

# FORCED MIGRATION

15

October 2002

review

## Displaced children and adolescents: challenges and opportunities



# from the editors

## Forced Migration Review

provides a forum for the regular exchange of practical experience, information and ideas between researchers, refugees and internally displaced people, and those who work with them. It is published in English, Spanish and Arabic by the Refugee Studies Centre/University of Oxford in association with the Global IDP Project/Norwegian Refugee Council. The Spanish translation, *Revista de Migraciones Forzadas*, is produced by IDEI in Guatemala.

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We are indebted to Geeta Narayan, Project Officer for Humanitarian Policy in the Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF New York, for her hard work as guest editor and to UNICEF for their financial support of this FMR's feature section on **Displaced children and adolescents: challenges and opportunities**. We're delighted to include an introductory piece by Nils Kastberg, Director of UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programmes, and a specially commissioned interview with General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian International Development Agency's Special Advisor on War-affected Children.



Corinne Owen

For those of us far from day-to-day contact with those directly affected by conflict and displacement, General Dallaire's passionate words are a reminder to retain our sense of outrage: "I don't see how we can make treaties on weapons and on prevention of war and we can create an international court yet not move in a cultural sense to develop repugnance about children as combatants."

The feature theme of issue 16 (to be published January 2003) will be **African displacement: roots, resources and resolution**. Issue 17, to be published in May 2003 in association with the Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, will focus on **'when displacement ends'**. If you are interested in writing on either of these subjects, please contact us as soon as possible at [fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk).

Other themes under consideration for 2003 include 'reproductive health for refugees/IDPs', 'asylum' and 'logistics of assistance'. Again, if you are interested in writing on any of these subjects, please contact us. We can then let you know what we decide – and obviously if we get a lot of interest in certain themes, that will help our decision making! And please remember that we keep space in each issue for 'non-theme' articles on any other subject relating to forced migration.

Many thanks to those of you who responded to our question about an FMR CD ROM. If you missed the question, here it is again.... If we were to put all back issues of Forced Migration Review (for our three language editions) on a CD ROM, would it be of use/interest to you? Would you be prepared to pay? Do contact us.

We continue to update the acclaimed **Did you know?** section of our website. Please have a look, send us any suggestions and tell friends and colleagues about our site. If you read Spanish, you may be interested in our new Spanish language site: [www.migracionesforzadas.org](http://www.migracionesforzadas.org)

We welcome **Kate Prudden** to the FMR team. She replaced Sharon Ellis for several months earlier this year while Sharon was on maternity leave. Kate will now be working one day a week with FMR, focusing particularly on website development, outreach and collaboration.

With best wishes.

Marion Couldrey & Tim Morris  
Editors, Forced Migration Review

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Children's Fund or any other United Nations organisation.

Front cover photos: Child soldier, Cambodia: Gary Trotter/Still Pictures • Norwegian Refugee Council's TEP-programme in DR Congo: Norwegian Refugee Council 2002

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## General articles

## Regular features



# Strengthening the response to displaced children

by Nils Kastberg

Ron Gilting/Still Pictures

*Today, an estimated 20 million children are displaced by armed conflict or human rights violations.*

education. In addition, legal 'invisibility' may leave IDPs susceptible to arbitrary actions and unable to seek help or protection from local authorities.

Efforts have been made in recent years to strengthen the international response to the internally displaced, primarily in relation to institutional and operational coordination. Among these are the development of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement<sup>1</sup>, a comprehensive collection of legal standards and norms applicable to IDPs; the adoption by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee of a policy paper on Protection of IDPs<sup>2</sup>; the development of Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Separated and Unaccompanied Children; and the establishment of an IDP Unit within the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)<sup>3</sup>.

## Key elements in UNICEF's response to displaced children

Children who are refugees or IDPs face many of the same challenges and risks: discrimination, the breakdown of or separation from their family, physical injury and psychosocial impact, violence, abuse and exploitation, and other violations of their rights. At the same time, there are important differences in their status, related mainly to the legal and institutional mechanisms in place for their assistance and protection. Humanitarian organisations

*School for displaced children, Liberia.* **F**orced to flee their homes, often travelling great distances to escape enemy fire, these children are the most frequent victims of violence, disease, malnutrition and death. In the chaos of flight, these boys and girls may become separated from their parents and families and thus exposed to far greater dangers. Adolescents have special needs because they are especially vulnerable to forced recruitment, abduction, trafficking or exploitation, and for girls sexual violence and rape are risks. In many cases, 'temporary' displacement often extends well over a decade. In such cases, children may spend their entire childhood in camps.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the impact of displacement - whether internal or across international borders - on families and children. This article considers some of UNICEF's recent experiences in working with displaced children.

## Refugees and IDPs: risks and challenges

The 1951 Refugee Convention sets the standards for the treatment of refugees and the obligations of countries. Although the international community has taken responsibility

for their welfare, primarily through UNHCR, refugees often face terrible hardship, danger and suffering. Frequently perceived as outsiders, they may suffer harassment and discrimination. Language barriers may limit children's access to education and lack of accepted certification makes employment difficult for parents. The mobility of refugees is sometimes restricted by host country regulations. Poverty awaits most in the long term, after they lose land and property as well as many legal rights. In their precarious existence they may endure a range of human rights abuses, including incarceration and exclusion from schooling.

Because the majority of conflicts over the last decade have been within rather than across national boundaries, the number of IDPs - those who are forced to flee but remain within their own national borders - has been increasing sharply. Although governments are primarily responsible for the welfare of those who are internally displaced, they may be unable or unwilling to offer them assistance and protection. The internally displaced, separated from their normal support systems and often without identity papers, may be unable to obtain food, water, shelter, health services and

must be cognisant of the implications of these challenges and differences as they work to assist and protect refugee and internally displaced children.

Using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as its starting point, UNICEF strives to ensure that children displaced under emergency conditions have the same rights to survival, protection, and development as other children.

### *assessment is a particularly undervalued area of activity*

UNICEF's work for displaced children does not, of course, take place in a vacuum. The support of its partners, both governmental and non-governmental, local and international, is critical in ensuring the success of UNICEF's efforts to support and protect children. Inter-agency collaboration to address the needs of refugee children is essential. In 1996, UNICEF and UNHCR, key partners in this area, outlined their collaboration in a memorandum of understanding covering issues such as refugee education and protection of refugee children.

Young people have the right to express their views and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. The participation of displaced young people is a critical element in successful project design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. Beyond the immediate impact of improving programmes, the participation of young people is also a major contributor to rebuilding their self-esteem, increasing their sense of efficacy and, ultimately, to aiding their empowerment. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, UNICEF has supported the establishment of a youth-to-youth support hotline in which young volunteers, supervised by a professional, have been trained and are available on two toll-free lines to provide information and psychosocial support to other young people over the phone. This kind of approach builds upon the strengths of young people themselves and helps them improve their own coping skills while supporting their peers.

Creative solutions must be pursued in order to address many of the challenges of displacement, as routine approaches and solutions are likely to fall short for these children who are either constantly moving or facing the threat of moving again, and who may be deliberately targeted by govern-

ments and armed groups. Nor are displaced children part of a homogenous or historical 'community' so community-based approaches will need to be adapted accordingly. To address such factors in Georgia, for instance, UNICEF and UNHCR supported a mobile campaign for child rights to educate children and communities on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the first half of 2001 alone, the campaign travelled from village to village in Eastern Georgia educating 6,700 children about their rights.

### **Advocacy**

Effective advocacy should be built on accurate information. It may include regular reporting on the conditions of the displaced; making displaced communities themselves aware of their rights; mobilisation of partner organisations; advocacy at the highest political levels; and ensuring that organisations working with the displaced community specifically consider the rights of children. One example of effective advocacy around children in armed conflict is the growing integration of children's concerns into Security Council resolutions and statements. The most recent Security Council resolution on children affected by armed conflict calls upon all parties to armed conflict to "provide protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children....".

As part of an inter-agency effort, UNICEF is working closely with the IDP Unit to support training at country-level on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The training is both an advocacy initiative to raise awareness of the needs and rights of the internally displaced and a capacity-building exercise to support governments and country teams in developing a stronger overall response to IDPs. The training package includes specific consideration of the capacities and vulnerabilities of children and women.

### **Assessment**

Of the many different activities needed to protect and support children, assessment is a particularly undervalued area of activity. It is often during the assessment stage that key decisions affecting the rights and well-being of children are made, for example, decisions about which activities are most critical for children

during and after displacement, or where activities should be targeted to reach the most children at risk. The early and ongoing availability of sex- and age-disaggregated data is essential to inform these kinds of decisions.

Assessment, monitoring and evaluation activities are the foundation of sound programmes as well as the basis of effective policy and advocacy. Good assessments should call attention to situations or issues that may lead to displacement, such as inter-ethnic clashes or nationalist rhetoric. They should also systematically incorporate protection concerns and involve the participation of displaced children as far as possible. In 2001, for example, the situation of children in camps in northern Uganda for the internally displaced was assessed to obtain in-depth knowledge of specific factors affecting the rights and development of children and adolescents. The assessment made recommendations on the issues of abducted children, children orphaned by AIDS, and child abuse and exploitation.

### **Care and protection**

The restoration of basic social services is critical to respond effectively to displaced children. Access to maternal and child health care (including the prevention of malnutrition and childhood diseases such as measles and polio), schools, water and sanitation, cultural activities and recreation help not only to save lives but also to restore a protective environment for children who have been uprooted. The establishment of child-friendly spaces in camps for refugees and IDPs is providing integrated care for children in a number of humanitarian crises. [See article by Suba Mahalingam on page 22.]

Displaced girls and boys are particularly vulnerable to all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, rape and recruitment into armed forces. UNICEF promotes the concept of children as a 'zone of peace' as a general approach to children in armed conflict situations. Periods of cease-fire or 'days of tranquility' have been used to facilitate access to basic social services for children. This year, UN agencies and their partners have been able to carry out successful National Immunisation Days for polio eradication in Somalia, DRC, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Afghanistan, among others. In the DRC, the UN assisted

national education authorities in negotiating the delivery of state exams to rebel-held areas in the country. This allowed students in all parts of the country to sit for state diplomas. Where political will exists, conflicts need not be an obstacle to fundamental development imperatives such as the right to health or education.

Birth registration and the provision of basic identity and registration documents are an important element in helping to prevent violations of the rights of displaced children. Without identification, children are vulnerable to under-age recruitment by armed forces, may be unable to take advantage of educational and health services, and are at risk of losing their citizenship rights. In Colombia, a cooperative programme by UNICEF, Colombian government agencies and ECHO created 'registration brigades' to enable internally displaced children to regain identity documents. The one-stop registration programme was organised in multiple sites to overcome transportation difficulties faced by displaced families. People were also helped to register at border areas, to prevent their temporary movements across national boundaries from complicating registration requirements.

The preservation of family unity is a general principle when working with displaced children, as the family is the most effective unit of protection and assistance for children, especially very young children. Family reunification is also among the most important activities for children who have been separated from their families, and can help restore normalcy in a way that few other activities can.

When providing assistance to children, efforts should be made to recognise and take advantage of entry points to reach children. International and non-governmental organisations may be able to use traditional entry points for assistance, such as education and health, in order to promote activities in newer, less traditional areas such as protection, psychosocial support and recreation, and to combat gender-based violence. In Cambodia, UNICEF, World Education and the Ministry of Education operate a successful

mine risk education programme through the school system in the most affected districts. The programme has reached more than 81,000 children, including both in-school and out-of-school children, and 12,500 adults. It has since been expanded to include HIV/AIDS awareness as another component of risk education. In Indonesia, in 2001, UNICEF and USAID supported the establishment of a computer training centre at the Maluku Library in Ambon for high school youth from both Muslim and Christian communities. The Library is situated in a neutral area in Ambon and provides a rare venue for children from both communities to interact with each other and learn and play together.

Protection and assistance must be seen as mutually reinforcing actions. Traditionally, the focus has been on providing assistance to 'vulnerable' groups such as children; however, the international community is increasingly cognisant of the need to ensure that the populations they seek to assist are also protected from further human rights violations and threats to their safety. For internally displaced and refugee children, who have been driven from their homes because of human rights abuses, protection must be a fundamental part of the international humanitarian response.

Because the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced and refugee children are so interlinked, displacement must be addressed as part of a broader humanitarian and

development strategy. Humanitarian organisations and donors alike require a better understanding of the ongoing nature of many displacement crises and needs, the long-term impacts on children of even relatively short episodes of displacement and the specific protection dimensions of displacement.

## Conclusions

Among the major areas of response to displaced children are assessment, advocacy, care and protection. UNICEF's experience demonstrates that flexibility, partnerships and innovation are required in all these areas. Assessments must be flexible enough to address repeated waves of displacement and incorporate a broad range of protection and assistance issues. Advocacy must be sensitive to the specific risks and challenges facing displaced children and must involve a range of partners at local, national and international levels. Finally, innovative and flexible approaches are needed for the care and protection of displaced children, including approaches that are grounded in a comprehensive, integrated and long-term response to displacement.

*Nils Kastberg is the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF. Email: emops@unicef.org*

1. See [www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/principles.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/principles.htm)

2. See [www.idpproject.org/UN/IASC/ProtectionPolicyPaper.pdf](http://www.idpproject.org/UN/IASC/ProtectionPolicyPaper.pdf)

3. See [www.reliefweb.int/idp/](http://www.reliefweb.int/idp/)

*Teaching children to avoid landmines, Cambodia*



# The need for international standards on archiving the records of unaccompanied children

by Kirk Felsman, Alebel Derib and Stirling Cummings

*The case for developing international guidelines on the archiving and management of the records of separated children rests at the intersection of children's rights and theories of child development.*

The Convention on the Rights of the Child notes that there should be due regard to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background. Article 8 focuses on the legal and protection aspects of guaranteeing the child's identity, including "nationality, name and family relations". Such data may help an older child achieve one of the central developmental tasks in the life cycle: establishing a firm sense of 'identity' through knowledge of one's individual and collective history.

In 1998 a project funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation and Save the Children Sweden started archiving the original registration records of the so-called 'Lost Boys' of Sudan, a group of some 18,000 refugee children (now young adults) who originated from South Sudan. Hard copies of these records were moved eight times between 1987 and 1996 and were almost destroyed by an agency concerned to free up office storage space.

These documents represent the only written record of their early lives. Individual files contain photographs and an average of eight pages of detailed social history including the child's own descriptions of his experience of displacement. When complete the database will be searchable by multiple indices, including name, nickname, date of birth, age, ethnic background and place of origin. We hope it will yield a model that stimulates discussion and contributes to the development of international stan-

dards and policies on the records of separated children. We anticipate that the project will make personal records available to Sudanese youth who have been or are being resettled in the US, to those who remain in Kakuma Camp in Kenya, as well as to those who have returned to southern Sudan.

When the project was launched field staff with long experience working with Sudanese youth doubted if these refugee minors would really want copies of their records, noting that they already had a strong oral tradition and that many knew their kinship links. However, a series of focus groups with the youth then living in Kakuma Camp in Kenya indicated that they were almost unanimous in their desire to have copies of their personal histories.

*"I do not have parents or relatives who could tell me how I behaved or some of the things I said or did when I was a child. But, most of all, I have many questions that I would like to get answers to from my past. To me my records are replacements of the relatives or parents I never came to know very well, or I never had. I would need the information from my childhood to give to my children, as any parent is expected to do."*

Registration systems have been developed based upon the short-term need to address the functional purpose of immediate tracing and reunification efforts.

From a child rights and child development perspective, we would argue that agencies involved in tracing and reunification programmes have an ethical obligation to adopt a longer-term view of their documentation, tracing and reunification efforts. We would urge the establishment of guidelines and international standards to deal directly with the need to archive individual social history records of separated children and to provide appropriate access to such confidential records over time.

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**Alebel Derib works for Save the Children, Sweden and is the author of a recent report on unaccompanied Sudanese children in Pignudo and Kakuma camps ([www.rb.se/assets/pdf-filer/program/Pignudo.pdf](http://www.rb.se/assets/pdf-filer/program/Pignudo.pdf)).**  
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# Interview with General Roméo A Dallaire

## What is your role at CIDA?

I have been invited by the Minister for International Cooperation to be Special Advisor on War-affected Children to the Canadian International Development Agency. My role is to provide insight to CIDA on specific areas where children are being used in conflict. I attend conferences, present papers, review documents where required and go to the field to analyse the situation and provide insights on possible areas of work. I also look at what and how Canada is doing with regard to this issue.

## What is CIDA's position regarding war-affected children?

Within CIDA's Child Protection Action Plan, war-affected children are an area of strategic focus. Priorities for CIDA programming in support of these children include providing basic education for refugee and internally displaced children, supporting reintegration of child soldiers into their families and communities, training to prevent and resolve conflicts, and providing basic health and psychosocial services.

CIDA is focusing on efforts to involve war-affected girls and boys directly in designing and implementing interventions for them. CIDA also seeks to make the impact of war on girls and boys visible and to promote ways to prevent the violation of their rights during and after conflicts.

## What should donor governments do to look after the needs of displaced and war-affected children?

The question of children as instruments of war is misunderstood. There is little acknowledgement that this new phenomenon has emerged during the conflicts of the 90s.

Because there is no grand strategic grasp of this phenomenon, you don't

have an outcry by the international community about the abhorrence of the use of children in war. You don't have an outcry like you have with regard to the use of biological or nuclear weapons. These instruments are rightly feared and actions have been taken to ratify conventions to prevent their use. The use of children in war to me is morally impossible to neglect or to put aside. I don't see how we can make treaties on weapons and on prevention of war and we can create an international court yet not move in a cultural sense to develop repugnance about children as combatants.

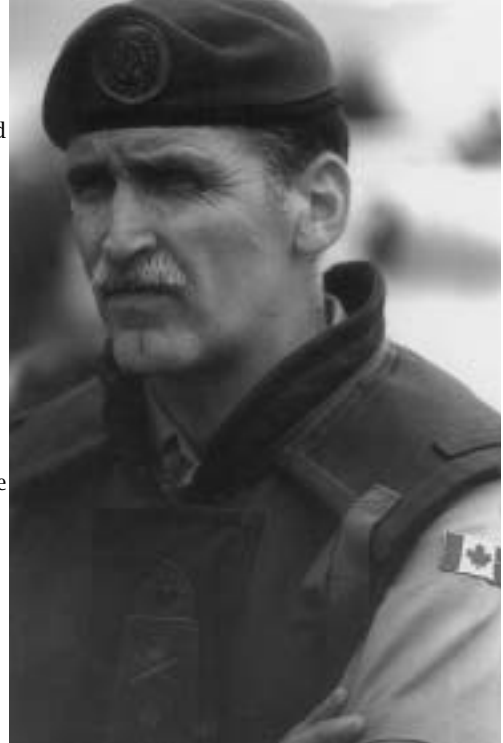
## How would you describe the response by the humanitarian community so far?

## What are the opportunities and challenges?

There are enormous efforts being done by a whole host of organisations. Some are working on prevention. Others are trying to pick up the pieces after conflicts. There is some effort done through education to encourage peaceful resolutions of conflict. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child is also moving forward.<sup>1</sup>

But what I don't see from that international effort is the ability to advance more innovative efforts in the field. I'll give you an example. UNICEF in Sierra Leone has done a magnificent job with its partners to rebuild educational systems in displaced camps and villages. Through reintegration programmes, they teach basic skills and attempt to reintegrate back into society the children who have been active participants in these conflicts.

However, the depth of the problem is not touched upon. Longer-term programmes are not being pursued. The work is one of crisis resolution and



setting up a base where the nation can pick up and sustain itself. The argument is that NGOs don't want to create a dependent state and so they want to hand over fairly rapidly. However, the responsibility cannot simply be handed over.

I once spoke to a young leader and he told me how he was going to this rehabilitation programme to be a cobbler or carpenter. This was not particularly over-exciting but it gave him a basic skill. He said "I'm going to be going to school here for the next while." He then asked "what happens after?" These children are very conscious of the longer term which sometimes I don't think that we appreciate enough. What happens after the three months of this programme? Is there an education system for him? Is there going to be support to help him into these transitions? What happens after this life of traumas and easily available power? The facile response is that the communities and families are able to absorb these children and to reintegrate them into mainstream society.



Let me explain. You've got boys, you've got girls and you've got leaders. The boys are the active participants and their reintegration requires taking their energy, and giving them active things to do in order to sustain that impulse that they have been living with for years. The question of girls is far more complex because even if we have innovative ideas to help rehabilitate them, like teaching them non-traditional skills, these often go nowhere. Girls return to their home village and can't use those skills because of traditional village culture. It creates another pressure on the girls which they have to face while also tackling the psychological trauma.

These two groups in themselves can partially be handled through reasonably short-term programmes. However, none of the programmes for boys or girls deal with the true post-traumatic stress they face. They'll fake it, they'll live with it for months, maybe years, but at one time or another, without any follow-up or professional help, they will explode. They can become enormous problems for communities and can become potential recruits to return into the bush.

The third group, the leadership gang, as far as I have been able to discern, has not been specifically touched upon by the humanitarian community. The youth who have developed leadership skills during these conflicts are in the norm highly skilled, highly intelligent, very savvy of human nature, very proud and capable of swaying the opinions of others. Now these boy and girl leaders are being handled in the same pot as the boys and girls I have just described. However, they are the seeds for the next round, they are the leaders of the next revolution unless they are nurtured through a separate programme. The objective is to take those magnificent skills and encourage them to become leaders in an effective rebuilding of the nation.

Sierra Leone is an example where 14 year olds are actually in command of camps of displaced or demobilised children. They retain those same powers because they're natural leaders and the others are swayed by them. Even NGOs use them. The lack of coordinated work with these leaders

is to me the most evident deficiency in the whole programme because no matter how much we're going to do, if those leaders are not handled well, they will bring back into conflict and banditry all the ones that we've helped.

**With regard to your recent trip to Sierra Leone as Special Advisor to CIDA, what risk and opportunities did you see for the children?**

Sierra Leone is, I think, a very good example to use when we want to study the problematic issue of youth in conflict. It is also a very good example to use to dissect the efforts that have been done by the humanitarian community.

One area, particularly difficult to handle, which is prevalent in Sierra Leone is the whole area of child dependency on drugs and alcohol. How do you bring those children back down to normalcy? I've discovered that detoxification programmes are virtually unavailable because they are very costly and risky in terms of getting positive results. But as long as they still have a hankering for drugs, any bandit or any adult can recruit them instantaneously. So by not solving this dependency, or re-educating and reorienting the leaders you keep them as potential recruits for the next round.

**Throughout the conversations you have had with boys and girls, what have they told you about their needs during and after a conflict?**

Interestingly, the most vociferous are the young leaders. The girls, however, are very difficult to reach. It takes time for them to come out of the closet, to both speak about what they've lived and what they want to do. But the theme that keeps coming from all of them is education.

They want to be able to know what's going on and to be able to make more conscious decisions. A lot of these kids have aged extensively through surviving the traumas of these conflicts. They are not necessarily a 12 year old like in North American standards. Therefore we need to orient our programmes towards appropriately targeted education. It's interesting

to see that education in displaced and refugee camps can provide much that the community needs. Teachers who are culturally sensitive and who are working patiently to provide education and permit the children to make decisions are needed. The difficulty lies in deciding on the type of education programme. Will it be in line with the national system, or shall it be more independent? Much research needs to be done on this issue. Where you see an organised programme, there is far more serenity in the camp, the kids are structured, the adults have more time to reflect and can tackle problems.

**What do you hope to accomplish by the end of your term as Special Advisor?**

I hope to do two things. One, is making Canadian youth far more aware of what's going on out there. Showing them what's happening to those of their age. So, provide an awareness that will remain with them, because it's so strong and powerful a picture that if they're aware of it, they'll grasp it. My preliminary work has proven that not only are they affected by this information but they're quite keen in pursuing it.

And the other one is a strong desire to get youth to do something concrete, which is not just bottle drives and picking up a few dollars to donate, which is essential, but in fact getting involved with programmes that are both at the strategic level of 'Canadian youth support the Optional Protocol', 'Canadian youth have launched a campaign specifically against child soldiers being used' and, at the more tactical scale, children who might be able to bring about change through influencing local business and community leaders.

*For further information see [www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/childprotection](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/childprotection) or contact Caroline Fahmy, Research Consultant to General Dallaire. Email: [caroline\\_fahmy@acdi-cida.gc.ca](mailto:caroline_fahmy@acdi-cida.gc.ca)*

*This interview was given on 4 September 2002.*

1. The Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict was adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2000. It entered into force on 12 February 2002, having been signed to date by 110 states. The text of the protocol is at: [www.unicef.org/crc/annex1.htm](http://www.unicef.org/crc/annex1.htm)

# Watchlist on children and armed conflict

by Julia Freedson

*My name is Wilmot, from Liberia. I am 16 years old. At age five, I fled from Liberia with my mother to Sierra Leone. I was too young at the time to really understand what was happening. I heard the sounds of guns. I saw people running. I saw people shooting. I saw people being killed. I saw people dying. People as young as I were dying... I saw families like mine, in the thousands, leave everything behind and run... The children of Liberia appeal to the Security Council of the United Nations to do everything possible to stop the fighting in Liberia.*

**W**ilmot Wungko, a former Liberian refugee, spoke on behalf of millions of children around the world caught up in wars not of their making. Addressing the UN Security Council in a special meeting on children and armed conflict in May 2002, he articulated the need for greater support for children of war - and the particular case of refugee and displaced children. Children make up approximately half of the world's estimated 38 million refugees and IDPs.

Children, including adolescents, are the most vulnerable populations in situations of armed conflict. In the past decade over two million children have been killed in wars and another five million have been wounded or disabled.<sup>1</sup> Twenty million children

have been forced from their homes, including seven million who have become refugees in another country. Because of war, entire generations of children grow up without ever seeing the inside of a schoolroom and without receiving proper nutrition or vaccinations. Other children are recruited to be combatants and become witnesses to and forced perpetrators of extreme violence. Children, particularly girls, face increased threats from trafficking, exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV). These can result in serious health problems, including the spread of HIV/AIDS. More than 50% of landmine victims are children.<sup>2</sup> They are also disproportionately affected by the proliferation of small arms. These and other physical consequences are compounded by the

emotional and psychological traumas of war.

Children who are forced to flee from their homes in the chaos of conflict can wind up in the most difficult of circumstances. Like Wilmot, these children lose their homes, their communities and many of their basic rights, including the right to be protected from violence. Others lose their parents, grandparents, siblings and friends. They are often left without proper guardianship or as heads of households. While these children are among the most vulnerable, they are often the most neglected by the international community, national governments, aid agencies and others who should be doing their utmost to protect them.

The UN Security Council has said that the protection of children affected by armed conflict is essential for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council has repeatedly made commitments for the protection of children in armed conflicts. Yet, little has been done to turn these commitments into real protection for children on the ground. Graça Machel, one of the world's most dedicated advocates for war-affected children, recently warned,

"The implementation of the measures promoted in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions is slow at best, and the improvements we have been pushing for are still only intermittently and dimly reflected in the everyday lives of children."<sup>3</sup>

## Children and armed conflict and the international agenda

Many NGOs, UN agencies and governments have recognised the extent and severity of abuses of children in wars. Graça Machel's groundbreaking UN-commissioned 1996



Ron Gilling/Still Pictures

study entitled *The Impact of War on Children*<sup>4</sup> was the first international effort to systematically analyse the relationship between war and children and make comprehensive recommendations to improve the situation. Since that time many agencies have joined forces and worked together to implement Machel's recommendations and advocate for better protection of children's rights and security.

Children are now on the peace and security agenda and are a focus for humanitarian action. Coordinated efforts led to the adoption of three UN Security Council resolutions – 1261, 1341 and 1379 – which focus exclusively on the protection of children in armed conflict. In September 1997 the UN Secretary-General appointed Olara Otunnu as his Special Representative on Armed Conflict and Children.<sup>5</sup> Progress has been made in thematic areas, such as small arms, education in emergencies and child soldiers. Education is now established as the fourth pillar of humanitarian assistance during emergencies and in February 2002 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict came into force. Joint efforts also ensured significant attention to the impact of armed conflict on children during the UN Special Session on Children and in the Session's outcome document *A World Fit for Children* which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2002.

Building on these significant developments, a group of child rights-focused NGOs created the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict<sup>6</sup> to respond to a need for better monitoring and reporting on the situation of war-affected children. Watchlist reports detail all factors related to the impact or threat of armed conflict on children in a specific geographic context. They combine information from a variety of sources with analysis by child rights experts and make recommendations for action.

Watchlist reports inform discussions, raise awareness about children's needs and put forward specific recommendations to protect children. Calling for action, the reports urge the UN Security Council to ensure that children's rights are protected. For example, the Security Council has



been urged to call on relevant governments and non-state actors to allow humanitarian access to vulnerable populations, particularly refugee and IDP children. Watchlist reports are disseminated to the UN Security Council, other UN agencies, relevant national governments and civil society through a growing electronic network and the media.

Operating within the framework of universal human rights principles, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>7</sup>, the Watchlist partner organisations are creating a mechanism for child rights advocates to work together over the long term. This network will facilitate on-going advocacy and capacity building within civil society organisations by linking local community groups involved in child protection with international networks to provide consistent follow-up on actions to protect the rights of war-affected children and adolescents.

To date, the Watchlist has issued comprehensive reports on Afghan, Burundian and Angolan children. Reports on Palestinian, Israeli, Sudanese and Congolese children are being developed.

**Further information about the Watchlist and country reports are available at [www.watchlist.org](http://www.watchlist.org). Julia Freedson is Watchlist Coordinator. Email: [juliaf@womenscommission.org](mailto:juliaf@womenscommission.org)**

1. International Bureau for Children's Rights: [www.ibcr.org](http://www.ibcr.org)
2. International Campaign to Ban Landmines: [www.icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org)
3. Statement made during address to UN Security Council during meeting on children and armed conflict, 7 May 2002.
4. [www.unicef.org/graca/graright.htm](http://www.unicef.org/graca/graright.htm)
5. [www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/](http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/)
6. The Watchlist is housed at the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children ([www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org)) and is managed by a six-member international NGO Steering Committee.
7. [www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm](http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm)



# Children first... organisation and recovery in Latin America

by Nidya Quiroz

*Promoting the concept of children as owners of rights and as actors in their own development has been the challenge taken up by UNICEF in Latin America.*

**I**n addressing forced displacement in Colombia, for example, UNICEF has implemented a number of creative initiatives, with a rights perspective, that are being replicated in other parts of the world.

## Breaking the cycle of violence

For more than 40 years Colombia has experienced armed conflict that, in a decade, has displaced more than two million people. 50% are children, the majority of whom have seen their parents killed, their homes destroyed and their neighbours massacred. Dysfunctions are clearly detectable in these displaced children: 80% show fear, cry, have nightmares, wet their beds, do not concentrate, have memory problems or are more dependent on adults. Many wish only to obtain a weapon, join a rebel group and take their revenge. Overcoming the impact

of conflict is necessary for the children's development and for building peace.

UNICEF therefore decided to prioritise education for peace, social mobilisation and the psychosocial recovery of affected children and adolescents in Colombia. It was agreed that it was essential to work with rights in a holistic manner; for example, to promote the organisation of displaced children (Article 15 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) to voice their opinion on what affected them in their new situation (Article 13) and participate (Article 13) in their own psychosocial recovery (Article 23).

Displaced children and adolescents in conflict zones and camps chose to be peace builders, in spaces called 'territories of peace' - schools, families, municipalities. UNICEF and more than

400 other institutions<sup>1</sup> supported them and provided access to communications media so they could voice their ideas directly.

The programme is known as the Return of Happiness (*Retorno de la Alegria*) programme. It seeks to engage children, adolescents, parents, communities, teachers and social science professionals in mental health recuperation strategies. The methodology has been successfully used by UNICEF in countries such as Colombia, Mozambique, El Salvador and Venezuela during emergency operations after violent conflict or disaster.

The methodology involves adolescents in the emotional recuperation of children as a fundamental means to reconstruct the social network in communities affected by disasters. It includes games and recreational components with well-structured objectives as tools to achieve psychological and emotional recuperation in children, significantly increasing the quality of children's communication

and relational capacities. Equally, it incorporates families and schools as the therapeutic axis that promotes and supports the emotional recuperation of children.

### Developing a culture of peace

The children promoted a wide range of activities in their schools. Providing training, motivation and stimulating material was sufficient to generate a wave of creativity that took them out of a culture of death and violence. They invented invented stories in which the wolf no longer ate the grandmother, they held art exhibitions on subjects of peace and tolerance, they developed conciliation skills, they held discussions on non-violence, they issued invitations to peace concerts, they reported mined areas for marking by the Red Cross, they supported the creation of fish-breeding ponds and they collected waste from banana plantations in Urabá for recycling and transformation into slabs and roof tiles for the huts of those displaced.

These activities were free but run to a set timetable and supported by adolescent supervisors. Day by day the children developed a culture of peaceful coexistence rather than violence. The institutions involved acknowledged the value of involving children in their programmes and taking them into account when planning. Little by little, a children's movement was built: the Children's Movement for Peace.<sup>2</sup>

After working in the Children's Movement for Peace, Juan, a displaced boy whose father and cousin were killed, decided not to take vengeance but to study law. María, another child who lived in one of the areas most affected by conflict, decided to study psychology. Cecilia and Isabel, one of whose schoolmates was killed, have found employment directing the Child Constructors of Peace process in one of the allied institutions.<sup>3</sup>

When armed groups approached the camps and suburbs for recruitment purposes, they found children and adolescents who knew what the right to life meant. Many children preferred to move to other municipalities rather than be recruited. Instead of learning to kill, the young people were now saying yes to peace. Many people asked, "What do you give them that the armed groups don't?" We answered, "Everything except the gun." UNICEF and its allies – principally the Church, which is the best ally for protecting the presence of UNICEF in the field – offered adolescents visibility and identification, gave them the tools for helping psychologically affected children, trained them, gave them status in the community, supported them so they could organise in groups and provided transportation subsidies when they travelled to help distant displaced populations.

The best example of the voluntary work of these children took place when they replicated their psychosocial recovery experience with other children affected by disasters, after

the earthquakes in Armenia and Colombia and the mudslides in Vargas in Venezuela.

Displaced Afro-Colombian children took the Return to Happiness methodology to these affected areas and, in a very short time, helped thousands of children through in-service peer training of young people in the Scouts and

*the young people were now saying yes to peace*

Red Cross. Through recreation and play, they were able to help children express their feelings and analyse the events that made them feel guilty. They used the same monkey puppets to facilitate the projection of fears by the children. The wooden vehicles that, together with the rag doll families, served in Colombia to recall displacement now served to recall the evacuation. The helicopters that attacked communities in Colombia were now used to tell how the victims of water and mud in Caracas were saved. The motorcycle that helped to narrate the attacks of paramilitary groups served to express the delivery of aid by the Red Cross.

Enabling organised adolescents and children to participate in humanitarian action for peace removes them from the danger of the spiral of violence. There is nothing of greater priority than tearing children from the hands of war.

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In 2001 UNICEF published *Out of War* by Sara Cameron, a dramatic account by ten young people in the Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia of their lives and their struggle for peace. ISBN 0-439-29721-4. \$15.95. See [www.unicef.org/children-in-war/out-of-war/aboutbook.htm](http://www.unicef.org/children-in-war/out-of-war/aboutbook.htm)

1. Including the Red Cross Society, Boy Scouts, Redepaz, Pastoral Social (the Catholic Church), World Vision and Save the Children-UK.
2. The Children's Movement for Peace was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998. See [www.unicef.org/children-in-war/out-of-war/unicef.htm](http://www.unicef.org/children-in-war/out-of-war/unicef.htm) and [www.unicef.org/initiative/p-colombia.htm](http://www.unicef.org/initiative/p-colombia.htm).
3. Juan, María, Cecilia and Isabel are fictitious names used to protect the privacy of the children.

*An adolescent boy from the Children's Movement for Peace conducts a Return to Happiness workshop, Quindío, Colombia.*







# Meeting the needs of internally displaced children: training and capacity building of agency personnel

by Angela Raven-Roberts

*IDP children in  
East Timor*

Throughout the 1990s, national and international humanitarian agencies faced a number of challenges in developing their response to the needs of countries and communities affected by armed conflict, massive displacement and the deliberate violations of human rights. Developing adequate human rights and humanitarian instruments and principles to ensure the protection of these communities has been equally as important as the development of appropriate programmes in health, nutrition, food security, education and livelihood enhancement to ensure their well-being and economic longevity.

The special protection and assistance needs of children affected by armed conflict, natural disasters and forced internal displacement have been the subject of several reviews, UN resolutions and calls to action from a large group of diverse NGOs, academic institutions and child-centred activist organisations. 'Mainstreaming' a child perspective into the policy and

programme sectors of humanitarian and development organisations is becoming as important as the measures to incorporate a gender perspective into the workings of various organisations. However, there still remains the challenge of how agency personnel, officials and extension workers of national ministries are to be equipped to do this and what standards of practice and systems of accountability should exist to ensure quality and appropriately designed programme strategies and actions.

Internally displaced children forcibly removed from their homes due to either war or natural disasters have been displaced from both their cultural and natural environments. They are subject to hunger, malnutrition and a lack of shelter and access to health and educational services. When not living in squalid IDP camps, they are often forced to seek refuge among populations who may be equally poor and whose environment may not have adequate services and facilities. This may cause resentment and discrimination

against newcomers, which could result in violence to these communities. Children in these communities are often exposed to sexual abuse, forced labour and other forms of intimidation and exploitation. Many may have lost their families and, as orphans or unaccompanied minors, be forced to live and fend for themselves or be taken into dubious fostering arrangements where they are used as cheap labour in return for meagre food, shelter and protection. Unaccompanied children and youth in these unprotected environments are also subject to exploitation by predatory institutions such as militias, criminal gangs and traffickers who capture, cajole or blackmail them into working for them.

Since the 1990s, through research and practice, NGOs and others working in the field of humanitarian crises and forced displacement have accumulated a wide range of experience and knowledge in response to the needs of children in these situations. This work can be grouped under two

general headings - one referring to the protection needs of displaced children and the other to their material assistance needs. These also encapsulate the types of training and sensitisation required for personnel working with children.

### Protection of children

The protection of children encompasses the laws and instruments that exist to ensure the rights of children as well as their actual physical security and safety. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as well as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) are two of the most comprehensive treaties for the protection of women. These instruments support the claims of children in a range of situations *vis à vis* their right to food, shelter and education, as well as protection from exploitation, trafficking, forced labour, sexual slavery and other forms of violence, abuse and discrimination. A number of new protocols and legislation have been accepted internationally that also have direct relevance to internally displaced children, including laws on the use of child soldiers, protection against human trafficking and new labour laws.

Personnel working either for national institutions or international humanitarian organisations should be fully cognisant of these protocols and understand how they inform and enhance the work of their agency. All too often in emergency situations staff are recruited hurriedly and are not given even basic training in these instruments or their relevance to their work or, importantly, in agencies' codes of behaviour for relating to children and unprotected minors. Recent cases of sexual abuse by refugee camp workers, peacekeepers and staff of humanitarian agencies attest to the importance of ensuring that these protocols are widely disseminated and enforced.

It is equally important that national institutions and counterpart agencies be given the benefits of training and dissemination of these codes and principles. Agencies often assume that, because a country has ratified or signed up to a convention, it is common knowledge throughout the country they are working in. In many multi-lingual societies, for example, national laws - even if they refer to

children and incorporate elements of the Convention of the Rights of the Child - may not be available in local languages, and administrators, police, judicial services and others at a more local level may not be aware of them. Creating opportunities for shared training and dissemination of these policies is a good way of building the capacity of national institutions and helping them fulfill their own obligations under international law.

### Material assistance needs

Internally displaced children have specific health, nutrition, educational, psychosocial and other physical and material needs. Agencies have learned over the years the importance of implementing basic emergency health-care in situations of displacement that prevent excess mortality. Measles vaccination, prevention of cholera and dysentery through provision of good water and sanitation programmes, and implementation of income-generating and livelihood protection programmes have become standard practice for many agencies working in the context of massive displacement and armed conflict. Personnel have to be skilled in a number of specific technical sectors such as education, health and child development as well as being attuned to the specific cultural and political characteristics of the context in which they are working. As agencies experiment with more creative ways of meeting these needs - such as addressing the mental health needs of children - they may increasingly require staff to develop language skills or use anthropological techniques to develop culturally appropriate responses and to gain closer interaction and knowledge of the communities with whom they are working.

Staff working in humanitarian agencies whether directly or indirectly working with children need to be aware of the wide range of protection and assistance needs that internally displaced communities and their children face. Managers and programme directors need to know how to implement appropriate life-saving as well as livelihood-supporting programmes and where to seek advice and resource to help them in these efforts. Staff need to know how to conduct needs assessments, nutrition and health surveys, food security and vulnerability analysis and other forms of community needs analysis as well as

how to monitor the impact of their inputs and programmes. These skills require quantitative as well as qualitative methodologies. Staff also need to understand the different debates, codes and standards that have been established to ensure proper implementation and accountability of humanitarian programmes. As organisations such as the SPHERE Project<sup>1</sup> seek to develop and disseminate these kinds of codes and standards, it is important that those working specifically on children's issues develop, disseminate and adhere to the same kinds of codes and standards.

### Training initiatives

A number of organisations such as the Save the Children Alliance, the International Rescue Committee, UNICEF and others have developed training modules and packages that address many of these issues. At the same time several universities in Europe and North America are now offering specialist courses in humanitarian assistance, which include child-related programmes. There is still much to be done and developed, however. The discourse of 'children in armed conflict', 'internally displaced children' or 'children in humanitarian crises' is, of necessity, multi-disciplinary. The challenge remains to bring these fields together effectively as well as to influence other policy discourses regarding the issue of armed conflict, forced migration and displacement. A further challenge remains to develop these same programmes in Southern universities where the scarcity of resources for higher education often results in lack of attention for specialist programmes such as children and human rights. The development of these institutions could help provide key resource centres and help create a new cadre of local agents of change who could help governments to develop policies and legislation for meeting children's needs.

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1. See [www.sphereproject.org/](http://www.sphereproject.org/) and also p55 of this FMR.

# Protecting children from the protectors: lessons from West Africa

by Asmita Naik

*The need to protect refugees from threats from humanitarian workers did not receive much attention until the recent release of findings from the joint UNHCR and Save the Children UK report on the sexual exploitation of refugee children in West Africa.*

**S**harply turning the tables on the carers and protectors, it asked whether they had done enough to prevent abuses from within their own ranks. Numerous scandals in

children. Against this backdrop, the aid community could not have hoped to remain immune for long.

The report<sup>1</sup>, based on focus group discussions and individual interviews involving 1,500 children and adults, documented allegations against 40 agencies and 67 individuals. The very numbers themselves were shocking. They brought a sudden realisation among agencies, which may have silently grappled with such issues for years, that this was a collective problem of major proportions and not an individual one of minor scope. The report found sexual exploitation to be endemic in the camps; the exploiters were men in the community with

power, money and influence - camp leaders, casual labourers, teachers, security forces, traders, etc. But it was the allegations against the humanitarian workers which drew the greatest moral outrage: the world was shocked that the very people there to help were

"I leave my child with my little sister, who is ten years old, and I dress good and I go where the NGO workers drink or live and one of them will ask me for sex. Sometimes they give me things like food, oil, soap and I will sell them and get money."

(refugee child)

"When ma asked me to go to the stream to wash plates, a peacekeeper asked me to take my clothes off so that he can take a picture. When I asked him to give me money he told me, no money for children, only biscuit."

(refugee child)

recent years have implicated other respected institutions of society - including church hierarchies, school administrations and education authorities - in the abuse and neglect of

actually doing harm, even wilfully doing harm in some cases or, at the very least, allowing it to continue unabated. The report cited mainly locally recruited humanitarian workers extorting sex in exchange for desperately needed aid supplies (such as biscuits, soap, medicines and tarpaulin) and sometimes even

*The photos accompanying this article depict camp life in general and are in no way intended to imply that these children are victims of exploitation.*



withholding aid until sex was proffered: "Your name is not on the list"... "The computer swallowed your card". Even when payment was made it was said to amount to a few meagre pennies - the going price for a 'trick' in Liberia was reported to be US10 cents, barely enough to buy a handful of parched nuts or a couple of pieces of fruit, let alone a full meal. Worse still, the practice appeared most pronounced in the significant and established aid programmes of Guinea and Liberia.

"An NGO worker made me pregnant but now he left me and is loving to another young girl."  
(*refugee child*)

The girls, mainly aged between 13 and 18, reported far-reaching consequences on their lives: pregnancies, abortions, teenage motherhood, exposure to STDs and HIV/AIDS, lost educational, skills-training and employment opportunities and even dashed hopes of future personal relationships. The teenage mothers especially described pitiful and harsh lives: "I have to sleep with so many men to make 1500, so that I can feed myself and my child. They pay me 300 each time, but if I am lucky and I get an NGO worker he can pay me 1500 at one time and sometimes I get 2000" (girl mother in Guinea) or "I sleep with different men but mostly NGO workers because I have to eat and feed my child" (girl mother in Liberia).

### Earlier warning signs

Alarm bells had sounded before. Anecdotal accounts had circulated for years. UNHCR's 1995 guidelines on sexual violence and refugees expressly acknowledged the implication of "international refugee workers" in sexual violence against refugees, noting that sexual favours may be extorted in exchange for assistance, food or even refugee status.

In recent years, a spate of published reports had warned that something was seriously amiss in West Africa. In mid-1999, Human Rights Watch reported that sexual exploitation was a widespread problem in the camps in Guinea, noting that the children felt compelled to prostitute themselves to make ends meet, with their clients being "primarily refugee men who get their income from trading or working

for aid agencies". Refugee girls were engaging in sexual relations with "registrars, Guinean citizens hired by UNHCR to conduct the refugee census, in the hopes that this would ensure that they would be properly registered and receive assistance".<sup>2</sup>

UNHCR's evaluation of its programme in Guinea in January 2001 reiterated the same concerns: "One of the most serious and worrying accusations is that the main customers for refugee prostitutes, given the lack of available cash within the camps, are staff of NGOs and other organisations. This kind of behaviour, if true, clearly constitutes an unacceptable abuse of power and must be prevented. In Kolomba, prostitutes' 'favourite time' is said to be when the food distribution teams are present in the camp".<sup>3</sup> More recently, last year's evaluation of UNHCR's activities concerning refugee children disturbingly foreshadowed the findings of the sexual exploitation report. The evaluation team conducting field visits between March and July 2001 to the same three countries reported: "In a number of focus groups with children themselves and other interviews in West Africa, aid workers and others with access to power and resources in the camps were identified as often responsible for the sexual exploitation of children." The team reported finding attempts to address issues of sexual exploitation "limited" and that "although exploitation by national staff was reported to be common in West Africa, organisations seemed not to know how to respond".<sup>4</sup>

"It's difficult to escape the trap of those [NGO] people; they use the food as bait to get you to sex with them."

(*refugee child*)

### Continuing concerns

Since the report was issued, alarm bells have continued to sound with television footage and journalistic reports giving a vivid and human face to the phenomenon. The media has unearthed fresh allegations of abuse by humanitarian workers.<sup>5</sup> The US NGO network InterAction reports that child sexual exploitation by aid workers constitutes a global problem of enormous magnitude.<sup>6</sup> A recent sex for education scandal in Zimbabwe resulting in the sacking of two senior refugee officials together with

criminal charges laid against a senior aid official in Kenya for sodomising boys in a refugee camp highlight that abuse is not confined to West Africa and that girls are not the only victims.

### Power imbalance

A variety of factors can contribute to an environment where exploitation is able to flourish. In West Africa women and girls are among the most disempowered members of an impoverished group of refugees lacking food, education facilities, health care, employment opportunities, farming land or other means of subsistence. Entering sexually exploitative relationships becomes a survival and coping mechanism and is seen as the

Sexual exploitation is defined by the children as "when them big men go loving with small girl for money. Them big men can go loving to small girls, they can call girl when she walking along the road, and then the girl go and they go in house and lock the door. And when the big man has done his business he will give the small girl money or gift."

only way to make ends meet. Parents seemed defeated - "If you do not have a wife or a sister or a daughter to offer the NGO workers, it is hard to have access to aid." - and refugee leaders, helpless: "NGO workers have so much power that people treat them as really important people and the community cannot challenge them". Children are an unequal match in physical, emotional and psychological terms for the adult aid worker. In many places, the targeting of young barely pubescent girls by all types of exploiters and abusers is a particularly worrying trend. Clearly, the younger the child the greater the imbalance and scope for manipulation.

