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STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR REFUGEES

Expanding complementary
pathways of admission
to Europe

ERN+ Scoping Paper

Co-funded by the
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The European Resettlement Network is a joint initiative coordinated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Its current project, co-funded by the European Union under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), supports the further development of resettlement and complementary forms of admission to the EU for those in need of international protection. The content and conclusions of this paper cannot necessarily be taken to represent the positions of each coordinating organisation, but serve to contribute to the debate on expanding the provision of protection-sensitive, sustainable European pathways of admission for refugees.

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Foreword

There are more than 65 million people forcibly displaced in the world as a result of violent conflict and persecution. More than 22 million of these are refugees in need of protection. With limited opportunities for voluntary repatriation and local integration, and few spaces made available for resettlement, other solutions for refugees in the form of safe and legal pathways of admission to third countries represent both a vital protection tool for those who need it most and a tangible way to show solidarity and responsibility sharing with countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees.

UNHCR estimates that 1.2 million refugees worldwide will be in need of resettlement in 2018.¹ While the need for resettlement of Syrians remains substantial at 40% of total projections, there are large numbers of other refugee populations in protracted or large-scale displacement situations who are also in need of resettlement, including in several African countries. Without viable alternatives, many refugees are choosing to move onwards, including along the Central Mediterranean route, across deserts and on dangerous sea journeys in an effort to reach safety. There is therefore an urgent need to establish new and additional opportunities to provide protection to refugees, while continuing to expand and strengthen resettlement, and to develop further possibilities for refugees' safe and legal admission to countries that have the capacity to provide this protection and to offer the conditions to lead productive and full lives.

In Europe, some progress is being made in expanding both the number of countries resettling as well as the places made available on an annual basis. Since July 2015, an unprecedented number of EU Member States voluntarily pledged to receive refugees through resettlement.² However, statistics show that Europe's

contribution to global resettlement remains modest, with just 18,175 refugees resettled to the European Union (EU) and Associate Member States in 2016.³ While the EU is working towards the establishment of a Union Resettlement Framework, it remains to be seen to which extent this will lead to a tangible increase in the number of refugees resettled to Europe.

Establishing safe and legal pathways of admission to complement resettlement programmes is therefore an essential step towards securing a meaningful response to the current unprecedented global displacement situation.

The need to provide increased and complementary pathways for refugee admission is reflected in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which was adopted by all 193 Member States of the United Nations at the UN General Assembly in September 2016. Countries, including the Member States of the European Union, expressed their intention to "expand the number and range of legal pathways available for refugees to be admitted to or resettled in third countries."⁴ In addition to resettlement, a number of forms of admission can make this goal a reality, including community-based sponsorship programmes, scholarships and visas for students, and the expansion of humanitarian admission programmes.⁵ Partnerships between governments, international organisations and civil society are indispensable to expand and develop such pathways, and several important initiatives are currently being undertaken in this respect.

1 See [UNHCR Project Global Resettlement Needs 2018](#)

2 The increase in the number of EU countries running resettlement programmes is due, in large part, to the agreement of 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland in July 2015 to resettle 22,504 persons under the [Conclusions of the Council of the European Union](#)

3 Persons resettled to the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Eurostat data on resettled persons by age, sex and citizenship, annual data (rounded) (11/07/2017). For context, a total of 125,835 persons were actually resettled globally in 2016, with the United States of America taking 78,340 and Canada 21,838 (see [UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2018](#))

4 [United Nations New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#), para 77

5 *Ibid.*, para 79

Over the last six years, the European Resettlement Network (ERN)⁶ has worked to develop and strengthen resettlement programmes in Europe by connecting a variety of actors involved in refugee resettlement. Recognising the need for new approaches, since 2016 the ERN has broadened its scope of activities to include research on complementary pathways of admission to Europe for refugees.

This paper accompanies two parallel publications on private/community-based sponsorship and humanitarian admission programmes,⁷ published under the activities of the EU-funded **ERN+ Project: Developing Innovative European Models for the Protection of Refugees and Providing Support to New Resettlement Countries**. As limited research has been conducted on the potential for complementary safe and legal pathways of refugee admission to the EU,⁸ the aim of these papers is to advance some key considerations with

respect to different complementary pathways, which the European Resettlement Network identifies as having potential for development in the European context. To do this, the papers draw on existing examples of admission programmes for refugees in Europe and elsewhere to present a first exploration of new and relevant initiatives.

As the publications demonstrate, pathways of admission for refugees often have commonalities and can even directly intersect. As such, no one model for complementary pathways can be considered in isolation, and programme definitions and priorities differ according to a range of political and legal factors, as well as the potential for partnerships with civil society organisations and other non-governmental actors. The publications aim to further guide discussions with a variety of relevant stakeholders, leading to more extensive feasibility research proposing recommendations for the development of such pathways in the EU.⁹



International Catholic Migration
Commission (ICMC) Europe



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

International Organization
for Migration (IOM)



Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for
Refugees (UNHCR)

⁶ www.resettlement.eu

⁷ The papers are available at www.resettlement.eu

⁸ Migration Policy Institute has nonetheless addressed this subject in recent publications such as *No Way Out? Making Additional Migration Channels Work for Refugees*, 2016, Elizabeth Collett, Paul Clewett, and Susan Fratzke; and *Tracing The Channels Refugees Use to Seek Protection in Europe*, 2017, Susan Fratzke and Brian Salant

⁹ Detailed feasibility studies on community-based sponsorship, humanitarian admission programmes and on study opportunities for refugees will be available from spring 2018 at www.resettlement.eu

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Abbreviations

CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DAFI	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
JISR	Japanese Initiative for the future of Syrian Refugees
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NOKUT	Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen (Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education)
SRP	Student Refugee Program
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

1. Introduction

1.1. THE NEED FOR COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS

There are 1.2 million people estimated to be in need of resettlement globally in 2018,¹⁰ but only a fraction of that figure is able to benefit from State implemented resettlement programmes. While resettlement remains one of the most important tools to meet the protection needs of refugees, in a world where the demand far outstrips the number of places available, complementary pathways of admission can provide further protection and solutions for refugees. This has been recognised by the Member States of the European Union (EU), who are among the 193 countries that adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, and thereby committed to expanding the number and range of third-country solutions for refugees.¹¹

Offering opportunities for refugees to arrive safely in the EU from first countries of asylum in the framework of a study programme represents one way to complement the efforts made by States to welcome refugees through resettlement and other complementary pathways of admission. Such opportunities can help to address the situation of refugees in first countries of asylum who have few prospects of attaining durable solutions in the form of safe continued stay and integration or voluntary return to their country of origin, nor of being resettled. In addition, tertiary education programmes offered in third countries can contribute to countering the need faced by refugees to undertake dangerous journeys in search of protection, while also demonstrating solidarity with countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees.

This paper is a preliminary exploration of the potential for student scholarship and study programmes in European Union Member

States to offer a response to the context outlined above. It draws on experience from countries inside and outside Europe where stakeholders have collaborated to offer scholarship opportunities welcoming refugees to new countries. An initial stocktaking exercise is combined with a reflection on the necessary protection standards for such programmes, as well as some initial central policy and programming considerations that intend to support the continuation of the debate on establishing protection-sensitive and sustainable scholarship programmes for refugees to arrive safely in the EU from refugee-hosting countries outside of Europe and take up a programme of study. This publication is part of a wider body of research by the European Resettlement Network, and is followed by a targeted feasibility study on developing higher education scholarship opportunities for refugees in the EU.¹²

1.2. HIGHER EDUCATION TOWARDS SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES

Quality higher education plays a critical role in situations of forced displacement as a means for young refugees to equip themselves with the tools to become self-reliant and build a meaningful future in line with their aspirations. It can have a tangible and potentially life-long impact on individuals and their families because it:

- ✓ Supports refugee graduates to achieve social integration and increased earnings leading to economic independence, maximising benefits to the individual as well as economic and social contributions to countries of study
- ✓ Enables graduates to be an important resource for their families and communities in the country of their study, the first country of asylum or their country of origin
- ✓ Develops human and social capital to contribute to peace-building and bring about future post-conflict reconstruction and economic development in countries of origin

¹⁰ See [UNHCR Project Global Resettlement Needs 2018](#)

¹¹ [United Nations New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#).

