

Association of Immigration and Refugee Services Professionals



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Message from the president

As I begin my term as president of ARSP I am taken aback at the political, social, and cultural climate surrounding the refugee and immigrant communities. Our current global state of affairs is heart-wrenching as the number of refugees, internally displaced persons, and unaccompanied children reach profound numbers. Daily reports of defenseless individuals, families and communities being caught in the crossfire of war, racial and ethnic conflict, politics, and the egos and the ignorance of present day power brokers. Victims experience genocide, harrowing escapes, poisoning, starvation, drowning, separation, hopelessness, helplessness, and death.

Immigrants and refugees experience escalating rates of xenophobia and are confronted with rhetoric that espouses indifference, intolerance, and cold aloofness advocating “they are not our problem” and condescension, disdain, and hate of the “other”. The plight of undocumented communities intensifies as talk of “building a wall” and “deportation” brings considerable stress to the vulnerable.

Mixed status families live in constant fear that their households will be ruptured if relatives are forcibly separated from each another.

As we work to address the needs of immigrants and refugees through advocacy and education it is my hope that the ARSP newsletter and website will continue to serve as a resource for our members as social change agents. We are adding a section to the newsletter called “Local Initiatives” and encourage members to share their own innovative programs/projects for possible use by others.

We are also providing a link to the Center for New North Carolinians website, a source of up-to-date news and policy interpretations. We invite you to share additional information and resources to add to our compendium of knowledge.

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The official name of ARSP, from the by-laws, is the *Association of Immigration and Refugee Service Professionals*. I would like us to consider using the full original name publicly, as we act in our own local communities of influence to acknowledge the plight of immigrants; we can retain the acronym within our organization.



Finally, as I witness the current atrocities around us, I am challenged by the words of Benjamin Ferencz, who was a 27-year-old prosecutor with the international war crime tribunal after World War II. Now 96 years old, Mr. Ferencz reflects on the Nuremberg Trials stating “I have boiled everything down into a slogan: Law not war. Three words. If you could do that, how you could change the world... And the next question is, how do you do it? I also have three words. Never give up... Good luck, world”.

The story about Ferencz is chronicled in the NPR interview

(<http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/10/18/497938049/the-last-nuremberg-prosecutor-has-3-words-of-advice-law-not-war>) as well as the documentary, *Watchers of the Sky*, alongside the account of Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide”. I recommend that you consider viewing this film on Netflix for inspiration as we continue our struggle for justice.

Maura Busch Nsonwu, PhD, MSW, LCSW
ARSP President

Refugee updates from Rwanda

Three years ago, the lingering refugee crisis in the Central African Great Lakes region was generally considered the worst refugee crisis in the world at that time. The United Nations has now defined Syria as the biggest refugee crisis since World War II. Three years ago ARSP sponsored an educational seminar to the Rwandan refugee camps in May of 2014 to assess the status of the many refugees there, mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), who had been stuck in the camps for decades. Delegates visited camps, met with refugees, UN officials, and NGO's. This report is an update on status of refugees in Rwanda. The region remains unstable. DRC, Burundi, and South

Sudan remain in crisis. DRC elections are pending in 2018.

In March, 2014, UNHCR reported that there were approximately 75,000 registered refugees in Rwanda, 99% of them from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many of the refugee families had been in camps since the early 90's, and international organizations did not see a resolution in the near future. In addition, Rwanda is the smallest African country and has the highest population density of any African country. The US pledged to increase its commitment to refugee assistance in the Great Lakes region by allowing an additional 10,000 Congolese refugees into the US through a P2 (priority 2) category of open cases without US connections, in addition to the already

authorized P1 Congolese refugees- family reunifications. However, UNHCR Rwanda estimated that 98% of the refugees would still be stuck in camps for the foreseeable future.

In March, 2017, UNHCR reported that they now have 159,660 refugees in their Rwanda registry plus an additional 8800 asylum seekers who were not yet processed. Half of the refugee population is children. The Congolese population now stands at 74,267, about the same as three years ago. The rate of births has been about equal to the numbers resettled in third countries.

