

# Investigating Integration: The Geographies of the WUSC Student Refugee Program at the University of British Columbia

ROBYN PLASTERER

## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the geographies of resettlement and integration with respect to the Student Refugee Program (SRP) of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). As Canada's only program to link resettlement with post-secondary education, the SRP makes manifest intriguing geographies that intersect international, national, and local scales. This study carried out the first qualitative research of the WUSC SRP at the University of British Columbia (UBC). It draws from good settlement practices, refugees' existing skill sets, and refugees' perspectives to examine how refugee students' human capital can best contribute to Canadian integration.*

## **Résumé**

*Cet article examine les géographies de la réinstallation et de l'intégration à l'égard du Programme d'étudiants réfugiés (PÉR) de l'Entraide universitaire mondiale du Canada (EUMC). Seul programme au Canada liant la réinstallation et l'éducation postsecondaire, le PÉR rend manifeste des géographies intéressantes qui croisent des échelles internationales, nationales et locales. Cette étude propose la première analyse qualitative du PÉR de l'EUMC à l'université de la Colombie-Britannique (UBC). Elle est guidée par de bonnes pratiques d'établissement, les compétences existantes des réfugiés et les perspectives de ceux-ci afin d'examiner comment le capital humain des réfugiés peut mieux contribuer à l'intégration.*

## **Introduction**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that over 805,000 refugees will be in need of resettlement over the next three to five years.<sup>1</sup> With 80 per cent of the world's refugees living in countries where local integration is not possible, and voluntary repatriation at its lowest level in twenty years, resettlement to a third country remains the only viable solution for hundreds of thousands of refugees worldwide.<sup>2</sup> Canada is often regarded as an international leader with respect to its refugee resettlement programs and policies<sup>3</sup> and collectively, Canada, the United States, and Australia accept over 90 per cent of refugees resettled each year.<sup>4</sup>

One program in particular has shed light on the immense value of resettlement, not only as means for Canada to contribute to reducing global refugee crises, but also as means to enhance civic engagement and community-building within its national borders. The Student Refugee Program of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is the only program of its kind to link resettlement with post-secondary education. In doing so, it sheds light on the value of refugees as a source of human capital and has made it its mission to nurture this capital by providing refugees with access to higher education in Canada. Through its unique resettlement process, the SRP encompasses myriad geographies that intersect international, national, and local scales.

In examining the program and its history at the University of British Columbia (UBC), which is located in Vancouver in the Canadian province of British Columbia, I

will consider how to build an integrative society by drawing from good settlement practices, refugees' existing skill sets and refugee perspectives. My research is framed with the following objectives:

1. to ascertain what recommendations sponsored refugee students have in terms of what should be included or considered in the design and implementation of integration services at the University of British Columbia; and
2. to determine what can be learned from the good practices that are already in place in the operations of immigrant and refugee serving organizations in Vancouver.

The need to examine refugee integration is a pressing issue in both academia and policy making. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has called for further research to "accurately assess the resettlement and integration success for Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)"<sup>5</sup> and refugee experts have claimed there is a dearth of "studies on refugee integration" and a lack of refugee perspectives in academic research.<sup>6</sup> While much work has been done to examine the integration of refugee youth in Canada's elementary and high school systems,<sup>7</sup> there is a paucity of research on refugees' experiences with higher education. This paper seeks to address that gap by using the SRP at UBC as a reference point for exploring the initial phases of integration for refugee youth within Canada's post-secondary system.

Although the SRP has been active at UBC for over twenty-five years, it has never been evaluated nor has any formal qualitative data been collected from the sponsored students themselves. Moreover, since the local sponsoring group is student-run, it is subject to continual turnover in leadership. For this reason, a qualitative study of sponsored students' recommendations for the program would be immensely constructive. By using this small yet unique sponsorship program as a case study, I hope to contribute to a broader dialogue that uses space and place to better understand where, when, and how initial integration occurs. I believe that such a dialogue is crucial to the development of integration strategies that facilitate "natural processes" of "home-making."

### **Conceptual Framework**

My research process began with an extensive literature review on refugees' needs and best settlement practices while conducting an in-depth reading of CIC and WUSC documents. From this review I built my conceptual framework around the themes of integration and refugee sponsorship.

### **Integration**

The term "integration" is multi-faceted and elusive. Integration indicators found in the literature can include anything from labour market participation, language proficiency, and residential segregation to social networking and cultural consumption patterns. Since the WUSC SRP is founded on principles of reciprocity and mutual respect from both the host society and newcomers, I have positioned my analysis with the following definition: "a dynamic, multi-faceted two-way process which requires adaptation on the part of the newcomers, but also the society of destination."<sup>8</sup>

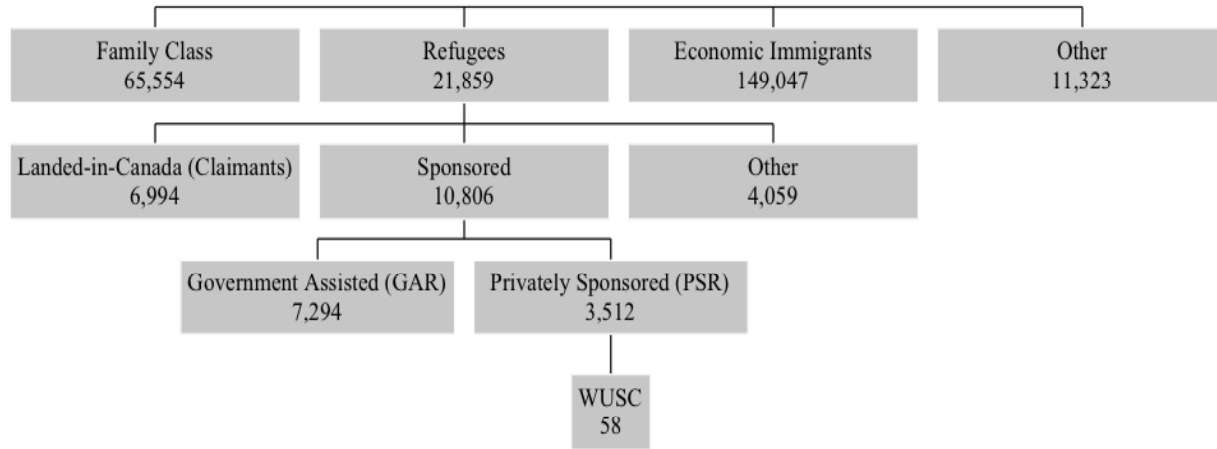
While formal evaluations of refugee sponsorship and support services tend to focus almost exclusively on economic or functional indicators,<sup>9</sup> WUSC protocol requires the sponsoring group to also provide "moral and emotional support."<sup>10</sup> As such, I felt that the integration model laid out by Kissoon was most appropriate for my research as it gives equal weight to both the functional and social aspects of the integration process.<sup>11</sup> Functional integration, according to Kissoon, refers to the indicators such as "language proficiency, labour market participation, civic and political participation, educational performance, and accommodation in adequate housing."<sup>12</sup> Social integration, on the other hand, refers to more affective qualities, such as an individual's sense of identity, belonging, and well-being, as well as the strength of his/her social networks.<sup>13</sup>

### **Refugee Sponsorship**

Functional and social integration are crucial aspects of Canada's long-standing refugee and humanitarian programs, which resettle between 20,000 and 36,000 refugees per year.<sup>14</sup> Of these, the majority fall under two umbrella programs: the Landed-in-Canada Asylum Program (for refugee claimants) and the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program (for sponsored refugees).<sup>15</sup> The Refugee and Humanitarian Program can be further divided into the Government-Assisted Refugee Program (GARP) and the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) (see Figure 1). While refugees sponsored under the first are referred by the UNHCR and supported by government-funded settlement services, refugees who are privately sponsored are supported by volunteer organizations.<sup>16</sup> My research focuses primarily on the integration of refugees who have come through the PSRP under WUSC.

