NAFSA Region XII November 3, 2016 Palm Springs, CA Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert
ACEI
Zepur Solakian
CGACC

SYRIA

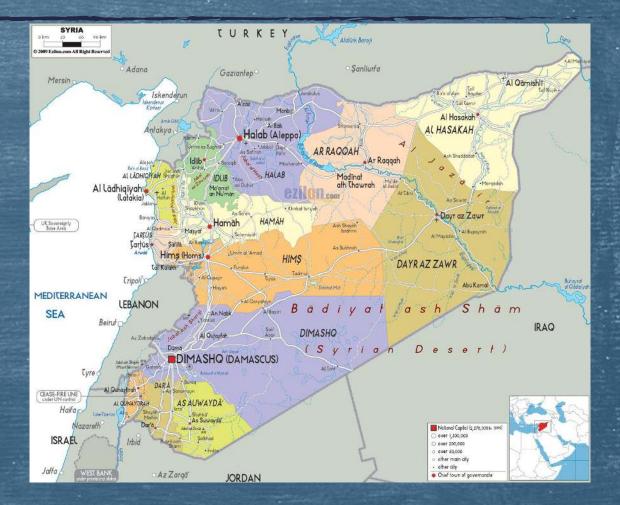
Education in Crisis and Providing Pathways for Refugees





Syria: Quick Facts

- Official Name: SyrianArab Republic (SAR)
- > Area: 185,180 sq km
- > Capital: Damascus
- Population: 17,064,854(July 2014 est.)
- > Official Language: Arabic







Overview of Syrian Crisis

What started the crisis?

- Severe 15-year drought in countryside drove approx. 1.5 million people to main cities in search of work and food
- Peaceful protests in March 2011 in response to arrest & mistreatment of youth accused of Anti-Assad graffiti compounded with dissatisfaction with government's handling of drought and economic hardships, escalated to violence
- By July 2011, army defectors formed the Free Syrian Army joined by civilian Syrians and outside fighters

Who are the various groups?

- Assad Regime
- National Coalition of Syrian Revolution & Opposition Forces
- ► ISIS/ISIL/Daesh
- Russia
- ▶ Iran
- ▶ U.S. (+ 9 countries)





Syria: Civil War at a Glance

West of Syria:

The Alawaite and minority-dominated Assad regime

Shia militias trained & funded by the Iranian Revolutionary Corp (IRGC)

Center:

Sunni moderates

Islamists

Jihadists groups (e.g. ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra) Northeast:

Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG)

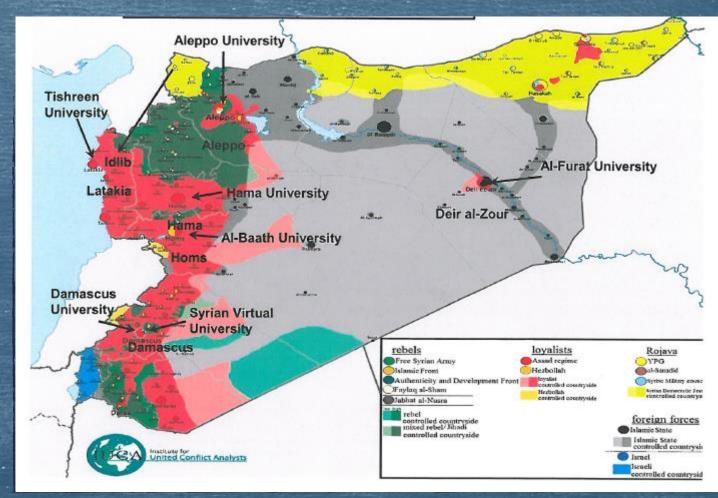
Outside Players: Iran and Russia (backing Assad regime)

Outside Players: Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE (backing Sunnidominated opposition) Outside Players: Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) backing the YPG





Syria: Conflict Map (January 4, 2016)



Source: IUCA & AACRAO



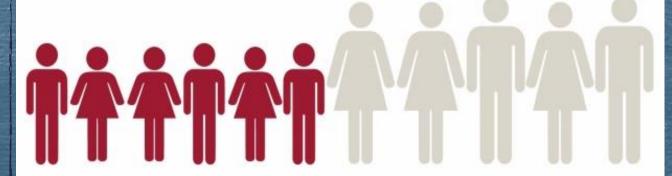


Syria: Casuatlies of War

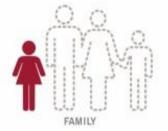
SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

MercyCorps

Children Caught in War



More than 50% of Syrian refugees are children who've lost everything.









