Evaluation of the UNHCR Tertiary Education Scholarship Programme (DAFI)

Final Evaluation Report
October 2022

UNHCR Evaluation Service

The UNHCR Evaluation Policy confirms the UNHCR commitment to supporting accountability, learning and continual improvement through the systematic examination and analysis of organizational strategies, policies, and programmes. Evaluations are guided by the principles of independence, impartiality, credibility and utility and are undertaken to enhance the organization's performance in addressing the protection, assistance and solution needs of refugees, stateless persons and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

Evaluation Service

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Evaluation information	
Title:	Evaluation of the UNHCR Tertiary Education Scholarship Programme (DAFI)
Time frame:	1992–2021, with a focus on the period 2015–2020
Type:	Decentralized
Geographical focus:	Global, with country case studies in Chad, Ecuador, Jordan, Rwanda, South Africa, Turkey and Uganda
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Executive summary

About the evaluation

The UNHCR commitment to ensuring that refugees have access to higher education began thirty years ago with the inception of the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), funded by the Government of Germany. During this time, the scholarship programme has provided access to higher education to <u>over 21,500 refugee students in more than 55 countries.</u> DAFI is one of the most renowned and long-standing scholarship schemes for refugees in higher education and has been implemented across diverse contexts ranging from least developed countries to upper-middle-income countries through various modalities of delivery. Over its three decades of existence, the DAFI programme has been the subject of research, the components that make up the scholarship programme have evolved and over the past five years the programme has tripled in size. This is the first time, however, that the programme has been independently evaluated. The evaluation was commissioned to improve understanding of the programme's efficacy in delivering higher education scholarships for refugee youth and to learn how the programme could be strengthened to perform better in the future.

The evaluation examined the DAFI programme from a global angle through three online surveys that gathered responses from 1,124 refugees in different countries worldwide, 18 implementing partners and dozens of UNHCR staff from 30 country operations, as well as national perspectives from seven focus countries: Chad, Ecuador, Jordan, Rwanda, South Africa, Turkey and Uganda. Online surveys were complemented by key informant interviews with students, implementing partners and UNHCR staff, as well as a thorough analysis of the databases available at the UNHCR Education Section. During its inception phase, the evaluation defined a list of key evaluation questions and identified mixed methods for tackling them, including outcome harvesting, positive deviance and comparative country case studies. Survey instruments were then piloted and deployed in the field to collect primary data. The main findings are summarized below.

Summary of findings

DAFI maintained <u>high levels of effectiveness in facilitating the completion of undergraduate degrees: the DAFI graduation rate[1] was 84 per cent between 2010 and 2020</u>. Despite its effectiveness, DAFI has not always delivered results equally for girls: the share of female participants remained stable at around 40 per cent over the period 2014–2020. In addition, on average, female refugees participated in fewer DAFI programme activities than male students – such as language or digital skills courses, or internships – even as the programme's male and female dropout rates gradually converged over time. Once admitted to the programme, however, female students showed very similar graduation rates to their male colleagues. The evaluation identified a series of promising practices that hold potential for

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[1] The DAFI graduation rate can be defined as the number of DAFI students who graduated each year divided by the sum of those who were expected to graduate in the same year, net of those refugees who left the programme due to repatriation, resettlement or obtention of a scholarship in a third country. The DAFI graduation rate is an adaptation of the UIS (UNESCO Institute for Statistics) definition: "Number of graduates from first degree programmes (at ISCED 6 and 7) expressed as a percentage of the population of the theoretical graduation age of the most common first degree programme".

replication across countries to narrow the gender gap at each stage of DAFI, from application through to transition to work. The lower tertiary enrolment rate of women is not unique to the DAFI programme. Lower female participation rates are intrinsically linked to the fact that refugee girls are less likely to enrol in and complete secondary school than their male peers, resulting in fewer women who are eligible for tertiary education.

DAFI was found to be highly relevant to the needs of refugees. It significantly contributes to alleviating financial constraints that hinder access to higher education and contributes to skills development. However, not all programme components were found to be equally relevant, indicating the need to continue focusing on timely delivery of scholarship allowances that are large enough to cover the living expenses of its beneficiaries, as a first priority.

Through the student engagement component of the programme, DAFI students frequently contribute to the development of their communities via volunteering activities. Students also reported reasonably high levels of happiness and maintained a relatively positive outlook on life; significantly, this was more common among girls and among students in camps. Some DAFI scholars become role models in their communities.

Barriers to employment faced by DAFI graduates are significant and multifaceted. The average NEET rate for DAFI graduates (i.e. the percentage of DAFI graduates who are not in education, employment or training) is estimated at 50 per cent. While this NEET rate is relatively high (and significantly higher for female graduates than for males), it drops to around 20 per cent for male graduates in Rwanda and Uganda, where the legislation is more favourable to participation in the formal labour market. Similarly, in South Africa the labour market provides more opportunities and DAFI students are more likely to graduate from top-ranked universities that may better prepare them for work. While the conditions that drive lower NEET rates in certain countries may not be common globally, these experiences provide evidence that relatively high levels of transition to work are possible where refugee graduates enjoy the right to work.

The evaluation identified an important indirect effect, namely that awareness of the DAFI programme among refugees in secondary education motivates students to finish secondary school; this "pull" effect is stronger in camps than in host communities and is stronger for girls than for boys.

In terms of programmatic coherence, the evaluation found room for improvement to connect DAFI to UNHCR-led interventions in both secondary and higher education, as well as to other higher education and youth employment programmes. The lack of dedicated in-country technical expertise in higher education in most UNHCR country offices is an obstacle to delivering programmatic coherence and to ensuring that synergies with other programmes in secondary education and youth employment are capitalized upon. Even when DAFI can benefit from support from the UNHCR country operation, the evaluation did not find conclusive evidence that the presence of a DAFI programme alone could drive policy-level changes in refugee inclusion in higher education; strategic advocacy and liaison work is needed to raise awareness and illustrate the macro outcomes that DAFI is facilitating. DAFI focal points and partners have been effective at negotiating reductions in tuition fees with local higher education institutions. Additionally, DAFI has been successfully leveraged by UNHCR in several countries as a strategic entry point for advocacy to lower barriers to higher education for refugees.

The evaluation also found that the main challenge to the financial sustainability of the programme was insufficient diversification of the donor base in the face of increasing demand for scholarships on the ground. While private sector funding to DAFI is increasing via the Aiming Higher campaign, the additional programme income generated is not yet sufficient to meet the increasing demand on the ground: the evaluation confirmed enormous unmet needs among young refugees. Combined with the encouraging results of DAFI in terms of effectiveness, this reveals the large potential of DAFI to absorb additional funding (from private, public, bilateral and multilateral donors) to deliver tangible results in higher education.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Define a minimum package of core components/skills that DAFI students should acquire in each country, according to the context. In order to maintain relevance and to position DAFI as a holistic, best-in-class scholarship, as well as to reduce the variability of the student experience of DAFI, each country operation should define a minimum common package of services to be delivered, based on context-specific factors such as the strength of the implementing partner and the legal framework regulating refugees' access to higher education and labour markets. For example, in a country that guarantees refugees the right to work, DAFI might focus on the provision of language training[2] or IT skills training, whereas in a country in which transition to work is not legally possible, the focus might shift towards, for example, psychosocial support and skills-building through volunteerism.

Recommendation 2

Pilot a scholarship scheme for high-performing refugee girls in their last year of high school who face financial hardship. Given the high incidence of financial constraints and the very low participation of girls in several large operations (Ethiopia, Pakistan, etc.) UNHCR should pilot the provision of "bridging" scholarships to high-performing refugee girls in their last year of high school who face financial hardship. This would not just help to mitigate the financial constraints that typically hinder refugee girls in completing secondary education, but also reinforce the "pull effect" that awareness of DAFI has on the rate of completion of secondary education.

Recommendation 3

Ensure that allowances are paid out to students before the start of the academic year. Allowances should be large enough to guarantee relocation as well as the standards of living described in the Programme and Policy Guideline. The tertiary education team should develop criteria to make sure that financial support under DAFI has comparable purchasing power across countries, and that financial assistance is adjusted in the event of sudden, strong inflation. DAFI partners should work closely with UNHCR to make sure that all agreements are signed well in advance of the academic year and that students understand their reporting duties upon selection, in order to avoid delays. Likewise, both UNHCR focal points and partners should map out bottlenecks to anticipate potential causes of delay.

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[2] DAFI should aim for graduates to have working knowledge of either English or French upon graduation. This could be achieved by engaging more effectively with organizations that can provide language courses at low cost (British Council, Alliance Française, etc.) and/or engaging partners who can guarantee high-quality provision of online language courses.

Recommendation 4

<u>Enable students to access electronic devices and connectivity according to their learning needs</u>. Quality tertiary education in many higher education institutions – whether in low-, middle- or high-income countries – often requires access to the Internet and to quality online learning materials and tools. With most countries still adjusting to a post-COVID context, it remains to be seen to what extent higher education institutions will maintain – or increasingly shift to – blended learning. DAFI students should also be provided with sufficient ICT skills preparation to be poised to succeed in a technology-enhanced learning environment and should achieve a common minimum standard of IT skills by the time they finish their degree.

Recommendation 5

<u>Ensure that students are mentored and guided towards choosing the best available degree</u>. DAFI should leverage the experience and knowledge of in-country implementers to achieve a balance of each of the following objectives:

(a) To maximize refugees' agency in choosing a degree aligned to their aspirations and objectives

(b) To facilitate access to high-quality degrees at the best available higher education institutions

(c) To ensure the relevance of such undergraduate courses vis-à-vis the requirements of the labour markets in which perspective graduates will be competing for jobs.

Recommendation 6

<u>Prepare plans to improve the participation of girls, taking into account the set of good practices identified in this evaluation</u> (Box 1). In parallel, dedicated cross-country discussions among partners should take place annually in the form of virtual workshops at which to share knowledge and experience of how to increase the participation of girls. Partners in countries with high rates of female participation (e.g. Jordan, Mali, Egypt) should mentor country operations that are facing challenges in increasing the participation of girls (e.g. Ethiopia, Pakistan, Kenya) via evidence-informed workshops or webinars. Given the stagnant female participation rate, it seems evident that affirmative action is needed to rapidly achieve more equitable participation of women in the DAFI programme.

Recommendation 7

<u>Advocate with higher education institutions to foster favourable financial conditions for enrolment of the highest possible number of DAFI students</u>. UNHCR should remain engaged with higher education institutions to advocate for increased access to higher education for refugees and to help create the enabling environment necessary in order to maximize DAFI enrolment.

Recommendation 8

<u>Increase awareness of DAFI among secondary school students (particularly girls) in refugee communities</u>, especially via social media, secondary school teachers and grassroots organizations, in order to amplify the "pull effect" of DAFI on the completion of secondary education.

Recommendation 9

<u>Systematically link DAFI with in-country interventions in secondary education and youth employment</u> in order to improve programmatic coherence with DAFI beyond advocacy efforts. Links should be built with UNHCR and non-UNHCR interventions alike.

Recommendation 10

<u>Increase fundraising efforts for DAFI, to ensure its financial sustainability in the medium and long term.</u> In order to enable DAFI to make higher education scholarship opportunities continuously available and be less susceptible to potential changes in donor prioritization or economic conditions, the Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service (DRRM) should target bilateral and multilateral public donors to secure medium- to long-term contribution agreements for DAFI within a more diversified pool of donors. The findings of this evaluation suggest that the impact and efficiency of the programme could be appealing to a range of donor interests.

Recommendation 11

<u>Develop an evaluation strategy, potentially leveraging a longitudinal design, and run an independent evaluation every four or five years.</u> The programme evaluation strategy currently includes continuous programme monitoring of both implementation and expenditure, as well as student performance and participation in programme activities. UNHCR should employ a longitudinal study to further establish and understand the relationship between the scholarship programme and:

- secondary education access and retention;
- transition to employment outcomes;
- the broader implications of higher education for refugees on the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, namely:
    - Ease the pressures on host countries;
    - Enhance refugee self-reliance;
    - Expand access to third-country solutions;
    - Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

List of boxes

List of acronyms

DAFI	Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative Albert Einstein (Albert Einstein German Refugee Academic Initiative)
DRS	Division of Resilience and Solutions
DER	Division of External Relations
DRRM	Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GEM	Global Education Monitoring
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
KII	Key Informant Interview
HC	Host Communities
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HH	Household
HQ	Headquarters
IP	Implementing Partner
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IT	Information Technology
LSMS	Living Standard Measurement Survey (World Bank)
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEET	[Young people] Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PD	Positive Deviance
QS	QS World University Rankings
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
THE	Times Higher Education
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UG	Undergraduate
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. Purpose, scope and methodology

1.1 Purpose

The key objectives of the evaluation are, firstly, to generate evidence to understand the contribution of DAFI to the social and economic outcomes of the young men and women who take part in it and, secondly, to improve the design, management and implementation of this and other higher education programmes for refugees. The evaluation is also expected to: help improve the alignment of DAFI objectives and the expected results with those of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR); help to maximize the contribution of higher education scholarships to enhancing refugee self-reliance; and contribute to easing the pressure on host states.

The evaluation has both summative and formative elements and was designed to give feedback to inform the implementation of DAFI as well as to inform the design of higher education scholarship programmes for refugees.

1.2 Geographical scope and time frame

While the original plan set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR) was to evaluate DAFI since 1992, the evaluation had to focus primarily on the period 2014–2020, since UNHCR does not have an integrated data management system that allows analysis prior to 2014. Moreover, data prior to that date is often incomplete or unavailable and high levels of staff turnover made it impossible to obtain detailed qualitative information from earlier than 2014, while disaggregated data on the number of applications, shortlisted candidates and awards per country is only available from 2017 onwards.

The evaluation maintained a global focus while offering deep dives into DAFI country operations in Turkey, Ecuador, Rwanda, Jordan, Uganda, South Africa and Chad to better understand how and why the DAFI approach and inputs (resources, tools and systems) were effective and under what type of country-specific conditions. Several large DAFI country operations declined to participate in the evaluation (Kenya, Iraq and Ethiopia) due to country-specific circumstances mainly linked to human resource capacity, time constraints, or worsening humanitarian crises that would have made data collection challenging. The purposive sample of countries was identified by the UNHCR Education Section and their inclusion in the evaluation has been agreed by UNHCR regional bureaux and country operations. The purposive sample of countries strikes a balance between the representativeness of different geographical areas, different degrees of regulation affecting refugees' right to work and different programme sizes.[3]

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[3] "Programme size" means the total number of DAFI students and alumni since the inception of DAFI in each country.

1.3 Audience

The intended users of this evaluation are: UNHCR staff (specifically the Division of Resilience and Solutions – DRS); staff working in education, youth employment or connected themes; staff working in fundraising for higher education, as well as UNHCR in-country focal points working on DAFI implementation; DAFI partners in the field; host country governments; donors; scholarship providers; refugees; potential employers of DAFI graduates; other stakeholders active in the subsector of refugee higher education.

The findings of the evaluation will be used for advocacy, strategic planning and programme management; they are expected to inform discussions with senior management in reflecting on the role of DAFI as a cornerstone of the 15 by 30 roadmap,[4] the UNHCR strategic plan for achieving the target of 15 per cent of refugee young people enrolment in higher education by 2030.

1.4 Methodological approach

1.4.1. Key evaluation questions

The evaluation addressed the following list of key evaluation questions (KEQ), grouped according to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, coherence, impact and (financial) sustainability.

Relevance:

(R1) How relevant are the different components of the DAFI individual scholarship to (a) the beneficiaries' needs and (b) completion of an undergraduate degree and transition to work?

Effectiveness:

(E1) How and to what extent has DAFI contributed to its objective of facilitating refugees' completion of an undergraduate degree? Has the programme delivered results equally for young women and men?

(E2) How and to what extent did DAFI contribute to its beneficiaries (a) engaging in the development of their communities, (b) becoming role models in refugee communities, (c) maintaining a positive outlook on life and (d) developing positive views on peace, non-discrimination and gender equality and against radicalization?

(E3) What, if any, generalizable lessons can be found to improve the design and effectiveness of DAFI as well as any other UNHCR interventions that complement DAFI in Tertiary Education?

Coherence:

(C1) To what extent does the DAFI Programme "leverage" (a) the UNHCR operation and (b) the wider tertiary education system in the country of reference to deliver results in terms of the refugee inclusion agenda?

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[4] More detailed road map to achieve the target: https://www.unhcr.org/publications/brochures/605a0fb3b/15by30-roadmap-coming-together-achieve-15-enrolment-2030-visualized-pdf.html

Impact:

(I1) How and to what extent has the DAFI Programme contributed to the transition of its graduates into the labour markets of countries that guarantee refugees the right to work?

(I2) Does the programme have any indirect secondary effects? On participation and retention in secondary education, for example, particularly among girls.

(Financial) Sustainability:

(S1) What are the challenges to the financial sustainability of the programme? What actions could UNHCR take to mitigate such challenges?

1.4.2. Outcome harvesting

Mixed methods have been combined to tackle the KEQ according to the evaluation budget, evaluation timelines, available resources and circumstances on the ground. Outcome harvesting was proposed during the inception phase as a methodological approach to help answer KEQ E3 and C1. While the evaluation was able to "harvest" several outcomes (see Annex 7) operationalization of outcome harvesting in the reconstruction of causal pathways has proven challenging, mainly due to (a) the difficulties country operations have in identifying and measuring outcome-level results[5] in higher education for refugees and (b) the difficulties of contacting knowledgeable in-country stakeholders to construct and validate pathways of change. Hence, while harvested outcomes could be identified, reconstructing the pathways that led to their realization was more difficult.

As foreseen in the inception report, whenever outcome harvesting could not be fully implemented or did not lead to the identification of verifiable outcomes, more key informant interviews (KII) were held with refugees and implementing partner (IP) staff than initially foreseen, in order to enable country-specific deep dives to understand how different implementations, contexts and other factors have produced the observed results.

1.4.3. Positive deviance

The evaluation also leveraged positive deviance (PD) as a methodological approach for certain KEQ, as specified in the evaluation matrix. PD refers to a behavioural and social change approach based on the observation that certain individuals confronting similar challenges, constraints and resource deprivations to their peers will nonetheless employ uncommon but successful behaviour patterns or strategies to find better solutions. Through the study of these individuals (students, institutions or DAFI country operations referred to as "positive deviants") the PD approach identifies "strong performers" and tries to understand the critical success factors behind their "above average" performance.

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[5] This finding indicates capacity gaps at country level in monitoring and results-based management.

The following evaluation matrix offers a recap of the approaches to tackling each KEQ. The evaluation matrix refers to three different surveys constituting the backbone of the primary data for this evaluation:

(1) <u>Refugee survey:</u>[6] administered to refugees who benefited from DAFI or were shortlisted for a scholarship via snowball sampling, using mailing lists and records from each implementing partner. More details on the features of the sample are available in Annex 6. The refugee survey has been piloted on a small sample of refugees in Zambia, as described in the inception report.

(2) <u>Implementing partner survey:</u>[7] administered to UNHCR implementing partners delivering DAFI. The implementing partner survey has been piloted with the implementing partner in Zambia, as described in the inception report.

(3) <u>UNHCR staff survey:</u>[8] administered to UNHCR staff working in DAFI Programme countries.

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[6] Questionnaire available at https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/8INOT0K2
[7] Questionnaire available at https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/LoSw2tMe
[8] Questionnaire available at https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/KGObnPYf

Table 1. Evaluation matrix

KEQ	Methodology	Data	Data source	Scope
(R1) How relevant are the different components of the DAFI individual scholarship to (a) the beneficiaries' needs and (b) completion of an undergraduate degree and transition to work?	Mixed methods: quantitative assessment from the refugee survey, complemented with qualitative information from key informant interviews	Primary data on risks, incidence of negative coping mechanisms, participation in internships and similar extracurricular activities, transition to work; secondary data on application for DAFI and completion of degrees; secondary data on participation in internships and other extracurricular activities; existing needs assessments at country level; qualitative info on targeting at country level.	Refugee survey and key informant interviews	Global, with more detail available in focus countries
(E1) How and to what extent has the DAFI Programme contributed to its objective of facilitating refugees' completion of an undergraduate degree? Has the programme delivered results equally for young women and men?	Mixed methods: mainly quantitative assessment complemented with qualitative information from key informant interviews; positive deviance	Databases maintained by the DAFI team with historical data on degree completion; qualitative data on constraints and enablers of girls' participation in DAFI and completion of studies	Refugee survey, implementing partner survey, UNHCR staff survey and key informant interviews	Global, with more detail available in focus countries
(E2) How and to what extent did DAFI contribute to its beneficiaries (a) engaging in the development of their communities (b) becoming role models in refugee communities, (c) maintaining a positive outlook on life and (d) developing positive	Mixed methods: quantitative assessment mainly based on primary data complemented with qualitative information	Primary data from the refugee survey on individual data, employment status, salary, coping mechanisms, civic engagement, outlook on life, views in favour of peace, non-discrimination and gender equality and against radicalization; qualitative information	Refugee survey, implementing partner survey, key informant interviews with implementing partner	Focus countries

views on peace, non-discrimination and gender equality, and against radicalization?	from key informant interviews	from key informant interviews with implementing partner		
(E3) What, if any, generalizable lessons can be found to improve the effectiveness, design and implementation of DAFI as well as other UNHCR interventions complementary to DAFI in Tertiary Education?	Mixed methods: mainly quantitative assessment complemented with qualitative information from KII; positive deviance; outcome harvesting	All types of data available	Refugee survey, implementing partner survey, UNHCR staff survey, key informant interviews	Global, with more detail available in focus countries
(C1) To what extent does the DAFI Programme leverage (a) the UNHCR operation and (b) the wider tertiary education system in the country of reference to deliver results in terms of the refugee inclusion agenda?	Mixed methods: mainly quantitative assessment; outcome harvesting	Primary data from the UNHCR staff survey, follow-up key informant interviews with staff in focus country	UNHCR staff survey, key informant interviews	Focus countries
(I1) How and to what extent has the DAFI Programme contributed to the transition to labour markets of its graduates, in countries that guarantee refugees the right to work?	Quantitative assessment based on survey data, complemented by qualitative information	Primary individual data from the refugee survey on employment status, salary, participation in internships and similar extracurriculars; qualitative info on access to labour markets	Refugee survey, key informant interviews with implementing partner and DAFI graduates, if needed	Global, with more detail available in focus countries

(I2) Are there indirect secondary effects of the programme, for example on participation and retention in secondary education, particularly among girls?	Quantitative assessment based on survey data, complemented by qualitative information	Primary individual data on transition, coping mechanisms from the refugee survey; primary data in the section dedicated to indirect effects on transition is from the implementing partner survey	Refugee survey, implementing partner survey, key informant interviews with implementing partner	Focus countries
(S1) What are the challenges to the financial sustainability of the programme? What actions could UNHCR undertake to mitigate such challenges?	Qualitative assessment based on secondary data on programme financing	Quantitative data on DAFI funding (current and historical contributors); key informant interviews with UNHCR staff, analysis of UNHCR reports on DAFI funding strategies and mechanisms	Data on sources of DAFI funding, key informant interviews	Global

1.5 Data description, data collection and limitations

1.5.1. Data description

Several types of data have been leveraged to answer the KEQ, as follows:

(a) Secondary data, including:

- the DAFI student database of the Education Section, which covers about eleven thousand individual records of refugees in all DAFI operations, with reliable coverage for the period 2015–2020;

- the application and award database of the Education Section, which holds data on applications and awards, by country, from 2017 onwards;

- the funding database of the Education Section, which contains all contributions to the DAFI Programme since 2011 by all donors; this will be referred to as the "financial database";

- country-level reports made available by country operations, including strategic reviews, country reports on DAFI and other similar country-level resources (full list available in Annex 3);

- thematic reviews of DAFI, such as the cross-country analysis of the civic engagement of DAFI students in 2018 (full list available in Annex 3);

- relevant literature on higher education for refugees, including academic articles, impact evaluations and reports from international organizations (full list available in Annex 1);

- annual reports for the DAFI Programme (2011 to 2020);

- online databases with indicators and metrics on refugee higher education and transition to work (e.g. ILOSTAT).