The term “third country” is used widely in this paper. It can have two meanings. Firstly, in the context of identifying solutions for refugees residing in countries of first asylum that are outside Europe, it indicates a State such as a Member State of the European Union that may agree to admit a refugee from such countries of first asylum. Secondly, in line with accepted usage in the EU, “third country” may also refer to countries other than the Member States of the European Union and its Associated States. For the purposes of this paper, the meaning is dependent on the context. This paper focuses on programmes that entail the selection and transfer of refugees from a country outside Europe to a Member State of the EU

¹² See www.resettlement.eu for European Resettlement Network publications

- ✓ Offers flexibility and mobility in the longer term regarding future residence and labour mobility opportunities for refugees

While the importance of higher education for refugees is clear, their access to it is severely limited. **Only one per cent of young refugees are in tertiary education, compared to 36 per cent globally.**¹³ Among the reasons for this are prohibitive costs, complex and inaccessible admission procedures to higher education institutions, a lack of accredited programmes, and most refugees' significant geographical distance from education opportunities.¹⁴

A number of refugee scholarship programmes outside the European Union have been established to respond to these challenges. Indeed, **the vast majority of scholarship programmes for refugees are provided in countries outside Europe already hosting large numbers of refugees.** Examples of such responses include the DAFI programme (German Academic Refugee Initiative Albert Einstein programme)¹⁵ and the regionally focused *Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians* (HOPES) Project, funded by the European Union.¹⁶

Notwithstanding the essential importance of continued support for these programmes, EU Member States can help to address the challenges and bridge the gaps by offering a greater number of scholarships for refugees to safely enter and study in Europe, while contributing to medium and long-term sustainable development goals. If provided a **safe and regulated avenue out of the uncertainties and risks associated with forced displacement**, and an opportunity to access **higher education in a safe environment**, eligible refugees stand a greater chance of being able to support themselves and their families in a sustainable way.

Recognising the **talent, determination and life experience of refugees** can moreover provide States' higher education

institutions with an opportunity to engage more deeply in the national and European debate on innovative responses to refugee protection and integration, while promoting inclusive societies and better public understanding of refugee issues. Such outcomes align with the EU's policy objectives, for example as articulated in the Valletta Action Plan¹⁷ on migration, agreed by EU Member States and African countries in November 2015.

The **2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development**¹⁸ recognises that quality education for all, including higher education, plays a critical role for sustainable, peaceful development.¹⁹ The New York Declaration and its annexed **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework**²⁰ specifically pledge to "*promote tertiary education, skills training and vocational education*" and underlines that "*in conflict and crisis situations, higher education serves as a powerful driver for change, shelters and protects a critical group of young men and women by maintaining their hopes for the future, fosters inclusion and non-discrimination, and acts as a catalyst for the recovery and rebuilding of post-conflict countries*".²¹

Given the infrastructure, resources and objectives for cooperation and internationalisation of the tertiary education sector across the European Union, Member States are well positioned to create avenues for refugee students currently not residing in Europe to access European higher education institutions. **Offering student scholarship and study programmes for refugees as a complementary pathway of admission can serve as a concrete protection tool for the EU to implement its international commitments.**

13 UNHCR, 2017, *Left Behind: Refugee Education in Crisis*. In addition, only 61% of refugee children attend primary school, while globally enrolment rates stand at 91%. Only 23% of refugee adolescents attend secondary school, compared to 84% globally

14 UNHCR/UNESCO, May 2016, *No More Excuses. Provide Education to All Forcibly Displaced People*

15 Given the long-established success of the DAFI programme, it can serve as a useful source of information when considering the establishment of protection-sensitive higher education scholarship programmes. See www.unhcr.org/dafi-scholarships

16 For more information, please visit: www.daad.de/hopes_short-description

17 The [Valletta Action Plan](#) was agreed on the occasion of the Valletta Summit on migration between European and African governments in November 2015

18 For more information on the 2030 Agenda, please visit: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld:Goal4ofthe2030Agenda> on education underlines the importance of equal access to quality education at all levels, including for vulnerable and conflict-affected groups. Target 4.b specifically speaks to tertiary education and the importance of scholarships

19 The 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report '*Education for People and Planet: Creating sustainable futures for all*' is fully dedicated to demonstrate the links between education, human capital and sustainable development

20 The [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework](#) (CRRF) in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants is already being applied in a number of countries. The Global Compact on Refugees, to be presented in 2018, will build on the CRRF and maintain its objectives

21 *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, 19 September 2016, page 15 (para 82).

2. Scholarship Programmes for Refugees

The global consultations around the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants have **increased awareness in Europe of the importance of higher education for refugees**. In recent years, a number of initiatives both in Europe and elsewhere have sought to facilitate access to higher education for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection and to provide scholarship opportunities. Recognising the value of offering higher education to refugees, there is growing interest in the EU among education institutions, student groups and civil society on the whole to combine study opportunities with safe passage to Europe under the framework of complementary pathways.

While some existing international complementary pathway initiatives offer a durable solution in the form of student scholarships combined with permanent residence with a view to long-term integration, other initiatives have been developed with the aim of supporting refugee students to contribute to post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building in the longer term by providing a short-term but secure opportunity. Current and previous examples of scholarship programmes that offer refugees the chance to safely depart from resource-constrained first countries of asylum and to take up study in a new country can provide important experience and information that can inform considerations of refugee protection, programme design and implementation.

This section first highlights four existing European schemes in the Czech Republic, France, and Germany before presenting international examples of experience from a nascent Japanese initiative as well as the decades of experience from Canada's Student Refugee Program. The programmes in Japan and Canada are presented in more detail due to the large amount of publicly available information.

Although many more EU initiatives could also be mentioned, four have been selected to draw attention to

specific issues that can inform the discussion on the range of possible modalities for providing scholarships. It should be noted that some initiatives, particularly in Europe, have only recently been launched and implementation experience is therefore still limited.

2.1. INITIATIVES IN EUROPE

In Europe, a strong desire has been demonstrated by students and throughout academic institutions to respond to the global displacement crisis, particularly to the consequences of the conflict in Syria. Student projects have sprung up to support access to education and integration for refugees on campus, and university communities have been pushing for refugees to be welcomed into tertiary education. The European Universities Association maintains a Refugees Welcome Map,²² presenting just some of the European initiatives and activities of higher education institutions and related networks and organisations supporting refugee students. Further examples among the many from civil society include the Student Action for Refugees group (STAR),²³ which advocates in the United Kingdom for refugee access to higher education, and the international Scholars at Risk Network.²⁴

Some EU Member States, as well as the European Commission, have responded by partnering with higher education institutions to offer ad hoc opportunities for refugees, mostly from Syria, to come to Europe for their studies. Currently, scholarship programmes that involve the admission of refugees from outside Europe are being offered or are planned to be offered in a number of countries, including by the Governments of **Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia**.

²² refugeeswelcomemap.eua.be

²³ www.star-network.org.uk

²⁴ www.scholarsatrisk.org

The Erasmus Mundus programme of the European Union has also facilitated scholarships for refugees to a number of European universities under the programme's funding package, though these were largely implemented without any coordinating organisation beyond the receiving institution.²⁵ Other similar initiatives by non-governmental organisations or universities have also been seen in **France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.**²⁶

While it would be impossible to present the various elements of all the scholarship programmes in Europe, four examples from the Czech Republic, France and Germany have been selected for the purposes of this paper to provide an overview of some European approaches taken to date.²⁷ The three government and one civil society programme demonstrate the geographic diversity of initiatives in Europe and constitute a snapshot of practice that highlights many common factors reflected in other programmes. These programmes have been established to respond to the needs of young refugees from Syria. Nonetheless, the initiatives can offer insight into how to build **longer-term, sustainable and more protection-sensitive refugee scholarship programmes in Europe as a solution for diverse nationalities.**

As noted, due to the limited availability of public information on the different European programmes and their implementation, it is not possible to present each programme in detail. An overview of certain key parameters of the four programmes is presented in Table 1 and the following subsections. The information is based on publicly available material and interviews with stakeholders.

25 For further information on a range of scholarship programmes, including the European Union [Erasmus scholarships](#), see the [ERN+ Webinar page](#) on this subject.

26 Examples include the partnership between the region of Occitanie-Pyrénées-Méditerranée, universities in Toulouse and Montpellier and the *Association Démocratie & Entraide en Syrie, Ghosn Zeitoun* (France), a pilot project from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Spark (Netherlands), the [Global Platform for Syrian Students Emergency Scholarship Programme](#) (Portugal) [Windle Trust International](#) and [Jusoor](#) (UK), and pilot projects by the University of Barcelona and the regional authorities of Catalonia (Spain).

27 All programmes are relevant and their experience will contribute to further discussions. The decision to illustrate the four examples represent no specific endorsement or more or less favourable assessment.

Table 1: At a Glance - Programmes from the Czech Republic, France and Germany. For information on the scholarship package and costs covered, see Table 5 in this document's Annex: Value of the scholarship package (costs covered)

Example Countries Features	Czech Republic	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	German Leadership for Syria	French Civil Society Regional Programme
Managing Agency	No clear designated body	Campus France	DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)	Démocratie et Entraide en Syrie, Ghosn Zeitoun
Country of Selection	Jordan	Lebanon	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey	Jordan
Funding Source	Government	Government	Government	Mixed: Regional Administration, universities, donations and fundraising, NGOs
Period	2016-2021	2017 - unknown	2014-2018	2017 - ongoing
Number of Students	18	34 arrivals since October 2016; selection ongoing	221 (implemented)	20 (out of 200 since 2014) ²⁸
Scholarship length	7 years: 1 year language tuition + 1 year extension 5 years degree studies	12 to 36 months	As required. Generally 2 years (MA) or 3.5 years (PhD)	Support committed for the first year, until other regular funding and support options become available
Family support	No	not explicitly stated	Yes	Possibilities for family reunification for students granted refugee status
Study level supported	Bachelor, Master	3rd year Bachelor, Master	Bachelor (continued), Master, PhD	Undergraduate and Bachelor mostly
Visa/Status	Permit for long-term stay	Student Visa	Student Visa	Student Visa
Language training	1 year (+ 1 year extension)	up to 1 year	3-6 months	1 year, can be extended
Language of study	Czech	French	German and English (English required)	French
Consideration of vulnerability in eligibility criteria	special attention to the most severely persecuted groups of citizens and to gender equality stated as a	No information	Registration with UNHCR required, no additional vulnerability criteria	Selection by Universities informed by consideration for those in most difficult situations; special consideration for gender equality

2.1.1. “New Elite for Syria – a Czech Government Grant Programme for Syrian Refugees”

The Czech Republic, alongside countries such as Hungary and Slovakia, has a long tradition of welcoming international students to their universities. In response to the mass displacement brought about by the Syria crisis, these countries decided to use this experience to welcome into their countries young refugees that had been displaced from Syria to neighbouring countries.

