



The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities

Extending the welcome:

LONG-TERM APPROACHES
TO
SUPPORTING
REFUGEES
AND
AT-RISK
SCHOLARS

IN
HIGHER
EDUCATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The ACU would also like to thank all those who contributed to the symposium by sharing their knowledge and experiences and by identifying practical solutions to support refugees, displaced people, and at-risk scholars in higher education. To find out more, or to register your interest in joining the ACU's new community of practice for universities working in this area, contact membership@acu.ac.uk



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FOREWORD

The Education 2030 Agenda calls for the international community to ensure that ‘no one is left behind’. This extends to all potential learners from a diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic and indigenous groups, faiths and belief systems and includes the growing number of refugees, migrants and vulnerable displaced persons. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is working with member states and partner organisations to break down barriers to inclusion and to improve equity of access to all levels of education, including for refugees and migrants.

Until now, however, the focus on refugees and vulnerable migrant education has been largely concentrated on basic education. As of 2019 there are an estimated 69.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, most of whom have few means to access education. Of this unprecedented number, only 1% of eligible refugees have equitable access to higher education level studies. The 2018 Global Education Meeting in Brussels recognised this failing and expanded its scope to include higher education, urging a ‘commitment to include migrants, displaced persons and refugees in the education and training systems and to facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills, and competencies’. More urgent attention is needed at the system and institutional levels to address the waste of talent that this gap represents – not only for individual refugees but also for the societies and economies that receive them.

Higher education institutions are not only seats of learning and academic research; they are a service to society and have a duty to respond to the aspirations of their expanded local and national communities. These communities are becoming increasingly diverse, with diverse educational needs in terms of knowledge, skills and competence acquisition. For universities to be inclusive of and accessible to refugee and vulnerable migrant groups, they must be adaptive, flexible and receptive. Institutional policies are required to attract and retain migrant and refugee talents. Such policies must include flexible entry pathways; be adaptive in the types of learning courses and study programmes they provide; and be receptive to creating the support services needed to address the unique difficulties that refugee and migrant learners face as they adjust to a life and a learning environment that is often markedly alien to that of their home countries.

One of the main obstacles that refugees face when applying for higher education studies, or seeking meaningful work opportunities, is that their previous studies and qualifications are not recognised. Often, refugees find themselves in a new country without any official documentation of their qualifications. Recognising this, the Brussels Declaration also noted that ‘mechanisms such as the European Qualification Passport are important instruments to meet the aspirations of individuals and are beneficial to both host countries, as well as countries of origin’.

Building on this initiative, UNESCO’s member states have expressed an urgent need to scale up the qualifications passport to the global level. The UNESCO Qualification Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants is envisaged to offer a multilateral solution to the increasing global challenge of providing access to higher education and employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged people on the move. It emphasises the importance of education for building peace, restoring dignity and recovering livelihoods for refugees, and the need to implement a comprehensive refugee response and strengthen global governance of migration.

Such practical mechanisms can ultimately, however, only have an impact if they are mirrored by an open-minded and flexible approach to higher learning access by higher education institutions themselves, coupled with their own individual commitments to embrace refugee and migrant communities. The ACU’s ‘Extending the welcome’ initiative not only signals a strong commitment from a network of more than 500 institutions around the world but is also synonymous with ‘leaving no one behind’ and attests to the determination of 50 nations to make this a reality.

UNESCO encourages higher education institutions globally to contribute to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – goals that are relevant to all of humanity, regardless of their prior learning, status, location or life histories. Extending the welcome to higher learning is a laudable contribution to realising these global priorities.

Peter Wells
Chief of Higher Education, UNESCO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Extending the welcome', a symposium convened in March 2019 by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) in partnership with the University of Edinburgh and the British Council, brought together participants from a dozen countries across public, private and academic spheres to discuss the education gap faced by refugees and displaced people¹ and what universities can do to help bridge that gap. Through a discussion of findings and best practice from already established programmes, participants identified common themes that need to be addressed and developed recommendations for universities that are working to widen the participation of refugees and displaced people at their institutions.

The key issues identified included financial barriers, structural barriers, the recognition (or lack thereof) of prior qualifications, the additional obstacles faced by refugee and displaced women, and the impact of trauma and mental health issues on educational progression and overall wellbeing. The following emerged as areas in which work can be done to mitigate these barriers:

- Increasing flexibility on the part of higher education providers, specifically around admissions criteria, recognition of qualifications and acknowledging and addressing the additional barriers that refugees and displaced people are likely to face once they have entered higher education.
- Being creative, innovative and context-led in programme design. Increasing access to open, distance and blended learning, tailoring programmes to their particular communities, and involving refugees and displaced people in programme design and implementation were all identified as crucial components of programme success.
- Directly addressing gender and other intersectional barriers that female refugees and displaced people are likely to face.

- Ensuring holistic programme design for ongoing success. Programmes that were cognisant of and specifically addressed their participants' psychosocial, financial and legal concerns saw higher retention rates and a greater level of academic success than those that did not.
- Sharing best practice, knowledge and experience among practitioners working to widen participation in higher education to refugees and displaced people. This will ensure that programmes have the greatest chance of success.
- Building international networks and partnerships as a valuable way to build ties between institutions already working in this area.

The ACU is committed to engaging with its member universities on these key areas and to working in partnership to deliver the following next steps:

- Developing a **statement of shared values** to be taken up by members, including a commitment to widen access to higher education for displaced people
- Launching a **community of practice** to facilitate the sharing of best practice among those working in this area
- Creating **opportunities for collaborative research and data sharing** to fill information gaps, identify effective partnerships and provide evidence-based advocacy and policy recommendations for local and national governments

¹ Throughout, this report uses the term 'refugees and displaced people' to describe a broad group of people that includes refugees, people seeking asylum, internally displaced people, forced migrants and at-risk scholars. Members of this group can be either in or out of their country of citizenship and may hold a range of legal statuses, both settled and precarious.

INTRODUCTION

The Global Compact on Refugees² was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in December 2018 and outlined the growing need for greater cooperation by the international community in dealing with the ever-expanding refugee crisis. It aims to ease the pressure on host countries and to increase refugee self-reliance, and highlighted access to education – specifically including tertiary education – as a key component. Academics were listed as relevant stakeholders and were mentioned among those who had much to contribute to finding creative solutions to this highly complex issue.

The UNHCR estimates that as of June 2019, of a total of 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, refugees numbered 25.9 million, and that 84% of these were being hosted by developing countries.³ Displacement has a severe impact on a person's education pathway, with many displaced people never again resuming formal or informal education. Only 61% of refugee children attend primary school, against a global average of 92%, and as they shift into their university years the numbers only get worse. Only 1% of refugees participate in tertiary education compared to 37% of people globally.⁴ That is an extraordinary amount of potential going untapped.

Education benefits not just the individual, but also the community of which they are a part. It serves to develop people to their fullest potential and, in the context of displaced people, can also provide communities with the skills and knowledge they need to combat the unique challenges facing them. Higher education can also provide people with tools to support development and reconstruction in their home country, if return becomes possible. Moreover, Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights affirms everyone's right to education, a right that was enshrined with the ratification of the UN International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. With tertiary education also included in the Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of higher education as an integral element of this right is gradually coming to the fore.

In response to sudden influxes of refugees and displaced people, universities have often taken action to try to increase access for these groups to higher education. However, these actions are often by necessity reactive, short-term solutions that may not last beyond the initial crisis. Some refugees and displaced people experience hostile environments on arrival in a host country, which has wider implications for access to education. There is a need for medium- and long-term programmes that work proactively and creatively to recognise and overcome the barriers facing refugees and displaced people, and to widen their participation in higher education.

It was within this context, and with its strategic priorities in mind,⁵ that the ACU, in partnership with the British Council and the University of Edinburgh, convened a two-day symposium that aimed to facilitate a discussion on current practices in relation to refugee higher education and on what more could be done by universities to support displaced people in furthering their education.

The event brought together academics, policymakers, students and partners working in the area of refugee higher education and included participants from across the global north and south, with representatives from origin, transit and destination countries present. Programmes currently working on this issue were showcased, including projects operating in Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta and Uganda, among others. Event participants identified gaps in this area of work and developed recommendations for how the higher education sector could strengthen its response.

'Tackling global issues has always represented the essence of the University of Edinburgh's international ambitions, and we were delighted to contribute to this symposium. We hope this work will lead to deeper partnerships, stronger relationships and the commitment for a longer-term vision for supporting refugees, displaced persons and at-risk scholars to fulfil their potential through higher education.'

