



Yulia Gershinkova, UN Volunteer with UNHCR, with Ghazal, a Syrian refugee, on her first day of school in Moscow, Russia.

Paving over the cracks: helping refugee women and children begin a normal life in Russia

Yulia graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Oriental Studies from the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in Moscow and a double Master's degree in Public Policy and International Relations from HSE the University of Bologna.

During her studies, she took part in student exchange programmes across Lebanon, Jordan and Italy. Following this, Yulia moved to Bangkok, Thailand, to work with the Social Development department of UN ESCAP, focusing on migration and sustainable development in North and Central Asia. She then joined the UNHCR office in Moscow as a UN Volunteer.

Russia is a destination of many refugee and asylum seekers from countries such as Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan. However, despite the large number of applications, only 589 people hold refugee status in Russia and some 187,785 were granted temporary asylum in 2017¹⁰.

On a day-to-day basis, Yulia largely focuses on helping refugee women and children begin a normal life in Russia and integrate into the community. This involves helping the adults find employment and become financially independent, and tackling the refugee education crisis by facilitating refugee children's enrolment to local schools.

Additionally, Yulia strives to reveal the most vulnerable refugee cases, in order to ensure these refugees receive sufficient help and support from UNHCR, its partners and the authorities.

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Being a UN Volunteer allowed me to work directly with refugees and asylum seekers, as well as learn more about UNHCR operations in Russia and across the world. As a UN Volunteer, I feel that what I'm doing is important, because I can see how it improves the lives of individuals and communities in some ways or another. --Yulia Gershinkova, UN Volunteer with UNHCR in Moscow.

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https://www.unhcr.org/ru/fileadmin/files/docs/Fact_SheetNov2017_EngFINA_L.pdf



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Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 4: Quality education**, **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities**, **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**