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Report

Feasibility Study on a University Access Project in Turkey

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1. Executive Summary

Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul and the Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM) were asked by the Asfari Foundation to assess how a project to facilitate the access of Syrians to higher education opportunities in Turkey could bridge the gap between students, particularly those from low-income and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, and the scholarships that are available to them. The project's general structure had already been designed by the Asfari Foundation in coordination with prospective partners. Therefore, the feasibility study consisted of two main parts:

1. Verification of the suitability of the project within the Turkish context.
2. Preparation of a framework that presents feasible options for initiating a three-year higher education access project.

Over the course of the consultancy, the Team conducted background desk research, held meetings with relevant policy-makers and administrators, including from local universities, international agencies and NGOs, and carried out a field visit to Gaziantep, speaking extensively with the prospective partners of the project as well as meeting with over 40 Syrian students.

Given that 640,632 Syrians in Turkey are between 14-24 years old, and that only 9,480 Syrians are currently enrolled in Turkish universities, it is essential to leverage Turkey's burgeoning higher education sector by enabling Syrians to study at universities around the country. An important outcome of this will be that Syrians will be better integrated into the host community, able to work in Turkey after completing their studies, and can engage in cross-border activities upon their return to Syria while also supporting the reconstruction of their country.

For the Asfari Foundation's project in Turkey to be effective and impactful, it should address the main barriers confronting Syrian students in accessing higher education, which are summarized below.

- **Economic hardship:**

By far, the most important factor impeding the access of Syrians to higher education is their economic situation. While most universities do not charge tuition, students still need support for living expenses and are often required to work while studying to support their families. Entering most universities in Turkey is dependent on language proficiency, and Turkish language courses charge tuition. A number of scholarship programs have been put into place to cover both Turkish courses and other expenses related to studying at university. After learning Turkish, Syrians would be able to gain access to the far greater number of places available in university programs where the main language of instruction is in Turkish. Given the current structure of Turkish language teaching programs, an increase in the number of available scholarships for language acquisition, especially for disadvantaged students is needed. Young women are at a particular disadvantage, as well as those from low-income backgrounds residing outside of the main urban areas.

- **Availability of and access to information and support systems:**

Although the Turkish government very recently started to develop policies that would enable Syrian youth to access education, the education system for Syrians under temporary protection is still very complex. Therefore a key priority for students is to access accurate and standardized information that will help them apply to universities and to scholarships in one centralized platform. Students

have major difficulties in receiving accurate information on the processes for application and registration, accreditation, exams to be taken, Turkish language certificates and scholarships.

After entering university, Syrians then need support to succeed. There seems to be a trend of students dropping out after one or two years, now becoming apparent since Syrian students have only been enrolled in Turkish universities as of 2013. The reasons for this include psycho-social factors, difficulty in following classes in Turkish, and the need to continue working. Scholarship support needs to be combined with a support mechanism for students currently in university, comprised of psycho-social services, mentoring and social integration activities.

Recommendations

We believe the recommendations outlined in the report fall in line with Asfari Foundation's mission to empower people to create change, particularly by developing the human capacity of disadvantaged Syrian youth. The projects allow the Foundation to multiply the impact of its support to Syrians, by leveraging partnerships with institutions that are well-placed to operate both at scale and with a focus on disadvantaged students. The proposed project also enable the Foundation to pilot and test innovative approaches that donor institutions or universities could adopt or support in two to three years. The project would also focus on enhancing outreach and support services to Syrian students, who desperately need better methods of receiving information about existing opportunities. Moreover, by supporting a civil society organization created by and for Syrian students, the Asfari Foundation would enable Syrian students to represent themselves and support each other. This is both programmatically and symbolically very important.

The Long-term Goal of the Asfari Foundation Project:

By offering pathways for young Syrians to access university education in Turkey, this project will support young people to develop the skills, knowledge and capacities that are essential to leading productive lives. This will increase their chances of integrating effectively into Turkish society, allowing them to enter the job market. Turkish society would in turn benefit by leveraging the human capacity of refugees rather than continuing to invest vast resources into more aid programs. Young Syrians would eventually be able to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria, and be uniquely placed to conduct cross-border work after returning home. Moreover, a strong and clear route to higher education would motivate Syrian families to prioritize secondary school education for their children, rather than sending them to work.

Outcomes of the Asfari Foundation Project:

- 150 disadvantaged young Syrians are able to learn Turkish, enabling to enroll in university and access scholarships for their undergraduate studies.
- Syrian students are empowered and take responsibility for reaching out to their peers, helping each other to navigate the complex university and scholarship application process.
- A student-led NGO will enhance its capacity to effectively serve Syrian students around Turkey, acting as a central and accessible resource for clear and structured information about scholarship opportunities and university application procedures.
- A model program to reduce drop-out rates will be developed and piloted, targeting 50 Syrian students currently enrolled at university. The program would entail psycho-social support, mentoring and social integration activities, and eventually be taken up by other institutions.

1. To support Turkish language acquisition, the Team recommends supporting scholarships that could be provided through one of two platforms: either through Spark, or, through UNHCR and YTB, the official body within the Turkish government that facilitates scholarships and university placements for Syrian students, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). The partnership would enable Asfari bursars to study Turkish with Foundation support before entering university, under a framework that would pre-qualify the scholars for existing scholarship programs to cover their university costs.

2. To address the availability of and access to information and support systems, the Team recommends that the Asfari Foundation support both Spark and the Syrian Students Office for University Services (SSOUS).

The recommendations are outlined further in Section 5 of the report.

Participating in this feasibility study has been extremely valuable for Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul and we would like to thank the Asfari Foundation, its staff and its partners for working with us through this process. We have learned a great deal about this important dimension of the higher education field in Turkey. This has raised our awareness of the gaps, and has made us more committed as an institution of higher education to address these issues. Especially after meeting so many bright, young Syrians, we feel more inspired than ever to support and collaborate with efforts like these.

2. Goals of the Feasibility Study

The Asfari Foundation wishes to establish a program that would enable Syrian refugees in Turkey to access higher education opportunities, with a key objective to bridge the gap between students, particularly those from low-income and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, and the scholarships that are available to them. As part of the feasibility study for the prospective program, Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul and the Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM), based in Ankara were asked by the Asfari Foundation to assess whether and how a project to facilitate the access of Syrians to higher education opportunities in Turkey (hereafter, the Asfari Project) as initially proposed, could be carried out in light of new developments influencing the design of project. The feasibility study consisted of two main areas:

- **Verification of the suitability of a program on higher education access within the Turkish context.**

Aim: To review current policies and programs regarding the access of Syrians to higher education adopted by the Turkish government and Turkish universities, and to assess how policy makers, university administrators, international agencies and students perceive the success of these efforts, how challenges are being addressed, and how the Asfari Foundation program is expected to engage with relevant official bodies and the Turkish legal framework.

Section 4.1 presents the overall policy framework, detailing the current policies in place guiding access to higher education.

Section 4.2 outlines key challenges facing students while Section 6.2 captures the experiences of three universities with high levels of Syrian students.

- **Preparation of a program framework that presents feasible options for initiating a three-year higher education access project.**

Aim: In addition to investigating certain components of the originally proposed project, the Team also sought to grasp the emerging dynamics, understand their influence on the framework of the project, and if necessary, explore alternative arrangements.

The key questions that have been addressed include the following:

- How to best design a program framework that empowers Syrian students and addresses their priorities and needs, while also creating a multiplier effect that is able to leverage existing systems and sources of funding?
- How would the two partners originally identified by the Asfari Foundation - Spark and SSOUS – work together in a collaborative framework? What would their respective roles be?
- How to enable Turkish language training in such a way to offer quality education at a reasonable cost for the largest group of Syrian students?
- What alternative efforts exist in the arena of higher education for Syrians in Turkey?

The prospective partners are described in Section 4.3 while the project recommendations are provided in Section 5 of the report.

3. Research Process

The finding and recommendations synthesized in this report are based on different phases and levels of research that were conducted over the course of the two weeks between the time the agreement was signed and submission of this report.

The main phases of the research carried out by the Team:

- **Background desk research**, reviewing existing reports¹ produced by international and Turkish organizations analyzing the overall context for the education of Syrians in Turkey. This was complemented by online research, reviewing websites and Facebook groups of relevant initiatives, both in Turkey and in the region.
- **Meetings with relevant policy-makers and administrators**, including the Rector of the University of Gaziantep (UOG), officials from UNHCR, DAAD, UNICEF and YTB, a high-ranking member of the Ministry of Education of the Interim Syria Government, a high-ranking member of the Assistance Coordination Unit in Gaziantep, which serves as the main coordinator of donor aid to relief efforts in Syria, as well as a Syrian professor at Hasan Kalyoncu University who is now developing a project to prepare Syrian students for university. Interviews were held with administrators from three universities outside of Gaziantep with high levels of Syrian students. A Skype call was held with the previous consultant, Claude Isakov, to understand her impressions.
- **Three-day field visit to Gaziantep**, which was the most critical segment of the research:
 - The Team held lengthy and multiple discussions with the prospective partners of the program: Spark, SSOUS, and the Anadolu Lügat language center.
 - The Team met with over 40 Syrian students, some of whom were enrolled and some not currently enrolled in university. Students were from the main public university, Gaziantep University and the main private university in the same city, Zirve University. Some of the Zirve students were enrolled in the Masters' program.
 - The Team also visited a vocational training center and a community center in Nizip, a town 40 minutes outside of Gaziantep, where free Turkish language classes are held, holding discussions with the students as well as the director of the center, center staff and the Turkish language instructor.

The research process enabled the Team to address the main goals of the feasibility study.

The reports reviewed and meetings conducted during the background research process were especially vital to understanding the past and current policy frameworks guiding education for Syrian refugees. The reports shed light on the existing opportunities and challenges Syrian populations are facing in accessing higher education, explaining the requirements to enter universities in Turkey for students who finish secondary school in Turkey and in Syria, the accreditation system, various exams students must pass and Turkish language courses to receive

¹ Reports consulted: Al-Fanar Media, [Strengthening Delivery of Higher Education to Syrian Refugees](#) (October 2015); Bilgi University Children Studies Unit, [Suriyeli Mülteci Çocukların Türkiye Devlet Okullarındaki Durumu Politika ve Uygulama Önerileri](#) (September 2015); British Council, Al-Fanar Media, SPARK, [Lifting Up Syrian Youth Improving Regional Access to Higher Education](#) (March 2016); University of Oxford, Ensuring quality education for young (September 2014); SETA, [Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Çocukların Eğitimi: Temel Eğitim Politikaları](#) (February 2016); UNICEF, [Curriculum, Accreditation and Certification for Syrian Children in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt](#) (March 2015).

education in the very language. As for the legal structure, the reports revealed that the policies of the Turkish government are prone to rapid change depending on new developments and newly emerging actors. The complex nature of the system, thus, creates a complex environment for prospective Syrian students who are willing to enter universities.

The Team examined the **numbers of Syrian students enrolled at Turkish universities** in the years of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 from the official website of the Higher Education Council, to understand the distribution of Syrian students according to gender and by university (see Section 6.1). This allowed the Team to select and contact the top universities hosting Syrians throughout Turkey, to gather additional, on-the-ground information regarding the process of entrance and registration of students, required documentation, Turkish language and the integration of students to the university environment (see Section 6.2).

The team collected **information on the prospective partners of the project, namely Spark, SSOUS and various Turkish language teaching centers**, focusing on their organizational structure, working fields and previous activities regarding higher education and language instruction. Background research and information provided by the Asfari Foundation enabled the Team to prepare a questionnaire to use when meeting with Spark, SSOUS and language centers, as well as with students and various administrators and policy-makers. For Spark and SSOUS, questions were prepared to understand a) the basic structure of these organizations and their existing projects and activities, and b) the role they would like to specifically play within the context of the Asfari Project. The questionnaire enabled the Team to have an in-depth understanding of how these organizations position themselves in this project, what kind of relationship they would like to construct with each other, the methods and strategies they would use to realize the project and their vision and perception of the aim and prospective achievements of the project.

To learn the extent to which the partners and the project in general satisfy and comply with the **needs of the students** living in Gaziantep, the Team held meetings with over 40 students. Most of these were lengthy group or individual discussions, but some of the meetings were shorter and consisted of few key questions. The young people at the meetings had very different experiences and background from each other, varying according to their gender, age, level of education, level of knowledge of Turkish and English language and university enrollment. Around half of the youth were enrolled in the universities in Gaziantep, while the remaining was not yet enrolled and many were in the phase of getting prepared to enter universities. These meetings were valuable in developing a greater understanding of the education system with its opportunities and flaws.

This process has revealed a great deal of valuable information that has been instrumental to shaping the recommendations within this report. However the Team would like to emphasize that **the findings in no way constitute the outcome of a formal research agenda or study**. In order to make generalizable and substantive claims, especially in regards to Syrian students, a more rigorous study would need to be conducted, involving widespread data-collection and key informant interviews. Rather, this report charts overall impressions that are sufficiently grounded to enable the Asfari Foundation to arrive at an informed decision regarding its future grant-making on this subject in Turkey.

4. Key Findings

4.1 Access to Tertiary Education for Syrian young people in Turkey: Current Policies in Place Guiding Access to Higher Education

4.1.1 Overall Context: The Temporary Protection Regime in Turkey

Syrians in Turkey - Key Figures:

- Officially 2,748,367 Syrian nationals are under the temporary protection of Turkey as of 5 May 2016.)² 315,887 (11.4% of the total) are between 15-19 years old (Male: 172,495, Female: 143,395), and 324,745 (11.8% of the total) are between 20-24 years old (Male: 181,330, Female: 143,415). The overall number of Syrians between 14-24 years old is 640,632. This means that 23% of the overall Syrian refugee population in Turkey is either at the age of university studies or at an educational level leading to university studies. There are currently 9,480 Syrians enrolled in universities in Turkey.³

Main Challenges with Respect to Policies for Syrians in Turkey:

- Lack of coordination between different state institutions is the overall problem in the general management of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey. This problem is driven from the fact that Turkey is a State Party to 1951 Geneva Convention, but maintains a geographical limitation. This means that Turkey signed the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees with the option of restricting of its treaty obligation with refugees coming from European Countries⁴
- As a result, its asylum system has always been of temporary nature for non-European asylum seekers and refugees. Turkey provides non-European asylum seekers only temporary protection pending resettlement. It does not grant them refugee status and recognize rights as listed in the Refugee Convention, such as the right to work, the right to housing, and the right to access social services. Since Turkey is a State Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, it recognizes the right to primary education for all asylum seekers and refugees. Primary education starts at age 6 and continues to age 13, covering elementary and middle schools, each of which lasts four years. Under this overall legal context, the only possible durable solution for non-European refugees in Turkey has been resettlement by UNHCR to third countries. Integration as a durable solution has never been considered.

Governance and Legal Context:

The Prime Ministry for Emergency and Disaster Management Agency (AFAD) and the Directorate General on Migration Management (DGMM) are the state institutions in Turkey currently mandated to cover asylum and migration issues. In addition, the Ministry of National Education (MONE), the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), and the IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF have been strongly supportive of the efforts of the Turkish institutions for

² http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik May 2016

³ From a presentation made by a YTB official on May 23, 2016 during the World Humanitarian Summit.

⁴ Article 1, Paragraph Section B.(1) of the Convention gives an option to the States to determine the scope of their obligations: "For the purposes of this Convention, the words in article 1, section A, shall be understood to mean either (a) "events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951"; or (b) "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951." Turkey opted for the meaning expressed in "(a)". The practical consequence is that Turkey provides international protection to all asylum seekers but grants full refugee status only for those who are citizens of European countries. For citizens of non-European countries, this protection is of temporary character meaning that they are not entitled with the rights of refugees listed in the Convention. For non-European refugees, there is no possibility of integration into Turkish society, theoretically the only solution available for them is to be resettled into a third country. <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html>

certain aspects related to education and other issues. While UNICEF is collaborating with the Government on the primary and secondary education of the Syrian refugees, UNHCR is increasingly involved in higher education.

When the influx of Syrian refugees started in 2011, there was no national law on asylum in Turkey. Asylum issues had been under the mandate of the national police. In the absence of legislation, the government resorted to its experiences from historical mass influxes of refugees in the 1980s and 1990s with the assumption that the Syrian crisis would not last long and Syrians, who were considered “guests,” would return back to their homes. The model for accommodation was the camps (“temporary accommodation centers.”) The Prime Ministry for Emergency and Disaster Management Agency (AFAD) was put in charge of Syrian refugees. One camp after another has been established alongside the Turkish provinces neighboring Syria.

Meanwhile, the increase in the number of Syrian refugees has been much faster than the building of expensive camps. By 2014, the number of Syrians living outside the camps was much higher than those in the camps. AFAD as well as the UN agencies had been focusing on the camps and were largely ignorant to the problems of the growing number of refugees living outside the camps (Today, only 270,000 refugees live in 25 camps in 10 cities while 2,478,000 are living in cities.)

Turkey’s first ever asylum law, The Law on Foreigners and International Protection was adopted by the Turkish Parliament in March 2013. The Law presumed the establishment within the first year after entry into force, of a civilian state authority (DGMM) in charge of all migration issues. The remaining provisions entered into force in April 2014 when the DGMM became fully operational. The provision of the Law on mass influx situations as described in Article 91, has been applied and the Syrians began to be considered, in legal terms, as persons under temporary protection. The new institution, which was designed for individual asylum applications, has been tasked to register retrospectively the millions of Syrians in Turkey.

Administrative Context:

With the creation of DGMM, the competition between AFAD and DGMM has spread out to other ministries in charge of special aspects of the crisis such as the ministries of education, labor and health. To solve this lack of coordination, Prime Minister was appointed a Chief Advisor to establish necessary harmony. However, this position lasted only five months and was abolished in April 2016 without any expressed reason but most probably with the intention to shift coordination to a ministerial level. All asylum affairs, therefore were put under the management of a Deputy Prime Minister, under whom AFAD was said to gain full control of the Syrian crisis. More recently, the Prime Minister has been forced by the President to resign and when this report was being drafted, a new government was announced. The above mentioned Deputy Prime Minister lost his seat in the new cabinet and it is yet to be seen who will be in charge of Syrian refugees. The political changes as well as administrative reshufflings cause a great deal of discontinuity in policies.

What seems to remain constant is the temporary character of the Turkish asylum system and Turkey still rejects developing a comprehensive strategy of integration based on the assumption that the Syrian refugees may stay longer in Turkey.

4.1.2 Access to Education and Mechanisms to Facilitate Access to Higher Education

The maintenance of the geographical limitation and the resulting temporary character of international protection in Turkey are also reflected in the policies in different sectors, including education.

In June 2014, the Ministry of Education, after long negotiations with UN agencies, issued a circular on education. According to this regulation, schools both inside the camps operated by AFAD and in cities, which are run by Syrian NGOs, gained a status, called “temporary education centers” (TECs.) An Arabic curriculum, adapted from that used in Syria, was regularized on the assumption that refugees would return back to Syria soon. Access to Turkish state schools was also made available to Syrians. It is up to Syrian families to choose to send their children to Turkish state schools to attend mixed classes. However, since the curriculum is in Turkish, Syrian students face difficulties in following the classes. There are also reports that in some Turkish schools, Turkish parents put pressure on school management not to enroll more Syrian students, who they think, may slow down the pace of the education. There have also been reports of harassment by Turkish children of their Syrian classmates. In Turkish state school, Turkish classes are provided for Syrian students.

As of 2015, the government decided that schools operated by Syrian NGOs can operate within Turkish school buildings after the schooling hours of the Turkish students. This was a relief for many temporary education centers, which were in difficulty of covering their operational costs.

UNICEF is now supporting the Turkish public schools that share their facilities with the Syrian schools by providing furniture, paying the salaries of the cleaners and supporting upkeep. It distributes school bags (200,000) and stationery. UNICEF also covers the salaries of Syrian teachers. Out of 13,000 Syrian teachers, UNICEF pays the salaries of 11,000, with the rest paid by the TECs themselves. A source from UNICEF, who asked not to be quoted by name, shared that that with the regular wages, and the prospect of one day being considered a member of the Turkish civil service, more Syrians have been applying to the MONE. New regulations may allow these Syrian teachers to be considered state employees, though it is too early to say anything definitive about this. UNICEF is also currently building seven schools with a total of 27 classrooms for Syrians in Adana, Ankara, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Mardin and Mersin provinces.

The attendance rate of the students goes down as the level of education goes up. There are several factors for this. Economic difficulties of the Syrian families force the young refugees to work to support their families instead of attending school. However, with the new policies, it is said that this trend is changing and more young students enroll at higher level classes due to the incentive money (80 USD per month/per student) being paid to families which, instead of sending their young members to work, they enroll them to the school. The mechanism of qualifying for this incentive money is set in cooperation with the schools and UNICEF.

The lack of coordination among state agencies and unstable administrative structure is also reflected in the education sector. Recently the department called “Basic Education” under the Ministry of Education, which has been the main focus of the education plans for Syrians, has been replaced by another department, the Life Long Learning Department. The head of the department said to the consultant that they are new in the area and would be starting their work from scratch.

Policies and Regulations Guiding Access to Higher Education:

Recently, the Turkish government has been making efforts to rationalize and streamline procedures, offer a greater number of scholarships and increase the number of places available to Syrian students.

There are no tuition charges for Syrians who study at Turkish state universities, who can enroll as foreign students. For university entry the main challenge for the Syrian candidates is the Turkish language proficiency. However, another challenge is the fact that due to limited quotas, Syrian students cannot choose the branches that they want to study at university. There is a high and unmet demand to study medicine, which is a very competitive field even for Turkish citizens.

The approval process of school certificates for graduates of secondary schools changes quite often. Currently this is done through the local departments of the MONE. The accredited certificates and transcripts are welcome but not required, due to their unique situation as refugees who fled their homes in a rush. Committees in the schools interview the student and make an assessment of their level. However, lack of language, differences between the Syrian and Turkish curricula, and the fact that Syrian students are in many cases under the impact of trauma, are the factors that hinder fair and objective assessments.

The Syrian high school Baccalaureates are assessed by the local MONE Committees at the provincial level as part of the most recent implementation. The diplomas and certificates of the graduates of TECs are subject to the same approval procedure. In addition, some universities may require applicants to take specialized tests for foreign students.

Syrians must demonstrate a certain level of Turkish knowledge (through obtaining a C1 level certificate) to attend university programs that are taught in Turkish. This certificate should be obtained from TÖMER, a language program housed in universities and private language centers. Fees can vary, based on the intensity of the courses, and the center.

Mechanisms to Facilitate Access to Higher Education:

To facilitate immediate access to Syrian students, University of Gaziantep (UOG) opened six departments with Arabic language instruction. These are architecture (currently 20 students), Economics (currently 18 students), Business Administration (currently 44 students), Electrical and Electronic Engineering (currently 35 students), Food Engineering (currently 34 students), Civil Engineering (currently 44 students) and Mechanical Engineering (currently 12 students).⁵ Some of the courses are taught by Syrian academics. Since this is a new application, it is too early to assess its impact or success, though concerns about the program include the relatively higher tuition rate and that Arabic instruction would delay integration into Turkish society. There are plans underway to roll out Arabic language programs at Harran University and Çukurova University in Fall 2016.

UNHCR has established a technical working group, composed of UNHCR, UNICEF, MONE, YTB and YÖK as well as some INGOs, on scholarship coordination in order to share information, map services and also ensure the harmonization of financial packages offered to students. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) linked to the Prime Ministry of Turkey and many governmental and non-governmental organizations provide scholarships to

⁵ Figures were obtained from the Rector of UOG and cross-checked with the website of the university.

Syrian refugees residing in Turkey. Although there are considerably more scholarships available in recent years, the reality is that demand far outpaces supply.⁶

The main scholarship programs available for Syrians studying at Turkish universities are listed below. These scholarships vary in terms of their criteria, amount and duration and are outlined in the table in Section 6.3, which gives detailed information regarding the coverage and application requirements for these programs.

- Türkiye Burslari Program (Turkey Scholarship Program) given by YTB
- Süriye Destek Bursu (Syria Support Scholarship) given by YTB and partially funded by the EU
- DAFI Program (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund), implemented by YTB and UNHCR, funded by Germany
- Spark Scholarship Program, implemented by Spark, funded by The Netherlands
- Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians (HOPES) program supported by the European Union's Madad Regional Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis⁷

Additional efforts to support Syrian students in their transition to university have also been uncovered by the Team in the course of its research. There is an emerging initiative developed by Professor Bakr Sarakbi, who teaches at Hasan Kalyoncu University. With funding various donors, including one in Qatar, working through Syria Bright Future, he plans to set up a Turkish language program which would be offered at low or no cost and supplemental courses for students in Math, Science and English, conduct outreach to students in Istanbul, Ankara and Gaziantep and offer counseling to students. There are students now working with him to develop the program, which aims to reach 100 high-potential students in the first year. Syria Bright Future is an NGO first established in 2008 in Syria, with offices in Jordan and in Gaziantep working predominantly on protection and psycho-social programs. It works with INGOs, WHO, UNICEF and other well-known organizations.

There also appear to be 3-4 active Facebook groups that function in the same manner as SSOUS, offering updates on scholarship opportunities and university entrance requirements. Of these, it appears that SSOUS is the most institutionalized, referenced and 'branded.'

⁶ For example, for the government's 2016-2017 Türkiye Burslari program there were 93,000 applications from 180 countries, which will be awarded to around 5,000 students from around the world.⁶ For the 2014-2015 academic year, there were 82,000 applications from 176 countries, with approximately 20% of these consisting of Syrians. Before 2014, there were 500 Syrian students who received scholarships, 1,026 were awarded scholarships in 2015. ⁶ According to a presentation made by Başak Yalçın at a UNHCR-Marmara Municipalities Union conference on April 30, 2016 in Istanbul, 3,000 scholarships were made available as part of the Süriye Destek Bursu Program. Spark received approximately 8,000 applications for its scholarship program; approximately 264 were awarded.

⁷ http://www.avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/2016_April/HOPES-short_descriptionTR.pdf and <http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2016/03/new-scholarship-programs-gear-up-to-help-syrian-youth/> and <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20160427163724481>

4.2 Understanding Students: Needs and Priorities

This section of the report consists of data collected from meetings held in Gaziantep with more than 40 Syrian youth both living at the center of Gaziantep and in Nizip - a smaller district 45 minutes outside the city which is relatively less developed than the center. The findings are also informed by meetings with administrators and policy makers as well as by the background research that was conducting. The Syrians living at the center were those who are enrolled at Gaziantep University and Zirve University, a private university, and those who are taking Turkish language courses at Anadolu Lügat Center.

It was very visible that the differences in age, sex and background were very strong factors in the choices of these young people in entering universities and how they approach university education in Turkey, which are elaborated upon below. The meetings held with the groups allowed the Team to understand the most important issues and needs of the Syrian young people who are in universities or on the verge of entering one.

4.2.1 Factors Influencing Students' Access to Higher Education

Economic Factors:

- Without having conducted extensive research, it would be possible to suggest that the students living in the city center come from middle class families and have relatively better access to different opportunities for education and employment.
- Students residing in central Gaziantep appear relatively better off with their finances - at least for being able to cover school and language course fees and sustain a decent life.
- The Syrian group in Nizip, on the other hand, were at a lower economic profile. Most of them have enrolled in free Turkish courses given by a national civil society organization, Yuva, operating a community center and vocational training center in the district.⁸ Compared with the others, this group had fewer opportunities to reach higher education mainly because lack of access to information, economic conditions, and inability to receive scholarships mainly due to lack of knowledge.

Level of Education: Differing levels of education creates various sub-groups:

- One group consisted of those who had finished their secondary education in Syria and are able to get accreditation in Turkey to enter universities.
- Another group consisted of students who graduated from lycées in Turkey, either from official state schools or from the Temporary Education Centers. The ones who had the chance to go to Turkish schools would have fluent Turkish and supposedly would have no difficulty in entering universities throughout Turkey.
- The third and the last group of students were the so-called “transfer students” who had to interrupt their university education in Syria and come to Turkey. This group seemed to be the most vulnerable one mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because they are at a relatively older age, they are reluctant to learn Turkish and thus receive education in Turkish. This narrows their chances to enter university, since the majority of tuition-free state universities give education in Turkish. In brief, there is a tendency among the transfer students to continue their education

⁸ Yuva, a Turkish NGO, in addition to its centers in Nizip, has a community center in the Kirikhan district of Hatay province. The organization is funded by various international organizations such as DVV International, Open Society Institute and GIZ. For other partners and funders, see <http://www.yuva.org.tr/textpage.php?id=2&dbName=nedenetekili&lang=EN>.

in English or Arabic.⁹ Secondly, the transfer students encounter significant difficulties in terms of continuing their education where they left off. The Team heard of several cases of universities not providing information to these students on how they may enter universities in Turkey without repeating the courses they have already taken. Lack of information and lack of assistance compel these students to start their education from scratch. This is something that prevents these students from entering universities.

Language: Students have different preferences for the language of education they would like to acquire for various reasons:

- As mentioned above, age was cited one of the dominant reasons for some Syrians not wanting to learn Turkish. This group believes their age is not young enough to start learning a language from the beginning and receive education in this language.
- Perceptions of the students about their own future is a decisive factor guiding their preferences.
- Syrian youth who do not envision a future in Turkey do not prefer to receive education in Turkish. They tend to be more eager to receive English courses which would increase their chances to go to other countries in the future. English, by all accounts, is seen as strong means to building a future outside Turkey. Turkish, on the other hand, implies developing a life in the country and reducing the possibility to go to Europe. The internationality of English attracts many of the students. As a matter of fact, all the students the Istanbul Team met in Gaziantep had very fluent English, while the ones in Nizip could not speak the language (though some could understand it).
- The reluctance of some students to learn Turkish, however, does not necessarily mean all were unwilling to receive education in Turkish. There were many students, especially those who were at the younger ages, who wanted to learn the language and enter a suitable department. More than half of the students the Team has met were willing to learn Turkish. Learning Turkish, would not only increase the opportunities of the prospective students to gain access to higher education, but also make their lives easier in the country, especially if they seek job opportunities in Turkey .
- There were relatively few Syrians who were eager to study in Arabic language departments. Although education in the mother tongue seems to be a convenient and attractive option, it limits students to select certain departments and certain universities that provide Arabic courses. This seemed to be the main reason for many students not to prefer education in Arabic. Nonetheless, there are many students, mainly from engineering departments, who benefit from this option.
- According to a recently published study by the Human Development Foundation of 378 interviews conducted with young Syrians in Istanbul, acquiring Turkish language proficiency was listed as the top educational priority (89%) followed by English language (62%).¹⁰

Gender:

Around half of the students in the meetings were female. The females in the youth group in Nizip indicated that they have difficulties in convincing their families to allow them to attend university, especially outside of Gaziantep. Many of them were quite vocal and engaged, committed to furthering their studies and interested in scientific fields and studying outside Gaziantep. Girls' access to education is a common challenge for Turkish youth as well. Syrian girls, in general, may

⁹ Gaziantep University has opened courses in Arabic mainly at the departments of engineering. More universities, namely Harran University in Şanlıurfa and Çukurova University in Adana are in the process of opening departments with Arabic language.

¹⁰ <http://ingev.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Capacity-building-in-support-of-Young-Refugees-in-Metropolitans.pdf>

face the same difficulty due to cultural values and patriarchal tendencies in the Syrian society, which may be amplified by the various stress factors arising from the conflict.

Residence:

In Gaziantep, there are many young people living both in the urban and in the refugee camps in the city. The ones living in the camps are able to attend the Temporary Education Centers where they receive education in Arabic from Syrian teachers. It is very difficult to reach and support these students from outside since there is no permit to enter the camps and thus no outreach to those students, except through government institutions. For those living in the urban area, state institutions and various organizations have outreach and are able to support them in various ways. There is no one systematic or standardized outreach strategy. Institutions pursue their own methods in reaching students and supporting them through offering information regarding application procedures and scholarships. The students living at the center of Gaziantep are more accessible and thus relatively more fortunate than those who live at the periphery.

4.2.2 Students' Needs and Priorities

All the meetings with student groups and scholars, university staff, representatives of civil society organizations and officials reveal that there are major needs of Syrian students. What is most crucial for all the prospective students is to receive accurate information on how they may access higher education. Moreover, access to sustained scholarships and support in language teaching appear to be other priority needs of the Syrian youth. Observations gleaned from the Team's meetings with Syrian students correspond to the main obstacles outlined in the previous section.

Availability of and access to information and support systems:

Lack of information on the legal procedures to enter university appears to be the most significant problem. Students have major difficulties in receiving accurate information on the documents required for application and registration, accreditation, exams to be taken, Turkish language certificates and TÖMER accreditation, and scholarships. In other words, students do not receive formal and standardized information on how to enter universities, how to proceed with documentation, how to receive a Turkish language certificate which is applicable throughout Turkey. This widespread confusion is due to various reasons:

- The education system for Syrians under temporary protection is very complex and not well structured. The Turkish government very recently started to develop policies that would enable Syrian youth to access education. The lack of substantial policies and the shift in the policies create considerable confusion in the implementation of the processes. Even state officials seem to have difficulties in grasping the system and thus in providing information. Syrian students told the Team that they receive different answers from various actors on, for example, how they could get accredited when they complete secondary school in Syria or Turkey. They receive inconsistent and contradictory information on the exams they need to take and documents they would need.
- There is no main resource for Syrian students to go and receive accurate information. This is compounded by the decentralized system of enrollment that allows each university to set and establish its own criteria. The lack of official institutions to provide information creates an important gap. Unexceptionally all the Syrians the Team met in Gaziantep suffered from this deficiency. Moreover, language appears to be a barrier for many Syrians to receive information. Some of the resources are not translated into Arabic language and only those who know

Turkish or English can benefit from those. Initiatives such as SSOUS are trying to address these gaps but from a completely voluntary basis.

- Policy gaps and a lack of a reliable resources lead to inaccurate information being quickly spread among the Syrian populations. Many people acquire incorrect information and this information circulates among youth groups. Thus, many Syrian students are misinformed about the processes, and lose time and effort with their actions. Moreover, the Team heard more than a few students voice rumors regarding ‘unclear’ practices at the local university. While such episodes may very well take place at other universities in Turkey and the region, in the face of an already fragile situation, this presents yet another factor which diminishes the motivation of students in continuing their studies.
- Even if Syrian students are able to navigate the complex application procedures to enter university, there seems to be a trend of students dropping out after one or two years. This is just becoming apparent now as Syrian students have only been enrolled in Turkish universities since 2013. The reasons for this include psycho-social factors, difficulty in following classes in Turkish, and the need to continue working. Scholarship support needs to be combined with a support mechanism for students currently in university, comprised of psycho-social services, mentoring, social integration activities, etc. Currently there are only informal services being provided, but these are extremely limited. Otherwise, there is a very real risk that students who enter university may not be able to succeed.

The priority of students is to receive accurate and standardized information from an easily accessible institution which also assists Syrians to apply and register to universities as well as to apply for scholarship opportunities. Platforms that could fill this gap would be a vital step to diminish the main challenge confronting the access to higher education.

Turkish Language Certificate:

Syrian students who are willing to learn Turkish and pursue education in Turkish are obliged to receive a C1 level certificate from TÖMER language centers. Courses are offered by private centers and the language centers at universities, including Gaziantep University. Both the private ones and the one at UOG are by fee, the latter demanding a more reasonable price.

There are different opinions about the quality of the courses given by the University. The major problem with the certificate the University provides is that they are not valid at other universities. This creates an impediment for students who would like to use their certificate at other institutions.

Students who prefer to learn Turkish would need a course that provides C1 certificates accredited with TÖMER with very low and even no fees. This is critical for students to be able to access higher education and build a future in Turkey. Students can also take free classes, such as those offered by the Nizip Community Center, and then travel to Gaziantep to take the C1 examination administered by Anadolu Lügat (for which they must 125USD). However, several students told the Team that in order to succeed in university and follow the classes there, a more rigorous language training program, such as that offered by Anadolu Lügat, is preferable.

Scholarships:

Many Syrian students are dependent on scholarships in order to start or continue their studies. Syrian youth, especially those who reside in Nizip, are not well informed about the scholarship opportunities available for them, though most seem to have heard of Spark. It is imperative that

there is a platform where these opportunities could be found all together in one place. The recently established working group led by UNHCR is working on building coordination between scholarship organizations and creating a platform where all scholarship opportunities would be gathered for students. An increase in the number of available scholarships would also satisfy the needs of more Syrian students.

4.3 Assessment of Prospective Asfari Foundation Partners

4.3.1 Spark

As the Asfari Foundation is already aware, Spark is an important player in the higher education space in Turkey, sitting on a higher education coordination committee with UNHCR, YTB and DAAD. Not only does it have very good relationships with international donors and the Turkish government agencies responsible for higher education, it also has a good network with universities in southeast Turkey, particularly at the rector level, which is critical to facilitating cooperative arrangements with these institutions.

Spark has been instrumental in attracting Dutch government funding to introduce important innovations in the higher education landscape in Turkey. Through this, they have enabled Arabic language programs at Gaziantep University (UOG) in five disciplines while also offering scholarships to students enrolled in these and in the Turkish language programs:

- Spark is monitoring a scholarship program funded by the Dutch government, which has placed 100 students in the Arabic language and 140 students in the Turkish language programs at UOG.
- Spark manages scholarships for 24 students in English language programs at UOG.

In the last cycle, Spark received nearly 8,000 applications for its scholarships in Turkey. It worked with a committee of students and experts to evaluate the applicants based on certain criteria. SSOUS was involved in this process. For this year's cycle, they have asked Iraqi students to take part in the evaluation process instead, with the understanding that there would be less conflict of interest than with Syrian students.

Spark is also currently in an advanced stage of discussion with the US, UK and Australian government donor programs to scale-up an English language training program. Spark and their donors believe that this would respond to the demand for English language training.

In addition to this, for the coming year, they have received additional funding to increase the number of scholarships they offer to 450. The program has been announced and applications are due on July 3. These students will be placed at UOG, Harran University, where Arabic language instruction is expected to begin in fall 2016, and in Çukurova University in Adana. This program is co-funded by the Dutch government and the Education Above All Foundation in Qatar.¹¹ Through this partnership, they will implement the Dynamic Futures Program of the Education Above All Foundation,¹² which also entails Leadership and Capacity Building for high-potential students as well as entrepreneurship programs.

¹¹ http://spark-syria.eu/featured_item/syrian-refugees-and-palestinian-expansion/

¹² This is a Qatari institution founded in 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. It aims to “build a global movement that contributes to human, social and economic development through quality education and other welfare programmes and initiatives.”
<http://educationaboveall.org/#!/home>

In the discussions held, Spark confirmed the role it would play in the project as outlined in the concept note it submitted to the Asfari Foundation. Spark is willing to refocus its proposal to concentrate on supporting university access for Syrian students through Turkish language training and other support services. Within the context of the Asfari project, Spark has suggested that the 150 students whose Turkish language training is supported will automatically qualify to receive scholarships to study at these three universities in the 2017-2018 academic year, once completing the Turkish language training.

Spark's main role would be overall project management, promotion, selection of students as well as monitoring and implementation. It also is willing to monitor, train and help build the capacity of SSOUS, the prospective partner which would be responsible for a suite of support activities within the project. As far as Spark's view of SSOUS's role in the program, this could be to support peer-based monitoring and evaluation, to complement the more formal monitoring and evaluation that Spark will be carrying out. Although Spark scholarships are already well-known, SSOUS could also help promote the program to students. They could also offer activities on social integration and psycho-social support. However, Spark would like to ensure that the psycho-social support program offered by SSOUS will be given by professionals and monitored well. Spark has also suggested that it could offer capacity building for SSOUS as part of the program.

Spark has expressed a preference to offer the Turkish language training at 1500USD per student through Anadolu Lügat (aka Andimer), referencing the quality of its programs. In a recent discussion with the Turkey director of Spark, it was confirmed that the price would be lowered though an exact amount could not be given. Spark is about to start negotiations with Anadolu Lügat for the English training package it recently agreed with the British Council. By adding in the Turkish training package into its negotiations, it could probably get a better price for all services.

Along with the ongoing uncertainty regarding the cost of the Turkish language program, the main concern with the proposed structure of the project is the relationship between Spark and SSOUS. Spark clearly sees itself in a dominant position over SSOUS, which would be the junior partner in the project. It does not wish to be considered an "equal" to SSOUS. While this is certainly obvious to all concerned, the asymmetry between the two organizations poses a major problem, primarily due to the way that each wishes to position itself. SSOUS's desire for autonomy will rub up against the more patronly approach of Spark. While partnerships between organizations of different levels and orientations are always possible, in this particular case, the Team feels that the mix of the personalities of the two directors will not be conducive to a set-up in which SSOUS will be subsumed within a grant to be made to Spark. Moreover, there is a problem of trust between them, which can only be overcome, potentially, through a positive experience of working together. A sounder alternative approach would be to offer a separate, start-up grant to SSOUS, which Spark has agreed would be a suitable way of proceeding. This is detailed further in the Recommendations section.

Anadolu Lügat

As described above, the Turkish courses provided by Anadolu Lügat, the main private language provider in Gaziantep, seem to be good quality. The Team met with the staff and instructors of the center and participated in one of the lectures to observe the teaching environment and levels of the students. There are currently 172 students taking various courses there, 90% of which are Syrian. Anadolu Lügat is set to open a second branch in Gaziantep and in several cities throughout the southeast of Turkey. 80-85% of their students who completed the C1 certificate are now studying at university. They were able to produce a list of Anadolu Lügat students who went on to

study at Turkish universities, which shows that they have good tracking systems in place (and appear to care about the success of their students). Along with Turkish lessons, it also offers preparatory courses for the YÖS and SAT examinations. Several students the Team spoke with who were not from Anadolu Lügat mentioned that its SAT courses carry a good reputation in the Syrian community. In fact, the SAT instructor shared that they have 6-7 students who may score at 1300 or above.

It appears that Anadolu Lügat is well managed by a passionate (and entrepreneurial) director, Dr. Murat Kilic, who is well-connected in and well-informed about the higher education landscape in Turkey especially in regards to Syrians, and a capable and committed team of administrators and instructors. The Team's overall impression of Anadolu Lügat is positive, however, one could also do some further verification by speaking with students who graduated from their Turkish language courses. The Team asked but was unable to obtain a clear indication from Dr. Kilic as to whether he would reconsider the 1500USD tuition fee in the case of a prospective partnership with the Asfari Foundation. The Team feels that this amount would need to significantly reduced before including Anadolu Lügat in the project.

The Turkish courses provided by Anadolu Lügat, the main private language provider in Gaziantep, seems to be good quality. The Istanbul Team met with the staff and teachers of the center and even participated in one of the lectures to observe the teaching environment and levels of the students. The Team had a positive impression of the quality of the teaching. The C1 certificates Anadolu Lügat provides are accredited with TÖMER Centers and are applicable throughout Turkey. The students, however, need to pay a relatively high amount of fee to complete the course. Many students would not be able to cover 1500 USD.

SSOUS

SSOUS is led by a dynamic, passionate Syrian student now enrolled in the engineering program at the University of Gaziantep. The Team had the opportunity to meet with him twice while in Gaziantep, visiting the office they currently use as well as their future space. Recently registered as an association, SSOUS has a clear vision for its future, which is to establish SSOUS clubs in universities around the country that would conduct workshops and offer additional support services to Syrian students already enrolled or wishing to enroll in university. Given that SSOUS is run by a core group of five volunteers, and another circle of about 40 volunteers (many of whom study and work in addition to volunteering), their output has been quite significant. They are quite aware that they need to build their capacity, and wish to receive training and support on this, especially on methods through which they can sustain themselves financially after 2-3 years (through crowd-funding models, for example). While this is a good indicator of self-awareness and self-reliance, the concept note that was prepared for Asfari Foundation seems to point in another direction – specifically in respect to the excessively ambitious budget that was submitted. The need for institutionalization and capacity building is clear.

SSOUS has confirmed that they see their role in the Asfari Project as supporting promotion, social integration and counseling activities, as well as reviewing the scholarship criteria. While this is in line with Spark's forecast, SSOUS has expressed that while it would like to cooperate with Spark, it does not want to be “under” Spark, preferring to have a more clearly defined position within the project. Aside from capacity building on establishing a monitoring and evaluation system, SSOUS does not feel it needs to rely on Spark for its professional growth. Two negative experiences in the past with Spark plus the recent process of submitting concept notes for this project has led to feelings of mistrust. SSOUS was not consulted by Spark as the latter prepared its draft concept

note for the project. Since this outlines a specific role for SSOUS, there should have been more communication between the two organizations. The Team feels that the lack of trust poses a problem to linking these two institutions under one project. By giving SSOUS a separate, but smaller grant, the two institutions would have a healthier ground to cooperate with each other.

5. Recommendations

Given the Asfari Foundation's commitment to civil society, human capacity and education, and its status as an independent foundation, it has an important and unique role to play in complementing and linking to existing initiatives that seek to support university level education for Syrians. Efforts to offer scholarships in Europe, Canada and the United States can be a viable alternative for only a very limited number of students. Therefore, mechanisms to support access to higher education in Turkey are particularly significant and would correspond to the mission of the Asfari Foundation.

As described above, several important efforts underway by international governments and other actors in Turkey point to an enabling environment, which would make the Asfari Foundation project to advance the access of Syrian students to university education in Turkey valuable and impactful. Most of the existing efforts focus on funding scholarship programs, whereas there are key areas that remain under-addressed.

Turkish language acquisition appears to be an important precondition for enhancing university access. Therefore, leveraging the capacity of Turkey's burgeoning higher education sector by supporting Syrians to study at universities around the country, where the main language of instruction is in Turkish, is essential.

Based on the analysis presented in previous sections, the key obstacles confronting Syrian students in entering university are:

- **Economic:** Scholarships are needed to cover Turkish language training, living costs, housing and in some cases tuition.
- **Support systems:** Both for information regarding application procedures and for ongoing support at university.

Given that there are several new scholarship programs on the horizon, the Team recommends that the Asfari Foundation strategically position itself to complement the existing landscape in several important ways:

- Support language scholarship programs to become more *inclusive* of those groups who are not accessing scholarships, working with YTB and UNHCR or Spark to find ways to reach them. Our sense is that those who are not accessing scholarships are low-income, live outside a major city, and are young women. We have heard from a number of policy-makers and administrators that they are concerned that young women will not be able to take advantage of scholarship opportunities, because their families may prefer that they get married, or that the sons go to school. Given the good education levels of young Syrian women, it would be a great shame for their potential to be undermined. UNHCR puts a great effort in reaching out to especially vulnerable groups, both during the application process and later on when they have entered university. The Foundation could fund language scholarships that would be based on jointly agreed criteria to reach particularly disadvantaged groups (low-income, living outside a major city, gender, etc).

The differences between working with YTB-UNHCR as opposed to Spark are:

- With YTB-UNHCR, the cooperation would be with a government agency, allowing for economics of scale. The per student cost would most likely be lower and the geographic

reach would be wider (nation-wide, urban and camp-based refugees). Courses would be offered at TÖMER centers located in universities. After completing the language course, students would not automatically qualify for scholarships for their university studies though their applications would be viewed preferentially. This option is also risk-free in the sense that YTB is a major government institution.

- With Spark, the cooperation would be with an international NGO, therefore communication between the Asfari Foundation and the grantee would be more direct and immediate. The per student cost would be slightly higher and the geographic scope limited to Gaziantep. Students would receive language training at a private TÖMER course where the standards are higher. They would then automatically qualify to receive scholarships for their university studies. Working with Spark would also support the other aims of the project, through its cooperation with SSOUS. Spark is a well-established INGO but always faces the risk that many other NGOs confront, such as funding, management and capacity.

Therefore, weighing all these factors, the Team recommends working with Spark on the language scholarships rather than with YTB-UNHCR.

- Support Spark and SSOUS to develop and refine their *outreach and support programs* for both potential new students and for those already enrolled in university. Considering that there are a suite of new scholarship programs that will soon be launched, it would be important to support students in accessing and pursuing these opportunities. Our research has identified that a more structured and centralized system of information sharing and outreach is needed. As a student-led network, SSOUS has the ability to reach many young students. With adequate support, it could offer more sustained, structured and targeted services to Syrian students, bridging the gap between opportunities that are available and those who are interested in accessing them.

At the same time, far more effort needs to be placed on enabling students to succeed in university – this will be the next major challenge. Spark and SSOUS are well-placed to cooperate with each other to introduce innovations at the university level. They could develop a pilot program combining psycho-social support, mentoring and social integration activities targeting 50 students currently enrolled at University of Gaziantep. The program could be designed as a model that could over time be adapted as a ‘best practice’ at universities around the country. Spark and SSOUS would work with experts to design, implement and monitor the program, each institution playing a role in the program based on their own core competency. It is a very good moment to begin developing these kinds of activities, especially as the numbers of Syrians at universities will be increasing dramatically in the coming years.

- Support SSOUS to professionalize into an independent, sustainable civil society organization. There is a need for a Syrian student-led and organized civic initiative that would reach and represent students, complementing the other donor-led initiatives with much-needed perspectives and outreach that would be inclusive and responsive to student needs. While making a separate grant to SSOUS may be a risky proposition as it is a start-up organization, the Team feels that this is an important role that an independent foundation like the Asfari Foundation is particularly well-placed to fill.

A small, start-up grant of 30-50,000USD for one year of activity, with a possibility to renew for two more years, would enable SSOUS to hire one or two full-time staff, develop a strategic

plan and expand its activities so as to be more effective in the services that it delivers to students. SSOUS has indicated in our discussions that they would be willing to receive a grant for this amount. Activities could also include cooperating with Spark on student outreach and support. SOUSS would need to be closely monitored; for this, the Team recommends offering supplemental consulting support from local trainers for capacity building purposes. The Team could work with SSOUS over the coming one to two months as it prepares its proposal to the Asfari Foundation to identify possible trainers – the trainers could be affiliated with Syrian NGOs in Gaziantep (SSOUS has one name in mind), and/or with Turkish NGOs with a good deal of experience coaching youth groups.¹³ Over time, SSOUS could leverage additional funding sources by submitting applications for small grants programs currently on offer by Embassies and Consulates in Turkey. In our conversations, we found that the US Consulate in Istanbul spoke very highly of SSOUS, and DAAD Istanbul would like to organize a workshop or an internship placement program linking SSOUS to German counterparts, who are actively involved in supporting Syrians at university in Germany. SSOUS would also qualify well for the HOPES small grants program. It is highly unlikely that SSOUS would be able to grow and pursue such opportunities if it continues operating at its current volunteer-only capacity. There should be a period of close cooperation and planning to develop a detailed proposal for the Asfari Foundation, which could take another one to two months.

- Follow-up with *parallel initiatives*, such as Syria Bright Future and HOPES, to ascertain other opportunities that exist and whether there might be strategic alternatives to the options presented above. It is also important that the Asfari Foundation remains in close contact with the UNCHR technical working group on higher education in Ankara for coordination purposes – a meeting should be arranged immediately between the Foundation and this group. The Columbia Global Center would be happy to continue gathering information on the field and share it with the Asfari Foundation. However, representatives of the Foundation should also visit Turkey at least twice a year to meet with grantees, government officials and other organizations in the field.
- Contribute to sound analysis and the generation of knowledge by supporting *research projects* which survey Syrian students, both in and outside university, analyze best practices and document the impact of educational policies.

Participating in this feasibility study has been an extremely valuable for Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul and we would like to thank the Asfari Foundation, its staff and its partners for working with us through this process. We have learned a great deal about this important dimension of the higher education field in Turkey. This has raised our awareness of the gaps, and has made us more committed as an institution of higher education to address these issues. Especially after meeting so many bright, young Syrians, we feel more inspired than ever to support efforts like these.

¹³ One option is to work with Sivil Düşün EU Programme, a support tool designed by the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey to support civil society. <http://sivildusun.net/sivil-dusun-eu-programme/> Another option is the Community Volunteers Foundation. <https://www.tog.org.tr/en>

Long-term Goal of the Asfari Foundation Project:

By offering pathways for young Syrians to access university education in Turkey, this program will support young people to develop the skills, knowledge and capacities that are essential to leading productive lives. This will increase their chances of integrating effectively into Turkish society, allowing them to enter the job market. Turkish society would in turn benefit by leveraging the human capacity of refugees rather than continuing to invest vast resources into more aid programs. Young Syrians would eventually be able to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria, and be uniquely placed to conduct cross-border work after returning home. Moreover, a strong and clear route to higher education would motivate Syrian families to prioritize secondary school education for their children, rather than sending them to work. Given that 640,632 Syrians in Turkey are between 14-24 years old, and only 9,480 Syrians are currently enrolled in Turkish universities, it is essential to leverage Turkey’s burgeoning higher education sector by enabling Syrians to study at universities around the country.

Outcomes of the Asfari Foundation Project:

- 150 disadvantaged young Syrians are able to learn Turkish, enabling them to enroll in university and access scholarships for their undergraduate studies.
- Syrian students are empowered and take responsibility for reaching out to their peers, helping each other to navigate the complex university and scholarship application process.
- A student-led NGO will enhance its capacity to effectively serve Syrian students around Turkey, acting as a central and accessible resource for clear and structured information about scholarship opportunities and university application procedures.
- A model program to reduce drop-out rates will be developed and piloted, targeting 50 Syrian students currently enrolled at university. The program would entail psycho-social support, mentoring and social integration activities, and eventually be taken up by other institutions.

Scholarships for Language Instruction Two Options: Project with UNHCR/YTB or Spark		Outreach and Support Programs Project with SSOUS
<p>1. UNHCR/YTB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 Syrian students around Turkey acquire Turkish language skills and pre-qualify for scholarship programs covering their university costs. • Criteria established to identify and support the most disadvantaged groups. • YTB would facilitate access of students to universities around the country and to scholarship opportunities, though award of scholarship is not guaranteed. It would also support ongoing monitoring of students. <p>Grant amount:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per student would most likely be lower than Spark option. • Project running costs may be lower than Spark option. 	<p>2. Spark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 Syrian students in Gaziantep acquire Turkish language skills and automatically qualify for scholarship programs covering their university costs at Gaziantep, Harran or Çukurova universities. • Criteria established to identify and support the most disadvantaged groups. • Spark would work with SSOUS in developing and piloting a model program for support services for Syrian students currently enrolled in university (see SSOUS column for further information) <p>Grant amount:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As it now stands, 1500USD per student for Turkish language training = 225,000USD. • 50,000USD for project running costs. • 30,000USD for model program costs to be implemented with SSOUS. • Total grant amount: 305,000USD for Year 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSOUS would become a nationally recognized, well-structured NGO reaching at least 5000 Syrian students in cities around the country, supporting their ability to apply to university and to scholarships. • SSOUS would cooperate with Spark in developing and piloting a model program for support services for Syrian students currently enrolled in university. This would serve as a model program that could be implemented directly by universities or by NGOs in other locations. The program would initially target 50-100 students in Gaziantep. An additional program could be rolled out at Istanbul University in Year 2. • SSOUS would receive grants or other forms of support from other donor organizations in Year 2 and Year 3. <p>Grant amount:</p> <p>Approximately 500000USD per year over 2-3 years</p>
<p>The Team needs another 1-2 weeks to determine exact costs of the budget in order to make a recommendation between the two options. The above amounts are estimations.</p>		<p>The Team would need to work with SSOUS for 1-2 months to develop a well-structured proposal.</p>

6.1 Annex 1: Figures of Syrian Students Enrolled in University in Turkey

The following figures were obtained from the online Higher Education Information Management System statistical database of Turkey's Higher Education Commission.¹⁴ Figures for the 2015-2016 academic year have not yet been published. The figures include both undergraduate and graduate level students.

The Team then prepared tables showing the distribution of Syrian students across universities located in different regions, namely Istanbul, Gaziantep, and outside Gaziantep.

The figures demonstrate that there has been a notable rise in enrollment between 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, and that students are quite dispersed across regions. The significant number of young Syrians outside of Gaziantep implies that the Asfari Project might adopt a wider geographic lens in future years. The lower enrollment rate for Syrian women also implies that a special effort could be made to support this particular sub-group.

2014-2015 Academic Year Figures

Total number of university students: 6,062,886

New admissions: 1,383,232

Total foreign students: 72,178

Undergraduate Syrians admitted: 2,298 (1549 men, 749 women)

Undergraduate Syrian students: 4,597 total (3245 men, 1352 women)

Total Syrian students: 5,560 total (3,937 men, 1,623 women)

Syrian graduates from undergraduate studies: 43 total (40 men, 3 women)

Enrollment Figures of Syrian Students by Gender and Geography

	2013-2014			2014-2015		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Istanbul	528	141	669	1118	416	1534
Gaziantep	157	32	189	642	321	963
Other	720	207	926	2177	886	3063
	1405	380	1785	3937	1623	5560

¹⁴ <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr>

Top 20 Universities in Turkey with Syrian Students in 2014-2015

(Out of 115 universities which have enrolled Syrian students)

Ranking	University	2013-2014	2014-2015	Total Student Body (2014-2015)
1	Gaziantep Üniversitesi	66	775	40057
2	İstanbul Üniversitesi	104	509	173190
3	İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi	73	213	31577
4	Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi	136	194	17992
5	İnönü Üniversitesi	9	187	36232
6	Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi	10	176	25393
7	Zirve Üniversitesi	113	158	7620
8	Mersin Üniversitesi	104	155	35869
9	Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi	54	107	7603
10	İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi	102	102	3393
11	Erciyes Üniversitesi	37	99	53721
12	Siirt Üniversitesi	1	98	9130
13	Harran Üniversitesi	16	91	20634
14	Sakarya Üniversitesi	24	86	77540
15	Çukurova Üniversitesi	31	80	47243
16	Uludağ Üniversitesi	12	80	60056
17	Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi	20	79	34179
18	Batman Üniversitesi	8	70	8352
19	Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi	16	69	65220
20	Kastamonu Üniversitesi	14	66	20450

**Istanbul-based Universities Ranked by Syrian Student Enrollment in 2014-2015
(Out of 33 Istanbul-based universities which have enrolled Syrian students)**

Ranking 2014- 2015	University	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	Total Student Body (2014-2015)
1	İstanbul Üniversitesi	104	509	173190
2	İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi	73	213	31577
3	Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi	136	194	17992
4	İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi	95	102	3393
5	Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi	20	79	34179
6	Marmara Üniversitesi	42	57	74864
7	İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi	18	55	35922
8	Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf Üniversitesi	29	49	3850
9	İstanbul Kemerburgaz Üniversitesi	18	40	3861
10	Fatih Üniversitesi	33	35	14011
11	İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi	13	31	19623
12	İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi	15	26	11312
13	Özyeğin Üniversitesi	7	23	5395
14	Okan Üniversitesi	9	19	16930
15	İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi	6	18	7457
29	Boğaziçi University	1	1	15276
32	Koç University	1	1	5430

Universities Outside Istanbul with Highest Numbers of Syrian Students in 2014-2015

Ranking 2014- 2015	University	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	Total Student Body (2014-2015)
1	Gaziantep Üniversitesi	66	775	40057
2	İnönü Üniversitesi	9	187	36232
3	Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi	10	176	25393
4	Zirve Üniversitesi	113	158	7620
5	Mersin Üniversitesi	104	155	35869
6	Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi	54	107	7603
7	Erciyes Üniversitesi	37	99	53721

8	Siirt Üniversitesi	1	98	9130
9	Harran Üniversitesi	16	91	20634
10	Sakarya Üniversitesi	24	86	77540
11	Çukurova Üniversitesi	31	80	47243
12	Uludağ Üniversitesi	12	80	60056
13	Batman Üniversitesi	8	70	8352
14	Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi	16	69	65220
15	Kastamonu Üniversitesi	14	66	20450
22	Anadolu Üniversitesi	36	56	2686894

Enrollment Figures for Universities in Gaziantep

Ranking	University	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	Total Student Body (2014-2015)
1	Gaziantep Üniversitesi	66	775	40057
2	Zirve Üniversitesi	113	158	7620
3	Hasan Kalyoncu Üniversitesi	10	28	4332
4	Sanko Üniversitesi	0	2	231

6.2 Annex 2: Case Studies from Turkish Universities with Significant Numbers of Syrian Students

Syrian students are able to enroll in universities around Turkey. Given that many Syrian students live in major cities around the country, the Team sought to examine opportunities outside of Gaziantep, where many initiatives are currently concentrated. The Team chose three universities with high levels of Syrian students, aiming for a distribution across geography (covering Istanbul and an Anatolian university outside of Gaziantep) as well as type of institution (private and public). The information shared below was obtained from discussions with administrative staff of these institutions responsible for international and/or Syrian students, and in some cases with professors who teach at the institution, who either teach Syrian students and/or are from the education faculty of the university.

İnönü University (Malatya, Central-Eastern Anatolia region)

International and Syrian students who are admitted to İnönü University, a state university, are required to take a Turkish language exam. Students who demonstrate an intermediate knowledge of Turkish (B1) directly start their programs of study whereas those who do not qualify for this level are required to register with TÖMER – İNÖNÜ (Turkish Language Education Application and Research Center) for language education. The university requires 375 hours of study for B1 level of Turkish at TÖMER. TÖMER also admits international students and Syrians who are not enrolled at İnönü University for language study. These students pay \$1250 fee per year, whereas registered students are exempt from this payment. TÖMER has an additional student quota for Syrians. In TÖMER, Syrian students are brought together in a separate class rather than being randomly assigned to mixed classes with other international students. TÖMER instructors at İnönü believe that having all Syrian students together in one class proves to be a more fruitful approach leading to higher levels of success in language education.

Syrians need to take İnönü University's Examination for Foreign Students (YÖS) and demonstrate high school graduation degree and diploma accreditation upon their admission to the university. The registrar's office at İnönü sometimes makes an exception for qualified Syrian students who are unable to demonstrate the required documentation and frequently extends the registration period.

At İnönü University, 80% of Syrian students prefer to study in the School of Medicine, Pharmaceuticals and Dentistry, whereas the remaining 20% prefer to study at the School of Engineering. This is mainly due to larger student quotas of these schools and higher likelihood of employment opportunities upon graduation.

Syrian students prefer to study at İnönü University due to its campus facilities, easy access to accommodation, and lively campus environment. The relatively affordable living conditions of Malatya and employment opportunities also appeal to Syrian students who need financial support to be able to continue their university education. The total number of Syrian refugees increased from 9 in 2013-2014 academic year to 187 in 2014-2015. The growing interest in İnönü by Syrian students can be explained within this general framework.

Istanbul University

Istanbul University, a top public university, conducts its own YÖS exam for international students which consists of questions in geometry, mathematics and general ability. The exam is in five different languages including Turkish, Arabic, English, French and Russian. Students who are admitted to Istanbul University should also demonstrate adequate knowledge of Turkish either by taking the Turkish Proficiency Exam given by Istanbul University Department of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the academic year or presenting a Turkish Proficiency Document from the Turkish Language Teaching Research and Application Centers of the University. Students at the A1 and A2 level are considered to have inadequate knowledge of Turkish and required to study at the language center before starting their respective programs of study. Students at the B1-B2 level, on the other hand, can be placed into the program which they obtained the right to attend but are required to attend a Turkish language course during their studies until they reach A1-A2 level.

Students should submit high school degree accreditation, a Turkish Language Proficiency document and immigration card for registration. Students usually prefer to study in the School of Medicine, Engineering and Business Administration as these areas enable them to find employment with relative ease and hence be able to support their families. There is a 50% dropout rate for Syrian students but this rate has been in decline recently thanks to growing funding opportunities for refugee students. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities has issued a new fund for 1100 Syrian students, 300 of who currently study at Istanbul University Language Center. The fund aims to enable successful Syrian students to learn Turkish and start their undergraduate education immediately thereafter.

Syrian students at Istanbul University usually stay with their families and relatives. They also have access to university dorms. Most Syrian students have part-time jobs so they are not able to spend extra time on campus and participate in student clubs and social activities. Even though the university provides psychological counseling, students do not tend to apply for these services unless they are directed to by their instructors. Some faculty members host activities for Syrian students with their own means to facilitate their socialization with other international and local students.

During 2015-2016 academic year, 713 Syrian students are registered at Istanbul University. 148 students study at the Faculty of Literature, and 141 students study at the Faculty of Engineering. Please see a detailed distribution below.

Faculty	Number of Students
Distance Learning	56
Physical Education and Sports	1
Cerrahpaşa Medical School	43
Dentistry	9
Pharmaceuticals	56
Literature	148
Sciences	31
Florence Nightingale Nursing	1
Education	8
Law	22
Economics	78
Divinity	22

Communications	8
Istanbul School of Medicine	22
Management	13
Engineering	141
Forestry	6
Logistics and Transportation	5
Political Sciences	6
Aquaculture	1
Veterinary School	4
Total	683
Vocational School	
Law	1
Health Services	9
Technical Sciences	6
Total	16
Institutes	
Social Sciences	9
Natural and Applied Sciences	5
Total	14
TOTAL	713

Istanbul Aydın University

Istanbul Aydın University is a private foundation university, where students pay tuition determined by their field of study. Tuitions range from 14.000TL for the School of Engineering to 24.000TL for Medical Sciences. Istanbul Aydın University gives financial aid to Syrian students who apply to the university. Contrary to state universities, there is no requirement for a Foreign Student Exam at Istanbul Aydın University. Syrian students who demonstrate required documentation, i.e. high school degree accreditation and their immigration card, and are able to pay the university tuition are directly admitted to their preferred programs of study.

TÖMER at Istanbul Aydın University charges \$1250 for international students. Currently, 50 Syrian students study at TÖMER with funding support from the university. At TÖMER, Syrian students are randomly dispersed among other international students. Each class has 3-4 Syrian students out of 18 students. Students need to reach B1 level of Turkish before they start their programs of study.

During 2015-2016 academic year, 251 Syrian students are registered at Istanbul Aydın University. 76 students are enrolled in Engineering School, 41 students are enrolled in the School of Management and 39 students are enrolled in the School of Architecture and Design. In addition, there are 40 students currently registered at TÖMER Istanbul Aydın University, who study Turkish.

