



النهضة العربية للديمقراطية والتنمية
Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development

التعليم
Education



Access to Higher Education for Refugees in Jordan

IN THE NAME OF PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



ARDD

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Foreword

Education opens minds; it opens doors to new opportunities, and offers a sense of normalcy where it may no longer exist. In contexts of mass displacement education also forms one mechanism for protection. This is as much the case for basic education as it is for higher education. The benefits of higher education are manifold and have profound effects on individuals, communities, and the stability. This report serves to provide insight on the response to the provision of higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan as well as documentation of the ongoing challenges in this process.

Reflection on this issue should be welcome to not only understand the challenges but also as way to better address youth concerns in situations of mass displacement. While this report specifically focuses on the Jordanian context, further research could be dedicated to comparing responses between the three major host countries of Syrian refugees. There are various initiatives throughout the region and one consolidated understanding of the variety of responses could feed into the future development and standardization of such responses.

Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) – Legal Aid has a firm belief that the ongoing challenges outlined through this report can be worked through with consistent advocacy and coordination. However these issues can only be properly addressed if there is a solid commitment to higher education opportunities for refugees on the part of the international funding community. In short, sustainable funding is required. Without this, practical concerns do not exist and all efforts are theoretical. The rhetoric and commitments made at the London Conference are a step in the right direction. Ensuring that the commitments made are translated into the provision of diverse educational entry points, including tertiary, post-basic, as well as academic options, will be key to ensuring the future of post-conflict Syria and the region more broadly.

Many thanks must go to the various organizations that provided generous insights into the varied organizational responses to higher education, namely UNHCR, UNESCO, NRC, IIE, DAAD, EDU-Syria, UNDP and JRS. Thanks must also go to the refugee youth who were spoken to. They provided clear individual insight into the experiences of the different stages of the response cycle which supports previous efforts of other agencies to improve where challenges lie.

Introduction

Throughout the five-year Syrian refugee crisis, education for refugee children has been prioritized in development, humanitarian aid, media coverage, discussion, and research. Extensive efforts have been made to increase children's access to education to ensure their continued healthy development and provide security and stability during the refugee experience. As the majority of Syrian refugees in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are under the age of 17, this attention is not unfounded. However, refugees' access to higher education in Jordan has lacked the necessary attention. The initial response to higher education was isolated and sporadic, only recently becoming coordinated as the crisis and consequent displacement became protracted. While movement did not begin until 2015, conversation and advocacy on the issue had started long before. There was no shortage of support for higher education amongst the stakeholders interviewed. This paper maps the prior and current initiatives undertaken and the ongoing challenges present for refugees and other stakeholders. This is done with a clear ambition to contribute to the ongoing development of such programs as well as allow for reflection on how such programs could be better implemented in responses to mass displacement.

The importance of improving responses to higher education should not be underestimated. Education, and the protection it guarantees, should not stop once a child reaches the age of eighteen. Higher education offers the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life and combats feelings of stagnation and hopelessness. Ensuring access to higher education provides refugees with the opportunity to develop essential skills to rebuild a post-conflict Syria. Higher education serves a dual purpose for the refugee community: it is both a tool for sustainable development and a component of immediate security and stability. While challenges to accessing higher education rest predominately on the limited opportunities available, meaning that only the brightest students have opportunity for advancement, the crux of the issue is funding. The current mass migration to Europe should call immediate attention to the international funding community to create more opportunities for people to stay in countries of first asylum and lay a path for development of a better response to other crises in the future. While this was broadly discussed at the London Conference, in early February, the actual implementation of the proposed funding towards higher education remains unclear, with only clear intention for vocational training.

However as this paper will demonstrate, higher education also poses protection concerns for refugee youth because it intersects with the civil documentation issue common to many refugee situations; as well as an issue specific to the Jordan context whereby refugees are not allowed to return to Jordan once they leave, regardless of whether this is for a scholarship opportunity. Based off these identified protection concerns stakeholders are increasingly focusing on providing higher education opportunities for refugees within the Kingdom. To ensure the viability of such initiatives programs should be based off individuals and community desires and their needs.

Methodology

The research was conducted through initial desk based research of publically available documents relating to higher education for refugees in Jordan, collation of all available higher education opportunities for refugees within the Kingdom and available meeting minutes from different sector working groups. This highlights the historical development and conversation around the response. However as higher education opportunities have emerged for refugees in Jordan literature about the issue has not kept pace. Accordingly, desk based research was complemented by qualitative interviews with key stakeholders who have been involved in the response to higher education in Jordan. The interviews conducted shed light on the differing organizational roles to increase attention to the issue and the consequent need to address the protection challenges that have emerged. Accompanying these organizational perspectives, interviews were conducted with differing voices of refugee youth, including a student who received a scholarship to study abroad, a student who received a scholarship in country, students who are seeking scholarship opportunities and non-Syrian refugees. Identification of these individuals was through snowball sampling. Although the paper focuses on the institutional response to providing access to higher education for refugees, including the voices of these youth is essential, precisely because it is their futures that will be affected with or without opportunities.

A Mandate for Higher Education

The importance of access to higher education is clearly outlined in Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26), in International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 13), and Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28). Activating these articles in times of emergency response to refugee crises has long proven difficult despite the recognized need and importance of it.¹ Indeed, currently, only one percent of refugee youth worldwide are enrolled in tertiary education.² Such a small percentage clearly delineates how opportunities and access to rights are reduced by the refugee experience.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the only UN agency with the mandate for higher education, however this mandate is not limited to them in refugee situations. As the dedicated organization for the

1 Emergency Education Assistance Unit. «EDUCATION FOR ALL ASSESSMENT THEMATIC STUDY.» UNESCO | Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women. Last modified October 1999 ,1. <http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/emergency/themes/index.htm>.

2 DAFI: UNHCR Tertiary Education Scholarship Program. UNHCR, 2015. <http://www.unhcr.org/568bc62b9.html>.

protection of refugees the United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), set up the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (DAFI) in 1992 to provide the possibility of scholarships for refugees. Through funding from the German government, DAFI has consistently provided a limited number of scholarships for refugees in countries of first asylum to study topics that can one day contribute to the rebuilding of their home countries. Over the more than twenty year period in existence, DAFI has provided more than 6,000 scholarships for students in countries as diverse as Iran to Ethiopia.³ UNHCR describes DAFI as having pioneered ‘a new approach, one that went beyond the usual primary and secondary education focus by specifically providing tertiary education... DAFI forms an integral part of the UNHCR mandate and the realization of durable solutions.’⁴ The provision of higher education to refugees is thus seen explicitly as a means to access durable solutions, which is a key component of UNHCR’s mandate.

