



No Lost Generation: A Proposal to Increase Equitable Access to Education for Out-of-School Children in Syria and the Region

*A Partnership between UNICEF and the
Education Above All Foundation*

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Overview

The crisis in Syria is now entering its fourth year and every day the risk of a lost generation of children grows. Nearly half of the entire population, or **approximately 9.3 million Syrians (of which almost half are children), now require humanitarian assistance**¹. Some 6.5 million people are internally displaced inside Syria, and a further 2.5 million people, including close to 1.3 million children², have fled to neighboring countries. They live in overcrowded camps, inadequate informal settlements or host communities, where tensions are rising between refugee and local populations.

Most Syrian children have been torn from their homes and many have witnessed unspeakable cruelties. They are also living without adequate access to education and psychosocial support – a situation with even greater impact on girls, children with disabilities, children separated from their families and children enlisted into armed forces and groups exposed to the horrors of war. **Without education, protection and support, these children are at risk of losing hope, of accepting violence as normal and replicating it – undermining their own futures, the future of their nations and the stability of the region.** In short, the future of an entire generation lies in the balance.

UNICEF believes that education should not only be an integral part of the humanitarian response, but that it should also encompass more than just meeting curriculum objectives. **Education delivery should offer a safe space for children, a means of providing a sense of normalcy, psychosocial support, protection against harm, as well as access to other vital services.** Schools provide protection and help to restore a sense of normalcy for children, helping them to deal with the emotional stress.

In Syria's time of need, UNICEF and the Education Above All Foundation are partnering once again to provide access to education for children who are out of school in Syria and its neighboring countries. Chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser of Qatar, also the UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, the Foundation has generously committed significant funding to UNICEF Syria's emergency education programs. **The Education Above All Foundation will match any donation, dollar for dollar, for UNICEF Syria's education fundraising campaign up to \$10.8 million.**

1. UN OCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, Issue 43, 13-26 February 2014.

2. UNICEF Syria Crisis Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report, 10 January – 16 February 2014.

Cover Photo:

A nine-year old boy from Syria in a classroom at the KAR school in the Domiz refugee camp in northern Iraq. © UNICEF/Schermucker

The proposed two-year program will **increase equitable access to education for 586,600 vulnerable and displaced out-of-school children³ (OOSC) (ages 6 to 15) affected by the crisis in Syria, in addition to training 300 teachers:**

- **In Syria**, the program will reach **500,000 out-of-school children**, and
- **In the region**, the program will reach **86,600 out-of-school Syrian refugee and host community children and 300 teachers** in the surrounding host countries:
 - *Jordan* – 16,000 children.
 - *Lebanon* – 4,100 children.
 - *Iraq* – 26,500 children and 300 teachers.
 - *Turkey* – 40,000 children.

UNICEF will focus on increasing access to education for both boys and girls, with a focus on those most vulnerable and with limited access to formal education. Key objectives to reach out-of-school children include:

- Increasing access to safe learning spaces and learning materials.
- Expanding access to remedial education and recreational activities.
- Strengthening alternative education programs for out-of-school children.
- Constructing/rehabilitating learning spaces, including adequate WASH facilities.
- Supporting teacher training initiatives.

UNICEF's efforts will utilize innovative and flexible strategies to ensure every child's right to education is met with a focus on the most vulnerable children. **UNICEF will promote strong partnerships at all levels** – from the community, district, governorate, national and international levels – **to ensure the sustainability of all planned activities and outcomes to increase equitable access for the children affected by this crisis.**



Displaced children participate in an art activity at a UNICEF-supported shelter in Homs, Syria. The activity is part of UNICEF's psychosocial services to help children recover from the trauma caused by the conflict.

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3. Children will benefit from more than one activity since they face multiple disadvantages and barriers to access quality learning in the crisis.

