

Increase Refugees Enrolment in Higher Education in Jordan

#15by30Goal

“Un-official translation”

Theoretical Background

This policy paper focuses on increasing the enrollment rate of refugee students in Higher Education in Jordan to 15% by 2030, as set by UNHCR and its partners in their 15 by 30 goal. This goal ensures that 15% of young refugee women and men, or approximately 500,000 refugees in total, can access Higher Education by 2030 (UNHCR, 2019). To ensure that this goal is achieved, UNHCR and its partners have developed a timetable and an operational plan. Although the enrollment rate of refugees in universities exceeds the global rate by 3%, there is still an urgent need to study the reality and obstacles that stand in the way of refugees enrolling in Jordanian universities, given that the enrollment rate of non-refugee students, including refugees, in Jordanian universities reached 34.4% in 2018 (Knoema.com, 2022). On the other hand, the global enrollment rate among refugees in Higher Education was 38% in 2018 (Martin, and Stulgaiti, 2022; UNHCR, 2019).

University education is crucial when it comes to providing long-term development solutions for refugees, whether in the host countries where they live or and possibly resettled, or if they return to their home country. As a result, it is necessary to investigate the barriers they encounter when they consider enrolling in Higher Education in Jordan and to develop some proposals and potential opportunities to assist refugee students to easily get access to Higher Education.

Qualitative research was designed and carried out to study this problem, based on information gathered from refugee students, experts, and decision makers in Jordanian universities. 7 Focus Groups were conducted with 74 refugee students enrolled in Jordanian universities, as well as with 20 experts in the fields of Jordanian Higher Education and refugee issues. The focus groups revealed that there are numerous barriers that prevent refugee students from enrolling in Higher Education. These obstacles are divided into two categories: those related to the students themselves, and those related to Jordanian universities, their laws and regulations. One of the main reasons mentioned by students in focus groups is the financial barrier and low income of refugees in general, especially since Jordanian universities accept refugee students as international students. Except for a few, university tuition fees are prohibitively expensive for the vast majority of refugees, especially given that the costs of study and living in Jordan are higher than in Syria (Kamyab, 2017).

The inability of refugee students to afford university tuition fees after completing their secondary education, as well as the existence of critical obstacles students face in universities, are the primary reasons for the low enrollment rates of refugee students in higher education institutions, especially given the world's growing refugee population. By the end of 2021, according to UNHCR's annual global trend report; the global number of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people forced to flee their homes due to conflicts, violence, fear of persecution, and human rights violations had risen to 89.3 million, becoming the largest number since World War II (UNHCR, 2021-2022). 82%, are concentrated in developing countries while 18% are hosted in the developed countries.

It is important for refugees to pursue higher education and obtain scientific and professional qualifications. This goal is consistent with the fourth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, which is to provide inclusive and equitable education for all members of society. Higher Education shields refugees from marginalization and harm while also assisting them in establishing communities in exile. It also contributes to building their societies in the future if they return to their country. Higher Education serves as a bridge between the current emergency situation and long-term development for refugees (Avery and Said, 2017). It is also a driving force for equality, social change, and the development of democratic societies that provide high-quality services to all (Cin and Dogan 2021).

Many attempts have been made by neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan to address the barriers that refugee students, particularly Syrians, face in enrolling in Higher Education. Turkey has provided huge aid and appears to be the most successful in this regard due to its size and greater financial capabilities (Kamyab, 2017). Jordan has provided many services to refugees, allowing students to enroll in universities as well as applying for work permits and exempting them from fees (Al-Hawamdeh and El-GHali, 2017). In a recent policy paper (Martin, and Stulgaiti, 2022) that simulates the problem of refugee enrollment in Higher Education in six countries (Egypt, Turkey, Ethiopia, France, Germany, and Norway), it was discovered that among the most significant obstacles to refugee students enrolling in higher education are legal restrictions, exorbitant tuition fees, living costs, difficulties in learning the required language, and difficulty obtaining equivalence, as well as other challenges faced by refugee women. The study produced 14 recommendations, including improving procedures to account for refugees' prior qualifications, providing more funding for refugees and universities where they will study, developing "equal opportunity" policies for refugees, and obtaining periodic information that monitors opportunities for refugees. Furthermore, the recommendations suggest providing refugee students with university-related knowledge, admission criteria, and funding opportunities. In addition to that, providing courses for refugee students once they arrive in the host country will prepare them to enroll in universities when they are admitted.

In a case study commissioned by UNESCO to investigate Higher Education in Jordan and the possibility of enrolling Syrian students (El-Ghali and Al-Hawamdeh, 2017), the study drew attention to the fact that there are numerous opportunities for Syrian students to enroll in Jordanian universities that are not overcrowded, such as universities in southern Jordan, as well as community colleges that have the capacity to accommodate additional students. However, because Jordan's higher education institutions are autonomous, there is a need for ongoing communication between them, international donor organizations and scholarship donors. Jordan has 10 public universities, 19 private universities, 51 community colleges, and 42 vocational training facilities. The researchers identified the obstacles that face students' enrollment in Higher Education: the financial barrier to studying and living expenses, the academic barrier to enrolling in basic education, the English language, which students struggle with, documentation of previous studies, and scholarships. These findings are similar to what was found in the above mentioned study. Furthermore, the study made 15 recommendations to address the enrollment of Syrian refugee students in Jordanian Higher Education, such as directing Jordanian and refugee students to study required specializations needed in the job market, especially given Jordan's high unemployment rate of 13.8% among males and 25.2% among females.

To increase the enrollment of refugee students in Higher Education, economic and social conditions must be considered, and global coordination is required to develop fair global strategies for the long-term development of refugees (Avery and Said, 2017).

In this time of financial pressure on countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, the international community, particularly European and American countries, Arab countries such as Qatar, the Arab Gulf, and Saudi Arabia, and the private sector, must bear their collective global responsibility to assist and support students pursuing higher education (Kamyab, 2017; Wit and Albach, 2017). A collective commitment to States and other diverse multi stakeholder approaches are needed to apply the principle of responsibility sharing and fulfill objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, including ease pressure on host countries and expand access to third country solutions.

