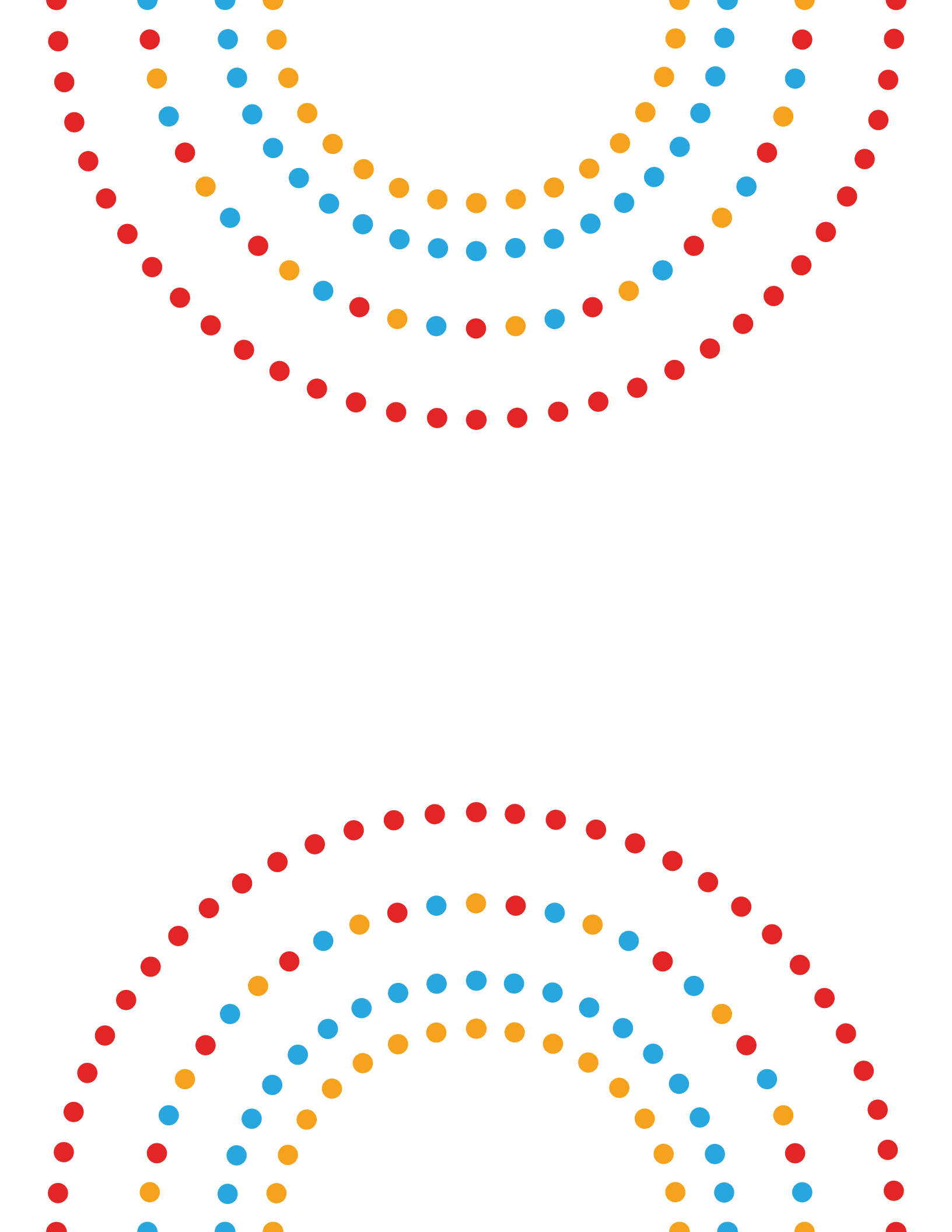


# 2020

## YEARBOOK





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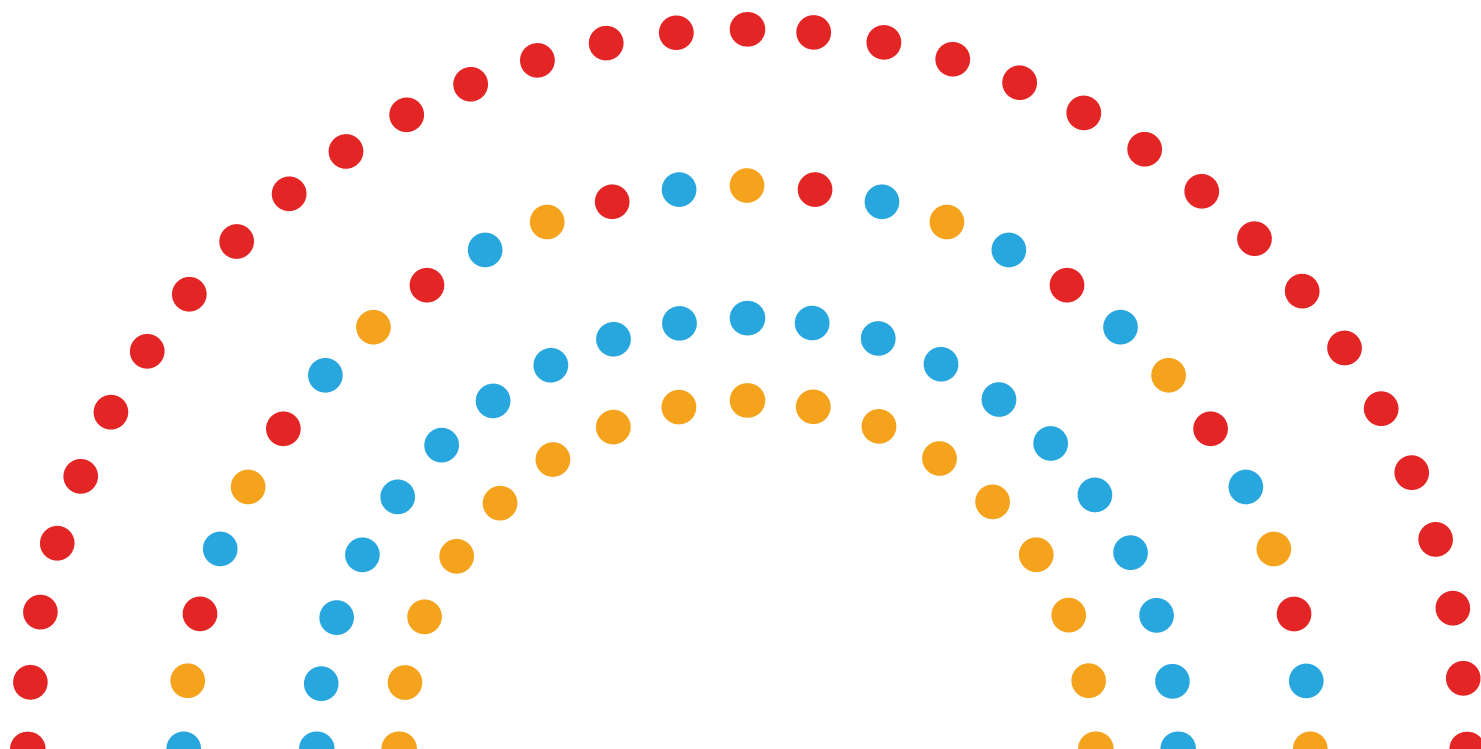
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# 2020: A YEAR OF RESILIENCE

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After a year like no other in our collective memory, we at the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC) are grateful for the opportunity to share a reflection on 2020 as our members continued to advance on our shared mission to provide quality connected education in emergency contexts. It was a year replete with challenges that none of us had encountered prior but, as this Yearbook will go on to illustrate, a year that also showcased the incredible resilience of our members, partnerships, and most critically, our learners.

As with many organizations, the CLCC was forced to adapt to the changing environment and redoubled our reliance on technology as the primary convening mechanism to bridge the distance between us. The CLCC had several virtual meetings to share lessons learned, seek opportunities for members to collaborate further, and reflect on individual organisational strategies to enhance the sustainability of initiatives moving forward. Additionally, the CLCC was featured in a number of international publications and fora in recognition of, and advocacy for, the responsible provision of technology for education in emergency contexts.

As you'll see in the accompanying pages, 2020 was a year of immense challenges but also one of catalytic opportunity. Organizations within the CLCC banded together to provide continuity of learning in fragile environments, individual learners reached their educational ambitions, and a particular subset of the Consortium, the Instructional Design for eLearning (IDEL) group, set the foundation to provide further capacity building for universities worldwide to increase online learning opportunities.

As we turn to 2021, we are buoyed by the communal resilience realized in 2020 and are eager to achieve the Consortium's strategic agenda. Moreover, we are doing so with a greater appreciation for both the work we do and those we do it with. We are grateful for this community's support and look forward to working closely with all of you in the year to come. Thank you for reading, and please always feel free to reach out with questions or opportunities for engagement.

Best regards,

**CLCC Co-Leads**

Arizona State University and UNHCR



# WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CLCC MEMBERS



Scholars  
Program



## TRSN and GYAC **#ForYou** campaign

Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN) and the Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC) have developed the participatory **#ForYou** social media campaign to highlight refugee youth's positive contributions.

Join the campaign by making your own video just like [Faida](#), [Miriam](#), or [Aroni](#), using the **#ForYou** hashtag and tagging [@StudentRefugee](#) and [@UNHCR\\_GYAC](#)!

# FIGURES AT-A-GLANCE

**GRADUATED**  
WITH BA DEGREES FROM  
**SOUTHERN NEW  
HAMPSHIRE  
UNIVERSITY**  
(SNHU)



**140**  
STUDENTS

**95%** OF 2020 KEPLER KIZIBA  
**GRADUATES** COMPLETED  
THEIR **SNHU BA** IN **4 YEARS OR LESS**

## KEPLER

WITHIN  
**6 MONTHS**  
OF GRADUATION,

**90%**

OF REFUGEE GRADUATES  
WERE **EMPLOYED OR ENROLLED**  
IN FURTHER STUDIES



**YORK UNIVERSITY'S**  
BORDERLESS HIGHER  
EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES

UNDERGRADUATE  
PROGRAMME:

**43** **STUDENTS** **(35% FEMALE)**

ENROLLED IN THE  
**BA IN  
EDUCATIONAL  
STUDIES**

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME:

**55** **STUDENTS** **(40% FEMALE)**

GRADUATED WITH **CERTIFICATES**  
IN **EDUCATIONAL STUDIES**

GRADUATE PROGRAMME:

**5 STUDENTS**  
GRADUATED WITH **MASTERS**  
**OF EDUCATION IN LANGUAGE,  
CULTURE, & TEACHING**



**14 STUDENTS** **(50% FEMALE)**

ACTIVE IN THE **M.ED. PROGRAMME**  
WITH **9 NEW STUDENTS** **(33% FEMALE)**  
ENROLLED IN THE THIRD COHORT

## JESUIT WORLDWIDE LEARNING

---

PROFESSIONAL COURSES

**1,390**  
STUDENTS



**4,033** (59% FEMALE)

**STUDENTS**  
FROM OVER  
**18 COUNTRIES**  
ENROLLED IN  
**9,047 COURSES**



**ENGLISH**  
LANGUAGE  
COURSES

**2,012 STUDENTS**



**ACADEMIC COURSES**  
**631** STUDENTS

GRADUATES **EARN**  
**103% MORE**  
THAN THEIR  
**UNIVERSITY-**  
**EDUCATED** PEERS

**98.2%** OF  
**STUDENTS**  
ARE ON TRACK  
TO **GRADUATE**  
IN **4 YEARS**

## SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY GLOBAL EDUCATION MOVEMENT

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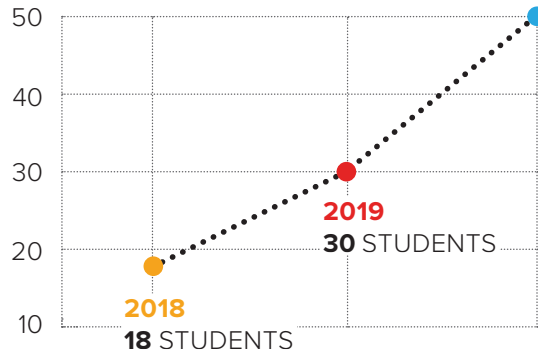


**100%**  
OF GRADUATES  
ENGAGE IN  
**INTERSHIPS**

**1,000+**  
STUDENTS  
**SERVED**



## MIT REACT

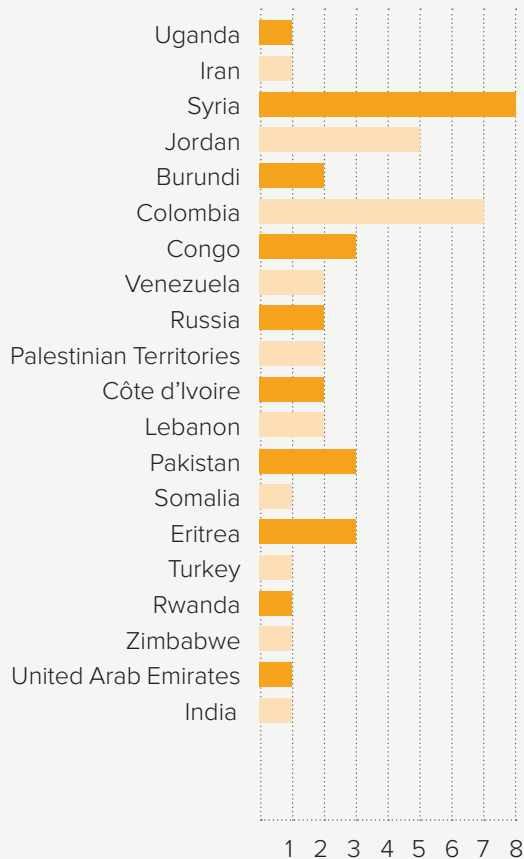


**2020 | 50 STUDENTS**

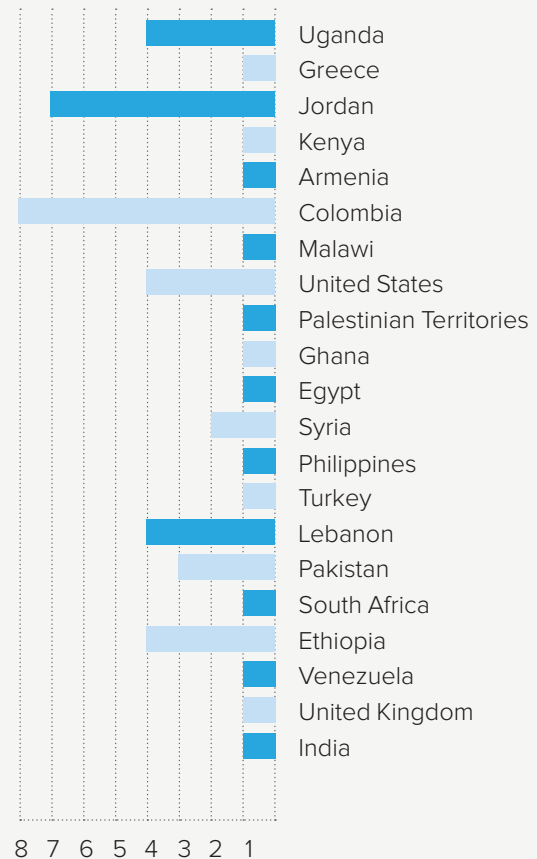
INCLUDING **40 REFUGEES**  
REPRESENTING **20**  
**NATIONALITIES** AND  
RESIDING IN **20+ COUNTRIES**

## OUR LEARNERS

### COUNTRY OF BIRTH



### COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE



## KIRON STUDENTS BASED BY COUNTRY

### TOP 5

1. GERMANY
2. JORDAN
3. TURKEY
4. LEBANON
5. NETHERLANDS



NUMBER OF  
COURSES ON  
KIRON CAMPUS

**430**  
COURSES

## KIRON

### FIGURES AT A GLANCE 2020

**33%**

COMPLETION RATE  
OF KIRON COURSES

COMPARED TO  
AROUND

**4%**

WORLDWIDE  
(AVERAGE)

THE CAREFULLY  
CURATED CURRICULUM  
OF STUDY  
PROGRAMS AND THE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
SUPPORT MEASURES  
RESULT IN COURSE  
COMPLETION RATES BY  
KIRON STUDENTS THAT  
ARE MUCH HIGHER  
THAN NORMAL STAND-  
ALONE MOOCS



**11.000** STUDENTS  
WORLDWIDE ON  
ON KIRON CAMPUS

## MASTERCARD FOUNDATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

**39,500**

SCHOLARSHIPS

COMMITTED AS

OF DECEMBER 2020

USD **1.2 BILLION**  
COMMITTED



**36** PARTNERS  
INCLUDING

**25** UNIVERSITY  
PARTNERSHIPS

**23,050** SCHOLARS  
CURRENTLY ENROLLED

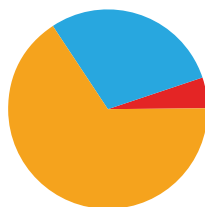
**16,950** SECONDARY LEVEL  
**6,100** UNIVERSITY LEVEL

(72% FEMALE)

**11,950** SCHOLARS

IN OUR ALUMNI NETWORK

**10,200** SECONDARY LEVEL  
**1,700** UNIVERSITY LEVEL



**29%** UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS  
AFRICAN PARTNERS

**5%** UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS  
NON-AFRICAN PARTNERS

**66%** SECONDARY  
EDUCATION SCHOLARS

Due to rounding, the numbers presented may not add up precisely to the totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect the absolute figures.

