

CULTURES OF LEARNING

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*Conditions for
Socio-cultural
support for
refugees in
MENA*

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1. Introduction

Since 2011, over 11 million Syrians have been displaced. 6 million are internally displaced within Syria, whilst others have fled to other countries in the region, including Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. As of December 2017, 5,263,146 Syrians are registered with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq (2017). A full breakdown of registered refugees in each of the four host countries, as of December 2017, is included below:

	Lebanon	Jordan	Turkey	Iraq
Number of registered Syrian refugees	1,001,051	655,588	3,359,915	246,592
Registered Syrian refugees as percentage of total population	16%	6.9%	4.2%	0.6%

Figure 1: Registered Syrian refugees as percentage of total host population

As a consequence of this crisis, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria have had their education interrupted since 2011. Before the Syrian crisis, 26 per cent of university-aged men and women from Syrian towns and cities, and 17 per cent of men and 15 per cent of women from rural areas, were enrolled in some form of tertiary education in Syria, including bachelor degrees and vocational training programmes (El-Ghali, Berjaoui, and McKnight 2017). In this respect, Syria has a much lower rate of overall enrolment in tertiary education than is historically the case in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, something demonstrated by UNESCO's database on educational enrolment (UNESCO 2017b)¹:

	Syria	Lebanon	Jordan	Turkey
Percentage of tertiary education aged population enrolled in tertiary programmes in 2011	25.94%	49.74%	40.3%	60.73%

Figure 2: Pre-crisis figures for tertiary education enrolment in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey

¹ There are no existing UNESCO statistics on tertiary enrolment in Iraq.

In 2016, however, between one and five per cent of the total number of university age refugees from Syria living in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq were enrolled in similar tertiary education programmes regionally (El-Ghali, Berjaoui, and McKnight 2017; Dakkak, Yacoub, and Qarout 2017). The long-term trend is also concerning: approximately 861,000 school-aged child refugees from Syria are out of school in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt (UNICEF 2016: 2) constituting what has been dubbed by international media and aid/development agencies as the ‘lost generation’ whose limited enrolment in primary and secondary education will no doubt close off future opportunities to pursue any form of tertiary education. This is compounded by the fact that 23 per cent of the total number of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR are under the age of 18 (UNHCR 2017), suggesting a long-term challenge with regards to expanding access to tertiary education for this ‘lost generation’.

This report, based on an extensive literature review as well as semi-structured interviews with practitioners and service providers, highlights the challenges that exist in providing access to quality tertiary education in the contexts of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. It also provides an overview of the provision of tertiary education opportunities that exist regionally and in each of the countries covered by this report. In particular, this report highlights several barriers and opportunities that exist in relation to tertiary education provision for Syrian refugees, such as documentation, legal status, language, accreditation, financial challenges – including opportunity cost and broader socio-economic barriers – and possibilities of employment. Attention is also given to the numerous activities, programmes and initiatives of humanitarian/development organisations, universities and practitioners working to improve the state of tertiary education provision for Syrian refugees in the four host countries.

This report also critically examines the gaps that exist in the literature, noting in particular the fact that research on this area by the international community is fairly recent, focusing on tertiary education as a route to livelihoods since 2014 (Qarout, Yacoub, and Dakkak 2017). Alongside the relative novelty of the literature on this topic, one further problem highlighted is the lack of a thorough intersectional analysis of refugee lives. As a result, this report also aims to look at Syrian refugee access to education from the perspectives of different factors, including employability, trauma, economic status/class, gender, ability and the broader legal/humanitarian framework that governs the lives of refugees. Moreover, this report also highlights, in conjunction with the consulted literature and the findings of the interviews, areas where opportunities to improve policy, evidence and overall responses to tertiary education provision can be found in the context of the Syrian crisis.

In order to do this, we have consulted most of the literature on access to tertiary education in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey generally, as well as in relation to the particular context of the Syria crisis. This report draws on the key assessments

gleamed from this literature, the gaps that exist in research and practice, and analysis of the data gathered through interviews held since November 2017 with tertiary education providers and practitioners operating to support Syrian refugees.

2. Methodology

Research data has been mainly collected through primary and secondary data methods, which included interviews with stakeholders and desk based research (literature review). To understand and explore the educational opportunities available to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, we have used a total of 37 semi-structured interviews with service providers, representing local and international non-governmental organisations, government officials, researchers, and academics. We have selected these interviewees, as we were commissioned to assess tertiary education provision from the perspective of providers, rather than refugees themselves. Whereas we mainly focused on stakeholders' perspectives on the state of tertiary education provision to Syrian refugees, we have also crosschecked interviews with research and data available on the topic (triangulation). Due to inconsistencies in some of the answers provided during the interviews, we ensured accuracy in reporting as much as possible to present the descriptions closest to reality on the ground.

This research project took place over a period of three months and over three stages. Initially, the team reviewed all accessible literature about Syrian refugees' access to education. The second stage consisted of interviews with relevant stakeholders, while simultaneously surveying tertiary education providers in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq to produce a database with the providers and the type of services they provide. The final stage focused on analysing interview data thematically to integrate in the report.

Interviews:

The core of the methodology was data analysis and semi-structured open-ended interviews. A pre-determined but flexible question guide/agenda was set prior to the interviews. This interviewing technique proved to be very useful in this case. This form of interviewing is also very flexible, allowing room for probing and follow-up questions (Cargan, 2007), brings specific themes into conversation with the participants, and creates a shared co-equal status between the interviewer and the interviewee (Fontana and Frey, 2005).

Secondary Data:

Secondary data collection methods included (1) a desk-based literature review, (2) a consultation of existing WE research and expertise, (3) an analysis of all existing

reports relating to tertiary education provision in the four countries and all relevant reports written by major organisations.

Sampling:

For the interviewee sample, we have initially surveyed the organisations and universities meaningfully engaged in the issue of Syrian refugees' access to tertiary education in the target countries. We have ensured that we interview at least a representative of a university in each country. However, the greatest challenge has been in accessing people in Iraq who work on tertiary education provision for Syrian refugees. This is due to the political situation in Iraq, where the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI) government is extremely hard-pressed to respond to IDPs (internally displaced persons), as well as Syrian refugees. Additionally, the independence referendum that took place in KRI rendered the political and legal system unclear. This presents an imbalance in the data, as of the 37 interviews only four interviewees were in KRI. However, we have resorted to literature in order to create a balance in the findings, and we have also interviewed a refugee in Iraq.

In addition to surveying and selecting representatives to interview for this project, we have also used a snowballing technique to access other stakeholders, whereby an interviewee recommends another person/organisation to interview. We have interviewed stakeholders from the following organisations and universities: University of Birmingham, Uni Med Research Unit, Al Fanar Media, Sonbola, American University of Beirut, German Jordan University, UNHCR, ARDD, Aljamiya Project, Sharing Perspectives Foundation, Center for Lebanese Studies, UNICEF, Free Syrian University, Jusoor Syria, ANHRE, Kiron, AVSI Foundation, Edraak, Amal Educational Centre, Killis Universty, Asfari Foundation, Kiron, Spark Foundation, Jamiya, NRC, HOPES, COSV, and UNESCO.

3. Overview of Regional Challenges

Refugee access to tertiary education is but one of the many challenges facing host countries, practitioners, humanitarian organisations and communities responding to the Syrian crisis. However, the protracted nature of displacement, which has forced hundreds of thousands of refugees to suspend their education to instead support diverse livelihood and survival strategies, has produced an ‘education crisis – a lost generation of children without education across multiple countries of the Middle East’ (Culberston and Constant 2015: 73). As such, much of the literature on this topic has produced recommendations and findings that situate the barriers in accessing tertiary education in relation to this wider context of precarity, insecurity and protraction familiar to many refugees from Syria. However, there is a need to ensure research into tertiary education provision adopts a more nuanced, intersectional and context driven analysis so that the data gathered is able to better reflect the diverse experiences and perceptions of tertiary education provision for refugees from Syria. In building on this assessment, and in consultation with the existing literature, the following key regional challenges must also be addressed:

Coordination:

Efforts to provide and enhance access to higher education for refugees from Syria have been previously criticised for lacking any effective coordination mechanisms. This has meant that, in light of the Syrian crisis, ‘many countries have been struggling to deal with [the situation on] their own for years’ (Al-Fanar Media 2015: 1). In response to this, Al-Fanar Media has held several region-wide workshops with practitioners and organisations that aim to facilitate broader coordination through working groups and knowledge exchange. In a workshop in 2016, it was reported that coordination ‘of a kind that has rarely been seen before in international humanitarian efforts’ (Al-Fanar Media 2016) was still needed in light of a) increasing pressures on materials (Frey 2013), b) lack of qualified teachers and c) failures in tertiary education outreach to prospective refugee students. As a result, participants of these workshops went on to argue that coordination may be better facilitated through the creation of online platforms accessible both by refugee students and applicants, as well as service providers and universities.

Nevertheless, some coordination mechanisms exist such as regular meetings amongst (I)NGOs, and government institutions in host countries under the umbrella of sector working groups or sector coordination meetings. However, these meetings do not lead to the strategic coordination of the type demanded by the crisis. Instead, information provided during such meetings focuses on practicalities and functions rather than on overall strategic planning at the national, regional and international level. However, in Jordan, the government recently created a coordination mechanism in the form of an online system where all funders and service providers are able to deposit information about their projects. The projects are approved by the government (centrally) according to certain criteria that includes overall needs assessments and outreach

priorities. This is similar to the Lebanese government's coordinated response to Syrian education needs through the Reaching All Children Through Education (RACE) programme.

Language:

Many higher education courses and programmes in Lebanon and Jordan are often instructed in English or French (in the case of Lebanon), especially Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, but also some arts and humanities courses too. This is not so much the case for vocational training, which is often instructed in Arabic. As such, this is more of a barrier to higher education in particular, constituting in this regard a major challenge for Syrian refugees who lack English and/or French language skills. Similarly, in Turkey, where subjects are not instructed in English, courses are taught in Turkish (Abu-Assab and Nasser-Eddin 2015). In Lebanon, some courses are also instructed in French (El-Ghali, Berjaoui, and McKnight 2017). Overall, there is also a distinct lack of Arabic content across the board, and also in online and distance learning options, limiting overall access and attainment (INEE 2017).

Outreach:

There is also a challenge in communicating opportunities, such as scholarships or training programmes, to potential refugee applicants. The Norwegian Refugee Council's Paul Fean has described how 'young people are very frustrated about finding out very late about scholarships and missing deadlines' (Al-Fanar Media 2016). Outreach that focuses on refugee camps can at times be successful, but it is much harder to disseminate opportunities to those living in urban areas or in non-camp settings, which account for the vast majority of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey. More precisely, outreach in camps can be limited by the lack of mobility, tools or resources at the disposal of camp-based refugees, meaning that even when opportunities are known about, other challenges, such as a lack of documentation or financial resources, force individuals to miss deadlines or opportunities for scholarships, for example.

There is also an additional barrier to effective outreach presented by class. This has not been covered in depth by the literature consulted as part of this review, yet it appears to be an extremely significant factor in determining the outcomes of outreach efforts. For example, as one interview participant observed, refugees living in cities with prerequisite language skills also often belong to a higher socio-economic class, in turn granting them better access to scholarships and higher education opportunities, in particular, programmes offered to study in Europe and North America. In contrast, refugees from less privileged backgrounds, who live in poverty and/or those who prefer to make a living (mainly in the informal economy, given the various legal restrictions host countries have placed on a refugee's right to work or to access certain professions) rather than enrol in an educational program, are not as easily engaged by outreach efforts. Whilst more research is needed, this is arguably the result of a failure

on the part of outreach efforts to address the concerns some refugees have about the plausibility of tertiary education, and particularly higher education opportunities. These relate to concerns about the impact studying may have on short-term livelihoods, plus the fact that legal barriers to employment for refugees may prevent graduates from finding work even with tertiary level qualifications.

