

Global Refugee Forum 2019 Template for Good Practices

Please send this template and any attachments to the Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team at hqgrf@unhcr.org **as early as possible** to facilitate the consolidation and presentation of good practices in time for the Global Refugee Forum.

Good practices can be shared on the Global Refugee Forum website and then included in the digital portal, which is currently under development.

Please complete a separate template for each good practice.

Name of entity sharing good practice

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

Name and position of contact person

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Partners

UNHCR, HOPES, DAAD, EU

Name of good practice

Facilitation of Higher Education Accession among the Syrian Youth in Turkey

Country/ Region:

Turkey

Year(s) of implementation and duration:

6

Document related to the good practice model/approach:

Attached Available at:

General description of the good practice:

With around 3.6 million people, Turkey is home to the largest Syrian population who had fled their country after the break of civil war. YTB's works in the higher education sector of Turkey play significant role in building community resilience among the Syrian youth and responding with an effective and exemplary way to fulfill the education needs in emergent and protracted refugee situations.

For facilitation of access to tertiary education, YTB has utilized many tools including but not limited to granting of scholarships, payment of tuitions and provision of advanced level Turkish language courses. Türkiye Scholarships program, provided by YTB on behalf of the Turkish Government, offers the most prestigious Turkish universities and unique educational experiences for the Syrian students under temporary protection in Turkey. In this context, scholarships offered by YTB have influenced the prospects of young individuals, especially of young women and served as a tool of social integration to the host country.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, YTB has ensured inclusive and equitable quality education opportunity for the Syrian community and significantly contributed to the achievement of 7% higher education enrollment rate in Turkey while the accession rate in tertiary education for refugees worldwide remains only at 1%.

Main activities of the good practice:

YTB acts as an exemplary model in the promotion of access to higher education. This model is exercised through a variety of useful practices in the form of tuition fee coverage, language training courses and all-inclusive scholarship offers for the students under temporary protection in Turkey. Within this context, it is important to note that YTB covers tuition fees of all Syrian students in Turkey to facilitate accession to the higher education programs. Moreover, using its most important instrument in the provision of higher education opportunities for international students, YTB has significantly utilized "Türkiye Scholarships" in response to the needs of Syrian youth. In this regard, Türkiye Scholarships have provided the Syrian students with an all-inclusive package of university/program placement, tuition fee, health insurance, accommodation, monthly stipend and a yearlong Turkish language course. Since 2012, 5172 Syrian students have benefited from Türkiye Scholarships.

Since 2013, YTB has also been providing Turkish language courses up to C1 level, which is a requirement for foreign students to be able to enroll in Turkish universities. YTB has also benefitted from collaborating with UNHCR to increase and facilitate enrollment. In this connection, 14,758 bursars have been granted language scholarships since 2013. Additionally, YTB has taken efforts to explore the potential of financing mechanisms and instruments to mobilize international funding on tertiary education. In this regard, HOPES, DAFI and HESP programs have availed the accession of 1259 students in higher education programs. Starting from 2019, students are also supported by 40 academic advisors assigned in Turkish universities hosting the largest number of Syrian students to increase retention in higher education.

Results of the good practice:

The number of Syrian students studying on undergraduate and graduate levels in Turkey has exceeded 27 thousand as of 2019. Amongst the Syrian youth, there is a high demand of post-secondary education reflected on large number of applications to “Türkiye Scholarships”. In 2019, the number of applications to Türkiye Scholarships from the Syrian youth has become 20,067. Since 2012, YTB has provided scholarships to 14,496 Syrian students, including scholarships from international funds with 3RP partners. Between 2012 and 2018, scholarship provision for Syrian students has increased by 18,4%. These works executed by YTB have had significant impacts on the attainment of 7% higher education accession rate among the Syrian youth in Turkey.

As per the data provided, the most important result of this good practice is the increased accession of Syrian youth to the tertiary education in Turkey. Inclusion in the national education system also has direct contributions to the self-reliance, resilience and economic prospects of the Syrian students in Turkey. Equipment of the necessary skills and profession for a meaningful contribution to the labor market are facilitated through creating opportunities in the higher education and investing in the human capital. More importantly, graduates of these successful programs are expected to assume active roles in the reconstruction of their country in the future. YTB is ensuring high levels of enrollment in tertiary education for the attainment of a qualified human resource who will engage in Syria’s rebuilding process.

Challenges in implementing the good practice and how they are being addressed:

YTB recognizes that language is the greatest barrier for Syrian students seeking higher education opportunities. The most common challenge for the Syrian students against pursuing academic studies is to demonstrate the sufficient level of proficiency in Turkish language as the medium of instruction in most universities is Turkish. Therefore, language preparation courses towards degree programs are designed to develop academic language proficiency.

Furthermore, academic advisors are assigned in order to increase the retention of students. The advisors are intended to be the first contact point of all Syrian students. With the support of advisors, sociocultural problems and academic conditions of the students are followed-up. Reasons for failure during academic studies are addressed and solutions are developed.

For interaction of the Syrian students to the host community, students are also diversified across provinces with different universities and degree programs. In this line, place of residence of the students is taken into consideration for easier accession to higher education and the conversation of the household.