(b) Primary data from online surveys, administered as follows:

- The UNHCR staff survey was administered to all countries with active DAFI operations. A total of 30 different DAFI country operations answered (55 per cent of country operations).

- The implementing partner survey was administered to all DAFI countries relying on implementing partners to deliver DAFI. A total of 18 DAFI implementing partners answered (52 per cent of DAFI Programmes are delivered via implementing partners).

- The refugee survey was disseminated to all DAFI beneficiaries globally and all refugees shortlisted for DAFI in 2021. A total of 1,124 refugees benefiting from DAFI in 35 different countries (out of a total of 55 countries with DAFI operations) submitted valid responses.

The refugee survey was not administered in Chad because a similar survey, launched by UNHCR to find out more about the socioeconomic conditions of refugee secondary school graduates in Chad (including DAFI beneficiaries), had just been launched at the time of the evaluation. UNHCR felt that additional demands to participate in surveys would cause survey fatigue and compromise data quality. While the findings of the survey in Chad are not directly comparable with those in the other focus countries, they lead to the same results and conclusions.

(c) Primary data from KII with the following stakeholders:

- 5 DAFI beneficiaries in each focus country (for a total of 30 refugees, both students and graduates).

- 24 UNHCR staff working in different capacities, from the Division of Resilience and Solutions Education Section to Private Sector Partnerships (PSP), as well as 15 UNHCR country office staff (detailed in Annex 3).

- 15 implementing partner staff working on DAFI (all focus countries plus implementing partner staff in Mali, Burundi, Pakistan, Lebanon and Ethiopia[9]).

A recap of the data collected in each country, with the number of key informant interviews in each country, may be found in Annex 3.

(d) Online working sessions with implementing partners, UNHCR country office focal points and the Tertiary education team at HQ, both to triangulate data and to ensure that the evaluation remained relevant, as follows:

- Bimonthly sessions with the UNHCR Tertiary education team to discuss progress and preliminary findings, clear bottlenecks and validate data.

- One online session with UNHCR country operations in October to debrief on the findings of the UNHCR staff survey and collect feedback on a series of preliminary recommendations.

- One online session with the implementing partner.

- Implementing partner to debrief in October on the findings of the implementing partner survey and collect feedback on a series of preliminary recommendations.

1.5.2. Ethical considerations in data collection and management

Primary data collection followed a set of ethical principles for fieldwork, based on the UNEG Norms and Standards, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations system, the UNHCR Data protection policy and the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity policy. The following principles have been observed:

(1) Informed consent: respondents were given enough information about the evaluation, and the evaluator ensured that there was no explicit or implicit coercion, so that potential respondents could make an informed and free decision regarding their involvement in online surveys and key informant interviews. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the survey at any time; no answers in any of the online surveys were compulsory. Especially for refugees, no personal identifiers of any type were collected that could reveal the identity of the respondents.

(2) Clarifying purpose: the evaluator introduced himself to all participants and explained, in a way that was easily understood by all, the purposes of the research and what would be done with the information provided

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[9] These are either DAFI operations delivering more than 100 scholarships per year on average (2014–2020) or positive deviant DAFI operations.

by participants, moderating expectations regarding the participants' "gain" from joining the research. No financial compensation was provided to individual participants.

(3) Anonymity: given that the research respondents shared their personal opinions, it is the evaluator's responsibility to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and their personal information is protected. This was operationalized by ensuring that no personal identifiers were collected, so that all datasets were anonymized by construction. All emails and phone numbers of refugees were destroyed by the evaluator upon conclusion of the evaluation.

(4) Minimising the burden for the beneficiary: there would be no notable benefit or burden (except time) associated with taking part in the research and all participants were subject to the same benefits and burdens. Efforts were made to not disrupt the participants' daily routines/schedules.

The online surveys were not fully designed to ensure the participation of refugees with certain disabilities, e.g. those who have difficulty reading on a screen (this group is very limited among current students). Formal ethical approval was not required for this evaluation. The evaluation represents a standard element of feedback from beneficiaries that is a natural part of the programme management cycle.

Survey data was collected via Kobo Toolbox. Only the evaluator had access to the Kobo Toolbox account in which all the survey data was stored. Qualitative data was collected during calls over Teams, Zoom and similar applications and the corresponding notes were stored on SharePoint in a way that did not identify feedback providers, in order to ensure security and anonymity. KII were not recorded, in order to protect anonymity. At the end of the evaluation, anonymized data was handed over to UNHCR.

1.5.3. Safeguarding

The evaluator identified three types of risk associated with the proposed evaluation design:

(1) Risk of misuse of confidential information or contact information when performing surveys or key informant interviews. These risks were minimal as online surveys are routinely administered via UNHCR or partners in the field. Likewise, the email addresses of DAFI students and alumni are routinely used for interaction with beneficiaries for purposes other than this evaluation (monitoring, communications, etc).

(2) Risk of contracting COVID-19 during data collection. All surveys were administered online, via smartphone or telephone. No additional travel took place specifically for the evaluation.

(3) Risk of negative consequences for the beneficiaries in the event of negative feedback from survey participants. To shield any survey respondents from this risk, the findings are presented in a way that makes it impossible to single out who provided what feedback.

1.5.4. Triangulation

Quantitative data from databases made available by UNHCR was triangulated with country-specific records whenever available, annual reports and similar secondary data. Data was triangulated to the extent possible, but it was not possible to triangulate all data due to time and budget constraints. For example, it

is not possible to triangulate primary survey data on life satisfaction of refugees, or on their employment and status. Spot checks were performed of the applications and award databases and the student database, with the support of the in-country implementing partner, and minimal discrepancies were found.

To triangulate some primary data, similar questions were put to both implementing partner and refugees as a consistency check. In both the implementing partner and the refugee questionnaires, certain questions were asked in similar ways to avoid misunderstandings. Findings concerning questions administered via the online questionnaire (unless confidential) were triangulated during key informant interviews. Data from the UNHCR staff survey and the implementing partner survey was validated in two separate sessions, with implementing partner staff and UNHCR staff respectively. Whenever possible, qualitative data from key informant interviews was triangulated with quantitative data.

1.5.5. Limitations

There are limitations associated with both the design and the data of the evaluation. Concerning the design, the limitations identified are as follows:

(1) Time constraints, compounded by the challenges posed by COVID-19, were such that the evaluation could only collect a single cross-section of data. Combined with the fact that no evaluation strategy for DAFI existed prior to the evaluation, it has been impossible to estimate a counterfactual and to attempt to isolate causal effects accordingly. Most KEQ could have been better addressed via a longitudinal study.

(2) No baseline data was available for several metrics. To try and provide a surrogate of this missing baseline information, the evaluation collected data on shortlisted students for 2021 to mimic a baseline for 2021 graduates. This design is not optimal in that it does not control for other factors outside of DAFI that might have contributed to programme effects.

(3) The initially envisaged outcome harvesting process has been challenged by staff turnover in both UNHCR and implementing partners, on the grounds that DAFI turned out to be quite "siloed" and, in several focus countries, does not interact very much with institutions such as ministries or community-based organizations.

(4) Some country operations that were initially selected for the evaluation due to their level of engagement and the number of students in the programme (Ethiopia, Kenya, Iraq, etc.) withdrew from the evaluation due to human resource constraints, leaving the evaluation unable to cover some of the largest programme countries.

Concerning data, the limitations identified are as follows:

(1) The refugee survey has been administered globally, but response rates differed by region. DAFI operations affected by the Syria crisis displayed significantly higher response rates, hence they are over-represented in the sample. More details are available in Annex 6.

(2) The dataset generated by the refugee survey may be biased towards those DAFI students who have easy access to the Internet. This implies a potential overestimation of average programme effects, since

those students who have easy access to the Internet are probably the most well off. While relying solely on online data is not ideal, online data collection was the only option within the pandemic context.

(3) Individual student records are of higher quality starting from 2015, with less data available prior to 2014 other than aggregated data presented in annual reports.

(4) Refugees may have provided the most desirable rather than the most objective answers for fear of losing DAFI support. To mitigate this effect, all personal identifiers have been removed from online surveys.

(5) Implementing partners may have provided the most desirable rather than the most objective answers for fear of losing UNHCR funding. To mitigate this effect, the confidentiality of responses has been reiterated several times and findings have been triangulated to the extent possible.

2. Context

2.1 DAFI Programme description

The DAFI Programme aims to support young refugee women and men in acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies leading to a first-level, post-secondary Bachelor's degree or equivalent qualifications, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The rationale for supporting only first-degree study programmes is to ensure that the DAFI Programme has maximum impact in terms of the number of students supported and its ability to motivate refugee young people to complete secondary education and to facilitate access for those who do not yet have any higher education qualification.[10]

The DAFI Programme supports:

(1) Programmes at International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 6, or Bachelors or equivalent level, typically designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies and lead to a first degree or equivalent qualification. These programmes may include practical components (internships) and are traditionally offered by universities and equivalent tertiary educational institutions.

(2) Short-cycle tertiary education ISCED level 5 courses, typically designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competencies. These are generally practical courses offering specific occupational training to prepare students to enter the labour market; they may provide a pathway to other tertiary education programmes.

2.1.1. Strategic priorities and their evaluability

The strategic priorities of DAFI are:

(1) To promote self-reliance and pathways to solutions resulting from completion of an undergraduate qualification;

(2) To empower young women and men equally to develop knowledge, skills and leadership so that they can participate fully in advancing social cohesion and the development of their communities;

(3) To strengthen the protective impact of education by encouraging lifelong learning for refugees;

(4) To provide role models for refugee children and young people by demonstrating the positive impact of education on individuals, communities and societies;

(5) To contribute to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction for returnees;

(6) To promote social, economic and gender equality.

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[10] For additional details, the reader may refer to the DAFI Programme and Policy guideline (2019).

These six strategic priorities are broad and are interpreted with a great deal of diversity across countries, as discussions with country operations indicate. In some countries (e.g. Ecuador), DAFI targets vulnerability slightly more than academic excellence, while in other countries (e.g. Chad) the opposite holds true. Likewise, some country operations (e.g. Lebanon) tried to position the scholarship as a component of a wider youth employment programme, with DAFI Programme budgets being devoted to both scholarships and to activities that directly foster transition to work. These varying interpretations of the essence of DAFI are a testament to its suitability for responding to vastly differing needs and demands according to context, local capacity, national policies and related contextual factors. This breadth may have been intentionally infused to provide the needed flexibility in accommodating different implementation strategies at country level and adjusting to changing circumstances and emergencies. The flip side of this breadth is that it was impossible to prepare a change theory that remained valid across countries and the strategic priorities cannot be directly evaluated without context-specific refinements (as foreseen in the ToR).

2.1.2. DAFI Programme components

DAFI scholarships are designed to support each student by affording them a modest but decent standard of living that meets their basic needs and allows them to focus on and successfully complete their tertiary studies. DAFI scholarships are provided for up to four years to allow students to complete a standard undergraduate (undergraduate) degree. Annual renewal is based on their successful completion of the academic year or semester and promotion to the next academic year by the higher education institution (higher education institutions). Concretely, according to the DAFI Programme and Policy guideline, a DAFI student is supposed to receive a scholarship grant alongside additional support to promote retention, employability and personal development. The scholarship grant is intended to defray the cost of food, accommodation, local transportation and personal expenses on the one hand and costs associated with registration fees and tuition on the other (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Scholarship grant breakdown
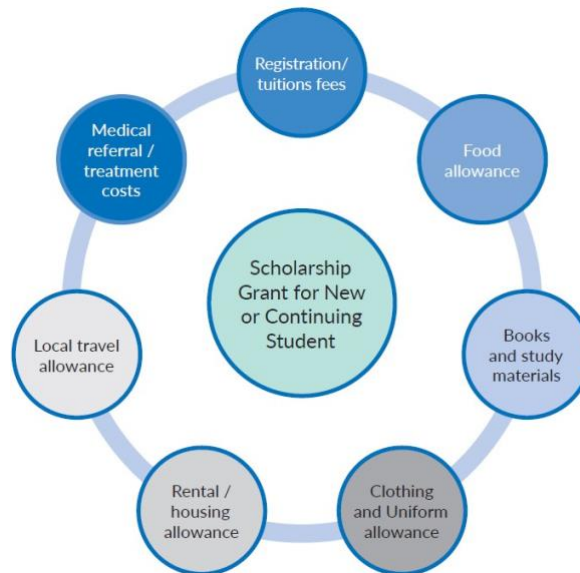
The provision of <u>additional support</u> to promote retention, employability and personal development should be tailored to each context by the country operation and centred on several components that will improve students' academic performance, experience and employability.

Such components can be categorized as follows:

- <u>Internships</u> offer an important opportunity to develop a student's profile and readiness for work or entrepreneurship. In countries where refugees do not have the right to work, or only a limited possibility of formal employment, internships may be possible. Where internships for refugees are restricted or impossible, the UNHCR office and programme partner may provide or identify opportunities to gain work experience by engaging students in study-related, community-based or community service activities.

- Proficiency in the <u>language of study</u> is fundamental to good academic performance, confidence and competitiveness in the labour market. Having an accredited language certificate in addition to the study diploma may enhance the student's profile when applying for jobs and postgraduate scholarships. Similarly, students may have had limited access to computers or IT centres prior to entering university, in which case DAFI may determine that additional IT training is needed to enable them to fully participate in learning.

- <u>Counselling</u> is professional psychological guidance to help with handling and processing private problems relating to academic, social or emotional issues. DAFI students should be able to access academic and individual counselling at their higher education institution.

- <u>Mentoring</u> is one-on-one support provided by a more experienced person to a younger or less experienced person, usually in relation to education or employment.

- <u>The DAFI club</u> is a national forum for all DAFI students in a given country. It can be leveraged to expand networks, to aid career planning and skills development, community engagement and peer-to-peer support, or to articulate concerns and suggestions to both UNHCR and the partner regarding DAFI.

- DAFI promotes <u>community engagement</u>, via unpaid volunteering activities that should take between 10 to 15 hours per semester, to expand and increase the agency of each DAFI student and their commitment to community leadership and development.

- <u>Individual learning needs</u> and challenges may arise throughout the scholarship period: each academic year may pose different challenges or requirements for different students, which DAFI should be able to address in case of need. Personal situations or family circumstances may change, with accompanying psychological, social and academic impacts. Preparatory or supplemental courses may be particularly relevant where studies have been interrupted.

Figure 2. Non-financial components of the DAFI Scholarship programme
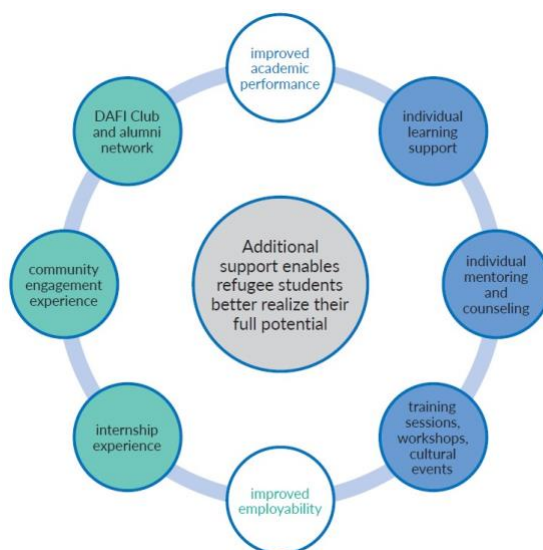
2.2 Theatres of DAFI operations

DAFI often operates in challenging environments in which refugees' right to education may not be guaranteed. Refugees encounter multiple barriers to accessing higher education and even higher barriers to transition to employment, where legal barriers can sometimes prove unsurmountable. DAFI thus faces challenges in securing refugees' rights in contexts characterized by low resources, competing priorities and varying degrees of discrimination against refugees, all of which affect their access to higher education and transition to work; this in turn contributes to dropout at secondary level.

While the scholarships provided through DAFI and other partners cannot solve the higher education crisis for refugees, they demonstrate the huge demand for higher education among refugees and show the dedication with which refugees pursue undergraduate courses. DAFI enters its third decade having reached over 21,500 refugee young people in a complex global context. The existing challenges involved in improving refugees' access to higher education and transition to work have been compounded by the sheer increase in numbers of refugees around the world, as well as by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has undermined the provision of education at all levels and disrupted livelihoods. While DAFI has been able to

expand significantly in the last five years, a very large number of refugees remain excluded from higher education; especially women, who currently make up about 40 per cent of DAFI beneficiaries.

Table 2 below provides an overview of the challenges posed by the imposition of high university fees or restrictions on refugees' right to work in the seven focus countries of this evaluation.

Table 2. Access to higher education and refugees' right to work in evaluation focus countries

Country	Access to education	University fees	Refugees' right to work
Chad	Same as nationals	Same as nationals	Very limited right to work, only in selected sectors
Ecuador	Same as nationals; however, there are few if any public universities in border regions; cost of tuition generally high both in public and private universities.	Same as nationals	Full access to labour market
Jordan	Same as nationals for Syrians, restrictions apply to other nationalities	Syrian refugees need to present a valid service card, while non-Syrian refugees need to present a valid passport and a secondary school certificate to access higher education institutions. Refugee students are required to pay international fees (about 25 per cent more than nationals).	Limited access to labour market. Occupations that are open to refugees are in the agriculture, construction, manufacturing and service sectors.
Rwanda	Same as nationals	Same as nationals	Full access to labour market
Uganda	Same as nationals, but certain nationalities (e.g. South Sudan) may need a foundation year certificate to access higher education.	Same as nationals	Full access to labour market
South Africa	Access to free primary education (grades 1-9); for access to higher education, fees apply.	Same as nationals	Full access to labour market
Turkey	Access to tertiary education for Syrians is guaranteed, but with restrictions on refugees' mobility.	Fees have been paid by the Turkish government for Syrians enrolled in full-time degrees at state universities since 2014, but this policy is now being reversed. Refugee students of other nationalities have been paying international tuition fees throughout.	Temporary Protection beneficiaries and International protection applicants (Syrians and other nationalities) have the right to work and can either apply for work permits or permission to establish businesses.

3. Findings

3.1 Relevance

(R1) How relevant are the different components of the DAFI individual scholarship to (a) the beneficiaries' needs and (b) completion of an undergraduate degree and transition to work?

Key findings:

Refugee students need tailored interventions to support their university experience, including orientation, mentoring and sometimes psychosocial support, specific training to make up for skills gaps, and tailored work readiness training: DAFI is appropriately designed to cater to this set of needs. All DAFI components are relevant to students' needs, completion of undergraduate degrees and transition to work, albeit to different degrees. Delivering the right amount of financial assistance at the right time is the most relevant component. Mentoring to choose a high-quality, market relevant course is also of great relevance and importance, alongside providing training courses that help prepare for transition to labour markets. In contrast, participation in civic engagement activities or participation in the DAFI club (even if these were still relevant in terms of skills development and students' need to feel connected, respectively) were found to be less important in catering to students' needs. The most fundamental component of DAFI remains the provision of a financial allowance that is both large enough and timely enough to allow students to meet their basic needs and focus on their studies.

Table 3 shows a summary of take-up by component (see definitions in Section 2). Since all DAFI students benefit from the scholarship grant, it has been excluded from the table. DAFI students in camps receive more components than those in urban settings, while male beneficiaries systematically receive more components than females, which most likely reflects gender-specific barriers associated with girls' capacity to make time for extracurricular activities, their agency/empowerment in the household and their capacity to appeal to internship providers as refugees, among other factors. Key informant interviews with implementing partners and refugees highlighted that the provision of components/services varied substantively, both in-country (i.e. different DAFIs expressed different levels of satisfaction with the Programme in the same country, e.g. Ecuador, Turkey and Rwanda) and across countries: for example, the implementing partner in Jordan was able to deliver a richer set of components than other implementing partners, such as those in Rwanda or in Turkey, which followed a more "minimalistic" approach centred around the provision of financial assistance.

