



## CONFERENCE

18<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019  
BERLIN



### CONCEPT NOTE

## STUDENT-LED INITIATIVES

19<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 15h45 to 17h00

#### Format

The World-Café will begin with lightning talks from a selection of speakers involved in student-led initiatives. Participants will then break into smaller groups and discuss challenges, opportunities and added value of different models of youth engagement contributing to the expansion of higher education opportunities for refugees.

#### In Brief

This World-Café explores how student-led initiatives and youth engagement can play a pivotal role in contributing to the expansion of high-quality post-secondary and higher education opportunities for refugees. It initiates discussion on how, in the context of the Global Compact on Refugees and SDG 4 commitments, students can lead the design, development and execution of actions that can enable, foster and improve high-quality post-secondary and higher education opportunities for refugees.

#### Background

Higher education programmes range from residential multi-year programmes to technical certificate programmes, online or blended learning short courses and diploma tracks. In each of these, student-led initiatives can play a fundamental role in raising learner perspective vis-à-vis academic institutions, public authorities and local communities. They can actively propose solutions to tackle challenges faced by students in all education phases, from enrolment to access to job opportunities.

Refugee and host community students – including those finishing secondary school, those mid-study and those who have had their studies interrupted – have skills, motivation, talent, knowledge and ideas to inform programmes that work for students, meet their needs now and expectations for the future, increase the likelihood of completing their studies, and amplify the value that students will place on or extract from their studies throughout their lifetime.

They are dynamic, resourceful, and powerful agents of change and academic institution programme managers, education providers, donors and authorities need to empower them and ensure that their perspectives are heard, considered and incorporated to meet their expectations, desires and needs.

The benefits of this approach are numerous, resulting in education opportunities that are responsive to the challenges and circumstances of specific refugee contexts – enrolment barriers, competing obligations to contribute to family financial sustainability, distance and travel restrictions, time or language limitations,



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cultural or social norms that impact women and men differently, and likelihood of employment following completion of the study programme.

### Framing Questions

The first Global Refugee Forum, to be held in December 2019, will highlight commitments to responsibility-sharing, including in expanding access to higher education for refugees significantly and UNHCR is committed to achieving this with its partners.

1. What is the unique contribution of student-led initiatives to this goal?
2. How can refugee and host community students work together to strengthen student-led initiatives at a local and global level?
3. What can academic institutions, education providers, public authorities and donor partners do to support and strengthen student-led initiatives?

### Moderator

**Michelle Manks**, Senior Manager - Durable Solutions for Refugees, World University Service of Canada (WUSC)

### Speakers

**Faida Alida**, Bachelor's student of Economics on a DAFI scholarship, Chad

**Ronja Hesse**, Member of the European Student's Union and head of the free association of student's union fzs e.V., Germany

**Ella Ininahazwe**, Refugee College Guidance Counsellor with the organization Kepler, Rwanda

**Narine George**, Project coordinator at the International Relations Office at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg Cottbus and Welcome Award Winner 2018, Germany

**Selin Susan Mathews**, Project Manager Refugee Assistance Programme at Bosco, India

**Simon Marot Touloung**, DAFI alumnus, member of the Global Youth Advisory Council and Programme Manager with African Youth Action Network (AYAN), Uganda

### Rapporteurs

**Oscar Javier Gacía Suarez**, DAFI alumnus and English teacher, Ecuador