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

“You cannot build peace in a country  
without building up human beings.”



**Ehab Badwi**, 28, was awarded the IIE Scholarship for Syrian Students in 2018. He is currently pursuing a BA in Economics, Politics and Social Thought at **Bard College Berlin (BCB)** in Berlin.



## ● IIE PEER & Bard College | Advocating for Syrian Youth

Ehab Badwi, 28, was awarded the IIE Scholarship for Syrian Students in 2018. He is currently pursuing a BA in Economics, Politics and Social Thought at [Bard College Berlin \(BCB\)](#) in Berlin.

Ehab grew up in Homs, Syria. In 2013, he graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering from Al-Baath University. Although Ehab had planned to work as an engineer, mandatory military conscription forced him to flee to the Ivory Coast in 2013 and then Turkey in 2014.

As a result of his own experience as a refugee, Ehab became passionate about helping Syrian youth connect to opportunities. For Ehab, this meant advocacy and peacebuilding. He connected with UNHCR and was invited to speak at the 2015 World Humanitarian Summit in Geneva. He traveled to Europe, spoke in front of large crowds about his hopes for Syria, and decided to seek asylum in Germany.

After receiving asylum in 2015, he lived in a refugee camp, but sheer luck would connect him with a German family that would take him in for the next three years. During that time, he worked, searched for informal learning opportunities, and focused on learning German. Simultaneously, his civil society work was growing as he sought to play an active role in rebuilding Syria. At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, he founded the [Syrian Youth Assembly \(SYA\)](#). Young Syrians at the Summit came together to collectively make their voices heard, organizing for change on behalf of all Syrian youth.

Since 2016, SYA has made progress advocating for Syrian youth's educational opportunities. In a partnership with Coursera, SYA streamed 120,000 courses in Syria over two years. For Ehab, this further proves that Syrian youth are thirsty for education.

Since then, Ehab has also contributed to the peace process in Syria by consulting with governmental bodies and hopes “to build a road map which shows how young people can participate.” Through this work, he was inspired to deepen his expertise in peacebuilding and chose to pursue a BA in Economics, Politics and Social Thought at [Bard College Berlin \(BCB\)](#). Ehab is able to pursue his studies through a generous scholarship from the [BCB's Programme for International Education and Change](#) and additional support from [IIE's Student Emergency Initiative](#), which covers his living expenses.

Today, Ehab is not only working towards a second bachelor's degree, but he is also the CEO of the SYA, a Youth Representative for the [World Organization for Scout Movement](#), and a Youth Leader at the [Tertiary Refugee Student Network](#). He takes on these responsibilities because he believes that “if the response doesn't come from us, no one will do the response. No one is advocating for young people. This puts a lot of responsibility on [us], but there is no alternative.”

Ehab knows what a privilege it is to live in peace and pursue his passions through his education. He feels a deep sense of responsibility to lift up his community and help more refugees access higher education.

Like so many [displaced and refugee students](#), Ehab demonstrates that when we invest in young people and their education, they become committed leaders and advocates for other students living in contexts of conflicts or crisis.

**“They like to learn, but they missed the opportunity because of the war.**

**They are smart enough to educate themselves, but they just need to have the tools.”**

## • York University's Borderless Higher Education for Refugees | Graduates Launch a Community-Based Organization Focused on Refugee Research

Okello Oyat, Ochan Leomoi, Arte Dagane, Abdikadir Abikar, and Abdullahi Aden began their studies at York University's Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) in 2013. After completing York University and Kenyatta University's stackable certificate, diploma, and undergraduate degree programmes, these same students lobbied for graduate programmes in Dadaab. Through their persistence, York University began to offer an in situ masters programme in the Fall of 2018. This June, these students completed their research projects and graduated with M.Ed. degrees.

Inspired by their studies, these students founded the Dadaab Response Association, a community-based organization led by refugee researchers. The Association is "a research organization that works in the Dadaab community and investigates problems the community faces and develops recommendations that can help change society," says Ochan Leomoi, a founding member. Since launching, the Association has been commissioned

by the CLCC and the Local Engagement Refugee Research Network (LERRN) to conduct research on connected learning and the impact of COVID-19 in the Daddab refugee camps.

The challenges brought on by the pandemic have highlighted the importance of local capacity when international agencies and researchers cannot enter such spaces. The Dadaab Response Association hopes to fulfill these research needs during the pandemic.

Beyond the pandemic, the BHER graduate programme and Dadaab Response Association hope to address the need for local, home-grown, qualified refugee researchers, who can publish and speak about issues affecting their own communities. Equipped with the right credentials and experiences, these researchers can leverage their local knowledge, language skills, and proximity to conduct rigorous research that accurately reflects the refugee community's needs and informs local and international policies.



Faculty of Education Professor Don Dippo poses with five MEd BHER students who received their graduate degrees in June 2020. From left are: Ochan Leomoi, Okello Oyat, Abdullahi Aden, Arte Dagane, Don Dippo and Abdikadir Abikar

## ● **Arizona State University** | Innovative Education Delivery with Employment Outcomes in Uganda

Arizona State University (ASU) launched the Education for Humanity (E4H): Powered by SolarSPELL (SSPELL) pilot project in 2019.

The project combined a SolarSPELL and Moodlebox to create an offline, solar-powered technology that produces its own Wi-Fi hotspot. Students without access to the internet or electricity could use any internet-enabled device to access course materials.

In addition to the project's innovative use of technology, the project appealed to learners because of its focus on key employability skills, such as agribusiness, and an array of 21st-century skills ranging from digital literacy to critical thinking.

E4H and Windle International Uganda recruited 30 learners from Nakivale Settlement, Uganda. Two facilitators were hired to administer the programme and guide learners throughout the course.

Learners gained a range of skills to prepare them for employment. When asked which skills contributed most to being hired, Birungi Eva, one of the newly hired War Child Holland (WCH) facilitators, responded "communication skills, business skills [and] computer skills" (personal communication, November 25, 2020). Another new WCH facilitator stated that "The agribusiness project helped us to be self-reliant (sic) in education like studying without a professor and learning from home" (Muhammed, personal communication, November 29, 2020).

The learners also acquired unique technological and digital literacy skills by using the programme's technology. For example, they developed an understanding of an offline wi-fi network, a micro-computer with a learning management system, and solar-powered panel and battery

function. As Mugabe Muhammed stated, the "project gave me skills concerned (sic) with digital learning and how to handle electronic gadgets like computers, tablets, chargers" (personal communication, November 29, 2020). Birungi also stated something similar:

**"I am a facilitator for the Can't Wait to Learn programme, which involves digital learning or use of ink pads [for] War Child Holland. From [the] course, I learned how to use a tablet/ink pad for further studies. And this led to my current employment."**



**BIRUNGI EVA AND MUGABE MUHAMMED.**  
Photo credit: E4H participants



**JACINTA NAFUNA.** Photo credit: Carrie Bauer.

Another learner was recently promoted from facilitator to an assistant project officer for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). As part of his employment advancement, he stated that the programme gave him “an added advantage for my appointment... As a social worker dealing with case management and the behavior of children in the community, [I used] teamwork capability skills...” (Niynzima, personal communication, November 19, 2020). He also stated, “Critical thinking skills...was also an advantage...as [you] know War Child Holland deals with people who [are] physiologically and emotionally affected because of wars in their countries and that means to work with such people you need to have critical thinking” (Niynzima, personal communication, November 19, 2020).

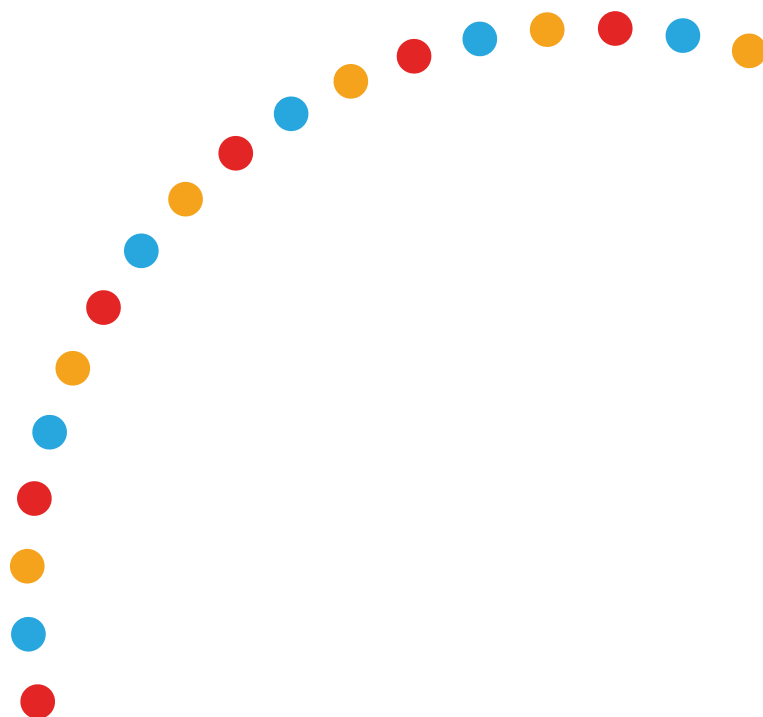
As a result of participation in the programme, 1 facilitator was hired as an Information Technology/Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, and 7 of the 30 learners were hired as facilitators by War Child Holland (WCH) for the Can't Wait to Learn (CTWL) programme.

“The learners always figure out solutions to the challenges they encounter. They not only had the opportunity to take a higher education course but also had the opportunity to learn, maintain and coordinate the technology while implementing the project.”

**Jacinta Nafuna, Facilitator**



**LEONICE NIYNZIMA.** Photo credit: E4H participants





## ● **Kepler & Southern New Hampshire University** | Gaining Professional Experience with the CLCC



**Niyonkuru Egide, a Kepler & SNHU Graduate, Quality Assurance Office at Siriforce & Former CLCC Communications Intern. Photo credit: Kepler.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has not been an easy time for refugees, especially for those graduating. Fortunately, with the support of the Kepler academic team and refugee college guidance counselors, I managed to graduate with a bachelor's degree from Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) during this difficult time.

Finding professional experience during the pandemic, though, was another challenge. Luckily, Kepler's career team and guidance counselors tirelessly supported me in finding a professional experience that would help me become independent post-graduation. They reached out to me during Rwanda's COVID lockdown and collected updates about job opportunities that I had applied for, offering extra support as needed.

Previously, I was connected to the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC) through Kepler's career department, and I landed a virtual opportunity as the Communications Committee Intern. During my time with CLCC, I networked with partner organizations, drafted social media content, collected and published refugee testimonies and stories from around the world, and monitored the CLCC website. Through CLCC, I gained global exposure, polished my communication skills (particularly with CEOs and those working at a high level), and improved my writing, photography, video editing, and time management. I also learned a lot about CLCC partners' plans for refugee higher education.

My supervisor at CLCC assigned me various tasks depending on the ongoing events. There were

times I would map each partners' activities and locations via Google MyMaps tools. Tasks were varied and sometimes complicated, as I was still learning and required supervisor support through virtual training, but I was proud to deliver high-quality work.

The experience I gained from CLCC was a major card that I held when applying for opportunities. I always made sure to emphasize my experience with CLCC. Now, it's easy for me to demonstrate to recruiters that I have a background in communications work as well as experience working with both local and international organizations.

Consequently, my experience with CLCC has led to other opportunities. This month, I completed a paid internship with World Vision, a major international NGO, in their Communications and Public Engagement Department, allowing me to both grow professionally and cover my monthly expenses. I also completed a highly competitive apprenticeship with Siriforce, which aims to leverage refugees' skills and provide them with jobs finding bugs in company websites, mobile apps, and softwares. Now, I work full-time with Siriforce as a Quality Assurance Officer as I continue to build valuable professional experience.

## ● Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town | Student Support Networks

In 2020, the UpLearn programme, more than ever before, had to depend on the strength of its student support networks. Thanks to incredible leadership from a handful of student volunteers in the programme, online spaces were created and revitalised from within the student community to support academic success as well as emotional wellbeing.

In early 2020 we put out a call for student leaders to come forward and establish an entirely student-run support network. Two student leaders were identified to head this initiative based on their intimate knowledge of the diverse needs of our student body. These leaders created a WhatsApp group of volunteers that form a support committee that provides care for students going through particularly challenging life circumstances. The group fundraises amongst the student body and organizes visits, care packages, and events to show solidarity amongst students and staff in moments of crisis.

As a result of the pandemic, many of our students faced extreme challenges, which took a toll on their emotional wellbeing. The student support

group was incredibly responsive and became fundamental to maintaining UpLearn's sense of community despite the fact that for many months we were unable to meet in person.

Parallel to this initiative, student leaders also formed degree-specific WhatsApp groups during the extended lockdown which began in March and is still in effect in South Africa. These replaced the exchanges that would normally occur in our lab. These spaces are used to discuss particular academic difficulties, ask and answer questions, form teams for group work, and to generally offer encouragement. Both spaces developed organically alongside and complimentary to the more formal elements of the programme that were also taken online. Watching these spaces develop through strong student leadership has offered our team incredibly valuable insights into the dynamic ways in which UpLearn can and should create space for students' contributions to overcoming barriers to academic success.



## ● Tertiary Refugee Student Network | Scaling Our Operations and Impact

The Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN) is a global network of refugee students and graduates from various higher education programmes. TRSN serves as a platform where refugee students advocate for educational opportunities for refugees.

Despite this year's challenges, TRSN scaled both its operations and impact. We now have regional leaders in South and East Africa, West Africa, MENA, South America, Asia and the Pacific. We also have members in 15 countries around the world. United by their dedication to open up opportunities for more refugee students, our regional leaders and members advocate for refugee education at local and national levels.

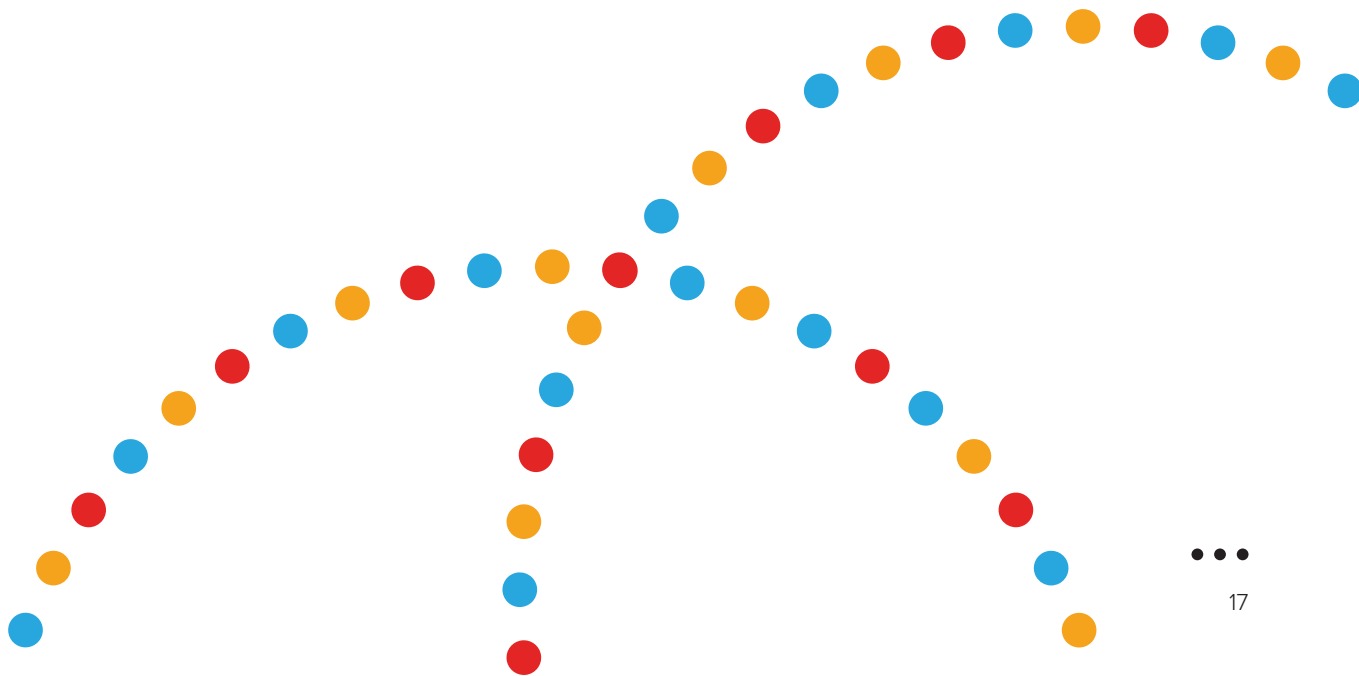
In 2020, TRSN, together with the Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC), developed the #ForYou social media campaign to highlight refugee youth's positive contributions. We also highlighted how refugees responded to and worked at the forefront of the pandemic.

TRSN took an active role in World Refugee Day virtual events. Our members organised and

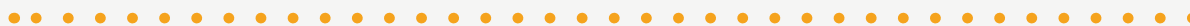
attended a digital, interactive online conference session on "Education in Crisis and Innovative Pathways." Attendees discussed specific challenges and brainstormed solutions to the various barriers refugees face along their education journey. During a breakout session, we discussed new ways refugee students can connect across borders. The session was part of Kiron's "Amplify Now" virtual refugee conference.

