



Refugee Education in Urban Settings

*Case Studies from
Nairobi – Kampala – Amman - Damascus*



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I. List of Abbreviations

AAH	Afrika Aktions Hilfe
AGDM	Age, gender and Diversity Mainstreaming
ARGL	African Refugee Program Great Lakes
BLP	Basic Literacy Program
BIS	Beneficiary Information System
BO	Branch Office
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CNA	Comprehensive Needs Assessment
COP	Country Operations Plan
CSO	Community Services Officer
CTA	Community Technology Access
DAFI	Albert-Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative
DIPS	Division of International Protection Services
DPSM	Division of Programme Support and Management
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EC	European Commission
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EFG	Education Field Guidelines
EIU	Education Information Unit
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
EXCOM	Executive Committee
FARAJA	Consolation (Kisuaeli)
FPE	Free Primary Education
FRC	Finnish Refugee Council
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GoK	Government of Kenya
GOPA	Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch & All the East
GoU	Government of Uganda
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HC	High Commissioner
HQ	Headquarter
IAU	Inter Aid Uganda
ICDL	International Computer Driving Licence
IBC	International Blue Crescent
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International NGO
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JRF	Jordan River Foundation
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
KCC	Kampala City Council
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PDES	Policy Development and Evaluation Section
PEP	Peace Education Program
PTA	Parents-Teacher Association
PU	Première Urgence
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister

OSTS	Operational Solutions and Transition Section
RI	Relief International
RTP	Right To Play
SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLE	Safe Learning Environment
SMC	School Management Committee
S&I	Standards & Indicators
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Sciences Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
URAP	Urban Refugee Assistance Program
USAID	United States Assistance for International Development
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WFP	World Food Program
WTK	Windle Trust Kenya
WTU	Windle Trust Uganda
YPE	Youth Education Pack

I. Introduction

Global challenges:

High Commissioner Antonio Guterres in his opening speech to this year's Executive Committee Meeting (ExCom) on 28th September mentioned five major challenges that impact on the work of the organization. He quoted

- population growth,
- climate change,
- food shortages,
- water and energy insecurity,
- migration and
- urbanization as mega-trends that are more and more interlinked today, mutually reinforcing each other and driving insecurity and displacement in the world.

Challenges to UNHCR:

In addition, the HC highlighted four direct challenges to UNHCR:

- shrinking humanitarian space, as the work of humanitarian organizations becomes more and more difficult,
- shrinking asylum space, as many governments become increasingly unwilling to host refugees,
- finding durable solutions, as repatriation decelerates,
- urban refugees, whose numbers are steadily increasing, with around half of the world's refugees now residing in cities and towns.

Urbanization:

Urbanization is undoubtedly one of the so-called “mega-trends” of our times and in view of these dramatic population developments, it is no surprise to find that a growing number and proportion of the world's refugees are to be found in urban areas. This large-scale presence of persons of concern to UNHCR in urban areas has implications for the economy, society and administration of the cities and towns concerned and raises challenges for urban planning and other forms of social, economic, and public governance. There is additional pressure on infrastructure and the environment, as well as on housing and social services, including health and education.

Implications of urbanization for UNHCR assistance and protection:

The presence of refugees in urban areas raises significant assistance and protection concerns, especially when refugees self-settle outside the purview of official programs. Camp-based refugees are often formally distanced from many of their host communities' socio-economic and political processes, but those in urban settings have no option but to engage and compete with local populations, markets and institutions.

Besides increasing in size, the world's urban refugee population is also changing in composition. In the past, a significant proportion of the urban refugees registered with UNHCR in developing and middle-income countries were young men who possessed the capacity and determination needed to survive in the city. Today, large numbers of refugee women, children and older people are to be found in urban areas, particularly in those countries where there are no camps. They are often confronted with a range of protection risks: the threat of arrest and detention, *refoulement*, harassment, exploitation, discrimination, inadequate and overcrowded shelter, as well as vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), HIV/AIDS, human smuggling and trafficking.

Refugees usually move to urban areas to seek security and a potentially greater choice of income-generating and educational opportunities, housing, as well as better quality basic services as those provided in camps. Many also move to towns and cities because of numerous restrictions on life in camps, the desire to live in proximity to other family or community members, or sometimes to find anonymity and go “unnoticed” in order to avoid problems with the authorities. Others, like in the case of Iraqi refugees, move directly to big cities in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt or Turkey.

In protracted refugee situations, motivations may include the wish to escape from camp life and restrictions placed on them, or the hope of resettlement and moving on to another country or continent. Increasingly, returning refugees also gravitate towards urban areas once they have arrived in their country of origin. Displaced people who move to urban areas to escape from armed conflicts may remain there even when peace is restored.

Urban refugees are often scattered throughout a city and confined to slum areas, shanty towns or suburbs, making it difficult to determine their needs and to identify the most vulnerable among them. Refugees in urban areas face a number of disadvantages in comparison to other low-income city-dwellers. In addition to the protection problems with which they are confronted, they often lack the community support systems that help poor nationals to. They may also find it difficult to access livelihoods or afford the often overstretched healthcare, education and other services on which the local population relies.

Governments may lack the capacity to provide public services to refugees at limited or no cost and need the assistance of UNHCR, bilateral donors, development agencies and other actors to build or increase their capacity.

UNHCR response to the challenge of urban refugees:

Until recently, UNHCR focused on refugee populations accommodated in camps or settlements. Consequently, and with a new attention shifting to the urban situations, countries affected are in the process of reviewing their programs to increasingly incorporate urban refugees as well. In countries where refugees arrive directly in cities and towns, like in the case of Iraqi refugees in the Middle East, UNHCR has set up large urban-based programs to protect and assist them. In Syria and Jordan, where most of the Iraqi refugees are hosted, there are a number of new and innovative approaches to address the issues as this review will highlight.

Recognizing the need to address the issue of urban refugees in different locations in a more comprehensive manner, UNHCR is now refocusing on this ever-growing caseload through a comprehensive policy and strategy review at different levels of the organization.

In the context of the Annual High Commissioner's Dialogue, the issue of urban caseloads¹ has been made the theme for 2009 and a new UNHCR Urban Refugee Policy was developed and approved in September 2009.

II. UNHCR Education in Urban Areas

Background

In August 2009, UNHCR has finalized its Education Strategy 2010-2012 to assist and guide its field offices in the implementation of education programs. Within this framework UNHCR is also willing to better address the issue of education for refugees in urban areas as part of a broader policy and strategy review. This review has therefore been undertaken to gain a better understanding of challenges and opportunities in urban areas with regard to education programs.

For the purpose of this review and the case studies presented, the term refugee refers to all people of concern to UNHCR living in urban areas.

Objectives

This review aims at identifying main challenges and opportunities for education in urban areas and to assist UNHCR in developing a more systematic and comprehensive approach. It therefore

- provides an overview of UNHCR education in the context of the new policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas;
- analyzes four selected country situations in Africa and the Middle East, namely Kenya, Uganda, Syria and Jordan;
- identifies education challenges, opportunities and good practices in urban settings, and
- provides conclusions and recommendations for strategic planning and future interventions.

Methodology

The review has been conducted over a period of three months from October to December 2009. It comprises three major components:

- Research: Review and analysis of existing documents, e.g. UNHCR/partner policies on urban refugees, Country Operations Plans (COP), education programs in urban settings and Standards & Indicators (S&I) reports;

¹ Urban caseloads refers to refugees & other people of concern to UNHCR living outside camps/settlements in capitals/cities & larger townships (definition needs to be clarified)

- Assessments/field missions: Undertaken to selected country programs with large numbers of urban refugees and a variety of formal and non-formal education programs, namely Nairobi/Kenya, Kampala/Uganda, Amman/Jordan and Damascus/Syria. Approximately one week was spent in each location. The missions were organized by the respective UNHCR Branch Offices. UNHCR/ partner consultations, project visits and focus group discussions with refugee communities (parents, children, teachers, community leaders and youth) were held and complemented by meetings with local education authorities and UN sister agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO).
- Consultations/report writing: De-briefings of Bureaus/Desks on field assessments, organizing a feed-back and consultation process and finalizing and submitting a final report.

III. UNHCR Education Framework

New policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas

Based on the organization’s mandate given by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems², UNHCR’s new policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas marks the beginning of a new approach with regard to the way how UNHCR addresses the issue of refugees in urban areas. The new policy has two principal objectives:

- to ensure that cities are recognized as legitimate places for refugees to reside and exercise the rights to which they are entitled; and
- to maximize the protection space available to urban refugees and the humanitarian organizations which support them.

Ensuring access to healthcare, education, livelihoods and other services are among its key objectives and UNHCR is committed to focus on the provision of services to those refugees whose needs are most acute.

Education as a right

Promoting a rights-based approach, education is essential from the onset of an acute crisis or emergency until the phase of durable solutions, especially for children. UNHCR considers urban areas to be a legitimate place for refugees to enjoy their rights, including those stemming from their status as refugees as well as those that they hold in common with all other human beings. Access to Education is one of these rights³ and includes education in urban areas. Yet refugees’ and other persons of concern right to education encompass more than just primary schooling. It also

² UNHCR Mission Statement, “Our Core Values and Goals”, www.unhcr.org

³ A child’s right to free education is emphasized within the 1966 International Covenant on Economic and Social Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights already stated that ‘everyone has the right to education.’

includes pre-primary and post-primary education, such as secondary and tertiary, as well as non-formal and vocational education⁴.

The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees states that hosting states should accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to primary education (Article 22:1) as well as treatment as favourable as possible with respect to education other than elementary. It is the responsibility of signatory governments to the Convention and its 1967 Protocol to provide public services, including education. States who have not signed the Convention, like Syria and Jordan, may be assisted by UNHCR in providing these services if they allow refugee children to access the public education system.

Displaced populations and children themselves constantly stress the importance of quality education and access to higher levels of educational services next to other essential services. UNHCR is strongly committed to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Education For All (EFA) Strategy, on which its education programs are based. Ensuring the right to education is one of UNHCR's major Global Strategic Objectives for 2009.⁵ In its Education Strategy for 2010-2012, UNHCR commits to education as a "fundamental and universal right (which) forms an integral part of the organization's goal to provide protection and find durable solutions."⁶

Challenges for education in urban areas

In urban areas, education may play a particularly critical role for social integration or to help those coming from rural areas to garner the necessary skills to become economically competitive. As the number of children living in cities climbs, providing quality education to both refugees and local children is a growing concern to all stakeholders. While many of the challenges of accessing and benefiting from education apply equally to refugees in rural and urban settings, there are a number of issues associated with access and enrolment, quality of education and protection risks that are particularly significant in urban environments. These three areas are in line with the three main objectives of the Education Strategy 2010-2012, namely increased access, improved quality and enhanced protection.

Access and enrolment

Refugees often face considerable problems to access education in urban settings. There is a general lack of clear regulatory frameworks and legal provisions to govern the admission of refugee children in schools as well as a lack of procedures to notarize school certificates in order to ensure a smooth transfer to the school system back home following repatriation. Admission without proper documentation is a major issue at all levels.