Table 3. Percentage of DAFI students in receipt of programme components, by gender and location (DAFI student database (2014–2020) and refugee survey, all countries, 2021[11]

Component	Male[12]	Female	Urban	Rural	Camps	Total	Source
Internship	37%	21%	26%	46%	34%	31%	Student Database
Training sessions (Language)	41%	31%	31%	24%	46%	37%	Student Database
Training sessions (IT)	37%	21%	25%	20%	39%	30%	Student Database
Counselling	37%	33%	30%	34%	51%	35%	Refugee Survey
Mentoring	32%	28%	31%	32%	31%	30%	Refugee Survey
Community Engagement:							
Unstructured volunteering	59%	41%	44%	46%	68%	51%	Refugee Survey
Structured volunteering	51%	38%	44%	38%	52%	45%	Refugee Survey
No participation	23%	38%	35%	35%	13%	29%	Refugee Survey

Table 4 provides a summary of findings regarding the relevance of each DAFI component to the beneficiaries' needs and the programme's objectives.

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[11] Data from UNHCR internal databases is more reliable than data from the refugee survey, since the latter works off a sample that may not be fully representative, while the former is closer to a census of DAFI beneficiaries.
[12] This column should be read as the percentage of the total number of eligible male students who benefited from a DAFI component; the same reasoning should be applied when reading the "Female" column.

Table 4 Relevance of DAFI components

Component	Relevance to the needs of beneficiaries	Relevance to completion of an undergraduate degree/transition to work
Individual scholarship grant	Strong positive evidence: financial constraints are binding for DAFI students. About 50 per cent of DAFI beneficiaries reported that their households either "often" or "sometimes" did not have enough food to eat on a given day; furthermore, about a third of beneficiaries asked for more generous scholarships. Virtually all key informant interviews have confirmed that students would not have been able to complete their degree without DAFI financial support. Several key informant interviews with students indicated that the scholarship allowance was not always sufficient to cover students' basic needs; some students indicated that their academic performance suffered because they had to find extra income to cover tuition or equipment-related expenses or basic needs. There is no consistent approach across countries to determine the total cash allowance that each student is entitled to receive. There is also no common approach to dealing with inflation.	Strong positive evidence: scholarships are fundamental to avoiding dropout, as overwhelmingly confirmed by key informant interviews with refugees. Key informant interviews in multiple countries have highlighted how even a small delay in the payment of allowances or tuition fees can trigger long-lasting consequences and significantly affect academic performance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the scholarship was not sufficient to cover the costs of IT equipment and an Internet connection, most likely resulting in significant learning losses.
Internship and work readiness	Positive evidence: about 30 per cent have participated in an internship since 2014, while increased opportunities for internships were requested by 17 per cent of participants in the refugee survey; key informant interviews with DAFI students revealed a strong demand for internships so that they might gain entry-level work experience. key informant interviews with UNHCR staff and students highlighted that training courses on work readiness were relevant to the beneficiaries, as assistance is needed with CV writing, developing interview skills and communicating in the workplace.	Positive evidence: internships are not relevant to completion of a degree, but key informant interview evidence showed that they are regarded as being relevant to skills development and transition to work.

Training courses	Positive evidence: language courses in English or French (depending on the country) were consistently cited as important components during key informant interviews with DAFI students as well as implementing partners.	Mixed evidence: training courses can complement undergraduate degrees, but could also come at a high opportunity cost and crowd out the scholarships budget (one such case may be Jordan, where certain non-essential training courses may have been too expensive). Entrepreneurship training could be relevant, but must be tailored to context, i.e. that of a micro-entrepreneurship "by necessity" within an informal economy with low access to inputs and credit. Language courses were cited in key informant interviews by both implementing partners and students as being important drivers in the transition to work.
Counselling	key informant interviews with refugees in focus countries highlighted the relevance of counselling when students encountered unexpected difficulties. implementing partners in Jordan and South Africa were cited by refugees as being particularly effective in providing counselling. Conversely, the UNHCR-led country operation in Turkey has displayed limitations in this respect: several refugees lamented little or delayed feedback, while in one case involving acute mental health problems the country operation only reacted when the evaluator explicitly flagged the case.	Positive evidence: key informant interviews with both implementing partners and students confirmed that counselling helped keep dropout low.
Mentoring	Positive evidence: over 70 per cent of DAFI students are first-time university learners, so they may not obtain qualified advice from their families; key informant interviews confirmed that they benefited from receiving orientation when choosing their courses.	Positive evidence: key informant interviews with both implementing partners and students confirmed that mentoring helped keep dropout low. Students highlighted the importance of receiving mentoring when choosing their course, as it had helped them to correct any misrepresentations they had had and to gather information on the structure of courses and their relevance to the needs of the job market. Mentoring is fundamental to choosing

		high-quality, relevant degree undergraduate courses.
DAFI club and network	Limited positive evidence: the club may have helped to maintain a sense of connection in the countries in which it has been implemented (e.g. Uganda), but has generally not been commonly cited as a positive contributor to addressing students' needs. In most countries, the clubs have been put on hold following the pandemic.	Lack of positive evidence: key informant interviews with refugees did not reveal any evidence of a direct link between the DAFI club and transition to work or completion of a degree. While the DAFI club may help foster a sense of belonging and facilitate networking, it does not seem to be relevant as a driver of either graduation or transition to work.
Community engagement	Mixed evidence: there is anecdotal evidence of DAFI students developing skills following civic engagement activities, but the evaluation could not find consistent evidence of relevance. key informant interviews with students highlighted that the component is not relevant for refugee students, who do not have time for it as they need to work part-time or care for family members.	Mixed evidence: currently about a third of all survey respondents do not engage at all in such activities and only about half of survey respondents were engaged in structured activities. The component is not relevant to completion of degrees and only partially relevant to transition to work (via skills building and accumulation of practical experience). The component may come at a high opportunity cost (human resources devoted to searching civic engagement opportunities, matching students with them and monitoring).
Individual learning support	Positive evidence, especially for the most demanding courses (e.g. engineering) and especially for refugees who have completed secondary education in low-resource settings (e.g. South Sudan) and are refugees in middle-income countries, or in situations where the language of instruction was different to that spoken in the host country. Despite the very high relevance, not all students have accessed learning support to cover their learning needs.	Positive evidence: key informant interviews with both implementing partners and students confirmed that learning support helped to keep dropout low and positively influenced academic performance.

"DAFI is allowing me to fight to realize my dreams"

Female DAFI student

"The university is very far and I have to travel two hours to reach it. Transport costs are high and some days I cannot afford both the bus ticket and dinner"

Male DAFI student

"DAFI was a life-changing experience, I would have never graduated without it"

Female DAFI graduate

"Even if inflation eroded the purchasing power of our allowances, the scholarship was fundamental to help us financially"

Male DAFI student

When directly asked what changes could be made to improve DAFI, refugees' answers revealed an unmet need for more programming in youth employment and social protection generally – which is understandable given the degree of financial hardship among respondents (50 per cent of respondents reported that they went to bed hungry either often or sporadically over the month preceding the survey, see Annex 8). It seems that refugees are – rightly, given the financial hardship they endure – more concerned with finding employment after graduation than with improving their academic experience in the short term.

Table 5. Comparative relevance of different suggested changes to the design of DAFI (refugee survey, 2021, 648 responses)

Suggested change	% DAFI beneficiaries who selected the change as being in the top three for relevance[13]
More direct support to find employment after graduation	46%
More generous scholarships	32%
More legal support to obtain work permits and documentation needed to work	19%
More entrepreneurship training to set up new businesses	18%
More internship opportunities	16%
More academic support during the undergraduate course	16%
More opportunities to volunteer	14%
More language courses	10%
More courses to develop IT skills demanded by the job market	10%
More mentoring to get orientation in the job market	8%

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[13] Multiple choice (up to three elements) was allowed; hence percentages exceed 100 per cent.

"Without the financial support from DAFI I could not study at all – yet the money is not sufficient for me to fully focus on my degree"

Male DAFI student

"I did not get much more in addition to financial support, but I would not be attending university today without this scholarship"

Female DAFI student

3.2 Effectiveness

(E1) How and to what extent has the DAFI Programme contributed to its objective of facilitating refugees' completion of an undergraduate degree? Has the programme delivered results equally for young women and men?

Key findings:

DAFI has been highly effective in facilitating the completion of undergraduate degrees: approximately 84 per cent of students who participated in the DAFI programme between 2010 and 2020[14] graduated, with low gender differentials and with similar rates in and out of camps. Graduation rates are also relatively stable over time. This indicates that DAFI is highly effective at selecting strong candidates and that DAFI students are highly motivated to complete their degrees. However, DAFI has generally not achieved gender parity: of a total student population of 11,582, only 4,566 were female. Another important theme to take into consideration when assessing programme effectiveness is the quality of the universities chosen by students. This varies significantly across countries and remains an area for further investigation: currently the programme permits students to study at any accredited Higher Education Institution and more information is needed to understand whether graduation from higher-ranked universities results in improved programme effectiveness and outcomes for students in the long run.

Table 6 presents the outcomes percentage of students who graduated from DAFI since inception, based on the DAFI student database, which holds records for 11,582 students between 1997 and 2020 – this represents just over half of all DAFI participants over the same timespan[15].

Table 6. Breakdown of DAFI student outcomes, 1997–2020, all countries (DAFI student database)

Academic outcome	Female	Male	Camps	Non-camp

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[14] The graduation rate methodology defined as: "the number of DAFI students who graduated each year divided by the sum of those who were expected to graduate in the same year, net of those refugees who left the programme due to repatriation, resettlement, or obtaining a scholarship in a third country" differs from other methodologies that could have been applied, such as the "success rate" defined as "the total number of students who either get promoted or graduated at the end of each year, divided by the total number of students in the same year" or the "dropout rate" indicated in DAFI annual reports, defined as "the total number of students who dropped out at the end of the year divided by the total number of students in the same year". The dropout rates indicated in the annual DAFI report are usually 2-3% on an annual basis.

[15] Prior to 1997, student records were not kept systematically at a global level. The evaluation exercise was based on consolidated student data available at headquarters.

Discontinuation for misconduct	231	338	159	410
Dropped out – medical reasons	17	21	15	23
Dropped out – personal reasons	263	382	436	209
Graduated	1,753	2,648	1,820	2,581
Newly admitted	218	185	114	289
Promoted	1,953	3,270	2,497	2,726
Repatriated	10	13	5	18
Repeated year	48	60	57	51
Resettled	66	91	73	84
Obtained new scholarship abroad	7	8	3	12
Total	4,566 (40%)	7,016 (60%)	5,179 (45%)	6,403 (55%)

The DAFI graduation rate can be defined as the number of DAFI students who graduated each year, divided by the sum of those who were expected to graduate in the same year, net of those refugees who left the programme due to repatriation, resettlement, or obtention of a scholarship in a third country.

Based on this definition, from 2010 to 2020, the global average annual graduation rate of DAFI students was 84 per cent for both male and female students.

DAFI has evolved significantly over the last decade: between 2010 and 2015 the yearly average intake was about 250 new students per year, while from 2015 onwards, following a large increase in funding in connection with the war in Syria, the yearly average intake increased to about 1,800 students per year. This rapid increase has had implications on data quality: prior to 2016, sample sizes at country level were too small to provide reliable estimates. Estimates of effectiveness are much more reliable when calculated over the period 2016–2020, since they can draw on a much larger number of observations. Against this backdrop, the following dashboard (Figure 3) provides several charts that depict the evolution of the graduation rate over time, by gender and location.

Graduation rates are generally high and similar between males and females, though female rates seem to exhibit a slightly higher variance. Graduation rates also seem slightly lower in camps than in non-camp settings. Importantly, regardless of the disaggregation, the graduation rate is converging over time towards its mean of 84 per cent, indicating that the programme is becoming more effective at correcting gender-related and location-related differentials.

Figure 3. Dashboard on the evolution of the graduation rate, 2010–2020 (DAFI student database)[16]

Panel 1. Number of scholarships globally awarded per year, 2010-2020
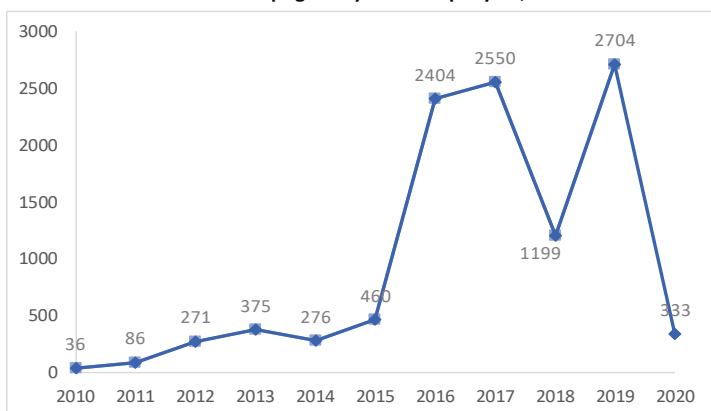
Panel 2. Graduation rate, all countries, 2010-2020

Most reliable data (larger sample of students)
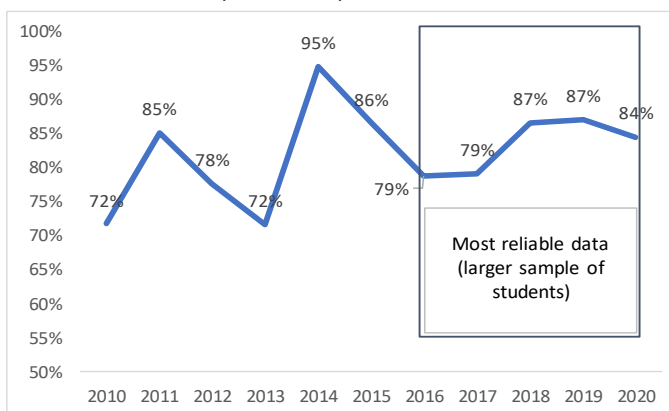
Panel 3. Graduation rate by sex, 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Females	76%	67%	86%	88%	86%
Males	81%	84%	87%	86%	83%
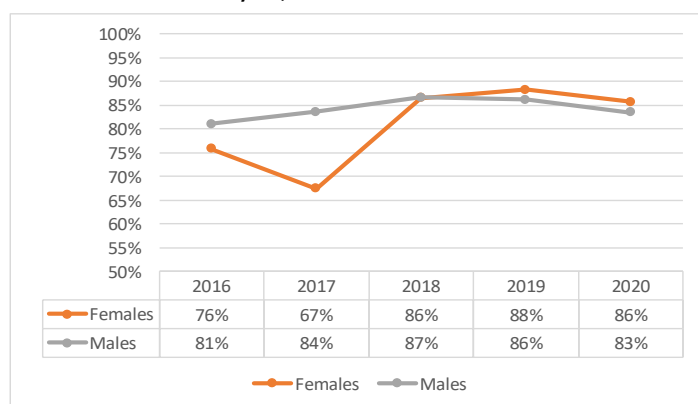
Panel 4. Graduation rate by location (camp vs. non-camp), 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Camps	76%	71%	79%	81%	81%
Non-camps	84%	91%	91%	90%	86%
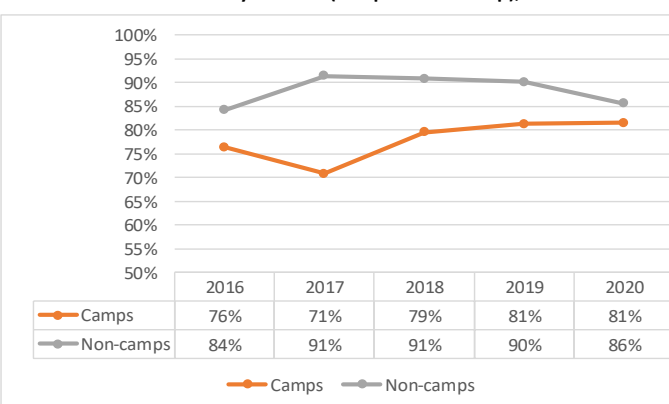
[16] Spikes in the graduation rate (2011 and 2014) indicate a higher number of students successfully graduating from their studies, while at the same time the DAFI programme experienced low numbers of dropouts.

A further breakdown by focus country and by gender is provided in Table 7. Graduation rates by country are calculated from 2016 to 2020, as this permits much more precise estimates to be made (see explanation above).

Table 7. Graduation rates by focus country, gender and location, 2016–2020 (DAFI student database)

Country	Female	Male	Camp	Non-camp	Total
Chad	68%	73%	N/A[17]	N/A	71%
Ecuador	67%	87%	N/A[18]	N/A	77%
Jordan	95%	91%	89%	94%	93%
Rwanda	65%	67%	67%	50%	66%
South Africa	78%	78%	N/A[19]	N/A	78%
Turkey	68%	72%	N/A[20]	N/A	70%
Uganda	98%	93%	98%	85%	95%

Graduation rates are particularly high in Uganda and Jordan. Key informant interviews with students suggest that this positive deviance likely reflects a combination of a strong supply side in higher education provision (higher education institutions offering courses of good quality) and effective case management and student monitoring by the implementing partner, compared to e.g. Turkey, where the high expectations of higher education institutions, compounded with language barriers and less effective individual student monitoring, drove higher dropout rates.

Dropout rates are generally low and decreasing over time. The two main causes of discontinuation of study, which accounted for about 12 per cent of all students combined in 2020, are personal reasons and misconduct (e.g. providing false documentation of academic progress). Less than 1 per cent of students discontinued their studies for medical reasons between 2010 and 2020. The evolution of dropout rates is illustrated in Figure 4:

[17] All students in Chad live in camps.
[18] No encamped students in Ecuador.
[19] No encamped students in South Africa.
[20] No encamped students.

Figure 4. Evolution of the dropout rate, by cause, all countries, 2010–2020 (DAFI student database)
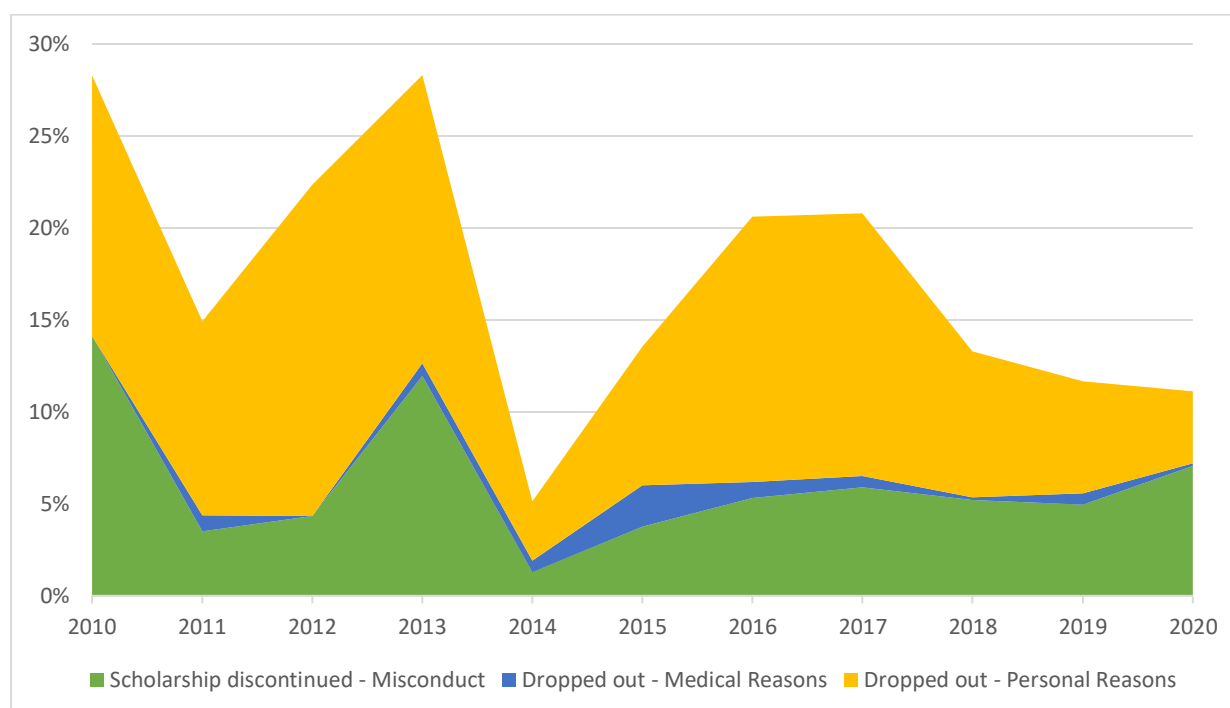
The use of the dropout rate as a measure of effectiveness deserves some additional consideration. High quality higher education institutions tend to be more demanding and, when coupled with language barriers, tend to produce a higher dropout rate (as seen in Turkey with Syrian refugees, where the intrinsic difficulty of some degree courses was also compounded by language barriers). Thus, some level of dropout is structural – probably even healthy – when students enrol in selective courses: aiming for zero dropout is not realistic.

Despite the very impressive performance of DAFI in facilitating graduation and containing dropout, looking at graduation rates alone may leave out important considerations regarding the quality of the tertiary education that DAFI students are receiving, especially in low-resource contexts. The evaluation thus also explored the quality of undergraduate courses in both the refugee survey and in most key informant interviews with both students and implementing partners, especially in low-resource settings. Key informant interviews in focus countries highlighted that implementing partners were sometimes presented with a trade-off: enrolling fewer students in high-quality, high-tuition institutions or maximising the number of scholarships for higher education institutions of slightly lower academic standing and lower costs. Pressed by the large unmet needs, several implementing partners chose the latter option. By and large, this strategy seemed quite successful: about 73 per cent of DAFI students expressed positive views on the quality of their courses. Yet this finding is complemented by the fact that DAFI students do not seem to be consistently attending the best available courses in host countries: for example, only 9 per cent of DAFI students in Africa enrolled in programmes at top-ranked African universities. The evaluation cut the list of top African institutions down to the top 30 in a combined ranking based on the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking

and the QS World University Rankings (hereafter, QS).[21] While this cut-off point is admittedly arbitrary, it still showcases the heterogeneity of the capacity of DAFI to place students in top-ranked higher education institutions (see Table 3).

Table 8. DAFI students attending top higher education institutions in Africa, 2014–2020

Higher education institutions	Country	DAFI students enrolled	Share of DAFI students in country	THE rank	QS rank	Avg. rank
University of Cape Town	South Africa	10	8%	1	1	1
University of Witwatersrand	South Africa	5	4%	2	2	2
Stellenbosch University	South Africa	3	2%	2	5	3.5
University of KwaZulu-Natal	South Africa	8	7%	5	8	6.5
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	13	13%	4	10	7
University of Ibadan	Nigeria	2	4%	6	10	8
Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia	3	<1%	6	10	8
Aswan University	Egypt	0	-	6	10	8
Durban University of Technology	South Africa	7	6%	6	10	8
Mansoura University	Egypt	20	4%	10	10	10
North-West University	South Africa	0	-	10	10	10
University of Nairobi	Kenya	186	25%	10	10	10
Suez Canal University	Egypt	12	2%	10	10	10
Ferhat Abbas Sétif University 1	Algeria	0	-	10	10	10
Kafrelsheikh University	Egypt	9	2%	10	10	10
University of Lagos	Nigeria	0	-	10	10	10
University of Johannesburg	South Africa	22	18%	17	4	10.5
Cairo University	Egypt	107	22%	17	6	11.5
University of Pretoria	South Africa	0	-	17	6	11.5
Makerere University	Uganda	70	12%	17	10	13.5
University of the Western Cape	South Africa	12	12%	17	10	13.5
American University in Cairo	Egypt	0	-	24	3	13.5
Covenant University	Nigeria	0	-	17	10	13.5
Oran 1 University	Algeria	7	3%	17	10	13.5
Ain Shams University	Egypt	94	19%	33	8	20.5
Alexandria University	Egypt	74	15%	33	8	20.5
Kwame Nkrumah University Science & Technology	Ghana	8	8%	33	10	21.5
Rhodes University	South Africa	1	1%	40	8	24
University of Casablanca Hassan 2	Morocco	9	9%	40	10	25
Mohammed V University	Morocco	4	4%	40	10	25

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[21] Both rankings are from 2020. Data retrieved from https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings and https://www.qs.com/rankings/

Times Higher Education (THE) has been providing highly regarded performance data on universities since 2004 and is considered to be one of the most trusted university ranking sources. Its global ranking uses 13 performance indicators grouped into five broad categories: 1. Teaching, which focuses on the learning environment (30 per cent); 2. Research volume, income and reputation (30 per cent); 3. Citations, or the research influence (30 per cent); 4. International outlook of staff, students and research (7.5 per cent); and 5. Industry income, or knowledge transfer (2.5 per cent). THE rankings include more than 1,600 universities across 99 countries. QS is viewed as similar to THE and is also often used by students, academics, university leaders and governments. Since the two methodologies are different, they are considered together to achieve a well-rounded understanding of how universities rank globally, which is a somewhat subjective measure. The QS report uses six simple metrics: academic reputation (40 per cent), employer reputation (10 per cent), faculty/student ratio (20 per cent), citations per faculty (20 per cent), international faculty ratio (5 per cent) and international student ratio (5 per cent). The QS rankings include 1,300 universities globally.

Given the varying quality of the courses on offer, some tough calls had to be made by the implementing partners to balance the DAFI commitment to excellence with the affordability of degrees and the entry requirements of top higher education institutions. The Egypt and South Africa DAFI Programmes were the most effective at enrolling DAFI students in top-ranked higher education institutions. It is also worth noting that most of the ranked Universities are public.

The country operation in South Africa adopted an interesting mechanism to give students more agency to choose high-quality, high-tuition degrees. The scheme allowed students to dip into their allocation for housing/spending money to top-up the allowance for tuition fees (source: key informant interviews with the implementing partner and with students). While this approach means students may opt to work part-time, which may present a risk to completion or academic performance, it may also result in increased agency, quality and relevance of the degree to the job market.

Table 9. Country operation placing students in top higher education institutions in Africa, 2014–2020 (DAFI student database)

Country	Number of top-30 African higher education institutions in the country	% of DAFI students enrolled in top-30 African higher education institutions
Egypt	8	74%
South Africa	9	58%
Kenya	1	25%
Ghana	2	21%
Morocco	2	13%
Uganda	1	12%

"Studying in a top African university in Uganda makes a difference. I feel connected and exposed to the best available education"

Male DAFI student

"As a girl studying in a prestigious University in South Africa, I have become a role model in my community. Younger girls come ask me for advice on how to get a degree".

Female DAFI graduate

The evaluation found a high variance in the participation of young refugee women across countries. Although the programme and policy guidelines stipulate that 50 per cent of scholarships should be awarded to young refugee women, this has not taken place. Globally, the percentage of female applicants is slightly increasing, yet it remains below 50 per cent; yearly awards to female applicants hovers around 40 per cent.

Figure 5. Share of applications from girls (left) and scholarships awarded to girls (right), 2017 to 2020
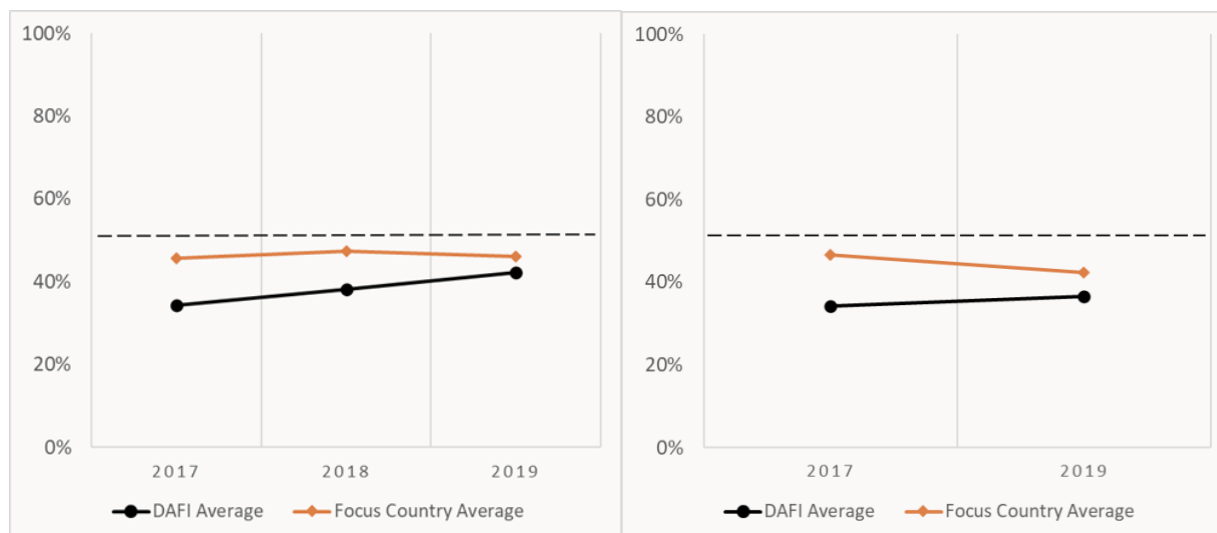
"DAFI was my only hope. I am forever in debt for the opportunity that DAFI opened for me"

Female DAFI graduate

DAFI has seen some success in increasing the number of female applicants, but the award of scholarships is not yet fully equitable: the participation of girls has been fluctuating around 40 per cent since 2014. This phenomenon is mainly caused by high dropout rates in refugee girls in secondary education, which triggers a lower representation of girls in the pool of eligible candidates for scholarships. A breakdown that highlights the country-level variation in the participation of girls is illustrated in the following table. Countries in which girls' participation was consistently less than 40 per cent are highlighted in red.

Table 10. Share of female students supported (largest DAFI operations, 2014–2020, DAFI student database)

Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ethiopia	41%	34%	28%	25%	22%	17%	16%
Kenya	31%	32%	32%	28%	29%	27%	24%
Jordan	61%	63%	58%	58%	58%	59%	60%
Turkey	67%	49%	43%	44%	42%	42%	42%
Pakistan	24%	25%	24%	16%	16%	22%	N/A

Iran	60%	62%	63%	62%	61%	64%	63%
Uganda	34%	36%	37%	34%	34%	34%	34%
Egypt	50%	64%	51%	53%	53%	51%	48%
Rwanda	48%	43%	41%	31%	29%	29%	29%
Iraq	N/A	N/A	60%	59%	57%	58%	59%
Lebanon	55%	49%	50%	52%	56%	59%	60%
Senegal	29%	36%	38%	36%	33%	39%	33%
Algeria	64%	63%	66%	54%	52%	62%	60%
Burundi	29%	32%	30%	22%	23%	31%	32%
Chad	24%	25%	27%	33%	35%	39%	39%
India	39%	38%	47%	43%	41%	42%	44%
Cameroon	35%	30%	30%	30%	34%	33%	38%
Sudan	68%	68%	66%	68%	68%	57%	58%
Mauritania	30%	56%	23%	21%	22%	21%	21%
Tanzania	28%	32%	43%	37%	25%	24%	39%
S. Africa	38%	39%	45%	42%	38%	41%	44%
Average	**43%**	**42%**	**44%**	**41%**	**41%**	**40%**	**40%**

An analysis of country operations that are positive deviant for the participation and retention of girls, complemented by a literature review, has yielded a summary of promising practices that have potential for replication to improve gender equity. The following box contains a summary of all promising practices identified, categorized by the stage of participation in DAFI. The evaluator expects "positive interaction" effects to take place if multiple good practices are adopted in a country simultaneously; in other words, benefits are likely to positively reinforce each other if multiple good practices are implemented in a bundle.

"I applied three times before getting the scholarship. I did not give up".

Female DAFI student

Box 1. Promising practices to improve the participation of female students in DAFI

Stage	Promising practice identified	Reference/Source
Before/during application	Conducting outreach in the refugee community leveraging schools, parents and religious leaders to drive change in social norms regarding the importance of higher education for girls.	DAFI Annual Report 2018 (Burundi) and DAFI Annual Report 2019 (Pakistan); implementing partner survey Rwanda; implementing partner key informant interviews Mali
	Engaging directly with community leaders to encourage them to keep their girls in higher education	implementing partner survey Rwanda, implementing partner survey Cameroon; implementing partner key informant interviews Mali

	Building long-term relationships with trusted local organizations, especially community-based organizations and religious organizations that can help in identifying and interviewing marginalized female students	GEM report 2018; implementing partner key informant interviews Mali
	Facilitating female-led support networks and clubs for young girls (reading clubs, cultural clubs, etc.) involving female DAFI scholars as role models (this could be done via the civic engagement component of DAFI: female students could support the implementing partner by participating in female-led support networks for female applicants)	Damaschke-Deitrick, Galegher & Park (2019), implementing partner key informant interviews Mali
	Ensuring that female representatives are available throughout the application process (e.g. female hotline operator, designated email contact for female students, etc.).	DAFI Annual Report 2019 – Afghanistan; Damaschke-Deitrick, Galegher & Park (2019)
	Leveraging existing women's networks in the community to share information about the DAFI Programme and encourage girls to continue their education.	implementing partner survey India; implementing partner key informant interviews Mali
	Explicitly stating in the call for applications that girls are encouraged to apply even if they believe they do not meet the requirements.	implementing partner survey Jordan
	Performing needs assessments in the different refugee communities in order to identify the most significant barriers and find the solutions that best fit each context.	implementing partner survey Ethiopia; implementing partner key informant interviews Mali
	Monitoring the progress of promising female high school students in refugee communities and encouraging them to apply for DAFI via tailored messaging.	implementing partner key informant interviews Mali
	Organizing community events with theme-based games, activities and prizes (e.g. on world refugee day), to raise awareness of education possibilities and give visibility to graduate refugee girls as role models.	implementing partner key informant interviews Mali
	Piloting the provision of scholarships to high-performing refugee girls in their last year of high school who face financial hardship.	key informant interviews with implementing partners in Pakistan and Ethiopia

	Supporting the initiatives of women's rights organizations/refugee grassroots organizations to help refugee girls complete secondary education and apply for DAFI	key informant interviews with implementing partners in multiple countries
During selection	DAFI selection committee/selection panels with at least 35 per cent representation of women are better balanced and more likely to produce gender-balanced pools of beneficiaries.	Checchi, Cicognani & Kulic (2019); Teherani et al. (2020)
	Considering gender-related vulnerability as well as academic excellence during selection: whenever the academic performance of two candidates is comparable, choose the one most likely to be affected by gender-related vulnerability.	key informant interview with implementing partner in Ecuador; implementing partner survey Jordan
	Slightly lowering academic admission criteria for female applicants (i.e. thresholds for grades, test scores, etc.) to expand the number of eligible girls.	key informant interviews with implementing partner in Burundi; implementing partner survey South Africa; implementing partner survey Ethiopia; Teherani et al. (2020)
	Expanding the age requirement to include more female students among the eligible students.	implementing partner survey Namibia; implementing partner survey Niger
While studying	Pairing female scholars with female academic advisors or ensuring that any staff working with female students are trained in gender sensitivity.	Fisher et al. 2020
	Holding a gender sensitization course for incoming scholars: encouraging girls to take space and speak during class and making sure that they know the importance of their own education.	implementing partner survey Rwanda
	Encouraging higher education institutions to adopt family-friendly policies that are supportive of women's roles as wives and mothers, i.e. maternity leave, on-site or subsidized childcare, extension of academic deadlines, remedial courses for missed lessons, etc.	Fisher et al. 2020; implementing partner questionnaire in Chad

	Proactively addressing gender imbalances in certain fields of study: i.e. offering remedial programmes/learning support for women entering certain STEM courses that are more commonly taken by men.	Odaga (2020); key informant interview with implementing partner in Uganda
	Providing female students with targeted academic support to ensure their continuing progress; proactively identifying students at risk and providing targeted support according to personalized action plans.	implementing partner survey Ecuador; implementing partner survey Egypt; implementing partner survey Rwanda
	Providing timely, gender-sensitive counselling as soon as signs of distress or suboptimal academic performance arise.	Odaga (2020); key informant interviews with students in Turkey
Transition to work	Monitoring gender parity in the provision of internships under DAFI more effectively and taking corrective action as needed.	Secondary data analysis
	Working with humanitarian partner NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) to facilitate access to internships/volunteer work for female DAFI graduates.	implementing partner survey in Chad; several key informant interviews with UNHCR staff
	Establishing effective referral mechanisms to refer female DAFI graduates to trained career counsellors.	implementing partner survey Jordan

(E2) How and to what extent did DAFI contribute to its beneficiaries (a) engaging in the development of their communities, (b) becoming role models in refugee communities, (c) maintaining a positive outlook on life and (d) developing positive views on peace, non-discrimination and gender equality, and against radicalization?

Key findings:

About 70 per cent of DAFI students invested in their communities via volunteerism, with anecdotal yet consistent evidence of positive contributions to community development.

About 88 per cent of implementing partners agree that refugees are regarded as role models in their communities by other refugee children and youth. Key informant interviews with students highlighted that they became role models firstly by the very fact of joining the scheme, which has a reputation of excellence; secondly, by attending prestigious universities; and thirdly, by completing projects that create social value through the civic engagement experience.

The average DAFI student maintains a mildly positive outlook on life despite the challenging circumstances in which they live; this is especially true of girls generally, and of boy and girl students living in camps/settlements, who regard DAFI as a source of hope for their future.

DAFI students share largely favourable opinions towards gender equality and democracy, and against discrimination or radicalization, but the evaluation did not find any clear, direct evidence of DAFI contributing to improving such views.

(a) Community engagement (volunteering) is viewed positively by the implementing partners: 82 per cent of them agree that the component adds significant value to the programme, while 71 per cent of them agree that experience in civic engagement can be a substitute for entry-level work whenever refugees experience limitations in accessing labour markets. Key informant interviews with refugees provided anecdotal evidence that a minority of DAFI students felt that they had obtained part-time jobs or become more employable because of the skills that they had acquired through unstructured volunteering.

The following tables present a brief analysis of civic engagement among DAFI students and graduates.[22]

Table 11. Participation of DAFI students in civic engagement activities, by type and gender (refugee survey, 2021); 816 respondents

Country	Unstructured engagement		Structured engagement		No engagement	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Jordan	50%	35%	52%	46%	33%	38%
Lebanon	77%	50%	69%	54%	-	25%
Uganda	81%	50%	45%	39%	10%	22%
Egypt	27%	12%	27%	18%	64%	74%
Ecuador	31%	7%	63%	30%	31%	63%
Rwanda	57%	50%	64%	33%	7%	25%
Pakistan	56%	67%	34%	33%	34%	-
South Africa	52%	69%	48%	15%	13%	31%

About one third of students globally were not involved in civic engagement activities, and female beneficiaries were generally less engaged than males.[23] Unstructured civic engagement, namely individual, occasional, non-organized activities such as helping children with homework or caring for the elderly, is more common than engagement within structured, collective organizations (e.g. as a member, volunteer or supporter of a non-governmental organization working to improve social outcomes). There was significant variation across countries, with Egypt and Ecuador facing the most challenges in supporting structured engagement. Structured, goal-oriented activities aligned with students' personal or career goals appears to be the ideal scenario. Key informant interviews with implementing partners revealed that implementing and monitoring the civic engagement component is resource-intensive, particularly in terms of developing a range of choices of civic engagement opportunities that are relevant to students' objectives and monitoring

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[22] Since it is possible for a student to engage in both structured and unstructured civic engagement activities, the percentages do not add up to 100 per cent. The percentages should be read in the following way: in Jordan, 50 per cent of male respondents engaged in unstructured activities while 35 per cent of female respondents engaged in unstructured activities.
[23] The COVID-19 pandemic was obviously a factor in reducing civic engagement activities.

the results of both structured and unstructured civic engagement. In Jordan, the implementing partner is building up a menu of volunteering opportunities for students. Key informant interviews revealed that only a few implementing partners are capable of identifying volunteering opportunities and matching them to students with ease, while providing the necessary monitoring.

(b) <u>DAFI as role models:</u> 88 per cent of implementing partners agree that refugees are regarded as role models in their communities by other refugee children and youth. Key informant interviews with students (Jordan) and implementing partners (Chad and Lebanon) highlighted that they became role models in refugee communities by following three pathways[24]: firstly and most commonly, by the very fact of joining the scheme, which has a reputation of excellence; secondly, by attending prestigious universities; and thirdly, less commonly, through the civic engagement experience, where their contribution to the community is visible to other refugee children and youth.

> *"As a woman studying engineering, a field that is male dominated, this scholarship helped me become self-confident. I now feel that I am able to do anything that I put on my mind".*
>
> *Female DAFI student*

> *"I feel a strong will to give back to the refugee community once I am in full-time employment, and I most definitely will"*
>
> *Female DAFI student*

(c) <u>Happiness/outlook on life/life satisfaction:</u> DAFI beneficiaries more commonly describe themselves as "happy" than "unhappy" (Figure 6) and tend to maintain positive levels of life satisfaction (Table 12) alongside a mildly positive outlook on life, despite the challenging circumstances in which they live (Table 13). While the evaluation design does not permit the contribution of DAFI to be isolated from other factors, key informant interviews confirmed that DAFI was a source of hope for the future and happiness in the present, which translates to a better outlook on life, especially for girls and students in camps, as illustrated in Table 13.

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[24] Key informant interviews with students revealed that the first two pathways were more common.

Figure 6. Levels of happiness (refugee survey, 2021, 1,087 respondents), based on the question: "Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, somewhat happy, neither happy nor unhappy, somewhat unhappy or very unhappy?"
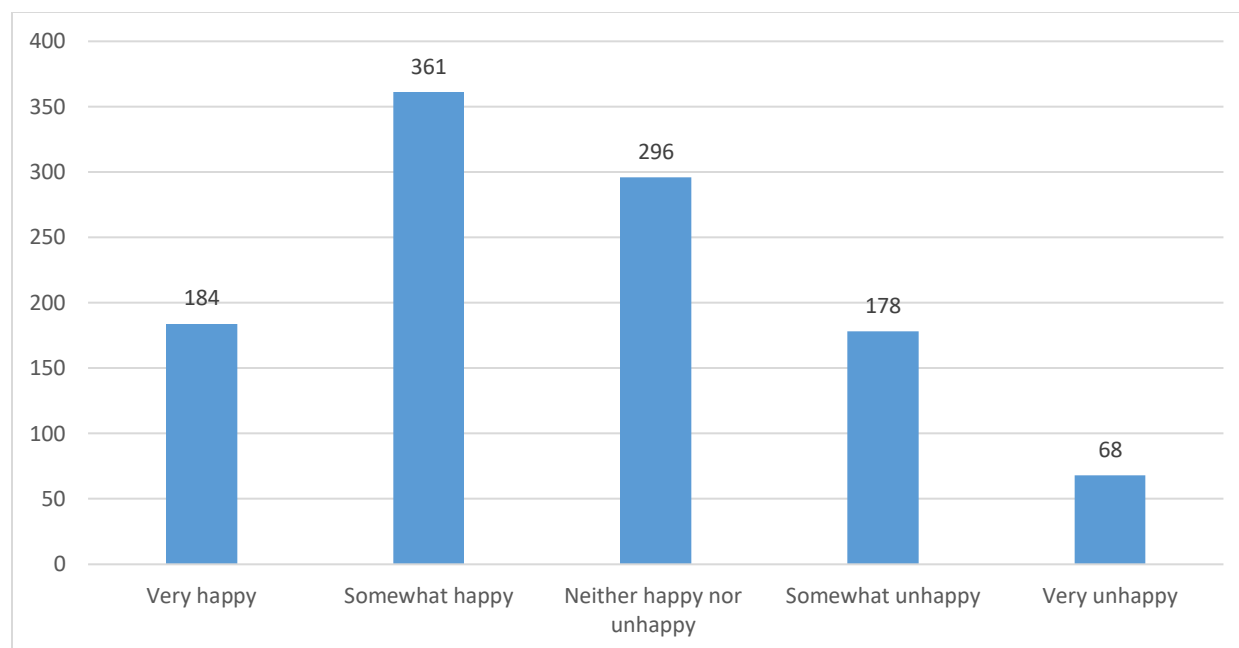
Table 12. Levels of life satisfaction, by country, by gender (1,088 respondents, refugee survey, 2021), based on the question: "Compared to this time last year, would you say that your life has improved, stayed more or less the same, or worsened?"

	Worsened		Stayed the same		Improved	
Country	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Jordan	20%	7%	20%	21%	60%	72%
Lebanon	8%	19%	46%	9%	46%	72%
Uganda	-	-	15%	-	85%	100%
Egypt	12%	10%	21%	21%	67%	69%
Ecuador	6%	-	25%	8%	69%	92%
Rwanda	4%	-	19%	8%	77%	92%
Pakistan	-	11%	25%	11%	75%	67%
South Africa	-	7%	15%	7%	83%	85%

Table 13. Outlook on life, per country/location (1,088 respondents, refugee survey, 2021), based on the question: "one year from now, do you expect that your life will be better, will be more or less the same, or will be worse?"

Country	Worsened			Stayed the same			Improved		
	Urban	Rural	Camp	Urban	Rural	Camp	Urban	Rural	Camp
Jordan	14%	-	20%	20%	26%	15%	65%	74%	65%
Lebanon	11%	22%	-	32%	6%	-	58%	67%	100%
Uganda	-	-	-	13%	-	8%	87%	100%	93%
Egypt	12%	-	-	17%	50%	50%	70%	50%	50%
Ecuador	3%	-	-	14%	-	-	81%	100%	-
Rwanda	-	-	2%	10%	-	17%	90%	100%	78%
Pakistan	-	-	-	18%	13%	25%	82%	75%	75%
South Africa	3%	-	-	9%	50%	-	88%	50%	-

(d) <u>Views in favour of peace, non-discrimination and gender equality, and against radicalization</u>: the evaluation conducted a comparison between shortlisted candidates and graduates whose country of origin was Syria, this being the most common country of origin of respondents. Limiting the analysis to only Syrian scholars made it possible to eliminate country-specific influences from respondents' opinions. The analysis further grouped Syrian scholars by parental education levels and gender. Comparing average scores, the evaluation found no evidence that participation in the DAFI programme contributed to changes in views on peace, non-discrimination or gender equality, either among Syrians or among other refugees. The research design within which the refugee survey was administered is unsuited to isolating the effect of the DAFI programme on sociopolitical views. This KEQ should be investigated more thoroughly within a more sophisticated longitudinal research design and with more specific questions, in order to be better able to isolate causality.

<u>Overall, DAFI students largely favour gender equality and democracy and are against discrimination,</u> with a measure of variation in opinions between the sexes: females consistently have more favourable views than males. Conversely, females conveyed more rigidity on religious matters and expressed slightly less liberal political views. The responses highlighted elements of rigidity among respondents when religion and science were juxtaposed.

Table 14 compares average scores on several statements, recoded with higher values expressing agreement with the statement and lower values expressing disagreement.

Table 14. Degree of agreement of DAFI beneficiaries with various statements (refugee survey 2021, 898 respondents; figures in red represent statistically significant differences between gender)

Statement	Average score [Female]	Average score [Male]
A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl.	1.28	1.54
On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do	1.87	2.26
On the whole, men make better business executives than women do	1.59	2.10

When jobs are scarce, people with disabilities should have less right to a job than those without disabilities	1.79	1.87
Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right	3.27	2.96
The only acceptable religion is my religion	2.51	2.28
A husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she goes out without telling him	1.02	1.06
A husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she argues with him	1.01	1.04
The country should have a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections	1.93	1.91
The country should be ruled by the army	2.15	1.89
The country should have a democratic political system, with a functioning parliament and elections	1.32	1.31
The country should be governed by religious laws, without political parties or elections	2.24	2.01

Access to higher education via DAFI seems to represent only one of many factors driving the formation of young refugees' views on forms of government, social inclusion, etc. Key informant interviews with refugees confirmed that participation in DAFI increases political awareness, agency and empowerment. Complex processes are at play, however, and a longitudinal study should be undertaken to further examine and understand this aspect.

Box 2. A case study of Congolese DAFI students in Rwanda

Becoming young intellectuals[25]

This case study examines how DAFI students from the Democratic Republic of Congo attending Rwandan universities negotiate their identities as "highly educated persons" in camps. The case study's key findings are:

- The desire not to disappoint family occupies an important place for DAFI scholars.

- Highly educated refugees intend to become "someone helpful" to the community.

- Although secondary education was difficult to access in the camps, it provided a vision for the future. In addition, education allowed refugees to change their personal image and identity from one of victimhood and pity to one of empowerment and intelligence.

- Students faced discrimination at universities and did not want their refugee status to be known to their classmates for fear that it would be used against them.

- DAFI scholars became positive moral entrepreneurs in the camps, encouraging changes to norms and behaviour to improve the lives of those in the camp.

- Education helps refugees master "essential attributes" for entrepreneurship: brokerage, engaging with others on an equal footing, expressing one's opinion in public or against people higher in the social hierarchy and speaking foreign languages fluently.

- Students have political ambitions, feel the importance of connecting refugee young people with the history of their country of origin, and have a claim to "national belonging".

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[25] Based on Fert, M. (2020). 'Becoming an intellectual': how Congolese refugee university-students in Rwanda negotiate ideals, expectations and social positionality. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *18*(3), 317-329.

- DAFI scholars reclaim their right to political activism and push against any form of de-historicization and de-politicization, rejecting the perspective of becoming apolitical.

(E3) What, if any, generalizable lessons can be found to improve the effectiveness, design and implementation of DAFI as well as other UNHCR interventions complementary to DAFI in tertiary education?

Lesson 1. DAFI did not always keep students learning during COVID-19 related university closures. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the world with unprecedented challenges, which have accelerated the transformation of education. Key informant interviews with DAFI students confirmed that it was hard to find ways to make virtual learning as rich as in-person learning. It should be noted that DAFI students continued to receive their scholarship living allowance throughout the pandemic-related closures, whereas it is not known what support non-DAFI students received, if any. In low-income countries, the already difficult challenge of providing proper support for students was compounded by parallel crises and students highlighted that the mandatory shift to online education resulted in several lessons learned:

(a) DAFI students faced significant challenges in online-only instruction: inadequate access to devices, limited access to the Internet, difficulty navigating the online environment that some higher education institutions had set up in a rush, and low-quality online instruction delivered by university lecturers who were not fully prepared for a sudden switch to online teaching. For example, only one implementing partner, in Jordan, was sufficiently prepared and resourced to lend laptops to DAFI students.

(b) There are several models for higher education that have shown significant potential to deliver; however, generally at a higher cost than the DAFI programme. These may represent a model for UNHCR to expand or adapt to other contexts characterized by prolonged university closures or long-term encampment and to document for replication in other settings.

(c) Over-reliance on large-scale provision of devices has been a weakness of early EdTech programmes, yet in the case of DAFI, increased access to devices could help to improve students' learning experience. UNHCR should assess the value of access to devices as an integral part of DAFI going forward.

(d) Online-only degree courses underdelivered in Ecuador, where several students either dropped out or expressed dissatisfaction with online-only degree courses; this contrasts the positive feedback shared by students enrolled in courses delivered in-person in the same country. Conversely, in several countries, such as in Lebanon, students expressed positive feedback for online-only short courses on skills development (e.g. CV writing, Excel, communication in the workplace, etc.). These findings suggest the need for further investigation in this area.

"We need to have allowances that reflect our needs for electricity and accessing the Internet. Studying has become very hard after the university closed due to COVID".

Male DAFI student

Even before COVID-19, we had a person studying IT who could not afford a computer. We wondered what he could learn in IT without access to a device"

Lesson 2. When implementing directly, UNHCR may not have been as effective as local implementing partners in providing students with tailored, consistent monitoring and support**.** In countries in which UNHCR is implementing directly, several implementing partners as well as some students expressed the feeling that UNHCR is able to provide more minimal tailored, consistent monitoring and support. For example, in Turkey, where UNHCR implements the DAFI programme for non-Syrian students[26], the evaluation found gaps in monitoring and in ensuring adequate and timely follow-up to the needs of scholars. Conversely, cross-country evidence has highlighted that when the implementing partner is a national NGO it tends to provide more extensive case management and counselling (Chad, Jordan and South Africa stand out in that respect), since it can: (a) typically avail itself of more staff for more time for case management and timely, personalized follow-up, (b) have a more practical understanding of local dynamics and of the constraints faced by refugee students and (c) consistently deliver at lower cost than UNHCR operations.

"I really appreciated the flexibility that the NGO implementing DAFI gave us here in Jordan"

Female DAFI student

Lesson 3. Financial assistance to students should be timely and sufficient to allow for relocation. In both the key informant interviews and the implementing partner survey, the implementing partners claimed that UNHCR does not always transfer DAFI funds within the deadlines set by higher education institutions for the enrolment of students. The finding was confirmed in key informant interviews with students; key informant interviews with both implementing partner and UNHCR focal points also pointed out that sometimes delays are caused by late submission of documentation on behalf of students.

In Ecuador and Pakistan, for instance, UNHCR has sometimes transferred scholarship budgets after the enrolment deadlines for new students, sometimes hampering enrolment. Several students from different sub-Saharan African country operations complained of delays in the transfer of their allowances; several students raised issue with the fact that the financial support received under DAFI was not sufficient to allow

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[26] The DAFI programme in Turkey is facilitated through two implementing tracks: 1. Syrians residing in Turkey under UNHCR temporary protection (TP) status. This status provides access for TP holders to documentation, health care, education and other forms of social protection through state services. Syrian students under TP status are also included in the nationality-based student enrolment tracking system in Turkey. This programme is implemented by the government-affiliated Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). 2. Turkey also hosts a large number of persons from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Somalia under international protection status. UNHCR does not, however, apply the same access criteria to these nationalities, as persons coming from countries other than Syrian can also be registered under different status, such as migrants. As such, UNHCR directly implements the DAFI programme for non-Syrian students.

for relocation from camps/settlements to places/cities of study despite this being explicitly envisaged in the DAFI Programme and policy guidelines.

> *"Sometimes the money comes two months late. Some students just cannot afford to wait. We need to think of a better way to transfer the allowances".*
>
> *Female DAFI student*

> *"Sometimes allowances are delayed, and I can only afford low-quality food; this is odd for me since I am studying nutrition, and I know that I am putting low-quality foods in my body"*
>
> *Male DAFI student*

Lesson 4. Programme accountability, especially at the outcome level, should be better defined.

Key informant interviews with UNHCR staff and implementing partners revealed varying interpretations of the "programmatic identity" of DAFI across countries. Some focal points regarded the programme as being largely accountable for the provision of degrees; others believed that DAFI should be accountable for the transition of its graduates into employment. This lack of shared understanding is also a consequence of insufficient contextualization of the broad DAFI strategic objectives at country level, reflecting a preference for decentralized programme design, according to the aims and demands of each country context.

3.3   Coherence

(C1) To what extent does the DAFI Programme leverage (a) the UNHCR operation and (b) the wider tertiary education system in the country of reference to deliver results in terms of the refugee inclusion agenda?

Key findings:

DAFI leverages UNHCR country operations to realize the scholarship's potential for advocacy for the inclusion of refugees in higher education. DAFI gives UNHCR country operations a "programmatic backbone" in higher education, around which each country operation can build its advocacy efforts. However, aside from advocacy efforts, coordination with both UNHCR and non-UNHCR programmes in secondary education or youth employment is not systematized. Given the strength of the DAFI programme, this is an area that should be capitalized on and improved. This is partly due to the fact that UNHCR country operations do not have a dedicated, full-time higher education officer, which hinders the design and implementation of technically grounded, coherent programmatic actions in higher education. DAFI country operations have limited clout to influence the wider tertiary education system: high-level policy changes to deliver results in refugee inclusion typically cannot be achieved without sustained and multi-pronged interventions that go above and beyond the simple provision of scholarships; nonetheless,

at country level, DAFI has been successfully leveraged to engage with higher education institutions in order to negotiate reductions in tuition fees for refugees and to design other scholarship schemes. DAFI programmes should be further leveraged to raise the profile of refugees' secondary and higher education needs at country level with donors and other stakeholders.

(a) To investigate programmatic coherence, the evaluation studied the extent to which UNHCR staff consider linkages with DAFI when designing or implementing initiatives targeting refugees in the 16–30 age bracket. The rationale is that programmatic coherence can only arise if programme staff routinely operate programmatic linkages with DAFI. In other words, if in-country programme staff do not consider linkages between DAFI and other interventions in the portfolio, DAFI will operate in a silo, without leveraging the UNHCR country operation or vice versa. The UNHCR staff survey found average levels of programmatic coherence despite evidence of widespread knowledge of DAFI functioning among programme staff, coupled with positive, even if limited, evidence of engagement with DAFI on the part of senior management. The programme has delivered its stated objectives successfully, but to further extend the positive impact of the programme, better integration of the DAFI programme with other interventions – secondary education and livelihoods approaches, for example – could be prioritized. Limited human resource capacity for higher education in UNHCR operations at country level diminishes the potential for full utilization of positive linkages with the DAFI programme and the potential to build on existing good practices.

The degree of agreement with the statements in the following table was explored using a five-point Likert scale: options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher values express agreement with the statement; lower values express disagreement; a value of 3 represents neutrality. Average scores between 3 and 4 can be interpreted as very mild evidence of programmatic coherence.

Table 15. Programmatic coherence: degree of agreement with selected statements (UNHCR staff survey)

Statement	Average score
In my country operation, whenever a new programme for refugees aged 16–30 is *designed*, linkages with the DAFI programme are routinely considered.	3.7
In my country operation, whenever a new programme for refugees aged 16–30 is *implemented*, linkages with the DAFI programme are routinely considered.	3.8
My colleagues working on programmes are aware of how the DAFI programme works and what its target group is.	4.5
Senior management in my country operation is actively engaged with the DAFI programme mission and results.	4.1

The evaluation tested the extent to which DAFI leveraged the UNHCR country operation via both key informant interviews with country-level focal points and the UNHCR staff survey. Firstly, the key informant interviews highlighted the fact that coordination with UNHCR programmes in youth employment or secondary education is not systematized, which is an area for improvement. Secondly, it emerged that DAFI leverages the wider UNHCR country operations as an entry point for advocating the inclusion of refugees in higher education: this took place in several countries (list not exhaustive):

- UNHCR Cameroon conducted several advocacy activities at the level of the Ministry of Higher Education for the inclusion of refugees in the national education system. This resulted in the

Minister of Higher Education requesting that heads of higher education institutions in Cameroon consider refugees as Cameroonians when charging university fees.

- In Turkey, implementation of the DAFI Programme on a large scale helped to increase the number of additional scholarships provided by the government.

- Several operations (e.g. Somalia) engage with line Ministries during the DAFI selection process and reach out to senior counterparts (e.g. Directors of higher education departments), highlight the needs of refugee students, the solutions proposed by DAFI and the high academic potential of the candidates.

- UNHCR Lebanon established the Higher Education in Emergencies round table to complement advocacy efforts in higher education. The round table gathers over 40 participants from higher education institutions in Lebanon and abroad, government ministries, donors, United Nations agencies and NGOs, as well as scholarship providers, and works as a coordination platform for aligning programmes, advocacy and initiatives around refugees' access to and inclusion in higher education, in line with both Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and the 15 by 30 initiative.

Lastly, given that few UNHCR country operations have a higher education officer providing dedicated oversight for all higher education activities, extra attention is required to ensure that the programme is well integrated with other UNHCR programmes. Despite the decentralized structure of UNHCR, the DAFI programme remains centrally managed for good reason: the additional management support required to maintain high allocation and resource utilization and to collect and disseminate good practices for DAFI programme implementation and related functions are consolidated into a small team at headquarters supporting the 50+ country programmes, thus eliminating the need for a higher education specialist in each country operation.

(b) Both the UNHCR staff survey and outcome harvesting highlighted the fact that DAFI country operations have limited clout to influence the wider tertiary education system and high-level policy changes to deliver results in refugee inclusion (e.g. reductions in financial barriers faced by refugees, more conducive regulations, simplified recognition of secondary school completion abroad, etc.), which typically cannot be achieved without sustained and multi-pronged interventions that go above and beyond the provision of scholarships. Nonetheless, DAFI provides a strategic entry point for advocacy with Governments, development actors and higher education institutions (see Table 16). At country level, DAFI is more commonly (and more successfully) leveraged to engage with higher education institutions in order to negotiate additional scholarship schemes and reductions in tuition fees for refugees. A good example is Chad, where the UNHCR country operation has a higher education portfolio structured around scholarships, wherein the DAFI implementing partner offers a "menu" of scholarships, leveraging DAFI as the "best in class" model.

The outcome harvesting and key informant interviews did not provide any evidence that UNHCR country operations optimally leveraged DAFI to contribute to shifts in policy or legislative changes. Such changes took place in eight countries but it was not possible to identify clear and decisive evidence of whether DAFI caused or contributed to causing the observed changes. Nonetheless, the evaluation found that DAFI was effective both in negotiating reductions in tuition fees and in obtaining fee waivers with higher education institutions, having done so 33 times in 21 different countries. This might have been aided by the fact of

DAFI being embedded within UNHCR, which elevates its status and creates favourable conditions for signing memorandums of understanding and similar partnership agreements with higher education institutions in order to reduce fees for refugees, which is the main barrier to expanding access.

Table 16. Frequency of outcomes harvested from the DAFI Programme, 2011–2020

Outcome category	Harvested outcomes	Frequency
Policy or legislative changes [at national level]	National fees equated to those for refugees	2
	Govt amended law to allow refugees access to higher education	3
	Govt reduced tuition fees for refugee students	3
	Total	**8**
"Spot" public funding to DAFI students [at the level of higher education institutions]	Govt included refugees in scholarship programme	1
	Reduced fees for DAFI students via public funding	2
	Partial funding for DAFI students via public funding	2
	Total	**5**
Reduction in the fee structure of higher education institutions [at the level of higher education institutions]	National fees applied to refugees	7
	Reduced fees for DAFI students	3
	Reduced fees for refugees	10
	Additional financial support for DAFI students	3
	National fees for DAFI students	6
	Waived tuition fees for DAFI students	4
	Total	**33**

3.4   Impact

(I1) How and to what extent has the DAFI Programme contributed to the transition of its graduates into the labour markets, across countries that guarantee refugees the right to work?

Key findings:

The average NEET rate (i.e. the percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training) of DAFI graduates globally is around 50 per cent. This falls to between 20 per cent and 30 per cent for male graduates in countries like Rwanda and Uganda, where legislation is more favourable to transition to work, and in countries like South Africa, where the labour market features more opportunities and where DAFI students are more likely to graduate from top-ranked universities that may better prepare them for work. Though graduation rates are generally comparable between women and men, female graduates encounter significantly higher barriers than males in the transition to employment and receive significantly lower salaries.

UNHCR assumes responsibility for delivering DAFI as a holistic, best-in-class tertiary scholarship programme: it would be incorrect to hold DAFI accountable for its graduates' transition to work outcomes, particularly since refugees do not enjoy the right to work in the majority of host countries. These outcomes are best conceptualized as an impact-level result that depends crucially on country-specific circumstances such as a country's legal framework and the dynamics of local labour markets.

Figure 7 illustrates the realistic contribution of DAFI to transition to the job market (based on the evaluator's adaptation of several resources from the IRC <u>Outcomes and Evidence Framework</u>[27]). Rather than attempting to offer a change theory, this model illustrates the complexity of pathways to self-reliance to situate the relative contribution of DAFI to transition to work. While DAFI plays a role in skills building, other considerable barriers remain.

The colour scheme illustrates the degree of control exerted by UNHCR over each result:

- Amber: UNHCR has no control over the result; regardless of the effectiveness of the agency in a country operation, the result remains independent of its efforts.

- Yellow: UNHCR has a little control over the result; the agency can realistically expect to have an influence on the result through its interventions, but the relative contribution of that influence may be modest or limited to certain groups.

- Green: UNHCR clearly has some control over the result; the agency has a role to play in influencing the result through its interventions.

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[27] The Outcomes and Evidence Framework is a tool developed by IRC to help reconstruct pathways of change based on the latest impact evaluations, in order to achieve outcomes that are relevant to the lives of refugees. More information is available at oef.rescue.org. The evaluator drew on the Outcomes and Evidence Framework to construct the pathways of change illustrated in Figure 7; specifically, the evaluator used the resources under the Economic Wellbeing section of the Framework and adapted some of the envisioned pathways to fit the reality of the DAFI Programme.

Figure 7. Pathways of change to self-reliance for DAFI graduates

DAFI graduates generate sufficient income to be self-reliant

DAFI graduates are gainfully employed in decent work

DAFI graduates are successfully self-employed

Refugees are legally entitled to work

DAFI graduates have sufficient livelihood inputs / tools to look for work

Refugees have information on job openings and opportunities for employment

Job opportunities exist and are open for refugee women and men

DAFI beneficiaries graduate with the skills and knowledge needed to prepare them for decent work

DAFI graduates have access to capital

DAFI graduates have the skills to manage business inputs, assets and resources

DAFI graduates have access to financial services, [loans, savings account, insurance, etc]

Refugees are legally allowed to own businesses

Business opportunities exist and are open for refugee women and men

Refugees have information on business opportunities, regulations and market functioning

DAFI participants are motivated and willing to learn

DAFI participants have sufficient time and resources to complete their degrees

HEI offer courses that adequately prepare students for entry in labor markets

Communities are supportive of youth undertaking UG studies

Youth access peer support and or mentoring

Youth perceive benefits and returns to learning

DAFI scholarship is large enough to allow for full time or part time study

Assumptions

HEIs do not discriminate against refugees
HEI teachers and instructors have adequate pedagogical skills
HEI teachers and instructors have adequate technical skills
DAFI participants put in sufficient effort towards finishing their UG studies
DAFI is well targeted and reaches the right audience at the right time
The selected HEI for each DAFI participant suits each student's abilities

The pathways described in the diagram are consistent with evidence from key informant interviews and the findings of the refugee survey. Against this backdrop, about 52 per cent of DAFI graduates who responded to the refugee survey are NEET. NEET rates among DAFI graduates are not dramatically different from those in the local populations (see Table 17), at least among males; in several countries they are even lower than the national NEET rates.[28] NEET rates are substantially higher for female graduates, reflecting the intersectionality of gender-related barriers to employment for female refugees. High NEET rates in Jordan and Egypt also reflect regulatory frameworks that restrict access to the formal labour market and are less refugee-friendly than those of Uganda or Rwanda.

Table 17. NEET rates in focus countries, by gender (2020 ILOSTAT and World Bank data for nationals; refugee survey for DAFI graduates, 2021)

Country	Youth NEET rate (nationals)		NEET rate (DAFI graduates)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Jordan	29%	44%	41%	79%
Egypt	16%	40%	57%	89%
South Africa	31%	34%	23%	N/A
Uganda	22%	38%	20%	50%
Rwanda	28%	38%	20%	40%
Chad	16%	28%	N/A[29]	N/A
Turkey	18%	34%	N/A[30]	N/A

"I am confident I will be able to complete my degree with high marks, but there is a lot of discrimination against refugees, so I may have to look for a low-salary job"

Male DAFI student

Caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of the refugee survey:

- a total of 212 graduates responded worldwide, so the sample size at country level is not large;
- since the evaluation had to resort to snowball sampling there is no guarantee that the survey is fully representative of DAFI graduates;
- simply being "in employment" may not mean having a decent job: DAFI graduates may be underemployed or underpaid. While this dataset is unfit to investigate this question, monthly salaries among DAFI graduates do seem low (see figures below). Most DAFI operations have a DAFI alumni network that is used to distribute employment opportunities and other relevant information among the DAFI graduates. However, a monitoring system to track graduates' transition or earning pathways has not been put in place.

Even in the light of these significant limitations, the results can be interpreted in an encouraging way: despite all difficulties, about half of DAFI graduates seem to be in education, employment or training.

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[28] ILOSTAT uses 15 to 24-year-olds (inclusive) for its youth NEET rate, while the refugee survey for DAFI graduates uses 22 to 30-year-olds (inclusive). While these indicators are consequently not strictly speaking comparable, they represent the best available benchmark for comparing refugees with nationals.
[29] DAFI beneficiaries in Chad completed a different survey.
[30] Only six DAFI graduates completed the survey in Turkey.

Figure 8. Comparison between actual salaries and the minimum needed salary in focus countries (USD, refugee survey 2021)
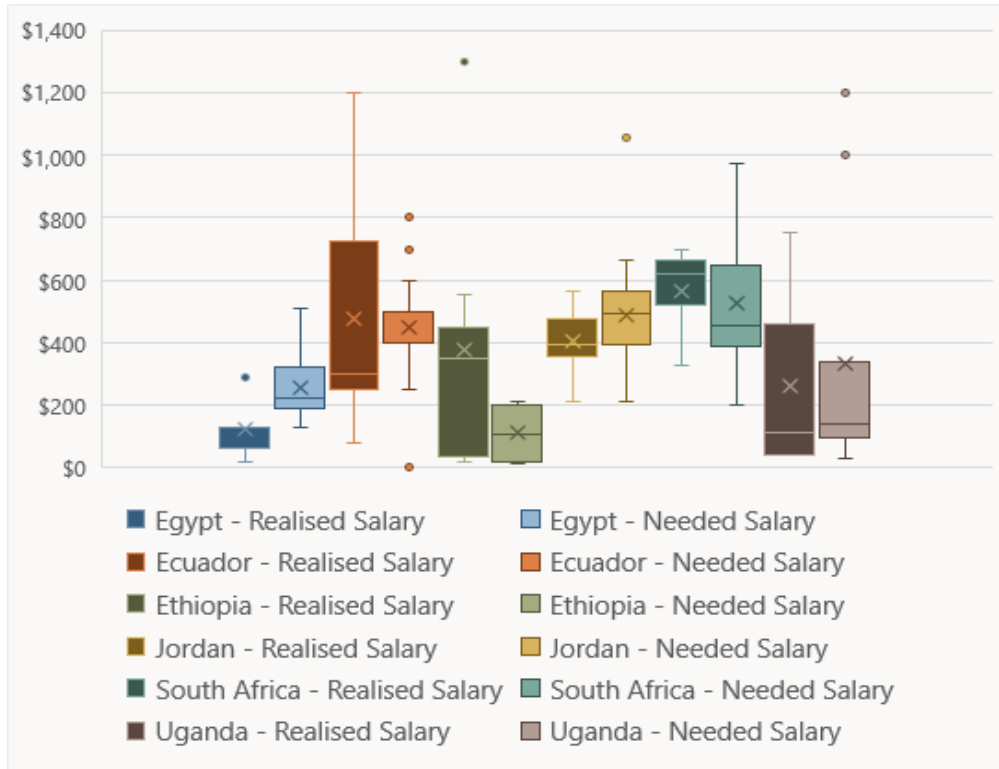
For the three focus countries in which wage data is available, there is an evident large wage differential to the disadvantage of female DAFI graduates:

Figure 9. Wage differential, male vs female graduates in selected focus countries (USD, refugee survey 2021)
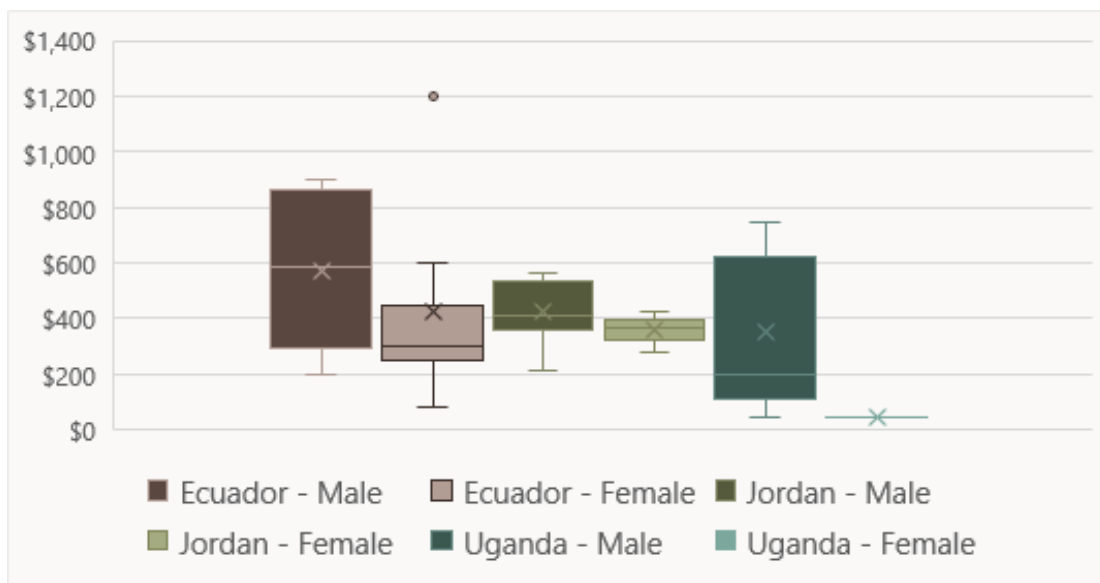
Box 3. Evidence from Rwanda: choosing market-relevant undergraduate courses

While guaranteeing transition to work is too much to ask of DAFI alone, this does not absolve DAFI of responsibility for optimizing the choice of courses available to its beneficiaries according to the needs of the local labour market. Evidence from Rwanda indicates that strategic choices of courses, in line with the requirements of the labour market, can significantly help transition. In the early 2010s, several DAFIs in Rwanda explicitly chose degrees in pharmacy and in information technology based on an analysis of the local job market that indicated that both sectors were short of qualified professionals; a thematic report from UNHCR Rwanda shows that these students were able to find employment shortly after graduation (Segre, 2016).

DAFI graduates report moderate satisfaction regarding the quality of their undergraduate courses and whether they adequately prepared them for the job market. This leads the evaluation to conclude that, all things considered, the balance of relevance and quality of undergraduate degrees has been satisfactory, although there is room for improvement. The questions below were asked using a five-point Likert scale, with options ranging from strong agreement (1) to strong disagreement (5); a value of 3 represents neutrality.

Table 18. Quality of degree and work readiness (refugee survey 2021, DAFI graduates – 218 respondents)

Statement	Average score, male	Average score, female
Was your undergraduate course of good quality?	2.04	2.11
Did your undergraduate course adequately prepare you for the labour market?	2.18	2.34

Box 4 Finding work in refugee camps: evidence from Ethiopia

The Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany, which implements DAFI in Ethiopia, conducted an assessment in 2020 on the socioeconomic status of DAFI graduates in Ethiopia, based on semi-structured interviews administered to 123 DAFI graduates living in camps. About 60 per cent of DAFI graduates had obtained jobs either permanently or on a temporary basis in the camps, which can be considered an encouraging result against the backdrop of a local youth unemployment rate for Ethiopian nationals of close to 30 per cent in urban areas. Consistent with findings from the refugee survey in other countries, the overwhelming majority of DAFI graduates who found work (92 per cent) were male, highlighting very large structural barriers to transition to work for female refugee graduates. The majority of DAFI graduates who found a job were from South Sudan (73 per cent) and they most commonly targeted NGO work (56 per cent) and government jobs (29 per cent); only 15 per cent of graduates hoped to open their own business. Among unemployed DAFI graduates, about 53 per cent identified unavailability of job opportunities as the main reason for unemployment, while 31 per cent of graduates believed that the lack of work permits for refugees was the main reason for being out of work. Most of the unemployed graduates were of Somali origin.

To improve programme impacts, 83 per cent of respondents suggested that DAFI should extend its support to help graduates until they find employment or access further education opportunity schemes, a finding that was confirmed in key informant interviews undertaken by the evaluation in the region (Uganda and Rwanda). The study concludes that DAFI graduates need to upgrade their soft skills and English language proficiency, both to improve work readiness and to capitalize on postgraduate education opportunities.

Finally, it is important to note that in several countries students do work even before the end of their courses. In Ecuador, two thirds of DAFI beneficiaries are working either full-time, part-time, or occasionally. This finding points at two conclusions: (1) the scholarship allowance in Ecuador may be less than students require for basic living expenses, thus providing an incentive for many to work (a finding that was corroborated by qualitative evidence from key informant interviews) and (2) Ecuador provides an enabling environment for transition to work, which is a positive finding from the angle of achieving self-reliance. Since completion rates for Ecuador are quite high, this "balancing" of work and study could be functioning reasonably well. Similar reasoning can be applied in South Africa, where fees for the best ranked higher education institutions are typically expensive and may require students to work part-time. Conversely, in Jordan and Turkey almost no students are working, which reflects both the impact of legal barriers to work and the fact that scholarship allowances are better aligned to the cost of living.[31] This finding may also be influenced by different right to work policies across country contexts.

Table 19. DAFI students currently in employment (countries with >20 total answers, refugee survey 2021)

Country	Full-time	Part-time	Occasional jobs	Not working	Total # of answers
Jordan	2%	5%	5%	89%	66
Turkey	0	2%	9%	89%	53
Egypt	8%	12%	12%	69%	51
Uganda	6%	0	13%	81%	48
Rwanda	2%	0	14%	84%	44
Ecuador	8%	25%	31%	**36%**	36
Lebanon	3%	10%	6%	81%	31
Pakistan	4%	12%	0	84%	25
South Africa	0	9%	27%	64%	22

"I am thankful to DAFI: without financial support I could not study at all – yet the allowance I receive is not sufficient for me to fully focus on my degree"

Male DAFI student

I2) Are there indirect secondary effects of the programme, for example on participation and retention in secondary education, particularly among girls?

Key finding:

Eligibility for DAFI represents an incentive for refugee students to complete secondary education. About 18 per cent of refugees stated that they became aware of DAFI prior to completing secondary school (or having completed secondary school prior to being displaced). Of these, 79 per cent indicated that awareness of their eligibility for DAFI strongly motivated them to complete secondary education. This "pull effect" on completion was stronger for girls and in camps.

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[31] The evaluation had no data on the size of scholarships with which to make a cross-country comparison, but the conclusion that scholarships were slightly more generous in the MENA region was corroborated by anecdotal evidence from key informant interviews.

About 83 per cent of implementing partners indicated that the possibility of being selected for DAFI represented an incentive for refugee students to complete secondary education. Data from the refugee survey confirms this finding. Only about 18 per cent of refugees, however, stated that they became aware of DAFI prior to completing secondary school (also because some refugees were displaced after finishing secondary school). Of these, 79 per cent indicated that awareness of their eligibility for DAFI strongly motivated them to complete secondary education. This "pull effect" on completion was significant among refugees who found out about DAFI in secondary school and was stronger for girls.

Table 20. Pull effect of DAFI awareness on the completion of secondary education (refugee survey 2021)

	Refugees who became aware of DAFI before finishing secondary school	Refugees who felt strongly motivated to complete secondary school (due to awareness of DAFI)
Males	21%	**74%**
Females	15%	**85%**
Total	**18%**	**79%**

The effect is stronger in camps: 34 per cent of encamped refugees stated that they became aware of DAFI before completing secondary education; of these, 88 per cent felt strongly encouraged to complete secondary as a result. This may be linked to the fact that information flows faster in camps, among other factors (e.g. length of time in the camp). Across countries, the effect is clear and varies considerably in size. One key element explaining this variation is the timing of displacement: in Ecuador: Venezuelan refugees are a recently displaced refugee population compared to refugee populations in Uganda, Jordan or Rwanda, who have typically been displaced for longer and are thus more likely to have been sensitized regarding DAFI; also, the fact that DAFI has been running for longer in Uganda, Jordan and Rwanda than in Ecuador has no doubt been a factor in creating an enabling environment for the pull effect.

Table 21. Pull effect by country (refugee survey 2021 – highest values in green, lowest in red)

Country	Refugees who became aware of DAFI before finishing secondary school	Refugees who felt strongly motivated to complete secondary school (due to awareness of DAFI)
Turkey	12%	71%
Jordan	42%	69%
Uganda	58%	**80%**
Rwanda	54%	**89%**
South Africa	22%	**100%**
Ecuador	**9%**	**33%**

Figures on the pull effect should not be interpreted as pertaining to the national level; rather, the pull effect can be expected in communities that have been sensitized regarding DAFI or where DAFI is well known by refugees. The pull effect suggests that more investment should be made in raising awareness about DAFI to further amplify this pull effect: it is interesting to note that social media is the most commonly cited medium through which refugees find out about DAFI. There may be room to improve the role of teachers as vehicles of awareness-raising.

Table 22. Channels via which refugees hear about DAFI (refugee survey 2021)

Channel	Frequency	Channel	Frequency
Social media	**29%**	Word of mouth	7%
Friends	28%	Teacher	**7%**
Other	13%	Advert	5%
Parents or family members	11%		

3.5 Financial sustainability

(S1) What are the challenges to the financial sustainability of the programme? What actions could UNHCR undertake to mitigate such challenges?

Key findings:

Funding for the DAFI programme is not ideally diversified. The concurrent absence of both a multi-year funding arrangement with Germany and a resource mobilization strategy that speaks to both public and private donors exposes the programme to risks of income fluctuations in the event of reductions in funding from the primary donor(s). Huge unmet needs in refugee communities combined with the effective results of the DAFI programme in terms of effectiveness reveal the large potential of DAFI to absorb additional funding – from private and public, bilateral and multilateral donors alike. Additional multi-year bilateral and private sector commitments should be secured.

The following chart illustrates the evolution of DAFI Programme income in the decade 2011–2021.

Figure 10. DAFI funding in United States dollars, by donor, 2011–2021 (UNHCR financial database)
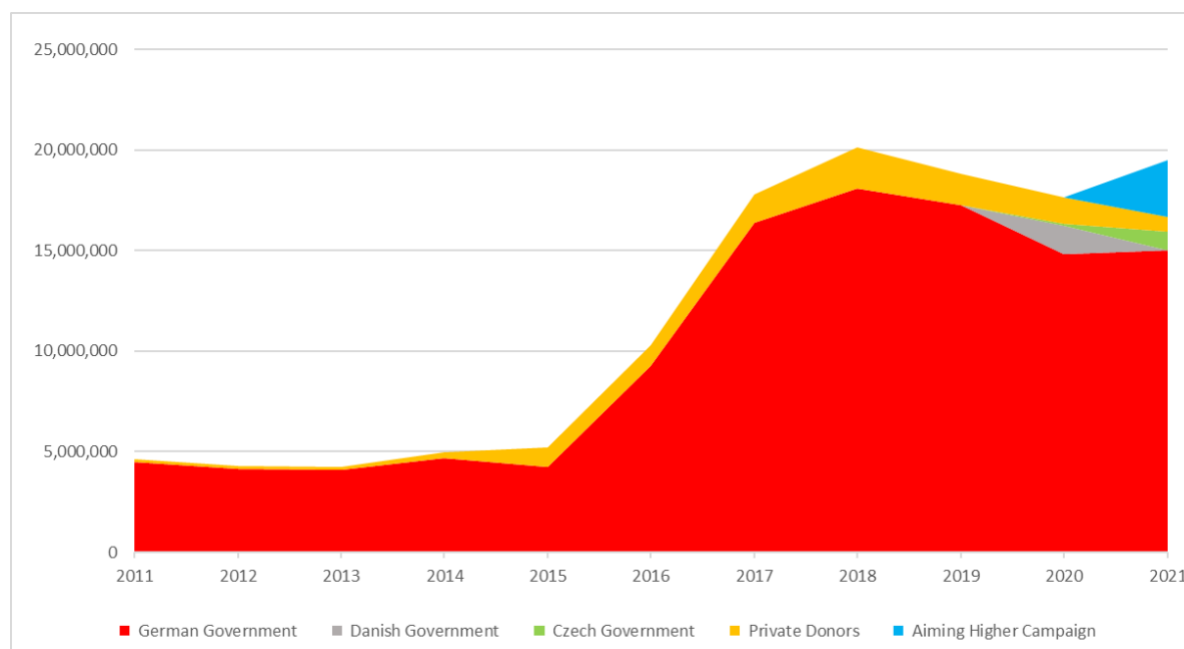
Having funded the DAFI Programme for almost 30 years, the German government provides the financial foundation of DAFI. Germany has contributed almost 90 per cent of the total programme income over

the last decade. Contributions from Denmark and the Czech Republic started in 2019; although the latter are much smaller, they represent a first welcome sign of diversification in the pool of public donors.

The visible increase in funding from Germany since 2015 came in response to the Syria crisis; a significant proportion of funding from Germany has, since then, been earmarked for countries affected by inflows of Syrian refugees. Funding from Germany is renewed on an annual basis, without a formal agreement for multi-year funding.

UNHCR country operations and/or implementing partner do not engage in national level fundraising for DAFI; rather, each country operation is provided with DAFI funding via UNHCR HQ. There are examples of UNHCR country operations advocating with HEIs to accept refugee students based on national student fee rates, others are able to top up scholarship allowances in order to increase scholarship places. UNHCR operations are also raising funds under the Aiming Higher fundraising campaign.

Efforts are under way to further expand the bilateral donor base of the DAFI Programme. The Aiming Higher campaign started contributing to DAFI Programme income in 2020 and contributed to a "healthy" diversification of the donor base, targeting companies, foundations and individuals to expand the pool of donors in a more sustainable way. Aiming Higher, however, does not target public donors, and its contribution to programme income remains relatively small compared to public funding, even if it is increasing rapidly. Private donors are also potentially more volatile donors than public institutions since their contributions may suddenly fall in the event of an economic downturn.

DAFI could be significantly scaled up: on the one hand, the programme is highly effective in facilitating the completion of undergraduate degrees; on the other, the large unmet demand for scholarships[32] is such that larger investments in DAFI offer promising potential for large social and economic returns. Having a more diversified donor base – featuring a pool of private, multilateral and bilateral actors – could provide a more risk-savvy financial foundation on which to turn some of that potential into reality.

"DAFI was a life-changing experience for me, but so many other talented students here in Jordan do not make it since there are not enough scholarships available"

Female DAFI graduate

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[32] Evidence of large unmet needs came out strongly in key informant interviews with implementing partners and UNHCR in-country focal points, as well as from an analysis of the rate of award across countries: for example, over 90 per cent of applicants are unsuccessful in Lebanon, Jordan, South Africa and Iraq.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Relevance

Conclusion 1

DAFI remains <u>highly relevant to the needs of refugee students</u>: most DAFI students interviewed clearly stated that they would not have accessed higher education without the DAFI scholarship. However, there is some variation in the way that students experience DAFI, both in the same country and across countries, in terms of the components/services received and their quality/timeliness.

Conclusion 2

Refugee students typically need tailored intervention to support their university experience, including orientation, mentoring and sometimes psychosocial support, specific training to make up for skills gaps, workplace preparation, etc., which host community students may not require to the same degree. <u>DAFI is appropriately designed to cater to this set of needs, yet not all of the components seem equally relevant.</u> Delivering the right amount of financial assistance at the right time is imperative and the component that DAFI operations cannot afford to miss. The evaluation found anecdotal evidence that delayed or missing payments have affected students' stress levels or led to the adoption of coping mechanisms (such as reducing food intake). By contrast, participation in civic engagement activities or in the DAFI club – even if they maintain an element of relevance vis-a-vis skills development and social connectedness – are not equally as crucial to students' needs. The most fundamental component of DAFI remains the provision of a financial allowance that is both large enough and timely enough to allow students to meet their basic needs and focus on their studies.

4.2 Effectiveness

Conclusion 3

High graduation rates and low (and decreasing over time) dropout rates indicate that <u>DAFI has been effective in consistently contributing to the completion of undergraduate degrees for refugees.</u> In almost all instances, when students drop out they do so for reasons that are independent of DAFI – namely either due to misconduct or for personal reasons.

Conclusion 4

Female participation in DAFI reached or exceeded the 50 per cent mark in only a few countries; in many others, including most of the largest country operations, trends in female participation are stagnant or worsening. Overall, <u>DAFI is not yet delivering results that can be considered fully equitable for women and men.</u> The evaluation was able to isolate positive deviant country operations that had led to improved participation of female students and compile a list of good practices with potential for cross-country replication (see Box 1). The fact that the number of applications from girls is rising, coupled with a convergence in graduation rates over time, provides encouraging evidence.

Conclusion 5

A key element in delivering DAFI effectively is the choice of <u>resilient implementation procedures, which must guarantee good case management, tailored support for individual students and the ability to troubleshoot</u> in the event of unforeseen circumstances. NGO implementing partners typically performed better and were more resilient than country operations in which UNHCR implemented DAFI directly. Local NGOs are often better placed than UNHCR to perform individual monitoring, follow-up and case management and can be more cost-effective. UNHCR staff are typically responsible for a range of programmes and for managing multiple interventions and processes. As such, a DAFI programme delivered by UNHCR may be less likely to achieve the same level of precision in monitoring and management as one delivered by an NGO partner.

