



PANEL I

A Syrian's Journey towards Higher Education Access

This session will focus on the “how” to facilitate refugees and IDPs access to education, with a specific focus on Syrian refugees. It will also examine good practices for energizing and sustaining interventions, focusing on access to education and employment.

Moderator

Mr. Farooq Burney

Executive Director, Al Fakhoora Program, Education Above All, (Qatar)

Speakers

Mr. Yannick Du Pont

Founder and Director, SPARK (Netherlands)

Mr. Nasser Al-Faqih

Team Leader, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNDP (USA)

Ms. Helena Barroco

Diplomatic Adviser to President Sampaio, Secretary General of the Global Platform for Syrian Students

Islamic Development Bank – Speaker TBD

Background

61% of refugee children have access to primary education, compared with a global average of more than 91%. The gap widens as they become older, with only 23% of refugee adolescents attending secondary school, compared to a global average of 84%. The situation worsens for tertiary education, where only 1% of refugee youth attend universities, in comparison with 36% globally ([UNHCR, 2017](#)). As much as there is a need for improved education access for refugees and IDPs of all ages, access to quality higher education, as well as a need to provide guidance

and support as refugees progress through their educational programmes, is in specific need of urgent attention.

Within this context, the session will examine “how” to facilitate refugee and IDP access to education and employment. It will cover differences in perspectives, inclusion and participation of target beneficiaries in programmatic design, partnerships’ approaches, programming strategies, skills offered, and the impact of different ‘types’ of access.

Al Fakhoora, the host of this panel, provides post-secondary, undergraduate and graduate scholarships, offering access to higher education for marginalized youth through comprehensive scholarship, student affairs, civic leadership, and economic empowerment programmes. Al Fakhoora began its Dynamic Futures Gaza programme in 2009, with the aim of enabling youth living under the blockade in Gaza to pursue undergraduate studies while also equipping them to be articulate, impassioned self-advocates. Building on this success, Al Fakhoora expanded its Dynamic Futures programme globally in 2016, moving into six new regions and working with Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and Syrian IDPs and refugees in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

Discussion angles for Panel:

Context

- How does access to education differ between countries, between different conflict contexts, and between programmes offered by development actors?
- How are the challenges for higher education access for refugees and IDPs different from other youth? How is the Syrian crisis different in relation to higher education access? What are the unique challenges faced by this particular group of refugees and IDP’s?
- What is the importance of holistic higher education programmes in this context? What challenges must be overcome?
- How does the context of Gaza for example, where the Dynamic Futures programme started, compare and contrast to the context of the Syrian crisis (Dynamic Futures Global) and how has that influenced programme design?
- For a student in a crisis context, what are his most pressing needs? How can we address all levels of needs (Maslow’s hierarchy) in order for the student to finally become an educated civic leader?

Best Practices (programming, approaches, tools, monitoring, and partnerships)

- What makes a programme successful? What has been tried in the past and shown not to work, and how has this involved programme development?
- How can policies/programming be made more supportive on the part of development partners and crisis countries?

- What are the roles and rules of engagement for external partners in supporting access to education of refugees and IDPs in crisis and post-crisis situations?
- How can development partners make policies/programming more supportive in crisis countries?
- Do we know what works for higher education access? What are the best tools/practices used in assessing refugees and IDP needs? And how should we measure the impact of programmes?
- What is the benefit/value added of programmes like Dynamic Futures, that includes components in addition to traditional scholarships (which often provide only placement and tuition payment)?

Collaboration

- How does access to education differ between countries and between programmes offered by development actors?

Biographies

Moderator

Mr. Farooq Burney, Executive Director, Al Fakhoora Program, Education Above All, (Qatar)

Farooq Burney is the Executive Director of Al Fakhoora, a programme of Education Above All in Doha, Qatar, which works to promote the right to education in conflict post-conflict states by providing opportunities for marginalized youth to become educated, professionally skilled and inspirational leaders of the future. Al Fakhoora provides comprehensive scholarship and empowerment packages, focused not only on quality education but also on student services, leadership development and economic empowerment, currently in six countries: Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Farooq has over 20 years of experience in the NGO sector in North America, Asia, and the Middle East.

Speakers

Mr. Yannick Du Pont, Founder and Director, SPARK (Netherlands)

Founder and director of SPARK, Yannick has been working in the field of higher education & economic development in post-conflict countries since 1994. With an MA in International Relations and Sociology from the University of Amsterdam, Yannick worked for the Netherlands Minister of Development Cooperation from 1996 to 1997. Later with the Dutch IKV; and the Development think-tank of the Dutch Labor Party, the Evert Vermeer Foundation, Yannick was engaged as a researcher for the Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael" to evaluate the performance of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2000/2001). SPARK has programmes to support growth oriented SMEs and facilitate youth job creation in 17 fragile States in primarily East and West Africa, North Africa & Somalia and the Middle East. Next to his

work at Spark, Yannick du Pont also serves on the Board of the Max van der Stoel Foundation (Amsterdam), Advisory Board of the Centre of Theory of Change (New York), the Steering Board of the Knowledge Platform on Security and Rule of Law (The Hague) and the AIDCOIN Foundation (The Hague).

Mr. Nasser Al-Faqih, Team Leader, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNDP (USA)

Nasser Al-Faqih is a United Nations development practitioner and advisor for Economic Recovery in crisis settings. With over 12 years' experience in the field, Nasser has developed several initiatives to support youth empowerment and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities in Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, including the refugee population and host communities living in poverty and marginalization. Nasser is currently the Leader of the Poverty Eradication Team in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) serving more than 240,000 households living in poverty through the Economic Empowerment Program (DEEP), which aims to support people in crisis overcome chronic dependence on aid and become active participants in economic and social development. Additionally, Nasser is a lead expert in the United Nations on partnership building, resource mobilization, and Private Sector engagement in the Arab Region.

Ms. Helena Barroco, Secretary General of the Global Platform for Syrian Students

Helena Barroco was admitted to the Portuguese Diplomatic Service in 1997 and was a Diplomatic Advisor to the President of Portugal, Mr. Jorge Sampaio, between 1999 and 2006. She served in the context of his international activities (i.e., United Nations Alliance of Civilizations; fight against Tuberculosis as part of the MDG's Agenda; Dialogue Café Global Network; the Global Commission on Drugs Policy).

Since 2013 she is coordinating the programmes developed by the Global Platform for Syrian Students www.globalplatformforsyrianstudents.org and is advocating for the promotion of higher education in emergencies in a sustainable and systemic way. Ms. Barroco has degrees in Philosophy, Linguistics, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Quantum Physics from UCL, Leuven Catholic University (Belgium).

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