

A photograph showing two young children, a girl and a boy, walking towards the camera while holding hands. They are both wearing blue UNICEF backpacks. The girl on the left is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, while the boy on the right is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. They are walking on a gravel surface in front of a white tent. The text "Rapid Education Assessment Report" is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

Rapid Education Assessment Report

Syrian Arab Republic

4-13 December 2012

Preface

“Providing children a safe space to learn, play and overcome the trauma they have witnessed – even for a short while –is crucial for both children and their parents”

“If education is not prioritized by the international community, Syria’s children – particularly girls – risk becoming a ‘lost generation’, which will have enormous long-term consequences for the country’s, and the region’s, future”.

Maria Calivis

UNICEF Regional Director, Middle East and North Africa

The crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, now in its twentieth month, has taken an extremely heavy toll on education. Teachers and other personnel have been killed, schools and educational facilities have been damaged or destroyed, and material and equipment have been looted. Syrian children and adolescents are facing incalculable losses because of the severe disruption of their schooling – some have missed a few weeks and others have already lost up to two school years. These disruptions are compromising children's potential return to school and jeopardizing their prospects for a rewarding school career and for better a future for themselves and their country.

UNICEF, the lead agency in the education sector, is working with other partners, including United Nations agencies, international and local non-governmental organizations and the Syrian Government, to respond to the crisis affecting education in Syria. Key to a well-targeted and effective response is the provision of accurate data and up-to-date information on the educational situation of Syrian children and adolescents. In this context, the Rapid Education Assessment undertaken by UNICEF is an initial attempt to document the situation of the education sector in Syria after 20 months of conflict and to evaluate actual needs on the ground. This rapid assessment does not provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the situation in the different provinces, districts, areas, cities and villages, but rather gives a general profile of the situation in the different regions and proposes a set of interventions to guide the educational response effort. These interventions are defined in line with the four main categories used by the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).

Through this report, UNICEF hopes to enhance the scope, level, efficiency and quality of response planning in the education sector in Syria so as to mitigate as much as possible the effects of the crisis in terms of disruption of education and learning. This will be a first step towards restoring the rights of all Syrian children, girls, boys and adloescents, to an education.

Maria Calivis

Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Ms. Tatiana Garakani, assessment expert mobilized through the Assessment Capacities Project(ACAPS). UNICEF expresses deep gratitude and appreciation both to Ms. Garakani for her expertise, hard work, resourcefulness and unconditional commitment, and to ACAPS, particularly Patrice Chataigner and Wilhemina Welsh, for their facilitation of this assignment and for technical support.

UNICEF also expresses appreciation to all who contributed to this assessment exercise and to reporting on its results and recommendations:

- The Syrian refugees interviewed in the Za'atari camp and in Mafraq shared with the assessment team their knowledge of the situation, their views, individual stories and feelings.
- The Syrian Ministry of Education shared a large and valuable set of secondary data both on the pre-crisis and in-crisis situation.
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Rapid Education Assessment Syrian Arab Republic

Executive Summary

Twenty months into the Syria crisis and with the significant deterioration of the situation, particularly since Summer, 2012, UNICEF, as cluster sector co-lead agency for education, undertook an education needs assessment for Syria so as to better understand the situation and improve response planning, not only by UNICEF but also by United Nations and other partners engaged in the education sector. This exercise, which was fully supported by ACAPS, took place during the first half of December 2012.

Because insecurity and a volatile and unpredictable situation made it unfeasible to conduct the needs assessment in-situ in Syria, the assessment was implemented remotely from Jordan using existing documentation, secondary data that were kindly and diligently provided by the Syrian Ministry of Education (MoE), and useful data and information collected from Syrian refugees in Jordan who were interviewed regarding their knowledge and perception of conditions prevailing in their areas of residence in Syria prior to their “escape” to Jordan.

The assessment's methodological approach did not allow a detailed and comprehensive account of the situation and educational needs in the various regions of the country. However, it did allow the elaboration of a general portrait of the realities of the education sector in Syria and the identification of a general profile of needs on the ground and the resulting directions for action, both in the short term (as the crisis continues) and for the longer time (post-crisis).

After an introduction and a brief presentation of the methodology, the assessment report reviews the pre-crisis situation of education in Syria, which was marked by numerous achievements and significant progress towards reaching Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3, although with some significant challenges remaining in the underserved northeastern part of the country.

The report then describes the impact of the 20 months of the crisis on the education sector in Syria and highlights the main priorities for sustaining or restoring education in the country as identified by Syrian refugees interviewed in Jordan.

The next two sections of the report present the main findings of the assessment according to two general, geographically referenced, profiles: areas affected by conflict and insecurity; and areas affected by a large influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Both the findings and the resulting recommendations for action, both for the short and the longer term, are presented in reference to the four INEE Minimum Standards categories of: (i) access; (ii) teaching and learning; (iii) teachers and school personnel; and (iv) policy.

The last section of the report gives more general recommendations regarding further needs assessment work in Syria and the additional capacity required by UNICEF to undertake this work.

1. Overall situation

Civil unrest and armed violence have been the reality for children and their families in Syria for the past 21 months. All the governorates have been affected to varying degrees. Many regions, especially densely populated areas such as Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus and Daraa, have been severely affected by the escalation of conflict and insecurity. Other areas, such as Al Hassakeh, Ar Raqqa, parts of Aleppo, Damascus and Homs, have seen an influx of IDPs. According to the United Nations, as of December 2012, approximately 4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 2.5 million IDPs¹, and 500,000 individuals have been registered as refugees in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, and in Northern Africa.

Education has paid and continues to pay a very heavy price. An estimated 2 million children, and probably more, have been affected by the crisis. About 80% (1.6 million) of these children are below the age of 14, and slightly less than half of them (800,000) have been displaced, with their opportunities for schooling severely constrained.

Teachers and other education staff are also affected by the situation. According to the MoE, more than 110 teachers and other school personnel have been killed, and about 84% are currently² reporting to work on a fairly regular basis. Salaries are being paid to those teachers still working, but the MoE faces challenges in paying for the additional work of teachers who are helping children catch up with missed schoolwork and learning opportunities. This has been further aggravated by the high influx of children in their catchment areas (double-shift schools). In addition, the devaluation³ of the Syrian pound has severely reduced purchasing power not only of teachers but of the entire population, which adds to the daily pressure of securing food and other essential commodities for children and families.

According to the MoE, 2,400 of Syria's nearly 22,000⁴ schools (13%) are damaged or destroyed, with 1,499 schools (8%) used as shelters and collective centres hosting a number of IDPs⁵.

