

As the crisis in Syria enters its sixth year, children continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. Two decades of investment in education have been wiped out. Five years of conflict have tripled the proportion of Syrian children out of school **from 0.9 million (14 per cent) in the 2011/12 school year to 2.8 million (40 per cent) in the 2014/15 school year**. Many Syrian school-age children have never seen the inside of a classroom and those in school continue to be at risk of dropping out. Syrian children have been deprived of their childhood along with their right to education.

In 2013, UNICEF and partners united their efforts to reach out to children in Syria and the five host countries through the **No Lost Generation (NLG)** initiative. The NLG supports national leadership of ministries of education and mobilizes partnerships around national plans, with the aim of bridging immediate response with long-term development efforts around three pillars: education, child protection and adolescent and youth engagement. The adoption of the **Whole of Syria (WoS)** approach in 2014 has further strengthened strategic and operational coherence in the delivery of a coordinated education response inside Syria.<sup>1</sup> In line with these efforts, the **Supporting Syria and the Region Conference**, which was held in London on 4 February 2016, represents a significant shift in the international community's response to the Syria crisis by promoting greater focus on education through increased and long-term funding to sustain the ambitious goal of ensuring the right to education for all Syrian and vulnerable host community children.

## Education inside Syria and the five host countries

**Inside Syria**, five years into the crisis, 2.1 million Syrian children are out of school and one in four schools have been either damaged, destroyed, or are being used as shelter or for military purposes. Lack of learning spaces is compounded with a shortage of qualified teaching staff and learning materials, makeshift curricula lacking any educational underpinning and the uncertainty over examinations and recognition of certificates. If children do not return to school, the loss of human capital formation due to the increased dropout from school could reach US\$10.7 billion, or 17.7 per cent of Syria's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010.<sup>2</sup>

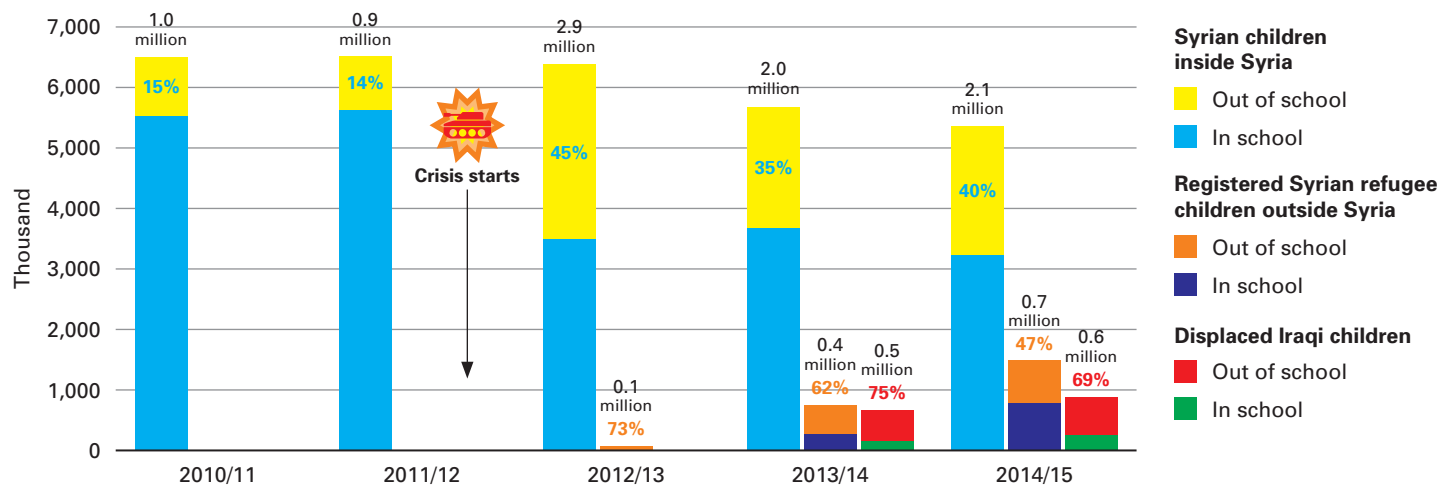
**In the five host countries**, Syrian refugees are facing increasingly difficult situations, with impoverished living conditions, limited opportunities for livelihoods and greater protection needs. While the actual number of students enrolled in formal education has tripled since August 2013, the percentage of out-of-school children has remained close to 50 per cent, as host countries struggle to accommodate the increasing influx of Syrian refugee children.



