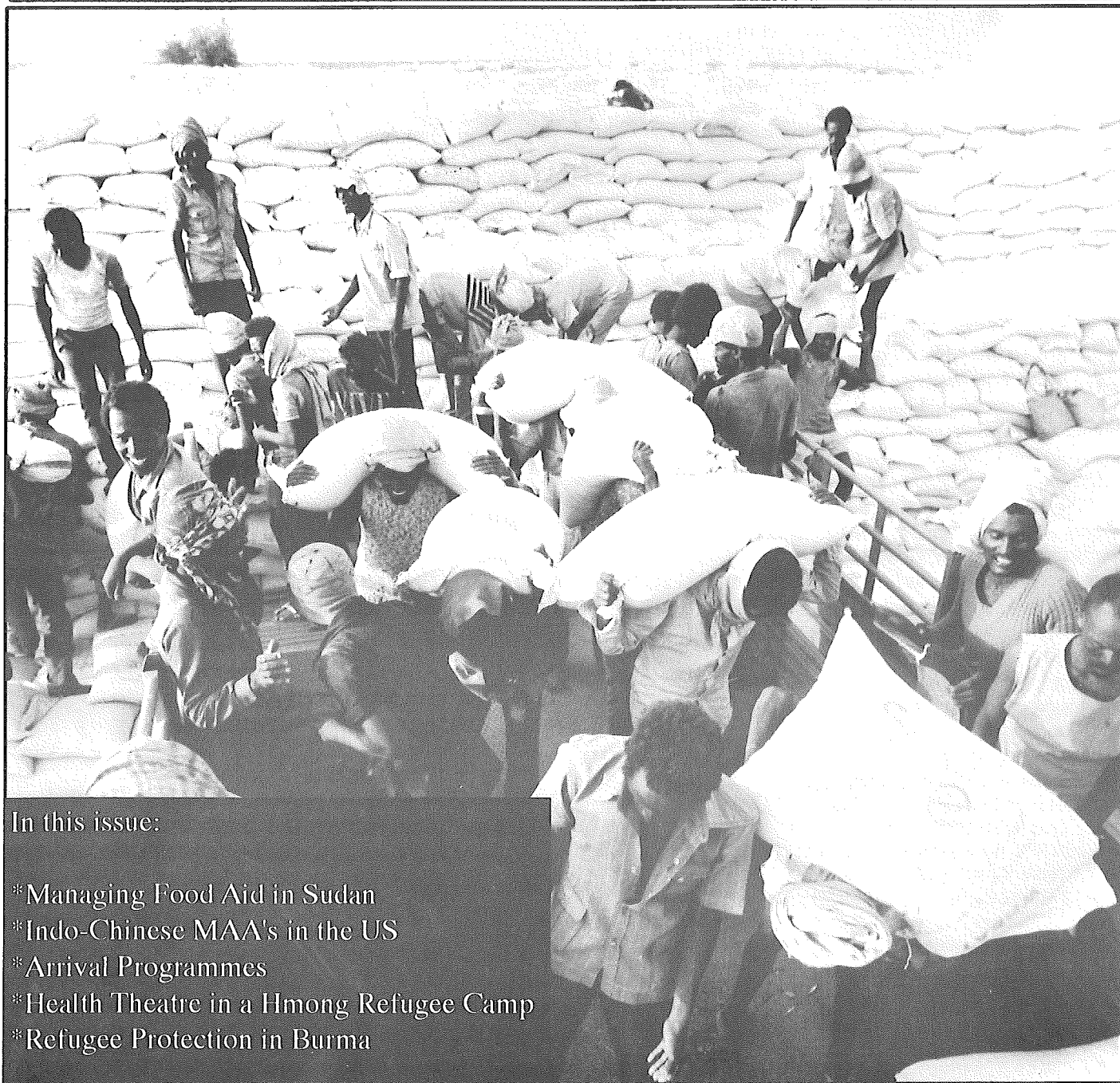


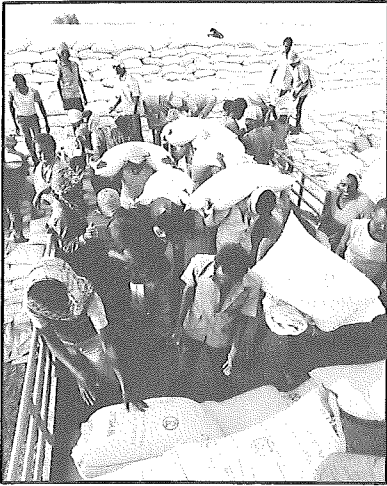
WHO'S IN CHARGE?

MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN REFUGEE ASSISTANCE



In this issue:

- *Managing Food Aid in Sudan
- *Indo-Chinese MAA's in the US
- *Arrival Programmes
- *Health Theatre in a Hmong Refugee Camp
- *Refugee Protection in Burma



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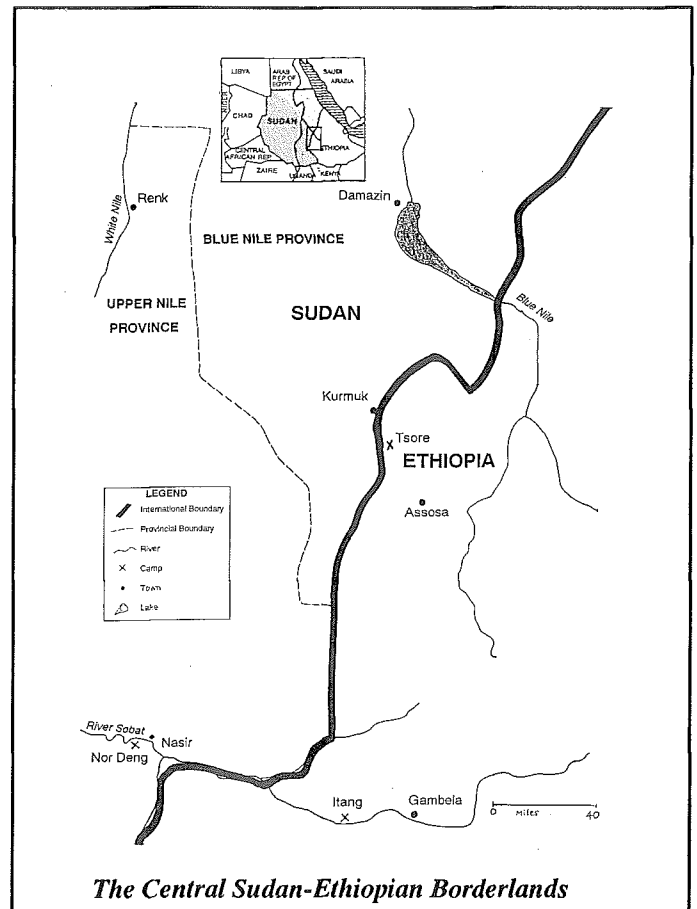
MANAGING FOOD AID: RETURNEES' STRATEGIES FOR ALLOCATING RELIEF

by Wendy James

This article describes the means by which a group of returnees to Sudan developed and handled their own food distribution system, the way in which they tried to ensure equity and the means they used to give priority to those in greatest need.

Sudanese returnees coming back from southwestern Ethiopia in 1991 were stranded by the rains and the war in their own country whilst still far from home. They faced a situation of extreme food shortage. At the places where they congregated, such as the rebel-held town of Nasir in Upper Nile Province, limited assistance was provided by the UN and NGOs under 'Operation Lifeline Sudan'. Relief consisted solely of sorghum, maize or wheat as the Khartoum Government allowed aid only in the form of grain. Delivery by barge (favoured by Khartoum) proved erratic and air drops arranged by the World Food Programme during the prolonged delays were subject to severe Government restrictions in areas held by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Seven food distribution centres were set up at Nasir in June/July 1991 by the relief wing of the SPLA (the SRRA), and one of these (Nor Deng) was the focus of my research.

In July/August 1991, I wrote an initial report for the World Food Programme (WFP), and returned to conduct a further study in September and October. The context for the studies on food aid and its management was one of heightened (and politicised) concern over numbers and distribution. In the Nor Deng community, at least, such fears proved to be unfounded.



The Central Sudan-Ethiopian Borderlands

Background

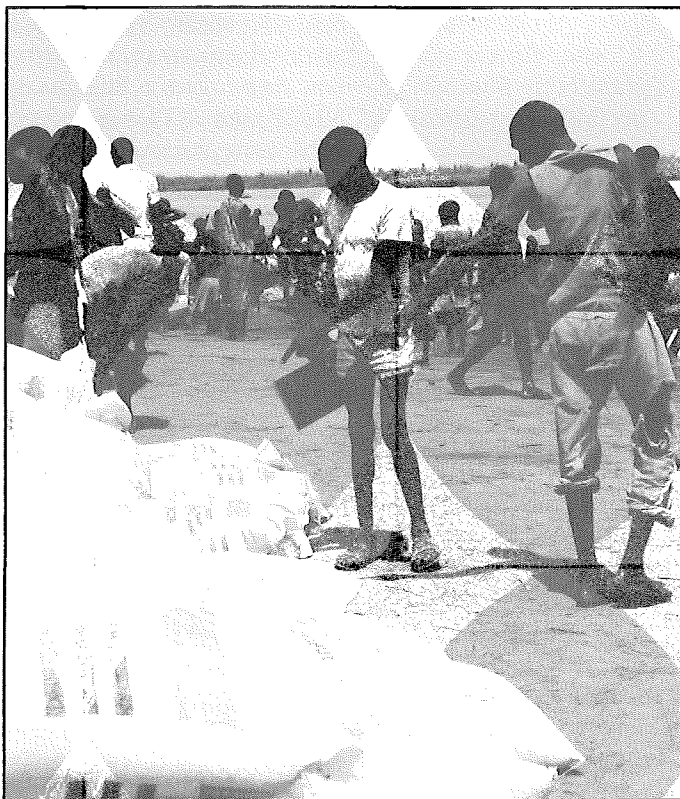
Most of the returnees at Nor Deng had originally left the Sudan in 1987 when the civil war engulfed their home area in the Kurmuk District of the Blue Nile Province. As refugees in Ethiopia they were first sheltered in a new UNHCR camp at Tsore near Assosa in the west, but had to flee again following attacks on the camp in January 1990. They showed up in another Ethiopian camp (Itang) in May-June 1990, only to flee for the third time after the fall of the Mengistu Government in May 1991. They left Itang together with the rest of the camp population (mostly from southern Sudan). The Blue Nile group of 30,000 were mostly Uduk speakers, formerly a dispersed and loosely-knit population, but now widely perceived as a coherent ethnic entity. They were basically farmers, hunters and gatherers, accustomed to hilly and forested country. They were uncomfortable in the Nasir grass plain where they were concentrated as returnees, where they faced floods and were in competition for resources with the local Nuer population.

The Numbers Game

Usual doubts about the size of the target population were heightened in Nor Deng by donors' shifting political interests and changing policies towards southern Sudan and Ethiopia. In addition, there was more than the usual concern about whether the food (provided at great cost) was actually reaching the returnees. There was inevitably some 'leakage' to local civilians, some of whose need was almost as great, but the further suspicion was that some food went on to the SPLA.

Returnees in the Nasir area had been registered on their arrival in June-July. However, three months later there was confusion about the numbers in each of the established centres. The SRRA population estimate for Nor Deng (Blue Nile and southern returnees together) was 35,000. This figure was not accepted by the UN who put forward various lower estimates. One was an 'educated guess' of 14,000 (although UNHCR had counted more than 20,000-25,000 Blue Nile refugees in the previous camps of Itang and Assosa). The overall allocation of food to the Blue Nile community in Nor Deng was negotiated with the SRRA, who derived their population figures from lists compiled by 17 group leaders or chiefs in July. Between July and October the accuracy of these lists increased as more people came forward to register (immigration was not possible with the floods), and the totals changed from 25,000 to 30,455. Despite this increase, July figures continued to be used, the lists continued to be regarded as dubious and the UN had not seen the detailed evidence they contained.

The chiefs listed the names of household heads and the number of dependants (in some cases these were broken down into adult and child, male and female). The lists were not prepared as propaganda for an external eye, but were for the use of the people themselves in monitoring their own sharing arrangements. This gave extra credibility to the information, in my view. When this community had been in Assosa camp in Ethiopia, UNHCR had regarded them as 'model refugees'. But how were they coping with this situation of severe need in the Sudanese context?



Nor Deng, on the South Bank of the Sobat, was 1 of 7 distribution centres set up in June/July 1991
Photo: Wendy James

Monitoring Patterns of Food Distribution

Distributions were not regular. They occurred on a daily basis only when there had just been a new air drop or barge delivery. As stocks were depleted and plans for new supply routes faltered, food distributions were cut to alternate days and at times they ceased altogether. In the first half of September there was a two-week gap when no deliveries took place. Rates of illness, death, and childhood malnutrition, rose dramatically from September onwards.

The food distribution was observed at several stages of the process. On arrival by boat on the waterfront of Nor Deng, responsibility for the grain was handed over from a WFP monitor to a returnee team who had several years' experience in previous camps. On just two occasions over the previous few months charitable allocations had been made to sick people from the waterfront, but otherwise the whole delivery was carried to distribution points from where individual household allocations were made.

Agencies assumed that each sack contained 50 kgs. On the basis of my observations, however, this was not the case and an average figure of 48 kgs per sack would be more accurate. When actually checked, several full sacks were only 49 kg (possibly because of dehydration). Moreover, people claimed that there were always sacks that were not quite full. Other sacks had small holes, accidentally or half-intentionally made, and grain had dribbled out in transit. A further small point, not insignificant when every gram has to be accounted for, was that the actual sack weighed several grams.

BLUE NILE RETURNEE GROUP IN NOR DENG: FOOD SUPPLY & CHIEFS' POPULATION RECORDS

CHIEF	Population Recorded in July '91	Number of Sacks	Population Recorded in October '91	Average Grams Per Head
Noka Gindi	1,817	19.5	2,810	333
Awad Chito	1,552	13.5	1,953	331
Dhahil Zaid	3,595	28	3,641	369
Karkon Jimma	1,259	11.5	1,407	392
Tom Mahmoud	1,271	10.5	1,278	394
Soya Bam	2,468	23	3,432	321
Leko Bakhit	2,510	23	3,078	359
Dhunyka Men	1,104	11.5	1,712	322
Ponis Adam	1,142	11.5	1,711	322
Waskan Munya	1,229	11.5	1,529	361
Hajko Yusuf	1,139	10.5	1,653	305
Ebet Puba	2,895	24	2,931	393
Takgwo Idris)				
Leha Hamdan)	1,152	12.5	1,329	451
Dawud Kenta)				
Sebit Robo)	1,861	14.5	1,991	349
Tongwo Gwolod)				
	24,449	225	30,455	355

Note: Food Deliveries in October 1991 were based on the July 1991 recorded populations.

The average 48 kilos of grain per sack was distributed within each chief's group in a highly systematic manner. Orderly queues formed at each local distribution point. Each person in the queue had a small white card or paper ticket issued by their chief, giving name and the number of household members. Each ticket corresponded to an entry on the chief's list. The chief himself presided, with one or two clerks scrutinising the tickets and calling out the number of cupfuls due. Large and small tin cups were recognised as units in the Nasir region although in Nor Deng the small cup was used exclusively. Two or three young men sat by the open sack doling out the cupfuls into the individual pots, pans, or bags as the numbers were called. From repeated checks, we knew that a small rounded cup held 250 grams or slightly less, and that there were at least 192 cups in an average sack.

...each Chief strove to make public charitable allocations whenever possible

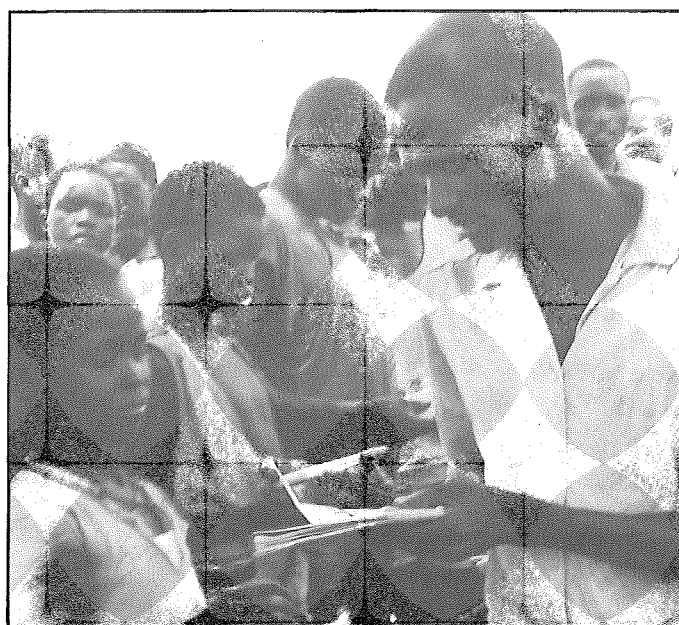
Each chief's group struggled to allocate shares fairly, and strove to make public charitable allocations if possible. Chiefs had to cope with problems on an ad hoc basis. In the larger groups, especially where inadequate lists were drawn up in July, some very hungry families came begging for a little more, and others sent a second family member along for an extra allocation. In October, people were still surfacing without proper tickets. Despite the increase in recorded numbers, distributions in October were still being made on the basis of the July figures. The following examples illustrate some of the working solutions which were found.

Examples of Distributions in Practice

Chief Waskan Munya's small group made a relatively adequate list in July (1229) and by October numbers had only increased to 1529. Their 11.5 sack share would still go round, and the chief and his assistants knew their people well so families did not try to send different members to collect double shares. At first they had tried to use a large tin cup to give out one cupful per person, but this system did not go round. So they switched to the smaller cup, only to find they had a surplus! They solved the problem by giving each ticket-holder one cupful for each person on the ticket and 3 cups extra. A ticket for 6 was allocated 9 cups; a ticket for 3 got 6 cups, and so on.

I observed this system in detail for the distribution of the contents of one complete sack, weighing the individual bags of grain as they were taken away by the people, and found a very satisfactory fit between the number of cups from the sack, the number of kilos given out from it and the average grams received per person. After the whole distribution, a small amount of grain was left at the bottom of the last sack. Chief Waskan considered several charitable options, discussing them with the small crowd that remained, and checking with them who was in special need. In the event, some was given to specific people with sick relatives, to one couple who had just had a baby, and to a bereaved family holding a memorial gathering.

Chief Soya Bam drew up a very inadequate list in July and by October he had an additional thousand people to feed beyond the number his share of 23 sacks was supposed to cover. He gave out just one small cupful per person on each ticket, but regularly found that there was nothing left for charitable allocations or token shares for his assistants (which he would have liked to offer). On the day my observations were made, he had established a new way of checking on the double use of tickets by having the clerks mark them with different coloured pens. As a result, a sack and a quarter were left over. After open discussion, some was given to a family with a memorial gathering, some to a girl actually begging on the grounds of hunger in her house, some to sick people's households, and the rest was shared equally as a token payment to workers on the distribution, including the chief himself.



A clerk checks a ticket against his list: lists were prepared by the Chiefs for use in monitoring their own sharing arrangements

Photo: Wendy James

Noka Gindi's group also made an inadequate list in July, to which a thousand had been added by October. His struggle was a losing one to try and share out 19.5 sacks on the basis of one small cupful per person. His solution was to reduce the number of cupfuls for the larger households. Thus for a group of 10, he gave 9 cups; a group of 8, 7 cups; down to a group of 5 people who received 4 cups (i.e. 1 kg). From 4 down, however, the full number of cups was given. The chief could see no other way to try and ensure that everyone got something. Grain for memorial gatherings had to be collected from the houses themselves, indeed a modest memorial feast bringing in people from several neighbourhoods had been organised in this way. It marked the deaths of young men over the past year: some had been ill, some had been killed as members of the Sudanese armed forces, and some as members of the SPLA. All were remembered together, through the sharing of a dozen plates of relief grain porridge and sauce made from newly-ripened UNICEF okra.

