



CONFERENCE

18TH – 19TH JUNE 2019
BERLIN



CONCEPT NOTE

CONNECTED LEARNING

19th June 2019, 15h45 to 17h00

Format

The World-Café will begin with lightning talks from a selection of leaders in the Connected Learning Field. Participants will then break into smaller groups and work collaboratively to tease out the most formidable challenges related to scaling based on an assigned theme. The groups will then consider plausible solutions that can best utilize the variety of actors working in this space, and identifying those with the potential to make a substantial impact.

In Brief

This interactive session explores the path to scale within connected learning programmes, identifying the barriers and more importantly, discussing ways to mitigate or eliminate them entirely. With only one percent of refugees accessing higher education, the ability of successful programmes to reach exponentially greater numbers of students is essential in order to close this gap. The World-Café discusses obstacles to scale connected learning along with five themes: policies supporting increased access to higher education; academic support and learning environments; course design and learning pathways; infrastructure; sustainability and operational models.

Background

Connected Learning has demonstrated tremendous potential to **scale access to quality accredited higher education programmes** wherever learners reside. Since 2012, over 7,500 students in 18+ countries have benefitted from accredited Connected Learning programmes through UNHCR's partners within the [Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium](#). A range of certificate, diploma, and degree programmes are available to refugee and host community students through blended learning models that incorporate online and face-to-face delivery, leverage digital technologies and innovative pedagogies, and provide holistic student support.

Alternative models of learning allow those who are out of school options to re-enter the education system or to progress further, and to access certified skills development and learning opportunities including Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET).

Connected and blended learning approaches have proven effective in making higher education accessible to those who would otherwise face barriers or be excluded. Through access to higher education, supported by innovative approaches such as the targeted use of technology leveraged by the expertise of private sector partners, young people have opportunities to build sustainable futures through education.



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In this session, participants will begin with lightning talks from a selection of experts on the global challenges faced within connected learning at tertiary level, both for refugee populations but also for the needs of learners in developing contexts around the world. Participants will then work collaboratively to tease out the most formidable challenges within their assigned theme, and will then consider the wide range of actors in this space in designing plausible solutions, identifying those with the potential to make a substantial impact.

We will use this information to **create a map of the types of investments needed to scale connected learning programmes globally between now and 2030**, and issue a call to action to all participants, to carefully consider their competitive advantage and make clear commitments to furthering the agenda of connected higher education and the Global Compact on Refugees.

Good Practice Examples

Arizona State University, through their Education for Humanity initiative, offers a Global Freshman Academy where refugees can take first-year college courses for credit, with or without documentation of prior learning. They also offer language and bridging courses.

Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) offers Diploma courses in partnership with Regis University, as well as Associates and Bachelor degrees in partnership with Southern New Hampshire University in a number of urban and refugee camp settings.

Kiron Open Higher Education, along with its partners in the PADILEIA programme, supports displaced Syrians seeking access to higher education. They provide blended learning courses and MOOCs as a pathway to university entry.

York University, as part of the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) project, enables refugee access to certificate, diploma, Bachelor, and Master degrees in education, community health, and geography.

The **Civic Education Programme** organized by the University of Konstanz accompanied the “Leadership for Syria” scholarship programme in Germany. Under the scientific direction of Prof. Dr. med. Wolfgang Seibel the certified Civic Education Programme was developed in English in a blended learning format and covered learning modules in three areas: (i) understanding of democratic society; (ii) sustainable economic politics and (iii) personal competency.

Framing Questions

1. What are the **challenges** to scale related to partners and partnerships?
2. How do **financial and cost constraints** limit scale, both from institutions and from realities in the field, and how can these be overcome?
3. What are the **structural and infrastructure considerations** that must be in place to enable proven initiatives to scale?
4. What role can academic institutions and researchers play?
5. Which stakeholders are being underutilized in bringing programmes to scale?



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Moderator

Jacqueline Strecker, Connected Education Officer at UNHCR, Switzerland

Speakers

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Seibel, Full Professor of Politics and Public Administration in Konstanz and an Adjunct Professor of Public Administration at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Germany

Dr. Dominic Orr, Senior Researcher, Kiron Open Higher Education, Germany

Peter Balleis SJ, Executive President, Jesuit Worldwide Learning, Switzerland

Joanna Zimmerman, Assistant Director, Education for Humanity at Arizona State University, USA

Rapporteur

Ben Webster, Founder and CEO of Mosaik, UK

Suggested Reading

Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. 2017. Quality Guidelines Playbook. Lessons Learned Through Contextualized Practice. ([PDF](#))