



## SITUATION ANALYSIS

As the school year 2015/2016 is set to begin in September, the focus in August was on preparing out-of-school children to enter public schools through reaching out to as many parents and children as possible. The aim of the outreach was to promote formal basic education as the best option for children that leads to recognized official certification. The Lebanese public schools will start on 28 September when Lebanese and Syrians in the first shift will resume their education on that day. The second shift classes (afternoon classes that also offer official and recognized certification) will start on 12 October. Public education in Lebanon is not free of charge; however students for this school year will not have to pay any fees to enroll as the fees will be covered by the Government of Lebanon with the support of the international community.

After months of insecurity about the funding short-falls of UNRWA and the subsequent risk of UNRWA schools not opening on time, UNRWA announced on 19 August that they secured funding and declared schools open. In total 68 UNRWA schools will start on 7 September in Lebanon and UNRWA targets to enroll 38,500 children (grade 1-12).

In the school year 2014/2015, a total 101,362 Syrian and other non-Lebanese children were enrolled in Lebanese public schools (first and second shift), which represents about 25% of the total amount of refugee school-aged children. For the new school year, the Minister of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has indicated that 200,000 non-Lebanese including Syrian children can enter first and second shifts (45,000 in first shift and 155,000 in second shift) in an effort to integrate more school-aged refugees into the formal system. In total there are 1,278 Lebanese public schools and of these 259 will be open for a second shift. This is a considerable increase from last year where only 144 were open for a second shift. In order to offer education closest to areas where the most vulnerable families live, MEHE and the UN conducted a vulnerability mapping supplemented by quantitative assessments conducted at the field level, and based on that, the number of schools opening for a second shift has increased significantly. Funding is now secured for 166,667 Lebanese students, for the 45,000 in first shift and for 95,755 Syrians and other non-Lebanese in second shift. Funding is still needed to support 59,245 Syrians and other refugee children in second shift. However, at least 200,000 refugees still remain outside of the formal education system, deprived of their basic right. Health and psychosocial counselors will be present this year inside the schools to safeguard the well-being of children who have faced difficult circumstances and prevent immediate or long-term mental and health disorders in the children's lives.

A Back-to-School Campaign is being planned to reach out to as many Lebanese and Syrian school age children as possible promoting certified formal basic education as the paramount option for education. Partners' main focus is to facilitate the outreach and mobilize resources to reach out and disseminate information to local communities and invite them to enroll their children in the Lebanese Public Schools and/or UNRWA schools.