Country Situation: An Educational Crisis in Syria

The education statistics both in Syria and across the region are staggering, with a high number of out-of-school children (OOSC) and poor education conditions for currently enrolled children. This threatens to increase the drop out rate, and in turn the number of OOSCs:

- In Syria, a total of 3,004 schools were damaged or destroyed while 1,007 schools were used as shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs)⁴. The lack of safe learning spaces, coupled with a shortage of textbooks and school furniture as well as the appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, are serious barriers to children's access to learning in the country. The conflict and violence have adversely affected enrollment and attendance, leaving close to 2.3 million children out of school or at risk of dropping out in Syria⁵. Some have lost one or two years of schooling but are now able to return to school, while others dropped out without any chances to return or benefit from alternative learning opportunities.
- In surrounding countries, Syrian refugee children are struggling to access schooling. Of the 600,000 school age refugee children, some 68% are not in school. Children from host communities in neighboring nations, who are often themselves already facing economic and social stresses, are now in classrooms that are overstretched, overcrowded and under-resourced. In many cases Syrian refugee children have been out of school for months or even years, there are not enough schools, nor experienced teachers and supplies. Children who were learning Arabic and English in Syria are now facing classes taught in French, Turkish and Kurdish. Many children are required to work to support their families. Additionally, girls are pressured to leave school to marry while boys face recruitment by armed groups.

In 2013, UNICEF's education responses, along with sector partners, have reached over 900,000 children across the country and region. **Despite the collective efforts, over two million children still remain out of school.** The Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and other partners offer education courses that provide remedial and accelerated courses to IDP children and out-of-school children in line with the national curriculum during the crisis. However, children are not provided a full set of textbooks and materials to follow the curriculum. Furthermore, the number of accelerated learning programs is still limited and there is a need to further strengthen access to education for out-of-school children in hot spots. **A scale-up of education interventions is critical to reach more vulnerable children and ensure their right to access quality education, before it is too late.**

An investment in education is critical even in emergency situations because most of the children who drop out due to the crisis are unlikely to re-enroll at a later stage. Thus **the education opportunities of the generation can be lost forever.** The future development of knowledge, skills, productivity and socio-economic opportunities are significantly reduced and limited at all levels. **This leads to a severe impediment to the overall development and peace process of Syria as a whole.**

4. Ministry of Education, 2013, National education data reported in October 2013.

5. UNICEF, 2013, The averting a lost generation strategy draft. Whilst an estimated one million children remain out of school, additional 1.3 million are at risk of dropping out in Syria.

UNICEF in Action

SYRIA

A total of **500,000 out-of-school children** will be reached through multiple, comprehensive interventions from both the demand-side and supply-side barriers to education: additional safe learning spaces, supplies, school rehabilitation, remedial education, self-learning program, and accelerated learning program using “Curriculum B” (a condensed version of textbooks used to accelerate learning programs). The priority governorates in Syria include Homs, Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir ez Zour, Hassakeh, Idleb, Hama, and Rural Damascus where there are many out-of-school children and IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) children. UNICEF’s focus in Syria will include:

1: Increasing access to safe learning spaces

Given that one out of every five schools is not operating as a safe learning facility in Syria, the **lack of safe and protective learning environments is a serious impediment to bringing out-of-school children back to school**. Children who have dropped out need to be supported to go back to school or provided with alternative learning opportunities in protective environments. School rehabilitation and the provision of additional safe classrooms with WASH facilities are therefore considered a top priority within the Ministry of Education to re-open schools and accommodate the return of those who are displaced and excluded from the education system. Additional safe learning spaces must be supported together with supplies of teaching and learning materials to stimulate the classroom learning and activities to ensure a quality learning environment. Depending on accessibility and needs, UNICEF will provide:

- Teaching and learning materials (i.e. bags, school-in-a-box) for 500,000 OOSCs, combined with community mobilization through a media campaign as part of the nationwide “Back to Learning” initiative. UNICEF will reach out to internally displaced families and encourage them to register and enroll their children especially OOSC for formal basic education in the new academic year.
 - One school bag per child can contain basic stationary, pencils, eraser, pens, rulers, exercise books, notebooks and color pencils.
 - A school-in-a-box contains materials for both students and teachers.
 - Teacher materials can include register books, exercise books, chalk, markers, flipcharts, rulers, alphabet posters, teaching clock, scissors and dusters.