In 2015, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed a new programme with the stated aim of “enabling university education to future Syrian elites”.²⁹ The Czech Republic worked with Caritas in Jordan and UNHCR to identify possible candidates. Syrian refugees in Jordan whose study had been interrupted due to their flight were selected by the local Czech embassy, and arrived in the Czech Republic later in 2015 to begin a six-year scholarship, with the first year consisting of a full-time language programme to acquire the Czech language. Where more time was needed to acquire the Czech language, provisions were put in place to extend the scholarships.

²⁸ This is one of the programmes of the NGO in 2017 dedicated to Syrian students in Jordan. Since 2014, more than 200 Syrian and Palestinian refugee students benefited from different programmes implemented by the NGO.

²⁹ See [Prague Post](#), 3 May 2015

It appears that the Czech programme considered the vulnerability of the students as a criterion informing the selection process, and sought to take into account the “most oppressed population groups and gender equality”.³⁰ No further information is available on the use of this criterion in practice, but highlights some scholarship providers’ motivations to strike a balance between young refugees’ preparedness to embark upon study in a new country, their potential role in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as need for a solution to their current situation in first countries of asylum.

2.1.2. “Scholarship Programme of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Syrian Students living in Lebanon”

In **France**, the Scholarship Programme of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Syrian students living in Lebanon³¹ was established following a commitment by the French President announced during a visit to Lebanon in 2016. It is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs³² and operates in close collaboration with the French embassy in Lebanon. Campus France,³³ the French national agency for the promotion of higher education, international student services, and international mobility, is responsible for managing the programme. This programme does not explicitly identify a need for a third-country solution among the selection criteria, but rather seeks to prioritise the education of young Syrians “who will represent the pillars of tomorrow’s reconstruction process in Syria, when the conditions of safety are established for their safe return to their country.”³⁴

The initiative mostly aims to offer scholarships for Master’s programmes, which constitute a majority of the spaces provided. The programme is, however, also open to Bachelor-level candidates to complete a final year of interrupted undergraduate study. In the case of

scholarships being granted for final year Bachelor studies, the length of the support provided under the grant will be extended until the completion of the second year of Master’s study.

The advertised scholarship package is comprehensive.³⁵ It covers the cost of travel to France, while also committing to support refugees in the application procedure for obtaining a visa. Tuition fees are waived, and upon arrival in France the scholarship offer includes health insurance coverage, a EUR 767 monthly allowance and support to find accommodation. It is not known how accommodation costs are covered, and whether these must be met by the student from within the monthly allowance. Finally, scholarship holders are promised a contact person to support them with administrative procedures and to monitor the progress of the study programme.

Responsibility for programme implementation is centralised, and Campus France oversees and sometimes assumes the support provided to students and coordinates the involvement of different actors involved in the initiative. The French government has pledged to admit 1,000 Syrians through student visas³⁶ although it is not known if these 1,000 places will all be offered through government scholarships, or as part of initiatives such as those described in section 2.1.4. Before the conflict in Syria, France used to issue more than 400 student visas annually to Syrians.

2.1.3. German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) “Leadership for Syria”

In 2014, the DAAD initiated a programme to offer the possibility to study in Germany for Syrians and persons formally habitually resident in Syria affected by the crisis. It is funded by the Federal Foreign Office. Applicants needed to be registered with UNHCR in a country outside the European Union, or be seeking or have been

30 *ibid*

31 The call for applications is available on the [website](#) of the initiative’s partner Campus France.

32 The French government provides an overview of existing scholarship programmes on their [website](#)

33 www.campusfrance.org/en

34 See the [Call for Applications](#)

35 See *ibid*. For more information on the scholarship package provided under the programmes presented in this paper, see Table 5 in this document’s Annex: *Value of the scholarship package (costs covered)*

36 See UNHCR, [Resettlement and Other Admission Pathways for Syrian Refugees](#)

granted international protection in Germany. In total, 221 students were supported with scholarships under the programme.³⁷

The DAAD's long experience in working with refugees led to a comprehensive and carefully planned programme. Applicants were provided with support to obtain travel documents to enter Germany in case they were not in possession of a valid passport, and a detailed explanation of the criteria and the application process were published online.³⁸

The scholarship scheme was open to all fields of study and to all courses currently offered at German universities with the exception of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, law, fine arts, music and architecture. The focus of the programme was to provide a study place for young people with outstanding talents and "who have the potential to benefit from the educational offer and rebuild Syria."³⁹ As part of the programme, an extra-curricular course was arranged, through which the scholarship holders could network and benefit from activities reinforcing their formal study courses. Despite the focus on the contribution to a future Syria, the ongoing nature of the crisis has led to a need for flexibility from the German authorities, and DAAD is actively seeking to provide options for the students upon graduation.

Unlike most other programmes in Europe, DAAD and the German government granted permission to successful applicants to bring their spouse and children to Germany. Maintaining the family unit can have a profound impact on students' ability to settle and concentrate on their studies, as they can be assured that their closest family members are safe and provided for. While family unity can ease the integration process, DAAD also provided for an intensive four-month German course so as to facilitate students' integration into German society.⁴⁰

2.1.4. Civil Society Leadership in France

Not all of the scholarship programmes offered in Europe have been at the initiative of governments. As mentioned, individual higher education institutions or other civil society groups have also taken the lead in offering scholarship programmes. One example is a French project initiated in 2013 by the independent NGO *Démocratie et Entraide en Syrie*, Ghosn Zeitoun.⁴¹ The project is based on a partnership between regional authorities, universities and NGOs. The first initiative undertaken under the project was for 25 students in 2014 and was run in collaboration with the French Administrative Department of Val de Marne, the University of Paris-Est Créteil, France terre d'asile (a national asylum NGO) and the CROUS (the social affairs body of universities, managing student housing). Most recently, in 2017, the project brought students to France under two initiatives, one of which is presented briefly in this section.

In collaboration with the administrative Regional Council (Conseil régional: the elected assembly of a French Region) of Occitanie / Pyrénées-Méditerranée, the universities of Paul Valéry in Montpellier and Fédérale in Toulouse and France terre d'asile, among other actors, this programme offered scholarships to 20 Syrian refugees from Jordan starting in 2017. The civil society group approached universities and other actors to galvanise support for refugee scholarships, with the programming aiming to offer mainly undergraduate programmes for Bachelor study. Working with UNHCR on the ground in Jordan to help identify possible candidates registered with UNHCR, the applications submitted by Syrian candidates were assessed by the two partner universities and *Démocratie et Entraide en Syrie*, prioritising the cases most in need on the basis of application files and on-site interviews, guided by gender parity considerations.⁴²

The successful applicants then renewed their passports and applied for a student visa, with arrangements having been made through the NGO's engagement with the

37 See [DAAD](#)

38 The DAAD published a detailed, clear Question and Answer document for prospective applicants. See www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/stipendien/formulare/faq-syria.pdf

39 See the [DAAD website](#)

40 Various elements of the programme are presented from the perspective of scholarship holders on the [DAAD webpages](#)

41 Information on the programme activities is available on the [inhere Project website](#) (in English) and the [Campus France website](#) (in French). See also the NGO's [Facebook page](#)

42 In 2017, the beneficiaries included 6 female students for the Occitanie-Jordan programme (of a total of 20) and 11 female students in the City of Paris programme (of a total of 25)

French Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and the Interior Ministry to ensure the issuing of the visa, as well as with UNHCR to ensure that exit permission from Jordan was granted. Upon arrival, students submit an asylum application. They also begin an intensive French language programme offered by the partner universities to achieve the level required for studies, which begin one year later.

Financial and other support for the programme is provided by a wide range of actors. The Regional Council offers a major contribution, complemented by universities, France terre d'asile and by private donors. This financing covers a monthly allowance of EUR 500 for the student, the airplane ticket fees, the initial settlement costs, financial guarantees on accommodation, social security and registration fees at universities, if applicable. The French student housing body CROUS, a partner of the programme, offers students lodging that has to be paid by the student, although a partial reimbursement is made by the French government social welfare body, as is the case for all low income persons in France, including non-nationals. A partnership with the Conférence des Présidents d'Universités (CPU – the national body representing tertiary education institutions, composed of their directors) ensures that previous college or university degrees are granted the proper equivalence in the French education system and that the students have access to an accredited university, preferably in the same initial welcoming region and group of universities. The programme is open to all fields of study, including medicine and arts.

In principle, the financial support is in place for twelve months, during which time students apply for asylum with the French authorities. Beneficiaries of refugee status in France may avail themselves of significantly reduced fees for university study, and so upon the granting of refugee status, students arriving under the programme have access to a five-year scholarship from the CROUS social affairs.

This initiative, spearheaded by a dedicated NGO, demonstrates how an active civil society leader can collaborate with the relevant actors to launch programmes, including guaranteeing the support of the government. The NGO has also offered further similar programmes in 2017 including an initiative in partnership with the City of Paris, which saw 25 Syrian and Palestinian students arrive from Syria, Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt.

2.2. NON-EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES

Outside Europe, further insight can be gained into the range of approaches taken to welcome refugees into new countries in the framework of a scholarship programme. Experience from Canada's long established programme can provide an important reference point, and Japan's recent experience highlights good practice in robust planning and a protection-sensitive approach, while demonstrating the possibilities for new programmes to emerge in contexts less experienced with refugee reception. There is considerable public information available on the programmes presented in this section, particularly on Canada, which allows for a more detailed look at their practice. The following two examples are therefore presented in greater depth than the foregoing European programmes.

2.2.1. Japanese Initiative for the Future of Syrian Refugees

The **Japanese Initiative for the Future of Syrian Refugees (JISR)** was announced in 2016 and the first group of students was selected in June 2017. In August 2017, 19 refugee students left Jordan and Lebanon for Japan. As family members were entitled to accompany the refugee students, the Japanese programme has seen 36 persons admitted to Japan under the programme. The JISR is managed by JICA, the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Careful planning and collaboration efforts with UNHCR have helped to establish the foundations for a modest but robust programme, with a rigorous selection process and a comprehensive support package. Significant consideration has also been given to refugee protection and short- to medium-term solutions. As the programme is new, the implementation experience as well as the experience of sponsored students in Japan, cannot yet be measured. However, this information will be important to understand how, in practice, the JISR will facilitate successful reception and integration of the sponsored students, especially given Japan's limited experience with welcoming refugees. The ability of stakeholders in Japan to provide the

necessary support to arriving students and their families throughout their stay will be highly important.

Approach: JISR is a government-led programme for the period 2016-2024, with the aim of accepting 20 students per year over the next five years. Its objective is to help build capacity and leadership for Syria's peacebuilding and reconstruction, once the conditions are in place. Fostering intercultural understanding is also a motivation. JISR seeks to encourage students to integrate into Japanese society, especially by finding employment after graduation.

Eligibility: JISR targets Syrian refugees between 22 and 39 years of age who already hold a Bachelor's degree, and are registered with UNHCR.

Process: The call for applications was widely advertised using posters, online listings, announcements through partners, and through bulk text messaging. Applicants are required to submit a research plan and identify a university and supervisor in their application, but they are not allowed to contact universities for information. Applications are submitted to UNHCR offices in Jordan and Lebanon and then referred to the Japanese government. JISR proposes prioritized fields of study relevant for the objectives of the programme. The selection process is highly rigorous and organised in several steps over four months, including English and Mathematics exams, and web-based interviews with universities in Japan. Before departure, students and their family members took part in an orientation day and, upon arrival in Japan, were enrolled in a three and a half week post-arrival orientation programme.

Costs and Support: Support is provided for a maximum of three years. This covers two years of Master level studies and, in necessary cases, up to one year as 'research student' to prepare for the masters-level entrance exam. Fully funded by government resources, it covers all costs related to travel to Japan, daily life and health care. Students can bring their spouse and children, and are entitled to receive family allowances, support for housing, school enrolment, life counselling and language training for their family members. Beneficiaries are issued a student visa, which will, in principle, be converted to a longer

stay permit in the event that they are unable to return to the country of asylum or origin. After the period of study, individuals are required to provide for themselves and their families. The programme includes Japanese language training, support to find internships, and an introduction to Japanese companies, which can help to access employment and pave the way towards lasting solutions.

Good Practice: JISR, in a similar way to the German Leadership for Syria programme, supports close family members to accompany the selected student. This is particularly significant for young women who may be encouraged to apply as they otherwise may be reluctant or unable to travel without a family member (male relative) and/or have family obligations. Application forms and guidelines are available online in English and provide comprehensive information to applicants about the programme.⁴³ Through its programme design, JISR demonstrates an intention to support meaningful integration and options for lasting solutions. The implementation team has also actively engaged in an assessment of the nascent programme with UNHCR, seeking to identify lessons learned and planning for improvements to the next selection phase.

2.2.2. Student Refugee Program in Canada

The **Student Refugee Program (SRP)** managed by the **World University Service of Canada (WUSC)**⁴⁴ was established in 1978 and has since supported more than 1,700 refugee students to arrive in Canada with permanent residence status and pursue tertiary education. It combines higher education opportunities with a permanent relocation to Canada for young refugees in need. The Canadian programme is of particular relevance because it:

- ✓ offers lessons learned from almost **forty years of experience** with scholarships
- ✓ provides **a pathway to citizenship**

⁴³ For more information please visit: www.jica.go.jp/syria/english/office/others/jisr.html

⁴⁴ For more information, please visit: srp.wusc.ca/about

- ✓ is an established programme based on **student, university, community and volunteer engagement** and commitment
- ✓ helps sponsored students to **become self-sufficient**
- ✓ offers additional admission places that are **complementary** to the government's regular resettlement programme
- ✓ engages with **many different partners** to ensure the functioning of the programme both in Canada and before arrival
- ✓ pays specific attention to **pre-departure orientation** and **arrival support**
- ✓ is **predictable and long-term**, facilitating robust and sustainable planning

Approach: Scholarships are linked to Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees programme,⁴⁵ and based on a **comprehensive settlement and integration approach and a public-private partnership**. The responsibilities of relevant groups and the government are clearly defined. The programme enables an annual average of 130 refugee students to arrive and study in Canada, and more than 80 post-secondary academic institutions participate in the programme. An agreement with the Canadian government's department for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) allows WUSC to identify young refugees in need of a solution outside of their current country of asylum, who are then submitted to IRCC for approval.

WUSC Local Committees implement the programme, which actively engages more than 600 students from Canada in the peer-to-peer process.⁴⁶ The Local Committees are collaborative, campus-based groups

that consist of Canadian students, faculty and staff, and programme alumni raise funds and awareness of the programme on their campus and in their community. The Committees are remarkable in that they foster active engagement of private citizens, particularly youth, across Canada in the process of admitting and supporting refugees.

Eligibility: Refugees aged 17 to 25 years and residing in Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon and Malawi are eligible to apply if they meet the criteria for Canada's private sponsorship and refugee admission programmes.⁴⁷ There is no limitation on the eligibility of different nationalities, with refugees from 39 countries of origin having benefited since the programme started. Candidates need to have copies of their secondary school and/or university/college transcripts, and meet a 'minimum level of English or French language proficiency'.⁴⁸ Applicants must be single and without dependents. According to WUSC, the sponsorship of dependents would exceed the financial capacity of the groups that sponsor and support students, and slow down the process.

Process:⁴⁹ The process from application to arrival can take up to 18 months. WUSC and local partners select suitable candidates based on application packs submitted to them by refugees, language tests and interviews. The WUSC Local Committees in Canada negotiate admission with their education institutions, submit the immigration forms to IRCC for the selected refugees, and act on behalf of the candidate until their arrival. In the meantime, in the country of asylum, the selected candidate participates in language and computer classes, academic research projects, Canadian life courses, and other pre-departure activities. They also receive a guidebook to prepare themselves.⁵⁰ Canadian student volunteers who work overseas support the pre-departure activities and other organisations support pre-departure preparation, such as IOM with its Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) programme.

45 For more detailed information on Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSR), please see: European Resettlement Network, 2017, *Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement: Private Sponsorship in Europe*

46 For details on how the WUSC Local Committees work, please see: World University Service of Canada, November 2015, *The Student Refugee Programme: Guide for Local Committees*

47 Resettlement from outside Canada: www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/index.asp

48 See WUSC, *The Student Refugee Program A guide for Canadian Universities, Colleges and Cegeps*.

49 Please see pages 8 and 9 in *ibid* for an illustration of the process.

50 WUSC, 2007, *Pre-Departure Guide for WUSC Sponsored Students*. Almost Everything You Wanted to Know about Living and Learning in Canada but were Afraid to Ask.

The candidate will undergo an interview with the IRCC, and medical and security clearances with the Canadian High Commission, after which the visa and travel documents are provided for the student to travel to Canada where he or she will receive permanent residence status upon arrival.

Partners on the ground, for example NGOs that work in education, language training for refugees and with youth groups, support the programme in outreach and the selection process. Representatives from the host governments, such as Ministries for Education, can verify the authenticity of transcripts and certificates of the applicants.

