

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

DOUBLE SHIFT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF SYRIAN
REFUGEE CHILDREN IN LEBANON: CASE OF BATER
OFFICIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

by
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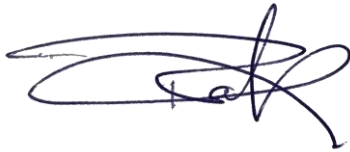
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ABSTRACT

OF THE PROJECT OF

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Title: Double Shift Educational Experience of Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon: Case of Bater Official Secondary School

Syrian refugee children face frequent interruption of education and limitations in accessing educational services as a result to their forced displacement after the 2011 Syrian Civil War. Lebanon hosts an estimate of 987,000 refugees from Syria's ongoing conflict, out of which 490,000 of them are children of school age. The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education has opened several double-shift public schools to accommodate the number of refugee children. Around 350 schools in Lebanon are now operating on a double shift basis to provide an education for about 150,000 Syrian refugee children. The double-shift system separates the Lebanese students and the Syrian refugee children, where the Lebanese attend school in the morning shift, and the Syrians attend school in the afternoon shift.

Unfortunately, only about half of Syrian refugee children attend school, leaving more than half not in schools. This issue can, very much, be linked to the cost of enrolment, transportation, and books and stationery. The poor economic situation of Syrian families, nested within the Lebanese complex crisis also led to relying on the children to work instead of attending school child labor. This, in addition to other difficulties that Syrian refugee students face within schools, which include discrimination, language and school curriculum.

Keywords: *Refugees, Syrian refugees, Education, Obstacles, Lebanon*

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ABBREVIATIONS

BOSS	Bater Official Secondary School
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFE	Global Fund for Education
GoL	Government of Lebanon
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VASyR	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon
WFP	World Food Programme

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to the other with the goal of settling, permanently in the new location internally or across borders. Migration, as individuals or groups, can be an effect to several causes such as lack of employment, war, social insecurity, economic instability, natural disasters, and many others (UNDP, 2017). It is crucial to differentiate between refugees, displaced persons, asylum seekers, and the different types of migrants since these groups are subject to different levels of assistance and protection under international humanitarian law. An asylum seeker is defined as a person running away from persecution or conflict, seeking international protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention (Weis, 1990). A displaced person, on the other hand, is a person who is forced to leave their home because of natural disasters, war, or persecution (UNHCR, 1997). A refugee is an asylum seeker whose claim has been approved by the country in which he or she has submitted it. However, the United Nations considers that displaced persons and asylum seekers are refugees, even before having their claim officially approved by the host country. (Edwards, 2016).

In the process of migration, both the hosting society and migrant have rights and responsibilities according to the New York Declaration which notes the obligation of “refugees and migrants to observe the laws and regulations of their host countries” (para. 39). For example, the migrants have the right to access proper education and at the same time the receiving society is responsible to provide access to such a service according to the Articles of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

Education is a basic human right, which if deprived from, might influence other social elements such as health and consequently lead to further inequalities between and within societies. Indeed, education is a social determinant of health, influencing the quality of life of an individual. In their seminal book “Social determinants of health. The solid facts”, Richard Wilkinson and Michael Marmot state that social inequality leads to health inequality. Education, therefore, is one way to lessen these inequalities through empowering the society and investing in schooling (Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003).

International laws have been put forward to protect them and ensure their right to a respectful life. Education is a basic human right for any child (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Indeed, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Refugee children are especially at risk to drop out and not receive proper education; this is because of the presence of many socio-economic risk factors, such as poverty and household-level determinants. These include parental educational level, social standing, income level, and socioeconomic instability. In a refugee setting, another determinant might also enter the equation: the sociopolitical status of the hosting country, as well as the existing policies (UNHCR, 2021). Hence the need to protect this right through laws, policies, and proper implementation in host countries is crucial (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; Refugee Convention, 1951).

Besides the legislative aspect, enablers and challenges in front of the integration of refugee children into the education system in host countries is very context-specific. This research project is focused on Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, a hosting

country that is not signatory of the 1951 Convention on Refugees. It is also the country with the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, overburdening an already fragile infrastructure. Lebanon has undergone successive political and economic crises, not the least of which is the protracted refugee crisis. Most recently, the country is going through a steep currency devaluation and political turmoil, putting 88% of Syrian refugees under the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB). (VASyR 2021)

The education system in Lebanon is quite different from that in Syria on many levels in terms of curriculum and language, and already suffers from its own weaknesses. Hence, including Syrian refugee children in the educational system in Lebanon has had immense challenges, and both the government of Lebanon (GoL) and partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have attempted to bridge gaps through policy and implementation. However, drawbacks still exist, and political and economic challenges are increasingly pressing.