Schooling has been severely disrupted for thousands of children. Attendance reports from the 2011-12 school year showed that 70% of the schools in Homs were closed during the last quarter (March-May 2012), and that the number increased to 90% a month later. The same was reported from Idleb and Daraa governorates, where 90% of schools closed in May-June 2012. It is worth noting that the month of May marks the end of the school year and in general students' attendance decreases as they are preparing for their final exams; summer vacation starts in June. This trend continued into the current 2012-13 school year, during which it has been observed that two months after the start of the new school year, many schools did not reopen and thousands of others are operating under very difficult conditions in terms of infrastructure, human resources, student attendance, double shifting, overcrowding, availability of teaching and learning materials, supervision and management. The MoE reports⁶ that nationally, 72% of children are enrolled to attend school but in some governorates, such as Aleppo, the attendance rate has dropped to 6%, and in other areas attendance has become sporadic. Furthermore, since the beginning of the crisis, children in and out of school have been experiencing stress and trauma. Education should provide a safe space for children, a sense of normalcy, psychosocial support, and protection against harm, in addition to delivering other vital services.

¹ UN (Dec 2012) Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan for Syria and Humanitarian Bulletin Syria – issue 14 - 27 November to 10 December 2012

² Ministry of Education (12 Dec 2012), unpublished report

³ From \$1=SYP49 in November 2011 to \$1=SYP100 in December 2012

⁴ This is inclusive of private or UNRWA schools.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

2. Methods and limitations of the study

Due to severe time and resource constraints and lack of access, this assessment was based primarily on an analysis of secondary (pre-crisis and in-crisis) information, data from the Syrian MoE and reports by United Nations agencies, international NGOs and the media.

To verify some of the findings and assumptions, focus group discussions (N=3 females + 3 males) and interviews (N=5 females + 10 males) were conducted with refugees in Zaatari Camp in Jordan on 9 and 10 December 2012, and with other recent arrivals in Mafraq (N=4 females + 2 males) on 11 December 2012. Despite the effort to interview individuals coming from different geographical areas in recent weeks, the majority were from Daraa, and a few from Homs, Damascus and Aleppo. The interviews addressed the four domains of education as per the INEE Minimum Standards: (i) access; (ii) teaching and learning; (iii) teachers and school personnel; and (iv) policy. The responders were able to report about the status of education as they left it in areas severely affected by the crisis and insecurity. However, as nearly all of them had directly left Syria to migrate to Jordan, they had very limited information about the situation and educational needs of IDPs. **Therefore, the specific needs of IDPs in Syria and their host communities remain a critical gap in this assessment.**

Four education-related questions were added to the WASH survey that was conducted 11-13 December 2012 with new refugees arriving to register (N=178). The respondents were asked about the status of their schools when they left Syria, the biggest obstacles for students attending schools in their area of origin, alternative learning opportunities (e.g., home/community schooling), and their main concerns about present education conditions in Syria as compared to the pre-crisis situation. The majority of responders (83%) were from Daraa, 8.5% from Damascus and 6% from Homs. About half of them (52%) had left their homes less than a month before (November 2012).

The preliminary results and assumptions were discussed and verified with partners involved in education in Syria.

3. Situation of the education sector prior to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic

Education in the Syrian Arab Republic is centralized and funded through the state budget (4.9% of GDP and 16.7% of total government expenditures in 2010). The MoE is responsible for supervising and setting the curriculum and goals of teaching, including the interaction and integration of the active teaching elements. As part of a decentralization process, some authorities have been delegated to the 14 directorates of education in the governorates, the Governorate Council and their bodies. Each education directorate is responsible for the schools in its governorate.

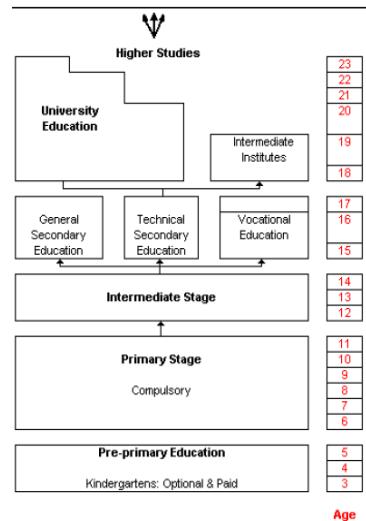
In 1981, a law was passed to make education from grades 1 to 6 compulsory for all Syrian children. In 2002⁷, primary and lower secondary education were combined into one basic education stage, and education was made compulsory and free from grades 1 to 9. It is managed through 2 cycles, with cycle 1 covering grades 1-4 and cycle 2 covering grades 5-9. Although some schools still operate physically with classes 1-6 and 7-9, new construction takes the new structures of cycles into account.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) carried out jointly by the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics and the UNICEF Syria country office in 2005-06 found that only 7.5% of children aged 36-59 months were attending preschool. Urban-rural and regional differentials were significant: the rate was as high as 9.7% in urban areas, compared to 5.4% in rural areas. Differentials by socioeconomic status were also significant: 18.1% of children living in rich households attended preschool, with the rate dropping to 3.6% among poor households. Overall, 33.6% of 6-year-olds attending the first grade of primary school had attended preschool the previous year, with the proportion of boys slightly higher than that of girls. In urban areas, 40% of children had attended preschool the previous year, compared to 25.8% of children in rural areas. Regional differentials by governorate were also significant. While 52.4% of first graders had attended preschool in Damascus, only 22.8% of their counterparts had attended a preschool in Aleppo. In addition, the MICS revealed a significant differential according to the mother's education level, ranging from 21.2% among children whose mothers had no education to 57.2% among children whose mothers were university-educated⁸.

According to the 2007 census, 98% of schools in Syria are public, 1.8% are private and 0.2% are operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugee children. Gender parity is close but has not yet been fully achieved⁹. In general, the Syrian Arab Republic has shown positive trends since the MICS was undertaken in 2006. For example, the EFA Global Monitoring Report indicates that the gender parity index in terms of gross intake rate in primary education is equal to 1, and that it reaches 0.99 in terms of net intake rate.

In 2010, UNESCO¹⁰ noted that only 10% of children were enrolled in pre-primary school, compared to 22% in the region.

A large portion of children who were of primary-school age were attending school (around 86%), with a very slight difference between males and females. Primary-school enrolment (gross) averaged 120%, which was superior to the regional average of 98% in 2010. The rate of secondary school participation was lower, with



⁷ Law No.32 of 7 April 2002

⁸ Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 2008

UNDP (2011) Syrian Arab Republic HDI values and rank changes in the 2011 Human Development Report.

<http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/SYR.pdf>

⁹ Gender inequality index <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/SYR.pdf>

¹⁰ Statistics UNESCO for the Syrian Arab Republic,
http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=760&BR_Region=40525

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only 70% of net enrolment ratio, which did correspond to the regional average in 2010 (69%). High school drop-out rates were linked to poverty and economic necessity to find employment, along with limited motivation to enrol in secondary vocational education. School life expectancy scored 9.8 years in 1995 for 11.3 years in 2011. The primary to secondary transition rate was 95% in 2009.

