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Study to Design a Programme / Clearinghouse Providing Access to Higher Education for Syrian Refugees and Internal Displaced Persons

Final Report

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym/abbreviation	Meaning
AARU	Association of Arab Universities
ANQAHE	Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
AOU	Arab Open University
APQN	Asia-Pacific Quality Network
AUB	American University in Beirut
AUC	American University in Cairo
AUF	Agence universitaire de la Francophonie [*University Agency for Francophonie*]
BC	British Council
CARA	Council for Assisting Refugee Academics
CfP	Call for Proposals
CNAM	Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers [*Conservatory of Arts and Crafts*]
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst [*German Academic Exchange Service*]
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
ECTS	European Credit and Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (formerly: European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ESU	European Students' Union
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
FT	Full Time
GCE	General Certificate Exam
HEAC	Higher Education Accreditation Commission
IDMC	The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IIE	Institute of International Education
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
ISG	Interim Syrian Government
IT	Information Technology
JC-HEM	Jesuit Commons-Higher education at the Margins
LASeR	Lebanese Association for Scientific Research
LAU	Lebanese American University
LM	Labour Market
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa

MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MoHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MSP	MENA Scholarship Programme
NEO	National Erasmus Office
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRM	Population, Refugees, and Migration
QA	Quality Assurance
QF-EHEA	Qualifications frameworks in the European Higher Education Area
RPEL	Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SCHE	Short Cycle Higher Education
SRP	Student Refugee Programme
SSE	Student-Staff Ratios
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TAGORG	Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Syrian conflict is having a devastating and lasting impact on Syria and across the region. With the conflict entering its fourth year, the needs of the affected populations are of an unprecedented scale.

As one result, there is a large influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan, Lebanon and other countries and also a large number of IDPs. Not only, but particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, the additional cost due to the hosting of an increasing number of Syrian refugees led to a high pressure on public services, and to an increase in deficits and public debt.

The target group of this study are Syrian refugees of university age (18-24). A large number of Syrian students have either been displaced inside Syria or fled the country and have settled down in neighbouring countries, the majority in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. They face a very unique situation: not only their participation rates in further and higher education are lower than those of their peers in host countries, but they also face a significant drop in participation vis-à-vis the Syrian access rate before 2011. The latter circumstance in particular indicates a considerable unmet demand for further and higher education.

The specific objective of the study as given in the ToRs is to "assist in the design of a future program by the EU to enhance access to further and higher education for young Syrians who had to drop-out of formal education, especially internally displaced students inside Syria and Syrian refugees across the region, with a focus on Jordan and Lebanon, but also on Turkey and Iraq. The program should be as inclusive as possible.

Based on desk research, telephone interviews, an online survey and two field missions to Lebanon and Jordan, the team consisting of three HE experts assessed both, the actual further and higher education needs of the target group (and the problems they face in getting access to it) – and the existing offer provided in the host countries, and internationally, but as well through online education. This enabled the construction of a hierarchy of needs according to their criticality. Identified needs were clustered into five possible areas of intervention, and each was in turn assessed against the difficulty of covering it and its contribution to goal attainment.

This study led the team to advise setting up a mechanism that should:

- Make the best use of existing potentials;
- Meet various needs of the target group for participating in education at EQF levels 5, 6, and 7 (or equivalent);
- Support equal access to further and higher education to the those most in need;
- Contribute to better coordination and to continuously improving further and higher education interventions in the region;
- Further promote the use of e-learning tools and approaches in further and higher education;
- Reduce fragmentation of interventions and actors – produces pilot experiences for further replication;
- Have the potential to be easily scaled up.

Such a mechanism should work under a call for proposals, following eligibility and selection criteria outlined later in this report. It should be managed by a facility with secretariat and a coordination and quality assurance functions.

For the purposes of this report, a *facility* is defined as a temporary organizational body set up to initiate and improve assistance activities for Syrian refugees during a limited time period. It is more

than a project management unit since, in addition to the project management of one (or more) call(s) for proposals, it:

- Facilitates communication on lessons learned;
- Further replicates successful approaches;
- Provides relevant orientation to the target group.

Hence, the team recommends the establishment of a *facility*, which encourages regional and international further and higher education providers to submit proposals which address the target group's further and higher education needs.

Two broad and complementary policy objectives – diversity and equal access - were considered when opting for this "all-inclusive approach" where different players interact, cooperate and influence each other to enable change. And to better align the extremely high and diverse demand for further and higher education with the existing and further envisaged supply from the national and international donors.

Through provision of funds through a further and higher education facility, a broad variety of projects and actors can be encouraged to best use their potential and experience to address the broad range of needs of the target group, namely financial, regulatory, skills and competences, learning options and usability of education acquired as a refugee. Furthermore, this facility can contribute to information and experience sharing on further and higher education options and to increased cooperation and networking of further and higher education providers in the region, which could create additional synergies.

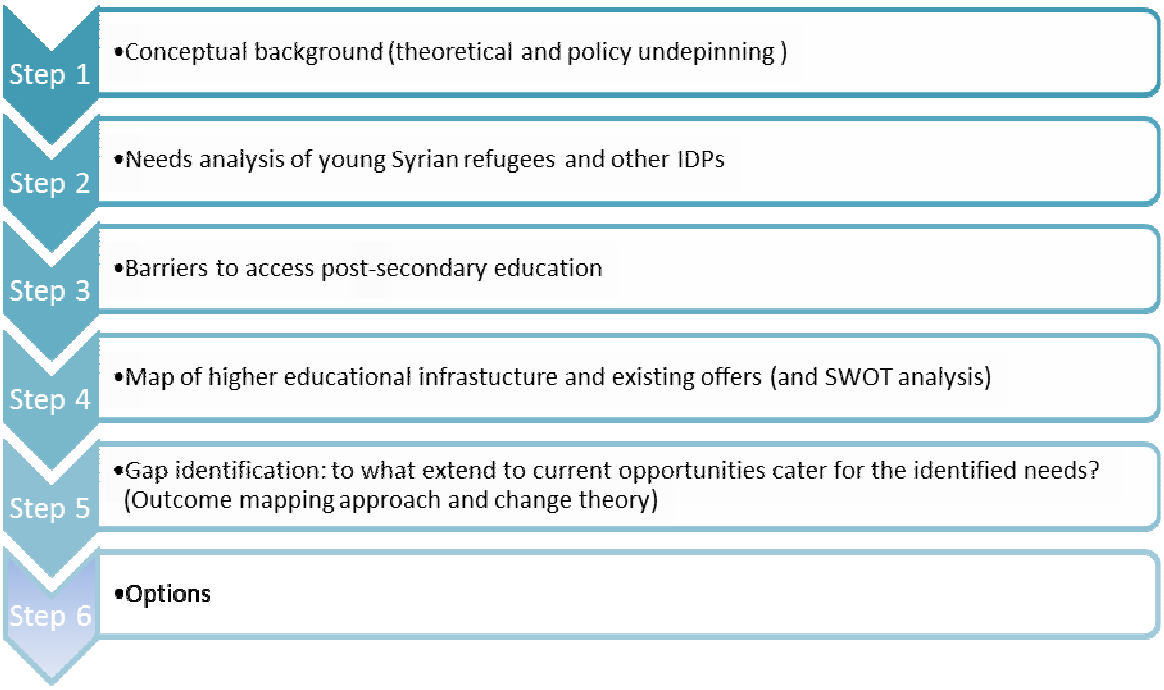
Further effects and sustainability of this type of intervention can be expected through

- Possible scaling up and buy-in of additional donors;
- Use of lessons learned in similar environments;
- Use of lessons learned for further and higher education initiatives in the host countries;
- Use of lessons learned for preparation of new projects – improved project pipeline;
- Increased capacity of universities and other partners in the region.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report will serve as a framework to identify options (or mixes of options) that might support access to higher education for young Syrians who have been affected by the ongoing crisis in their country. The framework is rooted in a conflict approach to the sociology of education[1] and builds on a number of activities including (a) a review of existing literature and documentation on the subject (b) an online survey[2], and (c) field visits to Lebanon and Jordan. The report consists of several building blocks as shown in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Steps in Building the Framework



Step 1 expounds the basic conceptual building blocks underpinning the analysis (i.e. underlying theoretical assumptions and key higher education policy developments). These elements ultimately define the adequacy and legitimacy of any proposed option.

Step 2 consists of a needs analysis. The main higher education needs of Syrian refugees are identified based on an established needs assessment protocol (Kaufman and English, 1979; Witkin and Altschuld, 1995).

Step 3 describes main barriers for Syrian refugees to start, continue or finalize tertiary education.

Step 4 maps the key players currently reaching out to the target group. This map shows a broad network of actors who are offering widespread educational opportunities to (groups of) individuals. However, the accompanying analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats ("SWOT matrix") reveals a degree of fragmentation and limited cross-cutting coordination.

[1] See for example Bourdieu 1979, 1990 [1970], 1996 [1989]; Shavit et al. 2008

[2] The online survey reached about 1,700 respondents. For each question a different number of answers were given. It does helps clarifying the needs and conditions of Syrian refugee students. The results are consistent with general findings of this report. The survey is explained in more detail in the Annex

As a result of identifying this fragmentation Step 5 emphasizes the relatively scant aggregate impact of ongoing initiatives. One may surmise that to date the multifarious players' self-construal is not that of "boundary partners" (i.e. individuals, groups, and organizations with whom different programmes interact directly and with whom programmes anticipate opportunities for influence, Earl *et al*, 2001; Smutylo, 2005), but rather of stakeholders with individual development and humanitarian agendas.

Step 6 proposes a number of options stemming from the antecedent analyses and describes in more detail one preferred option. This section also proposes a number of potential scenarios which might fall under such option.

2. BACKGROUND (STEP 1)

Two aspects are germane to the discourse about Syrian refugees' opportunities to participate in higher education under the current circumstances, namely a theoretical and a policy dimension.

2.1. A brief theoretical base

On the theoretical side, sociological studies such as Bourdieu's (1990 [1970]) have explained inequality as the result of the possession of different forms of capital (economic, social, and cultural), and equity in (higher) education opportunity as correlated to the possession of one or more of these forms of capital. At the same time, education is said to contribute to persistent inequality in educational opportunities because of its unequal distribution across strata (Shavit et al. 2008).

Therefore, initiatives to promote participation in higher education are widespread, but also diverse since they depend on national priorities and contexts. Most policies across the world associate access to higher education with students' financial situation (i.e. their relative possession of economic capital). For example, the 2004 English-Welsh *Higher Education Act* which established the Office for Fair Access[3] with which universities must make agreements to invest some of their additional income from fees to attract applications from students from low income groups is illustrative. Other policies, such as Sweden's "25/4 rule", which fixed a percentage of study places for adult applicants, focus on non-financial aspects that might hamper participation.

Today, young Syrian refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) face a very unique situation. Not only their participation rates are lower than those of their peers in host countries, but they also face a significant drop in participation vis-à-vis the Syrian access rate before 2011. The latter circumstance in particular indicates a considerable unmet demand for higher education.

According to a conflict approach to the sociology of education, one may argue that young Syrians' current predicament is exceptional because it originates from the unforeseen deprivation of all three forms of capital. In fact, most refugees face a financially dire position (loss of economic capital); *and* their networks of social relationships that may have supported higher education aspirations at home might be weaker and not as relevant in the new hosting community (loss of social capital); *and* accumulated knowledge and competencies (cultural capital) might not be fit for purpose – the lack of language skills being a prime example (see next section).

From this perspective, options (both current and prospective) should be evaluated according to their contribution to redressing imbalances in the possession of all forms of capital. Hence, an effective suite of interventions should look not only at the immediate financial constraints of individual Syrians

[3] See: http://www.offa.org.uk/

aged 18-24 who wish to access tertiary education (for example through scholarships), but also at the adequacy of their skillset and social integration in a new context.

2.2. A brief discussion about higher education policy

At the European level two recent policy developments are notable, i.e. the *Europe 2020*[4] strategy (wherein education and training play a key part) and *Education and Training 2020*[5]. *Europe 2020* sets targets in five priority areas for the EU, one of which is education: the share of early school leavers across the EU should be under 10%, and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree. Moreover, together with the *Erasmus+* Programme within the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, it provides stronger policy support and financial incentives for internationalization strategies[6].

Europe's *Education and Training 2020* is the current overall framework for EU political cooperation in education. This framework, agreed by Education Ministers in 2009, has four main priorities including (a) making lifelong learning and learner mobility a reality, (b) improving the quality and efficiency of education and training, (c) promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship and (d) enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training. It also includes performance indicators against which progress will be measured:

- At least 15% of adults participate in lifelong learning;
- Less than 15% of 15 year olds are low-achieving in reading, mathematics and science;
- At least 95% of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education participate in early childhood education;
- At least 20% of new higher education graduates should have had a higher education-related study or training period abroad;
- At least 6% of new graduates from initial vocational education and training should have had an initial VET-related study or training period abroad.

On a superficial level one could argue that attracting Syrian students may help achieving (some of) these targets. However, these goals can only be understood in a more general context of higher education policy development where national, regional, and global factors are at play. Without the pretence of exhaustiveness, at least two broad and complementary policy objectives should be considered when designing and implementing options to align demand and supply of higher education for young Syrians refugees, i.e. diversity and transparency.

Diversity is an important objective of higher education policy because as systems grew from élite to mass, enrolments were subjected to a growing diversity of societal and student demands. Hence, government policies have encouraged diversification of higher education institutions and/or programmes, for example creating more vocationally-oriented non-university institutions aside research universities. For instance, since the late 1960s several countries decided to develop binary or multi-type systems to account for institutions' different missions (Teichler, 2008; OECD, 1973)[7].

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4 See: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

5 See: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/ef0016_en.htm

6 See European higher education in the world Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions. At: http://www.nuffic.nl/bibliotheek/European-higher-education-in-the-world.pdf

7 The British polytechnics were established in the early 1960s rapidly followed by the French Instituts Universitaires de Technology (IUT). The German Fachhochschulen sector followed in 1969/1970. The regional colleges in Norway were set up in the early 1970s (Kyvik, 1981). In the mid-70s Australia and Ireland followed with, respectively, the Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE) sector and the Institutes of Technology. The Flemish Colleges and Danish University Colleges date from the early 1980s. The Netherlands established the Colleges in 1986. The Finnish Polytechnics (1991), the Austrian Fachhochschulen (1994), the Swiss Fachhochschulen and the Portuguese and Czech Polytechnics (late 1990s)

The higher education literature suggests seven key categories of diversity (Birnbaum, 1983):

- Systemic diversity refers to differences in institutional type, size and control found within a higher education system;
- Structural diversity refers to institutional differences resulting from historical and legal foundations, or differences in the internal division of authority among institutions;
- Programmatic diversity relates to the degree level, degree area, comprehensiveness, mission and emphasis of programmes and services provided by institutions;
- Procedural diversity describes differences in the ways in which teaching, research and/or services are provided by institutions;
- Reputational diversity communicates the perceived differences in institutions based on status and prestige[8];
- Constituential diversity alludes to differences in students and other constituents (faculty, administration) in the institutions;
- Value and climate diversity is associated with differences in social environment and culture.

From a policy perspective, diversity affects the capacity of a system, institution or programme to cater for new types of students, for example Syrian refugees. They may have educational and professional goals (e.g. reconstruction or nation re-building) or requirements that differ from the "traditional" student. To be effective in benefitting the target group, options must carefully consider the degree and type of differentiation of the context where actions will be implemented. For example, careful consideration might be given to short cycle higher education (SCHE), which according to the OECD (1973) is predominantly non-university, has a strong vocational element, and is terminal in nature (i.e. it leads to a diploma). It might thus be particularly relevant for supporting future reconstruction efforts and employability of refugees. Key objectives for spreading SCHE include increased demand for higher education, equality of opportunity, labour market demand and innovation that "traditional" universities are reluctant to implement (*ibid*).

A corollary of diversity is transparency. For years, Europe has been pioneering initiatives to boost transparency by supporting projects developing transparency tools to account for institutional and system diversity[9] and through substantive policymaking. The following developments seem particularly relevant because they clearly can impinge on the effectiveness of future interventions to support Syrian refugees in their higher education aspirations:

- The **European Qualification Framework** (EQF)[10], a translation tool that helps communication and comparison between qualifications systems in Europe. Its eight common European reference levels are described in terms of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) and allow for comparability with national qualifications systems and qualifications in Europe. It therefore

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are relatively young (De Weert and Soo, 2009). These sectors are often referred to as non-university higher education, short cycle higher education or alternatives to universities (OECD, 1991). This indicates that the UAS institutions were often seen as second best next to the "university sector" (cited from File *et al*, 2013, p.19). In 1992 the UK upgraded its Polytechnics to universities effectively relinquishing the binary tradition; more recently, Ireland's "National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030" (Hunt, 2011) recommended that a process should be put in place to allow institutes of Technology to apply for designation as a "Technological University", which would however still differ in mission and role from traditional universities.

8 Ever since Shanghai Jiaotong University released its first global ranking in 2003, discussions about diversity have mostly centred on reputation and prestige (see: http://www.shanghairanking.com/)

9 Examples include *U-map*, to better understand the diversity that exists in the European higher education and research systems (van Vught 2009), and U-Multirank, a "[...] new multi-dimensional, user-driven approach to international ranking of higher education institutions". See: http://www.u-map.eu/ and http://www.u-multirank.eu/#!/home?trackType=home&section=entrance

10 https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/how-does-eqf-work; http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f%5B0%5D=im_field_entity_type%3A97

facilitates recognition of qualifications across Europe. Short cycle higher education falls under EQF Level 5;

- **European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS)**[11] is a tool that helps to design, describe, and deliver study programmes and award higher education qualifications. The use of ECTS, in conjunction with outcomes-based qualifications frameworks, makes study programmes and qualifications more transparent and facilitates the recognition of qualifications. It makes national systems more comparable across Europe and is also a crucial element of the Bologna process (see also below). Credits are the way in which learning outcomes are expressed. One academic credit corresponds roughly to 30 hours of student work (including in-class contact hours and self-work);
- **Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning** means crediting past learning achievements regardless of the way they were attained. This is possible if the applicant can demonstrate the necessary learning outcomes. Recognizing all forms of learning is a priority of EU action in education and training[12]. RPL is most suited for non-traditional learners (particularly those denied access, adult learners, or students from countries with different education systems). However, there are also problems relating to the meaning and value of this tool, and much depends on its national application. Duvekot (2008) emphasizes that recognizing "all forms of learning" can take a number of forms, including (a) Accreditation of Prior Learning – which focuses on the summative effects of accepting experience directly and solely relevant to the achievement of a specific standard – (b) Recognition of Prior Learning – which emphasises the formative connotation and (c) Valuation of Prior Learning – which lies at the crossroads and has both summative and formative paths. A country such as the Netherlands has long been a laggard regarding RPL (for example in comparison to Portugal, France, or Ireland) and, having experienced limited success in higher education it is currently discussing the need for a new roadmap where a clear distinction is made between a RPL process for employment and for further study;
- **Quality assurance (QA):** QA and accreditation mechanisms are crucial for protecting learners from so-called "rogue providers" or "degree mills". Common requirements for national systems have been defined at European level to improve the consistency of quality assurance schemes across Europe. European standards and guidelines have also been developed for internal and external quality assurance in order to provide universities and quality assurance agencies with common reference points. Several networks of QA agencies exist, such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE), the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), or the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education - (INQAAHE). These entities often work together to promote mutual recognition of QA decisions and QA in cross-border education. Extensive work on quality assurance in cross-border education has been done particularly by INQAAHE and UNESCO (Cremonini *et al*., 2012; UNESCO, 2007; INQAAHE, 2007).

It is important to note that transparency tools are necessary to promote internationalization, a key objective of the European commission. The commission supports member states towards comprehensive internationalization strategies that, while capitalizing on national strengths, make European higher education attractive in the world (EC, 2013). A comprehensive internationalization strategy should include (a) promoting international mobility of students and staff, (b) promoting internationalization at home and digital learning (including Massive open online courses (MOOCs[13]))

[11] See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/ects_en.htm

[12] European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning at: http://www.ecvet-team.eu/en/system/files/documents/964/european-guidelines-validating-non-formal-and-informal-learning.pdf

[13] MOOCs are digitally-delivered courses (via the web or tablet apps). They may offer credits, but whether these are accepted towards a degree is up to individual higher education institutions (and still an exception, see for example an article on The Economist of June 28th 2014 at http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21605899-staid-higher-education-business-about-experience-welcome-earthquake-digital). Moreover, because MOOCs delivery lends itself to a multiplicity of designs, there is a lively ongoing debate about whether the term "MOOC" can in fact capture this diversity. There is increasingly talk of "DOCCs" (Distributed Open Collaborative Courses), "POOCs" (Participatory Open

and (c) strengthening strategic cooperation, partnerships and capacity building. These goals can only be achieved in a context of full transparency.

Finally, it is important to note the Bologna Process, a development which goes beyond the EU. The Bologna Process was launched with the "Bologna Declaration" of 1999 and is one of the main voluntary processes at European level. It is implemented in 47 states, which define the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Members of the Bologna Process are the 47 countries, together with the European Commission, and the consultative members, namely the Council of Europe, UNESCO, EUA, ESU, EURASHE, ENQA, Education International and BUSINESSEUROPE. Its aim was for Europe to engage in a voluntary process to create the EHEA, which was launched in 2010. The key elements of the Bologna process include (a) Three Degree Cycle, (b) Qualifications Frameworks (QF-EHEA, not to be confused with the EQF), (c) ECTS, (d) promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance, (e) recognition of qualifications is essential to allow students to study at different institutions in different countries and (f) Joint Degrees. Now, after the launching of the EHEA, the Bologna Process moves towards a new phase, a more in-depth one, focusing on a reduction of the implementation discrepancies in the countries forming the EHEA[14]. In a way, the Bologna process can be regarded as a huge transparency tool as it wanted to make European higher education accessible and attractive for Non-European countries and students through a recognisable degree structure. This would also make European graduates transferable to countries outside Europe. Future options should consider this framework to be effective.

3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STEPS 2-3)

As a result of the civil war in Syria there is a large influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and other countries and also a large number of IDPs. In September 2014, and according to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the figures are 613,252 refugees have been registered in Jordan, 1,176,971 in Lebanon, 832,527 in Turkey; 215,309 in Iraq and 135,030 in Egypt and 6.5 million IDPs inside Syria. In Jordan and Lebanon, the additional cost due to the hosting of an increasing number of Syrian refugees led to increase in deficits and public debt.

The cost of public services such as water, health and education services, and costs for energy and hosting of Syrian refugees are the most pressing issues weighing on public finances in all neighbouring countries[15]. However, recent findings also suggest that the inflow of Syrian refugees may also be beneficial. For example, according to Muftah — an online magazine[16] — the civil war in Syria means an influx of skilled Syrian refugees into for Jordan which is strengthening the private sector. Also, private investment appears to have shifted from Syria to neighbouring countries.

Arguably, promoting higher education for Syrians can potentially bring both relief to refugees who would have expected to participate in pre-crisis Syria, and limit the socioeconomic burden for hosting countries. In other words, because higher education produces economic and social benefits (*inter*

Online Courses), "SPOCs" (Small Private Online Courses) and "BOOC" (Big (or Boutique) Open Online Courses). See: Bayne and Ross (2014).

[14] See: http://www.ehea.info/ and http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-basics/Bologna-an-overview-of-the-main-elements.aspx

[15] For example, according to the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (2013) by the end of 2013 the subsidized items for approximately 600,000 Syrian refugees cost at least US$152.4 million.

[16] According to Muftah's mission statement (http://muftah.org/about/): "Muftah launched in May 2010 to push back against these trends and provide English-speaking audiences with incisive analysis on MENA countries, eschewing Western media's focus on terrorism, oil, and Islamism, and, instead, highlighting the complex factors that shape and influence regional countries and populations". Muftah also mentions that it is "[…]solidly pro-Palestinian and will not publish pieces that are contrary to this perspective"

alia: IHEP, 2005; OECD, 2012; McMahon, 2009), it can help refugees be more productive participants of the hosting countries.

This section identifies the needs of Syrian refugees with regards to their higher education ambitions. In keeping with established definitions, we define "need" as the discrepancy between the present state of affairs in regard to the target group (young Syrians of university age) and the desired state (which in this case largely reflects the pre-crisis situation). The assessment seeks to determine such discrepancies, examine their nature and causes, and set priorities for future action (options).

The methodological framework of the analysis, shown in Chart 2, follows a number of stages. First, we identified the *area of concern*, which is the discrepancy between Syrians' participation in higher education before and after the crisis. Although reliable data are hard to obtain, it is possible to estimate that in pre-crisis Syria the gross enrolment rate was over 20% (Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010; UNESCO) while amongst the eligible Syrian cohorts in the region after 2011 this number ranges between less than 2% (Turkey) and about 8% (Lebanon and Jordan). In Syria itself it is impossible to estimate accurately the loss of participation in higher education. In general, there is agreement that hundreds of thousands of university students in Syria have had their education interrupted (O'Malley, 2014; Ward, 2014). In the hosting countries gross enrolment rates have traditionally been higher than Syria's (about 30% in Egypt, 40% in Jordan and Lebanon, and over 50% in Turkey as of 2012)[17].

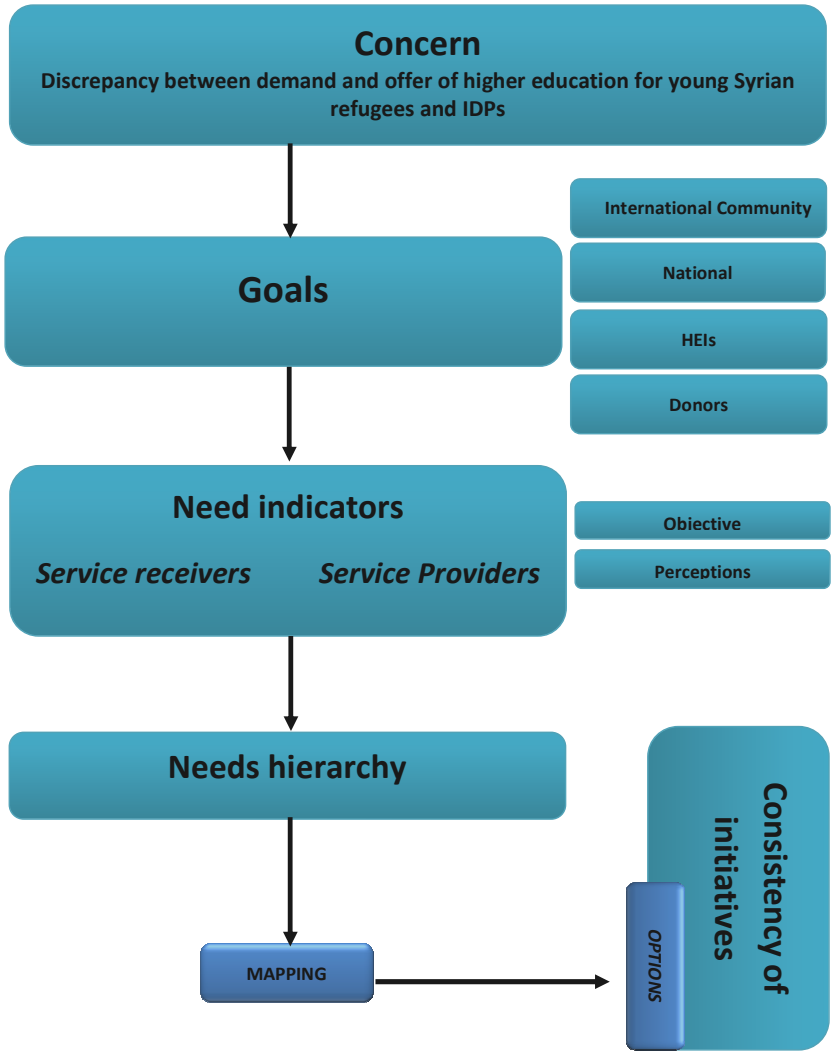
Next, preliminary *goals and needs indicators* were developed. Such indicators are necessary to verify that the issue is salient. Key players that have an impact on policy such as the European Union, national governments, tertiary education providers, and donors set overarching goals. Important needs indicators of learners and providers were identified during the preliminary desk research phase[18]. Needs can be objective/measurable (e.g. income level, employment permits and regulations) or perceptions (e.g. sense of acceptance in the academic community).

Third, the field missions and additional interviews enabled the construction of *hierarchy of needs* according to their criticality. Identified needs were clustered into five possible areas of intervention, and each was in turn assessed against the difficulty of covering it and its contribution to goal attainment.

[17] See: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR/countries.

[18] The inclusion of local providers in the assessment is crucial to reaching an inclusive understanding of the situation (are providers equipped with necessary resources to address the needs of large numbers of potential Syrian students?)

Chart 2: Methodological Framework Needs Analysis



3.1. Area of Concern

The Syrian conflict is having a devastating and lasting impact on Syria and across the region. With the conflict entering its fourth year, the needs of the affected populations are of an unprecedented scale. By the end of 2014, almost 10 million people were in need of assistance in the region (equating to over 40 % of the Syrian population) including 6.5 million people that are internally displaced (7.6 million as of March 2015[19]) and over 2.8 million Syrians have registered as refugees in neighbouring countries. It is estimated that the number of conflict-related deaths has surpassed 200,000 individuals with over one million people having been wounded.

The target group of this analysis are Syrian refugees of university age (18-24). A large number of Syrian students have either been displaced inside Syria or fled the country and have settled down in neighbouring countries, the majority in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. In general, the data regarding Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries are uncertain since they usually refer to those who registered with UNHCR only, and differ by country. For example, there is information about the age

[19] See http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf

group 18-24 in Jordan (UNHCR, 2014a) but similar figures for the other countries are wanting. However, it is possible to make estimates based on the available data. Table 1 shows the approximate number of Syrian refugees aged 18 to 24 in neighbouring as of mid-late 2014.

The calculation is extrapolated from the mid-2014 available data from Jordan and the existing figures from other neighbouring countries. In Jordan there are 271,413 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees between 18-59, which is approximately 44% of the total number of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in the country[20]. According to UNHCR (2014a), those between the ages of 18 and 24 are 77,718, which is 29% of the 18-59 age group. Using the UNHCR figures for all neighbouring countries helps to estimate the target group's size, i.e. approximately 29% of the 18-59 age group per country.

Table 1: Syrian Refugees aged 18 to 24 in Neighbouring Countries (extrapolations)[21]

Country					
Lebanon	**Jordan**	**Turkey**	**Iraq**	**Egypt**	**Total**
146,457	77,718	145, 310	33,792	20,760	424,037

Country data from http://data.unhcr.org (see website list)

Regarding participation in higher education, there is general agreement that the average Syrian rate prior to 2011 was above 20%. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO Institute of Statistics cited in UNESCO, 2014, p.4), by 2011 "[…] Syria had experienced an ascendant trend with regard to gross enrolment ratios in HED [*Higher Education access and Degrees*], from 21 in 2006 to 26 in 2011" (including vocational training and university education[22]). Data gathered from the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics also indicate over 20% participation as of 2010.

At the same time, there is evidence of far lower participation rates among Syrian refugees in the same age bracket. For example, according to the Turkish National Statistical Agency (Reported in Watenpaugh *at al*., 2014b, fn. 10 as interview information), there are 1,784 Syrians in Turkish higher education institutions, which accounts for 1.22% participation rate among Syrians. The Jordanian Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC) estimates that about 6,000 Syrians are in higher education over 95% of whom in public institutions (interview data). Official data provided by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) show that there are ±8,549 Syrians enrolled in Lebanese universities (i.e. about 3,000 in the Public University and 5,549 in private universities), which is 6% participation rate (interview data). This number is said to have decreased substantially of late, with fewer than 2,500 Syrians enrolled in Lebanese higher education in 2014 (British Council interview).

In Syria itself it is impossible to estimate accurately the changes in participation in higher education. In general, there are statements such as "it is likely that hundreds of thousands of university students in Syria have had their education interrupted" (O'Malley, 2014), or "[…] the number of students enrolled at universities has dropped by a large percentage" (Ward, 2014). However, according to the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, at the time of writing almost all universities in the country are

[20] See: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107

[21] Other estimates calculate that the age group 18-25 totals about 258,000 (see the "Action Document on the provision of Higher Education to Syrian youth affected by the crisis in Syria and in Jordan (CRIS number: ENPI/2014/037-732). However, those numbers refer to January 2014, whereas the numbers reported in this report are based on UNHCR figures of late August 2014. Moreover, changes in refugee numbers based on the UNHCR's Syrian Regional response Plans (UNHCR, 2013; 2014b) also justify the assumption that end-of-year numbers are higher.

[22] See: http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/country-profile.aspx?code=SYR&regioncode=40525

fully operational, whether in their real campus or in temporary locations[23]. Moreover, changes in the (official) Syrian government policy now allow secondary students to re-sit some of the modules if they fail their high school exams, which indicates that the number of students in undergraduate studies might be more stable than assumed, or even on the increase. In fact, 2014 data from the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education[24] indicate a 40% growth in undergraduate participation within Syria between 2010 and 2014 (from 549,848 to 768,606 undergraduate registrations).

However, this report suggests a degree of caution when using the data provided by the Ministry as there are indications that these numbers might not reflect entirely the situation on the ground. There are no accurate data on how many students actually study at universities (i.e. attend classes and sit exams) either before or after the crisis began. This, *inter alia*, is because of the longstanding tradition of many Syrian students to register at a university but not to attend on a regular basis (students might travel or conduct extramural activities, return to continue their studies after a number of years while remaining formally enrolled—a possibility even more likely in today's fluid circumstances).

Indeed, other sources indicate a more severe setting. According to *Al-Fanar* (Abdo, 2015) – a venture philanthropy organization working in the Arab world with its own dedicated discussion platform on higher education – "Syrian universities have lost about one third of their professors, while around 100,000 students have dropped out, according to official statements, which could well be minimizing the problem." Interview information received for this report is consistent with *Al-Fana*'s estimation[25]. Hence, since no other hard data is available and given the limitations of official data mentioned above, for analytical purposes this report assumes that at a minimum 100,000 (or 15%) of the total pre-war student population has been affected. Considering a 20% participation rate among IDPs (based on 2010 data from the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics), one may estimate that over 29,000 of the potential IDP student population could not participate in or terminate tertiary education[26].

These figures confirm that there is a significant loss in higher education participation among Syrian refugees since 2011 (Table 2 and Chart 3).

[23] Exceptions are the Raqqa branch and the Faculty of Petro-Chemistry in Deir Ezzor, which are closed

[24] See the Website of the Syrian Ministry of higher education, 2014 at: http://www.mohe.gov.sy/mohe/index.php?node=555&cat=2862&

[25] In drafting this report a number of interviews and contacts were made with Syrian stakeholders in Syria itself, or who have been involved in Syria itself, see Annex 4

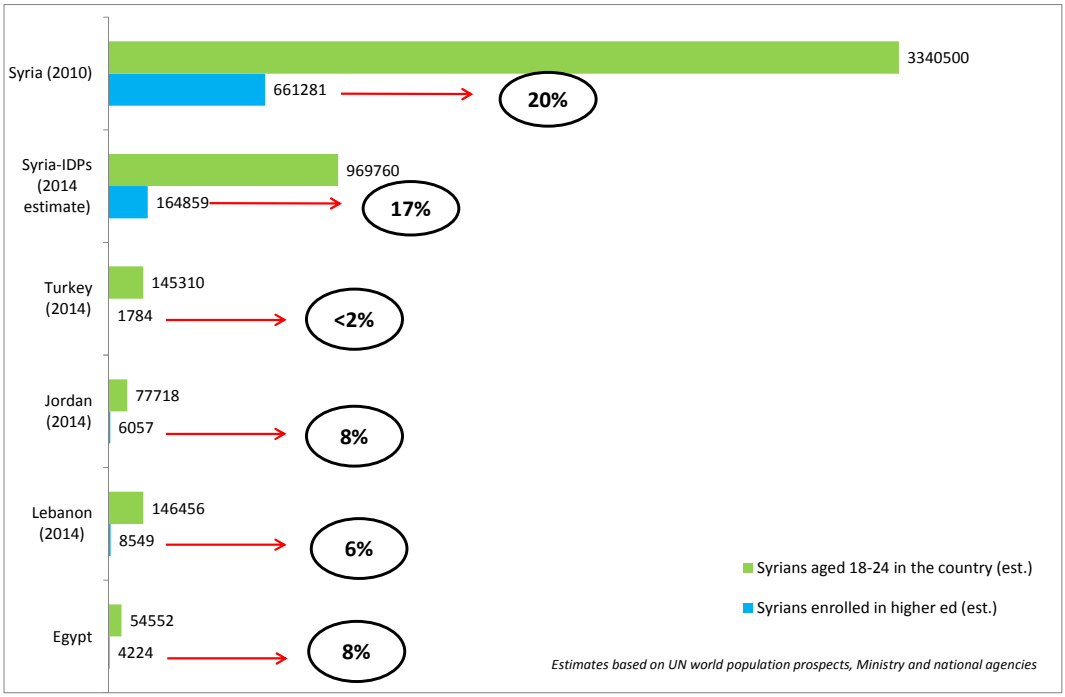
[26] Note for the reader: this calculation is an extremely rough estimate meant solely to give the reader a sense of scale of the problem, and is dictated by the lack of any reliable post-2010 statistics for Syria. The data for Syria are extrapolations (see below) and based on information gathered through interviews and the recent article by *Al-Fanar Media*. Since there are accurate (albeit fluctuating over time) data from UNHCR about the refugee population in Jordan, including a breakdown for the 18-24 age group (not available for all neighbouring countries), the team used this information as a base, well aware that the situation differs per country. In Jordan the 18-24 population of Syrian refugees is about 29% of the 18-59 age group, which in turn is 44% of the total refugee population. The analysis, hence, assumes that in Syria the 18-25 group is approximately 29% of 44% of the total IDP population (as reported by the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, ECHO). That is, 7.6m x 44% x 29% = 969,760. Subsequently, an estimation had to be made as to how many IDPs aged 18-24 had to abandon their study. This is an even more arduous task because, as reported heretofore, there are no reliable estimates even within neighbouring countries. This report chooses a number (100,000) that was reported in February 2015 by *Al-Fanar Media* (*Al-Fanar*'s bi-weekly blog dedicated to higher education in the Arab world). This is about 15% drop from the enrolment numbers reported by the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics before the war. A 15% loss in participation calculated over a "normal" 20% enrolment rate among 18-24 year olds leads to a conservative estimate that about 29,000 IDP students are missing out on further and higher education in Syria alone (969,760 x 20% = 193,952; 193,952-15% = 164,859).

