



International Cooperation in the field of socio educational inclusion: The UB Support Programme for Refugees and People Fleeing Conflict Zones

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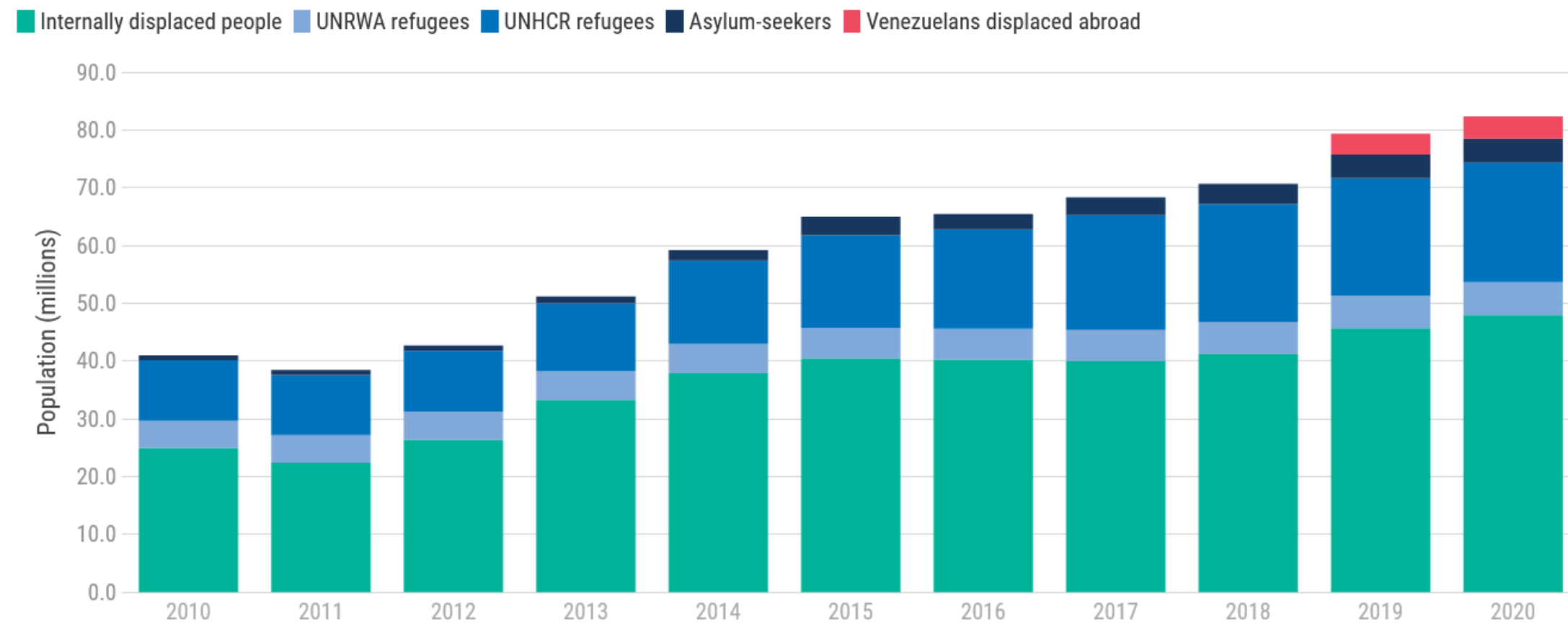
OBREAL Global
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Educational inclusion: Forced displacement and access to education

Global forced displacement (at end-year)



Source: [UNHCR Refugee Data Finder](#)

Enrolment of refugees in education

Primary school

Secondary school

Higher education

68%

34%

5%

Forced displacement and access to education: barriers

Knowledge about the barriers:

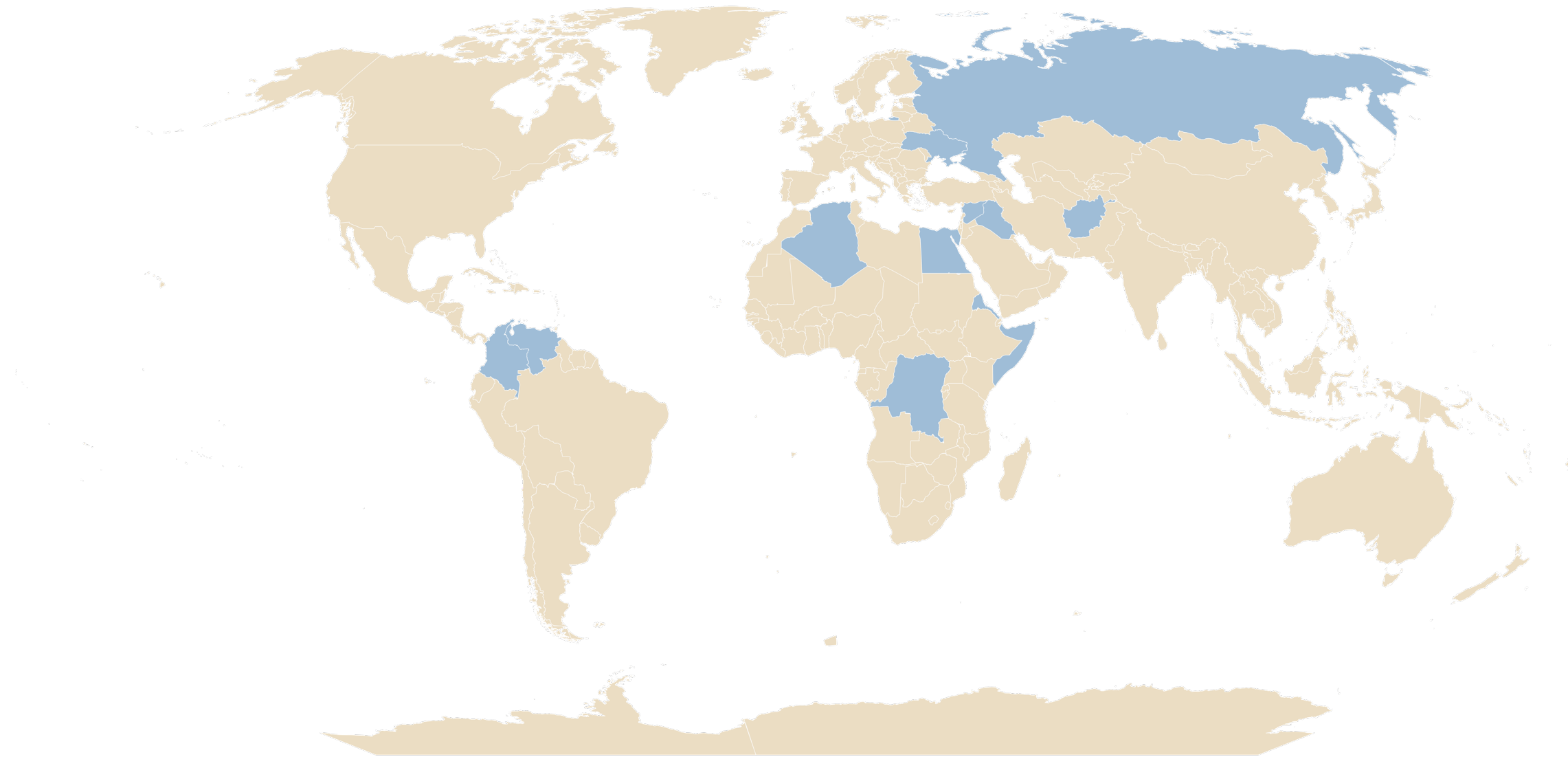
- UB Previous experiences supporting refugee students (Balkans war, Haiti's earthquake,...)

- International cooperation:



- Language barriers
- Recognition of prior learning
- Administrative process of enrolment
- Lack of scholarships and lack of reliable information
- New socio-educational system. Gap on skills and knowledge, new roles and cultural codes, expectations
- Legal status: International student: access to residence and job permits?
- Socioeconomic integration: lack of social networks, discrimination, access to the job market, ...

Nationalities of participants in the UB Support Programme for Refugees (2016-2022)

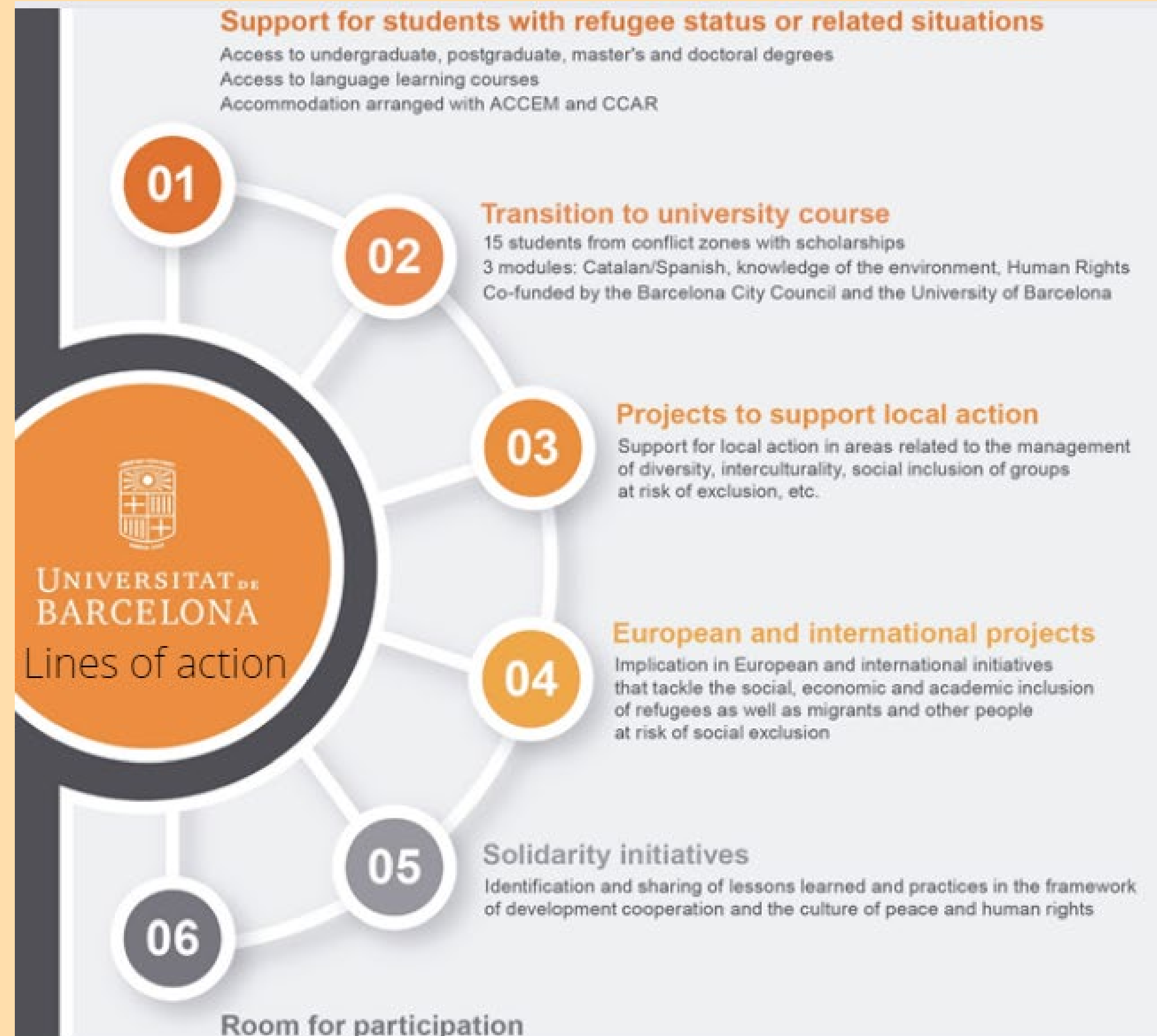


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90 students have been supported by the Programme since 2016. The Programme is mainly funded by the UB, with the financial support of the Barcelona City Council (transition course). Viladecans City Council and AGBAR (social inclusion phase: accommodation) also contribute to the Programme.



What are the University of Barcelona answers and commitments?



Our work is aligned with:

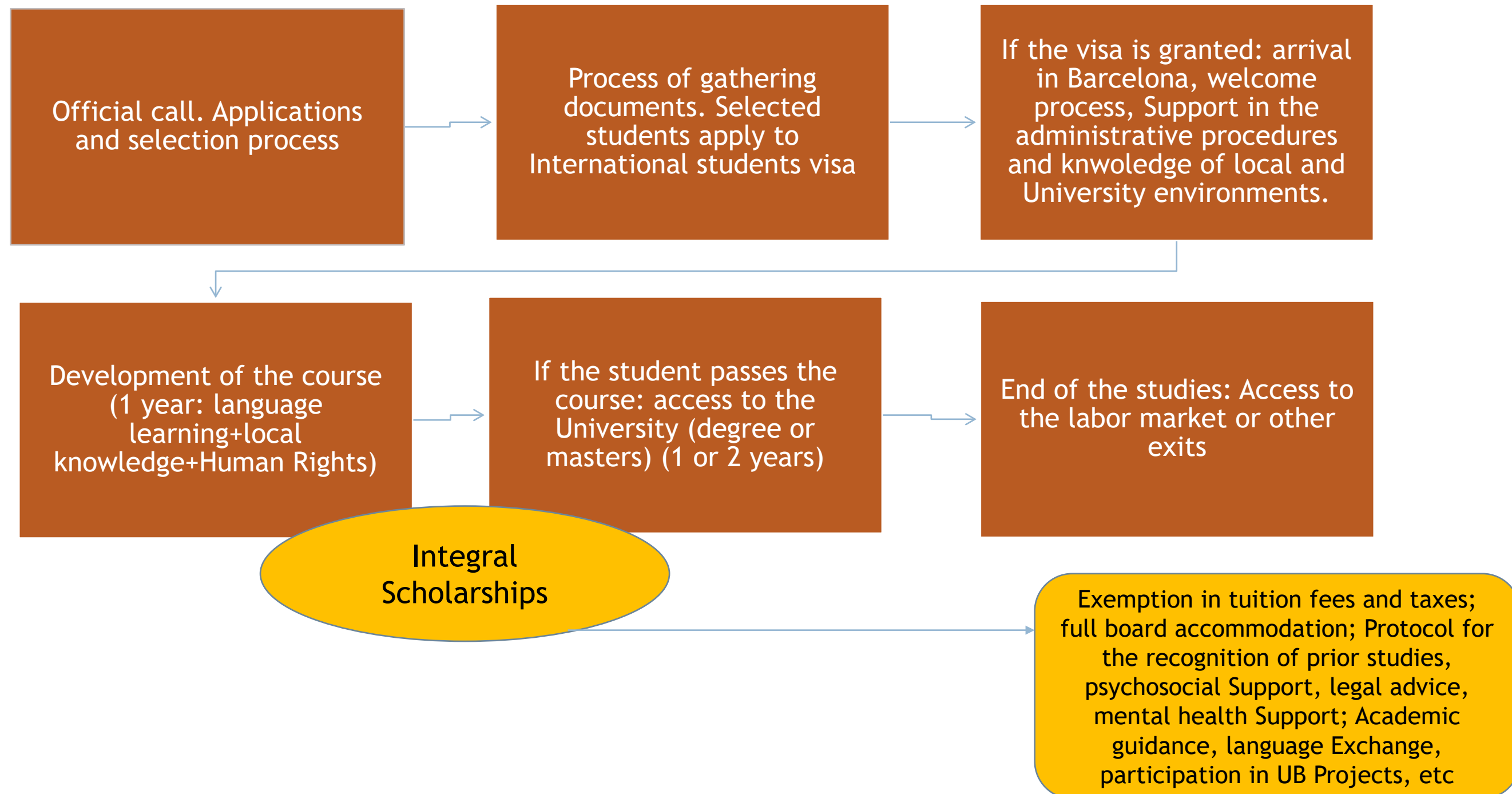
- 2030 agenda: SDG 4 (quality education) and 10 (reduce inequalities)
- Recommendations of UNHCR on complementary and safe pathways.

But above all, the UB considers that the Programme is part of the university's social responsibility and social commitment.

The Programme supports either refugee students who are already living in Catalonia (line 1) and those who are living in non-EU countries (line 2): educational complementary pathways for refugees .



The transition course to the University in 6 phases



Transition course to the University. Main characteristics

- **Type of course**

Official extension university course: 36 ECTS credits. Spanish, Catalan+Human Rights+Knowledge of local environment

- **Target groups**

Refugee students+ Students in refugee like situation with a minimum of 30 credits, living out of the EU. The Programme encourages the participation of women, LGTBIQ+, economic vulnerability and Human Rights vulnerability

- **Protocol for the recognition of previous studies**

- **Funding**

Co-funded by the University of Barcelona and the Barcelona City Council

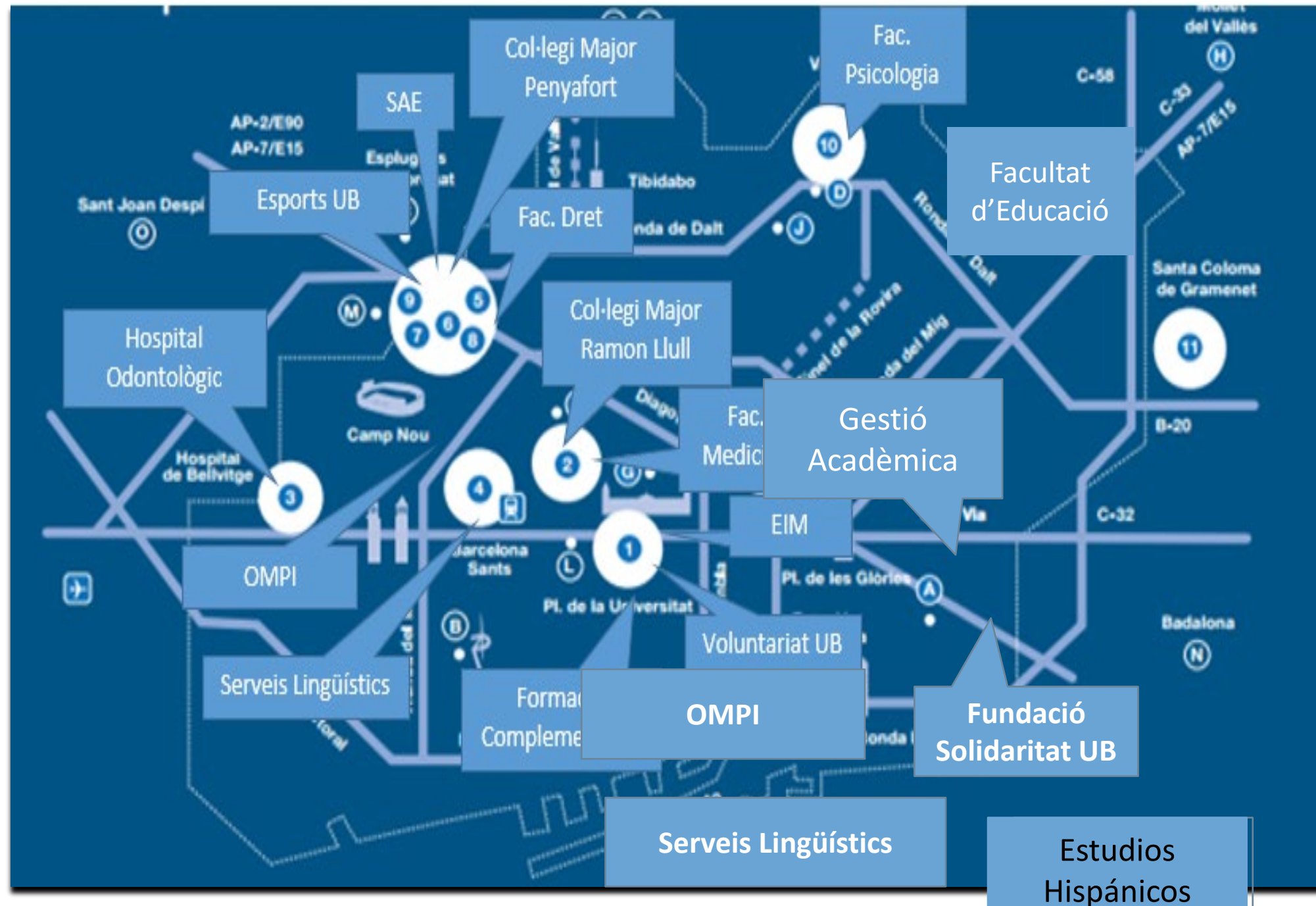
- **Coverage of the scholarship**

Integral scholarship: exemption in the payment of tuition fees (waivers); full board accommodation, private health insurance, psychosocial support, academic guidance, legal advice, linguistic exchange, participation in international projects, mentoring, etc

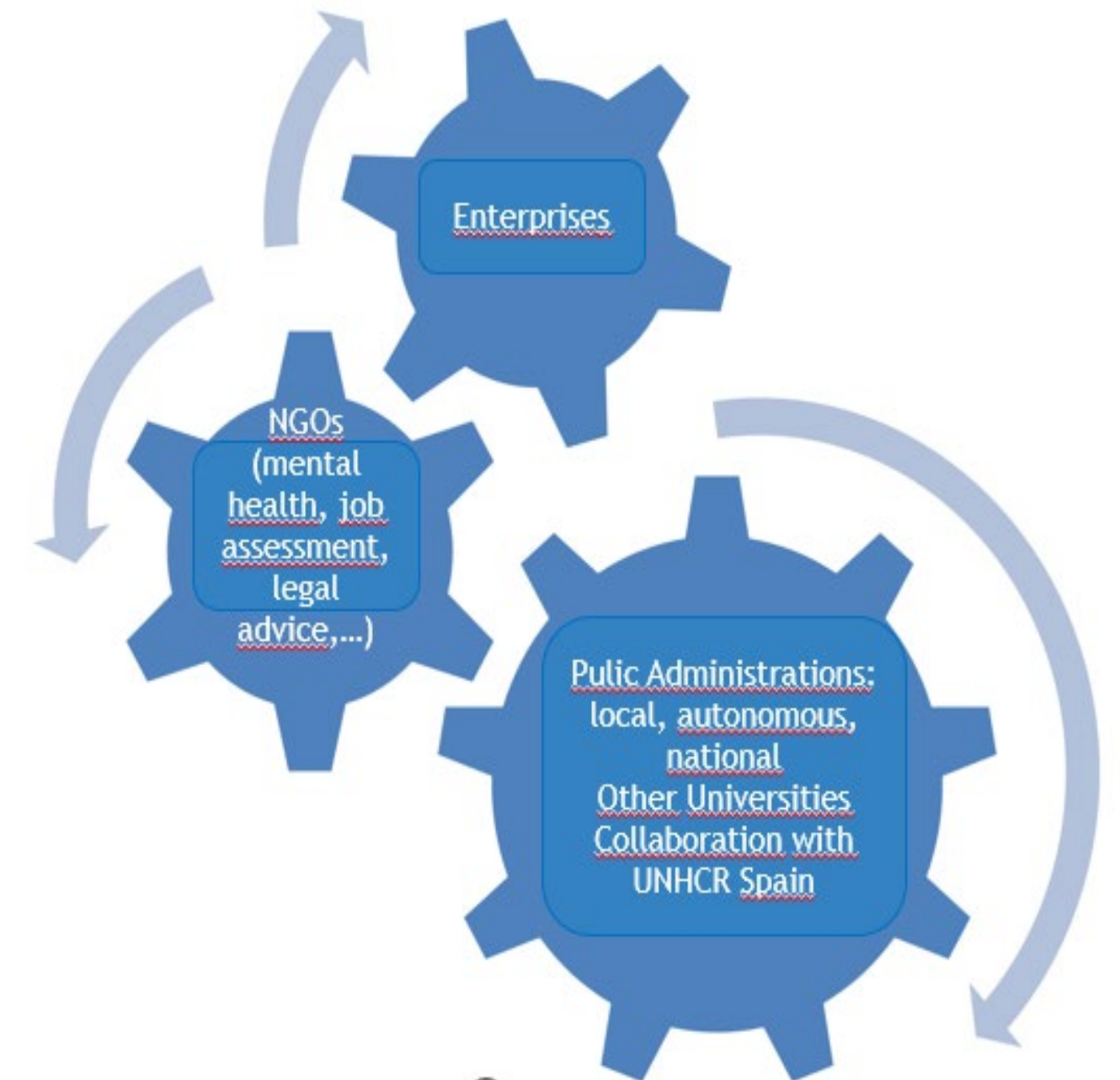
- **Continuity of the scholarship**

1 year + 2 years. Review + Continuation

Internal and external stakeholders



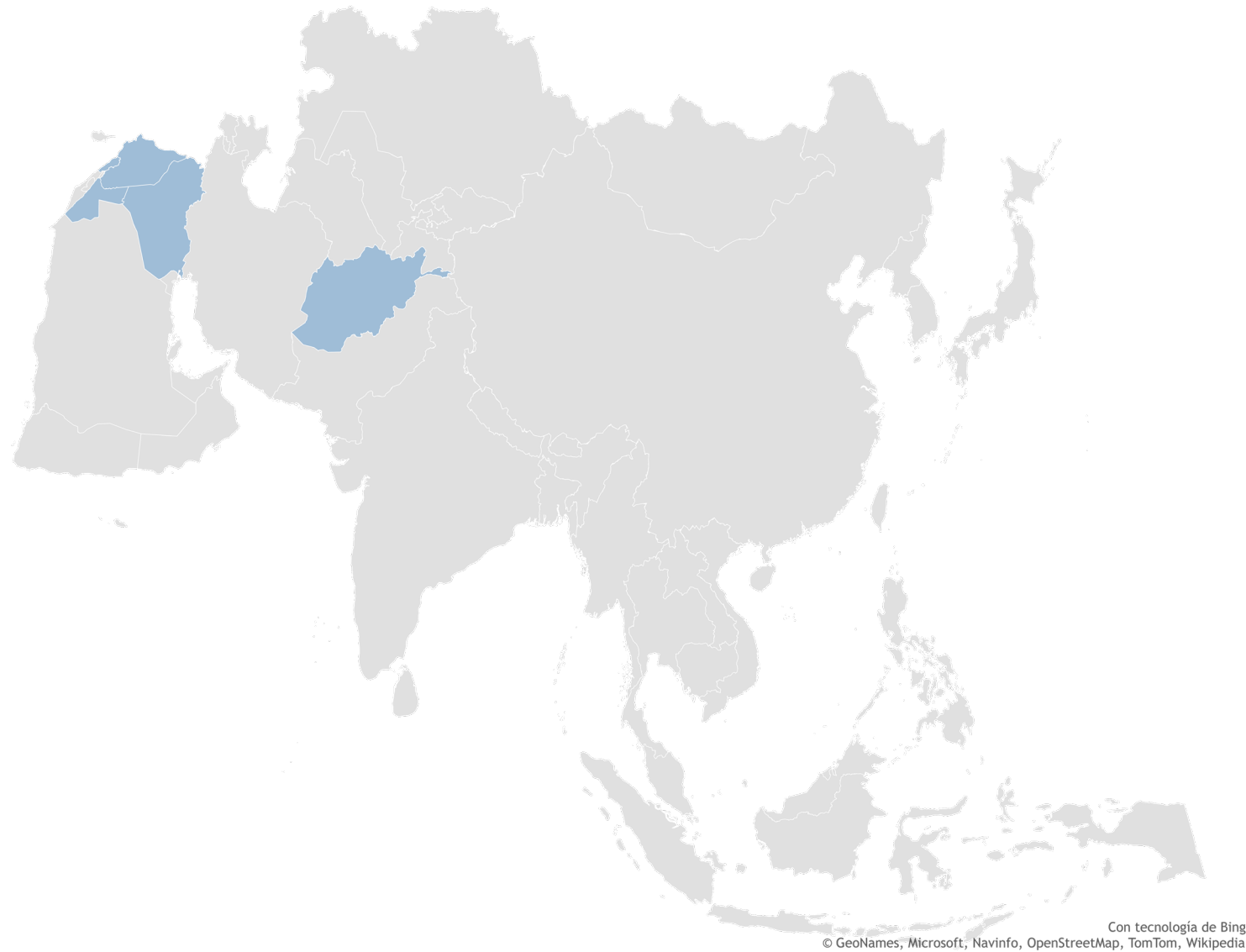
Internal network (University level): solidarity, flexibility, collaboration. Top-down commitment and bottom-up support