However, a new refugee population has arrived. A Burundian refugee population of almost 85,000 have fled to Rwanda, starting in 2015. Following an uprising after a destabilizing election and coup attempt two years ago, Burundi fell into chaos and families began to flee.

Most (over 53,000) of those refugees in Rwanda are housed in a new camp on the Tanzania border known as Mahama Camp. Other Burundians joined the thousands of urban Congolese refugees who reside outside of camps. Mahama Camp began with temporary plastic sheet housing for clusters of families, but now a little over half of the population

have semi-permanent housing. Over the last couple of months, Burundians have been arriving at an average rate of 28 people per day and most are now moving on to urban non-camp settings in the capital of Rwanda, Kigali.

Over 30,000 urban refugee dwellers, mostly Burundian, now reside in community based protection programs there.

The historical setting of Burundi, due south of Rwanda and also part of the Great Lakes region, is similar. It is second only to Rwanda in population density on the African continent, and has the same tribal mix as Rwanda, predominantly Hutu, followed

by Tutsi, and a small population of Twa-pygmy. The two countries have always been separate political entities except during the Belgian and German colonial periods. However, tribal conflict and ethnic cleansing issues similar to Rwanda's emerged with colonialism and flare up from time to time in Burundi.

Crises for the new Burundian refugee population include lack of space and food insecurity. While some stable housing has been secured for the new Burundian refugee camp population, expansion space is restricted. Local villagers and the Rwandan government are concerned about the impact of the newcomers. The World Food Program and UNHCR are concerned with refugee food shortages because



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of the crisis with Syrian refugees, and now shortages are increasing with the new and unstable Burundian refugee population. UNHCR is adopting emergency measures with cash incentives offered on mobile phones with sim food cards at \$250 per adult Congolese refugee who will return home and try to reestablish themselves there. If successful, this measure may be offered to Burundians as well. Challenges for refugees and receiver countries continue to grow.

Note: While UNHCR is a primary resource for some of this information, this analysis is not sanctioned by the UNHCR.

Raleigh Bailey, Ph.D.
Rwanda Seminar leader,
May 2014
ARSP Board Member

Malaysia: A short-term study abroad on refugee processing

In summer 2016, UNCG associate professor and ARSP board member Dr. Sharon Morrison, led a delegation of 9 students and 4 local service providers on a 21-day trip to Malaysia to learn about forced migration of Rohingya refugees residing in Malaysia. They met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Resettlement Support Center (RSC) staff and professionals responding to this pivotal humanitarian crisis.

According to the United Nations, the minority Muslim group Rohingyas are the most persecuted people on earth. Many Rohingyas arrived in Burma in the 19th century when it was under British rule. Some scholars and many Rohingyas agree that they are indigenous to Rakhine state, and they leverage this claim with historical evidence showing that Muslims have lived in the Rakhine state formerly known as Arkan in the western coast of Burma. It is, however, unclear if the modern Rohingyas descended from those Muslims. In 1982, the Burmese government effectively stripped their citizenship and their ability to study, marry, travel work and access healthcare is restricted. They also face arbitrary arrests, forced labor, religious persecution, land seizure and various types of human rights violations. With a population of approximately 800,000, Rohingyas are considered stateless.

In February 2016, UNHCR reported that there were 53,700 Rohingya refugees in Malaysia (UN, 2016). There are no refugee camps in Malaysia, instead refugees live in urban areas and share a living spaces with up to 40 people, in areas close to construction sites and plantations where they seek meager and illegal employment in 3-D (dirty, dangerous and difficult) jobs that the local people do not wish to have. Unfortunately, Malaysia is not a state party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its protocol, which means that it does not have an asylum system that regulates the status and rights of refugees. In August 2016, it was reported that former UN secretary general Kofi Annan would be heading a panel on addressing the Rohingya crisis.

Global Partners

The UNHCR is dedicated to protecting the well-being and rights of refugees worldwide, by providing refugees with basic rights such as the ability to claim refugee status and education. The IOM provides humane and orderly management of migration, as well as humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees. The IOM in addition provides medical check-ups prior to the departure of the migrants leaving Malaysia. The RSC primarily works on resettlement resources for individuals and families in preparation of resettlement to a different country, in hope of a better life.

