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NETWORK

Academic Refuge

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership

Marit Egner, Project Coordinator,
University of Oslo

SUCRE project multiplier event 5 July 2018

Academic Refuge Project Facts

Full project title: Strategic partnership to promote core academic values and welcome refugees and threatened academics to European campuses

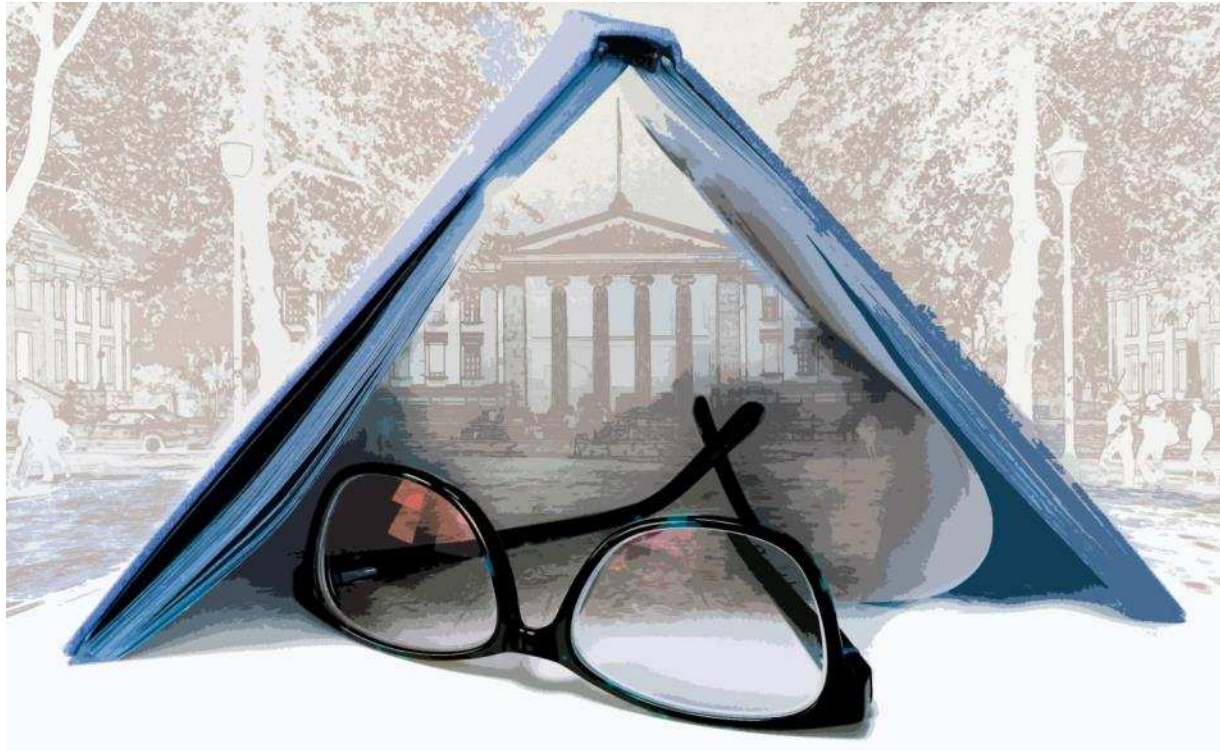
Project partners: University of Oslo (lead), UNICA
Scholars at Risk Network,
University of Ljubljana

Associate partners: EUA, EAIE, WUN, Al Fanar Media

Budget: 300,000 euros

Duration: 3 years, Sept 2016 to Aug 2019

Refugees in HE and Scholars at Risk



Synergies of approaches?



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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:

- IO1: Develop curriculum and implement two-part training on (a) welcoming refugees and threatened academics to campus and (b) promoting higher education values

2018:

- IO2: MOOC: Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/academic-freedom>

2019:

- IO3: Electronic publication on Putting Higher Education Values into Practice



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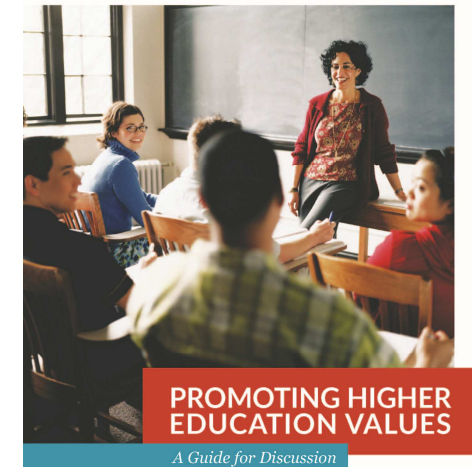
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June 2017



- 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
 - 60 participants, from UNICA and SAR member universities
 - Some new training material



Welcoming refugee students

- Welcoming 1: Formal
 - Recognition
 - Admission
 - Language
 - Finances
- Welcoming 2: social and academic success
 - Integration into study programmes
 - Success as students and in the labour market



UNICA responses for refugees



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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**ACADEMIC
DUGNAD**

Low-hanging fruits:

- Making knowledge available
- Institutional webpages for refugees
- Refugee guide to higher education
- Developing internship opportunities
- OLS courses for refugees
- Making use of the refugees' competencies
- Creating networking groups
- EUA Refugees Welcome Map
- Mapping and building networks
- Using existing structures and programmes

<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

Hosting scholars

- **Preparing the institution**

- Learn from others
- Institutional leadership
- Make SAR known
- Procedures and flexibility



- **Recruiting the scholar**

- Match the scholar and academic unit
- Practicalities (contract, housing, immigration)
- Welcome the scholar



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Hosting scholars (cont.)

- **Making the most out of the stay**
 - Safety and well-being
 - Academic activity and network
 - Competence development
 - Social network
- **What next?**
 - Return
 - Regular job
 - Extension of stay
 - New host
 - Apply for asylum
 - External project funding (e.g. MSCA)



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Mohamed

- Dentist from Syria
- PhD from France
- Ass. Prof. and dentist in Syria until 2014
- Worked 2 years at UiO through the Scholar Rescue Fund + language and other courses and tests
- Authorisation as a Dentist in two years!
- Current position:
Private dentistry clinic
- Academic options:
Post.doc./
clinical instructor



Emir

- Geographer from Turkey, PhD from Turkey
- Applied for asylum in Norway in 2016, not allowed to work while waiting
- Waited one year for refugee status and another 8 months for getting settled and into the municipal introduction programme
- Guest researcher at UiO + language courses at UiO while waiting
- Current situation: Introduction programme with language course and internship outside the university



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Academic practice

- Combination of municipal introduction programme and the universities' experiences from Scholars at Risk
- 3-6 months internship as research assistant or similar in a relevant department at the university
- During pilot: required minimum bachelor, opened for many applications and candidates
- Experience: Need to have at least Master or PhD and be small scale tailor made.



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MOOC: Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters

The screenshot shows the FutureLearn course page. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Categories', 'Courses', 'Programs', and 'Degrees'. Below this, the course title 'Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters' is displayed, along with a brief description: 'Explore the meaning of academic freedom and how it relates to core higher education and societal values.' A large, tilted, red-bordered box with the text 'NEXT COURSE 29 October 2018' is overlaid on the right side of the page. Below the course title, there are tabs for 'Overview', 'Topics', 'Start dates', 'Requirements', and 'Educators'. A central image shows a woman with a blacked-out mouth in a classroom setting. Below the image, there are icons for duration, time commitment, and pricing: 'Duration 3 weeks', '3 hours per week', 'Learn for free', and 'Upgrade for €39'. A small link 'What's this?' is also present.

Target groups: HE Students and staff, NGOs, general public

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/academic-freedom>



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MOOC content

- **Week 1:** What is academic freedom and how does it relate to other higher education and societal values?
- **Week 2:** Why are academic freedom and related values important, and what threats or challenges to these values may be faced in different contexts?
- **Week 3:** How can you promote and defend academic freedom and related values?



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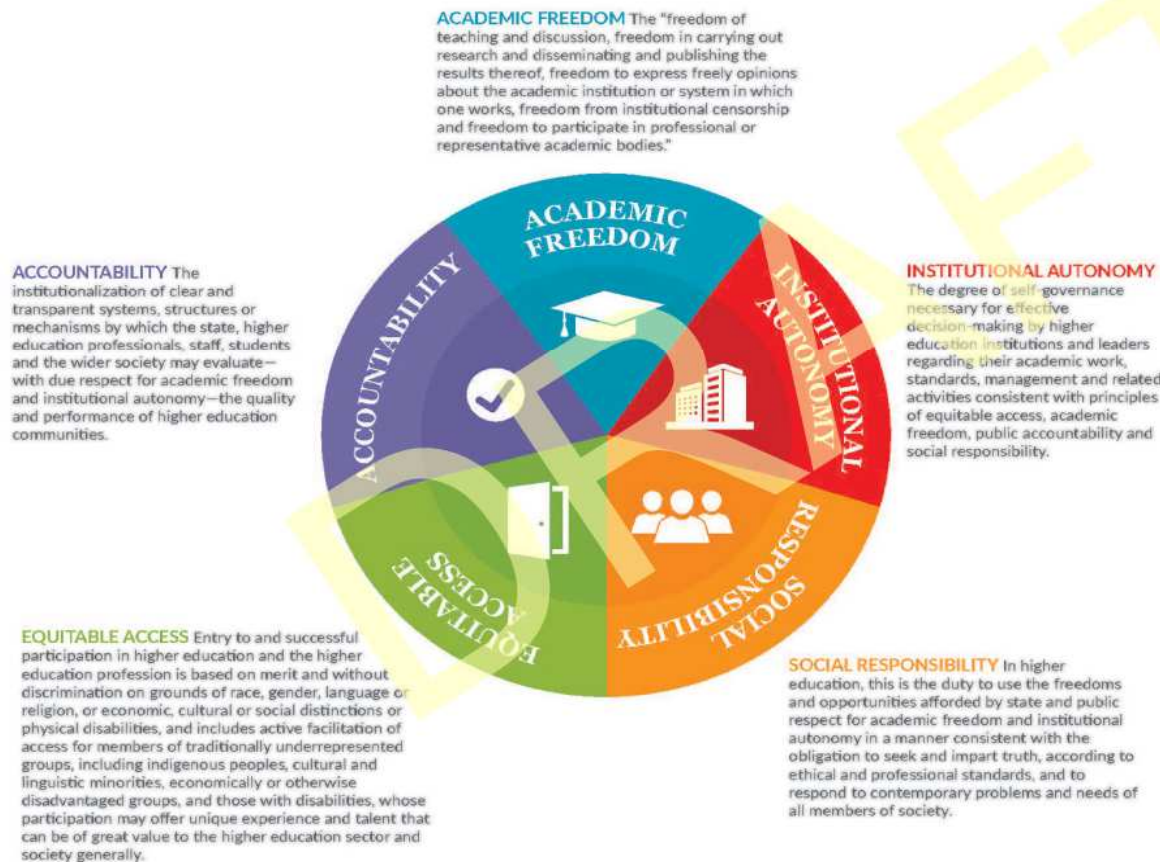
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Promoting higher education values

WHAT ARE “CORE HIGHER EDUCATION VALUES”?

Scholars at Risk’s understanding of higher education values is informed by international human rights law,² UNESCO instruments,³ and related civil society statements,⁴ which collectively identify five core values: equitable access, accountability, institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and social-responsibility.



DON'T WE NEED MORE PRECISE DEFINITIONS?

While consensus on a general meaning of each core value is important, given the wide range of higher education systems, institutions and local conditions, a perfectly precise definition is neither possible, nor particularly desirable. More important is an understanding of the interrelatedness of each value with the others, and a good faith application of the general meaning to the conditions experienced in a given case. Rather than focus on binary questions (Is conduct X included in value Y?), which risk oversimplification, better understanding may result from exploring interrelatedness of the various values (e.g. “What is the impact of the conduct X on respect for core values?”).

WHAT ABOUT OTHER, RELATED VALUES?

The five core values listed are not an exhaustive list but rather a set of broad categories, each of which may implicate other values concerns. For example integrity in research, governance and management is essential to higher education and should be understood as included within the meaning of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and accountability, respectively. Similarly general anti-discrimination principles should be understood as included within the meaning of equitable access and social responsibility.

ARE CORE HIGHER EDUCATION VALUES HUMAN RIGHTS?

Much of the meaning of the core values listed would be covered by international human rights standards, while other elements may depend more on generally accepted good practices. Claims for violations of equitable access or academic freedom, for example, might be sustained under existing human rights law protections for the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to education, or the right to freedom from discrimination based on age, gender, religion, race or other grounds. Claims of violations of institutional autonomy or accountability may more often depend on domestic legal or policy protections, buttressed by internationally recognized good practices. But even these may trigger human rights protections, given the interrelatedness of all five values, if the conduct in question also impinges on other values areas. For example, a decision by a state to close a university because of budget or management concerns may not trigger human rights protections that may be implicated if the closure was instead intended to punish peaceful academic or student expression.

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



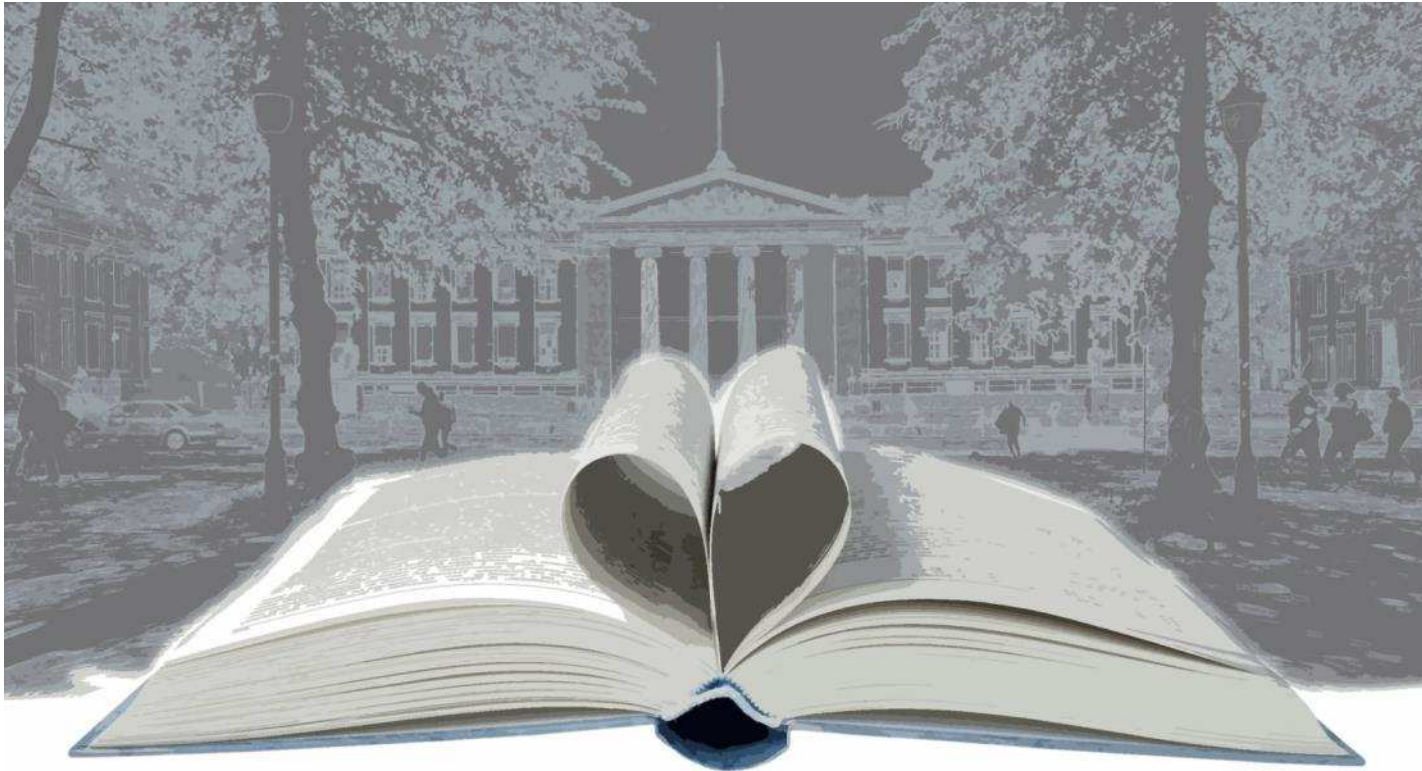
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Thanks for your attention.



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



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