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Sudan

Refugees Country Briefing

ARENA aims to enable access to higher education for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.



Sudan

Official name: The Republic of the Sudan (in Arabic: جمهورية السودان Jumhūriyyat as-Sūdān),

Location: The country is situated in north-eastern Africa, between Egypt to the north and Eritrea, bordering the Red Sea in the north east. It is also bordered by Libya in the north west, by Chad in the west, by the Central African Republic in the south west, by South Sudan in the south and by Ethiopia in the south east, and it shares maritime borders with Saudi Arabia.

Population: 45,561,556 (July 2020 est.)

Ethnic groups: Unspecified Sudanese Arab (approximately 70%), Fur, Beja, Nuba, Fallata

Languages: Arabic (official), English (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, Fur

This country briefing – especially developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – gives orientation on the education system in Sudan in the light of recent political and economic developments in this country. It presents a systematised overview on its higher education system and links to the available information sources that are useful for the evaluation of qualifications of refugees coming from Sudan, even in cases where candidates present insufficient or lack of documentation.

Photo coverage:
A sunset view of the Nile River in Khartoum, Sudan
Photo: Shutterstock

Source: Republic of Sudan Official Portal CIA World Factbook - Sudan

Current situation

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sudan gained its independence from Anglo-Egyptian rule in 1956. Since then, it has had a turbulent history of political conflicts. The first Sudanese civil war erupted in 1955 because of southern rebel groups seeking independence and fighting against the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) from the central government. The conflict ended in 1972 with the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement.

The second civil war started in 1983. It was largely a continuation of the previous conflict, lasted for twenty-two years and ended in 2005 with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which resulted in a popular referendum leading to the independence of South Sudan six years later, on 9 July 2011. In the meantime, the military coup of 1989 brought President Omar al-Bashir to power. In 2003, other conflicts erupted in the northern part of Sudan – Darfur – between rebel groups against the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). In 2011, the Doha Peace Agreement was adopted with the intention of ending the Darfur conflict, but there are still remaining tensions.

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

Since December 2018, when then President Bashir's government imposed emergency austerity measures to try to stave off economic collapse, instability and violence has returned to Sudan. The situation worsened in April 2019 when the long-serving ruler Omar al-Bashir was overthrown. Once again, the country dove into a deep political crisis with huge mass protests and clashes between the military (which took power) and pro-democracy movements. Sudan's transitional governing body is organising pending national elections that are expected to take place in late 2022.

Sudan's history since independence, marked by war and brutality, has forced large numbers of internal displacements within the country. The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has been steadily increasing from 841,949 in 2005 to 2,174,000 in December 2015 (UNHCR, 2015), specially from South Sudan, where it is estimated that more than 4 million southerners fled from their original places of

residence. These people were unable to grow food or earn money to feed themselves, and malnutrition and starvation became widespread. That stresses an already unbearable situation since Sudan also has a longstanding tradition of hospitality towards refugees and asylum seekers (mainly coming from neighboring African countries including Eritrea, Chad and the Central African Republic). Data from 2018 shows that Sudan hosts about 1.1 million refugees and migrants from the region, mostly South Sudanese (more than 858,000). Nearly 65 per cent of refugees in Sudan are children.

IMPACT ON THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Sudan has a very young population (Sudan's children make up half of the total population) as 40 per cent of the population are less than 14 years old and 20 per cent between 14–25. They are the most affected by the chronic conflict, economic crisis and under-investment in basic social services that have been characterising the country.

Very few school-age children are receiving an education, and children are subject to kidnapping and abuse from soldiers (over 2,300 children had

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Higher education in Sudan has a long history of interaction with politics.

been killed or maimed and approximately 19,000 had been recruited into armed groups). Schools across the country were frequently closed due to fighting and the threat of violence, and hundreds of schools were looted and destroyed. According to UNICEF, between 2013 and January 2016, violence destroyed more than 800 schools and armed forces and non-state armed groups occupied more than 100 schools and universities, creating extended gaps in schooling for thousands of children.

Specifically regarding higher education, between 1989 and the beginning of 2016, it suffered significant change in its structural settings. Programmes were designed in accordance with the Islamic vision of the regime of the time and Arabic became the language of instruction. In the meantime, the number of universities increased exponentially: from 4 public universities to about 30 today (including the creation of 19 regional universities) and private colleges/universities increasing from 1 to 73. This process was implemented with a lack of proper planning and without taking into account the country's real needs. That created a paradoxical situation: on one side it created a large number of graduates without proper job opportunities (and consequentially a huge rate of unemployment) and at the same time a lack of

skilled workers in disciplines that are fundamental for Sudan such as agriculture and veterinary medicine.

Higher education in Sudan has a long history of interaction with politics. Institutions were affected by the political climate as well as being instigators of political change. Gordon Memorial College (currently University of Khartoum) graduates were the force which established the Graduates Congress and led to the creation of the main political parties in Sudan either directly or as a reaction. Therefore, it is not surprising that the protests of late 2018 and the beginning of 2019 against President Omar al-Bashir's government and the increased cost of living, have resulted in the government closing all of the country's universities.

Even after President Bashir was overthrown, the regular functioning of universities and students resuming their studies have been endangered. Besides the lack of security (students are often attacked while they are on campus) there are difficult living conditions, including the difficulty of getting to university (caused by the lack of transportation and petrol) and the refusal of hundreds of professors to return to teaching until authorities deal with their demands. Some campuses are also coping with physical damage (especially in the University of Khartoum).

In a macro perspective, the financial implications of the severe economic crisis that Sudan is living through, for higher education, translates into a reduction in technology transfer and staff contacts with other countries which have hindered its own development.

Education in Sudan

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNING BODIES

- Federal Ministry of Education –
وزارة التربية و التعليم: <http://www.moe.gov.sd/>
(available in Arabic only)
- Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research –
وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي: <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/index.php/ar/>
(available both in Arabic and English) – the website worked until mid-October 2020

RECOGNISED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research provides a list of the accredited institutions divided into: Public Universities, Private Universities, Private Colleges, Technical University Colleges, Research Centres and University Hospitals. The name of institutions is available in both English and Arabic at the following link: <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/index.php/ar/institute/main/1>

Nevertheless, most of the information available on the website is in Arabic only.

ACCREDITATION BODIES

According to the Education Act 1992, the Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is the main body responsible for higher education, in charge of general education planning, curriculum development and teacher training.

Accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes is supervised by the National Council, a national body within the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research specifically in charge of the definition of the role of each higher education institution; establishment of policies and standards for affiliated institutions; the evaluation of the performance of higher education and scientific research institutions and the review of their reports, in line with the standards set by the Federal Ministry of Higher Education. Other bodies are involved in running educational programmes, such as the Evaluation and Accreditation Commission (EVAC).

Information is mainly available on the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's website that does not always work properly in all its pages. In addition to that, it should be taken into account that since its independence in 1956, Sudan has faced rapid growth and significant reforms in the higher education sector which has led to a lack of control of the quality of the programmes and has limited information available.

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TYPES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Prior to 1990, there were five higher education institutions in Sudan: the University of Khartoum, the University of Cairo (Khartoum Branch), Omdurman Islamic University, the University of Juba and the University of Gezira along with colleges and technical institutes that offered specialised study paths. After 1990, many existing colleges were upgraded to university status and new universities were created, mainly in the provinces and urban areas, in order to include a wide part of the population into the higher education sector.

Nowadays in Sudan there are 36 public universities, 19 private universities, 52 university colleges and 18 Technical University Colleges. Many private institutions were established in a short period of time, therefore there is lack of the quality of the programmes and staff, compared with the ones offered in the public sector.

NATIONAL EDUCATION REFORMS

The General Education Act of 1992 represents one of the main and most significant reforms in the education sector that interested Sudan with the aim of guaranteeing education all over the country. It covers general education objectives, examination regulations, education policies and general administration. The approved curriculum is to be applied nationwide, and Arabic became the official language of instruction. Religious education is compulsory.

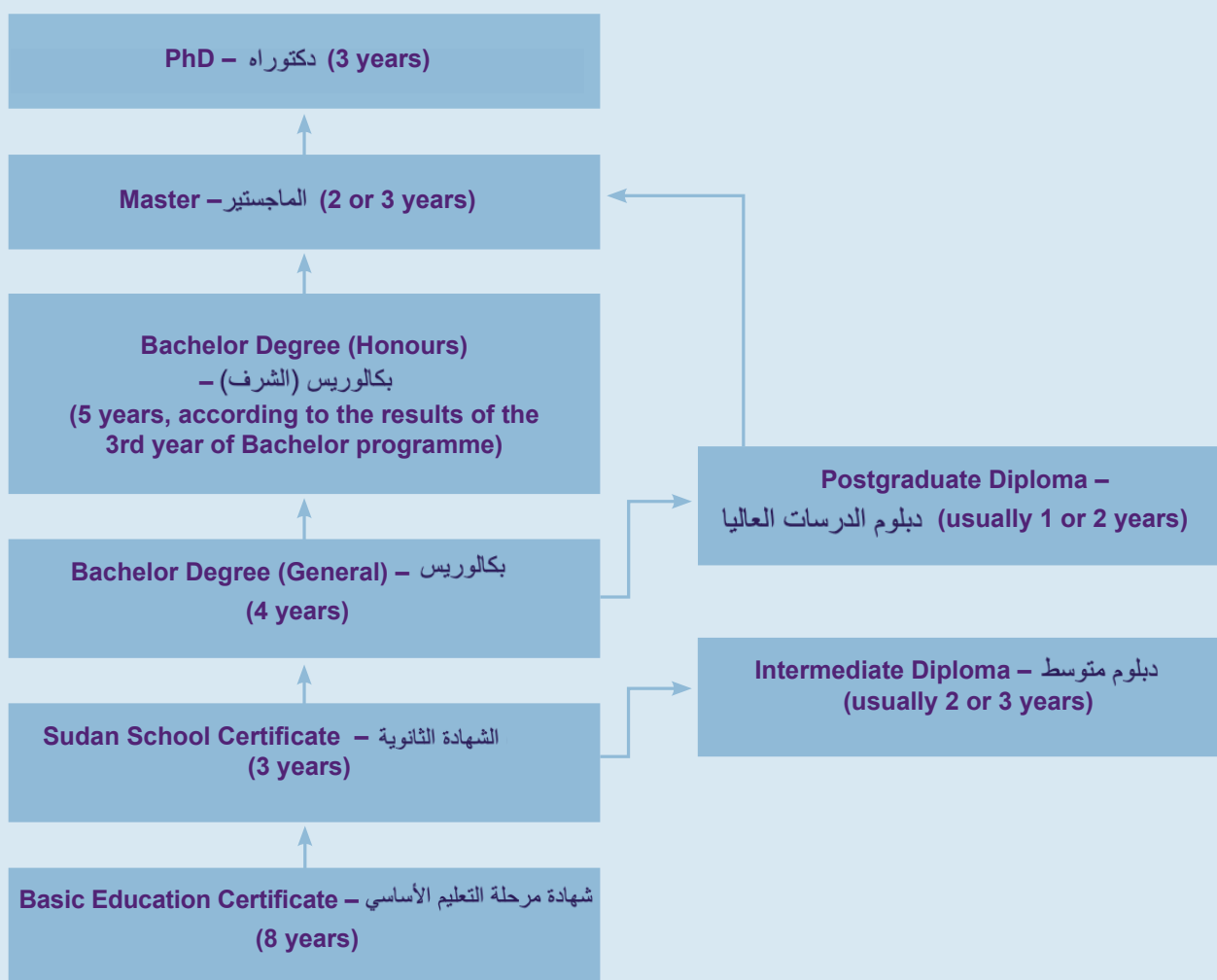
The general objectives of education, as stated in the act, are to instill religious ideals, beliefs and morals in young people as well as national pride and cultural heritage; to encourage creativity and ambition; and to build up individuals' abilities and skills through technological training so as to fulfil the goals of comprehensive development.

Throughout the years, several measures were taken by the Government in order to include children of poor areas and girls into the education sector, culminating in 2001 with the General Education Planning and Organisation Act, which stipulates the right to education for all children of eligible age without discrimination.

Sudan is still in the process of reforms and efforts to increase access to education and guarantee a good quality from pre-school to secondary school, both at federal and local level. It is worthwhile to mention the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) that aims to provide the Education Sector with a clear set of priorities towards quality and inclusive education for the period 2018/2019 - 2022/2023.

Sudan is still in the process of reforms and efforts to increase access to education and guarantee a good quality from pre-school to secondary school

Education chart



Source:

The chart is redacted based on the information available on the website of the Federal Ministry of Education as concerns secondary education, at the

following link <http://www.moe.gov.sd/ministry.html>
For higher education, most of the information is available on the website of Sudanese higher education institutions.

Education system

Education in Sudan, from general education to higher education, is modelled on the Anglophone system even though, in 1990, the Sudanese Government introduced new fields of study, such as Arabic and Islamic studies that reflects the culture and the peculiarities of the system itself. The Federal Ministry of Education is the body in charge of the development and planning of general education while the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research supervises higher education.

PRE-HIGHER EDUCATION

After 1995, the current education system entered into force and consists of three stages: pre-school education, primary or basic education, and secondary education. Pre-school education is a non-compulsory stage and it is not free. The academic year lasts 210 days and the Federal Ministry of Education is in charge of setting the date of the start of the academic year as well as for the national exams.

Primary Education

Compulsory education starts at primary level and it is addressed to children from ages 6 to 13, for eight years of education that leads to the Basic Education Certificate or شهادة مرحلة التعليم الأساسي which is the qualification that gives access to secondary education.

The national curriculum is set by the Federal Ministry of Education and consists of five core subjects, including language, religion and mathematics. The language of education is Standard Arabic, but English is studied as well. In addition to that, students are encouraged to acquire basic knowledge of science, health education and theology.

The Federal Ministry of Education has begun the implementation of a new structure of basic education which is expected to be implemented

from 2023. Under the new structure, basic education will last nine years.

Secondary Education

Generally, pupils enter secondary education at the age of 14, after a successful completion of the basic education. Secondary education lasts three years, made up of two years of a common track and then each student has the possibility to choose between two different streams: arts or science. The language of education is Arabic, and the curriculum is made of nine core subjects included Arabic, English, Mathematics, History and Religion.

At the age of 16, students sit for the Sudan School Certificate Examination that is given to students who successfully passed four core subjects and one optional subject or three compulsory subjects and two optional. Upon the successful completion of the exam, students are awarded the Sudan School Certificate or الشهادة الثانوية that gives access to higher education in Sudan, according to established criteria set by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Education in Sudan,
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HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to undergraduate programmes is based upon the results of the Sudan School Certificate examination, centrally administered by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Once enrolled in universities, students can obtain a bachelor's degree in four or five years. Master's degree programmes last two or three years and require some independent research and the submission of a thesis. Following a master's degree, a doctoral degree can be obtained in three years with the presentation of a final thesis. PhD programmes are only available at the University of Khartoum in the fields of humanities, law and science.

First Cycle (Bachelor level)

At the age of 17, students in Sudan can further their studies in higher education at undergraduate level. Whereas colleges offer diplomas of two or three years in length, at university they can obtain:

Bachelor's degree (General) – بكالوريوس, after four years of studies. This qualification does not give direct access to a second cycle degree but to a post graduate diploma (دبلوم الدراسات العليا), of one or two years in length.

Bachelor's degree (Honours) – بكالوريوس (الشرف), given upon completion of five years and based on good results of the third year of a bachelor's degree.

Language of instruction at higher education institutions is Modern Standard Arabic.

Second Cycle (Master level)

After successful completion of an undergraduate course, students can further their studies at graduate level, offered at universities in limited fields. The medium of instruction is English in most of the fields, but Arabic is available in some programmes.

Postgraduate Diploma – دبلوم الدراسات العليا: this course is a one- or two-year programme taken

PhD programmes are only available at the University of Khartoum in the fields of humanities, law and science.

upon completion of a bachelor's degree (general). These courses are offered in a specialised field of studies. Admission requirements are defined by each university and additional information can be found on the universities' websites.

Master's degree – الماجستير: this course is offered in both private and public higher education institutions, generally they are programmes of two- or three-years length. Students usually access this level of education upon the success completion of a bachelor's degree (honours) and after succeeding in an examination with a second-class grade. It might also be possible to get access after successful completion of a Postgraduate Diploma. Additional requirements are set by each university and available on their websites. Master's degrees can be offered as course work-oriented or research-oriented courses, mainly in English or in Arabic, according to the programme and the university.

Third Cycle (Doctorate level)

PhD programmes – دكتوراه are mostly offered by the University of Khartoum in the fields of humanities, law and science. Some public universities offer doctoral programmes in health-related fields as part of the academic path of professional studies. Programmes are of minimum

three years length and can last more. The language of instruction is mostly English, and the presentation of a final thesis is required. Students who apply for a doctoral programme are required to present a project work and are admitted on the basis of the project and the final grades obtained during the master's degree. Additional specific requirements are set by each university.

Teacher Education

Teacher education in Sudan is still an ongoing process and represents one of the main goals of the Education Sector Strategic Plan for the Federal Ministry of Education. Prior to 1993, teacher education was provided by education training institutes that offered programs of two years in length, that combined theory and practice. Afterwards teacher training was included in the higher education sectors, with a more academic approach. In order to teach at secondary school, a Bachelor of Education of four years is now required.

Medicine and Health Sciences

Medical education in Sudan has recorded significant development in the last century, considering that at the beginning of the 20th century there was just one medical school in the whole country and nowadays 66 medical schools provides professional degrees in the medical sector.

Programmes are usually five or six years in length (five years of lessons and one year of rotation internship in hospitals) and students obtain a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (البكالوريوس الطب البشري). The language of instruction in medical colleges is mainly English, and selection of students is highly competitive. Usually a final mark of 70 percent in the Sudan Secondary School Certificate is required in order to be admitted into a medical college while

University of Khartoum requires an average of 86 per cent. Professional degrees in Health Sciences can also be obtained in the field of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy. English is the medium of instruction and the programmes are of a nominal length of five years.

Engineering Education

Engineering education is offered by most of the universities and colleges in Sudan in several fields as petroleum engineering, computer science and architecture and, as is common for professional degrees, the language of instruction is English.

Programmes at undergraduate level are of five years in length and students receive a Bachelor of Engineering (بكالوريوس هندسة) at the end of their study path. After the completion of the course they can decide to further their study at graduate level or enter into the labour market.

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The Toolkit projects

ARENA is the third cycle Refugees and Recognition - Toolkit project. The two previous are:

TOOLKIT

The first project took place between 2016–2018. The overall goal was to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees. The main outcome of the project was the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications, representing a first-aid kit for staff working with the assessment of inadequately documented qualifications.

For further information, visit: <https://www.nokut.no/en/Refugees-and-Recognition/toolkit>

REACT

The follow-up project REACT took place between 2018–2020. Here the Toolkit methodology was successfully tested as a supplement to ordinary admission procedures in cooperation with several European higher education institutions. The main outcome was the REACT Q-Card for Admission Officers, providing recommendations for action at higher education institutions working towards enabling access to further studies for refugees.

For further information, visit: <https://www.nokut.no/en/react/refugees-and-recognition>



Grading System

The final grade appears in numbers, in percentage on the final certificate. Lowest passing grade is 50–59 percent.

Grading System - Sudan Secondary School Certificate

Percentage	Translation
80–100%	Distinction
70–79%	Good
60–69%	Above Average
50–59%	Pass
00–49%	Fail

HIGHER EDUCATION

Each university in Sudan defines its own system of grades. These are main common patterns that can be identified. Additional information on the grading system is usually provided on the transcript of records issued to the student. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct an analysis of the transcript of academic records case-by-case.

Grading System - Higher Education

Percentage	Letter grade/ GPA	Class
70–100%	A	First Class
60–69%	B	Second Class - Division One
50–59%	C	Second Class - Division Two
40–49%	D	Third Class
00–39%	F	n/a

Information Resources, Recommendations and Best Practices

DATABASES AND NATIONAL BODIES

ENIC-NARIC Network

Information regarding national authorities in charge of higher education issues in Sudan: <https://www.enic-naric.net/africa.aspx?country=Sudan&c=148>

Existing Country Databases

- Al Mahdi, T.A.S. (2019). Knowledge E. The Path of Undergraduate Medical Education in Sudan.
- CIA World Factbook. (2020). Sudan.
- Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Republic of the Sudan, Federal Ministry of Education. (2019). General Education Sector Strategic Plan.

- UNESCO. (2018). Sudan Education Policy Review: Paving the road to 2030.
- UNESCO. (2012). International Bureau - World Data on Education.

National Education Bodies

- Republic of Sudan Official Portal: <https://www.presidency.gov.sd/#>
- Federal Ministry of Education – وزارة التربية والتعليم : <http://www.moe.gov.sd/>
- Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research – وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي : <http://www.mohe.gov.sd/index.php/ar/> (available both in Arabic and English) – the website worked until mid-October 2020

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Documentation

Evaluating credentials from Sudan is always challenging and in-depth research is required. In addition to that, it is recommended to be flexible and try different pathways before coming up with a final decision in the evaluation, that should be conducted case-by-case.

The Secondary School Certificate has several security features that can be identified by asking for the original papers, when in doubt. The Secondary School Certificate is available in Arabic and English, upon the request of the student.

Higher education credentials are issued in English and Arabic. Usually students provide a scan copy of the final diploma and transcript of records in English. It is common that English misspelling can be found and therefore additional research is recommended. It is suggested to try to contact the institution that issued the documents several times, even though that might cause some delay in the evaluation.

Comparison between templates received and sharing expertise with others in the ENIC-NARIC network is always good practice.

Fraudulent Documents and Diploma Mills

If you have any questions concerning the authenticity of a document or the accreditation of an institution, we recommend that you contact your national ENIC-NARIC centre.

Additional Information

A general consideration concerning available resources about Sudan is related to the difficulty in getting access to updated and available primary sources of information. Usually official websites work intermittently and therefore it is recommended to keep track of the information remotely and trying to get access many times.

Concerning higher education, most of the relevant information is available for consultation directly on the website of the institution that has become a reliable source of information, concerning academic programmes. Public and private universities and other higher education institutions usually have a website in both English and Arabic.

Shendi University: <https://ush.sd/Portals/AR/english/>

Sudan University of Science and Technology: <http://www.sustech.edu/>

University of Khartoum - Graduate programs: <https://graduate.uofk.edu/arabic/programmes.php>

EXISTING BEST PRACTICES

European Area of Recognition Manual

http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear_manual_v_1.0.pdf

Recommendation on the Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications under the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Explanatory Memorandum

<https://rm.coe.int/recommendation-on-recognition-of-qualifications-held-by-refugees-displ/16807688a8>

European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications>

Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications

https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/utenlandsk_utdanning/veiledere/toolkit_for_recognition_of_refugees_qualifications.pdf

