

Submitted: 18 April 2017; Accepted: 10 July 2018

# Syrian Refugees' Children Instructional Challenges and Solutions in Jordan: Teachers' and Parents' Perspectives

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## Abstract

*As a neighboring country to Syria, Jordan received a large influx of Syrian refugees whose children's education has been a huge challenge to the Jordanian educational system. The present qualitative study investigates the educational challenges Syrian refugee children faced with possible solutions to overcome them. Therefore, a conveniently selected sample of twenty four participants (twelve Syrian refugee teachers and twelve Syrian refugee parents) filled out an open questionnaire on Syrian refugee students' instructional challenges, the reasons for such challenges and the solutions to surmount them. The major challenges, according to Syrian refugees' teachers, revolved around lack of achievement among refugee children, lack of devotion to school learning responsibilities, insufficient refugee teacher training, refugee children's behavioral difficulties and overcrowded classrooms. According to Syrian refugee parents, most of these challenges encompassed deterioration in instructional achievement, lack of school assignments, carelessness to achieve well in Math and English, lack of high qualifications among refugee parents, difference in interest in French in Syria and English in Jordan, violent behaviors among refugee children because of the war situation and absence of one of their parents. Other challenges included vague attitudes towards learning, lack of concentration in exams, quick irritation, stubbornness, negative attitude toward schooling, mis-behaviors by classmates and difference between school and home instruction. Most of the reasons for such challenges belonged to the war condition and the psychological traumas and social circumstances of refugee children. Recommended proposals embodied strengthening school/parents communication, training refugee teachers and tackling refugee children's psychological problems.*

**Keywords:** Syrian refugees; challenges; methods of teaching refugee children; refugee teacher education.

## Introduction

The Syrian refugees' crisis has escalated recently causing dislocations beyond countries of the region with an awful humanitarian refugee suffering (Yazgan, Utku and Sirkeci, 2015). As a result, this crisis has so far laid huge additional strains on the capacities and resources of host countries and also on the world humanitarian system (Zetter and Ruadel (2017). Syrian Forced Migration (IASFM, 2017) concerns the refugee's movements and displacements because of several causes such as war and conflicts. As a consequence of the Syrian crisis, Syrian refugees fled and

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migrated to neighboring and other world countries among which is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Most of Syrian refugees are now living in camps while some are living in Jordanian urban cities. Those refugee children living in urban Jordanian cities have been enrolled in the Ministry of Education schools through evening double shift schooling administered by the Ministry of Education in co-operation with specialized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and UNHCR.

### **Background of the Study**

As a state at the mid of a region with constant political and military conflicts, Jordan has received several waves of refugees starting with the aftermath of 1948 Israeli-Arab conflict when hundreds of Palestinian refugees fled to Jordan. This required Jordan government together with UNRWA to secure an educational assistance for Palestinian Refugees. Likewise, the 2003 US war in Iraq put new strains on the Jordanian educational system. Recently, the 2011 conflict in Syria has also strained the Jordanian educational resources and capabilities (Dhingra, 2016).

To illustrate further the educational crisis of Syrian refugee children education, it is worthwhile to throw light on the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan. As estimated by UNHCR, Syrian refugees totalled 4.9 million until Mid of March, 2017. Of those refugees, Jordan received a *population of 1.3 million people. Indeed, this number is around one fourth of the population of Jordan. Forty nine 49% are aged between 18-59 where about 19% aged between 5-11 officially registered refugees. Meanwhile, urban cities in Jordan have received 657,000 Syrian refugees of whom (177,070) were living in Amman. Other cities had 158,585 living in Mafraq, 35,535 in Irbid in the north of Jordan and 108,826 in Zarqa, a city close to Amman (Jordan Times Newspaper referring to Syria Regional Refugee Response's Inter-Agency Information and UNHCR's website ( March, 21, 2017). Fakhoury, the Jordanian planning minister (2017), noted that Jordan received 13% of the UNCHR registered refugees, in addition to hundreds of thousands of unregistered refugees from Syria. He, however, indicated the various challenges of the Syrian crisis on Jordan's different sectors.*

