

UNHCR responds to rising hunger in the Horn of Africa

INSIDE: Aid for
2.1 million displaced
Ukrainians • Update on
Pakistan flood response
• Meet Federal MP and
former refugee Dai Le
• Art project inspires
Rohingya youth



Contents



3 THE DIFFERENCE YOU MADE: You're helping us stay and deliver in Ukraine



4 THE DIFFERENCE YOU MADE: Pakistan and Horn of Africa

5 FIVE YEARS ON: Art programs for Rohingya youth

6 REFUGEE VOICES: Interview with Dai Le

8 IN THE COMMUNITY

10 LEADING WOMEN FUND: Empowering women in Jordan

12 EMERGENCY: Winter Survival Fund

14 AIMING HIGHER: The power of education

16 GIFTS IN WILLS: A chemistry teacher's legacy



PUBLISHED BY

Australia for UNHCR
PO Box Q428
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230, Australia

T: 1300 361 288
E: info@unrefugees.org.au
W: unrefugees.org.au
f australia4unhcr
@ australiaforunhcr
@ UNrefugees
A Australia for UNHCR
ABN 35 092 843 322

ON THE COVER: UNHCR is providing emergency shelter, water and cash assistance for people facing extreme hunger in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya.

© UNHCR/Eugene Sibomana



WELCOME

In August, I stepped into the role of CEO with Australia for UNHCR, taking over from our founder and National Director of 22 years, Naomi Steer. I'm enormously excited and honoured to be appointed to this role, and want to thank you for supporting our work and continuing to stand with refugees.

This is a critical time for UNHCR. An unprecedented 100 million people are now displaced worldwide. This year alone, we have seen emergency after emergency. In Ukraine, war has forced 14 million people to flee their homes, with the number of people displaced continuing to rise. In the Horn of Africa, families are teetering on the brink of famine due to a deadly combination of drought, conflict and rising commodity prices. And in Pakistan, unprecedented monsoonal flooding has destroyed almost one million homes and forced thousands to sleep out in the open, cram into camps or stay with hosts.

Your generous gifts are providing life-saving aid and protection for the world's most vulnerable people. Thanks to you, UNHCR is delivering shelter, emergency relief items and psychosocial support to help displaced people survive and rebuild.

In this issue, you'll read the latest update from Ukraine, where the war continues to grind on. Since February, UNHCR has reached more than 2.1 million people with aid, including cash assistance, emergency shelter, and specialised services for women and children. The next challenge is the approaching winter. With homes and critical infrastructure destroyed, the people of Ukraine will need our help to stay safe and warm through the cold months ahead.

In these troubled times, I draw inspiration from my fellow Australians who step up for refugees again and again. Our corporate supporters joined us in June for our annual World Refugee Day luncheon, raising over \$250,000 for Ukraine. Community groups and individuals have thrown their support behind Ukraine as well, raising much-needed funds to support people fleeing the war.

Former refugees are also making waves in the community. I'm very pleased to share an interview with Dai Le, Federal Member for Fowler and a former Vietnamese refugee, whose impassioned maiden speech to Parliament reminded us of the extraordinary things that refugees can achieve.

Finally, I am pleased to share a report from our team's recent trip to Jordan, where the Leading Women Fund is supporting Syrian refugee women with cash assistance to help them meet their basic needs. In this article, you'll also meet an inspiring Syrian refugee and photographer, Yousef Alhariri, who joined us for the trip. In this edition of *With You*, he showcases a selection of his favourite photographs.

Thank you for everything you do for refugees.

Trudi Mitchell, CEO



Oksana, Yuri and Svitlana in front of their destroyed home in Nalyvaikivka, in Kyiv Oblast.



© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

You're helping us stay and deliver in Ukraine

When war broke out in Ukraine in February, millions fled their homes seeking safety. Families were torn apart, with women and children streaming across borders into neighbouring countries. A humanitarian crisis also unfolded inside Ukraine, with homes and critical infrastructure destroyed, and livelihoods decimated.

Australians have responded with kindness and compassion, donating more than \$16 million. Thanks to you, UNHCR has drastically ramped up emergency operations in the region – providing life-saving essentials, shelter repairs, emergency cash payments and mental health support.

In Ukraine itself, even with security risks, humanitarian convoys are still getting through to hard-to-reach areas. To date, UNHCR has reached 2.1 million people with aid. They include 51-year-old nurse, Oksana, who woke to the shrill sound of air raid sirens and shelling one morning, and fled to the cellar with her husband and daughter. War had come to their quiet rural village of Nalyvaikivka on the outskirts of Kyiv.

