



# Needs Analysis Update

KA2 ERASMUS+ CAPACITY BUILDING  
IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION PROGRAMME



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union





REFUGEES EDUCATION  
SUPPORT IN MENA COUNTRIES

# Refugees Education Support in Mena CoUntriEs RESCUE

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### **Abstract (for dissemination)**

**The international cooperation RESCUE project** -aimed at helping Jordanian, Lebanese and Iraqi (Kurdistan Region) Universities in structuring an effective response to refugees crisis- has monitored the presence of refugee students on national levels and **identified, produced and updated a needs analysis for target Universities.**

The needs analysis belongs to the work package 1 of the RESCUE project and its update has been deemed necessary because of the **high speed at which the situation and the number of refugees have changed** between the time of proposal writing and the project start date.

The analysis covers all the seven RESCUE partner universities, namely: Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) and Lebanese University, in **Lebanon**; Zarqa University, Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan and Yarmouk University, in **Jordan**, Duhok University and Duhok Polytechnic University, in **Iraq (Kurdistan Region)**, and it also covers three additional non partner Higher education Institutions: the Hashemite University (HU), Jerash University (JU) and Al-Bayt University (ABU).

The document provides an overview of the territorial contexts, **identifying the most relevant elements related to the forced movement of people**, its management and the social and economic impact on the territory.

The report examines the needs analysis based on the **processing of the information obtained from the partner Universities**, as well as from the interviews and field visits carried out during the first half of 2017.

Thus, the report establishes a **panoramic view of the situations of access and permanence of refugees in higher education** (from the point of view of each of the participating Universities), as well as a panoramic view of the challenges that Universities identify in order to favour the incorporation of these young people. In this regard, the report identifies common elements related to **the deterioration of economic conditions, the lack of centralized information** (scholarships, admission requirements, etc.) **or other access restrictions**, as well as action proposals focused on the role of Refugee Students Operational Support (R-SOS) Units.

In general, the report allows a comprehensive vision of the situation in each country and builds a **basis to establish the action plans through recommendations.**

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## Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

## Context

Since 2011 the MENA region has suffered one of the most important forced movement of population recorded since the end of the Second World War. More than 5 million of people have fled the Arab Republic of Syria and more than 6 million are forcibly displaced inside the country. The countries surrounding Syria –Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG)- have hosted a large number of persons fleeing from the conflict in Syria and, in some specific circumstances such as the case of the KRG, from internal conflicts.

The scope of the situation and the deep economic, social and humanitarian impact over the territory and the people has mobilized different actors: international organizations, governments, NGOs, etc. Universities as development, social cohesion and educational actors have also been mobilized in order to promote the right of education for those collectivities especially vulnerable and in order to facilitate their integration in the job market.

The deep concern about how to deal with such a sensitive issue keeping the social cohesion and with limited resources in conditions of economic deterioration and potential sociopolitical instability is a challenge for all the actors involved (states, NGOs, universities,...).

## RESCUE project and partners

The objective of the RESCUE project<sup>1</sup> is to promote the access to higher education and facilitate the integration in the job market of refugee students coming from the Syrian conflict and allocated in Lebanon, Jordan and KRG. This objective will be pursued through the definition, setup and implementation of ad hoc units (the Refugee Student Operational Support Unit – R-SOS), small offices whose mission is to structure specific services supporting the refugee students in resuming their academic training path.

The RESCUE partners in proگرامma countries are:

- UNIMED (coordinator),
- Sapienza University (Italy),
- Universitat de Barcelona (Spain),
- Technische Universitaet Berlin (Germany),
- Istanbul Aydin University (Turkey)

and in MENA countries:

Lebanon: Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) and Lebanese University (UL)

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the RESCUE project at <http://www.uni-med.net/en/tag/rescue/>



- Jordan: Zarqa University (ZU), Yarmouk University (YU), Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan (ZUJ) and Association of Arab Universities (AArU).
- Iraqi (KRG): University of Duhok (UoD) and Duhok Polytechnic University (DPU)

The following need analysis includes the MENA partners mentioned above and three more Jordanian universities not part of RESCUE partnership but involved as additional case studies in order to enrich Jordan analysis: the Hashemite University (HU), Jerash University (JU) and Al-Bayt University (ABU)

Each university in each country has a different situation to face, different constraints and challenges to deal with. Therefore the needs analysis aims to design a tailored answer to cope with different scenarios.

## Findings

There is a wide range of challenges that Universities are facing. Among them we can identify **the legal framework** of each country. The legal framework and its implementation can contribute to facilitate or to obstruct the social and economic integration of refugee populations. Restrictive legal framework includes administrative requirements (residency permits and strict requirements for their renovation, for example), specific requirements for the labor market integration (limitations into the professions that refugee can develop) or the requirement needed to access to higher education institutions or to recognize previous studies (presentation of supporting documents, for example).

The general deterioration of the living standards of refugee families has been identified by different institutions and agencies (UNHCR among them). The work instability, low wages, incompatibility between work time and study time are elements that can impede the access to higher education. In this scenario the **economic situation** of refugees is an external challenge that contributes to discourage the access of refugee to Higher Education Institutions or can contribute to the academic dropout. In this field, different organizations and international agencies are developing **scholarship programs**. But there is room for their proper dissemination among potential students. In fact, the partner universities and the field visits have confirmed a lack of information about resources (programs, projects, scholarships,...) addressed to refugees.

Universities have also identified different elements that must be taken into account: **the lack of proper dissemination about resources** (mentioned above), the **knowledge gap** between the standard university formation in the host country and the background formation of refugees and the **language gap**. To overcome the knowledge gap the universities identify the need of **preparatory and/or bridging courses**. In the case of the language gap, it is important to remind that the Syrian educational system language basis is Arabic in all the educational levels, including higher education. Among the nearby countries the higher education system is based totally or partially in English language. Therefore **low English, Kurdish** (in the case of KRG) **or Turkish** (in the case of Turkey) **levels can be a barrier to University access and success**. In the case of Kurdish it is also necessary for the social and

labor market integration. Language courses addressed to refugees are being implemented through different organizations, NGOs and institutional programs like HOPE. There is also another element to take into account: the psycho-social dimension of refugees.

**The field of work for Universities (with particularities due to country or internal specificities) is focused in scholarships and the psycho-social support, followed by the recognition of studies, access to Higher Education (that includes language courses, mentoring and tutorial action plans), legal advice and preparatory/bridging courses.** Integration measures (accommodation, medical support, ...) are less common as priority fields of work. The situation explained can change from one university to another and can be altered by the movement of population returning to their homes.

In this context, the Universities don't have operational units to cope with the situation explained above. The R-SOS Units are perceived as an opportunity to respond to social needs and challenges identified addressed to refugee/IDPs as well as the local population, also affected by the economic crisis.

## **Recommendations**

The situation in Jordan, Lebanon and KRG is changing day-by-day. The regional context (Syria, Iraq) is also unstable. The refugee social and economic situation in these countries is getting worse and with the time the negative strategies will undermine the opportunities to the university access and success of youth. With this scenario of change and uncertainty there is the need to establish a **permanent observatory on Higher Education and refugees/IPDs** that allows to identify in real time needs and constrains, and also develop properly initiatives and actions.

The second recommendation is to avoid duplication of initiatives, learn together about prior experiences and cooperate to reinforce the funding and projects jointly with the field actors. For this reason, we strongly recommend the promotion of a **coordination system among all agents that are supporting the Higher education Institutions in the region.**

In order to promote the access to higher education the third recommendation is a **general review of scholarship criteria prioritizing the access to HE and not only excellence.**

The refugee situation (social integration, access to education, labor market integration,...) and the internal policy towards them differs from one country to another, in this sense, the next recommendation is to focus the initiatives in a **tailored national approach.**

The fifth recommendation takes into account the **social cohesion.** The deterioration of the living standards has affected refugee population and also local population. Any initiative addressed to improve just a vulnerable collectivity in a general situation of disadvantage must consider the potential effect in terms of social cohesion. For this reason, it is necessary to consider the needs of the local hosting communities as well as the refugee collectivity.

## Introduction

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# Introduction

This need analysis is part of RESCUE'S WP1. WP1 aims are to:

1 – Analyze identified practices and select (according to established criteria) the “best practices” to be transferred to the Partner Countries. Analyze identified practices in target Universities and select (according to established criteria) the “best practices”.

2 – Produce an update of the needs analysis for target Universities and the presence of refugees students on national level. This update activity is needed due to the high speed at which the situation and number of refugees changes over time: in fact between the time of proposal writing and the project startup date an elapsed time of 8 to 10 months is absolutely common, therefore an update of the needs analysis is needed to have a comprehensive vision of the situation in each country as a basis to establish the action plans.

## Methodology

The methods chosen to carry out this report were the use of literature and documentary evidence (bibliographic research) and the use of a survey and interviews during the field research visits with key actors.

- Bibliographic research. A bibliography research has been done with the aim of providing an overview of the forced people movement, the impact upon the host communities and upon the education system, the legal framework of refugees and displaced population in the involved countries. Please find here below some examples of the utilized sources:
  - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
  - Local sources: for legal and statistical information
  - NGO's and UN reports
- Field research. Collection and analysis of information (qualitative and quantitative) through interviews and the needs analysis survey<sup>2</sup>. The data was provided by:
  - partner universities in the Rome workshop during the RESCUE meeting (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> February 2017). During this workshop universities pointed out target groups, needs and external/internal constrains.
  - partner universities and local stakeholders (i.e. Syrian Students) during the field visits carried out by a delegation composed by UNIMED members, members of the Program Countries Universities and members of AARU (Association of Arab Universities). The field visits were held:

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<sup>2</sup> The need analysis survey template is attached as Annex I

- In Lebanon, 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> March 2017
- In Jordan, 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>th</sup> March 2017
- In Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> May 2017

During the field visits the team had interviews and meetings with university staff and local stakeholders<sup>3</sup>. Please find here the list of local stakeholder consulted/interviewed during the visit in the region:

- During the Lebanon visit or the immediate aftermath:

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), SPARK (local representative),

- During the Jordan visit or the immediate aftermath:

Danish Refugee council, UNHCR (local representative), Action Aid community center representative, Al-Aqsa Charitable Association, Madaba Corporation, Basha'er Al Noor Association.

- During the Iraq (KRG) visit or the immediate aftermath:

Duhok Governorate, Domiz 1 Camp manager, Sharia IDPs Camp manager, Harikar NGO.

It must be also noted that during the visits in all the countries the RESCUE team interviewed over 100 Syrian students, organizing individual meetings (for example during the visit at Lebanese University premises and Yarmouk University) and plenary sessions with students coming from refugee camps (for example during the visit at Zarqa University premises).

## General Overview

Ten universities have participated in the survey, seven of them were RESCUE Partners. The seven partner universities are located in three countries:

- Lebanon: Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) and Lebanese University (UL)
- Jordan: Zarqa University (ZU), Yarmouk University (YU) and Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan (ZUJ).
- Iraq (KRG): University of Duhok (UoD) and Duhok Polytechnic University (DPU)

Thanks to AArU efforts we also included in our analysis three Non-RESCUE Universities as external sample in order to show the state of the art also in other institutions enlarging our

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<sup>3</sup> The country field visit schedules are attached in Annex I

sample. We have to stress the fact that more research is needed in this sense as we were not able to reach out other Universities in Lebanon and Iraq (KRG) as well as in Jordan. Thanks to extra-efforts of AArU we were only able to include in our analysis the following Higher Education Institutions:

- Jordan: Hashemite University, Jerash University, Al-Bayt University.