Methodology

The qualitative approach and methods were used relying on the focus groups tool to understand the reality experienced by refugee students and their inability to enroll in Higher Education in Jordanian universities. This included collecting data from groups of refugee students in Jordanian universities and from a group of experts familiar with the reality of refugee issues in Jordan. The study included seven focus groups held in three regions of Jordan: the northern region, which included three sessions, the central region, which included three sessions, and the southern region, which included one session. Each session had 5 to 15 participants, for a total of 74 participants. Each session lasted 3 hours. The semi-codified discussion questions consisted of 24 questions prepared in advance by the work team, the most prominent of which were the barriers that refugee students face when enrolling in Jordanian universities. The discussion sessions were led by Yarmouk University professors and assisted by graduate students from Yarmouk University, which is funded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The high financial cost of higher education programs was one of the most significant constraints, especially since refugees are treated as "international students." The second issue that arose during the sessions was the issue of laws and regulations that restrict refugees' ability to work in Jordan. Following that, we will go over the most important issues raised by the participating students in their responses, as well as suggestions for overcoming these obstacles¹.

The Importance of the Study Problem

The research issue is focused on the small number of refugee students who have access to Higher Education. Based on the literature review, it was found that refugees prioritize their immediate needs, whereas university education is still regarded as unimportant or urgent. Dealing with refugees' immediate problems is important and necessary, but so is their need for university education, which provides sustainability and long-term development for them, their families, and their countries. However, refugees face numerous barriers to enrollment in Higher Education, the most significant of which is poverty and their inability to cover the costs of university tuition fees, particularly the high cost of university education in Jordan, as well as being treated as international students.

As a result, it is crucial to study the reality experienced by refugees from their perspective, the perspectives of experts, and previous literature conducted on refugees in order to understand the main reasons that limit refugee students' enrollment in Higher Education. There is a need to identify the challenges that refugees face so that we can analyze them and study potential solutions.

Presenting the Study Problem

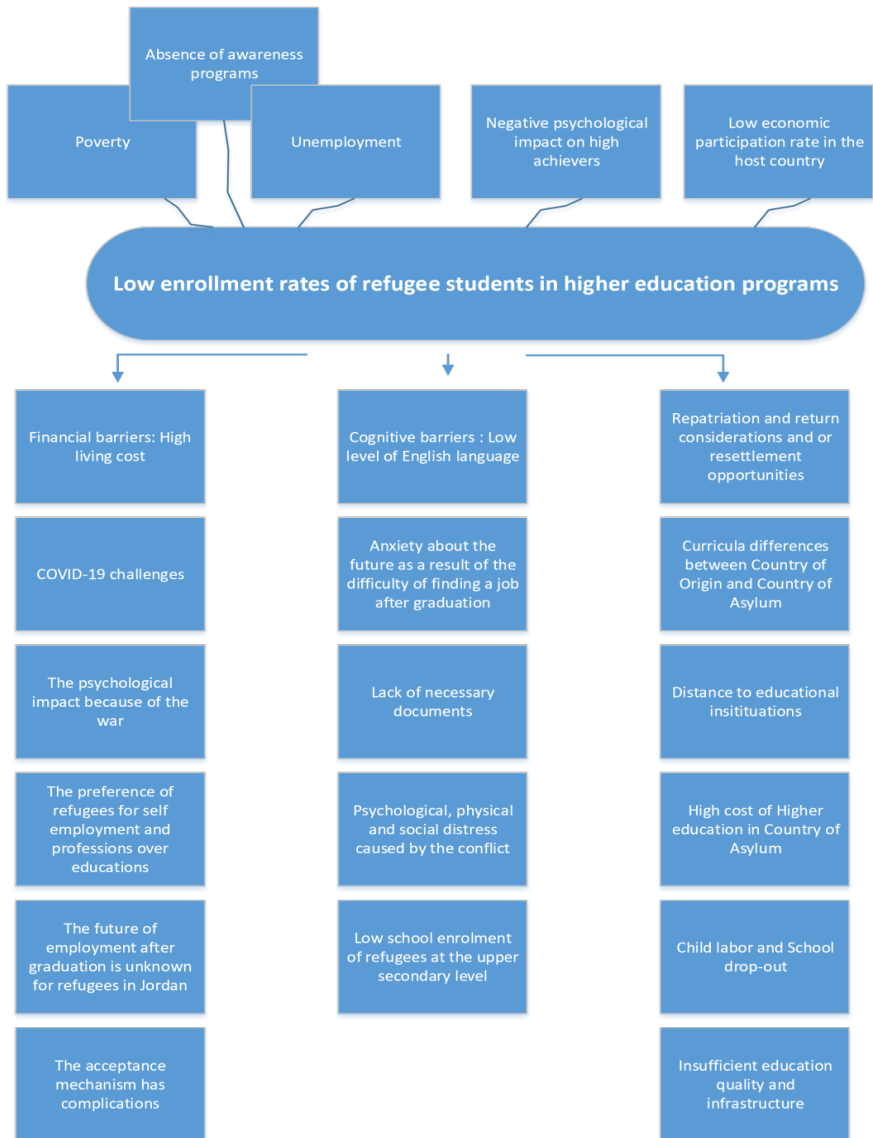
Many refugees, mainly Syrians, have put pressure on Jordan's education system, especially basic education. Jordan has worked hard to provide refugees with primary education, an urgent and necessary need. Higher Education, on the other hand, was not enough on the radar of the country's planning priorities and did not have the same opportunities and resources to facilitate enrollment of a larger proportion of refugee students, as is the case among Jordanian students.

The policy paper aims to increase the number of refugee students enrolled in Jordanian Higher Education to 15% by 2030. This goal achieves sustainability and is consistent with Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to "ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, particularly with regard to university education."

The purpose of this paper is also to share the most important findings from focus groups which include refugee students, educational experts, and higher education experts. On the other hand, the paper seeks to stimulate expert discussion of the various implications of refugee and Jordanian students' right to Higher Education, as well as to discuss some challenges, opportunities, and recommendations.

This policy paper will have a significant impact on allowing refugee students to obtain HE certificates that will help them find work, reduce unemployment rates among young refugees, and contribute to building the necessary infrastructure for the places where they reside in, whether in Jordan, in their home country if they return, or in any third world country they are going to resettle.

Discussion of the Challenges- Problem Tree Analysis



¹ The problems are identified based on the focus group discussions with Syrian refugee students and experts.

² The root of the tree indicates the problems, and the top of the tree refers to the impact.