⁴ The 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* also states that, 'secondary education in its different forms includes technical and vocational, and higher education'

⁵ UNHCR Global Appeal 2009 Update

⁶ UNHCR Education Strategy 2010-2012, August 2009

The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Kenya and Uganda and the opening of public schools in Syria and Jordan have helped to increase enrolment rates in urban settings, but government departments and education officials need assistance from the international community to cope with this additional burden and an overstretched education system. Partnerships between humanitarian actors and development agencies to jointly close existing gaps, for example between primary and secondary education, are crucial for continuous education.

The lack of space to accommodate large numbers of children, generally poor infrastructure, school facilities in need of repair and rehabilitation and insufficiently equipped classrooms are preventing boys and girls to access education.

Even where refugee children have gained access to educational institutions, they may face discrimination from school administrators who do not wish to see non-national children in their classrooms or from teachers who will not encourage full participation. They may also face harassment and bullying by students. Traumatized children may not have access to appropriate counselling services.

Many schools may not enrol students if they are more than two or three years above the class average and thus disrupt their education. In other instances, refugees face problems of access similar to other socially and economically marginalized groups within urban areas, for example in regard to tuition fees or transport costs to reach schools.

Financial constraints due to the lack of legal access to employment and income continue to prevent parents to send their children to school. These include high living costs in cities, school costs for uniforms, textbooks, feeding and transport. With increasing lack of financial resources, children may be withdrawn from school by parents in order for them to work and support the family.

High drop-out, non-attendance and low completion rates are often the result of the above mentioned financial constraints, often leading to child labour. Moreover, cultural practices such as early marriages or favouring boys' education over girls' education are major reasons for high drop-out and low attendance rates. Traumatic experiences, poor health status or disabilities and mental health problems as well as cultural and lingual differences, discrimination and harassment by fellow students and teachers are also contributing factors for non-attendance and high drop-out rates.

Language problems and difficulties to adjust to national curricula may aggravate the situation, particularly in the case of newly arriving refugees.

While UNHCR has been quite successful in meeting targets on access to primary education, a major gap is evolving: the lack of post-primary education opportunities, with the most evident gap in secondary and vocational and education. Scholarship programs are rare and limited in number, a fact that is equally relevant for tertiary education, thus undermining UNHCR's aim to provide continuing education.

Equally challenging is the availability of education opportunities in non-formal and informal education despite laudable efforts by UNHCR to provide life-skills

education, remedial classes, vocational and skills trainings, recreational activities and literacy and numeracy courses.

Pre-primary or early childhood education is only available in well-funded operations and remains another challenge in providing life-long education.

Many parents who can afford it will send their children to private schools, where they expect higher quality standards, as is the case for Somali, Eritreans and Ethiopians having settled in Nairobi and Kampala. Some communities have pooled funding to set up their own schools in these cities without receiving UNHCR assistance.

Quality

Although the introduction of Universal Primary Education in some countries has increased enrolment rates in urban settings, the quality of education remains a challenge.

One main reason for a lack of quality education are insufficiently trained and poorly paid teachers. This may depend on the quality of existing teacher training colleges and the status of teachers in their respective societies. Out-dated teaching methods may be found in classrooms where child-centered pedagogy has not yet entered. Teaching and learning materials are often enough insufficiently available.

Other challenges include weak linkages between schools and the communities they serve, parent-teacher associations unaware of their roles and responsibilities, overcrowded classrooms lacking standard equipment, the non-availability of learning resources and teaching aids, lack of sufficient recreational activities and the lack of regular school meals and health check-ups.

Once in the classroom, children who have experienced trauma or the psychological stress of relocation may also have trouble concentrating and keeping up with work. Teachers are not sufficiently trained to deal with traumatized children. As most urban refugees are integrated into existing schools, these difficulties may be magnified by a new language. Children may need to make adjustments to new pedagogical techniques or teacher expectations.

Protection

The majority of youths, who regard education as the key factor to find employment, are without development opportunities and constitute a major potential for future conflict; young girls are especially vulnerable and may be exposed to gender-based violence if left outside the education system.

On the other hand schools are not always safe places for children and violence continues even in the school environment. Violence and abuse can be perpetrated by both students and teachers and can take various forms, such as corporal punishment, peer-to-peer intimidation or sexual and economic exploitation and abuse. A concentration of traumatized children may also result in major pedagogical, disciplinary and protection challenges.

Protection risks in urban settings may be related to SGBV, discrimination, harassment, bullying, domestic violence, etc., long distances to schools that can expose children to accidents, cultural practices, early and forced marriages, resulting in early pregnancies and sexual abuse, large numbers of out of school adolescents with high protection risks, insufficient vocational and skills training programs, lack of income-generation and livelihood opportunities and limited opportunities for continued education.

There are groups-at-risk such as teenage mothers, children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups, orphans, unaccompanied and separated children, traumatized children, people with disabilities, sex workers and other groups for whom specialized educational responses are needed.

Education statistics for urban areas

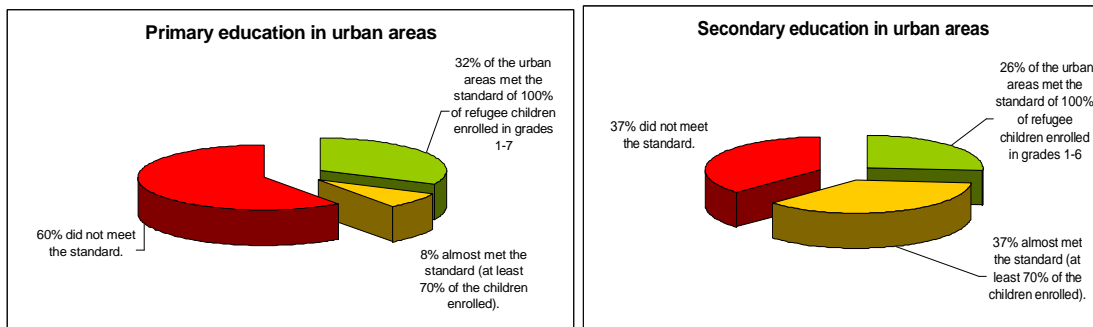
A number of education indicators from the UNHCR Standard & Indicator (S&I) 2008 provide a limited insight into the living and schooling conditions of urban refugees. Though existing data on access to education, not to mention retention and completion, are incomprehensive and allow only an approximation, the analysis nevertheless demonstrates that important gaps persist in regard to access to education of refugee children and youth in urban areas. Data available for 87 urban areas hosting refugees suggests that the standard of 100% enrolment rate in primary education is met in 32% of these.

The total number of urban refugees for who data are available is 1.8 million, plus 900.000 asylum seekers. In 2008, the total number of primary school-aged children (6-11 years old) is 84,106. The average enrolment rate for primary education is 64%⁷. It can be assumed that some parents send their children to private schools but their number is very likely limited.⁸ The total number of secondary school-aged children (12-17 years old) reported in urban areas is 77,500. The average enrolment rate for secondary education is only 38% showing limited opportunities for post-primary education.

Programs targeting the group of adolescents (12-17 years) demonstrate an even larger gap: only 11% of urban areas have youth programs. Looking at the livelihood indicator as a condition enabling urban refugees to pursue their education, existing data indicates that more than 50% of refugee households in urban areas live below the national poverty line.

⁷ Data available for 63 urban areas in 62 countries

⁸ Primary Education: Global enrolment rate is 69% in 132 reporting camps, secondary education: global enrolment rate is 31% in 88 reporting camps



In 2008, in the 87 urban areas for which data on school enrolment of refugee children is available, 32 percent of the reporting areas met the standard; in camps, 29 percent met the standard (132 reporting camps). For secondary education, available statistics indicate that only 21 percent of the camps managed to enrol at least 70 percent of the adolescents in secondary education. In urban areas, the figure was 37% (65 reporting areas).

No marked differences seem to exist between regions. Urban refugees in Africa, Asia and the Middle East face similar constraints in accessing education, more than often related to poverty, the lack of livelihood opportunities and income.

Based on UNHCR'S Global Strategic Objectives and through the analysis of current Standards and Indicators (S&I) reports, the targets of the Education Strategy for 2012 for urban areas have been formulated for primary and secondary education as follows:

- In these 87 urban areas, the percentage of refugee children not enrolled in primary schools is reduced to 32%, with special attention to gender parity
- In these 66 urban areas, the percentage of refugee children aged 12-17 not enrolled in secondary schools is reduced to 58%, with special attention to gender parity.

IV. Education challenges and opportunities

Case study 1: Nairobi, Kenya

Background information

Total no. of refugees:	325,000 (October 2009)
Origin:	Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo
No. of registered URBAN refugees:	34,249 (2008)
No. of estimated URBAN refugees:	200,000 (2009)
Total country budget (2009, AB+SB):	USD 59 mio
Total needs (2010 CNA):	USD 125 mio
Total needs education (2010 CNA):	USD
Total education budget (2009):	USD 3.7 mio
Total URBAN education:	USD 44,000

While UNHCR continues to strongly advocate for the freedom of movement of refugees in Kenya, refugees are still required to live in designated camps as per the Government of Kenya's (GoK) explicit encampment policy. Most refugees live in camps near Dadaab (mostly Somali refugees) and in Kakuma camp (originally for Sudanese refugees and by the time of the review composed of Sudanese, Somalis, Ethiopians and other nationalities). However, with the enactment of the Refugees Act in 2006 and expected implementing regulations in the course of this year, e.g. the issuance of individual documentation to refugees (whether Government issued or UNHCR' mandate refugee certificate), de facto movement will be facilitated. Thus, the number of urban refugees is expected to continue rising from today's estimated 200,000.

In 2005, the UNHCR Branch Office Nairobi started to re-examine its urban refugee program, which was facing a number of challenges. The Office had very limited information about the situation of refugees in the capital, making it impossible to devise a protection strategy to address refugees' most serious concerns. A first step was to carry out a survey of NGOs working with refugees in Nairobi. To gather their perspectives, UNHCR launched a series of workshops and meetings which it called the Nairobi Initiative. In 2006-2007, the office took several steps to build upon the foundations laid by the Nairobi Initiative and developed an urban refugee program based on core principles of outreach, transparency, refugee participation, community development, and effective management of data and information. Working in close partnership with the government, NGOs and refugee communities have since then been the cornerstone of UNHCR's urban program.

Education challenges

Access and enrolment

The Government of Kenya (GoK) has adopted Free Primary Education (FPE) and the Children Act does not discriminate refugee children in terms of access to education. The government policy on free education for all, however, does not prevent some school administrators to refuse refugee children in order to safeguard places for

Kenyan children. Limited cases have also been reported where refugee children have been barred from schools due to lack of proper documentation.

The government has also waived the tuition fees for all public secondary schools. However, the implementation of the waiver has proven difficult because school headmasters insist that the tuition fee is essential in running schools because of insufficient government funding. In reality, therefore, they continue the practice of demanding fees thus making it difficult for refugee children to enroll in secondary education.

In regard to higher education, there was the requirement, laid down in the Immigration and Alien Restriction Act, for refugees to obtain student passes when they want to enroll, especially for those coming from the camps. With the enactment of the Refugee Act, refugees are now allowed to enroll in higher education without presenting a students pass, a regulation that is not yet fully known to all school and university administrators.

