



## **Fresh Eyes on the Refugee Crisis: an interdisciplinary approach**

*Is there really a refugee crisis? Or is it a crisis of confidence and solidarity? Young scientists take a fresh look at this issue and recommend constructive ways forward.*

**Berlin, 29 February 2016** - With immigration high on the agenda across Europe and elsewhere, and the number of refugees and asylum seekers on the rise, the Global Young Academy (GYA) identified integration as a priority for urgent attention. In partnership with the Dutch Young Academy and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the GYA convened a two-day workshop in December 2015 to explore complex, interdisciplinary issues around refugee integration in Europe. The outcomes of their deliberations have just been [published](#).

Engaging over 20 academic experts and practitioners, from different disciplines, countries and cultures, and drawing on a wider survey of young scientists and refugee scientists, the participants explored areas where the research community can make an evidence-based contribution to this highly politicised topic. They concluded that models of integration that respect diversity, democracy and widely-held values of human dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity and human rights pose a challenge for the EU and its Member States. There is a clear tension between integrating increasing numbers of refugees ethically and efficiently, and satisfying the interests of both refugees and citizens of host countries.

The participants identified four distinct areas that require further attention, and to which the global research community can readily contribute:

1. **Understanding the problem:** identifying areas where conceptual theory, empirical evidence and better data are required to support policymaking. This includes a better understanding of cultural values within communities and of the fundamental European principle of solidarity;
2. **Practical actions and interventions:** building on and scaling up good practice, for example in job market integration, community-led non-formal education schemes, and trust-based social networks such as mentoring schemes for refugee scientists;
3. **Reframing the refugee debate:** developing more intelligent and innovative media strategies to help inform the public objectively, influence public opinion and ultimately public policy;
4. **Addressing the root causes:** understanding and then reducing the need for people to flee their countries through more concerted and coordinated international effort.

Recommendations are targeted primarily at the European Commission, and the High Level Group of Scientific Advisers to the EU has already identified migration as a priority area for its attention. H2020 – the world’s largest research programme – can potentially

help to fund further work. But there are also recommendations for the OECD, the UN, and the global research community to help mitigate and better manage the refugee crisis more widely, in recognition that Europe is only one part of the picture.

Eva Alisic, Co-Chair of the GYA and driving force behind the expert meeting says: *“Forced migration is a global issue. As scientists we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to contribute to solutions. This meeting has brought unique perspectives together, from human rights and history to public health and urban design. We hope that its suggestions, such as the introduction of innovative education formats for refugees, will be seriously considered.”*

*The workshop was generously supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, and an anonymous donor. Representatives from the European Commission also participated in the discussion.*

### **About the Global Young Academy**

The Global Young Academy was founded in 2010 with the vision to be the voice of young scientists around the world. The GYA empowers early-career researchers to lead international, interdisciplinary, and intergenerational dialogue by developing and mobilizing talent from six continents. Its purpose is to promote reason and inclusiveness in global decision-making. Members are chosen for their demonstrated excellence in scientific achievement and commitment to service. Currently there are 200 members and 101 alumni from 67 countries. The academy is hosted at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) in cooperation with the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. The GYA received its seed funding from the Volkswagen Foundation and has since 2014 been funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and supported by the IAP: the Global Network of Science Academies. The GYA has also benefitted from project funding from a variety of donors and partners.

A brief report giving insight into the organization’s major achievements as the voice of young scientists may be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/1L7WbQy>.

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