

Research Article

REFUGEE CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION: THE EDUCATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN – REALITY AND PROSPECTS

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Summary: 1. Introduction. – 2. Literature Review. – 3. The Legal Framework for the Right to Education of Refugee Children. – 4. National and International Efforts to Implement the Right to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan. – 5. The Reality of the Education of Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan and its Challenges. – 5.1 *Economic Hardship*. – 5.2 *Safeguarding and Safety Concerns*. – 5.3 *Low Quality of Education*. – 5.4 *Obstacles Related to Educational Policies*. – 6. Conclusions and Recommendations.

Keywords: Children's rights, human rights, refugee protection, rights of refugee children

ABSTRACT

The number of Syrian refugees has increased in light of the deteriorating political, economic, and humanitarian situation in the country, and they have spread to various parts of the world in search of security and stability, whether in Syria's neighbouring countries or other countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe.

International reports have revealed the tragic situations resulting from protracted refugee situations in which Syrian refugees, including children, are often denied access to essential services or have difficulty exercising their rights, including their

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right to education, as a fundamental right guaranteed by international charters and conventions.

The current research pays special attention to the reality of the education of Syrian refugee children in Jordan, given the obstacles and difficult educational conditions encountered by many of these children, taking into account the achievements and gains made in this context that must be preserved and generalised, as well as identifying the difficulties and challenges encountering the Jordanian State, in an attempt to overcome them, work to confront them, and ultimately improve the situation of Syrian refugee children with regard about education and provide them with hope for a better future.

Background: *Since the outbreak of political violence in Syria in 2011, vast numbers of Syrians have gone to the Jordanian border to escape one of the most devastating civil wars in recent times, and about one-third of the refugees fleeing their countries, i.e., about one million three hundred thousand Syrian refugees, have arrived. These refugees are distributed within the Zaatari, Azraq, Rakban, and Emirati-Jordanian camps. Some of them live outside the scope of these four camps, especially in the governorates of Irbid, Mafrq, Amman, and Zarqa. More than half of these refugees are children.*

Methods: *The research uses the descriptive analysis method, which is based on the detailed description and in-depth analysis of the topic of the study through gathering detailed data related to the research problem, analysing legal texts and relevant information as well as their clear interpretation, concluding with proposing appropriate solutions and recommendations aimed at supporting the right of Syrian refugee children in Jordan to obtain their right to education.*

Results and Conclusions: *The study concluded the importance of the efforts made by the Jordanian government, with the support of donors and humanitarian organisations, regarding assisting Syrian students in obtaining a quality education and its contribution to the steady increase in the percentage of children enrolled in education.*

On the other hand, the study confirmed the many obstacles and difficulties that impede the education of Syrian refugees in Jordan, such as child labour and early marriage, the lack of appropriate educational infrastructure in light of the scarcity of essential financial resources, the lack of international funding; the limited availability of school, the shortage of qualified human resources to deal with refugee children, and the lack of the necessary documentation to enrol in education.

However, despite all the challenges and difficulties related to the education of Syrian refugees in Jordan, the opportunity remains to overcome the difficulties effectively, develop the educational reality, achieve an increase in the rates of absorption in the educational systems, and improve the quality of education provided to these students, which will contribute to the realisation of their dreams and aspirations and help them rebuild their society and host society alike.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Jordanian Government provides Syrians in its territory with access to many essential services. However, despite the importance of efforts to provide refugee children with the right to education at the local and international levels, tens of thousands of such children are out of school, two-thirds of refugees do not have the opportunity to enrol in secondary education, and only 3% of them can attend university programs due to poverty and lack of resources or because of Jordanian policies that limit refugees' access to education. Therefore, there is an urgent need to strengthen the efforts of the international response to the needs of Syrian refugees in the field of education, address and overcome obstacles to their access to education, improve their access to education, and ensure that they will complete it.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to protracted conflict and displacement, refugee education must be re-evaluated as a long-term project. Sarah Dryden-Peterson examines how refugees view education and its function in promoting certainty and resolving gaps in their refugee journeys. Her article discusses the technical, methodological, and relational aspects of refugee education that help refugee children prepare for an uncertain future through the portrait of a refugee teacher.²