Local partners

Thousands of resettled asylum seekers are welcomed through the doors of organizations such as the Center for New North Carolinians (CNNC), Church World Services (CWS), and a plethora of smaller volunteer agencies. North Carolina is one of the largest hubs for resettled refugees to stay due to its diversity and because of the vast availability of stable industrial. Because of this, many service providers, such as Epic Renewal and CWS- a VOLAG or volunteer agency that helps to resettle refugees all along the coast, do their part to make sure that those who are seeking asylum are able to obtain it.

Nneze Eluka, MS
 PhD student, Public Health Education
 Adora Nsonwu
 Undergraduate, English & Anthropology
 Rachel Ear
 Undergraduate, Public Health Education



The group with UNHCR representatives at the United Nations Compound in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. From left to right: Cindy Knul, Early Smith, Sydney Gouani, Adora Nsonwu, Veronica Hough, Lisa (UN Representative), Dr. Sharon Morrison, Rachel (UN Representative), Rachel Ear, Nneze Eluka, Nhung Budhan, Dr. Holly Sienkiewicz, Shalee Forney, Vicky Dithane, Eunice Calderon Photo credit: Nneze Eluka



The group with a tour guide at the National Museum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Photo credit: Early Smith



The group at the St. Giles Boulevard Hotel the day of departure from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Photo credit: Nneze Eluka

Syrian refugees of Turkey: how does it work?

Gaziantep, a Turkish city close to the border with Syria, has the main center for refugees in the country. All refugees entering the country have to first register there to get their temporary documents and become eligible for financial and medical aid. Bypassing Gaziantep would cost a refugee all types of humanitarian, medical, and other types of related aid. My visit to this city in mid-March 2017, made possible with the help of the Coalition of Diverse Language Communities of the UNCG, was short but it was a good opportunity to gain some first-hand information.

Mehmet Servet Yelken, an official working for the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, informed me that no refugee trying to enter the country is rejected. Therefore, they always expect new refugees from neighboring Syria and Iraq, as well as remote countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia. The number of the registered Syrian refugees in the country is approximately three million.



Registered refugees get a temporary ID card from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management.

This documentation affords them free access to healthcare and education; they are also allowed to work legally. Refugees who decide to move to other parts of the country are free to do so, they simply re-register in their new location.

The Turkish government has produced effective policies to deal with the challenges of refugee growth. Policies that allow refugees to legally work and own a business have significantly alleviated the strain on the government and the entire society. Although this has created some unhappiness among the workers, the employers are quite happy with such a policy. This has also helped refugees integrate into Turkish communities.



A sample temporary ID card

School-aged refugee children attend school on a regular basis. To accommodate this need some schools, operate on a two-shifts schedule. The refugee teachers and those who qualify for teaching are employed by the education directorates.

Official organizations and civil society institutions organize their work to raise public awareness about refugee needs. The Syrians I met are happy with the attitude of local people and policies of the government. However, many of Syrians, especially those who reside in the tent cities, still have lots of problems related to poor living conditions as they wait patiently for the war to end. After six years, they are losing hope. Some of the refugees see the situation as an opportunity to fulfill their dream of a better life in Europe, while others want to go back to their homes.

Human smugglers offer their service for the refugees transiting through

the Mediterranean and Aegean seas to Greece, from where it is easier to go to different parts of Europe.



Thousands of refugees have died trying to cross the seas.

It seems there is no immediate solution to the problems that refugees from Syria face. Especially, in the West they give rise to new problems wherever they seek a sanctuary. Apart from the economic, social, and cultural problems they face in their host countries, they become a tool for politics. Undoubtedly, one of the best solutions of the problem is enabling them to return to Syria. Therefore, the war must be over. In the meanwhile, the Turkish case must be used as a model to accommodate refugee needs.

In my opinion, Turkey has done a better job to help refugees compared to other countries. Arguably, its moralistic approach to the refugee issues may have certain cultural aspects. However, the effective official refugee policies of the government should not be underestimated. Other governments can learn a lot from Turkey.



