

DOCUMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION RESPONSE FOR SYRIAN CHILDREN UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION IN TÜRKİYE - REPORT

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**DOCUMENTATION OF THE
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PREFACE

In the last decade, Türkiye has realized significant progress in boosting social and economic development, reducing poverty and inequality and improving access to services for the most vulnerable, including refugee children and their families. Since the start of the Syria crisis in 2011, Türkiye has been significantly impacted by refugees from Syria, who migrate to Türkiye in large numbers. In fact, for the past 6 years, Türkiye has hosted the largest number of refugees of any nation, hosting roughly 4 million refugees, 3.7 million of them from Syria, in 2021.

Türkiye's 11th National Development Plan, Education Vision 2023, and Ministry of National Education (MoNE) emphasize the Government of Türkiye's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and generosity in welcoming and integrating refugees into the country. In addition, the country recognizes a right to education and has made considerable effort to ensure access to education for refugee children.

Since hosting such a large number of refugees has strained the countries resources and required adaptability in new policies over time, UNICEF has worked closely with the Government of Türkiye to support its efforts to improve services for refugee children and their families. Over time, UNICEF and MoNE collaborated on a durable humanitarian response which sought sustained, coordinated results over time. These more durable policies and practices remain in place today, evolving with the needs of refugee families, allowing the Government of Türkiye, with the support of UNICEF, to meet the needs of Türkiye's most vulnerable children.

The COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in the spring of 2020, has further increased the needs and required supports of the vulnerable refugee population. Besides household and child poverty, stress and illness resulting from the pandemic may increase gender-based violence, violence against children, child labour, early and forced marriages, and social tension, among other negative impacts. The Government of Türkiye has continued to show adaptability and generosity in the face of the pandemic; however, challenges remain given the unprecedented nature of the shock, the resulting scope of its impact, and the constraints on policies and programmes able to be carried out given the COVID-19 context.

In this context, the following study was commissioned jointly by UNICEF and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) of Türkiye to document, over time, the Government of Türkiye's response to the Syria refugee crisis and the information that exists on the access to and quality of education for Syrian children under temporary protection (UTP) in Türkiye. The study reflects both parties' unrelenting commitment to advancing inclusive and quality of education for the most vulnerable children in Türkiye and shared resolve to reflect on current programmes as a means for advancing future results for children and families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study on Education of Syrian Refugee Children in Türkiye is a collaborative product of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) of Türkiye and UNICEF, with technical support from myriad stakeholders. The work could not have been completed without the expertise and assistance of the government institutions and technical partners. We would like to extend special thanks to the following people and organizations that made this study a reality.

We are grateful for the efforts of Mustafa Öztürk, consultant and professor at Erciyes University in Türkiye, who led the drafting of the study.

In the Government of Türkiye, the collaboration of the MoNE, the Lifelong Learning General Directorate, the Departments of, Education in Emergencies and Migration, Social Partners and Projects, PIKTES and the Ministry of Youth and Sports was instrumental in this study. We especially appreciate the efforts of Lifelong Learning General Directorate, the Department of Education in Emergencies and Migration, in actualizing this product.

Significant guidance was obtained from Gaziantep Provincial Directorate of National Education (PDoNE), İstanbul PDoNE, İzmir PDoNE and Şanlıurfa PDoNE.

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Design and translation of the final study was realized through the efforts of QUO, Smart, and Lexicon.

UNICEF is grateful for the many contributors who made the knowledge contained in this study accessible to inform policy and practice. Because of these efforts, UNICEF and collaborators will be better able to advance results for children, especially vulnerable refugee children.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
BLN	Basic Literacy and Numeracy Programme
CCTE	Conditional Cash Transfer for Education
CE	Central Exam (Transition Exam to High School)
CoEU	Council of the European Union
CPRSR	Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees
DG LLL	Directorate General for Lifelong Learning
DG MM	Directorate General of Migration Management
DG TTD	Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development
EIN	Electronic Information Network (Elektronik Bilişim Ağı- EBA)
FGD	focus group discussion
GIZ	German International Cooperation Agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
HEC	Higher Educational Council
ICFS	Integration Classes for Foreign Students
IDFA	Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IYEP	Remedial Education Programme
MoFSS	Ministry of Family and Social Services
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NGO	non-governmental organization
NLG	No Lost Generation
PEC	Public Education Centre
PIKTES	Project on Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education System
RAM	Research Centre for Counselling
SAVE	Schooling Adolescents through Vocational Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SVEP	Syrian Volunteer Education Personnel
TAC	Temporary Accommodation Centre
TALIS	OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey
TEC	Temporary Education Centre
TLC	Turkish Language Course
TPE	Turkish Proficiency Exam
TPS	Turkish Public School
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UTP	Under Temporary Protection
UEE	University Entrance Examination
YÖBİS	The Foreign Student Education Management Information System





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this work is to document existing information on the access to and quality of education for Syrian children under temporary protection (UTP) in Türkiye in between 2011 and 2019/20. The study analyses the past and current educational response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye. It also contributes insights into educational policy and practices that can serve as a guide for effective approaches across Türkiye and worldwide.

Two main methods were used to document Türkiye's education response to the Syrian crisis:

- **Method 1** – A desk review of the educational response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye
- **Method 2** – Qualitative data collection and analysis in the form of interviews and focus group discussions (FDGs) to gather information on policy and a non-formal education programme, the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) in Türkiye.

By 2021, the Syria crisis was in its tenth year and had become a humanitarian catastrophe with an estimated 11.6 million Syrians in need of various forms of humanitarian assistance (NLG, 2020). Even now, the international community is still struggling to respond both in Syria, and other countries where Syrian refugees live, such as Türkiye, Lebanon and Jordan. The situation of Syrian children and adolescents has been marked by ongoing hostilities in localized areas, new and prolonged displacement, an increase in self-organized returns to Syria and the continued erosion of community resilience (NLG, 2018). Throughout the process, nearly 5.6 million Syrians have been forced to leave their country and most of them have taken refuge in Türkiye. This means that Türkiye is, for the sixth consecutive year, the largest refugee-hosting country in the world (UNHCR, 2020a). A total of 3,731,028 registered Syrians who were forced to leave their home country are living in Türkiye (DGMM, 2021). This population consists of 1,124,353 children of compulsory school age (DG LLL, 2021). Türkiye has made a significant effort to meet the needs of these Syrian refugees by providing them with shelter, food, clothing, health, psychosocial assistance and education.

Since 2011:

Nearly 5.6 million

Syrians have been forced to leave their country



3,731,028
registered Syrians
are living in Türkiye

1,124,353

of these refugees are children
of compulsory school age



The fundamental right to education is recognized by Türkiye's Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Relevant documents note the need for every child, regardless of her or his nationality and socio-economic, health or cultural status, to develop knowledge and skills for their future learning (Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees [CPRSR], 1951) (MoNE, 2018). In this respect, various measures have been put into practice to facilitate the inclusion of Syrian children in the Turkish public education system, which meet the requirements of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards. These standards were developed to inform the education of children living in emergency and transition contexts, including refugee students.

Throughout history, Türkiye has hosted large numbers of migrants. But the high numbers of Syrian nationals in recent years is unprecedented and has led to great challenges in providing for the education needs of a large number of school-age Syrian children. Türkiye began addressing these challenges during the acute period of the crisis between 2011 and 2013¹ using tent, container and prefabricated schools in refugee camps. The acute period was followed by a transition period (2014–2015) during which Temporary Education Centres (TECs) served as the main venues for the education of Syrian students.² During this time, an adapted version of Syrian curricula in the Arabic language was followed, taught with the help of Syrian Volunteer Education Personnel (SVEP).

With the transformation from an emergency situation to a protracted crisis and no clear end in sight to the conflict in Syria, the Government of Türkiye was faced with the challenge of how to integrate the Syrian population, given that high rates of return to Syria were becoming increasingly unlikely. And so policy shifted to ensuring the integration of Syrian children into Turkish society by gradually accepting them into Turkish Public Schools (TPSs). This took place during what can be described as the normalization period. With nearly one million children (mostly Syrian but including other nationalities) under temporary

protection since 2016, Turkish education policy has become increasingly inclusive toward refugees. Since then, Syrian students have the same rights as Turkish students and benefit from the same services as their Turkish counterparts, including psychosocial support services and services related to special educational needs.

Several policies have also been put into practice to improve the teaching and learning opportunities offered to Syrian students (see [Figure 9](#) for the timeline of policy and practices). During the transition period when the TECs were functioning, adapted Syrian curricula were used with students following their education in Arabic. These curricula were revised three times by the Turkish Government and MoNE with the help of the Syrian community in Türkiye.

To enable easy integration into TPSs, Syrian students were offered Turkish language courses and support programmes (i.e. Back-Up programmes). Furthermore, measures have been developed for those who have not attended school for a long time (or who have never attended school) to facilitate their return to education or support their learning in school. These measures include Catch-Up programmes, Back-Up programmes, summer schools and language support programmes. Syrian students have also been included in educational support and financial incentive programmes originally designed for Turkish students such as the Remedial Education Programme (IYEP) and the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) Programme. In order to increase student success in school and to help students integrate more easily into TPSs, adaptation classes (*uyum sınıfları*) were introduced. The Electronic Information Network (EIN) has been made available and effectively used as a distance learning tool to provide additional support to Syrian students during the COVID-19 pandemic. To help children between the ages of 14 and 17 who for various reasons, often abandon their schooling after completing basic education, the Schooling Adolescents through Vocational Training (SAVE) programme was implemented by enrolling such students in vocational training centres.

1 The education of Syrian children in Türkiye can be addressed in three periods: an acute period (2011–2013), a transition period (2014–2015), and a normalisation period (2016–present). It should be noted that these phases are not officially described by MoNE and have been defined by the author.

2 TECs were established by Circular on Education and Instruction Services for Foreigners issued on 23 September 2014 (Circular 2014/21).

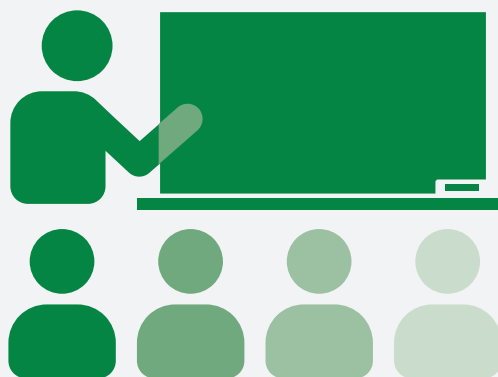
MoNE has carried out several initiatives to recruit qualified education staff and improve their skills in dealing with children UTP. Initially, SVEP provided education on a voluntary basis in TECs and were supported by financial incentives. After the 2014/21 circular, they began to be assigned through interviews undertaken by provincial directorates. SVEP began to be assigned in TPSs to help integrate Syrian students into TPSs during the transition period. Turkish language, Arabic language and counselling teachers have been hired to provide language courses (both in Turkish and Arabic) and counselling services to Syrian children studying in both TECs and TPSs. Several initiatives have been carried out on the professional development of SVEP, Turkish teachers and principals to support an inclusive education system in Türkiye, with a particular focus on the Syrian children UTP.

Complex, protracted emergencies like the Syria crisis are never easy to handle and the fact that so many Syrians have crossed the border in need of protection has brought many challenges for Türkiye, particularly in the context of the education response. As of November 2020, 65 per cent of the Syrian children of school age are attending TPS and almost 400,000 Syrian children are out of school (DG LLL, 2021). The enrolment rate of Syrian children in schools varies according to the level of education. The enrolment rate at pre-school level is 31 per cent, 75 per cent in primary school, 81 per cent in lower secondary school and 43 per cent in upper secondary school (DG LLL, 2021). Based on the analyses carried out for this study, a variety of factors appear to keep Syrian children out of school.

The first factor keeping Syrian children out of school is related to mobility. The living conditions of many Syrian refugees are unstable and many try to achieve stability by moving to another country or city in the hope of finding better living conditions. This delays young people's entry into the school system as they can only benefit from services in provinces where they are registered. Such movement leads to learning gaps for Syrian children when compared to their peers, potentially limiting their future educational life. It has also been reported by almost all study participants that such mobility hinders the effectiveness of outreach activities, because despite intense efforts, it becomes difficult to reach students.

**By November 2020,
only 65 per cent**

of the Syrian children of school age were attending Turkish Public Schools



**Almost
400,000**

Syrian children
were out of school

Enrolment rate
in primary school
is almost

80 per cent,

at the upper secondary
level it is only

50 per cent



In addition, there are pressures on young Syrian people to work: for boys in the informal labour sector and for girls in unpaid domestic work. The most socio-economically disadvantaged Syrian families often have to choose between financial sustainability and the educational needs of their children. This leads to many children leaving school to work in order to meet the basic needs of the family.

Also, due to social norms among refugees, the educational enrolment rate of Syrian adolescent girls declines as they age: some Syrian families support their daughters' early marriage and are reluctant to send them to mixed classes. As education in Syria is only compulsory from grades 1 to 9 (UNESCO-IBE, 2011), education at the upper secondary level is perceived as less important by many Syrian people, in contrast to the perception of Turkish parents, according to the participants of the fieldwork carried out during this documentation study.

During this study, special attention was paid to a non-formal education programme, the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP). The ALP targets Syrian and other non-Turkish-speaking refugee children who have never been enrolled in school or have not attended school for at least three years. The programme helps to integrate them into school at a level appropriate for their development. ALP is provided in Public Education Centres for a period of 16 months and has a modular structure. Students who have successfully passed the equivalence test after completing a module are then transferred to TPSs, depending on their age.

Fieldwork carried out for this study shows that ALP is hugely successful in ensuring access, availability, community participation, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Since the programme began in 2018, 63,725 refugee children (including Syrians and other nationalities) have been contacted through outreach activities. Of this group, 29,037 had enrolled in the programme by June 2021.

Issues that need to be addressed

Negative reactions to refugees and low cohesion hinders integration



Low proficiency in Turkish language



Lack of socially inclusive learning environments



A lack of educational arrangements for multicultural learning



Syrian children often work outside or in the home rather than attend school



Limited reach of Accelerated Learning Programme



Despite the challenges, Türkiye has been successful in providing Syrian children UTP with access to quality education. However, a number of issues still need to be addressed. Based on the analysis carried out throughout this study, the following needs and priority areas have been identified:

- The high number of Syrians in classrooms in places where Syrians are concentrated has led to negative reactions from some families in Türkiye and has hindered the integration of Syrian children into the host society. Therefore, investments made in the past for additional classrooms/schools should be reconsidered in regions with high Syrian populations.
- The low Turkish language proficiency of Syrian students is one of the biggest obstacles to their successful integration into the Turkish education system. For this reason, programmes such as adaptation classes that support language development should continue.
- Due to lack of Turkish language skills, fear of assimilation and conflict-related trauma, many Syrian students cannot easily fit into TPSs. Many instructors who participated in the study reported that some of their students would like to return to ALP after being transferred to TPS due to integration issues. There is a need for creating more inclusive, socially cohesive learning environments in TPSs.
- According to teachers working with Syrian children in TPSs, one of their biggest challenges is the lack of educational arrangements for Syrian children (i.e. professional development for teachers and educational materials). Therefore, there is a need to increase capacities of teachers working in multicultural classes and provide them exemplar materials and activities that can be used in multicultural learning environments.
- Some Turkish families may hold negative attitudes towards Syrians which can influence their children's behaviour in school. There is a need to develop programmes to contribute to social cohesion between Turkish and Syrian families.
- Boys are often required to help provide basic needs for the family rather than advance to upper secondary education. In addition, some Syrian families won't send their daughters of upper secondary-school age to school due to different cultural and gender norms. So, there is a need to continue to expand financial incentives for vulnerable students, to stay in school (e.g. CCTE), and to find ways to persuade Syrian parents to send their daughters to school.
- According to research, ALP is a very successful programme and appears well suited to meet the needs of Syrian and other non-Turkish-speaking refugee students who have been out of school for a long time. To enable the programme to reach more out-of-school children, expansion into other provinces/districts is being considered, which will require more resources be allocated to the programme.

The Syrian crisis has already become a long-term and persistent displacement crisis with profound effects internationally, but especially on Türkiye, which hosts approximately 65 per cent of the Syrians who have taken refuge outside Syria. The double impact of an influx of refugees and limited available international funds means that Türkiye is facing challenges in all areas of its emergency response, including education.

With the support of national and international organizations such as the Turkish Red Crescent Association (Kızılay), The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), MoNE assists and supports children UTP to enroll them in school and implements policies to create inclusive learning environments in a manner that can serve as an example for other countries facing similar large influxes of refugees.



INTRODUCTION

The crisis in Syria continues to have a devastating impact on children and on the general education sector, not only in Syria but also in Türkiye, which hosts the majority of displaced Syrian students. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Türkiye continued to host the world's largest number of refugees in 2020, with 3,731,028 registered Syrian nationals and nearly 400,000 registered people of other nationalities under the international protection scheme as of November 2021 (UNHCR, 2021). During this crisis, Türkiye's comprehensive policies and initiatives continued to provide people in need of protection with a wide range of rights and access to services including education.

Even though Türkiye had developed many initiatives to educate Syrian children UTP since the beginning of the crisis, the development of concrete policies and practices, particularly targeting Syrian children UTP in Türkiye, took place at a relatively later stage (Taştan & Çelik, 2017). The reason for this was the assumption that the war in Syria would soon end, and Syrians would eventually return home. However, as the war has continued, resulting in more mass movements of refugees into Türkiye, the need for better educational provisions for Syrian children UTP has emerged, leading to significant policy changes.

Another reason for the late development of more concrete policies and practices is that "the field of educational planning in emergencies and reconstruction is still young" Kirk (2009, p. 7). Türkiye had to explore and develop the right policies and initiatives to provide quality education services to more than one million Syrian children residing in its borders. It should also be noted that over the same period, Türkiye also has hosted a large number of refugees from other nations such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.

The Council of the European Union (CoEU) asserts that the humanitarian approach alone, in the education of vulnerable children, does not suffice to meet the wide, large-scale and diverse needs of children across the world, in particular when crises are protracted (CoEU, 2017). The Council adopted conclusions stressing an approach in the context of humanitarian-development nexus programming for the education of vulnerable

children. Because "poverty, conflict, fragility and forced displacement are deeply interlinked and must be addressed in a coherent and comprehensive way [there is a] need to coordinate humanitarian and development actions so as to address the root causes of vulnerability, fragility and conflict while simultaneously meeting humanitarian needs and strengthening resilience" (CoEU, p. 2). Likewise, the UNICEF Education Strategy 2018–2021 asserts that UNICEF is committed to leveraging the humanitarian-development nexus³ in order to ensure that policies and practices are linked to strong public education systems and that education services for all children are relevant and sustainable (UNICEF, 2018a).

It is estimated that a large number of young Syrians will remain in Türkiye even after the conclusion of the war in Syria, as Türkiye's size and supportive policies can offer Syrians educational and professional opportunities, as well as an enabling environment in which to rebuild their lives. This then emphasizes the further need for inclusive education practices in Türkiye as increasing numbers of Syrian students take up education in Turkish schools alongside their Turkish peers. Access to quality inclusive education is crucial since it will help Syrians UTP to overcome the psychosocial problems caused by war and migration (ERG, 2018). The provision of quality inclusive education will help traumatized individuals and facilitate their integration into the host community. In order to achieve this, the partnership between MoNE and UNICEF has allowed for the development and implementation of a number of policies and initiatives in Türkiye to strengthen equitable access to education and increase the quality of learning in the context of Syrian children's education in Türkiye.

This section of the study was developed based on a desk review of open sources including: official statistics, documents of United Nations institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), relevant literature, and media reports. The section outlines the policies and initiatives that have targeted the inclusion of Syrian children into the education system in Türkiye. It also provides readers with background information on the Turkish education system.

³ According to UNICEF's procedure on linking humanitarian and development document (UNICEF, 2019c), UNICEF offices are required to adopt a systematic approach to linking development and humanitarian programming through specific actions, including; building and strengthening local capacities and systems from the beginning of humanitarian action, improving immediate emergency response through preparedness as part of country programming, improving the quality of the links between humanitarian and development programming, implementing risk-informed programming – including risk assessments, adaptive programming, conflict sensitivity programming – and a commitment to work in partnership to build on capabilities and resources to crisis-affected countries.

1 THE INCLUSION OF SYRIAN CHILDREN INTO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN TÜRKİYE

1.1. The context: Syrians in Türkiye

Türkiye has welcomed Syrian citizens forced to leave their home country since April 2011. The number of displaced Syrians crossing the border into Türkiye has dramatically risen since then, due to the increasing violence employed by the Syrian regime. The number of Syrians crossing the border to seek protection was 14,237 in 2012, reaching 3.6 million in 2019 (see [Figure 1](#)). Türkiye currently hosts approximately 3.7 million (65.7 per cent) of the 5,672,927 Syrians who took refuge outside Syria according to the most recent UNHCR data (UNHCR, 2021). However, it is believed that there are more refugees in Türkiye than officially registered (Aydın & Kaya, 2017), due to irregular entry into Türkiye, breach of entry conditions and the expiration of refugees' legal status. According to data provided by Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), approximately 300,000 Syrian irregular migrants have been seized by the authorities over the last five years, as of November 2019 (DGMM, 2019).

Türkiye has implemented a “temporary protection regime” for Syrians, which includes an open-border policy and forbids forcible returns (non-refoulement). The Convention on the Rights of Refugees considers the principle of non-refoulement as so fundamental that accepts no reservations or derogations for it (CPRSR, 1951). “It provides that no one shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom” (CPRSR, 1951, p. 3). Starting in October 2011, Türkiye has guaranteed that Syrian refugees will not be forcibly returned and that they are provided with “temporary protection” status with no time limits imposed on their stay (Aydın & Kaya, 2017).

When the crisis in Syria broke out, Türkiye's initial emergency response entailed setting up Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs). By December 2015,

25 TACs had been established in 10 provinces near the Syrian border (Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, Adıyaman, Adana and Malatya) that accommodated 267,243 Syrians out of 2,503,549 who were seeking refuge in Türkiye at the time (DGMM, 2016). According to February 2021 figures, there are currently seven TACs that accommodate 51,732 people (DGMM, 2021). When the total number of Syrian people UTP is considered, 3,731,028 ([Figure 1](#)), almost 100 per cent of Syrians now live among the host community.

Temporary Accommodation Centres



By 2015, 25 TACs were established in 10 provinces near the Syrian border at Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, Adıyaman, Adana and Malatya, to accommodate 267,243 of the 2,503,549 refugees.

Figure 1. Distribution of Syrian refugees under temporary protection by year (DGMM, 2021)

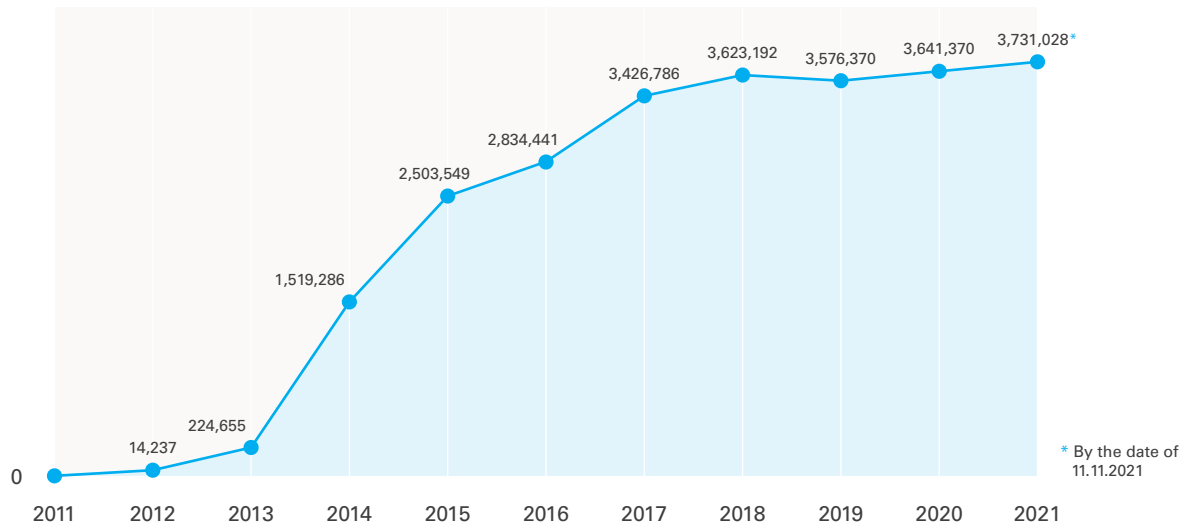
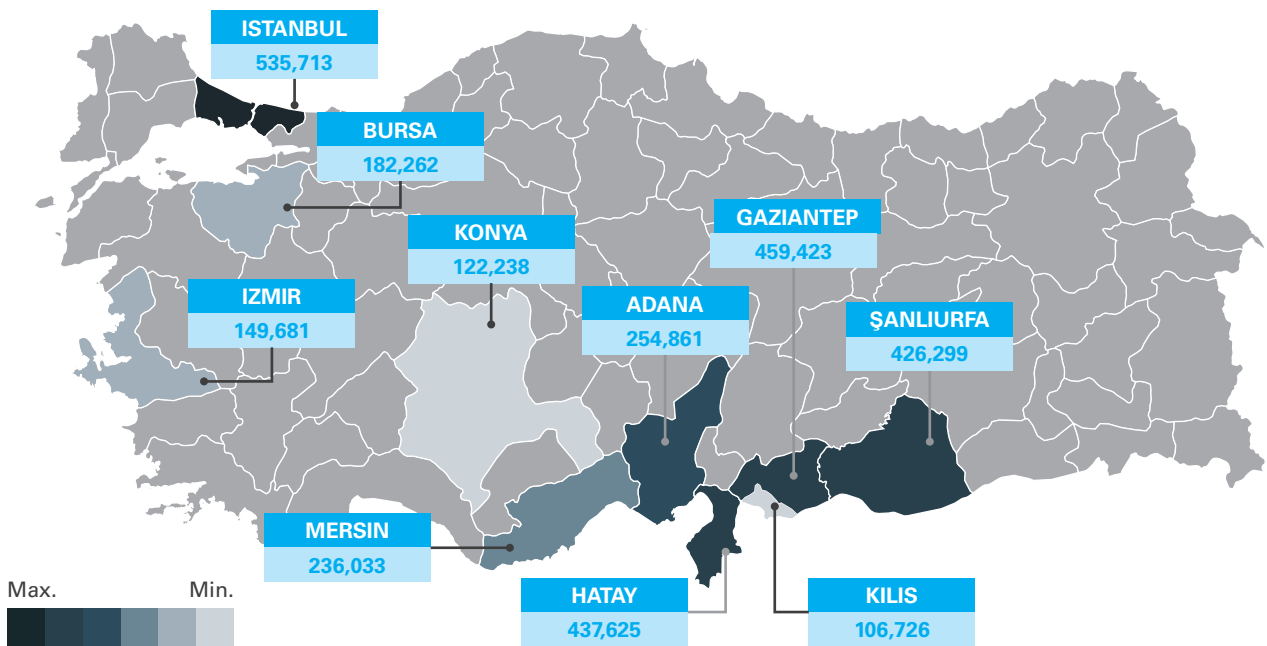


Figure 2. Distribution of Syrians under temporary protection by top ten provinces (DGMM, 2021)



Significant positive developments took place in 2013 and 2014 for people seeking international protection, including Syrian nationals in Türkiye. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection No. 6458 was passed in April 2013. Based on the law, the DGMM was established in April 2013. Law No. 6458's regulation, named as the Temporary Protection Regulation, came into force in October 2014. This regulation established legal status for Syrian people which helped them to

obtain housing, social benefits, and access to health and education services in Türkiye. **Figure 2** shows the most populated ten provinces by Syrian nationals under temporary protection as of February 2021. It should also be noted that in such cities as Kilis, Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Mersin the ratios of the Syrian population with the local host population are quite high, 75.45, 26.44, 22.03, 20.22 and 12.83 per cent respectively (DGMM, 2021).

1.2. The Turkish education system

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye, everyone has the right to receive an education.

Education is free in public schools and is compulsory from ages 5/6 to 17, including primary and secondary education. Pre-school education is currently optional although there are plans to make it compulsory and accessible in public and private schools, as stated in the Türkiye's Education Vision 2023 (MoNE, 2018). Türkiye's school model is graded as 4+4+4 (four years of primary school, four years of lower secondary school, and four years of upper secondary school).

Figure 3 shows the general structure of the Turkish public education system.

