

Evaluation title:	<i>Evaluation of UNHCR Tertiary Education Scholarship Programme (DAFI)</i>
UNHCR evaluation reference:	EvO/2022/13
Entity that commissioned the evaluation:	DAFI Team, Education Section - Division of Resilience and Solutions
Due Date for Management Response:	07/02/2023
Date Management Response Completed:	04 January 2023
Coordinator of the Management Response:	Manal Stulgaitis, Education Officer, Education section, DRS
Management Response cleared by:	<i>To be filled by ES</i>

General comments on the evaluation:	<p>The evaluation of UNHCR's Tertiary Refugee Scholarship Programme (DAFI) is the first external evaluation of the programme in its 30-years of operation. The evaluation report provides relevant and useful reflections on key components of the programme and areas for improvement or adjustment, as well as valuable data on the programme's performance and impacts for both individuals and communities. The recommendations are germane and feasible; indeed, some have already been integrated into programme policy and guidelines updates. Perhaps above all, the process of undertaking the evaluation and the outcomes continued in the evaluation report put in place a foundation and supporting recommendation for subsequent evaluations and additional research to deepen the understanding, relevance and impact of the programme in the medium to long term. .</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 1:	<p>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 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</p>
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Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		HQ tertiary team (provision of technical guidance); country level DAFI focal points.				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Update DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines to reflect a suggested minimum package of core competencies.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with country level focal points	Consultation with country level focal points will take place at a global DAFI programme workshop in Q2 2023, supported by a pre-workshop survey to identify a suite of relevant, feasible core competencies as determined according to right to work, labour market opportunities, programme size and other context specific factors.	Q2 2023		
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.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		HQ tertiary team (for the design of the pilot); country level DAFI focal points (implementation of pilot and connected monitoring).				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Implement, support, monitor and learn from	DAFI HQ management team in	A bridging programme to support improved transition and representation of female students in tertiary education has already been initiated in Pakistan as of	Q3 2023		

	'bridging' programme for girls in Pakistan operation.	consultation with Pakistan DAFI focal point and partner.	Q2 2022. The HQ team will closely support, monitor and aim to expand/replicate the programme in other countries that perform poorly in terms of gender equity.			
2	Explore partnership with organisations already working on bridging and transitions programmes to support girls and other under-represented groups to transition to higher education.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with relevant country operations.	UNHCR has existing partnerships with Kepler, Mosaik Education and OSUN, for example on a variety of bridging and transition programmes. The HQ team will seek to consolidate the approaches with these organisations, identify the most effective interventions thus far and relevant sites for implementation.	Q3 2023		
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.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		HQ tertiary team (inflation adjustments); UNHCR in-country DAFI focal points (timely payment)				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Update DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines to reflect a standardized format for determining allowance amount, actions to take in the case of economic shifts, and mitigating measures to	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with country level focal points	Consultation with country level focal points will take place at a global DAFI programme workshop in Q2 2023, supported by a pre-workshop survey to identify a feasible approach to standardising determination of allowances across country contexts, disbursement of allowances on time, and procedures relevant to economic shocks and shifts.	Q2 2023		

	ensure timely payment of allowances.					
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.					
Management response:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree					
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):	Country programmes have been instructed to and provided funds to expand access to hardware as well as data to ensure connectivity where needed. Country programmes will work to progressively to define a minimum standard of IT skills, achieved through existing university teaching and learning resources, or supplemented by DAFI-specific ICT supplemental skills development.					
Unit or function responsible:	Country level DAFI focal points					
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Update DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines to reflect inclusion of a laptop in the student scholarship package.	DAFI HQ management team	Complete.	Q4 2022	Complete.	
2	Based on consultations with country level focal points, the DAFI HQ management team has rolled out the first round of laptop purchase approvals in select countries for all incoming DAFI students.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with country level focal points	Complete.	Q4 2022	Complete.	

3	Based on consultations with country level focal points, the DAFI HQ management team will continue to approve budget for laptops for all incoming DAFI students in additional countries.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with country level focal points	Planned for 2023 programme planning and budgeting cycles.	Throughout 2023		
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.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		Country level DAFI focal points.				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Update DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines to reinforce emphasis on academic and career counselling prior to the start of studies.	DAFI HQ management team.	Where DAFI country programmes are implemented by a partner organisation with advanced technical skill in university level guidance counselling, this may be possible. Where that skill is not present, country programme focal points will need to rely on secondary or university level academic and career guidance counselling, to the extent that it is available.	Q4 2022	Complete	
2	Support existing or emerging university guidance advisor initiatives to expand refugee-student specific support to identify tertiary education	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with country level focal points	The Tertiary Education Team at headquarters has begun work to expand and strengthen partnership with a number of organisations already providing academic transition and guidance support to refugee students (Kepler, Mosaik Education, WUSC, Elimishu Kakuma). This work will continue in earnest throughout 2023 with	Q4 2023		

	opportunities that are aligned to individual characteristics and locational factors.		the aim to establish a functional pilot for the Global Peer to Peer Solutions Advisor Network which has the express purpose of supporting more refugee youth to transition to higher education and work based on their relevant skills, the labour market factors in effect and career aspirations. (The Global Peer to Peer Solutions Advisor Network was presented as an Innovation Lab at the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2022.)			
RECOMMENDATION 6:		Prepare plans to improve the participation of girls, taking into account the set of good practices identified in this evaluation. 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.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		HQ tertiary team				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Create information sharing opportunities between country level focal points to explore and learn from existing initiatives to boost female participation.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with country focal points.	Consultation with country level focal points will take place at a global DAFI programme workshop in Q2 2023, including dedicated sessions to explore, troubleshoot and agree to measures to address low female participation rates across programme countries.	Q2 2023		
2	Institute policies to require countries to take affirmative action measures to achieve	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with relevant	The DAFI HQ management team issued instructions to country operations prior to 2023 programme planning, instructing that country plans must include measures to ensure that selection and short lists are equally representative of women and men.	Q4 2022	Complete	

	equitable enrolment of women by 2025.	country operations.				
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.				
Management response:		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		Advocacy with higher education institutions and relevant ministries is highly dependent both on the capacity and agency of the country level focal point and on the political and operational context where each DAFI programme is implemented.				
Unit or function responsible:		Country level DAFI focal points				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Update DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines to reinforce emphasis on advocacy with HEIs and relevant ministries, including specific examples and best practices for such advocacy.	DAFI HQ management team.	DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines have been updated. A specific guidance note on working with HEIs is in a final draft stage and will be issued in Q1 2023.	Q1 2023	Partially complete.	
2	Collect and share information from successful advocacy efforts by DAFI focal points in country operations.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with relevant country operations	A dedicated session for information sharing among country level focal points will take place at a global DAFI programme workshop in Q2 2023. Examples of where advocacy with HEIs or ministries have been successful in improving conditions for refugee enrolment in higher education will be discussed and interrogated.	Q2 2023		
3	Cosolidate and reflect contributions of HEIs and ministries to expanding refugee enrolment in hosting countries in	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with relevant	The HQ DAFI management team will consolidate examples of successful advocacy, joint efforts and contributions of HEIs and national ministries to advance and expand refugee participation in higher education. The findings will be used to inform GRF representation of tertiary education to highlight the role of HEIs and	Q4 2023		

	information notes and at the Global Refugee Forum.	country operations	national government in delivering on the 15by30 objectives and improving conditions for expanded enrolment of DAFI students.			
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.				
Management response:		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		Outreach to secondary education students and institutions is highly dependent both on the capacity and agency of the country level education focal point and on the political and operational context where each DAFI programme is implemented.				
Unit or function responsible:		Country level DAFI focal points				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Update DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines to reinforce emphasis on the important of outreach to secondary students and in secondary schools. Provide examples of how other stakeholders (DAFI alumni and DAFI clubs) can contribute to these efforts.	DAFI HQ management team.	Complete.	Q4 2022	Complete.	
2	Collect and share information from DAFI focal points in country operations who have successfully and systematically implemented secondary school outreach initiatives to improve transitions to tertiary education.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with relevant country operations	A dedicated session for information sharing will take place among country level focal points at a global DAFI programme workshop in Q2 2023. Examples of successful secondary school outreach will be consolidated for dissemination, and presentation at the GRF or in supportin policy briefs, as relevant.	Q2 2023		

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.				
Management response:		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		Creating effective linkages with secondary education and youth employment initiatives is highly dependent both on the capacity and agency of the country level education focal point and on the political and operational context where each DAFI programme is implemented.				
Unit or function responsible:		Country level DAFI focal points				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Update DAFI Programme Policy & Guidelines to reinforce emphasis on the importance of linkages with secondary education and youth employment initiatives.	DAFI HQ management team.	Complete.	Q4 2022	Complete.	
2	Collect and share information from DAFI focal points in country operations who have successfully and systematically created linkages with secondary education and youth employment initiatives.	DAFI HQ management team in consultation with relevant country operations	A dedicated session for information sharing will take place among country level focal points at a global DAFI programme workshop in Q2 2023. Examples will be consolidated for further dissemination and inclusion in the DAFI Community of Practice Portal.	Q2 2023		
RECOMMENDATION 10:		Increase fundraising efforts for DAFI, to ensure its financial sustainability in the medium and long term. 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.				

Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Convene donor briefing on DAFI programme for Member States.	DAFI HQ management team	Convened invitation-only DAFI Programme 30 th anniversary celebration and briefing for Member States (MS).	Q4 2022	Complete	
2	Follow up with DAFI programme information, specific asks and other bilateral outreach to MS	DAFI HQ management team in collaboration with DRRM	Based on the above activity and response from MS, follow up outreach will continue throughout 2023. Teams will make specific effort to take advantage of opportunities created by the advent of the GRF in 2023.	Throughout 2023.		
RECOMMENDATION 11:		<p>Develop an evaluation strategy, potentially leveraging a longitudinal design, and run an independent evaluation every four or five years. 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				

Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR HQ tertiary team with assistance from the Evaluation Service				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress After 1 Year	
					Status Update	Comments
1	Submit proposal for longitudinal study of DAFI programme outcomes.	DAFI HQ management team	Proposal submitted to the UNCHR-World Bank Joint Data Centre, outlining a longitudinal study to investigate post-graduation economic, social and employment outcomes of the programme.	Complete.		
2	Design of evaluation strategy/process to be implemented periodically ensuring systematic evolution and overall responsiveness of the DAFI programme over time.	UNHCR HQ tertiary team with assistance from the Evaluation Service	Based on information collected during the Global DAFI Programme workshop in Q2 2023, the DAFI HQ management team and Evaluation Service will develop a relevant, feasible evaluation strategy.	Q3 2023		