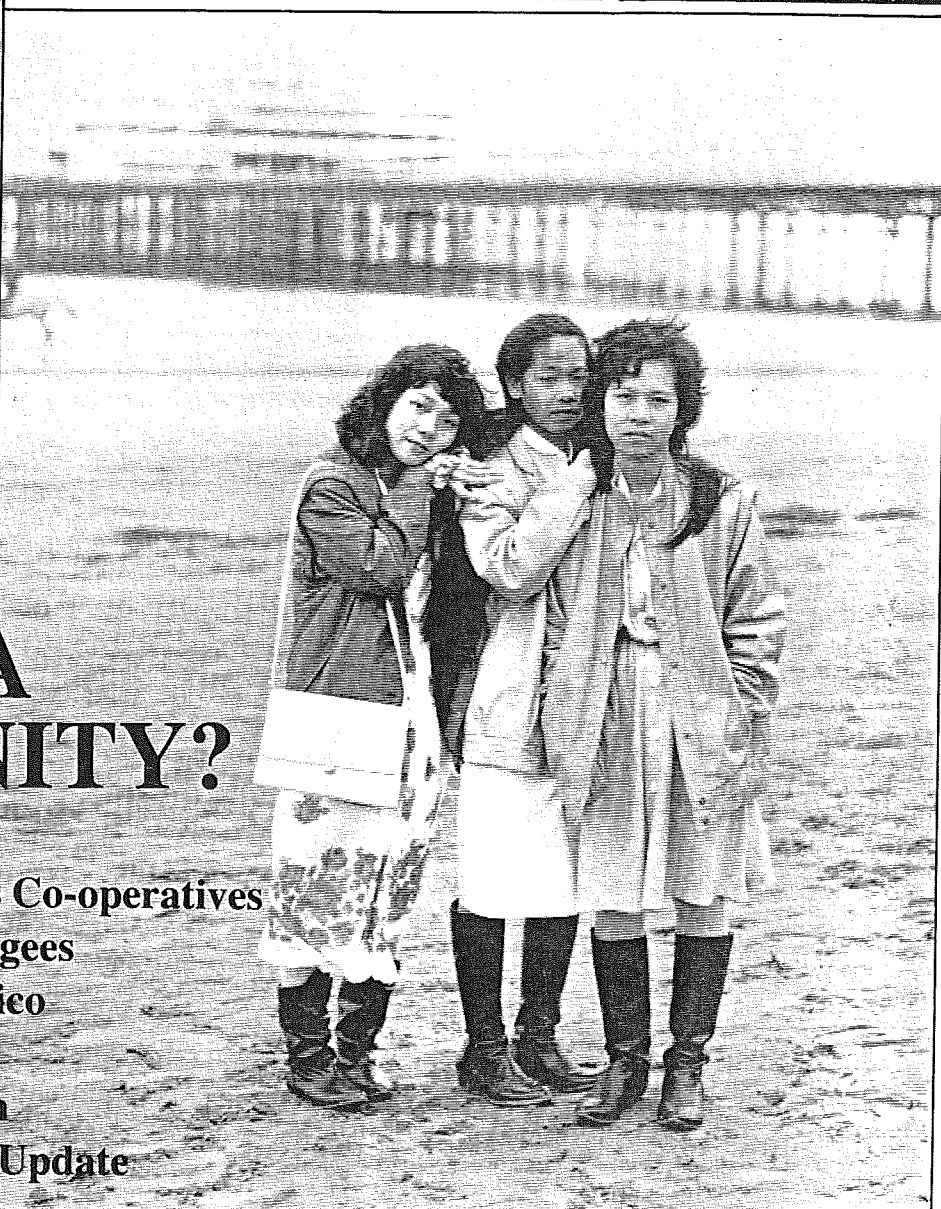
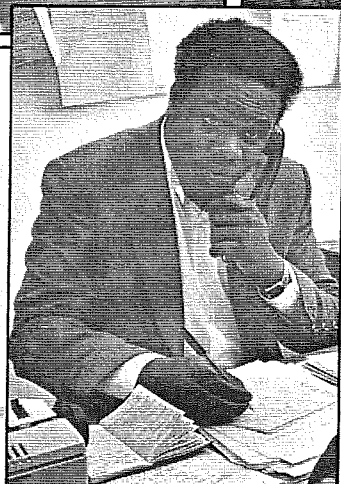
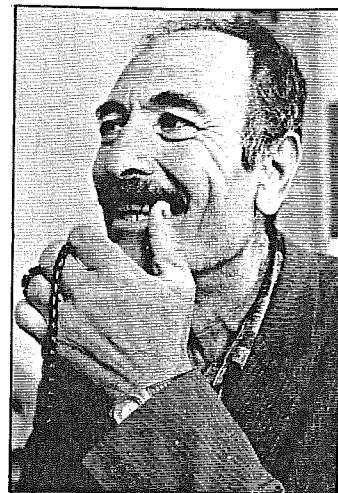


RPN REFUGEE PARTICIPATION NETWORK 6

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ARE WE A COMMUNITY?

Also in this issue:

- ★ Palestinian Women's Co-operatives
- ★ Dental Care for Refugees
- ★ Guatemalans in Mexico
- ★ Who is a Refugee?
- ★ Articles on Education
- ★ Reviews, Poetry and Update

Cover photographs by: Caroline Penn, H.J. Davies, David Hoffman/British Refugee Council; P. Deloche/UNHCR.

CONTENTS

Are we a Community?	2
Repatriation	5
★ Persisting Doubts Among Guatemalans in Mexico	
Refugee Women	9
★ Palestinian Women's Co-operatives: 'Our Production is Our Pride'	
Education	13
★ Learning from a Distance: New Opportunities in the Sudan	
★ From Counselling to Assistance: the Weakest Link?	
Health	19
★ Is Dental Care for Refugees an Expensive Luxury?	
	
Comment	22
★ Who is a Refugee? Resolving the Conflict	
Reviews	24
Poetry	29
★ South African Football	
★ Wild Boers	
Update	30
Letters	35
News from RSP	36

Are We a Community?

This is an invitation to refugees and other forced migrants both within and outside the Refugee Participation Network, regardless of race, sex and religion, to reflect together on whether we have anything in common.

First, let us see how we are regarded today by those who determine our position and conditions in host countries, and what consequences their assumptions have on our behaviour.

One general assumption in western countries of asylum, is that the refugee is an individual. His/her case is investigated and decided individually, (s)he faces a new social environment as an individual and if, on any legal basis, (s)he is allowed to stay in the country of asylum, social integration is seen as a long-term relationship between the individual refugee and the host country as a whole. This assumption favours those refugees who are unlikely to be victims of racial or sexual discrimination, such as well-educated white males who speak foreign languages. For them, close association with other refugees or forced migrants might jeopardize their image as a 'responsible' applicant for membership (citizenship) of the host country. Therefore, for many of them there is no alternative but to adopt the habits, values and lifestyle of the country of asylum and forget about other refugees who, in this scenario, are reduced to competitors in the race for social acceptance. The remaining majority is left struggling from an almost hopeless position: even if accepted as 'genuine' refugees, most have to experience isolation and unemployment, as well as disguised, or even open, expressions of racism and xenophobia.

Many refugees are able to adjust to this situation by passive withdrawal from normal social interaction, but the response of a few is aggression or even crime. It seems to become a vicious circle: some refugees are unemployed or criminals because they are not accepted by society, and yet their chances of acceptance diminish because they are unemployed or criminals. One could well ask whether this situation is desirable in a democratic society. If the answer is 'no', a sensible response should be considered.

An assumption prevalent in countries of asylum in the 'third world' is that refugees belong to a certain ethnic group, nation or tribe. They are usually fleeing from neighbouring countries in large numbers and accordingly, they are perceived as a homogenous ethnic community. They are expected to return to their country of origin, as a group, if and when the host government considers that human rights or other standards are improving there. This assumption supports the so-called traditional rulers of the fleeing group: the chiefs and elders who are supposed to be the natural leaders or representatives of the people. They are the gatekeepers through whom local government and international agencies manage the affairs of these people. Interestingly enough, Dr Harrell-Bond, Director of the Refugee Studies Programme in Oxford says: 'wherever refugees are allowed to practice democracy, they **never** elect as leaders those individuals who formerly held "traditional" authority'. In these situations refugees are kept together, their future largely dependent on the improvement or worsening of relations between their own government and the host country. Their freedom of movement and access to information are often restricted. Only in fortunate circumstances do they have, individually, a chance to improve their immediate or future position, by working within or outside the refugee camp, or by gaining access to education.

So, we see a picture emerging, in which more than 13 million people, from an enormous variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and from many parts of the world, exist in a temporary situation and with a provisional status, often for periods exceeding five years. These people are the 'WE' in the title of this article. Are we isolated individuals, belonging nowhere except to the host society, if it is ready to accept us? Or are we members of an ethnic community which has fled together to another place, assumed to be safe? Or, feeling the need to maintain our ethnic identity **and** to integrate ourselves in the normal social life of the host country, do we need a different, 'third' community to belong to? Are we all members of one multiethnic, multicultural community, geographically dispersed in the world but sharing the same concerns? What do a black South African mine worker, and a Czech woman engineer, a Chilean farmer and a Chinese student have in common if all of them become 'refugees'? Do they have needs and interests of a similar kind?

Everybody has basic needs; everybody has an interest in a safe asylum; everybody (probably) has an interest in the improvement of the situation in his/her country of origin. But these are generalities on which we cannot base any genuine or viable community, and these needs, at least in principle, can be met separately and individually. On the other hand, as long as asylum policies are restrictive, and resources for humanitarian assistance are scarce, every refugee has an interest in competing with others: for legal recognition; for health care; for financial assistance; for job opportunities. 'Look, I behave better than the others, so I deserve these!' Since these circumstances seem un-

likely to change in the foreseeable future, and since refugees cannot be expected to transform themselves overnight and abandon all rivalry, we should explore whether there is enough self-interest involved for all, or for many of us to justify multicultural co-operation. In other words, do we have any community of interest?

Last year, a group of young people from four continents, meeting in a development institute in The Hague, set up a new project: the Displaced Citizenship Programme (DCP). By doing this we were saying: yes, we do have a community of interest with other refugees and forced migrants. Going even further we said: the recognition and realization of this multicultural community is not only in the interests of refugees but is **equally** important for the citizens and societies of host countries. This is true because a community partnership between the 'hosts' and the 'guests' can foster improved perceptions of one another and prevent the socially divisive tendencies mentioned earlier, if not for reasons of democratic principle then at least for practical purposes. The realization of this community should create inter-cultural communication in two directions: across the cultural boundaries between us and across the social and cultural boundaries between 'hosts' and refugees.

Why did we think we had mutual interests? Refugees or forced migrants do not own any piece of land on which to settle other refugees. We have neither natural resources, nor huge funds with which to run development projects. We do not have the authority to extend legal or political protection to others. So, what **can** we offer each other?

What we can do, first of all, is to break through your individual or local isolation by offering you permanent access to others in a similar situation. Some of us have already found ways of coping quite well with our problems, and are thus well-equipped to provide an insider's advice, based on personal, local experience, to others having similar difficulties. This might include explaining social and other services which are not known, not understood, or misunderstood by newcomer refugees; communicating with the local *know-who*, that is, the key figure within an agency or authority who can be approached personally with a specific problem, to receive clear and sympathetic advice or assistance. We might call this an 'insider advisory service'. Most of the languages spoken by newcomer refugees must be covered by the service. Besides practical advice, the service team would provide a non-discriminatory (non-racist, non-sexist) environment for every local refugee or forced migrant, if the host society itself is not able to meet this standard completely. Political stands should be kept outside the work of the service, as the sometimes conflicting ideologies of refugees with a history of antagonism, could easily break down any co-operation.

Secondly, having the 'insider advisory service', we can identify together those local problems which concern all of

us, regardless of ethnicity, and which cannot be solved by individual initiatives. If we want more influence to ease or solve those problems, we must act as a real community, aware of the best interests of its members. But we must also have an understanding of the problems the host society faces in dealing with us and, in the light of this understanding, articulate our interests to local citizens, to the host government and to other agencies. This advocacy should be based firstly on assumed self-responsibilities and secondly on claimed human rights: in negotiating with others, we should regard our community neither as dependant nor as claimant, but rather as a partner to the hosts. We could call this a 'community partnership service'. Perhaps, in many places, we will not be regarded as equal partners, but securing recognition of our equal status will be one of our major tasks.

Thirdly, we move onto the international scene. Whether you have realised it or not, since you became a refugee, you have never elected those who speak internationally in the name of, and for the interests of refugees. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees states: 'UNHCR and its partners in the voluntary sector have traditionally acted as advocates for refugees... The danger ... is that refugee agencies and their staff begin to assume that they know what is best for their clients... the voice of the refugee is quietly forgotten.' Considering the many good intentions, and how much enthusiasm, energy, time and money, is spent in the efforts of international, national and voluntary agencies on refugee protection and assistance, the above comment is very important and valid. By filling this gap we can offer each other pure democracy: the chance to speak to each other and to the international community.

Democracy cannot be granted by outsiders: it can only be developed by ourselves, so we must therefore take the responsibility, and the trouble, to do this. The international form of such an inter-cultural democracy could be an 'insiders' communication network' in which every refugee individual or group can speak to, and be listened to by, any other individual or group in the network. This network could be of great practical relevance in developing and exchanging self-help and mutual support systems at various levels: for instance, adaptable educational and self-teaching packages, especially in basic skills (reading, writing etc.), foreign languages, and competitive skills of knowledge-intensive industries (e.g. word and data processing, other communication skills). This network would provide a channel for every relevant piece of information or knowledge, gained or stored by any participant of the

network, and freely accessible to every other participant. We also need to think seriously about ways of achieving greater economic and financial self-sufficiency in order to support these self-reliant activities. In this context, the decentralised system of knowledge distribution described above, might, in turn, play a decisive role, since knowledge is probably our only convertible currency: the asset which can be translated into wealth-generating actions in our new environment. Because of the lack of any legal status for such an international network of **non-citizens**, an adequate, politically neutral 'protectorate' of one of the principal organs of the United Nations (for example the Secretary-General) would make this undertaking stronger, safer, and more feasible.

As you know, this network does not yet exist. As a refugee or forced migrant – whether legally recognised or not; whether involved in the activities of a refugee-based group or not – you might recognise that we have shared interests in self-help and self-representation as a means of saving our dignity, ensuring our future prosperity and regaining equal membership in human society.

Establishing the 'insider advisory service', the 'community partnership service' and the 'insiders' communication network' are the main goals of our project, the Displaced Citizenship Programme. As we develop stronger links with the Refugee Participation Network (RPN), and discover how closely our goals resemble those of the Refugee Studies Programme and its RPN, we are being given the opportunity of announcing in this newsletter what we want to do and why, and of using RPN to carry out this networking. We hope we can attempt to achieve these aims together with you, wherever you are in the world.

Geza Tessenyi

If you or your group would like to participate in, or just know more about, the Displaced Citizenship Programme please write directly to:

Geza Tessenyi

DCP Co-ordinator

Institute of Social Studies

PO Box 90733

2509 LS The Hague, The Netherlands.

Comments, suggestions, constructive criticism or any other supportive actions would be welcomed from interested 'outsiders': sympathetic citizens, agency workers, politicians and scholars.

REPATRIATION

PERSISTING DOUBTS AMONG GUATEMALANS IN MEXICO



Photograph by Finn Stepputat

do we do if we regret our decision?

'We escaped to Mexico because we didn't want to die. And we don't want to go back, now. They say it's quiet, now, but we're afraid of going back. Suddenly there will be violence again.... The flesh is afraid of going. Thanks to Mexico we're tranquil, here. We sleep, and we sleep peacefully.'