Table 2: Syrian Students in Need, in Syria and outside Syria

Country	Syrians aged 18-24 in the country (est.)	Syrians enrolled in higher education	20% target	Current Participation	Gap to fill with intervention
Syria (2010)	3,340,500 [b]	661,281 [a]		20%	
Lebanon	146,456	8,549	29,291	6%	20,742
Jordan	77,718	6,057	15,544	8%	9,487
Turkey	145,310	1,784	29,062	1%	27,278
Syria IDPs (2014)	969,760 [d]	164,859 (not possible to determine) [c]	193,952	17%	29,093
Other	54,552	4,224	10,910	8%	6,686
Total (excl. Syria 2010)	1,393,796	181,249	278,759	13%	93,286

[a] Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics; includes also post-graduate
[b] Estimation based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Population Division (2013). World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision. Because the UN breaks down in age groups of five years (0-5; 6-10; 11-15; 16-20; 20-25; etc.) from 1950 to 2010, we calculate people aged 15-20 x 50% + people aged 20-25
[c] A note of caution: This, more than the figures for the other countries, is a very rough estimate meant solely to give a sense of scale of the problem within the country. This guess indicates a loss of about 3% in participation but this should be in no way taken as precise as the situation is probably far worse than this.
[d] Estimation based on an IDP population of 7.6m (reported by the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO)).

Chart 3: Syrian Loss in Participation in Higher Education Since 2010 (estimates)



To date there have been a number of regional initiatives that could help address the problem. For example, in 2014 Queen Rania of Jordan launched *Edraak*, a not-for-profit platform for MOOCs in Arabic. The platform is meant to offer Arab learners access to courses taught at universities such as Harvard, MIT, and UC Berkeley, amongst others, at no cost to the learner, with the potential to earn certificates of mastery for certain courses (PETRA - Jordan News Agency, 2014).

Although such an initiative could potentially assist Syrians as part of a greater group of beneficiaries (Arab students), when it comes to addressing the Syrian higher education problem specifically, most donors and organizations still consider scholarships the primary avenue. But the problem's magnitude means that Syrian's losses in higher education participation cannot be compensated by current international scholarship initiatives (in spite of their positive impact on individuals). Existing scholarships tend to (a) favour merit and (b) require compliance with a set of formal prerequisites such as the possession of the necessary secondary diplomas, language proficiency and residence permits. Although common across scholarship schemes worldwide, these aspects pose significant hurdles for this study's target group. Most of the students in need are not high-achievers but rather average students who in normal circumstances would have entered higher education receiving neither special assistance nor awards. But scholarship schemes, by their very nature, are meant to reward excellence and/or support students in need on a competitive basis. In the case of Syrian refugees and IDPs, the number of students in need is overwhelming and cannot be covered by existing resources, (see also Table 7 below)

It is not possible to know the exact number of Syrian scholarship recipients because of the wealth of programmes ranging from institutional to multinational. Nevertheless, Table 5 (see later) provides a rough overview of some of the most prominent initiatives and suggests that that the number of scholarship beneficiaries for EQF levels 5 and above is unlikely to exceed 5,000 at best, including different levels and covering different periods of study (one-year, short courses, full degrees)[27].
Moreover, even adjusting the number of potential beneficiaries to account for the fact that students of more privileged SES do not need assistance to pursue higher education abroad one must consider that (a) extant resources can only cater for a limited number of recipients and (b) with fewer than 2% of the global tertiary student population pursuing studies abroad, international student mobility is still the exception rather than the rule[28] thus, on the aggregate, focusing entirely on mobility scholarships seems unlikely to yield visible results[29].

The survey conducted for this project (see Annex), which covered over 1,200 young Syrian men and women aged 18-25 affected by the crisis and resident in Syria or abroad[30], also shows that many students had to abandon their studies as a consequence of the persistent crisis situation. 43% of respondents[31] had to interrupt their bachelor or master studies. Within this group there are slight differences between males and females (and about 60% of respondents were male).

[27] This number is a rounded-up approximation to give the reader a rough order of magnitude of the problem. The number of beneficiaries extrapolated from table 5 totals fewer than 2,000 students. This includes different sorts of scholarships (for different levels, for different periods of study, for Syrians only or for mixed groups). On the other hand, there are other initiatives (e.g. institutional) that are not listed in our preliminary overview, hence it was considered prudent to over-estimate even considerably. The picture that emerges is none the less one where scholarships cannot cover all the needs.

[28] See: http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx. It must be emphasized that between 2000 and 2012 student mobility has doubled in absolute terms, from 2m to 4m. This however, reflects growing university enrolment around the world (*Ibid.*)

[29] It must be stressed that this statement is not meant to discount the value of scholarships but rather to consider aggregate impacts

[30] The questionnaire was disseminated online through several Facebook groups which publish scientific research and education and advertise employment opportunities for young Syrians, see Survey Report in the Annex

[31] 73% of the age group of 18-25 who responded to this question

The region at a glance: Refugees and Tertiary education Providers

Syria
IDPs (IDMC estimate): 6.5m

Lebanon
Syrian Refugees (UNHCR): 1,159,000
Higher education and post-secondary institutions (Ministry): 41

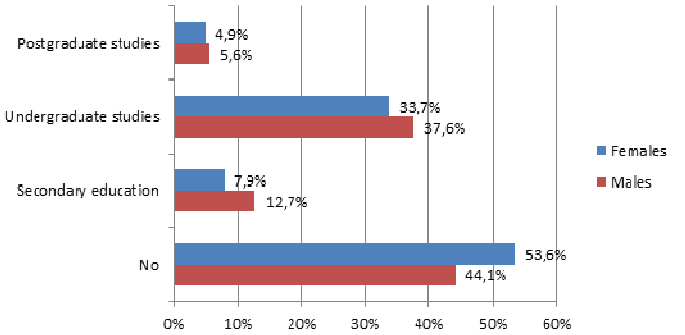
Turkey
Syrian Refugees (UNHCR): 1,165,300
Higher education and post-secondary institutions (Ministry): 166

Jordan
Syrian Refugees (UNHCR): 622,400
Higher education and post-secondary institutions (Ministry): 36

Iraq
Syrian Refugees (UNHCR): 233,700
Higher education and post-secondary institutions (Ministry): 162

Egypt
Syrian Refugees (UNHCR): 138,300
Higher education and post-secondary institutions (Ministry): 51

Chart 4: Studies Drop-out by Level of Study and Gender



Source: Project survey

One should also consider recent high school graduates who are in principle eligible for higher education. For example in Jordan, data supplied by UNICEF shows that there are 2,721 Syrian applicants (1,663 females and 1,058 males) for the secondary exit exam (*Tawjihi*) in year 2014-2015. In 2013 the pass rate was 34%, and given the 20+% of Syrian pupils who would be eligible for higher education in a non-crisis situation, this would account for a further 200 students prepared to enter higher education in Jordan in 2015.

In addition, there are those students in Syria and neighbouring countries who took the General Certificate Exam (GCE) implemented by the Ministry of Education of the Interim Syrian Government (ISG). According to data provided by the ISG, in 2014 they were 14,250 students enrolled for the GCE, 13,869 of whom were granted permission to sit the exam and 9,678 took the exam (6,433 in Syria, 1,225 in Jordan, 473 in Lebanon and 1,547 in Turkey). The ISG-implemented GCE is seen as the only option for tens of thousands of Syrian students to hope to progress to tertiary education. However, its implementation faces a number of challenges, particularly the issue of recognition and consequently the capacity to secure study places at undergraduate institutions[32].

Moreover, the higher education systems have a problem catering for the needs of their local learner population, which adds to the strain of increased demand. For example, data from Jordan (supplied by the national Higher Education Accreditation Commission) show a lack of capacity of over 50,000 places in public institutions (though more expensive private providers appear to have excess capacity).

Finally, one should also consider the fields and levels of study Syrian refugee students might pursue, as well as the gender distribution. These matters are important because several issues are at play. As will be mentioned later in the analysis, it is important to bear in mind what knowledge and competencies will be most sorely needed in post-war Syria. At the same time, financial priorities will also affect the capacity (of suppliers, donors – including the EC –, and users) to opt for certain fields of study over others. And, in addition, the target group's own limitations might skew their immediate choices. For example, there is evidence to suggest that young Syrians in neighbouring countries tend to select programmes based on criteria (e.g. language of delivery) which might be unrelated their

[32] According to an interview with the Lebanese Secretary General for education, the ISG GCE has been disallowed in Lebanon and is not recognized

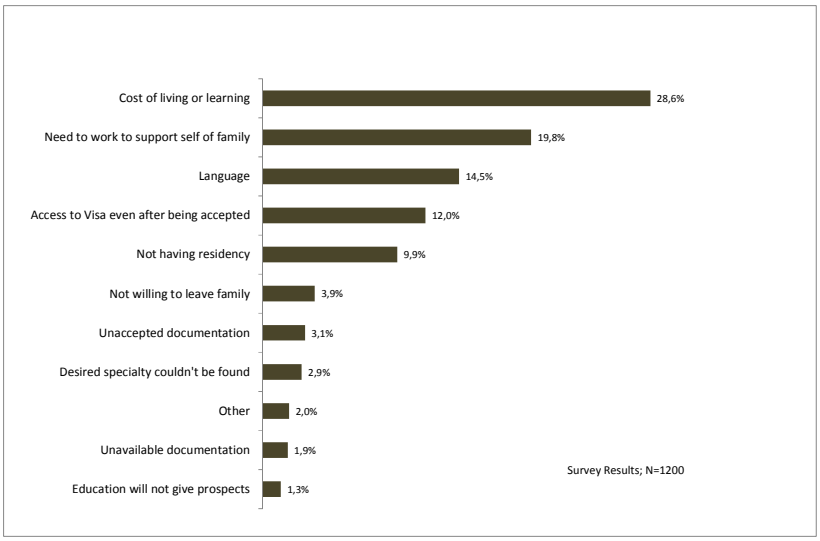
interests (*interview data*). And, although exact data is sketchy, there are also indications pointing at a gradually increasing deficit in male participation of Syrians refugee students as they tend to seek employment to support their families.

The latest data from the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010) for public universities presented in Annexes 2 and 3, shows that as of 2010, about two thirds of Syrian graduates were in the Arts, Humanities and Law, while about a third graduated in sciences and engineering studies. The distribution of male/female students appears relatively balanced across the fields of study although there are some differences (e.g. there is a significant majority of females in pharmaceutical studies and the arts, as well as a majority of males in engineering). Over the whole spectrum of fields of study, the number of females and males in pre-war Syria was roughly equal. This picture is slightly more skewed in host countries today (e.g. in Jordan, the gender composition in public universities is 1 male to 1.3 females (HEAC)). Trend data also show a staggering increase in post-graduate studies in pre-war Syria. Between 2006 and 2010 the number of Master students and Master graduates increased by over 300% (from 2,709 to 13,140 and from 454 to 2,084 respectively); the number of Doctoral candidates grew from 595 to 1,650 (+177%). This information should be kept in mind whilst opting for possible solutions.

3.2. Needs and possible areas of operation

This section (a) identifies the needs of the target group and (b) prioritizes them according to their relative impact on reaching the stated goal of "[…] enhance[ing] access to further and higher education for young Syrian refugees and IDPs[33]". The survey conducted as part of this research highlights a number of primary hurdles expressed by Syrian students, including *inter alia* the dearth of funds to support study and family, problems in gaining (reasonably remunerated) employment, language difficulties and lack of official transcripts, identification documents etc., and (see Chart 5)[34].

Chart 5: Most Severe Hurdles to Continuing Higher Education



Source: project survey (N=1200)

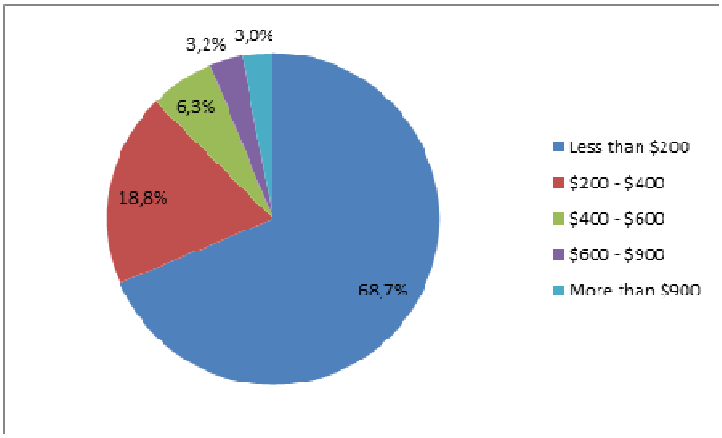
As can be seen from Chart 5, the costs associated with life and studying remain the key problems. This issue is associated with very low income levels, as shown in Chart 6 below (also based on the

[33] See this assignment's ToR

[34] Respondents could select the three most important hurdles. Respondents of all ages were included in this chart (total respondents to this question: 1,200)

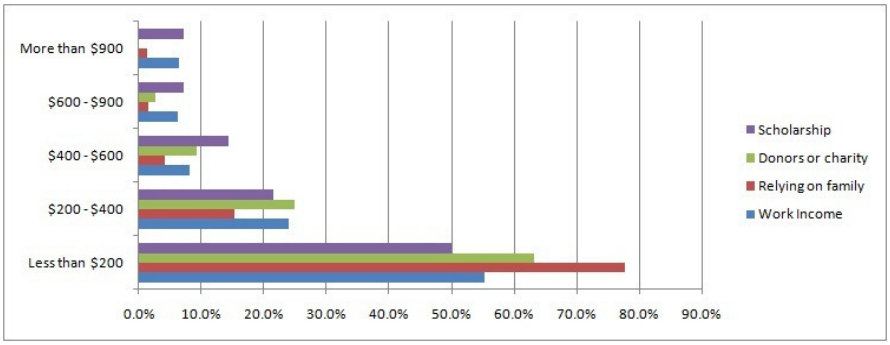
project's survey results). The survey further indicates that family and donor assistance is the main revenue source for those living below $200 per month (Chart 7).

Chart 6: Income Levels of Syrian Refugees



Source: project Survey; N=1280; age group 18-25

Chart 7: Income Sources [(a)]



Source: project Survey; N=1280; age group 18-25

[(a)] *Percentages are calculated per income source rather than value giving the actual percentage for each income source within the ranges of income. The reach of the response group includes variant geographical areas giving way for variations in the value of currency (e.g. between Lebanon and Syria, the two countries which host most respondents)*

Table 3 provides a summary of the needs identified during the research and classifies them by their nature (objective vs. perceptions) and level (service receivers vs. service providers).[35] Although the primary targets of intervention are learners, a comprehensive needs assessment which also looks at service providers (in this case tertiary institutions) is advisable as benefits to learners depend on the capacity of providers to cater for them. Hence, addressing (or at least taking into account) the needs of the institutions that must ultimately provide higher education is crucial to success.

[35] Two notes of caution are necessary when interpreting these tables. First, the "level distinction" in Table 3 (receivers/providers) gives an overview of where the main emphases lie but the ultimate goal is to recognize and address needs that affect directly or indirectly the target population. Secondly, Table 4 is a qualitative assessment based on our research and field work and should not be construed as an exact ranking. We acknowledge that in principle all need areas are highly critical in supporting access to higher education for young Syrians. The exercise is meant to aid priority-setting

Table 3: Key Needs, Classified by Objectivity and Level

Need	Nature		Level	
	Objective / Measurable	Perception	Service Receiver	Service Provider
1) Income	√		√	
2) Movement restrictions (e.g. Visa)	√		√	
3) Access to transportation	√		√	
4) Availability of student residences	√		√	√
5) Language proficiency	√		√	
6) IT proficiency	√		√	
7) Lack of transcripts and necessary diplomas	√		√	
8) Lack of RP(E)L options and policies	√		√	√
9) Employment (need to work to support family)	√		√	
10) Lack of PT study options	√		√	
11) LM-relevance of available/accessible programmes	√		√	
12) Lack of reliable counselling and orientation services (lack of information)	√		√	
13) Unclear regulations about online programmes (recognition, accreditation and QA)	√		√	√
14) Capacity (physical and human) to cater for increased numbers of learners	√			√
15) Lack of facilities for online teaching	√			√
16) Few university networks in the region	√			√
17) Uncertainty on the length of stay: education and career goals		√	√	√
18) Distrust of on-line options		√	√	
19) "Usability" of acquired qualifications for LM, for further study (recognition of future qualifications (acquired as a refugee)		√	√	
20) Lack of acceptance by peers, academic community and society		√	√	√
21) Need to support for (disenfranchised) local students		√		√

The needs listed above can be clustered in five potential "areas of operation", namely (i) financial (ii) regulatory, (iii) skills and competences, (iv)learning options and (v) usability of education acquired as a refugee. These are assessed for their criticality in relation to goal attainment. Further, the key barriers faced by young Syrian refugees wishing to participate in higher education (which in fact are the concrete consequences of the need areas) are shown in Table 4. The table aggregates the needs in clusters of more coherent themes, elaborates on their consequences (i.e. barriers to student persistence), and assesses their degree of criticality.

