



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

**REFUGEE
STUDIES
CENTRE**

A global leader
in multidisciplinary
research on forced migration

OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Islahiye camp for Syrian refugees in southern Turkey.



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Congolese refugee children at Nyakabande transit camp in Kisoro, southwestern Uganda.

Welcome

The Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) is the world's foremost multidisciplinary centre for refugee and forced migration studies. Founded in 1982, the RSC was the first academic centre of its kind and our continued success is underpinned by a deep commitment to unite scholarship, policy and practice through a comprehensive programme of research, teaching and dissemination.

As the oldest university in the English-speaking world, Oxford has long led the way in pursuing scholarly expertise and knowledge generation for the wider benefit of society. The University's intense interdisciplinary approach is especially suited to confronting the hugely complex challenges of the modern world.

In the early 1980s Dr Barbara Harrell-Bond undertook research regarding one such challenge: how to improve the performance of humanitarian agencies in the field. During fieldwork in Algeria she realised the paucity of academic literature available on the subject, and on her return to Oxford she founded the Refugee Studies Centre (then known as the Refugee Studies Programme).

The RSC – based in the Oxford Department of International Development, which in turn sits within the Social Sciences Division – started with a weekly seminar and rapidly gained momentum as a focal point for the study of refugee issues. From the beginning, the RSC aspired to bridge

In 2002 the RSC was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education.

The Royal Anniversary Trust said: 'A world-class centre for the study of forced migration and refugees has been created at the University of Oxford. With its pioneering research and innovative education and training programmes, the Refugee Studies Centre has had a major constructive influence throughout the developed and developing world and has stimulated effective international networks.'

the divide between scholarship, policy and practice – an ethos eloquently expressed by another former director, Dr David Turton, who argued that ‘there is no justification for studying, and attempting to understand, the causes of human suffering if the purpose of one’s study is not, ultimately, to find ways of relieving and preventing that suffering.’

Today, we are engaged in a wide range of innovative research projects and we offer a number of popular learning programmes. To ensure the broader impact of our work we publish widely in books and journals and through academic papers; we build networks, run workshops and organise

international conferences; and we engage with our audiences online through videos, podcasts and social media.

More than three decades after its establishment, the study of forced migration has become a recognised academic discipline, embraced by numerous educational institutions across the world. The need for independent, objective and critical scholarship on factors determining and resulting from displacement has never been greater, and the RSC remains in the forefront, shaping the agenda in today’s most critical debates.



The Refugee Studies Centre is based in Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford.

Research

Through our global networks, partnerships and affiliations, academics based at the RSC collaborate with researchers both in the developed world and in the global South, combining scholarship with active engagement in policy debates. With a reputation for critical insight and scholarly integrity, the RSC is a global leader in multidisciplinary research on the causes and consequences of forced migration, engaged in a multitude of projects broadly conceptualised around three clusters.

Drivers

This cluster examines the causes and consequences of forced migration. A thorough understanding is vital, both to improve the ways in which the causes of forced migration are addressed, and to minimise the negative consequences and maximise the positive opportunities arising from specific contexts of displacement.

In recent years, academics at the RSC have pioneered new research in this area, exploring the role of environmental change in displacement and the situation of 'survival migrants' who fall outside the dominant legal interpretation of a refugee. Another significant area of research explores the effects of global environmental governance and the expansion of resource-based multinationals on mobile peoples in the Middle East.

Governance

This cluster looks at normative and political perspectives on refugees and forced migration. Research related to humanitarian crises focuses on the roles of NGOs, international institutions and governments in responding to disasters. The wider effects of refugee and forced migrant flows are also examined in relation to domestic, regional and world politics.

Research projects in this cluster include those that study specific facets of humanitarian response, such as faith-based humanitarianism, humanitarian innovation and refugee camp governance; those that consider national and regional migration and citizenship regimes; and those that look at broader issues and trends in global migration governance and international relations.

Experiences

This cluster looks to understand forced migration from the perspective of affected people. In order to respond appropriately to humanitarian crises and protracted refugee situations, it is vital to understand the lived experiences of refugees and refugee communities, but until relatively recently refugees were often regarded as vulnerable and dependent victims: voiceless and powerless, the recipients of aid, but never the actors or agents of change.

At the RSC, we carry out participatory research with refugees that has helped to transform attitudes among international agencies engaged in humanitarian and development aid. Research projects at the RSC focus on the role of gender, religion and identity in humanitarian response as well as the policy implications for managing some of the world's most at-risk refugee populations, such as Palestinian youth in the Middle East and undocumented migrant children in Europe.