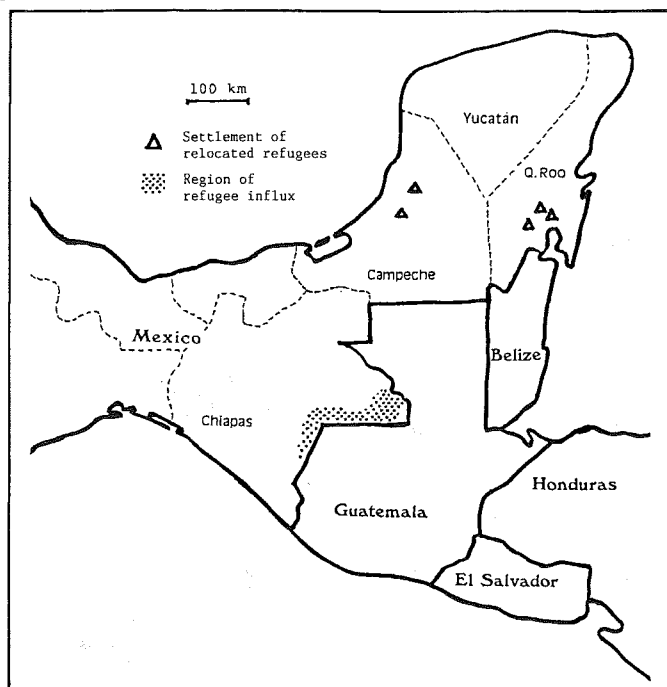
The feelings, expressed by a Guatemalan woman, are common among her exiled compatriots in Mexico. More than 100,000 Guatemalan peasants, many of them landless co-operativists, crossed the border into Mexico between 1981 and 1983, seeking refuge from the violent civil conflicts which had devastated their villages in the western Guatemala. UNHCR recognised 45,000 as refugees and assisted them through the Mexican Commission for Assistance to Refugees (COMAR). The other 55,000 have never been recognised. They are dispersed in the border region or have migrated to Mexican cities, far to the north.

COMAR soon started negotiations with the military government of Guatemala, for the repatriation of the refugees. In 1986, this government was replaced by a civilian

one, headed by Vinicio Cerezo. The newly-elected President set up a Special Commission for Assistance to Repatriates (CEAR), in order to facilitate repatriation. Nevertheless, by June 1989 only 3,800 refugees had been repatriated to Guatemala. The majority remain in Mexico, waiting, in an atmosphere of doubt and indecision, to be repatriated at some later date.

In 1984, the Mexican Government relocated the refugees to the peninsula of Yucatan, well away from the border. Many of the refugees resisted relocation fiercely and have remained near the border. In Yucatan, UNHCR and COMAR set up an assistance programme designed to help the relocated refugees to become self-sufficient. When I visited the Yucatan settlements in 1988, 18,000 Guatemalan refugees were living there, cultivating the land and engaging in occasional wage labour in the region.

From 1986 onwards, when the refugees had started to produce some maize and beans, COMAR/UNHCR reduced the distribution of food and goods according to an estimated 'degree of self-sufficiency'. In 1989/90, the assistance programme will be reduced to a minimum. As



an alternative the refugees are being given the opportunity to enter a Mexican rural credit scheme elsewhere, under the same conditions as local peasants. Involvement in the scheme would imply a long-term commitment and further relinquishment of their claims in Guatemala.

The cutbacks in assistance urge the refugees to make up their minds: should they stay and integrate further into the Mexican economy, or should they repatriate?

Indecision

'We are considering putting ourselves on the list for returning in January. We're fifteen families. My son is calling us. We are considering going to Cantabal [an army-controlled 'model village'] He says he's got his plot there, and that there are five or six plots left, if we return soon. Our plots in our own village are occupied. He says that there is peace, but who knows if it's true?.... What do we do if we regret our decision?'

Ten men were standing outside the COMAR hut, awaiting details of the repatriation procedure. Two days later, I met one of them who explained that they had heard the latest news and had decided to wait and see. 'Here, we've got a house for our religion,' he said, referring to the temple of the Pentecostals. The piece of news that convinced them to wait and see was a report of the massacre in Aguacate, Chimaltenango, where somebody had killed twenty-two peasants.

Another day, I met a person who had previously expressed strong feelings against repatriation under the current

conditions. This time we sat alone together and, in a low voice, he asked me:

'I would like to ask you a question. Which is better, to stay here or return to Guatemala? We've just received a letter from my big brother, and a tape and two letters from other family members: 'Come, come, come! It's quiet now, your plots are still here'. My wife says, 'let's go at once', but I don't want to leave as I shall have to do service in the civil [defence] patrol. But they say there are no longer soldiers in the village. What do you recommend?'

Information

When I met Guatemalan representatives in a settlement, I was greeted with many questions, such as: 'What is the situation in Guatemala now? Is it possible to return to our villages? Do you know UNHCR plans for next year?...' At first, I thought a general lack of information was the reason for these questions, but I was wrong.

The refugees constitute an important piece in the complicated jigsaw puzzle of Central America. Many interested parties communicate their views on the situation to the refugees. Broadcast news from government, rebel and other transmitters in Florida, Cuba, Mexico and Central America reach the refugees. UNHCR delivers letters and tapes from the refugees' relatives in Guatemala. The Guatemalan government and other interested parties, including the churches, send visitors to the settlements to convince the refugees either to repatriate or stay. Guatemalan merchants bring news to the settlements and, now and then, refugees pay visits to Guatemala.

The problem is not lack of information, but lack of confidence in its reliability. The atmosphere of a refugee settlement is saturated with doubts, rumours, distrust, dreams, threats and promises. My own presence produced a perfect example of this: after a few days the rumour went round: 'The Gringo is here in order to enlist families who want to leave for Canada with him'. I had never mentioned anything about resettlement or Canada, but three months later, refugees were still coming to me to discuss their decision to resettle in Canada: 'We are ten families who have decided to follow you to Canada....'.

Now or Later?

There are only a few households who have made the decision never to return to Guatemala. The majority intend to repatriate either now or later. Those intending to return to Guatemala at once have a variety of motives. They want to be reunited with their families, or to get a plot of land before it's too late. Some wish to return because they have inherited a tiny piece of land or because they are 'bored' in the settlement. ('Bored' here has a slightly different meaning: 'exhausted' or 'fed up'.)

The refugees who have decided to stay in Mexico for the time being are convinced that the returnees either have

not experienced the violence, or that they are 'Evangelics'. 'They are religious, they put their destiny in the hands of God,' as one refugee said. This is confirmed by the registers which show two-thirds of the refugee population as Catholics, but the majority of returnees as Evangelics, Pentecostals, or Jehovah's Witnesses.

In Guatemala, some fundamentalist, non-Catholic sects, mainly sponsored by their North American mother organizations, are closely affiliated to the political right. In the conflict-stricken regions of north-western Guatemala, where the Catholic Church was suppressed during the 'pacification' from 1981-83, the non-Catholic sects predominate. There is a rumour that non-Catholic preachers have visited the settlements in order to tell their people to return, and to promise them land.

The opposition between Catholics and non-Catholics should not be overestimated or generalised. Several non-Catholic groups do not advocate repatriation under the prevailing conditions, but the question of repatriation sharpens the opposition. Catholic catechists commented that the Evangelics who had returned had accepted the injustice of the existing order by doing so, while the Catholics preferred to denounce the injustice by remain-

ing in exile. 'To the army, every refugee is a *guerillero*,' said one, but the Evangelics say that 'the Catholics are the real *guerilleros*'.

Most of the refugees whom I spoke to were afraid to return to their country and preferred to wait and see. In 1988, they heard news of an attempted military coup, the appearance of a new death squad, the continuing disappearances of members of popular movements, the Aguacate massacre, and the extension of guerilla activities. They feared that their plots of land were probably occupied by other peasants, and that should they return, they would have to do service in the 'Patrols of Civilian Self-Defence'. Several refugees were afraid to return in small groups: 'If we go back, all of us together, it's OK'.

Organization for Repatriation

In January 1988, the Guatemalan refugees in Mexico started to campaign for 'collective and organised return'. They elected representatives to a 'Permanent Commission' set up to negotiate conditions for repatriation with the Guatemalan Government. The refugees set out their own terms for repatriation: the right to return to their own land; guarantees of freedom to organise, and safety after their return; the presence of exclusively civilian author-

Which is better: to stay in Mexico or return to Guatemala?



Photograph by Finn Stepputat

ities in their villages; and finally the presence of international organizations during and after the return.

In November 1988, the Permanent Commission was recognised as representative of the refugees in the camps and settlements in southern Mexico. Representatives were invited to participate in the 'Commission for National Reconciliation' – the Cerezo Government's forum for national dialogue. Unfortunately, neither the Army nor the guerilla organization participate.

In spite of the invitation, it is very unlikely that the Guatemalan Government will accept the refugees' conditions or the idea of a collective repatriation. Repatriation is important for the image of the government, but they want the refugees to return in small groups so that the process will not get out of control. The Army – a decisive actor in Guatemalan politics, in spite of the civilian face of the government – is not interested in the return of refugees and is still reported as viewing all refugees as *guerilleros*. This fact is severely hampering the repatriation process since, in the regions which the refugees fled from (and which many of them wish to return to), the Army exercises firm control at the local level.

Meanwhile?

Negotiations will probably drag on for some time. Meanwhile, the adults will see their children and adolescents, who make up two-thirds of the refugee population, become more and more 'Mexicanized'. The refugees will integrate further into Mexican economy and institutions, they will carry on to suffering from the conditions of a feeble self-sufficiency, and the pressure to repatriate will continue.

While they are waiting for a possible repatriation, the refugees will have to confront the realities of the future. They will never return to their old Guatemala. A refugee, who had been a co-operative leader in Guatemala, put it this way:

'Now it's time to consider the future, but we're weak. People don't think. They go out and earn their money, and that's it. But money is like flowers: in the morning they look pretty, but in the afternoon.... When they return to Guatemala they know how to eat, they know how to manage money. But they will not earn anything there. What to sell? Where to go? Pure machete, since they haven't studied. Here we've got someone supporting us. But there? Who is going to teach us? Studies are only for the rich.... We need teachers, agronomists, drivers, mechanics.... How are we going to go to the Governor, if we haven't studied, if we don't know how to present our wishes, our ideas? We will never have our rights.... We're here to work!'

The cutbacks in assistance force the refugees to consider their future. Many of them are not yet self-sufficient.

They still need assistance, but whether they stay in Mexico, or they choose to return to Guatemala in one, two or three years, they also need to develop new qualifications, new ways of life and new identities. The refugees have begun to recognise these needs, and their cultural and social institutions still have the potential to mediate the process of recognition and change. Practitioners in the field can act as catalysts to this process, but the refugees also need more concrete assistance for professional training.

Doubts, rumours, distrust and indecision seem to be prominent features of life in exile. In order to reduce them, it is important for those working with refugees to avoid hints, assumptions, abstractions, and vague promises when communicating with the refugees. But, even so, doubts will persist. Many refugees told me that UNCHR was compiling a list of people who wanted to visit their villages, in order to assess conditions for themselves. It turned out to be a rumour. But it might be a good idea. It would help the refugees to make up their minds: to acknowledge the present state of Guatemala; or to say goodbye. As things are, they could not decide: they continue to think that they would return in a few days, or perhaps a few weeks...

Finn Stepputat

*Institute of Cultural Sociology
University of Copenhagen, Denmark*

The above article is based on field work conducted in Mexico in August-November 1988 in the settlement of Maya Tecun in Campeche Province.

In the Shadow of Liberty: Central American Refugees in the United States (September 1988) is a report of a study on the situation of Central American refugees in the United States in the late 1980s. Published by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the report is based primarily on interviews with refugees and others involved in refugee work conducted in several states across the US.

Underlying the report are two broad convictions: first, that the presence of Central Americans in the United States raises fundamental questions of human rights, and second, that United States policy has aggravated the conflicts generating the flows of refugees. The survey covers four areas: the situations in Central America that generate refugee flows; struggles for refugee rights along the United States-Mexico border; Central American communities in the United States; policy questions.

For further information write to:
American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, US

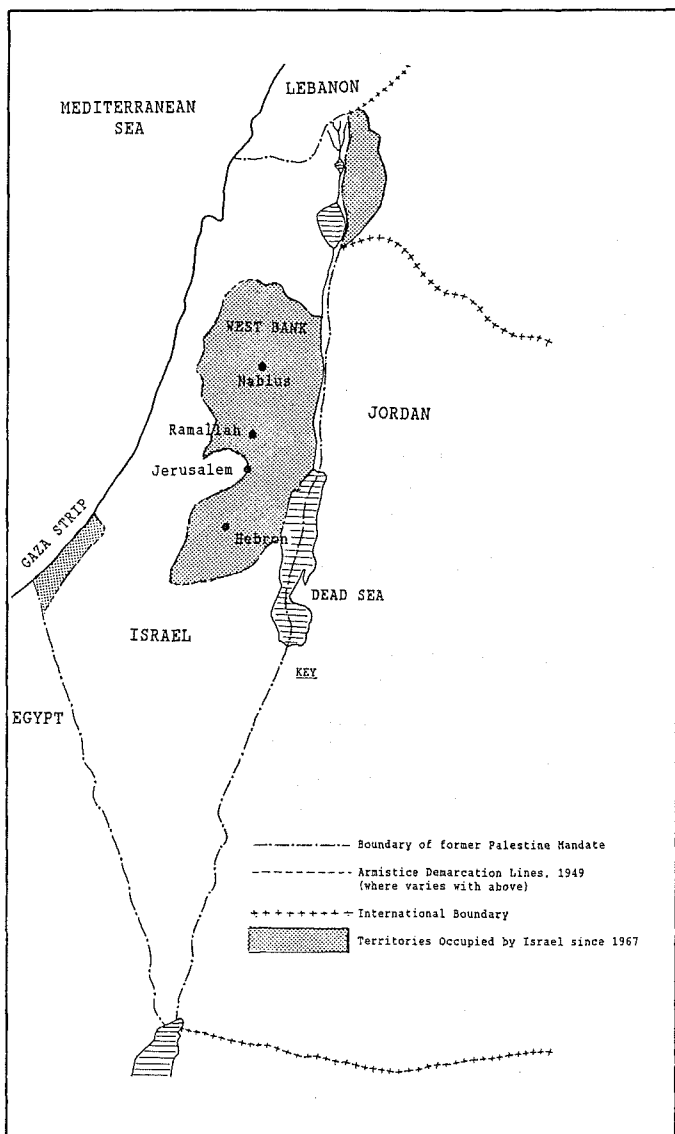
REFUGEE WOMEN

PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVES: 'OUR PRODUCTION IS OUR PRIDE'

by Eileen Kuttab

From Dependence to Self-Sufficiency

Since the Israeli Military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, the Israeli government has implemented a series of economic measures in the Occupied Territories which have undermined the viability of Palestinian agriculture. Resisting these measures, in the 1970s Palestinians initiated and developed mass-based organizations consisting of women, workers, farmers and youths. On the basis of these organizations, projects have been established to develop the productive capacity of the community, with the long-term goal of rebuilding a relatively self-sufficient and self-reliant economy. The effectiveness of this strategy has been greatly enhanced by the Palestinian *Intifada*, which began in December 1987.



Boycotts of Israeli products organised as part of the struggle against the Occupation have left Palestinian consumers with few home grown choices, increasing the need for local agricultural ventures. The Women's Committees established before the *Intifada* have assumed added importance as Palestinians have turned towards self-sufficiency, becoming the basis for women's co-operatives.

