Education Sector Working Group Meeting, September 2025
Minutes of Meeting

Date: September 30th , 2025
Place: UNICEF and online
Chaired by: Isaac Makanani UNICEF, Maithree Abeyrathna NRC, and Hala Sarabi QRF.
Attendees: UNICEF, UNHCR, NRC, QRF, Save the children, Jordan Education Coalition, IREX, British Council, Caritas Germany, JOHUD, IMC, UNESCO, MEDAIR, IRC,TDH,JRSHI, JCEA (Jordan Coalition for Education for All) and CRB.

Agenda:

1- Overview of events attended by the ESWG co-chairs
   a) GPE Partnership Compact Development (30-31 July 2025)
   b) ESP Drafting process (15 – 17 September)
   c) Update on ORAWG (NRC)
   d) EDPG Meeting, 18 September
2- Updates from UNESCO
3- Updates on the MENARO Sub-regional meeting on Syrian Returnees (UNICEF)
4- Update on ARDD research (ARDD)
5- ESWG survey responses and moving forward (QRF)
6- Update on Certification of education documents for Syrian Refugee children (NRC/UNICEF/UNHCR)
7- AoB

1. **Presentation: One Refugee Approach Working Group**

- The working group, reactivated in May 2024, aims to advocate for minority refugee groups in Jordan such as Somali, Sudanese, Iraqi, Yemeni, and Eritrean refugees.

- Core focus includes promoting equitable humanitarian services based on vulnerability rather than nationality or UNHCR registration status.

- Efforts include multi-sectoral collaboration to address gaps in service provision and funding, and ensuring meaningful refugee participation in advocacy and decision-making.

- Recent collaboration with CARE, Intersos, and Caritas led to inclusion of non-Syrian and non-registered refugees in needs assessments, addressing data shortages.

- Membership is open to humanitarian and civil society actors relevant to minority refugees, currently consisting of 26 entities and approximately 40 members.

- Key learnings highlight the importance of evidence-based advocacy supported by quality data, and the role of refugee representatives strengthening advocacy impact.

- Challenges remain around limited data availability and resource constraints.

- Interested organization in joining working group can contact Ramayana Mahafza: +962 779 909 024 email: Ramayana.mahafza@jrs.net

2. Updates on GPE Partnership Compact Development

- The Compact aims to deliver USD 15 million to support Ministry of Education priorities focusing on digitalization, aligned with government modernization vision.

Commented [IM1]: GPE Partnership Compact is only focusing of Digital Transformation being the priority area chosen by the MOE

- Process adjustments were noted due to budget constraints, narrowing focus areas and participant numbers as guided by the Ministry of Education.

- The Compact is linked with the ongoing ESP process, which focuses on four domains: early childhood education, basic education cycles, technical and vocational education, and system strengthening including digital transformation.

- Cross-cutting themes include inclusive education, gender equity, and greening education.

- Validation workshops are expected through November and December with ongoing member participation encouraged.

3. ESP Process and Sector Engagement

- The ESP drafting process involves extensive consultations with the sector working group under Ministry of Education direction.

- Changes in subgroup representation and participation were clarified as Ministry-directed to manage meeting logistics effectively.

- Members highlighted challenges in coordination and requested more inclusive consultation and transparent communication on decision-making and selection criteria.

- Planned validation phases will offer further opportunities for member input.

- The working group has been asked to contribute technical guidance and capacity building while strengthening coordination and advocacy efforts.

4. Updates from UNESCO and UNICEF

- Ministry-led emergency preparedness and crisis management strategies are under development with partners support.

- Focus on updating SOPs for school safety, crisis management, and inclusive education standards.

- Workplace learning and career guidance models are being piloted in collaboration with private sector partners and ministries.

- Inclusive education efforts include self-assessment tools and alignment with national policies to avoid duplication of efforts.

6. Regional Coordination and Country Response Planning for the continuation of learning for Syrian Refugees

- Regional meetings are held involving six countries hosting Syrian refugees to develop country response plans ensuring continuity of education for refugee children returning to Syria or remaining in host countries.

- Jordan's Ministry of Education established a five-member technical team supported by UNICEF to draft its country plan.

- Contributions from the Education Sector Working Group are solicited to ensure comprehensive representation of sector priorities, including formal and non-formal education, and inclusion of children with disabilities.

5. Research and Evidence Sharing

- ARDD initiated research relevant to inclusive education and is open to sharing research scopes and avoiding duplication with existing studies.

- The working group discussed the need for evidence-based planning incorporating community experiences and data in the country response framework.

6. ESWG Feedback Survey Summary

- A survey conducted among ESWG members showed good overall satisfaction regarding discussions, networking opportunities, and capacity building.

- Members expressed interest in increased focus on inclusive education, Syrian refugee return issues, broader sector mandates beyond humanitarian response, and enhanced access to Ministry of Education.

- Suggestions included more technical guidance, evidence sharing, advocacy, and innovative engagement approaches to increase member participation.

- Challenges include meeting fatigue and reduced funding, necessitating realistic expectations and revisiting membership engagement strategies.

7. Education Documentation Certification and Fee Waivers

- The group discussed finalized guidelines on certification of education documents for Syrian refugees, distinguishing it from ratification processes.

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- Advocacy remains crucial to ensure timely dissemination and implementation of waivers to avoid enrollment barriers faced due to documentation issues.

- Feedback from the field is requested to monitor waiver application inconsistencies.

Commented [MA2]: I think these three points are related to section 9 (NRC brief on enrollment fees) and not related to certification and ratification of Edu documents. I suggest move them under #9.

8. Referral and Screening Updates (ECD and Disabilities)

- Handicap International shared progress on operationalizing the national referral pathway covering ages 5 to 15 in pilot areas funded by GIZ Promise, involving school-based screening and referral in coordination with ministries of education, health, and social development.

9. NRC brief on school enrollment waivers (fees and documentation for 2025/2026 school year)

- At the start of each semester, it is noted that there are only two days left for school enrollment, but students may face limitations related to the required documentation at the time of registration. These limitations could concern the availability of documents, having the correct documents, or having them renewed.
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- Recent waivers issued exempt registered refugees and certain categories of students from donation fees, though fees for other students have increased significantly.

- According to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for student admission, there is a mandatory donation fee for both non-student and student applicants. However, exemptions exist for certain students, allowing them to enroll without paying this fee. This exemption has been granted annually since the beginning of the crisis via a waiver issued by the education authorities, instructing school principals to accept registered Syrian refugees without requiring the donation fee.

- This year, the Ministry of Education issued the donation fee waiver on August 12, providing schools sufficient notice not to collect these fees from eligible students. Previously, the exemption was included in the SOP for the first time, thanks to advocacy efforts led by UNICEF and NRC. The SOP covers registered refugees (Category 1), children of Gaza (Category 2), and children of Jordanian mothers (Category 3), all exempt from the donation fee. Notably, the donation fees were increased significantly—up to tenfold—making the waiver critical to avoid financial barriers for these students.

- Regarding documentation, a waiver was issued on September 24, allowing students with expired, missing, or unrenewed documents to enroll conditionally, with the expectation that they will update their status by the end of the calendar year's first semester. Despite this waiver, there is concern that some students may have faced enrollment rejection prior to its issuance. Awareness among families and school principals regarding this waiver remains essential to prevent such cases.
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- Overall, advocacy remains crucial to ensure waivers for both donation fees and documentation are issued promptly before registration periods. This will prevent students from being denied enrollment due to administrative barriers and ensure their access to education is protected.

Next Meeting

- To be scheduled; members will be informed via email.

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