UNHCR's Role in Enabling Access to Education for Refugees in Jordan

Jordan is globally recognized for including refugee children in its national education system. Despite hosting one of the largest Syrian refugee populations, Jordan, with the support of partners, has facilitated access to educationfor refugee childrenand youth.

Jordan's educationsystem has faced significant pressure,largely due to the size of the refugee population since the Syrian crisis began in 2011. At its peak, Jordan hosted approximately 715,000 registered refugees, placing substantial pressure on public services, including education. As of April 2026, Jordan hosts nearly 390,000 Syrian refugees and 23,000 refugees of other nationalities registered with UNHCR, many of whom are school-aged children (19%).

The Ministry of Education currently serves around 1.3 million students in public schools, including more than 100,000 Syrian and approximately 5,500refugee students of other nationalities, all registered with UNHCR, enrolled in formal education. To meet increased demand, the Ministry has introduced measures such as double-shift schools, particularly in areas with large refugee populations.

Education Governance and Coordination in Jordan

The Accelerating Access Initiative (AAI), established in 2016 under the Joint Financial Agreement (JFA) at the Jordanian Ministry of Education, supports the Government in responding to increased demand for schooling in the public system resulting from the enrolment of Syrian refugees. Through this Account, donor funds finance activities such as teacher recruitment, operation of double-shift schools, provision of learning materials, and maintenance of school services for both Jordanian and refugee students. To date, over USD 126 million has been provided through this Initiative. The Education sector's governance and partners' alignment are structured through three key coordination platforms:

1.The Education Development Partners Group (EDPG) serves as a strategic and coordination forum for development partners and donors supporting the education sector. Its role is to align, coordinate, and harmonize education support, ensure efficiency, and support national education strategies by promoting policy dialogueand helping implementsector plans.

2.The Policy, Planning and Coordination Committee (PPCC) is a policy-level body under the Ministry of Education responsible for sector planning, coordination, and oversight. The PPCC guides the use of resources from the AAI by aligning donor funding with the Ministry's policies and priorities.

While fiscal management of the AAI is administered through the Ministry's financial and administrative systems, the PPCC plays a key role in planning, monitoring implementation, and ensuring alignment with national education strategies.

3.The Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) functions as the primary operational coordination platform bringing together partners to align education interventions under Jordan's Response Plan (JRP), the Government-led national framework for responding to the Syrian refugee crisis and the Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP), the broader regional framework covering neighboring host countries.

The ESWG facilitates information sharing,joint planning, and monitoring to promote coherence and minimize duplication in support to the Jordan's national education system.

As a member of all three mechanisms, UNHCR contributes through membership and strategic dialogue, policy-level engagement, data and surveys, technical support, and advocacy, supporting the effective inclusion of refugees in Jordan's national education system.

UNHCR's Engagement in Support of Refugee Access to Education

UNHCR plays a central role in safeguarding equitable access to quality education for refugee children and youth under the **One Refugee Approach** (ORA), an advocacy and coordination approach in Jordan that promotes equal treatment, rights, and access to services for all refugee populations regardless of nationality. This engagement focuses on the integration of refugee educationpriorities within national education planning frameworks and strategies, alignment between humanitarian and development education interventions, and the strengthening of data-informed decision-making across the education sector.

UNHCR's advocacy in the education sector has contributed to the establishment of the **Higher Education Alliance**, a network of 17 stakeholders formed to facilitate refugee access to tertiary and higher education in line with the 15by30 Goal. The Alliance supports expanded access to higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) opportunities for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, recognizing higher education as a driver of economic development in line with the second Growth Driver of Jordan's Economic Modernization Vision and relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

UNHCR supports access to higher education for refugees through oversight of the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (DAFI) scholarship programme, implemented in partnership with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF). The DAFI scholarship programme provides financial assistance, academic monitoring, psychological support, and skills development to refugee youth pursuing university education in Jordan. This collaboration reflectsUNHCR's commitment to fostering self-reliance and empowering refugee communities through inclusive and quality education pathways.

In addition, UNHCR actively supports the identification of **global third-country scholarship opportunities** and engages with partners, including JICA, France, and Canada. This includes information sharing, selection processes, student counselling, and facilitating travel through complementary pathways.

Key Achievements

- **Inclusion of UNHCR-registered refugees** within the Education Strategic Plan 2026–2030, led by UNESCO and Ministry of Education, across education levels from early childhood education to TVET, through collaboration with UN sister agencies and with donor support.
- **Integration of refugee education data into the national Education Management Information System (Ajyal),** supported by joint data validation, analysis, and information-sharing mechanisms between humanitarian and government actors, in collaboration with UNESCO.
- **Advancement of digital transformation in education,** including digitized curricula, enhanced teacher digital skills, and strengthened education data systems, in collaboration with donors.
- Additional **25 scholarships secured** in 2025 through a **nationwide education enrolment campaign by the Higher Education Alliance,** bringing together universities and the private sector.
- **Collaboration with World Bank on the MASAR Program** (Modernizing Education, Skills, and Administrative Reforms) in Jordan, a major program supporting strengthening human capital by improving education quality, expanding access to early childhood education, and enhancing school-to-work transitions through vocational training opportunities in secondary schools, for Jordanians and refugees.
- **Access to SANAD,** a government-led digitalplatform facilitating accessto documentation and services,including verified education records. The platformenables refugee studentsto securely retrieve and present academic certificates, supporting recognition and continuity of education, including for returnee children and youth.

Education in the Context of Voluntary Return

UNHCR supports the integration of education considerations within voluntary return processes through coordination with the ESWG, the Ministry of Education, donors, and partners, including UNICEF. This coordination facilitates the provision of accurate and up-to-date information to schools and families on return procedures and education pathways.

Cross-border coordination with UNHCR and UNICEF offices in Syria supports alignment on enrolment requirements, certification, and documentation across education systems for both school and tertiary education pathways, enabling continuity of learning for returnees.

Through the Higher Education Alliance, UNHCR supports mechanisms that facilitate the completion of education-to-employment pathways, including access to documentation, recognition of qualifications, scholarship opportunities, and work-based learning. These measures support education continuity and contribute to smoother transitions for refugees opting for voluntary return.