Students are placed in their preferred school in their home address registration area. However, at the end of lower secondary school, students may choose to sit for a nationwide competitive exam (The Merkezi Sınav-Central Exam [CE]- Transition Exam to upper secondary school) and can be placed in one of the selected schools they choose, according to the score they get. The types of upper secondary schools that students can attend after lower secondary education are outlined below within the scope of MoNE's Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions [MoNE-RSEI] (2020):

Anatolian Upper Secondary Schools (Anadolu Liseleri):

These schools function as general upper secondary schools where students who successfully complete eight years of primary and lower secondary school

education can enrol directly, depending on their location of residence. Anatolian upper secondary schools used to be different from general upper secondary schools in terms of their syllabus, entry requirements (i.e. through CE) and the number of students allocated to each class in the past. However, as of 2013, all general upper secondary schools were transformed into Anatolian upper secondary schools. Graduates of Anatolian schools, if successful in the nationwide University Entrance Examination (UEE) (*Yükseköğretim Kurumlar Sınavı-YKS*), can go on to higher education institutions.

However, a small number of the Anatolian upper secondary schools in every province were selected as "schools that take students by CE" in 2018. Therefore, they have accepted students by their CE scores since 2018. A list of these schools in every province is determined and updated by the MoNE every year.

Science Upper Secondary Schools (Fen Liseleri):

These are special schools for students who have exceptional aptitude in the sciences. In fact, they are designed to provide a resource for educating students as scholars in science and mathematics in addition to the general upper secondary school achievements. These are competitive upper secondary schools that require high scores from CE and train students specifically for higher education in the sciences, technical and medical fields. Graduates of science schools, if successful in the UEE, can go onto higher education institutions.



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Figure 3. Turkish public education system (MoNE, 2020, p. xxv)

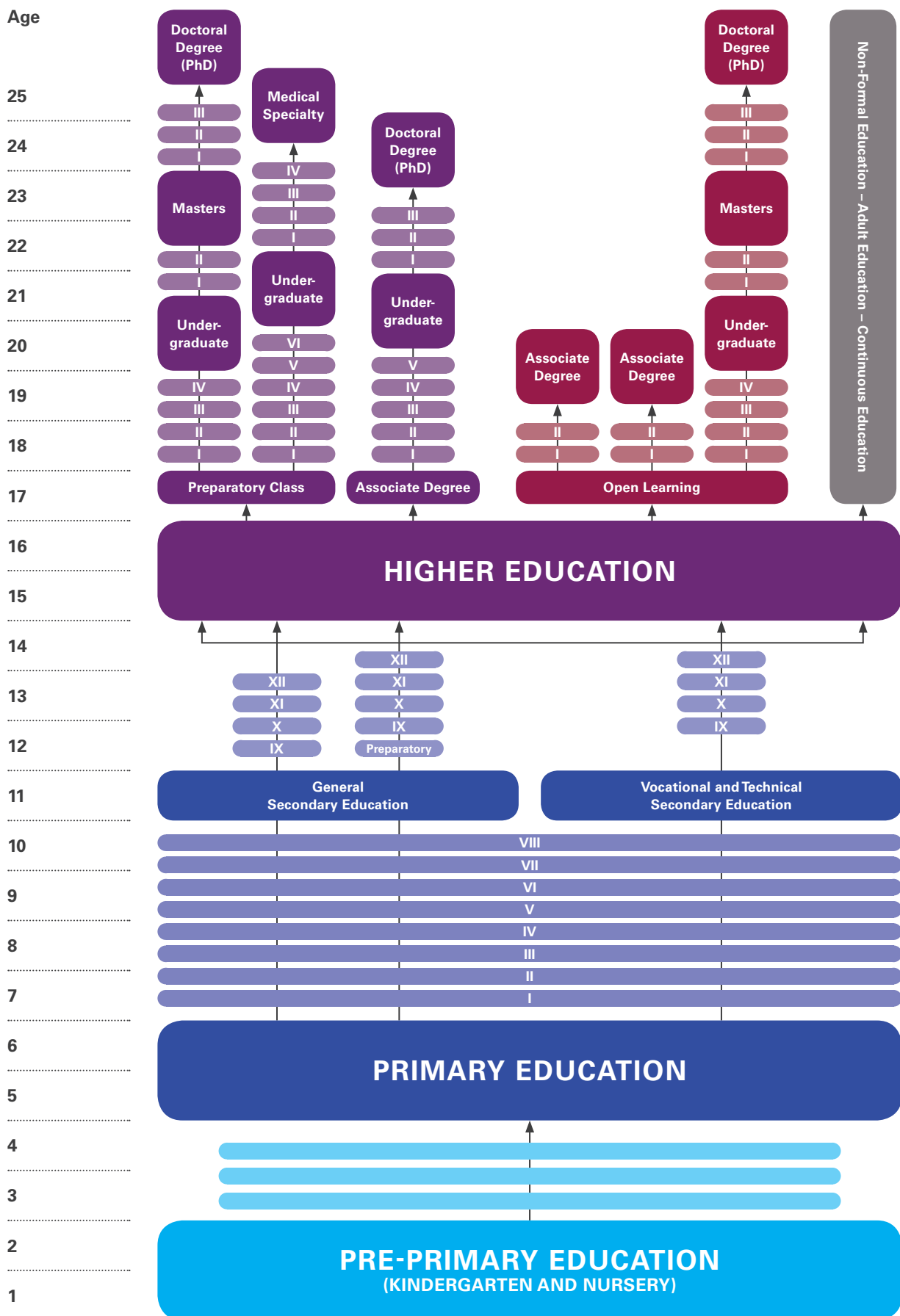


Figure 4. MoNE's regulation on secondary education institutions

 <p>Anatolian upper secondary schools (Anadolu Liseleri): general upper secondary schools for students who have completed primary and lower secondary school education. Graduates of Anatolian schools can go on to higher education institutions.</p>	 <p>Science upper secondary schools (Fen Liseleri): for students who have aptitude in the sciences and mathematics. These competitive upper secondary schools train students specifically for higher education in the sciences, technical and medical fields. Graduates of science schools, can go onto higher education institutions.</p>
 <p>Social Science upper secondary schools (Sosyal Bilimler Liseleri): are focused on social sciences. They are designed to provide a resource for educating student scholars in social sciences and literature. Graduates of these schools can continue their education in higher education institutions.</p>	 <p>Fine Arts upper secondary schools (Güzel Sanatlar Liseleri): provide students with basic knowledge and skills related to fine arts. Students are admitted to via an aptitude test. Those who graduate from these schools can continue their education in higher education institutions.</p>
 <p>Sports upper secondary schools (Spor Liseleri): provide students with basic knowledge and skills in the field of physical education and sports. Students are admitted to these schools via an aptitude test and graduates can continue their education in higher education institutions.</p>	 <p>Vocational and Technical Anatolian upper secondary schools (Meslek Liseleri): offer vocational and technical education and build the education, skills and technical knowledge of a profession. Students are accepted with thorough CE, as well as interviews and physical performance tests.</p>
 <p>Anatolian Imam Hatip upper and lower secondary schools (Anadolu İmam Hatip Lise ve Ortaokulları): These schools are designed to provide students with knowledge and skills about basic Islamic sciences in addition to the general achievements of upper secondary education (i.e. natural and social sciences courses). They can be as mixed or same sex (i.e. male/female) schools.</p>	 <p>Multi-Programme Anatolian upper secondary schools (Çok Programlı Anadolu Liseleri): are are upper secondary schools that gather Anatolian upper secondary school and VTASE programmes in a single school, especially in places with a small population and small number of students. Programmes offered depend on the needs of the area and the school.</p>
 <p>Open Education upper secondary school (Açık Öğretim Lisesi): offer a distance education model that enables people to receive education using information and communication technologies. Open to anyone wanting an upper or lower secondary school diploma regardless of age. Students do not have to attend school but do have to take exams.</p>	 <p>Non-Formal Education: means lifelong learning activities at different levels in order to ensure the economic, social and cultural development of individuals in accordance with their interests and abilities (e.g. language, dance, computer courses). It is provided in public education centres.</p>

Social Science upper secondary schools (Sosyal Bilimler Liseleri): Similar to science upper secondary schools, they are focused on social sciences. They are designed to provide a resource for educating student scholars in social sciences and literature in addition to the general upper secondary school achievements. Students also need to sit in the CE and obtain high scores to enter these schools. They train students specifically for higher education in law, literature and social science fields. Graduates of these schools, if successful in the UEE, can continue their education in higher education institutions.

Fine Arts upper secondary schools (Güzel Sanatlar Liseleri): This type of upper secondary school aims to provide students with basic knowledge and skills related to fine arts in addition to the general upper secondary education attainments and to provide a resource educating qualified individuals in the field of fine arts. Students are admitted to these schools via an aptitude test. Those who graduate from these schools can continue their education in higher education institutions if they succeed in the UEE.

Sports upper secondary schools (Spor Liseleri):

These upper secondary schools aim to provide students with basic knowledge and skills in the field of physical education and sports, in addition to the general upper secondary education attainments. Students are admitted to these schools via an aptitude test. Those who graduate from these schools, can continue their education in higher education institutions if they are successful in the UEE.

Vocational and Technical Anatolian upper secondary schools (Meslek Liseleri):

As part of formal compulsory schooling, after completing lower secondary school, students can opt for vocational and technical upper secondary education institutions (i.e. Vocational and Technical Anatolian Upper Secondary Education-VTASE and Vocational Education Centres-VEC). Students studying in these schools receive vocational and technical education and are able to maintain their own lives, contribute to the need for a qualified workforce, and build the education, skills and technical knowledge of a profession, as well as craft or field of activity that may be needed when returning to their country, if they are foreigners. Since 2018, students have been admitted to VTASE both through the CE and the local placement procedure explained above. Students are accepted to Anatolian technical programmes of VTASE and to Anatolian vocational programmes of schools that apply specific programmes and projects with thorough CE, as well as interviews and physical performance tests in the designated schools. If those looking to pursue higher education are successful in the UEE, they can attend two- or four-year higher education institutions in their own fields as well as in other fields.

In this context, the weekly schedule for Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School, Anatolian Vocational and Anatolian Technical Programmes (for students UTP) has been put into practice since the 2016–2017 academic year.

Vocational Training Centres (Mesleki Eğitim Merkezleri):

Apprenticeship training, which used to be part of non-formal education, was included in the scope of formal and compulsory education in 2016. People are enrolled Vocational Training Centres (VTC) as apprentice students. Eligibility criteria for VTC enrolment include completion of lower secondary education, meeting the health requirements of the profession they will be entering, and signing

a contract with a workplace operating in the field of education in which students are enrolled. Those who pass the Journeyman's Certificate at the end of the 11th grade and the Mastership Certificate at the end of the 12th grade have journeyman's and mastership certificates. At the same time, a Vocational and Technical Anatolian upper secondary school Diploma is issued to those who enrolled in the upper secondary school diploma programme applied in VTC, in which students must successfully complete additional courses.

In this context, the Vocational Education Centre (for students UTP) weekly course schedule has been used since the 2021–2022 academic year.

Anatolian Imam Hatip upper and lower secondary schools (Anadolu İmam Hatip Lise ve Ortaokulları):

These schools are designed to provide students with knowledge and skills about basic Islamic sciences in addition to the general achievements of upper secondary education (i.e. natural and social sciences courses). Those, who graduate from these schools can continue their education in higher education institutions if they succeed in the UEE. They can be designed as mixed or same sex (i.e. male/female) schools.

Multi-Programme Anatolian upper secondary schools (Çok Programlı Anadolu Liseleri):

These are upper secondary schools that gather Anatolian upper secondary school and VTASE programmes in a single school, especially in places with a small population and small numbers of students. The types of schools and types of vocational and technical programmes to be offered at the school depend on the conditions/needs of the area and the school.

Open Education upper secondary school (Açık Öğretim Lisesi):

This is a distance education school model that enables people to receive education without space and time limitations using information and communication technologies. Anyone who wants to earn an upper or lower secondary school diploma regardless of their age can enrol in the open education upper/lower secondary school. In this system, students do not have to attend school but have to take exams. Open education practice is also available for different types of secondary schools mentioned above including Anatolian Open Imam Hatip Upper/Lower Secondary Schools, Vocational Open Upper Secondary Education School, and Vocational and Technical Open Education Schools.

Non-formal Education: Refers to lifelong learning activities in different time periods and at different levels in order to ensure the economic, social and cultural development of individuals in accordance with their interests and abilities (e.g. language, dance, computer courses). People who have never entered the formal education system or are at any level of the formal education system or who have left or completed the formal education can benefit from it. It is provided in PECs (MoNE, 2020).

Higher education in Türkiye is typically composed of either four years of university or two years of higher vocational school education. Some programmes have an additional year of language study. Under normal circumstances, a master’s degree takes two years; while a doctorate degree takes three and half to five years. This category includes all educational institutions which provide post-secondary education. Higher education programmes are under the supervision of the Higher Education Council (HEC).

The Turkish education system is under the supervision and control of the MoNE. It is a centralized system where policy and administrative decisions about education, including the appointment of teachers and administrators, selection of textbooks and selection of subjects for the curriculum are made. For a centralized system, the inclusion of newly arrived refugees from a different cultural background with a different language has been a new experience and posed many challenges in terms of policy, infrastructure and culture of schools in Türkiye. The initiatives with respect to institutionalization and enrolment are outlined in the following sections. A more detailed analysis of policy to ensure inclusive teaching and learning environments to tackle above mentioned challenges and implementation outcomes will be shared in the literature review and progress sections.

1.3. Institutionalization of the education of Syrian children

From the very beginning of the crisis, when Syrians started to cross into Türkiye, MoNE created a task force called the “Syrian Education Unit” to make plans for the education of Syrian children. Later, with the passing of the circular titled “Educational Services for Foreigners” on 23 September 2014 (circular 2014/21), a Ministry Commission was founded under the chairmanship of a Deputy Under Secretary to coordinate Syrian children’s education in Türkiye. Educational provision for Syrian children UTP was formalized with the establishment of the Education in Emergency and Migration Department on 16 May 2016. This was to be an associate department of the Directorate General for Lifelong Learning (DG LLL). The Education in Emergency and Migration Department was tasked with planning, coordinating, implementing and supervising education during emergencies and migration situations. This department has units in provinces that deal with issues at the local level. So now, any issues regarding Syrian children’s education are handled by DG LLL and the new Education in Emergency and Migration Department (Taştan & Çelik, 2017).

1.4. Enrolment of Syrian children under temporary protection

According to the figures provided by DGMM, as of November 2021, there are 1,124,353 school aged Syrian children (5-17 years old) in Türkiye (LLL DG, 2021). 731,713 Syrian children (65 per cent) were provided access to formal education as of November 2021 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Enrolment rate of Syrian children as of November 2021 (DG LLL, 2021)

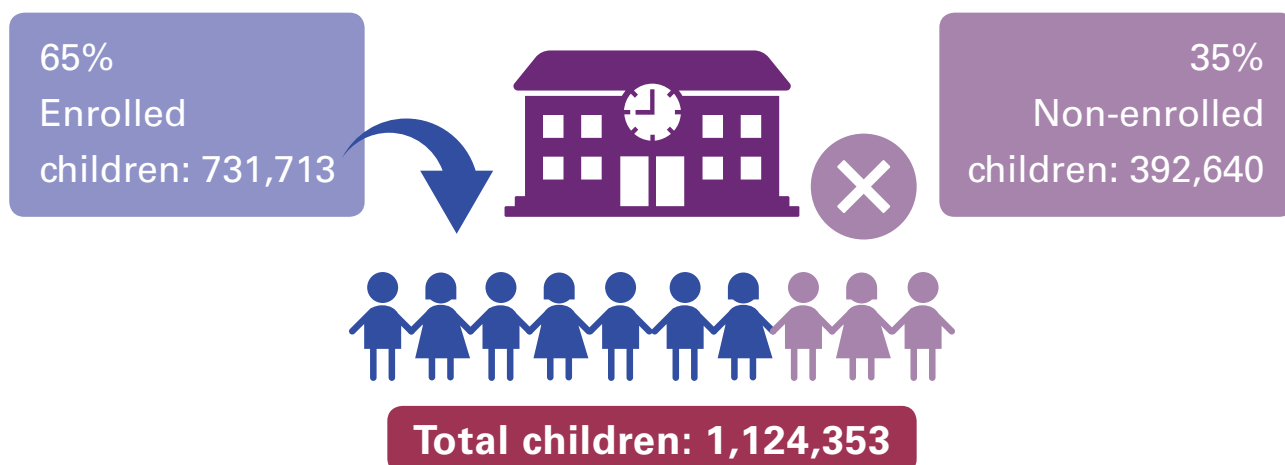
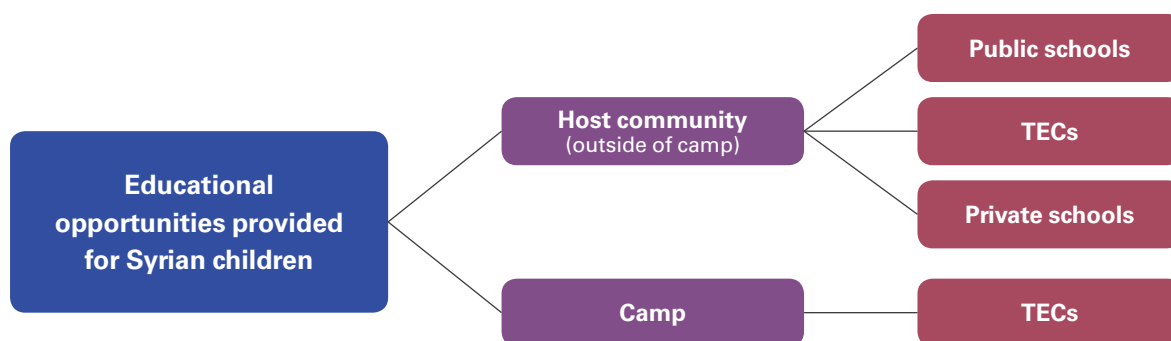


Figure 6. Types of schools that Syrian children could attend during the crisis (2011–2022)



Educational services for Syrian children have been provided in different ways since the crisis started. As it was initially assumed that Syrian conflict would be short-lived and that Syrian guests would soon return home, education for Syrian children in the early stages of migration was offered through Temporary Education Centres (TECs). These TECs were designed only for Syrian children with instruction in Arabic by SVEP through an adapted Syrian curriculum. SVEP were specially selected Syrians in Türkiye who preferably had a teaching background or had an undergraduate degree in areas such as science, literature, engineering and pharmacy. Figure 6 shows the implementation of education services until 2020. As of September 2020, all TECs have been closed and all Syrian children attending school have been transferred to TPSs.

Significant progress appears to have been achieved in terms of the school enrolment ratio of Syrian students UTP in Türkiye (Table 1). Pre-primary enrolment rates even exceed those achieved by Syria before the war started. Within Syria itself, a 12-year system of primary and secondary education is followed, consisting of six years of primary and six years of

secondary education which is divided into two cycles (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). Compulsory education in the country is nine years (grades 1-9).

Table 1 shows, that the ratio of pre-school and lower secondary education enrolments in TPSs is higher than the ratio in pre-war Syria. However, the school enrolment ratio drops to nearly 75 per cent and 43 per cent for primary and upper secondary school levels respectively in Türkiye, lower than the school enrolment ratio in Syria before the conflict started. Although MoNE, with the support of UNICEF, has been providing Syrian students with education services, it is estimated that approximately 35 per cent of Syrians (Figure 5) of school age do not have access to formal schooling, especially at the secondary level. The main reasons for their non-enrolment are structural barriers such as economics, child labour, child marriage, and language issues (Carlier, 2018; Emin, 2016; Taştan & Çelik 2017; UNICEF, 2018b). This makes equal access to education for all Syrian children UTP at all levels, a huge challenge. However, Türkiye, with the support of UNICEF, has made huge efforts to reach out to all children UTP to ensure they have access to quality education.

Table 1. School enrolment rates of Syrian children in Syria and Türkiye

School level	School enrolment ratio in Syria, 2010 (before the crisis)	School enrolment ratio in Syria, 2011 (when the crisis started)	School enrolment ratio of Syrian children UTP in Türkiye, 2021
Pre-primary education	9.0%	10.00%	31.48%
Primary education	93.0%	N/A	75.00% 81.17%
Secondary education – upper secondary	66.8%	68.82%	43.00%

Source: UNESCO-UIS (2020) and DG LLL (2021)



2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This section initially looks at the refugee crisis in terms of education using the relevant literature before assessing the educational response in terms of policy and practice. Then, the methodology used in the study is explained.

2.1. Theoretical background for the educational response to refugee crises

In 2019, the UNHCR reported that worldwide, there were 79.5 million persons of concern, i.e. fleeing war, persecution and conflict: a record high number, up from 43.3 million in 2009 (UNHCR, 2020a).

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This increase in the number of displaced people seeking protection was driven by the Syrian crisis between 2012 and 2015. All of these persons of concern need help and access to basic services such as health and education.

2.1.1. Education in emergencies

Long-term conflicts result in major disruptions to education. The quality of schooling deteriorates for young people who stay in the conflict areas due to factors such as damaged school buildings, lack of security, and lack of funds. The situation can be more complicated for those seeking protection in other countries as refugees (Mendenhall, 2019a). For example, when large numbers of refugees arrive from a neighbouring country and are accommodated in camps, as is the case in Türkiye, new schools have to

be established, teachers need to be recruited, and educational materials and psychosocial support has to be provided (Sinclair, 2007).

Education in emergencies is a relatively new field which was developed in the 1990s and early 2000s when various international organizations had to provide support to people across the world affected by various emergencies (Mendenhall, 2019a; Kagawa, 2005). It can be argued that the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child includes education in emergencies as part of a general humanitarian response. Article 22.1 reads:

States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.

“Education in emergency refers to education for populations affected by unforeseen situations such as armed conflict or natural disasters”

(Sinclair, 2007, p. 52).



Sinclair (2007) argues that the Convention obliges that countries which have ratified the Convention must ensure access to education within their territory. The establishment of INEE with the support of UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, and leading NGOs paved the way for an understanding that gives high priority to education in emergencies particularly for displaced children.

By conducting regional and global consultations, INEE developed widely endorsed Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies in 2004. INEE (Minimum Standards for Education- INEE, 2010a) covers Five Domains to be considered to ensure an effective educational response in emergencies:

- **Foundational Standards (community participation, coordination and analysis);**
- **Access and Learning Environment;**
- **Teaching and Learning;**
- **Teachers and Other Education Personnel;** and
- **Education Policy.**

The Foundational Standards: community participation, coordination and analysis are to be applied across all domains to promote a holistic and quality response (Figure 7). These standards show the importance of good diagnosis at all stages of education in emergencies to better understand the context and apply more appropriately the standards in the other domains.

Figure 7. Domains for education in Emergencies (INEE, 2010a, p. 8).

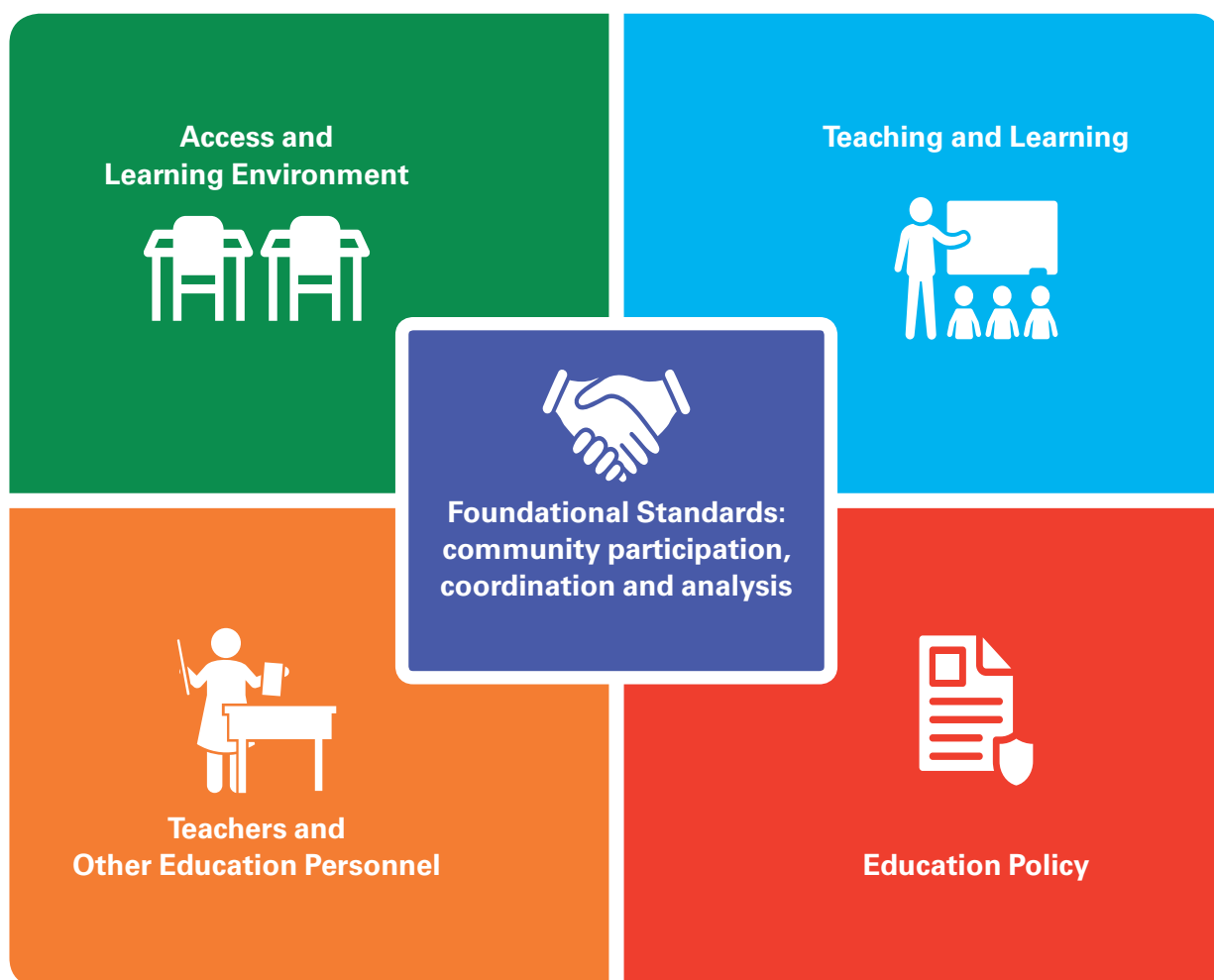
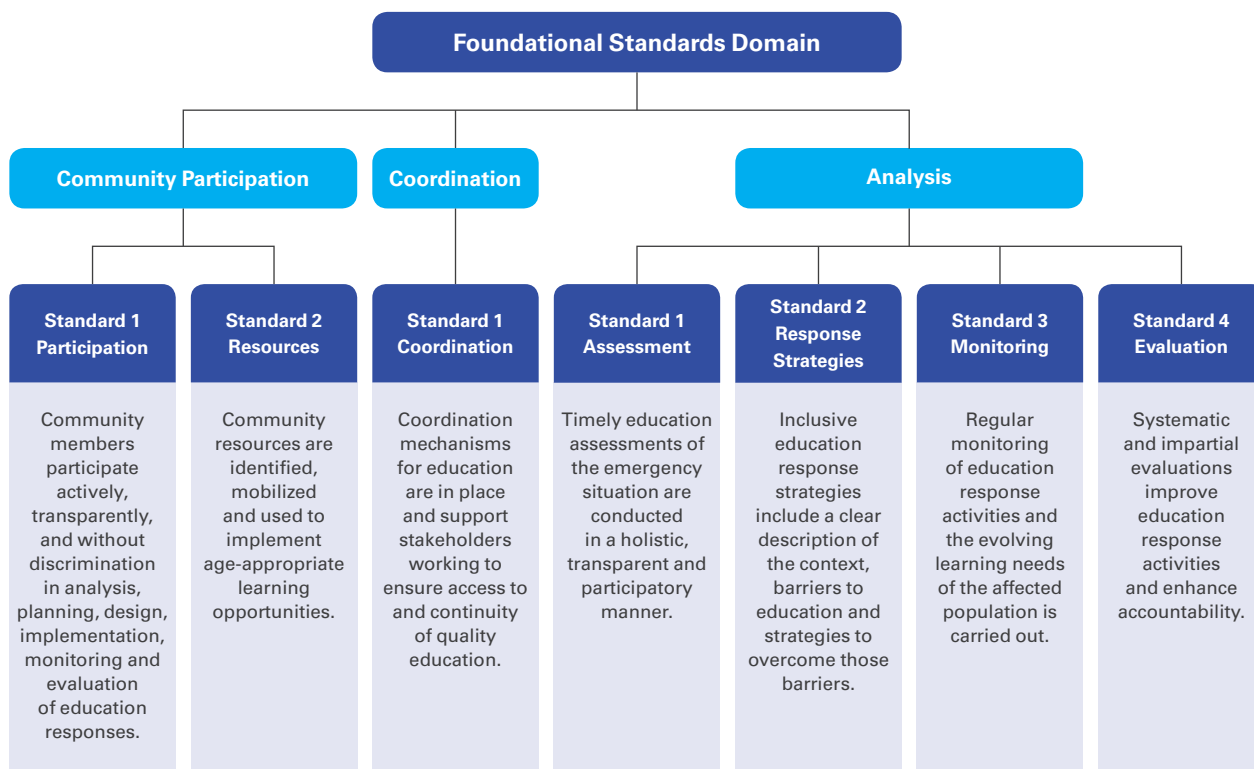


Figure 8. INEE Foundational Standards (INEE, 2010a, p. 19).