Reporting on the educational challenges of Syrian children, the UNHCR (2016), mentions a set of learning issues Syrian children struggle with in host countries. These embody the lack of enrollment in schools and the language displacement where the children, sometimes, find difficulty with the Arab dialect used in the host Arab country. Meanwhile, these children are faced with the difficulty of learning English or French where the former found to be more challenging. The second challenge is that the school



environment is perceived as scary where bullying spreads. This situation is worsened by the inadequate preparation of refugee teachers to offer classroom protection and reduce the traumatic situation of the refugee children. The third trouble concerns recourses, where refugees do not find sufficient money to buy material or disburse instruction fees and transportation. Therefore, the refugee children will be forced to seek work to help reduce the monetary suffering of their families. The fourth issue seems to do with the lots of agencies and institutions ready to help, but their work is impeded by top down solutions and the duplication of their responsibilities. The last challenge, according to the above international organisation, concerns the difference between home education and that of host country.

However, to help enrolment of refugee children, three types of schools were allocated by the Ministry of Education in Jordan in co-operation with international organizations and agencies to look after the education of the Syrian refugee children. These include refugee camps schools, evening double shift schools with a total number of 200 and finally the catch-up education schooling which aims to register students who missed more than three schooling years. This illustrates the severity of the refugee crisis and the resulting crisis of educating refugee children as the main purpose of the present study.

### **Teaching refugee children**

The schooling and teaching of refugee children has been, as pointed out above, a big challenge to the Jordanian Government and the Ministry of Education, in particular. It is worthwhile to mention that there is little research that has so far addressed the educational situation of the Syrian refugee children. However, few recent research studies revealed significant educational difficulties encountered by immigrant young students (Palaiologou 2007), (Zinovyeva et al. 2011, Barban and White 2011 and Mantovani 2008), (Cebolla-Boado and Medina 2011 and Vaquera and Kao 2012 ) and (Seabra and Mateus 2011).

The escalation of the crisis of the Syrian refugees has broadened and so strained the host countries educational capability. According to Yazgan, Utku and Sirkeci (2015), since 2011 and as a result of the growing conflict in Syria, migration at a large scale has emerged and caused group dislocations in countries of the region and beyond. According to them, the crisis has risen and its impact widened from host countries in the region toward countries of the European continent. These authors also indicated that the Syrian crisis is the main reason for the increase in displacement and



the consequential dreadful humanitarian condition in the region. Therefore, they called for undertaking analysis studies to understand the Syrian migration crisis.

The education and schooling of the refugee children may be impeded by several factors such as the level of education of their parents. Here, a relevant issue emerges which is the level of education of the parents and the associated degree of familiarity with the host country's educational system. This issue is perceived as a factor behind refugee children's educational underachievement. In this vein, Raporat (2016) conducted a research analysis which included 34 studies for 29 multiple groups of refugee children. He suggested that most of the refugee children's hardship in learning stemmed from misunderstanding of their parent concerning a different educational system. Other causes included stereotyping on the part of refugee teachers and the sort of bullying and discrimination refugee children endured. The researcher referred to some literature which revealed that refugee kids could also struggle with behavioral, social interactional and intellectual difficulties.

In the same context, Alter (1992) argue that the current literature on parent-school communication is reviewed and placed in the context of home-school variables relating to academic success. Likewise, several other researchers investigated multiple issues related to the teaching of refugee students. For instance, Yau (1995) carried out a study to identify among other things the schooling needs of refugee children with the aim to find out the method by which teachers and the staff deal with refugees and their difficulties. He also aimed to identify the ways through which teachers, schools and the school system account for the social, academic and emotional needs of new immigrants. The study revealed the multiple backgrounds of the students and their complicated needs. It also revealed the shortage of the preparation of the refugee teachers. Consequently, the study recommended the provision with information for refugees, their teachers and the students themselves and also called for developing whole school approaches to care about the needs of these students.

