Options for vote for the NGO linked event – 2023 Global Refugee Forum

Following the Call for Expression of Interest received to organise a collective NGO event on the sidelines of the Global Refugee Forum, we have received multiple ideas and thematic suggestions, which were briefly presented during a meeting among NGOs on Thursday 26th October.

Although it was initially announced that three options would be pre-selected and submitted to vote, all the themes suggested were of high relevance and interesting in terms of dialogue.

Therefore, given the diversity of thematics we call on you to vote for one of the 12 expressions of interest below to be the NGO linked event ahead of the Global Refugee Forum.

During the meeting, synergies between the different thematic suggestions were highlighted. Depending on the results of the votes, on the willingness and agreement of responders to collaborate, we might be in position to propose to merge some of the expressions of interest.

Note that a strong interest was expressed by several NGOs to actually have many of these events during a one-day event in the same venue. ICVA is currently exploring if there is the possibility to have the venue for a full day. If we can make the venue available for additional NGO organized events, we will share with you related information.

1. Access to civil society for refugees and stateless persons: a tool to achieve equality and human rights
   - The purpose of this event is to discuss some of the challenges - including legal, logistical and communication - faced by refugees and stateless people in particular those from marginalized groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and LGBTQI people, and to identify ways to address them.
   - The format would be an interactive dialogue among refugees and stateless people with age, gender, and diversity groups represented, and civil society organizations advocating for the rights of refugees and stateless people.
   - The questions directing the discussions during the event:
     1. Do you think that refugees and stateless people including those from marginalized groups are properly represented in global, regional, national and local decisions and policies that affect them? What are your arguments supporting your response?
     2. What are the challenges that Refugee Lead Organizations (RLOs) face in adequately represent refugees and stateless people? What other civil society organizations can do to support RLOs?
     3. What is the role of civil society organizations not led by refugees to support and ensure representation of refugees and stateless people?

2. Innovative legal advice
   - In the realm of legal advice, a multifaceted and knowledge-intensive field, the fusion of expertise and creativity is paramount. Regularly reevaluating processes and efficiency is crucial to generating innovative ideas that elevate our work.
   - The event will provide a platform for the global legal advice community to collaborate, share knowledge, and exchange best practices, thus enhancing the collective effort to support asylum seekers and refugees. By coming together, all participants stand to gain valuable insights, inspire one another, and learn from each other’s experiences.
   - The primary focus of panel will be to spotlight innovative practices in the provision of legal advice, with an eye towards ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers have unrestricted access to justice.
   - The panel will bring together a diverse array of stakeholders deeply engaged in offering legal advice to asylum seekers.
3. **Intersection of the climate crisis, refugee movements, and international responsibility-sharing**
   - This panel will explore the direct implications that the climate crisis is having on global patterns of forced displacement, as well as how refuge and host communities are working to adapt and respond to climate change in innovative ways.
   - The panel will provide a crucial platform to address the resulting challenges.
   - The panel will assemble thought leaders, policymakers, and advocates to deliberate on innovative approaches towards equitable responsibility-sharing and to explore critical topics including climate-resilient infrastructure, access to resources for local actors and RLOs, and the intersection between climate finance and humanitarian assistance.
   - The panel will also focus specifically on the gendered nature of the climate crisis in the context of forced displacement.
   - Finally, the panel will touch upon the climate finance pledge currently being developed, and likely to be one of the multi-stakeholder pledges that rises to the category of ‘mega pledge’.

4. **WLO and Refugee WLO Inclusion – Ensuring Local Perspectives in GBV GRF Pledges**
   - Despite many global commitments to and calls for localizing GBV programming to facilitate and improve access to lifesaving assistance centered on the voices of women and girls, there is little evidence that it is being prioritized or that local women and WLOs are seen, included or adequately funded as change agents in addressing GBV. WLOs that address GBV are often absent from analyses and face major hurdles to meaningful participation due lack of funding, political will, translation services, and logistics and administrative support. These issues are even more acute in displacement contexts.
   - This year’s Global Refugee Forum has sought the active inclusion of WLO and refugee WLO voices in the planning for the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies + pledge.
   - This event will explore lessons learned from the pledge planning process, highlighting best practice of WLO and refugee WLO inclusion in global spaces, through an interactive panel discussion with (refugee) WLO leaders.

5. **The importance of engaging civil society actors and supporting national and regional networks to advance the four key GCR objectives**
   - The event will stress the importance of engaging civil society actors and supporting national and regional networks to advance the four key GCR objectives.
   - Networks, specifically civil society organisations play a pivotal role in enhancing refugee rights, access to services, and social inclusion.
   - The benefits of such networks are immense, including but not limited to:
     1. Improved coordination and resource mobilisation,
     2. NGOs feel safer to call out government policy as identified in collective,
     3. Networks can influence government by demonstrating that civil society is cohesive and easy to communicate with,
     4. Partners can share learnings, skills, and resources.
     5. Align advocacy efforts and strategies for common goals.
   - Many challenges must be addressed, such as ensuring equitable representation and resource allocation. Establishing and coordinating networks also takes time and resources. The Forum could provide practical advice on the key principles of developing and maintaining a successful network in the face of challenges and opportunities, including identifying and exploring the roles of all participants.

6. **Sharing Responsibility and Widening the Humanitarian Base: whole-of-society best practices from the Asia Pacific**
• The goal of the event is to widen the basis of humanitarian aid by sharing best practices of whole-of-society approach and HDP nexus by stakeholders in the Asia Pacific region.
• Civil society and government actors in the Asia Pacific region have been significantly expanding their contribution to the global refugee crisis. One key feature of such progress is development actors stepping up to provide durable solutions and strengthening the resilience of refugees and their host communities. The multi-stakeholder approach taken by CSOs and public actors in parts of Asia show how the HDP Nexus discourse can lead to complementary contribution by the so-called non-traditional actors addressing crucial gaps in refugee self-reliance.
• Panelists representing governments, CSOs, aid agencies, refugees, and host communities from Asia Pacific, will share best practice and convene a strategic approach to strengthen their whole-of-society effort and contribute to the HDP nexus approach into GRF pledges.

7. Advancing Refugee Leadership and Participation as a Core Element of the Whole-of-Society Approach
• This event will explore how humanitarian and development actors can more effectively work to advance refugee leadership and participation in humanitarian and development responses.
• In recent years, the concept of "Meaningful Participation" has been discussed by various stakeholders in the context of involving refugees and asylum seekers in decisions that impact their lives. Despite efforts by civil society to articulate meaningful refugee participation, it remains a challenge.
• The event will showcase pioneering research that maps the contributions of refugee-led initiatives, along with the challenges they face. It will also introduce delegates to new guidelines that are co-owned and have been collaboratively developed for those interested in learning more about research that is co-produced with refugees.
• The event contributes directly to the GCR paragraph 34, “Responses are most effective when they actively and meaningfully engage those they are intended to protect and assist...” and the objectives of the GCR and GRF, in particular, to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, and increase access to solutions.

8. Reflections on progress to durable solutions in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region
• The event will focus on an overall update on solutions policy and programming in key countries of the region, reflecting on both national and regional initiatives, potentially with a focus on early solutions thinking in response to the ongoing crises across the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region.
• The event will showcase promising programmatic examples on behalf of NGOs in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region.
• The event will include a presentation from a refugee researcher who worked on the reflection on the solutions agenda.

9. Self-reliance and durable solutions
• The event suggested will pivots around self-reliance and durable solutions, as refugee self-reliance is one of the central components of the Global Compact on Refugees (Objective 2).
• Based on research examining the relationship between self-reliance and durable solutions – also as a reminder that self-reliance is not a solution in itself but a step towards durable solutions, and that it is crucial that programming which promotes self-reliance does so with this in mind.
• This event will be relevant for a range of NGOs and other partners, which would enable us to both discuss good practices, including pledges which speak to this, as well as gaps and opportunities.
• The event could be linked with key pledges such as the “mega pledge” on Economic Inclusion and Social Protection, efforts to enhance meaningful youth participation in the GRF and GCR
processes with UNHCR and partners in the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action as well as in the multistakeholder pledge related to the Global Community Legal Aid.

10. The role of faith-based organizations in emergency refugee responses

- The event will focus on how NGOs and CSOs play a pivotal role in providing essential services to refugees and displaced individuals during emergencies and in their subsequent integration processes. Collaborating with faith-based and religious institutions and their members, who are integral parts of society, opens new avenues for refugee assistance.
- Volunteers from the Faith-Based NGOs frequently lend their support to various local and global initiatives within refugee and migrant programs. They invest their time, skills, and knowledge in caring for diverse groups, including children, the elderly, women, men, individuals with disabilities, those in significant distress, and those in the process of integration.
- Activities such as providing food, clothing, protection, organizing shelters, transportation, offering primary medical care, providing psychosocial support, legal advice, cultural orientation and integration, supporting children, or teaching languages all embody the principles of humanity, foster peace, offer hope to those affected, and contribute to breaking down prejudice, fear, or any uncertainties held by the host population.

11. Localizing “Localization”: A Pathway to Action

- While there is a growing recognition by the global community of the importance of localization, including high-level commitments in the Grand Bargain and Global Refugee Forum, the global community has still fallen short.
- Global South actors have critiqued the localization movement as centering Global North actors, and importantly, attribute the inability to make significant progress to the failure to address underlying structural problems which have given rise to such an imbalance of power in the current system in the first place.
- The event will focus on four objectives:
  1. Creating a safe space for open and honest dialogue and learning around the historical roots of the exclusion of local actors, and power imbalance in the system, including within the institutional structures of INGOs and global actors;
  2. Strategies and good practices that global actors can take to identify, assess, and shift policies, structures and mindsets that create barriers to localization;
  3. Sharing concrete principles, tools and frameworks that can offer practical guidance to global actors to create equitable partnerships with their local partners immediately; and
  4. Identifying how to utilize the upcoming GRF and pledges to advance localization.

12. Advancing localization

- Local and refugee-led organizations are today being asked to play increasingly prominent roles in meeting the assistance and protection needs of forcibly displaced people in many of the world’s most challenging environments. Yet despite growing calls for these actors to be more fully embraced in internationally supported responses to displacement, most still find themselves on the outside looking in – struggling to attract attention, funding, and a seat at decision-making tables. How can rhetoric move closer to reality for local and refugee-led organizations?
- Three leaders of refugee-led organizations will highlight continuing challenges and recommendations for change around advancing localization in response to displacement and statelessness, a key theme of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.