



Refugee Research Network

Research Digest

Date February 28, 2018

The RRN Research Digest provides a synopsis of recent research on refugee and forced migration issues from entities associated with the RRN and others.

Recent Publications and New Research

Gengo, R. G., Oka, R. C., Vemuru, V., Golitko, M., & Gettler, L. T. (2018). Positive effects of refugee presence on host community nutritional status in Turkana County, Kenya. *American Journal of Human Biology*, 30(1).

Refugee camps are often assumed to negatively impact local host communities through resource competition and conflict. This study asks instead whether economic resources and trade networks associated with refugees have benefits for host community health and nutrition. To address this question, it assesses the impacts of Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwest Kenya, comparing anthropometric (human physical variations) indicators of nutritional status between Turkana communities in the region. The results show that Kakuma Refugee Camp is associated with better host community energetic status indicators, compared to other relevant, regional sites varying in development and resources. Based on global nutritional standards, observed differences likely represent meaningful disparities in overall health. Nevertheless, perceptions of refugees as illegitimate interlopers maintain a high psychological burden. Available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajhb.23060/full>

Labman, S., & Pearlman, M. (2018). Blending, Bargaining, and Burden-Sharing: Canada's Resettlement Programs. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 1-11.

The BVOR program was introduced in 2013 as a modified version of private sponsorship and middle ground between sponsorship and government-assisted resettlement. While the program was met with criticism and skepticism that the government was off-loading more resettlement responsibility to private sponsors, the Syrian crisis significantly impacted and changed the Canadian resettlement landscape. This comment outlines the program and surveys the benefits and concerns with such a model. BVOR is examined in relation to both private and government resettlement, in the current moment of Syrian resettlement, and in comparison, to the historical use of private sponsorship for Indochinese refugees. The comment serves to assess the direction of Canada's future resettlement. Available for subscribers at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12134-018-0555-3>

Bansak, K., Ferwerda, J., Hainmueller, J., Dillon, A., Hangartner, D., Lawrence, D., & Weinstein, J. (2018). Improving refugee integration through data-driven algorithmic assignment. *Science*, 359(6373), 325-329.

The continuing refugee crisis has made it necessary for governments to find ways to resettle individuals and families in host communities. This article used a machine learning approach to develop an algorithm for geographically placing refugees to optimize their overall employment rate. The authors developed and tested the algorithm on segments of registry data from the United States and Switzerland. The algorithm improved the employment prospects of refugees in the United States by approximately 40% and in Switzerland by approximately 75%. Available:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f575/54fa3537b3b2d14a1c50b85cd88045803592.pdf>

FMR 57: Syrians in displacement

This issue of FMR explores new insights and continuing challenges relating to the displacement of millions of Syrians both internally and in neighbouring countries. Authors present new insights and reflect on continuing challenges, covering topics which include: local and refugee-led initiatives; identification and understanding of displaced people's vulnerabilities and capabilities; stereotyping on the basis of gender, age or disability; child marriage; the contribution of education to social cohesion; legal identity; preparation for return and the challenges around restitution and property rights; and the potential of economic and development approaches (a topic to be explored more fully in our June issue on Economies, work and displacement). It contains 27 articles on 'Syrians in displacement', plus six 'general' articles on other topics. Available at: www.fmreview.org/syria2018.

Reports, working papers and briefs

A call to action Protecting children on the move starts with better data

Massive data gaps leave displaced children unprotected, warns UN. A lack of reliable data on the estimated 28 million children living in forced displacement is impacting the ability of aid agencies to assist them. This report that was released jointly by several UN agencies notes that information about age is only available for 56 per cent of the refugees under UNHCR's mandate and that only 20 per cent of countries with data on people displaced by conflict break it down by age. The report aims to contribute to creating reliable, timely and accessible data and evidence for understanding how migration and forcible displacement affect children and their families – and for putting in place policies and programmes to meet their needs. Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/lac/200180215_CallToAction\(2\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lac/200180215_CallToAction(2).pdf)

IDMC's thematic series: UnSettlement - urban displacement in the 21st century

This case study/thematic series aims to explore the scale, nature and dynamics of urban internal displacement across the world. It also includes the first case study of the thematic series, exploring the challenges and opportunities for IDPs in Maiduguri, Nigeria and their participation in the city's economy. Available at:

<http://www.internal-displacement.org/library/publications/2018/unsettlement-urban-displacement-in-the-21st-century>

Marshall, K., et al. (2018). Religious roles in refugee resettlement: Pertinent experience and insights, addressed to G20 members (No. 2018-11). Economics Discussion Papers.