The national enrolment rate in primary education was 87% in 2007 according to UN-MDG.⁹

According to UNHCR Standards and Indicators (S&I) 2008, out of a total number of 34,249 urban refugees (42.3% female and 50.5% male) the total percentage of students enrolled in grades 1-6 was 46.6%. 52.3% of refugee students are enrolled in grades 7-12 (with male and female at an equal 52.5%) out of a total number of 2423 students at lower secondary level. 125 students were enrolled in tertiary education and a total of 300 participated in a number of formal, non-formal, vocational and skills trainings (15-24 years old refugees). The literacy rate was only 34.0%, with male refugees reaching an enrolment rate of 45.0% but the female enrolment rate remaining at 20.0%.

The real number of urban refugees may not be known, but in primary education 14,500 refugee children¹⁰ are presently enrolled in Nairobi, as the Urban Refugee Assistance Program (URAP) was expanded from six to thirteen schools, whereas in secondary education only 80 refugee students are benefitting from UNHCR assistance. 300 students are participating in a number of non-formal education activities. 125 students are enrolled in the DAFI scholarship program for tertiary education country-wide, but the majority is from either Kakuma or Dadaab camps and not from Nairobi.

The retention and completion rates of primary school refugee children are not recorded and the real number of urban refugee children still remains unknown. Some children do not fit in the education system because of their age while others have language problems. Access to public colleges is limited and college education is costly so that only few refugees can afford it. Literacy is low among the refugee communities making it difficult for them to engage in business, access services or present their case for eligibility determination.

⁹ United Nations Millennium Development Goals Indicators for Kenya (statistics 2007)

¹⁰ Urban Refugee Education Fact Sheet, Education Unit, October 2009 (circulated during mission)

Infrastructure of public schools is generally poor, resulting in lack of space and overcrowded classrooms, limiting the number of refugees who can gain enrolment. In addition there are grave water shortages, a major problem they share with the Nairobi population, especially during the dry season. Sanitation and other facilities are run down and in dire need of repair, but public funds through the Ministry of Education are insufficient.

At the level of primary education FPE grants access to refugee children. The integration of refugee children takes generally place in a non-discriminatory way and without major problems at the community level. UNHCR support provided to primary schools through rehabilitation of infrastructure and material support is generally good, but the support needs to be expanded to include secondary and vocational/skills training to allow primary school leavers to continue education.

The overall lack of sufficient secondary education, skills and vocational training opportunities as well as limited access to targeted youth and adult education programs is challenging refugees' efforts to become productive and self-reliant. Linkages with UNHCR livelihood programs are essential. Special programs targeting girls' education may help to reduce high drop-out rates in the last grades of primary schooling and reduce protection risks.

The German-funded DAFI program enjoys an excellent reputation and students want to be more engaged in UNHCR's refugee work. The office has recently involved them in a survey and they have expressed the wish to assist UNHCR with similar activities in the future.

Refugees need school and birth certificates to access education opportunities. Attaining refugee status is an important step to get access to education, more particularly post-primary education. There are, however, a number of schools that enrol refugee children without proper documentation as a humanitarian gesture and out of solidarity.

Quality

Teacher training is a crucial element in the provision of quality education. In Kenya, teachers are generally insufficiently trained, poorly paid and their status in society is rather low. If given the opportunity, teachers prefer to work in private schools where the salaries are higher. UNHCR provides teacher training through GTZ for the schools enrolled in the urban program (13), but the training needs in other public schools are enormous.

Overcrowded classrooms are another major constraint to achieve quality education. The average teacher: student ratio in public schools, attended by Kenyan and refugee children, is approximately 1: 70 according to the UNHCR Education Team. Schools visited during the mission had up to a hundred children crowded in classrooms.

Activities like teacher and education/school committee trainings, psycho-social counselling and a variety of extra-curricular activities as well as activities for children with special needs are well organized and have a positive impact on the quality.

Protection

Community mobilization has had a positive impact on communities in terms of awareness creation and peaceful coexistence through joint sport, music, dance and theatre activities. Some schools have successfully participated in competitions, even up to the national level, and serve as “role models” for others.

Parent-Teacher Associations are well-established and provide members with training on management and organizational skills.

Protection risks, especially for girls, are ranging from different forms of SGBV, including harassment during travel to schools (often long distances), at school itself (bullying and discrimination) and also at home (domestic violence). Cultural practices, especially early pregnancies and marriages, may lead to non-attendance and eventually drop-out from school. In large families, boys are traditionally given the priority in terms of education, while girls are charged with household chores and looking after their younger siblings.

Partners

Three implementing partners (GTZ, JRS, WTK) provide education services, with GTZ being the main partner through their multi-sector Urban Refugee Assistance Programme (URAP). There are also two local operational partners (ARP-GL and FARAJA) who run scholarship programs with their own funds.

Coordination meetings with implementing partners are irregular and there is no forum to discuss urban refugee education. URAP is co-funded by UNHCR and the German Government. The Urban Refugee Protection Network, recently established by UNHCR offers an excellent platform to include and discuss education and coordinate activities by various stakeholders.

Direct linkages with national and provincial education authorities (MoE, City Council) and other UN-organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP) in Nairobi exist but need to be strengthened and improved in view of joint and complementary activities. Cooperation with the private sector or academic institutions, such as the collaboration with universities and colleges under the DAFI program, is not in place.

Selection of good practices

Despite the above described challenges in the Kenyan context, there are a number of good practices that other UNHCR operations could learn from, for example:

Multi-Sector-Assistance Program: UNHCR established a multi-sector assistance program for urban refugees (URAP) with a strong education component to reduce the number of implementing partners and follow the principle of “management in one hand”.

Remedial classes: UNHCR offers through partners a variety of language classes for newly arrived refugees, particularly from Somalia and Ethiopia, to facilitate integration into local education systems.

Role models: UNHCR and partners choose and support “role models” among refugee communities to strengthen extra-curricular and recreational activities and organize sport, dance and theatre competitions at school and community level. Some groups have thus achieved to represent their communities in competitions at the national level.

Adult Education Centers: UNHCR cooperates closely with national Adult Education Centers and therefore supports participation of refugees in basic literacy and numeracy programs close to their living quarters.

Student ID: Some public schools have issued student IDs for refugee children to address the lack of proper documentation, a practice that has increased protection of children outside schools from authorities and security agents.

Collaboration with Madrasa schools: Training of religious leaders (Maalims) to advocate for refugee children’s access to both religious and formal education.

DAFI alumni: DAFI students have established a students’ alumni network and are committed to get more actively involved in refugee work. UNHCR hired DAFI students to conduct a survey in Nairobi.

Urban Refugee Protection Network – Education Working Group:

UNHCR has launched the above network as a forum for all stakeholders to discuss issues of concern to urban refugees. This network has formed a number of Working Groups and during the mission it was agreed to establish a Working Group on urban education with the objective to develop a more systematic and comprehensive approach. This would include next to UNHCR implementing and operational partners representatives from the Ministry of Education, the City Council, UNICEF, UNESCO and other stakeholders.

Recommendations

- Strengthen public primary education by expanding the program to more schools (presently 13) and including self-managed community-based schools without encouraging a parallel education system but facilitating their integration into the national education system.
- Organize a survey/mapping out of existing refugee schools and potential new implementing and operational partners.
- Expand tertiary scholarship programs (DAFI+) and include more urban-based refugees; identify additional scholarship opportunities (governments, foundations, private sector, etc.).
- Develop targeted youth programs with an increased focus on vocational/skills training, functional adult literacy, cultural activities, including sports, etc.
- Identify open and distance learning programs; review the past cooperation with Kenyatta University and document lessons learned.

Case study 2: Kampala, Uganda

Total no. of refugees:	142,297 (October 2009)
Origin:	Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya
No. of registered URBAN refugees:	23,000
Total country budget (2009, AB+SB):	USD 24,075,794
Total needs (2010 CNA):	USD 55 mio
Total needs education (2010 CNA):	USD
Total education budget:	USD 997,860
Total URBAN education:	USD 32,854

As of August 2009, 142,297 refugees from 24 countries were assisted by UNHCR, with a majority coming from countries in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (DRC, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya). The total budget 2009 is USD 24 million, whereby the Country Needs Assessment (CNA) amounted to over USD 55 million. The total education budget is almost USD 1 million, whereby the urban education program receives USD 32,800.

At the moment, UNHCR is providing care and maintenance to urban refugees and asylum seekers estimated at 23,000 representing 14% of the total refugee population in the country. This category constitutes a very fluid and heterogeneous population with diverse needs and resources.

In Uganda refugees live in open settlements and have access to land for residential and agricultural purposes. As a result, most of the refugees have achieved some level of self-sufficiency in food and livelihoods. Many of their Ugandan neighbours were themselves refugees and there is a well-developed sense of mutual understanding, cooperation and support. Health centers, schools, wells and roads constructed by UNHCR and partners are also accessed by the host community. Conversely, refugees have access to national services, such as hospitals and schools. In Kampala, all refugees have access to public services including schools.

UNHCR Kampala tries to review the situation of urban refugees and is addressing the issue since 2008 through a registration process, a survey on organizations active in Kampala, undertaken by the Finnish Refugee Council (FRC), the establishment of a Refugee Community Center as well as a socio-economic survey. The office hopes that with these measures taken, and including the results of the mission, it will be able to revise its approach and improve service delivery and livelihoods for urban refugees.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is UNHCR's partner for all issues related to refugees in Uganda. They have a Community Services Section under which education falls, similarly to the UNHCR structure. Coordination with the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Kampala City Council (KCC) and other national education authorities may be organized more regularly and systematically. Contacts to universities and other academic institutions are existent through the DAFI scholarship program.

The UNHCR CS Unit in Kampala has three permanent staff. The Senior CSO reports directly to the Deputy Representative, an indicator for the importance that the office attaches to education. A UNV Education Officer is working full-time on education

and coordinates his work with five education implementing agencies (GTZ, FRC, AAH, RTP and WTU). The focus is on community mobilization, data collection, partnership and capacity development.

The net enrolment rate in primary education for Ugandan children stood at 94,7% in 2007 according to the UN MDG website.

Education challenges

Access and enrolment

There are 48,579 refugee children of school going age (5 to 17 years) living in refugee settlements in Uganda presently. This constitutes about 30% of the total refugee population (142,297 at the end of August 2009). In Kampala, exact figures are lacking, but with 10,837¹¹ registered refugees in 2008 (without asylum seekers), the percentage of students enrolled in grades 1-6 was 46.6% (42.3% female and 46.6% male) out of 2034. There are no statistics on grades 7-12. Only 99 students in the age bracket of 15-24 years attend any form of non-formal activities and the literacy rate was 2008 at 34.0% (45.0% for men and a meagre 20% for women).

In Uganda, like in Kenya, Universal Primary Education (UPE) has been introduced and primary education is free and mandatory. This has improved enrolment rates in settlements, where refugee schools have been successfully integrated into the national system. The current primary school enrolment for refugee children was 22,854 of which girls are 42.3% are female and 57.7% are male. Hence only 46.4% of the total population of children of school going age have been enrolled in school. Some 21,746 Uganda nationals have also enrolled in refugee settlement schools bringing the total number of enrolled students up to 44,295.

Financial constraints due to general poverty, the lack of access to jobs or legal employment are the main cause leading to non-enrolment of children and non-completion of studies. Living in the city is costly, food and rents are high, and despite UPE parents have to pay PTA funds, uniforms, school feeding, textbooks and transport to and from schools.