### Absence of controls

In such circumstances only strong controls can act as a bulwark against exploitative behaviour. Inadequate managerial control - particularly proper regulation, monitoring and supervision of staff - is a key contributing factor. The assessment described a "conspiracy of silence" among agency workers fearing repercussions for speaking up about abuse. Physical danger, ostracism, intimidation and loss of livelihood are all very real threats for those who speak out. Refugees likewise noted an absence of

a safe and confidential complaints mechanism: "If you report one NGO worker, you will not only be in trouble with that person but with other staff also" (adolescents in Guinea and Liberia). Inadequate management of humanitarian operations, without monitoring whether and how assistance actually reaches intended beneficiaries, fosters an environment where exploitation can flourish.

"In this community no-one can access CSB [a soya nutrient] without having sex first."  
*(refugee women)*

Poor and ineffectual legal controls can also contribute to the perpetuation of such acts. Criminal standards under which such acts can be prosecuted may be inadequate under national laws, such as when the age of consent is too low or absent. Even where laws exist on paper they may be difficult to enforce in poorly functioning legal systems damaged by years of war and economic and social decline. This, coupled with the usual evidentiary difficulties of prosecuting crimes of sexual violence even in stable countries with well-functioning legal systems, means that criminal law cannot be seen as the principal tool of measurement, prevention or redress.

"They change girls so much and none of them marry the girls and if she becomes pregnant she is abandoned, with no support for herself and the child. Most of us used to just look at them and wonder. Our brothers, they have a problem."  
*(aid worker)*

Social norms and prohibitions would normally be another constraining force on such behaviour. However, in societies weakened by conflict, poverty and displacement, the usual protective social and community structures may have broken down. Traditional practices and behaviour patterns may become distorted especially once these safeguards are lost. Other values born of necessity may take hold of community life. Research in West Africa indicates that sex as a trading commodity is a commonly-held notion. Peer and parental pressure in such circumstances may be another force driving children into exploitative relationships.



Fiona Wilks - ChristianAid/Still Pictures

## Prevention

Aside from the remedial measures to be taken to assist survivors of such abuse, a variety of steps can be taken to prevent future exploitation. The issue needs to be tackled in a holistic way as clearly sexual exploitation by aid workers is occurring against a broader panorama of socio-economic deprivation and upheaval and cannot be dealt with in isolation. Underlying causes must be addressed. At the same time, the specific duty and indeed ability to curb abuses by employees must be acknowledged. Even if the wider social ills cannot be redressed there is much an employer can do about the behaviour of those under his or her employ, especially in places where jobs are hard to come by. The leverage an aid agency can exert over this section of exploiters needs to be utilised to the maximum extent possible.

The imbalance of power at the heart of exploitative behaviour must be tackled. If economic desperation is fuelling this pattern of behaviour, the first steps must involve a review of

the adequacy of aid, proper monitoring to check that the intended aid is being received, bringing assistance levels up to a minimum standard, paying special attention to vulnerable groups (such as girls from single parent homes and separated children)

"No girl will get a job in this camp without having sex with NGO workers, NGO workers who are female already loving with an NGO man. He will continue to go loving with other girls, but girls see it as competition. It is survival of the fittest."  
*(aid worker)*

and developing alternative livelihood options (micro-credit, agricultural land, skills training) to enable the basic needs of the refugees to be met. The refugee community should also be empowered to reassert an equilibrium to the power relations in the camps and to restore a healthy sense of independence for those forced to live in exile.

Important steps in this regard include frequent consultation and involve-



ment of all refugee community stakeholders (especially women and children) in programme development, training and raising awareness of rights and entitlements. It is vital that proper channels for complaints be established. Regular camp sessions between top agency officials and refugees, rather like 'surgeries' held by parliamentarians for their constituents, would be an important step in promoting greater humanitarian accountability.

"If you see a young girl walking away with tarpaulin on her head you know how she got it."  
(refugee leaders)

Instituting stronger prohibitions is another angle of prevention. This includes a number of management measures including the development and implementation of codes of conduct. While such codes are not a panacea, especially without effective enforcement mechanisms, they are an important way of establishing acceptable standards of behaviour and the difference between right and wrong – something which, at least from the West Africa example, appears to have become dangerously blurred. Proper staff regulation backed by firm disciplinary action is thus a critical weapon against abuses of this kind especially given the difficulty of meeting the higher burden of proof required under criminal law in such chaotic environments.

In the wake of the report, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) established a Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises. The Task Force's June 2002 report sets out the core principles of a code of conduct for humanitarian workers.<sup>7</sup> These expressly prohibit sexual relations with under 18 year old beneficiaries, oblige all staff to report concerns and suspicions regarding sexual abuse by fellow workers and charge managers with responsibility for ensuring that the code is implemented.

Task Force recommendations centre on issues of camp governance and delivery of humanitarian assistance. They include increasing the number of protection staff on the ground, increasing the numbers of female staff, more frequent site visits by supervisory staff and developing confidential complaints procedures coordinated at the country level.

Several countries are to be selected in order to review aid distribution systems and the role of specialised staff.

Legal prohibitions too are important in the fight against exploitation. Advocacy on legal standards is necessary alongside technical support to host governments in developing and implementing legislation prohibiting the abuse of minors. Social controls need strengthening in conjunction with refugee communities through, for example, education and training/awareness-raising activities. Prohibitions at whatever level need to be monitored if they are to have any effect. As the scope for the misuse of aid exists in many situations, not only West Africa, the creation of a much broader-based independent humanitarian watchdog to monitor abuses in aid is warranted.

Given the many different reports drawing attention to this phenomenon, there can be little doubt that there has been a widespread pattern of exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries across different regions, countries, camps and refugee populations which has long gone unchecked. The West Africa sexual exploitation report with its names and numbers was a long overdue wake-up call. The past few months have seen unprecedented action by the humanitarian community with organisations working together under the aegis of various inter-agency processes to tackle this communal problem.

The IASC process as well as grassroots coordination in many countries indicates an impressive level of commitment from policymakers to follow up recommendations. Clear priorities and deadlines as well as mechanisms for monitoring are now needed to turn these policies into action. The focus and energy devoted to this issue in the past few months will, it is to be hoped, result in lasting changes for child protection on the ground.

**Asmita Naik is an independent human rights consultant and one of the authors of the UNHCR/Save the Children UK report 'Sexual violence and exploitation: the experience of refugee children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone'. The views or opinions presented in this article are solely those of the author and are not intended to represent those of any other individual or organisation.**  
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1. An executive summary of initial findings and recommendations made public by UNHCR is online at [www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/open-doc.pdf?id=3c7cf89a4&tbl=PARTNERS](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/open-doc.pdf?id=3c7cf89a4&tbl=PARTNERS)
2. Human Rights Watch *Forgotten children of war - Sierra Leonean refugee children in Guinea*, July 1999, [www.hrw.org/reports/1999/guinea](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/guinea).
3. UNHCR *A beneficiary-based evaluation of UNHCR's programme in Guinea, West Africa*, January 2001, [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch).
4. UNHCR *Meeting the rights and protection needs of refugee children: an independent evaluation of the impact of UNHCR's activities*, May 2002, [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch).
5. See for example, [www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0205/08/i.ins.01.html](http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0205/08/i.ins.01.html)
6. See [www.interaction.org/files.cgi/562\\_report\\_ia\\_task\\_force.pdf](http://www.interaction.org/files.cgi/562_report_ia_task_force.pdf)
7. The report is available at: [www.reliefweb.int/idp/docs/references/protsexexpPoARep.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/idp/docs/references/protsexexpPoARep.pdf)

### Key internet sources on displaced children

#### Canadian International Development Agency: Child Protection

[www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/childprotection](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/childprotection)

#### Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

[www.child-soldiers.org](http://www.child-soldiers.org)

#### Eye-To-Eye Project: Save the Children

[www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/)

#### Human Rights Watch: Refugee Children

[www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/promises/refugees.html](http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/promises/refugees.html)

#### Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

[www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org)

#### Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict

[www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict](http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict)

#### UNESCO: education in crisis and post-conflict situations

[www.unesco.org/education/emergency/index.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/education/emergency/index.shtml)

#### UNHCR's Children Homepage

[www.unhcr.ch/children](http://www.unhcr.ch/children)

#### UNICEF

[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

#### WarChild

[www.warchildusa.org](http://www.warchildusa.org)

#### Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict

[www.watchlist.org](http://www.watchlist.org)

#### Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

[www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org)

# Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises: the humanitarian community's response

by Iain Levine and Mark Bowden

*The grave allegations of widespread sexual exploitation and abuse of refugee and internally displaced women and children by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers in West Africa have highlighted the vulnerability of refugees, IDPs and others, especially women and girls.*

Sexual abuse and exploitation, in humanitarian crises or elsewhere, reflect a variety of failures or omissions attributable to a range of responsible actors and institutions. They represent a failure to uphold basic rights to protection. In institutional terms, sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian staff represent a failure on the part of humanitarian agencies whose stated role is to provide protection and care.

Sexual exploitation and abuse of people affected by humanitarian crises represent a challenge to the entire humanitarian community. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)<sup>1</sup> provides an important mechanism for preventing and responding to such crises. In March 2002 the IASC established a Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises which was mandated, within the overall objective of strengthening and enhancing the protection and care of women and children in situations of humanitarian crisis and conflict, to make recommendations to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian personnel and the misuse of humanitarian assistance for sexual purposes.

In April 2002, the Task Force produced a Policy Statement on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises in which it reaffirmed its commitment to

promoting and protecting the rights enshrined in international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.<sup>2</sup> The Policy Statement stressed that IASC members recognise their responsibility, in fulfilling their mandates, to guard or protect vulnerable persons from sexual and other exploitation and abuse and to address such violations appropriately in their work. In particular, IASC members committed to ensuring that their staff and implementing partners do not abuse their power and influence to exploit and harm others.

## Plan of Action

The Task Force has developed a Plan of Action to ensure a coherent and coordinated response by all members, both globally and at country level. The Plan, now formally endorsed by all operational humanitarian agencies, outlines a number of steps to be taken by the humanitarian community in order to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and respond to survivor needs. This Plan is not a blueprint. It is part of an ongoing effort of the humanitarian community and will be refined on the basis of experience, pilot activities in selected countries and field visits to affected locations. There is general recognition of the existing problem of sexual exploitation

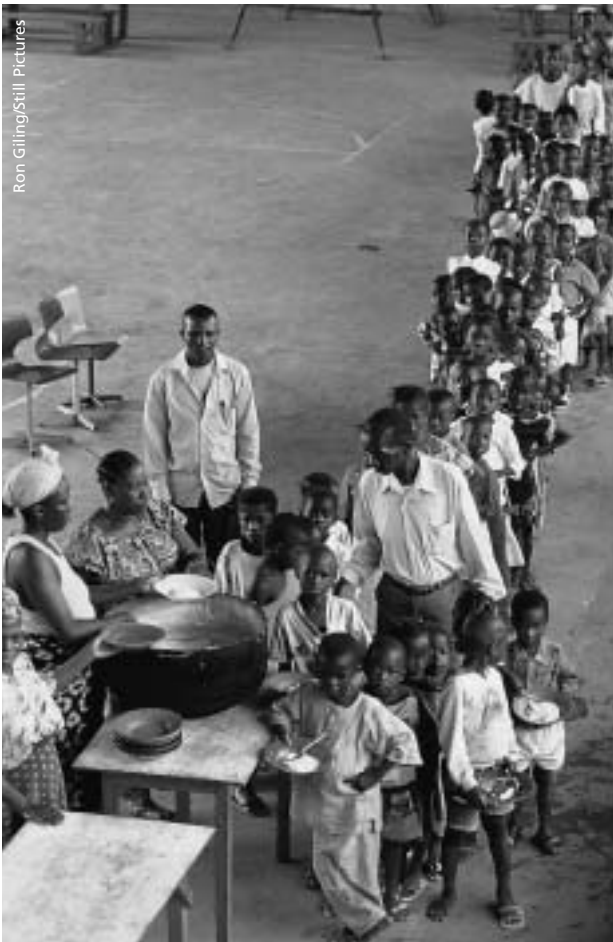
and abuse in humanitarian crises. The problem is broader and harder to define than initially assumed and, by its nature, is difficult to investigate. Therefore, for the purposes of the Plan of Action, the Task Force has used the following definitions:

- 'Sexual abuse' is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- 'Sexual exploitation' is any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- 'Humanitarian workers' include all workers engaged by humanitarian agencies, whether internationally or nationally recruited, or formally or informally retained from the beneficiary community, to conduct the activities of that agency.

The Plan of Action requires IASC members to undertake actions in several key areas, including the behaviour of staff, training, beneficiary accountability, delivery assistance mechanisms and assistance to survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse.

All humanitarian agencies must clearly define the principles and standards of behaviour that they expect of their staff. In relation to sexual exploitation and abuse, these core principles have been identified as:<sup>3</sup>

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.



- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour, is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
- Humanitarian agencies are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all

levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

Furthermore, these principles and standards should be incorporated into agency codes of conduct and staff rules and regulations. Mechanisms to ensure that these standards and principles are promoted, disseminated and integrated into personnel requirements, administrative standards and agreements with partners and contractors must also be established. In addition, mechanisms for reporting complaints, investigative procedures and disciplinary processes

### *sexual exploitation and abuse represent a betrayal of trust*

should be established. Managers must be required to promote a culture of protection in which exploitation and abuse is not tolerated and reports of possible violations are treated seriously and confidentially.

The creation of an environment that is conducive to the prevention and elimination of sexual

exploitation and abuse is key. Such an environment will include, at a minimum, enhanced beneficiary participation in all aspects of humanitarian programming and camp governance, improved delivery mechanisms to reduce their potential for exploitation, and dissemination of information on beneficiary rights, entitlements, responsibilities and complaints procedures. Another key element is to ensure that, wherever feasible, survivors have access to legal and judicial systems.

The Plan of Action recognises that humanitarian crises have different impacts and create different needs for men, women, boys and girls. The Task Force believes that it is critical that a gender perspective is adopted in all elements of design, planning and implementation of humanitarian activities. In the context of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, this ranges from ensuring the presence of more women staff to addressing gender inequalities in access to economic opportunities by beneficiaries and participation in decision-making processes.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse will only be effective within a broader framework of effective protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation. Protection is a central and indispensable component of humanitarian action. It should not be compromised. Particularly in times of financial stringency, agencies must commit to sustaining protection activities.

The Task Force recognises that responsibility for full implementation of the Plan of Action also relies on parties that are outside the IASC structure, such as peacekeepers and host governments. It calls on donors to promote some of the core recommendations with the humanitarian organisations that they choose to fund.

The humanitarian community has now acknowledged that the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse is a global challenge. This represents an important step forward. From consultations, it is clear that there is a genuine recognition from agencies that sexual exploitation and abuse represent a betrayal of trust as well as a catastrophic failure of protection. There is a real commitment on the part of agencies to address this problem and take responsibility for implementing necessary management changes.

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1. The IASC ([www.reliefweb.int/iasc/](http://www.reliefweb.int/iasc/)) is comprised of members (FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, WHO) and standing invitees (ICRC, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, IFRC, InterAction, IOM, the Steering Committee on Humanitarian Response, the Representative of the Secretary-General for IDPs, UNHCHR and the World Bank).

2. See [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/)

3. Different considerations will arise regarding the enforcement of some of these principles for humanitarian workers hired from the beneficiary community. While sexual exploitation and abuse and the misuse of humanitarian assistance will always be prohibited, discretion may need to be used in the application of the principles regarding sexual relationships for this category of humanitarian worker.

# Education: protecting the rights of displaced children

by Suba Mahalingam

*UNICEF and its partners work with displaced communities to provide material assistance and protection, using as their basis the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> and other international legal instruments. Education has proven a valuable tool in this effort, not only making children aware of their rights but also providing a way to participate in the realisation of these rights.*

Education should be a key part of programming and planning for displacement. Every effort should be made to immediately establish or restore educational programmes. In the first weeks of an emergency, education may be simply organised 'play', giving children a sense of structure and daily routine. Any available shelter can serve as a temporary classroom - under a tree, a tent, in a cave - where a child can participate in organised activities. However, education in an emergency must be more than a stop-gap measure and should be designed to evolve and expand into a sustainable education system.

Schools can help monitor the status of displaced children to ensure that their rights are being fulfilled. Displacement makes it difficult to obtain information on whether children have access to basic services. This is more daunting for groups displaced in a variety of non-camp settings. Teachers at schools can keep track of the needs of their students and facilitate screening for children who need special assistance. Schools can also ensure nutritional needs by serving meals to students.

Education can help prevent children being recruited as fighters through a curriculum that teaches non-violent conflict resolution and facilitates peace building. However, schools may be potential targets for recruitment activities by armed groups. Measures must be taken to prevent the politicisation of schools and ensure that schooling helps to stop the cycle of

violence and retribution. In some countries, UNICEF is maintaining databases of children enrolled in school to monitor and prevent recruitment. Education is also an essential component of successful disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes for children. School attendance is a deterrent to re-recruitment because it provides stability and also lays the groundwork for children's reintegration in communities, through access to catch-up education and vocational training.

Education can give the support and guidance children need to be proactive within their communities. Children learn literacy and emergency skills. UNICEF supports education of displaced children on landmines, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender sensitivities, child rights and life skills. Schools have also been used as entry points for psychosocial programming, even a key element of such programming.

## Child-friendly spaces in Liberia

Child-friendly spaces are an innovative concept of protection for displaced children and their mothers. First established in 1999 to provide integrated care for children in Albanian refugee camps, they have been successfully adapted to serve the needs of war-affected children in Angola, East Timor, Guinea and, most recently, Liberia.<sup>2</sup>

In a crisis following the displacement of large numbers of people, the delivery of humanitarian assistance is often fraught with difficulties. In Liberia, UNICEF has established child-friendly spaces in camps for IDPs to enable focused services for children and to provide a sense of security amidst the chaos of conflict. This was accomplished by allocating a safe haven in the displaced camp and providing a range of services, such as early childhood care, nutrition, immunisation, psychosocial support and primary education. Mothers are able to care for their infants in safe areas and children can come together to play and learn. Teacher emergency packages and UNICEF's 'school-in-a-box' have been provided, supplying crayons, books, slates and teaching aids.<sup>3</sup> Teachers and nurses have been trained from among the local displaced populations to assist in organising schooling and health care.

*the child-friendly spaces approach... promotes participation of children and communities*

The key to the success of the child-friendly spaces approach is that it promotes participation of children and communities. It provides a framework for a coordinated effort involving community leaders, parents, teachers and children and helps guarantee children's rights to survival, development, participation and protection.

## Education for landmines awareness in Eritrea

Landmines are a particular threat to children fleeing into unknown territory. Children are especially at risk as they may stray into nearby fields and paths, looking for firewood, water or simply a place to play. They may not recognise warning signs around mined areas and their natural curiosity may even encourage them to investigate the sometimes colourful and curious designs of mines and unexploded ordnance.

In Eritrea, UNICEF has established

partnerships with a number of international NGOs to conduct mine risk education within displaced and host communities in Gash Barka and Debub. Mine risk education teams have been trained and equipped by the Eritrean Demining Agency, with UNICEF support. These efforts have enabled further training and the establishment of regional teams of community facilitators. Discussions with the demining agency are also underway to start a school-based mine awareness project. Another milestone in mine risk education is the active involvement of children's theatre groups. For example, the Sewit Children's Theatre group was commissioned to tour communities in Eritrea to provide landmine awareness. The strength of this example lies in its multi-faceted approach. The message is conveyed not just through workshops by mine risk education teams but is also integrated into regular schooling and made interesting and interactive through theatre.<sup>4</sup>

### Empowering displaced girls through education

For girls, the problems of displacement are compounded. Girls are at special risk of abuse, exploitation and sexual violence. The stress and tension of refugee camps increase the likelihood of domestic violence. Poorly planned camps can create insecure and isolated spaces where girls are vulnerable to rape. Children who have lost parents may be left to look after and provide for younger siblings. Overwhelming poverty and limited economic opportunities may force them into prostitution and leave them exposed to abuse, even by those employed to protect them.

In Somalia, while distributing sanitation tools in an IDP camp, the UNICEF water and sanitation team discovered that many of the women and girls lacked even basic literacy and life skills. To address this issue, UNICEF and an NGO women's network initiated a pilot literacy project. Literacy and life skills training were provided to women and young girls in the camp. The project built on traditional practices and used non-formal educational materials developed by the UNICEF education programme. This case exemplifies the rights-based

*Education... cannot be put off until the conflict is over*

approach to programming whereby the water and sanitation team sought not just to provide the camp with water services but to fulfil the rights of displaced persons.

Education can give girls greater confidence and self-esteem. It can also provide practical knowledge about hygiene and health care and increase their chances of securing a livelihood, while decreasing the possibilities of exploitation. Yet despite these benefits, it is estimated that only 1

in 10 refugee girls attends class: significantly fewer than boys. Girls are often kept at home to perform household chores or their parents may fear for their safety in walking to and from the classroom. If parents are unable to send all their children to school, girls are more likely to be excluded. Cultural practices, such as early marriage, may also become obstacles to girls' education. Education programmes must address these concerns and create an environment that encourages the participation of girls.

### Conclusion

Emergencies can be used to introduce new approaches, teaching methods and curriculum reform so that education contributes to protecting displaced children and promoting social justice and human rights. Monitoring and evaluation of programmes are essential to analyse their impact and ensure that protection needs, such as psychosocial support, landmine awareness, HIV/AIDS prevention, child rights and life skills, are integrated into education in emergencies. Education must be a pillar of programming for displaced children. It cannot be put off until the conflict is over. Education also can help stabilise a country in conflict. In the



recent Afghanistan crisis, the 'back-to-school' campaign succeeded in getting 1.5 million children to return to school in 2002 and also transformed and revitalised an education system that had been inaccessible to girls for many years.

For displaced persons who have lost their home and possessions, education can restore hope and resilience, while providing the essential tools needed to build a more peaceful and just society.

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1. See: [www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm](http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm)

2. See: [www.unicef.org/media/newsnotes/02nn05liberia.htm](http://www.unicef.org/media/newsnotes/02nn05liberia.htm)

3. For details, see [www.supply.unicef.dk/emergencies/schoolkit.htm](http://www.supply.unicef.dk/emergencies/schoolkit.htm)

4. For more details of UNICEF's Eritrea programme, see: [www.unicef.org/emerg/Country/Eritrea/011212.PDF](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/Country/Eritrea/011212.PDF)

5. For more details of UNICEF's Somalia programme, see: [www.unicef.org/somalia/](http://www.unicef.org/somalia/)

6. See UNICEF Afghanistan's newsletter for details: [www.unicef.org/noteworthy/afghanistan/paishraft-july2002.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/noteworthy/afghanistan/paishraft-july2002.pdf)



# What should children learn?

## A discussion of learning content during crisis

by Susan Nicolai

*Emergencies present an opportunity to influence or change what children learn so that it becomes more relevant to their everyday lives.*

*From the set of photos used by teachers and students, as mentioned in 'The Framework in West Timor'*

In many crisis situations children have no access at all to organised learning experiences. In others, when schooling is already in place, there are questions as to whether learning is relevant or comprehensive. In either case, there are decisions to be made about what children learn and how they are taught. Crisis changes an environment in such a way that new topics become urgent and new ways of teaching old subjects are necessary in order to be more effective. Introducing learning content or revising that which already exists should help students survive better in changed circumstances, develop individually and socially, and build skills for life-long learning.

### What should learning include?

In an emergency there is often a sense that changes are needed in what children are taught. Before new materials are developed or specific alterations to curriculum are promoted, however, one should have a sense of what is important for children to know - not only as a result of the emergency but also for their lives as a whole. Only then is it possible to assess whether schools can provide the full range of learning content or if out-of-school alternatives are necessary.

#### i. Survival skills: 'learning to live'

Survival skills are a central part of education in emergency situations. Children must have access to the essential knowledge and skills that will enable them to cope with the emergency. In stable situations, children typically learn core aspects of survival from their parents. Crises leave parents without the knowledge or capacity to take on this role. In an emergency, subjects such as safety, health and environment take on increased urgency.

#### ii. Developmental skills: 'learning to be'

At its best, education should never be only about survival, nor should it be only about academic aims. Individual and social development skills are equally important. Structured learning opportunities can contribute to children's sense of themselves and their interaction within a community. Having at least one constant in a daily life full of change can help children continue growing, both individually and socially. This may be achieved by introducing certain subject content such as conflict resolution, human rights awareness or cultural activities. Alternatively, it may mean teaching other subjects in a manner that emphasises communication, encourages positive group interaction and allows children to deal with the emotional impact of the crisis.