Discussion of the Challenges

The following challenges were identified after relying on the literature review and previous studies, analyzing the information contained therein, and analyzing the results of focus groups including refugee students and those studying in universities in the North, Central, and South regions, as well as focus groups including educational experts:

First: Financial Barrier

This is the most significant challenge shared by all refugee students. The high cost of the parallel and international programs in Jordanian universities on which refugees are permitted to study, in addition to not allowing refugee students to postpone tuition fees, the absence of any loans offered to them by Higher Education and universities, and the lack of student benefits and incentives, are the most significant challenges shared by all refugee students. All of these obstacles impeded the completion of the distinguished and academically outstanding students to complete their Higher Education. It is also worth noting that the lack of international bodies that provide scholarships to refugees, as well as their lack of continuity and sustainability, which places a burden on students and their families in light of refugee families' limited financial resources, and the impact of COvid-19, which prevented refugee families from receiving assistance are also among the challenges faced by refugees. In addition to the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, the level of donor countries' contributions has decreased in the years preceding the pandemic, and as a result, students resort to looking for work to cover the costs of their studies or refrain from enrolling or withdrawing from higher education programs.

Second: Skills and Capacities Barrier

Refugee and Jordanian students face a unique challenge due to their low levels of English prior to entering university, particularly those with a Syrian secondary certificate, which prevents them from enrolling in majors where the medium of instruction is English. In addition, the difference in curricula between their home country and the host country creates a knowledge gap for them, which is reflected in their performance and achievement when they enroll in higher education programs, forcing them to withdraw or not enroll.

Third: Challenges in Accessing Universities, Intermediate University Colleges, and Institutes due to Geographical Distance

Due to the relative distance of their places of residence, the long journey time to reach universities using public transportation, and sometimes unavailability of public transportation, a number of refugee students, as well as some Jordanian students, have difficulty accessing universities and intermediate university colleges. On the other hand, refugee students residing in

camps face more difficulty accessing these institutions. This discourages refugee students from enrolling in higher education programs and has a negative impact on their enrollment rates, in addition to the lack of identity papers for refugees, which is one of the requirements for enrolling in higher education institutions in Jordan.

Fourth: Limited Job Opportunities in the Jordanian Market for Refugee Graduates

One of the challenges refugee students mentioned in the focus group sessions was the unknown future of refugee students' post-study period in relation to the labor market in Jordan, as Jordanian labor laws do not allow refugees to work in many fields even after completing higher education. Furthermore, job opportunities are scarce, and if they do exist, they require a work permit which is prohibitively expensive. The job opportunities available to refugees are not commensurate with the majors they studied at universities, but this does not affect their enrollment because their goal is to enroll in higher education programs in order to obtain a job opportunity outside Jordan, particularly in the Arab Gulf countries or in the Western countries.

Fifth: Lack of incentive among refugee students due to limited work opportunities

The government's decision to prevent refugees from working in certain economic sectors has affected their desire to enroll in higher education programs or to pursue their higher education. In addition, changing the academic disciplines they are enrolled in based on the economic sectors available to them in Jordan or abroad, or the level of demand for this specialty globally are other reasons that hinder refugee students to pursue their higher education. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the lack of privileges and incentives for distinguished and academically outstanding refugee students leads students to withdraw from or not enroll in higher education programs.

Sixth: Social and Cultural Difference

Because of the social and cultural differences (customs, traditions, social trends, preference of males over females, and underage marriage), refugee students are unable to enroll in higher education programs. As the majority prefer self-employment and professions, education is not a top priority for them. This is reflected in the number of students dropping out of school, the rise of child labor, being content with finishing primary school without continuing on to secondary school, or dropping out of secondary school and going into self-employment. Some refugees finish secondary school but do not enroll in higher education programs.

On the other hand, due to the high cost of education and scarcity of financial resources, families prefer their male sons to enroll in higher education as part of their cultural tradition among the refugee community. Because they encourage early marriage, these families do not prioritize enrolling their daughters in higher education. These practices have a negative impact on higher education enrollment rates.

Seventh: Absence of Awareness Programs

The lack of necessary awareness programs demonstrating the importance of enrolling in higher education programs, particularly those directed at parents, contributes to the low enrollment of refugees in higher education programs. Furthermore, the lack of academic guidance for refugee students before and after choosing a university major may cause them to change their major,

putting them under financial pressure, or force them to withdraw from higher education programs.

Eighth: Voluntary Return, Immigration, or Resettlement in Countries such as Europe and Canada.

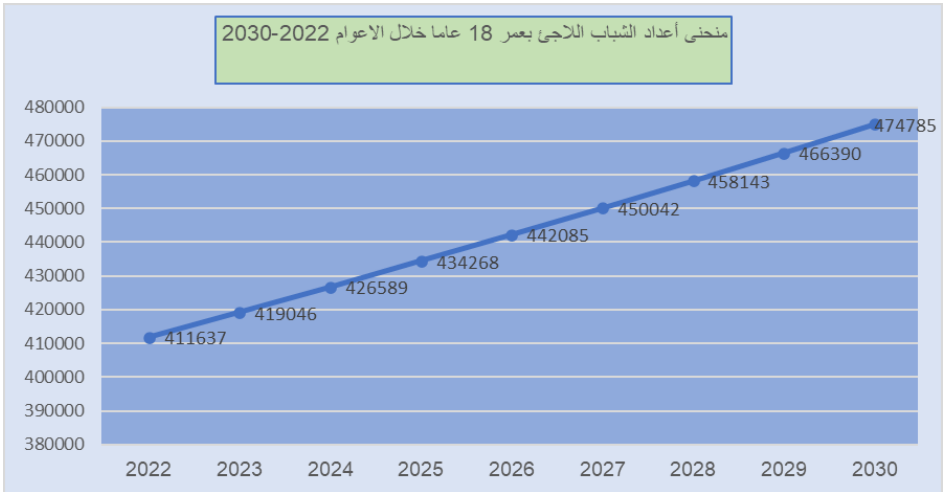
One of the challenges that refugees face when enrolling in or continuing their higher education programs is insecurity. Many refugees got enrolled in higher education institutions and then postponed their studies due to getting a resettlement opportunity followed by a Permanent Residency or citizenship in a 3rd country before returning to Jordan to finish their studies; hence this contributed to dropping out before completing their studies.