Further, Vincent and Warren (1999) conducted a small qualitative study to identify the distance between the rhetoric of the engagement of the refugee parents in the educational process, and the actuality of school work in the United Kingdom. This project investigated the factors which support or restrain home-school communication and relationship between schools and refugee families. They found that refugee families in Britain are repeatedly socially, politically and economically disabled.

Refugee children schooling may also be obstructed by the kind of traumas these children experience as a result of migration.. As for the traumas



of refugee children, MacKay and Travares (2005) reported on the effect of war on students in Manitoba schools. They reflected on the various types of traumas experienced in refugee camps and the associated interrupted schooling. According to them, the effects of war if unhandled severely impacts the educational level of war affected children. Hence, they called for specialized programs to help refugee families and their children. They called for clustering these students and provide bridging and new comer programs. They also mentioned that the refugee students experienced lack of adjustment to school learning and were slow in learning concepts, learning skills and learning other languages. Moreover, they reported on acculturation stress and differences in expectations of the school between their home and host country.

A document based on the educational needs of young refugees in Victoria (refugee education Partnership Project, 2007) called for the development of a coherent education strategy for young refugees. For instance, this strategy should take into consideration, among other things, the learning needs of refugee students. It also called for analysing refugee student development throughout their educational process. It called for measuring effectiveness of schools to account for refugee students' educational needs. Furthermore, it encouraged the development of a state-wide professional progress strategy for teachers to raise their skills to develop language and literacy support across the target curriculum.

The preparation of the refugee teachers and the selection of the teaching methods have been considered by some research among the strategies to better educate refugee children. For example, Dooley (2009) envisioned a different approach to teaching refugee students in secondary schools. This approach requires all teachers to expand their pedagogical skills to embody teaching language and literacy alongside with the content of the subject area. It encourages ESL teachers and content area teachers to find links between the refugee students' conceptual knowledge with that which belongs to other students using an approach that considers their distinctive literacy needs. It also should build upon the prior knowledge and life experiences prior to and after immigration.

Reflecting on the experiences which are likely to impact refugee children learning, Macksoud (2000) mentioned various types of them that children may have in war-affected countries which are liable to impact their development and anxiety level. These embody the death of a parent or close relative, exposure to combat, experiencing a refugee life, long separation from their parents or main care givers, exposure to violence, exposure to violence as a victim, suffering physical injuries, participation in armed forced and war-caused poverty. He encouraged the identification of



the different experiences which cause the refugee child's stress. Meanwhile, he suggested that teachers should understand the emotional problems of the refugee children and to discuss their problems.

Furthermore, other researchers called for improving the quality of education offered to refugee students and caring about their psychological conditions. For instance, Woods (2009) suggested that schools should play three roles in refugee children's education. First, they should provide a social and just education for refugee children. These encompass provision with top quality teaching and learning related to print literacy as well as English as a second language and academic foundational knowledge. A second role belonged to developing citizenship and access to cultural and social capital by refugee students. The final role had to do with the provision with welfare and so addressing issues of trauma, stress, violence and disengagement that are possibly brought by refugee students.

A very related issue is the gap between host and refugee children's school achievement. In this context, some research addressed the gaps in educational achievement between host and refugee children. For instance, Schnell and Azzolini (2015) examined the various educational gaps with reference to immigrants' youths in 4 new immigration countries such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The analysis revealed large gaps between immigrant youths' achievement and natives of these countries. The drawbacks encountered by immigrant children were referred to economic as well as material resources offered to them, the educational level of the parents who did not respond positively to these differences.

Finally, some proposals were offered to reduce the severity of the educational problems of refugee children. For example, Solis (2017) suggested six solutions to help lessen the educational crisis of the Syrian refugees' children. These embodied the need for adequately provide fund to schools and universities to cope with requirements of educating the children of Syrian refugees. Secondly, he suggested the expansion of vocational training and, thirdly, he suggested the development of a curriculum for Syrian refugees' children with a proposal to use blended learning. The fourth suggestion was to involve Syrian refugee teachers in the teaching of their children and, finally, to develop tests instead of transcripts where the outcomes can be used to enroll students in universities.