“The whole street was grey from the ashes of burnt buildings,” says Oksana. “Our yard was full of rubble, slate, window frames, glass. We spent many days trying to clean up,

moving very carefully as we didn’t know if there was any unexploded ammunition or other dangerous things in our yard.”

UNHCR has provided Oksana and her family with a temporary house behind the rubble of their former home, along with mattresses, bed linen, solar lamps and items like soap and towels. Oksana’s husband, Yuri, is now starting to rebuild the home with help and supplies from UNHCR.

Of the seven million refugees who fled to neighbouring countries, the vast majority are women and children – traumatised and at increased risk of exploitation and trafficking. With your help, UNHCR has established critical protection and support services.

Vita, 28, arrived in Moldova in early March. She fled after hearing of the rising death toll among children, and of atrocities occurring in other parts of the country.

“*The whole street was grey from the ashes of burnt buildings. Our yard was full of rubble, slate, window frames, glass... We didn't know if there was any unexploded ammunition or other dangerous things in our yard.***”**

“After I found out about the events in Bucha, in Irpin, and saw the situation in Mariupol, I realised that the same thing could happen in Odesa,” she says. “So I decided to take my child to a safe place.”

She’s now staying at Casa Marioarei, a shelter for survivors of gender-based violence, which has partnered with UNHCR to help women and children arriving in the country as refugees.

“We were lucky that on the very first day we arrived, we were brought here to this centre, and we were immediately shown where we can live, that it would be safe and comfortable here, and we would be able to stay in peace and quiet for a while.” ■



◀ Bahadur Khan, an Afghan refugee whose home was destroyed in Pakistan's floods, collects UNHCR emergency supplies.

Life-saving aid for Pakistan

Monsoonal rain and flooding swept across Pakistan from mid-June, submerging one-third of the country. Australians responded generously, sending life-saving aid to flood victims, including the many Afghan refugees living in Pakistan.

By September, UNHCR had mobilised 1.2 million emergency relief items to assist 50,000 households in the hardest-hit provinces of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. Items included tents, plastic tarpaulins, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, solar lamps and kitchen sets. UNHCR also delivered 10,000 sandbags to help families build up defences around their homes.

Bahadur Khan, an Afghan refugee living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, is one of the flood survivors who received UNHCR's aid. When the Kabul River broke through an embankment, he had just 10 minutes to evacuate his family. They found higher ground and slept out in the open until UNHCR teams arrived the next day with provisions.

"We are thankful for the tents and shelter and a mosquito net," Bahadur said.

UNHCR has also provided vital protection services for the most vulnerable flood victims, including women and children. With sister agencies UNICEF and UNFPA, UNHCR provided psychosocial support, delivered sanitary products to women and girls, and supported family tracing efforts.

"Thanks to our generous donors who have been helping UNHCR to assist people in Pakistan," said UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch. "Pakistan has been a generous refugee host for the last 40 years and this is the time that the world stands in solidarity with the country and its people." ■

Urgent relief in the Horn of Africa

Our generous supporters have provided life-saving aid for communities in the Horn of Africa, where drought, conflict and rising commodity prices have created a hunger crisis. The situation is particularly dire in Somalia, which is at risk of famine.

Drought and food scarcity are also driving increased displacement. With your support, UNHCR is providing emergency shelter, aid items such as sleeping mats and cooking stoves, and cash assistance to help displaced families buy food and other essentials. In Somalia alone, UNHCR and its inter-agency partners have provided 101,800 core relief items, 55,423 cash assistance payments and 32,790 emergency shelters.

Barwako Noor Ali, a single mother from Somalia, lost her cows and goats to the drought. With no way to feed her children or earn a living, she fled across the border and found safety at a temporary shelter in Bur Amino, Ethiopia.

"There was nothing more we could do to survive," said Barwako. "The river was dry. There was no rain. I left because of my children."

With women and children accounting for 80 per cent of displaced Somalis, UNHCR has also ramped up its protection work. Your gifts have helped UNHCR refer vulnerable families to specialist services, raise awareness of the heightened risk of gender-based violence, and distribute sanitary products to women and girls. ■

✓ **Barwako Noor Ali and her children fled Somalia to seek greater security in Ethiopia.**



© UNHCR/Eduardo Soteras Jalil

Mohammad Hasson, 13, and other Rohingya photographers in Cox's Bazar produce a magazine called *Rohingyatographer*.