Producing Traditional Foods; Challenging Traditional Roles

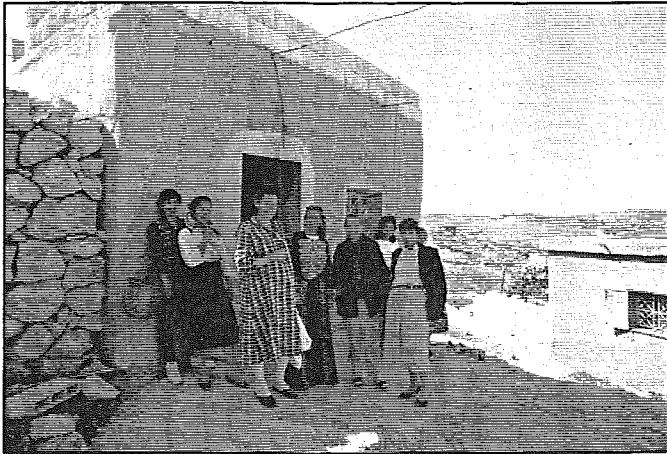
The women's development project 'Our Production is Our Pride' was established in 1987 in two villages in the Occupied Territories: Betillo village in Ramallah district, north of Jerusalem, and Saer village in the Hebron area, south of Jerusalem (see map). The principal objective of the project was to establish a women's co-operative based on the production and marketing of local foods. Well-known traditional recipes like plum and apple jam, lemon and orange juice concentrates, pickled egg-plant and hot sauce were chosen as suitable products. However, the project encompassed other aims and objectives beyond those of a setting up a successful enterprise. These were:

- ★ to develop labour and other local resources for the benefit of the community;
- ★ to support the steadfastness of Palestinian peasant families on their land;
- ★ to strengthen the role of rural women in development by transforming their traditional role of household economist to the more effective role of national economist, thereby laying the basis for their social emancipation;
- ★ to train the women involved in collective decision-making and management relating to their own welfare and economic affairs;
- ★ to involve academics in the application of their ideas as part of the outreach programme of the universities in community development;
- ★ to promote national and cultural identity through the production of traditional foods;
- ★ to develop a democratic, co-operative model for economic organization which could be replicated in other parts of Palestine.

The project also sought to promote certain principles in accordance with the level of development of the Palestinian economy, and a people-oriented development strategy, for example: low capital investment, labour-intensive techniques, the use of education as a mobilising force, non-profit orientation, the rotation of tasks and small-scale production.

Project Partners

Initially, the project received funding from the Norwegian Save the Children Fund and the Norwegian Refugee Council. The approach of the funding agencies, who were represented by a Norwegian woman based in Ramallah, has been realistic. After considerable experience of external aid organizations, Palestinians now have a strong critical awareness of their potentially negative role. In this



Outside the Co-op building in Saer

Photograph by Redd Barua

case, however, the agencies realised that it would be difficult for external, non-governmental organizations to implement development projects without the co-sponsorship of national institutions. Furthermore, they recognised that the nature of the project, its structure and objectives, could not be imposed by outside organizations.

At an early stage, formal co-operation was established between the project and the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology at Birzeit University, with the goals of utilising local expertise in community development, and of increasing links between the academic and the wider communities. Representatives of these departments became full partners in the project team. At first, this co-operation was at the academic level consisting of a debate on whether the project should be started in a village or in a refugee camp. However, to broaden the discussion, women practitioners, village-based women, and representatives of women's grassroots organizations were invited to participate. Together, they discussed the nature of the project to be implemented, its aims and objectives, and the action plan to be followed. In other words, a feasible project for the healthy participation of women in development was formulated by the women themselves.

From the beginning, the emphasis was on development, 'from and to the masses'. The implementation of the project relied mainly on intensive discussions between village women, the project team, and local consultants. During this process, self-respect and self-confidence was built among the co-operative members, as well as group identity and solidarity.

The founding committees of both the successful pilot co-operatives had 18-20 women members, mostly married women from a peasant background whose husbands commute to work in Israel. No specific membership limit was established, although it was generally agreed that if numbers became too large a new co-operative would be formed. Most of the women come from conservative Muslim and Christian traditions, which limit their freedom of

movement, and most had three or four children, so that childcare and the conflicting demands of the home and work were inevitably important issues to be resolved.

The Four Phases of Implementation

The implementation of the project involved four phases, which began with the choice of possible sites for the location of the co-operatives. Sites were selected on the basis of certain criteria such as the size of the village, the type of agricultural produce and surplus locally available, as well as social and political conditions. According to these criteria, twenty villages and two refugee camps were chosen for initial field visits. After this, five villages in the Gaza Strip and six in the West Bank were chosen for the full food survey. The objective of this survey was to get a comprehensive picture of what agricultural products are grown and where, local food traditions (i.e. methods of food preservation, dietary habits, nutritional values), accessibility to Israeli products, and women's and men's attitudes towards co-operative activities. All this was done with the help of local women who thus gained confidence in the team's work and ideas. As a result of the survey, three villages were chosen as sites for co-operatives, although only two were eventually used. In the process of conducting the survey, a group of village women was chosen to become the future basis of the co-operatives.

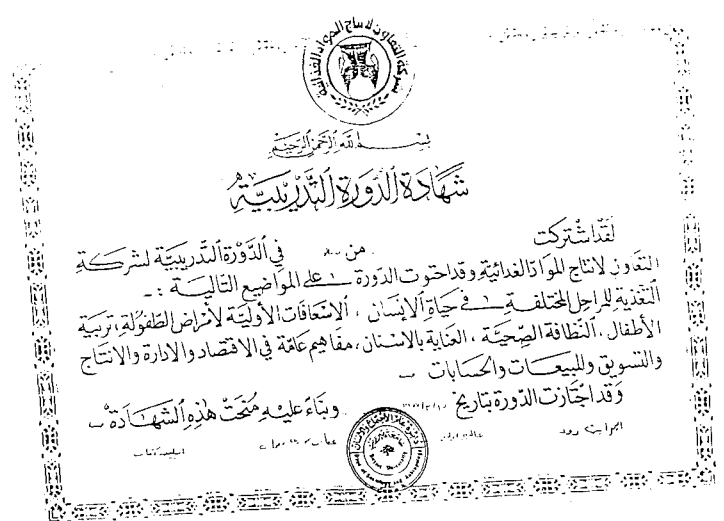
Parallel to the food survey, a motivation survey was carried out among female business administration students, partly to recruit an economic consultant for the project team, but also to get a feel for women's expectations and aspirations in building their own economic enterprises.

Next, a training course, developed by the project team, was held in the village, to mobilise women to enrol in the project. The training course, jointly taught by the project leader, and its nutritionist and economist, covered basic subjects related to the production process, such as nutri-

A member of the Saer Co-op



Photograph by Redd Barua



Betillo Co-op registration certificate

tion, hygiene, health care, administration, leadership and organization, marketing, accounts and book-keeping. The course was a pre-requisite for membership of the co-operative, which otherwise did not require any specific qualifications or skills. The course was also designed to accommodate and train illiterate women and, at this stage, women of a wide age range (16-50) participated. The initial training course later formed the basis for a recently-established co-operative school, where women from different villages and refugee camps are trained before establishing new branches of the co-operative.

Following training, production began on a limited scale, on the basis of a market survey carried out by village women of the co-operative. Members built up their experience of production, and a feel for the market and its demands. Recipes were standardized for high quality and good taste. A board was democratically elected to lead and supervise the process of production, leading to more independence in the management of the enterprise.

In the final phase, real production began at increased levels. The project team was still directly involved and mainly responsible for the development and continuous evaluation of the project. Additionally, the team helped to widen the social and economic network in urban areas by involving local institutions and shops in the distribution of products. Alongside this development of the productive capacity and the network, the women formulated their own internal rules and regulations through exhaustive discussions.

The co-operatives were formed with an egalitarian structure, whereby each member has one vote, and the general membership elects representatives to fulfil various functions, as well as making decisions, for example, on the proportion of turnover to be allocated to wages, social welfare, taxes and production costs. Members' wages are

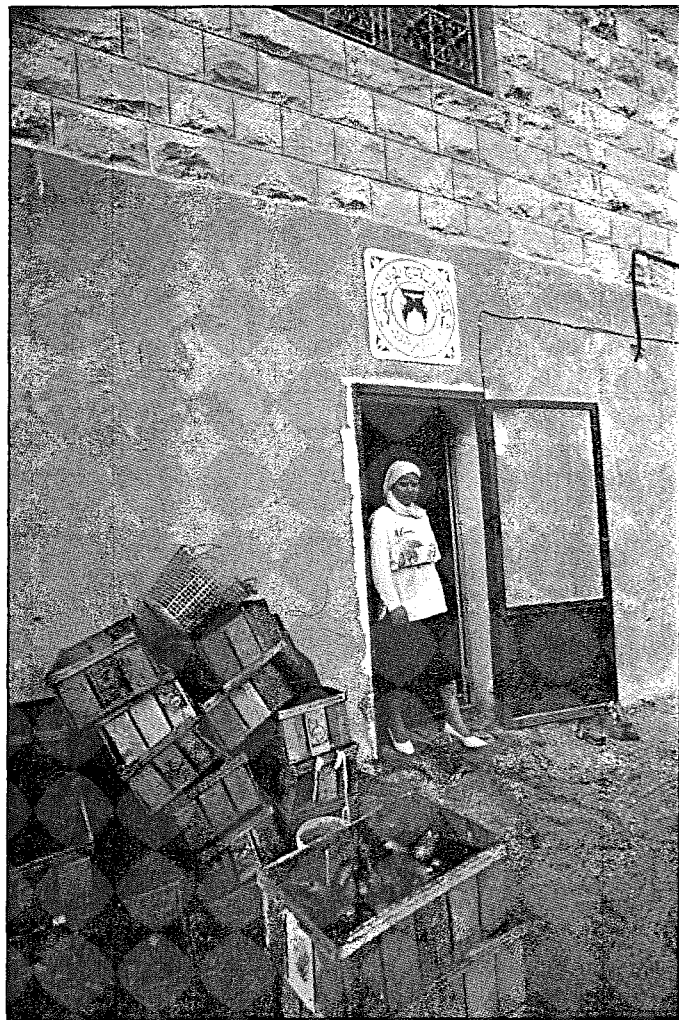
determined by the number of hours they have put in, and total sales revenue. Holidays, maternity leave, medical insurance and childcare costs are met by the social welfare fund.

Obstacles and Achievements

The early participants in these co-operatives faced a number of obstacles. Husbands and village societies as a whole were initially resistant to their increasing social and economic independence. For example, a pregnant woman from Saer struggled almost daily with her husband and father-in-law, and was allowed to attend meetings only once a week. Two sisters, forbidden by their father from joining the training course, had to alternate their secret attendance at weekly meetings. However, after three years, the attitude of men towards women's involvement in the co-operative is changing.

Another problem is that of balancing domestic obligations with the demands of co-operative work. A degree of flexibility has evolved such that women choose their own schedule within the working hours of the co-operative.

The Co-op premises in Betillo: boxes of egg-plants



Photograph by Redd Barna

This allows them to fit work around their other activities and obligations. The need for childcare provision as an integral part of such projects is now recognised and nurseries have been established. Women take turns to staff the nursery and this work is given equal reward to time spent on production.

Distribution and marketing have also proved problematic, partly due to the lack of experience of members in these fields and the restrictions on their movements imposed by social tradition. In addition, Israeli policies under the Occupation have limited the freedom to sell agricultural produce. Equally, the political unrest has made the availability and prices of raw materials unpredictable.

In spite of these not inconsiderable obstacles, the co-operatives are now independent of outside management and funding (although they may look to outside finance if major expansions are planned). Not only have the products satisfied local needs in both quality and quantity, but women have also earned higher incomes than they

One of Betillo Co-op members with plastic tubs containing vegetables undergoing preservation



Photography by Redd Barna

would have done in local or Israeli factories. Moreover, the self-perception of women, their status within the household and the community, and their social and political awareness have been greatly enhanced. In addition, the infrastructure necessary to maintain, and widen, the gains of the project is slowly evolving. The co-operative has been able to establish links with village farmers and grassroots agricultural committees. This has made it possible to purchase raw materials at reasonable prices and has simultaneously helped support peasant families. A distribution network of co-operative outlets has also been formed to facilitate marketing.

A Model?

'Our Production is Our Pride' is becoming a movement that offers a model for the development of other small-scale co-operatives in Palestine. A co-operative venture is now being planned in one of the more active refugee camps in the Occupied Territories, which will combine home industries with the provision of services for the community.

Perhaps 'Our Production is Our Pride' has lessons for other refugee situations too? The less socially and economically conservative atmosphere of the refugee camp may be receptive to this kind of women's co-operative venture; camps could also provide a ready-made market. Participation, as exemplified by the 'Our Production is Our Pride' co-operative, is currently in vogue in the aid community, who could provide the initial capital for such a venture. But the successful implementation of new options for development, such as these women's co-operatives, does not happen without accompanying changes in the political arena. The *Intifada* has released resources such as voluntary work, and co-operative relations, which can overcome financial constraints. In Palestine, the stone is as important as the co-operative in the struggle for self-determination.

Eileen Kuttab is a Lecturer in Sociology at Birzeit University in the West Bank and a member of the women's development project 'Our Production is Our Pride'. This is a revised version of an article which appeared in the Journal for Refugee Studies Vol 2 No 1. Thanks to Kim Bush for additional insights.

EDUCATION

LEARNING FROM A DISTANCE: NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SUDAN

Distance learning is a relatively new technique in the Sudan, where it has been pioneered by the Sudan Open Learning Unit (SOLU). According to the Deputy Director of SOLU, **Rashida Abdel Mutalib**, who will take over the directorship from an expatriate later this year, distance learning is particularly suitable for education in refugee communities:

'Conventional education, which involves setting up permanent establishments, can be very costly. Many refugees have their education interrupted when they flee from their home countries, sometimes for quite long periods. At the same time, as adults they are expected to earn their own living in host countries. In this situation distance learning can be an ideal solution.'

SOLU was established in 1984 through an agreement between the International Extension College in Cambridge, England, and the Commissioner of Refugees office of the government of Sudan. Although they initially worked mainly with refugees, including some Sudanese in the refugee-affected areas, last year they started programmes among Sudanese displaced by the civil war, and hope to introduce programmes aimed at the general Sudanese population in the near future.

Distance education involves learning by oneself at home, or in a study group, without a school or teacher. SOLU provides students with study material and a programme of assignments which are corrected and assessed by tutors from the Unit. It runs both formal and non-formal educational programmes. The formal programme is aimed at refugees who have been at secondary school, but have had their studies terminated as a result of being forced into exile, and who are thus over the normal age for secondary schooling. Before beginning on an examined syllabus, these candidates, who tend to be mainly young men, follow a 'refresher' course to get them back into the swing of formal study, and brush up their existing knowledge. They then move on to take the London GCE 'O' Level 'B' syllabus, which has been adapted for overseas students, in the distance learning mode. The first batch of 'O' level students will not take their examinations until next January, but the Formal Programme Co-ordinator, himself a refugee, feels that their performance to date is promising. Students may also opt for the Sudan School Certificate in English.

Rashida, however, has not come from a background in formal education. Previously, she worked with the Ministry of Social Welfare, and has brought her own professional perspective to SOLU:

'Community development is increasingly concerned with non-conventional systems of education, that is, adult education and group contact. Our non-formal programme concentrates mainly on literacy for



adults. We also have a training programme for primary health care workers, which is still in the testing stage, to raise community awareness of health issues.'

The adult literacy programme is run in three stages. The first stage involves direct contact teaching in literacy and numeracy. This more intensive phase gets the students started and gives them some confidence. One of the units in the first stage is on travel. The following week, the students come back and discuss their experiences of going out by themselves. This is particularly important since the majority of those on the literacy course are rural women. If they move on to the more advanced stages, they will have to travel once every two weeks to visit centres where the tutors are located, although the centres are mostly within a day's journey of the refugee settlements.

Women can be major beneficiaries of distance learning programmes. As Rashida says:

'It can be an ideal solution for women, who, either because of tradition, or after getting married, have family commitments and do not have the time or opportunity to go to school. It may also provide a solution to disabled people who, because of mobility problems, are unable to get to the classroom.'

