Progress and challenges in implementing the commitments made in the Brussels Conference 2019 by the Government of Jordan and the International Community

**EDUCATION**

### WHAT WAS COMMITTED

- The GoJ committed to enrol 130,000 Syrian refugee children in formal education at all levels by the end of 2019 under the Jordan Compact.
- The International Community pledged to provide predictable, multi-year financial and technical support to address the needs of the MoE.
- The GoJ committed to increasing access to quality education opportunities and improving the safety of the learning environment for all children.
- The GoJ committed to providing universal education to increase inclusion for children with disabilities and improving access to educational services in public and private schools.

### PROGRESS

136,437 Syrian children were enrolled in formal schools, representing a 2 percent increase in enrolment for Syrian children, including an 8 percent increase in camp schools compared to the first semester of 2018, which exceeds the enrollment target in the Jordan Compact (ISWG 2019).

The GoJ extended its documentation enrolment waiver to the 2018-2019 school year, enabling Syrian refugee children to attend school regardless of their documentation status.

### CHALLENGES

The GoJ has not extended its documentation enrolment waiver to the 2019-2020 school year. Even when in place, some schools did not respect the waiver and rejected Syrian students’ enrolment due to a lack of documentation.

More than half of all Syrian children aged 15 years and older are not enrolled in school. Net attendance rates among Syrian refugees are 47 percent less than Jordanians at the secondary level and 10 percent less at the primary level.

While unintentional, double-shift schools have created inequalities in educational opportunities and outcomes, with Syrian students attending afternoon sessions receiving 221 fewer teaching hours than the national average over the course of a school year (EU Findings of the Education Quarterly Survey for 30 Centers and Schools, Dec. 2018-Jan. 2019). The separation of afternoon and morning sessions based on nationality also creates barriers to social cohesion.

Students in formal schools in refugee camps receive 121 hours less than their counterparts enrolled in afternoon sessions in double shift schools. The precarious nature of teacher contracts in the camp schools coupled with poor basic facilities create further challenges.

Children with disabilities make up approximately 10 percent of all school age children in Jordan, but almost 80 percent do not receive any form of education (Dept. of Statistics 2019).

The closure of schools due to coronavirus is expected to have a negative impact on school enrolment as vulnerable students struggle to access online learning platforms and/or face increased pressure to enter the workforce due to reduced household incomes.

### WHAT WE RECOMMEND

- Reinstate the documentation enrolment waiver and establish a clear complaints and referral mechanism for cases of Syrian refugee children rejected from enrolment in schools.
- Increase contact hours for afternoon sessions in double-shift schools, while continuing to promote integrated schools as a long-term solution to improved education in Jordan (see below).
- Improve the collection of enrolment data and invest in school transport to optimize existing enrolment capacity of integrated schools.
- Invest in teacher trainings and professional development and review teaching methodologies to improve the quality of teaching. This should include the integration of crisis-sensitive education skills, psychosocial support, and nonviolent disciplinary approaches for staff.
- Increase contact hours in schools in camps, place teachers on more predictable contracts, and adapt curriculum and methods to better address the additional needs of students living in camps.
- Enhance current non-formal education pathways to support the re-integration of OOS children and youth in formal schools and include in national plans.
- Disaggregate monitoring and reporting across school levels and by age to track barriers to education with consideration for how coronavirus has impacted children’s education and protection needs.

June 2020
In 2019, the GoJ issued a new list of 15 occupations closed to non-Jordani-ans and 13 restricted categories, further limiting opportunities to enter into formal employment. Evidence shows that work permits have done little to strengthen decent work protections, while the type of occupations they cover are typically low paid and involve poor working conditions. Over the past decade, the share of workers who are informally employed has disproportionately increased among those informally employed, especially as women and youth are particularly vulnerable (B4C Building Blocks 2020).

Despite improved registration arrangements, Syrians are only permitted to operate HBBs in food processing, handicrafts, and tailoring outside of camps, while elevated financial vulnerability and regulatory hurdles meant only 22 of the 919 HBBs registered in 2019 were operated by Syrians. A mismatch between training programs and market demand, as well as minimal follow-up to support finding work, often weakens vocational training programs. The loss of access to livelihoods, disrupted local economies, and increased competition for jobs due to the pandemic will increase economic vulnerability and reliance on negative coping mechanisms, as well as protection concerns, with women and youth particularly vulnerable (B4C Building Blocks 2020).

Deep structural labor market constraints create a challenging operating environment for livelihoods actors. 34 percent of the working age population in Jordan were employed in 2019. Economic inactivity is disproportionately represented among those informally employed, especially as women, economically active and that prevent a further increase in unemployment among the working age population.
Deterioration in work rights and entitlements. The socio-economic impact of the pandemic, coupled with longstanding refugee vulnerabilities, are expected to exacerbate protection concerns related to GBV, increase evictions for those unable to pay rent and/or utilities, and contribute to a deterioration in work rights and entitlements.

WHAT WAS COMMITTED

- The GoJ committed to creating health policy that provides universal and affordable access to healthcare, as well as expanding access to the use of primary and secondary public healthcare.
- The Jordanian Department of Health has stated that the protocols for treatment of Syrians will be the same as for Jordanians during the current coronavirus crisis.
- The GoJ has worked alongside development partners to improve access to Ministry of Health services. In particular, a multi-donor account entitled the Jordan Health Fund for Refugees was committed to and supported by multilateral institutions and international donors.

CHALLENGES

- The previous cut in healthcare subsidies has had a lasting impact on vulnerable Syrians as high medical-surgical costs have resulted in a surge in household debt.
- Awareness of the policy reversal has been slow to be disseminated and it is estimated that less than 50 percent of Syrians are aware of the change.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

- Re-open registration for asylum seekers of all nationalities so that it is no longer time bound, enabling them to obtain or renew their international protection and legal residency documents.
- Introduce more flexible procedures for registering and ratifying marriages to better facilitate the registration of vital life events, especially births.
- Provide Syrians living in camps with greater freedom to leave the camps permanently, reside in host communities, and access essential services.
- Ensure legal safety for those who are willing to return to Syria by issuing key legal and civil documents to prove nationality, identity, and family lineage.
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- Develop needs based vulnerability assessments and programming across all populations to ensure social protections are extended to all in need.
- Prioritize SGBV prevention and responses and ensure case management agencies are considered life-saving to facilitate access permits in case of further COVID19 restrictions.

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WHAT WAS COMMITTED

- The GoJ has committed to expanding registration and regularization of status for Syrian refugees to achieve comprehensive registration.
- The GoJ has pledged to reduce the vulnerability and insecurity of Syrian refugees through programming that addresses basic needs, negative coping strategies, and food insecurity.
- The GoJ has committed to reducing GBV and prioritizing women’s empowerment.

PROGRESS

- The rectification of status process was extended for an additional year to March 2019, enabling approximately 24,000 Syrians to obtain updated Asylum Seeker Certificates for host communities and to register with the GoJ to obtain legal residency cards (MoI service cards) that regularized their status and provided access to basic services and humanitarian and development assistance.

- Jordan has established a National Online Case Management System to deal with all cases of GBV and Violence against Children (VAC) of all nationalities.

- The GoJ introduced a legal aid bylaw in 2019 that establishes a national legal aid system covering criminal cases that will be managed by the Ministry of Justice Legal Aid Unit.

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- The GoJ committed to improving health services for Syrian refugees. This included establishing a National Online Case Management System to deal with all cases of GBV and Violence against Children (VAC) of all nationalities.

- UNHCR has provided comprehensive primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services free of charge for refugees in Azraq and Za’atari camps and for vulnerable Syrians in urban areas.

- It is estimated that 100 percent of births were assisted by skilled attendants from 2017 to 2018 and mortality for infants and children under the age of five has been halved during this time period.

- Syrian refugees continue to be exempted from fees for primary, maternity, and child health services, including vaccines, at the Ministry of Health maternity and childhood centers.

- Ensure equal access to quality health services for Syrians, especially in camp settings where refugees would be exceptionally vulnerable to the spread and impact of the pandemic.
- Continue to support targeted awareness campaigns to clarify the policy reversal to ensure Syrian refugees are aware of their ability to access treatment and services.
- Engage with the GoJ and donors to support the provision of healthcare services throughout the pandemic and to ensure that Syrian refugees receive equal medical treatment as Jordanians, as well as awareness campaigns for prevention.
- Review and update the lists of vulnerable refugees in urban areas in order to support and improve their access to health services.

- Secondary and tertiary medical services are only partially covered for Syrian refugees, leading to an increase in beneficiaries receiving support ranging from 5.6 to 6.4 percent depending on the program.

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Empowerment and Role of Women

The empowerment and role of women should be integrated as a cross-cutting theme throughout interventions in the aforementioned sectors. The protection and personal rights of refugee women and girls remain a priority to address gender-based discrimination and violence, particularly in the wake of coronavirus that has exacerbated an already precarious protection situation. The curfew and restrictions on movement have resulted in fewer people seeking assistance, as evidenced by a 68% decrease of reported SGBV cases over the first weeks of the lockdown. In addition, the livelihoods and well-being of Syrian refugee women are also of critical importance to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on unemployment and wages, as well as to promote paid job opportunities as only 5.8% of work permits that were issued in 2019 were for Syrian women.

Lastly, the educational challenges women and girls face with enrolment and retention must be highlighted, especially with regards to protection concerns in schools or training facilities, civil documentation issues, and limited access to information on enrolment or scholarship opportunities.

Localisation

An additional cross-cutting theme is localisation, which must be advanced throughout interventions in protection, education, livelihoods, and health. The localisation agenda must be strengthened through support to national stakeholders in the transition to the humanitarian-development nexus agenda, and on improved and long-term planning for a refugee-centered response in host communities.

Actors must continue to work towards localisation and fulfilling the Grand Bargain commitments to ensure sustainable ownership at the community level, which was recognised in the JRP through linkages to the SDGs and prioritising consultations with civil society.

However, we also recommend the development of an indicator to monitor progress on localisation in order to track direct funding to national NGOs and platforms for greater engagement and participation in Jordan.

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