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# UNIVERSITIES AS SPONSORS

## Conference Report

Bologna, Italy

10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2022

*Sala VIII Centenario, Rettorato,*

*Universita di Bologna.*



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JUSTICIA Y POLITICAS SOCIALES

## Introduction

In partnership with Caritas Italiana/Consortio Communitas and the University of Bologna, the Share Network, led by ICMC Europe, held **an in-person conference on Universities as Sponsors and Tertiary Education Pathways for Refugees** in Bologna on March 10 and 11 (agenda in annex p.15-16). Co-funded by the European Union with additional support from a private donor, the conference was organised within the context of the [Share Quality Sponsorship Network \(QSN\)](#) project, which brings together a consortium of actors across Europe to support the development of pilot and ad-hoc sponsorship initiatives into sustainable, community-driven programmes.

On the European and global policy stage, resettlement-based and complementary education pathways for refugees have increasingly gained traction. Under the [Recommendation on legal pathways to protection in the EU](#), the European Commission has committed to promoting access and further expansion of higher education programmes for refugees, with support from EU funds. As part of the [UNHCR Three Year Strategy](#), the [Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways](#), launched in May 2020, has developed [minimum standards for third country education opportunities](#).

In Europe, several pathways for refugee students with differing structures have developed in recent years. European programmes like the [German DAAD Leadership for Syria and Africa](#) and the [Italian University Corridors \(UNICORE\)](#) offer refugees the opportunity to access student pathways through (mainstream) student visas and scholarships while offering additional integration support.

A second approach admits refugees under resettlement-based refugee sponsorship schemes. Refugees admitted receive refugee status, student scholarships and integration support offered by local volunteer support networks. The most known example of such

resettlement based sponsorship programmes is the [Student Refugee Program \(SRP\)](#) in Canada managed by the [World University Service Canada \(WUSC\)](#). A similar approach is being piloted in the UK under the [community sponsorship programme](#) at King's College London.

The University of Bologna, being one of the oldest universities in the world with a long-standing commitment to human rights, international cooperation and refugee protection was an ideal setting for the conference. Bologna University was also the first of 24 universities in Italy to welcome refugee students to Italy through the [UNICORE programme](#).

Over 90 participants from Italy, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, the UK and Canada attended the conference. They represented a variety of stakeholders ranging from higher education institutions, student associations, refugee students, regional authorities, researchers and civil society.

The Bologna Conference provided the opportunity for participants engaged in complementary education pathways to **exchange and share best practices** on different aspects of the existing programmes including identification and referral, selection, funding, integration support and protection safeguards. It further provided the chance to discuss **common advocacy strategies and operational frameworks to expand tertiary education opportunities**. Within this framework, it offered participants an opportunity to discuss and reflect on a proposed **joint Manifesto**. The latter outlines multi-stakeholder roles and commitments and reflects on possibilities for future cooperation. Taking place during the first month of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the conference also offered initial reflections on the repercussions for Ukrainian refugee students while not forgetting the many needs of other refugees, notably Afghans.

## The conference reflected on the following key questions

### *The different existing types of education pathways for refugees*

- What are the differences and commonalities between the existing education pathways?
- What are the benefits of having refugee students being welcomed by a sponsor group?
- What role can civil society play in student pathways?

### *Building multistakeholder engagement to expand and strengthen higher education pathways*

- What are some concrete steps different stakeholders can take to expand higher education pathways for refugees?
- How and which partnerships should be developed to strengthen higher education pathways?

### *Necessary structures in countries of first asylum and support during the hosting phase*

- Which key structures and procedures are needed in countries of first asylum?
- Who are the key partners on the ground?
- What role do volunteers and civil society organisations play when students first arrive?
- How can diaspora organisations and student associations support refugee students?