Implemented in 1978, the CIC Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) has upheld Canada's humanitarian principles and its international responsibilities.<sup>17</sup> As one of sixteen countries to take part in the UNHCR's resettlement programs, Canada has one of the three largest in the world.<sup>18</sup> Since 1978, the PSRP has contributed

Figure 1. Immigration Trends in 2008 (CIC Facts and Figures)



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Facts and Figures 2008*, accessed March 30, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2008/permanent/01.asp>.

to the resettlement of over 195,000 refugees and persons in refugee-like situations to Canada.<sup>19</sup> The program operates through a partnership between CIC and sponsoring groups, whereby CIC approves and facilitates the refugee's travel to Canada while Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their Constituent Groups (CGs) commit to providing functional and social support for the first year. There are currently eighty-seven SAHs, the majority of which are affiliated with faith-based or ethnocultural groups.<sup>20</sup> One of the few exceptions to this trend is the World University Service of Canada—a unique humanitarian organization and the only program in Canada to link resettlement with post-secondary education.

Since its inception in 1978, the WUSC Student Refugee Program (SRP) has brought over one thousand refugees to Canada as permanent residents. The approximately sixty refugee students it currently sponsors each year may seem like an insignificant contribution to the PSRP; however, the SRP is unique in that all refugees resettled through the program are enrolled at a Canadian post-secondary institution on arrival. Moreover, their respective Local Committees provide them with tuition fees for at least their first year, in accordance with CIC guidelines.<sup>21</sup> With ensured access to education, refugees are able to contribute to the social, economic, and political fabric of their home countries through transnational linkages such as remittances, family sponsorship, and even returning home as professionals.

My research focuses on how the SRP operates at UBC, where it has been active since 1981 and has sponsored fifty-six students as of September 2010.<sup>22</sup> The majority of these students have come from Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and

Uganda, reflecting the national SRP trend whereby 53 per cent of sponsored students are East African.<sup>23</sup> This also corresponds to the broader Canadian demographics whereby Africa and the Middle East are the largest source areas for refugees.<sup>24</sup>

The SRP program works on various scales (the transnational, national, and local) to link stakeholders such as the UNHCR, Windle Trust, CIC, and the Government of Quebec with post-secondary institutions across Canada (see Table 1). Hyndman and Walton argue that any studies of “integration and resettlement require an examination of migrant experience both within and beyond Canadian borders.”<sup>25</sup> As such, I intend to map the geographies of the program by examining the various stakeholders operating on different scales in Kenya (in the camps and in Nairobi) and in Canada (in Ottawa and Vancouver). I will also look at the exclusions from WUSC's selection process, the degree of agency refugees have in their relocation, and the way in which space/place is negotiated by WUSC, CIC, the university, and the refugee. Ultimately, I seek to outline the recommendations that would enable sponsored students and experts in the field to better the integration process at all sites.

### Methodology

This study is small-scale and qualitative in nature. I conducted seven key-informant interviews and participant observation at a settlement organization to elicit some of the good practices that can be learned from immigrant and refugee-serving organizations in the Lower Mainland (the region surrounding Vancouver). Three separate focus

groups were coordinated in order to get refugees' perspectives on what works, does not work, and should be done to improve support. All research participants were invited to contribute to and revise the research as active participants in this community learning project and were assured that their contributions would be recognized in the final report.

### *Observation*

My research mentor for this project was the Centre of Integration for African Immigrants (CIAI). Located in New Westminster, British Columbia, the centre was founded by Paul Mulangu, himself a refugee from the Congo. The centre currently works to help newcomers enter the labour market while offering socio-cultural support, and is one of only two centres that deal specifically with African newcomers in the Lower Mainland.<sup>26</sup> My observation was guided by the principles of reciprocity and reflection,<sup>27</sup> allowing me to contextualize my findings, while being critically self-reflexive and reciprocating the knowledge gained by contributing to a funding proposal for CIAI.

### *Focus Groups*

The need to include more "recipient" voices in refugee and resettlement research is increasingly relevant in the designation and implementation of funding and programs.<sup>28</sup> As such nineteen SRP students and alumni were invited to participate in focus groups, of which eight students took part in three group sessions. Since many SRPs are full-time students with full-time or part-time jobs and community volunteer commitments, scheduling proved to be a limiting factor. Focus groups were used to elicit respondents' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences in a way that underscored the importance of social networks. This method enabled participants to be valued as experts, give recommendations, and work collaboratively with each other and with me to create a "forum for change."<sup>29</sup> Through this process, participants asked questions of each other, and even supported and sometimes challenged one another's claims. Following the work of Anne Grinyer, participants were given the option to (1) remain anonymous under a pseudonym, (2) to be recognized for their narratives with their real name, (3) and/or to take ownership of their stories by being involved in the analysis and dissemination of the findings (and have a byline in the paper).<sup>30</sup>

The biggest limits to this method were that the groups were difficult to assemble, and were neither fully representative nor fully confidential. However, in accordance with oral African traditions, all participants orally committed to respecting each other within the focus group and respecting confidentiality, which was reinforced by signing the consent form. Food was provided at all sessions to transform the

focus groups into a social space that facilitated open dialogue and encouraged recommendations. My intent was not to be appropriative in theorizing people's lives, but rather to allow the sponsored students to voice their opinions so that their perspectives might guide the future of the program. To that end, I was careful to position the sponsored students as research *participants* rather than *subjects*, by sending out emails throughout the research, asking for feedback.

### *Key Informant Interviews*

I conducted seven key informant interviews with settlement agency professionals and current and former members of the WUSC UBC leadership. These research participants included:

#### **Settlement Services:**

- As the current director for settlement services at Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC)—the largest immigrant-serving agency in western Canada—Chris Friesen is also a former chair of the WUSC UBC Committee. He was instrumental in initiating the Student Refugee Program in 1981 and has experience working with refugees in Kenya with Windle Trust (WUSC's overseas partner).
- Currently the executive director of Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC), Eyob Naizghi came to Canada as UBC's first sponsored student through the SRP program in 1981. MOSAIC is one of the largest and oldest organizations in the Lower Mainland that empowers immigrants and refugees, including refugee claimants, through an integrated service delivery model.
- A former refugee from the Congo, Paul Mulangu is the founder and executive director for Centre of Integration for African Immigrants in New Westminster, British Columbia.
- A former UBC SRP student and active WUSC volunteer, Bakumba Gorle now works as an African community settlement counsellor at ISSofBC in their Burnaby and New Westminster offices.

#### **WUSC UBC Leadership:**

- In addition to being the UBC SRP faculty advisor since 1994, Glen Peterson has also travelled to Kakuma Refugee Camp in 2008 with the WUSC Refugee Study Seminar.
- The former SRP coordinator at UBC for five years, Rose Higgins has since gone on to help establish the SRP at Ryerson University in Toronto and is currently a WUSC board member.

- A former SRP student and SRP coordinator, Chan Moses has experience working and volunteering with WUSC, community settlement organizations, and CIC.

Through their collective expertise, these participants were able to elucidate the potential avenues for and limits to collaboration between the SRP and settlement services in the Lower Mainland. Furthermore, as many have had experience working with the SRP program both at UBC and in Kenyan refugee camps, they were able to highlight the supports and barriers for SRP students in their integration process on multiple scales.

#### *Data Collection and Analysis*

All of the interviews were conducted in English and participation was voluntary and unpaid. Aside from one interview that was conducted online, I recorded all of the interviews in person and transcribed them by hand, verbatim, including slang, non-standard grammar, and dialects. Through a process of initial and focused coding, I examined the barriers, supports and best practices, and transnational linkages discussed by three categories of interviewees: settlement service professionals (key informants), WUSC UBC leadership (key informants), and SRP students (focus group participants).<sup>31</sup> The responses from these three groups were compared and contrasted, allowing for common critics, recommendations, and subthemes to emerge.

While I examined the transcripts individually and within these three groups, I also considered them collectively as part of larger narrative. It is important to note that the partition between focus group participants and key informants does not correspond to lived realities. In actuality, all participants embody complex social geographies that can be traced across multiple trajectories; almost all have negotiated the categories of “refugee,” “SRP student,” “local,” “citizen,” “activist,” and “professional” at one point or another.

#### *Positionality*

My research process was framed by feminist geography’s core belief that all knowledge is partial and situated.<sup>32</sup> As such, I began by interrogating my own positionality in relation to the refugee community here at UBC, before delving into the positionality of sponsored students in Vancouver. As an active volunteer within the WUSC organization since 2005, I have come to know many of the sponsored students in a social context. This positionality within the “WUSC system” may have inhibited some of the participants from freely criticizing the program, or discouraged them from attending the focus groups altogether. However, I feel that overall, the deep rapport we had developed prior to the project created an atmosphere of trust that allowed

students to divulge both their personal frustrations and recommendations.

These opinions and suggestions will be tied into the following discussion of my research findings. I begin with a brief background of the WUSC program and an overview of the spatiality of the SRP and its supports, before offering recommendations based on the good practices I have uncovered, and finally providing suggestions for future research.

### **Background**

#### *Historical Context*

WUSC’s predecessor, International Student Services (ISS), began to engage with refugee issues in the 1930s and 1940s, as it assisted European refugees from the university community who were affected by war resettle to Canada. This work persisted through the 1950s, when Soviet aggression and the failed Hungarian revolution spurred ISS to support Hungarian and Czechoslovakian refugees to resettle to Canada. In the 1960s, decolonialization in Africa created an outpouring of refugees, and many African students began coming to Canada through WUSC.<sup>33</sup> All of these waves of resettlement paralleled global trends and the priorities of the UNHCR of the time.<sup>34</sup> In 1978, when the Canadian government established the PSRP, WUSC became an official SAH and the Student Refugee Program was born.

Since its inception, the SRP has sponsored students from thirty-five countries of origin where there had been political turmoil. While the majority of students are African, the program has sponsored youth from the Middle East, South and Central America, Eastern Europe, and South and East Asia. Some of these sponsorships reflect greater geopolitical trends. For instance, the majority of South Africans were sponsored in the 1980s prior to Nelson Mandela’s election, and those from Bosnia and Herzegovina were sponsored between 1993 and 1997, during and in the aftermath of the Bosnian war. However, it is not solely geopolitics that determines the demographics of the SRP.

As WUSC sponsorship is linked to post-secondary admission, it is paramount that WUSC’s overseas partners in the countries of asylum have the demonstrated capacity to provide students with the language training needed to meet universities’ admission requirements. As a result, demographic shifts in the SRP are more often a reflection on WUSC’s shifting organizational partnerships than on (inter)national resettlement trends. WUSC currently operates out of two main countries of asylum: Malawi and Kenya.<sup>35</sup> However, as 80 per cent of the UBC SRP students from 2000 to 2010 were resettled from Kenyan refugee camps (Kakuma and Dadaab), this paper looks specifically

at the overseas integration practices of WUSC's Kenya partner: Windle Trust.

### *Contemporary Context*

The importance of equipping refugee youth to meet the entry requirements for higher education in Canada cannot be overlooked. According to Lori Wilkinson, many refugee youth already resettled to Canada may be ineligible for higher education as a result of Canadian streaming, language barriers, and the nineteen-year age cap on free secondary schooling.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, prior to 2003, asylum seekers were unable to access student loans.<sup>37</sup>

But it is not only the link to higher education that makes the WUSC sponsorship unique; it is also WUSC's peer-to-peer model that allows for more individualized support. This is particularly relevant given that many researchers are calling for more personalized, culturally orientated, and needs-based approaches to resettlement that acknowledge the specific challenges of groups such as refugee youth.<sup>38</sup> With over 50 per cent of GARs in 2006 being under twenty-two years old, and refugees being generally younger than other newcomer groups in Canada, there is a pressing need to better understand the experiences of refugee youth in Canada.<sup>39</sup> Many immigrant and refugee serving organizations in the Lower Mainland have responded to this need by developing youth-specific programming.<sup>40</sup>

The WUSC program is advantaged by the fact that it is designed for and deals solely with, a young adult demographic.<sup>41</sup> In addition to all SRP students being between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five, the sponsoring Local Committees (active on post-secondary campuses across Canada) are comprised almost entirely of student volunteers. Many focus group participants perceived that this model provided them with more individualized support than GARs receive through government-funded settlement services:

Settlement [services] are good, but because of the amount of clients they have, they can not help people so much.—Amara

They [settlement services] really have their clients there, for other clients coming in its hard ... If your not part of that, its gonna take forever for someone to help you.—Eve

You come as a government sponsored refugee you don't have anything like WUSC sponsorship, which is very well organized.—Hakim

SRP students can seek peer support not only from their Local Committee, but also from fellow refugee youth. Since the UBC Local Committee currently sponsors up to four

students per year, these youth are able to access the invaluable support of a growing network of SRP students and alumni. Simich, Beiser, and Mawani claim that such peers aid the integration process by providing "personal affirmation of common experiences of both origin and transition."<sup>42</sup> As previously stated, many of these students have lived in Kakuma and Dadaab and therefore often have personal connections that transcend the spatial and temporal boundaries of their university lives.

### *The Spatiality of WUSC and Geographies of Integration*

#### *Overseas: Sites, Stakeholders and Integration Practices in Kenya*

##### **The camps**

Throughout the Global South, the development of "safe spaces" (like refugee camps) is facilitated by transnational relations of power exerted by international stakeholders.<sup>43</sup> This is exemplified in both Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps where international humanitarian and political organizations strive to provide for, and spatially contain, approximately 46,000 refugees in Kakuma and 290,000 in Dadaab.<sup>44</sup> Kenya has the precarious geography of sharing borders with five other nations, all of which (aside from Tanzania) have produced a substantial outflow of refugee persons. With 413,000 refugees (352,000 of whom are Somali) and 16,700 asylum seekers as of January 2010, Kenya is one of the world's top ten countries of asylum for protracted refugees, and one of the top five in Africa.<sup>45</sup> Once in these protracted refugee situations, the chance to resettle abroad remains the sole option for many, who are unable to repatriate due to continued violence and are deterred from local integration by the Kenyan government.<sup>46</sup>

As such, programs like WUSC provide a highly sought-after opportunity to construct a new home in a country free of persecution. To do this, WUSC works collaboratively with numerous stakeholders overseas, the most reputable being the UNHCR, which has ultimate authority over the camps and all the organizations operating within its borders. WUSC must also operate in accordance with Canadian federal mandates; according to CIC protocol it is up to the SAH to "make a preliminary assessment as to whether or not the applicant may meet the refugee eligibility criteria."<sup>47</sup> From there, WUSC liaises with its overseas partner Windle Trust, the Canadian High Commission, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to select qualified candidates and arrange their language, medical, and security tests as well as their travel documentation (see Table 1).<sup>48</sup> Because all of the official documentation for Canadian residency is done prior to departing from

Kenya, the geographies of integration, both functional and emotive, actually begin *in* the refugee camps.