In **Turkey**, despite positive policies facilitating enrolment of Syrian refugee children in both public schools and in Temporary Education Centres (TECs) with a modified Syrian curriculum and Arabic as the language of instruction, half a million Syrian refugee children remain out of school, the majority of whom live in host communities. In **Lebanon**, with the launch of the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) Plan, there has been a significant increase in the number of Syrian refugee children enrolled in public schools in the last three academic years. Second shifts have been opened in 238 schools to increase the capacity of the public sector. Despite this, 40 per cent of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon remain out of school. **Jordan** is striving to reach out to all Syrian refugee children, which has put the public school system under strain, overstressing resources and undermining the quality of education provision. Fifteen per cent of Syrian children remain out of school. In **Iraq**, public schools using Arabic as the language of instruction have been established in refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and, overall, 68 per cent of Syrian children are enrolled in school. Limited learning spaces, lack of teaching staff and resources have, however, left some 20,000 Syrian refugee children out of school, with the majority concentrated in host communities. In KRI, limited resources and limited available infrastructure are keeping 614,000 (69 per cent) displaced Iraqi children out of school. In **Egypt**, almost all Syrian refugee children are enrolled in school. However, low quality of education, overcrowding of classrooms, and language barriers remain challenges for Syrian children, many of whom attend school irregularly.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, please visit [www.wos-education.org](http://www.wos-education.org).

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF (2015) *Economic Loss from School Dropout due to the Syria Crisis: a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of the Syria Crisis on the Education Sector*, Amman: December 2015.

1. Number and percentages of Syrian children in school and out of school (pre and post-crisis)<sup>3</sup>**Inside Syria**

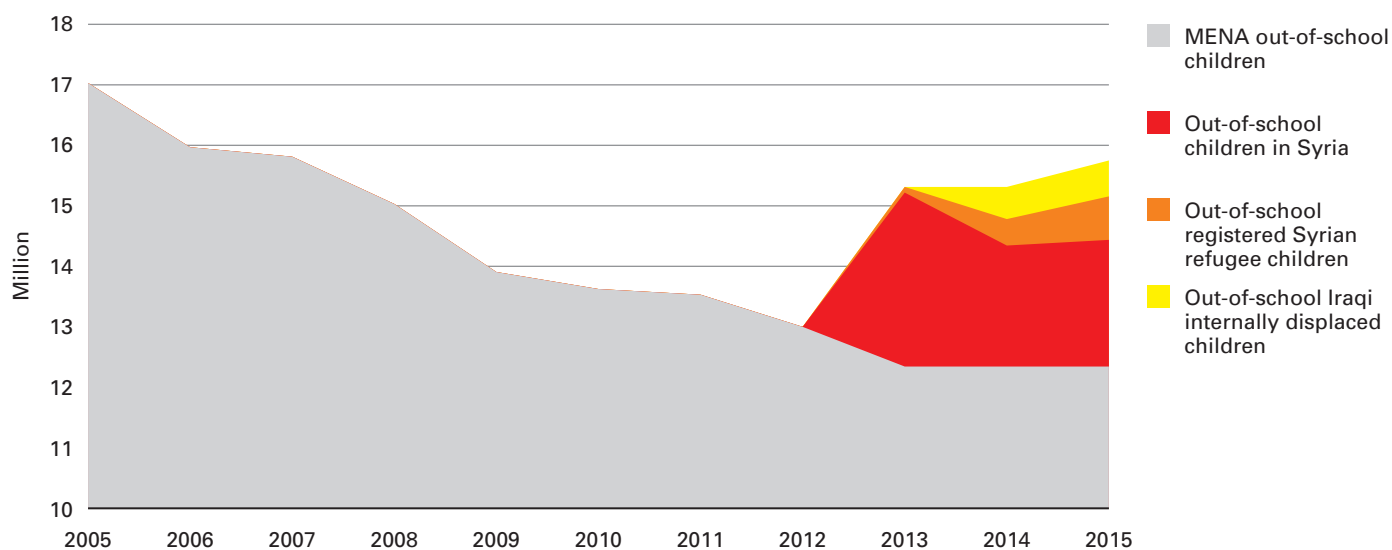
The number of out-of-school children tripled one year after the crisis from 1 million to 2.9 million.

