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PEER

Empowering
Displaced Students

Meeting the Growing Challenges

It is an oft quoted statistic—today there are an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world who have been forced from home. While it can be difficult to see past the immediate need many refugees have for necessities like food and shelter, let us not overlook another statistic. Globally 37% of all young people have access to higher education, yet for refugees that number is only 1%. Ask a displaced mother what she wants for her children and you will hear one common refrain—an education. For these mothers know that while humanitarian

assistance helps her child survive today, an education enables her child to thrive for the long term. When the Syria crisis erupted in 2011, IIE led a then-incipient global initiative to recognize the demand for higher education among refugees and displaced students. While the international community often falls short in its response to the global education crisis, IIE's Platform for Education in Emergencies Response (PEER) is prepared to meet the challenge. In 2016, IIE teamed up with the Catalyst Foundation for Universal Education to create IIE PEER.

Since its launch in March 2017, IIE PEER has reached over 38,000 young people around the world through its online database featuring hundreds of educational opportunities. IIE PEER also provides intensive university advising, placement and scholarship support for students in the United States, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. With the generous support of the Catalyst Foundation for Universal Education, IIE PEER looks forward to continuing our work to support displaced students around the world.

Advising Programs

Scholarship opportunities and the IIE PEER clearinghouse fill a much-needed gap in the provision of services for the displaced, but many students still need significant support to apply for higher education opportunities. The IIE PEER advising program aims to support students during their university application through the implementation of student advising, placement and scholarships.



Displaced Karen students at Mae La refugee camp

1 North America

IIE PEER is partnering with the Syrian Youth Empowerment (SYE) program to help displaced students from Syria study in North America. SYE offers academic and career mentorship to secure scholarships to universities.

2 The Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) works with newly arrived refugees in Connecticut. Their Higher Education Program will help high school and adult learners begin or restart their higher education journey.

3 Middle East:

Multi Aid Programs (MAPs) is a non-profit organization of Syrians working to build the capacity of the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon through a variety of programs. In collaboration with IIE PEER MAPs is implementing a 6-week training to prepare 22 Syrian youth with the skills needed to successfully apply for higher education programs.

4 East Africa

IIE is partnering with the Open Learning Exchange (OLE) to help approximately 20 young men and women residing in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya attend university in the Puntland region of Somalia through preparatory programs and tuition scholarships.

5 Southeast Asia

IIE PEER administers programs to help displaced students along the Thai-Myanmar border earn a recognized university degree. High achieving displaced students will be supported through two initiatives. The PREP Scholars Award, a distance learning initiative, will provide full tuition scholarships. The PREP Bridge Award will provide grants to pay upfront costs, as well as arrange for full scholarship support from universities.





Dogon Nshimiyimana, NYU Master's student displaced from the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Global Expansion

In March 2017, IIE launched the PEER platform providing displaced Syrian students with reliable and up-to-date information on tertiary and non-degree opportunities. In an effort to become a global resource for displaced and refugee students, IIE PEER expanded its services to other student populations featuring countries such as Colombia, Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Yemen. Today, the IIE PEER database is fully searchable by displaced and refugee students from any background who wish to continue their education.

By the Numbers



38,000

Website users accessing PEER's higher education resources



356

Partners and affiliates worldwide



49

Conference presentations around the world

Grantee Spotlight

“ In a world where guns are loud, education is our most powerful weapon. This opportunity opened my eyes to the world, armored me with confidence and gave me the possibility to develop my skills and learn new ones ” ”

— Rand Jarroch, Student



Sinan Zeino is a Syrian student currently pursuing a Master's degree in International Affairs at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. Originally from Masyaf, Sinan was searching for educational opportunities outside of Syria and found the IIE Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis. The Consortium connected him to a full scholarship to study social work at Salve Regina University. As his studies were ending, Sinan learned about the Student Refugee Scholarship at Columbia University through the IIE PEER opportunity database. Sinan is focusing on giving back to his community with an internship at the International Rescue Committee and as a consultant for IIE PEER. Sinan believes "education can help displaced and vulnerable students who are in desperate need for an opportunity to bounce back from adversity."



Saw Thein Soe is a teacher and alumni at Pu Taw Memorial Junior College (PTMJC) in Mae La refugee camp, Thailand. After studying at Minmahaw Higher Education Program to earn an accredited high school equivalence certificate, he received an offer from Asia Pacific International University (APIU) to study in the Faculty of Education. Initially, Saw Thein Soe returned to work at PTMJC as he did not have the financial resources to complete a degree at APIU. With the help of the IIE PEER PREP program, he received the first IIE PEER advising scholarship. On January 2, 2019 Saw Thein Soe became a first year student at APIU to fulfill his dream. Saw's dream is to become a teacher as he finds great joy in helping others find their unique path outside of the camp.

Thought Leadership

“ While the global political climate poses increasing challenges for students from Syria and other countries to resume their studies in traditional safe haven countries, PEER highlights the relentless work of higher education communities on both sides of the Atlantic to support students affected by crises. ”

— Excerpt from *Times Higher Education* article
co-written by Nele Feldmann and Katherine Miller



“ Today there exists an urgent and global need to support refugees on university campuses...When we welcome refugees we enable individuals to flourish, and in turn strengthen the economic, social and civic fabric of communities across Canada. ”

— Chris Eaton, Executive Director of World
University Service of Canada (WUSC - EUMC)

IIE PEER Would Like to Thank Our Partners for Their Support

Due to the dedication of many partner organizations and universities, IIE PEER has furthered access to higher education in emergencies and raised awareness of the accessibility gap worldwide. We held a successful first workshop in October 2018, in collaboration with AACRAO, along with our first annual IIE PEER Forum in April 2019. **Visit iiepeer.org for more information.**



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