Tom Mahmoud's group created an ingenious alternative system for guarding against the double use of tickets. Households on the list were arranged in order of size: those with 10 persons first, followed by those with 9, those with 8 and so on, down to 2. Grain was distributed to households of a given size first, say those with 10 members. After they had been served, those with 9 members were called and so on. If the grain ran out, a line was drawn on the list and those below the line were left without. But on the next delivery, the cycle proceeded from this line onwards.

Other pragmatic solutions were doubtless being found in the other chiefs' groups to cope with the immense difficulties of being fair and being seen to be fair. In some ways the chiefs were almost too anxious to be scrupulous, as for example in keeping people off their lists.

Differing notions of the 'household'

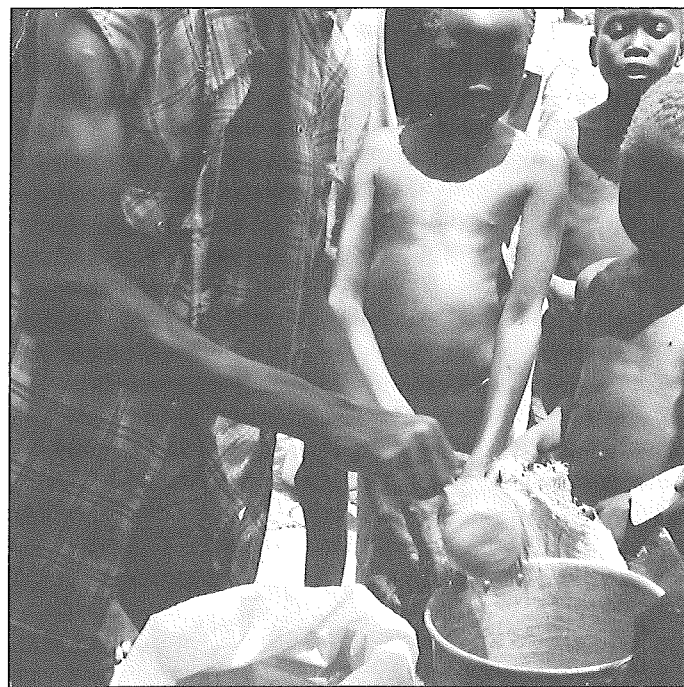
There was a wide discrepancy between the standard agency view of the family and the matrilineal thinking of the Uduk, in which a man's real dependants are his sister's children. The chiefs were trying to use the bureaucratic ideal of a male household head with wives and children as dependants. This resulted in confusion and was a minor source of double-counting, as for example when two wives of one man would be asked separately for the name of their household head, and so he would go down twice.

...the standard agency view of the 'household' resulted in many sources of under-counting.

But the different notions of the household resulted in as many sources of under-counting. For example if a man were not on a list, he would borrow from his sister's share. Several young unmarried men seemed to be in this position. A married man would not usually include his wife's younger brother as a dependant, even though before becoming refugees a group of young men and boys would be welcome to eat at one of several households of their matrilineal kin. Further, some young married women were not registered at all, because their husbands had left them or gone away. The chief of the husband's group would not take responsibility for these women and their children in the absence of the husband or breakdown of the marriage, and they were often too late to get on the list of their maternal group's chief, or their parents' household. In March 1991, young men had been taken from Itang to a SPLA school, and the wives left behind. These women, often with children, had been refused meal tickets by their husbands' chiefs on the grounds that the husband was not present. People falling between stools in this way had to beg and borrow from relatives, usually matrikin, for a little grain to keep their own household going.

Conclusion

The survey revealed written evidence of a larger population of returnees in Nor Deng than had been officially accepted; this evidence was produced by the displaced group themselves, and I believe it was generally trustworthy. Despite my reports to this effect, however, and copies of the evidence, the population fig-



The average amount of grain received by each refugee at each distribution was 355 grams.

Photo: Wendy James

ures were still the subject of dispute at the higher levels of UN policy-making, and a body-count was attempted in Nor Deng a month later - people were summoned to line up in the full sun to be marked with indelible ink. This method yielded a total of less than half my estimate. What of those who were lying sick in their straw shelters? What of the babies, the children playing in the river and the grassland, the women out on full day treks looking for firewood and wild vegetables, the men fishing? And what of those who had decided they were nervous of official counts, a fear which had kept many from registering in the initial melee of arrival from Ethiopia.

My survey also made it quite plain that not a single gram of relief food went outside this community of the Blue Nile returnees. Here was another example of displaced people monitoring and distributing their own food in a trustworthy way.¹

The Future

At the beginning of the dry season, the Blue Nile returnees in Nor Deng were permitted to move to the north bank of the river and by early June 1992 it appears that the majority have trickled away from Nasir and sought to settle in the hilly, wooded region to the north of the Sobat valley. Some have even reached the Yabus and other parts of their own home area. If security conditions permit, and if there is a good rainy season this year, all who self-settle should have the chance of harvesting a decent crop later this year. ●

1. Readers are referred to the discussion of food distribution undertaken by the Mursi in RPN 8.

Dr. Wendy James lectures at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford

REGISTRATION MANUALS

REGISTRATION IN EMERGENCIES by J. Mitchell and H. Slim (1990). OXFAM, Practical Health Guide No.6; Oxfam Publications, P.O. Box 120, Oxford, OX2 7FA, UK. 64 pages, Price £3.95 paperback, plus postage.

This short book raises many complex issues, which it does not pretend to solve. It is a practical, step by step guide to organising the registration of people in emergency relief situations using OXFAM's registration kit. Well-organised chapters take the reader through the different items in the kit and the processes involved in using them; typical sections are entitled 'Staff uniforms and job descriptions', 'The rope and demarcation', 'Stationery; the ledger and the clerks', and so on. At the end, a couple of examples show successful and failed attempts to register groups of people.

At the start, the book asks a fundamental question - 'Do you really need to register?'

'Not all kinds of relief distributions need registration. It will depend on whether you are setting up a 'direct' or 'indirect' distribution system... An 'indirect' distribution is one which is managed by the beneficiary community...Registration is an expensive process... Make sure you consider alternative distribution methods before choosing direct distribution.' (p4)

Later, in Annex One, the authors note that 'community-managed' registration or 'self registration' should be encouraged where possible. However, only two brief paragraphs deal with how to carry out the more desirable 'indirect' or 'community-managed' registration. The authors do not detail the circumstances under which agencies should resort to 'direct' methods, although this is the subject of the rest of the book.

What then are the 'direct' methods? In brief, they involve gathering potential beneficiaries into a demarcated and enclosed area, interviewing them one by one, noting household details in a ledger, issuing coded registration cards entitling the holder to a certain quantity of relief, marking those who have completed the process to prevent double registration, and ushering them out of the area. This process requires 15 different items (the 'kit') and eight categories of staff, including Guards, Communicators ('the role of the communicators is to use the megaphones to communicate with and organise the people...'), Registration clerks, Markers ('the role of the markers is to mark each person with a dye...') and Shepherds ('to guide people inside the registration compound...') (p15).

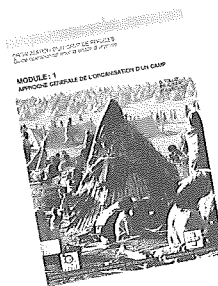
In some respects, though, the image of aid beneficiaries portrayed is much less benign than that of sheep. Many kit items and staff categories relate to crowd control and prevention of cheating. Problems in these respects are attributed in part to 'culture':

'Some communities find it impossible to relate to the processes inherent in emergency registration. Such ideas as regular attendance, marking, queueing, counting, individual identification and single rather than group hand-outs are unacceptable to them. Cultural difficulties of this kind frequently occur with nomadic people.' (p31)

Assuming the 'direct' distribution approach is chosen, the book gives little advice on how to establish two way communication, focusing instead on deploying people to carry out and convey orders. In addition, the need to use certain items in the kit (such as the dye to mark people) is not questioned.

Given that the authors advocate a participatory approach in preference to the one they describe, we look forward with anticipation to a book on the subject.

ORGANISING A REFUGEE CAMP: OPERATIONAL GUIDE FOR EMERGENCIES. MODULE ONE, OVERALL APPROACH TO CAMP ORGANISATION (Organisation d'un Camp de Refugies: Guide Operationnel Pour La Phase d'Urgence, Module: 1, Approche Generale de l'Organisation d'un Camp), by D. Tollet, Ph. Autier, M.F. Lechat (1988). MSF and the Centre for Research on Disaster Epidemiology, Rue Deschampheler 24-26, B-1080 Brussels, Belgium.



This practical manual in the French language is the first in a series of four handbooks on camp organisation (other volumes cover nutrition, water and health issues in camps). The approach taken in the guide is novel: a range of technical options are presented on the issues addressed, accompanied by advice on the different circumstances under which one option may be preferable to another, and details of the potential disadvantages of the different approaches.

The emphasis on communication and delegation prevents the tone of the handbook being prescriptive. Notes are provided on how to recruit auxiliary staff from the refugee community, on the election of refugee leaders from the different camp sections, on how to communicate the purpose of each activity or administrative procedure to auxiliary staff and to refugees.

Sections of the manual are intended for auxiliaries themselves, and are illustrated with cartoon drawings to explain the need for particular activities and to prevent misunderstandings. A humane and participatory approach is intended throughout, and the authors note in their introduction to the series that *'...the pragmatic approach adopted should not make us lose sight of the fact that displaced people are above all individuals, and if it is necessary to give people identity numbers or to count them, particular attention must be paid in day to day contact to ensure that they feel they are being treated as people and not as numbers'*. In addition it is stressed that guidelines should always be viewed in the light of specific field situations.

In contrast to the single registration method described in the OXFAM manual, the MSF guide provides three alternative ways of conducting a census: 1) by the central administration, 2) by local leaders in camp sections (elected by the displaced community) 3) using a mobile team of enumerators. The guide answers questions such as 'Why is it necessary to ask people's age? Why is it necessary to note the date? Why is it important to know where displaced people are from? Why is there a column for date of death/birth/departure? In addition, a range of techniques are provided for estimating population without an actual census.

The range of issues covered in this one volume is broad: having set the context of the different phases of emergency assistance, the authors turn to immediate priorities. Annexes cover the criteria for the choice of camp location, elements of medical demography and how to draw a map of the camp. Thereafter the focus switches to evaluation of sanitary conditions, the selection and recruitment of auxiliary staff and the establishment of administration structures.

In conclusion, this guide has been thoughtfully designed to be technically thorough yet simple to use, and flexible for the highly variable situations characteristic of refugee settings.

Mark Leopold and JoAnn McGregor, RSP

MIGRATION, FOOD CRISES & COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The following resolutions and recommendations were adopted by the Famine & Society Thematic Group, at a conference, 'Population Movements, Food Crises and Community Response', organised by the Centre for the Study of Administration of Relief (CSAR), in New Delhi, January 1992.

Resolutions:

1. all relief agencies involved should adopt a goal that by 1995 the mortality levels in any displaced population of 10,000 persons should be reduced to 0.5%;
2. the immediate increase of minimum calorie levels given to those in refugee camps, or who are otherwise dependent on international agencies for nutritional requirements, from 1900 KCals to 2200 KCals per person per day, irrespective of gender;
3. the presence of independent and scientific monitoring in all relief programmes, particularly of criteria and methods for food distribution and of community level food consumption;
4. the availability of information from within refugee camps and other relief projects should be improved, including the publication of statistics on deficiencies, morbidity and mortality rates, and access for researchers to refugee populations themselves;
5. the establishment of a Standing Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (SIACC) for each troubled region of the world, encompassing U.N., governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations in the region, with the task of coordinating the humanitarian relief work at the time of crisis;
6. the establishment of effective permanent mechanisms to provide and administer humanitarian relief, protection, safe return and compensation for the categories of involuntary forced migrants who fall outside internationally accepted definitions of a refugee;
7. the inclusion of material as well as non-material rights in legal considerations of human rights; in particular, the full recognition and application of the human right to sufficient food to nourish oneself and one's family.
8. distinctions should be examined between:
 - (i) relief and food security: when the only aim of relief is to prevent death by starvation, famine can become chronic. Relief should aim to provide famine-affected communities with the means for economic improvement - at the least for food self-sufficiency;
 - (ii) deaths by starvation and by disease: at present there is not sufficient evidence or communication with the starving to be able to distinguish accurately between causes of deaths; current figures are often calculated on political grounds.

Recommendations:

9. famine studies and refugee studies should be recognised as fully academic fields, rather than confused with popular media images of morbidity, death and charity;
10. there should be greater inter-disciplinary collaboration in devising approaches and methods for research, documentation and teaching of Famine Studies and subsequent relief policy;
11. links should be recognised and investigated between:
 - (a) Global and local causes and effects
 - (b) Economic and ecological phenomena
 - (c) Exploitative employment and economic unemployment
 - (d) Social, biological and economic processes of decline in famine-affected communities
 - (e) The role of gender in society and famine;
12. clear distinctions should be drawn between:
 - (a) Famine and mortality
 - (b) Famine and natural calamity
 - (c) Poverty and famine.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAAs

by Krisna Abhay

By the 1960s, non-profit organisations were becoming increasingly influential in the USA in fields such as education, health, civil rights, urban affairs, foreign aid, and even national security. For refugee communities organising to meet their own needs, non-profits in the form of Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs) have also been the key. In the following article, Krisna Abhay looks at the organisation of MAAs developed by Indochinese refugees in the United States over the last 15 years, the traditional organisation models on which they were based, the pressures on them in the new context and the way they have adapted.

Since 1975, more than 1,200 MAAs (a ratio of about one per thousand refugees) have emerged from within the Indochinese-American community. These MAAs across the U.S. are in various stages of development. There are perhaps half a dozen mega-MAAs (with an annual budget of \$1 million or more) which differ little in outward appearance from large non-refugee nonprofit service providers. Their income sources are diverse with a significant portion coming from government grants and contracts. Other MAAs are just coalescing, especially ones focusing on or led by refugee women and those in communities where the refugee population has not yet reached a critical magnitude. In between these two extremes are the majority of MAAs, many of which draw major funding from the federal refugee programme, and others which continue to function based on a hard core of dedicated volunteers.

MAAs provide a broad range of services: some function as temples, others raise money to support resistance armies overseas, act as freelance entrepreneurs providing special services, or operate primarily as social service networks (Mortland 1988). Bui (1988) divides the services offered into social/fraternal, educational/cultural, religious/spiritual, professional, political, and those serving specific sub-populations (senior citizens, women, veterans, students).

Over the past decade, the inter-disciplinary refugee service type of MAA has gained increasing public recognition, through incentives from the federal government, and through initial encouragement and seed funding offered by government refugee programme officers. These MAA service-providers now constitute the majority of operating MAAs.

To understand the cohesion and effectiveness of these MAAs, one must appreciate that Indochinese think and organise themselves differently from Westerners. With weak public institutional structures in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, and a tradition of unresponsive, centralised authoritarian governments, community social structures are patterned on the model of the extended family. When our peoples were transplanted to the U.S. in the absence of strong anchor communities (it is estimated there were no more than 3,000 Southeast Asians in the United States when the great influx began in 1975) Southeast Asian refugees organised after the extended family model - and MAAs were born.

The Extended Family Traditional Organisation Model

From the start, MAAs operated on a powerful principle: **the interests of the individual are better served when the interests of the group are served.** In the face of adversity, the extended family model provides a structure in which relationships are formalised through kinship obligations, and provides a practical system for achieving social goals. The extended family traditional organisation model has advantages:

- It is a traditionally-acceptable and culturally understood method of pooling financial and material resources.
- In the absence of strong public educational institutions, the kinship structure provides a forum for sharing, accumulating, and transferring practical knowledge from generation to generation.
- It provides a medium for the equitable distribution of benefits among members and a mechanism for debate and conflict resolution within the group through a council of elders or appointed officers.
- Power and authority are usually conferred to the leaders by virtue of their skills (know-how), seniority and accumulated resources.
- In countries like Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, 'the power of the Emperor stops at the village gate', and the government is seen primarily as a tax-collector, offering no democratic means of participation, nor central public institutions for passing on knowledge. The council of elders, in such a context, represents the interests of many extended families and becomes a practical form of governance.

*...MAA leadership is now shifting
from elders to those who function best
in the new environment.*

Increasingly, however, MAA leadership has shifted from the community's elders to other men or women, who are sometimes quite young, and who have demonstrated the greatest capacity to function effectively in the new environment.

Stages of Organisational Development

Like any nonprofit organisation (refugee or other), MAAs pass through various stages of development as they strive to meet their challenges. Their problems are by no means uncommon in new organisations. Four stages of organisational growth have been identified by Hershey and Blanchard (1988): creativity, direction, delegation, and consolidation. The need for change is seen as four different kinds of crises, each of which must be dealt with before the organisation can move on to the next stage: crisis in leadership, crisis in autonomy, crisis in control, and crisis in red tape.

MAAs appear to be in the first stage of organisational growth - creativity. They need to adapt to changing conditions: funding cut-backs, new political realities, and shifting community needs. Like other non-profits, MAAs tend to coalesce around individuals with strong charismatic personalities. Their founders have dominant leadership characteristics, but generally lack applicable managerial experience and training. The management problems which are arising cannot be adequately handled by existing management arrangement and are outside the scope of the founding leadership's expertise.

Given that for some time to come, many MAAs will continue to be led by the same founding Board Members and key staff, the challenge is to develop management skills and experience. Research has highlighted a variety of managerial and administrative weaknesses in MAAs, most of which require training or assistance in:

- Personnel systems, including staffing needs, job descriptions and qualifications, policies for hiring/firing.
- Budgeting and financial management.
- Strategic financial and programmatic planning.
- Definition and clarification of goals and objectives.
- Inter- and intra-organisational information and communication.
- Methods of decision-making and lines of authority.
- Fund-raising - both proposal writing and grants management.

Adaptation to the American Context

When they began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, MAAs were characterised by their informality, devotion to a cause, and often charismatic leadership. Those that received government funds had to change in response to federal and state guidelines; management of the government-funded segment of their operation became tighter and more performance-based. Often, the MAA's original Board Members (the council of elders) continued many of the old, culturally-demanded activities as well; since these were not funded, they could be run in the old, loose way. What developed was two parallel systems of accountability, which caused tension. Training and technical assistance was focused on programme staff (who were being paid to run the government-funded programme) to the virtual exclusion of the council of elders and the detriment of Board governance.