Costs and Support: Financial (i.e. income), administrative and integration support are offered by the sponsorship group in the first 12 months. The WUSC Local Committees establish a sponsorship model according to the opportunities on their local campus and they play a critical role in offering day-to-day social and academic support. The costs of the programme are covered through a combination of private fundraising in the form of donations and levies on tuition fees as well as in-kind material assistance or waivers regarding costs for tuition, books, accommodation and meals. Access to health care is provided by the government and supplemented through a medical insurance plan that is available to all Canadian students and permanent residents enrolled at a higher education institution who do not otherwise have private insurance.

The Committees welcome and support the sponsored students and help them to adjust to life in Canada. The Committees connect the new students with academic advisors and tutors, and link them to free computer or other learning programmes offered on campus. Many campuses have pre-identified employment opportunities in order to support the transition of sponsored students to self-sufficiency and help them gain part-time Canadian work experience. Towards the end of the 12 months of sponsorship, the student is supported to make a choice for the next steps best suited to his or her situation and studies. At the end of the sponsorship period, refugee students have the same access as Canadian students to student loans, the possibility of bursaries and other

scholarships, and/or can take up part-time work to support themselves. Access to the public welfare system is ensured where necessary.

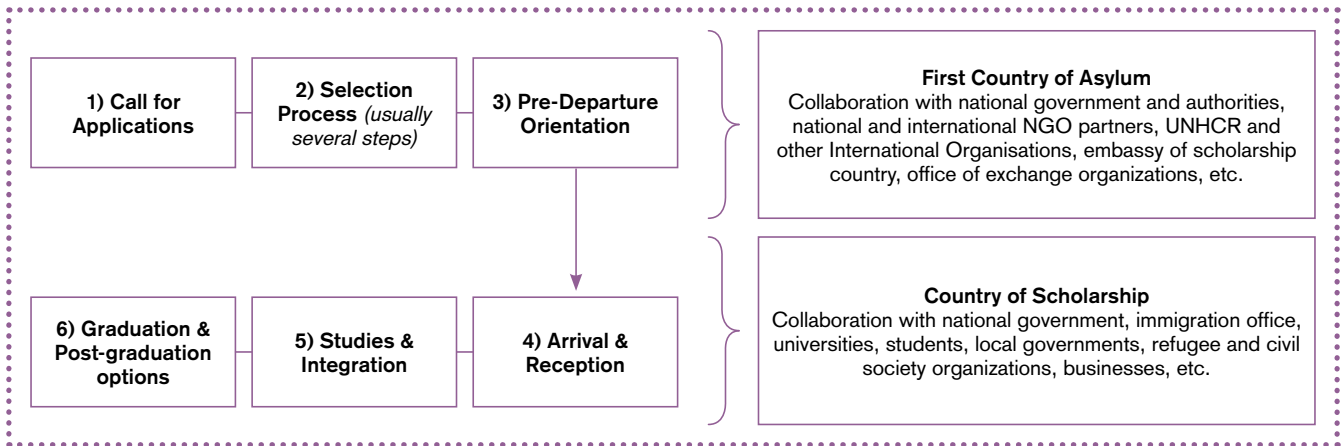
Good practice: The SRP has reaped rewards both for refugees and Canadian society by increasing Canada's highly educated work force, supporting self-reliance for refugees, fostering cultural diversity, and encouraging open and welcoming communities that support refugee protection.⁵¹ Good practices that have helped to maintain a successful programme are, for example: (i) the unique **youth-to-youth sponsorship model and engagement of students** and student groups in Canada, community-buy in, interlinking support from other programmes managed by WUSC, and capacity building and training activities for Local Committees; (ii) **committed partners** that ensure funding, implementation and institutional support in Canada and the countries of asylum;⁵² and (iii) the attention given to a **comprehensive pre-departure preparation** and **intensive support at arrival** and throughout the first year.

51 World University Service of Canada, 2007, *Fostering Tomorrow's Global Leaders: An Evaluation of the WUSC Student Refugee Program*

52 Funding partner: Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development; Implementing Partners are Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Government of Québec, Windle Trust Kenya, UNHCR, and Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS); a list of institutional partners in each Province of Canada can be found at wusc.ca/resources

3. Key Safeguards & Considerations for Protection and Programme Design

Illustration 1: Sample of main phases of scholarship programme for refugees



This section serves as a brief introduction to a number of recommended key considerations for embarking upon the establishment of third-country scholarships for refugees. It is based both on existing guidance from UNHCR relating to the provision of higher education opportunities for refugees, as well as an analysis of European and international experience, including the examples presented in Section 2 of this paper. This section begins by highlighting the **key minimum protection safeguards** to ensure that scholarship programmes do not jeopardise the legal status, protection or wellbeing of refugees. This is followed by core **programming and design considerations for the establishment of comprehensive and sustainable programmes**. While not exhaustive, the considerations presented in this section can help to further the discussions on how to establish a protection-sensitive and sustainable third country scholarship programme for refugee students in European Union Member States.

3.1. MAINSTREAMING PROTECTION STANDARDS

Many displacement situations are characterised by their protracted nature⁵³ as well as a lack of a secure legal status, the inability to access employment or basic services including education and health, and a precarious situation that impacts basic rights and can expose refugees, including young refugees, to trafficking, different forms of violence, exploitation and abuse.⁵⁴

Although many young refugees have the same potential and ability as any other international student to study in Europe, the fact that they are refugees influences the design of programmes to take into account their particular context and protection needs, and their experience during flight and displacement. First, refugees in countries of first asylum may need particular support to identify reliable and secure scholarship opportunities

53 Protracted refugee situations are understood by UNHCR to refer to refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries. See UNHCR, 2004, 'Protracted Refugee Situations'

54 UNHCR, 2017, *Child and Youth Protection*.

Table 2: Key Protection Safeguards

1)	1) Assistance and support to obtain valid travel documents and visas, and to exit countries of first asylum;	5)	Prospects to remain legally beyond the period of study if needed for protection purposes, or in the case of discontinuation of studies, including access to asylum where needed;
2)	2) Informed consent by refugees, with transparent communication of any consequences that departure from the first country of asylum may have on re-entry or return to that country in the future;	6)	Respect for family unity, without undue separation of family members;
3)	3) Access to a legal status and stay in the country where the scholarship is provided for the duration of studies, including access to basic rights and services;	7)	Measures to ensure that the psychosocial well-being of refugees is not jeopardized through participation in the scholarship;
4)	4) Protection against <i>refoulement</i> (expulsion or return to a country where the refugee student may be at risk of persecution, or where such removal would lead to an individual's risk of torture and other serious human rights violations); ⁵⁶	8)	Adequate guarantees regarding the welfare of refugees to ensure against hardship or destitution.

and prepare an application. Beyond this, putting in place certain safeguards in the provision of scholarships to EU Member States as elsewhere can ensure that the programme is sensitive to the protection of refugees. These include, among other things, support to obtain the necessary documents to travel to the country of study, clear and guaranteed legal status in that country throughout the study period, access to psycho-social support services and legal counselling where required (e.g. with regard to legal status, family reunification, employment rights, freedom of movement etc.), language, integration and mentoring support, as well as secure and realistic options upon and after graduation.

Table 2 above sets out the **minimum protection safeguards**, which are informed by UNHCR publications⁵⁵ on this subject as well as experience from existing and previous practice. They can ensure that third country scholarship programmes provide a meaningful solution for refugees, while not jeopardising their safety, protection or wellbeing. These safeguards are relevant to all stages of the scholarship programme (selection, pre-departure and arrival, study period, graduation and post-graduation).

⁵⁵ See, inter alia, UNHCR's 2014 [Guidance Note on safeguards against unlawful or irregular removal of refugees and asylumseekers](#)

⁵⁶ See, in particular, the checklist for third-country scholarship providers, in UNHCR, 2015, [Higher Education Considerations for Refugees in Countries affected by the Syria and Iraq Crises](#), page 7.

3.2. MAKING OPPORTUNITIES ACCESSIBLE TO REFUGEES WHO NEED THEM MOST

Young refugees who are already advanced in their education can be ambitious to start or continue higher education. As mentioned, in host countries they often lack the financial support to access tertiary education. However, due to their displacement, their original academic records may not be available or their previous qualifications and documents may not be recognised or cannot be verified.⁵⁷ Due to the interruption or prolongation of their education, refugees also may be older than other students when they are ready to start tertiary studies. In addition, refugees fulfilling programmes' eligibility criteria may be married with children when they apply for a scholarship, adding to their responsibilities

⁵⁷ The Canadian SRP works with Canadian authorities to rebuild the portfolios of education credentials through interviews and assessments for refugees already in Canada. Similar initiatives to facilitate recognition of qualifications have been put in place in Europe. The SRP accepts certification from distance learning programmes provided by accredited universities, e.g. from the US and looks further into creating solutions through distance and blended-learning programmes for refugees to earn certificates from Canadian or other institutions. The [Connected Learning Consortium for Higher Education for Refugees](#) explores similar innovative avenues for refugees to earn certificates from accredited institutions to allow them to apply, for example for scholarships. The Consortium has brought together [key organizations](#) that are working for provide digital higher education opportunities to refugee learners in conflict and crisis settings.

and leading to a natural desire not to be separated from family members. Each case may be different in terms of protection or special needs, psychological and personal issues. These circumstances and challenges can be addressed in the design of requirements and procedures for application and selection, admission to the education institution in Europe and the support offered during the scholarship period.