### **A brief overview about the refugee situation in the territorial context<sup>4</sup>**

According to data provided by Universities, more than 3 million of refugee and displaced<sup>5</sup> people live in the area of influence of the 7 partner Universities.

The ratio of refugee/displaced population over the local population in the three main territories participating in the RESCUE project is uneven. In Duhok area, the ratio refugee/displaced population over local population is 50/50, in Lebanon data shows that the ratio is 40/60 and in the Yarmouk governorate the data diminishes until 19%.

The knowledge about the interests or needs of the potential or current refugee/displaced university students is an outstanding issue for Universities. Only Zarqa University has surveyed the refugee students trying to identify their needs.

Related to the work in vocational training or crash courses, 72% of the Universities have identified, at least, one organization or NGO working on these fields. The most known organization, in fact, is a plan (HOPES), followed by the British Council and Lebanese NGOs' specialized in training.

### **Refugee legal framework**

Refugees are usually registered by UNHCR<sup>6</sup>. Some populations, as Syrians since 2011, are recognized as prima facie refugees by UNHCR. The prima facie recognition means that “UNHCR recognizes the refugee status on the basis of readily apparent, objective circumstances in the country of origin or, in the case of stateless asylum seekers, their country of former habitual residence. A prima facie approach acknowledges that those fleeing these circumstances are at risk of harm that brings them within the applicable refugee definition.”<sup>7</sup>

In the countries of the partner universities, the recognition of refugee status is done by

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<sup>4</sup> The main source of the data provided is UNHCR. In countries like Lebanon the data available is from 2015. The 73% of the Universities have provided full data about refugee and local population.

<sup>5</sup> Displaced people are located mainly in Duhok Governatore, in the Iraqi Kurdistan.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (<http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>) is the United Nations's organism in charge of refugee camps and assistance.

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR Guidelines on International protection n° 11. <http://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/558a62299/guidelines-international-protection-11-prima-facie-recognition-refugee.html?query=prima%20facie%20refugee>

UNHCR as a result of the signature of Memorandum of Understanding. There are Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) at national level between UNHCR and Jordan (1998), Lebanon (2003) and, since 2016, Iraq. “Under the terms of the MOU, the UNHCR adjudicates claims for asylum and the government issues a temporary residence permit”<sup>8</sup>.

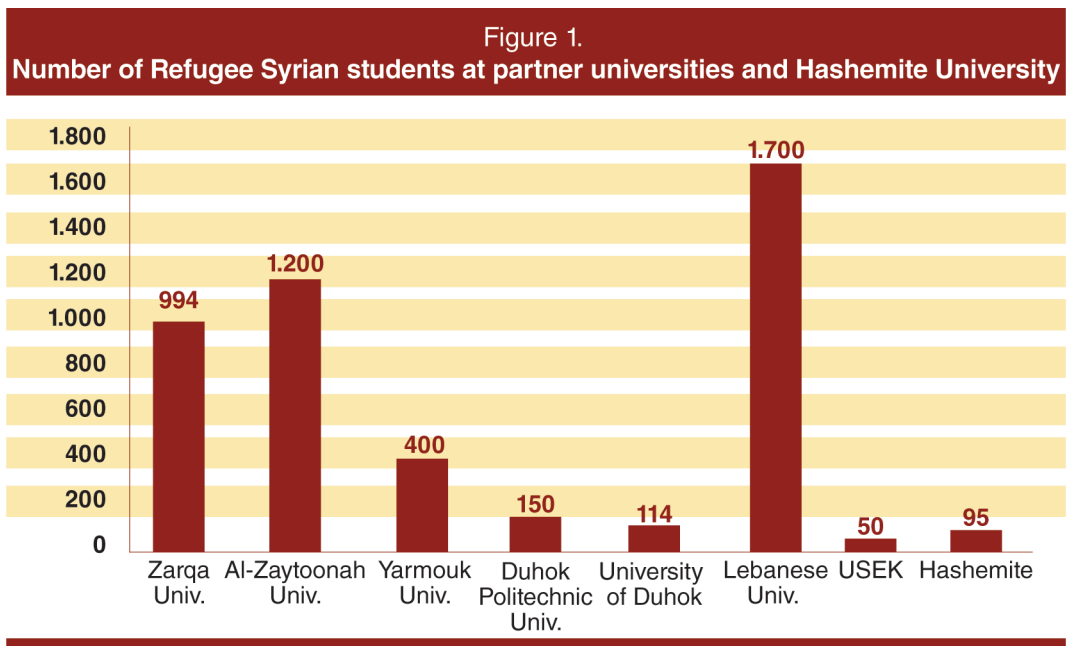
None of those countries had signed the 1951 Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol.

On the other hand, at national level different laws had been approved and implemented in order to regulate the access to the labor market, residence permits<sup>9</sup>

All University agree with the fact that the refugee status recognition by UNCHR does not have an impact into the access of refugee students to the University.

### Refugee students at partner Universities

A total amount of 4.703 Syrian refugee students have been studying or are currently studying at the partner universities and at the Hashemite University.



Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

<sup>8</sup> Refugee Law and Policy: Lebanon <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/lebanon.php#Memorandum>

<sup>9</sup> More information about legal status of refugee in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq at <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugees/legal-status-refugees.php>

The Universities have identified 10 main obstacles for the access to the higher education system. Between these 10 obstacles we can distinguish 6 dimensions:

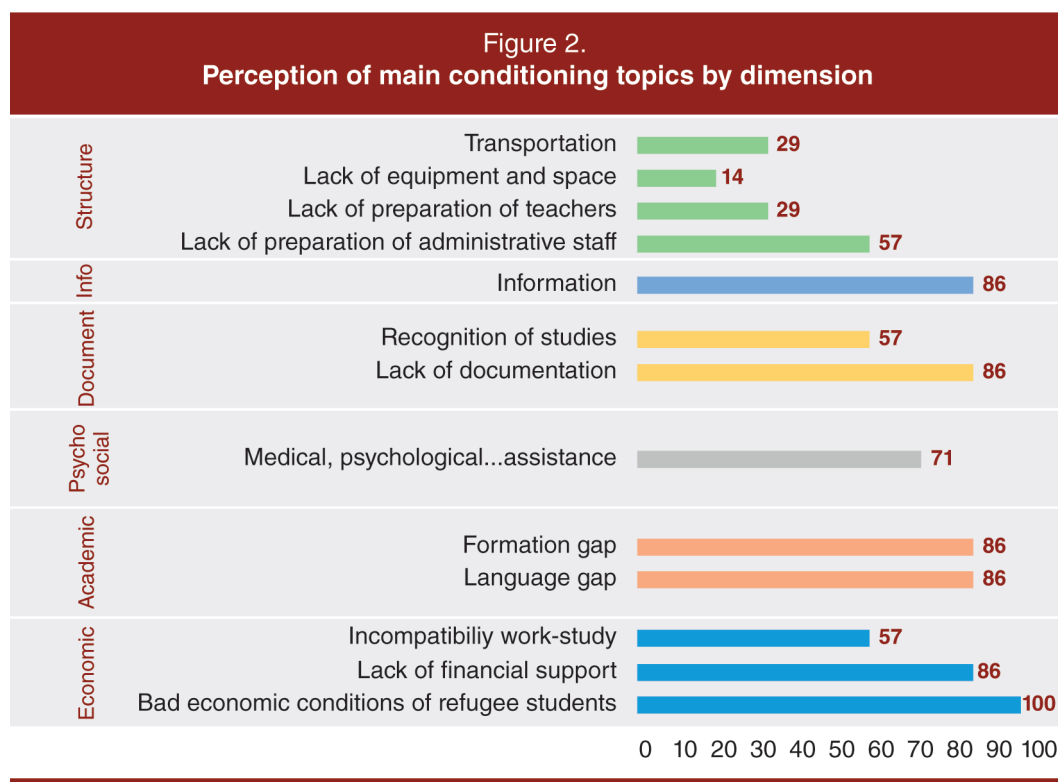
- Economic challenges of refugee dimension:
  - The main obstacle identified is the bad economic situation of potential refugee<sup>10</sup> student applicants. The 100% of the partner Universities have identified this obstacle as main topic.
  - Lack of financial support for refugee, for instance, scholarships.
  - Incompatibility between work time and study time.
- Academic performance dimension. Among them we can mention:
  - Knowledge gap. Gap between the standard university formation in the host country and the background formation of refugees.
  - Language gap. This obstacle is related to Syrian students. Syrian educational system language basis is Arabic in all the educational levels, included higher education. Among the nearby countries the higher education system is based totally or partially on the English language. In Lebanon teaching classes can be done either in English or in French, and in the Iraqi Kurdistan in Kurdish or English. In Jordan, the higher education system is totally in English. The Universities have identified a low level of English knowledge among potential refugee students.
- Psycho-social dimension:
  - Specific attendance to refugee needs in the medical, psychological field.
- Documentation requirements dimension:
  - Lack of documentation (academic reports or certificates). Students can't show or demonstrate previous studies and the Universities can't verify with written records or documents nor the identity of the person (sometimes there is not personal identification card) either the prior studies.
  - Recognition of studies. It is linked with the lack of documentation and with the veracity of the documentation provided by the student.

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<sup>10</sup> Different UNHCR reports and NGO's reports have identified the existence of survival strategies among refugee population, specially among long standing Syrian and Iraqi refugee population in Lebanon and Jordan.



- Information dissemination dimension:
  - Lack of reliable information about resources (programs, projects, scholarships,... that the potential student can apply) that can facilitate the access to the higher education system
- Structural adaptation to the specific needs of refugee students:
  - Preparation of teachers (academic support,..)
  - Preparation of the administrative staff
  - Adaptation of equipment and physical space

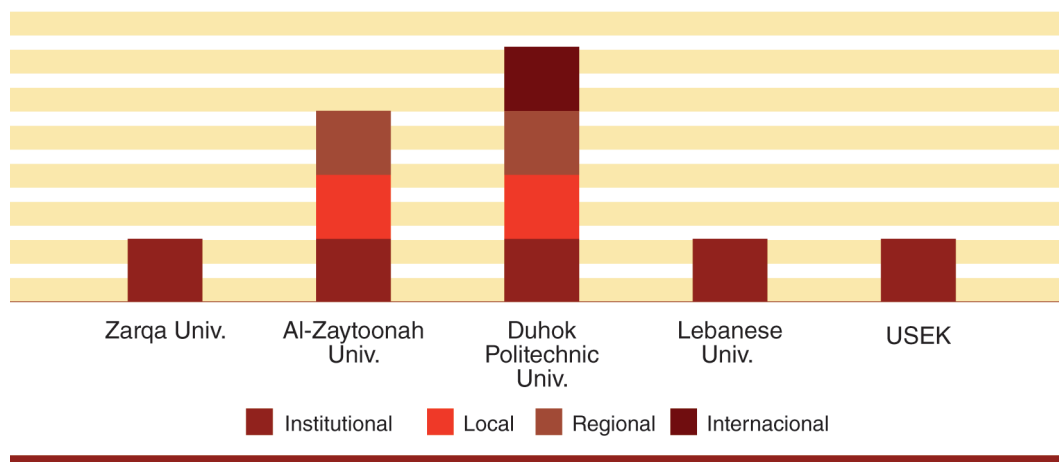


Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

### Developing actions or plans for imminent action

At least 87% of partner universities are working or planning to work to respond to the refugee students. The scope of this work is unequal. In fact, all the Universities want or are working on an institutional level, at the university level.

