



# Refugee Research Network

## Achievement Report

### **Summary**

The Refugee Research Network (RRN) is a global network of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers that aimed to have a wide-ranging and progressive impact on refugee research and policy in Canada and globally. Central to this work has been an emphasis on building collaborative research partnerships and networking capacity with Global South nations, which are increasingly stressed by displacement and conflict and marginalized in the international research community. The RRN's model of research partnership is based on respectful interpersonal relationships founded on person to person contacts, and open and transparent communications that recognise structural inequalities among researchers in low and high-income countries. This model has guided the formation of the research clusters and networks that have achieved relative independence. The principal impacts of the RRN include: 1) the building of research capacity within Canada, 2) linking Canada to new and expanded networks of researchers and research centres that span the Global South and North, 3) the generation of new knowledge by clusters of researchers focused on major issues and practices, 4) the mobilization of new and existing knowledge to make it more accessible globally, 5) the development of a model of individual and institutional partnership that strives to bridge the social and economic inequities inherent in "South/North" relationships, and 6) training the next generation of refugee scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. The RRN members have been highly productive. The outputs of the research clusters include: 23 workshops and conferences, 6 books, 6 special journal issues, 12 separate journal articles, 11 reports, 4 annotated bibliographies, a new online journal and 5 conference presentations on the RRN research process. With the support of the 2015 SSHRC Partnership Impact Award, the RRN continues to focus on the mobilization of the knowledge generated.

### **Outcomes**

The RRN has supported and facilitated the development of new networks of researchers and practitioners across Canada and globally, including the Canadian Association of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) founded in 2008, the Latin American Network for Forced Migration / Red Latino Americana de Migración Forzada established in 2010, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL) launched in 2011, the Global Policy Network launched in 2012, and the Asia Pacific Forced Migration Connection (APFMC) established in November 2013. A highlight was the establishment of the Emerging Scholars and Practitioners on Migration Issues (ESPMI) network of scholars and practitioners focused on creating a cooperative and helpful professional network for those starting out in the field of forced migration. ESPMI has produced a refereed online e-journal on refugee research. Central to the RRN was the establishment of multi-disciplinary research clusters that generated new knowledge

on key issues facing refugees and those who work to protect them. The clusters have leveraged forty-two grants with a value of \$5.9 million to support the networking of partners, to produce and disseminate research and to launch special initiatives such as the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees project (BHER). Thematic clusters developed through the RRN include: Age & Generation in Migration Contexts, Detention and Asylum, Environmental Displacement, International Refugee Law, Methodology & Production of Knowledge in Forced Migration Contexts, and Gender and Sexuality. The RRN website includes a repository for research, and there is an active Facebook group and Twitter following. Four policy briefs on current issues were presented to the Canadian Ministries of Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship and Global Affairs in December 2016. A weekly Refugee Research Digest was launched in the fall of 2017 and Refugee Research in Context, an online platform to contextualize contemporary refugee issues, experiences, and debates, is being developed.

### **Audience(s) benefitting from the results this initiative**

Audiences benefitting from the research produced by RRN clusters and networks include academic peers and scholarly associations, policymakers, practitioners, and students. The Age & Generation in Migration Contexts cluster has developed the concept of social age in migration recognising the differential impacts of migration processes on different populations across age and generation, which is of particular relevance to policymakers and humanitarian workers. The Detention & Asylum cluster has documented the increase in the detention of refugees often under inhumane conditions by states including Canada, with a view to supporting development of policy and practice interventions that eliminate or at least ameliorate the detention of refugees. The Environmental Displacement cluster studied the trends of displacement caused by conservation, resource extraction, and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, and informed global understandings of the broad implications of climate change on vulnerable populations. One major outcome of the International Refugee Law cluster was a major Canadian-American policy report, *Bordering on failure: Canada-US border policy and the politics of refugee exclusion*, published by the Harvard Law School. The Methodology & Production of Knowledge in Forced Migration Contexts cluster sought to advance forced migration research by examining methodological, ethical and epistemological challenges faced by researchers in this field. The Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) project is an innovative RRN cluster of Canadian and African university and NGO partners offering post-secondary education (PSE) to refugees in the Dadaab camp, Kenya. It established a potentially global model for PSE for refugees that will increase their capacity for successful return to their home countries, integration into the host countries or resettlement in new countries such as Canada. Finally, an international team of faculty and students has developed Online Research and Teaching Tools, globally accessible resources to provide educators and students with contemporary research tools and methods in order to improve the practice and quality of forced migration research.

### **Knowledge Mobilization Methods Used**

- Academic dissemination (Essentially, a one-way flow to other scholars in or near your field(s) of research)

- Knowledge transfer (Transferring knowledge to scholars in other fields of research)
- Knowledge translation (Writing or presenting research findings in more readable or useable forms e.g., writing for a wider or more diverse public)
- Knowledge exchange (Exchanging or sharing knowledge with other disciplines or across sectors (two-way flow) e.g., workshop or conference)
- Knowledge brokering (Facilitating the flow of knowledge between others)
- Knowledge synthesis (Pulling together existing research in a useful form for other researchers or organizations)
- Co-production (Building research teams or alliances that generate new knowledge based on an ongoing exchange of knowledge)
- Networking (Organizing ongoing networks of scholars and/or other experts to mobilize knowledge)

### **Research Products**

5 articles on partnership (subscription based)

7 journal articles by individual authors (subscription based) + 17 articles specifically referencing RRN (authors either involved with RRN, or RRN cited as example of KM)

2 book reviews

6 special journal issues (1 open access)

6 books

7 chapters

4 research syntheses and lit reviews

4 annotated bibliographies

10 working papers and reports

23 workshops and conferences

5 media references

4 briefs

5 presentations, at least another 112 presentations by students supported by the RRN to attend IASFM and CARFMS conferences, The project also supported the travel of 43 academics/partners to IASFM, CARFMS, other workshops to present on research.

86 YouTube videos from RRN channel

3 blogs

1 editorial

### **Web sites or other social media products.**

In addition to 10 project websites, the RRN has a very active Facebook group of more than 38,000 members – the largest Facebook group on refugee issues and research in the world (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/30614536012/>). It also has a Twitter account of more than 3,000 followers (<https://twitter.com/RefugeeResearch>). Online RRN members include

academics, students, front line workers, NGOs, refugees, educational institutions and interested members of the public. The RRN supports the social media activities of 2 academic associations – CARFMS and IASFM. Combined with various listserves, the RRN has developed an outreach capacity of more than 60,000 individuals globally. One e-journal was launched: *Refugee Review* (<https://espminetwork.com/publications/>) .

### **Knowledge Mobilization Events**

In addition to 23 workshops and conferences attended, in June 2015, the RRN hosted the *Innovations in Forced Migration Studies* conference at York's Glendon campus that brought together RRN partners and other leaders in the field, including Dr. Alexander Aleinikoff, then Deputy High Commissioner of UNHCR, who provided the keynote address. [

### **Media**

Project based:

(October 16, 2015) Toronto Star article on the BHER Project: [York U project teaches Dadaab refugees to teach others: http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/10/16/york-u-project-teaches-dadaab-refugees-to-teach-others.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/10/16/york-u-project-teaches-dadaab-refugees-to-teach-others.html)

(October 28, 2015) Universities step up to aid Syrian refugees:

<http://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/universities-step-up-to-aid-syrian-refugees/>  
[https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/11/02/does\\_canada\\_border\\_services\\_agency\\_need\\_oversight.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/11/02/does_canada_border_services_agency_need_oversight.html) (author cited as member of RRN)

### **General Remarks**

In December 2016, four commissioned policy briefs on current concerns were presented to the Ministries of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Global Affairs Canada by RRN members. The topics and authors were: Age and Generation in Canada's Migration Law, Policy, and Programming by *Christina Clark-Kazak*; The Humanitarian-Development Nexus: Opportunities for Canadian Leadership by *Kevin Dunbar & James Milner*; The State of Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada: Trends, Issues, and Impacts by *Jennifer Hyndman, William Payne, & Shauna Jimenez*; and, Environmental Displacement and Environmental Migration: Blurred Boundaries Require Integrated Policies by *Michaela Hynie, Prateep Nayak, Teresa Gomes, & Ifrah Abdillahi*.