As observed in existing practice, the selection criteria and application requirements are usually widely communicated in a call for applications through local partners, schools, social media or online portals. Clear communication on the parameters, rights and entitlements of the scholarship is vital to **responsibly manage applicants' expectations** and guide their choice of the field of study and higher education institution.⁵⁸

One key challenge facing refugee students may be their ability to provide evidence of previous education and qualifications. Documents may have been lost or destroyed during transit, meaning that application procedures requiring copies of such documents are an obstacle. Students from conflict zones, for example, may face the challenge that their school diplomas or other educational documents do not conform to their national system if issued by non-government authorities with effective control of a region. Even where bona fide diplomas and certificates are available, these may not easily be recognised by higher education institutions in EU Member States, for example. Several initiatives or platforms exist to enhance diploma recognition and skills assessment. The activities of ENIC-NARIC networks⁵⁹ can offer insight into good practice and new and innovative procedures. One of its members, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), has worked with partners to develop the European Qualification Passport for Refugees as a way to better convey refugees' qualifications and skills to education

institutions in Europe.⁶⁰ Engaging with such experienced actors can help to overcome perceived barriers.

Additionally, applicants will need to be aware of the possible implications that accepting a scholarship abroad may have regarding separation from family and relatives, and their legal status in the first country of asylum. Experience shows, for example, that sponsored students are often highly concerned for their families. However, only a very limited number of programmes, (i.e. Japan and Germany) provide for nuclear family members to join students in the country of scholarship, with the associated support for visas and their costs of living. The **availability of family accompaniment** can: (i) encourage more qualified female candidates to apply; (ii) contribute to the psycho-social wellbeing of the student, facilitating smooth completion of the study programme; and (iii) create solutions for the family as a whole.

3.3. LEGAL STATUS AND POST-GRADUATION OPTIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The programmes reflected in this scoping paper generally provide a student visa, or a long-term visa in the case of the Czech Republic, for the period of study, with the notable exception of Canada, which provides a permanent, durable solution. A challenge to obtaining visas, however, can be the provision of national travel documents. Refugees may need support to overcome obstacles that arise due to the inability to obtain or renew passports from their country of origin and programmes may need to reflect this in their application procedures.

The visa and status granted in the country of scholarship define rights and entitlements, such as, for example, access to national social services, permission to work⁶¹ or mobility rights. To prevent any risk of a situation

58 Checklist for refugees when choosing a scholarship programme abroad (Annex III), in: UNHCR, 2015, *Higher Education Considerations for Refugees in Countries affected by the Syria and Iraq Crises*

59 See www.enic-naric.net/recognise-qualifications-held-by-refugees. ENIC: European Network of Information Centres in the European Region; NARIC: National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union. Read more on the [ENIC-NARIC website](http://www.enic-naric.net)

60 See www.nokut.no/News/First-European-Qualifications-Passport-for-Refugees-issued-in-Greece

61 Part-time work may be considered beneficial for some refugee students, or indeed a necessary component of education or training. However, programmes that would rely on additional income through work could jeopardise refugees' financial security or study outcomes for various reasons

arising in which the student finds him/herself without an adequate legal status, scholarship programmes should provide for **a status that is secure for the duration of the studies**, with access to rights and services. Where status is explicitly linked to participation in study programmes, contingency plans can be put in place to manage cases in which a student encounters difficulties with completing a portion of the study programme due to unforeseen circumstances.

Programmes can be made robust and protection-sensitive through ensuring that States issuing visas on a scholarship programme do not attach requirements to that visa indicating an obligation to return to a first country of asylum or to the country of origin, as the conditions for safe return may not be in place. Graduates may be inclined to advance their professional and personal trajectory in a number of ways, including returning to their homes or their former country of residence if it is safe to do so, but there are a number of factors to be considered.

In the case of some countries neighbouring Syria, re-entry permission can be difficult or impossible to obtain for refugees who leave the country under certain conditions. In practice, this can lead to open-ended separation from family members, and confusion, anxiety and uncertainty with regard to options upon graduation. At worst, it puts the student at risk of falling into legal limbo and facing risks to his or her protection. Informing and counselling prospective scholarship beneficiaries with regard to all the relevant implications that accepting a study opportunity in a new country can entail is a vital step in the process. Working with competent international organisations can help to ensure that this central protection consideration is adequately addressed at the earliest stage.

After years of studying, developing language skills and building relationships and networks, students will have had enhanced opportunity to integrate into society and may have realistic prospects either in the country of scholarship or another European country for employment, setting up a business or for further study. They may qualify for certain other forms of residence, access to which can be facilitated by the country of scholarship.

Coordinated support for these considerations can help to maximise the chances of secure futures through, for example, support to find internships, or easing conditions to access other forms of legal stay such as EU work permits for highly qualified third-country nationals.

With exception to the durable solution approach of the Canadian SRP, the rationale of existing programmes generally tends to assume, at least in principle, that beneficiaries will leave upon completion of their studies or when it is safe to return. However, sustainable and protection-sensitive programmes will consider the need to be flexible and support refugees to access solutions where needed regarding life after graduation. If not comprehensively and transparently addressed early on, these questions may preoccupy students to the extent that it has negative effects on their educational performance and plans for their future.

The programmes of both the French and German governments outlined in this paper demonstrate a sensitivity towards the important consideration of residence status and professional options upon graduation where graduates are not beneficiaries of international protection in the country of scholarship. There are risks involved when imposing undue conditions such as return to countries of origin or first asylum, where persons' safety may be at risk or when such return may be impossible. Flexibility regarding options for onward stay has been seen in the more mature German programme, for example.

3.4. SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE DURING THE STUDY PROGRAMME

A scholarship package usually foresees all the necessary arrangements for support, sufficient funding tailored to the costs of travelling to and living in the country of study, and services required by the student from the point of selection to matriculation.⁶² In addition to tuition and registration fees, students are likely to need

support for school supplies, accommodation, transportation, research and internship costs, medical fees including pre-departure, language and integration programmes and any other essential expenses.⁶³ Without these components, eligible refugees may be unable to participate in a programme.

Beyond the material considerations, Table 3 summarises six components that can allow for effective, holistic support of students throughout their scholarship period.

Table 3: Key components that can support refugee students

Pre-Departure Orientation and Preparation:	Pre-departure activities may include language, ICT, foundational skills, and cultural courses and meetings with other beneficiaries. Selected candidates receive support for their visa application and travel documents. This phase can take several weeks or months and has proven to be very important for the sponsored student, as reported by the Canadian SRP. Distance learning can also help gain any necessary credits that international students may require to access programmes, while helping to prepare for the study environment at European higher education institutions.
Support upon Arrival:	Support in the initial phase, for registering with relevant authorities, opening a bank account, settling into or finding accommodation, orientation on campus or pedagogic mentoring is usually provided in all programmes by either the implementing/coordinating body (NGO or otherwise), students, university staff or campus groups. Reception and integration activities for international and refugee students often already exist. ⁶⁵ Two lessons learned from the Canadian SRP are: (i) the initial support provided by dedicated students through organised committees has been critical for success in the long-term, and (ii) a reduced course load in the first semester of study helps newly arrived students to better adjust.
Internships and Part-Time Work:	In the EU, work experience is often a core or mandatory component of study and can be critical to finding future employment after graduation. Students may therefore need support to find placements. Access to part-time work during the studies may also be important. Although programmes should not need to rely on students' additional income, part-time work can have positive effects on increased self-reliance and confidence, language skills, social integration, and overseas family responsibilities. When designing the programme, this is a relevant consideration for determining the visa type and status granted, and will depend on national frameworks.
Language Courses:	Prior to departure and/or upon arrival, language courses are a standard component across all programmes as language is a key enabler for academic success and social integration. The level of required language knowledge and relevant certification can differ and also depends on admission requirements of the universities. Online language courses are a possibility for language learning in the host country, and many EU countries have seen a proliferation of civil society and university initiatives that support refugees' language acquisition.
Mentoring and Monitoring:	Personal relationships and attention are known to be critical components to help a students succeed, and can even begin before departure. A close and responsible relationship between the refugee student and the implementing/coordinating organisation (or professor, tutor, student buddy or student group reporting to this organisation) and/or a counsellor (psycho-social support) can help reduce stress and better manage disappointment and setbacks. It can also mitigate risks and ensure sponsored students enjoy their rights and entitlements and do not experience any discrimination.
Networking & Post-Graduation Advice:	It can be helpful to take a forward-looking approach by facilitating access to legal and welfare counselling as well as to career advice and potential employers to help students take informed decisions about their personal and professional future. Social networks among supported students and/or other refugees are important to exchange knowledge about options for solutions, to gain moral support and to keep in touch with the 'refugee community' in the first country of asylum and home country. While not at the expense of measures to facilitate integration in the student's new environment, including contact with other students, scholarship providers may consider to facilitate such networks, e.g. through workshops or excursions as part of the programme. This is a cornerstone of the DAAD Leadership for Syria programme, for example.