Figure 3.  
Scope of the initiatives by Universities



Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

### Scope and funds of the initiatives

71% of the partner universities have answered the question about the scope of their initiatives of refugee access to higher education. All of them are working or want to work on the institutional scope. Only two of them, the Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan (Jordan) and the Duhok Polytechnic University (Iraq KRG) points out the aim to work trespassing the boundaries of the institutional level. The first one reaching the local and regional level and the second one at all the four levels (institutional, local, regional and international)

60% of the Universities that are working on the issue have co-funded initiatives, these Universities are located in Lebanon (Lebanese University) and Jordan (ZU and ZUJ). The main funds come from European projects (HOPES Project<sup>11</sup>) or European institutions (British Council<sup>12</sup>). Only in the case of ZU, the university receives funds from local and regional sponsors. In addition, ZU is providing discounts on study costs for sponsoring NGOs who fund syrian refugees.

### Main topics of the initiatives

Figure 4 illustrates the topics that the university initiatives are addressing. There are two main topics the universities are interested to:

<sup>11</sup> HOPES project is the acronym for Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians. Funded by the European Union 's Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis - THE MADAD FUND - the project provides a wide range of educational offers to Syrian refugees in host countries in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. Webpage: <http://www.hopes-madad.org/>

<sup>12</sup> The British Council is one of the four organizations that are implementing the HOPES Project.

- **Scholarships.** 67% of the universities point out the importance of scholarships. That coincides with the initial perception of economic issue as a main problem into the access of refugee students into the Higher Education System.
- **Psychological support.** The psychological support is one of the hottest topics for 67% of the universities. This topic was the seventh question that Universities identified as conditioning the access to Higher Education System.

50% of the universities have agreed that a set of 6 items are important to consider on their initiatives. These are:

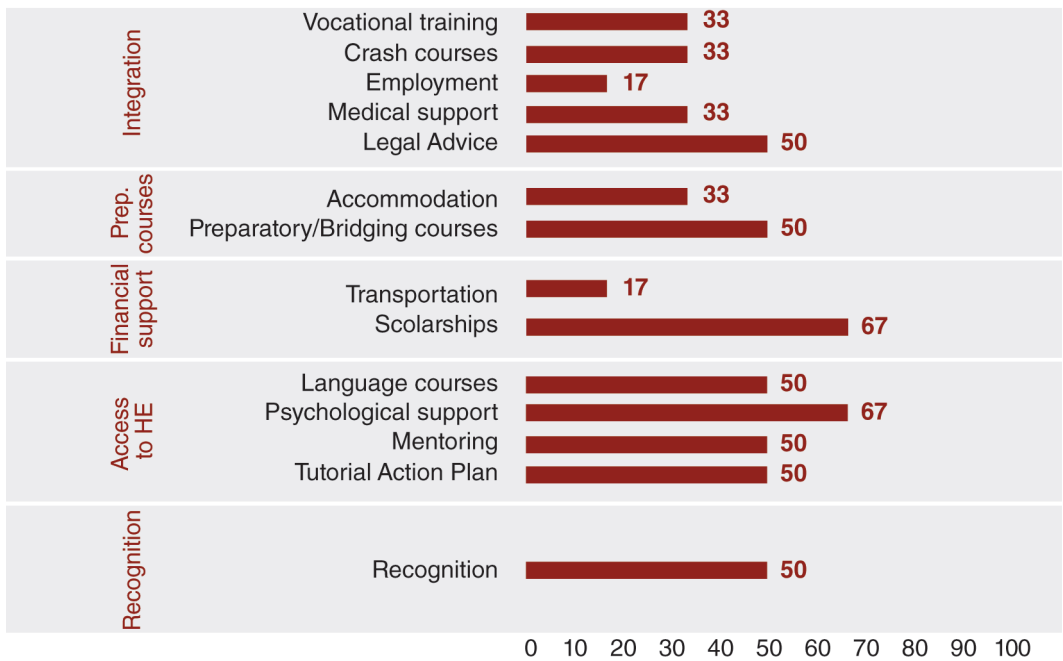
- **Documentation.**
  - **Recognition of studies and prior learning.** This topic was at the top of the conditioning topics to access to the university by refugee students. At least, the recognition of studies was a question of concern for 57% of universities, and the lack of supporting documentation was a limitation for 86% of them.
- **Academic performance:**
  - **Language courses.** Linked with the language gap identified by the 86% of the universities.
  - **Preparatory/bridging courses.** Linked with the formation gap identified previously.

Language courses and preparatory/bridging course would try to respond to this topic of concern about the academic performance of refugee students in new and different cultural, educational and academic contexts.

- **Mentoring and tutorial action plans have been named** as fields of action at the university initiatives. Both can help into the academic performance of students.
- **Facilitate legal advice.** Although the legal advice was not pointed out as a question of concern, it appears as a part of the initiatives of half of the partner universities.

The topics less mentioned were employment and transportation. Only 17% of the partner universities consider important those items. Generally speaking 33% of the universities note that topics such as transportation, accommodation, crash courses or vocational training could be offered through their initiatives.

Figure 4.  
Main topics of the partner universities initiatives



Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

To sum up, the results show that the Universities addressed their initiatives into the financial and psychological support, and in second place to the academic performance, being the integration measures, for instance (with the exception of the legal advice) less shared.

### Specific units to attend to refugee students

This question was answered by 85% of the partner universities. Only one of them, Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan, have a department that attends to general students and refugee students in particular. The rest of universities don't have a department or unit to attend to refugee students neither in general nor in particular.



Image 1 R-SOS physical Unit at al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan premises

**The Lebanese case:  
Lebanese University  
and Holy Spirit University  
of Kaslik**

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# The Lebanese case: Lebanese University and Holy Spirit University of Kaslik

## Context

As other neighboring countries, Lebanon has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Protocol. However, Lebanon is a state party in 9 of the 18 main human rights treaties<sup>13</sup>, including Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Despite the United Nation's recognition of Syrian fleeing the armed conflict as refugee, the Lebanese government treats Syrian population almost as foreigners or "guests" even though the most extended term used by the Lebanese Government is "displaced Syrians". The Government of Lebanon considers any form of local integration of temporarily displaced individuals as unconstitutional. The only durable solution for the Government is their safe return to their country of origin in accordance with the norms of international law<sup>14</sup>.

There are not exact data about how many Syrian refugees are located in Lebanon. The government estimates that approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees are living in Lebanon, other sources estimate almost 2 million over a population of around 5.9 million. Government of Lebanon estimates that the country hosts 1.5 million Syrians who have fled the conflict in Syria (including 1.017 million registered as refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), along with 31,502 Palestinian Refugees from Syria, 35,000 Lebanese returnees, and a pre-existing population of more than 277,985 Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon<sup>15</sup>. This makes approximately 1/3 of population in Lebanon actually composed by refugee/displaced people. In addition, 3.3 million people are considered in need in Lebanon. 1.5 million of them are vulnerable Lebanese, whose situation was deteriorated with the start of crisis, 1.5 million are displaced Syrians, 277,985 of them are Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and 31,502 of them are Palestinian Refugees from Syria<sup>16</sup>. It is estimated that there are around 150,000 Syrian refugees youth at the age of accessing university are living in Lebanon<sup>17</sup>. Only 12% of Higher education System-aged Syrian refu-

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<sup>13</sup> OHCHR "Status of ratification. Interactive dashboard" <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>

<sup>14</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, by Government of Lebanon and United Nations. [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017\\_2020\\_LCRP\\_ENG-1.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017_2020_LCRP_ENG-1.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, by Government of Lebanon and United Nations. [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017\\_2020\\_LCRP\\_ENG-1.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017_2020_LCRP_ENG-1.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, by Government of Lebanon and United Nations. [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017\\_2020\\_LCRP\\_ENG-1.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017_2020_LCRP_ENG-1.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Syria Crisis Education Strategic Paper, London Progress Report, September 2016. [http://wos-education.org/uploads/reports/London\\_Education\\_Progress\\_Report\\_Sept2016.pdf](http://wos-education.org/uploads/reports/London_Education_Progress_Report_Sept2016.pdf)

gees (officially registered) have a grade-12 (secondary education) degree<sup>18</sup>.

Lebanon adopted an open door policy toward refugees from Syria at the beginning of the crisis, with the expectation that the conflict would be short-lived. This policy was eased by the Economic and Social Cooperation and Coordination agreement signed between Lebanon and Syria in 1993, allowing free movement of goods and people. In 2014, refugee numbers reached one million and Government of Lebanon adopted a Policy Paper on Syrian Displacement, aiming to restrict entry from and encouraging the return to Syria. As a result new entry requirements are put in place in 2015<sup>19</sup>. Until May 2015, the UNHCR registered refugees entering Lebanon on the basis of a file and an interview. This registration was facilitating access to basic services (health, education for young children, shelter in some cases, access to water and sanitation, etc.) As of May 2015, this registration process was put on hold upon request by the Lebanese government<sup>20</sup>.

Residency regulations of 2015 requires that all Syrians at age 15 and over to pay an annual USD 200 renewal fee per person, present valid identification and an entry slip obtained at the border, submit a housing pledge confirming their place of residence<sup>21</sup>. Most refugees are unable to cope with those rules which hinders them from obtaining legal status and benefiting from public services and makes them vulnerable to abuses. With the General Security announcement of a new policy in February 2017, Syrian refugees registered with the UNHCR before 2015, can obtain a six-month residency permit for free. However, this decision excludes those who are not registered with the UNCHR who need to find a Lebanese “sponsor” and pay the annual renewal fee of USD 200 per person above 15 for the renewal of their residencies. Obtaining civil documentation has become difficult and costly for many displaced Syrians, and issues related to legal status further increase their vulnerability. In August 2016, the data obtained from visited 7,225 households indicate that 60 percent of individuals over 15 years old are without legal residency, compared to 47 percent reported in January 2016<sup>22</sup>.

There aren't refugee camps in *strictu sensu* for Syrian refugees. So the Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in rural and urban areas, especially concentrated on in the Beka'a Valley (the border between Lebanon and Syria) Beirut and Mount Lebanon Governorate.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> UNHCR, as quoted by Mrs. Agatha Abi Aad, UNHCR National Education Officer during HOPES Stakeholder meeting, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> IMF Country Report No. 17 / 20.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/01/12/i-just-wanted-be-treated-person/how-lebanons-residency-rules-facilitate-abuse>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.refugees-lebanon.org/en/news/35/qa-on-new-entry--renewal-procedures-for-syrians-in-lebanon>

<sup>22</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020, by Government of Lebanon and United Nations. [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017\\_2020\\_LCRP\\_ENG-1.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017_2020_LCRP_ENG-1.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> UNHCR “Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Government Policy and Protection Concerns” [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/documents/droi/dv/94\\_restrictedbriefingnote\\_/94\\_restrictedbriefingnote\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/droi/dv/94_restrictedbriefingnote_/94_restrictedbriefingnote_en.pdf)

Since October 2014, the Lebanese policy towards Syrian refugee has three main goals:

1. Reduce the numbers of refugees by, among other, stopping refugees' entry into Lebanon (except for unpredicted exceptional humanitarian cases) and encouraging Syrian refugees to return to their country or other countries by all possible means.
2. Ensure security through the implementation of security measures including requiring municipalities to keep a census of refugees and the strengthening of municipal policing.
3. Ease the burden by preventing Syrians from working unlawfully, ensuring that humanitarian assistance benefits refugees and vulnerable host communities equally and securing direct funding to state institutions through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) and through special programs to develop the Lebanese economy.”<sup>24</sup>

The social, demographic and economic pressure of almost 2 million people over a 6 million people population is relevant. Many host communities and refugee population are living in poverty, in many cases, as a result of high rates of unemployment, and other preexisting situations before the Syrian war. The economic and living conditions of long term Syrian refugees has decreased dramatically. Competing for scarce resources, especially jobs in the black market, the raise of rents and the legal status of refugee (and its consequences) are main topics in a context of political, economic and social crisis. But there are historical reasons why some Lebanese have a bad perception of Syrian refugees. Syria ruled Lebanon as a dominant power with military presence starting from the very beginning of the country civil war (1975-1990) and the withdrawal of Syrian troops became a *de facto* reality just in 2005. So today there are some Lebanese searching for a sort of revenge towards the huge presence, of Syrian in their country.

