



MENSCHEN BEWEGEN
LANGE NACHT DER IDEEN

Interactive Conference

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugee protection, with a particular focus on education

Friday, 19 June | 10:00 am – 12:30 pm



Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the entire world feel vulnerable. Overnight, life as we know it has changed for all of us. With coronavirus now present in every country, the world's 71 million refugees and forcibly displaced persons are among the most exposed to the threat of the virus.

The pandemic and national measures to combat the spread of the virus are having far-reaching consequences with dramatic loss of livelihoods, a rise in the risk of sexual violence, child abuse and mental health impacts, as well as discriminatory restrictions on access to health and social services. In addition, the COVID-19 outbreak is also a major education crisis, exacerbating the risk that inequalities in education will further increase. The closure of schools, universities, technical and vocational training institutes has also affected refugee learners and students. In these challenging times, displaced and refugee students are at a particular disadvantage and there is a risk that progress in increased enrolment may be eroded. While some countries have quickly rolled out digital learning programmes, many regions do not have the means and technical infrastructure to do so, and additional challenges to continuous learning exist.

In this interactive conference, which is part of the German Federal Foreign Office's [Long Night of Ideas](#), the panellists will examine the impact of the COVID-19 on refugee education as one key protection area, and will highlight good practices from different countries through which refugees and their hosts enjoy continued access to education. Examples include measures taken by the DAFI scholarship programme, adjustments within connected learning opportunities and other innovative actions to ensure that learning continues.

Ahead of the World Refugee Day on 20 June, the event will aspire to answer what lessons can be learnt from the COVID-19 response and which opportunities arise from the pandemic for initiatives on education as a building block of resilient societies.

With a special focus on the participation of refugee students and staff and partners at the country level, breakout sessions will allow attendees to participate in in-depth discussions and Q&A with the panellists.

The event will set the scene for the "[Amplify now – Virtual Refugee Conference](#)" on World Refugee Day (20.6.2020) organized by [Kiron](#) – a leader in connected higher education for refugees - and create the links to experts who are working on education and refugee protection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speakers:

Keynote by **Bahati Hategekimana**, DAFI Graduate and UNHCR/UNV employee and nurse volunteer in a hospital in Nairobi

Sajjad Malik, Director, Division of Resilience and Solutions, UNHCR

Ronald Muench, Head of Division Higher Education, Science and Research, German Federal Foreign Office

Dr. Tobias Ernst, CEO Kiron

Emma Wagner, Senior Education Policy and Advocacy Adviser, Save the Children, INEE Advocacy Group

Moderator: **Hatice Akyün**, Journalist



Breakout sessions:

Breakout session 1 – Jordan:

UNHCR and partners have collaborated with Jordan's Ministry of Higher Education since 2018 to support them with the roll out of their e-learning strategy. The UNHCR Education team has been working with the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education to provide university faculty with professional development focused on instructional design and the delivery of online and virtual learning modalities. The first training session on conducting student assessment online was attended by 50 professors, directors of e-learning centers, and ministry officials. Further sessions will focus on student engagement and collaboration. Due to those investments' university students including refugee students could continue their learning in their home places during the COVID19 lock down. This breakout session will present these good practices of investment in Connected Learning Education opportunities.

Speakers: **Zeina Jadaan**, UNHCR Education Officer; **Fadi Aljawabira**, student; Moderated by Reem Mansour, Jordan Operations & NGO Partnerships Representative Kiron

Breakout session 2 – West Africa:

Nationwide closures in West and Central Africa are impacting 140 million children across the region, including forcibly displaced children who are integrated in national education systems in all the countries. In many countries of the region, remote learning is a luxury because it assumes access to technology hardware (computers and tablets) and internet connectivity. According to UNESCO, in Sub-Saharan Africa, 89% of learners do not have access to home computers and 82% do not have internet. This has sometimes led to a rejection of distance education, a cruel indicator of the digital divide, by parents and teachers. To ensure the continuity of learning in a protective environment and to prepare for the safe reopening of schools, UNHCR is working with Ministries of Education and education partners to support students access to distance education programmes, enhance health training for teachers, support community awareness-raising activities on COVID-19 and basic prevention measures while upgrading water and sanitation facilities in schools.