Universal Secondary Education (USE) has been approved by the parliament and is currently being implemented with at least one secondary school per sub-county benefitting as few refugee parents can afford to send their children to secondary schools and pay the tuition fees. Due to UNHCR funding constraints there are very limited opportunities for primary graduates who have successfully completed the national exams to continue studies at secondary level. Only limited support in form of scholarships has been awarded to a few learners. In the beginning of 2009 UNHCR provided 141 (89 girls and 52 boys) secondary school scholarships through the “ninemillion.org program”, a global online fundraising campaign that raises awareness and funds for education and sport programs for the world's refugee youth. This country-wide evident gap between primary and secondary education is further aggravated in the urban context.

¹¹ UNHCR Standards and Indicators Report 2008

The lack of youths' and special programs for girls' education, few adult education programs (skills training, literacy, etc.), the lack of open and distance learning programs (ODL) further challenges the situation of young people.

Since the inception of the DAFI program twelve years ago, up to 200 individuals have benefited with an 80% employment rate after graduation. To date up to 95% of the former scholars from southern Sudan have repatriated and are currently working in their country. Presently, there are some 164 university scholars, of which 79 are continuing undergraduate students, 18 are post graduates, 27 students are awaiting graduation and 40 are new scholars. The DAFI program is working well but students enrolled are mainly coming from the settlements and need to be more involved in refugee work; the up-coming DAFI annual conference provides an excellent opportunity to form an alumni network, discuss issues and become more pro-active.

UNHCR Uganda strictly follows the official policy of integration into the national education system; the establishment of a parallel education system like in the past is discouraged. Support to self-managed, community-based refugee schools is aimed at facilitating their integration through registration and at following the national curriculum.

There were no reported cases of access problems with regard to the lack of proper documentation; primary schools accept all refugee children without papers. At post-primary level, the lack of identity papers still presents a major obstacle.

Quality

A strategy of integration into national system through UPE is strictly followed, but the generally low standards and poor quality of public schools are not encouraging for parents to send children to these. School buildings are dilapidated and in need of repair, equipment is damaged or missing and needs replacement, teaching and learning materials are insufficient and teachers poorly paid and trained. Classrooms are overcrowded; the school environment is generally not very child-friendly; infrastructure and facilities like classrooms, water, latrines, etc. are run down and few teacher training programs are offered to improve the quality of teaching.

Those parents who can afford it are sending their children to private schools instead (Somali, Ethiopians). There are a number of refugee-managed community-based schools, but some of the visited ones are in extremely poor conditions whereby others enjoy the support of their wealthy business community.

A number of strategies have been successfully employed in settlements over the years to improve enrolment and quality of services, for example through targeting female learners to mitigate the gender imbalance. In collaboration with Right to Play (RTP), sport activities have been incorporated in the education program. The Government's UPE scheme offers material and financial support such as an additional number of teachers, scholastics materials.

The ninemillion.org campaign has made it possible to provide assistance to girls and boys in upper primary school, organize in-house training of teachers to enhance

curricula delivery, incorporate community members through the PTAs, and train school management committees.

The challenge is now to transfer some of these activities and good practices to the urban setting of Kampala. One of the education partners in the settlements, FRC, has already agreed to start Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) activities in the capital.

Protection

There are a number of protection risks particularly for girls such as SGBV, including harassment, discrimination, domestic violence and other cases. They may occur in schools or at home. Long distances from home to UNHCR-supported public schools lead to increased protection risks. Cultural practices such as early pregnancies and marriages lead to non-attendance and drop-out from school. Boys are given priority over girls in attending education

Parents-Teachers Associations and School Management Committees are well-established in all schools and actively participating in school affairs, but need to be further trained about their roles and responsibilities.

Social mobilization through sport, music, theatre has worked well in the settlements and had had positive impact on communities in terms of peaceful coexistence, SGBV and HIV/AIDS awareness, cultural practices like girls' education, etc., and successful programs (sports through RTP) should be expanded to Kampala.

Partners

Next to UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the responsible government department for all refugees in Uganda, there are eight national and international organisations providing different services.

Among those, education providers are Inter Aid Uganda (adult education), Jesuit Refugee Services (English classes), Pan African Development Education & Advocacy Program (vocational, computer training and English classes), Windle Trust (scholarship programs) and the Refugee Law Project (English classes and human rights education). There are also a number of local and refugee associations that provide certain basic services to their members. In Kampala, the two main implementing partners for the urban programs are IAU for primary education (six schools) and WTU for the DAFI scholarship program.

Selection of good practices

UNHCR Uganda's urban program is relatively new, but in the education sector there are a number of good practices that should be mentioned here, among others:

Remedial English language classes: a number of partner agencies have started to provide English for newly arrived refugees, particularly from French-speaking countries of the Great Lakes.

Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) classes: UNHCR, in collaboration with FRC, is introducing FAL, an approach to literacy that combines basic literacy with life-skills development, to urban refugees.

DAFI student Alumni: DAFI students have committed to establish an Alumnus during their up-coming Annual Conference and are pledging to get more actively involved in refugee work in the future.

Survey/Mapping exercise: UNHCR and FRC have commissioned a survey in 2009 to map out and analyze organizations involved in urban refugee work in Kampala to get an overview of possible partners either from international and national institutions or self-managed refugee groups and associations.

Representation of refugee parents in PTAs: Parents Teachers Associations exist in the different schools in which refugee children are enrolled. Refugee parents are involved in these associations, thus supporting a better integration in local schools. In case disciplinary problems related to the specific situation of refugee children arise, they are usually solved at the school/community level, thanks to the involvement of parents and of the refugee community.

Antonio Guterres Refugee Community Center:

The Center was established to enhance protection of urban refugees, provide space for them and Ugandan nationals to meet, interact and appreciate cultural diversity. It provides education opportunities such as language, literacy and life-skills classes. The Center also plans to teach skills in business management, microfinance and microcredit, computer literacy and crafts making. A resource center/library, an internet café, a kindergarten for pre-primary education and a carpentry workshop are planned projects of the Center.

Recommendations

- Strengthen coordination for urban refugee education by including the topic on the agenda of existing education donor forum (chaired by the Dutch Embassy).
- Organize regular (quarterly) education coordination meetings with all stakeholders active in urban education (chaired by UNHCR).
- Develop a comprehensive multi-sector assistance program for urban refugees with all stakeholders and identify a suitable partner organization.
- Organize a survey/mapping out of urban education opportunities and involve refugee youth and DAFI students.
- Improve cooperation with government departments (KCC, MoE), UN agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP) for joint planning, needs assessments, monitoring, resource mobilization and identifying linkages with existing/planned national programs supported by development partners.
- Identify additional operational partners (public/private sector for skills training, academic institutions for ODL, sport federations/RTP for sport activities, etc.) to complement UNHCR activities, for example in providing scholarships for post-primary education.

- Strengthen community outreach programs and refugee participation in education programs at all levels to improve needs assessments, monitoring and impact evaluation in a participatory and inclusive way.
- Increase support to primary education, expand the school program, include refugee schools and facilitate registration by avoiding a “parallel system” and continue to follow a “local integration” approach.
- Identify potential donors for secondary and vocational training scholarship programs both at headquarter and in Uganda to increase access to post-primary education.
- Establish linkages between education and livelihood projects (for example the Maka Pads Project in Kyaka II and others) and identify cooperation opportunities (trainings, etc.).

Case study 3: Damascus, Syria

Total no. of Iraqi refugees:	1.2 mio (government estimates)	
No. of non-Iraqi refugees:	5,126	
No. of registered Iraqi refugees:	217,689 (UNHCR)	
Total country budget (2009, AB+SB):	USD	90,945,979
Total needs (2010 CNA):	USD	166,756,206
Total needs education (2010 CNA):	USD	16,6 mio
Total education budget (2009):	USD	16,1 mio (incl. non-Iraqis)
No of refugees* enrolled in	Formal: 33,425	Non-formal: 5,340
	Higher: 152	Informal: 2,962
	Total: 41,879	
<small>*Statistics represent formal education: by the Ministry for Education, Syria for 2008-2009 school year; higher education: UNHCR supported students in 2008-2009 academic year; Non-formal and informal: UNHCR supported children in non-formal and informal education in 2009, <i>in progress</i></small>		

As of October 31st 217,689¹² Iraqi refugees are registered with UNHCR. A smaller urban-based non-Iraqi refugee population (5126 refugees and 2815 asylum seekers) is comprised of Somali, Afghan, Sudanese and Iranians. In addition, UNHCR assists 949 Palestinians in Al Tanf and Al Hol refugee camps.

Syria, although not being a signatory to the 1951 Convention, has always been hospitable in hosting its neighbors and is now home to the largest concentration of Iraqi refugees in the region, followed by Jordan and Lebanon.

The massive Iraqi refugee exodus that has taken place since 2006 has been one of the major challenges for UNHCR. The organization is familiar with the demands of coping with large and sudden movements of refugees, but in most cases, those people are settled in camps. The unique feature of the Iraqi situation is that the vast majority of refugees have settled in and around Damascus, with a small proportion in towns like Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Deir Ezzo, Lattakia, Tartous and Hassaka. The urban nature of this refugee population makes detection, identification and follow-up of vulnerable cases very challenging.

The high refugee numbers have put a significant strain on Syria's economy as well as on the country's social service system, open to all Iraqi refugees, in particular on health and education infrastructure.

Recent price increases in rent, fuel, food and other commodities have led to increased economic hardship and homelessness; child labour, early marriages and other negative coping mechanisms are on the rise. Related to poverty issues and financial constraints are decreasing school enrolment, increasing numbers of drop-out rates and out-of-school youth, often faced with high protection risks.

Syria is facing severe challenges on its own in the form of an economic downturn and a two-year drought in its North Eastern governorates and the refugees' presence remains a burden and the governments' generosity cannot be taken for granted.

¹² UNHCR Syria Info-Sheet, November 2009

As a result, the situation of Iraqi refugees remains fragile as the majority does not have any immediate prospect of finding a durable solution for themselves. Most of them say that current conditions in Iraq prevent them from repatriating, while a significant number have no intention of returning in the short term.

Currently, UNHCR priorities are to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to persons with specific needs. In order to identify and support those at risk, UNHCR organizes outreach activities and carry out home visits (through 78 Iraqi outreach workers in 6 community-based centers). UNHCR also provides direct assistance to 116, 174 refugees (complementary food and non-food items) and 12,252 families (monthly financial support), health care and the provision of education services.

These priorities are in line with the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) for 2009 where the Education Working Group¹³ has established priority needs, a response strategy, a monitoring framework and funding requirements (USD 25.7, mio). Education is mentioned under the strategic priority II: *“Ensure that Iraqi refugees’ basic needs continue to be met with special attention to the most vulnerable (at risk of exploitation).”*

A Joint Education Appeal was launched in July 2007 by UNHCR and UNICEF: Providing Education Opportunities to Iraqi Children in Host Countries, July 2007, amounting to USD 129,935,000.

The UNHCR Education Team (IRC Education Officer and two national staff) is headed by the Programme Officer who reports to the Head of the Programme Unit. They interact with Protection and Community Services, thus ensuring a multi-functional team approach to education. Education team works in coordination with international NGOs on education projects following their registration with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) starting from May 2008. At government level, UNHCR partners are the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). There is a close working relationship with UNICEF who chairs regular education coordination meetings (every three weeks).

Education challenges

The Syrian government has a clear policy that welcomes all children from the Arab world living in Syria to enrol in public schools. Government schools are free of charge and the compulsory education age is from 6 to 15 years old (grade 1-9). The MOE has opened its schools to Iraqi children and has shown great flexibility by accepting late school registration and by authorizing cross-border examination. Certification problems are limited to secondary schooling as Iraqi certificates have been generally recognized in Syria and learning attainments of Iraqi students in Syria certified and recognized by both countries.

Challenges include, but are not limited to, a lack of school records (such as previous results from Iraqi schools and visa), lack of motivation for enrolling in Syrian public schools, financial difficulties forcing Iraqi children to work to contribute to the family income, difficulties with the Syrian curriculum which is different to that of Iraq, legal

¹³ UNICEF (chair), MOE, SARC, UNHCR, Première Urgence, DRC, IRC, EICD, Secours Islamique France, HELP Germany, EC, SDC, ACF, IBC, EMDH

age restrictions, fear relating to residency status, child labour, disabilities and trauma of children and parents.

All major education stakeholders in Syria¹⁴ have agreed upon four priority educational needs to be urgently addressed:

- Poor access and low enrolment of Iraqi children and adolescents
- Lack of retention and completion of Iraqi students at all levels
- Insufficiently developed non-formal education system
- Limited access to higher education.

Access and enrolment

According to the Directorate of Statistics and Planning, 49,132 Iraqi children and adolescents were enrolled in Syrian schools in the academic year 2007/2008 which was an increase of 33% to the previous school year. This figure includes preschool classes, vocational secondary schools and vocational institutes. The majority of these children are registered in schools in Damascus and Rural Damascus. Data for the school year 2008/2009 show a significant drop to 33,249 enrolled children (-32%). This drop can be explained by a combination of factors including economic hardship, refugee movements and departures (within urban settings, return to Iraq or resettlement to a third country). Other suggested reasons are the lack of facilities and space, especially in areas with a high Iraqi refugee population, the lack of proper documentation, particularly required from grade 10 upwards, and also the fear of losing residency status (some families with expired visas are afraid about their current legal situation and prefer not to register their children in schools). Financial constraints lead to withdrawal of children from schools, making them work to supplement and/or provide family income.

Following a recent UNHCR survey on drop outs, conducted by Education Information Units based in community centers, the main reasons given by parents interviewed (students were not included in the survey) were financial constraints (44%), followed by lack of space in schools (overcrowded classrooms) and problems with the Syrian curriculum (18%). Health problems, lack of documentation and expected resettlement were other reasons given. Close to 20% of drop-out children work in order to support themselves and their families and find casual jobs in hotels and restaurants, shops and factories or they work as cleaners, deliverers or street sellers. The vast majority of those who work are male (close to 90%) and only 6% of female drop-outs (due to early marriages, household support and move to another location) were engaged in paid labour.

In higher education, refugees are permitted to enroll in Syrian universities but are charged a very high “international” student fee. In addition, many refugees do not have a copy of their 12th grade certificate that must be notarized by the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Syrian Embassy in Baghdad as well as the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before enrollment. For these reasons the number of Iraqi refugees in Syrian universities is very limited. In August 2008, UNHCR reached an agreement with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to support 200 Iraqi students and at

¹⁴ MOE, MOHE, EC Delegation, UNICEF, SARC, UNHCR, UNESCO, and INGOs (Première Urgence, DRC, IRC, Secours Islamique France and HELP)

the end of a well-organized selection process 152 students (46 male and 106 female) had their tuition fees covered (funded by the Italian Government through UNHCR). 250 new students have submitted applications for the academic year 2009/2010. Through the DAFI program, funded by the German government, 28 students mainly among Non-Iraqi refugee population benefit from UNHCR assistance.

In non-formal education, UNHCR offers remedial classes, mainly in Arabic and English, and vocational and skills training. Over 5,000 children are undergoing remedial classes and other non-formal activities in public schools and private institutions. 2,469 Iraqis participate in some form of informal skills training, whereby only 15 are enrolled in literacy courses. Illiteracy rate is very low among Iraqi refugees. In addition, UNHCR regularly offers summer camps (with 407 participants and recreational activities for 86 children in 2009).

UNHCR together with UNICEF and other humanitarian agencies is supporting the Ministry of Education (MoE) in coping with the impact of the large number of Iraqi students attending Syrian schools through increased budget allocation, mainly towards school rehabilitation and construction (382 schools refurbished, 55 additional classrooms built, 1 new schools and 4 school compounds built) as well as direct support to the Ministry (110 staff and 1,000 teachers trained). This support has enhanced coordination and planning and benefitted 45,000 Syrian and Iraqi children in 2009. Despite these achievements, dropping enrolment and attendance rates are now a major concern. Unfortunately, no data exist on completion rates to compare enrolment and completion. According to the MOE, the national enrolment rate stands at a high 99% (in comparison: 86.9% by WB 2007).

Quality

The huge influx of Iraqi refugees has undoubtedly impacted on the quality of education. Insufficient number of schools, lack of space, facilities in need of rehabilitation and repair, overcrowded classes resulting in a very high teacher-student ratio – all these are quality issues that have been and still are addressed by UNHCR, UNICEF and partners.

The role and capacity of the MOE has been strengthened in this context by bringing in a variety of technical skills and experience through a number of partners. Agencies have helped to establish national standards for construction, rehabilitation and supplies, training, and quality assurance mechanisms. In its on-going reform process and under its new 5-Year Plan (2010-15), the MOE addresses the quality issue through the recruitment of new teachers and increased teacher training. It is committed to UNICEF's "child-friendly" approach¹⁵ and is in the process of revising the curriculum and integrating new technologies into the learning and teaching environment. 40,000 teachers out of 340,000 have been (re-)trained since 2006 and school facilities have been constructed, rehabilitated and up-graded.

¹⁵ Child Friendly Schools (CFS) Initiative

Double shifts (morning and afternoon sessions) were introduced to deal with the lack of space and pressure on schools, but the Ministry hopes to be able to stop this practice in the next academic year in all schools affected.

Following early consultations between UNHCR and UNICEF, the division of labour in view of capacity building for MOE agreed upon was to focus on “hardware” (UNHCR) and “software” support (UNICEF). In this context, UNHCR has provided financial contributions to the MOE (2007: USD 20mio; 2008: USD 18 mio; 2009: USD 4.7 mio) towards school construction, rehabilitation, furniture, equipment, textbooks, transportation costs and teacher allowances. In 2008, UNICEF received a contribution from the European Commission amounting to USD 8 mio for formal and non-formal activities to improve quality of education.

Protection

The UNHCR Community Services and Protection team confirmed a number of protection risks for refugees in Syria, particularly for girls. They include, among others, the fear of deportation due to the non-renewal, expiry and lack of residency permits, the risks associated with illegal residency and the transit visa arrangement upon arrival in the country. Parents fear to send their children to school because official registration might lead to being identified by authorities as illegal persons. In addition, an uncertain future leading to frustration and hopelessness, trauma and psycho-social problems associated with flight and violence as well as sexual and gender-based violence for boys and girls alike, in some cases leading to early marriages (“pleasure marriages”), crime and forced prostitution, were mentioned. HIV/AIDS and SGBV are taboos in Syria but reports from refugee outreach volunteers confirm an increase in related cases. Domestic violence as a result of economic hardship seems equally to be on the increase and has an impact on school enrolment and drop-out.

Currently, 84,601 are registered with UNHCR as having specific needs, including 9,419 children or adolescents at risk¹⁶. Other groups-at-risks include persons with disabilities (6,069), refugees with critical medical conditions (43,308), older persons at risk (4,939), persons with special legal and protection needs (41,689), single parents (500), unaccompanied or separated child (278) and women at risk (10,675).

UNHCR addresses the education needs of adolescents in the age group of 12-18 who are not enrolled or have dropped out of the system, through a mix of non-formal and informal activities, including remedial classes, enrolment in private institutions, organization of summer and winter classes during holidays and vocational/skills training. The objective, apart from providing complementary learning opportunities, is to reduce protection risks and prevent aggressive behaviours and violence through exclusion, marginalization and neglect.

¹⁶ UNHCR Syria – Statistical Report on registered Iraqis, 31st October 2009

Partners

The UNHCR Education Program works at the national level very closely with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) which is mandated to coordinate all relief and assistance efforts in the country, including registration of international NGOs. Within the MoE, the Directorate of Planning and Statistics is UNHCR's main partner.

UNHCR works closely with NGOs and other agencies engaged in Education Response: Première Urgence (PU), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the International Blue Crescent (IBC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), HELP Germany, the European Institute for Cooperation and Development (IECD), Secours Islamique-France, Enfants du Monde, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW Germany), the Delegation of the European Commission (EC) and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).¹⁷

UNHCR participates actively in regular Education Coordination Meetings, chaired by UNICEF.

Selection of good practices

In Syria there are a number of innovative approaches and good practices aimed at improving directly or indirectly access, quality and protection objectives of urban refugee education:

Coordination at national level: UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), the responsible body for all relief and refugee work in Syria. Through regular contacts and meetings UNHCR ensures to integrate refugee activities into national education plans. By building the capacity of MoE in implementing education projects UNHCR enhances education opportunities for refugees despite the absence of legal frameworks. At the same time the partnerships, based on joint planning, implementation and monitoring, creates a positive working environment, provides entry points for other international organizations and ensures the sustainability of UNHCR interventions.

ATM Cash Assistance: UNHCR started the distribution of ATM cards to Iraqi refugees identified as urgently needing financial assistance in December 2007. So far, 12,252 families benefit from the monthly financial assistance through ATM cards. Heads of households receive approximately US\$150 (SYP7000) per month, with an additional US\$15 (SYP700) for each dependent. Cash assistance, primarily aimed at single women head of households, is intended to support the enrolment of Iraqi children in Syrian schools and prevention efforts against problems such as gender based violence and child labour.

Outreach Program: UNHCR Community Services works with 78 female Outreach Volunteers (who are trained and paid a small stipend) originating from all segments of the refugee population and residing in all parts of the city and suburbs where refugees are to be found. Their functions include identifying and visiting particularly

¹⁷ Some agencies are UNHCR Implementing Partners (IP), some are Operational Partners (OP)

vulnerable refugees; providing them with counselling and practical forms of assistance; facilitating refugee access to services and passing on relevant information with respect to UNHCR's assistance program; identifying community resources and mobilizing refugees to play an active role in support of their compatriots; sharing information so as to gain a better understanding of the refugee population, including their location, movements and living conditions; supporting UNHCR's public information and external relations activities by making presentations to donor states and the media.

Education Volunteers: UNHCR is also working with Education Volunteers, selected professionals from the Iraqi refugee communities, who are under the supervision of the Education Unit. Their main role is to identify out-of-school children as well as teachers among the refugee community with the objective to support enrolment through remedial classes (mainly in English, Arabic and mathematics). These volunteers are also the main channel for information and communication between UNHCR and the refugee community.

Remedial classes: Many Iraqi children have difficulties in making the transition between the Iraqi and Syrian curriculum and face problems with Arabic and English. In order to ensure continued enrolment and successful academic performance, UNHCR provides remedial language classes to assist enrolled children but also out-of-school youth to improve their language skills and help them to perform better and/or re-enter the formal school system.

Vocational/skills training: UNHCR has entered into agreements with selected private education institutions who offer training courses, for example in computer literacy, business start-ups, entrepreneurial and administrative skills, bookkeeping, tailoring, hairdressing, auto mechanics, etc. to refugee students. Trainings are usually combined with life-skills education. Basic skills trainings (handicrafts, etc.) are also offered to out-of-school youth in community centers. These courses are organized in preparation of return.