TRSN also participated in the 16 days of activism of fighting against gender-based violence (GBV). TRSN hosted two Facebook Live sessions, enabling TRSN members from different regions, share their personal experiences and shed light on the role of education in eliminating GBV. Our regional leaders also organised Whatsapp group discussions to explore the role of youth in eliminating GBV.

As we approach year two of the pandemic, we plan to continue our #ForYou social media campaign and participate in virtual events. Through these activities, we will continue to raise awareness and advocate for refugee students' right to access educational opportunities.



# YEAR IN REVIEW STORIES



Diploma graduates sing the Regis University song. Photo credit: JWL

## ● **Jesuit Worldwide Learning** | 2020: COVID-19 and a Decade of Higher Education at the Margins

### **Our COVID-19 Response**

Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) and approximately 3,000 of its students have been impacted by COVID-19 to varying degrees. For most of our students, the main challenge has been isolation – including from their learning centre peers. However, in some locations, a

number of students were forced to interrupt their studies in order to concentrate on day-to-day food security.

To support our students during this difficult time, JWL launched a COVID-19 Crash Course, developed in cooperation with the Medical Mission Institute in Wuerzburg (Germany) and Seitwerk

GmbH (Germany). This course was made available to staff, students, and the general public in early May and provided information about COVID-19 and guidance about how to stay healthy.

Additionally, JWL provided laptops, tablets, and internet data bundles to academic and professional students in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya and Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi. We also leveraged alternative communication tools (notably instant messaging and video conference applications) across all centres and programmes in order to ensure continued learning and learning support. All efforts were deployed to ensure learners' sustained access to the Learning Management System, as well as to provide the necessary flexibility in terms of assignment deadlines.

During this difficult time, we have been thrilled to see students taking initiative to support one another. Members of student-based organisations stepped up support to their learning community, and students have organized themselves into groups in order to maintain connections with their peers and overcome the sense of isolation.

## 10th Anniversary

This year also marks a decade of JWL's work, providing higher education to marginalised communities. On the 29th of September, JWL

and Regis University (USA) co-hosted the first global, virtual graduation ceremony for the 2020 Diploma graduates from learning centres in Kenya, Malawi, Iraq, Jordan, and Afghanistan.

Findings from the *Report on 10 Years of the Diploma in Liberal Studies* (published this Fall) revealed (among other things) an expected completion rate of approximately 60% (an extremely high rate even for programmes not operating at the margins) and proof that the programme's online blended learning model also promotes inclusion.

As we celebrate our 10 year anniversary, we are also proud to announce the launch of 4 new programmes.



**BA in Sustainable Development**  
in partnership with Xavier  
University Bhubaneswar, India

**5 Sustainable Environment**  
courses each certified by  
Newman Institute, Sweden



**Professional Certificate in Eco-Tourism**  
certified by HTSI, School of Tourism  
and Hospitality Management, Spain

**Professional Certificate in Creative  
Writing and Design** certified by St.  
Joseph's College Bangalore, India



Through these new programmes, we hope to expand our impact and reach in 2021.

## ● Australian Catholic University | New University Education Programme for Teacher Training on the Thai-Myanmar Border

Australian Catholic University (ACU) and its in-country partner in Thailand, the Marist Asia Foundation (MAF), have trialled a new university education programme in the southern border-crossing township of Ranong that aims to train the next generation of community educators. By the end of 2020, five teachers will have completed

ACU's Certificate in Teaching and Learning programme, which they completed while holding teaching roles in local community learning centres.

Prior to the start of this pilot programme, there were no formal education opportunities for educators in Thailand who have come from refugee and migrant communities. In Ranong,

young teachers (who are graduates of ACU's Diploma in Liberal Studies programme) have the opportunity to develop teaching confidence through the twelve-month Certificate programme, where they undertake learning and mentoring of classroom skills, student management, educational theory, and curriculum assessment. This programme has had young teachers focus on incorporating a learner-centred approach to teaching through collaborative planning, observations, and reflection. As part of their

training, the future teachers have created colourful posters for their classrooms to assist in the development of independent learners. The ACU programme, delivered at the MAF learning centre, aims to train up to ten teachers for the local migrant community. The pilot project reminds us that collaborative community-embedded learning is an effective way to build local teacher capacity in the long-term displaced Myanmar communities in Thailand.



MAF volunteer teacher and tutor, Katie Fisher (left) with the five local community teachers (right) enrolled in ACU's Certificate in Teaching and Learning at MAF's learning centre in Ranong, Thailand.

## ● InZone | Launching a New Programme & Learning Centre

As a result of the conflict in Syria, there is a growing need for trained translators and interpreters in neighbouring countries. Jordan, which is currently home to 650,000 Syrian refugees, is no exception.

Drawing upon InZone's expertise in multilingual humanitarian communication, a Humanitarian Translation and Interpreting Diploma (HINTTD)

was launched in March 2020 at Yarmouk University. The programme brought together Syrian refugees from the Azraq refugee camp and Jordanian students from Yarmouk University to form a professional network for humanitarian translators and interpreters in Jordan. Coming from different professional and educational backgrounds, our students are keen to develop their translation and interpreting skills.



Taught by faculty from Yarmouk University, the diploma can be completed in three academic terms and includes modules ranging from language enhancement and advanced translation/interpretation skills to humanitarian ethics and CAT (Computer-Assisted-Translation) tools.

The diploma's blended learning approach had to shift entirely online only one-week into the course's launch in response to the pandemic and the regulations issued under Jordanian Defence Law. This was challenging for students in Azraq camp where internet connectivity remains an obstacle. As one student expressed it:

"This course is one of the things I dreamed of and wished to have. It is a precious opportunity for me, and I do not want to lose it. But I faced technical challenges such as the weak network, and I had to attend lectures and take exams in the street or at the neighbours where I could not focus well."

Despite the challenges of moving the course online, the course was implemented successfully and on schedule. Students learned to use advanced tech tools and showed high levels of commitment even during intermittent lockdowns. We were inspired to see students transform the dual challenge of being a refugee and the pandemic into an opportunity to advance their translation and interpreting competencies and to develop their professional futures.

"It is so mesmerizing how this diploma managed to take us through different horizons of knowledge. What captured me was how each class had its own vibe and set of terms and different rules, and how they all come together and meet at the same core information and values."

Despite the difficulties brought on by the pandemic, our new refugee-led management team in Kakuma has been helping our students set up various community-based projects,



The HINTT Diploma was made possible through generous funding from the Ford Foundation under grant #129478 to the University of Geneva.

launching a new semester in September and preparing to move to new premises this Autumn.

Built by InZone with funding from the University of Geneva and support from UNHCR, our new learning centre in Kakuma will open shortly and include new classrooms, a creche, cafeteria, fablab and even a space for a garden. Thanks to our Kakuma Academic Coordinator, Dieu Merci Luundo, and his colleagues in Vijana Twaweza Youth Club (an initiative developed with InZone), InZone's new premises will soon be blooming with local flowers, vegetables and trees.



The challenges of 2020 have, in many ways, allowed us to take stock of our programme and set a new course for the future. Our move to the new premises is a watershed moment that signals a consolidation of our work over the last few years and a chance to forge ahead with our efforts to build a vibrant higher education community in Kakuma.

Our new 2021-2025 strategic orientations will create new momentum for better learning opportunities for more students, both where InZone currently operates and in new contexts. Pedagogic innovations, refugees' empowerment and cross-sector partnerships will drive future InZone developments.

## ● Kiron Open Higher Education | Rising to the Challenge

As an online education platform, the COVID-19 pandemic presented us with both more opportunities and challenges than we ever thought possible. With our partners' support, we made substantial progress in advocating for online education as a viable education pathway, and we continued to deliver real impact to our students. Kiron Campus evolved into a multifaceted service-offering, remaining free, and focused on professional pathways and 21st Century Skills to enable personal and academic growth.

We launched seventeen skill-booster programmes on Kiron Campus, which are high-quality courses focused on industry-specific skills. Integrating feedback from our students, we also increased our language learning opportunities, especially as language is often a barrier to success in both university and workplace settings.

Moreover, our Campus is now multilingual, translated into English, Arabic, Spanish, and most recently, Turkish. Additionally, to increase engagement and support for our students, we launched a more developed virtual community, a safe space where students can collaborate, ask

for support, and discuss topics that interest them.

Since internet connectivity is a common problem for refugee students, we reduced the bandwidth significantly on Kiron Campus and further developed our own low-data Android App – a game-changer, which made our learning materials more accessible in low connectivity environments and drastically increased our student retention rates. Thanks to measures like these, we had over 11,000 active students last year.

In honor of World Refugee Day, we held the Virtual Refugee Conference, “Amplify Now”, to serve as a platform for Kiron students and refugees worldwide. We hosted 31 events in 3 days and over 5,000 participants in collaboration with UNHCR supported by CLCC to highlight innovative solutions in the community and education field as well as refugee-led projects through an Impact Prize.

We remain committed to creating innovative opportunities for refugees and underserved communities. The pandemic has further limited access to education for these communities. In



these unprecedented times, our role in creating sustainable solutions, providing a network, and prioritising education for those left behind, is more important than ever. Under the name “Collective Impact Campus,” we opened up our platform to other refugee-focused organisations to help them connect to their learners.

Our vision for 2021 and beyond is to expand our partnerships and continue providing valuable learning pathways for refugee students. In collaboration with our partners, we hope to empower more learners by making the Collective Impact Campus inclusive and foster supportive student communities worldwide.

## ● **Mosaik Education** | Redesigning Our Programmes for Mobile and Online Learning

As with all organisations, 2020 required Mosaik to adapt quickly. We redesigned course materials, transitioned our flagship Guidance Programme and English Programme to mobile-learning, and doubled enrollment.

Our Guidance Programme, which helps refugees plan for their higher education, maintained positive outcomes despite being delivered in an entirely new medium. We were also able to expand this programme, and now serve students in Turkey as well as Jordan and Lebanon.

Our English Programme also grew. We expanded our learner-driven English classes through a series of remote online classes during the summer. We were extremely excited to provide a platform for refugee leadership here, with the classes being taught by students who had attended our original class in Amman.

Finally, Mosaik was invited to the Humanitarian Education Accelerator to develop a new teacher training programme based on its existing English classes. This programme helps teachers integrate communicative teaching techniques into their existing English programmes and introduces them to various tools and techniques teachers can use either in remote or in-person settings. The programme is delivered online, and teachers are supported through an active online community of practice.

Mosaik Education supports refugees to reach university through skills and guidance programmes. These project activities were funded by Open Society Foundation’s Higher Education Support Programme, UK Aid, University of Reading, Al Tajir Trust and the Humanitarian Education Accelerator.



“I want to be part of the Mosaik team. I want to help other refugees like me to develop and improve their English skills...English language will absolutely change their lives. They will have a better future and more opportunities in life. Plus they can get involved with the community easily.”

**Ahmed**, Mosaik English teacher and former Mosaik student

## ● Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town | Innovative Online Courses, Internships & Professional Development

In 2020 UpLearn was forced to adapt very quickly to the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. We moved all core programme elements online, and students received digital literacy skills training to ensure they could participate in the programme.

UpLearn developed a data and connectivity-conscious methodology that utilises three platforms across a four-hour workshop period.



Students engage in Zoom discussions



Complete individual and group activities in Google Classroom



After each activity, students return to Zoom for facilitator and peer-led discussions and reflections



Use Whatsapp groups as a support line for technical challenges and continued peer engagement

In the early months of lockdown when this structure was new, students were taught how to use these platforms and received follow-up resources via Whatsapp.

As a result of moving all of our teaching online, we have seen an incredible jump in our students' digital literacy skills and general resourcefulness and independence. The experience has also revealed the strength and opportunity for a hybrid-teaching model that utilises online and in-person learning spaces. In 2021 we will be working with seventy new students, providing additional monthly workshops without the additional cost of an extra lab or classroom space.

Due to the national lockdown, we also had to adapt our internship, which focuses on helping students develop project-management skills. Instead of having students work together to coordinate an in-person workshop, they created

multimedia content on COVID-19. Under the supervision of communications and health systems professionals, students learned how to find reliable sources, synthesise information and create original online content.

Another highlight of 2020 was the launch of UpLearn's advanced professional development course. This is a compulsory, asynchronous, online course housed in Google Classroom. The course is designed to keep students up-to-date with current professional trends and facilitate the development of necessary professional skills. This course also encourages students to think deeply about their professional goals and unique selling points, frame learnings from their degree and past experiences in quantifiable terms, and identify skill gaps that need to be addressed so they can meet their professional goals.

The course runs over ten weeks and consists of an introductory module, seven core skill modules, and a final interview assessment. Students submit multiple assignments. Teaching assistants provide individualised feedback and schedule one-on-one consultations with students when necessary. To help students understand their career options and network with professionals, the course also includes four enrichment Q&A sessions with professionals in each of the three degree fields.

Students who complete this course are automatically registered in Scalabrini's Employment Access programme, which actively assists students in finding employment. This year, one hundred and seven students graduated from the associate's degree programme and eight students graduated from the bachelor's programme. We are hopeful that this course will help our graduates distinguish themselves in South Africa's saturated and sometimes discriminatory job market.

## ● MIT Refugee Action Hub | Celebrating our Largest and Most Global Cohort



MIT ReACT learners connect for Day 3 of the Computer and Data Science Certificate Programme Orientation in September. Photo credit: Gillian Walsh.

In September 2020 the MIT Refugee Action Hub (ReACT) welcomed the newest cohort of our Certificate in Computer and Data Science (CDS) programme, wrapping up an unprecedented year the same way we began it—with a virtual gathering. The online graduation ceremony that we held in January and the three-day online orientation welcoming our third CDS class bookend a year in which much has changed.

For ReACT, some of the changes brought by 2020 have been unexpectedly for the better. Earlier in the year, as education around the world began moving into virtual spaces, we strove to adapt, innovating ways to deliver the same quality educational and collaborative experiences that have been the hallmark of our programmes.

When ReACT launched in 2017, we were able to offer a blended learning experience out of Amman, Jordan. Our students came primarily from the MENA region. Since then, we have sought to develop versions of our programmes that could reach more learners. Adapting the CDS programme to a fully online format has been a silver lining of 2020, allowing ReACT to reach a more global cohort—and in a time when the need to provide free learning opportunities to displaced and vulnerable populations wherever they are is stronger than ever.

Selected from over 700 applicants, the 50 new learners in ReACT's 2021 class come from twenty-two countries. They represent almost every continent in the world and, together, make

up our largest and most global class to date. Now in the first leg of their yearlong journey to mastering 21st-century skills such as computer programming, data analysis, collaboration, and entrepreneurship, members of ReACT's new class bring to the CDS programme a rich diversity of experiences, perspectives, and talents.

With the support of internal partners at MIT, the Western Union Foundation, and other external supporters like Paper Airplanes and Na'amal, ReACT continues to grow our global hubs, building networks of NGOs, philanthropic supporters, companies, universities, alumni and mentors to support learners where they are. We

are also working with different organizations on workshops related to digital learning in remote or low-bandwidth settings—like refugee camps—as well as efforts to connect refugee talent to opportunities for dignified employment. As we refine our blended learning model and mode of engaging with regional hubs, we plan to develop a playbook of best practices.

At MIT ReACT, we are excited to see our students coming from all over the world to learn together, to become a part of our global network, and to create new hubs of learning in regions as diverse as Colombia, Uganda, Ethiopia, the United States, and Jordan.

## ● Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access | Increasing Our Reach Through Digital Learning

The Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access (PADILEIA) aims to facilitate access to higher education for those displaced and affected by the Syrian crisis in Jordan and Lebanon, including disadvantaged local populations. The project sits within the portfolio of the Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR) programme. It is led by King's College London, in partnership with the American University of Beirut (AUB), Al al-Bayt University (AABU), FutureLearn and Kiron Open Higher Education.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our focus this year has been the rapid development of fully digital learning. While originally an adaptation caused by necessity, since we could no longer deliver our courses in a blended learning format, the increased focus on digital has allowed us to analyse its benefits more fully.



### Adapting to Fully Digital Delivery

Once the pandemic struck, Jordan and Lebanon went into lockdown very suddenly, which meant that the PADILEIA project team had to make a rapid decision about how to proceed with ongoing courses. Our Foundation courses, which run for eight months and aim to prepare students for a university degree, were in full swing with only 25% of the material run on Google Classroom and the remaining 75% taught face-to-face at a bespoke study hub. Our online courses, although already 100% online, were being delivered with an instructor to facilitate learning and increase engagement. Students benefited from the community created and the fit-for-purpose infrastructure our study hubs provided.

We conducted an assessment very quickly with both students and facilitators to understand potential challenges of moving face-to-face activity online. As we had expected, many of our students had only intermittent internet access and - although most had a phone - many did not

have a laptop, which affected the types of tasks they could be expected to perform. We tackled this challenge by providing students with internet cards and tablets which allowed us to restore their access to course content within just a few weeks of lockdown.

We also adjusted the demands of certain courses. For example, instead of submitting long pieces of written work (which is difficult without a laptop), students could make shorter comments or bullet points for instructor input. Some courses were more amenable to these adaptations - with courses such as programming being much more difficult for students to complete without adequate resources. Computer science is covered in the Foundation programmes and we are working on adapting the curriculum to make it more flexible. Still, it is a significant change that could not be accommodated quickly.