**Outside Syria**

Although the percentage of out-of-school refugee children has declined from 73% to 47%, the total number of out-of-school refugee children keeps growing due to the increase in the refugee population.

**In Iraq**

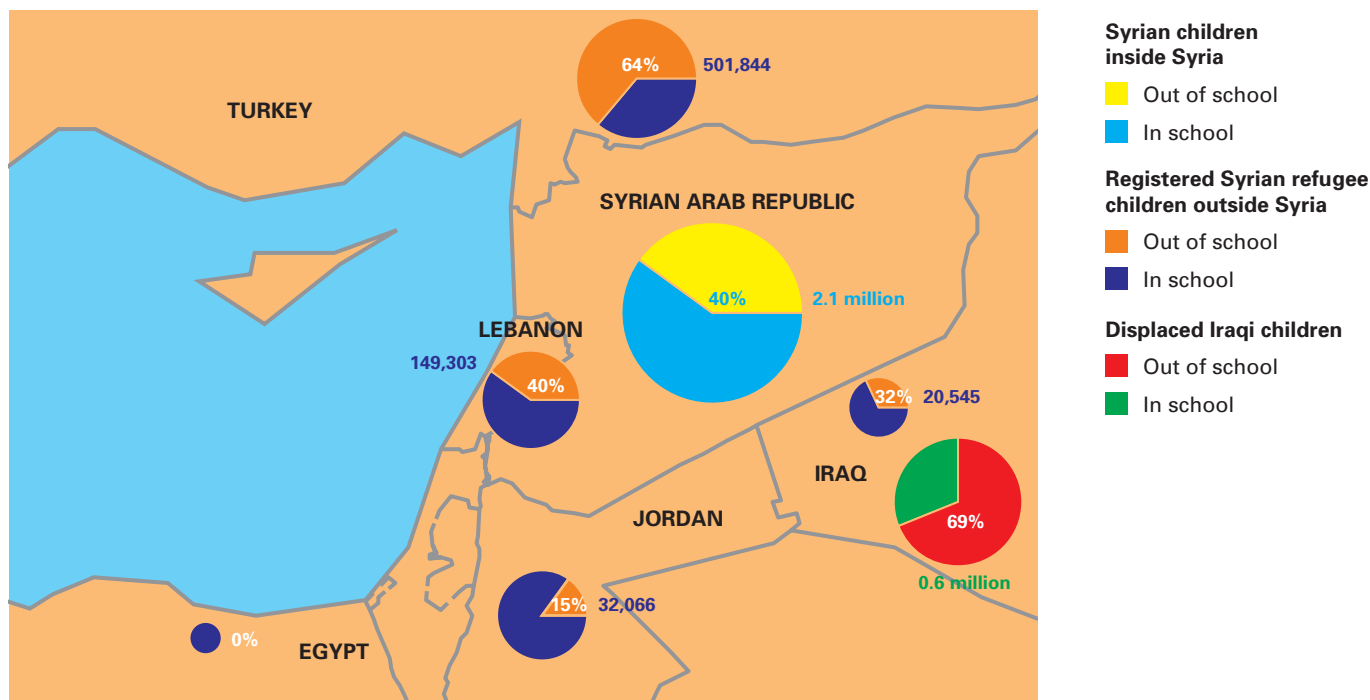
The combined impact of the Syria and Iraq crises resulted in 0.6 million out-of-school children among the Iraqi internally displaced children.