To sum up, it appears that very little was written on the Syrian refugees' children educational challenges. Therefore, the present study addresses a set of refugee children educational issues and seeks to find out some possible solutions to reduce the intensity of these challenges and enable refugee children to overcome their educational challenges.



### **Statement of the problem**

As outlined above, the crisis and tension in Syria pushed thousands of Syrian refugees to flee Syria and so to seek refuge in neighboring countries. Of these countries, Jordan has received around one and a third million refugees as government resources reveal. Jordanian schools have started to accommodate and enroll Syrian refugee students, especially through specialized refugee schools in the camps. For those living among Jordanian citizens in urban areas of Jordan like Amman, evening-shift schools were assigned for the purpose of educating these refugee students. Through contact with school principals and teachers, it appears that these refugee children encounter several educational challenges. Syrian refugee children themselves suffer from the bad conditions of which refugees complain. The present study investigates the instructional challenges of these students from the perspective of their teachers and parents and seeks possible solutions to overcome such challenges to help improve the refugee children instructional environment.

### **Questions of the study**

What follows are the research questions:

What are the Syrian refugees' children instructional challenges as perceived by their teachers?

What are the Syrian refugees' children instructional challenges as perceived by their parents?

What are the solutions for Syrian refugees' children instructional challenges as perceived by their teachers?

What are the solutions for Syrian refugees' children instructional challenges as perceived by their parents?

How do the expectations of parents and teachers address the challenges of the refugee children?

How are refugee children's challenges addressed by Non-Governmental Organization and UNHCR?

### **Limitations of the study**

This study was limited to twenty four teachers and Syrian refugee children's parents with twelve in each category. The instrument used was an open questionnaire by the respondent on the challenges Syrian refugees children encountered in their learning of the school subjects in the educational evening shift schools allocated for their children by the Jordanian government. The study took place during the second semester, 2017.



## **Methodology**

### **Sample**

To achieve the purpose of this study, the researcher used a convenient sample of twelve (12) teachers and (12) parents. The participants were those teachers and parents who agreed to be respondents to the open questionnaire. Teachers who taught the Syrian refugees' children filled out an open questionnaire reporting on the various challenges these students encountered in their schools in Jordan and reflected on the reasons for these challenges and the solutions to overcome them. On the other hand, (12) female parents filled out the open questionnaire and reported on their children's instructional challenges, causes and the solutions they suggested to sort out these challenges.

### **Instrument**

The researcher used the open questionnaire to gather data about Syrian refugee children's challenges and looked for solutions for them in the first semester 2016-2017. He applied the open questionnaire to a convenient sample of twenty four participants evenly split into refugee children's parents and their teachers. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) encouraged using open-ended questionnaires to collect qualitative data. The open-ended questionnaire used in this study, addressed the Syrian refugee school children's challenges as viewed by their teachers, the reasons for these challenges and the solutions to surmount them. The same open ended questions were responded to by parents of the Syrian refugee children.

### **Data analysis**

Data collected via the open questionnaire instrument were qualitatively analyzed. To analyze qualitative data, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested first that the researcher should be familiar with the data. Then he/she generates codes, searches and reviews themes defines them and names themes and finally reports findings. The researcher of the current study first summarized the received responses. He then condensed them to allow for patterns concerning Syrian refugee students' challenges and their solutions to emerge. Then he tabulated these findings for the purpose of this study. The researcher eliminated unnecessary data.

### **Validity and reliability of the instrument**

The open questionnaire was shown to six specialists in curriculum and instruction and teaching methods from Jordanian universities who suggested modifying few questions which the researcher carried them out





and the final version was sifted to use for the reserach purpose. The final version of the open questionnaire was administered to the sample subjects in the first semester 2016-2017. As for the reliability of the findings, the author conducted inter-rater reliability where two analysts analyzed responses to the open questionnaire then the inter-rater reliability was computed as % 88 which was considered high and so fitted the purpose of this study.