Forecasting and Inferential Data Enrollment:

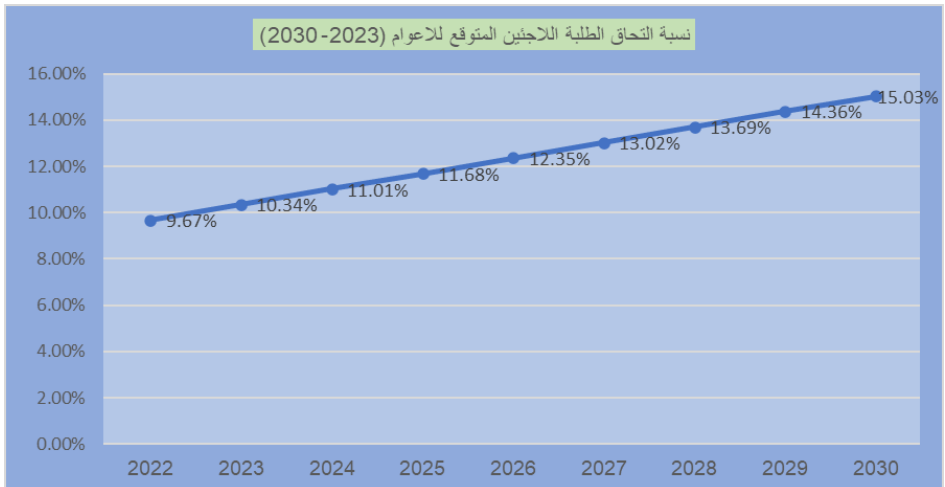
The forecasting procedure consisted of the following steps:

- Calculating growth rates in the number of refugees over the age of 18 who are registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the years 2023-2030 using mathematical equations. Estimates were made based on the rate of increase in the number of refugees over the age of 18, the desired enrollment rate, the number of new students who enroll each year in addition to students enrolled earlier, the average cost per hour as well as the average number of hours approved for each academic discipline, and finally the cost difference between international, parallel, and regular education. Then, according to the criteria for occupancy of these facilities, the number of facilities that would need to be added to universities was projected based on the number of additional students, and these expenditures were determined using estimates from the relevant engineering authorities. The same procedure was conducted for the cost of e-learning, the training of the planned professors to appoint them as freelance or part time lecturers, and the cost of their pay. Together with the appropriate authorities, we calculated each expense and arrived at the overall cost.
- Calculating the number of students who will enroll annually in accordance with the annual enrollment rates that have been relied on in accordance with the desired enrollment ratio in 2030, which is 15%, as well as the current enrollment rate of 9%, and dividing the difference by seven to determine the desired annual enrollment rates. The enrollment rate should gradually reach 15% in the next seven years. Then, the number of new enrollments from refugee students was calculated based on these annual percentages.

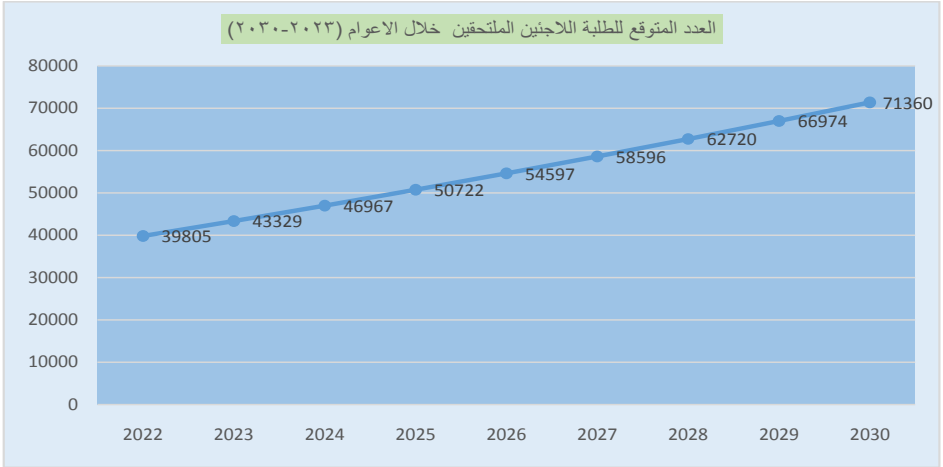
1- Forecasting the Number of Refugee Youth Aged 18 between 2023 and 2030.



2- The Percentage of Refugee Students Enrolled in Higher Education Programs between 2023 and 2030.



3- Forecasting the Number of Refugee Students Enrolled in Higher Education Programs between 2023 and 2030.

