

70th anniversary of UNHCR – Volkswagen donates 70 university scholarships



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“Education is one of the most important linchpins of social engagement, democracy and prosperity. We in the Volkswagen Group are therefore particularly keen to give young refugees equitable access to education. Our close collaboration with UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe over six years and our Volkswagen Group Refugee Aid initiative are testament to this. When we started our work, its focus was on providing emergency aid for refugees arriving in Germany. By now, we are concentrating on the longer-term issues of education and integration into the labor market. We are pleased that we can now also support the education of refugees on a global scale by means of our cooperation with UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe: 70 scholarships to mark the 70th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention are a fine example of our sustainable and integrative support for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ work,” said Gunnar Kilian, Member of the Board of Management Human Resources and Truck & Bus at Volkswagen AG.

Daniela Cavallo, Chairperson of the General and Group Works Council of Volkswagen AG: “Education is the most important key to integration. The scholarships being awarded to refugees on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Refugee Agency underpin the fundamental work of the UNHCR. We in the Works Council are particularly impressed by the focus on training, because internships and training courses for young professionals are important tools for successful integration into a profession and consequently into society.”

“For many young refugees, DAFI is synonymous with future prospects,” said Katharina Lumpp, UNHCR Representative in Germany. “Doing a degree not only provides a big opportunity that is frequently not available to these young men and women, but it also makes an important contribution to the communities in which they live

and the countries that take them in. We are delighted that the Volkswagen Group has decided to invest in the education of refugees in particular – and to do this within the framework of the well-established DAFI program set up in Germany. DAFI will go a long way to increasing the very low share of refugees in third-level education – currently 5 percent compared to the global average of over 30 percent.”

Peter Ruhenstroth-Bauer, Managing Director of UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe: “Education is the key to a better future. We are very thankful that Volkswagen is joining forces with us to create educational prospects for young refugees.”

The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlingsinitiative Albert Einstein, DAFI) has been in existence for nearly 30 years. It was founded by the German federal government in 1992 to give highly talented refugees the opportunity to go to university. Since then, the UNHCR has been in charge of implementing this program, to which the Volkswagen Group is now donating 70 scholarships.

The UNHCR has set an ambitious goal of increasing the share of refugees receiving access to higher education from 5 to 15 percent globally by 2030 through the DAFI refugee scholarship program: too many refugees are denied the opportunity to explore their potential through higher education, including technical and vocational training, and thus to drive innovation and research. One of the reasons for this is that young refugees are often among the most financially disadvantaged segments of the population and have little or no opportunity to enter higher education.

You can find out more about the DAFI program here (German only).

About UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe

UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe is the German partner of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). It mobilizes civil society to support the UNHCR’s worldwide life-saving missions, funds projects for refugees in Germany and helps to create awareness by informing people about migration, why people flee their country and what awaits refugees.

About Volkswagen Group Refugee Support

Volkswagen Group Refugee Support has been initiating and coordinating integration programs in Germany to prepare young refugees for occupational training and the labor market since 2015. Over 6,000 individuals have already been helped to date. Expanding refugee support on an international scale is an important element of the Volkswagen Group's engagement in these activities.

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