Art brings hope to Rohingya children

THE DIFFERENCE YOU MADE

“It makes me happy when the children can relay the message of peace to their community. Wherever we go, art remains in our hearts. To me, art is the voice of my heart and mind.”

— AYELA AKTER, ROHINGYA VOLUNTEER ARTIST

Mohammad Hasson (left) meets with his photography mentor, Sahat Zia Hero.



ART PROGRAMS IN COX'S BAZAR ARE PROVIDING THOUSANDS OF ROHINGYA REFUGEE CHILDREN WITH NEW EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES.

In Bangladesh, more than half of all Rohingya refugees are children or young people who have received no formal education since their arrival. Now, with support from a generous Australian donor, almost 9,000 children have the chance to learn through art.

Rohingya art teachers and Bangladeshi art students have teamed up to deliver art supplies and training to young people, focusing on photography and theatre. The programs are particularly beneficial for girls and for children with disabilities, who are at risk of social exclusion.

Mohammad Hasson, 13, is one of the students who has used his new skills to express himself. Five years ago, he was among the 700,000 people fleeing violence and persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State. Mohammad, who is non-verbal, communicates through sign language, writing and drawing. However, his favourite mode of expression is now photography.

“I like to do photography the most,” he signs. “Everyone becomes happy when I take their photos.”

Mohammad and other young Rohingya photographers post their photos on social media to document their lives in refugee camps. They also launched a magazine, *Rohingyatographer*, showcasing their work.

Another student, Sharmin Ara, likes to draw the camp she lives in. She dreams of travelling to other countries to visit her aunt and grandmother, but also of educating other children.

“I am happy to be here as I can meet my friends, laugh and talk – and also the teachers look after our wellbeing,” Sharmin says. “One day, I would like to teach other children.”

UNHCR and its partners are trialling a formal education program based on Myanmar's national curriculum but, for now, the art program bridges a gap for many students, empowering them to learn and to share their stories.



Ayela Akter, a Rohingya volunteer artist, is proud of doing something positive in her community.

“I mentor 30 children. I wish to teach 60 children in the future. It makes me happy when the children can relay the message of peace to their community,” she says. “Wherever we go, art remains in our hearts. To me, art is the voice of my heart and mind.” ■

To find out more about supporting a major project like this, contact Elizabeth Grady, Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships, on 0420 323 766 or email EGrady@unrefugees.org.au

Dai Le's message for refugees

In May, Dai Le was elected as an independent Federal MP to the south-western Sydney seat of Fowler. In her maiden speech to Federal Parliament last month, she told the story of fleeing Vietnam by boat as a child with her mother and sisters.

In this interview, Ms Le shares her message for refugees and thanks Australia for UNHCR's donors for supporting the important work of the UN Refugee Agency.

How did it feel to represent the refugee experience during your maiden speech to Parliament?

It was such an honour. I felt that I was able to represent many refugees like myself, who came to Australia and were given the opportunity to rebuild themselves. It was very much a humbling opportunity, but I'm also proud that somebody like me was delivered into the house of the people by a majority refugee and migrant community.

What is your message for the 100 million people who are now displaced around the world?

I hope what I achieved in my speech was a message for them to persevere.

It's very challenging for people being displaced, being stuck in refugee camps, being stuck in no-man's land, being stateless – like we once were. There's that fear of not knowing if there's going to be a future, not knowing if you're going to be able to give your children the opportunities that you would like them to have.

How did UNHCR assist you in your journey?

UNHCR played a very important role in the processing of refugees after the Vietnam War. They were in place in the five countries where there were processing centres for Vietnamese refugees – the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

UNHCR played a very important role in making sure there were procedures and processes... to ensure that the people being brought into new countries like Australia would be able to integrate and have a successful new life.

What would you like your legacy to be for refugees?

For me, it's about not letting your circumstances and your background stop you from playing a role in giving back to the country that gave you an opportunity. In any country when you settle, there are bound to be challenges, but overall, as a country, Australia is very embracing. That's my personal experience and I'd like to encourage other refugees not to be stopped by negative perspectives, but to rise above those and just know that we've got this opportunity now, let's make the most of it.

What would your message be to our donors who give so generously to others, whether it's to refugees from Ukraine, or Myanmar or Yemen?

Thank you very much for donating to UNHCR. Your dollars really contribute to the work of UNHCR and enabling them to work effectively to quickly process refugees like myself, in order for us to actually get that opportunity to be resettled quickly so that we can rebuild our lives. ■



^
Dai Le meets community leaders in Cabramatta in south-western Sydney. Photo courtesy of Dai Le.



∟
Dai Le gives her maiden speech to Parliament wearing an áo dài featuring an Australian flag design.

>
Dai Le with her mother and two sisters in a refugee camp after fleeing Vietnam. Photo courtesy of Dai Le.



DAI LE'S MAIDEN SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT

“ Like many in the electorate of Fowler, mine is a refugee settlement story.

I was seven years old when Saigon fell, during the Vietnam War in April '75. My mother was forced to flee with my two younger sisters, escaping communism. It was a time of chaos and confusion. I remember running with my mother and two younger sisters, scrambling to make our way onto a boat, and pushing through the cries and screams of women and children. I had no idea what was happening. All I can recall were the cries, the panic, the chaos – and the one moment on the boat when I turned around to look back at my birth country to try and comprehend what was happening and just saw a big black smoke in the distance.

I remember the years in refugee camps, dreaming of being able to lie on a proper bed, to have a proper home and to go to a proper school. I remember the moment when we were accepted to be resettled as refugees in Australia – known to many back in refugee camps as the island with the best education system in the world – and remembering as we stepped out of Kingsford Smith Airport, the feeling of gratitude and freedom. We were filled with hope as we looked out onto the horizons of endless possibilities. ”



© AUSPIC

In the Community

© Australia for UNHCR/Jarrod Bryant



Danijel Malbasa, the inaugural winner of the Les Murray Award for Refugee Recognition, speaks with host Kumi Taguchi.



» UNITE FOR UKRAINE

The community of Mapleton in Queensland has united behind an eight-year-old boy and his campaign for the people of Ukraine.

When the war broke out in February, Mark was so upset by what he saw on the news that he asked his mum how he could help.

“What would it be like if our house was bombed? What would it be like if I had to say goodbye to my dad because he had to stay and fight? Mum, we have to do something, it’s devastating,” Mark said.

Mark’s mum, Heidi, helped him turn his passion into action. Together, they organised a fundraising event at Mark’s school in Mapleton on the Sunshine Coast, raising vital funds for vulnerable families fleeing their homes in Ukraine.

The event was attended by 1,000 people and featured children’s entertainment, stalls showcasing local small businesses, food, live music and raffles.

“I saw it as a massive learning opportunity for my children and other children in the community. This is really good for them to see we can make a difference,” Heidi said.

“If you feel passionate about something, and you want to help, you should get in and do it. Mark demonstrated that passion and I backed him. I think that makes communities and kids feel empowered.”

Heidi said the event united the people of Mapleton. “It was a bit unexpected, just how good I think it made everybody feel. People that were involved were so happy and were so moved. We were all so pleased that our community did it.” ■

» CELEBRATING REFUGEES ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY

In June, we held our annual World Refugee Day event, raising over \$250,000 for the Ukraine emergency.

For the second year in a row, our World Refugee Day lunch was a hybrid event with 400 guests in attendance at the Sheraton Grand in Sydney and dozens more watching online. The event raised much-needed funds to help protect women, children and other particularly vulnerable refugees fleeing Ukraine.

Guests heard from the inaugural winner of the Les Murray Award for Refugee Recognition, Danijel Malbasa, who was displaced by the Yugoslav Wars.

“From the age of five until 12, I was living in a refugee camp on the outskirts of Kosovo in a factory where they just put mattresses on the floor,” said Danijel. “That’s how we lived, side by side.”

Danijel described how UNHCR helped his family find safety in Australia, and urged the audience to support all refugees, regardless of their country of origin.

“Anyone can be a refugee really. It just takes one war, one pandemic, one nuclear disaster, and you can find yourself in my shoes.”

Chair of Australia for UNHCR, Michael Dwyer, paid tribute to Naomi Steer, who spoke at her last World Refugee Day event as National Director. Naomi acknowledged those who have supported refugees and displaced people since she founded Australia for UNHCR 22 years ago.

“I take my leave in what continues to be a year of incredible highs and lows,” she said. “Highs because of the ongoing generosity of countless Australians and organisations supporting refugees and displaced people, but lows because of the escalation of conflict that has resulted in massive global displacement, which has now hit 100 million people.” ■

✓ Mark with his parents, Heidi and Chris.



Image courtesy of Heidi Becker.

» THE LEADING WOMEN FUND CELEBRATES AMBASSADOR ZOE GHANI

In September, Leading Women Fund members gathered in Sydney to celebrate the release of Zoe Ghani's debut novel, *Pomegranate & Fig*.

The Leading Women Fund is a network of Australian women supporting Syrian refugee women who have fled to Jordan. This event was the first opportunity for members to meet up since the pandemic.

Zoe Ghani, a Leading Women Fund Ambassador and former Afghan refugee, read from the opening of her novel at the event, which was generously hosted by WeWork.

Pomegranate & Fig traces the lives of three young people – Henna, her brother Hamid, and a man who will become her husband, Rahim. Taking the reader from the streets of Herat in the 1970s to India in the 1980s and then to the suburbs of Sydney, the novel vividly illuminates the disruption, displacement and tragedy of war.

Pomegranate & Fig is now available for purchase in bookstores and online. ■



» VIETNAMESE GROUP RAISES \$60,000 FOR UKRAINE AND AFGHANISTAN

The Vietnamese Community's Queensland Chapter has raised \$60,000 in the last year for Ukraine and Afghanistan, and is now raising money for people affected by the flooding in Pakistan. The group has been fundraising for Australia for UNHCR since 2016, raising more than \$140,000.

Dr Cuong Bui, the President of the Queensland Chapter, is a former refugee who fled at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975.

"We remember the journey and we still remember vividly what we had to go through during the time we were boat people," said Dr Bui. "We were refugees. We understand the suffering of refugees themselves. We feel we have the duty to help." ■



Nhan smiles for the camera after completing the City2Surf with Team UNHCR in Sydney.

» RUNNING FOR REFUGEES

More than 200 people participated in the City2Surf as part of Team UNHCR, raising vital funds for refugees.

They joined 60,000 participants running, walking and dancing their way from Sydney's CBD to Bondi Beach as part of the iconic City2Surf, after two years of cancellations due to COVID-19.

Team UNHCR's dedicated supporters raised \$43,000 for people fleeing conflict, disaster and persecution.

One of our longest serving fundraisers, Bernie Shipp, has participated in the City2Surf for over 30 years, but started fundraising for Australia for UNHCR 10 years ago. So far, he has raised over \$50,000.

"It became a natural way to raise funds for a cause that is important to me," said Bernie. "If we can assist any way that we can, then we should," he said.

Nhan, another long-serving fundraiser, has been participating in the City2Surf with Team UNHCR since 2017. As a former refugee who fled Vietnam, taking a boat from Malaysia to Australia, Nhan understands the difficult journeys refugees take to find safety.

"I remember the horrible journey. We were so glad to see land after seven days seeing nothing at all – just the sky and the ocean and sometimes there was rain and storms," Nhan said.

"I wanted to help other refugees. I understand their journey from personal experience. Australia for UNHCR helps refugees all over the world. Yemen, Myanmar. Year after year, you support and help those refugees." ■

Janine Allis's reflections from Jordan

LEADING WOMEN FUND AMBASSADOR JANINE ALLIS TRAVELLED TO JORDAN IN MAY TO MEET SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN WHO ARE RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE. THE BOOST JUICE FOUNDER SHARES HER REFLECTIONS ON MEETING WOMEN WHO ARE REBUILDING THEIR LIVES WITH SUPPORT FROM THE LEADING WOMEN FUND.

Janine Allis visits a community centre in Azraq refugee camp, Jordan.

© Australia for UNHCR

The women I met once lived dynamic lives in Syria, only to have their world turned on its head by a conflict out of their control. They are women who were forced to leave behind everything and rebuild their families' lives as refugees in another country.

The challenges of doing so are immense. Without a secure livelihood, refugee women and their children have been known to resort to survival strategies that place them at risk of exploitation, gender-based violence, early marriage and child labour.

In Jordan there are 700,000 refugees registered with UNHCR. Among those I had the pleasure of meeting were Malak and Fatima.

Forty-seven-year-old Malak is a highly educated teacher who started providing psychological aid to children when the war broke out in Syria. She fled the country after having to run past snipers on the way to and from school every day. Now in Jordan, she is struggling to find any

work as she looks after her 88-year-old mother, who is very ill. The cash assistance provided by the Leading Women Fund is her only chance of having any sort of semblance of a life.

And then there was Fatima, a 53-year-old mother of four. With the help of UNHCR, Fatima established a successful cooking business out of her home, and dreams of expanding into supermarkets across Jordan and into other countries.

For Fatima, it was a fridge which was a game changer. She was suddenly able to expand and take on more customers and even staff – giving employment opportunities to other women.

As Fatima says, being able to work makes a person feel valued in society. The income has also helped her give her daughters an education. Just like me, these are women who are driven to give their children the best possible opportunities.

It's taking innovation, encouragement and the generosity of donors like you

The Leading Women Fund is a network of Australian women supporting Syrian refugee women through cash assistance. For more information on the Fund, visit unrefugees.org.au/lwf

» WHY CASH ASSISTANCE?



- Dignity for displaced people
- Ease of distribution
- Supporting local economies

» DID YOU KNOW?

- In Amman, women can withdraw cash using an iris scan instead of a bank card
- 33,000 refugees receive cash assistance in Jordan
- Cash assistance now accounts for a greater share of UNHCR assistance than traditional aid items

to make this happen, to shatter the glass ceiling for women who didn't think they could do this. The looks on their faces says it all: "I can do this, I can have a skill, I can be self-sufficient."

It was incredibly powerful to see and makes me even more determined to help these women on their path towards greater confidence, self-reliance and financial freedom. ■



GUEST PHOTO EDITOR: Yousef Alhariri

Yousef fled conflict in Syria when he was 13 years old. Ten years on, he is participating in a UNHCR program in Jordan that employs refugees on short-term projects to help them develop their skills. Yousef accompanied Janine to Azraq refugee camp and into the homes of refugee women. For this issue of With You, Yousef has selected his favourite photos from the trip and explained what makes them special.



» **FROM TOP LEFT: It's important we support refugees in all settings,** but sometimes support comes in a different form – which is listening to them, and interacting and understanding the real challenges. For me, this photo reflects that type of support. Janine went around the room and had in-depth conversations with every woman there – answering the questions they had, hearing about their business ideas and listening to the challenges they face. It was very comforting and reassuring for the refugee women.

» **I got very emotional at this home visit.** When Malak was telling her story, tears interrupted her many times – but she also showed that she's a strong person and can move forward. This was a very special moment, because it was just an exchange of energy between the two women. This smile came after Malak had been very emotional and Janine held her hand strongly and, without having to say much, showed her she was supported.

» **Many Syrian refugees had different professions before they were displaced.** This man now owns a bicycle shop, but it's likely he was a teacher, engineer or something else back in Syria. When people arrive as refugees, most have either no, or very little, chance to own a business and make a dignified source of income. This man has done his best to open this humble shop and, even though he makes just a very small income, it meets his family's basic survival needs. For me, this photograph shows that he's talented and will do his best, but at the same time he needs support.

» **This was also a very special visit, because it showed the strength of women who don't have male support.** This photograph shows a mother (on the left) with her eldest daughter. She is a symbol of strength – raising three children alone, while also working, and doing her best to get them an education. There are very limited education opportunities after the end of high school, and this mother is exploring scholarship options for her eldest daughter. Sometimes, from the whole camp and hundreds of students, there might be only one scholarship. This daughter represents a whole generation of students who are struggling to realise their dream of entering university and having employment later on. ■

All images: © Australia for UNHCR/Yousef Alhariri

Winter is the next challenge

WITH A HARSH WINTER APPROACHING, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE WILL NEED EVEN GREATER SUPPORT.

The cold, wet months in Europe, the Middle East and central Asia will soon add to the suffering of refugees and displaced people. Living in temporary shelters or makeshift accommodation, many families will struggle to stay warm and dry.

The situation is particularly challenging for Syrian refugees. More than a decade after the outbreak of war, many displaced Syrians are unable to meet their day-to-day needs, much less prepare for the onslaught of winter. In Lebanon, nine out of 10 Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty, with many cutting back on essentials like food and medicine, or taking on crippling debt, just to survive.

Last winter, Hamad Khalaf struggled to keep his family safe. He was only able to earn \$10–\$15 per day, which didn't go far, especially with the rising cost of living. When the winter rains began, Hamad's tent was inundated.

"The tent was filled with water," said Hamad. "My wife and I spent the whole night dredging water outside the tent so our children could sleep. We borrowed some blankets from our neighbours to keep the children warm."

This winter, UNHCR aims to assist 1.4 million Syrian refugees with cash assistance to cover winter clothing,

sleeping bags, plastic sheeting, fuel and other essentials. In Lebanon, UNHCR is also piloting a new heating solution, distributing briquettes made of vegetable waste, which are more environmentally friendly than other fuel options such as timber or petrol.

