



DAFI Afghanistan for returnees

BACKGROUND

Displacement situation

Afghan refugees comprise the second largest refugee population in the world with almost 2.5 million registered refugees, and the largest protracted refugee population in Asia. In Afghanistan, UNHCR assists refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees.



Voluntary repatriation

UNHCR continues to facilitate voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan refugees to Afghanistan, coordinating with the authorities to ensure returns are voluntary, safe, and dignified. The return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran is taking place under the Tripartite Agreements with the respective Governments and UNHCR, and in line with the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR). Since 2002 more than 5.26 million Afghan refugees have repatriated with UNHCR's assistance. In 2019 a total of 8,079 registered Afghan refugees returned, including 6,062 from Pakistan, 1,939 from Iran, and 78 from other countries.

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Higher education equips returnees with crucial knowledge and professional skills to support self-reliance and successful re-integration, as well as to contribute to development and peace building. Globally, Afghan refugees comprise the second largest group of DAFI scholars after Syrian refugees. By opening a programme for qualified returnees in Afghanistan, DAFI is enabling returned youth to continue their education, after which they will be in a better position to help reconstruct their conflict-affected communities.

In July 2019, a Letter of Understanding between UNHCR Afghanistan and Kabul University paved the way for implementation of DAFI programme for the first time in Afghanistan. A total of 40 eligible returnee students (20 females and 20 males) were selected for DAFI support. The selection process was carried out jointly with Kabul University and German Embassy. Selected students will receive a cash grant of approximately USD 300 per student per month, which will help them to cover a range of education-related costs, including study materials, and allowances for living expenses, transportation, and accommodation during the academic year. In addition, UNHCR donated 15 computers to the university which will benefit DAFI scholars and others alike.



Interview process with a female candidate for DAFI scholarship programme. ©UNHCR 2019/ M. Haroon

Education including access to tertiary education, remain an important protection intervention that will equip returnees with crucial knowledge and professional skills to achieve self-reliance through entrepreneurship, postgraduate studies or other livelihoods options.