Conclusion 6

<u>Voluntary civic engagement activities are most effective at supporting social cohesion and skills development if several of the following conditions are present</u>: (a) if there are restrictions on refugees' right to work; (b) if it is relatively easy to identify and monitor civic engagement participation; (c) if students have sufficient time and agency, according to social norms; and (d) if there are relevant skills to be gained from volunteering, in alignment with the students goals. Conversely, the civic engagement component is less relevant/effective:

- if refugees' right to work is guaranteed (internship or part-time work is preferable to volunteering in this case);
- if identifying and monitoring civic engagement opportunities is resource-intensive (which is often the case, thus offsetting the value);
- if students have little time or agency, in function of social norms (e.g. because of expectations of household work, care for children); and finally,
- if the options for civic engagement amount to unstructured or non-goal-oriented volunteering.

Conclusion 7

In the few instances where online-only degree courses have been utilized, <u>they have not delivered good outcomes for DAFI students who opted to pursue this study modality</u>. In one country,[33] the few DAFI students who undertook online-only degree studies reported greater dissatisfaction with the programme and their learning. Alternative blended learning options have delivered better outcomes than online only. Conversely, short skills development courses (e.g. CV writing, communication in the workplace, learning how to use software, etc.) can be strategically delivered online at low cost and to high standards of quality.

4.3 Coherence

Conclusion 8

DAFI leverages UNHCR country operations to realize the scholarship's potential in advocacy for the inclusion of refugees in higher education. DAFI gives UNHCR country operations a "programmatic backbone" in higher education, around which each operation can build its advocacy efforts. As a result of the need to prioritize primary and secondary education for refugee children, <u>few UNHCR operations</u>

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[33] Ecuador

are able to allocate resources to support tertiary education programming. Some UNHCR operations, however, have used the programme to advocate for expanded partnerships, investments and tertiary education opportunities for refugees. In this regard, the DAFI programme presents a unique and vital resource for ensuring that post-secondary opportunities remain available for refugee youth.

Conclusion 9

At country level, there is room for improvement to connect DAFI more effectively with interventions in secondary and higher education, as well as youth employment programmes, so that DAFI can be more effective and delivered within a more coherent programmatic framework. Operations that plan, manage and monitor the DAFI programme as part of an integrated approach to secondary and tertiary education and subsequent employment, rather than as an isolated intervention, optimize the potential for outcomes.

Conclusion 10

The lack of in-country dedicated technical expertise in higher education in UNHCR country offices is an obstacle to designing and delivering such coherence and in ensuring that synergies with other programmes in secondary education, higher education and youth employment are capitalized upon.

Conclusion 11

Even when DAFI can benefit from support from the UNHCR country operation, the evaluation found no evidence that DAFI alone can drive policy-level changes in terms of refugee inclusion in higher education. Since DAFI has been effective at negotiating with individual higher education institutions for reductions or fee waivers for its beneficiaries, positively influencing higher education institutions' admission policies for refugees seems to be the realistic dimension of DAFI when it comes to influencing a country's wider tertiary education system.

Conclusion 12

DAFI has often funded students to attend high quality, public higher education institutions. Investments in public higher education institutions through DAFI can be a productive way to support the commitment to responsibility sharing and strengthening national systems set out in the Global Compact for Refugees (through the payment of tuition fees).

4.4 Impact

Conclusion 13

While the average NEET rate for DAFI graduates globally is around 50 per cent, it falls to between 20 per cent and 30 per cent in countries like Rwanda and Uganda, where legislation is more favourable to transition to work, and in countries like South Africa, where the labour market offers more opportunities and where DAFI students are more likely to attend top-ranked higher education institutions that better prepare them for work.

Conclusion 14

Female DAFI graduates who manage to enter the labour market are, on average, paid less than their male counterparts.

Conclusion 15

Awareness of DAFI among refugees in secondary education contributes to motivating students to finish secondary school. While only a small percentage of refugees in secondary school knew about DAFI prior to finishing secondary school (15 per cent of girls, 21 per cent of boys), this pull effect is clearly detectable and is slightly stronger for girls than for boys, and stronger in camps than in host communities.

Conclusion 16

Refugees become aware of DAFI mainly through family and friends, as well as via social media; teachers play only a small role in awareness-raising.

4.5 Financial sustainability

Conclusion 17

The main challenge to the financial sustainability of the programme is an insufficiently diversified pool of public donors and the concurrent absence of a resource mobilization strategy that speaks to both public and private donors. While private sector funding for DAFI is increasing (via Aiming Higher), the programme is excessively reliant on funding from Germany, which may have reached an upper limit in the face of increasing demand from refugee students for assistance.

Conclusion 18

Huge unmet needs in refugee communities combined with the encouraging results of DAFI in terms of effectiveness reveal the large potential of DAFI to absorb additional funding – from private and public, bilateral and multilateral donors alike – to deliver results in higher education.

5. Recommendations

This section presents three sets of recommendations, based on the findings and conclusions:

(1) Recommendations on programme design and the structure of the scholarship.

(2) Recommendations on DAFI implementation at country level.

(3) Recommendations on DAFI management and financial sustainability.

5.1 Programme design and structure of the scholarship

Recommendation 1

<u>Define a minimum package of core components/skills that DAFI students should acquire in each country, according to the context</u>. In order to maintain relevance and to position DAFI as a holistic, best-in-class scholarship, as well as to reduce the variability of the student experience of DAFI, each country operation should define a minimum common package of services to be delivered, based on context-specific factors such as the strength of the implementing partner and the legal framework regulating refugees' access to higher education and labour markets. For example, in a country that guarantees refugees the right to work, DAFI might focus on the provision of language training[34] or IT skills training, whereas in a country in which transition to work is not legally possible, the focus might shift towards, for example, psychosocial support and skills-building through volunteerism.

Responsible: HQ tertiary team (provision of technical guidance)[35]; country level DAFI focal points.

Time frame: short term

Priority: very high

Recommendation 2

<u>Pilot a scholarship scheme for high-performing refugee girls in their last year of high school who face financial hardship</u>. Given the high incidence of financial constraints and the very low participation of girls in several large operations (Ethiopia, Pakistan, etc.) UNHCR should pilot the provision of "bridging" scholarships to high-performing refugee girls in their last year of high school who face financial hardship. This would not just help to mitigate the financial constraints that typically hinder refugee girls in completing secondary education, but also reinforce the "pull effect" that awareness of DAFI has on the rate of completion of secondary education.

Responsible: HQ tertiary team (for the design of the pilot); country level DAFI focal points (implementation of pilot and connected monitoring).

Time frame: pilot completed by the end of 2024

Priority: high

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[34] DAFI should aim for graduates to have working knowledge of either English or French upon graduation. This could be achieved by engaging more effectively with organizations that can provide language courses at low cost (British Council, Alliance Française, etc.) and/or engaging partners who can guarantee high-quality provision of online language courses.
[35] This may require the DAFI team at HQ to modify the Programme and Policy manual.

5.2 Implementation of DAFI at country level

Recommendation 3

Ensure that allowances are paid out to students before the start of the academic year. Allowances should be large enough to guarantee relocation as well as the standards of living described in the Programme and Policy Guideline. The tertiary education team should develop criteria to make sure that financial support under DAFI has comparable purchasing power across countries, and that financial assistance is adjusted in the event of sudden, strong inflation. DAFI partners should work closely with UNHCR to make sure that all agreements are signed well in advance of the academic year and that students understand their reporting duties upon selection, in order to avoid delays. Likewise, both UNHCR focal points and partners should map out bottlenecks to anticipate potential causes of delay.

Responsible: HQ tertiary team (inflation adjustments); country level DAFI focal points (timely payment)

Time frame: as soon as the next round of beneficiaries is selected in each country

Priority: very high

Recommendation 4

Enable students to access electronic devices and connectivity according to their learning needs. Quality tertiary education in many higher education institutions – whether in low-, middle- or high-income countries – often requires access to the Internet and to quality online learning materials and tools. With most countries still adjusting to a post-COVID context, it remains to be seen to what extent higher education institutions will maintain – or increasingly shift to – blended learning. DAFI students should also be provided with sufficient ICT skills preparation to be poised to succeed in a technology-enhanced learning environment and should achieve a common minimum standard of IT skills by the time they finish their degree.

Responsible: country level DAFI focal points

Time frame: as soon as possible

Priority: very high

Recommendation 5

Ensure that students are mentored and guided towards choosing the best available degree. DAFI should leverage the experience and knowledge of in-country implementers to achieve a balance of each of the following objectives:

(a) To maximize refugees' agency in choosing a degree aligned to their aspirations and objectives

(b) To facilitate access to high-quality degrees at the best available higher education institutions

(c) To ensure the relevance of such undergraduate courses vis-à-vis the requirements of the labour markets in which perspective graduates will be competing for jobs.

Responsible: country level DAFI focal points

Time frame: this is a continuous process

Priority: high

Recommendation 6

Prepare plans to improve the participation of girls, taking into account the set of good practices identified in this evaluation (Box 1). In parallel, dedicated cross-country discussions among partners should take place annually in the form of virtual workshops at which to share knowledge and experience of how to increase the participation of girls. Partners in countries with high rates of female participation (e.g. Jordan, Mali, Egypt) should mentor country operations that are facing challenges in increasing the participation of girls (e.g. Ethiopia, Pakistan, Kenya) via evidence-informed workshops or webinars. Given the stagnant female participation rate, it seems evident that affirmative action is needed to rapidly achieve more equitable participation of women in the DAFI programme.

Responsible: HQ tertiary team (for organization of the workshops/webinars), implementing partner for participation and connected follow-up.

Time frame: this should be a continuous process starting in 2022

Priority: very high

Recommendation 7

Advocate with higher education institutions to foster favourable financial conditions for enrolment of the highest possible number of DAFI students. UNHCR should remain engaged with higher education institutions to advocate for increased access to higher education for refugees and to help create the enabling environment necessary in order to maximize DAFI enrolment.

Responsible: country level DAFI focal points

Time frame: this should be a continuous process

Priority: high

Recommendation 8

Increase awareness of DAFI among secondary school students (particularly girls) in refugee communities, especially via social media, secondary school teachers and grassroots organizations, in order to amplify the "pull effect" of DAFI on the completion of secondary education.

Responsible: country level DAFI focal points

Time frame: this should be a continuous process starting in 2022

Priority: high

Recommendation 9

Systematically Link DAFI with in-country interventions in secondary education and youth employment in order to improve programmatic coherence with DAFI beyond advocacy efforts. Links should be built with UNHCR and non-UNHCR interventions alike.

Responsible: country level DAFI focal points

Time frame: this should be a continuous process starting in 2022

Priority: high

5.3 Management and financial sustainability

Recommendation 10

<u>Increase fundraising efforts for DAFI, to ensure its financial sustainability in the medium and long term.</u> In order to enable DAFI to make higher education scholarship opportunities continuously available and be less susceptible to potential changes in donor prioritization or economic conditions, the Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service (DRRM) should target bilateral and multilateral public donors to secure medium- to long-term contribution agreements for DAFI within a more diversified pool of donors. The findings of this evaluation suggest that the impact and efficiency of the programme could be appealing to a range of donor interests.

Responsible: DRRM

Time frame: this should be a continuous process starting in 2022

Priority: high

Recommendation 11

<u>Develop an evaluation strategy, potentially leveraging a longitudinal design, and run an independent evaluation every four or five years.</u> The programme evaluation strategy currently includes continuous programme monitoring of both implementation and expenditure, as well as student performance and participation in programme activities. UNHCR should employ a longitudinal study to further establish and understand the relationship between the scholarship programme and:

- secondary education access and retention;
- transition to employment outcomes;
- the broader implications of higher education for refugees on the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, namely:
  - Ease the pressures on host countries;
  - Enhance refugee self-reliance;
  - Expand access to third-country solutions;
  - Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Responsible: HQ tertiary team with assistance from the Evaluation Service

Time frame: medium term – next evaluation to be run in 2026/2027

Priority: medium

Figure 11. Overview of recommendations

Overarching recommendations

1. Develop an evaluation strategy

2. Increase fundraising efforts for DAFI in order to ensure its financial sustainability in the medium and long term.

3. Consistently engage in negotiations with well-established HEIs to sign memorandums of understanding (MoU) that allow for favourable financial conditions in order to enrol the highest possible number of DAFI students.

4. Systematically link DAFI with in-country interventions in secondary education and youth employment.

5. Define a "minimum package" of "core" components/skills that DAFI students should attain in each country, in function of context.

6. Prepare plans to improve the participation of girls, taking into account the set of good practices identified in this evaluation.

Recommendations prior to higher education

7. Pilot a scholarship scheme for high-performing refugee girls in their last year of high school who face financial hardship.

8. Ensure that students are mentored and guided towards choosing the best available degree.

9. Increase awareness of DAFI among secondary school students (especially girls) in refugee communities.

Recommendations during higher education

10. Ensure that allowances are paid out to students before the start of the academic year.

11. Enable students to access electronic devices and the Internet according to their learning needs.

6. Annexes

Annex 1 – References

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Annex 2 – Terms of reference of the evaluation

Purpose and scope of the assignment

In line with the six strategic objectives of the DAFI Programme (promoting self-reliance and pathways to solutions; empowering young women and men; strengthening the protective impact of education; providing role models for refugee children and youth; contributing to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction; and promoting social, economic and gender equality), this evaluation is intended to generate evidence of the results of the programme and its longer-term outcomes and effects, particularly in understanding the contribution of the DAFI Programme to learning, social and economic outcomes. The evaluation is expected to generate evidence to inform improvements to the design, management and implementation of the DAFI Programme and other derivative higher education programmes for refugees. The evaluation is also expected to help to align the objectives and expected results of the DAFI scholarship programme with those of the Global Compact on Refugees, thereby helping to maximize the contribution of refugee higher education scholarship programmes to enhanced refugee self-reliance, as well as contributing to easing the pressure on major host States.

The evaluation deliverables are intended for use by UNHCR staff, DAFI Programme partners in the field, host country Ministries, higher education institutions, donors and scholarship providers, refugees, potential employers and others. Primary intended users include the UNHCR Education Team at HQ and in the Regional Bureaux and Country Offices. The evaluation will also help internal advocacy among donors.

The evaluation should demonstrate not only the individual, social and financial outcomes of the DAFI scholarship programme, but also aim to identify which aspects of the programme contributed to the outcomes achieved, which aspects do not appear to have contributed to the desired aims of the scholarship programmes and which outcomes or causes of outcomes are unknown or unexpected. The main evaluation criteria include relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation seeks to address the following broad key evaluation questions (KEQ), which should frame the proposed evaluation approach, methodology and proposed scope outlined in the proposal. For the final KEQ, the relevant sub-questions and scope will be defined and agreed during the inception phase.

How appropriately is the DAFI Programme designed to meet its intended strategic objectives across settings and over time?

How and to what extent has the DAFI Programme achieved or contributed to achieving its strategic objectives across locations and over time?

What have been the key contributing and constraining factors – both internal and external, including any specific aspects of programme design or implementation – influencing the achievement of DAFI Programme results and outcomes across settings and over time?

To what extent does the DAFI Programme interface with and leverage the wider UNHCR country operation in each setting, and vice versa, particularly in terms of aligning objectives with those of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)?

Are there indirect or secondary impacts of the programme, including but not limited to:

- Participation and retention in secondary education, particularly among girls.
- Educational achievement.
- Employment prospects, including entrepreneurship.
- Social and economic outcomes, including community engagement, leadership, social cohesion and income levels.

What, if any, generalizable lessons can be found to inform the design and implementation of future UNHCR activities and interventions relating to tertiary education?

Methodology

UNHCR welcomes the use of evidence-based, diverse, participatory and innovative evaluation methods and approaches. The evaluation is expected to employ a robust mixed methodology combining qualitative and quantitative methods, including data collection and analysis, desk review of secondary information, content analysis of relevant background and programmatic data and documents, as well as direct observations. It would be beneficial for the evaluation approach to consider how evaluation findings might be effectively communicated to affected communities.

Qualitative methods should include virtual and/or in-person interviews where feasible, as well as focus group discussions (FGD) with a range of key stakeholders including UNHCR, external stakeholders and targeted populations with a strong Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach. Data/information from a wide range of sources will need to be triangulated and cross-validated to ensure the credibility of the evaluation's findings and conclusions.

The evaluation will draw upon information collected and analysed from a wide range of sources and a representative range of stakeholders. UNHCR will ensure that the Evaluation Team has access to relevant documents and contact details but, should in-person travel be permitted, the Evaluation Team is expected to arrange and manage its own travel and logistics in-country (including translation/interpretation services) unless UNHCR is required to provide assistance (i.e. in direct access to Persons of Concern either remotely or in-person or in areas of limited access due to travel and/or security constraints).

Given the current limitations resulting from COVID-19 travel restrictions, it is anticipated that data will be collected by local consultants and teams where possible, or remotely, and in line with relevant national health and safety policies.

The Evaluation Team is expected to work in close collaboration with the Tertiary Education Team and other relevant units. The Evaluation Team will be asked to refine the methodology and key evaluation questions following the initial desk review and key informant interviews during the inception phase.

It is anticipated that the evaluation will be completed within 7 months, from January 2021 to July 2021, including a 6-week inception phase, up to 14 weeks of data collection, 4 weeks of data analysis and report writing and a 4-week review and finalization phase.

The indicative timeline is as follows:

Activity	Key deliverable	Indicative timeline
Phase 1: inception, including: - Initial desk review. - Selected key informant interviews (conducted remotely). - EQA review on the draft inception report. - Circulation of inception report for comments and finalization.	Final inception report (25 pages), including methodology, final evaluation questions and evaluation matrix, and a draft programme for the data collection phase and data collection tools.	Weeks 1–6
Phase 2: Data collection including: - Key stakeholder interviews, FGD and surveys (in country and remotely as required). - In-depth document review.	Summary of findings. Debriefing (PowerPoint presentation).	Weeks 7–20
- Debriefing (remote or in person) on preliminary findings and data collection phase (including discussion of any significant data gaps with key stakeholders). - Stakeholder feedback on preliminary findings and data collection phase		
Phase 3: Data Analysis and Reporting including: - Analysis and write-up. - EQA review of draft report, circulation for comments. - Validation workshop (remote or in-person) to discuss stakeholder feedback, validate evaluation findings and discuss conclusions and proposed recommendations.	Draft final report (for circulation and comments), including recommendations for internal periodic monitoring, evaluation and learning activities. Validation Workshop PowerPoint presentation.	Weeks 21–24
Phase 4: Finalization of evaluation report based on comments following circulation.	Final Evaluation Report (50 pages) including recommendations and standalone executive summary (5-10 pages).	Weeks 25–28

Annex 3 – Data collected by the evaluation, by country

DAFI country operation	Other key informant interviews or interactions with the country operation	UNHCR staff survey	Implementing partner survey	Additional country-specific secondary data/relevant research
Afghanistan			-	
Algeria				
Azerbaijan		Submitted	-	
Benin			-	
Burkina Faso		Submitted	Submitted	
Burundi	Key informant interviews with implementing partner (positive deviant on inclusion of girls)			
Cameroon	Key informant interviews with UNHCR focal point	Submitted	Submitted	
Chad	FGD with five DAFI students and one graduate, two key informant interviews with UNHCR focal point and key informant interviews with implementing partner (positive deviant on low dropout)	Submitted	Submitted	
Côte D'Ivoire			-	
Democratic Republic of Congo		Submitted	Submitted	
Ecuador	Two key informant interviews with implementing partner; key informant interviews with two refugees enrolled on online university courses and	Submitted	Submitted	Rodríguez-Gómez, Diana. 2019.

	four refugees enrolled on other courses (physical classes); participated in implementing partner webinar			
Egypt	Participated in implementing partner webinar	Submitted	Submitted	Damaschke-Deitrick, L., Galegher, E., & Park, M. F. (2019); Damaschke-Deitrick, L., Wiseman, A. W., & Galegher, E. (2021)
Ethiopia	Two key informant interviews with implementing partner Participated in implementing partner webinar	Submitted	Submitted	Draft report on the socioeconomic conditions of DAFI graduates in Ethiopia (2021)
Gambia			-	
Ghana		Submitted	Submitted	
Guinea Bissau		Submitted	-	
Guinea Conakry			-	
India	Participated in implementing partner webinar		Submitted	
Iran		Submitted	-	
Jordan	Three key informant interviews with positive deviant implementing partner (monitoring, mentoring, participation of girls); key informant interviews with UNHCR country focal point; five key informant interviews with students	Submitted	Submitted	Mrayan, S. & Saleh, A. (2020).
Kenya	Key informant interviews with BHER team at York University	-	-	Giles, Wenona (2018).
Kyrgyzstan			-	Damaschke-Deitrick, L., Galegher, E., & Park, M. F. (2019)

Lebanon	Key informant interviews with Kiron, three key informant interviews with students	Submitted	Submitted	
Liberia		Submitted	-	
Malawi				
Mali	Key informant interviews with implementing partner (positive deviant on inclusion of girls)	Submitted		
Mauritania				
Mexico		Submitted	-	
Morocco		Submitted		
Mozambique			-	
Namibia			Submitted	
Niger		Submitted	Submitted	
Nigeria		Submitted	-	
Pakistan	Key informant interviews with implementing partner	Submitted	Submitted	
Russian Federation		Submitted	-	
Rwanda	Key informant interviews with implementing partner and UNHCR country operation focal point, five key informant interviews with students	Submitted	Submitted	Fert, M. (2020); Meyer, S. R., Yu, G., Hermosilla, S., & Stark, L. (2018) Country evaluation (Segre, 2016)
Senegal				

Somalia		Submitted	-	
South Africa	Key informant interviews with implementing partner and UNHCR country operation focal point; five key informant interviews with students	Submitted	Submitted	DAFI operational Manual (Study Trust)
South Sudan				
Sudan			Submitted	
Syria				
Tajikistan		Submitted		
Tanzania		Submitted		
Togo			-	
Turkey	Two key informant interviews with UNHCR country operation focal point; five key informant interviews with students	Submitted		
Uganda	Five key informant interviews with students, key informant interviews with implementing partner, key informant interviews with UNHCR country operation focal point	Submitted		Odaga, G. (2020); Meyer, S. R., Yu, G., Hermosilla, S., & Stark, L. (2018); Betts, A. (2021)
Ukraine			-	
Yemen				
Zambia	Key informant interviews with UNHCR country operation focal point	Submitted		
Zimbabwe		Submitted	-	

Annex 4 – Key informant interviews questionnaire (administered to DAFI implementing partners and UNHCR staff)

-> INTRODUCTION

Overview of evaluation (ask permission to record the session).