**– James Smith, Vice-Principal International,
University of Edinburgh**

2 UNHCR, 'Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Part II – Global Compact on Refugees' (New York: UN, 2018) <www.unhcr.org/ph/the-global-compact-on-refugees>

3 UNHCR, 'Figures at a Glance' (2019) <www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html> [accessed 13 October 2019]

4 UNHCR, 'Turn the Tide: Refugee Education in Crisis' (Geneva: UNHCR, 2018) <www.unhcr.org/5b852f8e4.pdf>

5 The Association of Commonwealth Universities, 'The Road to 2030' <www.acu.ac.uk/about-us/road-2030>

BARRIERS TO ACCESS FOR DISPLACED PEOPLE

Refugees and displaced people all over the globe face significant barriers to furthering their education. Regardless of whether they are in a refugee camp in a host country, internally displaced in their own or have been permanently settled in one of the few developed nations with a refugee resettlement programme, refugees and displaced people struggle to access higher education. These barriers may be external (such as difficulties in accessing a visa to enter the country in which the institution is based), explicit (such as admissions criteria) or implicit (such as structural or psychosocial issues).

Among the issues highlighted by the symposium participants one of the most pressing was the recognition – or lack thereof – of refugees' and displaced peoples' prior qualifications. When people flee war or persecution, documents are often lost or destroyed during the journey, making recognising prior education difficult. Even for those who manage to salvage their official documentation, the road to having previous qualifications recognised by a different educational system is challenging, expensive and time-consuming. Education providers may not adequately value the prospective student's qualification, or the context in which it was achieved, and may lack the tools to verify equivalence.

For those who do overcome these hurdles, financial restrictions often prevent further progression. Regardless of their legal status, refugees and displaced people (including people seeking asylum) are often classified by education providers in host nations as international students and as such face high tuition costs. Even those who have been resettled on refugee visas with recourse to public funds often find accessing student finance systems challenging. While higher education providers in global north countries have made some progress in recent years to increase the number of scholarships offered to refugees and people seeking asylum,⁶ there is still much more scope for additional investment in this area.

Once refugees have been enrolled in higher education programmes, issues of retention and the eventual academic success of participants of education programmes are also areas of concern. The effects of trauma on memory and the ongoing impact of their environment for those still in precarious situations cannot be underestimated. Structural barriers such as access to the internet and physical spaces in which to study further compound the challenges faced by these students.

During the symposium, participants discussed ways to address these barriers and enable wider access to higher education for affected people. Drawing on real-world examples from programmes being run by many of those in the room, event participants identified considerations and policy recommendations that could drive progress. These recommendations are outlined on the pages that follow.

'When people flee war or persecution, documents are often lost or destroyed during the journey, making recognising prior education difficult.'

⁶ 71 institutions in the UK offer refugee and asylum seeker-specific scholarships and fee waivers and, as of 2018, 204 scholarships were offered by more than 23 universities in Australia.

1. FLEXIBLE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

An important area of need identified by attendees was for higher education providers to be more flexible in their admissions criteria and to be cognisant of the additional barriers that refugees and displaced people face in accessing, and successfully participating in, higher education. To ensure increased participation by refugee and displaced students, it is vital that admissions departments appreciate the context in which many of these applicants have undertaken their education and understand the gaps and 'breaks' in education pathways they may have experienced. Universities could broaden the pool of applicants under consideration by increasing understanding among admissions staff of the issues around documentation and of the context in which refugees and displaced people received education and likely took their language examinations.

It is important for higher education providers to recognise that by being more flexible in their admissions criteria for their institutions they are not lowering the standards of the institution but are instead increasing the participation of students who are highly resilient, will bring a unique perspective to the topics under examination and will enrich institutions through diversity.

Case study: Universities of Sanctuary

Universities of Sanctuary (UoS) is an initiative to encourage and support universities in the UK to increase access for refugees and displaced people to their institutions. Part of the City of Sanctuary movement, it requires the university to commit publicly to the City of Sanctuary vision of welcome and to offer scholarships to refugees and displaced people who are unable to access student finance.

UoS provides information and guidance to participating universities on the difficulties these students are likely to face, including absent or missing educational documentation, the impact of likely mental health issues and possible implications of the student's immigration status. In response to absent or incomplete transcripts, UoS suggests that universities find alternative ways to assess grades or make allowances for admissions staff to overlook incomplete records if 'enough evidence of qualification can be shown through circumstantial evidence and ability.'⁷ To combat mental health issues, UoS advises that student counsellors be well versed in the challenges that people seeking asylum can face or, in the situation of a scholarship being provided, that a point of contact is clearly identified for the student to approach if they are struggling.

