

FEATURE

‘No right to dream’: Being young and undocumented in Britain

NEWS

Meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas
Funding news
RSC courses

ACTIVITIES

Jan Egeland’s visit to the RSC
Revisiting feminist strategies of inclusion relating to violence against women

PUBLICATIONS AND SEMINARS

Wednesday Seminar Series: dialogues between academia and practice
Forced Migration Policy Briefing: Iraq’s refugees – beyond tolerance
New Working Papers

CONFERENCES

New perspectives on Romani migration and mobility – conference report
Deportation and citizenship – conference report
Faith-based humanitarianism conference

ALUMNI

Naoko Hashimoto
Dr. Solomon Kebede Goshu



UNIVERSITY OF
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REFUGEE
STUDIES
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Meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas

Cities in the fast-urbanising global south are increasingly susceptible to humanitarian crises. Over one billion people live in urban slums, exposed to urban hazards and associated vulnerabilities. Refugees and IDPs share these environments, accentuating their exposure to complex emergencies and humanitarian crises.

From July to November 2009, RSC Director Professor Roger Zetter was consultant to a Task Force convened by the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee to prepare an Initial Strategy Paper on *Meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas*. UN-HABITAT led this dialogue involving 26 UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Many humanitarian actors have experience in responding to urban disasters but levels of expertise are varied. To date there has been no systematic assessment of – nor mechanisms to share – operational capabilities, assessment methodologies, guidelines and programme design and delivery.

The Task Force provided a first-stage review of a range of challenges and has established a platform for more detailed mapping and then mainstreaming of policy and practice. An article on its findings appears in *Forced Migration Review 34*.

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Funding news

In the last quarter of 2009 we were delighted to receive an increased commitment from the Swiss government to launch a pilot research project on environmental displacement, bringing their contribution to €50,000. At the same time we were able to raise partnership funding for this project from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who committed NOK 410,000, along with \$24,000 from UNHCR. The project is due to run for six months and will, we hope, form the foundation for a major academic study on this important subject.

We are grateful to the Lee Foundation for a contribution of £12,000 to our core costs. The Lee Foundation supported the Refugee Studies Centre in its earlier days.

The ERSTE Stiftung committed €15,000 funding for the conference *Romani Mobilities in Europe*. We hope this will form the first steps of a fruitful partnership with this foundation.

We are grateful for the individual gifts we receive from friends, alumni and donors who value and support our work.

For more information, contact Amelia Richards, Head of Development, at amelia.richards@qeh.ox.ac.uk

RSC courses

A second edition of last year's short course on statelessness is scheduled to take place from 16–18 April 2010. The course will focus on statelessness and international law. The issue of statelessness is rising steadily on the agenda of the UN, governments and civil society in many parts of the world. There is also an increasing body of both theoretical and empirical research looking at citizenship – and its absence – from various perspectives. This course, intended for experienced practitioners and graduate researchers, draws on the expertise of RSC staff and associates, as well as members of external institutions, including UNHCR.

Please contact Dr Alice Edwards at alice.edwards@qeh.ox.ac.uk for further details.

Registration for the 21st International Summer School in Forced Migration is now open. The course takes place from 5–23 July 2010. You can apply online or by fax/post. The closing date for applications is 1 March 2010 for applicants requesting sponsorship through the RSC and 1 May 2010 for all other applicants.

For further details, contact RSC's Outreach Programme Manager at summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk



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Jan Egeland's visit to the RSC

The RSC was delighted to host Jan Egeland on 18 November 2009. Mr Egeland acquired 25 years of experience in humanitarian, human rights and peace work before his appointment as UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator in June 2003 (until December 2006). Mr Egeland is currently the director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.

During his day in Oxford, Mr Egeland held a question and answer session for students reading for the MSc in Forced Migration. 30 students peppered Mr Egeland with questions regarding northern Uganda, North Korea, Colombia, lack of control of distribution in humanitarian emergencies, inter-agency coordination at the UN, neutrality and the timeline of moving from humanitarian concerns to political engagement.

In the evening Mr Egeland gave the tenth annual Harrell-Bond lecture, entitled 'Beyond blankets: in search of political deals and durable solutions for the displaced'. Mr Egeland began the lecture with an account of world trends and asked: Is the world becoming a better or worse place? As an optimist, Mr Egeland thinks we have made progress but he cautioned that the world today is more socially unjust – whether in reality or by perception – than ever before. He attributed this as a cause of some migration and described it as an increasingly tense issue that must be resolved. He also discussed the need to engage in seeking political and security solutions in protracted refugee situations and cited examples from Darfur, the Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Liberia and Iraq.

The podcast of the lecture is available on [Forced Migration Online](#) and the [slides](#) that Mr Egeland used to illustrate his lecture are available in PDF format.

Amanda Craig, MSc Candidate in Forced Migration

Revisiting feminist strategies of inclusion relating to violence against women

RSC Lecturer in International Refugee and Human Rights Law Dr Alice Edwards was invited by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to be the keynote speaker at an event to mark the United Nations' 16 Days of Activism on Violence against Women, held in Geneva on 26 November 2009. The event was chaired by Dr Volker Türk, Director of UNHCR's Department of International Protection Services, and coincided with the launch of the French, Spanish and Arabic versions of UNHCR's *Handbook on the Protection of Women and Girls*. The event was well attended, with the participation of around 60 officials of various international and non-governmental organisations.

Dr Edwards' paper reviewed the various 'inclusion strategies' of feminist activists, as well as international and non-governmental organisations, to incorporate the issue of violence against women into existing human rights norms, noting that there is still no explicit prohibition on violence against women at the level of international law. These strategies have included defining norms such as torture, slavery, persecution and sex discrimination as covering acts of rape, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, sex-selective abortion, infanticide and other threats to women's bodies, lives and dignity. Acknowledging that there has been significant progress made since the UN Charter of 1945, she challenged others working in this area to continually re-evaluate these strategies, pointing out the concern that short-term strategies of inclusion can play into and reinforce entrenched inequalities within the framework of international law. Her presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session.

The presentation was based on work towards her forthcoming book on the same subject: Alice Edwards, *Violence against Women and International Human Rights Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

For further information, please contact Dr Alice Edwards at alice.edwards@qeh.ox.ac.uk



'NO RIGHT TO DREAM'

BEING YOUNG AND UNDOCUMENTED IN BRITAIN

What does it mean to be young and undocumented in contemporary Britain? How do young migrants cope with life in Britain at a time of economic downturn and the government's 'tough touch' on undocumented migrants? Built around the voices of 75 migrants from five countries (Brazil, China, Turkey, Ukraine and Zimbabwe), this research into the social and economic lives of young undocumented migrants in Britain captures a complex reality, moving between the uniqueness of the individual experience and the search for patterns and commonalities across migrants' accounts of their everyday lives and experiences.

Being undocumented has significant practical, social and economic impacts and permeates the everyday lives and decisions of young people, including jobs and job search, social

networks and friendships, housing and access to medical help and justice. Being undocumented often creates a transitory and insecure identity. Lack of status is an all-encompassing experience, producing distinctive forms of social marginality with significant impacts such as 'enforced' mobility in the search for accommodation, for work or to avoid detection.

However, motivations for migration differ between country of origin groups depending on their social, economic and political circumstances prior to migration, as illustrated in the following accounts:

I came to this country because I had political problems. I thought England is more honest on this issue... We thought England would not give us to Turkey. (Amed, 29, Turkish Kurd)

This study was commissioned by the [Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#), under its Social Justice Programme, and explores the social and economic lives, motivations and aspirations of undocumented young migrants in England. It is based on in-depth interviews and testimonies collected between August and December 2008 from 75 young people (35 women and 40 men) living in London, the North West and the West Midlands. Interviews were carried out in first languages by field researchers with the requisite language skills.

At that time, although lots of people were going abroad, most went to other countries. Those leaving for the UK were not so many. It was thought that since not too many were going to the UK, finding work should be easier. (Jessy Chang, 21, Chinese)

These differences affect the aspirations and hopes of young people, their plans for the future and their fears of return. The reasons why people choose Britain as a destination are based on economic considerations, social and kinship networks, historical, political and cultural ties and/or perceptions about human rights in Britain. In reality, though, little was known about Britain before arrival and there was little systematic effort to collect reliable information.

Many young undocumented migrants come to Britain to work. The interviews reveal low pay, clustering in a few, generally low-skilled employment sectors, lack of progression, and exploitation in the labour market. A Chinese migrant offers a glimpse of his everyday life:

I work till midnight, well after midnight, until the boss goes... Life is just like this every day. I spend my time like this every single day (Huadi Zhang, 29, Chinese).

Increasingly restrictive immigration controls and the impact of the economic crisis are acutely felt. These conditions are reinforced by perceptions of anti-immigrant political rhetoric. Not surprisingly, trying to get some kind of status is a dominant aspiration. The effect of punitive immigration measures, including raids on businesses thought to be employing migrants without permission to work, has lowered wages and increased vulnerability, as illustrated in the following accounts:

I think for this kind of job in a takeaway shop, normally I should be paid £280, £290 or even up to £300 [a week]. Instead I got £210. He paid less because he said I had no residential status. (Gao Zeng, 24, Chinese)

There's always a fear, I'm always watching over my shoulder as I could get caught working here? (Ray, 21, Zimbabwean)

Social, community and faith group networks are crucial to the social and economic lives of young undocumented migrants but there was little contact with people from outside of the immediate country of origin and linguistic groups. Social networks from the same country of origin group were the

main ways of finding jobs, although a minority also had to pay a fee to 'professional' mediators to get a job. However, this varies according to the size and settlement patterns among the five groups and is affected by the extent to which community and faith-based groups exist. Moreover, even when they were present, not all young people elected to use these more formalised support organisations and groups, preferring instead to remain hidden and separate. As a Ukrainian migrant explains:

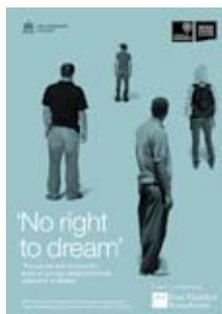
All those whom I socialise with are all Ukrainians, all undocumented. (Dmytro, 22, Ukrainian)

The social world of young undocumented migrants is the result of a continuous interplay between their needs and aspirations and the constraints due to their lack of status. These constraints affect young undocumented migrants differently and the principal factors that produce differences are country of origin, ethnic group, gender, pre-migration experiences, as well as their experiences in the UK. Inevitably, the issue of trust is central in the creation of social networks among young undocumented migrants.

Being undocumented limits aspirations and many talked about being trapped, unfulfilled and unable to make plans. For some, life is simply existing, for others it is a temporary phase, and some are considering return. The lack of states, undocumentedness, invades personal and emotional space, often leading to a shadow existence, a lack of self worth, a lack of trust in others and often the internalisation of fear for themselves and families. The demands of life courses produce adaptation and adjustment strategies yet there is an ever present sense of feeling trapped in a situation where marginality cannot be resolved and a future cannot be constructed. Thus, making plans for the future – a crucial part of the optimism of youth – is constantly appraised against the possibility of being arrested and deported.

The research was carried out by Professor Alice Bloch, Department of Sociology, City University London, and Dr Nando Sigona and Professor Roger Zetter, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. The final report is available in PDF format on the [RSC website](#).

For more information, please contact Dr Nando Sigona at nando.sigona@qeh.ox.ac.uk



Dialogues between academia and practice

During Hilary term 2010, the RSC Public Seminars will focus on the dialogue between academia and practice, addressing the contentious nature of the linkage between academic research on the role of academia vis-à-vis practice.

The programme includes presentations on prima facie refugee status determination; communicating the refugee experience outside of academia; uneasy dialogues between refugee research and policy; the UK Border Agency and the use of evidence-based policy; protecting Palestinian children; human security and non-citizens; the dynamics of displacement in East and Central Africa; and the use and abuse of research in forced migration.

The seminar on 24 February will also feature the launch of *Human security and non-citizens: law, policy and international affairs*, an edited collection by Dr Alice Edwards (RSC) and Carla Ferstman, Director of REDRESS.

The full seminar list can be found on the [RSC website](#). The seminars take place on Wednesday at 5pm, at 3 Mansfield Road, Oxford, OX1 3TB. Refreshments will be provided after each seminar.

Contact: rsc@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Iraq's refugees Policy Briefing

The RSC fourth policy briefing, *Iraq's refugees – beyond tolerance*, considers the situation of displaced populations within Iraq and of communities of Iraqis living under difficult circumstances in a number of other [or 'neighbouring'] Middle Eastern states. The paper suggests that despite military and policy discourses of renewed stability in Iraq, the crisis is far from over and mass return is unlikely as long as security remains a key concern. It presents some key principles for consideration by policymakers in government, migration agencies and humanitarian networks and recommends that further research be conducted on the scale, circumstances and patterns of movement of Iraqis within and beyond the Middle East.

This policy brief is written by Dr Philip Marfleet, Centre for Research on Refugees, Migration and Belonging at the University of East London, and Dr Dawn Chatty, Deputy Director of the RSC.

The briefing is [available in PDF format](#).

The editor of the series, Héloïse Ruauadel, would welcome feedback on the briefing at rscpolicy@qeh.ox.ac.uk

New Working Papers

The [RSC Working Paper Series](#) is intended to aid the rapid distribution of work in progress, research findings, essays, special lectures and conference papers by RSC researchers, associates and students. The Papers aim to stimulate discussion among the worldwide community of scholars, policymakers and practitioners.

In 2008–09, a record-breaking number of students – ten in all – were awarded a distinction for their dissertation. The MSc examination committee recommended making their theses available as part of this series.

The RSC recently added seven new titles to its Working Papers Series. Six are based on MSc dissertations and one paper is a collection of papers based on presentations given at the September 2009 international conference *Protecting People in Conflict and Crisis* and a roundtable discussion on *Post War Future in Sri Lanka*.

WP 53: *Protection and livelihoods of displaced female adolescents: Could casuistry be a methodology for humanitarians?*, Veronika Talviste

WP 54: *How long is too long? Questioning the legality of long-term encampment through a human rights lens*, Sarah Deardorff

WP 55: *Prima facie determination of refugee legal status: An overview of its legal foundation*, Matthew Albert

WP 56: *Did 9/11 matter? Securitisation of asylum and migration in the European Union from 1992 to 2009*, Dace Schlenz

WP 57: *The securitisation of asylum: Protecting UK residents*, Joshua Seidman-Zager

WP 58: *Civilian protection in Sri Lanka under threat*, Edward Benson, Bhavani Fonseka and Ambika Satkunanathan

WP 59: *From ethnic insiders to refugee outsiders: A community level ethnography of Greek Cypriot identity formation and transference since displacement*, Rebecca Brubaker

The RSC anticipates adding three more papers by MSc students focusing on, a comparative perspective of Xinjiang and Tibet; the causes of violence in refugee camps; and, young male asylum seekers and refugees in Britain. Other forthcoming Papers will address the right to protect and internally displaced persons; protection of civilians in Darfur; and the reconstruction process of Nahr El-Barid Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon.

The Working Papers are distributed free of charge via the RSC website. Hard copies may also be purchased. Contact Paul Ryder: paul.ryder@qeh.ox.ac.uk



New perspectives on Romani migration and mobility – conference report

Policy and media attention on the phenomenon of Romani migration and mobility is mainly the result of the raising widespread intolerance toward Roma throughout Europe, and to date it has been narrowly confined within a discourse on security and control. This attention has produced a number of ‘calls for tenders’ and policy workshops on the subject matter but not much empirical, academically sound research and informed debate.

On 14–15 January 2010, the RSC held an international conference on ‘Romani mobilities in Europe’, which brought together Romani and non-Romani scholars and students from a variety of disciplines. The main aim of the conference was to offer different perspectives on the issue of Roma migration and mobility and to open up the debate to alternative framings.

The conference was convened by Dr Nando Sigona and Professor Roger Zetter and generously supported by the John Fell Oxford University Press Fund and the [ERSTE Stiftung](#).

The conference programme included three plenary sessions (on the Europeanisation of the Roma issue; migration, mobility and identity; and activism, advocacy and the politics of research), fifteen panels with over fifty speakers from eighteen different countries, a book launch, a Romani jazz band and a keynote speech by Baroness Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne. The podcasts of the plenary sessions are available to listen to on [Forced Migration Online](#).

In her speech, Baroness Nicholson, member of the House of Lords, offered an assessment of the ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion’, the World Bank- and Soros Foundation-sponsored initiative which, by bringing together governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, as well as Romani civil society, aims to accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma.

The conference proceedings are available for [download](#).

Please contact Dr Nando Sigona for more information: nando.sigona@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Deportation and citizenship – conference report

On 11–12 December 2009 the RSC and the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) hosted an international conference on deportation and the development of citizenship, part of a project on deportation and citizenship funded by the John Fell Oxford University Press Fund. It attracted academics and practitioners from 12 countries. The presence of international experts on deportation, such as Professor Daniel Kanstroom, Professor Antje Ellermann and Professor Guy Goodwin-Gill, plus representatives from the UK Home Office, the International Organisation for Migration and advocacy groups enabled a rich and lively discussion.

The issues addressed included aspects of immigration law, deportability, resistance to deportation and what happens after deportation. It emerged that the discussions centred on the many ways in which deportation reveals changing notions and practices of membership across different societies. Most of the presentations will be made available as online working papers. Some will also be considered for publication as part of a special issue of a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Contact Dr Emanuela Paoletti for more information: emanuela.paoletti@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Faith-based humanitarianism conference

The RSC and the [Las Casas Institute](#) on Ethics, Governance and Social Justice (Blackfriars Hall, Oxford University) are organising an international conference on ‘Faith-based humanitarianism: the response of faith communities and faith-based organisations to people affected by conflict, crisis and forced migration’.

The conference is scheduled to take place in Oxford on 21–23 September 2010. It will convene academics, humanitarian practitioners, policymakers, theologians and inter-faith representatives. It aims to consider the motives, role and impact of faith-based organisations in their responses to people affected by conflict, crisis and forced migration and how faith-based approaches differ from the responses of secular humanitarian organisations. The conference will discuss the role faith plays in the lives of forced migrants. It will touch on the occasional culpability of faith-based institutions in generating conflicts leading to forced displacement while also considering the role of faith communities and faith-based organisations in conflict mediation and resolution.

For more information, please contact the Policy Programme Officer Héloïse Ruaudel at heloise.ruaudel@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Alumni



© IOM 2008 - MT10331 (Photo: Prida Stephen)

IOM transports Karen refugees to Mae Sot for medical screening

Naoko Hashimoto, MSc 1999–2000

Since 2007, I have been working for the Tokyo office of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as programme manager. One of my responsibilities is the creation and overall coordination of a scheme for the first ever refugee resettlement to Japan. The government of Japan announced in December 2008 that Japan would accept a total of 90 refugees from Myanmar – currently living in Thailand – on a pilot basis. Under this pilot scheme, which will run from 2010 to 2012, IOM will provide support to the Japanese government when they interview refugees in Thailand, conducting comprehensive health assessment and treatment of individual refugees, carrying out pre-departure cultural orientation and language training, and taking responsibility for the exit and entry procedure and transportation from the refugee camp in Thailand to Tokyo.

My current position is a direct result of career moves taken over the last decade, including the excellent education I obtained through the MSc in Forced Migration at the Refugee Studies Centre. I gained practical experience as advisor on human rights and humanitarian affairs for Japan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, as project officer at the counter-trafficking unit at the headquarters of IOM, and as associate protection officer for UNHCR in northern Sri Lanka.

I am very happy to keep the RSC and other interested parties informed of how the Myanmar refugees integrate into Japan.

Contact Naoko: NHASHIMOTO@iom.int

Dr. Solomon Kebede Goshu, Summer School 2009

Amidst a protracted humanitarian crisis in Darfur which has devastated the health system, particularly in rural areas, International Medical Corps is making emergency obstetric care services possible through training and support.

International Medical Corps was founded in 1984 by volunteer doctors and nurses and has been operating in Darfur since August 2004 in response to the current crisis. I have had the honour of serving as the country director in Darfur since 2005. We are responding to the health, nutrition and water and hygiene needs of more than half a million conflict-affected people in West and South Darfur.

International Medical Corps works closely with the Ministry of Health, local communities, health volunteers and medical staff to help address the immediate health gaps, while also rehabilitating local health-care infrastructure to restore sustainable health services. We incorporate training and capacity building into all of our programmes, so that the community and the Ministry of Health can continue services over the long term. In just the last six months, we have facilitated the training of 715 staff from International Medical Corps – supported health facilities and 1,028 community workers received training on priority health topics.

As the crisis in Darfur continues – now in its sixth year – the border areas of Chad and the north-east of the Central African Republic (CAR) have become plagued by ethnic violence, government and armed group standoffs, and wide-spread banditry. The triangle of violence in this region has resulted in mass displacement, each nation with people fleeing as well as receiving refugees. International Medical Corps is the only international non-governmental organisation with cross-border operations in Eastern Chad, West Darfur and north-eastern CAR that is providing care to refugees as well as to conflict-affected internally displaced persons and host communities.

By strategically investing in the existing health-care infrastructure and by increasing the human resource capacity from within the refugee, internally displaced and host communities, International Medical Corps is helping to put in place mechanisms and capacity that will help avert major public health emergencies, which would have tragic and devastating consequences on human life in this fragile region.

To find out more about International Medical Corps, visit our [website](http://www.imcworldwide.org).

Contact Solomon: skebede@imcworldwide.org