



Challenges and Opportunities of Local Faith-based Responses to Displacement from Syria

A 2-day workshop organised by the Refugee Hosts Research Project
University of St. Joseph, Beirut, 17-18 July 2017

Introduction:

This joint-learning workshop will bring together representatives from secular and faith-based organisations, academics, and members of civil society based in Lebanon, as well as regional partners working in Jordan and Turkey, to discuss the challenges and opportunities related to local faith community (LFC) responses to displacement from Syria. It will offer an opportunity to collectively map the current state of knowledge, policy and practice about the roles played by religion and faith in framing local community responses to displacement in the Middle East, and to identify critical gaps in these areas.

The workshop will enable us to explore the particular challenges and opportunities that participants face when working with refugees from Syria and local host communities, and what measures you have put in place – or believe are still necessary – to overcome these challenges. It offers both an opportunity to develop a better understanding of these challenges and opportunities, and to ensure that our research project (www.refugeehosts.org) is asking the right questions in the right ways to provide evidence that can help different actors (including UN agencies, INGOs, donor governments, and diverse national and local actors) better support the development of sustainable local community responses to refugees from Syria.

The aim is for this workshop to contribute to the development of a multilingual Policy Note on this topic that will be published in Arabic, Turkish and English. This Policy Note will capture the extent of our discussions (which will take place under Chatham House rules), and will prioritize a set of recommendations for researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and diverse members of local communities and civil society organisations, including refugee-led initiatives. We will further build upon these discussions and recommendations throughout our research project's data collection, analysis and dissemination phases.

About Refugee Hosts:

Refugee Hosts is a 4-year research project funded by two of the UK's research councils (the AHRC and the ESRC). The project – whose full title is 'Local Community Experiences of Conflict-Induced Displacement from Syria: Views from Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey' - aims to examine how, why and with what effect local communities are responding to the arrival and settlement of refugees from Syria. Of particular relevance to this workshop, the project also aims to examine the implicit and explicit roles played by religion and faith in local community experiences of and responses to displacement from Syria.

The Refugee Hosts project is led by Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (Principal Investigator – UCL), Prof Alastair Ager (Co-Investigator - Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh), Dr Anna Rowlands (Co-Investigator - Durham University) and Prof Lyndsey Stonebridge (Co-Investigator – University of East Anglia).

Elena, Alastair and Anna will be in attendance at the workshop, alongside the Project and Communications Coordinator, Aydan Greatrick. Throughout the project, Alastair and Anna will be leading on the development of a religious literacy handbook. Refugee Hosts' project partners include PEN International, and the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, Refugees and Forced Migration. Our project collaborators are Save the Children's Humanitarian Affairs Team and *Stories in Transit*.

Draft Workshop Programme:

Monday 17 July

10:00-12:00: Session One: Thinking about Challenges and Opportunities

- Introduction from the Refugee Hosts research team
- Outlining the purpose and aims of this workshop
- Participant introductions and personal reflections on the challenges and opportunities that exist in relation to LFC responses to displacement in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey

Lunch: 12:00-13:00

13:00-16:00: Session Two: Question-Led Group Discussion

- What are the most significant challenges and opportunities that exist when it comes to local faith community responses to displacement?
- What barriers need to be overcome? Are there important differences or barriers that need to be respected and retained?
- What work are other people/organisations/communities doing in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, and what can be learnt from their experiences?
- What does 'hosting' (on a *community* level) mean in this context?

Tuesday 18 July

10:00-13:00: Session Three: Ways Forward – Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Research

- Look at preliminary findings from pilot interviews to a) discuss emerging themes and b) refine research approach
- Key recommendations for research, policy and practice: working collaboratively to develop a Policy Note for relevant stakeholders; and identifying the best ways forward for ongoing research into this issue by the Refugee Hosts team and other participants.

Further Details:

If you would like to take part in this workshop please contact Mr Aydan Greatrick, Refugee Hosts Project and Communications Coordinator, on aydan.greatrick.15@ucl.ac.uk.

If you are travelling from outside of Beirut (including from Jordan and Turkey) and require travel and accommodation in order to attend please do let Aydan know as limited funds are available to cover these costs.

This workshop is kindly supported by the UCL Knowledge Exchange Fund, which promotes academic engagement with diverse audiences, including humanitarian/development policy-makers, practitioners, and communities affected by conflict.