Equally important is embedding this information and these processes within the institution so that all levels of the university, but in particular those who are likely to encounter refugee and displaced students (such as admissions and student welfare staff), are aware of the issues at play and are better equipped to assist them. Symposium participants with experience of the UK scholarship system highlighted that, even when scholarships exist, university staff are often unaware of them and are insufficiently prepared to support prospective students who may have precarious or unresolved immigration status.

To date, 13 universities in Britain have been classified as Universities of Sanctuary, with more than 30 working towards recognition.

⁷ A. Grace and B. Margolis, *Universities of Sanctuary Resource Pack* (Leeds: City of Sanctuary, 2019), <<https://universities.cityofsanctuary.org/2019/03/27/the-new-university-of-sanctuary-resource-pack-is-here>>.

2. ADAPTABLE INTERVENTIONS

A recurring theme of the symposium was the need for the various programmes being delivered to be flexible and adaptable. While there is great potential to upscale and duplicate programmes over multiple regions, adapting them to the specific context and community in which they are being delivered is imperative to a programme's ongoing success. In addition, it is vital to involve refugees and displaced people in the programme design process, and during development and implementation, to ensure that the programme is relevant, coherent and addresses effectively its aims.

Higher education institutions and partners working to widen participation also need to be flexible in the mode and method of study they offer and ensure they address the structural barriers facing refugees and displaced people. Blended education methods, online learning systems and innovation in programme design and distribution all have an important part to play in delivering higher education programmes to refugees and populations of displaced people.

Case study: PADILEIA

The Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access (PADILEIA)⁸ is increasing access to higher education for refugee and disadvantaged host communities in Jordan and Lebanon through new online and blended learning programmes.

Participating students can work towards micro-credentials in relevant fields and are supported by tailored student services and affordable pathways into locally delivered formal academic qualifications.

PADILEIA provides three learning offers:

- Short online courses via the FutureLearn platform.
- Online university-level courses and Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) through the Kiron online learning platform.
- University foundation programmes, using blended learning and delivered via the partner universities.

Through these learning offers, PADILEIA is increasing refugee communities' access to high-quality education by providing a foundation for further higher education learning. PADILEIA also enables students to acquire the transferable skills they need for future work, to act as agents of change within their own communities and to play a future role in the reconstruction of Syria.

A mentorship component, administered via messaging and voice-over-IP service WhatsApp, was developed to counter retention issues. Programme partners also identified the importance of co-design with the target students and of 'localising' the content – adapting the visual design, way of talking and names used to increase the course's relevance to the student population. Study hubs were constructed in Lebanon to deliver blended learning and as a place to take MOOCs. These physical locations also doubled as a place to access healthcare and career support. In Jordan, the study hubs are located on the campus of the partner university, allowing students to take part in campus life, outside the refugee camps.

The PADILEIA partnership is led by King's College London (UK), in collaboration with the American University of Beirut (Lebanon), Al al-Bayt University (Jordan), Kiron Open Higher Education (Germany) and FutureLearn (UK).

8 Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access (PADILEIA), <www.padileia.org>

3. GREATER GENDER AWARENESS

Gender is an important component that needs to be specifically considered when attempting to extend higher education access to refugees and displaced people. Due to a range of issues, most notably the burden of child-rearing – which falls disproportionately on the child’s mother or female relatives, and cultural stigmas towards women furthering their education, women are frequently underrepresented in initiatives designed to assist and increase participation among displaced people.

Safety is also a concern: female and non-binary people in refugee camps are at a much higher risk of violence, which can have an impact on their access to programmes and whether they are safe travelling to and from learning facilities. Gender as a contributing factor needs to be considered throughout programme design and implementation to ensure that a project is addressing adequately the additional, intersectional barriers that female refugees and displaced people will face.

Case study: Pathways for Promise

Pathways for Promise is a scheme run by the Asian University for Women (Bangladesh). It is a flexible preparatory course for women from traditionally underrepresented communities, including refugees and internally displaced people, that aims to assist their transition into undergraduate study. Students can participate in one- or two-year academies, which have a focus on English language study and classes in mathematics, computer science, martial arts and leadership.

Through this programme, the Asian University for Women recognises that ‘circumstance is not an indicator of potential’⁹ and provides instruction on academic skills such as scan reading, critical thinking and constructing an argument. It acknowledges that women from these communities were often not expected to have their own opinions or to speak out in support of them.

