrupted the continuous and sustainable access to and provision of adequate healthcare services in Syria. Currently, around seven million people in Syria are in need of access to basic healthcare and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services (UNOCHA, 2016). The situation is particularly alarming for over four million people living in hard-to-reach areas. Health facilities and medical workers are under attack across the country. According to the WHO (2016), around 58% of public hospitals and 49% of primary healthcare centres are either partially functional or closed. Over 640 health workers have been killed and total number of health personnel has declined by 45% since 2011. Access to essential medicines has also declined due to 70% reduction in local pharmaceutical production and staggering increase of 50% in medicine prices (WHO, 2016). Though right to health has been violated for everyone, situation is particularly catastrophic for women and children due to their higher vulnerability and risk to illness and health complications. There is significant decline in maternal, new-born and child health (MNCH) care coverage due to limited availability of skilled birth attendants including obstetricians, low antenatal care and substantial decrease in childhood vaccination. Currently, about 300,000 pregnant women are deprived of needed medical help and 48% of children are not vaccinated against preventable diseases like measles etc. (SPHN, 2016). In addition, over 3 million pregnant women and children are acutely or moderately malnourished and require nutrition assistance (UNOCHA, 2016). After witnessing widespread death, destruction and displacement millions of Syrians are exposed to extreme psychological stress, anxiety and depression. Currently, over 600,000 people, including significant number of women and children, are estimated to be living with mental illness in Syria (WHO, 2016). However, there are very limited services and resources available for mental and psychological help and support. In fact, the

situation was not very promising even before the crisis with less than 100 psychiatrists across Syria and no psychiatric nurses. Food security situation also remained very poor with 8.7 million Syrians lacking access to adequate amount of food due to disruption in food supplies (SPHN, 2016).

3.3.2 Situation in Neighbouring Countries

Growing violence and conflict have also forced around half of the Syrian population to take refuge in neighbouring countries. A vast majority of them is hosted by only three countries namely: Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. The exodus of Syrian refugees has enormous stress on the infrastructure of the host countries and it is extremely difficult for them to absorb millions of people into their healthcare system. Though healthcare needs of Syrian refugees are more or less the same across the host countries, each of them has approached the Syrian crisis in a different way and has been applying a variety of policies and mechanisms to address the healthcare needs of refugees. In general, health response has been fragmented, uncoordinated and has been shaped around a short-term crisis response with little focus on long-term issues. Syrian refugees' access to essential health care services, availability of crucial human and financial resources and major health related issues and challenges vary considerably from one host country to another.

The government of Turkey has taken several administrative/legal measures to improve the refugees' access to healthcare. In this regard two laws namely: Law on Foreigners and International Protection passed in 2013 and the Regulation on Temporary Protection passed in 2014, paved the way for all Syrian refugee to have free and universal access to primary public healthcare and get medicines by paying a fraction of the price (Gkouti, 2015). As of October 2015, all registered refugees have been assigned a foreign national ID number to enable additional access to medicines from all pharmacies contracted with the Turkish government health insurance provider (SGK). Currently, all registered Syrian refugees are entitled to receive free healthcare services in Turkey. Non-registered refugees, however, can access only emergency health care after which they need to register to obtain further health support (SETA, 2015).

Access to medical facilities is generally easier in camps, with a coverage rate of 90%, compared to outside of the camps with a coverage rate of less than 60%. According to the findings of a survey conducted by the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD, 2014a), the low coverage among the refugees living outside the camps is mainly due to no need for healthcare (60%), lack of entitlement (16%) and financial constraints (10%). A small number of refugees were either unaware of availability of health services or living far from the health facilities. There were 399 medical personnel working in 21 medical centres to cater to the health needs of refugees in 22 camps spread across 10 provinces as of May 2014 (AFAD, 2014b).

According to the latest estimates of MoH of Turkey (2016), between April 2011 and November 2015 refugees have been provided over 10 million polyclinic services both inside and outside of the camps including 426 thousand inpatient treatments, 297 thousand surgical operations and 69 thousand deliveries. During the same period, around one million patients residing in camps who required advanced diagnosis and treatment were referred to the hospitals from the camps.

Meanwhile, hundreds and thousands of refugee children were vaccinated against polio with the support of WHO and UNICEF in order to control the outbreak of polio virus. Some 144,000 hygiene kits were distributed to the women and families (SETA, 2015).

Although millions of refugees were allowed to benefit from the healthcare services, the capacity of healthcare system was not increased accordingly thus leading to a huge stress on both health personnel and infrastructure especially in the border areas (SETA, 2015). Many polyclinics and hospitals have reported an additional patient load of 30 to 40% and were struggling to address the growing need for healthcare services. To address this issue, many hospitals and clinics are enlarged whereas the government also supports the opening of Syrian hospitals and planning to allow Syrian refugee doctors and nurses to work in coming months. Nevertheless, some local users reported facing increased wait times and overcrowding in health centres (MoH, 2016).

Language barrier is another significant problem in providing health care and information to the Syrian refugees in Turkey. It is also recognised as an important factor that has influence on satisfaction about healthcare services. In order to overcome this problem, the MoH has developed information campaigns, including communication materials in Arabic on disease prevention and available health care services. According to the latest available estimates (WHO, 2015), some 300,000 brochures on reproductive health and 535,000 on Sexual and gender-based violence in Arabic (527,000 in Turkish for impacted populations) were distributed. Furthermore, Ministry of Health of Turkey in collaboration with the WHO and Gaziantep University has initiated a Refugee Doctor Adaptation Training programme and trained 200 Syrian refugee doctors and a training program for Syrian refugee nurses is also planned (WHO, 2015).

Syrian refugees have access to most basic healthcare services in Lebanon, through the public sector health facilities. However, the capacity of public sector to meet the needs of the growing refugee population is very limited (UNHCR, 2015). Moreover, public sector is comprised mostly of primary health care centers and dispensaries, has limited capacity in terms of tertiary care infrastructure and financial resources. Private sector has better services, accounting for 82% of available health services and largely based on user fees (El-Jardali, 2014).

Lebanon does not have a national strategy for coping with the health care needs of the Syrian refugee population. Relevant ministries in Lebanon coordinate with the UNHCR and nongovernmental organizations to provide healthcare services for the refugees. Up to 75% of the cost of referral cases is covered by the UNHCR. Lebanon does not allow the establishment of formal refugee camps or field hospitals by humanitarian organizations (Amnesty International, 2014). When field hospitals are not allowed, this places all refugee medical needs on the existing Lebanese health care infrastructure. There were three mobile clinics and 24 medical centers to provide health care for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Syrian refugee doctors and nurses are also allowed to work after getting permission from the MoH. Over all, only 36% of Syrian refugees perceive that healthcare is affordable and accessible in Lebanon (Samari, 2014).

Provided the limited capacities of healthcare system in Lebanon, the influx of Syrian refugees exacerbated the challenges faced by Lebanese citizens seeking access to public health care.

Usually, uninsured Lebanese citizens obtain care through the Ministry of Health which covers up to 85% of hospital care and 100% of medication costs for high-risk diseases (Samari, 2014). Syrian refugee's inflow has exerted extreme pressure on the health system as the patient caseload at health clinics has increased by 50%. Thus, causing delay in payments for the uninsured Lebanese and increase in waiting time for the doctor and ambulance (Amnesty International, 2014).

All registered Syrian refugees in Jordan were able to access primary and secondary health care free of charge up to the 20 November 2014. Since then refugees cannot access free health services instead, it is provided at a subsidized rate (MoH, 2016). Nevertheless, this fundamental shift in policy lead to significant decrease in level of awareness about the availability of health care from 96% in 2014 to 64% in 2015 and the share of Syrian refugees not seeking for health care services has also increased from 4% in 2014 to 13% in 2015. Measles immunization coverage, through self-report, in under-fives also declined from 87% in 2014 to 82% in 2015. The average cost of care paid by the refugee in the first facility they visited was 46 USD compared to 32 USD in 2014 (UNDP, 2014).

In the camps, similar to Lebanon, UNHCR with the support of the Ministry of Health provides health and humanitarian support. Only 30% of the refugees in Jordan reside in camps and for the larger portion of refugees outside the camps, not all needs are adequately addressed. Though refugees have free access to health care services within camps, the hundreds of thousands who live in cities face the same costs as Jordanians. Most of the refugees are located in the four northern governorates in Jordan, and the capital Amman provides most of the special health care services. Currently, Syrian refugee doctors and nurses are not allowed to work in Jordan (MoH, 2016).



Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre

Since 2012, the MoH has maintained its policy of access to primary and secondary care in their facilities for all Syrians living outside of camps. Between 2012 and 2015, over 500 thousand Syrian refugees received health care services in hospitals and over 900 thousand used health centers including 50 thousand inpatient treatments, seven thousand mental health consultations and 12 thousand surgeries (MoH, 2016). Furthermore, major vaccination campaigns were undertaken with 166,284 measles and 9,596,993 polio vaccinations administered among the Syrian refugee children. Reproductive health supplies including family planning methods were secured, training was provided for over 3,800 health workers and community health volunteers, and capacity improvements were made in 20 hospitals, 44 health care centres, one public health lab and the central blood bank (UNDP, 2014).

