

Institution: Kingston University
Unit of Assessment: 17, Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology
Title of case study: Policy change by United Nations regarding stateless women and children
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research at Kingston University into statelessness and gender discrimination in nationality laws established the significant and damaging effects attributable to these issues. Following the presentation of this research to the US State Department, the US government submitted a resolution to the United Nations on protecting the right to nationality of women and children, and ending legal discrimination against women in nationality laws, that drew substantially upon the research. This resolution was adopted by the UN, such that the change in UN policy in this area can be traced back to the research carried out at Kingston University.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Research carried out at Kingston University sought to quantify and explain how the denial and deprivation of citizenship undermines people's human rights and opportunities for human development [2][3]. The research was performed through a project entitled <i>Measuring the Costs of Statelessness: A Livelihoods Analysis in Four Countries</i>, funded by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration – [US\$180,000], (July 2010-August 2011) led by Prof Blitz. The aim of this project was to establish how the denial and deprivation of citizenship affects livelihoods, and built on previous research by Blitz including the 2011 book <i>Statelessness and Citizenship</i> [1].</p> <p>The underpinning research was carried out in four countries (Bangladesh, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and Slovenia) where Blitz's team conducted a livelihoods survey of 980 households and 60 interviews with formerly stateless and natural born citizens. The livelihoods of stateless persons were then compared with those of citizens in these four countries, using qualitative and quantitative analyses. The most significant conclusions of this research were that statelessness reduces household income by just over one third, and reduces the probability of being a home owner by nearly 60 percent [4][5]. The average educational attainment of stateless households is between one and six years lower than that of citizen households. Stateless persons also suffer from lower health status than citizens, and have poorer access to justice and law enforcement.</p> <p>Blitz and his team were the first to quantify how the denial and deprivation of citizenship undermines people's rights and livelihood options [1]. They established that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Statelessness lowers a household's per capita income by 33.7 per cent. (ii) Statelessness has a negative impact on the acquisition of human capital. In Bangladesh the mean education of stateless groups (grade 3) was approximately six years lower than the level achieved by citizens (grade 9). In Kenya the mean education of stateless group (grade 7) was approximately three years lower than that of the citizens (grade 10). In Slovenia the mean education of the 'erased' group (grade 10) was approximately 2 years lower than that of the citizens. In Sri Lanka, for the formerly stateless group educational attainment was approximately grade six, one year lower than that of the citizens (grade 7). (iii) Statelessness has a negative impact on the ability to acquire assets - stateless households spent 34 per cent less than citizen households. (iv) Statelessness reduces the probability of owning a home by almost 60 per cent. <p>The above findings were cited by the US Assistant Secretary of State for Global Affairs in October 2011 and used in part as the basis for a pledge by the US government to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; specifically, the research team's recommendations regarding gender and nationality based discrimination.</p>
Key researcher: Brad K Blitz, Professor of Human and Political Geography, 01/09/2009-31/03/2013

Impact case study (REF3b)

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

The following publications are all of internationally recognised quality (2* and above). They were subject to peer review; the research informing these studies was the result of competitive research grants and favourable reviews from authorities in the field, as indicated below. All outputs can be supplied upon request.

[1] Blitz, Brad K. *Statelessness and Citizenship: A Comparative Study on the Benefits of Nationality*, Edward Elgar Publishing, (Published January 2011; 244 pages; ISBN 978 1 84980 067 9). (Co-authored and co-edited with Maureen Lynch).

This book resulted from a competitive award given by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Statelessness and the Benefits of Citizenship – A Comparative Study of Eight Countries' [CHF 23,000] October 2008 – September 2009. The project had been selected by Mary Robinson and Sergio Pinheiro to commemorate 60th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. On the basis of their comments, the project was funded. The manuscript was subject to peer review before a publication contract was issued.

[2] Blitz, Brad K. *Statelessness in the European Union: Displaced, Undocumented and Unwanted*, Cambridge University Press, (Published February 2011; 334 pages ISBN 9780521191937). (with Caroline Sawyer).

The research contained in this book derived from a competitive grant funded by the Rothschild Foundation Europe and Ford Foundation, 'Statelessness, Racism and Civic Exclusion: a Study of four European Countries' [£65,559], August 2006 – July 2008. The grant had been supported by Prof. Steven Vertovec, formerly of the University of Oxford, ESRC Centre for the Study of Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS). The manuscript was subject to peer review before a publication contract was issued.

[3] Blitz, BK and Otero-Iglesias, M (2011) 'Stateless by Any Other Name: Unsuccessful Asylum Seekers in The United Kingdom, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37/4, (2011), pp. 657-673. ISSN: 1369-183X (Print). DOI: <http://10.1080/1369183X.2011.545311>.

Refereed journal article.

[4] Blitz, Brad K. 'Neither Seen Nor Heard: Compound Deprivation Among Stateless Children in Jacqueline Bhahba (ed.), *Children Without a State: The Scope of Child Statelessness in the 21st Century*, MIT Press, 2011, pp. 43-66.

Peer-reviewed book edited by team of senior researchers at Harvard University and published by leading academic press.

[5] Blitz, B.K. 'Statelessness, Protection and Equality', UK Department of International Development and University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre Policy Brief, September, 2009, pp. 62. Available at: <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/RSCP3-Statelessness.pdf>.

The publication was peer reviewed by staff at the University of Oxford.

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

The impact of the underpinning research has been a change of policy by the US government and, consequently, by the United Nations.

The report *Measuring the Costs of Statelessness: A Livelihoods Analysis in Four Countries*, containing the results of the underpinning research described in Section 2, was submitted to the US State Department Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration in September 2011. A subsequent briefing was organised in Washington, DC, where the co-author Maureen Lynch presented the findings to staff from the US State Department.

On 25 October 2011 the Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Maria Otero, deputising for and delivering a speech on behalf of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., quoted from the report at length and acknowledged the research by Kingston University. She went on to say that Secretary Clinton has identified women's nationality rights as an important area of work for the State Department and that the US government is "advocating on behalf of stateless people with foreign governments and civil society organizations. US diplomats

Impact case study (REF3b)

around the world are working to generate local political will to reform discriminatory nationality laws.” Otero then announced the US government’s intention to use the strength of its public diplomacy to increase global awareness of women’s nationality rights, as recommended in Blitz’s report [1].

On 7 December 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced US government policy and pledges based on the research, saying “The United States has launched an initiative to build global awareness about these issues and support efforts to end or amend such discriminatory laws. We want to work to persuade governments – not only officials but members of parliament – to change nationality laws that carry this discrimination to ensure universal birth registration and establish procedures and systems to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship for stateless people.” Secretary Clinton borrowed the wording from Blitz and Lynch’s book about the ways in which the denial of citizenship deprives people access to basic rights, and the sequencing of examples is almost exactly as in the text. She introduced a series of “commemoration pledges”, one of which is on statelessness and maps onto the recommendations included in Blitz and Lynch’s 2011 book and Blitz’s 2009 report on the benefits of citizenship. [2]

Also in 2011, Clinton pledged that the US government would “Focus U.S. diplomacy on preventing and resolving statelessness among women and children, including efforts to raise global awareness about discrimination against women in nationality laws and to mobilize governments to repeal nationality laws that discriminate against women.” [3]

In July 2012, the US government drafted a resolution on the theme announced by Clinton which was introduced to the UN Human Rights Council on 5 July 2012 [4]. This resolution was passed by consensus on the same date [5].

It is too early to quantify the number of women and children benefitting from the implementation of US and UN humanitarian policy instruments: the impact so far is on the policies of the US and UN. However, the significance of this policy change can be demonstrated by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)’s estimates that there are 12 million stateless people globally. The underpinning research identified the following numbers: 300,000 stateless people in 2003 in Sri Lanka (now supposedly having the right to citizenship); 20,000 - 30,000 stateless Nubians in Kenya; 250,000 stateless Bihari in Bangladesh; and 25,671 were 'erased' and are effectively stateless in Slovenia.

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

[1] Remarks on Statelessness and Gender Discrimination, Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, Refugees International Event, U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, October 25 2011, available at:

<http://www.state.gov/g/176132.htm>

[2] Hillary Clinton’s remarks 7 December available at

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/12/178406.htm>

[3] Pledges 2011 – Ministerial Intergovernmental Event on Refugees and Stateless Persons, page 38, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/4ff55a319.html>

[4] U.S. Introduces Human Rights Council Resolution on The Right to a Nationality, 5 July 2012, available at

<http://geneva.usmission.gov/2012/07/05/u-s-introduces-human-rights-council-resolution-on-the-right-to-a-nationality/>

[5] UN resolution [A/HRC/20/L.8](#) “The Right to a Nationality: Women and Children”, passed 5 July 2012, available at

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session20/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx>