



PROYECTO HABESHA

FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION
AND PEACE IN SYRIA



**PROYECTO
HABESHA**



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Summary

The Habesha Project is a neutral, not-for-profit, non-political, and non-faith based international Mexican-led humanitarian initiative aimed at sending a message of solidarity to the Syrian nation. It does so by making it possible for Syrian students, who have fled the conflict, to travel to Mexico to pursue higher education. In association with leading academic institutions, the Project will foster discussion designed to increase awareness about the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, as well as regional and global implications of the conflict. This initiative proposes a model that views Syrian students as an asset and opportunity to promote an intercultural dialogue that fosters an international culture of peace.

The Habesha Project believes that the long-term successful departure from the current conflict is at least in part dependent on the youth's ability to successfully complete the studies that have been interrupted by the outburst of the armed conflict. This initiative complements the limited but existing international initiatives that demonstrate a direct link between support for higher education and sustainably rebuilding communities affected by the armed conflict. The Habesha project facilitates diplomatic efforts undertaken by the Government of Mexico and the historic tradition of the Mexican people to promote international solidarity and peace among nations. Furthermore, the Project establishes the Mexican Government as a role model and proactive member of the Geneva II Peace Conference.

The Project is defined by three components:

- Analysis and Awareness
- Dissemination
- Reception

The three components of the Project will be implemented by four working clusters, none who shall be entitled to receive funds.

This document describes the components and sub-components required to accomplish the stated objectives.



I. Project Description

The Habesha Project¹ is an international Mexican-led humanitarian initiative with two primary objectives:

- 1) To send a message of solidarity to the Syrian nation by making it possible for 30 Syrian students, who have fled the conflict and currently live as refugees, to travel to Mexico to continue the pursuit of higher education; and
- 2) to foster, in association with leading academic institutions, discussion aimed at raising awareness in Mexico about the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East and the regional and global implications of the conflict.

The Habesha Project is a humanitarian, neutral, not-for-profit, non-political, non-faith based initiative based on the principle of shared responsibility of all peoples of the world to address and overcome current challenges.

Furthermore, this initiative proposes a model that conceives the reception of Syrian students as an asset and opportunity to promote an intercultural dialogue that fosters an international culture of peace. With this approach the Habesha Project seeks to enlist Mexico, its large university community, and its international partners as pioneers in this global effort.

The Habesha Project has been designed in line with the diplomacy of results upheld by the Government of Mexico and the historic tradition of its people in international solidarity and promotion of peace among nations. Moreover, this initiative builds on the trust of the international community, put into the Mexican Government to play a positive role as participant to the Geneva II Peace Conference.

II. Project's Components

Over a period of eight months, the Project will conduct activities in line with the three components: **Analysis and Awareness, Dissemination and Reception.**

The three components are designed to be carried out interdependently, each component led by a responsible stakeholder. All components will be coordinated under a four activity-cluster system (see section III). The Habesha Project was designed with consideration to proven results of existing international initiatives (see annex 1) Furthermore, the Project integrates institutional

¹ Habesha refers to the name of an old and disappeared kingdom situated on the current territory of Ethiopia. Soon after the birth of the Islamic creed, the Prophet of Islam, still weak in his own tribe, was chased out of Mecca. Being unable to protect his own followers, he requested some of them to travel and seek refuge in Habesha, a place known as being a territory of justice ruled by a Christian king. His followers travelled to Habesha and were heard by the king who granted them asylum. The Habesha Project is not a religious or partisan initiative whatsoever. The story behind its name is a symbol of two nations with different beliefs and different cultures trusting each other regardless of the fact that they were unknown to each other.



expertise from a variety of experienced members of the communities in the Middle East who will ensure that the Project achieves its primary objectives.

i. Analysis and Awareness Component

The Analysis and Awareness component will be developed and implemented by leading Mexican universities and institutes specializing in international relations, Middle East studies, and international public law. The participating institutions will design a research program to analyze the Syrian crisis, its regional and global implications, and the broader effects of the various humanitarian crises in the Middle East region.

Through the pre-designed research program (*see annex 3*), the participating academic institutions will facilitate the reception of the 30 Syrian refugees in Mexico by providing relevant actors and the general public with the information required to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the Syrian crisis and the urgency for action. The Analysis will also assess the obligations of the international community to respond to the Syrian crisis and highlight proven best practices for the reception of refugees in line with ratified international treaties.

