

EAWOP Small Group Meeting (SGM) on Unpacking the Role of Work and Organizational Psychology for Forced Migration and Displacement

Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Meeting Overview

The EAWOP SGM on “Unpacking the Role of Work and Organizational Psychology for Forced Migration and Displacement” took place from 12-14 June 2024 at Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali (LUISS) Guido Carli, in Rome, Italy. The SGM was organized by Katja Wehrle and Ute-Christine Klehe, both from Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, Nicole Alonso from LUISS, Rosalind Searle from University of Glasgow, Sofija Pajic, Annabel Buiter, and Yvonne van Rossenberg from Radboud University, Franziska Koessler from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and Varuni Wimalasiri from University of Aberdeen.

A total of 19 contributions were accepted for the SGM, encompassing three digital impact panels/summits, two sessions dedicated to lived experiences, five unconference sessions, and nine lightning talks. The program was structured around these contributions, organizing them into daily themes: (1) The plurality of migration experiences, (2) stakeholder perspectives and engagement in refugee and migrant workplace integration, and (3) doing research with refugees and migrants: Ethical and methodological considerations.

In sum, there were 30 participants from across the world, including Europe, Australia, USA, and Africa. The participants were both academics and practitioners in the field of forced migration and displacement. Esteemed organizations such as UNHCR Italia, Agenzia ONU per i Rifugiati, The Salvation Army Australia – Asylum Seeker and Refugee Service Melbourne, and Re:Source Cleveland contributed valuable insights on supporting people from forced and displaced backgrounds during resettlement. Research centers like the Deakin Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education (CREATE) shared their

expertise on providing support and enabling the rebuilding of careers through meaningful employment, vocational training, and education. The meeting concluded with an engaging discussion space on the research and policies needed to better support those who have been displaced, including a future collaboration session in cooperation with the EAWOPii. During this, the group brainstormed on the meeting outcomes and key deliverables for future EAWOPii activities.

2. Key Highlights

The SGM was an important event where researchers and practitioners from around the world gathered to share their work and tackle the challenges faced by people from forced migration and displacement backgrounds. The SGM benefited from its association with EAWOPii, focusing on engaging, informing, and influencing policymakers with evidence and insights derived from work and organizational psychology (WOP) research and practice. The event addressed urgent issues related to forced migration and displacement by fostering conversations and discussions among various stakeholders. It emphasized tailoring research to the lived experiences and practical problems these stakeholders face, promoting collaborations, and developing practical tools to build a sustainable WOP. Here, a key highlight was hearing first-hand accounts from individuals who had been forced to leave their homes and rebuild their lives in new countries. These individuals shared the social, professional, and familial challenges and successes they encountered throughout their resettlement journeys.

Relatedly, additional highlights were the non-traditional formats that the SGM utilized, as they emphasized active participation and co-creation. The event was viewed as an incubator for the development of ideas, objectives, and a research agenda for upcoming topics and challenges in the field.

Another key highlight was the living art exhibition “That’s how I create peace” by Catrin Geldmacher from the non-profit organization Weltreise durch Wohnzimmer e.V. At the end of the first day, Catrin displayed the artwork of people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and shared the stories behind their art with the participants.

3. Meeting Outcomes

Overall, the SGM fostered the development of a network of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, enhancing these stakeholders’ awareness and understanding of one another to advance knowledge and policy on forced migration and displacement. Tangible scientific

outcomes encompassed the presentations by the contributors and the ensuing discussions, which offered fresh perspectives for study. The presentations and discussions also highlighted key areas where further practical and policy implications and resources are needed as well as directions for future research. Insights from lived experiences and practitioners facilitated a deeper understanding of each stakeholder's needs, motivations, and perspectives, pinpointing the real-world challenges faced by diverse stakeholders in the context of forced migration and displacement research and practice. These insights underscored the topics of importance that require further study, introducing new perspectives and guidance to the field.

Further, participants took part in brainstorming sessions to create a more detailed map of the stakeholder ecosystem, exploring strategies to effectively address the needs of various stakeholders. In the event, we also bundled initiatives and mapped key deliverables for policy and practice. The continuity of activities and initiatives following the SGM was ensured, with plans for a position paper in the *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. Additionally, a special issue on a topic related to "Questions and challenges in forced migration and displacement through the lens of work and organizational psychology" in *Applied Psychology: An International Review* will serve as a platform to disseminate studies in the field. In addition, the SGM resulted in the organizing of several sessions for the biannual conference of the EAWOP in Prague, 2025.