The MICS (2006)¹¹ also found that the percentage of secondary school participation (net attendance ratio) was 54.2%. The percentage differed between urban areas (57.4%) and rural areas (50.8%), and also presented a differential per governorate, with the highest in Suweida (83.6%) and the lowest in Aleppo (39.9%).

National Education Indicator 2011		
Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)	4.9%	
Expected years of schooling (of children) (years)	11.3	
Adult literacy rate, both sexes (% aged 15 and above)	84.2%	
Education index	0.534	
Combined gross enrolment in education (both sexes)	66.4%	
	Male	Female
Youth (15-24 years) literacy rate (%), 2005-2010	96%	93%
Pre-primary school participation, Gross enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010	9%	9%
Primary school participation, Gross enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010	125%	120%
Primary school participation, Net attendance ratio (%), 2005-2010	87%	86%
Secondary school participation, Net enrolment ratio (%), 2007-2010	70%	69%
Secondary school participation, Net attendance ratio (%), 2005-2010	63%	63%

Literacy rates in the Syrian Arab Republic are higher than the regional average, at 84.2% (vs. 75%) for adults (>15 years old) in 2011 and 94.9% for youth in 2010.

Access to education for non-Syrian children varied based on their legal status and ethnicity. Palestinians had access to both UNRWA and public/private schools. On average, 80% of Palestinian refugees attended UNRWA schools and 20% attended either government or private schools¹².

Although there were no restrictions preventing Iraqi children from attending schools in Syria, the actual number of Iraqi children enrolled in schools was estimated to be low, primarily because many children had to work to help support their families. The Syrian MoE reported a drop of 26% in school attendance by refugees between 2009 and 2010. United Nations agencies estimated

that up to 35% of Iraqi children may have been out of school. In addition to economic pressures to work, reasons for drop out (or not enrolling at all) were lack of the child's school records, difficulties with the Syrian curriculum and the education process in a new country, transportation, legal age restrictions, fear related to residency status, disabilities and trauma-related reasons for both children and parents¹³.

Starting in the 2011-12 academic year, new curricula were introduced in all public schools in the first, second, third, fourth, seventh and tenth grades. This is the first time since the 1970s that the primary and secondary school curricula have been changed in Syria. The new curriculum was rolled out in phases starting in 2008; the last phase was planned to be introduced in 2012 for grades 6, 9 and 12. However, it is likely that the change in curricula will not be well-rooted in teachers and students' minds given the current deteriorating situation and its negative impact on education in Syria.

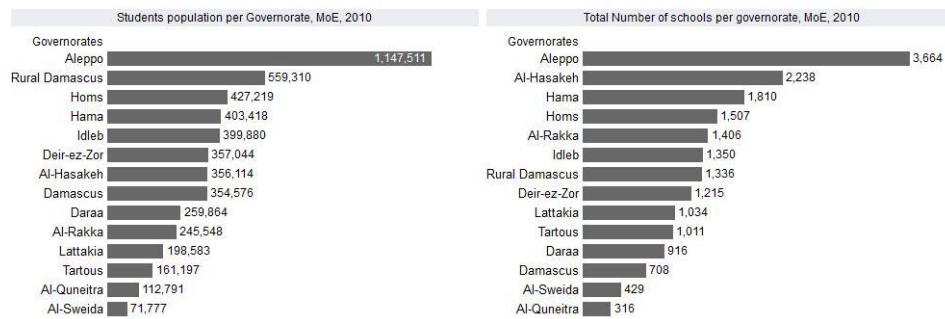
¹¹ http://www.childinfo.org/files/MICS3_Syria_FinalReport_2006_Eng.pdf

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

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Available figures from the MoE about the number of students and schools in 2010 are as follows:



Before the crisis, the incidence of poverty in Syria was highest in the northeastern region. More than half of the poor (58.1%) lived in this area and 38.3% of them worked in agriculture. The rate of GDP growth was only 0.9%. This northeastern region, referred to as the triangle of poverty, included the governorates of Deir Ezzor, Ar Raqq and Hassakeh (ACF report, 2012). The recurrent drought threatened the food and economic security of farmers and herders, and seriously endangered their livelihoods and nutritional status. It affected 60% of the national territory and 1.3 million small-scale farmers/herders of Hassakeh, Raqqa and Deir Ezzor. Of the 803,000 persons severely affected in Syria, 682,000 are from Hassakeh, Deir Ezzor and Raqqa and 60,000 families (35,000 from Hassakeh only) migrated. The lack of alternative feed, the high prices and the lack of pastures caused important animal losses for herders or major sales at very low prices¹⁴.

In terms of education, those areas had lower numbers of qualified teachers and lower enrolment rates. In 2006, Raqqa and Deir ez Zor had the lowest percentage (76%) of children of age to enter primary school attending grade 1, even lower than the general average in rural areas of 89%. Raqqa and Deir ez Zor had also the lowest rates of attendance by girls.

Secondary school attendance dropped significantly in all governorates; the average was only 57% in urban areas and 51% in rural areas. In 2006, Aleppo and Raqqa showed the lowest net attendance ratio of all governorates, 40% and 44% respectively. For girls, this percentage was even lower, with only 37% attending secondary school.

4. Picture of the current situation of education in Syria as of 14 December 2012

The following map summarizes and illustrates various factors affecting the educational opportunities of students in Syria. The red dots indicate areas severely affected by the conflict and insecurity, and the yellow dots show areas with a large influx of IDPs¹⁵. The overall situation is a mix of conflict and displacement in

¹⁴ Action Contre la Faim (2012) Assessment ACF & SARC: Displaced Population from Deir Ezor, Hassakh City

¹⁵ Based on the information provided by Map: OCHA Humanitarian Snapshot (12 Dec 2012); Map: Border crossings and clash areas (10 Dec 2012); Map: HIU (5 Dec 2012)

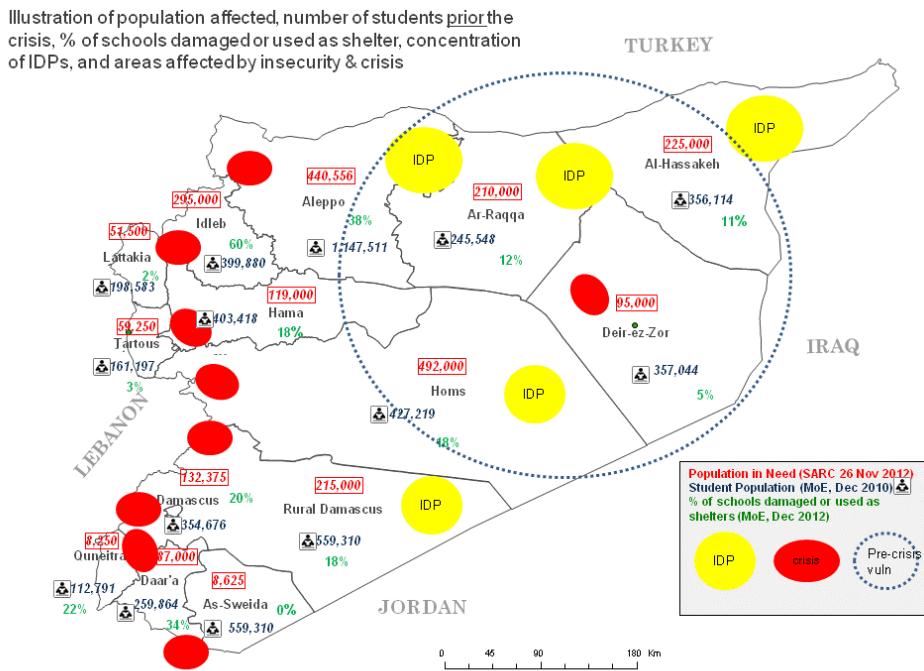
https://hiu.state.gov/Products/Syria_DisplRef_2012Dec05_HIU_U683.pdf, and Map: IDMC

[http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/32F6F5040CF356A4C1257A5D0045AEFD/\\$file/Syria_IDMC_afterMar2012.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/32F6F5040CF356A4C1257A5D0045AEFD/$file/Syria_IDMC_afterMar2012.pdf)

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most of the governorates, with varying degrees of intensity. However, in order to help prioritize intervention areas and required response, the map has been simplified to represent the dominant trends. As mentioned earlier, Hassakeh, Deir Ez Zor, Ar Raqqa and the eastern part of Homs are areas of pre-existing vulnerabilities, prior to the crisis. This area is indicated by a dotted circle. The map also displays the proportion of schools damaged or used as shelters (in green)¹⁶, the estimated number of affected population (in red boxes), and pre-crisis reference data about the number of students per governorate (2010)¹⁷ to help assess the approximate number of students affected by the conflict and displacement.



4.1 Overall educational priorities

The refugees arriving from Syria were asked (through a survey questionnaire) to identify their three main concerns and priorities in terms of education. The following table reports on these main concerns and priorities according to their frequency in the responses of the people surveyed:

¹⁶ MoE (12 December 2012) unpublished report

¹⁷ Bureau of Statistics – Syrian Arab Republic

Concern #1: Frequency a concern was raised: A – 1 A – 10 times A – 20 times A – 30 times A – 42 times	<p style="text-align: center;"> Curriculum Quality of education </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> prefer e-education Damaged schools </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Uniforms No road </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Schools City is destroyed </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> No schools </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> School building </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Security & fear materials infrastructure repair </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Students dont come Lack of basic things Studying has become difficult Sanitation Everyone has left Transport </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Heating Electricity Trauma </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> No teachers </p>
Concern #2 Frequency a concern was raised: A – 1 A – 10 times A – 20 times A – 29 times	<p style="text-align: center;"> uniform Health Heating students don't come schools </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> electricity transport </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Security & fear No teachers </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Water no schools cost Pharmacy no money </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> curriculum School building quality of education </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> infrastructure repair fuel destroyed schools </p>
Concern #3 Frequency a concern was raised: A – 1 A – 20 times A – 40 times A – 60 times	<p style="text-align: center;"> No food infrastructure repair computer programmes </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> sanitation pharmacy Security & fear schools </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> electricity </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> materials heating </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Better teachers no education curriculum </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Kidnapping uniform water </p>

The following list illustrates the frequency of issues raised by the responders:

- Security and fear
- Materials (books, stationary, materials for schools, sports and extracurricular activities, etc.)
- Infrastructure and repair of schools
- Lack of teachers (teachers who have left or do not show up due to security constraints)

- Curriculum (too hard, not relevant to culture or values, etc.)
- Quality of education (increased classroom size, reduced hours of instruction, combined classrooms, lack of teachers, lack of materials, etc.)
- Lack of facilities such as heating, water, sanitation, and access to medication

The interviews at Za'atari and Mafraq revealed similar trends in terms of priorities:

- Ensuring safety and security (“*Students don't need stationary, they need to feel safe*”, a parent in Za'atari)
- Construction and rehabilitation of schools
- Provision of material
- Psychosocial support, particularly for students
- School attendance, the need for remedial classes and accelerated learning programmes
- A strategy for placement exams for students with no papers/school certificates, both internally displaced and refugees in neighbouring countries
- Recruitment of teachers and verification of their certification if they no longer have a copy of their credentials
- Curriculum review
- Enhancing vocational training

It must be noted that these priorities relate to geographical areas that have been severely affected by the conflict and therefore, are not representative of the educational priorities and needs of IDPs and their host communities.

4.2 Overall Protection Issues

- Human Rights Watch¹⁸ (29 November 2012) reported that boys have been recruited for combat and other military purposes. However, these claims were refuted by the responders, who for the most part clearly stated their support to the Free Syrian Army (FSA) but, at the same time, did not accuse the Syrian Army of recruiting children or adolescents.
- There are reports of some increases, mainly in rural areas, in the practice of early marriage for girls as young as 13, to “protect” them. The practice of early marriage is still prevalent in Syria, particularly in rural areas. Prior to the crisis, the age was 14 to 15 years, and now it has lowered to 13 years.
- Pre-existing vulnerabilities are further aggravated by the ongoing violence and insecurity and by the socioeconomic vulnerability of IDP families. In many cases, they have lost their livelihoods, which results in children and adolescents dropping out of school to try to earn some income to support their families.
- Refugees in Za'atari indicated that educational opportunities are very limited for children with disabilities.

5. Findings

Based on the analysis of in- and pre-crisis information, areas have been identified and grouped by how they have been affected: a) areas affected directly by insecurity and conflict; and b) areas affected primarily by the influx of IDPs. In the following sections, the current situation (as of 15 December 2012) in terms of access,

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch (29 November 2012) <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/11/29/syria-opposition-using-children-conflict>

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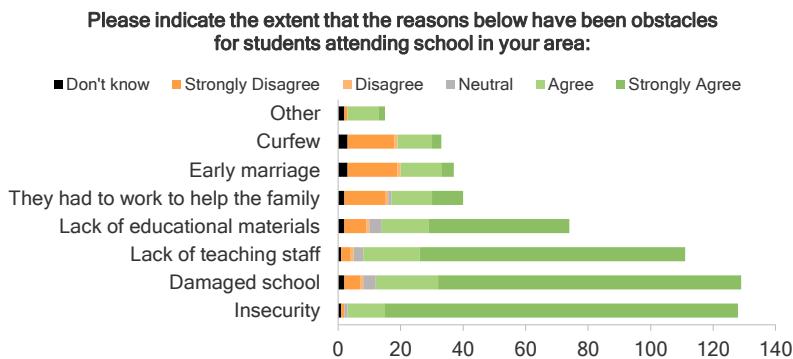
teaching and learning, teachers and school personnel and policy are presented, followed by programme recommendations for the education sector group in support of the MoE.

