



Southern
New Hampshire
University



ICONIQ - LEVER FOR CHANGE
GEM ANNUAL REPORT

September 2023



INTRODUCTION

At a time when colleges and universities were quickly shifting to hybrid models of online and in-person learning, the Southern New Hampshire University's Global Education Movement (SNHU GEM) program provided continual, uninterrupted access to learning for thousands of refugees, regardless of the challenges these students faced from the global pandemic, or political, security, and climate change impacts.

It is with gratitude to Iconiq, that we write with our year in review and share our updated GEM strategy. GEM has pulled back from experimentation and testing out new models and instead we have conducted a deep dive to identify a "core" GEM model that is sustainable, effective, and efficient. This core model focuses on academics and academic support and sets students up for success in earning US accredited bachelor's degrees; the model focuses on the piece of the puzzle that Southern New Hampshire University does best and has expertise in—providing the accredited university degree. We have been able to increase GEM's impact and reach under our new GEM core model.

PARTNER UPDATE

To that end, GEM continues to meet with our on-the-ground partners at all of our GEM sites about their priorities and speak with students and partners about what is important to them. Students and partners universally reported that many other organizations are offering micro-credentials and certificates and that the higher education degree was the critical value that SNHU provides; the degree is what sets students up for success and what sets GEM apart. We are continuing to partner with on the ground organizations who have a deep understanding of context and strong community roots. These partners have wrap around support services (mental healthcare, childcare, job skills, employment support) built into their programs. With these transformational partnerships, SNHU continues to offer students a comprehensive academic and support program to facilitate success.

In addition, GEM is collaborating with Arizona State University to provide ESL pre-program support, Localized (<https://www.localized.world/>) to provide career resources, and Global Mentorship Initiative (GMI <https://globalmentorship.org/>) to provide post-program mentorship. We have also updated our admissions requirements to identify any students who may need pre-program support prior to starting the SNHU degree program.



By focusing in on what SNHU does best—offering accredited degrees, GEM has been able to reduce operational costs by one-third; this has been achieved by identifying efficiencies, finding cost savings in duplicative efforts, and leveraging partner programs that already exist.

In September 2023, GEM held an in-person convening of partners from all sites. Partners came together to share successes and ideas. Teams worked together to brainstorm solutions for challenges and share best practices. GEM partners will continue this good work throughout the year with newly formed working groups.

GEM CARES & EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS

All site employment and/or partner meetings are held regularly monthly to foster cross-site collaboration and sharing of ideas. The GEM Professional Development Google classroom of 11 courses that was launched in 2021 and updated in 2022 are in full swing.

GEM supported partners and coaches guide students through the courses listed below:

1. Cover letter writing
2. Resume writing
3. Interview skills
4. Basic Zoom etiquette
5. Time and task management
6. Taking Initiative in the workplace
7. Professional communication in the workplace



GEM used funds for student transportation stipends and lunch and nutritional support (at the sites) for Lebanon students.

Our latest GEM employment statistics are:



450 students have participated in internships or externships in the last 6 months



700 students were provided with employment application support in 2023



GEM students also joined SNHU career day, and all graduates had the opportunity to be linked to a mentor through the Global Mentorship Initiative.

KEY MILESTONES

Academic Outcomes in 2023

1,250 Students enrolled

2,600 Students Served

81% On-time graduation rate

90% Internship completion rate

83% Persistence

100% Students receiving 1:1 and group academic supports and coaching

85% Employment rate 6-months post-graduation 2023

3.6 Years Median to graduate with a BA degree

DEI Targets

50% Female Students

25% Vulnerable host community students

STUDENT STORIES

Recent SNHU
GEM Graduation
in Lebanon



RECENT PROGRAM PIVOTS IN RESPONSE TO POLITICAL UNREST

In April 2023, the government of Lebanon began a new campaign to actively deport Syrians from Lebanon. SNHU GEM Syrian students are in fear of moving around Lebanon as they may be collected at local checkpoints and deported to Syria. SNHU GEM worked with our on-the-ground partners in Lebanon to shift in-person student supports, laptops, academic coaching, and internet bundles to remote services. Students continue to maintain uninterrupted access to their curriculum and wrap-around supports. Students have demonstrated their resilience and grit and continue to thrive in their SNHU degree programs. GEM will respond and change supports based on student needs as they continue to evolve.



FISHING IN THE DESERT PROJECT

In the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, a group of refugee students has designed a sustainable and self-sufficient agricultural system to feed camp residents. The Fishing in the Desert project is co-led by Glory (Lukambo) Luundo, a Congolese refugee living in Kakuma camp and Southern New Hampshire University Global Education Movement (SNHU GEM) student pursuing a bachelor's degree in healthcare management with a concentration in global perspectives. Working together with other youth from Kakuma camp, Glory is fighting hunger and malnutrition in the Kakuma refugee community by establishing fish ponds to farm tilapia and catfish.



Despite tough competition from over 150 other groups, the Fishing in the Desert project was one of just four student teams to win the United Nations [World Food Programme](#) (WFP)'s first NextGen East African Innovators Programme in 2021. The NextGen program aims to support student innovators from East Africa as they develop solutions to food-related challenges. The Fishing in the Desert team also gained access to an intensive mentorship program with the Technical University of Denmark's laboratory for food systems change and innovation, [DTU Skylab FoodLab](#).

When Glory established his first fish pond in Kakuma camp, it was only 2m by 1m with eight tilapia fish, but the project grew rapidly. Glory moved the project into a communal space and co-founded the Vijana Twaweza Club with other youth in Kakuma camp to support the project. The group currently has 40 members from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi. Glory credits his SNHU GEM education for providing him with the “leadership, management, and entrepreneurship skills that have tremendously helped me and the Vijana Twaweza Club to grow.”



◀ Glory and members of the Vijana Twaweza Club check on the progress of their crickets

With support from the World Food Programme and DTU Skylab FoodLab, the Fishing in the Desert team is continuing to improve their project, with a focus on building a more sustainable system. Vijana Twaweza Club members and a group of students at the DTU Skylab FoodLab have created a prototype “aquaponic farm” at DTU to replace their crop gardens at Kakuma refugee camp. In an aquaponic farm, the nutrient-rich water from raising fish provides a natural fertilizer for the crops, and the plants help to purify the water for the fish.

“We raise crickets to feed the fish, and then we use the water from the ponds to provide nutrients to the crops. Some of these crops are then fed to the crickets. To close the circle, the fish, crickets, and crops are all consumed by humans in the camp,” explained Glory. The team is working to implement aquaponic farms at every fish pond in Kakuma camp.

SNHU GEM recognizes the importance of empowering refugee youth with the tools to develop grassroots solutions to the problems in their communities. As the team behind the innovative Fishing in the Desert project has proven, they have the vision needed to tackle widespread hunger and malnutrition. SNHU GEM and its partners can offer the support needed to refine and expand their ideas for transformative change.



BUDGET SUMMARY

Below is summary of the Iconiq Grant Budget

Scholarships*	\$ 36,000
Student & Partner Support	\$ 964,000
Total	\$ 1,000,000

* Additional student scholarship cost was funded by Southern New Hampshire University.

Thank you to Iconiq for your thoughtful partnership of our Global Education Movement. Our refugee learners continue to inspire in the face of enormous adversity.