With a Syrian refugee (left)

Ali Askerov, PhD
UNCG Department of Peace and Conflict Studies

Incorporating effective mental health interventions into mainstream refugee resettlement work

“Trauma is a profound, wide-spread and severely undertreated public health crisis in our world today. The silent inner suffering of millions of people around the world is palpable and fixable, if we choose to start treating it collectively. In the past, the task appeared overwhelming due to a lack of appropriate tools and interventions available; but, this is no longer the case. The ability to implement large-scale trauma healing interventions could individually augment educability, creativity, and overall well-being, and in effect create a ripple effect to communally enhance social, economic, and cultural productivity” (2014) – Rolf Carriere, UNITAR Fellow, Retired UNICEF Country Director in Asia.

The number of traumatized individuals in the world is staggering and the need for treatment to help widespread groups of people get back to baseline functioning as quickly as possible is essential. Given the multiple large-scale critical incidents that occur frequently on our planet, such as natural disasters, the refugee crisis and the resultant suffering and distress, how do we begin to tackle this? EMDR has the potential to change the face of trauma.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy is an integrative psychotherapy approach that enables people to heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences. In 2013, the World Health Organization granted to EMDR a formal recognition as an evidence-based therapy that is quick, affordable and widely applicable in a variety of cultures and distressing environments.

Additionally, the EMDR Integrative Group Treatment Protocol (EMDR-IGTP) was developed by members of AM-AMECRISIS when they were inundated by the vast need for mental health services after Hurricane Pauline devastated the western coast of Mexico in 1997. Since its creation, group EMDR has been validated in a meta-analysis as “very effective” and a “recommended intervention” making group EMDR an especially effective approach for treating trauma on a global scale.

Three major benefits of implementing group EMDR are: 1) that it is effective cross-culturally, 2) it has the advantage of reaching many people very quickly, and 3) it helps to reduce social withdrawal and stigmatization often suffered by survivors.

Additionally, paraprofessionals can be taught to assist or to occasionally lead the EMDR groups under supervision of a clinician, which permits wide application in communities that have fewer clinicians.

Kelly Smyth-Dent is a psychotherapist trained in conducting group EMDR. She also has eight years of experience working in refugee resettlement and conducting psychotherapeutic services to immigrant and refugee populations. She is conducting consultation services for organizations interesting in learning more about group EMDR and how to implement these services within their programs. Kelly seeks and applies for funding (pro-bono), and then will help your agency launch and implement the group EMDR program to enhance the services you are already providing (consultation fees are included in the grant application). She gets paid when the grant is received. Contact Kelly at Kelly@kellysmythdent.com or (336) 337-9864 to learn more.



Kelly Smyth-Dent, MSW

Local Initiative: FaithAction Community ID Card



The FaithAction Community ID Card program is a unique local initiative. This program was created out of a series of dialogues, facilitated by FaithAction International House, to build bridges of understanding, trust and cooperation between local police departments and the diverse immigrant communities living in and around Greensboro, North Carolina.

The FaithAction identification card, is a valid form of identification for any resident of the local community who may have limited access to government issued forms of ID. It also serves as a symbol of support for the mission and work of FaithAction - turning strangers into neighbors.

It is officially accepted by the Greensboro (North Carolina) Police Department;

Greensboro was the first city in the South to have such an innovative and widely accepted community ID program. Since the program launched in the summer of 2013, over 2,000 residents from over 40 nations and 50 cities throughout North Carolina have participated in the program's orientation and received a FaithAction ID card.

The FaithAction ID program is currently being contested by the

North Carolina legislative body as it mirrors the national dialogue regarding immigration. As cultural allies, our participation in supporting local initiatives, such as the FaithAction ID card, can serve as symbols of solidarity with immigrant community members.

Maura Busch Nsonwu, PhD, MSW, LCSW
ARSP President



ARSP president Maura Nsonwu (middle) at the April 2017 FaithAction ID drive with Social Work students; left to right: Zik Nsonwu (UNCG) Mentzie Rahman (NCA&T) Mauricesha Williams (NCA&T) and Porsha Griffin (NCA&T)

Website Connections

Center for New North Carolinians
<https://cnnc.uncg.edu/>

UNHCR Syrian Refugee Crisis

<https://www.searchingforsyria.org>

EDMR Therapy
<http://www.kellysmythdent.com/>