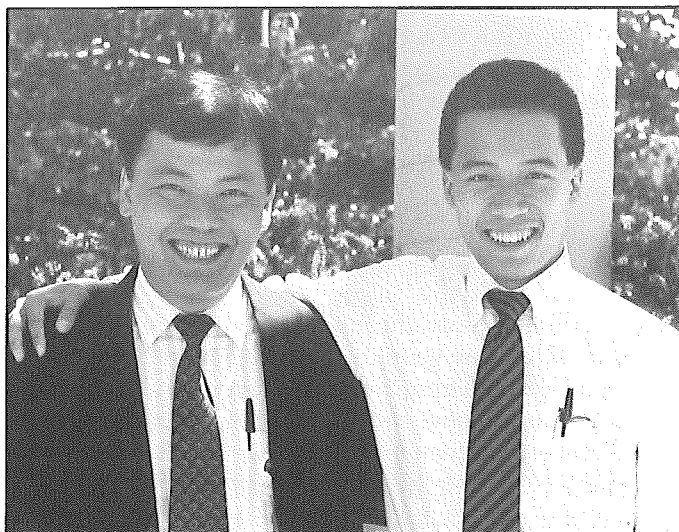
Early seeds of tension emerged as MAA programmes became 'funder-driven' and increasingly less responsive to the changing needs of the overall community. To keep getting government grants, MAAs had to focus services and attention on the 'have-nots', thereby ignoring the interests and legitimate needs of those refugees who were beginning to 'make it' and who could have become a vital source of support for future newcomers - and for the MAA itself, in terms of volunteers, financial contributions, and advice.

Improving MAA Practices

Three critical issues face the Indochinese-American nonprofit leadership. All three relate to increasing the momentum toward building MAAs that are democratically based and run.

1) Defusing Board/professional staff tension

Tension is caused by the experience gap - practical knowledge acquired in Indochina by Board Members versus academic and technical knowledge received by professional staff trained in the US. Increasing access to the broad range of information and training opportunities is needed to help narrow gaps between Board Members and organ-



The author and his research assistant Ly K. Tran during a training session with MAAs in California

isational staff. Board Members, who now form the traditional council of elders, are additionally hampered by lack of English language skills. As a result, leadership meetings are frequently conducted in the refugees' own language, whose forms of address further reinforce traditional hierarchy.

2) Stopping the brain drain

The US educated and technically competent younger generation are frustrated and feel shut out of MAA management because of old-style leadership dominance. Today, the rift between the old and the new styles of leadership is literally tearing many MAAs apart. The transitional younger generation, who went through elementary and perhaps junior high school in their own countries and have completed their high school and university education in the U.S. are beginning to break out of group-think and become more individualistic in orientation. Their exclusion from leadership and authority by the community elders has driven them to seek material success (by American standards) as a means to acquire credibility and status. Timing is critical - this special bi-cultural generation is getting married, having children and buying a house or planning for their nuclear family's future. Once this 'bridge generation' has begun to focus on upward career mobility, they may not have energy for the community. They (and their children) will regret that community leadership opportunities were not available when they were ready to make their commitment.

3) Memories

Memories of the traumatic loss of the homelands and the continuing exodus of refugees from home countries help keep alive the political debate (armed resistance versus reconciliation and reconstruction) and remain a constant source of internal ethnic community tensions. MAA effectiveness is then hampered whenever such dissensions arise among the MAA leadership.

...a filtering system that takes into account differing experiences can help MAAs keep the best of both the old and the new cultures.

Resolving tensions between the Board and professional staff, then, will require **innovation**. A new 'filtering' system that takes into account the differing perspectives, experiences, and knowledge levels can help our MAAs keep the best of both the old and the new cultures. With enhanced communication skills, MAA leadership can be in a better position to clarify the organisation's ever-emerging mission and set realistic and manageable goals that will allow the organisation to endure - even grow - and take full advantage of resource opportunities. As an ultimate step, the organisation may want to consider innovative ways of freeing up key leadership

for additional learning experiences, perhaps in the form of a sabbatical.

Encouraging broader participation is key to stopping the brain drain and bridging the experience gap. MAAs will need new systems for communicating with all their various constituencies. Democratisation of the Board recruitment and selection process is essential. With increasing mutual respect, perhaps with a mentoring process structured into the MAA's plan, clear and constructive roles for multiple generations become possible.

The many passions within our constituencies cannot be defused without a commitment to pluralism. MAAs must build in a mechanism that encourages constructive discussion and debate. Moving beyond conflict for any MAA requires mutual consensus that disagreement is acceptable, even healthy. ●

Krisna Abhay was Senior Associate at Indochina Resource Action Center (IRAC) from early 1990 through June 1991. This article is one example of his work with MAA staff and Boards to adapt skills learned through other cultures and traditions and apply them to effective community organising and development in the US.

This article was extracted from an article entitled 'Leadership and Management: A Comparative Study of MAAs' in The Bridge, Vol. 8, Nos. 1 & 2, Spring/Summer 1991. On the last day of his life, IRAC volunteer Derek Schoen (former journalist and retired US refugee program official) gave 'Leadership and Management' its final tight edit for The Bridge; Derek died of a stroke on his way home. Publication in the Refugee Participation Network is yet another way to honour Derek's work with refugees.

The Bridge is an information service of the Indochina Resource Action Center, a national nonprofit organisation which serves as a voice and a resource for the Indochinese-American communities in the United States.

ARRIVAL PROGRAMMES

PSYCHO-SOCIAL WORK IN SWEDEN'S RECEPTION CENTRES

by Enrique Bustos

An innovative psycho-social programme was designed and pioneered in Sweden's Refugee Reception Centres between 1989 and 1991. It involved support and training for both refugees and staff in each of the Centres, and coordination and communication with others outside the programme. The first Refugee Reception Centre in Sweden was opened in 1987 after negotiation between the Swedish Red Cross and the Immigration Board, and three more followed in 1988. The first psychologist was appointed in 1989 to design the psycho-social programme. By 1991, the Centres together had a capacity for 1200 refugees, and there were some 160 employees, including one or two qualified psychologists at each Centre. Although the psycho-social programme has now been discontinued, the experiences and ideas are important and should not be lost.

The overall aim of the programme was to eliminate psycho-social risk factors in the Centre itself and reduce those emanating from outside. All too often in psycho-social assistance programmes, efforts are concentrated on developing models and working forms to help asylum seekers deal with the traumas that they carry with them from their home countries. In contrast, the Red Cross programme aimed to place a greater emphasis on preventing, or alleviating, the effects of a reception system that itself increases or creates mental illnesses, exacerbates conflicts within families and extinguishes the hope of freedom for those seeking protection in Sweden.

The traumatic experiences which asylum seekers and refugees often bring with them can be expressed in the form of psychosomatic symptoms as well as problems of a cognitive nature. However, the asylum process itself and the uncertainty with which it is surrounded, mean that it is a very stressful experience which adds to the problems asylum seekers face.

For their part, the staff at the Refugee Centres are confronted daily with many aspects of the asylum seekers' traumatic and trying life situations and this gives rise to a number of existential and moral questions. The staff are in a vulnerable position from the point of view of their own mental health, in the face of strong and continuous emotional reactions amongst the asylum-seekers and refugees. This is also an important feature of the social relations in the Centres.

Each Centre designed the detail of its own psycho-social programme. Particular measures and priorities were based on an analysis of the psycho-social environment, and the present and future needs of the refugees, asylum-seekers, employees and volunteers. This was periodically reviewed in view of the rapidity with which the situation can change. At each Centre, however, the following activities all existed:

- (1) Assistance in the form of crisis counselling, together with therapeutic support sessions for both asylum seekers and personnel.
- (2) Examination and assessment sessions regarding the psychological status of asylum seekers and refugees.
- (3) Family counselling or family support activities.
- (4) Group activities among asylum seekers and refugees aiming at a higher degree of responsibility and participation in daily activities at the Centres;
- (5) Group activities among the personnel to prevent 'burn-out' and to improve communication patterns at the Centres.
- (6) Education for staff and volunteers in order to raise the awareness of psycho-social high risk factors.
- (7) Co-operation with other institutions and with authorities.
- (8) Co-operation with medical staff.
- (9) Consultation with members of other professions.
- (10) Planning, realisation and documentation of specific psycho-social issues.
- (11) Specific projects directed towards certain groups of refugees (children, single parents, families with a great number of children, etc.)

A Study of Ten Families Expecting Possible Expulsion from Sweden

During the spring of 1991, a study was undertaken of ten families resident at the Soderfors Reception Centre who were expecting possible expulsion from Sweden, and who had come forward for psychological aid.

Through the study it became apparent that the families were in a very vulnerable condition when they arrived at the Centre. They were young and they found themselves in a

THE VIETNAMESE 2000 PROGRAMME, UK

by Chris Levack

conflict situation which, at worst, led to persistent mental ill-health for one or more members of the family and/or a broken family. The asylum process tended to intensify any conflict that already existed within the families. The children developed the same symptoms as the adults, for example, increased levels of anxiety, recurrent nightmares, difficulties in sleeping, difficulties in concentration and lack of appetite.

We concluded that in spite of activities designed to limit the harmful effects of the asylum process and the inevitable idleness, time itself was a high risk factor (from the point of view of mental health) which the Centre could not alleviate. Access to social support, such as pre-school education for the children, visits by personnel, support sessions as well as consultations with a psychologist and ready access to information of all sorts, however, proved valuable for the families and staff. Education and other activities can also be of great importance for the asylum seekers' physical health, their ability to adjust mentally, as well as their ability to assume responsibility.

In addition to the services for the ten families, open lectures were held for employees which proved to be of great value. These covered themes such as threats, violence, crisis theories, burn-out syndrome, setting limits, torture and trauma. Further seminars on specific topics were held for particular categories of employees. Staff counselling was recognised to be an important part of the programme, to prevent emotional exhaustion and to encourage positive solutions to conflict resolution.

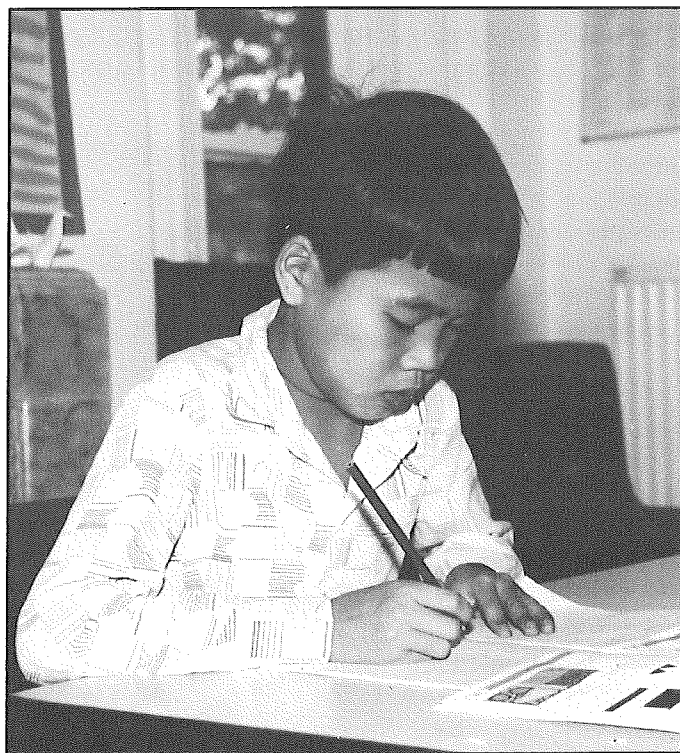
Final Comments

Developing a psycho-social approach to work at the Reception Centres was a challenge. Previous models and experience were lacking. In addition, the Reception Centres were already established before the new approach was introduced. So a degree of resistance from some of the employees concerning the effects of psycho-social interventions had to be taken into account. New external high risk factors, such as those relating to changes in Swedish asylum policy, also influenced the environment. The strain of this programme clearly demonstrates that the psychologists and social counsellors, in spite of their education and previous experience, need further training focused on the specific nature of work with refugees. There was also a need for on-going meetings of a counselling nature. The challenges were great and these professionals needed special support from the management and others. ●

Enrique Bustos is a Psychologist/Psychotherapist and Co-ordinator of the Psychosocial Programme for the Swedish Red Cross. Originally from Chile, he has been living in Sweden for 16 years.

In contrast to other refugee-resettlement countries in the West, the UK has been slow to develop formal policies for receiving and assisting refugees. Approaches have been ad hoc, uncoordinated and loosely evaluated. The potentially positive side to such an approach is that it may allow for greater flexibility, a greater role for refugees' own initiatives and greater freedom for refugees to provide support according to their own perception of need. With this question in mind, the following article raises issues which have emerged from the experience of educational provision in the current resettlement programme for Vietnamese.

The reception programme for the Vietnamese has been more organised than that of other refugee groups. For the 1979-80 'boat people' it took the form of a widely-criticised policy of dispersal. This has been discontinued and assistance to the latest quota of 2,000 Vietnamese is managed so that refugees join an established Vietnamese community in the major UK city of their



Family, friends and a completely different lifestyle have often been left behind.

Photo: Chris Levack

choice following an initial three to ten month period in a Reception Centre.

Two agencies - Refugee Action and the Ockenden Venture - are responsible for the reception centres with funding from the Home Office. Additional grants for educational provision are managed by local education authorities (LEAs). These educational grants have been used in different ways: some LEAs employ tutors to work solely in the Centres, others provide 'outreach' from existing Further Education Colleges. The nature of bilingual support for school aged children is similarly variable. My own experience in Kirklees LEA has been as a teacher working solely with refugee children both in schools and in the Centres. Kirklees was the only LEA to adopt this approach.

Issues Arising from the Kirklees Vietnamese Refugee Project

1. Children's Experiences Prior to Arrival in the UK

Traumatic experiences in flight and in the Hong Kong camps together with the disruption of life in the reception centres can cause children to have problems in adjusting to a structured school environment. A case can be made for school entry based on the ability to cope with and benefit from school rather than the statutory requirement to attend once medically cleared. A child welfare expert from Hong Kong has described children's difficulties after experiencing the camps in the following way:

'We have cut off a whole segment of what is [the refugee children's] rightful primary experience. Little children experience a cumulative and increasing deprivation to their whole existence so that their intellectual development, their emotional development, their

social development, are in many ways taken from them... When they move on, therefore, they are less and less competitive with other children, with a whole bit of experience they will never recapture'. (Vais 1991)

2. Involving the Parents

All parents have a critical role to play in the education of their children. Given the enormous sense of loss that refugees suffer, it is essential to involve the parents in any work undertaken on their children's behalf, especially if we are to avoid making the parents feel that because of language and cultural barriers, their role as educators is redundant. The positive feedback we get from the parents indicates that this approach is greatly appreciated.

3. Secondary Medical Health Check

Refugee children do not attend local schools until medical health checks have been carried out. These can take up to eight weeks and this delay affects the type of support that can be offered in both the schools and the Centres. However, this waiting period does provide an opportunity for the children to adjust to their new surroundings, and for us to carry out initial assessments and decide on a programme of study.

...bilingual assessment materials allow refugee children to also continue learning in Vietnamese.

4. Assessments

Refugee children sometimes have a report from the camp schools, although the scope and the utility of these reports is extremely limited. Bilingual assessment materials have been developed to facilitate this process. These materials have



The Kirklees Vietnamese Refugee Project is the only resettlement programme in the UK to employ a full time teacher to work with the refugee children.
Photo: Chris Levack

allowed children to continue learning in their own language at the same time as closing the gap between their level of understanding in Vietnamese and English.

5. Leaving the Centre

The procedure for transferring schools after leaving the Centres may cause further disruption to children's education. This is especially the case in parts of London where one family had to wait over six months before their children were offered school places.

Conclusion

These are just some of the issues arising out of one LEA's experience and current policy for educational provision. Centres in other districts have different experiences. The UK ad hoc approach may have advantages over more

structured programmes, and allow greater flexibility. It may also mean, however, that refugees continually get second best. As the Vietnamese 2000 Programme approaches its end in 1993, it needs to be evaluated by the refugees themselves. Refugees' opinions need to be sought before we can begin to assess to what extent the Programme has contributed to their quality of life and how it could be improved. ●

Chris Levack teaches in the Kirklees Vietnamese Refugee Project.

Vais, L. 1991. 'Defenseless in Detention - Vietnamese Children Living Amidst Increasing Violence in Hong Kong'.

EVALUATING NEW ZEALAND'S ARRIVAL PROGRAMME: A CAMBODIAN PERSPECTIVE

by Keryn McDermott and Man Hau Liev

The On-arrival Education Programme at Mangere, New Zealand provides six-week long courses which combine English language tuition with orientation classes. The English teaching programme is task-based, and aims to develop confidence in using the language for tasks necessary for life in New Zealand. The orientation classes provide information about New Zealand in the mother tongue and begin to develop skills needed to cope with living in a new cultural setting.

Our aim in evaluating the Refugee Education Programme was to assess the extent to which it assists refugees in the process of resettlement. Information was collected through bilingual interviews with Cambodians who had arrived in Auckland from January 1988 to August 1989. The analysis of the information collected formed the basis of recommendations to modify the programme.

Methodology

The research used an approach developed by the anthropologist Kurt Lewin and termed 'Action Research'. This places emphasis on democratic participation, and is a means of making the research culturally appropriate and avoiding ethnocentrism. We wanted to know refugees' own perspective, and

hence avoid the trap of assuming that 'all reasonable people' shared our views (Brown and Tandon 1983). Unlike much participatory research, however, this evaluation originated from an organisational authority: we were working with rather than against the system.

Cambodians were involved in the research in many ways. They discussed and modified the design and conduct of the interview. Our advisory group also included refugees, and the cooperation of the wider community was sought through a letter published in the Khmer Buddhist Association's Newsletter. Three Cambodians conducted the interviews, to ensure that frank responses were collected as far as possible.

Results and Discussion

The 45 Khmer ex-refugees interviewed represent approximately 10% of the total number of Cambodians who have attended the Refugee Education Programme and settled in Auckland. Refugees follow these courses at a time when their learning capacity is reduced by several factors. Having recently arrived, they struggle with the inevitable culture shock, the sense of dislocation from their homeland, a legacy of past trauma and the problems of a foreign environment. Often they have little previous experience of the classroom.

Our evaluation showed that after the course, the vast majority of ex-refugees can cope with the following tasks independently: using the telephone in Khmer, using electrical appli-

ances, sending a letter overseas, and shopping at the supermarket. Tasks which caused refugees the most problems were: arranging schooling, getting a job, registering with the New Zealand Employment Service, and getting Social Welfare Benefits. The problems refugees experience are often linked to, or exacerbated by, the language skills required.

After leaving the Centre, finding another English class was the problem most commonly cited by refugees. Asking directions was regarded as a problem by 57% of the interviewees and securing a benefit was problematic for 48% of the sample. Few people were able to solve these problems alone and generally the course of action was to seek help from others. Therefore, the most important coping strategy is to know how and where to get help.

Although reliance on others is an appropriate short-term strategy, this may cause problems later on if refugees cannot cope on their own. The clear message from the interviews is that refugees want more training after they leave the Mangere Reception Centre.

Conclusions

The research findings had implications for many different institutions. For the Refugee Education Programme, ideas emerged relating to course content and classroom practice, and the bilingual nature of the programme received much support. The tasks identified as particularly difficult could be the basis of further English language training, and the teachers themselves could play a greater role in facilitating access to further classes and/or training.

There were also clear messages for other agencies and community workers. The Department of Social Welfare and New Zealand Employment Service would benefit from acknowledging the problems they create for ex-refugees and those who support them. Sponsors, friends, relatives, the Refugee and Migrant Service and Khmer community workers, now have a measure of when they are most likely to be approached for support.

In some ways, ex-refugees who have lived in Auckland for three years continue to be dependent. It will take some time for them to acquire the skills possessed by the friends and relations who help them. The process is long and painful but one outcome of this research could be that everyone involved better understands refugees' resettlement needs. ●

Brown and Tandon 1983. 'Ideology and Political Economy in Inquiry: Action Research and Participatory Research' *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, Vol. 19, No. 3.

Keryn McDermott has been Coordinator for the Refugee Education Programme since 1987 and previously taught English in Sri Lanka and China.