The materials for the non-formal programmes are written in Tigrigna, the mother-tongue of most Eritreans and some Ethiopians, and include stories relating to Eritrean history and culture. The third 'post-literacy' stage of the adult course introduces Arabic and English languages, as well as health education and agricultural extension materials. The modular nature of the courses means that students progress at their own pace. Once they successfully complete a stage, or unit, they can move on to a more advanced level.

Nevertheless, there has been a drop-out problem, particularly in the first two or three months of the formal programme. Students who have already completed some years of secondary education enrol, having not been in school for some time, only to find that the course is more demanding than they anticipated. As a result of this phenomenon, SOLU has developed an intermediate foundation course, which emphasises Life Skills, Mathematics, English and Arabic. Although initially introduced among displaced Sudanese, a lot of Eritrean refugees from the same area have also enrolled, and there are plans to extend the foundation course more directly to the refugee community. SOLU are currently seeking the resources to do this.

People also drop out for other, more personal, reasons. In the struggle to survive and be self-reliant, refugees have become a very mobile group. For example, someone might move to Khartoum because they have fixed up a job there. SOLU is now trying to accommodate this by allowing students who have been attached to one centre, to transfer to another, providing they have completed some course units, and they can show they had a good reason to move. In this way, distance education can be more flexible than conventional schooling.

Developing materials for distance education can be a lengthy and involved process. SOLU has relied a lot on the expertise of the International Extension College in this field. They began by conducting an educational needs assessment survey in the target areas, to identify the priority needs. Training has been an important component of the projects, with a series of workshops being organised for the course writers, who are mainly secondary school teachers, or people previously involved in course production for Sudanese students. Some subject areas have been more challenging than others:

'The mathematics courses are relatively easy [to adapt]. But the biology and chemistry courses are more difficult. The students have to examine the materials to ensure that they are understandable. The practical side of the courses has to be included which is more demanding, and requires supporting materials. We are now providing tapes and tape recorders, as well as science kits. We advise the course writers to give examples of practical experiments which can be

conducted at home and don't require a lot of complicated materials.'

Evidently, imagination is required to adapt course materials to the constraints of refugees' lives, whilst still providing the essence of the curriculum. Both refugees – who number among the SOLU staff – and the Office of Education (of the Commissioner for Refugees) have been involved in discussions during the preparatory period. After initial writing and editing, the materials are tested and any necessary changes incorporated, then the final versions are produced at the in-house printing shop. To date, SOLU has relied largely on printed materials as the medium for distance education. Although they have not yet ventured into broadcast media, there are hopes for the future:

'In May, we organised a workshop, part of which was attended by some government officials. They promised that there could be a lot of co-ordination between the Sudan Open Learning Unit and the radio and TV corporations, so we are looking forward to that.'

Since it involves mainly study at home, distance learning requires a high level of motivation. However, SOLU courses are aimed at adults and older youngsters who enter the system voluntarily, and would otherwise have few chances to begin, or recommence their education, so there is, on the whole, a high level of commitment. But tutorial support and feedback are also essential components of the system. Students visit one of the SOLU centres every two weeks to bring their latest assignment, collect the last one, which has been marked by the tutor, and discuss their work. The rule that students cannot collect the next set of materials unless they have completed the previous assignment, also acts as an incentive to be conscientious. For formally examined courses, a certain number of assignments have to be completed before tutors will enter a candidate for the exam.

SOLU encourage the setting up of study circles with group leaders, where students sit and discuss their work amongst themselves. Tutors are around to provide information and assistance if they are needed. The group discussions are not compulsory, however, so that students can still consult their tutors confidentially if they wish.

For a successful distance education programme, then, a degree of contact is a necessary component. Compared to the staffing and equipping of a full-time school or college, however, the resources required for the study centres are minimal. Each centre is provided with a 'school in a box' with bare essentials such as blackboards, chalk and lamps (since most centres have no electricity). Writing materials are bought by the students themselves, except in cases of severe hardship.

SOLU are now expanding their distance learning programmes into the displaced and general Sudanese popula-

tions. Their programmes are becoming more integrated, rather than having isolated projects for the different communities. At the same time they are thinking of evaluating the existing programmes in order to take stock of what has been achieved. Now that the experimental stage is over, it remains to establish the validity of distance education. Rashida assesses the state of play:

'The main issue facing us is that distance education is a new technique for the refugees, for the staff and for the Sudanese authorities, who we are relying on to help us in many ways. With the help of the International Extension College, we are organising a conference in December this year, on distance education in the Sudan in general, in order to try and convince the Sudanese authorities and decision makers of the value of this work. We are hoping that this conference is going to be a major step forward.'

Distance education is proving a valuable system among some members of the refugee and wider community in Sudan. It cannot be a substitute for the intensive supervision, socialization and community focus provided by the school environment, particularly for younger students. But where circumstances and resources are constrained, it may provide a solution for those who have 'missed out'.

Sally Baden

For further information contact: -
The Director, Sudan Open Learning Unit
PO Box 986, Khartoum, Sudan
Tel: 41891; Telex: 22190 ACROP SD

Thanks to **Jo Bradley** of the International Extension College.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The rationale for any network is the participation of all members. To date, the RPN has commissioned a number of articles from persons inside and outside the Network, whose experience or knowledge we felt to be worthy of sharing with others; we have also compiled some articles from existing research and field reports. Lately, more spontaneous contributions as well as letters, have been sent to us, all of which are most welcome.

We are always looking for short articles and other information which will be of value to practitioners. If you are involved in setting up a project, organization or event which you would like others working in the refugee field to be aware of, do let us know.

We are keenly aware that practitioners are usually over-committed in their work, and rarely have the time to sit down and write. However, agencies regularly produce field reports, which, rather than gathering dust in agency filing cabinets, could be reproduced in revised form, where they are of wider relevance. The RPN Newsletter is already exchanged for many other newsletters and bulletins: we would appreciate re-

ceiving other such publications from organizations in the Network, especially from 'third world' or refugee-based groups. Selective reproduction of articles from such publications can be a way of promoting practical information concerning problem-solving initiatives at grassroots level.

Another of the principles on which RPN was established is the need to bridge the gap between research and practice. Practitioners are often suspicious of research, sometimes justifiably, seeing it as an 'ivory tower' activity bearing little relation to their everyday problems. However, research can be a tool to help practitioners grasp the complexity of the situations with which they are dealing. Perhaps, if both researchers and practitioners allowed more scrutiny and discussion of their work, research could make a more significant impact on practice and vice versa.

In short, please share any ideas, knowledge, expertise, information, comments or requests which you have, that may be of use to the wider community involved in refugee work, with other RPN participants through the Newsletter!

FROM COUNSELLING TO ASSISTANCE: THE WEAKEST LINK?

Gilbert Lukhoba works as an Educational Counsellor with the **Windle Trust**, in Nairobi, Kenya. Apart from administering assistance for a number of refugee students, he counsels up to 15 people a day – many of them refugees – regarding educational opportunities. Here, he discusses with **Sally Baden** of RPN the 'ups and downs' of the job.

Q: I'd like to quote a few sentences on host country counselling services, from a paper written in 1984 about educational provision for refugees in Africa:

'The inadequacy of counselling services in the receiving countries is probably the weakest link in the chain of educational assistance available for refugee students.... At best these counselling services have become pre-screening mechanisms for donor bodies, and act as referral agencies directing the students towards scholarships or granting bodies most likely to be able to help them.'

What's your reaction to this view?

A: I would say that there are areas where a counsellor can be incompetent. An educational counsellor is supposed to be an all-rounder in terms of knowledge of education, but there are particular levels of education where you might not be able to give adequate information. If you are counselling in higher education, you may not be equipped to counsel regarding nursery schooling for the candidate's children. The first question one should pose is: is the counsellor aware of all available opportunities? This requires a lot of background work: a lot of physical visits to institutions and evaluations of those institutions, even knowledge on the timing of courses.

Does your work involve educational counselling only, or are you also involved in direct sponsorship of students?

We do counselling and placement: we provide advice to a large number of people, but only select and place a few into educational institutions. They have to meet our criteria, the major one being that they have to fit into the higher education bracket. We interview candidates for placement on a number of criteria: besides academic performance, we also evaluate the need situation of the candidates; how traumatized the candidates are; what their family position is; what their chances of employment are; what their status is *vis-à-vis* opportunities in the asylum country. All these variables are considered and then we decide whether we are going to make an intervention or not.

We also act as agents for the World University Service in Canada, recruiting students on a regional basis for entry into Canadian universities. Parallel to this, we run language courses that enable students to do a TEOFL exam, which is mandatory for entry into Canadian universities. Our geographical scope of work extends beyond Kenya: we recruit in Sudan, have a few cases from Somalia, and a few from Ethiopia.

Do you have representatives in those countries as well?

No. We try to reach those areas from Nairobi, and I'll admit that communication with Sudan is very difficult. Occasionally we reach out to Khartoum specifically, but there are many other needy areas in Sudan: Yei, for example, or Juba, areas which are fairly inaccessible.

Occasionally we send out one of the refugee students whom we sponsor in Nairobi, to interview other refugees in Sudan.

Are you dealing exclusively with refugees?

No. Not exclusively. We deal with refugees as a priority group, but it's our policy also to meet the needs of Kenyans who are particularly disadvantaged. For example, a Kenyan person who is disabled and has achieved fairly well academically, but who lacks the means of support to continue his education. However, Kenyans who want our sponsorship must meet stricter conditions than refugee candidates, and they must have tried all other existing opportunities in Kenya before they can draw on our resources.

On what basis are people being selected for sponsorship?

Apart from the academic criteria, there is this vague area called needs assessment. Does the person have parents in the host country? Is the person a parent?

How would that affect their case?

Positively. We look at sponsorship also as a means of providing for dependants as there'll be some form of allowance to help with the study and at the same time cater for the family. This can be dangerous, though, because sometimes the allowance may end up being consumed by the larger family rather than for educational purposes. So we try to make it a policy to conduct ongoing evaluation of a candidate's use of our resources. On some occasions we have sponsored both husband and wife, who have not only been able to benefit from an educational package, but also from a larger income through which they can support their children.

In your counselling work, are you very much office based, or do you also do outreach work?

We have one field office in a densely populated area of Nairobi where many refugees find it affordable to live, and in that way we are very close to them. There is an informal network among refugees through which word spreads about where resources are, and through that network people come to us. For the ones that we sponsor, we visit their various institutions, talk to them, their teachers and the management. We also talk collectively with the management and students.

Typically, who are you dealing with: men or women? What sort of age range?

The age range is approximately 19-40. Women are definitely under-represented. This reflects the refugee situation because fewer women move in political crisis situations. Women from Uganda especially are affected as a result of their husbands being killed or some other factor to do with men. This also reflects the numbers of refugees registered with UNHCR in Kenya in terms of men in proportion to women.

Perhaps there's also difficulty for women in that services are less accessible to them?

Women suffer educational handicaps in their home countries. When they come into asylum, they 'inherit' the problem they had before: they cannot meet our academic criteria because they were under-privileged educationally in their country of origin. We try to be flexible and offer scholarships to women for courses which would not normally come within our domain.

How many refugee women are being sponsored currently?

A little over twenty out of seventy-three in Kenya. That's not many in comparison to men, and very few of them take high quality courses, I'm afraid. They tend to do hairdressing, home economics, or tourism, while men are taking engineering or technical courses where maths is a prerequisite. We have very few women students being sponsored at the university because they were, for example, not able to follow maths courses and are therefore cut off from technical courses at a later stage.

Is there no attempt to upgrade the education of women to enable them to gain access to more advanced courses?

In the context of Kenya, it would be difficult to redress women's lack of good quality qualifications now because the education system in Kenya has just changed. Age is also a factor. If you come from Uganda at the age of twenty-four, and need to go back to secondary school, we can't help very much. You are going to enter into a new system, with its own requirements and before you graduate you will be over age for entry into university, say in Canada, where you have to be under thirty.

You just mentioned that the education system in Kenya has changed. Can you explain this and its impact on refugees?

Yes, it's more technically biased now, and the curriculum is broader. They are doing about twelve subjects at 'O' Level. One can now go to university after 'O' Level, whereas before people had to be at 'A' Level standard. Previously, we had a common examination - the East African School Certificate - which applied to Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. So a Ugandan coming to Kenya used to find it very easy to integrate into the education system,

because they would be following a familiar curriculum. But now it's impossible. The change of the system in Kenya has had negative consequences for the participation of refugees in education. Also, there are certain courses where the government does not allow the enrolment of refugees: vocational courses such as teacher education.

Why are refugees not admitted to such courses?

Although I have tried chasing up government officials, I am not really in a position to say. It's terribly difficult to get refugees enrolled at the diploma level. Each education system is first of all geared to serving its own nationals: they don't take migration into account. I'm afraid that the university is no longer as 'universal' as it's meant to be.

Could you clarify the relative position of refugees and Kenyans in terms of their legal rights to education, and also what happens in practice?

I'm glad you're asking about the practical operation of the conventions that relate to refugee rights. Of course, nobody would talk to you about refugees not being able to benefit from an education, but there are practical problems which face them. Whereas on paper it's their right to benefit from an education in the host country, sometimes, depending on the demand on that course from nationals, refugees are peripheralized. Also there is one particular category of refugees known as 'mandate' refugees: those who have not been recognised by the government, but are in the country under UN protection, while awaiting resettlement, or any other possibility. In theory they can study, but they have to pay fees as though they were non-citizens. Those who are recognised by **both** UNHCR and the government are given, at least on paper, similar treatment to nationals. Unfortunately, the 'mandate' cases are the largest number and they face additional problems compared to other categories of refugees.

What would you describe as being the major counselling needs of refugees in Kenya?

The counselling infrastructure in Kenya is not comprehensive, but the major problem is the lack of resources to support people. When someone comes seeking to further their training you have to ask: are there places for people in institutions? Is there enough money to spend on them? Are the courses they want to do available locally, or would it involve them moving to a 'developed' country, and what are the costs associated with that? If one wants to do, say, a Higher National Diploma in computing at the Oxford Polytechnic, the costs are prohibitive. The same sum would meet the fees of two or three people at the University of Nairobi. Now, we are also starting to look at Tanzania as an alternative, which could be fairly cheap, due to the status of the Tanzanian shilling.

You're trying to find more local opportunities.....

More African opportunities, which are cheaper, but can still be of good quality. We have placed two Rwandese students in Benin: they had the advantage of the French language background. But we lack contacts in some other African countries: there isn't even a Benin embassy in Nairobi. There is one candidate who will be going to the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. Tanzania is a little more sympathetic to the refugee cause, having been a refugee-hosting country for a long period. Actually, the largest number of our students are in Kenya, because they can get education at fairly cheap rates, the level of adjustment is not great and our access to them is immediate. But we sponsor many others in Britain. Most of those are doing postgraduate courses.

So apart from advice about educational opportunities, what other support do you give to people who are going to study overseas, say in Britain or in Tanzania?

We buy air tickets, provide living allowances, support fieldwork projects for PhD candidates and so on. Once we've identified a candidate for sponsorship, we cater for all their needs, including clothes and holiday allowances. That's why we're selective: when you're dealing with a smaller group you're able to cater for all their individual needs, rather than dealing with a larger group in half measures.

What do you feel your needs are in terms of skills, training and support, in order to function effectively as a counsellor?

I am very grateful for having attended the training course at RSP. I've had insights into other disciplines that fertilize my own professional training. I'm a sociologist of education and I benefited greatly from courses on international law, nutrition and cross-cultural communication. The selection of people counselling in the field is quite haphazard. If you employ a social worker to counsel refugees, they are going to need new skills and strategies to cope with people who have been traumatized. They definitely need training, in some instances retraining. Counselling is very broad....I would suggest a multidisciplinary sort of training.

