The Current State of Access to Basic Education for Syrian Refugee Children Living in the Za’atari Camp

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THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP.

Theresa L. Frey

PIM 74

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

May 18, 2016

Advisor: Carrie Wojenski, Ed.D.
THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP

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Student name: Theresa L. Frey

Date: May 18, 2016
THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP

Abstract

Using Rodman’s (2006) International Education Analytical Inquiry Matrix as a theoretical framework, the purpose of this study is to examine the current state of access to basic primary education for Syrian Refugee Children Living in the Za’atari camp. Within the scope of this study, access is examined in three parts, including:

(1) Who is accessing education within Za’atari and who is not?
(2) How are certain groups accessing education?
(3) What is the learning environment of Za’atari?

In addition to addressing existing issues of access to basic education in Za’atari, this study examines efforts made towards increasing access. By examining the current state of access to education in Za’atari, this study addresses areas needing improvement, and possible next steps in the evolution of education for Syrian refugee children living in Jordan.

This case study offers a multi-layer approach to the qualitative research method. The Matrix Model (2006) used in this study has widened the perspective to include multi-sector and multi-national lenses, which establishes the dimensions of how education is accessed in Za’atari. Disadvantages of this study were also noted, which include all interviews being conducted in English and in a different time zone. The research revealed that the current literature is focused on quantity, where the research participants noted quality of education access is what is needed the most. The results of this study can be used to further examine the state of educational access within Syrian refugee crisis. Additionally, this study provides insight into the current state of access, as perceived by Social Sector Organization employees working in Za’atari refugee camp.

Keywords: Refugee, Syria, Basic Education, Right of Education, Syrian, Jordan, Za’atari, Education Access, Refugee Camp, Arab Spring, MENA
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Dedication

To all children, everywhere, who have the right to sing, to dance, to learn, to go to school, to play, to drink clean water, to have a shelter over their head, and to live in a safe environment.

To my life partner, Jonathan Pettibone, who this masters degree would not be possible without. Thank you for being a true partner, and believing I could even when I was not sure. To Lena Mae Frey-Pettibone for her early morning snuggles and patience as I finished ‘Mama’s school work’. To Mama Gigi and Jojo, who makes our family whole. To my Mom and Dad, who inspired me from early childhood to keep going, and to remember that we all have responsibility to each other, and who set the foundation for my work within International Education. To Mandy, Pete, Andrew, Charity, Amie, Megan for being amazing and encouraging siblings. For my colleagues at Pace University, especially Dr. Barry Stinson, Mira Krasnov, Dr. Sophie Kaufman, Colleen O’Hara, Kristina Byrne, Dr. Christine Shakespeare, Adele McKinley, Dr. Sonia Suchday, Dr. Anna Shostya, Dr. Uday Sukhatme and Dr. Adelia Williams-Lubitz. To my advisor, Dr. Carrie Wojenski, who pushed me harder and further than I thought I could go within this Master Degree. All my PIM 74 cohort and our own small group, Denver, Shannon, Ashley, Eric, and Ashleigh as we pushed each other to keep going and it kept us all going. Editor Jed Blume, thank you for helping me to find my words. For my entire SIT Faculty and SIT team in Jordan, including Dr. Aqeel Tirmizi. For the Social Sector Organizations employees and volunteers in Jordan for sharing their time with me. I look forward to this just being the beginning of many collaborations and working together to support education and children who all have the unequivocal right to education.
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CCFA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Child Focused Assessment Za’atari</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>Head of Household</td>
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<tr>
<td>JENA</td>
<td>Joint Education Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Jordan’s Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
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<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSO</td>
<td>Social Sector Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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Introduction and Research Question

Since March of 2011, approximately 4.5 million Syrians have fled their homes due to the war in Syria, over 60,000 of whom are hosted in Jordan with over half being children (United Nations Children’s International Emergency Fund, Comprehensive Child Focused Assessment [CCFA], 2015; Amnesty International, 2016). In Syria, in 2011, there were several pro-democracy protests held between January and March. On March 6, 2011 in the city of Dara’a in the southern portion of Syria, several teenagers were arrested and tortured for spray painting protests and revolutionary symbols on a school challenging Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, with the words “The people want the regime to fall. It’s your turn, doctor” (Selo, Marrouch, & Carberry, 2012). The message was a challenge to President Bashar al-Assad, a trained ophthalmologist, and warning of the Arab Spring in Syria. This moment was seen as the tipping point of the Arab Spring in Syria and the beginning of the Syrian civil war (Selo, Marrouch, & Carberry, 2012).

Throughout this very violent civil war, schools became places that were targeted and destroyed. The charge to destroy schools was led by the government of President Bashar al-Assad (Human Right Watch (HRW), 2012). The HRW (2012) report noted that it was not only the school structures that were targeted, but also the students. Teachers and school officials were told by security officers to interrogate the students (HRW, 2012). Many families pulled their children out of school prior to fleeing the country (Save the Children, 2015). Syrians have fled to host communities or refugee camps located primarily in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, and Jordan, all border countries of Syria (Save the Children, 2015). The war continues to this day.

According to World Vision (2015), approximately two to three million Syrian children are not attending school, both within and outside of Syria. The United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2015) predicts that Syrian children are accessing education at the
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lowest rate of enrollment in the world. Prior to the Syrian crisis, 100 percent of boys and 98 percent of girls were attending primary school (UNESCO, 2014). Now, Save the Children (2015) estimates that half the children involved in the Syrian crisis are not receiving any form of education, formal or informal. With an estimate total of Syrian child refugee population of 330,000, UNICEF estimates that only around 30,000 children in Jordan are attending formal or informal school (World Vision, 2015). Access to education is important, because children who do not receive basic education are likely to be subjected to child labor, or early marriage (American Institute for Research (AIR), CfBT Education Trust, Save the Children, 2015).

Furthermore, education is important for the future of the Syrian children, and Syria. Education must be addressed and accessed in order to rebuild Syria, and increase economic growth (AIR et al., 2015).

Using Rodman’s (2006) International Education Analytical Inquiry Matrix as a theoretical framework, the purpose of this study is to examine the current state of access to basic primary education for Syrian Refugee Children Living in the Za’atari camp. Access is examined in three parts: (1) who is accessing education within Za’atari and who is not; (2) how they are accessing education; and, (3) what is the learning environment of Za’atari. With nearly, 80,000 to 120,000 refugees living in the camp since July 2012, Za’atari is a formal refugee camp supported by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) located in the northern part of Jordan about 15 kilometers from the Syrian boarder (UNHCR, 2016). This study provides an understanding of access to basic education in Za’atari, as well as examines the progress made thus far for increasing access to education. By examining the current state of education in Za’atari this study will address the areas of educational access need improvement, and next steps in the evolution of education for Syrian refugee children living in Jordan. The
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research question is: What is the current state of access to basic education for Syrian refugee children living in Za’atari?

Literature Review

Literature reviewed for this study includes international reports on the Middle East and North Africa, Syria, and Jordan, non-government monitoring, evaluations, and assessment research. The primary research is from the United Nations (UN) and partnering social sector organizations, gathered through surveys, and focus groups of students, families, parents, teachers, and the school administration in Za’atari (see Appendix D & E). Secondary research includes government reports from the Jordan’s Ministry of Education, and declassified reports from various governments. Also included are several articles from regional experts on the Arab Spring, Syria, Jordan, and emergency response. Social sector organization reports were peer-reviewed.

Currently, there is a lack of scholarly work on access to education in Za’atari. Scholarly works take a macro level approach and only look at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) within education and conflict, and not the specific refugee camp of Za’atari. Nearly all literature referenced in this review was written between 2011 and 2016, as this is the time of the Arab Spring and the Syrian Crisis. The literature reviewed that was written prior to 2011 was the United Nations policies that affect refugees, children, or educational rights, or scholarly work on the MENA region, resources not timed to the aforementioned political timeline. Keywords searched included: MENA, Syria, education crisis, Za’atari, Jordan, basic education, primary education, education access, Jordan Ministry of Education, and the right to education.

Historical and Political Context: Middle East and North Africa

In early 2011, the Arab Spring migration crisis began with Tunisians leaving Tunisia due to the political uprising connected to free and democratic elections. This uprising ultimately led
to the overthrowing of the Tunisian government (Mikail, 2013). During the migration, Tunisians sought refuge primarily on an Italian island called Lampedusa. Meanwhile, Libyans were seeking refuge in Tunisia, after the Libyan political conflict that resulted in fall of Colonel Gaddafi (Mikail, 2013). Subsequently, Yemen began hosting approximately 230,000 refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea who were fleeing natural disasters and political uprisings (Mikail, 2013). Understanding the movement of these populations is crucial to understanding both the Arab Spring and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Most of the political uprisings related to the Arab Spring have settled and many have returned to their home countries, or, have found asylum in their host country; however, this is not the case for Syrians (Mikail, 2013).

Syria’s civil war is often linked to the Arab Spring (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2014). However, the Syrian context differs from the rest of the countries involved in the Arab Spring because there is no end in sight for the conflict in Syria (UNDP, 2014). When examining civil wars across the world, since 1945, the average length of any civil war has been 10 years. If the same holds true for Syria, this means it is only at the halfway point of the war (UNDP, 2014). In addition, there are many rebel factions participating in the war, and such group factions tend to be linked with longer civil wars (UNDP, 2014). The Syrian civil war is being fought between the Assad government and more than 13 major rebel groups who are connected to each other in opposition to the Assad government (Zorthian, 2015). As compared to the number of factions historically involved in other civil wars, the number of faction involved in Syria’s civil war suggests that this conflict is likely to last longer than the average civil war (UNDP, 2014).

