

BONN. **A Thriving Hub for Forced Migration Studies**

Bonn is a vibrant, internationally connected hub for transdisciplinary research on forced migration. The city's unique strength lies in the close interaction of world-class academic institutions with a dense network of international organizations, humanitarian actors, civil society initiatives, and policy think tanks — all located within a compact urban environment. This ecosystem allows rigorous research to intersect directly with real-world challenges, fostering collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and decision makers.

Anchored in this environment are the **University of Bonn** and the **Bonn Research Alliance (BORA)**. Together, they strengthen connections within the forced migration studies community and help position Bonn as a leading center of expertise in this relatively young field of study in Germany.

Research Excellence at the University of Bonn

The University of Bonn plays a central role in (forced) migration research. Colleagues at the **Forum Internationale Wissenschaft (FIW)** focus on democratic participation in contexts shaped by forced migration. At the **Institute of Geography (GIUB)**, expertise centers on migrants' perceptions of health and everyday life, as well as migration-related inequalities. The **Center for Development Research (ZEF)** conducts migration-related research with a focus on the Global South, including studies on mobility decisions, economic factors and gender in migration, and livelihood strategies. At the **Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS)**, researchers explore intersections of forced migration and slavery studies within the university's excellence framework. A newly established **Junior Professorship for Reconciliation Studies** investigates displacement, conflict, and social repair in its ongoing projects.

The project *"Reflexivity in (Forced) Migration Studies"*, supported by BORA and the university's **Transdisciplinary Research Areas (TRAs)**, linked colleagues from the above-mentioned institutes and paved the way for cooperation with practitioners.

Evidence-based Research Informing Policy and the Public

Globally recognized think tanks in Bonn shape public debates and policy advice on forced migration and displacement within global development. Researchers at **bicc (Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies)** conduct qualitative research on the mobility, livelihood strategies, integration and reintegration prospects of forcibly displaced individuals, along with the causes and consequences of protracted displacement. A specialized team at the **German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)** examines the links between displacement, the mitigation of its consequences, and global development. The **UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)** researches the links between human mobility and environmental change, and the **IZA Institute of Labor Economics** offers key insights into labor markets and migration dynamics.

International Organizations, Civil Society and Humanitarian Practice

Equally significant is Bonn's vibrant civil society. **UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe e.V.**, the German partner of UNHCR, is based in Bonn and plays a key role in national refugee protection. Local organizations

such as the **Evangelische Migrations- und Flüchtlingsarbeit Bonn (EMFA)** and its **Integration Agency, Flüchtlingshilfe Bonn e.V.**, and **Aktion Neue Nachbarn** provide essential support to refugees and migrants. Specialized networks, including the **Bonner Netzwerk "Flucht, Migration und Behinderung"**, address intersections of displacement and disability, while **MediNetz Bonn e.V.** offers medical care for people without legal status.

Civil society also plays a critical role in legal and political empowerment. The **Refugee Law Clinic Bonn e.V.** provides free legal counseling for displaced individuals, and the city-wide **Weltoffen Bonn** initiative connects a broad coalition of community-based refugee and migration organizations. **MIGRApolis – House of Diversity**, home to **BIM e.V. (Bonner Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelles Lernen)**, offers research expertise, community space, dialogue formats, and cultural initiatives.

The **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**, **Welthungerhilfe**, and the emergency relief alliance **Aktion Deutschland Hilft** all maintain their headquarters or major offices in Bonn. Organizations such as **CARE**, **Caritas**, and **Malteser** further strengthen the city's humanitarian profile.



The Bonn Platform for Forced Migration Studies

A cornerstone of this ecosystem is the **Bonn Platform for Forced Migration Studies**, established in 2023 by the University of Bonn (Staff Unit for BORA, Forum Internationale Wissenschaft), **bicc**, the **FFVT initiative** (Forced Migration and Refugee Studies: Networking and Knowledge Transfer), and **BIM e.V.** The platform fosters an inclusive and trusted space where researchers, practitioners, decision makers, and representatives of migrant-led organizations exchange knowledge under conditions of mutual respect and joint learning.

The platform hosts regular activities such as the **IMPULSE café** in the university's House for Intellectual Innovation and Creativity IMPULSE, providing a space for researchers to reflect on conceptual and methodological challenges in forced migration studies. **Roundtable discussions** facilitate exchange between experts from research and practice. Together, these formats combine empirical rigor with lived experience, contributing to a research culture that is both reflexive and transformative.

Unique Environment for Research, Policy, and Practice

The University of Bonn, together with specialized think tanks, international organizations, and civil society actors working on (forced) migration, development, and humanitarian practice, creates a unique environment in which research, policy, and practical engagement are closely intertwined. As an internationally connected hub for transdisciplinary research on forced migration, Bonn enables theoretical inquiry to engage directly with real-world challenges, linking rigorous research with lived experience. For researchers and practitioners in forced migration and related fields, the city offers an ideal setting for collaboration, reflexive research, and societal impact.

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