

The Refugee-Led Research Hub

Annual Report 2021-2022



REFUGEE
STUDIES
CENTRE



Overview

The Refugee-Led Research Hub (RLRH) is an initiative of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. Founded in October 2020, we support aspiring researchers with lived experience of forced displacement to become leaders in the field of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies. A majority of RLRH colleagues and scholars identify as current or former refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, and stateless persons. The RLRH is physically based in Nairobi and Oxford. We have two main areas of activity:

First, RLRH offers a series of academic programmes, which support graduate access and professional development for people with lived experience of displacement. We target students who have completed a bachelor's degree and provide online learning and a graduate access scheme. Drawing upon teaching and mentorship from Oxford faculty, we prepare learners for academic and research careers across the social sciences and humanities.

Second, RLRH has developed a portfolio of research projects, which are led by researchers with lived experience of displacement. Our research agenda is guided by the concerns of forcibly displaced communities and aims to have a direct impact on policy and practice. Our researchers are supported through collaboration with partner organisations and through mentorship by Oxford faculty.

At a glance



100+

Learners, researchers,
& staff across the world



1500+

Applications submitted
for RLRH programmes



40+

Applications for
Oxford degrees



70%+

RLRH affiliates identify as
women or non-binary



4

Research studies
undertaken



9

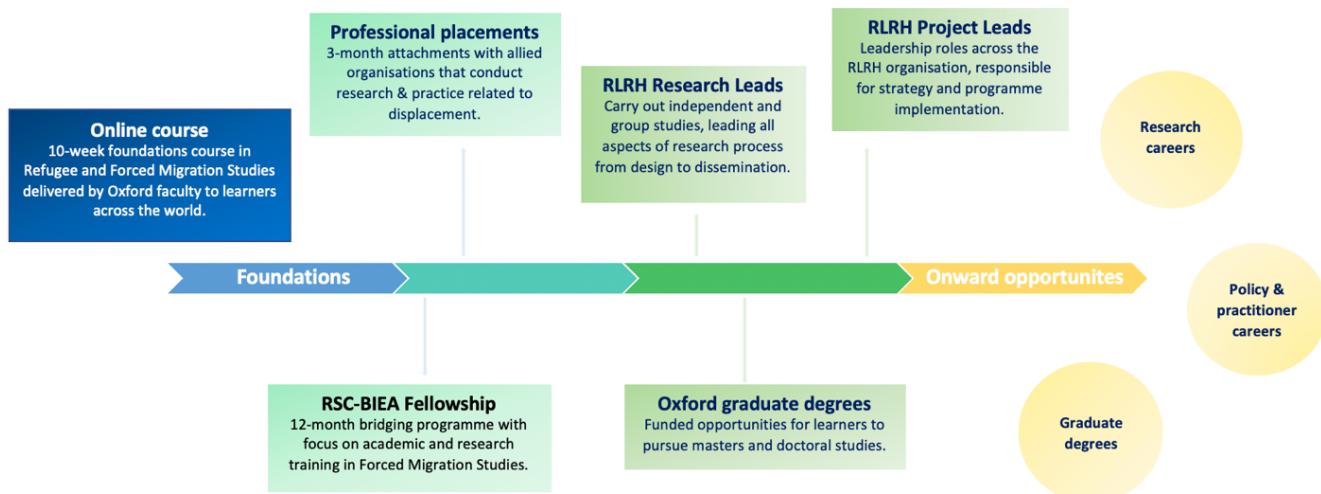
Offers received for
Oxford graduate
degrees

The RLRH is funded by the IKEA Foundation.

Its research projects are also supported by OSF, the Bosch Foundation, the Global Whole Being Foundation, IDRC, and WUSC.

RLRH Activities

Our approach is based on a pathway model. We support researchers at different stages of their academic journey, ensuring opportunities for progressive professional development. We provide a range of entry points for researchers to access career-stage appropriate training. The pathway begins with our foundational Online Course in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies and offers a diverse range of subsequent opportunities including our graduate access fellowship scheme and our professional research placements scheme.



Our pathways provide opportunities that accommodate and support different learners' academic and professional aspirations.

1. Online Course in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies

This introductory course provides both an online and in-person platform for learners affected by displacement to study the main disciplines and themes in Refugee Studies. The course is inspired by the RSC's MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, covering content from International Relations, Law, Anthropology, Philosophy, Gender Studies, Economics, and more.

- The inaugural cohort consists of 60 learners across the world. They are based in 17 countries on four continents.
- The course is taught by RSC faculty. RLRH facilitates delivery of the content.
- The course lasts 12 weeks and is certificated by the RSC.
- Upon completion, learners can progress to the Fellowship, graduate application support scheme, professional placements, and other advanced opportunities.



2. RSC-BIEA Fellowship in Refugee Studies

The Fellowship is an advanced year-long bridging programme. The first nine months focus on academic and research training, culminating in a capstone project. Fellows also complete a three-month professional placement.

- 12 fellows were selected from a pool of 900+ applications. They're based across Eastern, Northern, and Southern Africa, and Europe.
- Oxford faculty, graduate students, and external specialists deliver lectures, workshops, and supervision throughout.
- Fellows lead academic tutorials in small breakout groups for the 60 online course learners.
- Six fellows will pursue graduate studies in Autumn 2022, at University of Oxford, Boston University, and Tsinghua University.



Top: Fellows Natasha Treunen (Uganda, Weidenfeld-Hoffman Scholar) and David Kinzuzi (Burundi, Schwarzman Scholar)

Bottom: Fellowship critical reading group

3. Oxford graduate access support scheme

We provide graduate and scholarship application support to prospective applicants worldwide who have been affected by forced displacement. Peer advisors help in the submission of applications to master's and doctoral programmes.

- 70+ people applied to join the scheme and received detailed guidance on how to apply for a degree.
- 23 applicants received individualised support throughout the application process.
- More than 40 applications were submitted to Oxford.
- Nine offers were made for graduate degrees across Oxford's Social Sciences Division.
- RLRH advocates for scholarships explicitly for students affected by forced displacement.



Oxford Department of International Development

4. Public outreach & impact

Bahati Ernestine presents on refugee inclusion in humanitarian response

RLRH affiliates regularly appear as expert speakers alongside professors, government officials, and staff of (I)NGOs and grassroots initiatives, among others. They have presented evidence- and experience-based insights on topics including:

- Accountability and allyship in refugee-led research
- Improving education and employment access
- Changing debates in refugee livelihoods and self-reliance
- Alternative forms of knowledge production and outputs

Overview of research activities

We collaborate on research projects with partners committed to promoting refugee leadership in forced migration research. We are currently collaborating on three studies in East Africa which explore themes of importance to the refugee community:

- **Refugee-led organisations:** RLRH co-leads a project on RLOs in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania with the Local Engagement Refugee Research Network (LERRN). This study explores 1) the nature and scope of RLOs in East Africa, 2) the impact of RLOs on displaced communities, and 3) the factors that condition RLOs' varied responses and impact on displaced communities. The project is funded by Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Bosch Foundation, the Global Whole Being Fund, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
- **Refugees' access to citizenship:** RLRH co-leads a study on refugees' access to citizenship and residency in Kenya with the Refugee-Led Organisation Network of Kenya (RELON-KE), in partnership with Kituo Cha Sheria and Haki Na Sheria. The project seeks to provide evidence on the experiences, profiles, and aspirations of refugees who have applied for permanent residence and/or citizenship in Kenya. This research is funded by OSF.
- **Refugees' access to work permits and business licences:** This project aims to explore the gaps that exist between policy and practice of refugee access to Class M work permits and business licenses for refugees in Kenya. The study uses a purely qualitative approach and engages a range of stakeholders, including successful and unsuccessful refugee applicants, INGOs and NGOs, the private sector and refugee community members. The project also seeks to investigate the support needed to improve access to Class M work permits and business licenses. It is funded by the World University Services Canada (WUSC).

RLRH Leadership



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