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# REFUGEE CHILDREN

INVASION BY ACHOLI THE ASKARI OF U.P.C.



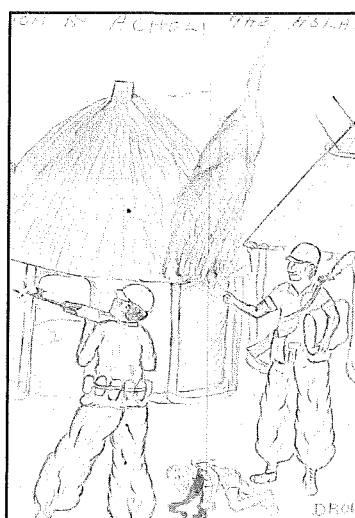
*Drawing by Opiku Phillips Anyiraci, age 16, Ugandan refugee student in Sudan, 1985*

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**THE REFUGEE PARTICIPATION NETWORK (RPN)**, published quarterly by The Refugee Studies Programme, aims to provide a forum for the regular exchange of practical experience, information and ideas between people who work with refugees, researchers and refugees themselves. The RPN is currently mailed, free of charge, to approximately 1700 members in 84 different countries around the

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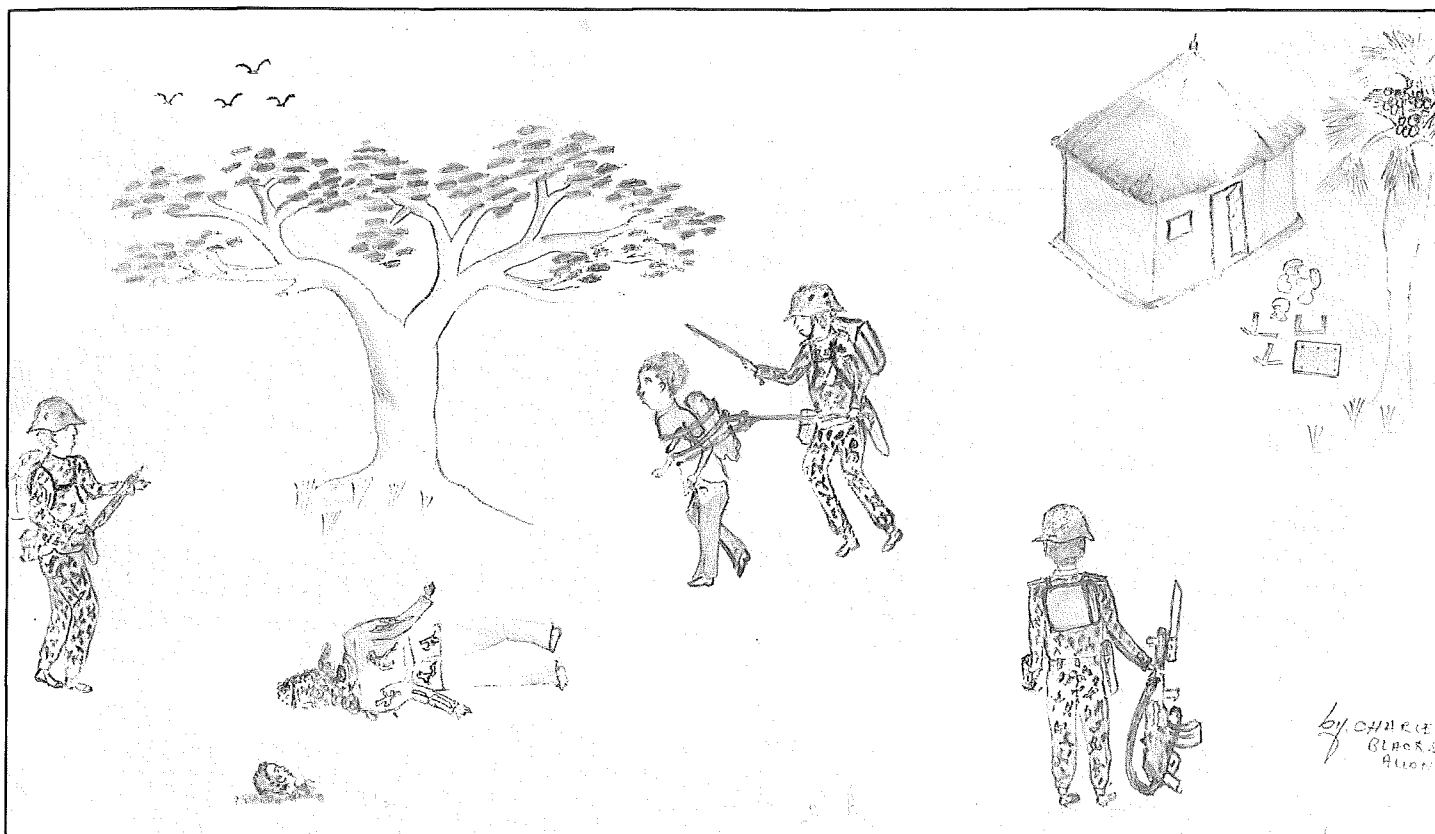
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# REFUGEE CHILDREN



*Drawing by Charles Blackson Alion, Ugandan refugee student, Sudan, 1985*

## BOY SOLDIERS OF MOZAMBIQUE

by Neil Boothby, Peter Upton, Abubacar Sultan

**Mozambique has been engulfed in a ten year war noteworthy for its devastating impact on children, many of whom have become the victims and the tools of war. Boys as young as six have served as soldiers, children of all ages have been the targets of systematic, country-wide abductions, and large numbers of young people have been killed or have been subject to torture, rape, and forced labour.**

This article focuses on one especially vulnerable group of war-affected children: boy soldiers. It stems from a larger study undertaken by the National Director of Social Action (DNAS) and Save the Children Fund (SCF) in which 504 children from war-affected areas of Mozambique were interviewed. Approximately half of these were boys, of whom 28 percent had been trained as soldiers. All of the children had personal war experiences. Children selected for interview were between the ages of 6 and 15; a few older children whose war-related experiences occurred between these ages were also included.

The interviews were open-ended guided by a set of questions, and were conducted in local languages unless a child preferred to speak in Portuguese. The sessions took place within camps for the displaced, orphanages, schools or individual homes in the most private conditions possible. In many cases, the interviews have undergone two translations (native language to Portuguese to English). The narratives presented are the authors' best efforts to recreate the children's accounts.

### RENAMO Abductions

Capture by the anti-government forces (the Mozambique National Resistance, RENAMO), is one of the greatest risks faced by children in the rural areas. Indeed, nearly two-thirds (64%) of the children interviewed for this study had been forcefully abducted from their families. RENAMO's need for captives, along with food and material supplies, continues to fuel raids against civilian communities. A 14 year old boy's account of a RENAMO attack in Marrumeu, revealed that in parts of Sofala teenagers aged 15 to 19 are taken from their community and trained for combat. In the South of the country the average age is 11.5 years, younger because teenagers and young men commonly work in South Africa and so many potential recruits are absent.

Children kidnapped by RENAMO who were interviewed for this study were used for a variety of purposes. Some worked as porters carrying heavy loads of supplies to bases within the RENAMO-controlled zones. Many others worked directly for RENAMO as servants or fought as combatants. Although not all children became RENAMO combatants, they were nevertheless subjected to military life in the base camps.

In the camps, younger boys did the same type of work as girls - helping older girls and women prepare food, haul water, wash and clean - though only boys performed tasks such as tending cattle and hunting for food. In the south of the country, boys are at a greater premium; in the southern province of Gaza, for example, boys as young as six or seven carry guns and thus are often exempt from camp chores. A 7 year old told us:

*...when we got to the base camp, they took me from my mother and put me with some other boys. [Then] some bandits came and began to train us. The training was for two or three weeks. Then we went on raids. [At first], I just carried a gun. After a while, I began to shoot it...*

Children in base camps were expected to serve RENAMO without question or emotion. The reward was extra food, comfort and promotion - from servant to body guard to combatant.

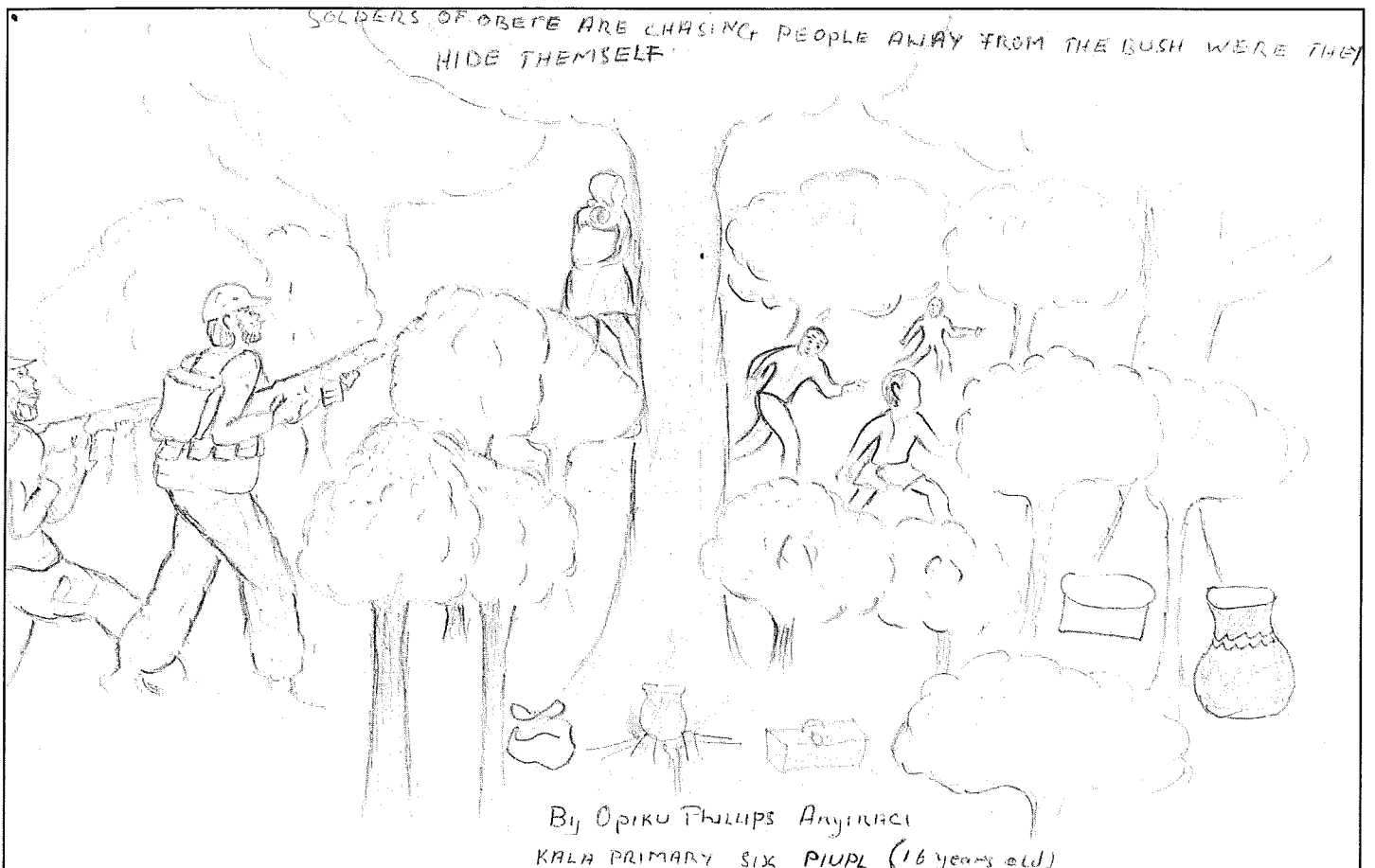
### Socialisation into Violence

Once in base camps, boys are subjected to a socialisation process that is brutal and systematic. One of its main components is physical abuse and humiliation. A 14 year old from Inhambane recalled:

*Sometimes, just for their entertainment, the bandits forced children to fight each other in front of them. I was considered a good fighter because I was strong and I fought to win. [But] one time they forced me to fight against an adult and he beat me...*

RENAMO conditions children through beatings, which eliminates any resistance, and an attempt is made to emotionally harden the children through punishment if they offer help or display feelings for others subjected to abuse. A 12 year old from Tete described how RENAMO programmed him not to show fear or emotion:

*They told us that we must not be afraid of violence or death and tested us to see if we could follow this command... Three different times people who had tried to escape the base were caught and brought back. The bandits brought all the children, including me, to witness their punishment. The bandits told us that we must not cry out or we would be beaten. Then a bandit struck the man in the top of the head with his axe and after he split his head open, he drove the axe down until it went into the man's chest...*



Drawing by Opiku Phillips Anyiraci, age 16, Ugandan refugee student, 1985

By beating and exposing children to violence, RENAMO conditions them not to question its authority. The next step is to force children to become abusers themselves. In the words of Alfredo, a 12 year old boy from Gaza:

*The bandits beat us almost every day. They even beat us if we played or laughed or sang. Sometimes I would sing a song to myself. They couldn't hear it, and it made me feel better sometimes. This was one of the ways I tried to fight them...*

*The bandits assigned other boys our age to watch over us. They were once part of our group and had also been beaten. Now, they were put in charge and were even worse... they enjoyed hurting us... When one of us was caught doing something, the bandits made him stand in front of us. They asked us what the boy had done wrong. The first one of us to answer correctly was brought forward too. He was given a stick or bayonet to punish the other boy... The rest of us were told to answer quickly next time or we'd be beaten too.*

The process of training boys for actual combat follow a similar pattern: boys are put through daily drills and exercises; they learn how to march, attack, retreat and shoot weapons. Many are required to kill captives as a rite of passage into RENAMO's ranks. An account of military training by an 11 year old boy from Gaza is as follows:

*Most of the boys were young and had not shot a gun before. The bandits taught us to take the gun apart and to put it back together. They lined us in rows and fired guns next to our ears so we wouldn't be afraid of the sound. Then they had us shoot the guns and kill cows...*

*Boys who were the best at this were made chiefs of the group. When other people did something wrong, the bandits told these new chiefs to kill them... This is how boys became RENAMO chiefs...*

A set of formal rites are said to mark the change of status from that of a child civilian to that of a RENAMO combatant. These follow a child's first murder. There are numerous variations on the ceremonies; Domingo, a 15 year old from Gaza described his own experience:

*After the killing, body parts were cut up and cooked with other meat. The bandits got a healer who told me to eat the stew. Then he called for demons and asked them to make me safe from FRELIMO's bullets. The demons agreed. But I would have to drink the blood of the next three people I killed before I would be safe from the bullets. If I didn't, I would be killed.*

### **Treatment of Boy Soldiers by the Government and its Military**

64% of the 504 children interviewed for this study were abducted by RENAMO and taken either to a base camp or a control zone. All of these children were in RENAMO custody for differing periods of time, and all, one way or another, found their way back

to civilian life. Children who escaped were usually released after questioning, while those who were captured or had been RENAMO combatants were more likely to be interrogated and mistreated.

The Government (FRELIMO) and the military have responded to former child soldiers in varying ways. Consider the case of Jose, a 14 year old from Inhambane who, after abduction from his family, served with RENAMO for at least a year and was trained for combat. In a battle with FRELIMO, his hand was shot and he gave himself up. When we spoke to Jose, the wound on his hand was fresh, and he spoke of his experience with RENAMO in great detail. The military suspected Jose of being a RENAMO spy and of having entered the village to collect information in advance of a RENAMO attack. Whether or not he was a spy, Jose was released after questioning and sent to the local orphanage.

In other cases, the treatment of child soldiers is less humane. Despite Mozambique's declared amnesty for former RENAMO participants and captives, 30 children interviewed for this study (approximately 6 percent of the total sample) stated that they had been detained in FRELIMO military centres or other kinds of jails. Some boys described being detained for a few days or weeks. Others, however, were imprisoned for longer periods of time.

In several cases, former child soldiers have disappeared from FRELIMO military detention centres. In September 1988, the Governor of Gaza Province wanted to develop a rehabilitation programme for former RENAMO combatants, and asked SCF and DNAS staff to meet 12 child-soldiers who were in a military detention centre. When SCF and DNAS staff went to the detention centre, however, the 12 boys were no longer there, and the military authorities refused to discuss what happened to them.

### **The Way Forward**

Clearly, without a political settlement between the Mozambican government and RENAMO, little can be done to improve the security of endangered populations. Until a political settlement is attained, civilians in rural communities and camps for the displaced will remain vulnerable and insecure, and boys will continue to be kidnapped, taken to RENAMO base camps, trained for combat, and forced to kill.

While this battle must be fought in the political arena, there are avenues that can be pursued by the Mozambique government and their international counterparts to protect former child captives of RENAMO from government military mistreatment. Specifically, the amnesty programme should be strengthened, as it is the cornerstone of the state's commitment to help former child captives rejoin society. Further-

more, many children who do manage to return to their homes and communities without being imprisoned still find it impossible to talk about their experience for fear of detection and reprisal by local security forces.

The need for former boy soldiers to hide their identity for reasons of personal security is especially detrimental. On the one hand, these children must rediscover and reforge their social links and identity to begin living active, productive lives. On the other hand, they find they must assume a different personal history -- sometimes even a different name and family -- in order to avoid punishment or imprisonment.

Recognizing this dilemma, DNAS and SCF initiated several training sessions with the Frelimo military and the police, encouraging them to be more humane in their responses to the boy soldiers. In 1990 and 1991, training seminars were held in Inhambane and Gaza provinces where the abuse of former child captives was discussed openly, and the procedures were established to encourage police and the military to turn such children over to local child-care groups. Since then, the situation in these two provinces has improved dramatically, and follow-up investigations indicated that after receiving adequate protection, support, assistance, and nurturing, these former boy soldiers are developing into loving and competent youth. Similar efforts are required in the other provinces. ●

*Neil Boothby is Professor of Policy Studies with the Institute of Policy Sciences and Public Affairs, Duke University, U.S.*



**CHILD SOLDIERS: THE RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN INTO ARMED FORCES AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN HOSTILITIES** is a 44 page Report of Quaker Peace and Service, London, edited by Martin Macpherson.

The document provides a summary of the current status of child soldiers in 21 countries. Seven appendices detail the various international instruments laying down standards concerning the recruitment of children into armed forces and their participation in hostilities.

The Quaker Report makes a number of recommendations:

1. Ratification by Governments of existing international instruments (the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the two Additional Protocols and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child).
2. Implementation of existing standards. The UN Commission on Human Rights should appoint a special rapporteur to monitor implementation of standards concerning the use of children in armed conflict.
3. Raising the age of recruitment into armed forces from 15 to 18 years.
4. High level study by the UN Secretary-General on the use of children in armed forces.
5. Catering for the needs of child soldiers. UN bodies such as UNHCR and UNICEF should bring together governments, NGOs and experts to improve health, education, employment and social services for re-integrating ex-child soldiers into civilian society.
6. Children fleeing recruitment into armed forces should be recognised as refugees and guaranteed protection and assistance by the international community.
7. Advisory services and technical assistance should be provided by UN bodies such as UNHCR and UNICEF.

Copies of the Report are available from:

General Secretary  
Quaker Peace and Service  
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GB-London NW1 2BJ  
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Two related 1991 reports from the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva are *Children Bearing Military Arms*, December 1991, 4 pages, 195/91 and *Children Bearing Military Arms*, January 1992, 4 pages, 196/91.

# RECRUITING INDIGENOUS RESOURCES: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE REFUGEE CHILDREN

Awareness of human resources existing within refugee communities is often lacking, and the way these resources may be capitalised upon in assistance programmes is little understood. Based on a recent study of refugee women and their families in Malawi<sup>2</sup>, Alastair Ager argues that facilitating refugees' networks of social support and thus enhancing refugees' own means of coping is key to providing for vulnerable refugee children. This he terms 'recruiting indigenous resources'.