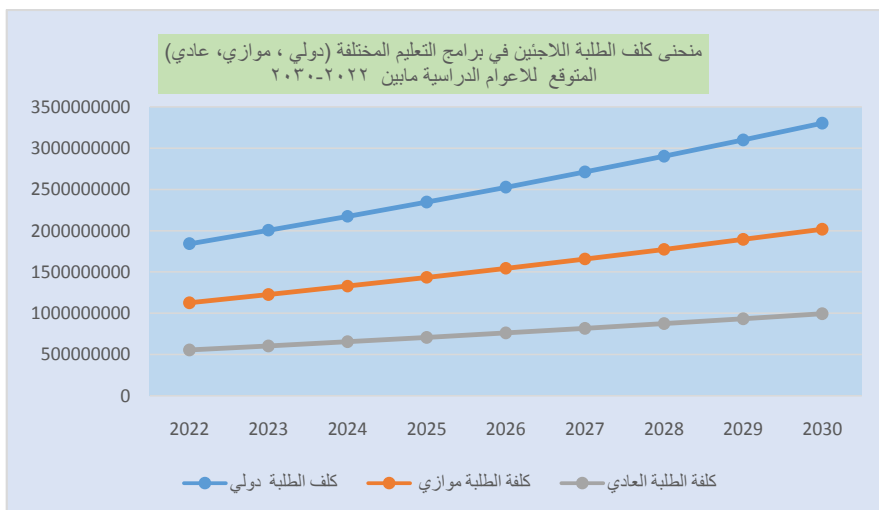


Financial Costs

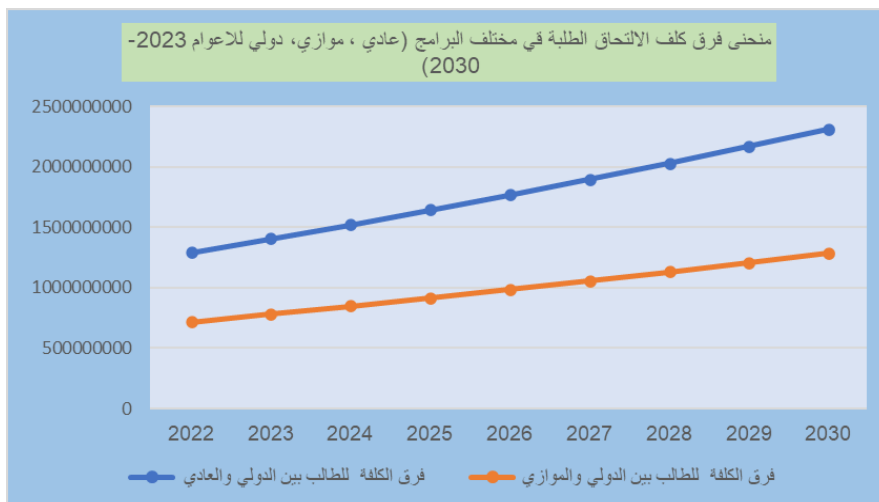
The process of calculating financial costs was divided into several stages, as follows:

- Determining the financial cost of refugee students' education in the international education program, parallel education, and regular education, based on the number of students who will enroll in universities, as specified in the previous section. This should be conducted after consulting the Department of Admission and Registration at Yarmouk University and calculating an arithmetic average of the credit hours of the various disciplines, as well as the average credit hour price according to the international, parallel, and regular programs for the various disciplines. These costs will be adopted by all universities that refugees will enroll in to increase their enrollment rate.
- Determining the financial gap if refugee students are accepted in the parallel education program or regular education by finding the difference between the financial costs of the three education programs that were calculated according to the number of enrolled refugee students.
- Setting standards for determining and preparing university facilities, as well as preparing lecturers. For example, the number of students per classroom, the number of students per laboratory, the number of students per classroom, and the average of student lecturers. These standards were determined based on the principles approved by the Higher Education Accreditation Commission.
- Determining the cost of establishing and equipping facilities, as determined by the Engineering Department, the Supplies Department, the E-Learning Center, and Open Education Resources, the cost of constructing and equipping a classroom, laboratory, and auditorium, and the cost of e-learning equipment at current Jordanian market prices. The total costs were calculated by multiplying the number of classrooms, laboratories, big halls, and lecturers by the cost of one unit.

1- Costs of Enrolling Refugee Students to Higher Education Programs (International, Parallel, and Normal) for the Academic Years 2022-2030.



2- The Difference between the Expected Costs of Enrolling Refugee Students in the Programs (Normal, International, and Parallel) for the Years 2023-2030.



3- The Costs of Developing Infrastructure, Adding Facilities, and Appointing Part-Time Lecturers, which is Expected to Take Place between 2023 and 2030.

A table displaying the numbers and costs of facilities and part-time lecturers required and expected to accommodate the increase in enrollment rates in higher education programs between 2023 and 2030.

Facilities and Lecturers	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Number of classrooms needed to cover the increase in refugees' enrollment	1083	1174	1268	1365	1465	1568	1674	1785	
Number of educational auditoriums	87	94	101	109	117	125	134	143	
Number of computer labs	1444	1566	1691	1820	1953	2091	2232	2379	
Number of laboratories	1444	1566	1691	1820	1953	2091	2232	2379	
Number of part time lecturers	1238	1342	1449	1560	1674	1792	1914	2039	
Costs of computer labs	93880377	101762878	109898732	118294506	126956921	135892855	145109348	154613607	
Costs of laboratories	93880377	101762878	109898732	118294506	126956921	135892855	145109348	154613607	
Costs of classrooms	37913229	41096547	44382180	47772781	51271064	54879807	58601852	62440110	
Costs of auditoriums	12998821	14090245	15216748	16379239	17578651	18815934	20092064	21408038	
Costs of lecturers	9903864	10735425	11593712	12479420	13393258	14335950	15308239	16310886	Total number
Total	248576667	269447972	290990105	313220454	336156814	359817400	384220852	409388286	2611818550

Options and Alternatives

First, a general policy requiring refugee students with a Jordanian General Secondary School Certificate to be treated in the same manner as Jordanian students.

This policy requires treating refugee students as Jordanian citizens and allowing them to apply to Jordanian universities through normal or parallel admission based on their high school averages.

In this case, they apply for university grants and opportunities available to Jordanian students.

Policy implementation procedures:

- Modifying the regulations issued by the committee established by the Minister of Interior's letter No. 10/11/T/93598 issued on 12/19/2021.
- Developing clear work mechanisms to deal with students from Syria, Egypt, Nigeria, Uganda, Burkina Faso, and Ghana who wish to study in higher education institutions and applicable in universities in accordance with His Excellency the Minister of Higher Education No. 9423 issued on 26/6/20224 based on the foundations of university admission and the mechanism for collecting fees from them.
- Enhancing the university infrastructure (halls, science laboratories, computer laboratories, auditoriums, etc.)
- Providing funds in the amount of 2,611,818,550 dinars to upgrade infrastructure and hire part-time lecturers to accommodate the increase in the enrollment rates of refugee students in Higher Education between 2023 and 20305.
- Assigning part-time lecturers.
- The international community's cooperation in assisting universities in developing infrastructure and directing grants to universities to establish educational facilities such as halls, scientific laboratories, computer laboratories, and auditoriums to accommodate the increased enrollment rates of refugee students.
- Increasing the number of grants provided by the international community to support refugee students' education.
- Increasing the government financial support for universities by increasing the amount allocated to the Ministry of Higher Education's budget through the General Budget Department and the Ministry of Finance, as well as the amounts allocated in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation's plans to achieve the Ministry of Higher Education's goal of increasing support provided to universities.
- Updating and activating the Jordan Response plan to facilitate inclusion of refugees in national higher education systems, carry out projects, attract international support, and ensure that educational opportunities receive attention

⁴ Refer to index

⁵ Refer to **"Forecasting and Inferential Data"**

and are tailored keeping in mind opportunities for complementary pathways in the coming years if they are activated.

- Establishing educational programs for refugees in universities in the South, which have low enrollment rates and assigning fees comparable to those paid by Jordanian students for normal admission based on their high school average.
- Using part of Zakat funds to pay the full or part of the fees for refugee students.
- Adopting an approach where fellow students sponsor refugee and vulnerable Jordanian students by adding one additional Jordanian Dinar to the fees paid by students at the registration level.