### Pre-departure orientation

When I say that integration begins overseas, I am referring not simply to the process of filling out papers, but also to the more complex emotional geographies that accompany this process: how expectations are set and how notions of home, family unity, and sense of well-being may begin to shift. Pre-departure orientations are integral to this entire process, both functionally and socially. In general, WUSC-sponsored students participate in two pre-departure orientations. The first is an IOM orientation for refugees of all ages who are resettling to sponsoring countries in the Global North. This orientation gives a basic overview of Canada's geography, socio-political structures, food, and housing, as well as how to use electricity and send remittances. This orientation is immensely valuable, given that IOM officials understand how transnational links are enacted by refugees in Canada:

The IOM one is important; they tell you how to send money back home. But the UBC students will not tell you, they don't do it so they don't know it. But when I come here I have to know it ... Things a Canadian student cannot understand because it doesn't make sense to him, like "oh you're already sponsored why are you paying money to family? What does that mean?" But when IOM officials talk to you they know that you are going to send money home, so they tell you what are the procedures, where to send your money, if your money gets lost how to follow up, all those legal things, they deal with it.—Ali

While the IOM is able to prepare students for functional integration by introducing Canada's legal, institutional, and financial structures, the WUSC orientation provides insight into social and academic integration.<sup>49</sup> All SRP participants found the cultural aspect of both orientations was the most important, as it helped them become active participants in the integration process and minimized the impacts of culture shock:

We were told about life in Canada, and how we handle ourselves, encountering different cultures and how you can adapt to different cultures ... You know its different here from the way Africans do it, here they say you have to contact people, people will not come to you, you have to go to people. In Africa it is different ... So those things we were taught, and that was the part of the culture we came to know and I think it was helpful.—Joseph

Three of the focus group participants had received orientations from Canadian students overseas and all concurred

that these workshops were "much more meaningful" and "very helpful." The student-to-student interaction allowed sponsored refugees to access university-specific information and, in some cases, contact information of individuals in their future host locale, thus accelerating social integration. Paul Mulangu, executive director of CIAI, also suggested that a one-month holistic pre-departure orientation program led by a former sponsored student or Canadian student could greatly aid the integration process upon arrival.

While the pre-departure orientation should be comprehensive, it is also important to, "consider the relevance of [information given], in that moment, in that space" (Ali). Some participants suggested that all orientation materials should be destination-specific (i.e. not informing a refugee of Dalhousie's admission policies if they're going to UBC), in order to avoid overwhelming students with information.

One of the primary functions of the pre-departure orientation is to ensure participants' expectations of Canada are accurate. This is a pressing issue, as the lack of information and unrealistic expectations prior to arrival in Canada can be a primary barrier for African newcomers according to both Paul Mulangu and Bakumba Gorle (former SRP student and current African community settlement counsellor at ISSofBC):

Some of them they don't know where they're going, they are just told they are going to Canada and that's it ... Some have this crazy imagination about this country you know. They come here thinking they're gonna find a 5 bedroom house, find a car parked outside, all these crazy things, but they don't realize all these crazy things require lots and lots of work.—Bakumba

However, unrealistic expectations were not a concern for SRP students, largely because of the comprehensive orientation programming they received. Particularly with respect to accommodation and financial supports, everyone's expectations were met or exceeded:

I kind of found it the way I wanted it to be. The reality is what I expected.—Eve

I didn't expect it was going to be this much.—Amara

For me it is more than I expected it!—Hakim

Bakumba Gorle believes that SRP students are advantaged because they "don't have that crazy expectation, that's one thing, and secondly they know the language, so the barriers are a little bit different. The only barrier that comes to you is maybe a lot of cultural adjustments."

*National: The Role of the WUSC National Office*

The WUSC National Office, based in Ottawa, is largely responsible for initiating this integration process overseas by linking SRP students in the camps with resources from their sponsoring institutions (such as course catalogues, etc.) and working with overseas stakeholders to provide comprehensive programming. As the official SAH, the WUSC National Office must liaise with the CIC in Ottawa, Windle Trust, and the Canadian High Commission in Kenya and the CGs at various institutions across Canada. Though its responsibilities are geographically dispersed, the WUSC National Office is the central authority as to who may or may not participate in the program.

Since WUSC links resettlement with post-secondary education, the primary determinants for participation are access to secondary education and academic performance. Even though access to primary school education is disproportionately high in Kakuma and Dadaab as compared to other camps in Africa,<sup>50</sup> the availability and quality of secondary education is highly problematic. For instance, in 2009, approximately 2,050 students sat their final primary school exams in Dadaab, even though the secondary

school system could absorb only 450 of them.<sup>51</sup> Congestion, dilapidated and under-resourced facilities, and a teaching staff that is roughly 90 per cent untrained are just some of the challenges faced by refugees who must compete with Kenyan nationals on their final examinations in order to pursue post-secondary education.

The WUSC process is highly competitive and all candidates must be between seventeen and twenty-five years of age,<sup>52</sup> have completed secondary school, be recognized as a refugee in the country of asylum, exhibit proficiency in English or French, and meet the minimum academic requirements outlined on the call for application. To be admitted to the SRP, “candidates must be recognized by the UNHCR (or by the office authorized to give refugee status in the county of asylum) and be accepted by WUSC, the Canadian immigration authorities, the Registrar’s Office at the college or university, and by a sponsoring Local Committee”.<sup>53</sup>

WUSC generally requires that the applicant be single without dependents. This is the case for two primary reasons: first, it eases integration into university life, and second, it is extremely difficult for student-based Local

**Table 1. Scales, Sites, and Stakeholders of WUSC SRP**

	<b>Overseas</b>	<b>Nationally</b>	<b>Locally</b>
Site	Kenya: Dadaab, Kakuma, Nairobi	Ottawa	Vancouver, UBC
Stake-holder	UNHCR: Has ultimate authority over camp; verifies the refugee status of the SRP candidate; observes the interview process IOM: Facilitates all travel arrangements; provides the pre-departure orientation for refugees Canadian High Commission (Overseas CIC staff): Interviews candidate to determine eligibility and admissibility for resettlement; conducts medical & security checks WUSC National Office: Selects qualified candidates; facilitates university placements Windle Trust Kenya: Posts call for application in the camp; conducts the pre-interview test and posts the final interview list; participates in the interview panel; provides language proficiency tests and pre-departure orientations Local Committee members: Send pre-departure materials.	CIC and Quebec Immigration Offices: Liaises with the Canadian High Commission; manages the re-payment of travel loans, provides information regarding immigration & settlement processes WUSC National Office: SAH with the Government of Canada & Quebec; responsible for the selection and placement of candidates; provides training to the Local Committees (CGs); Overseas all official documentation and facilitates immigration process; monitors the program.	WUSC Local Committee: Provides financial, social and emotional support for at least 12 months The University: Processes admission, waives tuition for 5 years UBC Housing and Conferences: Guarantees housing for first year Alma Mater Society: Provides stable recurrent funding UBC Faculty Fund: Additional donor



Committees to provide the necessary financial and moral support for a dependent—especially with respect to the cost of child care in Canada. However, in the event that Local Committees are able to commit to such financial and social responsibility, WUSC has supported refugees with dependents, such as single mothers, through the program. UBC is among the select committees that have been able to make such a commitment.

The support of single mothers is particularly relevant given the gender disparity within the program. Between 1978 and 2008, only 269 of the 1,058 students—or roughly 25 per cent—sponsored through the WUSC SRP were women. This in direct correlation to the fact that in the refugee camp schools, boys outnumber girls four to one.<sup>54</sup> In response to such inequity, many universities (including UBC) have lowered their entrance averages for young women coming through the SRP. In 2009, WUSC responded to this alarming gender gap by launching a new in-camp strategy, Shine A Light—a fundraising campaign to provide refugee girls with solar lamps to study at night, remedial training and school supplies, and scholarships for secondary schools in Kenya. This campaign aims to ultimately enable more young women to qualify for the WUSC sponsorship program.

Candidates must display personal agency at their interviews with WUSC and CIC to demonstrate their “ability to establish.” Once the candidate has been admitted to the WUSC program and passed CIC’s admissibility interview and security clearance, the WUSC National Office has the final say on where she or he is placed in Canada. When the candidate accepts the sponsorship, she or he enters into a legal agreement with WUSC (the SAH), their Local Committee (the CG), and the Canadian government, to live in the town or city where the CG is located and to remain in school for the first twelve months.<sup>55</sup> As such the refugees have a degree of agency over the transnational and national scales of their resettlement (as they have applied to a Canadian SAH), but may not choose the locality or university for relocation.

The interlocking relationships between the stakeholders shown in Table 1 give rise to complex and mutually constitutive geographies. There are times when national, and even local, actors operate in Kenya on a global scale; for instance, when WUSC and Local Committee members provide refugee students with pre-departure materials. At other times we see global stakeholders passing off responsibilities to national and local actors, such as when the IOM transfers a travel loan (for the cost of the flight to Canada) to CIC, which then passes it to the sponsored student and/or Local Committee. These actors operate in a geographical symbiosis that allows the program to abide by a multitude of site-specific protocol and regulations.

### *Local: The Actors and Processes Impacting Integration in Vancouver*

While the sponsored student is legally obligated to remain within the spatial locale of the CG for their first year, the CG is likewise obligated to “provide the sponsored student with financial, moral and emotional support for at least 12 months.”<sup>56</sup> The moral and emotional aspects cannot be overstated. When asked what the word “integration” means to them, all participants referred to the affect qualities of feeling respected by the host community: “integration is how you relate to the people you meet,” “it’s people coming together and staying together.”<sup>57</sup> It is clear from these responses that social support is a pressing issue for sponsored students. I will therefore begin by looking at aspects of social integration, from orientation to the ongoing development of social networks with the host and ethnocultural communities. I will then turn to the functional integration of labour market participation, and finally the implications of transnational networks on both social and functional integration

#### **Local orientation**

In order to minimize the effects of culture shock, the local orientation must be as comprehensive as the pre-departure one. Furthermore, it is important to *show* refugee students how to navigate the geographies of the campus and city as well as how to negotiate various social systems such as banking and university administration. This includes providing an orientation of physical way-finding (how to get to one’s classes, how to find the bank) but also virtual way-finding (how to register for courses, how to use online banking). Paul Mulangu suggests that the best way to do this is by relying on the “traditional way”: “What I call traditional way is first to show somebody. After that, he is going to know how to do himself, rather than giving someone a map and saying go, they are not used to that.”

This concept was reiterated by many of the students, who expressed a desire to be guided first and then shown the corresponding information online. It was repeatedly brought to my attention that paperwork such as cellphone contracts should be discussed in detail with the sponsored students, so that they can make informed decisions and exercise their personal agency.

Another fundamental challenge is the expediency needed to provide an orientation within the two-week period between the student’s arrival and the beginning of school. Sponsored student Ali explains:

... well the thing was we expected a smooth transition from our camp life to our campus life within that time frame, we expect a lot which realistically is not possible because you need them to do

the work of a couple months integration within that small frame period.—Ali

As such, orientation should be seen as a long-term process, rather than just an initial reception. This was the case five years ago when, according to Deng—a sponsored student at the time—various activities such as hiking, potluck dinners, and library tours were organized throughout the semester, provided overall consistency to the integration process.

### Socio-cultural integration

While functional integration is often evaluated with a checklist of settlement supports and guidelines, social integration is difficult to measure. The emotional geographies of how a newcomer connects to a given place are shaped by the evolution of their social networks and how they reposition themselves in society. But as stated earlier, integration is a two-way process, and thus the sponsoring group must work to enhance social interaction between refugee students and their local peers. Deng reflects on how such interactions can foster a sense of belonging and well-being:

In my time I was even given a birthday party! ... Its not necessary of course, but if the committee can actually make it happen, you feel good ... For me I would appreciate something like that happening for someone.—Deng

However, his gratitude for past gestures is matched by the dismay that currently

Social integration is lacking so bad, and that is really what new students need. Because coming here can be really overwhelming, if you are coming from a small town, and then you are being dropped in Vancouver, even the simplest thing can be really overwhelming for a new student, so they really need a close guide.—Deng

Multiple students claimed that in the past few years, while the functional integration supports have improved, they were disappointed by the level of emotional support they received:

I was not finding what I had expected like getting to chat with people, and coming to people when they're really in bad situations and thinking about different things, and thinking about different people, but nobody is there to help you, to calm you down. I did not feel good about that.—Joseph

I didn't get enough support from the interactions with the people. I got to know only very few people from the Local Committee. Otherwise, in terms of academic and getting UBC cards all these

things, I got enough support ... I didn't receive all my expectations here. That's it.—Jal

The importance of Local Committee support was emphasized by other research participants who concurred: "You're big enough to be on your own, but you still need that connection" (Dedi).

Glen Peterson, faculty advisor to the SRP, has reiterated the need for more community interaction on the "basis of something like a mentoring relationship, where we pair Canadian students with incoming SRP students." The CIC considers mentoring as a critical piece of settlement programming, and invests nearly three million dollars annually in the Host program. This "local community-based service delivery" program is administered by immigrant and refugee serving agencies like ISSofBC and MOSAIC, to match Canadian volunteers with newcomers on the premise that local volunteers are best positioned to "respond to local needs."<sup>58</sup> To enhance socio-cultural integration, such a mentoring program could be developed by the Local Committee, with the guidance of Vancouver-based immigrant and refugee serving agencies.

### Ethnocultural connections

Community networking can be further empowered by connecting sponsored students to their ethnocultural groups within the host locale. According to the literature, "the impact of co-ethnic networks on refugee integration outcomes needs to be clarified."<sup>59</sup> However, throughout my research, participants overwhelmingly perceived such networks as integration supports. All of the key informants discussed the importance of connecting new SRP students to their ethnocultural groups in Vancouver; in particular, Bakumba Gorle, Paul Mulangu, and Eyob Naizghi (executive director of MOSAIC) suggested that immigrant and refugee serving agencies could play a key role in facilitating this:

The [immigrant and refugee serving] organizations are better suited to meet the socio-cultural needs of the students, I believe. This may include connecting the students with their own communities and other communities of interest ... [if] they are connected to these groups, the stressors may be lessened ... [and it may make a] ... significant difference in their initial settlement, and long term integration.—Eyob

SPR students agree that connections to their ethnocultural community and former sponsored students significantly ease socio-cultural barriers: "Culture shock was not so huge for me because I had people I could talk to if I had questions about it. It helped me fit into the community" (Dedi).