## Partners

- Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) (<http://www.usek.edu.lb/>).

Private catholic university. With 12 faculties and 3 institutes. More than 7.000 students distributed in 4 campuses, most of them enrolled at the Campus of Kaslik in 2016-2017. Currently there are 50 registered Syrian students at USEK. All of them are eligible, regular students who pay for tuition fees themselves. International affairs office is responsible for services to Syrian students.

- Lebanese University (<http://www.ul.edu.lb/>).

It is the only public university in Lebanon. The Lebanese University is the largest higher learning institution in Lebanon. Lebanese University has 70.500 enrolled students. The number of Syrian students has declined from 6.000 in 2010-2011 to 1.454 in 2016-2017.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 11.



## Needs and constraints

As we can observe from figure 5, both Lebanese universities share same points of view about the economic topic, the academic performance and psychosocial dimensions.

At the **economic level**, both universities identify bad economic conditions and lack of financial support as issues that can determine the access to the Higher education institutions. The incompatibility between work and study was not taken into account as an exclusion topic. As the ILO has recognized “The majority of Syrian refugees are living in hard socio-economic conditions with limited livelihood options and few connections or acquaintances; they have scant means of self-reliance, especially female-headed households who make up a good share of the refugee population”<sup>25</sup>. Students have financial difficulties in paying registration fees (especially for private universities), covering technical and laboratories materials expenses. We were also informed of a lack of information about resources (programs, scholarships, etc.) addressed to improve the access of refugee students to the University. Students are not aware of the scholarship opportunities and are scared to apply to fraudulent websites. They may encounter fake websites while searching for such opportunities as underlined during some interviews held in Lebanon at UL premises.

Into the **academic performance**, both universities agree that the formation gap between standards (the Lebanese standard and the country of origin standard) and the language gap are two of the most important topics that refugee students have to overcome. The language gap is considered one of the main reasons for drop-outs. The language of instruction in Lebanon is either English or French with few exceptions in which Arabic is used. So Syrian students with insufficient foreign language knowledge have an obstacle to overcome. Obligatory attendance requirement in some faculties, such as hard sciences, may be another reason for drop-outs for those Syrian students who have to work to support their families.

There is a coincidence regarding the **psychosocial** assistance. Both Universities have observed that refugee students present different types of psychosocial needs that need to be taken care of. In this sense it should be noted that also local University staff can be in need of a specific training concerning how to deal with traumatized students and how to provide them appropriate services. According to our findings and interviews Syrian students’ lack of self-confidence for their capacity to continue and successfully achieve their education within the Lebanese education system pose a psychological barrier for their academic success.

At the **documentation level**, the shared opinion is that the recognition of prior studies is a main topic that restrict the access to the university. The recognition of prior studies involves the presence of different documentation. The presentation of the documents is mandatory

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<sup>25</sup> ILO “Assessment of the impact of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and their employment profile” [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_240134.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_240134.pdf)

and some of the documents<sup>26</sup> which must be submitted are:

- ID document
- Official high school transcript stamped by the ministry of education in Lebanon, or Equivalence certificate

For the equivalence certificate (which is very difficult to obtain and which may take more than 6 months), the student must submit:

*CASE 1: For general certificate of secondary education students:*

- Brevet certificate
- General Certificate of Secondary Education with a clear mention of success

*CASE 2: In the case that the documents were not issued in Lebanon, the original documents and copies should be:*

- 1- Either stamped by the Ministry of Education in the country in which studies were completed, and then by the embassy in Lebanon so that they can be stamped by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lebanon
- 2- Or stamped by the embassy of the country in which studies were completed then by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lebanon.

And:

- valid passport
- residency card issued by the General Security for foreign students. This card is difficult to obtain, as the field visit report indicates.
- administrative fees

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<sup>26</sup> More information about documentation requirements at Refugees-lebanon.org website (<https://www.refugees-lebanon.org/en/news/135/qa-on-higher-education>). This website is managed by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) with the support of the Inter-Agency Coordination efforts.

Figure 5.  
Perception of main conditioning topics by dimension. Lebanese universities.

		Lebanese University	USEK
<b>Economic</b>	Bad economic conditions of refugee students	✓	✓
	Lack of financial support	✓	✓
<b>Academic</b>	Incompatibility work-study		
	Language gap	✓	✓
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Formation gap	✓	✓
	Medical psychosocial... assistance	✓	✓
<b>Document</b>	Lack of documentation	✓	
	Recognition of studies	✓	✓
<b>Information</b>	Information	✓	
	Lack of preparation of administrative staff		✓
<b>Structure</b>	Lack of preparation of teachers		✓
	Lack of equipment and space	✓	
	Transportation		

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

But the universities identify also different items as constraint topics for the access to higher education:

- Lebanese University point out as conditioning topics:
  - Information: lack of information about scholarships, access to higher education, access to language courses. Despite of fact that there are different initiatives related to scholarships, programs, students are not aware of these. The field visit report reveals that there are fake websites offering opportunities for students.
  - Lack of equipment and space: The Lebanese University is the partner university with the largest number of refugee students. This fact explains why this concept has been pointed out.

- USEK points out:
  - Lack of preparation of both administrative staff and teachers

There are also different items that have been identified by universities as potential constraints:

- Refugee undergraduates have limited access for some jobs in Lebanon
- There is an underdeveloped solidarity network between Syrian refugee students

Figure 6 shows the different issues the universities identify as fields of work. The University of Lebanon and USEK point out the mentoring, understood as orientation on academic life and training, as a key topic to work on.

Figure 6.  
Main topics of the Universities initiatives (Lebanon)

	Lebanese University	USEK
<b>Recognition</b>	Recognition	
	Tutorial action plan	
<b>Access to HE</b>	Mentoring	✓
	Psychological support	✓
	Language courses	✓
<b>Financial support</b>	Scholarships	
	Transportation	
<b>Prep. Courses</b>	Preparatory/Bridging courses	
	Accommodation	
	Legal Advice	
<b>Integration</b>	Medical support	
	Employment	
	Crash courses	
	Vocational training	

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

The USEK also points out the psychosocial support and the Lebanese University the scholarships as needs to be taken in account.

According to the field visit, in the context of the RESCUE project, the Lebanese University and USEK could involve internal and external agents.

- External synergies
  - The UAOLB (Universities Association of Lebanon)<sup>27</sup> has been identified as a point of dissemination of the project
  - The USEK pointed out that the R-SOS Unit in USEK could organize courses for teachers and administrative staff, who deal with refugee students, at the private universities
  - Both Universities underlined the fact that NGOs must be included as fundamental partners in order to reach Syrian students.
- Internal synergies:
  - The Lebanese University has identified the Lebanese University Center for Languages as a part involved directly in the R-SOS Unit Activities

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<sup>27</sup> Universities Association of Lebanon <http://www.uaolb.org/>

## R-SOS Units: state of the art and future implementation

There are no operational units set up in the two Lebanese partner universities. So there is no staff neither equipment dedicated to this issue. The Lebanese University has calculated in 4 the number of staff that can run the R-SOS Unit. The USEK would like to reinforce the faculties and units that are dealing with local and foreign students.

The needs in terms of equipment have to be defined by the USEK. The needs in terms of equipment are summarized in the following figure:

**Figure 7.**  
**Needs in terms of equipment for the R-SOS UNIT**

	<b>LU</b>		<b>USEK</b>	
	Total amount	Equipment Technical Characteristics	Total amount	Equipment Technical Characteristics
<b>Staff</b>	4		No needs for extra staff	
<b>PCs</b>	5	Desktop, 4Gb memory, 500gb storage, i3 or i5, fully equipped	x	
<b>Servers</b>				
<b>Printers</b>	2		x	
<b>Routers</b>	1	Dual band router		
<b>Switchs</b>				
<b>Scanners</b>	1		x	
<b>Copiers</b>	1	Canon, Epson, HP	x	
<b>Telephones</b>	1			
<b>Power point projector</b>	4	Canon, Epson, HP		

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

## Recommendations

1) In Lebanon there is a strong resistance to the use of term ‘refugee’. Using the term refugee in R-SOS Units might even endanger the access of Syrian university students to the Units, who are reluctant to reveal their status to better integrate in the society or university life.

The letter “R” in R-SOS units, at least in Lebanon, could signify the name of the Project, “RESCUE”, instead of the term refugee, to make it more acceptable for the Lebanese society, project partner universities and even refugee students themselves. (i.e. RESCUE-Student Operational Support Unit). The situation is considered as a general Lebanon Crisis and the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan developed by the Government of Lebanon addresses all the vulnerable groups in Lebanon, including vulnerable Lebanese. R-SOS Unit services should address all those vulnerable groups, in order to be accepted by the society and to be effective.

2) The objectives and prospects of the RESCUE project should be announced to other universities in Lebanon via UAOLB platform, to include them in the future activities of the R-SOS Units.

3) There is a lack of solidarity and support networks among Syrian students. It should be further investigated whether it is feasible to employ Syrian volunteer students at R-SOS Units, which would also help to overcome the reluctance and fears of Syrian students to access the Unit’s services.

4) Increasing our partner universities’ capacity by building strong links with international and local organizations dealing with refugee education in Lebanon should be one of the main aims of the RESCUE Project.

5) R-SOS Units could be designed mainly as an information hub for refugee student related activities of other non-governmental and international organizations as well as scholarship opportunities provided for students.

6) Be aware of local communities needs and include Lebanese students in R-SOS activities providing services (in a ratio 70 Refugees/30 Hosting Communities) in order to avoid social tensions in the Higher education Systems. This measure can help social inclusion.

7) Be aware of different needs between the UL as the only public University in the country and USEK as a private University designing different Action Plan in accordance with different needs.

8) As no Refugees camps are present in the country for Syrian we should consider NGOs as privileged partners in order to reach out Refugees communities and make them aware of R-SOS activities. We should also consider a specific dissemination strategy taking into account the dispersion of Refugees communities in the country.

**Higher Education in Jordan  
and refugees: Zarqa University,  
al-Zaytonaah University, Yarmouk  
University and some additional  
experience from AArU network**

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# Higher Education in Jordan and refugees: Zarqa University, al-Zaytonaah University, Yarmouk University and some additional experience from AArU network

## Context

Jordan, as a member of the international community and full member of the United Nations, signed various international agreements and conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of a Child, the Geneva Convention, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, etc<sup>28</sup>. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as other countries of the area such as Lebanon, has not signed the 1951 Geneva Convention neither the 1967 Protocols.