## Child Development

Psychologists view childhood as a crucial time in the development of an individual's intellect, personality and emotional nature, and traumatic experiences during this period may have life-long consequences. Assistance to refugee children, must not, therefore, focus narrowly on their physical needs. Provision for their social and psychological needs is not an optional extra, but is fundamental to the well-being of these children, who will be tomorrow's leaders and workers.

## Risk Factors

The literature on children's social and psychological needs identifies several 'risk factors' (poor nutrition, barren educational environment, etc.) which can serve to curb or disrupt their development. These are represented in the upper part of Figure 1. Whilst most studies pertain to western cultures, what literature we have from the developing world seems to confirm the cross-cultural relevance of these factors.

When they become refugees, children may experience many of these risk factors. In our work with Mozambican refugees, most families portrayed life before the civil war as secure and stable. Subsequent circumstances prior to, during and after flight, however, placed refugee children at considerable risk

from factors ranging from poor nutrition and maternal ill health to stressful life events and family instability.

There is no clear correspondence, however, between the magnitude of risk (through stress, deprivation, etc.) and developmental outcome for children. Although the likelihood of developmental problems (e.g. emotional difficulties or learning problems) increases as one is subjected to more risks, the relationship is not necessarily linear. This is because the effect of risk factors can be mitigated by 'protective' factors.

## Protective Factors

Risk factors such as poor nutrition and poor physical environment are commonly the focus of attention for agencies wishing to assist children, because these are tangible targets for intervention. On the other hand, protective factors are less tangible, relating to qualities of the child's home environment of a typically more psychological nature. As such, they are less often the focus of agencies' concern. This is an important omission, as enhancing these protective factors may ultimately be the most effective means of supporting children's developmental progress.

Of the three protective factors identified in the lower part of Figure 1 (secure attachment, social support and parental coping style), the focus here is mainly on social support. Attachment and parental coping style may prove of equal importance, but appropriate cross-cultural studies in this area are lacking. The serial parenting commonly experienced by African children, for example, does not appear to foster the form of attachment with a consistent figure that in the West is so commonly regarded as crucial for emotional well-being in later life. Rather than placing children at greater developmental risk, however, such practices may enhance children's ability to cope in African cultural settings. Research in this area is vital if we are to understand how to foster refugee children's development.

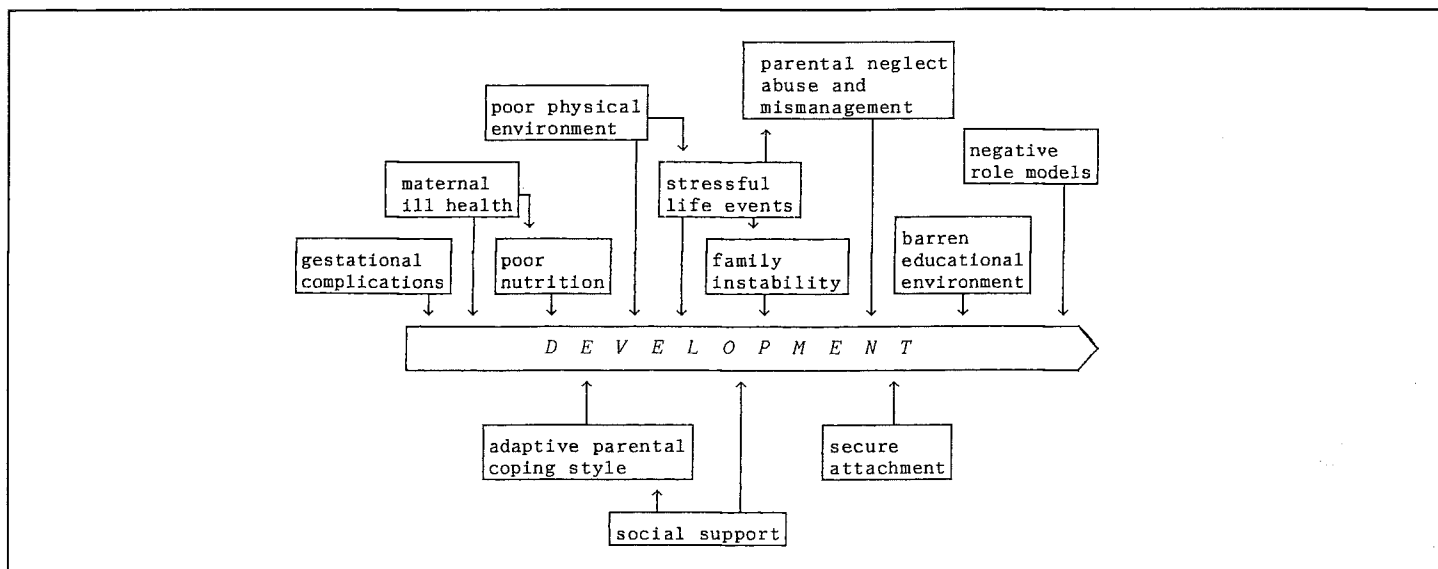
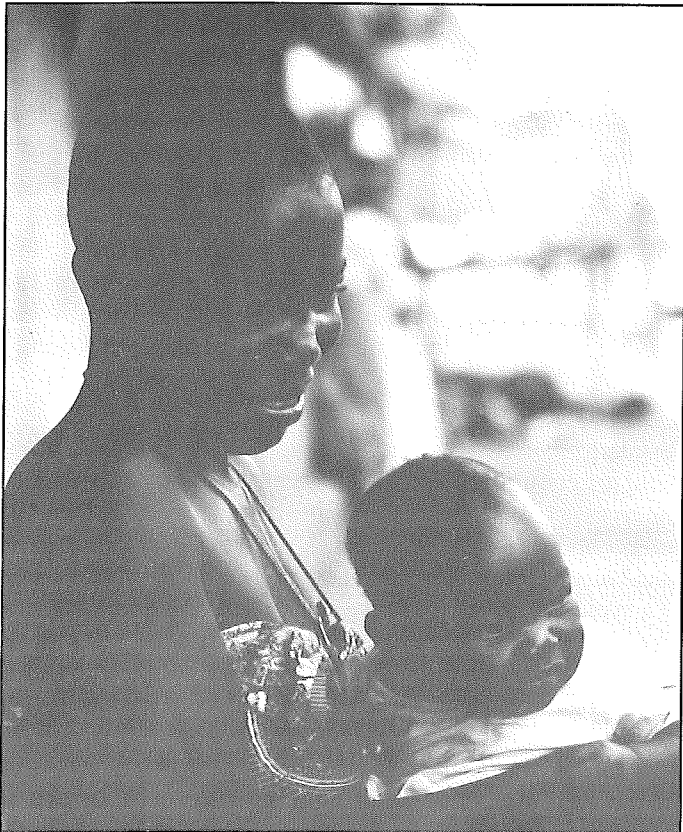


Figure 1: Schematic representation of risk factors and protective factors in the course of children's development



*Childhood is a crucial period not so much because of children's inherent vulnerability but because of its foundational nature.*

*Photo: Alastair Ager*

## Social Support

There is a body of cross-cultural research on the effects of social support on psychological adjustment and vulnerability to stress. In a study of Mozambican refugee women and children in Zambia<sup>2</sup>, for instance, a number of factors relating to social support were reported to 'protect' individuals from the consequences of trauma and distress which they had experienced. Such protective factors included:

- \* mother living with extended family
- \* supportive family or family member
- \* having friends nearby
- \* religious affiliation

Both women and children supported by one or more of these factors proved better adjusted psychologically than other individuals even if they had experienced similar traumatic events.

This suggests that promoting social support of the type listed above is an important and neglected strategy in assisting children's development. One of the reasons such a strategy may have been neglected in the past is that it is - to be honest - simpler to ignore people's existing resources or capabilities and start with a 'clean slate'. It is easiest to presume that people 'bring nothing with them'. Plans and strategies do not then have to fit in with something else, which may be difficult to define.

It is vital, though, to consider refugees' own resources for two reasons:-First, people do indeed 'bring things with them' in terms of their abilities to cope with difficulties and to support one another. Plans that are made in ignorance of such patterns will rarely be fully successful. Second, with shortage of resources nearly always a key issue, it makes little sense to turn one's back on the considerable resources that may be unlocked from within a refugee community itself.

## Implications

The following guidelines for maximising the protective influence of social support come from the foregoing theoretical analysis.

**1. Avoid disrupting existing social practices and networks.** Unthinking introduction of a programme may significantly disrupt important social practices and networks. For example, food distribution in many settings is done by men, while food is traditionally a central concern of women. Unfair distribution may be partly alleviated by closer modelling of existing practices in which women play a more prominent role in sharing out food and supporting the vulnerable.

**2. Facilitate 'reconnection' of previous networks.** Child reunification programmes are based on the principle of 'reconnecting' a social network (the family) of clear value to the developmental progress of a child. In a similar fashion, there may be value in attempting to 'reconnect' other networks disrupted by displacement such as village networks or women's groups.

**3. Promote the development of new, adaptive networks.** It is naive to believe that pre-existing networks were ideal and comprehensive in providing necessary support to all individuals. For some groups (e.g. female heads of households) there may be value in promoting novel networks which serve a clear current purpose for support and assistance.



*Social support can serve to protect individuals from the consequences of experienced trauma and distress.*

*Photo: Alastair Ager*



#### 4. Avoid imposing alien forms of administration

In refugee camps the structure of committees formed to discuss issues of concern to refugee communities is arguably often highly inappropriate. Recent research in Malawi on the means of achieving women's representation in the camp illustrates the inadequacy of the election procedure for meeting this goal. Women told us:

*\* We feel we are being neglected here...*

Over what issues?

*\* Issues we don't present because there is no woman in authority...like domestic*

*problems...when a man and woman separate or when a man behaves irresponsibly...any time you present the issue to the Chairman he says it is a domestic matter...it would be good if there was a lady to take up the issue...*

Have you heard of the election of a Camp Chairwoman?

*\* No*

What about the selection of ten women from each block to represent women?

*\* We heard that people were going around writing names...women were chosen by the Block Chairman*

Would an election have been better?

*\* Yes, that would have been a good idea.*

The selected Camp Chairwoman was later interviewed:

Who proposed you?

*\* A number of people...it was at a meeting of Block Chairmen. The original proposal came from the office to select ten women from each block, and for these to elect a Chairwoman*

What will you do?

*\* I haven't been given responsibilities yet...I expect to be given my orders from the group that thought up the idea.*

Where such relationships of dependency prevail, vital resources within refugee communities lie untapped. Recruiting these resources is a key step in fostering the development of vulnerable children within these settings - and likely promises many other benefits besides. ●

1. Ager, A., Ager, W., and Long, L. 1991. 'A Case Study of Refugee Women in Malawi'. Final project report to UNHCR. Zomba, Centre for Social Research.

2. McCallin, M. and Fozard, S. 1990. 'The Impact of Traumatic Events on the Psychological Well-Being of Mozambican Refugee Women and Children'. International Catholic Child Bureau.

*Dr Alastair Ager, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Malawi, takes up post as Professor of Management and Social Science at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh from September 1992.*

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# ASSISTING THE MOST VULNERABLE REFUGEES



*Toy trucks made by boys in Mankhokwe refugee camp, Nsanje, Malawi*

*Photo: Ken Wilson*

by Ken Wilson

**Assisting refugees requires recognising them as active both individually and as communities. It means understanding that they can, and do, work to solve their own problems and meet their own needs outside (and sometimes in spite of) relief programmes. Yet within the refugee population, it is essential to recognise that there are 'vulnerable' people unable to meet all of their needs who may benefit least from assistance programmes targeted at the 'average refugee'.**

Vulnerable categories of refugees are receiving increasing attention, especially as the targets of NGO supplementary assistance projects. This is certainly to be welcomed, and many innovative and useful programmes have been undertaken. But it brings with it the danger of people being labelled, and their problems being identified according to the label's stereotype - whether or not these correspond with people's actual problems and requirements. Assistance may further serve to isolate the target groups from wider society and other development processes. Labels may also be misapplied or may be too broad. For example, some programmes have viewed almost all social, emotional or intellectual deviance as evidence of 'traumatisation' amongst child refugees from Mozambique.

'Vulnerability' depends on the social context in which people live. It is the weakening or absence of social support systems that leads to refugee settings typically having more vulnerable people than 'normal' societies.

The nature of demands made on people causes new types of vulnerability. If there is no firewood within several kilometres of a camp, those unable to walk and carry heavy loads will become vulnerable if they cannot find means to buy. Disabled people typically try to develop income generating skills that require little mobility (e.g. tailoring), and their vulnerability often reflects the fact that they lost their equipment, or access to a market for their services.

**The method of refugee administration may itself increase vulnerability.** For example, families are commonly separated between and within camps or settlements. In addition, systems of aid distribution can require the receivers' physical presence (or even their active pushing) to obtain their entitlement. Food aid is often inadequate in terms of quantity or quality, requiring vulnerable people (who are least able to acquire supplements and often most in need of adequate nutritional intake) to find income generating activities. The health threats of crowded and poorly serviced camps may particularly affect the more marginal members of society, especially children. Systems for receiving new arrivals which entail a long delay, or require people to establish homes before registration, tend to create vulnerability as people have to depend on their own

efforts or charity in the interim. Finally, in some programmes people have been enabled or even encouraged to 'dump' vulnerable members of their families onto the assistance agencies.

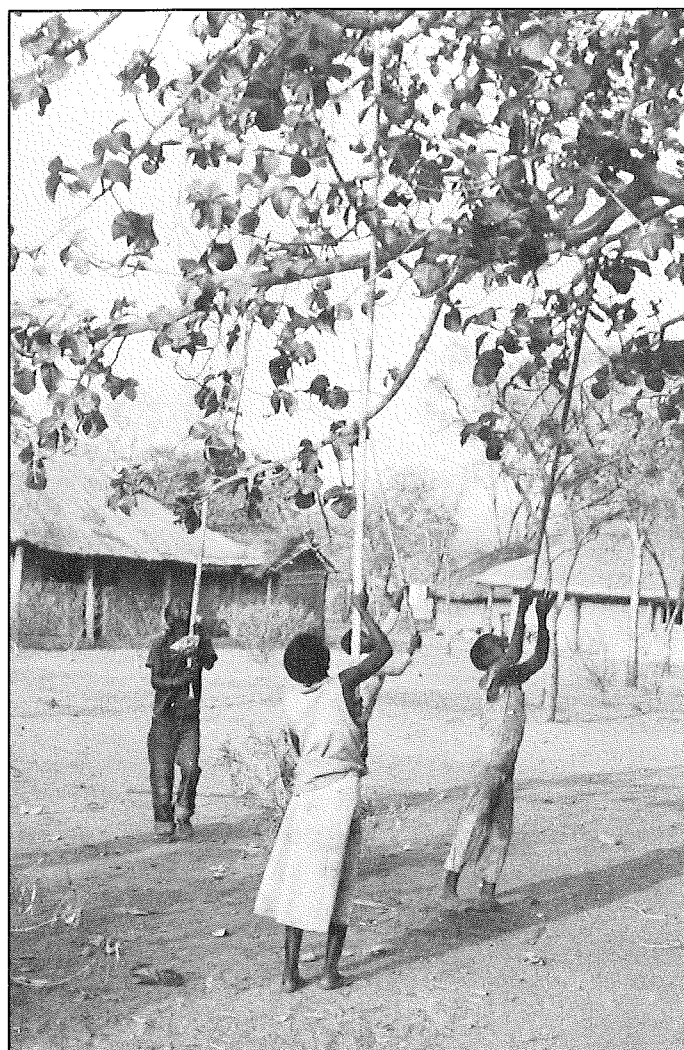
**Addressing 'vulnerability' requires an element of 'social engineering'.** Designing programmes for vulnerable people explicitly or implicitly seeks to target the issues that aiders believe the refugee community itself is inadequately addressing. They need to find the people whose problems or needs are inadequately met, or who are even actively mistreated. After all, nearly all societies have attitudes that severely disable people with such handicaps as speech impediments or blindness. Children suffering from 'traumatisation' may be thought to need extra discipline (even corporal punishment). Public education, affirmative action, support groups, etc. have proved useful in many societies and are needed in refugee populations too. When outsiders assist vulnerables, however, they inevitably challenge the existing social-moral order: throughout history, the one who recognises and meets the need of the 'deserving poor' has been central to the legitimacy of power and authority. Programmes for the vulnerable, especially women, can challenge community processes and refugee leadership, leading to dramatic failures on occasion.

The merits of targetting relief to a particular sub-section of a population depend on the extent of the differential in need compared with the expense of determining who exactly is in what kind of special need and setting up reliable systems to distribute to these particular people. There is clearly a trade-off between providing everyone with the same product or package (cheap but not necessarily precisely what each requires), and giving people more exactly what they need (costly because this need has to be determined and a variety of goods have to be procured for distribution). One strategy in response to this dilemma is to provide people with money with which they can meet their own needs according to their own priorities, but this requires even more secure distribution systems than other aid. There is also a trade-off between allocating resources to hand-outs and spending them on 'social work' such as counselling, awareness-raising programmes for officials and staff, general facilities, refugee training programmes, etc. Decisions about what the trade-offs are in any given circumstance could be better made if there was more in-depth research on the actual constraints on vulnerable peoples' welfare in refugee situations.

Programmes for vulnerables are too often divorced from wider assistance programmes. For example, vulnerable people often need special help partly because nobody has ensured that they receive their basic ration entitlement. It has even been said that general programmes have consciously excluded vulnerable people, believing that they are now being covered by a special agency.

**One method of addressing these issues, which has been inadequately explored, is that of working through really grass-roots indigenous welfare networks and institutions.** These tend to flourish in refugee populations, and are often named by vulnerable people as their chief means of support. We need to find out why they are effective (and why they are sometimes ineffective). Such organisations could provide information on precisely who the vulnerable people are in any situation, the nature of their needs, a channel to reliably reach them, and the framework for their assistance as fully social beings. The constraints on such organisations also need to be considered, for example they are often part of religious or political organisations and therefore only reach certain people and sometimes have a wider agenda. In addition, they may themselves ensnare recipients in positions of social inferiority.●

*Ken Wilson, Research Officer, R.S.P.*



*Children picking figs, Ukwimi refugee camp, Zambia*

*Photo: Ken Wilson*

## UNHCR GUIDELINES ON REFUGEE CHILDREN

At the 42nd session of the UNHCR Executive Committee (Geneva, 7 to 11 October 1991), the High Commissioner, Madame Ogata, established a new UNHCR post of Coordinator for Refugee Children, an important step toward implementing the guidelines on refugee children which were drawn up in 1988. The guidelines include the following:

- \* **Needs assessment.** Effective protection and assistance to refugee children requires an early needs assessment, preferably involving individual interviews. The opinion of a child on his/her own needs should be obtained and given weight in keeping with the child's maturity of judgement. Responses should be culturally appropriate, and the refugee community should be actively involved.
- \* **Additional resources.** Refugee communities themselves should be considered as a major resource for meeting the needs of refugee children. Field Offices should also identify local child welfare services and actively seek financial and technical inputs from governments, NGOs, specialised agencies within the United Nations system and other international organisations.
- \* **Camp Location.** Camps should be located to ensure the safety of children and prevent them becoming victims of military and armed attacks and forced recruitment.
- \* **Housing arrangements can improve physical security.** For example, unaccompanied young women and families headed by women, can be more secure if provisions are made for special group living arrangements or for accommodation of children with foster parents. In order to solve this problem, an initiative has been taken in one camp to develop a 'crisis room' which is available on a 24 hour basis for emergencies.
- \* **Law & Order.** If there is a link between violation of refugee children's physical security and crime, alcohol or drug abuse, the adoption of existing national regulations should be promoted concerning the maintenance of law and order.
- \* **Incidents of forced recruitment into armed forces (state or insurgent) should be reported and documented.** Voluntary participation in armed attacks, support functions such as carrying ammunition and acting as scouts are as unacceptable to UNHCR as more direct functions. Since, invariably, corrective action to protect refugee children from such activities is difficult to achieve and may, therefore, call for public condemnation of the office, factual reports substantiated with as much proof as possible must be provided. In instances where recruitment is carried out by people other than national authorities, strengthened police and military protection should be requested as a matter of course.
- \* **Abuse.** Evidence of torture, physical and sexual assault, abduction and similar violations of the safety and liberty of refugee children calls for action against offenders. Incidents should be promptly reported in full detail to HQ to enable it to intervene as appropriate.

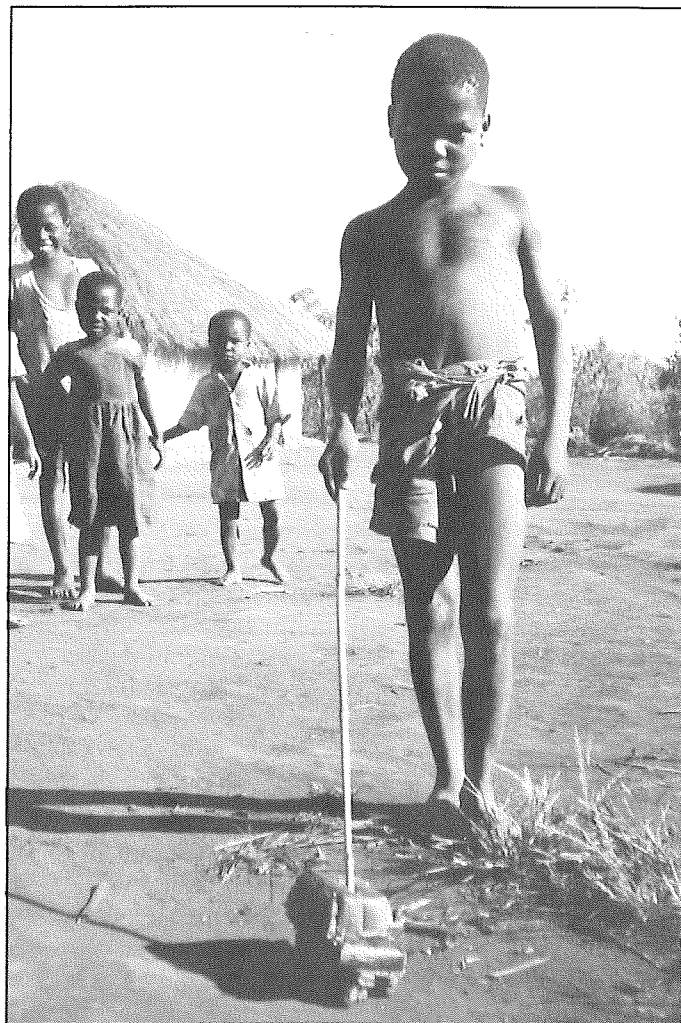
**REFUGEE CHILDREN IN MALAWI: A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNHCR GUIDELINES ON REFUGEE CHILDREN (1991), Tolfree, D. International Save the Children Alliance and the UNHCR, London, 145 pages.**

In response to the compelling evidence of both the numbers and plight of child refugees globally, UNHCR published the Refugee Children's Guidelines in 1988. They are intended to highlight the many issues and problems affecting refugee children, to focus on their special vulnerabilities and set standards for policy and practice.

David Tolfree's report is the result of both fieldwork and consultation with interested parties, and its aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of the UNHCR guidelines, as implemented for Mozambican refugee children in Malawi. The report does not attempt to analyse the Malawi programme in detail, but rather to examine the major issues associated with planning and use of the Guidelines.

One very important strength of the document is its extremely comprehensive scope. Unlike so many other sources on refugee children, which tend to focus on a particular population or a particular issue, it assesses not only the multiple needs of, and responses to, the general population of refugee children, but also the special requirements of those who are unaccompanied, orphaned, disabled or traumatised by war. Because of their specialist technical nature, separate reports were prepared for physical health and nutrition. Meanwhile, Tolfree describes a variety of social services (such as counselling and pre-school play facilities), the education, recreation and documentation, tracing, foster and reunification programmes, the innovative 'consolacao' programme for children involved in violence and a range of rehabilitative interventions for physically disabled children.

The evaluation revealed a number of clear shortcomings with the Guidelines, and the report makes some important recommendations in this regard. Perhaps the most significant finding was that the guidelines are neither widely disseminated at the field level, nor especially effective as an operational tool. One suggestion among many is that a single publication should be prepared, aimed at bringing greater understanding of children's issues into the mainstream of practice, whilst also offering more detailed operational guidance. A particular priority is to set clearer operational standards in relation to social, cultural and recreational needs and to establish some initial principles concerning war-traumatised children. Another is to ensure that children's needs are not treated as an afterthought in emergencies and that greater attention be paid to the quality of life for refugee children and not just their survival.



*Muloza/Mulanje refugee camp, Malawi Photo: Ken Wilson*

The report is a very effective practitioner's document, full of insights about the particular situation in Malawi and of observations which have implications for policy and programming for refugee children throughout the world. It also reflects well the broad participative process which guides the Malawi programme. Overall, it challenges practitioners working with refugee children on many fronts: to be more responsive to perceived need, to be more reflective and sensitive and, at the same time, less absorbed by crisis management.

Jo Boyden

## PSYCHO-SOCIAL ISSUES IN COMMUNITY WORK: A PRACTITIONERS' NETWORK

The idea of a practitioners' support network arose at a seminar on 'The Mental Health of Refugee Children Exposed to Violent Environments', organised by RSP from January 6-10, 1992.

One of the most important concerns of the participants was the theme of community-participative programmes and the gap which exists between academics and field-workers. Many of the themes discussed focused on building programmes adjusted to specific communities within specific cultures; ways of ensuring the participation of the community itself in both the design and the realisation of the programme; the training of non-professionals; the design and conduct of research adjusted to the needs of field-workers; and how to manage with a limited budget, as in most developing countries.

During the course of the seminar, nearly twenty participants interested in these issues met to express their feelings of isolation and frustration at their inability to share common concerns and benefit from contact with those having similar interests in other countries. Similar concerns have been raised by African, Latin-American and European professionals during the 3rd World Family Therapy Congress, which was held in Jyväskylä, Finland from 2-6 June 1991. We therefore decided to create a support network to facilitate communication and enrich work by sharing experiences amongst ourselves. Future issues of RPN will provide regular space for the psycho-social issues network.

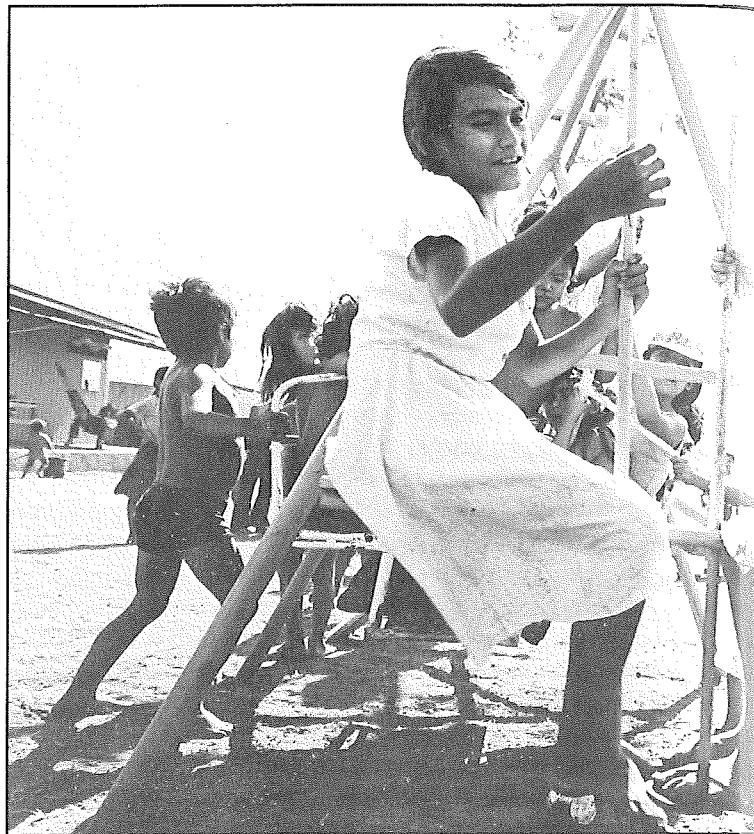
### **Preliminary objectives of the Network:**

- \* To compile a directory of persons interested in community-participative work and psycho-social issues.
- \* To identify resource persons who are willing to contribute ideas on the basis of their work.
- \* To locate and circulate, through the *Refugee Participation Network*, existing and available materials, and bibliographies of projects world-wide.
- \* To create a forum for mutual support on both a theoretical and practical level.
- \* To share problems encountered in the field as well as the solutions devised, especially in relation to the creation of culture-specific projects.
- \* To raise colleagues' awareness about the relevance of a community-participative approach when dealing with the psycho-social crises of families in difficult circumstances.

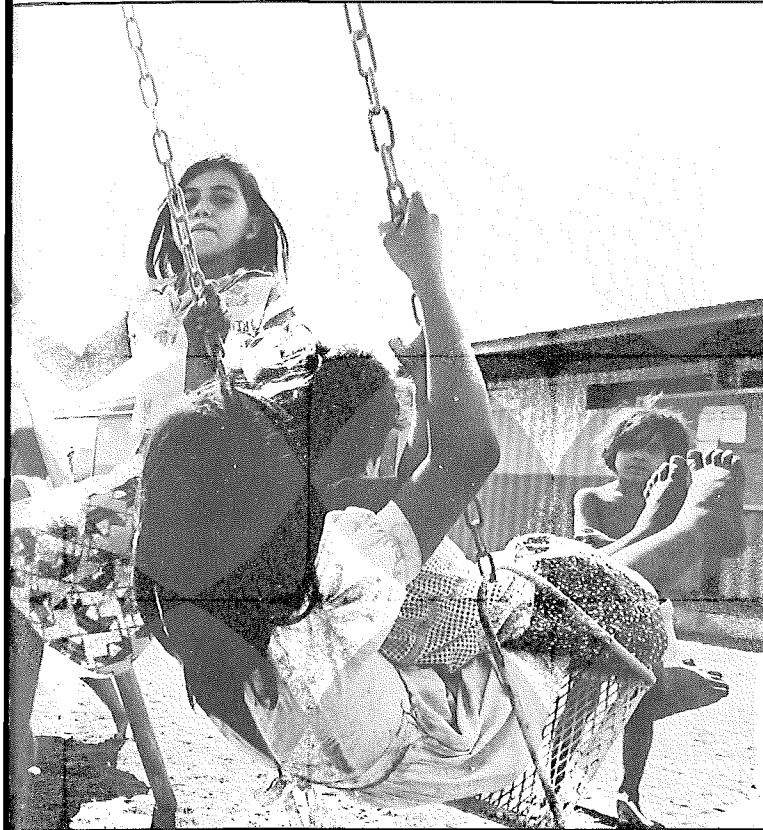
If you wish to join the Practitioners' Network, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return to:

Ancil Adrian-Paul, Secretary to Practitioners' Network for Psycho-social Issues in Community Work,  
c/o The Refugee Studies Programme,  
Queen Elizabeth House,  
21 St. Giles,  
Oxford, OX1 3LA  
U.K.

Tel: +44-865 270722 Fax: +44-865 270721



*A mental health care programme in Nicaragua furthers the*



*autonomy and creativity of orphaned and displaced children  
Photo: Mike Goldwater/OXFAM*

## HELPING FAMILIES TO COPE WITH WAR AND CIVILIAN DIFFICULTIES IN NICARAGUA

**Jean-Claude Metraux**

In 1987, Nicaragua had been exhausted by ten years of war. Fifteen thousand children lost one or both of their parents and hundreds of thousands of people were displaced. There was only one psychiatrist for every one thousand inhabitants. Since then, Nicaragua has developed a mental health care programme which helps families cope with war and civilian difficulties. The programme involves training non-professionals in both preventive work and primary care. At the end of their training, non-professionals should be able to attend to families (children, parents, grandparents and other relatives) who are experiencing life crises in their own communities.

Initially, the programme responded to a demand for training of non-professionals (mostly volunteers) who worked with child war orphans and families of killed combatants. The role of these non-professionals was, however, progressively extended to situations not directly connected to the war. The

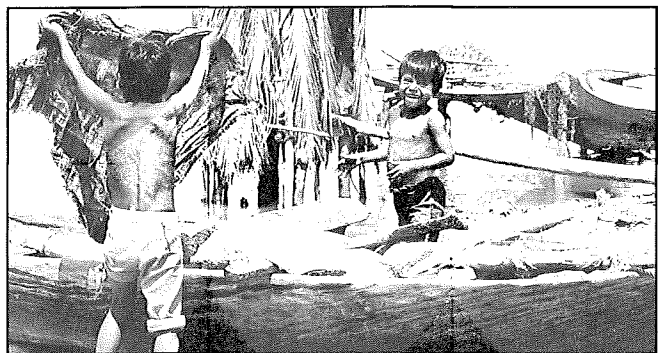
training expanded likewise to cover other crisis situations linked to the family life cycle coupled with dramatic changes in family structure.

The programme's structure is crucial to its success. The national level training team are psychologists and psychiatrists (initially these were expatriates but now are predominantly Nicaraguan). They teach the second level which comprises local professionals. These in turn train the non-professionals. On a fourth level are the families with whom the latter are working. The project has now spread to cover five administrative regions (approximately half of the national territory). With the help of local professionals from the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, fifty Nicaraguan psychologists and social workers can train nearly seven hundred non-professionals.

Basic principles guiding this successful programme are as follows:

1. The emphasis is on health and prevention.
2. Beneficiaries at the community level must also contribute to the programme's definition.
3. The aim is to further the autonomy and creativity of all those involved (parents, children, local communities and local professionals).
4. The structure of the programme at all levels must allow for maximum flexibility and autonomy.
5. Both the local professionals and the non-professionals must work out their own personal experiences with a family.
6. General guidelines and training techniques must be adjusted to specific social, cultural and historical contexts.●

*Jean-Claude Metraux is with the Centre d'Etude de la Famille, Hopital de Cery, 1008 Prilly, Switzerland.*



*Children in Nicaragua*

*Photo: Michael Barrett/OXFAM*

# ANOREXIA NERVOSA OR AN ETHIOPIAN COPING STYLE? DIAGNOSTICS AND TREATMENT OF AN EATING DISORDER AMONG ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANT JEWS

by Gadi Ben-Ezer

Approximately 16,000 Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia arrived in Israel between 1977 and 1985. Most of them came during 'Operation Moses' towards the end of 1984 and the beginning of 1985. With the termination of the Operation, an estimated 15,000 were cut off at various stages of their journey back towards Israel. By 1990, there were more than 1,500 Ethiopian children in Israel whose parents were among those left behind. Some are orphans but the large majority have parents still in Ethiopia.

There are altogether 6,000 Ethiopian children and youth who immigrated to Israel. Ninety percent of those between the ages of eleven and eighteen are in Youth Aliya frameworks. About 3,500 children are living in communities in Israel, most of them attending elementary schools. An additional 1,000 young people between the ages of eighteen to twenty-eight, who are students in

universities and vocational courses, or have been drafted into the Israeli army, must support brothers and sisters who are younger. They have to be substitute parents for their younger siblings despite their own difficult financial circumstances and personal distress. The condition of the children, then, has influenced the entire Ethiopian community and has affected their adjustment to Israel.

## The Emotional Condition of the Ethiopian Children

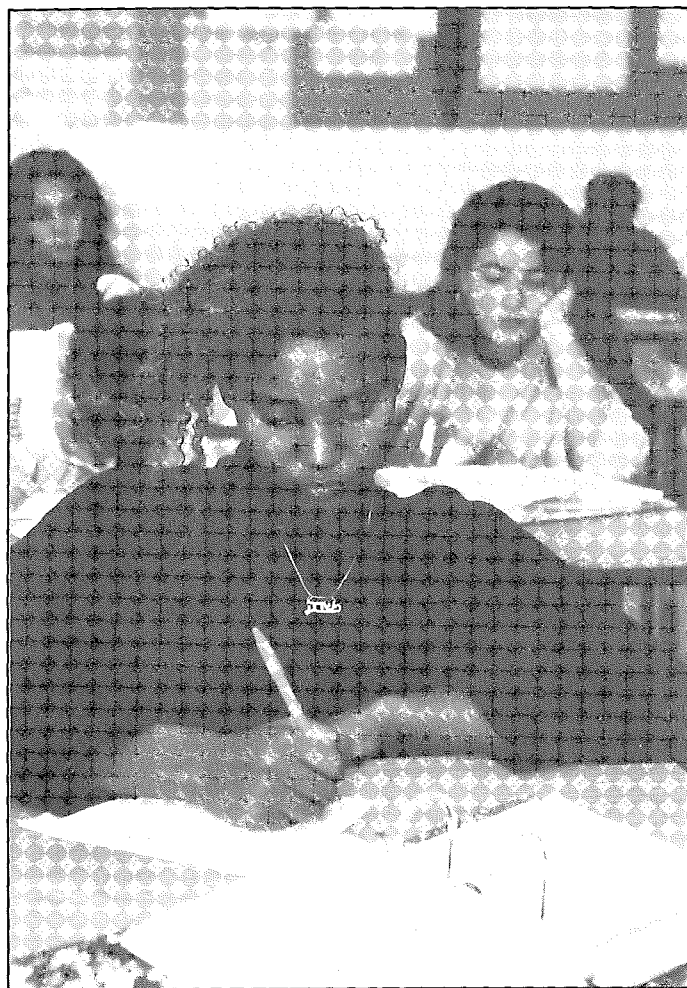
Four years have passed since 'Operation Moses'. As each month passes, the condition of the children worsens. Their patience has been stretched more than they can bear and they are on the verge of explosion and despair. They no longer know where to direct their distress and their unhappiness.

The letters from Ethiopia completely unbalance them. A father who is stranded in a village near Gondar believes that in economic terms Israel is like 'America'. He writes to his son to save him and his sisters. 'Help us,' writes the father. 'We are in danger.' The son does not know what to do. He is twelve. He is living in a boarding school. He stops eating.

*Thirteen year old Sarah feels guilty that she was saved and has arrived in Israel. She stops concentrating on her studies, and stops eating.*

Other children get no letters. They are also worried. Sarah, for instance, is a girl of thirteen who left her mother and sisters in Ethiopia and does not know their situation. The persecution at the hands of the Ethiopian authorities, the distraught mother boarding with relatives, and lately, the news of a terrible famine about to follow the latest drought, all constantly worry Sarah. She feels guilty that she was saved and arrived in Israel. She stops concentrating on her studies, and stops eating.

In order to illustrate his distress, an Ethiopian teenager referred to me because he had stopped eating, told me the following story in our first session: 'A monkey fell from a tree and rolled into a thorn bush. An old man passing on the road saw him and asked him how he could help. The monkey said "Take my thorns out." But the old man did not have time and he said he could take out only one thorn, the one that hurt the most. "Which one is that?" he asked. The monkey pointed to his behind.' The teenager asked me, 'Can you take that thorn out for me?' What he meant was, 'You cannot bring my family from Ethiopia, so how can you help me?'



This unaccompanied Ethiopian immigrant lives in an Israeli boarding school  
Photo: Gadi Ben-Ezer





*Ethiopian students in Israel*

*Photo: Gadi Ben-Ezer*

Although one cannot bring his family immediately, one can still help by trying to understand his condition. Let me share with you my understanding of 'eating arrests', a phenomenon found quite frequently among Ethiopian immigrants in Israel, among children and adults, and females as well as males.

### **The Ethiopian Abdomen and the Concept of Coping**

There is an Ethiopian proverb: 'The abdomen is wider than the world' (in Amharic, 'Hode Ke-ager Yisafal Laschalow Sow Ema'). Feelings are lodged not in the heart, but in the stomach. Ethiopian children are socialised to internalise their feelings, particularly those of sadness, anger, hatred and stress, and to keep them in their abdomens until they fill up.

The abdomen, then, is a 'container' of the emotions. The Ethiopian cultural code cherishes and dictates emotional restraint. This code refers particularly to containing or restraining 'negative' social reactions and mental pain. Thus, trauma, personal misfortunes, and social conflicts are all supposed to be 'kept and covered' in the abdomen, which is believed to have the capacity to store all feelings and any effects of painful events. In addition, feelings are believed to be 'stored' as layers in the Ethiopian abdomen, one on top of the other. The top layer is believed to be the one experienced in the present.

Thus, the Ethiopian coping style is different from the 'western' coping style. Ethiopians do not cope by 'talking it out', as Westerners usually do, in accordance with the

Greek cathartic tradition. Rather, Ethiopians try to contain their feelings, and practice 'active forgetting' - an active trial to distract themselves from the problem. This is usually done by the person trying to place layers of joy and happiness on top of the sadness and pain they presently experience. By so doing they try to replace the emotional layer which is the top layer in the abdomen - hence presently experienced - by a different one.

One may hear Ethiopian elders, in paying condolences to a mourner say to him or her 'Let your abdomen be wide enough to absorb and contain all the pain you are experiencing now' ('Hode Sefi Yehun,' or 'Hode Sefi Yarjech') or 'Do not think too much about it and you shall forget'.

*...feelings are believed to be 'stored' as layers in the Ethiopian abdomen, one on top of the other.*

This ties in with another cherished value in Ethiopian society, that is, the value of patience. Ethiopian society advocates patience almost as a way of life - the correct way of meeting the world, a right state of mind. Yet, it is even more than that: patience is conceived as a real coping mechanism, a fact that is expressed in the many proverbs dedicated to the subject: 'Slowly-slowly (but with patience) the egg will walk on its own feet', that is, turn into a chicken. ('Kas Bekas Enkula Beegru Yehedal') Hence one has to be patient and bear with the development of events in their due time. Also: 'The abdomen is wider than the world, for the one who has the needed patience.'

Complementary to the concept of patience as a coping mechanism is that of the periodicity of miseries, which can otherwise be conceived as the 'wheel of misfortunes'. Ethiopians believe in the periodic recurrence of miseries and harmful events in a kind of cyclic oscillation, throughout a person's course of life, but even more so between individuals in society. Elders may tell sufferers in a stressful situation: 'Today is your turn to suffer, tomorrow will be mine; the day after - someone else's turn'.

When a person does not succeed in coping with his misfortunes and troubles, people may say that their 'abdomen is full,' meaning filled up with trouble. In Ethiopian culture a person with a full abdomen is a centre of concern. The person barely copes, and is bound to react in one irregular or pathological way or another. In other words, a 'full abdomen' is conceived as a **pathogenic condition** in Ethiopian culture. The person might 'burst' at work, or 'explode' within the family setting or react in some anti-social way. In many cases the person might develop some pathological condition. One such condition is 'eating arrest'.

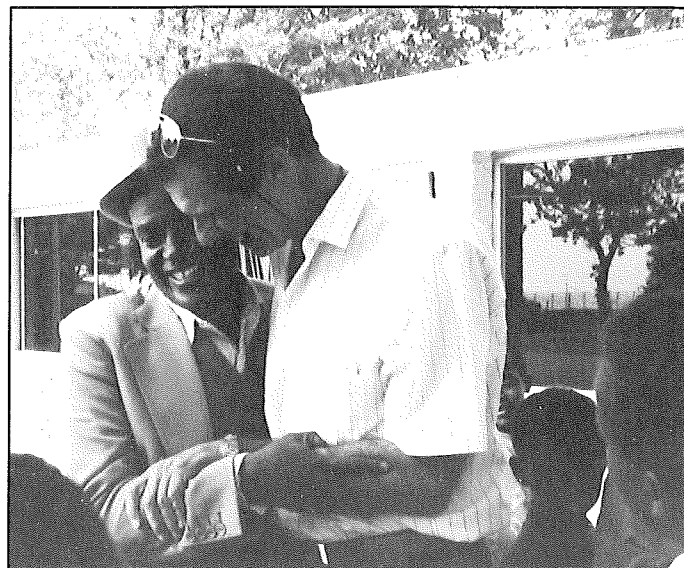
### Phenomenology of Eating Arrest

One will suspect from the term 'eating arrest' that we are talking about people who stop eating. What most professionals and others do not know, is that the person experiences and conceptualises the problem as a **physical problem**; for example, as some difficulty in swallowing. Sometimes the person may also complain of nausea and a vomiting reaction. The phenomenon proceeds over an extended period of time, sometimes months or even years.

Another point is that the disturbance oscillates between short periods of total eating arrest, which requires sometimes that the person lie down for days because of weakness, and longer periods of partial eating arrest, when the person eats very little. As in anorexia nervosa cases, the condition progresses to a point where it endangers the person's life, due to the severe loss of weight, and the person has to be hospitalised. I would like to add that in female cases of eating arrest there is, like in anorexia nervosa, a cessation of menstruation (secondary amenorrhoea) that points to a disordered physiology accompanying the acute loss of weight.

### Differential Diagnosis of Eating Arrest from Anorexia Nervosa

A full discussion of anorexia nervosa is beyond the scope of our present study. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III (DSM III, revised version), anorexia nervosa is first and foremost a weight phobia: 'an intense fear of becoming obese which does not diminish with the loss of weight'. This already hints at another diagnostic criterion, 'the disturbance of body image'. Other criteria refer to the fact that the disorder appears to be a disturbance of adolescence (and some younger adults) and that it is



*Author keeps his promise to reunite with Ethiopian refugees on their first day in Israel*

almost exclusively a disorder among adolescent females. These criteria have led many researchers to conclude that anorexia is very much a disturbance tied up with western culture and western values surrounding obesity and slimming.

The Ethiopian disorder of 'eating arrest' lacks all the essential criteria which characterise anorexia nervosa. Among Ethiopians, there is no weight phobia in 'eating arrest'. Ethiopians who stop eating are not concerned with obesity at all. There is no obsession surrounding body image. There is no wish for slimming among Ethiopians who suffer from eating arrest. On the contrary, there is usually a concern about their deteriorating weight and the effects it might cause to their general health. In Israel, the Ethiopians sometimes relate an explanation of some 'Sudanese disease', unknown to Israeli doctors; all physical tests end with no significance. Lastly, we should not fail to mention that, in contrast to the western disorder of anorexia nervosa, the Ethiopian disorder is not limited to adolescence and appears in males as well as in females.

Thus, the Ethiopian disorder should be differentiated from anorexia nervosa and termed an 'eating arrest disorder' that centres around the inability to eat due to an abdomen filled up with the misfortunes of life. This, of course, may lead to an altogether different prognosis and treatment procedure. Eating arrests should also be differentiated from voluntary fasting. Fasting is commonly practiced by Ethiopian Jews, and is voluntary in connection with religious dates. Eating arrest, on the other hand, is involuntary and unconscious. There is no intent to fast or starve to death and there is no awareness that the eating arrest might lead to starvation. Eating arrests should also be distinguished from depression. Although it comes nearest to the DSM diagnosis of dysthymia (depression neurosis), the quality of the symptom, its extremity, and the fact that it endangers the person's life, differentiate the two in a major way.

Treatment of eating arrests, beside cultural adaptations, could be done in a similar way to what is done in classical psychodynamic therapy. It then aims at helping the patient gain insight into the connection between his or her symptoms, and the psychological factors presumably at the base of the symptoms. In my experience (36 cases researched, either in therapy with me or as a consultant to psychiatrists or psychologists), as soon as the patients recognise this connection, and work through the emotional factors, they gain control over the symptom and find other ways of expressing the pain or coping with the troubles and misfortunes of life.

### Conclusion

The Ethiopian eating disorder can be connected to the social context in which it was studied, that of Ethiopian Jews in Israeli society. These troubles are connected to the state of Ethiopians as immigrants in Israel, and even more to the separation from their stranded families in Ethiopia. Besides the survivor guilt it arouses, this situation inflicts a hurt upon the individual wholeness or 'oneness' that serves as a basis for stress and vulnerability to all other problems of immigration specifically related to Ethiopian immigrant Jews in Israel. These problems include significant loss in self-esteem, partly because of differences in skin colour, and the various stereotypes aroused in Israeli society, all of which fill up the Ethiopian abdomen, resulting in eating arrests.

There is a limit to what a therapist can do about this. One can try to alleviate some of the pain, to take some of the 'thorns' out. One may even develop some therapeutic techniques derived from Ethiopian culture, as I did. Nevertheless we have to recognise that the most painful 'thorn' in this respect, is beyond the limit of therapeutic endeavour, or, as another Ethiopian immigrant once said while negotiating a therapeutic contract with me: 'The sky falls down, and what you offer me is to avoid the mess by supporting the roof of my house?!'

Hence, I recognise the fact that it is no less and maybe even more important to take preventive measures in relation to at least some of the stresses of the Ethiopian population in Israel. These measures can be attained by efforts dedicated to the re-unification of families and by more respect, tolerance, and maybe even sympathy from Israeli society towards its new Ethiopian immigrant members.

### Post Script

On May 1991 most of the families were re-united in a one-day air-lift, in which 14,500 Ethiopian Jews were brought from Addis-Ababa to Israel. This was possible due to the downfall of Mengistu's regime. Still, there were about 3,000 Ethiopian Jews left in Addis Ababa and an estimated 12,500 so called 'Christianised Jews' in Ethiopia. All these have relatives of first degree (parents, children) in Israel. One does not yet know, how many of the children are still separated from their families and what will be the effect of the new situation on the mental health and coping ability of Ethiopian Jews in Israel. ●

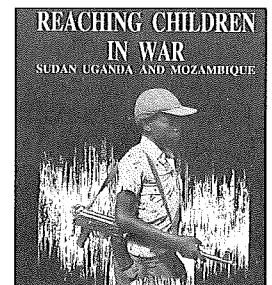
*This article first appeared in Mind and Human Interaction 2(2), October 1990, University of Virginia, U.S.A. The author, Dr. Ben-Ezer, is a clinical psychologist affiliated with Youth Aliya Psychological Services in Jerusalem and is a lecturer at Ben Gurion University of the Negev. He is currently a visiting research fellow at RSP. Requests for reprints should be directed to Gadi Ben-Ezer, Dept. of Behavioral Sciences, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, PO Box 653, Beer Sheva 84105, ISRAEL*

## BOOKS ON REFUGEE CHILDREN

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**REACHING CHILDREN IN WAR: SUDAN, UGANDA AND MOZAMBIQUE** (1991), Dodge, C. and Ranudalen, M. (eds), Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, P.O. Box 1703, S-751 47, Uppsala, Sweden. 146 pages, \$11.95.

This collection of articles draws on research and experience in Sudan, Uganda and Mozambique and describes how child victims of violence can be helped during and after war. The book is not directed to specialist academics, rather it aims to encourage international and non-governmental organisations, African governments and the public that more can be done. It contains a wealth of experience and insight from field investigation and personal experience that deserves to be shared.



While describing the terrible experiences that children often encounter, including perpetrating acts of violence themselves, the authors also recognise that children often have the capacity to understand and handle their experiences. The children described in this book may be 'traumatised' victims, but they are also very much alive and full of vision and initiative: the book brims over with the capacity of the children to make good their lives with the minimum of assistance and understanding. The use of insets for case studies is also effective in helping us know them as people.

The nine chapters cover topics such as: the social disruption caused by war and its implications for children; children's war experiences; studies of street boys in Sudan and Mozambique; child soldiers of Uganda and Mozambique, and psychological problems suffered by the internally displaced. The discussions include much common sense about how to provide assistance.

Uganda and Sudan demonstrate the extent to which international agencies such as UNICEF are now able to negotiate the provision of aid to children across the war lines, and put issues of national security, at least briefly, in second place. However, it is difficult to say how much the children actually gain from such programmes. The potential benefits of having armies recognise the humanity of the civilians on the 'other side' might be even greater.

Other forces that shape children's experiences in countries collapsing through war are also recognised. For example, the interaction between 'push and pull' factors that bring children from a desolated countryside into towns and onto the streets are discussed. Attention is drawn to the fact that the street children of most African cities are almost all boys, and the authors attribute this to a tendency for girls to be passed on to relatives or to become servants. Recently, a Catholic priest in a northern Mozambican city told us that aid agencies frequently err in their assistance programmes for 'street children' because they fail to understand their complex social background. He even cited a case where angry relatives and friends gathered within minutes of a street child being knocked down by a vehicle! It seems that the cultural context provides boys with the 'opportunity' of taking to the streets at the same time as perhaps requiring this of them, deeming girls more valuable in the domestic sphere. Furthermore, in northern Mozambique at least, girls tend to marry in their early teens.

In conclusion, this book is an important resource for those concerned with meeting children's needs in war torn regions.

Florence Shumba and Ken Wilson

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**UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN IN EUROPE: EXPERIENCE WITH PROTECTION, PLACEMENT AND EDUCATION (1990)** ed. Helga Jockenhovel-Schiecke, based on the Work of the European Standing Committee on Unaccompanied Refugee Children 1984-1990, International Social Service, German Branch, Am Stockborn 5-7, 6000 Frankfurt/M. 50, Germany. 248 pages.

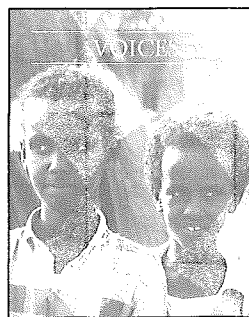
The collection of papers brought together in this book arise from the ongoing work of the 'Standing Committee on Unaccompanied Refugee Children' since it was formed in 1984. The Committee aims to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experience, and to develop cooperation at the European level, and was initiated by practitioners attending a seminar organised by International Social Service (German Branch) in cooperation with the European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles.

The first section of the book provides an overview of the situation of unaccompanied refugee children in western European countries and details the recommendations of the Standing Committee. This is followed by a series of essays on protection issues. Three essays on placement solutions cover experiences of working with refugees in group homes, and outline criteria for the choice, preparation and supervision of foster parents. A group of essays on education and training pay particular attention to the situation of refugee girls: the discrimination they commonly face, and socialisation in their country of origin. Also included are educational issues such as mother tongue teaching, and balancing two cultures in exile. A section on psychosocial problems and means of support covers experience from the Trousseau Hospital in Paris and OASIS in Copenhagen, together with an essay on the therapeutic value of solidarity, hope, and community action for child victims of political violence. The final section is a compilation of country reports on Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Greece.

The collection is practically oriented, often including guidelines or recommendations for practice in the diverse fields covered. However, the importance of the specific experience of particular groups or categories is not lost, thanks to the detail presented in specific case studies. In short, this multi-disciplinary collection of essays is of value to practitioners working with refugee children throughout Europe.

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**VOICES: FROM ERITREA, SOMALIA AND KURDISTAN**, November 1992, Rachel Warner (ed), (Education Officer, MRG). Tigrinya/Somali/Kurdish/English. Set of 3 booklets, each 32 pages. Price £7.95 + 20% postage or £2.95 each. Order from Minority Rights Group, 379 Brixton Road, London SW9 7DE.

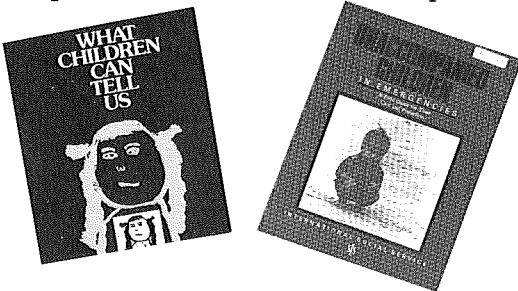


Voices is a dual language collection of autobiographical writing in three volumes by Eritrean, Somali and Kurdish secondary school students in London schools. The series raises issues of human rights and what it is like to be a refugee. The students write about memories of home, experiences with discrimination and oppression, the journey to Britain, and their perspectives on language, culture, religion and school. Voices is a valuable teaching resource for the cross-curricular themes of citizenship and for ESL teachers, community language teachers and adult education tutors. They are fully illustrated with photographs and drawings.

# NUTRITION

**WHAT CHILDREN CAN TELL US: ELICITING, INTERPRETING AND EVALUATING INFORMATION FROM CHILDREN** by J. Gabarino, F. Scott and Faculty of the Erikson Institute, 1990, Jossey-Bass Inc., Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0BW. 373 pages.

In the context of the many factors affecting the treatment and welfare of children, this book discusses means of obtaining and evaluating information from children in a variety of settings. In its first part, the book covers topics such as developmental factors affecting children's communication and considers self-esteem and coping, cognitive and language development. The second part discusses eliciting information from children with particular attention given to culturally sensitive inquiry, adult biases and expectations about communication, and observing children's behaviour. The third part considers communication in special settings.



**UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES: A FIELD GUIDE FOR THEIR CARE AND PROTECTION**, by J. Williamson and A. Moser, International Social Service, 32 Quai du Seujet, 1201 Geneva, Switzerland. 104 pages.

This practical guide is intended as a tool for those working in emergencies. It aims to provide a framework for the care and protection of refugee children. Topics discussed include the principles of child welfare, legal considerations, and trauma. The second part of the guide addresses the practical problems faced in an emergency and looks at ways to deal with them. It covers issues such as preparing for emergency child care, preventing separation, locating, registering and interviewing unaccompanied children, emergency and interim care, tracing families and long term planning.

**CHILDREN WORLDWIDE** is the international review of the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB). Published three times a year, it is available in French and English. Vol 17, No. 2. 1990 contains a series of articles on refugee children including: community-based approaches to refugee mental health needs, ICCB research in Zambia, a school-based mental health programme in Central America, children in the Thai camps and details of an ICCB project on documentation of refugee children.

The magazine is available from ICCB, 65 Rue Lausanne, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland for an annual subscription of US\$10.

## VITAMIN A DEFICIENCY AND THE EYE

Vitamin A deficiency is a serious public health problem. Indeed, each year some 250,000 children are irreversibly blinded due to the effects on the eye of vitamin A shortage (xerophthalmia). Another 250,000 children are left with lesser degrees of permanent impairment of vision due to corneal damage. Up to 75% of blinded children die within a few months of the blinding episode, depending on their nutritional status, available care and associated infections. In addition, some five million children have non-corneal xerophthalmia each year. There is growing evidence that even subclinical deficiency increases infection and mortality rates.

Refugees are especially vulnerable because their communities often have a high incidence of childhood protein-energy malnutrition, infectious diseases, and pre-existing marginal vitamin A status. This is reinforced as refugee rations usually contain either insufficient vitamin A or none at all. Outbreaks of xerophthalmia have been reported in several recent refugee situations, most notably in Sudan in 1984-5 when already severely malnourished refugees were fed a vitamin A free ration. Vitamin A deficiency can occur at any age, but the most severe effects are usually in pre-school children. In refugee populations, older children and adults may also be at risk.

Since vitamin A requirements rise as the intake of calories rises, providing food without vitamin A to refugees whose malnutrition includes vitamin A deficiency is likely to worsen the deficiency, leading to blindness and even death. This was the original basis for the inclusion of vitamin A in skimmed milk powder intended for developing country use.

*...refugee rations usually contain either insufficient vitamin A or none at all.*

In addition to its effects on the eye, deficiency of Vitamin A also impairs immune response, decreases the body's resistance to infection and causes flaking of the skin which reduces its protection against bacterial infection. Children with an inadequate vitamin A store (with or without co-existing protein-energy malnutrition) are at risk. For example, poor

vitamin A status is associated with illness and death from measles, as well as measles-associated corneal damage and blindness, lower respiratory tract infections and diarrhoea.

### Eye Changes

The eyes of young children should be checked regularly in high risk situations. Finding even one severely affected child means that there are many more in the same population. Vitamin A deficiency affects different parts of the eye - retina, conjunctiva and cornea. Night blindness and changes in the conjunctiva are warning signs. Reported night blindness in areas where the condition is common and there is a local descriptive term, is a sensitive indicator of vitamin A deficiency. All eye lesions are transitory, and so survey work needs to take account of seasonal variations in dietary intake of foods containing the vitamin, as well as the incidence of precipitating infections.

### Actions to Take

Guidelines for supplementation of vitamin A are available from WHO, Geneva: *Vitamin A Supplements: A Guide to Their Use in the Treatment and Prevention of Vitamin A Deficiency and Xerophthalmia*, WHO/UNICEF/IVAGG Task Force, 1988. Vitamin A supplementation for refugees and famine victims is detailed in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation* 1988, 66(6): 689-697.



Both the fruit and young leaves of the papaya tree (paw paw) are good sources of Vitamin A. Photo: Susan Spragg

In refugee situations, it is recommended that high potency vitamin A be available at all levels of the health service. Corneal involvement is a medical emergency. Children whose corneas are affected should be treated with the recommended three dose schedule. Topical use of an antibiotic eye ointment is indicated. Ophthalmic ointment with steroids should **never** be used in this situation.

Measles is a special case. WHO recommend that high dose vitamin A be provided to all children with measles in communities in which vitamin A deficiency is a recognised problem. In addition, individuals with active xerophthalmia, severe generalised malnutrition, diarrhoea, or lower respiratory tract infections are all believed to require treatment with vitamin A and schedules are outlined.

### Prevention

The potential for growing foods containing vitamin A in gardens is often unrealised. Some common vitamin A rich tropical foods are detailed below, and assistance programmes could enable refugees to grow or purchase many of these.

#### VITAMIN A-RICH TROPICAL FOODS

Name	Scientific Name	Form of Plant	Part	Vitamin A Content (I.U.'s/100g. edible portion)
Amaranth	<i>Amaranth dubius</i>	dried	leaves	26,700
Cassava	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>		leaves	13,800
Gourd, Rag, cylindrical	<i>Luffa cylindrica/ acutangula</i>			
Angle-type			leaves	15,400
Kidney Beans	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>		leaves	5,400
Mango	<i>Mangifera indica</i>		fruit	600-21,600
Papaya	<i>Carica papaya</i>		fruit	10,900
(paw paw)		young	leaves	19,300
Peanut	<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>		leaves	12,700-13,100
Sweet potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>		leaves	3,800-11,700

Source: *Vitamin A+ Sieve*

Periodic, massive dosing with oral vitamin A to pre-school age children has also proved its worth as a short term intervention with immediate impact on alleviating blindness. In the long term, prevention of nutritional deficiency depends upon improving agricultural production, economic access to essential foods such as oil/fat and pre-formed vitamin A sources, and improved infant feeding habits. ●

This is based on an article by Dr. Nicholas Cohen which appeared in *Community Eye Health: An International Bulletin to Promote Eye Health Worldwide* and a paper by Neiburg, P., Person-Karrell, B. and Toole, M. 'Malnutrition/Mortality Relationships Amongst Refugees' presented at the *International Nutrition Symposium, Oxford, 17-20 March, 1991*.

## FREE NEWSLETTERS ON VITAMIN A ISSUES:

The *Xerophthalmia Club Bulletin*, published three times a year, is available free of charge to all workers seriously concerned with xerophthalmia. It includes short articles, 'Notes and News' and a 'Literature Digest' and is supported by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and the International Vitamin A Consultative Group.

To apply for membership, please write to:

Dr D.S. McLaren  
International Centre for Eye Health  
27-29 Cayton Street  
London EC1V 9EJ

The International Centre for Eye Health, which publishes *Community Eye Health*, is part of the Institute of Ophthalmology at the University of London and associated with Moorfields Eye Hospital, Department of Preventive Ophthalmology. The magazine provides recent information on ophthalmic practice and opinion for both the specialist and the non-specialist in eye care and for doctors, nurses and paramedicals.

For details of the publication contact:

The Editor  
Community Eye Health  
International Centre for Eye Health  
Institute of Ophthalmology  
27-29 Cayton Street  
London EC1V 9EJ

*The Vitamin A+ Sieve* is published biannually by the Rodale Institute. It provides abstracts of articles across disciplines dealing with issues relating to vitamin A and vitamin A deficiency. The Vitamin A+ Sieve has also published a list of the Vitamin A content of tropical foods, many of which are very common. These publications can be obtained from:

Executive Director  
Rodale Press Information Services  
33 E Minor Street  
Emmaus  
PA 18098  
USA

The Helen Keller International's Vitamin A Technical Assistance Program publishes a biannual magazine *Vitamin A News Notes*. The magazine provides information about the activities of peoples' voluntary organisations in Vitamin A projects around the world, as well as news of publications and workshops and 'program tips and ideas'. It is published in English, French and Spanish. Details from:

Helen Keller International  
15 West 16th Street  
New York  
NY 10011  
USA

## DRAFT 'GUIDELINES FOR CALCULATING FOOD RATIONS FOR REFUGEES'

UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) are jointly preparing **Guidelines for Calculating Food Rations for Refugees**, which are intended to assist planners in calculating refugee rations at both HQ and field level.

In contrast to past approaches, the guidelines note that food rations should complement any food which the refugees are able to obtain themselves through agricultural or income-generating activities and from other sources. If such activities are restricted or impossible for economic or political reasons, the food rations should meet all refugees' essential nutritional requirements. A thorough assessment of the degree of self-sufficiency and level of household food security is therefore a prerequisite for ration planning.

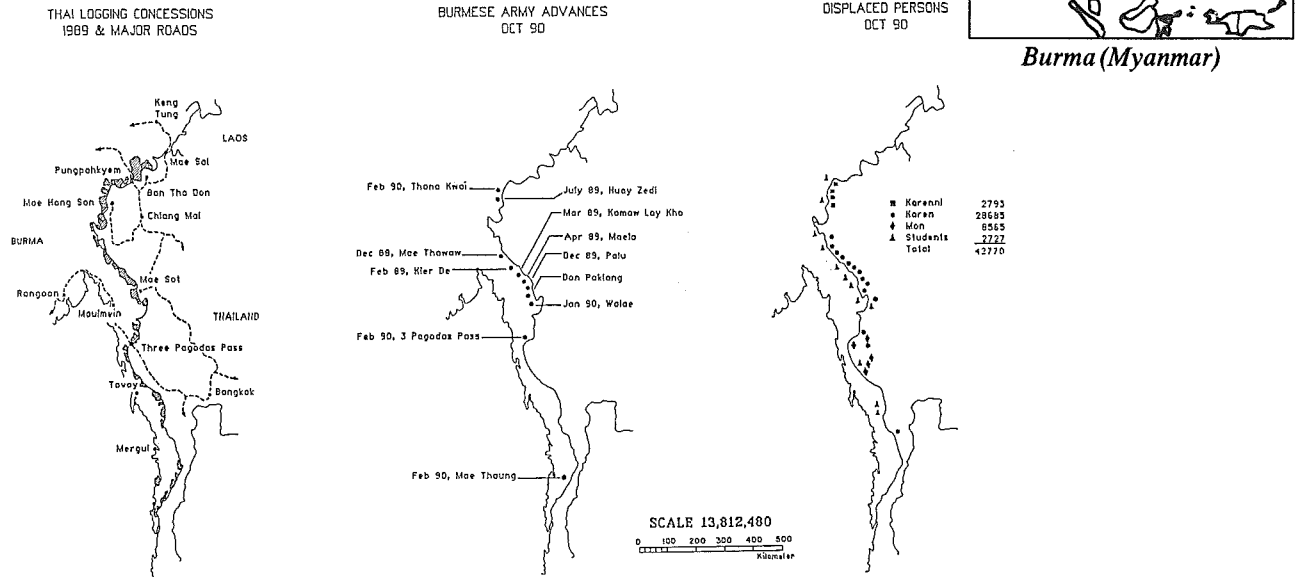
The Guidelines identify the factors which may increase a population's average nutritional requirements (such as age and sex composition, health/nutrition and physiological status, and activity level) as well as the factors which may decrease food aid requirements (such as access to additional foods, income-generating opportunities, and market availability and trading opportunities). Other management considerations include identification of the population's food habits, short-term supply problems, continual periodic assessment of food ration adequacy, food processing considerations, availability of essential non-food items, and food safety control.

The Guidelines include examples of 1900 kcal rations designed for sedentary populations with normal energy requirement levels. Also included are examples of enhanced rations (which have additional micronutrients through the inclusion of a fortified and blended cereal, fresh foods such as fruit and vegetables, and condiments and spices to be made available where possible). The Guidelines also include a table listing the approximate nutritional values of commodities per 100-gramme edible portion.

The Guidelines are currently in provisional draft form as a test document for a period of time in the field. An evaluation will be carried out in mid-1992 and will incorporate comments and suggestions received from the WFP and UNHCR field offices, as well as from NGO implementing partners to whom this document was forwarded.

# REFUGEES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## THAI BORDER ACTIVITIES



Since October 1990, the number of Burmese refugees along the Thai border has increased by over one-third.

## WAR, LOGGING AND DISPLACEMENT IN BURMA (MYANMAR)

by Crystal Ashley and RPN

The link between refugees and the environment is often discussed in the context of 'natural disasters' causing cross border migration. Equally, refugees are often held responsible for environmental degradation in the places they settle. In Burma's borderlands, however, the relationship between the destruction of the teak forests and refugee flows takes a different shape. Here the relation reflects the dynamics of war, a change in the military and economic strategy of the Burmese State Law and Order Council (SLORC), economic agreements with Thailand, and their devastating human and environmental effects.

### Logging and the Military Campaign

Burma's teak forests are being destroyed by Thai logging companies granted large-scale concessions by SLORC. In addition, timber purchases by Chinese contractors have soared (at least 100 Chinese trucks leave daily for the

capital of Yunnan Province in China). The logging is concentrated in territory held by Burma's insurgent ethnic minority groups, and felling has accelerated dramatically along 1500 km of Burma's border, from the rainforest on the Chinese border in the north, along the Thai border to the southern part of the coast. Thai and Chinese highway crews are busy constructing new logging roads to penetrate parts of Burma previously inaccessible from Thailand and China.

Deforestation is providing much of the needed revenue for Burma's counter-insurgency war. Teak sales have facilitated arms purchases from China to the value of US\$ 1.5 billion in the 1991 fiscal year alone. Arms contracts have also been made with firms in Belgium, Israel, Britain, Poland, Pakistan, Germany, Singapore and Yugoslavia. Furthermore, by facilitating the advance of the Burmese military along the new logging roads, deforestation is creating new flows of refugees. It is destroying the resource base, the future livelihood of the minority groups and is causing untold environmental damage.

For over 40 years, almost half the land area of Burma, and at least a third of Burma's population of 42 million, have been governed by local ethnic minorities. Their numbers swelled after 1988 when they were joined by 10,000 university students and others who fled the violent suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations in the capital, Rangoon. The latter sought shelter and support from ethnic minority groups with whom they had previously had no contact, and who they knew about only through government-



controlled information. Since then, the urban dissidents and ethnic peoples of Burma have become targets for an intensified military offensive by SLORC.

Counter-insurgency campaigns by SLORC, and the preceding Ne Win government, had, until recently, been unable to penetrate the minority-held areas. Logging roads created for timber extraction since the Thai/SLORC agreements in 1989 have, however, changed the dynamic of the war. Burmese forces have been known to use Thai soil to launch their offensive against the minorities from the rear. Aerial attacks on refugee settlements have also been executed from Thai airspace. The annual dry season offensives need no longer be accompanied by wet season retreats, and Burmese troops do not need to rely on supplies trekked from within Burma. Refugees who in the past temporarily fled the fighting, to return home following the Burmese troop's retreat, now accumulate in camps on the Thai side.

As a result of these changes, the number of ethnic minority refugees on Thai soil has risen rapidly to the current figure of over 60,000. Logging vehicles carried SLORC troops into Thailand along the new bulldozed roads so that they could attack student and minority camps inside Burma which were therefore also forced to relocate inside Thailand. The success of this offensive was directly due to improved Thai-Burmese relations which had resulted in SLORC's grant of logging concessions to Thai companies earlier in 1989.



*South of Three Pagodas Pass, Thai border*

*Photo: Therese Caouette*

### **History of teak logging in Burma**

Teak has long been an important resource in Burma. Much of the timber extraction had been under the control of the ethnic minorities. The methods they used were generally protective of the forest and maintained environmental stability. For example, a selected mature tree would be ring-barked and left to die prior to cutting. This weakens its branches, and hence reduces damage to other trees on falling. Damage to surrounding growth while extracting the timber is minimised by the use of elephants rather than mechanised equipment. For years, the Thais have bought timber products from wood extracted in this way by minority peoples such as the Karen, Karenni and Mon.

Tight controls on teak harvesting were also upheld through the 'Burma Selective System' which was initially intro-

duced by the British colonial government and maintained after independence in areas managed by the Burma Forestry Commission. This system had established a minimum age of 90-120 years for trees to be felled. Sustainable logging practices were abandoned, however, when senior military figures were placed at the head of forestry operations.

### **Changes after 1988**

Thailand's own previously expansive teak forests have been depleted by years of indiscriminate over-felling. Without the forest soils and cover to absorb and filter the rainfall, the land has been degraded, and is now vulnerable to floods and landslides. One incident alone in 1988 resulted in 350 deaths. This prompted a national ban on logging. Just days after the restrictions came into force, Thai General Chaovalit Yonchaiyut flew to Rangoon to secure concessions to Burmese teak. Under pressure from Thai military leaders who themselves own logging companies, the concessions allowed an initial 20 companies to remove Burmese teak worth an estimated US\$ 112 million in the following year. The number of companies has now grown to 43.

SLORC has sought to take over all aspects of the trade in timber and other natural resources. They have sold concessions in timber, fisheries, mining and petroleum exploration, entering into partnerships with foreign firms from Japan, Singapore, Korea, Malaysia, China, India, Australia, the US and particularly Thailand. Thai timber concessionaires have publicly complained that their contracts with SLORC oblige them to develop strategic roads into minority lands, and compel them to donate US\$ 1 million per concession for the development of Burma. They are also asked to extend lavish cash donations to various Burmese army units based along the Thai/Burma border.

The indigenous people have been forced to allow contractors to enter their territory for teak. Lumber sold by the minorities has now faded into insignificance compared with the scale of timber extraction by the Thais. Indigenous peoples are routinely confronted by armed logging crews as contractors enter their territory for teak. Primary forest is cut with high-technology equipment, and trucks exit in convoys, each carrying in excess of 35 tonnes. Night and day the trucks are visible on the border highways, some with a load comprising a single enormous log, and others with a mixture of new and older growth. SLORC does not monitor removal except by means of customs agents at the border, and the minorities for their part are powerless to limit concessions granted by SLORC. The indigenous people, trapped in this way, sometimes impose a tax on the logs extracted.

In February of 1991, Mon leaders announced that one region in their control, called Three Pagodas Pass, was closed to all army and logging transport. A well-known timber company owner ignored the order, the truck was blown up and the Thai driver killed. Compensation was



*Recent Burmese arrivals along the Thai border, January 1992*

*Photo: Therese Caouette*

demanded. The Mon refused, citing their right to prohibit access to the roads. Within days, three Mon youth were jailed by local Thai authorities on illegal immigration charges, their arrest said to have been ordered by the timber baron. In addition, all rice and fish ration deliveries to Mon refugees in the area were terminated without explanation. Only after Mon leaders agreed to the restitution demands were the boys released and the desperately needed food supplies resumed. In November 1991, equipment from the same company was again rolling through Three Pagodas Pass. This time a truck and bulldozer were damaged by the Mon; compensation was again demanded by the owner and refused. All three of the Mon State's top officials were quickly arrested and jailed. Negotiations for their release are in progress, rumoured again to require the immediate reopening of the Pass road.

Road closure is one means used by indigenous groups to try to retain control over their timber resources. In other regions it is said that minority leaders actually agree to match the size of the Thai/SLORC logging concessions to secure income of their own. Other areas, lost by the insurgents to SLORC, are sometimes clearfelled immediately. Even where logging encroachment is slower, it nevertheless makes the forest 'a difficult place to hide', as one Mon leader recently put it.

### **Thai/Burmese Trade Relations**

The financial problems experienced by the Karen and Mon, and their involvement in destructive Thai logging also reflect changes in trade and economic policy between SLORC and its neighbours. Of particular importance has been the newly-won central government control over black market border trading towns, and the new bilateral trade agreements with border States.

Territories held by the insurgent minority groups along the border have in the past been more prosperous than areas under the central government, due to the insurgents' command of the thriving black market. In the peak year of 1983, the

Karen National Union (KNU) Finance Minister estimated income to be an astonishing 5000 million Kyats (US\$ 250 million at official exchange rates for 1983). Local army officers, villagers and traders in Thailand frequently preferred to do business with insurgent forces than with the Rangoon government; purchase of vital commodities, including arms, was extremely easy to arrange. Burma's neighbours regularly received delegations of the insurgent groups for economic, political and military talks.

Much of the cross-border traffic in basic commodities and luxury goods which previously went through areas held by insurgent forces now follows government-controlled trading routes. With their loss of control of border trade towns, and with the development of legal trade links between SLORC and its neighbours, the minority groups have lost another significant source of revenue. They are now forced increasingly to cooperate with the Thai logging companies, indeed, more than 90% of the minority groups' income is now derived from such collaboration.

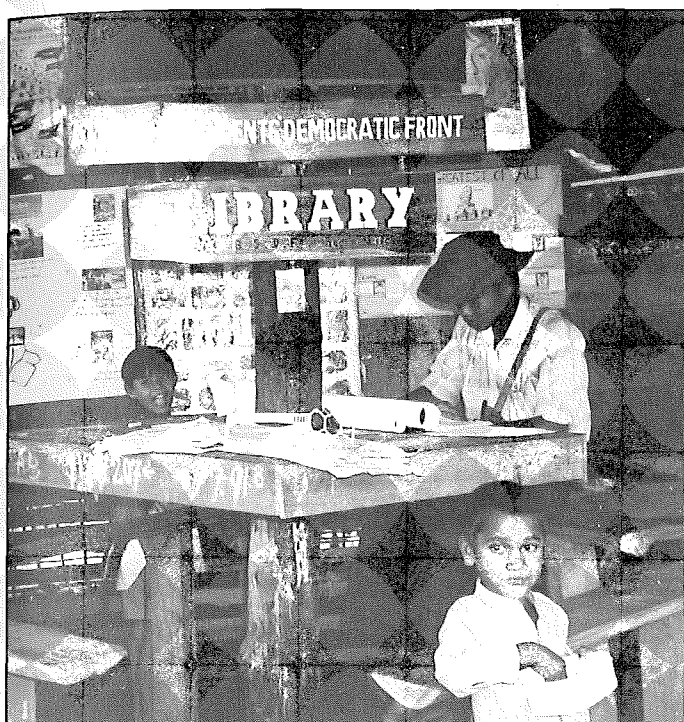
### **The Effects of Logging**

Roads developed for hauling timber are fundamental to SLORC offensives against minority peoples in Burma. Apart from logging on the basis of concessions negotiated with the minority groups, and in areas held by the central government (the roads from which can then be used in offensives), Thai loggers also move into rural areas following attacks: as whole villages are evacuated under gunfire, logging operations start within days.

Extensive felling not only has long term environmental effects, but is often followed by flashflooding and drowning. 1991 saw the worst flooding in 50 years: in just one Karen township, over 6,000 acres of rice, coconut and betelnut production were lost to floods exacerbated by deforestation. At the same time, flooding caused by deforestation in Arakan and Pegu Yomas was of such severity that it required a UN emergency response. Severe incidents of this sort are occurring along the Thai and Chinese borders. Deforestation of the Burmese forests (the last block of continental forest in Asia) is an emerging regional ecological disaster.