After more than twenty years of providing scholarships, in November 2015, UNHCR launched the Education 2030 Framework for Action in which they outlined the grave dangers of not educating refugees. Mr. Volker Türk, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection for UNHCR, indicated that the movements of people heading into Europe ‘are largely undertaken by young people seeking safety and the means to a more secure future, particularly through access to education.’⁵ The journey is thus a reflection of a want for more than countries of first asylum are able to provide. Even before the mass arrivals of refugees on European borders, UNHCR’s Education Strategy for 2012-2016 indicated that amongst refugees there is a ‘huge demand for higher education, however this is largely unmet.’⁶ UNHCR committed in this strategy to increase the number of refugees who could follow higher education courses, provide academic support to secondary students, facilitation of open and distance learning and reduce barriers to education in host countries.⁷ In their most recent DAFI Annual Report, UNHCR further indicated that attention should be directed to ensuring increased enrolment into secondary schools; expand scholarship opportunities as well as distance learning; in an attempt to address the barriers to higher education from a variety of levels.⁸ It is clear that efforts have long been made to increase and expand opportunities for refugees in countries of first asylum, however the demand far outweighs the number of potential students; meaning that the majority live idle, with few prospects for the future. As clearly expressed by UNHCR, this is one of the reasons that aggravates

3 DAFI 2014 Annual Report (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative). UNHCR, 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/568bd4a59.html>.

4 Morlang, Claas, and Sheri Watson. Tertiary Refugee Education Impact and Achievements: 15 Years of DAFI. Geneva, Switzerland: UNHCR, 2007. <http://www.unhcr.org/47b4083d2.html>.

5 Türk, Volker. «Launch of the Education 2030 Framework for Action.» Speech, UNESCO General Conference, 38th Session, Paris, France, November 2015 ,4.

6 UNHCR Education Strategy 2016-2012. UNHCR, 2012. <http://www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.html>.

7 Ibid.

8 DAFI 2014 Annual Report (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative).

people to make a decision to leave. Currently some voices in the European Union see this as a security threat as refugees continue to arrive on Europe's doors. The larger threat is the consistent and ongoing un-education of mass populations of youth that will have profound and manifold consequences into the future.

Benefits of Higher Education

Access to education in emergency situations, after the provision of basic protections such as shelter, clothing, food, and healthcare, has become one of the primary initiatives of the international humanitarian community. UNESCO says that it is 'increasingly recognized that education must be a principal part of any humanitarian response.'⁹ In UNHCR's Education Strategy 2012-2016 it was clearly outlined that education would be a part of all emergency responses. UNICEF is no different, with education a core component of their emergency response.¹⁰ This is precisely because education is seen as a protection tool against various forms of abuses as well as a means to create stability in the lives of refugee children and young people.¹¹ The importance of education in emergency contexts must be broadly recognized as essential to providing the foundation from which children can grow.

UNESCO found in their study, *Education in Emergencies*, that if there is no opportunity for continuation from primary to secondary through to higher education, then there is little incentive for students to stay in school and apply themselves to their education.¹² Indeed it is widely accepted that the dropout rate of refugee children and youth in countries of first asylum is much higher than local children and youth. This is undoubtedly a consequence of the significant and varied challenges that these children and youth face living in a country which, generally speaking, does not provide equal rights. Refugees often face inequality in work rights and protection, meaning that children may leave school to support their

families or marry to reduce the financial burden. These reasons as well as many others, demonstrate that because of their status as refugees, children and youth are substantively denied equal access to primary and secondary education. It is this inequality that international agencies and local actors throughout the world remain committed to overcoming by ensuring that access to education is not determined by one's legal status, but rather in respect of their fundamental human right to have an education.

9 UNESCO. Draft Preliminary Report Concerning the Preparation of a Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications. Paris: UNESCO, 2015. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/234743/002347/0023E.pdf>.

10 «Education in Emergencies: Preparedness, Response, Recovery | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.» UNESCO | Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women. Last modified January 2016 ,1. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/pcpd/education-in-emergencies/>.

11 UNHCR Education Strategy 2016-2012. UNHCR, 2012.

12 «Education in Emergencies: Preparedness, Response, Recovery | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.» UNESCO.

Inequality of substantive access to education extends to accessing higher education for refugees. This has long been the case and for many makes sense because of the ongoing issues in primary and secondary education and the ever present funding issues. However, issues in primary and secondary education should not be seen in isolation of higher education. It is necessary through these pathways that access to higher education opportunities arise. All levels of education initiatives must be conducted in tandem to ensure continuation through the education system and continuity, just as in a context undefined by emergency. The aim should be to reduce the impact that forced displacement has on individual's education opportunity and life choices.

Higher education has a variety of benefits that do not simply affect the individual, but also has a positive impact on the community. This is broadly accepted for all people but holds even more significance for refugee communities. As UNHCR states 'studies at the tertiary level endow refugees with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the community as role models, particularly in the case of female DAFI graduates... (They) proceed to transfer these benefits in turn to their communities through employment in fields which enable them to have a lasting impact upon reconstruction and sustainable development in the refugee community and their country.^{13'} Access to higher education thus provides refugee youth the opportunity to continue with their life, despite their situation of forced displacement. This allows them to support their communities in exile and contribute to the future development of their home countries; ensuring that vulnerability, marginalization and isolation is not exacerbated and unaddressed. Higher education provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between emergency response and sustainable development. In this sense higher education holds a dual role as both protection and sustainable development.

Benefits aside, there are challenges involved in the provision of higher education precisely because of the youth's status as refugees. As the below case study of Jordan will highlight, there are ongoing barriers to accessing higher forms of education for the vast majority of the refugee population, civil documentation issues for those who do gain access, as well as protection concerns that arise through such opportunities. While significant attention is dedicated to the experience of Syrian

refugees this is virtue of the nature of the response to the Syrian refugee crisis and does not reflect a lack of commitment to other refugee communities. Just as access should not be based on status, nor should it be based on nationality Access should not be based on nationality.

13 Morlang, Claas, and Sheri Watson. Tertiary Refugee Education Impact and Achievements: 15 Years of DAFI.

Case Study: Jordan

Background

At the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2011, the international community initially focused on the provision of immediate needs and protection. Despite the Jordanian government's commitment to provide free access to education for school age children it became increasingly obvious to local and international actors that thousands of school age children were out of school. Since 2012, UNICEF has provided support to the Kingdom's Ministry of Education (MOE) to establish learning spaces in the refugee camps and strengthen the capacity of primary and secondary schools in the host communities.¹⁴ In an effort to increase access to education for school age children, a number of assessments were conducted, outlining the various barriers to education. The biggest challenge was the perceived temporary nature of displacement and as the crisis continued, new obstacles developed: financial insecurity leading to child labor and early childhood marriage, indirect financial costs of entering schools such as for transport and books, as well as fear of bullying within the school system.¹⁵ The Jordanian government, with the support of international agencies has successfully increased enrolment amongst Syrian students. In fact, as a result of advocacy efforts by international organizations and increasing acceptance of the semi-permanence of the conflict, a 60% enrollment rate of Syrian school-aged refugees has been achieved.