Current existing literature focus on refugee quality of education and access to educational services, with little attention to factors that mold their educational experience at countries of first asylum (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). One framework that attempted to relate pre-resettlement educational experiences to post-resettlement ones in the hosting country for refugee children was that of Sarah Dryden-Peterson. In her report entitled: “The Educational Experience of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum”, Peterson explains how the previous experiences of refugee children affect their educational experience and exposure to schools in the United States. The author’s analysis draws on in-depth research conducted on refugee education in countries of first asylum prior to arrival in the United States. According to Peterson, the gained educational experience of refugee children during their pre-resettlement will in return

negatively influence their post-resettlement experience (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). The aspects proposed are: Limited and disrupted education, language barriers, inadequate quality of instruction, and discrimination in schools.

In this project, I am interested in investigating the pre-resettlement experiences of Syrian children in Lebanon. For that, we will be guided by Peterson's framework in the different phases of the research, and will be employing a qualitative case-study design at a secondary public school.

SECTION 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Background

The Syrian civil war, now in its 12th year, is said to be the biggest humanitarian crisis of the 21st century. It has caused 6.6 million refugees who have fled the war mainly (5.6 million) to neighboring countries (such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan), or to Western countries, especially Europe (UNHCR, 2022a). The presence of many refugees and displaced persons in Lebanon has a huge impact on the Lebanese society, since Lebanon is already struggling with public debt. Powered by enormous debt and the untenable way it was financed, the crisis has lowered Lebanon's gross domestic product (GDP) by “58.1% since 2019, plummeting to an estimated \$21.8 billion in 2021”. Being one of the most imbalanced countries, millions have been pushed into poverty, revenues decreased by almost “half in 2021 to reach 6.6% of GDP and real GDP” have deteriorated by an estimate of 10.5% last year (World Bank, 2021). The population of Lebanon has increased by one third especially after the Syrian War, which has put enormous pressure on public services that have become overstretched. Demand surpassed the capacity of the government to meet the needs of both refugees and Lebanese citizens (Osseiran, 2017).

Today, Lebanon is suffering from a complex crisis, with a drastic currency devaluation and political and security turmoil, further exacerbating the protracted refugee crisis (OCHA, 2021). According to the latest vulnerability report of Syrian refugees (VASyR) in 2021 it has been shown that “88% of Syrian refugee families are still below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), the absolute minimum

amount required to cover lifesaving needs, similar to 2020 (89%) but significantly higher than the 2019 level (55%)”. The same report showed that, on average, the monthly expenditures per capita were two thirds the SMEB (down from 120% in 2019), implying that Syrian refugee families were not meeting the minimum living standards. Additionally, since 2019, the phenomena of children between the ages of 5 and 17 who were engaged in child labor doubled, reaching 5% in 2021, with boys being at risk four times more than girls. Moreover, the report also found that the highest rate of child labor was between the ages of 15 and 17. (VASyR 2021)

More unfortunate figures have been shown by the VASyR 2021 report. In 2020 for instance, the percentage of youth aged between 15 and 24 years who were attending school or university was only 13%. Nevertheless, there was a significant difference between age groups. Those aged between 15 and 19 had a higher attendance rate than the 20 to 24 years group, at 24% and 4% respectively. Among the youth, expenses were still reported as a significant reason for not attending school, however, the two key reasons were either due to marriage or due to work. Moreover, seven out of ten youth were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), with boys (78%) reporting a higher rate than girls (54%). Similar to education attendance, the NEET increased with age. The NEET share among youth aged 15 to 18 years was 57% compared to 75% for those aged between 19 to 24 years.

