Education
Support to the Syrian education system affected by a large influx of Iraqi refugees
Ensuring access to quality education

“We hope to give young Syrians and Iraqis opportunities to actively develop their society and transform their personal commitment into tangible results.”

Ambassador Vassilis Bontosoglou, Head of EU Delegation to Syria

Context
Whilst a large proportion of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees in Syria are of school age, the vast majority work to support their families rather than attend classes. Those who do attend have increased student numbers by over 11%, placing a huge strain on schools’ resources.

Objectives
- Renovate and equip school buildings & sanitary facilities.
- Build the capacity of teachers and staff, training them in the specific problems of refugee students.
- Improve enrolment in basic education for both Iraqi & Syrian youth.
- Provide non-formal learning opportunities for out-of-school Iraqi adolescents.
- Implement an Iraqi pre-school education programme.

Impact
- 216 schools have been renovated and equipped; janitorial staff in 60 schools received training in maintenance skills & additional maintenance materials.
- Teachers and educational staff have been trained, including in psychosocial health & the specific needs of Iraqi refugee children.
- Iraqi adolescents participated in '2nd chance' classes, youth friendly centres and youth camps.
- An Iraqi preschool education programme has been set up.
- A 'Child Friendly School' framework has strengthened partnerships between schools, parents and communities.
Support to the Syrian education system affected by a large influx of Iraqi refugees
Ensuring access to quality education

Supporting every child’s right to education in Syria

Schools are similar across the world: boisterous students, playground noise and homework to be done. But for some students in the Syrian Arab Republic, especially in impoverished areas such as Al-Hasakah in the extreme north of the country, education has been limited. A recent drought here has only compounded the stress on an already overstretched education system that has absorbed an influx of thousands of Iraqi students.

The European Union (EU) has partnered with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to ensure every child’s right to education, as mandated by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Be it through new bathrooms, better desks or improved teacher training, the EU and UNICEF have pledged to improve the educational environment for Syria’s enthusiastic students.

In Al-Hassakah, school supplies and reconstructed classrooms have enlivened the learning environment. “This is a new thing in this school. We’ve not had something like this before,” said Al-Hasakah headmaster Saiid Bakro. “Now we have these beautiful desks that are the right size for the children, painted walls, also a sun shade in the playground. Before, there were no guardrails and a boy fell to his death from the second floor. Now it is safer.”

The students are proud of their refurbished schools, offering to show off new facilities, even the toilets. The new bathrooms are a cause of fascination.

“This bit is new, the toilets are all new. These are French toilets, see, you press this button,” said Mohummed, 11, as he toured his newly spruced-up school. “Also, this is my favourite picture, of the park and the people with trees,” he added, pointing to a wall painting. “It is really beautiful.”

Robert Sixsmith, UNICEF