



No Lost GENERATION INITIATIVE

Protecting the Futures of Children Affected by the Syria Crisis

ONE YEAR REPORT, September 2014

Responding to the courage of a generation

Salma is physically scarred, the result of shrapnel from a shell hitting her in the face as she hung out laundry at her home in Aleppo, Syria. A child of more than three years of bloody conflict, she is the face of a generation of young Syrians who – regardless of their embattled childhood – will one day be responsible for shaping and leading their nation as doctors, teachers, engineers, lawyers and parents.

At 16 years of age, she also represents the courage of that generation. “Life goes on even if we live in rubble; this is my home and I have nowhere else to go,” she says.

Salma embodies the millions of children for whom the last three and a half years have been marked by displacement, destruction, terror, and trauma; and who have witnessed the key pillars of childhood such as their education, health, and recreation crumble before their eyes.

She is one of the many children that the No Lost Generation initiative set out to champion, recognising that the experiences of conflict, displacement and loss have left children with deep emotional as well as physical wounds. In some cases children are being left brutalized and prone to aggression towards others and thus at risk of replicating violence as they grow into adulthood, with serious implications for the future prospects of their nation and the region.

What is the No Lost Generation Initiative?

The No Lost Generation initiative recognised that for children like Salma, merely providing shelter, or medical supplies, or repairing physical damage was insufficient if her generation was to be equipped to someday rebuild and reconcile a shattered nation.

Preventing the loss of that generation required strategic investments in the education that would provide children with the skills and sense of civic responsibility to help rebuild their society. Helping that generation also to overcome the psychological distress and traumas caused by the conflict, and reducing the potential for replicating the hatred and violence they had experienced, required an equal investment in repairing the less visible damage to children’s minds.

The No Lost Generation initiative brought together a wide range of partners – from the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and international donors – backed by a strong body of public support to

call for an initial US\$1 billion investment in expanding access to learning, providing a protective environment and broadening opportunities for children and adolescents in Syria and the neighbouring countries. It also urged a fresh commitment to stronger policies in host countries to reach more children on a sustained basis, noting that generous host communities were under immense strain as they supported refugee families.

The initiative has put education and child protection at the centre of the humanitarian response, generating critical funding to traditionally under-funded sectors in emergencies that has enabled partners to make significant strides in meeting the direct educational and psychological needs and rights of vulnerable children and supported their protection.

For Salma – and many more children like her – it has brought renewed optimism. “Education gives me a sense of hope in my life,” she says.

No Lost Generation goals at a glance

Increasing learning and skills, including increasing school enrolment and keeping children learning; improving quality of education; expanding vocational and remedial secondary education and alternative ways of delivering education; and strengthening education systems to better support learning for refugees and vulnerable host communities.

Providing a protective environment, including protecting children and upholding their human rights; providing psychosocial support, including teacher training; promoting birth registration; providing mine-risk education; strengthening institutional and community-based protection mechanisms and referral systems; and addressing gender-based violence and specific needs of adolescent girls.

Broadening opportunities for children and adolescents, including building life-skills for children and adolescents; vocational training; integrating peace building into education, sports and arts, etc.).

Increasing learning skills

Inside Syria, despite the continued fighting, official figures report 440,000 more children in school over the last year than the previous academic year.

Support to school infrastructure has helped this increase - 46 protective temporary learning spaces have been established inside Syria, and 32 damaged schools repaired, including in hard to reach areas such as Homs. 1.5 million conflict-affected children in 14 governorates of Syria received school supplies through the 'Back To Learning' campaign that began in the autumn of 2013. Special efforts were made to reach children in volatile cross-line areas – more than 128,000 children have been able to attend school clubs in cross-line areas across 10 governorates. These efforts have also aimed to help children to reconnect with friends, and focus – even for short periods of time – on regular childhood routines, which is known to have important psychological benefits.

"I like to draw things that happened in Syria because I can let out what is in my heart. I enjoy it because it reminds me of home."

Hanin, 11 years old, now living as a refugee in Jordan.

Helping children back to learning has required more than just physical space, pens and exercise books. A school feeding programme now being established inside Syria will be scaled up to reach 350,000 students by the end of 2014.

Despite the challenges inside Syria, teachers are still trying to deliver education. The No Lost Generation initiative has recognised that investing in teachers' skills improves the quality of education, promotes their own resilience and increases retention. For example, more than 550 teachers received psychosocial training during the last year.

And enabling children to learn while still caught in a war zone has called for fresh thinking. A self-learning programme, mirroring the Syrian national curriculum, is being finalised. This will allow children to learn, especially in hard to reach areas of Syria, even if they cannot attend schools.

Outside Syria, in generous host countries, the No Lost Generation initiative has contributed to an increase in enrolment in formal and non-formal learning, from 169,500 to 489,000 children over the last year.

Understanding that access to meals is a major incentive for children to come to classes, school-feeding programmes have reached 27,000 children in Jordan and Iraq.

It's vacation time in Qamishly, in northeast Syria. But for three days each week, Lama, a fifth grader, attends a school club in Safi Al-Dien Al-Heli School. "I thought coming to school in the summer would be a pain, but now I love it. I count the days to know when the next school club is so I can meet my friend Rania and the teacher," she says.

For thousands of children in Syria, summer vacation is no longer about taking a break from their hectic school lives. On the contrary, with displacement and violence regularly interrupting normal classes, many children around the country use their summer break to visit school clubs and catch up on lost school days.

Over the summer of 2014, 400 such school clubs have been providing remedial classes to 328,000 children in ten of Syria's governorates. Nearly 40 per cent of these clubs are in hard-to-reach areas.

"I have been teaching for more than 15 years, but this is the first time I've had summer clubs with my students. I see the difference these clubs can make to students' learning needs... and how their learning improves when the children interact with friends," says Itab, Lama's teacher.

The hope is that the summer classes will lead to more children enrolling in school when the new academic year begins. Even if the conflict doesn't end, learning should still be able to continue.



Lama (R), a fifth grader, attends the school club in Safi Al Dien Al Heli School three days a week.

The focus on education as a key to the future of both refugee and local children has driven efforts to build improved systems that better enable children to learn.

In Lebanon, for example, the government and its partners have, under the 'Reaching All Children with Education' (RACE) programme, committed to providing education to an average of 413,000 Syrian refugee and vulnerable Lebanese children every year for the next three years, including through a second shift in public schools. In Jordan, 98 public schools have also started operating double shifts; an immediate, short-term solution to deal with the massive number of out of school Syrian children. As a first step to expanding access to learning, the approach is welcomed by teaching professionals. "It's a child's right to be educated, anywhere he or she is," says one Jordanian teacher, now working with Syrian refugees. "Our policy is to accept as many Syrian children as possible."

Helping children to attend classes is just one part of the equation; the quality of what they learn has been another priority within the No Lost Generation initiative.

"By the time we go back home, these children will have become doctors, engineers and lawyers. If children remain ignorant, we will lose our future generations."

Nureddin, Syrian school principal, now a refugee in Turkey.

In Turkey, important steps have been taken toward normalizing the status of Syrian refugee teachers – the only teachers available in camps and among some host communities. These include a comprehensive compensation strategy, teacher training and the development of a 'code of conduct' for teachers.

In Iraq, education partners have agreed to expand refugee children's access to schools that offer the Kurdish curriculum in Arabic. Additionally, partners are discussing opportunities to support younger children to enrol in Kurdish-medium schools with additional language support.

Another critical barrier to children's learning – the financial burden faced by families – is being tackled in Egypt and Jordan, where cash grants help the neediest families send children to classes.



The degradation of the education system within Syria, and increasing pressure on educational systems in countries hosting millions of refugee children, call for bold new thinking on how to provide the children of Syria with quality learning opportunities.

One planned sub-regional initiative through the No Lost Generation approach is the Syria Curriculum and Certification Initiative (SCCI) which aims to provide vulnerable, marginalized and excluded children affected by the Syria crisis with an online learning platform that combines interactive, multimedia-enhanced approaches with online certification.

This 'Virtual School' will be adapted to the situation of displaced and refugee children, with offline solutions and facilitation in learning centres where online infrastructure is not available.



Youth worker Sevgi Biçer first noticed Bilal at the opening of Adana Sarıçam Camp's Child Friendly Space, in Turkey. "He was serious and aggressive, like an adult," she said. "The other children were painting while he just walked around, watching."

But today things are different. Music has helped Bilal, a 14-year-old from Idlib, Syria come out of his shell. He has learned how to play the guitar and the tambourine. Despite being unfamiliar with Turkish singers and lyrics he loves to play and listen to the music of his host country. When he speaks, it's clear that music and the other activities in the Child Friendly Space have helped to bring him back to life.

Bilal arrived in Turkey with his siblings 15 months ago after a difficult journey. Bilal's father, a teacher, and his mother are still in Syria and Bilal lives in the camp with his six brothers and sisters.

