



Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program

ANNUAL REPORT

»» Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program 2024

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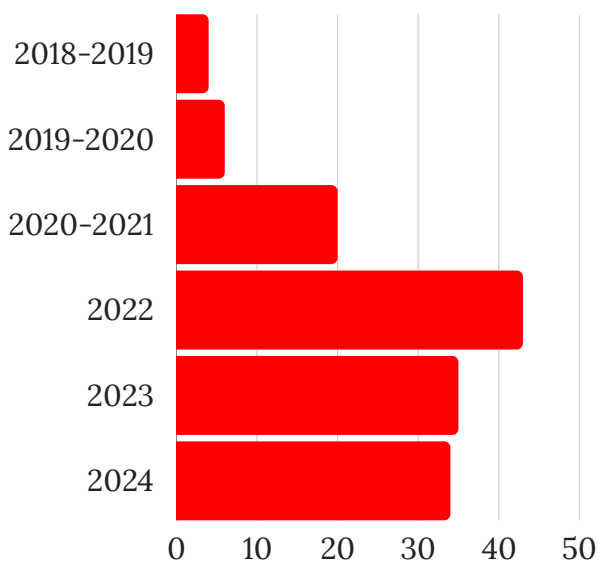


SGSP TODAY

142 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

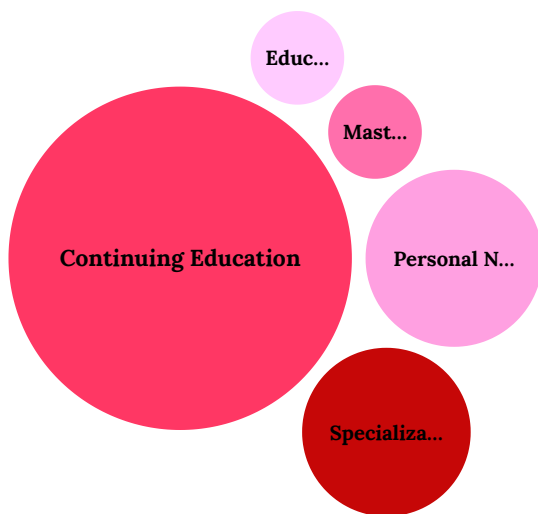
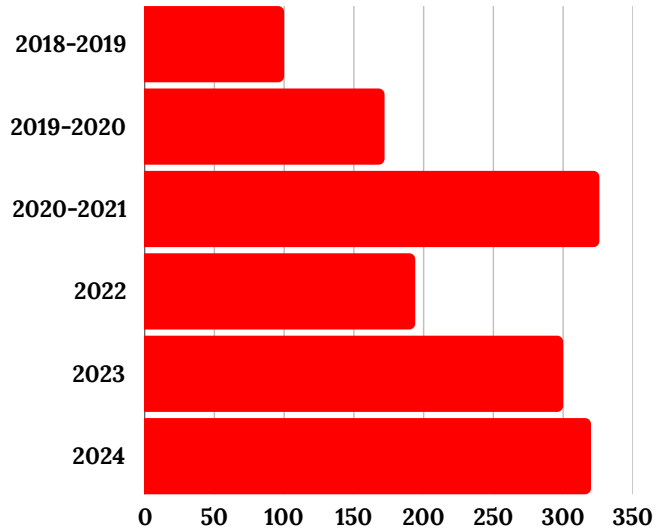
Since 2018, the Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program has been working in Azerbaijan to expand educational opportunities for women from low-income backgrounds and those with limited access to education. Each year, the program announces an open application period for a certain duration, during which young women receive not only financial assistance but also mentorship support.

Since its establishment in 2018, the number of scholarship recipients has steadily increased. This year, SGSP has provided financial aid of up to \$800 USD to **30 students**. Additionally, as a new milestone in the program's activities, the **full annual tuition fees for four students** have been completely covered for the first time.



APPLICATION PROCESS

In total, 332 applications were received during this period. However, 12 applicants (male candidates and those with incomplete or incorrectly filled applications) were disqualified in the initial selection stage due to not meeting eligibility criteria. One of the key requirements for applying to SGSP is being a female student residing in Azerbaijan.



During this period, a total of 320 applications were reviewed. The motivation for applicants to join the scholarship program varies based on their individual needs. As shown in the diagram, most applicants sought financial support to continue their education, cover personal expenses, or invest in personal development—such as language courses, professional training, or preparation for a master’s degree.

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process was carried out in three stages: 1. Initial Review 2. Partner Evaluation 3. Interview. Each stage of the selection process is explained in detail below.

1) Initial Review

At this stage, the SGSP Project Team carefully evaluated 320 applications and categorized them into three groups based on their level of need—highest, medium, and lowest. The determination of financial need was based on the socio-economic indicators presented in the applications. After the initial review, **192 applicants** advanced to the next stage.



2) Partner Evaluation

Two dedicated SGSP partners reviewed the short-answer essays in anonymized applications based on two key criteria: a) Highest financial need; b) Clarity of future goals. At the end of this stage, the SGSP Project Team selected **97 finalists** to move on to the interview phase.

3) Interview

Since SGSP is a needs-based scholarship program, individual phone/online interviews were conducted to assess how well the scholarship funds aligned with students' needs. During this phase, the goal of the SGSP Project Team was to get to know each finalist more closely and ask additional questions not covered in the application form.

After thorough discussions, an eight-day interview process was conducted, resulting in the selection of **34 scholarship recipients**.

For the first time this year, **four first-generation students** pursuing degrees in education were awarded **full annual tuition scholarships**. A first-generation student is the first in their family to have access to higher education. Research shows that this group of students faces unique challenges in adapting to the higher education environment. Considering this, the SGSP Project Team awarded the **First-Generation Student Scholarship** to four individuals from low-income families.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The SGSP Mentorship Program is an intensive three-month initiative dedicated to promoting the growth and advancement of scholarship recipients. By engaging mentors from diverse fields on a voluntary basis, the program provides young women with meaningful guidance and support, helping them make empowered decisions in their personal and professional lives. The mentorship program has proven to be highly beneficial, with numerous success stories recorded each year. Scholarship recipients have reported feeling more empowered, gaining greater self-confidence, and improving their decision-making skills for their future

careers through mentorship connections. To ensure its continuous positive impact, the program's progress is regularly monitored.

Beyond personal development, the program also encourages scholars to actively participate in SGSP's growing network, strengthening their sense of community. This network serves as a valuable resource for ongoing collaboration, professional development, and long-term support.

This year, **up to 20 scholarship recipients participated in the three-month mentorship program.**



SGSP, recognizing the increasing need for support among its scholars, will collaborate with the Violette Mentorship Program starting in 2025. Founded by two young individuals, this program aims to support young women and contribute to positive change in their lives. Their vision aligns perfectly with the values of SGSP. For more information, visit their Instagram page: [Violette Mentorship](#).

PARTNERSHIPS



This year, we continued our partnership with the **Azerbaijani Cultural Society of Northern California** and the **Fund for Azerbaijan**. Both nonprofit organizations provided us with organizational and fundraising support, helping us raise more funds for scholarships and implement better programming for our scholars.

We would like to express our gratitude to our partners for their time and efforts in making 2024 another successful year!





MEETING WITH AWARDEES

Although the Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program (SGSP) has been operating since 2018, all crowdfunding campaigns and the selection process have been conducted entirely online. Over the years, we have only been able to organize two in-person meetings with past scholarship recipients.

This year, on **March 15, 2024**, we successfully reunited with our awardees and partner organizations. The main goal of the event was to bring scholarship recipients together, facilitate experience sharing, and inform them about new programs and opportunities.

Representatives from partner organizations such as **ACSNC, For Azerbaijan, and Dentons** also attended the event. We believe that as scholarship recipients connect, share their experiences, and learn from one another, it is possible to build a strong community that **supports education in Azerbaijan, especially for women.**

Looking ahead, SGSP aims to expand its efforts to provide more young women with access to education and support them in achieving success.



SGSP 2023 AWARDEES

MEETING WITH APPLICANTS

For the first time this year, as part of the application process, a meeting with potential scholarship applicants was organized on May 21 at ASAN Service Center No. 7, initiated by **our awardee Zeynab Samedova**.

Approximately **50 participants** attended the event, where Zeynab shared her experiences from the program and provided detailed answers to participants' questions about the application process.