Please see the details below.

Faculty	Number of Students
Engineering	76
Economics and Managerial Sciences	41
Architecture and Design	39
Anatolian Vocational School	29
Institute of Social Sciences	27
Medical Services Vocational School	12
Sciences	11
Arts and Sciences	4
Education	3
Arts	2
Preparatory School (Guest Student)	2
Communications	2
Dentistry	1
Medical Sciences	1
Social Sciences Doctorate	1
Total number of students	251
TÖMER	40

6.3 Annex 3: Overview of Scholarship Opportunities

Name	Information	Coverage	Main Application Requirements	Key Figures
<p>Türkiye Scholarships</p> <p>Implemented by YTB (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities)</p>	<p>-Türkiye Scholarships are government-funded scholarships awarded to outstanding applicants from countries outside Turkey.</p> <p>YTB program works only with Gaziantep University for language courses and education, plus additional centers based in 10 universities around the country.</p> <p>-Length of award: 1 year Turkish Language course + 4,5 or 6 years depending on the official duration of the program</p> <p>http://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/index.php/en/turkiye-burslari/burs-olanaklari</p>	<p>Allowance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Undergraduate Students 200 USD per month - For Master's Students 300 USD per month <p>Accommodation</p> <p>Offered free of charge in public university dormitories. Students who prefer other housing must pay their own expenses.</p> <p>Tuition and Fees</p> <p>Türkiye Scholarship students do not pay tuition.</p> <p>Health Expenses</p> <p>Türkiye Scholarship students are covered by public health insurance.</p> <p>Turkish Language Course</p> <p>If they are not proficient in Turkish, Türkiye Scholarship Students must take one year of Turkish languages courses, free of charge.</p> <p>Transportation</p> <p>Türkiye Scholarship students receive funds to travel to Turkey to start their studies and for departure after graduation.</p>	<p>1. Age Requirements: - Undergraduate Degree: Those who were born no earlier than 01.01.1995, - Master's Degree: Those who were born no earlier than 01.01.1986, - Ph.D Degree: Those who were born no earlier than 01.01.1981, - Research Program: Those who were born no earlier than 01.01.1971,</p> <p>2. Applicants should not have any health problems that would act as a barrier to their education.</p> <p>3. Candidates must meet the minimum scores relating to the program they are applying to.</p> <p>4. Students who are currently studying in Turkey are not allowed to apply to the level that they are already studying.</p> <p>5. Turkish citizens and persons who lost Turkish citizenship cannot apply for this scholarship program.</p>	<p>2016 application figures:</p> <p>93,000 applicants from 170 countries.</p> <p>5,000 scholarships will be awarded.</p> <p>1,600 Turkish language scholarships offered in 2015-2016 for Syrian and Iraqi refugees in cooperation with UNHCR.</p>
<p>Support Scholarship for Syrian Students</p> <p>Implemented by YTB (Presidency for Turks Abroad and</p>	<p>Designed for Syrian Students who currently study in an undergraduate program of a Turkish university.</p> <p>The scholarship is only available for the education year of 2016 (Jan-Dec).</p> <p>85% of the costs are covered by the EU.</p>	<p>Will offer a monthly stipend and will only be paid during semester time: 1200TL (600 TL stipend+600 TL accommodation)</p> <p>The scholarship does not cover TÖMER language courses, health insurance and transportation costs.</p>	<p>Only the following natural persons will be eligible to benefit from this scholarship program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Currently enrolled in a minimum four year undergraduate program of an officially registered public university in Turkey, 2. Currently enrolled in daytime program, and for the normal duration of the program (e.g. 8 semesters for 4 year undergraduate program except preparation school) 	<p>Aims to offer 5,000 scholarships over the next five years.</p>

<p>Related Communities).</p>	<p>http://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/index.php/en/haberler/783-suriyeli-ogrenciler-icin-destek-burslari</p>		<p>4. Be a citizen of Syria and be under temporary protection in Turkey and</p> <p>5. Must have not previously been awarded by Türkiye Scholarships</p> <p>6. Must not be benefitting from any other scholarship given by other institutions (including exchange students).</p> <p>For applicants who have completed the first semester of study, they must also have a cumulative grade point average satisfying the passing score as determined by the university.</p>	
<p>DAFI Program</p> <p>Implemented by YTB and UNHCR and (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities).</p>	<p>UNHCR provides scholarships for refugees through the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (DAFI). Funding for this programme is provided by the Federal Government of Germany.</p> <p>DAFI scholarships are provided for one academic year. After one year, the scholarship can be renewed, if the student passes the annual examination for promotion to the next academic year.</p> <p>In some cases, and subject to the recommendations of the UNHCR office as well as availability of funding, language training courses may be provided.</p> <p>http://www.unhcr.org/dafi-scholarships.html</p>	<p>The DAFI programme might cover the costs mentioned below in full or in part, depending on the specific needs of refugee students and the country operation.</p> <p>Registration/Tuition Fees: The scholarship usually covers the registration and tuition fees.</p> <p>Subsistence Allowance: Students receive a subsistence allowance. In some countries, this is paid as a lump sum while in other countries it is divided into several components such as living allowance (food), book allowance, boarding/housing allowance, local travel allowance and pocket money (or personal allowance). Not all of allowances automatically applicable to each country but are rather based on local circumstances.</p> <p>Students' Annual Allowances: Students are not automatically entitled to all allowances as conditions in the various countries differ. In some countries, all or several allowances have been combined into a lump sum payment. Likewise, the needs of individual students within the same country may differ according to subject of study, so that benefits may vary amongst students. Costs for medical insurance or medical treatment are handled by UNHCR offices in accordance with local implementing</p>	<p>In order to be eligible, a candidate should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have recognized refugee status; 2. Have successfully completed secondary schooling to a high standard in camp-based refugee schools, or in national schools of the country of origin or asylum; 3. Have no other means of support for university studies; 4. Select a course of study that is likely to lead to employment in the country of origin; 5. Not be older than 28 years at the beginning of studies (exemption could be applied); 6. Select a choice of study course with maximum three to four years duration. 	<p>DAFI has rapidly scaled up access for Syrian refugees: from 34 students in 2013 to 144 students in 2014.</p> <p>Demonstration of high demand: 5,800 applications for 70 scholarships in Turkey in 2015.</p> <p>An additional 1,000 scholarships will be made available for Syrians in Turkey.¹⁵</p>

¹⁵ This information is received by the presentation of UNHCR “Strengthening Delivery of Higher Education to Refugees” Istanbul, Turkey on 6 October 2015.

		arrangements and requirements.		
SPARK Program	<p>SPARK scholarship scheme contributes to the education and career prospects of Syrian refugees in Turkey, and helps build community cohesion.</p> <p>The program is sponsored by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.</p> <p>This scholarship information is for September 2014 and July 2015.</p> <p>http://imprhumanitarian.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SPARK-Syria-HE_registration-form_2015-09-04-print-EN-1.pdf</p>	<p>The following items are covered:</p> <p>Subsistence allowance: The allowances are considered to be sufficient to cover one person’s living expenses during one year of the study period.</p> <p>Course fees</p> <p>Allowance for study materials</p> <p>Accommodation in a university dormitory: If the applicant prefers to arrange accommodation elsewhere, it is on her/his own responsibility to cover those expenses.</p> <p>The scholarship is only intended for one year and may be extended.</p>	<p>A candidate applying for the SPARK scholarship scheme must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be a national of Syria; 2. Be available for the entire period of the selected course and be able to take part in the entire course; 3. Demonstrate a solid link between his/her educational background and the selected course and motivation to actively engage within the community; 4. Meet the admission requirements of the selected course. As such a candidate must have a General Certificate Exam Diploma (undergraduate courses) or bachelor’s degree (graduate courses) in one of the selected fields of study and meet other educational or professional requirements, which may vary per course and university; 5. Offer evidence of proficiency in speaking and writing the language of instruction (English, Arabic, Kurdish or Turkish). 	<p>It plans to grant a total of 3,500 scholarships in the region in 2016.</p> <p>450 scholarships will be given in Turkey in the coming period.</p> <p>So far, 264 scholarships have been given in Turkey.</p>
HOPES Program	<p>Established in May 2016, The Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians (HOPES) program is funded by the European Union’s Madad Regional Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis.</p> <p>The EU has provided over €12m over the next three years.</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/syria/madad/index_en.htm</p>	<p>Will provide support for Syrians in higher education and TVET programs.</p> <p>With partners such as DAAD, British Council, Campus France, EP-Nuffic, Stichting Spark, and the German-Jordanian University, several thousand course placements and scholarships will be made available in the region, focusing on Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and northern Iraq.</p>	<p>Along with scholarships, English classes will be provided to 4,000 and educational counselling for over 42,000. A small grants program (€30,000-60,000 per grant) will be made available for universities and NGOs to apply to in order to develop projects supporting the education of Syrian refugees.</p>	<p>Aims to provide 300 scholarships to Syrians.</p> <p>Most of these will be given in Turkey.</p>

6.4 Annex 4: List of Contacts

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UNICEF Administrator

40 Students from Gaziantep University, Zirve University, Anadolu Lügat, and Nizip Community Center

Administrators from İnönü University, Istanbul University and Istanbul Aydın University

6.5 Annex 5: List of Acronyms

AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DAFI	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund
DGMM	Directorate General on Migration Management
EU	European Union
HOPEs	Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MONE	Ministry of National Education
Madad Fund	EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test
SSOUS	Syrian Students Office for University Services
TEC	Temporary Education Center
TÖMER	Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Center
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UOG	University of Gaziantep
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization
YÖK	Higher Education Council
YÖS	International Student Entrance Exam
YTB	Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities