



## DAFI ANNUAL REPORT 2011

UNHCR – Division of International Protection

September 2012



**Cover photo:** Uganda: Graduates from Nkumba University, the Greens represent Procurement and International Relations, the Blues represent Information Technology, and the Purple represents Law, October 2011

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## Introduction: UNHCR and Tertiary Education

### A new education strategy

In 2011, UNHCR commissioned an external review of refugee education which highlighted areas in need of improvement, including education quality, access to post-primary education, mainstreaming within national education systems, and data management.

Based on extensive analysis, this review set out an agenda for change, aimed at promoting quality and protective education for refugees as a support to durable solutions and as a core element of UNHCR's mandate. The proposed recommendations include the "provision of post-primary education for all refugees up to the end of secondary school, with emphasis on access for girls and marginalized groups, and provision of additional opportunities for higher education, both through scholarships and site-based programmes that use open and distance learning."<sup>1</sup>

Following the global education review, in broad consultation with NGO partners, UN agencies, academic institutions, a new 5-year Education Strategy (2012-2016) was developed, which addresses the recommendations of the review.

This education strategy aims to ensure the provision of refugee education, not as a peripheral stand-alone service, but as a core component of UNHCR's protection and durable solutions mandate. Quality education that builds relevant skills and knowledge enables refugees to live healthy, productive lives and builds skills for self-reliance. The strategy emphasizes improving learning outcomes and making lifelong learning accessible for all, from early childhood education to secondary, higher, and adult education.

### Refugees need tertiary education

Young refugees, often living in enforced idleness and despair, wish to continue their education and to be of greater service to their communities. The benefits of higher education include:

- Cultivating civic leadership that is essential to any durable solution;
- Development of skills and confidence, which allow greater participation in civic and public life, which in turn enhances protection and quality of life for refugees;
- Fostering the ability to make strategic life choices, reducing irregular movements of young refugees in search of protection, livelihoods, or higher learning opportunities elsewhere;
- Training a future cadre of highly qualified teachers for primary and secondary schools and health professionals; and

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<sup>1</sup> S. Dryden-Peterson (2011) *Global Review. Refugee Education*. UNHCR. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/4fe317589.pdf>

- Promoting economic gains that are critical for post-conflict reconstruction and for poverty reduction.

Higher education is also a critical part of the educational continuum: the possibility of higher education motivates young people to enrol in and complete secondary school, which has a similar impact on demand for primary education.

Almost 60% of refugees worldwide come from four countries, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where reconstruction needs are vast.<sup>2</sup> Refugees, while in exile, need to acquire higher skills and to be groomed as qualified professionals to sustain peace and foster development. Well-educated refugees are in demand in their own countries upon return and in countries of asylum. They must contribute to the local economy and community development. Experience has shown that higher education facilitates local integration, as seen by examples in Zambia and Namibia, and can be used to leverage the right to work for refugees.

Everyone has the right to education. [...] higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (UN Declaration of Human right, 1948:Art.26)

Tertiary education<sup>3</sup> is one of the priorities of UNHCR's Education Strategy 2012-2016 issued in December 2011, and needs to be considered within the continuum of the education cycle supported by UNHCR, especially the provision of secondary education.

The DAFI Programme is an integral part of the new UNHCR Education Strategy 2012-2016 approved by the High Commissioner in December 2011. Objective four (4) of the strategy aims at increasing access to higher education for refugees. Building on the pioneering approach spearheaded by DAFI in supporting capacity building and promoting refugee self-reliance, UNHCR is committed to expand the number of scholarships, to develop access to accredited distance learning programmes, to expand para-professional training opportunities and to foster innovative partnerships.

### **The DAFI programme**

Since 1992, the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Programme (DAFI) has been and remains a crucial option for refugees to continue higher education while in exile. Funded by the German government since its inception, the programme provides

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR Global Trends, 2010

<sup>3</sup> The terms 'higher education' and 'tertiary education' are used interchangeably to refer to all post-secondary education leading to degrees, certificates or diplomas. Higher education includes all post-secondary education, in particular education at colleges and universities that leads to degrees. It also includes training that is technical, vocational, professional and/or para-professional and that leads to certificates and diplomas.

scholarships for deserving refugees to study at universities and colleges in their host country and to a lesser extent, in their country of origin upon return. The contribution of the German Government has increased annually over the years, reaching EUR 3.4 million in 2011.

This initiative, which initially supported 800 students in 1993, has paved the way for long term achievement in durable solutions for refugees. Currently, almost 2,000 students a year have a chance to earn a diploma at universities in 39 countries.

As a unique 'sur-place' scholarship programme for refugee students, DAFI contributes to the search for durable solutions under UNHCR's mandate and has provided vital support towards the reconstruction of conflict affected countries. The multiplier effect of the programme is documented through stories of DAFI students and their families. Graduates have developed generic and transferable skills and bring meaningful contributions to their communities as teachers, doctors, engineers and others. They act as role models in their environment and their success encourages younger children to continue their education.

DAFI is the only programme allowing refugee access to higher education on a worldwide scale. In many ways DAFI pioneered a new approach, one that went beyond access provision to primary and secondary education by specifically providing tertiary education. This focus and evident success, has led to the acceptance of tertiary education in the context of refugee education amongst UNHCR staff and its partners.

In 2011, an additional 800,000 people were displaced across international borders, the highest number of refugees in more than a decade. Therefore, needs keep growing, as demonstrated by the high number of applications received each year for the DAFI programme.

## 1. 2011 facts and figures

### Summary Facts and figures for 2011:

**Number of students:** 1,779

**Male / Female ratio:** 57% male / 43% female

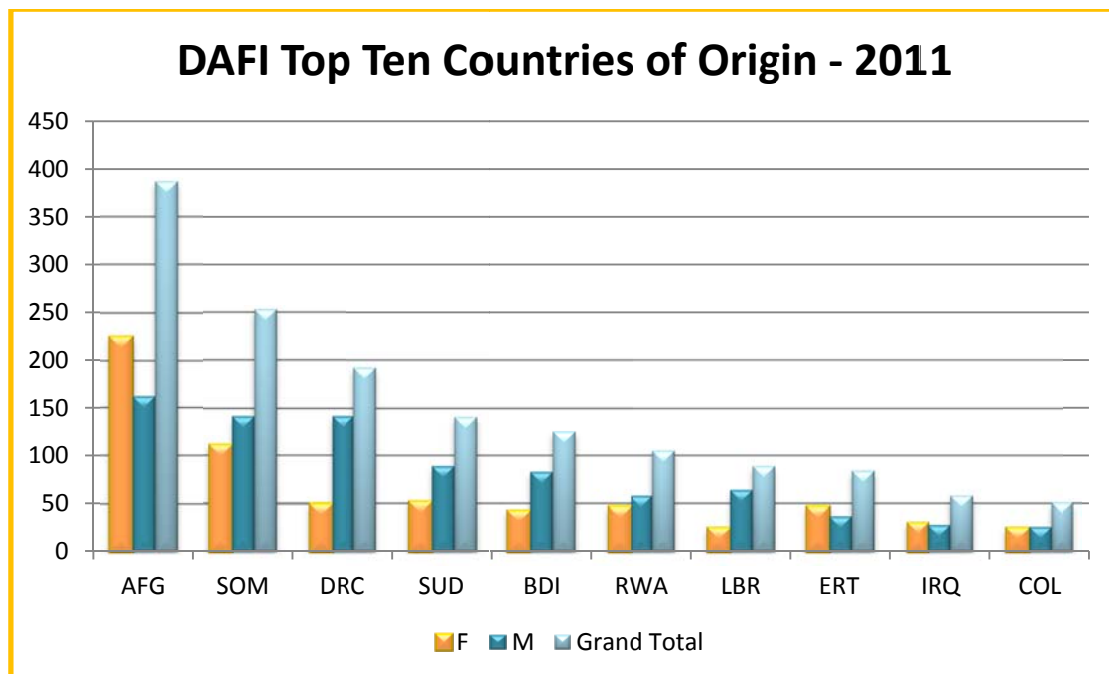
**Countries of study:** DAFI students enrolled in courses in 39 countries