Most participants expressed a desire to be connected to their local ethnocultural groups, and many cited UBC-based organizations such as Africa Awareness and the Muslim Student Association as key integration supports. Faculty advisor Glen Peterson notes, “There’s a small but very dedicated group of African students and other community members here [at UBC] who, my sense is, very much rely on each other and help each other out. So that’s a great source of support [for SRP students].”

However, it may be presumptuous to assume that one’s social needs necessarily correlate to one’s place of origin. While the majority of participants wanted to connect with their co-ethnic groups, this may not always be the case due to personal, political, or religious divisions. We must remember that the complexity of one’s embodied geography is not necessarily reflected in his/her country of origin. As one student articulated, “I sometimes don’t feel comfortable, because they all have their own agendas. I don’t feel safe, I don’t know who to trust” (Amara). This was echoed by SRP coordinators, who suggested that the initial orientation should include a discussion with sponsored students regarding which local communities they would like to engage with.

Because integration is a two way process, it is important not only to connect students to their ethnocultural community (if they so choose), but to encourage students to share their cultural heritage with the host society. A primary means to facilitate such cultural exchanges is through volunteerism, both within a student’s co-ethnic community and with Canadian students through the WUSC Local Committee and other humanitarian groups. Eyob Naizghi suggests that one of the best integration practices is to support “refugee students to stay actively involved with the extra-curricular activities of university life, volunteering for community organizations, etc.”

Integration is not always about receiving social services and supports. The ability to work and volunteer in one’s community promotes a sense of personal agency, validation and belonging, as well as extends one’s social networks. Participants agreed that volunteering was a fundamental support for social integration:

I didn’t get help from the [Sudanese] community but I give help to the community. I feel, I don’t know how to call it, I feel like I have something, being a student you gain so much from the knowledge, even up to now, I help the community because it’s very important. Just helping and not getting help.—Dedi

Certain students also felt that it was important for the SRP students to volunteer with the WUSC Local Committee in order to validate refugees as positive agents of change

within the community, while building their own skill sets and connections:

I try to be involved as much as I can, and I think it’s very good because at the same time it will help us, and it will help others to know us. Because it’s not always them helping us but maybe we can contribute too ... at the same time you find networks, you find friends, you know other things.—Amara

I think one thing that is very important is to get SRP students more involved in the WUSC club ... And I’m really grateful I did that because it changed my life totally ... my mind is kind of global now.—Chan

Volunteerism can also assist sponsored students to progress on the labour market trajectory, by acquiring Canadian experience and references for their resumé.

### Labour market participation

Labour market participation is particularly relevant given that the deskilling of overseas (African and Middle Eastern) work experience by Canadian employers has been an initial barrier for SRP students in finding employment: “The barrier was lack of Canadian experience. That was the barrier in getting your first job, it was hard to get that first job. But after getting it, the second was easier, the third was easier” (Deng).

All focus group participants have suggested the Local Committee could do more under the CIC protocol to “help refugees find employment” by assisting them in attaining Canadian job experience and references.<sup>60</sup> Although SRP students are receiving a world-class education, this must be supplemented by additional skill sets such as resumé writing, interview clinics, and so forth. Relevant workshops are available at an institutional level through UBC Career Services; however, most focus group participants were unaware of them, and suggested that they be included in the initial orientation. This reflects a national trend, whereby refugees may be underutilizing human services due to a lack of information.<sup>61</sup> Key informants further suggested that an employment mentorship program, perhaps modelled on the Host program, could enhance labour market participation and even strengthen community life.

However, while employment may be an initial barrier for SRP students, ultimately WUSC sponsored youth have better labour market trajectories than most PSRs. A 2007 CIC survey identified employment as one of the two largest resettlement challenges for PSRs.<sup>62</sup> As a result of deskilling, 60 per cent of PSRP respondents in the survey indicated a desire to attain skills training in a wide range of

employment areas.<sup>63</sup> In contrast, a 2007 WUSC Executive Summary that found that 97 per cent of WUSC students have completed or are in the process of completing their post-secondary education, and 85 per cent have found work in their chosen field after graduation.<sup>64</sup> According to the report, “an overwhelming majority agreed that enrollment in a college or university and support of the WUSC sponsoring group were the key factors in their successful integration into Canadian society.”<sup>65</sup>

This successful employment rate comes at a time when refugees are experiencing “downward occupational mobility” and “achieving lower economic outcomes than in the past.”<sup>66</sup> In particular, newcomers from sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing lower employment rates than other groups, and African refugee youth are among the least likely to find employment in Canada.<sup>67</sup> In a 2008 study mapping the labour market transitions of immigrant-born, refugee-born, and Canadian-born youth, Lori Wilkinson found that refugee youth experienced the highest levels of unemployment, with nearly one-third of her sample (aged twenty to twenty-four) being unemployed.<sup>68</sup>

As education is considered to be the “major pathway” to access economic advancement in Canada,<sup>69</sup> it follows that SRP students who have completed their post-secondary education find themselves in a position to contribute to and benefit from the Canadian labour market.

Not only does post-secondary education provide skills training and knowledge to advance one’s human capital, but it also advances one’s social capital through a network of professors, professional mentors, and future colleagues. According to Navjot Lamba, the networks many refugees employ “may not be sufficient to overcome their downward occupational mobility.”<sup>70</sup> This is not the case for SRP students whose access to post-secondary resources and contacts can help them achieve occupational success. Through the university, SRP students are able to overcome the major barriers to economic integration outlined by Usha George: lack of Canadian credentials, language barriers, competition from increasingly educated Canadians, and lack of Canadian networks.<sup>71</sup>

Not only is employment an indicator of functional integration, but as SRP student Hakim points out, it contributes to social integration as well:

In terms of the Vancouver community, you can learn it through your work places. Like for me I work at [a grocery store]. I get to know about the people working with me, those people, the customers in that store, so you can learn through working.

### Transnational links

The reason labour market participation is so crucial is because of the immense pressures students have to remit money home. As such, these transnational links are rooted in and dependent on the students’ functional integration. Yet conversely, this need to send remittances can implicate refugees’ ability to integrate as well as impede their academic performance.<sup>72</sup> Students mentioned that there had been occasions where SRP students at other universities had to drop out of school to pay off the transportation loan or support family members overseas. All key informants agreed that this pressure begins immediately once the refugee has arrived in Canada: “When you land here you gotta support somebody and it can add a lot of stress, because nobody can support everybody in the community, we are not the UN, the UN can’t anyway” (Bakumba).

Chris Friesen, ISSofBC director of settlement services, agrees that “the intense pressure placed on refugee immigrants when they first arrive in Canada to contribute to the well being of friends, family, extended family, and community members back home” can impede their integration as it keeps them on the margins, “living on income support, welfare, on or most likely below the poverty line.”

The transnational implications of sending remittance are complex; while it acts as a barrier for the sponsored refugees, it is simultaneously a support for overseas networks. The ability of students to remit money home, combined with the knowledge and skill sets they acquire in Canada, reposition them as agents who can strengthen their communities in Africa (by supporting their siblings’ education, etc.), through transnational efforts. Sponsored students articulated that the transnational benefits of the WUSC SRP were a primary motive for joining the program:

... it is a program that is helping a lot of people. Not only to those students that are sponsored, but also their families, relatives back in Africa. It’s very helpful and I really appreciate for those who initiated this program.—Siyad

As the first UBC SRP student and current executive director of MOSAIC, Eyob Naizghi knows the challenges refugee students face in maintaining their transnational networks while negotiating their own multi-faceted identities within the host society. He claims,

Connecting with overseas is not good enough on its own. They have to find a means of airing their background locally. So it is equally important that they have a local connection that supports their overseas network. Some of them have the burden of supporting their overseas networks (relatives, family members) ...

It is important that these factors are acknowledged by the local community.—Eyob

Again the Host program is a good model for this supportive local connection. Not only does it aid newcomers in finding employment to support their overseas networks, but it is premised on the idea that everyone is a teacher and everyone a learner. The Canadian volunteer introduces the newcomer to available services, contacts in their field of work, and community activities while learning about their cultural heritage, world view, and geopolitical history.

Hyndman and Walton claim that “transnationalism is about identities that traverse multiple places.”<sup>73</sup> This is certainly true for SRP students who have traversed not only multiple places, but also multiple social and institutional categories: “African,” “refugee,” “permanent resident,” “Canadian,” “local.” The negotiation of these transnational identities is complex and not easily understood, but what is clear is that the Local Committee must work to validate all of these embodied geographies and their corresponding networks, through initiatives such as cultural nights, online forums, and fundraisers for community projects in the refugee camps, etc. As faculty advisor Glen Peterson articulates:

I think that the more students can come here and adapt here and build lives here without rupturing their previous lives is a good thing. They're able to develop multiple identities which I think is a good thing. They don't see themselves as either Canadian or African, they see themselves as both. And I think they can flourish in both of those contexts, and things like internet communication make that much more possible.

The importance of preserving overseas links is matched by a need to maintain a network of past, current, and future UBC-sponsored students. These students are bonded by their common geographies of dislocation and resettlement, as well as their experiences integrating into the University of British Columbia. In this respect, the “SRP is very different [from settlement agencies]—it is like a family” (Bakumba). Sponsored students Eve and Dedi agree that transnational communication must be maintained because:

We have a nice community that we can always look up to ... we should keep the big group, even if they graduate keep them involved, so that it grows, grows, grows.—Eve

... The SRP is a community of people ... I know that in 20 years from today we're still going to be useful to each other.—Dedi

### **Areas for Further Research**

This paper has sought to provide the first formal report on the Student Refugee Program at UBC with respect to the geographies of resettlement and integration overseas, nationally, and locally. The importance of continual, holistic orientation programming and social networking within one's ethnocultural group and host locale has been elucidated. However, the pursuit of the following umbrella topics for further research could be immensely beneficial:

1. an in-depth study of what settlement services SRP students are eligible for in Vancouver, highlighting the possible avenues for, and limits to, collaboration with immigrant and refugee serving organizations;
2. the distinctions between SRP students and other African newcomers with respect to the barriers they face and their perceived level of personal agency; and
3. An investigation of post-WUSC sponsorship repatriation trends to better understand what contributions former SRP students are making in their home countries.

The WUSC SRP is a small sponsorship program; however, its significance lies not in its size, but in its uncompromising belief in the human capital of refugee students. The program is increasingly relevant in an ever-globalizing world. As Chris Friesen states, the expansion of the program “has come at a time when UBC is continually looking abroad, trying to position itself as a global institution of excellence, so this program fits quite nicely into the direction that the university is moving towards.” Not only does it help position UBC as a global leader, but it also reflects well upon Canada's position as an international leader for refugee resettlement. The SRP instigates nation-building not through economic migration, but through the principles of collectivism, multiculturalism, and reciprocal knowledge that uphold Canada's humanitarian traditions and international responsibilities. Sponsored student Ali articulates it best:

I hope people will realize that this is a program that has helped over 1,000; it's helped them change their life. And when you think about changing the life it's not a change for just a person, it's change for a whole family, a community, a whole tribe, it goes beyond, beyond, beyond. I hope to see this bigger, better and more pronounced that it is.

## NOTES

1. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *News from the Field*, 2010, accessed July 5, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c23f.html>.
2. Ibid.
3. Peter Li, *Destination Canada: Immigration Debates and Issues* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003).
4. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *News from the Field*, 2010.
5. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Summative Evaluation of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: Final Report*, 2007, accessed February 20, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/evaluation/psrp/psrp-summary.asp>.
6. Soojin Yu, Estelle Oullet, and Angelyn Warmington, "Refugee Integration in Canada: A Survey of Empirical Evidence and Existing Services," *Refuge* 24, no. 2 (2007): 17–34; Langan Jane Courtney, "Voices of Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: Reflections and Recommendations of Sudanese Refugees" (master's thesis, Stanford University, 2007).
7. Lori Wilkinson, "Factors Influencing the Academic Success of Refugee Youth in Canada," *Journal of Youth Studies* 5, no. 2 (2002): 173–93; Lana Stermac et al., "Educational Experiences and Achievements of War-Zone Immigrant Students in Canada," *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies* 5, no. 2 (2010): 97–107; Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, "Refugees and Education in Canadian Schools," *International Review of Education* 42, no. 4 (1996): 349–65; Cécile Rousseau, Aline Drapeau, and Ellen Corin, "School Performance and Emotional Problems in Refugee Children," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 66, no. 2 (1996): 239–51; Ahearn et al., "The Experience of Refugee Children," in *Refugees: Perspectives on the Experience of Forced Migration*, ed. A. Ager (London: Pinter, 1999).
8. Yu, Oullet, and Warmington, "Refugee Integration in Canada."
9. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Summative Evaluation*; Yu, Oullet, and Warmington, "Refugee Integration in Canada."
10. World University Service of Canada, *Local Committee Handbook Model 1: An Overview of WUSC & Local Committees* (Ottawa: World University Service of Canada, 2008).
11. Priya Kissoon, "Home/lessness as an Indicator of Integration: Interviewing Refugees about the Meaning of Home and Accommodation," in *Doing Research with Refugees*, ed. B. Temple and R. Moran (Great Britain: Policy Press, 2006).
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. There were 32,687 refugees in 2004; 35,776 in 2005; 32,499 in 2006; 27,955 in 2007. Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Facts and Figures 2008*, accessed March 30, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2008/permanent/01.asp>.
15. Yu, Oullet, and Warmington, "Refugee Integration in Canada."
16. Ibid.
17. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Summative Evaluation*.
18. Ibid.
19. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2003).
20. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Summative Evaluation*.
21. The majority of the supports mandated by the CIC are functional, "providing the cost of food, rent, household utilities, and other day-to-day living expenses; providing clothing, furniture and other household goods; locating interpreters; selecting a family physician and dentist; assisting with applying for provincial health-care coverage and Interim Federal Health Program; enrolling children in school and adults in language training; introducing newcomers to people with similar personal interests [social]; providing orientation with regard to banking services, transportation, etc. ; and helping in the search for employment." See Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*.
22. In addition to the SRP students that UBC sponsors through the WUSC National Office, the WUSC UBC Local Committee has also financially supported several Convention refugees, who were already in Canada, to pursue their post-secondary education at UBC.
23. There is also a significant number of students who come from Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC. World University Service of Canada, *The Student Refugee Program: A Guide for Local Committees* (Ottawa: World University Service of Canada, 2009).
24. Yu, Oullet, and Warmington, "Refugee Integration in Canada."
25. Jennifer Hyndman and Margaret Walton-Roberts, "Interrogating Borders: A Transnational Approach to Refugee Research in Vancouver," *Canadian Geographer* 44, no. 3 (2000): 244–58.
26. I also spent a day volunteering with the African Refugee Youth Program through the Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC), and visited the ISSofBC office on Drake Street and the MOSAIC office on Commercial Drive.
27. Alison Mountz, Eli B. Moore, and Lori Brown, "Participatory Action Research as Pedagogy: Boundaries in Syracuse," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 7, no. 2 (2008): 214–38.
28. Courtney, "Voices of education in protracted refugee situations."
29. Ibid.
30. A. Grinyer, "The Anonymity of Research Participants: Assumptions, Ethics and Practicalities," *Social Research*

- Update, University of Surrey (2002), 36, accessed March 9, 2009, <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU36.html>.
31. Under the umbrella of *barriers and challenges* the following subtopics emerged: discrimination, cultural shock, academic life, labour market participation, unmet/unrealistic expectations, and bureaucracy. Within *supports and best practices*, the subtopics were: orientation and reception, counselling, co-ethnic and co-religious support, community engagement, finances, and needs-based approaches. Under the topic of *transnational linkages*, the focus was on remittances, family, diasporic networks, and identity.
  32. Gillian Rose, "Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics," *Progress in Human Geography* 21, no. 3 (1997).
  33. World University Service of Canada, *The Student Refugee Program* accessed July 20, 2010, <http://www.wusc.ca/en/campus/students/SRP>.
  34. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *History of the UNHCR*, 2010, accessed July 20, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cbc.html>.
  35. However, WUSC has not sponsored from Thailand in the past three years, and currently only operates from Kenya and Malawi.
  36. Wilkinson, "Factors Influencing the Academic Success of Refugee Youth in Canada."
  37. Lori Wilkinson, "Labor Market Transitions of Immigrant-born, Refugee-born, and Canadian-born Youth," *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 45, no. 2 (2008): 152–76.
  38. Usha George, "Immigration to Canada," in *Immigration Worldwide: Policies, Practices and Trends*, ed. U. Segal, D. Elliot, and N. Mayadas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Wilkinson, "Labor Market Transitions."
  39. Debra Pressé and Jessie Thomson, "The Resettlement Challenge: Integration of Refugees from Protracted Refugee Situations," *Refuge* 25, no.1 (2008): 94–99; Wilkinson, "Factors Influencing the Academic Success of Refugee Youth in Canada."
  40. Such programs include: ISSofBC's *Multicultural Youth Circle Program for Newcomer Youth (MY Circle Program)* and *African Child and Youth Program* and MOSAIC's *FreeRunning for Older Refugee Youth, Newcomer Youth (NuYu) Theatre Project* and *Separated Children Intervention and Orientation Network (SCION project)*. CIAI and Umoja Operation Compassion Society also offer various integration supports for newcomer youth.
  41. Moreover, unlike immigrant and refugee serving organizations, WUSC deals with small numbers of PSRs annually—the vast majority of whom have no dependents and can speak English and/or French fluently.
  42. Laura Simich, Morton Beiser, and Farah Mawani, "Social Support and the Significance of Shared Experience in Refugee Migration and Resettlement," *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 25, no. 7 (2003): 872–91.
  43. Jennifer Hyndman, "A Post-Cold War Geography of Forced Migration in Kenya and Somalia," *Professional Geographer* 51, no. 1 (1999): 104–14.
  44. Briefing Kit, UNHCR Sub-office Kakuma Operations, 2009; .Briefing Kit, UNHCR Sub-office Dadaab Operations, 2009.
  45. One must also take note that sub-Saharan Africa has more protracted refugee situations than any other region of the world. UNHCR, *2010 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Kenya*, 2010, accessed July 22, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e483a16>; UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees, Humanitarian Displacement in the New Millennium*, 2009, accessed April 23, 2009, <http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/4444d3c81a.html>.
  46. UNHCR, *2010 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Kenya*, 2010.
  47. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*.
  48. The WUSC National Office and its overseas partner, Windle Trust, evaluate the SRP applications and conduct the initial selection interviews. Next, candidates undergo a CIC interview with the Canadian High Commission and conduct their TOEFL language tests with Windle Trust. The WUSC office then selects qualified candidates and refers them to the Canadian High Commission (while liaising with the CGs in Canada to facilitate their post-secondary placements). The Canadian High Commission then conducts medical and security checks and issues the visas and travel documents while the International Organization for Migration (IOM) facilitates all travel arrangements.
  49. WUSC also provides the students with a pre-departure book that they can take with them to their future host locales.
  50. Sixty per cent of children have access to primary education in Kakuma and 36 per cent in Dadaab. Courtney, "Voices of Education in Protracted Refugee Situations."
  51. Atieno Otieno, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, CARE Dadaab, interview, conducted in Dadaab, August 2009.
  52. WUSC has mandated an age limit to uphold the program's idea of "youth sponsoring youth." World University Service of Canada, *The Student Refugee Program*.
  53. Ibid.
  54. World University Service of Canada, *Shine A Light*, 2010, accessed July 6, 2010, [www.shinealight.ca](http://www.shinealight.ca).
  55. World University Service of Canada, *Local Committee Handbook Model 1*.
  56. World University Service of Canada, *The Student Refugee Program*.
  57. Only one participant made reference to functional support by mentioning the broader societal structures: "It's how you fit into the system. It could be the community, government, the education system."
  58. Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *An Evaluation of Host*, 2004, accessed April 2, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/resources/evaluation/host/intro.asp>.

59. Yu, Oullet, and Warmington, "Refugee Integration in Canada."
60. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*.
61. George, "Immigration to Canada."
62. The other being language. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Summative Evaluation*.
63. Ibid.
64. World University Service of Canada, *Fostering Tomorrow's Global Leaders: Executive Summary* (Ottawa: World University Service of Canada, 2007).
65. Ibid.
66. Navjot Lamba, "The Employment Experiences of Canadian Refugees: Measuring the Impact of Human and Social Capital on the Quality of Employment," *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 40, no. 1 (2003): 46–64; Pressé and Thomson, "The Resettlement Challenge."
67. George, "Immigration to Canada"; Wilkinson, "Labor Market Transitions."
68. Wilkinson, "Labor Market Transitions."
69. Each year of additional schooling for a young female refugee increases her chances of employment by 1.7 times. Wilkinson, "Labor Market Transitions."
70. Lamba, "The Employment Experiences of Canadian Refugees."
71. George, "Immigration to Canada."
72. This finding is corroborated by Lori Wilkinson's 2008 study that found that the need for many students maintain jobs while pursuing vocational training or post-secondary education often negatively impacts their studies and may prevent completion. Wilkinson, "Labor Market Transitions."
73. Hyndman and Walton-Roberts, "Interrogating Borders."

---

*Robyn Plasterer has an honours BA degree in human geography from the University of British Columbia, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in refugee and forced migration studies at Oxford University. In August 2009, she joined the Globalization of Protracted Refugee Situations Project as a research assistant in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya. The author expresses her sincere gratitude to Priya Kissoon for her invaluable mentorship, direction, and insight. She would also like to thank her key informants and focus group participants for their participation and feedback, and Asni Mekonnen, Senior Program Officer of the WUSC Student Refugee Program, for her unwavering dedication to the program and her revision of this research.*