Table 4: Areas of Operation

Need Area	Main causes	Difficulty to meet need (L, M, H)	Consequences (barriers caused by the "need area")	Criticality (1= lowest 5=highest)
Financial (1, 3, 4, 9, 21)	▪ Loss of assets ▪ Problems gaining employment/ low remuneration ▪ Fees set as foreign students	H	▪ Cannot cover costs of education ▪ Transport, accommodation costs	4
Regulatory (2, 7, 13)	▪ Entry/exit regulations ▪ Need for prior diplomas as a condition for enrolment and/or graduation ▪ Regulations forbidding/limiting employment	M	▪ Cannot graduate ▪ Cannot conduct foreign exchanges	4
Skills and competences (5, 6)	▪ Curriculum difference in Syria and host countries, especially with reference to English language	L	▪ Ineligibility for several programmes (which are in English or other non –Arabic languages) ▪ Limited choice of programmes (not according to interest, employability or life perspectives)	5
Learning options (8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18)	▪ Regulatory (FT attendance, lack of clear recognition of online programmes in the region) ▪ Cultural (distrust of online education) ▪ Lack of uniform and coordinated information service covering the different opportunities, rules, etc.	L	▪ Lower attendance than potentially possible (especially online programmes)	5
Usability of education acquired as refugee (11, 17, 19, 20)	▪ Uncertainty of whether refugee graduates would be allowed to work in the region, or whether their diplomas would be acknowledged in Syria after the end of the war (because of the uncertainty of what the future government will look like)	M	▪ Less perspective and effort to access higher education in target group	2

L: Low
M: Medium
H: High

4. HIGHER EDUCATION OPTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE REGION (STEPS 4-5)

This section identifies a selection of key players (donors) and the higher education options for Syrian students in the region and beyond. Table 5 presents a selection of key players and the higher education options for Syrian students in the region. The information presented – based on the desk research and the interviews conducted throughout the project – is meant to improve the understanding of the current situation and strategy on further and higher education for Syrian refugees in the region and should be seen as the baseline for future action. What emerges is a picture of scattered praiseworthy initiatives providing for a group of students who are often privileged vis-à-vis the bulk of other Syrian refugees. In other words, despite the wealth of endeavours, most students remain under-served.

As can be construed from this table, these operations focus mainly – albeit not solely – on scholarships. The total number of Syrian refugees served amounts to some 2,000-3,000 (that is, excluding initiatives below EQF5). Even accounting for significant approximations, this number is well below the demand (see Table 1).

Table 5: Key players and what they offer
(Acronyms: see list of Abbreviations)

Actor	EQF level (or Equivalent)	Number of beneficiaries (p/y)	Country	Notes
AMIDEAST	6	±50 (Tomorrow's Leaders) ±5 (Hope Fund Undergraduate Scholarship) [66 since 2000]	Middle East; Lebanon	*Tomorrow's Leaders* is a scholarship programme for disadvantaged candidates across the Middle East supported by the US Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). AMIDEAST sets the criteria for what the universities have to provide to be able to compete. For example, in 2013/14 it was for Syrians only; in 2014/15 also Lebanese. The programme provides four-year university scholarships and internship opportunities at AUB, AUC, or LAU. In addition to their studies, recipients are expected to engage in community service activities and participate in internships *Hope Fund Undergraduate Scholarship* is for disadvantaged Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Applicants must have all their transcripts and pass the TOEFL English test USAID has its own University scholarship programme in Lebanon for Lebanese only (about 150 a year)
AUF	6 and above	<50	Syria and Lebanon	Programme for Syrian students in Syria to help them get scholarships to study in Syria and to go to Francophone countries
British Council	Below 6	Dozens Za'atari camp initiative: 40 Teacher training: 1.500 language teachers	Jordan and Lebanon	The BC does mainly language and academic prep for university. E.g. 12-week pilot in Jordan for English and academic preparation for 40 Students in Za'atari Camp. Intake level: A2 (goal to reach B2) BC office Jordan has proposed to establish drop-in centres, for guidance on scholarships, online opportunities, and language training In Lebanon the BC runs a program to train Lebanese teachers for training 1,500 Syrian language teachers, in partnership with Institut Français and in cooperation with Lebanese MEHE. This is co-financed (80% EU – 20% BC : total budget €1.5m). Benefitted 90,000 Syrian school children aged 8–14 (indirectly Lebanese school children too)
DAAD	6 and above	200	Any	*Leaderships for Syria* provides 100 scholarships for studies in Germany in all fields of study except medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, law, the arts and architecture. Very selective (over 1,000 of applications expected) Another programme supports 100 Master scholarships (EQF 7) for studies in Jordan. Half of these scholarships are reserved for Jordanians
EC	7-8		Syria	Launched in 2004, the Erasmus Mundus programme has supported academic

Actor	EQF level (or Equivalent)	Number of beneficiaries (p/y)	Country	Notes
				cooperation and mobility with partner countries. As of 2014, cooperation with Partner countries in the field of higher education will be supported through the new Erasmus+ programme'. For Syria, under: ▪ Action 1: Joint Programmes: 39 Syrian Master Students have been selected over the ten annual selections up to 2013; ▪ Action 2: Partnerships (formerly External Cooperation Window) with scholarships: under the 2014 call, 2 additional partnerships (European University with a Syrian university) have been selected; ▪ Action 3: Promotion projects to enhance attractiveness, profile, image and visibility of European higher education worldwide: No Syrian institutions have been involved.
IIE	6 and above	>200	Any	The *IIE Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis* and IIE's Emergency Student Fund has enabled more than 200 Syrian university students to resume their studies at institutions in the U.S. and globally. The consortium includes IIE, Jusoor, Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), and the U.S. Department of State, Global Platform for Syrian Students, Kaplan Test Prep International, and the University of California, Davis. *From Camps to Campus* is a pilot project aiming at supporting Syrians in camps in Jordan to continue their higher education in Jordanian universities. This supports 7 students
Institut Français				*Teacher training programme: see BC*
Jesuit Commons	Below EQF5	230	Syria and Jordan	JC-HEM (Jesuit Commons Higher education at the Margins) strives to bring tertiary education via distance learning to marginalised students who are often excluded from access. JC:HEM offers a Diploma in Liberal Studies and several Community Learning Service Tracks. It works through partnership with US tertiary providers. Admission based on application and an English exam. No transcripts needed. It provides academic tracks over three years. The certificate is equivalent to 1.5 years (45 Jordanian credits). Graduates receive transcripts and can use the credits to transfer (e.g. to universities in the US). It is almost equivalent to an Associate Degree (EQF 5).
Jusoor	6 - 7	11 scholarships for Syrians university students in Lebanon	Global	In addition Jusoor runs the *Camp to Campus* programme with IIE (Jordan) and is part of the *Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis* (see IIE)

Actor	EQF level (or Equivalent)	Number of beneficiaries (p/y)	Country	Notes
		1 scholarship for Master at University of Cambridge		
LASeR	6 and above	670 (250 full scholarships + 420 partial scholarships)	Lebanon	Students are distributed in Lebanese universities, both UL and private (they seem to do better in private universities also because they get more English prep). Budget is max $250,000 annually from different donors LASeR supports majors relevant to the Syrian Labour market within Lebanon (e.g. education, health, business) Condition for the scholarship is participating in LASeR-run training in life skills, IT, English etc. aside the university courses Planning to create a fund for micro-credit fund to support Syrian entrepreneurship
NUFFIC	n/a (in principle >6)	140 (expected 20+ Syrian)	Region	The MENA Scholarship Programme (MSP) offers around 140 short course scholarships a year to professionals. The scholarships can be used for selected short courses in the Netherlands. They are distributed proportionally among the participating countries. Syrians can apply if they reside in one of the 10 MENA countries (Syria has been removed: Syrians in Syria cannot apply)
NRC	Below 6[36]	1,700 (JO) ±2,000 (LB)	Jordan and Lebanon	NRC focuses mainly on the *Youth Education Programme* (YEP), which is a 3-month sub-tertiary level programme and focuses on post-basic technical training courses such as tailoring, male hairdressing, electrical wiring and the ICDL (IT course). 6 centres in Lebanon 3 centres in Jordan, in the Za'atari, EJC and Azraq camps (NRC supports Accelerated Learning Programmes for children)
Sampaio Foundation	6 and above	>600	Global	The *Global Platform for Syrian Students* (see also IIE) was founded by former president of Portugal Jorge Sampaio. It is a multi-stakeholder initiative supported by IIE, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Union for the Mediterranean, and several governments to provide scholarships to Syrian students to go abroad. About 200

[36] The sort of courses offered under YEP is hard to define under the EQF framework. They are below Bachelor, but depending on the exact knowledge, competences and skills they produce they could reach even up to EQF 5 (this is evidenced by similar courses held across Europe but it seems apparent that it is not the case yet in the NRC YEP programmes for Syrians). Moreover, as they last three months, this could equate (roughly!) to 15 European Credits

Actor	EQF level (or Equivalent)	Number of beneficiaries (p/y)	Country	Notes
				in Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq; 100 in other countries of the Middle East and North African region; 100 in North America; 100 in Portugal and other European Union countries; and 100 in Brazil and other Latin American countries *Program for Syrian Armenian Students in an emergency situation*
SPARK	7	13 (90)	Turkey / The Netherlands	Scholarships for Syrians to attend Master courses and short courses at Dutch universities (part of the MENA Scholarship Programme (MSP)). This is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by NUFFIC. SPARK assesses the applications. In 2013 there were 30 available places, 800 applications and 13 finally awarded (based on applicants' fulfilling the criteria) In 2013 SPARK also started *Syrian summer University in Exile*, a pilot programme giving Syrian students who have had to abandon their studies, skills that might help them deal with the emergency situation they face and the eventual transition in Syria. The pilot (one week) attracted 90 students in 2013 and was run in cooperation with Universities in Raqqa (opposition-run Syria). SPARK would like to start also a winter school
Swedish Institute Study Scholarships	7	15 (for two years)	Syria / Sweden	The Swedish Institute has decided to allocate up to 15 scholarships for Syrian students on an annual basis for two years. The scholarships are for full-time master's level studies in Sweden for the academic years of 2014/15 and 2015/16, i.e. a total maximum of 30 scholarships. Scholarships are granted on condition that the students have been admitted to a master's programme at a Swedish university. Applicants must be students from Syria with a bachelor's degree from a Syrian university, but may at the time of application and admission reside in a country other than Syria, including Sweden.
UNESCO	6 and above		Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria	Several initiatives to gather data to inform decision making (e.g. SMS survey); advocacy; and institutional capacity building; "Train the trainers" initiatives. In particular The *Youth Education for Stability* (YES) programme (2014) to cover (a) global information-sharing via online platform and outreach and (b) advocacy for access, quality and funding
UNHCR	6	105	Jordan (45), Lebanon (60)	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (*Deutsch Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative*, or DAFI) is UNHCR's main global program for tertiary education, providing scholarships annually to refugees to study in host countries. It is centrally managed by UNHCR's HQ in Geneva. In July and August 2014 about 900 applications were received. In Lebanon, for the academic year 2014/2015, 20 scholarships will be granted to newly high school

Actor	EQF level (or Equivalent)	Number of beneficiaries (p/y)	Country	Notes
				graduates to start university and 40 for 2nd and 3rd university year student. DAFI scholarships are provided for one academic year. After one year, the scholarship can be renewed for another year, if the student passed the annual examination for promotion to the next academic year. Grant of more than $1.8m by the Said Foundation
UNWRA	6	40 scholarships via EU 4 were via Qatar Foundation [Lebanon]	Regional	Main focus in pre-tertiary. University scholarships are on merit basis and cover part of the fees Comprehensive approach to the Syrian crisis (pre-tertiary education): e.g. hard copy, online, CD/DVD, TV use depending on the need at the time Programmes apply to Palestinian Refugees from Syria. In Lebanon, UNRWA graduates about 500 annually pre-tertiary level
USAID	5 and above (but also lower levels short courses)			There are some programmes for Syrians managed via USAID's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), which helps in (a) repatriation (b) local Integration and (c) resettlement. Moreover, USAID funded programmes within universities on civic engagement and supporting debates at the time of the Arab springs $500m education budget in Jordan, but not for higher education
WUSC	5 and above	74 (in 2014) Usually 60-65 p/y)	Global	The *Student Refugee Programme* (SRP) is a resettlement program that provides opportunities for refugees to continue their post-secondary studies in Canada. It is not a scholarship programme. The SRP is supported by WUSC Local Committees (made up of university and college students, staff and faculty) on campuses across Canada. Through its agreements with the Government of Canada and Québec WUSC enables students sponsored through the program to enter Canada as permanent residents. WUSC accepts applications from refugees registered in Kenya, Malawi, Jordan, Lebanon and Malaysia. Age eligibility: 17-25

There are several other organizations that play a key role in the region even if they do not directly support higher education for Syrians financially. For example the Association of Arab Universities (AARU) represents over 300 universities in the region and is involved in a number of EC-funded projects. AARU has a special fund for Palestinians but not yet for Syrians. Online education providers are few. They include *inter alia* the Arab Open University (AOU), which offers part of its programmes online; TAGORG, a centre of provision located in Jordan which teams up with other universities worldwide to provide fully online courses; and the Syrian virtual university, which is recognized in Syria. Edraak—mentioned above—is another example. However, the key problem of online education is both learners' lack of acceptance as well as recognition issues (for example in Jordan the Ministry recognizes only online programmes offered on universities listed on established world rankings[37]). Moreover, there are organizations, such as the UK-based Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), which have the aim to support academics[38].

Although Table 5 does not cover higher education institutions[39], providers' cooperation is pivotal for initiatives to take hold. In general institutions could, *inter alia*, offer reduced fees (especially if they are part of a network that might cover the remaining balance like in Lebanon's LASeR experience), allow learners more time to produce all necessary transcripts (notwithstanding the ultimate legal requirement to produce them), facilitate language and bridging courses, or support and run online education.

However, providers have two important areas of concern which need to be held into account for project options to be acceptable. Such areas of concern are fundamental in that they go beyond the "practical" needs listed in Table 3, but are at the heart of what higher education institutions do:

- Mission: higher education is about teaching and learning, research, and civil engagement ("third mission"). Remedying to Syrian students' drop in higher education or lack of higher education opportunities does not necessarily fit neatly into these categories. Institutions often reiterate that academic education does not *ipso facto* imply catering for Syrian refugees (instead, as providers they have a responsibility to promote access for local students);
- Capacity: many institutions do not have enough capacity to provide for local students and as a result have high Student-Staff Ratios (SSR). This problem appears to be longstanding and a strong influx of Syrian refugees in institutions would make it worse. As SSR is an important quality indicator (both in national quality assessments and as part of international ranking exercises) the fear is that supporting access for Syrians (a positive in participation terms) will be outweighed by the deterioration in educational quality and institutional reputation.

4.1. Strengths, Weaknesses and Towards an Outcome Approach

What emerges from the analysis thus far is a fragmented picture where stakeholders are intent on separate activities that depend on a number of limiting conditions, including for example their capacity self-assessment and their evaluation of the situation as humanitarian vs. developmental according to their missions and perspectives. For example, the British Council connects people with the UK, Alliance Française with France; JC-HEM cooperates with US universities and offers distance learning opportunities but does not (yet) provide qualifications at level EQF-5 or above. These commendable initiatives are uncoordinated in that there is no comprehensive "trans-provider strategy" to address the needs of Syrian higher education students. As a result, Syrian students have

[37] Particularly the *World University Ranking* and the *Academic Ranking of World Universities*. The field work revealed that there are differing opinions across the higher education community on what is recognized by the ministry, and in fact there appears to be no single rule except that part of the programme must be conducted f2f

[38] See: http://www.cara1933.org/

[39] The reason for this is that a number of common features were identified (see text). Several institutions were visited during the field work. See list of stakeholders at the end of this report

a tenuous knowledge base on existing initiatives and may miss out on important opportunities. At the same time, as mentioned in the policy background section of this report, diversity in higher education has always been a way to respond to changing demands (for instance as massification took hold). Thus, it is important to promote diversity of provision to tackle the Syrian situation (i.e. a new demand). But the current fragmentation and lack of coordination among providers can in fact reduce diversity of offers and is therefore inefficient.

Moreover, to ensure post-war Syria is a functioning country actions should encourage a flexible higher education and scientific research policy that can focus on the most needed fields of study for reconstruction and post-war development as well as the inherent social added value of higher education (as discussed already in the 1940s in the US, see e.g. Hook, 1942). While prescribing deterministically the scope of interventions would be at odds with the diversity of offers just mentioned, the resources available are insufficient to cover every area and thus priorities must be made (for example teacher training, amongst others, is necessary to ensure continued basic and secondary education, see e.g. Sheehy, 2014). In this context, some of the post-1989 debates about Eastern Europe's transition towards free market and even German and Japanese post-WW2 reconstruction policies can be referred to. For example, with regards to Poland's transition in the early 1990s, Wierzbicki (1991, p. 63) calls for, inter alia, "[…] a flexible scientific policy of promoting generally quality in basic research while concentrating in applied research on several selected fields decisive for an elastic restructuring of the Polish economy". His fundamental stance is in favour of supporting certain parts of applied science and enterprise over others ("pick winners") like Germany and Japan have been successfully doing for a long time (*Ibid*, p. 64).

But careful consideration should also be given to the level of study that will be needed (a) to address the key reconstruction needs of post-war Syria and (b) the needs of the labour market in neighbouring countries where a number of Syrian refugees are bound to settle. Different EQF levels imply the achievement of different learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competencies[40]). For example EQF 5 qualifications are short degrees that are strongly labour market-oriented and might provide a good basis for both re-development and providing life perspectives to disenfranchised youth who have not yet accessed higher education. At the same time, higher levels (Bachelor or Masters, i.e. EQF 6/7) are also necessary to develop a balanced and complementary workforce in society, as well as Doctoral (EQF 8). A fundamental question is the extent to which an EC intervention should support different levels of study. One can expect that the higher the level of education sought, the less the students are in need of external support (as opposed to family support, for example). In other words, someone aspiring to a PhD (EQF 8) is likely to be less disadvantaged (have greater capitals, as defined in Section 2.1 of this report) than someone who did not access higher education at the outset because of the crisis or had to abandon his/her studies. A reasonable intervention should, hence, prioritize support for programmes at EQF 5 through EQF 7.

Whatever action is ultimately taken, what is needed is a more "all-inclusive approach" where different players interact, cooperate and influence each other to enable change. This approach is often associated with an outcome mapping project design which focuses on "down-stream" changes in behaviour that should occur in the boundary partners[41], making change achievable in a sustainable and enduring manner. This, in turn, means that each actor in the process is an agent of change, not a passive "beneficiary" caught in new circumstances. From the perspective of potential projects, outcome mapping emphasises that project goals may be of a "love-to-see" character rather than realistically achievable outputs of a limited-time project, and that the project activities cannot singlehandedly achieve those outcomes. It reinforces, therefore, seeing the participants in the

[40] See: https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page
[41] See definition in the introduction

project as partners and agents of change, rather than passive receivers of aid (Earl *et al*, 2001; Smutylo, 2005).

As mentioned heretofore, online education and other forms of distant learning are, today, a popular mode of higher education delivery. Increasingly, the use of new technologies enables alternative modes of delivery and new forms of teaching and can potentially reach a significant mass of students. Digitization offers opportunities to learn independently from time and location and to focus on differentiation, broadening, and deepening of knowledge. For example, an emphasis on online materials can allow for a more intensive F2F instruction experience focused on problem-solving and discussions rather than "traditional" lectures and requiring less time (the so-called "flipped classroom", which is a form of blended learning[42]). Moreover, digital delivery can allow students to deepen their knowledge in their areas of interest as well as promote self-selection through online matching tools.

Yet, despite its long presence in the region and possibility to capacity expansion, online education does not attract a large proportion of higher education seekers. The number of students enrolled in the Syrian Virtual University in 2011 (after 8 years of operation) summed up to 8,100 from a total of 661,300 students in all Syrian universities. Online Education is generally regarded[43] to be of less value for its weaker accreditation[44] giving way for unpopularity among employers, in addition to the cultural belief in the importance of traditional modes of education in terms of learning outcomes, delivery and examination. It also cannot cater for a wide range of training intensive specialties. Students also give importance to presence in class and the social aspects of traditional universities, which helps them (especially as foreigners) to integrate in host communities and formulate a social basis.

From the information presented, it is possible to construct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) matrix of key actors (donors and institutions). A SWOT analysis is an instrument to make a diagnosis and to look forward strategically and can guide future action. It is a way to look critically at how present strengths can be exploited in the context of opportunities and threats (the external dimension), and which weaknesses need to be overcome in order to be successful (Nijssen and Ligthart, 1999).

As such, it is more than a list of strengths and weaknesses. Organizations face exogenous conditions (threats and opportunities) and have internal characteristics (strengths and weaknesses). Strategies can be successful only if they consider these different dimensions and exploit their potential interrelations. For example, an organization might have a robust network of international connections and be active in a country with high influx of Syrian refugees, which today is globally acknowledged as a problem to be addressed. From a strategic point of view, the former (good networks) is an internal strength and the latter (awareness of the problem) is a potential external opportunity. Such an organization might, then, request funds to lead activities to strengthen regional higher education networks and capacity in exchange for favouring Syrian students (exploiting its strengths in the context of an existing opportunity).

Based on the SWOT one can design credible options with better chances of success.

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[42] There is a wealth of information on this approach. For example see: http://www.uq.edu.au/tediteach/flipped-classroom/what-is-fc.html

[43] From interviews and focus groups conducted

[44] Regionally, each country only recognizes its own institutions - an issue which AOU has solved by establishing campuses in several Arab capitals

Table 6: SWOT Matrix: Towards Possible (Preliminary) Options

		Internal	
		Strengths ▪ Organizational reputation ▪ Good international connections ▪ Initiative/good will	**Weaknesses** ▪ Limited resources ▪ Heavy structures ▪ Lack of provider capacity (e.g. for online programmes)
External	**Opportunities** ▪ Growing international awareness; ▪ Active Syrian expat communities.	Using strengths in the context of opportunities	Dealing with weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities
External	**Threats** ▪ Lack of coordination with other actors; ▪ Reliance on provider cooperation; ▪ Reliance on enabling national legislations; ▪ Reliance on external funds; ▪ Impact of new demands on SSR.	Using strengths to limit the impact of external threats	Dealing with weaknesses by trying to limit the threats

For improving the situation of Syrian refugees (IDPs and IIDPs) age group 18 – 24 different possible **options for action** can be identified:

1) Option 1: provision of budget support for higher education

The option to use the aid delivery modality of budget support would channel available funds to support the higher education systems in the region through direct endowments to governments in the countries affected by the refugee crisis. In keeping with OECD (2006, p.26), direct budget support is a transfer of money which is managed "[…] in accordance with the recipient's budgetary procedures". Sector budget support, as a more focused aid delivery modality could be used as channel to establish one or more of the following options.

2) Option 2: establishing a Higher Education Facility for Syrian students to which different donors can contribute to

A facility is a temporary organizational body set up to initiate and improve assistance activities for Syrian refugees during a limited time period. It is established as a visible EU-funded programme, managed by a Technical Support Unit and with a number of tasks, including (i) managing of one (or more) call(s) for proposals, it (ii) facilitating communication on lessons learned, (iii) further replicating successful approaches and (iv) providing relevant orientation to the target group. Such a mechanism should work under a call for proposals, following eligibility and selection criteria. This option is in fact a higher education development cooperation programme that enables (a) different donors to contribute to "top-up" the existing available budget, and encourages (b) different organizations to respond to calls for proposals according to set eligibility and selection criteria. This option addresses most of the identified problems, including the fragmentation of donor activities in the region, the need for involvement of local institutions etc.

3) Option 3: strengthening regional higher education networks and capacity in exchange for favouring Syrian students and reconstruction relevant research

Under this option, universities in the region and other providers can team up and receive direct EC support, provided they ensure a "quota" (to be agreed upon) for Syrian learners. The latter can be operationalized, for example, either through a free-fees system for eligible Syrian students or through a fee-reduction (with the balance being covered by the available EC fund). Network members can agree on exchange programmes for their (Syrian) students, which would release some of the pressure on their capacity to cater for local students.

4) Option 4: Use of MOOCs only

This option provides Syrian refugees with the possibility of following selected MOOCs with all costs involved (e.g. facilities and reading materials) covered by the donor. The costs are expected to be low, with much of the infrastructure already in place. It is a "cheap" alternative to scholarships, and can cover a high number of beneficiaries. Moreover, given the nature of MOOCs, this option should be open to all who want to avail themselves of it, without any differentiation between Syrian and local students. However, one may expect that many (possibly mostly) Syrians would deem this a viable alternative.

5) Option 5: creating a Virtual Open Arab University to support existing online studies

In cooperation with already existing initiatives for 'virtual studies', efforts could be made to establish a virtual Arab University, which could teach in Arabic and be (physically) located everywhere. With permanent and temporary academic staff, this university could focus on thematic areas and discipline which are of special relevance for the Arab world and the Middle East.

6) Option 6: using funds for more scholarships

A possible option is to provide dedicated scholarships for Syrians to study in the region or overseas. Careful consideration would have to be given to eligibility and selection criteria (merit vs. need) as well as the nature of the scholarships (e.g. full vs. partial).

Each of these options has its own advantages and disadvantages:

Using the modality of budget support for higher education may reduce disparities in host countries and have low overhead costs but its impact might be more long-term.

A *higher education facility for Syrians* responds to the multitude of needs and potentials, can support a high number of youth in host countries in the region, is flexible and can be scaled up, it builds regional networks and capacity; however, it would need an administration, a secretariat with overhead costs and could currently finance only small projects.

Strengthening regional higher education networks is likely to be sustainable as it creates capacity in the region, but it is a long-term process, which focuses strongly on academic institutions.

Use of MOOCS is a good opportunity to expand existing knowledge and to close gaps in knowledge. So far certificates are not provided and/or recognized.

Establishing a Virtual Open Arab University might potentially cater for a high number of students, but must carefully consider formal issues relating to recognitions, quality assurance and accreditation, as well as "non-formal" issues about the societal, academic and LM acceptance of online education.

Finally, *scholarships* support students fully, and are thus a very optimal solution for those who are reached, but at the same time the numbers will remain limited and there is the risk that harsh competition will not favour the most in need.

5. TOWARDS A MIX OF INTERVENTIONS

This final section of the report argues in favour of establishing a higher education cooperation programme for Syrian students (*option II*) which would enable a mix of interventions rather than attempting a one-size-fits-all action. It outlines the possible costs involved to enable the facility's expected operation and sets out possible eligibility criteria. Such an EU-funded programme will include eligibility conditions and criteria for project selection, as outlined in Table 10. While one may consider that in many cases assistance might be desirable for both student *and* families, this is unlikely to be feasible in practice under the current (financial) constraints and is not recommended. Moreover, information gathered during the field work suggests that supporting participation of Syrian students in the hosting countries' higher education systems will be accepted by all parties involved if the interventions also provides local benefits (e.g. for institutional capacity building).

5.1. The Need for a Multidimensional Answer to the Syrian Higher Education Question

The Syrian crisis has left thousands otherwise qualified learners deprived of their right to higher education. As mentioned heretofore, this situation is exceptional because of its (human and geographic) scale, the speed with which the crisis has unfolded, and the nature of the higher education system affected.

Arguably, then, the problem cannot be tackled with established measures such as need- or merit-based scholarships alone. For example, one may consider enabling young Syrian refugees in the region[45] to return to the pre-crisis tertiary education participation rates of approx. 20% as a reasonable objective. By a conservative estimation—that is, net of those who are already enrolled and current fellows in international programmes—support would be required for around 60,000 individuals. One can gauge roughly the financial costs involved in catering for learners for a 3-year programme at a university in each of the countries in the region, based on the applicable fee structures and expected board and lodging costs. Without the pretence of accuracy, Table 7 shows that the scale of magnitude to fill the higher education demand gap with scholarships alone would run into the billions rather than millions of Euro. Moreover, even with the degree of uncertainty and approximation of these figures, it is clear that an approximate budget of €10m, a scholarship-only solution could not fill the demand gap. Table 7 shows the hypothetical budget needed to fill the demand gaps in the region and the numbers that could be covered by a €10m endowment[46].

[45] That is, excluding IDPs

[46] The fee levels vary, at times dramatically, among different fields and/or types of institutions. The figures shown in Table 7 are estimates based on the top and lower fee levels for different forms of higher education (and different programmes) in each country, as presented in websites such as http://www.studyinturkey.gov.tr/ and on individual institutional websites (in Arabic) which the authors examined in addition to interviews conducted in select institutions in Lebanon and Jordan. For example, Turkish public institutions have low or no fees but in private universities fees can rise up to U$D20,000 (the Turkish system is already struggling to cater for its own students and, although the Turkish government allows Syrian students to gain access for free at public universities as "special students, this avenue does not provide credits or a terminal degree). This "averaging" exercise is deemed the most suitable to provide a realistic idea of the costs involved in a scholarship solution while an arbitrary choice of the "cheapest" or "most expensive" programme in each context is unlikely to be consistent with the diverse demands from Syrian students. Costs of living are based on focus group discussions and interviews with students (including some who did have experience in Egypt and Turkey) and desk research, and include rental (at minimum cost and in cohabitation with roommates) .

Table 7: Costs of a full Scholarship-Only Solution – Estimates

Country	Syrians aged 18-24 in the country (est.)	Syrians enrolled in higher education	20% target	Gap to fill with intervention	Full Scholarship per learner for a 3-year programme [(a) (b)]	Total cost (EUR estimate) [(b)]	Students who can be covered with a €10m budget (% of gap)
Lebanon	146,456	8,549	29,291	20,742	€ 64,500	€ 1.3bn	155 (1%)
Jordan	77,718	6,057	15,544	9,487	€ 45,500	€ 0.4bn	220 (2%)
Turkey	145,310	1,784	29,062	27,278	€ 30,000	€ 0.8bn	330 (1%)
Other (Egypt / Iraq)**	54,552	4,224	10,910	6,686	€ 30,000	€ 0.2bn	330 (5%)
Total (adj for intl scholarships)	**424,036**	**20,614**	**84,807**	**59,193**	--	**€ 2.7bn**	--

(a) Lebanon: U$D 260 per credit hour on average with an "average" programme of 130 credits (costs differ depending on the field); U$D 600 p/m cost of living estimate; administrative fees excluded. Jordan: average U$D 7,000 p/y (costs differ depending on the field); U$D 500 p/m cost of living estimate; administrative fees excluded. Turkey: average U$D 2,500 p/y (costs differ depending on the field); U$D 500 p/m cost of living estimate; administrative fees excluded. Egypt: average U$D 4,500 p/y (costs differ depending on the field); U$D 350 p/m cost of living estimate; administrative fees excluded
(b) 1 U$D = .86€ as of January 2015
** Based on data from Egypt only (Iraq not available)

Table 7 estimates roughly the costs of full scholarships that is, covering fees, rental and cost of living. Although the countries in question already have several grant and/or scholarships to support students, they are not full-coverage. Indeed, a full-coverage scenario is unlikely and is presented here to provide the reader with a sense of the costs involved in catering for such high numbers of students in need.

Other sources[47] suggest similar levels of costs (including subsistence and fees), but illustrate that full scholarship schemes are unlikely. For example, in Turkey, State (monthly) scholarships provided for the current academic year are approximately €115 at Bachelor level, €230 at Master level and €345 at Doctoral level. In addition, there may be institutional scholarships based on applicants' secondary exam results, which varies between €100 and €500 per month. A number of private universities are also offering non-refundable scholarships to successful students if they choose to study at their institutions[48]. However, fees vary strongly. Public universities are virtually free, but private universities apply fees up to over €12,000. Moreover, the cost of living in Turkey is strongly dependant on location; Istanbul (where about 40% of students live) is the most expensive at about €500 per month for students living away from home. Similar scenarios apply to other neighbouring countries such as Lebanon or Jordan, according to the same sources. In the latter there are a number of scholarships provided by the Ministry, which pay for the full tuition for eligible (Jordanian) students. However the costs of living (estimated between €2-300 for lodging and about €400 for subsistence and incidentals) are barely covered as families are expected to provide support. In Lebanon, the only public university (University of Lebanon), which caters for about 38% of all university students, charges about U$D200 per year for Bachelor students and U$D500 for Master programmes; private providers may charge up to U$D25,000. While there is no particular scheme in place by the state to help students in need, there are contributions to families from different sources financed by the State based on the type of state employees, as shown in Table 8. As can be seen, (a) there is no particular support to those in need, but rather the support is provided to all[49], and (b) the

[47] The EC gathered the cost information provided in the following paragraphs through universities and NEO offices in the region
[48] €1 = TRY2.89 as of April 2015 (see: http://www.xe.com/)
[49] As the support depends on the type of State employee, this support is unlikely to benefit non-Lebanese

state is indirectly supporting the private sector (which is a specific Lebanese phenomenon applied to the general school education too).

Table 8: Financial Aid to Cover the Yearly Cost of an Enrolment in Higher Education, Public or Private, by Type of State Employee

Type of state employee	Source of aid	Aid per year for a student enrolled in LU	Aid per year for a student enrolled in private
Full-time professors of LU	Caisse Mutuelle	Lump sum of U$D 2,000	90% of the real cost of study with a ceiling of USD 8200
State employees including school professors	Cooperative of the State Employees	Lump sum of U$D966	75% of the real cost of study with a ceiling of USD 2890 for disciplines like Medical Sciences and Engineering and of USD 2320 for other disciplines
All military services	Ministry of Defence	A lump sum equivalent to twice the fees paid at LU	60% of the real cost of study at a private university without a ceiling
Employees covered by "ĩNational Social security Fund" get aid to cover cost of study of their children, but the Fund is managed by the State and financed by the private sector.			

Source: information from EC/ National Erasmus Offices/ university interviews

Similar conclusions may be drawn about budget support aimed at strengthening higher education systems in the region (with the expectation of more intakes of Syrian learners). First, a potential €10m endowment would be but a small fraction of the current state budget for higher education and would have negligible impact. For example, Lebanon spends about 2% of its GDP on higher education or €761m - in this case the EU's available budget would thus be 1.3% of this 2%. But perhaps more importantly, budget support is a modality which by its very nature leaves ample leeway to individual countries to pursue their own policy priorities. It is questionable whether (minor) infrastructural or capacity investments that such an initiative might elicit would in fact benefit Syrians because each system has its own considerations which might take immediate priority (e.g. considerations about research excellence, rankings, and international reputation).

Table 9: Higher Education Expenditure

Country	GDP (€) [(a)]	Higher education	Higher education expenditure (% of GDP)	EU endowment potential (% of current HE expenditure)
Lebanon	€37bn	€756m	2%	1.3%
Jordan	€30bn	€284m	1%	3.5%
Turkey	€710bn	€9bn	1%	0.1%

(a) In official exchange rate – not purchasing power parity. Estimates of 2013
Sources: Economic Research Forum (2009); World Fact Book

As opposed to other options, designing a programme for Syrian students under a call for proposal modality enables the implementation of a suite of actions.

Such a mechanism should work under a call for proposals, according to strict eligibility and selection criteria, whereby the funds would be used to co-finance a broader variety of initiatives of further and higher education providers in the region: through the eligibility and selection criteria, regional networking and cooperation in this area cam be strengthened, existing potentials used, and a broader number of 'windows' be opened to the target group.

In turn, this means that the EC can have more leverage in steering potential projects according to its priorities and enabling an optimal mix of interventions. Chart 5 is an example of a possible project mix based on the relative importance that EC might give to different areas of interventions (eligibility for project funding would be evaluated according to the EC's priorities). Chart 5 is for example purposes only.

Chart 5: Mix of Possible Project Intervention under Option 2 (Example)

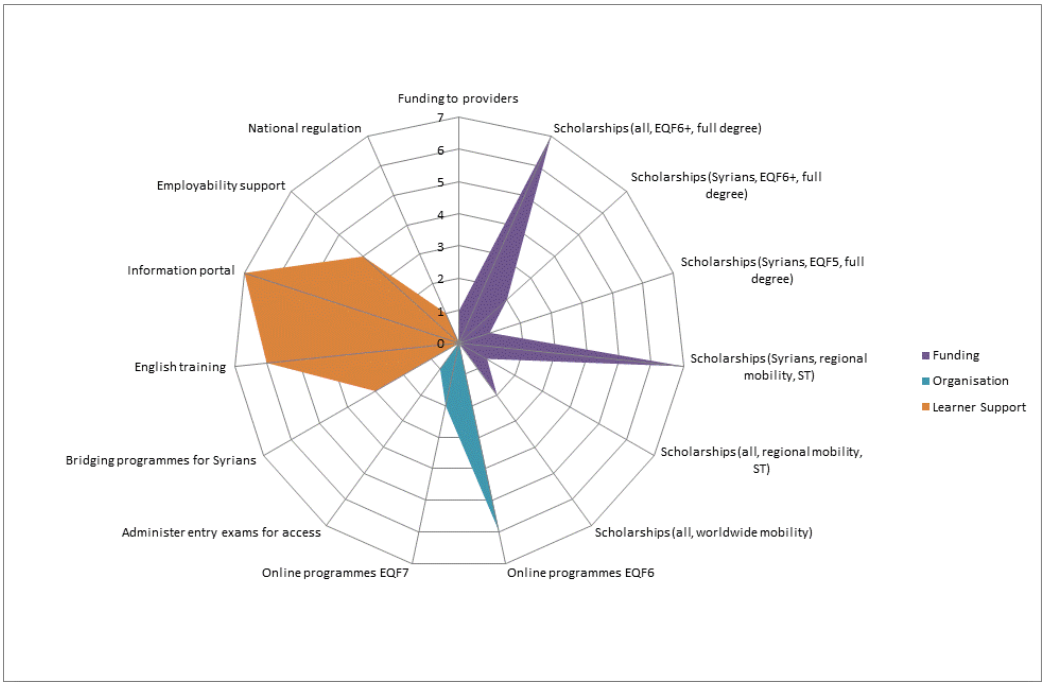

Chart 5 is a fictional scenario where the EC creates its own mix of interventions according to the following priorities (0 means "no priority" and 7 "highest priority"):

<u>Top priorities (first tier of funding)</u>

- Scholarships to cover full degree studies (eligibility: all);
- Scholarships for short term regional mobility (eligibility: Syrians only);
- The establishment of online programmes at EQF 6;
- The development of an information portal;
- English training.