While winter presents enormous challenges, Hamad is hopeful that his children will have a brighter future.

"I hope that they will not live what we lived through, and that the situation of the region will be settled so that we can return to our homes and be able to return to schools to learn." ■

**Will you help protect vulnerable refugees from the harsh winter?
Donate to our Winter Survival Fund at unrefugees.org.au/wintersurvive**



Winter arrives in an informal settlement in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon.

© UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sánchez

Winter in Ukraine

Eight months since the war began, Ukrainians are struggling to rebuild their damaged homes, reunite their families and recover from the trauma of war. They are in urgent need of financial assistance, having lost their jobs and incomes, while the price of essentials continues to rise.

These families will face even greater challenges as winter approaches. In Ukraine, temperatures can plummet below minus 20 degrees Celsius. With 14 million people displaced and vital infrastructure destroyed – including centralised heating plants – many more Ukrainians need winter assistance.

UNHCR will focus on helping people living in areas damaged by the war, especially vulnerable and isolated people who do not have access to power or heating. UNHCR will also be making urgent repairs to accommodation centres to ensure they are ready for winter.

“Many homes have damaged roofs and windows, leaving residents exposed to cold, rain and snow,” said Kostyantyn Dmytrenko, Associate Shelter Officer with UNHCR in Ukraine. “Everyone in Ukraine knows that they need to be well-prepared for the winter season... but with the scale of destruction, it will be very difficult.

“A safe and warm home is a basic need of every human being. That is especially true in the winter, when people can become very ill or even die if exposed to the cold weather conditions.” ■

✓ L-R: Karolina Lindholm Billing, UNHCR Representative in Ukraine; Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees; and Pascale Moreau, UNHCR Director of the Bureau for Europe, visit a damaged neighbourhood in Irpin.



My wife and I spent the whole night dredging water outside the tent so our children could sleep. We borrowed some blankets from our neighbours to keep the children warm.

» HOW UNHCR IS HELPING

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN:



Provide cash payments to help families buy winter essentials such as food, clothing, fuel and heaters



Distribute winter relief items such as thermal blankets, sleeping bags and winter clothes



Help refugees repair and weatherproof their homes

© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell



“Working with refugees was my plan from the outset.

I know their hardships, I’ve experienced them myself.”

TEN YEARS AGO, SAJEDA AND HER FAMILY FLED WAR IN SYRIA. NOW SHE’S WORKING HARD TO HELP OTHER REFUGEES AFTER UNHCR DONORS GAVE HER THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO UNIVERSITY.



Life is busy for 24-year-old Syrian refugee Sajeda. She works providing support services for refugees and vulnerable migrants, while simultaneously completing a Master’s degree at the American University in Cairo.

It’s a challenge, but it’s all for something she’s deeply passionate about.

Sajeda grew up in the Syrian capital, Damascus, but her family made the difficult decision to leave at the end of 2012 as conflict spread across the country.

They began a new life in Egypt and, despite initial difficulties, Sajeda and her sister were able to register at a local school.

“It was very important for the family,” says Sajeda. “Actually, if we had to drop out, we might have gone back to Syria because our education is crucial.”

Living in a rural area and being the only Syrian in her school were adjustments for Sajeda, but she made good friends and focused on getting a good education.

With family finances tight, Sajeda’s only hope of continuing

her studies after school was obtaining a UNHCR DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship.

“It was a surprise for me to get accepted,” says Sajeda. “It felt great, especially because, at that time, our financial situation was not stable... Without DAFI, I wouldn’t have been able to continue my education.”

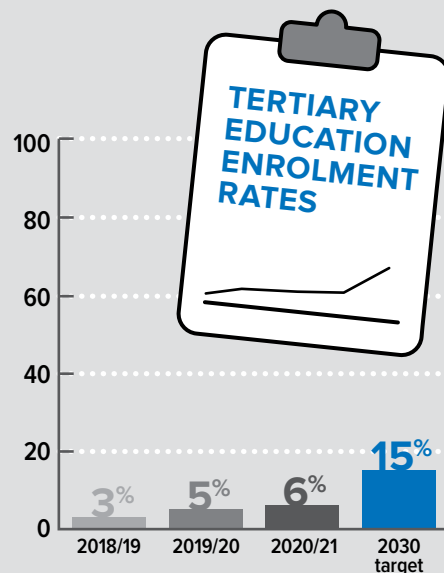
She went on to prove herself a worthy candidate – graduating with top grades in her law degree at Zagazig University in Northern Egypt. Her degree helped her secure a job at

“

DAFI was a passion and a hope for me. Now I want to give back and support fellow refugees in the same way that I was supported. A scholarship program like DAFI can be the first step towards starting a new life.”





