



**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

**CONCEPT NOTE and CALL FOR PAPERS**

**ADDRESSING REFUGEE CHALLENGES:  
A WORKSHOP ON RESEARCH AROUND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE  
GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES**

**Wed 13 November, 2019**

**UNHCR Headquarters, Rue de Montbrillant 94,  
Geneva, Switzerland (Room MBT04)**

**A. Aim and background**

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), adopted in December 2018 by the UN General Assembly ‘seeks to operationalise the principles of burden- and responsibility-sharing to better assist, protect and find solutions for refugees and support host countries and communities (para 3, UN doc. A/73/12) (part II)). Grounded in the international refugee protection regime, including the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol and regional refugee instruments, it is also guided by international human rights instruments, international humanitarian law and other international instruments, and is complemented by instruments for the protection of stateless people.

Its objectives are to:

- (i) ease pressures on host countries;
- (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance;
- (iii) expand access to third country solutions; and
- (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

While recognizing the primary responsibility and sovereignty of States, these objectives will be pursued, among other things, through engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including academia.

The GCR in paragraph 43 envisages that ‘a global academic network on refugee, other forced displacement, and statelessness issues will be established, 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. Efforts will be made to ensure regional diversity and expertise from a broad range of relevant subject areas.’

The proposed GCR Academic Interdisciplinary Network (‘GAIN’) will focus on three main areas, namely (1) research; (2) teaching on displacement and other issues linked to the GCR’s objectives; and (3) scholarships and other forms of support to displaced academics and students. It aims to complement the activities of existing academic networks, and bring added value particularly through its focus on the GCR objectives. Its aims will include facilitating exchange among researchers and academics worldwide, in a wide range of disciplinary fields, notably for those in regions, countries and institutions which may have more limited access to established networks and resources.

In 2018-19, UNHCR has undertaken consultations with academics, researchers and other relevant stakeholders in preparation for the formal establishment of this Network at the Global Refugee Forum on 18-19 December 2019.

As part of these preparatory activities, UNHCR will convene a workshop on research related to the objectives of the GCR in the autumn of 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop aims to bring together researchers from different disciplines and geographical regions to present and examine

ongoing research around the objectives of the GCR. It will aim to focus on a range of research topics and approaches, with a view to highlighting and stimulating reflection and discussion on ways to achieve progress towards the abovementioned objectives. The workshop will also be an opportunity to contribute to the Global Refugee Forum. To this end, it will involve presentations and discussion of research that relates to the four objectives of the GCR (listed below), and in particular, which could contribute to approaches and methodologies to further their achievement in practice. This could include research which analyses or highlights good practices, with respect to specific country or regional situations or those which could be relevant on a global level, which can support the international community in developing forward-looking and impactful contributions that will benefit the lives of refugees and their host communities. The workshop will also aim to provide a starting-point for further activities of the GCR Academic Network, notably within its research workstream; and for further dialogue with policy-makers around strengthening responses to displacement in practice.

## **B. Call for workshop papers in thematic areas related to GCR objectives**

UNHCR wishes to invite researchers to submit papers related to one or more of the four objectives of the GCR for presentation at the proposed workshop. The following is a non-exclusive list of possible topic areas on which research to be presented at the workshop may focus.

- (i) *Easing pressures on host countries.* Research relating to this objective could address: responsibility-sharing arrangements for refugee protection and support; protection and other forms of capacity development and support; initiatives to promote social cohesion and co-existence; links between development and humanitarian planning and assistance; quantifying the costs associated with hosting refugees; calculating economic contributions by refugees.
- (ii) *Enhancing refugee self-reliance:* Related research could address: rights to decent work; livelihoods and economic inclusion strategies, programmes and initiatives for refugees; leadership and agency of refugees; access to and use of capital by refugees, including micro-credits; cash-based assistance; self-reliance and gender, including strategies devised for and/or by women; education for refugees.
- (iii) *Expanding access to third country solutions.* Related research could address: resettlement processes and programmes, including state- and privately-sponsored programmes; impact of resettlement; labour migration programmes for refugees; study visas for refugees; family reunification for refugees; other complementary pathways to protection for refugees; integration programmes.
- (iv) *Supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.* Related research could address: peace-building, reconciliation and social reconstruction; assisted voluntary return; sustainability of returns; reconstruction of infrastructure and services; post-conflict governance; return and youth.

Papers submitted could address other themes that are relevant to the GCR objectives articulated at the beginning of (i)-(iv) above.

Papers that take into account the key areas of focus that have been identified for the first Global Refugee Forum are particularly encouraged: burden- and responsibility-sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, solutions, protection capacity, and energy and infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Further information on the key areas of focus can be found on the Global Refugee Forum website <https://www.unhcr.org/pledges-and-contributions.html>.

### **C. Submission of proposals**

Researchers and authors are invited to submit, by 16 September 2019, an abstract of a maximum of 700 words, outlining research and/or analysis they wish to present, including the geographical and thematic focus, main propositions and key features of the methodology. The abstract should explain how the research relates to one or more of the four objectives of the GCR. Research by or involving refugees or other persons of concern to UNHCR will be of particular interest, along with research which reflects different gender perspectives.

A selection will be made among the abstracts selected, based on relevance to the GCR objectives and aiming to capture a range of themes, geographical and disciplinary focus areas. The author(s) of the selected papers invited to submit a complete paper (up to a maximum of 6000 words), to attend the workshop and present the work to other researchers, interested stakeholders and UNHCR. Subsequently, possibilities will be explored for publishing the papers either in a collected publication or in interested academic journals. In addition, selected research presented at the workshop will subsequently be highlighted at the Global Refugee Forum, as part of work to promote and support effective implementation of the GCR.

Support for travel costs and expenses to attend the workshop will be available for a limited number of participants, with particular focus on researchers coming from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Participants are encouraged to seek alternative means to cover such costs.

Abstracts must be submitted by 16 September, 2019 to [garlick@unhcr.org](mailto:garlick@unhcr.org), [criswell@unhcr.org](mailto:criswell@unhcr.org) and [heintze@unhcr.org](mailto:heintze@unhcr.org).