Limited secondary and primary education opportunities and/or enrolment:

The protracted nature of the Syrian crisis has seen lower overall levels of youth participation in primary and secondary education, producing what has been described as a ‘lost generation’ (El-Ghali, Berjaoui, and McKnight 2017). In terms of improving access to higher education, it is increasingly the case that young people lack the prerequisite qualifications to access many higher education courses. As such, ‘the pathway to tertiary education is made more difficult with many students outside the formal education system. Increasing the number of Syrians in primary and secondary education and retaining them could lead into higher enrolments in tertiary education’ (Al-Hawamdeh and El-Ghali 2017: 23). The fact that the crisis has interrupted the vast majority of Syrian youth’s primary and secondary level education suggests that this major challenge will only increase with time.

Demand vs Supply:

The availability of scholarship places is far outstripped by the level of demand for places. For example, UNHCR’s DAFI programme, whilst having been scaled up in response to the Syrian crisis, is unable to keep up with demand. An Al-Fanar report also highlighted similar trends across other scholarship schemes:

	Number of applications:	Number of places:
DAAD Scholarships	5,000	221
IIE/Jusoor Scholarships	4,000	43
Chevening Scholarships	1,213	8
Erasmus Scholarships	1,000	100
University of Gaziantep Scholarships	228	15
Said Foundation Scholarships	2018	80

Figure 3: 2015 figures for scholarship applications to places offered (Al-Fanar Media 2015)

Overall, there is a huge gap between the opportunities provided and the overall level of demand (Al Ahmad 2017). However, even for those who secure a scholarship, a number of the other challenges identified in the literature, but especially socio-economic factors and legal restrictions placed on refugees, force many to drop-out of schemes. Despite the literature observing that, even for those with scholarships, the risk of dropping-out is high, there is little analysis or evidence as to the drivers behind

these drop-out rates, and what can plausibly be done in the long-term to support those with scholarships to finish their studies. One programme that is working to fill this gap, however, is the UNESCO funded Quality Universal Education for Syrian Students and Teachers (QUESST), which launched in 2015. This currently supports 206 students (40 per cent Lebanese and 60 per cent Syrian) enrolled in three Lebanese universities (The Arab Open University, Haigazian University and University Libano-Francais) but who are at risk of dropping out due to financial constraints. Moreover, interview findings suggest that overall applications by Syrian youth for key scholarships such as UNHCR's DAFI programme are in decline. Given this, this report aims to develop a more up to date picture vis-à-vis the causes and consequences of drop-out rates, through interviews with key stakeholders.

Accreditation and qualifications:

Many refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq find that they are unable to apply for or access tertiary education because they cannot produce proper copies of their past qualifications, often because they were left in Syria or have been destroyed during the crisis. This severely restricts the ability of refugees to access programmes. For example, 'out of 400 applicants for a scholarship program, only 130 had the necessary documents to enrol at a Jordanian university' (Al-Fanar Media 2016: 7). Some universities and initiatives are attempting to verify degrees or offer opportunities to demonstrate ability through specially tailored entry exams. NOKUT (Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) verifies degrees through an intensive interview process that could be a model for others to replicate (*ibid.*). This challenge also interacts with a number of socio-economic obstacles. For example, recovering or securing copies of past attainment and academic certificates can be expensive so whilst such documents are accessible in theory, they remain de facto out of reach for less privileged Syrians (ILO 2015; Dakkak, Yacoub, and Qarout 2017).

In response to these challenges, SPARK in particular are coordinating exams that assess the ability of refugees from Syria in lieu of any required certificates. In partnership with universities across the region, these initiatives are making it possible for those without proper accreditation or resources to access tertiary education opportunities (see appendix one).

Trauma:

Displacement can be an extremely traumatic experience, preventing a 'wide variety of human talent and resources' from reaching their full potential (El-Ghali, Chen, and Yeagar 2010). Indicators for refugee attainment suggest more difficulty in securing top grades, which can deter some universities, particularly private ones, from offering general admittance for fear that overall performance may decrease. This perception can limit opportunities and undermine refugee integration and wellbeing in the long run (Shuyab, Makkouk, and Tuttunji 2014; King 2014) and help to stigmatise

refugees as a burden, reducing both individual wellbeing plus overall efforts to integrate refugees into society.

4. Country Specific Tertiary Provision

4.1. Lebanon

Current status of Tertiary Education provision opportunities for refugees:

At least 400,000 school age Syrians have arrived in Lebanon since 2011 (Shuyab, Makkouk, and Tuttunji 2014). Responding to this massive number of school-age Syrians has been difficult: Lebanese regulations limit the right to public education to Lebanese citizens only. Language issues prevail too: whilst the Lebanese University (public) teaches mostly in Arabic, STEM subjects are instructed in English or French. Whilst many efforts have been undertaken to overcome these challenges in Lebanon, 95 per cent of Syrian refugees aged 15-24 are not enrolled in secondary or tertiary education in Lebanon (El-Ghali, Berjaoui, and McKnight 2017). Moreover, whilst programmes that target primary education exist, such as the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) programme, 48 per cent of 6-14 year olds are not enrolled in primary or secondary education in Lebanon, suggesting long-term access to tertiary education for displaced Syrians will remain low (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, all refugees who have completed the official high school in Lebanon (Thanawieh Aamah Lubnanieh) or equivalent are able to access public or private universities. Establishing that a prior qualification is equivalent to the Thanawieh Aamah Lubnanieh can, however, be a complicated process. The Equivalency Committee of MEHE must review all certificates from other Arab countries, and establish whether or not the applicant also has a residency permit (UNESCO 2017a). The need to present a past certificate is sometimes difficult for refugees as these can be lost, damaged or simply left behind in the flight from Syria. This challenge is compounded by the fact that some private institutions also ask for school transcripts. For graduate study, a certificate of qualification, copy of university degree and complete university grades are required. Up until recently and in all instances, residency has been required, meaning refugees must be registered with UNHCR. However, whilst over 1,000,000 refugees are registered with UNHCR in Lebanon, an estimated 300,000-500,000 remain unregistered. Moreover, UNHCR has been banned from registering additional refugees since 2015, meaning the legal status and/or documentation required to access services is often in doubt for recently arrived Syrians. Nevertheless, for those who have resided in Lebanon since before 2015, it can sometimes be difficult to renew residency permits, and costly, creating another challenge, particularly for Syrian men as they are regularly stopped at checkpoints in Lebanon by security officials who perceive them as a threat. This restricts overall mobility, further limiting access to education institutions, whilst contributing to a sense of precarity that undermines the ability of refugees to plan for long-term futures

in the country. Moreover, 70 per cent of the total population of refugees from Syria live below the poverty line, undermining efforts to provide tertiary education by forcing many young refugees to choose between livelihoods and an education.

Refugees from Syria are also not granted a government protection card, meaning that they are considered undocumented migrants. Therefore, Syrians who want to apply for university are considered international students. Moreover, people who want to apply for vocational training and courses in Lebanon have to go through the same process as someone applying for university. In 2016, the Lebanese government issued a decree stating that scholarship providers should not pay tuition fees towards public vocational courses to Syrian students who are not registered with UNHCR. This put huge constraints on tertiary education providers, meaning that they were required to secure permission from the government before registering students in vocational training. This led those providers to seek private vocational training schools through which to enroll students, but also left many unable to meet the overall demand owing to financial constraints. Nevertheless, formal vocational training and education are open to Syrians and funded through UNICEF. UNICEF coordinates with the Ministry of Labour to support students to access these programmes (usually 2 years).

Challenges and barriers of tertiary education provision in Lebanon:

A diverse range of challenges and barriers face Syrian refugees' access to tertiary and higher education in Lebanon. However, before going into detail about the exact challenges that arose through the literature and interviews, it is first important to highlight that obstacles and challenges differ for both tertiary and higher education. It has been obvious from the interviews that the government places more restrictions on Syrian refugee access to tertiary education like vocational training rather than higher education, because they fear that it will create competition between refugees and the Lebanese population. One interviewee working with an international organisation said: 'the issue of vocational training is very political in Lebanon, and that's why Syrian's access to those vocational training proved to be much more difficult'.

Lack of secondary education

The main challenge relates to the declining number of students with required prior education training, in particular qualifications for secondary level schooling. Young people who left education for a number of years are often unable to go back to school (secondary education), barring them from further tertiary education. Moreover, even for those who begin secondary education, the challenges facing them even at this level of their education, such as economic difficulties and/or the need to support their family, means secondary education drop-out rates are very high in Lebanon. Moreover, an academic at Birmingham University stated that one of the main issues that is often overlooked in existing literature relates to the gap between secondary school, and those pursuing tertiary education. In other words, Syrian refugees drop

out of secondary school in order for them to work and help their families (see section below on livelihoods). Thus, if Syrian refugees do not have access to secondary school they will not be able to access tertiary education.

Livelihoods

The conditions of Syrian refugees are very unstable in Lebanon; Syrian refugees have to support their families financially to secure a basic standard of living and that results in many students leaving education.

Time commitment

While options to be involved and enrolled in vocational training is available and funded in many cases, the demand is low. This is because the conditions (pre-requisites) to be able to enrol might disqualify young people. For example, documentation (legal papers) and/or completion of certain years in school. Moreover, uncertainty surrounding education policies is one of the reasons that lowers overall demand. Similarly, the ability to commit to long-term programmes is limited and difficult. This is also due to factors related to mobility: young people are highly mobile, often moving long distances for work and home. For example, UNICEF offers three, six and nine month TVET programmes. Almost no one enrolls in the nine month programmes, whilst the majority enrol in the three-month programmes. The nine month non-formal, non-certified programmes can be divided into three month-long modules. However, the formal modules are pre-set and non-flexible.

Cost

Syrian refugee students cannot afford the tuition fees of the university and also there is a huge demand on scholarships and usually the number of students applying for the scholarships is much higher than the scholarships. Cost (both direct and indirect) prevents young people from enrolling in tertiary education. Whilst donor support exists, this does not cover the overall level of demand, and often falls short of full support for living costs and so forth.

Documentation

Lack of documentation, particularly for young men, prevents their movement and access to tertiary education institutions of tertiary education. Many young men also face a higher risk of being stopped at checkpoints in Lebanon, leading to possible arrest or deportation. In the case of Lebanon, Syrian refugees especially are reluctant of pursuing tertiary education because of the existence of check points. Residence permits are not easy to acquire in Lebanon, and are very hard to renew if they expire.

More generally, the inconsistency in policy and implementation that comes as a result of the precarious legal framework in Lebanon makes people lose faith in tertiary education: many question its worth in light of these obstacles. Moreover, Syrian refugees who need to apply for university have to provide their high school

certificates. These also need to be authenticated, which costs between 200 and 400 dollars.

Palestinians from Syria encounter a more complex situation: these refugees must possess an entry permit approved by the General Directorate of General Security, residency of between one to three years, or an exit and return permit. These obstacles are so severe that they drastically limit Syrian Palestinian access to tertiary education in Lebanon, forcing them to ‘remain in a war zone’, a situation that amounts to an ‘international violation of refugee rights’ (*ibid.*: 22). This difference between the situation facing Palestinian Syrian Refugees and Syrian refugees is exacerbated by the long-standing divergence in protection regimes that exist for these populations. UNRWA is mandated to respond to the needs of Palestinians, whereas UNHCR is responsible for all other refugees. The latter leaves several additional options open to Syrians, such as resettlement, as well as access to rights that are not applicable for Palestinians from Syria placing them in an even more precarious situation in general (Abu-Moghli and Bitarie 2015).

Economic planning and perceptions about the value of education

There is also a considerable belief among refugees in Lebanon that the level of education is inversely proportionate to employability. In this sense, the higher the education pursued by an individual, the less likely they are of also finding a job. This perception is largely reflected by the job market in Lebanon, where even highly skilled/trained Lebanese citizens are unable to find skilled work. The job market is also more restrictive toward refugees, who cannot be employed in a number of skilled industries, such as medicine and engineering, even if they may have attained a degree in these subjects in Lebanon. In recognition of this, many young people would rather not waste time and money on education, and start working as soon as they can.

Inconsistencies in student choice and service provision

There is a huge gap between what many students want to study and what providers offer in terms of scholarships. For example, in Lebanon students expressed their interest in studying history, Arabic literature and philosophy because these are the only subjects that are taught in Arabic. However, scholarships, which were provided to them, do not cover those subjects because the graduates of these subjects are most likely to be unemployed.