5.A Areas affected by the conflict and insecurity: Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, western part of Homs, Damascus, parts of Rural Damascus, Daraa

5.A.1 Impact of the crisis on education

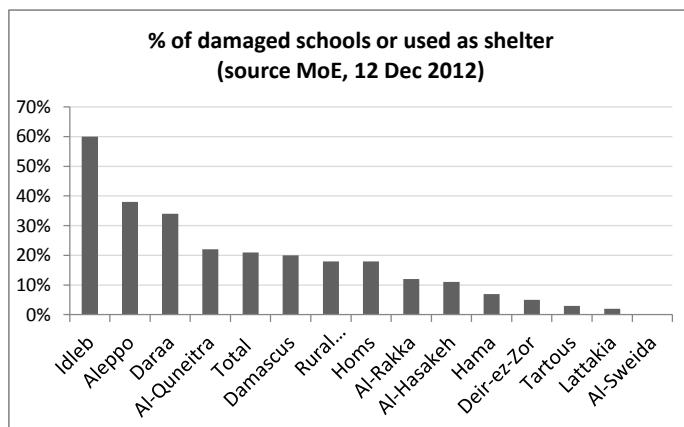
Access Although some schools have been damaged or destroyed, **insecurity** remains the main obstacle for students and teachers. Attendance has become sporadic at best. The refugees interviewed in Za'atari indicated that in areas where schools are still open, on average student attendance **does not exceed 2 days per week** because of occasional shelling or bombing. Those living near schools have higher attendance rates. Security has particularly affected the **attendance of girls, especially at high school level**, because high schools are often further away from children's homes. The refugees interviewed indicated that they had "heard" of girls being kidnapped. Parents have also been reluctant to send younger children to school, worrying about their safety. In some areas, students have missed school from the beginning of the 2012-13 school year, but in other areas many students have already missed a year of school (2011-12). In some specific neighbourhoods of Homs that were affected early on by the conflict, many children have actually lost two school years. The crisis has made it difficult for students to concentrate ("children are not thinking about school, but worrying about the next strike", said a parent interviewed in Za'atari Camp).

The survey undertaken with recent refugees shows that the main obstacles for attending schools are: insecurity, damaged schools, lack of teaching staff, lack of educational materials, livelihood and early marriage.



Since the situation varies from one area to another, generalizations by governorate cannot be made. Schematically describing the situation, one refugee interviewed in Za'atari said that in most provinces or districts or cities you would find "hot areas," where violence and fighting are ongoing daily and where education has "completely stopped." There are also "unstable areas," where there is sporadic resurgence of fighting and bombing/shelling and where educational services are occasionally provided. The "much calmer" areas are those where the situation is close to normal, including with regard to education. This

general categorization was confirmed by other persons present in the group discussion. In terms of infrastructure alone, 2,400 schools have been reported to have been damaged and 1,500 used as shelters¹⁹; these data are not disaggregated between primary and secondary schools. Idleb, Aleppo and Daraa are the most affected.



From this perspective, the most affected governorates are Idleb, Aleppo and Daraa, respectively reporting 60%, 38% and 34% of schools damaged or used as shelters. There are reports that some schools have been used temporarily, and sometimes for longer periods, by the Syrian army or the FSA and other combatant forces.

According to the survey undertaken among recent refugees, more than 35% of the respondents reported their children's school in the area of origin as having suffered minor damage (windows, paintwork, etc.), 25% reported medium damage (including WASH facilities) and 26% reported heavy damage (destroyed walls, foundation damages, cracks, WASH facilities, etc.). Only 7.3% of the respondents reported schools as completely destroyed while the remaining 6.3% gave other responses such as "school has been affected by looting" or "the school is abandoned".

Regarding the possibility that the school might be used for other purposes, almost a third (30%) of the respondents said their schools in the areas of origin were being used for purposes other than education, i.e., mostly as shelters for displaced persons or occasionally by the Syrian army or FSA.

Some homeschooling is reported, but not as much in areas that have been heavily impacted by the insecurity. There are anecdotal reports of home schooling, consisting essentially of private tutoring for children of families who can afford it, or of tutoring by well-educated parents helping their children. Students in grades 9 and 12, especially in urban areas, have been trying to attend preparatory classes for exams. Combining the last two modalities, a teacher from Homs explained that after leaving Homs with her children, she spent a few weeks in Damascus where she managed to register two of her children to

¹⁹ MoE (12 Dec 2012) unpublished report

take the 9th and 12th grade exams. One of her children attended classes to prepare for the exam while she spent a good part of her time helping the other one to finish the part of the curriculum he had missed and be ready for the exam. She said that shortly after the exam results were announced, she migrated to Jordan.

Teaching & learning There has been looting of materials and equipment (computers, sports equipment, materials for extracurricular activities, surveillance cameras, etc.). Administrative offices of the MoE have been damaged in some provinces. Warehouses and print shops of the Textbook Authority and vehicles like school buses have been damaged or destroyed/burned. In terms of textbooks, most schools received their quotas for 2011-20 through the provincial directorates and most needs were covered. However, according to the people interviewed in Za'atari, no or very limited quantities of materials were distributed this year, most probably because of the burning of warehouses and print shops. For those students still able to attend school, the quality of teaching and learning has decreased as school hours have been shortened (by one hour on average), classes have been grouped, double shifts have been created and many classes have been functioning with limited learning resources. In some areas, training (through various organizations) has been provided for psychosocial support. The role of school counsellors has increased, due to the large number of children in need of psychosocial support. It is unclear if a referral system was in place for children needing specialized mental health services.

Teachers and school personnel **Attendance** Attendance has been hampered due to insecurity, especially for teachers residing farther from the school. In some areas, the tensions between different factions in the school may have had a role in pushing out some of the teachers. However, according to those interviewed in Za'atari, during the first several months of the crisis and due to the peaceful nature of the protest, school teams managed to keep politics out of the school so as not to disrupt its normal functioning. It is only later that "positions" became much too clear to be hidden or not to influence relations within the teams. There were also reports of the FSA putting pressure on communities to boycott schools during the conflict as a sign of protest. Reports of kidnapping²⁰ have also created additional fear for teachers and students. It was reported that some teachers felt unmotivated to teach the curriculum which was a subject of criticism for a variety of reasons.

Salary

Teaching personnel continue to receive their salaries. In some cases, it has been reported that an accountant from the provincial directorate of MoE would visit the school and disburse salaries to teachers who were present and carried an ID. In other areas, teachers had to go to a bank in the main city. However, insecurity could cause the closure of the bank for days. If teachers missed 15 days of attendance, they would be cut off from the payroll. Hence, many teachers seem to be going to register at the school, even if the school is no longer functional.

Policy Teachers and students are encouraged to attend schools in their communities to reduce the risk of exposure to violence. After the summer vacations, teachers working in schools outside of their province

²⁰ BBC (27 Nov 2012) www.bbc.co.uk/news/World-middle-east-20491957

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of origin were allowed – if they so desired – not to report back to their school of assignment but to the provincial education directorate of their province of origin which would assign them to a school close to their place of residence. This has facilitated school registration for internally displaced children.