Instructors and facilitators had a different challenge, requesting support and training on how best to move their material online. In response, training workshops on how to transition to online teaching were delivered by King's College London. These workshops took a very collaborative approach, drawing on the practical experiences of all the participants. We also used simple but effective technologies such as online whiteboards and small group discussions, thereby offering examples that the instructors and facilitators could take away and use in their own online lessons. Participant Dr Mohammad Jaradat explains, "We talked about the barriers faced by our students in and out of the classroom, and how we can overcome those. We also talked about some technologies like Mentimeter, Google Classroom and Flipgrid."

Key technologies used for our digital offering included Zoom for conferencing and a WhatsApp group for the facilitators, which enabled them to share challenges and support each other. WhatsApp was also used to provide further student

support, which cohorts created using groups. Here, students could have discussions and ask questions, similar to how they would in a classroom setting.

In general, our instructors were excited to try something new and assess whether online instruction could be useful to us in the longer term. Abir Majdalany, an instructor for our Foundation course and also a coordinator for our short online MOOCs, noted that "teachers have the chance to explore online teaching strategies that serve students' needs in addition to applications that could be beneficial in assessment." Instructors began to split teaching into shorter windows spread throughout the week to help maintain students' attention spans, and to upload teaching agendas to Google Classroom in advance so students could better prepare.

Abir also notes that "instructors succeeded in grabbing students' attention but it was challenging to sustain it until the end of the session. Since students' videos were turned off, instructors were not able to see if students were paying attention or away from their device. Additionally, teachers had challenges in assessing students since assessment tools in remote learning are still not very accurate and fair." Instructors needed to adjust by making extra effort to be available outside of lesson times, and to check in with students more often to try and replicate the strong face-to-face relationship formed in the classroom.

## The New Normal?

As restrictions are lifting, we are continuing to deliver our courses using blended models. Many of our students missed the community feeling of the classroom, with one commenting that online learning "did not give as effective results as teaching in the classroom." The ability to be physically with other students and instructors brings benefits that cannot be fully replicated digitally.



The advantages of online learning have always been central to PADILEIA's core delivery, and this is a key factor to us being able to adapt quickly to a fully-online delivery model. Rachel Safadi at Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), one of our partners, noted that fully online learning meant "students can attend the facilitated sessions from their own homes, and in their own time. The sweeping majority of the students are advancing in the programme and are 'sticky' in nature, meaning that student retention rates for this fully online programme are high. This gives us an indication that many students are finding fully online learning approaches sufficient and beneficial." Other instructors commented that more students are getting the opportunity to practice their IT skills which in turn promotes greater interest in computer classes. One student even commented that online learning has helped the cohort get to know each other on a deeper level, saying that fully online sessions mean you "get to know the students' minds, not just their faces".

Since physical location is less of a barrier with fully online courses, we have seen big increases this year in the number of students signing up to study. For one of our basic English courses, for example, the enrolments have increased ten-fold, to nearly 50,000 learners, with a 700% increase in the number of learners who identified as "refugees

in Jordan or Lebanon." This significant spike in learner uptake is in line with wider FutureLearn platform trends, which revealed that environmental factors, such as COVID-19, have led to a significant increase in site visitors and new enrolments across the platform. Technology has played a key role in our ability to accommodate these larger student numbers, with the use of Zoom, in particular, allowing us to increase our class sizes from 30 students in a physical location to 50 on a Zoom call. We have similarly noticed a decrease in mentor dropouts, a student support mechanism we provide, as they are able to arrange sessions with students at their mutual convenience rather than being limited to campus opening hours.

Some of our initial findings are that students are able to adapt and feel more positively towards the courses when they have had some initial face-to-face meetings with their cohort and instructors. This is something we are investigating further and we will be publishing a report of our findings early in the new year.

Whilst we acknowledge the significant benefits of blended learning, this pandemic has allowed us to experience facilitated online learning. With the increase in learners and reach, it is clear there are some benefits to this, and that it is possible for students to benefit from learning in this way.

## ● Southern New Hampshire University | Supporting Students in Uncertain & Challenging Times

Looking back on 2020, it is unquestionable that we are working alongside our learners during an unparalleled moment in time. With the continued rise of inequality, conflict, and uncertainty worldwide, the number of displaced people has ballooned to a staggering 70.4 million. The ongoing refugee crisis is an acceleration of a decade-long trend. Refugees are among the

most marginalized populations globally, and this has become even more evident in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Southern New Hampshire University Global Education Movement (SNHU GEM) connected learning model hinges on working collaboratively and successfully with partners located in the



camps and urban areas. It has been an honour and pleasure to work alongside partners to ensure students still received support previously delivered in-person. This support includes academic coaching, psychosocial support, and access to a laptop and internet services. Most importantly, these support services include ongoing staff mentorship, which ensures that each student has an advocate to support them along their academic and employment journey. The work of partners has been extraordinary in ensuring that students had uninterrupted access to their studies and additional support given the unique challenges they experienced due to the pandemic. For example, SNHU GEM took its usual in-person partner retreats virtual and offered partner staff a retreat on mental health and wellness to support students and staff.

SNHU GEM, our partners, and our students have faced many new challenges – and have achieved many new successes – over this past year. While the COVID-19 pandemic changed the landscape of education, it also highlighted how well the GEM

programme is set up to support student access and success in uncertain and challenging environments.

COVID has also accelerated SNHU GEM's efforts for employment advocacy through digital employment opportunities. All students still complete an internship (digitally), and SNHU GEM is proud to be a partner in launching Siriforce, an organization based out of San Francisco that aims to link refugees with employment opportunities, with the goal of proving that Silicon Valley level talent exists in all corners of the world.

Our students in Rwanda, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Lebanon have continued to shine throughout the year. Indeed, we noticed that our students made accelerated progress at the beginning of the pandemic, and we have determined that the majority of our students are learning and completing their degrees at the same pace, on average, as prior to the pandemic. Our students report that the self-pacing aspect of our programme has been key during this time. The self-pacing aspect gives them the opportunity to participate in learning while



juggling competing priorities, including work, family obligations, housing insecurity (for our urban students) and food insecurity, all of which have been exacerbated by the recent pandemic.

“Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, I managed to keep focused on my academic career, because SNHU tried to provide all the necessities that helped me to continue my studies. SNHU/GEM provided airtime for the internet during this COVID-19 situation.”

**Wilson, GEM student in Dzaleka Refugee Camp**

Over the last year, SNHU GEM has continued to enrol new cohorts of students, and we successfully brought them onboard through our first fully remote orientations. These orientations used Zoom, Padlet and other virtual meeting platforms. Holding remote orientations allowed students from several sites to interact and collaborate with each other and co-lead orientation activities across countries. We continued to engage our students remotely through synchronous and asynchronous learning, and we found new ways to support them and our blended learning model.

Additionally, earlier this year, we expanded our operations and added a new partner and additional site in Lebanon.

We look forward to seeing students continue to thrive and earn their Bachelor’s degrees even in the most challenging circumstances!

## ● Launch of the Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies



The Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies (CAPRS) had its official launch on the 15th July, 2020.

The Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies (CAPRS), under its Opening Universities for Refugees (OUR) Programme, made a joint pledge with the University Alliance for Refugees & At-Risk Migrants (UARRM) at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019. The pledge aimed to bring University Ranking Agencies (URAs), as new stakeholders, into the ongoing discussions on refugee youth and their access to higher education, and to propose a new ranking criteria

called the Social Sustainability Moving Badge System (SSBS). This additional ranking system is intended to be independent of current academic rankings and would encourage universities to be more inclusive to displaced youth.

To kick-start this process, the initial plan was to bring together the representatives of key Ranking Agencies to discuss strategies and to create a new collaboration model between the UNHCR and URAs at a workshop in May 2020, either in Geneva or in New York. Due to the travel restrictions brought about by the pandemic, the CAPRS team decided to communicate with Ranking Agencies directly and received an invitation from the Times Higher Education Ranking Agency to participate during the World Summit in August 2020.

In November, CAPRS also hosted the opening panel “Higher Education for Refugees: Towards

a Global Strategy” during the Times Higher Education (THE) Asia Summit. The panel also included representatives from the UNHCR and the CLCC. Additionally, Gül İnanç, the Co-Director of CAPRS, and Charley Wright, UNHCR’s Connected Learning Specialist, published “The

Online Transition Means High-Quality HE for All is Within Our Grasp” in the Times Higher Education (THE). They argue that COVID-19 has given major universities and funders an opportunity to play a powerful social role in making quality online learning available to displaced communities.

## ● **Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program** | 40,000 Students and Growing



Throughout 2020, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program continued developing young leaders who will drive social and economic change within their communities. By 2030, the Program will continue to expand by enrolling and graduating an additional 15,000 young people in high-quality tertiary education and leadership development including 70% women; 25% refugees and displaced youth; and 10% young people with disabilities for a total of 50,000 Scholars since the beginning of the Program. To date, the Program has reached nearly 40,000 talented students, primarily in Africa.

This year, the Scholars Program welcomed the United States International University-Africa (USIU-A) in Kenya and African Leadership University (ALU) in Rwanda and Mauritius into the partner network. World University Service of Canada and Light for the World also joined the Program as technical assistance partners to support inclusion of refugees and young people with disabilities amongst the partner network.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scholars Program is developing an eLearning initiative in collaboration with Arizona State

University (ASU) and USIU-Africa. The first phase of the initiative’s design will address universities’ urgent needs in the Scholars Program partner network while also building institutional resilience for the longer term. The initiative aims to advance three streams of work:

- Strengthening the capacity of all Scholars Program partner universities in instructional design and online pedagogy
- Supporting the development or acquisition of high-quality, inclusive and relevant online content (both academic and wrap-around support)
- And building a community of practice in e-learning, in Africa and beyond, which will enable collaborative learning and sharing of best practices, resources and lessons learned

In addition to working alongside refugee-led and youth organizations in Africa, we will continue to expand partnerships that deepen inclusion, increase access to higher education, and support graduates to transition to work.



## • Kenyatta University | Higher Education for Refugees in Dadaab Centre



KU's Dadaab Centre has worked with 400 refugees. Photo credit: KU.

Dadaab and Kakuma, two of the most populous refugee camps, make Kenya the second-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. Kenyatta University (KU) acknowledged that refugee students face numerous challenges in accessing higher education, including a lack of information and individual guidance to relevant courses. In 2012, KU established the Centre for Refugee Studies, which helps coordinate higher education for refugee students. The Centre's mandate is to identify and develop academic and professional programmes for students living in Dadaab and Kakuma.

Since its inception, the Centre for Refugee Studies, now Dadaab Centre, has coordinated higher education programmes for more than 400 refugees and host community students through a blended mode of learning. Two key projects have made connected learning a reality:

- **Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) in Dadaab**, which is a collaboration between KU, York University and Windle International Kenya (WIK)

- **Quality Secondary Education in Emergencies (QSEE) in Kakuma**, which is a collaboration between the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (HU), KU, WIK and the Mastercard Foundation.

Over the years, KU has also hosted approximately 205 refugee students through in-person study under the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) scholarship and several other students in different courses under the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) scholarship. The university has consistently played a key role in ensuring refugee and host communities have access to quality higher education and training that can help refugees succeed whether they are repatriated, resettled or integrated locally.

KU, with the support of its partners, is committed to ensuring that refugee students continue learning and can take exams from their camps during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also seeking new partnerships to continually explore additional opportunities for refugee learners.



## ● Carey Institute for Global Good | Center for Learning in Practice



The mission of the [Center for Learning in Practice](#) at the [Carey Institute for Global Good](#) is to improve professional learning and knowledge sharing in and across civil society organizations through Sustainable Learning programming, research, and services. Our [Sustainable Learning Framework](#) (updated 2020) is the cornerstone of our work. Sustainable Learning refers to a theory of educational practices that contribute to a healthy learning ecosystem. It is a set of applied disciplines and the practices that make them actionable.

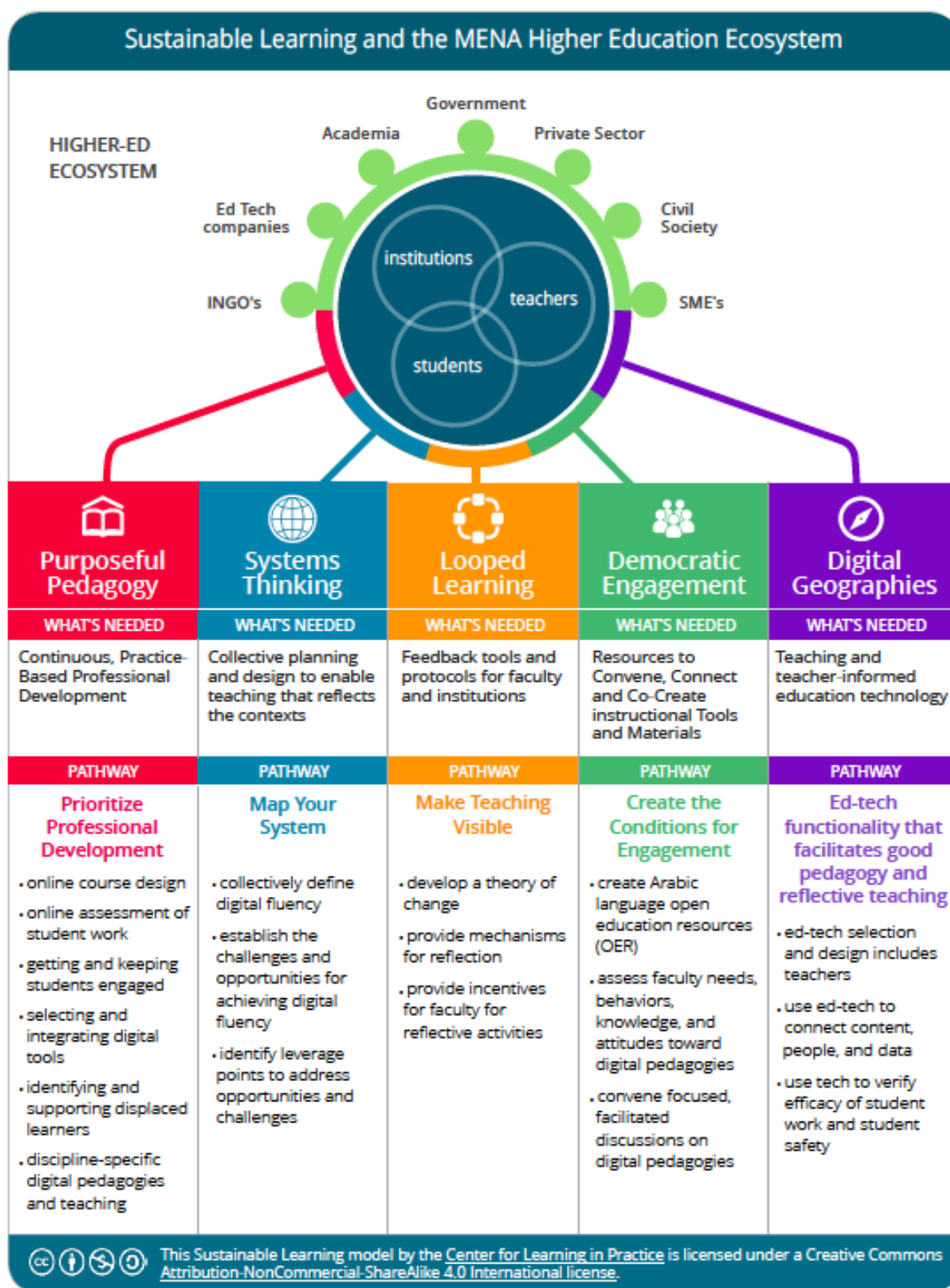
Whether you are a teacher, farmer, healthcare worker, journalist, or any other kind of practitioner, many types of knowledge are necessary to achieve your goals. Practice mastery results from knowledge and skills that enable you to adapt your practice to highly specific contextual factors; navigate institutional, local, state, national and international policy; master codified technical knowledge; create effective programme design and generate and analyze data.

As the world is grappling with the consequences and complexities of upheaval of every kind, and as COVID-19 has exacerbated the broader education ecosystem's weaknesses, Sustainable Learning has become an ever more salient guide

for designing learning, particularly online. It is in this context that we undertook, with partners around the world, several critical projects, including:

- Created a free self-paced course [Moving My Course/Programme Online in English and Arabic](#)
- Published [Higher Education Connected and Blended Learning Toolkit](#), an Open Education Resource (OER). Developed in partnership with the [Open Society University Network](#) and [Bard College](#), it introduces connected and blended learning and effective practices for designing instructionally sound courses that can be taught in both remote and brick and mortar teaching environments.
- Launched the MENA Region Higher Education Digital Pedagogies for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, with CLCC and UNHCR, a landscape analysis and planning project funded by the Open Society Foundations. The project's objective is to strengthen faculty capacity to effectively use digital pedagogies with a particular focus on students with refugee backgrounds. With faculty leadership teams from each country (pictured below), over 200 faculty across Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt (the research sites) participated. A report, including a situation analysis and blueprint for action, will be published in early 2021.

The current crisis presents a rare opportunity to reimagine education. In 2021, we will continue to pursue that opportunity in service of achieving collective impact and long-term systemic change in how learning is designed and delivered across contexts.





## ● Windle International Kenya | Innovative Re-Programming Amidst COVID-19

The emergence and global spread of COVID-19 has led to significant changes and disruption of services.

While the pandemic has had catastrophic effects on all populations, it has presented greater challenges for refugees. To ensure continued support for our Persons of Concern (PoC), Windle International Kenya (WIK) had to adapt our strategies and approaches in the delivery and execution of our services.

### Leveraging ICT

With the disruption of education due to the closure of learning institutions in Kenya, innovative approaches were adopted to ensure that the students we support in secondary schools in Dadaab and Kakuma and in tertiary institutions could continue learning. Leveraging ICT infrastructure was one sure way of offering continued support to our PoC while adhering to COVID-19 safety and protection guidelines.

### Mental Health Awareness Joint e-Forums

With the uncertainty and fear that came with the pandemic, causing anxiety and other psychological difficulties, the mental well-being of our PoC was of great concern to WIK. WIK's counselling department with the help of external psycho-social support specialists organised a virtual mental health support forum targeting university and college scholars.

The indefinite closure of universities and colleges abruptly stopped learning at a critical time when most faculties and schools were preparing for end of semester examinations. This threw students off balance, with the daily reports on

new infections and death rates fueling more panic and uncertainty. There was a need to equip scholars with additional tools to handle these changes and support others around them.

With face-to-face activities grounding to a halt in adherence to social distancing protocols, the three-part forum was conducted via MS teams, targeting over 600 scholars. The objective was to educate and sensitize scholars on mental health issues such as identifying common challenges as well as an array of structures and mechanisms for addressing those issues.

### Embracing Digital Platforms

Implementing remote support for WIK students to continue learning called for a switch to digital learning and information sharing platforms. Digital platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and MS Teams were extensively used by our teachers to share education content such as lesson notes, revision materials, assignments and other relevant audio/visual files with learners. The same channels proved useful in monitoring and maintaining contact with our scholars to establish their general well-being.

### Partnering for Connectivity

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a crucial opportunity for universities and colleges to leverage their digital capability. As such, most institutions switched to online learning via platforms like Google Classroom, Blackboard, Moodle, Zoom and other customized online applications.

This required scholars to have constant and unlimited access to internet connectivity. For WIK scholars, this posed other challenges such as

unreliable internet connectivity in the camps and the cost of purchasing bundles.

WIK therefore partnered with a local telecommunication company to provide subsidized data bundles for scholars who had registered to continue with online learning in respective institutions. This significantly increased the number of scholars undertaking online learning.

### Partnering for Continued Engagement

WIK partnered with local radio stations in Dadaab and Kakuma to broadcast radio lessons to WIK secondary school students in the camps.

Radio broadcast is one of the alternative curriculum delivery channels rolled out by the Government of Kenya through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), mandated to develop approved curriculum support materials for learning during COVID-19.

This radio programme content is broadcasted by over thirty local FM stations spread across

different counties. Where the radio signal was weak in the camps, pre-recorded KICD lessons were broadcasted through the local camp-based radio stations to our learners.

For our learners facing challenges in accessing radios, smartphones and internet bundles, WIK issued books donated by our partners to help students continue studying at home.

### Opportunity to Make a Difference

WIK scholarship programmes seek to nurture and cultivate the spirit of volunteerism and giving back to the community.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for our tertiary scholarship beneficiaries to complement the efforts of the government and camp-based organizations in the fight against COVID-19. They volunteered their skills in activities ranging from production and distribution of masks and soap, to carrying out COVID-19 sensitization campaigns in their community.



WIK students making cloth masks. Photo credit: WIK.

# STUDENT PROFILES



There aren't enough hours in a day for Innocent and his team as they step up soap production. Photo credit: JWL.

## ● Innocent | Jesuit Worldwide Learning

### **Job Creation and Community Impact During COVID-19**

For Innocent and his staff at GLAP Enterprises, there aren't enough hours in a day. They are stepping up production and distributing soaps throughout Kakuma Refugee Camp and Turkana West.

Originally from Burundi, where he studied chemistry, Innocent had to flee the country due

to insecurity. He reached Kakuma, Kenya, where he has been living for the past seven years. He began his business project in 2015 and made his first batch of natural soaps as Christmas gifts in 2016. JWL's Diploma in Liberal Studies and its concentration in Business drew Innocent's attention as an opportunity to use business to create jobs and address needs in his community.



**“The Diploma programme took out of me the fear of continuing my studies and extending my business.”**

He also told us that the course improved his communication and business skills and the tremendous impact JWL staff, colleagues and community leaders made on him. As a result, Innocent was inspired to further his studies and is now completing a BA in Business Administration through Southern New Hampshire University’s (SNHU) Global Education Movement (GEM).

Innocent hopes to extend his business to the international level, realising that capital, digital marketing and supply are obstacles to address. However, right now, the onus is on producing and distributing sufficient amounts of quality handwashing soap to the community at an affordable cost – even for the poorest. GLAP now employs 45 staff members - up from 18 before the pandemic. Innocent’s business has the double advantage of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and creating work opportunities at a time of increased unemployment.

## • Magerneh | Jesuit Worldwide Learning



**Magerneh plans on transferring knowledge and mobilising members of the community on environmental issues. Photo credit: JWL.**

Magerneh was just over a year away from completing his medical studies at Dilla

University (Ethiopia) when he fled to Kenya due to insecurity. When he came across the announcement about the Humans and the Environment course on the public noticeboard, having also previously obtained a degree in crop and horticultural science and being concerned about environmental issues, he thought “Oh! This is just for me.” He immediately enrolled in Humans and the Environment, which is part of five courses related to Sustainable Environment, each certified by the Newman Institute (Sweden).

His favourite aspect of the course is its focus on tangible, globally relevant problems and applicable solutions. Through the course, Magerneh “now know[s] what the problems are and how to tackle them systematically and sustainably.” He also enjoys interacting with students from different corners of the world.

Through the course, Magerneh has come to believe that “someone alone can bring a change by mobilising others, [and a] minority can influence the majority.” Transferring knowledge to and mobilising community members will be key and is part of Magerneh’s plan. For now, he will start by organising and engaging the community

around a tree-planting initiative.

He hopes to complete the studies he had to abandon but in the meantime will continue to nourish his mind by gaining knowledge in the areas of environmental science, politics, economics and management, so that one day he may help the people of the African continent.

To current and future JWL student, he would say:



“When you get a chance to learn, do it well to the maximum you can! Love your subjects. If you love them, they will respond and become easy for you! [...] When you study, don't think you are studying for only yourself. Feel your poor communities, feel your poor country, feel your poor continent Africa - this is going to give you some kind of great energy!”

## ● Luma | Jesuit Worldwide Learning



Luma joined the Diploma programme in Amman with a thirst for knowledge. Photo credit: JWL.

Luma joined the Diploma programme in Amman with a thirst for knowledge. “I consider myself lucky to have this chance because this Diploma is inclusive for all aspects of life that will open the way for me to be an effective member of my community and of the world.”

Political Thought and Sociology were of particular interest and Luma eventually opted

for the Social Work concentration. Being a part of group discussions with peers from different backgrounds and with diverse experiences allows her to learn about different cultures, other countries, and makes for particularly memorable moments. She recalls the first day she met with fellow students at the learning centre: “[...] we were from different countries (Iraq, Sudan, Somalia). I felt that I really live in this world and nothing could differentiate us like colours, race, religion or anything else. We are the same, so I feel humanity brings us together.”

Change is already apparent, as Luma finds she is a better listener, more patient, tolerant and considerate of other people's views, while also feeling more confident about her abilities. She has opted for the Social Work concentration and is already applying her knowledge as a volunteer with the Jordanian Red Crescent and Noor Al-Hussein Foundation, where she works with persons with disabilities.

The realities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic present some challenges but Luma and her classmates have been supporting and motivating each other to continue with their studies.



## • Manahil | Jesuit Worldwide Learning



Manahil wants to fight for the rights of girls and other vulnerable persons in the community. Photo credit: JWL.

**“Girls are very disadvantaged in my community, and that is why I want to fight for their rights,”**

says Manahil. Originally from Sudan, she and her family arrived in Kakuma Refugee Camp (Kenya) when she was thirteen years old. She wanted to study medicine, but was married at sixteen and became a mother a year later. Belonging to a community that does not favour girls’ education made pursuing her studies a real challenge. But she was determined.

Manahil completed her secondary education, took some computer classes and eventually joined the JWL Diploma programme (which she graduated from in Fall 2020). During her studies, she developed an interest in business management. She elected to join the programme because she

enjoys being part of “a diverse student body.” Interacting with students from across the globe,

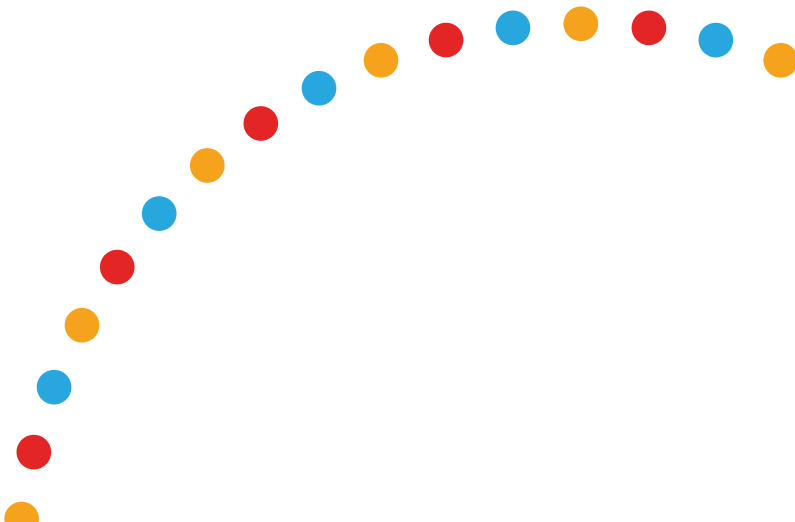
**“we learn their cultures, and they learn ours.”**

At the same time, she serves the JWL Kakuma community as a Student Welfare Officer.

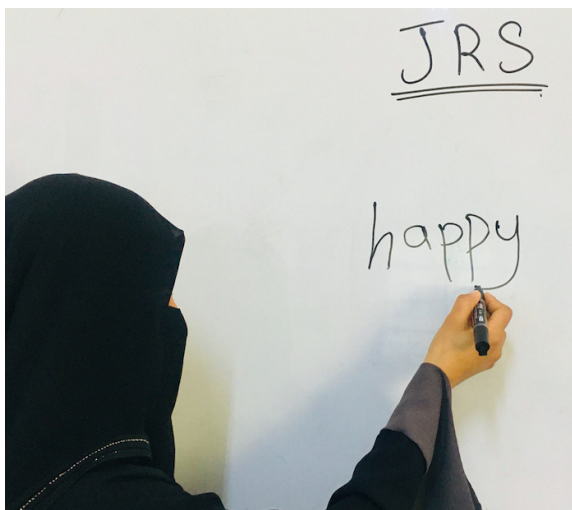
The project management skills she has gained are serving her well as part of the Kakuma Hub Global Shapers Community, coming up with projects to assist the community and “be the voice of the refugees in Kakuma.” In response to COVID-19, she is also working on a project with UNHCR on prevention measures and ensuring that accurate updates are shared with the community.

She hopes to be a business entrepreneur in the beauty industry one day and has applied for the degree in Business Management with Southern New Hampshire University. It is equally important to her to support vulnerable persons, starting by running an orphanage. “I want to fight violence, discrimination, tribalism, and advocate for peace in society.”

**“My advice to women like me is to grab the opportunities available, do something great in life, and do not fear fighting for what they want because people are unfair. It is [up to] them to fight for their rights.”**



## ● Amjad | Jesuit Refugee Service



**Amjad is committed to pursuing her education so that she can provide a secure future for her children. Photo credit: JRS.**

Amjad participated in the Pathfinder programme of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), a global post-secondary education and training initiative to help refugees and other forcibly displaced people build self-reliance and determine their own future.

Despite numerous obstacles, Amjad is committed to pursuing her education because she knows that education is the key to a better life and a secure future for her children. She shares her story below.

“Before I knew about the JRS, I came to Jordan for cancer treatment that was not available in Yemen. I left my family and my environment and came with a broken soul to Jordan. I completed my bachelor’s degree, but I had difficulties with the English language. I struggled throughout my time at university and wanted to improve for the sake of my children.

The English course with JRS facilitated a qualitative shift in my life. I entered a better mental space, no longer plagued with negative thoughts. Instead, I became more open to society and other

cultures - which is especially significant because I am Yemeni and veiled. I realised that we are one family uniting our humanity, we fear for each other, we rejoice together, and we grieve as one, always communicating with each other.

Additionally, I found other ways to spend my free time, positively and productively...I am now an active member of society. It is funny that before, I was growing old waiting for the results of medical exams, worried sick and agonizing over the minutes. Now, the hospital calls me to remind me of my appointments – I have gained freedom of mind and spirit.

If I could summarize my experience in one sentence, I would say: ‘The Arab world was gathered in a classroom.’

Since the start of COVID-19, it has been difficult to adapt to the changing circumstances. The first week of the ban was the hardest, some basic materials such as table salt, for example, had been exhausted, but it has since gotten easier. My children’s schooling was disrupted, as we have one phone and a simple internet package, which was insufficient, but thankfully some lessons were broadcast on TV.

I received some support during the pandemic, both emotionally and materially, from my course facilitators and the Civil Defense Directorate when I needed medical care or just some advice. Before the pandemic, I did many activities, including going to the Islamic Centre at the University of Jordan or visiting JRS. Fortunately, now my children are in front of my eyes. I can spend more time with them and focus on their education.”

## • Kitali | InZone



“My name is Kitala. I am 29 years old, and I come from the Democratic Republic of Congo. I left my country in 2012 due to insecurity and the fear of being persecuted. I arrived at Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya in November of the same year.

In 2015 I saw a poster for Higher Education courses offered by InZone of the University of Geneva. I joined the InZone Ethics course, and I was part of the first cohort. After completing the course, I joined the human rights programmes and then the children’s rights programme. These programmes increased my confidence and motivation and helped my community; they also helped me achieve my goals of implementing community-based organizations in the camp. Doing this, I followed my life principle, which is the Ubuntu system or golden rule: “do to others what you would like them to do to you”.

Since then, I co-founded three community-based organizations in Kakuma refugee camp that focus on empowering refugees through the access and use of digital technology or enabling them to become entrepreneurs. This experience showed me how human beings value each other, which motivated me to launch There is Hope Africa (THA) in 2017. THA is a refugee-led organization that strives to empower refugee women, young mothers, children and young people by providing them with vocational training skills that enable them to become self-reliant and build their confidence to cope with the different challenges refugees go through in the camp.”

## ● Min | Australian Catholic University



**Min Htet Si Thu is a 20-year-old Burmese student.**  
Photo credit: ACU.

“Ever since I was a little boy, I always dreamed of becoming a successful entrepreneur. I wanted to contribute to my people and my country. Hence,

being accepted to the Thai-Burma Diploma programme at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) has been a huge turning point in my life. The education I am receiving from this programme has literally opened my eyes and revolutionized how I see the world. Additionally, the knowledge and strategies I learnt in ACU’s business course have given me the confidence to pursue my dream to create better job opportunities for disadvantaged people in Myanmar.

Thousands of secondary school graduates from refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border are eager to continue their education at international universities but have limited opportunity to do so. For instance, I completed high school in 2018 in Mae Sot, a border town, but without a recognized certificate for my further study either in Myanmar or Thailand. I realized the importance of an accredited course of study if I were to have the opportunity to contribute to my country. The ACU Thai-Burma programme is highly respected and offers students like me the



The ACU Thai-Burma programme is an accredited course of study for displaced students living near the Thai-Myanmar border. Photo credit: ACU.



education we desire and trains us to step up our game in our career or further education.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on schools, colleges and universities all over the world. We also faced many difficulties in the early months in terms of our studies, however, ACU found ways to help students and keep the programme going even in the middle of the lockdown. Every cloud has a silver lining! Since

then, we have not had any problem accessing our studies.

Overall, it is a great chance for me to be here in the ACU Mae Sot Thai-Burma programme as I am getting closer and closer to my dream. My confidence and knowledge are developing every day, and I am super excited to graduate from this prestigious programme.”

## ● Myo | Australian Catholic University



**ACU student Myo Myo Khine is from Rakhine State, Myanmar. Photo credit: ACU.**

“I am currently enrolled in the Diploma of Liberal Studies, Diploma of Liberal Studies at the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

In 2016, I graduated with a Bachelor of Economics from the Yangon University of Economics. However, even though my degree qualified me to pursue a master’s in Thailand and other places, Myanmar’s education system, which is based on rote learning, did not inspire me to continue my education there. Instead, I came to Mae Sot with the determination to undertake an international level of education.

Fortunately, in 2019, I got a chance to study at ACU Thai-Burma Diploma Programme, which has become the bridge for my next academic

journey. This programme has provided me with a high-quality education, including critical thinking, research skills and other beneficial academic skills. During my study time in the online individual learning programme, I admit I have faced some challenges as English is my third language. However, with my eagerness to learn different things, and with the support of lecturers and our onsite academic tutors, I have overcome those challenges.

While all seven subjects I have completed in this diploma programme have been interesting, I enjoyed global health the most. The modules and research for these courses have ignited my desire to pursue a master’s in public health. The interactive learning tools in this course have taught me how to develop solutions to address public health issues. After graduating from the ACU programme, my goal is to apply to an international master’s degree programme in public health. Once I complete my masters, I hope to become a public health worker and return to Myanmar so that I can work with impoverished communities in Rakhine State to improve their quality of life while also striving for better health outcomes at an individual level.”



## ● Sylvia | University of Nairobi



Sylvia Beatrice Wairimu is enrolled in a Bachelor of Education (Arts) programme. Photo credit: UoN.

“In December 2019, news went round about a contagious disease, the novel Coronavirus. It never crossed my mind that a few months later,

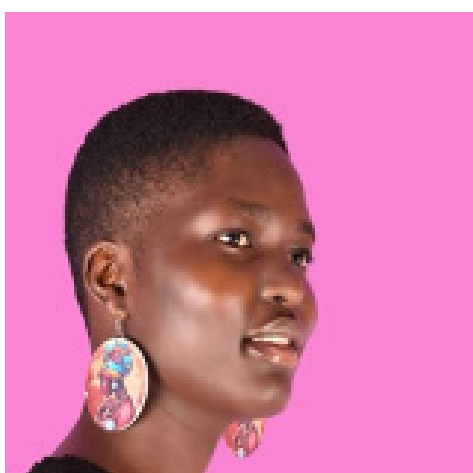
the whole world would be different.

Looking back, I wish I had an idea about the permanent scars that it would leave behind. I would appreciate the moments I shared with friends and family and the freedom of walking maskless.

The closure of schools came with a fair share of challenges. Living in the rich agricultural land of Nyandarua County in Raitha Village at the foot of the Aberdares Ranges provides me with a serene, peaceful and tranquil environment to study. However, due to poor connectivity, participating in online learning is almost impossible for me.

Despite these challenges, I will not let anything hinder me from achieving my goals. COVID-19 has made me discover my strengths, abilities and weaknesses. I feel more motivated to achieve my goals.”

## ● Anuarite | University of Nairobi



Anuarite has been learning at home for five months. Photo credit: UoN.

Five months ago, the Ministry of Education closed schools indefinitely due to the pandemic. Our

Vice-Chancellor announced that we would complete our coursework and exams online. It was unbelievable; not even the Open Distance and e-Learning programme students had ever done examinations online. I called a few friends to find out how to prepare for online exams. A few friends complained; they did not have proper gadgets, network coverage or lighting. For me, it was impossible to connect because the electricity was out in my town.

Before the pandemic, I attended a few conferences online, but I honestly could not imagine completing an exam online. Some administrators were against universities administering examinations online, arguing that the examinations' quality would be compromised.

However, after two months of doubting the Vice-Chancellor's announcement, we finally had training on handling online examinations and went ahead to complete all of our exams online. Quality was not compromised as the examination system could detect any form of cheating, and tracked the time intervals between your answers and the number of times you left the site. I completed my coursework and exams at a nearby

cyber. I am proud that I passed all my exams, and I am excited to start the new semester.

Despite these challenges, I have learned a great deal as a result of the pandemic. COVID-19 has allowed me to enrol in free, short courses and youth training, which now are all online. Personally, I have also had more time to meditate and reflect.

## • Fredrick | University of Nairobi

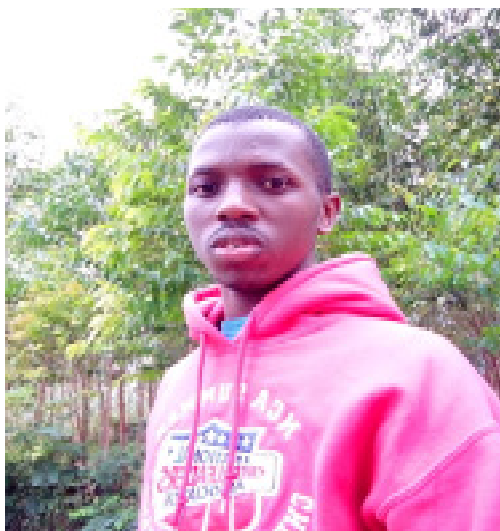


Fredrick is continuing his education at home in Kakamega, Kenya. Photo credit: UoN.

"Sitting in a grass-thatched structure in Ejinja Village in the heart of Kakamega County Western Kenya, COVID-19 has taught me which corner of my 'isimba' (hut) is better endowed with a stable Safaricom and Airtel connection. I am keenly following the proceedings of my West African Prose Literature class, dash to our Google Classroom platform to check on my classmates' presentations as I prepare for my course term paper that I would later submit to a Turnitin platform to check for plagiarism. Isn't this the new normal?

We can't let 2020 waste away, hoping things will return to normal. COVID-19 has taught us better survival tactics not just in academia but holistically. If it were not for COVID-19, I would have graduated without knowing how to submit or retrieve assignments online, schedule a class or even attend an online exam. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, I choose to see the positive changes that have occurred. As a result, these trying times have taught me that 'impossible' should never be a visionary leader's language."

## ● Joseph | University of Nairobi



Joseph is taking online classes to complete his bachelor's degree. Photo credit: UoN.

“Many presumed COVID-19 was a simple illness - a cough accompanied by a headache or small fever. Little did we know that it could be fatal and

spread across the entire world.

In Kenya, lockdown and curfew restrictions changed everything. The pandemic impacted many sectors, especially education. It led to the closure of all learning institutions indefinitely.

Overnight learning institutions were forced to adopt online learning. Many students faced many setbacks, especially technological problems and internet connections, which hindered their ability to access online classes and exams. It was sad seeing my friends and mates miss out due to unavoidable circumstances.

All these challenges had to be endured as we hope things will get well soon. However, as we approach year two of the pandemic, we have to accept the new normal and live with it while taking precautions and measures to reduce its spread.”

## ● Fatima | Mosaik Education



Fatima is a Syrian refugee living in Jordan.

“One year ago, I was preparing myself for IELTS to apply for a scholarship. A friend of mine told me about an English class that Mosaik provides for refugees in Amman. Now I am part of the amazing team at Mosaik as an English teacher. In the beginning, when I went to the course, I really liked the way it was taught - it was unlike any of the English classes I had attended before. As someone who had spent most of her life studying in a conventional way, I was a bit sceptical of this approach. Students drove the course, and the topic was chosen according to the students' needs and interests. The classes were exciting and fun, which made me feel like I was doing something wrong; learning was supposed to be difficult, not fun! I kept going back to the classes even though, deep down, I

did not believe in this method. But after a while, I noticed an improvement in my English, especially in my confidence in speaking English. I took the IELTS, and I got the score I was hoping for, but I kept attending the classes because it was not just English classes but a great place to meet and engage with amazing people and bright minds on interesting, meaningful topics.

Right before the pandemic, Mosaik informed me that they were recruiting students from the class to teach other refugee students English after providing them with teacher training. I was really excited to apply because I admired what Mosaik was doing, and I wanted to do something in return for other students in my place. After interviewing for this teacher role, I was informed that I got accepted! I was so happy to start with Mosaik, but the pandemic put everything on hold, and I thought it would never happen until Mosaik reached out and told us that they were going to do it remotely. We did the training, and I started teaching. Even though it is not my first time teaching, I was still very nervous because

it was my first time teaching in an online setting. I used to spend hours planning classes and drafting ideas, but it all paid off. The classes were amazing, the students did great, and I have many new friends from each class.

I have taught 3 classes with Mosaik now, and in every new class, I love what we do more. Each student—even though the conditions are similar—all have their own story and dreams that they all work really hard to achieve, and being able to contribute and help them get where they want to get is everything I could ask for.

Now, I not only teach with Mosaik, but I recently became even more involved and have taken more of a leadership role as an English Programme Intern, helping shape a toolkit on this dialogue-driven method while also supporting community training English teachers across Amman. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for the students I teach, the teachers I help train, and our critical work and unique pedagogical approach at Mosaik Education.”

## ● **Ahmad** | Southern New Hampshire University - Lebanese Association for Scientific Research



**Ahmad Alhussin is completing SNHU and LASer's HealthCare Management programme. Photo credit: Hassan Harrouk.**

“I am Ahmed Alhussin from Syria. I studied at the Intermediate Health Institute at Al-Baath University in the Department of Anesthesia and Resuscitation. I obtained an honours degree and received a government scholarship to complete my BA in Human Medicine at Al-Baath University. But my studies were interrupted by the war.

I was forced to leave Syria for Lebanon as a refugee; I escaped the war but left my dream of becoming a doctor flying in the sky. For many



years, I thought it was impossible to pursue my education and become a doctor. But everything changed when I obtained a scholarship from Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) in cooperation with the Lebanese Association for Scientific Research (LASeR), and I enrolled in their Health Care Management with a Global Perspective programme.

When COVID-19 struck, I was able to help other students in the camps with remote education. Through the COVID-19 Community Initiative Challenge (CIC) internship with the Global Education Movement (GEM) programme, I had the opportunity to teach students completing their associate's degree. I also had the opportunity to participate in the "CMIC-Community Mobilization in Crisis" training with the University of Ottawa

and the American University of Beirut. This training taught me how to help students choose their university major and support them in their field. These opportunities were important steps in my life because I was able to help students bypass their pain and complete their education.

In less than a year, I finished the first level of study. I completed a workplace skills development programme. I also completed courses on IT and management, which taught me important life and digital skills. Now, I am committed to obtaining a bachelor's degree in Healthcare Management and then pursuing a masters and PhD through LASeR and SNHU. Today, I am confident that my dreams will come true as long as I continue to work to achieve them."

## ● **Raghad** | Southern New Hampshire University - Lebanese Association for Scientific Research



**Raghad El Fayssal is currently completing her BA in Management. Photo credit: Hassan Harrouk.**

"I am Raghad El Fayssal, and I am pursuing a BA in Management with a concentration in Logistics and Operations at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU).

I started studying at university 2 years ago. Time passed quickly, and I am about to finish my degree. I cannot say that my journey at SNHU has been easy, but it has been full of successes. Through the constant support of SNHU, in collaboration with the Lebanese Association for Scientific Research (LASeR), I overcame the challenges and fears I faced and achieved many of my dreams.

One of these challenges was how to apply for jobs, internships and apprenticeships. First, I had to learn how to write a CV and cover letter. I attended several workshops, and I got feedback to improve my CV and cover letter. Now, I can create a CV and cover letter without any help.

The next thing that I had to master was learning how to do a job interview. This was not easy, but I was fortunate to practice with experienced professionals like my supervisors. I applied for many positions, and I was thrilled to be accepted for most of them.



So far, I have worked as an academic tutor at LAsER and interned as an operation coordinator at Delivery Express Company. I was also offered positions at Al Hayaa School and Unbound Conversation Company as an English teacher and an Arabic tutor. I was recently

accepted at Siriforce Company for Digital Work Apprenticeship, and after completing my apprenticeship, the CEO hired me as a quality assurance manual tester. When I look back on those months of hard work, I always say the hard work was worth it when I can see the success.”

## ● **Alnarjes** | Southern New Hampshire University - Lebanese Association for Scientific Research



**Alnarjes Harba is currently majoring in Healthcare Management and minoring in Communications. Photo credit: Hassan Harrouk.**

“In the 6th grade, I stopped being a student. I had to take care of my mother, my nephew, and our small shop. We survived our house being bombed seven times and watched our friends get murdered in their front doors. Scenes of death and the sounds of bombs are still stuck in my memory. Although life was getting harder, I managed to keep my little dream alive.

When I was 12, we travelled to Lebanon, and I saw wounded people groaning in a decommissioned hospital. I cannot describe how difficult it was and how much I wanted to find a way to help.

In Lebanon, I continued my studies in a Syrian school. During the final exam, death in Syria reached my family members, and I lost two brothers. My mother told me, “You should not give up.” I got the highest score on the final exam (97%)!

After high school, I was determined to pursue a career in healthcare management to aid people. Pursuing my bachelor’s degree in the healthcare domain has shown me the importance of the healthcare field in maintaining and improving human lives, especially during a crisis. However, traditional Lebanese universities would not accept my Syrian certificates.

As a student engulfed in violence, immigration, and death scenes, I needed more than nutrition. I needed hope, and this is what Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) provided me with. After being accepted into the scholarship programme, I believed that I had a future worth preparing for. I believed that my responsibilities were not limited to clearing the rubble from my house. I knew there was a life to prepare for beyond the conflict.

In the first year, I was determined to learn English through the classes in LAsER. Now, I am teaching the English language in the same school in which I studied! After that, I completed my AA in six months instead of two years. I polished my skills through an internship in human resources. Last year, I began my BA and had the opportunity to take classes ranging from photography and accounting to Turkish and IT.

The pandemic motivated me to launch a project that will help refugee-run businesses bounce back after COVID-19. Through a Global Education

Movement (GEM) internship, I planned, carried out, and evaluated an initiative to empower 20 young refugee students in Lebanon's educational host communities. Since I faced language obstacles, I was determined to help one AA student graduate on time with one-year tutoring sessions. I am currently doing the same with a BA student as well. All these achievements have inspired me to pursue an MA.

Today, I am dreaming about becoming a doctor and managing my own hospital one day. SNHU has inspired me to continue to work hard to get what I want. I believe that the question of "what war is good for" has another answer instead of "absolutely nothing!" Although war kills people, it makes others stronger and determined to serve. "

## ● Assi | Kiron Open Higher Education



Originally from Sudan, Assi is a Kiron student in Jordan. Photo Credit: Anne Parsons.

"My name is Assi. I am originally from Sudan but have been living in Amman, Jordan, for the past five years as a UNHCR registered refugee. Because of my status, I am unable to work, so I decided to focus on my education. I was introduced to Kiron by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) since I have not had many educational opportunities before. After taking some courses

online, I developed new interests in computer science and language learning. Now I can gain academic experience while also working on myself. I have increased my critical thinking skills, learned new languages, and can now find solutions to problems I have in my daily life."

## • **Aboud** | Kiron Open Higher Education



Originally from Syria, Aboud is a Kiron student in Germany. Photo Credit: Anne Parsons.

“I am originally from Syria but moved to Germany five years ago. I started with Kiron after researching refugee education initiatives online and began some courses on the IT track. It was initially hard because I was not comfortable learning online, and the culture was different here. But now, I am doing my Masters at the University of Duisburg-Essen with the help of Kiron. Being in a new country with lots of bureaucracy and procedures was difficult at first. Their support team helped me figure out what was required to transfer and assisted me along the way. Once I complete my programme, I hope to start my own business in the future and stay a life-long learner.”

## • **Zahour** | Kiron Open Higher Education



Zahour is a Kiron student in Jordan. Photo Credit: Anne Parsons.

“My name is Zahour, and I am currently living in Irbid, Jordan. At Kiron, I started taking a few courses here and there until I started the web design skill booster programme. This led me to create an online platform (M-Medic) that solves vehicle-related problems drivers face on the road. TTI incubated the project, and now my partner and I are working on the web page to reach more people. This project taught me how to overcome challenges and find the best solutions to the problems we face.”

## ● Anthony | Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town

Anthony Murambiwa started his journey with the UpLearn programme in September of 2019; he spent the year diligently working on projects and steadily making his way through the associate's degree. By January of 2020, he was ready for an internship. He ended up completing two internships concurrently.

His first internship was with the Global Education Movement (GEM). He was involved in creating a system to track internship and employment opportunities and completions across all the GEM sites. Anthony worked with a fellow intern from Lebanon to create spreadsheets for all GEM partner organisations, including UpLearn. In this way, his work has fed back into UpLearn and will benefit our team and our students and the broader GEM initiative. GEM can now easily compile information and statistics for potential funders as well as potential employers. Anthony is now exploring the option of creating

a consultancy service for data management and spreadsheet creation.

His second internship was with the Scalabrini Centre. As team leader for the content consulting internship at Scalabrini, Anthony further developed his tech and communications skills. His team worked with a local school to film and edit a video about COVID-19 prevention specifically created to inform parents and children on the protocols for returning to school after lockdown.

Anthony completed both these internships while also keeping his own IT business afloat through the lockdown period. Through these internships, Anthony has built a strong skill base and CV with work experience that complements his current pursuit of a BA in Communications. Reflecting on the experience this year, Anthony says, "the sky is not the limit; it's just the beginning. Despite one's obstacles, you need to dream big."

## ● Adnan | Southern New Hampshire University - Global Education Movement



Originally from Syria, Adnan Othman is pursuing his BA in Management in Lebanon. Photo credit: SNHU.

Adnan left his home and family in Syria and moved to Lebanon for survival. But, his first few days in Lebanon were difficult; he felt frustrated, lost and hopeless. Jobs were hard to find, and many did not provide a living wage.

Therefore, he decided to pursue a university degree. Though there were limited opportunities, he never got tired of looking. Down the road, he realized that learning English was the key to achieving his goal of getting a proper university degree; he decided to use his evening time after work at a clothing store to study English online. His English skills improved considerably, and he was accepted into the Global Education Movement (GEM) programme through the Multi Aid Programme.



Adnan says that getting an education has been an important aspect of his life. It enabled him to earn some income through paid internships. He also gained the confidence to tackle challenging issues because he has broadened his perspective through education. He also liked that education allowed him to learn about different cultures and see the world differently.

Adnan is passionate about education and encourages free, lifelong learning for all; he plans to become a university professor to contribute to education and sustainable development. Adnan aspires to help refugee children, most of whom are unable to access education opportunities due to their refugee status.

## ● **Fatuma** | Southern New Hampshire University - Global Education Movement



“Up until last week, the happiest day of my life was the day I found out that I would become a university student through the Southern New Hampshire University Global Education Movement (SNHU GEM) programme. But a few days ago, I learned that I was accepted for a job to become a Reviewer for the GEM Hub, providing feedback and guidance to my old programme’s current students. Now, this is my new happiest moment.”

Fatuma Ciza, a recent graduate of Southern New Hampshire University - Global Education Movement (SNHU GEM), came to South Africa

as a refugee from Burundi four years ago. In Burundi, Fatuma worked as a nurse, but in South Africa, her credentials did not translate, so she struggled to find employment. In 2018, Fatuma was selected to join the first-ever group of SNHU students in South Africa, just as she found out that she was pregnant with her first child. Fatuma was worried that she wouldn’t be able to keep up with a rigorous university schedule with a newborn. However, she soon learned that SNHU’s competency-based model allows students to study independently and on their own time. Without exam deadlines or scheduled classes, Fatuma completed her studies between nap time, feeding time, and bedtime. In addition to completing her coursework, she also was able to complete a scholarship-mandated internship and work part-time as a tutor for her fellow students. In April 2020, Fatuma graduated with her BA in Healthcare Management.

Last week, after a competitive application process, Fatuma was accepted to become a Reviewer at the GEM Hub. She will be reviewing and assessing the classwork of students in the SNHU GEM programme and beyond. When asked what advice she would give to other students starting their academic journeys, she said she would tell them to “envision their future. If you can envision it, you can accomplish it.”



## ● **Kyoshabire** | Southern New Hampshire University - Global Education Movement



I am Kyoshabire Adrine, a Ugandan national currently living in Kenya as an asylum seeker. As

an asylum seeker, my journey began when my family, friends, and community threatened my safety after I came out as a trans man. Being an LGBTQI rights advocate has been my passion for years, and I have wanted opportunities to further my impact in this area. I believe the degree will help me gain communication and problem-solving skills that I can use to continue my advocacy work. Education gives me knowledge of the world around me and how to help transform it positively.

For the past few years, I have connected with different humanitarian entities to bring awareness around LGBTQI+ topics. I write poetry that is published as blogs and website entries. Please allow me to take this opportunity to share the following poems dedicated to LGBTQI+ and the refugee community.

### **POETIC PAIN OF HELL** Female-to-Male/LGBTQI Poems

The following three poems are written by Adrian Sparks Edmundson, (HE/HIM), (Kyoshabire Adrine).

#### **“Struggles of a Trans Man”**

In my eyes  
I carry sadness  
Along with me  
Standing among the crowd  
Yet I feel alone  
I walked through the crowd  
And kicked a stone  
I fell into rejection  
Oppression and depression  
The pain of hopelessness!!  
All over me  
I cry deep inside  
But never shed a tear  
Deep down inside

I haven't smiled in a while  
How worthless am I?  
I fight back the tears bravely  
Small frozen droplets  
On my cheeks form reluctantly  
The moon slowly lowers  
As my heart does  
Like a stone, my heart is now  
A soul that hope abandoned  
Whose star was extinguished  
Passion burnt out  
Pieces of myself shivered  
They have been scattered into corners of the world

Through the muddy bowels I crawl trying to  
gather myself back  
Surrounded by walls of oppression and  
unfortunate  
Destined to dwell in uncertainties accompanied  
by only the worst fears and roughest seas  
Trying to walk through the walls of oppression  
that stand erect, then I bang  
As a door opens, I quickly scurry in more walls  
and the door vanishes  
Darkness outweighs light  
An uneasy feeling moves through me  
I feel hopeless, helpless and lost  
Trying to walk through the walls of oppression  
that stand erect  
I bang

#### **“Dehumanized”**

In the dark, I sit where the site of distress is bliss,  
my thoughts are catacomb cliffs and I teeter  
Voices of responsibility ring out bleakly, my eyes  
can't close up  
My brain won't free me  
It's 2020  
Million eyes still crying  
Those that never sinned  
The street lights are all flickering  
Whilst, innocent souls on streets  
Hungry and hopeless from a broken life  
Angry, with their fists clenched  
They have always watched us from behind  
curtains  
Not concerned about what they see  
With their hot drinks beside them  
Wishing it's never them  
A desperate stranger watched from a distance  
We are treated as fools

Belongings strewn across pavements  
Where do we go?  
We are treated as worthless human beings  
As if our lives don't matter  
Down on the darkened streets, we are  
Thousands!  
Our souls are largely overwhelmed!

#### **“Where Is my Freedom?”**

I sit beneath a shaded tree again with a pen and  
a paper in my hands  
Imprisoned by an Autumn of thoughts  
Clinging to life  
Sways a windy soul  
Visionary clouds beyond these meadows  
I can't see  
Illusions fraternizing in my mind  
Held up by uncertainties  
Questions arrive...where is our freedom of  
expression?  
Who knows where we can do this freely?  
LOOK at the darkness in our journeys  
Forgotten birds singing  
While lying down in thirst  
So afraid to drink water from a pool that would  
shade blood  
Eagles flying in the sky  
As birds call for help, they drown  
Inside a pool of blood  
All day rivers are flooded  
They can't get out of the rivers of sorrow  
For there's no tomorrow  
Wolves circle  
Like hyenas with a smile  
Whom do we trust?  
Forgotten birds die helplessly



## ● Justin | MIT Refugee Action Hub



Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Justin Paluku Mbunzule is an MIT ReACT student. Photo credit: Hassan Harrouk.

"I have been living in Uganda since 2012, when I was forced to flee my country of origin due to war and insecurity. I had only completed high school and felt hopeless when I first arrived in Uganda, leaving all my properties behind and finding myself where nobody could speak my language.

In addition to the language barrier, I began facing other challenges like lack of food and medicine. No one gave me an orientation for survival. I understood, "You might survive persecution, but be prepared for challenges." However, I had a positive mind and hoped to achieve a goal in my life.

I strongly believe that there is always something that can connect you to other people for positive purposes. It was on the soccer field that

I found a Ugandan man who could speak a little Swahili. After two weeks on the soccer team, I was introduced to the Church of Congolese, which provided English lessons to refugees. This was how I started to learn English. In the same class, other students informed us about an organization teaching computer skills, but people had to pay to access the lessons.

A few months ago, through our connections on the soccer team, my friend and I met a man driving across East Africa. The man needed someone to take care of his properties while he was travelling. It was a way for us to spend at least a safer night. We started living with the driver and saving the payment, 50,000 Ugandan Shilling, around \$15, per week. After three weeks, we had saved the 80,000 UGX needed for the lessons.

After spending three months in basic computer courses, I began volunteering at the Pan African Development, Education, and Advocacy Programme (PADEAP). I taught other people who fled their country due to insecurity. Since 2013, I have worked with refugees from countless countries, including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan, as an ICT volunteer trainer.

Through my involvement in Refugee Reproductive Health Research with the University of Toronto, the Refugee Economy Study with Oxford University through Young Africans for Integral Development (YARID) Uganda, I have continuously found motivation. I am now an MIT ReACT Computer and Data Science student. Hopefully, I will find opportunities to expand my knowledge to support people living in conflict environments by offering the chance to learn new techniques for solving their community problems."

## • Malaz | MIT Refugee Action Hub



Malaz Aroub is pursuing his BA degree at SNHU and was accepted into the MIT ReACT programme and is studying data science. Photo credit: Hassan Harrouk.

“I was told that everyone would graduate and have the same degree, but what differentiates me from others is my experiences. Thus, I followed my passion for learning new things about computers. I spent my free time learning about useful applications or exploring Excel’s awesome functionalities until one day, I registered for a programming course. Through this course, I learned the fundamentals of computer science and focused on Python 3. Although this course does not make its students experts, it opened

my eyes to the huge world of programming and how amazing my journey could be in this world. After all, the first project that I worked on was “Hello World!”

When I finished the course, I honed my Python skills by taking online courses, watching YouTube videos, and solving challenges on some websites. Then I started some projects, 2D games and some applications, and I created them all on my own! Then, I decided to move on to web development. I learned about MySQL, PHP, and JavaScript from online courses. But, before I went deep into these programming languages, the MIT Refugee Action Hub (MIT ReACT) posted their call for applications to study Data Science. The acceptance rate is 7%, but I decided to apply anyway. My application stood out because of my experiences, which is what they said in the email, congratulating me that I had passed the first step. I did a proctored exam that was 2.5 hours. It was hard, but I passed it, and now I am a student at MIT! At the same time, I enrolled in a full-stack web development boot camp to further improve my programming skills.

**There is still a lot of time before graduation; who knows what else I will learn!”**



# THROUGH THE LENS



BHER students distribute soap, masks, and flyers in Dagahaley Camp. Photo credit: York University.

## ● York University Borderless Higher Education for Refugees

In June 2020, York University's Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) graduate students in Dadaab implemented a project to support the distribution of soap, masks, and flyers outlining how to maintain emotional and physical health

during the pandemic in their camp communities. This was originally an initiative launched by the University of Geneva's InZone's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Pillar in Kakuma.

“When I first heard of washing hands as one of the prevention measures in the fight of the virus, I just thought it is the normal washing of hands that takes less than 10 seconds. But after reading from the instruction shared on my flyer and on how to make a local washing facility, I felt informed. I am “aware” that washing is now a process that takes at least 20 seconds.”

**Male primary school teacher from Hagadera**



York-BHER graduate students in Dadaab met virtually with the SEL team in Kakuma to plan and coordinate the distribution; a separate distribution plan was developed for Dadaab to reflect contextual differences. In addition to this detailed plan, the students developed a monitoring and evaluation piece to assess the effectiveness of primary school teachers' distributing these resources across 3 camps (Ifo, Dagahaley, and Hagadera) in Dadaab.

This project was designed and implemented by refugees. The closing statement in the M&E report written by BHER students indicated the importance of such a project:

“Finally, the refugee-designed and -led project that shines the light on local ingenuity has made us proud, and we feel empowered by the model. The COVID-19 response project has proven to the world that when outside support and competencies are not available, the local competencies arise. Therefore, we too, have learned the importance of building local competencies and having them ready to respond to any crisis that may occur unexpectedly.”

## • Southern New Hampshire University & Lebanese Association for Scientific Research



[Above and below] LAsEr students continue learning while adhering to COVID-19 precautions or guidelines.  
Photo credits: Hassan Harrouk.





## ● Kiron Open Higher Education



A Kiron student preparing for his exam in Critical Thinking Studies. Photo credit: Anne Parsons.



Rose from Iraq, now based in Amman, wants to become an English teacher. Photo credit: Anne Parsons.



Mohamad is working in IT while studying. Photo credit: Anne Parsons.



## ● University of Nairobi



Student reading *The Secret Reign of Pope Christine* for her Creative Writing course. Photo credit: Anuarite Indoshi.

## ● Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town



In January 2020, Boboliko Lokonga received an Associates degree in General Studies specialising in Business. He is now working towards a Bachelors in Management @ the UpLearn programme. Photo credit: Quentin Pichon.



UpLearn graduates line up outside the Scalabrini Centre before receiving their certificates. Photo credit: Quentin Pichon.



UpLearn students celebrating at graduation. Photo credit: Quentin Pichon.



Michou Wabambuyi and her academic coach Tavia Viglietti enjoying graduation day. Photo credit: Quentin Pichon.



## • Southern New Hampshire University Global Education Movement



A GEM student is supporting his local community as a volunteer during the COVID-19 lockdown @ Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town in South Africa. Photo credit: SNHU.



GEM delivers a socially distanced orientation to new students @ UNRWA Innovation Lab in Lebanon. Photo credit: SNHU.



A new GEM student is excited to begin his new degree following orientation @ UNRWA in Lebanon. Photo credit: SNHU.

## ● Jesuit Worldwide Learning



Global English Language (GEL) students sitting their final exams in Domiz Refugee Camp. Photo credit: JWL.



Handwashing station @ JWL Learning Centre in Kakuma. Photo credit: JWL.



## ● Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access



4th year students studying on campus for their IT classes. Photo credit: Al-al Bayt University.

## ● Tertiary Refugee Student Network



TRSN member Adhieu, based in Kenya, has produced over 3,000 masks and bar soaps for distribution among refugees in Dadaab and Kakuma. Photo credit: TRSN.

## ● Australian Catholic University



Shwe Shwe Naing, from ACU's Ranong learning centre with the Marist Asia Foundation. Photo credit: ACU.



# REFLECTIONS:

## STUDENTS & ALUMNI

### • Southern New Hampshire University - Lebanese Association for Scientific Research

"From here, I pave my way to achieve my dream of obtaining a bachelor's degree in healthcare management and then master's and PhD with the Lebanese Association for Scientific Research (LASeR) and Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). Hope is always present as long as the will is present. Our dreams must come true as long as we work to achieve our dreams.

#### Ahmad Alhussin

"SNHU was an amazing opportunity to complete my education at this university. This scholarship added a lot to my personal, educational, and professional experience. The scholarship was the gateway to discovering the world for me."

#### Motassem Alnajem

"SNHU gives me the mentality of competing to gain what I believe in. I believe that the question of 'what war is good for' has another answer instead of 'absolutely nothing!' Although war kills people, it makes others stronger and determined to be alive."

#### Narjess Alharba

"When I look back on those months of hard work, I always say the hard work was worth it when I can see the success."

#### Raghad Al Faysal

Today I am on my way to finishing my BA, and I am seeking a Master's. I will never stop learning. I would say to others: Do not give up. Face all the challenges because your dream is waiting for you."

#### Nour Maaz

"There is still a lot of time before graduation; who knows what else I will learn!"

#### Malaz Aroub

## ● Kiron Open Higher Education

"I genuinely love learning, and I do believe that education forms the basis for everything. Whatever you want to achieve or become good at, you have to start with education."

**Asmaa** (Mafraq, Jordan)

"I dream of completing my education and running my own business. I want to influence the new generation that is growing up and the way they think."

**Amani** (Irbid, Jordan)

"What I loved the most from my experience as a facilitator [at Kiron] is the confidence boost it gave me. I am now able to present myself in front of others, explain concepts, and support students, which is something I could not do before."

**Roaa** (Amman, Jordan)

## ● Jesuit Worldwide Learning



"I strongly believe that educating young girls and women is the solution to innumerable global problems from domestic violence, social injustice, poverty and discrimination...I believe that empowering women as JWJL does really improves many marginalised communities' livelihoods. Second, I call upon the class of 2020 to critically think about their own role in their community's development."

**Khaltum** (Kakuma Refugee Camp)



"Completing the Diploma programme has been life-changing for me. This is not only because it's an educational achievement, but it also changed my way of thinking. It moved me from questions that led me astray to questions that led me to where I needed to be. I was driven from questions like 'How can I make a living?' to questions like 'What gap can I fill in my community?' I was driven from asking questions, to taking action."

**Espoir** (Dzaleka Refugee Camp)



## • Kepler



"I hate when the state of growing has ended; you feel like there's nothing left to do. Right now, I'm still learning, and I'm using the skills I've gained to solve problems. Every day, I remind myself that I've started

as a Data Entry Officer — DEO — and one day, I'll be the CEO!"

**Benita Mulungi**, recent Kepler/SNHU graduate & Data Entry Officer at One Acre Fund



"I came to Rwanda [as a refugee] when I was two. My mother didn't go to school, and even though my dad went to school, he didn't have the documents to prove it. My family, all my loved ones, and myself — we all received humanitarian support. I felt like I needed to do this for the next

generation — not just for my own community but for the world. I'm a survivor, and I want to help other survivors."

**Gentile Dusenge**, recent Kepler/SNHU graduate & UNHCR Community-Based Protection Intern

## ● Southern New Hampshire University - Global Education Movement

“My experience was great; I am saying this because I had more time with my family, helping my wife with domestic jobs. After all, I was fully home daily, so I had time for my studies and time for my family differently from when I was going to the learning centre from 9 AM and coming back up to 4 PM. More importantly, I kept the pace high of deliverables.”

**Joseph** (Kakuma Refugee Camp)

“It was not easy to manage work and study online, but after two months, I started to work better than before, and I was able to accomplish lots of things simultaneously, such as work, study, and internship.”

**Maha** (Lebanon)

“My academic and career goals controlled my plan. I stayed on track since I divided my time. I studied during the night to change my routine. I used to watch movies and videos to stay motivated and to avoid being bored. I taught the English language to kids. My time was balanced. I taught the kids during the day and studied during the night. We can always find the right way if we really have the strong will to study, succeed, graduate, and work.”

**Harba** (Lebanon)

“GEM is more than a Learning Institution for me. I am learning the real world’s projects, and for that reason, I am determined to show the world what I can with the package that SNHU has implemented in my next year and the rest of the years to come. GEM has unlocked my potential.”

**Joseph** (Kakuma Refugee Camp)

“I applied for this scholarship because I have lots of responsibilities, and I want to have a university degree. Therefore, studying with GEM is the best opportunity for me to achieve my goals and handle my family and work responsibilities at the same time.”

**Maha** (Lebanon)

“I am very thankful for this wonderful opportunity I was given by GEM. To have another chance to become a better person who can contribute to her society is not only for me, but access to the education GEM provides a better future for all refugees around the world.”

**Petronil** (Dzaleka Refugee Camp)

“The SNHU GEM programme has made it possible for disadvantaged students like me to navigate the most challenging aspects of life. This higher education has provided me with self-reliance tools, and it is evident in the alumni community that refugee students have potential if given the opportunity to pursue higher education. In essence, I have seen myself transition from someone naive and uninformed to a person with innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to all challenges life may throw at me. My career achievements truly emphasize the impacts of the SNHU GEM programme.”

