



Mapping of
**Complementary
Education Pathways**
in the Nordic and Baltic Countries

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMIF	Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund	RST	Resettlement
CTD	Convention Travel Document	SAIH	Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond
CPATHs	Complementary Pathways	SFI	Swedish for Immigrants
EDUFI	Finnish National Agency for Education	SFS	Swedish National Union of Students
EHU	European Humanities University	SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
HEI	Higher Education Institution	SMA	Swedish Migration Agency
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees	SRF	Scholars Rescue Fund
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	SRP	The Student Refugee Programme
IIE-SRF	Institute of International Education-Scholars Rescue Fund	StAR	Students at Risk
JWL	Jesuit Worldwide Learning	SUHF	The Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions
MES	Middle East Scholars	TRP	Temporary Residence Permit
MPI	Migration Policy Institute	UDI	The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
MRU	Mykolas Romeris University	UHR	Swedish Council for Higher Education
NGO	Non-Governmental-Organization	UWC	United World Colleges
NOKUT	Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
NSO	National Union of Students	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Representation Office for The Nordic and Baltic Countries
OCMA	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs	RNB	
ODA	Official Development Assistance	WUSC	World University Service of Canada
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development		
RSD	Refugee Status Determination		



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Background

By mid-2022, 31.7 million people were displaced outside of their home countries owing to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated refugee challenges in accessing education and increased a need for solutions. The gap between an increasing global refugee population and decreasing number of refugees resettled has been on a broadening trajectory over the past five years.

Complementary pathways, highlighted in 2018 as an auxiliary to resettlement in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), provide important opportunities for solutions and protection for persons in need. Education pathways are programs designed to provide eligible refugees currently residing in third countries with a safe access to education opportunities outside of their current host country.

¹ UNHCR, 'Refugee Data Finder – Key Indicators', *UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency*, updated 10 November 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>, (accessed 15 December 2021).

This report has been prepared by the UNHCR Representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries (UNHCR RNB) to further raise awareness and provide a foundation for the development of complementary pathways, specifically education pathways for refugees living in third countries, through targeted initiatives, including pilot projects within the Nordic and Baltic region. The report provides information on educational programmes as well as the key requirements in Nordic and Baltic countries for access by third country nationals living outside of the country where the education is provided. In the analysis, UNHCR focused on assessing the legal requirements and identifying potential challenges refugees and asylum-seekers are facing, or could potentially face, and which would need to be considered and taken into account when establishing or expanding existing education pathways for third-country nationals to include refugees living in third countries.

Findings

Education pathways can play a vital role in providing access to third countries for many refugees. There are currently several safe pathways through education opportunities in the Nordic and Baltic countries refugees can apply for. Although most of these initiatives are not geared to accommodate the specific circumstances of refugee students owing to administrative and legal barriers hindering access, this has led to a variety of obstacles, which require the attention of relevant stakeholders, explored in depth within this report. Despite the challenges, the programmes hold great value in serving as the building blocks for possible future complementary education pathways in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

The Middle East Scholars Programme at the LCC International University in Klaipėda, Lithuania has established a targeted admission program that most closely implements several core components of education pathways for refugees. Students who are eligible to benefit from education opportunities under the program benefit from the lawful stay afforded to them accordingly.

Opportunities

The numerous education programs in the Nordic and Baltic countries which are open to third-country nationals signal the motivation to offer the possibility for nationals of other countries to access education opportunities and supports the need for broader consideration on how these openings also can be offered to refugees living in other countries. Several programmes implement one or more of the core criteria of complementary education pathways. These establishments exhibit the capacity to provide safe access to education programmes for refugees living in other countries within the confines of current legislative and administrative barriers. This signals the opportunity to encourage, and foster, the growth of viable programmes beyond current activities and limitations i.e. geographical, and legislative.

Recommendations

To capitalize on the foundations set by education programmes in the Nordic and Baltic countries, individual initiative and coordinated action between Governments and key stakeholders is integral. Accordingly, and in line findings of this report, UNHCR recommends active consultation between institutions which currently implement education programmes for refugees, national authorities, and relevant international organizations to work towards refinement of existing entry pathways for foreign students to enable equitable access for refugees. UNHCR further recommends actions tailored to build knowledge on the benefits of, and challenges to the establishment of complementary education pathways.



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1. BACKGROUND

1.1

Basis for mapping

Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Global Goals calls to work towards Quality Education to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In 2021, of all refugees, 68% were enrolled in primary, 34% in secondary and approximately 5% to tertiary education.² Higher education constitutes a crucial link between learning and earning for refugees, empowering them to become more self-reliant and build a sustainable future for themselves. Refugee-inclusive higher education environments also lead to a richer academic conditions and stimulate stronger social cohesion.³

Echoing the sentiments relayed in the GCR, states are encouraged to activate legal pathways in a systematic, organized, sustainable and gender-responsive manner for refugees' benefit. Such pathways must also foster appropriate protection safeguards.⁴ Exposure to the benefits of complementary pathways have increased among governments, universities and civil society organizations globally.⁵

The EU also underlines the importance of the fostering safe avenues for refugees. In addition to working towards solutions for education related challenges, developing legal pathways to Europe is also a priority of the European Commission. In 2020, the European Commission noted that the the EU budget supports Member States humanitarian admission schemes and study or work-related schemes.⁶

A 2021 OECD-UNHCR study found that students from Afghanistan, Syria, Iran and Eritrea held study visas in Nordic and Baltic countries; with 709 study visas issued in Sweden, 111 in Lithuania and 71 in Estonia.⁷ This study helps illustrate the mutual appetite for education programmes between hosting institutions and eligible foreign students including refugees.

Developing education pathways may also lead to a reduction in irregular migration as safer, mutually beneficial, paths between eligible displaced persons and receiving institutions materialize.

² UNHCR, 'Staying the Course' – The Challenges Facing Refugee Education, 2021 Refugee Education Report, pp. 9-10, <https://bit.ly/3fJLSLH>, (accessed 28 November 2021).

³ UNHCR, *15by30 Roadmap, Coming Together to Achieve 15 % Enrolment by 2030*, 21 March 2021, <https://bit.ly/3rwxClZ>, (accessed 28 November 2021).

⁴ United Nations, *Global Compact on Refugees*, New York, 2018, section 94, p. 37, <https://www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4>, (accessed 15 December 2021).

⁵ CRISP, *Complementary Pathways*, <https://resettle.org/complementary-pathways>, (accessed 28 November 2021).