Issues were raised with regard to the curriculum since some found that it was too difficult and that it marginalized students from families of modest conditions or without highly educated parents, especially after the basic level. There were also concerns about the curriculum not fully reflecting the realities of Syrian society in its richness and diversity. The system's practice of orienting failing students to vocational education was also criticized as an inappropriate and inequitable option. The MoE regulation regarding “compulsory use of the school uniform” is suspended until further notice.

5.A.2 Recommendations for programming

Recommendations aim to address the impact of the crisis in the areas affected most severely by the violence and insecurity:

	Short term – in crisis	Long term - Post-crisis
Access	Facilitate continuation of schooling where possible and homeschooling by providing emergency education kits and learning materials, including from the MoE. Provide prefabricated classrooms –and WASH facilities if needed- in areas that have become accessible.	Rehabilitation and construction in line with child- and disabled-friendly standards and the “build back better” principle Reintegration Certification for returnee children
Teaching and Learning	Print textbooks, activity books and teachers' guide to be distributed along with education kits to students. With reestablishment of electricity and internet connectivity, explore possibility of using educational channels or web-based learning. Ensure availability of PSS services for affected children to help them overcome their stress	School clubs model (remedial education, PSS, and recreational activities) Remedial classes Catch-up or accelerated learning programmes Vocational training Curriculum revision
Teachers and school personnel	Support payment of salaries Look at ways parents can support home-based schooling under the guidance of teachers, and coordinated by headmasters, during the days when security conditions improve and schools open. Training counsellors and teachers on PSS	Teacher training as per need, Training of other school personnel, particularly headmasters and counselors. Reintegration of displaced/refugee teachers and other education personnel returning to their place of origin or where they will reside.
Policy	Maintain policies for inclusive education and flexibility for displaced population Continue suspension of school uniform policy so as to reduce cost for parents	Solutions must be explored regionally about placement exams and standards for reintegration of Syrian returnees from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, etc...

	Streamline placement tests	Consider a revolving fund to help schools in transition.
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5.B Areas affected by high influx of IDPs: Hassakeh, Ar Raqqa, parts of Aleppo, Homs, Damascus and Rural Damascus.

Even though these six provinces have received the largest influx of IDPs, it is useful to note that nearly all the provinces have received IDPs. This is evidenced by the fact that **the MoE reports schools being used as shelters in 12 out of the 14 provinces of the country.**

As mentioned earlier, the key informants' interviews and surveys have shed some light on the situation of education in crisis-affected areas, but almost no information on the situation of IDPs and their educational needs. Therefore, the impact assessment is based on an analysis of secondary data and sets of assumptions based on the pre-crisis situation. This information needs to be verified and validated through further assessment and triangulation of data.

5.B.1 Impact of the crisis on education in areas hosting IDPs

Access	The infrastructure of existing schools is not as badly affected as in other areas. However, some schools are sheltering IDPs. With fewer functional schools – as many cannot continue to function due to damage or to their use as shelters – , this leads to a serious problem of overcrowding and lack of space. This is sometimes aggravated by the fact that some teachers did not report to the school to which they are normally assigned, which again can hinder the enrolment or attendance of internally displaced school-age children. A significant percentage of schools are used as shelter for IDPs. Although in the short term the new host schools apparently have been able to accommodate the new arrivals, the average class size has increased as a result. In some instances, schools are being used both as schools and as shelters for IDPs, putting extra pressure on WASH facilities. Host communities, however, are struggling with inflation and higher cost of fuel, which makes transportation to and from school difficult at times for both students and teachers. School heating is also no longer possible despite the severe winter cold. IDP children have sometimes experienced or witnessed extreme violence and are therefore in a state of psychological distress that can hinder their return to or performance at school.
Teaching & Learning	In many instances, IDPs have fled their cities and villages without any of their possessions. As a result, children often do not have copies of their official school records or their school materials.
Teachers and school personnel	Teachers and educational personnel are part of the displaced population. Thus, they may have fled without taking copies of their credentials, which may make it difficult for them to be recruited to work as teachers in their areas of residence.

Policy The MoE has adopted policies to accommodate enrolment for displaced children, and has suspended the “compulsory use of the school uniform” until further notice. As mentioned earlier, new regulations have been adopted by the MoE to facilitate the movement of teachers from their schools of assignment to schools in their area of origin or zone of displacement.

5.B.2 Recommendations for programming in IDP affected areas

	Short term 3 to 6 months	Long term (if IDP situation becomes protracted)
Access	<p>Provide extra learning space through prefabricated classrooms and repair damaged buildings including WASH facilities, and accommodate double shifts if required.</p> <p>Establish playgrounds for children and safe spaces for adolescents.</p> <p>Stimulate demand for schooling through back to school activities (information/communication and incentives...)</p>	<p>→ Consider school feeding and use of school clubs to encourage retention of at risk students.</p> <p>Consider vocational training (with start-up kits) to help integrate adolescents who may not return to formal schooling. The acquired skills can be used immediately to rebuild and rehabilitate schools and the communities.</p> <p>Increase access for children 3-5 years of age in community based ECD or preschools/kindergartens.</p> <p>Consider incentives (cash or in-kind assistance –such as food, stationary and clothes) for students at risk of drop out (especially girls).</p>
Teaching and Learning	<p>Make sure sufficient number of teachers are available.</p> <p>Ensure psychological counselling and referral of severe cases to specialized care by mental health specialists or to hospitals.</p> <p>Provide space for play and recreation kits.</p> <p>Provide the necessary teaching and learning materials.</p> <p>Maintain remedial classes where possible.</p>	<p>→ Scale up remedial/catch up classes and accelerated learning programs</p> <p>With reestablishment of electricity and internet connectivity, insure possibility of distributing the curriculum electronically, while trying to procure sufficient numbers of paper copies.</p>
Teachers and school personnel	<p>Make sure sufficient number of teachers are available.</p> <p>Assure continuation of salary payments to teachers.</p> <p>Teachers' training.</p> <p>With the devaluation of Syrian currency and escalating inflation, there is a need to provide additional incentives to teachers to contribute to maintaining their purchasing power.</p> <p>Engage school councils with community based members to further support the school and activities.</p> <p>ECD teachers to engage in activities for children and attend to their psychosocial wellbeing.</p>	
Policy	<p>Maintain the policies that allow students from other governorates or districts/neighborhoods to enrol without difficulty in new schools. Maintain the lifting of the regulation pertaining to compulsory uniform.</p> <p>Ministry and governorate officials should maintain a record of teachers' credentials and provide that information to schools that may want to hire displaced teachers who no longer have copies of their credentials.</p> <p>Solutions must be explored on how to address the specific needs of students who need to pass the 9th and 12th grade exams.</p>	

Consider a revolving fund to help schools and look into management modality options.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations concerning the on-going assessment of education in Syria

This assessment report, at best, presents dominant trends and possible impacts. However, given the difficulty of the situation, close (real time) monitoring is needed to update the evolution of the situation frequently and keep an eye on changing trends that may affect priorities (both in terms of geography and population at risk).