The Analysis and Awareness component will coordinate closely with the two other components but will be designed autonomously and budgeted independently within an agreed common framework established by a coordination cluster. In particular, the Analysis and Awareness component will implement two main activities:

a) Research

Consisting of a 12-module seminar to take place in Mexico City with each participating institution developing and presenting specific expertise relevant to the Syrian crisis and the Project. Each module of the seminar shall be consolidated in a written article that can be broadly disseminated and serve to support the Reception component of the Project.

b) Field Mission

Consisting of a two-week field trip to the Middle East, participants will include academics and students participating in the Analysis and Awareness Component of the Project in order to expose academics to the practical realities of the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East region. A pre-designed program for the trip will ensure that participants interact with actors responsible for managing the humanitarian response to the crisis in the Middle East.

ii. Dissemination Component

The Dissemination component aims to build support for the reception of the Syrian students by:

- Further disseminating domestically and internationally the findings of the participating academic institutions and other actors associated with the Project;



- collecting and disseminating first hand accounts and opinions of actors from the NGO and intergovernmental community currently responsible for relief efforts at the field level; and
- designing independent modules (visual and thematic) with relevant information about the Syrian crisis that will serve to further contribute to Project objectives.

In particular, the Dissemination component comprises the following activities:

a) Social Media

A website and usage of social media platforms to provide real-time progress reporting and stakeholder engagement to build awareness of the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

b) E-Newsletter

The Project will produce a monthly e-newsletter. The e-newsletter will be the primary tool to engage the disbursed stakeholders – including the university communities that will host the Syrian students.

c) Modules

Two modules developed and implemented by hosting universities. The modules will impart information that will help to sensitize the target communities to the values and objectives of the Project.

1. **Intercultural Dialogue and Culture of Peace:** Building on ongoing international initiatives and academic efforts, the selected participating institution will develop and implement this module (*see annex 3*).
2. **Photo Documentary:** Developed using materials from professional photo-journalists working in Middle East and displayed on the premises of hosting institutions (*see annex 4*).

iii. Reception Component

The Reception component is comprised of all aspects of selection, travel, academic placement and stay of the 30 Syrians students in Mexico. Given that these activities will take place in disbursed locations throughout the Middle East region, Mexico City, and at various Mexican states, the tasks will be divided among and undertaken by the most appropriately located Project partners.

The Project will closely coordinate with relevant Government of Mexico (GoM) authorities, international agencies with proven experience with similar programs, and universities participating in the Project.

The Project will develop strategies that are specific to the Reception component to secure required funds.



a) Selection of Students in the Middle East Region

The selection process will be undertaken by an organization with previous related experience. The Project coordination team will work together with its partner in the Middle East to ensure that the selection of students meets the criteria established by the GoM and participating universities in Mexico. The selection criteria will ensure that students can be selected from any community in any country affected by the crisis, including Syrian minorities. The Project will aim for an even distribution of male and female beneficiaries (*see annex 5*) The selection process will coordinate the issuance of all administrative and academic documentation required to process and transfer the students to a Mexican university, including all required translations from Arabic to Spanish and all required legalization or validation of documents.

b) Travel

The Project will facilitate all travel from selected Middle East countries to Mexico and all other activities related to the preparation and issuance of travel documents and necessary visas. The Project will seek, wherever necessary, the assistance of relevant authorities to provide supporting documentation in the process of issuing relevant travel documents.

c) Migratory Status

The determination of the migratory status of all participating students will be undertaken by relevant GoM authorities. The Project will support students by preparing individual files with all required documentation to expedite processing by the GoM. Based on existing practices, the Project notes that host countries have successfully expedited visa processing for other international initiatives.

d) Language Stay

Upon arrival in Mexico, Syrian students will receive intensive Spanish language instruction in a selected city. The duration of instruction will be six months to one year. The specific length of the course will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the level of language proficiency achieved by each student. A student will be deemed proficient when he/she is able to comfortably attend a participating Mexican institution of higher education, with instruction in Spanish. The Project may also place students in university programs taught in English. (*see annex 6*).

e) Academic Placing

Prior to the arrival of the Syrian students in Mexico, the Project will secure 30 places in public and private universities in selected states of Mexico (*see annex 7*). Students will enroll upon completion of language training. Validation of previously completed academic work will be conducted simultaneously during the course of language training.

The length of the Spanish course (six months to one year) should provide the Project with sufficient time to complete the process and resolve potential administrative challenges. A



complete dossier describing the Project values, objectives and planned activities will be produced to invite selected universities to become host institutions (*see annex 8*).

The Project will work with participating universities to make a wide variety of academic programming available to students. The Project will work with participating universities to make programming available that is particularly relevant to the political, social, and economic realities of the real life situation in countries in the Middle East affected by the Syrian crisis.

f) Living Allowance & Health Insurance

In close coordination with all stakeholders of the Project, a monthly allowance will be determined (based on the average expenses of a Mexican student) and a delivery mechanism established. The allowance shall be sufficient to cover all basic needs of students, including housing, food, and other basic daily expenses (*see annex 9*).