We believe that such meetings will be highly beneficial in the future, helping students clarify their questions and support their decision-making process.



CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

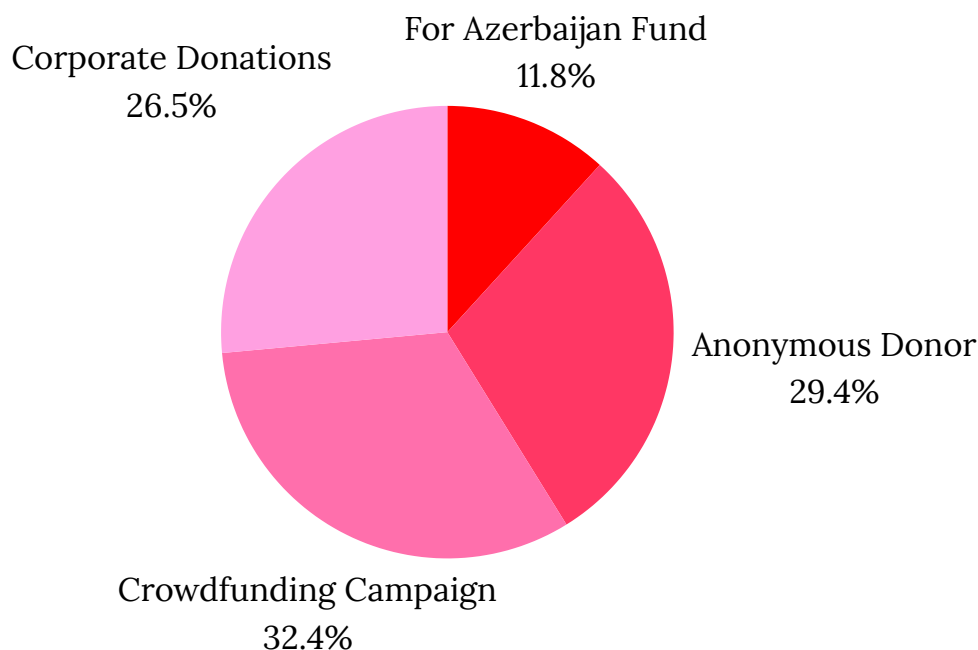
As part of the 2024 SGSP Crowdfunding Campaign, we successfully raised **\$15,979 USD** through **47 online donations** in collaboration with the Azerbaijani Cultural Society of Northern California (ACSNC) to support the education of young women from Azerbaijan.

In addition, corporate donations totalling **\$15,591.86 USD** from Servis Plan (Germany) and Ernst & Young (EY Baku) further strengthened our fundraising efforts. As in previous years, an anonymous donor generously contributed **\$8,000 USD**, bringing our total budget for 2024 to **\$39,570 USD**.

With this financial support, we were able to cover educational expenses for 30 students.

Beyond this campaign, our collective efforts and ongoing partnerships continued to make an impact throughout the year. Thanks to the Fund for Azerbaijan, we provided support to four additional students, bringing the **total number of scholarships awarded to 34**.

The graph below illustrates the distribution of donations across various campaigns and partnerships:



FINANCIAL REPORT 2024

Income	
Crowdfunding Campaign Donations (Website)	\$ 15,979.00
Corporate Donations	\$ 15,591.86
Anonymous Donor Contribution	\$ 8,000.00
Total Income	\$ 39,570.86
Expenses	
Administrative Expenses	\$ 1,287.55
Scholarship Disbursement	\$ 19,414.94
Total Expenses	\$ 20,702.49
Net Surplus *Deficit 2024	\$ 18,868.37
Net Surplus *Deficit 2020-2023	\$ 19,211.74
Total Fund Available	\$ 38,080.11
Administrative Expenses / Total Income	3%
Scholarship Disbursement / Total Income	49%
Net Surplus 2024 / Total Income	48%

***Administrative Expenses** encompass platform payments (Stripe, Hosting, GSuite, and transfer fees). It's important to note that all work undertaken by the team is on a voluntary basis; no monetary compensation is provided.

***Net Surplus (Deficit)** will be allocated to fund scholarships for the awardees in the upcoming years.

***Revenue and expenses are calculated till December 30, 2024**



Shahla Garayeva Scholarship Program



DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Write to us:
mail@sgsp.info