**Countries of origin:** Refugee scholarship recipients originate from 42 countries

**Length of studies:** 3-5 Years

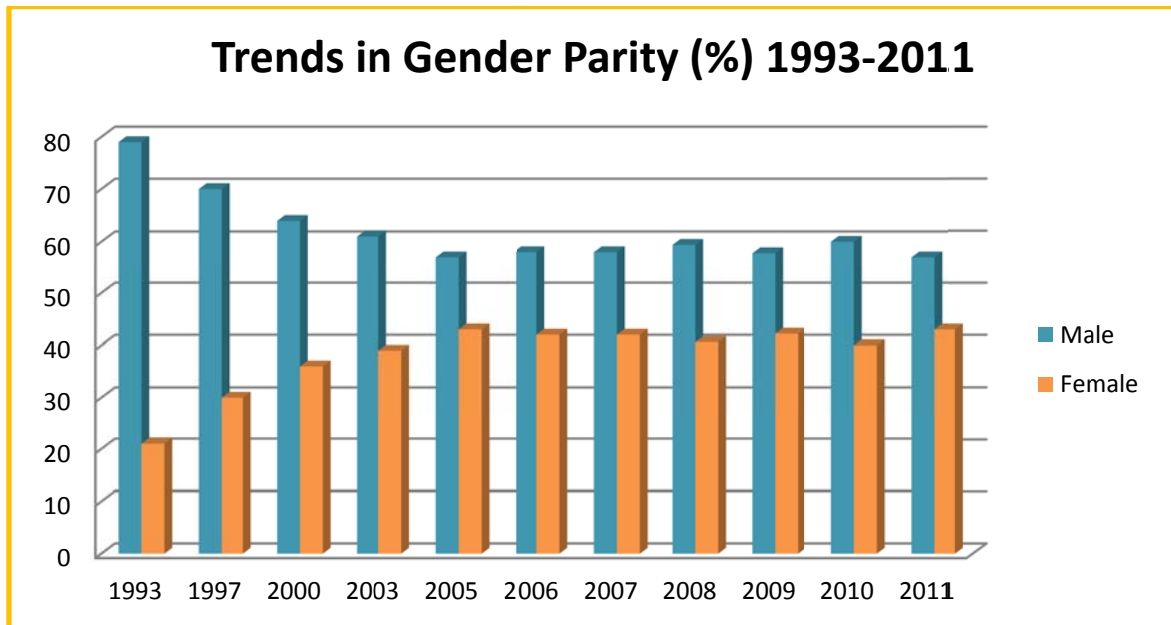
**Main study subjects:** Commercial and Business Administration, Social and Behavioural Science, Medical Sciences and Health-Related Studies, Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Education Science and Teacher Training, Humanities, Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, Law

In 2011, **1779 students** from 42 nationalities benefitted from a DAFI scholarship, in 39 countries.



On average, DAFI students were **28 years old**. **43% of scholarship recipients are female**, which is a small improvement from 2010, yet still insufficient to reach gender parity, given

that 49% of all refugees worldwide are women and girls. This requires a more precise and concerted effort to target female students for the scholarships. An increased number of scholarships, as planned in the coming years, must be accompanied by an improved trend in gender parity.

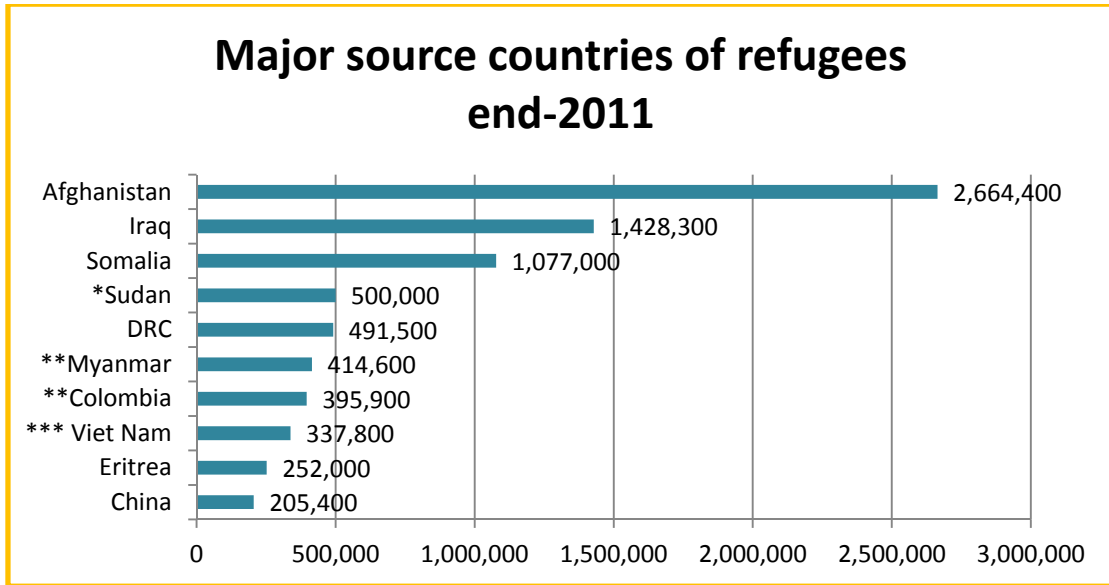


A notable exception is Afghan students, with 225 female and 162 male students currently studying. This is due to the high number of female students in Russia, Iran, and Kirghizstan.

Gender parity will be addressed in more detail under the regional sections of this report.

DAFI students' **countries of origin** mostly correspond to those of the global refugee population. The majority of scholarship recipients are from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan<sup>4</sup> and DRC. On average, one in four refugees originated from Afghanistan (2.7 million refugees), which therefore remained the leading country of origin for the DAFI Programme in 2011.

<sup>4</sup> All data for Sudan may actually include citizens of South Sudan, in absence of separate statistics for both countries.



\* May include citizens of South Sudan (in absence of separate statistics for both countries).

\*\* Includes people in a refugee-like situation.

\*\*\* The 300,000 Vietnamese refugees are well integrated and in practice receive protection from the Government of China.

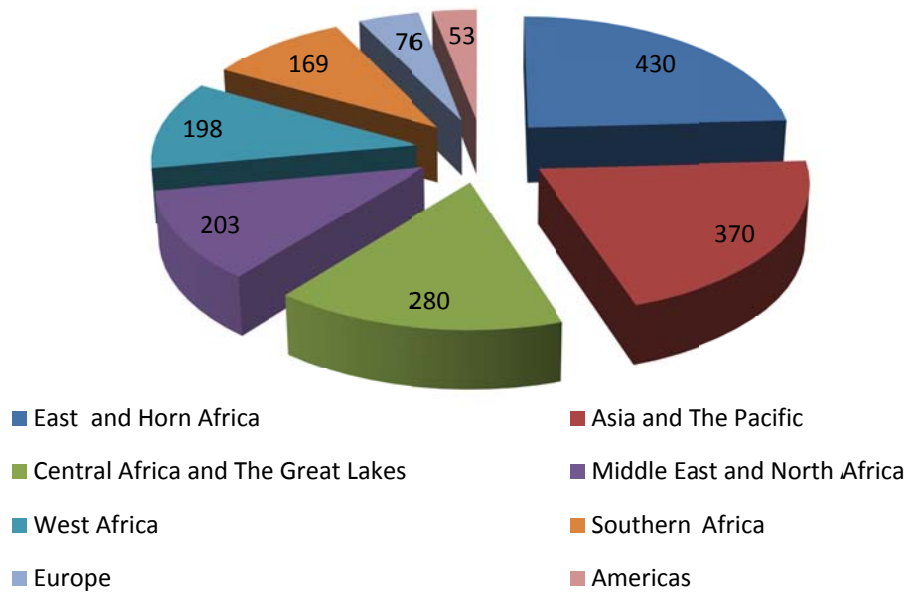
Consequently, 315 Afghan refugees received DAFI scholarships in 2011, 254 from Somalia, 192 from DRC, 141 from Sudan and 58 from Iraq. These nationalities accounted for more than 50% of all DAFI scholars worldwide and attended universities in over 29 countries. Somalis now receive the second highest number of DAFI scholarships, which is in line with the increased movement of their population. 45 students from Iraq were supported under the DAFI programme. However, the DAFI funding for the programme in Syria ended in June 2011, as new funding was provided locally by the Italian Government.

51 additional refugees received DAFI scholarships in 2011, representing 22 countries, with no more than 10 recipients for each country.

The regional allocation of **country of study** also corresponds with protracted operations, with countries like Ethiopia, Uganda, Iran, Pakistan, and Ghana offering higher education opportunities to several dozens of refugee students.