In terms of facilities that are lacking, we are definitely deficient in terms of resettlement counselling because if somebody is going to Canada, we need to liaise with the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi; if somebody is going to USA we would need to liaise with the US Embassy. That sort of networking is not adequately developed at present.

How could this lack of liaison on resettlement be rectified?

It can be improved but the danger that one faces as a agency sponsoring education locally is that, once some-

one's resettlement application is accepted, its timing can affect and interrupt their current education. A candidate will look forward to this opportunity and, once it comes through, would very much like to make use of it. Moving to the US, for example, is arranged between UNHCR, the resettlement country and the refugee...the sponsoring agency is not involved. There may be a need to postpone resettlement in some cases, in order to allow adequate preparation for the resettlement opportunity. The danger is that once the opportunity is available, if the candidate wishes to remain and finish the course, the whole process may be cancelled. Once an opportunity falls through, the chances of getting that opportunity again in the future are virtually nil.

So perhaps if the embassies and UNHCR were more flexible regarding the timing of resettlement, this situation might be improved?

Yes, and if they provided information to local agencies on the candidate to be resettled. But there are many dangers inherent in this sort of information sharing. Some educational agencies have been known to freeze scholarships for people who have been selected for resettlement. They feel that, after all, they're going away: they need no longer be a 'burden' to us. It may be safer for candidates to keep that information away from their sponsors, because once they know, they may abruptly terminate the sponsorship, not realising that arranging resettlement can be a lengthy process.

You referred to evaluation earlier on. Could you elaborate on how you evaluate the success (or otherwise) of the services you're providing?

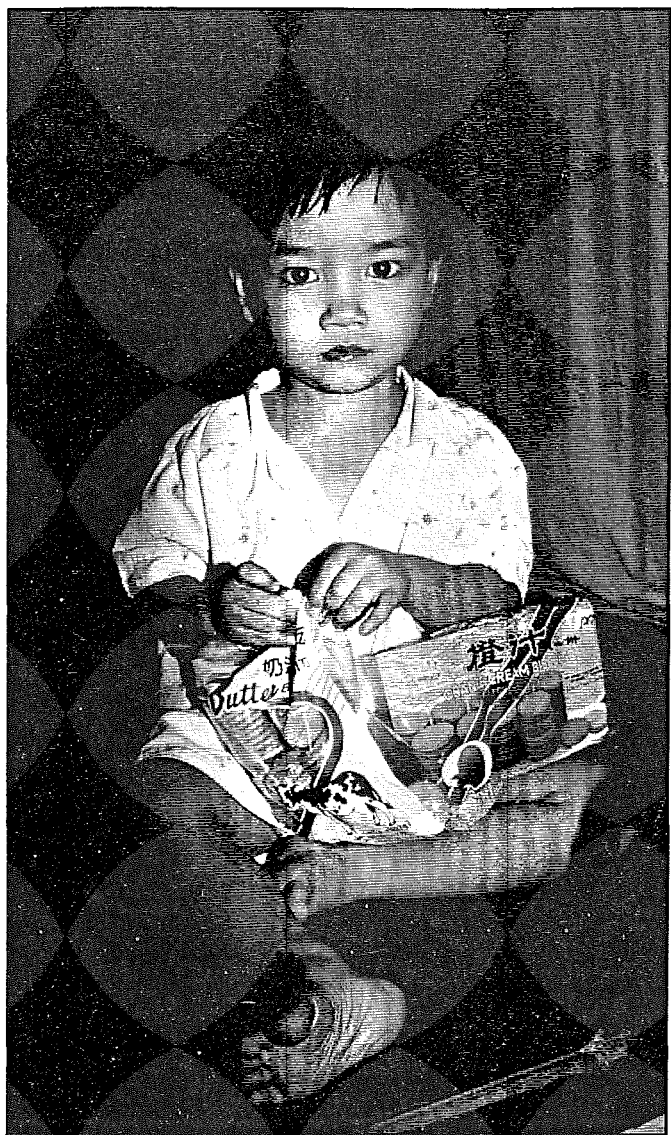
My approach to work is not 'professional' in that I don't say 'amount of input: \$5000, amount of output: 1 exam passed'. To me, that is a poor way of doing things. If a candidate doesn't do well in an exam, I try to collect relevant information. First of all I talk to the student, and listen to his or her opinion. Then I evaluate the resources, and the quality of the tuition received, in consultation with the teachers. Eventually, I sit down with the candidate and present all the pertinent facts and try to elicit a defence. For instance, you may discover that a refugee student has failed an exam, but others may also be affected: it may be the entire class. If extra tuition or resources, such as books are needed, we try to provide them. If I am convinced that the circumstances governing poor performance are not within the student's control, I would recommend that support be maintained.

Note

1. Gerhart, G. 'Educational Assistance to Refugees from South Africa and Namibia' *Refugee Issues* vol 1 no 1, Refugee Studies Programme/British Refugee Council, July 1984, pp6-7.

HEALTH

IS DENTAL CARE FOR REFUGEES AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY?



Photograph by Rebecca Todd

'Hush ups'; San Yick closed camp, Hong Kong

Poor dental health is rarely life-threatening and can be easily overlooked in refugee situations, when other health needs are more pressing. Moreover, comprehensive dental care is expensive to deliver. Providing dental treatment for large numbers of refugees, who are suffering the accumulated effects of previously untreated disease, might be seen as an inappropriate use of resources. Is there a case for dental care as part of the medical programme in refugee camps, or is it an expensive luxury?

The Need for Dental Care

South-east Asian refugees resettled in the West have been found to have high levels of dental decay and gum disease. Studies show that they have generally received little previous treatment. For example, while 94 per cent of Viet-

namese children arriving in Norway had dental decay only 6 per cent had fillings, and these were often of poor quality¹. Dental problems have figured as one of the biggest health problems of these refugees on resettlement.

Dental programmes which provide only pain relief services might suffice in short-term emergency operations but are inadequate for long-term care. A growing proportion of refugees in South-East Asia are 'long-stayers', caught in an *impasse* between limited resettlement offers and unwillingness to be repatriated, in camps where conditions are not conducive to dental health. Thus, there is a strong case for prevention and health promotion to be undertaken, to contain the disease level. While extension of dental programmes to include these activities may be seen by some as giving an inappropriately high level of care to people supposedly in transit, the cost-effectiveness of the dental programme as a whole will be enhanced, in the long term, by reduced disease levels.

This article describes some effects of the refugee camp environment on dental health and the primary health care approach taken in some camps on the Thai-Kampuchean border.

Diet and Decay

Dental decay has been shown to be caused primarily by the frequent consumption of sugary foods. The traditional diet of south-east Asians is mainly savoury and in Vietnam the use of sugar is restricted by rationing. Unfavourable changes in diet due to the greater availability and variety of sugary foods and drinks in the refugee camps can lead to an escalation in dental caries. The severity of dental caries seen in children screened in Wiltshire was said to be due to a sudden addition of sweets to their diet in Hong Kong refugee camps². When refugee children are brought up in the confines of a closed camp, the regular giving of sweets and biscuits relieves guilt feelings and pacifies fractious children. In San Yick camp (Hong Kong) the sweet biscuits readily available are nicknamed 'Hush-ups'. Their effect is seen in the extensive-tooth decay of these children.

In refugee camps on the Thai-Kampuchean border, sugary snacks are also much in evidence. These are bought from market stalls to supplement the ration. Fizzy drinks such as Sprite and Coca-Cola containing a lot of sugar are sold: these sweet liquids, as well as food, can cause tooth decay. Also available are brightly-coloured syrup drinks which are poured over a bag of ice and given to drink with a straw. In one of the camps, the syrup drink sellers are positioned at the gates of most schools and children flock to these between lessons.

Also popular among children are tubes of 'One Baht' sweets and a range of caramelized starch snacks such as crisps coated with sugar, which can be equally damaging to dental health. Their stickiness means they adhere longer to the teeth and therefore are more likely to start the

breakdown of tooth enamel, particularly where there is a lack of regular tooth-brushing.

In South-East Asia, children do not commonly brush their teeth at a young age, and sometimes not until they start school. However, dental decay can begin when the teeth first come into the mouth, from six to eight months onwards. The upper front teeth of some children in Thai refugee camps are completely destroyed by the age of four, leaving only the roots visible. This often leads to dental abscesses, pain and even more serious consequences such as osteomyelitis³ if untreated. However, treatment by extraction is unpleasant especially at this age, since there are no facilities to put the child to sleep. Prevention is better than cure.

What Kind of Dental Programmes?

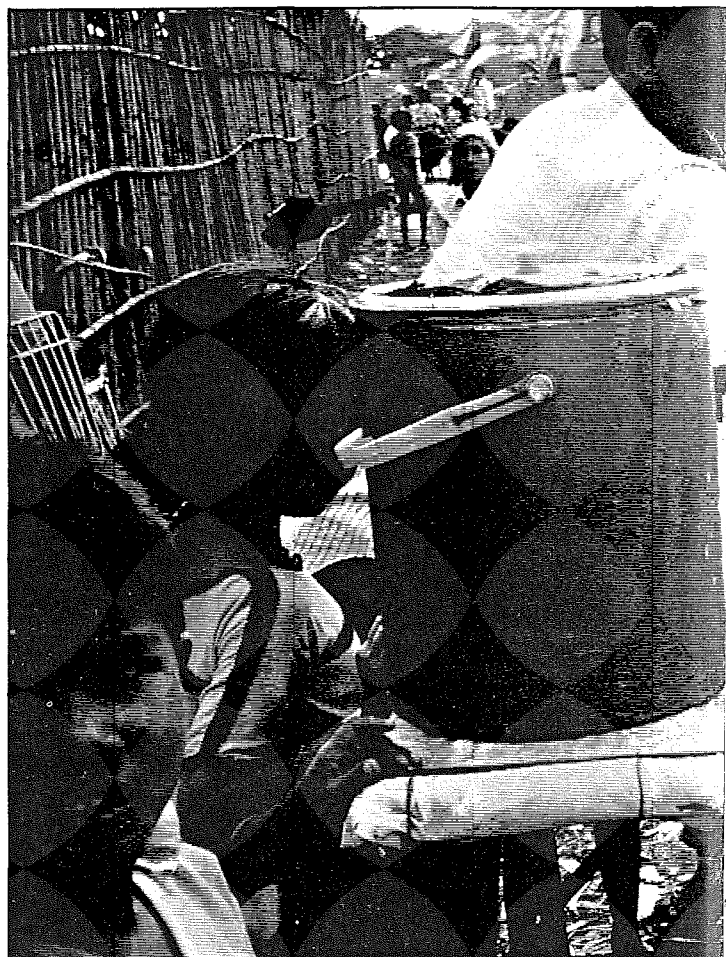
Dental decay and gum disease are preventable. Public health programmes of dietary advice, oral hygiene instruction, and the introduction of fluoride in the water or in mouth-rinses can dramatically reduce their prevalence. Dental programmes in Site 2, Site 8 and Khao-I-Dang, all camps on the Thai-Kampuchean border, illustrate the integration of these activities with curative dental services. Daily supervised teeth brushing drills have been initiated in schools as well as weekly fluoride mouth-rinses for high risk secondary school children. Khmer public health workers are trained to deliver dental health advice while on regular home visits. In Site 8, supervised tooth-flossing is also done using sack cloth or thick thread.

The training of Khmer refugees as dental workers is an important component of the programme in these three camps. They screen school children for dental problems and refer cases needing treatment to the clinic. Khmer workers also do the dental health teaching in schools as well as learning technical skills to treat patients in the camp dental clinic. Their expertise is impressive: they learn to do extractions, fillings, root fillings, take x-rays, make dentures and perform complicated surgical proce-

'One baht' sweets (underneath the Colgate Toothpaste) sold on black market stalls in the refugee camp



Photograph by Rebecca Todd



Syrup drink sellers; Khao-I-Dang, Khmer refugee camp,

dures. The training of Khmer staff prepares them for eventual return to Kampuchea, where the destruction of the intelligentsia has left a vacuum of professional skills: only two dentists remained in the country by the end of Khmer Rouge reign. As political changes in Kampuchea take place making the repatriation of refugees more likely, the transfer of these skills is becoming an increasingly important part of health programmes. In addition, the involvement of refugees in running health programmes, is a means of countering the adverse effects of the chronic dependency that is a feature of life in refugee camps.

Differing Levels of Services

Not all dental programmes in south-east Asian refugee camps have the same range of activities. In most, curative care and relief of pain by extraction dominate, with an almost complete absence of preventive programmes. Even the extent to which teeth are filled rather than extracted varies between camps, with transit camps being more likely to try to save the teeth.

In theory, it is UNHCR policy to provide health services commensurate with those available for nationals in the host countries. However, in the transit centres in Thailand



Photograph by Rebecca Todd

Thailand

and the Philippines where refugees are selected for resettlement in the USA, they are provided with very sophisticated care, the aim being to eliminate as many dental problems as possible before the refugees leave South-East Asia.

In the Hong Kong camps, the situation is different, since the Vietnamese are not normally eligible for resettlement. Dental care is either available on an *ad hoc* basis, or non-existent. There are no preventive programmes, even though conditions are such that dental health is threatened. In San Yick, tooth-brushing has to be done in the communal bathroom facilities which serve 400 people. The only dental education material in this camp is a large drawing on the wall depicting tooth-brushing, but the caption warns against wasting water.

Preventing Yet Another Problem

Refugees in long-term refugee camps are often in conditions highly unfavourable for good dental health. A preventive approach is appropriate and cost-effective. The preventive public health approach to dental problems developed in the Thai-Kampuchean border camps may be a useful model for dental programmes elsewhere. Dental



Photograph by Rebecca Todd

Toothbrushing; San Yick closed camp, Hong Kong

disease can be yet another problem that refugees will face on resettlement or repatriation. This can be avoided if more is done to control dental disease in refugee camps.

Rebecca Todd

Lecturer in Community Dentistry

Notes

1. Riordan, P.J., Birkeland, J.M., Olsen, J.M., Boe, O.E. (1981) 'Dental Health of Young Vietnamese Immigrants' in *Community Dental Oral Epidemiology*, 9: 239-244.
2. Philips, S.J. (1981) 'Screening Vietnamese Refugee Children' in *Maternal Health and Child Care*, 6: 342-346
3. A condition where infection has extended into the bone.

Rebecca Todd has worked in dental treatment of Vietnamese refugees coming to the UK for resettlement. She has also worked in the Thai-Kampuchean border camps, supervising the preventive and treatment programmes, and has visited one of the closed camps in Hong Kong.

COMMENT

WHO IS A REFUGEE? RESOLVING THE CONFLICT

Refugees Reach West With Cries of 'We're Free'

James Appe's comments on the existence of environmental refugees [RPN 5] raise a number of issues which need to be addressed. Who is to count as a refugee is the focus of considerable current interest, without extending the issue to questions of the environment. In particular, the furore over the decision to screen refugees from Vietnam and the threat to repatriate, forcibly if necessary, those who are screened out, hinges largely on the definition of a refugee and the way in which status will be determined.

According to Appe, the attempt to find a 'proper' definition of refugees is a political struggle between people and organizations who want to help refugees by broadening the definition and governments and politicians who wish to restrict the definition and exclude them. The original humanitarian approach to the problems of refugees has been replaced by political approaches.

12 THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1989

Kohl rolls out welcome mat for refugees

He concludes that 'the fact remains that the 1951 Convention's definition of a refugee...is the only correct and acceptable definition: that a refugee is a person who is "outside the country of his (or her) nationality owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted...". From this quotation, two simple but important conclusions can be drawn: a) only those persons outside the country of their nationality owing to the fear of persecution are refugees; b) refugees are essentially and strictly political victims.'

While there is something to recommend in Appe's conclusion that there cannot be environmental refugees, the central arguments on which he bases it are on more shaky ground, especially the notion that the original approach to refugees was purely humanitarian.

