

# A LAUNCHPAD TO SCALE

Amala Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

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# Amala Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

## *A Launchpad to Scale*

- Contents** .....3
- Executive Summary** .....5
- Problem Statement** ..... 8
- Amala’s Work, Impact and Achievements to Date**..... 11
- Our Three Year Plan: A Launchpad to Scale**.....12
- Strategic Aims** .....15
  - Make Amala’s education programmes replicable .....15
  - Become a widely recognised education provider for refugee youth .....18
  - Build organisational capacity to accelerate growth .....20
- Financial Projections** .....21
- Conclusion** .....23
- Endnotes** .....23



Our vision is of a world where everyone can build a future they have reason to value.

Our mission is to use the power of education to transform the lives of refugees, their communities and the world.

# Executive Summary

Over 80 million people are living in forced displacement worldwide, equating to over 1% of the world's population being displaced. As fewer than one in three refugee adolescents are accessing secondary education, and only 3% going on to higher education, this presents not only a crisis of displacement, but also a crisis of education.

Amala was established in 2017 with the bold aim to provide transformative educational programmes to refugee and crisis-affected youth, who often face insurmountable obstacles to accessing education. An Amala education enables young people to improve their own lives, participate in society and drive wider societal change.

Between 2017 and 2021, Amala developed the first international high school diploma intentionally designed for and in partnership with young people with experience of displacement. We have engaged with more than 500 youth through Changemaker Courses and have developed our model for delivering high-quality learning in low-resource environments.

Our educational model, which focuses on the development of agency to enable refugee youth to transform their lives, community and societies is, we believe, unique and has proven to be in high demand among the young people with whom we have worked. We have increasing qualitative and quantitative evidence of the positive impact of Amala learning, and in the next stage, we seek to build on this success in order to meet the size of the problem we seek to address.

Our ambition with this strategic plan is therefore to significantly grow the numbers of young people we are able to serve, develop organisational readiness and remove barriers to scale in order to create a launchpad for exponential growth and impact from 2024 and beyond.

To do this, we will focus on three strategic aims:

## **1. Make Amala's education programmes replicable**

Amala's education programmes focus on developing students' agency and ability to participate in society. In this strategic period, our focus will be on streamlining and ensuring our model is both simple and cheap enough to be replicated by partners without compromising quality.

## **2. Become a widely-recognised education provider**

In order to build a platform to scale, Amala needs to be widely regarded as a trusted provider of high quality education. We will work with governments, accrediting bodies and partners to obtain formal recognition and raise our profile in order to offer the programme to even more young people in the future and enable Amala students to access a wide range of pathways after graduating.

### 3. Build organisational capacity to accelerate growth

In the next three years, we will increase our reach tenfold to reach 5,000 students and create a launchpad for exponential growth beyond this strategic period. We will therefore focus on building fundraising capacity and financial sustainability, creating a diverse and resilient network of partners and developing organisational capacity for scale from 2024.

As we embark on this critical next stage of our journey, we are inspired by our students who exemplify the energy and motivation to learn, thrive and lead. We are looking forward to making this plan a reality and to working towards addressing the huge need for quality education among refugee and crisis-affected youth.





“The education of young refugees is crucial to the peaceful and sustainable development of the places that have welcomed them, and to the future prosperity of their own countries.”

- UNHCR



## Problem Statement

Access to education is vital for the full development of human and societal potential. Yet for millions of adolescent and young refugees amongst the world's growing refugee population, education remains a distant dream. Globally, there are now more than 80 million people who are displaced, and crises are increasingly protracted, leading many people to spend years if not decades in displacement. Furthermore, ongoing conflicts and the impact of climate change mean that the number of people who are forcibly displaced is predicted to rise to hundreds of millions by 2050.

Refugee and crisis-affected youth face numerous challenges in accessing education at all levels, but educational opportunities diminish as an individual becomes older. It can become increasingly difficult, even impossible, for youth over the age of 18 to integrate into the national education systems of the host community. Refugee youth also tend to live in precarious conditions and therefore the need to work, or in the case of many girls and young women, to get married, can take priority over the completion of education. This results in only one in three school aged refugees accessing secondary education and only 3% accessing higher education.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 that aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, Amala sees a need to not only provide access, but also to ensure high quality of education. Too many young people experience education poverty, and as a result, lack the agency and competencies to develop their full potential and meaningfully participate in communities, society and economies. In a world of rapid change and uncertainty, high quality education for refugee youth and crisis-affected communities could not be more vital and urgent.

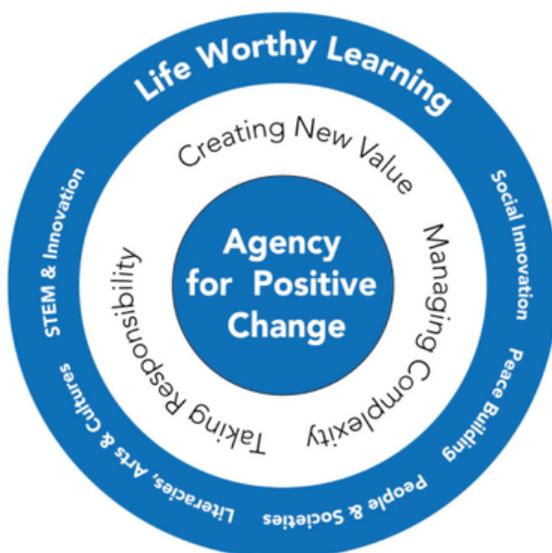
# Amala's Work, Impact and Achievements

## Overview of Amala's Work

Since Amala was established in 2017, we have worked in partnership with refugee and crisis-affected youth to design and deliver high impact educational programmes that aim to address the needs of both refugee youth and young people in the countries where refugees are living who experience similar challenges.

Amala provides a transformative education, which enables students to develop their sense of agency to positively influence and transform their own lives, communities and society.

Agency sits at the heart of the Amala learning model and is fostered by students developing the competencies of creating new value, managing complexity and taking responsibility. This enables Amala students to take action for positive change



*The Amala Learning Model:*

Amala is committed to catalysing change in communities where refugees live. We provide training and ongoing development to support facilitators who are embedded within the communities where we work to run high quality programmes. Facilitators are also key to the contextualisation of Amala's curriculum, which is designed to be run in a variety of geographical locations and both city and camp contexts. Refugee and crisis-affected youth have been involved in the curriculum development process and the development of Amala programmes is guided by the lived experiences of our student Advisory Group.

We make use of technology to run programmes through a blended learning model, which combines in-person classes and online independent work. This model combines much-needed flexibility for students with a strong sense of community.



# Amala Programmes

Amala has designed, developed and implemented two programmes which enable refugee and crisis-affected youth to access transformative, agency-based learning:

## 1. The Amala High School Diploma:

This programme is the first international high school diploma designed with and for refugee youth. The High School Diploma is an alternative pathway to completing upper secondary education (high school) for youth aged 16-25 who are out of school and who wish to access a holistic opportunity that focuses on the development of competencies to improve their communities and the world.

The High School Diploma enables students to develop their sense of agency in a broad range of areas, including using evidence to make change, self and cultural expression, participation in society, sustainable peace and leadership.

The High School Diploma is typically studied over a period of fifteen months, and consists of ten courses, a personal interest project, and a pathways advising programme, enabling students to identify and access opportunities (e.g. higher education, training, work) once they graduate. Assessment and eventual graduation is based on the Mastery Transcript of competencies which is becoming a recognised means of assessment that offers an alternative to traditional examinations.

## 2. Amala Changemaker Courses

Amala Changemaker Courses enable refugee and crisis-affected youth to develop their sense of agency for positive change in specific areas, including "Peacebuilding", "Social Entrepreneurship" and "Ethical Leadership." Changemaker Courses develop life skills and can support integration and participation in communities, economies and societies.

Amala Changemaker Courses are typically studied over a ten week period, and are available for refugee and host community youth who are out of school, as well as those who are in school. Changemaker Courses can therefore be used to supplement other learning programmes and existing schooling, and their applied nature provides an accessible starting point for those seeking to re-enter their education.

To have greater reach and flexibility, Amala programmes can be delivered in two ways:

- Amala-operated - whereby Amala is responsible for all aspects of delivery, including Amala facilitators delivering programmes and Amala establishing its own operations.
- Partner-operated - whereby Amala accredits a partner to deliver programmes, with Amala responsible for curriculum and facilitator development and the partner responsible for local operations, including the recruitment of facilitators and provision of infrastructure. Previous and current partners have included community-based organisations and national and international NGOs.

## Impact and Achievements to Date

The concept for Amala was conceived in 2017 in response to the need for transformative, agency-based education for refugee youth. Our primary focus in our initial stages has been to make this ambitious idea a reality and establish proof of concept. Amala's first two years were focused on curriculum development: together with our founding partner school UWC South East Asia, 150 educators and representatives of refugee and crisis-affected youth, we collaboratively developed the curricula for ten courses that now comprise the Amala High School Diploma. We have also devised a new and progressive model for assessment and a foundational English language course.

Over 600 students have participated in Changemaker Courses in Jordan, Kenya, Greece, Uganda, Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia, Lebanon, Cameroon and Hong Kong. We have proved that the Amala model can be successfully implemented across a range of different countries, regions and contexts. There is evidence of the impact of courses: in line with Amala's theory of change, alumni are improving their own lives through education and work, and are improving their communities by leading, working or volunteering on entrepreneurial initiatives.

So far, 100 students have successfully been enrolled on the Amala High School Diploma: 50 in Amman, Jordan and 50 in Kakuma Camp, Kenya, with the first students graduating in September 2021. The great majority of students report that they have taken action to create positive change in their community during the programme, and students are already gaining access to further educational opportunities.

Amala's model and work has been recognised twice by the Finnish organisation HundrED as one of the world's most inspiring and impactful educational innovations. We have been highlighted by Save the Children as a promising practice within refugee education and our work and students have been showcased by the OECD's Education 2030 project.

Through our work in a range of contexts and countries across four regions, we have determined that the Amala model can deliver impact in recent as well as protracted refugee and crisis situations around the world. We are now at a stage where we have proven that our concept is viable and impactful. The next three years will focus on creating a launchpad to make Amala programmes realisable at scale.





"Amala opened my eyes and given me the ideas, skills and knowledge to start solving the problems in my community"

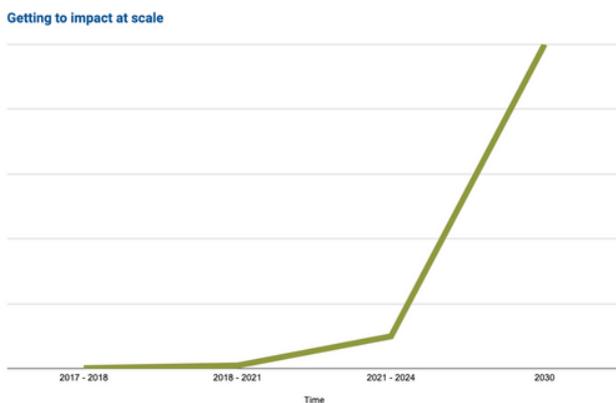
- Amala alumna

# Our Three Year Plan: A Launchpad to Scale

Our long term ambition is for Amala programmes to be available to any young person in our target group who wants to access them. In order to make this goal a reality, our ambition within this three year period is to significantly grow the numbers of young people we are able to serve, develop organisational readiness and remove barriers to scale in order to create a launchpad for exponential growth and impact from 2024 and beyond.

To make this happen, we will focus on three strategic aims:

1. Make Amala’s education programmes replicable
2. Become a widely recognised education provider
3. Build organisational capacity to accelerate growth



Over the next three years, Amala programmes will grow to reach 5,000 students through a combination of deliberate and organic growth. While our approach is to prove our proposition in a number of contexts, our main countries of focus will continue to be Jordan, Kenya and Greece where we have already established a presence and where there are opportunities to grow further.

To spread risk and increase our impact, we will also develop funding and partnership opportunities to launch the Amala High School Diploma Programme in up to four new locations where there is a sizable refugee population and a need for alternative education opportunities for the young people in our target group.



The 5,000 students will be reached both through Changemaker Courses and the High School Diploma: 3500 will participate in approximately 120 Changemaker Courses and 1500 will form a part of 60 High School Diploma classes.

The tables below provide an illustrative trajectory of growth in student numbers for both programmes. The categorisation includes projections for both Amala operated programmes (Amala) and Partner operated programmes (Partnerships). Locations beyond the focus countries of Kenya, Jordan and Greece are yet to be decided and are therefore marked as unspecified locations.

### Amala Changemaking Courses

*Annual growth students reached*

	2017 - 2020	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total
Jordan (Amala)	59	0	50	100	209
Jordan (Partners)		0	100	300	400
Kenya (Amala)		50	50	50	150
Kenya (Partners)	93	100	150	300	643
Greece (Amala)	70	50	50	50	220
Greece (Partners)	14	100	150	250	514
Other locations (Amala)		0	50	50	100
Other locations (Partners)	264	200	300	500	1264
<b>Total students reached</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>3500</b>

### Amala High School Diploma

*Annual growth students reached*

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Total
Jordan (Amala)	50	50	100	200
Jordan (Partners)	0	50	100	150
Kenya (Amala)	50	50	100	200
Kenya (Partners)	0	50	150	200
Greece (Amala)	0	100	100	200
Greece (Partners)	0	0	200	200
Other locations (Amala)	0		100	100
Other locations (Partners)	0	50	200	250
<b>Total students reached</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>1500</b>



# Strategic Aims

## 1. Make Amala's education programmes replicable

Amala's curriculum and our focus on transformative, agency-based learning is our biggest organisational asset. Over the last four years, we have focused on developing our education programme (including curriculum, assessment methods and facilitator development) and piloting it in multiple locations.

In the next three years, we will build on our successful pilots and further develop the model to be replicable at scale. For this to happen, it will be necessary to iterate and streamline our approaches to curriculum and assessment, further develop our approaches to facilitator training, refine our partnership model and make our programmes a cost effective proposition.

### 1.1 Iterate and streamline Amala curriculum and assessment approach

As we move out of our pilot phase, we will further iterate Amala's curriculum to ensure that it remains of high quality while also being simple and flexible enough to scale. We will use our Amala operated models to test and pilot improvements to the education programme and will develop a comprehensive yet adaptive curriculum review process. We will also build upon and formalise processes to involve Amala students, alumni and other crisis-affected youth in the review and further development of curriculum and assessment. We will further iterate our competency-based assessment approach to enable it to be effective for learning, robust and trustworthy and easily implementable by partners.

### 1.2 Devise effective and efficient approach to facilitator development

To date, our focus has largely been on the development of a high quality curriculum. In this strategic period, we will put a greater focus on ensuring that the curriculum can be delivered to a high standard. This will involve developing a facilitator development programme for the High School Diploma that focuses on key competencies and fosters a culture of continuous improvement both in Amala-operated and in Partner-operated sites. We will also further iterate our approach to facilitator development for our Changemaker Courses to ensure both quality and scalability. Furthermore, we will focus on ensuring that programmes delivered by both Amala and partners are of high quality through the implementation of a quality assurance framework.

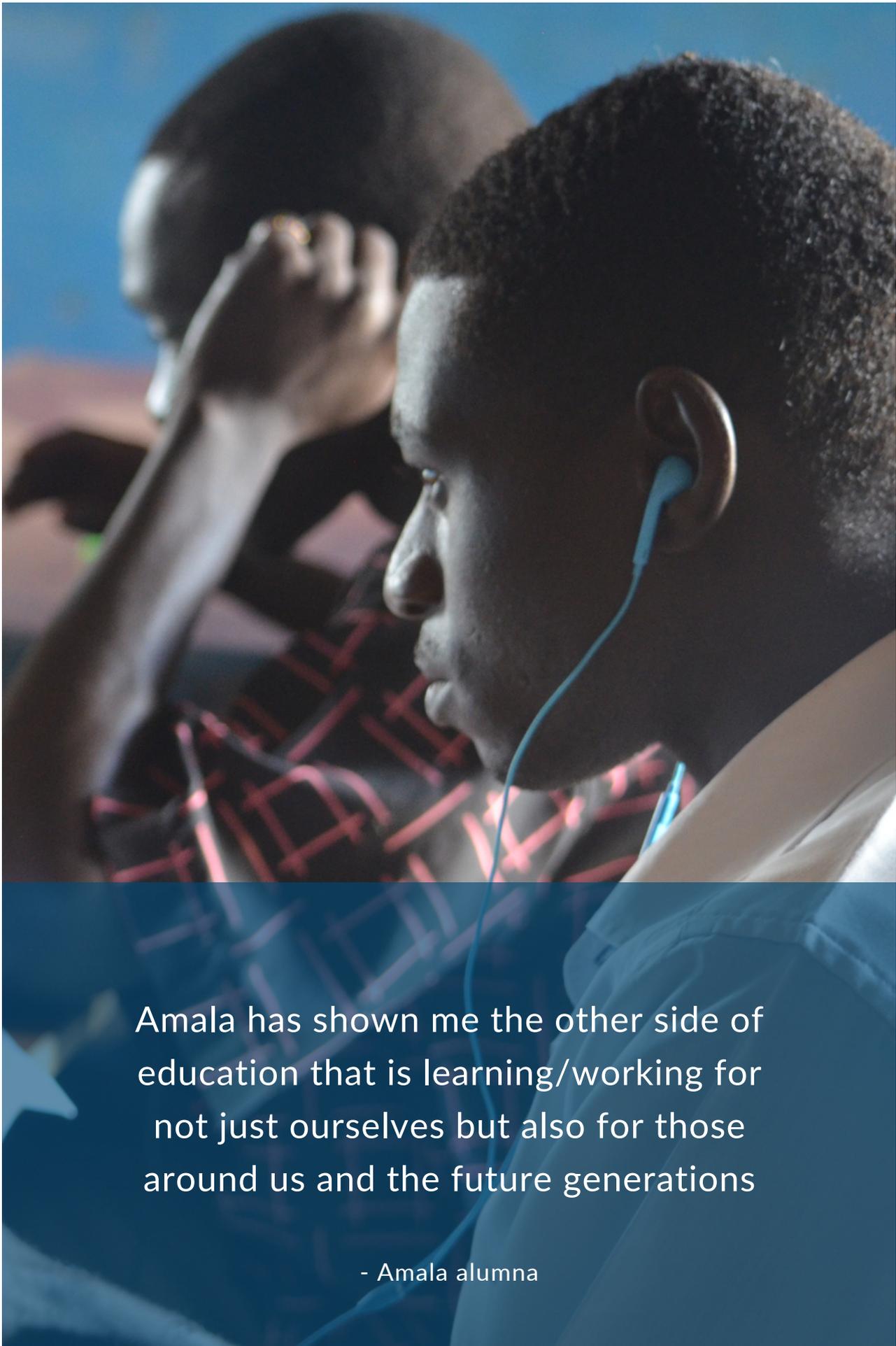
### 1.3. Refine implementation models

While we have already worked with a number of partners to implement Changemaker Courses, to date the High School Diploma has been solely run through an Amala operated model. In this period, we will concentrate on developing an accreditation and support process for partners to run the High School Diploma, which we will test with a select number of partners. Furthermore, we will develop Changemaker Courses as a distinct package and refine the partnership process to make sure they are accessible for a wide range of partners.

### 1.4 Make programmes a cost effective proposition

To be viable for scale, Amala programmes need to be cost effective and represent value for money in relation to programmes with similar outcomes. This will involve benchmarking both the High School Diploma and Changemaker Courses against similar programmes, and critically reviewing the cost and impact of different elements within Amala's programmes. We will also use technology to streamline processes such as student tracking, monitoring and evaluation and partnerships in order to make staff time more effective.





Amala has shown me the other side of education that is learning/working for not just ourselves but also for those around us and the future generations

- Amala alumna

## 2. Become a widely recognised education provider

In order to create a launchpad for scale, Amala must be widely regarded as a provider of high quality education for refugee youth. To reach this goal, we need to gain accreditation for the High School Diploma, demonstrate robust evidence of impact, work towards government recognition in key countries and raise our profile within the education in emergencies and humanitarian sectors. Our comprehensive and inclusive approach to curriculum development, the support of our founding school UWC South East Asia, and the growing recognition of the quality of Amala programmes in the locations where we work form a solid basis to develop wider recognition.

### 2.1 Gain accreditation for the Amala High School Diploma

Third-party accreditation of the Amala High School Diploma is a cornerstone to becoming a widely recognised education provider. It will both enable us to improve our own practice, establish credibility and open pathways among higher education providers. We are currently working with the accrediting body CIS (Council of International Schools) to have the Amala High School Diploma programme accredited and we expect accreditation to be in place by the end of 2022. CIS accreditation will be an important gateway towards recognition from governments and higher education institutions

### 2.2 Achieve recognition by governments and higher education institutions

Amala's goal is that the High School Diploma is recognised by governments as an equivalent to other upper-secondary education programmes, enabling students to pursue a broad range of pathways in-country. We will establish relationships with and start to work with the relevant public bodies, particularly in Greece, Jordan and Kenya to pursue government recognition. At the same time, we will seek opportunities to work with organisations who can offer scalable pathways options for Amala students, with a particular focus on affordable higher education.

### 2.3 Produce robust evidence of impact

Amala's ambition is to make high quality education accessible for a large number of refugee and crisis-affected youth, and we care deeply about making progress towards this ambitious goal over the next three years and beyond. In the next three years, we will improve our monitoring and evaluation processes for both the Changemaker Courses and the High School Diploma to assess rigorously and often how we can improve our educational programmes and model to make the greatest difference possible for our investment. We will also identify and work with an external research partner (e.g. a university) to carry out an independent study on the impact of Amala programmes in this period. The outcomes of the study will be used to inform improvements to Amala's education and programmes and to demonstrate impact.

### 2.4 Raise Amala's profile within the education in emergencies and humanitarian sectors

As we seek to grow our programmes, we will participate in and contribute to relevant working groups and fora, including but not limited to the education in emergencies (EiE) sector. This will help to raise our profile, promote our work to others and enable us to align our proposition to the priorities of the sector and the countries where we are working. We will also tell the stories of Amala, our students, partners and the impact of our programmes in order to create trust, legitimacy and support further growth.



Since the beginning of my studies with Amala, my behaviour has become kinder. I have increased my acceptance of people who are different, and I know how to deal with people who come from a different background to me

- Amala student

### 3. Build organisational capacity to accelerate growth

In this strategic period, Amala's aim is to increase our reach tenfold to 5,000 students and create a launchpad for exponential growth. In order to accelerate the growth of programmes, we will develop a larger and stronger network of partners and increase our financial sustainability and operational capacity for scaling. Our existing presence in focus countries, the growing interest we have seen from partners in Amala programmes, and a reasonably diverse pool of funding sources with an increasing number of multi-year commitments put us in a strong position to build our capacity for growth.

#### 3.1 Grow Amala programmes through a strong network of partners

Amala's model has been designed to be delivered in partnership with other organisations, including community-based organisations, INGOs and governments. To date, we have worked with a select number of partners who have approached us for collaboration, enabling us to deliver Changemaker Courses to 500 students around the world. In the next three years, we will build on this, deliberately reaching out and building a strong network of partners who are committed to working together to deliver high quality learning to a growing number of students.

We will greatly expand the number of partners who run Changemaker Courses, and we will carefully select a number of partners to pilot the partnership model for the Diploma Programme before approving a greater number of partners to do this. We will continue to work with partners of a range of sizes in this period and will use this knowledge to determine which partners we can work with most effectively to scale Amala programmes.

#### 3.2 Develop financial sustainability

Organisations at Amala's current stage of development are usually supported by a limited number of donors and require unrestricted funding in order to develop their capacity to scale. However, organisations that scale rarely rely on philanthropic funding alone. It is therefore key that Amala increases both its fundraising capacity in this period and develops new income streams to achieve financial sustainability. Over the next three years, we will seek multi-year grants to support our growth and increase unrestricted funding through developing an annual giving programme for individuals and schools, while working with implementation partners to ensure all programmes are sustainably funded. This will help us to build the capacity to access government and institutional funding, which will enable us to scale programmes beyond the three years of this strategic plan.

#### 3.3 Increase operational capacity for scaling

Amala's growth and development has so far been enabled by a highly motivated team of staff and volunteers. Continuing to foster a culture of learning, innovation and trust amongst the team and partners will be important as we build capacity for scale. In the next phase, country teams will take on more responsibilities for fundraising and partnership development, support and quality assurance. We will also strengthen and protect our local operations, for example through legal registration. As we increase our reach, we will invest in digital systems that can streamline processes in areas such as finance, fundraising and people operations. To ensure full accountability and support as we grow, we will also develop the Board of Trustees and recruit new trustees who add new skills and expertise in areas such as fundraising, scaling and international development.

# Financial Projections

The expenditure forecast displayed below has been derived from Amala’s ten year financial model, and encompasses programmatic activity and central costs involved in delivering this strategy. Central costs such as educational development, programme coordination, monitoring and evaluation, management, governance and administration are not constant but have been flexed with increased programmatic activity, and as such have been apportioned to the locations displayed in the expenditure forecast below. Coordination and management costs on Amala’s side for external research have been included in the projections, however the full cost of such a study is not represented as most of the expenditures would sit with the research partner.

The expenditure forecast is predicated on Amala increasing its level of income significantly in the next three year period to support both growth in student numbers, opening up Amala’s programmes in new locations and investment into organisational capacity to be ready to scale beyond 2024. Our flexible delivery infrastructure gives us the capacity for a higher level of funding and increasing student numbers should this become available. Conversely, if sufficient financial resources do not become available, we will reduce growth numbers accordingly. As such, these growth figures and accompanying expenditure forecast should be seen as a medium growth scenario.

Our goal is to be able to offer a High School Diploma for less than \$1500 per student and less than \$150 per student for the Changemaker Courses. According to our financial projections, this will be achieved by the end of this strategic period.

<b>Expenditure forecast</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022 - 2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
<b>Locations</b>			
<i>All figures in USD</i>			
Jordan	188,000	240,000	405,000
Kenya	176,000	210,000	283,000
Greece	64,000	358,000	461,000
Other locations	55,000	213,000	517,000
<b>Total budget forecast</b>	<b>483,000</b>	<b>1,021,000</b>	<b>1,666,000</b>
▼			
<b>Total budget forecast (in £ sterling)</b>	<b>349,000</b>	<b>738,000</b>	<b>1,204,000</b>

*Exchange rate used: US\$1.3838 to £1 (source: www.oanda.com 16/07/2021)*

## Funding

We have seen significant growth in income since Amala was founded: From £130k in 2018/2019 to £283,000 in the 2020/2021 financial year. This has proven that Amala and the 'big idea' for the High School Diploma is a fundable proposition. We have developed a relatively broad funding base, comprising foundations, schools, individuals and CSR programmes.

Our challenge over the next three years will be to grow our current level of income significantly - 250% over the three year period. This signifies development from a 'start-up' budget to a more mature and sustainably funded budget. Achieving our fundraising goals will require expanding our current donor base through developing an annual giving programme, engaging schools in fundraising and increasing the number of multi-year grants we receive.



# Conclusion

Our goals for this period are ambitious and exciting. This strategy sets out three key goals that will act as a compass for the three years to come, leading us towards programmes that can be scaled, an offer that is recognised and highly regarded, and an infrastructure that can enable exponential growth beyond this period.

This is our route to scale and the next step on our journey towards ensuring that Amala programmes are available to any young person in our target group who wants to access them. We invite you on this journey to create a launchpad for scale and impact the lives of many young refugees and crisis-affected youth.

# Endnotes

This strategy has been inspired and informed by the helpful tools provided by the [Mulago Foundation](#), [Spring Impact](#) and the book *Lean Impact: How to Innovate for Radically Greater Social Good* by Ann Mei Chang.

We would also like to thank the many people who have given up their time to review earlier drafts of this strategy, build the financial model and who provided invaluable insights and comments to inform the direction of travel and future goals for Amala.



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