As it stands in Jordan, UNICEF reports that 90,000 students remain outside of the formal education system, 30,000 of whom are accessing various forms of informal education while 60,000 have limited to no access.¹⁶ While these are improved numbers, the significant drop out rate and lack of progression from primary to secondary school also remains a matter of concern. As it stands there are only 5,371 Syrian students enrolled in secondary education.¹⁷ Considering there are approximately 85,605 students between the ages of 12-17, this indicates that 94% of all eligible secondary students are not enrolled.¹⁸

At the same time as ongoing issues with access to education, the issue of the quality of education received within the schools has become increasingly evident. This has been a primary issue identified through focus group discussions conducted by ARDD-Legal Aid through the 'Education for the Future' initiative in Mafraq governorate.¹⁹ Parents, teachers, and students have indicated that challenges include

14 UNICEF. Every child reaching their potential through learning. Jordan: UNICEF, n.d. http://www.unicef.org/jordan/5._Jordan_-_Every_child_reaching_their_potential_through_learning.pdf.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 MOE or UNICEF from Zainab- need to check with Zainab

18 UNHCR, (2016), Registered Syrians in Jordan, 15th January 2016. PDF.

19 Internal ARDD-Legal Aid document

the violence in schools, the double-shift teaching system, and the limited capacity of teachers to work with conflict-affected children and to handle increased workload. Indeed this has been acknowledged by His Excellency Mohamad Alaqoor, Secretary General of the MOE, who noted that Jordan is approaching a new phase beyond providing access to education for Syrian refugees: the pursuit of quality education.²⁰ Despite the ongoing issues facing the education sector to address the needs of refugee children within Jordan, it is evident that significant attention has been paid to ensure children their right to access, and more recently, quality education and these efforts will continue because of the deep importance of education to a child's development and protection while in the Kingdom.

In contrast 2015 was the first year higher education was included in the Jordan Response Plan (JRP). For many this largely accords with the nature of emergency response. There is little understanding at the beginning of a refugee crisis how long the situation will endure. Accordingly, planning focuses on the short term and measures are stop gap rather than systemic. How higher education came to be a part of the JRP is due to both the length of the crisis and the continued and ongoing advocacy of different international stakeholders. In discussions with different actors, the issue of lack of access to higher education opportunities became clear in 2014 and advocacy continued thereafter. In the specific case of Za'atari Refugee Camp, a Youth Task Force initiated a process of focus group discussions to determine the primary challenges of youth within the camp at the end of 2014. This was incorporated into the UNHCR Participatory Assessment, the results of which showed clear demand for higher education, as well as increased community inclusion. Since this point, actors have indicated, to differing extents, that addressing the needs has taken significant time and energy and there remains much room for improvement.

This is one of the reasons that Maysa Jalbout outlined, 'Youth (15-24 years old) have arguably been the most underserved and the most negatively impacted by the Syrian crisis.'²¹ Analysis of media, organization reports and academic literature shows that there has been a very limited and consistent dialogue on the issue of higher education for Syrian refugees prior to 2015. Higher education as a topic for discussion in the response was initially alerted in 2013 by an academic group led by Dr. Kevin Watenpugh. According to Watenpugh, the team was originally told

20 «UNICEF Jordan - Media Centre - [27 Oct 2015] New Schools in Za'atari Refugee Camp to Improve Access and Quality of Education for Syrian Children.» UNICEF | Children's Rights & Emergency Relief Organization. Last modified October 27, 2015. http://www.unicef.org/jordan/media_10657.html.

21 Jalbout, Maysa. Opportunities for Accelerating Progress on Education for Syrian Children and Youth in Jordan. Theirworld, 2015. <https://gbc-education.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/JORDAN.pdf>

by the aid organizations that, ‘there are no university age students [in Za’atari Refugee Camp], but that it instead houses almost exclusively poor peasant-farmers and urban laborers and their families.’²² However upon arrival in Za’atari, the research team discovered that there were university students in the camp eager to continue their studies. Further, the team found the situation was no different for urban refugees outside of camps. There were, and continue to be, university students present in all major Syrian refugee populations throughout the Kingdom.²³ As an explanation for this misperception among aid workers, Watenpaugh wrote in The Higher Education Chronicle that:

*(This misconception) stems from the way aid workers often imagine refugees. Historically, whether it’s Armenian survivors of genocide, Palestinians displaced by the creation of Israel, or Iraqis fleeing foreign invasion and civil war, Middle Eastern refugees can appear to be an undifferentiated, opaque mass in the collective consciousness of international humanitarianism.*²⁴

While this statement generalizes the approach of aid workers, it is an important critique of how **benefactors of aid must not make assumptions regarding beneficiaries of aid**. The stakeholders spoken to for this report were shocked by the sentiment expressed. Though there was an understanding of how such sentiments can generate. Many aid workers are coming to the Syria crisis from a different crisis, and their experience may not account for a more urban refugee population that had access to ample educational opportunities in their home country. The understanding of what a refugee means then is transplanted across contexts and borders thereby removing history, culture and different levels of access to opportunities; as though by virtue of becoming a refugee, people’s experience, needs and expectations become the same. As higher education in Syria was publically available to all, the assumption that Syrians would not want to continue their studies or were uneducated shows a lack of knowledge about the context of which people come from. This example clearly demonstrates the importance of understanding the social, cultural, economic and political context from which refugees have fled, to best serve their needs and develop programming that can support their ongoing development, regardless of their status as refugee.

22 Watenpaugh, Keith D., Adrienne L. Fricke, and Tara Siegel. Uncounted and Unacknowledged: Syria’s Refugee University Students and Academics in Jordan. Jordan: University of California Davis Human Rights Initiative and the Institute of International Education’s Scholar Rescue Fund, 2013. https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Uncounted%20and%20Unacknowledged%20-%20Syria%27s%20Refugee%20University%20Students%20and%20Academics%20in%20Jordan.pdf.