The minimum standards for the Foundational Standards domain are shown more clearly in **Figure 8**, and place an emphasis on actively engaging with communities during the processes of education response, effective and appropriate use of resources, efficient coordination among stakeholders, creating inclusive learning environments and practices including pedagogy and assessment, and finally in setting systematic monitoring and evaluation practices.

Other frameworks and strategies aimed at increasing protection of the right to education for all children include the following:

The Sustainable Development Agenda

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a new development agenda, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, launching 17 globally endorsed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be met by 2030. SDGs are considered to be the key to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all with SDG 4 asserting that a quality education is the foundation for sustainable development (INEE, 2019). Although all of the seven SDG 4 targets are relevant to refugees, Target 4.5 in particular asserts that

vulnerable groups should be provided equal access to all levels of education by stating that: “By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations” (UN, n.d., para. 8).

Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Target 4.5




“By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”
(UN, n.d., para. 8).

The Education 2030 Framework for Action

The Education 2030 Framework for Action, which was adopted by the international education community following the Incheon Declaration of the World Education Forum in Incheon in 2015, lays the foundation within which global efforts will be anchored to achieve SDG 4 (Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action [IDFA], 2015). To develop responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children in a crisis context, the framework refers to INEE's minimum standards for guidance in planning and response.

As with the SDGs and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the focus in this study will be given to four main areas of concern (education policy, access and learning environment, teaching and learning, and teachers and other educational personnel) in emergency and humanitarian education as covered by the INEE domains (see [Figure 7](#)).

2.1.1.1. Education policy in emergency and humanitarian education

The aim of SDG 4 to ensure education for all by 2030 represents a critical opportunity to ensure that the education of refugee children is considered at national and international levels.

International legal documents and initiatives now recognize the right to education for refugee children, with education being seen as a priority from the onset of any emergency. This right to education is not only considered fundamental in the early stages of the crisis but also along the whole timeline of the refugee situation. When developing education policy in the face of an emergency crisis, countries need to be aware that there are three main steps to follow when providing education in emergencies and these

are laid out in the UNHCR's Education Strategy document (2012, p. 27–28).

During the transition process, the aim is to ensure a quick resumption of formal schooling. Key activities suggested by UNCHR (2012, p. 28–29) in the process include:

- capacity development of national partners in use of the INEE Minimum Standards;
- rapid identification of teachers within the refugee population for additional training in participatory pedagogies, curriculum content, formative assessment, psychosocial support and peace-building;
- advocacy with local authorities and national Ministries of Education to ensure the smooth integration of refugee learners into national systems, where possible and especially in situations of extended stay, and provision of intensive language support where necessary; and
- ensure that there are dedicated personnel to design and coordinate the emergency education response, including through deployments.

During this transition process, UNESCO (2017, p. 2) urges that countries pay attention to the particular need for the stabilization phase which “relates to a structural context involving the host States’ educational policies and legal frameworks as well as matters related to the adaptation and integration”. INEE (2010a, p. 105) has two minimum standards concerning refugee education policy that also relate to stabilization. These standards are:

Law and Policy Formulation: Education authorities prioritize the continuity and recovery of quality education, including free and inclusive access to schooling. Key actions for this standard include the following:

The three main steps when providing education in emergencies

1. Providing non-formal safe learning spaces and leisure activities.
2. The transition from safe learning to more formal educational activities should be ensured, focusing particularly on literacy and numeracy. Education opportunities need to be accelerated rapidly for more formal education. Against all odds, data should be collected as soon as possible to inform decision-making. This data should include information on children's ages and educational levels, teachers and school principals within the refugee population, and children with specific needs.
3. Resumption of formal learning recognized by the government(s) of origin and/or host country. Decisions on the curriculum to be used should be made in consultation with the refugee community and pay due regard to the importance of providing quality and certified education services in the most sustainable way possible.

- public education laws, regulations and policies respect, protect and fulfil the right to education and ensure continuity of education;
- laws, regulations, and policies ensure that every education facility rebuilt or replaced is safe;
- laws, regulations, and policies are based on an analysis of the context that is developed through participatory and inclusive processes;
- public education policies are supported with action plans, laws and budgets that allow a quick response to emergency situations; and
- laws, regulations and policies allow schools for refugees to use the curricula and language of the country or area of origin (INEE, 2010a, p. 107).

Planning and Implementation: Education activities take into account international and public education policies, laws, standards, and plans for the learning needs of the affected populations. Key actions for this standard include the following:

- formal and non-formal education programmes should provide inclusive educational activities that fulfil education rights and goals;
- education authorities develop and implement national and local education plans that prepare for and respond to future and current emergencies; and
- financial, technical, material and human resources are sufficient for effective and transparent development of education policy, and planning and implementation of education programmes (INEE, 2010a, p. 112).

When a refugee situation is looked at in terms of adaptation and integration, several issues appear to limit the rights of refugee children. One issue is the “intolerance, xenophobia, aggression, national and ethnic tensions, and conflicts [which] affect many groups in many places” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7). Another issue, in the case of Syrian refugee children, is that enrolment can take from one month to several years after they have arrived in the host country.

These enrolment delays are due to a number of factors, the first being mobility. The living situation of many Syrians is inherently unstable. This leads to many families seeking to improve their situation by moving to another country, region or city in the hope of finding better living conditions. This delays the entry of Syrian children into the school system and results in academic gaps when compared with their peers, limiting their future educational lives.

In addition, there is pressure for young people to work, for boys in the informal labour sector and for girls as unpaid domestic labour.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) argued in his hierarchy of needs that physiological needs are at the forefront deficiency needs, which explains why many Syrian families have put their educational needs on hold during the crisis (Hale, Ricotta, Freed, Smith, & Huang, 2019). Syrian families often have to make a choice between financial viability and their children’s educational needs, meaning that children work to provide basic needs for the family rather than get an education (Usta, Arıkan, Şahin & Çetin, 2018).

Cultural attitudes and social norms also affect family decisions on education. Often early marriage leads to a lower enrolment rate of Syrian girls. Also, the fact that education is free and compulsory from grade 1 to 9 in Syria means that perceptions of necessary education levels is lower than in Türkiye. Such a schooling culture also shapes Syrian families’ understanding of education so that the number of children that continue on to secondary education drops radically.

Reasons for delays in education enrolment for Syrian students



Mobility: Some families move around to other cities or regions seeking better opportunities.



Pressure to work: Young boys are pressured to help the family by working and girls are encouraged to work in the home.



Cultural attitudes: Early marriage for Syrian girls, a shorter compulsory education period in Syria and an unwillingness by parents to put daughters in mixed classrooms contribute to delays in enrolment.

In general terms, to better protect refugees' right to education and to put in place sustainable policies, UNESCO (2017) proposed a framework for states that features four interdependent principals: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability (4-As Framework) to be applied as follows: (UNESCO, 2017, p. 22-23):

- Refugees should be included in public education systems, educational institutions and programmes and these should be available in sufficient quantity (e.g. buildings, sanitation, facilities for both sexes, safe drinkable water, and duly trained, qualified and motivated teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries and incentives, and teaching materials).
- Educational institutions and programmes should be accessible to everyone, ensuring non-discrimination and physical and economic accessibility. Host countries should prevent discriminatory practices towards refugees and facilitate their access to schools and universities, in particular regarding their possible lack of documentation (e.g. identification and academic transcripts).
- The form and substance (including curricula) of education should be acceptable to the students (relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality). Cultural diversity, intercultural understanding, and multicultural education play an important role in this context. In the host countries, the new language of instruction can present a significant barrier for refugees. Refugees should be supported in learning the language of the host country at an early stage and intensive language training should be promoted where needed.
- Education must be flexible to adapt to the needs of changing societies. Host countries, supported by the international community, should take all necessary measures to receive refugees and provide them with a high-quality and meaningful education. They should also take into consideration, when necessary, accelerated and flexible education options enabling refugees, over the long term, to rebuild their lives and communities, obtain employment, own businesses or purchase land.

Finally, another important component to be considered in the stabilization phase is the problem of recognition of qualifications of refugee children (Kirk, 2009; UNESCO, 2017). This recognition is important for students access to further studies and the labour market, but refugees often face serious obstacles

having their qualifications recognized (UNESCO, 2017). Many of them left their home country with no documentary proof of their qualifications (i.e. diplomas and certifications) and many institutions "refuse undocumented claims at face value" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 10). In addition, as UNESCO (2017) asserts, the institutions which have to deal with refugee applications face the same problems in accessing, assessing and recognizing credentials from Syria due to the ongoing situation.

Although refugee families place a high priority on education – regarding it as essential both for the future of their children and their society, (Sinclair, 2007) – they know that certification to back up educational qualifications is just as vital (Kirk, 2009). Families are less willing to make sacrifices in terms of time and cost to send their children to school if there are no future benefits when students can't receive certifications or prove that they undertook certain courses (Kirk, 2009). Kirk (2009) recommends that education ministries globally develop policy guidance for the equivalency of curricula, programmes, credentials and ensure their implementation at local levels.

2.1.1.2. Access and learning environment

As a humanitarian response, education in emergencies is vital. "[It] is immediately protective, providing life-saving knowledge and skills and psychosocial support to those affected by crises" (IDFA, 2015, p. 11). Psychosocial support is needed to develop a sense of normalcy for children affected by the emergency so that traumatized children can be provided with a routine similar to the one they are used to in stable and non-conflict contexts (Sinclair, 2007). Education in emergencies also provides children with a safe place in potentially dangerous environments (Steiner-Khamsi, Monks, Brylinski, 2019; UNCHR, 2012). As mentioned before, refugee children can be subjected to child labour, marriage, crime and xenophobia. Schools can play a critical role in giving them a sense of direction and hope.

Education also prepares children for the post-conflict future. Those children who are out of school during conflict lose precious years of academic and social learning and can lag behind their peers. Education is the key to future well-being particularly for the most vulnerable, so access in an emergency is a priority. Likewise, education in emergencies plays a role in creating a sustainable future, providing children with skills to prevent disaster, conflict,

and disease by enabling social cohesion, supporting conflict resolution, and peace-building skills (IDFA, 2015; INEE, 2010b; Sinclair, 2007).

Finally, education can ensure protection for marginalized groups – minorities, girls, children with disabilities, out-of-school adolescents etc. – [who are] often at risk of exploitation or being forced into unsafe work such as prostitution or recruitment by militias (Sinclair, 2007, p. 53).

In emergency situations, there is always an emphasis on meeting immediate needs, in terms of health and safety. This, combined with a lack of human and material resources, means that provision for effective education interventions tend to take second place (Steiner-Khamsi, Monks & Brylinski, 2019). Education is still one of the least funded sectors in humanitarian response (Mendenhall, 2019a) and despite the tripling of humanitarian financial aid in recent years, the share of the total devoted to education has barely increased, not exceeding 2.3 per cent in 2018 (INEE, 2019).

This lack of funds for educational provision, especially the lack of access to quality learning environments, severely hampers the psychosocial well-being of children in both the short and long term and has a long-term impact on society (UNESCO, 2017). Limited funding also impacts budget allocation across schooling levels, generally prioritizing basic education (including lower secondary), resulting in budget inequality and contributing to a chronic neglect of secondary education for refugees (Mendenhall, 2019a; UNESCO, 2017).

According to UNHCR's 2018 data, while 61 per cent of refugee children world-wide attended primary school (compared to a world average of 92 per cent), only 23 per cent of them were enrolled in secondary education (compared with 84 per cent worldwide) (INEE, 2019). In addition to budget inequality, other supply and demand barriers prevent refugee children from accessing secondary school. According to UNHCR (2015), supply barriers include exclusion from public education systems (i.e. policy requirements and lack of negotiations with national authorities), distance (i.e. especially in rural areas, the number of secondary schools is small and distant from each other), language (i.e. in secondary education, the complexity of concepts increases), capacity (i.e. secondary education requires more resources and technical capacity than primary education), and documentation (e.g. the lack of recognized diploma proving successful completion of primary school). Demand barriers include low primary completion rates, high opportunity costs, and low perceived value of secondary education based on cultural norms (UNHCR, 2015). It should also be noted that girls living in conflict situations are two and a half times more likely to drop out of primary school than boys, and are 90 per cent more likely than boys to be excluded from secondary school (INEE, 2019). These factors show the need to create inclusive learning environments at all levels of education for refugee children.

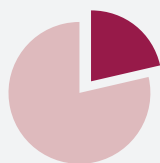
The majority of studies on education of child refugees advocate creating inclusive learning environments (INEE, 2010a; UNESCO, 2017; UNHCR, 2012; UNICEF, 2015a). SDG 4 targets are also advocated: "Build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all" (UN, n.d., para. 11).

Creating such inclusive systems must be considered from two perspectives: access to school and creation of inclusive school environments. Because of the barriers mentioned, refugee children are at high risk of being out of school for long periods. In such situations, INEE (2010b) points out that alternative programmes may be needed to ensure the participation of students and enable them to progress through the stages of development and education. Interventions such as ALP, home school modules and distance education can be viable alternatives for children who cannot attend school regularly because of continuing conflict (INEE, 2010b).



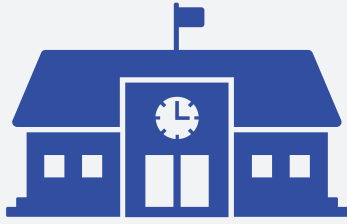
Only 61 per cent

of refugee children attend primary school, compared to the world average of 92 per cent.



23 per cent

of refugees are enrolled in secondary education compared to 84 per cent worldwide.



Inclusive schools are places where students

feel safe, empowered and accepted and can experience a sense of accomplishment.

Inclusive schools are ones where students feel safe, equal, empowered and unconditionally accepted. Such a school environment enables students to be “themselves”, and to experience a sense of accomplishment about what they can achieve. Creating such environments takes a combined effort from teachers, principals, families and other stakeholders and requires “the availability of accessible learning structures and sites”, “removal of barriers of enrolment”, “availability of sufficient resources”, “sustained quality education activities”, “safe and child-friendly learning environments”, “supportive learning environments”, “skillful teachers to support children”, and “safe access routes to the learning environment” (INEE, 2010a).

2.1.1.3. Teaching and learning

Once refugee children enjoy access to education, the next step is to ensure that this education is inclusive and of high quality – two factors prioritized in both the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action (IDFA, 2015).

In the Framework there are several references to providing education in emergencies and the education of refugees but paragraph 26 in particular urges countries to “institute measures to develop an inclusive, responsive and resilient education system to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in crisis contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees” (IDFA, 2015, p. 11). For UNICEF in Türkiye, this position was spelled out in the Country Programme Document as follows: “The Türkiye-UNICEF partnership will evolve further to include national,

regional and global dimensions, with an initial focus on humanitarian action, inclusive quality education, and child protection” (UNICEF, 2015a, p. 8).

Although SDG 4 commits the global community to ensuring quality and inclusive education for all young people, its pledges are insufficient in crisis contexts (INEE, 2019). In a refugee setting, teaching and learning can be low quality and sometimes irrelevant (Sinclair, 2007), and has been characterized as “very poor” by Mendenhall (2015, p. 93). Although the quality of education largely depends on the choice of teachers, Mendenhall *et al.* (2015, p. 93) note that “pedagogy in refugee educational contexts has not received sufficient attention”; and is “a neglected priority” in the words of Michele Schweisfurth (2015, cited in Mendenhall *et al.* 2015, p. 93).

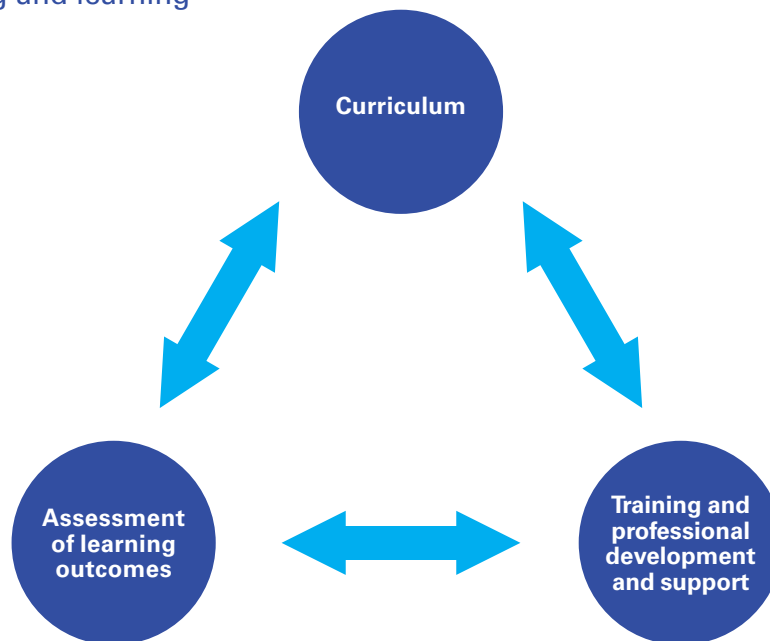
Likewise, UNICEF (2018a) reports that one of the barriers to quality education is the low-quality of teaching and schools as well as factors such as economic circumstances, gender, disability, and disruptions resulting from conflicts.

Mendenhall *et al.* (2015, p. 93) argue that the teaching of refugee children requires a two-fold perspective: attention to generic pedagogical principles and attention to contextualized notions, enhanced by teachers and students in specific places. Similar to non-emergency situations, INEE (2010b) proposes a generic framework for education in an emergency where the teaching and learning process is cyclical, each dimension linked to one another and enabling the success of the others (Figure 9).

Curricula must represent the content, including knowledge, skills, values and learning outcomes, to be acquired by students through the lessons and courses they attend while being appropriate and relevant for students of concern during emergency situations. Also, curricula should be created using available or familiar textbooks if possible (INEE, 2010b).

In crisis situations, which applies to Syrian children UTP in Türkiye, INEE (2010b) and UNHCR (2012) assert that curricula should go beyond reading, writing and arithmetic, and should lay the groundwork for the development of values and skills such as peace, conflict resolution, reconciliation, human rights and context-bound competencies to help prevent and respond to future crises.

Figure 9. Teaching and learning



INEE’s minimum standards for a curriculum include the following:

- Education authorities lead the review, development or adaptation of the formal curriculum, involving all relevant stakeholders.
- Curricula, textbooks and supplementary materials are appropriate to the age, developmental level, language, culture, capacities and needs of learners.
- Formal curricula and examinations used in the education of refugees and internally displaced people are recognized by home and host governments (INEE, 2010b, p. 1).

Assessment of learning outcomes is about obtaining information on student learning and progress which, in turn, is used to determine if learning outcomes are relevant for the curricula and the needs and development of students. Structured and continuous assessment of progress and assessment data collected during the process helps stakeholders to determine the individual needs of students to monitor the teaching and learning process, monitor progress made by children and promote accountability amongst the stakeholders (INEE, 2010b). INEE’s minimum standards for carrying out an assessment in emergency situations are as follows:



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- continuous assessment and evaluation of learners' progress towards established objectives inform teaching methods;
- learners' achievement are recognized and credits or course completion documents are provided accordingly;
- graduates of technical and vocational programmes are assessed to gauge the quality and relevance of the programmes against the changing environment;
- assessment and evaluation methods are considered fair, reliable and non-threatening to learners; and
- assessments are relevant to learners' future educational and economic needs (INEE, 2010b, p. 40).

In technical terms, standardized assessments only based on summative methods are not preferred as they will not yield accurate results, particularly for refugee children (Öztürk, Cengiz, Köksal, İrez, 2017). The assessment carried out in emergency situations should largely be based on formative assessment "gauging ongoing progress by identifying learner strengths and weaknesses" (INEE 2010b, p. 40). In order for assessment practices to be inclusive, they should begin with assessing what children already know and what they can do and continue by focusing on how much the students have achieved in the process (Molbaek, 2018; Öztürk *et al.*, 2017). Assessment results should also be used to ensure the efficiency of instruction rather than simply used for benchmarking or ranking.

The instruction and learning process represents pedagogical practices carried out in the class to ensure that instruction is accessible to all students including refugee children and it is closely linked with the dimension of continuing Training, Professional Development and Support for teachers. Teachers have a critical role in education in emergencies (INEE, 2010b; Mendenhall *et al.*, 2015). However, education of refugee children raises challenges that some teachers are not used to dealing with. Refugee children may be traumatized, speak a different language to the host community, and be socio-economically disadvantaged. Integrating refugee children into the schools and creating multicultural and inclusive classrooms requires teachers to develop new skills: skills that can be built through on-going professional development opportunities and support (INEE, 2010b).

Such conceptualization of teaching and learning is reflected and emphasized in more current UN strategy documents. In 2015, Mendenhall *et al.* report a

dramatic shift in the conceptualization of the teachers of refugees over recent years. For example, although UNHCR was measuring teacher impact mainly by the teacher-student ratio between 2005 and 2012, from 2012 it has taken a different stance that focuses on teachers' instructional role and professional development needs to provide an effective teaching and learning process. Similarly, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) developed by UN agencies in response to the Syria Crisis, named its direction concerning education in the region "No Lost Generation"; in order to ensure that no children fell through service gaps. According to the 2019/2020 regional strategic overview, "the 3RP... aims to ensure access to sustainable, relevant and quality education opportunities at all levels through support to flexible learning strategies and multiple pathways, strengthening national inclusive education systems and improved multi-sectoral responses – including protection" (3RP, n.d., p. 13).

INEE's minimum standards state that teachers should be "confident and competent in their roles and with the content of the curriculum" as well as "competent in basic content (literacy, numeracy, core subjects, and critical life skills)" before having expectations of "learner-centred teaching" (INEE, 2010b, p. 32-33). In this respect, INEE asserts that rote learning can be acceptable in the beginning if a teacher does not know any other instructional methods, but in the long run it advocates learner-centred and discovery-based methodologies. INEE describes elements of learner-centred pedagogy including instructional materials which provide space for interaction, debate, and dialogue; teaching methods that encourage the active participation of all students, and teaching and learning activities that are tailored to children's individual learning needs. All these elements are considered to be a core component of teacher training programmes and curriculum. Furthermore, INEE emphasizes the importance of effective communication amongst teachers, students and parents, and urges all parties to make provisions if the language of instruction is different from the refugees' native language (INEE, 2010b). This is a departure from the historical approach in which parallel systems of refugee education were adopted (Mendenhall *et al.*, 2015). The UNHCR 2012–2016 Education Strategy attempts, where possible and where appropriate, to integrate refugee learners into national systems based on ongoing consultation with the refugees themselves (UNHCR, 2012). This strategy helps with the integration of refugees into national systems providing a

protective environment for them in the community and helps focus on “quality within existing systems of teacher training, learning assessments, and certification” (UNHCR, 2012, p. 8). A case for the integration of refugee children into public education systems is also put forward by the UNICEF Education Strategy 2019–2030. The strategy adopts “a priority focus on equity and inclusion” (UNICEF, 2019a, p. 28). For UNICEF this means focusing on marginalized children including refugee and displaced children and children affected by emergencies and advocating that refugee children should be integrated into host country’s public education systems (UNICEF, 2019a).

In the next chapters, an examination of Türkiye’s policy of integrating Syrian children UTP into national systems since 2015 will be examined. The policy has meant that Syrian children UTP face challenges in being taught a different curriculum in Turkish, which is not their native language. Mendenhall *et al.* (2015) point out that refugee children in such circumstances need support from their teachers to negotiate and make linguistic and curricular transitions. In the case of Türkiye, such a need is important because MoNE aims at fulfilling the targets set out by its main strategy document, Vision 2023, while also carrying out professional development of teachers on inclusive education (MoNE, 2018a). Inclusion is, in this context, considered “as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 13).

2.1.1.4. Teachers and other education personnel

Having created school places, governments must also provide qualified teachers and teaching materials for hundreds of thousands of newcomers, who in many cases, may not speak the language of the host community and may have been out of school for a long period (Sinclair, 2007). Teachers are central to the quality of education in every system, but their roles are even more critical in the education of refugee children. The main problems associated with teachers in crisis situations can be summarized as below based on INEE (2019, p. 8) and UNESCO (2017, p. 10):

- Often there are not enough teachers.
- There is a shortage of experienced teachers. Also, many are recruits with minimal experience or without a teaching background.
- There is a lack of resources to retain them. Teachers’ salaries are a long-term cost that poses a crucial challenge to already-exhausted public education budgets, as well as humanitarian partners whose short-term emergency funding cycles are inconsistent with the recurrent wage costs of teachers.
- Teacher planning and management in these contexts are often compromised by poor coordination.
- Teacher qualifications are usually not recognized across borders and refugee teachers who may be best placed to support refugee learners are often denied the right to work.
- Teachers in crisis areas are exposed to the same traumatic stress as their students, but their well-being is often neglected.
- Teachers tend to be poorly prepared to deal with a group of students with complex linguistic, academic and psychosocial needs.
- In crisis contexts, provisions for professional development of teachers are very limited.

INEE minimum standards point out a need to recruit qualified teachers with recognized credentials. Qualified teachers are described as competent and well-trained, knowledgeable in pedagogy and subject matter, skilled in providing psychosocial support to learners, skilled in teaching children with disabilities, and skilled in carrying out participatory and active teaching and learning processes (INEE, 2010a). In addition, the criteria in selecting teachers include “gender balance”, “diversity reflecting that of the community”, “teaching experience, including teaching children with disabilities”, “relevant language ability”, “age”, “academic background”, and “other technical skills and experience” (INEE, 2010a, p. 96).

Once the transitional phase from safe learning spaces to more formal education activities is achieved, “in instances where States resort to refugee-exclusive systems, they should provide teacher training and professional support to build basic teaching skills for unqualified teachers who could operate in TECs, such as those that have opened in Türkiye” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 20).



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2.2. Education response in Türkiye

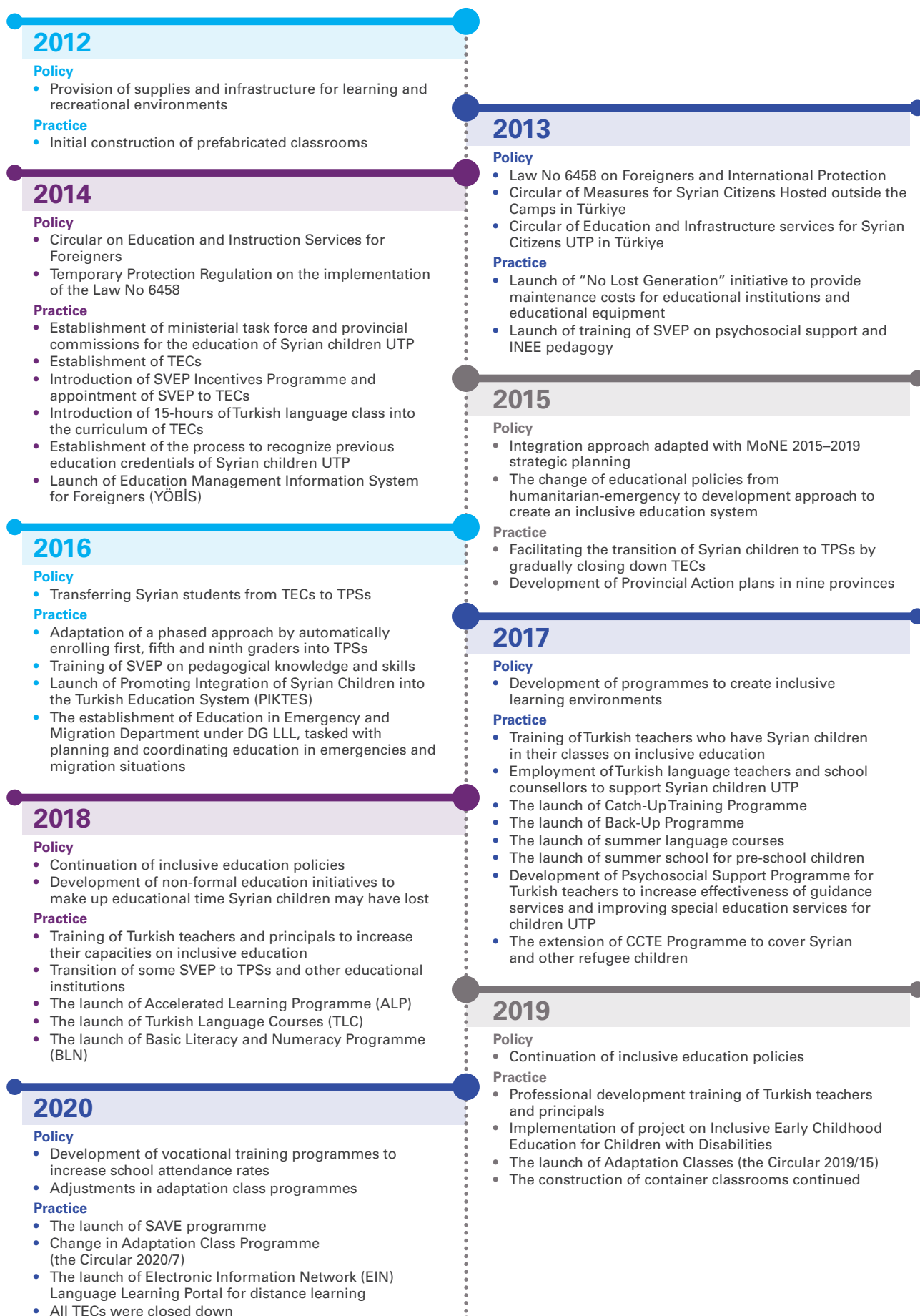
The legal status of Syrians in Türkiye is unique, as they are not classified as refugees.