<u>Medium priorities (second tier of funding)</u>

- Scholarships to cover full degree studies (eligibility: Syrians);
- Scholarships for worldwide mobility (eligibility: all);
- The establishment of online programmes at EQF 7;
- Bridging programmes (not English) for Syrians;
- Employability counselling.

<u>Low priorities (third tied of funding e.g. if funds are left over)</u>

- Funding providers;
- Scholarships for Syrians to access programmes at EQF 5;

- Scholarships for short term regional mobility (eligibility: all);
- Administering entry exams;
- Promoting change at national level.

An option enabling this sort of intervention mix requires a robust administrative structure to manage it. Based on common practice, such a structure would require about 25%-30% of the full budget and would include a set of working categories such as:

- Use of regional experts/stakeholders to develop the call(s);
- Assessment of proposals;
- Monitoring of the projects, including regular appraisals of projects' annual plans and annual reports, and financial audits throughout the project;
- Evaluation of project results, communication of lessons learned.

Under a call for proposal mechanism, applicants may submit tenders, which the EC evaluates according to a set of eligibility and selection criteria for applicants. Table 10 shows possible criteria.

Table 10: Proposed eligibility and selection criteria based on the main findings of this report

Go / No-Go Criteria	Eligibility Criteria	Ambition and Selection Criteria
Organizations are financially sound and registered	Governmental or public organizations (e.g. accreditation bodies, teacher training institutes) represented in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, Syria), regardless of the official place of registration. Organizations must be involved and active in further and post-secondary education activities (e.g. the Primary Education Councils would not be eligible)	<u>Substantive quality of proposal</u> ▪ Is based on a needs analysis; ▪ Is creative and innovative (adds value to other existing initiatives and does not replicate; ▪ Addresses topics, research, other issues which are of specific importance for refugees, for conflict resolution, for re-construction and state building; ▪ Makes use of innovative teaching and learning approaches. *Possible Weight 20%*
Consortia of eligible applicants	NGOs represented in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, Syria) regardless of the official place of registration. National, regional and international NGOs which are involved and active in further and post-secondary education activities in the region would be eligible.	<u>Relevance of proposal</u> ▪ Meets the objectives of the call for proposals; ▪ Considers financial restrictions of refugees; ▪ Consistent with the requirements of the country and of Syrian students; ▪ Follow the national priorities and local needs with regards to dealing with the Syrian crisis; ▪ Demonstrates local ownership; ▪ Demonstrates that the project promotes participation in EQF 5, 6, or 7 or equivalent. *Possible Weight 20%*
One bidder, one bid" rule: This is a go or no go criterion ▪ Applicant has submitted no more than one bid; ▪ Any consortium partner or sub-contractor is not included in more than one bid; ▪ No team member in more than one bid.	Private and public tertiary education providers represented in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, Syria) regardless of the official place of registration	<u>Effectiveness of proposal</u> ▪ Clear description of objectives, inputs, activities, and results; ▪ Measurable outcomes; ▪ Feasible project activities; ▪ Monitoring of activities is foreseen throughout the project. *Possible Weight 10%*
	Requesting organization is part of an	<u>Efficiency of proposal</u>

Go / No-Go Criteria	Eligibility Criteria	Ambition and Selection Criteria
	established network in the region, in any capacity (full or associate membership for example) as long as it can demonstrate active involvement (e.g. through leadership of at least ### projects in the topic area within the last five years)	▪ Clear distribution of roles and tasks among partners; ▪ Price/quality: the project costs are reasonable, justified, and there are not cheaper alternatives. *Possible Weight 10%*
	Demonstrated capacity to manage an activity on the scale of the project in question	<u>Impact of proposal</u> ▪ Outlines the potential tangible and quick effects on Syrian learners; ▪ Is sensitive to transversal aspects such as gender, culture, poverty, sustainability, and human rights; ▪ The proposal is likely to have multiplier effects; ▪ The proposal is likely to realize changes (in the organization or the system) that will benefit Syrian students immediately and local students over time. *Possible Weight 25%*
	Demonstrated capacity to begin activities within 90 days from signing the contract with the EC	<u>Sustainability of proposal</u> ▪ Clear plans to maintain or adapt the activities after the project ends to continue supporting refugee students; ▪ Takes into account its impact on the policy level (political sustainability). *Possible Weight 10%*
	Organizations are directly responsible for the preparation/ management/implementation of the project, i.e. not act as an intermediary	
	The project is ready for implementation	

5.2. Recommended Approach

The approach for an EU intervention which is recommended by the team, had to take into consideration that the proposed programme addresses refugees, young people confronted with a crisis situation which requires quick action which produces quick effects and impacts. Unfortunately, so far, there is not much experience or lessons to learn from international support to further and higher education in Humanitarian Aid and crisis situations, where refugees are living under very different and often changing conditions[50]. Different to primary and secondary education, there is no standard which can be followed, not a 'one fits for all' type of education for the target group 18 – 24. The team's research and assessment showed that there are a number of ongoing initiatives in the academic sector, some few as well which provide vocational skills, general life skills and orientation to the target group. However, given the sheer quantity of persons in need, all these initiatives are scattered interventions which have not yet shown a significant impact on the 'generation' in need.[51]

Modern – and often less expensive and easier to access – e-learning solutions are not yet really accepted in the region (culturally, but as well in terms of recognition by national accreditation bodies). Furthermore, taking into consideration the social and economic difficulties which existed in the host countries in the region already prior to the crisis, and the visa restrictions for refugees, the team recommends:

The setting up of a mechanism, which:

- *Makes the best use of existing potentials;*
- *Meets various needs of the target group for participating in EQF levels 5, 6, and 7 (or equivalent) education;*
- *Supports equal access to further and higher education to the ones most in need;*
- *Contributes to better coordination and to continuously improving further and higher education interventions in the region;*
- *Further promotes the use of e-learning tools and approaches in further and higher education;*
- *Reduces fragmentation of interventions and actors – produces pilot experiences for further replication;*
- *Can be easily scaled up.*

Such a mechanism should work under a call for proposals, following the eligibility and selection criteria outlined in 5.1., and managed by a facility, with a secretariat function and a coordination and quality assurance function.

Under the *secretariat function*, the facility would develop and manage at least one call for proposals, and monitor the implementation of the selected projects. Together with making the program and the EU visible, the facility presents and communicates the program to the broader public and makes it attractive for other donors to join. The secretariat provides services to the Donor (the EC) through the management of the CfP, and to potential applicants through information and feedback provision.

Under the *coordination and quality assurance function*, the facility provides services to the target group as well as to potential and existing further and higher education providers in the region. In this function, it would establish and run a website (in Arabic) which collects and presents information on existing further and higher education offers for Syrian refugees, including those selected under the CfP. The facility provides feedback to the projects and project partners, encourages exchange of

[50] In camps, in host communities, as refugee communities in host countries, moving within and in and out of Syria, etc.
[51] As one interview partner mentioned: „we are all just offering what we have…"

experiences and joint learning between the different projects and partners, and publishes good practice examples.

The facility could either (a) be hosted by a competent organisation (in or out of the region), alternatively a (b) PMU needs to be set up for this program. In both cases, a percentage of the overall financial resources for this program would need to be used for the management of the CfP and for the added value produced by the facility (in its coordination and quality assurance function).

For option (a), a host organisation would need to:

- Be accepted by the main actors and providers of further and higher education in the Region;
- Be accepted by the main actors and providers of further and higher education to Syrian refugees;
- Have experience with the management of EU funded calls for proposals;
- Have experience in the Middle East;
- Have NO interest in submission of own proposals (conflict of interest).

During an overall (facility) lifetime of 3 years, one call could be prepared, managed and projects (2 years max. duration) implemented. If the costs for the management of the facility are not higher than 20% of the overall budget, and eligible project budgets range between €500,000 and €1,5m, a significant number (5 – 15) of projects could be financed. This would allow as well for smaller actors to participate in the bidding for projects, and give room for broader diversity.

Increased impact and sustainability of the action can be expected through:

- Possible scaling up and buy-in of additional donors;
- Use of lessons learned in similar environments;
- Use of lessons learned for further and higher education initiatives in the host countries;
- Use of lessons learned for preparation of new projects – improved project pipeline;
- Increased capacity of universities and other partners in the region.

6. REFERENCES

6.1. Interviews conducted

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- http://www.ehea.info
- http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-basics/Bologna-an-overview-of-the-main-elements.aspx;
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- http://www.needsassessment.org/
- http://www.offa.org.uk/
- http://www.shanghairanking.com/
- http://www.studyinturkey.gov.tr/
- http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/country-profile.aspx?code=SYR&regioncode=40525
- http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx
- http://www.u-map.eu
- http://www.u-map.eu/
- http://www.u-multirank.eu/#!/home?trackType=home&section=entrance;
- http://www.uq.edu.au/tediteach/flipped-classroom/what-is-fc.html
- https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/how-does-eqf-work
- https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page
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- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFxaKqRkJFw
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSeXFifKiVU

7. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Survey Report

Questionnaire report

By Malaz Safar Jalani

This report was prepared as part of the
Study to Design a Programme / Clearinghouse Providing Access to Higher Education for Syrian Refugees and Internal Displaced Persons

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide the study with a broader view from the perspective of the target group. The gathered responses serve to indicate stronger notions and provide additional info and evidence that caters for the lack of solid statistics of Syrian youth, especially those who live in Syria, as nearly half the responses came from Syria.

The questionnaire was disseminated online among the followers of several Syrian Facebook pages and groups which publish scientific research and education and advertise employment opportunities for young Syrians. This dissemination method was deemed the most appropriate to reach Syrian youth who have resorted to, popular online communication to overcome distance and problems to assemble. Using these existing platforms appealed to the target group. Young Syrians aged 18 - 25 represents 69% of the responses.

Answer choices included open-ended choices where respondents had the possibility to provide explanations and more options. Those answers were looked at individually to cater for a broader perspective on analysed aspects, such as the hurdles to access higher education. This comes from the inherited functionality of the information gathered and the online method of reach, which is to present a viable idea of a proportion of Syrian youth. The information, from a select of questions, was then triangulated following the research direction.

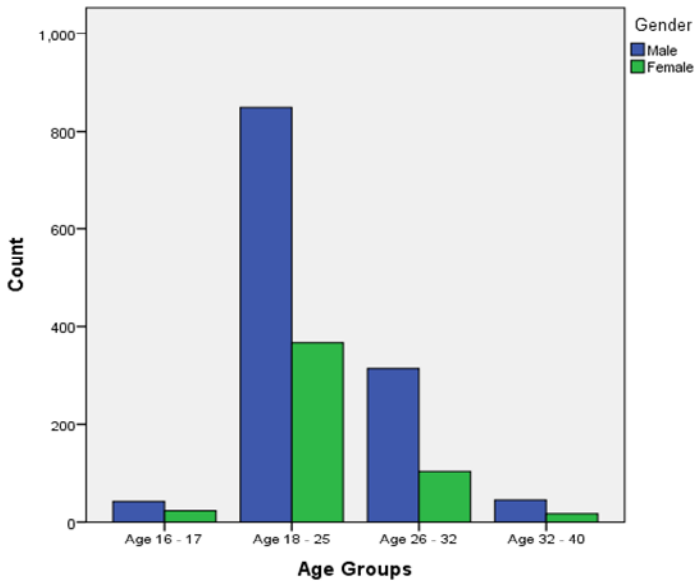
2. RESPONSE GROUP DESCRIPTION

2.1 Age and Gender

Respondents were between 16 and 40 years of age. To allow selectivity in data processing for certain questions, they were split into four age groups: 16-17, 18-25, 26-32, 32-40. Respondents were also requested to specify the gender.

The gender composition of the responses population was 71% males to 29% females across the four age groups. As mentioned above, the 18-25 age group was 69% (or 1,215) of the total response count; their gender distribution was similar to the total population's. The age group of 26-32 represents 24% of the response population and has a male-female ratio of 3 to 1.

Chart 1: Respondents by Age and Gender

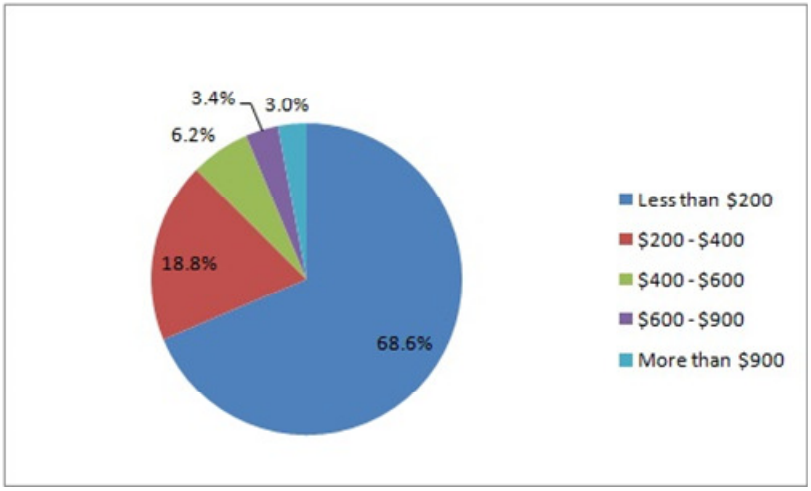


N= 1761

2.2 Income and income sources

About 87% of the respondents earned or have had a monthly disposable income of less than $400 per month. Moreover, their income depended mainly on another family member (68%) and work (34%). This holds true also for the 18 -25 age group.

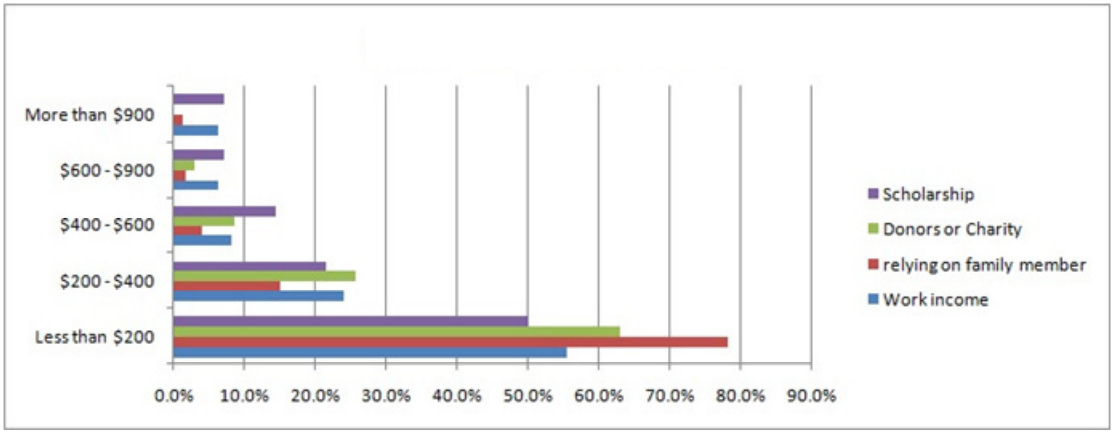
Chart 2: Income Distribution



N= 1215

The main sources of income were family members and work but many also avail themselves of other income sources such as help from states or organizations

Chart 3: Income by Income Source

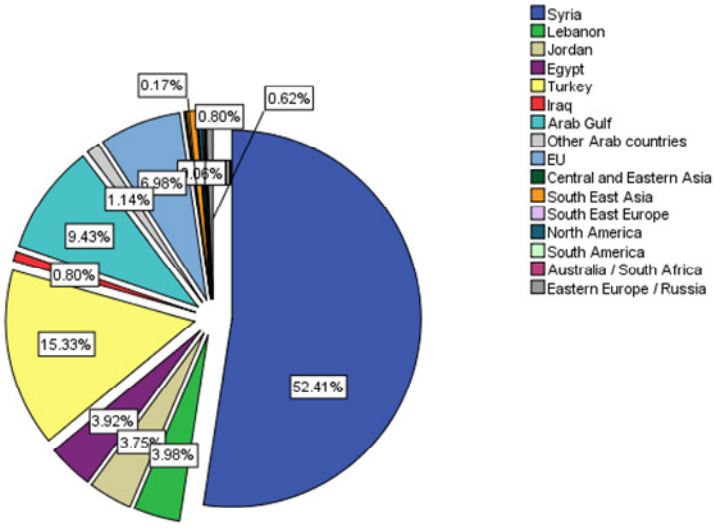


N= 1215

2.3 Country of residence and inclusion in UNHCR registers or statistics

Respondents were allowed to select, from a group of countries and regions, their place of residence. Most responses came from Syria (52%) and Turkey (15%). The region (Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt) hosts about 12% of the respondents with similar distributions (3-4% each); only 0.8% of respondents live in Iraq (14 of 1,761). About 9.5% live in the rest of the Arab Gulf region, 7% currently live in the EU, and the rest are divided between other Arab countries and the rest of the world (Malaysia for example is known among Syrian youth because of its alternative education opportunities and easy access).

Chart 4: Respondents Country of Residence



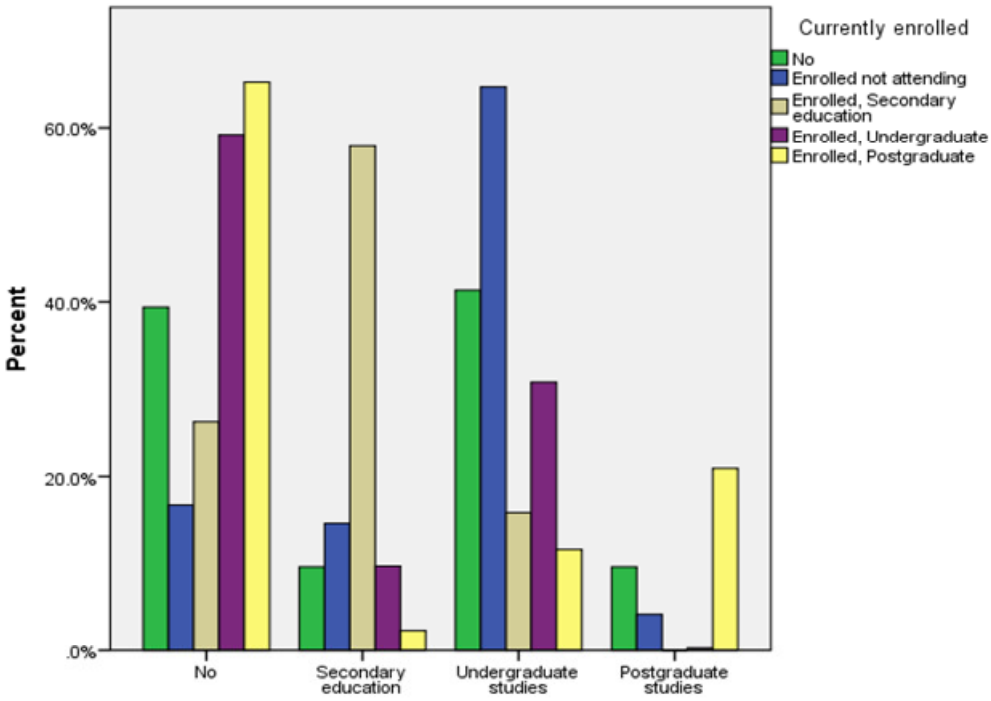
N= 1761

About 14% of all respondents said they have contacted UNHCR. However, this figure includes Syria and Turkey where the average was 8%. Excluding these two countries raises inclusion in UNHCR data to 35-40%, especially in the region surrounding Syria. 80% of respondents living in Jordan and nearly half of those living in Lebanon and Egypt (48% and 56% respectively) reported contacting UNHCR.