FRIENDS

Fact: More than $\frac{1}{2}$ of Syrian refugees are under 18. (source: UN)





Syria: Casualties of War



➤ Syria 2014:

approx. enrollment in basic education: 553,000 students approx. enrollment in secondary education: 2,875,00 students

Syria 2015:

estimated 2 million Syrian children were out of school roughly 5000 schools destroyed/damaged

450,000 university age Syrian are now refugees (source: 2015 IIE report)

1,629 students killed by government forces as of 2014/15 (source: Syrian Human Rights Group)

approx. 35,000 university students unlawfully detained

approx. 4.7 million Syrian refugees at camps in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt (source: UNHCE)





Syria: Casualties of War



Before conflict/war





"Syrian children heading to school in war ravaged city of Duma, Syria, 2013"

Source: www.al-monitor.com









Damascus University (pre-war)





"Damascus University cafeteria after bombing in March 2013"

Source: <u>www.nytimes.com</u>







Aleppo University (pre-war)







"Aleppo University, after its Architecture faculty and dormitories were bombed in January 2013"

Source: www.thenational.ae







Al-Baath University (pre-war)





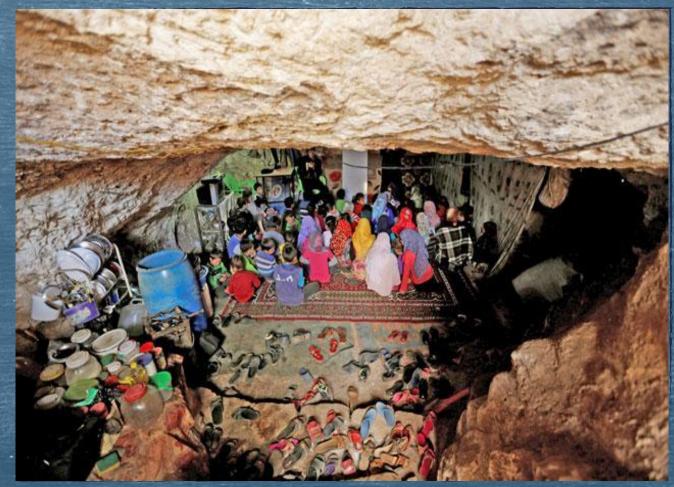


Al-Baath University in Homs





Syria: Education goes Underground



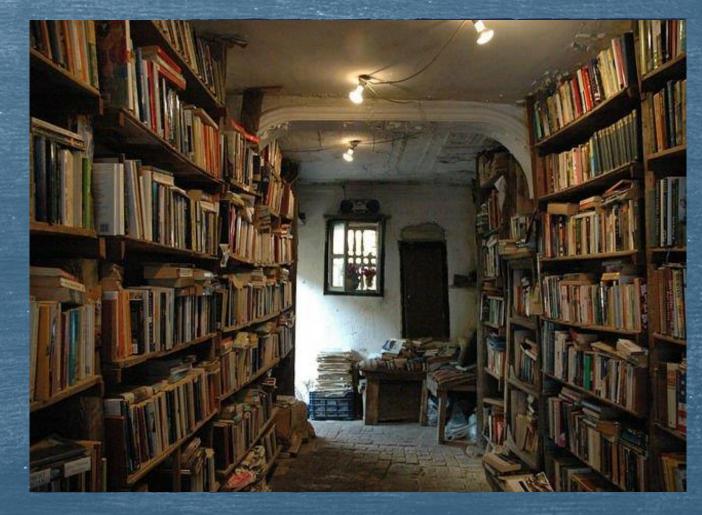
"Makeshift classroom in a cave, Syria, March 2016"

Source: <u>www.jordantimes.com</u> (Reuters photo)





Syria: Education Underground



"Secret Library in Syria"

Source: www.globalcitizen.org







"Side effects of war: Child labor & exploitation"

Source: UNICEF

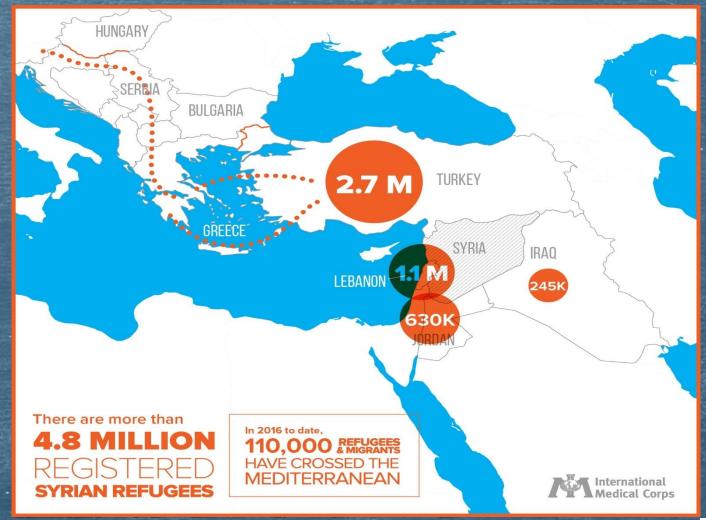




Syria: Latest Update

- > 13.5 million need humanitarian aid in Syria
- 6.6 million are internally displaced in Syria
- 4.7 million+ refugees have fled to neighboring countries
- > 5.6 million children are affected
- 64.7% of people in Syria live in extreme poverty

Source: International Medical Corps 2016







Refugee Host Countries

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Families Fleeing Violence

There are more than 4.7 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. Nearly one million have applied for asylum in the safety of Europe. More than 13.5 million people are still in need of assistance inside Syria.



LEBANON

1 in 5 people is a Syrian refugee 1,069, 111



JORDAN

1 in 13 people is a Syrian refugee 637, 859

TURKEY 2,620,553

SYRIA 6.6 million people internally displaced

> IRAQ 245, 543

As of February 24, 2016 Sources: http://data.unbcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php UNOCHA.org/syria







As of February 24, 2016 Source: UNOCHA



Syria: Education in Refugee Camps

"Syrian teacher & students in an improvised school at a refugee camp in Jordan, 2014"

Source: www.jordantimes.com







Syria: Education in Refugee Camps

"Makeshift school for Syrian children at refugee camp in Turkey, 2014"

Source: www.brookings.edu







Syria: Education in Refugee Camps

"Syrian children at an improvised school in refugee camp on border of Syria and Jordan, 2015"

Source: <u>www.jordantimes.com</u>







Syrian Students in US

 ORIGIN
 2013/14
 2014/15
 % Change

 Total Syrian
 693
 792
 14.3%

 Students in U.S.
 Total
 11.3%
 10%

 International Students in U.S.
 886,052
 973,926
 10%

Source: IIE Open Doors & EducationUSA Middle East & North Africa





Syria: Education Governance/Administration



Syrian Ministry of Education Damascus

- Basic & Secondary Education and Public Schools – supervised by Syrian Ministry of Education
- ► Higher Education governed by the Ministry of Higher Education

Governance/Administration





Syria: Education Funding



- Public basic and secondary education is free and funded by the government
- ▶ Public higher education is also free
- Private institutions do not receive government financial support

Funding





Syria: Education Overview



Photo credit: Nish Nalbandian

Primary, Lower & Upper Secondary and Tertiary

- ► Primary, lower & upper secondary
 - Basic Education (9 years)
 - Lower Secondary [compulsory]
 - *1st Cycle (4 years) [Grades 1-4]
 - *2nd Cycle (5 years) [Grades 5-9]
 - Secondary (3 years) [Grades 10-12]
- ► Post-Secondary/Tertiary Education

* 1-6 Years





Syria: Basic Education (Primary)



Photo credit: Nish Nalbandiar

- ► **Age:** 6
- Length: 9 years, divided into 1st cycle (4 years) and 2nd cycle (5 years) [ages 6-15]
- ► Governance: Ministry of Education
- Assessment & Promotion: National Examination at end of basic education cycle
- Credential: Basic Education Certificate (Shahadet Al-Taleem Al Sasi)





Syria: Secondary Education



Photo credit: Louai Beshara-AFP

Syrian students taking their final baccalaureate exams 6/18/13

Secondary Education

- **Age:** 16
- Length: 3 years (Grades 10-12 / ages 16-18)
- Admission Criteria: National exam at the end of basic education (test results determine access to either general/academic secondary schools or vocational/technical secondary schools)
- Governance: Ministry of Education
- Two Branches:
 - •General/Academic
 - Technical/Vocational
- Award: General Secondary Education Certificate (aka Baccalreate)
- Provides Access: Higher education at universities or higher institutions





Syria: Higher Education



Photo: Damascus University (main building)

Higher Education

- ► **Governance:** Ministry of Higher Education of the SAR
- Admission Criteria: General Secondary School Certificate aka Baccalaureate
- ► Accreditation/Recognition: Ministry of Higher Education of the SAR

http://www.mohe.gove.sy/mohe





Syria: Higher Education - Reforms

- **Educational Reforms**
- □ 2001 Private Universities Law
- 2002 Syrian Virtual University recognized
- 2004 & 2006 University Regulations Law

Reforms





Syria: Higher Education – Institutions

- # of Universities & Higher Institutes
- □ Public: 7
- □ Private: 20
- □ Higher Institutes: 4
- ☐ Higher Institutes affiliated to Universities: 12

Number of Universities & Higher Institutes





Syria: Higher Education – Degree Programs



Degree Programs

- □ Diplomas/Associate (2 years) [min. GPA 50%]
- Bachelor's (4-6 years) [min. GPA 50% or 60%; project/research/training/internship]
- Higher Diploma (1-3 years) [min. GPA 60%; project/research]
- Master's (2 years) [min. GPA 60%; Thesis]
- Doctorate (min. 3 years) [min. GPA 60%; Dissertation]

Higher Education: Degree Programs



Syria: Current State of Education



- Estimated 2.8 million Syrian children were out of school
- SAR baccalaureate/Secondary School Examination only accessible in Regime held areas of Syria
- ➤ Roughly 5000 schools destroyed/damages
- 450,000 university age Syrian are now refugees (source: 2015 IIE report)
- 1,629 students killed by government forces as of 2014/15 (source: Syrian Human Rights Group
- Approx. 35,000 university students unlawfully detained
- Approx. 4.7 million Syrian refugees at camps in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt (source: UNHCE)

Current State of Education





Syria: Current State of Education (cont./)

- Formal education in ISIL-controlled and "liberated" areas is unpredictable and disrupted
- SAR's MOHE confirms that universities have not officially closed but they aren't operating normally
- Some universities have moved classrooms and offices to less dangerous areas
- Universities are constantly under attack
- Scholars, professors, students are targeted, arrested or have fled
- Students do not attend classes regularly, some only attend exam
- Some students in refugee camps reenter Syria for the SAR-approved Secondary School Certificate exam.

Current State of Education (cont./)





Syria: Secondary Education Post 2011 – Under SIG

Syrian Interim Government (SIG)

(National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces formed Higher Commission for Education)

- Introduced a revised national curriculum for Grades 1-12
- Administers its own Syrian secondary education in 2013, 2014, 2015)
- □ SIG Secondary Ed Exams administered in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and "liberated" parts of Syria
- Each year approx. 10,000 student take the exam
- The Secondary Education Certificate is not recognized by Syrian Arab Republic's Ministry of Education
- The Secondary Education Certificate is recognized by Turkish government and one university in France

Secondary Education in Syrian Interim Government Post 2011





Syria: Secondary Education post 2011 - Other

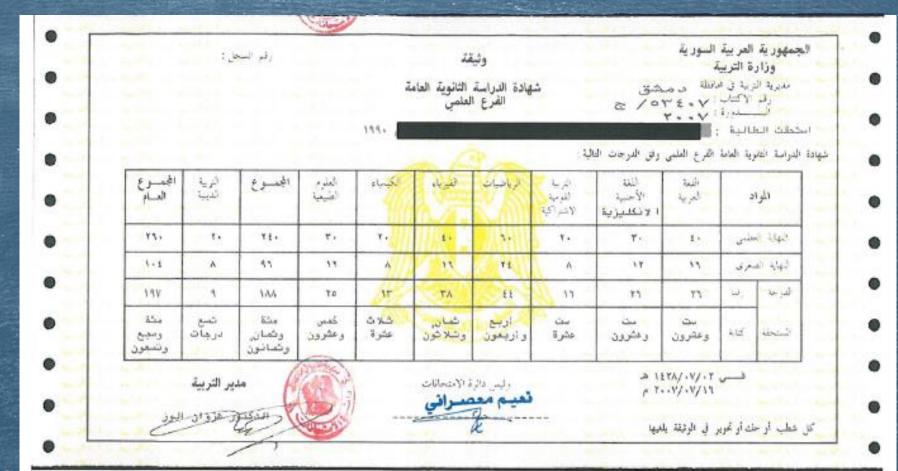
- ▶ Other Examining Entities:
- □ The Syrian Commission for Education administers the Libyan curriculum to Syrian students in Turkey for the past 3 years (2013, 2014, 2015)

Syrian Commission for Education(NGO)





Syria: MOE of the SAR Secondary baccalaureate

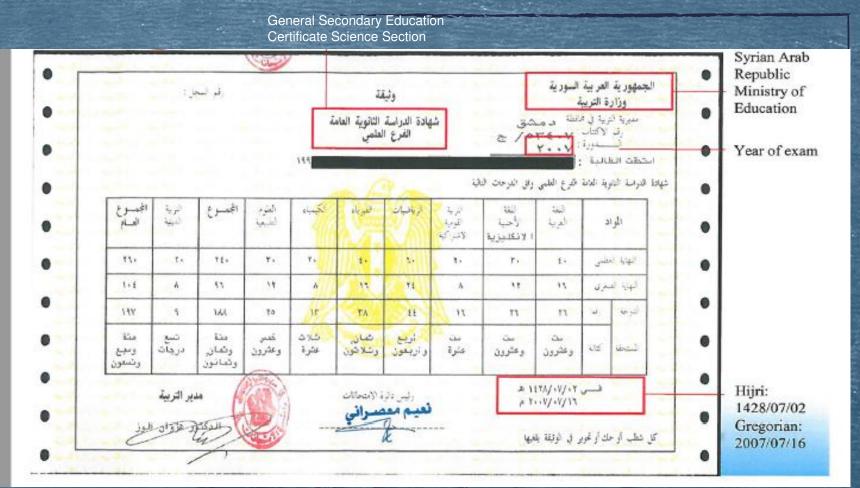


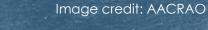






Syria: MOE SAR Secondary baccalaureate (cont./)









Syria: Verification of Credentials - Secondary

Ministry of Education

http://moed.gov/sy/cresults2015/scientific/index.php



MOE Verification





Syria: Syrian Interim Government (SIG) baccalaureate

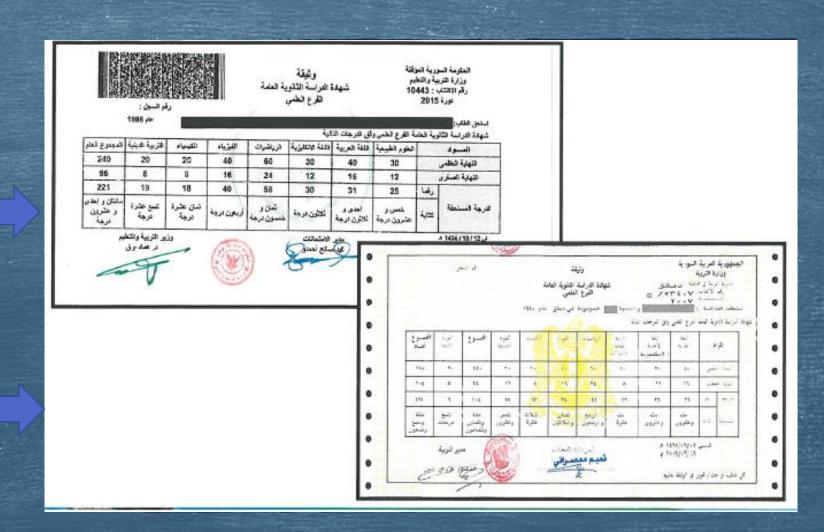


Image credit: AACRAO





Syria: SIG vs SAR Baccalaureate





SIG

SAR





Syria: Challenges facing Syrian Refugees

Documentation

- Little or no academic documents
- ► SAR Baccalaureate exam only offered in Syria
- ▶ SAR MOE has Online verification database (since 2014)
- Syrian universities will only issue one original official set of documents to studies
- Syrian universities will not issue documents directly to other institutions
- Syrian universities will not issue transcripts to students no residing in the country
- University of Damascus has digitized all its academic documents

Challenges: Documentation





Syria: Challenges facing Syrian Refugees

Language

Language barriers, if US-bound, deficiency in English language

Psychological

PTSD from war, psychosocial and emotional difficulties

Financial

Financial, limited to no funds or immediate source of income

Challenges: Language, Psychological, Financial





Syria: Plight of a Refugee

Practical Guide to Helping Refugees & Displaced People without/limited Documentation