Since the civil war began, many Syrians have fled the country and have sought refugee status primarily in neighboring counties such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt
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(Amnesty International, 2016). While the Arab Spring has certainly caused movement and
migration within the region, Arab Spring refugees from other countries have been displaced for a
shorter time and with much smaller migration numbers (Mikail, 2013). At the end of 2014,
Syrians accounted for the highest number of refugees worldwide (United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2016). Jordan has acted as a host community since the
beginning of the Syrian crisis (UNDP, 2014). According to the Jordanian Ministry of Interior,
the number of Syrian refugees now accounts for almost one fourth to one third of the local
population in the northern regions of Jordan (UNDP, 2014). Prior to the crisis, the northern
region of Jordan was not heavily populated, and the sizeable migration of Syrians has created a

Laws and Rights of Refugees

Governments have a responsibility to protect their citizens (Global Center for
Responsibility to Protect, 2008). This notion of the Responsibility to Protect was the outcome of
the UN World Summit in 2005. Its purpose was to protect vulnerable populations that were
experiencing genocide, war crimes, or other acts against humanity (Global Center for
Responsibility to Protect, 2008). Recently, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution
on the current state within Syria, which concluded that the Syrian government is unable to
protect its citizens (OHCHR, 2016).

Many of the Syrians who have fled the country have become refugees. As Syrian
refugees they are protected in the international community under the 1951 Refugee Convention
relating to the Status of Refugees (UN, 1951). The Refugee Convention was created during
World War II and defines who qualifies as a refugee (UN, 1951). This definition includes those
fleeing are not doing so by choice but for a need of safety (UN, 1951). Furthermore, the 1967
Declaration on Territorial Asylum states that granting asylum is a peaceful and humanitarian act
related to the Status of Refugees, and includes the legal status of refugees and the right to be protected against forcible return (UN General Assembly, 1967). Generally, no country is required to allow foreigners to cross its borders. Countries can define when and how they will allow non-citizens to enter, including refugees (UN General Assembly, 1967).

While both the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol are important, Jordan has not signed either of these agreements (Jastram & Achiron, 2001). Furthermore, Jordan does not have any national legislation related to refugees or asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2010). Jordan nonetheless is hosting a large amount of refugees from Syria, as well as from Iraqi and Palestine (UNHCR, 2010). The country provides refugees with healthcare and education, but does not promise pathways to work (Jastram, & Achiron, 2001). While Jordan continues to be a generous host to refugees, a lack of legislative policy on the issue means that Jordan’s generosity could stop at anytime (UNHCR, 2010). In 2013, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that daily arrivals to Jordan of new Syrian refugees rarely fell below 1,500 refugees per day, and could reach up to 2,500 refugees per day (UNDP, 2013).

Most of the rights critical to refugee protection are also fundamental rights stated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to education (UN General Assembly, 1948). In 1989, The Convention on the Rights of the Child was expanded and applied to all children, including asylum seekers and refugee children (UN General Assembly, 1989). Children have the right to receive an education in any context, and receiving this education can protect children in times of conflict (Ostby & Urdal, 2011). Specifically, education protects against child militarization, child labor, early marriage, and other known special dangers to children in emergency situations (UNICEF, 2015; Save the Children, 2015). The wellbeing of children from conflict zones also improves as access to education increases (Save the Children, 2015). Attending school restores a sense of stability in children’s lives and they ultimately learn
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better ways of coping with their situations (Ostby & Urdal, 2011). The following quote describes how children’s refugee experiences impact their ability to learn, how their experience is unique, and how they are truly vulnerable:

“Children are vulnerable. They are susceptible to disease, malnutrition, and physical injury. Children are dependent. They need the support of adults, not only for physical survival particularly in the early years of childhood, but also for their psychological and social wellbeing. Children are developing. They grow in development sequence, like a tower of bricks, each layer depending on the one below it. Serious delays interrupting these sequences can severally disrupt development. Refugee children face far greater danger to their safety and wellbeing than the average child. The sudden and violent onset of emergencies, the disruptions of families and community structures as well as the acute shortage of resources with which most refugees are confronted, deeply affect the physical and psychological well-being of refugee children” (UNHCR, 1994).

Prior to the Syrian crisis, from 2002 to 2011, education in Syrian had been compulsory for children in grades one through nine (UNESCO, 2010/11). During this time, education in Syria was free (UNESCO, 2010/2011). In Jordan, education is a factor of pride and the government spends a significant amount of its National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on providing its citizens with education.

Za’atari refugee camp. Za’atari was not intended to be a refugee camp. In 2011, the Syrian crisis, much like other crises related to the Arab Spring, was projected to be short-lived. By July 2012, Za’atari became a refugee camp. It was first a temporary United Nations (UN) tent city, and then Za’atari opened official on July 28, 2012 to host refugees from Syria who were seeking asylum (UNICEF, CCFA, 2015). In 2016, the masses of Syrian refugees are still coming to Jordan (See figure 1).
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![Graph showing growth of Syrian Refugees in Za’atari camp by number of shelters, 2012-2013](image)

*Figure 1. Growth of Syrian Refugees in Za’atari camp by number of shelters, 2012-2013 (UNHCR, November 2013, January 2013, February 2013, March 2013, April 2013, May 2013).*

**Education in Za’atari**

Between 2011 and 2016, in only five years, a whole city has been built to support the Syrian refugees in Jordan. Jordan’s Ministry of Education and UNICEF have worked together to set up an entire school system, from early childhood education through secondary school (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; Comprehensive Child Focused Assessment (CCFA), 2015).

*Who is accessing education in Za’atari: Facilities, districts, and certification.* In 2012, Za’atari had two school complexes with a third complex under construction (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). In all of these school complexes, there are four schools including one primary school for girls, one primary school for boys, one secondary school for girls, and one secondary school for boys (UNICEF, JENA, 2013, UNICEF, JENA, 2014, & CCFA, 2015). Currently, the girls are going to school in the morning between 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., and the boys between 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. This schedule follows a double shift system, where classes are taught in 35 minutes, as opposed to the 45 minutes classes in a typical school in Jordan.

In 2012, approximately 78 percent of the children ages six to 17 in Za’atari did not go to school (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). At that time, studies reported that many families believed that
that they would return home to Syria (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Students who were not attending school in Za’atari and who participated in the UNICEF (2013) study shared their main reasons for not going to school, including a lack of interest feeling too insecure to go to school, and that school was too far away. However, in a CCFA (2015) report, the data highlighted the negative effects that children who were not in school experienced, such as feeling bored or feeling that they were missing out. For some children school provided them with a purpose and structure, and after losing everything, it was very difficult to lose the opportunity to go to school (CCFA, 2015).

By 2014, attendance rates in the camp more than doubled, and over 50 percent of all school-aged children were attending school (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). The number of school complexes increased to five. Progress was being made, but there was room to improve, as a significant amount of children were still not attending school. The main cited reason cited for not going to school in 2014, by both boys and girls ages six to 11, were that they had never been to school and the distance to school was too far (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). Some children also dropped out of school. Girls that dropped out felt the distance was too far and that there was too much verbal and physical violence at the school, while boys felt that they lacked interest and that they felt too insecure to go to school (UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

While overall numbers of students that attended and enrolled in school had increased, certain districts were better attended than others. The range of enrollment varied from 81.9 percent in the District 1 to 31.3 percent in District 12 (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). One of the proactive measures to address the issue of school attendance was through a partnership between UNICEF, Jordan’s Ministry of Education (MOE), Save the Children, and other social sector organizations (CCFA, 2015). The partners created a back-to-school campaign to encourage students and their families to go back to school (CCFA, 2015).
In 2015, the Comprehensive Child Focused Assessment (CCFA) report was published for Za’atari. This report stated 64.6 percent of all school-aged children in Za’atari were attending formal school, and there were seven complexes with 28 schools (CCFA, 2015). As of the 2015 school year, Za’atari offered education up to grade 12, and a certificate of completed education for Syrian students from the Ministry of Education of Jordan (CCFA, 2015). Additionally, the survey indicated that over 92 percent of head of households (HH) with school aged boys or girls believed that the education certificate was either “important” or “very important” (CCFA, 2015).