A boy seated at a desk looking through a school bag he just received at a classroom in rural Damascus. As part of the Back to Learning Campaign, UNICEF aims to reach one million displaced primary-school aged children with school bags filled with school supplies and stationary.

© UNICEF/Halabi

- 60 prefabricated classrooms equipped with student desks and chairs to benefit 4,200 children.
 - A prefabricated classroom is a steel structure with typical floor dimensions of 5m x 7m. These classrooms provide a safe environment conducive to learning.
 - A classroom can accommodate 35-40 students. In practice, prefabricated classrooms are used at double-shift schools to accommodate over 70 students per classroom.
- Rehabilitation of classrooms and WASH facilities in 100 schools to benefit 50,000 children.

2: Expanding access to remedial education and recreational activities

UNICEF and the Ministry of Education will accelerate collective efforts to promote access to remedial education for vulnerable children. UNICEF will focus on out-of-school children who have missed several months or years of schooling. Promoting remedial education and recreational activities as part of psychosocial support through school clubs, especially during winter months and summer school holidays, is one of the key education responses to children affected by the crisis. Depending on accessibility and needs, UNICEF will provide:

- 24,000 out of the 500,000 total out-of-school children with school clubs to attend remedial classes and recreational activities in hard-to-reach areas. School club teachers are trained to provide psychosocial support.
 - A school club is a place where IDP children and OOSC can participate in remedial classes and benefit from psychosocial support through recreational activities under the care of qualified school staff. School clubs can operate in a school compound, in centers run by an NGO or shelters for IDPs.
 - Remedial classes offered in school clubs aim to improve children's learning performance levels and *prevent school drop out* and/or help them re-enter school.
 - Children attending school clubs benefit from psychosocial support through structured learning, play and recreation, and referral to specialized services if necessary. The clubs are free and open to all boys and girls between 5 and 18 years of age.
 - Priority is given to children who have not attended school for some time, who moved to the area from elsewhere (IDPs), who have dropped out of school and/or have poor school results.



Children attend a remedial class held inside a building sheltering displaced families in Homs. The classes are run in four shifts daily, providing children aged 4-12 with lessons in Arabic and mathematics as well as recreational activities.

© UNICEF/Morooka

3: Strengthening alternative education programs for out-of-school children

The longer the conflict continues, the more difficult it will be to deliver quality education services to all children in both government-controlled areas and locations heavily-affected by the conflict. Given the national education system does not function in certain parts of the country, it is critical to find alternative modalities to reach vulnerable children in these areas. UNICEF and partners plan to deliver alternative education programs through self-learning materials and accelerated learning textbooks (“Curriculum B”) to help ensure continued learning for these children:

- 500,000 out-of-school school children will access alternative education through self-learning materials as well as accelerated learning textbooks called “Curriculum B” in line with the Syrian official curriculum.
 - UNICEF and partners are preparing to roll out self-learning materials that cover four core subjects (Arabic, English, Math and Science) for basic education (grades 1-9). The self-learning program also includes a training package for teachers and parents who are key to supporting self-learning at home or in the community.
 - UNICEF and the Ministry of Education will be printing and distributing condensed textbooks called “Curriculum B” to the most affected governorates. This is an important initiative since it targets the most vulnerable children including those who are out of school and who have missed out on basic education over the last one or two years. Training of teachers, tutors and parents are conducted to support the self-learning program and accelerated learning program in the target areas.

