

*To unlock displaced talent, a clear solution lies in recognising non-traditional education programmes and certifications.*

Millions of displaced young people are locked out of university and skilled employment because conflict has denied them access to stable education and conventional qualifications. With only 37% of the world's 49 million displaced children enrolled in secondary education, successive generations have lost out on opportunity, and the world has lost out on their talent.

Alsama Project finds the potential hidden by war and displacement, giving young people the education and recognition they need to build their futures. We have developed two revolutionary education innovations for displaced youth: a 6-year accelerated programme that brings students from illiteracy to university-readiness, and the G12++, a Cambridge Assessment-backed qualification that is enabling refugees to get their skills recognised on the international stage.

The accelerated learning programme, developed by Alsama, represents a disruptor in education for displaced youth in the Middle East, taking them from illiteracy and innumeracy to university/employment readiness in half the traditional time. The programme's holistic curriculum – spanning Arabic, maths, English, IT, professionalism and the creative arts, alongside a range of extra-curriculars – is designed to maximise opportunity and prepare students fully for life after school. We have ambitious plans to offer this programme to displaced youth worldwide, expanding our offering to reach 1,980 students across nine centres by 2030, and after this, transitioning to a franchise model to reach over 12,000 displaced teens in the MENA region.

At the same time, Alsama has developed the G12++ exam to unlock opportunities after secondary education. The G12++ was created after Wissal - a Shatila refugee camp student who rose from illiteracy to class-topper, global cricket ambassador and international competition winner in six years – asked how she could 'prove her skills' to higher education institutions, exposing a systemic credentialing gap for displaced youth. In response, Alsama created an online, curriculum-agnostic exam. For students without a fixed curriculum or access to a national qualification, the G12++ offers formal certification of high-school level capabilities (G12) and key life skills (++). Built to UNESCO ISCED standards, it holds both rigour and flexibility together, and is now recognised as equivalent to UK, US and Canadian high school qualifications, certified by Ecctis and IEE respectively. This means the G12++ can unlock, and has unlocked, the next level of higher education, vocational training or skilled employment for certificate holders. Indeed, the G12++ has already been adopted by 10 university partners worldwide ranging from the University of Cambridge to CIS College of Vocational and Technical Education in Lebanon.

Last year, for the first time, the G12++ allowed Wissal, amongst 16 other Alsama graduates who were the first students to take the exam, to 'prove their skills' to universities and employers. She is studying psychology at York University, Canada, while fellow graduates also secured fully funded places at Ashoka University, Leicester University and MUBS, Lebanon. All 17 are now pursuing further education or skilled employment.

Alsama, in partnership with Cambridge University Press and Assessment, is in the process of scaling up the G12++, so that displaced youth worldwide can prove their potential like Wissal. Alsama's current scaling strategy aims to reach over 5,000 G12++ candidates by 2030, and 50,000 by 2040. However, national and international recognition of revolutionary education solutions like Alsama's is vital to unlock the full potential of displaced talent.