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OUTCOME REPORT

Expert Roundtable: Harvesting benefits & addressing challenges of migration

On November 19th, 2018 KAS New York invited selected authors of the research and publication project ***Refugees and Migrants in Law and Policy – Challenges and Opportunities for Global Civic Education*** to present their findings and discuss with other participating experts the implications of their research for the achievement of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular Migration objectives.

This outcome report is intended to give an overview of the discussed topics. Issues such as inclusive early childhood education, host community experiences, refugee integration through civic education, PTSD amongst refugees and migrants as well as the complexities of integration in South-South migration were addressed.

In considering migration to Europe, a key circumstance to contemplate is the continent's demographic evolution. Decades of falling birth rates have resulted in slower population growth. The continent's birth rate is now so low that the total population in many European countries – including in Germany - has begun to decline. Even if migration flows to Europe continue at the current rate, forecasts estimate that Germany will only be about to maintain its current population by 2050. Experts are estimating that approx. 247 million humans (among them are nearly 25.4 million refugees) are on the move globally, the highest recorded number since World War II. UNHCR and others well versed in these migration flows additionally speculate that these numbers could be grossly underestimated. Considering these staggering numbers of migrants and refugees, and in light of Europe's apparent need for immigration in a way that recognizes that every individual has the right to a life in safety, dignity and protection, the topic of integration gains unprecedented importance. Prof. Dr. Slawomir Redo, former Senior Criminal Justice Expert at UNODC and now Senior Adviser to the Academic Council on the United Nations System made the case for the importance of preschool civic education to instill a global culture of lawfulness in young children. The goal here would be to raise children with the purpose of including them as vital contributors to a *moral community*. Conveying the values of the host country to children at the earliest possible time and placing these values at the core of their education can contribute significantly to a well-adjusted life. Prof. Redo identifies gender mainstreaming as a prerequisite for successful integration. This includes ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all educational activities for children. For holistic learning and inclusion approaches, civic education is additionally paramount. In this regard, children's civic

education is a good conduit to develop understanding and commitment to a democratic system, including a culture of lawfulness. Linking these observations to the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular Migration the role of early childhood education in achieving Goal 16: *empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion* is an important tool. This recognition should be underscored by appropriate investment in early childhood education that allows for sensitivity and respect for different cultural heritages, while at the same time ensuring a mutual understanding of certain unalienable values.

While misinformation about refugees is rampant, little reliable research has been done on the psychological implications refugees often have to face as a result of stress and traumatic experiences in their home countries, on their travel routes as well as in their host countries. Prof. Dr. Helmut Kury from the University of Freiburg, Germany has looked into these implications with a team of international researchers. Together they examined the progression of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among refugees, especially from Syria, after their arrival in Germany. The study found that one in three of the respondents have a psychiatric level of PTSD, hence requiring clinical treatment. Other similar studies show that the occurrence of PTSD can be highly dependent on the origin and travel route and can affect anywhere between 40-60% of refugees. Those diagnosed as suffering from a psychiatric level of PTSD often experienced war, violent conflict, human trafficking or sexual violence. Furthermore, research shows that officials working in the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees in Germany have little knowledge on the symptoms of trauma related conditions, hence making them unequipped to identify vulnerable and traumatized persons who would require treatment. Even if refugees don't reach a level of psychiatric PTSD several studies found that they suffer from several stress symptoms or comorbid disorders such as anxiety, tension, sleep disturbances, restlessness, depression, suicidal tendencies or substance-abuse issues. In contemplation of supporting refugee populations by offering mental health services, stigmatization of mental illnesses in certain cultural backgrounds constitutes a major barrier in accessing help. Anonymous treatment options in a safe space are therefore of utmost importance to convince traumatized individuals to open up. Among those asylum seekers that were accommodated in emergency shelters for an extended period of time levels of PTSD seem to be exasperated as opposed to those who can be placed in more appropriate housing options, offering some privacy, volunteer workers and a local support system. An increased media focus and in some cases politically motivated emphasis on criminal offenses by foreigners living in Germany has contributed to the belief that migrants and refugees commit crimes at disproportionately higher rates than Germans. In this regard Prof. Dr. Kury cautions to jump to conclusions. He argues that refugee populations can't just be compared to the general public of a host country in order to produce a reliable comparison. To safeguard scientific honesty and accuracy one must compare specific subgroups within the refugee population to equivalent subgroups of the host society. Young males for example – who often constitute the majority of refugee populations – tend to have higher crime rates all over the world as opposed to the rest of society. Additionally, Kury calls attention to the fact that 45% of violent crime committed by migrants and refugees are committed against other migrants and refugees. He also warns of a statistical bias that could result from the fact that criminal activities committed by foreigners tend to be more often reported and followed-up on by police. Lastly Kury explained that violence committed by individuals of the host community against refugees is often overlooked, as is the

consideration of the traumatic experiences many refugees and migrants have had to endure. In this regard the recognition of and further research on the disproportionate psychological burden of refugees and migrants can be helpful to inform implementation of the two Global Compacts.

Another important acknowledgement that seems to be forgotten too often in the public debate is that the majority of refugees flee to their neighboring countries, hence mostly staying in their own region. UNHCR's latest annual Global Trends report revealed that developing regions host 84% of the world's refugees under the High Commissioners' mandate. Akemi Yonemura, Education Specialist for UNESCO contributed her findings on best practices for achieving integration of refugees and migrants through education in the West African context. West Africa is the region with the largest migrant stock in Africa, as well as the highest number of intraregional migrants. Access to education in West Africa has made great strides in the last decade, especially at the primary school level. The real challenge constitutes itself once students move to secondary school. More than half of students in West Africa drop out at the lower secondary level. The number of students reaching upper secondary school is often marginal. The dropout rates of students are also often highly gendered, with boys completing more school years on average compared to girls. While access to education can already be a challenging endeavor for local families, refugee and migrant children face additional barriers. According to UNHCR only 50% of refugee children in West Africa have access to primary education and only 22% of adolescents were able to attend lower secondary school. Not only does the New York declaration as well as the two Global Compacts specifically call for equal access to education within a few months of arrival in a host community, the Convention on the Right of the Child recognizes education as a legal right to every child on the basis of equal opportunity. With the rapid increase of refugees and migrants in the region in recent years, anxieties and security concerns have increased in host communities who often don't have sufficient resources for a robust crime prevention and criminal justice architecture. The Doha Declaration thereby acknowledges the importance of education for all children and youth as fundamental to the prevention of crime and corruption, and to the promotion of a culture of lawfulness that supports the rule of law and human rights while respecting cultural identities. Education is furthermore considered as one of the most powerful tools in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), which is of utmost urgency across West Africa. An educational priority identified by Akemi Yonemura is civic education. Not only for refugees and migrants, ensuring their successful social, cultural and political understanding of their host country and allowing productive participation and integration in society. But importantly also education about refugees and migrants for the local population, thereby diminishing stereotyping, exclusion and discrimination. As mentioned before, access to education past the primary level is still a major challenge for local and refugee/migrant children. Civic education has to start and take place in school. However, it is also important to deliver through non-formal education beyond the curriculum since it has a character-forming quality. This can be done by engaging families, community members, religious institutions and civil society organizations. Additionally, it would be paramount for host countries to reduce barriers for refugees and migrants to access schools. This can include loosening or waiving certain requirements that foster exclusion, offering catch-up classes, allowing for cross-regionally recognized certificates (e.g. through ECOWAS), being mindful regarding language impediments (especially due to high language diversity in West Africa).

Presenting authors also took a look at the host community perspective. In light of the wave of terror attacks across Europe in recent years and simultaneously a steady increase in migration, anxieties regarding victimization seem to be on the rise. To deepen the understanding of host community experiences, Prof. Mally Shechory-Bitton, Vice Rector and Head of the Criminology Department at Ariel University in Israel and Dr. Esther Shachaf Friedman, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Social Work at Linneaus University in Sweden designed a comparative study to measure the fear of crime and fear of terrorism among Swedish and Israeli citizens. The participants were purposefully chosen to be residents of highly diverse locations, including areas with a high concentration of immigrants. Important to note is that their study found that fear of crime is not related to the amount of actual crime or official statistics. Ironically, those who are the least likely to become victims of crime tend to be the most fearful. From a demographic perspective women experience much higher levels of fear than men and elderly men and women experience significantly more fear of crime than younger people. Neighborhood security and safety are one of the main factors impacting fear of crime. Thereby neighborhood disorder - like physical signs of neglect - facilitate both actual victimization and higher levels of fear of crime in both Israel and Sweden. Community cohesion on the other hand reduces fear of crime, as there is a perception that neighborhoods with collective efficacy are more likely to take actions against crime. While social cohesion has no correlation with the fear of terrorism, fear of terrorism increases similarly to fear of crime when neighborhood disorder rises. This study found higher rates of fear of crime and terrorism among the Israeli participants. To evaluate this, it is vital to note that Sweden and Israel experience similar rates of actual crime exposure. The presenters gave the higher exposure to terror incidents among Israelis as a possible explanation. In light of their discoveries regarding neighborhood disorder and the fear of crime and terror, Prof. Shechory-Bitton and Dr. Shachaf called for the redirection of social investments to visibly improve the residential environment, hence fostering social cohesion and lowering anxieties.

A host country that has historically been known for its welcoming culture towards refugees is India. After China's occupation of Tibet, Tibetan refugees fled to Dharmshala, India. After the Bangladesh War of Independence, an estimated 10 million Bengali refugees fled to neighboring India. Due to the Kashmir conflict, displaced Pundits and Sikhs are still in Indian refugee camps today. This type of mobility is referred to as South-South migration, which accounts for 82 million or 36% of the total stock of global migrants. South-South migration is an increasingly significant factor in the economic and social development of many developing countries which require completely different approaches than the migration challenges facing Europe. Interestingly, the Indian constitution affords refugees the same fundamental rights that apply for citizens. Protected is thereby life, personal liberty and protection against deportation (non-refoulement). India has a largely liberal refugee policy, allowing entry from South Asia and surrounding developing countries. Although the government already implements measures to help refugees, the country lacks resources and adequate infrastructural capacities to accommodate refugees. In a multicultural society such as India that features the breadth of diversity in culture, religion and ethnicity, policy makers are facing the challenge of balancing sustainable development in an inclusive manner while large sections of their own population still live in poverty. According to the World Bank 22 % of the population or 270 million people still live below the poverty line. Dr. Swati Shirwadkar, Professor at the University of Tampere in Finland and at Bharati Vidyapeeth University

in India presented her research on the challenge of integration of refugees and irregular/nondocumented immigrants in a complex host country situation such as India. She identified government interventions in which civic education centers around peace and employment skills are offered to the refugee and migrant community as having the highest success rates for sustainable and independent livelihood. Although compassionately welcoming the distressed from neighboring countries is very much a part of the Indian fabric and identity, recent economic and political tensions, coupled with security concerns have created anxieties in the Indian society. An increase in crime, terrorism and political instrumentalization of both have exasperated the friction. On the other hand, human rights activists and organizations have unmasked discrimination, exploitation and even forced repatriation committed against the refugee community in India. This clearly demonstrates that even a country that historically welcomes refugees and migrants can turn the tide if the host society feels left behind and unsafe. Given the enormous numbers of South-South refugees and migrants, recent developments in India should be taken as a learning experience. Developing countries willing to host large numbers of refugees and migrants should enjoy the support of the international community, allowing them to simultaneously address the livelihood of their own vulnerable citizens. The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) foresees a key principle in this regard: burden sharing. Hereby the GCR introduces a global mechanism for mobilizing international cooperation. UNHCR will organize Global Refugee Forums at ministerial level in 2019, 2021 and every four years after 2021 where all UN members and relevant stakeholders can find ways to carry the weight together. India is a clear case in point that there is no cookie-cutter best practice approach to successful integration and that, especially in South-South migration a careful and nuanced evaluation of the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the host society and the necessities for the refugee and migrant communities needs to take place.

Recommendations:

- 1) Conveying the values of the host country to children at the earliest possible time and placing these values at the core of their education can contribute significantly to a well-adjusted life. Gender mainstreaming is a prerequisite for successful integration.
- 2) The understanding that a significant number of refugees (varies depending on country of origin, reason for flight and host country) suffer from PTSD or other symptoms such as anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies or substance-abuse issues should inform measures for access to mental health treatment, appropriate housing situations and social support services.
- 3) Civic education for refugees and migrants is fundamental to the prevention of crime and corruption, and to the promotion of a culture of lawfulness that supports the rule of law and human rights while respecting cultural identities.
- 4) Host communities should establish dialogue platforms between refugees/migrants and the local population to support integration and allow for the flourishing of new relationships. The redirection of social investments to visibly improve the residential environment of host communities will foster social cohesion and lower anxieties.
- 5) South-South migration is an increasingly significant factor in the economic and social development of many developing countries which require completely different approaches than the migration challenges facing Europe. Developing countries willing to host large numbers of refugees and migrants should enjoy the support of the international community, allowing them to simultaneously address the livelihood of their own vulnerable citizens.