Access to technology

Data showed that most Syrian refugees have difficulty accessing the Internet, as it is extremely costly. Moreover, there is lack of availability of computers and laptops particularly in camps, which leaves many students unable to participate in any online courses. Additionally, regular and prolonged power cuts in Lebanon exacerbates the lack to access to the Internet for refugees and marginalised communities.

Language

English and/or French are the main languages of instruction at Lebanese Universities. This creates a barrier for Syrian students who do not have those language skills. At the level of higher education, technical terminologies add a further level of difficulty to language accessibility.

Complexities within the higher education system

The Lebanese tertiary education landscape itself more broadly generates challenges and complexities, but also opportunities to increase access through partnerships and coordination. For example, the Lebanese tertiary education sector is largely private, with only 30 per cent of the country's tertiary education institutions running publicly. This means that many institutions have particular and diverse systems for the enrolment and teaching of courses, in contrast to Syria's more homogenous public-sector framework (97 per cent of Syrian higher education institutions were public before the war, and all instruction is in Arabic). However, this diversified and specialised education system also brings with it some challenges in terms of cost. Even public universities cost a minimum of 700 USD and a maximum of 900 USD per year, whilst private institutions cost between 2,500 USD to 18,000 USD for the most prestigious schools (UNESCO 2017a). Whilst several scholarships exist for refugees from Syria, as well as coordinated fee reductions (see appendix two), these generally do not meet the overall level of demand, as fee reductions can still leave courses costing too much for most refugees from Syria. Moreover, some private institutions have expressed reluctance to let Syrians in for fear they would reduce educational outcomes (Shuyab, Makkouk, and Tuttunji 2014: 109), reflecting what one author described as a general 'sense of hostility towards Syrians [...] on some university campuses' (King 2014).

This hostility is mirrored in the different quality of higher education available to refugees and hosts. Budget constraints on the government often mean public universities and institutions, as well as the primary and secondary schools available to Syrian refugee youth, are failing the mark (Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014: 67). However, the volume of private institutions that do exist in Lebanon has meant that many opportunities and collaborations between institutions and humanitarian organisations have emerged in response to the needs of refugees from Syria, with several quality solutions forming, some of which are detailed in appendix two. These include the adoption of more flexible and responsive curriculums (Shuyab, Makkouk, and Tuttunji 2014: 100). More broadly, this has also allowed universities to operate as key drivers of the Lebanese economy, producing 'market-oriented' graduates that fill critical skills gaps, to the benefit of both refugees and hosts. However, more joint coordination and reform is needed in the long-term (El-Ghali 2011), plus more substantial, development-oriented responses to refugee education needs to counteract the economic and social precarity that pervades the lives of refugees from Syria.

Competition between refugees and hosts

Furthermore, Syrian refugee students who want to enrol in Lebanese universities are faced with competition with Lebanese students. Many of them are placed in hard situations where they cannot compete because of their educational backgrounds.

Resettlement

Many young Syrians in Lebanon struggle with the precarious legal and financial situation, encouraging many to seek resettlement to a third country as a long-term strategy. Hence, their motivation to enrol in higher education in Lebanon is hindered, regardless of the fact that resettlement takes a long time and is not guaranteed.

Role of the Lebanese government:

The government is facilitating the ability of Syrian refugees to enrol in secondary education without documentation, which in the long term will lead to higher enrolment in tertiary education. However, the decision on the issue of documentation is not clear. Various circulars from the government are issued regularly, sometimes negating/cancelling each other out, producing inconsistencies that no doubt make it difficult for refugees to plan ahead, leading to lower overall demand for tertiary education opportunities.

In February 2018, during an informal conversation with a MEHE representative, we were informed that MEHE is open to accepting 50/50 blended learning, in recognition of many of the challenges highlighted above, in particular documentation and cost. Under these schemes, students can attend 50% online modules and 50% face to face modules at Lebanese universities, allowing their diplomas to be accredited. Nevertheless, this decision has not been guaranteed by a government circular or regulation. It is also unclear how universities will implement such blended courses. There are also negotiations between universities and MEHE to ensure that original certificates will be waved as a prerequisite for enrolment, under the condition that students will have them available before graduation. This will allow refugees to begin courses in advance of presenting their prior education qualifications, which can often take a very long time to acquire.

Coordination mechanisms between service providers:

UNICEF has been developing a coordination mechanism for two years, to pull together all providers of vocational training programmes in Lebanon (4 Ministries are involved in TVET). There is also a 'road map' that is currently being finalised by UNICEF, which will be published and endorsed by all 4 ministries. The road map consults with workers unions, the private sector and NGOs, bringing together all actors working with youth under the umbrella of TVET. This road map will highlight all the given conditions and priorities to make sure all providers are on the same page.

Stakeholders in Lebanon stated that there is not a clear coordination mechanism between different service providers of education. There is, however, something called higher education roundtables that are organised by UNESCO. These have created the

education groups as a working group where stakeholders within the education sector meet every month and discuss their work, certain cases, the services they provide and so on. Having said that, most interviewees based in Lebanon emphasised that those meetings have not resulted in the development of an effective mechanism that might help strategic planning and coordination.

Furthermore, and despite these efforts, there are numerous barriers ahead of establishing coordination mechanisms. For example, working with young people (those at the age of tertiary education) means that some of the actors fall under a number of sectors. For example, a youth officer at one organisation explained that, to be able to coordinate their education work, they also often had to be involved in a number of other coordination mechanisms for health, well-being, livelihood, social stability and so on. Involvement in these coordination mechanisms can be overwhelming, time consuming and redundant. They do not necessarily facilitate partnerships and illuminate and/or limit duplication. The scale of intervention is too large, which means that there is a lot of staff; many are mobile as well (in and out of the country), which diminishes the continuity and consistency of the coordination mechanisms. The response needs to be quick and coordination and collaboration might slow the response.

Overall, coordination in Lebanon is patchy. One interviewee said: ‘coordination between stakeholders is a huge problem, there is no collaboration, it is more of a competition. There is also a lot of duplication, and in these meetings, it is always the same things, no future steps.’ However, another interviewee stated that whilst coordination mechanisms are improving, it often happens informally, without concrete improvements overall. Ensuring that coordination efforts are both more effective and responsive is therefore a priority, especially in light of the diverse needs that are generated by the challenges highlighted above.

Data also showed that there is not a specific system that tracks students’ enrollment in universities. Whilst Spark has developed a very thorough tracking system for all its programs (his database tracks students’ names, place of residence, university’s enrollment, subject and so on), it has been said that the governmental ministries do not provide details on the numbers, which otherwise might help support such initiatives. UNHCR also has a tracking system, through which they track registered refugees. However, data shows that even this tracking system does not track the numbers of students who are enrolled in tertiary education.

Online learning:

Given the challenges highlighted above, along with efforts by MEHE and other providers to introduce blended learning opportunities in Lebanon, it makes sense that online learning is increasingly seen as a critical opportunity to improve the provision of tertiary education. However, it remains difficult to determine the real numbers of

people involved. Furthermore, and as a result, the overall success – and desirability of such options in the eyes of refugees – is still not known.

Intersectional approaches – tracking diverse needs:

Camp and non-camp

There is a difference in the quality and availability of tertiary education services for refugees from Syria living in camps and those who live outside of camps or in urban areas. Interviews showed that people who live in the camps are much more likely to have information about education services such as, courses, scholarships, educational opportunities than people who live in urban settings. It is also difficult for most refugees who live in urban areas to know about those programs as they live far from where the activities are taking place. Therefore, it has been apparent that there is huge problem in the outreach to Syrian refugees who live outside the camps.

Providers use multiple modalities for outreach: home visits, intermediaries like Community Based Organisation (CBOs), media (traditional and social), distributing leaflets through local faith communities, organisation and through community events. WhatsApp is also used extensively in the camps to spread messages related to education opportunities and scholarships. It is particularly difficult to reach refugees who are not registered with UNHCR. As mentioned above, registration is a prerequisite for the majority of services, with UNHCR registration papers used as a form of documentation.

Class

Class has also been a factor in determining whether Syrian refugees can access post schooling or not. In other words, post-schooling education is dependent on being elite in the first place. For example, as one interviewee working with an international foundation that provides scholarships stated, refugees coming from a relatively good socioeconomic background can allow their children to go into higher education as it has been clear from the interviews that most scholarships only cover tuition fees rather than both fees and living costs. Therefore, the real cost of enrolling in tertiary opportunities ensures refugees from disadvantaged backgrounds find it much harder to justify taking part in tertiary education, regardless of whether or not they may have successfully secured a scholarship for their fees. Moreover, this reality pushes Syrians from poor backgrounds to prioritise and seek any kind of economic activity to improve their livelihoods, reducing faith in education as a means of improving opportunities in the long-run. As one interviewee working in a research organisation in Europe said: ‘Many Syrians do not have access to food and water – the basic needs – so they will for sure seek any kind of economic activity to support their families and lose the hope of pursuing their education’

Racism and discrimination

One of the key issues that Syrian refugees face in Lebanon is that they are exposed to racism and discrimination by some members of the host community. Syrian refugees do not feel safe and/or welcomed in Lebanon. They are seen as a burden and are treated as ‘guests’ that will either go back to Syria or seek asylum in a third country. This feeling of unsafety that the Syrian refugee population is experiencing contributes to further isolation, and feelings of precarity that undermine their ability to plan for long-term futures, including long-term educational futures too.

Gender and disability

It has been apparent from the interviews that women and girls are encouraged to pursue tertiary education, often over men, because families fear that women will end up on the street and engaged in ‘less respectable’ activities to generate income. As for young boys, the opposite expectation exists: men are encouraged to become the providers of the family and seek work outside of the home. Moreover, interviews have also stressed that the provision of online courses is very gendered. In other words, men are more likely to access online courses than women because they have more access to technology, laptops and computers.

The provision of educational opportunities to Syrian refugees overlooks disability and does not take into consideration physical and/or mental disability. However, despite this gap, there is a real lack of thorough research here.

4.2. Jordan

Current status of Tertiary Education provision opportunities for refugees:

Jordan has a very large higher education sector. However, until recently, the response to the needs of Syrian refugees has been critiqued for a lack of coordination (Sherab and Tranchik 2016: 7). Main challenges relate to the high number of child refugees not in formal education (Christophersen 2015: 1), plus prevailing economic difficulties that limit opportunities for jobs and futures for graduates in the country (Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014: 66). In a positive step, higher education has been factored into the 2015 Jordan Response Plan (JRP), which has worked to counteract some of the earlier criticisms of under-coordination in Jordan.

Public schooling is also ‘overburdened’ (Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014: 3) in Jordan, meaning long-term outcomes for Syrian youth are substantially lower than is comparatively the case for Jordanians. This has reduced opportunities to pursue higher education, impacting on the overall aspirations of some young people from Syria. For example, some scholarships prioritise masters over undergraduate degrees, which may not be suitable for many given the increasing gap in skills evident in the current generation of university age Syrian youth. This is also reflected in the interviews, where one individual remarked how applications for DAAD scholarships

in Jordan were reducing year by year. As a result, ‘more programs need to be designed and created for this section of Syrian youth in Jordan’ (Sherab and Tranchik 2016: 27).

Nevertheless, the pressures placed on the Jordanian education system, communities and the economy by the arrival of refugees from Syria has produced what one author described as a climate of insecurity, leading to the ‘loss of a generation of university graduates’ (Watenpaugh, Fricke, and Siegel 2013: 5). Again, this reflects how the refugee is placed in a precarious situation by the broader economic, social and legal challenges that they face. In this context, strategising for long term futures remains difficult, encouraging many to pursue livelihoods in the informal economy instead of tertiary education in Jordan.