## Regional Allocation of Scholarships - 2011

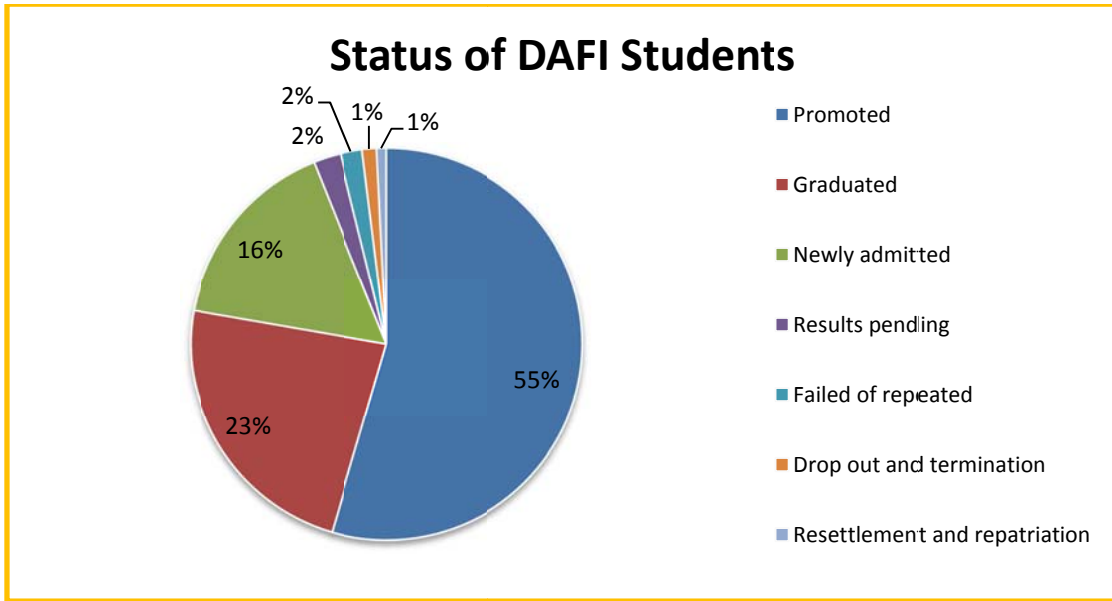


Africa remains the main focus of the DAFI programme, with 61% of the scholarships provided to refugees hosted in this region, notably the East and Horn of Africa, where Sudanese and Somali refugees receive more than 400 scholarships.

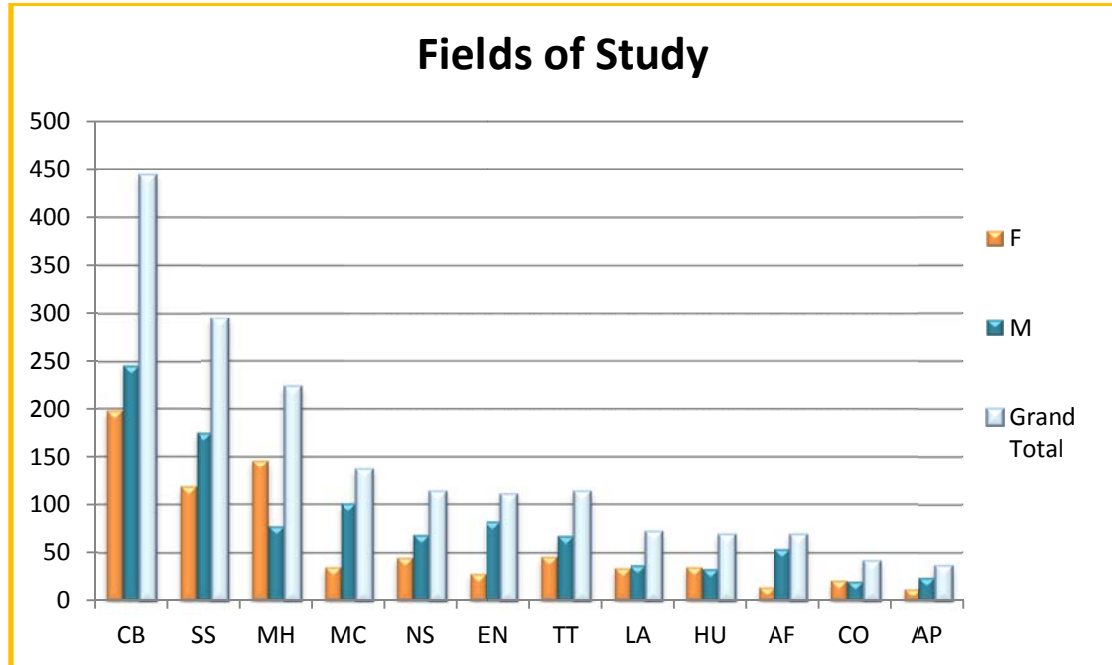
It is important to underscore that in 2011 developing countries hosted four-fifths of the world's refugees, with 48 Least Developed Countries providing asylum to 2.3 million refugees. Therefore, the DAFI Programme needs to go beyond simply providing scholarships. The DAFI programme ought to be instrumental in capacity building at the local level, contributing, for example, to the development of more sophisticated academic institutions and education systems to support refugees.

The average cost of scholarship rose slightly from \$2,803.00 in 2010 to \$2,849.00 in 2011.

Overall, the **academic results** of the students were overwhelmingly positive. 413 students (23%) graduated this year, while 970 got promoted to the next level. 288 new students entered the programme. Only 4% of the students failed or left the programme, largely due to resettlement.



Commercial and business sciences are still the preferred area of study. This focus encompasses a variety of diplomas and topics, ranging from accounting to banking to economics. The pattern of fields of study remains very similar to 2010; however, there has been an increased number of students in medical sciences, with two thirds now being female.



CB: Commercial & Business Admin  
 SS: Social & Behavioural Science  
 MH: Medical Science & Health Related  
 MA: Mathematics & Computer Science  
 EN: Engineering  
 NS: Natural Science  
 TT: Education Science and Teacher Training

LA: Law  
 HU: Humanities  
 AF: Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery  
 CO: Mass Communication & Documentation  
 AP: Architecture & Town Planning  
 OP: Other Programmes

## 2. DAFI Regional Overviews

This section provides a regional overview of students' flows and recent developments in the programmes. Detailed country information is available in the fact sheets in the annex.

### 2.1. Africa

As per UNHCR regional coverage, the Africa Region does not include North Africa which falls under the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of refugees has declined for nine consecutive years from 2001 to 2009. In 2010, the trend reversed as the number of refugees rose, and has continued into 2011. By the end of 2011, there were close to 2.7 million refugees in sub-Saharan Africa, roughly half a million more than at the beginning of the year.

Country of Study	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students	Budget (USD)	Average Scholarship Cost (USD)
Benin	33	15	48	86,982	1,812.13
Botswana	12	6	18	176,619	9,812.17
Burundi	43	16	59	168,871	2,862.22
Cameroun	48	19	67	159,498	2,380.57
DRC	11	8	19	52,149	2,744.68
Eritrea	7	1	8	19,851	2,481.38
Ethiopia	104	54	158	291,147	1,842.70
Ghana	58	25	83	411,795	4,961.39
Kenya	42	13	55	206,781	3,759.65
Mozambique	2	2	4	29,259	7,314.75
Namibia	10	10	20	231,118	11,555.90
Nigeria	7	3	10	17,999	1,799.90
Rwanda	49	18	67	288,775	4,310.07
Senegal	44	13	57	282,958	4,964.18
South Africa	32	34	66	388,789	5,890.74
Sudan	14	43	57	139,809	2,452.79
Tanzania	59	9	68	199,738	2,937.32
Uganda	86	66	152	268,482	1,766.33
Zambia	28	18	46	190,372	4,138.52
Zimbabwe	5	10	15	24,040	1,602.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>1077</b>	<b>3,635,032</b>	<b>3,375.15</b>
<b>% OF TOTAL</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>72%</b>	

**Students from DRC** represent 18% of DAFI students studying in Africa, and have received scholarships to attend university in 14 countries, mainly in Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

They face many challenges that limit their choice of university and field of study. They face language difficulties in Anglophone countries. In Uganda, where authorities do not recognize their secondary school certificates, they cannot attend public universities. UNHCR and its partners continue to advocate on the students' behalf to address these obstacles.

Despite these issues, students excel in their studies, find internships, and secure jobs in some countries, like Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda. In South Africa, refugee students face additional challenges finding internships because of issues related to insurance coverage. This was discussed extensively with the German Embassy in Pretoria, who advised UNHCR to contact the South Africa/German Chamber of Commerce to discuss possible solutions. One idea that was proposed included German companies hosting these students for internships for the required period. In DRC, the DAFI for Return Programme initiated in 2009 to support reintegration of refugees from Zambia continues. Five scholarships were terminated because of poor academic performance. Close follow-up was provided to continuing students to prevent further issues due to insufficient academic preparedness.

The second largest population of DAFI recipients in Africa is refugees from **Somalia**, who study mostly in Ethiopia and Kenya. 127 Somali students are currently studying in these two countries, which hosted 126,300 and 517,700 Somali refugees, respectively, based on UNHCR figures for 2011.

In **Ethiopia**, refugee figures have more than tripled since 2008 as hundreds of thousands of Eritreans and Somalis flee. The focus was put on enrolling more female students in Jijiga, a border town with Somalia. For these young women, access to the Health Sciences and Teacher Training technical institutes, where they have been accepted, is the first exposure they have to life outside of the camp. The Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany (AEEG) has been selected as a new implementing partner in order to strengthen peer networks and tighten relationships with the academic institutions. AEEG also works with the German embassy on cultural and education projects, and has brought a new dynamism to one of the oldest DAFI programmes.

