

# WORLD REFUGEE DAY

20 JUNE 2026

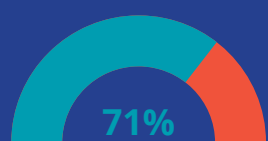
“UNTIL EVERYONE IS SAFE”



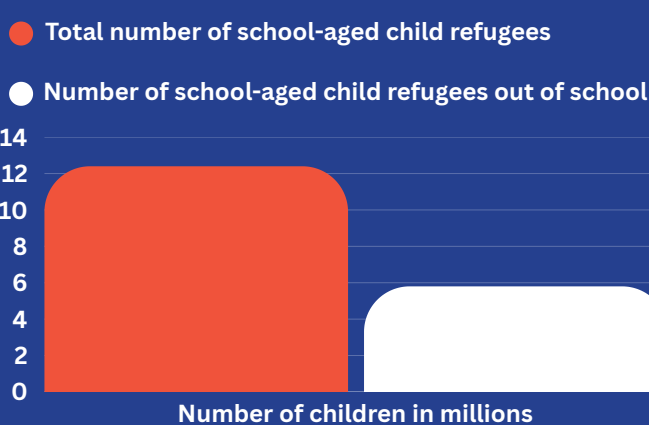
Graduate Women International (GWI)

## KEY FACTS ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY

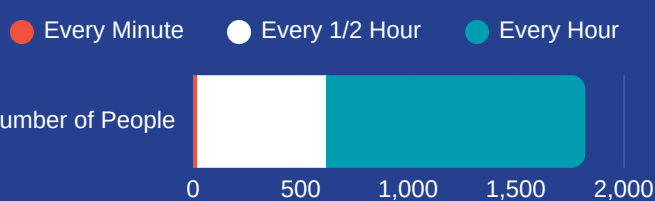
Of the **117.3 million** people who **remained forcibly displaced** in mid-2025, around 31.6 million were refugees as per the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).



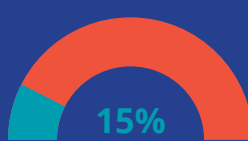
Low- and middle-income countries host **71%** of the world's refugees and others in need of international protection.



In **2025**, approximately **12.4 million** refugee children of school age had limited access to education, with almost **half of them** unable to attend school at all.



Every minute, 20 people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution, or terror. For a day, it makes 28,800 people leaving everything behind.



**UNHCR and partners** are committed to achieving enrolment of **15%** of young refugee women and men in higher education by the year **2030**.

Source: UN, UNHCR

## WHAT IS WORLD REFUGEE DAY?

World Refugee Day (WRD) is an international day designated by the United Nations to honor refugees. It is marked annually on 20 June and highlights the strength and courage of people forced to flee conflict or persecution. WRD places focus on refugees' rights, needs, and ambitions, as well as building empathy and understanding for their resilience in rebuilding their lives.

Source: UN

## REFUGEE CONVENTION AT 75 YEARS

Seventy-five years after it was adopted, the 1951 Refugee Convention remains a lifeline for people forced to flee. It is a commitment that still needs our perspectives, our advocacy, and our solidarity today.

Source: UNHCR

## SOME GWI ADVOCACY FOR REFUGEES

2015, Policy Update: Education for Refugee Girls



2025, Infographic for World Refugee Day



2024, CFUW (Canada) and GWI Webinar: Three Refugee Stories



2025, GWI Webinar: Pathway to Professional Reintegration

“My foremost responsibility will be to refugees, and others forced to flee, upholding their rights and dignity and advancing durable solutions so that displacement remains a temporary situation, not a permanent fate.”



Barham Salih  
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Source: UNHCR

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## WHAT IS THE GWI HEGG HOFFET FUND?

With the Hegg Hoffet Fund for Displaced Women Graduates, GWI assists graduate women who have been displaced because of war, political upheaval, or other emergencies.

The GWI Hegg Hoffet Fund includes:

-  Providing short-term grants.
-  Funding refresher courses so women can re-enter their professional field.
-  Supporting training for new employment when returning to the original profession is not possible.
-  Promoting courses that build skills and confidence.

[READ MORE](#)  [Information](#) on the GWI Hegg Hoffet Fund

[READ MORE](#)  [20 June 2025 GWI webinar](#) “Pathway to professional reintegration for displaced women graduates through the Hegg Hoffet Fund”

Source: GWI

## Meet the GWI Hegg Hoffet Committee

The GWI Hegg Hoffet Committee oversees the selection process for the Hegg Hoffet Fund for Displaced Women Graduates. By carefully reviewing applications, the Committee ensures that grants of up to CHF 3,000 provide meaningful support for displaced and refugee women graduates to regain professional qualifications, develop host country language skills, and pursue employment opportunities. ***GWI thanks the Hegg Hoffet Committee for its diligence, integrity, and dedication to ensuring the Hegg Hoffet Fund supports displaced women graduates in rebuilding their futures in their new host country.*** Below is an introduction to the Hegg Hoffet Committee members 2026-2028:

**Cynthia ADINORTEY**

**Ghana Association of University Women (GAUW)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Convenor**



“It is an honour for me to serve as Convener of the GWI Hegg Hoffet Committee, helping to empower displaced women graduates as they rebuild their professional lives.”  
— Cynthia Adinorley, Associate Professor of Molecular Microbiology, University of Cape Coast (Ghana), and Coordinator for International Relations, GAUW.

**Karoline DORSCH**

**Swiss Association of University Women (SVA)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Member**



“I have been a member of the SVA and consequently also of GWI for more than 20 years. I have had several functions in those associations. In 2024-2025, I was Treasurer of GWI. Living in Switzerland, we have been in the lucky position of not having experienced a war in our country for a long time. Therefore, as a member of the Hegg Hoffet Committee, I am very happy that the fund exists to help displaced women in their new country to finish their studies or to get accreditation of their education, so they can work again and be independent.” - Karoline Dorsch

**Alice KAGODA**

**Association of University Women Uganda (AUWU)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Member**



Alice Kagoda is a professor of education and teacher trainer at Makerere University’s School of Education, as well as a gender activist and member of GWI and Women Leading Education Across Continents. She is committed to advancing gender-responsive education and promoting a life free of violence for women and girls, alongside her passion for community engagement and small-scale farming.

# The GWI Hegg Hoffet Committee



**Milly KASAJA MUBIRU**

**Association of University Women Uganda (AUWU)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Member**



“One thing I value about the Hegg Hoffet committee is the vision of the Committee, which states: a world where all displaced graduate and tertiary women, regardless of their origin, have the opportunity to rebuild their professional lives! Integrate seamlessly into new host countries and continue their intellectual and academic ambitions! This vision aligns with my personal values and professional values! I have a strong belief that women should have access to educational opportunities because they have an inherent ability to excel once supported!” - Kasaja Mubiru

**Vasanti PATWARDHAN**

**Indian Federation of University Women’s Associations (IFUWA)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Member**



Vasanti Patwardhan is an obstetrician and gynaecologist, practicing in Pune, India, for the last 40 years. She is also a certified psychologist and has practiced as a counsellor for the last six to seven years. Her special interests are in working with the underprivileged and creating health awareness in women, hence “very impressed by the work of the Hegg Hoffet Committee and its cause.” - Vasanti Patwardhan

**Brenda ROBERTSON**

**Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Member**



"Making a difference is being a member of the GWI Hegg Hoffet Committee where NFA members from all parts of the world come together as a team to provide financial assistance for women and girls who have become displaced due to a crisis/conflict. What an uplifting moment to realize you have done a small part in helping a woman/girl to see that a future for themselves is possible.” - Brenda Robertson

**Selin SOLU**

**Turkish Association of University Women (TAUW)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Member**



Selin Solu is a real-estate investor and property-management professional, with a BSc in Organizational Leadership from Penn State University and ongoing MBA studies at Purdue University. She applies her organisational leadership and investment expertise to her work with GWI and the TAUW, supporting women’s education and gender equality.

**Eleni TABUA-YOUNG**

**Graduate Women Fiji (GWF)  
Hegg Hoffet Committee Member**

Eleni Tabua-Young is a Hydraulics and Wet Fire Protection Services Engineer with over 14 years of experience in Pacific infrastructure and building projects. She is currently pursuing a Master of Construction Management at the University of Adelaide as an Australia Awards Scholar. She previously served as Vice President Membership of GWF and is passionate about expanding opportunities for women and girls through education, leadership, and STEM. Eleni values the Hegg Hoffet Committee for its role in supporting women scholars whose work drives positive change and for the opportunity to collaborate with a diverse group of dedicated women leaders.