This is particularly the case for refugees in camps, such as Za’atari. Refugees living there have very limited opportunities to pursue higher education despite a significant interest in such an option on the part of resident youths, resulting in a sense of despondency among Syrian youth in Jordanian camps (Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014: 66). As with the situation in Lebanon, aspirations are held back by legal frameworks, a lack of documentation and restrictions on mobility and financial capital. Delays in registration with UNHCR also prolong time out of school, and subsequently affect long-term aspirations of attending higher education institutions (*ibid.*: 65). UNHCR Jordan also requires that refugees renew their status every six months. This creates a sense of limbo, deterring individuals and their families from pursuing long-term strategies for a life in Jordan: in six months they could potentially go to another country or return to Syria (Christophersen 2015: 17). Nevertheless, in camps, there are a number of INGOs and charities/NGOs under royal patronage (Al Hay’at Al Hashimieh). Many of these provide non-formal training in computer skills and language courses, for example. These courses are short-term and they do not provide refugees with accredited certificates, yet they are widely implemented for those in camps.

In urban settings, there is a high prevalence of increased risk: whilst in camps individuals are disconnected from universities (Watenpaugh, Fricke, and Siegel 2013:14), the challenges of living in a city can make it impossible for urban dwelling refugees to amass the time and financial resources to study. Refugees in urban areas ‘lack stable sources of income and struggle to meet their basic needs’ (*Ibid.*: 13). This insecurity is compounded by the absence of spaces in which prospective and current students can meet and socialise. In light of various restrictions on movement, and the need to renew residency permits, many refugees from Syria also experience insecurities that they may be returned to a refugee camp, further limiting access to education and the opportunities that being in a city provide.

Online education has become an alternate model to increase access to tertiary education in Jordan, especially for those who live in camps and have restrictions

placed on their mobility. However, online learning is not often accepted when transferring credit and therefore students in online learning programs will not be able to use the certification that they receive through such programs' (Sherab and Tranchik 2016: 20). There is also evidence to suggest that refugees do not prefer online learning: instead Syrian youth appear to incline toward face-to-face learning opportunities (Fincham n.d.). This is informed by the various barriers that exist with regard to accessing online education, such as limited internet access, which is also reflected in the small retention rate for online courses (Greenway, Hillers, and Rampelt 2016) offered by organisations like Kiron (see appendix one).

Overall, both public and private universities in Jordan accept refugees. However, public universities have a quota for the acceptance of refugees and they deal with them based on the same criteria as international students. This means that the fees are high. Private universities also charge high fees. Nevertheless, Syrians in Jordan are entitled to a government protection card, which means that they have automatic access to different rights such as health and basic education. Having said that does not mean that they have good quality of delivery to those rights but, in comparison to Lebanon, Syrians do get direct access, albeit these still cost through fees, limiting access overall.

Challenges and barriers of tertiary education provision in Jordan:

Higher education opportunities that are provided in Jordan largely fail to respond to the diverse needs of Syrian refugees as they are framed by a variety of contexts, from camp-based refugees, to those who live in urban areas and so on. Whilst there is certainly a large amount of initiatives relating to tertiary education in Jordan, the majority of work completed focuses on expanding what is already available. As a result, many of the more marginal needs continue to go un-met. These needs are diverse, and largely relate to the various specific challenges and barriers listed below.

Lack of secondary education

As in Lebanon, many school age refugees from Syria have not completed or are not enrolled in secondary education, meaning they lack the qualifications to pursue tertiary level opportunities.

Documentation

Not all refugees from Syria are in possession of certificates proving prior educational attainment. As a result, some students who have otherwise completed the required pre-tertiary level schooling in Syria are not able to enrol on courses in Jordan. Whilst they would be entitled to begin a course upon producing their certificate, this would mean returning to Syria to collect it, either from a government ministry or from home, both of which remain impossible. If refugees do not have their certificates then have to take the Jordanian high school certificate. This is disadvantageous as it is completely different from the Syrian system. Additionally, those students who already

passed this level in Syria are discouraged and demotivated to re-take the high school exams in Jordan.

Employability and work permits

Restrictions imposed on employment and employability for refugees in Jordan discourages refugees from pursuing tertiary education. Refugees who complete university or technical degrees in many cases are not allowed to work using their attained skills. Work permits, when granted by the government, limit Syrian refugees to specific low-skilled jobs, undermining the long-term practical benefits of pursuing tertiary education.

Cost

Lack of financial assistance to students who have been granted scholarships was also noted as a significant barrier. One interviewee highlighted that the problem is not with the provision of educational opportunities because there are so many; the problem instead relates to the limited provision of financial support and stipends to students. In lieu of these, seeking low-skilled employment is a more beneficial livelihood strategy than tertiary education.

Access to technology

As with Lebanon, many Syrian refugees in Jordan have limited access to the Internet, laptops and computers, undermining their ability to enrol on online and other courses.

Language

Whilst the language of instruction in Jordan is largely Arabic, scientific degrees require proficiency in English. Online courses, provided by certain academic institutions and/or NGOs are largely in English. Moreover, many tertiary education opportunities will require that an applicant has proficiency in English. This creates a barrier to access.

Camp and non-camp differences

Whilst accessing unaccredited courses provided by organisations that function under the royal patronage or INGOs inside camps is easier, the study environment is often not suitable for students, especially in camps like Zaatari. Where the infrastructure is poor, meaning it cannot accommodate for students to pursue their education in a holistic way. Additionally, in camps, students are unable to access tertiary education academic institutions as their mobility is highly restricted. Camp dwellers require permits from Jordanian authorities to be renewed on daily basis to be able to leave the camp. Urban refugees, face the challenge of high transportation costs, hence their access to tertiary education is hindered. Also, information to education opportunities does not necessary reach urban refugees as they live in scattered communities. It is easier to disseminate information about opportunities at the camp level.

Cost

Economic barriers in Jordan limit access, resulting in competing priorities for refugee households. As a result, there is a need for tertiary education strategies in Jordan to address economic livelihoods. There is a substantial reliance on youth labour to support refugee families, which hinder the ability of young people to enrol in education putting their family livelihood as priority.

Role of the Jordanian government:

There are a number of partnerships the Jordanian government, universities and international organisations relating to higher education. These are coordinated through the Ministry of Planning. These initiatives are multi-fold, and revolve around Jordanian policy priorities.

In particular, the Jordanian government aims to ‘harmonise’ relations between the host and refugee communities. As a result, the government of Jordan requires (I)NGOs working in the humanitarian/development and protection sectors to include local Jordanians in their programs. For example, education providers are bound to cater for 30-50 percent of the marginalised Jordanian population. Interviewees mentioned different percentages that are required by the government to be included in the programs. This inconsistency reflects the lack of clarity and confusion that exists in service provision and policy. In order to implement this policy of ‘harmonisation’, the Jordanian government has created a system of approvals that makes it difficult for (I)NGOs to receive funding and work on projects related to Syrian refugees, unless they adhere to this policy. These restrictions are especially felt by organisations that work outside of the camps. Nevertheless, by creating such a coordinated enforcement mechanism, the Jordanian government has also developed an effective opportunity to enhance coordination between organisations more broadly.

This centralised system of approval is nevertheless complicated: once the project is initially approved (after being entered in the computerised system), every partner organisation ((I)NGO) should enter their own data, which takes time and effort. A separate approval then follows for each individual partner. (I)NGO’s operating in Jordan are not allowed to receive funding from a donor unless approved through this system. Approval will be granted a Ministerial commission, which will review all aspect of the project, its budget and its partners. This committee is created to assess and select projects that benefit and target Syrian refugees and host communities. Once the committee has approved the project, the (I)NGO has to secure approval from the ministry where it is registered. Because of these numerous steps, it is clear that the government makes it difficult for (I)NGOs to work with Syrian refugees when they reside alongside host communities.

As a result of this, an atmosphere of suspicion is created. Some (I)NGOs feel that they are under surveillance and suspicion from the side of the government once they decide to work with Syrian refugees. Nevertheless, INGOs and UN Agencies readily

work with the Jordanian government, and help them track numbers of beneficiaries. Some (I)NGOs use heat maps to identify areas where there is a large concentration of Syrian refugees within host communities. This gives a good indication, but arguably fails to capture the diverse and precise needs both of hosts but also of refugees.

Coordination mechanisms between service providers:

In Jordan, there is a national level tertiary education working group that meets each month. This focuses broadly on a broad range of tertiary opportunities, and includes other sectors that work on or with youth. This working group was created in 2015/2016, and is chaired by UNESCO and UNHCR. There is no clear strategy for the working group, in terms of linking programmes/content or of pursuing concrete synergies across organisations and programmes. Nevertheless, this body acts as a mechanism for those organisations and institutions working on provision of tertiary education to learn from each other, so as to enhance their own work and to avoid duplications where possible.

As with Lebanon, provision of higher education for refugees in Jordan has relied on the effective coordination of (I)NGOs, universities, government departments and other institutions. Some schemes that have emerged in light of this coordination include the Jordanian Hashemite University's course on communication, technical skills and life skills, which is open to all refugees regardless of age. This also offers proficiency tests for applications in lieu of transcripts, which expanded to include Al alBays University and the Amman Arab University. Al alBays University also offers 100 scholarships for refugees residing in the Za'atari camp. Other initiatives are in operation, including those listed in appendix three, which aim to enhance the provision of tertiary education in Jordan in light of key gaps and challenges highlighted in this report.

Online learning:

There are numerous online courses available in Jordan. These are provided by various NGOs, INGOs and universities, both based in Jordan, but also operating at the regional and global levels. Many of these initiatives are uncoordinated and most of them unaccredited. One interviewee called the online courses for refugees 'a territory of uncoordinated mess'. Nevertheless, and in light of the challenges presented above, some education service providers have taken to existing online platforms, such as *Duolingo* for their English courses, to enable access to other programmes that may have language prerequisites. These also come at no cost. Moreover, many international universities provide online courses, but Syrian refugees cannot benefit from the credits they gain on these courses.

Intersectional approaches – tracking diverse needs:

Syrian refugees in Jordan face many of the same intersecting challenges as their peers in Lebanon. As highlighted above, these cover issues of class, gender and ability, but also issues relating to dwelling, from camp-specific challenges to urban-specific

challenges. Recognising these is essential if the full set of needs is to be met vis-à-vis the provision of tertiary education in Jordan.

Gender

The majority of the interviewees realised the unique challenges that face certain groups, such as women, when it comes to accessing tertiary education opportunities. For example, scholarships for fulltime courses require successful applicants to often travel far from where young Syrian women live. In this case women are unable to benefit as they have other priorities such as taking care of family members. They also face security and social challenges when it comes to mobility.

Class

Scholarships provided are very competitive, which means that those who benefit from these opportunities are the ‘cream of the crop’. Often, they are young Syrians who have language skills, mobility and access. Under this context, providers of such scholarships are perpetuating inequalities in the society.

Disability

Whilst there is no clear data on young people from Syria with disabilities, those with disabilities face substantial challenges to access tertiary education. Whilst there was an acknowledgement of this in the interviews, there still exists a major gap here.

4.3. Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI)

Current status of Tertiary Education provision opportunities refugees:

As of December 2017, Iraq is hosting 249,592 registered Syrian refugees (UNHCR 2017) the vast majority of them are in KRI. In comparison to the literature on Jordan, Lebanon and, to some extent, Turkey, there is a dearth of information on the provision of tertiary education in Iraq. However, what is clear from the literature is that Iraq poses a huge number of problems. For one, teachers’ salaries have reportedly gone unpaid (Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014: 67), whilst young refugees ‘expressed hopelessness and lacked the motivation to engage in education and training given the diminished prospects for further study or meaningful employment’ (*ibid.*: 67). As most of the Syrian refugee population is present in KRI, language presents further problems: Kurdish is prominent in many refugee hosting parts of KRI which means there is a lack of availability of teaching in Arabic. Moreover, schools have often been used as makeshift shelters for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

In government universities, Syrian refugees are admitted to a parallel system (like in Jordan) where the tuition fee is much higher than that paid by Iraqi students. There is also no clear information from the government relating to vocational training. Nevertheless, basic technical training is available, and is coordinated through the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). UNHCR also plays a key referral role vis-à-vis

the livelihood sector within MOSA which is an important route to vocational training. However, there is still a significant lack of clarity when it comes to the provision of vocational training in Iraq.

