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## **E-Newsletter, spring 2011, Vol. 2.1**

This is the second issue of the [Refugee Research Network \(RRN\)](#) e-newsletter. The RRN is a Strategic Knowledge Cluster Grant funded in 2008 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Here you'll find information about ongoing and recently completed activities of the network and updates on new developments. The RRN e-newsletter is a biannual publication accessible in electronic format.

### **Content**

Message from Dr. Susan McGrath	page 2
Refugee Research Clusters	page 4
Regional Initiatives with Institutional Partners	page 8
New Scholars Network	page 11
New Publications by RRN members	page 12
Announcements	page 14
Meet an RRN Member: Professor Roberto Vidal-Lopez	page 15

## Message from Dr. Susan McGrath

We are pleased to update you on the work of the Refugee Research Network. We are approaching the half way mark in our seven year project with many initiatives flourishing. Reports are provided here on five of our research clusters and four regional projects with institutional partners.



**Susan McGrath**  
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Tertiary education for refugees in protracted refugee situations was a potential research cluster identified in our original proposal. Professor Wenona Giles, the senior co-applicant of the RRN, and her team have had great success with the securing of two grants: a SSHRC Partnership Development grant to support a project in the Dadaab camp in Kenya and a York Academic Innovation Fund grant to support a project in a camp in Mae Sot near the Thai Burma border. Professor Christina Clark-Kazak secured a SSHRC grant in aid of workshops to host a successful workshop on age and generation in migration held at York's Glendon campus in April 2011. A timely workshop on Refugee Determination: Comparisons, Challenges and Dilemmas was hosted by Professor Donald Galloway in Toronto in October of 2010. Canada has experienced significant changes in its refugee determination system and our legal scholars have been important critical commentators. Professor Jennifer Hyndman has been working on two projects. She surveyed Canadian agencies serving refugees about their research interests and compiled a research agenda to inform researchers and funders about needed research in the field. Professor Hyndman and the Gender and Sexuality research cluster recently produced an annotated bibliography on LGBT and asylum issues and hosted related events in Toronto. The cluster is also working with the Refugee Law Project in Kampala to develop LGBT resources and scholarship.

With modest resources from the RRN, our partners in the Calcutta Research Group, the African Centre for Migration and Society and the Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies in Cairo are developing their resource centres with a particular focus on expanding their digital materials. A RRN supported workshop with Professor Roberto Vidal Lopez at Javeriana University and Professor Beatriz Sanchez of Los Andes University in Bogota, Colombia in November 2010 resulted in the formation of the Latin America Network on Forced Migration. A follow up workshop is planned for September 2011 in Toronto. Professor Vidal is featured in this newsletter.

The RRN is growing in numbers! The New Scholars Network now has over 300 members and over 800 people have registered at the RRN website. Our re-search engine at the website is being developed to link up with repositories of refugee

information globally. In addition to the website, we have a presence on You Tube, Twitter and Facebook. We continue to provide support to three professional associations: the Graduate Students' Caucus at the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University, the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) and the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM).

RRN members are meeting on July 2, 2011 in Kampala just prior to the IASFM conference hosted by the Refugee Law Project in Kampala. We will be reflecting on a paper by Professor Loren Landau of the African Centre for Migration and Society on the mobilization of knowledge within and across the apparent Global South - North divide. We are also examining current issues in refugee research. Along with our mid-term evaluation, the results of these discussions are expected to inform our work over the last half of our project. Do check the website ([www.refugeeresearch.net](http://www.refugeeresearch.net)) to keep up to date with postings and contact me if you have any questions or suggestions ([smcgrath@yorku.ca](mailto:smcgrath@yorku.ca)).

## Refugee Research Clusters

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### **Borderless Education: The Provision of Tertiary Degree Programs to Long-term Refugees** Wenona Giles, Centre for Refugee Studies, York University

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For some 8.1 million people in the Global South caught in refugee-like situations for ten years or more as an outcome of war, human rights violations, and/or persecution in their home countries (USCRI 2009), attending university or accessing other tertiary degree programs is almost impossible. Refugees who have completed secondary school almost universally voice the desire to attend university.



