

Voices in Action: Refugee & Migrant Education Network Gathers in Rome for Its 2026 International Conference

Academics, UN officials, international organizations, refugee scholars and refugee students meet at the Pontifical Urbaniana University to turn collaboration and educational solidarity into actionable recommendations

ROME – The Refugee & Migrant Education Network (RMEN) is holding its biannual international conference, *“Refugee & Migrant Education: Voices in Action: Transformative Collaboration and Educational Solidarity with Refugees & Migrants,”* from 30 September to 2 October 2026 at the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome.

The three-day global event brings together academics, United Nations officials, including representatives of UNHCR, international organizations, refugee scholars and refugee students. Participants are addressing critical questions of education and meaningful integration for refugees and migrants, as well as education about human mobility. Through the exchange of expertise and thoughtful dialogue, the conference aims to foster collaborative strategies that improve access to education and promote real inclusion for displaced populations.

The primary objective of the gathering is to develop actionable recommendations that advance refugee and migrant education while strengthening collaboration among participants.

A MOMENT OF URGENT NEED

The conference takes place at a time of acute global challenge. Across continents, millions remain displaced by war, poverty, violence and climate change. Families are uprooted, young people’s education is interrupted, and communities struggle to provide even the most basic opportunities to learn.

As Pope Leo XIV marked in the *Magnifica Humanitas*: A litmus test for social justice today is the treatment of migrants, refugees and those forced to move due to poverty, violence, climate change and environmental disasters. The way a society treats them reveals whether its sense of justice is driven by fear or by the spirit of fraternity. Pope Francis urged us to see migrants not simply as a problem to be managed, but as a living image of the People of God on the move. They are people with dignity, resources and dreams, who have the right to be treated with respect and to ask to become active members of the societies that welcome them. (MH, 81)

“We know the statistics, but more importantly, we see the faces: students fleeing conflict with only a book in hand; classrooms marked by scarcity as much as resilience; families for whom ‘home’ has become uncertain,” said Prof. Anthony J. Cernera, PhD, President and Founder of the Refugee & Migrant Education Network.

URBANIANA AND THE MISSION TO ADDRESS TODAY CHALLENGES

Welcoming participants, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Prof. Muroi, expressed the University's pleasure at hosting the Network once again.

"We are truly honoured to have you here," the Dean said, thanking Prof. Cernera and the organizers of the conference.

The Faculty of Theology has in recent years worked to become an integral part of the "choir" of voices in action on migration. Its programs include a Specialization and PhD in Intercultural Pastoral Theology and Theology of Human Mobility, with students from more than 100 countries and 108 affiliated institutes around the world. The programs aim to train experts and practitioners capable of dialogue, comparison, design and transmission, through a multi-, inter- and intra-disciplinary methodology with a strong intercultural dimension.

"The relationship with your institution is not only appreciated, but desired. I hope that your presence here will mark a further concrete step towards a collaboration that is set to continue over time," the Dean added.

A NETWORK BUILT ON SOLIDARITY AND HOPE

Founded in 2018, RMEN connects people from universities, NGOs and international agencies and organizations who work to improve and expand educational opportunities for refugees, migrants and displaced people. The Network was born from the conviction that those engaged in this work are strengthened by being linked in a community of mutual support and encouragement, a principle that has remained central as the Network has grown.

By linking universities, NGOs and individuals, RMEN builds a global community of solidarity in which small, concrete efforts add up. "Alone, no single effort solves the crisis; together, they weave a fabric of belonging and hope. In doing so, we plant seeds of renewal – seeds that, even in hard times, may grow into a harvest of dignity, justice, and peace." Prof. Cernera noted.

Founded in 2018, the Refugee & Migrant Education Network is a global network of universities, NGOs, international agencies and individuals committed to expanding and improving educational opportunities for refugees, migrants and displaced people through collaboration, mutual support and solidarity based on the principle of the Social Doctrine of the Church.