2. Impact of the Syria and Iraq crises on out-of-school children in MENA (2005-2015)<sup>4</sup>

The Syria and Iraq crises resulted in an additional 3.4 million children out of school (2.1 million inside Syria, 0.7 million Syrian refugees and 0.6 million Iraqi displaced children). This brings the MENA number of out-of-school children back to the 2007 level with close to 16 million out-of-school children.

<sup>3</sup> Syrian figures are calculated using data from the Ministry of Education (MoE) Education Management Information System (EMIS), UNHCR, UNICEF, UNPD, Syria 2011 Statistical Year Book, Syria 2004 Census and population projection of the U.S. Census Bureau. Iraqi figures come from MoE central Iraq/Education Cluster Partners. Data for Syrian figures cover students aged 5-17 years, and is calculated from gross enrolment instead of adjusted net enrolment, which leads to an underestimation of the out-of-school number. For 2015 enrolment is adjusted to account for 25% of pre-crisis enrolment for non-reported sub-governorates; Syrian refugee figures are updated to December 2015; the Iraqi internally displaced population figures cover students aged 6-17 years and are updated to November 2015.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 1. In addition, the MENA out-of-school numbers (grey area) cover children of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary age, which is age 5-14 years for the majority of MENA countries. Number of out-of-school children for MENA for 2015 reflects the number for 2014 and it is only used as reference.

3. Geographical distribution of out-of-school children (December 2015)<sup>5</sup>**Inside Syria**

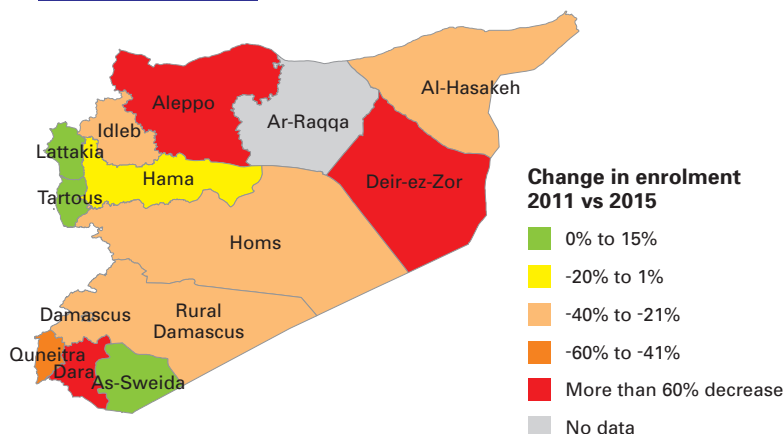
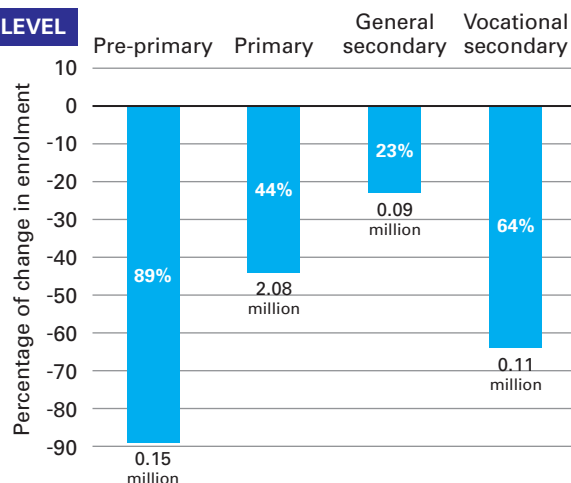
2 out of 5 children are out of school (2.1 million).

**Outside Syria**

1 out of 2 Syrian children are out of school (0.7 million).

**In Iraq**

7 out of 10 Internally displaced children are out of school (0.6 million).