Most Vietnamese Face Return, Hong Kong Says

Refugees fear forced march into Cambodia

In its original form (changed only in 1967 by an additional protocol) the Convention was related to 'events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951' or to 'events occurring in Europe and elsewhere before 1 January 1951' with contracting states being allowed to decide which definition they wished to apply. The reason for the restriction on time and geography was largely political - providing a legal and institutional mechanism to offer asylum to the people fleeing the establishment of the new communist states of eastern Europe. At the same time, refugee resettlement was seen as a convenient means of filling a gap in the labour market which threatened the process of post-war recovery.

There were, and continue to be, those who see the acceptance and treatment of refugees as a humanitarian issue, but the foundations of the convention and the international system established through UNHCR were political and its operation has, with the involvement of states as the arbiters of eligibility, continued to be so. Refugee policy, as a US Refugee Co-ordinator put it some years ago, is an extension of foreign policy. For governments, refugee policy is a political issue and humanitarian concern is guided by political interest. The worst case is the hundreds and thousands of Cambodians forced to remain in the most desperate situation in camps along the border with Thailand. This is not a humanitarian problem but a political problem causing a human disaster.

It is not a question of academic romance, as Appe would have it, to try to look for new legal definitions of a refugee which are appropriate to current political situations. It is part of a larger effort to ensure the incorporation of humanitarian principles in political behaviour. It may confuse governments and politicians who have their own agendas - why, for example, does the US take large quotas of Vietnamese and European refugees, but not Salvadorans or Guatemalans? Because, quite simply, the situations are politically different. Vietnamese who leave are 'victims of communist persecution' and/or 'economic mismanagement'. Salvadorans are 'economic migrants' seeking a better life in the US. So, Vietnamese have been recognised without being required to establish their claim to a well-founded fear of persecution while virtually all Salvadorans are refused asylum and deported. European governments

Police deployed to quell boat people violence

are closing their doors even more firmly, attempting to prevent all but the smallest trickle of refugees from getting into the fortress.

But the contradiction does not end there. Western donors provide extensive aid to support programmes for large numbers of refugees in 'third world' countries without requiring individual determination under the terms of the convention. Recent examples abound: Afghan refugees in Pakistan who are victims of foreign invasion and civil war; Salvadorans who have fled the indiscriminate slaughter to seek security in Honduras; people from Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda in each of the other countries. The difference here is that the support is given to maintain people in camps or settlements far away – so determination is not seen as important.

Internally displaced people provide another difficult political issue. It may be confusing and it may add definitional difficulties to an already complicated problem, but the internal refugees – those who cannot get into another country – are also not offered protection. If there is going to be oppression then you had better be near a border if you want the international community to take any effective action.

Discussion and policy on repatriation also has its contradictions. While everyone agrees that there should be no *refoulement*, the recent Geneva conference on Indo-China accepted that there should be screening of new arrivals. If screening is to have any meaning at all, it must imply that some people will be screened out. If repatriation is not accepted as a consequence then there are three options. Firstly, there can be an open-ended commitment to resettlement of those screened out, in which case there is no point in having a screening process at all. Secondly, there could be a holding operation condemning people to indefinite detention in temporary camps which is surely less desirable. Finally, there could be an agreement to settle people locally, but this does not seem politically accept-

If screening is to have any meaning at all, it must imply that some people will be screened out



Photograph by L. Taylor/UNHCR

Government seeks to allay fears on newcomers Bonn to boost aid for refugees

able to the potential hosts. Against these alternatives, properly supervised and supported repatriation does not necessarily seem so unattractive.

However, repatriation is not an easy issue. Is it really safe for people to return? UNHCR is, for example, working to repatriate Tamil refugees from India while simultaneously arguing that they should not be sent back from Europe. If Sri Lanka is dangerous, surely it is dangerous wherever returnees have been given asylum? How and for how long will the returns be monitored? In the case of the Vietnamese this seems unclear. There are a host of other questions which need to be asked and answered. But the principle of repatriation for those screened out is not necessarily inconsistent with humanitarian principles.

16,000 Surge Across Border From Hungary Berlin Denounces Budapest, Alleging 'Open Interference'

Contradictions in refugee policy abound because the root causes and the solutions are political. Making amends for the mistakes of the thirties and forties and early cold war politics shaped the present refugee definition and legal framework. But today's refugees are from and in the 'third world'; and it is there that the greatest advances have been made in attempting to find legal definitions linked to the political situation. The OAU (Organization of African Unity) Convention includes 'every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events disturbing public order' have been forced to leave their homes. The Cartagena Declaration of the OAS (Organization of American States) includes 'those whose lives, security or liberty have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflict, mass violations of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.' Frightened governments and politicians elsewhere would do well to follow their example and bring the response to refugees into line with the modern political causes of their plight.

Clive Nettleton

REVIEWS

MANUALS FOR PRACTITIONERS WORKING WITH REFUGEES

There is a considerable body of literature addressing the concerns of practitioners, yet social work and fieldwork agency shelves throughout the world are littered with dusty, unread material held not to be relevant to the daily concerns of the workers. This is a shame because most of the authors of such material are practitioners turned writers and these manuals contain much that would be valuable to practitioners in their work. If this already available material was read, the tendency in each new generation of practitioners to reinvent the wheel might be avoided.

The dilemma for writers, however, is where to direct the focus of concern. Practitioners, of course, have to grasp the central issues of their work, but this understanding will not develop if their daily tasks are dressed up as a set of abstract questions and remote theories. Much of their work is crisis intervention. Therefore, they need to know what to do **now**, in **this** situation, with **this** person or group. Conversely, simply drawing up a list of prescriptive procedures for specific practice will also be unsatisfactory: such a list will not throw much light on the deeper problems of workers in their daily confrontations with the needs and distress of people dependent on their services.

The three books reviewed below are useful in this respect because, with similar objectives, but in different fields, they represent practical approaches that might be adopted to overcome the gap between the concerns of writers and those of practitioners. All three books are manageable, well-presented and clearly indicate to whom the book is addressed. They also give a comprehensive list of resources and contacts.

I am, however, dubious about the general assumption present in all three books, that groups such as refugees, or women in developing countries form a homogenous group which constitutes a special case with regard to good policy and practice. The basic dynamic of refugee services and development work is typically 'infinite needs - scarce resources'. Therefore, who will be helped is an urgent question with immense ethnical implications. In answering it, workers may become trapped in the further question of whether some people are more 'deserving' than others. This in turn raises the issue of whether some people, perhaps because of a

particular political commitment, or because of their known involvement in the torture of others, should not be helped at all.

Of course, when writing a manual, authors have to focus upon the particular needs and interests of those identified as the subjects. But there is a danger that appropriate, practical concerns will be turned unthinkingly by others into a set of generalizations about those falling within the category of women or refugees. From such generalizations, a negative policy orthodoxy may develop, leading to characteristic hunting and possibly stereotyping, which will be both ineffective and harmful.

Social Work and Refugees, R. Finlay & J. Reynolds (1987). National Extension College (18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, CB2 2HN, UK) and Refugee Action. London. 225 pages, price £12.95.

This handbook is for those working in Social Services. It offers a comprehensive account of all aspects of work with refugees in Britain. The long experience of the authors in this field and their obvious commitment to provision that meets the needs of asylum seekers and refugees shines through. The book's usefulness goes beyond its UK focus because, although the book is directed at people involved in social work in Britain, who are not themselves refugees, it is obviously a synthesis of what has been learned from refugees, both as workers and clients, throughout the world.

The strength of the book lies in the way discussions move smoothly and easily between specific issues and broad themes. However, I wish place had been given to the needs and experiences of social workers in this field. The authors could then have stressed, as they have elsewhere, the importance of good supervision and a strong support network for those involved. Although in print for three years, I warmly recommend this book as a basic resource for social workers.

Understanding Family Violence within US Refugee Communities, Beth Richie (1988). Refugee Women in Development, Inc., 810 First St. NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002, US. 63 pages, price \$8.00 inc. p&p.

This is another pathbreaker and is therefore to be welcomed. It sets out possible exercises and role-plays through which the painful issue of domestic violence against women refugees can be addressed and discussed.

Clearly written, it takes the reader through the issues in a constructive and sensitive way. I have some reservations,

however, about the chosen format. The point of writing in this way is to guide people step by step through a set curriculum. When it works, as it does for some of the time in this book, it is an effective learning tool for practitioners. But it is also potentially dangerous. The assumption of those using it is that, if they follow the exercises, they will be competent in a specific area. Therefore, it is essential that each necessary step is written in clearly, with respect to both content and technique.

However, this book leaves some critical points undiscussed in both areas. One serious omission, for example, is that there is no discussion of the possible relationship between organized political violence, which many refugees have experienced, especially torture and rape, and the incidence and form of family violence in refugee communities. I would argue that it is this, specifically, which gives possible validity to treating refugees as a special case, with respect to family violence. But the very serious question which then arises should be faced in the manual, that is, why, when both men and women have experienced torture, where related family violence can be shown, men are typically the perpetrators and women the victims and survivors?

At the level of technique, I was concerned to find role-play presented as unproblematic. It is, as Ritchie shows, a very powerful medium of communication and change. Therefore, ground rules about participating in role-play should be set down in the manual. For example, the informed consent of those participating in role-play, and the need for time at the end of an exercise to fully 'de-role', are basic, but cannot be assumed.

These qualifications notwithstanding, this is a useful book which should be developed further.

No Short Cuts: A Starter Resource Book for Women's Group Fieldworkers, by Nicky May and the Networkers (1986). Change International Reports, PO Box 824, London, SE24 9SS. 56 pages, price £3.75.

This informative booklet with an excellent list of agencies and other resources for this work, is to be particularly recommended for the amount of factual detail given. This ranges from questions about group membership to examples of form layouts, to the possible pitfalls at all levels of women's groupwork. Of the three books reviewed, it seemed to me the most useful as a desk-top resource for action. Given an identified set of objectives, it informatively sets out the practical means of achieving them and the possible barriers to success.

I have only one small reservation about it as a resource book: the presentation mitigates against easy access to information. The print is very small and the sections closely squashed together with much wasted space. Under

pressure, a worker, or group participants, may find it difficult to engage with this very important text.

Ann Schofield Payne
Ruskin College, Oxford

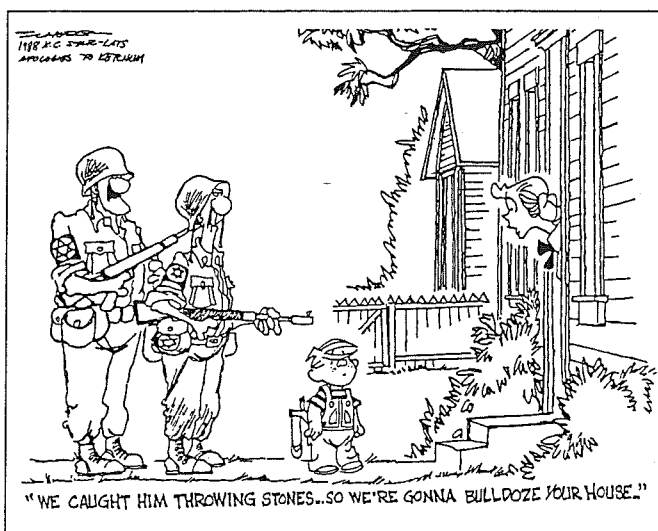
No Short Cuts has already been extensively used by non-government organizations, and will soon be available in French and Spanish editions.

American Public Opinion and the Question of Palestine: an Analysis of Changes in American Views Based on Polls taken from 1978-1988, by Fouad Moughrabi, Issue Paper No 22, published by ADC, 4210 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008, US. 26 pages, price \$3.00 + .50 p&p

This pamphlet is one of a series, published by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), which aims to increase awareness in the American public of Arab affairs. This paper deals with American public opinion towards the Palestinian question.

In 1988 there were more than two million Palestinian refugees, 725,000 of them still living in camps. This situation was created by the Israeli occupation of 73 per cent of Palestine in 1948, and of the remaining parts known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. The analysis shows how American public opinion towards Israel has changed during the past decade. This shift of opinion has been brought about by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Israeli involvement in the 'Iran-Contra affair' and, lastly, Israeli violations of human rights in dealing with the Uprising in the Occupied Territories.

Relying on polls and media coverage, the author shows that, although Israel has been supported by the American public in the past, this support has gradually shifted in-



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sofar as there is a significant increase in pro-Palestinian sympathy and a willingness to endorse the right of Palestinians to a separate, independent state. These pro-Palestinian tendencies were more evident among the college-educated and better-informed Americans. There is also some evidence of public support for exerting economic pressure on Israel to begin immediate negotiations with the PLO, through American aid, which totals \$3 billion per annum. More strikingly, the study points out the splits that have started to appear among American Jewish people in their attitude towards Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories.

Although this is an encouraging and informative analysis, there are two aspects that have been neglected. The first is the failure to make any mention of Israeli political, economic and social policy in the Occupied Territories during the last two decades. This surely must play a key role in provoking the Palestinians. The second is American government strategy towards the Palestinians and its role in their suffering.

Najeh Jarrar
An-Najah University
Nablus
West Bank

Other recent ADC Issue Papers in the same series include *Children of the Stones* and *The Uprising in Cartoons* both at \$3.00 + .50 p&p.

A Study of West Papuan Permitted Refugees in Papua New Guinea, (1988) by Ursula Rakova, published by the Catholic Commission for Justice Peace and Development (PNG), P O Box 6576, Boroko, Papua New Guinea.

Since 1960, when Indonesia annexed the former territory of Dutch New Guinea as its easternmost province of Irian Jaya, Melanesian West Papuans have been seeking refuge across the border in the Independent Republic of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

This undergraduate study is an attempt to assess the number of West Papuans in PNG who have had permissive residence status for more than ten years, and who have not obtained PNG citizenship.

Unfortunately, the sampling methods used are not adequate to provide a reliable estimate of these numbers, or other accurate demographic data. The author visited only seven towns and, in many cases, held no more than one group interview from which to collect information. Using this technique, she cannot have been sure that all members of the West Papuan population were included. However, other information gathered from the 248 informants is of great interest: for example, they appear to have come from a highly educated sector of the West

Papuan population (35 per cent completed primary education; 35 per cent secondary and 15 per cent tertiary); 80 per cent were Protestant compared to only 20 per cent of Catholics. Most were living in private accommodation, with only 28 per cent in government housing. In the sample, more than half were unemployed. Of those interviewed, 80 per cent wanted to gain PNG citizenship.

The significance of these observations, without a reliable database, is limited. They do, however, suggest an interesting topic for future local research initiatives.

Rosemary Preston

The Impaired Mind (March 1988) published by the Psychiatry Centre for Afghan Refugees, Shaheen Town, University Road, PO Box 641 GPO, Peshawar, Pakistan. 52 pages.

The crisis in Afghanistan during the last ten years has affected the life of almost every individual in one way or another and as a consequence one third of the population has sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Drawing by a victim of torture at the Psychiatry Centre for Afghan Refugees



The Impaired Mind is a valuable source for mental health workers, both clinicians and researchers. The report illustrates the work of the Psychiatry Centre for Afghan Refugees, which constitutes a serious attempt towards the establishment of mental health services for victims of the crisis in Afghanistan.

The consequences of exposure to bereavement, the deeper sense of loss both tangible and intangible, torture, and other facets of the misery of displacement, are examined. The report also provides statistical evidence of the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among those who have visited the centre. It also gives insights into the possible relationship between displacement, drug abuse and patterns of psychopathic behaviour. Interestingly, the report attempts to establish a relationship between exposure to extreme stress and epilepsy. Also included are several well-presented case studies of patients who have visited the centre.

According to the report, children are one of the most vulnerable groups affected by the current crisis. They are deprived of basic education and other physical, intellectual and emotional needs essential for normal develop-

ment. This may have far-reaching consequences for future generations. There is ample evidence that exposure to traumatic experiences in early childhood leads to the development of psychopathology in subsequent years. The appalling conditions experienced by refugee children are compounded by other factors, such as lack of nutritious food, poor sanitation and poor preventive medical care, all of which result in weak growth both physically and mentally.

