



Education Provision for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan

Poskytovanie vzdelávania pre deti sýrskych utečencov v Jordánsku

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to shed light on the main challenges and barriers to formal primary education for Syrian refugee children in Jordan. It shows how school enrollment and Jordan's educational services for Syrian refugee children have been negatively affected by policies limiting their access to Jordanian public schools. Other barriers include child labor, early marriage, stakeholders inter collaboration problems, and social tensions between Syrian refugees and host communities. Also, it outlines refugee children's special educational needs and several safety aspects and risks associated with insufficient education. The paper also questions whether Syrian refugee children's situation will improve unless Jordan undertakes reforms that go beyond the framework of its current education policies and gets more considerable donor funding targeted at improving access to schools. Lastly, this article provides three policy options to assist Jordan and other stakeholders in taking essential steps to ensure that Syrian refugee children can realize their right to education.

Keywords: primary education; refugee; children; quality; Jordan; Syria; barriers to education; fragility; school dropouts; child-labor; early marriage; social tensions

Abstrakt:

Tento dokument sa pokúša objasniť hlavné výzvy a prekážky formálneho základného vzdelávania pre deti sýrskych utečencov v Jordánsku. Ukazuje, ako boli školské zápisy a jordánske vzdelávacie služby pre deti sýrskych utečencov negatívne ovplyvnené politikami obmedzujúcimi ich prístup k jordánskym štátnym školám. Medzi ďalšie prekážky patrí detská práca, predčasné manželstvá, problémy spolupráce medzi zúčastnenými stranami a sociálne napätie medzi sýrskymi utečencami a hostiteľskými komunitami. Taktiež načrtáva špeciálne vzdelávacie potreby detí utečencov a niekoľko bezpečnostných aspektov a rizík spojených s nedostatočným vzdelaním. Príspevok tiež kladie otázku, či sa situácia detí sýrskych utečencov zlepší, pokiaľ Jordánsko nepodnikne reformy,



ktoré presahujú rámec jeho súčasných vzdelávacích politik a nezíska väčšie finančné prostriedky darcov zamerané na zlepšenie prístupu do škôl. Na záver tento článok poskytuje tri možnosti politiky, ktoré majú Jordánsku a iným zainteresovaným stranám pomôcť pri prijímaní základných krokov na zabezpečenie toho, aby si sýrske deti utečencov mohli uplatniť svoje právo na vzdelanie.

Kľúčové slová: *základné vzdelanie; utečenec; deti; kvalita; Jordan; Sýria; prekážky vo vzdelávaní; krehkosť; predčasné ukončenie školskej dochádzky; detská práca; skoré manželstvo; sociálne napätie*

Introduction

Today the number of refugees around the globe has reached 26 million, half of which are children. Additionally, 85% of those refugees are hosted in developing countries. In 2019, the highest number of refugees came from Syria [1]. Since the start of the Syrian crisis in 2011, estimates indicate that around 13 million Syrians have urgently needed humanitarian assistance [2]. Nearly half of the country's population has been displaced internally and externally. More than 6.3 million Syrian refugees fled Syria in order to seek safety in the neighboring countries. As of 2018, the number of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers was mainly distributed as follows: 3.6 million in Turkey, 944,000 in Lebanon, 676,000 in Jordan, 253,000 in Iraq, 130,000 in Egypt, and 35,000 in different other North African countries [3]. Out of the total number of Syrian refugees, around one million have sought asylum in different European countries in the European Union. All this has led to severe socio-economic and political effects on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and most of Europe [4].

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates, half of the 3.5 million school-aged refugee children in the world do not attend schools [5]. Moreover, previous studies were able to show that despite the obligations on state parties imposed by human rights conventions and declarations, many refugee-host countries still consider refugee children as 'guests'. Therefore, their needs are not considered a priority to the host's national educational programs [6-7].

Nowadays, the Syrian crisis has become one of the most significant challenges to the human rights regime and one of the greatest crises this generation faces. There is very high uncertainty about nearly one million Syrian refugee children's education due to Syria's educational environment becoming progressively worse after the crises. Between 2014 and 2015, around 51% of Syrian children could not attend school, while around 74% of children were not enrolled in highly affected areas. As a result, those children arrived at refugee camps with educational disadvantages. Besides, many Syrian refugee children were emotionally traumatized, leading to an increase in their academic, emotional and social challenges, which negatively affected their learning and development; and resulting in underachievement and school dropouts [8]. Since education plays a significant role in achieving sustainable economic development, any country must invest in human capital to secure its economic and social progress and improve its income distribution [9]. Investing in refugees' education is no exception, as it eventually leads to broad social benefits to refugees themselves and the host communities. Leaving school at an early age can harm competitiveness, productivity and rise to poverty and social exclusion. Also, if the education conditions worsen, this will produce a society lacking on the physical, moral, and intellectual levels. Thus, to achieve sustainable economic development and overcome the current widespread problems of

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inequalities and labor market imbalances in the world economy, including Europe [10-11-12-13-14], the host countries need to invest in refugees' human capital. To move forward in this direction, host countries need to shift the attitude and perception of refugees from being a burden on the economy and society to being a resource that can contribute to socio-economic advancement.

This article primarily focuses on formal educational provisions for Syrian refugee children in Jordan, a country of 10.05 million citizens [15], and located in the heart of the Middle East. The Hashemite Kingdom, known for its stability in the region, is bordered by Israel, the West Bank, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria. The geographic location and political stability have made Jordan one of the primary host countries for foreigners and Syrian refugees. It continued to host a massive number of refugees relative to its national population - When Palestinian refugees under The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) mandate are taken into account- 1 in 3 people in the country were a refugee under the responsibility of the UNHCR. Besides, Jordan is the third-largest recipient of Syrian refugees after Turkey and Lebanon [2]. Nowadays, Jordan hosts more than 1.3 million Syrian refugees. Nearly one-third of total Syrian refugees in Jordan are school-aged children -5 to 17 years old- with 40% of them remain out of school [16]. The situation has spurred the Jordanian government to accommodate Syrian children's educational needs. The government of Jordan, with key stakeholders, has demonstrated generosity by extending educational services to Syrian refugees' children. In 2012, the Jordanian government, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and key partners, launched the Emergency Education Response (EER) program, which aims to provide Syrian refugee children living in Jordan – inside or outside refugee camps – with free formal education and additional relevant safe and appropriate educational services, alternative pathways, enrolment outreach and minimizing the impact on Jordanian host communities. EER has achieved a significant accomplishment by providing access to formal education for 226,000 Syrian children. However, given that 80,000 school-aged Syrian children are still not receiving formal education until now requires urgent action [17-18].

Moreover, the increasing number of Syrian refugees entering Jordan has highly pressured critical social sectors and services in the kingdom; therefore, adverse consequences on vulnerable Jordanians and the country's educational system have been observed [18]. The Jordan response plan for 2018-2020 has shown that the Syrian crisis continues to severely affect Jordan's educational sector and, in particular, on public schooling [19]. Moreover, a study conducted by Culbertson & Constant emphasized the need for additional research and analysis of the barriers to education in Syrian refugees' main host countries [20]. For all the mentioned reasons, this article aims to tackle those research gaps. A previous study issued by Human Rights Watch has shown a public opinion opposition by Jordanians to the educational programs offered to Syrian refugees. Besides, high tension exists between Jordanian and Syrian communities, especially in vulnerable host communities, where residents view Syrians as already straining limited educational resources [18]. Whereas a study that has been conducted by Valenza & Alfayez provided sufficient evidence to support Culbertson et al. and UNHCR, it also concluded that the existing social tension has resulted in a high level of bullying, violence, and harassment of Syrian children [21]. Additionally, Experiencing moral and physical violence in Jordanian schools considerably affected Syrians' willingness to study and integrate with their Jordanian peers. However, this article will take a different

position, as the author believes that the potential risks of not providing Syrian children with sustainable and quality education and not taking serious steps to integrate them into Jordanian schools and host communities will not only have an impact on Syrians themselves but also will negatively influence the stability and prosperity of the Jordanian society. The key conclusion of this research is that the main problems facing educational provisions to Syrian refugee children in Jordan are educational registration policies & regulations, child labor, early marriage, social tensions, and stakeholders' collaboration problems.