Educational access. Distance is one of the most consistently reported barriers of access to education. Students who are within 250 meters of school have a 64.9 percent attendance rate, while students who are over 750 meters have a 36.2 attendance rate (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). While distance is a real reason, the variables related to the distance are also relevant, such as as street traffic, violence, and harassment (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). Both girls and boys have reported having stones thrown at them on their way to school (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). Boys also reported being beat-up and having other children stealing from them. For example, a young boy said, ‘Although we escaped bombing…now some boys organized gangs and beat us’ (UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

In 2014, school attendance increased in line with the education of the head of household (HH) (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). This increase was true for children ages six to 11 who were attending school, as well as the overall school enrollment population (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). In 2014, over 82 percent of parents said they believed education was either important or very important (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). However, when asked about how they would rate the educational services, of parents of girls ages six to 11 only 18.5 percent said “good” or “very good”, and for parents of boys ages six to 11 only 15.6 percent said “good” or “very good” (UNICEF, JENA, 2014).
Parental involvement. The need to create greater awareness and build legitimacy around parent involvement is a significant factor in the continued success of education within Za’atari (CCFA, 2015). Jordanian teachers reported they did not have contact with parents (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). On the other hand, the Syrian assistant teachers reported that they did have contact with the parents but not in an organized way (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Syrian assistant teachers expressed that they appreciated parents approaching them on the streets and in informal settings (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). The assistant teacher believed this contact is helpful but they wanted to see parents more active and involved with the schools, often referencing how parents often were involved in education in Syria (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Parents also described their communication with school as being very low: 77 percent said they did not receive regular information from the school, and 60 percent said that no one in their household has ever spoken to any of their children’s teachers (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). Additionally, 93 percent of these same parents reported that they were not involved in the school (UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

There were plans to create a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), with recommenders to organize meeting times for parents to talk to teachers and to create a welcoming environment where parents are officially invited to visit the school (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). During these visits, parents would discuss the progress of their children, including matters of attendance (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Also during these visits, teachers and parents could write notes and updates in the children’s notebooks (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Committee creation was scheduled for 2013, consisting of Syrian assistant teachers and community members who were responsible for following-up on absences (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). However, as of 2014, no schools have a PTA. The biggest challenge in creating a PTA, as highlighted by prospective members, was that they were not appointed officially, and felt they lacked official legitimacy (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). By 2015, there were engagement events created for parents, but only six percent of
parents reported to knowing about and attending these engagement events (CCFA, 2015). Students shared that one of their main motivations for going to school was the family and community support they received. Without parents engaged in the schools it is hard to build a community of students who are attending school (UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

*The learning environment of Za’atari.* Environmental variables can have a large influence on the educational outcomes, including facilities, violence in the schools, children’s psychosocial health, teachers, and the curriculum. Understanding these variables as educational access opportunities or barriers provides insight into students’ experiences within the Za’atari camp.

Physically, in 2013, blackboards were described as unusable and in need of fixing (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). A suggestion was to install whiteboards instead, and so moveable whiteboards were added to the classrooms in 2014 (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; UNICEF, JENA, 2014). In 2013 children also needed backpacks with stationary. Without them there was a “the long delay in distribution of books and stationary that has cause children to drop out.” (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). The following year distribution of these materials happened much earlier, and a record was kept detailing who received materials for the semester, which was associated with increasing attendance. (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; UNICEF, JENA, 2014). In addition, the focus was on adding additional education resources such as maps, sports equipment, libraries, and computers (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). The progress from fulfilling individual needs, such as students having pencils and papers, to fulfilling the needs of the classroom, such as maps and a school library, signifies positive growth. In addition, in 2013, there was no playground, and children described needing a space to play outside of the classroom (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). This need has since been addressed, as children now have outdoor play spaces and some schools even maintain gardens (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; CCFA, 2015).
No matter what the school facilities are like, additional non-physical issues can create an environment where students are unable to learn, such as issues of noise, nutrition, and breaks. Class size has also been an ongoing issue, as some classes had more than 120 students (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Since this peak, classes have been reduced to fewer than 50 students in most cases (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; CCFA, 2015). Reports indicate that in addition to classrooms being too crowded, noise levels have been reported to be so loud that it was difficult for students learn (UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

Nutrition is also lacking for students in Za’atari, as very few students eat three meals a day. Reflecting this issue some students have said, “it would be good if we had two meals a day” (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). One Syrian teacher reported that, “children to do not eat enough to do well in school” (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). In 2013, there was a request by teachers, students, and parents to offer meals in school, though it is not clear if this issue was addressed (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Furthermore, there are no breaks scheduled, and students across all ages said it was extremely difficult to stay focused without breaks (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; UNICEF, JENA, 2014). American Academy of Pediatrics (2013), reported that breaks are essential for child’s development including social, emotional, and cognitive development (American Academic of Pediatrics, 2013). Teachers echoed this sentiment saying they felt the same way (UNICEF, JENA 2013; UNICEF, JENA, 2014). While it may seem natural to add in breaks, the schools operate in a double-shift system, and so breaks could potentially cause considerable scheduling constraints (UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

Violence is also an on-going issue affecting school in Za’atari, as children have reported that the teachers are verbally abusive (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Reflecting upon this issue, one student stated that some teachers “hit us and shout at us” (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Additionally, both boys and girls reported incidences of corporal punishment (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). While
some male parents felt that corporal punishment could lead to more effective learning, other parents disagreed (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). Teachers in this situation have described how they felt the need for more power, and students generally felt if they did something wrong they should be punished (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). In children, violence can interrupt the learning process or even cause regression in developmental milestones (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2016).

Teachers have also reported very serious concerns with the psychosocial health of their students (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). For example, one teacher shared that whenever a plane flies over the camp the students panic because of their memories of bombs being dropped in Syria (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Many teachers agreed that violent behaviors might develop if children’s the psychosocial health was not addressed (JENA, 2013). Violence has been reported to be very prevalent in the boys schools (UNHCR, 2013).

In the education system within Za’atari there are Jordanian teachers, Syrian assistant teachers, school counselors, assistant principals, and principles that are all hired by the Ministry of Education of Jordanian. The Jordanian teachers and the Syrian assistant teachers are paired together in the classroom. Many teachers have expressed the need for psychosocial support, and for training that builds skills of classroom management and support the Syrian refugee students (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). In the UNICEF, JENA (2013) report, teacher training was a significant recommendation. Recommended trainings included child protection, psychosocial support, and clarifying the roles of the Jordanian teachers and the Syrian assistant teachers (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). In addition to these trainings, many members of the Za’atari school community hoped to share successful examples of Jordanian and Syrian teachers working well together as models of best practices (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Sharing best practices would help create an
environment for effective co-teaching, which would enable teachers to be a key factor in motivating students (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

**Instruction.** Along with matters surrounding teachers and the school system, the issue of the curriculum is at the core of many people’s concerns. The Syrian and Jordanian curricula are quite similar (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). While the Za’atari formal curriculum consist of core elements of the Jordanian curriculum, students reported that art, music and physical education are not always taught, although students wished they had these classes (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). Indeed, girls between the ages of six to 11 cited art and music as one of their favorite things about going to school in Za’atari; however, that art and music education was not available in all schools (UNICEF, JENA, 2013; UNICEF, JENA, 2014).

Children complained about the national education curriculum in Jordan and described it as a lot of memorizing, with comments about rote learning (UNICEF, JENA, 2013). In addition, boys reported that they disliked the national education course, saying they wanted to learn about Syria rather than Jordan (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). While the curriculum was often criticized, there was also a sense that maybe it was the teachers who taught poorly and did not explain things well, or that learning was geared towards rote memorization rather than engagement of dialogue (UNICEF, JENA, 2014). It was not clear whether there are issues in quality of teaching, or the curriculum, or if these issues were caused by experience a different education system in a different place.

**Summary of Findings**

Rodman’s (2006) International Education Analytical Inquiry Matrix was used to analyze the literature reviewed for this study. Rodman’s (2006) Matrix is useful in identify the current state of situation through looking at a single issue through many lens. This framework was created to analysis development education.
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When viewing the existing body of literature through this framework, most studies provide a macro level view of education within the camp (Rodman, 2006). The strength of the literature is groundwork assessments that have been done thus far, such as understanding the challenge of the distance to school and progress made to date. However, such macro level analysis does not address some of the major issues as to why students are or are not accessing education. The focus of resources needs has shifted from pencil and books to school facilities such as maps in the classroom or a library for the school. However, there seems to be little progress or data on why parents, as significant stakeholders, are not involved in the schools. The data suggests that parents and community involvement are both crucial for sustaining and building access to education, but there is little data explaining why the PTA or other parent engagement activities are not working properly. Another area that is not addressed, but mentioned consistently in different sources, is the violence and psychosocial health of the children. Furthermore, even with higher attendance in the school the question of educational access still remains. While current literature examines the structural pieces from caravan school complexes, distance to the schools, and curriculum it misses what accessing education is like for the students of Za’atari. Additionally, other relevant issues to this topic include the purpose of education in Za’atari and the future of education in Za’atari.

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to examine the current state of access to education in Za’atari, specifically for primary school Syrian refugee children age six to 11 years old. The study is aimed at understanding who is accessing education in Za’atari and who is not. For those Syrian refugee children who are accessing education, it becomes important to understand certain variables, such as how they are getting to school and who is encouraging them to go. Another important variable to understand is the learning environment in schools, which includes the
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curriculum, teachers, class size, violent incidents, psychosocial support, and school facilities. This research employs a qualitative approach to understand educational access and the variables influencing it. Data for this research has been gathered through interviews with Social Sector Organization (SSO) employees, who are working within the field of primary education at Za’atari. This data reflects the current state of access to education, as well as the barriers that exist. The intention for this study is to gather new data to help understand and support the relevant need for on-going development for the Syrian refugee children in Za’atari and in a larger context of the future of education for the Syrian refugee children in Jordan.

Research Design with IE Matrix

Rodman’s (2006) International Education Analytical Inquiry Matrix provides a framework for this case study, offering a multi-layer approach to the qualitative research method. This approach includes: (a) the research question; (b) the literature review; (c) identifying the sample population; (d) the interview questions; (e) the analysis and coding of the data; and, (f) the final data analysis (see Figure 2, below). The International Education Analytical Inquiry Matrix (2006) is a valuable tool to facilitate looking at an issue from multiple positions. For this study, the Matrix Model (2006) widened the perspective to include multi-sector and multi-national lenses, which helped establish dimensions of how education is accessed in Za’atari.
Figure 2. The International Education Analytical Inquiry Matrix (Rodman, 2006).