*Rudi Osman, Exiled Students Union (UEE) asking a question*

## Day 1: Welcome and Introduction

Moderated by Caritas Italiana's Oliviero Forti, participants of the conference were welcomed to the University of Bologna by the vice-rector Prof. Raffaella Campaner. She opened the conference with a reflection on the UNICORE project. Piloted at the University of Bologna in 2019 with the first five students welcomed from Ethiopia to the University of Bologna, she affirmed ***"it is both an exciting and challenging task"***.

Don Marco Pagniello, director of the civil society organisation Caritas Italiana, continued the reflection with a focus on what university corridors represent. Alongside the Gandhi Charity, based in Ethiopia, Caritas was part of the project from the beginning due to their experience in humanitarian corridors. Pagniello emphasised the importance of creating legal channels and corridors for refugees to reach Europe safely.. These transform the route to Italy ***"from a sea of death to a corridor of hope and future"***.

Puot Nyang Both, a South-Sudanese student at European University Institute in Florence, shared his journey from Ethiopia to Italy. The UNICORE model is based on an online self-application, meaning that candidates need access to digital equipment. Access to the internet and digital skills were difficult to obtain as he lived in a remote area in Ethiopia with little connection. However, with the help of UNHCR and other local NGOs, he managed to apply and got selected out of over 500 applicants. He concluded on his journey that ***"it was tough – it was the most exciting time of my life but also the most difficult since I had to leave my family behind."***

Petra Hueck, director of ICMC Europe/Share Network concluded the introductory panel by reminding the audience that higher education pathways' success also depends on community welcome and integration. Not only must refugees be admitted safely to Europe, but ***"longer-term insertion into the labour market must be a key objective from the start"***.



*Puot Nyang Both and Petra Hueck welcome participants*



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## Day 1: Panel on different types of education pathways for refugees

Below is a summary of topics discussed during the interactive panel.

Moderated by ICMC Europe/Share Network's Gabriela Agatiello, the panel sought to familiarise the participants with the different existing types of education pathways. The panel thus opened with brief overviews of programmes.

The resettlement based [Canadian Student Refugee Programme \(SRP\)](#) overview was delivered by Michelle Manks. The German complementary pathway [DAAD](#) (Academic Exchange Service) by Christian Hülshörster, the Italian [UNICORE](#) by Daniele Albanese. The recently launched French [UNIV'R](#) overview was delivered by Annick Suzor-Weiner.

All schemes have commonalities but some key themes were identified where approaches differed.

The **legal status** of the refugee students differed. Being a resettlement-based programme, the Canadian model provides students with full refugee status and a permanent residence permit, whereas the German, Italian and French complementary pathways offer refugees mainstream student visas, with stay limited to the duration of the studies. DAAD director Hülshörster informed that the [Leadership for Syria](#) programme, which welcomed 221 Syrians from 2015 to 2019 to German higher education institutions, had a 97% successful completion rate. Graduates are then entitled to stay for 18 months to find employment. Once they do, they can remain for five more years.

The students' success does not only depend on the selection criteria and previous qualifications but also on the right academic preparation prior to starting their studies. All programmes presented, therefore, offer **bridging programmes**, either in the country of first asylum and/or upon arrival. These will familiarise the students with the academic system and local language and thus better prepare the refugees for student life in a new environment.

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*In Canada, collaborations and partnerships on campus at the local, national and regional level are crucial: the more diverse the partners are, the more successful the scheme is.*

Michelle Manks, WUSC

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The panellists all affirmed that their programmes do not solely focus on the studies but also seek to ensure **labour market inclusion** at an early stage. They do so by building professional networks via private sector engagement and mentoring. This is crucial for the European complementary pathway programmes as they do not give automatic permanent residence status. In Italy, universities are looking to find internships for students to facilitate the transition to employment.

The **applicants' profiles** also differ since the French, Canadian and Italian programmes are solely open to refugees. Germany's [Leadership for Africa](#), however, is open for both nationals from refugee-hosting countries and refugees in the selected country in a 50/50 ratio. DAAD's director Christian Hülshörster explained that the decision to admit nationals as well as refugees was a lesson learned from the preceding [Leadership for Syria](#) programme. Offering scholarships to nationals avoids discrimination between groups and recognises the tremendous challenges that refugee

hosting countries like Lebanon and Jordan face.

