

Education in Lebanon: Challenges, Remedies and Way Forward



Refugee students attend a second shift in North Lebanon.
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#WhatDoesItTake

24 July 2015

LEBANON UPDATE

Agencies and the Government of Lebanon had requested US\$ 2.1 billion in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) launched on 15 December 2014. As of 23 July 2015, agencies reported to have received US\$ 578.5 million (27% of the requirements)

HIGHLIGHTS

- 366,000 refugee school-aged children are registered with UNHCR;
- The Minister of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) called for support to meet the ministry's objective of enrolling 200,000 refugee children in public schools, and providing another 100,000 with non-formal education;
- The last school year saw 106,735 refugees enrolled in the Lebanese public education system;
- 10,000 Syrian children aged 9 to 17 have started attending a new Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) introduced by MEHE this week;
- 60 Syrian refugees received DAFI scholarships and enrolled in universities.

Shirine's Story



In this picture, Shirine is seen finalizing her DAFI scholarship acceptance file in Zahle - ©UNHCR/L. Abou Khaled

"People think that all Syrian refugees are not educated. It is not true. I am a refugee and I will continue my studies. I can be successful."

War and displacement did not stand in the way of Shirine's dream: to become a telecommunications engineer. At 18 years of age, she fled to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley soon after her graduation from high school in Rif Dimashq, Syria. She left behind what is closest to her heart: her home, her friends, and her father.

Her feelings of loss and grief did not stand in her way, but propelled her to enroll in a telecommunications programme at a university in the Bekaa. Her father, who also values education more than anything else, sold a piece of land he owned in Syria to cover Shirine's college tuition fees. A year later and due to the high cost of living in Lebanon, her father could not afford to pay his daughter's college tuition anymore. Shirine went from door to door looking for support, until she found the DAFI scholarship.

"Syrian students think they lost everything in this war – even their right to learn. This grant is motivating more and more Syrian students to succeed", she explained, "People think that all Syrian refugees are not educated. It is not true. I am a refugee and I will continue my studies. I can be successful. DAFI is truly like a gift from God," she added.

Oslo Summit on Education

Lebanon's Minister of Education and Higher Education participated in the Oslo Summit on Education for Development which took place on 6-7 July 2015. The Summit aimed at mobilizing strong and renewed commitment to reach the 58 million children around the world who are still being denied their right to education, and to improve learning outcomes for those who attend school.

The Minister called for support to meet his objectives of providing education to 200,000 refugee children in Lebanese public schools, and reaching another 100,000 with non-formal education, which can only be realized when adequate funding is received.

Donors indicated they would give additional support to refugees in Lebanon for the new academic year.

Reaching All Children with Education (RACE)

Close to 366,000 school-aged refugee children between the ages of 6 and 17 are registered with UNHCR in Lebanon. Of those, many have been out of formal education for over three years. The last school year saw 106,735 refugees – mostly Syrians - enrolled in the Lebanese public education system with the support of UNICEF, UNHCR, and partners

UNICEF, UNHCR and their partners supported transportation for 44,000 vulnerable students. Transportation was reported as being among the top reasons behind drop-out rates, as the cost of transportation can be prohibitive for most refugee families. A delay in the start of the 2014-2015 school year has also negatively impacted the access of refugee children to public schools.

A key initiative in the 2014-2015 school year was to engage parents in order to further sustainable access to schools and learning achievements for children. Nearly 50 parent committees

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Up to 10,000 Syrian children aged 9 to 17 have this week started attending a new Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) introduced by MEHE

Less than 2,000 adolescent refugees were enrolled in secondary schools last year

were established to facilitate their engagement in their children's education. Hundreds of awareness sessions were organized, and over 60 Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs) specialized in education helped identify and refer out-of-school children for assistance. This served to promote access to the newly developed Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP).

Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)

Close to 10,000 Syrian children aged 9 - 17 who have been out of school for over two years have this week started attending the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) recently introduced by MEHE. The programme, certified by MEHE and the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD), provides out-of-school children with the required competencies to enable their enrolment in the Lebanese formal education system.

The ALP is composed of nine intensive levels (each level lasts for a period of four months) corresponding to the nine grades in the Lebanese basic education system. Placement tests to assess children levels and needs were held in April and May 2015. The programme started in 40 schools from July and will stretch until the start of the next school year in September 2015.

Vocational Education for Youth

Education opportunities for refugee youth remain extremely limited, with less than 2,000 refugee adolescents having enrolled in secondary schools last year. This is mainly due to difficulties in adapting to the curriculum in Lebanon which varies from the one taught in Syria, prohibitive fees, and the need to turn to negative coping mechanisms such as child labor to support families.

In order to address this gap, UNHCR supported some 700 students between the ages of 13 and 18 who had reached grade six either in Lebanon or in Syria, to access Lebanese public vocational schools (Brevet Technique (BT), Technique Supérieure (TS), etc).

This effort has provided youth with more opportunities in practical and adapted learning, such as marketing, nursing, design, etc.

In 2014, 60 Syrian refugees in Lebanon received DAFI scholarships and enrolled in institutions of higher education

DAFI Scholarship

Globally financed by the Government of Germany, the DAFI tertiary education scholarship programme supports over 2,200 refugee students to study at universities and colleges in their country of asylum each year.

In 2014, the programme helped 60 young Syrian refugees in Lebanon to enroll in institutions of higher education. The programme supports students to become role models in their communities, advocates for continued education.

Several grantees have in turn volunteered during the summer with local organizations, reaching out to both Syrian refugees and Lebanese.

The plan is to reach 120 students from Lebanon in the coming year.

For more information on DAFI:

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4a2dd6.html>

DONORS

Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, EU, France, Germany, Holy See, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA.

Contributions have also been received from the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as well as from private donors, national and international organizations.