The objective of this call is twofold:

To understand the key features of the context in which DAFI operates in your country.

To formulate the main outcomes of refugees' access to and completion of tertiary education in your country over the last 5–10 years.

-> DISCUSSION ON CONTEXT

For a start, let me confirm with you some aspects of the context of refugee education in your country.

How many DAFI scholars are living in refugee camps?

Refugees who graduate have restricted access to labour markets, correct? What exactly are these restrictions? Are there any documents that explain these restrictions in detail?

aside from DAFI, looking at the last 5–10 years in your country, what have been the main trends and changes in access to higher education for refugees?

-> FEATURES OF COUNTRY OPERATION

Let me now move on to ask you questions in more specific areas.

(a) Interactions with higher education institutions

Large numbers of higher education institutions charge refugees higher/the same as nationals/reduced fees, correct? Is this a policy, or does it work with spot MoUs with local higher education institutions? When did the changes take place?

Did DAFI or UNHCR contribute to such changes? Can you tell me more about what the DAFI Programme, or UNHCR specifically, have done to support these processes with the higher education institutions?

(b) Interactions with ministries

What were the main policy changes or moves that the Ministry has made in the last decade, if any?

(c) Evolution of barriers to access to higher education

Let us put ourselves in the place of a refugee who completes secondary education. How have barriers to tertiary education evolved for refugees over the last few years, in your view?

(d) Girls' participation in higher education

Sustained participation of girls in higher education has improved/stayed the same/decreased in your country and is currently in the region of xx per cent. What is it that you are doing to improve girls' participation, that you feel could be replicated regionally or globally?

(e) Interaction with other programmes or scholarship schemes

Are there other scholarship schemes in your country as well as other programmes for refugees of the same age group? How does DAFI interact with those?

(f) Follow-up questions on implementing partner online survey (if necessary, according to the specific answers provided in the implementing partner online survey)

Annex 5 – Questionnaire for key informant interviews with DAFI beneficiaries

The following questionnaire has been used as a basis for key informant interviews with both DAFI students and graduates.

1. Could you please introduce yourself and discuss your progress in your undergraduate course?

2. Do you have any feedback on the quality of your undergraduate course?

3. How has DAFI helped you to date? Which of the scholarship's components (provide examples) did you find most relevant to your needs?

4. Do you feel that participating in DAFI has made you a role model in your community? Why/why not?

5. Have you been involved in any volunteering/civic engagement under DAFI? If yes, how was your experience?

6. Have you ever encountered any unforeseen problems during your degree? If yes, how did you react?

7. How did you interface with the DAFI implementing partner (mention name) in your country? Do you have any recommendations to help them improve on the delivery of DAFI?

8. If you could change anything about the way DAFI is structured or delivered, what would you change?

9. Do you think you will be able to find a job after you finish your degree? What steps, if any, are you taking to try to find a job?

10. Do you have any additional remarks/feedback on DAFI before we close the interview?

Annex 6 – Sample of the refugee survey

The final sample has 1,124 respondents, divided as follows by DAFI country programme (not country of origin) and by gender. Countries with over 35 responses are highlighted in bold.

DAFI Country programme	Female	Non-binary	Male	Total respondents
Arab Republic of Egypt	34		36	70
Burkina Faso			2	2
Cameroon	4		16	20
Democratic Republic of Congo	2		6	8
Ecuador	38		27	65
Ethiopia	1		29	30
Ghana	9		13	22
India	2		1	3
Jordan	95	1	64	160
Kenya	1		9	10
Lebanon	97	1	57	155
Liberia	1		5	6
Malawi			3	3
Mexico	4		1	5
Morocco	1			1
Namibia	1		5	6
Niger			3	3
Nigeria	2		1	3
Pakistan	3		34	37
Rwanda	13		45	58
Somalia			1	1
South Africa	14		23	37

Annex 6 – Sample of the refugee survey

South Sudan	1		1	2
Sudan	3			3
Syria	1		3	4
Turkey	190	3	130	323
Uganda	24		55	79
Ukraine			1	1
Zambia	4		1	5
Did not respond			2	2
Total	545	5	574	1,124

As expected, the "snowball" sample is only partially representative of the wider DAFI population in all countries; nevertheless the sample covers the focus countries well, with relatively large sample sizes for additional large operations such as Egypt and Lebanon. Refugees of Syrian origin constitute 47 per cent of the sample of the refugee survey. The overrepresentation of refugees from the Middle East implies that a large majority of the respondents were Muslim; they also came from relatively educated backgrounds: about half of the respondent's parents completed upper secondary school. The sample achieves equal representation of male and female students. As depicted in the tables below, both urban, rural and encamped subpopulations of refugees are represented.

Age (years)		Gender		Location	
Average age	23	Male	574 (51.0%)	Urban	621 (58%)
Highest age	48	Female	545 (48.6%)	Rural	236 (22%)
Lowest age	17	Non-binary	5 (0.4%)	Camp	218 (20%)

Religion	Percentage
Sunni	56%
Protestant	11%
Another religion	11%
I prefer not to answer this question	10%
Roman Catholic	8%
I do not practise any religion	3%

Shia	1%
Orthodox	<1%
Hindu	<1%

DAFI beneficiary status	Percentage
Graduate	19%
Newly enrolled student (enrolled in 2020)	9%
Shortlisted students (2021 intake)	40%
Student	31%

Parents' education level	Mother's education	Father's education
Completed lower secondary cycle	20%	19%
Completed primary cycle	20%	15%
Completed undergraduate degree, Masters or higher	14%	20%
Completed upper secondary cycle	21%	24%
Unknown	1%	5%
Never attended school or did not complete primary cycle	24%	17%

Annex 7 – Outcome harvesting database

Description of outcome or result of interest	Year	Country
National fees equated for refugees and national students (decision of the National commission for the integration and support of refugees)	2017	Guinea
National fees equated for refugees and national students	2017	Sudan
Ministry of Education allows UNHCR-mandated refugees to enrol in any academic institution	2012	India
Ministry of Home Affairs introduces a policy asserting the right to education for all refugees at all institutions in which DAFI students are enrolled	2014	Tanzania
Ministry of Education amends Law on Higher Education to ensure refugees have access to higher education	2019	Ukraine
Government removes refugee-specific fees for higher education	2015	Iran
Ministry of Higher Education offers one year of tuition-free study to DAFI students in specific five-year subjects (five-year courses)	2017	Iraq
Ministry of Education allows 15 DAFI scholars to be enrolled in public universities and technical colleges, paying the same fees as nationals	2019	Malawi
Ghana Refugee Board enrols 75 per cent of new DAFI scholars under the same fee structure as nationals	2016	Ghana
Moscow Dept of Education sponsors tuition fees for 10 DAFI scholars	2006	Russian Federation
Ministry of Education and public universities receiving DAFI students reduce tuition fees for all refugee students by 50 per cent	2016	Rwanda
The Government of Turkey waives tuition fees for Syrian refugees	2014	Turkey

The Ministry of Education opens a national scholarship programme previously targeting Eritreans to all nationalities. Cost per student was reduced by 75 per cent and 104 new scholars were able to enrol	2013	Ethiopia
Government includes refugees in free tuition declaration	2018	Liberia
A higher education institution (the Pan-African Institute of Development in Central Africa) charges national fees for refugees	2014	Cameroon
Seven higher education institutions charge national fees for refugees	2019	Chad
Multiple (unspecified) higher education institutions charge national fees for refugees	2015	Chad
A higher education institution (the International University of Kyrgystan) charges national fees for refugees	2013	Kyrgyzstan
Three higher education institutions charge national fees for refugees	2013	Moldova
A higher education institution (University of Rwanda) charges national fees for refugees	2014	Rwanda
Public universities charge national fees for refugees	2014	Senegal
A higher education institution (University of Duhok College of Medicine) reduces fees for DAFI students in specific subjects (additional funding so that scholars can finish six-year medical degrees)	2019	Iraq
Private higher education institutions (unspecified) reduce fees for DAFI students in scientific and technical education fields	2019	Mauritania
Six higher education institutions reduce fees for refugees	2019	Chad
A higher education institution (6th October University) pays half of the required study fee for enrolled refugee students	2017	Egypt
One higher education institution (unspecified) reduces its fees for Syrian refugees	2015	Jordan

Some (unspecified) higher education institutions waive 25 per cent of fees for non-Kenyan students	2013	Kenya
Several (unspecified) higher education institutions reduce fees for refugees	2011	Kenya
Several (unspecified) higher education institutions reduce fees for refugees	2012	Senegal
Seven higher education institutions reduce fees for refugees	2018	Sudan
Two higher education institutions (Africa University and Ahfad University for Women) reduce fees for refugees	2013	Sudan
One higher education institution (Aden University) reduces international student fees by 50 per cent for refugees	2011	Yemen
Two higher education institutions (unspecified) provide additional scholarships for DAFI scholars	2011	Egypt
Higher education institutions (medical schools) provide food compensation and transportation discounts for DAFI scholars	2016	Russian Federation
Two higher education institutions (Dar Al-Salam University and Lebanese International University) provide DAFI scholars with additional financial support	2016	Yemen
Some (unspecified) higher education institutions charge national fees for DAFI students	2018	Gambia
Two higher education institutions (University of Cape Coast and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) admit DAFI students with government-subsidized local fees	2018	Ghana
Five higher education institutions charge national fees for DAFI scholars	2011	Ghana
Three higher education institutions charge national fees for DAFI students	2017	Liberia
Two higher education institutions charge national fees for DAFI students	2013	Liberia

Partner higher education institutions (unspecified) charge national fees for DAFI students	2016	Yemen
A higher education institution (Yerevan State College of Informatics) provides four full scholarships for DAFI students	2012	Armenia
A public teacher training college in the south waives tuition fees for DAFI scholars	2012	Chad
A higher education institution (6th October University) exempts 30 DAFI scholars from tuition fees for the next five years	2013	Egypt
Four higher education institutions in St Petersburg and Moscow waive tuition fees for DAFI scholars	2014	Russian Federation
Partner higher education institutions (unspecified) reduce fees to below the national rate for DAFI students	2017	Mali

Annex 8 – Household expenditure and coping mechanisms (refugee survey)

This is a short analysis of the questions in the "Household experiences" section of the refugee survey. Questions were asked using a five-point Likert scale, recoded with higher values expressing the worst outcomes (e.g. high incidence of negative coping mechanisms) and lower values expressing the best outcomes (e.g. low incidence of negative coping mechanisms). This analysis found that: (a) DAFI beneficiaries share some of their cash transfers within their households, most commonly to cover basic unmet needs such as food or electricity, less commonly to cover education and health care expenses; (b) DAFI beneficiaries generally live in precarious financial conditions: while they can often afford a safe place to stay, 50 per cent of respondents stated that either they or their family did not have enough food to eat at least twice a month (Table A9.2); and (c) individuals and households benefiting from DAFI in focus countries adopted similar negative coping mechanisms, reflecting that DAFI was delivered to individuals sharing similar vulnerability profiles across focus countries.

Table A9.1 – Use of financial support paid out by DAFI for Household (HH) expenses and the incidence of coping mechanisms in focus countries, by gender (refugee survey – largest values by country are highlighted in bold)

Country	Use of financial support paid out by DAFI for household expenses			Incidence of negative coping mechanisms		
	Contributed to basic HH needs	Contributed to education expenses of others in HH	Contributed to health care expenditure in HH	Reduced food intake	Resorted less to health care	Slept without safe shelter
Ecuador	**2.13**	1.60	1.73	2.52	2.34	1.22
Female	1.96	1.46	1.71	2.62	2.47	1.17
Male	2.38	1.81	1.75	2.38	2.19	1.28
Jordan	2.61	1.88	**2.03**	2.17	2.53	1.21
Female	2.51	1.93	2.11	2.25	2.70	1.11
Male	2.76	1.81	1.91	2.06	2.28	1.34
Rwanda	2.00	2.00	1.00	**2.88**	2.13	**1.88**

Female	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.60	1.90	1.50
Male	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.95	2.19	1.97
S. Africa	**3.26**	**2.23**	1.83	2.20	2.37	1.28
Female	3.38	2.46	1.69	1.93	2.31	1.07
Male	3.18	2.09	1.91	2.38	2.41	1.44
Turkey	2.14	1.86	1.62	2.01	2.04	1.26
Female	2.08	1.75	1.58	1.99	2.05	1.23
Male	2.18	1.94	1.65	2.04	2.03	1.31
Uganda	2.14	1.88	1.75	2.73	**2.71**	1.71
Female	2.12	1.76	1.82	2.52	2.82	1.74
Male	2.15	1.92	1.72	2.83	2.66	1.70
All countries	**2.41**	**1.88**	**1.85**	**2.36**	**2.41**	**1.38**

Table A9.2 – incidence of cutting food intake as a coping mechanism in focus countries (refugee survey)

In the last 12 months, how often have you or your family not had a sufficient amount of food to eat on a given day?	Total responses, all countries	Percentage,all countries	Ecuador	Jordan	Rwanda	S. Africa	Turkey	Uganda
Never	302	30%	12	58	7	14	129	5
Rarely (i.e. once or twice in the last 12 months)	193	20%	13	28	8	4	47	17

Sometimes (i.e. once or twice a month, on average)	340	34%	27	44	18	13	66	41
Often (i.e. once a week or more)	159	16%	8	21	16	4	33	8
Total	994		60	151	49	35	275	71

Annex 9 – Size of DAFI country operations and country of origin of beneficiaries

The following table is based on the DAFI student database and offers a snapshot of how many scholarships are currently offered in each country and to students of which countries of origin. Refugees from just four countries: Somalia, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria, constitute about 60 per cent of the total beneficiaries since the programme began in the Nineties. In terms of country operation size, Ethiopia is the largest by a significant margin, followed by Kenya, Jordan, Turkey and Pakistan. While the student database does not represent a full historical count of beneficiaries, it is the nearest data source UNHCR has to a census of past and present students and holds records on about 11,500 past scholarship students (of a total of about 18,500).

Country	Female DAFI	Male DAFI	Total (hosted)	% of total (hosted)	Total (origin)	% of total (origin)
Afghanistan	20	20	40	0.5%	1 179	16.1%
Angola	0	0	0	0.0%	3	0.0%
Algeria	97	64	161	2.2%	0	0.0%
Azerbaijan	8	8	16	0.2%	0	0.0%
Bangladesh	3	20	23	0.3%	0	0.0%
Benin	8	7	15	0.2%	1	0.0%
Burkina Faso	5	9	14	0.2%	0	0.0%
Burundi	46	96	142	1.9%	240	3.3%
Central African Republic	0	0	0	0.0%	228	3.1%
Cameroon	48	80	128	1.7%	36	0.5%
Chad	60	95	155	2.1%	12	0.2%
Colombia	0	0	0	0.0%	36	0.5%
Congo	0	0	0	0.0%	6	0.1%
Cote D'Ivoire	10	8	18	0.2%	125	1.7%
Democratic Republic of Congo	14	14	28	0.4%	456	6.2%

Ecuador	30	16	46	0.6%	0	0.0%
El Salvador	0	0	0	0.0%	6	0.1%
Eritrea	0	0	0	0.0%	119	1.6%
Ethiopia	129	687	816	11.1%	83	1.1%
Gambia	6	7	13	0.2%	1	0.0%
Ghana	35	45	80	1.1%	0	0.0%
Guatemala	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Guinea Bissau	6	7	13	0.2%	1	0.0%
Guinea Conakry	11	32	43	0.6%	0	0.0%
Honduras	0	0	0	0.0%	3	0.0%
India	18	23	41	0.6%	0	0.0%
Iraq	157	111	268	3.6%	92	1.3%
Islamic Republic of Iran	311	181	492	6.7%	31	0.4%
Jordan	316	215	531	7.2%	0	0.0%
Kenya	136	431	567	7.7%	0	0.0%
Kyrgyzstan	4	0	4	0.1%	1	0.0%
Lebanon	126	86	212	2.9%	0	0.0%
Liberia	7	17	24	0.3%	7	0.1%
Libya	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Malawi	18	29	47	0.6%	0	0.0%
Mali	14	6	20	0.3%	103	1.4%
Mauritania	25	94	119	1.6%	17	0.2%
Mexico	17	11	28	0.4%	0	0.0%

Morocco	26	49	75	1.0%	0	0.0%
Mozambique	19	15	34	0.5%	0	0.0%
Myanmar	0	0	0	0.0%	34	0.5%
Namibia	1	3	4	0.1%	0	0.0%
Nicaragua	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Niger	11	17	28	0.4%	0	0.0%
Nigeria	17	32	49	0.7%	43	0.6%
Pakistan	90	446	536	7.3%	0	0.0%
Russian Federation	7	7	14	0.2%	8	0.1%
Rwanda	43	107	150	2.0%	106	1.4%
Senegal	14	28	42	0.6%	22	0.3%
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0.0%	4	0.1%
Somalia	33	42	75	1.0%	698	9.5%
South Africa	28	35	63	0.9%	0	0.0%
South Sudan	28	69	97	1.3%	995	13.6%
State of Palestine	0	0	0	0.0%	20	0.3%
Sudan	65	47	112	1.5%	306	4.2%
Syria	5	10	15	0.2%	1978	26.9%
Tajikistan	11	11	22	0.3%	0	0.0%
Tanzania	47	73	120	1.6%	0	0.0%
Togo	6	9	15	0.2%	14	0.2%
Turkey	304	416	720	9.8%	17	0.2%
Uganda	148	284	432	5.9%	4	0.1%

Ukraine	5	5	10	0.1%	2	0.0%
Uzbekistan	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Venezuela	0	0	0	0.0%	27	0.4%
Western Sahara	0	0	0	0.0%	136	1.9%
Yemen	60	55	115	1.6%	137	1.9%
Zambia	26	21	47	0.6%	0	0.0%
Zimbabwe	5	11	16	0.2%	2	0.0%

Annex 10 – Structure of the online surveys

Consistently with the KEQ, the surveys were structured in modules (see table below). Each module of the refugee survey has been adapted from well-established survey instruments: the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) and the World Values Survey.

Refugee survey modules	Source of modules (refugee survey)	UNHCR staff survey modules	Implementing partner survey modules
Information, background and disability	The questions on disability are the core questions recommended by the Washington Group	No of years acted as DAFI focal point	No of years acted as DAFI focal point
Education of HH members	Adapted from UNICEF MICS6 survey	In-country programmatic coherence (within UNHCR programming)	Implementing partner in-country programmatic coherence
Employment status	Adapted from the World Bank LSMS survey	-	Gender-related barriers
Personal and HH income	Adapted from the World Bank LSMS survey	Feedback on implementing partner strengths and weaknesses	Feedback on HCR
HH coping mechanisms	Adapted from the World Bank LSMS survey	-	Civic engagement
Attitudes towards violence, peace, radicalization, democracy, non-discrimination and gender equality	Adapted from the World Values Survey	Enabling and constraining factors for DAFI Programme effects	Enabling and constraining factors for DAFI Programme effects

Life satisfaction	Adapted from UNICEF MICS6	-	DAFI indirect effects on transition/ role models
DAFI indirect effects on transition into and from Higher Education	-	Suggested improvements to DAFI	Suggested improvements to DAFI
Risks	-		
Suggested improvements to DAFI	-		

Annex 11 – Explanation of deviation from the original terms of reference/inception report

Deviation <u>from the original ToR of the evaluation</u> can be summarized as follows:

(1) Refinement of the initially envisioned KEQ in the inception report. The initial set of KEQ consistently referred to the six DAFI strategic objectives. As discussed in Section 1, these objectives were deemed too broad to be directly evaluable without context-specific refinements. Most of the KEQ were therefore reworded to allow a more precise link with the strategic objectives of certain programmes, such as enabling refugees to complete an undergraduate degree under KEQ E1. Additional details can be found in the KEQ section of the inception report.

(2) The ToR envisioned remote data collection by local consultants; instead, the evaluation deployed online surveys via KoboToolBox, which made it possible to reach a wide variety of beneficiaries at virtually no cost and, crucially, in a short period of time, leveraging mailing lists that were already available at the Education Section or held by in-country implementers. This enabled the evaluator to better answer the KEQ, factoring in the point of view of the beneficiary more successfully.

Deviation <u>from the inception report</u> on the evaluation can be summarized as follows:

(1) The outcome harvesting process was only partially successful. The evaluation succeeded in formulating and often also triangulating outcomes stemming from DAFI, but it was often impossible to reconstruct the pathways of change that led to the identified outcomes, mainly due to the impossibility of identifying, contacting and interacting to a sufficient extent with key informants. As detailed in the inception report, the evaluation proceeded to prepare case studies for the focus countries. These have been presented using a comparative approach, i.e. comparing the results achieved in each focus country under each KEQ, as relevant. To this end, at least five students were selected for key informant interviews in each focus country, as detailed in Annex 3.

(2) As far as the refugee survey is concerned, an initial sampling strategy with the following features had been considered:

Category of DAFI stakeholders	Size	Sampling strategy
Current students	267	Probability proportional to size (gender, country of origin)
Alumni	267	Probability proportional to size (gender, country of origin)
Refugees shortlisted in 2021	267	Probability proportional to size (gender, country of origin)

For the given population, a sample size of 267 would be sufficient to achieve a confidence level of 90 per cent and a 5 per cent margin of error. The 267 refugees shortlisted for award in 2021 represent a reservoir of observations that could be used to mimic a baseline for DAFI alumni for certain indicators (incidence of negative coping mechanisms, life satisfaction, views/attitudes towards democracy among others). In terms of sampling strategy, probability proportional to size had been considered, in an attempt to build a sample that reflected the characteristics of the population vs gender and country of origin. In October 2020 it was concluded in agreement with UNHCR that, given the disruptions brought about by COVID-19, as well as logistical challenges and problems associated with weak Internet

connectivity in many countries, the evaluation would instead adopt a snowball sampling strategy to leverage as many responses as possible across all country operations, with emphasis on the focus countries. While this sampling strategy represented a downgrade in terms of accuracy, the fact that the refugee survey gathered 1,124 valid responses overall confirms that this sampling strategy could be regarded as viable in terms of informing the evaluation to a satisfactory degree.