4. Inside Syria: Change in enrolment in public education by governorate and level (2011 vs. 2015)<sup>6</sup>**BY GOVERNORATE****BY LEVEL**

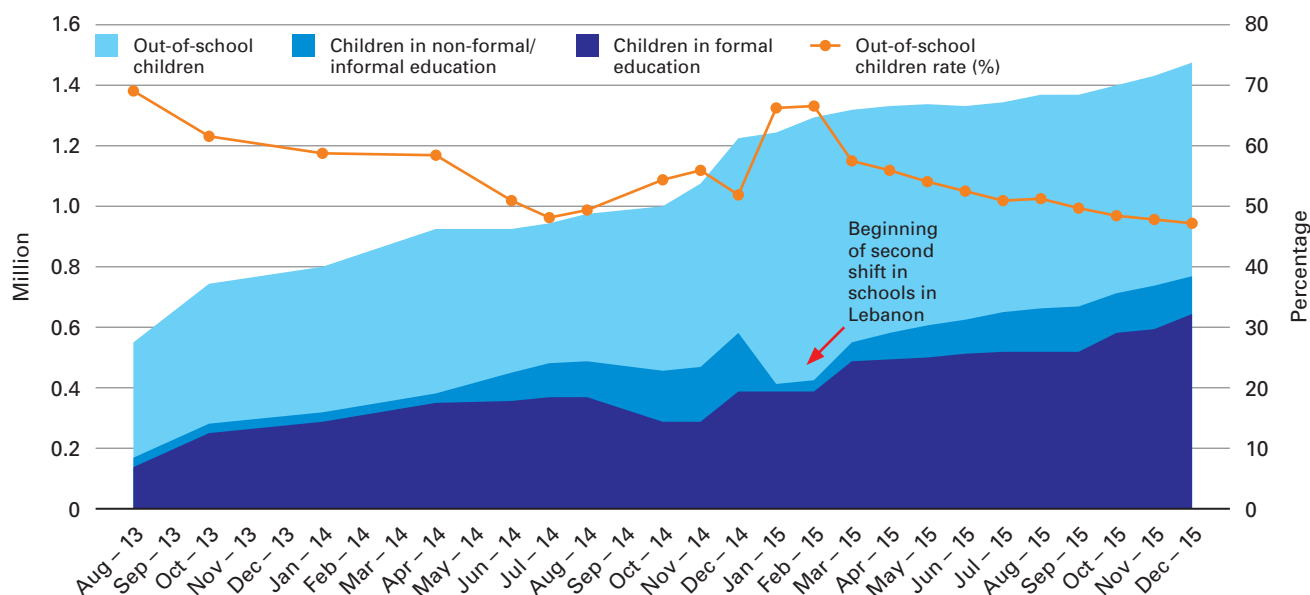
Enrollment in public schools in Syria has decreased over 40% since the onset of the crisis. However, changes have been uneven. In some governorates enrollment has fallen by more than 70% due to intense fighting, while in others it has increased due to the high influx of displaced children.

By education level, primary enrollment has decreased the most by the number of children (more than 2 million), and pre-primary and vocational secondary have fallen the most in percentage terms (89 and 64 per cent respectively).

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 3.

<sup>6</sup> Syria MoE EMIS for 2010/11 and 2014/15 school years. Enrolment for pre-primary to Grade 12.