⁶ European Commission, *Factsheet: New Pact on Migration and Asylum*, 23 September 2020, p. 14, <https://bit.ly/3V2ojoy0>, (accessed 28 November 2021).

⁷ OECD and UNHCR, *Safe Pathways for Refugees II*, March 2021, p. 17, <https://bit.ly/3M9en1J>, (accessed 28 November 2021).

2.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1

Purpose

This report presents key findings from a mapping exercise undertaken in the Nordic and Baltic regions between April and December 2021. The aim of the exercise was to gather information on existing education pathway programmes and similar initiatives in the Nordic and Baltic regions. UNHCR intends information provided in this report to stimulate interest in and support for coordinated action amongst key stakeholders for the development of complementary education pathways – and consequently assess the possibilities for the initial trial of pilot programmes.

This report provides information on prominent initiatives and presents key actors in the region who are engaged in, and can bolster, the development of complementary education pathways within their respective countries. The mapping provides a non-exhaustive overview of education pathway programmes and similar initiatives, as well as a summary of the legal requirements and barriers for refugees to access education pathways in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The mapping also includes reference to a few initiatives which although not currently designed as education pathways for refugees living in other countries, nevertheless, are open to refugee students. This was done with the aim of gathering information on existing programs that may serve as platform for the development of pilot programs.

It is the ambition of UNHCR for this report to serve as a catalyst in increasing access and opportunities for refugees in third countries to higher education through safe pathways. This report echoes the GCR's objective to increase refugees' access to protection and support them attain a sustainable solution through education pathways.

2.2

Methodology

Programmes analysed in this report are education pathway programmes as well as a selection of similar programmes that refugees can access in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The report provides a listing and analysis of legal requirements, and barriers, for refugees to receive study visas. Specific attention was placed on gathering information regarding formal visa study frameworks. This was done as fundamental entry criterion are frequently central obstacles for refugee students' access to higher education in a third country. Individual or anecdotal administrative challenges were not taken to account.

3.

WHAT ARE COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Education pathways are safe and regulated avenues for refugees to relocate to a third country for education through tailored programmes and include protection mechanisms such as legal entry and residence in the third country. Complementary education pathways include opportunities for refugees to extend legal status through a secure resident status, or postgraduate study/employment while offering protection against refoulement.

Education pathways fall under the umbrella of a broader set of complementary pathways which also include labour mobility pathways, family reunification, humanitarian pathways and private sponsorship pathways. As will be described further in subsection b, these pathways are designed to complement resettlement while offering safe and regulated avenues for refugees to meet their protection needs through a lawful stay in a third country.

3.1 Complementary pathways: key components

Complementary pathways leverage refugees' talents and abilities, while contributing to their building independence and agency. Complementary pathways are safe and regulated avenues for refugees that complement resettlement by providing lawful stay in a third country where their international protection needs are met. They are additional to resettlement and do not substitute the protection afforded to refugees under the international protection regime. Complementary pathways include existing admission avenues that refugees may be eligible to apply to, such as education pathways, but which may require operational adjustments to facilitate refugee access.

Third country legal pathways for persons in need of international protection have existed for several decades, yet the term complementary pathways have taken shape more recently. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016 was

a response by the international community to the global refugee influx at the time. In the declaration, complementary pathways were identified as a fourth durable solution beyond return, local integration, and resettlement. The New York Declaration led in turn to the GCR, which developed the concept further as a complement to resettlement for persons in need of international protection, which must entail appropriate protection safeguards.

To satisfy the core criterion of complementary pathways a programme, regardless of which pathway is utilized, must:

Be for refugees: As indicated in the study by OECD and UNHCR from 2021, "complementary pathways are meant to complement refugee resettlement by offering safe and legal admission avenues to refugees and *other persons in need of international protection* who find themselves outside their country of origin and seeking opportunities in a third country". Therefore, both refugees and other persons in need of international protection will be taken into consideration.

Be safe and regulated: The pathway enables the refugee to move in a safe and orderly way to the third country, as opposed to being exposed to illegal routes in the hands of smugglers. The refugee has access to a travel document and a visa to the third country prior to entering there and his or her movement is managed or facilitated by the third country's authorities and/ or the operators of the complementary pathway programme.

Meet international protection needs: There are measures in place to assure that refugees are protected against refoulement. One measure is the right to seek asylum in the third country or to be able to obtain another legal status which enable them to stay in this country after completion of their studies. Another measure to guarantee such protection is that the refugee can return to the first country of asylum and there enjoy the same rights and status that they had before departure.



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Provide lawful stay in third country: A lawful stay for a refugee in a third country is interpreted as having access to legal status and documentation in that country. The legal status is provided through an entry visa as well as a temporary or permanent residence permit, but also entitles the refugee student to several legal rights and services in the third country. The rights and services provided vary between countries and complementary pathway programmes.

Complement resettlement: The objectives of complementary pathways and resettlement may often overlap since both can be tools for protection and solutions, as well as a mechanism for sharing responsibility for refugees between states. However, complementary pathways are legal pathways in addition to and *separate* from a national resettlement programme.

3.2

Examples of Global education pathway programmes

There has been an emergence of programmes utilizing key elements of education pathways globally in recent years. Although some were time-bound initiatives, the majority continue to provide support to eligible refugee students. Listed below are initiatives which implement components of education pathways, and can be taken as guiding examples:



GERMANY

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Leadership for Syria and the DAAD Leadership for Africa.

Funded by German Federal Foreign Office, *Leadership for Syria* was a scholarship programme between 2015-2019. It provided students and researchers with Syrian citizenships residing in Germany or Syria with an opportunity to complete a Bachelor, Master, or PhD degree in Germany. The program saw 221 scholarship recipients over a five-year period.⁸ Built on the model of Leadership for Syria, the scholarship programme Leadership for Africa launched in 2021 with the aim of supporting students from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Cameroon. Of the 51 full scholarship recipients, 19 were refugees entitled to work while studying and could bring core family along.⁹



ITALY

University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE)

The programme operates across 24 Italian universities for recognized refugees of any nationality residing in Ethiopia. Selected students require English proficiency and must have completed a bachelor's degree. Costs for tuition fees, visa and

travel are covered by the programme, and the students receive a study grant during their studies in Italy.¹⁰ The programme is coordinated by UNHCR offices in Italy/Ethiopia, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ethiopian government. Universities in Italy are responsible for the admission of the students.



CANADA

The Student Refugee Programme (SRP)

Launched in 1978 SRP combines higher education opportunities with private sponsorship for young refugees with different nationalities. The Programme utilizes a unique funding model, roughly one million Canadian students contribute to a one-year scholarship by paying a small student tax. The programme is built on the “peer-to-peer” support model. The support structure is comprised of Canadian student formed volunteer groups; the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). Students receive a permanent residence permit directly upon arrival in Canada. WUSC provides support to persons from over 15 countries across Asia, Africa, and the Americas.



MEXICO

Habesha Project

Established in 2015 as a response to the displacement caused by the Syrian civil war the project provides young Syrians with an opportunity to continue their university studies in Mexico. In 2019, UNHCR began collaborating with the project to expand its programme to include Central American and Venezuelan refugees. Selected students can either study a bachelor's or a master's degree and receive a full scholarship covering the tuition fees. Their travel to Mexico, visa costs, accommodation and living costs are also covered by the programme.¹¹

⁸ DAAD, *Leadership for Syria*, 2019.

⁹ *Scholarship Programmeme for Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan*, UNHCR – Opportunities, 19 May 2021, <https://services.unhcr.org/opportunities/education-opportunities/leadership-africa-scholarship-programme-ethiopia-kenya-tanzania-and-south> (accessed 23 November 2021).

¹⁰ University Corridors for Refugees - Unhcr, <https://universitycorridors.unhcr.it/>, (accessed 10 October 2021).

¹¹ Habesha Project, <https://www.proyectoHabesha.org/english/habesha.html> (accessed 11 October 2021).

4. FINDINGS

4.1 General findings

UNHCR RNB conducted an extensive desk review and 30 semi-structured interviews with ongoing educational programmes and relevant actors. This was done to take stock of existing programmes, examine the challenges in expanding existing initiatives and support assessing the feasibility of a pilot education pathway program. The RNB interviewed university and college staff, programme coordinators as well as representatives of student organizations, funding institutes and state authorities. The interviews were conducted with a view on gathering data regarding legal requirements for entry, i.e. entry visas, and on the structures of educational programmes currently accessible to refugees in the Nordic and Baltic regions. To maintain consistency UNHCR RNB developed and utilized a standard guide when interacting with contributors.

The Nordic and Baltic countries share similar legal and administrative requirements for foreigners including refugees to obtain a study visa, as can be seen in figure 1. The eight countries share the legal requirement that students prove identity, preferably a passport. Both Norway and Finland require proof of legal residency in the country of application. Accessing the closest embassies for interviews or submitting biometrics as part of the visa application may present a barrier for refugees as the nearest embassy may necessitate extensive travel. Refugees may face restrictions on movement, as well as be unable to pay the costs related to such a trip.¹²

Refugees may also have their visa application rejected, as it can be difficult to prove to individual consular officers¹³ they will use the visa for the intention of study and not to claim asylum. There are return clauses in certain cases, like the Norwegian study permit framework. The framework dictates that circumstances in the student's country of origin/ residence must allow for return upon completion of the studies in Norway.

In addition to the legal requirements, international students, including refugees, need proficiency in at least the English language and to provide documented proof of previous studies. Most of the Nordic and Baltic countries require international students to pay tuition fees to study at their universities and colleges. Iceland and Norway have tuition-free education in study programmes at public universities. In Estonia, there are no tuition-fees if the study programme is taught in Estonian.

Most countries in the Nordic and Baltic region also require international students to provide proof of health insurance for the period of stay in the country, when applying for a student visa. This is the case in Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. In Denmark, international students are automatically included in the national insurance scheme after three months, in Iceland after six months and in Norway after one year.¹⁴ In Finland, the students normally need to reside at least two years in the country to be entitled to municipal health care. Tuition-paying students in Sweden are covered by a special accident insurance provided by the Government.

¹² Habesha Project, <https://www.proyectohabesha.org/english/habesha.html> (accessed 11 October 2021).

¹³ Fratzke, et al., 2021, p. 43.

¹⁴ Aalborg University, *Finance and Fees*, <https://bit.ly/3yh2262>; Study in Norway, *Health Insurance*, <https://bit.ly/3EgnXOr>; Swisscare, *International student health insurance Iceland*, <https://swisscare.com/en/country/iceland>, (accessed 11 October 2021).



4.2 Challenges

There are multiple education programs operating within the Nordic and Baltic countries open to foreign students which also accept eligible refugees. However, the multitude of nearly unsurmountable entry requirements pose a challenge for the majority of refugees, barring eligible refugee students from accessing opportunities to further their tertiary education.

The most important obstacle for refugee students who meet the qualifications to access the education program is to be able to fulfil the strict entry requirements which the national authorities have put in place to govern the admission of foreign students.

Challenges fulfilling visa conditions: Entry requirements for education visas are often set at a challenging level for non-refugee applicants. Even non-negotiable standards such as providing official and valid travel documentation such as passports may be out of reach for refugees who flee persecution. Meeting requirements which require financial means such as locating and securing accomodation (which often require deposits) and multi-month private health care is also disproportionately challenging for refugees who may be facing refugee-related challenges securing employment in their first country of asylum.

Challenges fulfilling the financial requirements:

In addition to the financial element of fulfilling visa conditions students are often asked to provide proof of having met mimmum financial conditions such as access to monthly disposable income, payment of tuition/application fees. However, the majority of the aforementioned, and other, financial requirements are often not possible for refugees as labour opportunities providing substantial income for refugees are relatively rare in many first countries of asylum. The disparity in challenges between foreign students, possibly applying to education programmes via other European countries, and refugees is especially pronounced when taking into consideration purchasing power of local currencies in most first and second countries of asylum for refugees.

Lack of access to information on opportunities: As described in the opening chapter, complementary pathways have emerged relatively recently as a supplement for resettlement. Information on pathways and ways of accessing opportunities are not readily available for potential beneficiaries of existing and/or potential programmes. This creates a challenge for both service providers and beneficiaries to work towards offering mutually beneficial solutions to refugees, host countries and receiving countries by way of complementary education pathways.

Figure 1: Study visa requirements for international students in the Nordic and Baltic countries



ICELAND

- Possess valid passport.
- Admitted to full-time studies at university.
- €1,288 monthly disposable capital.
- Possess health insurance for valid six months and covering a minimum of 2 million Icelandic Krona.
- Proof of secured housing.
- Above 18 years of age.
- Proof of clear criminal record.
- Have paid application and tuition fee.



SWEDEN

- Possess valid passport.
- Admitted to full-time studies in a higher education programme or courses requiring physical presence.
- €810 monthly disposable capital.
- Possess health insurance (for study programmes with a duration of less than one year).
- Have paid application and tuition fee.



NORWAY

- Possess valid passport.
- Provide proof to admittance to a university/college for full-time studies.
- Possess €13,000 per year of stay.
- Have accommodation in Norway.
- Have possibility to return home upon completion of studies.
- Proof of residence permit in country of stay for the previous six months.
- Have paid tuition fees (only for private universities).



DENMARK

- Possess valid passport.
- Accepted to a higher educational programme in Denmark.
- Have €850 monthly disposable capital.
- Command of Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, English, or German.
- Have paid application fee
- Have paid tuition fee
- Have health care covered for initial 3 months.



FINLAND

- Possess valid passport.
- Admitted to a Finnish university or college.
- €560 monthly disposable capital.
- Possess health insurance.
- Hold legal residence in country where application is submitted.
- Provide proof of previous degree and employment certificates (both not required from degree-seeking students and exchange students)
- Have paid application and tuition fee.
- Have paid application and tuition fee.



ESTONIA

- Possess valid travel document.
- Prove admittance to an Estonian university.
- Have €300 monthly disposable income.
- Possess health insurance.
- Have secured housing in Estonia.
- Have Paid visa fee and state duty payment.¹³
- Have paid tuition fees (for study programmes in English).¹⁴



LATVIA

- Possess valid travel document.
- Have invitation from university approved by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA).
- Have €500 monthly disposable capital.
- Possess health insurance with minimum coverage of €42,700 for insured period.
- Have place of residence in Latvia
- Have met academic qualifications.
- Provide evidence of clean criminal record.
- Have paid state duty payment.
- Have paid tuition fees.



LITHUANIA

- Possess valid passport.
- Prove admittance to a Lithuanian university
- € 150 monthly disposable capital.
- Possess health insurance with minimum coverage of €6,000 (if applying for a TRP).
- Have proof of arranged accommodation in Lithuania.
- Have police clearance from the home country (if applying for a TRP).¹⁵
- Have paid tuition fees.

¹⁵ University of Tartu, *Non-EU Citizen's Residence Permits and Visas*, <https://bit.ly/3CAA15h>, (accessed 29 September 2021).

¹⁶ Educations.com, *Study in Estonia: Tuition Fees & Scholarships*, updated 21 April 2021, <https://bit.ly/3C1URzy>, (accessed 20 December 2021).

¹⁷ Studee, 'How to apply for a Lithuania student visa', <https://bit.ly/3CzIDzK>, (accessed 20 December 2021).

¹⁸ Migration Information Centre "I Choose Lithuania", 'For Non-EU/EEA nationals', updated 28 June 2020, <https://bit.ly/3M7Xpkc>, (accessed 20 December 2021).



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4.3

Overview of findings from country level consultations

The 30+ interviews conducted during the mapping process generated a comprehensive overview of access provided to refugees, vis-a-vis education pathways in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Findings indicate a strong interest among many core stakeholders, including the education institutions to be able to provide opportunities for refugees to access tertiary education in Nordic and Baltic countries. Although challenges persist, as described above, building blocks for complementary education pathways can be found across initiatives in the 8 countries.

A broad overview of findings shows that education programmes in most Nordic and Baltic countries are available for refugees. However, programmes are provided either through distance learning or to refugees who are already residents in the country where the education is offered. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these programmes can serve as a platform to further consider the extension to complementary education pathways. All programmes identified in this report were initiated unprompted by outside guidance, and at a country level. This illustrates the motivation and momentum that can be leveraged to evolve current initiatives into complementary education pathways.

Programmes show great initiative

Throughout the mapping process, UNHCR identified several important initiatives and programmes across the Nordic and Baltic countries. Initiatives are being created to fill the gap in education provision in specific contexts, such as the:

- Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius' and their commitment to providing free access to university education in English for refugees in Lithuania.
- Estonia based NGO Mondo which works on improving refugee youth's access to education in their first country of asylum.
- European Humanities University in Vilnius, which relocated from Minsk to provide education for Belarusian students, 87% of total university enrolment, living in Lithuania.
- The is Finnish nation-wide integration project Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education (SIMHE) offers support for recognition of previous education and skills, organizes study information events, counselling, and training to foreign students.¹⁹
- The Uppsala based Newman Institute's Jesuit Worldwide Initiative provides tele-education to refugees living in their first country of asylum in Jordan, Kenya and Malawi. This Sweden based programme capitalizes on providing education to persons in need at distance through digital means.
- There are multiple special initiatives in the Nordic and Baltic countries focused on encouraging enrolment of refugees living in the respective countries to pursue tertiary education highlight. In addition to distance education, many education institutions are involved in integration-related activities such as validating foreign grades and skills, providing fast-track courses to certain job positions and language courses to ease the onboarding process. A specific integration focused initiative to supplement education courses in Stockholm, Linköping, Lund is the Korta vägen Programme (The Short Way). The programme provides academic guidance, Swedish academic language courses and vocational coaching the newly arrived.

Programme specific target demographics do not meet complementary pathways baselines

The multitude of initiatives and programmes available for provision to refugees in, or by initiatives based in, the Nordic and Baltic countries clearly benefit overall provision of education for refugees overall. However, for a programme to satisfy the core criterion of complementary education pathways, it must enable a refugee living in another host country to move in a safe and orderly way to the country where the education is provided. Most of the education programmes do not currently satisfy this criterion.

Programmes can naturally evolve into complementary pathways

There is a culture of social acceptance of refugees by most Nordic and Baltic countries, as illustrated by social support programmes for refugees and number of refugees per host community members. Additionally, the unsolicited emergence of the multiple education schemes for refugees indicates a focus on bolstering access overall, which could result in a natural evolution towards developing complementary education pathways in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

¹⁹ University of Jyväskylä, *Higher Education Institutions responsible for SIMHE*, 24 September 2020, <https://bit.ly/3STrvL7>, (accessed 22 December 2021).

4.4

Education programs in Nordic and Baltic countries available to refugees

The following is a breakdown of programs with similarities to complementary education pathways in Nordic and Baltic countries, at the time of the mapping exercise. The findings provide insight into existing opportunities available for refugees. SAR sections operate in several Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden - with the same core objective and target beneficiary group regardless of operational context. The University of Iceland applied for membership to the SAR program, but do not currently have an operational Section and as such will not be included in the following programme overview.

DENMARK

While tertiary education programs are widely available to refugees living in Denmark. UNHCR could not identify programmes that implement core components of complementary education pathways aside from the Danish section of Scholars at Risk (SAR). SAR is a global network of academic institutions which collaborates to support and protect threatened scholars around the world and promote academic freedom.

Programme: Scholars at Risk (SAR), Denmark

Programme Summary: The network offers temporary research and teaching positions at universities and colleges that are members of SAR.²⁰ Eligible scholars are assessed and matched with viable opportunities in Denmark. Scholars are supported in finding career opportunities when contract with the university ends.

Beneficiaries: The programme is accessible for persons with international protection needs who reside in a first country of asylum when they are admitted to the programme.²¹ The SAR network focuses mainly on admitting postdoctoral researchers, but may also admit individuals with a master degree and those with teaching experience.

Countries of Origin: To date SAR-sections in the Nordic countries have received scholars from Turkey, Syria, Eritrea and Yemen.

Funding: Member universities of SAR use funding from their budgets to finance the costs related to hosting the scholars at risk.

ESTONIA

Refugees in Estonia have access to pursue and benefit from tertiary education programs, and the Government supports the local organization NGO Mondo to provide valuable distance education support to refugees in their first country of asylum in Syria, Uganda and Jordan. However, UNHCR did not identify programmes currently implementing core components of complementary education pathways.

FINLAND

UNHCR identified 1 programme in Finland implementing one or more core components of complementary education pathways in addition to the Finnish section of Scholars at Risk. The IIE-SRF implements the multiple components of education pathways through providing an, initially temporary, safe and regulated pathway for refugees to Finland for education purposes whilst support fundamental needs during stay.

Programme: Scholars at Risk (SAR), Finland

Programme Summary: The network offers temporary research and teaching positions at over 10 universities in Finland who are members of SAR. Eligible scholars are assessed and matched with viable opportunities in Finland. Scholars are supported in finding career opportunities when contract with the university ends.

²⁰ Scholars at Risk, *Protecting scholars and the freedom to think, question, and share ideas*, <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org> (accessed 5 October 2021).

²¹ Syria is one of the countries that account for a large number of refugees in the world. View: Reid, K., *Forced to flee: Top countries refugees are coming from*, World Vision, updated 18 June 2021, <https://bit.ly/3rxtZCx>, (accessed 17 December 2021).

Beneficiaries: The programme is accessible for persons with international protection needs who reside in a first country of asylum when they are admitted to the programme. The SAR network focuses mainly on admitting postdoctoral researchers, but may also admit individuals with a master degree and those with teaching experience.

Countries of Origin: To date SAR-sections in the Nordic countries have received scholars from Turkey, Syria, Eritrea and Yemen.

Funding: In addition to individual budgetary allocation of funds by respective partnered universities, the Institute of International Education's (IIE) Scholar Rescue Fund offers grants via the Finnish National Agency for Education.

Programme: The Institute of International Education – Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF)

Programme Summary: IIE Initially founded in 1919, an independent non-profit organization based in the United States. The organization launched the IIE-SRF in 2002 to formalize its commitment to protect threatened scholars around the world.²² IIE-SRF's headquarters in New York review the application and assess the nature and urgency of the threat that the applicant faces in his or her home country. Once the applicants are accepted, IIE-SRF starts searching for appropriate host institutions. Accepted scholars arrive through safe and regulated avenues to Finland. Scholars can apply directly to the programme or through a third party. Those admitted to the programme obtain a lawful stay in Finland through a temporary researcher's permit.

Scholarships are granted for one year and can be extended with a second year if both the scholar and the host institution agree. Scholars have the possibility to extend their stay in Finland to look for work and are offered different services to support their career during their scholarship period.

Since 2016, IIE-SRF collaborates with the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) and Finnish higher education institutions to provide threatened

scholars an opportunity to continue their research in a safe environment in Finland. IIE-SRF, EDUFI and the host institution collaborate in providing financial and practical support for the scholar's travel arrangements. The host institution has the main responsibility for legal and practical arrangements such as finding accommodation.

Beneficiaries: The programme is open to scholars with refugee status. A selection criteria is that scholars must have resided for a maximum of two years in a safe environment outside of their country of origin.²³ The scholars arriving to Finland with their families can apply for a residence permit for researchers. The researcher's permit provides rights such as family reunification, the right to work in addition to the research and upon expiration of the permit to apply for a permit to look for work or start a business in Finland.²⁴

Countries of Origin: Majority of refugee scholars held Syrian, Afghan and Yemeni citizenships.

Funding: IIE can provide ad hoc funding that e.g. cover the residence permit fee and travel costs. EDUFI also provides €5000 as a relocation grant, which is available upon arrival in Finland.

ICELAND

While refugees in Iceland have access to pursue tertiary education, UNHCR did not identify programmes in Iceland implementing core components of complementary education pathways.

LATVIA

While refugees in Latvia can pursue tertiary educational through national systems, UNHCR did not identify programmes in Latvia implementing core components of complementary education pathways.

²² Scholars Rescue Fund, *About Us*, <https://bit.ly/3CzMAEA>, (accessed 22 November 2021).

²³ Online interview with Sini Piippo, EDUFI, 10 November 2021.

²⁴ Finnish Immigration Service, *Residence permit application for a researcher*, <https://migri.fi/en/researcher>; *Residence permit application for extended permit to look for work or to start a business*, <https://migri.fi/en/extended-permit-to-look-for-work> and *Moving to Finland to be with a family member*, <https://migri.fi/en/moving-to-finland-to-be-with-a-family-member>, (accessed 17 December 2021).

LITHUANIA

While refugees in Lithuania have access to tertiary education, UNHCR also identified an education programme in Lithuania which meets the core criterion of complementary education pathways. The Middle East Scholars Programme at LCC International University programme constitutes the sole initiative across the Nordic and Baltic states which currently meets the definition of complementary pathways.

Programme: Middle East Scholars Programme, Lithuania

Programme Summary: The programme was established at the LCC International University in Klaipeda in 2016 and has received over 80 students since.²⁵ Students enter Lithuania with a national D-visa to study. To date, all students who have applied to the programme have had passports. The programme accepts other travel documents including Conventional Travel Documents as well. The university collaborates with organizations with strong relationships to refugee groups and works closely with Non-Governmental Organizations, UN groups and humanitarian organizations in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq. In Indonesia, UNHCR was involved in supporting selected participants depart to Lithuania.²⁶

The selection process is based on the candidate's skills and an English proficiency test. Students can apply for a 2-year residence permit within four months of arrival. The permit entitles students to work and invite core family members. Students may extend the TRP for one year after graduation to find work. After five years of uninterrupted residence, they can apply for citizenship. Students can access support services during their studies including academic advisors and intercultural coordinators and local language courses.

Beneficiaries: The programme is open to persons in need of international protection, such as refugees and internally displaced persons, though candidates are not required to be formally recognized as a refugee to qualify for the programme.²⁷

Countries of Origin: To date SAR-sections in the Nordic countries have received scholars from Turkey, Syria, Eritrea and Yemen.

Funding: Private donors, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and LCC International University's student financial aid provides funding to the programme.

NORWAY

UNHCR identified two education programmes with similarities to complementary education pathways in Norway in addition to the Norway section of Scholars at Risk. Both Students at Risk and United World Colleges provide opportunities for refugee students to temporarily reside and study in Norway with the expectation that they return to their country of origin or move onwards once their education in Norway finalizes.

Programme: UWC (United World Colleges) Red Cross Nordic

Programme Summary: Founded in 1962, UWC Red Cross offers high school education to teenagers aged 16 to 19 to make "education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future" and to empower students to become changemakers. In 2016, as a response to the growing numbers of young and displaced people, the network launched the *UWC Refugee Initiative*; increasing number of refugee students' access to UWC schools worldwide.

Students with protection concerns within the programme obtain the same type of residence permit as any international student in the country, **entitling them to rights and services such as access to free health care through the National Insurance Scheme.**

Youth, including refugees, are provided legal entry and stay in Norway through a visa and two-year residence permit based on studies. The UWC Red Cross Nordic supports accepted candidates with

²⁵ *Middle East Scholars*, LCC International University, <https://lcc.lt/about-lcc/middle-east-scholars>, (accessed 5 October 2021).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Online interview with Aistė Motekaitienė, LCC International University, 24 September 2021.

travel arrangements and visa procedures either directly or through the national committees. The expectation from this programme is that the students, upon graduation, either return home or continue with their university studies in another country, most usually the United States of America.

Beneficiaries: UWC provides secondary education to 100 refugees worldwide per year through 18 colleges globally and has since 1995 a presence in the Norwegian municipality of Fjaler. The facility offers displaced young individuals a two year International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).²⁸ Most applicants at UWC Red Cross Nordic and other UWC schools are selected by UWC National Committees located in over 150 countries. All applications are assessed against UWC's five core selection criteria including motivation, commitment, and personal responsibility. 70% of the college's slots are reserved for international students.²⁹

To be admitted to the college and enter the country the students need to present identity documents. **If students cannot provide a passport other documents such as travel documents for refugees are also accepted.** The programme is open for persons with international protection needs.

Countries of Origin: The selection process is mainly conducted online and in collaboration with UNHCR and other local partner organizations.³⁰ In the academic year 2015-2016, the college admitted students from Eritrea and Myanmar, in 2018-2019, from Iraq, Yemen and Ethiopia, and in 2019-2020, from Afghanistan, Iran, Rwanda and Uganda.³¹

Funding: UWC Red Cross Nordic receives, among others, funding from the Norwegian State budget and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).³²

Programme: Scholars at Risk (SAR), Norway

Programme Summary: Lunched in 2011 SAR Norway offers temporary research and teaching positions at member universities and colleges. Eligible scholars are assessed and matched with viable opportunities in Norway. Scholars are supported in finding career opportunities when contract with the university ends.

Beneficiaries: The programme is accessible for persons with international protection needs who reside in a first country of asylum when they are admitted to the programme. The SAR network focuses mainly on admitting postdoctoral researchers, but may also admit individuals with a master degree and those with teaching experience.

Countries of Origin: To date SAR-sections in the Nordic countries have received scholars from Turkey, Syria, Eritrea and Yemen.

Funding: Participating universities balance internal internal budgets to allocate funds for the program. SAR Norway partnered universities have also received funding from The Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund.

Programme: Students at Risk (StAR), Norway

Type of programme: The programme aims to enable participating students to return to their country of origin upon graduation to become change agents in their home countries. The programme was founded by the student organisations Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund (SAIH) and the National Union of Students (NSO) 2012. The programme provides information and guidance to accepted students on how to apply for student visas. StAR accepts various travel documentation for students to prove their identity.

The programme covers travel costs though students must possess or be able to obtain official travel documents (passport or another valid travel document).³³ The students obtain a temporary residence permit based on studies, which is the same type provided to non-refugee international

²⁸ UWC Red Cross Nordic, *Annual Report 2020*, p. 2, <https://bit.ly/3Czrt5b>, (accessed 29 September 2021).

²⁹ UWC Red Cross Nordic, *Scholarships*, <https://bit.ly/3RDbdUU>, (accessed 2 November 2021).

³⁰ UWC, *The UWC Refugee Initiative – Empowering young refugees and internally displaced youth to become tomorrow's changemakers*, p. 15. Can be accessed here: <https://www.uwc.org/uwcrefugeeinitiative>.

³¹ UWC Red Cross Nordic, *Annual Reports for 2016, 2019 and 2020*. Can be accessed here: <https://uwrcrn.no/about-us-2/publications/>.

³² Online interview with Arne Osland, UWC Red Cross Nordic, 27 September 2021.

³³ Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, *Students at Risk - Programmeme Guidelines 2021-2022*, p. 3.

students.³⁴ The programme does not qualify to apply for a permanent residence permit in Norway.³⁵

Beneficiaries: Students are identified and nominated to the programme by a number of actors such as Norwegian embassies, SAIH, Amnesty International and NSO. Students can be nominated from any country on OECD's list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) countries. The nominating actors assess the candidates' eligibility against the mentioned selection criteria (activism and level of risk), whereafter Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) assesses their academic qualifications. After that the students are matched with a study programme in Norway.³⁶ Students are not required to be formally recognized as refugees to be eligible even though the programme is open to persons with international protection needs.

Accepted candidates must be between 18 and 35 years of age, proficient in English and have a background in human rights activism on a level that expose them to a personal risk of physical violence, arrest, or denial of civil rights. Students arrive either directly from their country of origin or from a host country where they have a valid residence status. However, the years with the temporary permit do not count if a student at risk wants to apply for permanent residency in Norway.³⁷

In **Norway**, scholars have the right to work and apply for a **permanent residence permit** after three years, as well as the right to bring family.

Countries of Origin: The programme has received students from Belarus, South Sudan, and Syria.³⁸

Funding: The programme is engaged in a three-party agreement with the Department of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (DIKU). Funding is mainly earmarked for scholarship purposes.

³⁴ Email response from Hilde Granås Kjølsvedt, Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, 22 October 2021.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Online interview with Stian Antonsen and Hector Ulloa, SAIH, 9 August 2021.

³⁷ Email response from Hilde Granås Kjølsvedt, Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, 22 October 2021.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Online interview with Marit Egner; 7 July 2021, 'Good practice Guide on national-level support initiatives', SAR Denmark; and Scholars At Risk Network – Swedish Section, 'Funding Agency Formas Contributes to the Work of SAR Sweden', <https://bit.ly/3MbOftA> (accessed 19 December 2021).

SWEDEN

UNHCR identified multiple avenues for refugees to access education opportunities in Sweden, including the Swedish section of Scholars at risk. Most initiatives were identified as being provided directly through universities targeting refugees living in Sweden.

Programme: Scholars at Risk (SAR), Sweden

Programme Summary: The network offers temporary research and teaching positions at universities and colleges that are members of SAR, such as the University of Gothenburg, University of Lund, Linnaeus University, Uppsala University and KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Eligible scholars are assessed and matched with viable opportunities in Sweden. Scholars are supported in finding career opportunities when contract with the university ends.

Beneficiaries: The programme is accessible for persons with international protection needs who reside in a first country of asylum when they are admitted to the programme. The SAR network focuses mainly on admitting postdoctoral researchers, but may also admit individuals with a master degree and those with teaching experience.

Countries of Origin: Scholars from Jordan, Afghanistan and Syria amongst others benefit from this programme.

Funding: Swedish SAR members receive funding through different avenues such as The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens jubileumsfond), which provided half of the programmes funding at the time of report. Member universities also allocate funds from within their internal budgets as well. As of 2022 SAR Sweden also has additional funding from Formas to co-fund the hosting of scholars.³⁹

5.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this report, UNHCR recommends that stakeholders take the following actions to advance the understanding of education pathways in the Nordic and Baltic countries and to support the development and expansion of similar initiatives:

Raise awareness about education pathways and their benefits for national authorities, decision-makers, universities, civil society organizations and funding institutes.

Increase awareness of the possibility for government counterparts to **leverage national non-legislative or non-regulatory avenues** to facilitate refugee access to student visas as well as education pathways. Additionally, increase awareness of the possibility of a broader humanitarian entry category, separate from resettlement.

Initiate and support advocacy efforts on key topics such as making student visas more accessible for refugees while exploring possibilities of waiving visa fees without changing national legislation.⁴⁰

Establish clear and transparent identification and selection processes to ensure prospective refugee students meet eligibility criteria for education pathways.

Uphold **key principles such as the right to seek asylum and non-discrimination** by informing education institutions about the rights of refugee students.

Share information on education pathways with embassies in host countries. This information can then be provided to prospective students.

⁴⁰ Fratzke et al., 2021, pp. 44-47.

ANNEX 1

COUNTRY FACT SHEETS



Denmark

Population: 5,792,202 mid-2020, 12% foreign born.
GDP Per Capita: €64,000

STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Proof of paid application fee, copy of passport and proof of financial resources for the entire stay in Denmark.
- Accepted as visiting/guest student attend part of a programme already initiated in the country of residence.
- Command of either Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, English or German.
- For students below 18 years, both parents must sign a declaration of travel consent to Denmark.

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: Following the suspension of its resettlement programme in 2016, Denmark re-started its programme in 2019 and pledged for 200 resettlement places in 2020.

Asylum-seekers: 1,547 were registered in 2020 which is the lowest number since the current counting method was introduced in 1998. Acceptance rate was 43 percent in 2020. The parliament passed a law on the externalization of the asylum process in 2021.

Main refugee nationalities: Syria, Eritrea and Iran.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Syria, Iran, and Afghanistan.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of Immigration and Integration: Responsible for legislation in the areas of migration, asylum, and integration.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Responsible for issues related to development cooperation with developing countries as well as visa-related issues.

Embassies/ Consulates: Processing travel visa applications.

Ministry of Higher Education and Science: Responsible for development, legal matters related to higher education.

Agency for International Recruitment and Integration: Processes residence permit applications for international students.

Higher Education Institution: Sets the specific admission criteria for their study programmes, as well as assesses applications from international students.

International Student's Office: Offers the international students' academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

National Union of Students in Denmark: Engages in advocacy for national and international students' rights and interests.



STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Admitted to a university in Estonia
- Secured accommodation
- Sufficient funds for living expenses
- Insurance
- Paid state fee (for Temporary Residence Permit, TRP) and visa fee (D-visa).
- For a study period of up to 6 months, degree-seeking students only need a D-visa. If the study period is longer than 6 months, the student enters the country with a D-visa and applies for a TRP once in Estonia.

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: Estonia does not currently have an annual resettlement programme.

Asylum-seekers: 35 new asylum applicants in 2020 and an acceptance rate of 40 percent that year.

Main refugee nationalities: Syria, Ukraine, and Russia.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of Interior: Responsible for policies concerning citizenship and migration, including asylum.

Ministry of Education and Research: Develops Estonia's policies for education, research, language learning and youth.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Responsible for issues related to development cooperation with third countries as well as visa-related issues.

Embassies/ Consulates: Processing travel visa applications.

Estonian Police and Border Guard Board: Assesses applications for student visas for third country nationals.

Higher Education Institution: Decides on the specific academic entry requirements to its study programme and assesses applications from international students.

International Student's Office: Offers the international students' academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

Estonian National Academic Recognition Information Centre: Evaluates foreign higher education qualifications.

Federation of Estonian Student Unions (EÜL): Engages in advocacy for national and international students' rights and interests.



STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Admitted to a Finnish university/college
Paid application fee (if applicable)
- €560 expendable monthly income.
- Private health insurance
- Valid passport
Paid tuition fee or granted scholarship
- Legal residence in country where application is submitted
- Earlier degree certificates and potential certificates of employment (both not required from degree students).

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: In 2021, Finland pledged to accept 1050 quota refugees.

Asylum-seekers: 1176 new applications in 2020 with an acceptance rate of 58 percent.

Main refugee nationalities: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Russia.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of Interior: Responsible for policies concerning migration and asylum.

Ministry of Education and Culture: Responsible for the planning and implementation of higher education policies, national budget proposals and Government decisions that apply to these. The ministry also had the lead on activities of the higher education system.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Responsible for issues related to development cooperation with third countries as well as visa-processes.

Embassies/ Consulates: Processing travel visa applications.

Finnish Immigration Service: Assesses student visa applications.

Higher Education Institution (HEI): Decides on admission criteria and student selection procedures for international students. In many cases, the HEI validates the competence and skills of foreign qualifications.

International Student's Office: Offers the international student academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

National Union of University Students in Finland (SUL): Engages in advocacy for national and international students' rights and interests.



Iceland

Population: 341,243 in 2020, 15.2% foreign born in 2020.
GDP Per Capita: €47,683

STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Enrolled in full-time study programme
- €1,434 expendable monthly income.
- Health insurance
- Above 18 years
- Valid passport A secure housing certificate (after arrival)
- Receipt for payment of the residence permit application.

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: 85 resettlement places in 2020 with the government intension to gradually increase the quota.

Asylum-seekers: 654 new asylum applicants in 2020 and in total 528 positive decisions that year.

Main refugee nationalities: Iraq, Venezuela, Syria.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of Justice: Responsible for policies related to migration and asylum.

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture: Responsible for the implementation of legislation as well the operation of higher education institutions.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Responsible for issues related to development cooperation with third countries as well as visa-related issues.

Embassies/ Consulates: Processing travel visa applications.

The Directorate of Immigration: Assesses applications for student visas from third country nationals.

Higher Education Institutions: Iceland has additional specific entry requirements to their study programmes (beyond the general entry requirements). There is no central admissions system in Iceland and applicants must apply directly to the university.

International Student's Office: Offers the international students' academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

The National Union of Students in Iceland (LIS): Engages in advocacy for students' rights and interests in Iceland.



STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Invitation letter from Latvian university
- €285 expendable monthly income.
- Place of residence in Latvia
- Fulfilled academic requirements
- Valid travel document
- Clear criminal record
- Paid the state duty fee.

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: Latvia does not currently have an annual resettlement quota.

Asylum-seekers: 130 asylum applications were lodged in 2020 and the acceptance rate that year was around 15%.

Main refugee nationalities: Syria, Afghanistan, Russia.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Turkey.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of the Interior: Responsible for policies related to migration and asylum.

Ministry of Education and Science: Responsible for the policies for higher education and research.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Responsible for policies regarding travel/entry visas as well as development cooperation with low income/ developing countries.

Embassies/ Consulates: Processing visa applications.

Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs: Assesses applications for student visas from third country nationals.

Higher Education Institutions: The admission procedure is not centralised in Latvia. Each higher education institution has its own admission board and selection criteria.

International Student's Office: Offers the international student academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

Student Union of Latvia: Engages in advocacy for students' rights and interests in Latvia.



STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Admissions letter from university
- €150 expendable monthly income.
- Valid passport
- Arranged accommodation prior to applying for visa-D
- If applying for a Temporary Residence Permit (TRP), a police clearance certificate from the home country is required.
- Health insurance policy (with minimum coverage of €6,000.00)

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: Lithuania does not have an annual resettlement programme but extended its participation in EU's resettlement programme until 31 December 2021, planning to admit up to 106 people.

Asylum-seekers: In 2020, Lithuania received 321 asylum applications, a 50 percent decrease compared to 2019. The acceptance rate was 25 percent.

Main refugee nationalities: Russia, Syria, Afghanistan.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of Interior: In charge of policies concerning migration and asylum.

Ministry of Education, Science and Sports: Responsible for policies regarding higher education.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Among others, responsible for policies regarding travel/entry visas as well as development cooperation with low income/ developing countries.

Embassies/ Consulates: Processing travel visa applications.

Migration Department (Ministry of Interior): Assesses student visa applications from international students.

Higher Education Institution (HEI): Admission criteria to study programmes are established by each HEI in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. Since 2003, 16 Lithuanian universities are members of the Association of Lithuanian Universities for Joint Admission (LAMA BPO).

International Student's Office: Offers the international student academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

Lithuanian National Union of Students (LSS): Engages in advocacy for students' rights and interests in Lithuania.



STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Valid passport
- Admitted to a university/college
- Paid tuition fees (if applicable)
- Sufficient funds for living
- Secured accommodation in Norway
- Residence permits for the last six months in the country of application.
- Circumstances in the home country must indicate the likelihood of the person returning home upon completion of studies.

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: 3,000 resettlement places annually since 2018.

Asylum-seekers: 1,387 asylum-seekers arrived in 2020. In the same year, Norway granted refugee status and subsidiary protection to 1061 individuals.

Main refugee nationalities: Syria, Eritrea, and Somalia.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Syria, Iran, and Turkey.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of Justice and Public Security: Responsible for matters relating to migration and asylum.

Ministry of Education and Research: Responsible for policies regarding higher education.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Among others, responsible for development cooperation with low income/developing countries as well as consular matters.

Directorate of Immigration: Assesses applications for student visas from third country nationals.

Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education: An agency under the Ministry of Education and Research, which recognizes foreign education and qualifications.

HEI: Each HEI handles application for admission to their institution.

International Student's Office: Offers the international student academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

National Union of Students (NSO): Engages in advocacy for students' rights and interests in Norway. Its goal is to ensure students' academic, social, and economic rights.



STUDY VISA REQUIREMENTS:

- Paid tuition fee
- Valid passport
- Sufficient funds for daily expenses
- Paid application fee (if applicable)
- Have, or have applied for, a health insurance (for studies for less than one year)
- Admitted to full-time studies in a programme or higher education courses, both requiring physical presence

ASYLUM:

Resettlement: 5,000 quota refugees annually since 2018.

Asylum-seekers: 12,991 in 2020 of which 7189 were accepted.

Main refugee nationalities: Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea.

Main asylum-seeking nationalities: Iran, Iraq and Syria.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Ministry of Justice: Among others, responsible for matters relating to migration and asylum policy.

Ministry of Education and Research: Among others, responsible for policies regarding higher education for international students.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Among others, responsible for development cooperation with low income/developing countries as well as consular matters.

Embassies/ Consulates: Processing travel visa applications.

Swedish Migration Agency: Assesses student visa applications from third country nationals.

Swedish Council for Higher Education: Recognizes foreign education and qualifications.

HEI: HEI's in Sweden decide the specific entry requirements to programmes.

International Student's Office: Offers international students' academic and practical support upon arrival at the university.

Swedish National Union of Students: Engages in advocacy for students' rights and interests in Sweden.

ANNEX 2

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UNHCR extends gratitude to all participants who contributed to this mapping exercise with their time and information.

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ANNEX 3

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ANNEX 4

RECOMMENDED READINGS

UNHCR RNB utilized the following documents as key reference material for this report. Accordingly, UNHCR RNB recommends them as further reading to deepen knowledge on complementary and education pathways respectively.

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