Moreover, Syrian students who arrived to KRI after completing schooling, or those in the middle of their higher education, must provide valid documentation in order to enroll in universities. Universities accept Syrian refugees who finished school in the camps in KRI.

Tertiary education in KRI is not free, it is costly, but access is guaranteed as soon as the certificates are available from the country of origin before the completion of the university degree. Moreover, in Iraq, Syrian refugees are granted a UNHCR registration card, along with the government protection ID, meaning they do not face as many challenges in accessing opportunities on grounds of registration as is the case in Lebanon. Furthermore, in Iraq most Syrian refugees come from the region of Hasakeh in Syria. Currently, the situation there has improved, meaning it is more stable. This has allowed Syrians to return but also contributed to high drop-out rates overall.

Finally, it is hard to prioritise higher education in the face of the protracted and large-scale crisis in Iraq. Approximately 300,000 Syrian refugees, and around 5,000,000 Iraqi IDPs, are at risk in the country. Given that tertiary education is not a right according to international law, it is not seen as a priority issue when compared to primary and secondary education (schooling).

Challenges and barriers of tertiary education provision in Iraq/KRI:

Certification

The process of approval, acceptance and equivalency of certificates takes a long time and is costly. Syrian students have to go through this process to be able to enroll in universities in KRI. Moreover, Syrian students who had their studies disrupted in Syria because of the war are unable to continue their studies in Kurdish universities due to the different requirements of the Syrian/Kurdish education systems. This results in inconsistent practices relating to accreditation and certification. Some universities ask students to go back to Syria to bring their official certificates and transcripts, but this is very dangerous and the majority of the students are unwilling to take that risk. There is also an equalization process in KRI which aims to verify the certificates acquired in home countries. Additionally, some universities require entry exams which are in English and thus creating an extra barrier to those who lack this language skill. Also, Syrian students have to secure a minimum of 65% in the national school examination (diploma) and they have to compete with Iraqi students. This can be difficult, especially for those who have had their education interrupted, decreasing their overall attainment. Nevertheless, private universities accept students with lower grades (55%), but the fees are high.

Travel

The distance between the camp and universities is often quite significant, meaning that securing travel to and from universities can amount to a significant financial burden.

Livelihoods and employability

Many Syrian refugees need to financially support their families, hence they drop out of tertiary education as they prioritise the livelihoods of their families.

Syrian refugees can work in the Iraq labour market, but they have to be registered with UNHCR. They also need a residency permit from the government and a work permit from the Ministry of social Affairs. Furthermore, employability is limited to construction and low-skilled service industries, such as supermarket employees. In the absence of any high-skilled opportunities, the practicalities of pursuing tertiary education are limited, hindering the overall demand for opportunities.

Lack of secondary education

Secondary education is a significant challenge in Iraq. There are not enough schools and teachers, which means that increasing numbers of the post-school age population do not have the prerequisite knowledge or training to access tertiary education.

Stakeholder capacity

The stakeholders who work on supporting tertiary education are limited. The majority of Syrian refugees between the ages of 18-24 are not engaged in tertiary education, so there is a huge amount of people without support. Moreover, youth programming has not been developed since before the crisis. This creates a number of particular difficulties for urban refugees as the limited services that do exist are often not able to reach them.

Political fragility

The political situation in the country is fragile, meaning that refugees and the government alike are not driven to plan for tertiary education opportunities: such an option would also require planning for a long-term future in a context where stability is far from certain. As such, and due to the political situation in KRI, some of the policies are based on pragmatism rather than legal frameworks. As a result, enforcement mechanisms are difficult to implement and monitor, and can therefore be inconsistent. However, the political context in certain areas in KRI (particularly Sulaymaniyah) can differ significantly from that of the rest of the region. Whilst this presents opportunities, it also presents unique challenges for service providers, requiring them to negotiate very different systems despite operating in one state context.

Language

Language is a barrier in secondary education, as Kurdish is the learning and teaching language, meaning many Syrian children do not enroll or drop out due to this language barriers. Even Syrian-Kurds who speak Kurdish encounter problems, as not all areas in Kurdistan speak the same Kurdish dialect. This is an issue in tertiary education as students have to pass a course in Kurdiology, which uses a Kurdish language not accessible for many Syrian-Kurds.

Role of the Iraqi/KRI government:

The KRI resilience plan is a government initiative, although it is unclear to what extent it is currently in operation. This plan aims to reactivate the economy through a series of coordinated efforts that include expanding tertiary education opportunities, including through diversifying the topics studied at universities. The aim here is to fill gap created as a result of declined human capacity following the conflict in Iraq. Furthermore, the government facilitates the admission (to higher education institutions) of Syrian refugees who have completed their secondary education in KRI. All they need is their UNHCR registration and school certificates/diplomas. Furthermore, Arabic and Kurdish are both used equally in universities, so Syrian students do not struggle language-wise.

The Ministry of Higher Education is also working to develop inclusive policies that improve access. This is on top of the fact that no legal barriers exist vis-à-vis Syrian access to tertiary education in KRI. Furthermore, the ministry of higher education has waved the condition to have original documentation and certificates (high school certificates). Instead, students are expected to present them before graduation. This is a public policy, but nevertheless ensures that existing difficulties relating to securing past qualifications remain.

Finally, the political situation in Kurdistan is not financially or politically stable. The government facilitates the work of education providers by negotiating with them to enrol students in public universities. They also ask the providers to build the infrastructure of universities, for example, by building computer labs or even covering staffing costs. This approach recognises the need that exists, as well as the government's limited financial capacity to meet that need. One interviewee working with an international organisation stated that they prefer this model as it secures sustainability for Iraqi universities. It also helps implement effective coordination mechanisms between service providers and the government.

Coordination mechanisms between service providers:

UNHCR (DAFI) works closely with HOPES and the British Council to complement each other's work and avoid duplication and increase access to scholarships. This also focuses on ensuring several diverse needs are met, by filling gaps and reaching out to communities not engaged in existing schemes. Furthermore, UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Higher Education, as well as university admissions teams to implement the certificate waiving policy highlighted above.

There is also an education cluster that works to coordinate between groups. It is a hybrid model that is only implemented in Iraq. The education cluster deals with both refugees and IDPs to facilitate coordination and to enhance the overall response. This model needs to be assessed as the impact of dealing with refugees and IDPs within one cluster is still not clear.

Despite these efforts, there is no coordination mechanism dedicated entirely to tertiary education. Admittedly, through the DAFI programme there is a coordination mechanism which includes SPARK, HOPES and DAFI, but this is the only coordination mechanism focusing on tertiary education, and focuses on scholarships only.

Online learning:

The ministry of higher education does not recognise online courses, as they cannot control the quality of the courses provided online. DAFI and other partners are investing in advocacy efforts to push the government to consider blended learning models for refugees, and for these models/courses to be accredited. In particular, UNHCR has stressed (1) The low cost of online learning, and (2) that European governments are keen to support such initiatives. Nevertheless, and as is the case in Lebanon and Jordan, such online courses are mainly provided in English, meaning that they are not accessible to many refugees in Iraq.

Intersectional approaches – tracking diverse needs:

Through these coordination mechanisms, a number of the diverse challenges highlighted above are taken into account, however a number of marginal groups remain unaccounted for in tertiary service provision. Nevertheless, UNHCR (DAFI) has encouraged universities to support people with special needs, and to ensure gender sensitivity in the overall response, but this is very limited. For example, UNHCR (DAFI) focuses on setting standards, by passing the message through the Ministry of Higher Education that they need to be disability friendly when it comes to issues of transportation. How much this translates into de facto improvements is not yet known.

Moreover, whilst the vast majority of Syrian refugees are in camps, and are as a result able to access higher education, many urban-based refugees are less easy to reach. Nevertheless, even within camps, many interview respondents indicated the overall numbers are very low.

Finally, DAFI programmes do give a priority to women as part of the selection criteria. However, due to the financial situation, as well as family obligations, many successful women applicants are forced to drop out.

4.4. Turkey

Current status of Tertiary Education provision opportunities refugees:

Turkey hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees globally – 2,992,000 as of May 2017 (Yavcan and El-Ghali 2017: 10). Many of these are young people under temporary protection: a total of 392,500 aged between 19 and 24 according to the Directorate General of Migration Management (*ibid.*: 13). This presents a number of challenges in responding to the needs of displaced university age youth. Moreover, the legal framework through which Syrian refugees are engaged, including ‘temporary protection’ mechanisms, pose further challenges. Turkey adopts a geographical limitation which means it does not regard Syrians in the country as refugees per se, only individuals displaced from Europe. Instead, Turkey has established a ‘temporary protection regime’ for Syrians, granting access to education, health, and emergency services, but restrictions on employment. In theory, this provides Syrians with several opportunities to access tertiary education in Turkey: some have access to higher education free of charge due to several bylaws, contingent on the quotas that exist within universities (*ibid.*: 9). In total, 14,631 Syrian refugees are enrolled in higher education level in Turkey (*ibid.*: 18), a marked improvement on the 1,784 Syrian refugees, or two per cent of the university age group, who were enrolled in Turkish universities in 2013-14 (*ibid.*: 19). Nevertheless, the ‘temporary protection’ regime places refugees in Turkey in a position of prolonged temporariness that generally undermines their ability to plan for long-term futures in Turkey and, subsequently, their right to or interest in accessing tertiary education opportunities. However, students in Turkey only need to secure a government protection card, the Kimlik, in order for them to access higher education. Moreover, Syrian students are not registered with UNHCR, but register directly with the government. In Turkey students are not asked to provide their high school certificates, they just need to pass an exam that the government sets in order for them to enter university.

Overall, access to ‘education for camp-based youth in Turkey is markedly higher than for their urban and rural counterparts.’ (Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014: 68). The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) established Education in Emergences and the Migration Unit within the Directorate for Lifelong Learning to develop long-term strategies. An encouraging development that has emerged through this coordination is the formation of a Student Education Management Information System (YOBIS) to ensure schools upload data, and that outreach and enrolment is enhanced across the country. The MoNE has also issued instructions in August 2016 to encourage integration of Syrian youth in primary and secondary schools, which may increase long-term outcomes for Syrians heading toward tertiary education. This has been supported by the EU via a direct grant of €300 million (Schmidt 2017).

A significant challenge exists vis-à-vis the Turkish state’s strict regulations in relation to NGO activity in the camps. This has prevented some of the more evident instances

of collaboration between organisations and universities/governments in Lebanon and Jordan.

Furthermore, the capacity of Turkish universities to take on students is comparatively low: only 925,000 of the total 2 million applications could be met in 2014 (Yavcan and El-Ghali 2017: 21). However, Turkish universities do recognise the Syrian interim government's baccalaureate exam. This was developed with support from Spark, and aimed to increase access to tertiary education by coordinating with Syrian civil society in the organising and marking of specially designed post-secondary entry-exams (SPARK n.d). However, there is little additional data relating to this exam and its long-term effects. Moreover, failure to conduct the exam and award certificates in a timely manner has delayed numerous applications to Turkish higher education institutions (Yavcan and El-Ghali 2017).

Nevertheless, Turkish universities have taken a large number of students through scholarships and other programmes. In total, Gaziantep University has offered places to 16,670 refugees from Syria, including offering Arabic speaking classes to overcome language challenges. Istanbul University has taken 990, Karabük University: 927, Mersin University: 724 and Khramanmaras Sütcü Imam University: 654. (*ibid.*). Moreover, the Türkiye Burslari (Turkey Scholarship Programme) has given 4,000 students access to public universities, but this scheme ended in 2014 and was replaced by government granted scholarships for 5,000 peoples. Overall, over 3,000 Syrian students have been granted such scholarships (*ibid.*: 20). At Killis university they have three groups that they target for support; (1) Syrian teachers (2) Doctors and (3) Students. They teach Syrian teachers Turkish language in order for them to go into the camps and teach Syrian refugees in camps. During these activities, the Syrian teachers are paid by the Ministry of Education. Syrian doctors are also taught Turkish so that they can work in Turkish hospitals. Finally, Syrian students need to undertake a language course before starting higher education which is supported through a variety of initiatives. Other Turkey-specific initiatives that exist can be found in appendix four.

Furthermore, the higher education council in 2015 has announced that eight assigned universities in the South of Turkey are to provide 26 curricula and majors in Arabic language. This program has been used mainly in Gaziantep University, but its operational costs are high. The universities have tried to employ Syrian academics. However, this has been a challenge as the Turkish government did not grant the Syrian academics work permits.

Challenges and barriers of tertiary education provision in Turkey:

Language

Being unable to speak Turkish is the single biggest obstacle facing Syrians. This is compounded by a lack of widespread, adequate Turkish language programmes; this in turn prevents enrolment and attainment in tertiary education. Proficiency in Turkish is also a requirement for enrolment in Turkish universities.

Economy

Moreover, it is generally shown that young Syrians are working informally rather than studying (Abu-Assab and Nasser-Eddin 2015; Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014) given economic and livelihood challenges facing many families. This also affects those with places, leading to high drop-out rates. Furthermore, Syrians also face challenges when it comes to the types of work permits that are available. For example, Syrian refugees cannot work in certain professions because of governmental laws. This limits incentives to take part in vocational training or other opportunities that might give them skills that they otherwise could not use in the Turkish labour market.

Discriminatory attitudes

Interviewees expressed their concern about particular discriminatory attitudes towards Syrian. They expressed that many Syrians do not feel welcomed, and they still feel like 'guests' in Turkey. This discourages Syrian refugees from planning for long-term futures in Turkey, including the pursuit of higher education opportunities. It has also been clear from the interviews that some aspects of the Turkish hosting community hold highly discriminatory attitudes toward Syrian refugees, particularly among the Turkish secular middle-class, who see Syrians as a threat to their children's university places.

Documentation

Syrian students need to provide proof that they are high school graduates, which can be difficult when certificates have either been lost, or left behind in Syria. Nevertheless, these documents can sometimes be replaced by cross checking the information, or through the sitting of an entrance exam that measures overall student attainment to date.

Resettlement

Being accepted in resettlement programs, although affecting a small minority of Syrian refugees, is also a factor that contributes to university drop-out rates. Moreover, the high number of resettlement applicants residing in Turkey also suggests that such applicants might not pursue tertiary opportunities on account that they may be resettled to a third country. Nevertheless, the wait for resettlement can take several years, meaning many face a precarious life in Turkey.

Gender

Women are less likely to be enrolled in universities and higher education as their families fear for their safety in Turkey. Some families feel that the Turkish

community looks down on Syrian women, and encourages them to stay at home for protection instead.

Scholarships

Some scholarships offer access only to courses that applicants may not actually find interesting. As a result, students who enrol in a course may then drop out because they lost interest or they discovered that this is not what they wanted to pursue.

Geography

Geographical dispersion means that many students live far away from their campus, and are unable to move closer due to familial, financial and other considerations. This also contributes to drop out rates, especially when students spend more time travelling to and from university than actually studying.

Social attitudes toward vocational training

Vocational training is not very popular in Turkey because it is associated with activities that are less prestigious. This is reflected in the diminished opportunities for vocational training offered by organisations. Nevertheless, many initiatives are available through Turkish government programmes, yet these initiatives focus more on basic skills and training for use in the wider Turkish economy, rather than anything more substantial. Furthermore, some vocational opportunities are taught in Arabic. This helps to widen access, but also limits Syrian refugee choices, and denies them the learning of a language that will certainly benefit their livelihoods in the country.

Unclear information

In many cases, Syrians lack up to date information about the provision of tertiary education in Turkey. This also relates to a lack of knowledge about the wider Turkish university system, which can appear bewilderingly complex, especially given the language difficulties facing Syrians. This severely limits access for those who lack any basic understanding of the Turkish education system itself.

Role of the Turkish government:

The Turkish government plays an extremely important, central role in the provision of tertiary education opportunities to Syrian refugees. This also means that every project and initiative has to go through the government. Organisations who offer educational opportunities to Syrian refugees have to be registered and also have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Higher Education Council. The Higher Education Council acts as the focal point between universities, vocational centres and other institutions that offer education opportunities, as well as international organisations more broadly, as well as UN Agencies. This close coordination of activities around the Ministry of Higher Education also means that

initiatives that are not in full compliance with Turkish regulations are shut down. The outcome is a highly organised, tightly managed coordination of activities.

As a result, the government in Turkey designs most of the policies, leaving little room for (I)NGOs to implement their strategy freely. The government also manages the camps, meaning (I)NGOs need permission from the government to access the camps. Nevertheless, with close regulation comes opportunities for effective, to scale responses that are well coordinated in contrast to Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

Coordination mechanisms between service providers:

In Turkey, there is an education working group that takes place the last Wednesday of each month in Gaziantep. This is co-chaired by UNHCR and UNICEF. For higher education, there is stakeholder round table meetings where they discuss policy issues, there is also a scholarship working group for higher education. Both of these meet more regularly than the education working group, and often in response to the levels of need and/or urgency that exist. All governmental institutions work together however, there is not a formal mechanism put in place.

In spite of existing coordination mechanisms, some students are able accepted more than one scholarship. This is a major problem in Turkey. This usually happens where there is a lack of coordination between different providers, in addition to the fact that some scholarships have better options than others. For example, if a scholarship offers living support alongside fees, then the successful candidate will likely accept this over a scholarship that offers fees-only support.

Intersectional approaches – tracking diverse needs:

Around 80 percent of the refugee population live outside of the camps, however, in camps they run language courses and schools, many people who are in camps apply for the scholarships. Overall, service provision in the camps is considered much better than those provided outside of the camps in urban areas.

Overall, diverse needs are tracked via the Ministry of Education, whose oversight is key to monitoring numbers and gaps. Access to this information is also open to the public. As for higher education, the higher education council tracks the number of students enrolled.

Nevertheless, these systems are not always able to engage communities left out by schemes, such as young Syrian women, or disabled students. In the case of the former, some families put a huge pressure on their daughters to get married and to leave education. In some cases, we notice that the dropout rates for Syrian women are much higher than male ones. Overall, ensuring that access remains open in spite of these attitudes or values is one way in which the needs of women are met more broadly.

5. Common Challenges

Across all of the countries considered by this report, a number of commonalities and differences are clear. In particular, similar issues relating to documentation, language and access remain, whilst the particular legal and state frameworks in the four countries present different overall contexts in which tertiary education is made available. In terms of commonalities, the following key issues are clear, and could potentially benefit from meaningful regional coordination:

- Young people are discouraged from applying to tertiary education institutions, often by structural economic or social factors that make tertiary education appear (both in reality and in perceptions) unrealistic, impractical and unfeasible in terms of cost, livelihoods and strategies. They are also often put off from applying because of the complicated legal systems that affects their mobility and rights.
- Tertiary education is provided within overwhelmingly confusing legal and administrative frameworks. This leads to a generally significant level of misalignment in policy and practice, as well as inconsistent policies that fail to meet the diverse needs and challenges that exist.
- Across all countries, multiple coordination mechanisms and bodies are in operation, meeting at national and local levels several times a year. This enhances opportunities for knowledge exchange and referrals, yet they are often limited due to a lack of implementation mechanisms or tracking systems that ensure effective coordination in both practice and principle.
- The provision of tertiary education opportunities in all four countries is hindered by increasingly high drop-out rates, both from tertiary courses, but also from secondary education. In this sense, the current provision of support at the tertiary level may struggle to compensate for the fact that the vast majority of post-school age Syrians today have not finished or even attended secondary school since the beginning of the crisis in 2011.
- Many respondents across all field sites indicated that the coordination meetings that are being held are seen as no beneficial. Some interviewees said that they stopped going to these meetings all together because they often lack results to improve implementation, or because they found them practically useless for themselves and their organisations.

Furthermore, some of the key findings emerging out of this research that were not accounted for in the earlier literature review relate to the decreasing hope that many Syrian youth have vis-à-vis the positive role education can play for their future. This was a common recurring feature across all research sites. Moreover, another commonality related to the challenges presented by donor relations when it comes to ensuring effective coordination mechanisms.

The loss of hope:

It has become apparent from the interviews that the general finding amongst stakeholders is that Syrian refugees have *lost hope for a quick and sustainable solution* to their situation in hosting countries:

“There is now a trend that people have lost the trust in higher education as a way to personal development, as a way to a better future.”

There seems to be a psychological barrier that prevents students from entering higher education (rather than a material one) – this is much more difficult to deal with and needs to be more fully explored.

There is also the lack of trust amongst refugee students that they cannot work in the field that they have studied. Many feel disappointed that there is no chance to apply the knowledge that they have learnt through tertiary education.

Improving coordination between donors and practitioners:

Across all four countries, one of the main obstacles facing effective coordination is restrictions placed on implementing organisations with regard to donors’ visibility. Donors in certain cases place some restrictions on organisations to ensure that their work is clearly defined against that of others, undermining coordination. The problem is that donors set the rules, and are not willing to negotiate. In order to overcome this, there is a need to coordinate donor efforts to eradicate donor competition over visibility. Instead, donors should be encouraged to share experiences in the field so that more needs can be met overall.

This would also help to overcome a further barrier relating to duplication: in recent years, there has been a lot of duplication in cases where students are successfully obtaining more than one scholarship, taking one, leaving funding from one donor to go to waste. However, efforts to share data about enrolled students could eliminate this problem, and help facilitate meaningful coordination between organisations and donors.

Spark has informed us that they have reached a milestone in coordinating between different stakeholders by meeting others a day before announcing the scholarships to identify students that have been accepted by more than one scheme. After identifying the students, they select them and inform them that they need to choose one scholarship, so that the funds of the other scholarship(s) can be reallocated.

Outreach is another problem generated by a lack of coordination. Most education providers work in the same geographical areas which leave other areas overlooked. There is also little to no diversity in the tools that are used, such as those platforms through which scholarship applications can be made, this means that whilst scholarships are well applied for, applications are often made by the same students across all scholarship schemes. As such, there is duplication in the numbers of overall

applicants, demonstrating the need for enhanced outreach efforts to engage those who are not familiar with or do not have access to the existing platforms.

The 'lost generation':

One of the main challenges that emerged through this research relates to the declining numbers of refugees from Syria who have not completed basic secondary level education across all four countries. This is a long-term concern, reflected in declining applications for scholarships, that suggests efforts to invest in tertiary education opportunities will not solve the larger problem that looms on the horizon: meeting the basic education needs of youth from Syria. Without addressing this problem, it is likely that a number of barriers to tertiary education will remain in place. Practically, these will include a deficit in prior attainment, barring many from accessing tertiary education opportunities on account of not having finished secondary education. More generally, this speaks a widespread problem, whereby many Syrian youth who might otherwise have been inclined to pursue tertiary education, are locked in a situation where the challenges facing them and their families present it as a redundant option.

6. Good Practices

In light of the particular and common challenges highlighted above, this research noted significant evidence of good practice that, in most instances, is able to overcome and/or respond to the numerous barriers that exist vis-à-vis tertiary education provision. In particular, we noted the following services and opportunities, provided to both vulnerable host communities and refugees, as evidence of good practice:

- Facilitation of short courses and blended courses led by members of the community (examples include NRC training centres in camps in Jordan)
- (I)NGOs working to avoid creating parallel systems in host communities. Instead, services to be provided through partnerships with local organisations.
- Through partnerships, the capacity of local and community organisations should be built in to the initial phases of the crisis, so that NGOs and community based organisation (CBOs) are able to take over and implement different education programmes in the long run, ensuring sustainability and relevance.
- In both Lebanon and Jordan, it has been noted by interviewees that the governments and institutions are more open to collaboration regarding blended learning schemes.
- Demand for tertiary education is related to what is being offered. Anything that is considered new (digital skills training for example) is in high demand because jobs are associated with it. Refugees can do those jobs online and are not restricted to the host countries' legal constraints. Offering more courses in this direction helps meet interests whilst remaining cost-effective and easy to deliver.
- Scholarships that provide a monthly allowance alongside scholarship support are most effective as they counteract the potential perceived loss of earnings that may arise from removing oneself from the (informal) economy.
- Efforts to increase local-host community harmonisation are advantageous, allowing education to become a method for long-term integration, simultaneously increasing refugee livelihood options that are otherwise undermined by a lack of certainty about their future prospects in the host community.
- Encouraging Syrian academics to take part in the education system, giving opportunities to Syrian refugees, so that they feel that they are contributing to the host community and to their own community.
- Encouraging Syrian refugees to work as volunteers with some of the (I)NGOs might give some hope to the refugee community.