All refugees with Syrian nationality are covered by an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with UNHCR in 1998<sup>29</sup>. The regulations of these existing MoU's primarily deal with the basic human rights situation including security, housing and regulation of labor but also with education. UNHCR also governs other groups of refugees. The only exception are Palestinians, or people from Syria with Palestinian nationality why are covered under the legal framework of UNWRA.

The Jordan government has adopted in its last response plan (2016-2018)<sup>30</sup> measures and indicators related directly with the access of refugees to higher education with the aim to “Strengthen the participation of youth in their communities and other decisions that affect them, as well as in programme design, implementation and evaluation, including through the development of programmes that target youth through mentoring, conflict prevention, technical training and higher education. An element of the Social Protection response plan will be to develop specialized programming adapted to the needs of children and youth formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups or at risk of recruitment.”

Some reports<sup>31</sup> have identified challenges for refugee students who want to attend classes. The challenges identified are: difficulties related to placement procedures, high school fees and lack of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) opportunities. Al-Hawamdeh & El-Ghali (2017) give a statistical summary of the situation of young Syrian refugees in Jordan. The group of refugees who are in the age of 18-24 equals 12.5 % of the whole Syrian population. This percentage equals about 80,000 people. The fact, that only about 7,000 students were enrolled in the academic year 2015/2016 and a rate of 26% of this age

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<sup>28</sup> For further information about international treaties <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>

<sup>29</sup> [http://carim-south.eu/databases/legal/Jordan/Bilateral%20Agreements/LE2JOR002\\_AREN.pdf](http://carim-south.eu/databases/legal/Jordan/Bilateral%20Agreements/LE2JOR002_AREN.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Jordan Response Plan 2016-2018 [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRP16\\_18\\_Document-final+draft.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRP16_18_Document-final+draft.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> UNCHR “Education Sector Quarterly Report (January – March 2017)” <http://data.unhcr.org/Syrianrefugees/region.php?id=75&country=107>

group who was in higher education before the start of the war shows the lack in integration into the Jordan higher education<sup>32</sup>.

There are also different constraints that impact directly into the refugee social and economic situation. Among these constraints there are legal constraints that restrict the access to work to non-Jordanian citizens. As of January 2017, there were 17 professions closed to foreign workers in Jordan. These include administrative and accounting professions, clerical professions, telecommunication jobs, jobs in sales, most technical professions, including mechanical and car repair, engineering, education and some professions in hospitality<sup>33</sup>. The residence and work permits are delivered by the Jordan government<sup>34</sup>. There are still some restrictions concerning job opportunities in the country for non-Jordan citizens and Syrian Refugees, but, according to ILO, in 2017 Jordanian government worked towards a normalization of Syrian workers' rights. The majority of occupations that are open to foreign laborers (including Syrians) are unskilled/semi-skilled/technical, and are concentrated in the agriculture, construction, manufacturing and service sectors<sup>35</sup>. In the case of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers, they do not have any clear right to work in Jordan, historically, Syrians have crossed the border freely under a bilateral work force cooperation agreement between Jordan and Syria, signed in 2001<sup>36</sup>. Also people unregistered by UNHCR as refugees or living in refugee camps (20% of total Syrian refugee population in Jordan live in camps) can't apply for a work permit. ILO has calculated that "99% of Syrian refugees work outside Jordan's labor regulations and in the informal economy"<sup>37</sup>. A survey done by UNHCR in March 2016 amongst Syrian refugees living in urban areas in Jordan showed that out of the 515,887 survey participants almost 48,000 qualified to a level of at least 12 years in high school up to having already university experience (UNHCR, Factsheet Jordan 2016). UNHCR's demographic surveys generally categorize the group 18-59 years of age, but not the specific target group of tertiary education: young adults between 18 and 30. The numbers presented in the tables below are based on UNHCR data and combined with information deducted from interviews. Defining and retrieving information about young refugee's interests in tertiary education, vocational training or crash courses in concrete numbers has proven to be very difficult. Interviews with students in Zarqa and Yarmouk university as well as round tables with NGO's have shown that the primary concern of young Syrians

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<sup>32</sup> Al-Hawamdeh, A. & El-Ghali, H. A. (2017): Higher education in crisis situations: synergizing policies and promising practices to enhance access, equity and quality in the Arab region; The regional conference on higher education in crisis situations. UNESCO & UNHCR, Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_559151.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_559151.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> ILO "Work permits for Syrian refugee in Jordan" [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_422478.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_422478.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_559151.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_559151.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> [data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=8394](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=8394)

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_422478.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_422478.pdf)

living in Jordan is to secure their living financially – for themselves and their families. As a consequence tertiary education is only being considered if sufficient funding is secured. But interest in courses that ease entering the labour market is present and has been quoted several times. With Syrians living in Jordan getting married and having children at a much younger age than their Jordanian peers, better access to labour market and income might help the other spouse to pursue their university education as well.

## Partners

There are three partner Jordanian universities:

- Zarqa University (<http://www.zu.edu.jo/en/>).

Private university located in the Zarqa governatore. Zarqa University (ZU) was founded in 1994 in a strategic location to the east of Zarqa City. The Private University started with six colleges that comprised one hundred and fifty students enrolled in twenty majors. Today 8.000 students distributed on thirteen colleges, including seven humanities faculties and six scientific faculties. The University comprises forty two undergraduate majors, and postgraduate programs in English Language and Literature, Arabic Language and Literature, Accounting, Computer Science, Mathematics, Marketing and Software Engineering. It also includes three deanships; Deanship of Scientific Research, Student Affairs and Evening Studies, in addition to five centres: Islamic Cultural Centre, Computer Centre, Language Centre, Centre of Continuing Education and Community Service and E-learning Centre. The university has a continuous education unit that offers a range of short training courses and working on establishing vocational training program in engineering disciplines.

- Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan of Jordan (<http://www.zuj.edu.jo/>).

Al-Zaytoonah is a private university established in 1993. It now includes six faculties, encompassing 19 undergraduate specializations and one graduate program. There are 300 faculty members of various ranks distributed among the six faculties of the University, and 80 teaching and research assistants and lab technicians. In addition, there are 210 administrative employees and 260 workers

- Yarmouk University (<https://www.yu.edu.jo/en/>).

Established in June 1976 by a Royal Decree, Yarmouk University has developed steadily into one of the largest and most prestigious state-supported educational institutions in Jordan. We currently have 27.850 students, 936 faculty members, and 1740 administrative and technical staff spread over 13 faculties that offer 56 bachelor degree programs, 63 master degree programs, and 19 PhD programs in a variety of specializations. We also have 11 centers for research and career development.

## Needs and constraints

At **economic level**, all data clearly show that the main and utmost important obstacle is financial support. Living costs in Jordan are generally high in comparison to the average income. In comparison to European cities, living costs in Amman rank at a mid- to high level being only 7% less than in Berlin but almost 30% higher than in Istanbul. Average rent for a 45 sqm flat is at approximately 400 USD plus expenses for utilities (water, gas, heating, electricity) of around 150 USD. (NationMaster, 2017). There are several donors for scholarships but nevertheless living costs for Syrian students and their families are usually too high. These results are similar for all Syrian students interviewed at Jordanian universities (table 5 and table 6). Another reason for lack of funding, is the lack of information about existing scholarships and how to apply for them. Students mentioned often that admissions regulations and requirements are too specific or too complicated to understand due to bureaucratic terminology and language.

**For academic access and documentation**, the need for official documents to get enrolled at university can be problematic too. Students from Syria in some cases do not have their certificates stating their high school or bachelor degree. In public universities students have to provide the administration with original copies within one year, otherwise they cannot continue studying. Given the troubled background of those students, who often fled and were displaced in addition to destroyed cities and infrastructure in their country of origin, the provision of original documents or legalized copies proves to be a major obstacle. Several students mentioned that often informal agents offer their services to receive the documents and even forgery is an issue. A black market for documents developed.

**Academic performances** are also affected when additional problems occur when the previous field of study differs from the field of study in Jordan. Equivalency offices exist but usually there is a gap between the study fields in Syria and Jordan which can effect a rejection of already obtained credit points. As the Syrian higher education system teaches mainly in Arabic, the English-speaking Jordanian education system can cause severe problems for integration. Students from Syria often cannot follow the content given in lectures or it takes a high effort in post processing the lectures. At least the private university of Al-Zaytoonah offers external English classes for students but they seem to be insufficient as the staff is overloaded when giving additional classes. Identified future actions of the universities stating the need for these classes. The Hashemite, Jerash and Al Albayt University identified this problem as well.

In comparison with the situation at Jordan universities, experiences by the Technical University of Berlin concerning Syrian refugees were collected by interviews of the counselling officer, the study institution for languages and the psychological unit of the university. Language is the most hindering point in entering German university as all classes are given in German language. Level C1 is needed to follow lectures in a proper way. Therefore, German language classes are offered for Syrian refugees at university with focus on technical language (mathematics and natural science). Medical and **psychological** care is granted for all students providing drugs and basic examinations, as well for their families. Psychological

care usually is focused on exam anxiety, as was observed at the Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan counsellor. At Yarmouk University a psychological and medical support is described. Also at the Jerash and Al Albayt University the need for medical support is mentioned in the questionnaire.

All planned actions mentioned are local initiatives at each university and should be funded internally or internationally. Many of them are dealing with scholarships and direct financial support for Syrian students. Cooperation exists already with EU programs, DAAD scholarships and language support from the British Council. Courses bridging the gaps to enter university are also to be taken in consideration. Language courses are mentioned at all universities. Mentoring for future Syrian students as well as enrolled students is also planned.

**Figure 8.**  
**Perception of main conditioning topics by dimension. Jordan universities.**

		Zarqa	Al-Zaytoonah	Yarmook
<b>Economic</b>	Bad economic conditions of refugee students	✓	✓	✓
	Lack of financial support		✓	✓
	Incompatibility work-study	✓	✓	✓
<b>Academic</b>	Language gap	✓		✓
	Formation gap	✓		✓
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Medical psychosocial... assistance			✓
<b>Document</b>	Lack of documentation	✓	✓	
	Recognition of studies	✓	✓	
<b>Information</b>	Information	✓	✓	✓
<b>Structure</b>	Lack of preparation of administrative staff			✓
	Lack of preparation of teachers			✓
	Lack of equipment and space			
	Transportation			

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

Yarmouk University points out that psychosocial issues and lack of preparation (of teachers and administrative staff) are also constraints that feed the difficult way towards the Higher Education system in Jordan.

As figure 8 illustrates the initiatives of the Jordan partner universities are different from one to another. Yarmouk University did not answer the topic.

Figure 9.  
**Figure 9. Main topics of the Universities initiatives. Jordan**

		Zarqa	Al-Zaytoonah	Yarmook
<b>Recognition</b>	Recognition	✓	✓	
	Tutorial action plan	✓	✓	
<b>Access to HE</b>	Mentoring		✓	
	Psychological support		✓	
	Language courses		✓	
<b>Financial support</b>	Scholarships		✓	
	Transportation	✓	✓	
<b>Prep. Courses</b>	Preparatory/Bridging courses		✓	
	Accommodation		✓	
	Legal Advice		✓	
<b>Integration</b>	Medical support			
	Employment			
	Crash courses			
	Vocational training			

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

On the other hand, ZUJ is interested also in focusing its activities in preparatory or bridging courses and integration measures such as accommodation and legal advice.