A.R.G.A.V.©

Assess overall situation

Reconstruct academic history

Gather documents

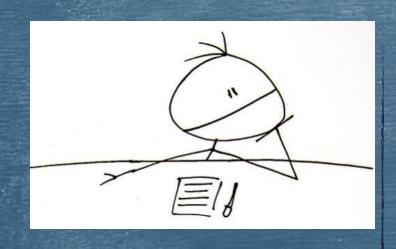
Assess competency

Verify

- Assess the overall situation
- Reconstruct the individual's academic history
- ▶ Gather documents
- Assess competency
- ▶ Verify



Step 1. Assess Overall Situation



- Assess the overall situation to determine if the claim for lack of documentation is legitimate (is source country at war or devastated by natural/environmental crisis?)
 - -Check US Department of State
 - -Search Internet on recent news
 - -Email institution
 - -Telephone institution (need a native speaker or someone fluent in the language)

1. Assess Overall Situation



Step 2: Reconstruct Academic History



2. Reconstruct Academic History

- Reconstruct the individual's academic history
 - -Follow your general procedures (as you would all prospective applicants)
 - -Require completion of an application
 - -Require submission of official academic documents
 - -Conduct an interview

Step 3: Gather Documents



- Gather any available academic and/supporting documents
 - -Student IDs
 - -Registration cards/enrollment slips
 - -Any transcripts, certificates/diplomas,
 - -Copies of licenses
 - -Certificates of professional standing,
 - -State examinations certification
 - -Proof of tuition payments/receipts from institution's bursary
 - -Sworn statements/affidavits from exiled faculty/school administrators)
 - -Newspaper clippings/articles/announcements or printed lists of graduated students

3. Gather Documents



Step 4: Assess Course Competency



- >Assess course competency
 - -Interview by member of faculty
 - -Assign special project
 - -Offer challenge/placement exam

4. Assess Course Competency



Step 5: Verify



- Verify and check everything that has been gathered to reconstruct a portfolio of your candidate:
 - -Confirm the crisis situation in the country and institution with official sources (e.g. U.S. Department of State)
 - -Ensure that you have in-house expertise on the country/region in question and its education system
 - -Compare and verify any document gathered against samples from same country and institutions in your archives
 - -Use social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram for your applicant and LinkedIn and Academic.edu for scholars from the conflict area
 - -When in doubt consult advice of colleagues in NAFSA and/or reach out to external sources such as independent evaluation services (members of AICE Association of International Credential Evaluators)

5. Verify



Syria: Resources/Useful Links



- SAR MOE: www.mohe.gov.sy
- SAR MOE Secondary School Examination Verification: http://moed.gove.sv/cresults2015/scientific/index.php
- SAR MOHE: www.mohe.gov.sy
- ▶ IIE Scholar Rescue Fund: http://www.iie.org/Programs/Scholar-Rescue-Fund
- IIE Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis: www.iie.org.syridscholarships
- NAFSA: Online Guide to Educational Systems Around the World-Syria https://www.nafsa.org/Resource Library Assets/Publications Library/Online Guide to Educational Systems Around the World/
- NAFSA: Credential Survey of Syria and Iraq http://www.nafsa.org/Professional Resources/Browse by Interest/International Stude nts and Scholars/Network Resources/International Enrollment Management/Credential Survey of Syria and Iraq/
- NUFFIC-Foreign Education Systems: Syria (incl. list of all institutions of higher education) https://www.epnuffic.nl/en/diploma-recognition/foreign-education-systems
- National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces: http://en.etilaf.org
- EducationUSA: www.educationusa.state.gov
- ▶ UNICEF http://www.oosci-mena.org/syria-crisis

Resources/Useful Links



Syria: List of Public Universities

- Damascus University http://damasuniv.edu.sy/english/
- Aleppo University (website inactive)
- ➤ Tishreen University http://www.tishreen.edu.sy/
- Al-Baath University http://albaath-univ.edu.sy/en/
- Al-Furat University (website inactive)
- Syrian Virtual University http://www.hama-univ.edu.sy/
- Hama University
 http://www.hama-univ.edu.sy/

7 Public Universities





Contact Information

Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert **President & CEO**

Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute, Inc. (ACEI) Email: acei@acei-global.org; jasmin@acei-global.org

www.acei-global.org



Zepur Solakian **President** Center for the Global Advancement of Community Colleges (CGACC) www.cgacc.org



Questions & Discussion