2.4 Interruption in education and current enrolment

Within the age group 18-25, 40% of those who are not enrolled in education institutions have not been interrupted from their education either. This means that 60% of those who are currently not enrolled have had to drop out of education. 10% of respondents from this age group reported being enrolled and not attending for several reasons, such as distance of the campus/university location, hazard of war, or the need to work.

Chart 5: Interruption in Education, by Level of Study

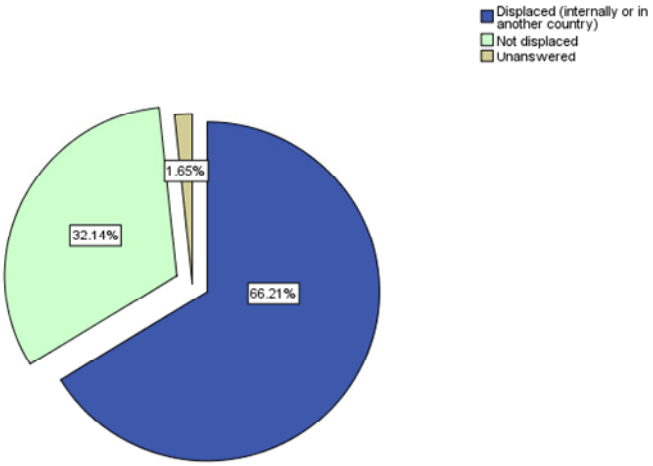


N= 901

2.4 Displacement

66% of all respondents reported having to change their place of residence in effect of the crisis. The reliability of this number is 88%due to respondents' inaccuracy.

Chart 6: Respondents' Displacement Resulting from the Crisis



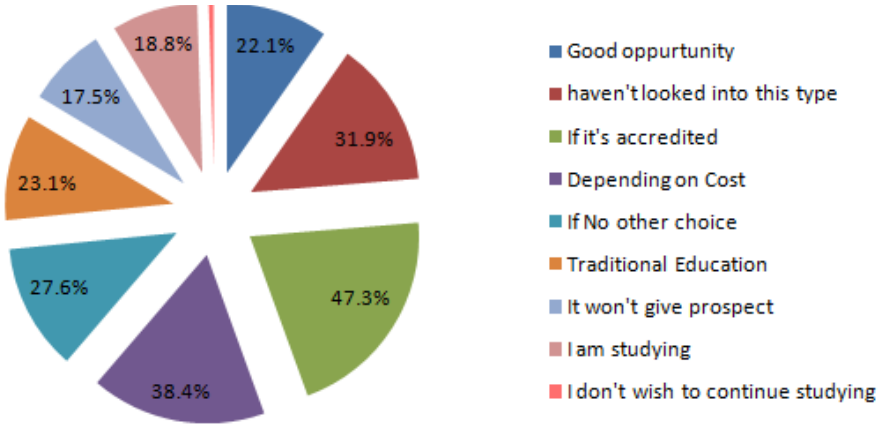
N=1761

3. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES AND CROSS TABULATIONS

3.1 Online education acceptance

Respondents of age group 18-25 had the possibility to select several options. Accreditation and cost are the most important factors in choosing online education, followed by "having no other possibility". However, 32% have not looked into the possibility online provision at all. 40.6% of responses indicate a preference for traditional education only or that, vis-à-vis face to face education, an online education will give no prospects. in regards to online education, respondents (in the open part of the question) expressed the following concerns: quality of learning outcome, electricity and internet cuts in Syria and not being able to afford high speed lines required in the countries of current residence (Egypt and Lebanon were specifically referred to), the unavailability of such mode for applied sciences and arts and especially in later stages of higher education, in addition to administrative issues related to recognition, delaying military service and prolongation of residency.

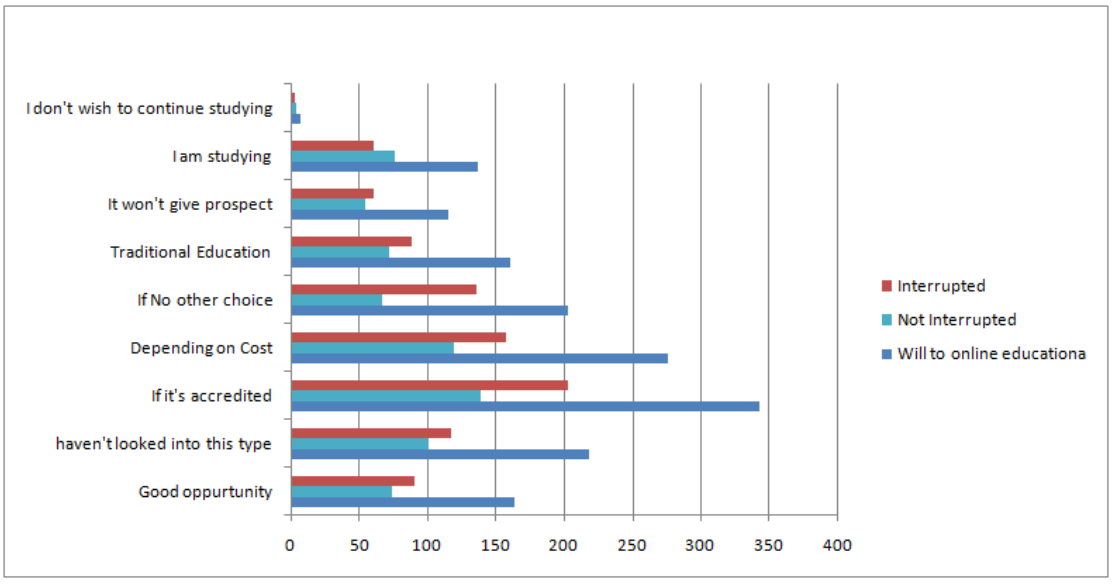
Chart 7: Will to Engage in Online Modes of Education



N= 1822

Online education has been a possibility for young Syrians between 18 and 25 for some time. The Syrian Virtual University was however not a popular alternative for tertiary education and questions about its accreditation were raised as it opened in 2003, as happened for private universities and open education. This could explain the importance of accreditation amongst the responses. It is also apparent that online education is not considered as an option by a significant population of the target group as shown in the following chart.

Chart 8: Perceptions on Online Education

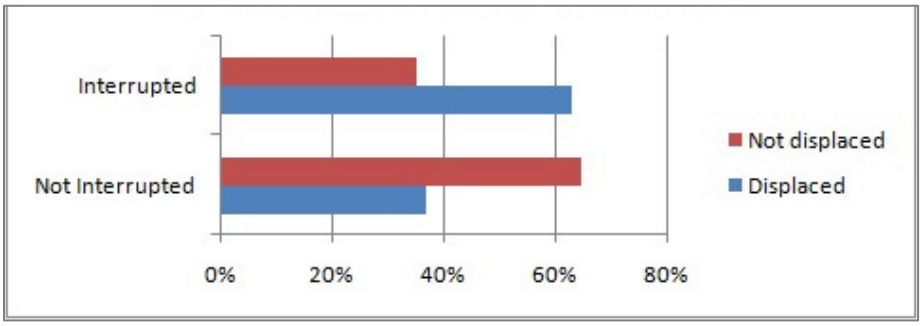


N= 711

3.2 Displacement and Interruption from education

Reasons for interruption of secondary and tertiary education included: the inability to access education facilities through dangerous areas, detention by the Syrian authorities, fear of detention at road blocks, being prosecuted within university[52], displacement, military service, not being able to obtain a visa, not being able to conduct field research necessary

Chart 9: Interruption of Education and Displacement



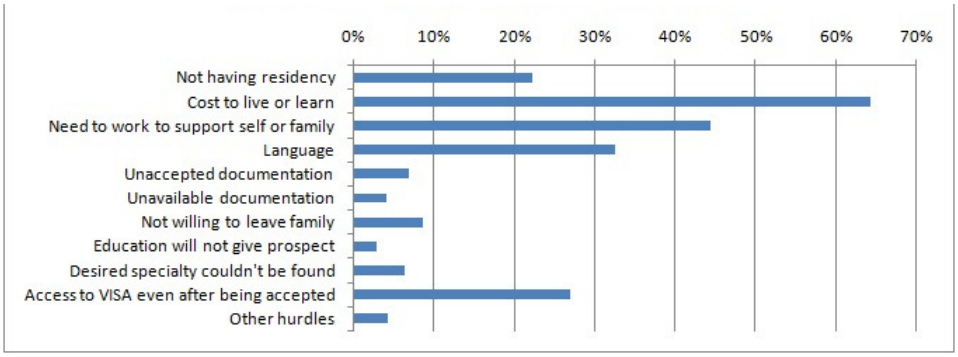
N= 887

3.3 Hurdles to access higher education

Respondents' view on most significant hurdles to access higher education

The following opinions on hurdles were gathered from all respondents, other hurdles included4% mentioned other hurdles such as: discrimination acts in education institutions against Syrians, inability to obtain visa from relevant embassy, inability to obtain documentation required for application (previous research and publications), lack of academic guidance and information, international certifications (SAT, TOEFL) which cannot be obtained in Syria or are expensive elsewhere, corruption in Syrian education system [53], administrative hurdles of application to universities outside Syria.

Chart 10: Hurdles to Access Higher Education



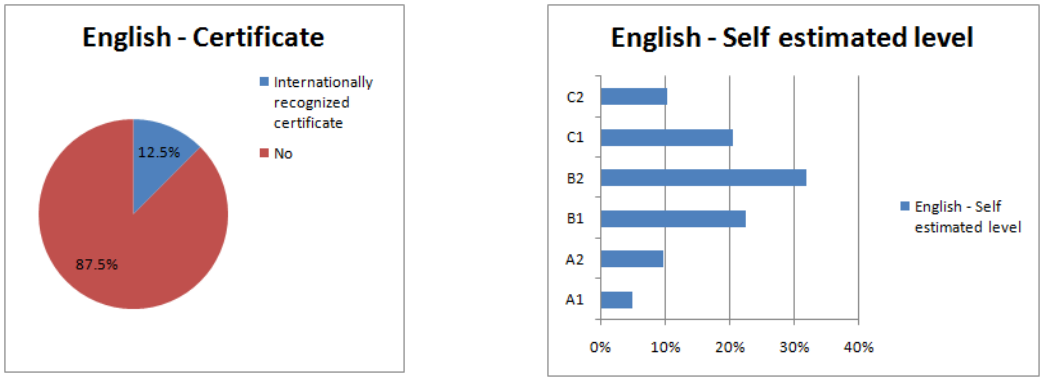
N= 2908

[52] Political tension among students resulted in the possibility of being arrested inside the university
[53] Leading to preventing from obtaining a full degree

Language proficiency

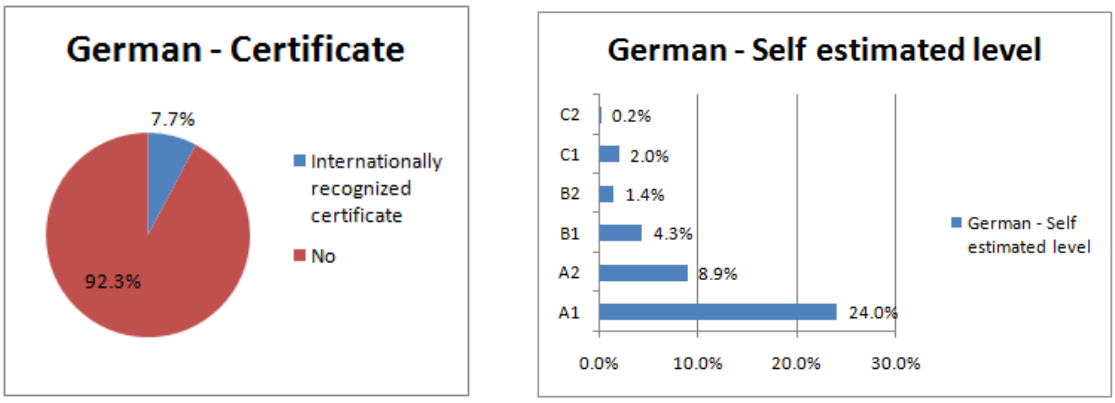
Language barriers emerged to be a key preventing the target group from pursuing higher education[54]. The following charts show that the most learned foreign languages in Syria are English, French and German. Some respondents reported learning other languages[55] as a necessity for integration and access to higher education in other countries.

Chart 11: English – Possession of Certificate and Self-Assessment



N= 1479

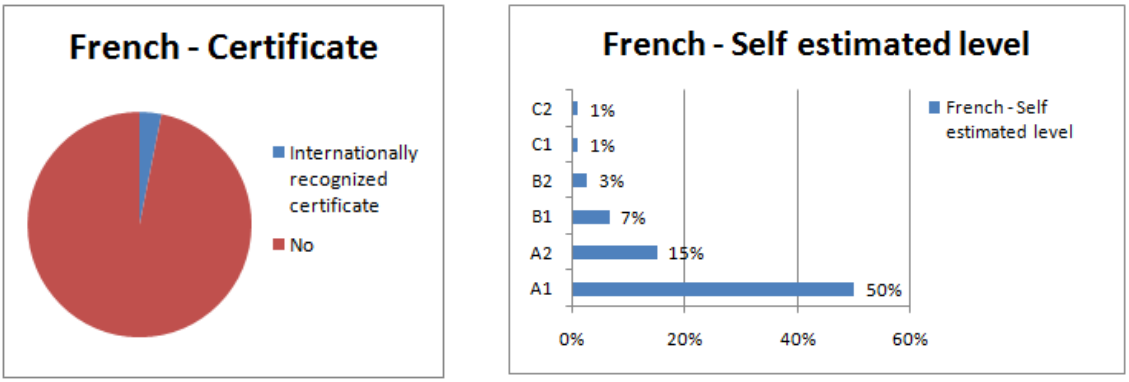
Chart 12: German – Possession of Certificate and Self-Assessment



N= 426

[54] Which also observed during the field visit to Lebanon and Jordan
[55] Spanish, Turkish and Turkish

Chart 13: French – Possession of Certificate and Self-Assessment

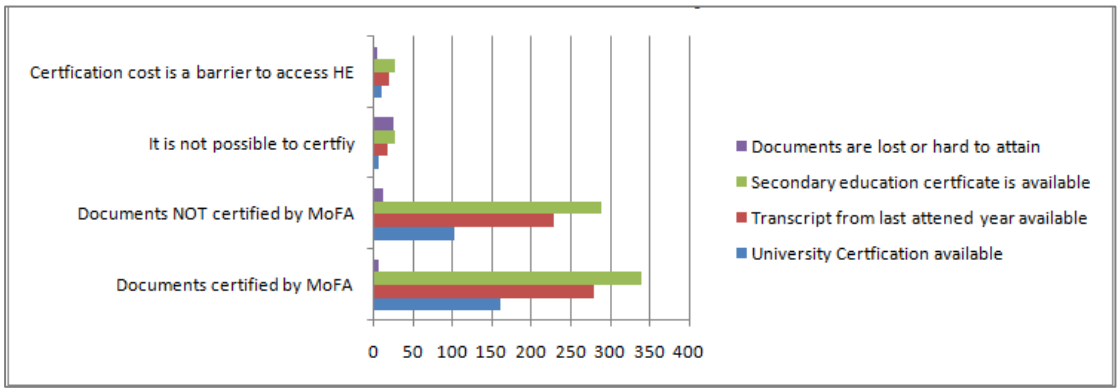


N= 610

Academic documentation availability and certification

Although certification of the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is necessary proof of previous academic attainments to continue/enrol in higher education, according to the target group it is often hard to obtain this certification (51% of respondents).

Chart 14: Academic Documentation Availability and Certification



N= 887

Access to information

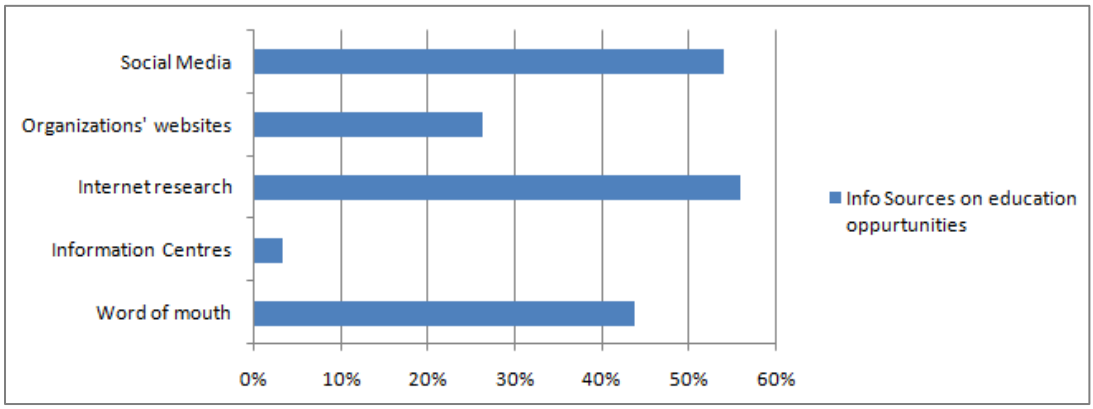
Most used portals and social groups:

www.dubara.com
www.uni-assist.de
www.ostio.de
www.daad.de
www.www.syr-res.com
www.lookinsyria.com
www.min7a.com.

While the most used sources of information is commencing an online search looking for specific information, social media allows information sources to target their audience. In this environment of sharing and interpersonal online communication this becomes greatly valuable for organizations

which offer education opportunities since less respondents reported acquiring information directly from the websites off such organizations.