Additionally, the Project will facilitate the affiliation of Syrian students to the “Seguro Popular” program to ensure access to health services by all Syrian students.

g) Welcome Committees

The Project will establish welcome committees in the hosting communities and hosting universities. The purpose of the welcome committee is to facilitate the daily life of students, build confidence, answer life questions and address challenges faced by students in their academic and personal lives.

III. Working Methodology

The Project is composed of actors working in a variety of professional capacities and geographic locations. Therefore, an efficient coordination mechanism is essential. A four activity-cluster methodology will be developed in order to allow each activity cluster to develop and implement its own strategy under the framework established by a Coordination Cluster (*see annex 10*).

a.i. Coordination Cluster

This cluster is responsible for ensuring that the Project is implemented according to stated objectives and methodologies. It will lead and monitor the progress of activities and be responsible for strategic decisions when required. The cluster will include members of all Project clusters, relevant GoM stakeholders and participating points of contact in the Middle East.

a.ii. Academic Cluster

This cluster will carry out the academic research component. The cluster will define research parameters and implement research activities in line with the objectives and values of the Project.



a.iii. Dissemination Cluster

This cluster will create all relevant tools to disseminate all information related to the Project. Materials will be produced in Spanish, English, and Arabic. Dissemination strategies will include social media and e-tools. As the information clearinghouse of the Project, this cluster will be responsible for administrative and data procession functions.

a.iv. Reception Cluster

This cluster will be primarily responsible for the academic enrollment, Spanish language training, living allowances and all other aspects relevant to the arrival and stay of the Syrian students in Mexico. The Project intends the GoM to be an active participant.

IV. Concluding Considerations

a.i. The Imperative for Emergency Action

The Project understands that it will be implemented within a context of one of the most violent armed conflicts in recent history. The Project establishes an aggressive timeline, with the reception of Syrian students as the primary priority for all Project participants. The Project also believes and hopes that engaged host universities will take it upon themselves and create *ad hoc* mechanisms to receive students and facilitate Project goals during and beyond the Project timeline.

a.ii. Close Coordination with Government Authorities

The Project will ensure that at all stages of implementation all relevant GoM authorities are consulted and included in the decision making process where necessary. Furthermore, relevant GoM points of contact will be invited to be part of the coordination cluster to ensure transparency and clear communication.

a.iii. No Reception of Funds

The Project's primary goal is not to directly receive funds from any public or private entity. Rather, the task is to secure scholarships and channel those funds via transparent and legal methods to ensure the stay of Syrian students in Mexico.



Annex 1. Evidence of Results

This document provides further evidence that providing educational opportunities to refugee populations facilitates long-term stability in post-conflict environments. It builds on data from successful outcomes of similar programs to substantiate Habesha's goals and planned actions.

The Growing Importance of Higher Education to Refugees

The majority of international institutions and civil society organizations are not academic institutions. However, national educational institutes and education ministries play a crucial role in achieving project goals.

Higher educational opportunities for refugees are often viewed through two lenses. Higher education is often seen firstly within the broader context of educational opportunities as a basic human right and secondly in recognition of the well-established link between long-term development and an educated workforce. The Project views the educational opportunities to be provided in the context of both a basic human right of the beneficiaries as well as a necessity for the sustained developmental progress of beneficiaries' home countries.²

Higher Education and Post-conflict Reconstruction

Existing literature demonstrates that beneficiaries of similar support programs regularly return to their home countries to play critical leadership roles rebuilding local communities and national identity.

Furthermore, fragile societies stand to benefit disproportionately from the influence of a qualified and educated community, political and private sector leaders. The Project believes it is a global responsibility to ensure opportunities for higher education when conflict strikes. Not only will this benefit beneficiary home countries, but it will also serve to promote a more stable peaceful world that is less likely to engage in future conflict.

UNHCR's education strategy for 2012-2016 demonstrates the important role higher education plays in rebuilding post-conflict societies. The Project is in line with UNHCR's mandate "to increase the number of scholarships for tertiary education through expanded partnerships with donors, academic institutions, and foundations, with a continued focus on scholarships in host countries" and "reducing access barriers in terms of nationality requirements, school certificates" etc.³

UNHCR DAFI Program: A Successful Model

² Dryden-Peterson, S. UNHCR Refugee Education, A Global Review, <http://www.unhcr.org/4fe317589.pdf>

³ UNHCR, Education Strategy 2012-2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.html>



The UNHCR DAFI program is an example of success. The "German Academic Refugee Initiative Albert Einstein" (DAFI by its German name) was established in 1992 and funded by the German government. Since its inception it has supported 1,700 students from 39 countries. In many cases, the beneficiaries have returned to their home countries to actively participate in the reconstruction process.⁴

