

SUMMARY

UNIV'R PROJECT, UNIVERSITY CORRIDOR TO FRANCE

Complementary Pathways are safe and regulated avenues that complement refugee resettlement and by which refugees living in a first country of asylum, may be admitted in a third country. They include, among others, humanitarian corridors, labour mobility schemes, community sponsorship and university corridors.

The Global Compact on Refugees and more recently the European Commission's recommendation on legal pathways, called on States to leverage skills, qualifications and the motivation of young people in need of international protection. In this context, UNHCR and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) have launched discussions with a view to elaborate a project of national university corridor to France, called UNIV'R (Universities for Refugees). This initiative fits into the Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and the AUF of February 2021 which aims to facilitate access to higher education for refugees and include the development of education pathways. University corridors fall within the Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways as well as within the Refugee Education 2030 Strategy of UNHCR.

Facilitating refugee access to higher education

This project will enable French-speaking refugees living in a targeted first country of asylum to study a master's degree (2 years) within a higher education institution in France (mainland). Work-linked courses could be included. 50 refugees should benefit from the project over two years: 20 as of September 2022 and another 30 as of September 2023. Considering that only 5% of refugees worldwide have access to higher education, this project could facilitate refugee access to the universities and provide them with administrative, legal, psychosocial, and financial support (scholarship and grant for living expenses).

The project builds on initiatives led by the French authorities (the Elysée program of the Ministry of International Relations, the partnership between the French Embassy in Tchad and the Jesuit Refugee Service, etc.) or by NGOs (Démocratie & Entraide en Syrie - Ghosn Zeitoun, Forum Réfugiés - Cosi in cooperation with UNHCR and the Clermont Auvergne University as well as the Ecole 3A). It is also inspired by the successful programs implemented by other European Union Member States (like Italy, Germany and Portugal) and Canada. It will interact with European projects of complementary pathways, like the SAFE and COMET projects funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

A multi-stakeholders project (2022-2025)

This multi-stakeholder project will be implemented with the support of French authorities (Ministry for Higher Education, Ministry of the Interior, General Secretary of European Affairs (SGAE), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local governments, higher education institutions, the Migrants in higher education network (Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur, MEnS), the Exiles Students Union (UEE), NGOs, the civil society (through private sponsorship), foundations, the private sector and refugees. It aims at facilitating refugee access to higher education in France. Several stakeholders have already demonstrated a strong interest in complementary pathways.

Finally, the project may also include a complementary dimension of distance-learning courses.



Watch the testimonies of two Central African students who have obtained a Scholarship in France this year.