The findings of this article will be of concern to the Government of Jordan (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation, Ministry of Interior), municipal (local) governments, UN agencies (UNICEF, UNHCR), foreign donors (EU, USA, UK, etc.), national and international NGOs (HRW, IOM, etc.), and development partners, which include the private sector and foundations. Also, this paper will be of use to Jordanian policymakers and other countries which are hosting refugees.

This article aims to contribute to the ongoing policy discussions among the Jordanian government, donors, and UN agencies to improve effectiveness, enhance quality, and ensure the sustainability of education provision for both Syrian refugee and Jordanian children by answering the following questions: 1) What are the challenges and barriers to education for Syrian refugee children in Jordan?; 2) How can we break the barriers to ensure that Syrian refugee children -particularly the most vulnerable- have access to education?

This article is divided into five sections. The first section will present the used materials and methods, followed by a literature review on refugees, children, and primary education in Jordan and the Jordanian Education Response Plan. The third section will examine barriers to education for Syrian refugee children in Jordan. The fourth section will propose policies, measures, and recommendations that might improve educational provisions for Syrian and Jordanian children. Finally, the last section contains the conclusion.

1. Materials and Methods

This study draws on a review of publicly available secondary literature and historical practice data. It is based on data from the Jordanian Education Management Information System database, the Department of Statistics of Jordan, the Jordanian ministry of interior, and the Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation. In addition to data and reports issued by the World Bank, UNICEF, UNHCR.

2. Literature Review

This section will provide the main definitions of refugees and their children. Also, it will outline the refugee children's special educational needs and several safety aspects and risks associated with insufficient education. Finally, it will discuss The Emergency Education Response Program and the social context of Syrian children's education in Jordan.

2.1. Definitions

At the outset, it is imperative to clarify what we mean when we talk about refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and children. It may be helpful to

refer to The United Nations' definitions. According to the United Nations, an asylum seeker or refugee is someone who: 'Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country' [22]. While an asylum seeker is someone who formally flees from his own country and applies for asylum in another one, while his application has not yet been approved. This person is considered a refugee when his application is approved. He is allowed to stay in another country once he has proved that he would face persecution if he returned to his own country.

Moreover, internally displaced persons are people who have stayed within the national border but have been forced to get out of their homes to escape situations of violence, armed conflict, human rights violations, or different kinds of disasters. However, for this paper, the term refugee will refer to a person seeking asylum or granted refugee status. However, it will not include internally displaced persons.

'Child' as defined in article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child means "every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier" [23]. Having discussed the above concepts, let us now discuss previous studies concerning refugees' children's special educational needs, safety aspects, and risks associated with insufficient education and Jordan's emergency education response plan.

2.2. Refugee children's special educational needs

In his detailed study, Hek pointed out that refugee children and adolescents may arrive to host countries with parents or other relatives or sometimes alone. Moreover, refugee children who arrive with their parents may be at risk of not being cared for adequately due to their parents' distress. Refugee children may also have to live with relatives that they do not know, or, if traveling unaccompanied, may be looked after by social services or be living alone. This highlights the fact that whether refugee children arrive to host countries accompanied or not, they will have a wide range of needs, depending on their unique experiences and circumstances. Besides, refugee children will experience adverse circumstances in their social environment and be exposed to emotional stress [24]. Therefore, both social and emotional difficulties are very relevant to refugee children and will relate to the experiences they have undergone [25].

2.3. Safety aspects and risks associated with insufficient education

First and foremost, education is one of the essential areas in the present global refugee crisis. Also, it is the most critical component in the reduction of terrorist recruiting in crisis circumstances. Hence, previous studies showed that terrorist recruiters primarily target vulnerable and hopeless refugee women and children in camp settings. For example, the Taliban in Afghanistan have recruited uneducated young people to serve as human shields. However, despite the substantial improvement in enrolling more refugee children in primary education, refugees are still lagging behind their host countries' counterparts [26].

Without literacy and self-realization through schooling, many young refugees will fall into the hands of oppressive and aggressive adults. According to UNHCR estimates, half of the school-aged refugee children in the world do not attend schools. This can

make it harder to recognize refugee children at risk of abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, and forced recruitment [27]. Suppose the stockholders and all of those involved do not take the appropriate action to improve the current situation. In that case, violence will recycle into the next generation, and they will have to face more significant security issues.

Furthermore, primary schooling and vocational training provide refugee children with the needed skills and resources to develop their future and offer a tangible solution to extremism and extremist affiliations. As human traffickers usually target under-skilled and uneducated refugee youth, women, and children for sex and labor exploitation. For instance, in the case of Syrian children in Jordan, dropping out of school was linked to child labor and early marriage [28].

Furthermore, Schools are fundamental institutions in providing quality education and possibilities for social inclusion for children, youth, and their families. Not attending schools will negatively affect refugees' integration process in their host communities, and potential risks include the radicalization of marginalized people, abusive anti-social behavior, and possible crimes [29].

At the national level, poor education among refugee children can have damaging long-term implications for development, competitiveness, creativity, and diversity in both the sending and host countries. History shows how host countries benefited from motivated migrants. There are so many prosperous refugee pioneers and innovators worldwide who make a considerable contribution to their refugee populations and host countries. Besides, returning refugees will make a substantial contribution to the resilience of their countries of origin. They also could help to strengthen bilateral ties among host countries and their respective countries. They need to receive adequate education and preparation so that they can make significant contributions to their country's rebuilding process [28].

2.4. The Emergency Education Response Program and the social context of Syrian children's education in Jordan

Since nearly one-third of total Syrian refugees in Jordan are school-aged children (5 to 17 years old), The Jordanian government, with key stakeholders, has demonstrated generosity by extending educational services to Syrian refugees' children. In 2012, the Jordanian government collaborated with UNICEF and key partners launched The Emergency Education Response (EER) program, which aims to provide Syrian refugee children living in Jordan - inside or outside refugee camps- with free formal education and additional relevant safe and appropriate educational services. EER has achieved a significant accomplishment by providing access to formal education for 226,000 Syrian children. However, given that 80,000 school-aged Syrian children are still not receiving formal education until now requires urgent action [17-18].

Furthermore, in their comprehensive evaluation of the Emergency Education Response program, Culbertson et al. found that to improve access to education, the government and key stakeholders must understand all barriers, including location, education provision characteristics, and characteristics of the family and child. Concerning quality, their study was able to show that the quality of education provided for both Syrian refugees and Jordanian children has been below desired levels, a finding which the author tends to agree with.

Also, their evaluation shows that there has been limited use of quality measures, such as low results in exams, crowded classrooms, challenging environments for teachers, poorly maintained facilities, Syrian students struggling with the transition to the new curricula, inconsistent grading policies, and unclear visions to adulthood giving students low motivation [17]. Meanwhile, many factors stand behind creating a relevant strategic education response plan, which includes massive refugee displacement into Jordan, interacting and complex components in managing the education response, patchy transition from emergency response to resilience, stakeholders' collaboration problems, lack of strategic and budget prioritization, and poor strategic planning for strengthening long-term educational system. Moreover, the sparked social tensions between a nationality-based approach and vulnerability or rights-based approach over education provision to Syrian children - especially in more impoverished Jordanian areas- played a significant role in negatively affecting the outcomes of the Emergency Education Response program [17-30].

Whereas a study that has been conducted by Valenza & Alfayez provided sufficient evidence to support Culbertson et al. and UNHCR, it has also concluded that the existing social tension has resulted in a high level of bullying, violence, and harassment of Syrian children. Their study highlighted that around 1600 Syrian children dropped school because of bullying in 2015-2016 [21]. Consequently, violence and harassment increased levels of school dropouts among Syrian children. Furthermore, war events in Syria caused trauma, disabilities, and severe psychological effects on Syrian children. Experiencing moral and physical violence in Jordanian schools considerably affected Syrians' willingness to study and to socially integrate with their Jordanian peers [21].

However, most of the previous studies failed to consider the impact of the crisis on the quality of education for vulnerable Jordanian children [8- 21-18-31], so instead of focusing exclusively on the quality of education for refugees, this research paper will also take into account the quality of education for Jordanians. Having discussed the main concepts and social context in Jordan, we will now proceed to examine the main barriers to education that might prevent access to school. Following this, we will discuss the recommended strategic shifts and policy options.

3. Analysis

3.1. Barriers to Education

In the past, Syria reported very high primary and secondary school enrollment rates as it was considered a success story. However, After the Syrian war started in 2011, the educational environment got rapidly worsened; 51% of Syrian children were not enrolled in schools, in some areas that were more affected by war, the percentage reached 74% [32]. In 2014 Syrian school enrollment rate ranked as the second-lowest country globally; many schools were damaged, destroyed, and used for other purposes [33]; because of this, many Syrian refugee children arrived in their host countries with an educational disadvantage. Besides, many of them were behind in all subjects and needed to catch up classes alongside the need to adjust to the new culture and environment, and in some host countries in Europe or Turkey; they had to learn new languages, which can be so challenging for them [34]. In the following paragraphs, we will elaborate on the challenges and barriers that Syrian refugee children and their families face in Jordan.

3.1.1 Child-labor and early marriage as sources of school dropouts

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) estimates, around 86% of Syrian refugees in Jordan live under the poverty line. Thus, poverty keeps Syrian refugee children out of school for two reasons: child labor affecting Syrian boys and early marriages affecting Syrian girls [18]. More than 25% of Syrian families depend on their children - boys for the majority- as the primary breadwinner. Also, around 50% rely on boys for earning a partial household income [35]. Furthermore, the UN estimates that one in ten Syrian children are working rather than studying. Consequently, many Syrian children remain out of school to provide a source of income to their families. The child labor complex issue is mainly driven by poor household income reliance on Syrian boys, particularly in fathers' absence or death. Syrian boys are vulnerable due to their exposure to dangerous unregulated construction sites and the police's risk of being caught. Therefore, being subjected to an informal and risky labor market, Syrian boys are likely to live far from their families, with a considerable risk of being recruited by radical and armed groups in Syria [17-18].

Syrian refugee girls get married at a very young age, which decreases their chances of school enrollment. Hence, More than half of Syrian girls get married before the age of 18 [18]. Similarly, poverty is the main reason behind this. Furthermore, parents' concerns about safety and sexual harassment are also reasons behind girls' early marriage. In contrast, Syrian parents consider this option to keep them safe and reduce the household's economic burden. Therefore, in most cases, early marriage prevents Syrian girls from pursuing their studies [31].

3.1.2 The Jordanian public opinion and social tensions on education provision

The massive refugee displacement into Jordan has sparked social tensions over education provision to Syrian children, especially in more impoverished Jordanian areas. This has been exacerbated by the dilemma of assistance allocation between Syrian children and vulnerable Jordanian children. The Jordanian citizens ask the following question: should the program be based on a "nationality-based" approach targeting Syrian children only; or a "rights-based" approach targeting vulnerable Jordanian children? [17]. Moreover, a portion of Jordanian residents views Syrians to decrease public services' qualities, such as education.

3.1.3 Stakeholders inter collaboration problems

In one of its reports, UNHCR described the humanitarian response for Syrian refugees in general as a "kitchen full of cooks"[30]. In the context of rapidly changing circumstances, achieving effective coordination between significant stakeholders in providing education responses to Syrian children in Jordan still faces several problems. Lack of consensus and disparate agendas, values, and goals among partners complicate ambitious educational programs' execution on the ground [18]. While the Syrian crisis's future is uncertain, significant stakeholders operating in Jordan lack strategic planning for long-term education provision to Syrian children. A comprehensive, collaborative approach is needed among all partners (Government of Jordan, UN agencies, donors, national and international NGOs, community-based organizations, refugees, and Jordanian communities) to achieve the desired results.

Furthermore, existing tensions between refugees and Jordanian host communities' complexes effective coordination between key partners. From one side, the refugee community's engagement is still limited. Designing effective educational programs starts

with understanding the real need of this community. On the other side, the debate between the "nationality-based" approach, focusing on targeting vulnerable children according to their nationality, and "the rights-based" approach, targeting children based on their vulnerability and needs, is still ongoing. The risk of using this issue into political considerations jeopardizes the existing collaboration between key stakeholders [17].

The provision of education to Syrian children suffers from a competition issue among operating organizations in Jordan, resulting in duplicated programs [30]. The traditional competition for funds or responsibilities over the educational sector in Jordan misallocates the existing scarce resources. It negatively affects the effectiveness and efficiency of education provision to Syrian children. Although NGOs understand that seeking common goals collectively is the most efficient way to meet Syrian children's educational needs, competition is still prevalent in the ground operation.

Finally, evidence-based policymaking in education provision lacks serious accountability and suffers from transparency issues. Such as a lack of big data to support the strategic decision-making, lack of transparency by donors, and key agencies in prioritizing fund requests or managing resources affect the program's efficiency. For example, UNICEF's change of ownership of education provision in camps and changing responses creates doubts about accountability to the government of Jordan and other stakeholders. Despite the improved use of data in supporting evidence-based policymaking, grey areas of accountability and transparency jeopardize existing trust between stakeholders. If trust between the Government, UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders is affected, education's efficient provision would not be possible [17].

3.1.4 Government regulations and policies limiting Syrian children access to formal education

Refugee Registration Policy in Jordan requires Syrian children to obtain identification documents (service cards) before enrolling in public schools. Many Syrian refugees around the world lost their documents because of the ongoing war in Syria. Since acquiring certain documents is crucial for humanitarian assistance, Syrian parents cannot register their children in Jordanian public schools. For instance, 40% of Syrian children in Jordan lack required birth certificates to obtain the service cards and thus enroll in public schools [18]. Another regulation limiting the education provision for Syrian refugee children is the "Three Years Rule". This regulation does not allow children to register in schools when they are aged three years more than their peers' grade level [18]. The Ministry of Education regulation applies to all children living in Jordan, both for locals and refugees. The government's rationale is that ensuring such regulation maintains classroom quality. Nevertheless, because many Syrian children stopped going to schools after being destroyed, "the three years" rule excludes them from enrolling in Jordanian formal education [17].

Hence, among the several problems facing education provision to Syrian refugee children in Jordan, the local public opinion's tension, stakeholder's inter-collaboration problems, child labor & early marriage, and regulatory limits are the main issues that require attention. Therefore, a more collaborative approach with all key actors' participation is required to enhance the school enrollment rates and quality of the education services.

Discussion

Recommended Strategic Shifts and Policy Options

Development and education partners and the donor community need to have a long-term commitment when it comes to educational programs to protect the new Syrian generation. This will be done by ensuring that the affected children have access to formal schools and are provided with a good quality education in an inclusive and safe learning environment. Separate fundraising processes and appeals for vulnerable Syrian refugee children living in Jordan should be done to achieve this. Moreover, focusing on effective investments for the future and working on strategic shifts towards longer-term approaches have to be taken into consideration. Strengthening the Jordanian education system and promoting educational policy frameworks and scaling up access, and adopting a systematic focus on quality education is required [36]. Moreover, the following three policy options could be beneficial to overcome the existing barriers.

Policy option number one: Increasing the advocacy and amending existing registration policies & regulations.

Revising already existing registration policies & regulations to expand access to education will result in system strengthening. This will increase the Jordanian ministry of education's advocacy to absorb more children eligible for official education. When it comes to admission requirements and educational regulations, the government should consider amending the current "Three Years Rule" regulation that keeps both Syrian and Jordanian children out of school and considers reducing the minimum documentation requirement for refugees to their asylum documentation [36-37].

<i>Table (1) The evaluation of policy Option 1</i>			
<i>Admission requirements and educational regulations</i>			
	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>mitigating challenges</i>
- Amending the Three Year Rule policy and current policy to reduce the minimum documentation requirement for refugees.	-Improve access to education.	- Without the requisite documentation, determining the child's needed information such as age, grade level, etc., can be very difficult. - Amending the current "Three Years Rule" and allowing the existence of a significant age gap can harm the quality of education.	Level testing based on grades is considered part of the enrollment procedure in which children can be assigned to their correct level, regardless of age.

Source: Author

Policy option number two: supplements and amendments to the current national policies to improve low Physical access resulting from a lack of infrastructure and teachers' supply.

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When it comes to infrastructure, the government of Jordan could work over the short term in order to expand the number of double-shifted schools, use temporary classrooms, seek private sector support by providing space to refugee children to attend the private schools with the support of scholarships, and enhance school expansion and construction from the medium to long term. When it comes to the lack of teachers supply, many qualified Syrian teachers are unemployed or working in non-educational positions because they cannot work as teachers. However, the policy could be amended to provide temporary work permits for them [37].

Table (2) The evaluation of policy Option2
children were unable to access schools due to the lack of infrastructure and teachers supply

	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>mitigating challenges</i>
Temporary classrooms	When refugee children return home, temporary classrooms can be moved to other areas of need.	-The temporary classrooms are expensive. -Deciding which schools require the most support can be argumentative.	-The Provincial Ministry of Education could consider approaching other international donors for more assistance in this regard.
Private Sector support	-if refugees' children attend private schools, the pressure on government schools will be reduced. -private schools can provide better educational quality.	- Scholarships that only target refugee children could meet strong resistance from Jordanian stakeholders. Scholarships awarded on a competitive basis tend to eliminate children in the highest educational needs and have no sufficient skills to compete with other refugees.	-It is better to have a refugee component to a scholarship scheme that targets both refugees and nationals.
increase the number of double-shifted schools	-Reduce the need for additional infrastructure. -Temporary costs would remain only if refugee children are in the country and not entirely integrated into the ordinary system. -promotes inclusion models and social cohesion.	-A shortage of teachers is a potential threat. - Needs funding. - Reduction of teaching hours could affect learning quality.	The government of Jordan could seek development partners' assistance to provide grants for incentives to teachers who give extra sessions and help with the extra running costs.
Increase teachers supply	-more support for the children in schools. -employ the parents of refugee children, which will improve their economic situation and reduce child labor and early marriage resulting from the dire economic situation of refugee children families. -promotes inclusion models and social cohesion.	- Extra salaries. - Additional running school costs.	The Ministry of Education could seek development partners' assistance to help with salaries and extra costs of hiring additional teachers.

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Source: Author

Policy option number three: a comprehensive, collaborative approach to improve access and provide better education services to Syrian children.

A better provision of education to Syrian refugee children can be achieved by applying a new collaborative approach coupled with the participation of key actors and enhancing the program's effectiveness and efficiency through an inclusive model towards ensuring the sustainability of education provision for Syrian children in Jordan. This collaborative approach is designed to:

- Enhance the effectiveness: as a solution for the access to formal education and quality of educational services. Ensuring better access to Jordanian schools requires robust educational policy and multi-sectoral policies. First, a collaboration based on responsibilities, obligations, and inter-trust is required between the Ministry of Education, local and international NGOs, educational unions, and parents' associations. Syrian community leaders – who have been previously excluded- are major actors /components of a collective educational policy. Second, improving the quality of education provision requires a multi-sectoral approach. A collaboration between government and non-government organizations operating in different sectors is required to find collective solutions for child labor and early marriages - the major reasons behind low access to education for Syrian refugee children-. Finally, the collaboration between Jordanian public and private entities with the support of local and international parties is required to enhance the quality of education in Jordan for all children. Investing in education facilities, improving students' test scores, and allowing extra-curricular activities are priorities to ensure a better quality of education.
- Improving efficiency: Ensuring the collaboration of multiple NGOs operating on the ground is for all parties benefit. That is why the Government of Jordan should convey all NGOs into a common strategy for funds securing and better planning for medium and long-term strategies. Nevertheless, this collaborative approach cannot succeed without the effective participation of Syrian communities in the decision-making process. Furthermore, data sharing for better informative and evidence-based policymaking is required for a more efficient education provision.
- Ensuring inclusiveness: Syrian communities were almost absent in the decision-making process for all humanitarian services targeting Syrians, including education. Designing adequate policies requires an understanding of the targeted group's real needs, psychology, and reality. Syrian refugees in Jordan are a cluster of experienced and ambitious talents in diverse activities. Many Syrians were former teachers with a great capacity to build a bridge of trust between Syrian children's parents and Jordanian education actors. Ensuring the inclusiveness of Syrian teachers in the decision-making process and the teaching process itself is a missing key for education provision in Jordan. Furthermore, experts in psychology and childcare are essential to overcome the trauma lived by Syrian children during the war in their home country. Including these major actors would improve the willingness to study and thus improve schooling.
- Sustainability of the programs: this is probably the most challenging issue requiring a constant collaboration between key stakeholders with Syrian communities'

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participation. With an ongoing conflict in Syria and high uncertainty about Syrians returning to their homeland, the sustainability of education provision is essential for building a homogenous generation of young Syrians and Jordanians.

The collaboration for this objective should be operated at different levels: state-level (which is required for a high willingness and capacity of persuasion), community-level (the junction between state-level and individual level, which enables a sense of shared belonging to one entity), and individual level (raising a constant awareness about the importance of education for both Syrians and Jordanians, as a mean for a homogenous future generation). Hence, policy dialogues, Syrian and local communities' engagement, capacity building, and coordination between key stakeholders are the foundations of sustaining education provision for Syrian children.

<i>Table (3) The evaluation of policy Option3</i>		
<i>a comprehensive, collaborative approach to improve access and provide better education</i>		
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>mitigating challenges</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The increasing quality of primary education provision for Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Jordanians. - Enhancing Effectiveness, Improving Efficiency. - Ensuring Inclusive participation of Syrian communities. - Sustaining the educational provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High cost and requirement of massive investment in terms of capital, human resources, and time. - Multitude of actors and stakeholders resulting in a risk of miscommunication. 	<p>The government of Jordan could appeal to development partners for technical and financial assistance and consider approaching additional international donors for further help in this regard.</p>

Source: Author

Recommendation

Applying policy option number three (combining the other two policy options) is highly recommended, although it requires massive investment in capital, human resources, and time. This holistic approach will create a fundamental base for sustainable educational provision for Syrian refugee children in Jordan. We understand that formal policy change is usually designed at the governmental level since policies require a political endorsement to have legal force and effect. However, engaging all key stakeholders in the educational policy change process can enhance policy implementation on all levels (teachers, principals, government officials, etc.).

Conclusion

In conclusion, with key stakeholders, the Jordanian government has demonstrated generosity by extending educational services to Syrian refugee children. However, even with these new services, children are still facing many barriers to accessing schools. The provision of these educational services was mainly undermined by some existing school registration policies and regulations and by stakeholders' inter-collaboration problems, which led to limiting access to public schools and increasing children dropout rates. Moreover, problems like social tensions, child labor, early marriage, corporal punishment, and bullying in public schools were also considered barriers to education.

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Most of the attempts to eliminate educational barriers for Syrian refugees living in Jordan were mainly through education policies. Nevertheless, even with these new policies in place, children are still facing many barriers to accessing schools due to the complex link between immigration and education policies, which affect their right to education.

As a result, a gap between educational policy development and the implementation of these policies has been noticed; however, engaging all key stakeholders in the policy change process will help them understand, interpret, and institutionalize those policies and enhance their implementation at all levels.

Finally, applying a comprehensive, collaborative approach to improve access and offer better education services to Syrian children is highly recommended as this will create a fundamental base for sustainable, efficient, and adequate education provision for Syrian refugee children in Jordan.

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