### **United Nations Involvement**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is active in Burma and does not recognise the damage done by logging companies. They have claimed that slash and burn agriculture practised by the local communities is responsible for the forest loss. In addition, they have backed the 'modernisation' of timber extraction techniques, and the replacement of elephants by machines. Proposals have recently been put forward by UNDP for reforestation programmes costing around \$19.5 million. At the same time, and on SLORC request, UNDP has numerous new road development projects in prime logging country.



*Burmese students have now joined minority groups in refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border* Photo: Elkie Wootton  
 Timber purchasers, such as the Association of Danish Wood Merchants, have recently warded off criticism of their operations by citing statements made by UN officials in Rangoon. Oscar Lazo, representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Burma has announced that all teak being exported from Burma has been felled according to 'sustainable principles'. All trees, he attested, had to meet minimum circumference standards approved by the Burmese state.

Without addressing the destructive and rampant extraction processes and their direct relationship to human rights abuses by the military, such UN programmes can only be seen as direct support of SLORC. ●

*This article draws on the following references:*

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# REPATRIATION

## A PROPOSED RETURNEES' OMBUD IN CAMBODIA

by Hanne Sophie Greve

**The repatriation of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons in the wake of the Paris peace accord presents a challenge to the returnees themselves, to Cambodia, and to the international aid community.**

The vast majority of the returnees share the fate of having been away from their country for several years, many for more than a decade. What they will come back to is not what they left - neither in material and practical terms, nor socially, culturally and politically. Changes have taken place on every level. Most returnees will not simply slip back into their old situation, but will have to be reintegrated. Similar problems will face the internally displaced, who are also expected to return home.

Numerous questions will arise, including legal ones. For example, there will be questions in relation to ownership (concerning especially land, but also movable property) and to the recognition of alien papers (ranging from birth and marriage certificates to educational degrees and diplomas).

Many returnees will come back thinking they have been the ones suffering the most for the past years and may have unrealistic expectations about their return. In contrast, those who stayed on in Cambodia may believe that they have been the ones who were left to live with the worst consequences of the war and the Vietnamese occupation. Even with much good will, both sides may have difficulties in fully understanding one another. The scarcity of resources will not ease the situation.

### **No protection mandate for international or non-governmental organisations**

UNHCR (the lead agency for the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons to Cambodia) has no protection mandate in the refugees' or displaced persons' country of origin. A protection mandate may, however, be agreed bilaterally by UNHCR and the returnees' home country. This option is available but has not been used in the Cambodian situation (nor has it been used in any other large-scale repatriation situation as far as I know).

Nor do other international or non-governmental organisations have mandates to protect returnees in their native land. If repatriation were to take place in war time, ICRC has a protection mandate with respect to many victims of war, but this is in relation to people as war victims and not as returnees.

UNHCR, together with agencies and organisations assisting UNHCR with the repatriation, do have a mandate to provide security for the returnees in the very process of repatriation - as they move back to their home areas, that is.

### **Human Rights Protection**

The reconstruction of Cambodia, including the rebuilding of its legal system, will inevitably take time. During this period of change, proper monitoring of the human rights situation will be important and so will a good system of reporting human rights violations. Human rights groups, and especially non-Cambodian ones, can never replace a good national legal system. The aim of the human rights groups ought to be to help build and strengthen a proper legal system in each State.

The flagrant violations of even the most fundamental human rights for the last twenty-three years, including American bombing, atrocities of war, Khmer Rouge terror and Vietnamese occupation, mean that the international community ought to feel responsible for the well-being of the Cambodian people following the peace agreement. Supervision by the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (initially by the UN Advance Mission in Cambodia) is one significant step in this direction, helping to rebuild a suitable legal system would be another.

Banditry is currently a significant problem. Combined with the countless changes being initiated and the return of refugees and the displaced, it is foreseeable that the ordinary legal system (in the process of being rebuilt) will probably be unable to handle all but the most serious human rights and protection problems.

Under these circumstances it may be wise to introduce the ombud institution in Cambodia. Indeed, steps in this direction have already been taken by Son Sann, president of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front. An ombud for public administration, mandated to handle complaints against the administration on behalf of any and every citizen, is a system well established in many countries. In addition, a returnees' ombud should be considered. Several countries already have specific ombuds for vulnerable groups or special situations, for example, children and minority groups.

### **The Ombud System**

In Norway, to have or be an 'ombud' simply means to have been elected for a special public function. The ombud system first came into being in a modern version with the 'Act concerning the Storting's [parliament's] Ombudsman for Public Administration' of 22 June 1962. (The ombudsman title has now been changed to merely 'ombud' - like 'chairman' has been replaced by the gender neutral 'chair'. There are both male and female ombuds.) It supplements the traditional legal system and has become an integrated part of the modern legal system.

## To illustrate how the ombud system may be organised, attention is drawn to some sections of the 1962 Act:

- \* The task of the Ombudsman is...to endeavour to ensure that injustice is not committed against the individual citizen by the public administration.
- \* The Ombudsman may deal with matters either following a complaint or on his own initiative.
- \* The Ombudsman may demand from public officials and from all others who serve in the public administration such information as he requires to discharge his duties.
- \* The Ombudsman shall have access to places of work, offices and other premises of any administrative agency and any enterprise which come under the scope of his powers.
- \* The Ombudsman is entitled to express his opinion on matters which come under the scope of his powers. He may point out that an error has been committed or that negligence has been shown in the public administration. If he finds sufficient reason for so doing, he may inform the prosecuting authority or appointments authority what action he believes should be taken in the particular case against the official concerned. If he concludes that a decision rendered must be considered invalid or clearly unreasonable, or that it clearly conflicts with good administrative practice, he may say so.
- \* If the Ombudsman finds that there are circumstances which may lead to liability for damages he may, depending on the situation, suggest that damages should be paid.
- \* The Ombudsman may let the matter rest when the error has been rectified or the explanation has been given.'
- \* If the Ombudsman becomes aware of shortcomings in statutory law, administrative regulations or administrative practice he may notify the Ministry concerned to this effect.
- \* The Ombudsman shall submit an annual report on his activities to the Storting [parliament]. The report shall be printed and published.
- \* If the Ombudsman becomes aware of negligence or errors of major significance or scope he may make a special report to the Storting [parliament] and to the appropriate administrative agency.'

## A Returnees' ombud

As a returnees' ombud, the Supreme National Council would ideally appoint a person of the highest standing, held generally in high esteem, and with no affiliation to the political parties. Ideally the ombud would also be a person with some legal training and with experience in settling

disputes. The latter is particularly important and may be satisfied by a Buddhist monk, given their traditional role in settling disputes in Cambodia. The ombud should be a Cambodian national, but foreign assistants with relevant experience could perhaps be useful (the latter could perhaps be funded by the UN).

The mandate of the returnees' ombud could include a right and obligation to follow-up on complaints of practices of the UN and incidents related to UN personnel. It also seems important to check that returnees are not favoured at the expense of the people among whom they shall live, in ways which may create obstacles to their reintegration or bad feelings by creating new and unnecessary differences.

## The advantages of having a returnees' ombud would be:

- \* to give the returnees their own properly authorised Cambodian spokesperson since they are to face particular challenges in the process of reintegration
- \* to give the Cambodian public a clear understanding of the fact that proper reintegration of the returnees is of concern to society as a whole
- \* to compensate for the international community's lack of protection instruments in the refugees' and displaced persons' country of origin
- \* to let the Cambodian society gain experience with an ombud system on a comparatively small scale - and with international support if considered desirable by the Cambodians themselves
- \* to provide a flexible, relatively quick and inexpensive (both for the society and the complainants) process for dispute resolution as opposed to a full-fledged court system which can take many years
- \* to give more room for guidance in the difficult process of reintegration than court decisions allow, the latter being necessarily more rigid and confined to interpretation of the law as it exists
- \* to avoid the need for a complainant in each case, since the ombud may pursue cases on his or her own initiative, for example as a result of allegations by international organisations or human rights groups. ●

*Hanne Sophie Greve worked for UNHCR as an assistant protection officer in the refugee camps for Cambodians in Thailand from 1979 to 1981; she later visited the camps and evacuation sites for Cambodians along the Thai-Cambodian border. She is currently a Court of Appeals judge in Norway.*

# MIGRANT WORKERS

## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANT WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES

The new International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families was passed in December 1990. It is an important step forward in clarifying human rights and minimum standards for forced migrants, a group outside the refugee definition. The protection defined by the Convention applies to all migrant workers, both documented and undocumented. Some of its provisions are detailed below:

\* Providing a universal definition of a migrant worker as 'a person who is to be engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national' (Article 2).

\* Defining categories of workers with provisions applicable to each and their families.

\* Establishing international standards of treatment through the extension of human rights to migrant workers and members of their families.

\* Viewing migrant workers as more than labour power, but as people with families, and with rights including those of family reunification, and assistance in the return home and process of readjustment.

\* Including self-employed amongst the categories of migrant worker with the understanding that this group includes small-scale activity involving oneself and possibly members of one's family.

\* Establishing the principle of 'equality of treatment' with nationals for all migrant workers and members of their families in a number of areas such as before courts and tribunals (Article 18), in terms of employment (Article 25), and access to education for their children (Article 29).

\* Providing additional rights to migrant workers and members of their families in a documented or legal situation.

\* Establishing minimum standards of protection for migrant workers and members of their families that are universally acknowledged.

\* Seeking to protect migrant workers and members of their families from collective expulsion (Article 22). Expulsion may only be in pursuance of a decision taken

by the competent authority in accordance with law and the decision shall be communicated to migrant workers in a language they understand. In case of expulsion, the person concerned shall have a reasonable opportunity before or after departure to settle any claims for wages and other entitlements.

\* Upholding the right to form associations and trade unions with no restrictions to be placed on the exercise of this right.

\* Opposing the penalisation of individuals because of their status or change in status. For example, migrant workers and/or members of their families are to be protected from double taxation (Article 48) and are entitled to return home with their earnings and savings (Article 47). Members of the family are also offered certain protection following a migrant worker's death or dissolution of marriage (Article 50).

\* Seeking to discourage clandestine and illegal migration through binding states parties to promote sound, equitable, humane and lawful conditions in connection with international migration of workers and members of their families.

\* Placing the responsibilities for protection of human rights on both sending and receiving states as well as states of transit.

States also retain certain rights, notably:

\* Determining who is admitted to their territories and under which conditions residency and work permits are given.

The Convention defines rights to compensation for unpaid wages and other entitlements in the case of expulsion (Article 22). When in force, it could be tested by claims such as from migrants forced to leave the Gulf following Iraq's defeat. In this case, the UN Security Council did attempt to set up a scheme to pay compensation for loss, damage or injury to foreign governments, nationals and corporations resulting from Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. This compensation was to be financed as part of the reparations programme, by 30% of the proceeds from UN supervised Iraqi oil-sales. Since Iraq refused to comply with UN conditions for oil sales, as of the end of 1991 there are no means to finance any compensation.

Like other international instruments, the application of the International Convention will be supervised by a Committee of experts elected from a list of nominees of the States party to the Convention. The Committee is to be funded as a component of the General Secretariat of the United Nations, giving it greater flexibility and independence than if it were funded by party states.

Before it can enter into force, the Convention has to be ratified by 20 states. To date, only Mexico and Morocco have signed the Convention. It is anticipated that the MESCA countries (seven Mediterranean and Scandinavian countries) will ratify, and will be followed by Canada, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Argentina. Other countries have voiced concerns: during the debates in December 1990 Australia made clear that it would not become a party to the Convention. Japan and Oman (possibly reflecting the views of the member States of the Gulf Co-operation Council) made similar statements. Germany and the United States made their objections known during the drafting process and there is no evidence that these two countries have changed their minds. Great Britain remained remarkably silent. The current harmonisation of immigration policies between developing countries does not create a favourable climate for ratification.

In receiving states today, there is ambivalence towards migrants, who are increasingly portrayed in the media and by governments as people who are causing problems, instead of people who can contribute economically and culturally to receiving societies. ●

Further information about the New Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the legal text, is available in the following publications:

*Proclaiming Migrants Rights: the New International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, 1991, Churches' Committee for Migrants in Europe, Briefing Papers No.3, World Council of Churches, Migration Secretariat, P.O. Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland.

Hune, S. and Niessen, J. 1991 'The First UN Convention on Migrant Workers' *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 9(2), 130-142.

## REFUGEE STUDIES IN CAIRO

Early in 1990, the existence of various communities of displaced people from the Horn of Africa in Cairo in general, and the arrest and subsequent imprisonment for more than a year and a half by the Egyptian authorities of a group of Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum-seekers in particular, stimulated my interests in refugee issues. Since that time refugee studies have started to expand at the American University in Cairo (AUC).

In the 1991 spring semester, after several contacts with the people at the Refugee Studies Programme in Oxford, I began teaching a course on refugees, one now offered on an annual basis. Given the presence in Cairo of the refugee communities themselves, local and international NGO operations, a regional UNHCR office, an office of UNRWA, the Egyptian Government's Office for Immigration and Care of Refugees, and the embassies of three countries with resettlement programmes from Cairo (the United States, Canada and Australia), all within easy reach of the campus, the city offers an excellent environment for such study. As a result of the class, several students became actively involved with local NGO programmes; however, not wishing to be restricted by geographical considerations, one of my students carried out a photographic study of Tibetan refugees in Nepal!

Also in the spring of 1991, the Political Science Department at the American University opened an African Studies Centre which, amongst other things, has facilitated various projects involved with refugees by providing a base for such work. So far we have seen the development of a Counsellor's Handbook on Resources for Refugees and Displaced People in Cairo, a needs assessment of Ethiopian and Eritrean communities in the city which is currently underway, and plans for a workshop scheduled for late spring 1992 on self-help programmes for refugees and displaced people. All three activities have been funded by the Ford Foundation. Further work is planned: a number of graduate students, for example, have expressed interest in master's theses at AUC on refugee topics, while others are looking for further study on refugee questions abroad. It is hoped that refugee studies in Cairo will not only expand, but will also continue to maintain the balance between academic endeavours and practical projects of immediate benefit to the various refugee communities here.

*For further information on refugee studies at the American University in Cairo, please contact:*

*Dr Dereck Cooper  
Dept of Sociology  
American University in Cairo  
P.O. Box 2511, Cairo, EGYPT  
Tel: +20-2-357 6758, 341 2350  
Fax: +20-2-355 7565*

# RESEARCH IN PALESTINE

## A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF THE BEIT-JIBRIN REFUGEE CAMP, BETHLEHEM

Dr Samir Hazboun

Beit-Jibrin refugee camp is one of the 23 camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Known locally as Al-Azzeh camp (after the village that most residents fled after 1948), the camp lies within the boundaries of the Municipality of Bethlehem, but is rented from the Jordanian government by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which exercises full authority over the camp, including the right to issue building permits.

This study of socio-economic conditions in the camp was conducted from July to September 1990, motivated by the increasing offers of aid for economic development in the Occupied Territories, and the need for an understanding of the existing situation. Since that time, the socio-economic situation has deteriorated, particularly since the Gulf War. The effects on employment have been severe, due to measures restricting the number of workers who were allowed to enter Israel. At the time of this study, the camp population was 992 persons, comprising 239 families (only 6 families did not participate in the study).

### The Labour Force

The labour force of the Beit-Jibrin camp comprised 171 men and 28 women, 54.3% of whom work in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and 45.7% in Israel. This means that on average, each worker supports 5 dependents in the camp - a heavy financial burden. Most of those employed work as artisans (particularly carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, and plasterers). Office employees are the second largest occupational group.

### Unemployment

21% of the potential labour force aged 25 to 64 years of age, is unemployed. If we then add those aged 15 to 24, the unemployment rate rises to 40%. These figures alone, from before the Gulf War, point to a profound and dangerous situation that faces Palestinian society. Of those unemployed aged between 25 and 64, 78.5% had not worked for more than 12 months. There is no unemployment benefit, nor is there social security for those who reach retirement age, even though most pay income tax during their working lives.

### Monthly Income and Family Expenditure

The poverty line in Israel in 1990 was 1700 New Israeli Shekels (N.I.S.) per month for a family of four. The families of the Beit-Jibrin camp were living far below this level. At the beginning of 1990, average monthly income per family was calculated to be about 835 N.I.S., and this dropped to 736 N.I.S. by mid-1990 (based on assumed real income according to occupational group and no un-

employment). Considering the reluctance of some residents to reveal actual income, the camp's average income was also calculated on the basis of average monthly expenditure. Using this method, 88.6% of the camp families still had a monthly expenditure below the poverty level set in Israel.

132 families receive assistance in the form of goods and cash from the UNRWA Beit-Jibrin Committee, charitable associations, or the social welfare department. 14 families depend on sons abroad as an alternative to this assistance. While 23 families pay taxes, the remainder do not, simply because they cannot afford to do so, or because their income is too meagre.

### Standard of Living

Indicators such as available living space, water accessibility and quantity, and electricity supply also point to a very low standard of living for the residents in Beit-Jibrin camp. Harsh conditions have been somewhat mitigated by aid from UNRWA and other relief organisations.

### Education

Education is a high priority for camp residents. Most children attend UNRWA schools and some attend government schools. In some cases, UNRWA shares in the expense of college or university. These graduates then enjoy priority of employment in UNRWA establishments. Of those aged 6 and over, 35% have partial or complete elementary education; 26.2% have partial or complete preparatory education; and 22.5% have partial or complete secondary schooling. Those with partial or complete post secondary education, including technical institutes, colleges and universities, constitute 7.3% of the residents. Only 8.82% are illiterate, and of these, the majority are elderly.

### Recommendations

Phase I should concentrate on developing camp infrastructure: improving sanitation and water supply, providing vocational training, constructing decent housing, and developing an integrated health service. Phase II should develop small businesses and create other employment opportunities. A social welfare programme should be planned to provide for the needs of the elderly and the unemployed. ●

*This article is extracted from a longer study of the same title. For further details, contact Dr. Samir Hazboun, Dean, Faculty of Commerce and Economics, Birzeit University, July, 1991.*



## LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL AFFILIATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Research at the Involuntary Migration Centre:  
An-Najah University

### RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

#### Political Affiliations in the Occupied Territories and Politicisation in Refugee Camps

Research on political affiliations in the Occupied Territories and the politicisation processes which are taking place in the camps is currently being undertaken by Mr Najeh Jarrar. The aim of this project is to have a sounder basis for understanding the Intifada and to predict the political formations which are likely to emerge in the event that the Occupied Territories achieve independence. In-depth interviews with key political figures in the camps are being conducted, together with discussion groups and observation of decision-making processes. A series of structured interviews will provide information on 3-5% of the families in each camp.

#### Refugees' Self Image and Factors Affecting Integration

This study of integration will provide a basis for developing a model to compare with other refugee populations, especially those who do not share a common language or common ethnic background with their hosts. The research is being undertaken collaboratively with Tom Woolley, Oxford Polytechnic.

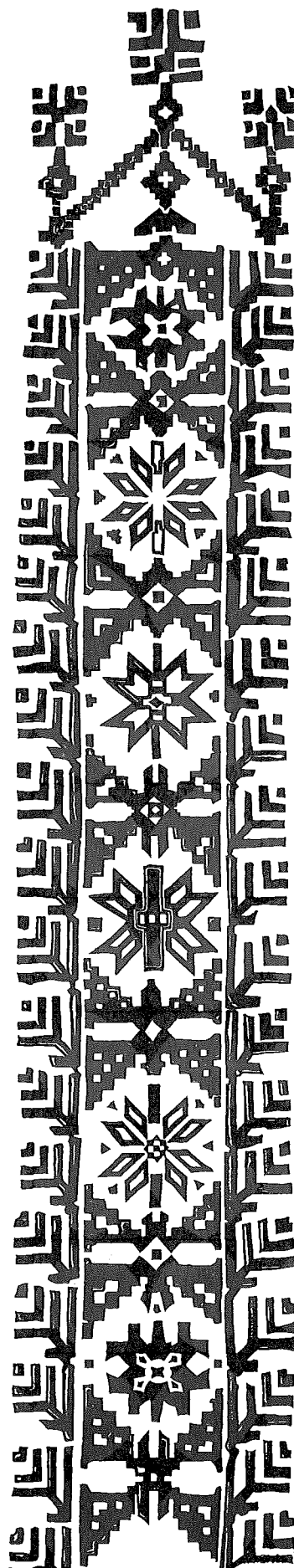
### FURTHER RESEARCH PLANS

#### Social order and control in Nablus.

Nablus, a city of 150,000, has been operating without a police force since the early period of the Intifada. Order is enforced by the Youth (predominantly males between the ages of 14 and early 20's) working within a structure of local committees. Their power ranges from dealing with minor misdemeanours through to administering capital punishment. Committees of 'elders' (aged 30's to 40's) relate to the youth in an advisory capacity, and have no instrumental power, whilst the youth control decision-making and action.

