

Action fiche for Syria

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Support for the emergency education response for displaced Syrian children and host communities in Jordan		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 5.4 million		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach – Joint management with an international organisation (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF))		
DAC-code	11220, 11230, 11240, 11320	Sector	(emergency) education

2. RATIONALE

Events unfolding in Syria in the last year have strong potential to affect the stability in the region, and in particular that of its immediate neighbours. The movement of refugees towards Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey has already reached critical levels, calling for targeted responses at country level to deal with the related humanitarian consequences. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) regional appeal was launched on 23 March 2012, for a global amount of USD 84 million to cover immediate humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees, including an amount for Jordan of USD 39.6 million. The European Commission has already committed EUR 10 million in EU humanitarian assistance.

In Jordan, the influx of displaced Syrians is also expected to have a significant impact on basic infrastructures and services, given the constraints faced by this country in the current social and economic context, and generally given its relative lack of natural resources.

The Government of Jordan has sought support from the donor community in view of the predictably worsening situation in this respect. According to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation: "Hosting thousands of Syrians in Jordan causes more pressure on the Kingdom's already scarce resources, particularly in the sectors of water, energy, health and education, which requires additional public spending to maintain the current quality of services in these key sectors", along with further indirect costs to the country's communities. The Government has launched in April 2012 a needs assessment with UN agencies⁴, which is expected to be published early May and inform the national (and UN) response to the situation at hand and its potential evolution.

One of the key areas requiring immediate support is education. The Government of Jordan decided, in December 2011, to open access to Syrian children to its public schools. It signed a co-operation protocol with UNICEF to support the public

⁴ Under the auspices of Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, with UNHCR, World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), looking at the sectors of education, protection, health, food, shelter.

education sector nationwide in accommodating additional numbers of students, while maintaining quality education for all children in Jordanian schools. The proposed intervention aims to contribute financially to the UNICEF action in support of the Ministry of Education and actors involved in community level education services in the present context. Education is currently the only area of co-operation – beyond that of humanitarian assistance strictly speaking – subject to a formal agreement with the Jordanian Government. The action is fully in line with the broader support provided by the EU to the education sector in Jordan and will help, beyond the emergency context, maintain the course of this successful reform.

A budget of EUR 5.4 million is foreseen for this intervention, to be mobilised through joint management in support of the UNICEF "Emergency education response for displaced Syrian children and host community in Jordan", covering part of the academic year 2011-2012 and year 2012-2013.

2.1. Sector context: policies and strategies

Jordan's social, economic and educational policies are key to its National Development Agenda. The country's long-term development challenges include its population growth rate and its large youth population, with more than a third of the nation's population between the ages of 10-19. The public sector is under heavy pressure to deliver services, and the education sector in particular struggles to accommodate high enrolment rates in overcrowded classrooms while improving the quality of education. Successive movements from neighbouring populations (Palestinians, Iraqis, and now Syrians) have impacted on the delivery of public education services, and incidentally challenged the pace of reform in this area.

Education reform is Jordan's priority. Since 2003, with the setting up of the Education reform for the knowledge economy (ERfKE)⁵, now in its second phase, international donors (including EU) have mobilised substantial resources to accompany the upgrading and transformation of the education systems and curricula in Jordan⁶.

The recent inflow of vulnerable Syrians into Jordan is placing an additional strain on the education system. Public schools are increasingly burdened by the shifting of thousands of students (most of them Jordanian) from the private to the public school system for economic reasons. By the end of April 2012, some 10,000 Syrians were registered with UNHCR (of which 48% are children under 18 years) with 4,500 waiting for the registration appointments. UNICEF successfully advocated with the Jordanian Government to allow Syrian children to access public schools. The Government approved in December 2011 the free school registration for Syrian children, regardless of their status in the country, in December 2011. On 2 April 2012 UNICEF signed a first Protocol with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in support of the Ministry of Education. This Protocol – and the subsequent one for the next school year - aims to support the latter in accommodating up to 15,000 students in the system. Moreover it aims to offer vulnerable Syrian children psychosocial support and remedial education classes to help them catch up with Jordanian curricula and with their peers in the classrooms.

⁵ C(2006)3324 of 18.06.2006.

⁶ Including the "EU Support for the second phase of the education reform" – Sector support programme from 2011, EUR 23 million (C(2011)5702 of 04.08.2012).

This is complemented with outreach activities towards families, through local partners and communities, to encourage parents to enrol their children, and to provide case management where necessary. Furthermore, UNICEF provides alternative education opportunities, at community level, for children who would not qualify for access to public schools (notably because they have been too long out of school).

2.2. Lessons learnt

Support to education reform is a success story of EU-Jordan co-operation⁷, and is fully in line with the revised EU-JORDAN European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan of 2010, as well as with the underlying objectives of the 2011 Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy “A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean”⁸ and “A new response to a changing Neighbourhood”⁹.

The EU has also supported the Jordanian education system in relation to the presence of displaced Iraqis after 2006¹⁰. Given the ramifications of the impact of refugee inflow, the issue of evolving numbers, the importance of a co-ordinated approach towards the various education actors, it is essential to involve a specialised body (UNICEF) with close links with all relevant actors and the capacity to ensure close monitoring of the needs and available assistance. UNICEF will ensure functional monitoring mechanisms to this end. Co-operation with UNICEF in Jordan on policy dialogue on education and youth issues more broadly is fruitful and constructive.

The proposed project also reflects the proven benefits of an approach that targets the direct beneficiaries (refugee children) as well as their host communities. It will allow mobilising critical complementary assistance to vulnerable children, where UNICEF has strong expertise.

2.3. Complementary actions

The present intervention will complement on-going programmes in the area of education, in particular the Programme "EU Support to the second phase of the education reform" (ERfKE II, EUR 23 million)¹¹, started in December 2011. The present intervention, beyond its emergency focus, is also in line with the EU's objective to limit the impact of external factors on domestic reform.

⁷ Programme "Support to Jordan's National Education Strategy" (C(2006)3324 of 18.06.2006) (EUR 42 million). Assessments and final evaluation have confirmed its contribution to the education reform progress in the country.

⁸ COM(2011)200 of 8 March 2011 states that the EU response to the changes taking place in the region needs to be more focused, innovative and ambitious, addressing the needs of the people and the realities on the ground.

⁹ COM(2011)303 of 25 May 2011.

¹⁰ Special measure on Development Cooperation Instrument Middle East funds to support Jordan's public education system to cope with the increase in demand caused by the large influx of Iraqi refugees (C(2007)6569 of 14.12.2007) (EUR 26.68 million). It supported the education system focusing on vulnerable students (not just Iraqis).

¹¹ C(2011)5702 of 11.08.2011.

The proposed action is focused on the education sector, with no overlap with EU humanitarian assistance objectives (such as health, registration, transit camps, cash transfers) nor with other donors' contributions to UNICEF addressing other urgent priorities (child protection, health, water and sanitation, which currently are supported by Germany, Norway and Switzerland).

Coinciding with this initiative, similar support will be provided by the EU to Lebanon to assist mitigating measures to deal with the influx of Syrian refugees there.

2.4. Donor co-ordination

The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation ensures donor co-ordination through regular meetings and the establishment running of the Jordan Aid Information Management System database established in 2009, which records on-going bilateral or multilateral projects. This Ministry has called for donor support in anticipation of the strong impact of Syrian refugee presence in Jordan. Donors already meet monthly under the auspices of UNHCR to co-ordinate their humanitarian and emergency interventions. In the education sector, UNICEF holds regular co-ordination meetings with the Ministry of Education and key actors in the field to assess the response and needs of displaced Syrian school age children. The EU Delegation to Jordan chairs monthly EU co-ordination meetings, where responses envisaged to the situation at co-operation level – including the present proposed intervention – are discussed. Weekly meetings are held between the EU Delegation and the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) field office.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

Global objective:

- To contribute to safe and appropriate services for vulnerable Syrians living in Jordan.