7. Recommendations

In light of the secondary and primary research completed as part of this project, the following key points are presented as recommendations that, if followed, may help to improve the overall provision of tertiary education opportunities to refugees from Syria living in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey:

Focusing on learning outcomes

- We should go beyond the idea of tertiary/higher education for employability, and look at the higher purpose of tertiary education. There is an opportunity in this crisis to go beyond the idea that the individual gets a certificate and a job: most of the efforts by international organisations and institutions are within this schema. By contrast, an argument should be set out that emphasises the ways in which higher education helps to further society, knowledge, people and communities: it is about critical thinking. This emphasis is arguably missing from current initiatives. Considering the higher purpose of tertiary education can provide inspiration, hope, empowerment, knowledge and skills to young people and allow them to push their own communities forward.
- The provision of informal education for Syrian refugees who come from different backgrounds and age groups is necessary in the context of the Syrian crisis. Informal education includes soft skills like language skills and communication skills.

Local host community harmonisation

- Programs should be targeting disadvantaged local communities as well as refugees. By doing so, a process of harmonisation between the local and refugee community is created and thus discriminatory attitudes and behaviours decrease.

Scholarships

- The model of scholarships for Syrian students to attend fulltime education is not always relevant or suitable. Particular refugee needs must be more thoroughly assessed and met. For example, scholarships for short term and part time programmes need to be increased and considered to cater for the contexts and nature of the lives of refugees.
- To avoid perpetuating inequalities, the selection criteria for scholarships need to be altered so that they are more inclusive.
- Organisations that provide scholarships should employ in-depth processes to select a small number of applicants, out of thousands. Through this process the organisations collect a large amount of data that can be used to better understand the barriers to accessing tertiary education. This allows for decisions to be made based on evidence.

Supporting courses

- Foreign language skills are much needed in addition to building research and critical thinking skills, hence a provision of a foundation year for Syrian students would help their access to and retention in tertiary education.

Advocacy and outreach

- Advocacy along with humanitarian/development work is recommended:
 - to ensure that higher education is considered in crisis response and as a protection mechanism.
 - to change laws, rule and regulations that hinder access to quality tertiary education for refugees.
 - to see higher education not as a separate sector but as a continuation for primary and secondary education that is also linked to other sectors such as health, protection and well-being.
- Awareness raising and sensitisation is needed when it comes to non-formal education particularly in relation to vocational training and the different subjects/courses that are offered.
- Educational providers need to work on a more thorough outreach mechanism to reach those Syrians who do not live in camps.
- Tackling education in relation to Syrian refugees should be done from a rights-based approach rather than a humanitarian approach.
- International organisations should develop more sustainable and long-term strategies for refugees' access to quality education. They should adopt a more holistic approach when addressing the issue by emphasising and recognising diverse needs and barriers.

Coordination

- The Connected Learning Consortium² model of coordination should be used as a basis for coordination and collaboration for other models of higher education institutions and service providers. (Identify gaps, needs, synergies, create criteria, and improve evidence base).
- For better coordination, there needs to be a clear vision for the sector and a solid leadership to lead meaningful and clear coordination mechanisms on national and regional levels.
- Refugees from Syria are keen to be mobile: they do not know what the future holds for them but either they stay in their current host communities, move to another country in the region or move back to Syria. As such, coordination between service providers on the regional level will facilitate the ability for Syrian refugees to move and benefit from the skills they have gained.
- There has to be a clear coordination mechanism between different stakeholders in order to avoid overlap and also to coordinate the services that they provide to Syrian refugees.

² For more information visit <http://www.connectedlearning4refugees.org/about-us/#about-background>

- There should be some coordination mechanism between different donors.

Meeting diverse needs

- Consideration for intersectionality: refugees are not a homogeneous group, considering different needs when designing programmes and providing services is needed.
- Providers of scholarships and education opportunities should be mindful of the needs of young people and bridge abilities to needs and selection criteria. i.e. provide language courses, IT skills courses and family support for those vulnerable groups to be able to benefit from scarce opportunities.
- Refugees from Syria have a different legal, social and economic status. These include both Syrians, but also Palestinians, Iraqis and Kurds from Syria. Each group faces different challenges and experiences. This is not reflected in this report and needs to be further investigated.
- The provision of services for refugees should adopt an intersectional feminist approach to look further into the multiple systems of oppression that people are exposed to such as, gender, class, nationality, religion, age, refugeehood and so forth.
- There is a need for refugees to receive psychosocial support alongside tertiary opportunities, in light of the trauma that has come from their experiences of conflict and displacement.

Online and blended learning:

- There are numerous online courses available via providers (NGOs, INGOs, universities) based in host countries, but also region and globally. These are uncoordinated, and most of them are unaccredited. Such initiatives could be linked to academic institutions in host countries or in education structures in Syria to ensure credibility, sustainability, accreditation, and a bridging of the knowledge and skills gained. This will also help to capacitate institutions in the region to conduct certification and accreditation processes.

Vocational training:

- Vocational training was highlighted by the interviewees as political, related to minimum wage, labour market and employability of local skilled labour. This issue needs further investigation.

Improving contextual knowledge:

- Host communities should not be dealt with as homogeneous groups. Understanding the social dynamics of these communities is essential. Service providers should not only consider relations between the host community and the refugee community, but they should also have an in-depth understanding

of how host communities function, and how these dynamics influence young people.

- The lack of consistency in policy, regulations, and practice needs more research in each of the countries included in this report.
- There is a high level of inconsistency between laws, policies and implementation in host countries. This is a challenge for any intervention. Any intervention needs to be built on a thorough research and understanding of the fragile and fast changing context in each of the host countries.
- There needs to be a time allocated to do this research. Two months is not sufficient enough: more research needs to be done, particularly in Iraq and Turkey.
- There needs to be a bottom-up and top-down approach to the provision of tertiary education for refugees, meaning that thorough research has to be done to assess refugees' needs, at the same time taking into consideration each country and its political, economic and social context.

Appendix 1: Chart Detailing Regional Programmes

Name of organisation/ programme	Brief summary of activities	Refugees engaged
British Council	At a regional level, the British Council's work has focused on expanding cost-effective and online/blended learning opportunities to refugees from Syria. Since 2016, the British Council has aimed to reintegrate 3,000 Syrian youth aged 18-30 into higher education. The support offered includes English, French, German and online short courses, as well as longer, fully accredited courses for 300 students (Al-Fanar Media 2015).	3,000
DAAD (German Academic Excellence Programme) Leadership for Syria Project	333 Syrians have received support of some kind, including 159 scholarships and 175 free online prep courses to increase access and to overcome barriers relating to missing qualifications. Over 4,000 applications were made to the DAAD programme in 2016, yet only 100 places were available (Sherab and Tranchik 2016).	333
Edraak	Edraak, is the first regional non-profit Arabic MOOC platform, that is an initiative of the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF). Up until July 2017, Edraak directly reached only about 3,000 refugees with online courses through implementing partners in Syrian refugee camps (Dakkak, Yacoub, and Qarout 2017).	3,000
Fakhoora's Dynamic Futures Programme	This programme primarily focuses on improving tertiary education accessibility in Palestine, but has since scaled up to include Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan since 2015 (Al-Fanar Media 2015). The Dynamic Futures Programme offers targeted support to select a number of students and their families so that economic pressures that may force an individual to abandon their studies to support the household can be overcome. This initiative is funded by Qatar's Education Above All Foundation. As of 2016, Fakhoora delivered 800 scholarships to Syrian students, with pilot projects in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan (Al-Fanar Media 2016).	800 in 2016

HOPES	<p>Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians (HOPES) is funded through the European Union’s Madad Fund and implemented by the German Academic Excellence Program (DAAD), British Council, Campus France and EP-Nuffic (Al-Fanar Media 2016) funded by EU Madad Fund and administered by German Academic Excellence Program (DAAD), British Council, Campus France and EP-Nuffic. This project aims to distribute 400 scholarships to Syrian students, English classes for 4,000 students, and educational counselling for over 42,000. The English language component of the HOPES programme (HEEAP) aims to engage 250 individuals a year in each of the major host countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. The overall aim of HOPES is to empower young Syrians (HOPES 2017).</p>	<p>Aims to engage over 42,600 refugees from Syria in various initiatives</p>
Kiron	<p>Kiron is leading in the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) for refugees from Syria. The current platform was launched in September 2015 and allows students to enrol and self-select study tracks in engineering, business, computer science, intercultural studies and architecture. Once selections have been made, students will be directed toward external MOOC providers. In total 1,246 applications were made in 2016, yet only 263 courses were completed (Greenway, Hillers, and Rampelt 2016) suggesting that while MOOCs offer flexible options for displaced students, long-term retention may be difficult in the absence of direct contact. Data from the first phase of the platform’s development also revealed far more men signed up to the system than women, plus targeted support was difficult because little was known about the student’s prior attainment (ibid.) As a result of this phase, Kiron has moved toward blended learning approaches, utilising different platforms to offer flexibility whilst working with academic partners across the region to offer face-to-face study options. Kiron has also developed ways on blending the assessment of student’s progress: learning is completed through offline study as normal student in a degree programme. Accreditation is then conducted through a series on online tests.</p>	
LAsER	<p>LAsER delivered 440 scholarships to Syrian refugees in 2015 (Al-Fanar Media 2015). Those who are prioritised are deemed ‘most likely to go forward in academics’, and benefit from a reduction in fees (up to 75%) negotiated by the organisation. LAsER’s approach aims to involve potential and current students in programme design. They also offer intensive English language classes to support students with their studies. LAsER scholarships are targeted toward middle class Syrians as it is felt working class students might not be able to find the time and resources to continue studying, regardless of whether or not a scholarship is in place.</p>	<p>440 in 2015</p>

LASER (Language and Academic Skills and E-learning Resources)	A three-year program launched in September 2015, funded by the EU and administered by the British Council. Combines language and academic training that targets disadvantaged Jordanian and Syrians aged 18-30 through enrolment in language courses (English, German and French). The programme aims to enrol 3,100 by mid-2017, including through MOOC courses in English and Arabic. 350 of the top students will then be selected to take online courses from the Open University and Amity University (Al-Fanar Media 2016).	3,100 target in 2017
RESCUE	RESCUE aims ‘to promote access to higher education and facilitate integration in the job market of refugee students coming from Syria in Lebanon, Jordan and KRG’ (Di Donato and Chelli 2017: 6). The project involves Sapiensa University (Italy), UNIMED (coordinator), Universitat de Barcelona (Spain), Technische Universitaet Berlin (Germany), Istanbul Aydin University (Turkey), Holy Spirit University of Kaslik and Lebanese University (Lebanon), Zarqa University, Yarmouk University, Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan and Association of Arab Universities (Jordan), and University of Duhok, or Duhok Polytechnic University (KRG).	Not known
SPARK	In 2015, SPARK supported 1,500 Syrian students in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey through scholarships to higher education institutions (Al-Fanar Media 2016). In 2016, the total target number of individuals involved in the programme was 10,000. In delivering their programmes, SPARK is partnered with LAsER, offering 460 students scholarships to private universities in Lebanon. In 2016, a total of 2,369 refugees from Syria were enrolled in higher education programmes in Lebanon, 510 in Jordan, 3,515 in Iraq, 3,600 in Syria and 123 in Turkey (Spark 2016). Of the combined total, 8% were enrolled in full time bachelor courses, 41% were in full time vocational training, 20% involved in short cycle courses, and 31% in language courses, demonstrating a varied approach to the higher education sector. Partnerships with universities have been very important for SPARK’s work. Key institutions that are involved include the American University of Beirut, the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education, the University of Gaziantep, and six higher education institutions in Syria taking 150 students each. Whilst scholarship programmes offer a broad set of choices for applicants, SPARK has also been keen to develop opportunities through the scholarship programmes that encourage Syrian youth to play an active and meaningful role in their host communities (Spark 2015). For students who lack the certificates demonstrating prior attainment, SPARK also offers entry exams to verify a candidate’s ability. Finally, SPARK run a Higher Education 4 Syrians programme that focuses on tertiary opportunities and entrepreneurship	2,369 in 2016