### R-SOS Units: state of the art and future implementation

Regarding the projected equipment universities estimated in a survey it shows that, although specific numbers varied, the core information retrieved was very similar. All universities assumed that enough PCs to cover a small PC-Pool or Computer-Lab will be necessary to operate the R-SOS unit. In addition, enough PCs for staff dedicated to the R-SOS unit should

be provided as well. Copying, printing and scanning solutions are needed for students and staff as well. To run the unit properly, the needed IT-infrastructure for background installation demanded were: at least one server with routers and switches for sufficient network distribution.

Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan is the only Jordan partner university that has a department that helps/look after general students, among them Syrian students. This department is composed by 4 persons with no specific training in refugee issues, and counts with 1 computer, 1 printer and 1 telephone.

In terms of staff, all 3 universities agree in the fact that the operational unit will need 3 members. In terms of equipment, the needs can be summarized in the following figure:

Figure 10.  
Needs in terms of equipment for the R-SOS UNIT

	ZU		ZUJ		JU	
	Total amount	Equipment Technical Characteristics	Total amount	Equipment Technical Characteristics	Total amount	Equipment Technical Characteristics
<b>Staff</b>	3		3		Not Specified	
<b>PCs</b>	15	Not Specified	21	Dell i7 6 generation 16gb H.D 1tb	4	Not Specified
<b>Servers</b>	1	Not Specified	1	Dell R730 Customizable: Intel® Xeon® E5-2640 v4, Windows Server® 32GB Memory, Dual 2TB Hard Drive	2	Not Specified
<b>Printers</b>						
<b>Routers</b>	1	Not Specified	1	HP pro 200	2	Not Specified
<b>Switches</b>			1	ip Com	2	Not Specified
<b>Scanners</b>			2	HP 2530 24-port	2	Not Specified
<b>Copiers</b>	1	Not Specified	1	HP Scan Jet pro 2500 F1	2	Not Specified
<b>Telephones</b>	1	Not Specified	1	XEROX WorkCentre 5325/5330/5335	2	Not Specified
<b>Power point projector</b>			1	Panasonic - KX-TGE433B	2	Not Specified
<b>Laminator</b>	2	Not Specified	1	Epson BrightLink 536Wi Interactive WXGA 3LCD Projector	2	Not Specified
			1	Xyron 4400 Wide Format 42" Cold Laminator	2	Not Specified

## Recommendations

During collection, analysis and evaluation of all data and information it became clear that the findings needed to be categorized and ranked by importance, feasibility of solutions and, most importantly, relevance to the scope of this Erasmus+ Capacity Building programme.

It became clear that the **financial situation of the Syrian students** is the most critical point keeping them from entering tertiary education or continuing their studies (table 5 and table 6). Scholarships are present but do not cover all expenses besides the tuition fees. Additionally, not all of the students are aware of the availability of scholarships or lack the necessary skills to apply. Once they receive a scholarship, they need to fulfil the conditions and keep their grades at a very high level not to lose the scholarship, threatening their study success. Nevertheless, financial support is not one of the goals of the RESCUE project and cannot be considered here as it deals with capacity building and not with direct financial support, but help in access to existing scholarships and other financial support can be provided by the units. Anyway the focus is on additional support in the field of academics and social integration as well as medical support.

The following main points were worked out:

1) It turned out that **language** as the basis of academic communication is the **most needed skill** to integrate students into the Jordanian higher education system. Syrian students are not fluent in the English language as it is not the academic language in Syria. Lectures are given in Arabic language and especially technical jargon is missing. At ZUJ premises, the classes already installed can handle about 30 students and are performed by the Oxford Institute, which is an external provider. Capacities inside universities are not present at the moment as the teaching staff has no free slot in their schedule. Computer skills are needed especially practical usage of software for preparation of data and documents.

2) The need to **link universities, NGOs and Governmental Institutions** to share information as well as experiences is needed to increase synergies and knowledge about the changing situation of Syrians in Jordan. A lot of effort is done by several different actors which is partly unknown by other institutions. A sharing point of information for students as well as other participants dealing with refugees can be established to increase the quality and efficiency of projects. Some suggestions building up a landline to reach central experts via telephone was mentioned and can be a simple tool for the above described linkage.

3) Legal aspects play a role for Syrian students as well. There is a need for legal counselling for example concerning the conditions of scholarships but also in general. As the status of Syrian students is equal to other foreign students and therefore tuition fees are much higher, a redefinition in public universities may be helpful.



4) A **social integration of Syrian students** is highly needed which already takes place in the students' community but can be strengthened with a meeting point to have an exchange between Jordanian and Syrian students. **Psychological counselling** is also a part of the social improvement of the living conditions and can be pushed in this project. The need for it is mentioned by all universities and also NGOs. The Technische Universität Berlin experienced the need for it for students coming from Syria to Germany as well.

5) Not only is the time of studying at university important for integration, but a **subsequent** connection to the labor market as well as further study opportunities, maybe abroad, is needed. Access to international mobility programs is partially done by providing life skill and career coaching at universities which is given for all students in general but it is helpful to expand this opportunity exclusively for Syrian refugees as regulations and conditions differ according to restrictions for foreigners in Jordan. Access to international mobility programmes like Erasmus+ key action 1 mobility grants are opportunities to let refugee students get experience in international higher education.

6) NGOs can ideally function as distributors and communicators on the ground and feedback partners for information and data.

7) Scholarships criteria should be revised taking into account the fact that a consistent part (if not the majority of) Syrian students are bread-winners for their families. Scholarship must not only concentrate on excellence basis but must also take into account the situation on the ground considering education and a human right instead than a privilege.

**Iraq, Kurdistan Region: Duhok  
University and Duhok Polytechnic**

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# Iraq, Kurdistan Region: Duhok University and Duhok Polytechnic

## Context

Iraqi Kurdistan or Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG) is a federated region in Iraq<sup>38</sup>. KRG covers an area of 40,000 square kilometers and has a population of 5,2 millions distributed in 4 governorates: Erbil, Slemani, Duhok and Halabja.

The socioeconomic and demographic situation of the KRG has been characterized by two main phenomena:

- The economic and financial crisis;
- The massive influx of internally displaced Iraqi population (IDP's) and Syrian refugees and its consequences at the social and economic levels.

The governorate of Duhok is not unconcerned to this phenomenon. In Duhok, there were 2 breaking points:

- **Massive arrival of IDPs: June-August 2014.** During the summer of 2014, more than half a million of people were displaced from Mosul and Tal Afar cities (June 2014) and from Niniveh, Zummar and Sinjar areas (August 2014) towards Duhok governorate. The ISIS advance, the violence and, finally the ISIS occupation and the fights to recover or liberate the ISIS areas are the main causes of the massive forced movement of people. According with the Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs (BRHA) data<sup>39</sup> the number of IDPs located in Duhok governorate in 2015 was 514.499. From them, 37% lived in one of the 22 IDPs camps allocated in Duhok governorate. The remaining percentage (63%) lived outside the camps, either in cities, towns or residential complexes. About 33% of non-camp IDPs “are living in critical buildings like unfinished/abandoned buildings and informal settlements. The conditions in these shelters are precarious, especially for women and children who have no access to culturally appropriate facilities”<sup>40</sup>. A risk of sexual and gender based violence and risk of exploitation and child labor has been identified.
- **Massive influx of Syrian refugees.** The breaking point was **April 2012**. According to BRHA data, over 71.000 Syrian refugees were located in Duhok, out of this number 56% were living in 4 Duhok's refugee camps: Domiz 1 and 2, Gawelan

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<sup>38</sup> For more information please visit the following link: <http://cabinet.gov.krd/p/p.aspx?l=12&p=180>

<sup>39</sup> Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs (BRHA) IDPs and Refugees in Duhok Governorate. Profile and General Information, February 2016 <http://www.brha-duhok.org/wp-content/uploads/Report%20of%202016.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

and Aqra. Here below an informative sheet is provided coming from Domiz 1 camp and collected during our visit on the camp.

Statistic				Apr		2017	
Date of opening	2012			APRIL			
Area of the camp	500			Donums			
No. of shelters	5165						
No. of families	5543						
Gender	Male	Female	Total				
No. of individuals	13287	12692	25979				
under 1 year	273	290	568				
Between 1 and 2 Years	660	578	1238				
Between 2 and 5 Years	1577	1577	3154				
between 5 and 17 Years	3930	3735	7665				
between 18 and 34 Years	3917	3965	7882				
between 35 and 59 Years	2581	2206	4787				
60 years and over	344	341	685				
No. of singles (Male )	327						
Orphan	189						
Widows	110						
Pregnant women	212						
Breast feeding women	209						
Women head of household	535						
Physically disabled	169						
Mentally disabled	133						
Patients with chronic diseases	680						
N0.of Deep wells	7						
N0. of Health centers	3						
No. of schools	7						
No. of community centers	9						
No. of child F. Spaces	2						
Movement for Families	OUT = 32	IN = 31					

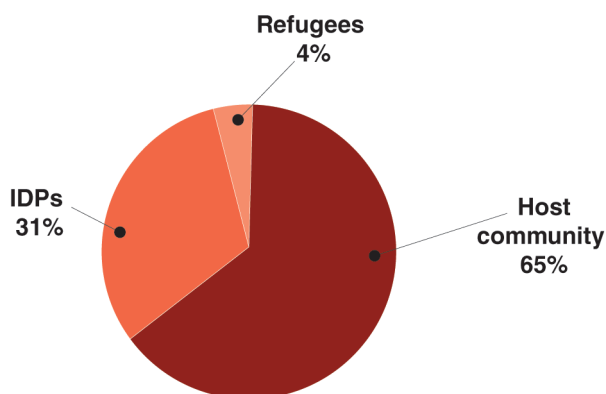
Image 2 Domiz 1 statistics (April 2017) - Courtesy of Domiz 1 camp manager

It is obvious that the total amount of persons (IDPs and Syrian refugee fleeing violence) can change from time to time depending on:

- The voluntary return to home cities, if there are safe conditions. This is common to Syrian refugees and to a part of IDPs.<sup>41</sup>
- In the case of Syrian refugee, the migration to Europe.

To sum up, the demographic composition of Duhok's population has increased and changed rapidly. This phenomenon and the financial crisis (due to decrease of oil prices, the disputes with the Baghdad government) results in a high pressure on the provision of public services, among them, education.

Figure 10.  
Composition of Duhok's population



Source: Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs (BRHA) IDPs and Refugees in Duhok Governorate. Profile and General Information, February 2016 <http://www.brha-duhok.org/wp-content/uploads/Report%20of%202016.pdf>

On the other hand, the BRHA is providing formal education to students at school age (6-17 year) at IDPs and Refugee camps. There are no facilities nor teachers providing or helping potential university students at the camps.

## Partners

The partner universities are:

- Duhok Polytechnic University (<http://www.dpu.edu.krd/>).

Public university established in 2012 by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research DPU was originally descended from the

<sup>41</sup> The BRHA report points out that there is not a willingness of voluntary return between Yazidis families living in the IDPs camps. The Yazidis kurdish families are the 82% of inhabitants of the IDPs camps. For an update about IDPs and refugees return we suggest to visit the following link <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2017/6/595612454/unhcr-seeing-significant-returns-internally-displaced-amid-syrias-continuing.html>

oldest institute in Duhok Governorate in 1988, with 19.558 graduates since then. The DPU has 8 campuses (2 in Duhok, Akre, Amedi, Badarash, Shekhan, Zakho and Shingal), 291 faculty members, 40 doctoral degree holders, 251 master's degree holders and 1.466 staff members.

