



2nd RUFORUM TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

CONCEPT NOTE

REFUGEE EDUCATION FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESS TO HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION IN AFRICA (REFINE)

Date: 14th August 2024 **Time:** 08:30-12:30 CAT

Venue: Mercure Hotel, Room Omatako 2, Windhoek, Namibia

Registration Link:

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BACKGROUND

The African Development Bank (AfDB) defines fragile states and situations as countries or situations with unique development challenges that have resulted from fragility and conflict including weak institutional capacities and poor governance, economic and geographic isolation, economic disruption, social disruption and insecurity. This definition presents the key elements of fragility as weak economic performance, ineffective structural policies, weak social inclusion and equity policies, and underperforming public sector management and institutions among others¹. Currently, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the highest number of fragile states and situations. This has affected the education of young people many of whom have been displaced internally within their countries or outside of their countries. The UNICEF estimates that over 4.4 million children of primary and lower secondary school going age are displaced across SSA, and risk missing crucial education. At tertiary and higher education levels, comparable levels of displacement occur. For example, the recent conflict in Sudan has displaced nearly one third (397,807) of its university students within a year. Such students are currently stranded as refugees in neighboring host. Education can provide a lifeline for refugees and displaced persons by providing stability and a sense of normalcy. Indeed, access to education fosters rehabilitation, hope, stability and learning of new skills, helping displaced learners/students to reach their full potential and contribute in their new communities, or when they return to rebuild their lives in their native countries².

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), exercising its solidarity principle and in the case of displaced young people, RUFORUM's key principle of solidarity provides for leverage of the networks' broad 170 members across 40 countries of Africa to unlock education opportunity for refugees in the region. The RUFORUM network is best placed to contribute to strengthening capacities of Agricultural Higher Education institutions (AHEIs), a key sector underpinning livelihoods of most refugees on the continent. But RUFORUM must work with other actors, countries and development agencies to first design stop-gap measures, and eventually, design and implement growth opportunities that enable skilling

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations>.

² Geda, A. 2011. Capacity building in fragile and post-conflict states in Africa. World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development. 7. 217-266. 10.1108/20425961201000036.

Co-organisers:





of displaced learners in their new communities or when they return to their native countries. This convening aims to address the issues of improving access to learning programs for refugees especially at higher and tertiary education, offering support for displaced teaching staff engagement and raising resources for the teaching learning and research of displaced persons.

MEETING PURPOSE

This policy roundtable aims to develop a framework for improving access to education by displaced young students in fragile countries of Africa. It also aims to develop capacity for teaching and learning among displaced persons by harnessing technology to improve access and at the same time skill and equip teachers and graduates to form the core staff in fragile countries when they return to their native countries.

OBJECTIVES

The policy roundtable dialogue aims to develop an action plan for strengthening higher agricultural education and capacity in fragile countries. The meeting will build consensus on how to support the completion of education by displaced students, while unlocking opportunity others to join higher education institutions in their respective current host countries or communities. The specific objectives to be achieved in the round table meeting include:

1. Examination of the state-of-the-art for teaching learning and research at selected tertiary education institutions to inform discussions on remedial planning for recovery in fragile countries of Africa.
2. Development of an action plan for strengthening human, organizational and institutional capacity in Post conflict and fragile states for teaching learning and research
3. Exploration of the creation of strategic partnerships between universities in fragile countries and universities in stable countries of the region to provide immediate access for completion of education by final year university and tertiary education students.

APPROACH

The meeting will consist of case studies and overview presentations to provide the context for discussions and derivation of the framework. Participants will be drawn from the higher education ecosystems of fragile countries who will co-create the framework for inclusion and access to higher and tertiary education. The meeting will be facilitated and a core team put in place to draft documents and manage the design to implementation processes.

Participants

The meeting will involve key stakeholders of agriculture and related sectors, especially the higher and tertiary education ecosystems actors. Key stakeholders to be involved in the meeting include: AUC Departments (ESTI, ARBE); African Governments (fragile and host governments), Higher Education Agencies/networks- AAU, IUCEA; UN agencies- UNESCO, FAO, ILO; Development Banks- AfDB, Badaea, World Bank; Apex agriculture agencies- FARA, SROs, AGRA; Regional Economic Communities- SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS, EAC, IGAD; Development Partners- Private Philanthropy and official development assistance agencies; Education agencies- Agrinatura, International Universities- WUR, OneCGIAR, and RUFORUM network leaders (vice chancellors from fragile countries and the representatives of the RUFORUM Board).

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EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The following outputs are expected to be produced from the roundtable:

- a) A Technical Working Group established along with preliminary Terms of Reference.
- b) A road map and the requisite processes and actions identified and the next action areas prioritized for development of the REFINE Action Plan.
- c) Urgent stop-gap measures identified for immediate actions to ensure inclusion and access to higher education by refugees both within fragile states and in host countries of the young displaced people.
- d) Requisite institutions/partnerships engaged to inform, enrich, support and implement REFINE.

VENUE, DATE AND LANGUAGES

The meeting will be held on 14th August 2024 at the Mercure Hotel, Windhoek, Namibia. It will be delivered in English, French and Portuguese.

Co-organisers:





PROGRAMME

Session Rapporteurs: RUFORUM

Time	Agenda item	Responsible party
08:30-08:40	Arrival and registration	Local Organizing Committee
Session Chair: Prof Aldo Stroebe, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research Innovation and Internationalisation, University of Mpumalanga, South Africa		
08:40- 08:50	Welcome Remarks	RUFORUM- Board Chair Prof Theresia Nkuo Akenji.
08:50-09:00	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Namibia.
09:00-09:10	Welcome Remarks	H.E. Prof. Mohammed Belhocine, Commissioner – Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, AUC
09:10- 09:40	Lead paper: The excluded next generation: Towards inclusion and access to higher and Tertiary education by Africa’s young refugees.	RUFORUM/Worldwide University Network
09:40 - 10:00	Discussion	Moderator
10:00-10:30	HEALTH BREAK	
10:30- 11:00	Fire-side chart: Experiences from countries affected by conflicts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East and Central Africa: DRC, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda • West and Central Africa - Mali, Chad, Cameroon • Southern Africa: Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia 	Moderator: Prof Aldo Stroebe
11:00-11:50	Fire-side chart: Investments, partnerships and implementation frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Mayer, Mastercard Foundation • European Union Intra Africa Mobility • US Agency for International Development (USAID), • Hendrina Chalwe, AfDB • BADEA • UNESCO-UNHCR 	Prof Aldo Stroebe
11:50- 12:20	Director ESTI, AUC processes: Presentation AUC processes for development of continental initiatives Discussions and implementation imperatives	Prof Aldo Stroebe
12:20-12:30	Meeting closure and Health Break	All

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