It appears that an inter-connected network of such advisory committees exists throughout the West Bank. The committees are composed of representatives of each of the three political factions: PLO-Fatah (the mainstream 'moderate' group which commands the bulk of popular support), the Islamic Movement (which recognises and supports the PLO), and the Socialist faction. In some respect, their function seems to be similar to that of lay magistrates, but with a wider scope. The youth consult them particularly in cases of civil dispute, and the ecclesiastic courts consult them on such issues as marital disputes. ●

*For more information, contact Tom Woolley, Department of Social Studies, Oxford Polytechnic, Gypsy Lane, Headington, Oxford, OX3 0BP, U.K.*



# REVIEWS

**COUNSELLORS' HANDBOOK OF RESOURCES FOR REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS, CAIRO, EGYPT** (October, 1991). Published by the Refugee Resource Project Team, Cairo. 96 pages, coilback. Price US \$10. Cheques or international money orders should be made out to the Department of Economics and Political Science, the American University in Cairo. Send requests to: Dr. William Cyrus Reed, Office of African Studies, Department of Economics and Political Science, The American University in Cairo, P.O. Box 2511, Cairo, Egypt.

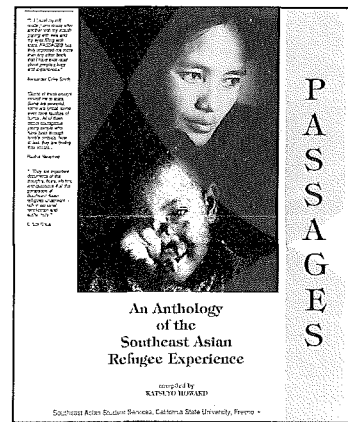
This book contains a wealth of information. Even new counsellors in Egypt will be able to proceed fast with their work without too much trouble. Each stage in the book is clearly explained such that lay workers can also comfortably use the handbook. The handbook constantly stresses that counsellors should use the refugees themselves and the local community to seek information about resources they might not find in the book.

Detailed information is included on educational opportunities for men, women and children, eligibility in terms of nationality or ethnic group, educational standards, etc. The book also gives the duration of courses in hours, months or years, costs, where funding may be possible, and the language used in instruction and explanation. It also gives a list of language courses in Cairo and in other universities and colleges in Egypt.

Possibilities of higher educational opportunities are covered, both within Africa and abroad, but counsellors are cautioned about raising expectations unnecessarily which might cause problems for both counsellors and refugees later, as these options are limited to a small number of the many refugees who are appropriately qualified. Names of all the countries where refugees could study are given. Here again, counsellors are cautioned to let the refugees know that acceptance to a university does not mean automatic permission to enter a country, or automatic funding, since different countries have different visa policies.

The handbook is based on extensive research, and is made in such a way that information can be updated easily.

Joyce Janda  
Visiting Study Fellow



**PASSAGES, AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEE EXPERIENCE**, compiled by Katsuyo K Howard (1991), published by Southeast Asian Student Services, California State University, Fresno, Fresno, California 93740-0056. 276 pages. Price US\$ 24.95 plus \$1.68 for sales tax and \$2.00 postage. Cheque payable to Southeast Asian Student Services.

This book is a collection of pieces written by students of Lao, Vietnamese or Cambodian origin who are now in their twenties and resettled in Fresno, California, U.S.A. The contributors are carefully acknowledged. The first section includes stories and reflections on life in the country of origin. They include idyllic recollections as well as intimations of the coming crisis. Then there are accounts of escape with its terror and trauma. In many cases this is material recollected out of childhood. Scattered through the volume, which is beautifully presented in anthology format are black and white photographs, portraits that illuminate the experiences being described. The final segments are stories of resettlement in the third country. They include experiences of the initial difficulty of adjustment, denial of one's origin and suffering, disruption in family relationships and rediscovery of identity which includes the new skills of the present and healing of family relationships.

The mode of collection of the material is described as having been sensitive and caring. The quality of the pieces would testify to this. They give a human portrayal of the experiences of war, escape, life as a refugee and resettlement. One has a sense of a new reality coming to birth with great pain but with courage and patience. These young people tell stories and we can know that the place they are in is new, not just for them but for all of us. The Dedication of the book is 'to all of you who are finding your own ways to bring peace and understanding to the earth'. We can hope that as well as testifying to a new hard won peace these young people can invite readers into their experience and to joining the peace.

Mary Densley  
Mercy Refugee Service, Lewisham, Australia

**VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN CAMPS** by Linda Hitchcox (1990), Macmillan Publishing (in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford), Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 2XS, U.K. 305 pages. Price #45 hardcover, #17.50 paperback.

In spite of the departure of 800,000 refugees from Vietnam since 1975, there has been surprisingly little documentation of the Vietnamese refugees' journey prior to Vietnamese Refugees in Southeast Asian Camps.

Based on research in 1987, and covering six refugee camps in Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines, this book explores the historical background of the Vietnamese refugee movement, the process of escape and the subsequent camp life in the country of first asylum in Southeast Asia. Linda Hitchcox overcame the enormous problems of obtaining access to the six camps and has set about describing their physical settings, the people in and associated with them, and the policies and administrative procedures that, as described by Hitchcox, keep the Vietnamese refugee from being self-sufficient.

*Vietnamese Refugees in Southeast Asian Camps* portrays a group of Vietnamese refugees who come from a variety of backgrounds, differing in their educational level, previous occupation, social class and ethnic grouping. In spite of these differences, their motives for leaving are found to be similar: the desire to maintain a valued way of life that was threatened in Vietnam.

Hitchcox contrasts and compares the dynamics that characterise the six different camps. She examines the level of refugee participation in decision-making and concludes that while there is a noticeably different balance of power in each of the camps, the authorities' objectives are the same - to make sure the Vietnamese are passive and compliant for ease of management.

Toward the end of *Vietnamese Refugees in Southeast Asian Camps*, Hitchcox includes a qualitative study of 608 Vietnamese refugees which explores connections between particular camps and the level of emotional distress within the camp populations. These descriptions shed further light on how the Vietnamese are coping with camp life. *Vietnamese Refugees in Southeast Asian Camps* captures the setting in 1987 for Vietnamese in refugee camps in Southeast Asia. It is well presented with comprehensive diagrams, illustrations and helpful summaries at the end of each chapter. The situation in the camps in Southeast Asia has since deteriorated and Hitchcox's book helps put the current situation into context.

Maryanne Loughry  
School of Nursing, Flinders University of S. Australia

**BIBLIOGRAPHY: NURSING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE WITH REFUGEES** by Marjorie A. Muecke, (1990) Southeast Asian Refugee Studies, Occasional Papers, No. 10, 36 pages. Published by S.E. Asian Refugee Studies Project, University of Minnesota, 330 Hubert H. Humphrey Center, 301 - S. 19th Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, USA. Price US\$ 3.00.

This bibliography aims to redress the gap in nursing knowledge of refugees and their needs. Nursing literature on refugees tends to be dispersed across subfields of nursing, particularly public health and maternal-child nursing, and across related fields, such as medicine, public health and the social sciences. As nurses often provide the first contact with a health care system - both in countries of first asylum as well as in countries of resettlement - it is important that they have easy access to these resources in order to continue improving service to the refugee communities they care for.

The Bibliography contains 99 titles of English language documents published predominantly in the United States. It is organised by refugee ethnic group: Afghan, Arab, Cuban, Haitian, El Salvadoran, Ethiopian, Indochinese (Cambodian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong, Mien, Lao), Iranian, Polish, and Tibetan. Two-thirds of the entries are contained in the Indochinese sections, with just two Ethiopian refugee articles representing Africa. In addition, there is a list of 13 titles on general refugee health issues at the end. These latter titles do, however, primarily concern health issues in the country of resettlement.

In each section, the annotations of research studies precede a non-annotated list of practice-focused publications. The research articles are very well annotated and include a summary of research results as well as methodology. As the practical articles are already published, and are more accessible, they have not been annotated.

The Bibliography will be helpful for nursing practitioners and researchers as an update on recent and unpublished research. Unfortunately, some titles may remain tantalising 'carrots' for the many practitioners who do not have access to a periodicals library: their difficulty will remain obtaining the articles themselves.

RPN

**The Confidence Building Measures on Asylum in Europe (CBMA) Project** aims to improve relations between asylum-seekers, refugees and forced migrants, and the European communities hosting them. Initiative-taking on the part of asylum-seekers and refugees will work towards the goal of a mutually positive public attitude, a balance between minority and majority rights and constructive cooperation.

IF YOU ARE A REFUGEE or asylum seeker, or have been forcibly displaced, and you are staying legally in one of the European countries, please send us a report on the situation of refugees, asylum seekers and other forced migrants in the country where you are resident, including:

- \* the relationship between the host community and the asylum seekers, details of the activities of any racist or xenophobic groups, government, civic groups, media, and forced migrants themselves.
- \* measures which could improve public opinion on asylum, or on relations between hosts and 'foreigners'.

Please write not more than 5 pages, in English, French or German. Closing date is the end of April. Indicate if your name should be treated confidentially.

An independent committee will examine reports on the basis of: 1) reliability and credibility of the data; 2) innovative and feasible proposals for improving public opinion and community relations; 3) a concensus-seeking tone.

A meeting will be organised in September 1992, to bring together the authors of the best reports, representatives of European governments, relevant international agencies, concerned private agencies, academics and the international media. The reports will be presented and discussed, and proposals put forward to improve on the present situation. A special study group will explore the feasibility of self-reliant economic initiatives between refugees and asylum-seekers and the host communities.

It is hoped to set up a framework for interaction at the European level between refugees, asylum seekers and other forced migrants seeking consensus and cooperation between themselves and their hosts. To receive a full proposal, or submit a country report, please contact:

CBMA Project  
c/o Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM)  
Janskerhos 16  
3512 BM Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
Fax: +31-30-39 30 28

## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

The **Second Asian Pacific Conference on Disaster Medicine**, will be held at Makuhari Messe, Chiba, Japan, from September 10-13, 1992.

As part of the activities planned for the current International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction, this conference on disaster medicine will discuss the nature of international disasters and preparedness measures. Approximately 1000 participants are expected, including medical doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians and disaster researchers. Symposia include 'Disaster and Medicine: Disasters in the Asian Pacific area and the need for emergency medicine', 'Disaster and Cities: City systems which cope with disasters', and 'Disaster and Emergency Aid: Preparedness of the state, firms and the public to cope with disasters'. For more information, contact:

Secretariat  
Second Asian Pacific Conference on Disaster Medicine  
c/o Japan Convention Services, Inc.  
Nippon Press Center Building  
2-2-1 Uchisaiwai-cho, Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 100  
JAPAN  
FAX: +81-3-3508 0820

A Conference entitled 'Migrants, Development, Metropolis' is being organised by the Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research in cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Association for Migration Research, Berlin. The Conference will address the impact of migration processes on various forms of social development. The fundamental changes in the world order and the rising importance of ethnicity and racism for social disqualification will be key themes. General aspects of development politics will be dealt with in panel discussions, and regional aspects of migration and development and other specific problems will be discussed in workshops. The Conference will be held in Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, from March 26-29, 1992. For further information contact:

Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research  
P.O. Box 11 25  
D-1000 Berlin 30  
GERMANY  
Tel: +49-30-262 84, -85 Fax: +49-30-262 95

A **Human Rights Activists and Advocates Workshop** is to be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, April 24-26, 1992, organised by the Southern Africa Human Rights Foundation (S.A.H.R.F.). The conveners hope that this Workshop will be the largest ever gathering of human rights activists in the region. The objectives are to provide training and a forum for the exchange of ideas by activists and advocates; to encourage democratic organisations in the region to prepare and participate in the transition to democracy and pluralist dispensation; to develop materials to be used in future human rights workshops; to establish a coordinating mechanism for the exchange of human rights, jus-

tice and democracy, and related information at the grassroots level.

This workshop and those planned to follow it will target the ordinary men and women in the region who want to devote their spare time and energy to the protection and observation of human rights. For more information on this Workshop or S.A.H.R.F., contact:

Archibald M. Ngcobo  
Executive Director  
Southern Africa Human Rights Foundation  
P.O. Box 430  
Kwekwe  
ZIMBABWE

**Forced Migration and National Sovereignty: Refugees, Displaced People and Involuntary Migrants** is the topic for the fourth international conference of the Catholic Institute for International Relations to be held at Church House Conference Centre, Dean's Yard, Westminster, London SW1P 3NZ, on 19-20 June 1992. This Conference will explore the causes and effects of the refugee crisis. Key speakers from Southern Africa, the Philippines, Europe and the USA will discuss state violations of human rights and look at the concept of national sovereignty as a central regulatory principle in international affairs. The Conference fee for the two days includes meals and refreshments:

#45 for members of organisations; #25 for individuals; #20 for CIIR members; #10 for unwaged (cheques payable to CIIR). Interested participants should register by May 1. To register, or for more information, contact:

Mari King  
CIIR  
Unit 3  
Canonbury Yard  
190a New North Road  
London N1 7BJ  
UK  
Tel: +44-071-354 0883 Fax: +44-071-359 0017

#### CONFERENCE REPORTS

**International Conference 'Human Rights Protection for Internally Displaced Persons'**, June 24-25 1991.

A meeting of 40 international experts was convened by the Refugee Policy Group to address the human rights dimension of internal displacement and recommend measures the international community could take to enhance protection for those in refugee-like situations within their own countries. In 1989, there were an estimated 20 million people internally displaced: 13 million in Africa, 5 million in Asia, 1 million in the Americas and 1 million in Europe.

*If you are not already a member of RPN and would like to join, please fill in the tear-off form below and return it to RPN*

### YES, I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE REFUGEE PARTICIPATION NETWORK!

I am/am not able to make a contribution towards my annual subscription:  £20  £40  other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Fax/Telex \_\_\_\_\_

Main area of work experience (eg. education, health, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Special interest group (eg. refugee women, children, etc.) or second area of experience \_\_\_\_\_

Geographical area of interest \_\_\_\_\_

Type of organisation (eg. NGO, international agency, refugee-based, individual, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to: Refugee Participation Network, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, OXFORD, OX1 3LA, UK**

Participants were unanimous in endorsing the need to design a more effective international response to the protection needs of internally displaced persons, as they often fall beyond the mandates of refugee and relief organisations and receive little or no protection from the human rights community. Participants urged a rethinking of the mandates of U.N. agencies to enable them to deal more effectively and rapidly with the assistance and protection needs of the internally displaced. Several participants proposed that UNICEF's more flexible mandate be extended to other humanitarian agencies, in particular UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

A conference report can be obtained from :

*Refugee Policy Group*  
1424 16th Street, N.W. Suite 401  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
USA  
Fax: +1-202-667 5034

**The Resolution of U.N. Commission on Human Rights on Internally Displaced Persons, adopted March 5, 1991 (Res. 1991/25)** invites all governments and international organisations to intensify their co-operation and assistance in world-wide efforts to address the serious problems and needs resulting from internal displacement. This resolution also requests the Secretary-General to take into account the protection of human rights and the needs of internally displaced persons in his system-wide review aimed at ensuring an effective response by the United Nations system to the problems of refugees, displaced persons and returnees. The Secretary-General is further requested to submit an analytical report on internally displaced persons, taking into account the protection of their human rights, to the Commission on Human Rights at its 48th session.

## DIRECTORIES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

*A Selected Bibliography on Refugee Health*, Hans Thoolen and Susan Forbes Martin, eds, July 1991.

This bibliography is a joint project of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Centre for Documentation on Refugees and the Refugee Policy Group. It is organised around key issues such as primary health care and health services, feeding programs and nutrition, cross-cultural service delivery models, health services in resettlement countries, responses to psycho-social problems, and problems of vulnerable groups.

The bibliography contains references to published documents (monographs or articles) as well as to unpublished material in the public domain (theses, conference papers) in English, French or Spanish. In addition, a list of publishers' addresses is provided, along with an author and subject index and thesaurus.

To order, contact:

*Refugee Policy Group (RPG)*  
(address above)

*Committee for Co-ordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand, Directory*, July 1991.

CCSDPT has produced a 45 page directory of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of people and organisations involved in any way with displaced persons in Thailand. It is organised by CCSDPT members, the Royal Thai government, international organisations, embassies, and other organisations (NGOs). A directory of service sites is also provided, with names and activities of organisations providing services.

To obtain a copy of this Directory, or for more information contact:

CCSDPT  
37-B Soi 15 (Soi Somprasong 3)  
Petchburi Road  
Bangkok 10400  
THAILAND

The U.S. Office of Refugee Settlement has compiled a *Directory of Films and Videotapes on Refugee Issues*. More than 120 titles are included on themes such as the refugee resettlement experience, refugee youth, job development, local and overseas orientation, health and mental health, religions, Hmong issues, law enforcement, etc. The Directory is available from:

*Office of Refugee Resettlement*  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.  
6th Floor  
Attn: Mr. Ron Munia  
Washington, D.C. 20447  
USA

## NEWSLETTERS

The **Afghan Refugee Information Network** is a registered British charity (no. 327194) which produces an English-language quarterly newsletter on Afghanistan. It carries original material obtained from people who have recently visited the refugee areas of Afghanistan, as well as digests of facts and figures from official sources, and reviews, summaries or translations of books and articles appearing in other countries. It also carries background articles by people expert in the field. Contributors include medical personnel, anthropologists, historians, relief workers, journalists and others.

For information about subscription, contact:

*Afghan Refugee Information Network*  
18 Burstock Road  
London SW15 2PW  
UK

## PUBLICATIONS

*National Human Rights Institutions in Africa* (September 1991), Richard Carver and Paul Hunt.

This study was commissioned by the **African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies** because of the lack of information on the experience of national human rights

institutions in Africa. The first section of the paper provides a brief historical review of permanent national human rights institutions in Africa. The second, drawing on African experience, considers three key features of official human rights bodies: mandate, appointment/accountability and investigation. By way of short case studies, the third section looks more closely at the institutions in Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zaire and the Gambia. The paper concludes with observations and suggestions about African national human rights institutions. The appendix provides a directory of official human rights bodies in Africa.

For a copy of the study or for more information, contact:

Raymond Sock, Director  
African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies  
Kairaba Avenue  
K.S.M.D.  
The GAMBIA

The publications programme of the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, Canada, includes books, specialised monographs, collections of conference papers, doctoral and masters theses, research and field reports, and other scholarly papers about refugee issues and situations.

Book titles for 1991 include: *Refugee Policy: Canada and the United States*, Adelman, H., (ed); *Soviet-Jewish Emigration and Resettlement in the 1990s*, Basok, T., and Brym, R. (ed); *Contemporary Hungary and the Refugee Problem*, Adelman, H., Tessenyi, G., and Sik, A. (eds). Book titles to be published in 1992 include *Humanitarian Intervention and Internally Displaced Refugees*, Adelman, H. (ed); *Refugee Aid and Development: Global Perspectives, Theoretical and Empirical Foundations*, Gorman, R., (ed); *Migrants and Refugees: Australia and Canada*, Adelman, H. (ed); *Hong Kong and Refugees*, Lam, L. (ed).