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Education in these camps is limited to primary and sometimes secondary education. There is no opportunity for higher education in the camps. To date, international scholarships to travel to institutions in the Global North remain the predominant scheme to address the need for higher education for only a negligible few. A handful of stellar students (about one percent) may win scholarships out of the camps, but the prospects for the vast majority are slim to none.

BHER aims to reverse this situation by improving opportunities for the tertiary education of long-term refugees by exploring the creation and delivery of on-line courses and supervision, delivered to meet international standards and designed as “portable” methods of study within the unique environment and circumstances of refugee camps.

The BHER initiative had its beginnings in “The Globalization of Protracted Refugee Situations” project led by Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC): <http://www.yorku.ca/gprs> One of the outcomes of that project was a Centre for Refugee Studies sponsored workshop on tertiary education for refugees organized at York University in Toronto in April 2010. [www.yorku.ca/crs/bher](http://www.yorku.ca/crs/bher) . Professor Giles was recently awarded a SSHRC Partnership Development Grant to support a needs assessment in partnership with Kenyatta University to examine the feasibility of a joint university degree to people living in and near the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. She and her team were also awarded a York Academic Innovation Fund grant to provide a York geography course to refugees in Mae Sot, a refugee camp along the Thai Burma border, in collaboration with the Australian Catholic University. The BHER team members are organizing a workshop to be held in Kampala just prior to the IASFM conference.

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**Working Group: Age and Generation in Refugee Contexts**

Christina Clark-Kazak, York University

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After its creation in March 2010, the RRN-sponsored working group on age and generation in migration contexts organized a thematic panel at the second annual conference of the Canadian Association of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) in May 2010. At this conference, the working group coordinator solicited participation from colleagues working on related issues. We created a virtual workspace on the RRN website and currently have over 100 members. Over the course of the 2010-2011 academic year, members of the working group participated in a seminar series on children and young people in migration contexts, sponsored by the Office of the Vice-President, Academic at York University. On April 27-28, the working group hosted a workshop in Toronto, involving 30 researchers and graduate students from across Canada. Funding was provided by a SSHRC grant in aid of workshops. Selected papers from this workshop will be published in a special journal issue. We also plan to prepare a proposal for a collaborative research project.



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**Refugee Determination: Comparisons, Challenges and Dilemmas**

Donald Galloway, University of Victoria

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In October 2010, a workshop focusing on Directions and Developments in Refugee Status Determination was held at the University of Toronto. Sponsored by SSHRC and organized by Donald Galloway of the University of Victoria and Michele Millard of the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University the workshop brought together leading refugee law scholars from across Canada and abroad to examine in detail important recent developments in refugee determination. The new amendments to Canada's refugee determination processes found in Bill C-11, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, 2010, and in the accompanying Regulations were a primary focus of the discussions, while scholars from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, South Africa, and the Netherlands presented comparative perspectives including analysis of the relevance of International Human Rights Instruments. Also participating in the workshop was Michael Hamelin of the Immigration and



**Donald Galloway**  
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Refugee Board who described planned changes to the Refugee Protection Division Rules and responded to comments and critiques from other participants. Mr. Hamelin noted that he would carry some of the ideas expressed in the workshop back to the planning committee and encouraged participants to submit written briefs to the IRB as part of its consultation process. Subsequently, a number of briefs were submitted. Within a week after the workshop, the government introduced Bill C-49 into Parliament which, if enacted into law, will establish some far-reaching changes to the current process. The new bill has motivated a number of later, more informal interchanges among workshop participants.

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### **Building and Community-based Research Agenda for Refugees**

Jennifer Hyndman, York University

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The recently posted Refugee Research Agenda provides concrete research questions and issues raised by the non-governmental organizations that assist government-sponsored refugees in Canada. The research needs outlined represent the views of agencies across Canada that deliver settlement services to refugees upon arrival in Canada.



