

LAB 6 – Strengthening the Path to 15by30

Nexus 3.0 Input (Revised)

1. Background

Global displacement has reached unprecedented levels, yet access to higher education for refugees remains extremely limited. Currently, only a small proportion of refugee youth worldwide can access higher education (7% according to 2024 data).

Education-based **complementary pathways**—including university corridors—offer a structured, protection-sensitive mechanism that enables refugee students to access higher education while supporting long-term integration and skills development.

These pathways can simultaneously contribute to:

- protection and safe mobility
- social integration in host countries
- labour market development
- human capital development for future reconstruction.

Initiatives such as the **15by30 goal** highlight the importance of scaling up access to higher education for refugees. However, moving from individual initiatives to **system-level models** requires coordinated ecosystems of policies, institutions, and support mechanisms.

2. From Programmes to Ecosystems

Scaling complementary pathways requires more than scholarships or admission opportunities. Sustainable models depend on the **integration of multiple institutional functions**, including:

- flexible admissions and recognition mechanisms
- belonging and social integration strategies
- well-being and mental health support
- education-to-employment pathways
- sustainable financing systems.

These elements together form the **ecosystem required to support refugee students throughout their higher education journey**.

3. Proposal for Discussion – University Corridors Model and how to enhance and replicate it

University corridor programmes implemented in countries such as **Italy and France** have demonstrated the potential of higher education institutions to open safe and legal pathways for refugee students.

These experiences show that success depends not only on admission opportunities or scholarships, but on the **integration of multiple dimensions across the student pathway** — from access and recognition of qualifications to belonging, wellbeing, and transition into employment.

When these elements are coordinated, complementary pathways form holistic educational ecosystems, supporting students from admission through graduation and beyond

Achieving the **15by30 goal** will require not only expanding access but also **strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of complementary pathways**.

Experience suggests that **integrated models produce stronger outcomes for both students and institutions**, making them more sustainable and easier to scale.

In this sense, **improving the quality and coherence of existing approaches can also enable greater expansion**.

This lab, therefore, offers an opportunity to reflect on how corridor experiences and emerging tools can contribute to building **stronger, more integrated, and scalable models of education-based complementary pathways**.

Nexus 3.0 is interested in exploring how higher education corridors can evolve from isolated initiatives into integrated higher education ecosystems supporting refugee access, integration, and employment. It is also involved in co-designing a pilot for implementing this model locally.