The formula of analysis for this study, as situated within Rodman’s (2006) Matrix, is as follows (see Figure 3):

...
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![Conceptual Framework Diagram]

**Figure 3.** The International Education Analytical Inquiry Matrix Formula (Rodman, 2006).

**Participation Selection**

Representatives from Social Sector Organizations (SSO) working within the primary formal education system in Za’atari were contacted to participate in this case study. Social Sector employees are defined as employees of international non-profit or non-government organizations, such as Save the Children or the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The prospective sample population of research participants consisted of 26 SSO employees, identified through personal or professional connections. These SSO employers were contacted via email, LinkedIn, or Facebook. The researcher sent an email
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to all 26 potential participants (see Appendix A). Nine SSO employees agreed to be interviewed as participants in this research project, and ultimately seven of these employees were interviewed. Accordingly, the resulting participation rate was 26 percent. All research participants were authorized with approval from their respective SSO to participate in this research project (see Appendix B). At least 24 hours before the interview, participants were sent the interview questions to for review (see Appendix C). Data collection through these interviews took place between March 15th and April 3rd, 2016. All interviews were conducted in English via Skype. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded using reoccurring themes. Special focus was given to major points of interest in the interviews, which touched on new insights that were not discussed in prior literature.

**Presentation and Data Analysis**

The following section presents the qualitative data recorded from the interviews of Social Sector Organizational (SSO) employees. This data was transcribed, coded, and organized into several sections. The first section includes general participant information, including professional experiences in the MENA and Za’atari. The second section presents data related to the *scope of community*, looking specifically at the story of Za’atari, and the creation of formal education structures and systems for Syrian refugees in Jordan (Rodman, 2006). The third section of data and analysis focuses on the critical international education variables of *facilities, access, attendance, and barriers* (Rodman, 2006). The study concludes through the Rodman (2006) political view of the greater community, discussing elements of the future of education in Za’atari, and the hope of promoting educational opportunities for Syrian refugee children.

**Participant Information and Experiences**

The seven individuals who completed interviews worked for six different SSOs. Two participants were male and five were female. All participants spoke at least two languages, and
six out of seven individuals spoke Arabic. Five spoke Arabic as their first language, and one spoke Arabic as a secondary language. Five of the interviewees were Jordanian, and two were European. All participants were between the ages of 30 to 40. As illustrated by this demographic information, of the total participants, there was strong representation from Jordanian nationals and native Arabic speakers. Most participants spoke English as a second language, allowing the interviews to be comfortable conducted in English (see Table 2).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSO</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Languages Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSO 1</td>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>English &amp; Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 2</td>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>English &amp; Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 3</td>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Irish-British</td>
<td>English, French, &amp; Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 4</td>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>English &amp; Arabic, a little Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 5</td>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>English, French &amp; Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 6</td>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Italian, French, English, &amp; Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>English, Italian, &amp; Arabic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Table displays the demographic information collected from the study’s seven participants.

Beyond basic demographic data, participants were asked to respond to the following questions, to the best of their ability:

(1) When they started working for their SSO?
(2) If they had worked in other MENA countries?
(3) If they had worked in other refugee camps?
(4) How long they had been working in Za’atari?

The responses to these questions provided information related to participants’ depth of knowledge about the progress of education, and access to education within Za’atari. Four participants started working in Za’atari at the beginning in 2011, before it became a camp. One participant worked in Za’atari since 2012, and two other participants have worked in Za’atari since 2013. The positions held by the participants included: Education Program Manger,
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Teacher Trainer, Researcher, Consultant, Volunteer, Educational Specialist, and Education Officer. This array of positions reflects a broad-based understanding and outlook, inclusive of different perspectives and experiences.

All participants have worked within other Jordanian refugee camps, and some of these camps also housed populations from Palestine and Iraq. Four of the participants have not worked in any other MENA country, outside of Jordan. Three participants have worked previously in other refugee camps in the MENA region, including in Syria, the West Bank, Gaza, and Iraq. Two participants have worked in refugee camps outside of the MENA region including Rwanda, Congo, and Nepal.

Table 3

**Scope of Community**

*Participant Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSO</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Started working in Za’atari</th>
<th>MENA national refugee camps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSO 1</td>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 2</td>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Jordan, Iraq, Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 3</td>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Jordan, Palestine, West Bank &amp; Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 4</td>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 5</td>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO 6</td>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Jordan &amp; Palestine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second dataset, displayed above in Table 2, is based on Rodman’s (2006) *scope of community*, with questions examining how each of the participants started working in Za’atari, and what programs the participants have been involved with in Za’atari. Several participants
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described the beginning of Za’atari, and the access to formal education there for Syrian refugee children. Questions focused on understanding on the following topics: (a) what projects within primary formal education participants have worked on within Za’atari; (b) how many projects within primary formal education participants have worked on within Za’atari; (c) which primary formal school have been built and opened while participants have worked in Za’atari, as well as in which districts the schools reside; and, (d) which schools are still in progress.

All participants explained that they had worked in Za’atari, as well as in other camps or on other projects with the Syrian refugees. No one responded directly to the question about knowing which schools had been built or opened while they had been working in Za’atari. However, most participants generally cited the UNICEF reports that were covered in the literature review. When asked if they believed there were sufficient primary school buildings, all participants either discussed the camp as a whole, or the situation within the area where they have spent the most time.

After discussing school buildings, all of the Jordanians spoke about why Za’atari happened, and what was before the camp. Each of the participants also touched on why the Jordanian King and Queen took on the initiative to support the Syrian refugees, including providing education. There was no question that specifically asked about the King and Queen’s decisions. However, after answering the series of questions presented during the interviews, all the participants felt they needed to give a reason why Za’atari had been created. Participants all discussed how in 2011 and 2012, there was no plan in place. Operating in crisis mode, UNHCR used tents for refugee homes, but the refugees kept coming. It eventually became clear to that Syria’s Civil War was not a short-term issue. During the interviews, participants also expressed how the Syrian refugees believed that the conflict would end soon and they would return to Syria, and so many families did not want to send their children to school in the camp. One
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interview participant quoted a resident in the camp as saying, “This crisis, this revolution will stop and we will go back…they wanted to go back to Syria” (Participant five, personal communication).

Overall, participants provided the following information about the inception of the Za’atari camp: Za’atari was opened as a camp in the northern government of Jordan with the idea in the beginning that it would host 5,000 Syrian refugees (Participant two, personal communication). But, before the end of the first month, over 15,000 refugees resided in the camp (Participant two, personal communication). No one thought the camp would still be operating in the present day of 2016 (Participant four, personal communication). The UNHCR kept opening districts until they ended up with over 120,000 refugees in 12 districts within the camp (Participant seven, personal communication). The camp became filled to capacity and then closed to new arrivals with the first year and a half (Participant two, personal communication). Other camps had to be opened for newcomers (Participant three, personal communication).

These shared experiences describing the beginning of Za’atari match current literature describing how early on families believed living in Za’atari was going to be short-term. Statements from participants demonstrate that all parties believed the conflict would only require a short period of humanitarian assistance from Jordan and the United Nations.

The Jordanian participants shared a sense of pride as they described how their government had to develop a refugee plan, one that encompassed education and healthcare for the influx of Syrian refugees. This plan highlights the Jordanian government’s belief that education is a human right. All participants, including the non-Jordanians, pointed out how well Jordan is handling the crisis. Along these lines, one Jordanian participant said “Jordan will never close the borders. Jordanians are humanitarians. It would not be right to send Syrians back, for what? To be killed?” (Participant four, personal communication). This commentary is
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important, given the international community’s belief that Jordan could easily change its welcoming policies. This belief is supported by current literature, which suggests that Jordan does not have any national policy on refugees or asylum seekers. Participants clearly explain how this change of policy by Jordan’s government would not happen, as it would be against Jordanian identity.

International Educational Variables

Participants were asked questions related to Rodman’s (2006) critical international education variables within the Matrix of facilities, access, and attendance and barriers. Some of the data gathered stood in contrast to data gathered from studies presented in the literature review. Many elements discussed by participants overlapped with the current literature, as participants described needs that appeared in the literature. However, according to participants, some of these needs were no longer prevalent in Za’atari.

Facilities. A question posed to participants about facilities asked if they believed there were a sufficient number of primary school buildings in the camp. In their responses, six out of the seven participants believed that there were presently enough school complexes. One participant very strongly stated, “I believe we are doing a good job in providing education.” (Participant six, personal communication). All participants agreed that many schools have opened, some of which as recently as the 2014-2015 academic year. While most felt there were enough schools, they did believe classes were overcrowded. Participants reported class sizes typically ranges from 50 to 70 students, though most felt that the class size should be no more than 30 students. Overcrowding appears to have changed since the studies presented in the literature review were conducted. The literature noted that most of the classroom only contained 50 students.
Four of the Jordanian interviewees suggested that the current school structures were “not school building[s], but caravan[s].” (Participant five, personal communication). Caravans are prefab structures that are made out of corrugated metal and other materials without electricity or running water. All participants agreed the work done by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MOE) to get the caravan schools to where they were was very important, but many believed it was time to build real school buildings and retire the caravans. Additionally, when it is both hot in the summer and cold in the winter, and so the caravans have not been able to maintain a comfortable temperature. One participant noted, “No more caravans. Why not build real schools?” (Participant four, personal communication). This quote suggests the participant’s belief that caravans are not real schools.

**Resources in the school.** Participants were also asked if they could identify the stakeholders supporting the resources that enable schools to run. These resources include building materials, as well as school supplies (i.e. books, paper, and pencils). The participants were then asked to discuss why they believed the stakeholders were providing this level of support. As noted by all the participants, there were big strides forward in formal education within the camp from 2014-2016. In Za’atari, UNICEF provides the students with notebooks, pens, pencils, and a bag with various things they need for the semester. All participants noted that distribution of supplies had been sufficiently addressed, a feeling that aligns with the data represented in the literature review (UNICEF, JENA, 2014, & CCFA, 2015).

