

»» Materials on Development Financing



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Storyline

Learning for a better future

Since the start of the civil war, Jordan has taken in over one million Syrian refugees – including 234,000 children. With the support of KfW Development Bank, they are now getting a second chance at schooling in Jordan.

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Amman, Jordan, midday: The playground at Abedal Latif Abdeen School for Boys is bustling with pupils – it's a change of shift at the double-shift school. A few boys race across the playground to the wrought-iron gates and cheer with joy. They have been studying since eight this morning and their school day is now over. A couple of them start a quick game of football, while others grab some juice and sandwiches from their rucksacks: a quick refreshment for their journey home. A group of teenagers hurries past us, heading in the other direction through the gate and towards the school building. For the pupils in what is known as the "late shift", the time for learning has only just begun after having the morning free. They will be studying English, Maths and the entire history of Jordan at Abedal Latif Abdeen until four thirty this afternoon.

Learning in shifts

One school, two shifts: 650 Jordanian children and young people study in the morning and 650 Syrian and Jordanian children and young people study in the afternoon. Given that one million Syrian men and women and 234,000 school-age children have fled to their neighbouring country of Jordan since the civil war broke out in their home country, shift-based learning has become a necessary part of the daily routine at the Kingdom's 200 or so double-shift schools. This is because the government was unable to build as many new schools as they would have needed to ensure normal schooling in such a short space of time. Nevertheless, the double-shift system enables Syrian children and young people to catch up on what they have missed, learn new things, and set the course for a self-determined future.

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The main people featured in the story include ...

- Murad Essam Kamel Laswi, an English teacher at Abedal Latif Abdeen School for Boys in Amman, who is keen to teach Syrian school children that they are able to improve their lives through education;
- Nidaa Al-Ali, an assistant to the head teacher at Dahiet Al-Ameer Hassan Primary School, who is able to fund her sons' studies thanks to the double income;
- Nisreen Mohammad Qusiny, a Jordanian-Syrian maths teacher at Dahiet Al-Ameer Hassan Primary School, who found her first ever job as a result of the programme;
- Hind Al-Hindawi, who has been coordinating school development within the Jordanian Ministry of Education since December 2017;
- Several young people, who explain the daily routine at the double-shift schools and tell us their hopes for the future.



In the current school year, up to 134,000 children are benefiting from KfW promotion in the field of education and the increased capacity within the school system.

After the London Syria Conference 2016 and facing the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis, the Kingdom of Jordan made a commitment in the “*Jordan Compact*” to ensure that all school-age Syrian children had the opportunity to attend school. The aim of the “*Jordan Compact*” was to generate prospects for Syrian refugees to remain in their region of origin. KfW Development Bank is supporting Jordan with these efforts and, on behalf of the German Federal Government, is funding teaching and administration positions and the construction of new schools. Since 2016, KfW has provided EUR 60 million for these additional positions using funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (BMZ) special initiative “*Tackling the root causes of displacement, reintegrating refugees*”. At the peak of the programme, 3,800 teachers and 1,600 administrative staff found employment. This also benefited the strained labour market in Jordan, where one in ten people are unemployed according to unofficial estimates. Thanks to German support, as many as 134,000 Syrian school children have now received high-quality schooling, around half of whom attended double-shift schools in the afternoon.

No lost generation

One of these children is Hani. The 15-year-old has no problem attending school in the afternoons. “It means I get to have a longer lie-in in the morning,” he says and smiles mischievously when we meet him and a few of his classmates at Abedal Latif Abdeen School. Of course, this is not the only reason. The gangly, dark-haired schoolboy is eager to learn, particular-

ly English and social studies, he explains. That’s because he would like to become a designer when he’s older, or a TV sports reporter, and good English skills are important for that. In Syria, he only went to school for three years before the civil war broke out and it became impossible for him to attend school in his home town of Homs. For almost an entire year, Hani was not allowed to leave the house. Every now and then he would flick through his older brothers’ school books, though he found it hard to concentrate. At night, shots rang through the streets and some of his relatives lost their lives. In 2013, Hani’s family fled to Jordan and Hani, the child of a “lost generation”, was transformed back into Hani, the school boy dreaming of a successful future. “The school here is good and I have to make the most of it,” says Hani. “I only have this one chance.”



Hani and Rafa’at, pupils at Abedal Latif Abdeen School for Boys in Amman.

