



Forced Migration and Refugee Studies: Networking and Knowledge Transfer Project description (long)

At the end of 2022, 108.4 million people were affected by forced displacement—62.5 million of whom remained in their countries of origin as so-called internally displaced persons. With the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, there has once again been a dramatic increase (by 21 per cent compared to 2021) in the number of people who were forcibly displaced. War, tyranny or threats from armed groups but also environmental disasters, climate change, poverty and lack of prospects continue to be factors that induce people to flee.

Very few displaced people have a secure residence status; as a rule, a situation of uncertainty persists: Two-thirds spend years and decades in temporary accommodation with limited access to education and legal employment. Forced displacement affects people of different social status in very different ways, both in terms of the causes and the conditions of movement within their countries of origin or across their borders. Women also tend to have fewer options and are exposed to different kinds of violence than men.

This is a topic of outstanding scientific, but also societal and political relevance, which demands an interdisciplinary perspective.

Forced Migration and Refugee Studies deal with the root causes, conditions, forms, infrastructures and consequences as well as the legal dimensions, protection regimes, protection gaps and political control options of spatial movements induced by violence, conflicts, social conditions and environmental disasters. While international research on forced migration has been conducted in a targeted manner since the 1980s, scholars in Germany only began to focus on global refugee contexts following the significant increase in number of people seeking protection in 2014/15. Increasingly, approaches to Forced Migration and Refugee Studies emerged from already established academic fields, such as Migration Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, which generated considerable knowledge only within a few years.

However, at the beginning of the project 'Forced Migration and Refugee Studies: Networking and Knowledge Transfer' (FFVT) in 2020, the research field was characterised by little exchange and a largely missing institutional foundation (institute, professorships, degree programmes, etc.). This is why FFVT aims to strengthen interdisciplinary forced migration and refugee research in Germany. To this end, the project, which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), brings together research on migration, development, conflict and violence, climate change, health, governance and human rights and other topics.

Partners in the FFVT are the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), the Centre for Human Rights Erlangen Nuremberg (CHREN), University of Erlangen Nuremberg, the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS, Bonn) and the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS, University of Osnabrück).

The project is committed to networking academic activities in the field and to establishing excellent interdisciplinary forced migration and refugee research with an international impact. A time frame of at least ten years should be allowed for the establishment of a sustainable research infrastructure for Forced Migration and Refugee Studies.

The cooperation project is based on five, closely linked, modules:

// **Module 1: *Networking within the research fields:***

The central task is to establish an interdisciplinary network of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies in Germany, taking into account all relevant research fields and actors. To this end, the project's activities include regular workshops and discussion events.

- // **Module 2: Teaching and promotion of young researchers:**
FFVT creates structures that enable the translocal training of students and doctoral candidates in coordinated programmes and international networking of young researchers.
An international Summer School has already been established and held as part of the project.
- // **Module 3: Internationalisation:**
FFVT strives for sustainable networking and increased visibility of German research in the international scientific landscape. To this end, it initiates cooperations with international researchers and establishes viable partnerships with strategically relevant institutions. FFVT is already cooperating with important global networks, such as IASFM, IMISCOE or LERRN. The project has also been involved in the organisation of two international conferences of the German Network of Forced Migration Studies in 2020 and 2022 and will host the 5th Conference of the German Network of Forced Migration Studies in Bonn.
- // **Module 4: Information infrastructure:**
An important element of networking is the development of an online portal through which information on researchers, research projects and research outcomes, transfer activities and methodological and theoretical perspectives can be shared.
A database that collects information on projects and researchers also gives the option of analysing specific trends in the research field.
- // **Module 5: Knowledge transfer and dialogue:**
Forced Migration and Refugee Studies deal with a subject of outstanding foreign, domestic and socio-political relevance. Therefore, dialogue with and knowledge transfer to politics, practice and the public play a central role. The project identifies dialogue and transfer needs and scientific findings and prepares them for policymakers, experts, media and the public. An important element is the publication series *Report Globale Flucht* (in German), which was first published in April 2023 and will be published annually by FFVT from now on.

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