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SCHOLARS AT RISK
N E T W O R K

Academic Refuge

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership

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UNICA IRO meeting 25 April 2017

Refugees in HE and Scholars at Risk



Synergies of approaches?



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Background

- Worldwide, more than 65 million people are currently uprooted by wars and persecution, 21 million refugees
- 6 percent of displaced people are in Europe
- Less than one per cent of world's refugees attend higher education; compared to 34 per cent total global (UNHCR Trends 2015)
- 25 percent in Syria (2011) had higher education
- There are ca 50 000 Syrian refugees with HE in Europe + ca 2000 scholars



UNICA responses



ACADEMIC DUGNAD

Many different initiatives at member universities

Integration

Recognition

Academic preparation

Bridging courses

Buddies

Admission

Guiding and Councelling

Languages

Internships

Online courses



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- Information day
- Online language training
- Guidance and counselling – Drop in
- Cooperation with the municipality
- Academic Network – Buddy groups
- Academic Practise - Internships
- Lecture series
- <http://www.uio.no/english/about/collaboration/academic-dugnad/>





SCHOLARS AT RISK – A NETWORK OF UNIVERSITIES

As SAR members, university leadership, staff, faculty, and students have the opportunity to actively engage in:



Protection

- hosting threatened scholars for temporary academic visits
- referring scholars to the network for assistance

Advocacy

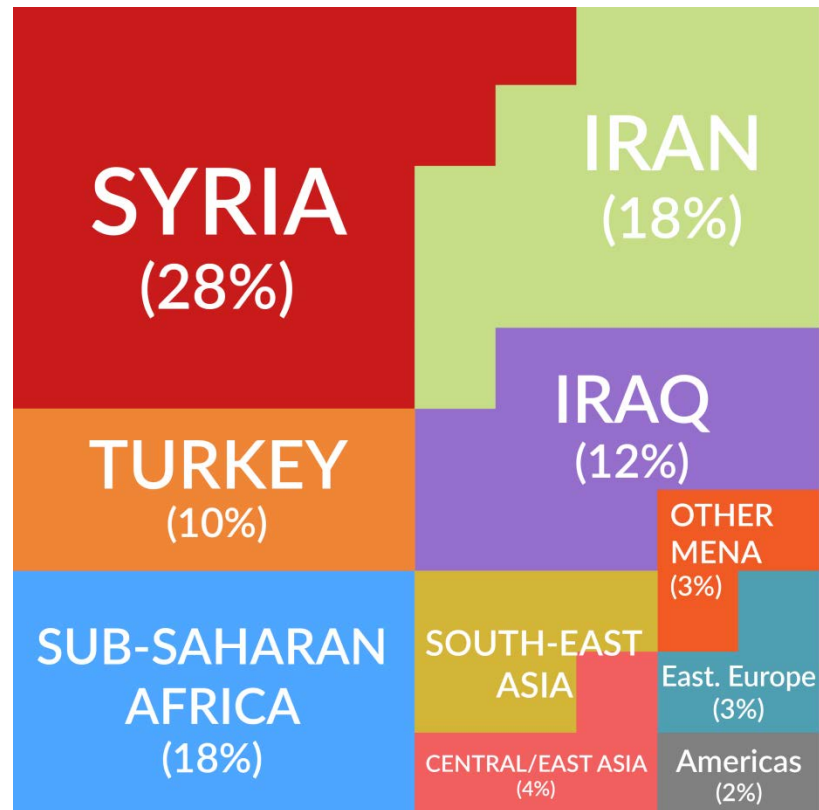
- offering Student Advocacy Seminars to teach real-world advocacy skills
- supporting scholars in prison by writing letters of appeal
- work with the SAR Academic Freedom Monitoring Project

Learning

- attending SAR conferences and workshops
- inviting SAR scholars to share their stories on campus
- joining research groups looking at pressing issues facing international higher education

SCHOLAR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

SAR currently provides assistance to threatened scholars from over 25 countries around the world.



THE SCHOLARS

SAR-assisted scholar

Dr. Anna Dolidze

International Law

Home country: Georgia

Risks: Intimidation, surveillance, and arrest in retaliation for her open criticism of policies relating to the operation and independence of the Georgian judiciary

SAR Network positions: NYU Law School, USA and Western University, Canada

Where is she now? In 2015, Dr. Dolidze returned to Georgia to begin an appointment as Deputy Defense Minister. In June 2016, she was appointed the chief legal adviser to the President of Georgia.



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THE SCHOLARS

SAR-assisted scholar

Dr. Kassem AlSayed Mahmoud

Food Science



Home country: Syria

Risks: Targeted by the government for defecting from compulsory military service

SAR Network position: Ghent University, Belgium, arranged with the UAF-SAR Netherlands & Belgium Section

Where is he now? Dr. AlSayed is working as a postdoctoral researcher in Belgium and dreaming of returning to his homeland.



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Academic Refuge Project Facts

- Full project title: Strategic partnership to promote core academic values and welcome refugees and threatened academics to European campuses
- Project partners: University of Oslo (lead), UNICA
Scholars at Risk Network,
University of Ljubljana
- Associate partners: EUA, EAIE
- Budget: 300,000 euros
- Duration: 3 years, Sept 2016 to Aug 2019



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Goals of the project



Two overlapping goals:

- 1) Improve the capacity of European universities to assist refugees and threatened academics
- 2) Promote greater respect for academic freedom and greater protection for higher education values



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Primary activities and outputs

2017:

- Develop curriculum and implement two-part training on (a) welcoming refugees and threatened academics to campus and (b) promoting higher education values

2018:

- MOOC: The Global University, Academic Freedom and Higher Education Values

2019:

- Electronic Handbook on Putting Higher Education Values into Practice



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Additional activities

- Project meetings
- Preparatory workshops with experts
- 3 multiplier events for non-partners
- Staff mobility for SAR scholars



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June 2017



- Academic Refuge Staff Training week
 - 5 days at the University of Oslo 19-23 June
 - Values in higher education
 - Welcoming refugees and threatened academics
 - Participants
 - 110 applications to participate
 - 60 participants, from UNICA and SAR member universities
 - Some new training material
 - A One-day open conference 21 June:
Academic Refuge: The Role of Universities in Turbulent Times



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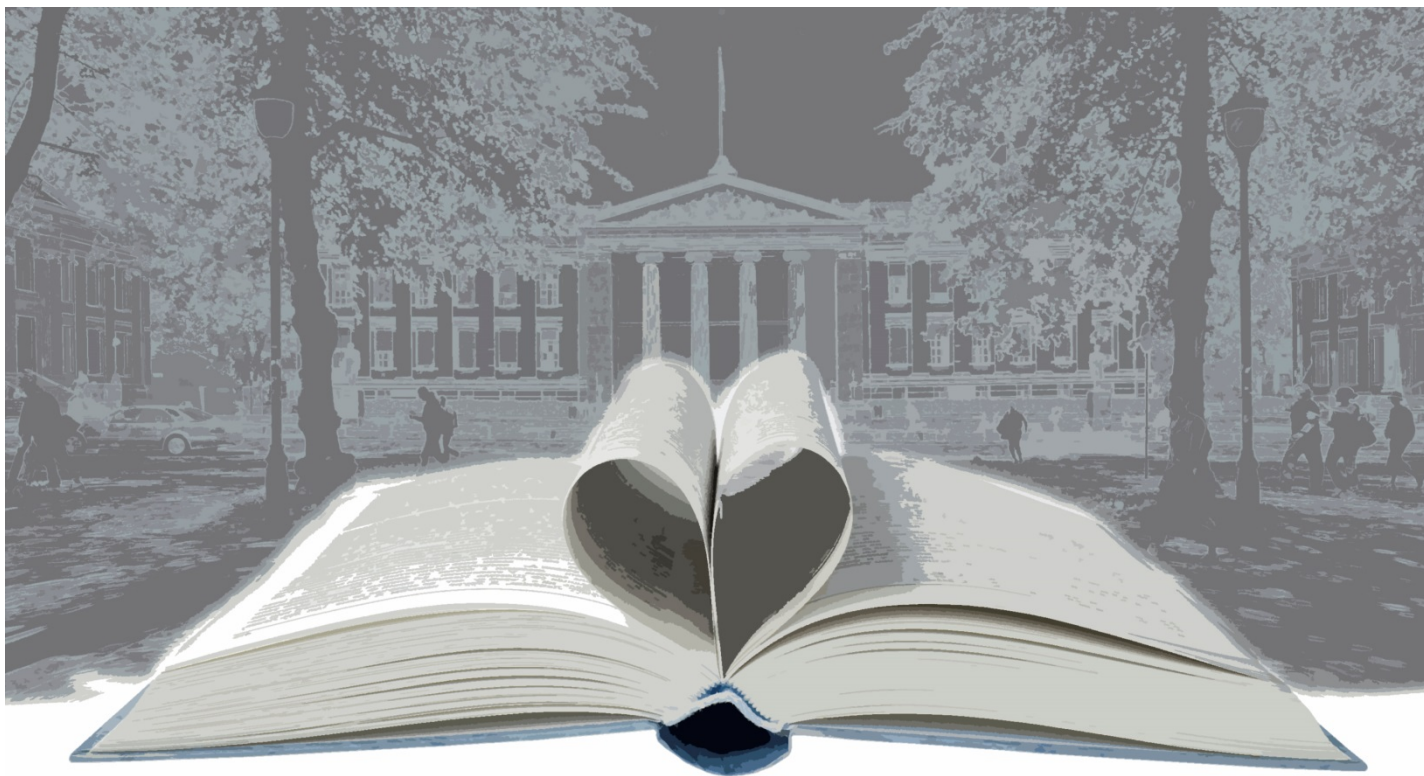
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Anticipated longer-term outcomes

- Greater number of refugees and threatened academics assisted by European universities
- Improved quality of assistance
- Improved capacity of refugee scholars to help rebuild regions once conflict subsides
- Contribute to a vision of the displaced as welcome contributors to communities
- Increased awareness of the importance of academic freedom not only to societies in transition but everywhere



Thanks for your attention.



<https://www.uio.no/english/about/global/globally-engaged/academic-refuge/>



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