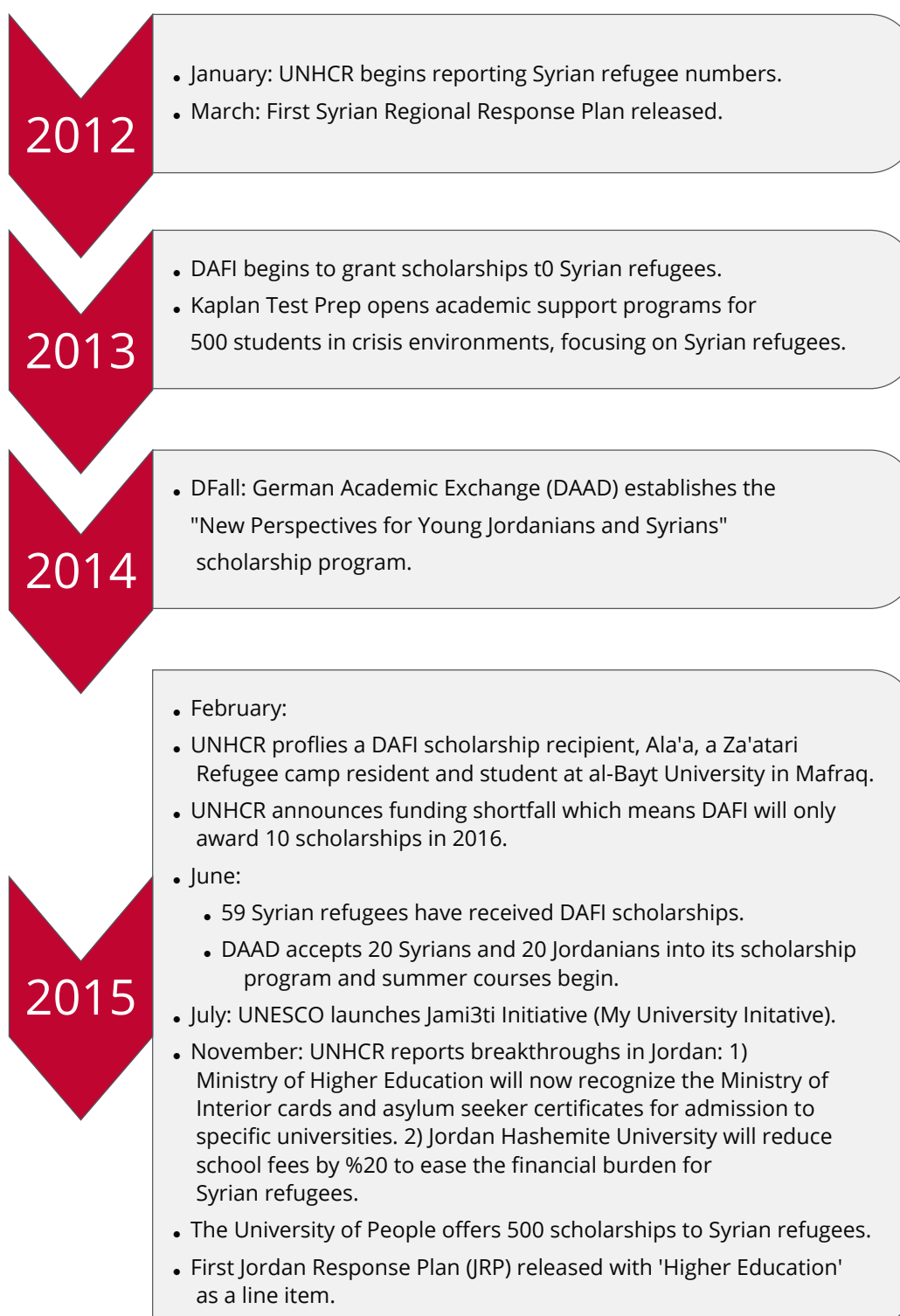
23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

As is the case for accessing basic and secondary education, all efforts should be made to ensure that access to higher education opportunities are not maligned as a consequence of the refugee experience. With the right to accessing higher education clearly enshrined in international conventions and protracted displacement now the norm for the majority of refugees in the world, including Jordan, developing best practices to the provision of higher education opportunities for refugees must be continually strived for. Importantly, this must take into account the desires, aspirations and expectations of the refugee youth themselves and not based on preconceived notions or impositions of what stakeholders or donors want. This was eloquently expressed by one stakeholder who made the point that while primary and secondary education is largely provided on a mass basis, higher education is by nature individualized and must be because it reflects the interests and desires and future ambitions of each student. The point made was that this should not be taken away simply because of one's forced migration.

A push to help the 'Lost Generation'

As the crisis has continued, more attention and funding have been brought to this issue.



The first major program to offer higher education scholarships to refugees of Syrian origin was DAFI in October 2013, with an initial 33 places offered and then continued in 2014 with 144 scholarships offered throughout the region.^{25 26} Of this total MENA allocation, in Jordan 17 Syrians secured scholarships in 2013, a total of 57 in 2014, with 13 Iraqi and one Somali recipient.^{27 28} As of June 2015, 59 Syrian students were receiving DAFI scholarship in Jordan. In a July 2015 DAFI status report, UNHCR profiled Alaa, a Syrian refugee living in Za'atari Refugee Camp and a recipient of a DAFI scholarship. Through her scholarship she was able to study Arabic language and literature at al-Bayt University in Mafraq.²⁹ While celebrating the achievements of students like Alaa, the article also clearly outlined that as a consequence of a funding shortfall only 10 scholarships would be made available in 2016.

In October 2014 the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) established a major scholarship program for Syrians wanting to study a Masters degree in Germany. Throughout the world 221 students received these scholarships and travelled to Germany to study. To the question of why the program started in 2014, a representative of DAAD indicated that the original concept note for scholarship opportunities for Syrians was developed two years previous and had been handed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, though was never acted upon. After a public petition organized by German academics attracted media attention to the issue of Syria's 'Lost Generation', there was quick movement on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which primarily funded the scholarships, with some support from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. After the request to develop and implement the scholarship program the call was launched one month later and saw 5,000 students throughout the region apply.

The following year DAAD established a host country scholarship program, 'New Perspectives for Young Jordanians and Syrians,' which aimed to provide scholarships for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host community members. The program targeted 'highly qualified Jordan and Syrian academics' for Master's programs at specific Jordanian universities, including German Jordanian University, Yarmouk University, Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), or University of Jordan (UoJ).³⁰ Applicants were required to 'intend to actively contribute to the peace

25 DAFI 2013 Annual Report (The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative). UNHCR, 2013. <http://www.unhcr.org/568bd18f2e7.html>.

26 DAFI 2014 Annual Report (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative)

27 DAFI 2013 Annual Report (The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative).

28 DAFI 2014 Annual Report (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative)

29 UNHCR. «Za'atari Student Wins Distinction Despite Trials of Camp Life.» UNHCR. Last modified July ,28 2015. <http://www.unhcr.org/55b7818d9.html>.

30 «The Hashemite University.» HU. The Hashemite University /الجامعة الهاشمية. Last modified January 2015 ,1. http://hu.edu.jo/OIR/f_news.aspx?news_id=26801.

ful co-existence of Syrian refugees and Jordanian communities.³¹ The first cohort for fall 2015 consisted of 20 Syrians and 20 Jordanians and offered summer preparatory courses for Syrians to facilitate completion of mandatory requirements for Master's programs. A second round of 20 Syrians and 20 Jordanians will be accepted for the fall 2016 academic semester. This scholarship program is primarily funded through the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, which has a focus on south-south exchanges.

Another edition to the scholarship opportunities for Syrians was made available in 2016 through EDU-Syria, a project funded by the European Union. Like the DAAD New Perspectives Scholarships it aims to provide Higher Education to both Young Syrians and Jordanians. The project is lead by the German Jordanian University with three partner institutes: Zarqa University, Yarmouk University and Al-Quds College.³² This is potentially the largest scholarship opportunity currently available, with 300 places to be offered at Zarqa University alone. In this project, scholarships will primarily be provided to those whose university studies were distributed as a consequence of the crisis, with clear provision for both Masters, undergraduate and vocational courses. There were 2,000 Syrian students in attendance at the Zarqa open day in early 2016, clearly demonstrating the significant demand for such an initiative.³³

Increasingly individual universities in third countries have offered scholarship opportunities for Syrian refugees. International Institute for Education (IIE) has consolidated a list of colleges and universities predominately in the United States and United Kingdom, which offer a range of scholarship opportunities which are either partly or fully funded. Following the DAAD "Leadership for Syria" scholarships, other scholarships were advertised by IIE in quick succession in 2015. In large part these scholarships appear to have been galvanized by the IIE consortium who have long advocated for universities to play a larger role in the response to the Syrian crisis. The original call for scholarships came in 2013 through funding from the US Department of State and Global Platform for Syrian Students and Kaplan Test Prep International. Since the original opportunity another round of scholarships has been launched. Over the course of the two rounds 333 Syrian students have received support of some kind including 159 scholarships, 175 free online test prep courses and 24 institutional top up grants. In each round of applications there were approximately 4,000 applications for 100 scholarships available.³⁴

31 «Scholarship Database - DAAD - Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst.» DAAD. Accessed March 2016 ,2. <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/datenbank/en/-21148scholarship-database/?status=3&origin=89&subjectGrps=F&daad=1&q=&page=1&detail=57194683>.