Syrian Economic Forum	the Syrian Economic Forum is primarily interested in offering practical, professional and entrepreneurial skills, rather than scholarships, to encourage ‘positive thinking and time management’ and to counteract ‘boredom’ and ‘waiting’ and the subsequent lure of recruitment into armed groups (Al-Fanar Media 2015). The Syrian Economic Forum operates largely from within Syria, offering 500-600 graduates 4 week courses on how to develop program proposals. The best of these proposals – which focus on community development – will be scaled up and implemented so as to directly benefit those communities affected by displacement. This work raises the viability, plus the need, of ensuring focus is not entirely directed toward academic qualifications in light of the acute challenges that exist vis-à-vis the humanitarian crisis in Syria.	500-600 individuals enrolled on to 4-week technical courses
UNESCO Jami3ti (My University)	Jami3ti was established in July 2015 and offers a database of scholarship opportunities in Arabic, and information on application processes to improve access to information and outreach.	N/A
UNHCR DAFI Scholarships	This programme currently supports more than 2,240 refugee students each year (Al-Fanar Media 2016). In response to the need for more coordination, and in line with UNHCR’s Education Strategy of 2013, this scholarship programme has focused on building and strengthening partnerships with universities and key stakeholders, often by advocating for fee reductions for refugees and in supporting partners with the development of cost-effective, distance learning solutions (Frey 2013).	2,240 per annum

Appendix 2: Chart Detailing Programmes in Lebanon

Name of organisation/ programme	Brief summary of activities	Refugees engaged
Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education	Offers scholarships to individuals who are: High achieving, Financially disadvantaged students admissible for a higher education STEM degree at the undergraduate/graduate level (provided they have not interrupted their education after high school for more than 4 years). To apply students must meet program eligibility criteria, including most notably a GPA of 85% or 3.0	250
AGFUND (Arab Gulf Program for development) in Partnership with the Arab Open University Lebanon	Provide University Diplomas in Business (Accounting, Marketing, & Human Resources Management), Diploma in Information Technology, Diploma in Education, and online certificate in Microfinance	200

Ambassade de France au Liban	Scholarship program to study in France (for Syrian students in Lebanon)	30
American University of Beirut (Al Ghurair STEM Scholars Program)	University scholarships (for Undergrad or grad students) for high achieving and financially disadvantaged Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian students.	a share of 60
AMIDEAST: Diana Kamal Scholarship Search Fund	BA, BS	Varies/year
AMIDEAST: EducationUSA Competitive College Club	Study groups Community service activities Reading assignments and lectures (leadership etc) SAT prep courses	Varies/year
AMIDEAST: Hope Fund scholarship for Palestinians	BA, BS	Varies/year
AMIDEAST: MEPI funded scholarship Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program for Lebanese	BA, BS with leadership training	Around 2 (Varies/year)
AMIDEAST: MEPI funded scholarship Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program for Syrians	BA, BS with leadership training	Around 15 (Varies/year)
AUB MEPI-Tomorrow's Leaders Program	Full coverage scholarship (for Undergrads) both Lebanese and Syrian.	a share of 25
EDRAAK	Free access (in Arabic) to courses taught and developed at international higher education institutions (platform)	
Education without Borders	Provide an opportunity to obtain an international, distance learning higher education degree, taught in universities around the world. Provide language learning services as well as professional recognitions services	

European Union Erasmus+ Programme	Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees : open to all Bachelor students. Erasmus+ Credit Mobility : exchange programmes for students and staff at all levels, all disciplines. Erasmus+ Capacity building : open to all lebanese Higher education institutions. Erasmus+ Jean Monnet : open to all Lebanese Higher Education Institutions	Around 850
Global Institute for Health and Human rights	On-line courses(mainly health science) in Arabic targeting medical students in camps.	
Heriot-Watt University	Scholarships for Master in HW in Britain 2017 2018 academic year	
HOPEs (Project funded by the European Union's Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis , the Madad Fund)	University scholarship and english courses	around 130
Jamiya Project	Piloting one course: one 12 week blended (online and in-person tuition). 'Small Private Online Courses' (SPOCs, not MOOCs) in Applied IT	
Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins	Provide tertiary education {Two academic programmes: The Diploma of Liberal Studies and Community Service Learning. Tracks (CSLTs)}	
JICA	The Japanese government grant research studentns "MONBUKAGAKUSHO: MEXT"- 2017 to study the master's and doctoral	
JUSOOR: Lebanon for Higher Education	Funded by expatriated Syrians living abroad, including the Asfari Foundation, Said Foundation and Chalhoub Group, JUSOOR funds outreach activities to thousands of Syrian youth, as well as scholarships and activity centres.	
KIRON- Kiron Open Higher Education	Free higher education and graduate with an accredited university degree.	
LASeR	University scholarships Language training Capacity building	150

LASeR	LASeR launched academic programme for Syrian refugees in 2013, providing funding for refugees to attend Lebanese University and four private universities: Arts, Sciences and Technology University, Lebanese International University, Al-Jinan University and University of Tripoli. In 2013 a total of 250 scholarship (50% Syrian, 50% Lebanese) were granted (El-Ghali, Berjaoui, and McKnight 2017). In 2015, this total increased to 440, with negotiated 75% fee reduction at Al-Jinan University and LIU. In 2016, 600 supported scholarships were supported in Lebanon. LASeR also conduct outreach in camps, UN offices and on Facebook, and support displaced Syrian teachers with Special Teaching Diplomas. In total, 35 male Syrian teachers have been recruited (ibid.).	2013: 125, 2015: 220, 2016: 660
Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education RACE programme (Reaching all Children with Education)	The Lebanese Ministry for Higher Education has responded to the education needs of displaced Syrians by developing the RACE programme (Reaching all Children with Education). This has seen substantial investment in the Lebanese educational sector, leading to some improvements in the outcomes of Syrians in secondary education. This will reduce barriers to accessing higher education that may otherwise stem from a lack of prior secondary qualifications among Syrian youth. Improvements in outcomes for those in secondary education, filling gap there (Ministry of Education and Higher Education 2016). Looking forward, RACE is developing NGO engagement strategies to help coordinate and improve education opportunities as of 2016 (UNICEF 2016: 9)	N/A
MasterCard Foundation Scholarship	MasterCard has committed to supporting refugees enrolling in the Faculty of Health and Sciences at AUB. The scholarships aim to provide Syrians with quality leadership skills, offering 180 scholarships over next nine years. Of these places, 33% will go to refugees from Syria, with equal focus on refugees from Africa and members of the Lebanese host community.	Approx . 60
SPARK	University scholarships (BA) Vocational studies scholarships (TS)	240
SPARK: Higher Education 4 Syrians Programme	In Lebanon, SPARK runs a Higher Education 4 Syrians programme that focuses on tertiary opportunities and entrepreneurship. Alongside their regional work, which includes online education and camp outreach, SPARK aims to enrol 2,396 students in 4 years (2015-2019). In 2017, 30% support was also given to students from host communities. In 2016, 265 SPARK students graduated from a 35% discounted AUB course on early childhood education (Spark 2016).	2016: 265 receive 35% discount at AUB. Aim to engage 2,396 between 2015-2019

UNESCO Quality Universal Education for Syrian Students and Teachers (QUESST)	QUESST launched in 2015. It is part of regional response strategy: “Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth”. It has supported 206 students who are already enrolled in higher education but risk dropping out due to financial or other difficulties. QUESST works in partnership with The Arab Open University, Haigazian University, and University Libano-Francais.	206
UNESCO Scholarships	Much of the money for such programmes has come from Kuwait, which granted UNESCO \$5 million to support young Syrians with accessing tertiary education. (ADD REF TO UNESCO)	
UNHCR – The Learn Lab	Higher educational (formal) Primary/secondary education	
UNHCR DAFI Scholarships	Up to 300 students were supported through the UNHCR DAFI scholarship programme in 2016 (El-Ghali, Berjaoui, and McKnight 2017). In Lebanon, this programme also offers language support in coordination with the British Council, the American Centre for English and Institut Français for French.	300 in 2016
UNHCR in partnership with TDH IT	University Scholarships	335
Unite Lebanon Youth Project - ULYP	Language training + college counseling University Scholarships (BA) + Stipend	300
University of West London	Provides financial support for outstanding students who wish to act as ambassadors for the University of West London	
UNRWA	University scholarship	40

Appendix 3: Chart Detailing Programmes in Jordan

Name of organisation/ programme	Brief summary of activities	Refugees engaged
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EDU-Syria	EDU is a 2016 project funded by DAAD New Perspectives Scholarships (European Union), which aims to provide higher education to young Syrians and Jordanians. This is led by the German Jordanian University in partnership with Zarqa University, Yarmouk University and Al-Quds College. This has seen 300 places open to refugees at Zarqa college alone. Places are prioritised for those whose university studies were interrupted	300
IIE (Institute of International Education)	IIE has established a pilot Emergency Student Fund programme in Jordan. These provide scholarship opportunities for Syrian refugees. The pilot project has also received support from the then Jordanian Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education (Sherab and Tranchik 2016: 19).	
Jamiya Project in Jordan	The Open Society Foundation funds the Jamiya project in Jordan (Open Society Foundations 2016) which focuses on overcoming the barriers that refugees face in accessing tertiary education. Jamiya blends online and in-person university courses for Syrians in Jordan, and aims to create a replicable blueprint that can be deployed in future refugee crises.' (O'Keefe 2016).	
Kaplan Test Prep	This project has offered support to five hundred students in crisis, since 2013, but involvement requires individuals to have proficiency in English.	
UNHCR	Advocacy in Jordan meant that as of November 2015 the 'Ministry of Higher Education would recognise the Ministry of Interior card and asylum seeker certificate in lieu of education documentation and transcripts with support of the Jordan Hashemite University and al-Bayt university' (Sherab and Tranchik 2016: 21). University focused advocacy has also seen JHU informed offer a reduction in school fees by 20%. Moreover, 33 Jordan-based scholarships were offered through the DAFI scheme in 2013, 17 of which went to Syrians (Shuyab, Makkouk, and Tuttunji 2014: 18).	
UNICEF	UNICEF provided support to the Jordanian Ministry of Education to establish 'learning spaces in the refugee camps and strengthen the capacity of primary and secondary schools in the host communities' (Sherab and Tranchik 2016: 15).	

Appendix 4: Chart Detailing Programmes in Turkey

Name of organisation/ programme	Brief summary of activities	Refugees engaged
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Gaziantep University	Yavuz Coskun, rector of GU, says GU offer free Turkish language classes in refugee camps (Al-Fanar Media 2016). Intensive Arabic-language curriculums are also in operation and available to refugees from Syria. GU is also sending Turkish language teachers to refugee camps and conducting preparatory courses designed to verify qualifications where they may not exist	
Orient for Human Relief	Set up in Gaziantep by Syrian businessman Ghassan About in 2013, Orient for Human Relief addresses the need for post-secondary education to fill attainment gaps ahead of higher education level, offering Turkish and English classes and vocational training for students.	
Sampaio Foundation's Global Platform for Syrian Students	This initiative has offered tuition funding and living costs in a similar scheme to those offered by DAAD and the IIE.	
SPARK's International Syrian University in Exile	Spark's work in Turkey led them to create the International Syrian University in Exile (ISSUE), which is hosted by GU. This offers summer and winter courses from 2013, with a focus on post-conflict rebuilding. Overall, Spark has supported 200 Syrians with scholarships as of 2016.	200+
SSOUS (Syrian Students Office of University Services)	SSOUS is an organisation that provides information to Syrian students about the Turkish university system, in order to improve outreach and access.	
UNHCR DAFI Programme	The UNHCR DAFI programme has supported 750 students in 2016.	

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