The UNHCR DAFI program was designed to secure access to higher education to refugee populations around the globe. Its stated purpose was "to contribute to the promotion for self-reliance of refugees by providing them with a professional qualification geared towards future employment. More generally, the DAFI Program aims to contribute both to the reconstruction of refugees' home countries, and to safety, peace and stability in the region"

DAFI defines its objective as "to contribute to the promotion of self-reliance of refugees by providing them with a professional qualification geared towards future employment and to encourage the development of qualified human resources for the future reconstruction of refugees' home countries upon repatriation, thereby supporting greater peace and stability in the region."⁵

DAFI has also been a recent success in conflicts in Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, Rwanda, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁶

Critical to the success of DAFI was the competitive nature and high standards set for student beneficiaries. Between 1992 and 2007, DAFI enrolled 4,774 scholars, of which 3,243 successfully graduated.⁷ Graduation rates were highest since 2000, and the Project believes that this demonstrates a proven successful model.

In 2006 Damascus University in Syria was a host university to DAFI beneficiaries.⁸ The Project believes that it is important for Syrian communities that once supported similar program objectives to itself benefit from foreign host countries and universities in a Syrian time of crisis.

Among DAFI beneficiaries, the fields of study in highest demand were: social and behavioral sciences (15%), commercial and business administration (18%), mathematics and computer science (11%), medical science and health (11%), education (8%), and engineering (5%). Law and architecture have not traditionally been in high demand among beneficiary populations, but the Project believes that achievement in these fields of study are important to reconstruction of

4 UNHCR, DAFI Scholarships XX Anniversary of DAFI Programme, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4a2dd6.html>

5 Morlang, C. Watson, S. UNHCR Tertiary Refugee Education Impact and Achievements 15 Years of DAFI, Evaluation Report pg. 7, <http://www.unhcr.org/47b4083d2.html>

6 Supra 5, pg. 16.

7 Supra 5, pg. 18.

8 Supra 5, pg.158.



Syrian communities and in partnership with participating Mexican universities will strive to offer such opportunities to beneficiaries.

Further demonstrating DAFI's success, 70% of participants successfully found employment following participation and 83% of those finding employment stated that their studies were directly related and responsible for the employment opportunity received.⁹

The Habesha Project in Line with Successful Experiences

Germany, the United States, and Canada have historically been the largest supporters of efforts to provide refugees with higher education opportunities. The Habesha Project enlists Mexico and its large university community as a participant in this global effort.

The Project believes that educational opportunities often take a back seat to other immediate needs in times of conflict and crisis. However, the Project believes that the lack of educational opportunities to refugee populations is no less of an emergency. Post-conflict societies often experience a significant shortage of educated youth. This achievement gap often becomes a barrier, lengthening, and making the rebuilding process more difficult, and in cases where this achievement gap is particularly acute, communities have been more likely to return to a state of conflict.

⁹ Supra 5, pg. 16.



Annex 2. Analysis and Awareness Raising

One of the two objectives of the Project is to “foster, in association with leading academic institutions, discussion aimed at raising awareness in Mexico about the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, its regional and global implications.” It is within the Analysis and Awareness Raising component that the Project will provide relevant arguments to frame the action in the existing Mexican foreign policies and best international practices. Furthermore, by involving academia and university communities within this component, the Project aims at sensitizing hosting communities to the humanitarian crisis and the concept of shared responsibility.

The Analysis and Awareness Raising Component will be designed and implemented by established experts in Middle East studies, mainly from the following institutions:

- COLMEX
- ITAM
- Universidad Iberoamericana
- Universidad Panamericana

These institutions will design an academic program composed of two subcomponents *a)* research activity and *b)* field mission.

a. Research Activity

This activity will consist of a series of seminars to take place in Mexico City and other hosting institutions in selected Mexican states.

Each module will be developed by the institution with the most relevant subject experience. The research activity proposes a curriculum that dissects the Syrian armed conflict, its regional and global implications, and the humanitarian crisis. The curriculum will also explore Mexico's role as a leader in the international community by providing asylum to refugees and its participation in the Geneva II Peace process.

Each module will be consolidated into a written work for further dissemination. The proposed academic program is as follows:

#	Subject	Description	Institutions	Date
1	Middle East and Syria: historic relations between Mexico (Latin America) and the region (Lebanese and Syrian diasporas in Mexico and Latin America)	TBD	TBD	TBD
2	The Syrian armed conflict: overview - from peaceful protest to sectarian civil war	TBD	TBD	TBD
3	The Syrian armed conflict: the broken balance of Lebanon, a new opportunity for the Kurdistan, the Turkish fears, the financial burden for Jordan, the Israeli perspective	TBD	TBD	TBD