#### iii. Academic skills: 'learning to learn'

Core academic skills, taught in a way that help children 'learn to learn', cannot be ignored during times of crisis. Emergencies often delay children academically, either because they face a lack of organised learning experiences for a period or because learning is continually interrupted. Literacy and numeracy, as well as subjects such as history, science, and the arts, are vital for an individual's independence and self-sufficiency. Opportunities to focus on and progress in traditional subjects can also be one mechanism for psychosocial support, providing a sense of normality and opportunities for accomplishment.

### What makes learning effective?

The methods used to convey new knowledge to children are critical. Essential aspects include:



SC-UK Indonesia, West Timor Education Project

#### i. Becoming child-centred

Child-centred teaching and learning make the progress of each individual child central to the education experience. The focus is on what children learn, rather than on what teachers teach. Child-centred methods address the needs of the whole child - skills for survival, individual development and social interaction, and academic learning.

#### ii. Learning through activities

Learning is effective when a child can act on what is learned. Teaching must link the knowledge and skills of a certain subject with the competency to use them. Rote learning is not enough. While education should definitely include the theoretical, it must also engage the learner in the practical use of an activity or in discussion of a new awareness. The approach recognises that when children play they are

*Core academic skills... cannot be ignored during times of crisis.*

often engaged in serious activity designed to learn something they want to know or understand.

#### iii. Both structure and creativity

Education should be provided in a structure that establishes expectations for both teachers and students. This is especially important in emergencies when the world seems out of control. In this environment, a child's sense of security is dependent on the certainty and familiarity of a routine. Structure does not necessarily equal rigidity, however, and affording children a space for expressiveness is equally important.

**Issues to consider**

**i. Changes to content**

During or after a crisis, the established curriculum document may need changes to make it relevant to children in new circumstances. Where the established curriculum has been narrow or rigid, this is an opportunity to expand awareness of other learning needs. Transforming curriculum is a slow process, requiring collaboration with and approval from government bureaucracies. Sometimes it is possible to work with schools to adapt their curriculum or include new subject matter. Often it is not, however, and urgent issues for children must be addressed through learning outside of school.

**ii. Home country versus host country curriculum**

Familiar classroom materials and teachers provide a sense of security and identity for children who have been displaced. For refugee children, the curriculum used should ideally be that of their country of origin. This encourages return home and facilitates reintegration once they have arrived. In situations of extended asylum, Ministries of Education may facilitate conversion from one curriculum to the other, particularly for those who plan to enter secondary or

tertiary schools. Although difficult, it may be possible to arrange for the home country to certify courses completed in the host country.

**iii. Language of instruction**

The language that is used for study is one of the most important aspects in education. It affects both the quality of learning and, in times of crisis, often creates a political statement. Studying in one’s mother tongue is particularly important for younger children, helping them to understand the material they are trying to learn and to retain use of the language. Where it is not possible to use mother tongue, some other means must be found to ensure that children understand (i.e. bilingual parents who can act as classroom assistants).

The mother tongue of an ethnic minority, a group often affected by conflict, is rarely that of mainstream society. Whether in their home country or as refugees in a host country, these children are likely to use a second language for the majority of their education. Similar to the selection of curriculum, as much as possible the selection of language should prepare children in several ways - both facilitating children’s integration in the society around them in cases of long-term displacement and leaving doors

open for families to return. Because language of study raises so many issues, the best policy for selection is one that prioritises the wishes of the beneficiary communities themselves.

**Framework for Learning for Children Affected by Emergencies**

Save the Children has developed a tool to guide decisions on learning content within its own work, both for use when supporting state education systems and when working with out-of-school education activities. Originally prepared during a 1998 regional education meeting in South and Central Asia, the tool continues to be refined through use in various countries programmes.

The Framework for Learning for Children Affected by Emergencies is meant to serve as a starting point, and is deliberately general so it can be adapted to suit many contexts. The package is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child with its call for universal basic education, and focuses on the participation of children. The tool advocates for the applicability of education to real life and promotes the use of a variety of teaching and learning approaches.

SURVIVAL SKILLS: LEARNING TO LIVE WHERE YOU LIVE	
THEME	PURPOSE
Safety Measures	To understand the dangers in the immediate environment and be capable of implementing survival strategies (this could include landmine awareness, small arms safety, camp living, health and sanitation).
Vocational Skills	To acquire practical vocational skills that enable the reconstruction of homes and livelihoods, with appropriate economic skills and an understanding of budgeting, marketing and small business.
Health Promotion	To understand basic health and survival issues, develop practical skills and implement strategies to reduce health risks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Community Health</li> <li>To promote and improve individual, family and community health and well-being.</li> <li>✓ Reproductive Health</li> <li>To facilitate informed choice based on HIV/AIDs and other risks</li> <li>✓ Environmental Hygiene</li> <li>To be able to pro-actively address personal and environmental hygiene issues that include appropriate water, sanitation and waste disposal resources and practices.</li> </ul>
Analysis & Understanding of Context	For children to understand the effects of a disaster or conflict, what is going on around them and how this impacts on their lives, their families and their communities.
Understanding Unity in Diversity	To recognise the similarities and respect the diversity of people from different cultures, religious, ethnic and political groups.
Environmental Education	To enable children to recognise and understand the direct effects of the disaster or conflict on environment, as well as the impact of human activities.
Parenting & Caregiving	To enable and encourage caregivers (children, youth, adults in the family and community) to take an interactive role in the children’s care and emotional, intellectual, physical and social development.

<b>DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS: LEARNING TO BE</b>	
<b>CURRICULUM AREA</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
Social Development	To be able to confidently participate, interact and take responsibility at individual, family and societal level in all aspects of everyday life.
Communication	To be able to effectively communicate in a variety of ways and situations in a manner which respects, understands and recognises others. This includes watching, listening, talking, participation and interaction.
Social Harmony, Peace and Tolerance	To understand, respect and be open to differences in opinion, religion, ethnicity and background with a commitment to overcoming discrimination and building a tolerant community inclusive of and responsive to all members.
Conflict Resolution	To develop capacities and use peaceful means to resolve day-to-day conflict.
Moral Education	To observe and respect the moral and ethical codes of one's own society and of the host community, drawing on positive aspects of the culture.
Civic Responsibility & Ability to Effect Change	To demonstrate the initiative and confidence to represent and promote the best interests of individuals, family and the community.
Awareness of Rights, Responsibilities & Obligations	To understand and respect that all individuals have basic human rights and to take practical measures to advance them in their daily life.
Psychological Development	To strengthen self-esteem, ability to cope and to be resilient within the changing circumstances of the day-to-day context in which they live towards becoming an independent, capable and responsible person.
Emotional well-being & develop. in conflict	To provide support and encouragement to children so they are better equipped to maintain an emotional balance within the changing circumstances created by the conflict.
Recreation and Creativity	To allow the time and space for leisure, with the opportunity to participate in and express oneself through a variety of recreational activities.
Coping with effects of instability	To cope with fear and stress and develop capacity to recognise the impact of disaster or conflict on themselves and their families and to develop practical coping mechanisms to deal with these.
Spiritual Development	To allow for individuals' spiritual development (thought, conscience, religion) within the socio-cultural context.
Physical Development	To develop a variety of physical skills to improve physical health and mental well-being.
Cultural identity and heritage	To develop skills to know and appreciate one's own culture in order to develop a sense of belonging, while enabling functional integration and appreciation of the host community.
Language (mother-tongue)	To learn one's own mother tongue in order to function within one's own culture and community in addition to other languages as appropriate.

<b>LEARNING SKILLS: LEARNING TO LEARN</b>	
<b>CURRICULUM AREA</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
Functional Literacy	To be able to effectively use reading, writing and oral skills for enjoyment, to acquire information and to interact with others.
Functional Numeracy	To be able to apply basic mathematical skills in order to undertake financial transactions, use basic measurements and to think analytically in daily life.
World Learning	To understand and appreciate one's relationship with one's physical and social environment and the wider world.
Science	To develop an investigative approach to learning about the world and the way things work.
History	To develop a sense of history and change.
Geography	To give children a sense of themselves, their family and community, in relation to their environment, and the wider world.
The Arts	To appreciate a community's artistic heritage and develop skills of communication and expression in select mediums.

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This article is drawn from a chapter of the forthcoming *Education in Emergencies Tool Kit*. To obtain a copy, please contact Shireen Miller, tel. +44 (0)20 7703 5400 or email: [s.miller@scfuk.org.uk](mailto:s.miller@scfuk.org.uk). A short summary of SC UK's policy and practice in education in emergencies can be found at: [www.savethechildren.org.uk/emergency/emerg\\_educ.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/emergency/emerg_educ.pdf)

# The Framework in West Timor

by Sandra Renew

**S**ave the Children uses the Framework for Learning for Children Affected by Emergencies in West Timor, Indonesia as:

## 1. A series of concepts for teachers to keep in mind when working with children

- The framework focuses discussion during teacher workshops, with the aim of improving the relevance of education to the lives of IDP and refugee children. Teachers take this knowledge into the classroom by using the framework to help plan lessons and broaden concepts presented in the basic curriculum.
- The variety of topics covered in the framework suggests the need for alternatives in the way teachers manage groups of children and arrange and use resources. A set of indicators called 'Is this school good for children?' has been developed to help schools with this.

## 2. A tool for advocacy with senior government education officials

- The central government is in charge of curriculum quality, with provinces responsible for adaptation in relation to relevance. The framework is used as a starting point to encourage the state to support a flexible curriculum, partly through providing examples of the kind of information IDP and refugee children need to know in their day-to-day life.
- The framework is also used to promote school access and continuity of attendance for all children. Part of this effort includes encouraging schools to develop strategies and include activities that are specifically designed to reduce community conflict and tension.

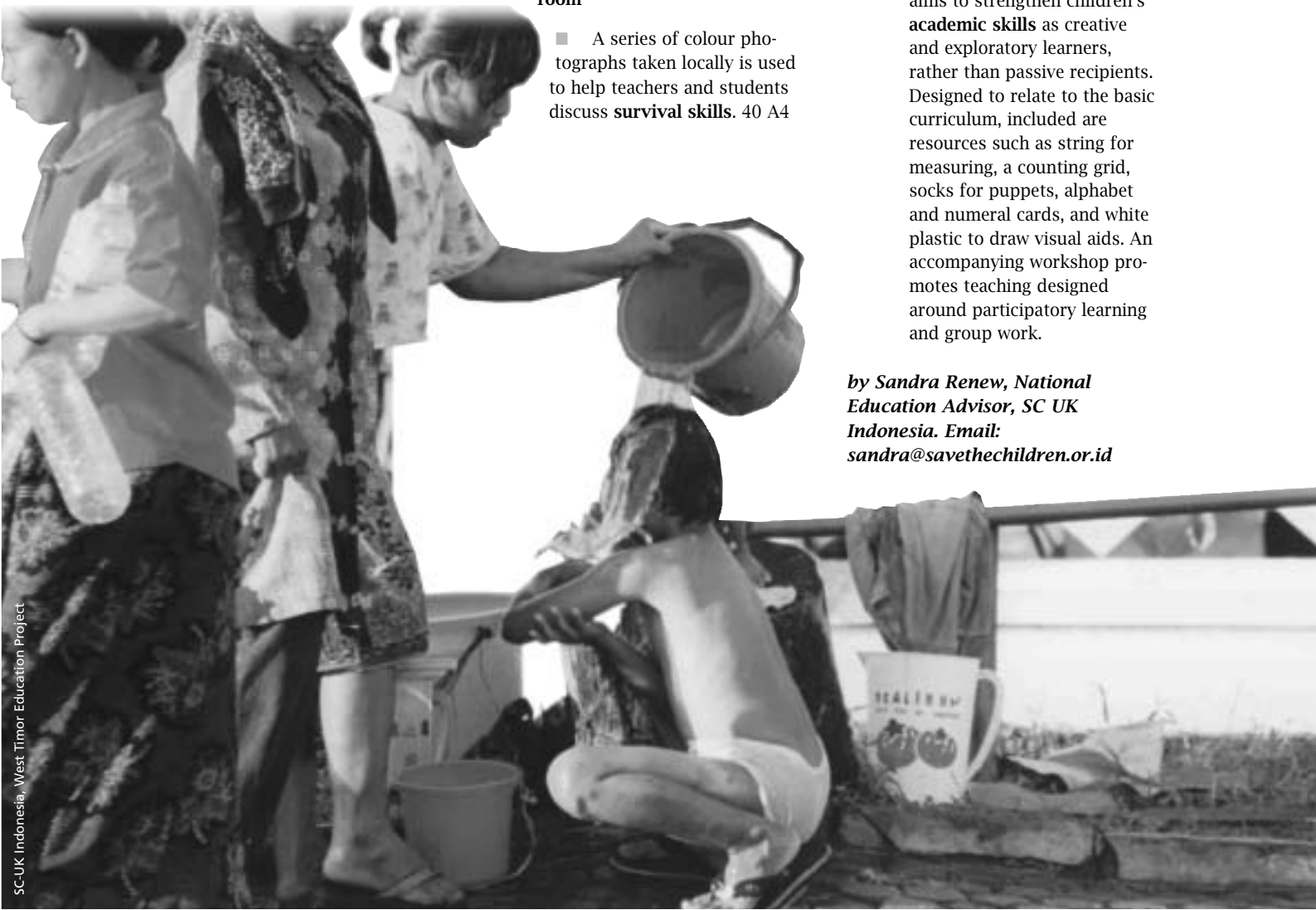
## 3. A basis to develop resource materials to use in the classroom

- A series of colour photographs taken locally is used to help teachers and students discuss **survival skills**. 40 A4

size photos were selected to portray the living situation of IDP and refugee children in barracks, sport stadiums and camps. Teachers develop questions for each photo and use the set to ask questions around critical social issues. This contrasts with the common teacher-child dynamic of rote response and right and wrong answers.

- A cooperative games box supports children's **individual development** and is used to build skills for **social participation**. The box contains items used in local games, as well as balls, ropes, frisbees and nets. Boxes are distributed at a workshop that emphasises games that promote collaboration and participation rather than competitive games that often exclude some children.
- The classroom activity box aims to strengthen children's **academic skills** as creative and exploratory learners, rather than passive recipients. Designed to relate to the basic curriculum, included are resources such as string for measuring, a counting grid, socks for puppets, alphabet and numeral cards, and white plastic to draw visual aids. An accompanying workshop promotes teaching designed around participatory learning and group work.

*by Sandra Renew, National Education Advisor, SC UK Indonesia. Email: [sandra@savethechildren.or.id](mailto:sandra@savethechildren.or.id)*



# The IRC's emergency education programme for Chechen children and adolescents

by Theresa Stichick Betancourt, Rebecca Winthrop, Wendy Smith and Gillian Dunn

*Over the past decade humanitarian actors have focused attention and resources on developing education as a specific intervention aimed at mitigating some of the physical and psychosocial distress affecting children during war.*

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has extensive experience in this field, having administered 40 education programmes in 20 countries of conflict over the past three years. There has, however, been very little research done to confirm our assumptions about the ways in which education interventions support children in times of crisis. This article focuses on the initial findings from a research project on the role of IRC's emergency education programme in the psychosocial adjustment of conflict-displaced Chechen adolescents in Ingushetia.<sup>1</sup>

The Republic of Chechnya declared independence from the Russian Federation in 1991. Fierce fighting beginning in 1994-96 and renewed in 1999 destroyed much of Chechnya and resulted in heavy casualties and massive displacement with 150,000-185,000 Chechens, 45% of them under

18, seeking refuge in the neighbouring Republic of Ingushetia. Most Chechens in Ingushetia live in host communities but some live in tent camps or in 'spontaneous settlements' located on empty or abandoned land and buildings. With approximately half of the current population of Ingushetia being displaced Chechens, the Ingush public infrastructure is overwhelmed and the education system can only accommodate a small percentage of the displaced Chechens. A mere 10,000 displaced Chechens are currently enrolled in Ingush schools. The vast majority of displaced young people have no educational opportunities whatsoever. IRC started its emergency education programme in January 2000 with non-formal education and recreation activities in 11 spontaneous settlements. The goal was to provide structured activities for the large numbers of displaced children and youth and to build the capacity of the

displaced community to respond to the needs of their children. During the first phase, the programme provided funding to secure education supplies and space for make-shift schools, training for displaced Chechen teachers on how to address the complex challenges of working with few resources and overcrowded or multi-age classrooms, recreation activities such as inter-camp theatre groups, and encouraged youth leadership and parent participation in programme planning and implementation.

At the beginning of the programme, IRC's Children Affected by Armed Conflict Unit in collaboration with a researcher from the Harvard School of Public Health<sup>2</sup> embarked on a longitudinal study of the impact of the programme on Chechen adolescents. This is one of several studies that are currently underway in IRC programmes, which aim to better determine whether external agencies can play a role in increasing social support structures and promoting psychosocial adjustment for children and youth affected by conflict. The findings summarised below are from the first phase of the research project with Chechen youth.

## Can emergency education promote psychosocial adjustment?

Previous studies have found that war-affected children do benefit from individual level interventions. Community-level social support interventions, such as emergency education programmes, and their role in mitigating trauma associated with war have not been specifically studied. The focus of the study was the degree to which IRC's emergency education programme contributed to, or fell short of, meeting such psychosocial goals as increasing social supports for the Chechen youth and alleviating psychological and social strains that they experienced.<sup>3</sup>

*Bogatyr school.*



Photo/IRC



Qualitative and quantitative data were collected in all IRC sites either well established or recently established by late 2000. The study measured participating adolescents' emotional and behavioural distress and factors that contributed to this stress as well as protective factors such as social support from family, friends and significant others, their perceptions of 'connectedness', namely of the closeness, caring, shared understanding and respect in relationships with their family, peers and larger community and their perceptions of the education programme.

*Chechen youth... have had to 'grow up fast'.*

### Multiple stressors

At the time of this study, Chechen adolescents suffered from many emotional and environmental factors that put them at risk and hindered a healing process. They talk of the day-to-day necessities, the difficulty of living in tents or abandoned buildings, the infrequency of food, medicines and educational materials and concern for their parents. They describe the humiliation of having to 'live like animals', being unable to fulfill their simple desire to 'live like other kids' and participate in simple play, school or community activities. They struggle with being a 'guest' in Ingushetia and are torn between a sense of gratitude to the Ingush for taking them in and frustration that they frequently tolerate teasing or harassment from local youth or authorities. Some report concern that they are being 'idle' and 'wasting time' when they should be 'busy with something' or working to support their families. Chechen youth are aware of the way in which their lives have been interrupted and how they have had to 'grow up fast'.

Research indicated that for many young people finding a means to enjoy the company of fellow teenagers has been challenging in the emotionally charged context of some settlements. Before the programme started young people had tried to organise their own activities but encountered resistance from adults, offended by the sight of young people having 'fun' amidst the hardship of displacement.

By the time of their arrival in the settlements, many young people had lost

their homes and their sense of a 'place' to return to. When asked about what was most important to young people at present, many spoke of the importance of having a 'place' to anchor themselves during this transition.

### The importance of place

Initial findings indicate that Chechen youth see the education programme as 'helping' by returning young people to their studies as well as giving children a safe and reliable place to go and an emotional space to turn their thoughts towards more age-appropriate concerns. Not only do teens feel that young people need a place to 'forget about the war',

they also need a place to be 'understood'. Relationships between teachers, youth leaders and peers in the education programme were discussed as a potential source of assistance and informational support when parental time for children was unavailable. Indeed, the education programme is seen as providing a place for children to connect to others, gain social support and offer hope for a better future. Many adolescents spoke about the opportunity to study in any form as a means of improving the potential for peace and success within their generation and for the region as a whole. The teens spoke generally about their desire to overcome the ravages of war and have future opportunities to be productive and successful.

### The importance of leadership opportunities

Some of the most compelling evidence of the developmental benefits of this education programme for young people is described by the youth leaders in the programme. For these teens participating in leadership roles in the emergency education programme influenced their own sense of themselves and their abilities to help others. Several youth leaders explained that this experience had influenced their interactions with others and their thoughts about future career choices.

### The need to move towards formal education as quickly as possible

While the education programme has undoubtedly been a source of social support, it has also created stress in

adolescents due to its non-formal nature. Initially the IRC-supported emergency education schools placed little emphasis on grades because so many children were behind in their schooling, texts and teaching materials were still few, teachers needed training and the programme needed to coordinate with the Ingush Ministry of Education to ensure future formalisation and accreditation. Due to a shortage of teachers trained in multiple subjects, not all subjects could be taught and many classrooms were of mixed ages and grade levels, making immediate formalisation too difficult. Although the non-formal nature of the programme was greatly determined in its early stages by an understandable desire to make children feel safe and comfortable, youth felt that the programme was actually 'not normal'. This created stress among adolescents that effectively contradicted the desire of many adolescents for legitimacy and normalcy. Adolescents eagerly wanted formal schooling situations and testing opportunities legitimised by local education officials. The non-formal education programme was emblematic of displaced Chechens as they felt they were living a parallel but 'abnormal' or unnatural existence by not attending what they perceived as 'regular' schooling.

### The primacy of family

Data used to measure the relationship between the stressors and supports identified by participants showed that the most significant factor mitigating adolescent emotional and behavioural distress was the degree to which they perceived a connected relationship to their family. The more adolescents perceived their relationships with their families as close, caring and respectful, the better their mental health. Trends in the data showed that the adolescents also perceived connectedness with their peers and their community as related to improved mental health. These factors did not have the statistical significance of the family connectedness factor but nonetheless showed trends towards mitigating psychosocial distress.

### Implications for planning of emergency education initiatives

The findings from the first phase of the project confirm our general assumptions about the role of educa-

tion interventions in meeting war-affected children's needs by helping communities create social support structures that foster psychosocial adjustment for adolescents while also offering continuity of learning. The research also points to specific programmatic strategies that should be followed, highlighting a need for humanitarian agencies working in emergency education to:

- support programmes that do more than target youth individually
- recognise the role of family, peer and community connectedness in the mental health and adjustment of war-affected youth
- encourage parents and extended family to participate in education through family-student-teacher discussion groups, school-based health activities or community education committees
- liaise from the outset with local authorities to ensure that student learning and teacher training are certified with local Ministry authorities
- move quickly, where possible, from the non-formal nature necessary for immediate interventions to formal education programming
- explore collective arrangements for childcare to increase opportunities for parental and student involvement in education programming
- dedicate further resources to studying the impact of emergency education and further improving programme design

### IRC's current programme in Ingushetia

IRC's early efforts to move rapidly to formal education have resulted in current Ingush Ministry of Education certification of learning in IRC schools. The programme has evolved to include a wide range of cultural activities, vocational education, accelerated learning and reconstruction of schools inside Chechnya. The second phase of the research project is underway and

publication of the full findings of the study is forthcoming.