## 5. Outside Syria: Number of refugee children, in formal and non-formal education, and out of school<sup>7</sup>

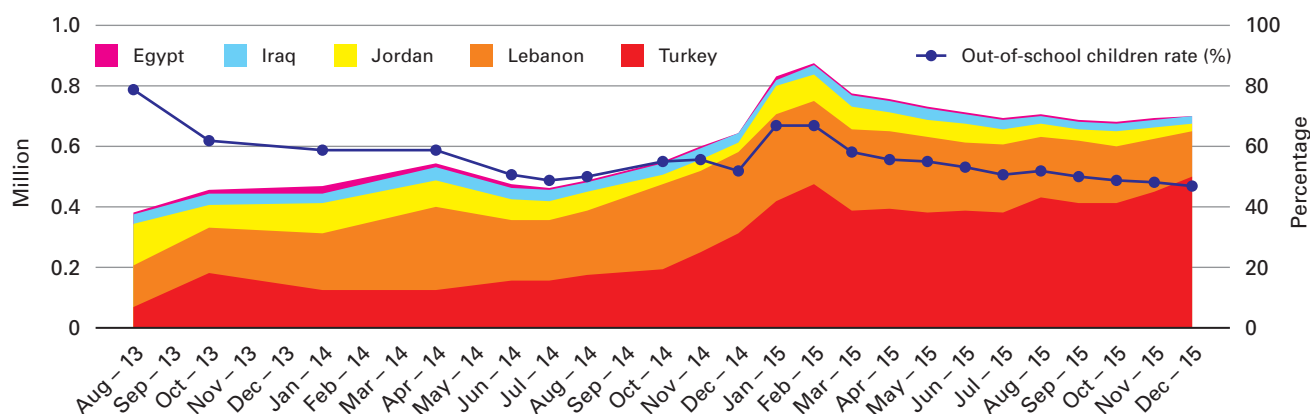


The number of refugee children accessing education has increased four times since August 2013 from 0.2 million to 0.8 million.

80% of Syrian refugee children with access to education are in the formal sector, while only 20% are in the non-formal/informal sector.

The rapid increase in the number of refugee children has posed major challenges for their absorption in the education systems. Despite a higher percentage of refugee children accessing education, the number of refugee children out of school doubled between August 2013 and December 2015.

## 6. Out-of-school Syrian refugee children by host country<sup>8</sup>



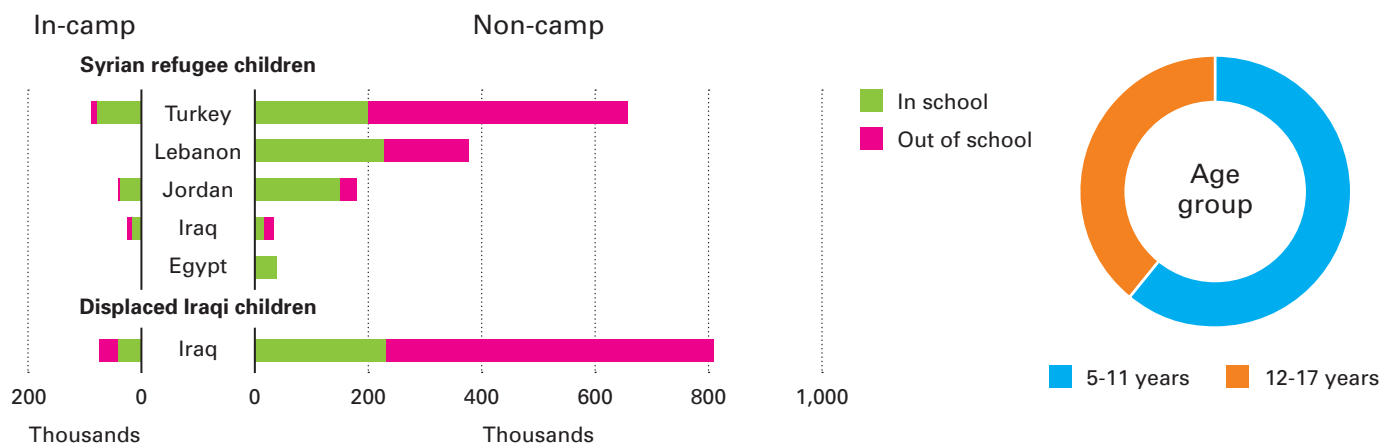
**Turkey and Lebanon:** 9 out of 10 refugee out-of-school children in the sub-region are in these two countries. This is due to the large, and increasing, number of refugee children. 77% of all Syrian refugee school-age children live in Turkey and Lebanon.

**Jordan:** A large but stable refugee population in Jordan has allowed education actors to reach a higher percentage of children with formal and non-formal/informal education.

**Iraq and Egypt:** Relatively small refugee populations in these two countries explain the small numbers of out-of-school children. However, a larger percentage of Syrian refugee children in Iraq remain out of school (30%).

<sup>7</sup> School-age children calculated using UNHCR registration as of Dec. 2015. As of 6 May 2015, UNHCR Lebanon has temporarily suspended new registration as per Government of Lebanon's instructions. Accordingly, individuals awaiting to be registered are no longer included. All enrollment data as of Dec 2015. For formal education: Data from 3RP Monthly update for Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. For non-formal education: Data from 3RP Monthly update for all countries, except Jordan. For Jordan: data from the Education Sector Working Group.