## Findings of the study

### The Syrian Refugees' children instructional challenges

Following are the instructional challenges reported by 12 teachers who taught Syrian refugee children in the first semester 2017-2018 in Amman Governorate.

**Table 1:** Syrian refugee children's challenges from the perspective of their teachers

No	Educational Challenges Syrian refugee children encountered
1	Antagonist verbal and physical behaviors among Syrian refugee children
2	Maladaptation due to transition from home country into a refugee country
3	Low instructional achievement due to the conflict in Syria
4	Lack of refugee teacher training and preparation which negatively affect the refugee student's achievement of intended instructional outcomes
5	Use of traditional teaching methods among teachers who teach refugee children
6	Shortage of teachers of refugee children
7	Alternating teachers from time to time which affects refugee children's achievement
8	Oercrowded classrooms (above 45 students per class)
9	Lack of instructional technology media
10	Lack of cohesiveness among some refugee families
11	Literacy problems manifested in reading and writing difficulties
12	Difficulty in math education
13	Lack of parental follow up of their children's education
14	Lack of devotion to school instruction and adherence to its administrative among refugee children
15	Lack of commitment and responsiveness to classroom disciplinary measures



As displayed above, the challenges Syrian refugee children complain of concerned some behavioral problems, lack of teacher training, lack of sufficient parental follow up and lack of sufficient interest among refugee children in school achievement. Following are the reasons for these problems.

**Table 2:** Reasons behind Syrian students' challenges from teachers' point of view

No	Reasons for Syrian students' challenges
1	Insufficient attention paid to the refugee children by their parents
2	The migration situation of the Syrian refugees impacted their children education
3	Awful social and psychological conditions of parents who live under bad economic conditions
4	Missing classes by refugee students over one year of migration which negatively influence their academic achievement
5	Bad fiscal conditions of refugee children because of the war crisis and the resultant migration calamity
6	Some cultural differences between home culture and that of the host country
7	Lack of parental attention to their children's educational achievement
8	Lack of communication skills by some refugee children

Most reasons for refugee students' challenges, according to their teachers, who participated in the present study, had to do with the conflict in Syrian and the miserable conditions of refugee children. Other causes embody missing classes by refugee children and experiencing certain cultural differences between home and host country.

**Table 3:** Solutions for the instructional challenges Syrian Refugee children encounter from their teachers' point of view

No.	Suggested Solution
1	Conducting meetings and workshops with parents to discuss related instructional issues
2	Using educational media and technology tools to improve educational achievement of refugee children
3	Reducing the number of students per classroom
4	Intensifying instructional classroom work
5	Reducing extra school work
6	Improving the instructional process to address essential needs among refugee children



7	Collaborating with organizations such as Save Children to reduce violence among Syrian Refugee children through encouraging them to practice drawing and do some physical activities
8	Conducting remedial instruction for low achieving students
9	Raising parents' awareness concerning their children emotional development
10	Holding training courses for teachers who teach Syrian children
11	Appointing counselors to care about emerging problems of refugee children
12	Encouraging refugee teacher preparation and sustainable professional development
13	Improving the salaries of the teachers who teach Syrian refugee children
14	Holding meetings with parents to alert them to follow up their children's education
15	Offering poor Syrian children some school study equipment
16	Offering Syrian teachers courses on classroom management to handle refugee students' learning problems
17	Offering teachers a training on teaching strategies such as cooperative learning and learning through gaming to facilitate students' integration with Jordanian children
18	Offering teacher training courses to refugee teachers on refuging psychology

Most of the solutions offered above call for the improvement of the educational outcomes of the refugee children, providing sustainable professional development for teachers and holding meetings with the parents to discuss educational issues of their children.

On the other hand, 12 refugee parents reflected on their children's instructional challenges and suggested solutions to overcome them. Table 4 below displays related findings.