Specific objective:

- Vulnerable Syrian children access free formal education and other relevant education services along with children in host communities.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

Component 1: Support to the Jordanian national education system (formal education)

Expected results: Vulnerable school-aged children access formal education opportunities and receive psychosocial support at school.

Activities will include support tuition and textbook fees for 15,000 vulnerable Syrian children; renting and setting-up double-shifting of 20 schools; remedial education for 5,000 children; provision of furniture and supplies for 60 schools; provide referral of 4,000 education cases and outreach activities to 10,000 community members;

provide training for 120 school teachers and counsellors on psychosocial support and child protection, child to child methodology, classroom management and inclusion; provide regional orientation for 300 counsellors on psychosocial activities.

Component 2: Support to community level interventions (informal and non-formal education)

Expected result: Children excluded from formal education opportunities access alternative learning activities at the community level.

Activities will include provision of informal and non-formal education to 2,000 vulnerable children and adolescents in Amman, Irbid, Ma'an, Mafraq, Ramtha and Zarqa.

Component 3: Support to monitoring mechanism for education emergency interventions

Expected result: Ministry of Education and partners effectively monitor and evaluate emergency education interventions.

Activities will include establishing a monitoring and evaluation system to monitor emergency programme interventions and to provide training in results based management to strength monitoring and evaluation capacity of partners and other stakeholders.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Assumptions

- Government of Jordan maintains its policy to accept Syrian refugee children in the national public education system and contributes to the proposed activities (human, material and financial resources);
- Active co-ordination among the main stakeholders remains.

Risks

- Dramatic increase in number of Syrian refugees jeopardises the capacity of the Jordanian Government and partners to respond;
- Unexpected changes in sector leadership affect programme activities;
- Compromised in-country peace and stability.

3.4. Cross-cutting Issues

The main relevant crosscutting issues are good governance, human rights and gender equality promotion, all integral to the action, which focuses on children and vulnerable populations.

3.5. Stakeholders

Major stakeholders are the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, UNHCR, and other key non-governmental organisations including Save the Children and Questscope. The host communities and district level local authorities (Directorate of Education) will also play an important role in the project implementation.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

The programme will be implemented under joint management with an international organisation through the signature of a standard contribution agreement with UNICEF within the framework of the European Commission – UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA), and in accordance with Article 53(d) of the Financial Regulation. UNICEF complies with the criteria provided for in the Financial Regulation.

The change of management mode constitutes a substantial change except where the Commission "re-centralises" or reduces the level of tasks previously delegated to the beneficiary country, international organisation or delegatee body under, respectively, decentralised, joint or indirect centralised management.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by UNICEF. Based on the reasons outlined in point 2, a derogation to cover retroactively the costs of the activities implemented from the date of signature of the Protocol between UNICEF and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation dated 2 April 2012 is necessary.

4.3. Indicative budget and calendar

The total EU financial contribution to the action will amount to maximum EUR 5.4 million.

Description	Budget
Contribution agreement to UNICEF	EUR 5.4 million
TOTAL	EUR 5.4 million

The indicative execution period of the programme will be 24 months as from signature of the Contribution Agreement.

4.4. Performance monitoring

A multi-stakeholder steering committee, chaired by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, will be set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project and to co-ordinate between all Jordanian institutions and actors to be involved in the project.

UNICEF and the EU will meet regularly and will undertake regular joint monitoring missions.

4.5. Evaluation (and audit)

An external final evaluation, covering all the activities of the action, will be carried out in accordance with European Commission procedures, financed under a different decision.

Financial transactions and financial statements shall be subject to internal and external verifications procedures and checks, including on the spot, following the provisions of the European Commission – UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).

4.6. Communication and visibility

A communication strategy and specific activities dedicated to communication and implementing partners will develop visibility. The EU guidelines will be followed. Communication and visibility will include visibility activities to be carried out in line with the Communication and visibility manual for EU external actions.

The EU Delegation in Amman may check the visibility component of the actions through field visits and will propose measures to increase visibility where appropriate. EU visibility guidelines will be respected by UNICEF and by other implementing bodies.

In case of joint management, and where applicable, the provisions included in the relevant framework agreement(s) signed with international organisation(s) will apply.