- University of Duhok (<http://www.dpu.edu.krd/>).

Public university established in 1992 the KRG. UoD is a collegiate research university located in Kurdistan Region-Iraq. The university started with two colleges, the College of Medicine and the College of Agriculture, with 149 student total. The UoD has 17 colleges with 76 departments, 19.615 undergraduate students, 1.260 academic staff and 2.205 administration staff. During the kick-off meeting of RESCUE project held in Rome (14-15 February 2017) both universities had stated that they share the same or very close diagnostic and situation.

- Ongoing activities - The idea, if possible, is to find common challenges but define different tailored solutions. This is a criteria valid for all the national cases.

Currently, there are over 150 refugee/IDPs students at DPU and 114 refugee students at Duhok University at local universities have already defined some practices in this regard:

University of Duhok:

- Conferences and workshops. “Learning right Conference for refugee and IDPs students” <http://web.uod.ac/about/activities/top-stories/learning-rights-conference-refugees-and-idps-students/>
- Activities (conferences, seminars, training..) taught by the Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution at the University of Duhok
- Participation in international projects related to refugees.

Duhok Polytechnic University

- Participation in seminars, conferences and workshops about the access of refugees to Higher education<sup>42</sup>
- Participation in international projects related to refugees.

## Needs and constraints

As we can observe from figure 11, there are some needs and constraints identified by both partner universities.

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<sup>42</sup> News from DPU [http://www.dpu.edu.krd/news/view/en/Home\\_Page/184635](http://www.dpu.edu.krd/news/view/en/Home_Page/184635)

Figure 11.  
Perception of main conditioning topics by dimension. Iraq (KRG) universities.

	Duhok Polytechnic University	University of Duhok	
<b>Economic</b>	Bad economic conditions of refugee students	✓	✓
	Lack of financial support	✓	✓
	Incompatibility work-study	✓	✓
<b>Academic</b>	Language gap	✓	✓
	Formation gap	✓	✓
<b>Psychosocial</b>	Medical, psychological, ... assistance	✓	✓
<b>Document</b>	Lack of documentation		
	Recognition of studies		
<b>Info</b>	Information	✓	✓
	Lack of preparation of administrative staff	✓	✓
<b>Structure</b>	Lack of preparation of teachers		
	Lack of equipment and space		
	Transportation	✓	✓

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

The most important ones are:

**The economic situation.** The economic crisis at the region and the bad economic situation of Syrian refugees and IDPs is one of the main concerns of both universities. The lack of financial support and the incompatibility work-study are also topics identified as part of the economic situation that can restrict the access to the Higher education institutions or facilitate the drop out. As different reports identify in some cases Syrian students have been forced to leave scholarships in order to seek a job. Differently from Lebanon and Jordan, in Iraq (KRG) Syrian refugees can have access to job market in a less restrictive way.

**In the academic field,** the two main concerns are the language gap and the formation gap. Both universities share the concern, specially, for the low level of English of Syrian students (who had studied in Arabic during all their schooling). English is one of the two main languages used at universities. On the other hand, the use of Kurdish as language of instruction

implies a big challenge for non-Kurdish students. The formation gap is also an important topic identified.

We cannot ignore the learning gap. Potential high dropout rates are possible if there is a gap between the basic learning standards of refugee students and the host University's learning standard. The curriculum gap is important at this point. According with the UNESCO report there is a committee (within the Ministry of Higher Education) dedicated to reviewing the curriculum between Syrian students and universities in the Kurdistan region and the student qualifications. If there is a substantial gap between the requirements in Kurdistan and the studies followed in Syria students can repeat two or more years or even repeat all the degree.

In the **psychosocial field** the impact of war and fleeing upon Syrian refugees and IDPs is important. And the university partners have identified this topic as an important concern. Although there are different NGOs providing that kind of psychological assistance the scope and long term work that a psychological intervention implies exceeds the current capability of those institutions.

Both partner universities have pointed out the lack of information concerning scholarships, the lack of dissemination of the information about learning opportunities, economical support. Regarding scholarships, in KRG, at least, there are two running programs: the UNHCR DAFI scholarship program and the SPARK grant.

**At structural level** both UoD and the DPU have pointed out as constraints the lack of preparation of administrative staff and the transportation. As regards the second topic it must be emphasized that the most important refugee and IDPs camps are located far from the main university campus, and there is not a public transportation network between the campus and the camps.

The RESCUE field mission also identified some concerns about:

- **Training quality:** Testimonies and reports<sup>43</sup> indicates that teachers are suffering delays in the payment of their salaries because of the financial crisis of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the budget struggle with the federal government in Baghdad. This situation can contribute to diminish the training quality and/or the involvement in voluntary activities.
- **The University capability:** Refugee and IDPs enrolment depend on the capacity of each specialization. According to an UNESCO report<sup>44</sup> the KRG has allocated 3% of the seats for Syrian students each year and has created what is called as Parallel

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<sup>43</sup> BRHA Infographics. Education. IDPs and Refugee Camps.<http://www.brha-duhok.org/?program=education-2>

<sup>44</sup> Hana A.El-Ghali, Aamr Ali, Nadine Ghalayini "The regional conference on higher education in crisis situations: Higher education in crisis situations: Synergizing policies and promising practices to enhance access, equity and quality in the arab region", 2017 <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/Iraq.pdf>



System of tertiary education<sup>45</sup>.

- The **documentation**: Until 2017 Syrian refugees were treated as foreign students. Only if students certify with official documents their prior learning, Universities will give the diploma. Since 2017, the will of the Ministry of Higher Education<sup>46</sup> is to allow the enrollment at the University of Syrian students with no documents, but the recognition of the university studies (diploma) will only be possible with the documents signed and stamped as the legal regulation establishes.
- **Security issues**. According to KRG government, there are some concerns about Syrian students and their connections/links with militia, armed groups and links with terrorist groups<sup>47</sup>.

Figure 9 shows the different fields the partner universities would like to focus their initiatives. The DPU is interested in all the fields of work: Recognition, access to Higher Education, financial support, preparatory courses and integration measures.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. At the parallel System of tertiary education “student fees are charged for studying at public universities. It is well known that study at universities and colleges in the region are usually free of charge; this system has made it easier for organizations to support refugee students allowing them to study at public universities.”

<sup>46</sup> This information was given during the Meeting between the advisor of the Ministry of Higher Education and the RESCUE Mission (may 2017)

<sup>47</sup> <http://cabinet.gov.krd/p/page.aspx?l=12&s=000000&r=401&p=484&h=1&t=407>

Figure 12.  
Topics of the partner universities initiatives

		Duhok Polytechnic University	University of Duhok
<b>Recognition</b>	Recognition	✓	
	Tutorial action plan	✓	✓
<b>Access to HE</b>	Mentoring		
	Psychological support	✓	✓
	Language courses	✓	✓
<b>Financial support</b>	Scholarships	✓	
	Transportation	✓	
<b>Prep. Courses</b>	Preparatory/Bridging courses	✓	
	Accommodation	✓	
	Legal Advice	✓	✓
<b>Integration</b>	Medical support	✓	✓
	Employment	✓	
	Crash courses	✓	✓
	Vocational training	✓	✓

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

UoD is interested in focusing the action on two fields:

- Access to Higher Education, especially the work in **psychological support programs**, language courses and tutorial action plans.
- **Integration measures.** Regarding the integration measures, UoD points out the work into the legal advice field, the medical support, crash courses and vocational training. In this last option, the University of Duhok agrees that vocational training is the best option for refugee and IDP students. Benefits of Vocational training/crash courses from the university point of view include:
  - In a short time (1 semester/1 academic year) students can be successfully trained;
  - According to key informants there are job vacancies that trained people

can occupy. In spite of this information, the mission team has not provided statistical information that confirm the statement.

- Both Syrian refugee from the camps and IDP's who live in camps can work outside the camp with the administration's permission.

As a relevant point it should be noted that:

- At the internal level, the Duhok governorate recognizes the universities as agents/ representatives and there is fluent cooperation among all the agents: public administration-Universities.
- At the international level, both Universities are very active. University of Duhok through the International Relations Department is active in collaborations with foreign universities, especially, with USA and German universities. And the DPU with different international partnerships.

## R-SOS Units operational dimensions and activities

There are no operational units dedicated to the advisory task towards refugees, IDPs or local students. Both universities agree in identifying an optimal number of 4 staff members to launch the R-SOS Unit.

R-SOS Unit Staff:

- The University of Duhok has identified 4 people (they are now working in the International Office with English skills) and a space to locate the R-SOS Unit at the Students Center.
- The DPU has three-four people who can carry out the operational unit. In the specific case of DPU there is a previous need identified: the language training for the potential staff, especially in English language.

Regarding the needs in terms of equipment, in the following figure there is a list of them.

Figure 13.  
Needs in terms of equipment for the R-SOS UNIT

	DPU		UoD	
	Total amount	Equipment Technical Characteristics	Total amount	Equipment Technical Characteristics
<b>PCs</b>	25	Dell 7010 8GB 1TB+Laptops	8	All in one with all its package
<b>Servers</b>	2	HP server DIP 380 XZON	1	Not Specified
<b>Printers</b>	4	Canon G2400	4	Not Specified
<b>Routers</b>	2	D-Link 3 Antina		Not Specified
<b>Switches</b>	2	D-Link	4	Not Specified
<b>Scanners</b>	2	HP	2	Not Specified
<b>Copiers</b>	2	Canon 2202	1	Not Specified
<b>Telephones</b>	4	Not Specified	2	Not Specified
<b>Power point projector</b>	2	LG	2	Not Specified
<b>Laminator</b>	1	Not Specified	1	Not Specified
<b>UPS</b>	7	Not Specified	4	Not Specified

Source: Need analysis survey, RESCUE project, 2017

## Recommendations

- 1) The actions must be aimed at the **social cohesion and avoid to generate inequalities** between communities (host communities, refugee communities and IDPs communities)
- 2) There is an **important level of cooperation between the public administration (governorate) and the universities**. The cooperation with **NGOs and international organizations** that are working on a similar way can be positive for all sides.
- 3) To promote the creation of **an internal network (at the University level) involving different departments, centers of study, student unions...** to develop the project at different levels: mentoring, training, dissemination.
- 4) **Scholarships**. As the team was informed, and following the UNHCR recommendations<sup>48</sup>, in the case of vulnerable households, scholarships could be designed as a financial support for the family and not only for the students.
- 5) **Refugees are different from IDPs in terms of both needs and constraints so tailored actions** should be arranged in order to answer to the different needs on the ground.
- 6) Social tensions can be generated between the Arab and Kurdish components of the region after the consultative referendum which will take place on September 25, 2017.

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<sup>48</sup> UNHCR “Higher education considerations for refugees in countries affected by the Syria and Iraq crises” <http://www.unhcr.org/568bc5279.pdf>

## Conclusions and final recommendations

The information collected and compiled in this document reflects a thorough effort of analysis of the needs and constraints regarding the integration of refugees and IDPs in the three neighboring countries to Syria.

As it can be seen from the tables, some issues are common to virtually all the Universities such as:

- The need for language courses
- The need for the recognition of prior learning (to different degrees of severity in the various Higher education Systems)
- The need for financial support to students (in terms of spreading awareness about existing opportunities)
- The need for Psychological support.