2.2 Education and Refugee Human Rights

Child education is a basic human right well enshrined in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1951 Refugee Convention. According to UNHCR, education protects refugee children and youth from forced recruitment into armed

groups, child labor, sexual exploitation and child marriage. Education also strengthens community resilience. Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child urges parties to ensure compulsory and free primary education to all children, providing secondary and higher education that is diverse and accessible, ensuring access to educational and vocational training, and controlling attendance and drop-out. Yet, literature indicates that a substantial proportion of refugee children (30%) and double that number were not enrolled in school in recent years (VASyR, 2021). The longer refugee children remain out of school, the less likely they are to enroll and finish their education. The situation has been exacerbated since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to online learning. This has made quality education inaccessible to a substantial proportion of refugee children across multiple education levels. (UNHCR, 2021)

2.3 Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanon

As a response to the complex Lebanese crisis, the government of Lebanon (GoL), supported by international bodies, has established the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) to support its residents, including Syrian refugees. A ministerial body and a UN agency coordinate the management of each sector of the response. The education sector is coordinated by the ministry of education and higher education (MEHE) on the one hand, and UNICEF on the other (LERP, 2021). Together, the GoL along with international actors have set the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) policy which has been in place since 2014 to support and improve the public education system in Lebanon.

The education system in Lebanon differs from that in Syria mainly with respect to the type of institutions and the use of languages in instruction. At the basic and secondary levels in Syria, instruction is done in Arabic and 97% of basic education schools are public, unlike Lebanon (El Ghali et al, 2017). The Lebanese government's solution to provide education to Syrian children relies on temporal inclusion; providing second shifts exclusively for Syrian children at designated public schools. This strategy has shown many weaknesses, especially in terms of the quality of education and the caliber of the staff hired. A much-needed cooperation between different governmental and ministerial bodies, as well as with NGOs was appealed for (El Ghali et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2019).

Indeed, schools in Lebanon are dealing with four general types of challenges: spatial, socio-emotional, cultural, and academic (Mahfouz, 2019). This has been further exacerbated since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to online learning, coupled with the economic collapse. For the 2020 – 2021, “only 53% of school-aged children (6 to 14 years) were attending school in the year 2020-2021, which represents a 14-percentage points reduction from 67% in 2020” (VASyR, 2021). Regrettably, MEHE is posing immense challenges in front of Syrian children's enrollment, especially requiring legal documentation that is almost impossible to fetch (Lebanon: Syrian Refugee Children Blocked from School, 2021).

In addition, Syrian refugee families are unable to afford paying for school tuition and other related costs such as transportation, stationary, and books. Nine out of 10 Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty, which has pushed a significant proportion into child labor. Around 5% of children 5-17 years old were engaged in child labor in 2021, an increase from 4% in 2020 and 3% in 2019 (VASyR, 2021).

Unfortunately, the school-age refugee population exceeds the current intake of the country's public schools and an over-stretched and under resourced system faces acute pressure (Adelman, 20; VASyR, 2021; Human Rights Watch 2021b). Moreover, supporters were unsuccessful in acting on assurances to ensure that there is 'no lost generation' of vulnerable populations; \$32.93 million are needed to cover for education sector expenses in Lebanon (OCHA, 2021). The Lebanese government has lost credibility vis-à-vis international funders who have pointed out the lack of transparency and accountability in spending funds allocated to education. This will be problematic in terms of securing emergency funding to save the generation. (Human Rights Watch, 2021)

2.4 Peterson's Theoretical Framework and Lebanon

To fulfill the aim of this research project, at first, the work of Sarah Dryden-Peterson in this field will be introduced. The author's theoretical framework on the experience of refugee children in countries of first asylum will help explore the topic at an international level.

In her report entitled: "The educational Experience of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum", Peterson explains how the previous experiences of refugee children affect their educational experience and exposure to schools in the United States. She states that during this transition period in the resettlement, clashes are often caused by factors such as language obstacles, privacy concerns, cultural misunderstandings, and stereotypes. The author's analysis draws on in-depth research conducted on refugee education in countries of first asylum prior to arrival in the United

States; in this study, I focus on the case of Lebanon as a country of first asylum for Syrian refugee children.

Peterson identifies four key factors that are significant for education in the U.S.:

1. Limited and disrupted education: In her report, Peterson states that there are several causes behind this disruption throughout the migration stages. During the migration's first stages, access to education is limited or even absent since the refugee children are still in conflict context. In addition, many children are registered to school at an older age and thus attending classes with younger children and graduating at an older age. Peterson mentions that disruption in the children's education is also affected by the country's legal restrictions as well as the process of ongoing migration.

2. Language barriers: Peterson claims that language is a major tool in an educational system to be able to build knowledge. Weak language is associated with low educational attainment, and can disrupt a student's social, emotional, and behavioral development. Teachers use language to communicate and deliver lessons. If students cannot understand and comprehend the teacher's talk, their learning suffers. They may act-up or begin to disengage because they are bored, confused, or feel stupid.