32 EDU-Syria. EDU-SYRIA – A Scholarship Program. Last modified February 2016 ,24. <http://edu-syria.eu/>.

33 Ibid.

34 Institute of International Education (IIE). «IIE Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis.» Institute of International Education. Last modified January 2016 ,1. <http://www.iie.org/Programs/Syria-Scholarships>.

It is not clear how many Syrian students from Jordan received scholarships. IIE states specifically that:

‘While the world struggles to meet the basic needs of millions of Syrian refugees, IIE and its partners are making sure that higher education is not neglected... IIE will work with the Syria Consortium partners and its network to explore additional scholarship opportunities for Syrian students to offer them a safe haven where they can continue their academic work and obtain the skills needed to preserve the leadership that will be needed to rebuild.’³⁵

IIE also started a pilot program in Jordan to provide scholarship opportunities for Syrian refugees through the Emergency Student Fund. This fund aimed to specifically support those students who were already enrolled in Jordanian universities but who were at risk of dropping out due to financial reasons. The first scholarships were dispersed during the fall semester of 2015.

Despite increasing scholarship opportunities offered through individual universities, **there has been a noticeable organizational shift away from supporting scholarship applications in third countries.** As will be explained in the challenges section of the paper below, this appears to be primarily a consequence of the perceived and real protection issues that emerge when refugee students leave the Kingdom, the expense involved with such scholarships and the want to not aggravate the vulnerability of families left behind. DAAD is the exception here; with the switch from third country to host country is explained entirely by who funds the programs. While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds programs in Germany, the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development focuses on in country programs. This may reflect a decision made at government level.

As scholarships to actually study at a university, whether in host country or abroad are limited, alternative learning options, such as online programs, have also developed as an avenue for further education for refugee youth. The online University of the People offered five hundred scholarships for Syrian refugees in 2015 and Kaplan Test Prep offered support to five hundred students in crisis, with a focus on Syrian refugees, in 2013.^{36 37} However, both of these services require that students already speak English, which potentially acts as a barrier to entry for some Syrians. Another interesting program was opened by Kiron University in 2015, providing free language and university courses for refugees online and funding for students’ final year at diverse universities. This was an important addition to the higher education opportunities for all refugees, because it serves to address the legal, language and financial issues many refugees face.³⁸

35 Ibid.

36 University of the People. «“UNIVERSITY IN A BOX”: AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OPENS GATES TO 500 SYRIAN REFUGEES.» University of the People. Last modified September 2015 ,8. http://www.uopeople.edu/about/worldwide-recognition/press-releases/#faq_answer_2_1.

37 Kaplan Test Prep International. «IIE Partners with Kaplan to Provide Prep for Syrian Students in Crisis.» Last modified October 2013 ,31. <http://www.kaptestglobal.com/news/iie-partners-kaplan-provide-prep-syrian-students-crisis>.

38 Kiron University. «Our Challenge, Our Solution.» Kiron University. Last modified January 2016 ,1. <https://kiron.university/about/challenge-solution>.

BOX: Increasing access to higher education requires increasing access to information

To increase accessibility to scholarship information, UNESCO launched the Jami3ti Initiative ('My University' Initiative) in July 2015. The Jami3ti Initiative is an online database in Arabic of scholarship opportunities and resources to help students better understand the application process. This website consolidates the widely dispersed scholarship information into a single, searchable platform, which may prove invaluable to Syrian refugee students. There are approximately 2,000 opportunities listed.

To discern the intention and desires of Syrian refugee youth, UNESCO conducted a mobile based survey with the intention of drawing upon the data collected to initiate further dialogue with key stakeholders in addressing the issues and aspirations of the refugee youth. While disaggregated by gender and location, there is a resounding message expressed across all cohorts: the vast majority has not accessed any form of education while in Jordan; clearly indicating that displacement has had a significant impact on the academic progress of Syrian refugees in the Kingdom.³⁹

To the question of future education options, the majority was clear: 92% of respondents indicated a preference for obtaining a degree over any other category of education, with very small interest in online 3%, non-degree/certificate 6% or blended learning 7%. Interestingly Za'atari respondents expressed less enthusiasm for anything other than degree and campus based education 97%. There was limited interest to stay in Jordan to continue their education, though this was evidently gendered: with a higher interest to stay amongst females. There was also a gendered aspect to the perceived need for preparatory courses; with males across all locations suggesting they required less support than females; with the highest self-perceived needs from respondents in Mafraq. UNESCO's findings provide a solid foundation from which stakeholders can continue their efforts to advocate making higher education options available for refugees; though it also makes clear the differences in expectations of Syrian students and actual opportunities on the ground.

BOX END

39 Education Sector Working Group. Access to Education for Syrian Refugee Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities: Joint Education Needs Assessment Report. UNICEF, 2015.
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_JENA_HC_March2015_.pdf.

These opportunities are the result of persistent advocacy on the part of different stakeholders to increase access to higher education for refugees in Jordan. The broadened provision reflects strong partnership and cooperation between international agencies, donors and the Jordanian government. This is best reflected in the progressive inclusion of higher education in the JRP. While there was only brief mention of it in the 2015 plan, the 2016 call for funds clearly outlines higher education to be a key component of the education sector, including vocational training. Advocacy has continued apace in different avenues. For example, in November 2015 UNHCR reported breakthroughs in regards to the civil documentation issue, with the Kingdom's Ministry of Higher Education indicating that they will recognize the Ministry of Interior (MOI) card and asylum seeker certificate in lieu of education documentation and transcripts with support from the Jordan Hashemite University and al-Bayt University.⁴⁰ Further, the Jordan Hashemite University informed UNHCR of a reduction in school fees by 20% to ease the financial burden for refugee students; a certification course for communication, technical, and life skills open to all refugees regardless of age; and a proficiency test for application in lieu of certified transcripts.⁴¹ The Za'atari Refugee camp coordination meeting minutes also indicates that 100 scholarship places have been made available at Al BaytUniversity.⁴²

Another important development in the higher education response has been the introduction of the Tertiary Education Coordination Group (TECG) at the end of 2015. This group is largely made up of UN and other agencies working with youth in Jordan, co-chaired by UNHCR and UNESCO, though is currently not open to all implementing partners in the field. The group is specifically focused on coordinating efforts in programming, discussing policy changes and developing shared advocacy points. Stakeholders highlighted that the creation of the group is an important step in coordinating what was previously isolated and sporadic efforts, which may serve to bring more focused and directed attention to the issue.

These are important developments in ensuring access to higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan. However these developments should also not be overstated. In the case of the 20% reduction in fees, it is unclear as to whether this is an across the board reduction for non-Jordanians, Syrians alone or only in relation to DAFI scholarships available from UNHCR. A February 1st policy announcement by the Ministry of Higher Education calls into question whether non-authentic documents of higher school completion can be used in lieu of authentic documents.

40 UNHCR Jordan. UNHCR Jordan Operational Update, November 2015. Jordan: UNHCR, 2015. <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-unhcr-operational-update-november2015->

41 Ibid.

42 ZA'ATARI CMC meeting minutes 16th February 2016

As stated in meeting minutes about the policy, ‘this is a clear step backwards.’⁴³ Concern has been raised for students who have received a scholarship but do not receive a stipend; without this financial support students have started to drop out.⁴⁴ Further, the existence of the TECG does not wholly overcome the communication and coordination challenges present because organizations are entering largely on a program basis rather than with a holistic approach.

Progress has clearly been made, but as various stakeholders expressed, there remains significant work ahead to address the ongoing obstacles obstructing access. These challenges exist at all stages of the higher education cycle: from low rates of enrollment in secondary school, to overall limited opportunities and the type of opportunities, to financial and protection concerns for those who have received scholarships.

Obstacles to Higher Education

In Watenpaugh et al 2013 study, students highlighted that the major barriers for their entry into Jordanian universities were: high tuition fees as well as high cost of living in Jordan which prevents the majority of university age Syrians from entering Jordanian institutions; lack of appropriate documentation including academic progress or certificates or travel documents.⁴⁵ Although many of these challenges have been addressed, other issues have arisen over time but student’s interest to continue studying has not subsided.

Supply and Demand

With difficulties securing funding for basic primary and secondary level education ongoing, initiatives to fund access to higher education are often seen as a luxury. The EU delegation to Syria estimates that there are 77,718 Syrian refugee youth in Jordan alone.⁴⁶ The demand for scholarships thus remains significantly higher than what is supplied. This is clearly evidenced in applications for DAAD scholarships under the ‘Leadership in Syria’ program with only one in 18 applicants, or 5%, receiving a scholarship. One stakeholder suggested that there were no more than 2,000 opportunities available overall. This is further reflected in the

43 ZA’ATARI CMC MEETING MINUTES 16th February 2016

44 ZA’ATARI CMC MEETING MINUTES 16th February 2016

45 Watenpaugh, Keith D., Adrienne L. Fricke, and Tara Siegel. *Uncounted and Unacknowledged: Syria’s Refugee University Students and Academics in Jordan*.

46 Loriska, Irene, Leon Cremonini, and Malaz Safar Jalani. *European Union Delegation to the Syrian Arab Republic: Study to Design a Programme/Clearinghouse Providing Access to Higher Education for Syrian Refugees and Internal Displaced Persons*. The European Union, 2015. <https://www.utwente.nl/bms/cheps/news/finalreportstudyhighereducationsyrianrefugeesandidp.pdf>.

difficulty in maintaining even the limited scholarship opportunities through the DAFI program. Due to funding shortfalls, DAFI scholarships available for 2016 will be less than those offered in previous years.⁴⁷ There is also an organizational focus on scholarships for Masters Students rather than undergraduate courses. It is unclear whether this is the case for IIE support to Syrians students in Jordan. Connected to the limited supply issue of all opportunities provided is the question of sustainability of such initiatives. As it stands, scholarships have been provided on yearly basis but no clear message has been sent as to whether these will be consistent and ongoing.

Low levels of enrollment in secondary education

While this has not been tested statistically, it is clear that the finite opportunities for higher education have been a contributing factor to the low numbers of Syrian youth enrolled in secondary education. As UNESCO points out, it is crucially important for there to be next steps in the education system for refugees so there is an incentive to work hard, whether that is tertiary education paths or technical skills-building. Without the explicit ability to move further through the education system there is little incentive for refugees to take their education seriously. Especially with so many youth outside of the formal education system, the pathway to higher education in the future will be difficult. It is thus essential that there are post-basic opportunities made available so that those who have missed out on the opportunity to continue through secondary education have a way back into the system. NRC provides this with youth centers in Za'atari and Azraq. UNESCO's most recent BTEC program, through the 'Youth Skills Development and Mentoring Project in Jordan' is another example of this in the urban context. BTECs are vocational qualifications specifically designed to provide students skills that will enable them to move on to higher education or straight into employment. In this specific program, 120 Syrian students from Za'atari, 160 from host communities as well as 120 vulnerable Jordanians will have access.⁴⁸ More programs like this should be developed and expanded to provide broadened opportunity. At the same time further efforts to get eligible secondary students back into school should be made a concerted priority. Efforts continue to be made in this regard with the Education Sector Working Group having developed key messages for increasing retention rates.⁴⁹

47 UNHCR Jordan. UNHCR Jordan Operational Update, November 2015.

48 «More Than 1,300 Youth to Benefit from New Youth Skills and Mentoring Development Project Launched in Amman.» UNESCO. Last modified February 2016 ,8. <http://en.unesco.org/news/more-1300youth-benefit-new-youth-skills-and-mentoring-development-project-launched-amman>.

49 Education Sector Working Group, Retention Key Messages 2016.

Civil documentation issues

Beyond the limited opportunities and low secondary enrolment there are many practical issues that refugees face in applying for such opportunities whether they are for university placement or tertiary education. The refugee experience of fleeing for safety often times means that the necessary documentation that qualify them for these scholarships are missing or lost forever. Students must provide this paperwork for matriculation and visas, but lack the necessary documentation or the financial resources to pay for expensive document translation services. As mentioned, there has been some formal acknowledgement of this difficulty and Al Bayt University has indicated that they would be willing to do placement tests for prospective students to determine their level.⁵⁰ However a February 2016 policy change by the Ministry of Higher Education may prove to be a barrier to the further expansion of such an initiative. The new policy mandates that all students must provide authentic documentation and this is the only form of documentation that will be accepted. This poses a setback for the progress made in regards to documentation issues. If this policy is to be maintained protection concerns about getting these documents from Syria will begin again. For example, through previous processes, Syrians have requested for family members still in Syria to obtain their documents. In one case identified by a NGO, a Syrian refugee asked a relative to collect documents within Syria. During that process, the family member was arrested and has been missing since. This is an extreme risk, especially for an application process which may not lead to an actual scholarship. Although the Jordanian Government's policy was developed in response to the emergence of fraudulent documents, this is a serious concern. To ensure the protection of Syrian refugees in Jordan and their family members still present in Syria, alternative mechanism must be investigated to verify individuals' educational history.

Lack of knowledge, access to information

Youth present at the Global Refugee Youth Consultation held in Amman in December 2015, indicated that they do not know about opportunities and often only found out about them right before the deadlines due to the lack of direct communication with the refugees themselves.⁵¹ Importantly this was expressed by students in both urban and camp settings suggesting that access to information is an ongoing issue. The Jami3ti Initiative is an important step in the right direction. With an approximate 80,000 Syrian youth alone, only 2.5% of the Syrian youth have accessed the service.⁵² UNESCO indicated that another push would be made to encourage further participation of the youth and to do this they will be drawing upon

50 UNHCR Jordan. UNHCR Jordan Operational Update, November 2015.

51 This information was obtained through ARDD-Legal Aids one day participation at the Global Refugee Youth Consultation

52 UNESCO, and European Union. UNESCO-EU Jami3ti Initiative: Mapping of Higher Education Needs and Opportunities for Syrian Refugees. Jordan: UNESCO, n.d. http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_jor_unesco_education_report_20151409_en.pdf.

relationships with different NGOs to distribute information about the initiative to their respective beneficiaries.⁵³ Challenges remain of how to distribute this information with youth living in urban areas as not everyone is involved with NGOs or connected to networks with information specific to higher education. This is not a problem specific to the information relating to higher education but an ongoing challenge for stakeholders in the provision of any information or services in urban settings. Social networks such as Facebook and wide access to smart phones are strong approaches to address the scattered population but to target the right populations through this approach remains a challenge. Importantly, this initiative relies on the fact that refugee youth have access to the internet.

Language and Culture

Language continues to be a barrier beyond access and information sharing issues. The DAAD 'New Perspectives for Young Jordanians and Syrians' program requires applicants to speak English, even though students are expected to attend Arabic-language universities.⁵⁴ This is not a unique request among scholarship benefactors for either the application process or admittance to specific programs, for either host country or third country provision. Many universities require that the beneficiary of a scholarship speak the native language of the benefactor. Only a few programs attempt to mitigate this challenge by providing language courses for students so that they may successfully matriculate into universities taught in a foreign language.⁵⁵ There have been efforts made to address this knowledge gap, including the provision of free English courses through the British Council.⁵⁶ Additionally, cultural differences in application and interview styles make scholarship applications more difficult for students who do not have access to career coaches or guidance counselors. Without these resources, students may struggle to identify and express the qualities that universities look for in students.

The difficulties that students have with the application process and the individualized attention they seek is reflected in the number of enquiries that scholarship providers receive. This is the case in the application process and for the recipients of scholarships. Demand on scholarship staff is high. In one specific case, the director of a scholarship provider spoke with a recipient for an hour and spoke with staff to identify a solution to their problem, something that the director identified as normal. DAAD has set up a specific Syria desk to support the caseload.⁵⁷ Other

53 Ibid.

54 «New Perspectives for Young Syrians and Jordanians.» DAAD-Information Centre Jordan - Startseite Amman. Accessed March 2016 ,2. <http://www.daad-jordan.org/en/27348/index.html>.

55 «Jusoor Scholarship Program » Jusoor | Syrians Forward Together » Syrians Forward Together.» Jusoor | Syrians Forward Together » Syrians Forward Together. Last modified January 2015 ,1. <http://jusoorsyria.com/programs/jusoor-scholarship-program/>.

56 British Council, (2015), Build Your Future, Available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.jo/en/buildyourfuture/placement-test-application>

57 DAAD, (2015), «New Perspectives for Young Jordanians and Syrians" Programme Website, Available at: <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/datenbank/en/-21148scholarship-database/?status=3&origin=89&subjectGrps=F&daad=1&q=&page=1&detail=57194683>

agencies working with youth also identify that there is limited capacity or organizational resources to support in these issues.

Protection Services

The process of accessing higher education has presented a number of challenges in protecting Syrian refugees, with both host country and third country scholarships. In regards to recipients who receive scholarships in third countries, questions largely remain unanswered as to who in the third country will assist with visa issues, basic necessities, and assistance should the refugee fail a course or their program; and whether there will be a possibility for naturalization. In the case of the Leadership for Syrians scholarships from DAAD, support staff were available originally on a one to one basis to help address the problems that students encountered. This has since shifted to an increased caseload per support staff.

Another concern centers on the Jordanian policy of not permitting the reentry of refugees who leave the country and the fact that there is no clear provision for naturalization through the scholarships. By accepting these scholarships abroad, refugees may be leaving behind family members in Jordan without a guaranteed means of returning. While some stakeholders were unsure if this was communicated to recipients of overseas scholarships, DAAD indicated this to students through a written consent form. In one identified case, a scholarship recipient refused to accept because she did not want to leave family behind. While there is no clear provision for naturalization in Germany through the scholarship, after completing the degree in Germany students are allowed to look for work within a 12 month period. If no work is found, people are by law meant to leave Germany. However, in the case of Syrians, they can apply for asylum in the country. There have been no cases reported of people being sent back to Syria or Jordan and there is little expectation that this will be attempted. This concern has been acknowledged and understood by actors involved in the response. UNHCR indicated in the Education Sector Working group in January 2016 that they are drafting a document to address these concerns for both refugees and donors.⁵⁸

Along with this broader challenge, when travelling abroad, refugees must have a passport. If they do not have one, the only formal option is to go to the Syrian Embassy in Jordan. For those who left Syria for political reasons, approaching the embassy may expose them to risk by interacting with officials from the Syrian government. In an effort to avoid this there have been cases of individuals paying large amounts of money for a passport through informal means, without any guarantee of receiving a true document. This also exposes them to exploitation and legal prosecution in Jordan because of this illegal activity.

58 «ESWG Meeting Minutes - 11 Jan 2016.» Paper presented at Education Sector Working Group - EWSG - Jordan, Amman, Jordan, February 2016 ,15.

Inexperience with Humanitarian Crises

Many scholarship providers and academic institutions now involved in the Syrian refugee crisis do not have previous experience with humanitarian crises and as a result do not understand the realities or the concerns of refugees. For example, many institutions have inquired about NGOs requesting documentation from the Assad government or Syrian institutions instead of individuals. This goes against the humanitarian imperative of “do no harm” as it would flag individuals as refugees who have fled Syria and pose risks to family members or connections remaining in Syria. There is the added risk of a refugee returning to Syria under duress should the Assad government or another entity blackmail the individual through threats. While scholarship providers have suggested that students could sign consent forms, this does not remove the responsibility of the stakeholders because of the ‘do no harm’ principle.

This inexperience also impacts the creation of selection criteria and standards for scholarship programs. While NGOs may have an open feedback loop with scholarship providers, such providers may not have the flexibility to alter criteria due to requirements from academic institutions or the host country’s Ministry of Education or funders.

Some stakeholders indicated that they have stepped in as a link between refugees and scholarship providers in an effort to ‘translate’ challenges and expectations between the two groups. The need for this does not seem to be the case across the board, with some scholarship providers having a direct line of communication with potential applicants to understand the challenges they face.

Masters over lower levels of higher and tertiary education

Scholarships that have been made available have focused on Masters Programs over undergraduate courses or other tertiary education opportunities. This provides opportunities for those who have already entered the higher education system but limits opportunities for those who have not had the opportunity to engage with the higher education system. This was a major issue raised by the youth present at the Global Refugee Youth Consultations in December 2015. Considering that the majority of secondary school aged Syrian students are not enrolled and that there are over 80,000 Syrian youth present in the Kingdom, the majority of whom have not entered higher levels of education as witnessed through the UNESCO Ja3miti findings, more programs need to be designed and created for this section of Syrian youth in Jordan. This is further reflected in the decreasing numbers of Syrian applicants for the Masters programs that DAAD is providing. The question of why there is such a focus on Masters Programs considering this largely remains unanswered. It is clear from reviewing the scholarship opportunities available that there needs to be varied opportunities at a variety of entry points to address the different stages of educational attainment of the youth popula-

tion. Importantly, this should include vocational training as well as undergraduate courses. Increased coordination and advocacy about this to funding bodies must be continually made to better reflect the needs and aspirations of the refugee youth in Jordan.

Input from refugees themselves: we need to organize interviews with the three refugee groups we identified.

Why help now?

Since September 2014, there have been several articles on education opportunities for Syrian refugees. These articles have largely adopted the term 'lost generation,' referring to former Syrian university students. These articles generally argue that scholarships and education opportunities provide potential leaders with the tools to rebuild a post-conflict Syria and prevent young, ambitious refugees from falling through the cracks. As Kaisth and King wrote, 'By failing to support the educational needs of Syria's students and scholars now, we run the risk of a lost generation of leaders, with potentially devastating effects on Syria and the region.'⁵⁹ An open letter from British academics was discussed in widely circulated publications, in September 2015, urging universities to take in Syrian refugees and academics.⁶⁰ An October 2015 article in the Atlantic also encouraged universities to aid refugees and discussed barriers to accessing opportunities.⁶¹

A Norwegian Refugee Council report from January 2016 indicated that 50% of refugees surveyed in Jordan said that they would be leaving Jordan 'because they saw no future, in particular because of not being able to find legal work, coupled with insufficient levels of assistance.'⁶² Along with the financial difficulties encountered for refugees in Jordan, the lack of higher education opportunities has been cited as a reason for refugee youth to leave. This has been noted in Za'atari Camp Management and Coordination (CMC) meeting minutes in the last months of 2015. In the context of major displacements of refugees and significant vulnerability in countries of first asylum, such as Jordan, access to higher education can be a protection mechanism for refugee youth to not pursue irregular migration. This was further indicated by the Oxford University's Refugee Studies Centre which said:

59 Kaisth, Daniela Z., and James R. King. «Syrian Refugees in Jordan - From Camps to Campus - University World News.» Global Edition - University World News. Last modified September 2014 ,19. <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140916145546614>.

60 Kirby, D, (2015), Refugee crisis: British universities should create scholarships and bursaries for students fleeing violence, say academics, The Independent, 21st September 2015. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/higher/refugee-crisis-british-universities-should-create-scholarships-and-bursaries-for-students-fleeing10511795-.html>

61 Horn, Heather. «Syria's «Lost Generation»: Should Universities Be Doing More to Help Displaced Students?» The Atlantic. Last modified October 2015 ,23. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/10/2015/syria-university-students-education/412174/>.

62 Drivers of Despair: Refugee protection failures in Jordan and Lebanon. Jordan and Lebanon: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2016. http://www.nrc.no/arch/_img/9213246.pdf.

barriers in access to education (including higher education) in regional hosting countries due to high cost and perceived risks contributes to the attraction of Europe as a destination for building viable futures.⁶³ Increasing higher education opportunities for refugees provides the 'glue' for people to stay in countries of first asylum.

At the London Conference held in February 2016, there was a clear agreement from the international community to both education and work opportunities for Syrians. In the co-host declaration at the end of the event, a statement was made to ensure 'No Lost Generation' and this included post-basic education such as vocational training.⁶⁴ In the case of Jordan, the commitment is to provide increased 'access to vocational training for Syrians and to tertiary/higher education opportunities for all vulnerable youth (Jordanian and Syrian)'.⁶⁵ The recognition of the need to provide such increased assistance is a welcome step in the response to the refugee crisis in the region and in Jordan in particular.

While clearly holding specific intent of halting irregular migration to Europe, increased funding towards higher education opportunities in countries of first asylum like Jordan is welcome. However, it should be made clear that the move to increase opportunities will be insufficient to address the magnitude and diversity of needs of the Syrian refugee youth community in Jordan. It is clear that progress on the issue of access higher education for refugees has been made but more can and should be done. Further, as has been outlined, higher education in refugee contexts also creates protection challenges that must be addressed for scholarship provision in host and third countries so that the positive impacts of higher education can feed into the post-conflict Syria: the nurses, teachers and scientists educated through these programs will ensure an educated population ready to engage the manifold issues present in the immediate and long term future of Syria. Increasing access to higher education is thus an avenue for protection, sustainable development and a stability and security into the future.

Outlined below are key recommendations for future responses to refugee situations and further recommendations for the specific Jordanian context.

63 Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford Department of International Development. *Refuge from Syria: Policy Recommendations*. Oxford, UK: University of Oxford, 2016.

<http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/refuge-from-syria-policy-recommendations>.

64 Germany, Kuwait, Norway, United Kingdom, and United States. «Co-hosts Declaration of the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference, London 2016.» Speech, Supporting Syria and the Region, London 2016, London, n.d. <https://2c8kkt1ykog81j8k9p47oglb-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/02/2016/FINAL-Supporting-Syria-the-Region-London-4-2016-Feb.pdf>

65 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. «The Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis.» Speech, Supporting Syrian and the Region, London 2016, London, February 2016 ,4. <https://2c8kkt1ykog81j8k9p47oglb-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/02/2016/Supporting-Syria-the-Region-London-2016-Jordan-Statement.pdf>

Recommendations

- Continued support to **primary and secondary education to ensure the education pathway is not disrupted as a consequence of displacement.** Higher education initiatives should not displace focus on other education level initiatives: All education initiatives should be seen in tandem with each other: feeding to the ultimate goal of education provision for all.
- **Strong working relationship with hosting government developed** early to address the specific concerns of youth population this could be achieved with a coordinated group such as the Tertiary Education Coordination Group
- Programs targeting youth should offer a **diversity of options**, beyond Masters Programs, including vocational and academic. This reflects the needs of any society.
- Higher education can be expensive. To overcome this challenge **diverse methods** should be employed to ensure some form of access: direct face to face, online blended
- Access to **higher education opportunities not based on nationality**: as has clearly been witnessed in the case of Jordan priority has been given to Syrian refugees over any other refugee population. With a variety of refugee communities in Jordan alone, inclusion of these groups into application process is central to reflect commitment to non-discrimination.
- Coordination with scholarship providers/Training for scholarship providers on the difficulties that refugee youth continue to face so that they can better reflect these needs in their programs.
- **Alternative pathways to secure validation of previous education level** considering civil documentation issue and protection challenges involved in obtaining from home country.

Annex1: Glossary

Annex 2: Available Scholarships

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