4	The Syrian armed conflict: the global Implications: diminishing US role in the region, Russia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.	TBD	TBD	TBD
5	Humanitarian crisis in the Middle East (description of the magnitude of the crisis and costs for the international community)	TBD	TBD	TBD
6	Mexico as an international actor: Mexican involvement in the Geneva II Peace conference (position of Mexico as a UNSC non-permanent member in the Iraq war)	TBD	TBD	TBD
7	The place for the Christian and other minorities in Syria	TBD	TBD	TBD
8	The refugee challenge	TBD	TBD	TBD
9	Historic tradition of Mexico as a country of asylum: the Spanish exile, exile from authoritarian regimes (Chile and Argentina), and Central American exile (Guatemala)	TBD	TBD	TBD
10	A foreseeable end to the conflict?	TBD	TBD	TBD
11	Comparative study on different models on tertiary education for refugee populations & reception of refugees - study cases: Canada, France, Germany, Iraq, Lebanon, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States.	Final product	TBD	TBD

b. Field Mission

The purpose of the field mission is to provide participating academic experts with a current, on-the-ground understanding of the conflict, the various stakeholders, the effectiveness of the humanitarian response, and the plight of affected communities and Project beneficiary populations. The duration of the trip will be two weeks and will include visits to two affected countries. The field mission will produce a report, shared with Project stakeholders.

The proposed field mission itinerary:

#	Item	Description	Whom	Date
1	Arrive in Amman	TBD	TBD	TBD
2	General briefing	TBD	TBD	TBD
3	In-country situation	TBD	TBD	TBD
4	The UN cluster system	TBD	TBD	TBD
5	Visit to Zaatari Camp	TBD	TBD	TBD
6	Meeting journalists	TBD	TBD	TBD
7	Travel to Erbil (or Beirut)	TBD	TBD	TBD
8	The security challenge	TBD	TBD	TBD
9	Dayin camp (Kawergosk?)	TBD	TBD	TBD



	Darashakran?)			
10	Day in camp	TBD	TBD	TBD
11	Feeding a camp – distributions	TBD	TBD	TBD
12	Schooling in refugee camp	TBD	TBD	TBD
13	Debriefing	TBD	TBD	TBD
14	Travel back to Mexico	TBD	TBD	TBD

The Project will arrange all the necessary clearances and meetings in the field well in advance of the arrival of participants.



Annex 3. Intercultural Dialogue & Culture of Peace

Through numerous resolutions within the UN General Assembly and UNESCO initiatives, the international community has stressed the need to engage new efforts to promote global peace and mutual understanding.

According to UNESCO, “cultural diversity has emerged as a key concern at the turn of a new century.” Cultural diversity is often viewed as a positive national trait, yet in many modern nations, it is often a source of conflict as well. UNESCO has identified raising cultural awareness and understanding culture in the context of diverse nations as key to global peace.

The Project adopts UNESCO's view and seeks to support and exploit the diversity of experience to build cultural understanding among beneficiaries, the Mexican nation, and the world. The Project views this diversity as a key project asset and critical inspiration for long-term development in Syria.

The following table shows the planned topics of discussion for Mexican and Beneficiary students:

UNESCO	European Intercultural Dialogue	UN Alliance of Civilizations	Council of Europe	Habesha Project
Exchange - Dialogue - Civilizations - Cultures - People - Understanding - Respect - Dignity - Cohesion - Reconciliation - Peace	Process - People - Groups - Organizations - Cultures - Worldviews - Equality - Creative Process	Interaction - Differences - Similarities- Overcoming obstacles - Actions	Understanding - Fellowship - Family	Process - Dialogue- Exchange-Interaction- Civilizations - Cultures - Peoples Groups - Organizations - Worldviews - Differences - Similarities - People - Dignity-Understanding - Respect - Creative Process - Actions - Peace

With past programs as a guide, the Project proposes the content according to the following themes:



Theme	Content	Objective
1. Intercultural dialogue, a philosophical and anthropological approach.	1.1 Dialogues: beyond East and West 1.2 The person as the source of culture 1.3 Defining elements of culture 1.4 Human dignity: the language of dialogue 1.5 Intercultural dialogue beyond politics: Family, civil society, university, tribal society	Understanding intercultural dialogue from a philosophical and anthropological perspective. In order to understand culture and promote dialog, it is important to understand the people that inhabit a culture. By understanding culture through understanding of its people, we promote an exchange where all participants are dignified by the nature of being human.
2. Embracing cultural diversity	2.1 Diversity in a globalized world: pluralism, tolerance, and intercultural dialogue 2.2 Diversity in national, religious, and cultural identities 2.3 Construction of identity in a multicultural environment 2.4 The risks of stagnant or absent dialogue	Understanding the context in which intercultural dialogue takes place and the challenges where dialogue lacks.
3. Intercultural dialogue, a global perspective	3.1 The notion of intercultural dialogue in the international community: historical approaches 3.2 The challenges of dialogue in a multicultural world 3.3 Intercultural dialogue in international relations	Understanding the need and challenges of intercultural dialogue at the international level.
4. Intercultural dialogue, promoting a culture of peace	4.1 Education 4.2 Media 4.3 Sustainable Development 4.4 Culture of Peace	Understand the importance of international dialogue in a variety of professional fields, and engagement points.
5. Dialogue: Let's talk about the human.		To discuss those topics that transcend borders and are relevant to all by nature of being human: family, peace, politics, love, justice, beauty, truth, religion, etc.

