



LERRN NEWSLETTER

The Local Engagement Refugee Research Network Newsletter

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Half-way there and growing strong!

Welcome to LERRN's fourth newsletter!

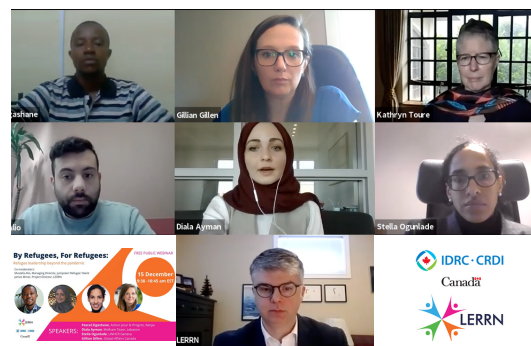
This year marks the half-way point in LERRN's Partnership Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). SSHRC support has been essential to our work, and we look forward to sharing our Midterm report with them in October 2021. Preparing for this process has provided a very meaningful and exciting opportunity to reflect on all that LERRN has accomplished since mid-2018 and the exciting work that still lies ahead.

As you will see in this newsletter, LERRN's partners have adapted remarkably well to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. While we have not been able to gather in person, video conferencing platforms have enabled us to make LERRN's activities more inclusive and responsive to the needs and priorities of our partners. From hosting webinars to virtually supporting localized research, LERRN's work has grown in depth and breadth over the past six months. Plans for the year ahead are even more exciting.

Thanks to the dedication of our partners, LERRN has laid a strong foundation to understand and enhance the role of civil society in the global refugee regime, especially by amplifying the voices of our partners in major refugee-hosting countries in the global South and by supporting refugee leaders. As we mark the half-way point, we remain committed to building a partnership that can help realize change and promote protection and solutions – with and for refugees.

From everyone at the LERRN Secretariat, stay safe, and stay well.

James Milner
Project Director, LERRN



Screenshot from the December 2020 LERRN-IDRC webinar "By Refugees, For Refugees: Refugee leadership beyond the pandemic"
Credit: LERRN

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UPDATES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

VIRTUAL EXHIBITION ON YOUTH TRAJECTORIES FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT IN JORDAN

As part of an ongoing project on youth trajectories from education to employment in Jordan and Lebanon, Dr. Oroub El-Abed and her team in Jordan curated a virtual exhibition called *Trajectories: Narratives Of Youth From Education To Employment.*



Mockup of the Trajectories Exhibition Mural
Credit: CLS

A group of fifteen young Jordanians, Palestinians and Syrian refugees living in Amman were invited to draw and narrate their River of Life. This analytical participatory approach produced meaningful drawings representing their trajectories from birth into the future and reflected their legal, social, gender,

cultural, and economic realities.

The team hosted a webinar about the exhibition, which was hosted in a gallery in downtown Amman for World Refugee Day. Stay tuned for the publication of a new report coming from this project on how the legal status of youth impacts their journeys from education to employment.



River of Life drawing of Basel Al Hassan, 25 (Syria)
Credit: CLS, Trajectories, Basel Al Hassan

UPDATES FROM EAST AFRICA

KENYA

The Kenya Working Group continued to provide support to students from a refugee background registered for the MA in Forced Migration Studies at Moi University. In 2020, Emmanuel Malual from South Sudan joined the program. He is a journalist by training and hopes to use his media background to highlight forced displacement issues.

The working group carried out field work in Kakuma, Dadaab and Nairobi on refugee participation, and conducted research on the effects of COVID-19 on mobility in Kenya. Some of this research was presented at a major conference on forced migration hosted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and at a Mobilities Workshop hosted by Moi University.



From Left, Kenya Working Group members Dulo Nyaoro, Serge Houghton and Dr. Michael Owiso in Addis Ababa, 2021
Credit: Dulo Nyaoro

TANZANIA

The Tanzania Working Group has supported refugees in applying to different opportunities for empowerment, including researcher positions for LERRN's study on RLOs in East Africa and scholarship programs like the DAAD Leadership For Africa Scholarship. The group has also continued to work on a survey on the impact of COVID-19 and a book project on the history of hosting refugees in Tanzania.

UPDATES FROM THE PROTECTION WORKING GROUP

In January 2021, the Protection Working Group with support from LERRN and the University of Ottawa received a Connection Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for a project entitled "Canada's Role in the Global Refugee Regime." This project aims to address a two-part knowledge gap, first on Canada's global engagement on refugee issues, and second on Canadian perspectives on refugee responses. It will bring together leading experts from within Canada and around the world to contribute to a series of public engagement activities and an edited volume published by McGill-Queens University Press, with an Open Access version for scholars and interested readers in the global South.

The team for the project "Vulnerability and Seeking Protection in Canada" (part of the broader VULNER project funded by the EU H2020 initiative) has started interviewing decision-makers involved in the determination of refugee/migrant legal status in Canada, to understand their assessment of "vulnerability" in practice. They have also started interviews with "on the ground" practitioners - such as immigration lawyers and service providers - to understand how they think about "vulnerability" and to identify gaps in services to "vulnerable" migrants. These interviews build on a document analysis during the first phase of the project, involving 400 Canadian legal and policy documents, as well as over 800 Canadian court cases. The final phase of the project will involve interviews with migrants to shed light on how they navigate the immigration/asylum system to secure legal status in Canada.

A new project called "Learning from NGO Partners" will talk with LERRN's NGO partners to understand how they navigate the refugee regime at various levels (local, regional, national, international) and their capacity for "speaking up" in these various contexts.

WEBINARS

ENGAGING WITH THE EDITORS OF *REFUGE* AND *REFUGEE SURVEY QUARTERLY*

In February, LERRN hosted a webinar featuring LERRN partner Maha Shuayb, along with the editor for *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* and LERRN partner, Dagmar Soennecken, and the editor for *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, David Cantor. A summary and recording of the webinar are available on LERRN's website. The discussion was based on an analysis of RSQ, published by LERRN and the RECAP Project at the Refugee Law Initiative in November 2020, and LERRN's analysis of Refuge, published shortly after the webinar.



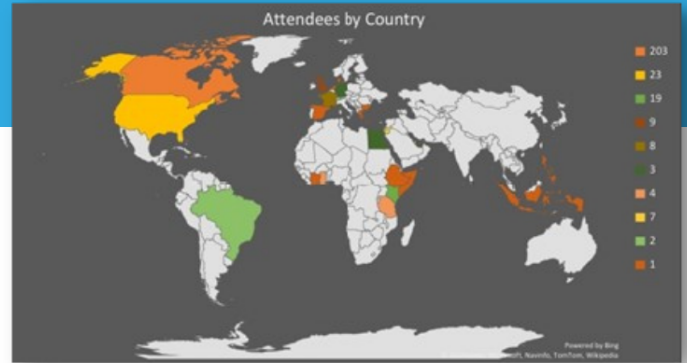
Promotional poster for the February 2021 LERRN webinar "LERRN's Analysis of *Refuge* and *RSQ*: Knowledge, Access and Representation"
Credit: LERRN

These analyses found that although authors based in many countries have published in the journals in recent years, the most articles were written by scholars based in the global North and focus on displaced persons in the global North, despite 85% of refugees being hosted in the global South. This lack of global South perspectives generally provides a skewed understanding of forced migration. The webinar participants highlighted several barriers for global South scholars publishing in academic journals, such as limited access to research funds and a language barrier. *Refuge* reflected on the webinar in their April 2021 newsletter and both journals are continuing to engage with these questions around representation and access.

LERRN is committed to publishing the work and creating a space for scholars from the global South and scholars from a refugee background through the LERRN Working Papers Series and a book series with McGill-Queen's University Press.

LERRN AND IDRC COLLABORATE TO PROMOTE THE LOCALIZATION OF REFUGEE RESEARCH

LERRN continued to work in close partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to support the localization of refugee research and the development of sustainable research capacity on refugee and forced migration issues in key regions of the global South. A very successful LERRN-IDRC webinar series reached over 700 participants across the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe in over 48 countries during the live sessions. The recordings already have more than 600 views on YouTube and climbing.



LERRN-IDRC Webinar Attendees by Country
Credit: LERRN

The series included the following webinars:

- October 2020** Mobilizing a Global Response: Acting on the report by the Honourable Bob Rae
- November 2020** Refugee Education during and beyond Covid-19: Perspectives from local and global actors
- December 2020** By Refugees, For Refugees: Refugee leadership beyond the pandemic
- January 2021** UNHCR Virtual Conference: 70 Years Protecting People Forced to Flee – North American Panels: North America within the global refugee regime and Realizing protection and solutions within North America
- April 2021** Refugee-host community relations during Covid-19 and beyond: Lessons from the Middle East and Southern Africa
- June 2021** Localized Forced Displacement Research: Lessons from East Africa and the Middle East
- June 2021** Forced Displacement and Health in the Context of the Pandemic: Localized Responses to COVID- 19's Impact on Refugees, IDPs, and Communities Living in Chronic Displacement



LERRN-IDRC

LERRN and IDRC also continue to actively collaborate on research that examines how localized refugee research can best be supported. Our focus since September 2020 has been to understand how “localized knowledge ecosystems” produce new forms of knowledge that have an impact on policy and practice. We understand “localized knowledge ecosystems” to incorporate actors with lived experience, research actors, and practitioners who produce and use knowledge on forced migration. Together, these actors coordinate with each other to advance new production within this system and translate and mobilize this knowledge to influence policy, practice, action and discourse/narrative to advance the well-being of refugees. Working closely with the [Africa Migration and Development Policy Centre](#) in Nairobi and the [Issam Fares Institute](#) at the American University in Beirut, the initiative has been examining how localized knowledge ecosystems function in Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya and Lebanon. The initiative presented results of this scoping and mapping phase during the [penultimate webinar in the LERRN-IDRC series](#). The initiative will next undertake a validation of the results of the mapping phase and develop in-depth case studies to better understand the dynamics of localized knowledge ecosystems on forced displacement and to explain variation in the impact of these ecosystems across context.



Promotional poster for the 9 June 2021 LERRN-IDRC webinar "Localized Forced Displacement Research: Lessons from East Africa and the Middle East"
Credit: LERRN

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

LERRN is also excited to support the launch of IDRC's [call for proposals](#) to establish Research Chairs on Forced Displacement in East Africa and the Middle East. These Research Chairs aim to “empower institutions in the Middle East and East Africa to define research agendas on forced displacement” and to “lead on identifying practical, gender-transformative solutions that promote the social, economic, political, and health rights of forcibly displaced persons and host communities.” The deadline for applications is 3 August 2021.

REFUGEE PARTICIPATION

SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL REFUGEE PARTICIPATION

The Global Compact on Refugees recognizes that “responses are most effective when they actively and meaningfully engage those they are intended to protect and assist.” LERRN has actively supported a range of initiatives on refugee participation, beginning with the 2019 book launch of *Refugees’ Roles in Resolving Displacement and Building Peace*, co-edited by LERRN partners Megan Bradley and James Milner along with Blair Peruniak. The book was the basis of a dialogue hosted by LERRN and the Refugee Hub at the University of Ottawa, in close partnership with LERRN advisors Mustafa Alio and Muzna Dureid. The dialogue contributed to exciting developments putting the principle of refugee participation into practice, including Canada’s commitment to include refugee advisors in future delegations to meetings of the international refugee system, starting with Mustafa Alio as Refugee Advisor to the Delegation of Canada to the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December 2019.

As reported in our January newsletter, 2021 was shaping-up to be an exciting year for refugee participation. The first six months of the year certainly did not disappoint! The new year began with the first meeting of the Refugee Advisory Network (RAN) of Canada. RAN is an independent and nonpartisan group of refugee leaders selected from across Canada through an open selection process. Advisors strive to achieve the meaningful inclusion of refugees’ perspectives, skills and knowledge in global policy and decision-making processes that affect the lives of refugees, from the root causes of displacement to the realization of sustainable, rights-based solutions. Since RAN Canada’s first meeting in January 2021, it has been involved with Canada’s delegation to bilateral meetings with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Deputy High Commissioner. It has actively been engaged in developing its structures to advance the meaningful participation of refugees in multiple levels of decision-making, as well as to increase funding and support to refugee led organizations.

To learn more about RAN Canada, please contact: ALL@RANCanada.ca

CONGRATULATIONS, MUSTAFA ALIO!

On 25 February 2021, LERRN Partner Mustafa Alio was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal by the Office of the Governor General of Canada. These awards “recognize individuals who have performed a deed or an activity in a highly professional manner, or at a very high standard that brings benefit or honour to Canada.” Along with Bassel Ramli and Omar Salaymeh, Mustafa Alio was recognized “for founding Jumpstart Refugee Talent to help newcomers enter the job market, become contributing citizens and start to rebuild their lives.” Congratulations, Mustafa!



LERRN Partner Mustafa Alio
Credit: Mustafa Alio

LERRN has also been proud to support Mustafa as he launched a new global initiative:



R-SEAT logo
Credit: R-SEAT

Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT). R-SEAT's vision is “for refugees to play a major role within the central decision-making bodies of the global refugee regime, such as the Executive Committee of the UNHCR (ExCom), to bring about a more effective and legitimate process to the policies that affect their lives.” R-SEAT will be working with refugee leaders in 20 countries to encourage governments to formalize refugee participation in the global refugee policy process. Mustafa brings vision, clarity, conviction and determination to his tireless work to make refugee participation a reality.

LERRN's research is also contributing to meaningful refugee participation. LERRN is supporting research by the Dadaab Response Association on refugee responses in Northeastern Kenya and recently published Working Papers by members of the group, which made important contributions to global discussions on refugee education. LERRN research has also helped create a working definition of “meaningful refugee participation,” discussed the emergence of a global norm on refugee participation, and analyzed the politics of refugee participation. Project Director James Milner presented the paper “The Politics and Practice of Refugee Participation in the Governance of the Global Refugee Regime” at the 2021 conference of the Canadian Political Science Association.

REFUGEE-LED ORGANIZATIONS

INTRODUCING EAST AFRICAN RESEARCHERS FOR STUDY ON RLOs

LERRN, in partnership with the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) at the University of Oxford and the Centre for Lebanese Studies in Jordan, has started work on a study that aims to understand the factors that influence the impact of refugee-led organisations (RLOs) as service-delivery providers in humanitarian settings in East Africa and the Middle East. This study is intended to be fully participatory and most of the core members of the research team have experience living as refugees. We are pleased to introduce the four Lead Country Researchers in East Africa:

Ethiopia: Abis Getachew holds a Master of Commerce in economics from the University of South Africa. Abis has been involved in several research projects on displacement in collaboration with the German Development Institute and the RSC.



Kenya: Andhira Yousif is originally from Sudan but has lived in Kenya as a refugee. This experience has emboldened her to stand up for the rights of displaced people, including as a member of the Youth Advisory Committee for the Displaced and Refugee youth Enabling Environment Mechanism (DREEM) project. She holds a MSc in International Development from the University of Edinburgh.



Uganda: Mary Gitahi holds a BA in Business Administration with a major in International Business Management from Makerere University in Uganda. Mary is a refugee from



Kenya currently residing in Uganda. Mary has a dream of raising awareness on refugee competence and the impact of localization in refugee communities.



Tanzania: Uwezo Ramazani holds an MA in Governance and Leadership from the Open University of Tanzania as well as an MA in Public Administration from the Mzumbe University in Tanzania. For the past 7 years, Uwezo has been working with Resilience Action International (RAI), an RLO operating mainly in Kakuma Refugee Camp, most recently as Director of Programs.

MAPPING BEST PRACTICES AMONG REFUGEE-LED ORGANIZATIONS

Working with LERRN and the UNHCR from February-April 2021, Emma Awe drafted a report highlighting applicants and winners of the [UNHCR 2020 Innovation Award](#). In 2020, the award recognized the crucial contributions of Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs) as community leaders with firsthand experience of the difficulties faced by refugee communities. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, RLOs creatively provided support and information with limited funds. Their innovations – such as digital health interventions and book drives – had an immense positive impact on both refugee and host communities. UNHCR awarded US\$15,000 to seven RLOs from seven different regions based on their ability to identify a specific challenge, respond with a novel solution, and include various actors in the implementation of their project. The report highlights the

the work of both winners and honourable mentions to generate additional funding and networking opportunities, as well as emphasize the critical role played by refugee leaders worldwide. Based on the original award applications and submissions allowing applicants to self-identify their most impactful work, the report includes short briefs about each of the RLOs, telling a unique history of their motivations, innovations, and impact. Detailed mapping of best practices showed that many RLOs quickly expanded established operations to respond to COVID-19 by relying on the skills of program alumni, repurposing pre-purchased equipment, and using digital technologies to reach wider audiences. Overall, the report highlights inspiring ways by which RLOs are uniquely suited to respond to emerging crises and how their vital work benefits refugee and host communities alike.

ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

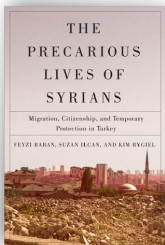
Over the last year, LERRN has proudly amplified the voices of its partners, using various virtual platforms to engage in important national and international conversations with governments and civil society. Through [the LERRN-IDRC webinar series](#), representatives of refugee-led organizations, national NGOs, civil society actors and researchers based in major refugee-hosting countries in the global South have engaged directly in dialogue with representatives of UNHCR and the Government of Canada. In addition, LERRN Project Director, [James Milner](#), jointly gave presentations to Global Affairs Canada with [Mustafa Alio](#) (on refugee-led responses) and with [Linda Oucho](#) (on refugee and IDP policies in sub-Saharan Africa). [Pascal Zigashane](#) and [Oroub El-Abed](#) presented to the Canadian Council for Refugees about resettlement and the global refugee regime.

JULY 2021

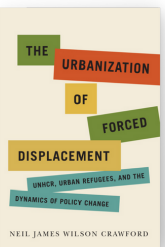
Gil Loescher
REFUGEES
A Very Short Introduction

NEW BOOKS

COMING SOON IN THE MQUP REFUGEE AND FORCED MIGRATION STUDIES SERIES



LERRN is excited to support the publication of three new books in the McGill-Queen's University Press Refugee and Forced Migration Studies Series, which is co-edited by LERRN partners Megan Bradley and James Milner.



- Coming September 2021: *The Precarious Lives of Syrians: Migration, Citizenship, and Temporary Protection in Turkey* by Feyzi Baban, Suzan Ilcan and Kim Rygiel
- Coming December 2021: *The Urbanization of Forced Displacement: UNHCR, Urban Refugees, and the Dynamics of Policy Change* by Neil James Wilson Crawford
- Coming February 2022: *Documenting Displacement: Questioning Methodological Boundaries in Forced Migration Research* edited by Katarzyna Grabska and Christina R. Clark-Kazak



LAUNCH OF GIL

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LOESCHER'S REFUGEES: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION

On 27 May 2021, viewers from 27 countries attended the virtual launch for Gil Loescher's last book Refugees: A Very Short Introduction. The event began with reflections from Gil's family before turning to a discussion of the themes of the book and their significance from the perspective of global policy discussions, national responses in the global South, and refugee leadership. Reflections from Mustafa Alio, Alexander Betts, Jeff Crisp, Janemary Ruhundwa and James Milner highlighted the book's important contributions to research and policy on global refugee issues, while remaining highly accessible to a wide audience. Drawing on Loescher's 40-year legacy as an authority on UNHCR and global refugee issues, the book offers a concise introduction to the impact of today's responses to refugee movements for states, global order and refugees themselves. It promotes a larger role for civil society actors and refugee-led responses. Speakers agreed that the book can act as a catalyst for new approaches to addressing the source of refugee displacement as well as ensuring that responses to refugee movements are more inclusive, comprehensive and rights-based. During the event, Gil's family announced that they will donate proceeds from the sale of the book to support the Gil Loescher Memorial Fund to support "students conducting research on refugee and displacement issues, with preference given to students from low and middle-income countries or who themselves have been displaced."

The series especially welcomes manuscript submissions from scholars in the global South or scholars from a refugee background. Please contact Megan Bradley or James Milner if you are interested in publishing a book in the series.

JULY 2021

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