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Encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/>

Republic of Sudan. Official portal: <https://www.presidency.gov.sd/>

Republic of the Sudan, Federal Ministry of Education. (2019). General Education Sector Strategic Plan: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2019-01-sudan-general-education-sector-strategic-plan-2018-2023.pdf>

UNESCO. (2018). Sudan Education Policy Review: Paving the road to 2030: <https://sudan.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Sudan%20Education%20Policy%20Review%20UNESCO.pdf>

UNESCO. (2012). International Bureau - World Data on Education, 7th edition: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/Sudan.pdf>

What is ARENA?

ARENA (Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit 3) is an Erasmus+ supported project, which aims to contribute towards more transparent and professional procedures for the recognition of refugees' qualifications in Europe. The project builds on the completed Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit project, where a common methodological approach to the recognition of refugees' qualifications was developed with the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications.

Goal

The overall goal of the ARENA project is to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, including those without official documentation of their educational background.

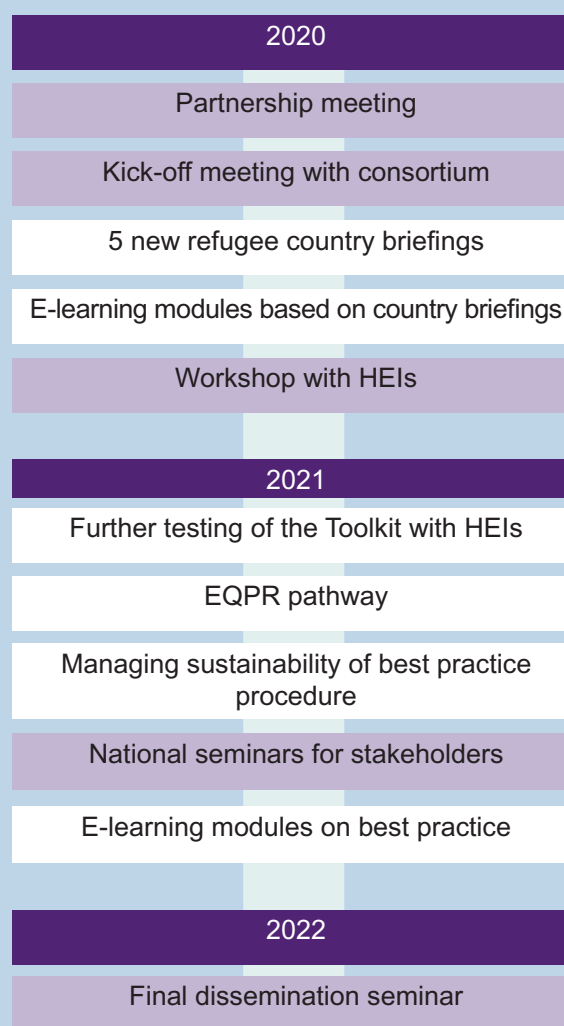
Activities

The activities are structured around three main focus areas concerning the further testing of the Toolkit in major refugee receiving countries, managing sustainability of identified best practice procedures and assessment schemes, and addressing the need for updated and relevant information resources.

MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Further testing of the Toolkit in cooperation with NARICs and HEIs from Greece and Malta
- Mapping of how HEIs in Italy view the EQPR as a supplementary document for admission to further studies
- Managing sustainability of best practice procedure identified in the REACT project
- Development of five new refugee country briefings on the educational systems of Yemen, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan and Palestine
- Development of e-learning modules

TIMELINE



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To enable the accessibility and transparency of the project's work, the results will be made available on the project's website on a continuous basis.

Websites:

<https://www.nokut.no/en/arena-toolkit-3>

Email:

project-arena@nokut.no

NOKUT

Drammensveien 288
Postboks 578,1327 Lysaker
Telefon: 21 02 18 00

www.nokut.no

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NARIC-Vlaanderen



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