The module is divided into five major discussion themes to create an enriching learning environment for both Mexican and Syrians students. The module will be designed such that it can be replicated at all host universities. The Project will make use of practices suggested by the Alliance of Civilizations United Nations, including:



- A summer school of five to seven days to introduce participants to these five themes, and begin discussion;
- The screening of relevant films; and
- Visits to national and religious monuments in Mexico, which is designed to introduce Syrian students to their surroundings and familiarize students with cultural practices in Mexico.



Annex 4. Photo Documentary

The photo documentary will bring together professional photographers currently covering the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East.

The Project will work with CALAMO, a Mexican not-for-profit, non-governmental organization whose objective is to create a network of artists and academics interested in the Middle East. Based in Mexico City, CALAMO conducts interdisciplinary activities aimed at creating understanding about the Middle East and facilitating intercultural dialog.

The photo documentary will capture moments of understanding, friendship, happiness and exchange between host university communities and beneficiary students. It will be designed such that it can be distributed to a broad global audience to build support the Project and similar initiatives.



Annex 5. Selection in the Middle East Region

The selection of Syrian students in the Middle East will be in accordance to the criteria established by host universities in Mexico in partnership with the coordination cluster of the Project. The Project will seek advice and technical support from limited but existing international initiatives with relevant experience. In particular the Project will learn from the following programs and international initiatives:

1. UNHCR's Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI Program) launched in 1992 to support higher education to refugee worldwide (see annex 0).
2. The Institute of International Education (IIE) is a non-governmental organization based in New York. Launched in 2012, it called for universities to commit scholarships for Syrian students under the umbrella of the IIE Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis.
3. The Global Platform for Syrian Students based in Portugal. The Global Platform is an international initiative, launched by the former President of Portugal Jorge Sampaio. The program secured higher education for Syrian students that lost these opportunities during the conflict in Syria.

The Project will make additional efforts to seek and include candidates directly from the refugee camps where hundreds of university students live, in many cases without access to internet and unable to apply.

Who can apply?

In order to be eligible, a candidate should:

- Be a citizen, national or permanent resident qualified to hold valid identity papers issued by the State of Syria;
- Hold refugee status in Lebanon, Turkey or Iraq, or be currently residing in one of these countries;
- Be at least 18 years old by the time the program begins;
- 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;
- Have no other means of support for university studies;
- Have strong motivation to contribute to his/her community; and
- Express willingness to participate in the intercultural dialogue component of the Project and support the values and objectives of the Project.

What are the preferences and priorities from amongst those who meet the criteria?

The following are paramount:

- Gender-balance: therefore women will be encouraged to apply;
- Individuals in particularly vulnerable situations;
- Student's proven academic performance;
- Students forced to abandon studies due to flight and who possess proof of previous university or college studies in their country of origin;
- In order to allocate benefits in an equitable manner to as many refugee families as possible, no more than one scholarship should be provided within a single refugee family; and



- Students who choose shorter and inexpensive courses with high chances of employment (such as computer studies, paramedical and teaching professions).

Following the best practices of the DAFI Scholarships Program (analyzed in annex 0), applicants should be able to clearly express their reasons for their chosen study subject and relate that choice to expected future employment opportunities in the country of asylum, as well as their home country.

What are the selection procedures?

The selection process will involve pre-selection, short-listing, and a final decision. A Selection Committee will implement each. The Selection Committee will consist of members of the Mexican academic institutions, government, and other relevant organizations providing scholarships.

The Project will support applicants from the time of application, provide translation services in English and Spanish language, and help applicants complete applications in accordance with the established criteria.

Verification

The Project will conduct in-person interviews and in-country application verification in order to ensure candidates meet all requirements.



Annex 6. Language Stay

Spanish language training will be conducted in the most suitable state selected by the coordination cluster. Should no alternative be chosen, the campus of the University Panamericana Bonaterra in the state of Aguascalientes will host the language stay. The University Panamericana Bonaterra boasts a high level of security and is consistently recognized for maintaining a high standard of living.

Training will last for six months to one year depending on the needs of the student. Syrian students are expected to acquire language skills sufficient enough to apply themselves actively in their new learning environment.

A proficiency examination will take place on a regular basis to monitor the learning progress and support those whose performance is below average.

The language study program is modeled after a similar Mexican initiative “300 scholarships for Haiti” (300 Becas a Haiti). Upon arrival in Mexico, students receive a six-month language stay in the city of Taxco in the state of Guerrero. Program evaluations highlight successful language acquisition and a high degree of integration among Haitian students and host communities. The Project will ensure implementation of best practices.



Annex 7. Geographical Area of Implementation

The Project will target higher education institutions in seven states selected by the coordination cluster. States are selected based on a combination of high security standards, ample academic opportunities, and programs taught in English.

Primary variables considered are: homicide rate (as an accepted measure for security levels) based on reports of 2013 by the National System of Public Security (Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, SNSP), population as of 2013 based on estimations by the Mexican National Council of Population (Consejo Nacional de Población, CONAPO), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) based on measures by the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, INEGI), and educational indicators from the National System of Educational Statistical Information (Sistema Nacional de Información Estadística Educativa, SNIE) of the National Ministry of Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP). Selected states are:

State	Population (millions, est. 2013)	Homicide Rate (x100K Inhabitants)	GDP (million pesos)	Average Education Level (years)	Higher Education Students (2011)
Aguascalientes	1.2	3.1	135,781	9.7	36,729
Federal District	8.9	8.4	2,116,151	9.1	462,581
Guanajuato	5.7	11.2	478,746	8.2	100,323
Jalisco	7.7	14.2	775,337	9.1	193,416
Puebla	6.1	7.1	398,691	8.0	179,033
Queretaro	1.0	5.7	245,963	8.8	24,576
State of Mexico	16.3	11.8	1,134,967	9.4	314,472



Aguascalientes



The state of Aguascalientes has a population of 1.2 million. Most residents live in the state capital of the same name. Aguascalientes has the second lowest homicide rate in the nation and the highest tertiary education completion rate. The state is home to the top ranked institution, Pan American University (Universidad Panamericana, UP).

Federal District (Distrito Federal, DF)



The DF, also known as Mexico City, is the capital of Mexico. It is the most populated urban area in the country and boasts the most inclusive and diverse communities nationwide. The District includes five of the 10 best universities in the country. Mexico City offers endless opportunities for immersion and cultural exploration.

Guanajuato



The state of Guanajuato is centrally located and carries historical significance as the birthplace of Mexican independence. It has become an important industrial hub and is the only state in the country with two cities deemed themselves as UNESCO world heritage sites (Guanajuato and San Miguel de Allende).

Jalisco



The state of Jalisco is located along the central pacific coast and is a common tourist destination. The state has a high tertiary education achievement rate and is home to several top-ranked universities. Its capital city, Guadalajara, is a diverse, inclusive city with significant historical, cultural, and entertainment opportunities.



Puebla



The State of Puebla is located 200 km south of Mexico City. The state has a low homicide rate and a top-ten university, the University of the Americas (Universidad de las Américas Puebla, UDLA) in the city of Cholula.

Querétaro



The state of Queretaro is located 250 kilometers north of Mexico City. Its capital city of the same name is consistently recognized as providing a high quality of life. The has recently remade itself as an important industrial hub, particularly in the aerospace technology field. Also a UNESCO site, the city provides ample opportunity to provide a rich cultural experience.

State of Mexico



The state of Mexico is centrally located and is comprised of Mexico's City's greater metropolitan area. It is the most populated state in the country and many of its cities are deeply integrated with Mexico City. The state has a high university educational achievement rate and is home to several top-ten universities.



Annex 8. Academic Placing

This is the process whereby the Project will secure full scholarships in public and private universities in the seven selected states. Pre-selection of host institutions will be conducted and approved by the coordination cluster. The Project will pursue opportunities at host institutions in three primary ways:

- 1. Securing scholarship in already existing programs.**

Cognizant that most institutions maintain scholarship programs, the Project will seek existing spaces. The Project will match the profiles and professional interests of Syrian applicants with the requirements established by each academic institution.

- 2. Securing scholarships in open offers made by host institutions.**

The Project will approach potential host institutions and invite commitments of a determined number of scholarship opportunities in select programs.

- 3. Securing scholarships in relevant subject matter programs.**

The Project will approach specific university programs based on relevant taught material. This strategy will be employed for programs taught in English, and programs in medical and public health.

Executing each of the strategies above, the Project is confident that it will secure necessary scholarship opportunities.

The Project will produce a list of all potential institutions, relevant programs, and scholarship opportunities.

From each potential host institution, the Project will request commitments for a determined number of scholarships. The commitment request will include the following material:

1. Cover Letter
2. Description of the Project
3. Commitment Form

The Project will work with each institution to match student beneficiaries with the relevant host institution scholarship. This process will take place during the language stay period.