**Jennifer Hyndman**  
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During the summer of 2010, Professor Jennifer Hyndman contacted all anglophone agencies that receive government-sponsored refugees, and consulted with more than two dozen staff about the most pressing research questions facing new refugees to Canada. With the help of research assistants, Tanya Zayed, who consulted with francophone counterpart organizations, and Irmi Hutfless, another recent MA graduate, the findings were analyzed, ranked by the frequency of their mention, and translated into both languages.

The aim of the agenda is to match graduate students and faculty with these pressing research questions where possible, and to demonstrate to funders that these are evidence-based needs that could be legitimately funded. For more information, contact Jennifer Hyndman at [jhyndman@yorku.ca](mailto:jhyndman@yorku.ca).

See the research agenda at: [http://www.refugeereseach.net/research\\_agenda](http://www.refugeereseach.net/research_agenda)

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## **Strengthening Sexual Minority Refugee Research Project, aka LGBT Rights and Asylum Project**

Jennifer Hyndman, York University

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This project is part of the Gender and Sexuality Group of the RRN, and aims to procure and consolidate scholarship to date on those asylum seekers and refugees who claims are based on persecution related to their lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender status. Sexual minority status does not include transgender persons, so the latter term is preferable. The project has three current objectives:

- To produce and post on the RRN site a concise but rich annotated bibliography of scholarship to date on LGBT and asylum issues. Much of this is legal research, but there is also a good number of articles and books from the social sciences. The summaries in the bibliography will allow everyone with web access to understand the thrust of these research contributions. Three senior students are working on this project: Robert Lidstone, Raha Bahreini, and Sharalyn Jordan. The release date is April 15, 2011.
- To raise awareness of LGBT human rights violations and the persecution, forced migration, and asylum related to these. Osgoode Law School has hosted a number of events and the RRN is collaborating with faculty there to highlight LGBT-related asylum. A successful event was held on April 18, 2011 with details to follow on the RRN site.
- To build capacity in regions beyond Canada and the global North by working with interested partners in the global South. A small-scale sharing of resources and scholarship to date is underway with the Refugee Law Centre in Kampala, Uganda where human rights atrocities and deaths have been attributed to LGBT identity.

## Regional Initiatives with Institutional Partners

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### **Mobilizing a Regional Research Network to address forced migration issues in Latin America**

Roberto Vidal-Lopez, Javeriana University

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In November 2010, a workshop was held at Javeriana and Los Andes Universities in Bogota, Colombia to bring together researchers from surrounding Latin American countries affected by the forcible movement of people across and within borders. More than 25 participants met in Colombia to map the issues related to forced migration including the root causes, the impact of forced migration on LA states, and the contribution of forced migrants to the process of peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. Funding was provided by the Canadian International Development Research Centre, Javeriana and Los Andes Universities and the RRN. York's Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean and Centre for Refugee Studies are also partners. The collaboration resulted in the establishment of the Latin American Network on Forced Migration which will facilitate and coordinate research being undertaken in the region. This network will be linked with the Refugee Research Network (RRN) and coordinated by Javeriana and Los Andes. A private working group for the participants was set up on the RRN site and is available in English and Spanish. With funding from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, a follow up workshop on trade, investment and displacement is planned for September 2011 in Toronto.



**Roberto Vidal-Lopez**  
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### **Africa's First Digital Archive on Refugees and Migrants**

Becca Hartman, University of Witwatersrand

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Scholarship has long been hindered by difficulty of securing primary data on migration and displacement in Africa. The African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS; formerly the Forced Migration Studies Programme) has made great strides to address this gap by creating a digital archive of primary data and grey materials collected in Southern and Eastern Africa. To ensure the longevity and minimize the costs of the



**Becca Hartman**  
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growing archive, it has entered into collaboration with the University of Witwatersrand's library, which will host the open access digital archive. Additional funding from Oxford University will support phase two of the project's development.

The archive now has two complete collections with over 800 folders, yielding thousands of unique documents. These collections address migrant labour (Mozambique, mid 1990s) and refugee integration (Africa, 2000-2010). Discussions are underway with another fifteen scholars with potential contributions, and another 25 additional scholars, migration institutions, and government officials have been invited to participate. New rounds of invitations go out every month, with an eye to maintaining our commitment to high quality, previously unpublished research and grey materials that complement existing available resources. Anyone with a 'collection' who feels they can make a contribution to this important initiative or has further questions about the project, should feel free to contact its ACMS Coordinator, Becca Hartman. The digital archive will not be made public until full copyright for the first two collections is complete. This should be achieved by early May 2011. The ACMS is also seeking investors to ensure the initiative's long term viability.

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### **The Database on Refugees in the Arab World Project**

Maysa Ayoub, Center for Migration and Refugees Studies, American University in Cairo

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The aim of this grant is to supplement CMRS database with resources produced in the Arabic language so that it can contribute towards knowledge production in this part of the world. The expected outputs of this project are two: first, the creation of the online Arabic language research resource on refugees covering demographic, legal, socio-economic, and political data. Secondly, produce a bilingual annotated bibliography on refugees in the region.

The collection of the Arabic resources for the online-database is ongoing through the student researchers who are hired on temporarily basis on this grant. The plan was to hire one part-time research student who can work on regular basis. However, this proved to be difficult as most of our students are international students who do not speak Arabic. Accordingly, this has slowed down the process of collecting resources. Finally we succeeded in recruiting a qualified Egyptian bilingual student who will start as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Due to the delay in the collection and uploading of data, we will probably ask for a non-cost extension beyond July 2011 which is the closing date of the grant.

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## Formation of a Resource Centre on Forced Migration in South Asia

Ranabir Samaddar, Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group

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The Calcutta Research Group (CRG) has built up a resource centre (with help from the Oxford University, York University, and the Government of Finland), on Forced Migration to disseminate knowledge on issues relating to displacement, migration, justice, autonomy to issues relating to minority rights. This Resource centre is maintained as part of CRG's online library holdings aiming towards facilitating scholars and researchers working on issues related to forced migration. A secured webpage has been formulated for the library and resource centre in the month of March 2010. Since then, the twin tasks have been to upload new books and relevant documents in the online catalogue and to enlist existing material on Forced Migration like reports, issues of journals and so on available with CRG.



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As part of its work on Resource Centre, CRG this year is providing short term writing fellowships to selected researchers working on issues on and related to forced migration from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Four researchers have been finalized by the selection committee for this programme (Two from Nepal, One from Sri Lanka and One from India). Selected researchers have been asked to submit their complete papers within February 2011.

## New Scholars Network

A major objective of the RRN is to support and promote the work of new scholars undertaking research in the field of refugee and forced migration studies. The mission of NSN has two basic goals: advancing research in the field of forced migration and fostering the professional development of new scholars. The strategies used by the NSN to achieve these goals are similar to the RRN's ones: networking, collaboration and knowledge mobilization.



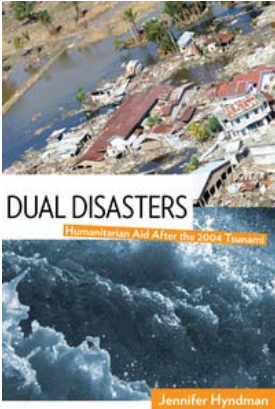
**Paula Popovici**  
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More specifically, here are some of our current, in-development and planned activities:

- building an international network of new scholars;
- facilitating collaborations among new scholars through the RRN/NSN website;
- disseminating relevant information and new opportunities for new scholars, such as conferences, call for papers, internships, academic programs, jobs etc. through our quarterly e-newsletter;
- creating a virtual space dedicated to NSN, hosted by the parent network, RRN;
- promoting the creation of visiting scholar positions with some refugee research centers and academic programs world-wide;
- facilitating the creation of working groups around research clusters of interest;
- publishing the biannual peer-reviewed journal dedicated to new scholars: The Refugee Review.