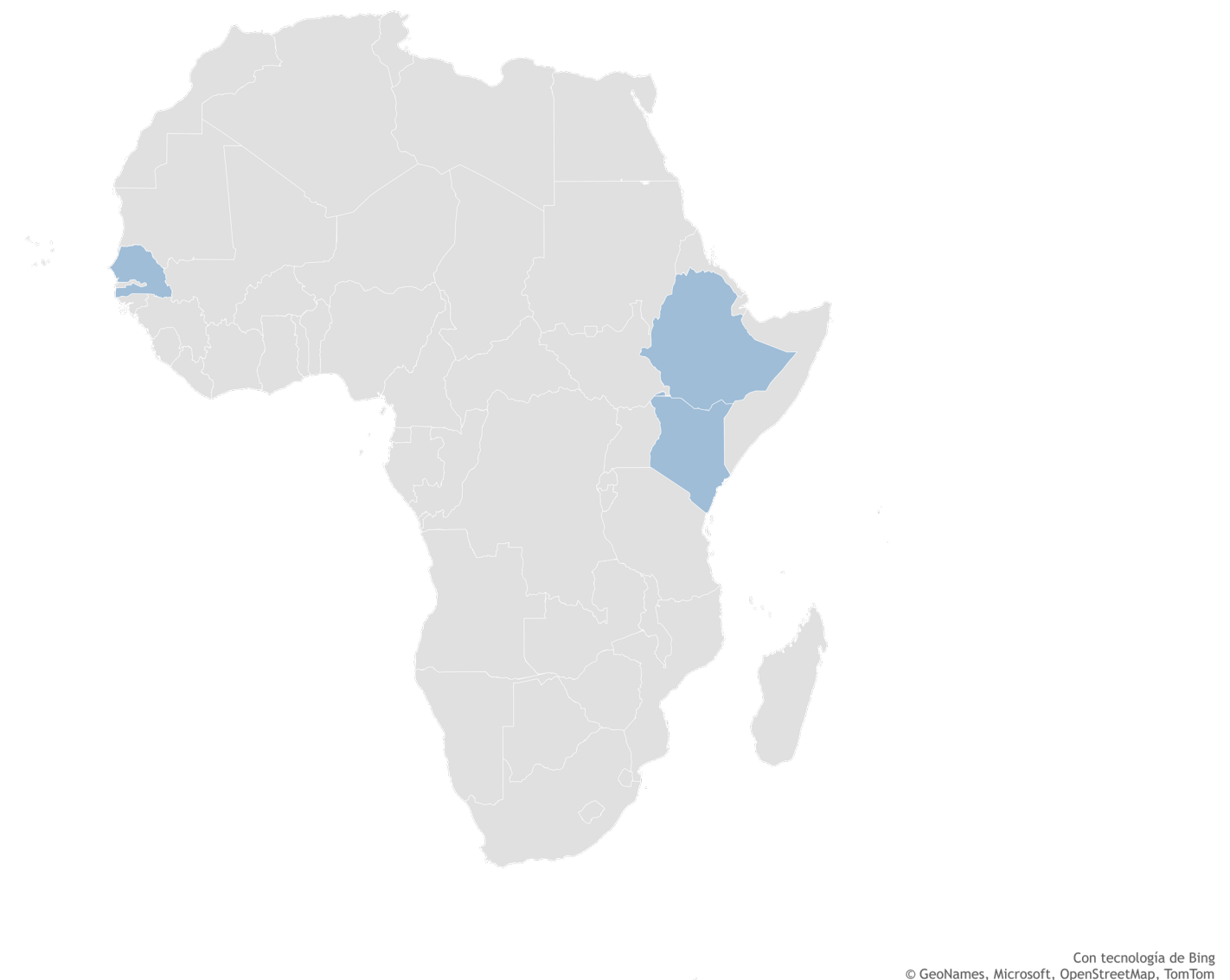
External network: It is a vital part of the holistic Support of the Programme. Still in progress!

International stakeholders

International Support. Middel East and Asia



International Support. Africa



Universities (Lebanon, Jordan and KRI), UNHCR, JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) and local NGOs participate in different phases: confirming some eligibility criteria, supporting selected students in visa procedures,... Participation: Higher Education in Emergencies round table (HEiE) Lebanon and MENA Contact Group for Complementary Pathways

CHALLENGES

- From the trend to the structure: Full institutionalisation of the Programme
- Scale it up: test the Programme at national level. In progress! Support fromf different ministries (Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Inclusion and Universities)
- Financial Support from autonomous, national and European levels
- Exit routes: improvement of job market Access opportunities



CHALLENGES

In terms of International cooperation:

- Institutionalisation of the cooperation with stakeholders: MoU?
- Involvement of more (quantity) and reliable (quality) stakeholders in different areas of Africa and Asia:
 - Support in reaching out students (and professors)
 - Accreditation of situations of vulnerability
 - Accompaniment in the pre-selection process
 - Exchange of experiences
 - Identification of job opportunities for those who decide to come back after finishing their training



The impact of the Programme in the students' lives: some testimonies

”

I came to Barcelona as part of the scholarship to support refugees, and to be honest, I was waiting for this opportunity and was afraid to miss it, especially after all the racism, sexual abuse, and exploitation I experienced in Lebanon.

I lived in Lebanon for more than seven years, there were difficult years.

”

The higher education at a master level was not a guarantee to improve our lives while living in a refugee camp.

Thanks to the Refugee Support Program of the University of Barcelona, I am now in Barcelona, a city where I feel that my rights are respected as a human being and having an opportunity at the same time to study at the University.

Social inclusion through physical activity: Socio-sports meetings



Methodology aimed at promoting social cohesion through cooperative games, totally inclusive. Activity addressed to refugees and University students.

Social inclusion through physical activity: Socio-sports meetings

Methodology developed by Dra. Merche Ríos and carried out at the University of Barcelona, other Spanish Universities and Universities of Central America and Cuba. Mainly with people deprived of liberty and people with mental disabilities.

2 projects:

- Sociosports meetings Academy. Tested with refugees for the first time in Lesvos, in particular, with girls and boys from 12 to 18 years, including unaccompanied minors) and University students of the Aegean. Partner organizations: University of the Aegean, Iliatkida and UBSF/UB: November 2019
- Wahda: project funded by the ACCD (Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament) and carried out in Tunisia with the support of the Université de Carthage and local NGOs: Ado+ and Deuxième Chance. 2021-2022. Other partners: Superacció and La Rotllana. Addressed to children and young people in risk of social exclusion and university students.

Social inclusion through physical activity: Socio-sports meetings



Main results:

- Participants have fun. This result is extraordinary important!!!
- The methodology establishes a safe space for participants: to play, to talk, ...
- Improvement of self-image and self-esteem
- Development of emotional bonds with other participants
- Break out of stereotypes and prejudices
- Development of listening skills, self-control, respect, commitment, values, ...
- Development of a sense of belonging
- In the case of university students, also development of skills necessary for their professional careers

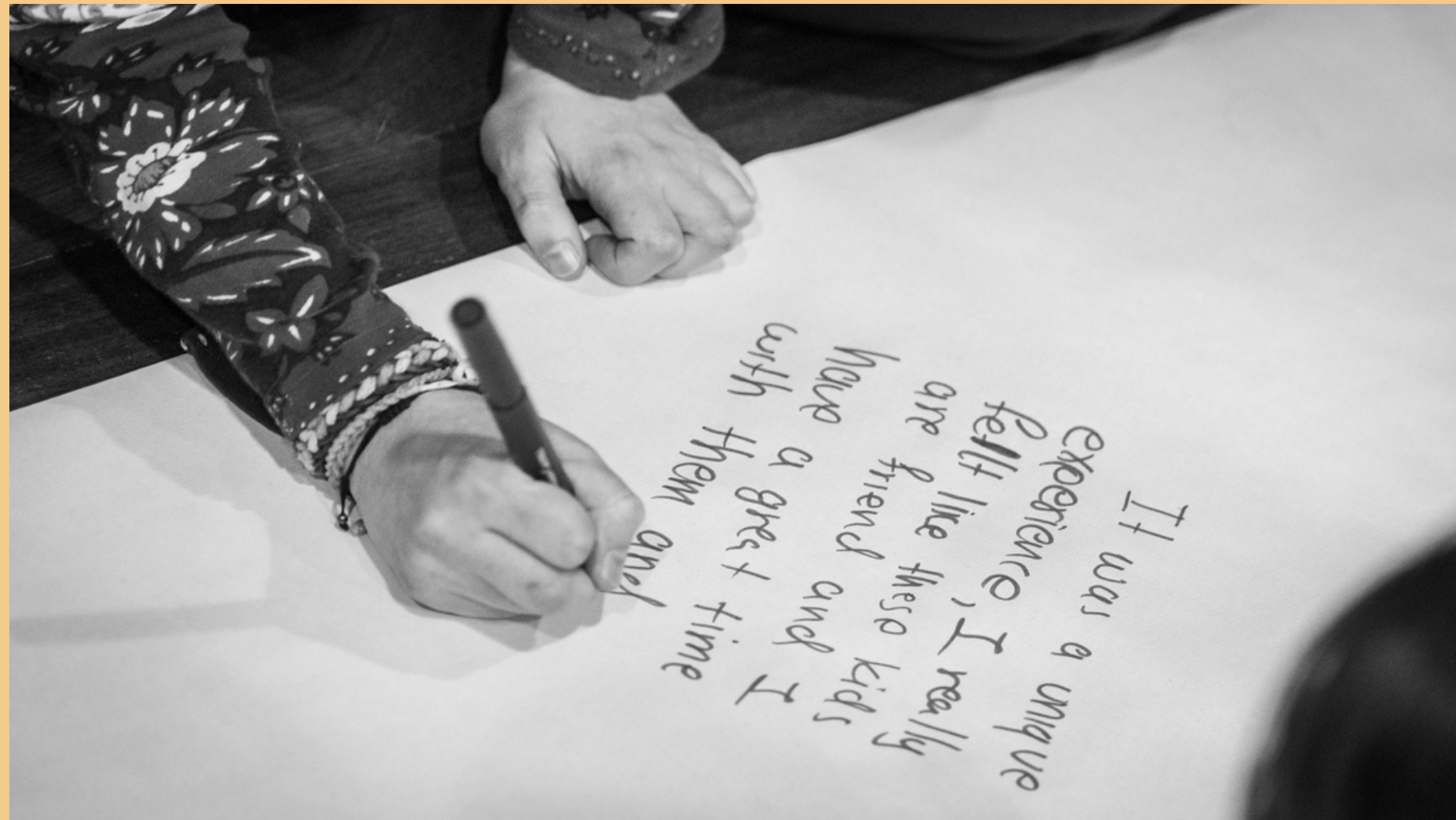
Socio-sports meetings: Challenges for international projects

- Identification of partners and their common work on the meetings: To be and feel that everybody is on the same page
- Set up a “structure” at the University and NGO levels: people committed with the meetings, their philosophy, actions and the potential in the field of personal change and social transformation (social justice)
- Especific training, follow-up during the first 2 years is necessary
- Ensure the sustainability of the action:
 - University level: link the meetings with a university subject, department
 - NGO level: to introduce the activity in the entity's offer of activities in a permanent way

Thank you for your attention



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