Policy Advantages and Opportunities:

- Increasing refugees' willingness to pursue higher education, leading to higher enrollment rates in higher education programs.
- Empowering refugee women, collaborating with all those who will assist them, equipping women with necessary skills and providing them with appropriate opportunities to pursue higher education as refugee men.
- Creating self-sufficient refugee communities.
- Raising refugees' skills and competencies, which leads to their investment in pioneering projects that improve their economic conditions and benefit the host country's economy.
- Reducing unemployment rates among refugees, which is linked to a shift in work permissions
- Reducing poverty rates among refugees.
- Improving refugees' competencies and skills which will allow them to find job opportunities in the host country.
- Improving the psychological well-being of refugees, particularly valedictorian students.

Policy implementation challenges:

- Universities' inability to bridge the financial gap caused by converting refugees' enrollment in international programs to regular programs, which amounts to 13,841,303,440 Jordan dinars, or from international programs to parallel programs, which amounts to 8,907,876,072 Jordan dinars for the period 2023-2030. This will undoubtedly put additional financial pressure on universities.
- The inability of universities to develop their infrastructure, build new educational facilities, and hire part-time lecturers based on an estimated cost of 2,611,818,550 Jordan dinars to accommodate the additional number of refugee students and their enrollment rates.
- The international community's unwillingness to contribute to closing the financial gap.
- The inability of international donors to bridge the financial gap between international education for refugee students and regular education over the next seven years, amounting to 13,841,303,440 Jordan dinars, as well as the

financial gap between international education and parallel education, amounting to 8,907,876,072 Jordan dinars.

- Jordanian society's reaction towards promoting equal fees between Jordanian and refugee students, because many students, particularly in areas characterized as poverty pockets, face financial difficulties as a result of Jordanian society's economic challenges.
- Students' preference for enrolling in private universities over public universities. This is due to the fact that private universities provide financial services such as installment plans and financial discounts that public universities do not.

Second, a general policy for instituting quotas for refugee students of all nationalities.

This policy requires universities to allocate a certain number of academic seats in each specialization for outstanding refugee students who meet the academic admission requirements for the specialization, and their credit hour fees must be the same as Jordanian students accepted into the regular program.

Policy implementation procedures:

- Modifying the work mechanisms issued by the committee established in His Excellency the Minister of Interior's letter No. 10/11/T/93598 issued on December 19, 2021. Defining clear work mechanisms to deal with students from Syria, Egypt, Nigeria, Uganda, Burkina Faso, and Ghana who wish to study in higher education institutions and applicable in universities in accordance with His Excellency the Minister of Higher Education's letter No. SH/9423 dated 20/6/2022.
- Amending higher education legislation, particularly those related to reconsidering education fees for outstanding refugee students, as well as the possibility of reducing university fees and finding a financial plan mechanism such as installments.
- Increasing the number of grants provided by the international community to support the education of refugee students, particularly outstanding students, such as Education Without Borders grants known as "Medad," the EDU-Syria scholarship program funded by the European Union Trust Fund, the UNHCR Scholarship Program for Refugees, and the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI).
- Revising the conditions for international community grants to reflect the reality of the refugee situation.
- Enhancing university infrastructure (halls, science laboratories, computer laboratories, auditoriums, etc.)
- Providing significant funds to expand infrastructure and facilities to accommodate an increase in refugee student enrollment rates in higher education between 2022 and 2030.
- Appointing part-time lecturers.

- International community collaboration in assisting universities in developing infrastructure.
- Increasing the percentage of governmental budget support for universities.
- Updating and activating the response plan in order to carry out numerous projects, attracting international support, and ensuring that educational opportunities receive the greatest share in the coming years if they are activated.
- Requesting that universities provide support funds for distinguished students, allocating a portion of them to refugees, and emphasizing the role of UNHCR in this regard as well as encouraging universities to create and maximize such opportunities.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Increasing the number of talented and valedictorian refugees enrolled in higher education programs, particularly public universities, which will increase enrollment rates.
- Enabling outstanding female students to obtain appropriate opportunities to enroll in higher education, particularly those whose families, due to financial constraints, prioritize educating their sons over their daughters.
- Developing self-sufficient refugee communities equipped with scientific knowledge and skills. These qualifications will enable them to earn a living and find job opportunities, as well as establish pioneering projects that benefit their community and contribute to the host country's economy and development.
- Reducing unemployment rates among refugees.
- Reducing poverty rates among refugees.
- Improving refugees' competencies and skills which will allow them to find job opportunities in the host country.
- Improving the psychological well-being of refugees, particularly valedictorian students.

Policy implementation challenges:

- Increasing the financial pressure of universities as a result of increasing the reception of refugee students and allocating a quota for them with fees lower than international fees comparable to parallel or regular fees, as well as their inability to meet these financial burdens and provide new structures and facilities to keep pace with the increase in student numbers.
- Reducing financial support for refugees in the Arab world in favor of asylum cases in Europe (Ukraine), taking into account the competing resources and multiple situations globally.
- The international community's failure to provide educational grants to refugees and host countries, which could be used to bridge the financial gap between international education for refugee students, parallel education, and regular education.

- A lack of financial resources to add educational facilities (halls, laboratories) and hire part-time lecturers to accommodate the increase in refugees' enrollment rates.
- Jordanian society's reaction towards promoting equal fees between Jordanian and refugee students, because many students, particularly in areas characterized as poverty pockets, face financial difficulties as a result of Jordanian society's economic challenges.
- Students preferring to attend private universities over public universities. This is because private universities, unlike public universities, offer financial services such as installment plans and financial discounts. As a result, public universities will be unable to absorb talented and outstanding students in the proposed quota system for reduced fees.

Third, a general policy to provide refugee and Jordanian students with opportunities for online and blended learning.

This policy is concerned with allocating distance-learning or blended learning programs for refugee students who are enrolled in universities, with fees comparable to regular university admission fees.

Policy implementation procedures:

- Amending the system related to integrating e-learning in higher education institutions No. 69 of 2021 and the instructions for integrating e-learning in higher education institutions for the year 2021, particularly the percentage of integrating e-learning and blended learning materials from the program's credit hours. This could be achieved through increasing this percentage or accrediting the entire hours of some e-learning programs. Improving and developing e-learning infrastructure by increasing the number of cloud platforms and storage capacity, as well as constructing a data center for the e-learning system which includes servers, Firewall, Load Balancer, SAN Storage and Others.
- Providing funds to develop the e-learning infrastructure, which amounts to 360,000 Jordan dinars.
- Training faculty members on contemporary teaching and assessment methods that are compatible with e-learning.
- Modifying and developing university study plans to accommodate e-learning.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Increasing refugee demand for higher education programs, which leads to an increase in enrollment rates in higher education programs.
- Allowing refugees to use the time they spend traveling to and from universities, as well as the flexibility provided by e-learning programs, to enter the self-employment market, particularly professions, or to establish private entrepreneurial projects that generate income for them, making it easier for them to pay the fees for their study hours.