Back in Syria Bilal spent his free time playing football and riding his bicycle. He's had to leave all that behind and misses his life there terribly. "I miss my mother and father. We used to play with my brothers and sisters. I miss those days so much."

Youth workers like Sevgi are trying to provide students between the ages of 14 and 18 with leadership skills for the future. Many of the students are like Bilal and have been separated from their parents by the conflict. According to Sevgi, the leadership training has made a huge difference to Bilal: "As a Leader Student now, he guides other students who are younger than him."

"I keep an eye on the little kids," says Bilal. "I make sure they don't make too much noise. My favourite activities are music, art, printing, dominos and ping-pong."

Providing a protective environment

A critical focus of the No Lost Generation initiative has been on helping children affected by the conflict to recover from the hidden wounds they have suffered; the psychological stress, fear and frustration that the conflict has inflicted and the related anger and aggression that has manifested itself in some children. The No Lost Generation initiative underscored that investing in the psychological wellbeing of this generation, along with its protection from abuse and exploitation, was vital to any chance of giving Syria a more stable and secure future, reducing the risk of children and young people repeating the violence they had themselves experienced.

Inside Syria in 2014 alone, more than 70,000 children inside Syria have been provided with essential psychosocial support including counselling, recreation, and life skills that promote conflict resolution, stress reduction and confidence building. Much of this has been possible through 240 child friendly spaces.

With many agencies bringing resources to address the psychological impact of the conflict on children, the need for a common approach to quality and standards has been critical. Inside Syria, partners have developed a Unified Basic Psychosocial Support Training Package, which aims to unify the various approaches used by different agencies throughout the country via a national standard.

Given the scale and diversity of the needs faced by children, bringing services closer to the most vulnerable children has been essential. In Syria, partners have been supporting mobile psychosocial support activities for children in areas where access and security constraints have made it difficult to establish permanent child friendly spaces. Mobile teams of animators, comprised of local volunteers, move between IDP shelters and community centres to run activities over a 2-month period.

The No Lost Generation initiative has enabled well-coordinated efforts for child rights advocacy; in addition to strengthening support to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave rights violations inside Syria, partners have also adopted a regional approach to monitoring of violations. After being verified, compiled and analysed, this information is used for programmatic and advocacy purposes.

Outside Syria, psychosocial support built around counselling, recreation, and life skills has benefited over 587,000 refugee children living in host countries.

For a child, the impact of these programmes is often immediate. “I like going to the child friendly space to be with my friends. I like playing with toys and singing,” says 8 year old Raneem, who attends activities in a camp in Jordan. But her parents also see a much deeper change. In the days after fleeing Syria, the little girl would not venture more than ten metres from their caravan home. “She was always afraid, she wouldn’t even go to the toilet on her own inside the camp,” her mother recalls.

Those caring for affected children have not been overlooked. In Jordan and Lebanon, support programmes have been specifically designed for families to help promote a nurturing environment, prevent child maltreatment, and improve the role of parents in addressing their children’s psychosocial needs, with 200,000 caregivers targeted in Lebanon alone.

While practical programmes providing hands-on psychological support to children have been of vital importance in tackling the immediate effects of the traumas, fear and loss experienced by so many, a critical pillar of the No Lost Generation initiative has been building sustained approaches to protecting children at risk over the longer-term. Investment in the capacity of local agencies has been seen as central to increasing the reach and impact of child protection programmes.

“The soldiers broke into our house. They grabbed my father and started beating him with their guns. I saw blood come out of his face,” says 7-year old Ahmad. “Mum said that he was arrested, but I didn’t know what that meant. I just know that they took him far away. I couldn’t speak from that time, I lost my voice,” he says holding back his tears.

Ahmad and his family fled from Da’ara to the safety of Jordan. He is now one of the many Syrian children who have registered at schools across the country. Careful attention from teachers, and the safe environment the school has created, has helped Ahmad literally find his voice again.

“The school helped me speak again, I can read and write letters. I love school so much. (The teachers) told me that I can read stories for my dad when he is back.”

Broadening opportunities for children and adolescents

One group affected by the conflict – adolescents – is especially vulnerable. The fragmentation of their lives, combined with feelings of anger and frustration at their plight, can expose young people to hopelessness, potential aggression, and the lure of armed groups. Finding alternative outlets for their energy, and creating opportunities for them that avoid violence and conflict, are critical. All partners in the No Lost Generation initiative recognise that the needs of adolescents require much more attention.

Inside Syria, More than 27,000 adolescents have benefited from a combination of life skills education, vocational training, remedial secondary classes and psychosocial support.

