Concept Note

European Academic Refugee Interdisciplinary Network – EARIN

I. Description

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) called for the establishment of "a global academic network on refugee, other forced displacement, and statelessness issues involving universities, academic alliances, and research institutions, together with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders, to facilitate research, training and scholarship opportunities which result in specific deliverables in support of the objectives of the global compact".

Following the establishment of the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN) at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) held in December 2019, several academic institutions, researchers, governments and other stakeholders pledged to support displaced communities.

While significant collaboration is on-going in the Europe region between UNHCR, higher education and research institutions, UNHCR identified a need for a jointly owned regional platform to advance the objectives of the GCR, implement GRF pledges related to academia and research, and support the coordinated engagement of European institutions in the GAIN and the GRF. In particular, an academic network plays an important role in supporting stakeholders to prepare an evidence-based, holistic and well-coordinated response to emergencies.

II. Objectives

Objectives were agreed upon and prioritized by members of the European Academic Refugee Interdisciplinary Network (EARIN) in the first meetings in November 2022 and January 2023. Objectives of EARIN include:

1. Promote actionable research in Europe

1.1. Map and compile existing mappings of European academic and research initiatives that are already engaging in or have the potential to engage in forced displacement and statelessness research

1.2. Identify initiatives and research on displacement and statelessness issues in major countries of asylum across the world

1.3. Identify gaps in knowledge and evidence in support of the implementation of protection and solutions for refugees (e.g. socio-economic profiles of refugees and labour market needs in Europe, shortcomings in economic inclusion / education, refugee contributions to economies).

2. Enhance teaching on forced displacement and statelessness

2.1. Expand learning and education opportunities in the region on displacement and statelessness issues

2.2. Map and implement learning programmes for teaching and university staff on refugee specific needs

2.3. Equip relevant government and public services personnel to respond to refugee needs

2.4. Facilitate connections between universities, academic and research institutions in Europe and in other regions.

3. **Expand education and academic job opportunities for refugees in the region**

3.1. Create education opportunities for refugee students, scholars and researchers in Europe

3.2. Mobilize support for the Aiming Higher Campaign to support 15by30 goals

3.3. Collect good practices on effective admission and integration of refugee students, scholars, professors and researchers

3.4. Advocate for policies to create scholarships and bursaries for refugee students, scholars, professors and researchers, and to create a talent pool initiative to facilitate labor entry in Europe.

4. **Advance the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)**

4.1. Identify and address barriers to the implementation of pledges made at the GRF in 2019

4.2. Bring academic and research individuals, institutions and alliances together to develop and make pledges based on their agreed commitments at the GRF in 2023

4.3. Make evidence-based recommendations to the international community in line with needs and gaps identified by the group.

III. Priority Areas of Work

To achieve objectives in Section II, members of the network are expected to work on five priority areas:

1. **Strengthen the evidence-base** of gaps in refugee protection and solutions, particularly those relating to refugees' access to education in Europe, including by developing methods to improve **data-gathering** on education of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, as well as on psychosocial, financial, legal and policy barriers to their access to primary, secondary and higher education in Europe.

2. **Address gaps and barriers** to access to education in Europe by **mapping and adapting** successful initiatives and existing good practices, including those related to recognition of qualifications, to different contexts in the region, by **facilitating discussions and research** on issues that are pertinent to sustainable access to education of refugees such as the lack of access to safe territory, provision of legal pathways and integration.

3. **Build on existing admission programmes** and education complementary pathways by mapping successful initiatives and exploring ways in which legal pathways can be developed in the region to admit displaced students, **build the capacity** of teaching personnel in primary, secondary and higher education institutions as well as employ researchers and professors from countries of origin and first countries of asylum.

4. **Mobilize resources** to increase the number of student scholarship, aid and study programmes available for refugee, asylum-seeking, internally displaced and stateless children and youth.

5. **Collaborate with forcibly displaced and stateless persons** themselves, as well as with education and research **institutions based in low- and middle-income countries** hosting

higher numbers of refugees in design, development and dissemination of Europe-funded research.