Other issues such as legal support and the provision of VET courses are less homogeneously spread but present in many Universities.

As we have said the actual set of services the R-SOS units will have to provide must reflect a common scheme but a customized design complying with the specific needs and constraints of each University, therefore in WP2 the action plans will be designed according to the specificities of each involved Higher education Institutions. Also the results of task 1.2, Best Practices analysis will be used in order to take inspiration from successful experiences.

On a more general and strategic level, and after several months of research, literature reviews and local field visit, we found out that there is a first most important need: **more research should be done in order to identify the real needs of a day-by-day changing scenario**. We think this is the only way to identify, through a permanent observatory on Higher Education and refugees, needs and constraints in these countries. While we are writing this document, some Syrians are starting coming back home, in Syria, and probably some Kurdish IDPs are going back to Mosul, but this will not erase nor stop the refugees crisis in the region also because, ideally, the R-SOS action it is not just delimited to Syria but, according to RESCUE indirect beneficiaries definition, to every

*student who wants to start or continue his/her higher education studies at the university and comes from a conflict zone, fleeing indiscriminate or generalized violence in situations of armed conflict.*

And unfortunately the region is highly unstable, with several crisis scenarios (Syria and Iraq in particular).

So our **first recommendation is to set up a permanent observatory on Refugees/IDPs**

**crisis** in relation with Education/Higher Education in order to better understand Education as a tool for fighting the crisis and provide these people with useful instruments avoiding the risk of losing generation and be prepared for the day after.

In line with this proposal, **our second recommendation is** to promote a **coordination system among all actors playing a supportive role to Higher education Institutions in the region** in order to avoid fragmentation and duplication of initiatives. Donors funds must be used being aware of what is already done on the field, and in close cooperation with major actors in the region. In this sense we call for a better coordination among different actors such as: donors, ministries, NGOs, local Universities, associations.

As our **third recommendation** we ask for a **general revision of scholarship criteria** as we were informed, in particular by Syrian refugees living in Za'atari camp in Jordan, that the current criteria set up by international donors are too much restrictive not allowing the majority of them to have access to scholarship opportunities. We strongly recommend to consider education not only for excellent students: excellence cannot be the predominant criterion in this crisis situation and considering the role of Syrian youth in their society. The R-SOS unit can provide help in this sense acting as a hub where to receive refugees comments and suggestions, plus an information center where to receive reliable information and support about scholarship opportunities.

While designing new criteria and dealing with Refugee crisis, we also recommend as a **fifth recommendation to avoid a regional approach, in favor of a tailored national approach with particular attention to local Higher education Institutions needs and constraints** taking into account that, even if generally speaking, *one size never fits all* in the so-called MENA region and that an approach to a generic “Arab” or “Islamic” or “Middle East” or “Mediterranean” region will never work. Each country and each context must be analyzed and considered according to local conditions (in terms of Laws, social composition, political constraints, government nature, cultural and religious beliefs, etc...). This is particularly true in RESCUE case not only because of differences among the 3 partner countries, but also because private and public universities showed different strategies and goals regarding Refugees according to their different “nature”.

Last but not least, as our **sixth recommendation**, we recommend to always involve in any measure in favor of refugees, **the local communities in order to avoid social tension**, but also because hosting communities in these realities are suffering for the high pressure of refugees and they must receive help in order to better answer to the difficult and challenging situation on the ground.

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- UNHCR Guidelines on International protection n° 11. <http://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/558a62299/guidelines-international-protection-11-prima-facie-recognition-refugee.html?query=prima%20facie%20refugee>
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- UNHCR: Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Jordan and UNHCR [http://carim-south.eu/databases/legal/Jordan/Bilateral%20Agreements/LE2JOR002\\_AREN.pdf](http://carim-south.eu/databases/legal/Jordan/Bilateral%20Agreements/LE2JOR002_AREN.pdf)
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- UNHCR: Seeing significant returns of internally displaced amid Syria’s continuing conflict: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2017/6/595612454/unhcr-seeing-signifi>

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- UNICEF: SyriaCrisisEducation Strategicpaper. Syria Crisis Education Strategic Paper, London Progress Report, September 2016. [http://wos-education.org/uploads/reports/London\\_Education\\_Progress\\_Report\\_Sept2016.pdf](http://wos-education.org/uploads/reports/London_Education_Progress_Report_Sept2016.pdf)
- United Nations, international treaties <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>
- Universities Association of Lebanon <http://www.uaolb.org/>

# Annex I

## Need analysis survey questionnaire

1 UNIMED – KA2, Call 2016

**RESCUE - Refugees Education Support in mena CoUntriEs**

### Concept

RESCUE project aims to increase the capacity of Universities of the target countries in answering to the needs of refugees students in those countries where the concentration of refugees is higher, namely Lebanon, Iraq (KRG), Jordan.

### Foreseen Results

1) Creation of a unit within each target university to improve or initiate assistance activities for refugees students, with the following tasks:

- welcome and orientation of refugees students
- organization of languages courses (English, French, German) in order to improve students profiles.
- Training (of Higher education Institutions Staff) of Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning (RPL) for both former students or potential students (range of ages 18-30 years old).
- elaboration of dedicated mechanism for having access to University courses (either standard University Curricula or ad hoc designed “crash” courses)
- training of local staff on Bologna Process + Study Visiting in Europe
- Monitoring of mobility opportunities for refugees students (scholarships, etc...)

## **SURVEY**

### **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

*The aim this survey is getting as many information as possible from partners in order to build up together a successful proposal. We think indeed that the participatory approach makes partners committed to the project contributing to create a strong ownership from the beginning! Within the concept of the project proposed, please respond to the questions below. These answers become the key data needed to submit a successful proposal.*

1. Explain why the project is relevant to strategy of your institution. If possible, please provide facts, figures and sources:

2. Explain the relations between your University and the selected area of interest for the project (Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan):

3. Detail your experience on the project topic both in Europe or in the selected partner countries

4. Which risks/obstacles we can individuate for the implementation of the project?

5. Could please provide us with facts, figures and sources a brief analysis of refugee presence in your country and more specifically in your University?

6. Do you already have planned a response for the refugees students? If yes please provide us facts, figures and sources.

Please return this survey to [m.didonato@uni-med.net](mailto:m.didonato@uni-med.net)

at your earliest convenience, no later than **Jan-27, 2016**.

**Thanks for your cooperation!**

## Need analysis survey updated

RESCUE project aims to increase the capacity of Universities of the target countries in answering to the needs of refugees students in those countries where the concentrations of refugee is higher, namely Lebanon, Iraq (KRG), Jordan.

This survey is part of the WP1 of RESCUE project. The survey pretends to gather the information about the refugee situation in each country and the specific needs, constraints and opportunities that the Universities have to create, develop and/or improve the R-SOS Units.

Please write the name of the University:

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1. Could please provide us with facts, figures and sources about the refugee presence in your region/governatore?
  - Please if you don't have data and you don't know the properly source indicate WD (Without Data)
  - Please if you don't have data but you know there is a source where it is, please indicate the name and internet webpage of the source

Please, Identify the region/governatore you are providing data about	
Number of refugee	
Number of local population	
% of refugee between 18 and 30 years	
% of refugee population interested in the academic curriculum/career	
% of refugee population interested in vocational training	

<p>% of refugee population interested in crash courses (courses to improve the skills and the possibilities for a labour market integration)</p>	
<p>Are there NGOs or other institutions (UN-HCR,...) that are working into vocational training o crash courses addressed to refugee? Please, could you write it/s names?</p>	
<p>Are there refugee students (or have been in the lasts 5 years) in your university? How many?</p>	

2. This question is related to refugee law, students and the University. Please indicate:

2.1. What is the formal registration for refugees in your country?

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2.2. What is the legal framework for refugee in your country? (national legislation,...)

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2.3. How is the University receiving the Law?

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2.4. Does registration as refugee have any impact into the access of refugee students to the University? Please, explain.

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3. Which obstacles do you identify (as University) for the access to the University of the refugee students? Select all the options you consider necessary.

Lack of documentation (personal and academic documentation) of refugee student

Recognition of studies and prior learning. Please select all the options you consider

- On the veracity of the documentation
  - On the University administrative level (recognition, titulation homologation,...)
  - On the legal level (laws). Which laws?
  - Other. Please indicate which
- 

- Gap between the standard university formation in the host country and the background formation of refugees
  - Language gap (no knowledge or low level of knowledge of the academic language)
  - Lack of information about resources (programmes, scholarships,...) addressed to improve the access of refugee students to the University
  - Bad economic conditions of refugee
  - Lack of financial support for refugees (no scholarships, for example)
  - Incompatibility between the work time and study time
  - Good or enough access to the University (public transport)
  - Lack of preparation of the administrative staff
  - Lack of preparation of teachers (academic support, ...)
  - Lack of equipment and physical space to attend the refugee students
  - Lack of satisfactory medical, psychological... assistance addressed to refugee students
  - Other/s. Which?
- 

4. Are you developing actions or are you planning to develop actions to respond to the refugee students?

- Yes.

Please could you select the scope (current o expected) of your initiative:

Institutional (only the University)

Local

Regional

National

International

Other/s: Which?

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Is the initiative coordinated/cofounded by other/s organizations

Yes. Could you write the organizations your university is working with?

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No

No. Why not?

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5. Please could you select the main topics of your initiative/s:

Recognition of studies and prior learning. If this is the case, please, identify:

Access to higher education. If this is the case, please, identify:

What kind of actions are you developing/planning to develop?

- Tutorial action plan to aid students in their access to the university
- Mentoring plan (peer mentoring)
- Psychological support to refugees (students, teachers,...)
- Language studies



- Other/s. Which?
- 

Financial support for refugee students. If this is the case, please, identify:

- What kind of financial support?
  - Scholarships (partial tuition fee, full tuition fee,..)
  - Student loans
  - Other. Which?
- 

Preparatory and bridging courses.

Integration measures .Please, indicate what kind of integration measure the university is developing:

- Facilitate access to accommodation
  - Facilitate access to legal advice
  - Do you offer medical support to refugees (students, teachers,...)?
  - Employment opportunities for researchers and Higher education Institutions staff. If this is the case, please, identify:
  - Crash courses
  - Vocational training
  - Other:
- 

6. Please indicate if the University has:

a. And operational unit already set up for the refugee student attendance

Yes. The University has an exclusive department/operational unit dedicated to attend the refugee student. Please, jump to question 5.1. and next

Yes. The University has a department/operational unit that attends students in general, and refugee students in particular. Please, jump to question 6.1. and next

No. The University doesn't have a department or unit to attend refugee students (neither in general nor in particular). Please, jump to the question 7.

1.1. Number of staff dedicated to the refugee students attendance:

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1.2. Have the staff a specific training to attend and identify needs of the refugee students?

Yes

No

1.3. Please describe the current equipment of the staff that attend the refugee students

Concept	Quantity	Main technical characteristics
PC		
Servers		
Printers		
Routers		
Switchs		
Scanners		
Copiers		
Telephones		
Power point projector		
Laminator		

7. Please indicate the staff and equipment you think is needed to implement the R-SOS Unit:

a. Number of staff required to start the activity of the R-SOS Units

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b. Equipment:

Concept	Quantity	Main technical characteristics
PC		
Servers		
Printers		
Routers		
Switchs		
Scanners		
Copiers		
Telephones		
Power point projector		
Laminator		

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

September 2017