This discussion paper sheds more light on the significant role played by Religious entities in the current forced migration crisis. These roles include innovative and experience-based ideas to address flawed aspects of the humanitarian system, overall advocacy on behalf of refugees and migrants based on humanitarian and spiritual principles, among other roles. Broadly, however, religious factors and contributions are poorly understood and insufficiently taken into account by policy makers and in think tank analyses of these issues. The paper is meant for G20 agendas and gatherings, as well as those of think tanks, that can benefit from purposeful attention to these often-neglected dimensions of a central global challenge. Available at: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/174588/1/1013729722.pdf>

News reports and blog posts

GDN Special Issue on "Migration, environment, and development"

Here are some featured posts by IMRC associates Yasmin Khan, Mohammad Moniruzzaman and Robert McLeman at the Global Development Network's new blog series on migration, environment and development. Khan describes life in Rohingya refugee camps in eastern Bangladesh and the dietary and cultural impacts a lack of fish has on camp residents. Moniruzzaman writes about informal food systems

in megacities and their importance in helping climate migrants adapt. McLeman outlines a sensible international policy for dealing with the reality that tens of millions of people will be on the move in coming decades because of climate change. Available at: <http://globaldev.blog/topics/migration>

Six months on, Rohingya children voice their fears, Report from Save the Children, Plan International, and World Vision

A new report reveals the challenges and fears faced by Rohingya children living in camps and settlements around Cox's Bazar. The report finds that the children are often fearful – they're afraid of being attacked while collecting firewood in the nearby forest, of being abducted by traffickers or harassed while using the camps' toilets at night. They also worry about missing out on school and the difficulty of staying clean and healthy. The children did report feeling comforted by the presence of aid organizations and the five-times daily calls to prayer. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/childhood-interrupted-children-s-voices-rohingya-refugee-crisis>

Australia's shame: The men on Manus Island by Evan Jones

This is a simple read for anyone who wants a recap on what is taking place at Manus island, its origins, the Australian government stance, and the refugees' conditions. Available at:

<https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/australia-s-shame-the-men-on-manus-island-15379>

Press Release: Despite Global Refugee Crisis, Japan Accepts Only 20 Refugees in 2017

Over the course of 2017, despite 19,628 persons submitting asylum applications, the Japanese government only conferred refugee status to a total of 20 persons. This is a press release statement by the Asia Pacific Refugee rights initiative to condemn the Japanese position. Available at:

<http://aprrn.info/press-release-despite-global-refugee-crisis-japan-accepts-only-20-refugees-in-2017/>

Villagers flee as India, Pakistan trade heavy border fire by Rifaat Farid

More than 1,000 people have fled their homes in the Uri sector of the disputed Kashmir region after India and Pakistan exchanged artillery fire on Saturday. Tension has been running high since an attack on an Indian army camp in Kashmir this month that left seven soldiers dead, but cross-border shelling has continued intermittently since the beginning of this year, displacing hundreds and leaving a 2003 ceasefire agreement in tatters. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/villagers-flee-india-pakistan-trade-heavy-border-fire-180225175630432.html>

20,000 Israelis Protest Deportation of African Asylum Seekers

Haaretz estimates that 20,000 Israelis joined asylum-seekers in Tel Aviv on Saturday to protest against the government's new policy of deportation or detention. Last week, Israel began jailing asylum-seekers who refused deportation to a third country. Local residents in south Tel Aviv have long complained about the presence of asylum-seekers living there, but on Saturday protesters carried signed reading "Refugees and residents refuse to be enemies" and "No to deportation". Available at:

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/over-10-000-israelis-protests-deportation-of-african-asylum-seekers-1.5846472>