3. Inadequate quality of instruction: Peterson claims that the quality of education provided to refugees in general is uneven and poor, therefore refugee children do not acquire the knowledge and skills that they should normally obtain. This in addition to the lack of needed resources where the student-teacher ratio is so high and teachers training, and qualifications are low. When teaching is often teacher-centered and based on lectures, then refugee children will have minimal participation opportunities.

4. and discrimination in schools: Syrian refugee students have been facing various forms of discrimination, bullying, and harassment due to the differences of culture,

ethnicity, and even social class. Peterson identifies discrimination in two main aspects. The first is discrimination in the curriculum that is taught, where most of the time refugee children cannot relate to the material as the nationals do. The other is the personal discrimination and bullying. This is a main factor that hinders the enrollment of Syrian refugee children and causes enrolled students to drop out after registration. Discrimination and bullying affect the children's ability to learn or motivation to attend. Cases of discrimination and bullying can also discourage other students from enrolling (Human Rights Watch, 2021a & 2021b; Adelman, 2019; VASyR, 2021).

After exploring Peterson's theoretical framework, this project will link the author's findings to Lebanon, to identify the relevance of those four main aspects at a national level.

SECTION 3

RESEARCH PROCESS

This project examines the theoretical and practical relevance of the pre-resettlement educational experiences for post-resettlement education of Syrian refugee children, by analyzing the aforementioned four main factors that Peterson identifies in her report, but in the Lebanese context. A review of the theoretical framework of Sarah Dryden-Peterson on educational experience of the refugee children in countries of first asylum will be conducted, and compared to the reality of Syrian refugee children in the Lebanese context with an aim of:

1. Examining how the four factors in Peterson's findings intersect with the findings of research conducted in Lebanon,
2. Comparing findings of Peterson with findings based on interviews at BOSS,
3. and suggesting possible policy recommendations and actions to be adopted by the Lebanese government, school and key stakeholders who are active in this field to enhance the refugee children's experience.

Qualitative research methods were used, which included a desk review and a study of previous literature (research papers, books, reports, and articles) coupled with field research by taking BOSS in Lebanon as a case study, whereby a series of interviews were conducted with students, parents, and school staff. This mixed-method approach will support in evaluating the quality of education provided to Syrian refugees in Lebanon whereby the findings from the field research will be compared to Peterson's findings to validate which of the four factors apply to Lebanon and how they vary from

the countries where her research was conducted. Additionally, the research will look into about the role of the Lebanese Government, schools, NGOs, and foreign aid in handling these problems. The use of multiple resources to triangulate the information will provide comprehensive content and a temporal view of the matter.

Prior to conducting field research, a series of approval applications were submitted starting with the Ministry of Education, BOSS Lebanon and AUB's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Additionally, the process included the use of parental and child consent forms for all those participating in the interviews. Interviews were conducted with five refugee students attending BOSS between the ages of 7 to 11 years old, this specific age group was selected as the majority of refugee students attending BOSS belonged to this age group and interviewing younger students would result of less accurate information since they might not be able to comprehend or express their experiences deliberately. Additional interviews were conducted with two parents to further examine the four main factors that Peterson identifies in her report and check their applicability, in addition to interviews with two teachers and the school principal. Nonetheless, this process included some challenges as a result of the economic crisis facing Lebanon and the Covid-19 pandemic, which hindered conducting face-to-face interviews. Different interview methods were explored as a result such as the use of online platforms however, this also posed as a barrier since the majority of the targeted individuals were vulnerable and did not have the access or the knowledge to use such platforms. Accordingly, interviews were conducted via phone calls.

Upon finalizing the data collection, analysis of the results was conducted, focusing on the main factors affecting the Syrian children's educational experience in Lebanon. Finally, recommendations and possible policy changes were suggested

towards enhancing the educational experience of Syrian refugee children and increasing their retention. Based on these findings, a set of recommendations were established that stipulate on the urge for the Lebanese government to undertake reforms that go beyond the context of its current education policies and seek increased foreign aid directed towards improving access of refugee children to schools.

SECTION 4

CASE STUDY ON BATER OFFICIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

After reflecting on Peterson's theoretical framework and applying it at a national level, BOSS is taken as a case study to analyze the four main factors that Peterson discusses which affect the educational experience of refugee children. BOSS, located in Bater – El Chouf area, is one of the public schools authorized by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education to teach non-Lebanese students during afternoon shifts including Syrian refugee children.