The two participants from the same SSO shared how working with the MOE has been one their greatest achievements of their SSO in terms of building formal education within Za’atari. With the MOE, the participants felt that they were really developing capacity to deal with the refugee crisis. These participants agreed, “Having the MOE plan and take the lead on education for the refugee has been remarkable.” (Participant six, personal communication). The
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SSO employees who made this statement were from Jordan and Europe. The Jordanian participant concluded, “We cannot hide it is a sensitive fight, the Syrian fight, we are working with a really amazing team at the MOE.” (Participant seven, personal communication). This quote demonstrates that while the work in collaboration with the MOE has been important and fruitful, it has not been easy. The reason working with the MOE remains challenging is that the MOE needs to address the needs of Jordanians, too. Outside of Za’atari, other schools in Jordan are now overcrowded. The importance of the MOE is something that was not discussed in the literature review. The leadership role the MOE has taken is essential as this ownership by the MOE indicated ownership of the Syrian refugee education as implied by SSO participants.

The school day. Participants were also asked to describe a typical school day.

Educational support was one of the first services that Jordan determined it would provide (Jordan Times, 2013). Participants discussed how formal education in Za’atari is structured. Jordan’s MOE oversees education, teachers, and administrators. UNICEF oversees the quality of education and attends to the needs of education for the Syrian refugees in the camp.

Participants described what a typical day is like:

The day starts with some speeches and announcements. Then students go to class with their teachers. The teachers make sure the children are okay, they do some exercises, they participate in music, they have activities that beautify the school, and they paint on murals on the caravans, teachers at the end of the day are sending notes to parents, and on some days there are meetings with parents or teacher meetings for the school. (Participant seven, personal communication).

The comment about teachers sending notes to the parents was discussed in the most recent report published by the CCFA (2015) as a need, and it is also described by several participants as an activity that is happening.

Participants also discussed the process of building of the community in Za’atari, and how students previously felt about the schools. One participant stated, “We have come along way in
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what the school means to the community, and I feel very proud of where we are.” (Participant seven, personal communication). Several participants commented how it is still very important to understand that the community is not living a normal life, by any means. Creating normalcy in the school, and creating a community are not something that necessarily easily completed tasks. For example, one participant described how children used to vandalize the school, whereas now they try to maintain it and keep it as beautiful as possible (Participant two, personal communication). The participant also highlighted how students share their beliefs about education being their way to a better future (Participant two, personal communication). Such statements suggest a belief and focus on education, but it is not clear how many students share this sentiment.

Gender differences. Participants were also asked if they noticed a difference in the primary schooling of boys versus girls, as well as if attendance rates correlated at all with gender. One of the major themes discussed in depth by four out of seven participants was how the attendance rate of girls is higher than boys. While boys often begin the day at school, they also leave early to work. One participant explained the higher attendance rates of girls stating, “The reason why there [are] more girls than boys is that girls do not work.” (Participant four, personal communication). This same participant went on to explain that, “boys prefer to work and help their family, and some boys run out of the school after only one-hour in school so they can work… The Jordan government allows the boys to open up shops in the camp and they earn money.” (Participant four, personal communication). Formal school attendance drops off around the age of 13, but for different reasons. As another participant states, “Boys are working and girls’ parents become fearful for protection issues, which certainly in a lot of cases are real.” (Participant three, personal communication). Simply put, boys favor work over school and parents become fearful for their daughters’ safety. The literature review indicated that boys
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going to work did not affect their school attendance, yet the participants indicated it did. Another participant shared this story:

There was a child standing under the sun and under the rain all the days. When she asked him, ‘why you don’t go to school? It is very useful for you and for your future’. The response was so emotional. The child said, ‘I would like to go to school but I cannot because I need to provide my family with some food’. When she ask him how much per day he told her I can barely get one Jordan Dinar. Imagine he works all the day for one Dinar. He says he wish there is someone who can give me this one Dinar for my father so he allows me to go to school. (Participant five, personal communication).

In addition, girls’ attendance rates decrease with the practice of early marriage. One participant said that there are bad stereotypes of Syrian girls. This same participant further stated that some believe that you do not need to pay a dowry. These cases are often linked with sex or marriage trafficking. There are more and “more child marriages and it is seen as fine to marry a girl 13 years old. Do you think this 13 year old will carry her baby and carry a book in her other hand? No.” (Participant two, personal communication). It is clear that they are some serious cultural issues that have to be addressed at the family and community level to keep boys and girls in school.
Eligibility for Formal Education. Participants were asked about eligibility to attend formal primary school for children age six to 11, including boys and girls. The literature review examined how students become ineligible when they are out of school for too long, and there is a three-year difference between their age and the grade level it corresponds with. In three of the interviews, when discussing primary school eligibility, mentioned that eligibility works the same for all MOE schools. Essentially eligibility is the same rule across Jordan. The one difference is that the Syrian children need to be assessed to determine which class level they will first enter. Participants agreed that remedial programs needed to be improved in order to address the eligible portion. The same three participants as above felt that student eligibility was still a major barrier, despite the literature saying this was seen as larger issue than it actually was.

As mentioned in the literature review, and confirmed with two of the seven participants, the age group six to eleven has the least percentage of eligibility issues, with “75.6 percent of the children are eligible, this is a good percentage” (Participant seven, personal conversation). It was discussed directly by two participants that the difficult age range is 12 to 17 years of age, as “students are not interested in school at this stage, and early marriage interferes” (Participant one, personal conversation).

In an interview, one participant gave a very practical view on the eligibility issue. The participant said, “A student six to nine years old is always eligible” (Participant three, personal conversation). Through the interview, it became clear that students younger than nine years old are always eligible to enroll in school. It is children over the age of nine that may have issues of eligibility. The issue is not being three years out of school, which is what was referred to in the literature. Rather, the issue is that matter is the age gap, but only after the age of nine. Therefore, any child younger than nine is eligible.
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Furthermore, this same participant went on to explain, “This has less to due with eligibility and more to do with the fact that there is no process that schools have to deal with children who have missed a profound amount of school” (Participant three, personal conversation). To discuss this process further, some teachers accept, lets say, a nine year old into grade three. The problem is now they are in the class of their age group, but then is there any meaningful access to school?” (Participant three, personal conversation). The other way is that you have some teachers, who will put the student, once again age nine, but now into grade one, and then you get away with missing school but you have the age challenge. There is a lot of work being done with the MOE curriculum to see what are the key learning areas and skills are at each grade level.

This knowledge of key learning and skills supports the informal education systems and centers who are working to help get children back into school. The hope is that the children who are out of school may be put on a fast paced process and have a formal process or confirmation back into formal schools. As of yet, the MOE has not assured that there will be formalized pathways for reentering school. One participant put this in the context of Jordan as a whole, “across Jordan 50 to 90 thousand children are no longer eligible despite being at formal school age” (Participant six, personal communication). This information was new, expanding on the question of eligibility. While this issue was addressed in the UNICEF reports, it was not made out to be a big issue (JENA, 2014). The perspective that the participants conferred is that eligibility is still a major issue.

Parents. Participants were asked what they believed to be the perceived view of parents and family on formal primary education for their children ages six to 11 years old. Through the interviews, all participants discussed the cultural and identity shift in one way or another in terms of their children going to school. One participant went on to explain what their experience has
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been with the parents in the community. This participant described how many of the Syrian refugees came over the boarder of Jordan. In Syria these people were farmers, and boys typically did not continue school after the age of 15 so they could help their fathers. Girls would get married. (Participant five, personal communication). Most of the families and parents coming to Za’atari have limited education. Some of the current barriers that were discussed with five of the participants were the background of parents. The students came from households where their parents might not be literate. Two participants specifically discussed the level of education and how it plays a role.

One participant mentioned several discussions with parents and how the parents felt they were not being supported to send their children to school. For example, one parent said to the participant, “why do they give us only pens and pencils for our children to go to school, but why not food and money” (Participant two, personal communication). This participant went on to explain that nutrition and money would help, as they will continue to need more and more help. The family versus education debate was deliberated further when one participant noted, when sons need to start being involved with the “family trade,” also saying “maybe now it is more important for the girls to become married as anything else could become problematic” (Participant two, personal communication). There seems to be general support by the families and parents for primary school aged children to go to formal primary school. There are family needs, including food and money, which create real barriers for children going to school.

Among five participants who had in depth discussions about the role of parents, the consensus was that it is essential for a parental and family attitude change towards formal education. While there has been work and marketing with the MOE, the perception of education has to change at the social, cultural, and family levels. One participant mentioned a hope that appears contradictory, saying parents are, “try[ing] to compensate for what they have lost and
they are pushing their children to do the best for more opportunities and this sometimes includes education” (Participant three, personal communication). The contradiction here is that parents and families are starting to shift their priorities regarding education. Another participant also recognized that now, the Syrian refugees believe they are staying in Jordan. So, they have started to adjust to Jordan’s education priorities. This participant went on to say, “Since 2014, all of [the Syrians] are sending their children to school because now they believe they will stay and they want their children to get a good education” (Participant four, personal conversation).

Beyond parents and family’s beliefs about the formal education system, one of the biggest concerns is violence. In this sense, violence includes situations that occur while children are traveling to school, as well as situations in the school. One participant stated, “Most parents think [education] is really important, but they do not think it is worth endangering their child” (Participant three, personal communication). This same participant goes on to explain that they think that most parents are now supportive of basic or primary education, but the big camp schools are dangerous places. In their own words:

“Most Syrian are not planning on going back to Syrian until at least five years after the revolution ends. What are they going to do now? No job. No education. Crime is increasing and violence against women is increasing too as the camps prioritize women working” (Participant five, personal communication).