After World War II, there were more displaced people than ever before. The effects of forceful relocation are significant and impact many elements of human existence. Forced migration has a tremendous impact on education – an important subject. Education has been one of the global strategic priorities of the United Nations Refugee Agency since 2010. A significant part of the life of refugees has been their optimism and aspiration for an education that would enable them to obtain stable and respectable employment. In their article, Bashir and Munira studied the refugee's right to education and outlined the nation's obligations under international law concerning educational matters.³

Focusing on the specific forms of harm refugee student experience domestically, other researchers are investigating how refugee educators implement protection. They highlight the interactions between Jordanian teachers and Syrian students and the preventive measures teachers take in response through photos of two classrooms in Jordan. Finally, they propose a broader definition of protection in refugee education, adding socio-political protection to the legal and human rights protections often included in humanitarian efforts.⁴

Humanitarian advocacy has included education as part of the humanitarian response. Brun and Shuayb discuss the advantages and disadvantages of humanitarian assistance for providing educational services during long-term displacement. Their article examined the potential and constraints of policies and programs for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. It also included the effects of the humanitarian response and the guiding principles for providing socially equitable, inclusive, and more developmental education for refugees in long-term displacement situations.⁵

Despite international treaties protecting the right to education, refugee children are primarily educated by the national educational systems of host nations. For example, researchers assessed schools offering lower primary education to refugee children in a refugee camp in Kenya. These youngsters' test scores were dangerously low, much lower than those of underprivileged children in the neighbourhood where they were being hosted. The study demonstrates the urgent need to prioritise increasing learning outcomes for immigrant children rather than only emphasising their access to education.⁶

The current research agrees with previous studies focusing on the critical importance of refugee children's education. It introduces the steps the Jordanian authorities took to enable

2 Sarah Dryden-Peterson, 'Refugee Education: Education for an Unknowable Future' (2017) 47 (1) *Curriculum Inquiry* 14, doi: 10.1080/03626784.2016.125593.

3 Ummer Bashir and T Munira, 'Durable Solution: Right to Education a Hope for Better Future for Refugees' (2022) 1 (6) *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 1157, doi: 10.55927/eajmr.v1i6.779.

4 Hiba Salem and Sarah Dryden-Peterson, 'Protection in Refugee Education: Teachers' Socio-Political Practices in Classrooms in Jordan' (2022) 54 (1) *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 75, doi: 10.1111/aeq.12436.

5 Cathrine Brun and Maha Shuayb, 'Exceptional and Futureless Humanitarian Education of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Prospects for Shifting the Lens' (2020) 36 (2) *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 20, doi: 10.25071/1920-7336.40717.

6 Benjamin Piper and others, 'Are Refugee Children Learning? Early Grade Literacy in a Refugee Camp in Kenya' (2020) 5 (2) *Journal on Education in Emergencies* 71, doi: 10.33682/f1wr-yk6y.

Syrian refugee children to be educated, reveals the difficulties of access to education for Syrian refugee children in Jordan, presents violations related to exercising the right to education by Syrian refugee children in Jordan, and discloses of national and international mechanisms to support the efforts of Syrian refugee children in Jordan to have access to quality and inclusive education. Finally, it submits recommendations and proposals to support the right of Syrian refugee children in Jordan to obtain their right to education.

3 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN

Education is a fundamental human right stated in numerous international and regional conventions and instruments, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed everyone's right to education, obliging the state parties to provide free education at the primary and essential levels and for primary education to be compulsory, technical and vocational education to be available to the public, higher education to be open to all by their competence. Furthermore, as a matter of priority, the Declaration also gave parents the right to choose the type of education to give their children.⁷

The right to education is stated in the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, which called for international cooperation in support of universal respect for everyone's equal access to education, without distinction of any kind, such as colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth; the obligation of the state parties to make primary education free and compulsory; secondary education available and accessible; higher education open to all based on capacity; ensuring equal levels of education in all educational institutions; improving the quality and quality of education; and supporting and promoting education for persons who have not received or are unable to continue teaching by appropriate means, as well as the obligation to provide education for all teachers without discrimination.⁸

