Background

Egypt continues to be both a transit country, as well as one that receives refugees flowing into the country. The deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic increased the number of Syrian refugees approaching UNHCR for registration. To date, UNHCR office in Egypt has registered a total of 133,251 refugees from Syria by 3 February 2014. Out of this total, more than 32,000 Syrian students were enrolled in Egyptian public schools during the 2013/14 school year, according to MoE, by 31 December 2013, stretching the capacity of the education services beyond reasonable limits.

Since the onset of the crisis, Syrian refugees were allowed to enroll their children in state-run schools and universities, and were given equal treatment with Egyptians when it came to school fees. The Egyptian government and people have been extremely generous in extending access to education to Syrians in the same footing as its nationals and this should be encouraged and supported and remains critical for the future wellbeing of the Syrian refugees in Egypt. However, this comes with constraints, as many schools in Egypt are now functioning far beyond their capacity, with sometimes as many as 90 students per class. UNHCR, along with other partners are determined to provide support to children’s education, and to support to the extent possible the Egyptian education system to absorb the increased numbers of Syrian refugees in Egypt.

Membership

The Education Sector working group is open to all humanitarian operational partners intervening in the Education sector, be they Government, UN/inter-governmental organisations, or non-governmental organisations (both national and international) that are abiding by established humanitarian principles in the delivery of support.

Working Group Objectives

- Support organization working in the education sector to deliver quality formal and non-formal programmes that provide access to education opportunities for all children.
- To strengthen the coordination capacity response of all education partners in Egypt to support the Government of Egypt (GoE) in providing access to quality education in safe and protective learning environment.
- Identify existing pressing needs in public schools attended by Syrian refugee children and ways to address them in a manner that promotes social cohesion
- To work towards a harmonized approach to provide a well-coordinated response to Syrian children most in need.

Expected outcomes

- Define capacity needs of the sector
Develop the necessary tools for efficient management of the education sector

Working modalities of the Group
- The Education Working Group is led by UNHCR and co-lead by UNICEF. The division of responsibilities to be defined by the co-chairs and clearly communicated to members of the working group.
- The regular meeting of the working group will take place monthly. Additional meetings can be scheduled as needed.
- Finalize the education strategy respecting the operational priorities and targeted indicators.
- Based on needs and interest, learning exercises and training activities will be facilitated by the Education Working Group.

Main responsibilities of Education sector working group members
- Proactively work to improve coordination and harmonization of education assessments and analysis, involving all relevant partners and sharing outcomes widely, both within the education sector and to the wider humanitarian community.
- Evaluate and report the activities under the Education sector, in addition the members are accountable for their input on monthly basis on the dashboard reporting that is shared on the regional level.
- Provide technical support to the sector group according to areas of expertise of each member organization.
- Sharing methodologies, studies, curriculum and lessons learnt within the Egyptian context.
- Collectively identify the capacity building needs, and participate in assessments and analysis.
- Ensure that adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review outcome of education interventions and progress against implementation plans. Aim to improve transparency towards international and national organizations and local and national authorities.
- Minoring progress of plans based on the agreed indicators that were set and agreed on during the planning phase on the RRP6

UNHCR – Sector lead
Main responsibilities and tasks of the Lead of the Education Sector Working Group (UNHCR):

Coordination
- Ensure alignment of interventions with government policies and strategies.
- Ensure coordination mechanisms between all humanitarian education partners, including national and international NGOs, UN agencies and other organizations or institutions involved in education. This includes ensuring effective links, communication and information management, as well as technical working groups and coordination platforms as appropriate.
- Ensure cooperation and information sharing between the education sector and other relevant sectors so that education partners are aware of key inter-sectorial issues and actions are taken as appropriate.
- Facilitate the exchange of information and ensure that education sector members are aware of existing technical standards and guidelines as well as mainstreaming crosscutting issues such as age, gender and disabilities.
- Compiling input from Education sector members and report achievements and progress towards targets on monthly basis on the dash board, mid-year and year end reporting.
- Facilitate needs assessments, analysis and gap identification, and share it with all education partners and other stakeholders.
- Support contingency planning process so that a contingency plan is in place to deal with significant changes in situation and number of refugees.
- Support to organize trainings, share technical documents and work together with technical working group to find solutions to technical issues as necessary.

UNICEF – Sector co-lead
Main responsibilities and tasks of Co-lead of Education Sector Working Group (UNICEF):
- Provide technical oversight to the development and implementation of Education strategy and work plan with partners and stakeholders.
- Support on-going coordination among education partners and other stakeholders and facilitate technical working groups formed for specific purposes as required.
- Support effective and coherent education assessment and analysis involving all relevant partners, including the identification of gaps and implementation of sectorial responses through collective delivery.
- Provide technical guidance and actively participate in on-going agency assessments, analysis, planning, monitoring and response in education and ensure that results are shared among agencies.
- Encourage agencies to adopt adequate education related contingency planning and preparedness measures for potential significant changes in the situation (including increased Refugee numbers in future months)