The Geneva Refugee Convention describes a refugee as:

A person who has a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (CPRSR, 1951, p. 14).

The protection of refugees is guaranteed under the Geneva Refugee Convention. Although Türkiye has ratified the Convention, it preserves a geographical limitation, restricting refugee status only to people from European countries. According to law number 6458, Türkiye protects those who take refuge in Türkiye under four statuses, namely, refugee, conditional refugee, secondary protection and temporary protection. While the first three of these are aimed at individual asylum seekers, temporary protection status is a protection status for those who seek refuge through mass migration (Ekşi, 2016). **Figure 10** summarizes, through a timeline, the major policies that have been taken by the Turkish Government and practices implemented by MoNE with the support of UNICEF towards the inclusion of Syrian children UTP including children of other nations such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.

Figure 10. Timeline of significant policy and practices



2.2.1: 2012



2012 spotlight

Short-term policies to teach children in tents and pre-fabricated buildings, coordinated by MoNE and the Turkish Government.

In 2012, education policies aimed at Syrian children were developed on the assumption that the Syrian crisis would soon end and that Syrians would return home (Taştan & Çelik, 2017). At the time, all Syrians crossing the border were provided with accommodation in camps (TACs) in cities near the Syrian border. Thereby, a short-term policy targeting the children in these camps (Emin, 2016) using tents, containers and prefabricated schools was initiated. During this initial stage, education in camps was facilitated with the support of Türkiye, local municipalities and SVEP. The schools in camps were coordinated by MoNE. The education services (i.e. curriculum and learning materials) were revised by the Government of Türkiye and MoNE with the support of Syrian educators under the supervision of MoNE during the early stages. At this time, Türkiye considered the Syrian community in Türkiye as the main actor in the education of Syrian children (Taştan & Çelik, 2017).

issued on 4 April of that year. The Law's purpose was to regulate procedures relating to foreigners' entry into, stay in and exit from Türkiye, and the scope and implementation of the protection to be provided for them. Because of the Law, Syrian nationals seeking protection during the Syrian crisis are provided with temporary protection status.

Meanwhile, the crisis in Syria continued to intensify and the number of registered Syrians in the country increased from 14,237 in 2012 to 224,655 in 2013 (DGMM, 2013). Although the majority of refugees were still living in camps, they gradually started to live among the host community. This had consequences for educational provision, particularly beginning in 2013 (Özcan, 2018). The first official policy document (issued on April 26, 2013) that addressed the education of Syrian children was a circular of *Measures for Syrian citizens hosted outside the camps in Türkiye (Ülkemizde Kamp Dışında Misafir Edilen Suriye Vatandaşlarına Yönelik Tedbirler Genelgesi)*. This circular examined identification, supervision and inspection of the places providing education services and social activities for Syrian children in the host community (Emin, 2016; Taştan & Çelik, 2017; Seydi, 2014). At the time educational provision was provided by municipalities, NGOs and the Syrian community itself with the support of UNICEF. This provision later came under the supervision of MoNE as a recognized and certified formal education system, supplying school buildings for the classes. These schools formed the basis for what became TECs (Taştan & Çelik, 2017).

2.2.2: 2013



2013 spotlight

Passing of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, No. 6458.

The number of registered Syrians increased from 14,237 in 2012 to 224,655 in 2013, with most Syrians living in camps.

Probably the most important development of 2013 was the establishment of the status of Syrians seeking protection in Türkiye through the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, No. 6458,

On 26 September 2013, another step was taken with the Circular of Education and Instruction Services for Syrian Citizen Under Temporary Protection in Türkiye (*Ülkemizde Geçici Koruma Altında Bulunan Suriye Vatandaşlarına Yönelik Eğitim Öğretim Hizmetleri Genelgesi*). The aim of the circular was to regulate and standardize the education of Syrian children living in camps or host communities (Seydi, 2014). The circular regulated aspects of education including coordination, curricula, recruitment of teachers, and access to school. The circular recognized that Syrian children's education had already been interrupted for a significant period. It was vital that further education gaps were avoided so that young people could continue their education, either in Türkiye, back in Syria or even a third country, should they move.

The curricula that Syrian children were to follow was prepared with the cooperation of Syrian educators in Türkiye but should be enriched with content including basic life skills, morality education, general culture and social skills (Taştan & Çelik, 2017). The September 2013 circular stated that the teacher needs can be met by either recruitment of Syrian or Turkish teachers. Thereby, SVEP or those who were qualified to teach or who met certain criteria among Syrian citizens, if willing and approved by MoNE, could be assigned as volunteer education support staff. Turkish teachers employed by MoNE in the province could also be assigned to the education of Syrian children provided that they were there as support teachers. If availability cannot meet the demand, then people who can speak Arabic and are qualified to teach could also be assigned. Furthermore, the circular stated that Syrian citizens of Turkish origin or those who hold temporary residence permits could follow the Turkish curriculum and attend TPSs. Vocational training and Turkish language courses could also be established for those who want them. (Emin, 2016; Taştan & Çelik, 2017).

During this early period of the crisis, there was a desperate need among Syrian children UTP in Türkiye for psychosocial support as many young people had been traumatized by violence. MoNE, with the support of UNICEF, carried out psychosocial support training for SVEP in 2013. Training was also provided on INEE standards and pedagogy. This training continued through to 2015. An evaluation report on the psychosocial training found it beneficial for the SVEP in helping them to change certain attitudes and approaches while providing social and psychological support to students (UNICEF, 2015b).

The regional advocacy initiative “No Lost Generation,” aims at combining efforts to ensure a secure future for children displaced by the Syria and Iraq crises. It was launched as a partnership between humanitarian and development organizations including UN agencies and NGOs in 2013 (NLG, n.d.). Since then, maintenance costs of educational institutions, educational equipment, school bags and stationery kits have been provided through the No Lost Generation initiative (UNICEF, 2019b). In addition, infrastructure construction works such as new buildings and container classrooms were initiated in settlements where Syrian students are concentrated.

2.2.3: 2014



2014 spotlight

MoNE issued a new circular regarding the education of Syrian children with temporary protection status.

This allows short-term policies to be replaced with long-term, permanent and sustainable solutions.

TECs are established.

On 23 September 2014, MoNE issued a new circular regarding the education of Syrian children with temporary protection status, expanding on the scope of previous years. The Circular on Education and Instruction Services for Foreigners (*Yabancılarla Yönelik Eğitim-Öğretim Hizmetleri Genelgesi*) examined replacing short-term policies with long-term, permanent and sustainable solutions (Özer, Komsuoğlu, & Ateşok, 2016). Syrian children UTP's right to access quality education was assured by the circular (Emin, 2016; Taştan & Çelik, 2017). A ministerial task force under the chairmanship of a deputy undersecretary and provincial commissions under the chairmanship of provincial deputy directors of public education or the chiefs of departments were also established.

Probably the most important development in the circular was the establishment of TECs which could now be opened with the consent of the governor under the provincial/district public education directorates. In the process of establishing TECs, MoNE and UNICEF built or refurbished TECs and schools attended by refugee students. MoNE also appointed 13,080 SVEP to TECs which were providing education in Arabic through an adopted Syrian curriculum.

Although the arrangements concerning the curricula and recruitment of the teachers had changed, the circular made improvements in the integration of Syrian children into education and the host community (Esen, Duman & Alper, 2016). A 15-hour mandatory Turkish language class was added to the curriculum of TECs at all grade levels, provided

by Turkish language, primary school and foreign language teachers. Second, the circular assigned provincial commissions to deal with issues relating to education such as recognition of previous education (equivalence), school transfers and placements with the only condition being that children are registered with the authorities. Those do not have their previous education credentials or who cannot document their current education level are accepted into schools based on their declarations in an interview. However, if necessary, the placement of students into a suitable grade level and school could be determined by a written or oral examination. Third, the circular emphasized systematic management of the education of Syrian children through an electronic education management system (i.e. YÖBİS). Finally, the circular granted the right to all Syrian children, registered to authorities, to enrol in Turkish public schools whether they had a residence permit or not.

As a part of No Lost Generation initiative in November 2014, MoNE-Turkish Post (PTT)-UNICEF worked to establish the SVEP Incentives Programme with the aim of improving education provision for Syrian children and providing financial incentive to SVEP (UNICEF, n.d.a). Through the programme, UNICEF and MoNE provide monthly monetary incentives for SVEP. Initially, SVEP's monthly wage was USD 150 (camps/C) and USD 220 host communities/HC).

Temporary Protection Regulation on the implementation of law number 6458 was issued on 22 November 2014. According to this Regulation, Syrian nationals seeking protection are to be provided with protection and basic assistance in Türkiye, which grants the right to stay in Türkiye until there is a more permanent solution. It also prevents forcible returns to Syria and grants access to the fundamental rights and needs, which include health, education, access to labour markets, social assistance, interpretation, and similar services. The regulation, in many respects, provided the opportunity for Syrians to enjoy above mentioned fundamental rights like those enjoyed by Turkish citizens (Ekşi, 2016).

At the end of 2014, MoNE and UNICEF established an education management information system, called YÖBİS to effectively manage the demographic and academic data of Syrian children attending TECs. YÖBİS is similar to the e-school system

(e-Okul) used for Turkish students. It allows MoNE to monitor students' performances including enrolment data, lesson grades and rates of attendance and absenteeism. Transfer of students in TECs to a public school or another school and the procedures after finishing TECs are carried out through YÖBİS (Taştan & Çelik, 2017). The educational affairs of Syrian students who hold residence permits are carried out via the e-school system of MoNE (MoNE, 2016). In addition, YÖBİS manages the data of SVEP, and supports tracking of their duties and their rights to access financial incentives.

2.2.4: 2015

2015 spotlight



An integration approach was developed in the 2015–2019 Strategic Plan of MoNE.

Change of educational policies from humanitarian emergency to development approach to facilitate the transition of Syrian children to TPSs by gradually closing down TECs.

If the Syrian crisis had been resolved quickly, TECs would have been a good solution to meet the educational needs of Syrian children as they would continue their education without any gaps in their schooling before returning to their home country (Taştan & Çelik, 2017). However, when it was clear that the crisis was not going to end quickly and that Syrians would not be able to return soon, a longer-term development approach, rather than a humanitarian emergency approach was needed. An education system that separated Turkish and Syrian students was not sustainable and did not benefit social cohesion and the academic future of Syrian children.

So an integration approach was developed in the 2015–2019 Strategic Plan of MoNE, which recognized that the aims of TECs had been achieved as a temporary measure. Moving toward a sustainable, integrative education approach, more beneficial to Syrian children living in the host community was

necessary. This would be an improvement on education in the Arabic language through Syrian curricula which would reduce the chances of integration (Karaman, 2018; Özcan, 2018). The initial aim of the MoNE Strategic Plan was “to ensure that all individuals have access to education and instruction under equitable conditions” (MoNE, 2015, p. 33). One of the strategies to fulfil this aim was articulated that efforts will be made to integrate children with different protection statuses (i.e. refugee students, students UTP and stateless students) into the public education system (MoNE, 2015). In 2015, MoNE began to encourage Syrian children UTP to register in TPSs instead of TECs and announced its plans to gradually close all TECs by 2019 (ERG, 2018).

Provincial action plans (PAP) were developed based on certain needs in nine provinces. The PAPs include services such as construction of prefabricated school buildings, renovation of school buildings, support of vulnerable children including Turkish children with stationary kits and bags, providing maintenance support, and outreach activities.

2.2.5: 2016

2016 spotlight



A phased-approach was adopted to automatically enroll pre-school, first, fifth and ninth graders into Turkish public schools.

More professional development of teachers provided.

In the 2016/2017 academic year, a phased-approach was adopted by automatically enrolling pre-school, first, fifth and ninth graders into Turkish public schools with the rationale that these grade levels are natural transition points and, making integration easier for Syrian students UTP to TPSs.

The change in approach, from a humanitarian to a developmental one, meant that MoNE also started to pay more attention to the professional development of both Syrian volunteer education personnel and Turkish teachers. Some SVEP, especially those who were based in camps, had been provided with training on pedagogy and psychosocial support from 2013. In 2016, more structured training programmes were provided for SVEP from the MoNE and its Teacher Training and Development Directorate General (DG TTD). For these programmes, SVEP working in TECs with higher education degrees were selected. However, almost one third of these teachers did not have a teaching background as of 2015 (Coşkun & Emin, 2016; UNICEF, 2015b). Others lacked the necessary knowledge and skills for progressive pedagogical practices.

With the cooperation of MoNE’s DG TTD and UNICEF, 489 SVEP were trained as master trainers to provide pedagogic knowledge and skills training to SVEP working in TECs in 2016 and 2017. Training of trainers was carried out in three phases, each focusing on a particular dimension of pedagogical knowledge. After each phase, the master trainers carried out the training of SVEP including replacement/supply volunteers for a total of 18,616 in the SVEP’s home cities in 2016 and 2017. Of these, 13,537 SVEP underwent a third and final phase of training (UNICEF, 2018b). The training included lectures and workshops on counselling, introduction to the teaching profession, classroom management, special teaching methods, and assessment. The volunteer participants then took an examination and those who were successful (94 per cent) were given a certificate allowing them to serve as volunteers in TECs (UNICEF, 2018b).

To overcome language and adaptation challenges of Syrian children UTP, a project was launched on 3 September 2016 called ‘Promoting Integration of Syrian Children to Turkish Education’ (PIKTES). This was a part of Facility for Refugees in Türkiye FRIT Treaty under the Financial Assistance Programme for Refugees in Türkiye between the EU and Türkiye and had a budget of EUR 300 million.⁴ PIKTES was concerned with providing educational support

⁴ PIKTES’s first phase was completed in 2018. The second phase started on December 21, 2018 with a duration of 36 months and a budget of 400 million EUR (Source: Avrupa Info, n.d).

to children studying in TECs and TPSs to facilitate their transition to public schools and integration into society in the 26 provinces where the majority of Syrians live.⁵ PIKTES is a multi-faceted project that takes into account all components that support the school as a whole including provisions of Turkish language education, catch-up education, transportation services, awareness activities, educational materials, stationery and textbooks, staff training (i.e. teachers, principals and other educational personnel), guidance and counselling activities, security and cleaning personnel to TECs (Tüzün, 2017).

Educational provision for Syrian children UTP was institutionalized with the establishment of the Education in Emergency and Migration Department, which is an associate department of the DG LLL, on 16 May 2016. The Education in Emergency and Migration Department was tasked with planning, coordinating, implementing and supervising education during emergencies and migration situations. The MoNE also institutionalized provisions provided to Syrian children UTP at the local level by establishing provincial and district coordination commissions. Those commissions are chaired by provincial deputy directors of public education or the chiefs of departments and primarily make decisions on the placement of students to schools. Founded under the local branches of DG LLL, the local Education in Emergency and Migration Departments are the most prominent players in Syrian children's education at the local level (DG LLL, 2018a).

2.2.6: 2017



2017 spotlight

More education staff and trainers were enrolled to meet the needs of children, especially in Turkish language.

Back-up classes.

Early education classes help children catch up.

The National CTE Programme was extended to cover Syrian and other refugee children residing in Türkiye UTP.

2017 was critical in terms of developing human resources to support an inclusive education system for Syrian children UTP. Beginning in 2017, DG TTD started training MoNE staff on inclusive education. First, the Improving Inclusive Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills of the Ministry of National Education Teachers Working with Foreign Students programme was implemented (MoNE, 2017c). This helped to increase the capacities of teachers to deal with the challenges Syrian children face in public schools. A total of 1,185 school counselling teachers were trained as trainers via an 86-hour programme. Across Türkiye, 107,939 teachers, particularly from 23 provinces where Syrian people live, were locally trained locally via a 40-hour programme with the help of trainer teachers.

For best impact, MoNE paid significant attention to the development of the language skills of Syrian students. In 2017, MoNE recruited 5,959 Turkish language teachers and school counsellors through the PIKTES project to be employed in TECs and TPSs (DG LLL, 2018b). These contracted Turkish teachers were required to undertake a number of in-service training sessions between April 2017 and December 2017 organized by DG TTD and DG LLL. Programmes of the in-service training for the PIKTES teachers included psychological support for children, management for traumatized students, conflict management, teaching methods, guidance and counselling, skills for removing cultural and social barriers related to historical and cultural backgrounds of societies (PIKTES, 2019a).

The Catch-Up Training Framework Programme for Foreign Students programme, developed by DG LLL as part of PIKTES was implemented in the summer of 2017. The programme targets students aged 9–18 who have been out of school or have temporarily interrupted their education in the cities where PIKTES operates. Schools were required to set up survey teams to reach out to such students in their regions. The programme aims to provide students with basic competencies so that they can continue their education (PIKTES, 2019b). Students are required to take 240–300 hours of class over the summer, which are available over four levels (two levels for primary and two levels for lower secondary school) developed according to students' competency in Turkish language and other subjects including mathematics,

⁵ PIKTES is being implemented in the following provinces: Istanbul, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Ankara, Mersin, Adana, Bursa, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Konya, İzmir, Kayseri, Osmaniye, Mardin, Kocaeli, Malatya, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Samsun, Sakarya, Antalya, Çorum, Eskisehir, Yalova, and Batman.

science and social sciences. The majority of the programme focuses on the Turkish language course, but students are also required to take other lessons and English language as well as a selective lesson (e.g. fine arts and physical education), except for students in the first level of primary school. Guidance and selective courses are included in all programmes (PIKTES, 2019b).

A Back-Up training programme, developed by DG LLL as part of PIKTES in 2017, was introduced for Syrian children attending TPSs from 3rd to 10th grade in 2017 (MoNE, 2017d). This was to provide additional training courses for Syrian children who were not performing well academically, who had to repeat the class they were in or who were recently transferred from a TEC to TPS (MoNE, 2017d). Syrian students are required to take eight hours of additional classes on Turkish language, maths and science subjects. Back-Up training programmes were opened with the proposal of the school administration and the approval of the Provincial Directorate of National Education (MoNE, 2017d). The Back-Up training programmes were carried out in two phases in PIKTES-I and 43,179 and 37,468 students benefitted from the programme, respectively between October 2019 and March 2020, 18,836 students participated the Back-Up training programme in PIKTES-II (UNHCR, 2020b).

Beginning in 2017, summer language courses for Syrian students have been offered through PIKTES. The course is 20 hours per week and is delivered alongside Arabic language and guidance courses. A total of 73,056 Syrian students have benefitted, and 6,928 of them had received transportation services to education centres and venues by the end of 2019 (Çatar, 2019). Teaching the students were 4,037 Turkish and 43 Arabic language teachers along with 413 school counsellors who took part in the courses as of 2019 (Çatar, 2019). In addition, a summer school for pre-school education was started in the same period. The circular sent to schools on 27 June 2019 by MoNE asked schools to arrange classes composed of half Syrian and half Turkish children. MoNE also developed a special education programme for early childhood education of Syrian children to be used for pre-school education (Çatar, 2019).

To overcome the challenges that arise with the need for psychosocial support, MoNE in cooperation with UNICEF revised the 2001 Psychosocial Support Programme, which taught counsellors and teachers ways they could support children suffering from

natural disaster-related trauma. In 2017, the programme expanded to include trauma related to grief and death, abuse, migration, suicide and terrorism. This programme included guidebooks and training for school counsellors and teachers to enhance the psychosocial support services available to all children, including those under temporary protection (UNICEF, 2018b). *The Guidance Book for Individuals under Temporary Protection* lays out best approaches and practices, along with critical supportive activities, to deal with the psychosocial challenges Syrian students have. These include grief, post-traumatic stress disorder, ways to prevent violence and bullying, and protection from sexual harassment and abuse (MoNE, 2017b). The same processes were used for children UTP with special education needs and a guidebook, the *Special Education Services Guide Book for Individuals under Temporary Protection Status*, was published to support teachers who work with children UTP with special education needs (MoNE, 2017b).

Türkiye implemented the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme for Education for disadvantaged Turkish children in 2003. It is a programme offered to poorer families (within the scope of Law No. 3294, whose needs have been approved by the *mukhtar* of their districts), that cannot send or have difficulty sending their children to school due to financial issues (Karabaglar, n. d.; MoFLSS, n. d.). The conditional cash transfer applies to children in formal education and can be paid from first grade through to upper secondary education (Karabaglar, n. d). The main aim of the programme is to facilitate school enrolment and to prevent absenteeism. Families that send their children to school regularly, in turn receive payment depending on gender (with girls getting higher rates) and school level of their children (children in higher grades get larger donations to ensure they continue in education rather than drop out) (Intersectoral Child Board [ICB], n.d.).

The National CCTE Programme was extended to cover Syrian and other refugee children residing in Türkiye UTP in 2017 (UNICEF, n.d.b). The eligibility rules and amounts to be transferred under the CCTE programme are the same as those for of Turkish children. So, provided that the child has attended school (i.e. Turkish public schools and TECs) at least 80 per cent of time, the student's family receives cash support every two months. The transfer values are set per child and vary by school level and gender (ranging from TRY 45 to TRY 75 per month).

Additional support is provided to families at the beginning of each school term in the form of TRY100 per beneficiary child in primary school (including pre-school), TRY 200 per beneficiary child in lower secondary school and TRY 250 per beneficiary child in upper secondary school or ALP (UNICEF, n.d.b). To date, 682,882 refugee students with inadequate financial resources have benefited from this programme to date (UNICEF, n.d.b).⁶

In order to improve access for Syrian children to Imam Hatip lower and upper secondary schools (education institutions founded to train government employed imams), the provincial directorates of public education appointed representatives from deputy principals of Imam Hatip secondary schools. These representatives created a roadmap to improve Syrian students' access to Imam Hatip schools by analysing the number of Syrian students in the provinces, good practices that led to Syrian students enrolling in the school, and from information they received from relevant NGOs.

2.2.7: 2018



2018 spotlight

UNICEF supported the Inclusive Education: Teacher Training Module to provide in-service teacher training workshops.

Three non-formal education initiatives, the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), Basic Literacy and Numeracy Programme (BLN), and Turkish Language Course (TLC), were established.

The success of MoNE staff training in 2017 led to other projects regarding inclusive education. In 2018, with the support of UNICEF, the Inclusive

Education: Teacher Training Module was developed and implemented. The goal was to provide in-service teacher training workshops aimed at changing teachers' perceptions and practices around inclusive education (Öztürk, 2019). Within the scope of the programme, ten separate modules were developed, each of which focused on developing teachers' skills in certain aspects of inclusive education including inclusive practices in multicultural learning environments and in working with children UTP (MoNE, 2018b). Initially, 1,673 trainers from 81 provinces were trained. These trainers passed their skills on to 75,249 local teachers in 81 provinces.⁷ Furthermore, a concise version of the modules was included in the standard professional development programme that every teacher takes at the end of the school semester in June.

The project was later extended to principals with the support of UNICEF. A 40-hour-module trained principals with the skills and knowledge to work in inclusive school environments. Similar to the initial teacher training, 951 trainers (principals and school administrators) were first trained; thereafter, they provided local training for 74,2849 principals across Türkiye. Therefore, this programme was able to reach every school principal in the country with inclusive education training in 2018.

As more Syrian students were transferred to TPSs, the need for SVEP employed in TECs was reduced. To be able to use their experience, skills and knowledge to support and facilitate the education of children, particularly Syrian children, some of the 12,994 SVEP were placed in TPSs and other educational institutions (i.e. PECs, Provincial Directorates of the National Research Centre for Counselling [RAM]) in 2018. The SVEP were given new roles in these educational institutions such as education, counselling and administrative support personnel to help improve the integration and learning of Syrian children within the Turkish national system (UNHCR, 2018).

To make up the educational time that Syrian children may have lost, three important non-formal education initiatives, the ALP, the BLN, and TLC, were

⁶ In November 2020, an additional one-time top-up payment was provided to support families facing increased challenges due to the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, benefitting 518,794 children.

⁷ The training programmes have been continued since then. More than 200,000 teachers have been benefitted from the training.

established in 2018 (UNICEF, n.d.c). ALP helped 29,037 vulnerable out-of-school refugee children to access formal education opportunities after the completion of the ALP module(s) in the 12 provinces⁸ that are home to more than 90 per cent of the Syrian population in Türkiye.

ALP has a four-module structure and was designed with a timeframe of 16 months. Modules A, B, C and D run for four months each. The first two modules (A and B) focus on Turkish language (intensive) and essential learning outcomes for the first four years of primary school (grades 1 to 4). The second two modules (C and D) focus on essential learning outcomes for lower secondary level as well as continuing Turkish language support (grades 5 to 8). To summarize, ALP Module A corresponds to grades 1 and 2 of primary education, and even if a child fails Module A, they continue to receive ALP Module B, which corresponds to grades 3 and 4. Module C corresponds to grades 5–6 and Module D corresponds to grades 7–8.

Syrian children, who have never attended school before are included in the ALP Module A for four months. Upon successful completion of a module, students are referred to the Provincial/District Equivalency Centres.⁹ These centres refer the applicant to a commission to take a placement exam.¹⁰ If they succeed, they are referred to an appropriate grade at TPSs, depending on their age, by the Provincial/District Equivalency Centre. If the child fails the exam, they can continue in the next ALP module for another four months (UNICEF, n.d.c).

TLC programmes are implemented in 83 youth centres covering 21 provinces¹¹ in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to increase Syrian children's ability to integrate into the host communities and TPSs (UNICEF, n.d.c).

BLN is a local programme implemented in Hatay only on a pilot basis in partnership with the Turkish Red Crescent and UNICEF. This programme helps to provide children with basic literacy and numeracy skills in Arabic and Turkish with the aim of helping these children integrate into their host communities (UNICEF, n.d.c.).

2.2.8: 2019



2019 spotlight

Psychosocial Support training, which includes support for traumas caused by immigration, was provided to counselling and guidance teachers across Türkiye.

The Inclusive Early Childhood Education for Children with Disabilities programme was implemented in cooperation with MoNE and UNICEF.

In 2019, to provide psychosocial support to Syrian students UTP in schools in 2019, in the scope of the comprehensive programmes developed, UNICEF and MoNE used SVEP in RAMs as support staff when counselling Syrian children. Psychosocial Support training, which includes support for traumas caused by immigration, was also delivered to counselling and guidance teachers across the country in 2019. Finally, professional development training of MoNE in partnership with UNICEF continued in 2019. Two training programmes, Training of Principals on Inclusive Education and Training of Teachers on Teaching Turkish as a Second Language in the Context of Inclusive Education are still being delivered nationwide.

⁸ ALP is being implemented in the following provinces: Adana, Ankara, Bursa, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kayseri, Kilis, Konya, Mersin, and Şanlıurfa.

⁹ Equivalence centres carry out the process of determining which class, area, branch or department in Türkiye the certificates/credentials obtained from primary and secondary education institutions (in Türkiye or abroad) are equivalent.

¹⁰ The placement exam can be conducted in written, oral or practical by a commission established by the teachers of the relevant courses under the chairmanship of the school principal at schools determined by the provincial/district public education directorates where the equivalence centres are located. At the end of the placement test, the score obtained from the test is sent to the equivalence centre by the school administration. Since March 2020, applications for equivalency are carried out through an online system.