In Lebanon, most refugees rely on its public education, which was already weak before the Syrian War. The influx of Syrian refugees has further strained public schools, with the number of school-aged Syrian refugees far exceeding the 249,494 Lebanese children enrolled in public schools in 2015-2016.

4.1 Limited and Disrupted Educational Opportunities

Peterson states that there are several causes behind this disruption throughout the migration stages. During the migration's first stages, access to education is limited or even absent since the refugee children are still in conflict context. In addition, many children are registered to school at an older age and thus attending classes with younger children and graduating at an older age. Peterson mentions that disruption in the children's education is also affected by the country's legal restrictions as well as the process of ongoing migration.

The Lebanese government has taken important steps to enroll Syrians in formal education. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan recognizes that all children aged 3-18

“have a right to and are eligible to access education, irrespective of their status.”

However, several factors deprive Syrian refugee children of their right to education in Lebanon by preventing or hindering enrollment, or causing enrolled students to drop out once registered. These factors include lack of local compliance in implementing the enrollment policy; limiting school ratios and minimums; insufficient support for refugee children adapting to the curriculum and new languages; lack of available space; family poverty pushing children to work instead of attending school; transportation costs; violence, bullying, and harassment; lack of a quality education; lack of access to sanitation facilities; and insufficient psychosocial support. Older children, girls, and children with disabilities face particular barriers to enrolling in school.

One of the main reasons for disrupted education for refugees in Lebanon is economic barrier, especially in the current financial and economic crisis Lebanon is facing. Many refugee children do not come to school regularly or drop out due to family financial hardship. Additionally, some parents did not support their children’s educations either because they could not afford it, or they needed their child to contribute to the family’s income instead.

Poverty and child labor are major barriers to refugee children’s access to education. While some refugee children try to juggle work and school, they are more

likely to drop out if they work long hours and undertake heavy work, as the result is low energy and concentration in class, which hamper their learning and ability to keep up.

On the other hand, interview results show that students are still traumatized as reported by the teachers, where they noted that there is a significant need to provide counselling and support to students in parallel to their education.

4.2 Language Barriers to Educational Access

Peterson claims that language is a major tool in an educational system to be able to build knowledge. Weak language is associated with low educational attainment, and can disrupt a student's social, emotional, and behavioral development. Teachers use language to communicate and deliver lessons. If students cannot understand and comprehend the teacher's talk, their learning suffers. They may act-up or begin to disengage because they are bored, confused, or feel stupid.

Several subjects in the Lebanese curriculum are taught in either French or English, as opposed to the all-Arabic Syrian curriculum, making it difficult for some Syrian refugee students to catch up. In addition to the language of instruction, the curriculum also differs from Syria's educational curriculums in terms of structure and content. At BOSS, the learning language used is French. Throughout the in-depth interviews, parents, students and school staff shared some of the challenges they face with the Lebanese curriculum. Students mentioned that there is a difficulty in comprehending lessons that are not taught in Arabic, whereby they are having a hard time keeping up with other students as a result of that. This is significant since in BOSS, this academic year is the first year where Syrian refugee students are separated into afternoon shifts, previously they were integrated in classes with Lebanese students,

receiving the same curriculum at the same pace, which caused even more difficulties for refugees to keep up. This was evident in the interviews where almost all refugee children mentioned that they are afraid to speak up in class if they did not understand something in fear of being laughed at by others in the classrooms, which validates Peterson's claim. Additionally, Parents mentioned that they are unable to offer the needed educational support to their children after school when it comes to homework and studying for exams since the language is also foreign to them.

Many countries who are hosting Syrian refugees struggle with this issue, since the host country education systems use learning resources and curriculums that they already have available. Though the local and main language in Lebanon should not be a barrier, however, schools in Lebanon teach some of the key subjects either in English or French, which are creating these challenges, particularly for older children who enroll in higher grades as compared to children who start school at an early age.

Extra academic support must be made widely available, it is equally important to provide teachers with the necessary training on addressing these children's needs. The barriers that result from language not only impacts a students' ability to learn, but also affects the pace and degree of social and cultural cohesion with the host community that is so essential to adapting to a new context. It is, therefore, a cornerstone to an effective inclusive refugee education policy.

4.3 Inadequate Quality of Instruction

Peterson claims that the quality of education provided to refugees in general is uneven and poor, therefore refugee children do not acquire the knowledge and skills that they should normally obtain. This in addition to the lack of needed resources where

the student-teacher ratio is so high and teachers training, and qualifications are low. When teaching is often teacher-centered and based on lectures, then refugee children will have minimal participation opportunities. This is the case that was evident during the interviews with BOSS, the school principal mentioned that recently the GoL is placing limitations and restrictions on the number of refugee students that are enrolled in schools that offer integration programs between the host and refugee children and encourage students in an effort to have these students enroll in specialized UN funded schools or schools that are relying on foreign aid, whereby for the current academic year BOSS enrolled around 30 students whereas previously the number was much higher. This measure mitigates the risks associated with providing uneven and poor education as a result of the lack of needed resources where the student-teacher ratio is so high.

The fact that the quality of education was not the priority in Lebanon, is best summarized by former minister Elias Bou Saab referring to the importance of providing Syrian refugees a place in a school instead of being on the street. He then adopted a policy of pushing students out of the morning shift and widened the second shift dedicated only to Syrian refugees. The socio-political impact of segregating Syrian children from Lebanese ones, was of lower priority despite the high levels of violence reported in the first few years between students in the two shifts. Moreover, there was little discussion about the teacher recruitment policy which prioritized assigning teachers working in the morning, without discussing the implications of teacher fatigue and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

4.4 Discrimination in School setting

The literature shows that Syrian refugee students have been facing various forms of discrimination, bullying, and harassment due to the differences of culture, ethnicity, and even social class. Peterson identifies discrimination in two main aspects. The first is discrimination in the curriculum that is taught, where most of the time refugee children cannot relate to the material as the nationals do. The other is the personal discrimination and bullying. This is a main factor that hinders the enrollment of Syrian refugee children and causes enrolled students to drop out after registration. Discrimination and bullying affect the children's ability to learn or motivation to attend. Cases of discrimination and bullying can also discourage other students from enrolling (Human Rights Watch, 2021a & 2021b; Adelman, 2019; VASyR, 2021).

Interviews at BOSS identifies the presence of the two main discrimination aspects mentioned by Peterson, as previously discussed the use of foreign language in some material and the use of the same curriculum that is already available without tailoring it to the needs of these refugee children is a key barrier for refugee children in Lebanon, especially those who start school at an older age and not from their early years. Due to the current nature of conflict and average length of displacement, most refugee children in protracted situations will live in exile for the duration of their school lives, rather than return to their home countries. As a consequence, prioritizing their inclusion in host country educational systems is now the preferred approach to refugee education. This means, however, that most refugee students will have to follow their host country's curriculum. While taking this approach is the most effective and sustainable way to ensure refugee students access a relevant, quality education that is recognized, it is highly likely that refugee students will have the level of competency

required for academic learning. Ensuring refugee children are supported to learn a new language of instruction is essential, as it holds the key to whether they will be able to access past learning, keep learning in their new classrooms, and integrate and recover.

Apart from that, it is evident that refugee children are facing discrimination from the host community, since all students in the interviews reported that they feel like they do not belong and that they get picked on or discriminated against from their classmates. The recent Inter-agency Multi-sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) specifically recommended having “programs in schools to address social cohesion” as a priority need. However, it is important to note that children at BOSS are not suffering from any discrimination at an institutional level, all students are treated equally when it comes to support and services provided from the teachers and the school. Additionally, refugee students do not require any legal residency to enroll at BOSS, a civil extract is sufficient to get enrolled.

SECTION 5

CONCLUSION

Most of the world's governments have already adopted the objectives of sustainable development, which support educational rights to all, yet we still see that inequality dominates in many others. If quality education is provided, then the new generations get prepared for the future by using their skills and knowledge and increasing income, thus decreasing the risk of social clashes and social exclusions. As the refugee crisis has become more intense and protracted, the absence of learning opportunities has harmed the well-being of children in numerous ways. There is worrying evidence that the crisis in education is contributing to an epidemic of child labor, poverty, and early marriage.

In his book, Sachs states that a Global Fund for Education (GFE) would bring together wealthy countries in order to collaboratively provide financial assistance to countries that need it the most. So, this could be one option for aiding the Syrian refugees and facilitating their access to education. More money enables more education if used and managed properly. The GFE guarantees that even the world's poorest children have the chance to receive proper education for secondary school at least. Such a global fund would guarantee that all children access education (Sachs, 2015). Thus, an additional \$50 billion per year could help in ensuring the Syrian refugee children have access to good schooling and this amount is not hard to save.

As such, the following recommendations are suggested

1. Limited and Disrupted Educational Opportunities

Governments and schools should formulate policies that take into account the refugees it is hosting and must be able to provide all their rights according to the UDHR that Lebanon has signed on. They should also play a role in financing education for the needy and disadvantaged groups such as the Syrian refugees. Investments must be made by the government in educational projects and programs dedicated for the Syrian refugees taking into account the standards and quality of the educational services to be provided.

Education is an essential human right that every Lebanese including refugees should have access to schools. Thus, in collaboration with various governmental and non- governmental organizations, public schools are used by volunteers to provide primary education for the Syrian children after the regular school time is over. As much as this initiative has supported in the teaching and learning process, yet a further step shall be made, and extra international funding shall be provided for this purpose solely.

As such, Lebanon must be able to change its set policies, which limit children's access to education, and ensure that refugee children can enroll in primary schools and continue to secondary school. Syrian refugee students should have the option of attending higher education or vocational training and earning a living. The government should also ensure the proper implementation of its enrollment policy and ensure that there is accountability by enforcing penalties/fines. The Ministry of Education should support non-formal education, at least as a provisional measure until formal education is accessible to all children in Lebanon and ensure that it is of a basic quality and that students have a qualified path to formal education. The government should allow Syrians to retain legal status by revisiting its residency requirements and allowing those whose status has expired to legalize.

2. Language Barriers to Educational Access

The Lebanese Government should permit Syrians' access to the labor market, specifically by allowing qualified Syrian teachers be part of the education system offered to refugee children. This will lead to the decrease in the language barriers. Lebanon follows a trilingual education system with the language of instruction in key subjects starting in grade 4 often being either English or French, creating challenges, particularly for older children. And many teachers are unable to provide adequate support to provide language reinforcement classes. Language-of-instruction issues impact millions of refugee children, contributing to low academic achievement and high drop-out rates. It is equally important to provide teachers with the necessary training on addressing these children's needs. Fluency in the local language not only impacts the ability to learn, but also influences the pace and degree of social and cultural cohesion with the host community that is so essential to adapting to a new context. It is, therefore, a cornerstone to an effective inclusive refugee education policy.

3. Inadequate Quality of Instruction

It is important for the Lebanese Government, with the help of foreign aid, to support schooling of refugees and to provide the equipment and resources needed such as labs and computers, in addition to training its teachers to become more specialized and capable. Most importantly, the Lebanese Government and NGOs, must ensure equal access to the quality of education in the schools. Therefore, equality should be not only in accessing education, but also in quality of education provided. Investing in education contributes to the well-being of the society and to its stability.

Access to quality education must not be conditional and must be provided equally to everyone. It is a right and a need that should be supported and financed by

the government. In his journal article published in Bold Magazine in June 2015, Jesri states “Everyone can do something; a small contribution can make a huge difference to people’s lives. Syrian children have to learn they are not alone and someone cares about them, about their childhood, their future, and the future of a country that will need them” (Jesri, 2015). Aid for education is little, and by the time the money needed gets available, it would be too late, and a whole generation of Syrians will be lost.

4. Discrimination in School Setting

Syrian refugees have been marginalized by the Lebanese state policies and have been deprived from their basic human rights such as access to good education due to the limited resources. Several factors affect the education of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon leading to prevention from enrollment or causing those already enrolled to drop out after registration. These factors include lack of local proper implementation of the enrollment policy; limits enforce on number of school ratios; insufficient support for the Syrian refugee children to adapt to the curriculum and new languages; lack of available space; family poverty leading to children work instead of attending schools; transportation costs; violence, bullying, and harassment; and lack of resources for a quality education. Financial support and external funding must be increased in order to provide proper for counseling when needed.

Education is a human right that shall not be perceived as a means for increasing income only, because it can highly affect social cohesion and inclusion between the Lebanese and Syrian refugees. Moreover, access to education alone does not suffice, as the quality of education is also a factor that can influence students’ motivation and increase the dropout rate. Aside from providing schooling to the refugees, their

curriculums and quality of education must be evaluated and adjusted in a way that conveys the refugees' needs.

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