

David Lefor

**Doctoral Researcher | Independent Consultant | Research Director,
Centre for HDP Nexus Solutions**

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Profile

International development researcher and technical expert with over a decade of experience across research, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and programme management. Thematic expertise includes education, adolescent participation, migration and displacement, social protection, gender, and child rights. Currently pursuing a PhD on educational and skills development among conflict-displaced youth in Thailand. Demonstrated success delivering high-quality, participatory, and policy-relevant research for UNICEF, Plan International, RUSI, ILO, and others.

Key Areas of Expertise

- Education and adolescent participation
- Migration, refugee rights, and statelessness
- Gender and intersectionality
- Child protection and ethical research with minors
- Disability and social inclusion
- Research ethics and safeguarding
- Programme evaluation and knowledge translation

Education

PhD International Development Studies (Expected 2026)

International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam & Ruhr University Bochum

Thesis: Enhancing Capabilities Through Education: Educational and Skills Development for Conflict-Displaced Burmese Youth in Thailand

MSc International Development (Distinction, 2020)

University of Portsmouth, UK

Dissertation: Yearning for Peace: Human Security Among the Ethnic Minority Burmese Refugees in Thai Border Camps

Bachelor of Education (1st Class Honours)

Lakehead University, Canada (2011)

Environmental Science and Experiential Education

BA Criminology and Criminal Justice (Psychology Concentration)

Carleton University, Canada (2007)

Professional Experience

Co-Founder/Director (Research) – Centre for HDP Nexus Solutions (Jun 2025 - Present)

Founding Research Director of a new non-profit advancing evidence-based solutions at the intersections of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding work. Leading the development of the Applied Research pillar, setting the organisation's research agenda, establishing partnerships, and designing methodologies for locally anchored, co-created research with future policy and practice impact.

Independent Consultant (Research and Evaluation) – UNICEF (Mar 2021 – Present)

Led key studies and programme reviews focused on adolescents, education, and justice systems across Southeast and Central Asia. Delivered strategic analysis and reporting for internal programme planning and public dissemination.

Project Lead – Samuel Hall (May 2022 – May 2024)

Led a range of research and evaluation projects for organisations including UNICEF, Save the Children, and Plan International. Focused on education, child protection, and adolescent wellbeing, applying participatory approaches in fragile contexts.

Director of Programmes / Assistant Director / Programme Manager – Includovate (2020 – 2022)

Oversaw evaluations and impact assessments for ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, and the Gates Foundation, among others. Contributed to internal safeguarding and served as Vice-Chair of the research ethics committee.

Teacher (Global Perspectives, Geography, Psychology) – Amnuay Silpa School, Thailand (2013 – 2020)

Taught at IGCSE and A-Level. Founded Model UN programme. Students achieved top global and national exam results.

Teacher (Geography and English) – Kuwait Bilingual School (2011 – 2013)

Selected Publications & Reports

- UNICEF Viet Nam – Assessment of Knowledge Gaps in Adolescent and Youth Programming (2025)
- UNICEF Indonesia – Adolescent Statistical Profile (2025)
- UNICEF Tajikistan – Diversion Programmes for Adolescents (2024)
- UNICEF Thailand – Child Rights and Business, and Youth Participation (2022–2023)
- UNICEF MENA – Evaluation of Child Protection Case Management Systems (2022–2023)
- RUSI – STRIVE Afghanistan Endline Report (2022–2023)
- Plan International – Evaluation of the BRiCE Project (2022)
- Springer Nature – Chapter in ‘Centering Gender in the Era of Digital and Green Transition’ (2023)

Certifications & Licences

- UNDP Nexus Academy (2025)
- Google Project Management (2021)
- Save the Children: Emergency Response (2021)
- CITI Program: IRB, RCR, and Social & Behavioural Research (2021)
- UNICEF/UPenn: Social Norms and Social Change (2021)
- Core Humanitarian Certification – Humanitarian U (2020)

Awards and Recognitions

- DAAD Graduate School Scholarship – Germany (2023–2026)
- PR.INT International Project Realization Grant – Germany (2025)
- Innovation & Social Impact Awards – Includovate (2021–2022)
- Teacher of the Year – Amnuay Silpa School (2018)
- Best Teacher Award – Kuwait Bilingual School (2013)

Conferences and Affiliations

- Speaker – 2025 Migration Conference (UK); 2025 Myanmar Conference (NL)
- Guest Lecturer and Seminar Contributor – Ruhr University Bochum (ongoing)
- Expert Reviewer – Cooperation Development Research (KoEF), Austrian BMBWF (2025–Present)
- Associate Contributor – Africa PMC Ltd (2025–Present)
- Member – Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) (2025–Present)
- Member – European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) (2025–Present)

Languages

- English (native)
- French, German, Thai (basic proficiency)

References

Available upon request.

Project Appendix

The following appendix outlines selected consultancy and research projects led or contributed to by David Lefor. Projects are grouped by thematic focus, primarily drawing on his expertise in education, adolescent participation, child protection, gender, and migration.

Children, Youth, and Education-Focused Projects

- UNICEF Viet Nam (2025): Assessment of Knowledge Gaps in Adolescent and Youth Programming.
- UNICEF Indonesia (2025): Adolescent Statistical Profile.
- UNICEF Malaysia (2024–2025): Support to the ADAP team for CPD finalisation.
- UNICEF Tajikistan (2024): Diversion Programmes and Adolescent Justice.
- UNICEF Jordan (2023–2024): Endline Evaluation of the Maharati Life Skills Programme.
- UNICEF Thailand (2022–2023): Landscape Analysis of Young People's Participation.
- UNICEF Thailand (2022–2023): Rapid Assessment of Child Rights and Business.
- UNICEF MENA (2022–2023): Multi-Country Evaluation of Child Protection Case Management.
- UNICEF Pakistan (2022): Review of Early Childhood Education Models.
- Plan International, Ethiopia and Somalia (2022–2023): Final Evaluation of BRiCE Project.
- Save the Children (2022): Girls on the Move – North Africa & MENA.
- UNICEF Thailand (2022): Evaluation of Adolescent Pregnancy Programmes.
- UNICEF Thailand & TLSDF (2022): Evaluation of Employability Programme for Migrant Youth.
- UNICEF Thailand (2021–2022): Youth Employability Initiatives – NEET Youth Assessment.
- UNICEF Laos (2021–2022): Formative Evaluation of Love and Care for Every Child.
- UNICEF Ghana (2021–2022): Situation Analysis of Children, Adolescents and Women.
- ILO Africa Regional Office (2021–2022): ACCEL Project Evaluation on Child Labour.

Gender, Protection, and Broader Thematic Evaluations

- RUSI Afghanistan (2022–2023): Monitoring Lead for STRIVE Afghanistan.

- Gates Foundation (2021–2022): Gendered Dimensions of Financial Inclusion in Ethiopia.
- BRAC (2021–2022): Country Landscape Analysis – Extreme Poverty Scaling (Ethiopia).
- UNDP South Africa (2021): Economic Costs of Disability.
- Tanager (2020–2021): Gender and Food Environment Analysis for SELEVER2.
- ILRI (2020–2021): Gender Study on Community-based Breeding Programmes.
- Women Gaining Ground (2021): Baseline Assessment in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda.
- UNICEF Thailand (2020–2021): Country Programme Strategic Positioning Evaluation.
- Digital Opportunity Trust (2020–2021): Youth Digital Access and Gender Analysis Toolkit.

Academic Engagements and Conference Contributions

- Speaker – 66th AARES Conference (2022): Gender, Agriculture and Climate Funding Ecosystems.
- Chapter Contributor – Palgrave Macmillan (2023): Speaking Gender in the Era of Digital and Green Transition.
- Speaker – 2025 Migration Conference (United Kingdom).
- Speaker – 2025 Myanmar Conference (Netherlands).
- Seminar Contributor – Ruhr University Bochum (ongoing).