62 Table 5 in the Annex to this document provides an overview of some of the costs covered in the programmes highlighted in this paper

63 See UNHCR, 2015, *Higher Education Considerations for Refugees in Countries affected by the Syria and Iraq Crises*

64 The DAAD supports programmes at German universities to provide reception, integration and academic support. There are two funding streams. One through the *Welcome. Students helping Refugees* and the other *Integra* for academic preparation

3.5. SECURING RESOURCES

Many of the cost considerations associated with study programmes for refugees are set out in the preceding subsection.⁶⁵ In addition to such vital considerations, the wider framework of financing for the scholarship package and programme implementation needs to be structured accordingly.

Many of the programmes presented in this paper are entirely government funded: the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Germany and France, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education in the Czech Republic. However, education scholarships across the world, including some for refugee scholars and displaced persons, are also provided by diverse private actors including individual donors, universities themselves, charitable foundations and philanthropic organisations. Table 4 on page 24 provides an overview of possible sources of funding for various costs related to scholarship programmes. This is not limited to financial resources but includes management systems, networks, and know-how. Consultation with relevant stakeholders can help to allocate resources effectively.

Scholarship programmes need secure funding to ensure that all selected students will be able to complete their studies without being at risk of losing their allowance, which could result in hardship or destitution. **Predictable, long-term funding** is also needed for management costs and to ensure the programme becomes a reliable mechanism for refugees, and to allow for planning by stakeholders. As scholarship programmes involve high amounts of funding and multiple transactions, putting in place **robust management through dedicated staff, monitoring and accountability structures and fiduciary systems** can contribute to the success of programmes.

The Canadian SRP provides a good example for sustaining a programme without major government funding, relying mostly on private sponsorship, student volunteering, university engagement and effective partner collaboration.⁶⁶ In France, too, the civil society initiative demonstrates the possibilities of launching programmes without central government funding. Financial support from Regional Councils, universities and other NGOs combine with a private sponsorship and volunteering approach to ensure the funding and the success of the programme, with all contributors having a stake in the project's success.

The success and sustainability of Canada's SRP is also related to the country's experience with private sponsorship of refugees. The integration of study programmes for refugees in private sponsorship initiatives in Europe may also hold significant potential to establish a comprehensive student programme while benefiting from existing or emerging funding models. This approach may be pursued further as community-based/private sponsorship programmes develop in the EU.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ For more detail on the costs related to protection-sensitive programmes, as before see UNHCR, 2015, *Higher Education Considerations for Refugees in Countries affected by the Syria and Iraq Crises*

⁶⁶ For more information on the programme and its funding model, see WUSC, 2017, *Building Educational Pathway for Refugees: Mapping a Canadian Peer-to-Peer Support Model*

⁶⁷ For more information on Private Sponsorship and nascent European programmes, please see: European Resettlement Network, 2017, *Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement: Private Sponsorship in Europe*

Table 4: The following represents an initial collection of potential options for funding and resources to support scholarship programmes

Higher Education Institutions	Waivers for tuition and examination fees, and other costs related to admission and studying; Other fees for canteen, library, etc. are waived (for certain period); Facilitate and initiate partnerships with the private sector to offer solutions and employment; Provide mentoring and counselling services to refugee students; Provide advisory services to the programme; Management of some scholarships through existing or new staff members or international student programmes	Student/Campus Groups	In-kind, direct support to refugee student through administrative assistance, language tutoring, mentoring, etc.; Payment of levies on tuition fees or other regular contributions for sponsorship (SRP model); Fundraising and advocacy activities to create public support and welcoming environments
Government Resources	Different Ministries (Foreign Affairs, Education/ Science, Health/Social Services; Development and Economic Cooperation) provide funds for implementation and management and support collaboration with national authorities such as migration or social services	Civil Society/ Non-governmental Organisations	Provide grants or other funding, as well as practical support. Within the framework of existing mechanisms and projects, NGOs involved in refugee or asylum issues can provide professional support to students in the area of legal counselling, reception and integration assistance as well as training in refugee issues to new actors. In-kind support or donations as well as volunteer or other engagement can be coordinated
Federal States/ Municipalities	Provide scholarships with resources from federal states or municipality budget to complement existing programmes or to independently set up programmes that are owned by regional and local public and private partners and strong linkages with the local labour market ⁶⁸	Foundations/ Private Sector	Provide complementary financial resources; Offer complementary courses/training/ workshops; Full or partial support to management of scholarship programme; Provide internship opportunities; Organise exchanges with other scholars; Shape the public debate with regard to migration policy, etc.
International/ Regional Institutions	Funds could be provided in context of humanitarian or education/science budget to various costs of the programme; Support cross-country cooperation, knowledge management, advocacy, or collaboration among higher education institutions. The European Commission may also take a role in the framework of existing or future efforts ⁶⁹	Family or Private Sponsorship	Sponsorship by refugee family members, private persons or groups of persons already residing in the country of scholarship who provide for immediate accommodation needs, assistance in finding permanent accommodation, familiarization with services and service providers, other financial, social and emotional support for reception and integration for a defined period of time

68 Examples are available, for example, from Germany where two federal state governments in Germany have helped to increase available scholarships for Syrian refugees: North Rhine-Westphalia has complemented funding for 21 scholarships within the DAAD Leadership for Syria programme and the state of Baden-Württemberg has provided 50 scholarships through its own DAAD managed programme that benefits from strong engagement of the federal Ministry of Science and Research and private sector partners to link the scholars early on with the local labour market. DAAD, *Jahresbericht 2015*, page 71 (German)

69 European Commission, Higher Education for Refugees and Migrants ([Website](#))

3.6. STAKEHOLDERS AND MANAGEMENT

Scholarship programmes can take different forms, but what is apparent from all programmes, although to different degrees, is the need **for multi-stakeholder engagement and collaborative efforts to ensure efficiency and accountability. Effective coordination and networking** among government, private sector partners, higher education institutions, student groups, NGOs, international organizations, refugee networks and communities can **leverage the resources and synergies** needed to establish a scholarship programme for refugees. A **stakeholder mapping** can help to identify the key partners.

A range of public, private and civil society stakeholders, including those working in asylum, immigration, integration, protection, education, psychosocial support services and the private sector should be engaged in the programming activities to ensure that the **educational opportunities provided will result in meaningful contributions to achieving durable or sustainable solutions for young refugees**. The DAFI Policy Guidelines provide a good example of how to **map and explain the roles and responsibilities of partners**.⁷⁰

Effective **partnership with higher education institutions** in the scholarship country is crucial. A list of cooperating universities is usually provided with the application forms, and organisations or agencies such as Campus France or DAAD provide advice to the students with regard to choosing a university. Universities or academic staff also often participate in the final selection of the candidates. Refugee scholarship programmes can benefit enormously from the engagement of students and the education institution as a whole, as well as other community organisations, locally active NGOs and diaspora groups, for example. Public-private partnership models, as well as models involving civil society, can potentially play an important role in sourcing innovative and complementary funding to enable refugee students to study in EU Member States, as well as in maximising

the overall success and outcomes of the programme and shared ownership.

Unless offered as a unique, stand-alone opportunity, scholarship programmes are based on a recurring annual programme cycle (call for applications, selection, pre-departure preparation, arrival/ orientation, studies/integration, and graduation/post-graduation). Monitoring, reporting, communication and student support are year-round activities. Flexible channels of communication among partners working with the students need to be in place to provide the best support possible. **Regular reporting, feedback and follow up activities** will help to ensure continued learning and improvement of the programme. Each scholarship programme needs clearly defined and transparently communicated parameters in terms of timeframe, the number of scholarships available each year, selection criteria, the selection process, and roles and responsibilities of partners in the host and scholarship country.

Commissioning an experienced coordinating body to manage the programme, as is the case in the scholarships overseen by WUSC, Campus France or DAAD, can help to ensure sustainability and effectiveness, including the professional and responsible handling of high numbers of application documents and sensitive data. In the case of the French civil society programme, a steering committee was established to include the principal stakeholders (the NGO Démocratie et Entraide en Syrie Ghosn Zeitoun, the Regional Council, the participating universities, the Conférence des Présidents d'Universités etc.) from the initial stage of the programme. It meets at least once every three months throughout the life of the programme, including through the selection, welcoming and follow-up stages.

⁷⁰ UNHCR, October 2009, *Policy and Guidelines for DAFI Scholarship Projects*

4. Moving Towards Next Steps

4.1. STUDY PROGRAMMES AS A COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAY TO PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES: BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

As this paper shows, in recent years a number of largely ad hoc scholarship programmes have been implemented for refugees to arrive safely in the European Union from resource-constrained first countries of asylum and take up study programmes. They are an indication of the fledgling engagement from both State and civil society or education institutions in offering complementary pathways to protection in the EU for refugees.

Although the numbers of arrivals under such initiatives have been low to date, with commitment and careful planning there is ample opportunity to expand and scale up programmes and to establish new initiatives in a manner that ensures the protection of refugees and contributes to international responsibility sharing in the

search for solutions for refugees. When developing and establishing programmes, actors will do well to engage with the lessons learned from recent experience in Europe and longer-term experience from Canada. Wide and inclusive consultation, and responsible, informed planning can help ensure that programmes are both sustainable and protection-sensitive.

