

# REFUGEE STUDIES

Studying the multiple, complex and interrelated social consequences of forced displacement and fleeing urges to adapt an interdisciplinary approach, whereby the innovative research findings also form the basis to build highly relevant educational initiatives and to create far-reaching impact in diverse societal contexts. The appointment of two new ZAP-members, embedded in the CESSMIR consortium, will therefore create unique opportunities to strengthen Ghent University as Centre of Excellence on the interdisciplinary study of the social aspects of forced displacement and refugee experiences.

*Leading scientists: Prof. dr. Ilse Derluyn, Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy - Prof. dr. Eva Deraus, Department Personnel Management, Work & Organizational Psychology - Dr Ine Lietaert, Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy - Prof. dr. Michel Vandebroek, Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy - Prof. dr. Angelo Van Gorp, Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy - Prof. dr. Stijn Baert, Department of Social Economics - Prof. dr. Frank Caestecker, Department of Economics - Dr. Jozefien De Bock, Department of General Economics - Prof. dr. Glenn Rayp, Department of General Economics - Prof. dr. Ilse Ruyssen, Department of General Economics - Prof. dr. Olivier Degomme, International Centre for Reproductive Health - Prof. dr. Stéphanie De Maesschalck, Department of Family Medicine & Primary Health Care - dr. Ines Keygnaert, International Centre for Reproductive Health - Prof. dr. Kristiane Van Lierde, Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences - Prof. dr. Sara Willems, Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care - Prof. dr. Bart Defrancq, Translation, interpreting and communication - Prof. dr. Katrijn Maryns, Department of Translation, Interpreting & Communication - Prof. dr. Stef Slembrouck, Department of Linguistics - Prof. dr. Piet Van Avermaet, Centre for Diversity and Learning, Department of Linguistics - Prof. dr. Christophe Verbruggen, Department of History - Dr. Olga Burlyuk, Department of Political Sciences - Prof. dr. Lesley Hustinx, Department of Sociology - Prof. dr. Jan Orbie, Department of Political Science - Prof. dr. Peter Stevens, Department of Sociology - Prof. dr. Bart Van de Putte, Department of Sociology - Prof. dr. Mieke Van Houtte, Department of Sociology - Prof. dr. Koen Vlassenroot, Department of Conflict and Development Studies - Prof. dr. Sami Zemni, Department of Conflict and Development Studies - Prof. dr. Ellen Desmet, Department of European, Public and International Law - Prof. dr. Gert Vermeulen, Department Criminology, Criminal Law and Social Law - Prof. dr. Jinske Verhellen, Department of Interdisciplinary Study of Law, Private and Business Law - Dr. Olga Petintseva, Department of Criminology, Criminal Law & Social Law - Prof. Tom Vander Beken, Department of Criminology, Criminal law and Social Law - Prof. dr. Yves Haeck, Department of European, Public and International Law - dr. Luce Beeckmans, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning*

*# new professorships: 2*

## **Project description**

Worldwide, about 60 million people are currently forcibly displaced and these numbers continue to increase, especially in the global South. Forced displacement and fleeing largely impact refugees' lives, as well as the lives of the people in the societies in which the refugees (temporarily or permanently) reside, and the societies where refugees eventually also return to. The social impact of forced migration is thus substantial, and touches upon diverse, but interconnected domains, such as health, housing, labour, language, education, policy and law. Given this interconnectedness, the study of the broad social consequences of displacement requires an interdisciplinary approach, with the combined input of different disciplines and related methodologies.

Yet, there is still little 'real' interdisciplinary research studying the social impact of the refugee experience, since most studies are monodisciplinary. Moreover, there is little theoretical basis for this interdisciplinary study of the impact of forced displacement. Third, educational initiatives in refugee studies, in particular on master's level are scarce, especially in Belgium. Last, although this research field is of high societal relevance and the impact of the research on the societies

involved (e.g., on policy, education, services) can be very high, scholars often have limited time to put real efforts to increase this 'societal impact' of their study findings. Therefore, the two allocated ZAP-members will together pursue **four aims**:

*(1) To carry out interdisciplinary research on the social aspects of forced displacement;*

*(2) To deepen the theoretical basis of refugee studies, especially in the interdisciplinary social study of displacement;*

*(3) To extend educational activities on the interdisciplinary social study of forced displacement at Ghent University;*

*(4) To strengthen the societal impact (impact on society) of the studies on the social aspects of forced displacement.*

Both ZAP-members will pursue those four aims (research, education, service to society), but each will have a particular focus: **one ZAP-member will have a specific focus on the theoretical basis (aim 2) and educational activities (aim 3), while the other ZAP will put extra emphasis on the impact of the research onto society (aim 4).**

The two ZAP will build on existing work at Ghent University, as integrated in the interdisciplinary **Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees (CESSMIR)**, where these two ZAP members will be embedded in. In 2015, the Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees (CESSMIR) was established, currently uniting over 40 promotors and many PhD students and other researchers from seven faculties of Ghent University (Psychology & Educational Sciences; Law; Economics & Business Administration; Arts & Philosophy; Medicine & Health Sciences; Political & Social Sciences; Engineering & Architecture) ([www.ugent.be/cessmir](http://www.ugent.be/cessmir)). CESSMIR creates an environment where interdisciplinary and complimentary activities in research, education and service to society on the social dimensions of migration/refugees can be initiated, elaborated and perpetuated. Since its establishment, CESSMIR has been highly active in developing a range of activities, including regular meetings for promotors and PhDs, doctoral schools training and training for practitioners, participation in conferences, a coordinating role with the City Council of Gent in its initiatives for refugees, and coordination of and participation in several research applications (BOF, FWO, ITN EU, H2020, COST, ERF,...). CESSMIR has explicitly chosen to focus on research, teaching *and* services to / impact on society, given the high societal relevance of its core focus, and the importance of connecting research with practice/services to society and teaching.

The appointed ZAP-members will have the possibility to work with all CESSMIR promotors, to rely on each individual's particular expertise, experience and network, and start from there to establish interdisciplinary studies, teaching activities and initiatives to increase the societal impact of the studies and teachings.