Even though he has only been at school for seven years, he is already in year nine. This means that he is at least the same age as his classmates. “The pupils from Syria often have big gaps in their knowledge,” Hani’s English teacher Murad Essam Kamel Laswi tells us later on. “They have missed a lot; a child in year six is often only at year-four level in terms of learning.” However, he explains that the Syrian pupils are motivated and want to catch up with everything. “They know they were lucky. That spurs them on.”

A way out of a lack of prospects

Hani’s English teacher is 34 and teaches during both shifts at the boys’ school. “I am obsessed with teaching the pupils that education and English in particular offer them a way out of poverty and a lack of prospects,” he says enthusiastically. “This applies to

Syrian and Jordanian children in equal measure.” However, the additional income generated by the double shift also suits him as well as the double salary enables him to treat his two children every now and then and buy them something to play with. Furthermore, Murad Essam Kamel Laswi supports his parents in the city of Kerak and he also sets a bit of money aside for larger purchases. Thanks to support from KfW Development Bank on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, a better and more self-determined future awaits him and his family.



Murad Essam Kamel Laswi is a teacher at Abedal Latif Abdeen School for Boys in Amman.

Murad Essam Kamel Laswi’s salary from the afternoon shift is funded by German tax money, as is the salary of Nisreen Mohammad Qusiny, a Jordanian-Syrian maths teacher at Dahiet Al-Ameer Hassan Primary School in Amman, a building that is just seven years old and has space for 1,600 pupils. “The school is ideal,” says Qusiny, “and the children are extremely curious and motivated.” The 40-year-old was born in Jordan but grew up in Syria. When the political situation in Syria came to a head in 2011, she did not hesitate; she instead moved her husband and four daughters back to her parents’ home country. Prior to her current role, she had not been working as her Syrian qualifications were not recognised. Thanks to the teachers’ salaries programme, she has now found a job and is able to partially contribute to her family’s income and fund her eldest daughter’s degree with her salary of around 300 Jordanian dinar (370 euros). The income gives the family more financial security and gives Qusiny herself a positive feeling of recognition and empowerment.



Nidaa Al-Ali, assistant to the head teacher, earns a double wage in the two-shift model.

Before she starts her working day at twelve thirty, she always stops in Nidaa Al-Ali's office. The Jordanian is the assistant to the head teacher and has already been working for five hours at this point. She works both the morning and afternoon shift, and also works from eight to twelve on Saturdays. Then she checks whether all the pupils are in school, performs an inspection of the premises, and coordinates the timetables. Her position is also financed by KfW on behalf of the German Federal Government. "The fact that I can work both shifts enables me to double my income – more than JOD 700 in total," she tells us proudly over mint tea and chocolate in the head teacher's office. Together with her husband's income, they now have enough to pay both of her sons' tuition fees and give them pocket money. She can now pay off the debts that the family had to take out from their neighbours and friends to build their house on a month-by-month basis.

A place to live and learn for the new pupils

A total of 815 Syrian boys and girls study at Dahiet Al-Ameer Hassan Primary School in the afternoons. Most of them are very young, pupils in year one or two, who fled Syria with their parents between 2011 and 2013; only a very small number of them actually went to school there. "Here in Jordan, they often live in very cramped conditions in one or two rooms, some of them have lost a parent," explains Nidaa Al-Ali. "Many Syrian children are intelligent and enjoy learning, but it is difficult for them to do their homework in peace at home in the mornings." With free activities and project work like radio, writing workshops or art, the primary

school not only wants to be a place of learning but also a secure place for the new pupils to live, feel at ease and find expression.

Unfortunately, not every school had these opportunities, as Hind Al-Hindawi tells us during our visit to the Ministry of Education in Amman. She goes on to explain that funds in the educational budget are tight and even before around 234,000 school-age Syrian children arrived in the country, many of Jordan's state schools were already over-capacity and run-down. Hind Al-Hindawi has been coordinating school development in the Ministry of Education since December 2017. She is also in charge of overseeing all of the various programmes that support the educational sector, such as Germany's involvement in the initiative for accelerating access to quality education (see info box) or the "No lost generation" strategy implemented via UNICEF. "Germany's support is more than generous," says Hind Al-Hindawi. "All of the positions in the afternoon shifts are funded by Germany – and two out of every three Syrian school children who are not taught in camp schools benefit directly from these double-shift schools."

Improving people's living conditions

Hind Al-Hindawi wants to change things at her ministry. "I want more! I am still a long way from my goal," she says ambitiously, and you can tell by looking at her that she has big plans. The young woman studied in Jordan and the USA, and wants to make the Jordanian education system more agile and future-proof. Particularly in a country like Jordan, where there is little industry, few raw materials and low economic growth, education is a key mechanism for improving people's living conditions. Not least because the situation in Jordan has become significantly more acute since the start of the civil war in Syria: water and power are rationed, rubbish heaps are growing, and unemployment is on the rise. And pressure on schools is increasing, too. There are often up to 43 children in one class.



Hind Al-Hindawi coordinates school development in the Ministry of Education.

"With the programme, Germany has really helped us to cushion the effects of the Syria crisis; now we have to be proactive, keep building schools, and adjust the curriculum," says Hind Al-Hindawi. In the future, her work will also focus on ensuring that Syrian and Jordanian children can study together in single-shift schools and that the construction of new schools might render the double-shift schools redundant at some point in the future. To achieve these goals, German financing now not only covers the salaries of teachers at double-shift schools but has also been funding salaries at single-shift schools since the start of the third project phase.

After all, teaching and studying at double-shift schools is a major challenge for everyone involved: firstly, the building wears out quicker – after all, the toilets, school benches and equipment are used twice as much – but secondly, the learning time during both shifts is shorter. However, there has yet to be any major protests against this state of affairs, not least because there are not many alternatives: the Ministry of Education has introduced schooling on Saturdays but classes often remain half-empty. Extending the school day is also out of the question because parents are worried about their children's safety when they have to walk home in the dark. Now, the school year may be extended by two weeks – but it is still unclear as to who would be able to pay for the additional teachers' salaries.



Head teacher Amine Alwneh (left) in front of the solar panels on Hay Al-Karamah School in Irbid.

In an effort to address the problem of space in schools, KfW has already financed the construction of 37 new schools in Jordan on behalf of the German Federal Government, with around 20 more in planning. Hay Al-Karamah School in Irbid was built in 2017, for instance. “Everyone was at the opening, our Minister of Education, representatives from the German Embassy and KfW,” head teacher Amine Alwneh tells us proudly during a tour of the grounds. The school is well equipped, with solar panels on the roof, science labs in the chemistry department, and a small library. The school has resolved a major shortage in the district, which previously had just one tiny school: 1,400 children now attend Hay Al-Karamah in two shifts, from pre-school age through to year ten. What’s more, 30 teachers have found a job here as well.



Schoolgirl Dana at Hay Al-Karamah School.

The school is located in a middle-class residential area, which means that it too was caught up in a development that was observed throughout Jordan back in 2017: because unemployment or falling wages meant that an increasing number of families were unable to afford fees equivalent to 2,500 euros to send their children to private school, almost 50,000 children inundated the state schools at the start of the school year – several hundred of whom arrived at Hay Al-Karamah. One of these pupils is 14-

year-old Dana, who is in year nine here. She enjoys being able to walk to school in the morning; in the past, she had to get the bus halfway across the city and had less time after school to do her homework or meet friends.

She likes her new school, even though the differing levels of knowledge among her classmates can sometimes make it difficult to get excited about lessons. “But the teachers here are good and their lessons are good, especially English,” Dana explains to us. She wants to become a nurse one day and help others. She has some clear ideas on how learning could be more fun: “The school of my dreams would have small classes with just 20 pupils,” explains Dana. “The pupils would not annoy each other, but if they did, the teachers would have enough time and the inclination to sort the argument out.” The schoolgirl also has an idea concerning the issue of double shifts: “If there were enough schools for everyone, all children could go to school in the mornings.” According to her idea, the afternoons would be reserved for children who had not understood something covered in the morning. Everyone would benefit from this, she says.



Education for all – Including 234,000 school-age Syrian children

Since the start of the civil war in Syria, around 1.2 million people have fled to the neighbouring country of Jordan. Men, women – and around 234,000 school-age children. Far too many for the often already chronically overcrowded Jordanian schools. The schools lacked the teachers, teaching materials and funds to teach this number of children. However, failing to educate children, in other words accepting a “lost generation”, is a lot more expensive in the long run: human resources are lost; peace, stability and progress are put at stake.

The broadly donor-financed Jordanian initiative “Accelerating Access to Quality Formal Education for Syrian Refugee Children” (AAI) has therefore set itself the target of enabling all children who have fled Syria to attend school. Every school year since 2016/17, the German Federal Government has provided EUR 20 million for teaching posts and administrative staff. This makes Germany the largest donor in the collective made up of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada and Norway. This commitment complements the existing bilateral Financial Cooperation measures: the support for Jordan’s school construction programme and the “No lost generation” strategy implemented via UNICEF.



Photos

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