



Committee: Social, Cultural and Humanitarian

Question of: Scholarship in Countries Affected by War and/or Armed Conflict

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Introduction:

While approximately 6.7% of the world's near-7 billion population hold college degrees, only 1% of the world's 65 million refugees have a university degree (2017 Australian International Higher Education Conference in Hobart). Higher education is needed to train the next generation of leaders who will rebuild war-torn countries.

People in countries affected by war and/or armed conflict often need scholarships to attend college because their material worth gets wiped out by their circumstances. They also need financial assistance in securing visas and all the paperwork needed to gain access to a new country.

Unlike many countries that have been ungenerous towards war-torn countries, universities around the world in recent years have been trying to live up to their principles of openness and diversity. In fact, many universities are courting refugees actively to offer them educational opportunities and transition to a more stable life. Universities have spent the past decade improving their ability to deal with mental health issues and adjustment problems. They are therefore in a good position to help people from war-torn countries who suffer from the trauma of war.

Scholarships are being offered by universities in the UK and Europe, the US and Canada, Japan, and Australia. In addition, a number of institutions (including Harvard) offer free online classes.

Detractors criticise such scholarships. Some believe asylum seekers should be kept out, whilst others question why scholarships are not offered instead to the under-privileged at home.

The Issue:

As the humanitarian response to the migrant crisis builds momentum, universities around the world are stepping up to offer scholarships to those affected by war and/or armed conflict.

UK

Cambridge University announced this year it plans to start a studentship fund to support refugees from war-torn areas. It states that currently 59 other universities in the UK (including Oxford and LSE) offer bursaries, scholarships or fee waivers for those whose education has been interrupted by political and/or humanitarian reasons.



US

In the US, scholarships are common, with many extending to “first generation” students whose parents were refugees.

Europe

Countries offering scholarships include Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Key Events

Event/Date	Explanation
Just after the 9/11	“Children’s fund of America” was created to provide education and welfare relief to American children who suffered due to the tragedies of national significance, such as natural disasters and acts of terrorism. Among its programs are the Twin Towers Orphan Fund, founded to help the children whose parents were brutally murdered during the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and America's Child founded to help the children whose parents sacrificed their lives fighting the War on Terrorism.
November 1989	The Convention on the rights of the Child was ratified by the General Assembly resolution 44/25 if 20 November 1989, but it did not come into force until 2 a September 1990. In 1989, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old often need special care and protection that adults do not.
2016	In response to the education crisis in Chad, UNICEF has so far provided school supplies to more than 58,000 students, distributed teaching materials to more than 760 teachers, and built 151 classrooms, 101 temporary learning spaces, 52 latrines and 7 sports fields. UNICEF Chad also supported the salaries of 327 teachers for the 2016-2017 school year.



Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Survivors on Conflict Scholarships

UWC Red Cross Nordic and Red Cross Haugland Rehabilitation Centre facilitate education and provide rehabilitation for youth who have been injured in war or conflict.

Youth who have been injured or are born with disabilities and live in conflict or post-conflict zones are invited to apply. They strive to be an inclusive community and to select functionally independent students whom we believe have the intellectual potential and personal resilience to benefit from and contribute to an education at UWC Red Cross Nordic.

Bombs not books

Books Not Bombs is a student-led campaign creating scholarships for displaced Syrian students. They call on universities to join the Institute of International Education's Syria Consortium and waive tuition for a number of displaced Syrian students, enabling them to receive a safe and quality education they deserve. By now, they have mobilised 23,236 students and they 197 universities are participating in this campaign

Switzerland

Europe is currently experiencing the worst refugee crisis since World War II, as over a million people seek shelter from war-torn regions, and host countries in Europe, including Switzerland, struggle to find humanitarian solutions to the crisis.

Franklin University Switzerland wishes to show its solidarity with displaced students by offering scholarships to recognised refugees in Switzerland through its Scholarships Without Borders (SWB) program.

Franklin University Switzerland's Scholarships Without Borders (SWB) program is designed specifically to provide university-level education opportunities for refugees, offering select qualified students who have been granted refugee status in Switzerland the opportunity to embark on studies leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree at FUS.

Germany

Germany has funded over 14,000 scholarships for refugees abroad. DAFI (The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) is financed by the German Government and private sponsors. Its goal is to enable refugees worldwide to access higher education by providing them with scholarships covering a wide range of costs, like tuition fees, study materials, food, transport, accommodation, and other allowances. The DAFI programme allows refugees to have careers in a wide range of fields and contribute to their host country.



Possible Solutions

- Creation of safe spaces, youth centres and recreational zones in camps and community centres where children can play, interact and develop freely.
- All states must adhere to the international laws and resolutions that protect education and the rights of children.
- In conflict countries, ask the leaders of each country to protect education by criminalising attacks, prohibiting the use of schools by armed groups, and to work with schools and communities to preserve schools as centres for learning.
- More countries and universities should be encouraged to fund and make scholarships available.
- Appropriate charities and agencies should be established in order to source funding for such scholarships so that all universities and schools can partake in this scheme.

Bibliography

<https://www.unicef.org/crc/>

<https://books-not-bombs.com/impact/>

<http://www.childrensfundofamerica.org/html/founders.htm>