This break out session will discuss how the education emergency response can work in a low-tech environment.

Speakers: **Charlotte Berquin**, UNHCR Regional Education Officer, 1 **Refugee Teacher** from the region providing remote lessons, 1 **refugee student**, 1 **partner representative** and moderated by **Manal Stulgaitis**, UNHCR Associate Education Officer.

Breakout session 3 – East and Southern Africa:

Instant Network Schools (INS) programme, was developed by Vodafone Foundation and UNHCR as an integrated platform that transforms an existing classroom into a multimedia hub. This involves a robust teacher training programme, curation of digital content aligned to the local curriculum, and creating an enabling multimedia environment complete with a local area network and Internet connectivity. To date, the INS programme has established 36 centers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, South Sudan and Tanzania, with a planned expansion taking place to establish 255 new INS schools across 6 countries reaching 10,000 teachers and 510,000 students by 2025.

Educational responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have stressed the importance of connected education investments, like the INS. While COVID responses have revealed a critical digital divide, the locations where the INS was active, individuals (be it students, families, and teachers) had the prerequisite skills required to support continuous or alternative learning approaches.

This section will look at how investments like the INS were leveraged for COVID responses, and what plans are underway to continue to utilize these centres to support catch-up programmes as schools reopen.

Speakers: **Albane Coeurquetin**, **Education Coordinator INS**, Vodafone Foundation; **Wendy Achieng Arunga**, UNHCR Programme Officer, DRC, **Mwenga Nundu**, INS Coach; **Arip Kiriyama**, INS Programme Manager, IRC, Moderated by **Jacqueline Strecker**, UNHCR Connected Education Officer.

Breakout session 4 – Germany:

In 2015 and 2016, Germany received over one million refugees and asylum seekers. The federal government, laender governments, civil society and private sector actors have made extensive efforts to enable refugees and asylum seekers to access education and training as well as the labour market in order to promote self-reliance. Challenges relating to socio-economic integration persist, however, including with regard to supporting the development of the skills and competencies required to engage in formal education and training as well as employment.

A cornerstone of related efforts has been Germany's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. This dual approach to professional qualification is a mainstay of Germany's education and training structure, combining classroom education in specialised schools with supervised, on-the-job employment training. This model has existed for some 50 years and offers an entry into ca. 350 professions. With 70 percent of trainees securing employment upon formal qualification, Germany's VET system has served as a model for states worldwide.

This breakout session will discuss the opportunities provided by Germany's VET system with regard to the (further) development of the skills and competencies of refugees and asylum-seekers, drawing upon one of many examples of dedicated private sector engagement. The session will shed light on the preconditions for successful and sustainable qualification and employment and touch upon the impact of COVID-19.

- **Speakers:** **Dr. Carolin Krautz**, project coordinator Group Refugee Aid, Volkswagen AG; **Thomas Weigel**, employee in vocational training at Volkswagen plant in Kassel, Volkswagen

AG; **Mastura Ekhlas and Mohammad Al Jaser**, trainees in logistics and former participant of the vocational preparation project „Einstiegsqualifizierung – EQ“, Volkswagen AG; **Marco Hahn**, School Principal Paulo Freire School at Zentrum Uerberleben; **Alessio Baldaccini**, Associate Education Officer, UNHCR Headquarters; Moderated by **Stefanie Gross**, Protection Officer, UNHCR Germany

World Refugee Day Campaign

The crisis has revealed how interconnected and interdependent the world is. In our shared vulnerability, we have realized that our strength as a human community lies in our togetherness. No one is safe until everyone is safe. The crisis has also shown us that we each have a role to play and that everyone can make a difference. As the virus and its broader impact spreads rapidly around the world, people and communities everywhere are coming together in an exceptional show of human solidarity and kindness.

With our social media campaign, we are calling all of you to submit a statement on twitter, facebook or instagram why humanity and solidarity is needed more than ever and what everyone can contribute. The statements will be collected on a dedicated webpage on <https://www.unhcr.org/dach/de/> that accompanies UNHCR's activities on this year's World Refugee Day.

Biographies of speakers

Sajjad Malik

Not yet provided.

Roland Anthony Muench

Mr Muench joined the German Federal Foreign Office in 1992. He is currently Head of the Division of Higher Education Science and Research. He previously served as Head of the Task Force on Cultural Preservation and Head of Division for German Centers for Research and Innovation, both in the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. From 2011-2015 he was Deputy Head of Mission for the German Embassy in Quito, Ecuador and prior to that he served as Head of Division for Multilateral Culture/Media Policy at UNESCO.

Bahati Ernestine Hategekimana

My name is Bahati Ernestine Hategekimana and I am 26 years old. I am originally from Rwanda and have been living in Kenya for the past 24 years as a refugee.

In 2019, I graduated as a nurse from Moi University – Kenya and I am currently serving as a UN volunteer with UNHCR Kenya.

I have always wanted to care for people and my nursing career has formed a lot of who I am as a person. This for me is something I value deeply and that gives me a lot of satisfaction. Through this, I have the opportunity to show love and kindness to people from all walks of life and to be there for them at their time of need.

I have also strived to be a humanitarian. I recognize that refugees are among the vulnerable in society who rarely experience kindness, who have scars that as a nurse I can get to. Five years ago, my five-year plan was to get my degree and get myself to a position where I can use my training to serve the vulnerable in society. To be an example worthy of imitation by other refugee youth, making a gentle statement that “You can allow yourself to dream”.

*I am grateful for the opportunity that my education has given me. As a refugee, it has been an immense privilege to contribute to the healthcare system in this battle against COVID19; and with my position at the UNHCR, I can access refugee youth and encourage them to be the best they can be. To remind them that **education is our voice**.*



Emma Wagner



Emma Wagner is the Senior Education Policy and Advocacy Adviser at Save the Children with responsibility for education in emergencies. She has been the policy lead for [Save the Children's global campaign on refugee education](#), publishing flagship research and reports ([Time to Act: A costed plan to deliver education to every last refugee child](#)), convening the [Promising Practices in Refugee Education](#) initiative with UNHCR and Pearson, and the [High-Level Meeting on Action for Refugee Education](#). Last year in partnership with UNHCR she helped develop the [Global Framework on Refugee Education](#) ahead of the Global Refugee Forum.

She is currently leading on Save the Children's policy and advocacy on the education response to COVID19 – [Save our Education campaign](#).

She represents civil society organisations in the Executive Committee of Education Cannot Wait and chairs the ECW civil society group. She is also a member of the Advocacy Working Group of the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies, and a member of the Global Campaign for Education.

Hatice Akyun

Hatice Akyün was born in 1969 in Akpınar in Anatolia. In 1972 she moved to Germany with her family, where she has lived since. As a journalist, she started at the Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung in Duisburg and worked as a company reporter for the magazine Max after completing her traineeship. Her weekly column "My Home" has also appeared there since 2011. In 2005 Hatice Akyün published her book "Once Hans with hot sauce", in 2012 the bestseller was made into a film. In 2008 her second book "Ali zum Dessert" will be published.

In September 2013 her third book "Ich küsse dich, Kismet - Eine Deutsche am Bosphorus" will be published.

In 2009 Hatice Akyün was awarded the Tolerance and Civil Courage Prize of her hometown Duisburg. In the same year, her blog "Recently in the Parallel World" was nominated for the Grimme Online Award. In 2011 she received the Berlin Integration Prize for her contributions to the debate on immigration and integration and her commitment to democratic coexistence.

Hatice Akyün lives in Berlin.



Tobias Ernst

Dr. Tobias Ernst, Kiron's CEO, has many years of intersectoral work and leadership experience in the public and social sectors, in particular in education. Tobias worked as a project manager and project lead at the Bertelsmann Stiftung from 2004 to 2009. Later, he was employed as an authorized officer at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Since 2014, Tobias has been responsible for business and organizational development for the educational organization Teach First



Deutschland as a Division Manager and Deputy Managing Director. Next to his role at Kiron he is Deputy Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the think tank Forum Ökologisch-Soziale Marktwirtschaft e.V.