Summer Camps: Since 2008 UNHCR, with the help of Iraqi Education Volunteers, has organized Summer Classes for Iraqi students in different areas of rural Damascus to prepare them for the next school year and help them to address the difficulties they face with the Syrian curriculum. The classes are offered in carefully selected private education institutes (6 in summer 2009) and run for three months. Activities offered range from remedial language classes and tutorial support to sports and recreational activities, arts and music, acting and theatre, computer lessons, handicrafts , excursions (National Museum) and entertainment (movies, shows, zoo, parks). Similar camps are also offered during the winter break.

Scholarship Program: The Italian Government provided UNHCR with funding for tertiary education. In August 2008, UNHCR reached an agreement with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in Syria to support 200 Iraqi students with university scholarships. At the end of a well-organized selection process 152 students (46 male and 106 female) had their tuition fees covered and 250 new students have submitted applications for a similar support in the academic year of 2009/2010.

Community Centers: UNHCR has established a number of Community Centers in areas where large numbers of Iraqis have settled. These Centers include Education Information Units (EIU) to provide any information about education issues (enrolment procedures, scholarships, etc.) to refugees, monitor remedial classes in private institutes where children (refugees and host community) are enrolled, organize summer education activities and offer vocational training courses for the youth and adults. They also provide in-kind support to families, carry out information, sensitization and awareness programs and follow up individual cases, with a special focus on girls and children with special needs. EIUs have developed a special tool to have information on children with specific needs; this could be used for monitoring purposes in other refugee operations. EIU teams are comprised of refugee volunteers. Refugees can also acquire the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL), an internationally recognized certificate, in these centers.

Recommendations:

- Continue to support the MoE in strengthening its capacity to improve the public school system and further facilitate the social integration of Iraqi refugee children.
- Approach development/bilateral agencies/partners that will assist UNHCR and the government/Ministry of Education in making present interventions for Iraqi refugees sustainable in view of a smooth transition from humanitarian aid to development cooperation in the education sector.
- Identify new operational partners (UN, NGOs, education institution, foundations, etc.) who have the capacity and funding to complement and continue UNHCR activities once funding of the Iraqi refugee operation is further reduced over the next years.
- Focus increasingly on the most vulnerable and at-risk groups (out-of-school youth, drop-outs and children with special needs) and provide education alternatives through non-formal and informal education, with special attention on vocational and skills training.
- Continue to increase enrolment, retention and completion of children in primary and secondary education by assisting the poorest and most vulnerable families through the targeted provision of cash grants, school uniforms and supplies.
- Increase opportunities to access higher education through scholarship programs beyond existing German and Italian government funding (DAFI+).
- Increase the number of recreational activities (sport, music, dance, theatre, arts, etc.) offered by the Community Centers to attract out-of-school youth; funding may be sought from the ninemillion.org campaign.
- Continue and strengthen the existing outreach activities and community-based approach through education volunteers and community centers by better

utilizing the professional expertise and development capacities of Iraqi refugees and communities.

- Utilize progressively the expertise of Iraqi refugees in education and further involve them in outreach and community-based programs by strengthening the “Education Volunteer” system and the work of the “Community Centers”.

Case study 4: Amman, Jordan

Total no. of Iraqi refugees:	450-500,000 (government estimates)	
No. of non-Iraqi refugees:	1,655	
No. of registered refugees:	48,337 (UNHCR)	
Total country budget (2009, AB+SB):	USD 36 mio (2010: USD 21 mio)	
Total needs (2010 CNA):	USD 63 mio	
Total needs education (2010 CNA):	USD 8.6 mio	
Total education budget (2009):	USD 1.4 mio	
No of URBAN refugees enrolled in	Formal: 26,890	Non-formal: 3,492
	Higher: 191	Informal: 3,731
	Total: 36,122	

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is host to an estimated number of 450-500,000 Iraqis, amounting to 9% of Jordan's population.¹⁸ Following these government figures, around 100,000 children are of school-going age. Though there continues to be uncertainty regarding the overall Iraqi population numbers in Jordan, for program and planning purposes, UNHCR relies mainly on the number of actively registered Iraqis, currently 48,337 persons as of October 2009; of these, 11,719 are of school-going age¹⁹. The majority of the non-Iraqi caseload of 1,655 are Sudanese (21.8%), followed by Somalis (16.4%), Syrians (16.4%), Jordanian dependants of other nationalities (14.6%), Egypt (7.2%), Russia (6.7%), stateless (5.9%) and other nationalities (11.0%).

Although the country, like Syria, is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol, it has extended great hospitality and tolerance towards its Iraqi "guests" on its territory. While this status places them in a legal grey area, in practice, Iraqis continue to be welcomed and to live in respect and safety. Jordan refrains from systematic deportation and detention, and His Majesty King Abdullah II has prominently and laudably referred to the obligation of extending support to Iraqis in the Kingdom. The sheer number of refugees, however, creates a socio-economic burden to the country that is increasingly felt by host communities. The combined lack of legal status and access to livelihoods, coupled with a spiralling and precarious economic situation, an increasing number of Iraqis find themselves in very difficult circumstances.

With the easing of requirements governing the entry and residence since the beginning of 2009, Iraqis are experiencing an overall improvement in the asylum and protection situation. New regulations issued may lead to a reduction of deportation and detention but do not, however, amount to any acceptance of illegal employment. The visa regime, implemented in early 2008, continues to be exercised by the Jordanian government.

¹⁸ Sunni Muslims (55.1%) constitute the majority of the caseload, followed by Shia Muslims (29.0%), Christians (9.9%) and others.

¹⁹ Source: Jordan Response Plan for Iraqis in 2010, p.3.

Iraqis registered with UNHCR in Jordan are well-educated. 59.4% of Iraqi adults have at least a high school diploma. 35.0% have a university or post-university level degree. 33% had some schooling but did not finish high school. 7.6% have received informal education, no education or none listed.²⁰ This explains also the importance that Iraqi parents attach to formal education of their children. There are also a large number of Iraqis who have legal residency in Jordan (29%) and are investing in staying in the country by building houses, starting businesses and enrolling their children in private schools.

UNHCR Jordan advocates integration of activities for Iraqi refugees into national structures and development plans and has made substantial contributions over the past years to reinforce and strengthen the capacity of Jordanian institutions that include Iraqis in their services, especially in health and education. The concern of the office is to make its interventions sustainable in the future through a smooth transition from humanitarian aid to development cooperation. The aim is to advocate and enable the government, the donor community and development partners to continue supporting Iraqi refugees in Jordan when UNHCR funding will be further reduced over the years to come.

The central government counterpart is the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) who received UNHCR contributions for the education sector in previous years, a practice that was discontinued in 2009 due to funding shortfalls. Unlike in Syria, there are limited direct contacts with the line ministries, e.g. the Ministry of Education (MoE). Most of the education projects are implemented through international NGOs.

The office presently works with 8 international organizations, Questscope (non-formal education leading to vocational training), Terre des Hommes Italy (vocational/skills training and informal activities), Mercy Corps (special education), Relief International (community centers, informal education), Save the Children US (general primary education, pre-primary, teacher training, informal activities), Care Australia (literacy, vocational/skills, support to non-Iraqis), Nippon International Cooperation (informal education) and the Jordan River Foundation (JRF). UNHCR works also closely with UNICEF.

Due to funding constraints, UNHCR has indicated to decrease the number of implementing partners in 2010. UNICEF, with whom UNHCR enjoys a very close partnership, has agreed to continue funding some of the partner activities and negotiations with a local NGO (Noor Hussein Foundation) are on-going to take over the DAFI scholarship program for tertiary education. It is worth noting that all organizations have expressed their wish and willingness to continue working in partnership with UNHCR even if funding will be discontinued next year.

The Jordan Response Plan for Iraqis in 2010 states three over-arching priorities with respect to humanitarian assistance:

²⁰ Iraqis in Jordan: Assessment of Livelihoods and Strategy for Livelihoods Promotion, July 2009, UNHCR

- (1) To preserve the protection space²¹ in Jordan by continuing to ensure Iraqis' access to national facilities such as health and education,
- (2) To provide safety nets in the form of cash, medical, legal and other assistance to ensure that refugees do not fall through the cracks, while at the same time
- (3) To seek durable solutions for the most vulnerable.

Within this framework, the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) has committed to the following objectives:

- Ensure Iraqi children and youth have access and support (academic, social and material) to return to and remain in relevant, certifiable education, in both formal and non-formal environments,
- Sustain enrolment of vulnerable children and youth within MOE training programs, vocational training courses (VTC) as well as other vocational options for those under 18 years of age,
- Ensure emergency funded assistance is provided within the framework of the Jordanian national education strategy.

Secondary objectives are to promote a favourable protection environment, to ensure non-discriminatory access to education and certification and security from violence and exploitation.

Education challenges

Subsequent to a royal decree in 2007, all Iraqis can access public education in Jordan, irrespective of their legal status. In particular, public schools- despite the additional pressure placed upon them- have been opened up for Iraqi children. Approximately 26,890 children have since then taken this opportunity to re-start or continue their education according to MoE statistics for the academic year 2008/09.

The main challenge in Jordan is to obtain accurate and disaggregated data on the number, age and gender of refugee children in primary and secondary public schools. UNHCR fully depends on government information as independent assessments or monitoring is not allowed in schools. The organization mainly collects information through the Beneficiary Information System (BIS) where implementing partners provide statistics on their support provided to refugees. Also, UNHCR collects information about school enrolment in ProGres when refugees come to register or renew their documents (every 6 months). UNHCR uses this information to identify families with children out of school and to refer them for support in finding an appropriate education for those children.

In contrast to Syria, education is not free of charge. In 2009, the European Union (EU) has funded school fees for all Iraqi children through ECHO, whereby the King of Jordan has committed to cover school fees for Jordanian children. This has caused a big shift from private to public schools. In 2008 it was estimated that an additional

²¹ The term “protection space” does not have a universal or legal definition, but is generally used to denote the extent to which a conducive environment exists for the internationally recognized rights of refugees to be respected and their needs to be met. See *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas, September 2009, p.4.*

40,000 students (Iraqis and Jordanians) had transferred to the public system, therefore causing a tremendous burden on school administrators and teachers.

Access and enrolment

School enrolment rates of refugee children are satisfactory according to the Education team following the royal decree and efforts by UNHCR and partners to encourage and facilitate enrolment. Out of the 450-500,000 Iraqi refugees (government figures) approximately 100,000 children are of school-going age and 24,650 were enrolled in the academic year 2007-2008. The main reasons reported for non-enrolment were general fear and mistrust of public institutions by Iraqis, discrimination and bullying of their children at school, financial constraints, anticipation of resettlement and the fact that many Iraqi children had already missed a number of school years. The number for the academic year 2008-2009 has increased to 26,890 (MOE). In non-formal education, 1,400 students participated in drop-out programs, 1,458 in remedial classes, 130 in literacy courses and 504 children went to kindergarten. In informal education, 1,304 attended skills training, 2,158 participated in some form of recreational activity and 269 went to summer camp.