Children's right to education was stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which obligated the state parties to make primary education compulsory, available, and accessible to all children, including refugees; general and vocational secondary education available and accessible to all; and higher education is also available based on capacity. The state parties are obliged to encourage children's regular attendance at school and reduce dropout rates, promote international cooperation in matters relating to education to eliminate ignorance and illiteracy, and facilitate access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern means of education. The Convention emphasises that education should be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities, to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles stated in the Charter of the United Nations, and to the promotion of respect for the child's own cultural identity, language, values, and convictions, while raising the child

7 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted 10 December 1948 UNGA Res 217 A(III)) (UDHR) art 26 <<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>> accessed 30 May 2023.

8 Convention against Discrimination in Education (adopted 14 December 1960 UNESCO General Conference) art 1 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-discrimination-education>> accessed 30 May 2023.

and preparing them for a social life in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, peace, equality, and friendship. This means that the Convention not only enforces the right to education but also sets out several goals for education linked to the child's dignity, taking into account the strengthening of their skills and abilities to enable them to develop their personality and to live satisfactorily in society.⁹ The 1950 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees provided for the refugee's right to the same treatment as that of the nationals of the contracting states in respect of elementary education, the best possible treatment in the care of branches of non-primary education, and respect of the pursuit of studies, the recognition of certificates, diplomas, and degrees granted abroad, exemption from fees, and the receipt of scholarships.¹⁰

The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights addressed in Art. 13 the right to education, recognising that primary education is compulsory for all, that there is an obligation to introduce free secondary education progressively, and that access to university education must be allowed on an equal footing. That education must be directed at developing the human personality and the sense of human dignity.¹¹

The right to education is also stated in Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to ensure quality, equitable, and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, providing that children have accessible and quality primary education and have access to affordable technical, vocational and university education, along with working to eliminate gender discrimination in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education for all vulnerable groups, including refugees, as well as to upgrade the existing educational infrastructure and provide it safely and effectively and increase the number of qualified teachers and trainees.¹²

The Incheon Declaration of 2015 committed various countries to follow strict and unified education policies and plans to ensure the achievement of the fourth sustainable development goal by 2030, which would change people's lives through education, address national and global education challenges such as marginalisation and inequality, take into account the selection and qualification of teachers, prepare curricula that promote access to education opportunities and achieve appropriate learning outcomes, and ensure the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable learners to enjoy happiness in their lives. The Declaration also stressed the need to meet the needs of refugees worldwide who could not access education. It pledged to develop appropriate educational systems to meet their needs in a safe, encouraging, and violence-free educational environment.¹³

On the other hand, the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies linked enhancing the quality of education and improving its services with preparedness and response to crises, including natural disasters and conflicts, and clarified the minimum rate of education and access to it until the stage of recovery from these crises, with a focus on the possibility of obtaining safe and appropriate opportunities for education, and the

9 Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989 UNGA Res 44/25) (UNCRC) art 22 <<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/44/25>> accessed 30 May 2023.

10 Convention Relating to The Statues of Refugees (adopted 14 December 1950 UNGA Res 429 (V)) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-relating-status-refugees>> accessed 30 May 2023.

11 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (adopted 16 December 1966 UNGA Res 2200 (XXI) A) (ICESCR) art 13 <[https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2200\(XXI\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2200(XXI))> accessed 30 May 2023.

12 Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (adopted 25 September 2015 UNGA Res 70/1) <<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>> accessed 30 May 2023.

