

August 2018

Promoting Access of Refugees to Education

UNHCR's education strategy centres on **promoting access of refugees to a broad continuum of educational opportunities**, ranging from formal education to higher education and opportunities for adults to learn new skills. A core element of this strategy is to promote the effective inclusion of refugees at all levels of the national education system. The operationalization of this strategy takes into consideration both the national policy context and the work of other agencies in the sector, such as UNICEF's promotion of children's access to education.

UNHCR recognises the importance of ensuring that in addition to having access to primary and secondary education, refugees have access to post-secondary education opportunities that include higher education programmes, skills training and Turkish language courses for adults. These programmes support the goal of promoting increased self-reliance for refugees through providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to access a wider range of high-skill or professional livelihoods opportunities.


As the greater part of UNHCR's education programming focuses on persons over 18 years of age, it is also important to ensure effective linkages with livelihoods programming by UNHCR and other agencies and promote smooth transitions from learning to work.

Collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of National Education to promote effective inclusion of refugees

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for ensuring access to formal and non-formal education opportunities for refugees. UNHCR works closely with MoNE in order to disseminate information to refugees on available educational opportunities, printing pamphlets and including information on education in outreach activities. Through engagement with refugee communities, UNHCR also works to identify the difficulties that refugees face in accessing these services and discuss joint solutions with the Ministry.

The ability to communicate in Turkish is essential for the meaningful inclusion of refugees in Turkish schools. For adults, the ability to communicate effectively in Turkish facilitates access to the labour market and promotes social integration between refugees and the communities in which they live. In 2017 UNHCR supported MoNE through the procurement of just under one million Turkish



62%  **38%**
Syrian children are enrolled in formal education in 2018



Over 20,000
Syrian youth are attending Turkish universities in 2018



4,292
Syrian youth at the start of the 2017/2018 academic year enrolled in UNHCR-supported higher education preparation programmes



1,152
Syrian youth started the 2017/2018 academic year with full scholarships supported by UNHCR

language learning books for children and 300,000 textbooks for adult language learners to be used in schools, temporary education centres and public education centres (PECs). This support will continue throughout 2018, with a focus on supporting Turkish language learning by adults. A new large-scale project focused on the provision of language classes for adults and enhancing the capacity of MoNE institutions to provide language and skills training courses will be launched in the second half of the year.

Supporting access to higher education

UNHCR works in close coordination with both the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) to facilitate access to higher education by refugee youth. YTB is a key partner in implementing higher education programmes and



works with UNHCR to offer higher education preparation programmes for high school graduates and to provide scholarships. The UNHCR/YTB higher education preparation programme provides a nine-month intensive Turkish language course that helps refugee youth meet the language proficiency requirements for enrolment in Turkish universities. In 2018, over 3600 youth will complete this programme before the start of the new academic year and a new student intake is planned for September 2018.

UNHCR's global scholarship programme, best known by its DAFI acronym, was introduced in Turkey in 2014 and has since grown into the largest programme in the world. More than 820 refugee students have been awarded DAFI scholarships since 2014 and 36 students have already graduated. The programme is implemented in partnership with YTB who have extensive experience in scholarship management and are responsible for the government of Turkey's international scholarship programme.

In order to support refugees from countries other than Syria to access higher education, in 2017 UNHCR introduced cash grants to assist refugee families with the costs of university tuition fees. Under this programme students apply for cash-based assistance that is conditional on university enrolment. Over 300 students have already benefited from the programme.

Promoting effective coordination within the education sector

UNHCR and UNICEF are the education sector co-leads for the preparation of the education chapter of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan and together co-lead the South East Turkey Education Working Group. The 3RP sets out a strategic vision to provide refugees with a range of education opportunities and ways in which the quality of these services can be enhanced. The sector co-leads also work closely with MoNE to ensure the alignment between the 3RP strategy and the goals and policies of the Ministry.

UNHCR, working with key actors in the higher education sector including the Higher Education Council and YTB, convenes a higher education working group that brings together different actors that provide scholarships, disseminate information on higher education opportunities and have

support or bridging programmes for students. Organisations in the Higher Education Sub-Working Group contribute to 3RP reporting on higher education issues and advocate for greater inclusion of refugee youth in higher education programmes.

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Thanks to UNHCR's donors for supporting our education activities in Turkey and for their unrestricted and regional funds in 2018:

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