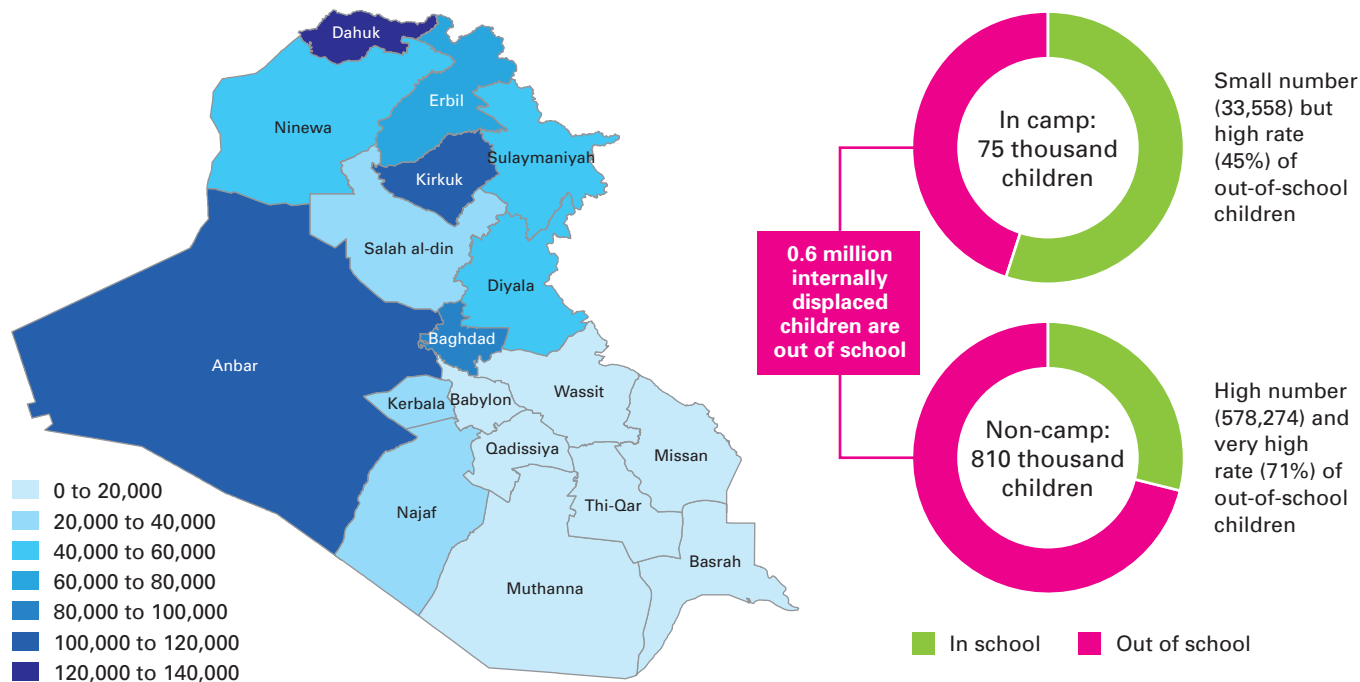
<sup>8</sup> See footnote 7.

7. Distribution of out-of-school Syrian refugee children in-camp/non-camp, and age group<sup>9</sup>

9 out of 10 children (including Syrian refugees and Iraqi displaced children) are living in host communities (1.3 million).

In countries where camps have been established (Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq) the out-of-school rate is close to three times more among children not in camps (64%) than among children in camps (24%).

6 of 10 children in the sub-region are aged 5-11 years (pre-primary and primary school age) while the rest is aged 12-17 years (lower and upper secondary school age). The enrollment rate for children aged 12-17 years is lower than for children aged 5-11 years. For example, in Jordan, the enrollment of children aged 6-11 years is 70% for both males and females, while for children aged 12-17 years the enrollment rate is 47% for boys and 54% for girls.