IRAQ

With access to education a paramount priority in camps and host communities, efforts will focus first on infrastructure development/rehabilitation as well as creating safe learning spaces. Prefabricated classrooms will be provided within the existing schools (both Arabic and Kurdish schools), along with gender sensitive WASH facilities. Support for transportation will be crucial for ensuring educational access for children, especially as those in host communities live in remote villages where distance from learning facilities can be a barrier to school attendance. Additional efforts will focus on ensuring the quality of learning, including provision of supplies, textbooks in local and/or appropriate languages, first-aid kits, sanitation kits, recreation kits and sports equipment.

To increase the number of teachers, UNICEF and the Department of Education in governorates will help identify Syrian refugees who have appropriate teacher qualifications. With attention to gender balance in the selection, these teachers will go through in-service training focused on improved teaching and learning processes, psychosocial support and inclusive management of their classrooms which will cover the methodologies of assisting learners who need extra support (this includes collaborative learning and peer teaching). This has been already piloted in schools located in camps and proven as a successful strategy.

UNICEF will support caregivers and pre-school center staff to include age appropriate learning and play. Partners will meanwhile seek to expand educational learning opportunities at home that can enhance social, mental and physical development of the children at early age.

UNICEF and its partners – including national and international academic institutions – will work with local and regional governments towards accreditation of education facilities and certification of academic programs through collaboration with the Kurdistan region Ministry of Education. Nationally recognized exams will be given to children along with supervision and monitoring. UNICEF will provide:

- School bags and stationary for 18,000 children.
- Transportation to school for 1,000 children.
- Prefabricated classrooms and/or rehabilitate existing classrooms and provide WASH facilities for 50 schools for 7,500 children.
- “Catch-up” classes, remedial education, psychosocial support, recreation activities in formal and non-formal settings for 26,500 children.
- Teacher training and materials for 300 teachers.



A ten-year old girl following a lesson with her fellow classmates in the KAR school at the Domiz refugee camp in Northern Iraq. © UNICEF/Shermbrucker

JORDAN

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and other partners, efforts will include expanding and refurbishing schools, tuition and textbook support (particularly supporting girls’ access and focusing also on children with disabilities) and establishing and equipping learning spaces. Support for double shift school days will be extended by focusing on augmentation of classrooms and recruitment of additional teachers. Essential school supplies will target vulnerable Syrian children in camps and urban settings, also benefiting the most vulnerable Jordanian children. School health and school nutrition programs will be integral to retention. As refugees often lack school documentation from Syria, advocacy with the Ministry of Education will also focus on conducting placement tests for enrollment at the appropriate primary school grade.

Remedial and accelerated learning will aim to reach children in host communities and camps. Partners will invest in the referral of children back to school, and children and adolescents excluded from formal education will be provided with opportunities to access alternative programs such as informal and non-formal accelerated learning. This will include activities in child-friendly and youth-friendly spaces, together with the deployment of mobile education teams and efforts to scale up the number of non-formal education centres. All these components will be pursued together with efforts to develop capacity of the Ministry of Education, including the ability to address violence in schools, while simultaneously providing also for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in schools. UNICEF will:

- Provide 20 prefabricated classrooms for 1,600 children.
- Rehabilitate/construct WASH facilities in 150 schools to benefit 16,000 children.
- Provide remedial and accelerated learning for 4,000 children.

LEBANON

The paramount focus is the need for learning opportunities to the vast number of Syrian refugee children currently out of school. Intervention strategies include the Back-to-Learning campaign to boost enrollment, a Non-Formal Education (NFE), quality learning and adapted curricula, psychosocial support, school rehabilitation, youth program and related efforts to benefit Lebanese and Palestinian children in the public system.

The NFE program will provide various learning opportunities tailored to needs of out-of-school children affected by the Syrian crisis. Based on their specific needs, children are enrolled into programs that vary from basic literacy and numeracy education to a more structured Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), or a catch-up program that increases readiness for formal education. Those programs will focus particularly on the growing numbers of children in informal tented settlements across the country. Mobile approaches will be applied, and all non-formal programs will seek to foster reintegration into the formal sector as soon as possible.

Psychosocial Support (PSS) and structured recreational activities will be provided to targeted classrooms. It is essential for affected children to feel safe and protected in their learning spaces. PSS ensures a sense of normalcy for children and builds their readiness to learn, in addition to supporting school retention by providing adequate referral and care for children who need specific counseling. UNICEF will:

- Conduct outreach activities to encourage enrollment including distribution of school bags and stationary for 4,100 children. UNICEF will also cover enrollment fees and assist with transportation costs.
- Rehabilitate existing learning spaces and/or create temporary learning spaces for 30 schools for 4,100 children. Rehabilitation efforts will address the specific challenges girls face in accessing and remaining in schools and the specific needs for children with disabilities.
- Provide “catch-up” classes, remedial education, psychosocial support, recreation activities in non-formal settings for 4,100 children.

TURKEY

Children in all camps and across provinces hosting Syrian refugees in Turkey require investment to support access and quality of learning. In order to increase access, prefabricated classrooms and/or existing schools/other spaces will be rehabilitated and refurbished, so children with disabilities can also access and utilize facilities, including WASH in schools. Remedial classes will also support students who have not attended school since they arrived from Syria. UNICEF and its partners will work to further promote children's well-being and school attendance through school health programs, which includes school feeding to children in non-camp settings. This will work together with conditional cash transfers to vulnerable families to protect children and promote school attendance. UNICEF will provide:

- School bags and stationary for 40,000 children.
- Four (4) prefabricated classrooms fully equipped with WASH facilities and school equipment for 5,760 children.
- "Catch-up" classes, remedial education, psychosocial support and recreation activities for 5,760 children.

Program Implementation

As the tension intensifies in the crisis, the humanitarian access still remains limited in certain hot spot areas, posing a major obstacle for project implementation and monitoring. Despite such difficult situations coupled with insecurity, UNICEF will maintain and maximize the partnership with local government and its partners in managing and monitoring the implementation of this program. UNICEF has partnerships with a range of international and local NGOs who can bring in-depth knowledge of the local context to the partnerships and help navigate access to marginalized target groups to maximize the reach and effectiveness of this program.

Impact of Your Investment

At this critical time in the lives of the children of Syria, we hope you will seize the opportunity to partner with the U.S. Fund for UNICEF and the Education Above All Foundation. Together, we can ensure these children continue their education during this time of crisis. Thanks to the generosity of the Foundation, **your investment will have double the impact** and will support UNICEF's effort to reach 586,600 children and 300 teachers by:

- Increasing access to safe learning spaces and learning materials by distributing school bags to 562,100 children and providing 2,000 school-in-a-box kits and 900 recreation kits.
- Expanding access to remedial education, recreational activities and psychosocial support for at least 24,000 children through school clubs.
- Strengthening alternative education programs for at least 500,000 out-of-school children through the self-learning program and Curriculum B textbooks.
- Constructing more than 80 pre-fabricated classrooms and rehabilitating at least 330 schools (includes WASH facilities).
- Supporting teacher training initiatives for at least 300 teachers.

We invite you to join us to be **champions for the children of Syria**. With your help, we can ensure the number of children without access to education during this conflict is ZERO.

On behalf of the children of Syria, thank you.



A 12-year-old girl raises her hand to answer a question in a UNICEF-supported tented classroom at the Kawergosk camp for Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. © UNICEF/Noorani

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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to save and improve children's lives, providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief, and more. The U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy, and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when ZERO children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, please visit unicefusa.org.