**Table 4:** Syrian children's challenges as viewed by their parents

No	Challenge encountered by Syrian refugee children from parents' point of view
1	Deterioration in the instructional level of the refugee student due to migration crisis
2	Lack of school assignments to the refugee children
3	Carelessness of their children in math and English



4	Lack of high parent qualification
5	Difference in interest in French as a foreign language in Syria and English as a foreign language in Jordan
6	Violent behavior of refugee children at home because of the war situation or the absence of their father
7	Lack of sufficient interest in English reading and writing skills
8	Lack of refugee children's concentration in school exams
9	Rapid resentment at home
10	Stubbornness among refugee children
11	Rejection of schooling
12	School leaving by refugee children to find some work to improve the financial situation of their families
13	Difference between school and home instruction

According to refugee parents, various challenges, encounter their children in their quest to catch up schooling. Most of these challenges revealed the refugee children's low achievement, negative attitudes towards schooling, difference between home and host country culture, lack of concentration among refugee children and finally the insufficient school assignments.

<b>Solutions to overcome refugee children challenges from the point of view of their parents</b>
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Parents should have more communication with refugee teachers
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Parents need to meet with teachers to discuss their children's educational matters
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Teacher should be strict in teaching refugee children
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More care and attention by parents should be given to their children study
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Refugee children should be encouraged to do English study assignments
Teachers should provide feedback on refugee childrens' learning performance
Connections between home and school should be strengthened

The table above indicates that teachers need to co-operate more with the parents, intensifying instruction of the refugee children and considering their educational needs.

In response to a question on refugee students' challenges, one teacher listed the challenges that the Syrian refugee children faced by saying:

We met several challenges with the Syrian refugee children such as the rise in antagonism against each other in all its forms, maladjustment because of migration, weakness and educational miss-achievement. The reasons for these problems are referred to the change in educational system between native country and host country, family upbringing at home, lack of social skills and lack of training on these skills at home. Other reasons have to do with the lack of follow up by parents of refugee families who might care more about finding work to offer these children basic needs. Some of these problems were handled through counseling classes for these children both group and individualized and finally equipping them with social skills. Among these skills were communication skills such as the skill of self expression, self- management and asking for appropriate assistance. Finally, I suggest training children of refugee families on how to manage their time.

A Syrian refugee parent commented on their children's challenges and hinted at the reasons behind them.

Various problems encountered embodying difficulty with the English language and holding less positive attitude towards reading and writing in English, lack of concentration during exams and learning classes and the overload of the school assignments together with problems such as anger, stubbornness, rejection of the school due to feeling of boredom and due to bullying and bad behaving school classmates.

Another parent hoped that the school should be responsive and so should show more co-operation.

I hope the school cooperates with us to care about these children and that constant meetings with the school should be held from time to time. The school should solve the problems the students face.



These quotes illustrate the types of the challenges encountered by Syria refugee children in Jordan.

### **Discussion of the results**

This study accumulated evidence from twenty four participants evenly split into refugee teachers and parents. They filled out an open questionnaire on the instructional challenges Syrian refugees children encountered. They also suggested solutions for these challenges. The study revealed the major challenges these students met, according to teachers, which embodied the lack of achievement, lack of devotion to school learning responsibilities, lack of sufficient teacher training, behavioral difficulties and overcrowded classrooms. According to the refugee parents, most challenges focused on deterioration in the refugee students' instructional achievement, insufficient school assignments, and carelessness of the refugee students about learning school subjects such as math and English. They also mentioned the lack of high qualification by parents, difference in interest in French by Syrian educational system and English language by Jordanian educational system, in addition to, refugee children's violent behavior. Other challenges covered the negative attitudes towards learning English, especially reading and writing skills, the lack of concentration during exams, anger at home, stubbornness, rejection of study and bad behaved classmates. Most of the reasons for these challenges were attributed to the war situation and the refugee children's psychological and social conditions. According to the Zaatari Refugee Camp website (2017 October 3), Syrian refugee children face several challenges that are not applicable to the education of refugee students' population in refugee camp schools, but also to the education of other refugee students' populations in urban areas in Jordan that got a huge influx of Syrian refugees. Jordanian urban public schools often witness over-crowded classrooms. Other reasons might have to do with the issue that public schools in Jordan use the Jordanian curriculum while the needs of refugee students should be taken into consideration.