Sports activities not only provide recreational opportunities, but help foster team building and understanding among children. In Syria, for example, a structured programme of soccer, aerobics, boxing and karate has been established with the support of professional Syrian coaches.

Outside Syria, Lebanon is piloting a programme to support children formerly associated with armed parties to the conflict, targeting 630 high-risk Syrian and Lebanese children. The initiative provides an integrated package of services including psychosocial support, activities on conflict resolution, vocational training, individual and group counselling, as well as access to health, legal and protection services.

In Iraq, noting the impact of recent political turmoil and conflict on young children and youth, partners have introduced programmes that support changes in behaviour that in turn can help create social conditions more conducive to peace.

Helping children to recover and heal emotionally as well as physically will be a long process. But the investments made to date, focusing as they do on a long-term approach to best equip children to face their futures with more confidence, will pay critical dividends for future peace and stability.

Fresh approaches to monitoring the impact of a long-running crisis

The scale of the Syria crisis has called for new approaches to measuring its impact, and planning better responses.

In **Jordan**, partners have been working closely with the Ministry of Education to develop an 'Open Education Management Information System' to collect and analyse data on Syrian refugee children in the camps. This has enabled the creation of a unique set of data for Syrian refugee children enrolled in public schools (in camps and host communities), which will allow for better monitoring and reduce duplication.

A data collection and data management model is being used in **Turkey** where Child Friendly Spaces are operated by youth workers from the Turkish Red Crescent, supported by Syrian volunteers aged 14-18. This approach gives older refugee children the opportunity to engage in activities in their communities while developing their skills in decision-making and leadership. Progress is tracked through an online monitoring system that links youth workers to partner organizations. While established as a basic reporting system, it now allows agencies to monitor trends and support youth workers to identify and solve problems, as well allowing timely higher-level action to be taken on issues that cannot be resolved by the frontline workers.

Similarly, in **Lebanon**, a Rapid SMS platform has been developed (using the U-report model from Uganda) for real time monitoring, initially starting with social workers, with a view to expanding it to other informants, including teachers and youth.

The way forward

As the Syrian conflict passes the three and a half year point, the context in which the No Lost Generation initiative has rolled out continues to evolve. The way forward strongly centres on the need for a long-term vision, delivering sustained support to a whole generation of children.

Moving from a humanitarian to a sustainable response. Greater attention should be placed on strengthening national institutions and public services to cope with the increased number of people left vulnerable. Humanitarian response activities will need to be pursued in conjunction with approaches that build resilience amongst affected communities. The opportunity to make longer-term investments in national child protection and education systems and services in host countries should not be missed. This will require linking initiatives with national level plans such as Lebanon's Stabilization Plan and Jordan's National Resilience Plan. Including vulnerable local populations within efforts to reach children from Syria should also be a key component to address and meet the needs of all the most vulnerable populations.

Access to education and child protection services remains of paramount concern. More than 4,200 schools have been damaged, destroyed or are being used as collective centres to shelter displaced people. There remain at least two million conflict affect syrian children out of school. Over-burdened national educational systems, particularly in Lebanon and Jordan, have forced double-shifts in overcrowded schools, with a resulting impact on quality. National education systems require further support to help host countries absorb the overwhelming number of new students. Non-formal education approaches may offer immediate solutions but more sustainable investments are necessary in the formal education sector.

The over 8,000 unaccompanied and separated children that have been registered since the start of the conflict are often the most vulnerable - and the numbers are rising. Meanwhile birth registration rates among refugee children remain low – in Lebanon, about three-quarters of refugee children have no birth certificates. All host countries have exhibited an upward trend in child labour among Syrian refugee children, particularly boys, and rates of child marriage are higher than they were in pre-crisis Syria. National child protection systems require sustained investment to ensure the special protection needs of the most vulnerable children from refugee and host communities alike are addressed in a timely, effective manner.

Quality of services in the area of education and child protection need further improvement.

Capacity building of national counterparts provides a strategic opportunity to offer better quality services. This has already begun in countries like Jordan and Lebanon, but must be further supported and expanded. In the child protection sector building a competent social sector workforce remains of paramount importance to scale up access and quality.

Integration of services will deliver better results for children – for example by including child protection policies in schools, strengthening referral mechanisms within hospitals, sustained child protection training for teachers and health professionals and integration of psychosocial activities in school curricula.



Better data for evidence-based planning and policy development. Existing initiatives for improved and more systematic collection of education and protection data in all affected countries (see box for examples) need to continue and expand, including those in relation to grave child rights violations and other protection threats.