Man Hau Liev is a senior bilingual tutor at the Refugee Education Programme and has a background in teaching, refugee community development and business management.



Problems refugees face in the resettlement country are often linked to the language skills required

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL? THE ETHIOPIAN REFUGEE SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

The Ethiopian Refugee Scholarship Scheme (ERSS) is a small scale, highly personal charity that sponsors education and training for refugees in the Sudan. It is entirely student-funded, but is administered by a local committee in the Sudan to ensure that appropriate candidates are selected. Initially set up in 1989 by Oxford University undergraduate Daniel McCallum, this successful scheme is now in its third year.

The extreme scarcity of educational opportunities for Ethiopian refugees in Eastern Sudan is striking. In Kassala, for example, there is only one school that is open to refugees. Funded by UNHCR, it shares the classrooms of a Sudanese school and meets in the heat of the afternoon when the Sudanese children have gone home. Teaching extends only to O-level standard (approximately Grade 11), and of the few who make it this far, only a handful are lucky enough to receive funding for further study and most have to resort to casual work in and around Kassala.

The ERSS offers vocational training in Nursing and Agricultural colleges and academic training in a Sudanese Commercial school in the Kassala area. The grants provided through the scheme pay students' fees and maintenance, and equipment for the Sudanese institutions. At the moment forty-five students are enrolled in the scheme, over half of whom attend the Nursing College in Kassala. A further 100 scholarships will be allocated in July this year.

Refugees often regard education as a priority, and this scheme targets members of the refugee community who would not otherwise be able to pay for it. It has generated a great deal of interest from the outset, especially among girls, for whom there are fewer educational opportunities at the post-primary level. Indeed, the capacity for sponsoring education is almost unlimited, and we are currently looking into the possibility of sponsoring refugees at the University in Khartoum.

In Kassala, the scheme is administered by the Refugee Education Unit set up specially for the scheme. The Unit comprises members of the Ministry of Education in Kassala and the two headmasters of the UNHCR school. They select students and distribute the grants. The Unit is accountable to the ERSS and to the Commissioner for Refugees in the Sudan. Quarterly accounts and a termly report on each individual student are sent to Oxford, and someone from the ERSS visits the Sudan annually to

assess progress and agree on the allocation of funds for the next year.

There are virtually no overhead costs in Oxford since the scheme is run voluntarily by students. Therefore, almost all of the funds raised goes to the Sudan and 93% of that reaching the Sudan go directly to the refugee students. The funding is stable, with Oxford colleges rarely leaving the scheme once they are on it. Currently other Universities and other agencies are being approached for further funding.

Why such a success?

There are a number of reasons why this scheme has been a success when so many others in the Sudan have failed.

* There has always been a very personal contact between the people co-ordinating the scheme in Oxford and those in the Sudan and both students and co-ordinators in the Sudan appreciate the regular visits.

* As the selection procedure is conducted at a local level, the individuals responsible are able to ensure that only the best and most deserving students are selected.

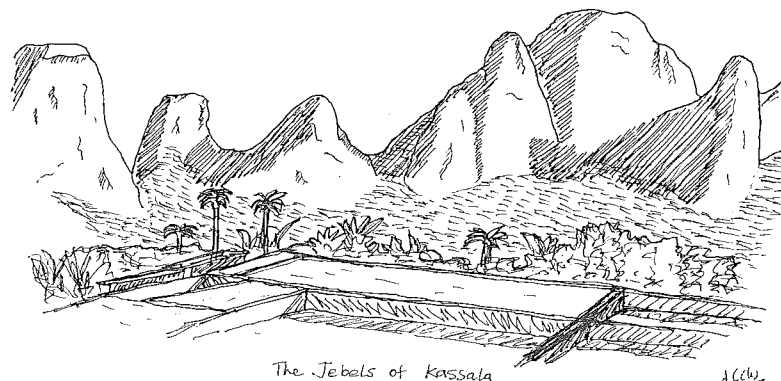
* Organisation and monitoring have been relatively easy as the Scheme is small-scale and localised. Having the Scheme run by local people seems to have guarded against corruption.

* Providing scholarships in the Sudan has meant that many people have benefitted from a comparatively small income - it costs only £400 to sponsor one student for a year. The fact that virtually all the money raised actually reaches the Sudan in this way, has also meant the scheme is supported by the Sudanese authorities.

All these factors point to the continued success of the scheme, but of course, the single most important element is that it is addressing an extremely important need identified by refugees.

Alfred Coles, Christ Church College, Oxford

A co-ordinator of the Ethiopian Refugee Scholarship Scheme who recently visited the Sudan



The Jebels of Kassala



For popular theatre to work effectively as a tool of empowerment for oppressed peoples, it must be rooted in their cultural strengths

Photo: Dwight Conquergood

HEALTH THEATRE IN A HMONG REFUGEE CAMP: PERFORMANCE, COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

by Dwight Conquergood

The potential for using theatre as a medium for cross-cultural communication has been little explored in refugee work. Yet it can facilitate dialogue between refugees and camp workers, and enhance refugees' ability to adapt to a new environment. In the following article, Dwight Conquergood illustrates how a refugee performance company was able to use this creative method in an environmental health programme.

Ban Vinai refugee camp is located in an isolated, hilly region of northeast Thailand. The camp has a population larger than any city in this remote area, and surpasses even Loei, the provincial capital. All of the approximately 48,000 residents are crowded on to 400 acres of undeveloped land. The camp space is intensively used because refugees are forbidden to go outside the camp without the express permission of the Thai camp commander.

Ban Vinai is the largest gathering of Hmong in the world. The Hmong refugees used to live in small mountaintop villages in northern Laos where they tended animals and grew dry rice and corn in fields cleared from the forest. When U.S. forces withdrew from the area in 1975, Laos collapsed and

came under the rule of a government hostile to the Hmong who were viewed as collaborators with the enemy. Almost overnight they were thrown into a densely populated camp and had no time to develop adaptive cultural traditions, let alone garbage disposal systems. As a result of grossly inadequate housing, latrines, and facilities for waste disposal, the camp has serious hygiene and sanitation problems. Imported and simplistic health slogans would not work for Ban Vinai. What was needed was a programme that was sensitive to the refugees' history and the specific problems and constraints of the camp environment.

The refugee camp may lack many things - water, housing, sewage disposal system - but not performance. No matter where you go in the camp, at almost any hour of the day or night, you can simultaneously hear two or three performances, from simple storytelling and folksinging to the elaborate collective ritual performances for the dead.

Developing Popular Theatre

In conjunction with Hmong refugees and a local Thai employee of the IRC, I helped design and direct a health education campaign which used this wealth of performance. A refugee performance company was established to produce skits and scenarios. Drawing on Hmong folklore and using traditional communicative forms such as proverbs, storytelling, and folk-

singing, it was able to develop critical awareness about the various health problems in Ban Vinai.

In popular theatre, the process of developing the performance is as important, if not more so, than its final presentation. The backstage processes of researching and developing culturally appropriate materials, the participatory involvement of the people are as significant as any explicit 'message' communicated in a skit or scenario. For popular theatre to work effectively as a tool of critical awareness and empowerment for oppressed peoples, it must be rooted in and begin with their cultural strengths. Of course, even before the Hmong became refugees, oral traditions and cultural performance were the primary ways of educating the young and promoting beliefs and values among adults.

...refugees were used to having expatriates undermine, even assault, their traditions.

Health workers wanting to use popular theatre must become participant fieldworkers. Getting to know the culture is important not just as a technique for collecting appropriate materials and ideas to be worked into performances but as a way of earning the community's trust and respect. No matter how flashy and entertaining the health show, village people are wary of outsiders who drop in for a day or two and then leave. I hoped to break the pattern of importing the knowledge of 'experts' and distributing it to the refugees, who were expected to be grateful consumers. I wanted to help demonstrate to both expatriates and refugees that dialogue was possible.

Bartering health advice and practices with traditional healers was one of the methods that worked well for me and prevented the programme from being too one-sided. For example, early in my fieldwork I fell through a bridge and gashed my toe. Herbalists treated my wound with soothing poultices from a glossy-leaved plant. Within a week the wound had healed. Due to the camp conditions, I also suffered frequent intestinal disorders, and consulted women herbalists who gave me a root to chew that eased the problem.

I tried to engage in a dialogue through which each culture could benefit from the other. This was particularly important as refugees were accustomed to having expatriates undermine, even outrightly assault, their traditions.

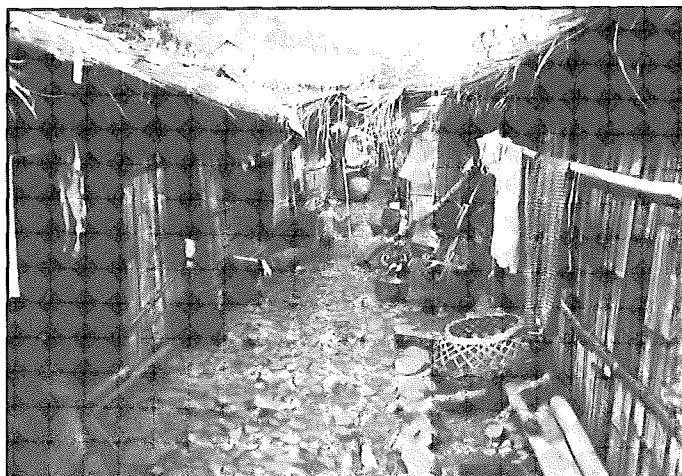
The Rabies Parade

The first test was whether or not the Hmong would accept a popular theatre approach. Could we gather an audience? That test came earlier than I had planned when five rabid dogs rampaged through the camp biting children. It was proposed that IRC use its funds to buy a rabies vaccine and inoculate all the dogs in the camp. The vaccine was purchased and IRC personnel were at their stations ready with needles to vaccinate the dogs. No dogs arrived. The problem centred on communication. The Hmong were not boycotting the rabies

programme. They simply were baffled by this strange procedure, or unaware of it. There was no effective way of getting the word out as to where, when and why dogs should be brought to the IRC stations for injections.

At that time, I had just arrived in the camp and was beginning to work with the newly recruited refugee performers/health workers. We had developed some characters based on stock figures in Hmong folklore and were designing and constructing costumes and masks. We were just starting to mesh as a group when the IRC director approached me and asked for help with the rabies vaccination project. Time was running out. The camp dogs would have to be vaccinated soon to prevent Ban Vinai having a serious rabies epidemic.

The performance company agreed on a grand, clamorous, eye-catching 'Rabies Parade' that would snake its way through all sections of the camp. The tiger costume - appliqued cotton fabric with a long rope tail - was almost finished, so it was agreed that the tiger would be the lead figure in the parade. The tiger is a trickster in Hmong folklore and mythol-



The camp environment is radically different from the Hmong mountain villages in Laos. Photo: Dwight Conquer good

ogy. We knew the tiger would draw attention and inspire awe. The tiger would be followed by a nature-spirit, a ragged costume with long coloured strings for hair, that would sing and bang on a drum. That noise, we hoped, would reach people inside their huts and bring them out to see the commotion.

We agreed that the chicken, a feathered costume with a striking cardboard mask that covered the entire head, would be the pivotal figure. After the dancing tiger and the clamorous nature-spirit got people's attention, the chicken would talk through a bullhorn and explain in terms the Hmong would understand, the seriousness of rabies and why it was important for every family to round up the dogs and bring them for injections. The chicken couched all this in an appeal to protect the children and then gave specific instructions for each neighbourhood in the camp as to where and when they should bring the dogs. The chicken was chosen to be the leading speaker because in Hmong lore chickens have divinatory

singing, it was able to develop critical awareness about the various health problems in Ban Vinai.

In popular theatre, the process of developing the performance is as important, if not more so, than its final presentation. The backstage processes of researching and developing culturally appropriate materials, the participatory involvement of the people are as significant as any explicit 'message' communicated in a skit or scenario. For popular theatre to work effectively as a tool of critical awareness and empowerment for oppressed peoples, it must be rooted in and begin with their cultural strengths. Of course, even before the Hmong became refugees, oral traditions and cultural performance were the primary ways of educating the young and promoting beliefs and values among adults.

...refugees were used to having expatriates undermine, even assault, their traditions.

Health workers wanting to use popular theatre must become participant fieldworkers. Getting to know the culture is important not just as a technique for collecting appropriate materials and ideas to be worked into performances but as a way of earning the community's trust and respect. No matter how flashy and entertaining the health show, village people are wary of outsiders who drop in for a day or two and then leave. I hoped to break the pattern of importing the knowledge of 'experts' and distributing it to the refugees, who were expected to be grateful consumers. I wanted to help demonstrate to both expatriates and refugees that dialogue was possible.

Bartering health advice and practices with traditional healers was one of the methods that worked well for me and prevented the programme from being too one-sided. For example, early in my fieldwork I fell through a bridge and gashed my toe. Herbalists treated my wound with soothing poultices from a glossy-leaved plant. Within a week the wound had healed. Due to the camp conditions, I also suffered frequent intestinal disorders, and consulted women herbalists who gave me a root to chew that eased the problem.

I tried to engage in a dialogue through which each culture could benefit from the other. This was particularly important as refugees were accustomed to having expatriates undermine, even outrightly assault, their traditions.

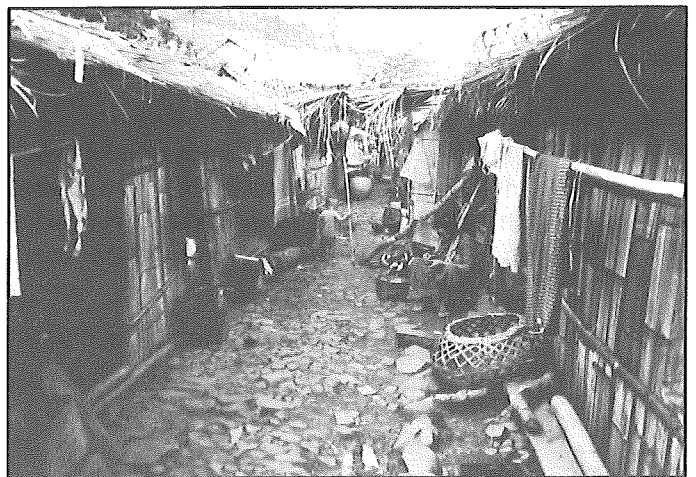
The Rabies Parade

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powers. They are frequently used as offerings in spirit ceremonies to lead the way to the sky kingdom.

In terms of its ability to gather an audience, the Rabies Parade was a huge success. However, the real test was whether or not the Hmong would bring their dogs to the vaccination stations. The next morning, on watch at the first station, I saw dogs come pouring in. We could not vaccinate them fast enough and by the end of a week we had vaccinated almost 500 dogs.

Incorporating Feedback

We took advantage of the performance company's initial outing to elicit direct audience feedback as part of the process of testing, developing, and refining our concepts. Throughout the development of our health theatre programmes, we actively solicited feedback from Hmong elders. One elder critiqued the performers on three points: (1) the plain-clothed performers and stage managers should wear traditional Hmong clothes, and not Western-style T-shirts and trousers available in the camp through charity outlets; (2) the backup music for the dances should be authentic Hmong, not Thai or Western-influenced melodies; (3) the rhymed chants were a little off from the traditional Hmong prosody and so he taught the young performers the correct speech patterns.

Through other critiques we learned that a few people found the masks and the tiger scary and worried that some of the children's spirits might be scared away and they would fall sick. This was very serious. If one shaman attributed the

sickness of one child to spirit-flight precipitated by the parade, the Ban Vinai health and performance company would be destroyed. No accusations came but we did decide to modify our staging techniques as a result of this feedback. Powerful characters like the tiger would no longer play directly to the audience. Instead, we would direct the energies of the tiger and other masked characters inside a circle, using an onstage focus. These dramatic characters would interact in an animated way with one another, but not directly confront the audience.

Mother Clean

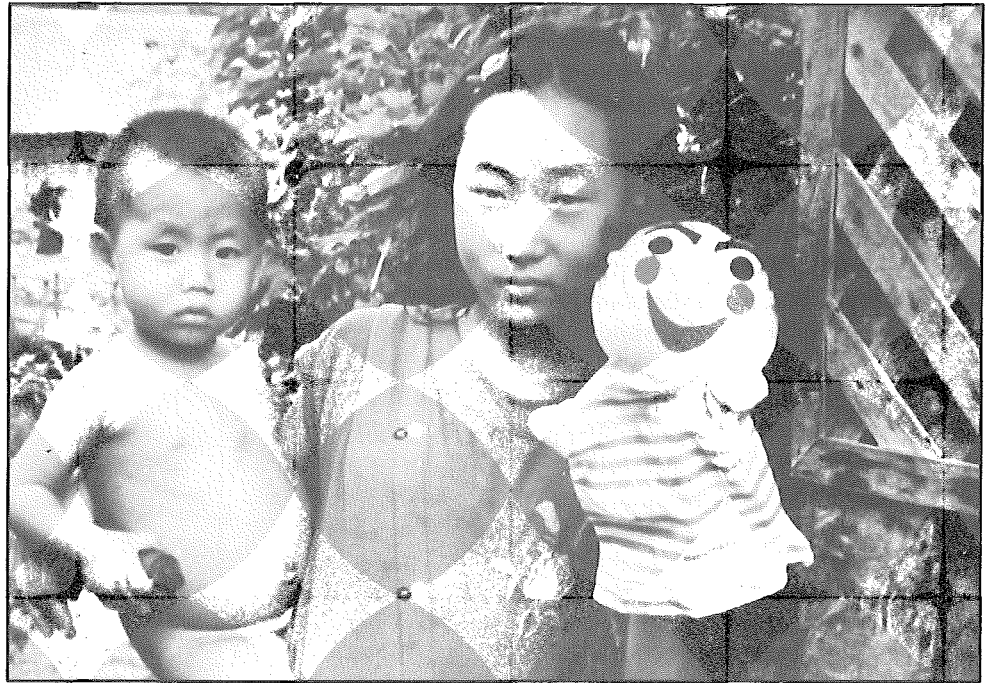
We did not want to lose the power of open-form communication, so we needed a narrator character who could safely and directly address audiences. Proverbs are an important and popular communication form amongst the Hmong. We wanted to use a character who could recite health proverbs and tell stories and who would have a special rapport with small children. This led to the creation of our most successful character who became the symbol for the entire health communication programme: the beloved Mother Clean (Niam Tsev Huv), our cleanliness clown. She was the collective creation of the entire performance company. In fact, the performance company worked collectively on all phases of the performance process, from research for scenarios to composing songs and proverbs to costume construction. Except for the tiger's mask which I purchased in Loei, all of the costumes and props were handmade from local materials.



The chicken was chosen to be the leading speaker because in Hmong lore chickens have divinatory powers.

Photo: Dwight Conquergood

Once we had demonstrated that performance was an appropriate and successful way of communicating with the Hmong, we set to work on the environmental health problems of the camp. Instead of blaming the Hmong for the poor health conditions and issuing messages instructing them to change their behaviour, we developed performances that would stimulate critical awareness about the camp environment, particularly how it differed from the Hmong mountain villages in Laos. Once their radically changed living conditions could be brought to consciousness through performance, the Hmong might understand the need for changing some of their habits to adapt to this altered situation.



Garbage

We mounted a series of performances focused on the problem of garbage in the camp. The first thing we had to do was problematise 'garbage'. In a traditional Hmong village, garbage was not the problem it was in Ban Vinai. If all disposable waste is organic, and you live in a small hamlet on a windswept mountain slope, then pitching waste out of the door is not a problem. It becomes instant feed for the household pigs or it biodegrades. In the context of a crowded refugee camp, however, this means of waste disposal has radically different consequences. We wanted to get this message across without demeaning the Hmong and suggesting that they were dirty.