The Member States of the European Union have the opportunity to develop more meaningful responses to the need for third-country solutions for refugees in countries of first asylum. Student scholarships to the European Union can provide a specific mechanism to widen the options for young refugees to create their own futures and live full and meaningful lives in safe and stimulating environments, thus securing a lasting solution to their forced displacement. By building partnerships and benefiting from the support and cooperation of a range of actors, the possibilities for refugee scholarship programmes to the EU can be maximised, enhancing Europe's contribution to global refugee protection.

4.2. KEY QUESTIONS FOR ONWARD REFLECTION

Based on the observations from existing programmes and key considerations presented in this paper, the following questions for reflection can serve to further the discussion on developing a robust framework for sustainable higher education programmes in European Union Member States that effectively **support and protect refugees to arrive safely in Europe**.

How can programme providers be supported to fully integrate protection safeguards for refugees during selection, study, and upon completion of the education programme?

Engaging in careful planning and maintaining a flexible approach to addressing obstacles and changing needs should help to foster robust programming that remains protection-sensitive. Collaboration between international organisations, national and local NGOs as well as government authorities and refugees themselves will help to mainstream the key protection and practical considerations to be made in the development of programmes and the systems that support such programmes.

How can eligibility criteria and identification and selection procedures be designed and implemented in a non-discriminatory manner that provides access to refugees in vulnerable or precarious situations, and thereby offer an opportunity to those who need it most?

Consideration of eligible candidates with specific protection needs and vulnerabilities can be explored to better balance support for refugees in need with those who already have a remarkable academic track record and potential to access solutions in other forms. Higher education institutions, as the central welcoming organisation, play a key role in selection alongside other relevant actors so as to guarantee the balance between protection needs and success in study.

Are there obstacles to be overcome to enable the provision of study opportunities to diverse refugee populations? How can non-discrimination be ensured and access enabled for refugees with relevant backgrounds and needs in a way that does not exclude certain nationalities of refugees?

While many European programmes have focused on Syrian students, looking ahead to the inevitable shifting dynamics and demographics of displacement could lead to flexible programmes that represent a long-term, sustainable mechanism for refugees to access solutions. Including a range of refugee populations from contexts in addition to the Syria situation can help to address the needs of refugees globally and to share responsibility in a more equitable manner, in particular by addressing protracted and large-scale refugee situations.

Which level of tertiary study and which disciplines can be made available to refugees under such programmes?

Widening programmes to include or emphasise undergraduate bachelor level studies, where this is not currently available, as well as vocational training can provide students completing secondary education with an important opportunity to study in safe, stimulating, high-resource environments. It can also provide important incentives for secondary school students to complete their education in first countries of asylum, knowing that opportunities for continuation of studies exist in countries such as the Member States of the EU. Offering flexibility in the fields of study that are supported under scholarship programmes may be useful in facilitating access to opportunities for refugees with diverse education profiles.

Which types of visa and permits can be utilised so as to streamline and facilitate programmes while ensuring clarity, transparency and security relating to rights and entitlements that guarantee the safety, protection and well-being of refugee students?

While the relationship with international protection is a central consideration of programme design, the current climate and the need for innovative thinking suggest that existing immigration and mobility channels could be utilised and adapted as necessary to contribute towards finding solutions for refugees. With hundreds of thousands of non-EU students taking up study opportunities in European countries every year, there is significant experience to draw on with regard to the expansion of existing structures for study, research and training, and the application of these structures to the refugee context. This should be without prejudice to access to the asylum system in the event that such a safety net is required.

How can the perspectives and options for students upon graduation be taken into account from the very beginning of the programme? What kind of counselling and information provision can effectively enable sponsored students to make informed decisions about their personal and professional future based on their newly acquired competencies and qualifications?

Starting with comprehensive pre-departure counselling, support and orientation, refugees can be supported from the outset to make informed decisions. After selection and confirmation, pre-departure networking with the support network in the receiving country and institution can better assist refugees to make preparations and to understand the nature of their stay in receiving countries. After arrival, targeted and dedicated support staff, networking with other students, academic supervisors and refugee communities can all contribute to identifying future opportunities. Private sector partnerships could be leveraged to support access to profile-enhancing opportunities such as internships and mentoring.

How can funding and resources be made available in a way that allows for predictability and robust planning while also guaranteeing that refugees are supported for the full duration of the programme?

Existing and previous programmes have faced challenges due to an inability to secure adequate funding to cover the programme in full. While ad hoc initiatives and one-off funding sources can provide opportunities for a few individuals, ongoing commitments as part of more robust, long-term structures would be required to anchor student scholarship programmes in the European refugee protection landscape. Planning on a multi-year basis can allow partners in countries of departure to work with a predictable, regular mechanism to support eligible refugees, while encouraging young refugees to work towards their application. It will also allow universities and communities in the receiving country to better plan their end-to-end support for arriving students.

Which opportunities exist for study pathways to be connected with, for example, private/community-based sponsorship programmes for the admission of refugees? How can complementarity and additionality be ensured?

As European countries increasingly explore the role that private/community-based sponsorship schemes can play in providing additional solutions alongside and complementary to resettlement, stakeholders in education can actively align themselves with private sponsorship developments with a view to diversifying and expanding private/community-based sponsorship programmes to include study streams. The New York Declaration conveys the complementary and additional nature of the provision of various third-country solutions for refugees. In the spirit of this commitment, study opportunities can exist alongside and in addition to resettlement programmes and other complementary pathways of admission.

5. Resources

Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing ([PDF](#))

European Union Delegation to the Syrian Arab Republic, 24 March 2015, *Study to Design a Programme / Clearinghouse Providing Access to Higher Education for Syrian Refugees and Internal Displaced Persons Final Report* ([PDF](#))

International Catholic Migration Commissions, June 2015, *10% of refugees from Syria: Europe's resettlement and other admission responses in a global perspective* ([PDF](#))

Jigsaw Consult and Refugee Support Network, December 2016, *Higher education for refugees in low resource environments: landscape review* ([PDF](#))

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Scholarship Program of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Syrian students living in Lebanon*. Call for Proposals ([PDF](#))

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, September 2016 ([PDF](#))

UNHCR/UNESCO, May 2016, *No More Excuses. Provide Education to All Forcibly Displaced People*. ([PDF](#)).

UNHCR, October 2009, *Policy and Guidelines for DAFI Scholarship Projects (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) 4th Edition*. ([PDF](#))

UNHCR, July 2015, *Higher Education Considerations for Refugees in Countries Affected by the Syria and Iraq Crises* ([PDF](#))

UNHCR, June 2017, *UNHCR projected Global Resettlement Needs 2018*. ([PDF](#))

UNHCR, 2017, *Left Behind: Refugee Education in Crisis*. ([PDF](#)).

UNHCR, 2017, *Why we need to position UNHCR for the future*, Essay by Andrew Harper

UNHCR, December 2017, *UNHCR Written Contribution to the Public Consultation on the European Union's (EU) legislation on the legal migration of non-EU citizens (Fitness Check on EU legal migration legislation)*, ([PDF](#))

European Resettlement Network, Resources and material on student scholarships for refugees and webinar accessed at: <http://www.resettlement.eu/page/ern-webinar-series-higher-education-scholarship-opportunities-refugee-students-1>

World University Service of Canada (WUSC), 2007, *Pre-Departure Guide for WUSC Sponsored Students*. Almost Everything You Wanted to Know about Living and Learning in Canada but were Afraid to Ask.

World University Service of Canada (WUSC), [Building Educational Pathway for Refugees: Mapping a Canadian Peer-to-Peer Support Model](#)

World University Service of Canada (WUSC), [Student Refugee Programme](#)

6. Annex

Table 5: Value of the scholarship package (costs covered)

Canada	Czech Republic	France MFA	French Regional Programme	Germany	Japan
<p>Income support and settlement services provided by private sponsors/ student group</p> <p>Tuition fees (waived by university)</p>	<p>Costs of the selection process; Medical checks; Travel; Admin charges; Boarding/ accommodation; Tuition fees and grants; Costs of healthcare to the same extent as for beneficiaries under the Czech public health insurance system</p>	<p>Travel; Social welfare/ security and health insurance; €767 monthly allowance; exempted of tuition; (one year of the scholarship can be used for language training before enrolling in a Master's programme)</p>	<p>Travel; Renewal of passports where required; accommodation down-payments and soft furnishings; phone cards to contact family members; €500 monthly allowance; welfare support initially as asylum-seeker; exempted of tuition with refugee status;</p>	<p>Language course (2-6 months) in Germany; Mandatory side study programme; Monthly allowance of €750 (Master) or €1,000 (PhD); Health, accident and private liability insurance; Travel allowance; annual study and research subsidy; If applicable, a family allowance and rent subsidy; A subsidy for print costs (PhD theses); Tuition</p>	<p>Tuition; Travel; Outfit Allowance; Living allowance every 2 months; Mobilization allowance for moving; Lump-sum payment for rental contract; Medical Expenses; Japanese language training; Family allowance</p>
12 months	1 year language tuition + 5 years actual studies	12 to 36 months	1st year, could be extended	2 years (MA) or 3.5 years (PhD)	max. 3 years