13 Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (adopted May 2015 World Education Forum) <<https://catesco.org/en/2018/02/28/incheon-declaration>> accessed 30 May 2023.

need to promote effective teaching and learning through paying attention to curricula, training, support, supervision, and accountability, to ensure contribution to building robust educational systems in the phase of recovery from emergencies.¹⁴

Among the international instruments related to the protection of refugees' right to education, we mention the UNHCR Education Strategy 2012-2016, which sought to ensure the provision of education to refugees as an essential component of protection and durable solutions and not as a temporary and stand-alone service, by enabling refugee children and youth to obtain a complete educational cycle, from pre-school to higher education, to establish the knowledge and experiences that provide them with protection and help them to live a better life, using technology, relying on modern educational curricula, and training those working in the teaching profession using modern methods and curricula.¹⁵

Finally, the Refugee Education 2030 Program, which includes an update of the UNHCR Education Strategy 2012-2016, addressed refugee education. The program's objectives are to ensure that refugees have increased access to quality education at all educational levels, increase their acceptance rates in higher education, and enrol more of them in technical and vocational training. At the same time, they are achieving equitable gender representation concerning enrolment in higher education.¹⁶

In addition to the aforementioned international conventions and instruments that have paid attention to the right to education, many regional conventions include education as well. For example, the Arab Charter on Human Rights in 2004 referred to the duty of state parties to eradicate illiteracy and make education a right for all, provided that primary education is free and compulsory as a minimum and that both secondary and university education is available and accessible to all without discrimination. Furthermore, the Charter requires state parties to ensure education to develop the human personality and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁷

Thus, we conclude that the various international and regional conventions and instruments declare the right to education so that international covenants guarantee that primary education is obligatory and free. Higher education is available equally and without discrimination except based on competence, including the children's right to obtain an appropriate and equitable education for those refugees. Instead, the teaching of this group is almost more important because the realisation of the right to education for refugee children is an indispensable way to ensure their enjoyment of other human rights, protect from their violation, enable them to develop their potential and prepare them to participate in the reconstruction of their country in the future.

4 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN JORDAN

Jordan hosts one of the largest concentrations of refugees in the world. Still, the Jordanian government needs to ratify treatment agreements, including the 1950 Refugee Convention,

14 INEE. *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery* (INEE 2012) <<https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards>> accessed 30 May 2023.

15 UNHCR, *Education Strategy 2012–2016* (UNHCR 2012) <<https://www.unhcr.org/media/30975>> accessed 30 May 2023.

16 UNHCR, *Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion* (UNHCR 2019) <<https://www.unhcr.org/media/38077>> accessed 30 May 2023.

17 Arab Charter on Human Rights (adopted 22 May 2004) art 41 <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/551368?ln=en>> accessed 30 May 2023.

although Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1998. The memorandum includes recognition of UNHCR's mandate concerning determining the status of refugees and a commitment to implement the main principles of international protection for refugees, especially the principle of non-refoulement. This means Jordan's legal obligation to implement standards to protect the right of refugee children on its territory to access education.¹⁸

Hiring new teachers is one of the most prominent Jordanian steps to help Syrian refugees who struggle to access education. The national educational system allows refugees to access education-related services equally with citizens freely.¹⁹

Refugee and citizen students also study the same curricula, and Syrian students are allowed to enrol in formal education programs, whether in Jordanian public schools with single shifts or in schools that apply morning and evening shifts, which have been relied upon to accommodate and enable a more significant number of Syrian students to enrol in formal education. It also prepared more schools and classrooms and provided non-formal education programs in the form of courses and compensatory lessons for those between the ages of nine to twelve who have not enrolled in formal education, knowing that the Syrian students who have enrolled in Jordanian public schools inside and outside the camps have recently been exempted from paying school fees and the price of textbooks.²⁰

The Jordanian Ministry of Education has cooperated with several organisations to monitor the guarantee the Syrian refugee children's right to education and to implement programs to meet their educational needs and encourage them to enrol in and attend school.²¹

For example, UNICEF supported the Jordanian Government's efforts in refugee camps by launching a spatial program (the so-called Child Friendly and Safe Spaces), which aims to provide access to education for children who are not eligible to attend formal or non-formal education programs by allowing them to benefit from alternative learning services that seek to develop their capacities and skills, with a focus on training and psychosocial support. Thus, reliance on this program provides an alternative to educating affiliated children. In addition, this program offers the basics of science until a suitable opportunity is provided for their transition to formal education.²²

To encourage Syrian refugee students in Jordan to continue their education, they have been allowed to benefit from distance education programs organised by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with its partners in the education sector to educate students in the eleventh and twelfth grades. Enrichment courses are offered in physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, Arabic, and English. The ministry also supported e-learning, providing students with the (Darsak) platform for distance education by broadcasting classes on local television channels and via the Internet. The ministry also worked to adopt the (Kolibri) platform, which is compatible with the Jordanian curricula, to secure the education of refugee students in innovative ways without the need for Internet access or the use of high-cost electronic

18 Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and UNHCR adopted 5 April 1998 [1998] 4277 The Official Gazette of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan arts 1, 2.

