

Urgent attention needed to improve education for Syrian refugee children, report finds

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There is an urgent need to improve both short-term and long-term approaches to education for the large number of Syrian refugee children in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, according to a new RAND Corporation study.

Improving the quality of the current education system will require increasing instructional time, improving teacher training, expanding school monitoring and creating programs tailored for children who have missed instruction for as long as three years because of the crisis, according to the study.

Infrastructure and transportation systems also will need to be improved to accommodate the refugee children into the education system.

The report offers recommendations to host country officials, United Nations agencies and donors about how to improve quality and access to education for the Syrian refugee children under increasingly strained budgets. It also outlines the societal implications of how refugee children are integrated into host country education systems.

"Establishing education for large numbers of refugees is a complex task that requires a combination of short-term solutions, long-term planning and evidence upon which to base future decisions," said Shelly Culbertson, lead author of the report and a policy analyst at RAND, a

nonprofit research organization. "The existence of so many refugees is changing the demographics of the host countries and creating significant challenges for both the refugees and their host countries."

The ongoing civil war in Syria and other conflicts around the world have created the greatest refugee crisis the world has seen since the end of World War II, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Only half of Syrian refugee children are accessing education, with nearly 700,000 children not attending any formal education in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Classes are overcrowded, instructional time has been shortened because of double-shifts created to handle the influx of students and teachers are inexperienced in handling difficult classroom conditions that include traumatized students, some of whom have missed years of education, according to the RAND report.

"Family poverty and policies that prohibit adult refugees from working have left some households desperate to find ways to earn a living," said Louay Constant, a study co-author and a policy researcher at RAND.

"Some households are taking drastic measures by allowing or compelling, in some cases, children to work in exploitative conditions when they should be in school.

"Ten percent of Syrian children in Jordan are involved in child labor. Moreover, an increase of incidences of early marriage of girls is to some extent attributed to the desperate financial situation faced by many of these refugee households."

It could be decades until many refugees return to their homes—if ever—making it critical for host countries to create sustainable plans for the education of Syrian refugee children while maintaining quality [education](#) for their own citizens, according to researchers.

More information: The report, "Education of Syrian Refugee Children: Managing the Crisis in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan," is available at www.rand.org

Provided by RAND Corporation

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