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*Editors' note: For further recent information on displacement and human rights issues in Chechnya (where one third of the population is internally displaced) see Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org/campaigns/russia/chechnya](http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/russia/chechnya) and Medecins du Monde [www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/mdm- Chec-31jul.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/mdm- Chec-31jul.pdf)*

*Pupil in IRC school, Tanzila, October 2001.*

1. For an overview of the work of the IRC in Chechnya and Ingushetia see: [www.theirc.org/where/index.cfm?fa=show&locationID=12](http://www.theirc.org/where/index.cfm?fa=show&locationID=12)

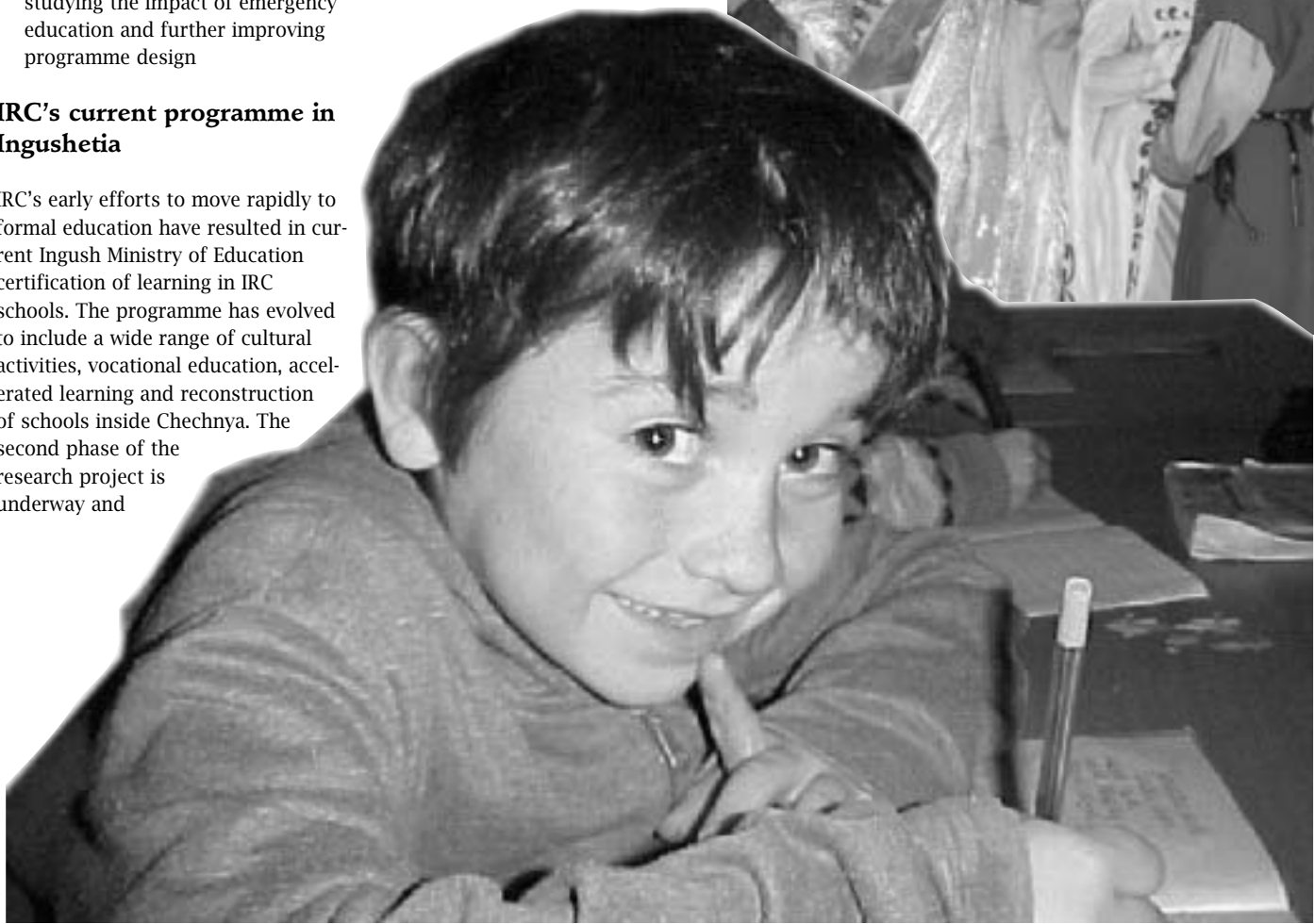
2. This project is funded by the Mellon-MIT programme on NGOs and Forced Migration and the Banyan Tree Foundation.

3. This phase of the study was informed by 'grounded-theory' and 'meaning-centred' approaches to qualitative research in which attention is given to describing local understanding of experiences and attending to potential sources of personal and outside bias. This approach is particularly useful when working in cross-cultural settings as it allows a local understanding of experience to take precedence rather than being rigidly constrained by outside theory.

4. For complete information on the findings from phase one of the project, please contact Theresa Stichick at [tstichic@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:tstichic@hsph.harvard.edu).

*Young singers preparing for IRC Culture Center performance, November 1991.*

*Photos: IRC*



# Integration not segregation: young refugees in British schools

by Rachel Hek

*I came here from a war, and we had to leave or we would have been killed. We came here and school helped me feel confident...*

Previous research has suggested that refugee children's experience in schools can make a real difference to their ability to settle and regain a sense of belonging.<sup>1</sup> As the UK government proposes measures which would take asylum seekers out of mainstream education to be educated separately,<sup>2</sup> now is a particularly opportune moment to reflect on the role of schools in the lives of young refugees.

This article is based on a research project<sup>3</sup> focusing on the experience of young refugees in two secondary schools in London and their perspectives on the factors that have helped them settle and do well in school. Fifteen students (from Somalia, Kosovo, Ethiopia, Colombia, Turkish Cyprus, Eritrea, Turkey and Iraq) and key staff in the two schools were interviewed over a period of six months.

Students talked about multiple losses of people, places and possessions. One student had been parted from his mother at eight and not reunited with her for five years. Those living with both parents appeared to be the most settled. Others were living with one parent or other relatives or were being looked after by social services. A third of those interviewed either knew for certain, or suspected, that one of their parents was dead. Many students talked of this continuing uncertainty.

*“We don't even know what has happened to my dad and the rest of them. Well I think we know they were killed, ...we know they were killed, and people try to say that they were not, but they were. We're just waiting now.”*

One young man linked his experience of losing his family to his hope of doing well and achieving his ambitions. For him, school had provided a focus and the teachers a source of

emotional support. All the students had high aspirations and hoped to go on to college and university when they left school.

Students pointed to a number of factors which helped them to settle in and begin to achieve in what was often a very different system. Three important themes emerged.

## Specialist teachers

All students mentioned the importance of having dedicated language support teachers who were able to speak to them in their own language and of teachers with understanding of addressing specific learning needs in helping them to settle.

*“They [the teachers] worked with you and showed you around and helped me, and there was a teacher from Somalia who translates the lesson which does help a lot.”*

Students who had difficulties said that more one-to-one input from specialist teachers would have helped them. They identified the importance of better support in English language skills.

## Friends

Most students said that having schoolmates from their home country immediately made them feel more comfortable. Many additionally mentioned the benefit of mixing with students from a variety of backgrounds. All said they now have friends at school.

*“First it was the teachers that helped me learn, and then it was one of my English friends; well, it was my best friend who was helping me with English and giving me help so that I'm going to do my best.”*

*“If you want to talk about how you settle in school, well if you've got friends from your own culture then it's hard for you to settle down and understand English stuff because it's different. With people from different cultures you learn more things and you settle down.”*

## The 'whole school' attitude towards refugees

The students all identified the positive impact of a whole school approach to issues affecting refugees. Those who were able to identify as refugees and feel that their experiences and contributions were being valued were able to gain a sense of belonging more quickly. In one of the schools, issues affecting refugees were integrated into the curriculum. Regular discussions of refugee issues allowed students to develop a clear understanding of the positive contributions to school life made by young refugees. In the school that had no such policies, the young people did not have a sense of their experience being celebrated in the same way and as a result felt marginalised.

Students identified a number of issues which, if seriously addressed by the school community, made them able to feel settled and to do well.

### i. Bullying

At one school students felt free to discuss their experiences and believed that pupils and teachers valued this. They thus felt positive about being refugees and able to contribute their particular skills and experience to the school. They reported that in general bullying was not tolerated and that if it did occur they felt confident to discuss it with teachers.

In the other school, however, the majority said that they did not feel comfortable being identified as refugees nor were able to readily discuss their flight and backgrounds in

school. These students felt vulnerable to bullying because of their accents and ethnicity. This was made more difficult by their perception that their school was not taking bullying seriously.

“When I first came it was difficult for me. Other boys said I sounded stupid and did my accent. It was all around my accent. I think they were trying to put me down because I am from a different place.”

## ii. Teachers' attitudes

Students from both schools talked of difficulties with specific teachers whom they perceived as unhelpful and/or unfair. Students felt particularly upset when teachers failed to listen and treated them unjustly. They valued teachers who recognised the difficulty of adjusting to the range of subjects, and felt out of their depth and humiliated when they could not understand what was happening in class and had to ask teachers to help them out. All the students said that it is vital that individual teachers and the school community listen to refugee children and take their concerns seriously. Some specifically spoke about teachers they felt were racist and urged the school to take action.

*Student who is an asylum seeker at a secondary school in Glasgow, UK.*

## iii. Links with home

All the students said that their parent/s or carer/s felt welcome at their school and the majority attend parents' evenings. This was important to the students and made them feel more part of their school. Most students said that the main reason that their parents feel welcome and understand the school is because teachers are helpful.

“The teachers are nice and friendly to my mum and every term at parents' evening they provide an interpreter.”

It was clear from speaking to the students that where the school had policies on promoting contact with parents the students felt more positive and able to consider themselves part of their school. They also clearly felt that school gave them and their families the chance to be part of the wider community in a new place. Some of the statements made by the young people suggest that their families are also benefiting from their relationship with the schools.

## Final comments

The proposed UK legislation to educate refugee children separately undermines the gains being made by young refugees in mainstream schools which support them appropriately. It is surely in the interests both of individual young refugees and British society as a whole that the regular school system should develop the capacity and understanding to educate all of our children.

Legal challenges to segregation are currently being mounted and opposition is being voiced by many in education, trade unions and refugee support organisations.<sup>4</sup> If legislation to create exclusionary education is passed, young people and their families will effectively be cut off from communities and lose informal opportunities to learn English and better understand British society. The young people interviewed said that this would hold them back and hinder their integration. The experiences of the students in these two schools show that it is realistic to provide appropriate educational and emotional support within a mainstream school setting.

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“... a resident of an accommodation centre shall not be treated as part of the population of a local education authority's area.”

(The Nationality, Asylum and Immigration Bill, 2002)

1. E H Wolde-Giyorgis, S Kidane, A Ghelle, *Giving refugee children and young people a voice: refugee children and young people's experience of local services*, Camden Family Service Unit, 1998; J Rutter & C Jones (eds) *Refugee Education: Mapping the Field*, London, Trentham, 1998; J Rutter *Supporting Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain: a compendium of essential information*, London, Trentham, 2001.

2. The Nationality, Asylum and Immigration Bill, 2002. See [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200102/cmbills/119/2002119.pdf](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200102/cmbills/119/2002119.pdf) (pages 23-24).

3. Research project undertaken by Rachel Hek (Social Work) and Dr Rosemary Sales (Social Policy) from Middlesex University, and funded through Middlesex University's Regional Regeneration Research budget.

4. For details, visit the Refugee Council website: [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/supportus/campaigns/camp007.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/supportus/campaigns/camp007.htm)



# Beyond consultation: in support of more meaningful adolescent participation

by Jane Lowicki



*In 2000, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children initiated a 'series of four action-oriented, participatory studies with adolescents affected by armed conflict'.*

Unpacking this mouthful of jargon and explaining that the idea would involve intensive research and advocacy designed and conducted by adolescents themselves, we asked young people in Kosovo (2000), northern Uganda (2001) and Sierra Leone (2002) about their interest in getting involved.<sup>1</sup> We expected them to be concerned about the fact that we could not guarantee that concrete programmes for adolescents would follow the research. Surprisingly, however, they were mainly astounded to be asked to take control of a project focused on **their** concerns as defined by **them**.

In each site, adolescents uniformly revealed severely limited opportunities for their participation in decision-making processes dominated by adults. When opportunities did exist, particularly in humanitarian operations, the nature of the participation often went little further than young people being consulted or asked to carry out the preordained wishes and objectives of adults.

Youth leader, Ngolo Katta, who with other young people coordinated the research study in Sierra Leone, said, 'This approach is totally unique. It's never been done before in Sierra

Leone. Usually we are just handed a request for information and told to rally the youth, follow up and deliver. If we question the process or make suggestions, it is not received well. And usually, if we do the research, we never hear from the people requesting it again.'

The simple act of saying to young people, 'We'll give you support as you need it but you decide what's important to you. You decide how it will work best. You manage the money,' and so on, appeared revolutionary. Yet, adolescents are at a time in their development when they are formulating their identities, actively preparing for adulthood and needing to take action on their own behalf. Many adolescents affected by war are thrust into adult roles prematurely, becoming soldiers, mothers and fathers, heads of households, husbands and

*Adolescent researchers learn communication skills, Sierra Leone*

wives, principal wage earners and more, with extremely limited support. They also form informal support groups, drama and sports clubs, income-generation groups and more.<sup>2</sup> In this context, participatory methodologies involving young people without their having a significant level of control over inputs and outcomes are absurd and belittling.

### The (unfulfilled) right to participation

As 191 nations of the world rally around the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)<sup>3</sup> (with only the USA and Somalia yet to ratify) and as the UN and NGOs explore, develop and test 'rights-based' approaches to programming, the issue of fulfilling children's right to participation (Article 12, CRC) is a hot one. Various methodologies or approaches, including participatory rural appraisal, people-oriented planning and a number of peer-to-peer/child-to-child approaches have substantially advanced understanding among international humanitarian agencies of the value of and need for involving 'beneficiary populations' in mapping exercises, assessments and social surveys, as well as programme implementation. Organisations and associations such as UNICEF, UNHCR, the International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA) and the International Rescue Committee have also developed in-house approaches to participation with a rights perspective. Donor governments at times even stipulate that community or beneficiary involvement be a measurable component of project implementation.

With some important exceptions, however, preliminary findings across the three research sites show that attempts to incorporate adolescents into programme decision making as ostensibly equal partners are limited. Organisations are often satisfied if a

This follows a general trend where 'beneficiary' populations are viewed as just that, those assumed to benefit from something but who are decidedly separate and distinct from the benefactor. It also reflects understandings of child protection to be principally about adults protecting children as opposed to a more collaborative approach where young people, who think and act on their own behalf, are not solely the objects of protection. For example, few refugee community volunteers responsible for child protection monitoring are actually children or adolescents, or their incorporation into such work is delayed, while adults are involved first when key decisions are made.

A comparative study analysing key findings across the four sites will be forthcoming from the Women's Commission. With adolescents and adults working together on the analysis, it will take an in-depth look at the issue of adolescent participation in different aspects of young people's lives - inside and outside the home. It will identify patterns in the practices of organisations developing and using adolescent-focused participatory methodologies, including in assessments, decision making, programme design, implementation and evaluation. Some highlights of achievements in these areas will include the promotion of child- and adolescent-centred participatory learning environments, young people's direct involvement in family tracing and reunification, and increased adolescent access to international policy discussions such as the UN Special Session on Children.

### Field study methodology and lessons learned

The object of the Women's Commission's work with adolescents is to improve knowledge about the situation of adolescents in armed conflict and conduct advocacy to strengthen relevant policy and increase services and protection to them in humanitarian emergencies and during reconstruction activities. It began with a desk study, *Untapped Potential: Adolescents Affected by Armed Conflict* (2000)<sup>4</sup>, which identified achievements and gaps in policy and programmes affecting adolescents in conflict areas. *Untapped Potential*

revealed a need to document adolescents' experiences, determine patterns and practices in humanitarian response addressing their concerns and identify solutions and ideas for improving their well-being. The series of four studies, subsequent comparative study and related advocacy seek to further all of these goals.

In each field site two research teams worked in two parts of the country. Each team had roughly 26-28 adolescent researchers and seven to nine adult research advisors. Their work was coordinated by a youth coordination group, preferably comprised of a local youth NGO or youth group. The Women's Commission and other interested groups or organisations in the region facilitated and advised the work of the teams.

The researchers - half girls, half boys - ranged in age from 10 to 19 years. They represented a variety of adolescent experiences - former soldiers, adolescent mothers, orphans, in school, out of school, working, refugees, internally displaced, disabled and more. The majority were literate but some were not. Few had conducted research before, and most had experienced a break in their formal education due to the conflict. All aspects of the project were conducted in their native languages, with interpretation as necessary.

Each research team participated in a three-day training where the Women's Commission presented them with one central question - what are the main problems of adolescents, and what are some solutions? The teams learned about and practised research methodologies, communication skills, listening and interviewing skills, note taking and reporting objectively, ethically and accurately. The teams spent a lot of time designing their own research study, developing detailed questions to ask their peers and adults about a range of issues they identified as important. The Women's Commission and other local trainers did not suggest topics or questions to them or go into any depth of explanation about human rights or child protection concepts. Invariably, however, the young people raised issues covering a full range of rights and protection concerns, while calling them by other names. Their methodologies included focus group

### *Most young people say they feel marginalised*

number of young people's opinions have been heard before implementing projects for them. Opportunities for building young people's capacity through their deeper involvement are often missed, ultimately affecting the sustainability and relevance of programmes. Most young people say they feel marginalised from those whose job it is to support them.



discussions, individual case studies and a written survey of most pressing adolescent concerns. The research sessions ultimately included an hour-and-a-half of focus groups led by one adolescent, where two adolescents took notes and an adult advisor assisted as needed. This was followed by the written survey, and each adolescent researcher was responsible for developing two case studies through individual interviews that they initiated.

### *their collective voice provided powerful information*

The researchers practised these activities in the training. Adults practised holding back from controlling the adolescents' activities and instead advised as needed. The researchers designed T-shirts for themselves and made a detailed research plan, determining which groups they would speak to and where - secondary and primary school students, adolescent mothers, ex-combatants, refugees, elders, adolescent petty traders, and others. The initial research took about a month and was implemented completely by the teams. Each team and the Women's Commission wrote reports based on the findings and they worked together to plan and

carry out advocacy activities bringing the young people's recommendations to decision makers and others. This involved national and international travel for some researchers, elected by their teammates.

Many of the young people involved in the project as researchers went on to initiate projects, form active youth groups, conduct more advocacy, train other young people and more. The participation of the thousands of

respondents, however, was limited

to the few hours spent with the research teams. Unless the teams returned to the communities (which they did) or an organisation began to work with them, the impact of their participation on their lives was limited. At the same time, their collective voice provided powerful information that was used to effect change in the lives of many adolescents.

While the Women's Commission studies are principally qualitative and focused on research and advocacy, they provide lessons to those undertaking all sorts of interventions in other sectors and phases of humanitarian response and prevention. The

lessons are also broadly applicable in classroom and other settings. The comparative study will include more on this.

To access the Women's Commission adolescents reports, visit [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org) and click on 'reports'.

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1. A fourth site, in Asia, will be the focus of the fourth participatory research project.

2. See *Making the Choice for a Better Life, Promoting the Protection and Capacity of Kosovo's Youth*, Women's Commission, 2001, pp 56-58; and *Against All Odds: Surviving the War on Adolescents, Promoting the Protection and Capacity of Ugandan and Sudanese Adolescents in Northern Uganda*, Women's Commission, p 51.

3. See [www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm](http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm)

4. Jane Lowicki *Untapped Potential: Adolescents Affected by Armed Conflict*, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2000, pp 4-5.

### **Adolescent participation: some lessons learned**

- Adolescents are a source of enormous and invaluable ability, creativity, energy and enthusiasm, and their ideas are important and valuable.
- Adolescent participation is necessary and achievable and may take many forms.
- Adolescents enjoy and learn from being engaged in constructive activities, especially those where they are making decisions, providing leadership and taking action, and their participation builds their capacity in ways that are useful to their lives beyond the tasks at hand.
- While participatory processes can empower young people, they can also further manipulate them, depending on the level to which adolescents are consulted and able to make choices - full participation goes beyond consultation to opportunities for leadership.
- Involving young people in research and assessment work places them in a position to advocate on their own behalf and enter community discussions using information and knowledge gained, adding legitimacy to their contributions.
- Adults can and should support adolescents' participation in a variety of important ways, requiring them to suspend authority structures that favour their opinions and contributions.
- The variations in experience, skills and perceptions, including about themselves, that young people bring to their activities influence the quality and nature of young people's participation.

# Childrens' clubs: new ways of working with conflict-displaced children in Sri Lanka

by Jason Hart

*This article is based upon research conducted early in 2002 in the Batticaloa and Ampara Districts of eastern Sri Lanka, a rural region which has witnessed nearly two decades of inter-ethnic conflict.*

Whole villages have been forced to flee, often taking refuge only a few kilometres away. As fighting subsides or shifts location, villagers return to rebuild their homes and lives amidst the violence which often continues around them.

Save the Children Norway (SCN) have maintained a presence in eastern Sri Lanka throughout the conflict.<sup>1</sup> Together with local partner organisations, SCN has sought to involve children as participants in their programmes rather than as mere recipients of services and protection measures. Achieving this aim has not been easy in a volatile and insecure environment in which children have often been particular targets for

harassment, conscription and exploitation by armed forces. Nevertheless, the efforts of SCN and its partners have led to the creation of some impressive programmes in which young people in the age group 12-18 have taken responsibility for their own activities.

## Children's participation

The right of children to participate in all decisions concerning their lives is a fundamental element of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup> (CRC) and is made explicit in Article 12. However, in situations of conflict and displacement it has not normally been the case that humanitarian agencies have encouraged the young to become full participants in the design,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programme activities. This may be due to a range of factors that include lack of appropriate staff training and assumptions about the limitations of children's abilities. In the conditions created by conflict and displacement, it is also particularly likely that fears for children's safety lead to a more paternalistic approach in which adults take full responsibility on behalf of the young.

In recent years, however, a number of agencies in places as far apart as Liberia, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Kosovo have begun to pursue participatory activities with conflict-affected and displaced children. Aside from the encouragement for this provided by the CRC, there is a growing understanding among academics and practitioners that children are not simply victims who must be protected or rehabilitated but are also actors who, even in the midst of widespread violence and upheaval, may have a valuable role to play in their societies. Moreover, engagement in meaningful social action, as a group, is increasingly perceived as a way to promote personal development and a sense of efficacy in the otherwise disempowering conditions created by conflict and displacement.

## The programmes

In 1999 SCN, together with a local partner organisation ESCO (Eastern Self-Reliant and Community Awakening Organisation), embarked on a pilot project with children in a small village called Sivanthivu in Batticaloa District. The project was intended to provide an opportunity for the young people of Sivanthivu to engage in the development of their own lives and that of the community. At the



same time, it would be a learning opportunity for SCN and ESCO and a chance to develop a model for work with other war-affected rural communities.

Sivanthivu itself is in a vulnerable location: a one kilometre square island situated between the forces of the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In 1990 the population of the village – approximately 300 families – was displaced by fighting. Most took refuge in a school building in the nearby town of Valachchenai, returning a year later to find their homes burned down. Since that time the village has been shelled and a number of residents, including the young, have been subjected to harassment and intimidation by military personnel. The unstable political environment has clearly impeded development and, more than ten years after the return, Sivanthivu still lacks electricity and has very limited water and sanitation facilities.

During their regular visits to the village to support a project with widows, ESCO staff began to engage in discussion with adolescents. Lacking previous exposure to outsiders, the young people were keen to talk to the visitors and share their frustration at the lack of recreational and educational opportunities. This led ESCO, with SCN support, to start working with them. Through a series of talks, ESCO staff encouraged the adolescents to identify, and suggest how to meet, their priority needs. A formal group was established: the Vivehananda Children Development Club. Its achievements to date include the following:

- The expansion of schooling in the village (previously grades 1-5 only) to include grades 6-9, through construction of a new building and eliciting the agreement of the local director of education to provide extra teachers.
- The re-instatement of bus services connecting Sivanthivu to the nearest town, previously stopped by order of the local army commander. This was achieved through advocacy efforts by the club members in collaboration with ESCO and the national NGO consortium.

- The construction of a building for club activities which not only provides a space for meetings, play and cultural activities for village children aged 5-18 but also houses a small library and vocational training initiatives aimed particularly at school drop-outs.
- The accumulation of funds for the longer-term support of the club and its activities through the savings of club members to complement \$1,000 won in an international competition for youth action.<sup>3</sup>

Today the Vivehananda Children Development Club stands as a model of participatory programming with children in eastern Sri Lanka. The achievements of this club have encouraged SCN to pursue further projects in other villages, both directly and through local partners. Various difficulties have been encountered in this work, however. Some of these are directly related to the political environment: severe constraints on agency mobility imposed by the Sri Lankan Army<sup>4</sup> and fear of forced recruitment – both of staff and children – by the LTTE. Other problems include the lack of capacity or enthusiasm of some local agencies to work in this way, and opposition from family or community members to children's involvement.

### Replication and adaption

In spite of these difficulties, at least three similar projects have since emerged. These include a club established and run by 12-18 year olds in a mixed Muslim-Tamil village in Ampara District where deep-seated tensions linger as a consequence of intercommunal violence and displacement of the Tamil population in the early 1990s. Similar activities have also been initiated in a Sinhalese village lying close to territory held by the Tamil Tigers and subject to sporadic attack by them. This village has experienced periods of great insecurity during which residents have chosen to hide in the nearby jungle at night and return to their homes only at day-break. Two projects initiated in the LTTE-controlled areas have had mixed success. One was suspended largely due to fear of forcible recruitment of children and agency staff. The other project involves three clubs specifical-

ly for separated children. The agency responsible temporarily stopped activities when recruitment was at its height. During this time many of the older members, especially males, fled to government-controlled areas. However, once the situation appeared to calm down the local agency resumed work.

Each of these more recent projects has drawn upon the experience in Sivanthivu but adapted activities to suit the local circumstances and meet needs identified by children. Thus, for example, in the mixed Muslim-Tamil village the adolescent members of the Child Action Group have focused their efforts particularly on cultural and educational activities and have built solid bonds of trust and respect across the lines of ethnicity which still divide many adults.

