



Impact Report- Interstellar and Launchpad

Phoenix Space CIO
2025

Interstellar and Launchpad Impact Report

Overview

The **Interstellar Scholarship Fund** offers vital financial support to exceptionally talented Palestinian students who demonstrate **both outstanding academic achievement and substantial financial need**. The fund targets **two groups**: those who have already been admitted to universities listed in the **Times Higher Education's Top 20 rankings either by university or by subject** in the UK and the USA (**Interstellar Scholars**) and those who meet our academic criteria and aspire to go to prestigious universities, but who have not been accepted to a university yet and lack the logistical and financial resources to apply (**Launchpad Students**).

All applicants for both the Launchpad and Interstellar streams must demonstrate exceptionally high Tawjihi scores (97%+), financial need and motivation to pursue higher education. These branches place particular emphasis on supporting exceptionally talented individuals. The fund supports Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, and Foundation Years that lead to undergraduate study.

In 2025, we received **550** total applications, of which **300** applications aligned with our criteria for Interstellar and Launchpad. Phoenix Space has proudly supported **16** outstanding students with scholarships via **Interstellar**, including **12** who have now been evacuated from Gaza. Phoenix Space is currently supporting **80** students via **Launchpad**. Through this stream we are actively running multiple programmes to support students through the university application process and enhance their chances of entry.

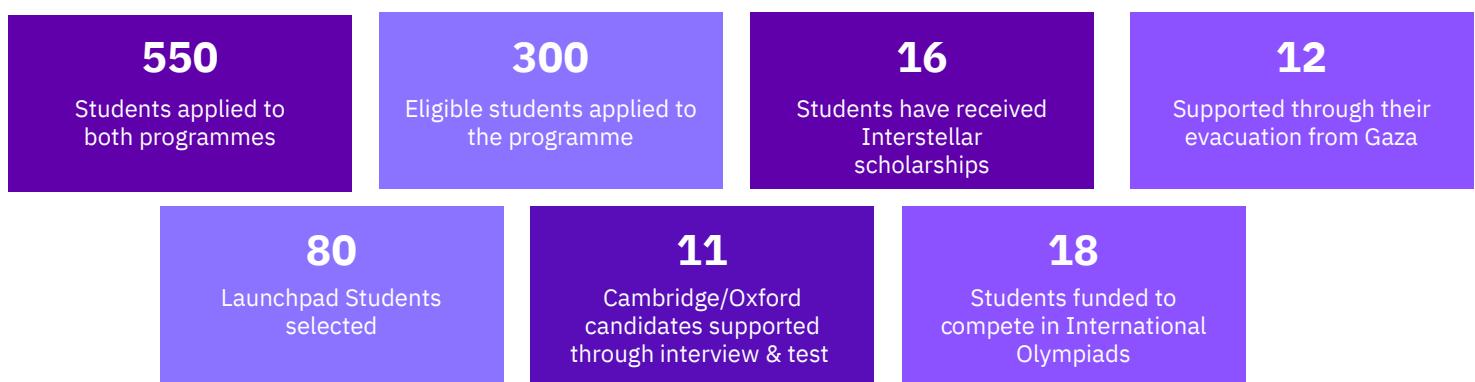
Universities Our Student's Attend

Oxford University | Princeton University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
University of Edinburgh

The London School of Economics and Political Science
University College London (UCL) | Imperial College London
King's College London.

*In addition Phoenix Space supported 7 students who got accepted into universities, such as Standford, Berkley and Cambridge but for logistical and bureaucratic reasons they could not attend this year.

Our Impact at a Glance



Launchpad Scholars at International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics, India.



Farah, BA, Electronics and Electrical Engineering Student, University of Edinburgh, Interstellar Scholar



Rahma, MSc, Applied Digital Health at Oxford University, Interstellar Scholar

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Interstellar

The **Interstellar Scholarship** provides financial support to top-ranking Palestinian high school graduates to start or continue their university education, including foundation years. It provides essential support for **tuition fees, living expenses, and travel costs that students can not afford due to the devastating impacts of conflict, war, or marginalisation**. This fund also supports students who have secured full or partial scholarships but require assistance with the remaining tuition fees or living costs.

The fund targets those who have already been admitted to universities listed in the **Times Higher Education's Top 20** rankings in the UK and the USA by subject. **All students must have 97%+ in their Tajiwhi results, and an excellent GPA score if they have recently graduated from their undergraduate degree**, to be eligible. Selection is based on a rigorous screening and verification process that assesses academic performance and financial circumstances in depth, to ensure those most in need receive support. Funding is renewed annually, conditional on the student's academic performance and financial situation.

Universities & Degrees of Our Interstellar Scholars

- Oxford University- MSc, Applied Digital Health
- Princeton University- BA, Molecular Biology
- University of Edinburgh- BA, Electronics and Electrical Eng
- King's College London- BA, Biomedical Engineering
- Imperial College London- MSc, Public Health
- The London School of Economics and Political Science- MSC, Management of Information Systems and Digital Innovation
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) - BA, Computer Science
- Cambridge University- History and Politics Course (3 Years) Trinity College Dublin: Foundation Year
- University College London- MSc Paediatrics and Child Health: Global Child Health

Phoenix Space has co-funded UCL's efforts in support of the evacuation of six master's students from Gaza, to pursue their studies at UCL. The degree programmes are outlined below:

- MSc Dental Public Health
- MA Education and International Development
- MSc Translation and Technology (Audiovisual)
- MSc Business Analytics
- MSc Translation and Technology (Audiovisual)
- MA Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages



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I was living in Gaza, where everything was stolen from our hands. What pained me the most, was the fear that my future might also be taken away, as my education had been disrupted. I am truly fortunate to have found Phoenix Space's scholarship opportunity that allows me to continue my studies, thrive, and pursue the education I have long aspired to.

Farah, Electronics and Electrical Engineering Student, University of Edinburgh.



“
The Interstellar Scholarship opened a door I had been knocking on for years. It gave me access to education and, more importantly, restored my belief in what the future can hold, like a bird emerging from a siege into freedom

Asmaa, Public Health, Imperial College London

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What We Do

Step 1: University Acceptance



Students get accepted to selected Universities and relevant stakeholders reach out to Phoenix Space.

Step 2: Scholarship Financial Support



Phoenix Space co-ordinates with student and universities to mobilise funds and secure tuition fees and living expenses in order for students to come to the UK and US take up their university offers.

Step 3: Logistical Evacuation Assistance



PS and partners assists in coordinating visas, IHS surcharges, evacuation efforts and international travel.

Step 4: Post Evacuation Support



This includes the coordination of: a needs assessment, medical and mental health support, accommodation, academic support, educational materials (including textbooks and laptops), essential WASH materials upon arrival, cash cards and multipurpose vouchers.

Steps 3 and 4 were given to 12 students who were evacuated from Gaza although it is available to all students.

Continued Support After Enrolment:

After enrolment, students receive ongoing, tailored support across the following pillars:

Academic 1:1 Mentoring: Students receive structured one-to-one and small-group academic mentoring to stabilise academic trajectories, strengthen retention, and rebuild academic confidence and identity following significant disruption. Mentors are matched to students based on degree discipline and individual needs. Phoenix Space coordinates this support via university academics and university societies.

English Academic Support: This tailored academic English pathway strengthens the core literacy required for university success. It supports participation in lectures, research, assessments, and independent study while enabling students to integrate into academic communities, build peer networks, and engage confidently in university life.

Digital Upskilling: This pathway equips participants with 21st-century competencies, tailored to market demands. Students gain access to premium STEM learning platforms and continued learning tracks aligned with global labour market demand. Training includes high-growth fields such as AI and data analytics, incentivising excellence, supporting continuous professional development, and strengthening alignment with the global digital economy.

Professional English Communication for Business: This pathway prepares students for professional environments across sectors, focusing on: Workplace Fluency: Strengthening performance in workplace dialogue, including negotiations, presentations, interviews, and formal professional interaction. Written Proficiency: Building high-level written skills for professional reporting, formal emails, proposals, and industry documentation.

Work Experience & Employer Engagement: This component bridges academic achievement and professional readiness. Phoenix Space coordinates legal guidance and system navigation via our partner network. We facilitate tailored internships and work placements aligned with each student's field of study and career aspirations, alongside delivering employability seminars, job fairs, networking events, structured career mentorship workshops, CV and interview best practices, recruitment trends, and in-demand skills, both generally and in the specific industries students aim to enter. The entire pathway is strategically tailored through rigorous 1:1 mentorship, guidance, and career needs assessment. Each student is paired with an engagement officer, ensuring every intervention- from placement to training- is aligned with the student's individualised goals as well as ensuring they are not taking on this journey in isolation. Students requiring mental health support are guided and connected to available, appropriate NHS and/or locally-based psychological and counselling services.

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Voices of Our Students



Malak, Interstellar Student

At just 18 years old Malak achieved the top national exam results in Gaza. But in 2023, her schooling ended when Gaza's schools were forced to close. Determined not to let war silence her potential, she applied to Cambridge to study History and Politics and secured an interview.

When the time came for her Cambridge interview, Malak strapped a heavy solar-powered battery to her back and walked a mile through danger to a friend's house, one with a broadband connection but no electricity, hoping the academic panel on the other side could hear her clearly. They did, and were impressed. Downing College praised her intellect and breadth of knowledge. She was offered a place.

The Times journalist noted that whilst speaking with Malak on the phone about her dire living conditions and diminishing food supply, they heard a bomb explode nearby, a brutal reminder of the danger she had to navigate daily just to survive.

Malak is an Interstellar Scholar she was evacuated with the aid of the Irish Government to pursue a foundation year at Trinity College, her tuition fees and living expenses were coordinated by Phoenix Space. She has now been accepted on a full scholarship to **attend Cambridge University** after her foundation year is complete. Malak's story, like all of our students', is one of **endurance, hope, and resilience**, one which embodies why Phoenix Space runs these scholarships: to not let violence silence the power of exceptionally talented individuals.

Dana, Interstellar Student

"After achieving the second-highest rank among 88,000 students in Palestine's high school exams and beginning my journey in medical school, the war tore everything apart. Overnight, the world I had built with years of effort and hope collapsed, and the dreams I once held so close seemed to drift out of reach.

But even in the silence that followed, I refused to surrender. I searched endlessly for a way forward, writing, applying, hoping-until I found Phoenix Space. It wasn't chance that brought us together; it was persistence, faith, and the belief that light always finds those who keep moving toward it.

Phoenix Space didn't just fund my studies- it revived the parts of me that the war had silenced. It reminded me that even from ashes, new beginnings can bloom. Through this opportunity, I've found not only a path back to education, but also a deeper sense of purpose: to grow, to heal, and one day to help rebuild the home that raised me."



Dana and Farah are pictured here as they land in the UK. Dana, Biomedical Engineering BEng, King's College London, Interstellar Student

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Our Students' Journey From Gaza- Through Their Eyes



Asmma and Suad, Imperial College London, Interstellar Students

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Launchpad Programme

Launchpad prepares exceptionally talented, disadvantaged Palestinian students to apply to the world's top universities. Designed for students who possess extraordinary academic potential but lack the financial, logistical, and institutional support necessary to access elite institutions. Launchpad ensures they are equipped with the tools, confidence, and pathways needed to succeed on the global academic stage.

Successful applicants will receive intensive, one-on-one mentoring throughout the entire university application process to maximise their chances of admission. Comprehensive support includes both group and individual workshops, covering planning sessions, interview preparation, personal statement development, and tailored application support for both UK and US universities. Students receive assistance with securing financial aid and scholarships, IELTS and SAT/ESAT/TMUA/TARA preparation and testing, covering the costs of the exams, CV development, ongoing English language support, assistance in compiling all required documentation, and guidance on acquiring relevant visas.

Students receive one-on-one mentoring from a team of **15** Oxbridge volunteers who help them prepare for university acceptance. This has resulted in **11** students being supported through Oxford and Cambridge interviews. In partnership with the University Admission Test UK Centre and Cambridge University, we arranged online tests for **11** students in Gaza to take the ESAT, TMUA, and TARA exams, facilitating their university admissions (these tests can be used for UCL, Imperial, and other university admissions). As no test centres in Gaza are currently operational due to the lack of electricity and internet, we also partnered with Taqat to provide three locations in Gaza with electricity, internet, and access to computers for conducting interviews and tests for Cambridge and Oxford admissions.

In addition, students pursuing STEM fields receive advanced training in computer science and mathematics. This preparation aims to equip them for prestigious international academic competitions, such as the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) and the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO), to enhance their academic profiles. This year, Phoenix Space proudly sponsored Team Palestine to compete in the 18th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics in India and the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) in Australia. These initiatives aim to enhance academic mobility, improve university applications, and strengthen the global profile of Palestinian talent.

These services ensure that every student is equipped with the knowledge and resources to pursue higher education at a global level.

We have accepted **80** exceptional students who meet, and often exceed, our eligibility criteria. We have identified **20** among those **80** students for our Launchpad Intensive Programme, designed to support their applications to top universities for the **2026/2027 admission cycle**.

Additionally, **60** students will join our broader UK and US Admissions Guidance Programme, offering structured support for competitive higher education pathways.

Ali, Launchpad Student



Ali's image of where he is currently living.

Ali is a Launchpad student. Alongside studying for his exams, he is helping manage **The Water Utility Camp** in **Deir Al-Ballah**, where he is currently living. Whilst trying to apply for university via his mobile phone with limited internet and electricity access. Ali hopes to study industrial engineering abroad, he says. "I aim to contribute to and rebuild my community."

Read Ali's Article: [Here](#)

Launchpad students at International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics, India.



Nesma, Launchpad Student



Nesma scored 99.4% in her exams, ranking first in Gaza City. Her education has been repeatedly disrupted, yet she has continued to study under unimaginable circumstances. Fluent in three languages and particularly strong in mathematics and physics, she aspires to become a doctor and use her skills to heal her people.

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Image taken by Hafez

Hafez, Launchpad Student

Hafez's, 20, is a Launchpad student; his academic journey reflects both exceptional achievement and profound resilience. Across three years of high school, he achieved scores of 99.7%, 98.3%, and 97%, placing him in the top 0.5% nationally in Palestine's Tawjihi examinations in 2023. He also earned a perfect 100% in Physics on the UPC (UCL) entrance exam, a rare distinction that underscores his academic potential.

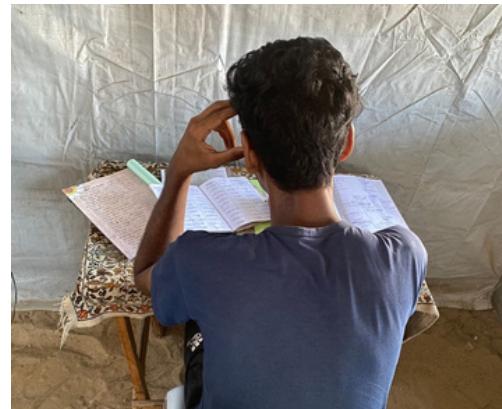


Image taken by Hafez

What these achievements do not capture is the context in which they were earned. Hafez studied in bomb shelters after his home was destroyed and maintained academic focus despite repeated displacement and constant insecurity. His success is not only a measure of ability, but of extraordinary perseverance and refusal to give up under conditions few can even begin to imagine.

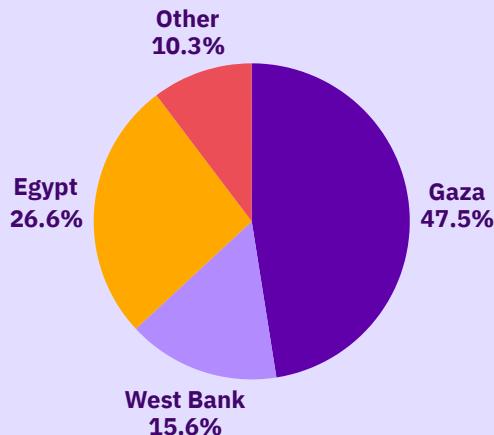
Hafez has been offered multiple prestigious opportunities, including a scholarship from the Palestinian Ministry of Education to study in Romania and a Turkish government scholarship for Engineering. However, Hafez was accepted to attend UPC foundation program at UCL, which we hope he will join next year at UCL, the foundation year that represents his pathway to a UK education. This programme presents a unique academic and financial challenge, but also a critical opportunity for Hafez to demonstrate his capabilities in a highly competitive environment and transition into long-term academic stability.

Alongside his studies, Hafez has demonstrated sustained leadership. He documented the experiences of displaced youth for Swiss National Television (RTS), organised emergency study groups in shelters, and balanced his academic responsibilities with community leadership roles at the French Cultural Centre, YMCA Gaza, and Reach Education Fund. His commitment to education extends beyond personal advancement to collective resilience and support for others. Hafez represents a generation whose brilliance has continued under bombardment, a young scholar who, even as his home was destroyed and his future suspended, continued to learn, lead, and believe in education as a lifeline.

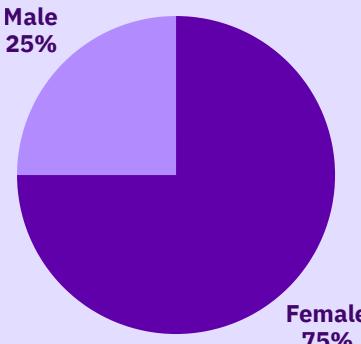
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Students Demographic

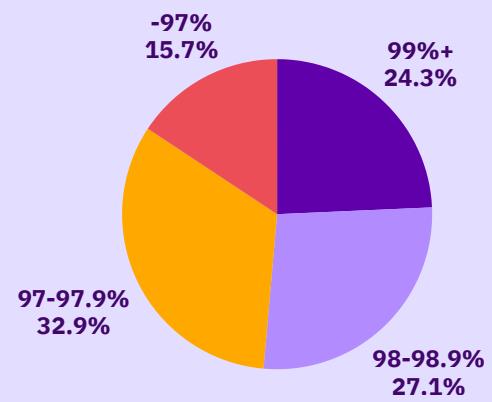
Students Country of Residency:



Gender Divide:



GPA Average Amongst Our Students:



Geographical Regions Where Students Enrolled in University Programs



- (2 Students) United States
- (14 Students) United Kingdom



A photograph captured from one of our students' tents in the camp where he is currently residing, taken by Ali, Launchpad student.

Our Partners Voices

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Phoenix Space enabled two students from areas of conflict who were experiencing unimaginable challenges, to access world-class education at King's. Our partnership with them has changed lives, and I feel privileged to work with such a hardworking and kind team. I look forward to continuing our relationship.

**Paul Webb, Sanctuary Programme Manager,
International Engagement & Service, King's College London**

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Phoenix Space's support has created opportunities for six postgraduate Master's students from areas of conflict to pursue a world class education at UCL. This support will not only change lives but will also help shape the world we live in. We are proud to work with the Phoenix Space team and look forward to what the future holds for our partnership.

**Ian Wilson, Executive Director of Development,
UCL**

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Our Partners

Interstellar and Launchpad have been delivered in collaboration with a diverse and committed network of partners, including: Palestinian Mission to the UK, Bseisu Foundation, AMIDEAST, GSI, READ, VIGSA (Volunteer Initiative for Gaza Students Abroad), Zeytoon, Gaza Education Gateway, Norton Rose, Gaza40, Scholarships for Gaza Initiative, Reallyenglish, National Zakat Foundation, Aziz Foundation, Taqat, Co-op, and many others whose contributions have been instrumental to the success of these initiatives.

Phoenix Space has also established formal partnerships with many leading UK universities, including but not limited to UCL, the University College London, King's College London, the University of Edinburgh, and Imperial College London. These partnerships ensure streamlined Gift Aid arrangements, tuition coverage, and full UKVI compliance.

During the UK Gaza evacuation effort, while UK universities provided individual support to admitted students, Phoenix Space acted as the sole organisation in the UK centralising the support for all **100** evacuated Gazans students, acting as the indispensable focal point to ensure students have all facets of foundational support. Phoenix Space's unique value lies in the ability to mobilise rapidly, work holistically across academic, legal, financial, and psychosocial domains, and bridge all stakeholders - universities, corporates, legal partners, and NGOs - into a single, coherent support system. This coordination ensures timely, consistent interventions and prevents any student from falling through critical gaps, positioning Phoenix Space as the organisation best equipped to deliver successful outcomes in this complex context.

From everyone at Phoenix Space extend our deepest gratitude to all of our partners, supporters, and collaborators who believe in this mission and have made these initiatives possible. Together, we are not only protecting access to education, we are restoring dignity, stability, and the possibility of a future once thought out of reach.

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