LERRN SUCCESS STORIES

WHAT IS THE LOCAL ENGAGEMENT REFUGEE RESEARCH NETWORK?

LERRN is the Local Engagement Refugee Research Network. We are a community of researchers and practitioners, committed to promoting protection and solutions, with and for refugees. We are working to ensure that refugee research, policy and practice are influenced by the collective action of an informed, inclusive, equitable and sustained network of civil society actors. With a focus on the Global South, our work responds to the needs and opportunities identified by our partners in major refugee-hosting countries.

Our vision is that all refugees have timely and reliable access to protection and rights-based solutions.

This report showcases the accomplishments of the network since its launch in 2018. Now at its halfway point, we're excited to share some of the many successes of our researchers, students, and refugee partners.

Our Impact

Jordan
LEADERSHIP
Research placements
Capacity building
Training
Protection
Collaborative Refugee Research
REFUGEE PARTICIPATION
Working Groups
Parnership
LEBANON
Tanzania
Diversity
Collective engagement
INTERSECTIONALITY
Localization
Knowledge mobilization
Advisory committee
rights-based solutions
Kenya

51 partners

155 students mentored

110 research outputs

35 publications

48 countries reached

LERRN supports collaborative research that responds to priorities identified by our working groups. Through this research, LERRN partners co-create new knowledge about the role of civil society in the global refugee regime while critically engaging with emerging issues related to diversity, intersectionality, protections and solutions.

LERRN is also working to enhance the impact of actors committed to partnered approaches to realize positive change in the global refugee regime. This is primarily done through training and mentoring activities for graduate students and emerging scholars to develop capacity-building across the world.

By amplifying our results and partners' voices through knowledge-mobilization tools, LERRN has a particular focus on social impact. We aim to address the political economy of knowledge production, which has neglected the voices of the Global South, with the goal of influencing global policy and public debates.

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

" It is amazing what LERRN has accomplished in such a short time! "

Importance of our partners and students

LERRN's many accomplishments are largely a result of the valuable contributions of our students and global partners. With positions in the secretariat team and exciting opportunities for international research placements, students have enthusiastically expanded their knowledge on enhancing the role of civil society to meet the needs of refugees in the Global South. Similarly, our global partners in Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Tanzania and more have unified LERRN through a shared spirit of academic excellence and collaboration while making significant strides towards refugee participation and policy change in Canada.

2018 A new project
"WITH AND FOR REFUGEES"

LERRN officially launched its partnership secretariat in October 2018, following a three-year process of dialogue and collaboration between the research and practitioner communities. With its base at Carleton University, our programs were also developed and implemented by Geographic Working Groups in Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon and Tanzania, along with Thematic Working Groups focusing on Protection, Solutions and Diversity/Intersectionality.

With the generous support of a Partnership Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, along with many contributions from our partner organizations, LERRN is excited to see the project run until December 2025.

Lashaunda

STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

Lashaunda Yates currently works as an adviser to the Anti-Racism Secretariat at Global Affairs Canada. She holds a BA in History and Political Science from Graceland University as well as an MA in Political Science. During her time with LERRN, Lashaunda worked as a project officer assisting in the organization and overall implementation of the project during the first few months since its launch.

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"LERRN is a great network and particularly engages organizations and people from different backgrounds and geographical areas"

2019

Student research placements and publication of working paper series

LERRN was excited to recruit our first cohort of students to implement research sub-projects identified by our Geographic Working Groups. From a pool of more than 40 applicants, seven students were selected from our Canadian partner universities (Carleton, McGill, Ottawa, and York). These students participated in the Summer Course at the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University and a week of fieldwork training at Carleton University.

They then worked closely with our Geographic Working Groups, many collaborating with their affiliated graduate students, to undertake

research on localization, refugee participation, the national legal framework of Tanzania and trajectories from education to employment in Lebanon and Jordan. Results of these research projects will be published as working papers on the LERRN website in the coming months.

Yasmeen

STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

Yasmeen Shahzadeh did her masters in education and society with a concentration in gender and women's studies at McGill University. Through her work with LERRN, she was able to explore her interests in feminist theory, gender studies and refugee policy and rights focused on the Middle East. Additionally, she was able to embark on a field placement in Jordan, where she was able to work firsthand with global research teams and develop valuable research and writing skills. Yasmeen is currently based in Amman, working as a consultant on gender and economic inclusion.

MEANINGFUL REFUGEE PARTICIPATION

Mustafa Alio appointed refugee advisor to Canadian delegation

In September 2019, LERRN and the Refugee Hub at the University of Ottawa convened refugee leaders, researchers, practitioners and policymakers for a Policy Dialogue to explore how Canada can support meaningful refugee participation. Participants proposed seven action items to support refugee participation going forward: a mentorship program for refugee leaders in Canada; refugee participation in processes related to the Global Compact on Refugees; the development of guiding principles for refugee participation; support of creative expression; planning for a global refugee assembly; a fund to support refugee participation; and, greater participation in the design of research. These discussions contributed to Canada's decision to name LERRN partner Mustafa Alio as Refugee Advisor to the Canadian Delegation attending the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva in December 2019. This was the first time a delegation attending a UN meeting on refugees had a member of the delegation participating specifically as a refugee. "Canada did the right thing for including a refugee in their delegation and has hopefully paved the way for others to follow suit," said Mr. Alio. "Refugees have a voice and should have a voice in any policies, programs or services that are being considered [for them]."

Pascal

PARTNER SUCCESS STORY

Pascal Zigashane is a LERRN partner who worked as the executive director of the URISE Initiative for Africa (CBO), which launched in 2016 and ran until 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a community-based organization that offered education, opportunities and training access for youth in Kenya. With his academic degree in social work from Regis University as well as a background in journalism and forced migration, Pascal is deeply passionate about leadership, advocacy and youth empowerment. As a refugee himself, he is an instrumental leader for social change in his community while creating education and job opportunities for other refugees in need.

2020

NEW OPPORTUNITIES:
LAUNCH OF RAN

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.

WEBINAR SERIES

LERRN and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) launched a webinar series on forced displacement in October 2020. These monthly webinars, co-moderated by LERRN and IDRC researchers, seek to amplify the voices and perspectives of partners closest to the issues, creating a platform for engagement among diverse actors from government representatives, the United Nations, refugees, activists and scholars. Reaching 312 participants across the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe, the webinars address several forced displacement dimensions, ranging from protection to refugee participation, education and health. With this exceptional work done in 2020, LERRN continued these stimulating conversations on forced displacement in 2021. On January 21st, LERRN hosted two North American panels to mark the 70th Anniversary of the UNHCR Statute. These panels considered North American perspectives on the "who, what, and how" of realizing protection and solutions, both within North American and through North American engagement in the global refugee regime.

STUDENT SUCESS STORY

Nadeea Rahim is doing her masters in Migration and Diaspora Studies at Carleton University. She works with LERRN as a research assistant while also supporting RAN Canada (The Refugee Advisory Network) as an advisor. During her time with us, she was able to expand her knowledge on global refugee policy.

Nadeea

"What makes LERRN special is that it's trying to change and transform this unequivocal and colonialist way of conducting research, and how we see what collaboration and research means." **Merve**

COVID 19 DEVELOPMENTS FROM GEOGRAPHIC WORKING GROUPS

The spread of COVID-19 had an unprecedented impact on lives globally. In refugee host countries, new challenges emerged as daily life was altered to accommodate safety measures. There was a growing apprehension that the full brunt of COVID-19 will be felt by the most vulnerable groups, including refugees. In response to requests from our partners, we have created a section on our website to provide updates on the way that COVID-19 is impacting the geographic regions where LERRN works.

We have highlighted reports and insights from our partners on the ground in Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya and Tanzania. In the last two months our partners have voiced concerns about the insecurity of refugees in each region. In refugee camps, limited access to soap and clean water coupled with crowded living conditions has heightened fears about the spread of the virus. Similarly, for refugees living in urban areas, loss of income due to the virus has left many unable to pay their rent and access adequate food, and, overcrowding and insufficient hygiene facilities are also of concern. The pandemic has also highlighted the challenges that multilateral institutions face in providing protection and delivering aid during times of crisis, as such, there is growing support for refugee self-reliance and empowerment. As this is an evolving situation, we continue to welcome written contributions.

2021 Refugee-led Research

In collaboration with the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford, LERRN secured funding from a consortium of donors to undertake an innovative longitudinal study on refugee-led responses to refugee situations in East Africa and the Middle East. The goal of the project is to move from anecdote to evidence and to better understand the factors that influence the impact of refugee-led organizations and initiatives in responding to the needs of their communities in a range of contexts. The research will be co-designed, co-conducted, and co-produced with research teams including refugees and national research partners across seven countries. Work to develop the project began in early January 2021 with the close collaboration of LERRN's partners in Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon and Tanzania. The project will run until late 2022.

Refugee Education
Working papers

LERRN was delighted to support the creation of the Dadaab Response Association in 2020, a community-based organization led by researchers living in Dadaab, Kenya. To help mobilize the research of this group, LERRN published research by four of the group's founding members and published research conducted for their Master of Education degrees through the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees initiative, based at York University.

The first paper, by Ochan Robert Leomoi, addresses the issue of exam practices in refugee schools, finding that cheating happens frequently due to barriers to adequate learning content, and the requirement for high exam grades to access the very limited opportunities in higher education.

The second paper, by Abdikadir Bare Abikar, examines the model of a Professional Learning Community for on-site, in-service teacher training for untrained teachers. These papers make important recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

Papers by Okello Mark Oyat, on the use of corporal punishment, and Arte Saman Dagane, on the causes of female student drop-out rates, were published in early 2021. Research produced by the Dadaab Response Association on the impact of COVID-19 on communities in the Dadaab refugee camps were published on LERRN's website later in 2021.

Students in Kenya and Tanzania

Faith

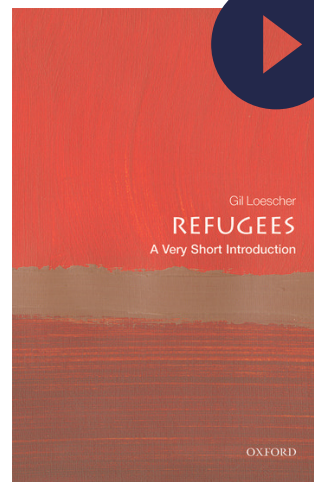Javans

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Faith Mjalilla did her masters of law at the University of Dallas and is now currently working at Dignity Kwanza as a programs officer with a focus on communications advocacy for refugees. Through her work with LERRN, she has supported the working groups in Tanzania as a research coordinator and acquired valuable knowledge on research skills and ethics. "I've been able to grow as an advocate for refugees," Mjalilla said.

Javans Okhonjo Wanga is currently doing two master's degrees, an MA in forced migration at Moi University and an MA in gender studies at Addis Ababa University. After finishing his BA in social work, Javans found his interest drawn to forced migration research with a feminist and gender inclusionary approach. During his time with LERRN, he partnered with Akalya to conduct research interviews in Kenya, including the Kakuma Refugee Camps and Kalpbeyei Settlement scheme for refugees, on the impact of resource dependency on localization of humanitarian services. His thesis at Moi University discusses barriers to the economic inclusion of refugees while his other thesis at Addis Ababa University is discussing the access of healthcare among victims of GBV within refugee communities in Kenya. He is currently a Research Assistant at Africa Union Commission working on Women's Rights.

Gil Loescher's "Refugees"

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.

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 which supports "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."

Who publishes in top forced migration journals?

LERRN's work is focused on the global South because that is where 85% of the world's refugees are hosted. However, LERRN analyzed top journals in the field of refugee and forced migration studies and found that almost 90% of articles did not include any authors based in the Global South and that the majority of research concentrated on forced migrants located in the Global North. Since 2020, LERRN has published analyses of three journals: Journal of Refugee Studies, Refugee Survey Quarterly, and Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees. In February 2021, LERRN hosted a webinar bringing together the editors of Refugee Survey Quarterly and Refuge with LERRN partners to discuss some of the results of the analysis. This work has informed conversations within the journals on what might be done to address some of these imbalances and structural barriers to academic publishing for scholars in the Global South or scholars with a personal experience of displacement. Journals have already taken steps towards or are considering providing more information for potential authors, offering extra copy-editing support, diversifying editorial boards and developing mentorship programs.

Rachel

STUDENT SUCESS STORY

Rachel McNally is a PhD student in the department of political science at Carleton University where she completed her masters with a focus on refugee resettlement policy. During her time with LERRN, Rachel has worked as a knowledge mobilization and translation officer, where she collaborates with researchers during the publication process **for the working paper series**. She is also organizing a webinar series with the Refugee Research Network on the ethics of forced migration **research**. "LERRN has introduced me to an amazing network of people, from researchers who live in Dadaab refugee camps, to academics in various places, to people who work with NGOs, to editors of journals," Rachel said.

What's next?

We are excited by all that LERRN has accomplished in just three short years, but there is so much more to do. In the second half of our partnership, we will continue to co-create new knowledge and understandings on critical issues affecting protection and solutions for refugees. We will continue to offer training and mentoring to students and civil society leaders to affect change in local, national and global settings. We will continue to mobilize knowledge to influence research, policy and practice. will continue to support effort to enahcne localized research capacity in major refugee-hosting countries and find ways to bring new voices into global research and policy discussions. We will continue to work in solidarity with refugee leaders to advance meaningful refugee participation. We believe that collaborative research can help ensure that all refugees have timely and reliable access to protection and rights-based solutions. We're excited by all that we have done, but there is much more to do.

Angel

STUDENT SUCESS STORY

"Working with LERRN really opened up the doors for me to thrive and make a difference in other organizations."

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"[LERRN] will surely achieve a long term sustainable plan. It's outputs will surely turn into precious outcomes representing a new base for future plans and projects"

LERRN

Social media report

WEBSITE

271 PAGE LIKES
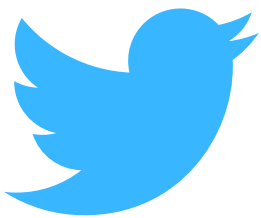
26 003 Users

80 877 Page Views

86.8% New Users

515 ZOOM WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS

5000 VIEWS in 60 VIDEOS

1459 FOLLOWERS

NEWSLETTER

mailchimp

263

LinkedIn

followers in 12 months

3490

email opens