



# Access Counseling Program

Duolingo English Test has hired a university advisor to support UNHCR and work with refugees to guide them through international university admission and financial aid application processes.

## BACKGROUND

Applying for university study is a complex and stressful process for everyone — but for refugees, it is even more difficult. The United Nations estimates that only 5% of all refugees ever enroll at a university. Duolingo English Test and UNHCR endeavor to change the narrative for refugee students and their prospects for higher education. Duolingo English Test is proud and honored to offer this program in support of UNHCR's [15by30 initiative](#), which aims to increase refugee enrollment in higher education to 15% by 2030. We believe this advising program will be transformative in creating a framework for refugees' access to higher education.

## PROGRESS

In 2022, we selected 25 refugee students living in India, Iraq, and South Africa — all brilliant students who will be intellectual powerhouses at their future universities. To help ensure these students have successful university outcomes, our program director, Laura Kaub, in partnership with local UNHCR operations, provided bespoke advising in the following areas:

- Researching and identifying a list of appropriate universities based on the students' personal and academic background and interests
- Helping to navigate worldwide university entrance requirements and processes
- Ensuring the students meet application requirements, including availability of school transcripts, leaving exams, standardized testing, recommendation letters, essays, and resumes
- Supporting the students in presenting the most compelling application possible, through essay writing workshops, help with resumes, preparation for interviews, etc.
- Helping students apply for generous funding opportunities including competitive merit scholarships and need-based financial aid
- Providing assistance with securing the necessary study visas and travel documents to ensure a smooth transition to their countries of study

A second cohort of Scholars has recently been selected for the program. They will begin the process of exploring themselves and their best-fit university pathways in June 2023.



## PERSPECTIVES

“Higher education turns students into leaders, amplifying their voices and enabling rapid generational change. Yet only 3% of the 80 million forcibly displaced persons around the world have access to it. We are proud to partner with Duolingo to reduce barriers to higher education for some of the world’s most vulnerable people”

—Matt Reynolds, Regional Representative for the United States and the Caribbean, UNHCR

“Many refugees lack access to high-quality education, which is critical in order to thrive in their countries of resettlement. We believe that this program can lower barriers to higher education and improve the livelihood of refugees around the world.”

—Luis von Ahn, CEO and Co-Founder, Duolingo

## INQUIRIES

Please email [institutional+access@duolingo.com](mailto:institutional+access@duolingo.com)

## SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The **Duolingo English Test** is an innovative and accessible English proficiency assessment for today's international students and institutions. Digital-first and learner-first, the test is available online, on demand—while using subject matter experts and AI to ensure it is reliable and secure. Brought to you by Duolingo, the most popular to learn a language, whose mission is to lower barriers to education.

The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.