IV. Participation and Working Modalities

The European Academic Refugee Interdisciplinary Network is co-chaired by UNHCR and representatives from universities, academic institutions and research universities in Europe. In an initial phase, modalities of participation remain flexible and may be revised if deemed necessary. However, participants should be cumulatively

  (i)   representatives from universities, academic institutions and alliances, research institutions

         OR refugee students, scholars, researchers, trainees or scientists;

  (ii) based in, or have links with Europe;

  (iii) be committed to supporting the implementation of the GCR.

Interest in joining the working group should be formally shared with EARIN Secretariat via email at hqearin@unhcr.org .

Working modalities were agreed upon by members of the Network during the first meetings. They include:

- Quarterly discussions or workshops until the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, with possibility of further discussions beyond 2023 as mutually agreed upon by members.

- Identification of action-points at the end of each meeting for follow-up by all members

- Agenda setting by co-chairs and Network members

- Resource and information sharing through MS Teams Group (hosted by UNHCR)

Members are expected to:

- Voluntarily commit enough time to ensure the good functioning of EARIN.

- Lead in organizing workshops and other activities

- Encourage their organizations to pledge at the GRF in 2023

- Share quarterly updates on relevant developments in their institutions and opportunities for refugee engagement

VI. Key Deliverables

- User-friendly mapping of European research initiatives linked to the objectives and implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.

- Annual reports in synthesizing findings, lessons learned and promising practices.

- Joint Pledges made at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

- Evidence-based recommendations presented at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

- 2-4 Thematic Workshops to mobilize action on EARIN objectives on a yearly basis

VII. Calendar of Activities

Date and Time	Activity
9 November 2022 **14:00-16:00 CET**	**First meeting to announce the launch of the EARIN** • Review EARIN Concept Note • Discuss membership and participation • Introduction to the workspace (MS Teams) • Encourage participation of academics with lived experience of displacement
27 January 2023 **13:30-15:30 CET**	**Second Meeting** • Adopt EARIN Concept Note • Agree on sub-themes and content of the first workshop of EARIN in Q1 2023 • Discuss interest in future events of EARIN
Q1 2023	**Workshop on European Collaboration with in Low- and Middle-Income Countries** • Research Collaboration • Research Ethics • Visiting Professor Fellowships • Refugee Scholars and Professors • Funding • De Mello Chairs Model
Q2 2023	**Second thematic workshop** *(themes and sub-themes TBD)*
Q3 2023	**Third thematic workshop** *(themes and sub-themes TBD)*
Q4 2023	**Workshop on Global Refugee Forum Pledges and Preparation** *(open to change depending on interest)* • Areas in need of support • Tertiary Education • Aiming Higher • Complementary Pathways

	• Joint pledges
December 2023	**Global Refugee Forum** • Selected members to attend the Forum and present results

Other suggested themes and sub-themes for future events of EARIN in 2023 and beyond:

Theme	Sub-themes
Integration and the Role of Academia	• Research and data collection • Training of university staff • Local opportunities for refugee students and scholars • Addressing language barriers • Teaching languages • Recognition of qualifications • Integration of refugees to labour market
Teaching on Displacement and Statelessness Issues	• Legal Protection • Social Sciences • Geography • Economics
Access to asylum for refugees and asylum seekers	• Access to asylum in unrecognized countries and unusual places of sanctuary
Lessons learned from the Ukraine crisis	• Mobile and flexible programmes • Protection of scholars at risks • Development of frameworks for more predictable responses in the academic and scientific sector • Access to education for non-Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Ukraine war
Mentorship	• Mentorship programme effectiveness, the optimal mentorship process • Best practices and lessons learned
Reintegration	• Building scientific capacity in the South • Lessons learned for protracted conflicts
Lessons learned from the Higher Education, Research and Development sector and research funders and their effectiveness	
Temporary protection and its implementation	