In **Kenya**, there is a clear trend for students from Somalia to return to the camps (mostly Kakuma and Dadaab) after their studies. There, they are often employed by NGOs as community workers, teachers, or administrative employees. Even more promising, a lot of them get better opportunities with the NGOs and the United Nations in Somalia, as illustrated by the story of Abdirashid Mohamud Ahmed.

With the support of the DAFI scholarship, Abdirashid Mohamud Ahmed studied Commerce at the University of Nairobi as an undergraduate. He completed and graduated with a first class in December 2009.

He was the 2009/2010 DAFIKESO (the local association of DAFI students) secretary and later served as the 2010/2011 DAFIKESO chair. In early 2011, he returned to Somalia. He is currently working there as a part-time lecturer at Bosaso University and as a Monitoring and Evaluation Expert for the Norwegian Refugee Council .



*"I realized as a grew up that education was only a privilege of the rich but you have spoken loudly and strongly that even the poor can equally perform if not better if given a chance. The organization is fighting a good fight, in order to give a chance to needy, deserving and qualified refugees in the camps, or in urban areas and I now strongly reject the notion that says only selected few can change the world. I am currently based in Bosaso ...I am giving back what I learnt back to the Society. I believe I am making a whole lot of difference and touching lives. You made me to see the road and it will be shame on me not to complete it. I will take it as challenge, do my best and share with others."*

Students from **South Sudan** are mostly studying in Ethiopia (46) and Uganda (84). More limited numbers are found in Kenya and other African countries, which makes a total of 139 refugees. In Ethiopia, most of them returned to South Sudan upon graduation, thus leaving the camps where they grew up. They easily found jobs or started their own company.

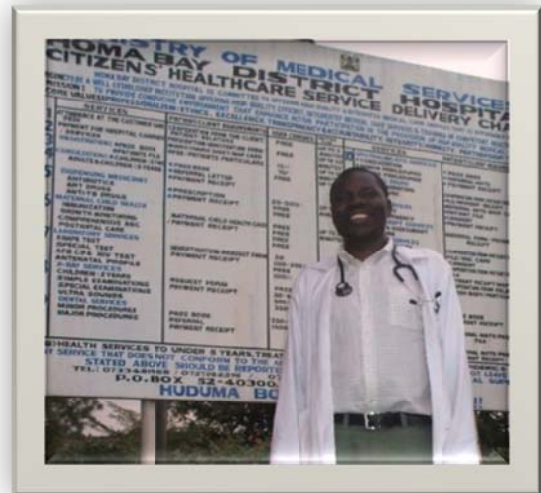
UNHCR's partner Windle Trust in Uganda reports that over the years, more than 150 Sudanese have found employment in South Sudan. Some are employed in health as doctors and nurses, in veterinary medicine, or in road construction as engineers. Also, many are now employed in education as secondary school teachers, lecturers at universities, educational NGOs, or with the South Sudan Ministry of Education.

It remains difficult to keep track of these students, as they are not in contact with UNHCR after their return. In this new country, where needs for qualified professionals remain high, they quickly develop professionally, as they often display the necessary flexibility to take opportunities as they arise.

Dr. Koma is currently interning at Homa Bay district hospital which is in Nyanza, near Kisumu city in the Western part of Kenya.

With the support of a DAFI scholarship, he successfully completed his undergraduate course in Medicine and Surgery at the Moi University School of Medicine in 2010.

He also undertook his community based attachment at Kapenguria District hospital in Western Kenya between April and August 2009. Koma is keen to repatriate to South Sudan and participate in the health sector in the young country.



The fourth largest group of DAFI students is from **Burundi**, with 126 students in 13 countries. 53 are supported in Burundi, in the framework of the DAFI for Return Programme, which was initiated in 2008 to support reintegration after exile in Tanzania since 1972. The first graduates will receive their diplomas in 2013. They study in a bilingual university which has facilitated their reintegration, as they grew up speaking English and Swahili. The students are living on the university campus, which has further strengthened their social life upon return. They have also found professional internships with private and public companies with ease. The number of returnees has decreased in 2010 and 2011, but these students are supporting UNHCR's partner, Refugee Education Trust (RET), to share their experiences and inspire other young students who recently repatriated. Many highlighted these initiatives led by RET, which took them to different parts of the country as a way to discover and get to know their country better.

104 students from **Rwanda** study in 12 countries in Africa. This includes 27 in Zambia and 27 in Uganda. Other Rwandan students received scholarships in Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Senegal, and Benin. In 2011, the Government of Uganda pledged to facilitate the local integration of some Rwandan refugees. Many have also found jobs successfully in Zambia, despite the difficulty in receiving work permits.

The number of **Eritrean refugees**, who were mostly studying in Ethiopia, will continue to decrease, as a result of the Ethiopian government's decision to facilitate access to national universities by providing scholarships for them. 26 were still studying in Ethiopia in 2011, and 84 in Sudan, where the possibility to find employment is still very constrained; however, it remains a key incentive for refugee children to continue their education in secondary school.

Overall, **Southern Africa** is host to 144,000 refugees. 169 students from 11 nationalities benefit from the DAFI programme in 6 countries. With the exception of South Africa, most refugees live in settlements or camps, with strict encampment policies enforced in Botswana

and Zimbabwe. Due to lack of livelihood and economic opportunities in the camps, parents cannot afford to send their children on to higher education. In Mozambique and Namibia, refugees also reside mainly in camps or settlements, but are allowed some freedom of movement in order to work. In Zambia, refugees reside in settlements, where they are de facto locally integrated. A few students managed to obtain work permits, especially in areas which are in demand, but the fees of permits have increased, making it more difficult to find employment. For Angolan refugees trying to repatriate or locally integrate, tertiary education remains a solid asset to facilitate a smooth transition to durable solutions. In Namibia, one refugee student with excellent academic credentials has been offered a partial sponsorship by a private bank. This external support complemented the 20 scholarships offered under DAFI.

The average cost of scholarships has sharply increased in Southern Africa. This is due to high inflation rates and the loss in exchange rates, particularly in Botswana and Namibia. It is to be noted though that in Namibia, refugees are registered in the university under the same conditions as nationals, and in Botswana, refugees continue to be exempted from paying the foreign levy.

A small programme has been opened in **Mozambique**, which hosts 10,000 refugees and asylum-seekers. Four students from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda benefitted from this new programme. The Government has provided agricultural land and allows the refugees freedom of movement and the right to work, enabling UNHCR to provide refugees with support in these areas. In line with this approach, the DAFI scholarship will help students to compete equally in the job market and facilitate their local integration.

In **West Africa**, Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal continue to host refugees from diverse backgrounds. In Senegal, the transfer of refugee students from neighbouring countries continues to yield positive results, despite a competitive job market. Ghana continues to be a very dynamic programme, thanks to the 83 students, mostly from Liberia, who study in 5 institutions, which have granted national fee-paying status to DAFI students. The DAFI Club in Ghana is extremely active, organizing talk shows to encourage younger students to continue their education, and annual seminars to boost academic skills and job preparedness. These initiatives are made possible thanks to the support of former DAFI graduates.

The success of former students inspires other refugees. Thomas Gborkie, a former DAFI student, has recently been appointed as Deputy Minister for Research and Extension at the Ministry of Agriculture in Liberia. Six other previous DAFI students have been employed in various ministries in Liberia such as Ministries of State, Finance and Gender Affairs. These and other success stories motivate beneficiaries, particularly Liberians, to go back to their countries of origin.

In **Nigeria**, UNHCR country operations were seriously disrupted by the bombing of the UN House in Abuja in August 2011, which left 23 people dead and over 120 injured. 12 students from Liberia are nevertheless finishing their studies.

The application of the 'ceased circumstances' cessation clauses for Angolan, Liberian, and Rwandan (pre-1999) refugees, announced in 2011, has been designed in each case as part of a comprehensive solutions strategy. Students falling under these cessation clauses will continue to be supported until they graduate, with an aim to facilitate local integration or repatriation. Students who will keep their refugee status following the exemption process will still be able to apply for DAFI scholarships in their countries of asylum.

## 2.2. MENA (Middle East and North Africa)

Last year, the humanitarian situation of displaced Iraqis continued to pose a heavy burden on host governments. Recent developments in the Middle East have made the task of protecting and assisting refugees much more challenging.

Country of Study	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students	Budget (USD)	Average Scholarship Cost (USD)
<i>Algeria</i>	13	11	24	27,982	1,165.92
<i>Egypt</i>	4	6	10	31,290	3,129.00
<i>Jordan</i>	18	21	39	268,955	6,896.28
<i>Mauritania</i>	17	8	25	76,291	3,051.64
<i>Syria</i>	7	18	25	20,608	824.32
<i>Yemen</i>	48	32	80	148,350	1,854.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>573,476</b>	<b>2,825.00</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	



Jordan: DAFI students take German classes at the Goethe institute in Amman



In **Jordan**, 39 Iraqi students continue to succeed with excellent academic results. Students express their appreciation for a very active programme, which opens doors for them. The programme also facilitates their participation in several high-level academic and scientific events, including the 4th Open Arab Robotics Championship. 26 students were enrolled in the German Jordan University, and 7 students went to study in Germany for their 4th year in 2011-2012, joining the 10 other scholars already benefitting from this academic exchange.

The demand for higher education remains high in Jordan, as described in a Women's Refugee Commission report:

The Iraqi population is highly educated, with many arriving in Jordan with university and advanced degrees. Thirty five percent of Iraqis registered with UNHCR have a university or post-graduate degree. Young women and men who have completed secondary school either in Iraq or Jordan almost universally voiced the desire to go on to university and continue their studies. However, higher education is more expensive for non-Jordanians and the costs are insurmountable for many Iraqis. (...)The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) program, funded by the German government and administered by UNHCR through a cooperative agreement with Questscope, provides 55 scholarships for Iraqis who wish to study a nonmedical science discipline in Jordan. While this has been an important opportunity for some Iraqis, the number of scholarships available does not meet the demand and the selection criteria are too narrow for many potential applicants. Meanwhile, according to some international agencies, the lack of opportunity to pursue higher education has negatively impacted secondary school enrolment as some Iraqis view secondary school as a dead-end and do not see the value in attending.

Women's Refugee Commission (2009). Living in Limbo: Iraqi Young Women and Men in Jordan. New York: Women's Refugee Commission.  
([http://womensrefugeecommission.org/images/stories/Jordan\\_youth\\_FINAL\\_01\\_2010.pdf](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/images/stories/Jordan_youth_FINAL_01_2010.pdf))

In **Syria**, the DAFI programme which benefitted 25 students from 6 nationalities was terminated at the end of June 2011, as funding was received locally from the Italian Government to cover the cost of the programme, building on the successful approach pioneered by the DAFI programme.

Somali refugee students in **Yemen** enrol in a variety of fields ranging from medical, architecture, engineering, psychology, social work, public information, and law. The number of female students decreased slightly in 2011, with 28 female scholars. Aden University has agreed to charge refugees 50% of the tuition fees charged to non-Yemeni students. In addition to 79 refugees from Somalia, 1 student from Ethiopia is studying in Yemen.

10 students from various nationalities benefitted from DAFI scholarships in **Egypt**. For non-nationals, education in public facilities in Egypt is restricted to particular nationalities

(including Sudanese). This restriction entitles beneficiaries of scholarships by UNHCR in Cairo to enrol in governmental schools under the same conditions as Egyptian students; however, persons of concern to UNHCR of other nationalities, including Iraqis, Somalis, Ethiopians, and Eritreans are unable to access public schools or universities, and have to enrol in more expensive private schools or universities which many cannot afford. This perpetuates their socially and economically difficult circumstances. Additionally, the socio-economic conditions faced by refugees have been exacerbated in the aftermath of the political turmoil experienced in Egypt.

**Algeria** and **Mauritania** are two other countries from the MENA region running DAFI programmes for 24 and 25 students, respectively. The living conditions of returnees in Mauritania are difficult and the scholarships have played a significant role by alleviating the burden of education costs on the families. 10 returnees from Mauritania graduated in 2011 and 6 of them are continuing their studies in Europe. In Algeria, refugees from Western Sahara from the camps around Tindouf were also supported with extra-classes in French to increase their academic performance. Saharawi Authorities insist that tertiary education is one of the most significant challenges for the Sahrawi high school graduates. More than 260 students every year graduate from Algerian secondary schools, with hundreds more studying abroad because of the lack of local opportunities.

### **2.3. Asia and the Pacific**

In the Asia and Pacific region, the total number of refugees, including people in a refugee-like situation, was estimated at 3.6 million at the end of 2011, a decrease of 10 per cent during the year. This was largely due to revised estimates of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. With close to 2.7 million refugees in 79 countries, Afghans constitute the main refugee population, with 95 per cent of them located in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In line with this global trend, students from Afghanistan represent almost 20% of all DAFI scholars. They are studying in nine countries, mostly Iran and Pakistan. It is worth noting that 10% of all DAFI scholars are Afghan women.

In 2011, over 68,200 refugees repatriated voluntarily to Afghanistan under the auspices of UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme: some 49,200 from Pakistan, some 18,900 from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and 100 from other countries.

Country of Study	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students	Budget (USD)	Average Scholarship Cost(USD)
India	7	14	21	24,558	1,169.43
Iran	80	141	221	166,709	754.34
Kyrgyzstan	10	13	23	23,564	1,024.52
Pakistan	50	38	88	77,629	882.15
Papua New Guinea	1	1	2	9,046	4,523.00
Tajikistan	7	8	15	28,418	1,894.53
Total	155	215	370	329,924	891.69
%	42%	58%	21%	7%	

Some DAFI students found jobs in **Afghanistan** and continue to help their families and siblings in Pakistan. However, some areas of Afghanistan are not conducive for return. The same scenario is witnessed in **Iran**, where qualified refugees are more likely to return to Afghanistan. UNHCR continued to improve access to services for registered refugees during their stay in the Islamic Republic of Iran, while searching for durable solutions. Considerable investments were made in the interrelated sectors of health, education and livelihoods. In Iran, refugee students are requested to obtain passports and student visas. Young Afghans are eager to continue their studies at the highest level. 500 hundred applications were received in Iran, and more than 1,500 refugees reportedly approached UNHCR's offices in Pakistan requesting information on scholarships.

In New Delhi, **India's** capital, the DAFI programme remains a crucial incentive to help Afghan refugees build their skills and find employment, despite the competitive job market. For refugees from Myanmar, access to university is key to promote continued access to education for younger students. Recent changes in the conditions of access to employment proposed by the government of India will encourage more students to apply for higher education and to gain meaningful livelihoods. Community leaders were also invited to refer students for DAFI scholarships, which helped UNHCR's partner in establishing better coordination with them. Their support is important for students, especially Afghan women, to continue studying despite the practice of early marriage.

Only two students were still supported in **Papua New Guinea**, where UNHCR is planning to close the office in 2012.

Prospects for local integration were not available for most refugees in Central Asia. Opportunities for gainful employment and self-reliance were scarce. However, in **Kyrgyzstan** and **Tajikistan**, the programme yielded excellent results, as refugees found employment upon graduation. The main beneficiaries were refugees from Afghanistan (32 students). In the region, access to higher education remains constrained by high cost of fees.

Ameneh applied for a DAFI scholarship after finishing high school in Qom, Iran. She is now in the third year of a four-year BA law course. "We use the money to cover my tuition costs. Without it, I would not be able to attend university and would just be sitting at home doing housework," said Ameneh, who lives with her family.

She does plan to get married – after graduating – but has no desire to become a stay-at-home wife, which is the tradition for most women in conservative Afghanistan.

She and her fiancé also plan to eventually live in Afghanistan and help rebuild the country that her parents fled from after the 1979 Soviet invasion. "He hopes to continue with postgraduate studies in physiotherapy and then return to our country, where there is a big need for this profession," Ameneh explained, before adding: "I too would like to help, but as a woman my plans are dependent on his."



## 2.4. Europe

Country of Study	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students	Budget (USD)	Average Scholarship Costs (USD)
Armenia	6	3	9	22,095	2,455.00
Azerbaijan	7	0	7	32,922	4,703.14
Georgia	9	10	19	59,600	3,136.84
Russia	7	11	18	28,100	1,561.11
Ukraine	6	17	23	82,616	3,592.00
Total	35	41	76	225,333	2,964.91
%	46%	54%	4%	4%	

The Governments of **Belarus**, the **Republic of Moldova** and **Ukraine** have supported the principle of the local integration of refugees, but implementation has varied. Employment remained a challenge, but language classes, vocational training, business grants and housing assistance have helped a number of refugees to find better jobs. In line with this approach, the DAFI programme recently opened in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus and continued to support 23 students, mostly from Afghanistan.

In **Russia**, the DAFI programme remains successful, and a clear path towards employment. The housing and residence registration that comes with student status are an important temporary protection mechanism for DAFI students in the Russian Federation. 18 students

are enrolled in different cities throughout the country and most of them are young Afghan women.

In **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan**, DAFI is part of UNHCR's efforts to support local integration of refugees. UNHCR continues to advocate for reduced fees in Armenia, where refugees are charged the same high fees as foreign students which severely hampers their ability to access higher education.