For a full listing of our current research projects in each of these clusters, including detailed descriptions, visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/research



A group of young Burmese men wait to clear immigration at the Friendship Bridge at the Thailand–Border checkpoint in Mae Sot, Thailand.

Haitian refugees attend classes at a centre in the Dominican Republic.



UNHCR / J. Tanner

Former directors of the RSC have written some of the defining publications in refugee and forced migration studies:

1986 – *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* by Barbara Harrell-Bond (Oxford University Press)

1991 – ‘Labelling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity’ by Roger Zetter (*Journal of Refugee Studies*)

2003 – ‘Towards A Sociology of Forced Migration and Social Transformation’ by Stephen Castles (*Sociology*)

2005 – ‘The Meaning of Place in a World of Movement: Lessons from Long-term Field Research in Southern Ethiopia’ by David Turton (*Journal of Refugee Studies*)

Teaching

The RSC's degree and non-degree courses have two distinct aims: to further academic understanding of forced migration by training future researchers and teachers, and to cultivate the 'reflective practitioner' by enabling professionals who work in the field of forced migration to engage with key debates and situate displacement in a broad historical and international context.

MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies

Each year, the RSC welcomes around 25 students onto its intellectually demanding, ten-month interdisciplinary master's degree. Taught by leading experts from a range of disciplines, and benefitting from Oxford's tradition of individual supervision and small classes, our students develop an understanding of the complex and varied nature of forced migration, and the skills to transfer this knowledge to the practitioner community.

Since 1998 the degree has attracted exceptional students, including Rhodes, Marshall, Commonwealth and Fulbright scholars, from virtually every continent; more than 300 students have graduated and gone on to pursue rewarding and influential careers in academia, law, government, NGOs and international institutions.

'The intellectually intensive programme strikes a healthy and important balance between theoretical and practical questions, while the founding ethos underpinning the RSC encourages its students to (re)examine "conventional" conceptualisations of forced migrants that so frequently inform policy and practice.'

Former MSc student

Doctoral research

For doctoral researchers, the RSC is a vibrant training ground. Our staff members supervise candidates undertaking doctoral research degrees both within the Department and across the University, as well as providing external supervision to candidates based at other universities. Students come from academic disciplines including development studies, politics and international relations, social and cultural anthropology, geography and psychology.

International Summer School in Forced Migration

For over 20 years the RSC's International Summer School in Forced Migration has been at the forefront of our teaching and capacity-building efforts, offering an intensive, multidisciplinary and participatory approach to the study of forced migration. This three-week course combines the very best of Oxford's academic excellence with a stimulating learning programme designed to help participants both understand the causes and consequences of forced migration and develop the practical skills necessary to deal effectively with its challenges.

'I took part in the Summer School last year and I just wanted to let you know that as I'm writing up my PhD, I think of the Summer School often and I greatly benefited from what I learnt there. I understand much more about the legal aspects and psychological impacts of being a refugee.'

Former Summer School participant



A refugee holds her baby boy while a friend looks on in Kiziba camp, Rwanda.

IRIN / Jason Gutierrez



Syrian Kurdish refugees at Domiz camp in Iraqi Kurdistan have opened their own falafel stand.

IRIN / Haba Aly

Short courses and Visiting Fellowships

The RSC convenes regular short courses, usually held over a weekend, which offer participants the opportunity to engage with contemporary debates under the guidance of distinguished experts. For those who wish to undertake an extended programme of self-directed research, Visiting Fellowships provide an excellent opportunity for senior practitioners and policymakers as well as doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers and more established scholars to conduct their work in a renowned environment.

A number of RSC courses and conferences qualify for Continuing Professional Development with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (CPD SRA) in the United Kingdom. These include the International Summer School in Forced Migration and the short courses on 'Statelessness and international law' and 'Palestine refugees and international law'.

For further information about the opportunities available to study at the RSC and how to apply for our courses, visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/study

Outreach and dissemination

Since the inception of the RSC, outreach and dissemination activities have played a key role in our efforts to advance refugee issues and inform both policy and practice in forced migration and humanitarian response.

Digital media

The RSC supports a range of online channels to keep students, colleagues and followers engaged with our current activities. Our newsletter and Facebook and Twitter accounts provide regular updates to several thousand supporters; our YouTube channel hosts interviews with academics about their work; and our podcast feed broadcasts our weekly seminar series. We are also encouraging distance participation in workshops through live streaming.

Visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/connect

‘Thank you so much for the newsletter! The content is very interesting and instructive. It is really appreciated.’

RSC Newsletter recipient

Forced Migration Online

Forced Migration Online (FMO) provides online access to a diverse number of resources concerning the situation of forced migrants worldwide. FMO is designed for use by students, academics, practitioners or anyone else interested in the field of forced migration and features publications, research guides, podcasts, videos and various other resources. The FMO Digital Library is a specialised collection of over 5,900 full-text documents that are free to download.

Visit www.forcedmigration.org

RSC publications

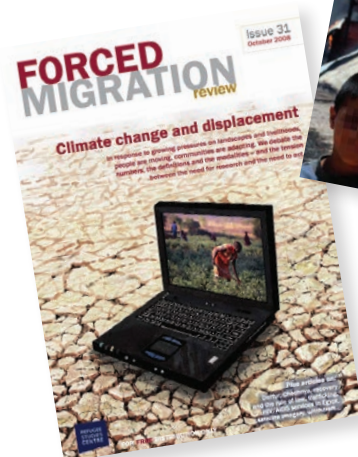
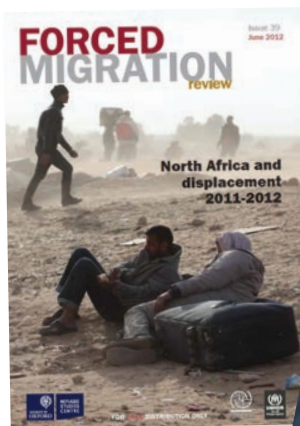
The RSC publishes a range of reports, papers and briefings available in print and to download free of charge. Written by academic experts, the Forced Migration Policy Briefing Series delivers policy research for a wide spectrum of governmental and humanitarian stakeholders. Our Working Paper Series aids the rapid distribution of work in progress, research findings and special lectures by researchers and associates of the RSC.

Visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications

Forced Migration Review

Forced Migration Review (FMR) presents concise, jargon-free articles in a magazine format, available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, and free of charge in print and online. Through FMR, authors from around the world analyse the causes and impacts of displacement; debate policies and programmes; share research findings; reflect the lived experience of displacement; and present examples of good practice and recommendations for policy and action.

Visit www.fmreview.org



‘Thanks for the many inspiring editions, which are helpful to me and our teams.’

NGO worker

***Forced Migration Review* is distributed in print to a global audience of around 15,000 individuals and organisations – and thousands more read it online.**

In 1987, the RSC started publishing a small outreach newsletter called the Refugee Participation Network newsletter (RPN) in order to facilitate greater communication between researchers, practitioners and refugees.

The publication was re-launched in 1998 as *Forced Migration Review*, using the term ‘forced migration’ that more explicitly encompasses both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Today it is believed to be the most widely read publication on forced migration.



UNHCR / H. CAUX

In the bitter cold, a fire helps to keep up spirits at an encampment near Calais, France.

Journal of Refugee Studies

The *Journal of Refugee Studies* (JRS) is published by Oxford University Press in association with the Refugee Studies Centre. This multidisciplinary journal provides a forum for exploring the complex problems of forced migration and national, regional and international responses, covering all categories of displaced people. Contributions that develop theoretical understandings of forced migration or which advance knowledge of concepts, policies and practice are welcomed from both academics and practitioners.

Visit <http://jrs.oxfordjournals.org>

Studies in Forced Migration

The Studies in Forced Migration book series is published by Berghahn Books in association with the Refugee Studies Centre. The series reflects the multidisciplinary nature of the field and includes within its scope international law, anthropology, sociology, politics, international relations, geopolitics, social psychology and economics.

Visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/studies-in-forced-migration

Funding

Our network of supporters is of critical importance to the continued development of the RSC and the success of our teaching and outreach programmes. We would like to extend our recognition and gratitude not only to donors but also to our alumni, patrons, advisers, unofficial ambassadors and friends.

The RSC enjoys wide-ranging support from governments, trusts and foundations, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and private individuals. Whilst a modest endowment supports a handful of posts and the University and Department provide funding for several more, the vast majority of our work and activities rely on external funding, income-generating programmes and activities and sponsorship.

In 2012, the RSC launched the 30th Anniversary Barbara Harrell-Bond Fund to support a new generation of research, teaching and practice in refugee studies. We want to equip the best and brightest students, regardless of their economic situations, to make significant contributions to the field of forced migration. We encourage you to support their education – helping to bring sustained, long-term benefits to the academic discipline and its practical application in alleviating the suffering of some of the world's most vulnerable people.

For more information about how you can contribute to our ongoing success, visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/about-us/anniversary-fund



Congolese refugees play a game of basketball in Kala camp, Zambia.

Front cover: A worker builds a transitional housing unit in Kobe refugee camp, Ethiopia.

www.rsc.ox.ac.uk



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