

Background information

The **Regional Academy on the United Nations (RAUN)** is an international and multi-disciplinary program which trains master and Ph.D. students in issues related to the United Nations and international cooperation. RAUN's aim is to provide participants with in-depth knowledge and resources about the UN and its functions, to raise their cultural awareness and openness, and to offer them a forum for networking and academic exchange. Since its creation in 2012, RAUN has trained over 170 young scholars from more than 25 countries.

The Academy follows a unique format combining **lectures and interactive workshops** with practical hands-on experiences. The program consists of three sessions per academic year (May until January), which take place in different participating countries (Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Austria). All courses are given by high-ranking experts and practitioners who share their rich experience with participants in an informal setting.

Apart from the course-work during the sessions, participants work in group (3-4 members) on **research projects** in cooperation with UN agencies and other international organizations. The theme of the 2017-2018 Academy is **"Women and Girls in a Changing World: Prospects and Challenges"**. The research projects can cover a variety of relevant topics, such as women and international security (e.g. the contribution of women to conflict resolution, women as victims of conflict and violence, women and disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control), sustainable development (e.g. female empowerment, economic integration, women and the environment), international human rights (e.g. female refugees and migrants, rights of minorities, and human trafficking), and gender parity (e.g. women and science, gender balance in the UN system). The results of the projects will be presented during the final RAUN session at the UN Headquarters in Vienna on January 16-18 2018 (dates subject to change).

Cooperation with UN Agencies and other organizations

▶ **For the 2017-18 RAUN we are searching for interested staff members of UN Agencies or other international organizations who are willing to support a student research project.**

The research groups cooperate with representatives of UN Agencies and other international organizations who serve as **mentors** for the research projects. The mentor should be a staff member (including consultants) of the partnering organization with expertise in the area of research (involving non-experienced members of the organization such as an intern as additional support can be advisable). Mainly, the mentors should help defining and shaping the research question, support the groups with relevant background material, and facilitate the contact to other organizations relevant for the research. The partnering organizations are **free in proposing relevant research topics** and questions that are linked to the 2017-18 RAUN theme.

Benefits of supporting RAUN research projects

RAUN offers a unique opportunity for UN agencies to bring young academics even closer to the UN and its work. Its approach that involves direct interaction between RAUN students and UN experts creates a rewarding relationship in which RAUN students get to better understand the work of the UN, whereas UN agencies are able to engage a major demographic of young people and inspire them to becoming better global citizens. RAUN research projects are directly linked to the priorities of the UN, allowing the involved Agencies to directly benefit from the research outcomes. The out-of-the-box research findings can support the work of the UN in relevant areas and help finding innovative solutions to global challenges. RAUN researchers also contribute to the work of the UN by tapping into areas where UN agencies might be lacking human and other resources. RAUN graduates can help to inspire others in their countries thus making future generations understand more about the work of the United Nations.

The research topics should be defined by the UN cooperation partners already two weeks before the start of the first session (ideally before April 20 2017) so that students can be informed and start to prepare in advance. It is advisable for the mentors to have a meeting with one RAUN representative before the start of the academic year in May to discuss possible topics and how to address and approach them. As part of the first session (May 10-12), students will visit the Vienna International Center on May 12. For this occasion, we would like to invite all involved partner organizations and mentors to joint sessions (maximum two hours) where they can briefly present their work and the planned research projects. The sessions will be followed by an informal consultation giving students the possibility to get to know their mentors or other representatives of the partnering agencies and to discuss open questions related to the proposed research topics.

Important dates for partner organizations:

- **By April 20 2017:** Definition of final research topics/questions by partner organizations
- **May 12 2017:** Visit to the Vienna International Center. Possibility for partner organizations to present their work and research projects there
- **Jan 16-18 2018:** Final session in Vienna with student groups presenting their research

Are you interested in a cooperation with the RAUN or do you have any questions? Please contact us at raun.communications@ra-un.org. We are very happy to send you more information about the Academy and to tell you more about possibilities for cooperation.

If you are interested in mentoring a research group, we will send you a short questionnaire/expression of interest form in which you can specify the research topic you are interested in (e.g. definition of research field/problem set, research question, desired outcome of work, etc.).