UNHCR is progressively phasing down the DAFI Programme in **Georgia**, following the current on-going naturalization process of Chechen refugees. The 17 remaining students enrolled in the programme will be assisted until they graduate in 2014. Reports from past scholars indicate they have successfully integrated and found jobs.

In Russia, Lemma was two when she and her entire family came from Afghanistan to Moscow. All family members – parents, a sister and two brothers – have refugee status in Russia. Now 21, she works as a nurse in the clinic run by UNHCR's partner organization that provides medical services to refugees and asylum-seekers.

*"I received my education as a medical nurse through the DAFI scholarship and now work in my specialty. However, I continue with my studies, this time by correspondence as a law student. I need legal knowledge, as I help translate when courts consider appeals from my compatriots to refusals from migration services about granting asylum."*



## 2.5. America

In Latin America, with a few exceptions, the local integration of refugees continues to face constraints. Depressed and discriminatory labour markets hinder economic integration. In Panama and Ecuador, UNHCR seeks to develop self-reliance and livelihood strategies, but also support host communities.

Country of Study	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students	Budget (USD)	Average Scholarship Cost (USD)
Ecuador	15	20	35	55,099	1,574.26
Panama	12	6	18	44,333	2,462.94
Total	27	26	53	99,432	1,876.08
%	51%	49%	3%	2%	

53 students mostly from Colombia were supported in 2011. In both countries, partnerships were forged with local institutions or other education partners to facilitate holistic support to

the students, support local activities amongst students and with their communities, and create linkages with the job markets.



Ecuador: Antonio Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with DAFI students in Quito, on the occasion of a festival for refugees

### 3. Key outcomes

#### 3.1. Academic performance remains satisfactory, and refugees build their leadership skills

**DAFI students continue to succeed.** In 2011, 347 students graduated (20%), 970 students were promoted to the next level, 7 students failed their exams and 40 are still waiting for their results because of strikes in universities (Benin, Uganda and Ghana). Several factors can explain these good results. DAFI selection procedures continue to be strictly implemented to identify the best students in the country where the programme is implemented. Besides, admission to university is often governed by strict criteria decided by local institutions, thus restricting access to the best students. In many countries like Iran or Ethiopia, secondary school students have to compete at the national level to enter universities.

For many, this already means they overcame the challenges of studying in their second or sometimes even third language. In Algeria, Mauritania and Jordan, additional language classes were sponsored to better support students. Difficulties to adapt to new environments and issues related to language remain the two main complications faced by DAFI students. In two instances, some students had been transferred to study in a third country in the past (Southern Chad, Djibouti). There have been no new enrolments of students for transfer at this stage, and UNHCR will identify lessons learnt from these cases to assess the conditions of success of this type of support.

The literacy environment to which students are exposed is important to facilitate academic preparedness. In this regard, the Education unit in Geneva will continue to closely monitor the conditions of transition from secondary schools to universities, and continues to encourage mentoring programmes and strategic approaches to improve the quality of primary and secondary education in countries where the DAFI programme is implemented.

Every year, refugee students are distinguished, graduate with honours, receive scholarships based on academic merit from government institutions, and are selected to study abroad through competitive processes. This year, ten countries specifically reported on students' academic achievements, ie. Russia, Senegal, Tanzania, Yemen, Kyrgyzstan, Ghana, Azerbaijan, Botswana, Burundi and Uganda. In Mauritania, Jordan and Uganda, students were selected to study in universities in Europe, thus participating in the global trend of cross-border education.

Upon graduation, refugee youth have a strong sense of achievement and are often highly regarded in their communities. They can contribute with their leadership skills and become self-confident ambassadors advocating for education and community development in their society.

Marko is from South Sudan. He was 9 years old when he became a child soldier during the civil war. He was seriously injured in 1991, aged 18, during an air bombardment near the Ethiopian border. He was airlifted to Nairobi by the Red Cross, and spent two and a half years in hospital. He had extensive injuries to his left hand, stomach and leg. An American doctor successfully operated on Marko's leg, saving it from amputation. Once Marko had regained health, the American doctor supported him to attend to school in the refugee camp in Kenya where he lived.

After secondary school, Marko received a DAFI scholarship. He graduated with a degree in Animal Health Management in Preventive veterinary medicine in 2008 and promised himself that he would spend the rest of his life helping others. He now works with an NGO in South Sudan, where he was in charge of a Goat Farming project, managing the micro-finance enterprise. The objective is to improve the livelihoods of the people in South Sudan. As a result, the surrounding community can access nutritious goats' milk as well and boost their economic status.



In the case studies of former students in Kenya, many graduates from Somalia spontaneously mention the ability to better comprehend the politics and current affairs in their homeland as one of the benefits of higher education, along with exposure to other students and professors who were sometimes trained abroad. These elements also confirm the added value of the specific skills gained at the academic level, which allow the graduates to apply for jobs.

A DAFI student, returnee from Tanzania to Burundi, was selected to attend the 13th Conference of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, held in Kampala, in July 2011, thanks to the support of UNHCR. He reports that he learned a lot on refugee issues from meeting with government officials, researchers and experts. But he also questioned the fact that despite good ideas and proposals, he found little commitment and concrete actions to implement recommendations proposed by scholars.

As tomorrow's leaders, refugees today build their critical analysis skills and leadership competencies thanks to the DAFI programme.

### **3.2. Gender parity slightly improved, but remains challenging**

**Women and girls represent 48% of refugees, but only 42% of DAFI students are female, with major geographical variations.** As they face additional barriers linked to traditional values and roles as well as to uneven access to secondary education, young women are particularly underrepresented in tertiary education, and specific measures



continue to be taken to address gender imbalance, such as the privileged consideration of female applicants, and accepting lower grades of young women applying for university scholarships.

Refugee women and girls, students and parents expressed their frustration at the lack of opportunities to pursue secondary or tertiary education, and at girls dropping out of school early. “We need those women that are educated to teach the women who don’t know, who are not educated.” (source: UNHCR (2011), *Survivors, Protectors, Providers: Refugee Women speak out.*)

In Africa, the percentage of female students rose from 34% in 2010 to 36%. Gender parity was reached in Namibia and Mozambique, and the number of female students was actually higher than that of male students in Sudan, South Africa and Zimbabwe. In Sudan, specific group discussions with female students helped to gather a high number of applications, which was then coupled with affirmative action to increase the number of female students. When female enrolment is low, it is often due to a bottleneck in secondary education, as in Eritrea where only 14% of female students are enrolled in secondary school, or in Tanzania, with 26% of female students in secondary schools in urban areas<sup>5</sup>. Sensitization of refugee leaders and parents by educated women and men acting as role models has proven helpful in Burundi and Iran.

The story of Caroline, below, epitomizes the difficulties faced by many young women to pursue their academic studies.

Caroline, 25 years old, is a Sudanese student pursuing a BA in Procurement and Logistics, at Nkumba University in Kampala, Uganda. Caroline is now in the final semester of her degree course.

In 2008 before she was awarded a scholarship, her father wanted to force her marry, with the aim of getting her bride wealth before he died. She ran away from her family in Kyangwali settlement to Kiryandongo settlement to live with her brother until UNHCR and its government counterpart intervened. The DAFI scholarship came as a blessing to help her realize her potential. Anyiri was the Chairperson of DAFI club in Nkumba University in 2010.

While scholarships and distance learning programmes are possible ways to support access to higher education, policies supporting female participation through positive discrimination are not sufficient to address the gaps. Young women often explain they have low self-esteem, and many think along traditional lines, equating higher education with men. There is still a long way to go to give equal educational chances to girls and young women, and thus leverage the multiplier effect of higher education. Ensuring that women are considered on a par with their male counterparts in attaining higher education does not mean discriminating against male students. The specific needs of male students should not be overlooked either, as they may be expected to support their families instead of continuing their education. A fine balance must be found by working with students and their families, and this needs to be adapted to each context.

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<sup>5</sup> UNHCR Education Fact Sheets 2011

### 3.3. DAFI students find durable solutions and contribute to their communities

In 2011 an estimated 532,000 refugees were able to return home voluntarily, the highest number since 2008, but still the third lowest recorded of the past decade. Despite all efforts, the prevailing situation in a number of countries has continued to prevent the return of millions of refugees. Higher level qualification is certainly a factor that facilitates repatriation.

As previously mentioned, refugees from Somalia often leave the camps where they were employed as NGO workers to go back to Somalia. Nevertheless, return is sometimes not possible, or difficult. This can be the case in particular in some parts of Somalia and Afghanistan.

Halima, a Somali refugee who studied in Kenya, worked in Somalia for 6 months in 2010 with a NGO. The men she was supervising in her team could not accept to be led by a woman. She was soon redeployed to the NGO's Nairobi office. She still hopes that one day an opportunity will come for her to return to Somalia.

