

# GLOBAL REFUGEE HIGHER EDUCATION NEWSLETTER



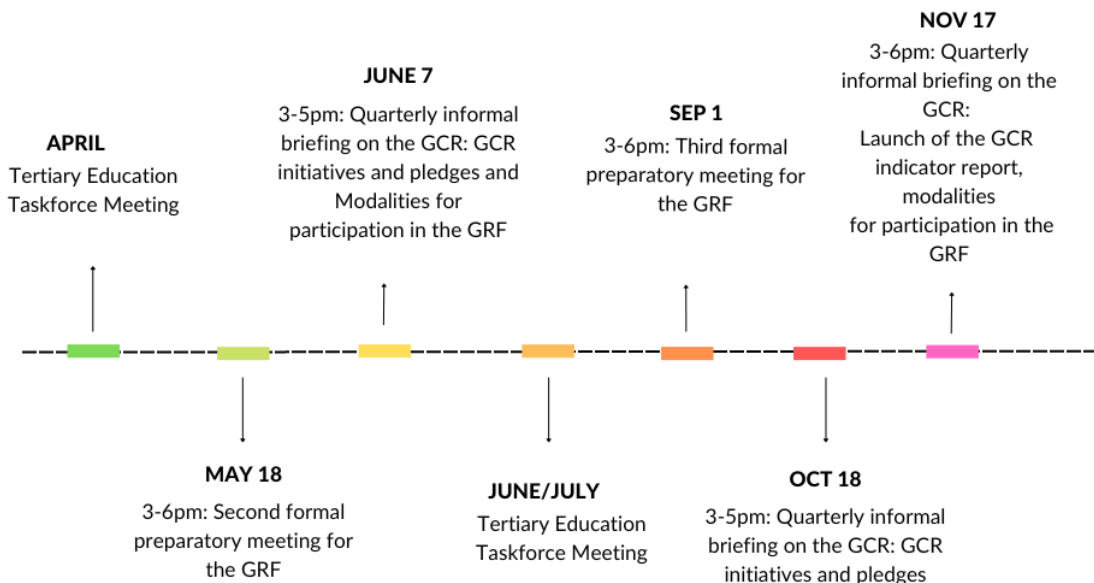
Welcome to the first edition of the Global Refugee Higher Education newsletter. This resource is intended to advance understanding of issues around refugee higher education, share information about initiatives and opportunities, and encourage the formation of new partnerships and collaboration for greater progress. Please share the newsletter widely and if you have suggestions for improvement, we take the opportunity to invite you to submit content for forthcoming issues. Submissions may include updates, events, research, youth-generated content, articles and the like. Your contributions are always welcome. To submit a contribution, please contact us at: [dafihq@unhcr.org](mailto:dafihq@unhcr.org)

# Road to the GRF

From 13-15 December 2023, the second Global Refugee Forum (GRF) will take place in Geneva, Switzerland. The GRF will be a pivotal moment to build on the progress made by governments, civil society, donors, refugee-led organisations, academic institutions and other stakeholders since the inaugural Forum in 2019. Exploration of innovative approaches to expand access to higher education for refugees, demonstration of effective partnerships, and capitalising on the leadership of refugee youth and students are central priorities for the year ahead.

The below resources will support robust engagement in planning for a productive GRF. In April, the Global Tertiary Education Task Team will begin periodic meetings in preparation for the GRF. If you are not already on the mailing list, please send an email to: [stulgait@unhcr.org](mailto:stulgait@unhcr.org) to join us.

## 2023 PREPARATORY MEETINGS



### What is a pledge?

[Pledges and contributions](#) are commitments by States, organizations, businesses, academics and refugees themselves that advance the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. At the 2023 Global Refugee Forum we need to see ambitious, multi-partner pledges that leverage partner expertise and demonstrate commitment to supporting refugee students and host country institutions through funding, capacity development, scholarships, access to appropriate technology, research, advocacy and policy development, and investments that support greater inclusion at host country level, as well as in third country contexts. View the [GCR Pledge Dashboard here](#).

### How can I create and submit a pledge?

A high-impact pledge is:

- Aligned with the 20 key recommendation from the High Level Officials Meeting
- Additional, quantifiable, and needs-driven
- Multi-stakeholder and jointly developed
- Pre-matched to support inclusive policies
- Developed in consultation with refugees and in consideration of age, gender and diversity aspects

Pledges may be submitted via the Global Compact platform by filling out [this form](#). The Tertiary Education Task Team and the UNHCR Education Section stand ready to support, discuss and plan strategic, impactful pledges with you. Please contact us!

### Higher Education Pledging Priorities

<b>Partnership and Responsibility Sharing</b>	Higher education institutions (HEI) establish <b>bilateral partnerships</b> to support increased enrolment of refugee students <b>in institutions in refugee hosting countries</b> .
<b>Data &amp; Evidence</b>	Undertake <b>global or regional research to build evidence</b> on the impact of refugee higher education on host country economies, sustainable development goals, gender inclusion in higher education etc..
<b>Scholarship and Enrolment</b>	States pledge <b>multi-year or endowment funding for the DAFI scholarship programme</b> .
<b>Financing and Infrastructure</b>	Establish and provide <b>multi-year running costs for Connected Learning Centres</b> in locations where refugees cannot otherwise access higher education due to policy, connectivity or logistical barriers.
<b>Solutions</b>	Link <b>education and labour mobility pathways</b> programmes to existing scholarship programmes and technical and vocational education and training opportunities in host countries.
<b>Student leadership</b>	Develop <b>joint pledges with refugee-led organisations such as the Tertiary Refugee Student Network</b> with funding, capacity development, advocacy, and outreach.

### Useful links:

- [General information on the GRF](#)
- [Information on preparatory meetings and how to connect](#)
- [8 ways displaced and stateless persons can actively engage in the next Global Refugee Forum | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR \(globalcompactrefugees.org\)](#)
- [Previous pledges and contributions](#)

**NOTE:** Planning for representation of refugee higher education issues at the Global Refugee Forum will take place at three meetings of the Global Tertiary Education Task Force in April, July and October. If you wish to be added to the mailing list please contact Samah Shda [shda@unhcr.org](mailto:shda@unhcr.org)

# Resources & Events

## RESOURCES

- [Global Academic and Interdisciplinary Network \(GAIN\)](#), formed as a product of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) GAIN is a global academic network of universities, academic alliances and research institutions working on displacement issues.
- Times Higher Education, [What Universities can do to Assist Refugees](#)
- Comprehensive search engine to locate higher education scholarships and related resources for displaced youth located in the UK: [Home - Displaced Student Opportunities](#)
- Education providers should post refugee higher education scholarships and other academic and labour opportunities on the UNHCR Opportunities Portal as a resource for refugee students across the globe: [Homepage | UNHCR Opportunities](#).
- Times Higher Education, [Promoting equity for refugees in higher education | THE Campus Learn, Share, Connect](#)
- Online database bundling information on refugee higher education in Europe: [Hub for European Refugee Education \(HERE\) \(hubhere.org\)](#)
- [World Bank Tertiary Education and Skills Umbrella Trust Fund](#)
- International Science Council, Ukraine Crisis Conference [Report](#)
- New resources from [Refugee REACH at Harvard University](#)

## EVENTS & WHERE TO FIND US

- [5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries \(LDC5\)](#): an opportunity to accelerate sustainable development in the places where international assistance is needed the most (5-9 March).
- [Commission on the Status of Women](#): As part of the 67th Commission on the Status of Women, the UNHCR Education Section convened [a webinar on the role that technology plays in enabling forcibly displaced women and girls to access and thrive in higher education](#). The panel discussion featured refugee students, including Aisha Khurram ( TRSN representative, Former UN Youth rep in Afghanistan ) and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and former refugee Mary Maker.
- [“Equipping Student Leaders as Partners for Sustainable Humanitarian Action”](#) convened by International Students Overcoming War (ISOW) at the Waterloo, Ontario campus of Wilfrid Laurier University from March 30 to April 1, 2023.
- Times Higher Education [Global Sustainable Development Congress](#) (hybrid), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 30 May - 1 June 2023.

# #15BY30

*This section highlights good practices, innovation and investments towards expanding quality higher education for refugees and host communities and achieving the 15by30 objective.*

## Connected Higher Education

### How can students play a role in shaping connected higher education?

*By the CLCC Student Engagement Task Force*

We are the Student Engagement Task Force (SETF), a group of students who are either studying at or have graduated from universities in the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC). Some of us have completed our degrees through connected learning, in programmes such as Southern New Hampshire University's Global Education Movement or the Borderless Higher Education programme in Kenya. Others are engaged in short-term educational programs, such as those provided by the Community Mobilization in Crisis project. Our experience of studying higher education through connected learning has opened many doors for us as students to be able to access opportunities to further ourselves and support our communities. Therefore, as a group of students, we have come together to create further opportunities for refugees to access higher education, as well as to support connected higher education programmes in being more responsive to students and relevant to their needs.

We want to focus on how connected higher education programmes can be more inclusive of a diversity of refugee backgrounds, including linguistic and cultural diversity. Connected higher education initiatives also need to consider the needs of their students outside of the classroom, including the journey of the student before and after their studies to support a transition to employment. We hope to encourage a greater diversity of connected learning providers supporting refugees, including institutions based in countries of first asylum and refugee-led initiatives.

In November 2022, we met as a group at the UN City in Copenhagen to discuss how we could support higher education providers to better support students through connected learning. As a result, we will be working in the coming year to direct resources to refugee-led organizations, promote diversity and raise awareness of, and advocate for connected higher education opportunities for refugees.

If you are interested in collaborating to this mission, or to know more about us, we invite you to contact us here: CLCC Students [clccstudents@gmail.com](mailto:clccstudents@gmail.com). Whether you are a student, a university or an organization, we would be interested in hearing from you!

### Tech to Rebuild Lives

*An article by High Commissioner Filippo Grandi*

UNHCR's High Commissioner Filippo Grandi emphasized the importance of technology for forcibly displaced individuals in a recent article for the World Economic Forum. He says: "Refugees

and internally displaced people (IDPs) need technology to connect with friends and loved ones, access news and entertainment, find employment, seek information and advice, and to contact

organizations such as UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, which I lead. When there are few other options to make yourself heard, technology can give you a voice. [...] If it is true that most jobs of the

2030s haven't been invented yet, let's ensure that displaced people striving to rebuild their lives are equipped for the future – because that future isn't far away. Without training, equipment, connectivity and fair access to the digital workplace, both displaced communities and those who host them will be left behind, wondering exactly what benefits globalization has brought.” Access the full article [here](#).

## Third Country Education Pathways



The [Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways](#) (GTF) promotes and supports the expansion of tertiary education as a complementary pathway for refugee students. Increasing the number of higher education pathways will not only help grow the number of refugees enrolled in higher education to 15% by 2030, as set forth in the *Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion* but also pursue the renovated goals of the Third Country

Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030 as the next phase of The Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways.

### Project UNIV'R: Twenty-one Refugee Students Arrive in France for Masters-level Studies

Twenty-one refugee students living in eight countries of first asylum originating from seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa started their academic year in France. They were hosted in 12 higher education institutions as part of the UNIV'R project, led by the United



Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), with the support of the Migrants in Higher Education Network (MEnS). [Read More](#).



## Japan-Ukraine University Pathways Program

Japan ICU Foundation (JICUF) and Pathways Japan launched the Japan-Ukraine Education Pathways program to bring Ukrainian students fleeing the war in Ukraine to Japanese education institutions. JICUF has mainly been involved with the Japan-Ukraine University Pathways (JUUP), which aims to facilitate the admission of Ukrainian students to universities in Japan. At the time of our last report, ICU was the sole participant of JUUP, but since then, the network membership has grown to 18 institutions. [Read more.](#)



## WUSC Welcomes Largest Cohort of Refugee Youth, Including Students from Afghanistan

For over 40 years, WUSC's Student Refugee Program has provided life-changing opportunities for refugees to pursue their post-secondary studies at universities, colleges, and CEGEPs across Canada, helping them to create a better future for themselves and their families. Thanks to the dedicated support from their network of postsecondary communities, volunteers, and donors, in 2022-2023, they are welcoming their largest cohort ever: a total of 172 refugee students! [Read more.](#)



# UNHCR Tertiary Scholarship Programme (DAFI)

## French Social Enterprise Simplon to Offer Digital Upskilling Opportunities to DAFI Students and Alumni

In February 2022, AUF, UNHCR and the French company [Simplon](#) started a pilot programme aimed at equipping refugees in Burkina Faso with sought-after digital skills to facilitate their long-term integration into the local labour market. It targets DAFI alumni, who have been living in Burkina Faso for a long time without being able to gain a foothold in the labor market. In an 8-month intensive programme, 13 individuals attended daily classes using Simplon's

'Développement web et web mobile' module, which trained them to become web developers. As of January 2023, 4 months after their graduation, about 60% have secured employment. [Read more.](#)

### DAFI Programme Launch in Colombia and Slovakia

On Friday, March 3, UNHCR announced that the DAFI programme will be extended to Colombia, offering an initial 20 scholarships to refugees and internally displaced youth in Medellin and Cartagena. [Read more here.](#) In addition, Slovakia has been added as a programme country in 2022, currently supporting eight students from Ukraine to pursue higher education.



### Painting Portraits of Hope

Reza (right) is one of the first recipients of the DAFI scholarship in Serbia. Reza is a fine arts student on the DAFI scholarship. He is a painter, passionate about portraying people who persist despite lives of suffering. His portrait of Einstein was a symbolic token of gratitude to the DAFI programme and the German Embassy in Serbia, which Reza delivered at the celebration of the DAFI 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022. One of the newest DAFI programmes, in Serbia, celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DAFI programme by highlighting the significant pledges that the Government of the Republic of Serbia submitted at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum.





# Technical and Vocational Education and Training

## Joint report on good practices in TVET programmes

This study is a joint collaboration of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labour Organization (ILO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Finn Church Aid (FCA) to identify good practices related to access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes for refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), as well as host communities, and their transition to the labour market. The study reviews TVET systems and programmes implemented by national ministries, private sector actors, development agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across five countries - Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda - prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created additional challenges for the livelihoods and inclusion of forcibly displaced people around the world.



## Tertiary Refugee Student Network

The Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN) is a global network led by refugee students and alumni that support efforts and advocacy towards increasing access to higher education for refugees. See more on the network [here](#). TRSN was recently selected for the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) steering committee group as refugee-led



organisation (RLO) member. TRSN also won UNHCR's innovation fund grant to implement the Peer to Peer Solution Advisors Network pilot project - one of only 18 chosen projects out of a pool of over 1800 entries. The solutions advisor project aims to streamline access to information and provide guidance services for refugee students navigating the road to tertiary education.

## Student delegates at High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges

In December 2022, a delegation of 10 refugee youth leaders participated in the UNHCR High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges. Students and graduates spoke in spotlight and plenary sessions, the speaker's corner, side events and innovation labs. The value of their strong participation was evident across a range of sessions and topics including on gender, climate change, child protection, access to employment, qualifications recognition and other essential topics. [Read more.](#)

## Regional Youth Leadership Training in East Africa – PROSPECTS Partnership

From February 15 to 16, 2023 the Regional Youth Learning and Networking Conference was taking place in Nairobi, Kenya. It was co-convened by the UNHCR EHAGL region, in collaboration with the UNHCR HQ Education Section and Glow Up Careers, delivered under the Prospects Partnership. The 2-day conference brought together refugee youth from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan who have graduated from the 6-month online training series led by the PROSPECTS partners (UNHCR, ILO, UNICEF) and co-facilitated with Glow UP Careers, the Tertiary Refugee Students' Network (TRSN) and the Global Refugee Youth Network (GRYN). The training provided in-depth skills development in youth leadership, public speaking and advocacy. During the training, participants were supported by trainers and facilitators to develop independent project initiatives to serve their communities. This convening allowed 4 representatives from each national group (20 in total) to pitch their projects to the project team, trainers and external experts, and to receive seed funding to implement their initiatives. Read more about the training series on the [ILO website.](#)



## Journalism Mentorship Programme

The fourth cohort of the Journalism Mentorship Programme concluded in March 2023. This 3-month online programme provides training in storytelling as form of advocacy and in responsible journalism. Fourteen refugee journalism students, alumni and community leaders have completed the programme, developing reportage on issues that affect them and their communities. The next call for applications will open in the second quarter of 2023. In case you would like to be informed once it does, please reach out to [hqeduc@unhcr.org](mailto:hqeduc@unhcr.org).

## Research & Evidence

*This section highlights a selection of recent scholarship on refugee higher education issues. Please submit submission and summaries of recent research to the newsletter team at: [dafihq@unhcr.org](mailto:dafihq@unhcr.org)*

Fincham, Kathleen. 2022. "Syrian Refugee Women's Negotiation of Higher Education Opportunities in Jordan and Lebanon." *International Journal of Educational Development* 92 (July): 102629. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2022.102629>

**Abstract:** The Syrian civil war is considered to be one of the worst humanitarian crises of modern times. The war has resulted in the displacement of more than 5 million refugees into neighbouring countries, and most of these refugees are above the age of secondary education (UNHCR 2020). Returning to education is one of the key ways in which young refugees attempt to rebuild their lives in exile. However, few research studies have focused on refugees, gender and higher education. In particular, there is a dearth of research which has specifically explored the challenges young female refugees face as they negotiate gender norms in relation to higher education within displacement settings. Using empirical qualitative research, and building on previous scholarship related to gender and education in postcolonial and refugee contexts.

**Aim:** This paper explores how young female Syrians negotiate gender norms as they engage with higher education opportunities made available for refugees within the context of exile in Jordan and Lebanon.

**Methods:** qualitative research

Kalocsányiová, Erika, Natalia Bîlici, Ryan Jenkins, Maria Obojska, and Şahizer Samuk Carignani. "What Works to Facilitate Displaced and Refugee-Background Students' Access and Participation in European Higher Education: Results from a Multilingual Systematic Review." *Educational Review*, 2022, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2022.2085670>.

**Research question(s):** What measures and recommendations for action can be derived from empirical studies of post-2014 refugee education initiatives within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)?

**Methods:** systematic review

**Main findings:** The majority of studies discussed in these articles were carried out in Germany and Turkey. From a methodological point view, the studies relied predominantly on qualitative methods ( $n = 32$ ), mainly interviewing and focus group discussions. Refugees face multiple barriers to accessing HE in Europe with the most common being language barriers, lack of certainty over immigration status, difficulties around validating previous qualifications, entry requirements, and reach and relevance of the offer.

O'Keeffe, P., Lovey, T. **Meaningful higher education in Kakuma refugee camp: A case study of why context and contextualization matter.** *Prospects* (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-022-09610-z>



**Aim:** In this case study, the authors compare and evaluate a contextualized medical studies course that was delivered via blended learning in the Kakuma refugee camp in 2019 with a non-contextualized version of the same course that was delivered in the Dadaab refugee camp in 2018.

**Methods:** Comparative case study approach

**Findings:** Evaluating both courses, Lovey et al. (2021) found a significant difference between them. Specifically, a significant difference was observed when comparing written exam result means in both groups, 30% and 51% (38/75), respectively (two-tailed test:  $P = .006$  and one-tailed:  $P = .003$ ) and when comparing oral exam result means in the Dadaab and the Kakuma course, 51% and 67% (13/20), respectively (two-tailed test:  $P = .05$  and one-tailed:  $P = .03$ ). While it may be impossible to say definitively, the fact that more students passed their final exam and gained higher results in the contextualized course suggests that contextualizing led to better outcomes.

InZone is an academic and humanitarian program that operates in the Azraq (Jordan) and Kakuma (Kenya) refugee camps, using a refugee-led management approach in which refugees oversaw course implementation and contributed to course development and delivery. The program used a collaborative blended learning ecosystem to bring refugee students, web-based tutors, onsite facilitators, lecturers, and course coordinators together to enable accredited blended learning courses from the University of Geneva in the refugee camps.

## Additional Resources

### ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- ECRE: *'Higher Education in Europe: A Pathway to Protection for Afghans?: Examining the Challenges of Access to Higher Education for 'Afghans at Risk'*, November 2022
- Mugerwa-Sekawabe, Muyenga. 2021. "Increasing Access to Education for Refugees in Uganda." *Law, Democracy and Development* 25 (January): 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2077-4907/2021/ldd.v25.19>.

### COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS

- UNHCR: *'Mapping of Complementary Education Pathways in the Nordic and Baltic countries'*, November 2022
- Evans, Rosie and Baker, Sally: *'Expanding durable solutions for refugees: possibilities for developing education pathways in Australia'*, Australian Journal of Human Rights, October 2022

### CONNECTED HIGHER EDUCATION

- O'Keeffe, Paul, and Thibault Lovey. 2022. "Meaningful Higher Education in Kakuma Refugee Camp: A Case Study of Why Context and Contextualization Matter." *PROSPECTS*, September. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-022-09610-z>.

### EMPLOYMENT & TVET

- IEEP-UNESCO Dakar: *'To what extent can education help the youth in sub-Saharan Africa secure decent jobs?'*, December 2022
- UNHCR, ILO, FCA, and GIZ. "Skills and Labour Market Transitions for Refugees and Host Communities: Case Studies and Country Practices on the Inclusion of Refugees in Technical



and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Employment,” May 2022. Accessed January 18, 2023. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93862>.

## VARIOUS

- Ahmed, Taban Khalid, Kim Ling Geraldine Chan, and Mimi Hanida Abdul Mutalib. “A Review of Social Networks and Social Capital for Volunteering for Refugees.” *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space* 18, no. 4 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.17576/geo-2022-1804-06>.
- Erdemir, Burcu. 2022. “Higher Education Policies for Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Opportunities and Challenges for Syrian and Turkish Students.” *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education* 2021, July, 185–205. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-36792022000042a015>.
- Fincham, Kathleen. 2022. “Syrian Refugee Women’s Negotiation of Higher Education Opportunities in Jordan and Lebanon.” *International Journal of Educational Development* 92 (July): 102629. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2022.102629>.
- Jalbout, Maysa and Bullard, Katy. *Key Tensions in Refugee Education*. Nov. 2022.
- Kalocsányiová, Erika, Natalia Bîlici, Ryan Jenkins, Maria Obojska, and Şahizer Samuk Carignani. “What Works to Facilitate Displaced and Refugee-Background Students’ Access and Participation in European Higher Education: Results from a Multilingual Systematic Review.” *Educational Review*, 2022, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2022.2085670>.
- Massa, Aurora. 2022. “‘Waiting for an Opportunity’. Future, Transit and Higher Education among Eritrean Refugees in Ethiopia.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, March, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2022.2047909>.
- Olsson, Fredrik, Linda Bradley, and Maisaa Abughalioun. 2023. “Refugees’ Aspirations, Attitudes, and Experiences of Higher Education and Professional Life in Sweden.” *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 7 (1): 100386. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2022.100386>.

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