



# KIDS RIGHTS

## KIDSRIGHTS REPORT: ALARMING EDUCATIONAL GAP FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LOOMING

*International donor community and host countries falling drastically short of commitments*

**Amsterdam, Amman, 27 March 2018** – International children’s rights foundation KidsRights has today published a new report revealing the alarming decline in access to education for Syrian child refugees living in neighbouring host countries. A shocking 43% of all Syrian school-aged refugee children in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt have no access to education, compared to 36% in 2016. This and other findings are offered in research which for the first time transcends local and per-state studies and offers overarching regional conclusions about the worsening educational situation for Syrian refugee children. KidsRights will today present the report at the *Second Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit 2018*, held in Amman, Jordan, attended by a large number of global leaders and Nobel Peace Laureates.

**Persistent local barriers to educational access** □

The report identifies the further impoverishment of refugee families and persistent bureaucratic barriers to educational access as main causes of the widening educational gap. KidsRights notes, for example, that restrictive policies in the host countries are preventing parents from obtaining work permits, thus worsening parental burdens to buy school materials or pay for transportation to school. Moreover, said restrictions are forcing children out of schools and into illegal and low-paid work. Based on a series of youth consultations held among refugee children, KidsRights also notes that such non-financial factors as insecurity, unchecked corporal punishment and discrimination in schools pose barriers to education.

### **Funding gap**

International donors and governments of host countries have fallen drastically short of joint goals agreed and funds pledged during the first *Supporting Syria Conference* held in London in 2016. Contrary to the goal to provide all Syrian refugee children with full access to education by the end of 2017, the education gap has in fact worsened considerably. The UN face a US\$603 million (72%) funding gap for crucial support for education for Syrian refugees for 2018 and 2019 alone. This is the result of inaction by the international donor community, which has often either reneged on pledges or transferred funds too late. Moreover, KidsRights and other NGOs have identified a severe lack of transparency regarding funds flowing from donors to host states.

### **The road to the Brussels Conference on Syria**

The international donors and host governments will meet again in April during the second Brussels Supporting Syria Conference. In a letter KidsRights appeals to the international community to close the educational gap by providing the funds urgently needed by the UN for educational support. Marc Dullaert, founder and chairman of the KidsRights Foundation, also underlines that a larger part of overall humanitarian budgets must go towards education, which for years has been among the most underfunded of sectors. “The successful reconstruction of post-conflict Syria by a young generation of Syrians will stand or fall by the level of educational access we can offer them,” said Mr. Dullaert who presents the report today in Amman.

Speaking on behalf of KidsRights at the Jordan Summit, International Children’s Peace Prize winner Mohamad Al Jounde will today discuss the worsening educational conditions viewed from personal experiences. Mohamad, a Syrian youth who fled to Lebanon with his family as a child, is an inspiring example of the crucial importance of access to education. Like thousands of other Syrian refugee children, Mohamad could not go to school. He set out to provide them with education himself by building a school in a refugee camp. This school now educates 200 children. Such positive initiatives will become fewer and fewer as underfunding and other educational barriers increase. The international donor community therefore owes it to Mohamad and an entire generation of Syrian refugee children to fulfil its commitment and ensure full access to education

## **End of press release**

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### About KidsRights Foundation

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the wellbeing of very vulnerable children across the world and advocates the realization of their rights.

KidsRights strives for a world where all children have access to their rights and are enabled to realize the great potential they carry within them. KidsRights sees children as changemakers with the power to move the world, and facilitates in voicing their opinions and taking action in order to bring about change.

KidsRights supports children by commanding global attention for the realization of children’s rights and acting as a catalyst to ignite change, together with children and youths. We support this with research and action. In order to gain insight into the status of children’s rights, KidsRights frequently conducts research. The foundation also finances local projects aimed at directly improving the rights of vulnerable children and stimulating child participation and change-making by youths. Please visit our website to find out more about KidsRights: [www.kidsrights.org](http://www.kidsrights.org).

### **Additional information (not for publication)**

KidsRights’ *Background Report – The Widening Educational Gap for Syrian Refugee Children* is available for download in KidsRights’ dedicated online newsroom: [kidsrights.pr.co](http://kidsrights.pr.co).

### **Interview requests and other questions**

Please address any interview requests for Mr. Marc Dullaert or Mohamad Al Jounde to KidsRights' media relations officers:



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