Other long-term success stories include refugees from Liberia studying in Ghana who successfully returned home. Every year, former refugees in Ghana participate in, and facilitate, workshops on leadership skills for DAFI students, building on their knowledge and experience.

As highlighted in the regional overviews, refugees often find jobs and integrate locally *de facto*. Documentation issues sometimes arise and UNHCR must ensure that protection issues are addressed by advocating for refugees to receive local work permits and ensuring that refugee status is maintained.

Even when return is not yet possible, or when refugees have no right to work and face strong competition on the job market, qualified refugees often identify creative solutions to become self-reliant and contribute to their communities.

Refugees in Botswana are not allowed to work unless they have special skills. UNHCR together with DAFI scholars is continuing to advocate with the Government to be flexible by allowing refugees to reside outside the camp and to apply and compete for jobs just like nationals. At the moment there is no graduate with a permanent job but four are doing internships with UNHCR partners, namely the Botswana Red Cross Society, the Centre for Human Rights, Skillshare International and Kenyan Airways. These initiatives, aiming at changing the image of refugees in the country, are opening more doors for DAFI graduates.

In parallel, refugee students found innovative ways to market their skills to an expanded market. The Give Back Consultancy or GBC, formed by DAFI scholars, aims to offer free language interpretation, Information Technology, academic coaching and other services to the Botswana people for free. UNHCR is working with the students to finalize this concept and engage in further initiatives.

DAFI students, as per the objective of the programme, also support the development of their communities. Many students have engaged in remarkable initiatives in collaboration with UNHCR DAFI focal points and partners in the 39 UNHCR country operations. A review of some of these inspiring ideas has been compiled and shared with the members of the global DAFI community. Initiatives include participation in sensitization campaigns on health, mentoring younger students, offering free courses to adults and children and advocating for refugee rights and peaceful co-existence, including in the media in countries like Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

In Kyrgyzstan, campaigns were held through Forum Theatre (short interactive theatre performances), where adolescent problems such as inter-ethnic conflicts, intolerance and violence were covered. Participants in the campaigns, mostly high school students, expressed a sincere interest in the issues and took an active part in performances and following discussions. The campaigns were also attended by representatives of a local law enforcement body that deals with juvenile cases.

DAFI students, by building their self-reliance and getting involved in their communities, bring meaningful contributions to the development process. Regional linkages are now being built, following a pilot workshop held in 2009 in Tanzania.

In June 2011, 60 DAFI delegates from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya convened at a workshop in Nairobi to discuss the involvement of refugee scholars in leadership initiatives in Africa. The workshop took place in Kenya and was hosted by Kenyatta University. The workshop was organised by a former DAFI student who now runs his own business in Germany and who engaged a number of university professors to contribute to the workshop.

Participants used the opportunity to develop a joint programme on communication and development issues, to be implemented with the support of the DAFI clubs.



Panama: DAFI workshop topics included prevention of HIV/AIDS and gender based violence

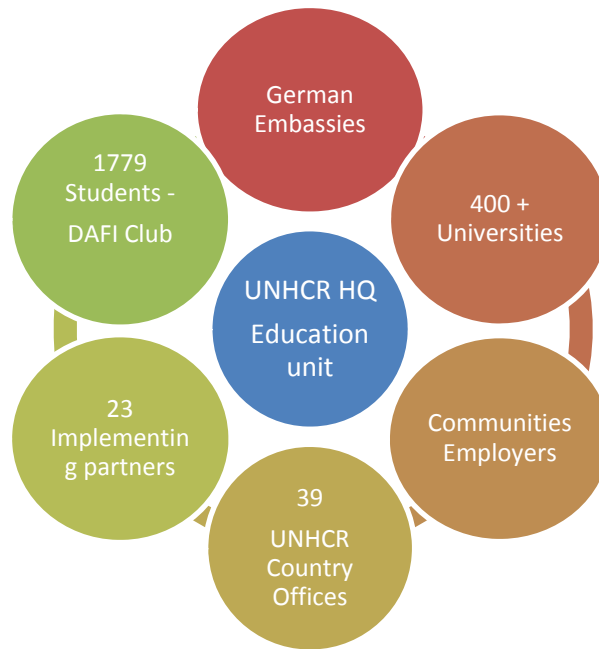
## **4. DAFI management and governance**

### **4.1. The way it works**

The DAFI Scholarship programme is embedded in the Division of International Protection (DIP) at UNHCR Headquarters. Global programming and policy functions are centrally managed by two staff members within the Education Unit. Programming functions include operational assessment and planning, annual detail budget allocation and financial monitoring for each country operation. Monitoring of programme implementation, technical support and strategic and policy advice are crucial for the smooth running of the programme, in ensuring quality and optimizing performance in the field. Field missions are an integral part and an indispensable monitoring and support tool ensuring that programme quality is maintained at a high level. In 2011, the Education Officer for tertiary education undertook three missions, visiting Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya and the DRC.

Country projects are implemented by UNHCR and its partners in countries of asylum and in countries of return. Some 60% of DAFI projects are implemented by partner agencies while 40% are implemented directly by UNHCR Field Offices. The decision on whether to engage an implementing partner is made by respective field offices depending on their overall implementation capacity and the size of the DAFI country operation.

Each operation running a DAFI programme nominates a DAFI Focal Person amongst UNHCR staff. These are staff working in the country programme with extensive knowledge in education programming and community services. They collaborate with implementing partners to ensure regular monitoring, support to students and visits to academic institutions. They communicate with and report to the Education Officer in charge of the programme at Headquarters.



DAFI country projects are part of the UNHCR annual budget and programming cycle from January to December. Implementation in UNHCR country offices is guided by the DAFI Policy and Guidelines (4th edition, October 2009) which describe in detail the selection process of students, admission to university and payment of fees, scholarship entitlements, monitoring of student performance and reporting requirements. Allocation of new scholarships is systematically discussed with the country offices and the regional Bureaux at UNHCR Headquarters, granting new scholarship slots according to needs, implementation capacity and potential for durable solutions.

#### 4.2. Data Collection

In 2010, data generation and analysis relied on the beta version of an ACCESS-based database<sup>6</sup> managed in Headquarters. The management of annual statistical data is supported by a central database, developed by the Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST) on the basis of the ACCESS programme and in close collaboration with the Education Officer in Headquarters. The database includes all relevant information on individual students since 2007, and records student biographical data, information on their chosen field of study and degree, university of enrolment, start and expected end dates, academic progress reports and students' contact details.

The database helps enhance the institutional memory of the DAFI programme and facilitates easy access to specific information. The ACCESS programme allows for information to be sorted according to selected indicators, for example the graduation year, programme of study, country of origin, or a combination of selected variables and indicators. This information facilitates annual and biennial budget planning for on-going students who continue to be supported under DAFI. The database has to be updated once a year, with

<sup>6</sup> Microsoft Office Access is a relational database management system from Microsoft that combines the relational Microsoft Jet Database Engine with a graphical user interface and software-development tools.

data collected and entered at the field level for each country. The quality of the data is ensured by the close cooperation of the field offices.

Limitations in data quality should be kept in mind when comparing more recent data with information collected prior to 2007. The 2011 data includes all refugee students who have benefited from DAFI sponsorship at any time from 1 January to 31 December 2011. The number of students sponsored in 2011 is 1,779 and it includes on-going students, graduates, drop-outs and resettled students within the 2011 budget/academic year.

During field missions, specific case studies and students' personal testimonies are collected and analysed. Country offices are also asked to report on academic achievements, perspective of graduates and students' networks and initiatives in their annual report.

### **4.3. Visibility**

The funding by the German Government is mentioned in official agreements signed for the implementation of the DAFI Programme, ie. scholarship agreements with the students, agreements with universities, sub-agreements signed between UNHCR and its partners, as well as in the call for new scholarships.

Leaflets and brochures have been disseminated at the global level, and some countries also customized their own brochure to inform the students, as in Jordan and South Africa. A DAFI logo, using the colours of the German flag, has been developed and is used on all documents (partners' reports, agreements, guidelines, certificates etc...). Stories are regularly published on UNHCR's websites and press releases are issued in some countries on the occasion of graduation ceremonies and DAFI clubs activities. Students have also launched weblogs in Kenya, Tanzania and Iran.

In the majority of countries, German Embassies participate in the selection process and/or in graduation ceremonies. The advice of German Embassy counsellors is highly valued and close relationships have been forged over time.

Using the opportunity of the 20th Anniversary, the Education unit has developed case studies, posters, leaflets, and videos. These are being shared extensively with the field to boost the visibility of the programme. A facebook album is also being put online.