More focus on adolescents and youth. Young people aged 15-24 are the largest demographic group among refugees, but far too many adolescents and youth are out of school. Remedial, vocational and higher education opportunities are almost non-existent. Young people face severe challenges in accessing educational opportunities due to host country policies and legislative frameworks.

As a result, studies in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan have consistently reported young people and adolescents feel insecure, have a lack of hope, and convey sadness and anxiety about their futures.

Partners should consider education strategies that cater specifically to the needs of this age group, through remedial education, vocational training, and extra-curricular activities, including sport, that involve Syrian youth, together with their peers in host countries.

Greater community engagement, including host communities, children and young people. There is a need to engage communities – especially children and young people themselves – in the education and protection of affected children to increase coverage, quality, community ownership, and build safer environments. This should include support for religious leaders, teachers and volunteers, including from refugee communities, to act as advocates and providers of education and child protection, as well as for human rights and citizenship education modules to support social cohesion.

Protection advocacy. Protecting children requires strong advocacy with decision-makers to underline their ability to address issues such as child recruitment, access and freedom of movement, and enable access to life skills and livelihood opportunities. Informed by data and information from human rights and protection monitoring, partners will need to work with relevant national counterparts to bring about measurable policy changes for children.

Policy reform. Children who do enter some form of learning are not receiving certification of completion because host country systems don't accept their existing paperwork - if it hasn't been lost in the chaos - or because hosts don't allow refugee children to sit exams, or because informal courses are not accredited. The challenges of certification and accreditation require urgent attention.

One possible strategy may be the introduction of the Syria Curriculum and Certification Initiative, which aims to provide children in grades 1-12 with a learning platform together with online formal certification.

Given the growing scale of the crisis, the ever-increasing number of refugee children unable to access education and the expansion of vulnerable populations in host communities, greater engagement will be required between partners and governments to identify ways of expanding opportunities for non-formal education.

A generation still at risk

A year after the world rallied to the call of No Lost Generation, there has been progress. For children like Salma – wounded but not defeated – there are now new opportunities, thanks to the efforts of many from the international community and host countries.

But more hearts and minds are at risk, as more children are affected by the conflict in Syria. More future teachers, doctors, engineers and parents are under threat of being lost to lack of opportunity, frustration and despair.

The risks to children's futures, and the futures those children will one day shape, are increasing. To prevent a lost generation, the work must go on.

Key results against targets and indicators

A number of factors have affected delivery of results against targets. In addition to the deteriorating humanitarian situation – with some 6.5 million children now affected by the crisis – and continued challenges to access affected communities, policy constraints including those related to school enrolment in host countries have required considerable advocacy before more children could be reached with support. Funding constraints, as indicated in Annex 2, have been another factor. It should also be noted that the results below cover the period to end August 2014, before the opening of the new school year. Results against education targets will increase in the third quarter of 2014 once schools re-open.

	Children reached with education support		Children reached with psychosocial support		Adolescents reached with increased opportunities including vocational/life skills training	
	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target
Syria	473,094*	3,900,000	72,486**	500,000	27,509	200,000
Lebanon	216,527	344,000	285,021	300,000	20,099**	35,000**
Jordan	148,636	295,500	204,703	298,960	2,965	30,500
Iraq	40,683	76,156	63,665	167,000	Data not available	
Turkey	107,714	305,280	29,590 **	103,500**	9,980**	180,000
Egypt	41,240	72,000	4,216**	40,000	Data not available	




Results: January to August 2014



Targets: January to December 2014

* This is for the 2014/2015 school year. In addition, 1.5 million children received supplies in 2013

** UNICEF data only

Funding status

 **Received: 301 million**  **Required : 885 million**  **Gap: 584 million**

	 Education			 Protection		
	Received	Required	Funding	Received	Required	Funding
Syria	23.48	103.16	23%	18.69	34.79	54%
Lebanon	88.77	218.45	41%	34.31	48.47	71%
Jordan	55.48	231.00	24%	38.86	86.51	45%
Iraq	9.82	37.92	26%	8.04	15.24	53%
Turkey	11.20	62.22	18%	4.34	19.99	22%
Egypt	5.60	17.51	32%	2.13	9.42	23%
Total	194.35	670.27	29%	106.36	214.42	50%

All funding figures are in million US\$.

Requirements are for all partners for January to December 2014. Funding status as of August 2014.

Cover photo: © UNICEF/UKLA2014-04986/Yurtsever
Bushra, 9, a Syrian refugee child in Antakya, Turkey.
March, 2014.

For more information on the No Lost Generation initiative and the work of the many partners involved go to:
www.nolostgeneration.org