- Investing in flexible learning and reducing travel time to and from university, as provided by e-learning, to enable refugee women to enroll in universities, improve their cognitive competencies, and overcome social barriers that hinder them from enrolling in higher education institutions.
- Finding solutions for refugees who live far from universities, as well as those living in camps since challenges like transportation or residing in remote areas hinder refugees from accessing to higher education institutions.
- Providing opportunities for refugees with war injuries to enroll in higher education as well as vocational and technical education.
- Creating self-sufficient refugee communities.
- Raising refugees' skills and competencies, which leads to their investment in pioneering projects that improve their economic conditions and benefit the host country's economy.
- Reducing unemployment rates among refugees.
- Reducing poverty rates among refugees.
- Improving refugees' competencies and skills which will allow them to find job opportunities in the host country.
- Improving the psychological well-being of refugees, particularly valedictorian students.
- Reducing the pressure on universities, particularly the cost of establishing new facilities and hiring new academic staff to accommodate an increase in refugee student enrollment.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The unwillingness to change the system or instructions for incorporating e-learning in light of considering e-learning education as an alternative.
- The unwillingness to provide international accreditation for the disciplines following the online and blended learning system entirely by institutions from other countries.
- Universities' inability to cover the costs of developing distance learning infrastructure.
- Universities' inability to cover the costs of training faculty members in modern education and assessment strategies compatible with e-learning.
- The international community's lack of cooperation and contribution to infrastructure development and faculty training.
- The inefficiency of university study plans that have been modified to accommodate full e-learning.
- Increasing the academic load and putting faculty and students under pressure.
- Universities' inability to fully convert to e-learning programs.
- The inefficiency of switching to e-learning in some disciplines that require application, particularly scientific disciplines (such as medicine, pharmacy,

engineering, and science). In these disciplines, it is possible to transition to blended learning.

- The low level of educational output and quality.

Fourth: Investing in various academic tracks based on developing skills related to Micro Degrees or Stackable Micro Credentials.

- This policy adopts promoting professional skills rather than purely scientific and academic degrees. Various tracks are used based on skill development through professional courses in addition to academic courses, and they are linked to different academic degrees depending on the number of credit hours allotted to each track.

Policy implementation procedures:

- Establishing laws, regulations, and instructions for this policy by Higher Education.
- Reviewing Jordan's labor-market legislation to allow refugees to work at certain rates in closed sectors.
- Benefitting from local and international experiences in this area to implement this policy such as the experience of AlHussein Technical University⁶ and American Community College International Programs (Associated in Arts AA)⁷ especially lowering tuition fees in these programs.
- Identifying a variety of educational paths based on successful local and international experiences, such as that of (Al-Hussein Technical University, Luminus Technical University College, the "Associated in Arts AA" program).
- Encouraging international organizations to develop beneficial projects for refugees tailored and linked up with opportunities for complementary pathways.
- Allowing refugees to work in the labor market (freelance), particularly in professions.
- Creating study plans that are in line with the policy.
- Utilizing intermediate community colleges to teach a certain number of credit hours in these programs at a cost lower than the costs in international and parallel educational programs.
- Developing the infrastructure in line with the policy.
- Activating the Vocational Training Corporation's role and modifying its responsibilities in line with this policy.
- Providing Financial and technical support from the international community for this policy.

⁶<https://www.htu.edu.jo/>

⁷The American Community College Program is based on awarding a two-year academic degree known as the AA (Associated in Arts). This certificate requires the student to study for two years in order to complete the qualifying materials and university requirements and be awarded this certificate. Then he moves on to universities, based on his college grade, to the specialty he approved. The goal of this concept is for intermediate colleges to be less expensive and to assist students in completing courses that do not require high and precise specializations from faculty members.

- Encouraging international organizations to develop beneficial projects for refugees.
- Training faculty members on education strategies, assessment and skills-based assessment.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Increasing refugee demand for higher education programs, which leads to an increase in enrollment rates in higher education programs.
- Reducing the financial pressure imposed on refugees by international and parallel program fees through enrolling them in intermediate community colleges for certain credit hours that are less expensive than the mentioned programs.
- Investing in refugee women's professional skills, improving their scientific competence, and integrating them into the labor market, which will increase their participation in the labor-market and contribute to the host country's economy.
- Investing in the professional skills that refugees, particularly Syrians, inherited from their parents and grandparents, and framing them scientifically.
- Raising refugees' skills and competencies, particularly by investing young people's capacities in the field of technology. This will lead to their investment in pioneering projects that improve their economic conditions and reflect positively on their contribution to the host country's economy.
- Identifying specializations that meet the needs and aspirations of refugees.
- Reducing unemployment rates among refugees.
- Reducing poverty rates among refugees.
- Improving refugees' competencies and skills which will allow them to find job opportunities in the host country and in third countries.
- Improving the psychological and economic conditions of refugees.

Policy implementation challenges:

- Higher Education's incompetence of establishing laws, regulations, and instructions governing this policy by Higher Education.
- The inability to review Jordan's labor-market legislation in order to allow refugees to work at certain rates in closed sectors.
 - The inability of higher education and its institutions to reduce tuition fees in these programs due to their high costs and the needs of the technical side.
 - Higher Education and its institutions' inability to reduce tuition fees in these programs due to high costs and technical requirements.
 - International institutions' lack of commitment to developing income generating projects for refugees.
 - The government's inability to allow refugees to enter the labor market as freelance, particularly professions.
 - Failure to develop study plans that assign a number of credit hours for developing skills and professions and link them to scientific academic certificates.
 - Not investing in intermediate community colleges.

- Failure to develop the infrastructure in line with the policy.
- Not activating the role of the Vocational Training Corporation or modifying its tasks in line with this policy.
- Lack of commitment from the international community to provide financial and technical support.
- International institutions are not being encouraged to develop productive projects for refugees.
- Universities' inability to make financial and technical commitments to train faculty members on educational strategies, assessment, and skills-based assessment.
- Students' reluctance to enroll in intermediate colleges.
- Lack of coordination between intermediate colleges and universities to enroll students who have completed the requirements specified in community colleges and want to pursue the highest skills-based academic certificate.
- Universities' inability to absorb scientific tracks and develop plans based on the number of hours for each track, as is the case at Al-Hussein Technical University.

Arranging alternatives downward and according to preference after analyzing the alternatives evaluation matrix, (time period, skills and experience, financial cost, impact)

Alternative	The time period for achieving the policy	Skills and experiences	Financial cost	Impact
A general policy for treating refugee students who have a Jordanian general secondary certificate in the same way as Jordanian students.	Long	Convenient	High	High
A general policy for the adopting a quota system for refugee students	Long	Convenient	Medium	Medium
A general policy to provide opportunities for refugee students for online and blended learning	Short	Needs Development	Low	High
A general policy to focus on various scientific tracks based on the development of skills related to a scientific degree	Medium	Needs Development	High	Medium-High

- 1- A general policy to provide opportunities for refugee students for online and blended learning.
- 2- A general policy for adopting a quota system for refugee students.
- 3- A general policy to focus on various scientific tracks based on developing skills related to a scientific degree. Various scientific tracks that depend on developing skills related to a Micro Degree or Stackable Micro Credentials.
- 4- A general policy for treating refugee students who hold a Jordanian general secondary certificate the same way as Jordanian students.

5- Recommendations

Creating a mini coalition committee comprised of two universities and intermediate community colleges to monitor the implementation of the optimal scenario or scenarios that will be agreed upon in order to increase refugee enrollment in higher education to 15% by 2030.

The coalition committee in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should do the following:

- Collaboration with universities on the possibility of providing support funds to ensure an inclusive higher education system; namely for outstanding and distinguished students, allocating some of these funds to refugees, and emphasizing UNHCR's role in this field by encouraging universities to create such opportunities.
- Coordination with the Ministry of Awqaf to allocate a percentage of Zakat funds for sponsoring the education of refugee students, especially the outstanding ones.
- Submitting a proposal to Higher Education to add an additional Jordan Dinar to university's tuition fees, paid by Jordanian students, in order to support refugee students and vulnerable Jordanian students.
- Amending higher education legislation, particularly those related to reconsidering fees for refugee students, the possibility of reducing university fees, and providing payment facilities such as installments.
- Proposing a suitable mechanism for collaboration between the UNHCR and Higher Education institutions, such as signing agreements and memorandum of understanding in order to facilitate refugees' enrollment in HE. Many procedures, particularly those relating to identification papers, the basis for admission, university fees, and the refugee status on SIS registration systems in universities, should be designed to make it easier for refugee students.
- Activating refugee counseling and guidance programs, beginning in elementary school and progressing to the university level, as well as creating direct and effective online webpages (hotlines) and artificial intelligence programs to assist refugees in all urgent and common questions about university education and majors.

- Creating an online icon within the webpages of Deanship of Student Affairs facilities in universities that includes a complete system for grants, loans, and conditions.
- Collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to update the response plan for 2023 and beyond, activate it to implement many projects, and attract international support, so that educational opportunities will have the greatest share in the coming years if it is activated, as well as allocating projects to support infrastructure, establishing educational facilities, and developing e-learning in universities.
- Linking international educational grants to refugee students in higher education with community initiatives.
- Encouraging international institutions to find productive projects for refugees that can assist them financially. This will allow them to enroll in various higher education programs.
- On the other hand, higher education institutions can provide students with academic skills and specializations that meet labor market demands in Jordan and in 3rd countries by targeting education programs to complementary pathways opportunities and needs of international employers.
- The UNHCR should mobilize support to review and develop the conditions for international community grants in light of case studies results for refugee students. Closer connection and cooperation with development organizations must be an integral approach to building long-term support and finding durable solutions for people forced to flee and their host communities.
- The UNHCR to identify the need of closer connection with development actors
- The UNHCR should collaborate with the Ministry of Labor to allow a certain rate for refugees to find job opportunities in the labor market, particularly professions and jobs that were previously closed to them.

References

Abd El-Galil, T. (12 June 2022). U.N. Outlines 15 Steps for Helping Refugees Access Higher Education. Al-Fanar Media. Retrieved from the net on 7-9-2022 from: <https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2022/06/u-n-outlines-15-steps-for-helping-refugees-access-higher-education/>

Al-Hawamdeh, Ahmad, and Hana A. El-Ghali. 2017. "Higher Education and Syrian Refugees Students: The Case of Jordan." <http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/Jordan.pdf>

Avery, H., & Said, S. (2017). Higher Education for Refugees: The Case of Syria. Policy & Practice, (24), 104–125. Retrieved from <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hj:diva-38529>

Cin, F. M., & Doğan, N. (2021). Navigating university spaces as refugees: Syrian students' pathways of access to and through higher education in Turkey. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(2), 298-312.

Kamyab, Shahrzad (2017). Syrian Refugees Higher Education Crisis. Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education. Retrieved from the net on 17-9-2022 from: [*EJ1233487.pdf \(ed.gov\)](http://www.ed.gov/EJ1233487.pdf).

Knoema.com (2022). Jordan - Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education. Retrieved from the net on 16 Sept. 2022 from: <https://knoema.com/atlas/Jordan/topics/Education/Tertiary-Education/Gross-enrolment-ratio-in-tertiary-education>.

Martin, M. and Stulgaitis, M. (2022). Refugees' Access to Higher Education in their Host Countries: Overcoming the 'super-disadvantage'. Retrieved from the net on 9-9-2022

from: <https://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/refugees-access-higher-education-their-host-countries-overcoming-super-disadvantage>.

UNHCR (2019). Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Education. Retrieved from the net on September 18, 2022 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/education/5d651da88d7/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education.html>.

UNHCR (2021-2022). Refugee Data Finder. Retrieved from the net on 9-9-2022 from: [UNHCR%20Refugee%20Statistics.html](https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/).

Wit, H.D., Altbach, P.G. (2017). Europe: the Syrian Refugee Crisis and Higher Education. In: Mihut, G., Altbach, P.G., Wit, H.d. (eds) Understanding Global Higher Education. Global Perspectives on Higher Education. SensePublishers, Rotterdam. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6351-044-8_24