© UNHCR/Antoine Tardy

DAFI scholarship alumna Sajeda is now studying a Master's degree and focusing her career on helping other refugees.



Students enrolled in UNHCR's higher education programs are free to choose their field of study for up to four years.

THESE ARE THE MOST POPULAR:

-  **20%** Medical science and other health-related fields
-  **18%** Commercial and business administration
-  **14%** Social and behavioural science
-  **12%** Engineering

Saint Andrew's Refugee Services, first as an immigration case worker, then as a legal officer for unaccompanied children and youth. Now, she is a supervisor.

UNHCR's Aiming Higher project is helping provide more DAFI scholarships for students like Sajeda. In recent years, refugee enrolment at the tertiary level has grown from just one per cent to five per cent, with UNHCR striving to achieve 15 per cent enrolment by 2030.

So far, DAFI scholarships have helped more than 21,500 refugees

around the world complete higher education. Sajeda is now studying for her Master's in Migration and Refugee Studies, while continuing to work in the sector.

"Working with refugees was my plan from the outset. I know their hardships, I've experienced them myself," she said. "Once I graduate, I will be able to fully concentrate on my career. I am passionate about it."

Sajeda says DAFI has been an important stepping stone, enabling her to pursue her dreams.

"DAFI was a passion and a hope for me. Now I want to give back and support fellow refugees in the same way that I was supported. A scholarship program like DAFI can be the first step towards starting a new life." ■

For more information on supporting the Aiming Higher initiative, please scan the QR code.



✓ Children play at a settlement for displaced people near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

© UNHCR/Oxygen Film Studio

Neville Arthur. Image courtesy of Paul Arthur.

Leaving a legacy for refugees

“ I was lucky I was able to discuss my dad’s Will with him when he was alive. My dad chose causes he really believed in. I have been inspired by his decision. I believe if we can, then we should give back to society through organisations that make a difference. **”**

Paul Arthur’s late father, Neville, left a bequest to Australia for UNHCR, ensuring his passion for refugees leaves a lasting legacy. Paul shares why his dad, who was a chemistry lecturer, chose to leave a gift in his Will.

Why did your dad choose to do this?

My dad was very passionate about human rights and supporting refugees and migrants. He had the chance to travel overseas and was highly aware of conflict in the world, and wanted to help people when they arrived in Australia. He was always concerned about how refugees and migrants were treated here in Australia and the discrimination they experienced, and he tried to do what he could to support them.

Did your dad have a personal connection to refugees or displaced people?

My mum’s family arrived from Ukraine after the Second World War. They were displaced after war and stayed in camps in Germany and eventually they arrived in Australia. I think this personal experience with my mum’s

family made him very conscious of refugees’ experiences and he wanted to support them. He was also so appalled by Australia’s treatment of refugees, and believed if the government wasn’t going to step up then individuals should. He truly believed in giving back to society and saw it as his obligation to contribute.

What would you say to someone considering leaving a gift in their Will to support refugees?

It’s such a vital area and the money is aimed at individuals – supporting livelihoods and helping refugees and displaced people to rebuild their lives.

Has your dad’s bequest made an impact on your own decision to leave a gift in your Will to an organisation or cause you feel strongly about?

I was lucky I was able to discuss my dad’s Will with him when he was alive. My dad chose causes he really believed in. I have been inspired by his decision. I believe if we can, then we should give back to society through organisations that make a difference.

There’s a lot more space for giving in our society and he’s certainly impacted me in a positive way. ■

How do you want to be remembered?

One of the most inspiring ways to ensure your values live on is to leave a gift in your Will, like Neville. For more information about leaving a gift in your Will, please contact our Planned Giving Manager, Aylin Salt, on (02) 9276 6871 or ASalt@unrefugees.org.au



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS AND LOYAL SUPPORTERS FOR MAKING AUSTRALIA FOR UNHCR’S LIFE-CHANGING WORK POSSIBLE.

[f australia4unhcr](#)
[@australiaforunhcr](#)
[@UNrefugees](#)
[Australia for UNHCR](#)