

UNHCR in Türkiye
April 2025

60,750 Syrian (45 per cent female) students enrolled in Turkish universities.

2,000 students received DAFI scholarships in Türkiye since 2014. **608** students received DAFI scholarships in 2025.

1,081 students received UNHCR cash grants for higher education in 2025.

12 per cent of the refugee students in Türkiye enrolled in tertiary education, compared to the global figure of 7 per cent.



Being part of the healthcare field, where I can contribute to helping people, is rewarding. My profession makes helping people a must. (...) Certainly, the DAFI scholarship has helped me a lot. If it were not for this scholarship, I would have gone through a difficult education process. I have a message for all students who want to continue their education and to those who never stop fighting to reach their goals. There is always a helping hand, including the DAFI Scholarship.

Mr Hamid, one of the recipients of the DAFI Scholarship.

Context

Refugees' access to higher education plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable development. It directly contributes to the self-reliance, protection environment, resilience and economic prospects of individual refugees and their communities.

Education empowers

young refugees to become agents of change, promoting social cohesion and contributing to more stable and prosperous societies. Refugees with higher education are more likely to contribute meaningfully to the host communities in which they live or to the economic and social reconstruction of their home countries when they can return home. A high rate of refugee students find formal employment following graduation.

In line with UNHCR's global education strategy, the Global Compact on Refugees, and Sustainable Development Goals, the education strategy of the UNHCR Türkiye operation focuses on promoting access to quality education for refugee youth and adults, leading to their effective inclusion in the labour market as well as social inclusion. These efforts, implemented in collaboration with national institutions, enhance refugees' contributions to economic growth and sustainable development. Investing in refugee education accelerates human capital development, drives innovation, and strengthens communities, fostering more inclusive and prosperous societies.



Ms Ghufran - one of the 2000 refugee students supported through the DAFI Scholarship.

Working in Partnership

Formal and informal education for refugee children and adults in Türkiye is led and coordinated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) play a key role in facilitating refugees' access to higher education. UNHCR works closely with YTB to provide scholarships and grants and engage in other activities.

Higher Education for Refugees

Through the German Albert Einstein Refugee Academic Initiative (DAFI) programme, UNHCR has provided scholarships for refugee students globally for over twenty years. The DAFI programme was introduced in Türkiye in 2014. Since then, it has grown to be the most extensive DAFI programme worldwide, implemented in partnership with YTB. The DAFI scholarship covers the academic tuition fees, accommodation, books and

living expenses in the country of asylum. Scholarships are awarded for undergraduate programmes between two and four years, and the award is renewed annually based on satisfactory academic performance.

In addition to the DAFI Scholarship, UNHCR offers cash grants to refugee students to pursue higher education. UNHCR also provided training for trainers on conflict resolution and transition to work to youth from refugee and host communities. Furthermore, UNHCR supports YTB for the development of online learning opportunities. The informal courses aim to increase the academic and communication skills of all refugee youth.

Learn more: [Short video](#) | [Web story 1](#) | [Web story 2](#) | [Web story 3](#)

UNHCR is grateful to the donors for unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions to the refugee response. UNHCR in Türkiye is also thankful to donors who are contributing to 2025 programmes. For more details: [UNHCR Türkiye Funding Update – 31 March 2025](#).

