

31 December 2019



CONTEXT

According to UNHCR's global data, only 3% of refugee youth have access to higher education. One of the main obstacles' refugees face when applying for further higher education studies or seeking work opportunities, is the lack of recognition of their prior studies and qualifications. Often refugees find themselves without any official documentation of their qualifications.

WHAT IS THE QUALIFICATION PASSPORT?

The *UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Migrants* is a standardized statement, which contains three parts – the assessment part, the explanatory part and the third part, concerning the way ahead. The assessment part of the *UNESCO Qualifications Passport* contains information which describes the highest achieved qualification(s), subject field, other relevant qualifications, as well as relevant job experience and language proficiency (in cases where it is possible to substantiate it and it might have relevance). The explanatory part contains information about the status of the document and a short description of the pilot project. The third part of the passport contains information about the way ahead and contact information for the right authorities and agencies, which might be of help in the job-seeking process and application for further studies and authorization.

Although this document does not constitute a formal recognition or authorization to practice a certain profession, it summarizes and presents available information on the applicant's educational level, work experience and language proficiency. The evaluation methodology is a combination of an assessment of available documentation, the considerable experience

gained through previous evaluations and the use of a structured interview. Thus, the document provides credible information that can be relevant in connection with applications for employment, internships, qualification courses and admission to studies.

PRE-PILOT IN ZAMBIA

The *UNESCO Qualifications Passport*, which is a pilot initiative by UNESCO and UNHCR, is as a global tool to facilitate the mobility and integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in higher education systems and to assist them in realizing their hopes and dreams, but also to contribute to the societies where they live. The *Qualification Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants* is a standardized document, which presents information on the educational level of the holder, relevant work experience and language proficiency based on an interview by experienced credential evaluators.

A pre-pilot of the *UNESCO Qualifications Passport*, aiming to help displaced people with missing qualification documents, was launched in Zambia in October 2019. Four organisations; UNESCO, UNHCR, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and the Zambian Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) worked jointly on the project, which is modelled on the *Council of Europe's European Qualification Passport for Refugees*, which was launched in 2017.

Zambia was chosen as the first pilot outside of Europe because of its considerable refugee population, its experience in qualifications recognition and in recognition of the Government's commitment to higher education and refugees. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Home Affairs and other government authorities in the spirit of the GCR, the project was rolled out in the Meheba Refugee settlement end of October. Based on 61 initial applications, 29 interviews were conducted. The result was that 11 of the candidates could be substantiated to have the qualifications and they received their *UNESCO Qualification Passports* on 11 December in an award ceremony in the presence of the Minister of Higher Education of Zambia, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the District Commissioner, officials from Zambia Qualifications Authorities and UNHCR.