The programme also includes emotional and personal development aspects, which are blended with the academic components. Project organisers identified this as a challenge in the programme’s development, but also vital to the programme’s success.

'Gender as a contributing factor needs to be considered throughout programme design and implementation'

⁹ Pathways for Promise, The Asian University for Women, Bangladesh <www.asian-university.org/impact/our-partners-2>

4. A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH

The importance of using a holistic approach when designing and implementing projects in this area was a pervasive theme during the symposium. Programmes that simply brought refugees into the higher education sphere found that students would not fare nearly as well as those in programmes that considered and factored into their design the additional barriers and challenges that these students face.

To maximise their success, the projects that were showcased during the symposium had used mentorship components to combat retention issues, including personal and emotional development alongside academic development, and given consideration to mental health as a central issue. Factoring in physical and mental health, and legal, academic and financial issues, was identified by participants as greatly improving the success in terms of engagement, retention and academic outcomes of projects working to widen participation.

Case study: Refugee Law Project

The Refugee Law Project¹⁰ at Makerere University (Uganda) provides education programmes to refugees and displaced people based in Uganda. The project focuses on developing English language skills as a pathway to further education and employment, but also on empowering displaced people to advocate for themselves in their everyday lives. Since 2007 more than 10,000 refugees have benefitted from the project, which also offers a two-week intensive course on media practices such as storytelling and documentary making. As well as preparing participants for employment, this course also serves to amplify refugee and displaced voices in the public and political discourse around displaced people.

In addition to these education opportunities, the Refugee Law Project offers mental health and psychosocial support to the participants, recognising that many refugees and displaced people have suffered trauma, which can be a huge obstacle to engaging in education. Staff provide legal support, access to transitional justice mechanisms and make provisions for gender and sexuality issues (one course was targeted specifically to women with child rearing responsibilities and offered childcare as a means of increasing participation and retention of students who were mothers). The Refugee Law Project is aware that addressing the student as a whole person, with complex and intersecting issues, results in a more sustainable progression for the individual, both personally and academically.

'Factoring in physical and mental health, as well as legal, academic and financial issues, was identified by participants as greatly improving the success of projects working to widen participation.'

¹⁰ Refugee Law Project, Makerere University, Uganda <www.refugeelawproject.org>

5. SHARING BEST PRACTICE

Perhaps the most consistent theme that emerged from symposium discussions was the need to share best practice among practitioners and those working in higher education for refugees and displaced people. Often, those conducting research or running programmes to widen participation are working in isolation. Universities may be compartmentalised, and it is common for colleagues to have little to no knowledge of programmes being run at their own institutions, let alone at other institutions.

In an area as complex and multilayered as displacement and forced migration, sharing of best practice and creating networks are essential components of any concerted effort to deliver real and lasting change. Participants spoke of the need to share programme information, research projects and findings, best practice, barriers, enablers and interventions. Knowing what did not work and what lessons were learned from facilitators' practical experience can also help to ensure that missteps are not replicated and that best practices are developed efficiently and effectively. While it may be challenging, universities should attempt to mitigate their 'territorialism' and strive to be active and open partners in this most vital imperative.

6. LEVERAGING THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Collaboration across the global university sector is a vital way to maximise the impact of national and institutional efforts to support refugees and displaced people in accessing higher education. The far-reaching university network that the ACU represents, working in partnership with other international networks, is a powerful tool for joint action on this issue. The development of strong and continuing networks around common interests and research themes enables information, resources, and best practice to be shared more quickly and consistently. It allows resources to be redistributed to where they can do the most good and minimises the likelihood of unnecessary duplication across projects. It enables the wealth of experience, knowledge, insights and perspectives that are held within this globally dispersed group to be coalesced. Such networks could also serve to counter or somewhat overcome the unsympathetic national narratives on refugees and displaced people held by many countries.

With this in mind, the ACU has committed to sharing information, facilitating dialogues, building connections and integrating projects among its members and partners in relation to higher education for refugees and displaced people. As one example, the ACU will use its convening powers and work with the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA)¹¹ and ACU member institutions all over the world to ensure placements for refugee and at-risk academics are made available at many of these institutions.

