

Education Sector Gender Analysis

16 June 2013

Formal Education

A large majority of boys and girls discontinue their education early on in secondary school. Stereotypically, this was so that boys could earn wages and girls could assist with household duties or marry, although it was also not unheard of that girls would work for wages.¹

CARE's survey of Amman-based refugees suggests more boys (52%) than girls (48%) are attending school². Concerns about harassment prevent some Syrian refugee girls from attending school. Some boys face verbal harassment and bullying, sometimes severe bullying. Both boys and girls lack proper documentation to attend school, lack ability to cover school expenses, suffer from overcrowding and have difficulty keeping up with the curriculum³. Similarly, UN Women found that refugees outside of camps were also kept their girls from going to school so that they would not be harassed. Conversely, some boys faced verbal harassment and bullying, sometimes severe bullying. Both boys and girls lacked proper documentation to attend school, struggled to cover school expenses, suffered from overcrowding in the classrooms and have difficulty keeping up with the curriculum⁴.

Attitudes among refugees towards education were positive and many stated that both male and female children who were not in school would like to be in school if given the chance.⁵

There are low rates of school attendance in Za'atri camp: 23% of primary school-aged girls and boys attend classes while 21% of secondary school-aged girls and 15% of the boys in the camp attend classes. For those not attending, boys and girls advise that the main reasons are violence and harassment to and from school, corporal punishment⁶ within schools, insecurity about leaving their family even for a few hours, having to help at home or work to earn money, the distance to school and the lack of appropriate toilets. A teenaged girl gave an example of older boys standing in front of the school and how she felt intimidated to walk to school as well as enter it. Parents advise that the following obstacles exist for their disabled children to attend: lack of access to a wheelchair or other physical aids, lack of physical accessibility at schools, fear that their child may not be accepted, or a belief on the part of the parents that education is not important for their children.⁷

Outside of the camp, registration for schools is difficult: in Irbid, refugee children were effectively required to attend the same school. The practice of using corporal punishment in schools by teachers is also extended to Syrian children. Many (40%) of the Syrian refugee children in the Jordan Valley work on farms. Most (95%) children do not attend school.⁸

Vocational Education

¹ UN Women (July 2013) *Interagency Assessment of Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among urban Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on early marriage*

² Care Jordan (Oct 2012) *Baseline Assessment of Community Identified Vulnerabilities among Syrian Refugees living in Amman*.

³ UN Women (2013)

⁴ UN Women (2013)

⁵ UN Women (2013)

⁶ An example was given of a male teacher hitting children on the hand with a pipe if they are late to school.

⁷ Education Sector Working Group, Jordan (April 2013) *Joint Education Needs Assessment: Za'atri Refugee Camp, Jordan*

⁸ UN Women (2013)

Many male adolescents had stopped attending school in Syria and begun formal apprenticeships before they left for Jordan. They lack opportunities to continue apprenticeships in their chosen fields or start new apprentices in Za'atari camp. There is a high demand for vocational training by all adolescents. Males would like training in masonry, metal work, tailoring, car repair, electrical work, plumbing, mobile phone repair and plumbing. Females already have strong domestic skills and would like training in sewing, art, computers and nursing. Given access to materials, many females would like to start weaving and sewing clothes for sale within the camp.⁹

Tertiary Education

Though Syrian females slightly outnumber males in tertiary enrolment, their increasing educational attainment is not reflected in their labour force participation. High fertility rates, limited affordable child care, cultural norms requiring the permission of male kin to accept employment, the mismatch between female skills and the demands of the labour market, and gender-based gaps in remuneration despite the Labour Law, are among the factors influencing women's labour force participation. Women are more likely to secure paid employment in the public than in the private sector.¹⁰

In Za'atri camp, for every 2 Jordanian teachers, there is approximately 1 Syrian assistant teacher. Many of the Syrian teachers are well-qualified and experienced yet must report to Jordanian teachers, many of whom are new recruits. The Jordanian teachers advise that they are threatened and attacked by students and some suffer from constant anxiety.¹¹

Literacy

80% of all persons surveyed (no gender breakdown) who were above the age of 60 were illiterate.¹²

⁹ UNICEF (June 2013) *Shattered Lives: Challenges and Priorities for Syrian Children and Women in Jordan*

¹⁰ UN Women (Dec 2011) *Syria Emerging Trends* Unpublished

¹¹ Education Sector Working Group, Jordan (April 2013) *Joint Education Needs Assessment: Za'atri Refugee Camp, Jordan*

¹² Care Jordan (Oct 2012) *Baseline Assessment of Community Identified Vulnerabilities among Syrian Refugees living in Amman.*