The participant continued, saying that the low education, no jobs, and violence against women is part of the challenge. She explained, the education gap and opportunity could change the current situation, saying, “We are focusing on education with the parents” (Participant five, personal communication). Since they have been living in Za’atari, there has been a lot of work within the community to show the “importance of education after they lost everything” (Participant seven, personal communication). The current state shows that more than 75 percent
out of the whole age group of children ages six to 11 are attending. One participant shares, “For me I see this as progress there is always more work” (Participant six, personal conversation).

While there is a lot feedback and varying points for parents to be involved, it seems the parent piece continues to remain unclear. The literature review had unclear points on why parents were not encouraging students to go to school. Through the large variety of responses by parents, demonstrated how many needs the families have and how that plays into the value of education for each family. Participants also shared a large range of answers. The point that was listed consistently throughout the participants’ interviews was that there must be a cultural shift towards education. This point goes further than simply providing educational opportunities, so that it can include education priorities that meet family’s needs.

**Barriers to attending.** Participants were asked what they thought motivated children to attend school. Most participants did not answer this question but instead focused on barriers. They were also asked what they though the barriers to enrollment or attendance are. One of the first barriers brought up was cash assistance. Cash is very limited and most of the aid going to the refugees is in the form of food. The way that they purchase food is through a voucher within the camp each person getting the equivalent to twenty Jordanian Dinar each month. When children are going to school, they are not able to buy snacks as the family only has food voucher. Parents do not have money to give their child to get a snack. In some schools they have started to provide a nutrition specialist and food with sessions on eating healthy as well as cleaning teeth. One participant said, “How can they understand and learn if they are not provided a good meal” (Participant two, personal conversation). One participant discussed how some schools are doing a good job. The participant continues and said that others are not providing a good education. The participant express that children are not motivated to go to a school after
everything if the quality education is low. When education quality is low financial motivators become more important.

One participant discussed how even though going to school is a normalizing activity and students want to learn, sometimes this desire to learn also pushes them out of the formal schools. This participant went on to explain that the schools are chaotic and they are not able to learn. The participant mentioned that there seems to be more boys at informal educational schools they believe it was due to the classes of children being so crowded, “with 50 children and incredibly noises with a teacher who cannot really keep control of the classroom and you know there is quite a bit of violence in the boys’ schools… sorry but there is quite a bit of violence” (Participant three, personal communication). Some of the violence is from children who are bullies, as shared by one of the participants:

“We need to accept that the child looks like this maybe because a barrel exploded at his home lost his hand and leg. We need to accept that little girl with a burned face. These things stop some of the children to go to school because other children even though they are Syrian as well start criticize him, or criticize her, or be away from them. This is one of the obstacles. The physical disabilities stop children from going” (Participant two, personal conversation).

Violence is a real issue and, as reported by three of the participants, the boys’ classrooms are much more chaotic and violent or, as one participant said directly, “there is quite a bit of violence in the boys schools,” the participant went on the to explain chaos in the camp in general and how this factor cannot be taken out of context when looking at the schools (Participant three, personal communication). “I would say that this is a barrier to attendance more than anything else, for the older teenage girl there is a perception of safety, for the boys there is a very real threat of violence, and I suspect it very hard to actually learning anything in there as they are” (Participant three, personal communication). Concluded on by saying, “If students are leaving formal education then what is the purpose of education” (Participant five, personal
communication). There is a grave need to address the violence. The violence actions stem often from the greater need for psychosocial support.

In a recent study reported by one of the participants, there were extremely high levels of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); however, neither the teacher nor the parents are trained on dealing with PTSD in their children or students. This was explained as, “children who do not sleep properly are children who do not concentrate and children who are likely to get in trouble for not paying attention in class.” In this example it is evident that negative consequences are being used when a child needs additional psychosocial support (Participant three, personal communication). The need for psychosocial care of the students is crucial. Another example of how severe the psychosocial scenario is for the children and adults within the camp follows:

“We did have an intervention where we worked with children who had chronic repetitive trauma and nightmares. We trained the teachers to distrust the intervention, and we went around and asked the children how many children had terrible nightmares and then they have again, again, more than three of these a week, you wake up and then you are so frightened that you think you are going to die and you cannot go back to sleep, if anyone has this problem then okay you can put your name on the list. We are going to run an intervention for it, and next day nearly all the children put their name on the list over 200 children and 3 of the teachers” (Participant three, personal communication).

The psychosocial need is tremendous. “It is a really big issue that really affect cognitive ability to learn” (Participant five, personal communication). In addition, two different participants stated that assistant teachers need to be supported in psychosocial support too as they are struggling with psychosocial issues too. Further more, all teachers need training on psychosocial support. They need to learn how to speak with students, what is appropriate to discuss, and know what resources exist at the school or outside of the school.
**Walking to School.** Participants were asked about how students were getting to school, and the distance from students home to the school and which districts are easiest for students to get to school. Children get to school by walking and getting a school close enough to children’s homes has been one of the big struggles early on in Za’atari. One participant shared “I would say the schools are not far from home and they are available everywhere in Za’atari. It is better than the host community” (Participant five, personal communication). The comment it is better than in the host community is refereeing to how there is a school in each district and these schools are closer and less crowded than some of the schools right outside of Za’atari.

In the past year there has been an effort to organize the ‘walking project’, which is where SSO or parent volunteers walk a group of children to school. This is important getting to school has been continuing cited barriers in all the reports within the literature review and mentioned by six of the seven participants as a challenge. Now that there is a school in every district one participant expressed that “there is no excuse for distance for the next school year [2016-2017]” (Participant six, personal communication). Another participant, while looking at a map in their office, said “certainly within one kilometer” (Participant three, personal communication). When the question about distance to school the conversation transitioned into not so much the distance is the problem, which has been the key points in the literature reviewed both the UNICEF, JENA reports (2013, 2014) and the REACH (2015) reports, but what happens on the way to school and why this is a concern (JENA, 2013; JENA, 2014; REACH, 2015).

While the distance started the conversation quickly participants started describing the roads on the way to school. “The roads that lead to the schools, is even hard for us adults to walk” (Participant two, personal conversation). Participants discussed how some roads are better, how bikes are being used as alternative transportation but sparingly, and how the camp has enforced speed limits. One participant described even when going the speed limit it is
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“surprising how children can pop-up in front of you” (Participant two, personal conversation). Furthermore, walking to school in challenging weather can be difficult as well. The children wear high boots in the rain and mud walking on the side of the street “trying to avoid bikes, cars, trucks, while having a bag of chips or a chocolate” to go to a school with no electricity when they are wet (Participation two, personal conversation).

It would be good if parents or non-profits could gather siblings or children from the same neighborhoods and walk them to school. One participant described how in another Syrian refugee camp in Jordan called ‘Azaq’ that they have community volunteers and they have walking groups. This has become very popular and effective to minimizing the bad things that happen on the way to school from traffic accidents or bullying. “This same initiative in Azaq has not been able to get off the ground in Za’atari and the reason why seems to be unclear” (Participant three, personal conversation). The suggestions have been one neighbor one day then another neighbor, but the parents have expressed that they would like the SSO to do it, as the parents are too busy.

The walking project or walking bus is crucial for Za’atari. All participants who mentioned walking project or walking bus also expressed concerns about safety on the way to school. Traveling to and from school seems to be a real barrier. It is not only the traffic and weather, but also the violence on the way to school. One participant shared, “I do not think it is unreasonable to walk a kilometer to go to school, but if you have to walk to school and get into three fights on the way then that becomes very different” (Participant three, personal conversation). The conversation on walking to school has many layers. One participant mentioned that the UNHCR should be supporting the walking bus soon, and they mentioned again it is not clear why the walking bus has not worked as of yet. The same participant acknowledge that is not common for the students to be walked to school where they are from in
Syria, maybe this was okay in a small village in Syria but they need support. When parents are desperate to make a living walking their child to school does not seem like a priority.

**Teachers and Curriculum.** Participants were asked a question about who they believe the education system is built for. Teaching in Za’atari as one participant described is “formal chalk and talk” or lecture style (Participation three, personal conversations). Four participants discussed how the teachers were fairly inexperienced and do not have the tools to teach in a normal classroom, but certainly do not have the ability to deal with the realities of teaching in Za’atari. On the other hand everyone is very focused on education in Za’atari. One participant who did not view the teachers as inexperienced described how some principles believe that the school in Za’atari is better than any school that they have worked for outside the camp in the past 30 years. The participant said, “We can forget that that education can be good in a camp, or better” (Participant seven, personal conversation).

One participant discussed how UNICEF, the organization that runs most of the efforts in the camp, “is making a good effort” (Participant two, personal conversation). This participant went on to discuss how the opportunities for Jordanians to teach are good but the Syrian’s feel more comfortable with the Syrian Assistant Teacher. Many in the community the participant talked to said they would prefer a Syrian teacher. Another participant elaborated on Assistant Syrian teachers versus Jordan teachers, and they described that both the Jordanian and Syrian teachers are exhausted from working double shifts. The participant went on to discuss how the Syrian assistant teacher wants to have a larger role and they want training so that they can become the teacher. One participant discussed how hiring the Syrian teachers was very important as they helped children and families deal with the pains of war, but also create a new environment. The Syrian teachers have become to be instrumental in supporting the children and the Syrian teacher community.
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Education really depends on the schools, teachers, and educational materials. One participant shared, “if we have good educational materials with good teachers in the schools, you will see that children are happy. You will see they will be counting from one to 10 in Arabic or English, and you will see they will want to learn and practice” (Participant two, personal conversation). The teacher have supported progressing to a more settled situation, and one participant describe that “Syrian teacher have supported learning, community to the school, promoting education, building parent teacher association, other initiative as they have been leaders in the advocating for the needs of the Syrian community based on the need of the schools” (Participant five, personal conversation).

**Curriculum.** One participant helped give a historical account of the Jordanian curriculum and the Syrian curriculum and the curriculum in Za’atari. The curriculum for Jordan was described as a English based curriculum as the English occupied Jordan. Syria’s curriculum was described as a French based curriculum as the French occupied Syria. With the English and French curriculums each national curriculum were a bit different. When the Syrians came to Za’atari, there was no camp originally and no education plans for them. King Abdullah and Queen Rania of Jordan wanted the refugees to have access to education, so they allowed the Syrian children to attend the same schools as the Jordanian children. When Za’atari and then other refugee camps within Jordan were built the MOE determined that the education system would be a Jordan educational system. In Za’atari there would be small elements of the Syrian education in the curriculum but the Jordan national class would remain.

The first few years the curriculum was a challenge to the Syrian teacher assistants, the students, and the parents. A participant explained the Syrian assistant teachers and parents felt like they could not help, as they did not know the curriculum (Participant two, personal conversation). The curriculum has been a challenge, and acknowledge as a challenge by all
participants. This challenge was not considered an unresolvable problem but rather a question all participants felt to be important. The curriculum is Jordan based, as the authority for education is the Ministry of Education of Jordan. The Syrian teachers have been are being trained on the Jordanian curriculum. One participant said, “the Jordan curriculum has a strong reputation and it is important that the students are learning the Jordan curriculum as they are in Jordan now” (Participant four, personal conversation). This same participant said that the Syrian assistant teachers shared that the curriculum is not that different. A participant shared that “the reason you see Syrian teachers in the classrooms is to help seal the gaps if there are any in the learning” (Participant four, personal conversation). Another participant added the curriculum in Za’atari while based in the Jordan curriculum has incorporated elements of the Syrian education (Participant seven, personal communication). However another participant had a analytical view of the curriculum was “built for the Syrians, built by very old fashion [principles], but very standard in the Middle East for what is in the school” (Participant three, personal conversation). The participant went on to say, “I do not question Jordanian curriculum, but what I do question if it meets the needs of the children” (Participant three, personal conversation).
International Support and Jordan’s need. Participants were asked if they believed that the education system in the primary school was working for the Syrian refugee children in Za’atari. In many interviews, and mostly with the Jordanian participants, the flags of foreign country and representations of the countries that are pasted everywhere in Za’atari that have supported. Almost all Jordanian participants commented in some way or another, that it really should be Jordan that is being thanked. The governments with their flags and public relations material are put on the school caravans. The participants believe that all the real things are coming from the Ministry of Education in Jordan. For example the teachers are paid for by the MOE, as is the teacher training. “The Gulf countries build it [caravan] and support them with resources like a computer lab, but the costly things, and the on-going things all come from Jordan” (Participant four, personal communication). Another participant said, “Qatari school, Saudi school, but why does each one [school] work differently? They recruit, they hang up their flags and say to the media we opened a school in Za’atari and then BAM end of story” (Participant five, personal communication). They both discussed resources and if the resources were spread or organized in a central manner to create an overarching better education system.

Another participant shared, “we need the help of the international community but I also feel the international community needs to learn about Jordan and the Syrian refugees here before raising their flags and what seems to say I am here, and here is my money. I am giving you my money” (Participant two, personal communication). It seems that there is the need for money, but not for sake of publicity but for on-going support. None of the participants answered the question, but they did define in some ways that education should not a public relations campaign, and it was inferred that it was sometimes.
‘E’ducation and ‘e’ducation. All of the interviews ended in a similar way. Participants were asked whether they believe the education system at the primary school level in Za’atari is working for the Syrian refugee children. Specifically, participants were asked to discuss their final thoughts about the current state of access to basic education, and then provide any recommendations. One theme that surfaced was how education with a capital ‘E’ stands for the role and responsibility of Education in the world, whereas education with a lower case ‘e’ is education as it appears in Za’atari or in Jordan. Accordingly, the ‘e’ducation of Za’atari feeds into the ‘E’ducation and vice versa.

When describing their final thoughts on ‘e’ducation in Za’atari, many participants shared the notion of quality versus quantity. Speaking to this notion, one participant shared the idea that there are enough school structures, but structures mean little if the classroom environment is not adequate for learning (Participant two, personal conversation). This participant went on to explain, “At the same time, we need to be realistic and imagine how many have spent time in Za’atari, and this helped improve their financial [future] and education” (Participant two, personal conversation). This duality that the schools are enough but also not enough was also touched on by another participant, who expressed how they believe the education system at the primary level was working. But, at the same time this participant concluded, saying, “I believe it is providing the most basic kind of education to students who are attending” (Participant two, personal conversation).

Another participant said that the situation in Syria is bleak, and that the education improvements need to be addressed through the following strategies: (a) real schools, not carvaans; (b) fewer students in the classrooms; (c) training courses for parents; and, (d) teacher training for Syrians and Jordanians (Participant two, personal communication). If these education issues are addressed, this participant believes that the early marriage issue would not
stand a chance. Illustrating this point, this participant says, “if you want to protect your daughter, the strength will be education, there is no man who can protect you, no one can protect you as you can protect yourself” (Participant two, personal communication).

All participants turned to a similar idea about the passion of education, which one participant described as follows:

Education is the only investment that no matter what happens around you, you will still own your future. No matter what you have your knowledge, your education? You can stand up again and start up all over again. Education is the solution, anything you lose. Education is an investment in the life. Education makes people independent and makes a better future and better plan for the future. (Participant seven, personal conversation)

Education is a child’s right. It is essential to create access to education for all children everywhere, and this notion defines the right of education. It is through education of communities that access to education is created. It is through promoting education that children will be able to access education. Students may have access to education, but it is equally important that it is a quality education. Another participant described:

My thoughts are no different than in other countries. Education, create a serious place to learn and they will come to learn despite the fact that they have considerable psychosocial problems, despite that the teachers are not well prepared on any standard. In order to make a change we have to fundamentally change how we thing about education. If we create education to meet the needs of the children and the psychosocial needs while also understanding that they have educational needs at this point in time than we can, but as of now there has to be a better option. If I could create the education system it would provide an alternative to the age six grade one, you have to provide a more flexible system according to the attainment level. I would give parents the space to talk about the problems. Education would be the holistic way. (Participant three, personal conversation)

The way to create the environment and culture of education is to hold celebrations for students who earn good grades. There needs to be more moments of celebration, even if they only involve face painting or handing out balloons. One participant describes a day when they painted the students’ faces, hearing students excitedly say, “Please teacher paint on my face. Do it just like that one (pointing to another child)” (Participant five, personal conversations). This
same participant said there needs to be more moments of happiness, and these moments need to spread through the schools and through the camp. This participant went on to explain how a balloon gives hope, saying, “One and a half Jordan Dinar for a package of balloons creates all the laughing and happiness that they feel inside” (Participant two, personal conversation). The participant believed, “after seeking knowledge, playing, and having fun, somewhere inside they will start to believe ‘there is a future for me’ and education can become their savior and give them a better future” (Participant two, personal conversation).

With all the progress and leading of the SSO, there is a certain level of standardization needed. While this idea of structure is often seen as a good thing, it does not relate to our society, which is friendly. We create things and give things like chocolates to those around us if they need it. There needs to be great flexibility on the standards to adjust to society.

Discussion

The average length of civil wars since 1945 has been about 10 years (UNDP, 2014). The Syrian crisis is not showing any signs of ending soon. Tent camps are still being built as refugee cities, and increasingly more refugees are seeking asylum. Classrooms are overcrowded, and education is often conducted in two shifts. There is a greater need for teacher and principle training to address concerns that Syrian children are behind (UNDP, 2014).

Estimate(s) the direct costs of replacing damaged, destroyed or occupied schools and lost school equipment could be as high as $3 billion. Importantly, we estimate that the long-term impact on Syria’s economy of 2.8 million Syrian children never returning to school could be as much as 5.4 percent of GDP, which equates to almost $2.18 billion. (Save the Children, 2015)

Syrian children who do not complete primary school education are likely to earn 32 percent less in their first year on the job, as compared with Syrian children who completed secondary school. This same demographic is projected to earn 56 percent less than Syrian children who completed university education (Save the Children, 2015). It is expected that
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Syria’s current out-of-school population will face similar, if not worse, earning prospects if they remain out of school. With so many children out of school, the individual child not finishing or being able to access education affects the child, the family, and the whole future Syrian economy. It is predicted that Syria’s economy could experience very real issues because of the country’s population of children who are not in school. This observation is made by comparing Syria with other countries that have also suffered significant economic loss due to large out-of-school populations, including Yemen, Mali, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Save the Children, 2015). It is estimated that the economic effects of 2.8 million Syrian children never returning to school could reach a staggering impact of $2.18 billion (Save the Children, 2015).

