



SHAHLA GARAYEVA
SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

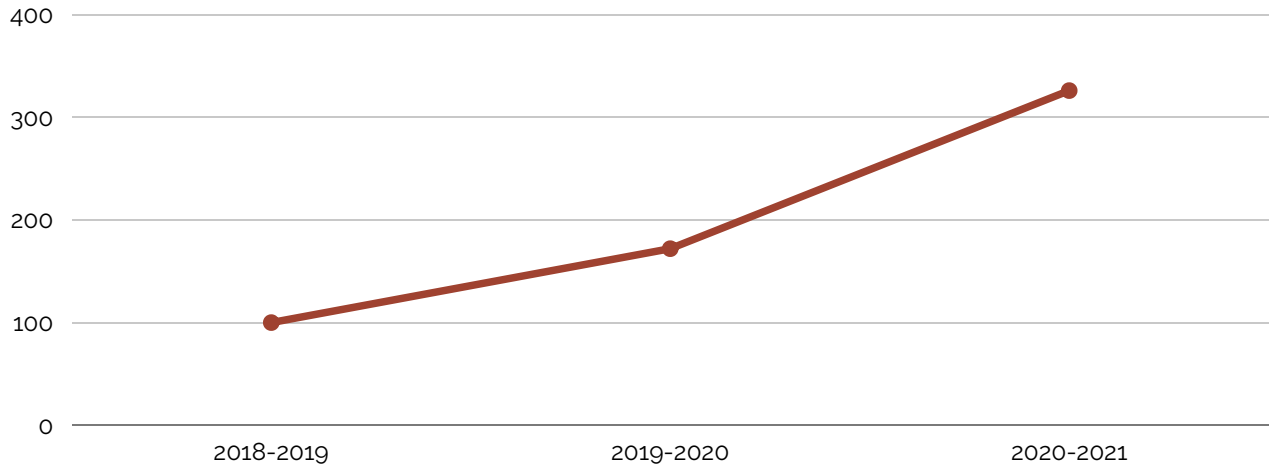


Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program

WHERE WE ARE NOW

We are at the highest point we've been since 2018. Congratulations to everyone!

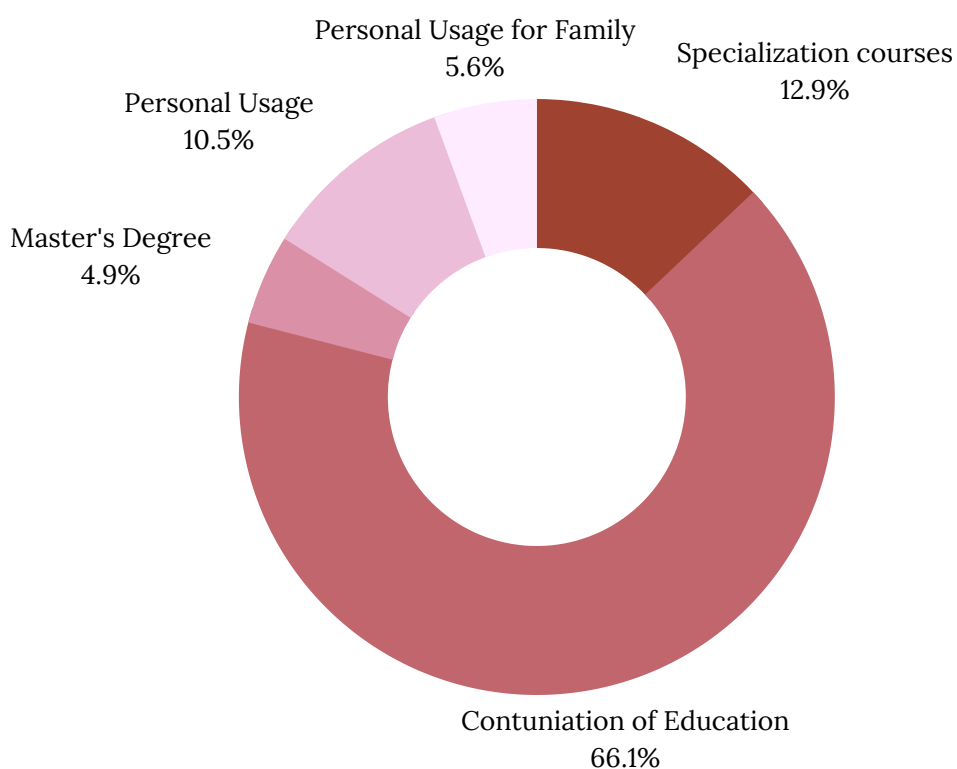
Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program founded in 2018 aiming to advance **educational aspirations and goals of underrepresented young women** from Azerbaijan. Since 2018, every year we open call of applications for two or three month of period of time in order to let young girls benefit from the scholarship program in the form financial aid and the mentorship program. This year we have received the biggest number of applications comparing the previous years



OUR CURRENT STATE

The Call for Applications 2020-2021 was open from 20 February 2021 to 31 May 2021. During this period, we received 326 applications in total, whereas **39 applicants** (male candidates, not completed application forms) were disqualified at the very first stage of selection process (*one of the eligibility requirements to apply to SGSP is to be a female resident in Azerbaijan*).

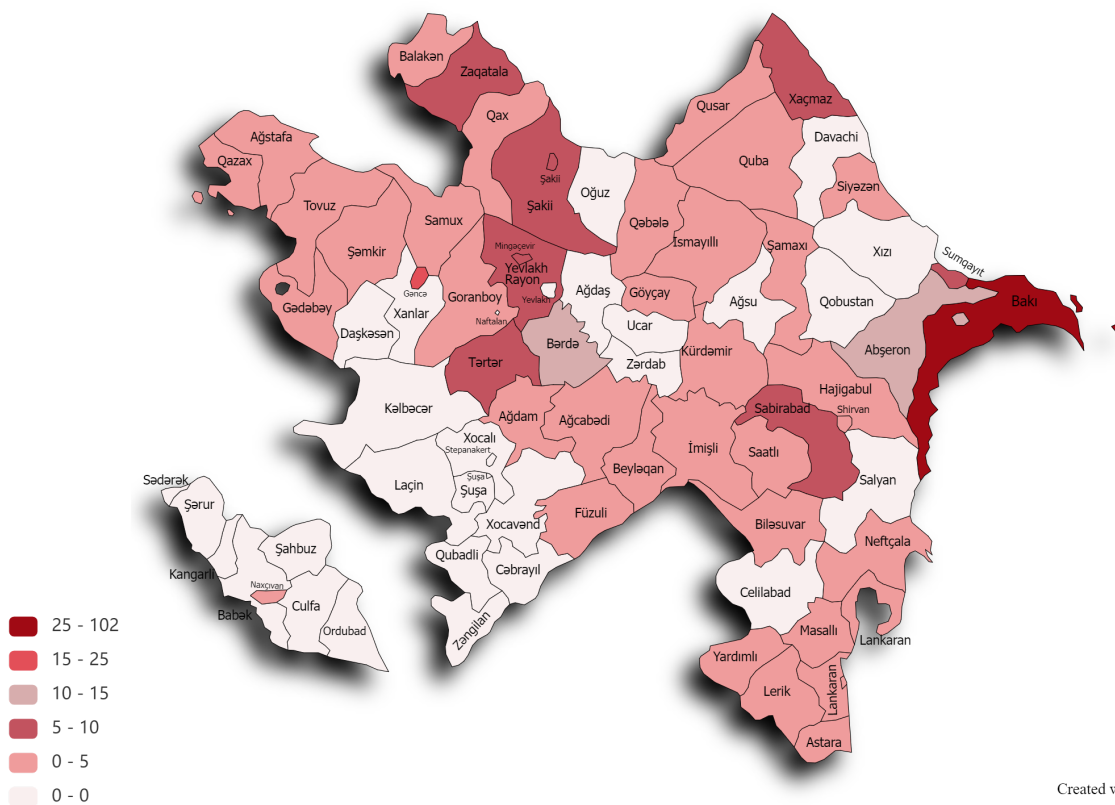
The applicants' purpose in applying for the scholarship program varied based on the demonstrated need. As shown in the chart below, most of the girls applied to either further **continue their studies** or use funds for various personal purposes:



APPLICANTS' REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

In total, we have reviewed **287 application**. Most of the applicants were from **Baku (102)**, **Ganja (22)**, **Absheron (14)**, **Barda (11)**, and the rest were from the different regions of Azerbaijan.

Applicants' Regional Distribution

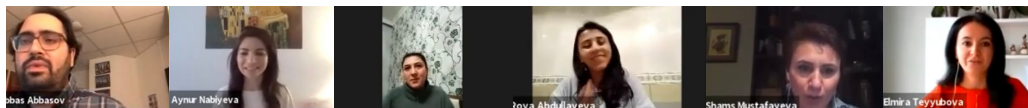


WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN?

Together with **Rondine International Peace Lab**, we organized our first virtual roundtable event dedicated to the importance of women's education. During this occasion, we discussed the SGSP's origins and goals, as well as *the educational challenges that Azerbaijani women face*. The SGSP Scholarship Awardees also talked about their experiences, as well as their perspectives on education and the program.

Shams Mustafayeva, the expert on gender issues, discussed the difficulties that women encounter in receiving education and the obstacles that educated women encounter in our societies. **Elmira Teyyubova, a representative of our partner organization - RIPL**, explained the collaboration and the organization, as well as shared her thoughts and feelings on women's education in Azerbaijan. Participants discussed and answered questions from the audience at the end of the session.

Also together with RIPL, we organized another online meeting with **Loretta Galli, a friend and supporter of RIPL**. During the meeting, she talked about the successes, achievements and also struggles of famous Italian women, the importance of the school and teachers during COVID-19 pandemic. She concluded her speech with a brief introduction to an initiative - "Street Foot" exhibition which will be the reason of our future collaboration.



Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program



RONDINE
INTERNATIONAL
PEACE LAB

SGSP MEETING WITH THE AWARDEES

Despite the fact that the SGSP has been operating since 2018, the entire selection process, as well as the crowdfunding campaign, were conducted entirely online. Four years later, on **October 3 2021**, we were finally able to arrange a meeting with the awardees of all years.



The purpose of the meeting was for **the girls to get to know us, communicate and exchange experiences with other fellow awardees**. Prior to this meeting, the SGSP team had only met virtually, and the gathering provided an opportunity for both team members and mentors to get to know one another.



We believe that as the awardees get to know each other and learn and benefit from the experience of others, taking into account the other tools (mentorship, training) offered by the program, we can build **a strong community in Azerbaijan that supports education, especially girls' education.**

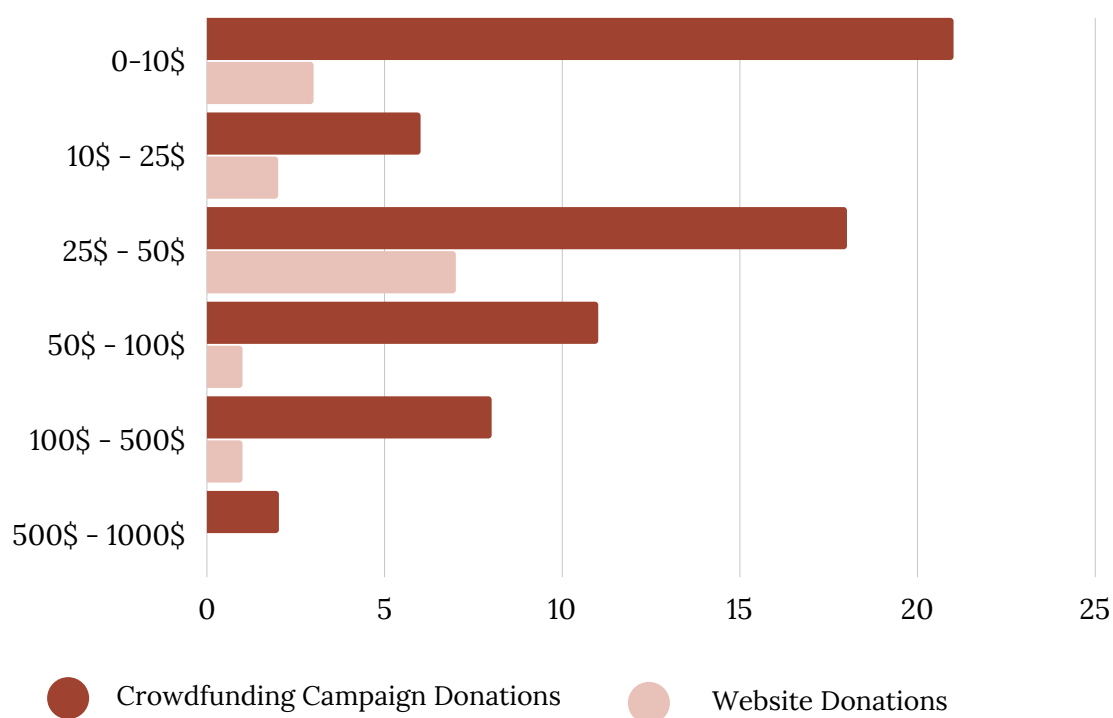
THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Along with the scholarship, we offer a one-year mentorship program for all our awardees. Having an experienced mentor is highly valuable to both career development and progression, as well as personal development and self-confidence. Feedback around the mentoring program from previous winners demonstrates **the positive impact on their personal and professional life**. Mentors, who are successful professionals from different areas of expertise, also experience positive outcomes by delivering feedback, advising, helping someone to unlock the potential. Most of our mentors voluntarily continue the mentorship relationship after a year of commitment. SGSP recommends **a one-on-one traditional way of mentoring and virtual mentoring** as most of our mentors are foreign residents.



THE CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

The two-month long campaign allowed us to collect, in total, **\$6,641.64** to fund the studies of young female students from Azerbaijan. We received a total of **66 donations** during the Crowdfunding Campaign. As previous year, the collaboration with RIPL (Rondine International Peace Lab) has allowed us to receive **14 more donations** (a total of **\$1,203.68**) after the crowdfunding campaign. Hence, the total public donations for the year of 2020-2021 has reached **\$7,845.08**. The chart below indicates the distribution of donations by the amounts received from our individual supporters.



THE CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

The Supporters

Our dear friend **Farida Sadikhova Buyuran** supported us through an auction. She auctioned 1 reserve copy of the "*Pomegranates and Saffron: A Culinary Journey to Azerbaijan*" book to support our crowdfunding campaign and the education of underrepresented young women in Azerbaijan.



We are also grateful to our anonymous supporter, who matched the crowdfunding donations at a **1:1 ratio**. Thanks to this support, we were able to double the number of SGSP awardees and support the educational aspirations of **20 students**.

The Volunteers

We would also like to thank **Narmin Hasanova**, who volunteered to take pictures and prepare video material for SGSP during our meeting this year.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

BUDGET 2020-2021 (IN US DOLLAR)

REVENUE	
Surplus from last year	\$158.56
Crowdfunding Campaign Donations	\$6,659.61
Matching contributions	\$6,764.06
Website Donations	\$1,031.11
TOTAL REVENUE	\$14,613.35
EXPENSES	
Administrative expenses	\$ 635.97
Program expenses	\$ 13,637.08
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 14,273.05
Net Surplus (Deficit)* 2020-2021	\$ 340.30

**Revenue and expenses are calculated till October 30, 2021*

SELECTION PROCESS

2020-2021

The selection process of the scholarship recipients took place in three stages: **1) Initial review; 2) External review; 3) Interview**. Each stage of the selection process is described below.

Initial review

During this stage, the SGSP project team reviewed the **287 applications** by assigning them into three categories: highest need, moderate need, lowest need. The criteria used for determining the level of need was based on an applicant's social and economic indicators as demonstrated in the application. After the initial review of all applications, the SGSP project team identified **163 applicants** who advanced to the second stage.

External review

Four of the SGSP supporters and a member of our partner organization (RIPL) indicated commitment to help with the selection of the scholarship recipients. At this stage, the supporters were asked to read through applicants' short answer essays and identify applicants who demonstrate *a) the highest need and b) a sense of purpose*. As a result of the external review, the SGSP project team determined **44 finalists** who made it through to the final stage.

Interview

At this stage, the SGSP project team scheduled a phone or a Zoom interview with each finalist to get to know them better and ask questions that were not on the application form. As SGSP is a needs-based scholarship, the project team aimed to probe finalists further on how the scholarship fund is relevant to their needs. Upon careful deliberation, **20 scholarship recipients** were selected at the end of a four-day interview process.

THE SGSP AWARDEES

2020-2021

Aysel Alizadeh

City/District: Tartar district

University: Azerbaijan State Agrarian University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I started studying at the Azerbaijan State Agrarian University three years after graduating from a technical college and successfully completed all of the graduation requirements. However, I was not able to graduate due to outstanding tuition payments. Thanks to SGSP, I will be able to officially graduate. Beyond graduation, I hope to start my company in the field of accounting and audit. I am dreaming of starting a business in the city of Shusha and contributing to the development of Karabakh by creating opportunities for students to intern and gain professional experiences

Ilaha Garayeva

City/District: Yevlakh district

University: Baku Foundational Medical College No. 2

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I'm studying to become a nurse practitioner-paramedic. I have interned at the cardiology department of the Educational Surgical University. When I heard about SGSP I decided to join this program and when I got awarded both my family and I were very happy. I express my gratitude for organizing such a program to support girls in their educational careers. This project is extremely important for my future educational goals. After graduating from college, I am considering further education. Later down the line, I am thinking of studying abroad for my master's. I like to read book for self-development and join various training sessions. I also believe that knowing a foreign language is crucial. I want to learn foreign languages and improve my language skills.

Shafiga Jumshudzadeh

City/District: Terter district

University: Azerbaijan State Agrarian University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? In 2020, after graduating from the agriculture department of the Barda State Administration Technology community college, I got admitted to the Azerbaijan State Agrarian University and am currently pursuing my education (as a fee-paying student) as a sophomore. Due to my family's financial situation, I have to work along with my university classes. Because my father passed away and my mother has a second degree disability, the responsibility to support my family of four also falls on me. In the future, upon completing my education in Azerbaijan, I plan to pursue graduate school abroad. My current job is a great experience for helping me achieve my future goals. One day I hope to help young girls in need like myself.

Maral Mammadova**City/District:** Ganja city**University:** Azerbaijan Technological University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I am studying towards a major in forensics and marketing of consumer goods at the Azerbaijan Technological University. After graduating from university, I am planning to pursue graduate school. I want to develop my skills in my major and find a job in this area. If I get to work in my field of choice, I would like to help people in need as much as I can, just like SGSP is helping me. I want to help others, so that no one has to go through what I have been going through.

Elnara Gubadova**City/District:** Baku city**University:** Baku Eurasian University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I am studying Near and Middle Eastern studies at the Baku Eurasian University. I live together with my family of five. I have one sister and one brother. My plans for my future and my educational goals are rather broad. I want to finalize all of the challenges I have experienced since childhood by making my own decisions and working in my field of study. I hope to gain deeper knowledge in my major and continue my education abroad. After studying abroad, I plan to return to Azerbaijan and share my knowledge and practice with the youth here. In the future, I would like to start a similar scholarship program for youth in need.

Elnaz Muradova**City/District:** Shamakhi district**University:** Baku Business University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Despite being withdrawn from school in the eighth grade, I was able to continue school and get admitted to the Shamakhi State Regional College (on a state-funded scholarship). Because I studied with excellent grades during college, I was able to cover my expenses with the 75-manat monthly scholarship. After graduating from the college in 2020, I was able to transfer to a four-year degree at the Baku Business University to study towards a major in accounting and audit. I believe that we should not fear having big goals and challenging pathways and not be discouraged by thoughts such as “it is too difficult”. Although I have faced numerous difficulties that I can not begin to cite, I think that I will be able to succeed in my personal and professional trajectories.

Tarlan Adgozalova**City/District:** Sumgayit city**University:** Baku Slavic University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Currently, I live in Sumgayit and attend Baku Slavic University as a senior majoring in English language pedagogy. For many years, I have been living with my family of 6 in rented apartments. When it comes to my career, one of my primary goals upon graduation is to work as a teacher in one of Azerbaijan’s mountainous villages. I think that there is a greater need for innovative teachers in the regions. Especially with the increasing cases of early marriages and women’s abuse in recent years, I am worried for our future. Therefore, my first goal will be to play a role in girls’ education living in the regions. Once I fulfill this mission of mine, I want to pursue education abroad. I aim to return to

my country after studying abroad to organize a scholarship program for students in need and I will realize this dream of mine. My biggest motivation in realizing my future goals has been SGSP.

Sevinj Aliyeva

City/District: Baku city

University: Azerbaijan State Academy of Art

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I am currently continuing my education at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Arts as a senior studying towards the artistic carpet-making major (as a honors group) in the decorative art department. First of all, I am getting a successful thesis defense in my final year. Afterwards, I will be getting ready for graduate school. I hope that I can successfully get admitted to a master's degree and pursue art studies as a major. My biggest goal is to reach the highest level in my education; to an extent, where I could pursue a doctorate and receive the highest possible degree in my field. Thus, in the future, I would like to become one of the teachers at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Arts and share everything that I have learned from my teachers with the future generations. Doing so, I want to contribute to the development of the art of carpet-making in Azerbaijan.

Amina Mammadova

City/District: Baku city

University: Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Despite being born in Shahvalilar village, Barda district, I went to the Aghdam district secondary school for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The year I got my high school diploma, I received admission to be a chemistry major at the Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University and currently, I am a senior. Interested in deepening my knowledge in my specialization, I plan to pursue graduate school beyond graduation. One of my plans is to master a foreign language to be able to study abroad. My career plans always include learning new skills and discovering new competencies to support my personal development. the youth here. In the future, I would like to start a similar scholarship program for youth in need.

Guljahan Mammadova

City/District: Baku city

University: Baku State University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? After losing our father in 2006, my mother has been taking care of me and my two sisters by herself. Despite difficulties, I was able to finish high school and get admitted to the journalism major (as a fee-paying student) at Baku State University in 2018. Right now I am a senior journalism major. After interning for the Azerbaijan State TV channel as a sophomore, I have developed a greater interest in TV. In the future, I want to better represent our country in this field. In addition to this, in line with the contemporary trends, I want to start my own channel on social media websites (YouTube and Instagram). This way, I can reach a wider global audience. In the future, I want to create videos about different areas and better develop my online content on YouTube.

Leyla Aydinova**City/District:** Baku city**University:** Azerbaijan State Agrarian University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Because I did not have material and moral support, received poor education during secondary school, and grew up surrounded by underdevelopment in Ganja city, my personal and professional development were negatively influenced. Finally, in 2014 at the age of 30 I was able to start college but because I became unemployed I could not complete my education. Currently, I have to pay the outstanding tuition fees in order to be able to officially graduate. Beyond graduation, I want to pursue further education in accounting/finance at one of the good quality universities abroad. The education I received in Azerbaijan is not good enough and I cannot help myself with this education. I can only compensate for the years that I lost due to a late start and get the level of knowledge that I want by studying in one of the advanced countries known for raising generations of inventors.

Rahida Bayramova**City/District:** Tovuz district**University:** Baku State University (Qazakh branch)

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Due to the financial difficulties in my family, I have faced obstacles in continuing my education. I believe that an educated woman is one of the pillars of an educated society. Considering this, after successfully graduating with a bachelor's degree, I hope to go on to graduate school. To achieve this, I need to work tirelessly to persevere through challenges. Being selected as a recipient of the SGSP became an important source of motivation for me. On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for selecting me. From now on, my biggest dream is to live up to this value and expectation. In the future, I would like to help girls in need just like myself and be a lifeline for other young girls.

Aytaj Alakbarova**City/District:** Baku city**University:** Azerbaijan State Culture and Arts University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? In 2021, I completed my studies as an undergraduate student majoring in the Film and Television department at the Azerbaijan State Culture and Arts University to which I got admitted with great enthusiasm in 2017. However, due to outstanding tuition payments, I have not been able to officially graduate. Yet during my undergraduate years I built a website comprising the latest film news and movie reviews. I have published on news websites and met a lot of professionals in my field who have shared their advice with me. These have been great motivating factors in my work. Nonetheless, I was quite demotivated due to financial hardships. SGSP became a new hope for me. Now I am already starting to realize my plans for the near future. One of them is to study abroad and to increase my professional knowledge. I plan to come back to Azerbaijan upon receiving master's abroad to work tirelessly in the field of film and television. I believe that I can do all of these and want to thank SGSP for paving the way to success for girls and young women like myself.

Zahra Khanim Guluzadeh**City/District:** Baku city**University:** Azərbaycan State Academy of Art

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Since 5th grade, I have been drawn to painting/drawing. During these years I have participated in multiple exhibitions and projects both locally and abroad. At the moment, I am studying towards a painting major at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Art. In 2019, I was a participant of the 'Femin Art' project in Turkey. One of the advantages of the extended periods of lockdown for me was discovering digital art. It has helped me in improving my skills. In the future, I plan to study and attend training sessions on animation abroad as well as gain more experience and get a master's degree in animation. I plan to work as a concept artist at a place like Disney.

Sabina Gadimova**City/District:** Yevlakh district**Educational center:** "Kur" Preparation Center

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I was born in an internally displaced persons (IDP) family. When I opened my eyes to the world in 2005, my family had already fled our village Bashlibel, Kalbajar district in the 1990s and had settled in a kindergarten in the Tanrigular village, Yevlakh district. The challenges we have been through have taught me one thing: I have to study tirelessly to support my family and help my mother suffering from serious diseases. This scholarship program has given me the initial support necessary to fulfil my dreams. In the future, I would like to study at the medical university and furthermore, continue my education abroad in order to become a good doctor.

Turana Rahmatova**City/District:** Baku city**University:** Azerbaijan State Economic University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I graduated from Masalli region Gizilavar village Secondary School in 2016. Although I was admitted to Khazar University, I couldn't continue my education at that time because I was not able to afford the tuition fee. The following year, I was offered admission to the Finance Faculty of ASEU. I come from a single-parent household and pay my tuition fee by working. I believe that this scholarship will be a great support to my future plans. Currently, I am planning a career in Finance, my specialty field. For this, I am working on myself to improve my language and technical skills. I also aim to continue my education abroad. I believe that with SGSP I will gain more confidence in achieving my future goals.

Fidan Mikayilova**City/District:** Baku city**University:** Azerbaijan State Economic University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Up to this age I have achieved everything with my own grit and perseverance. In order to prepare myself confidently for the future I am doing more than expected from me and will continue to do so. The future should shine bright like the sun for me. I hope to benefit from all the hardships I am going through right now. Hence, I am not giving up. I have so many beautiful plans and thoughts about my future...I believe in myself in this regard. First of all, I will complete my undergraduate degree and plan on pursuing my master's abroad. I want to major in important areas such as international relations or audit.

Natavan Garibova

City/District: Gusar city

University: Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I am a senior at the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University and I am majoring in Correctional Training. I am interested in my profession and the field of psychology. I have been a very active student throughout my university life. I have taken part in various training sessions and conferences and have received certificates, some of which are international. Through the "First International Speech Therapy Conference", "National Psychology Training", "Second International Autism ABA Azerbaijan Conference" and others I gained the knowledge that helped me determine my future career direction. In line with my specialty, I worked for two years at a children's club and carried out individual consultations with children with disabilities. I want to pursue a graduate degree in psychology and improve myself in this field. For this reason, I am grateful to the SGSP team for giving me this great opportunity.

Laman Isgandarli

City/District: Baku city, Nizami district

University: Azerbaijan State Academy for Physical Education and Sport

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? Among my future goals and plans the priority is to graduate bachelor's with the highest honors. I also think that Azerbaijan desperately needs specialized sports managers and I want to continue pursuing a career in this field. SGSP was a great impetus for me to take the first leap in this direction and I have been successful so far. In both years, this scholarship came at such a time and helped me so much that I was able to breathe and put aside some of the pressures to be able to focus on my studies. I am very very grateful to the SGSP team. I believe that girls like me who received the scholarship will make great strides and contribute to the future of our education, women's rights and empowerment just like Shahla did. Many thanks to the SGSP family!

Tarana Imanova

City/District: Zaqatala district

University: Azerbaijan State Economic University, Zaqatala branch

How does SGSP help you in reaching your educational goals? I am a senior majoring in information technologies (IT) at the Azerbaijan State Economic University, Zaqatala branch. I am planning on pursuing graduate school upon graduation. If I can afford it financially, I would like to study abroad for my master's. In my opinion, there is a great need for women to be educated in Azerbaijan. In the future, I want to be a woman who can stand on her own feet and will do everything in my capacity to be a successful businessperson. In general, mastering my skills in the field of IT is my biggest goal and I will do everything I can to realize it. Being awarded by the SGSP has brought me closer to my goals and I believe that I can reach all of them step-by-step. If one believes, there is nothing unattainable.



Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program
