

**ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
1 – 3 JULY 2015 - International Conference Center Geneva**

THEMATIC SESSION

BACKGROUND PAPER

Session Title: **Education and Solutions**

Date: **Wednesday 1 July**

Time/Room: **15.00 – 16.30, Room 3**

Education is a basic human right, enshrined in a wide range of internationally recognized conventions and declarations.

For UNHCR, education also plays a central role in its refugee protection and solutions mandate. Education provides the necessary skills and knowledge sets, coping mechanisms and life-saving information that are needed to allow refugees to protect themselves during any phase of displacement. It is educated refugees, above all, who provide leadership during displacement and who play a key role in rebuilding communities recovering from conflict. The future security of individuals and societies is inextricably connected to the transferable skills, knowledge and capacities that are developed through education. And yet, many refugees still do not have access to quality education nor the possibility to continue their studies despite high learning outcomes.

The strong relationship between solutions and education is recognised by UNHCR and partner NGOs. UNHCR's Education Strategy (2012-2016) emphasizes the importance of strong partnerships at national level, including close collaboration with Ministries of Education in countries of asylum and countries of origin/return. It advocates for the provision of quality education by promoting access for refugees to national education systems, inclusion of refugee education in national development frameworks and ensuring recognition of previous learning and certification.

The panel will include a refugee university student (recipient of a UNHCR scholarship), as well as a representative from a national education NGO and a representative from an international education NGO. The three person panel will explore how education contributes to finding solutions in the broadest sense, what good practices exist and what strategic approaches are necessary to move forward.

The session aims to explore how education (at all levels) can contribute to finding solutions and break the cycle of dependency for refugees. It will offer the opportunity to discuss good practice examples of how education, at the *societal level*, impacts on conflict resolution, social cohesion, community resilience and sustainable development. The session will also explore the *individual effects* of education, including how education can contribute to increased levels of empowerment through refugees' access to basic services, access to and enjoyment of basic rights and improved self-reliance.

The session will furthermore provide an opportunity to examine key challenges that prevent education from enabling solutions, and how to overcome these barriers. The role of NGOs and other partners is key in tackling challenges, and the role of NGOs is particularly important in building bridges between refugee communities, agencies and national authorities.

Moderator and Speakers

- Ita SHEEHY, Senior Education Advisor, Division of International Protection, UNHCR
- Scholastica NASINYAMA, Executive Director, InterAid Uganda
- Foni Joyce VUNI, Chair, DAFI Kenya Students Organization
- Kasukaali METHUSELAH, Programme Development Manager, Windle Trust Uganda