Until now, those mostly involved in developing the NSN and carrying out the projects outlined above were the NSN Interim Executive Committee members: Paula Popovici (PhD candidate, Philosophy, York University), Elizabeth Holzer (Assistant Professor of Sociology and Human Rights, University of Connecticut), Ian McGrath (Master's student, Interdisciplinary Studies, York University), Robyn Plasterer (Master's student, Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, Oxford University), Sharyn Routh (PhD student, International Relations, American University), and Julie Young (PhD candidate, Geography, York University). Through the upcoming elections and continuous membership drive, we hope to involve NSN members from outside of North America, as members, volunteers, or officers in the Executive Committee.

## New Publications by RNN members



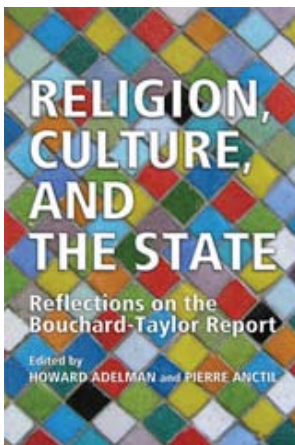
### **Dual Disasters: Humanitarian Aid after the 2004 Tsunami**

Jennifer Hyndman

Kumarian Press, March 2011

The 2004 tsunami was massive in every respect: the earthquake that preceded it was one of the largest ever recorded, the number of people killed or displaced is estimated at well over a million, and the international community donated billions of dollars to the relief effort. In some cases the tsunami struck regions already embroiled in other kinds of catastrophes – violent conflict and poverty. The tsunami's presence not only wreaked havoc as a natural disaster, but it left an enduring mark on the political dynamics and power struggles of these places.

*Dual Disasters* describes what happens when “man-made” and “natural” disasters meet. Focusing specifically on Indonesia and Sri Lanka, countries that had complex emergencies long before the tsunami arrived, Hyndman shows how the storm's arrival shifted the goals of international aid, altered relations between and within states and accelerated or slowed peacebuilding efforts. With updated comments on the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the book guides readers deftly through the multifaceted forces at work in modern humanitarian disasters.



### **Religion, Culture, and the State: Reflections on the Bouchard-Taylor Report**

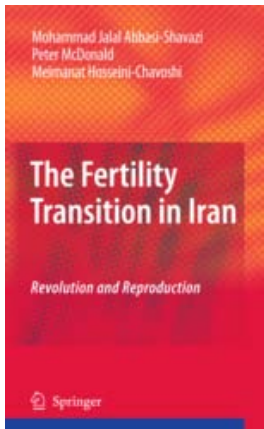
Edited by Howard Adelman and Pierre Anctil

University of Toronto Press, 2011

The Canadian principle of reasonable accommodation demands that the cultural majority make certain concessions to the needs of minority groups if these concessions will not cause 'undue hardship.' This principle has caused much debate in Quebec, particularly over issues of language, Muslim head coverings, and religious symbols such as the kirpan (traditional Sikh dagger). In 2007, Quebec Premier Jean Charest commissioned historian and sociologist Gérard Bouchard and philosopher and political scientist Charles Taylor to co-chair a commission that would investigate the limits of reasonable accommodation in that province.

*Religion, Culture, and the State* addresses reasonable accommodation from legal, political, and anthropological perspectives. Using the 2008 Bouchard-Taylor Report as their point of

departure, the contributors contextualize the English and French Canadian experiences of multiculturalism and diversity through socio-historical analysis, political philosophy, and practical comparisons to other jurisdictions. Timely and engaging, *Religion, Culture, and the State* is a valuable resource in the discussion of religious pluralism in Canadian society.



### **The Fertility Transition in Iran**

Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi, Peter McDonald, Meimanat Hosseini-Chavoshi  
Springer, 2011

Confounding all conventional wisdom, the fertility rate in the Islamic Republic of Iran fell from around 7.0 births per woman in the early 1980s to 1.9 births per woman in 2006. That this, the largest and fastest fall in fertility ever recorded, should have occurred in one of the world's few Islamic Republics demands explanation. This book, based upon a decade of research is the first to attempt such an explanation. The book documents the progress of the fertility decline and displays its association with social and economic characteristics. It addresses an explanation of the phenomenal fall of fertility in this Islamic context by considering the relevance of standard theories of fertility transition. The book is rich in data as well as the application of different demographic methods to interpret the data. All the available national demographic data are used in addition to two major surveys conducted by the authors. Demographic description is preceded by a socio-political history of Iran in recent decades, providing a context for the demographic changes. The authors conclude with their views on the importance of specific socio-economic and political changes to the demographic transition. Their concluding arguments suggest continued low fertility in Iran.

## Announcements

### **CARFMS 2011 - Human Rights Challenges**

May 11 – 13, 2011

Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies Annual Conference  
Montreal, Canada

<http://carfmsconference.yorku.ca>

### **IASFM 13 - Governing Migration**

July 3 – 6, 2011

International Association for the Study of Forced Migration 13<sup>th</sup> Conference  
Kampala, Uganda

<http://www.iasfmconference.org>

For more conference and workshop listings, please go to this URL:

<http://www.refugeeresearch.net/event-list>

## Announcement

Are you planning a trip to Ottawa? Do you have research findings you would like to present to the policy and research community in Ottawa? If so, the Policy Research Network of the Refugee Research Network (RRN) can help!

In cooperation with the Ottawa Migration and Refugee Research Network (OMRRN), the RRN is able to host seminars and brown-bag lunches in Ottawa - and ideal way for researchers to share their findings. Past events have attracted engaged audiences from Ottawa's research and policy communities and resulted in lively discussion.

If your travel plans will bring you to Ottawa, please contact James Milner (James\_Milner@carleton.ca) at least two weeks before your proposed visit with details of your research and to discuss the possibility of an event.

## Meet an RRN Member

### Who is Roberto Vidal-Lopez?

I am a Colombian lawyer. For more than a decade I have worked as a professor and researcher at the Faculty of Law, Javeriana University, Bogota. My work has been concentrated on the study of violence, its effects in society and its connections with problems of social justice in Latin America. I love teaching and I understand the classroom as a research arena, due to possibilities of creative dialog between professors and students. Many academic spaces where Law is taught are conservative and I live in one of these environments, but I aim for opening up spaces for constructive criticism and debate to liberate the creativity of the students. I have addressed my work to understand the complex processes that affect my community, which produce contexts of extreme sophistication and development to wide situations of poverty and lack of any opportunity for people. One of these processes has been the painful dynamic of forced displacement and refugees as a consequence of violence and armed conflict.



**Roberto Vidal-Lopez**  
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### Tell us few words about some of your past projects...

At the beginning of 90s, I was researching in History of Law in the XIX century. At that time I explored the crisis of forced displacement in Colombia as the result of the war between the leftist guerrillas and the association of drug dealers, some old elites and paramilitaries. The result of war was a massive diaspora of peasants. The examination of this reality obliged me to change my priorities and to transform my research agenda. I have worked for many years writing legal norms and implementing institutional structures for attending IDPs. My main work was developed in collaboration with the Colombian government and international organizations as UNHCR.

### ... and about your current projects.

My PHD research was a landmark that changed the direction of my work. The emphasis in critical theoretical frameworks turned my attention to political issues that surrounded institutions and the law. I started to cooperate with civil society and organizations of displaced people. For the past two years, I have been working on the relations of peace processes and durable solutions for displaced people, particularly, in advocacy for peasant displaced communities in their struggle against the global projects of economic development.

### Few words about RRN

We have taken very seriously the project of RRN in Colombia and Latin America. It is an excellent way to support the exchange of knowledge and even the production of new one. It has been a platform of meeting for Latin American scholars with people from all over the world, and particularly Canada and North America. As part of the RRN, we have created the Latin American Network on Forced Migration that will have its second meeting in September this year. This network is not only an academic knowledge space, but also an authentic political forum for the region.