¹¹ TLC is being implemented in the following provinces: Adana, Adıyaman, Afyonkarahisar, Ankara, Elazığ, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Kilis, Kocaeli, Konya, Mardin, Mersin, Osmaniye, Sakarya, and Şanlıurfa.

The Inclusive Early Childhood Education for Children with Disabilities programme, which was implemented in the academic year 2019–2020, is another important initiative carried out in cooperation with MoNE and UNICEF in the provinces of Antalya, Bursa, Gaziantep, İzmir, Konya and Samsun. The programme works to provide all children, especially children with disabilities, with access to quality inclusive education services. For the programme, 143 teachers were trained as trainers, and these in turn trained 1,300 teachers. In addition, provincial administrators and school principals from 90 pilot schools were trained in inclusive education. The target groups of the project were not only children with disabilities and children with atypical development, but also children at risk and children with atypical development, but also children at risk (Inclusive Early Childhood Education [IECE], n. d).

MoNE developed the initiative of Adaptation Classes for Foreign Students (*Yabancı Öğrenciler Uyum Sınıfları*) to increase Turkish language skills of foreign students at primary and secondary education levels in the 26 provinces with high numbers of Syrians. The circular (2019/15) sent to schools on 6 October 2019 by MoNE states that the students from 3rd to 12th grades who scored lower than 60 on the Turkish Proficiency Exam (TPE) carried out by the Ministry will be taken into the integration classes (Integration Classes for Foreign Students [ICFS], 2019). Students are required to attend these classes for two semesters. If they do not succeed in TPE after two semesters, they will be transferred to their current grade level and then, will be supported by existing mechanisms established for Turkish students as well as language courses that will be run by MoNE (ICFS, 2019).

With the support of UNICEF, the construction of container classrooms continued in the 2019–2020 academic year and 76 classrooms were completed to meet classroom needs, especially in settlements where Syrian children are concentrated. By 2020, 356 classrooms had been completed with capacity for 14,000 children.

MoNE's policy ambition was to integrate Syrian children UTP into the Turkish public education system and gradually close TECs. As of September 2020, all TECs were closed, and the transfer process from TECs to TPSs were finalized for all Syrian children UTP.

2.2.9: 2020



2020 spotlight

The COVID-19 pandemic brings educational challenges worldwide so the Education Information Network is used for distance learning.

UNICEF and MoNE launched the SAVE programme to help children between ages 14 and 17, who were unable to continue their education for various reasons (e.g. child labour).

MoNE's policy ambition was to integrate Syrian children UTP into the Turkish public education system and gradually close TECs. As of September 2020, all TECs were closed.

The COVID-19 pandemic created huge educational challenges worldwide in 2020. During this crisis, the Education Information Network (Eğitim Bilişim Ağı – EBA), traditionally used for distance education in the Turkish education system, has been made available and effectively used to provide additional support to Syrian students. By opening the EIN Language Learning Portal, course materials are made available to all students. In addition, EIN TV course videos are published on the PIKTES YouTube institutional page.¹²

In the Adaptation Classes for Foreign Students Programme, the Turkish Proficiency Exam that was due to take place could not be held because of the COVID-19 outbreak. But all students were allowed to continue their normal education without taking the exam. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, it was also decided to continue the implementation of adaptation classes in the 2020–2021 academic year for foreign students who continue their education in the third grade of primary school and for those whose level of Turkish language was deemed insufficient by the MoNE's Circular 2020/7.

¹² PIKTES Institutional youtube channel can be accessed via <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh4wkiHgzdpNdbHHrdWWygw>

In cooperation with UNICEF, MoNE launched the SAVE programme in September 2020 to ensure that children between the ages of 14 and 17 who were unable to continue their education for various reasons (e.g. child labour), after completing their basic education, are enrolled in vocational education centres (VECs). Thanks to the SAVE programme, children who had to support their families financially

could go to both school and work rather than just dropping out of education altogether. Field teams in 10 VECs in 10 provinces visited homes and workplaces and to pass on information about the SAVE programme. The SVEPs in the teams conducting home visits were very important in reaching out to and communicating with families.



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2.3. Methodology

The scope of this study is to document existing information about access to and the quality of education for Syrian children UTP in Türkiye. By analysing the current situation and the education response to the crisis and by contributing to the body of evidence on education policy and practice, the study can act as a guide for effective approaches both nationwide and globally in the future. This study also includes the history of the education response to the Syria crisis in Türkiye from the beginning of the crisis in April 2011 through to January 2019, including progress made, challenges faced, opportunities identified, lessons learned together with key recommendations to support both responses to short-term humanitarian needs and longer-term development objectives. Therefore, this study aims to give a historical overview of the entirety of the education response.

In order to document Türkiye's education response to the Syria Crisis, two main methods were used as a part of the methodology. These two include 1) desk review of the education response to the Syria Crisis, and 2) qualitative data collection and analysis in the form of interviews and focus group discussions (FDGs).

The desk review examines relevant sources providing information on the education sector response to the Syria crisis in Türkiye. These sources include international and national literature, national and international policy reviews that collected and analysed policy data on education response, statistics, research evidence, and other documents consolidated with UNICEF's data and information on Türkiye. Documents include, but are not limited to, MoNE policies and regulations (such as Vision 2023, etc.), the 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2019–2020, No Lost Generation publications and UNICEF's publicly available documents.

Following the desk review, qualitative data collection using interviews and FDGs was conducted to gather information on the education response to Syrian children UTP in Türkiye. This work drew on 25 individual interviews and 8 FDGs with key stakeholders working on the provision of education for Syrian children UTP regarding their experiences with the education response including the processes, successes, and challenges. The programmatic areas of focus for the qualitative data collection were on a non-formal initiative, namely the ALP provided in PECs and on whole-education approaches such as policy work.



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The data were collected from August to September 2020 in five cities, Ankara, Istanbul, İzmir, Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa.

Ankara was chosen because it is Türkiye's capital and is where the headquarters of MoNE and UNICEF are located. The other four cities were selected based on the high Syrian populations in each city, their socio-cultural and economic characteristics, as well as the geographical locations related to the programme selection. Istanbul, İzmir, Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa are among the ten provinces with the highest Syrian populations. Istanbul is the cultural and economic capital of Türkiye and is in the northwest of the country. While İzmir is in the west, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa are in the southeast of the country bordering Syria. The ratio of the Syrian population to the local host population is quite high in Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. It should also be noted that there are socio-cultural and economic differences between regions in Türkiye, especially between east and west. While İzmir is a developed city with GDP per capita that is above the national average, Şanlıurfa, like many other provinces in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, has not been able to take full advantage of recent economic development.

The stakeholders were identified based on their role in the education of Syrian children UTP. A consultation process with MoNE was carried out to identify key people who were responsible for the education of Syrian children in MoNE in Ankara and the cities of Istanbul, Gaziantep Şanlıurfa, and İzmir. Then, a purposeful sampling was adapted to reach relevant people through the key people identified in each city. The reason for adopting a purposeful sampling is that it is typically used in qualitative studies to carefully select participants according to the study purpose with the expectation that the participants will provide true and rich information that is of value to the study. The participants were selected using criteria that include the role, work experience, gender, and place of work.

In the first phase of the research, 13 semi-structured interviews were carried out with key officials of MoNE

and UNICEF staff in Ankara who were responsible for the development of policies for the education of Syrian children UTP. In the second phase, 12 semi-structured interviews and 8 FGDs were conducted with key stakeholders in Istanbul, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, and İzmir. In each city, three individual interviews were held with the Provincial Director of Migration and Emergency Education Department and two administrators of PECs. In each city, FGDs with Turkish teachers working in the ALP in PECs were organized separately with the participation of 4–5 teachers for each. Due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews and FGDs were conducted remotely using Zoom video communication software.

Both FGDs and individual interview protocols, in general terms, were developed to consider educational provisions with a specific focus on policy work and on non-formal education programmes, ALP, in terms of the programme development process and the implementation results and achievements. The questions asked to the participants were based on the main standards drawn from the international literature. So, these questions examined how access (and availability), community participation, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, and needs analysis were ensured in the process of identifying the needs of beneficiaries and the development of the programmes. Furthermore, they examined how participants perceive the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the implementation and results. Within this framework, FGD and semi-structured interview protocols were prepared separately for each stakeholder based on their specific roles in the education of Syrian children UTP.

Data were analysed descriptively to highlight the experiences and important messages of the participants. What was said by the participants during the interviews were coded and, then, categorized under the main themes (the needs, process and challenges of programme development, strategies to overcome the challenges, successes in terms of institutional results and results for beneficiaries).



3 PROGRESS

This chapter examines the progress made in the education of Syrian children in Türkiye in light of the results of the field study (i.e. key informant interviews and focus group discussions). The results of the study were grouped under two main themes: 1) Overall education response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye and 2) ALP. This is because collected data focuses on these two issues.

Overall Educational Response to the Syrian Crisis in Türkiye

The first section, Overall Educational Response to the Syrian Crisis in Türkiye, analyses progress and achievements related to the educational response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye, taking into account various support programmes based on the perspectives of the participants. This section also addresses the challenges that participants believe that Syrian children UTP face in Türkiye, particularly in the context of their educational needs.

Accelerated Learning Programme

The second section focuses on ALP in terms of successes and challenges from the perspective of the participants. ALP is also analysed according to certain criteria, namely access, availability, community participation, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

3.1. Overall education response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye

In the interviews, MoNE and UNICEF staff members were asked to comment on the overall education response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye. The results obtained are grouped under three main headings, namely:

- **Progress and achievements,**
- **Best practices, and**
- **Challenges.**

Each of these heading also contains sub-headings.

3.1.1. Progress and achievements

3.1.1.1. Progress made in the education strategy of MoNE

The policies for ensuring an effective and efficient education for Syrian children UTP have changed over time and can be addressed in three periods: the acute (2011–2013), the transition (2014–2015) and the normalization (2016–present) periods. While in the acute period, education for Syrian children was provided by the efforts of voluntary organizations, municipalities, and NGOs via local facilities. In the transition period, it was mainly offered through TECs under the supervision of MoNE. Since the 2016/2017 academic year, Syrian children have been accepted into TPSs. Transferring Syrian children to TPSs is considered to be a prerequisite for their integration into Turkish society, particularly in order to teach them Turkish. During this process, UNICEF has provided technical and financial support to MoNE in areas such as the development of curricula for emergencies, in-service training, incentives for SVEP, and financial support for families within the framework of various programmes and projects.

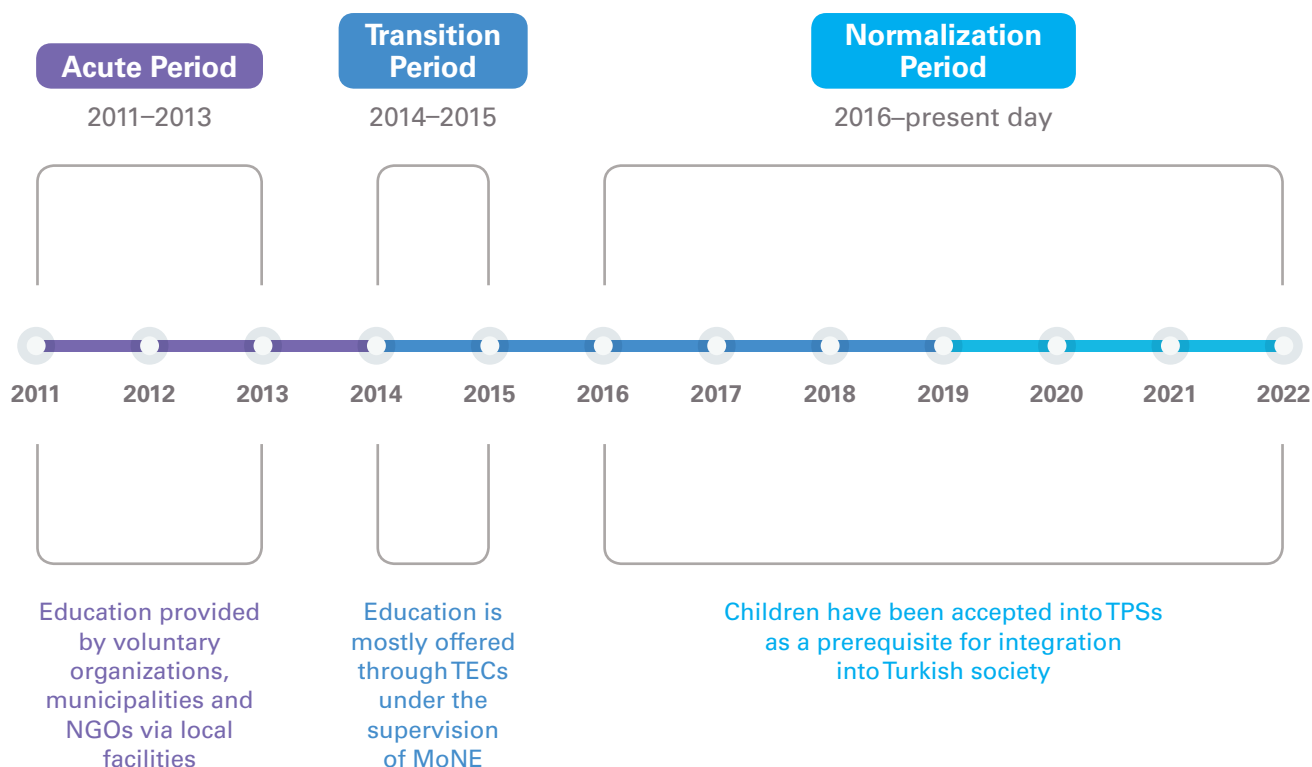
In 2021, as the Syrian crisis entered its 10th year, there was no significant change in the strategic plans of MoNE and UNICEF regarding the education of Syrian children. When asked about the overall goal of MoNE and UNICEF in Türkiye regarding the educational response to the Syrian crisis, both MoNE officials in Ankara and UNICEF staff clearly stated that their goal is to ensure that all Syrian children regardless of ability level, age, gender and socio-economic status can access safe and quality learning environments.

However, the policies to ensure that Syrian children receive an effective and efficient education have differed over time. In this context, based on the accounts of the participants, the approach to the education of Syrian children could be addressed in three periods, namely: the acute, the transition and the normalization periods.

Officials from MoNE and UNICEF staff stated that when the migration flow began, it was believed that the Syrian guests would be in Türkiye for only a short period. In addition, they had not foreseen that numbers of migrants would be so high. These initial expectations are summed up in the words of a MoNE official in Ankara “We never expected such a large migration. We did not expect to live together this long.” This meant that during the acute period in the first years, the education of Syrian children was facilitated through voluntary organizations, municipalities and NGOs via local facilities.

According to the participants, after the acute period was over, the logical educational strategy was to ensure that Syrian children would continue their education in Türkiye, at the same academic level they had left in Syria: this was the transition phase. In this phase, the top priority was to provide Syrian children with access to safe learning environments and to teach them an adapted Syrian curriculum in Arabic. The establishment of TECs started in 2014 and Syrian students were mainly educated in these institutions following an adapted Syrian curricula until 2016/2017. Developing the Turkish language skills of Syrian children was considered important with the establishment of TECs; so Syrian students received 15 hours of Turkish language lessons per week as part of their study programmes.

Figure 11. Strategic shifts in the education response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye



The education response to the Syrian crisis has undergone radical change since the 2016/2017 academic year, as Syrian children UTP have started to be accepted into TPSs. According to the MoNE officials in Ankara and UNICEF staff, the most important reason for this was the realization that Syrian guests would not be returning to their homes anytime soon. It appears that this was the turning point and when MoNE fully embraced the development education approach for the education of Syrian children in Türkiye. However, when asked whether this represented a major strategic shift in the educational response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye, the MoNE officials in Ankara and UNICEF staff generally did not prefer to differentiate between humanitarian and developmental approaches to refugee education. They tend to focus on the well-being of Syrian children and believe that every possible effort should always be made to ensure quality education for Syrian children, as stated by a UNICEF staff member:

Whatever stage we were at, in all situations children have the right to learn. No matter what the context [humanitarian or development education], they are entitled to high-quality education, to be safe to learn, and safe for teachers to teach. We try to keep it very simple.

All the participants who took part in the study, expressed that the primary purpose of admitting Syrian children to TPSs was to ensure their integration into Turkish society. The transfer of Syrian children to TPSs was also a demand of the Syrian people. A senior MoNE official at the provincial level has explained this demand on the grounds of future educational needs for Syrian children:

These children were disadvantaged when they arrived. They had language problems. It is easy to deal with this problem in the first or second grades, but difficult in the sixth or seventh grades. That is why they preferred the TECs. However, they realized that the TECs were putting them back academically both in Türkiye and in other countries where they would emigrate. For this reason, there has been a serious demand for our schools. Many families later wanted to send their children to TPSs.

According to MoNE staff, in both Ankara and other provinces (i.e. administrators and instructors working in Istanbul, İzmir, Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa), the most important prerequisite for integration is being fluent

in Turkish. Furthermore, some MoNE staff members at the local level justified the policy of admitting Syrian children to TPSs because TECs were not effective in teaching Turkish to Syrian children as illustrated by the comments of an instructor from Şanlıurfa:

Before starting to work in a PEC, I worked as a Turkish instructor at a TEC for three years. The lessons of Syrian children at TECs were very good. They were all very successful. However, they showed no interest in Turkish in the TECs. TECs were ineffective mainly because Syrian children did not receive a proper Turkish language education.

Although Syrian students took 15 hours of Turkish language classes in TECs, according to some MoNE officials and Turkish instructors, who had previously taught Turkish in TECs, learning of the Turkish language was impeded by the social environment. The students spoke Arabic at home and school. Some MoNE staff claimed that TECs were one of the major obstacles to the integration of Syrian children into Turkish society, as they were designed only for Syrian children. It should be noted that the complete closure of TECs was also justified by some MoNE officials in Ankara because Syrian children who attended TPSs performed better in exams than those who participated in TECs, as shown in the words of a MoNE official in Ankara:

Before the [COVID-19] pandemic, we were holding coordination meetings with provincial committees. As a result of the feedback we received, we found that children studying in TPSs were more successful. They do better in exams.

Closures of TECs have been happening gradually since the 2016/2017 academic year and, as reported by MoNE and UNICEF staff, all were closed as of September 2020. When asked about the current educational strategy for Syrian children in Türkiye, almost all MoNE officials in Ankara and UNICEF staff stated that their ideal is to integrate all Syrian children into TPSs and ensure that all children's learning needs are met. They believe that children with disabilities, children with language problems, and children with socio-economic issues deserve special attention. In addition, UNICEF staff members pointed out that they are committed to the strategy of MoNE, and therefore, do not have a separate strategy. The reason for this is explained by a UNICEF staff member:

UNICEF's perspective on the education of Syrian children, in general, is parallel to MoNE. UNICEF can take the lead, as the ministries of education in other countries are not very strong. In Türkiye, however, the MoNE is very powerful and effective. Therefore, MoNE often takes on the leading role and UNICEF provides support with its global experience.

UNICEF provides technical and financial support to MoNE in areas such as education in emergencies curriculum development, in-service training, incentives for SVEP, and financial support for families within the framework of various programmes and projects (e.g. CTE programme). UNICEF focuses on [or prefers] programme-based work rather than project-based work, as one UNICEF expert put it:

We try to work with ministries through programmes. This guarantees the sustainability of the work done. For example, if we prepare a building, the building disappears when the funds are used up. That is why we try to support the public institutions in all of our work.

It should be noted that an inclusive education approach has been introduced into the Turkish education system over the years. UNICEF staff made it clear that the current strategy is now to provide all learners with a quality education regardless of their nationality or any other characteristics. A similar idea was also voiced by some MoNE staff:

For us, there is no labelling of children as Syrians or Iraqis. They are all children to us. They have certain disadvantages, similar to those of Turkish students. They sit at the same desk as Turkish students who have similar disadvantages to them. They are provided with all the means such as stationery, health kits, internet, and tablets [something which emerged in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic] with the help of international organizations.

As has been stated before, after graduating from lower secondary school in Syria, many Syrian students do not generally go on to further their studies at upper secondary school. While female students stay out of school to help with household chores and for certain cultural reasons, male students do not attend school as they work to contribute to the family budget. According to MoNE officials,

since 2017, the Ministry has decided to help channel those Syrian out-of-school children into vocational education. Therefore, it was stated that solutions were being developed for Syrian children to go to school and work without leaving school.

3.1.1.2. Progress made in coordination of the response

The coordination of the response can be addressed in two periods. Before 2016, a coordination committee established under MoNE led the process and a coordinator for the education of foreign children especially Syrian children, was appointed in provinces. Education services for Syrian students have been institutionalized under the DG LLL since 2016. The Education in Emergency and Migration Department itself was established within DG LLL. Subsequently, coordination for the education of foreign children was transferred to this department in provinces. To some extent, however, it is a decentralized system and the provinces can take different measures to coordinate.

During interviews with MoNE officials, questions were asked about how educational services for Syrian students are coordinated. As with the strategic priorities, there are two periods, before and after 2016.

Before 2016, a coordination committee established under MoNE led the process and a coordinator for the education of foreign children, in particular Syrian children, was appointed in provinces. The participants stated that in the early days, there were problems particularly in terms of coordination between institutions. The priority was for Syrians to learn Turkish and this had to be done urgently and quickly. However, according to a UNICEF staff member, "there has been a flurry of vocational training courses for adults simultaneously". Ministries, local administrations, NGOs, and international organizations started to provide both Turkish and vocational education to Syrians independent of one another. According to the UNICEF staff member, Education Working Groups in cooperation with MoNE have been established in the central level and provinces to manage the resulting chaos and to coordinate the education services provided to Syrians. Working on behalf of the Ministry, this commission has started to coordinate the educational services of different institutions and organizations.

Since 2016, education services for Syrian students have been institutionalized under the DG LLL. To this end, as stated by MoNE officials, the Education in Emergency and Migration Department was established under DG LLL. Subsequently, the coordination of the education of foreign children was transferred to this department in provinces. However, the Governorships of Provinces have the final say in terms of coordination assignments in provinces, so there may be different provincial practices. In the provinces of Istanbul, Hatay and Antalya, for example, governors have taken special measures to coordinate the education of Syrian children in their provinces. The coordinators were selected from among deputy provincial directors of public education or branch directors. A WhatsApp group was created between the coordinators in the provinces and MoNE, and communication was carried out through group messages and phone calls. In addition, PIKTES coordinators have been appointed in 26 provinces, where more than 90 per cent of the Syrian population lives. Therefore, the DG LLL and PIKTES coordinators carry out educational services for Syrian students in coordination with each other.

A structure similar to the system described above was created on a provincial basis. Provincial coordinators responsible for the education of Syrian children have formed a WhatsApp group with school principals in their provinces. All the principals interviewed stated that they could easily reach the provincial coordinator through the WhatsApp group or by phone and that their problems were resolved immediately. Furthermore, because school principals communicate effectively with each other, they can support one another with any problems they encounter. In addition, the provincial coordinators stated that school principals are in one-on-one communication with the Syrian population and opinion leaders in their regions and that SVEP plays a very important role in their communication with Syrian families. As one MoNE official noted:

They are very good at determining which students are where and informing the provincial coordinator about children located in their regions.



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3.1.2. Best practices

3.1.2.1. Providing access and availability to education services

Spotlight on access and availability to education services

- Türkiye puts the education of Syrian children UTP at the top of the agenda.
- In the early years, Syrian children were admitted to schools without ID cards.
- Now, Syrian students with official ID have the same status as Turkish students.

In the early years of the crisis, in order not to deprive Syrian students of their right to education, children

who have not yet received their ID cards were able to attend classes until they submitted the document. At present, all Syrians who apply to official authorities can obtain their official identification documents within two to four months and Syrian children can enrol in school immediately. In this respect, as all participants asserted, Syrian students have the same status as Turkish students in the education system. For example, Syrian students have the right to enrol automatically at the school closest to their home. Free transportation services are also provided in some provinces when the school to the child's home is not within walking distance. For example, it was stated that 53,000 Syrian children have been transported to school free of charge in Istanbul over the last three years.

Various interventions were carried out in the process to increase the schooling of girls and boys of high-school age. Free transportation services were provided if families did not want to send their daughters to school on foot. In addition, especially to convince the families who do not want their daughters of upper secondary school age to be in the same class as boys, they have been referred to the Kız İmam Hatip Lisesi (girl İHL), as explained by a senior provincial MoNE official:



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Schools for girls and boys were separate in Syria. Since [in Türkiye] we have mixed education, families did not want to send their daughters to school if their daughters were 14–15 years old because for them, she could not be in the same class with boys. We referred the children with this request to the Girl IHL. If their homes were far away, we provided them with boarding.

However, many MoNE staff members have noted that the demands of the Syrian population on this issue have decreased significantly over time which is an important sign that they are beginning to integrate into Turkish society. Boys of upper secondary school age often cannot go to school because they have to work to contribute the income of their family. To support these children, UNICEF and MoNE staff members reported that the SAVE programme has recently been initiated. Field teams have been undertaking outreach activities in ten provinces by visiting homes and workplaces of Syrian children. However, the participants said that the main difficulty in enrolling recognized children in VECs is that they do not have Turkish course completion certificates at levels A1 and A2. Field teams direct these children to language training on PECs. In this way, thanks to the SAVE programme, children who had to contribute to their families' livelihoods were able to both go to school and work instead of leaving school. One UNICEF staff member described the benefits of the programme as follows:

We direct children who cannot attend school due to economic conditions to vocational technical education. They will receive one third of the minimum wage during their training. This means, they will both support their families economically and acquire a profession. In the programme, teams made up of teachers, school counsellors and SVEPs will start field surveys.

However, a MoNE staff member stated that the main difficulty in enrolling the identified children in VECs is that they do not have certificates of completion of A1 and A2 level Turkish courses. Field teams refer these children to PECs for language training (i.e., ALP).

Although no special programme has been developed for Syrian students with disabilities, according to MoNE participants: the same practices for Turkish students also apply to Syrian students except for rehabilitation expenses such as provision of wheelchairs. In this context, the needs of Syrian

children with disabilities are noted and addressed by the Special Education Unit in the Provincial Directorate of National Education as well as counselling teachers in schools. Students whose special education needs have been identified through the RAM process are directed to mainstreaming or special education institutions depending on their particular case. For example, a UNICEF staff member explained the practice regarding Syrian children with disabilities in Mersin Province as follows: "we put 35 students that we identified in Mersin in a special education school. They were placed in schools according to their own disabilities". It was also stated that a special class for hearing impaired Syrian children has been opened in the same province. Furthermore, a senior MoNE official in a province discussed the practices they had carried out regarding Syrian children with physical disabilities as follows:

Those with physical disabilities come to school with a wheelchair. If the school in the neighbourhood is not accessible by wheelchair, we take the child to another school using the district transport system. Or we move these children's classrooms to the ground floor of the school. We do not know the number of Syrian students with physical disabilities in the province. But their numbers are very low. We have Syrian students in 160 schools, and I only came across students with disabilities in a few schools.

As MoNE's resources are limited regarding the transportation of children with disabilities, a MoNE official from another province said that they arrange transportation with the help of NGOs. It has been observed that there has been some negative reactions among Turkish families due to impacts on schools, such as the increase in class sizes and the transition to double-shift education in the regions where Syrian students are highly concentrated. But due to effective management by school principals such negative reactions of Turkish parents towards the Syrian population have decreased significantly. For example, since the Syrian population in X region is very high, the citizens of that region did not want Syrian students to be accepted to the school in the early days. We contacted many parents during the process. We had meetings and I said to them then why are you renting your houses to Syrians? Or why are you hiring them at your workplaces? We explained how and why these children and people are a source of wealth. Now they are inviting Syrians to their homes.

3.1.2.2. Recognition of previous credentials

Spotlight on credential recognition

- Many Syrian children don't have documents to prove previous credentials.
- MoNE has taken measures to enable them to continue their education.
- Equivalence commissions use interviews and placement tests to determine which grade the children with no certificates could enter.

One of the biggest problems encountered in the education of refugees is the lack of documents that prove their previous credentials. It is understood that there is no obstacle facing Syrian children and parents in this regard in Türkiye, as the participants from MoNE stated that necessary measures have been taken to enable Syrian students to continue their education from where they left off. As explained earlier, equivalency centres, through placement tests done by equivalency commissions, determine in which grade the children would attend school. Since most of the children did not have any official documents in the beginning, the commissions, determined the children's grade based on statements from their parents. The commission called the child for an interview and/or subjected them to a placement examination to be sure of their level when deemed necessary. Level determination reports have been translated into equivalence in an ongoing process. The students, whose equivalence was given, began their education at the schools in their local neighbourhoods.