Our 'Garbage Theme' month featured Mother Clean in one of our most successful scenarios. Drawing on the evil ogre character from Hmong folklore (poj ntxoog), we created an ugly Garbage Troll in soiled ragged clothes and a mask plastered with bits of garbage and dirt. The Garbage Troll would lumber into the centre of the playing space and begin dramatising the behaviour to be discouraged - peeling eggs and other food and throwing the waste on the ground, picking up dirty food from the ground and putting it into his mouth, and so forth. After a few minutes of this improvisation, the Tiger would charge on stage and rebuke the Troll for such unseemly behaviour. The Tiger would growl and snarl and pounce at the impassive Troll, all the while making verbally explicit how bad this behaviour was. The Tiger would give up and leave but then the Pig would run out on stage and fuss at the troll for his disgusting conduct. The young performer who played our Pig was a gifted clown and there would be much farcical business between the Pig and the Garbage Troll until the Troll drove the Pig away. Then the Chicken would follow suit and sagely admonish the Troll about the environmental consequences of his behaviour and how he would make children sick by throwing garbage all about. The Troll would respond by throwing more garbage on the ground and at the Chicken, driving the latter away.

Mother Clean became fully integrated into the culture of Camp Ban Vinai Photo: Dwight Conquergood

From a considerable distance, Mother Clean would slowly sweep toward the dirty Garbage Troll. The children forming a circle around the playing space would have to open up their ranks to permit Mother Clean's passage. They would call out, warning her to beware of the nasty Garbage Troll. But Mother Clean would be unaware of the danger; absorbed in sweet thoughts she would sing to herself and dance as daintily as her bulk would permit. The children in the audience would increase the volume of their warning cries until Mother Clean heard and caught sight of the Garbage Troll. Unafraid, slowly, triumphantly she would sweep toward the nasty Troll huddling in the dirt making menacing noises. She'd reach down, pull him up by his hands, then, in a moment of redemptive grace, remove his dirt-face mask and wash his face and hands. Transformed, the Troll and Mother Clean danced as music was played from our battery-operated cassette player. Tiger, Pig, and Chicken rushed back on stage to dance and sing with Mother Clean and the redeemed Troll. Our refugee health workers, wearing sandwich-board posters with the health theme boldly lettered, would join the circle, and Mother Clean would slowly spell out and read the poster proverbs for those in the audience who were nonliterate. She would talk and invite comment and discussion about the theme.

Mother Clean would lovingly amplify the message of the proverb, pointing out that Ban Vinai is very different from the mountaintop villages in which the Hmong used to live. She exhorted a change in behaviour without degrading the people whom she was trying to persuade, locating responsibility in the environmental circumstances. Everyone could agree that indeed Ban Vinai was very different from their former home. After establishing that premise, Mother Clean then could

make the point about the need for adaptive response to this new situation.

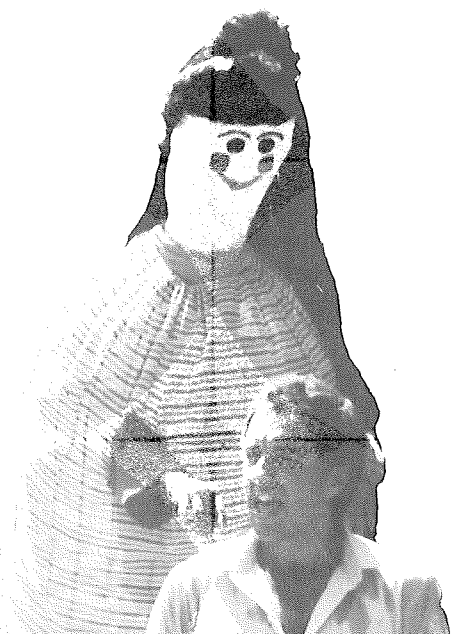
Over the next few years, Mother Clean became fully integrated into the culture of Camp Ban Vinai. Literacy textbooks produced in the camp print shop were illustrated with images of Mother Clean. Mother Clean hand puppets were made in the camp and used for entertainment and instruction. Mother Clean puzzles delighted children. The ultimate test was that Mother Clean had been invited by the Hmong leaders to perform at the New Year Festivities, the most important and elaborate celebration of Hmong culture.

In Retrospect

As I critique my work in the camp I realise that I should have developed more consciousness-raising performances specifically for the expatriate health professionals. They needed to develop a critical awareness about health problems in the camp at least as much as did the Hmong. Directing most of the performances to the Hmong resulted in a one-sided communication campaign and subtly reinforced the prevailing notion that the Hmong were primarily responsible for the bad conditions.

The ideal is for the two cultures, refugees' and relief workers', to enter into a productive and mutually invigorating dialogue, with neither side dominating or winning out, but both replenishing one another. Intercultural performance can enable this kind of exchange. ●

Dwight Conquergood, Ph.D., is Director of the Graduate Program in Performance Studies, Northwestern University, Illinois, US. This article was extracted from a longer paper originally published in The Drama Review: Journal of Performance Studies, Vol. 32:3, T119, Fall 1988, 174-208 and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.



The author with Mother Clean, the clown collectively created by the Hmong performance company

HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEES

7-11 DECEMBER 1992

This course is intended to provide an opportunity for those who work with refugees, especially those who are involved in protection work, to extend their knowledge of international law pertaining to today's victims of forced migration.

Course Themes:

- * Practical Application of International Human Rights Standards to Refugees
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- * Varying Conceptions of 'Refugees' and Other Protected Persons
- * Human Rights Instruments and Refugees
- * National and Regional Protection of Refugees
- * Problems of Access to Country of Asylum
- * Armed Conflict and Humanitarian Law
- * Political and Legal Strategies for Protecting Refugees

The Course Fee is £150 waged and £50 unwaged, which does not include accommodation.

For an enrolment form (due by 31 October 1992) and more information, contact:

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

Tel: +44-865-270723; Fax: +44-865-270721
Fax: +44-865-270721

EUROPE

ITALY'S NEW REFUGEE POLICY

by Jenny Hills

In March 1991, 24,000 desperate Albanians docked at the ports of Bari, Italy, hoping for a better life. Local citizens warmly opened their homes to many of these 'boat people', providing shelter and food for several days before the Italian army took over. Six months later a further 18,000 Albanians arrived. This time, local authorities contained the new arrivals in an outdoor stadium for three days, before expeditiously rounding them up, putting them on planes and forcing them home.

Largescale immigration is a new phenomenon for densely-populated Italy, itself a country of emigration prior to 1978. Indeed seven million Italians have emigrated to the Americas, Australia and Northern Europe since the Second World War. Since the late 1970s, however, this pattern has been reversed. Italy is now a country of net immigration and hosts over a million foreigners.

The recent influx forced the Italian government to re-examine its policy towards immigrants and asylum seekers, a process which led to the introduction of Italy's first aliens legislation - the 'Martelli Law' (Law No. 39, 28 February 1990). Discussed in tandem with debates over the harmonization of Europe's boundaries, and in the fear of being a 'frontier' state taking the burden of the prospective immigration from the East and South, the 'Martelli Law' has become a bulwark of Italy's new 'closed door' policy.

In the past, Italy has been particularly open to foreigners in comparison to other European countries. For example, tourists from Latin America, Turkey and North Africa did not need special entry visas. Foreigners' rights were upheld through ministerial rulings and directives, and an administrative practice of granting residence permits developed in the absence of written law. Laws relating to political asylum were similarly undeveloped. Justified through poverty and unemployment, Italy had been the only European Community nation to retain the geographic limitation on the 1951 Geneva Convention, making it applicable to asylum seekers of only European descent.

The constraints on formal recognition of refugee status was only of limited importance as few European refugees desired to remain in Italy. Most were resettled in North America, Australia and Scandinavia. Furthermore, non-European asylum seekers were allowed into Italy on condition that the UNHCR guaranteed their material welfare and resettlement in a third country.

Acting as a transit state for refugees, Italy developed a rather relaxed attitude towards the entrance of refugees and there were few restrictions in practice. Deportation procedures were very lax and those who were threatened with deportation could easily go 'underground'. This is a major reason for the large number of clandestines living in Italy.

Italy's tough talker moves to turn back tide of refugees

by Philip Willan in Rome

AS THE trickle of Albanian refugees turned into a flood last week, bringing panic, shootings and two deaths at the port, one woman was trying to flee.

Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis flew to Tirana to persuade the Albanian government to halt the latest exodus. Italian commentators suggested that the new flood of refugees may have been encouraged by Tirana in order to speed up the arrival of Western aid.

Certainly, De Michelis did not go empty-handed. He offered \$25 million (€32 million) over the next two months to get the Albanian authorities to co-operate in stemming the flow of refugees.

Mrs Boniver said Italy was prepared to play its part in reviving Albania's ruined economy. She is convinced that the problem of Albania's three million citizens should be resolved in Albania and that it can be fairly easily achieved with adequate foreign aid.

"The democratic Albania is said to be the topic is due to be discussed when Western leaders meet at the G7 economic summit in ... almost hear their teeth chattering," she said. ... believes, depends on ...



After the flood: police in Brindisi rounding up Albanians for identification

Refugees' nightmare fails to spoil dreams

12/3/91

AFTER five days of confusion, squalor and misery, 15,000 refugees from Europe's most extreme Socialist state have finally seen capitalism at its most disorganised mobilise a creaky emergency aid process. But despite the failure of the Italian state to provide even the most basic human needs when fleeing Albanians landed in huge numbers on its coast last week, the refugees' "I want a better life."

By Allison Clements in Brindisi

command centre, informing listeners of collection points and specific needs, and smoothing the distribution process.

"Please, anyone listening out there with men's shoes in size 39 to 44, surgical gloves or sanitary masks, please hand them in," the Di pleaded yesterday afternoon. Two thousand refugees ... with do"

ner. You ask them if they want to come to share bread.

Mr Rama, like many of his educated Albanian countrymen, insists that he is a European and has the right to be treated like any westerner.

"I consider myself a European citizen and do not place any importance on where I go to live - I might go to England or any other country. I am 23 years old and want

Italy trips over Albanian refugees

16/3/91

ITALY'S response to the sudden influx last week of thousands of Albanian refugees says much about the nature of the national psyche. The initial blend of official indifference and public compassion was symptomatic of the long

sense of family overrides all other emotions and relationships. Rome's negligence allowed them to indulge in a favourite national pastime - government bashing. Italian governments, past and present, have a dismal record when it comes to dealing with ... Last month a par-

From Gerald Bourke in Rome

one-third of the 250,000 people made homeless by the disaster are still living in huts. A similar proportion ...

Vito Lattanzio, the much-maligned Minister for Civil Protection, was still pleading almost a week after the Albanians disembarked that he was only empowered to tackle natural disasters, and that their arrival ... not fall"

quiry into Rome's belated response has rejected allegations that the government is guilty of criminal negligence. It merely committed "sins of omission", he said.

Audio Martelli, the deputy

Italy to repatriate latest Albanian 'boat people'

Italy to send back Albanian refugees

By Alison Clements in Brindisi and Jane Warr in Durres, Albania
 TWENTY THOUSAND free- But tired of waiting for official permission and desperate

Albanian refugees pack port in Italy

Ortovo - This small Italian port on the southern Adriatic has declared a state of emergency, saying it has been overwhelmed by the arrival of hundreds of Albanian refugees. Officials have demanded that Rome take more responsibility for almost 900 Albanians who have fled the communist state since a wave of communist protests be-

Policy towards the Albanians, who are held to desire economic betterment, has been inconsistent. Whilst in early 1991 24,217 were given one year residence and work permits on grounds of 'public order and sanitary conditions in Bari', a further 18,000 were deported later in the year. In granting the initial group work permits, the government is in effect waiving the terms of the new Martelli law.

A form of humanitarian or 'B' status needs to be incorporated in the Martelli Law, as many of those arriving in Italy do not fit the narrow criteria for refugee status, and yet are in need of international protection. To realize such humanitarian protection, and to alleviate Italy's perceived vulnerability to a refugee influx, cooperative solutions are needed at the European level. Cooperation must, however, take a different form than the paranoid building of 'fortress Europe'. ●

Jenny Hills was an RSP Visiting Study Fellow 1991-2, and worked as an intern with the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the US Embassy in Rome, Italy.

The most important provision of the Martelli Law is Article 1 which extends the right to seek asylum to non-European refugees. Nevertheless, the regulations in the Law resemble the all too familiar restrictionist immigration policy of other European States.

Under the Martelli Law, a parliamentary commission fixes the annual immigration quota. The quota for 1991 was zero. The same pronouncement has been made for 1992. The only non-European Community foreigners allowed to enter are:- students, family members of immigrants with legal status and housing, those with certain health problems and tourists (for three months). Restrictions on legal entry, however, have merely increased illegal entry. Furthermore, illegal workers in certain sectors of the economy, particularly in the agricultural south, continue to be tolerated as long as they suit local short term economic interests.

In 1990, only 4,867 asylum claims were made (Italian Refugee Council). This is a tiny proportion of the estimated 1,000,000 foreigners residing in Italy. The Martelli Law enshrines a narrow conception of 'refugee' so many entrants have to seek entry through other channels. For example, in July 1990, 800 Albanians requested (and were given) residence permits under immigration law. The majority of de facto refugees still live as clandestines.

In response to the problem of clandestinity, and as part of the new law, a decree of amnesty was granted to thousands of illegal foreigners. Non-EC nationals and stateless persons already in Italy on December 31st 1989 were given until June 28th to regularise their status. 204,180 foreign nationals took up the offer, including 4,800 Sri Lankans, 4,223 Somalis and doubtless many others who may be 'de facto' refugees.

The recent acceptance of Yugoslavs shows the Government is flexible when it wants to be. The Italian authorities were prepared to welcome up to 80,000 Yugoslavs in receiving centres in Udine and Treviso. They were granted residence permits on a group basis (renewable after one year). This action was justified on the grounds of long time historical ties with Yugoslavia, and in the belief that the Yugoslavs want to return home.

Albanians	20,973	Ethiopians	464
Romanians	2,187	Sri Lankans	150
Somalis	1,648	former USSR	114
Bulgarians	482	Yugoslavs	64

Note that the majority of Yugoslavians entering Italy as a result of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, have been allowed to obtain renewable 3 month humanitarian permits to stay (no work permit, but assistance in camps), unless they specifically requested asylum.

Source: ECRE, April 1992

PSYCHO-SOCIAL ISSUES IN COMMUNITY WORK: PRACTITIONERS' NETWORK

This Network for practitioners in psycho-social work is now a regular feature in RPN. Members are encouraged to submit ideas, requests and materials for future issues. For further enquiries about the Network, contact:
Ancil Adrian-Paul, c/o The Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA, UK

Update

We have received eleven new applications for membership to the Network in addition to those members included in the insert with RPN 12. Applications have come from Finland, the USA, France, Sweden, Israel, Greece, Canada and Hong-Kong. The applicants are all researcher/practitioners and their concerns are varied and specific. The issues involved and the names of the applicants are detailed below.

Conferences

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies held its 1992 annual meeting in Amsterdam, the Netherlands from 21-26 June. The conference met to exchange information

on various manifestations of traumatic stress. Contact address: Secretariat TSTSS Conference 1992, c/o TCOOO PO Box 13362, 3507 LJ Utrecht, The Netherlands.

The Second International Organisation of Migration Conference on Migration and Health, organised with the co-sponsorship of the WHO, the Commission of the European Communities and the Centre for Disease Control of Atlanta, took place from June 29 - July 1 1992, Brussels. The Conference discussed issues such as acculturation and training of health professionals. Contact: Seminar Secretariat, International Organisation for Migration, PO Box 71, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.

Forthcoming Conferences

The 12th International Conference on the Social Sciences and Medicine will be held in Peebles, UK on 14-18th September 1992. Themes of interest to health personnel working with migrants and refugees are: cultural and structural influences in the creation of, and participation in community health programmes; and health and social problems of refugees. Contact: Dr P.J.M. McEwan, Glengarden, Ballater, Aberdeenshire, AB35 5UB, Scotland UK.

Names	Concerns		
Ms. Yiannakou Anastasia Greek Council for Refugees Arahouis 39, Exarhia, Athens, Greece. Tel: (1) 3600059	Refugees in wider communities in first asylum countries	Gadi Ben Ezer Ben Gurion University, Negev Dept. Behavioural Science PO Box 653 Beersheba 84105 Israel	Interested in refugee children and mental health, specifically psychological processes of staff and absorbers in the context of the adaptation of Ethiopian Jews to Israeli society.
Dr Abdulbaghi Ahmad Bup Klin Uppsala Academic Hosp. 75017 Uppsala, Sweden Tel: 46 18 343831; Fax: 46 18 178611	Interested in helping children after the disaster in Iraqi Kurdistan. Has a report and slides which he would like to share.	Sister Maryanne Loughry JRS/CFSI RM 1602 Jubilee Comm. Building 44 Gloucester Road Wanghai, Hong Kong Tel: 852 5289331; Fax: 852 5276149	Interested in depression, violence, repatriation and the training of Vietnamese para-professionals in mental stress.
Bertrand Didier 19 Rue des Troelhes 31200 Toulouse France Tel: 61 578245; Fax: 61 504209	Integration of minors and the training of adult mental health workers. Has audio visual materials on refugee camp situations in France	Helkene Moussa 197 Rushton Road Toronto, Ontario M6G 3J2 Canada Tel: 416 651 6877	Interested in policy, women and children.
Clare Hanbury Child-to-Child Trust Institute of Education Bedford Way London WC1H 0AL Tel: 071 612 6647/6650; Fax: 071 612 6645/6632	Issues affecting refugee children. Has new material to assist children in difficult circumstances (from 20 October 1992) Uses participatory training methods.	Chudi Okafor Dept of Sociology Iowa State University 107 East Hall, ISU Ames, Iowa 50011, USA Tel: 515 2948032	Interested in the bases and dynamics of food self-reliance initiatives among refugees in Africa. The focus is on indigenous and appropriate technology
Elizabeth Keete Wilder Refugee Prog. 1028 Van Slyke Ave SE St Paul MN 55103 USA Tel: 612 4880990	Interested in funding. Would like to share information to help provide better services especially for Asian refugees. Has video tapes. Uses role-play performances. Would like programme summaries of participants in the Network]	Sabbah Charlotte 225 Bld. St. Joseph Montreal, Quebec H2T 2PD, Canada Tel: 514 273 9829	Interested in integration processes of refugees. Works with community organisation. Involved in psychosocial follow-up of refugee victims of oppression and torture.
		Paivi Talvinen Laakso Rauhankatu 20A 512 Social Centre of Turku International Office 20100 Turku, Finland	Works with victims of torture.

PROTECTION

BURMESE ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THAILAND

by Therese Caouette

Hundreds of thousands of Burmese have fled their country in recent years. Of those who entered Thailand, over 70,000 are living in camps along the border whilst a further unknown number are scattered around the country and in the capital. In August 1991, 3,2444 asylum seekers from Burma (Myanmar) had registered with UNHCR. Of these, 1,558 were recognised as 'persons of concern' to UNHCR, 998 were rejected, 494 were pending interview and 194 had registered but not shown up for interview. Those accepted are drawn almost exclusively from those who fled the pro-democracy uprisings of 1988.