Yemen: DAFI graduates with a representative of the German embassy and a UNHCR officer



Kyrgyzstan: Graduation ceremony with the German Ambassador

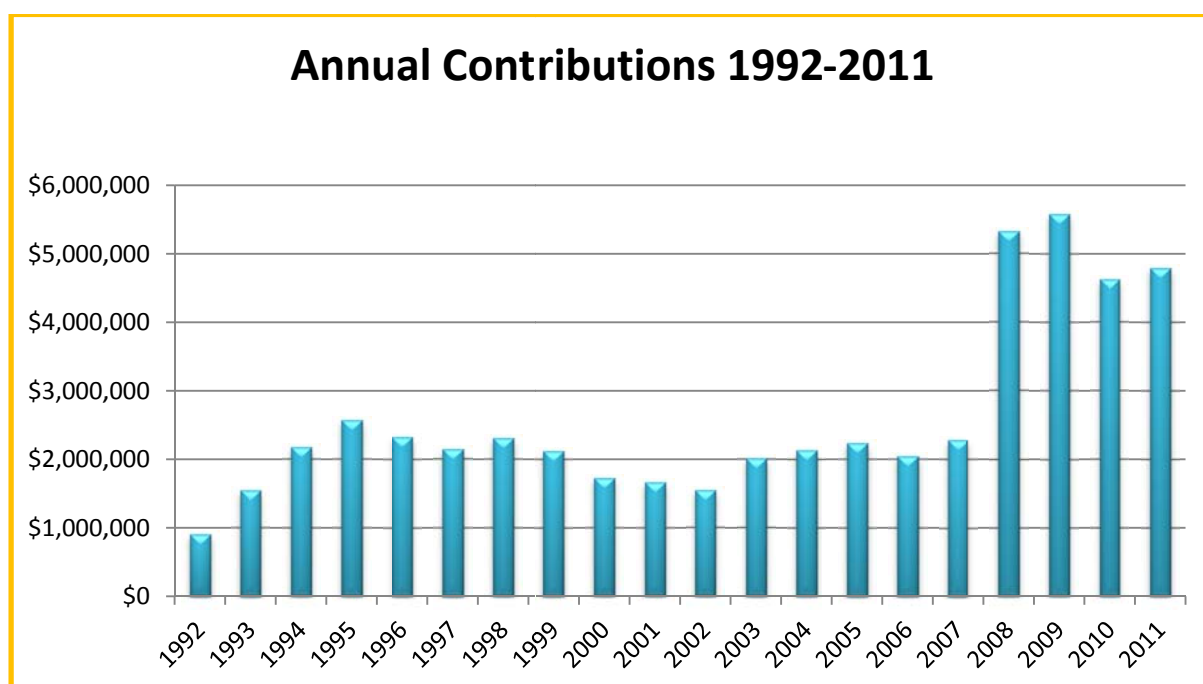


Tajikistan: Ceremony with representatives from the German Embassy and DAFI students



#### 4.4. Financial statement

<i>Contribution from the Federal Republic of Germany 2011</i>	EUR	3,401,000
<i>Equivalent in</i>	USD	4,790,141
<i>Carry over from 2010</i>	USD	-
<i>Total funds available from the Federal Republic of Germany</i>	USD	4,790,141
<i>Total Operational Budget</i>	USD	4,475,942
<i>Total Operational Expenditures</i>	USD	4,463,091
<i>HQ Administrative and Staff Costs</i>	USD	314,199
<i>Total Expenditures as of 31/12/2011 (Period 01/01/ - 31/12/11)</i>	USD	4,777,289



**DAFI 2011 Annual Report : Financial Statement (2000-2011)**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>CARRY-OVER</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>OTHER INCOME*</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>HQ ADMIN COSTS</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>SHORTFALL/SURPLUS</b>	<b>IMPL. RATE</b>
2000	75,579	1,722,903	92,112	1,890,594	1,929,265	174,258	2,103,523	-212,929	111%
2001	-	1,665,136	29,903	1,695,039	1,984,953	193,066	2,178,019	-482,980	128%
2002	-	1,545,769	210,228	1,755,997	1,572,221	199,642	1,772,063	-16,066	101%
2003	-	2,142,949	104,829	2,247,778	1,846,565	227,529	2,074,094	173,684	92%
2004	173,684	2,134,870	50,913	2,359,467	2,067,205	239,043	2,306,248	53,219	98%
2005	53,219	2,233,653	70,146	2,357,017	2,055,754	249,878	2,305,632	51,386	98%
2006	51,386	2,043,966	44,215	2,139,568	2,028,902	201,552	2,230,454	-90,886	104%
2007	-	2,280,143	-	2,280,143	2,089,372	237,228	2,326,600	-46,457	102%
2008	-	5,322,157	-	5,322,157	3,979,548.77	265,700	4,245,249	1,076,907	80%
2009	1,076,997	5,580,830	-	6,657,827	5,363,456	529,661	5,893,117	764,710	88%
2010	764,710	4,619,970	66,934	5,451,614	5,447,433	299,360	5,746,793	-295,179	105%
2011		4,790,141	133,333	4,923,474	4,463,091	314,199	4,777,289	146,184	97%

\*Including unspent balances from previous year, reconciliation and any other income or additional funding in 2010

## Conclusion and perspectives for 2012

2011 was marked by the increased number of graduates and the excellent performance of students. Inspirational experiences of individual and collective achievements shared by country offices and partners, combined with a renewed commitment by UNHCR to ensure quality education for refugees, have created additional momentum to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the DAFI programme in 2012.

Another clear asset of the programme is the students' involvement in community work, voluntary support to younger students or advocacy on refugee issues. These initiatives must be more systematically collected and shared amongst UNHCR staff, partners and DAFI students.

Achieving gender parity remains a challenge. Testimonies of women students help to better identify the factors which facilitate their access to higher education, such as family support and approval of community leaders. However, UNHCR also needs to look more carefully at integrated approaches within the education continuum, linking secondary and tertiary education, as well as initiatives to enhance the quality of primary education. These efforts should help to increase refugees learning outcomes and retention of girls in schools, thus supporting in the longer run a smoother transition to higher education.

Despite some reports of strikes in African countries, access to local, public universities should remain the preferred choice whenever possible and private universities should be an option only when places cannot be secured at the public universities. Fees are less expensive in public institutions. Furthermore, strong partnerships can be forged to widen access to higher education for refugees, by negotiating reduced fees, reserved seats for refugees and joint training initiatives between UNHCR and public institutions. This is currently the case in Egypt or Pakistan for instance. Bilateral donors and multilateral institutions may also implement development programmes to strengthen higher education systems. UNHCR and refugee students will thus benefit from these opportunities created by the international community to support higher education and capacity building initiatives.

Continuing support for students in countries currently participating in the DAFI programme remains the priority for 2012. UNHCR is willing to increase further the number of scholarships, despite an increase in the cost of scholarship fees in many countries. This will be possible thanks to thorough budget review, field monitoring and implementing partners with a strong performance record.

The Education Unit at Headquarters has received requests for support in Togo, Chad, South Sudan, Kuwait and Malaysia, that might be further assessed in 2012, based on available funding.

UNHCR continues to encourage the creation of DAFI Clubs. The linkages with Livelihoods experts will be strengthened in order to promote DAFI student involvement in career forums, meetings with professionals and entrepreneurs and in developing community work.

Where possible, opportunities will be sought to use DAFI to facilitate access to Distance Learning Programmes. The opening of new education distance learning programme in refugee camps in Kenya, Malawi, and Syria are interesting projects through which refugees can earn a diploma from local or international universities. In developing countries, public universities are striving to offer more opportunities to educate their nationals. Many major public universities

have developed on-line training and frameworks to facilitate cross-border education are now in place. UNHCR and its partners should avail of these opportunities to expand higher education opportunities for refugees. The number of applications received for the DAFI programme, as well as the increasing demand to access on-line degrees, are clear signs that this is an area that merits more focus for the refugee community.

2012 marks the 20th Anniversary of the DAFI programme. A Public Information package including leaflets, posters, talking points and a PowerPoint presentation is being shared with field colleagues to help them to show the positive impact of DAFI and to achieve additional visibility and support for the programme.

An expanded number of stories are being posted on UNHCR websites in French, English and Arabic.

UNHCR Offices are organizing events in the field to commemorate the anniversary and the Education unit is planning a global event during the upcoming Excom in October 2012 to showcase the multiplier effect of the DAFI scholarship programme and to provide more support for higher education.

Building on the pioneering approach enabled by DAFI, UNHCR remains more committed than ever to strategically support tertiary education as a way to empower refugee communities and to contribute to durable solutions.

**“Today I am the role model in my village. I encourage the parents to send their children to school and to be ambitious, for I alone cannot develop our town. People react positively and use my achievements as an example for their children. I have the confidence that a brighter future is ahead of us.”**

**Hokie Yuray, a refugee from Sierra Leone who studied in Liberia**