

News

The Open University of Catalonia has offered scholarships to 61 refugees



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The university community is involved with the refugees.

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Open University of Catalonia, UOC.

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Catalan Association of Universities.

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Refugees can study from the camps.

Since 2016, 61 refugees or asylum seekers have benefited from Open University of Catalonia (UOC)'s virtual classes.

"I had to flee Somalia because of the menaces of Al-Shabaab armed group. They wanted to hurt me because I was leading a program to empower women through political participation".

After almost 3 years without studying, this refugee has had the chance to continue his studies on Food System Analysis in the UOC. He's not the only one.

On February 2016 the UOC launched a [welcome program](#) that offered scholarships to study languages and superior education to those people who haven't reached the country of reception yet: some of them are still in refugee camps.

Under the slogan **UOC gives shelter**, different members of the university community have entered the program to offer voluntary guidance and special personalized sessions for refugees.

Only 1% of the refugees have access to higher education, which is the most useful means to a better life quality and integration. The Open University offers non-presence high education training, and the digital world allows refugees to study from their camps.

Refugees and asylum seekers often have a hard time proving their previous education, and this requires the active implication and efforts of UOC's academic secretariat. To compensate this inconvenience, the UOC offers courses and specializations that do not need any official documentation of previous high academic studies.

In the first edition of UOC's program, most of the students were Syrian refugees. In the second Edition, in 2017, asylum seekers from 11 different nationalities have managed to benefit from UOC's scholarships.

The Catalan Association of Public Universities has created a group of Shelter Universities, a space that triggers joint action among universities: UOC is one of its members. This year, UOC's host program has given 30

scholarships to asylum seekers.

Even though the call is closed, you can support the initiative by signing [We are a welcoming Europe here](#). On a local scale, if you live in Catalonia you can volunteer with UOC's solidarity mentoring program [here](#).

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