At the same time, tremendous efforts have been made in education at Za’atri. Families have left their homes in Syria, and the country they knew. In Za’atri, more and more children are going to school each passing year. The community is coming together in Za’atri, and there has been remarkable work done by a coalition of Jordan’s government, MOE, SSOs, and the community. To pause and to think, while there are certainly real challenges, and real struggles, and problems that seem to have no end in sight, Za’atri was once a place of tents, and then caravans. Within the four years between July 2012 and April 2015, a whole school system was built. There is a Parent Teacher Association, there is teacher training, and next year, in the fall of 2016, there will be kindergarten in Za’atri. Jordan’s MOE is issuing certificates for students, and Syrian students are starting to go to university in Jordan. Amidst some difficult circumstances, improvements are steadily evolving, as shown by the community within Za’atri, as well as Jordan’s government approach to humanitarianism, the Ministry of Education collaborating with UNICEF, and all the volunteers, teachers, and workers that believe children have a right to education no matter what. The right to education remains.
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Limitation in Research Design

While this study provides some insight onto the current state of education access, the research was limited to a select population that only viewed the current state of educational access from a SSO point of view. Furthermore, all interviews were conducted through Skype, which was subject to networking issues that caused six out of the seven interviews to be stopped at least once. Skype occasionally made conversation difficult to understand for users on both sides of the conversation. Most of the interviews happened between 3 and 7 AM in the researcher’s local time. This window of time is not ideal for conducting intensive academic research. Other limitations included rephrasing questions over the course of the study, as some questions were too ambiguous for participants speaking English as a second language. For example, participants experienced difficulty responding to questions like “Can you explain what this means?” and “What do they need to do?”

Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher believes future research on this topic is crucial. The current state of education access should continue to be looked at as the Syrian crisis goes on. This capstone only provided a glimpse into the volume of research needed on this subject. Within Jordan specifically, all the camps need to be examined, and best practices should be shared. The host communities within Jordan are becoming increasingly important, as Syrians are integrating in their new home. Assessing the quality of education must begin be a primary focus of educational evaluations with Za’atari.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the Syrian Civil War and the Syrian Refugee crisis have grown into emergency situations, there are everyday heroes developing solutions and some of their voices
were heard in this study. These heroes are changing the opportunities and the world for Syrian refugee children.

This is not the end, but a call to action. Education is a right. Syria will need to be rebuilt. Education is the root of development and opportunity. Education for the Syrian refugees, both children and adults, must be at the forefront of the response to this crisis.

Education cannot simply consist of lectures. Education must be reframed to the needs of this vulnerable community. There must be psychosocial support and healing. There must be art in the classrooms. There must be paths to use the education to better their host communities.

If the Syrian civil war ends after ten years, the child who was six in Za’atari is then sixteen. The child who was eleven is then twenty-one. The international communities support to create, and provide access to a quality education is crucial. Syria can be rebuilt for a peaceful future. There is hope for the Syrians, and for the Syrian children in education.
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THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP


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Appendix A

Dear Participant,

Greetings.

My name is Theresa Frey, and I am a graduate student studying International Education at the School for International Training located in the U.S. I am conducting research for my Capstone, which is similar to a thesis, on current access to education for Syrian refugee children living within Za’atari camp. I understand from a colleague that you might be considering being a potential participant. I am looking to learn from your perspective what the current state of primary education is in Za’atari.

It is my goal to heighten awareness to help further support awareness for support needed for further development of access to education within Za’atari, and in the bigger picture for the Syrian refugee children. I understand that working with children within education and with this highly vulnerable population is important to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. I will take every step possible for anonymity and confidentiality to remain. If there are additional steps needed that I have not provided for confidentiality and/or anonymity I will modify to meet your needs.

I hope you will consider participating. I am happy to answer initial questions, big or small, that are not covered in this formal email.

If you were to decide that you would like to participate, participation would include the following:

1. I will provide you the questions at least two days prior to our interview.
2. You will be able to opt out at anytime due to any reason.
3. One video/phone interview for one-hour discussing your professional perceptions of access to education within Za’atari.
4. Confirmation from your employer that you are able to participate in this interview.

Thank you kindly for considering. If you are interested in participating please respond to this email and we will organize a time that is convenient for you. Please kindly respond to this email by March 15th, 2016.

With Kindness,

Theresa Frey
Masters of Arts Candidate, International Education
THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP

School for International Training
THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Participant Consent form for Research Study:


You are invited to participate in a research study titled ‘The Current State of Access to Basic Education for Syrian Refugee Children Living in Za’atari’. This study is being conducted by Theresa Frey, a student at the School for International Training (SIT) as a requirement for completion of the Masters of Arts degree in International Education. The purpose of this study is to investigate education access within Za’atari for the Syrian refugee children. The hope is to heighten awareness on the Syrian education crisis for children. Topics the researcher will explore the current status of the primary schools, and who is attending them. Topics will also include what are some of the reasons for those children attending, and the children that are never attending or dropping out within the Za’atari camp.

The researcher will write a full case study paper to be shared and hopefully help heighten awareness needed for the Syrian refugee children.

As the participant, you will be asked to:

• Confirm via email that you are able and willing to participate prior to the interview.
• Partake in a recorded interview (over Skype/Google Hangout, telephone or in-person) lasting approximately one hour.

Your participation is voluntary:

• You are under no obligation to partake in this study
• You may withdraw yourself from this study at any point with no repercussion
THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP

- There is no cost to you and you will not be compensated financially
- There are risks for participating in this study such as emotional stress or anxiety related to discussing high vulnerable populations, and the high stress work within refugee camps.

The result of this research will be published in a Capstone paper:

- You should only take part in this study if you want to participate and have approval from your organization.
- If at any point you can decide to terminate your involvement in the study, the data you provide will not be included.
- You can refuse to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity will be protected:

- You will not be referred to by name in the publication of this study
- The interview recordings and surveys will only be accessible to the Researcher and SIT Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- All recording and data will be saved with password-protected files.

I will provide you with a final document of the written capstone.

For any questions or concerns, contact:

- The researcher at Theresa.Frey@mail.sit.edu, or by phone at 917-837-3713.

By agreeing to be interviewed, you are consenting to participate in this research study.
Appendix C

Interview Guide

Interview Guide – Social Sector working within Za’atari

Name:
Gender identity:
Age:
Job title:
Organization:
Nationality:
Languages spoken:

1. When did you started working for [insert name of organization]?
2. Have you worked in other regions within Middle Eastern North Africa (MENA)?
3. Have you worked in other refugee camps?
4. How long have you been working within Za’atari?
5. What positions have you held while working in Za’atari?
6. How many projects within primary formal education have you worked on within Za’atari?
7. While working in Za’atari, which primary formal school have been built and opened? Which districts are these schools in?
8. Which schools are still in progress?
9. Do you believe there are sufficient primary school buildings at this time? Why?
10. Who do you see supporting the resources to make the schools possible from building to resources within the school such as school supplies (i.e. books, paper, pencils)? Why?
11. Observationally, what is the school day like?
12. Is there a difference in primary schooling of the girls and boys?
   a. How do attendances rates correlate with the gender of school aged children in the camp?
13. How does a child ages 6 to 11 become eligible to go to formal primary school?
   a. Do you know approximately how many students’ ages 6-11 years of age who are ineligible or have dropped of school?
   b. Is there a difference between the boys and girls, ages 6-11 years?
THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ZA’ATARI CAMP

14. What do you believe the perceived view by parents and family on formal primary education is for their children, girls and boys ages, 6-11 years old?

15. What do you think motivates the children to attend school?

16. What do you think are the barriers to enrollment or attendance?

17. How are students getting to school?
   a. Do you think schools are close enough to students’ homes within Za’atari?
   b. Which districts do you think are easiest for the students to get to school?
   c. Do you think there are any districts that are more difficult for students to get to school?

18. Who do you believe that education system is built for?

19. Do you believe that the education system in the primary schools is working for the Syrian refugee children who are attending the schools? Why or why not?

20. What are your final thoughts on current state of access for basic education for the Syrian refugee children living within Za’atari? Do you have any recommendations?

The data collection instrument will be a series of interviews to gather qualitative data. An Excel workbook will be completed by the researcher to tabulate the answers, and used for comparing the data that is collected. Participants will be provided the findings upon the researchers completion of the capstone project. The researcher will be available for debriefing or to provide other information as needed through email and setting up phone conversations at the request of the participant.
### Appendix D

Sample size of Assessment Surveys from JENA (2013), JENA (2014), and CCFA (2015)

| Reported by Head of Household or Parent in Survey Assessments | Households | Families | Individual Ages 0-3 years 0-8 months 3 years 8 months to 5 years 8 months 6-11 years old 5 years 8 months to 17 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| JENA 2013                                                    | 380        | 1,509    | 406                                             | 183                                             | 920                                             |
| JENA 2014                                                    | 390        | 423      | 1,734                                           | 634                                             |
| CCFA 2015                                                    | 13,926     | 75,878   |                                                 |                                                 |                                                 |                                                 |                                                 |
### Appendix E

Sample size of Focus Group Discussions (FGD) from JENA (2013), JENA (2014), and CCFA (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group Discussions (FGD)</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>5 years 8 months to 17</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JENA 2013</strong></td>
<td>235 people representing 24 focus group discussion</td>
<td>142 (12 FGD) Children who arrive before December 2012</td>
<td>93 (8 FGD) Jordanian teachers (25), Syrian assistant teachers (21), Principals and assistant principals (11), school counselors (4/4), Syrian Education Committee (6/6), Parents of school going and non-school going children (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JENA 2014</strong></td>
<td>224 people representing 24 focus group discussions</td>
<td>Children attending school (4FGD): one on girls 6-11 and one on boys 6-11, Children who have dropped out-of-school (4FGD): one on girls 6-11 and one on boys 6-11, Children who have never attended school in Za’atari camp (4FGD): girls 6-11 (1 FGD) and boys 6-11 (1 FGD)</td>
<td>Parents of children who do not attend school Parents of children attending school Jordanian teachers, Syrian assistant teachers and school counselors, PTA members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCFA 2015</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>