The next phase of assessment should focus on the educational needs of IDPs (in and out of collective centres) and their host communities. If access is granted, the first rapid assessment should focus on Ar Raqqa, Hassakeh, Homs, Aleppo and Deir Ezzor (if the security situation permits). Assessment in other IDP areas less affected by violence such as Tartous, Lattaquie and Damascus would also be useful.

Better coordination is needed between the different UNICEF offices and partners, particularly UNHCR in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. A coordinated assessment approach led at the regional level (UNICEF) will allow a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of Syrians coming from different governorates. The coordinated approach might involve:

- Coordinated (same data collection tool, timeframe and methodology) and routine education surveys on new arrivals in refugee camps in the three or four neighbouring countries.
- Maintaining the liaison with the MoE in Syria for regular access to updated figures on school attendance and dropouts per governorate. Consider the possibility of assigning a sector group member to support the MoE in this task.
- Assessment preparedness activities are required in preparation for when data collection from the field become possible. It would be important, at least, to encourage actors with already sporadic access to regularly report and share information in a pre-agreed format.

As mentioned above, the assessment report has defined two main geographic categories and used them both to describe possible impacts and potential needs and to propose recommendations for programming for the short and longer term (recovery/post-crisis or protracted IDP crisis). The four categories of the INEE Minimum Standards have been a most useful tool for this exercise. One additional angle could have been and will need to be considered at a later stage: conducting a macro-level analysis of the impact of the crisis on the educational system as a whole, and proposing recommendations on what should be done to help sustain the system in both the short and medium terms. Elements to consider as part of this review would include: central and provincial-level planning and monitoring capacity, the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), pre and in-service training systems for teachers and other education personnel, curriculum, national assessment system, funding and operational and human resources issues, etc.

6.2 Recommendations concerning the assessment capacity within UNICEF

UNICEF has been relying on external consultants or seconded staff for this assessment. It is clear, however, that UNICEF, as a cluster lead for education, WASH, nutrition and child protection, will be required to lead assessments to be able to provide its partners with timely and up-to-date information about the situation, needs and priorities. **UNICEF must consider hiring, at the regional level, at least two professionals with complementary skills in assessment and information management.**

In a context where most of the assessment work relies heavily on a large volume of secondary information, with very limited access to affected areas, greater coordination is required between various sectors (education, child protection, WASH). This can help to reduce duplication of efforts in the analysis of secondary information and the burden of assessment on the affected population.

In addition, a permanent team at the Regional Office can help to establish information management systems in countries of the region, and develop baseline information for each country that is updated regularly. In case of any emergency, these baselines will help to accelerate significantly the impact assessment.

Annex I: Profile of respondents

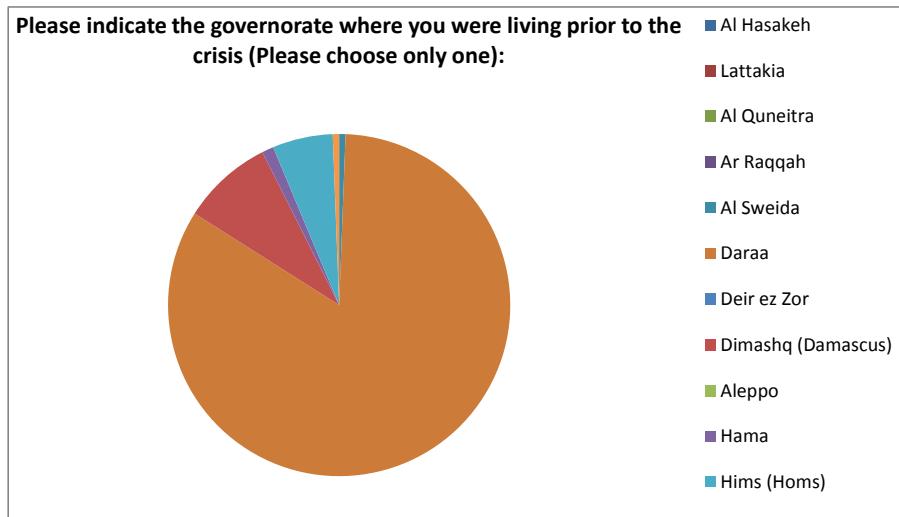
Profile of respondents in Zaatar

Gender	Location in Syria	Date of arrival
M	Daraa –Khirbert Ghazal	26 Aug 2012
M	Daraa – KHIRBERT GHAZAL	15 Nov 2012
F	Daraa -	Oct 2012
F	Daraa - Moarebet	End of Nov 2012
F	Damascus	June 2012
M	Daraa- Al Shajarah village	End of Sept 2012
F	Daraa – Alharay Al Movarat	26 Sept 2012
M	Daraa	Nov 2012
F	Homs – Al Qasair	29 Feb 2012
D	Daraa – Eleme	10 Nov 2012

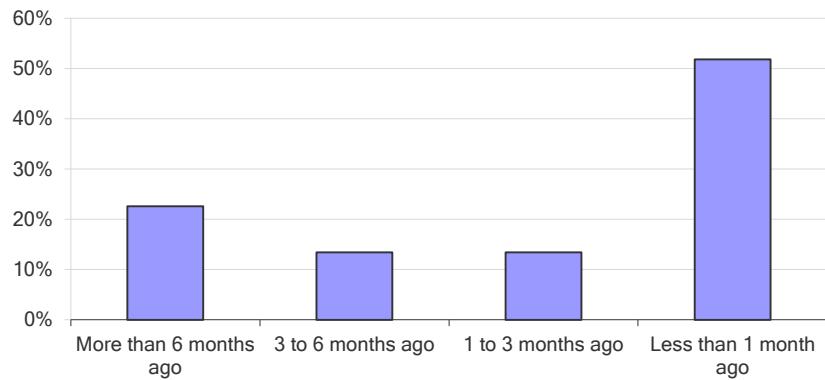
Profile of respondents in Mafraq

Gender	Location in Syria	When they left
F	Damascus	Nov 2012
F	Aleppo	Sept 2012
M	Hasakah	End of Nov 2012
F	Homs	March 2012
M	Homs	Nov 2012
F	Aleppo	Dec 2012

Profile of respondents – WASH survey – Zaatar



Please indicate when you first left your home (Please choose only one):



Annex II: Sources

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Note: The raw data collected through the interviews and group discussions in Zaatari and Mafraq are with the Education Section of the Regional Office for potential further consultation or views.