Partnerships can be used to strengthen ties between institutions already working across the globe in this area. It will be particularly important to strengthen ties between institutions in the global north and those in the global south, as well as making, facilitating and strengthening south-south connections. Universities within the ACU network are located in some of the richest nations in the world and in some of the poorest; some of the largest nations and some of the smallest. They encompass institutions from across the Commonwealth and across the global north-south divide, making the ACU uniquely placed to connect and convene academics and researchers with an immense range of experience and perspectives. The vast majority of refugees and displaced people are hosted by countries in the global south, and universities in these countries should be supported to lead and shape the direction that higher education institutions should take. Contributing resources and building capacity in these regions will ensure those who have on-the-ground experience are supported to drive progress. It will also increase the likelihood that the voices of refugees and displaced people are included in the discussion.

Universities can be powerful voices in effecting change. By joining together, these voices can be amplified to influence national and international government agendas and direct the attention of decision makers to the need to increase refugees' and displaced people's participation in higher education.

¹¹ The Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA) <www.cara.ngo>

CONCLUSIONS

'We cannot as a globe realise our shared commitments for sustainable development if we leave behind the 1% of us who have been displaced or made refugees. Their access to quality education is an important part of enabling them to determine their own future and to contribute to all of ours. Extending the welcome is not only the right thing to do. We may learn a lot by collaborating with refugees and at-risk scholars and by joining with other partners to do so, both about innovative ways to deliver quality education and about collaboration and intercultural relations.'

– Dan Shah, Director of Research, British Council

By making connections and convening diverse groups of individuals, the ACU hopes to facilitate an international response to ensuring the increased participation of refugees and displaced people in higher education. The university sector has a fundamental role to play in this global challenge. As can be seen by the innovative approaches noted in this report, universities are already involved in developing creative methods to widen access. But there is much more that can be done. Broader networks and a community of practice will help to share best practice from projects that have a proven track record, and help to streamline and replicate these projects. They will also serve to make fresh connections, leading to new projects and new initiatives to tackle this international crisis.

Universities need to be active partners in the global discussion on how to best address this issue, in addition to making concrete changes within their institutions. As well as increasing the provision of scholarships for displaced people, institutions must take steps to increase flexibility within their admissions criteria, recognise the additional barriers students from this group will face and 'internationalise' courses and programmes to reach a wider audience by increasing digitisation, expanding distance learning opportunities and opening resources up to underrepresented groups. These changes would have a critical impact on the participation of refugees and displaced people in furthering their education.

Having staff and approaches that are mindful of the external, explicit and implicit barriers, and specific policies in place to address them, are essential to ensuring the success of any processes to increase access. Universities are more than education providers: they connect their students to the wider community and serve as hubs for stronger community participation. They are uniquely placed to provide psychosocial, financial, language and academic support to their refugee and displaced students, and in turn increase their likelihood of success.

Universities also need to look beyond simply providing degree-focused higher education and instead examine the significant role they could play in assisting with teacher training, secondary education and technical and vocational education – even outside their own borders. Global north institutions must look to how they can partner with their colleagues in the global south to research and design innovative programmes in these areas. Partnerships between south-south institutions in countries that host large numbers of refugees should also be sought out and developed so as to draw on the perspectives of those who have in-depth, first-hand experience of this ongoing issue.

The ACU is committed to convening further discussions and taking active steps towards facilitating these partnerships. It is also imperative that the voices of refugees themselves are included in future discussions. Partnering with refugee populations and including those from a refugee background in research and programme design is vital to ensuring that any programmes developed address those issues that the population itself has identified as pressing. Including government input at all stages of research and development will also be important to ensure that there is a willing audience for any policy recommendations that are developed as a result of such projects.

NEXT STEPS

The ACU is committed to engaging with its members and partners to support wider access to higher education for refugees and displaced people, and to delivering the following next steps with its members.

In 2020, we will:

- Develop a **statement of shared values**, created in partnership with universities across the world and including a commitment to work to widen access to higher education for displaced people.
- Launch a **community of practice** to enable information exchange, shared best practice and network and partnership building among those working in this area. Universities often operate individually or bilaterally in their support for displaced people, and there are few opportunities to share best practice. Universities expressed a strong desire to connect and share information and learning from current projects. The community of practice will also encourage the participation of refugees and displaced people, ensuring that those affected have the opportunity to have greater input in programme design and implementation.
- Create **opportunities for collaborative research and data sharing**. Further research is needed to fill information gaps about existing provision, to analyse effective modes of support in a range of diverse contexts and to identify effective partnerships and policy enablers for better education provision. New research projects should focus on directing and shaping robust policy in this area, supporting advocacy and shifting governmental and national agendas. More also needs to be done to ensure the outputs of such research are shared more widely. Through its far-reaching network, and by working with partners such as the British Council, there is great potential for the ACU to disseminate data and outcomes from ongoing projects.

To share your university's work in this area or to register your interest in joining the ACU's new community of practice, please contact membership@acu.ac.uk

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APPENDIX 1

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

DAY ONE	
10.00 – 10.15	<p>WELCOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor James Smith, Vice-Principal International, University of Edinburgh • Dr Faye Taylor, Head of Strategic Partnerships, ACU • Dan Shah, Director of Research, British Council
10.15 – 11.30	<p>PLENARY PANEL: SETTING THE SCENE</p> <p>Chair: Alex Wright, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, ACU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassador John Mugerwa, Deputy High Commissioner of Uganda to the UK • Dan Shah, Director of Research, British Council • Ishrat Hossain, Commonwealth PhD Scholar, University of Oxford • Peter Wells, Chief of Higher Education, UNESCO
11.45 – 13.00	<p>CURRENT INITIATIVES AND EXPERIENCES: ODL AND PATHWAY PROGRAMMES</p> <p>Chair: Dr Alastair Niven, Honorary Fellow, University of Oxford</p> <p>Case studies from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Tania Lima, King's College London • Andrew Jones, Asian University for Women • Jessica Oddy, University of East London • Susan Alupo and David Onen Ongwech, Makerere University
13.45 – 15.00	<p>CURRENT INITIATIVES AND EXPERIENCES: MOBILITY AND SANCTUARY PROGRAMMES</p> <p>Chair: Dr Alastair Niven, Honorary Fellow, University of Oxford</p> <p>Case studies from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheila Mills, Council for At-Risk Academics, and Dr Jon Turner, University of Edinburgh • Emily Bowerman, Refugee Support Network • Arooba Hameed and Rhoda Oluwajoba, Universities of Sanctuary • Dr Anbara Khalidi, Windle Trust International
15.15 – 17.00	<p>WORKSHOP: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOPING SUPPORT</p> <p>Chair: Dr Faye Taylor, Head of Strategic Partnerships, ACU</p> <p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open distance learning (ODL) and blended learning • Pathway programmes, skills and training • Mobility and sanctuary programmes • Partnerships

DAY TWO	
09.15 – 10.30	<p>CASE STUDIES: PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES</p> <p>Chair: Jean-Benoît Falisse, Lecturer, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh</p> <p>Case studies from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Rebecca Murray, University of Exeter, and Dr Terri Sandison, University of Winchester • Dr Sally Baker, University of New South Wales, and Dr Karen Dunwoodie, Deakin University • Annick Suzor-Weiner, AUF • Michelle Manks, World University Service of Canada
10.45 – 11.30	<p>THE ACU AND AUF: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS?</p> <p>Chair: Jean-Benoît Falisse, Lecturer, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Joanna Newman, Secretary General and CEO, ACU • Georges Malamoud, Strategic Advisor to the Rector, AUF
11.30 – 13.00	<p>ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS: NEXT STEPS</p> <p>Roundtable discussions to identify priority areas for collective action</p> <p>Chairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex Wright, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, ACU • Emily Morrison, Senior Consultant – Research, British Council
14.00 – 14.30	<p>NEXT STEPS: CONCLUSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex Wright, ACU, and Emily Morrison, British Council
14.30 – 15.30	<p>REFLECTIONS AND CLOSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackie Killeen, Acting Director, UK, and Director, Scotland, British Council • Dr Joanna Newman, Secretary General and CEO, ACU • Hourie Tafech, Founder, Spark 15 • Dr Sally Baker, Lecturer, University of New South Wales

APPENDIX 2

SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS

Dr Karen Dunwoodie	Research Fellow, Deakin Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education	Deakin University	Australia
Dr Sally Baker	Lecturer, School of Education	University of New South Wales	Australia
Andrew Jones	Director, Pathways for Promise Pre-Access Program	Asian University of Women	Bangladesh
Emilie Coyle	Director of National Programmes, The Refugee Hub	University of Ottawa	Canada
Michelle Manks	Senior Manager, Durable Solutions for Refugees Programming	World University Service of Canada	Canada
Georges Malamoud	Strategic Advisor to the Rector	Agence universitaire de la Francophonie	France
Annick Suzor-Weiner	Project Manager	Agence universitaire de la Francophonie	France
Peter Wells	Chief, Higher Education	UNESCO	France
Philemon Misoy	Project Liaison Officer	Windle Trust International	Kenya
Hourie Tafech	Founder	Spark 15	Malta
Dr Sara Kindon	Associate Professor, Human Geography and Development Studies	Victoria University of Wellington	New Zealand
Susan Alupo	Programme Manager, Access to Justice	Makerere University	Uganda
Onen David Ongwech	Programme Manager – Gender and Sexuality	Makerere University	Uganda
Annabel Boud	Programme Manager (Policy), Commonwealth Scholarship Commission	Association of Commonwealth Universities	UK
Dr Joanna Newman	Chief Executive and Secretary General	Association of Commonwealth Universities	UK
Liberty Oberlander	Deputy Head of Membership	Association of Commonwealth Universities	UK
Dr Faye Taylor	Head of Strategic Partnerships	Association of Commonwealth Universities	UK
Alex Wright	Head of Policy and Public Affairs	Association of Commonwealth Universities	UK
Dr Ephraim Kisangala	Commonwealth Scholar (Uganda)	Bangor University	UK
Emmanuel Okot	Commonwealth Scholar (Uganda)	Bangor University	UK
Denis Opiyo	Commonwealth Scholar (Uganda)	Bangor University	UK
Jackie Killeen	Acting Director, UK, and Director, Scotland	British Council	UK
Emily Morrison	Senior Consultant – Research	British Council	UK
Dan Shah	Director of Research	British Council	UK
Lucy Young	Acting Deputy Director, Scotland	British Council	UK
Sheila Mills	Scotland Manager	Council for At-Risk Academics	UK
Mark Holton	Director of Organisation Development and Executive Director, Research Centre for Global Learning	Coventry University	UK

Melissa Tam	Senior Advisor to the Area Director	High Commission of Canada in the UK	UK
Dr Tania Lima	Director of Global Engagement	King's College London	UK
Father David Holdcroft	Professional Education Specialist	Jesuit Refugee Service	UK
Ben Webster	Founder	Mosaik Education	UK
Emily Bowerman	Higher Education Programme Manager	Refugee Support Network	UK
Dr Jonathan Bridge	Senior Lecturer in Physical Geography	Sheffield Hallam University	UK
Christopher Smart	Access to University Coordinator	Student Action for Refugees	UK
Moses Mpungu	Second Secretary	Uganda High Commission	UK
Ambassador John Mugerwa	Deputy High Commissioner	Uganda High Commission	UK
Arooba Hameed	Universities of Sanctuary Steering Group	Universities of Sanctuary	UK
Rhoda Oluwajoba	Universities of Sanctuary Steering Group	Universities of Sanctuary	UK
Gün Orgun	Regional Coordinator for Scotland	Universities of Sanctuary	UK
Dr Kurt Mills	Professor of International Relations and Human Rights	University of Dundee	UK
Jessica Oddy	Academic Tutor/PhD Candidate	University of East London	UK
Inga Ackermann	Global Community Coordinator	University of Edinburgh	UK
Michael Crawley	Online Learning Project Coordinator, Centre of African Studies	University of Edinburgh	UK
Dr Jean-Benoit Falisse	Lecturer, Centre of African Studies	University of Edinburgh	UK
Sarah Hoey	Immigration Legal Adviser	University of Edinburgh	UK
Derek MacLeod	Africa Regional Director	University of Edinburgh	UK
Nick Rowland	Regional Manager for Africa	University of Edinburgh	UK
Dr Jon Turner	Director, Institute for Academic Development	University of Edinburgh	UK
Ishrat Hossain	Commonwealth Scholar (Bangladesh)	University of Oxford	UK
Dr Alastair Niven OBE LVO	Honorary Fellow of Harris Manchester College	University of Oxford	UK
Professor Paul van Gardingen	Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, International and Development Research	University of Leicester	UK
Gillian Melville	Immigration Case Supervisor, Law Clinic	University of Strathclyde	UK
Ahmad Akkad	MA student in Global Education and International Development	University of Warwick	UK
Dr Terri Sandison	Special Projects Manager	University of Winchester	UK
Dr Anbara Khalidi	UK Programmes Officer	Windle Trust International	UK
Tomson Dube	Division of Students Affairs	National University of Science and Technology	Zimbabwe



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