8. In Iraq: Distribution of out-of-school internally displaced children (November 2015)<sup>10</sup>

60% of all displaced Iraqi children live in the governorates of Anbar, Baghdad, Dahuk and Kirkuk, and 30% in the Kurdistan regions of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

9 out of 10 displaced Iraqi children live outside camps.

More than half a million, or 71%, of displaced Iraqi children not living in camps are out of school.

<sup>9</sup> Estimation based on UNHCR data, the Iraq Education Cluster and reports between November 2015 and December 2015. Egypt and Lebanon have no camp settings.

<sup>10</sup> Data come from MoE central Iraq/Education Cluster Partners, covering children aged 6-17 years.



9. Challenges and responses<sup>11</sup>

## Challenges

## Responses

## System strengthening

Inside Syria, one in four schools are damaged, destroyed, being used as shelters or occupied by armed groups. Learning environments are not safe, with increasing reports of attacks on school, children and teaching staff.

Similarly, in the five host countries, the shortage of learning spaces, overstretched institutional and human capacities represent key systemic challenges for the adequate provision of education for Syrian children and children in host communities.

## System strengthening

In 2015, UNICEF and partners completed the rehabilitation of 452 schools in Syria. In the five host countries, 352 education facilities were constructed, renovated or rehabilitated. The engagement of parent-teacher associations in KRI resulted in the rapid rehabilitation of more than 500 schools occupied by Iraqi internally displaced persons.

Government leadership is crucial for an effective response to the Syria crisis: long-term plans, such as RACE in Lebanon and the Jordan Response Plan (JRP), aim at expanding education-system capacity to reach out to **all children**. UNICEF and partners provide sustained capacity development programmes for MoE staff and civil servants in all countries.

## Education policies

In Syria and the five host countries, admission regulations policies and inadequate regulatory frameworks linking formal and non-formal education often hinder access to education by refugee children and youth.

Lack of crisis-sensitive and responsive Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) affects effective planning and budgeting for the crisis response.

## Education policies

In Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt documentation requirements for enrolment in public schools have been lifted. In Turkey and Jordan, the EMIS has been developed to capture data on refugee populations registered in school.

In Lebanon, the first national non-formal education (NFE) framework was developed in 2015 to standardize and regulate NFE programming and provide multiple pathways for reintegration into formal education.

Egypt has mainstreamed the community-based school model through the development of national standards, teacher training and quality assurances mechanisms.

## Access

Syrian children face complex barriers to education, from different languages of instruction and curriculum used in school to protection concerns. Financial barriers to schooling, and inadequate capacities for addressing special education needs, including psychosocial support, limit Syrian children from accessing education.

## Access

In 2015 in Syria, UNICEF and partners supported 165,000 children to enrol in formal education and 575,000 children in non-formal education (including life skills education). More than 1.2 million children were reached with essential learning materials. Through the recently rolled out Self-Learning Programme (SLP), 19,000 children resumed their studies.

In the five host countries, UNICEF and partners have supported 740,000 Syrian children in accessing formal and non-formal education opportunities in 2015. In Jordan, UNICEF is scaling up the *Makani* ('My space' in Arabic) programme, which provides an integrated package of informal education opportunities, psychosocial support and life skills training.

## Quality

Five years of conflict in Syria have meant the loss of 22 per cent of the teachers and 18 per cent of the school counsellors.

In the five host countries, the lack of professional development opportunities combined with the recruitment of unqualified teachers on a temporary contractual basis are negatively impacting the provision of quality education.

## Quality

In 2015, UNICEF and partners provided professional development and incentives to more than 6,000 teachers in Syria, and provided training opportunities for almost 14,000 teachers in the five host countries.

In Turkey, UNICEF and partners have supported the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in developing a regulatory framework to provide Syrian volunteer teachers with standardized incentives. In 2015, the programme has significantly scaled up, reaching more than 8,700 teachers.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed analysis, see the Syria Crisis Education Strategic Paper, [http://www.oosci-mena.org/uploads/1/wysiwyg/160128\\_UNICEF\\_MENARO\\_Syria\\_policy\\_paper\\_final.pdf](http://www.oosci-mena.org/uploads/1/wysiwyg/160128_UNICEF_MENARO_Syria_policy_paper_final.pdf)