Annex III: Data Collection Tools

I. Interview Questions with Key Informants

Basic Information

1. Age _____
2. Gender : male female
3. Place of origin (in Syria):

4. When did you leave?

5. Did you go somewhere else in Syria before coming here? Where? _____
How long were you there?

6. Who did you leave with? (*entire family? part of the family? Did you leave any of your children behind? Did you bring any other family members or children of relatives with you?....*)
7. What did you do back in Syria? If teacher or school personnel /administrator – ask which school with follow-up questions about the school they worked at.
8. If the respondent is a parent ask about his/her children? Number and age and gender of children? How many of your school-age children were attending schools in Syria? Which school? Did any of your children work or helped you (with farming, taking care of the home, etc..)

Age of the child					
Gender of the child	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F				
Attending school	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> no				
Grade					
Name of school					
Working					

9. If yes, how often (days per week) your children attended school? (A)

Boys	Girls
A. 5 days	A. 5 days
B. 3-4 days	B. 3-4 days
C. 1-2 days	C. 1-2 days
D. Never	D. Never

10. If they did not attend regularly, what was the biggest obstacle for the children to attend school regularly?

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
a. Illness b. Concerns about security c. They had to work to help the family d. Too hungry to go e. Quality not the same as before f. Bullying g. Other _____		

11. What was you liked best / least about the education before the crisis? (A,B,C)

<i>Liked Most</i>	<i>Liked least</i>
a. Infrastructure b. Pedagogical practices c. Curriculum & materials d. Teacher training e. Relationship with teachers and school administrators f. Special activities (extra curricular) g. Participatory school management h. Other...	a. Infrastructure b. Pedagogical practices c. Curriculum & materials d. Teacher training e. Relationship with teachers and school administrators f. Special activities (extra curricular) g. Participatory school management h. Other...

12. What was the situation of the school(s) when you left? (A, B,C)

- A. Destroyed
- B. Damaged (requiring minor repairs)
- C. Damaged (requiring important repairs)
- D. Used by _____ for the purpose of _____
- E. Used as collective centre
- F. Abandonned
- G. Other _____

13. The average class size? Before the crisis? _____ Now? _____

If significant change – why? (*classes taught together?*)

14. Student attendance in general? Before the crisis _____ Now in Syria _____

Are there groups of children that have more limited access than others?

15. Was there a difference between boys and girls attendance? Young and older students? (A,B)
16. What kind of support was available for students? Any special activities, remedial classes, school club/summer clubs or psychosocial support? (B)
17. If the children did not go to school at all– what were the reasons? (A)

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
A. Illness B. School damaged or destroyed C. Concerns about security D. Difficulty registering them in the school E. They had to work to help the family F. Too hungry to go G. Quality not the same as before H. Schools are a potential site for recruitment or abduction of children I. Early marriage J. Bullying K. Other _____		

18. Can you describe the relationship /involvement of the community with the school/teachers?
- A. Repairing damaged school buildings or facilities
B. Establishing temporary spaces for learning
C. Ensuring safety of children and teachers
D. Providing school materials
E. Psychosocial support for teachers and students
F. School feeding
G. Other (specify)
19. If children did not go to school, did they attend any other learning event (home schooling, community schools, etc...) (A)
20. Did any of your children attended vocational training? Which kind? Did the crisis interrupt the training?
21. What where the vocational activities available in your home area?
22. Since the emergency around how many teachers are still able to work? (B)

Men	Women
A. None /only a few (0–25%)	A. None /only a few (0–25%)
B. Few (26–50%)	B. Few (26–50%)
C. Some (51–75%)	C. Some (51–75%)
D. Many (76–90%)	D. Many (76–90%)
E. Almost all (91–100%)	E. Almost all (91–100%)

23. What are the working conditions for the teachers and school personnel (*salary payments? Training? Materials? Other...)* (B)

24. Any other support available to the school? (B)

25. Can you describe the existing infrastructure in schools prior to leaving: (A and WASH)

School Name	# of Toilet/Latrine Blocks (Boys / Girls)	# of stalls in each Toilet/Latrine Block (Boys/Girls)	Toilet/Latrine Block Connected to Sewer (Y/N)	Toilet/Latrine Block Connected to Septic Tank (Y/N)	Existence of Hand washing Stations	# of Hand washing Stations	Existence of Showers (Y/N)	# of Showers (Boys/Girls)

26. What about other basic services and facilities at the school? (ex *Health facilities?*) (A)

27. Can you tell us about the availability of teaching and learning materials at school? (B)

28. Have you witnessed or heard of any tension or conflict within the school?

29. Can you please rank your main concern about education conditions in Syria currently as compared to the pre-crisis situation? (from 1 to 5, 1 being the most important)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Other comments or observations:

About education need in Jordan

30. Are your children attending school in Za'atari? If not why not?

31. How do they find the level? How has the transition been to adopting the Jordanian curriculum?

32. What types of services would you be interested in ? (*Ex of follow-up questions: Catch-up classes? Vocational training? Life skills? Literacy courses, computer classes, sports activities?*)

II. Guide for Group Discussion

1. Type of Group

M/F	Age	Point of origin in Syria	Profession	School they worked at?

2. How would you describe the current situation of education back in Syria?

Indicate the relevant governorate – in the following questions – if the respondents have that information

Al Hasakeh, Al Raqqa, Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, Lattakia, Tartous, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor, Damascus, Rural Damascus,
Al Quneitra, Da'ra, As-Sweida

3. Asked about the infrastructure:

Destroyed,

Damaged (requiring minor repairs),

Damaged (requiring important repairs),

Occupied by _____,

Used as collective centres, Other _____

4. Ask about student attendance:

4.1 How student attendance has changed? Increased / decreased? Why?

4.2 What are some of the most important reasons preventing students attending school?

- L. Illness
- M. School damaged or destroyed
- N. Concerns about security
- O. Difficulty registering them in the school
- P. They had to work to help the family
- Q. Too hungry to go
- R. Quality not the same as before
- S. Schools are a potential site for recruitment or abduction of children
- T. early marriage
- U. Bullying
- V. Other _____

4.3 Are boys and girls affected differently?

4.4 Is there a group that is particularly affected? Indicate the governorate – if they have that information.

5 Ask about teachers attendance:

5.1 Since the emergency how many teachers are still able to work? Indicate the governorate – if they have that information.

Men	Women
A. None /only a few (0–25%)	A. None /only a few (0–25%)
B. Few (26–50%)	B. Few (26–50%)
C. Some (51–75%)	C. Some (51–75%)
D. Many (76–90%)	D. Many (76–90%)
E. Almost all (91–100%)	E. Almost all (91–100%)

5.2 What are the working conditions for teachers?

- 6 Is there any support available to schools? (ex: psychosocial support, community support, other organizations? ...)
- 7 Are there any alternative learning centres? (home schooling? Community based? Vocational training?...)
- 8 How about the availability of the teaching and learning materials at schools?

- 9 What are your main concerns about the education of Syrian children? 1 being the most important.

1.
2.
3.
4.
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6.

- 10 What are should be the main priorities in supporting education in Syria?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

- 11 Other comments and observations: