

# Mapping UNSW Impact Global Development

<b>Primary SDG</b>	<b>3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b>
<b>Broad theme</b>	Urban development in border towns
<b>Research</b>	Assessing urban development in India's border towns and mentoring students in urban development and policy
<b>Impact region</b>	India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China
<b>Faculty</b>	Arts and Social Sciences
<b>School/Institute</b>	Social Sciences
<b>Academic</b>	Professor Duncan McDuie-Ra
<b>Project partners</b>	ARC funding: \$100,000 in funding now finished
	ActionAid, Don Bosco
<b>Related SDGs</b>	4: Quality Education
	10: Reduced Inequalities

## Elevator pitch

Duncan's research is examining how development in health and education occurs in violent, boarder towns in North East India, helping local and state governments to make better policy and educating students wanting to work in development in the region.

## The Challenge: How does a violent city like Imphal grow and develop?

Before colonial capture in 1891 the Indian state of Manipur, that borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh, was an independent region. A separatist movement has been active there since 1964, with it and other ethnic groups demanding division of the state along ethnic lines. Since 1980, the Indian Government has referred to Imphal as a 'disturbed area' and given the military special powers to detain people and shoot and kill.

Violence is common in Imphal and human rights violations are a major concern. People in rural areas flee to the city for safety. Refugees from Myanmar also head for Imphal for a similar reason and because the city acts as a gateway to the rest of India. Yet Imphal's infrastructure is very uneven, HIV infection rates are high, and mortality rates are high.

## UNSW's solution: Research development in health and education, train up students

Duncan examined urban development in Imphal and how the city's health and education sectors developed during conflict. He discovered Imphal has a very good private health sector. Imphal's hospitals are renowned in the State and in Western Myanmar. In education, the Indian Government is throwing money at the city, with many new schools being erected to educate more people. Currently those who are educated leave Imphal for work across India in shopping malls, call centres and the retail sector.

Having heavily researched the challenges facing the people of Imphal, Duncan is now investigating cities in the nearby state of Sikkim (with Dr Mona Chettri, Aarhus University). Sikkim is investing heavily in urban infrastructure, even in areas with low populations. Duncan is also researching the nearby city of Dimapur, a post conflict city (with Dr Dolly Kikon, University of Melbourne). Dimapur faces many urbanisation challenges, such as the development of land on what was once tribal land.

The Indian Government has progressive policies for ethnic minority peoples to study. This makes it easier for Manipur locals to study and it minimises drop outs. As a result the region has very high levels of literacy and education, and gender parity in education. To support the region further, Duncan and his colleagues have started a winter school for PhD students wanting to work in development in the area. The school is held every January and is in its fifth year. Activities include workshops on writing and research, and public talks and lectures. One scholar, like Duncan, mentors three students throughout their entire PhD programs.

### **The Impact: Influence government policy, and students wanting to work in development in the region**

Duncan has spoken to a number of government planners and NGOs in the region, influencing government policy and development work, and ultimately improving the provision of health and education in Manipur.

In the Winter School program, local PhD students are learning how they can make a bigger impact on urbanisation in the region through their research. Two graduates, both indigenous to Manipur, are now managing a national park in the area, providing a positive example of local empowerment. With mentees including female PhD students, the Winter School is helping to raise the profile of local women in the community, and it is also helping to weed out racism between Indigenous Manipuris and Indian scholars.

Findings from Duncan's research and the Winter School model could be applied to other border towns around the world where similar conditions exist, including Sudan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Southern Thailand, East Timor, and Indigenous reserves in North America.

### **Researcher**

Duncan McDuie-Ra is Professor of Development Studies at UNSW. His most recent books are *Borderland City in New India: frontier to gateway* (2016, Amsterdam University Press), and *Debating Race in Contemporary India* (2015, Palgrave). He is an Associate Editor for *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* (Taylor & Francis) and on the editorial board for the book series *Asian Borderlands* (Amsterdam University Press). Fascinated by territorial anomalies and urban issues, Duncan has travelled extensively in India and Myanmar.

Ben Falkenmire 04.12.17