19 Susan M Akram and others, 'Protecting Syrian Refugees: Laws, Policies, and Global Responsibility Sharing' (2015) 7 (3) Middle East Law and Governance 287, doi: 10.1163/18763375-00703003.

20 Human Rights Watch, "We're Afraid for Their Future": Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan (Human Rights Watch 2016) 61 <<https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1198724.html>> accessed 30 May 2023.

21 Akram and others (n 19).

22 UNICEF Jordan, 'Makani – My Space: All Children in Jordan Accessing Learning': Situation Report (Reliefweb, 22 March 2015) <<https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/unicef-brief-makani-my-space-all-children-jordan-accessing-learning>> accessed 30 May 2023.

devices. The platform provides students with a wide range of tools supporting innovative education and open educational resources, which enhances the quality of teaching and provides it to a more significant segment of students present in refugee camps.²³

Given that a third of Syrian refugees have already enrolled in higher education in their homeland but could not complete it, in addition to the critical role of higher education in the protection of young refugees, donor countries have participated in cooperation with the educational authorities to provide a range of scholarships to cover the university expenses of several Syrian refugee students who aspire to pursue their higher education and join Jordanian universities in various academic programs, such as the (Edu-Syria) scholarship funded by the European Union and the (DAFI) scholarship, which is provided with funding support from the German government, to ensure the achievement of the ambition of these students and enable them to rely on themselves and improve their future and ultimately support reconstruction efforts in their country.²⁴

The positive impact of the steps taken by Jordan to increase the enrolment of Syrian refugee students in education must be acknowledged. International reports showed that Syrian refugees enrolled in official Jordanian schools increased from 12% in 2012 to 64% in 2016.²⁵

However, despite the critical steps Jordan and many international organisations took to help Syrian children enjoy their right to education, thousands of school-age refugees still need to be in school. Moreover, only a tiny percentage of them have access to higher education. This makes it imperative to highlight the challenges facing these children in exercising their right to education and to identify the reasons behind them to address them and ensure greater access to education.

5 THE REALITY OF THE EDUCATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN JORDAN AND ITS CHALLENGES

International reports noted that the enrolment levels of Syrian refugee children in Jordan in schools and universities must be improved, as one-third of refugee children did not attend school. In addition, nearly two-thirds of children dropped out of secondary school, while a low percentage, at most 3%, have completed their university studies.²⁶ According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), girls and boys do not have the equal exercise of the right to education at all levels, which is evident from the low attendance of female students or the fact that a large proportion of them do not complete schooling. HRW noted that only a tiny fraction of refugees can access formal and informal education programs that international NGOs offer.²⁷

Many difficulties and challenges hinder the enrolment of Syrian refugee children in Jordan or cause them to drop out of school. The most prominent of these are as follows.

23 Mohammad Hawari, 'Investing in E-learning Remains a Priority for UNHCR Jordan' (UNHCR Jordan, 25 August 2020) <<https://www.unhcr.org/jo/13661-investing-in-e-learning-remains-a-priority-for-unhcr-jordan.html>> accessed 30 May 2023.

24 'EDU-Syria: Funded by the European Union' <<https://edu-syria.eu>> accessed 30 May 2023; 'DAFI Scholarship Programme – Opening Higher Education to Refugees' (Global Compact on Refugees, 2023) <<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/dafi-scholarship-programme-opening-higher-education-refugees>> accessed 30 May 2023.

25 Human Rights Watch (n 20) 1.

26 UNHCR, Stepping up: Refugee Education in Crisis (UNHCR 2019) 23 <<https://www.unhcr.org/steppingup>> accessed 30 May 2023.

27 'Jordan: Secondary School Gap for Syrian Refugee Kids' (Human Rights Watch, 26 June 2020) <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/26/jordan-secondary-school-gap-syrian-refugee-kids>> accessed 30 May 2023.

5.1 Economic hardship

Some 86% of Syrian refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line, which limits the ability of children to achieve education due to the inability of parents to bear the financial burden and meet the educational needs of children, including feeding them and paying the costs of transportation to schools and health care for them.²⁸

Both child labour and early marriage are the most common means used by Syrian refugee families in Jordan to overcome poverty, obtain additional income, and reduce the number of dependants, which naturally affects the ability of children to attend educational institutions.

Doubling the earnings of children who drop out of education to join work is contrary to international standards related to children's rights. Unfortunately, nearly half of the refugee children do not attend school to work and provide for themselves. These boys and girls often work illegally and in deplorable conditions, which puts them at risk of being trafficked or exploited.²⁹

Regarding child marriage in Jordan for Syrian refugee girls, it is mainly due to the urgent need of parents for money. Girls' marriage rates have doubled dramatically to 35% of Syrian marriages in Jordan. The reasons for the high incidence of underage marriages and the denial of access to schools are poverty, the parents' lack of sense of the usefulness of girls' education, their attempt to improve their living conditions and lives, and the lack of awareness of the dangers of early marriage.³⁰

Additionally, a crucial economic barrier to obtaining education for Syrian refugee children is based on the failure of international donors to provide sufficient support at the level of education that enables refugee children to enter proper schooling and education.³¹

5.2 Safeguarding and safety concerns

A report by UNICEF stated that about 70% of Syrian students in Jordanian schools are subjected to beatings and corporal punishment, and 58% are subjected to psychological violence and ill-treatment.³² Perhaps the problem lies in the lack of experience of teachers and administrative staff and their lack of training on how to help and support refugee students who have been exposed to psychological trauma or need health care because of what they suffered during the conflict in Syrian territory, which shows the urgent need to train teachers appropriately and work to hold them accountable in the event of their failure or violence against students.³³

28 UNHCR, 'Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015' (UNHCR, 20 June 2016) 2 <<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html>> accessed 30 May 2023.

29 UNHCR, *Stepping up* (n 26) 47.

30 The Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, 'Press Release: \$250 Million Secured for Syrian Refugee Education' (The Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, January 2016) <<https://educationenvoy.org/press-release-un-press-briefing>> accessed 30 May 2023.

31 Katherine Everest, 'Refugee Children Failed by Lack of Humanitarian Aid Funnelled into Education' (The Organization for World Peace (OWP), 18 October 2019) <<https://theowp.org/reports/refugee-children-failed-by-lack-of-humanitarian-aid-funnelled-into-education>> accessed 30 May 2023.

32 Abeer Allan, 'Violence Against Children: National Study... Alarming Numbers' (UNICEF Jordan, 16 December 2021) <<https://www.unicef.org/jordan/stories/violence-against-children>> accessed 30 May 2023.

33 Human Rights Watch (n 20) 6.

In addition, factors such as discrimination regarding sex and nationality, bullying by peers, and the social isolation and exclusion felt by Syrian children lead to their low rates of access to education or having to drop out. For example, some 1,600 Syrian students dropped out of education in 2016 due to harassment and violence from their Jordanian counterparts, whether inside or outside the school walls. This demonstrates the importance of promoting social integration between Syrian and Jordanian children, ensuring adaptation and good social relations.³⁴

5.3 Low quality of education

Another problem that is considered one of the most prominent obstacles facing the education of Syrian refugees in Jordan is the low quality of education, along with the lack of financial resources necessary to open and operate schools, especially in light of the lack of support and the lack of continuity of funding provided by international donors, and the resulting lack of recruitment and training of specialised educational cadres, in addition to the poor buildings dedicated to the education of refugee students and the lack of school feeding programs, and the lack of electricity, water, heating, and ventilation in some refugee schools.³⁵

Reliance on schools that apply the system of morning and evening shifts has also caused a decline in the quality of education and limited benefits, given the reduction in teaching hours and the volume of education received by Syrian refugee students, as classes in schools with two shifts last only five hours per day. In contrast, Jordanian students study seven hours per day.³⁶

Finally, the diminished opportunities for refugee students to complete secondary and tertiary education, and their perception of the futility or low level of education, are among the most important reasons for their abandonment of education.³⁷

That is why the quality of education has to be improved, giving hope to students with their ability to finish secondary education and complete their university education by providing educational opportunities based on grants and international aid, and partnerships with universities and higher education institutions.