The refugee children's educational challenges and the causes of them, indicate how much the refugee children suffer from these various types of educational problems. While some of these challenges may be sorted out through more co-operation between parents and schools as well as the improvement of the refugee children educational conditions, the solutions for several others will require long term solutions. Right now, neighboring countries such as Jordan are mostly concerned with enrolling refugee students in schools in order not to miss any of their schooling years



therefore 'catch up' schools were allocated. Jordan has been generous in providing free access to schooling though this has strained its educational resources. Still, much is needed in terms of increasing funds from international donors to provide education for refugee children and maintaining quality education for Jordanian students. It is also advisable to train some Syrian refugee teachers from among the Syrian refugee population because this will assist more in the education of refugee children (Barriers to educating, 2017).

The present study also revealed the struggle by refugee children with behavioral and attention issues, social interaction and intellectual challenges. Misconduct, stubbornness and lack of devotion to school disciplinary measures are evident among refugee children as revealed by parents and teachers' responses. Research conducted by several researchers, especially in southern Europe by Palaiologou, ( 2007) , (Zinovyeva et al. 2011 , Barban and White 2011 and Mantovani 2008), (Cebolla-Boado and Medina 2011 and Vaquera and Kao 2012 ) and (Seabra and Mateus 2011) reflected on the difficulties refugees children encountered.

Due to the general weakness in English, many Syrian children find it difficult to adjust to an educational system where many Jordanian children counterparts outperform them in English language achievement. One teacher pointed out that Syrian refugee students insist on the English language teachers to explain things in Arabic and to frequently use Arabic in the English classroom.

There seems to be a clear consensus between parents and teachers regarding the challenges encountered by Syrian refugee children. There is also an agreement concerning the possible solutions to overcome these challenges. Therefore, positive co-operation between school administration and teachers, on one hand, and refugee parent, on the other, is indispensable. Alter (1992) called for communication between parents and teachers.

In light of the findings of this study, a set of solutions are proposed that focus mainly on strengthening school and parents bonds and training of the teachers who teach Syrian refugees children. Raporat (2016) pointed out that most of the refugee children's hardship in learning stemmed from misunderstanding of their parents about a different educational system together with stereotypes possessed by teachers and the sort of bullying and discrimination refugee children experienced. Therefore, it is proposed to get refugee parents to be more involved in their children's education. They should help in overcoming their children's instructional challenges. Hoffmann and Samuk (2016) encouraged Syrian immigrants to develop



opportunities to guarantee better education for their children. Similarly, the participants of the London conference (2016) suggested proposals to avoid losing any generation of children due to Syrian crisis. They called for offering equal education for both female and male refugee children.

### **How do the expectations of parents and teachers address the challenges of the refugee children?**

Major expectations among parents participating in this study focused on getting their children achieve better in their school learning which could be better realized through strong connection with the school teachers. School teachers themselves concerning this connection called for more co-operation with parents. The parents expect the school to give more assignments to their children to keep them involved more with learning and also expect the teachers to provide them with feedback on their learning. Teachers do not seem to be in disagreement on this issue, especially they call for intensifying school work to these children and want to develop training programs for some of the teachers to develop their skills to care about refugee children learning. A director of noe charitable society reflected on the psychological pains of the children of the refugees.

