

Institution: City, University of London (City)		
Unit of Assessment: C19 – Politics and International Studies		
Title of case study: Changing International Policy to Improve Legal Protections and Resettlement Outcomes for Refugees and Other Displaced Persons		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007-2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Christopher McDowell	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Assistant Vice President (International)	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2005-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Yes		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Dr Christopher McDowell's research has changed policy (1) at the World Bank to address gender-based violence (GBV) against internally displaced people and (2) in the UK to grant vulnerable Syrians refugee status. As a member of a World Bank Inquiry in 2016, he provided evidence of GBV by construction workers on a road infrastructure project in Western Uganda. The findings led the World Bank and Ugandan government to change policy and take action to address GBV, prompting other international aid organisations to strengthen their safeguarding policies. In the UK, McDowell's research on the integration of vulnerable Syrians led the Home Office to change policy in 2017 to grant around 20,000 people full refugee status. In 2019, the scheme was extended to thousands of vulnerable people from other regions, making the UK a major resettlement actor for the first time.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR; 2019) estimates there are 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide – including 29m refugees and 45.7m internally displaced people. This presents complex and difficult problems for policy makers and institutions and for displaced people themselves. McDowell's research – pioneering the novel methodological approach of 'oral testimony' – has sought to understand the challenges faced by displaced people to identify solutions from their point of view [3.1, 3.2]. McDowell's research confronts the ethical challenges of working in crisis situations – such as how to build trust and dialogue, or the need for safeguarding from harm, coercion or exploitation – to enable participants to be able to engage in research [3.1, 3.2].</p> <p>This case study highlights two projects from McDowell's extensive body of work: (1) research with internally displaced people in Western Uganda for the World Bank (WB) [3.3] and (2) research on the resettlement of vulnerable Syrian refugees in the UK, commissioned by the UNHCR [3.4, 3.5].</p>		
2.1 Gender-based violence associated with infrastructure projects		
<p>The WB was financing the upgrade of the Kamwenge-Kabarole roadway in Western Uganda as part of its USD190 million Transport Sector Development Project (TSDP) being managed by the Government of Uganda. In 2014 and 2015, the Bigodi and Nyabubale-Nkingo local communities made two complaints to the WB raising serious concerns about the TSDP. These included allegations about sexual misconduct by male road workers including child protection, teenage pregnancies, increased sex work, and sexual harassment of female employees [3.3]. In response, in January 2016, the WB set up an Inspection Panel Inquiry – the accountability mechanism for communities who believe that they have been adversely affected by WB funded projects.</p>		

McDowell was commissioned as the Panel's Social Development and Resettlement Expert. [3.3, p. i, 8, 131; 3.6] Through interviews with affected people, the research found that resettlement-related marginalisation and impoverishment intersected with increased vulnerability for gender-based violence. The research found poorly conducted involuntary resettlement of local people increased the risk of general harm, but specifically harm to girls and young women. The research found that failing to compensate households swiftly and adequately for their losses deepened financial insecurity for all in the household, with the risk that children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. McDowell and colleagues' research corroborated the complaints of sexual misconduct and shaped the Inspection Panel's final recommendations [3.3].

2.2 Integration of vulnerable Syrians in the UK

In 2016, McDowell was commissioned by the UNHCR and International Organization for Migration to lead an 18-month joint research and advocacy project into the UK Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) [3.4, 3.7, 3.8]. The scheme had been extended in September 2015 to resettle up to 20,000 refugees over a five-year period and the research investigated issues relating to the post-arrival phase of the VPRS and the integration of vulnerable Syrians.

The study identified risks of integration failure for vulnerable groups and the need for early interventions in health and mental health for women who risked exclusion from support programmes. The research [3.4, 3.5] demonstrated the need for a national resettlement integration strategy and a change in policy towards the legal status of resettled Syrians. The research also identified opportunities for strengthening resettlement practice in countries of first asylum (for example, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey), and in the UK as the final country of resettlement. McDowell and his team conducted interviews with 167 resettled refugees, senior staff in 11 local authorities, and senior Home Office officials. The findings found that the VPRS was welcomed by concerned organisations and by the refugees themselves.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 McDowell, C. and Bennett, O. (2012). *Displaced: The Human Cost of Development and Resettlement*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- 3.2 MacKenzie, C., McDowell, C, and Pittaway, E. (2007). 'Beyond "Do No Harm": The Challenge of Constructing Ethical Relationships in Refugee Research', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol.20, Issue 2, pp.299-319. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fem008>
- 3.3 World Bank (2016). [Uganda: Transport Sector Development Project – Additional Financing \(P121097\) Investigation Report, August 4, 2016](#), Inspection Panel of The World Bank, Washington DC.
- 3.4 UNHCR and IOM (2017). *Towards Integration: Evaluation of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) Programme*, UNHCR: London, November 2017.
- 3.5 McDowell, C. (2017). 'Confidential Report – [text removed for publication]' commissioned by [text removed for publication] and [text removed for publication]

Research Funding / Grants

- 3.6 McDowell, C. Inspection Panel Commission: TSDP, Uganda. World Bank, July 2015-August 2016, USD31,000.
- 3.7 McDowell, C. Refugee Resettlement and Integration – UK Government's Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme. UNHCR Research Grant, January 2016-November 2017; £30,000.
- 3.8 McDowell, C. Major risks of integration failure for refugees in the UK. ESRC/Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST), 2016-2017, £103,000.

Awards for publication 3.1

Edgar Graham Prize for 2013, biannual Book-Length Award for works of original scholarship on agricultural or industrial development in Asia or Africa. Awarded by SOAS.
Cecil B. Currey Book-Length Award for 2013 awarded by the Association of Global South Studies.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

4.1 Changing international funders' policies to address gender-based violence

Due to the serious nature of the allegations, the World Bank (WB) cancelled the Ugandan Transport Sector Development Project (TSDP) – an unprecedented action – in December 2015 and put in place its Inspection Panel Inquiry in January 2016. McDowell's research provided the evidence to enable the Panel to corroborate complaints by local communities about gender-based violence (GBV), including evidence of rape and coerced sex, resulting from the mismanagement of the TSDP. The Inspection Panel's report was submitted on 4 August 2016 [3.3]. Within two weeks, WB Group President Jim Yong Kim announced a Global Gender-Based Violence Task Force to apply the lessons learned from Uganda to all the Bank's development finance projects around the world [5.1].

In October 2016, the President and Government of Uganda set out a detailed Management Action Plan (MAP) to address the issues raised by the Panel's research. In a letter to the WB President [5.2], Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said: "I want to confirm the commitment of my Government to ensure that social and environmental safeguards policies are adhered to ... including Gender Based Violence (GBV) and child protection" [5.2, Annex 2].

To implement the Management Action Plan (MAP), the WB allocated USD1million to enable the government to provide support to the communities affected, for example, the Emergency Child Protection Response to provide support for the victims of GBV and sexual abuse [5.3]. Within the original TSDP communities, 1,061 girls were reached through 35 Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents clubs, which provided life skills, training, psychosocial, and medical support through village health teams or other agencies. In addition, 37 girls completed vocational training for income-generating activities and received start-up support for their enterprises [5.3].

The Ugandan President's Office initiated wide-ranging legal, policy and operational reforms to the management of all of Uganda's infrastructure projects [5.3]. Implementation and monitoring was set out in four MAP progress reports, the final report being published in June 2020 [5.4]. These reports show examples of further impact and reach from the WB Inquiry Panel's work. For example, the Ugandan government, with the support of development partners, is scaling-up the Emergency Child Protection Response in seven districts between 2019 and 2022. The Spotlight Initiative aims to eliminate violence against women and girls and is implemented by UN agencies with USD 23 million of financial support from the European Union [5.4]. Another scaling-up initiative is the 'retrofitting' of GBV risk mitigation measures to a further 16 major WB financed projects in Uganda in the transport, energy, and educational sectors [5.4].

At the WB level, a Good Practice Note on Addressing GBV was published in September 2018 for WB staff working on investment projects, with a further important development in November 2020 when the WB announced a new policy on Contractor Disqualification to Strengthen Prevention of Gender-Based Violence. This means that companies bidding for WB contracts who fail to put in place measures to protect against GBV will be barred from bidding for contracts for two years. This is a major step for the WB and sets a precedent for other multilateral development banks and commercial banks that lend for global infrastructure projects.

The impact of the research has rippled beyond the World Bank and Uganda, with the Panel's investigation cited in reports changing policy on GBV and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) in the global aid and development sectors. Examples with significant international reach and beneficiaries include:

- The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) benchmarking study of development finance institutions' safeguarding frameworks (2019). Citing the Uganda TSDP as a "high-profile cases where human rights violations were particularly serious" (p.20, Box 10), it recommended that safeguards for vulnerable people should become a routine part of due diligence for development infrastructure projects [5.5];
- A review of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's (AIIB; the Chinese-backed infrastructure lending bank in Asia) Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) [5.6], published in late 2019, by a coalition of NGOs (Bank Information Center Europe, NGO Forum on the Asian Development Bank, Gender Action) made five recommendations on

GBV and referenced the Uganda research (p.20, ref 40). The AIIB has 103 members worldwide and is capitalised at USD100 billion. Its revised draft ESF (2020) [5.7] requires clients to take measures to identify and address the risks of GBV (p.6) for current and future projects (p.43);

- The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) Safeguarding Unit developed a tool to mitigate risks across DFID's programming recognising that infrastructure development presents a high-risk environment for incidents of SEAH [5.7]. The tool, published in March 2019, makes direct reference to the influence of the WB Uganda investigation – for example, referencing the WB's setting up of its GBV Task Force in 2016 [5.8, p.22] and specifying that lessons from the Uganda TSDP be integrated into training programmes [5.8, p.27].

4.2 Changing Home Office policy on refugee resettlement

A principal recommendation arising from McDowell's research for the UNHCR and International Organization for Migration was that resettled Syrians should be granted full refugee status which can lead to UK citizenship, rather than temporary 'humanitarian protection', as was the practice in 2016 [3.4, p. 25; 3.5]. In a letter from the UNHCR to the then Home Secretary Amber Rudd (17 November 2016), the main findings from the research were summarised including the crucial insight that the granting of temporary (five-year) 'humanitarian protection' status for resettled Syrians may hinder the process of integration.

After a series of follow-on meetings arising from the UNHCR letter, the Home Office signalled they agreed with the finding on integration, and on 22 March 2017 the Home Secretary announced that, from 1 July 2017, those admitted under the Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) would be granted refugee status as recommended in [3.4, p. 25] and [3.5]. In addition, all those resettled under the programme before this date would be given the opportunity to request to change their status from 'humanitarian protection' to refugee status [5.9], as recommended in [3.4, p. 25]. The change has affected up to 20,000 refugees over the five-year period (2015-2020).

The impact of the UNHCR research was extended in terms of timescales and geographical application in June 2019 when then Home Secretary Sajid Javid announced an extension of the VPRS beyond 2020, together with an extension of the Scheme to include vulnerable refugees from areas outside Syria and the region [5.9]. This new scheme consolidated the UK's Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, and the gateway protection programme into one global scheme [5.10], as recommended in [3.4, p. 25]. It is important to note that the consolidated VPRS has extended UK resettlement policy as the legal changes will apply to other displaced people from outside Syria, increasing access by around 5,000 people per year, making the UK a major resettlement actor for the first time.

McDowell's research [3.4, 3.5] continues to influence the UK's refugee resettlement policies. In January 2020 he joined the UK Home Office VPRS External Advisory Group, tasked with providing critical challenge and external research expertise to improve the development and evaluation of the UK's evolving refugee resettlement programme. In June 2020 he was appointed to the steering group for a research programme on the lived experiences of Syrian refugees who resettled in Northern Ireland under the VPRS.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1** World Bank (2016). Press release relating to World Bank President's announcement of setting up of gender based violence task force: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/08/11/statement-world-bank-group-president-jim-yong-kim-inspection-panel-uganda> (Accessed 15.2.21).
- 5.2** President Yoweri Museveni (2016). Letter to the World Bank, in *Management report and recommendation in response to the Inspection Panel Investigation report of the Uganda Transport Sector Development Project: Additional Financing (P121097)*. Annex 2, pp.55-57. Available at:

- <https://inspectionpanel.org/sites/inspectionpanel.org/files/ip/PanelCases/98-Management%20Report%20and%20Recommendation.pdf> (Accessed 15.2.21).
- 5.3** World Bank Update on Uganda Actions. (2018). pp. 22-35. Available at: <https://www.inspectionpanel.org/sites/www.inspectionpanel.org/files/2018-10/Tracking%20Management%20Action%20Plan%20-%20October%202018.pdf> (accessed 17/2/21).
- 5.4** International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2020). *Fourth and final Progress Report on the Implementation of the Management Action Plan in Response to the Inspection Panel Investigation Report on the Republic of Uganda*. For summary of resulting impacts see Annex 1, pp. 6-14. Available at: <https://www.inspectionpanel.org/sites/www.inspectionpanel.org/files/cases/documents/98-Fourth%20and%20Final%20Management%20Progress%20Report-02%20June%202020.pdf> (Accessed 17/2/21).
- 5.5** United Nations OHCHR (2019). *Benchmarking Study of Development Finance Institutions' Safeguards and Due Diligence Frameworks against the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. p. 20, Box 10. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/DFI/OHCHR_Benchmarking%20Study_HRDD.pdf (Accessed 17/2/21).
- 5.6** BIC-Europe, NGO Forum on ADB, and Gender Action (2019). *Do No Harm? Recommendations for the Review of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's Environmental and Social Framework*. BIC-Europe: Amsterdam. Available at: <https://www.re-course.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Do-no-harm-Recommendations-for-the-review-of-the-AIIBs-ESF.pdf> (Accessed 17/2/21).
- 5.7** Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (2020). Environmental and Social Framework, revised draft. Available at: https://www.aiib.org/en/policies-strategies/download/environment-framework/AIIB-Review-Draft-Environmental-and-Social-Framework_Sept-7-2020.pdf (Accessed 18.2.21).
- 5.8** UK Department for International Development (2019). *Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) Infrastructure Tool*. London: ICED/DFID. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/855899/ICED-Safeguarding-Infrastructure-Tool2.pdf (Accessed 17/2/21).
- 5.9** Baroness Williams of Trafford (22 March 2017). Written statement regarding Home Office change of policy for individuals arriving through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2017-03-22/HLWS553> (Accessed 17/2/21).
- 5.10** UK Home Office (17 June 2019). Press release regarding announcement by the Home Secretary on new resettlement scheme for the most vulnerable refugees. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-global-resettlement-scheme-for-the-most-vulnerable-refugees-announced> (Accessed 17/2/21).