In 2019, a new regulation was released by the Board of Education on equivalency. With the regulation, a new e-equivalency module was introduced that would enable individuals who apply for equivalency to complete their equivalency processes faster by giving them appointments from centres with less density depending on their province or district of

choice. This was an innovative digital platform that was established to eliminate long queues and waiting times at equivalence centres.

3.1.2.3. Practices for language support

Spotlight on language support

- In order to achieve successful integration requires that Syrian children UTP must have a good knowledge of Turkish.
- Programmes and initiatives have been developed to improve Turkish proficiency including adaptation classes and summer school courses.

According to MoNE officials, the most important measures taken in this context are the language support courses for Syrian students which were put in place during the 2018/2019 academic year. All Syrian students studying TPSs took a Turkish proficiency test and those who failed were taken out of their classes and studied only Turkish for six months or a year (depending on their proficiency level). A senior MoNE official in Ankara noted that approximately two thirds of the Syrian students could not pass the threshold score of 60 in the first Turkish proficiency test held and so were included in the adaptation classes (*uyum sınıfları*).

Turkish language classes have been created within the schools currently attended by Syrian students. These students attended language classes in the first semester of the 2019/2020 Academic Year. The education of students continued in the second period of 2019/2020 academic year via distance education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this process, the EIN has been effectively used to provide additional support to Syrian students. The EIN Language Learning Portal was made available to Syrian children as a distance learning tool. Under normal circumstances, the students were supposed to sit in a Turkish proficiency test again in May 2020. However, this test could not be held due to the pandemic and all students in the language classes passed directly to the next grade.

Summer school classes were offered to Syrian children and were considered another fundamental step towards the integration of Syrian students into the Turkish education system by MoNE officials. Summer language courses for Syrian children were offered for free through PIKTES in the summer of 2019. The duration of the course was 20 hours per week and was offered together with Arabic language and counselling courses. As part of the PIKTES project, MoNE recruited 5,959 Turkish language teachers and school counsellors to help Syrian children develop their Turkish language skills.

3.1.2.4. Support programmes

Spotlight on support programmes

- Initiatives have been developed to provide academic support to Syrian students.
- A Catch-Up Programme was aimed at children who did not go to school or who had had a break in their education.
- A Back-Up Programme was offered to children who were not performing well academically in TPSs.
- Syrian students were included in the Remedial Education Programme, which was originally designed for Turkish students. Summer schools were offered for children who could not benefit from pre-school education.
- Non-formal education programmes such as ALP and TLC have also been developed to bring out-of-school children into TPSs and improve their Turkish language proficiency.

Several initiatives have been developed to provide academic support to Syrian students. A 240/300-hour Catch-Up Programme was set up for students who did not go to school or whose education was temporarily interrupted. The programme was designed to provide students with skills in Turkish language, mathematics, science and social sciences so that they can continue their education. Students were offered Arabic and English courses as well as a selective module (e.g. fine arts and physical education). The participants also noted that the Back-Up Programme has been implemented for students who have already been in the TPS system but who are academically inadequate.

Furthermore, MoNE officials noted that Syrian students have been included in the Remedial Education Programme (*İlkokullarda Yetiştirme Programı- IYEP*), which was originally designed for Turkish students. This is a support programme developed for 3rd grade students who are unable to reach expected 3rd grade learning achievement levels. Students included in IYEP are admitted to the programme free of charge and receive support based on their identified needs in their own school.

In the summer of 2019, pre-school summer school classes were held for Syrian children who could not benefit from pre-school education. In addition, PIKTES officials stated that an early childhood education project had been implemented under PIKTES, reaching a total of 80,000 children. They noted that the Syrian children started primary school with increased self-confidence thanks to this project and stated that the project was very effective. However, MoNE officials pointed out that it is very difficult for only MoNE to provide access to pre-school education for all Syrian students and that support must be obtained from international organizations.

Finally, three non-formal education initiatives were developed to support Syrian students. Of these, ALP have been the most effective programmes in ensuring integration of Syrian students into TPSs. As data on ALP were also collected in the study, detailed results on ALP are shared in the next section.

3.1.2.5. Provision of psychosocial support services

Spotlight on psychosocial support services

- Support is implemented for refugee students in the same way as for Turkish students with counselling from SVEP-supported counsellors.

Psychosocial support services for Syrian students have been implemented in the same way as for Turkish students. Accordingly, Syrian students in need of psychosocial support are served by school counsellors. According to MoNE staff, SVEP help psychological counsellors significantly in this process. In fact, another measure to integrate Syrian children into TPSs, as reported by MoNE officials, was the assignment of SVEP who previously volunteered in TECs, but are now placed in TPSs, attended by Syrian children. SVEP support the school in providing counselling services to Syrian students, communicating with Syrian families, making home visits, and supporting Turkish teachers in Arabic language classes. A senior MoNE official at the provincial level noted that all SVEP in their province were required to take Turkish language courses offered in PECs. Therefore, he argued that MoNE ensures that SVEP communicate effectively with both Syrian children and Turkish staff.

3.1.2.6. Financial aid

Spotlight on financial aid

- The national CTE programme was expanded to include refugee children in 2017.
- Internet packages and tablets have been given to Syrian students to combat the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2017, The national CTE programme was expanded to include Syrian and other refugee children in Türkiye. The conditions of participation and amounts to be transferred under the CTE programme are the same as for Turkish children (MoFLSS, n. d). Provided the child attends school regularly (at least 80 per cent of school days per month), her/his family receives financial assistance every two months. Furthermore, with the support of MoNE and international organizations such as UNICEF, Syrian students received various types of material support, such as stationery and clothing. For example, a senior MoNE official from Istanbul listed services for Syrian students over the past three years:

In the last three years, 427,000 books, specially printed for Syrian students, were distributed. 25,000 students were provided with psychological support and therapy free of charge. 7,000 students attended summer school. Social and cultural events were organized. 97,000 students were provided with clothing aid. Stationary aid was provided to 102,000 students. We provided this support through MoNE and projects.

Internet packages and tablets have been provided to Syrian students through various projects to eliminate problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to limited resources, it was not possible to offer these opportunities to all those in need. In such cases, MoNE staff stepped in and sought to meet the distance learning needs of students during the pandemic using their own and local means. For example:

We saw that there were Syrian students, who could not access distance education during the pandemic period. For example, the child does not have internet or TV. We reached them through volunteer teachers and NGOs, and schools in their neighbourhood and bought tools for them. For example, teachers gave their TVs that they do not use in their homes. Benefactors were found. The teachers collected money among themselves.

3.1.2.7. Provisions to create inclusive learning environments

Spotlight on creating inclusive learning environments

- MoNE and UNICEF provided training for both teachers and school administrators to create inclusive learning environments.
- Arabic lessons are offered to Syrian students in TPSs.

The provision of Arabic classes was identified by MoNE officials as another measure to integrate Syrian children into TPSs. They believed that maintaining the mother tongue of Syrian children was critical for integration, as it makes it easier for Syrian students to develop self-respect and adapt to Turkish culture and language.

Another policy tool implemented to ensure the integration of Syrian students into the Turkish education system is professional development practices for educators. MoNE and UNICEF have provided training for both teachers and school administrators, especially since Syrian students began to be admitted to Turkish schools, as described in the first sections of this study. A MoNE official explained how this training led to significant changes in the field:

We have two types of teachers. There are those assigned within the scope of PIKTES, Turkish language teachers. There are also teachers who are MoNE staff in regular classrooms. Teachers under PIKTES had no difficulty communicating with Syrian children, as they received training before starting work. For this reason, we said that we should send all MoNE teachers who have Syrian students in their class for in-service training. We also made sure school principals should also receive training. This training was very effective. I met crying teachers. They said: "When they arrived, we saw them as people who were not fighting for their homeland, but we accepted them anyway. However, after the in-service training we received, we realized that they were actually oppressed people". Teachers started to buy shoes for the children and provided financial aid. Teachers believe that the training given to them is very useful.

3.1.2.8. Reaching-out and identifying Syrian children's needs

Spotlight on identifying Syrian children's needs

- A needs analysis was conducted systematically at the central level through meetings with provincial coordinators.
- At the local level, meetings with provincial coordinators to develop strategies and programmes were held among provincial coordinators with feedback coming from commissions, schools, Syrian families, opinion leaders, SVEP, and school counsellors.

Both MoNE and UNICEF staff stated that policies and programmes regarding the education of Syrian children are always developed because of a needs analysis. According to the information obtained from the participants, it is possible to evaluate the needs analysis in two parts at central and local levels. A MoNE official explained the needs analysis process carried out centrally:

In the centre, we determine the areas of need based on feedback from the provinces. Previously, we used to send them a form to write down their needs and requirements. Over the past few years, this has evolved into face-to-face coordination meetings because we have seen that face-to-face meetings are much more useful in determining needs. Directors or deputy directors from 81 provinces attend these meetings. These meetings took place almost every month until 2019. Since the needs were met in the process, it started to take place every three months as of 2019. However, we have not been able to do it for nine months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³

At the local level, provincial directorates identify out-of-school children and investigate their reasons for not attending school with the help of SVEP and schools. Students who are out of school for economic and social reasons, are referred to The Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFLSS) and various NGOs to meet their needs. A senior MoNE official in Istanbul explained how children who do not attend school were identified and enrolled in the province:

We make an annual work schedule. We gather Syrian citizens at school and hold meetings with them. We collect data from Turkish NGOs, UNCHR, the Provincial Migration Management Administration, Syrian associations affiliated with the Provincial Immigration Administration, Syrian opinion leaders, and municipalities. Based on this data, we analyse how many families are in which region of the province, how old their children are, whether these children are sent to school, and if not, why not? Then we [the monitoring commission] create lists by region. We send these lists to the relevant school principal in those regions. School principals go to the addresses we specified with the commissions they set up in their schools and check whether these people really live in Istanbul. If they are in Istanbul, the school investigates why the children are not attending school and report to us. The school enrolls the children within their catchment area. They offer alternatives to families to solve their problems.

The MoNE official responsible for the education of Syrian students in a province explained the position of parents and opinion leaders in the process:

When we try to talk to parents directly, they are reluctant towards us. However, before the pandemic, parents often visited schools. They met with school counsellors and administrators. We then received information from school administrators regarding the wishes and needs of parents. We get a lot of information from Syrian opinion leaders (religious and community leaders, directors of associations and charity and aid workers). Syrians listen to what opinion leaders have to say before taking any action.

School counsellors and SVEP are used to analyse the needs of Syrian students who continue their education in TPS. As stated before, with the closure of TECs SVEPs have been assigned as assistants in TPSs where Syrian students attend. According to the participants, SVEP play an effective role in schools, especially in counselling and communication with the Syrian children and community. A senior MoNE official in a province explained how SVEP were utilized to identify the needs of Syrian students:

SVEP provide support in Turkish schools but do not attend classes. We use them to guide us. A sort of coaching system is applied. For example, there are 120 Syrian students in one of our schools. There are 8 SVEP at this school. We have divided 120 Syrian students among these 8 SVEP. Each SVEP monitors the children in her/his group and prepares reports on them. The children's needs and overall well-being are analysed together with the school counsellor.

In addition, another MoNE official stated that they receive feedback from SVEP on issues such as the quality of the questions in the Turkish proficiency exams held in their provinces and the suitability of questions to the level of students. He also stated that MoNE regularly receives feedback about the problems and needs of Syrian students from the 210 SVEP in his province.

3.1.3. Best practices

3.1.3.1. Language constraints experienced by Syrian learners

Spotlight on language constraints

- Syrian children gradually develop their Turkish language skills but their academic Turkish language skills need to be improved so that they can better participate in class.
- Some of the main obstacles to acquiring Turkish knowledge for students include the use of Arabic at home and fear of assimilation.

13 UNICEF funded these coordination meetings and joined many of them.

All groups spoken to during the study, without exception, believed that the most important educational need of Syrian children was the development of their Turkish language skills. However, it is believed that this need has grown stronger over time since, as stated before, the Syrian people initially were believed to be staying in Türkiye for a limited period. Although many initiatives have been set up to equip Syrian children with adequate Turkish language skills, there still appears to be room for improvement. It should be noted, however, that there seem to be different perceptions among those who participated in the research regarding the language needs of Syrian children. For example, a senior MoNE official in Ankara stated that the language problems of Syrian children were overcome:

“At the point we have arrived, what I am happiest about is that the language barrier has been crossed. During home visits, I observe that while the parents speak Arabic, the children speak Turkish very well... As of September [2020], all TECs were closed. This is the most important indicator that we have overcome the language problem. We solved this problem not only with the effort of MoNE but also with the support of many organizations such as UNICEF, GIZ,¹⁴ and the Red Crescent.”

However, most of the MoNE’s Turkish language instructors working locally and some MoNE officials in Ankara stated that the language problem continues. In this context, they shared some negative experiences as well as positive examples. The instructors stated that students whose proficiency in the Turkish language is not high have difficulty in effectively following classes and succeeding in schools. For example, one instructor from Istanbul explained:

“Various problems are observed in children who start TPSs without having a sufficient level of Turkish. When the child does not understand the lessons, she/he withdraws. The child who fails to overcome the language problem becomes irritable and shows a tendency to violence.”

The instructors pointed out that although Syrian children generally develop their Turkish language skills to some extent, they find that speaking “some Turkish daily” is not always enough for them to be academically successful in TPSs. They believe that to prepare Syrian children to learn academically in the Turkish language, their Turkish should be fluent so that they can participate in classroom discussions and activities. In addition, a senior MoNE official stated that certain language skills of Syrian students are not sufficiently developed as follows: “The most important thing I observed in the field is that... the children learn the language but cannot write”

Some Turkish instructors, in particular, those based in Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep (i.e. cities neighbouring Syria) stated that the development of Turkish language skills of some Syrian children is delayed because they do not speak Turkish at home and they resist learning Turkish. For example, a Turkish instructor from Şanlıurfa who can also speak Arabic explains the situation they experience:

“Since we speak Arabic, we understand them very well. However, they resist us when we speak Turkish in class. When they see us speaking Arabic with their families, they resist speaking Turkish [in class]. Language is the most important issue.”

¹⁴ GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) is German International Cooperation Agency working in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education.



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Although many Turkish instructors stated that families, who speak Arabic at home make their job difficult, there is a body of research that indicates the value of immigrant parents in using their mother tongue at home with their children in terms of effective integration. Indeed, another Turkish instructor from Şanlıurfa explained the reason for Syrian children’s resistance to learning Turkish on the grounds of fear of assimilation:

“Most Syrian children still do not speak Turkish, especially those who are in primary school. They are still watching Arabic TV channels at home. They don’t want to be assimilated. They resist.”¹⁵

Furthermore, the above stated accounts were generally made by the instructors from Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep

rather than İstanbul and İzmir, which may indicate that regional differences exist in terms of students’ motivation to learn Turkish and to integrate into Turkish society. It should be noted that MoNE staff members usually underlined the rights provided to Syrian children (e.g. providing them Arabic language courses in TPSs) and the importance placed on protecting their identity as they believed that the host society must consider the language and culture of immigrants for integration to be successful. They believed that Syrian people should not be assimilated but integrated into Turkish society. In their understanding, while assimilation referred more to a one-way process that requires immigrants to become like the host society by changing their language and cultural practices, integration was considered more a two-way process allowing immigrants to take part in the society as they are.

¹⁵ The participant here reflected the fear of some Syrians in terms of losing their identities. In one of the largest online English synonym dictionaries, thesaurus.com, assimilation emerges as the most relevant synonym for integration. However, assimilation and integration are usually considered as two different and value-laden concepts that their meanings have been constructed in specific contexts. For example, Schneider and Crul (2010, p. 1143–1144) argue that while in the American debate, “successful assimilation by mainstreaming immigrants through patterns of economic and social success” was something desirable, the term “integration” is widely used in the European context. Houtkamp (2015), from a European perspective, provides a useful framework for the acculturation strategies that immigrants can opt for: ‘assimilation,’ ‘separation,’ ‘marginalization,’ and ‘integration’. He argues that an immigrant can choose one of these strategies depending on her/his “(1) a preference for the majority or for the heritage culture and (2) a preference for having contact with and participating in society with other cultural groups (Berry 1980). Assimilation... complete adaptation of the minority to the majority culture. Those who opt for this strategy have a preference for the majority culture and actively wish to engage with other groups. Separation means that individuals wish to exclusively orient themselves towards their heritage culture, having little desire to come into frequent contact with other groups. Marginalization occurs when new arrivals deny both their heritage culture and other cultural groups in society, resulting in a solitary cultural existence. Concerning integration, this strategy is preferred among those who both value their own cultural heritage but also wish to get in contact with other groups” (p. 75–76). international cooperation for sustainable development and international education.

3.1.3.2. Economic and cultural barriers to accessing school

Spotlight on economic and cultural barriers to accessing school

- Syrian students tend to drop out of education towards the end of lower secondary school.
- Upper secondary school attendance drops significantly (39.74 per cent).
- The reasons for this decrease in upper-secondary attendance include:
 - Boys are more likely to be sent to work than to school.
 - Girls are expected to help their mothers with household chores or, in some cases, to marry early.
 - Many Syrian families consider upper secondary education unnecessary.

The schooling rate of Syrian children is relatively good, especially at the primary and lower secondary school levels, 79.53 per cent and 78.89 per cent, respectively. However, the participants stated that Syrian students start dropping out of school towards the end of lower secondary school education and upper secondary school attendance drops significantly (39.74 per cent). In addition, there are regional differences in the enrolment rates of students. For example, while the number of out-of-school children in İzmir is reported as approximately 4,000 (14 per cent), it is reported to be around 63,000 thousand (44 per cent) in Gaziantep. This rate is reported to be even higher in Şanlıurfa. This situation was explained for two main reasons. The first is that the Syrian people who settled in the Southeastern Region of Anatolia are among the most economically disadvantaged groups of the total Syrian population in Türkiye. The second reason is related to socio-cultural structure of the Syrian population residing in this region, as they do not attach much importance to upper secondary school education.

The Syrian population UTP in Türkiye can be divided into three different profiles. These are three groups with socioeconomic differences. The first group is better educated and has a certain capital. Their main goal is to leave Türkiye. This group is trying to settle in the West, and education is not their priority. The second group is again well educated. They took advantage of certain opportunities



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in their country, but they left many of those advantages back in Syria. They are the ones who want to stay in Türkiye and want to be integrated. They strive to ensure that their children have a quality education. The last group is those who feel that they do not stand a chance. They are the ones who cannot go to school for economic reasons. They cannot return to their country either. It is the third group that we are really interested in. Their greatest chances in life are to be included in the formal education system through the non-formal education opportunities available to them.

A UNICEF staff member stated that the proportion of children enrolled in school in the third group mentioned above was around 60 per cent. The fact that this group is particularly resistant to school attendance has led to the development of innovative non-formal educational initiatives, which have only been put into practice relatively recently compared to other programmes. UNICEF officials stated that the largest non-formal education programme is ALP, followed by TLC, which is run in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Both MoNE and UNICEF officials asserted that out-of-school children are the most difficult group to reach and manage as explained by a UNICEF staff member:

“There are currently over 400,000 children out-of-school. However, it is very difficult for most of them to go to school because they are 11-12-13-14 years old and have never been to school in their life. They drop out of school a few weeks later. You can no longer put a 14-year-old in the same class with a 6-year-old. This is an important problem for the Turkish education system. Likewise, it creates a problem, especially for families.”

According to a senior MoNE official in one province, “dropouts start from the 7th and 8th grade.” All study participants had common assessments of why school attendance is declining, particularly at the upper secondary school level. The first reason given by the participants is that upper secondary school education is not compulsory in the Syrian education system. Therefore, families and children who come from such an education system consider that upper secondary school education is unnecessary. The most important factor, however, expressed by all participants, is economic. A senior MoNE official in Ankara expressed this idea as follows:

“Boys are expected to bring home bread when they reach upper secondary school age. However, when the girl reaches upper secondary school age, she must get married. Thus, a hungry mouth is reduced from the household. In short, they believe that the boy should contribute to the family budget, and the girl should leave home.”

A senior MoNE official in one province said that although Syrian families in the most financially difficult situations receive financial support from various NGOs and municipalities, in many cases boys are still sent to work. An instructor from Istanbul explained this situation:

“When we do field surveys, they hide the children from us. They do not give precise information about their children. They know that education is compulsory in Türkiye and they want to send the children to work.”

Many respondents from both UNICEF and MoNE stated that boys indeed have to work, because parents of out-of-school children are economically the most disadvantaged subgroup of the Syrian population in Türkiye. Even if the father and sometimes the mother work, boys continue to work because they need additional income. As one UNICEF staff member put it, “it is very difficult to get them to leave their workplaces and go to school because they have no other choice”. Especially in provinces neighbouring Syria, MoNE officials reported the fact that the fathers of many children were not alive. In addition, a father’s inability to find a job related to previous work experience in Türkiye or the father’s health problems leads the boys to work. An instructor described the socio-economic conditions of this group of Syrian children:

“There is a problem of what can be done in a family with 8–9 children. I can’t imagine how students will grow up in that environment. What could be the result of 5–6 children living in a room! There are children who have not been bathed for 2–3 months because there is a water problem in their house. For example, the school helped them with shoes and coats, but the next day the child came to school with slippers. We realised that the family sold this aid to someone else. They were receiving TRY 1,000 aid from Kızılay and they cannot get along with this amount. Children are employed to get bread into the house.”

Almost all participants believe that financial support to Syrian families will significantly increase the schooling rate of Syrian children. In some cases, there are families, who stated, “they can send their children to school provided that the father or mother is employed” according to a senior MoNE official in a province.

Some instructors who make home visits to reach out-of-school children linked the fact that boys are breadwinners to the cultural factor. They reported that some fathers, aged 40 to 50, are retiring and expecting the boy to earn a living. For example:

“It is a situation that we encounter from time to time during home visits. The father of the house is between the ages of 40 and 50 and spends his day at home or in the coffeehouse where Syrians go. They say, “I am retired so my sons work.””

While some instructors explain fathers’ early retirement with cultural reasons, the main reasons for their early retirement may vary. For example, as noted above, they cannot find a job suited to their skills.

According to all participants, the main cultural reason for girls dropping out of upper secondary school was early marriage. As one MoNE administrator said: “There is a tradition in Syrian culture of marrying their girls when they reach upper secondary school age. Therefore, there is this tendency, especially among the children of the target group that we strive to bring them to school”. This group of families, who have a relatively conservative culture, “want to know where their daughters are” or “don’t want their daughters to attend the same classes as male students”, as two MoNE officials reported. An instructor who participated in the study expressed these thoughts:

“I have many female students in my class between the ages of 13 and 17. They get engaged after a certain time. For example, I had 20 students in my last group. Four out of five of the girls got engaged and left. In addition, some families do not send the students to school because they believe that girls cannot be in the same class with boys.”

In addition, if the school is far from home, families do not want to send their girls to school on foot and do not have the financial means to afford the school transport service, which creates obstacles for girls’ schooling. There is also a sociological reason mentioned by many participants. Accordingly, girls are expected to help their mothers with housework. Especially in families where mothers work, daughters stay at home and take care of their younger siblings or elderly members of the family.

Another problem mentioned in terms of enrolment of Syrian students in school was the existence of an unregistered population. This situation can be seen as a regional problem as it is only mentioned by instructors working in Istanbul. The following quote from an instructor sums up the situation regarding unregistered immigrants in Istanbul:

“During the field surveys we carried out in Arnavutköy [a district of Istanbul], we met many unregistered Syrians. From the feedback I have received from students, there are also many unregistered Syrians in other parts of Istanbul. They do not want to be identified because they entered Türkiye illegally. They think they can be deported. Those registered in provinces other than Istanbul do not want to go to school either because they think they will be sent to the province where they are registered.”

Finally, some instructors who participated in the FGDs complained that some Syrian families, and in particular fathers, were not interested in the education of their children. For example, “the biggest problem in younger age groups is parental lack of interest. They do not encourage children. They do not bother if children do their homework. Some of my student’s fathers are married with two women. In such an environment, children do not receive enough attention”. In this context, some instructors said that families and especially fathers need parental training; otherwise, these children will always lose out. For example:

“There is a huge problem with fathers. It just goes on like this unless we educate the fathers. A project to educate fathers would be particularly useful.”



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3.1.3.4. Difficulties in reaching out-of-school children

Spotlight on reaching out-of-school children

- Because families leave the country or the provinces where they were registered, they become difficult to reach.
- This is one of the main issues on the MoNE agenda.

Both MoNE and UNICEF officials stated that, currently, one of their main efforts is to bring Syrian children, who are out-of-school into school. However, a senior MoNE official in Ankara said that, despite family visits with NGOs and mukhtars, they were unable to find new students. He explained the reason for this, as ‘they are either absent or very resilient.’ In fact, some local MoNE officials indicated that many Syrians might have left Türkiye. For example, an official from MoNE in Izmir explained this idea as follows:

“The number of Syrian children who do not have access to education appears to be around 4,000 for Izmir. In other words, the number of children aged 6–18 that we were unable to enrol. However, despite our best efforts, we cannot find them. Izmir is a transit point to Europe and Greece. Those who come here go to another country by illegal means or to another province after a certain period.”

A MoNE official from Şanlıurfa similarly stated that they could not reach many children who should be in their region according to official data:

“A report came to us from the immigration administration asking us to reach 15,000 children. We asked the districts to determine their addresses and why they were not attending school. However, the data we have obtained so far indicates that some of them have gone abroad and some have returned to their [home] countries.”

In addition, many Syrians were found to have moved from the province where they were registered without notifying the official authorities and went to Istanbul specifically for job opportunities. Therefore, “we have a very mobile group ahead of us”, said one MoNE administrator.

3.1.3.5. Concentration of Syrian population in certain regions

Spotlight on concentration of Syrian population

- There are issues with the high concentration of the Syrian population in certain areas.
- This leads to problems with physical capacity, leading to double-shift schools.
- In some areas such high concentrations leads to negative reactions from Turkish families.

The concentration of the Syrian population in certain regions of provinces causes some problems.

The first of these is the physical capacity problem that emerges with the schooling of Syrian students. When the Syrian population concentrates in certain parts of the city, the existing schools in that region begin to fall short. This was explained by a senior MoNE official in Istanbul:

“One of our main problems is the concentration of the Syrian population in certain areas of Istanbul. For example, while there are 21,000 children in Esenyurt, there are not 3 people in Bakırköy. Their clusters in certain regions put pressure on the school system. Either we need to increase school infrastructure or transport them to other districts. Schools are built in neighbourhoods with large Syrian populations. Eight schools have already been completed and ten are under construction. A very serious population comes from below (i.e. new-borns). This is what the EU, UNICEF and UNHCR should be focusing on most as of now.”



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The concentration of Syrian students in certain parts of the city made it compulsory to switch from single-shift to double-shift schools. For example, a MoNE official from Gaziantep said that after integrating Syrian students into the TPSs, nearly 200 schools had to switch to double-shift teaching. A senior MoNE official from Şanlıurfa also explained this in his/her province as follows:

“We need new infrastructure in places with a large Syrian population, like new schools and classrooms. It is not possible to switch to single -shift education in certain areas. Even schools with single-shift had to switch to double-shift.”

The second problem caused by the concentration of the Syrian population in certain parts of the city has to do with the distribution of Turkish and Syrian students in certain schools. Like Turkish students, Syrian students are placed to the school closest to their home. However, this has resulted in 50 to 70 per cent of the school population being Syrians, particularly in certain neighbourhoods of cities in Southeastern Anatolia. This situation does not seem to be welcomed by some Turkish families. A MoNE official from Gaziantep shared their solutions for the issue as follows:

“Especially in some regions, the rate of Syrians in school is 70 per cent. Turkish parents tend to withdraw their children from those schools in such places. For this reason, we are trying to make them acceptable by moving them from schools where there are a lot of Syrian students to other schools.”

One of the problems specifically expressed in Istanbul is that since the Syrian people moved to Istanbul for job opportunities, the system in Istanbul has reached a point of congestion. This is explained by a MoNE official from Istanbul as follows:

“Employment opportunities are concentrated in certain provinces in Türkiye. Syrians come to Istanbul to look for work. So, the system has come to a point here where it will clog. We have to offer them work opportunities on site before they come to Istanbul.”

3.1.3.6. Need for creating fully inclusive learning environments

Spotlight on the need for creating inclusive learning environments

- MoNE staff members say that ideally three to four Syrian students should be admitted to each class to effectively integrate Syrian children into Turkish society effectively.
- Many Syrian students prefer to receive education with other Syrian students.
- Syrian students may be neglected by teachers, bullied by their peers, and be unmotivated due to poor academic achievement.
- There is a need to create school cultures with a better understanding of inclusiveness.

Considering the general assessments of some MoNE staff members on the subject, it is understood that ideally three to four Syrian students are placed in each class so that they can learn Turkish effectively and integrate into Turkish society. However, this practice appears to be an application that Syrian students do not appreciate much in the case of PECs. Some PEC instructors indicated that one of the reasons why Syrian students prefer education at PEC is because they receive education together with other Syrian children in the classes there. For example, an instructor’s observation on the issue:

“They do not want to be one or two Syrians in the classroom. They want to be together with other Syrians. They only come to PEC if a class is opened only for Syrians. Some of the students we sent to TPS want to leave the school and come back to us. When we ask why, they say that they do not want to go to classes where there are many Turks.”

The practice of placing three to four Syrian students in each classroom, which has been implemented locally, and the fact that Syrian students do not want to attend classes where Turks are concentrated, reveals the urgency of the inclusive education practices that have been implemented by MoNE in recent years. In this context, it is seen that there are further steps to be taken in order to make all schools fully inclusive (i.e., including their families and social environment).

One of the main problems for Syrian children is high dropout rates, one UNICEF staff member noted. Although families and children are persuaded to enrol in school, they often drop out after a certain period. As explained in detail above, economic and cultural factors impact Syrian children's attendance at school. However, both MoNE and UNICEF officials stated that Syrian children dropped out of school for reasons that sometimes were not economic or cultural. According to a UNICEF staff member, these reasons are as follows: "For example, the teacher may neglect the child, peer bullying may be experienced, the motivation of the child can decrease when she/he is not successful". Indeed, these thoughts were shared by many instructors working at PECs. For example:

"I come across some families. They sent their children to TPSs, but because the teacher did not show enough attention and interest in their children and the children could not learn much, they want to bring the children to us [i.e. PEC] instead of sending them to TPS. There are too many students like this."

As stated, the low academic Turkish proficiency of Syrian students makes it difficult for them to follow their classes. Therefore, these students need additional support in the classroom. However, as a senior MoNE official stated, these children are already living in the most disadvantaged areas of the cities and receive education in relatively crowded classrooms. In such crowded classrooms, it becomes difficult for teachers to provide them with the additional support they need.

Some MoNE officials also stated that Syrian students might experience peer bullying in schools, but they also have behavioural issues due to their conditions [i.e. trauma]. Therefore, it was reported that a cycle occurs where one issue triggers others. The words of a MoNE official shows the scope of this problem:

"Syrian children are given nicknames. Turkish children can exclude them. However, the obstacle for these children to mingle with Turkish children is language. The child, who cannot overcome the language problem, gets angry. When the child cannot express himself adequately, he withdraws and shows a tendency to violence. Of course, they also have this in their own culture. They think that [showing violence] is a game. At the upper secondary school level, the situation sometimes requires the intervention of law enforcement."

However, local school administrators and instructors said that violent behaviour by Syrian students in schools has decreased significantly over time. For example, a PEC principal explained the change as follows:

"When they first came to PEC, they spoke very loudly. They used to make violent jokes to each other during breaks. The games they played were seriously violent. However, we rarely experience such problems anymore. They stopped talking loudly. Their games are no longer violent."

Many MoNE officials believe that the war and migration trauma Syrian children suffer also has an impact on the tendency towards violence among them. In this context, many MoNE officials who participated in the study stressed the need for psychosocial support. Indeed, psychosocial support is emerging as a need to address the vulnerabilities of Syrian students that have arisen due to the difficult conditions they are going through. For example, a MoNE official suggests that Syrian students will benefit from various psychosocial support activities to gain resilience:

"Apart from the language, there is no problem in schools. When there is a lack of agreement with the teachers and friends, the child thinks that she is not wanted. The real problem is not being able to understand each other. They developed a sensitivity, they believe that they are not wanted. They think that "We are Syrians anyway; they don't want us."

The above words of the MoNE official also reveal the necessity of creating school cultures with more understanding of inclusiveness. One of the problems raised by MoNE staff was related to hygiene. This issue was raised by both senior MoNE officials

in the provinces and the instructors. For example, while an instructor from Şanlıurfa stated that some of her/his students had not washed for weeks due to the lack of hot water in their homes, a senior MoNE official from a province stated that one of the main problems faced by teachers was the lack of hygiene. In this context, some MoNE staff argued for a need of hygiene training, especially for families.

In addition, some students, especially those who transferred from the non-formal education process to TPSs, may face problems if their ages are older than the students in their class are. These students face both the problem of coming to a new school system and attending the same class with younger children.

3.1.3.7. Pre-school children and children with disabilities

Spotlight on pre-school children and children with disabilities

- After upper secondary level, pre-schoolers have the lowest enrolment group among Syrian school children (30 per cent) due to low capacity, financial reasons and the view that pre-school education is seen as unnecessary.
- Syrian children with disabilities are perhaps the least emphasized group, and there is no special programme for Syrian children with disabilities.

During the fieldwork, the participants were asked questions about the educational needs of pre-school children and children with disabilities. According to MoNE's current data, the participation rate of Syrian children in pre-school education is around 30 per cent. Along with upper secondary school, the pre-school education group is the least schooled group among Syrian students. However, all participants asserted that pre-school education is very important for Syrian students because it allows them to start primary school more confidently and with fewer adjustment problems.

There are three reasons for the relatively low participation of Syrian students in pre-school education. The first is the general capacity problem regarding pre-school education, the second is economic, and the third is that pre-school is considered unnecessary by some families. Statements made by two different MoNE officials regarding this issue are as follows:

“The rate of participation in pre-school education for Turkish children is 54.36 per cent, but this rate has recently reached 30 per cent for Syrians. However, we have a general problem of shortage of capacity in Türkiye. If we overcome the capacity problem, Syrian children will benefit from it as well.

Schools charge families for pre-school classes. The materials used by the child are more expensive than the older age groups. Therefore, some families find pre-school education unnecessary because they think that the child will start primary school anyway. There are also those, who want to send their children to pre-school, but do not have the means. I mean because of financial difficulties.

Syrian children with disabilities are perhaps the most marginalized group. MoNE and UNICEF officials have said that no special programmes for Syrian children with disabilities have been implemented. In addition, it was found that no field survey was carried out to track down Syrian children with disabilities.

3.1.3.8. Challenges with coordination

Spotlight on coordination challenges

- Many current coordinators have heavy workloads.
- When a coordinator changes, that skillset can be lost in that area.

MoNE officials pointed out two main problems with the coordination. These problems are related to change of coordinators and one person is not enough to take on the workload:






“Sometimes the task of the provincial coordinator changes [and a new coordinator is appointed] and then we may lose the memory in that city. Having a person doing all the coordination tasks is a challenge due to the heavy workload. The workload for this job is quite heavy. This is our main challenge.”

The same idea was expressed by a UNICEF staff member for the central organization of the Ministry in Ankara. Having stated that they have no serious difficulty in terms of coordination, they argued that the changes in the duties of the Ministry Headquarters create difficulties in the effective use of time:

“The Director-General [i.e. DG of DGLL] has changed three times in MoNE. Department directors have also changed two or three times. The ALP Coordinator has changed a lot. Sometimes there were delays as newcomers wanted to start from scratch. For example, the director of the department changed during the development of the ALP curriculum. Everything was ready, but there was a delay of a few months with the change.”

3.2. Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)

In this section, the findings of the study are organized under five themes:

-  **Introduction to ALP**
-  **Achievements of ALP**
-  **Analysis of ALP**
-  **Instructor's in-service needs for ALP**
-  **Challenges faced by ALP**

3.2.1. Introduction to ALP

Non-formal education is a concept used for organized educational activities outside the established formal system. As stated before, there are 392,640 Syrian children who are of school age but are currently out of school in Türkiye as of November 2021 (DG LLL, 2021). These children are the main target group of non-formal education programmes and projects developed by MoNE and UNICEF.

Spotlight on ALP

- The ALP supports out-of-school children and helps integrate them into TPS or another relevant form of learning at a level appropriate for their development.
- This programme is not a non-formal educational initiative but should be viewed as a bridging programme.
- 63,725 Syrian children have been contacted since the programme started in 2018 and 29,037 of them were enrolled in the programme as of June 2021.
- Currently 11,000 students from this group have already been transferred to TPS after completing the ALP.

However, as indicated by UNICEF staff, school-age children cannot attend non-formal education institutions, but must attend formal schools in Türkiye. The relevant legislation does not allow school-age children to attend alternative institutions. According to both UNICEF and MoNE officials, however, more than 400,000 Syrian children have still been out of school despite being of schooling age (10–17). The participants argued that such a situation made non-formal education initiatives for Syrian children necessary and urgent. As noted by one participant: “After all, it is not educationally [or psychologically] appropriate to send a 10-year-old child to the first grade with 6-year-olds”.

According to all participants, the main purpose of the ALP is to support out-of-school children and to integrate them into TPS or another relevant form of learning at a level appropriate for their development. In this context, a UNICEF official asserted that this programme is not a non-formal educational initiative in the full sense of the word but should be viewed as “a bridging programme”. Since education can only be given in non-formal education institutions outside of the formal education system, the ALP has

been offered through PECs, which are non-formal education institutions that typically offer up to 3,000 courses to adults in various areas such as folk dance, arts, cooking, guitar playing and language lessons. A UNICEF staff member explained the situation:

“UNICEF’s goal is to ensure that all children are at school. However, in such emergencies, this is not possible. Because there is no such thing as non-formal education for school-age children in Türkiye, we started to design non-formal education programmes by collaborating with MoNE and some NGOs. However, of course, all processes (e.g. programme and content) and everything are approved by the Ministry. The biggest programme developed in this context is the ALP in Türkiye.”

ALP: the numbers



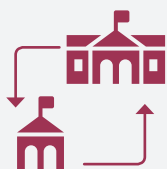
63,725
Syrian children

have been contacted since 2018.



29,037 of them

were enrolled in the programme as of June 2021.



11,000 students

have been transferred to TPS after completing the ALP.



13,000 children

between the ages of 6 and 9, were identified through ALP outreach activities.

A senior MoNE official in Ankara stated that 63,725 Syrian children have been contacted since the programme started in 2018 and 29,037 of them have enrolled in the programme as of June 2021. He stated that currently 11,000 students from this group have already been transferred to TPS after completing the ALP. In addition, 13,000 children between the ages of 6 and 9, who were not the target group of the programme, were identified through ALP outreach activities and many of them were convinced to enrol directly into TPS. According to MoNE and UNICEF officials, the following criteria are sought for children to be included in the ALP:

- Being between the ages of 10–18
- Having an ID starting with the number 99 (Syrian guests are given an ID starting with the number 99 by the DGMM. With this ID, the Syrian population can access all services such as education, health and social assistance like Turkish citizens).
- Not being registered in the e-school system (only children, who are out of school for a minimum of three years are accepted in the ALP).

As can be seen from the statement from a MoNE official, the ALP has been configured such that it takes into account all variables that may be encountered in the field:

“If a child is enrolled in any school or e-school, or in YÖBİS, she/he is referred to the relevant grade, accordingly. If she/he is out of school for three years, she/he is included in the ALP. If her/his age is out of formal education (i.e. above 18), we refer them to open school this time. What I mean is that if the child cannot finish upper secondary school in two years, we direct her/him to open upper secondary school.”

According to the participants, the coordination of ALP is carried out effectively. In this regard, there is regular reporting in a hierarchy extending from local to centre. The directors of PECs where ALP are conducted also undertake the coordination of ALP in that institution. These coordinators convey the needs of the students, instructors, families, and Syrian opinion leaders to the provincial coordinators. The participants state that in this process, the counselling experts and SVEPs assigned in PECs through the programme have taken on important roles, just as they did in TPSs.

For example, “social cohesion and counselling activities carried out by counselling teachers and SVEPs provide us with valuable qualitative data. A counsellor was appointed at each PEC through the programme”.

According to the PEC administrators, apart from official correspondence, communication between them and the provincial coordinator is carried out informally through WhatsApp groups and phone calls. The coordinator of the 12 provinces where the ALP is implemented reports regularly to the centre on current situations and needs.

3.2.2. Achievements of ALP

Spotlight on ALP success

- ALP is a highly effective and efficient programme developed in the context of the education response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye.
- It enables the most vulnerable children to effectively access formal education and it offers broader educational gains such as helping students to socialize and develop their self-confidence.

All participants in the study, without exception, stated that ALP is the most effective and efficient programme developed in the context of the education response to the Syrian crisis in Türkiye. Based on the accounts of the participants, it is possible to categorize the benefits into general themes. The first is the structural and pragmatic benefits that the programme provides in the transition of vulnerable Syrian learners into TPSs. Since the target audience of the programme is children who are out of school, their schooling through the programme is seen as a very important educational justification. In addition, the fact that Syrian children can be integrated into public schools more effectively through the programme was asserted as a pragmatic benefit of the programme. In this context, especially the instructors working with these children on site

stated that the programme boosted the self-confidence of Syrian children before they had started public school. For example:

“I definitely think ALP is efficient and effective. It is the right project. Before going to school, we provide them with the necessary pre-education and direct them to school in an equipped manner. It gives children self-confidence. They do not feel incomplete at the school they attend. Students who go directly to school cannot adapt to the environment. They feel excluded. For example, the child starts school in the 5th grade without being able to read and write.”

According to the participants, the second main benefit of ALP is other educational gains that can be considered in a broader perspective. UNICEF and MoNE staff members mentioned that ALP have provided Syrian children with several broader educational gains such as improving communication skills, making up for lack of self-confidence, making friends with Turkish people, fulfilling their longing for school, discovering their talents and developing more positive feelings about life in Türkiye. Some of the comments made by the instructors, who are in personal contact with Syrian children, on how ALP helped them acquire Turkish language skills and integrate into Turkish society are as follows:

“ALP deliver very good results. Many children would not have learned Turkish if ALP had not been opened because some of the children that we give equivalence and send to school may not integrate and leave school. This programme was a ray of hope for them.”

It was an efficient programme. I only graduated one class. I was very excited at first but now I am even more excited as I get the feedback. They all made a lot of progress. The children come to us today and ask which courses they can continue to take. I think we won them over.”

The third very important benefit of ALP expressed by the participants is that they allow Syrian children to socialize. It is observed that the social development of both boys, who work, and girls, who stay at home, are positively affected during their education in the ALP. For example:

“The programme is also very effective socially. There is no other place where boys can socialize other than the workshop where they work. The girls’ situation is worse because they have no social environment. They are always at home, taking care of their siblings and helping their mothers. I saw that they could express themselves better in school. We also did a lot of social activities at PEC. Most of them went to the cinema for the first time in their lives.

A father told me during the field survey: “I want my daughter to go to school because she is at home day and night.” In another example, Hida only goes out when she goes to the market with her mother. Dima spends her whole time at home. She has been in Istanbul for five years, but the only place she can go alone is school.

Their psychology was extremely compromised due to the trauma they experienced. ALP were a very good remedy for them. They make friends. They attend events and they take part in social events.

”

As can be seen from the above quotes, many participants believed that ALP give children hope for education and future. One instructor explained: “Education is very important for their future in Türkiye or perhaps in another country, ALP gave hope to children who have given up completely, and allowed them to thrive again.” As another educator noted, the children involved in this process are now dreaming, “for example about whether they can go to university”. In this context, the instructors stated that the children are very enthusiastic and happy to continue the programme, even if their families consider it unnecessary in some cases. In the international literature, various issues that should be taken into consideration in the process of developing programmes related to refugee education have been discussed. These can be listed as access, availability, community participation, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. ALP were evaluated in terms of these dimensions in the context of the data obtained in the study in the following section.

3.2.3. An analysis of ALP

In this section, an analysis of ALP is carried out based on the results of the study using key standards drawn from international literature including INEE. These standards include access and availability, community participation, effectiveness and efficiency, relevance, and sustainability.

3.2.3.1. How were access and availability ensured?

Spotlight on ensuring access and availability of ALP

- Needs assessment studies are conducted to ensure that out-of-school students have been reached and have access to education.
- Outreach teams made up of Turkish instructors and SVEPs carried out home visits and studies to ensure that Syrian children had access to school.
- Since 2017, 210,000 vulnerable children have been identified. Around 40 per cent of these children did not go to school.
- 63,725 of them have been reached under ALP and 29,037 of them have been included in the programme to date.
- Measures are being taken to increase the availability of ALP. Like in TPS, this education is free of charge. In addition, free transportation is made available to students to increase their attendance.
- The programme also offers ALP students free school bags, course books and stationary kits.
- The cultural sensitivities of the Syrian population are also observed, so that same-sex classes were established.

Since the programme was designed directly with the aim of providing non-Turkish speaking refugee children (Syrians and other nationalities) with access to school, a great deal of effort has been made in this regard. As one UNICEF official said, "These children did not come by themselves. We found them like digging wells with a needle" (a Turkish saying similar to the English "Looking for a needle in a haystack"). The UNICEF official also stated that 210,000 socioeconomically disadvantaged children have been identified with the help of various administrations since 2017. It was found that about 40 per cent of these children (around 50,000) were out of school for the reasons examined earlier. Within the scope of ALP, 57,109 of them have been reached and 29,037 of them have been included in the programme so far.

According to the participants, needs assessment studies are carried out at the local level to ensure that out-of-school students have access to education. In this context, field surveys are carried out by a team that is composed of two SVEPs, one male and one female, and a Turkish instructor who works in PEC. The team receives training on how to communicate with and convince families before they work in the field. The regions and houses to be covered are determined based on data from the DGMM, MoFLSS, the Ministry of Youth and Sports,

the Kızılay, and other NGOs. Then the houses where Syrians live are visited one by one and children who are out of school are identified. In this process, the team creates a database by filling out needs and observation forms. Once the out-of-school children are identified, they are referred to relevant education services according to their age. If the out-of-school child is between 6 and 9 years old, they are referred to the TPS. However, if the child is between 10 and 18 years old and has never attended school or has been out of school for a minimum of three years, they are referred to the ALP. If the child is older and has dropped out of school, she/he is referred to open school.

According to the participants, various measures are taken to increase the participation of Syrian children in the ALP and to ensure their continuity. Most importantly, this education is free as in TPSs. In addition, the free transportation service provided to students seems to be an important factor in increasing their attendance. For example, an instructor, who visits Syrian parents on site to convince them, shared the following thoughts about the benefit of free school transport: "Most of our students do not have good financial means. Some students do not even go out



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of the house. We convince the parents with the free transportation service. Many parents were convinced to send their children to PEC because of the school service.” The programme also provides free-of-charge school bags, course books and stationary kits to all ALP students.

As mentioned earlier, economic reasons are the main barrier to the age group that ALP are targeting. Participants indicated that families, as mentioned earlier, receive financial support from MoFLSS, various NGOs, and municipalities to improve access to ALP. Therefore, attempts are made both to prevent child labour and to convince families: “We work with NGOs and other institutions to prevent child labour. They support these families financially and try to meet their needs so that they send the child to school instead of to work.” Another structural measure taken in this regard, according to a UNICEF official, is that the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (Şartlı Eğitim Yardımı- ŞEY) Programme, which is a national programme funded by the Turkish Government for Turkish children, has been extended to Syrian and other refugee children as of May 2017 and to ALP students as of September 2019. The programme provides monthly cash assistance conditional on regular school attendance.

Finally, in some regions, teachers stated that they met their students’ employers in person and asked on behalf of the students if they could begin work in the afternoon. This allowed children go to their workplace after school at one o’clock.

The PEC administrators participating in the study stated that they adopted an approach suitable for the cultural sensitivities of the Syrian population, especially in the early days, in order to meet the criteria of availability in the programme. Accordingly, groups of students, aged 13–14, and same-sex classes were set up instead of mixed classes so that only girls could attend. However, almost all PEC administrators stated that they no longer need this practice because the Syrian families no longer have separate class requirements for female students. Finally, the participants pointed out that UNICEF continued to support ALP students and their families with “Learn at Home Kits” and “Hygiene Kits” during the COVID-19 pandemic. As stated by a PEC administrator, “students can continue their education at PEC without any financial burdens”.

According to MoNE officials, the distribution of girls and boys among students participating in ALP is almost equal. However, it was reported that boys

are unable to attend day classes in regions where they work intensively, and a decline has been observed in girls from the age of 13–14. For example, one instructor shared the following on the issue: “I started with a group of 22 students. Five of my female students in this group got engaged and left the programme.”

Almost all participants stated that they had met few children with disabilities during their home visits. But a UNICEF official indicated that ALP was not designed specifically for children with disabilities. However, some instructors noted that there were children with disabilities in their class. For example, an instructor had a student with a physical disability. She stated that her student is attending the class because they provide transportation service for the student. She also noticed that she had a student with learning difficulties and since the child was able to communicate with her on a basic level, there was not have much difficulty in the classroom. However, another instructor said they had some trouble with one of their their their students who had dyslexia. While one instructor had a student with no arms, another had a student with 30 per cent visual impairment in his/her classes. This indicates that while ALP were not designed for them, children with disabilities were welcomed in PECs if their conditions permitted. However, most instructors have often found that families generally do not want to send their disabled children to PEC/TPSs with the fear that the children may not take good care of themselves. In light of the instructors’ words, the following practices are followed when a child with disabilities was met during the home visits:

- When a child with disabilities is met during home visits, information about them is passed on to MoFLSS, TRC, and NGOs on site. These organizations provide child with disabilities and their families with the support and guidance they need. In this context, the child is referred to RAM and included in the special education process.
- Students who have started ALP classes but are unable to follow the class properly due to their intellectual disabilities are referred to the counsellor assigned in PEC. The counsellor refers these students to RAM using the same procedures that apply to Turkish students. Evaluations about the child are made in the RAM and sent to the special school.

3.2.3.2. How was community participation ensured?

Spotlight on ensuring community participation in the ALP

- Syrian NGOs and SVEP were actively involved in developing and continuing the ALP programme.

According to the participants, the participation of the Syrian community in the preparation and continuity of the ALP has been ensured. During the development of the programme, the participation of Syrian NGOs and SVEP was also ensured. As a UNICEF staff member indicated: “We did not say we were doing a programme for you. The programme was prepared with them”. SVEP provided active support in continuing the programme. Accordingly, they are involved in both home visits and in monitoring the needs and requirements of students in PECs. SVEP particularly help counsellors in PECs and offer support services for Syrian students.

3.2.3.3. How were effectiveness and efficiency ensured?

Spotlight on effectiveness and efficiency of ALP

- 90 per cent of the children who have been referred to the equivalence commission have passed the placement test.
- The drop-out rate is only 8 per cent, and more than 90 per cent of the students received ALP A1 and/or ALP A2 certificates.
- Teaching and learning processes that take place in ALP classes are effective in the sense that contemporary instruction methods such as drama, role-play, and group work are applied.
- Both summative and formative methods are used for the assessment.

From the participants' accounts, it can be stated that ALP is effective and efficient. In this context, quantitative data is the most important evidence we have. Figures shared by a UNICEF staff member show that significant progress has been made:

“We retained 92 per cent of the students in the programme. This shows that it is efficient. Over 90 per cent of the students, who have completed ALP, received A1 and/or A2 certificates. In addition, 90 per cent of the children, who have been referred, have received approval from the equivalence commission. These figures show that the programme is effective.”

Furthermore, the various infrastructure needs of 78 PECs in 12 provinces were met under the programme to ensure that the courses would be delivered effectively. PECs received tools such as smartboards, computers and photocopiers. However, as noted in sub-section “3.2.5 Challenges faced in ALP”, some instructors still have difficulties in this regard.

Instructors were hired for the programme on a contractual basis, and no instructors who participated in the study complained about their personal rights (e.g. wages). The instructors were found to be mainly from the fields of Turkish language and literature, elementary education, and Turkish language teaching. Therefore, only those who graduated from education faculties and those who had teaching certificates were assigned. Most instructors reported that they received in-service training before or during their service.

In the focus group discussions, the instructors were asked questions about how they were teaching their classes in order to verify the effectiveness of the teaching they employ. Almost all of them stated that they used contemporary teaching methods and techniques and tried to keep their students actively engaged in the classroom. Instructors agree that lecturing is not an effective method. For this reason, they use a variety of methods and techniques such as drama, role-play, group work, text completion, use of visuals, educational games, worksheets, and listening and speaking activities. The instructors also said that they try to relate their lessons to daily life as much as possible. For example:

“I ensure the active participation of students. I get them talking more. It is forbidden to speak Arabic anyway (for the purpose of practising Turkish). For example, if we have covered genitives, we highlight them from the book and do role-playing activities about it. We do activities using songs and stories etc.”

Turkish is a very different language from their language and the difficulties they sometimes face bore them. That's why I use educational games whenever possible. Competitions, etc. I teach multiplication tables with games. I get them to watch movies in the social studies class (by stopping and discussing it from time to time).

Learning by doing and experiencing is very effective. We do many writing, speaking, and reading activities. For example, we made a clock. We made materials while covering the seasons. We use a lot of cardboards and other similar stuff.”

The instructors stated that they used not only MoNE books, but also Turkish education books prepared by the Yunus Emre Institute, materials developed by them (e.g. worksheets, reading cards), and supplementary reading texts. For example:

“At ALP A, we use the Turkish learning set from the Yunus Emre Institute. They do activities from the Intensive Literacy book. We watch films. I use videos and PPTs that I prepared myself. I developed materials like index cards. At ALP B, we use MoNE' textbooks. I give them some homework from the textbook first and then we cover it in the classroom with activities. We use a lot of cardboard and printouts.”

Since ALP is designed as a bridging programme for formal education, students do not only receive Turkish language education. ALP also includes mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and life skills (Tur. Hayat Bilgisi) lessons. However, most of the instructors stated that they mainly focused on Turkish language education in ALP A (including certified A1 and A2 Turkish instruction). In ALP B, C, and D, other courses are growing in importance. During the FDGs, the instructors were asked whether they felt competent enough in such lessons as maths and science, as

many of them were graduates of the Turkish Language and Literature department. Those with an elementary education background stated that they generally did not have any difficulties in those lessons. While some of those with a background in Turkish Language Literature or Turkish Education stated that they did not experience problems due to the relatively simple content of maths and science lessons covered in ALP, some instructors developed solutions to overcome this problem. For example, "I absorbed social studies into Turkish language classes. I teach it when teaching Turkish. In mathematics and science lessons, I received support from chemistry teachers at PEC"

Some instructors also shared their observations about Syrian students' reactions based on various lessons. For example, an instructor stated that she "had trouble with her students in social studies classes, because this lesson has no equivalent for them"¹⁶ Some instructors stated that their students were not interested in maths because they found it difficult.

The instructors use both formative and summative assessments.¹⁷ They reported that they conduct formative assessments every week and give quizzes and tests every two weeks. Some examples of the practices expressed by the instructors in relation to formative assessment are given below:

"In ALP A, I use reading comprehension activities with students, who cannot read and write, once a week and assess their performance.

I observe what students write, identify their learning difficulties, and give them homework according to their needs.

We have a story writing activity. For example, they write the story of what happened while coming to school. One month later, we write the same story again and determine its development according to the first story.

According to the participants, exams are also held at regular intervals to assess students' progress. It was stated that the ALP B exams are typically held using multiple choice questions every 15 days. An instructor explained that these exams, which give students an opportunity to learn from their own mistakes, are welcomed by students, and stated that the students want to take an exam every week. The grades students receive from the exams are regularly shared with the PEC coordinator for monitoring purposes.

Additionally, counsellors have been assigned in ALP to provide psychosocial support to students. The counsellors are engaged two hours a week with each class. In these lessons, the instructor does psychosocial activities with students that were designed specifically for students attending ALP. For example: "When the counsellor enters the lesson, they conduct activities according to their emotional state. Today, for example, the sense of responsibility has been covered. they also gave me information about my students' performance in the class"

In addition, a counsellor¹⁸ who participated in the study stated that they give the children advice about educational opportunities and carry out orientation activities with them. Furthermore, with the help of SVEP, the counsellors interview children and their families and monitor their wellbeing. If a child has difficulties, they inform the instructor and/or coordinator on the principle of confidentiality and initiate the appropriate processes to find a solution.

¹⁶ Social Studies is a lesson taught in Türkiye at primary and lower secondary level (from 4th to 7th grade). The curriculum is composed of seven learning domains: history, geography, individual and society, economics, civics, science and society, and global connections. Although it has content that may be relevant to Syrian students, 4th and 5th grade curricula may be more focused on the local location and Türkiye. This could be why some Syrian students find social studies not relevant to themselves as it is more focused on life in Türkiye than any other place, especially Syria.

¹⁷ The aim of formative assessment is to give students feedback on their learning in the teaching and learning process. This can take the form of tutor led (course work, homework, etc.), peer or self-assessment. They usually carry no grade as the goal is to improve students' performances in the process by letting them to learn from their mistakes. However, a summative assessment is used to assess student learning at the end of an instructional unit (usually at the mid-term and at the end of the term) by comparing it to a standard, each other or a benchmark. Summative assessments are usually conducted by giving students tests and exams.

¹⁸ Although formally known as Guidance Teachers, school counsellors are required to have an undergraduate degree in Psychological Counselling and Guidance. Those, who have degree in psychology, can also serve as school counsellor provided that they hold a teaching formation certificate.

Finally, all instructors stated that they found ALP successful in terms of coordination. They asserted that some of the problems they had were resolved in a very short time and they were able to get the assistance they needed from the coordinators in a timely manner.

3.2.3.4. How was relevancy ensured in the ALP?

Spotlight on ensuring relevancy

- When developing ALP, a needs analysis was first carried out to determine the basic learning outcomes of the main subjects (Turkish, mathematics, natural sciences and technology, social studies and life skills) in the TPS curriculum.
- Based on these basic learning outcomes, the ALP curriculum was created with created with four modules in collaboration with academics, NGOs of the Syrian community, SVEPs and MoNE experts.
- ALP has been recognized by Syrian students and their families, which is reflected in the low drop-out rate (8 per cent).
- The instructors have taken measures at the micro level to ensure that the programme is relevant to the children, for example, adapting the curriculum and relating the content to the daily life of the students.

UNICEF and MoNE officials were asked questions about the development of ALP. According to the responses received, the programme was developed in collaboration with academics, NGOs of the Syrian community, SVEPs, and MoNE experts. In this context, the needs analysis was carried out first. In the needs analysis, the basic learning outcomes of the main subjects (Turkish, mathematics, science and technology, social studies and life skills) in the curriculum of the public schools were determined. Based on these basic learning outcomes, ALP was created with four modules. As one UNICEF staff

member put it: “As the school-age children in Türkiye (regardless of their nationalities) are supposed to attend only formal compulsory schooling, ALP acts a bridging programme for children who have never enrolled or been out of school for a minimum of three years to make up for their lost learning and be (re)-linked with education. If they were given a diploma to attend ALP (or ALP-like programmes), this would undermine the whole compulsory education system by by-passing it”

UNICEF and MoNE officials believe that ALP have gained recognition from Syrian students and their families. They cited the main evidence of this as the low ALP dropout rate. A UNICEF staff member claimed that while the dropout rate for similar programmes worldwide is between 35 and 50 per cent, it is only 10 per cent in Türkiye. They indicated that, due to structural problems, children soon stop participating in such programmes around the world. The fact that the ALP have a modular structure and that structural problems children face have been solved in cooperation with MoNE, MoFLSS, NGOs, and international organizations made it a very successful programme.

The instructors have also taken certain measures at the micro level to ensure that the programme is accepted by the children. The first measure taken in this context is the adaptation of the curriculum. The instructors make various adaptations and carry out differentiated instruction in the classroom to suit the needs of their students. For example:

“We adopt the curriculum according to the student profile. There are students, who are very good, but also others, who do not know anything, in the same class. I do tiered activities. I do differentiated activities.

We must make adaptations according to the level of the class. For example, my first group was very talented. My second group of students were not at the same level. I simplified the content in the second group compared to the first group.”

In addition, the instructors indicated that they relate the content they teach to the daily lives of students and do not overly rely on the textbook. As a result, it was found that the motivation of the students towards the lessons increased. Extracurricular activities are another measure taken to ensure that the education offered by ALP is more engaging with students.

There are such instructors, who asked a physical education teacher in the PEC to do PE classes with students, who give music and painting lessons on certain weeks, who give Arabic lessons to students, and who have a book reading activities in the schoolyard. Through such activities, it is observed that students are able to discover their own talents and can be guided to additional courses offered at the PEC:

“They discovered their own abilities. One of my students discovered this talent in the painting class and we directed him to the relevant institution. We directed those who are interested in music, to music courses. If there was no age limit in the course, they continued these courses at PEC. If there is an age restriction, they went to the courses organized by Municipality’s Education Centres.”

Almost all the instructors and PEC administrators reported that social activities, such as picnics, trips, and going to the cinema were conducted with the students before the COVID-19 pandemic. Such activities have been found to provide significant benefits in adapting children to school as they had opportunities to socialize and develop a sense of belonging and self-confidence.

Another measure taken at the micro level relates to cultural sensitivity. The instructors stated that they try to make the classroom atmosphere as free and comfortable as possible. They reported receiving positive reactions from students, especially when they showed cultural sensitivity. To illustrate this:

“We link the lessons with the Syrian culture. For example, we say “we have this kind of practice in Türkiye, what about Syrian culture?” ... We ensure continuous cultural interaction. We talk about their food and clothes. That motivates kids a lot. It develops a sense of belonging.”

3.2.3.5. How was sustainability ensured?

Spotlight on ensuring sustainability

- Monitoring and evaluation are carried out by MoNE and UNICEF under their own systems, and opinions are sought from practitioners and beneficiaries.
- MoNE conducts monitoring and evaluation both at the macro and micro levels through systems established between instructors, counsellors, and SVEPs, school principals, provincial coordinators and the education centre.
- Based on these activities, the ALP curriculum has been adjusted to better suit the needs of the Syrian students.

Regular monitoring and evaluation are carried out to ensure the sustainability of the programme. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out by both MoNE and UNICEF under their own institutional systems, and opinions are sought from practitioners and beneficiaries. MoNE carries out the monitoring and evaluation at the macro level through a system established between school principals, provincial coordinators and the centre, as explained earlier. At the micro level (i.e. within the PEC), students are monitored by instructors, counsellors, and SVEP and as noted, by a PEC director, “The instructors hold a weekly meeting with the PEC coordinator on students’ progress”. In these sessions, things related to students in need are discussed. For example, one instructor reported, “when a student stops attending the programme, a decision is made to go on a family visit”

A UNICEF staff member reported that because of the monitoring and evaluation carried out, ALP’s curriculum was reviewed and some learning outcomes were changed. Therefore, it was emphasized that the ALP curriculum has been adjusted to better suit the needs of the Syrian students. The success of ALP has also been found important in terms of being a source for the Catch-Up programme implemented by PIKTES. Since 2018, PIKTES has been using the ALP curriculum by modifying it according to its own needs.

3.2.4. Instructors' in-service needs

Spotlight on instructors' in-service needs

- Not all instructors had in-service training, probably because they started working in the programme at different times.
- The instructors who have received in-service training claim that training which focuses on theory rather than practice is not beneficial.
- Instructors say they needed training in teaching methods and techniques, drama, advanced topics in teaching Turkish as a second language, music and painting, and psychosocial support.

The need for in-service training for instructors is covered in FGDs. Some of the instructors noted that they took part in a four-day training session in Ankara. While some of them have taken more than one training course, others have attended no in-service training. Perhaps the main reason for this is that the instructors are employed in the programme on a contractual basis. As they started working in the programme at different times, some were unable to have the opportunity to receive in-service training.

The instructors, who have received in-service training, indicate that training which focuses on theory rather than practice is not very beneficial for them:

“My greatest training was field surveys. Even a single sentence in the theory did not match what I have experienced. None of what we were told in the training made sense when I met a child who has been locked away for five years. You must hug him first. In the training courses given to us, they explain things in theory and teach us how to teach people who already have an educational background. How to teach 13-year-old children who have never been educated is another matter.”

I have attended two training courses. The first lasted five days. It was a repeat for me. We mainly wanted to learn the techniques to be used in class. We wanted to learn how to design a lesson that 9-year-olds learn effectively. However, it did not happen.

As the quotes above show, the instructors need hands-on training that allows them to be active and focus specifically on their needs. However, the instructors find in-service training very valuable because that it gives them the opportunity to learn from each other. For example, “in-service training feels like therapy when it is with people we do not work with at the same institution. The environment there gives us energy. It provides the opportunity to learn from each other.” Finally, the instructors, who took part in the study, stated that they needed training in the following areas: teaching methods and techniques, drama, advanced topics in teaching Turkish as a second language, training for activities such as music and painting, and psychosocial support.

3.2.5. Challenges faced in ALP

Spotlight on ALP challenges

- The biggest challenge in relation to the ALP is time.
- The duration of the four-month ALP A module is considered insufficient.
- There are challenges in transitioning from ALP A to ALP B as these two modules focus on relatively different learning outcomes.
- Another challenge is the lack of infrastructure and resources.

The instructors mentioned some problems with ALP. One of them is the time problem. Many instructors, who participated in the study, stated that the duration of the four-month ALP A when certified A1 and A2 Turkish modules are covered was insufficient as follows:

“Our only problem is time. It is very difficult to teach how to read and write in four months and on top of that, to cover other learning outcomes.

We teach five hours a day. A1 and A2 take four months. I do not think the time is enough. This period must be longer as they have to learn a new alphabet.

They have to learn in two months what those in regular schools learn in 9–10 months. The time is not enough for them to reach the level to make a sentence. It would be much better if there were a short alphabet and vocabulary module before A1 and A2.

”

Some instructors reported that due to the significant difference between ALP A and B modules, students have difficulty when transitioning from ALP A to ALP B:

“In ALP B, we teach the children social studies, science, and maths lessons. When the children cannot form a complete sentence, they have great difficulty in other lessons.

Those who get equivalence from A1 and A2 experience confusion. While learning the alphabet, they suddenly find themselves in lower secondary school or ALP B where they have to study maths and science.

”

In this context, some instructors found that students, especially those who receive Turkish support from their family and surroundings, benefit more from ALP A1 and A2. For them, children, who do not encounter Turkish in the environment in which they live, have difficulty achieving equivalence even if they complete the ALP programme. In addition, it was found that girls, who stay at home and have very limited contact with the outside world, are even more disadvantaged.

Although there was no insufficiency in terms of resources in ALP A, the instructors indicated that they needed resources in ALP B. Many reported that they met their material needs (cardboard, glue, photocopies, etc.) from their own budget and that they had difficulties in accessing textbooks to be taught at ALP B. One participant stated that it would be more effective if lessons such as mathematics and science in ALP B were given by subject teachers instead of them.

Finally, some instructors raised the issues regarding the lack of buildings and equipment. While most instructors are satisfied with their existing physical and material infrastructure, some issues at the regional level were reported. For example, some of the instructors in Istanbul teach in public schools because the capacity of PECs in their region is insufficient. Among these teachers are those who have changed schools four times because the buildings became unusable in the aftermath of the Istanbul earthquake. Some instructors have indicated that if public schools are short of capacity, they [i.e. ALP class] are the first to be removed from the building. Additionally, some instructors noted that their lesson activities were limited due to a lack of facilities such as smartboards or projectors in their classrooms. For example:

“Unfortunately, we could not get a computer and projector because of the earthquake. Things take shape according to the facilities of the school. Needs are dealt with from time to time, but we have not been able to get many things because of the bureaucracy. There was no problem making photocopies while at PEC but public schools have always created problems. We always pay for the copy paper, markers, etc. ourselves.

Since we work with PEC, the principal of the public school can tell us not to come tomorrow... There is a renovation at the school or because they need the class. We are in a position that we can be sent out at any time. For example, the current principal says: “Since I have opened a new pre-school class, I cannot accommodate you.” We have to go to another school, but this time I have transportation problems. If we take our children to the schoolyard during breaks, we stand out. We use the classroom but cannot use the school.

”

Many instructors stated that they did not break ties with their students after graduating and that they continue to follow-up their development. However, some instructors reported that due to their heavy workload, they were unable to adequately track whether or not the students they graduated were in public school. Since the instructors do not have time to do such follow-up, they consider it beneficial to create a mechanism that will monitor the students after graduation and provide them with additional support.



4 CONCLUSION

From 2016 onwards, Türkiye took a different approach to the refugee crisis and education, changing from a humanitarian-emergency response track to one that considered a long-term development. With this aim, policies were put in place to integrate Syrian children into the Turkish public education system. By and large, this has proved to be successful as all schooled Syrian children under temporary protection (UTP) now continue their education in Turkish public schools (TPSs).

This transition from a humanitarian to a development approach taken by Türkiye complements, and in many ways, mirrors the approach, policies and priorities of UNICEF, as seen in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

Most of this convergence was deliberate. The Strategic Plan provides a commitment and institutional framework for UNICEF's accountability to strengthen the links between its humanitarian and development mandates in the context of the SDGs (UNICEF, 2018b). UNICEF aims to develop coherent interventions that are complementary for both humanitarian response and development to strengthen the systems that provide essential services to the most vulnerable and marginalized populations (UNICEF, 2019c).

Many of the policies to facilitate Syrian children's inclusion in the Turkish public education system reflect international requirements of the minimum standards of INEE, developed for the education of refugee students. These can be listed as follows:

Access to education

- At the initial stage, Syrian children were provided with safe learning spaces in tent, containers and prefabricated schools based in camps. These camp schools had MoNE coordinators and followed an adapted Syrian curriculum.
- The transition to more formal educational places was set in motion by the establishment of temporary education centres (TECs) in 2014. TECs offered education in Arabic through an adapted Syrian curriculum that was designed in collaboration with MoNE and Syrian stakeholders.
- The integration of Syrian children to Turkish public schools started from 2016. All TECs were closed as of September 2020. Today, Syrian students have the right to enrol automatically at the school closest to their home. Free transportation services are also provided in some provinces when the school to the child's home is not within walking distance.
- Syrian students have almost the same rights as Turkish students and enjoy all services as their Turkish counterparts, including psychosocial support services and services related to special education needs.
- Various measures have been taken to improve the schooling of girls and boys of upper secondary school age in particular. The Catch-Up Programme has been implemented for children between the ages of 9 and 18, who have been out of school or who have had their education temporarily interrupted. To convince the families, who otherwise would not want their upper secondary school age daughters to be in the same class as boys, referrals were made to girls-only İmam Hatip schools. The SAVE programme was implemented as of September 2020 to identify children between the ages of 14–17 who could not continue schooling after completing their basic education for reasons, such as child labour, and reintegrate them back to formal education by enrolling them in Vocational Education Centres. While continuing their education at VECs, students receive practical training at workplaces and receive a monthly stipend of at least one third of the minimum wage
- Previous credentials and qualifications of Syrian children UTP have been recognized and the implementation of procedures has been ensured down to local levels. Those who don't have documentation of their educational credentials have been accepted to schools through their declarations and examinations if needed.
- To coordinate the educational response to the Syrian crisis, the Education in Emergency and Migration Department was established under DG LLL in Ankara and provincial coordinators were assigned. Education Working Groups were

also established in the provinces to coordinate education services provided to Syrians.

- Non-formal education programmes such as ALP and Turkish language courses (TLC) have been initiated to increase the schooling rate of Syrian children. They particularly have targeted the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach children.
- ALP have proved to be effective and efficient in out-of-school refugee children's transition (including Syrians) to TPSs at a level appropriate for their development. It aims at giving a second chance for out-of-school refugee children to receive quality education. The programme reaches out to refugee children and develops their basic Turkish language, maths, science and social science competencies so that they can continue their education in public schools.
- At the local level, out-of-school students have been monitored by provincial directories with the help of schools, Turkish teachers and Syrian volunteer education personnel (SVEP). The directories identify out-of-school children and investigate their reasons for not attending school. Students who are out of school for economic and social reasons are referred to MoFLSS and various NGOs to meet their needs.
- The Electronic Information Network (Elektronik Bilişim Ağı- EBA) (EIN) has been effectively used to provide additional support to Syrian students as a mean of distance learning tool in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The EIN Language Learning Portal was created to make course materials available to all students. In addition, EIN TV course videos are published on the institutional page of PIKTES YouTube.

Teaching and learning

- Curricula in TECs were determined by the Government of Türkiye and MoNE with the help of the Syrian refugee community in Türkiye. Students followed their education in Arabic in TECs.
- To facilitate integration to the host communities, the curricula of TECs were enhanced with Turkish language courses and content covering basic life skills, moral education, general culture, and social skills.
- Learning materials have been provided with the help of international organizations.

- Policy and practices have been developed for those who have been out of school for a considerable period (or who never started school) to facilitate their return to schools such as summer schools and language support programmes.
- Adaptation classes, teaching intensive Turkish language, have been set up to improve the academic language skills of Syrian students.
- The Back-Up Training Programme has been developed to provide additional support to Syrian children who have not been performing well academically, who have had to retake the grade they were in, or who have recently been transferred from a TEC to TPS.
- Syrian students have been included in educational support and incentive programmes that have been originally designed for Turkish students such as the Remedial Education Programme (İYEP) and CCTE.
- YÖBİS was developed to focus on the management of demographic and educational data of refugee students, who were enrolled in TECs, and to track and certify the learning of those children.

Teachers and other educational personnel

- SVEP volunteered to provide education in TECs and were supported by financial incentives. After the 2014/21 circular, they began to be recruited through interviews.
- Excess MoNE teachers in the province where TECs were located were also assigned to the TECs for those classes Syrian volunteer teachers could not deliver.
- Turkish language teachers and counsellors are employed to provide language courses and guidance services to Syrian children studying in both TECs and TPSs.
- SVEP began to be assigned in TPSs to help integrate Syrian students into TPSs during the transition period.
- Several professional development training programmes have been carried out to develop human resources to support an inclusive education system in Türkiye, paying particular attention to Syrian children UTP. The training programmes targeted SVEP, Turkish teachers, and principals.

4.1. Needs and priority areas

Despite the many efforts cited to integrate Syrian children to TPSs, there are still large gaps due to the high population of Syrian students requiring attention. The priority areas are identified as follows:

- There are 731,713 Syrian students UTP registered at the TPSs as of November 2021 (DG LLL, 2021). An increase in the number of Syrian students at the public schools is expected with the gradual enrolment of those currently out of school. Moreover, the natural growth in the number of school-age children will lead to an increase in the number of Syrian students at public schools. Because of the increasing numbers of new students, extra physical facilities (i.e. classrooms and school buildings) are needed, requiring new funds. Despite Türkiye's generous efforts, a limited amount of international financial support has been obtained to this date, which creates economic and development challenges both in the short and long term.
- The increasing number of Syrian students in TPSs can cause cultural conflicts and gives rise to some Turkish parents' negative reaction to overcrowded classrooms. Furthermore, some Turkish families

may have negative attitudes towards Syrians, which may be reflected by their children in school. Although many people do not express any negative attitudes towards Syrian people and accept them as guests, findings of research conducted by the Platform for Protecting Children and Their Rights show that 56 per cent of the parents interviewed do not approve of their children being friends with a Syrian child (cited in ERG, 2018).

- Although many initiatives have been taken to teach Turkish to Syrian children, many of them still have language problems, especially academically, according to the results of the research. The lack of language proficiency is usually viewed as the main barrier preventing the integration of Syrian children into Turkish educational systems and society. According to the participants, many Syrian students were not able to follow regular classes sufficiently because they started school without adequate Turkish language training. Such a situation impeded their academic performance, engagement with classes, and ability to socialize with their Turkish peers and teachers. It was also reported that when children do not follow class effectively because of language problems, they might tend to withdraw or show behavioural problems.



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- The results of this research show that there is still a way to go to create fully inclusive school environments, as many Syrian students still prefer classes where the majority of students are Syrian. Many instructors who participated in the study indicated that some of their students would like to return to ALP after being transferred to TPS, due to integration issues. Indeed, Carlier (2018) reported that when Syrian students UTP started widely attending TPSs, issues of bullying started to emerge. More importantly, due to such reasons as lack of Turkish language skills, fear of assimilation and conflict-related trauma, many Syrian students cannot easily fit in TPSs (ERG, 2018; Taştan and Çelik, 2017; UNICEF, 2015b).
- According to teachers working with Syrian children in TPSs, one of their biggest challenges is the lack of educational arrangements for Syrian children (i.e. professional development and educational materials) (Kılıç and Özkor, 2019). Indeed, according to the results of the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) survey conducted by the OECD in 2018, teachers in Türkiye are in need of professional development, mostly in the following two areas: “Communication with people from different cultures and/or countries” (24.6 per cent) and “instruction in multicultural and/or multilingual classes” (22.2 per cent) (TEDMEM, 2019), which most probably results from the integration of Syrian children to TPSs and indicate that teachers are facing pedagogical and communication problems with Syrian students UTP. Syrian students at TPSs follow the same curriculum as their Turkish peers at the same time as trying to learn Turkish. Syrian students learning opportunities appear to be impeded when the standard teaching methods and materials are used in the classes.
- Compared to primary school level, the enrolment ratios of pre-primary and upper-secondary school education are low concerning Syrian children UTP. Economic, social, and cultural factors contribute to the decline in pre-school and upper secondary school attendance. Although education is free in TPSs and textbooks are given to all students free of charge, because of financial difficulties and family situation, some children are sent to work in such sectors as agriculture, industry, factories and construction to contribute to the family budget. Those children usually, either never enrol in school, or are absent from the school for a long time. Furthermore, cases have been reported by the participants that some Syrian families do not want to send their upper secondary-school-age daughters to school for social and cultural reasons.
- Two issues need closer attention regarding specific groups of Syrian children UTP. Although psychological counselling and guidance services at TPSs conduct routine studies with the help of SVEP, they have not implemented any special programmes for Syrian students. Similarly, although Syrian children with disabilities have almost the same rights as Turkish students with disabilities, there has been very little initiative carried out directly targeting Syrian children with disabilities (ERG, 2018). Many Syrian children with disabilities cannot benefit from the services offered to them as their parents often keep these children at home.
- Two main challenges regarding ALP are identified. First, the instructors reported that there was not enough time to improve students’ reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in ALP. Second, infrastructure problems exist in some areas where ALP are implemented.
- According to the participants, the Syrian population is very mobile. They can change country or city without notifying the authorities. This situation makes it difficult to follow up with some Syrian families and to check if their children are enrolled in school at the provincial level.



4.2. Priority recommendations and the way forward

Based on the analysis undertaken throughout this study, the following priority programming recommendations and way forward can be identified:

- The high number of students in classrooms where Syrian families are concentrated causes a negative reaction in Turkish families and hinders the integration of Syrian children into the host society. Therefore, new classroom/school investments should be made in regions with a high Syrian population.
- Rather than only focusing on how to integrate the refugee population into Turkish society, educational policies and interventions should target both refugee and host communities. In this respect, the following steps can be taken:
 - Create social cohesion between Turkish and Syrian families through programmes and channels such that Syrian families can communicate with Turkish families and make cultural exchanges.
 - Develop parent/family education programmes for both Syrian and Turkish families.
- Since the low academic Turkish language proficiency of Syrian students is one of the most important obstacles to their school integration, it is recommended that programmes such as adaptation classes and summer schools that support their language development should continue.
- It is recommended that further measures should be employed to create fully inclusive learning environments in TPSs. In this respect, the following steps can be taken:
 - Develop policies to create a whole school approach to inclusive education (for example, ensure that schools organize events and group work that will bring Turkish and Syrian students together and encourage schools to organize events to bring Turkish and Syrian families together).
 - Develop the leadership capacities of school leaders to initiate change in schools and create inclusive learning environments.
 - Develop policies encouraging schools not to use standard teaching methods and materials to cater for differentiated needs of all students.



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- It is recommended that measures should be employed to increase capacities of teachers working in multicultural classes. In this respect, the following steps can be taken:
 - Continue with professional development of teachers, especially in the areas of communication, instruction in multicultural and/or multilingual classes, and differentiated instruction.
 - Ensure that in-service training is based on practice and hands-on activities rather than delivery of theory.
 - Develop programmes specifically targeting whole-school approaches in the delivery of inclusive teaching and learning.
 - Develop sample activities and materials, especially prepared in accordance with the differentiated teaching approach, to guide and facilitate teachers' work.
- Syrian families often have to make a choice between financial viability and their children's educational needs, making the choice that their children work and provide basic needs for the family rather than get an education. Therefore, it is recommended to continue [and expand] financial incentives for students who attend school (e.g. CCTE).
- It is recommended that more attention be paid to the psychosocial needs of Syrian children and Syrian children with disabilities. In this respect, the following steps can be taken:
 - Develop more structured and specialized psychosocial support programmes for Syrian students in TPSs.
 - Develop programmes specifically targeting Syrian children with disabilities.

- ALP has been a very successful programme in bringing out-of-school refugee children to formal education. It is recommended that it should continue by readjusting, particularly the timeframe of Module A. It is also recommended that the PECs used in ALP be strengthened in terms of its infrastructure.

4.3. Concluding remarks

Due to language barriers and the perceived temporary nature of their stay, Syrian children in Türkiye were initially provided education in Türkiye in tents, containers and prefabricated schools based in TACs. For those living in host communities, the education of Syrian children was mainly carried out in locations made available with the efforts of local municipalities, NGOs and the Syrian community itself. It soon became clear that the provisions laid down by these stakeholders were insufficient to meet the educational needs of a large number of Syrian children. After TECs were established, educational services were provided by SVEP through adapted Syrian curricula in Arabic. Due to the insufficiency of TEC buildings in places with large Syrian populations, with the efforts of MoNE and UNICEF, TPSs began to be allocated for Syrian children. Double-shift schooling started to be used for the education of Syrian children in the host community. Therefore, when the school day was finished for Turkish students, the school building was given to the service of Syrian children's education in the afternoon.

However, the ongoing violence in Syria clearly showed that the crisis would not end quickly. This affected the ability of the Syrian community to return to Syria. Therefore, a long-term integration approach was adopted rather than a humanitarian-emergency

approach in the education of Syrian children UTP. Syrian children UTP were gradually enrolled in TPSs beginning in 2016 and all TECs were closed in 2020. While the main goal in the initial response was to ensure enrolment and attendance, since 2016, the focus has shifted to development and implementation of inclusive policies.

With the integration of Syrian children into TPSs, language became one of the main barriers, if not the most important, that Syrian children faced in schools. Many Syrian students were not able to follow regular classes sufficiently because they started school without adequate Turkish language training.

Such a situation impeded their academic performance, engagement with class and ability to socialize with their Turkish peers and teachers. In order to facilitate a gradual transition, MoNE strengthened the provision of adaptation classes and Turkish language courses for Syrian students in TPSs. In addition, a number of support programmes have been developed to enable access and integration into TPSs such as Catch-Up, Back-Up and non-formal education programmes (e.g. ALP and TLC). Syrian students have also been admitted to some national programmes such as CCTE and IYEP. Specific measures have been taken to increase the number of Syrian boys and girls in upper secondary education. Furthermore, MoNE, with the support of UNICEF, carried out a number of teacher and principal training programmes to develop human resources in support of an inclusive education system in Türkiye with particular attention to Syrian children UTP. It should be noted that the EIN has been made available and effectively used to provide additional support to Syrian students in the COVID-19 pandemic process.

Despite Türkiye's outstanding efforts, 392,640 Syrian children are still out of school. To reach these children and enrol them in TPSs, ALP were developed. Although ALP are offered in PECs, non-formal education institutions, they are not designed to be a non-formal education initiative but rather a bridging programme to integrate out-of-school Syrian children into TPSs. As reported in this document, ALP have proven to be successful in terms of reaching the most vulnerable children and enrolling them in TPSs. ALP have been well-received by Syrian students and have not only provided them with a route to TPS but also

with the psychosocial support they may need due to their vulnerable situation. Although TPSs have been closed from time to time due to measures taken against the COVID-19 pandemic, education in ALP has continued face to face since June 2020 with active participation of students.

UNHCR launched its refugee education strategy in September 2019. In the strategy document, Türkiye's education sector response to the Syria crisis is described as good practice with the following: "[Türkiye's practices] provide some useful insights into the education policy choices that states must make in response to large-scale refugee movements and transitions from short-term, immediate solutions to the more institutionalized, systemic and sustainable approaches in protracted refugee situations" (UNHCR, 2019, p. 18). Although complex and protracted emergencies like the Syria crisis are never easy to deal with, and the fact that so many Syrians have crossed the border in need of protection has presented Türkiye with many challenges, as reported in this document, Türkiye has done an outstanding work for the education of Syrian children. Türkiye has continued to make provisions and support the education of Syrian children in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created additional difficulties for MoNE. However, more efforts are needed to include all Syrian children in education as they are subject to many risks, such as child labour, child marriage, domestic violence, and potential for radicalization (Eryaman & Ervan, 2019).

Although existing evidence indicates that education makes a positive impact in emergencies, the overall available and quality data on education in emergencies is still insufficient (Mendenhall, 2019a; Montjouridès & Liu, 2019) and, in turn, the stakeholders "continue to lack substantial evidence on what works, how, for whom and at what cost" (INEE, 2019, p. 4). To this end, this study, based on a review of literature and fieldwork, has outlined current issues in refugee education, examined strategies for supporting the education of refugee children, and described the trajectory and characteristics of the educational policy and programmes, with particular attention to ALP, provided to Syrian children UTP in Türkiye. It also provided needs and priority areas and policy recommendations for Türkiye that may serve as a reference to future strategic planning and programming.



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