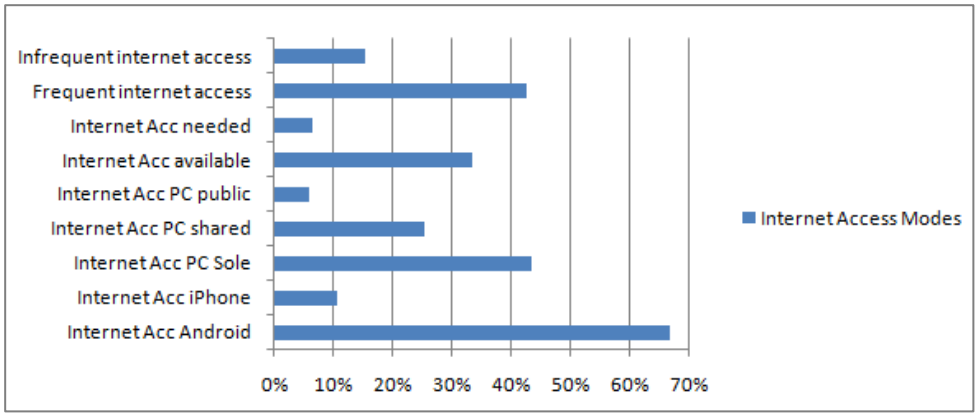
Chart 15: Information Sources on Educational Opportunities



Respondents: 1215, N= 3209

Most respondents report access to the internet through an Android powered phone, which highlights the necessity of creating mobile-compatible information platforms to allow ease of access. While not as many access internet through a PC a corresponding percentage had frequent access to the internet. A small percentage reported not being able to afford access to internet and a similar percentage used public computers (in internet cafés or libraries).

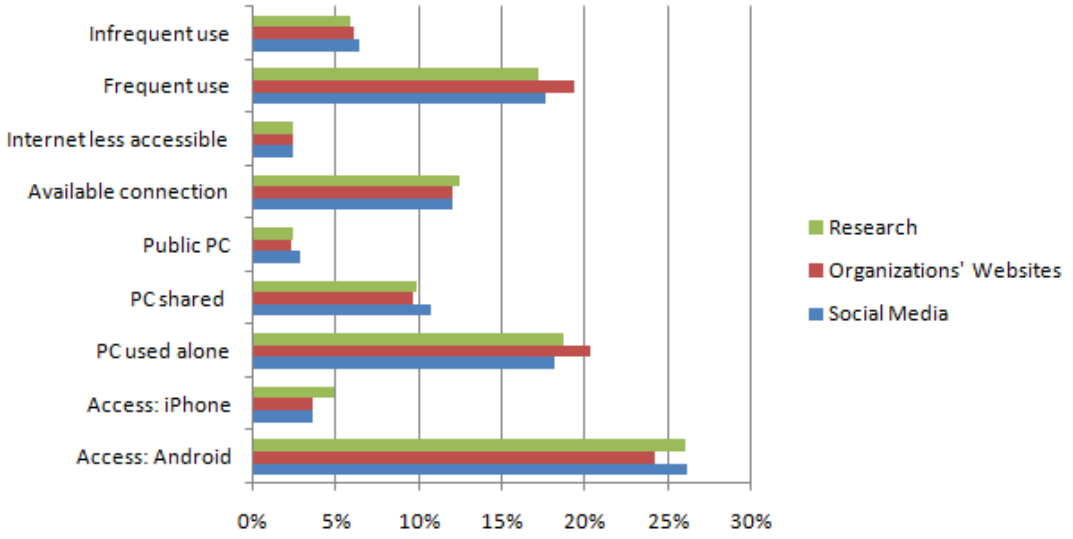
Chart 16: Internet Access Modes



Respondents: 1215, N= 4632

The following chart is a triangulation between the most common sources of information and mode of internet access among the respondents.

Chart 17: Information Sources and Internet Access – Triangulation



N= 4209

Annex 2: New and previous students, university graduates and Academic staff by gender, university and faculty, Syria, 2009-2010

طلاب ومستجدو وخريجو الجامعات السورية وأعضاء الهيئة التعليمية حسب الجنس والجامعة والكلية 2009 - 2010

NEW AND PREVIUOS STUDENTS, UNIVERSITY GRADUATES AND ACADEMIC STAFF BY SEX , UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY 2009 - 2010

TABLE 16/11 — جدول 16 / 11

FACULTY	UNIVERSITY	هيئة تعليمية Academic staff		متخرجون Graduates		مستجدون New Students		طلاب Students		الجامعة	الكلية
		إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M		
Medicine	Damascus	102	357	214	429	248	379	1465	2507	دمشق	الطب
	Aleppo	19	116	135	356	177	349	1015	2218	حلب	
	Tishreen	62	241	52	111	152	254	611	1083	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	7	82	39	42	127	149	553	788	البعث	
	Al-Furat	2	8	–	–	55	128	226	575	الفرات	
Pharmacy	Damascus	51	61	220	63	436	108	1765	420	دمشق	الصيدلة
	Aleppo	10	38	80	46	216	132	776	415	حلب	
	Tishreen	40	13	80	25	194	53	629	184	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	23	25	94	34	207	47	677	226	البعث	
Dentistry	Damascus	34	105	78	132	136	239	551	1002	دمشق	طب الأسنان
	Aleppo	23	25	37	66	118	179	454	732	حلب	
	Tishreen	17	65	45	110	38	105	174	502	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	6	60	49	40	74	114	248	381	البعث	
Nursing	Aleppo	-	-	-	-	41	135	106	321	حلب	التمريض
	Tishreen	39	21	13	28	95	132	207	288	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	4	4	-	-	41	64	74	110	البعث	
	Al-Furat	2	1	-	-	31	71	72	123	الفرات	
Sciences	Damascus	104	217	480	393	1346	618	4914	3482	دمشق	العلوم
	Aleppo	93	205	379	477	1120	1115	4129	4261	حلب	
	Tishreen	139	239	212	199	575	756	2129	2428	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	74	155	228	236	730	613	2846	2573	البعث	
	(Al-Rakka)	7	32	255	132	437	673	1034	2010	الفرات (الرقة)	
Architecture	Damascus	23	44	88	81	217	118	927	686	دمشق	هندسة عمارة
	Aleppo	36	32	67	64	151	156	612	655	حلب	
	Tishreen	41	33	47	31	81	66	321	267	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	9	38	37	36	118	96	401	366	البعث	
CivilEngin	Damascus	49	177	87	158	202	361	848	1543	دمشق	هندسة مدنية
	Aleppo	58	105	74	162	207	663	734	2554	حلب	
	Tishreen	122	142	82	106	235	409	878	1420	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	89	127	83	91	283	376	832	1053	البعث	
	Al-Furat	3	4	-	-	160	315	312	698	الفرات	

FACULTY	UNIVERSITY	هيئة تعليمية Academic staff		متخرجـون Graduates		مسـتجدون New Students		طـلاب Students		الجامعـــة	الكليـــة
		إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M		
Elec & Mech Engin	Damascus	60	281	177	596	358	691	1464	4635	دمشق	هندسة كهرباء وميكانيك
	Aleppo	117	307	114	704	426	1997	1185	6413	حلب	
	Tishreen	170	246	92	367	229	649	821	2596	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	46	191	53	266	178	723	573	2568	البعث	
Chem & pet Engin	Al-Baath	90	163	64	154	161	402	551	1275	البعث	هندسة كيميائية
	AL-Furat	5	8	–	–	59	174	150	556	الفرات	
political Sien	Damascus	6	41	30	56	105	215	315	627	دمشق	العلوم السياسية
Informatics Engin	Damascus	19	56	57	92	121	123	483	777	دمشق	هندسة معلوماتية
	Aleppo	20	27	35	61	93	137	344	574	حلب	
	Tishreen	21	52	21	48	78	108	252	364	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	23	47	32	56	75	87	249	311	البعث	
Communication technology	Tishreen	8	9	-	-	63	66	95	107	تشرين	تكنولوجيا الاتصالات
Tecnology Engin	Aleppo	9	18	119	88	223	181	880	808	حلب	هندسة تقنية
	Tishreen	26	48	7	73	131	235	322	1003	تشرين	
Agriculture	Damascus	96	187	154	141	395	272	1349	1184	دمشق	الزراعة
	Aleppo	82	209	87	165	239	500	672	1590	حلب	
	Tishreen	99	152	113	92	206	103	739	614	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	52	85	66	62	105	129	454	444	البعث	
	AL-Furat	21	92	46	100	190	325	623	994	الفرات	
Beaux Arts	Damascus	30	101	79	50	120	84	565	393	دمشق	الفنون الجميلة
	Aleppo	8	39	-	-	32	23	104	71	دمشق(السويداء)	
	Damascus(AL-Sweida)	-	-	65	32	67	45	375	246	حلب	
Letters & Humane Science	Damascus	220	254	3258	1478	4143	1314	29116	14917	دمشق	الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية
	Damascus(Daraa)	4	8	113	46	358	94	1207	443	دمشق(درعا)	
	Damascus(AL-Sweida)	5	19	116	68	315	233	1507	1076	دمشق(السويداء)	
	Aleppo	25	80	2257	1688	3841	2181	17309	12303	حلب	
	Aleppo(Idleb)	-	5	349	238	442	247	2026	1535	حلب(إدلب)	
	Tishreen	161	137	1381	653	2398	1675	11970	7479	تشرين	
	Tishreen(Tartous)	12	11	199	54	681	222	2787	767	تشرين(طرطوس)	
	AL-Furat(Deir-ezzor)	82	99	1028	422	1298	821	9073	5213	البعث	
	AL-Furat (AL-Hasakeh)	12	7	-	-	398	144	1104	405	البعث (حماة)	
	AL-Furat(AL-Rakka)	17	35	353	225	938	448	3620	2444	الفرات (ديرالزور)	
	Al-Baath(Hama)	-	3	70	41	262	146	1284	899	الفرات (الحسكة)	
	Al-Baath	1	3	24	11	233	100	930	633	الفرات (الرقة)	
Law	Damascus	37	84	572	1144	535	698	4262	7840	دمشق	الحقوق
	Aleppo	5	36	203	680	510	1435	1980	8928	حلب	
	Aleppo(Idleb)	-	-	7	43	44	352	204	1289	حلب (إدلب)	
	AL-Furat(Deir-ezzor)	5	5	63	101	133	367	555	1344	تشرين	
	AL-Furat(AL-Hasakeh)	-	8	10	30	85	273	461	1045	البعث	
	Al-Baath	1	6	23	28	107	365	427	1419	الفرات(ديرالزور)	
	Tishreen	-	1	9	24	100	345	351	1328	الفرات(الحسكة)	
Economics	Damascus	50	143	584	1028	510	461	3467	5300	دمشق	الاقتصاد
	Damascus(Daraa)	5	13	30	50	78	142	254	548	دمشق(درعا)	
	Aleppo	14	92	293	649	241	612	1486	4022	حلب	
	AL-Furat(Deir-ezzor)	61	91	203	346	325	906	1353	3010	تشرين	
	Tishreen	8	15	62	76	114	122	508	677	تشرين(طرطوس)	
	Tishreen(Tartous)	7	12	29	30	66	111	237	332	البعث(حماة)	
	Al-Baath(Hama)	2	3	-	-	65	139	222	522	الفرات(ديرالزور)	

FACULTY	UNIVERSITY	هيئة تعليمية Academic staff		متخرجــون Graduates		مســتجدون New Students		طــلاب Students		الجامعـــة	الكليـــة
		إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M	إناث F	ذكور M		
* Sharia	Damascus	10	51	524	497	449	217	3781	3320	دمشق	* الشريعة
	Aleppo	-	8	99	29	363	197	2065	1540	حلب	
Music	Al-Baath	18	17	6	22	10	22	65	153	البعث	التربية الموسيقية
physical training	Tishreen	26	48	24	38	79	151	234	437	تشرين	التربية الرياضية
	Al-Baath(Hama)	2	8	20	25	37	75	153	329	البعث(حماة)	
Pedagogy	Damascus	131	87	908	139	1230	163	5443	1024	دمشق	التربية
	Damascus(AL-Sweida)	5	12	151	17	407	54	1075	153	دمشق(السويداء)	
	Damascus(Daraa)	6	9	200	42	471	39	1433	159	دمشق(درعا)	
	Aleppo	4	7	-	-	170	41	170	41	دمشق(القنيطرة)	
	Aleppo(Idleb)	9	22	576	139	1211	316	4091	1118	حلــب	
	Tishreen	-	4	186	62	531	172	1361	469	حلب(إدلب)	
	Tishreen(Tartous)	72	25	844	127	1091	147	4862	738	تشرين	
	AL-Furat(Deir-ezzor)	9	4	234	24	162	6	1230	110	تشرين(طرطوس)	
	AL-Furat(AL-Hasakeh)	44	28	611	80	772	126	3066	489	البعث	
	AL-Furat(AL-Rakka)	5	5	160	69	351	81	1035	195	البعث(حماة)	
	Al-Baath	-	2	63	26	269	95	719	297	الفرات(الرقة)	
	Al-Baath(Hama)	11	14	153	34	413	71	1748	324	الفرات(ديرالزور)	
		-	1	75	13	431	130	1215	397	الفرات (الحسكة)	
Health Scien	Al-Baath(Hama)	3	5	84	52	200	66	622	277	البعث(حماة)	العلوم الصحية
Veterinary	Al-Baath	10	127	23	273	16	247	83	1450	البعث	الطب البيطري
		1	-	-	-	13	82	13	82	الفرات	
Tourism		4	4	-	-	54	52	54	52	دمشق	السياحة
	Al-Baath	4	9	22	22	50	70	223	248	البعث	
Total	Damascus	1063	2357	8120	6700	12436	6739	66519	52200	دمشق	المجموع
	Aleppo	520	1329	5162	5749	10261	11101	41804	51991	حلــب	
	Tishreen	1138	1597	3774	2609	7060	6532	30677	25418	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	610	1302	2738	2042	5382	4836	23580	20231	البعث	
	AL-Furat	73	213	1071	634	3763	3607	12946	13301	الفرات	
Grand total		3404	6798	20865	17734	38902	32815	175526	163141	المجموع العام	

* Islamic jurisprudence.

* تشمل التشريع الإسلامي

(1) data excluded institutes of : scientific heritage, environmental research, studying languges,marine research and political science.

(1) لا تشمل معاهد: التراث العلمي والبحوث البيئية وتعليم اللغات والبحوث البحرية و العلوم السياسية

Annex 3: Students and graduates of post-graduate studies by degree and university, Syria, 2006-2010

طـلاب وخريجو الدراسـات العليا حسب الدرجة والجامعة للأعوام 2006 - 2010

STUDENTS AND GRADUATES OF HIGHER STUDIES BY DEGREE AND UNIVERSITY 2006 - 2010

TABLE 22 /11 — جدول 22 / 11

YEAR	UNIVERSITY	Graduates		خريجون		Students		طـلاب		الجامعة	السنة
		مجموع Total	دكتوراة Doctorate	ماجستير Master	* دبلوم Diploma	مجموع Total	دكتوراة Doctorate	ماجستير Master	* دبلوم Diploma		
2006	Damascus	2316	103	323	1890	5993	384	1558	4051	دمشق	2006
	Aleppo	838	17	93	728	2756	176	1001	1579	حلـــب	
	Tishreen	1134	5	32	1097	2383	22	127	2234	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	36	1	6	29	82	13	23	46	البعث	
	Al-Furat	841	2	80	759	1906	29	373	1504	الفرات	
Total		4324	126	454	3744	11214	595	2709	7910	المجموع	
2007	Damascus	1189	106	418	665	5213	356	3525	1332	دمشق	2007
	Aleppo	310	20	173	117	2543	161	2092	290	حلـــب	
	Tishreen	214	10	90	114	2527	31	940	1556	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	488	5	30	453	1845	37	675	1133	البعث	
	Al-Furat	11	2	9	0	51	12	39	0	الفرات	
Total		2212	143	720	1349	12179	597	7271	4311	المجموع	
2008	Damascus	1075	74	653	348	6161	422	4189	1550	دمشق	2008
	Aleppo	337	26	311	0	2460	204	2256	0	حلـــب	
	Tishreen	733	17	140	576	1923	36	1116	771	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	485	3	32	450	1706	48	1035	623	البعـــث	
	Al-Furat	18	6	12	0	80	13	67	0	الفرات	
Total		2648	126	1148	1374	12330	723	8663	2944	المجموع	
2009	Damascus	1239	108	716	415	6763	468	4996	1299	دمشق	2009
	Aleppo	379	37	342	0	3252	242	3010	0	حلـــب	
	Tishreen	551	21	157	373	2116	85	1560	471	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	385	5	65	315	1891	69	1822	0	البعـــث	
	Al-Furat	51	6	45	0	195	14	181	0	الفرات	
Total		2605	177	1325	1103	14217	878	11569	1770	المجموع	
2010	Damascus	1867	194	1060	613	7998	724	6240	1034	دمشق	2010
	Aleppo	476	76	400	0	3843	783	3060	0	حلـــب	
	Tishreen	713	23	314	376	2468	77	1651	740	تشرين	
	Al-Baath	695	12	292	391	2693	55	1956	682	البعـــث	
	Al-Furat	25	7	18	0	244	11	233	0	الفرات	
Total		3776	312	2084	1380	17246	1650	13140	2456	المجموع	

* Only Students and graduateds of Educational habilitation are included

* تضم طلاب وخريجو دبلوم التأهيل التربوي فقط

Annex 4: Sources of Information about the HE situation in Syria

Organisation	Name of contact person (if any)	Contacted by	Date	Means	Response
Damascus University / Erasmus Coordinator	Prof Dr Rami Ayoubi	IL	November 2014	Phone	Some information(see interview notes)
			Jan-March 2015	E-mail	Some information (see last e-mail)
Contact person provided by EC Syria Delegation	Anas Alahmar	IL	March 2015	E-mail	No information provided
IIE	James King	LC	March 2015	E-mail	Information is largely unknown. Al-Fanar article only information that might be useful
Al-Fanar Media		LC	March 2015	Desk search	http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2015/02/syrian-professor-recipe-tragedy/
Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies		LC	March 2015	Desk search	http://scpss.org/en/?s=higher+education
Ministry of Higher Education		MS	January 2015	Phone	No Information
Higher Institute of Business Administration	Dean's office	MS	March 2015	Phone	No reply
Damascus University	Student Affairs	MS	March 2015	Phone	Refused to give Information
Damascus University	Dr. Sami Adarnali	MS	November 2014	Social media	No information
Syrian Bureau of Statistics	Ms. Marwa Saud	MS	March 2015	Social media	Outdated information

Annex 5: Action Document for the Syrian Further and Higher Education Cooperation (SFHEC)

Annex 6: Logframe - for the Syrian Further and Higher Education Cooperation (SFHEC)

Presented in a separate Volume