CRS also publishes a quarterly periodical, *Refuge*, which provides a forum to discuss issues including refugee status determination, sponsorship, ongoing resettlement needs and programs. An index, complete sets of *Refuge*, or individual editions are available. A one year subscription to *Refuge* costs C\$ 25.00 within Canada and US\$ 30.00 elsewhere. For more information, or to obtain CRS publications, contact:

York Lanes Press  
York University  
4700 Keele St.  
North York, Ontario  
M3J1P3  
CANADA  
Tel: +1-416-736-5843

Intermediate Technology Publications is the publishing arm of the Intermediate Technology Development Group, founded by the late Dr. E.F. Schumacher. Intermediate Technology enables the poorest people in the world to develop and use technologies and methods which give them

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3. ISSUES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF REFUGEE ASSISTANCE
4. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF FORCED MIGRATION

For further information please contact:

Course Training Officer,  
Refugee Studies Programme,  
Queen Elizabeth House,  
21 St. Giles,  
Oxford, OX1 3LA, U.K.

Tel: +44-865-270722  
Tlx: 83147G-attn QEH/RSP  
Fax: +44-865-270721

more control over their lives and which contribute to the long-term development of their communities.

IT Publications publishes an annual catalogue of recommended titles on appropriate technology and development issues, from publishers around the world, annotated to help those ordering by mail. The majority of the books are practically oriented. The 1992 'Books By Post' catalogue lists 600 books available from IT, including 200 of its own titles. The catalogue is organized alphabetically by topic and is not limited to English titles. Intermediate Publications is based at:

103-105 Southampton Row,  
London, WC1B 4HH  
UK  
Fax: +44-71-436 2013.

*A Guide To Living in Britain for Refugees From Vietnam*, Refugee Action, 1991. Vietnamese/Chinese/English.

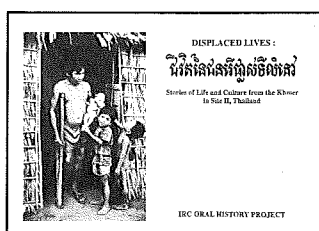
This is a collection of nine public education booklets designed to be used by refugees themselves. Each booklet covers a different aspect of social/economic life in Britain: Welfare Benefits, Housing, Refugee Documents and Family Reunion, Health, Education for Children, Education for Young People, Education and Training for Adults, Looking for Work, and Having a Job. Cartoons, creative graphics, and photographs make the booklets easy to use and understand. Addresses and phone numbers for places to get help are included for each topic.

Copies are available for #5.00 (free to refugees and community groups from Vietnam) from:

*Refugee Action Handbooks*  
The Offices, The Cedars, Oakwood  
Derby  
DE2 4FY  
UK  
Tel: +44-332-833310

*Displaced Lives: Stories of Life and Culture From the Khmer in Site II, Thailand*, International Rescue Committee, Oral History Project, November 1990. Khmer/English. This 157 page paperback offers a collection of personal accounts of social life and culture in Site II, the largest of six camps for displaced Khmer along the Thai/Cambodian border. It looks at the society and culture that has been established in Site II, and especially at that aspect of traditional culture contained in story-telling; it compares this tradition to the stories that people tell about their lives on the border. There is a beautiful collection of photographs throughout the book.

*International Rescue Committee*  
216 Soi 1 Sukhumvit Rd.  
Bangkok 10110  
THAILAND



## ORGANISATIONS

### Nadeje - Czechoslovakian Mission and Charity Initiative

NADEJE (The Hope) is a new NGO in Czechoslovakia. Its objective is to build a network around the country to serve refugees and uprooted peoples. NADEJE is developing programmes to assist the integration of refugees into the host country, including accommodation, employment, language education, childrens' education and proper medical care. It is also appealing to the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Social Care to establish education for both adult and child refugees.

For more information, contact:

*Ilja Hradecky, Director*  
NADEJE  
Rumunská 25  
120 00 Praha 2  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
Tel: +42-2-257506

The **Horn Refugee Service (HRS)**, in Toronto, Canada was established in 1986. HRS is concerned primarily with the Horn of Africa, and is committed to going beyond the advisory roles traditionally undertaken by international agencies. Concrete self-help programmes are provided directly to refugees in countries of first asylum. In terms of research, the aim of the programme is to create a database of current and accurate materials that will assist agencies and concerned groups in determining areas of critical need. HRS has also recently begun publishing a newsletter. For more information, contact:

*Horn Refugee Service*  
c/o Centre for Refugee Studies  
Room 322 York Lanes  
York University  
4700 Keele St.  
North York, Ontario  
M3J 1P3 CANADA

**Autonomia Alapitvány - The Hungarian Foundation for Self-Reliance (HFSR)** was established in 1990 with the view that 40 years of totalitarian government has destroyed the psychological and organisational tradition of self-help among Hungarians. In order to alleviate the painful transition from being dependent subjects into grown up, autonomous citizens, an effort must be made to support the emerging civic sector. Three aspects were perceived to be in need of radical change: the appalling state of the environment, the growth of poverty and unemployment, and the rise of discrimination against the most populous ethnic group in the country, the Gypsies, whose number has tripled in the last 30 years.

The objectives of HFSR are to contribute to the empowerment of the independent sector in the country by offering opportunities to its organisations, associations and clubs in the fields of environmentally sustainable development, poverty and minority rights, to enable them to obtain independent funds (seed money) to execute and monitor their own



projects, and so to enhance their autonomy and further develop their capacity to serve the community.

For more information, contact:

*Andras Biro*

*Executive Director*

*Autonomia Alapitvány*

*Hungarian Foundation for Self-reliance*

*H-1025 Budapest*

*Kaply utca 1*

**HUNGARY**

The Malaysian Sociological Research Institute coordinates a Sponsorship of Palestinian Children programme under a government created Trust. Over 300 fatherless Palestinian children from Lebanese refugee camps are sponsored with an annual contribution of M\$ 750 per child. In addition, MSRI has arranged for a number of Malaysian medical volunteers to work in Lebanon, and has sent a few tons of medicines to Lebanon, Gulf War victims and Palestinian medical services in the Occupied Territories. The programme raises approximately M\$ 1 million a year from Malaysian donations.

For more information contact:

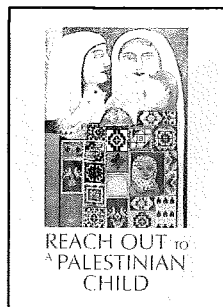
**MSRI**

**No. 19**

*Jalan Delima (off Jalan Bukit Bintang)*

*55100 Kuala Lumpur*

**MALAYSIA**



## CORRECTION

### COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

The address given in RPN 11 (October 1991) for CFSI was not correct. RPN apologises for any inconvenience this may have caused. The following are the correct addresses:

**Headquarters:**

*CFSI Manila*

*Suite 1000A, Victoria Building*

*429 United Nations Ave*

*Ermita, Manila, PHILLIPINES*

**Hong Kong Branch office:**

*1602 Jubilee Commercial Building*

*44 Gloucester Road*

*Wanchai, HONG KONG*



*Drawing by Charles Blackson Alion, Ugandan refugee student, Sudan*

# LETTERS

## PNDC abuses and the flight of Ghanians abroad

On December 31, 1991, Ghana's military government, the Provisional National Defence Committee (PNDC), marked its tenth anniversary. The decade 1981-1991 saw a substantial outflow of Ghanaian refugees. The PNDC, chaired by Flight Lieutenant John Jerry Rawlings, seized power from the former elected government and later established a dictatorial grip on Ghana, suspending the constitution and ruling through decrees. There was no guarantee of rights and freedoms. Public tribunals were set up to bypass the regular court system. Criticism of the revolution, Chairman Rawlings, or PNDC members was not tolerated.

On 18 December 1991, **Amnesty International** reported that between 1983 and 1986 in Ghana, at least 90 people were charged and tried in political cases, of whom 50 were sentenced to death and at least 23 executed. For the most part they were charged in connection with unsuccessful coup attempts and alleged conspiracies to overthrow the government. Many more Ghanaians have been sentenced to death *in absentia*. In April 1991, the Ghanaian authorities were unable to provide Amnesty International with lists or statistics on death sentences passed or executions carried out.

It is extremely hard to establish a precise total of Ghanaians outside their own country, as they are scattered over Africa, Europe and North America. Data on Ghanaian refugees in Europe assembled from UNHCR, combined with estimates from community based agencies in Canada, indicates that approximately 50,000 Ghanaians sought refuge abroad between 1982 and 1990.

Three categories of Ghanaian refugees are distinguished. First, there is the 'elite group' comprising key members of the civilian administration dethroned by the 1981 coup (parliamentarians, heads of Ghana's diplomatic mission abroad, lawyers, judges, university lecturers, heads of governmental boards and corporations, top political party officials and other administrative officials). The average age of this group was 35. They were highly educated and belonged to Ghana's top income bracket. Their ties to the dethroned administration made them and also their families targets for the military regime.

The second category is the semi-elite group, the university students and journalists who clashed with the military regime as a result of their outspokenness and criticism of military policies and anti-military demonstrations. Also included in this group were civilians and armed

personnel involved in unsuccessful coup attempts. This class was relatively young and educated.

The third and largest group consists of those induced to flee as a result of raids on traders, control of religious activities, clashes with revolutionary organs, and accusations of illegal economic activities. The average age of this group was 20, their education up to about high school level.

### Destination of Ghana's Refugees

The destination of the majority of Ghanaian refugees has shifted from the African continent to Canada, Germany, France, Sweden and Britain. The most crucial factor which refugees considered was their safety, which they felt was not guaranteed in neighbouring states. According to UNHCR, 19,763 Ghanaians sought political asylum in 17 European countries between 1988 and October, 1990. The British Refugee Council (BRC) maintained in 1990 that the largest concentration of Ghanaian political exiles were in Britain. There are 3,228 Ghanaians with convention refugee status in Britain, according to the latest BRC figures. BRC cautions that since the figures excluded families of these refugees, the number could be over 6,000.

The restrictive asylum practices adopted in Europe caused Ghanaians to turn to North America - particularly Canada. In the 22 months between May 1986 and February, 1988, 2,233 Ghanaians sought refugee status in Canada, compared with a total of 402 Ghanaian refugee applications to Britain in the same period. In fact, during this period, the number of Ghanaian claims in Canada were exceeded only by Chilean claimants in 1987.

The Ghanaian preference for Canada, however, has not been met with a high degree of acceptance. Between January 1 and September 20, 1991, 887 Ghanaian refugee claims went through the 'Initial Hearing Stage' conducted by the Convention Refugee Determination Division of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board. Out of these, a total of 796 were judged to possess a credible basis for their claim, and deemed eligible to proceed to a 'Full Hearing Stage'. However, out of 428 cases actually considered, 176 cases were given positive recommendations. This indicates an acceptance rate of just 20% with about 60% of Ghanaian refugee claimants still caught in the huge refugee backlog in Canada.

I would like to point out that repressions and persecutions continue to characterise Ghana's PNDC regime, and flight abroad will persist. This calls for a coordinated international effort to place pressure on the military regime to amend its ways.

**Edward Opoku-Dapaah is currently completing his PhD thesis with the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada.**

[The Editor would like to draw readers' attention to developments in Ghana since receiving this letter. *The Economist* for February 1992 notes that Ghana's ruler has set up a committee to write a new constitution which is due to be put to a referendum in April. Presidential and parliamentary elections are to be held near the end of this year]

## Tapping and developing refugees' skills

From 1959-1964, I was given responsibility by the then Government of Uganda to plan the educational programme for Rwandese refugees in Uganda, and ensure their integration into the Ugandan national education programme. My duties included establishing schools in the new settlements, and arranging weekend crash courses in the English language for Rwandese teachers (French had been their medium of instruction in Rwanda). Both teachers and children worked so hard that within one year, the Rwandese teachers were able to conduct their teaching in the English language.

Another arrangement which I made was an exchange between local Ugandan teachers and Rwandese teachers. Since the language of instruction in Rwanda was French, the Rwandese refugee teachers taught French in the Ugandan Secondary schools which had an acute shortage of such teachers. This arrangement had the blessings of the officials in the Ugandan Ministry of Education and indeed was a big saving for them since overseas expatriate teachers did not need to be hired. This programme worked to the benefit of the Rwandese refugee teachers in particular and served to meet the intended primary goal which was to help the Rwandese refugee children and promote their process of integration in Uganda.

Although the Rwandese teachers had not been trained according to the Ugandan sys-

# NEWSFROMRSP

(Continued from page 44)

tem of education, the in-service English language instruction they received, especially arranged in the settlement areas enabled them to use their skills. The Rwandese teachers needed English language to enable them to follow the Ugandan syllabus and the teaching system under the Ministry of Education.

Overall, the efforts towards education for refugees are rarely as well organised as this. Skills within the refugee communities are rarely tapped. Too often assistance is ad hoc, uncoordinated, unsystematic and often decisions are made on a political basis rather than in the interests of the refugees. After years of experience with refugees in Africa, Hugh Pilkington described the situation in the following way:

...it is not just that the blind are leading the blind, but that the totally blind are leading the partially sighted. The wrong refugee is sent to a wrong course, with the wrong background qualifications, at the wrong level, to prepare for a course which does not interest the refugee student, and eventually leading to a career which is most unsuitable. Too few agencies deploy the locally available expertise in preference to relying on the information from ill-informed institutions....

The example of Rwandese refugees in Uganda is an example of how host countries can also benefit from a refugee influx. In Kenya too, Ugandan refugees as well as refugees from Rwanda took teaching positions in schools and doctors and nurses were employed in hospitals, those with administration skills worked (and continue to work) in organs of the government including the five national universities.

In Uganda in the early 1960s, the responsibility for schools was being shifted away from individual missions so that they came under government control. One of the figures instrumental in the assistance programme for refugees, and a strong advocate for their integration, was the late Dr Stanley Smith (of the Anglican Church), assisted by Penelope Carlisle.

Rev. J.B. Kakubi, currently Bishop of Mbarara Diocese, represented the Catholic Church in the same process.

**Jork Bugingo**  
Former Education Officer in charge of Rwandese Refugees' Education in Uganda, currently visiting RSP, Oxford.

The workshop was conceived as a first phase which could establish the foundation for 'hands-on' training of practitioners within each of the countries represented. The aims of the workshop were: to review current policies in southern African countries and compare these with research findings and practices in other parts of the world; to review the comparative advantages of relief and developmental approaches to assisting refugees and displaced persons; to explore possible ways of identifying projects which would benefit both the displaced and host populations; to consider the sociology, psychology, and economics of repatriation and issues of reception, protection and the logistics of return; to consider if and how repatriation can be achieved with the minimum social and economic disruption to the displaced and settled populations in each country; to consider possible strategies for increasing the earning capacity of refugees.

The inter-related key topics discussed throughout the workshop were (1) the international context and the refugee experience; (2) the refugee situation and assistance policies in southern Africa; (3) refugees and development: potential and constraints; (4) institutional relationships; (5) securing and protecting the rights of refugees; (6) repatriation; and (7) meeting special needs.

The resource persons gave brief presentations on the key issues, followed by questions and discussion. Country delegates presented overviews on the refugee situations and policies in their respective countries, answering clarification questions from the floor. Breakaway groups for more detailed discussions were organised alternately on a country basis and then line ministry (sectoral) basis to facilitate maximum exchange of information and ideas.

A 170 page report of the Workshop proceedings is available from RSP for £4.

## RESPONDING TO THE NUTRITION CRISIS AMONG REFUGEES: THE NEED FOR NEW APPROACHES

The papers from this important international symposium, held in Oxford on 17-20 March 1991, will be published in a special length issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* in 1992.

Contributors will include:

Barbara Harrell-Bond . Ken Wilson . Erskine Childers .  
Jaya Henry . Philip Nieburg . Bobbie Person-Karell .  
Michael Toole . John Seaman  
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**Journals Marketing Department,  
Oxford University Press,  
Southfield Road, Eynsham,  
Oxford OX8 1JJ, UK**

Copies of the symposium report are still available from RSP for £1 postage & handling.

# NEWS FROM RSP

## Bernard van Leer Foundation Sponsorship

RPN gratefully acknowledges the Bernard van Leer Foundation of the Netherlands for sponsoring this issue of RPN on refugee children.

### 'Refugees or Economic Migrants?'

The seminar 'Refugees or Economic Migrants?' organised by RSP and the Roberts Centre, took place in December 1991 at a time of deepening concern over migration issues, and a widening gulf between those who call for greater humanitarian protection for forced migrants and those, especially in Europe, who fear a massive influx of refugees and labour migrants. The meeting brought together a group of some sixty participants with a shared commitment to open discussion of the issues. As such, it will have succeeded if it has started a process of building mutual understanding between the two viewpoints characterised in pathological terms by one speaker as 'the immigration paranoiacs and the humanitarian depressives'.

The participants included academic specialists in forced migration, representatives of humanitarian and non-profit organisations, senior government advisors and 'opinion-formers' from the worlds of business, finance and the media. To encourage free debate, the discussions which formed the bulk of the proceedings were held on a non-attributable basis.

Participants agreed that the New World Order was unlikely to diminish the likelihood of continued involuntary displacement on a huge scale, and several believed that its economic and social consequences would continue to generate huge increases.

Discussion and debate over the two days revolved around issues such as the adequacy of the international institutions and legal instruments that have grown up since the Second World War to deal with refugees and other forced migrants. The bulk of the second day was devoted to questions of forced migration within and into Europe, with case studies from Germany and the Soviet Union. This session was integrated into the broader conference themes by a discussion of the effect on refugees of anti-migrant attitudes in the press and wider society.

There was little consensus over possible solutions. Debate included suggestions for 'short stays' such as mechanisms for permitting short-term labour migration into comparatively wealthy countries; and suggestions for restructuring of refugee law and human rights monitoring.

A copy of the five page Summary Report is available from RSP for £1.00 and a published Report, together with the background paper and keynote address is forthcoming.

## Ongoing Field Research in Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia

As a follow-up to his studies on refugee livelihood in Malawi (1989) and Zambia (1990), Dr Ken Wilson, together with a number of Southern African colleagues, is conducting research on war, displacement and the future re-construction of society in Mozambique. The Mozambican government and several concerned aid agencies have funded and/or collaborated in this research.

*Research in Western Zambezia*, to be completed in 1992, has concentrated on the following themes:

- \* The nature of the war in Mozambique: the processes and experience of violence, and how this influences social relationships and generates displacement.

- \* The livelihood strategies of the refugees and internally displaced, as a basis for designing aid interventions with more lasting benefits.

- \* The nature of 'refugee societies', their interactions with the local host populations, local government and aid agencies, and how this influences people's conceptions of the future.

- \* Socio-religious movements and the experience of war and displacement (with particular focus on the Naparama peasant militia and the Jehovah's Witnesses).

- \* The processes of repatriation and re-integration, including institutional as well as socio-economic dimensions.

- \* The re-creation of society with peace, in particular local social amics and leadership, and how this links to the role of local government, infrastructure and services at district level.

*Research on Repatriation to Northern Tete* has involved field studies in 1991 with the Mozambicans from this region living in Zambia, and amongst returnees and displaced people in Northern Tete itself. It is also hoped to investigate how the people from this area currently in Malawi conceive of their future return. The studies demonstrate how repatriation planning can be greatly strengthened by a consideration of displaced people's own needs and strategies; and how the recreation of functioning civil institutions and economic environment in the home areas, including tackling such problems as land tenure, are just as important as helping people to physically relocate home.

## Southern Africa Regional Workshop

A workshop entitled 'Refugees as Resources for Development: Opportunities and Constraints' brought together 39 senior government officials from the line ministries in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe; 11 resource persons for the Refugee Studies Programme; and 10 representatives from international organisations including the EC, UNHCR, WFP and WHO. The workshop was organised by the Course Training Unit of the Refugee Studies Programme and was held in Arusha, Tanzania between 22nd September and 3rd October 1991. The workshop was funded by the EC, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Governments of the Netherlands and Denmark, the UNDP Field Offices of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

...continued on page 43