**Emmanuel** (Dzaleka Refugee Camp)

"I am studying with GEM to get an international degree which SNHU provides through taking online classes and completing different projects. Next year, I am looking forward to acquiring different skills which will help me to be successful internationally. Those skills include technical skills, critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and other skills, which will help me be a professional person worldwide."

**Ndayisenga** (Kiziba Refugee Camp)

"GEM has offered me the opportunity to continue my studies. I believe that I am lucky enough to get such an opportunity in the middle of thousands of refugees who need higher education, and I am looking forward to finishing my studies and using the tools for connecting the gaps and eradicating the problems that others encounter."

**Zamzam** (Kakuma Refugee Camp)

## ● Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town

"I am Fatuma Ciza, and I just graduated in healthcare management. To be honest, I could have never achieved this degree without the help from the UpLearn programme. The UpLearn team has helped me get rid of my fear and face all challenges that I thought were the obstacle for me to get my degree. But most importantly, the programme provided the teaching weeks to ensure that all students understand their projects. The teaching weeks helped me work faster on my projects which allowed me to finish among the top five students. Through the UpLearn programme, I enjoyed seeing how my mentors were approachable, which allowed me to ask any question at any time. I enjoyed this relationship because it increased my confidence which I believe is one of the best skills in the workplace."

**Fatuma Ciza**

"This university unlocked many things in my life. Physically, emotionally, financially. Through this programme, I benefited from an internship opportunity at an incredible clinic called Jubilee, where I practised what I learned in theory from the university. The UpLearn programme didn't want me to struggle with transport so they

provided transport. After my internships, there came another opportunity of an online job with Conversation Unbound in which I practised what I learnt from my academics and internships. Through this study, I can communicate freely, confidently and with flexibility. UpLearn unlocked what was locked for a long time in my life."

**Claris Mwan**

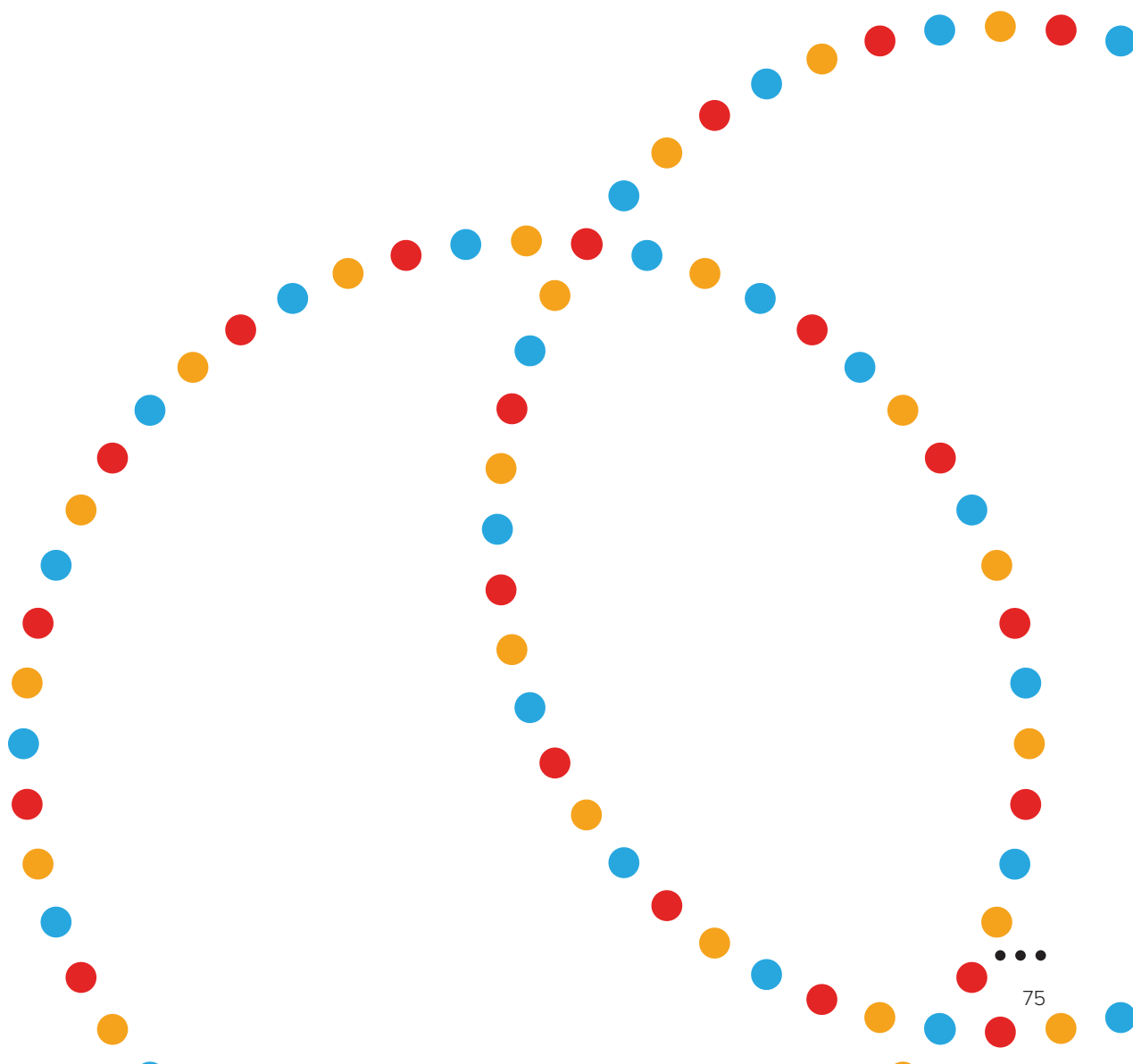
"My name is Charlotte Cynthia Tinarwo, and I am a Bachelor of Arts in Management Concentrating in Operations and Logistics student with SNHU Online. I have done three internships so far with three different organizations: The Zanokhanyo Network at Common Good, the Scalabrini Center of Capetown and the Global Education Movement. Through these internships, I gained insight into the work of NGOs. In my eyes, the experience is a precious thing in life because we need to be brave in taking risks. The world is a book, and those who do not travel only read one page, so it is good to explore the world. A big thank you to the UpLearn team, who always prepared PD workshops for SNHU students, and this really helped in acquiring skills in the business world. Work experience is also not something that

we create, but we need to undergo internships for professional development preparation. Doing my internships in an actual workplace helped me know and discover myself from a different angle. It also helped me control and develop my attitude and behaviour in dealing with different people and situations. Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play. The internship exercise was mainly to enable me to acquire practical skills and link theory to practice in the real world to meet the business environment needs.”

**Charlotte Tinarwo**

“I had a very fantastic experience with the Uplearn programme. Besides academic support, I have never felt alone during this academic journey. It was so powerful for me because whenever I had challenges, I would always think that there is someone to turn to, giving me peace of mind. I felt secure, and that gave me the courage to continue the journey, and that is very different from other university programmes.”

**Console Amina**





# MEMBERS COLLABORATE

## UpLearn and Southern New Hampshire University's Global Education Movement

The partnership between UpLearn and the Global Education Movement (GEM) programme at the Southern New Hampshire University (SHNU) has become stronger than ever in 2020. We have worked together to provide additional welfare support to students in a challenging year and adapted academic support programming to work online. We attended the GEM virtual retreat over a three-month period that focused on student wellness. These engagements were very productive and inspired us to make our welfare support and counselling referral service more robust than ever. We expanded our welfare budget significantly in response to widespread job losses amongst the student body. We are also working toward building a student peer support counselling group with trained facilitators from a partner organisation here in Cape Town that specialises in working with refugees and trauma.

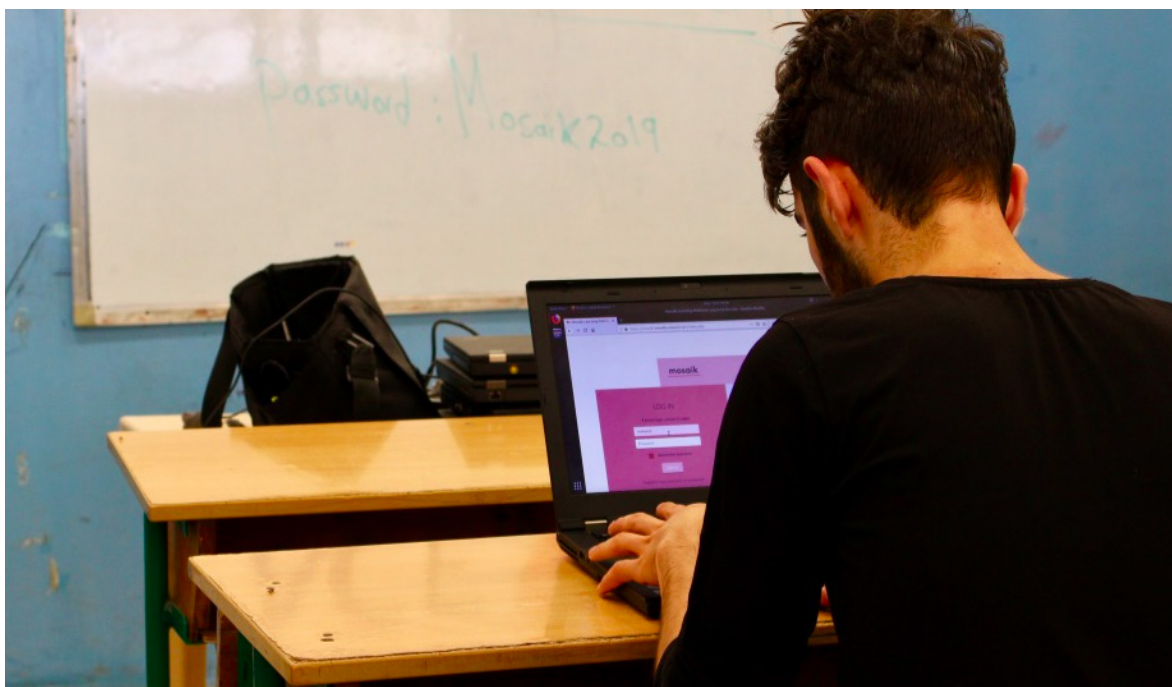
We hope that these will be accessible to all students next year.

Another great collaboration with the GEM team was the formation and launch of our new engagement policy. In the lockdown period, we found clear expectations built around robust policies, and accountability mechanisms became more important than ever for keeping students on track and engaged. The full team had several workshops with an education specialist consultant and GEM leaders to formulate this policy. It has now been discussed on multiple platforms through workshops and individual coaching sessions with all students and is in full swing. We go into 2021 with great clarity and consensus; it has been incredible to see how we have been able to come together, build and consolidate in a year of tremendous difficulty and isolation.

## Mosaik joins the Humanitarian Education Accelerator

The COVID-19 pandemic has, among many other challenges, brought the impact of the digital divide into sharp focus. With 192 governments ordering countrywide closures of their schools and universities and many shifting to virtual learning modalities, refugee learners, as well as those in low resource settings, have found themselves excluded from continuous learning interventions - often lacking the devices, infrastructure and connectivity required to learn online. In response to the clear need for innovative continuous learning programmes that respond to refugee learners' needs in low

resource settings, UNHCR and [ECW](#) teamed up with the [EdTech Hub](#), [mEducation Alliance](#) and [Global Innovation Exchange](#) (GIE) in June 2020 to create the Humanitarian Education Accelerator (HEA) COVID-19 Challenge. The HEA COVID-19 Challenge saw 13 promising innovations join a virtual bootcamp, after which 3 solutions were chosen to receive up to USD 60,000 in financial support and tailored mentorship to scale their solution to reach learners in refugee-hosting contexts. One of those teams was CLCC member Mosaik Education.



Trainee joining a Mosaik online programme. Photo credit: Rita Akroush.

In 2019, Mosaik had established an English class using the Dogme pedagogy, finding that it was particularly relevant to refugees' needs: the conversation-driven and materials light approach meant students were able to develop English through a curriculum co-created by them. The English language is crucial for livelihoods, training and particularly higher education: local scholarships in Jordan and Lebanon, international scholarship and most online tertiary level courses all have an English language requirement.

Mosaik had planned to replicate this approach to 4 new locations in Amman. COVID-19 required a rethink of the approach. Training had to be delivered online, and the pedagogy adapted to a remote, online learning environment.

Over the summer of 2020, Mosaik worked with 4 teachers (all of whom were refugees) to refine training and support for using Dogme during COVID-19. From their own classes and speaking to partners, Mosaik found that this approach to English language teaching met a need to maintain communicative teaching practice during

COVID-19 lockdowns.

Having joined the Humanitarian Education Accelerator (HEA) in September 2020, Mosaik is now building an Open Dogme Toolkit, which includes online training on 'Dogme' strategies and a community of practice. The Toolkit aims to support refugee youths' English language teachers to maintain the interactive and human side of English language learning during COVID-19. Coaching and peer learning has enabled Mosaik to rapidly develop a minimum viable product of the training, enrolling 23 teachers working with over 200 students within only two-months. A further cohort is expected to start before the end of November 2020. The HEA has also included a series of 'design sprints' led by IDEO.org, which supported Mosaik to complete designs for a community of practice - this will be a crucial element in allowing for decentralised and scalable access to the Open Dogme Toolkit for teachers around the world.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, adaptability and resilience of education models have been

crucial. But this goes beyond the ability to share and access digital learning resources remotely when classes are unable to meet: this should also include the ability to retain the interactive and collaborative nature of education. Mosaik believes that equipping teachers with tools

and inspiration is the most effective way to do this. In 2021, Mosaik plans to establish a range of strategic partnerships to sponsor the development of a three-stage MOOC that will expand provision and gather data on its long-term impact on teachers' resilience and adaptability.

## World University Service of Canada and Bard College Elected First Co-Chairs of the Global Task Force on Education Pathways

In September 2020, World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and Bard College, through the Open Society University Network (OSUN), were elected the first Co-Chairs of the newly formed Global Task Force on Education Pathways. The Task Force, launched during the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement in June, is a key deliverable of the [3-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways](#) and is composed of a diverse multi-stakeholder group of members. Its objectives are to identify high-potential countries, regions, partnerships and initiatives that can sustainably expand opportunities for refugees to pursue their academic aspirations in a third country and find a durable solution by granting alternative legal statuses. Together, members will promote the expansion or development of new education pathways, mobilize political support from key stakeholders worldwide, and provide technical assistance to emerging initiatives. Activities will include the development of global minimum standards,

capacity building, and establishing a community of practice where committed stakeholders can share best practices and lessons learned.

In addition to providing durable solutions to refugee youth in need of protection, the expansion of education pathways to third countries will engage new actors in meeting 15by30 targets and creating new opportunities for displaced students to pursue tertiary education in safety.

As members of Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC) and leaders on the Task Force on Education Pathways, Bard College and WUSC will be well-placed to bridge the gap between emerging opportunities offered by the post-secondary community around the world and initiatives in first countries of asylum that prepare students for those opportunities. This will connect refugees and displaced youth to better opportunities and durable solutions in third countries.

## Southern New Hampshire University Global Education Movement Partnerships

The Global Education Movement (GEM) programme at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is proud to partner with several members from the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC) in our nine sites of operation. Some of our partners include Jesuit Worldwide

Learning (JWL), Lebanse Association for Scientific Research (LASER), Kepler, and Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town. In 2020, GEM formally launched a new partnership programme with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Nairobi. GEM also partners with other organisations, including Multi

Aid Programmes (MAPs) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Lebanon.

Strong partnerships have become even more critical this year as higher education institutions seek to adapt and adequately support students

during a time of global crisis and uncertainty. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, GEM has worked closely with our partners across five countries to adapt our online degree program to a fully remote delivery model.



GEM students collaborate during a digital literacy workshop at Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town. Students in GEM receive laptops to pursue their degrees, enabling them to work more flexibly. Photo credit: GEM.

Over the past year, we combined forces with our partners to reallocate resources and to provide additional student support in the form of:

- Provision of WhatsApp, Zoom, Instagram, and Facebook-based academic coaching sessions, tutoring, and study groups; this is both through formal schedules with partners as well as informal networks across student groups
- Provision of data bundles and laptop access to students while learning centres are closed
- Provision of social groups, including coffee sessions with leaders, game sessions, happy

hours, and celebrations of milestones both with specific partners and across all GEM sites

- Expansion of counselling services and support for students, including Whatsapp-based counselling
- Additional case support for students in need through GEM Cares

GEM and our partners also participated in a virtual retreat over the summer that focused on building mental health support and self-care for partners and students.







Facilitators Nina Weaver (GEM) and Manal Ibrahim (UNRWA) pose for a photo during an orientation session for new students in August 2020. GEM launched a new partnership with the UNRWA Youth Unit in Lebanon in 2020, welcoming 40 Palestinian students into the GEM degree programme. Photo credit: GEM.



Mastercard Foundation Scholars at the Baobab Summit in Kigali, Rwanda. The Summit is an annual gathering where Scholars come together to engage, learn and connect with other transformative leaders.

The **Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium** extends its sincere gratitude to the Mastercard Foundation for its support and commemorates the efforts of our partner staff, front-line community workers, and students whose perseverance despite tremendous barriers over the last year has been truly remarkable.

**Thank you**