In response to the influx which peaked in October 1988 with 8,000-10,000 seeking refuge, the Thai Government established the Tak Repatriation Centre close to the Thai/Burma border. The Centre was closed in February 1989 as a result of international pressure following the deportation of hundreds of asylum seekers directly from the Centre to Burma. Some of these asylum seekers came to Bangkok due to hardship experienced on the border and the intensification of military attacks. In addition, many feared further deportations. In Bangkok, they sought protection from UNHCR Thailand, an office which previously had dealt almost exclusively with Indochinese refugees. The situation in Burma (Myanmar) has continued to deteriorate and the influx has continued.

In early 1989, the outcome of UNHCR's interviews with asylum seekers was that those who were successful in getting a document identifying them as 'persons of concern to UNHCR' were only those who could prove they were students who had participated directly in the 1988 demonstrations and had fled to Thailand immediately afterwards. Very few cases were heard or accepted from the displaced ethnic minority groups from Burma. Even when status was granted to individuals from the ethnic minority groups, they were not given documentation or assistance, since it was assumed they could return to join the 70,000 in the camps along the border. Yet these camps have received no more than de facto approval from various Thai authorities and UNHCR has not received the necessary request from the Thai government to assist the border populations (although since January 1992, UNHCR representatives have visited some of the border camps).

The number of asylum seekers overwhelmed the capacity of the UNHCR office. By December 1989, Burmese trying to register with UNHCR were given interview dates on average three months away, and throughout 1990, the office could only manage seven applications per day despite the recruitment of additional interviewers. Whilst awaiting an interview and determination of their claim, asylum seekers had to survive on their own. For a brief four month period, UNHCR provided a monthly allow-

ance of 1,300 Baht (US\$ 50) per person. Since this assistance has been terminated, applicants are once again having to survive unassisted before their claim can be made and processed. Those accepted are provided with monthly assistance for which they must sign.

The problem is not just lack of resources. The UNHCR is ultimately wholly dependent on the cooperation of Thai authorities to carry out its mandate. For example, identification documents for 'persons of concern to the UNHCR' were not officially recognised by the Thai authorities, although in some cases they did prevent arrest by the Thai police. In November 1989, UNHCR found it necessary to stop issuing the documents altogether due to pressure from the Thai Government. In subsequent negotiations, UNHCR provided the Thai Government with the names and case numbers of asylum seekers accepted by UNHCR in an effort to hold the Government responsible for their protection and non-refoulement. Those identified on the lists were horrified, given Thailand's ever warming relationship with Burma's military Government. Burmese 'persons of concern' to UNHCR currently have no means of identifying themselves to the Thai authorities, should they want to, as UNHCR has not issued any documents of undertaking to Burmese refugees after the Thai Government requested HCR to stop issuing such documents in 1990.

By late 1990, many began to regard formal identification as political asylum seekers with the status of 'persons of concern to UNHCR' actually *increased* their vulnerability. This fear became more pronounced after two asylum seekers registered with UNHCR hijacked a Thai Airways jet in November 1990. Since 1991, several of those registered have attempted to revoke their status as 'persons of concern', preferring instead to join the ranks of the estimated 300,000 illegal Burmese immigrants in Thailand. This latter, completely unofficial status affords them anonymity and flexibility to negotiate their personal asylum with local police and other authorities.

Arrest and Detention Procedures

Burmese students and 'illegal immigrants' more commonly face arrest, detention, and deportation than do the ethnic minority refugees living in camps. However, Burmese recognised by UNHCR, like all non-Indochinese refugees in Thailand who are in violation of immigration laws, are considered under Thai law illegal immigrants subject to arrest, detention and deportation. UNHCR has intervened on behalf of some individual Burmese to prevent their arrest and deportation. In some cases it has been successful. In general, however, UNHCR is unable to monitor effectively such actions taken against 'persons of concern'. On arrest, those registered with UNHCR have either denied association with the organisation or have requested the deletion of their names from UNHCR's register. In mid-1991, UNHCR was identify-

ing 'persons of concern' to the police, regardless of the detainees' decision to disassociate with the organisation. UNHCR has now discontinued this practice, but those identified earlier by UNHCR remained in jail 6 months after their release date.

In November 1991 the Immigration Detention Centre in Bangkok was housing some 1,800 illegal immigrants (nine times its intended capacity), and the majority of these were Burmese. Inmates are often able to purchase their release for 1,000 to 2,000 Baht (US\$ 40-80) by buying the name and bio-data of fellow inmates who cannot pay their deportation transport fees (300 Baht, US\$ 12) and are thus willing to sell these documents. Once detainees sell their identity papers, however, they may be forced to remain in detention indefinitely since their names have already been released. Those deported are expected to pay a 1,500 Kyat (US\$ 20) fine upon arrival in Burma or face six months in a Burmese jail. Detention in Burma often results in assignment to forced labour camps or conscription as a porter for Burmese troops.

'Safe Area' or 'Holding Centre'?

The concept of a 'safe area' for asylum seekers in Bangkok was discussed by UNHCR, some international NGOs and Embassies in early 1990. Later the same year, the Thai government began referring to this option as a 'holding centre' for 'Burmese students' to be opened in April 1992. In these discussions, focusing only on Burmese students registered with UNHCR excludes tens of thousands of displaced Burmese in Thailand.

Increasing numbers of Burmese submitted letters of withdrawal to UNHCR, in fear of being rounded-up, sent back to the border, held under Thai jurisdiction without access to the international community, and faced with an unknown future defined by the Thai military. During February and March 1991, 41 Burmese 'persons of concern' chose to turn themselves in to the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok as 'illegal immigrants'. Aware that this would result in deportation and fines, they regarded this option as preferable to being deported as identified asylum seekers. On September 3, 1991, nine Burmese students paid Thai immigration authorities 70,000 Baht (US\$ 2,800) to dissociate themselves from UNHCR and to be deported to the border. At the border the same group paid another 20,000 Baht (US\$ 800) to negotiate their return to Bangkok as 'illegal immigrants'. These nine Burmese dissidents therefore paid a total of US\$ 3,600 to cancel their association with UNHCR.

All Burmese students residing in Bangkok have now been called by the Thai Ministry of Interior to register for the holding centre. There are no clear screening criteria, nor is there international presence when eligibility is decided. UNHCR and Embassies have given support to the Thai initiative despite the fact that international access, conditions for repatriation and security, communication and protection procedures have yet to be clarified. Given UNHCR's past difficulties with refugee rights in Thailand, the Royal Thai Government's ever improving relations with Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), and the Thai Government's own internal unrest, there is scarcely

grounds for optimism with regard to such a plan for Burmese student dissidents.

As the proposed 'holding centre' becomes more of a reality, asylum seekers continue to go to great lengths to deny their contact with UNHCR and hence the stigma of political dissonance. The saga of the Burmese asylum seekers in Thailand illustrates the severe limitations on UNHCR's ability to protect refugees. The fact that such impotent protection is not even recognised as a right for the large number of those displaced from Burma along the border is further illustrative of the political constraints on the mandate of the High Commissioner's office. ●

Therese Caouette is a member of the Jesuit Refugee Service who has worked with Burmese refugees in Thailand since 1988 and presently is a Research Associate at Asia Watch in New York.

NEWS FROM BANGLADESH

As RPN is going to print we have received news of developments in Bangladesh which threaten the operation of programmes designed to protect and assist refugees. The physical and economic security of refugees is at risk, and health and feeding programmes are being undermined.

275,000 Rohingya refugees from Burma's Arakan Province are currently living in Southern Bangladesh, the vast majority of whom have arrived since December 1991. Initially, the Government of Bangladesh showed remarkable hospitality in providing land and shelter to this large scale influx and UNHCR was requested to assist on February 14th 1992.

A bi-lateral agreement to repatriate a quarter of a million refugees over six months, signed by the Governments of Bangladesh and Burma in late April, provides for no UNHCR supervision of, or involvement in, the repatriation process on either side of the border. An attempt by the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the newly appointed Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance, Jan Eliasson, to intervene prior to this bilateral agreement was not successful and no further progress has been made in securing a UN role. Access is crucial if UNHCR is to attempt to ensure safe and voluntary repatriation. Refugees themselves wish to remain in Bangladesh until they are sure of their future safety in Burma, indeed the influx into Bangladesh is on-going. Moreover, the absence of UNHCR supervision is one of the reasons the refugees do not want to return.

The Government of Bangladesh has recently instituted a number of measures designed to encourage refugees' departure. These include ordering all NGOs currently working with refugees to terminate employment of refugees. This will have serious implications for medical outreach work as well as supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes, as refugee employees are fundamental to NGO programmes in refugee emergencies. Large numbers of Rohingyas were employed by NGOs in Bangladesh in occupations ranging from registration clerks to labourers to community health workers. Movement between camps has been restricted for some NGOs and all agencies have been forced to get written permission for even minor expansions of existing work. Refugees are increasingly being confined to their camps and actively discouraged from trading in and using local markets. Over 60,000 refugees remain in particularly inadequate housing, and water and sanitation provision is limited. The onset of the heavy monsoon rains makes the situation desperate.

CENTRE FOR REFUGEE STUDIES IN KENYA

by Enoch Okwach-Opondo

The Centre for Refugee Studies at Kenya's Moi University was initiated in 1990. Prior to this, a course on Refugees and Human Rights had been established in the Department of Government and Public Administration, recognising refugees as a legitimate subject of academic, public policy and humanitarian concern. These initiatives grew out of correspondence between Dr B E Harrell-Bond, the Director of the Refugee Studies Programme (RSP) at Oxford University, UK and the Chairman of the Department of Government and Public Administration at Moi University, Dr K Cheluget.

Given its motto of 'a University With a Difference', Moi University, was regarded as a good place for a Centre devoted to systematic study and analysis of the socio-economic, cultural and political environment of forced human migration. In addition, the Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS) would train personnel from humanitarian agencies and governments working with refugees not only in Kenya, but also in the whole of eastern, central and southern Africa.

The launch took place on 8 November 1991 with a Workshop to identify key research and training needs. The participants included Professor Keya, Moi University's Vice-Chancellor, the Representative of the UNHCR in Kenya, Dr Awuye, and representatives from AMREF, Kenya's Ministries of Home Affairs and National Heritage, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Office of the President, among other participants. The Workshop was chaired by Professor John J Okumu, an academic who has had long experience in training as the Director of Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) and who also coordinates CRS activities.

CRS has embarked on an ambitious training programme for Kenya's senior Government officials involved in handling refugee affairs. The officials include provincial and district administrators, ministry officials, immigration officers, and the police. The first Seminar, focusing on Refugee Law and

Rights, is scheduled for June of this year and resource persons will be drawn from institutions in various regions of the world.

CRS will also coordinate teaching of Refugee Law and Human Rights to undergraduate students at Moi University, in addition to supervising post-graduate students' research on refugee affairs and human rights.

To cope with the urgent need to train officials to handle the increasing number of refugees in Kenya (by February this year there were an estimated 150,000 refugees in the country compared to only 7,300 in 1984), CRS - with support from the RSP - has embarked on a training programme for personnel. This writer, who is a lecturer at Moi University and Secretary of CRS's Steering Committee, is currently on a one-year attachment to RSP as a Visiting Research Fellow funded by the Pew Foundation and GTZ (Germany). The attachment is pegged to Phase II of RSP's on-going efforts to train personnel from selected institutions in eastern and southern Africa; institutions which will thereby develop and increase their capacity to mount local training courses for those involved in refugee work in the region.

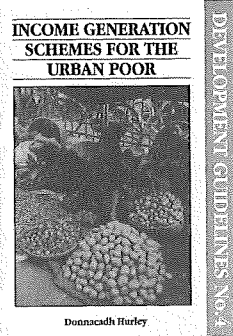
It is expected that the activities of the CRS will, therefore, contribute to alleviating the problems faced by refugees in Kenya, and in the whole of eastern, central and southern Africa through the Centre's teaching, training and research activities.

Inquiries about on-going and scheduled training, research and teaching by the CRS may be addressed to:

Professor John J Okumu
Coordinator
Centre for Refugee Studies
Moi University
PO Box 3900
Eldoret, KENYA
Tel: +254-321-43620 or 43001-8
Fax: +254-321-43047

REVIEWS

INCOME GENERATION SCHEMES FOR THE URBAN POOR by Donnacadh Hurley, with Steve Duke, Rebecca Francis and Brian Pratt (1990). Published by OXFAM: No. 4 in the Development Guidelines series. Oxfam Publications, P.O. Box 120, Oxford, OX2 7FA, UK. 136 pages. Price £6.95 paperback, £19.95 hardback, plus postage.



Income Generation Schemes for the Urban Poor, by Donnacadh Hurley, comprehensively examines the many issues involved in income generating projects. The book has four parts. The first introduces the actors: the urban poor and the interveners. The second addresses issues arising in the context of income generation. Part Three provides specific guidelines on business organisation for interveners and Part Four describes the range of different ways in which income generating activities can be supported.

Although Hurley specifically addresses those who design and implement income generating interventions, the book also makes interesting reading for a wider audience. Guidelines are supplemented with examples throughout and attention is given to both successes and failures.

Hurley argues that one of the main reasons income generating projects fail to become self-sustaining is that economic objectives are not made the primary goal. Therefore, the approach recommended in the book is strongly market oriented. For interveners working in emergency relief situations, this may seem less appropriate. However, for those making the difficult transition from relief to development or grappling to create projects that can 'stand on their own feet', this book has much to offer.

Hurley also challenges assumptions underlying styles of operation which are responsible for the failure of income generating projects. For example, agencies often attempt to start their own income generating schemes instead of supporting schemes already initiated by the poor. Inherent in this is the idea that 'we know best'. Such attitudes create and perpetuate dependency. By drawing attention to these problem areas, Hurley creates an opportunity for agencies to re-evaluate and improve their roles in the process of income generation.

The book also has a very good section on principles of business organisation. It covers the appraisal of new income generating investments, the management of economic activities, and procedures in financial management. Hurley also identifies areas in which agencies can support income generation outside of the promotional/organisational context, like marketing, purchasing training, etc.

Hurley recognises the limitations of income generating schemes: they are but one of the many aspects of a development strategy. However, his book leaves us with the promise that ap-

propriate intervention can be instrumental in helping people help themselves.

Sharmila Shankarkumar
RSP Intern, Summer 1991, now at Dartmouth College, US

REFUGEE COMMUNITIES: A COMPARATIVE FIELD STUDY by Steven Gold (1992), Sage Series on Race and Ethnic Relations, volume 4, Sage Publications Inc., 6 Bonhill Street, London, EC2A 4PU, 257 pages, Price £34 hardback, £16.95 paperback.

Refugee Communities: A Comparative Field Study is an anthropological study of Vietnamese and Soviet Jewish refugee communities in the United States. The work is built on Gold's eight year association with these communities as a teacher, resettlement worker and researcher, and the depth and quality of the material and analysis reflect this experience.

Gold's comparison of the two refugee groups starts with a discussion of adaptation and the varying degree of ethnic identification, solidarity and collectivism which have accompanied it. The positive aspects of ethnic identification are emphasized with due acknowledgement to its potentially negative consequences. While ethnic solidarity can create shelter against loneliness and mental illness, it can also result in the exploitation of co-ethnics in business, or can slow down assimilation and contribute to ghettoisation. The author recognises the role refugees play in adaptation, but shows that it is also influenced by a host of factors outside refugees' control, such as state policy, immigration law and the degree to which ethnic pluralism is tolerated in the resettlement country.

Both the Soviet Jews and the Vietnamese refugees have fled communist regimes. They arrived in California during the same period (1970-1980) and had high levels of skills and education. The similarities, however, stop there. Whilst the Soviet Jews have always been a minority group, and are welcomed on arrival by a relatively large American Jewish community, the Vietnamese in California belong to three diverse groups: the expatriate elite, the boat people, and the Chinese Vietnamese.

The personal history of the refugees is also detailed. A refugee's experience in the home country, individual educational and employment history, and ethnicity are all important in shaping their adaptation in a new environment. The diversity of the groups in this respect is stressed. Two descriptive chapters (Chapters 2 & 3) are devoted to Vietnamese and Soviet Jewish refugees' background and experience. Chapters 4 & 5 address the adaptation of the two communities in Cali-

fornia. One conclusion drawn is that in the Soviet Jewish enclave, there was resistance to ethnic organisation. Soviet Jews were 'informally close but lacked the desire or ability to form organisations' (p. 88). In contrast, Vietnamese refugees organised more readily, although this resulted in segmentation and factionalism among the community. Both refugee groups remained dependent on family networks and informal mutual help associations.

In examining the role of resettlement agencies Gold focuses on the difficulties in delivering services to refugees who may subscribe to cultural notions different from those held by state bureaucrats and resettlement workers. Resettlement agencies particularly stress employment and self-employment and a chapter is devoted to this topic (Chapter 7). With respect to self-employment, refugees' situation differs from that of immigrants as the former have no access to their home country. This limits their ability to benefit from large scale chain migration and reduces their chances of becoming middlemen who benefit from having a foot in both the home country and the host society.

Gold concludes his study by stressing that ethnic solidarity cannot be taken for granted. He blames the resettlement system for increasing segmentation and stratification within each community. Finally, he tries, if somewhat cursorily, to place these processes within a wider framework which considers relations between states and how these influence the fate of refugees. Relations between states are constantly changing in a world of shifting alliances, and enemies of today could become friends of tomorrow. These issues could be more fully explored both with relation to admission policy and attitudes towards refugees already settled.

However, this book is to be highly recommended. It is an interesting reflection on two refugee groups who are struggling to establish a niche for themselves in a multicultural society where competition for resources is high. It remains to be seen whether these new refugee/immigrants will follow the successful path of Koreans and Japanese in the US.

Madawi Al-Rasheed
Nuffield College, Oxford

THE RSP VISITORS PROGRAMME

The Visitors Programme brings together students, practitioners and senior academic researchers, some of whom are also refugees, from different regions and different disciplines, so that they may learn from each other and from RSP's teachers and resources. Researchers representing a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, use RSP's resources for independent study, the development of course materials for teaching in their own universities, or undertake supervised study. Visitors may obtain access to the many specialised libraries found throughout the University and are also actively encouraged to involve themselves in student activities in Oxford.

RSP is part of Queen Elizabeth House, the University of Oxford's International Development Centre, and all applications for attachment are reviewed by the QEH Affiliations Committee. On the basis of their *curriculum vitae* and references, successful applicants may be designated Visiting Research Fellows or Visiting Study Fellows. The latter undertake the 9 modules of RSP's multi-disciplinary Foundation courses (see ad, page 39 for further details about the Foundation Course programme).

Application forms are available from:

The Director
Refugee Studies Programme
Queen Elizabeth House
21 St Giles
Oxford OX1 3LA
UK

Fax: +44-865-270721

Please indicate a preferred beginning and ending date for your proposed attachment, your study/research objectives and your planned funding sources. More specific information concerning fees, application procedures, requirements and facilities will be forwarded to interested applicants.

UPDATE

COURSES

The International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) provides management training and research services which are designed specifically for European NGOs involved in relief and development in the South. The new centre is dedicated to improving the organisational effectiveness and programme performance of Northern NGOs and, where appropriate, that of Southern partner organisations. The goal of INTRAC is to serve NGOs in two key contexts: the exploration of management, policy and human resource issues related to the NGO's organisational development; and the evolution of more effective programmes of institutional development and cooperation.

There are two forthcoming courses in October 1992:

Understanding Institutional Development, 12-14 October 1992, Denmark; or 19-21 October 1992, UK. The purpose of this short course is to inspire the staff of NGOs to adopt appropriate institutional development (ID) approaches in their work, and in their own professional growth, by introducing ID as a key development strategy for alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development. This course is the first stage in the series of INTRAC ID courses.