Program Overview and Activities

No.	Activity	Beneficiaries		First Year (Academic Year)				Second Year (Academic Year)			
		1 st Year	2 nd Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SYRIA											
1	Provision of school bags – 500,000 OOSC	200,000	300,000		x	x	x		x	x	x
2	Provision of 2,000 school-in-a-box	40,000	40,000	x	x			x	x		
3	Provision of 900 recreation kits	40,500	40,500	x	x			x	x		
4	Provision of 100 prefabricated classrooms with furniture	2,100	2,100		x	x	x		x	x	x
5	Light rehabilitation for 100 schools	25,000	25,000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7	Support school clubs – 24,000 OOSC	12,000	12,000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8	Self-learning materials – 500,000 OOSC	200,000	300,000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9	Curriculum B textbooks – 500,000 OOSC	200,000	300,000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10	Training of trainers for alternative education	200	300		x	x		x	x		
11	Monitoring and evaluation	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Beneficiaries - 1st Year											
JORDAN											
1	Provide 20 pre-fabricated classrooms		1,600	x	x						
2	Rehabilitate/ Construct WASH facilities in 150 schools		16,000	x	x						
4	Provide remedial and accelerated learning		4,000	x	x	x	x				
IRAQ											
1	School bags/stationary for 18,000 children		18,000	x	x						
2	Transportation for 1,000 school children		1,000	x	x	x	x				
3	Provide pre-fab classrooms/rehabilitate existing classrooms and provide WASH facilities for 50 schools		7,500	x	x						
4	'Catch-up' classes, remedial education, psychosocial support, recreation activities in formal and non-formal settings		26,500	x	x	x	x				
5	Component of catch-up support for slow learners in existing teacher training		Beneficiary Figure reflected in Activity 4	x							
6	Peace building program and include in teacher training		Beneficiary Figure reflected in Activity 4	x							
7	Teacher training/material for 300 teachers		300		x	x					
LEBANON											
1	Undertake outreach activities to encourage enrolment including distribution of school bags and stationary for 4,100 children		4,100	x							
2	Learning spaces (i.e. rehabilitate existing spaces, and/or create temporary learning spaces) for 30 schools		4,100	x	x						
3	'Catch-up' classes, remedial education, psychosocial support, recreation activities in non-formal settings		4,100	x	x	x	x				
TURKEY											
1	Schools bags/stationary to 40,000 children		40,000	x	x						
2	4 pre-fabricated schools fully equipped with WASH facilities, school equipment		5,760	x	x						
3	'Catch-up' classes, remedial education, psychosocial support, recreation activities		5,760	x	x	x	x				

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The Impact of Your Support

At this time, we hope you will consider a gift to ensure the children of Syria continue their education during this crisis. Thanks to UNICEF's partnership with the Education Above All Foundation, your gift will have **twice** the impact:

\$10,000 will provide school bags and school supplies to approximately 1,850 out-of-school children in Syria. Each school bag contains basic stationary, pencils, erasers, pens, rulers, notebooks and color pencils.

\$25,000 will provide self-learning materials for 5,750 children. The self-learning materials cover four core subjects (Arabic, English, Math and Science) for education grades 1-9. The self-learning materials also includes a training package for teachers and parents who play a key role in supporting self-learning at home or in the community.

\$50,000 will support four school clubs to benefit 1,200 students. A school club is a place where children can participate in remedial classes and receive psychosocial support through recreational activities under the care of qualified school staff.

\$100,000 will provide light rehabilitation of classrooms and WASH (water, sanitation and health) facilities in six schools, which will benefit 3,000 children. This is considered a top priority by the Syrian Ministry of Education because it will help accommodate the return of children who have been displaced and excluded from the education system, such as girls and children with disabilities.

\$250,000 will establish 22 prefabricated classrooms for 1,540 children. These classrooms will provide a safe and secure space in which children who have been displaced can learn. A pre-fabricated classroom is a steel structure with typical floor dimensions of 5m x 7m, and are equipped with student desks and chairs. These classrooms are used at double-shift schools to accommodate over 70 students per classroom.

\$500,000 will provide school bags and stationary (i.e. pencils, pens, textbooks) for 9,000 Syrian refugee out-of-school children and teacher training and materials (i.e. flip charts, exercise books, alphabet posters, teaching clock, etc.) for 300 teachers in Iraq. Teacher training will include improving teaching and learning methodologies, training to provide psychosocial support and inclusive management of classrooms to help assist learners who need extra support (this includes collaborative learning and peer teaching).