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icon for complementary education pathways

Complementary education pathways are safe and regulated avenues through which refugees may move to a third country for the purpose of higher education, while being able to support themselves and reach sustainable and lasting solutions.1338 The “university corridors” programmes are implemented through ad hoc agreements and partnership projects between multiple actors, such as higher education institutions and university networks, associations, national authorities, international organisations, host communities, civil society organisations and refugee students.

In line with the UNHCR Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, 1339 as well as the UNHCR Refugee Education 2030 Strategy,1340 multiple projects were implemented in 2021. For example, the project University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE 4.0), supported by UNHCR, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and several Italian civil society organisations, offered refugees living in Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria the opportunity to study in 27 Italian universities.1341

The German Academic Exchange Service launched new scholarship programmes for refugees from Cameron, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, with funding from the German Foreign Office.1342 The project “Universities for Refugees” (UNIV’R) was established in France in 2021 with the support of UNHCR, which aimed to enable refugees residing in a first country of asylum to study for a Master’s degree of 2 years in a French higher education establishment. While two refugees arrived during 2021,1343 50 refugees would benefit from the project over the next two years. 1344

Although these types of complementary pathways have shown their benefits in the last years, civil society organisations have pointed out that refugees using these programmes may face challenges due to a poor knowledge base from the national system, insufficient financial support, and the need for reception and integration support in the long term. Forum Réfugiés-Cosi suggested some measures to cope with these challenges, including the need to adapt and facilitate administrative procedures, securing scholarships and financial support from municipalities, foundations and private companies, and improving coordination between the education institutions and the host community.1345 Similarly, UNHCR suggested several actions

to expand educational corridors at the national level, mainly related to identifying and applying context-specific solutions to legal and regulatory barriers, investing in raising awareness and creating venues for coordination.[1346]

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