

**education and refugee crisis, a case study**

**Научный руководитель — — —**

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Recently, we are witnessing the largest number of forcibly displaced people ever since World War II. As of the end of 2017, there were 68.5 million people displaced from their homes due to conflict and persecution, and 25.4 million of these are refugees who have crossed state borders, with 85% of them living in developing countries (UNHCR, 2018). Many of the developing host countries fear the consequences of large influx of people, due to their effects on the labor market and the provisions of public services. However, since about 52% of the displaced people are children with 50% missing out on primary education (UNHCR, 2018); the crowd out of education sector is what they fear the most. Such concerns largely take over the public debate in Western Europe and host developing countries. Nevertheless, Fears and debates are more exacerbated in neighboring developing countries as most refugees flee to them, and in most cases, those countries lack the required resources to deal with any sudden refugees influx (Assaad, Ginn & Saleh, 2018). Today Syrian crises has become one of the greatest challenges to the human rights regime and one of the greatest crises that this generation faces. Since the start of the crisis in 2011, nearly half of the country's population has been displaced internally and externally. More than 6.3 million Syrian refugees fled Syria in order to seek safety in the neighboring countries, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan (UNHCR Data, 2018). This has led later to serious socio-economic and political effects on the MENA region and most of Europe (Ceritoglu, Yunculer, Torun & Tumen, 2017), with no foreseeable future for Syrian refugees and high uncertainty about the education of nearly one million Syrian children. However, previous studies were able to show that despite the obligations on state parties imposed by human rights conventions and declarations, many refugee-host countries still consider refugees children as 'guests', therefore, their needs are not considered as a priority to the policy objectives of the host's national educational programs (Morris, 2006; Mayer, 2016). A study by Selcuk and Lauren has mentioned that the educational environment in Syria became progressively worse after the crises started. Between 2014 and 2015, around 51% of Syrian children were not able to attend school, while in highly affected areas around 74% of children were not enrolled. As a result, those children arrived to refugee camps with educational disadvantages. In addition, many Syrian refugee children are emotionally traumatized, leading to an increase in their academic, emotional and social challenges, and negatively affect their learning and development, which results in underachievement and school dropouts (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). Education plays a significant role in achieving sustainable economic development. Any country must invest in human capital to secure its economic and social progress and improve its income distribution (Ozturk, 2008); investing in refugees' education is no exception, as it eventually

lead to broad social benefits to refugees themselves and to host communities. Leaving school at an early age can have a negative impact on competitiveness, productivity rate and give rise to poverty and social exclusion. Also, if the education conditions get worse, in the long-term this will produce an ill society on all the physical moral and intellectual levels. Thus, In order to achieve sustainable economic development and overcome the current widespread problems of inequalities and labor market imbalances in the world economy including Western Europe (Wyrzykowska & Artner, 2015), it is very important for host countries to invest in refugees' human capital. To move forward in this direction, host countries need to shift the attitude and perception of refugees from being a burden on the economy and society to being a resource that can contribute to the socioeconomic advancement. For instance, a report issued in 2016 by the European Commission discussed how by 2060 the EU might need an extra 30 million immigrant workers to tackle the demographic problems of both the ageing population and high dependency rate. However, those immigrants have to be armed with the required qualifications, for that reason, they need to be provided with proper education and training before being able to replace the missing workforce (Artner & Sörg, 2018).

**Research Problem** This research will primarily focus on formal education provision for Syrian refugee children in Jordan; a country of 10.05 million citizens (Jordan Department of Statistics, 2019), located in the heart of the Middle East. The Hashemite Kingdom, known for its stability in the region, is bordered by the West Bank, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria. The geographic location and political stability has made Jordan one of the major host countries for foreigners and Syrian refugees. It continued to host a very large number of refugees relative to its national population - When Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate are included- 1 in 3 people in the country were a refugee under the responsibility of UNHCR. Also, Jordan is the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees after Turkey and Lebanon (UNHCR, 2018). Nowadays, Jordan hosts more than 1.3 Million Syrian refugee. Nearly one-third of total Syrian refugees in Jordan are school-aged children -5 to 17 years old- with 40% of them remain out of school (MOPIC, 2018). The situation has spurred the Jordanian government to accommodate Syrian children educational needs. The government of Jordan with key stakeholders has demonstrated generosity by extending educational services to Syrian refugees' children. In 2012 the Jordanian government in collaboration with UNICEF and key partners launched the Emergency Education Response (EER) program which aims to provide Syrian refugee children living in Jordan - inside or outside refugee camps- with free formal education and additional relevant safe and appropriate educational services, alternative pathways, enrollment outreach and minimizing impact on Jordanian host communities. EER has achieved a significant accomplishment by providing access to formal education for 226,000 Syrian children. However, given that 80,000 school aged Syrian children are still not receiving formal education until now requires urgent action (Culbertson, S. & Ling, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2016). Moreover, the increasing number of Syrian refugees entering Jordan highly pressures key social sectors and services in the kingdom, the pressure on Jordan's education system is at its highest, therefore, adverse consequences on vulnerable Jordanians and the country's education system have been observed (Human Rights Watch, 2016). The Jordan response plan for 2017-2019 has shown that the Syrian crisis continues to have a serious effect on Jordan's educational sector and in particular on public schooling (Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation, 2017). However, most of the previous studies have not considered the impact of the crisis on the education of Jordanian children; so Instead of focusing exclusively on the education provision for refugees, this study will also take into account the effects on learning outcomes for Jordanian children. Moreover, a study conducted by Culbertson & Constant (2015) emphasized the need for additional research and analysis of the barriers to education in Syrian refugees' main host countries. For all the mentioned reasons this research aims to tackle those research gaps. A previous study issued by Human Rights Watch has

shown that there was public opinion opposition by Jordanians to the educational programs being offered to Syrian refugees. In addition, high tension exists between Jordanian and Syrian communities, especially in vulnerable host communities, where residents tend to view Syrians as straining already limited educational resources (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Whereas a study that has been conducted by Valenza & Alfayez (2016) provided sufficient evidence to support Culbertson et al. and UNHCR, it also concluded that the existing social tension has resulted in high level of bullying, violence, and harassment of Syrian children. In fact, their study highlighted that around 1600 Syrian children dropped school because of bullying in 2015-2016. Consequently, violence and harassment increased levels of school dropouts among Syrian children. Furthermore, war events in Syria caused trauma, disabilities and serious psychological effects on Syrian children. Experiencing moral and physical violence in Jordanian schools considerably affected Syrians' willingness to study and to socially integrate with their Jordanian peers. However, this paper will take a different position and show that the potential risks of not providing Syrian children with sustainable and quality education, and not taking serious steps to integrate them in Jordanian schools and host communities will not only have an impact on Syrians themselves, but also will negatively influence the stability and prosperity of Jordanian society.

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