

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR REFUGEES AT YOUR SCHOOL/ UNIVERSITY

YOUNG CHAMPIONS



Stand up, speak out, and advocate for scholarships for refugees

Forced displacement has hindered refugees' access to education, with 48 per cent of all refugee children remaining out of school. Education is key to the future of individuals, communities and countries. It is protective and empowering, giving refugees the knowledge and skills to live productive, fulfilling and independent lives. Young supporters can make a big difference by advocating for refugee scholarships at their school or university!



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4 TYPES OF SCHOLARSHIPS

A scholarship is an amount of money given to cover someone's cost of studies. A scholarship can be partial or full and can help pay for tuition fees, educational material, food and rent, among other costs.

- **Peer to peer scholarship:** Scholarship funded by students and administered with student support (e.g. [ISOW](#))
- **University funded scholarship:** Scholarship funded by the institution itself.
- **Government funded scholarship:** Scholarship funded by a government (e.g. [DAFI](#), or [Catalan](#))
- **Donor funded scholarships:** Scholarship funded by a private donor.

8 STEPS TO ADVOCATE FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR REFUGEES

01

Find out if your school has a refugee scholarship programme

Does your school or university already offer scholarships for refugees? Some of them are mentioned here on [UNHCR's website](#). If your school already has a scholarship, contact the administration to learn more about it. You may be able to support and grow the existing programme! If not, go to step 2!

02

Learn about the importance of refugee education

Do some research into the importance of higher education in helping refugees thrive. Learn how education empowers refugees, provides routes to employment and self-sufficiency. You can refer to [UNHCR's website](#) and education reports for the latest facts and figures.

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03

Build your argument

After you have gathered basic facts from your research, focus on crafting an effective argument for refugee scholarships. Maintain a balance of rational and emotional elements. You can think about:

- How does creating a refugee scholarship align with the values of your school or university?
- How will a refugee scholarship make your school or university a better place?
- How can student advocates support the administration and refugee students?

Your proposal can include:

- A budget estimate that includes the cost for tuition as well as other basic needs such as housing, school materials and other relevant fees.
- The role of students like you in helping refugees integrate once they have received a scholarship.
- Refugee scholarship examples from other schools or universities.

04

Find strategic allies

It's time to put your argument to the test and return to the plan you crafted in Step 3! Reach out to older students, teachers and others who could be strategic allies, explain your objective and present your argument. Ask them for feedback on what could make your case stronger in the eyes of university leadership, incorporate their feedback and prepare for counterarguments in the face of obstacles.

05

Outreach

You might want to jump to step 6 and talk to your university leadership or you might want to build more momentum first. If so, here are some options to mobilize support from students and faculty:

- Create a flyer, a presentation or even a website with key messages and facts about refugee scholarships and your vision for the school.
- Consider creating a petition that students, faculty and university staff can sign to show support for the initiative. You can create flyers with a QR code redirecting to your petition.
- Harness the power of social media! Use your personal social media account, create a new account to promote your initiative or partner with an existing student club to promote your initiative.
- Think outside the box! Find creative ways to attract support, like setting up a stand at your school and distributing cookies to people who join your cause.



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06

Meet with university leadership

Time to lead. Write to your school's dean or university president and ask for a meeting. When you meet with university leadership, explain the importance of education in transforming the lives of refugees. Demonstrate the support you have garnered from the university community in order to make a compelling case for the creation of scholarships for refugees.

Be diplomatic. Try to understand the obstacles that your university might be facing and think about how to help overcome these obstacles. If the obstacles are financial, you might want to discuss whether the university can partner with donors, or if you can help launch a crowdfunding campaign.

Be persistent. Follow up with your university's administration to get an update on the status of their decision, and in the meantime keep inviting more people to join your cause. There is power in numbers!

07

Promote and support

If you have convinced your administration to offer one or more scholarships to refugees, kudos! You can ensure that applicants know about it and support them once they start studying!

- Let youth@unhcr.org know about the scholarship!
- Make sure your scholarship is on the [UNHCR Scholarship Opportunities page](#).
- Make sure your school or university sets up a webpage with relevant information about it.
- Contact refugee service providers and NGOs in your area and ask that they refer applicants.
- Help your university with the selection process
- Accompany the refugee student(s) when they come!

08

Submit your success story

Congratulations! Make sure to submit the scholarship on the [UNHCR Opportunities page](#) to help advertise it and contact us at youth@unhcr.org to share your story.



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Example of a refugee scholarship

Students at the Graduate Institute in Geneva, Switzerland, convinced their university to create a refugee scholarship. Now in its fourth year, the scholarship covers the cost of living in Geneva, with an additional tuition waiver.

Through their club, the students are involved in every step of the process, from promotion and outreach to increase the scholarship's visibility, to supporting refugees through the application process and accompanying them once they have enrolled. Continuous student involvement ensures that potential applicants are not falling through the cracks, and that scholarship recipients feel supported along the way.



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Impact of scholarships on refugees

Felix Sesay is a 24-year-old refugee who fled Sierra Leone as well as a nursing student living in Accra, Ghana. He is the recipient of a DAFI scholarship, given by UNHCR and donors to refugee and returnee students to earn an undergraduate degree in their country of asylum or home country.

When the coronavirus hit Ghana, Felix returned to Krisan refugee camp to put his nursing skills to good use by sharing safety measures with fellow refugees and helping students with schoolwork to make sure that they stay up to date with their lessons.



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