

TURKEY

EDUCATION EXTERNAL UPDATE

September 2016



Over 60%

Syrian refugee children
out of school

50 % increase

in child enrolment in formal
education between June 2015-
June 2016

Only 2.2 %

Syrian refugee youth
enrolled in Higher
Education

1,000

New DAFI scholarship
places for 2016/17

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

REFUGEES' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

- An enabling policy and legislative environment **guarantees access to education** for refugees: The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for ensuring that **all refugee children** enjoy access to schools and has taken steps to remove administrative barriers to enrolment.
- Refugee/asylum-seeker children registered with the authorities can **enrol in Turkish schools gratis**.
- MoNE approved the establishment of **"temporary education centres" (TECs)** to enable Syrian refugee children to continue their education: TECs offer instruction in Arabic, are staffed by Syrian volunteer teachers and make use of a modified form of the Syrian curriculum. They are present in all camps in southeast Turkey, and MoNE has approved over 350 to operate in urban areas hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees. During 2015, the Ministry increased its oversight of these institutions. Many TECs benefit from UNICEF support. Achievement certificates issued by MoNE-recognised TECs are accorded the same status as those issued by MoNE schools.
- From 2013-2015, the Council of Ministers, with the Higher Education Council, **waived tuition fees for Syrian refugee students enrolled in full-time degree programmes at Turkish State universities**. In 2015, the Turkish government subsidized the tuition costs of approximately 1,600 Syrians in Turkish universities. Refugees of other nationalities may attend university, but are required to pay foreign student fees.

REFUGEE CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- **More than 60% of Syrian refugee children are out of school**. Only 37% of an estimated 934,000 school-aged Syrian children are enrolled in formal education programmes. While over 85% of children living in camps are enrolled in formal education this percentage falls to around 30% for those living in urban areas.
- The **number of Syrian children enrolled in Turkish schools and TECs rose** to over 320,000 in 2016: Over 75,000 Syrian refugee children are enrolled in Turkish schools, with the remainder in TECs.
- **Non-Syrian refugees can enrol in Turkish schools** in the cities and provinces in which they are registered.
- 2.2% of Syrian refugee youth are enrolled in Turkish universities vs. 20% enrolled in Syria before the war.
- The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) expanded its existing **scholarship programme** to include Syrian refugees and has awarded 2,300 under this programme (YTB figures from November 2015). Additional scholarships for the 2016 academic year will be awarded shortly.
- **All refugees may enrol in free Turkish language and skills-training courses** offered by MoNE's Public Education Centres (Halk Egitim): These courses do not lead to formal vocational qualifications, but are sufficiently advanced to allow graduates to use their skills in ways that support income generation and self-reliance. In November 2015, MoNE reported that close to **80,000 Syrians attended** these courses.

UNHCR STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES

- The **education sector response is led by MoNE**, with the support of UN agencies, including UNHCR: UNHCR's education response is designed and delivered in close collaboration with the MoNE, YTB and UNICEF. UNICEF and UNHCR ensure the complementarity of their programmes through close coordination and through a division of roles and responsibilities, **with UNHCR focusing on promoting refugees' access to the national education system, as well as providing Turkish language programmes, skills training, and higher education access**. The core focus of UNICEF's activities support early childhood, primary and secondary education.
- UNHCR's education strategy and related activities focus on promoting a range of education opportunities for refugees and ensuring that education is **linked to durable solutions and self-reliance**.
- UNHCR consistently **advocates for the inclusion of refugee children in the national education system** to provide sustainable, predictable access to certified education. UNHCR provided extensive technical support during the revision of the Ministry's circular on foreigners' access to education.
- UNHCR and UNICEF, as sector co-leads, **provide training** to NGOs, community centres and refugee outreach volunteers involved in community outreach and refugee **counselling on the educational opportunities** available to refugees, and procedures for accessing these services.
- UNHCR provided around 270 urban and 24 camp-based TECs with **teaching support materials** developed jointly with the Ministry to enhance the quality of education offered, and will also provide 8000 teachers with stationery items required for educational administration and lesson preparation.
- With the support of the EU Delegation, UNHCR will implement a large-scale project (10m Euro) that will support the development of a curriculum and materials for teaching Turkish as a foreign language to **facilitate enrolment and retention in Turkish schools**, provide training for teachers on the effects of displacement on learning, and **introduce initiatives to promote social inclusion** and reduce bullying.
- **UNHCR provides twice-yearly cash grants to non-Syrian** refugee children who can show proof of enrolment in Turkish schools. During 2016 UNHCR will monitor the grants' efficacy in promoting enrolment.
- UNHCR facilitates **access to higher education through the provision of scholarships** in partnership with YTB: As of June 2016, the *DAFI Türkiye* programme became the largest in the world, with 1,000 new scholarships available for 2016/2017, of which 700 will be awarded in 2016. Almost 6,600 applications were received. Limited funds are available for non-Syrian scholarship holders, with only five scholarships awarded in 2015.
- UNHCR offered 1,600 advanced **Turkish language scholarships** to high school graduates to enable them to reach the language proficiency levels required for admission to Turkish universities. This 10-month programme will be expanded in 2016/17 and will provide subsistence grants to participants.
- UNHCR supports **language and skills training courses** through its community centres, while vocational and skills training programmes are supported through its Livelihoods programme. In 2015, UNHCR provided MoNE with equipment for its Public Education Centres' skills courses.
- **UNHCR co-leads the southeast Turkey Education Working Group with UNICEF** and plays a **key role in the 3RP sector strategy**. Monthly WG meetings are held in Gaziantep. UNHCR also coordinates a technical working group for higher education scholarship providers and has recommended the establishment of a higher education working group to government counterparts.

GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Despite positive national legislation and practices, enrollment in formal and higher education programmes remains low: **lack of knowledge of educational options available** to refugees, **prioritization of spending on basic necessities over education**, and **dependence on children to contribute to household income** are all barriers. **Language proficiency** is also an obstacle to enrolment in Turkish schools/universities, as is the fear of **social exclusion and harassment**. Demand for schooling remains high, however **supply of places in TECs and national schools does not match demand** in many provinces, with many operating close to capacity.
- Skills-building and language courses are only attended by a fraction of the refugee youth: **lack of awareness of available services** remains a barrier to participating and there is insufficient civil society capacity to meet demand.

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Links:

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