In one of the three clubs for separated children in the LTTE-controlled area, participants decided to support peers living in households unable to meet their basic nutritional needs. Each member agreed to save a small quantity of rice from their daily diet. At regular intervals participants bring the accumulated amount to their club meeting and together select a child from amongst their own number or from the community whose household will be given a donation of rice.

While the activities themselves may vary between the different projects, strong similarities exist in terms of the role of the agency staff. In all cases one or more fieldworkers are employed to work with the groups of adolescents on a daily basis. These are generally young people in their twenties, often from the local area. All have received extensive training (by SCN and its partners) aimed at sensitising them to the situation of conflict-affected and displaced children and the many daily challenges they face. They have also been trained to work in a manner which encourages and facilitates, rather than directs, activities. In a society where children are generally expected to obey the instruction of parents, teachers and community leaders, this is largely unfamiliar.

In their work at the village level, the field staff support the children's activities in a quiet manner. According to participants in the

various projects, they provide advice when decisions have to be made or when a particular problem arises. According to one group of adolescents, the agency staff may assume a role similar to that of parent, teacher or friend depending on the situation and in response to the needs expressed. However, the participants themselves take responsibility for decision making and for implementation of plans.

A further vital task of the staff is to build trust amongst parents and other adults. Activities such as these are unprecedented in the lives of their communities. Not only are young people taking initiative but they are doing so in groups, the composition of which might normally be discouraged by their elders due to considerations of gender, ethnicity or social status. By visiting parents and community leaders on a regular basis and talking with them about their concerns, field-workers have been able to open up and protect the space for young people's participation.

### The benefits of participatory activities

Working on projects that involve young people in a meaningful way is not an easy option. Although responsibility for much of the day-to-day running of activities may be taken by participants, this does not mean reduced workload and costs for agencies. On the contrary, ongoing support and monitoring of activities are essential to ensure the security and well-



Jason Hart

people to take positive action in order to develop their lives and their communities. When asked whether they might prefer to relinquish responsibilities and leave adults to run the clubs, participants insisted that this would be a bad idea. Their comments included the following: "You can't always depend on adults." "We want to decide - we can do what we like." "In other clubs [run by adults] the children come one hour late. Here they come half an hour early."

In addition to the dynamism manifest in activities, the benefits of this

In addition to this personal confidence, children also reported the confidence that they had developed in their effectiveness as a group. In many of the projects, participants had undertaken activities that were unprecedented in the life of the community such as organising an anti-alcohol campaign or celebratory village events. At first this had caused them anxiety and doubt but, through executing their plans and achieving some success, their confidence had grown, encouraging them to undertake new challenges.

Although not noted explicitly by children, it is clear to outside observers that participants have benefitted immeasurably in terms of their psycho-emotional well-being. No studies have been conducted in Sri Lanka which clearly demonstrate the difference participatory programmes have made in this regard. However, all agency staff expressed the conviction that profound changes have been achieved over the course of programme life. In part, this may be attributed to the action of bringing children together and facilitating the building of close relationships of trust and co-operation in a situation where conflict and displacement have fractured many social networks. In addition, the opportunity for children

*"In other clubs [run by adults] the children come one hour late. Here they come half an hour early."*

being of participants as they take action that often challenges the status quo. Furthermore, the capacity of the older participants to provide effective leadership has to be built steadily and consistently through training initiatives. In order to justify the effort required there must be clear benefits from such an approach. The young people in the various projects described a range of ways in which they were benefiting. In the first place, the programmes were clearly progressing successfully, encouraging young

approach extend to the personal development of participants. In all locations visited, the participants spoke at length about the increased confidence they now had in themselves and their abilities as a direct consequence of their participation. Girls in particular described how the activities had given them the opportunity to overcome shyness and restrictive social norms. They were now confident about speaking in public and felt much more comfortable socialising with boys.

to explore their potential and realise their efficacy as individuals and as a group – in short, to become empowered – has significant psychosocial benefits.

The effects of these activities have also been felt in various positive ways by their communities at large. In the mixed Tamil-Muslim village, for example, the Child Action Group supports the funeral and wedding ceremonies

*giving children a genuine opportunity to participate may prove a highly effective strategy.*

of villagers, across lines of ethnicity. In the Sinhala border village children are planning a tree-planting campaign in order to provide shelter and to protect the local environment. Aside from the contributions of the Vivehananda Children Development Club already discussed, the members also organise the monthly shramadana (communal volunteer) activities and provide refreshments for participants, and have created cultural performances for the entertainment of the whole village. The principal of the local school claims to rely on club members to assist him with sports events and other activities for his students. Participants in the separated children project in the LTTE-controlled area requested First Aid training. Due to the severe lack of health facilities and the obstacles to accessing clinics under government control, these children wanted to be able to deal with common but potentially serious conditions such as snakebite. The agency responded by inviting the local Red Cross to conduct a 3-day training, the first they had offered to under 18 year olds. The trainees are now keen to apply their new skills for the benefit of fellow villagers.

There is evidence to suggest that this industriousness and community spirit on the part of children may mobilise adults towards community-oriented action. For example, in Sivanthivu the same school principal reported that, prior to the establishment of the club, only five to six parents came regularly to the meetings of the Student Development Society, intended as a forum for support of the school and their children's education. However, as the club became active, attendance

jumped and there are now around 150 parents involved. A general mood of apathy has given way to concern about ways in which the village may be developed.

It is too early to discern clearly how children's activities in the other projects may influence adult community members. The biggest challenge reported by participants is alcoholism. While its causes are no doubt numerous, a significant exacerbating factor appears to

be the conflict itself which has destroyed so many precious lives, homes and livelihoods. Building on initial successes and enabling individuals and communities to overcome the despondency fuelling alcoholism will not be an easy or quick process. However, the clear example of children transcending their own suffering and organising themselves to develop their lives and villages must surely provide inspiration and encouragement to their elders over the longer term.

### Concluding remarks

In situations of conflict and displacement, international humanitarian agencies have traditionally focused on protection of the young and provision of services by themselves and their local partners. Working to encourage participation, in such a context, may appear to be a luxury or even a distraction. However, giving children a genuine opportunity to participate may prove a highly effective strategy. Not only are the capabilities of the young to protect themselves and support their own development enhanced but confidence in their capacity to deal with the many challenges of life in such unstable conditions is built.

At the time of writing, a ceasefire is in place in Sri Lanka which will, hopefully, lead to a secure peace. In the estimation of agency staff, if violence returns and, with it, further displacement, the young people involved in these projects will be well equipped to cope and may play an important role in supporting other children and their communities. The evidence from these few small projects in eastern Sri

Lanka suggests participation is invaluable to ensure the longer-term protection of the young.

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1. For details of SCN's work in Sri Lanka see: [www.savethechildren.lk/](http://www.savethechildren.lk/)

2. See [www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm](http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm)

3. See [www.takingitglobal.org/action/yiaa-2001.html](http://www.takingitglobal.org/action/yiaa-2001.html)

4. This situation has eased considerably since the ceasefire in December 2001 and subsequent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE in February 2002.

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# Disseminating findings from research with Palestinian children and adolescents

by Dawn Chatty

*For more than half a century Palestinian children and their care givers have lived a temporary existence in the dramatic and politically volatile landscape of the Middle East.*

These children have been captive to various sorts of stereotyping, both academic and popular. They have been projected, as have their parents and grandparents, as passive victims without the benefit of international protection. And they have become the beneficiaries of numerous humanitarian aid packages based on the Western model of child development and the psychosocial approach to intervention.

In January 1999, a research project examining the impact of prolonged forced migration and armed conflict on the lives of Palestinian children and young people was initiated in Lebanon, Syria,

Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>1</sup> The project had several goals. One was to bridge the theoretical and applied divide common to much of the research directed at Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. Another was to test and challenge some of the Western medical and developmental assumptions concerning child and adolescent development. A third was to engage in multi-disciplinary, participatory research to draw out the similarities and differences between Palestinian refugee communities separated for more than 50 years by the national borders of different states.

## Context of each field site

**Lebanon:** In 1949 Lebanon received nearly 110,000 Palestinian refugees from the newly-created state of Israel. At the end of 2001 there were 385,000 registered refugees in Lebanon, 56% of them living in recognised camps. Lebanon does not give refugees civil rights. Refugees may not attend government schools or use government health services. What health and education services are available are provided by UNRWA (United Nations Works and Relief Agency). Palestinian refugees may not work in Lebanon and 40% of this community is unemployed.<sup>2</sup>

**Syria:** 28% of the 396,000 registered refugees in Syria live in refugee camps. Syria grants Palestinian refugees all the rights of a citizen except the right to vote. Health and education services are provided by UNRWA. In addition, Palestinian refugees may use government health and education services. Many Palestinian youth attend university in Damascus and Aleppo.

Discrimination is more discretionary than embodied in legislation.

**Jordan:** Jordan has the largest number of exiled Palestinians. The 1,662,000 refugees registered with UNRWA make up about 34% of the entire population. 18% of them live in camps. The Palestinian population of Jordan has grown internally and through successive waves of forced migration. Health and education services are provided by UNRWA but access to government schools and health services is also possible.

Jordan is the only Arab country which provides citizenship rights to some Palestinian refugees.

**West Bank and Gaza:** The West Bank has a population of about 1.9 million Palestinians of which 31.5% are refugees, 27% of whom live in camps. In Gaza the 865,000 refugees comprise 81.8% of the total population. 54% of registered refugees live in camps. Most health and education services are provided by UNRWA. Most employment is within the Gaza strip, in government or UNRWA schools, or in agriculture. Prior to the current *intifada*, some had employment in Israel.

## Findings

The research was conducted in two phases: a community-level Participatory Research Approach (PRA) and a household sub-sample of 20 households in each site. Research tools used for gathering data included: collection of narratives and life histories, with a focus on critical incidents, from children and adults of different generations within the same households; semi-structured interviews with key informants; group interviews with men, women and children in homes and in schools; and participant observation.

Certain themes were repeated time and again, including constructed memories of life in Palestine, knowledge of the *Nakba* (Catastrophe) which led to the expulsion of the Palestinian refugees from formerly British-mandated Palestine, a



*Palestinian boy receives a daily meal from UNRWA, Dheishah refugee camp, West Bank.*



consciousness of Palestinian identity, a sense of discrimination and an awareness of gender biases within the community

#### a) Life in Palestine

The first generation (grandparents) of refugees have orally reconstructed life in Palestine before 1948 and this imagery is crucial in the transmission to the children and adolescents of the 'fact' of Palestine, the experience of security and agrarian happiness prior to the community's up-rooting, expulsion and refuge.

*"We were shepherds, we ploughed and harvested, threshed and picked olives... we didn't plant grapes, we planted barley, corn and wheat, God blessed these three seeds. There was milk, yoghurt, oil and cheese ... I was tutored by a person who used to receive an amount of corn or wheat in return for teaching me."* (First generation male.)

#### b) Al Nakba

Memories of the journey into exile appear in the narratives and life histories of all the households. The older generation recalls the peasant way of life while the second and third generation focus on the 'Right of Return' or what some call the 'Dream of Return'. Occasionally, the grandparents in the household talked about their actual flight from Palestine for the first time. For the children and grandchildren, this was a moving lesson in the fears which the older generation had faced and had been too ashamed to admit to before. Many spoke of the fears they had had for their lives, facing superior military might with, at times, only a few old rifles in the entire village.

*"I was 20 years old ... At 10 o'clock Jews entered and occupied the village. They used to threaten us that they would shoot us if we stayed. ... people went to the Red Cross and asked to leave because Jews wanted to kill us and there was no security... My family left every thing behind, they only carried some blankets on two donkeys."* (First generation female.)

#### c) Palestinian identity

Palestinian identity, we found, is consciously reconstructed, for example through popular story telling and oral memory. It is also supported by

external factors - host government policy - which heighten the sense of 'otherness'. This historical consciousness appears to be waning as the younger generations learn less about their past.

*"My grandmother tells me about Palestine, she is like a dictionary, she has many stories to tell about Palestine... I wish I could visit Palestine..."* (Third generation male, 17 years old.)

#### d) Sense of discrimination

The sense of facing discrimination varied significantly from country to country. Although reported in all interviews, this sense of otherness and marginalisation was expressed most strongly in Lebanon where parents spoke of the denial of their civil rights by the Lebanese government and children and youth expressed their sense of isolation and discrimination. Although in Syria most civil rights are granted to Palestinian refugees, there is, nevertheless, a sense of otherness.

*"Many people from the outside think we are terrible and we are all bad. They call us 'mukhawaymjiyyeh' [campers]. Even my sister's family who live in Zarqa, they say that people in the camp are garbage, good for nothing, cows, etc."* (Third generation male, 13 years old.)

Within this broad theme of discrimination we heard many views and statements about life in refugee camps. It was impossible to isolate certain issues such as overcrowding, violence, close kin relations and early marriage from the general 'culture of poverty' and the absence of alternative institutions to support individuals.

*"Over-crowdedness makes us very close to each other... When a problem occurs we hear the shouting at their houses. The most important problem is the narrowness of the place. Children can't play. People ask their neighbours to keep their children home"* (Second generation female.)

*"Our moral losses are greater than our material losses. When I was a young man I had the ambition of establishing an educated family but I was not able to do much for my children because of war and displacement. We were displaced five to six times and every time*

*we lost everything and had to start again"*. (Second generation male.)

#### e) Gender bias

Domestic violence and discrimination against females at home and at school were widely reported. Much of this violence is structural and institutionalised. Early marriage is sometimes used by girls as a way of escaping family or male tyranny and at other times it is forced upon them in order to improve their family's physical, economic or social situation.

*"A suitor came for my sister. My mother is the one who forced her to marry, not my father... She was the first in school, but my mother insisted she get married. The first suitor who came she forced her to marry him. ... My sister was fifteen when she married."* (Third generation female, 14 years old.)

*"There are differences between my thinking and my parents'. When I am bored I like to go out of the house but my mum prefers me at home. I can see the discrimination between boys and girls - boys can spend 24 hours outside the house but we stay home. It is true that it is better for girls to stay home but it is boring..."* (Third generation female.)

#### Themes and concerns raised by Palestinian adolescents

Foremost among the themes which emerged across all five field sites were young people's concern about their identity as Palestinians, refugees, camp residents and Moslems or Christians. The transmission of Palestinian identity remains important. The presence in many extended family homes of 'Generation 1' individuals is considered crucial. 'Generation 2' is less well-informed about Palestine and 'Generation 3' knows even less - generally the village of origin's name but nothing more specific. In Jordan, naturalisation policy has created a split population where the middle classes are often well-integrated into Jordanian society while the lower classes identify more with the general Palestinian refugee population. In Syria, Palestinian refugees tend to intermarry with the refugee camp population. This appears to be tied to the widespread feeling of discrimination as refugees among host country populations. Education also emerged as an important theme throughout, though the

push to gain higher education was treated with reluctance by some because of the very limited opportunities for gaining a university education (especially in Lebanon). Furthermore there was a growing perception that there was a scarcity of jobs available to Palestinians and that pay was low. These factors were seen to discourage greater numbers of adolescents from continuing in school. In some field sites, places in UNRWA schools were highly sought (Lebanon); in others they were spurned (Jordan).

Overall, adolescents were concerned with the quality of their education, the limited and overcrowded educational facilities, the limited capacity for vocational training, the absence of physical education, the shortage of libraries and computer laboratories, the limited playing areas and the very slim opportunities for gaining a university education.

A distorted and unclear perception of Palestinian history emerged from many of the interviews. There was a tendency to confuse dates and names of political rulers. Furthermore, the interval between 1967 and 1990 seemed to elicit no sense of any occurrence of importance to Palestinians. This is directly related to the lack of any Palestinian curriculum in the UNRWA schools in all five field sites. Until recently, UNRWA schools had to follow the national curriculum and hence the interpretation of the history of the host country. Recently, international pressure has resulted in some effort to teach Palestinian history alongside Lebanese history in UNRWA schools in Lebanon.

Most Palestinian youth considered emigration a viable option to improve their lives, reflecting loss of confidence in a just settlement of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It was only in the Syrian data that emigration did not emerge as a major theme, perhaps because of a greater sense of solidarity with the rest of the host population's sense of hopelessness. Family solidarity was still regarded as important and most youth talked about making sacrifices for the sake of family members.

The sense of gender discrimination among adolescent girls emerged in most of the field reports. Girls complained that they faced restricted movement and freedom of expression,



Jorgen Schytte/Still Pictures

*Young Palestinian with eye injury inflicted by Israeli military after the boy was caught throwing stones at soldiers, Gaza.*

were given heavy workloads at home, and were expected to let educational opportunities go first to their brothers. Early or 'arranged' marriages were reported to be still widespread.

Violence in schools and in the home, as well as gender-related abuse, was reported but it was difficult to determine whether this is on the rise or a persistent long-term problem. Abuse at home – verbal, physical and psychological – seemed to persist, with fathers abusing wives, parents abusing children, and boys abusing girls. Each generation discussed the tradition of beating as punishment in school and at home in order to control unsocial behaviour or to force girls into accepting decisions made on their behalf by their elders. These behavioural traits are accepted as part of tradition, though increasingly abhorred by youth.

Nearly all children and adolescents taking part in the study complained about overcrowding and the lack of privacy and green space. They discussed the overcrowded camps, the poor sanitation and lack of public services and the non-existence of public libraries, playing areas or clubs where girls could meet. The only public spaces outside the home were the street and the alleyways between buildings.

Political activism of youth, both girls and boys, was widespread and a source of prestige among their peers.

This active participation in political events has emerged as a major coping mechanism, giving youth a sense of hope, if not choice, in determining their future.

### What next?

Palestinian children and adolescents are active, politically aware individuals who have taken up the burden of looking after themselves and their families. They recognise the gross inequalities and lack of infrastructure, opportunities and rights which they have inherited. They cope by dropping out of school, seeking employment or entering into early marriage. They rely on the support of their families and community relations, and they find solace in religion and political activism.

Programming and policy-making on their behalf should start with their input. Unfortunately, however, many programmes and humanitarian aid packages for adolescents are created and initiated far from the field. Programmes are often recognised by local workers as not entirely suitable; much effort is then made at local levels to modify and 'tailor' such projects. During our period of study we observed and supported the efforts which one national office made to repackage 'a good parenting' programme for Palestinian families into something which would be found useful by the community. Eventually, social workers and a liaison team set

up a 'safe marriage' programme for adolescents out of the original materials. NGOs and donors need to draw young people into the whole process of planning, designing and implementing projects for their benefit. We would strongly encourage the reversing of current relationships between international organisations and the local communities so that programmes are culturally sensitive and shaped by local priorities.

In the context of Palestinian refugee children and young peoples, we strongly recommend listening to their concerns expressed in this study. This should include creating spaces for children and youth to express themselves physically through playgrounds and centres (especially for girls) and supporting public libraries and computer and cultural centres. Palestinian history needs to be promoted through formal and informal education. Given the high value placed on education in Palestinian society, family-school dialogue is needed to address problems of adolescent violence. Finally, we would recommend international programmes to bring together refugee children from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank in order to meet, share experiences and strengthen their ties with one another's communities.

**Dawn Chatty is Deputy Director of the Refugee Studies Centre. Email: dawn.chatty@qeh.ox.ac.uk. This project on Children and Adolescents is funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation. The full text of the Lessons Learned report is available on the RSC website at: [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/lessonslearned.htm](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/lessonslearned.htm)**

1. The project's five Palestinian research teams were overseen by the author in the case of the teams working in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Teams working in the West Bank and Gaza were supervised by Professor Gillian Hundt, School of Health and Social Studies, University of Warwick. Local Research Team Leaders were: Dr A Thabet, Gaza Health Services Research Centre (Gaza); Dr S Al Zaroo, Ministry of Labour, Palestinian National Authority (West Bank); Dr R Farah, CERMOJ (Jordan); Dr B Serhan, Welfare Association (Lebanon); Dr A Abdul Rahim, Union of Palestinian Women (Syria).

2. For more information, see *Grim prospects for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon*, FMR11, pp40-41.

# Addressing the protection gap: the Framework for Consultation on IDPs in Burundi

by Tullio Santini

*The Permanent Framework for Consultation on the Protection of IDPs was launched in February 2001 by the government of Burundi and the UN Country Team, with the involvement of national and international NGOs.*

This initiative, created to address the longstanding issue of protection for the more than 400,000 IDPs in Burundi, has been valuable in providing a permanent institutional forum for dialogue and information exchange on key protection and access issues. The Framework also constitutes a significant step forward in the process of strengthening the status - as well as proving the operational potential - of the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.<sup>1</sup>

## Background

Over the last few years, several studies and reports have emphasised the gravity of the displacement crisis in Burundi and called on relevant actors to redouble their efforts to meet the protection needs of the internally displaced.<sup>2</sup> They have demonstrated, in particular, that the 'protection gap' is attributable to a complex combination of factors: persistent insecurity in most provinces, which has resulted in precarious and intermittent humanitarian access; widespread disregard of civilians' fundamental rights by all warring parties; limited commitment displayed by both central and local authorities to effectively address the needs (particularly in terms of protection) of the displaced populations; insufficient operational capacity of key protection actors; and lack of a field-based, integrated strategic approach to protection by the UN and other members of the humanitarian community. As a consequence, moni-

toring, reporting and protection activities for IDPs have been neither coherent nor systematic, thereby hampering the 'protection capacity' of the humanitarian community.<sup>3</sup>

The mission of the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement to Burundi, led by the UN Special Coordinator on Internal Displacement in December 2000, provided valuable inputs to the search for a comprehensive approach to the protection dimension of the IDP crisis and resulted in a number of recommendations.<sup>4</sup> The mission, in particular, urged the establishment of an "Ad Hoc Committee on Protection of IDPs, possibly under the overall leadership of the Minister for Human Rights, and comprised of relevant governmental authorities, UN agencies, local and international NGOs and other international organisations, serviced by OCHA". The Committee should be "a forum for discussion and collaboration on issues relating to the provision of protection to displaced persons, including issues of access and follow-up on specific violations".

Consultations with key stakeholders ensued, leading eventually to the endorsement of the initiative, the creation of a drafting committee and, finally, the adoption in February 2001 of a Protocol (jointly signed by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the Burundian Minister for Human Rights) establishing a Permanent Framework for Consultation on the Protection of IDPs.<sup>5</sup>

## Mandate and composition of the Framework

The main elements of the Framework's mandate are to:

- ensure a permanent consultation between the Burundian government and aid agencies on issues pertaining to the protection of IDPs and the adoption of preventive measures
- create rapid intervention mechanisms (including joint field missions) to address all issues regarding access to and protection of IDPs
- launch and support all necessary initiatives to improve the effectiveness of existing structures for IDP protection
- monitor possible violations of human rights and humanitarian law in IDP camps and ensure that relevant follow-up actions are taken
- disseminate the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

There are two main levels for consultation: a High-Level Committee for the Protection of IDPs and a Follow-Up Technical Group (FTG). Both include representatives of the Burundian government, UN agencies and international and national NGOs.<sup>6</sup>

The FTG is responsible for executing the recommendations of the High-Level Committee. The Protocol also authorised the Chairperson of the FTG (the President of the Governmental Commission on Human Rights) to receive any complaint or report related to the protection of IDPs, activate existing governmental structures in order to address such cases, and inform the FTG in a timely manner of any measure taken.

In the Protocol's Preamble, the Parties acknowledge that "the Government of Burundi and the international community are bound by the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", an important recognition of the authoritative character of the Principles.

### Operational developments

#### i. The Monitoring Committee on the return of IDPs to Bujumbura

In the aftermath of the displacement crisis that occurred in the capital Bujumbura in February-March 2001,<sup>6</sup>



*IDPs find shelter in Bujumbura, Burundi*

a joint Government-UN-NGOs Follow-Up Committee was established to monitor the return of the IDPs to their homes. This provided the first instance of the Framework's operational potential. The role of this Committee was to closely monitor the return of those IDPs, with a view to assessing the authorities' compliance with the Guiding Principles and submitting daily reports to the Chair and Co-Chair of the Framework. The adoption of the Guiding Principles as a benchmark to assess the authorities' management of the return process - as well as the performance of the relief community - constituted the first example of concrete use of the Principles as a working tool by humanitarian and human rights actors in Burundi.

In March and April 2001, the Committee conducted daily visits to

the neighbourhoods affected by the displacement crisis, interviewed numerous IDPs, discussed key issues with local authorities and gradually expanded its activities to neighbouring areas. The periodic visits by the Committee helped reassure the formerly displaced populations and provided them with an additional, indirect safeguard that encouraged them to return.

By nurturing a daily, confidential dialogue with the authorities, the Committee was also able to achieve tangible results: minimising the consequences of loss of identity documents by many IDPs; denouncing the forced eviction of IDPs from certain sites in the capital (thus deterring further evictions); identifying cases of extortion by soldiers and/or local authorities from returning IDPs (the Committee successfully requested

the replacement of the military battalion responsible); reporting the urgent need for distribution of relief items for the most vulnerable among the returnees; advocating for the returnees' access to their cultivated land; reporting the need for awareness campaigns and clearing activities with regard to unexploded ordnance; and advocating for the population's liberty of movement in the previously contested neighbourhoods.

## ii. The Follow-Up Technical Group

The FTG holds regular weekly meetings. While in principle the High-Level Committee meets every month, it has increasingly delegated most of its function to the FTG. The FTG has decided to focus on a few key areas: conducting regular field visits and preparing reports on the situation of IDPs in displacement affected provinces; promoting the dissemination of the Guiding Principles and sensitising civil and military authorities to IDPs' protection needs; addressing concrete access and protection issues (especially in the highly sensitive province of Bujumbura Rural); and intensifying advocacy efforts on the plight of IDPs in Burundi.

intermittent commitment of key Burundian government actors and failure to convey Framework recommendations to local civil and military authorities;<sup>7</sup> initially uncertain engagement by some members (a reflection of the peculiar position of IDPs *vis-à-vis* the individual mandates of relief agencies), which meant that some key responsibilities were initially taken on by actors that were not ideally placed to play a strong protection role; limited availability of policy guidance on the matter; initial tendency to focus on procedural issues rather than on taking concrete actions to address problems; and insufficient definition of the precise relationship of the Framework with existing governmental structures dealing with IDPs (particularly the Governmental Commission on Human Rights).

## ii. Strategic potential

Despite these constraints (some of them attributable to the difficulties of launching a new initiative), early results seem to indicate that the Framework has the potential to evolve into a dynamic and effective tool for use in defusing crises or addressing problems before they escalate. This 'strategic' potential is based on a

number of factors characterising the Framework.

First of all, it is worth underscoring the public acknowledgment by the Government of Burundi of the 'binding' character of the Guiding Principles; this may eventually (and hopefully) lead to some

form of integration of the Principles themselves in the national legislation.

Secondly, the very existence - in such a challenging context - of a joint forum in which civil and military authorities are engaged in a constant dialogue regarding sensitive protection issues represents a significant achievement. Furthermore, this forum offers a strategic tool for the pursuit of more robust advocacy on behalf of the IDPs, particularly as far as the

prevention of human rights abuses is concerned.

In addition, the broad scope of the Framework's mission has already allowed participants to table a significant range of issues that go beyond the protection of IDPs *per se*, such as the safe and unhindered access for aid workers to civilians in need, the prolonged military occupation of health centres, the use of child soldiers and the situation of the Batwa minority. A relatively open mandate may be a useful asset in a scenario as complex as the one prevailing in Burundi.

The sensitisation of local administrators to general humanitarian principles, coupled with the dissemination of the Guiding Principles, is compelling local authorities to recognise their primary responsibilities towards IDPs. This programme of dissemination could (and should) in the future be expanded to include members of the security forces at all levels. The visits to the Provinces undertaken by the FTG have also resulted in considerable improvement of the (so far insufficient) quantitative and qualitative information available on the situation of IDPs.

Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, the dialogue and mutual confidence developed within the Framework may be instrumental in facilitating the timely response to access and protection issues. This has been proved, early this year, by the re-establishment of access to an area in Bujumbura Rural that had been declared 'off limits' by the authorities, on security grounds, for 18 months. Furthermore, at the end of May, the mobilisation of the High-Level Committee made it possible for aid agencies to obtain access to more than 30,000 civilians who had been forcibly relocated in Ruyigi province, provide them with emergency assistance and urge the authorities to redress widely reported human rights abuses.<sup>8</sup>

*Reconciliation puppet play in school supported by UNICEF, Bujumbura*



## Observations

### i. Constraints

During the first 17 months of the Framework's existence, its effectiveness has been undeniably affected by a range of constraints: lack of 'dedicated' human and financial resources; the broadness of its mandate; the unprecedented nature of the initiative and the members' limited expertise on IDP protection-related issues; the

## Conclusion

The creation of the Framework constitutes a valuable example of implementation of the Guiding Principles, which - if fully exploited - could contribute significantly to the search for new and more creative ways of addressing the protection needs of the internally displaced.

The UN Commission on Human Rights welcomed, in this year's resolution on Burundi, the establishment of the Framework. Key humanitarian donors also expressed strong support for the initiative and an active interest in following and supporting its activities.

A significant step to addressing the Framework's lack of dedicated resources was taken when UNDP, on behalf of all actors involved in preparing the 2002 Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for Burundi, submitted a project proposal for \$500,000 to provide the Framework with the operational capacity needed to implement its mandate. The availability of resources is essential to allow the Framework to develop a comprehensive, long-term plan of action and focus on sensitisation and capacity-building initiatives. In this respect, it is encouraging to learn of a significant contribution recently pledged by the US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance.

The effectiveness of the initiative, at least in the short term, will depend on the will and capacity of its stakeholders to attract the concrete support of

donors, mobilise the attention of national and international media, develop clear and realistic priorities for action and firmly assert the role of the Framework in moulding the institutional changes that the ongoing transition period will inevitably produce.

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1. [www.reliefweb.int/ocha\\_ol/pub/idp\\_gp/idp.html](http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/idp_gp/idp.html)
2. See, for example, US Committee for Refugees 'Burundi: A Patchwork of Displacement', in R Cohen & F Deng (eds) *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced*, Brookings Institution, 1998; Global IDP Database, *Burundi*, [www.idpproject.org](http://www.idpproject.org), May 2002; Report of the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on IDPs, E/CN.4/2001/5/Add.1, 6 March 2000; the latest reports or notes submitted by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi (E/CN.4/2001/44, 19 March 2001; E/CN.4/2002/49, 7 March 2002).

3. As outlined for example in *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, IASC Policy Paper Series, no 2, 2000.
4. *Mission to Burundi: Findings and Recommendations of the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement*, December 2000 (available at [www.reliefweb.int/idp/docs/reports.htm](http://www.reliefweb.int/idp/docs/reports.htm)).
5. *Protocole relative à la création d'un cadre permanent de concertation pour la protection des personnes déplacées*, 7 February 2001. On file with the author.
6. The Framework's membership includes: the Minister of Human Rights (Chair), the President of the Governmental Commission on Human Rights, the Ministers of Defence, Interior, Reinsertion and Reintegration of IDPs and Returnees; the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, UNHCR, OHCHR, OCHA and UNICEF (FTG only); the delegates of RESO (international NGO network) and ITEKA (Burundian Human Rights League). The ICRC declined the invitation to formally join the initiative.
7. In the second half of February 2001, a rebel attack on the outskirts of Bujumbura, followed by the rapid intervention of the army, led to the displacement of some 54,000 civilians into various areas of the capital. The situation started to normalise after more than two weeks, once the army had regained control of the disputed neighbourhoods.
8. In addition, the installation of the Transitional Government in November 2001 resulted in the departure of the Minister of Human Rights and other Ministers represented in the Framework. This sudden change in the chairmanship (and in the membership) constitutes an additional challenge for the initiative.
9. Human Rights Watch *Burundi: Government Forcibly Displaces Civilians*, 4 June 2002.

## Refugee health, research and policy: a case study from a London health authority

by Andrew Vallely and Catherine Scott

Recent years have seen considerable research into the health and social welfare needs of disadvantaged populations, including refugees and asylum seekers. Developing appropriate national and local-level policy in the UK to address these needs has lagged behind. Recent research on behalf of the Welsh Refugee Council, for example, concluded that service provision for refugees in Wales could be understood only in terms of three cultures: "ignorance, disbelief and denial". In many areas of London, refugee health services - provided through combinations of statutory and voluntary sector agencies - have been poorly funded and resourced and not been tailored to the needs of refugees. Croydon Health Authority in South West London conducted a health needs assessment among local

refugee communities in 1999. The research was conducted in response to increasing concerns among local interest groups, politicians and the statutory services that the number of refugees in Croydon was rising and that health needs in this vulnerable population were poorly defined and perhaps largely going unmet. Ultimately, the work was used to develop an action plan to tackle local health inequality and became an important theme within the Croydon Health Improvement Plan 1999-2002.

At the end of this process we wanted to explore the influence of our research on local policy:

- Was our research influential in its own right or simply because it was carried out in the right place, at the right time?
- How important was the process by which research was carried out

compared to the research findings themselves?

- What lessons are there for other researchers and advocates of refugee health?

### Right place, right time?

There was growing awareness of the need to quantify and prioritise refugee health needs in London and in Croydon. In early 1998, the Health of Londoners Project (HoLP) decided to assess the health needs of refugees living in London. Croydon Health Authority became aware of increased public concern regarding the number of refugees living locally and was asked to provide information on refugee health by Croydon Council. This favourable local environment was complemented by the commitment of the newly-elected Labour government to tackle health and social inequality. New emphasis on partnership with



local stakeholders helped ensure our research found a receptive audience.

The war in Kosovo focused attention on refugees and refugee health issues. Airlifts of civilian casualties to Britain in April 1999 led the Department of Health to recommend that all local authorities and health authorities collaborate in developing emergency contingency plans. Research previously conducted by health authorities, NGOs and others was circulated via an electronic public health network. At local level we were encouraged to build on local partnerships formed during our participatory research and to discuss our research findings more widely. Prior to the Kosovo crisis negative articles in the local media about Roma refugees from the Czech Republic were followed by reports of vandalism at refugee community centres. Kosovo helped promote more balanced media coverage of issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers. Local journalists became interested in our work and we provided background information for a number of articles. Media attention raised awareness among local health staff and policy makers, many of whom were previously reluctant to discuss these issues.

### Content or process?

The broad focus of much UK-based research in refugee health has made it difficult for policy makers to apply study findings at local level. Research has tended to focus on broad issues common to many refugee communities. It has been difficult for health authorities to prioritise different refugee health needs because the Home Office is unable to provide demographic data at local authority level detailing the total numbers of resident refugee populations or their country of origin, age, gender or household composition.

Our research clarified refugee health and welfare needs at local level and presented findings in a way that was clear to those making policy decisions. By comparing data from a variety of sources, we were able for the first time to provide policy makers with reliable demographic estimates. Recommendations and priorities for local action were put forward that recognised existing priorities and the capacity of local health and social services. We realised that ideas perceived both as locally acceptable and attractive in terms of capital

investment were more likely to be incorporated into policy.

The content of our research and the way it was presented seems to have been an important factor in promoting our recommendations into policy but what of the research process? We used participatory methods that facilitated joint working practices, sharing of information and local ownership of research findings. Many areas for future policy and service development, such as the training of peer-educators, were highlighted. Local refugee interest groups played an essential role as key informants and participants in the rapid appraisal. Their recommendations were included in the Croydon Health Improvement Plan and used to inform models for local primary care development. The action-orientated nature of the research process helped consolidate a network of local organisations and facilitated the development of a multi-agency planning group to take forward key recommendations such as developing bilingual health advocacy services.

During the process of collecting, verifying and comparing data, informal networks were established between the Health Authority, Community National Health Service Trust and the Local Authority Housing and Social Services Departments. Regular progress updates and wide-ranging consultation prior to the publication of a final report kept stakeholders and policy makers involved, fostered a sense of ownership of the research findings and built support for later policy development work.

### Lessons learned?

Our research was used to prioritise refugee health within the local public health context and to select key issues for consideration whilst rejecting others. Some of our influence seems to have simply been a case of right place, right time: broad political and policy factors were favourable. The way in which we presented our findings and the methods we used were also significant.

Being aware and taking advantage of favourable factors that promote the incorporation of research into local policy is important. Advocates of policy change for refugee health should not rely on research findings alone to influence public health policy and action at local level.

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1. V Robinson 'Cultures of ignorance, disbelief and denial: refugees in Wales', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 12(1), pp78-87.

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# update

UNHCR/Jesuit Refugee Service

## Britain failing to meet needs of disabled refugees

A new report from the University of York shows that the presence of disabled people in refugee and asylum-seeking communities in Britain is overlooked, their needs are largely unmet and agencies are uncoordinated and confused about their responsibilities. The government's policy of dispersing asylum seekers around the UK is making the lives of already marginalised disabled refugees even worse.

There is no official source of data on the prevalence of impairments and chronic illness amongst refugees and asylum seekers in Britain. However, refugee community groups and disabled people's organisations interviewed for the research identified 5,312 disabled refugees or asylum seekers known to them. Between 3 and 10% of the refugee population in the UK are thought to have a disability. Many have physical impairments resulting from torture, land mines and bullets. Many have multiple impairments (both physical impairments and mental health difficulties).

Unmet personal care needs, unsuitable housing and a lack of aids and equipment are commonplace. Disabled refugees lack knowledge about entitlements or how to get a community care assessment. Most workers in reception organisations also lack knowledge about disability-related entitlements open to their clients.

The researchers call for collection of impairment-related data and its inclusion in official data on refugees and asylum seekers. Staff of the National Asylum Support Service (NASA) need to receive training in disability and equality issues. Working arrangements and division of responsibilities between local authority social services departments and NASA must be overhauled. Above all, there is a need to clarify who is responsible for meeting the financial costs of providing community care services to disabled asylum seekers.

Key findings of the report are available online at: [www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/pdf/962.pdf](http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/pdf/962.pdf). *Disabled people in refugee and asylum*

*seeking communities* by Keri Roberts and Jennifer Harris is published for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by The Policy Press. ISBN 1 86134 479 1. £11.95. Marston Book Services, PO Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4YN, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1235 465500. Fax: +44 (0)1235 465556. Email: [direct.orders@marston.co.uk](mailto:direct.orders@marston.co.uk).

## Sudanese hopes for peace derailed?

The war in southern Sudan, increasingly fuelled by a struggle for key resources such as oil, has pitted the Arab- and Muslim-dominated north against the mainly animist and Christian south since 1983. In July the peacekeeping initiatives of the Intergovernment Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional grouping of states in the Horn and Eastern Africa (see FMR11 pp37-38), unexpectedly raised the hopes of Sudan's estimated four million IDPs. Amid considerable international scepticism, IGAD convened in Kampala the first-ever meeting between the Sudanese President, Omer Al-Bashir, and John Garang, the leader of the main Southern opposition, SPLA. Both sides signed up to the Machakos Protocol which outlines a broad framework for the peoples of southern Sudan to choose between peaceful secession or regional autonomy.

Negotiations in the Kenyan city of Machakos proved short-lived. Differences over the relations between religion and the state, the proposed structure of an interim government and the geographical boundary between northern and southern Sudan could not be resolved and Khartoum ordered its negotiators home on 2 September, the day after the SPLA captured the strategic garrison town of Torit. The UN estimates that around 100,000 people have been displaced by renewed fighting and resumption of Sudanese government bombing.

A detailed report from the International Crisis Group analyses the competing tendencies towards war and peace bedeviling both the SPLA and the Sudanese government and makes recommendations for more active international mediation at:

[www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=778](http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=778). For latest news from Sudan, see: [www.sudan.net/news/news.html](http://www.sudan.net/news/news.html) www.sudan.net and the Sudan section of ReliefWeb [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).

## US refugee admissions reach historic low

Security checks imposed in the aftermath of 11 September have resulted in a dramatic acceleration of the existing trend to reduce the number of refugees admitted to the United States. Tens of thousands of people authorised for entry remain in perilous limbo around the world.

The US has been far and away the most prominent of a small group of countries (primarily Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Sweden) which have a regular annual quota agreed with UNHCR for resettling refugees. The number of resettled refugees peaked during the first Bush administration in the early 1990s when the US admitted an annual average of 121,000 refugees. Under Clinton, admissions declined to an average of 82,000. 68,426 refugees were resettled in fiscal year 2001. In November 2001 President Bush authorised the admission to the US of 70,000 refugees in 2002. In a World Refugee Day speech on 20 June, Bush said he was proud that America is the "world's leader in accepting refugees for resettlement."

By the end of July 2002, with only two months remaining of the fiscal year, the actual number of arrivals was a mere 20,413. Refugee advocates have called on President Bush to admit more refugees in order to rescue some of those blocked by the new security restrictions. Among them are Sudanese 'Lost Boys' who fled slavery and religious persecution (see p7), Iraqi refugees who at the behest of the first President Bush turned against Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War, and Burmese fleeing ethnic cleansing at the hands of the oppressive military regime.

Refugee advocates urged the Bush Administration to raise the 2003 quota to 145,000 to compensate for the failure to meet 2002 admission targets and to restore partnership arrangements (whereby US NGOs work with the State Department to refer candidates for resettlement). They are



disappointed that at the end of September the Administration announced that 2003 quota will be between 50 and 70,000. It is unclear whether those promised but denied entry in fiscal year 2002 will be included.

The Refugee Council USA is a coalition of US NGOs focused on refugee protection. Its refugee admission recommendations for 2003 are online at: [www.refugeecouncilusa.org](http://www.refugeecouncilusa.org).

### Australian refugee policy: not for export?

Australia's right-wing government has embarked on a vigorous international campaign to promote its controversial hardline approach to asylum.<sup>1</sup> Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock used the meeting of UNHCR's Executive Committee in early October 2002 to again deliver the message that unauthorised 'secondary movements' of refugees from country to country should be prohibited.

Under a policy described by the Australian government as "the Pacific Solution", 433 refugees from the infamous MV Tampa were moved in August 2001 by the Australian Navy to the near bankrupt island of Nauru. In return, Australia paid Nauru \$30 million. Amnesty International, granted a one-off visit to Nauru before the island was closed to lawyers and journalists, argues that the Pacific Solution has been a costly experiment that has provided no answers as to how best to protect those who are fleeing human rights abuses. It argues that "the unilateral policy of the Australian government can be described as burden shifting, taking UNHCR resources away from regions where they are most needed and creating further uncertainty and hardship for individuals, many of whom have fled persecution."

Human Rights Watch has released a briefing paper accusing Australia of being on an "aggressive mission to muster international support for the Pacific Solution" which it condemns as a violation of the Refugee Convention. HRW interviews with Afghans and Iraqis seeking refuge in Australia indi-

cate that many have legitimate, protection-related reasons for doing so.

In September UNHCR told European Union Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs that UNHCR supports the creation of a new international agreement on "secondary movement." Human Rights Watch believes the UN proposal and other initiatives under development in the EU must take care not to end up mirroring the Australian approach. "When a refugee can't get effective protection in one place, he or she has every right to try to find it somewhere else," the report argues. "Australia's current refugee policies raise serious human rights concerns, including the use of interception and detention of asylum seekers at sea under 'inhuman and degrading' conditions. This sets a poor example for all coastal states, and is particularly dangerous at a time when Greece and Italy will hold the next two EU presidencies."

Human Rights Watch's report is at [www.hrw.org/press/2002/09/ausbrf0926.htm](http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/09/ausbrf0926.htm). The Australian branch of Amnesty International has fact-sheets on Australian refugee policy at: [www.amnesty.org.au/refugees/ref-factsheets.html](http://www.amnesty.org.au/refugees/ref-factsheets.html). BBC New Online examines the Pacific Solution at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/correspondent/2279330.stm>

### Palestinian children bear the brunt of Israeli clampdown

300 of the 1,600 Palestinians shot dead by Israeli soldiers since the Al Aqsa Intifada started in September 2000 have been children. Six hundred children have been arrested. B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organisation, reports that over 100 Palestinian chil-

dren under the age of 18 are held in Israeli jails, many of them tortured systematically. Imprisoned children are denied the right to education and visits from family and lawyers.

As military curfews, closures and home confinements reach unprecedented levels, more than 226,000 children have been unable to reach their regular classrooms and at least 580 schools have been closed. Many Palestinian school children are now being home-schooled or are gathering in makeshift classrooms such as mosques, basements and alleys. Even when children are able to reach school, many parents are no longer able to afford school fees due to the economic paralysis caused by Israeli restrictions on movements of people and goods.

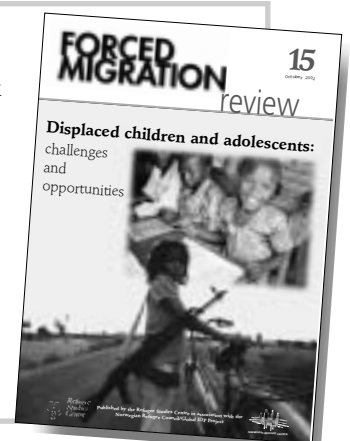
UNICEF has condemned Israel for denying Palestinian children their right to education and pointed out that Israel is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention governing the rules of war and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which it has signed.

International donors estimate that Israel's military offensive in May caused physical damage estimated at more than \$361 million. Among the facilities of the Palestinian National Authority which were systematically ransacked by the Israeli army was the Ramallah headquarters of the Education Ministry.

For a child-focused perspective on the impact of the occupation on children in the West Bank and Gaza, see: [www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye)

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UK Department for International Development  
UNICEF





[www.rsc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk)

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### RSC/UNICEF manual

RSC is collaborating with UNICEF to produce a manual for use by humanitarian workers in unstable situations such as complex emergencies and social disasters as well as natural disasters. The manual will be a compilation of material from 'The Refugee Experience' (a psychosocial manual compiled at the RSC), Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) and UNICEF field material. It is hoped that this manual will be suitable for local partners of UNICEF as well as UNICEF staff. The manual will reflect principles of good practice for working with children in unstable situations and will provide many examples of useful programme interventions. It will be available in early 2003.

For more information, email Maryanne Loughry at [maryanne.loughry@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:maryanne.loughry@qeh.ox.ac.uk) or contact her at the RSC address.

### Harrell-Bond Lecture 2002 : 5pm, 27 November at Rhodes House, South Parks Road, Oxford

Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, will give the 2002 Harrell-Bond Lecture. The subject will be 'Human trafficking and smuggling: implications for the refugee protection system'. All welcome.

For more details visit the RSC website at [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk)

### RSC receives multiple support from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation

The Refugee Studies Centre has received funding for three projects totalling £1.08 million (\$1.7m) from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation. Projects include a three-tiered study to extend our understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict and forced migration with a special emphasis on their effects on children. A second grant will fund two posts at

the RSC, strengthening its research capacity and its ability to support its established partnerships with centres in less developed countries. A third grant will provide initial support for the establishment of a new permanent Secretariat for the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration.

More information can be found in the research section of the RSC website at [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk).

## Courses

(see Courses section of RSC website)

### The Rights of Refugees Under International Law : 26-27 April 2003

This weekend seminar focuses on the specific human rights to which all refugees are entitled under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. This is a matter of increasing importance, as governments in many parts of the world are presently engaged in efforts to redefine refugees as little more than the objects of political and humanitarian discretion. As a matter of law, however, refugees are holders of a critical set of rights which they are entitled to invoke in relation to state parties to the refugee treaties. The goal of this short course is to equip policy makers, advocates and scholars with a solid understanding of the international refugee rights regime.

Instructor: Prof James C Hathaway, Director, Program in Refugee and Asylum Law, University of Michigan Law School. Fee: £130.

Contact Dominique Attala at [rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk) or at the RSC address.

### Palestinian Refugees and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights : 10-11 May 2003

This workshop places the Palestinian refugee case study within the broader context of the international human

rights regime. It examines, within a human rights framework, the policies and practices of Middle Eastern states as they impinge upon Palestinian refugees. Through a mix of lectures, working group exercises and interactive sessions, participants engage actively and critically with the contemporary debates in the human rights movement and analyse the specific context of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank, Gaza and Israel) in light of these debates.

Instructors: Dr Randa Farah (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Western Ontario, Canada) and Fiona McKay, LL.M (Deputy Director, Kurdish Human Rights Project). Fee: £100.

Contact Dominique Attala at [rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk) or at the RSC address.

### International Summer School in Forced Migration : 7-25 July 2003

The Refugee Studies Centre's three-week residential summer school is designed for upper and middle managers of intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations and government organisations and researchers involved with assistance and policy making for refugees and other forced migrants. Through lectures, group work, simulations, debates, individual study, and discussion, participants will examine contemporary responses to displacement at institutional and ground levels. Venue: Wadham College, University of Oxford. Fee: £2300.

Contact Shannon Stephen at [summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk) or at the RSC address.

## Forced Migration Online

[www.forcedmigration.org](http://www.forcedmigration.org)  
launch: November 2002



# Evaluating child protection

*Recent allegations concerning the involvement of humanitarian workers in the sexual exploitation of young people in West Africa have underlined the need for more effective approaches to the protection of refugee children.*

**A** new and independent evaluation of UNHCR's efforts in this area, commissioned by the organisation's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) a year before the allegations of sexual exploitation hit the headlines, identifies the challenges which lie ahead.