Similar to the Lebanon and Turkey, high influx of Syrian refugees in Jordan is straining the Jordanian health care system by creating supply and bed shortages. According to the MoH (2016), the density of healthcare providers has witnessed notable decline since the emergence of Syrian crisis. For example, the availability of physician per 10000 population has declined from 27.1 in 2012 to 22.8 in 2014, for dentists from 10 to 8.5, for nurses from 46.6 to 36.1 and for pharmacists from 16.3 to 13.9. Similarly, health infrastructure has also been strained and the ratio of hospital beds per 10000 population has declined from 18 in 2012 to 15 in 2014.

All Syrian refugees in Egypt are entitled to receive free healthcare services without any discrimination.⁴ However, most of the refugees are not registered and hence face administrative problems. Available healthcare capacities are not enough the growing demand and government is looking for funding to build more health facilities. Syrian refugee doctors and nurses are allowed to work.



⁴ As per the information provided by the representative of Egypt during the SESRIC Workshop “Syrian Refugees: Prospects and Challenges” held in Ankara, Turkey on 25-26 February 2016.

3.4 Education

Education is fundamental to economic growth, development and poverty reduction. Research shows that education is also critical for many other health, technology and social indicators. In conflict affected regions, it is a key instrument for rehabilitation of affected people. Recovery and reconstruction of a nation is more complicated when younger generations do not get good education. Syrian children in host countries, however, have encountered various disruptions and challenges in attending schools and receiving an adequate education. Syrian refugee children are also at risk for a range of mental health issues resulting from their traumatic experiences.

Prior to the conflict, the primary school enrolment rate in Syria was 99% and lower secondary school enrolment was 89%, with high gender parity. Today, according to UNICEF estimates, nearly 3 million Syrian children inside and outside the country are out of school (HRW, 2015). The educational achievements in Syria deteriorated quickly with the conflict. During the 2014-15 school year, 51% of all Syrian children did not attend school, and in the hardest-hit areas up to 74% of children were not enrolled (SCPR, 2015). Countless number of schools have been destroyed, damaged, or converted into shelters.

The disruption of the education system at home put the refugee children at an educational disadvantage at their destination and contributed to deterioration of their educational outcomes. This has been further exacerbated by language barriers as well as social and cultural challenges. Learning a foreign language is particularly demanding for children who have fallen behind in academic skills due to interruptions in their education.⁵ Moreover, the emotional trauma experienced by many refugee children may affect their cognitive and social development and aggravate their academic challenges (Sirin and Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

The United Nations estimates that approximately half of Syrian refugee children were not enrolled in school in mid-2015.⁶ Recent studies suggest that the enrollment rates of school-age Syrian children are an estimated 20% in Lebanon, 30% in Turkey, and 68% in Jordan (Sirin and Rogers-Sirin, 2015). Enrolment rates vary significantly across settings (in Turkey, Syrian refugee children in camps were far more likely to attend school than those in urban settings) and by gender (girls are far less likely to attend school than boys).

Meeting the educational needs of Syrian refugee children requires strong commitments from the hosting countries as well as international communities. This subsection starts with an overview of educational services provided to Syrian refugee children in the host countries. The section continues with discussions on the participation of children in education, who struggle to bridge the gaps in their education after disruptions in their learning. It then discusses the major barriers to

⁵ Advocates for Children of New York (2010), *Students with Interrupted Formal Education*, New York, www.advocatesforchildren.org/SIFE%20Paper%20final.pdf?pt=1.

⁶ Some 691,000 Syrian refugee children (50%) are out of school as of September 2015. United Nations, Regional Monthly Update: 3RP Achievements - October 2015 accessed Dec 30, 2015, <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/3RP-Regional-Dashboards-October-2015.pdf>.

education in order to understand the lack of participation to education in the neighbouring countries.

3.4.1 Educational Services for Syrian Refugees

As of 31 December 2015, there were 2,503,549 Syrian refugees registered in Turkey, and 34.2% of them were aged 5-17.⁷ Accordingly there were some 856,000 school-age Syrian refugee children in Turkey. Around 265,000 of refugees are living in 25 camps across the border.⁸ Educational needs of refugee children living in camps are met by the Turkish government and over 90% of children enrolled in the schooling system in the camps. On the other hand, large number of children dispersed in the country face substantial challenges in meeting their educational needs. In total, around 300,000 Syrian refugees are currently provided with an education in Turkey and another 150,000 children are targeted for educational services until the end of the school year.⁹



Educational services provided in a refugee camp in Lebanon

⁷ UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response, Turkey. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>.

⁸ Directorate General of Migration Management, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/istatistik_558_560_8971

⁹ Anatolia News Agency, <http://aa.com.tr/en/education/turkey-provides-education-for-300-000-syrian-refugees/495453>

In order to address the educational needs of the Syrian refugee children and increase their participation to education in Turkey, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) issued a Circular to regulate the education of temporary protection beneficiaries. With the Circular, a foreigner identification document will be enough to enrol, instead of a residency permit. The Circular also required commissions to be established at ministry and provincial levels to coordinate and take necessary actions as outlined in the law and regulation, and created an accreditation system for temporary education centres.¹⁰ According to the Circular, all school age children have free access to public schools provided that they are registered as temporary protection beneficiaries.

With the Circular, Turkey established temporary education centres (TECs) to offer Syrian refugee children a modified Syrian curriculum in Arabic operating inside and outside of the camps. Modification has been made in cooperation with the Syrian Interim Government based in Turkey and involves removal of partisan references to the Syrian government (HRW, 2015). TECs are located in provinces where large Syrian refugees are hosted. Since June 2015, the Ministry of Education in Turkey also started to supervise the administration of a Syrian baccalaureate exam to certify that will be recognized by Turkish universities (HRW, 2015).

To address the language barrier for Syrians, the MoNE offers free certified Turkish language courses at Public Education Centres. These centres also offer vocational courses for youth and adults. For example, 3,000 Syrian refugees living in Ankara, mostly women who lost their husbands, are being offered vocational and Turkish language courses that can help create job opportunities for them.¹¹ In order to encourage the participation of girls to education, a new education institution with a capacity of around 3,000 students, funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, has opened for Syrian refugee girls in Turkey's south-eastern province of Şanlıurfa.¹²

Despite major constraints, including a lack of physical classroom spaces lack of financial resources and difficulties to meet the curriculum requirements by refugee children, the Government of Lebanon offers widespread services for the educational needs of refugee children in Lebanon. It has adopted a strategy to get all refugee children into education called Reaching All Children with Education (RACE). The RACE strategy was developed in cooperation with UN agencies and other donors and brings the humanitarian and development responses together under a single framework. It aims to coordinate activities of different actors and agencies to address the needs of the vulnerable school-aged refugee children. Main beneficiaries are around 413,000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese children aged 3 to 18. The key elements of the strategy include ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities, improving the quality of teaching and learning, and strengthening national education systems, policies and monitoring. Total budget of the strategy is USD 634 million over the period 2014-2017 (MEHE, 2014).

¹⁰ Turkish Ministry of National Education Circular (MONE) 2014/21, http://alasehir.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2014_09/26014521_genelge.pdf

¹¹ Daily Sabah, <http://www.dailysabah.com/life/2015/09/10/syrian-refugees-regain-hope-through-professional-training>

¹² Hurriyet Daily News, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/new-schools-for-syrian-refugee-girls-open-in-turkey-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=92543&NewsCatID=341>

In fact, public schools in Lebanon provide less than 30% of education due to concerns over the quality of education. Despite the immense pressures on its own education system, Lebanon made important progress in providing educational services to refugee children under RACE strategy. In 2015, close to 110,000 Syrian school-aged children were expected to be enrolled in Lebanese public schools, representing a 21% increase from the previous year. The Ministry of Education opened 1,000 public schools to non-Lebanese students to enrol in their regular sessions. It also doubled the number of public schools offering second shifts to 160, with an expectation to reach more than 60,000 non-Lebanese students. Yet, notwithstanding more children in more Lebanese public schools, 400,000 Syrian children (3-18 years old) remain out of school (MEHE, 2014).

Similarly, the Government of Jordan have taken several steps to improve capacity to educate Syrian children in Jordanian public schools. Wherever needed, public schools are provided with additional prefabricated classroom and double shifts model is implemented to accommodate more students. In Jordan, double-shift schools have become the main tool for providing education to Syrian children and youth by serving Jordanian students in the morning and Syrian students in the afternoon. Both shifts follow the Jordanian curricula, but there are concerns over the quality of Jordanian education due to reduced teaching time in the double-shift system. Upon completion of the twelfth grade, both Jordanian and Syrian students are eligible to take the national exam (IPI, 2015).

3.4.2 Participation of Syrian Refugees to Education

In Turkey, approximately 90% of school-aged Syrian children attend school in the refugee-camps. However, 85% of refugee children live outside refugee camps. Outside of the camps, only 24% of these children were enrolled in school during the 2014-15 school year (HRW, 2015). The government decision to open its public school system to Syrian children and establish TECs to offer a modified Syrian curriculum in Arabic in 2014 improved markedly the access to education. However, there is a need to exert lots of efforts to increase enrolment and make education available to most refugees.

According to AFAD, there are more than 1,200 classrooms where educational services are provided to Syrian refugees (Table 1). Currently, almost 80,000 students are enrolled in public school system and 75,000 refugees have completed a training programme or still attending. There were around 8,000 Syrian students enrolled in the Turkish public school system during 2013-2014 school year and 37,000 during 2014-2015 school year (HRW, 2015). The increase in the enrolment over the last two years reflects the impact of the Circular mentioned earlier.

During the 2014-2015 school year, there were 34 temporary education centres in camps and 232 outside of camps. In 2014-2015, total primary and secondary enrolment in temporary education centres was 74,000 in camps and 101,000 outside camps (HRW, 2015; Theirworld, 2015). There are also concerns over the affordability of education in the private TECs.



School-age Syrian refugee children in Lebanon get access to education with major challenges

There are 150 public schools that are used in the afternoon to accommodate Syrian students and 50 unused municipal buildings are transformed into TECs (Theirworld, 2015). Moreover, 95,000 Syrian children benefited from the services provided by the Turkish Red Crescent¹³ through its community centres and children-friendly spaces. These centres offer psychosocial support, children’s activities, vocational training courses, and programmes to promote social integration within host communities.

Table 1: Educational Services to Syrian People

Classrooms	Number of Student					Courses for Adults			
	Preschool	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total	Ongoing		Completed	
						# of Courses	# of Trainees	# of Courses	# of Trainees
1.211	7.881	41.283	20.105	9.156	78.425	298	13.936	2.036	61.749

Source: AFAD website (accessed on 04.01.2016), <https://www.afad.gov.tr/TR/icerikDetay1.aspx?ID=16&icerikID=747>

The opportunities for higher education in Turkey are limited for Syrian refugees. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Other Related Communities (YTB) is addressing this problem through the provision of full scholarships for Syrians enrolling in public or private universities in Turkey.¹⁴

¹³ The Turkish Red Crescent, <http://www.kizilay.org.tr/Haber/HaberArsiviDetay/2224>

¹⁴ The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Other Related Communities (YTB), http://www.ytb.gov.tr/haber_detay.php?detay=4898

Despite all the efforts, the vast majority of the more than 856,000 Syrian children remain out of school. According to latest estimations, some 556,000 Syrian children are out of school in Turkey (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of Registered Syrian School Children and Out-Of-School Children in Turkey

	Aug 2013	Jan 2014	Aug 2015	Jan 2016
Number of registered school-age children enrolled in any school (5-17 years)	110,000	206,356	226,944	300,00
Number of school-age children out of school	76,600	161,709	394,049	556,000
Total	186,600	368,065	620,993	856,000

Source: Theirworld, 2015, UNHCR (2015- 3RP Regional Progress Report Oct.), UNHCR Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal; Anatolia News Agency, <http://aa.com.tr/en/education/turkey-provides-education-for-300-000-syrian-refugees/495453>

In Lebanon, there are around 380,000 school aged Syrian refugees and only 107,000 are enrolled in public schools (MEHE, 2015). There is large divergence across the regions. While more than 90% of refugee children in Beirut are enrolled, only 15% receive education in Bekaa region. Fewer opportunities for their families to earn an income combined with the prohibitive cost of transportation to school are just some of the barriers to enrolment for refugee children in the Bekaa Valley and the North of Lebanon (MEHE, 2014).

Lebanon recently started double-shift system to provide educational services as many refugee children as possible. The RACE programme also promoted the participation to education in Lebanon. There are around 380,000 registered refugee children aged between 5-17 years old in Lebanon. In the 2015-2016 school year, 155,000 refugee children are enrolled in basic education with 62,500 student in first shift and 92,595 students in second shift (3RP, 2015). Significant gaps in their learning, language barriers and malnutrition make it harder for Syrian children to keep up in class. High poverty rates among refugees also force families to withdraw their children from school to send them to work and contribute to family budget. On the other hand, limited progress has been made in improving the overall quality of education, weakening the public school's ability to retain students (MEHE, 2014).

In Jordan, there are some 220,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children (UNHCR Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal). 61.6% of these children across Jordan were attending formal education, amounting to 63.5% of school-aged girls and 59.8% of school-aged boys (UNICEF, 2015a). While attendance rate is higher at age group 6-11 with 70%, it is around 50% at age group 12-17, potentially explaining their participation to informal work. In the survey conducted by UNICEF, attendance rates in Karak governorate was highest for the age group 6-11 (around 85%) and lowest in Aqaba governorate (around 57%). It is also found that the later households arrived in Jordan, the less likely children were to be currently attending formal education, across all age groups.

Approximately 100,000 Syrian students were enrolled in formal schooling across Jordan for the 2013/14 school year (REACH Jena). The total number of Syrian students who accessed formal education in schools in camp and host community settings increased to 145,458 in November 2015.¹⁵ However, schools attended by Syrian children are generally overcrowded. The capacity of the public education system in areas (mainly Mafraq, Irbid, Zarqa and Amman) where there is a high concentration of Syrian refugees is overstretched (UNICEF, 2015b).

3.4.3 Barriers to Education

Challenges in all refugee hosting countries are similar. These include lack of capacity to meet the demands and overcrowded classrooms; economic hardships to cover transport, tuition and school supply costs; differences in language of instruction; social tensions, harassment and discrimination against refugee children; lack of catch-up programmes for children who missed education for a long time; unfamiliar curricula; legal and regulatory barriers to school enrolment; and different priorities of refugee households. Obviously, some factors are related to the supply of educational services and other are related to demand for education.

Supply is directly linked to the capacity and availability of education facilities as well as removal of technical, legal and regulatory barriers. Demand for education is more complicated and not easy to manage. It often relates to perceptions of households on their status, opportunities and challenges in the host community. Families send their children if they believe the benefits outweigh the costs of education. Acute financial pressures force children into work and early marriage. In this respect, governments and other stakeholders can facilitate income generation for adult household members in order to prevent children to work and reduce the costs of education so that families have greater incentives to send their children to schools. Better education will promote social cohesion in the host country and improve their knowledge and experiences to utilize in their country when they return home for rebuilding the state.

Towards realizing the children's right to education, Turkey has taken major steps in making public schools accessible to refugee children and accreditation of temporary education centres (TECs). Having spent \$600 million in 2015 for refugee children¹⁶ and removing the legal barriers, Turkish government faces further challenges that prevent Syrian children from attending school. The government aims to get 450,000 Syrians children into education by the end of the year 2016. In order to meet these targets, there is a need to address these barriers, which also include language barriers, economic hardship to pay the costs of transportation and supplies that drives children into the workforce and difficulties with social integration. Limited spaces in schools, inconvenient

15 UNHCR, Education Working Group | 2015 Syrian Refugee Response in Jordan, <http://data.unhcr.org/jordan/sectors/2015/education/#indicator=&gender=&poptype=&funded=&appeal=&partner=&allocation=&monthrange=&location=&obj=®ion=>
16 A statement by Turkish official from MoNE. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-turkey-education-idUKKCN0RW1WK20151002>

school locations and children's exposure to bullying from Turkish students are among other reasons for lack of participation to education in Turkey (UNHCR, 2015a).¹⁷

It is also reported that some TECs, such as NGO or community-based centres, remain unaccredited by the Turkish government, with reports from 2013 indicating low quality of teaching and learning, and students being left with no recognised certificates at the end of the school year (UNICEF, 2015b).¹⁸ It should be also noted that many well-educated and better-trained refugees were able to immigrate to Europe (whose immigration laws give preferential treatment to professional immigrants), while Turkey was slow to adjust its immigration policies to incentivize them to stay in the country. Turkey and other neighbouring countries should implement policies to attract more educated and qualified Syrian refugees to stay with their fellow citizens and help them to overcome the challenges they face. Such a policy would require a comprehensive education strategy designed for these refugees, including effective training, recruitment, and retention (SETA, 2015).

Five major obstacles are identified in the case of Jordan. These are economic barriers in the education system and in Syrian refugee households, educational divides between Syrian and Jordanian students, legal and regulatory obstacles to school enrolment, social tensions in schools, and competing priorities for refugee households (IPI, 2015). The IRD/UNHCR report (2013) found that adjusting to the Jordanian curriculum was a challenge for Syrian children, particularly for those that had missed some schooling. Support to assist them in catching up, through services such as remedial classes, were not widely available in Jordanian schools (UNICEF, 2015a). Due to financial constraints, some schools cannot afford to implement a double-shift system to increase capacity and accommodate more children in the education system (UNICEF, 2015a).

Similar to Turkey, the language of instruction in English and French is a barrier to learning for Syrian children in Lebanon (UNICEF, 2015b). Public school systems have been unable to cope with the surge in refugee numbers. Drop-out rates are exceptionally high for refugee children, reflecting a combination of economic and social pressures (UNHCR, 2013). The quality of provision is often very poor, with refugee children sitting in over-crowded and under-resourced classrooms (ODI, 2014).

In Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), access to education in host communities remains a challenge for Syrian children. The absence of sufficient physical primary and secondary school places requires priority attention. In Egypt, Syrian children experience difficulties with overcrowded schools, lack of school resources and the high level of violence in schools. There are additional challenges in understanding the Egyptian dialect and integrating into the school environment (UNICEF, 2015b).

¹⁷ UNHCR (2015), Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-16: Turkey. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹⁸ UNICEF (2015). Curriculum, Accreditation and Certification for Syrian Children in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Regional Study. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.

3.5 Employment

Conflict in Syria has produced a regional instability and major humanitarian crisis. While around 7 million people are internally displaced and over 13 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria as of December 2015, over 4.5 million people have fled the country, a number which is more than any other conflict of the past two decades. They arrived in neighbouring countries with little to no economic resources. Without formal residency rights and access to work permits, whatever resources they had quickly exhausted. They are forced to generate income through the informal labour market to meet their family's survival needs.

While the neighbouring countries of Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan are hosting large number of refugees, smaller number of refugees found their way to Iraq and Egypt, as highlighted in section 2. In spite of the huge efforts of host countries to mitigate the deprivation of Syrian refugees, the pressure on government services, labour markets and society in general is intensifying. Confronted by falling humanitarian assistance, the neighbouring countries are struggling to find an appropriate response to the massive refugee influx without leaving local communities detrimentally affected.

On the other hand, as humanitarian assistance decreases, Syrian refugees with no or limited legal access to work find no other option than looking for work to support their families. This inevitable upshot nurtures the informal economies and causes further deterioration of working conditions and wages in already vulnerable local labour markets. It also allows for exploitation, child labour and unacceptable working conditions and heightens tensions between local communities and refugees. Moreover, competition for jobs with local people puts pressure on wages and fuels tensions between communities (ILO, 2015).



Syrian children forced to generate income for their families

Starting in late 2014, the Turkish government issued new identity cards to Syrian refugees designed to give easier access to a wider range of basic services outside of the camps, including aid, job offers, education and health care¹⁹. By hosting more than 2.5 million Syrians, Turkey is the largest refugee-hosting country worldwide and only small portion (around 10%) of them are living in camps. As they informally enter the Turkish labour market despite the lack of work permission, uneasiness in local communities increases. A 2014 survey reveals that 56% of Turkish citizens support the argument that “Syrians take our jobs” (Erdogan, 2014). However, during early January 2016, the Turkish Government announced that they will grant formal work permit to Syrian refugees with temporary protection status.

In other neighbouring countries, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, refugees live in dire conditions and their accession to the labour markets is not granted. According to a study published in 2015 by ILO and FAFO, around 51% of the Syrian men living outside camps participate in the Jordanian labour market, with an unemployment rate as high as 57%. Women participation rate is found to be only 7%. Prior to the Syrian conflict, around 300,000 Syrians were working in Lebanon mostly in construction, agriculture and services sector without visa requirements to enter the country (ILO and FAFO, 2015). Now with over 1 million refugees, Lebanese labour market is not able to provide a job for all Syrians.

In this connection, this subsection reviews the labour market challenges faced by Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries. The discussions will be on access to employment opportunities, legal status of Syrian refugees and their right to work, working conditions of the refugees, and impacts on local labour force

3.5.1 Access to employment opportunities

At the outset of the crises, neighbouring countries welcomed the Syrian refugees without any hesitancy. Turkey has had a generous open-door policy toward Syrian refugees, but until late 2014 the refugees had been considered as guests (see section for more discussion on the legal status of Syrian refugees). In principle, Syrians who legitimately entered the country with valid passports can apply for residence permits and subsequently for the work permits. However, this requires usually lengthy and cumbersome procedures and only several thousand work permits were granted by the end of 2014. The reforms initiated in late 2014 were expected to facilitate the whole process of obtaining work permits (Del Carpio and Wagner 2015). However, already high levels of unemployment rate in Turkey were hampering the plans of the Turkish government to make it easier for Syrians to generate income.

Early January 2016, the Turkish government announced that the draft regulation has been adopted by the council of ministers and will be published in the coming days to grant work permission to Syrian refugees. According to the regulation, employers will be able to employ Syrians up to 10% of their staff. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians and other foreigners work illegally for low wages,

¹⁹ New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/30/world/europe/turkey-strengthensrights-of-syrian-refugees.html?_r=0

but only 7,300 work permits have been issued. Under new legislation, refugees will be able to apply for a work permit specific to their place of registration six months after they register there. Refugees under temporary protection can work within the refugee community in Turkey, for example as doctors or teachers in camps.²⁰

In Jordan, Syrian refugees are not legally permitted to work. However, many Syrians are forced to enter the job market by illegally involving in low-skilled, low-paid jobs. These are usually jobs from which Jordanians generally shy away. Illegal employment means almost no insurance, social benefits or compensation in case of an injury at work. According to a survey conducted by ILO, the majority of Syrian refugees who have obtained work in Jordan occupy jobs that have emerged during their arrival from Syria, that is, primarily low-skilled / low-wage jobs in an expanded informal sector. It is also mentioned that Syrians are ready to accept lower wages under more severe working conditions compared to Jordanians, which leads to crowding out of the Jordanians, further expansion of informality in the Jordanian labour market and decline of compliance with labour standards for all workers alike.

The Lebanese government maintained an open border policy until end of 2014. Lebanon has around 1.1 million refugees – one in every four people living in Lebanon is a Syrian refugee. The Lebanese government has refused to build formal camps for the refugees, fearing that permanent houses will lead them to stay and alter the country's sectarian balance. Informal settlements consequently have flourished in the Beqaa Valley and tensions are heightened as refugees and inhabitants started to compete for jobs and livelihoods.²¹

The year 2015 began with new entry and residency rules for Syrian nationals, which restricted the admission for Syrians only to those who can present valid identity documents and prove that their stay in Lebanon fits into one of the approved entry categories. They are also required to sign a commitment that they will not work while in the country (UNHCR, 2015a). The economically active refugees in Lebanon are either unemployed or working in low skilled low paid jobs, mostly on daily wages and without any form of protection (ILO and FAFO, 2015). In many cases, women have become the household's wage earner, yet they face major obstacles in accessing work.

Syrian refugees in Egypt are also required to obtain work permits in order to work, but it is an expensive, lengthy and complicated process, which requires that an employer sponsors the refugee and that there is no competition from a similarly qualified Egyptian candidate.²² On the other hand, authorities in the Kurdish region of Iraq granted Syrian refugees, mostly Kurdish origin, the right to work in the region.²³

Despite all the obstacles in the neighbouring countries, Syrian refugees are working to earn a living. The ILO estimates that labour force participation rates among adult Syrian refugees range from between 10% to 20% for women to around 50% to 70% for men in different population

²⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-turkey-idUSKCN0UP0QP20160111>

²¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/12/syrians-lebanon-border-controls-un-refugee>

²² <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/01/29/living-working-syrian-refugee-egypt/>

²³ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2013/06/iraq-kurdistan-syrian-refugees-aid.html#>

segments across host nations.²⁴ However, the challenges of access to work for Syrians have created conditions that are particularly exploitative. They work predominately within large informal labour markets that are unregulated, characterized by low and declining wages, long working days and poor working conditions.

3.5.2 Legal status of Syrian refugees and their right to work

As mentioned earlier, the neighbouring host countries have been exceptionally hospitable and generous to the plight of the Syrian people, and provided support and assistance through a broad range of services since the inception of the crisis. However, the legal status of Syrian refugees remained vague throughout this period. The 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees are the key legal documents in defining a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1951 Convention defines a refugee as an individual who is unable to return to his or her country of prior residence due to a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”. It requires states to accord “the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment”.

²⁵

There are almost 150 countries that are signed and ratified the Convention; however, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq are not signatory of the convention. Turkey retains a geographic limitation to its ratification of the Convention, which means that only those fleeing as a consequence of events occurring in Europe can be given refugee status. Turkey classifies non-European individuals fleeing to Turkey as “conditional refugees”. While conditional refugees are legally permitted to work in Turkey while awaiting resettlement, Turkey has decided not to classify Syrians as conditional refugees, instead offering them temporary protection (Bidinger, 2015). The idea of temporary protection is not a new concept. It allows host states to respond quickly to humanitarian crises while avoiding the obligation to grant refugee status to a large influx of individuals, particularly where the 1951 Convention does not apply. The situation in Turkey is a classic example of a situation where temporary protection is the appropriate host country response (Bidinger, 2015).

Turkey is the only country that has introduced specific legislation to address the needs of Syrian refugees (ILO, 2015). However, the Turkish government did not recognize them as refugees or asylum seekers until end of 2014 and treated them as ‘guests’. This had two important implications. First, they could not apply for asylum in a third country. Second, the guest status implied that refugees could be relocated by the Turkish government without any legal process. To alleviate the conditions of the Syrian refugees and to limit uncertainty, the government enacted a temporary protection policy that ensures an open border between Turkey and Syria and that promises no forced exits (IZA, 2015). The regulation is expected to facilitate access of Syrian refugees to the labour market, while protecting the employment opportunities of Turkish nationals.

²⁴ http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_387195/lang--en/index.htm

²⁵ The 1951 Convention, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html>

The Turkish model can be considered as an effective model of intervention that could be adapted by other countries (ILO, 2015).

Despite the long history of refugees in Jordan (from Iraq and Palestine) before the Syrian crisis and not being a party to the 1951 Convention, Jordan still lacks a coherent legal and policy framework to appropriately address the important questions surrounding the situation of refugees in the country. Moreover, the labour law does not protect vulnerable workers, including illegal refugee workers, against abusive practices and there is no definite process for how to obtain a work permit (ILO and FAFO, 2015). Given the current workforce challenges, Jordan could take only limited steps to allow Syrian refugees to work. There are only about 10% of employed Syrians who obtained formal work permits mostly in camps and practically all Syrian refugees working outside camps do not have work permits (Kattaa, 2015). This results in low and declining wages, longer working days, and poor working conditions and regulations for Syrian refugees.

While Iraq is not a party to the Refugee Convention 1951, the Iraqi Government has issued some legislative instruments related to refugees in Iraq (ILO and FAFO, 2015). Refugees with a residency permit in northern Iraq have the legal right to work, but it is difficult to obtain residency permit without legal documentation. Even with permission to work, it is not easy to find other than low-paid work. Refugees in Iraq are also not able to register businesses or open bank accounts.

Despite being a party to the 1951 Convention, Egypt has no national asylum procedures and institutions (ILO and FAFO, 2015). The Egyptian constitution states that foreigners with political asylum status may be eligible for work permits. The majority of refugees rely on work as their primary source of income. However, they take up less skilled jobs in the informal sector due to an inability to find suitable jobs or obtain a work permit. Ayoub and Khallaf (2014) find that Syrian refugees' living conditions in Egypt have shifted together with changes in the country's political environment. President Mohamed Morsi, in office from June 2012 to July 2013, openly supported Syrian opposition forces; however, after his overthrow in July 2013, government policies and media rhetoric turned against Syrian refugees.

3.5.3 Working Conditions of the Refugees

According to a study published by ILO and FAFO (2015), Syrians are willing to accept lower wages and harsher working conditions than Jordanians. The impact of this is not just the crowding out of Jordanians but also an increased informalization of the Jordanian labour market. About 51% of the Syrian men living outside camps participate in the Jordanian labour market, while the unemployment rate is as high as 57%. Among Syrian refugee workers, 96% of workers outside camp, and 88% in Zaatari camp, have no social insurance specified in their contract or agreement. On the other hand, only few refugees have written contracts, reflecting their informal employment. Children are involved in economic activities particularly outside of the camps. According to the same study, while only 1.6% of Jordanian boys in the age group 9-15 and 17% in the age group 15-18 are economically active, more than 8% and 37% of Syrian boys in the respective age groups are economically active.



Syrian refugees working at textile fabric in Turkey

Majority of Syrian refugees are young people stemming from rural areas and have considerably lower education compared to Jordanians (ILO and FAFO, 2015). 60% of the Syrian refugees above the age of 15 have never completed basic schooling. Currently, more than 40% of employed Syrians outside camps in Amman, Irbid and Mafrq are found to work in the construction industry, while 23% work in the wholesale and retail trade and repair industry, 12% in manufacturing, and 8% in the accommodation and food service industry. In terms of occupations, 53% of the Syrian refugees employed outside camps work as craft and related trade workers, 24% as service and sales workers, and 12% in elementary occupations.

As mentioned earlier, only about 10% of employed Syrians could obtain formal work permits. 18% of Syrian refugees outside camp report having applied for a permit for their current main job, but only 40% of them succeeded. Among workers who did not apply for a permit, the main reasons cited were that permits are too expensive (64%) or too difficult to get (15%). According to UNHCR (2015b), one in six refugees in Jordan living currently in urban or rural areas (outside the main refugee camps) is in extreme poverty, with less than \$40 per person per month to make ends meet.

Syrian workers in the informal sector are generally being paid less, have to work more, and have poorer contracts compared to Jordanians in the same sector (ILO and FAFO, 2015). As many as 30% of Syrian refugees are working 60 hours or more, including 16% working 80 hours or more. Moreover, taking into account the Jordanian minimum wage, standing at 150 JD for non-Jordanians, 25% of Syrian refugee workers outside Zaatari camp and as many as 61% of workers in the Zaatari camp were receiving a cash income that was smaller than the minimum wage. The labour market within the Zaatari camp is restricted to a limited number of opportunities, which are below the skill set of the refugees and can impact negatively on their self-esteem and contribute to

de-skilling. Nevertheless, around 1.5% of the Syrian refugees in the camp set up almost two thousand small enterprises, while the rest of the population remain dependent on the support provided by humanitarian agencies working in the camp.

The majority of Syrians in Lebanon reported that too few job opportunities (86%) and too little salary (76%) were the main challenges faced by their community, while only one in five Lebanese believed that there were few job opportunities for the Syrian community, or that salary received by Syrians was not sufficient to meet basic needs (ACTED, 2014). Also in Turkey, illegally working Syrian refugees earn lower than domestic employees and have no rights or protection.²⁶ Syrians living in camps are dependent on the Turkish government for daily provision on food and shelter. If carefully regulated, granting the refugees permission to work can reduce the burden on the government. An immediate influx of huge number of refugees in the job market can have disruptive effect on it, but can also contribute to expansion of the market and strengthening of the economy (Bidingier, 2015). This would reduce informality and exploitation of the Syrian labour force.

3.5.4 Impacts on local labour force

It is commonly argued that migration increases supply of labour and competition, which results in lower employment and wages for local people. However, this argument is empirically not supported (Borjas, 2013), which is partly explained by the lower internal migration to that area from the rest of the country. Migration also increases food and housing prices and lower real wages for households spending a large share of their income on basic goods. A study on the effects of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey finds no employment effects on natives' employment rates, but finds price increases in food and housing, disproportionately affecting the lower income natives (Akgündüz et al., 2015). They also find no impact on the exit rates from the regions that are affected from the migration: natives appear to be staying put.

A World Bank study finds that the refugees result in the large scale displacement of informal, low educated, female Turkish workers, especially in agriculture (World Bank, 2015). While there is net displacement, the inflow of refugees also creates higher wage formal jobs allowing for occupational upgrading of Turkish workers, while for women there is also an increase in school attendance. On the other hand, increased informality deteriorated the efforts of the government in minimizing the informal economy, which increased from 30% to around 50% in Turkey (ILO, 2015).

In Lebanon, the impact of the Syrian crisis was found to have been variable across sectors, and sectors hiring Syrian workers reported significantly higher growth and employment levels since the crisis (ACTED, 2014). Wages were directly influenced with this sudden increase in labour supply. In some villages of the Bekaa, daily wages of labourers have dropped by up to 60% (FAO, 2014). Prior to the Syrian crisis, Lebanon had already been facing high unemployment rates that coincided with a prevalence of low quality and low productivity jobs in an unregulated and poorly governed labour market (ILO, 2013). ILO survey reveals that host communities believe that their employment prospects have worsened with increased competition and that their wages have been

²⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-refugees-turkey-idUSKBN0TN1DA20151204>

pushed down due to the cheaper supply of Syrian workers. There are also concerns that small enterprises operated by Syrians block the opportunities for the Lebanese people.

There are reports of significant impacts from the influx of Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labour market, and there are strong concerns about the effects on available job opportunities, wage levels and working conditions for Jordanians (ILO and FAFO, 2015). The labour force participation rate for Jordanians is similar to what it was before the Syrian crisis, while the unemployment rate has increased from 14.5% to 22.1%. Current unemployment rates are highest among youth, and among the lowest educated and poorest segments of the population. The majority of Syrian refugees who have obtained work in Jordan seem to occupy jobs that have emerged during the arrival of refugees from Syria, that is, primarily low-skilled/lower wage jobs in an expanded informal sector. This indicates a loss of opportunity for increased employment of Jordanians in newly emerged low-skilled jobs. There is also higher unemployment and competition for existing jobs.

3.6 Social Integration and Cohesion

With the number of Syrian refugees approaching five million, the host countries have been left to grapple with many social and economic issues, chief among them are heightening social tensions and raising economic cost which are the core themes discussed in this section.

3.6.1 Heightening Social Tension

Syrian refugees have been highly accepted in the neighboring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. This acceptance is in line with the solidarity feelings that people of neighboring countries have towards the Syrian refugees and is inspired by the Islamic model of “Ansar & Muhajirin” and the teachings of the holy Quran (see *Surah Al-Hashr, Ayah 9*). This model of acceptance has been facilitated by the historical, cultural, religious, linguistic, and even family and tribal commonalities the Syrian refugees share with the people of the neighboring countries

Of course throughout the last five years there have been several negative incidents and protests towards the Syrian refugees, yet they do not alter the general picture of acceptance and solidarity. However, as the Syrian crisis prolongs and the number of Syrian refugees continues to increase and the socio-economic impacts continue to accumulate in host countries, acceptance of Syrian refugees starts to erode and social tension emerges as an issue that needs to be prevented and alleviated. Policy makers and community leaders must not take social acceptance for granted and without proactive measures social acceptance will not be endless.

The level of acceptance of Syrian refugees varies within the same country and is dependent on political affiliation and religious and ethnic identification. In the case of Turkey, people who are supporters of the religiously conservative Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) are more sympathetic and accepting of the Syrian refugees than supporters of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) which has a secularist Kmalist ideology and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) which has a nationalist ideology. Also agitation with Syrian refugees can be witnessed in Turkish towns and cities near the Syrian border where large numbers of Alevis live such as the provenance of Hatay. The Alevis are largely sympathetic

to the Assad regime and hold hostile views and attitudes towards the Syrian revolution and the Syrian refugees. Similarly, in Lebanon where the matter of religious and sectarian balance is a sensitive political issue, the attitudes towards Syrian refugees is framed by religious and sectarian affiliations.

Social tension in host countries due to the Syrian refugee issue is driven mainly by the following five causes:

Structural causes: Structural causes are causes related with the host country and predate the refugee crises such as: weak infrastructure, low institutional capacity, government ineffectiveness in providing basic services, underequipped local municipalities, poverty, high unemployment and resource scarcity (i.e. water). As huge numbers of refugees poured into small countries such as Lebanon and Jordan, the existing infrastructure and state capacity struggled to meet the new demand (i.e. water supply, waste water management, solid waste management, electricity...etc.) created by the refugees and as a result exacerbated the vulnerability and fragility of these states.

Social causes: Social causes include sectarian issues, culture, customs and norms. The differences in culture, customs and norms can lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretations of people's intentions thus giving rise to the possibility of social tension. For example many of the Syrian refugees hail from rural areas in their home country in which polygamy and marriage of females at an early age are acceptable social norms but these practices are frowned upon in some areas of the host countries.

Competition between host communities and refugees: As refugees compete with host communities for jobs, business opportunities, livelihood opportunities, housing, healthcare services, and educational services many in the host community will feel deprived thus giving rise to social tension.

Perceptions: Perceptions, mostly false perceptions, play a role in elevating the levels of social tension. Syrian refugees are falsely being associated with higher levels of crime, theft, and disorderly conduct. A 2015 International Alert Report (International Alert, 2015) focusing exclusively on the impact of Syrian refugees on security threat perceptions in Lebanon illustrates that Lebanese nationals are concerned about becoming victims of crime. In Turkey, Syrians are commonly identified with theft, prostitution, property damage, etc. Nevertheless, all of the studies indicated that crime rates are lower among Syrians than among locals (HUGO, 2014). The perception of Syrians in host countries has also been negatively impacted by the phenomenon of "Syrian beggars" who in many occasions use aggressive tactics when begging thus causing great unease within the local people; however, these beggars do not present the average Syrian refugee and in reality these beggars are professional beggars who used to beg in the streets of Syria before the start of the revolution.

Discrimination: Syrian refugees are subject to discrimination and in some cases the discriminatory policies are supported by the people of host countries. For example; the levels of support for discriminatory policies measured in the Lebanese community were staggering with over 90% supporting nightly curfews against Syrian refugees, and another 90% supporting restricting the

political freedoms of Syrian refugees (Harb and Saab, 2014). In Turkey, Syrian are classified as guests. When asked “What disturbs you most?” Syrians responded “to be called guests”. In fact, to be a guest is not a “right” but a condition, which depends largely upon the host. In line with that, by affirming the “guest” status, a host basically intends to put the guests in their place, particularly in case the visit is longer than expected (HUGO 2014).

Rising tensions have consequences on equitable access to public spaces, urban governance, basic services, livelihood opportunities and humanitarian and development assistance. For example, as tensions rise, so too does isolation of refugee families from the fabric of urban social life. Syrian women, preferring to avoid harassment or negative stereotyping in public spaces, remain at home – an unfortunate coping mechanism that reduces access to social capital in the community. Children are also adversely affected, as families prefer not to send their children to school for fear of discrimination or harassment (which in turn increases segregation and furthers social tensions). As frustration and scapegoating become common, discrimination may reduce access to employment and livelihood opportunities for young Syrian refugee men. This may increase domestic violence, drug abuse and participation in radical collective action in this demographic (Guay, 2015).

3.6.2 Economic Costs

Giving refuge and providing basic service to the millions of Syrian refugees has come with a high price tag. Turkish officials claim that Turkey has spent so far close to 8 billion US dollars on Syrian refugees. In Jordan the funding needed to enroll Syrian students and to maintain the infrastructure for local students reached \$257 million in 2015. Jordan’s government has also spent \$168 million on basic health services for refugees. Available figures regarding infrastructure costs indicate that some \$62 million per year is needed to cover the additional demand derived from the influx of Syrian refugees. These infrastructure investments are mainly related to the provision of municipal services, such as access to running water, connections to the power grid, and road maintenance and construction. The funding needed in response to the influx of refugees as percentage of Jordan’s budget reached around 35% in 2015 (UN, 2015). In Lebanon, the cost of Syrian refugees on public infrastructure was \$589 Million in 2014, the cost on electricity was \$ 500-580 million between 2012 and 2014 and the cost on the education sector was \$194 Million between 2012 and 2014 (Gebara, 2015).

On the other side and despite the costs incurred, the economies of host countries have not suffered from welcoming the Syrian refugees, quite the opposite, they have benefited. According to a report from the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the Turkish economy is projected to grow from 3% in 2015 to above 4% in 2017.²⁷ The Lebanese economy has been growing beyond expectations over the past two years, with the World Bank estimating 2.5% growth in real terms in 2015, the country’s highest growth rate since 2010. Refugees have been an important source of demand for locally produced services in

²⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/economy/turkey-economic-forecast-summary.htm>

Lebanon, funded from own savings and labor income, from remittances of relatives abroad and from international aid. It is estimated that an additional 1% increase in Syrian refugees increases Lebanese service exports by 1.5% (World Bank, 2015). That is remarkable considering the hugely negative political scene in Lebanon, and tourism and investments declining markedly, especially from Gulf countries. The situation is similar in Jordan, its gross domestic product (GDP) will rise by about 3% this year according to the International Monetary Fund.²⁸

One often sighted complaint about the Syrian refugees from host communities is that they have caused the unemployment rate to shoot up. However, in Turkey and in the border city of Gaziantep which has high numbers of Syrian refugees the unemployment rate has actually dropped since the arrival of the Syrian refugees (HUGO, 2014). Recent research finds that while Syrian refugees in Turkey—the majority of whom have no formal work permits—have displaced unskilled informal and part-time workers, they have also generated more formal non-agricultural jobs and an increase in average wages for Turkish workers (Del Carpio & Wagner, 2015). The picture is also consistent with the Jordanian case where a recent study, using monthly data by Fakh and Ibrahim (2015), finds the influx of Syrian refugees has had no discernable impact on the Jordanian labor market

4 Policy Options

The analyses in the previous section show that Syrian refugees face major challenges in fulfilling their humanitarian needs as well as accessing to basic services, including health, education and labour market. Important challenges are also identified in the area of social integration. Based on these analyses, this section provides policy recommendations to address these challenges.

4.1 Humanitarian Needs, Sheltering and Housing

The total amount of the budget to meet the humanitarian needs of all Syrian refugees has been expanding as the number of refugees in the hosting countries climbs up. As the world's largest humanitarian crisis since the World War II, efforts of hosting countries and international community have stayed insufficient to meet the humanitarian needs of all Syrian refugees properly. In the sixth year of the crisis, hosting countries are able to make more reliable and proper budget estimations to meet the humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees. However, the unmet budget estimations due to lack of national and international funding have been severely affecting the quality and scope of humanitarian services available for Syrian refugees. In this context, once more, the hosting countries should give a strong message to other countries and international community, and invite them to fulfill their commitments that Syrian refugees are in need of more humanitarian assistance.

²⁸ <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2015/INT080515A.htm>



Camp management in Turkey above the world standards - Hatay refugee camp in Turkey

Some host countries are relatively inefficient in coordination of humanitarian services for Syrian refugees, and therefore are in need of guidance from international actors and other hosting countries. For instance, this inefficiency leads to some significant amount of food losses within some host countries. In this regard, setting up a regional coordination mechanism may be helpful to manage the humanitarian services for Syrian refugees in an effective and coordinated way.

The efficacy of cash-assistance needs to be assessed carefully and re-scaled in the host countries. Some studies showed that cash assistance helped Syrian refugees in addressing their humanitarian needs. However, there are some unsuccessful practices in some camps where cash-assistance led to some undesired results such as associated with increased criminality and brutality. Therefore, more in-depth research needs to be undertaken in this domain.

Some host countries are not successful as others in providing safe drinking water, sanitation and waste management services stemming from limited amount of funds, lack of expertise and experience, and insufficient amount of mechanical equipment and technology. Therefore, each host country needs to identify its main source of problem in this domain to come up with an effective solution. In terms of expertise and technology, some host countries are ready to share their experience and technology with others in order to address the Syrian refugees' humanitarian needs more effectively.

Undernourishment and unmet basic humanitarian needs have being severely affected the human development of some Syrian kids and adults in the hosting countries. In some cases, these people

can be identified easily that they are lying on the street with hunger. However, in many cases they are not easy to detect either they are living in rural areas or they are not willing to tell their needs publicly. Therefore, the host countries need to start new public campaigns to find out these affected Syrian refugees who are in need of humanitarian assistance in order to help them. Both public institutions and NGOs need work together for a successful result in this domain.

The long-lasting conflict in Syria has also affected the sheltering and housing needs of Syrian refugees in the host countries. As the conflict has deepened, the chance of Syrian refugees to go back to Syria has diminished. Providing tents or containers in the refugee camps for Syrian refugees can only be interpreted as a temporary solution for an emergency situation that any human being cannot be happy in a camp where they are isolated from a lively social life and cannot interact with the surrounding societies. Therefore, addressing the sheltering and housing needs of Syrian refugees have become a permanent issue rather than a temporary one for the host countries. In this regard, first and foremost, the host countries need to change their perception on Syrian refugees that they are in need of medium and long-term solutions for their sheltering and housing needs in the sixth year of the crisis.

It is vital for policy makers to reach more information about the housing conditions of Syrian refugees who are living both in camps and out-of-camps. In this context, more unique datasets and research are needed to understand the conditions of Syrian refugees who are living in camps and out-of-camps. There are some available studies conducted for the camp populations. However, there exists very limited data and a few studies for the sheltering and housing conditions of Syrian refugees who are living in non-camps in the host countries. Therefore, it is recommended to design and implement specific surveys in order to fill this gap. In this context, a market survey can be undertaken in order to come up with a realistic picture of sheltering and housing problems of refugees in the hosting countries where the results of such a survey would help to prepare a long-term strategic plan for refugees.

As datasets allow, more in-depth research studies need to be carried out in order to come up with a realistic picture of sheltering and housing conditions of refugees especially for those of living out-of-camps. For instance, in Turkey almost 90% of 2.7 million Syrian refugees are living outside the camps and authorities are not able to track some critical information such as what are the average rent paid by refugees and the average household size. It also became evident that in order to address the sheltering and housing needs of Syrian refugees effectively, more country-specific and thematic workshops needs be organized in order to have a better understanding of the real situation of Syrian refugees with participation from public institutions, NGOs, and regional and international organizations.

As mentioned above, apart from camps with full of containers and tents, more durable and long-term housing solutions need to be developed in collaboration with public institutions, international and regional organizations, and NGOs. For instance, the Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKI) provides social housing units for families in need. A similar approach can be used to

lead an initiative through constructing low-cost apartments and renting them to Syrian refugees in where NGOs may provide financial help to refugees to cover their rental costs.

The lack of an effective coordination among the hosting countries stays as an important challenge and limits the scope of positive externalities such as the exchange of best-practices in the provision of sheltering and housing services for Syrian refugees. In this regard, institutions and policy makers of the host countries need to harmonize national policies at the regional level with a view to set the basic standards of camps and follow up the overall implementation of these standards and to develop long-term regional strategies for the Syrian refugees. In this respect, a coordination/steering committee needs to be established in order to allow for concerted efforts for Syrian refugees and to exchange best practices. This committee needs to include representatives from the hosting countries (Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt) as well as the UN and OIC organs. The committee may hold regular meetings in every six months to increase cooperation among countries in addressing the Syrian refugee crisis including their sheltering and housing needs.

A letter can be sent to the Presidency of Turkey, as the term presidency of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit starting from April 2016, in order to request convening all NGOs operating for Syrian refugees in a meeting or a forum to address Syrian refugees' sheltering and housing problems.

In some hosting countries like Lebanon, camp managements are de-centralized and fragmented that leads to a series of problems. In this regard, countries need to exchange their best-practices in this domain to centralize and digitalize their camp management systems. Therefore, the identification of camp management practices across different host countries has a critical importance in order to find out the successful examples.

Public services being provided in camps are integral part of the sheltering and housing services for Syrian refugees. Nevertheless, in some hosting countries, public services such as education and health are being provided under temporary poor tent conditions, especially in camps. Therefore, a special attention should be paid in this field and authorities need to give priority to raise the standards of public services in camps. In this regard, policy makers need to work on improving both the quality and coverage of public services in camps.

In order to address the sheltering and housing needs of Syrian refugees, some hosting countries need to make some arrangements in the legal rights of refugees. For instance in Turkey, although a portion of refugees are ready to own their house, they are not allowed to purchase a house due to legal restrictions. No doubt, each host country has its own understanding of the problem and has to make choices for its national security. However, the rights for Syrian refugees in all hosting countries need to be reviewed in the sixth year of the Syrian crisis again by taking all relevant international agreements on refugees and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On the other side of the equation, the hosting countries need to carefully investigate bad-practices of some landlords towards Syrian refugees in the process of renting and selling houses in the

hosting countries. In this regard, if it is needed, additional precautions should be taken by policy-makers such as increasing penalties for landlords who discriminate against refugees and charge a rental rate more than 40% of the average market rate for a similar housing unit.

4.2 Health

A complex mix of social, cultural, economic, political and legal factors underpin the adequate access and availability of basic healthcare services to the Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries. After witnessing widespread death, destruction and displacement millions of Syrians are exposed to extreme psychological stress, anxiety and depression. However, there is very limited provision of mental health and psychosocial services to the Syrian refugees. This issue is in part related with the language barrier and in part to the limited number of facilities that offer mental health services. Language barrier is also a significant problem in providing health care and information to the Syrian refugees in Turkey. It is also recognised as an important factor that has influence on satisfaction about healthcare services. In order to overcome this problem, the MoH of Turkey has developed information campaigns, including communication materials in Arabic on disease prevention and available health care services. Moreover, MoH in collaboration with the WHO and Gaziantep University has initiated a Refugee Doctor Adaptation Training programme.

On the other hand, a significant number of refugees are living outside the camps in all host countries. This make it very difficult to locate them, learn about their needs and devising mechanisms for targeted help. Furthermore, many of these refugees are unregistered and therefore are not entitled to seek health care and support when in need. Healthcare systems are under huge stress especially in Lebanon and Jordan due to limited capacities of health care facilities. These countries have very limited financial resources to provide for extra beds, medicines, equipment, health workers and the healthcare facilities.

Limited coverage and resources for the cross border healthcare services is another stumbling block. There is no clear and mutually agreed policy for the cross border referrals and usually decisions are made on the case to case bases.

Furthermore, different border towns are applying different practices regarding the coverage and care. Social and cultural differences about seeking the healthcare services (for example whole family accompanying the patient to the healthcare unit creating an artificial crowd) and differences in practices related with personal hygiene, child spacing, breastfeeding etc. are also major concerns.

In this connection, the following recommendations can be made to improve the health conditions of Syrian refugees. Ensuring provision of basic healthcare services inside the Syria is a must and need to be focused in all national and regional planning. There is a need for fundamental shift in response from the short term firefighting arrangements to the long-term integrated approaches to address the healthcare and its social determinants. The involvement of NGOs should be facilitated especially in raising refugee's awareness about healthcare services, community based activities and providing hygiene services.



Syrian nurse providing primary health care to Syrian refugees in Hatay Reyhanlı Turkey

There is a need to establish community health centers to provide socio- psychosocial help and information about available health services to the Syrian refugees. Moreover, efforts should be made to replicate the OIC experience of Mental Healthcare in Turkey to establish mental healthcare centers in other host countries. There is also need to design long term programmes for teaching Turkish language to Syrian refugees, training more interpreters and incorporating Syrian health workers into the system.

Finally, exodus of Syrian refugees has enormous stress on the infrastructure of the host countries and it is extremely difficult for them to absorb millions of people into their healthcare system. Therefore, securing sufficient funds for the host countries to cover the cost of healthcare for the refugees and expand and upgrade their healthcare facilities and invest in their health workforce must be emphasized in all foras.

4.3 Education

Low access to education represent a major problem in refugee hosting countries. In this context, barriers to education include school space shortages, language and curriculum, transportation, school fees as well as safety. In order to overcome this problem, the most urgent need is to put significant planning and resources into improving access for Syrian refugee children out of school.

In this context, Turkey's Ministry of National Education (MoNE) highlighted the action plan for 2017-2018. In total, 3 targets will be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Development. These include (1) increasing institutional capacity such as developing a new curriculum, distance education, establishing a new education system for Syrians, organizing workshops and conferences; (2) increasing human resources such as providing work permits, preparing online teacher training, increasing vocational training capacity (currently, there are 1,000 teachers and 1,500 new teachers will be hired as coordinators throughout Turkey and MoNE will have also 50,000 Syrian teachers and will train 3,000 teachers for Turkish courses), and (3) increasing physical capacity such as establishing more than 100 schools for Syrian refugee children.

Creating additional shifts in public schools with more attention to quality represent also an important issue. Shifts could provide additional space for government or alternative formal education. Moreover, including longer-term development planning in addition to humanitarian responses is essential. More precisely, much of the refugee response has been focusing on short-term solutions. However, planning should move to a longer-term development response involving much more resourcing and capacity-building of national education ministries.

In addition, public authorities need improved management systems to support increased responsibilities, with respect to education of Syrian refugee children. In this context, enhancing data and information in support of managing refugee education is essential. Information on education of Syrian refugee children is lacking in order to support planning. Therefore, information may be improved by collecting data on academic performance of refugee children, developing a consistent set of indicators, building capacity of government data management. Improving effectiveness and efficiency of the refugee education response with use of technology such as mobile phones, data systems and internet is also necessary.



Syrian children learning Turkish language at public schools

In Lebanon, there is a need for investment and transportation solutions in order to overcome the problems of the Syrian refugees. Communication with Syrian teachers represent also another important issue for Syrian refugee children. Awareness on the importance of education among Syrian refugee children is crucial. There is also a need to support the private institutions providing training to these children. On the other hand, adapting strategies and clear policies represent major issues for Jordan. In addition, language barriers can be solved with an academic approach.

Unemployed Syrians need to have training programmes in order to be recruited. In this context, the Vocational Education and Training Programme for the Member Countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-VET) is a programme originally designed and developed by SESRIC in order to improve the quality of vocational education and training in the public and private sectors with the aim of supporting and enhancing the opportunities for individuals in the Member Countries to develop their knowledge and skills as well as to facilitate the sharing of knowledge between OIC Member Countries. Therefore, SESRIC is ready to cooperate with NGOs, governments, regional and international organizations regarding any project about the Syrian refugees in the education sector. The Capacity Building Programmes of SESRIC which aims for the enhancement of human resources as well as courses within the framework of “Training of Trainers” (ToT) providing vocational education can also constitute important programmes for Syrians.

4.4 Employment

One of the major problems faced by Syrian refugees is their legal status and permission to work. Turkey is the only country that has introduced specific legislation to address the needs of Syrian refugees. Given the current workforce challenges, Jordan could take only limited steps to allow Syrian refugees to work. There are only about 10% of employed Syrians who obtained formal work permits mostly in camps and practically all Syrian refugees working outside camps do not have work permits. Refugees with a residency permit in northern Iraq have the legal right to work, but it is difficult to obtain residency permit without legal documentation. Even with permission to work, it is not easy to find other than low-paid work. The majority of refugees in Egypt rely on work as their primary source of income. However, they take up less skilled jobs in the informal sector due to an inability to find suitable jobs or obtain a work permit. Therefore, it is critical to facilitate administrative processes for entry into the labour market for the refugees.

In terms of working conditions, Syrians are willing to accept lower wages and harsher working conditions than local workers. Majority of Syrian refugees are young people stemming from rural areas and have considerably lower education compared to Jordanians. Syrian workers in the informal sector are generally being paid less, have to work more, and have poorer contracts compared to Jordanians in the same sector. The majority of Syrians in Lebanon reported that too few job opportunities (86%) and too little salary (76%) were the main challenges faced by their community, while only one in five Lebanese believed that there were few job opportunities for the Syrian community, or that salary received by Syrians was not sufficient to meet basic needs. Also

in Turkey, illegally working Syrian refugees earn lower than domestic employees and have no rights or protection.

In terms of impacts on national economies and local communities, increased informality deteriorates the efforts of the governments in minimizing the informal economy. In Lebanon, the impact of the Syrian crisis was found to have been variable across sectors, and sectors hiring Syrian workers reported significantly higher growth and employment levels since the crisis. There are reports of significant impacts from the influx of Syrian refugees on the local labour market, and there are strong concerns about the effects on available job opportunities, wage levels and working conditions for local people.

In addition to improper working conditions, including working below minimum wage with no social security for long working hours, the scale of child labour is a concern that needs to be addressed by implementing strict regulations and laws on child labour and raising awareness on the subject. For an effective intervention, it is important to know the skills base of the refugees, but such data are not available. Turkey is planning to conduct a survey to assess the skills base of the refugees. It is also important to encourage entrepreneurial activities by refugees. In general, hosting countries do not offer a well-planned entrepreneurship program and guidance for starting a business. There is also a lack of women empowerment programs, which needs to be considered, as women become the family breadwinner in most families. This could be done through providing support for micro projects to encourage women as well as youth to open their own small businesses.

Low economic growth in some hosting countries limits the prospects for new job opportunities. However, host country economies can be boosted with active participation of Syrians to the local economies. Supporting Syrian capital owners to invest their capital in productive areas will contribute to hosting economies. There will be a potential of creating new markets for new products through new businesses. Noting that a big number of Syrian were small farmers / land-owners in their country, idle agricultural lands can be rehabilitated for utilization and investment by skilled Syrian labour force, which can increase the production of food and animal farming and decrease the needs for agricultural import. A holding company could be set up for agriculture to facilitate agricultural production by Syrians.

The host countries will also benefit in terms of the language skills of the refugees in research, education and trade, but it is important to address the language barriers, particularly in Turkey. People working in informal economy could be targeted to enhance their employability in the formal economy through vocational training courses. This is also important for self-employment and entrepreneurship. Special mechanisms can be developed to facilitate remote services provided by Syrian refugees, particularly in the area of information and technology services.



Refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war, like the metalworker pictured here, who now resides in Turkey, have not negatively affected the economies of their host countries.

4.5 Social Integration

The social acceptance of Syrian refugees in the host countries should not be taken for granted and should not be assumed to be limitless. The huge number of Syrian refugees in the host countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq is putting a huge burden on the social fabric of the host countries and proactive measures should be taken to ensure social acceptance and enhance social integration. Generally speaking, host countries needed to formulate separate plans and strategies for the short, medium, and long term and also need to differentiate those plans according to gender, age and geography (border cities versus in-land cities). Strategies and plans will not be effective without accurate data and the first step should be the full registration of Syrian refugees and making the database of Syrian refugees available to all governmental institution and NGO for better planning and targeting of services to refugees who need it. There are numerous best practices in some of the host countries regarding social integration, these best practices must be identified and spread among host countries. Also throughout the whole process of ensuring social integration of Syrian refugees, the host countries should not place the whole burden upon themselves and must continue to hold the international community accountable to its responsibilities towards the Syrian refugees. In addition to the just mentioned general policy recommendations, host countries are advised to implement the following specific measures:

- **Eliminate the language barrier.** This is specific to Turkey's case. Current infrastructure can be used such as schools especially when these schools are not in operation during after hours, weekends, and summer vacation.
- **Recognize the importance of sport, art, and culture activities** in breaking the isolation of the Syrian refugees and in better integrating them in the host country society.
- Since many studies show that religiosity is high among Syrian refugees, **involve religious authorities** in facilitating the integration of Syrian refugees
- **Prepare the host communities** for the possibility that many of the Syrian refugees will never go back to Syria even if the Syrian crisis end. This includes making the host communities accept the residing of Syrian refugees on a permanent basis and the possibility of offering a pathway for citizenship.
- **Train government official on the on the laws** pertinent to the Syrian refugees. Ensure that all enacted laws are implemented consistently and uniformly across the country.
- **Raise awareness** among the Syrian refugees about the laws, cultural norms and values of the host countries.
- **Expand the role of community centers** which can play an important role in social integration; providing information about available services and how to access them; raising awareness about laws, rights, and responsibilities; provide training about cultural and social norms; and organize sport, art, and cultural events.
- **Effectively use the media** to change negative perceptions about Syrian refugees and increase awareness.
- **Focus on success and positive stories** (in sports, art, science...etc.) about the Syrian refugees in order to counter the negative perception being held by host communities.
- **Create safe spaces** where communities from Syrian refugees and host countries can come together and interact.

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