The Practice of Institutional Development, 26 October - 7 November 1992, UK. This course is designed to improve the ability of NGO staff to put ID strategies and techniques into practice and follows on from the first course.

For more information about these courses or INTRAC's other workshops, contact:

INTRAC
94 Kingston Road
Oxford OX2 6RL, UK
Tel: +44-865-53062; Fax: +44-865-59298

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

A conference entitled '**European Unity and Minority Groups**' will be held 24-28 August, 1992 in Bath, UK, sponsored by Christianity and the Future of Europe (CAFE) and the Minority Rights Group (UK). Focusing on the place of minority religious and ethnic groups in the new Europe, discussions will try to assess the effects of increased federalism on minorities and discuss ways in which the different churches and other faith communities are reacting to the situation. For more information, contact:

The Course Secretary
The Ammerdown Centre
Radstock, Bath BA3 5SW, UK
Tel: +44-761-433 709

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is organising a **symposium on social and economic aspects of mass voluntary return movements of refugees in the Horn of Africa**, to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 15-17 September 1992. Participants will include African governmental and non-governmental policy makers, administrators and practitioners; representatives from international organisations and donor countries; and scholars and researchers from Africa and elsewhere. Discussions at the symposium will focus on key operational issues such as how to facilitate and encourage initiatives towards self-help and self-organisation among returning refugees throughout the return process; how to link the type and modalities of assistance during the return process to objectives for long-term socio-economic development in the returnees' home country; the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of international initiatives in assisting mass repatriation and reintegration of returnees; the advantages and disadvantages at the national level of certain 'models' of organisation in facilitating and co-ordinating mass voluntary return; reintegration, reconstruction and development of the home country. For more information, please contact:

Hubert Morsink
Senior Adviser and Programme Co-ordinator for Refugee Research
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, SWITZERLAND
Tel: +41-22-798 84 00; Fax: +41-22-7400791

The tenth International Organisation for Migration (IOM) seminar entitled **Migration and Development** will take place in Geneva 15-17 September 1992. Topics for discussion will include the relationship between development and international migration; the interaction between labour migration and economic development and its effects in countries of origin and countries of reception; the ways in which investment and trade liberalisation can facilitate return migration and contribute to migration stabilisation; practical measures for maximising the contribution of development cooperation to migration stabilisation, including planned and orderly migration; and harmonisation of development and migration objectives. Participants will include government officials responsible for development cooperation policy and those concerned with migration policy from both North and South. For a registration form or for more information, please contact:

Seminar Secretariat
International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
P.O. Box 71
CH-1211 Geneva 19, SWITZERLAND
Tel: +41-22-71792 69; Fax: +41-22-798 61 50

'**World Education Crisis: Roles for Distance Education**' is an international conference organised by the International Extension College, 20-24 September 1992 at Robinson College, Cambridge. The following issues will be addressed: adult basic education, open learning systems for substitute secondary schools,

distance teacher education, establishing priorities, education for refugees and returnees, and international collaboration. Speakers and session leaders from many different countries have been invited and confirmed speakers include the President of the Commonwealth of Learning, the Vice Chancellor of the UK Open University, the Zimbabwe Minister of Education, and the Namibian Minister of Education and Culture. The combined cost for residential delegates will be £350; the cost for day delegates (including coffee and lunch) will be £35 per day. For more information or to reserve a place or offer a paper, contact:

Miss Judith Brooks
International Extension College
2nd Floor, 10 Woburn Square
London WC1H 0NS, UK
Tel: +44-71-580 4372; Fax: +44-71-323 0325

'Refugees in the 90's - National and International Perspectives: Integrating Policy, Practice and Research', 14-17 October 1992, Vancouver, Canada will bring together policy-makers, practitioners and researchers. There is an urgent need for those working with refugees to share information, problem identification and research in order to foster public health policy. Themes will include policy issues such as who determines refugee status, Who pays and why? and service issues concerning refugee children, elderly refugees, family violence, training of workers, models of care, and treatments of torture victims. For more information, contact:

Erling Christensen
Executive Director, Western Social Policy Forum

Box 32, 545 East Broadway
Vancouver, British Columbia V5T 1X4, CANADA
Tel: +1-604-240-7267; Fax: +1-604-873-1920

RECENT CONFERENCES

'Immigration and Refugee Policy: The Australian and Canadian Experiences' was held 2 - 5 May, 1992, York University, Toronto, Canada. Topics discussed at this conference included the context of immigration and refugee flows, the economic and environmental impacts of immigration, social cohesion and the integration of newcomers. To obtain papers, contact:

Centre for Refugee Studies
York Lanes
4700 Keele St.
North York, Ontario, CANADA
Tel: +1-416-736-5663; Fax: +1-416-736-5837

'Harmonisation of Refugee Policies in Europe: The Impact on Legal Counsellors' seminar of the European Legal Network on Asylum (ELENA), held 7-10 May 1992, Luxembourg. This seminar was an opportunity for European lawyers and legal counsellors to learn more about the European intergovernmental initiatives and their impact on day-to-day advocacy on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. For information on the proceedings of this seminar, contact:

Eva Kjoergaard
ELENA
3 Bondway

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 able to make a contribution towards my annual subscription of: £20 £40 _____

Please make cheques payable to RSP/QEH

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

London SW8 1SJ, UK
Tel: +44-71-820 1156; Fax: +44-71-820 9725

The symposium **'Going Home: The Prospect of Repatriation for Refugee Women and Children'** was held 8 June 1992 in Washington, DC, and sponsored by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. For information on how to obtain a report of the symposium's outcomes and recommendations, contact:

Catherine O'Neill
Chairwoman
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
386 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016, US
Tel: +1-212-679 0010; Fax: +1-212-689 3459

'Refugees in France and in Europe: 1952-92: 40 Years of Application of the Geneva Convention.' 11 - 13 June, 1992, Centre de Conférences Internationales, Paris. Themes of this Conference included the foundations of refugee protection policy, the present and future situation of refugees in Europe, and the French and other European models regarding the future. For more information, contact:

IPR International
Jeanne Renard
12 rue des Halles
75001 Paris, FRANCE
Tel: +33-1-42 33 75 51; Fax: +33-1-42 21 17 62

CONFERENCE REPORTS

'Mass Voluntary Return of Refugees' Symposium, N'Djamena, Chad, 25-27 February 1992 was the second in a series of three United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) symposia on the social and economic aspects of mass voluntary return of refugees from one African country to another. During the past three decades, many waves of Chadian refugees have fled en masse to Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and the Sudan. Voluntary mass return movements occurred particularly during the 1980's whenever a general amnesty was declared by a new government and refugees thought it worth the risk of returning home. Chad is expecting the return of another 20,000 refugees from the Sudan in the near future.

A small multi-disciplinary research team from the Institut National des Sciences Humaines (INSH), Chad, carried out field research in various regions of the country. The research report and country overview highlight a number of policy-oriented themes, including the lack of co-ordination among foreign assistance programmes, and the success of programmes and projects based on a grassroots approach.

A separate report on the difficult situation of many women who fled Chad highlights the striking differences in their daily situation depending on the host country in which they took refuge. It also illustrates how these differences influenced the speed and extent of their reintegration on return to Chad and the

subsequent impact some women had on their community.

These research findings were presented for discussion at the symposium, together with brief reports on Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and Sudan. Two publications expected to result from the symposium will be available from UNRISD at a later date.

For more information, or to obtain the publications, please contact:

Reference Centre
UNRISD
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, SWITZERLAND
Tel: +44-22-798 84 00; Fax: +44-22-740 07 91

INSTITUTIONS

The Artisan Trust and Artisan Link Ltd is a new marketing and assistance organisation for artisanal products from developing countries. The Commission of the European Communities has recently accepted Artisan Trust as an NGO partner for the promotion of fair trade and producer assistance, and is providing financial support. It will assist those involved in small enterprises, particularly women, to become increasingly self-reliant and not dependant on relief. For more information, contact:

John Pirie
The Artisan Trust
61 Charterhouse Street
London EC1M 6HA, UK

The International Committee for Development Market Research aims to promote and help implement the application of Development Market Research (DMR) in development agency programmes. DMR attempts to offer highly efficient rapid appraisal of development problems, relying on well established market research methodologies. Teams of indigenous market research practitioners who have been trained in various aspects of market and opinion research are hired to carry out the projects. For further information, please contact:

T. Scarlett Epstein
Secretariat
International Committee for Development Market Research
'Hethersett', North Bank
Hassocks, BN6 8JG, W. Sussex, UK
Tel/Fax: +44-273-845579

RESEARCH

'Children of Gaza', is a study of the psychological and behavioural response of children to trauma, recently completed by the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) and the Palestine International Society for Mental Health. The study involved a random sample of 1,564 children, aged 8 to 15 years, living throughout the Gaza strip. The first dimension of the study was related to the experience of trauma, the second to self-esteem, and the third the degree of anxiety and fear experienced.

Results show 96.3% of the children were exposed to night raids into their homes, 49.8% were subjected to physical beatings resulting in 8.7% having their bones broken, and 29.0% were shot and wounded. It was shown that children living in the refugee camps are more exposed to trauma and violence than children living in the towns and villages and Gaza City. The results also show a significant positive correlation between exposure to physical trauma and heightened self esteem. On the other hand, there is a statistically significant correlation between witnessing violence and lowered self-esteem.

For more information, contact:

E.R. El Sarraj, MD or F. Abu Hein, PhD
Gaza Community Mental Health Programme
Gaza 1049, Occupied Territories, via Israel
Tel: +972-51-863684; Fax: +972-51-864408

Nutritional research with Rohingya refugees in Burma is being conducted by Helen Keller International, Bangladesh, which has been coordinating a Nutritional Surveillance Project for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention of Nutritional Blindness (NSP) since October 1989. Data is collected on nutritional status, morbidity, mortality, health care, socioeconomic background, present living conditions and relief activities. Market observations on food prices and transactions are done at the camp level. A handbook, with a detailed description of the survey methodology and objectives will be published. For more information, contact:

Dr. Marijke Wijnroks

Technical Advisor Rohingya Refugee Nutritional Surveillance
Helen Kelle International, Bangladesh
P.O. Box 6066 Gulshan
Dhaka-1212, BANGLADESH
Fax: +880-2-813310

The **Hemispheric Migration Project (HMP)**, sponsored by Georgetown University's Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance (CIPRA), funds research on refugees and labour migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project's support for Latin American and Caribbean scholars has a twofold objective: to encourage the development of research on refugees and migration in countries of origin and to bring the results of this research to the attention of policymakers in the sending, as well as receiving, countries. Since 1983, the HMP has commissioned and provided technical support for over 50 studies on the causes and consequences of population movements in the Western Hemisphere. A number of publications and research papers are available for purchase from HMP. Please contact:

Hemispheric Migration Project
Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance
Georgetown University
P.O. Box 2298 - Hoya Station
Washington, D.C. 20057-1011, US
Tel: +1-202-298 0213; Fax: +1-202-338 0608

FORD FOUNDATION GRANT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEE PRACTITIONERS

The Refugee Studies Programme has received a grant of US\$ 50,000 from the Ford Foundation to support the participation of Southeast Asian refugee practitioners.

Grant funds will be available over a three-year period beginning July 1, 1992.

Southeast Asian government officials or senior practitioners who are interested in writing up their experiences or conducting research using RSP's documentation centre and resources, and who are willing to teach in-service courses and/or seminars with RSP, are invited to apply for periods of not less than one month.

Interested applicants should write, with c.v. and details, to:

Dr. Barbara Harrell-Bond, Director
Refugee Studies Programme
Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA,
U.K.
Fax: +44-865-270721

Journal of Refugee Studies

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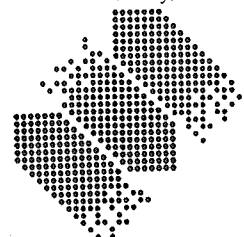
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PUBLICATIONS

Yugoslavia Torn Asunder: Lessons for Protecting Refugees from Civil War (February 1992), U.S. Committee for Refugees. Based on a site visit to the region in October, the report features testimonies of Croat, Serbian, and ethnic Hungarian refugees from the conflict. The report also analyses the changing causes of refugee flight in Europe and suggests new directions to explore for resolving refugee situations. It makes a series of interim recommendations about providing assistance in conflict areas and for developing appropriate legal mechanisms for protecting civil war refugees. For more information, or to obtain a copy of the Report, contact:

Bill Frelick

U.S. Committee for Refugees

1025 Vermont Avenue, Suite 920

Washington, DC 20005, US

Tel: +1-202-347 3507; Fax: +1-202-347 3418

Treatment of Torture: Readings and References, edited by Ferne E. Atkinson, a psychiatric and family therapy social worker who works with refugees. The collection of articles is a guide for identifying and treating those refugees with psychic trauma due to torture, political persecution, and psychological war prior to their arrival in the country of asylum as refugees. Each section of the book consists of a general survey of the area, followed by reprints of articles of particular relevance. Sections include assessment and treatment, the family and family therapy, adolescence, and the child. In addition to the references accompanying each of the articles reprinted, the reference section includes over 500 items relevant to the subject. The price is C\$ 28.50 plus \$5.00 postage and handling (check or money order). For more information, or to order a copy of the book, contact:

Ferne E. Atkinson, MSW

635 MacLaren Street

Ottawa, Ontario K1R 5L1, CANADA

The Vietnamese Experience in America (April 1992), by Paul James Rutledge, Indiana University Press, 192 pages, Price US\$ 29.95 cloth and US\$ 10.95 paper. This book is part of the series 'Minorities in Modern America' edited by W.F. Kimball and D.E. Harrell. Based in part on firsthand interviews, the book recounts vivid stories of flight out of Vietnam and the difficulties of starting over in a new country. It emphasises the resettlement process in the United States, from the policies of the US government to aspects of community acceptance and conflict, and describes Vietnamese culture and the changes it has undergone in the process of becoming a new Vietnamese-American culture.

Contact:

Order Department

Indiana University Press

601 N. Morton,

Bloomington, Indiana 47404-3797, US

The Minority Rights Group 1992 Catalogue contains a number of publications specifically relevant to refugees as well as a comprehensive collection of material on minority rights. The

catalogue includes about 100 titles, including over 20 that are new or updated.

For more information on obtaining the catalogue or MRG publications, contact:

Robert Webb

MRG Publications

379 Brixton Road

London SW9 7DE, U.K.

Tel: +44-71-978 9498

The Ethnic Communities Oral History Project was set up as a response to a call from members of minority ethnic groups in London who felt that their experiences were not being expressed in historical publications, exhibitions and educational resources. They also felt that false assumptions were being made about the countries where they or their parents were born. The Project has produced a number of booklets, exhibitions and videos. For more information, contact:

Ethnic Communities Oral History Project

2 Royal Parade

Dawes Road

London SW6 7RE, UK

Tel: +44-71-381 3272

Refugee Policy: Canada and the United States is a comprehensive study comparing all aspects of the refugee policies of the U.S. and Canada. The price is US\$ 19.50 cloth and US\$ 14.50 paper, plus \$3.50 for postage and handling. Contact:

Ms. Anne Munafò

Center for Migration Studies

209 Flagg Place

Staten Island, NY 10304-1199, US

Tel: +1-718-351 8800; Fax: +1-718-667 4598

EXHIBITS

Swords Into Ploughshares is a collection of over 200 utensils used in daily life -- such as bowls, combs, vases, lamps and jewelry -- all fashioned from artillery shells, bombs and airplanes. The exhibition has been coordinated and mounted by the Asia Resource Center (ARC) in Washington, DC, US and is designed to show the resilience of people devastated by war. The exhibit is compact and very portable and is excellent for schools, museums and religious institutions. Rental time and cost are negotiable. For information, contact:

Asia Resource Center

P.O. Box 15275

Washington, DC 20003, US

DIRECTORIES

Directory of Afghan NGO's, 1991 is a joint, voluntary project of Afghan NGOs who began meeting in 1991 in a pilot project hosted by the United Nations Office of the Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). The Directory provides information on 33 NGO's, with a further list of addresses totalling 66. These include the Muslim Association of Afghan Refugee Women in

Islamabad (MAARWI), House No. 275, St. 16, G-10/2, Islamabad, and the Physician Association for Afghan Refugees, Street No. 8, Jamal Road, Shaheen Town, Peshawar, Pakistan. For more information, contact:

ANCB President
Eng. Abdul Rahim
Reconstruction Authority for Afghanistan (RAFA)
19 Gul Mohar Lane
University Town, Peshawar, PAKISTAN
Tel: +92-521-44867

NEWSLETTERS/JOURNALS

HAITI-Insight is published monthly by the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees (NCHR). NCHR is a coalition of 47 American and Haitian religious, labour and human rights organisations which work to assure that Haitian asylum applicants receive fair hearings in the United States and to educate the US public about human rights conditions in Haiti. The newsletter is sent free of charge upon request. For more information or to receive the newsletter, contact:

NCHR
16 East 42nd Street
3rd Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017-6907, US

The **Asian and Pacific Migration Journal** is a new interdisciplinary publication which aims to stimulate research and analysis on migration and refugee movements from and within Asia and the Pacific. Annual subscription rates are US\$25 or P600.00. All subscription inquiries should be addressed to:
APMJ Circulation Manager
Scalabrini Migration Centre
P.O. Box 10541 Broadway Centrum
1113 Quezon City, PHILIPPINES

The **Mobile Public Information Unit**, a UNHCR project in the Lao refugee camps in Thailand, is producing a newsletter covering news and resources in the Laotian camps on the Thailand border. For subscription information, contact:

The Editor, Newsletter
Mobile Public Information Unit
P.O. Box 1
Chiang Khan, Loei 42110, THAILAND

REFUGEE SERVICES

The **Refugee Advice Centre** in London was opened in January 1992. The drop-in centre offers free advice in numerous languages on issues such as immigration, education, housing, employment, unemployment benefits, taxation and legal matters. It is a project established by the Employment Action programme of The Training & Business Factory which is a company providing services to local communities through the Government's employment programmes, including a school which teaches English to refugees. For more information contact:

Peter Watts
Refugee Advice Centre
1 Balmoral Road
Leyton, London E10 5ND, UK
Tel: +44-81-556 6881

The **Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)** is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, established in January 1989. An estimated 6,000 people are currently (January 1992) seeking refuge in Greece and come mainly from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Activities have included psycho-social, legal and material assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. The GCR also pursues the widest possible involvement of the local community in projects assisting refugees, both in human and material resources.

For more information, please contact:
Greek Council for Refugees
39 Arahovis St.
Athens 106 81, GREECE
Tel: +30-1-360 0059; Fax: +30-1-360 3774

The **Neighbourhood English Scheme (NES)** in the London Borough of Brent now runs two full-time (30 hour) courses for refugees and asylum seekers, one for adults and one for young people ages 16-21. In addition, they run 20 hour 'modular' courses for refugees. Courses include language skills, reading, writing, British Systems, Educational Guidance and vocational subjects such as computing. In addition, a wide range of community and intensive classes run by NES are open to refugees. For more information, contact:
Ms. Emma Hartnoll
Refugee Liaison Tutor, NES
Pavilion Building, Ashley Gardens
Preston Road, Wembley
Middlesex HA9 8NP, UK

The **Medical Centre for Refugees (FMC)** in Linköping, Sweden organises a number of health programmes for refugees. A medical ward employing thirty people treats people suffering from war injuries. A unit for transcultural psychiatry treats approximately 1,000 patients a year and provides interpreters trained in psychiatry. Experience and knowledge acquired here is disseminated to psychiatric clinics and refugee residential centres throughout the country. Health and medical care is also provided at ten refugee residential centres in three counties and at the clearance centre in Flen which approximately 3,500 refugees pass through each year.

In terms of research and education, FMC has a programme to collect and disseminate knowledge about transcultural medicine. An inventory of research projects in the field of refugee medicine has also been developed, including a data bank of literature retrieval. FMC also has one doctoral dissertation and several research projects in progress. For more information, please contact:

The Medical Centre for Refugees (FMC)
University Hospital
S-581 Linköping, SWEDEN
Tel: +46-13-22 20 00; Fax: +46-13-22 30 07

LETTERS

RPN welcomes responses to the personal viewpoints expressed in these letters.

UNEXPLODED LAND MINES IN CAMBODIA AND NGO LESSONS IN LAOS

I hear about a major operation to clear land mines in Cambodia involving millions of dollars, foreign experts and big equipment. The American Friends Service Committee and Mennonite Central Committee (AFSC/MCC) have 15 years experience in clearing unexploded ordnance in Laos and hence have insights that might be of value to aid organisations working in Cambodia. Although the land mines in Cambodia differ from the air dropped anti-personnel mines in Laos, some key points are none-the-less relevant.

After the war in Laos, a Japanese company prepared a multi-million dollar land clearing proposal for one Lao province. The project was never implemented. Nevertheless the internally displaced Lao villagers returned to provinces like Xieng Khouang after the war and began clearing their fields by hand with little help. Aid agencies are today supporting new settlements along the Ho Chi Minh Trail with limited consideration is given to the vast ordnance problems. Yet, to dig an irrigation ditch or build the foundations of a school, the ordnance has first to be cleared.

While AFSC/MCC helped test various ordnance clearing techniques, it was the provincial social welfare staff and the Lao farmers who became the experts. In one province we hired the special social welfare team who used a small generator, wire and explosives to blow up the ordnance where it was found.

Only when we asked farmers what help they needed, did we discover the importance of shovels. Instead of traditional maddox hoes (the use of which causes many injuries and which aid groups often give in resettlement kits) farmers said shovels were the only safe tool. Technically, the best way to find the tennis ball size, air dropped bomblets was to expose the hidden ones by digging with a shovel or by ploughing. Mine detection equipment was difficult to find and use well in Laos. In Laos, simple tools and intensive labour proved more useful than heavy equipment, especially on slash and burn upland fields.

This brief background on our experience in Laos is to encourage aid agencies to give more thought to consulting with farmers who in reality must clear the mines to grow food. In addition, the problem will no doubt be long lasting and Khmer ordnance teams will be needed in each area, (foreigners will

probably leave this dangerous job especially when the big funds dry up). Aid projects in areas with ordnance (either old American or new mines) should consider including ordnance clearing in the project.

We should continue to educate people about this issue to reduce the international production and use of these weapons which kill children and villagers. The Asia Resource Center can always use more items in its 'Swords into Ploughshares' exhibit which is travelling around the world. We continue to write and tell personal stories about the daily tragedies from unexploded ordnance to publicise this issue.

Roger Rumpf worked for 8 years in Laos and Vietnam for the American Friends Service Committee, 1978-81 and 1986-90 and is with the Asia Resource Centre in Washington, DC, US

APPEAL TO DONOR GOVERNMENTS

Over 500,000 Eritrean refugees are currently stranded in the Sudan, craving to return home but unable to do so for want of basic assistance.

The war and the climate of brutal repression that triggered the exodus came to an end in May last year. As a result, many refugees can no longer contemplate life in exile, nor can they tolerate being deprived of their right to return, however hospitable the host country may be.

In response, the Commission for Eritrean Refugees (CERA) has been doing its utmost to mobilise international assistance for the task of repatriation. CERA issued a general appeal in August last year and approached the UNHCR to work out a comprehensive programme of repatriation and reintegration giving first priority to those in the Sudan.

The UNHCR responded positively, sending a technical team to conduct a survey and assess the basic needs for reintegration. Subsequent developments, however, were far from encouraging. The Operations Plan devised by the UNHCR was not based on the findings of the survey, and focused exclusively on repatriation while virtually neglecting reintegration. CERA envisaged a total outlay of US\$ 200 million for the first phase of repatriation and reintegration of 250,000

refugees, but the UNHCR Operations Plan earmarked US\$ 68 million which would essentially cover only logistical costs. CERA submitted a further detailed commentary pointing out flaws in the procedural and substantive content of the Operations Plan. Intensive discussions were subsequently carried out with the UNHCR, after which they came up with another new proposal, unrelated to the previous surveys and discussions. The new scheme was much smaller in scale and projected funds were reduced to US\$ 24 million dollars for a partial repatriation this year.

Donors' apathy and reluctance to commit themselves to this Programme, 'amid a multiplicity of crises elsewhere' and the limitations of UNHCR's mandate which excludes responsibility for reintegration, have been cited as reasons for the narrow focus of the Programme. But the donor community and the UN have been involved in reintegration programmes in the past. A recent example is a US\$ 154 million project to rehabilitate Ethiopian ex-soldiers. The per capita allocation of funds in the repatriation of South African refugees, Namibians and others has also been significantly higher than the proposed allocation for Eritrean refugees. The substantial funding (almost US\$ 2 billion) marshalled for Cambodia is another stark example of the apparent inconsistency. If, as we would like to believe, the primary consideration in these acts is humanitarian, we find the preferential and discriminatory approach inexplicable.

That funds cannot be generated locally to compensate for the financial shortfall hardly needs emphasis. Thirty years of war, the deliberate policy of pillage pursued by the Mengistu regime and the effects of recurrent drought in the past decade have impoverished Eritrean society. And while CERA and the Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) are fully committed to facilitating the repatriation, the endeavour is a recipe for social disaster in the absence of the minimum conditions enabling the returnees to have a productive life. The PGE has indeed made it clear that it cannot bear the consequences and recriminations that would ensue if the programme is launched in its present form. To abandon a quarter of a million refugees to their own devices (which is tantamount to dumping), may well sow the seeds of future turmoil and instability.

There is also pressure within the refugee community to return home. Those who have lost patience and faith in international assistance are in fact taking risks and returning

home spontaneously. In the past two years, an estimated 50,000 refugees have returned from settlement camps, as well as urban and semi-urban areas.

This influx, which is growing at the rate of 100 new returnees a day through Tessenei alone, is potentially disastrous. The capacity of local communities to absorb these returnees is virtually nil and the overstretched services can hardly withstand these additional pressures. A recent survey of 17,160 returnees indicated there were 21.3% children under the age of five and 39.5% were female-headed families. The illiteracy rate was 85.5%. The demand for shelter, school, medical services and other amenities is thus immense and may unleash social tensions with a negative bearing on the prevailing peace. The situation may also trigger a back-flow as the returnees find destitution unbearable.

In view of these realities, CERA appeals to all concerned governments to take full account of this precarious situation and to extend the necessary assistance. Failure to take urgent measures now may lead to heavier responsibilities and burdens as the crisis grows in scale.

*Commission for Eritrean Refugee Affairs
Provisional Government of Eritrea
Asmara, March 22, 1992*

SUDANESE REFUGEE INFLUX CONTINUES

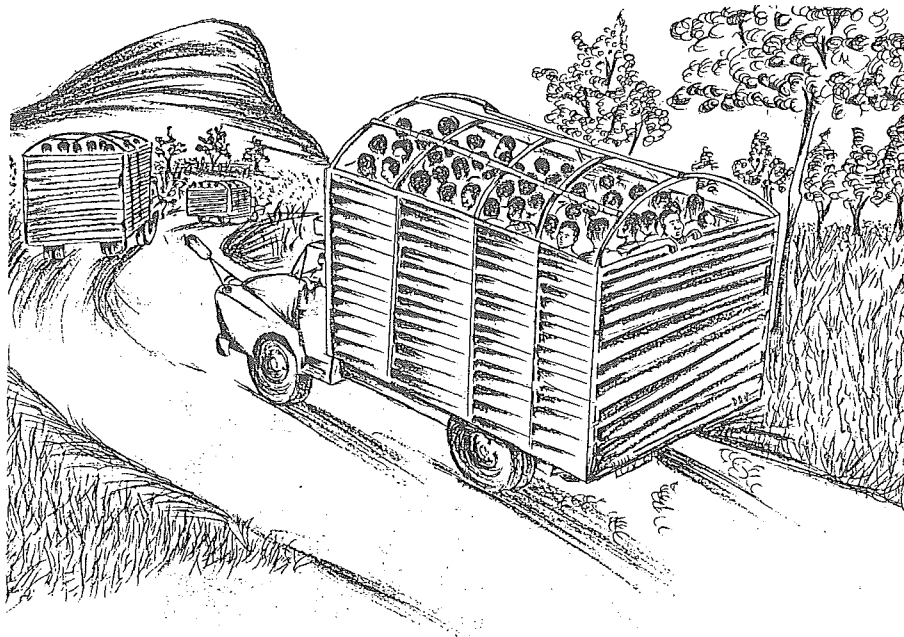
While the international community and UNHCR advocate durable solutions to refugee issues around the world, refugee flows continue. For example, 70,000 southern Sudanese have arrived in North West Uganda, driven by the civil war and attempted forcible recruitment of young boys in to the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). The scale of the influx increased towards the end of 1991, peaking at 200 arrivals daily in January 1992 and reducing to 150 per day by March. In response, the District Executive Secretary for Refugee Affairs has continued to provide shelter in Moyo Civic Centre, Moyo Hospital has extended its services to refugees and together with UNHCR, transport has been provided to ferry refugees from the transit centres to settlements in the East of the District.

The continuing war in South Sudan not only disrupts the local and host economies, but robs the world of the human potential of the displaced nationals. For young refugees, a priority is education. As one student described it: 'the armed conflict raging in the south has shattered the region virtually to ruins. We have lost our houses, crops, animals, education... I was affected in the third year of my secondary schooling, when Comboni Senior Secondary School closed due to

heavy shelling in Juba town. Prior to this, the Government in Khartoum passed a decree making Arabic the official language of instruction in classes and making compulsory the study of the Koran. That decree prompted many students to escape. To our horror, the first group of sixty who attempted were arrested by Government forces and taken to the 'white house' (a military barracks in Juba). A few days later many students' dead bodies were found lying about and we had to flee. Leaving Juba town, we could see people in their homes and we wondered how they would be able to organize any resistance. In reality, both sides in the war are brutal and unpardoning. It is over a month since we arrived in Uganda, surviving at God's mercy...'

In the refugee camps themselves, fighting broke out between the 'Lukayi' and 'Kuku' in the transit camp of Ogujabe in East Moyo on the banks of River Nile. 'Ethnic' clashes have not previously been reported from Sudanese refugee camps in Uganda. Their cause is unclear, but it has been suggested that they reflect the culmination of grievances over inequitable distribution of food and other resettlement relief items. They were ridiculously sparked when a 'Lukayi' deliberately kicked a water container placed in a queue by a 'Kuku' girl. Fighting broke out. The clashes flared up in Olijji area of the camp where the few 'Lukayi' were quickly overrun by the 'Kuku'. The defeated 'Lukayi' retreated to Katoro side of the camp where they were more numerous and mobilised a fresh attack on the 'Kuku'. This time they were victorious, and marched through Olijji village burning all the grass-thatched huts. Despite trying to resist with local weapons the 'Kuku' failed to repulse the attack and had to flee.

*Michael Amadi, Editorial Board Member,
'Aulogo' newsletter, Lutheran World Federation,
Moyo, Uganda*



Amadi L.

REFUGEE RELIEF AND FEEDING CENTRE: ROHINGYA EXPERIENCE

Bangladesh has been in the news again. This time refugees from Burma have been pouring into the Cox Bazar region of Bangladesh. They are Rohingyas, poor Muslims from the Arakan State of Burma.

Men, women, old and the young have crossed the border to save their lives. There has been torture, rape, forced labour and killings by the Burmese army in their villages. They came in thousands, on some days as many as 5,000. No wonder the number rose to 250,000 in a short time. It is a disaster situation - a man made disaster. Emergency relief measures have been provided and refugee camps have been set up. Along with the Bangladesh Government, UNHCR, World Food Programme and a number of NGOs are tirelessly busy in relief operations. We have seen all these on the TV. I went to see for myself.

It is a disaster. When I was there, 90,000 people were still in need of shelter, lying in the open fields with a piece of polythene or a few twigs to cover their head. They are in need of food. But they are not 'beggars' as they may be in the eyes of 'medical experts'. My understanding tells me that we need to review our set Western ideas before we get involved with refugee relief in a Third World setting. We, in the West, need to change our 'know everything' attitude. Otherwise we will continue to do more harm than good, perhaps unconsciously, in the name of emergency relief. Here is one example - the feeding centre. I went to see one such centre at a refugee camp.

The flag flying, the banner, the T-shirt on the expatriate volunteer say the centre is run by a European NGO. Anyway, that is not important. Now, what is going on inside? There is a large room where children (under 5s probably) sit in rows with plastic plates and spoons in front of them. While watching the 'morning feed', I got distracted with the screams of a child, coming from the next room. The little boy was going through a process to be eligible for the feeding room - 'scientific determination of malnutrition'. So he has been made to lie on a plank of wood and somebody held his head tight with two hands. By now, the screaming boy has started throwing his legs about too. So the other worker has caught hold of the flying legs and tried to keep them steady and dead flat on that

plank until he could adjust the sliding scale for 'correct' measurement - the height of the boy. By then the exhausted boy had given up and let them measure how long he was. Then came his weight. It was, too, a bit of a struggle to get his legs out correctly through that triangular bag. He soon found himself hanging in the air, sitting in that bag. His eyes were definitely saying, 'what next!'

Let us go back to the feeding room. The morning feed has been served. My! Never, in my life, have I seen Third World poor children eating so slowly. What a fuss with food! But what is the matter with these children? I asked the local lady working at the centre. She replied, 'what can we do? They decide (pointing to the other room)'. I understood she meant the French volunteer who was busy writing notes on the register. She continued 'in our country simple rice and vegetable would be a feast for these children. No one likes this rice pudding. They put milk, sugar and, you know, oil'. I nodded. However, they like the 'lunch' feed of this centre - rice, dahl, dry fish and some vegetables, I think.

Do we need this feeding centre? Are the children malnourished? I would say, either no one in the camp is malnourished or everyone is. It is our set idea that refugee children must be malnourished and we must supplement with what the 'human body' requires. Because we know science, we 'screen' with a 'scientific method' and we give 'balanced feed' with a height-weight chart in the other hand.

I do not know who invented that 'locally made, simple to use' height measure tool; surely the boy did not like it. Not only the trauma each one has to suffer before going to the feeding room, I wonder what happens in those little minds when they have to sit in rows in a crowded room waiting for 'someone' dropping that 'lumpy stuff' in their plates. Let them play and have a little more rice and vegetables.

Dr Manan Ganguli, Medical Advisor to Health Unlimited's work in Bangladesh; formerly with Quaker Peace & Service. May 1992

(Continued from page 40)

RSP has now developed a **Five Year Plan** for the period 1992-97 outlining the directions in which the Programme seeks to go, both in its structure and management and its substantive work. RSP's growth over the period of the previous Five Year Plan, from five staff members to twenty, underlined the need for a sustained and continuous planning process within the organisation. Responding to this need, the Ford Foundation in 1991 earmarked grant funding to finance the development of a planning framework for the next five years.

REFUGEE STUDIES PROGRAMME

ACADEMIC COURSE OF STUDY 1992-1993

Multi-disciplinary Foundation Course

- * Refugees in the Contemporary World: An Introduction
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This multi-disciplinary foundation course of study is open to all members of the University, Visting Fellows, and by arrangement to students, researchers, and practitioners from other institutions.

For further information please contact:
Refugee Studies Programme,
Queen Elizabeth House,
University of Oxford, 21 St. Giles,
Oxford, OX1 3LA

NEWS FROM RSP

Sponsorship

RPN gratefully acknowledges the Commission of the European Communities, the European Human Rights Foundation and Save the Children, UK for generous funding support

Repatriation Conference

A Conference entitled 'Refugee Repatriation During Conflict' was organised by RSP on 23rd May 1992. The conference met to hear the outcome of research on repatriation in the Tigrayan, Sri Lankan, Afghan and Central American contexts and to discuss a guide for NGOs based on the findings. The research which commenced in 1986 was funded by the Ford Foundation through Intertect, Texas, and Georgetown University's Centre for Immigration Policy and Research (CIPR) who supported the Central American component. Barry Stein and Frederick Cuny authored the guide and coordinated the research. Participants included representatives from UNHCR and other international organisations, NGOs, advocacy groups, academics and refugees. Presenters included the research coordinators, case study authors Barbara Hendrie and Professor Adolfo Zinser of Mexico National University. Arthur Helton of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and David Winder of St. Antony's College, Oxford also made presentations on issues raised in the research.

The idea for the NGO guide came out of reflection on the detailed repatriation case studies. It had emerged that in each context, some agencies working with refugees had not supported or had even actively prevented, refugees from returning home during conflict. Thus in effect, they were not recognising refugees right to return. Social support networks and cross-border contact are, however, often vital for refugees to secure their future. As such, care needs to be taken that in assisting refugees such ties are not broken and mobility not prevented. The guide gives a typology of different sorts of repatriations and broaches legal and practical issues relevant to return to conflict situations. It tries throughout to focus on refugees' viewpoints and concerns.

In discussion, the question was raised whether, in today's political climate, encouraging repatriation during conflict would not in effect undermine the basis of refugees' right to asylum. In the guide itself, the authors try to achieve a balance between supporting refugees' own decisions even when this involves choosing to return to insecurity, and yet not actively promoting this as an ideal 'solution'. An ethical question was also raised at the Conference, and remained unanswered: in a situation where refugees and protection workers have differing perceptions of the refugees' own best interests, should agencies let refugees go back to what they perceive as certain death?

The draft guide for NGOs is currently being revised. For copies of the forthcoming guide, or for information about forthcoming publications of the initial research case studies on repatriation, please contact:

Dr Barry Stein, Dept. of Political Science, Michigan State University, Michigan 48824, USA.

RSP Staff and Friends

RSPs course training officer **Anthea Sanyasi** is currently on a one year sabbatical in Vietnam working with Norwegian Action for Returning Vietnamese (NARV). She will be working specifically with unaccompanied minors.

Our congratulations to **Bacete Bwogo**, former RSP Study Fellow, who has been awarded a two and a half year fellowship by the Institute of Current World Affairs for a comparative study of health care delivery in Cuba, Costa Rica, India and the USA. For further information about the study, please contact RSP.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan has agreed to fund for a further three years a research position at the Refugee Studies Programme. The post was created in 1990 and has been held for the last two years by **Dr Nicholas Van Hear**, who has been focusing on the forced migration generated by the Gulf conflict.

The Status of Refugees in Asia by Vitit Muntarbhorn was published and launched by Oxford University Press in June 1992 with the assistance and support of the RSP. The author was previously a Visiting Research Fellow at the RSP and is now Associate Professor of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. The book surveys some of the key issues of law and policy affecting refugees in the Asian region, including the movement and presence of refugees in different parts of the region, and an evaluation of the legal situation (multilateral treaties, regional and national initiatives).

The book will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of RPN and is available for £25 from OUP, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

...continued on page 39

1982-1992

**RSP IS CELEBRATING ITS
10TH ANNIVERSARY!**

**HRH Crown Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan
will give the annual
Joyce Pearce Memorial Lecture
to celebrate RSP's 10th Anniversary on
21 October 1992
at the Examinations School, High Street,
Oxford, UK at 5 pm.**