Undoubtedly, this report is an important step forward in the investigation of mental disorders among refugee populations. Its main drawback is that it is confined solely to the patient population. A full account of the prevalence of mental disorders needs a more comprehensive survey which would be beyond the scope of this report and other small scale studies. This requires the attention of international organizations such as the World Health Organization or the United Nations.

Overall, however, *The Impaired Mind* is a useful reference for those interested in the psychiatric aspects of forced migration and associated post-traumatic stress disorders.

A Wali
The University of Hull, UK

Putting People First: Voluntary Organizations and Third World Organizations, (January 1989) edited by Michael Harris and Robin Poulton. Development Studies. Published by Macmillan, London. 178 pages, price £7.50.

Non-Governmental Organizations and the New Orthodoxy
'The new orthodoxy' referred to on the back cover of this volume, is an expression which has gained currency of late in the development literature.

In part, the new orthodoxy has emerged as a consequence of the failure of economic theories of all types to adequately come to terms with what is happening in poor countries. It reflects an increased recognition by concerned people, of all ideological persuasions, that the multilateral and bilateral aid organizations are in many cases part of the problem, not any kind of real solution. The new orthodoxy requires analysis to be grounded in interdisciplinary micro-level research, in order to improve understanding of what is happening to real people, and of what these people do and know. Along these lines, significant insights have been possible about the nature of rural poverty, the causes and consequences of famine, and the detailed technical knowledge of supposedly ignorant and conservative peasants and pastoralists. But the new orthodoxy goes beyond insights. It links analysis directly to the planning and flexible implementation of grassroots aid programmes.



Paradoxically, this approach does not necessarily contradict, the neo-liberal, 'get the prices to farmers right' policies espoused by the World Bank. Partly for this reason, and partly because the large aid organizations are eager to re-establish some credibility following the appalling disasters that have occurred in Africa, it is also an approach for which considerable funds are currently being made available. But to what degree does the new orthodoxy really affect aid planning, or to what extent it is just the new lip service?

This collection is made up of pieces written by the 'do-ers' of development, some of them working as field officers for the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) OXFAM and Action Aid. In accordance with the new orthodoxy, editor Robin Poulton claims that NGOs 'never carry out an action without studying its effects, but always carry out the research with the villagers together, so that it leads to greater impact for the actions', and goes on to assert that the 'NGOs are building up the structures which will allow peasants not only to claim, but to gain a share of power'. In places, an unquestioned connection is made between the ideals of the new orthodoxy and what NGOs actually do. This is absurd.

The ideal of putting people first, of strategies which seek not only to assist, but to empower the recipients of aid, is extremely difficult to put into practice even when there is a will to do so. Many organizations have adopted this rhetoric, but make no effort to implement it. As Robin Poulton himself points out, some NGOs act in an amateur, sometimes damaging manner. Others rely heavily on official funding. Probably the majority of NGOs, particularly those specializing in health care, persist in top-down, technological transfers and their staff remain remote from the 'targets' of their interventions.

Several chapters in this book seem to be more concerned with showing projects in a good light in order to elicit further funding, than with seriously examining constraints, lessons and achievements. On the other hand, there are parts of the volume which deal with the problems involved in promoting grassroots development more seriously, and make it worth looking at in spite of its shortcomings.

Robert Dodd writes frankly about the barriers to Oxfam's effort to promote grassroots development, particularly in Burundi, where political repression acted as a severe constraint on development initiatives, since the organization

was mistrusted both by the government and by those it was trying to help. Tim Brodhead provides a helpful overview of Indian self-help organizations, and suggests ways in which the Gandhi model might provide lessons for NGOs operating in Africa. He stresses the importance of moving away from development timetables, and instead promoting a vision of development rooted in indigenous values and based on people's needs and active involvement. However, a comparison of the Indian and African experiences of self-help might have helped to explain why local NGOs in Africa appear to be so weak. Perhaps one of the reasons for the relative success of Indian organizations is that the activities of international NGOs are much more restricted by the Indian government than they generally are in Africa.

In perhaps the best chapter, Nigel Twose provides a thoughtful survey of NGO activity in Mali and Burkina Faso. He reveals that, following the famine of the 1970s, more than fifty national and regional aid offices were established in Ouagadougou in just a few years. The result was a huge range of autonomous projects, based on individual and sometimes ill-informed judgements. He gives the example of an attempt to set up village cereal banks, with the intention of providing an alternative source of cereals to that of the grain merchants. It was a good idea, but the grain was sold in quantities which were too large for the poorest to afford, and were often bought by the relatively rich, who would then re-sell them at a profit. Now the same organizations have moved down the road to Mali and it looks as though the same mistakes are going to be repeated. At the root of the problem is the competitiveness of NGOs. Few are prepared to collaborate with each other in a meaningful way, and fewer still are prepared to recognise the need for anything more than a minimal working relationship with the host government.

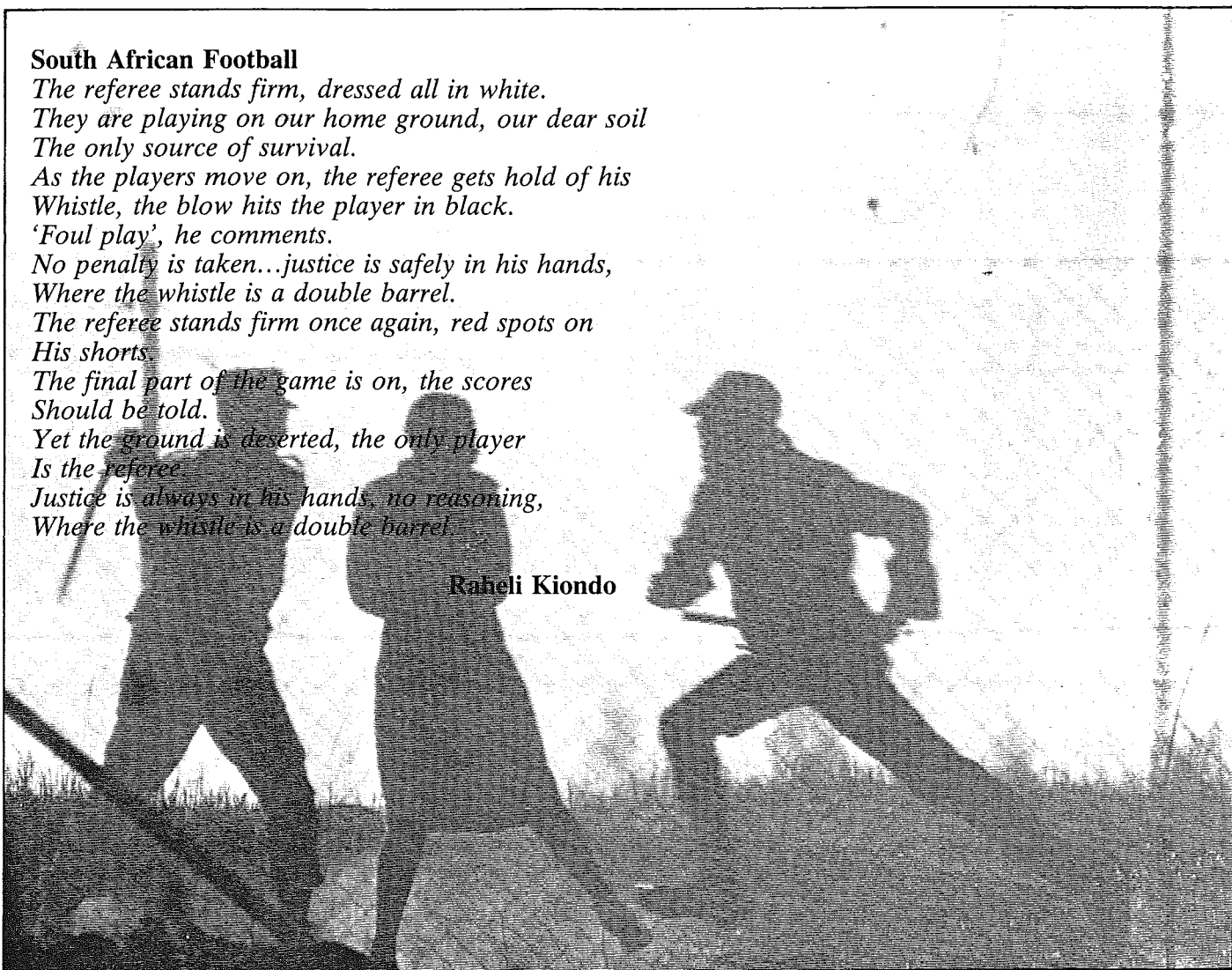
This problem, as well as the dilemmas involved in the transition from relief to development, are taken up in the following chapter by Eva Mysliwiec on OXFAM activities in Kampuchea. Finally, in 'Vietnam remembered', Guy Stringer recounts his experiences in simple, and humane prose. He does not disguise the difficulties involved in transferring resources and skills to those that really need them, but succeeds in undermining the cynicism that must occasionally affect all of us who work in, or think about, the aid business.

Tim Allen
St Anne's College, Oxford.

South African Football

*The referee stands firm, dressed all in white.
They are playing on our home ground, our dear soil
The only source of survival.
As the players move on, the referee gets hold of his
Whistle, the blow hits the player in black.
'Foul play', he comments.
No penalty is taken...justice is safely in his hands,
Where the whistle is a double barrel.
The referee stands firm once again, red spots on
His shorts.
The final part of the game is on, the scores
Should be told.
Yet the ground is deserted, the only player
Is the referee
Justice is always in his hands, no reasoning,
Where the whistle is a double barrel.*

Raheli Kiondo



Photograph by IDAF/Noel Watson



Raheli Kiondo was educated in Tanzania, Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho. At present she is working for the Tanzania-Mozambique Friendship Association (TAMOFa) as Management Assistant and Agricultural Programme Officer. In 1988 the Tanzanian Government appointed TAMOFa as an implementing agency for health, education, and community development for Mozambican refugees of whom there are 72,000 in the southern regions of Tanzania. Raheli lived for eleven years in Mozambique and can therefore sympathize with the masses who face hardship and suffering.

Police beating a woman in a township

Wild Boers

*So mild the weather,
Stretches miles forever,
Chances to glance,
Traces of fence.
Behind bars,
Survive victimized warm hearts,
So calm to the core,
No chance to oppose,
Circled by vicious roars,
Of roaming wild boers.*

Raheli Kiondo

UPDATE

ORGANIZATIONS

Peace and Human Rights

The Pan-African Centre for Research on Peace, Development and Human Rights (PACREP) is an independent, non-governmental network of peace and human rights researchers. The objectives of the network are to initiate, promote and conduct research and original investigations with a view to projecting an African viewpoint on peace in the world.

Programmes and activities include research, publications, the Refugee Research Group, conferences/seminars/lectures, as well as a documentation service. Membership is open to all individuals and institutions who subscribe to the aims and objectives of PACREP and who are interested and engaged in the study of peace, development and human rights in the African context.

For further information write to:

Professor Okwudiba Nnoli
Co-ordinator-General, PACREP
Department of Political Science
University of Nigeria
Nsukka
Nigeria

Refugee Women and Children

Inter-Refugee Welfare Centre (IRWC) is a non-governmental organization based in Dar-es-Salaam. It is locally initiated and encourages the participation of refugees in projects for durable solutions. IRWC believe that by promoting refugees' own ideas from the grassroots and diffusing them into the wider scope of development strategies, the real needs of refugees can be met.

The Inter-Refugee Welfare Centre is primarily involved with projects concerning the care, welfare and development of refugee women and children. These include: a home for abandoned children and single women and mothers in the suburbs of Dar-es-Salaam; a plan to start up nursery schools in refugee settlements; using volunteers to alleviate the hazards of malaria, malnutrition and illiteracy amongst refugee children; a women's theatre group to raise funds for women's income-generating projects; plans to begin a market gardening scheme; the provision of basic medical treatment.

The Inter-Refugee Welfare Centre is anxious to secure support for its work in meeting the needs of under-privileged refugee women and children. Those interested and/or able to offer help should contact:

The Co-ordinator
Inter-Refugee Welfare Centre
Post Box 71368
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: 64096

Refugee Women in Development (RefWID) Inc. is the only national organization in the United States which helps refugee women to meet the economic needs of their families, to feel personally safe and secure, and maintain their culture and identity. Founded in 1981, the organization has three primary goals: a) to promote and support refugee women's self-help efforts; b) to increase programme and policy attention to the economic development and related adjustment needs of refugee women; c) to help refugee women join forces among themselves, with women in the United States, and with relevant development resources to meet their needs. RefWID is sponsored by the Overseas Education Fund International, and provides technical, educational, and organizational assistance to refugee women.

RefWID publishes a newsletter, *The Quilting Bee*, which is translated into seven refugee languages and is disseminated to over 1500 organizations, individual refugees and interested agencies.

For further information write to:

Sima Wali
Executive Director
Refugee Women in Development Inc.
810 First Street, NE
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002, USA
Tel: (202) 289-1104

Rural Development

CIKARD, the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge for Agricultural and Rural Development, focuses on preserving and using the knowledge of farmers and rural people around the globe. The Centre was established at Iowa State University in October 1987 and its goal is to collect indigenous knowledge and make it available to development professionals and scientists.

Those who would like to be included in the CIKARD information network please write to:

Dr D.M. Warren
TSC Program
318 Curtiss Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011, USA

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR

Health and Human Rights

In continuation of the First International Conference held in Paris in September 1987, the Second International Conference, 'Health, Political Repression and Human Rights', will be held in San Jose, Costa Rica from 26 November to 2 December 1989.

The aim of the Conference is to promote possibilities in the care of victims of organised violence through the exchange of knowledge, experiences and new developments. The programme consists of plenary sessions, round-table discussions, symposia and workshops.

The organisers are anxious to contact people interested in attending the Conference as soon as possible, so please write to:

Organising Committee Costa Rica

c/o LHM van Willigen, M.D.

Director OGV

Postbus 264

280 AC Rijswijk

The Netherlands

The Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) is organising a seminar on 'Migration Medicine' which will take place from 6-9 February 1990 at the World Health Organization Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland. The seminar is expected to be attended by 120-150 persons involved in medical issues linked to populations moving from one country to another.

ICM is processing and moving approximately 150,000 refugees and migrants to other countries this year. In this respect it is concerned daily with various medical issues as outlined in the provisional programme of the seminar (infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, leprosy and sexually-transmitted diseases; mental health, nutrition, oral health, health education and counselling of groups at risk).

ICM have published a 'call-for-papers' pamphlet together with the provisional programme of the seminar. Those interested in either contributing a paper or attending the seminar should contact:

Seminar Secretariat

Intergovernmental Committee for Migration

PO Box 71

1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland

Tel: (022) 717 9111

CHOLARSHIPS

Oxford Students' Scholarships 1990

A number of Oxford colleges offer scholarships to students from developing countries who, for political or financial reasons, or because equivalent educational facilities do not exist, cannot obtain an education in their own countries.

All scholars must satisfy Oxford University matriculation requirements. They must either a) have obtained a degree from a recognised university; or b) have passed examinations equivalent to 2 'A' level passes and 3 'O' level passes in the General Certificate of Education. These passes must include a pass in an approved mathematical or scientific

subject, a pass in English Language, and a pass in another language; or c) in some cases, a certificate of having passed an entrance examination to a recognised university which may meet the matriculation requirements.

All scholars must have a command of English adequate for receiving all tuition and for taking all university examinations in English.

Application forms and further information can be obtained from:

The Adviser to Overseas Students

Graduate Admissions Office

University Offices, Wellington Square

Oxford OX1 2JD, UK

PUBLICATIONS

Peace and Development in the Sudan

Sudan Update, Vol. 1, No 1, 30 June 1989, is published by the Committee for Peace and Reconstruction in Sudan (CPRS). CPRS is intended to unite Sudanese and non-Sudanese in Great Britain from different ethnic, religious, and political groups, who genuinely want to work for peace and development in Sudan.

Sudan Update is primarily a factual news-sheet providing recent information on the Sudan gleaned from Western, Arabic and Sudanese newspapers, as well as radio and other sources. It will be distributed fortnightly and is intended to keep all Sudanese and friends of the Sudan in touch with what is happening in the peace process. It is produced mainly by volunteers and the editor requests anyone recently returned from Sudan, or who can give an analysis on any particular aspect, to telephone in their news to Liz Hodgkin (see below).

The first three issues of *Sudan Update* will be free of charge. Thereafter, the cost price will have to be charged. Those who wish to make donations, please make cheques payable to: Committee for Peace and Reconstruction in Sudan. Annual subscription: £10; 6-monthly subscription: £6.

Dr Liz Hodgkin

CPRS

65A Swinton Street

London WC1X 9NT, UK

Tel: 01 837 4188

Health

The Ark: the African Bulletin on Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, Issue No 1 (May 1989). This is a new publication of the WHO Panafrican Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response and aims to be an information service, contributing to the build-up of a global preparedness attitude. This first issue includes thirty-

five news items on health emergency management in Africa.

Correspondence and enquiries should be addressed to:

The Editor

The Ark

WHO EPR Panafrikan Centre

PO Box 3050, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Refugee Children

Children Caring.... Children Sharing...., written and compiled by refugees living in Central America gives a remarkable insight into the thoughts and feeling of El Salvadoran refugee children, and the ways in which Costa Rican children have responded to their plight. Following the influx of El Salvadoran refugees into Costa Rica, the Children's Project was set up and many international volunteers collaborated. This book, almost entirely written and illustrated by children, invites the reader to share their thoughts, hopes, dreams and fears.

For further information about the work with El Salvadoran refugees please write to:

DIAKONIA

Apdo. 500-2050

San Pedro - San Jose

Costa Rica, C.A.

Human Rights

As part of a new series of background papers, the Minority Rights Group (MRG) has published *The Alevi Kurds* by David McDowall. This is an informative and comprehensive overview of the Alevi Kurds' history and current situation. It is intended that the report be used by solicitors and those working specifically with the recent influx of over 3,000 Kurdish asylum seekers in the UK, most of whom are Alevi Kurds from Turkey.

Published on 7 August 1989, *The Alevi Kurds* is priced at £2.00 + p/p for MRG subscribers. For non-subscribers £10.50 will ensure a subscription to the next five MRG reports (on issues such as *The Bedouins of the Negev*, *The Indians of Guatemala*, and *The Minorities of the Balkans*), a copy of *The Alevi Kurds* plus access to subsequent occasional papers.

To order please write to:

The Minority Rights Group

29 Craven Street

London WC2N 5NT

Tel: 01 930 6659

The European Manifesto (1989) is published by Refugee Forum and the Migrant Rights Action Network, price £2. The publication is part of the continuation of the European campaign in which the Refugee Forum and the Mig-

rant Rights Action Network set out the manifesto for migrants, immigrants and refugees in Europe. This manifesto has been adopted in various European networks in 1989. It also spells out specific demands for migrants, immigrants and refugees in the UK.

There is an urgent need for groups, communities and organizations to join together to ensure that legitimate demands are raised in every forum and on every occasion. The Refugee Forum and the Migrant Rights Action Network urge all immigrant, migrant and refugee groups to support their campaign and to publicize the ten demands of the manifesto.

For further information contact:

Refugee Forum, Migrant Rights Action Network

54 Tavistock Place, London WC1, UK

Behind the Palestinian Uprising: A Journey through the Occupied Territories (1988) by Essma Ben Hamida, is jointly published by the Third World Network and International Foundation for Development Alternatives. The author of this 76-page booklet, a Tunisian woman journalist, gives a vivid eyewitness account of the life of Palestinians under Israeli rule, in the Occupied Territories, and in refugee camps in Jordan, clearly showing the reasons underlying the Palestinian Uprising. The extensive use of quotes from interviews with Palestinian men and women gives a harsh picture of the systematic oppression, squalor and deprivation under which many Palestinians are forced to live and allows us to hear the authentic voice of Palestinians on their struggle. The booklet is manageable in size, easy to read and contains many useful facts and figures, as well as poems and photographs.

For further information, contact:

Third World Network, *87 Cantonment Road, Penang, Malaysia*, or

International Foundation for Development Alternatives, *4 Place du Marche, 1260 Nyon, Switzerland*.

The Immigrant Experience

The Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives, Vol VII, No 1, March 1988, is a special edition that focuses on the immigrant experience. Articles include 'Migrant Women and Wage Labor: the Case of Turkish Migrant Women in Western Europe', 'Pre-Schooling of Children with a Mother Tongue Other than Swedish', 'Migrant Women and Education' among many others.

The Journal is published quarterly with occasional double-sized special issues on specific problems with an interdisciplinary focus in the social sciences. Encouraging

views from the widest possible spectrum of opinions, the Journal is a valuable research and reference tool for scholars, students and libraries.

Subscription rates for India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Africa, and Latin America are SKR 250 + 25 (institutions) and SKR 125 + 25 (individuals); other countries: SKR 425 + 25 (institutions) and SKR 200 + 25 (individuals).

Subscriptions, manuscripts, books for review and all editorial correspondence should be addressed to:

Managing Editor SJDA

Post Box 7444

103 91 Stockholm, Sweden

Tel: 0758-19687

Resettlement

Refugee Sponsorship Handbook, compiled by the Working Group on Refugee Resettlement, is a refugee sponsorship guide book for sponsorship groups or prospective sponsorship groups of refugees entering Canada to become permanent residents. Items include 'Types of Sponsorship', 'Financial Guarantees', 'Cost of Sponsorship', 'Planning and Preparation', 'Initial Settlement and Orientation', 'Long Term Adjustments' etc.

For further information write to: -

The Working Group on Refugee Resettlement

347 College Street

Suite 301

Toronto, Ont. M5T 2V8, Canada

Tel: (416) 968 1928

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

***YES, I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE REFUGEE PARTICIPATION NETWORK**

Name _____ Position _____

Address _____

Town _____ Country _____

Telephone/Telex/Fax _____

Main area of work or experience (e.g. education, health etc.) _____

Special interest group (e.g. refugee women, disabled etc.) or second area of experience _____

Geographical area of interest (e.g. Africa, Asia etc.) _____

Type of organization (e.g. non-governmental, international agency, refugee-based, individual etc.) _____

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

ERROR ON ASYLUM SPARKS CONTROVERSY

The article entitled 'Restrictive Practices: Asylum Trends in the West' in the last issue of the Newsletter (RPN 5), has sparked off a controversy in the UK press. Edward Mortimer, a journalist with the *Financial Times* (FT), used much of the information from the article to write his own piece entitled 'The Closing Door to Sanctuary' which the FT published on 22 August. The original article in RPN, and consequently Mortimer's piece, contained an error. As UK Home Office Minister John Patten pointed out, in his letter of 29 August to the FT, it is not true that *'....the British government acted illegally in the summer of 1987, by refusing asylum to five Tamils and returning them to Sri Lanka within four days of their arrival'* (RPN 5, p15)

However, two of the five Tamils mentioned were among a larger group of fifty-eight Tamils whom the Home Office tried to remove (to Bangladesh) on 17

February 1987, four days after their arrival. The removal was delayed by some of the Tamils stripping down to their underpants, and halted by the last minute granting of an injunction, brought by sympathetic solicitors. The five Tamils in question were deported to Sri Lanka in February 1988. It was this act which, in March 1989, was ruled illegal by the Immigration Appeals Adjudicator, who ordered the Home Office to return the Tamils to the UK. After a series of delaying tactics, the Home Office has now been forced to accept this ruling, and at least one of the Tamils has now returned to the UK to pursue his asylum claim.

The author of the article in RPN 5, Sally Baden, corrected the error in her letter published by the FT on 5 September, whilst maintaining the essence of the argument: that asylum seekers coming to the UK are subjected to increasingly inhumane treatment.

LETTERS

We have received the following two letters from staff members of the Lutheran World Federation working in Moyo, Uganda. Their comments and observations are their own personal reflections and do not necessarily reflect those of the Lutheran World Federation.

*'To RPN
Please allow me a space in the RPN to put down what I think about the way refugees are handled.'*

I have been a refugee myself and therefore have personal experience concerning how refugees should be handled. By virtue of their recognised status, a refugee should be cared for by UNHCR to some extent, leaving some room for self-sufficiency.

Refugees become frustrated and violent when they are mistreated by UNHCR employees. Why should UNHCR keep an employee in service when he/she is inhumane? Refugees never threaten to use violence unless they are mistreated.

My appeal to those working within UNHCR is for their services to be more fruitful than simply working to earn themselves a salary.... I would also advise UNHCR to devise refugee programmes similar to their returnee programmes. In this way, refugees would become self-sufficient in the shortest possible period. Basic essentials should be given to them on arrival, which would solve the problem of keeping refugees in transit camps. In transit camps refugees are idle and more likely to become violent....

These are suggestions for possible implementation. It is a good idea to share experiences.'

Ronald Iya Banaoceai
Moyo, Uganda

'I feel that the RPN magazine offers a good opportunity for exchanging the experiences of those involved in the field of social work. It is

particularly appealing to those involved in refugee or returnee programmes.

The issues raised indicate the continual search for the best approaches to attain effective community participation. For example, the article on women's solidarity in RPN 3 revealed their cohesive character but showed that they could only afford to undertake small income-generating projects with no marked impact. The article on the Tanzanian experience [RPN 3] recommends the separate provision of social services for refugees. However, the situation for Ugandan refugees in the Sudan was different as services were successfully integrated right from the start. Separation could easily have given rise to serious enmity and conflict if the local community had had no access to the social services provided for refugees. The local situation may dictate decisions on when to integrate services.'

Sam W. Donze
Community Development Officer
Moyo, Uganda.

From the Ministry of Social Services in Malawi:

'..... As you may be aware, we in Malawi have relatively little experience with the problem of refugees and the RPN publication has proved helpful, particularly when the sharing of experiences is necessary in order to enrich our own programmes.'

Mrs E.J. Kalyati
Secretary for Community Services.

Similarly, **Dr E. Ngolle Ngolle** has written to us from the University of Yaounde, Cameroon:

'....I write to express the view that your RPN Newsletter is of extreme usefulness to those of us who hunger for constant and up-to-date information about refugees and related events.

.... Equally important is the fact that the newsletter serves as a quick reference guide for researchers who might be unaware of the existence of sources of information and other resources.'

Dr Ngolle Ngolle has also written in response to Mr James Ingram's lecture, 'Sustaining Refugees' Human Dignity: International Responsibility and Practical Reality' sent to RPN members with RPN 4:

'In the first place, I found encouragement in the value and importance Mr Ingram places on research, something which is taken for granted in many parts of the world including those affected by refugee influxes.

I also share his concern over the politicization of the numbers aspect of refugee management. African refugees particularly are victims of this phenomenon given their remote locations inaccessible to demographic surveyors and the reluctance on the part of certain refugee-affected states to accept the existence of refugees within their territories.

It seems to me that given the negative implications of these problems on refugee welfare, there is need for the international community to invest UNHCR with greater powers and resources thus enabling it to go beyond its traditional mandate and prevail on states, or all concerned, to be more conscientious in their management of the refugee problem. Donors of food and other forms of international aid would also do well to refrain from the practice of tying their aid to their political and strategic interests.

We recognise that while responding to refugee problems is a humanitarian gesture on the part of the international community, the enterprise itself is the consequence of political decision-making which tends to make politics out of the refugee business.'

NEWS FROM RSP

As for RPN 5, the guest editor for this issue of RPN is again Sally Baden, assisted by Mary Kilmartin. The layout, design and printing is by OXFAM.

RPN Membership

We have received a heartening number of letters from refugees around the world expressing their appreciation of and interest in the RPN. Many of these have expressed a desire to join the Network but are concerned about payment for RPN publications. May we remind all our readers that, providing we continue to receive sufficient funding, RPN publications will remain free of charge.

RPN Directory

We are pleased to include with this issue of the Newsletter the *RPN Directory of Participants* with introduction and full explanatory notes on the coding system. The Directory will be updated annually. Many participants will note that we have been unable to code their specific areas of interest and expertise. This is mainly because the application forms provided in previous Newsletters failed to elicit this information. We have, however, amended the application form in this issue, and those participants who are without codes are urged to complete the new form so that the relevant information can be added to the next updated version of the Directory. Additionally, if Network participants to whom we have already assigned codes feel that this has been done incorrectly, then please let us know. We hope that the Directory will prove useful by enabling participants to locate fellow Network participants with similar interests.

Food Provisioning of Mozambican Refugees in Malawi

This study of aid and livelihood in one of Africa's most serious current refugee situations was undertaken for the World Food Programme by a team of three researchers from the Refugee Studies Programme: Diana Cammack, Florence Shumba and Ken Wilson.

Malnutrition is increasing amongst refugees under relief aid. Therefore the study focused on the problems with existing food aid quantity, composition and distribution, and suggested possible remedies. Refugee strategies for diet supplementation were found to be inadequate due to the marked economic and natural resource constraints of rural Malawi. There was significant economic differentiation amongst refugees, and detailed recommendations were made for targeted assistance to the poorest.

Host country impact and the potential for improved relief and developmental intervention in this regard, were examined through investigation of processes of economic and ecological change which varied between areas. Firewood provision was deemed essential in particular areas, and generally for the poorest refugees and new arrivals. Novel initiatives were proposed to tap refugees' existing skills, including bee-keeping in forest reserves and swamp use for fishing and agriculture.

The report (194pp) can be consulted in the Documentation Centre at RSP, and may be published at a later date.

Visiting Fellowship Programme

The Visiting Fellowship Programme of the Refugee Studies Programme brings together practitioners and researchers, some of whom are also refugees, from different regions and different disciplines, so that they may learn from each other to their common benefit. Since 1985 RSP has had 50 Visiting Fellows in residence, representing 23 nationalities. Practitioners with experience in working with non-government organizations, international agencies and host governments have been concerned with expanding their knowledge in such areas as health, legal counselling, general administration and psychiatry. Academic fellows have used RSP's resources for research purposes, to develop courses for use in their own institutions, or they have undertaken structured and supervised study.

Courses currently taught at RSP include: Theories and Methods in the Study of Involuntary Migration; Refugees in the Contemporary World; the Sociology of Famine Migration; the Refugee Issue in International Relations; Refugee Law; Understanding Nutritional Issues; Psychosocial Problems of Displaced Peoples. In addition, the RSP Course Training Officer organises a series of specialised short courses for practitioners and can arrange short-term placements with relevant agencies.

On the basis of their *curriculum vitae* and references, applicants may be designated Visiting Research Fellows or Visiting Study Fellows. Fellows are responsible for securing their own funding. Once an applicant has been approved for attachment, the RSP will assist in writing letters supporting their applications for funding. Formal applications should be sent to RSP (see address on front cover).

Future Courses

Future courses at RSP will include:

- ★ *Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, an integrated conference and workshop on 'Interpersonal Skills in Assisting Refugees' and 'Stress Management in Health and Welfare Work with Refugees'. 27 November - 8 December 1989.
- ★ *Genocide and Constructive Survival: A Psychological Approach*, 17 January - 7 March and 25 April - 20 June 1990 (17 weekly sessions).
- ★ *Transcultural Sensitivity*, 7-18 May 1990.
- ★ *The 1990 Practitioner Training Summer School*, 1-27 July 1990. This Summer School is for practitioners at managerial level in programmes and development schemes concerning refugees and displaced people in countries of first asylum.

For further information write to:

Anthea Sanyasi

Course Training Officer, RSP