

For Immediate Release



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Joint Report by the AUB Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education Calls for Renewed Attention to Address Less than 5 % Enrolment of Refugee Youth in Secondary Education

During a joint event at the American University of Beirut (AUB), the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education and the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs released the results of mapping around the state of refugee education in Jordan and Lebanon to identify key challenges inhibiting access and completion of secondary, technical and vocational (TVET), and tertiary education. Attending the event were policy practitioners from various institutions in Lebanon, researchers, members of the press community, representatives from the American University of Beirut and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education.

The study focuses on Syrian and Palestinian refugees as the two largest refugee populations in both countries, although the findings and recommendations are relevant and applicable to all other refugee populations living in the host countries as well. The findings from the study highlight four key challenges:

Finding 1 - Although the funding for refugee education has not been sufficient, it has been largely focused on the primary level.

Finding 2 - Significant gaps in access continue to persist at all levels of education, but most strikingly at the secondary level.

Finding 3 - Vocational education lacks data, investment and quality interventions. Vocational education institutions and programs in Jordan and Lebanon remain largely traditional and are not seen as a desirable education pathway for youth.

Finding 4 - While support for increasing access to higher education for refugees remains low, another critical challenge is its relevance to the labor market and the employability of refugees upon graduation.

While refugees' access to tertiary education needs to be addressed, with only 5-8% of Syrian and Palestinian refugees attending university in Jordan and Lebanon, the quality and relevance of education are also critical issues.

Speaking at the event, Maysa Jalbout, CEO of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education said: "With this report, we hope to shed light on the urgent need for more funders to address the alarmingly low enrolment and completion rates of less than 5% at the secondary and tertiary education levels in Jordan and Lebanon. The report illuminates critical information all donors need to better understand the best ways to engage with organizations serving refugees."

From her part, Dr. Hana El-Ghali Education and Youth Policy Research Program Director at AUB's Issam Fares Institute, said "Continued research within the areas of education of refugees is critical in order to understand and address the rapidly changing needs within the sector. It is clear that there is room for further support and innovation in order to bridge the gap between primary education and higher levels of education for vulnerable populations in both Jordan and Lebanon. Investing in secondary, TVET and higher education for refugees emerges as necessity rather than a luxury as education may be the only thing that they can take with them anywhere they may go."

Innovative Pathways

Widening the scope of scholarships and exploring options of bridging the middle school years to secondary school, TVET and tertiary education remain among the most pressing needs in order to overcome the low rate of enrolment and the high rate of dropout among refugee youth. Exploring alternative pathways for refugee youth, particularly in light of the restrictive labour laws within each of the host countries, arises as an essential next step for all stakeholders. Both refugee crises are now considered to be protracted, and this will demand innovative approaches to address the education of refugees in both Lebanon and Jordan in order to ensure that these vulnerable populations are receiving what is rightfully theirs, the right to an education at all levels.

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education received a 27M USD grant from the Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair Refugee Education Fund in 2018 to develop and administer this initiative. The Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair Refugee Education Fund supports high-impact education programs at the secondary, vocational and tertiary levels of education for refugee youth in Jordan and Lebanon. The grants provided by the fund also support children of families who due to conflict in their home countries, temporarily reside in the UAE but are unable to afford school fees. The Fund aims to reach 20,000 refugee youth over three years. The call for proposals for the second phase of funding is currently open until March 19th, 2019.

For further information on the findings and to view the full report, please visit www.aub.edu.lb/ifi or www.alghurairfoundation.org/en

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For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar
Director of News and Media Relations
Mobile: (+961) 3-427-024
Office: (+961) 1-374-374 ext: 2676
Email: sk158@aub.edu.lb

Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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