According to the evaluation, which was undertaken by a multidisciplinary and multinational team of experts, UNHCR has introduced strong policies and guidelines on the protection of refugee children. The agency has also created a specialised unit and a variety of posts which are dedicated to children's issues, established standby arrangements with agencies such as the Norwegian and Swedish chapters of Save the Children, and introduced a comprehensive follow-up strategy to the Graça Machel Study on the impact of armed conflict on children.

Despite these efforts, the report explains, UNHCR's operational performance in relation to the protection of young people continues to be inconsistent at best. As the report concludes, "children, half of the organisation's population of concern, are often overlooked and considered on the sidelines of core protection and assistance work."

## How, then, has this situation arisen?

The evaluation team, which visited nine different field operations in the course of a year-long review, acknowledges that UNHCR often works in very difficult operational environments, and that it has had to contend with chronic funding constraints. At the same time, the evaluation report sug-

gests that a number of organisational issues have impeded the effective implementation of UNHCR's policy.

**Accountability.** Previous evaluation recommendations relating to the protection of refugee children have not been utilised. While refugee children have been designated a 'policy priority', this has not always been reflected in operational terms. And too many other policy priorities compete for the attention and resources of the organisation's field offices.

**Mainstreaming.** There continues to be an assumption that UNHCR's traditional sectoral activities address the needs of refugee children. The community services and education functions, which have particular relevance to refugee children, have been undersupported. Training in child protection issues has not reached the frontline national staff who have the most regular contact with refugees.

**Protection in practice.** There is a limited understanding of the way that UNHCR can operationalise the rights of the refugee child. More situational analysis is required to identify and address the protection problems that arise in specific locations. And the social aspects of child protection, as opposed to the more familiar issues of legal and physical protection, require more systematic attention.

Addressing these constraints to the effective protection of refugee children promises to be a challenging task for UNHCR. Indeed, the evaluation presents no fewer than 43 recommendations, involving a wide range of organisational issues: policy dissemination, management account-

ability, training, capacity building, the role of specialised staff and partnership with other organisations.

The report also makes proposals for change in relation to specific aspects of child protection: the registration of refugee children, sexual violence and exploitation, formal and non-formal education, the prevention of military recruitment and the situation of unaccompanied and separated children.

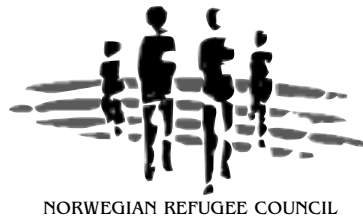
UNHCR's Senior Coordinator for Refugee Children has been undertaking a detailed review of these recommendations, which will be incorporated into a plan of action. At the same time, a senior staff member has been assigned to ensure that the agency's response to the evaluation on refugee children is effectively coordinated with its follow-up to two other important reviews: an assessment of the implementation of UNHCR's policy and guidelines on refugee women, and an independent evaluation of the community services function in UNHCR.

*EPAU will bring you further news of these initiatives in forthcoming editions of Forced Migration Review.*

1. 'Meeting the rights and protection needs of refugee children: an independent evaluation of the impact of UNHCR's activities' by Valid International, May 2002. The report can be accessed at the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Page of the UNHCR website, [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch), or can be ordered in hard copy from [hqep00@unhcr.ch](mailto:hqep00@unhcr.ch).

2. The first of these reports was undertaken by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, with support from the US and Canadian governments and EPAU. It is available at [www.womenscommission.org/reports/pdf/unhcr2002.pdf](http://www.womenscommission.org/reports/pdf/unhcr2002.pdf). The latter will be published by EPAU later in 2002.

This is a regular page of news and debate from UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU). For further information, or suggestions regarding this regular feature, contact Jeff Crisp, head of EPAU. Email [CRISP@unhcr.ch](mailto:CRISP@unhcr.ch)



NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

# INEE

## Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE)

*The NRC, a founding member of the INEE network, currently serves as the chair of the INEE Steering Group. In September 2002, NRC hosted the annual Steering Group meeting in Oslo.*

### Background to the INEE

In April 2000, at a Strategy Session on Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis at the World Education Forum in Dakar, a decision was taken to develop a process of inter-agency communication and cooperation in order to improve response to emergency education. An Inter-Agency Consultation held in Geneva in November 2000 launched this process and founded the INEE.

INEE works in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Education for All Declaration and the Dakar Framework to promote access and completion of high quality education for all persons affected by emergencies, crises or chronic instability.

### INEE objectives are to:

- advocate the inclusion of education as the fourth pillar of emergency response
- share knowledge and experience among practitioners about education in emergencies
- promote greater donor understanding and support of education in emergencies
- make teaching and learning resources widely available
- ensure attention to gender issues in emergency education initiatives
- document and disseminate best practices in the field

- move towards consensual guidelines on education in emergencies

Eighteen months after its creation, a number of INEE achievements can be highlighted:

- There are over 200 organisational members and over 100 individual members.
- A website, which serves as an advocacy tool and as an education in emergencies resource and information bank, was launched in June 2002.
- Over 450 individuals participate in an interactive email list.
- The UNHCR/INEE Peace Education Programme was launched at a workshop in March.
- A Task Team on relevant teaching materials has sent teaching kits to 150 English-speaking and 30 French-speaking recipients in the field.
- INEE has recently added the Working Group on Standards for Education in Emergencies to its group of Task Teams.

INEE's priorities for the next two years include supporting the development of standards and training for education in emergencies and lobbying donors and international decision makers in order both to promote a greater understanding of and to obtain more funding for education in emergencies and in post-crisis reconstruction.

Currently, UNESCO's Education Division in Paris hosts the INEE Secretariat.

*For further information, visit the INEE website at [www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org) or contact the INEE Network Coordinator, Beverly Roberts. Email: [b.roberts@unesco.org](mailto:b.roberts@unesco.org) or [broberts@care.org](mailto:broberts@care.org).*

### New Secretary General for the NRC



Norwegian Refugee Council 2002

*Raymond Johansen has been appointed as the new Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. He is 41 years old and leaves his duties as Norwegian Chargé d`Affaires in Asmara, Eritrea. He has been the leader of the Socialist Party of Oslo, head of the Environment and Transport Department of the Oslo City Council, Director of Information at Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.*

**visit**

[www.nrc.no/engine.htm](http://www.nrc.no/engine.htm)



# Global IDP PROJECT

## Displaced children: more information available

by Stacey White

The Global IDP Project is frequently asked for statistical information on internally displaced children. Donors, partner agencies, and academics want to know how many internally displaced children and young people there are worldwide, what their most urgent needs are and how well the humanitarian community is responding to this widely-affected and vulnerable group of displaced people.

The good news is that improved information about displaced children is now available. Since the launch of the Global IDP Database ([www.idpproject.org](http://www.idpproject.org)) in 1999, the Database has grown to include profiles on 48 differ-

ent countries, each of which contains increasingly accurate and comprehensive information on displaced children. By July 2002, there was a total of 338 'envelopes' with information on children, the bulk of which were related to children's educational needs (89 envelopes), their health and nutritional status (84) and risks to their personal security (39). In addition, there were over 70 envelopes on the international humanitarian response to the needs of IDP children. Reports on humanitarian programming generally focused on activities or planned activities designed to provide support in the above-mentioned areas.

In each region, reports tend to focus on different sets of needs. Interestingly, the countries in the Database with the most information on educational needs of IDP children were in Asia, with Indonesia, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka topping the list. The countries with the most data on nutrition and health needs were from the African continent, where Angola, DRC, Somalia and Sudan contained the greatest number of envelopes. Reports of personal security risks also featured widely in the various country profiles. Here again, information in the Database seemed to indicate that IDP children in Africa were at greatest risk with some of the most alarming reports coming out of Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda. This said, it should be noted that no geographic region under consideration in the Database is free of protection risks to children. In all five of the regions monitored, reports of rape, sexual exploitation, military recruitment and abduction figure in the different country profiles, with girls most vulnerable to abuses.

Global data on displaced children remains hard to establish. While the Database is increasingly able to collect and compile illustrative examples of general trends regarding children, either through regional assessments

or emergency bulletins, global data on the situation of IDP children in a particular country, as well as medium- and long-term data, is harder to come by. Information on the total number of children displaced as a consequence of any particular conflict remains vague at best. If global figures or statistics are available on IDP children, they are nearly always rough percentages presented in the context of the UN Consolidated Appeals (CAPs) process or other annual funding documents. At present, the majority of profiles in the Database containing global statistics on children come from UN CAPs and indicate that around 60% of IDPs in any one country are children.

Lack of high quality data is also a problem when trying to assess situations over the medium or long term. Good assessments - for example, on the nutritional or physical security situation of IDP children - may be undertaken in a given camp or region at a given time; the difficulty, however, is to make sure this information remains useful after its immediate release. Its value will be limited if released in a vacuum with no possibility for comparison or tracking over time.

Facing these challenges, the Global IDP Database has been striving to collect and compile ever better data on IDP children. We hope that, through intensified outreach to international and national organisations working with children, we will be able to provide our users with more reliable information on displaced children and, in doing so, provide a stronger basis for international advocacy and assistance work to help displaced children.

1. The country profiles of the Global IDP Database are organised by category of information (which loosely follow the structure of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, i.e. patterns of displacement, subsistence needs, physical security, etc). Each category in the Database contains subject-specific information in the form of 'envelopes'.

The **Global IDP Project** is a project of the Norwegian Refugee Council and is administered through its Geneva office.

#### Staff

**Project Coordinator:** Elisabeth Rasmusson

**Database:** Andreas Danevad

**Information Officers:** Christophe Beau, Frederick Kok, Greta Zeender, Johannes Klok, Cathy Benetti, Claudia McGoldrick

**Training & Protection:** Bjorn Pettersson,

**Publications & Advocacy:**

Andrew Lawday

**Donor Relations:** Catherine Hubert

#### Donors

Canada, Denmark, Norway, Sweden (SIDA), Switzerland, UK-DFID, ECHO, International Development and Research Centre - Canada, Norwegian Church Aid, World Vision, Save the Children UK, UN agencies and private donors.

#### Website

Visit our database on internal displacement and get more information about the Global IDP Project at:

[www.idpproject.org](http://www.idpproject.org)

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at:

#### Global IDP Project

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CH 1209 Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel: + 41 22 799 0700  
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Email: [idsurvey@nrc.ch](mailto:idsurvey@nrc.ch)

# publications

## Report on National Human Rights Commissions and Internally Displaced Persons

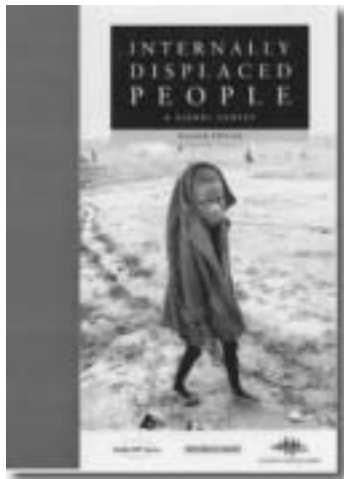
by Mario Gomez. *Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement*. July 2002. 36pp. Free.

Analyses the role, with particular reference to Sri Lanka, that national human rights commissions could play in addressing the plight of IDPs.

Contact: Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli, *Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement*, 1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20036, USA. Email: [gsanchez@brookings.edu](mailto:gsanchez@brookings.edu). Available online: [www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/articles/gomez\\_20020701.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/articles/gomez_20020701.htm).

## Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey: 2nd edition

*Global IDP Project, Norwegian Refugee Council, Geneva*. October 2002. 256pp. HB: ISBN 1853839531. PB: ISBN 1853839523.



The second, updated edition of the Global IDP Project's acclaimed overview of conflict-induced displacement has information on internal displacement in 47 different countries.

To obtain a copy, contact Andrew Lawday, *Global IDP Project*, 59 Chemin Moïse-Duboule, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland. Email: [andrew.lawday@nrc.ch](mailto:andrew.lawday@nrc.ch). Tel: +41 22 799 0703. Or contact Earthscan Publications Ltd, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN, UK.

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7278 0433.  
Fax +44 (0)20 7278 1142.  
Email: [earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk](mailto:earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk)  
Website: [www.earthscan.co.uk/howto-order.htm](http://www.earthscan.co.uk/howto-order.htm).

## The ECRE Country Report for 2001

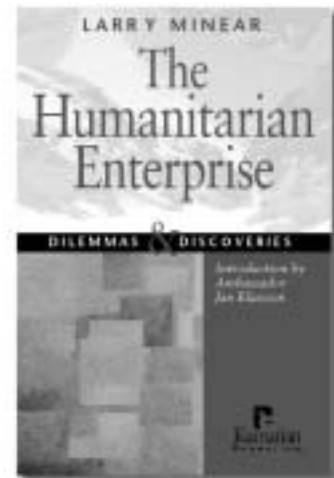
The European Council on Refugees and Exile (ECRE) 2001 country report, published September 2002, contains reports on major policy and legal developments in 2001, along with statistics on asylum applications, for 25 European countries.

The ECRE Country Report is available online at: [www.ecre.org/publications/countryrpt01.shtml](http://www.ecre.org/publications/countryrpt01.shtml). To obtain a hard copy (cost £15 including postage and packing), email [ecre@ecre.org](mailto:ecre@ecre.org) or write to:

ECRE Secretariat, Clifton Centre, Unit 22, 3rd Floor, 110 Clifton Street, London EC2A 4HT, UK.  
Tel: +44 (0)207 7295152.  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7729 5141.

## The Humanitarian Enterprise

by Larry Minear. July 2002. 304pp. HB: ISBN 1565491505 £50. PB: ISBN 156549149 £20.50.



Through the lens of the Humanitarianism and War Project, this text explores what international humanitarians - from the UN to the Red Cross and private relief and development agencies - have learned about how to do humanitarian work well and the arguments which remain unresolved.

Contact: Eurospan, 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7240 0856. Fax: +44 (0)20 7379 0609. Email: [orders@edpubs.co.uk](mailto:orders@edpubs.co.uk).

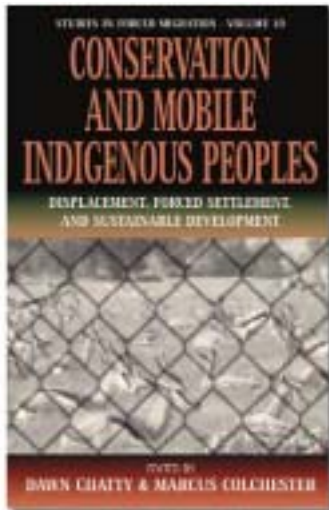
## New Issues in Refugee Research

UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) has published eight new reports. All are available online at: [www.unhcr.ch/epau](http://www.unhcr.ch/epau).

- Refugee return and state reconstruction: a comparative analysis, by Sarah Petrin
- Pastoral society and transnational refugees: population movements in Somaliland and eastern Ethiopia, by Guido Ambroso
- Refugee protection and migration management: the challenge for UNHCR, by Jeff Crisp and Damtew Dessalegne
- Humanitarian action in an age of terrorism, by Larry Minear
- Collateral coverage: media images of Afghan refugees during the 2001 emergency, by Terence Wright
- Jordan as a transit country: semi-protectionist immigration policies and their effects on Iraqi forced migrants, by Géraldine Chatelard
- Separating ex-combatants and refugees in Zonga, DRC: peacekeepers and UNHCR's 'ladder of options', by Lisa Yu
- Therapeutising refugees, pathologising populations: international psycho-social programmes in Kosovo, by Vanessa Pupavac

### Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples: Displacement, Forced Settlement and Sustainable Development

Edited by Dawn Chatty and Marcus Colchester. 2002. 432pp. HB: ISBN 1571818413 £40. PB: ISBN 1571818421 £14.80.



Case studies look at the impact of wildlife conservation projects on the lives and livelihoods of indigenous communities.

Contact: Berghahn Books,  
3 Newtec Place, Magdalen Road,  
Oxford OX4 1RE, UK.  
Email: [orders@berghahnbooks.com](mailto:orders@berghahnbooks.com).

### Guide to Health Workers Providing Care for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

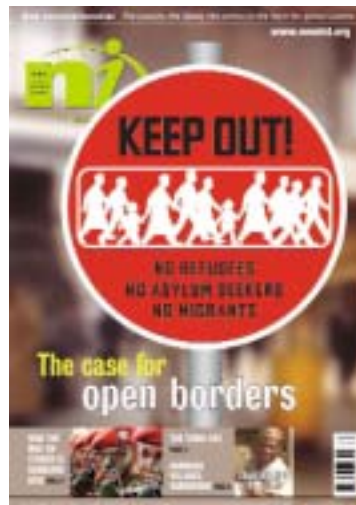
by Dr Angela Burnett. Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. 2002. 32pp.

The Medical Foundation ([www.torturecare.org.uk](http://www.torturecare.org.uk)) has published a new guide for health personnel working with refugees and asylum seekers. This guide aims to give health workers practical information in addressing the health needs of asylum seekers and refugees. As well as considering the care of victims of torture, the guide also gives information on counselling, sexual violence and the needs of women.

The guide can be downloaded at: [www.torturecare.org.uk/archivebrf/brief27.rtf](http://www.torturecare.org.uk/archivebrf/brief27.rtf) or obtained from the Medical Foundation, 96-98 Grafton Road, London NW5 3EJ, UK.  
Tel. +44 (0)20 7813 9999.  
Email: [pa@torturecare.org.uk](mailto:pa@torturecare.org.uk).

### Refugees: The Case for Open Borders

New Internationalist magazine, issue 350. October 2002.



This issue of NI includes articles looking at subjects such as the fears fuelling the debate about refugees, the call for open borders, the question of race, and the impact of 11 September on asylum seekers. It also includes different countries' records on asylum, personal stories by refugee writers, and contacts for action around the world.

Individual copy: £2.50. For 10+ copies: £1.50 each plus £1.50 total p&p. To order a copy or to enquire re annual subscription costs, contact Mary Leonard at [maryl@newint.org](mailto:maryl@newint.org) or write to her at NI, 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW, UK.  
Tel: +44 (0)1865728181.

### Sphere Handbook revision

The first edition of the Sphere handbook was launched in 2000. Since then, over 30,000 volumes have been sold and the handbook has been translated into 15 languages. In order to keep the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response relevant to humanitarian workers and to the populations affected by conflict and calamity, a revised edition of the handbook will be published in late 2003.

Comments are encouraged from national and international NGOs, UN agencies, donor governments, governments where disaster response frequently takes place, academic institutions and other humanitarian actors. Individuals from NGO and UN HQs as well as those from academic institutions will participate as reviewers to the revision.

Handbook feedback forms, the text of the first edition and additional information can be found at [www.sphereproject.org](http://www.sphereproject.org).

If you would like to publicise one of your organisation's publications or if you would like to recommend a publication for this page, please send us full details - and, preferably, a copy or cover scan. See below for our contact details.

### Nashrat Al-Hijra Al-Qasriya and Revista sobre Migraciones Forzadas

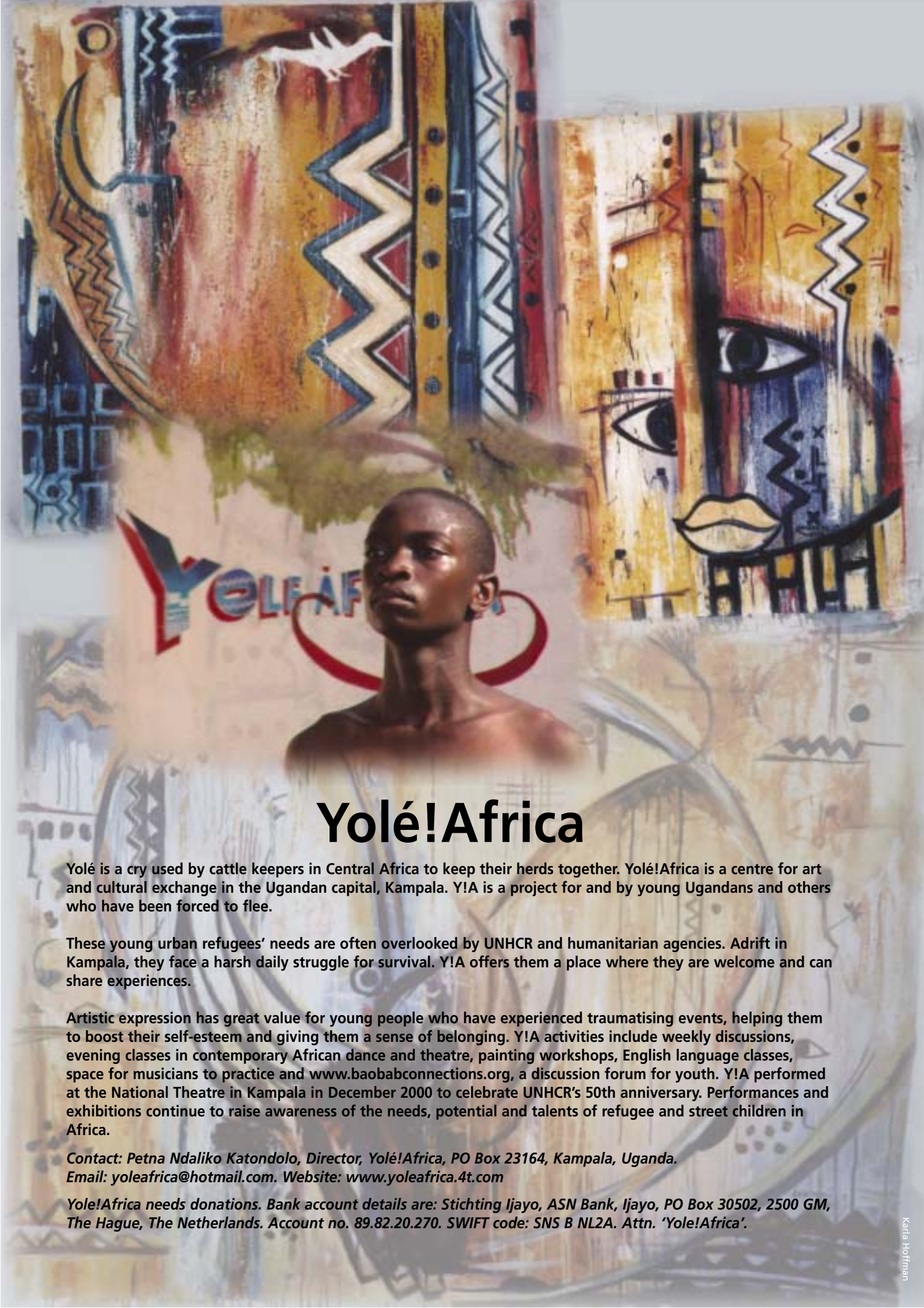
Forced Migration Review is also printed in Spanish and Arabic.

All subscriptions to the Arabic and Spanish editions are free of charge.



If you would like to receive one or the other, or if you know of others who would like to receive copies, please send us the relevant contact details. Email the Editors at [fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk) or write to us at: FMR, Refugee Studies Centre, QEH, University of Oxford, 21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, UK.





# Yolé!Africa

Yolé is a cry used by cattle keepers in Central Africa to keep their herds together. Yolé!Africa is a centre for art and cultural exchange in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. Y!A is a project for and by young Ugandans and others who have been forced to flee.

These young urban refugees' needs are often overlooked by UNHCR and humanitarian agencies. Adrift in Kampala, they face a harsh daily struggle for survival. Y!A offers them a place where they are welcome and can share experiences.

Artistic expression has great value for young people who have experienced traumatising events, helping them to boost their self-esteem and giving them a sense of belonging. Y!A activities include weekly discussions, evening classes in contemporary African dance and theatre, painting workshops, English language classes, space for musicians to practice and [www.baobabconnections.org](http://www.baobabconnections.org), a discussion forum for youth. Y!A performed at the National Theatre in Kampala in December 2000 to celebrate UNHCR's 50th anniversary. Performances and exhibitions continue to raise awareness of the needs, potential and talents of refugee and street children in Africa.

Contact: Petna Ndaliko Katondolo, Director, Yolé!Africa, PO Box 23164, Kampala, Uganda.  
Email: [yoleafrica@hotmail.com](mailto:yoleafrica@hotmail.com). Website: [www.yoleafrica.4t.com](http://www.yoleafrica.4t.com)

Yole!Africa needs donations. Bank account details are: Stichting Ijayo, ASN Bank, Ijayo, PO Box 30502, 2500 GM, The Hague, The Netherlands. Account no. 89.82.20.270. SWIFT code: SNS B NL2A. Attn. 'Yole!Africa'.