

English Test Success among Syrian Refugee Girls Attending Language Courses in Lebanon

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Abstract : Background: The devastating effects of the war on Syria's educational infrastructure has been widely reported, with millions of children denied access. However, among those who resettled in Lebanon, the impact of receiving educational assistance on their abilities to pass the English entrance exam is not well described. The aim of this study was to identify predictors of success among Syrian refugees receiving English language courses in a Lebanese university. Methods: The database of Syrian refugee girls matriculated in English courses at the American University of Beirut (AUB) was reviewed. The study period was 7/2018-09/2020. Variables compared included: family size and income, welfare status, parents' education, English proficiency, access to the internet, and need for external help with homework. Results: For the study period, there were 28 girls enrolled. The average family size was 6 (range 4-9), with eight having completed primary, 14 secondary education, and 6 graduated high school. Eighteen were single-income families. After 12 weeks of English courses, 16 passed the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) from the first attempt, and 12 failed. Out of the 12, 8 received external help, and 6 passed on the second attempt, which brings the total number of successful passing to 22. Conclusion: Despite the tragedy of war, girls receiving assistance in learning English in Lebanon are able to pass the basic language test. Investment in enhancing those educational experiences will be determinantal in achieving widespread progress among those at-risk children.

Keywords : refugee girls, TOEFL, education, success

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