Annex 9. Living Allowance and Access to Health Care

Beneficiary students will receive a monthly allowance determined by the coordination cluster. The exact amount will be established based on a calculation of average expenditures of a current Mexican student and standards established by National Council of Science and Technology of Mexico (CONACYT).

The allowance should be sufficient to cover all basic needs of Syrian students including housing, food, transportation, and basic daily expenses. The amount will vary by location. Any additional contribution from host universities will be considered to establish the final contribution from the Project.

Funds will be disbursed directly, at the beginning of each month, and students will be responsible for allocation according to their educational and cost of living needs. The Project will help students create a bank account at a Mexican bank to receive and store funds.

Living Allowance

Average allowances per region are subject to change, but as calculated are:

State	Monthly allowance, Mexican pesos (MXN)
Aguascalientes	\$ 7,000 MXN
Federal District	\$ 7,000 MXN
Guanajuato	\$ 7,000 MXN
Jalisco	\$ 7,000 MXN
Puebla	\$ 7,000 MXN
Querétaro	\$ 7,000 MXN
State of Mexico	\$ 7,000 MXN

Housing

Depending on the receiving Institution, students will have two options:

- Student residences:** Syrian students will be placed in existing student residences. Traditional student residences facilitate rapid and full integration, and the Project believes, the best opportunity to provide beneficiaries with an enriching living experience. The cost will either:



- Be waived by the receiving institution upon agreement with the Project or
 - Be covered by the Project.
- b. **Flat renting and sharing:** Most host institutions provide assistance to students to find off-campus housing. Beneficiaries will be encouraged to avail themselves of these services. In those cases where student flat-sharing is not possible, the Project, with the support of the receiving institution, will source appropriate assistance.

Housing costs vary greatly depending on the location. The estimated costs for the first semester are as follows:

State	Student residence	Shared flat
Aguascalientes	Tbd	Tbd
Federal District	Tbd	Tbd
Guanajuato	Tbd	Tbd
Jalisco	Tbd	Tbd
Puebla	Tbd	Tbd
Querétaro	Tbd	Tbd
State of Mexico	Tbd	Tbd

c. Health insurance

The Project will enable students for eligibility under the “Seguro Popular” program.

Seguro Popular provides its beneficiaries with universal health insurance coverage in the Mexico. This will ensure Syrian students can have access to healthcare during the length of their stay.

Distribution Mechanism

To manage cost of living allowances, the Project will request one host academic institution establish a trust within the institution, managed by the institution's financial department.

A detailed analysis of the administration of the trust will be presented all Project stakeholders. The Project will establish a clear monitoring mechanism in accordance with national and international transparency standards.



Annex 10. Cluster Methodology

The three Project components are designed to be carried out interdependently, each component led by a different stakeholder and all coordinated under a four activity cluster system. Each activity cluster will develop and implement its own strategy under the framework established by the coordination cluster.

Coordination Cluster	The cluster will develop the framework and strategic direction for the Project. It will monitor progress and make critical decisions on how best to achieve Project goals. The cluster is composed of a member from each of the other clusters, a representative from the GoM, and focal points in the Middle East region.
<p>This cluster is ultimately responsible for the delivery of all Project objectives. In particular the coordination cluster will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take all necessary decisions to achieve Project objectives; Establish a standard framework under which all clusters will implement their work; Ensure fluid communication among all actors and stakeholders across all activities and geographical regions; Determine the host institutions where students will be placed; In coordination with the Global Platform for Syrian Students and relevant GoM authorities, participate in the selection of students; and Monitor the progress of the Project and take relevant actions in order to maintain Project activities relevant to accomplishment of objectives. 	
Who	
Analysis & Awareness Raising Cluster (AAR)	This cluster is primarily responsible for developing the academic component of the Project.
<p>Tasks include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Define an academic program and determine the methodologies used; Select the team responsible for implementing the academic material; Prepare and plan the field mission; and Coordinate all other tasks participating host institutions wish to contribute. 	
Who	
Dissemination Cluster	This cluster is responsible for all outbound communication regarding Project progress.



<p>This cluster will develop all tools and materials to communicate the status of ongoing activities and milestones reached. Materials will be published in, Spanish, English and Arabic. The cluster will also collect, organize and maintain all Project data. Tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create and maintain a web page; b. Create and maintain social media accounts; c. Create and coordinate the production of a monthly e-newsletter; a. As a data center, serve as a clearinghouse for all project records, data, and communication; b. Establish welcome committees host communities. 	
Who	
Academic and Allowance Placing Cluster (AAP)	This is responsible for securing placement at host universities and coordinating scholarship opportunities.
<p>Tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Select the higher host universities; b. Establish and develop scholarship opportunities at host universities; c. Match beneficiary students with appropriate scholarship opportunities; d. Ensure all beneficiary students have access to health care either public or private; and e. Design and implement the language training program. 	
Who	





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