**Means of financing** vary as well from programme to programme. Whereas some rely heavily on government funding such as the German DAAD programme, the Canadian sponsorship programme is funded by a 'cotisation' or 'levy' on students. These micro-contributions are paid by all students enrolled at Canadian universities participating in the SRP, thus forming a sustainable peer funding sponsorship model. The UNICORE programme is almost entirely funded by universities and civil society.

The Canadian SRP is the sole model that foresees a **peer-to-peer refugee volunteering support system**. In Canada, [campus groups](#) are tasked with supporting students' integration and raising awareness about the programme and the need for refugee protection. The German and Italian programmes rely as well on the support of students but not in a structured and institutionalised manner, but rather through non-formalised student initiatives that organise support activities for the refugees.

#### **GOOD PRACTICE**

In Canada, student sponsor groups can apply for [catalyst and activity funds](#) (\$250 and \$25-\$500 respectively) to fund purchases related to public engagement and team building activities.

Most programmes are supported by a **coordinating body**. This can either be an NGO such as [WUSC](#) in Canada, a university association such as the [MEnS network](#) and [AUF](#) in France or an international exchange organisation such as [DAAD](#) in Germany.

In Italy, no formalised coordination arrangement exists. Rather, on an ad-hoc basis, UNHCR coordinates pre-departure and Caritas coordinates post-arrival arrangements. Panellists agreed that to be efficient, the coordinating role must be properly funded and resourced. An umbrella organisation may be useful for this task since it can facilitate communication and exchange between the different actors and ensure the smooth running of the programme.

All schemes have been growing and expanding since their launch. The UNICORE is welcoming an increasing number of refugee students and engaging with more universities in Italy. The DAAD has set up the new [Hilde Domin programme](#) for students at risk, and the French UNIV'R programme will welcome its first students this autumn.

Nevertheless, a common concern for the European schemes remains their **sustainability**. This is key to the continued successful expansion of the schemes and can be achieved through collaborations and partnerships with a variety of actors at the local, national and regional level, as Manks explained. Such partnerships include the private sector, civil society, local authorities, academic circles and the community. Diverse partnerships ensure the overall sustainability of the programmes and should be formalised. Upholding and creating new partnerships requires ongoing coordination efforts. It is therefore beneficial if staff time is allocated to this task.



## Parallel Working Sessions

At the end of day one, conference participants split into two parallel working sessions to discuss the two stages of higher education programmes: 1. The selection of beneficiaries in countries of asylum and 2. The support provided in host countries during the programme. The working sessions consisted of short interventions and exchanges between participants. Below is a brief summary of the topics discussed.

### Working session 1 on structures and procedures needed in countries of first asylum

Moderated by UNHCR Italy's Lorenzo Leotardi and Luisa Bianco, the session focused on selection criteria, selection procedures and recognition of certificates. From the outset, the importance of engaging **local partners on the ground** was stressed. Moreover, all interventions mentioned the importance of anticipating obstacles when designing the programme.

#### Selection criteria

Appropriate selection criteria are crucial for the success of programmes as the first French experience led by [Forum réfugiés-Cosi](#) proved. The Lyon business school that offered scholarships did not impose high enough entry requirements for the students, who dropped out after 4 months because they were unable to keep up with the programme.

Criteria can include:

- The **Grade Point Average (GPA)** of the applicant
- Sufficient proficiency in the course's **language**
- Recognition of **refugee status**

#### GOOD PRACTICES

**Family reunion:** In Germany, when scholarships are granted, immediate family members can join and receive an allowance

**Linking community sponsorship to higher education:** Kings' College in the UK chose to sponsor a refugee family with a child that graduated from one of their education programmes in third countries. Upon arrival, the child could immediately continue their higher education at Kings' College.

#### Selection procedures

Hülshörster explained that the German DAAD could rely on local organisations for application support in the Leadership for Syria programme but that UNHCR field offices had to be heavily relied upon for the Leadership for Africa programme. He emphasised the importance of conducting individual interviews, if possible in person, although stressing that it is resource-intensive.

- Information and counselling sessions should be held before the application process is launched
- Applicants need support in preparing their dossier
- An electronic platform/database can be helpful, although digital skills and a secure internet connection are indispensable for the application process.

#### GOOD PRACTICE

**Interviews:** In Italy, when doing the selection interviews, questions on wellbeing and health are asked to get an understanding of their needs for post-arrival follow-up.

#### Recognition of qualifications

Adriana Bortolotti from the University of Brescia gave an informative presentation on the assessment of refugees' qualifications. She outlined the steps to be taken to recognise qualifications. First, she shared the importance for universities to consult available resources such as [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees](#) or the Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence ([CIMEA](#)). Then, universities must set up fair and transparent procedures and policies; and ensure that applicants receive clear, understandable and accessible information.

To ensure that the applicants' qualification is adequate, information should be required from students on their previous education. Such information includes the:

- study programme
- institution they studied at
- the formal rights given by the qualification obtained
- duration of study
- status of institution and programme
- workload of the programme

#### *RECOMMENDATIONS for selection criteria, procedures and recognition of qualifications*

- **Language courses** should be provided in countries of first asylum as language can be an important obstacle for refugees to accede education pathways
- Recognition, accreditation and verification of academic diplomas is a complex process, but there are some **European and national tools** to assist the process
- In addition to checking academic documents, **interviews should be used to assess skills and motivation** of applicants

#### **Working Session 2 on post-arrival coordination and integration support**

Moderated by WUSC's Michelle Manks, the session focused on civil society commitment, student participation, academic tutorship and job placement. All interventions emphasised the importance of **building partnerships with a variety of actors at the national and local level**. This can ensure all-around support to refugees upon arrival and facilitate inclusion.

##### ***Civil society and volunteer engagement***

Engaging volunteers and civil society organisations (CSOs) is a vital component of post-arrival support. Volunteers bolster human resources and engaging civil society allows the programme to draw from the CSOs' experience in supporting the integration of newcomers. Indeed, Caritas Italy, which has longstanding experience in implementing humanitarian corridors, was part of the UNICORE programme from the outset due to their vast experience in the integration and welcome of refugees.

- Civil society provides most of the **psycho-social support** to students
- CSOs support the **social inclusion** of the students outside the university
- **Diverse partnerships at local level** are most effective
- Volunteers can support the navigation of the practical side of student life and offer **language learning support**

##### ***CHALLENGE***

**Creating links to the wider community** outside of CSOs or higher education institutions is a challenge.

- This may be bridged by disseminating and translating activities offered so as to facilitate outreach to diaspora communities

##### ***Migrant-led and diaspora organisations***

Participants in the session agreed that it was important to reach out to migrant-led and diaspora organisations as those could form the bridge between the local community and the higher education institution. By engaging with other migrants and diaspora, students are



provided with support from a more familiar network.

- This can be a resource to facilitate entering the labour market and increase the well-being of students.

### **Student and alumni associations**

Former and current students represent a key stakeholder in supporting the navigation of student life and providing academic mentoring. Alongside introducing the newcomers to life on campus, they can advise on courses and share what is expected during exams. Kefyalew Gemada, a WUSC alumni himself elaborated on the importance of mentorship. He affirmed that *“refugees who came before provide the biggest support over time”*.

- Students and alumni can act as a **bridge** between the community and the higher education institution
- Engaging alumni associations can enhance the chances for a rapid and effective **labour market integration**

### **GOOD PRACTICE**

**Leveraging expertise:** Students who came through the Canadian SRP can volunteer for WUSC and be part of an advisory group that aims to improve the programme design. This advisory group also holds an informative webinar when new students arrive in Canada.

### **Labour market integration**

Since students start studying to learn but also to optimise their chances of employment, all interventions stressed the need to foster early labour market inclusion, already at an early phase of the programme. The Italian UNICORE project enables this through the provision of internship opportunities via partnerships with the private sector.

- Academic tutorship/mentoring should take into account labour market integration as early as possible
- Providing **soft skills training** is crucial for effective labour market integration

### **GOOD PRACTICES**

#### **Engaging the private sector:**

DLA Piper, an international law firm, offers pro bono legal empowerment courses and soft skills training: they provide refugee students with interview simulations and CV writing courses.

The University of Galway partners with Medtronic, a medical technology company, to offer refugees internships and job opportunities.



*Gabriela Agatiello moderating the panel*

## Day 2: Official Welcome

Moderated by the University of Bologna's Marco Borraccetti, the participants were welcomed by **Prof. Giovanni Molar**, Rector of the University of Bologna. He opened the second day of the conference by reminding participants of the importance of opening more safe corridors to Europe, referring to the recent crisis in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Ukraine. He reaffirmed the University of Bologna's commitment to mobilise university support for the [Manifesto on Expanding Refugee Tertiary Education Pathways in Europe](#).

Prof. **Rita Monticelli**, Bologna City Council Mayor's delegate for Human Rights and Interreligious Dialogue opened by explaining the importance for such projects to have a good collaboration with the city. She reflected upon what welcoming refugees mean for a city and declared *"Opening up humanitarian corridors in times of crisis is not only our duty*

*but a way for us to rethink our communities."*

She concluded by declaring that cities wishing to celebrate interculturalism, must support projects such as UNICORE.

The Emilia Romagna region works with diverse regional partners such as the University Network, [ERGO](#) and actors from civil society to support the inclusion of refugee students. **Elly Schlein**, vice president of the Emilia Romagna Region, affirmed that *"higher education also acts as a key instrument to reduce inequalities alongside being a powerful tool for social inclusion"*. She emphasised the importance of building strong partnerships when fostering education pathways. She elaborated that such partnerships should be as diverse as possible and include next to institutional partners also civil society. This is to ensure that refugee students **"do not only access to higher education but also receive support during their studies"**.

## Day 2: Building Partnerships and Minimum Standards for Education Pathways

**Prof. Marco Borraccetti** opened the floor by introducing the [Manifesto on expanding refugee tertiary education pathways in Europe](#) (hereafter Manifesto).

For background on the Manifesto and to sign onto it, please see [here](#). He pointed to the Manifesto's **multi-stakeholder approach** to expanding tertiary pathways. Such a commitment of all stakeholders to work towards common advocacy, strategies and operational frameworks will allow for the creation and scaling of existing higher education pathways for refugees.

Borraccetti affirmed students and university staff will be the driving forces for disseminating and endorsing the Manifesto, starting with the University of Bologna. The Bologna conference

was only the first step in a series of initiatives that will promote the Manifesto across Europe and its Universities.

The Manifesto was launched in collaboration with the [Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways](#), a global network that promotes and supports the expansion of education as a complementary pathway with a focus on tertiary education opportunities. UNHCR's **Luisa Bianco** introduced participants to the Task Force's four [Minimum Standards for Complementary Education Pathways](#). They comprise **protection and safeguarding** including access to travel documents and visas; **application and admission** including reasonable support when applying; **funding** including subsistence costs; **integration and**

**psychosocial support** including career placement and internships.

**Teresa Albano**, Economic Affairs Officer OSCE/OCEEA explained that the [Organisation for Security and Cooperation \(OSCE\)](#) is interested in the expansion of complementary pathways such as UNICORE. They represent comprehensive and **effective legal migration** by opening a secure way for refugees to seek higher education. Further, tertiary higher education programmes can be an engine of economic growth and stability.

Private sector engagement can address existing funding gaps by providing innovative financing initiatives. DLA Piper's Martina Antoniutti presented [Social Impact Bonds](#) that may serve as a future **financing model for complementary education pathways**. These could provide additional funding to higher

education programmes through private investors taking on the financial risk rather than universities or governments.



*Conference participants listening to the panel*

## Day 2: Interactive discussion on strengthening higher education pathways through multi-stakeholder engagement

Below is a summary of topics discussed during the interactive panel.

Moderated by ICMC Europe/Share Network's director Petra Hueck, the panel sought to introduce and collect feedback on a joint **Manifesto on Expanding Tertiary Education Pathways for Refugees in Europe**. To read the full manifesto and sign onto it please see [here](#).

The panel shed light on the commitments of each of the stakeholders concerned. All actors should work together and form partnerships to effectively further refugee student pathways. Their structured cooperation can grow the number of students reaching Europe safely, result in greater welcome, a more secure status and stronger academic performance.

This means that the **EU, governments, higher education institutions, the private sector, civil society, students, university staff and refugees** must all commit to taking concerted action. They can provide more scholarships, facilitate the recognition of qualifications, provide for flexible funding, offer settlement and integration support, support grassroots engagement and foster active refugee participation. Local communities and partnerships will play an especially important role in ensuring commitments are met.

Reflections on the **role of universities and university networks** in furthering education pathways were presented by the University of Bologna's Marco Borraccetti and Mathieu Schneider, Vice-president of the University of

Strasbourg and President of the **MEnS'** network, which consists of 42 Universities, 6 NGOs and 10 Institutions in France.

**Refugee students** were represented by Kefyalew Gemada ([WUSC](#)) and Rudi Osman ([Union of Exiled Students \(UEE\)](#)). Refugee participation in all phases of the design and implementation of higher education pathways is crucial. The role of **local students and student associations** in Italy were discussed by Pietro Cocciolo (University of Turin). The role of civil society was conveyed by Ludovica Raiola (Diaconia Valdese), and the **private sector** by Claudia Barbarano (DLA Piper).

The panel discussion emphasised the indispensable but sometimes overlooked role that students and refugees can play in education pathways. **Refugee participation** when designing and evaluating programmes is crucial. It is a useful tool to gain valuable inside knowledge, enables evidence-based programme feedback and offers a different insight into the programmes. Gemada mentioned that while it is important to ensure that refugees are sufficiently qualified, programmes must give equal attention to removing the barriers that obstruct refugees' access to higher education. He affirmed that **"there are barriers for refugees to access education – removing those barriers should be the main goal of such programmes"**. This also entails adapting entry requirements to the realities of receiving education in a refugee

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*A common strategy and joint advocacy are needed to address the risk of fragmentation*  
Mathieu Schneider

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camp. Often the limited educational offers and thus certificates received do not reflect the skills and potential of the refugees, who with the right support can catch up fast when offered the opportunity.

Another insight gained from those with lived experiences is that next to the right to education, other **rights such as family reunion and permanent residence status should be considered in the programme design**. This was also flagged by Puot Nyang Both, the UNICORE student who explained at the opening of the conference the tough decision he faced between pursuing his education and leaving his family behind.

Rudi Osman, the founder of the [Union of Exiled Students](#), which ensured access of 130 exiled students into French higher education institutions in 2021, emphasised that governments should provide more scholarships and accommodation. He stressed that an effective way for scaling complementary pathways is to share and exchange best practices.

**Students and student associations** with or without a refugee background represent an immense resource for newly arriving students. They are highly motivated, have the time and first-hand knowledge to support new students with social integration and in navigating the academic system. To fully use the potential of these stakeholders, cooperation with them must be embedded in programme design.

#### GOOD PRACTICE

**Engaging students:** France has set up ‘buddy programmes’ that give national students the opportunity to spend 1 hour and 1 meal per week with a refugee student. By doing so, the national students can better their grades by obtaining points counted towards their GPA.

Schneider, representing the French network for migrants in higher education ([MenS](#)), highlighted the importance of including **networks**, whether they consist of universities or civil society organisations. They have an overview of the national situation and can organise events and facilitate exchanges between interested parties. Networks and associations can have more leverage when addressing public authorities and facilitate applications for funding. A centralised organisation creates efficiency and forms a credible entity, that can apply for more substantial programme funding.

**Civil society** engagement is vital and ensures all-around support for students. They bring integration and welcome expertise that other stakeholders may not have. They also play an important role in ensuring psycho-social support for refugee students and share lessons learned from inclusive programmes that ensure refugee participation in their design. Indeed, *“civil society covers the gaps that universities cannot”* affirmed Diaconia Valdese’s Ludovica Raiola.

**Financing** was a common theme discussed by all panellists. Increased funding can result in more scholarships and support for refugee students. Moreover, adequate funding enables sufficient language and academic training courses and ensures that monitoring and evaluation of programmes can take place. Involving the **private sector** to secure funding outside the university is crucial.

Furthermore, for a sustainable and smooth-running programme, **governments** should be involved. Close partnerships, such as the one in Germany, where the Foreign Ministry is heavily involved, can lead to the State providing substantial financial and political support to the schemes.

## Conclusion and next steps

Expanding and creating higher education pathways is a task that must be undertaken by a **multitude of stakeholders**. This multi-stakeholder approach enables the formation of **cooperation and partnerships** at the regional, national and local level. Specifically, the conference panels emphasised the efficiency and importance of **diverse local partnerships** with civil society, diaspora, migrant-led organisations, students, university staff, municipalities and the private sector to support refugee students' welcome and inclusion. This network of actors including the EU and governments can provide growth and sustainability to the existing programmes as well as encourage the creation of new programmes.

### **Conference summary**

The first panel allowed the panellists and conference participants to exchange on and learn from the existing higher education opportunities in France, Germany, Italy and Canada. Although all differed in design, all programmes rely on a diverse variety of actors for the implementation of the programme.

The parallel session on structures and procedures needed in first countries of asylum had participants agree on the importance of not only focusing on academic merits, but also on personal motivation demonstrated during interviews, which constitutes an equally important criterion to take into account. The parallel session on post-arrival coordination and integration support emphasised the important role played by refugees who had gone through the programme as well as peer support from fellow university students.

The first panel of day 2, introduced participants to the manifesto, the Global Task Force's minimum standards for complementary education pathways and on innovative private sector engagement: social impact bonds.

The panel on strengthening higher education pathways through multi-stakeholder engagement addressed the commitments

needed by each stakeholder and the importance of having shared strategies and advocacy objectives.

### **Key lessons learned**

- A **multi-stakeholder approach** is needed for sustainability and growth.
- The more **diverse** the partners, the better
- Good cooperation with **local partners** in countries of first asylum is necessary.
- Need for **strict selection criteria** when selecting students, however it should be **adapted** to refugees' particular situations.
- When selecting students, their **individual needs** should be assessed to offer adequate support upon arrival.
- Motivation is an important aspect to be assessed as part of the selection.
- Need for **comprehensive preparation** of prospective students via special bridging programmes (either in countries of first asylum or host countries).
- Engaging **civil society** organisations with expertise in integration, refugee protection and special needs is beneficial.
- **Students and student/alumni associations** should be at the heart of the programmes.
- Reaching out to municipalities and **communities** beyond university circles and civil society ensures sustainability and facilitates social and labour market integration.
- **(Early) labour market integration** must be an integrated part of the programme design.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** as well as facilitating **refugee participation** enable bettering the design of programmes.

### **Next steps**

In the coming months, led by the University of Bologna, Caritas Italiana and the Share network/ICMC Europe will disseminate the Manifesto to mobilise support and endorsements.



## Annex

# Universities as Sponsors

10-11 March 2022, Bologna

Sala VIII Centenario, Rettorato - via Zamboni 33

Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna

## Agenda

Day One: Thursday 10th of March

15:00 – 16:00	<b>Arrival and registration (coffee/nibbles)</b>
16:00 – 16:30	<p><b>Welcome and Introduction</b> Moderator: <b>Oliviero Forti, Caritas Italiana</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prof. Raffaella Campaner</b>, Vice-rector of University of Bologna</li> <li>• <b>Don Marco Pagnello</b>, Caritas Italiana Director</li> <li>• <b>Nyang Both Puot</b>, UNICORE student at IUE Florence</li> <li>• <b>Petra Hueck</b>, Director ICMC Europe/Share Network</li> </ul>
16:30 – 17:30	<p><b>Panel I: Different types of education pathways for refugees (Interactive panel)</b> Moderator: <b>Gabriela Agatiello, ICMC Europe/Share Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Michelle Manks, World University Service of Canada (WUSC)</b>: The Canadian refugee sponsorship programme (RSP)</li> <li>• <b>Christian Hülshörster, DAAD</b>: The German Leadership for Syria, Leadership for Africa &amp; Hilde Domin programme</li> <li>• <b>Albanese Daniele, Caritas Italiana</b>: The University Corridors for Refugees programme</li> <li>• <b>Annick Suzor-Weiner, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)</b>: New initiatives for a University Corridor in France UNIV'R</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
17:30 – 19:00	<p><b>Parallel working sessions - participants will choose between session 1) or 2)</b></p> <p>1. <b>Structures and procedures needed in countries of first asylum:</b> Moderator: Luisa Bianco &amp; Lorenzo Leotardi, UNHCR Italy Topics: Criteria, selection procedures, legal status, certificate recognition, coordination and support</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>1. <b>Coordination and support during the hosting phase:</b> Moderator: Michelle Manks, WUSC Topics: Program funding, academic tutorship, civil society commitment, student participation, job placement</p>

## Day Two: Friday 11th of March

8:00 – 9:00	<b>Arrival and registration (coffee/nibbles)</b>
9:00 – 9:20	<b>Official welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prof. Giovanni Molari</b>, Magnificent Rector of University of Bologna</li> <li>• <b>Prof. Rita Monticelli</b>, Mayor's delegate for Human Rights and Interreligious Dialogue</li> <li>• <b>Elly Schlein</b>, Vice-President Emilia-Romagna Region</li> </ul>
9:20 – 9:30	<b>Feedback from rapporteurs of parallel working sessions</b>
9:30-10:20	<b>Building partnerships and minimum standards for education pathways</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prof. Marco Borraccetti, UNIBO</b>: Introduction to the Manifesto</li> <li>• <b>Luisa Bianco, UNHCR</b>: Global Task Force <a href="#">Minimum Standards for Complementary Education Pathways</a></li> <li>• <b>Teresa Albano, OCSE</b>: Expanding Complementary Pathways for tertiary education, building partnerships</li> <li>• <b>Martina Antoniutti, DLA Piper</b>: Social Impact Bonds and private sector engagement for student pathways financing</li> </ul>
9:30–9:45 9:45–10:00	
10:00–10:10	
10:10–10:20	
10:20 – 11:40	<b>Panel II: Interactive discussion on strengthening higher education pathways through multi-stakeholder engagement</b> Moderated by <b>Petra Hueck, ICMC/Share Network</b>
10:20 – 11:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mathieu Schneider, MEnS Network</b>: Universities' views</li> <li>• <b>Kefyalew Gemada, McGill University and WUSC Alumni</b>: Sponsored students' views</li> <li>• <b>Pietro Cociolo, DEB (Dialogue Explore Bond) and Alterpolis, University of Turin</b> Student organizations' views</li> <li>• <b>Ludovica Raiola, Diaconia Valdese</b>: Civil societies' views</li> </ul>
11:20 - 11:40	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
11:40 – 12:00	<b>Final remarks and conclusion</b>