While UNHCR and partners continue to encourage Iraqis to enrol their children in formal education, the informal and non-formal education sector serves as an alternative and viable opportunity for re-insertion into the formal system while allowing at the same time for a more flexible and safer environment. It has to be noted, however, that whereas home schooling and non-formal education are certified in Jordan, general informal education is not recognized and certified by the government.

To further increase enrolment rates²², various tailor-made programs have been initiated to cater for the specific needs of urban refugees. The main objectives are on increased enrolment in public and private schools, both for primary and post-primary education, access to non-formal and informal activities when formal education is not available and access to pre-school education. Program focus is on the establishment of Help Desks, the provision of educational kits, remedial education and summer and winter classes, language training, computer classes, life skills development and academic scholarships through the DAFI program. They also include trainings on Safer Learning Environments (SLE).

Those children, who have been out of school for more than three years and who are two or more years older than their grade level, can now follow non-formal education. This system allows them to complete the 10th grade by following a (24 months) two or three year-long accelerated curriculum; they may then enter into a vocational training program after sitting for the 10th grade exam, but they can't transfer back or access the formal education track. Discussions are underway with and in the Government to allow such transfer in the future.

Informal, vocational and remedial education activities provide an opportunity for out-of-school children to begin their educational development in a safe and supportive

²² Statistics not available, but estimated by the UNHCR education team at 90% for primary, and 75% for secondary education

environment; this facilitates later transition to formal or non-formal education. Remedial education assists Iraqi children to adjust to the new curriculum and achieve successful performance.

UNHCR supported also an Early Childhood Education (ECE) project which assisted 20 community-based kindergartens through renovation of buildings and provision of furniture. Through the introduction of a public kindergarten system (KG I for 4-year old and KG II for 5-year old children) by the government in 2008 there was a move from private to public institutions (similar to the earlier move from private to public schools) because government services are free of charge. UNICEF will continue to fund some activities for young refugee boys and girls.

However, Iraqi families with sufficient resources continue to access private schools. On an exceptional and case-to-case basis UNHCR supports those children with identified special needs.

Access to higher education and university is limited by the fact that Iraqis must pay the same “international” tuition rate as other foreigners. However, with their strong attachment to education, many Iraqis are eager to benefit from Jordanian institutions of higher education. DAFI scholarship opportunities are very limited but presently 49 students are enrolled in universities. In 2010, ten new scholarships will be awarded to Iraqi refugees.

Quality

Teachers generally lack training and are insufficiently qualified. There are no teacher training colleges in Jordan. The majority of teachers have only an academic background but no specific pedagogical training. They are in need of up-grading and training in child-centred pedagogy. Capacity building of teachers and curriculum development is supported by USAID. UNICEF trains teachers in psycho-social support.

Schools are generally well equipped (in terms of teaching and learning materials, furniture, etc.) but the infrastructure and buildings usually lack the necessary maintenance and repair work. Overcrowded classrooms contribute to a lack of quality education in public schools.

Protection

The main issue under discussion in Jordan by teachers, school administrators and the general public is violence in schools and the Ministry of Education and UNICEF have started a country-wide program to address the issue with the support of the donor community. The “Maan... Towards a Safe School Environment” campaign seeks to reduce violence against children in public schools. According to a recent study, conducted in collaboration with UNICEF and the National Council for Family Affairs, more than two-thirds of children in Jordan are subjected to verbal abuse by their parents, while 57 per cent experience physical abuse at the hands of their schoolteachers and administrators. In response to these findings, the Maan campaign will bolster the fight against school violence by adopting a three-track strategy: school-based activities prompting teachers to take up new methods for instilling

positive discipline in classrooms; community-based meetings advocating zero tolerance of violence in schools; and media based coverage raising awareness on the results achieved by the campaign.

UNHCR participatory assessments²³ also confirm the existence of violence in schools and at home. They reveal that Iraqi children, like Jordanians, are subject to violence and face discrimination from headmasters and teachers. They have difficulties in rejoining studies after several years out of school and many parents are reluctant to send them to school as they need their children to support the family. SGBV is a concern in Jordan and identified causes include exploitation at the work place, negative conception of refugee women and single female headed households as well as domestic violence related to serious levels of frustration among persons of concern. Victims are often reluctant to file complaints for fear or threats to be detained or deported due to illegal residency or simply mistrust in public authorities.

Children face serious protection risks in form of exploitation when they are forced to engage in informal sector activities to secure livelihoods for their families. In public schools, refugee children are at heightened risk of bullying and discrimination.

There are presently 11,348 Iraqis in Jordan with specific identified vulnerabilities²⁴ and it requires an individual and tailor-made protection and assistance approach.

Parents-Teachers Associations (PTA) are usually established at school level, but community participation in school management is generally very limited and often reduced to annual parents-teacher consultations.

Partners

UNHCR participates actively in the Iraqi Children Education Coordination Meetings, co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children-US as well as in the Iraqi Children Informal Education Coordination Meetings, co-chaired by UNHCR and Relief International. In addition, there are regular donor coordination meetings, attended by USAID, EU, ECHO, UNICEF, UNHCR and others.

Selection of good practices

In Jordan UNHCR has introduced a number of innovative approaches and good practices. Some of them to be mentioned are:

ATM Cash Assistance: In Jordan, all families with children enrolled in public schools are eligible for financial assistance. UNHCR has signed an agreement with a commercial bank which enables eligible refugees to withdraw their cash from ATM machines at the time and place of their choosing. Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) has been established to prevent fraud and abuse of the system and to deal with problems such as the loss of cards. This is a conditional cash transfer to encourage parents to enrol them in schools and complete their studies.

²³ Summary Protection Assessment, UNHCR, March 2009

²⁴ Jordan Response Plan for Iraqis in 2010, p. 6

Remedial classes: Because of the differences between the Iraq and Jordanian curriculum and in addition to a few subjects that are new for Iraqi students (IT and English), many students face difficulties in learning. Many UNHCR partners and NGOs provide remedial classes that cover grade 1 to 10th through Community Centers. The approach is not to directly learn from the text book, but to cover the main expected learning outcomes. Many of these centres are using Iraqi and Jordanian volunteers as teachers, which has a positive side effect on students in terms of bridging community divides. Summer and winter classes, organized during the holidays, focus on remedial classes next to recreational activities for Iraqi students.

Vocational training: VT for Iraqi refugees is provided by UNHCR partners and other NGOs (not by the Government who offer only vocational education). Females are offered, for example, courses in hairdressing, sewing, computer, cooking and many more basic skills. Other programs are targeting the youth and male adults, with skills training in carpentry, metal work, car mechanics, construction/building, phone repair, recycling and electrical works at the center. All programs are certified and accredited inside Jordan outside (including Iraq). Training periods vary from 3 weeks to 3 months, depending on the course contents.

Help Desks: For more effective outreach activities, Help Desks and Hotlines were established at Community Centers and UNHCR partner offices to increase public awareness of available services, including education programs. The telephone Hotlines are permanently open and have professional staff to respond to all calls, provide advice and counselling or make referrals to specific services offered by other NGOs, the MOE or UN organizations. Help Desks provide in-house facilities that allow for direct access, faster service and close interaction with refugees seeking advice, for example on transferring to public schools or on non-formal and informal education programs.

ProGres: UNHCR uses this tool to identify out of school children. On a monthly basis, the office generates lists of all the children who come to the office for registration/renewal and were listed as out of school. Then UNHCR coordinates with the Help Desks to call these families and counsel them on school registration or other educational opportunities (non-formal, informal, kindergarten, etc).

Drop-out Program: This certified vocational and skills program is a very important alternative to children and youth who may not enrol or have dropped out of formal education. It is also a protection tool for out-of-school youth to prevent exploitation, SGBV and violence. The education support for this program aims to prepare children for the 10th grade graduation exams. Upon the completion of the program the graduates are eligible to continue their education in public vocational institutions to gain the necessary skills to start their own businesses. The program has three cycles, each of which lasts eight months and targets different grades. The drop-out support program is carried out in public schools with Jordanian teachers' facilitation.

Children with Special Needs: Identified children with special needs (physical and mental disabilities, etc.) are enrolled in special private institutions where they receive professional and tailored support in a child-friendly environment.

Kindergarten Program: This early childhood development program is targeting young children (age group 4-5) who are transiting from pre-school to formal primary education. The program is the first element of continuing education that ideally leads from early childhood to primary, post-primary and adult education. Iraqi refugee children are attending kindergarten classes together with Jordanian children of the same age. It is considered a valuable learning activity for co-existence, tolerance and mutual respect and prepares children in accessing primary schools.

Recommendations

- Continue targeted support to the most at-risk Iraqi families through the provision of financial assistance and education kits to keep children in schools as families face increasing financial difficulties.
- Promote funding of school fees and text books for the next academic year following ECHO's discontinuation of funding.
- Provide technical support to educational institutions to ensure the quality of education is maintained and special needs of at-risk Iraqi students are met (including education professionals training).
- Strengthen education support programs for Iraqi children to adjust to the Jordanian educational system such as remedial classes for new arrivals.
- Advocate for scholarships for Iraqi refugee to attend post- secondary education (DAFI +), with increased focus on shorter and medium-term education (2-3 instead of 4-5 years of studies).
- Increase access to post secondary educational opportunities, in particular to vocational and skills training and other non-formal activities, with a strong focus on out-of-school youth.
- Sensitize parents of Iraqi children on the importance of continued education and mobilize them to participate actively in their children's education and protection through PTA's.
- Ensure that Iraqi refugee children's concerns are included in the Ma'AN campaign against school violence.
- Provide continued support to Help Desks to ensure Iraqi children enrolment, protection and retention in public schools.
- Identify donors to support the continued provision of early childhood education services through public and private kindergartens.
- Strengthen existing outreach activities and community-based approaches through the involvement of Iraqi education volunteers
- Continue UNHCR support to the existing community centers and expand services to other locations.
- Facilitate and utilize the capacity and expertise of Iraqi community with respect to informal education services (Iraqi adult experts and volunteers that have been trained during previous years).
- Shift from international to local NGO partners to ensure sustainability of UNHCR interventions (see DAFI program).

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

General

The number of urban refugees is steadily increasing as they look for employment and livelihoods as well as educational opportunities in cities and towns in their host country; it is a very fluid and diverse population with different resources and needs that require targeted approaches and interventions. It is therefore recommended to increase education support to refugees living in urban areas according to identified needs and address education needs through a comprehensive, holistic and group-specific approach.

Data on urban refugees are only available from 60-70% of urban settings and do only include refugees living in the capitals and having registered with UNHCR. In the locations visited there are great discrepancies between official government numbers and UNHCR registered refugees. In urban areas, offices are currently giving certain forms of assistance to all children regardless of their UNHCR registration to ensure that they enjoy the right to a free basic education. It is therefore recommended to harmonise existing data on urban refugees between UNHCR and partners to improve joint planning and programming and use education standards and indicators to measure progress and impact.

Perceptions of and attitudes towards refugees by the local population differ between urban settings visited, mainly depending on the host country's official refugee policies and the prevailing socio-economic situation. In general, urban refugees have been well received by host governments and are accepted and tolerated by their host communities, even if they constitute an additional burden for the existing urban infrastructure and public services, especially in health and education. It is therefore recommended to continue following a strategy of integrating education for urban refugees into the national education system and provide education support for the benefit of refugee and host communities.