### **How are refugee children's challenges addressed by NGOs and UNHCR?**

It appears that the psychological pain and stress the refugee children suffer from signify the major challenge for the host country educational specialists and directors as well as for NGOs and the UNHCR. Several learning challenges were addressed by the UNHCR (2016) at the international level which encompass the lack of enrollment in schools, the language displacement where the children are sometimes finding difficulty with the Arab dialect used in the host Arab country, learning English or French where the former found to be more challenging. The second challenge is that the school environment is scary where bullying usually spreads. Other challenges concerned lack of teacher preparation to offer classroom protection and reduce traumatic situations of the refugee children. The third trouble concerns, according to UNHCR, recourses, where they do not find sufficient money to buy material or disburse instruction fees or transportation. The fourth challenge seems to do with the lots of agencies and institutions ready to help, but their work is obstructed by top down solutions and the duplication of responsibilities. The last challenge concerns the difference between home and host country kind of education. NGOs assist some times in reducing such pains and stresses where for





example in the case of the Syrian refugee crisis, the author himself contacted several community organizations which helped to offer some help to Syrian refugees. These helped in offering the basic needs for refugee children and facilitated communication with local schools to enroll refugee children and to catch up with school instruction. They also offered basic educational needs for the refugee children by contacting international and national donors.

A director of one of the NGOs, in Jordan, expressed their role toward refugee families and their school children by saying:

*Our charitable society besides receiving refugee families and giving them lectures on how to save the basic life needs for them and their children, the charity enabled families to find suitable schools for their children and assisted in offering necessary school needs.*

The same director asserted that their city in the north of Jordan which is close to the Syrian borders has 300 NGOs whose roles, according to him, overlap and seem chaotic. He called for reducing their number and looked for quality roles of these NGOs.

### **Issues emanating from the above discussion**

Issue one: Consideration and paying special attention to the Syrian refugee children instruction by school teachers and parents

Issue two: The need for conducting refugee teacher training to care about Syrian refugee children's instruction

Issue three: Qualifying teachers of refugee children to provide counseling for stubborn children, careless and heart-broken children and also for those who suffer from some broken families and who are subject to bullying and marginalization by other students

Issue four: Developing teaching methods for teaching Syrian refugee children.

Issue five: Encouraging refugee children to do their home assignments and devote themselves more to achieve school learning objectives

Issue six: Giving special attention to achieve cohesive refugee families.

### **Implications and recommendations**

The recommendations built upon the findings of the current study are directed to policy makers, academics, practitioners and organizations concerned with the welfare and the educational protection of the refugee children. A multi-faceted approach can be proposed to provide quality instruction to Syrian refugee children in Jordan and elsewhere in refugee host countries. This proposed approach will need a careful planning for



refugee education where Ministry of Education, Universities and international organizations and NGOs at local communities can work together and unify their strategies. This suggested approach is illustrated as follows.

Enabling governments to devise policies to develop the educational outcomes of refugee children in host countries both as short and long term educational policies

That the Ministry of Education needs to develop on-site training programme to develop the essential teaching skills among Syrian refugee teachers by training them to cope with the educational challenges of the refugee children.

The Ministry of Education can co-operate with international and national NGOs to provide counseling services to these refugee children, especially those who suffer from losing one of their parents and those who suffer from fragile families

Universities can also offer help through studying refugee children issues and work with those concerned on reducing the psychological pains and problems of the refugee children. Concerned university departments can provide essential teacher training and preparation for refugee teachers. Counselling and special education can also be provided to refugee teachers to qualify them and also to refugee children.

Tightening school-home connections to discuss issues related to the educational achievement of refugee children

Developing teaching methods to remedy educational underachievement among refugee children and to assist them to overcome their learning hardships

Selecting and qualifying teachers of refugee children from Syrian refugees specially those who have appropriate qualifications to make up for teacher shortages and assist existing Jordanian teachers who teach refugees' children.

Universities can assist the qualification and training of refugee teachers to care about the special needs and challenges of this group of refugee students and their special challenges.

The voice of NGOs and international organisation regarding the refugee children's needs and challenges should be heard.

The Ministry of Education curriculum should also incorporate the special needs and aspirations of the Syrian refugee students.

Further studies are needed to study the nature of the psychological traumas and behaviors of refugee children to avoid negative impacts on their school achievement and reduce the negative effect on the host country.



**Acknowledgement:** The author acknowledges the refugee teachers' and parents' cooperation and participation in the study. Also, thanking those school principals and NGOs who gave information about the affairs of Syrian refugees and their children's education.

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