5.4 Obstacles related to educational policies

Jordanian educational institutions must provide Syrian refugees with missing or non-existent identification documents as a condition for their children's enrolment in education, such as birth certificates, children's identity papers, or original Syrian school certificates. This requirement is one of the most critical concerns of Syrian families wishing to educate their children due to the lack of legal documents and the difficulty of obtaining them from the concerned authorities, which lowers the desire of many Syrian children to learn. Therefore, the Jordanian authorities must narrow the scope of imposing these conditions to ensure

34 UNHCR Jordan, 'Education Activities for Refugees': Situation Report (Reliefweb, 28 August 2019) 5 <<https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-education-activities-refugees-august-2019>> accessed 30 May 2023.

35 Human Rights Watch (n 20) 19.

36 Jordan: Secondary School (n 27).

37 UNICEF, Comprehensive Child-Focused Assessment: Za'atari Refugee Camp (UNICEF Jordan June 2015) <<https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/comprehensive-child-focused-assessment-za-atari-refugee-camp-jordan-june-2015>> accessed 30 May 2023.

refugees attend school. In addition to the above, the Jordanian Ministry of Education has implemented the so-called three-year rule, which prohibits all children over three years of age from enrolling in the required classrooms. This has constituted a significant obstacle to the enrolment of thousands of Syrian children in formal education. Therefore, the application of this rule must be waived, and these children must be allowed to complete their education from the point where they left school.³⁸

Additional barriers to the education of Syrian refugees in Jordan is a need for more effective use of Syrian refugee teachers in education. Thus, it is essential to stress the need to use Syrian teachers' human energy to work alongside the Jordanian teachers in educating Syrian children and reduce the burden caused by having too many students in one class.³⁹

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the realisation, respect, and promotion of the right to education for all Syrian refugee children in Jordan, it is essential to apply the following recommendations.

- 1) Providing more protection regarding the right to education of Syrian refugee children and its enforcement by providing more financial support to Syrian refugee families, allowing them to work to earn money and meet their basic needs legally, thus alleviating economic pressures on them and enabling them to cover the costs associated with their children's education, increasing their access to schools and universities and reducing their chances of withdrawing from school.
- 2) Organising campaigns to raise awareness among the families of Syrian refugee children regarding the importance and priority of education to curb the phenomenon of child labour, which hinders their education and affects their future.
- 3) Activating compulsory primary education to reduce the school dropout rate of Syrian refugee students in Jordan and ensure their right to quality educational opportunities.
- 4) Using the support of international humanitarian and development organisations and other national associations of Jordanian education authorities, which will increase university scholarships for Syrian refugee students in Jordan.
- 5) Reviewing legislative policies and administrative procedures that impede the Syrian refugees' right to education.
- 6) Providing the necessary training for teachers, educational bodies, and local students in schools attended by Syrian students to enable them to exercise their right to education.
- 7) Improve the infrastructure and provision of educational services in schools dedicated to educating Syrian refugees in Jordan.

38 Human Rights Watch (n 20) 41.

39 Elizabeth Adelman, 'Refugee Teachers: The Challenges of Managing Professional Expectations with Personal Experiences' (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), 17 December 2019) <<https://inee.org/resources/refugee-teachers-challenges-managing-professional-expectations-personal-experiences>> accessed 30 May 2023.

- 8) Providing psychological support and social rehabilitation for Syrian children and helping them to overcome the trauma they experienced during the conflict phase, to facilitate their involvement in the educational process.
- 9) Increasing the employment of Syrian refugee teachers who teach Syrian students in Jordan.

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