As 50% of urban refugees live below the national poverty lines of their host countries, UNHCR and partners continue to identify and assist the most vulnerable among them. There are also urban refugees who have means of their own, are more settled, engage in business activities and have achieved some sort of self-reliance; in most cases they do not need to be assisted by UNHCR unless they belong to an at-risk group with special needs. It is therefore recommended to continue targeting the poorest among urban refugees and provide education support on a case-to-case basis, with special attention to girls and the youth.

Increasing access and enrolment

1. UNHCR has to avoid building or supporting parallel education systems in urban settings but instead continue to achieve local integration into public school systems. In cases, where refugees have started self-help and community-based schools, it is recommended that UNHCR facilitates their registration and integration according to national education standards.

2. Although access to primary education is generally well covered according to the objective of universal primary education, main challenges exist in post-primary education, including secondary and tertiary education, where the numbers of students benefitting are dropping dramatically. UNHCR, in the years to come, will have to focus more on resource mobilization to support those students who would like to continue their studies upon completion of primary education. It is therefore recommended to seek donor support for secondary and university scholarships with an increased focus on shorter and medium-term tertiary education (2-3 instead of 4-5 years of studies).

3. Next to the lack of continued education, there are widening gaps for those refugees, who are either not enrolled or have dropped out of education for a number of different reasons. UNHCR is offering a wide range of non-formal and informal education activities for those young people and adolescents, but needs to increase certified and accredited vocational and skills training opportunities as an alternative to formal education. This is particularly important in the context of preparation for return and engaging the youth in informal sector activities, leading to income-generation and livelihood development. Even in countries where refugees are legally not allowed to work, there is a tendency to tolerate small-scale business development. It is therefore recommended to further develop targeted youth programs in non-formal education with an increased focus on vocational and skills training to ensure continued education.

4. In the context of life-long and continuing education, support to pre-primary education in the form of “kindergarten” assistance is an important element of UNHCR education programs, but can only be implemented in well-funded operations as it is not a priority for most offices. Practices have shown, however, that an investment in young boys and girls (age 4 and 5) facilitates their transition to primary schools and allows for better performances, retention and completion rates. It is therefore recommended to include pre-primary education into UNHCR programs targeting urban refugees according to identified needs and the availability of funding.

5. There are a number of good practices such as cash assistance, education kits, Help Desks, outreach programs, sensitization and awareness campaigns, etc. that have helped to increase enrolment, retention and completion of children in primary and secondary education. Any assistance in the urban context, however, needs to be provided on a case-to-case basis and should benefit the most at-risk refugee families. It is therefore recommended to address the individual education needs of urban refugees by providing targeted support for increased access to education of the most at-risk groups.

6. Open and distance learning (ODL) programs may allow a more flexible, less costly and tailor-made approach to school-based learning in urban settings. Unfortunately, in the four locations visited, refugees were not enrolled in such programs. It is therefore recommended to organize surveys to identify such opportunities and start collaboration with academic and private institutions offering such services.

Improving quality

1. In all urban locations visited, the lack of quality in public schools is closely linked to non-enrolment, non-attendance and low completion rates. The public school system, in its efforts to implement universal primary education and open schools for all refugee children, is faced with a number of challenges impacting on quality service delivery, ranging from insufficiently trained teachers, overcrowded classrooms and the lack of teaching and learning materials. In the case of urban refugees it is important to observe national standards in regard to curricula, learning materials and teacher training. It is therefore recommended to strengthen and increase cooperation with Ministries of Education and specialized agencies with proven expertise in quality education.

2. Case studies have shown that in urban areas where the communities are actively involved, the quality of education - next to increased access - has been significantly improved. Community outreach programs and refugee participation in education programs need to be strengthened at all levels to improve needs assessments, monitoring and impact evaluation in a participatory and inclusive way. It is therefore recommended to continue sensitizing, mobilizing and training refugee parents and communities to strengthen their role in education committees, Parents-Teacher Associations and School Management Boards.

3. The participation of refugee education professionals in non-formal and informal activities such as the outreach and education volunteer systems, the establishment of community centers and home schools, the provision of remedial classes, literacy courses, skills training, and their active involvement in a variety of extra-curricular and recreational activities (sport, music, dance, theatre, arts, etc.) have also positively impacted on quality. It is therefore recommended to further utilize the professional knowhow, expertise and development capacity of refugees and engage them in non-formal and informal education to improve quality.

Enhancing protection

1. In an urban context, there are a number of protection risks for refugees, including the fear of deportation due to the non-renewal, expiry and lack of residency permits and the risks associated with illegal residency. Parents fear to send their children to school because official registration might lead to being identified by authorities as illegal persons. An uncertain future may lead to general frustration and hopelessness, aggravated by trauma and psycho-social problems associated with flight and violence. It is therefore recommended that UNHCR and partners reduce protection risks by actively supporting the increased enrolment of refugee children in formal and non-formal education.

2. Protection risks for children, and particularly for girls, range from different forms of SGBV, including harassment during travel to schools (often long distances), at school itself (bullying and discrimination) and also at home (domestic violence). Cultural practices, especially early pregnancies and marriages, may lead to non-attendance and eventually drop-out from school. In large families, boys are

traditionally given the priority over girls in terms of education, while girls are charged with household chores and looking after their younger siblings. Exploitation is another risk when boys are forced to engage in informal sector activities to secure livelihoods for their families or girls are forced into prostitution. UNHCR has responded to these protection challenges through increasing the number of children enrolled in formal and non-formal education activities. Targeted assistance (cash assistance, education kits, vocational and skills training, remedial classes, etc.) is provided to the most vulnerable refugees. It is therefore recommended to increase UNHCR education support to groups-at-risk that include out-of-school youth and children with specific needs.

3. Community mobilization in form of Parents-Teacher Associations (PTA) and inclusion of refugee parents in these associations is another tool of protection. Parents need to be further sensitized on the importance of education and teachers need to be trained on refugee issues, including psycho-social counselling. It is therefore recommended to strengthen parents and community participation in formal and non-formal education at all levels through outreach programs, awareness campaigns and trainings in view of reducing protection risks.

Building capacities

1. The primary responsibility for public education lies with the Ministries of Education (Primary, Secondary and Higher Education). Having opened up public schools to all refugees (either by decree or law), a high number of refugee students places, however, an additional burden on available space and existing infrastructure as well as administrators and teachers. Ministries, city education officials and public schools therefore need to be supported to increase the absorption capacity of the public education system. This can happen through financial and material contributions towards school construction, rehabilitation and repair, provision of school/classroom equipment and student “education kits”, including uniforms and textbooks. All support has to be tailored to the specific needs of the relevant public education system and has to demonstrate a clear impact (through monitoring of standards and indicators) on increased access and enrolment of refugees. It is therefore recommended to include capacity building programs in all UNHCR operations targeting education for urban refugees.

2. UNHCR programs and interventions still focus to a large extent on camp-based refugees in terms of programming, staffing and funding. As a result, operational support for urban refugee education in terms of staffing and funding varies from country to country. Offices with education professionals (UNHCR or seconded staff) are obviously more capable to be innovative and manage larger programs than offices where education is entirely managed by Community Services Officers. In order to address urban refugee education in a comprehensive and systematic way that includes regular contacts with the government, the donor community, the UN and NGOs, it is necessary to have Education Managers in place. It is therefore recommended to create education posts in high priority operations or, alternatively, to increase staff secondments (NRC, IRC) and identify other arrangements (UNOPS).

3. Community Services (CS), responsible for education, is generally understaffed and overwhelmed as responsibilities often include health services, community development, case management, outreach activities and education. Education needs to be better integrated with Protection, Programme, External Relations and also Livelihood activities. It is therefore recommended to redefine the role of Community Services in regard to education and strengthen the multi-functional team approach in UNHCR offices to education.

4. There are large discrepancies in terms of funding of education in urban areas in the countries visited that impact on the delivery of services. In 2009 UNHCR Kenya, out of a total education budget of USD 3.7 mio, had only USD 40,000 for education activities in Nairobi and UNHCR Uganda, out of a total education budget of USD 997,860, had only budgeted USD 32,854 for education activities in Kampala. On the contrary, in the context of the Iraqi operations, where refugees are entirely settling in urban areas, UNHCR Syria has an education budget of 16.1 mio and UNHCR Jordan an education budget of USD 1.4 mio. It is therefore recommended to shift resources within well-funded camp-based operations to benefit urban refugees or generally increase contributions to urban refugee education.

Developing partnerships

1. All UNHCR education interventions on behalf of urban refugees need to be planned and implemented in line with official national education policies and development programs. Therefore, close cooperation with the relevant Ministries of Education are crucial for integration and sustainability. This refers to joint needs assessments, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agreed upon projects that serve both refugee and host communities. It is therefore recommended to establish close partnerships and good working relations with Ministries of Education and other education officials in order to advocate for the inclusion of refugees in national plans and programs.

2. Education strategies for urban refugees have to be incorporated into country-based Joint UN Response Plans, developed by United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF). The good practice of Education Working Groups, comprised of all education stakeholders and usually chaired by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), should be continued and strengthened. UNICEF and also UNESCO have the capacity to either complement UNHCR education activities in certain areas (teacher training, curriculum development, material distribution, certification issues) or even continue them under their development mandate once UNHCR's emergency funding is reduced. It is therefore recommended to strengthen existing UN coordination mechanisms and form Education Working Groups that address the issue of urban refugees.

3. Whereby UNHCR is usually very efficient in construction and rehabilitation, equipping schools and providing classroom materials (“hardware” components), curriculum development, certification issues, teaching and learning materials and teacher training (“software” components) are often looked after by specialised organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO) and NGOs. It is therefore recommended to arrive at a clear division of responsibilities while planning joint education interventions, based on the comparative advantages and added value of each partner.

4. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) working with UNHCR on the implementation of a variety of education activities according to their mandates, proven expertise and experiences are also the natural partners in urban settings. In the beginning of an operation, UNHCR usually signs agreements with a number of international NGOs with whom they have developed working relationships over the years. In many cases these NGOs are also operational partners as they co-fund projects or work directly with refugees with their own funding. It is therefore recommended to further identify operational NGO partners with the capacity to co-fund UNHCR activities or take over projects once UNHCR funding decreases.

5. UNHCR has realized the importance of increased cooperation with local NGOs who are community-based and more familiar with the local context and environment than international partners. They may need some capacity building support in the beginning. It is therefore recommended to identify additional local partner organizations with experiences and expertise in education to work with refugees in the urban context.

6. The private sector is increasingly becoming an important actor as the review has shown. Good practices such as agreements with non-religious and non-political private education providers (companies, institutes, kindergarten, vocational training centers, etc.) and the negotiation of lower tuition fees or special slots for refugees are opportunities that should be followed in the future. It is therefore recommended to identify cooperation opportunities with the private sector in regard to scholarship programs, vocational training, computer literacy and distance learning.

7. Coordination is a key factor of success! Therefore the organization of regular education coordination meetings with all stakeholders active in urban education is an indispensable element in UNHCR programming. There are different levels of coordination: at office level with all implementing/operational partners (chair: UNHCR); at UN-level (through UNCT and Working Groups); at donor level (chair: UNICEF) and at government level (chair: MOE). It is therefore recommended that UNHCR participates actively in education coordination meetings at all levels to advocate for the inclusion of refugees, their right to education, as well as to identify opportunities, develop partnerships and establish linkages with other education programs that might benefit urban refugees as well.

