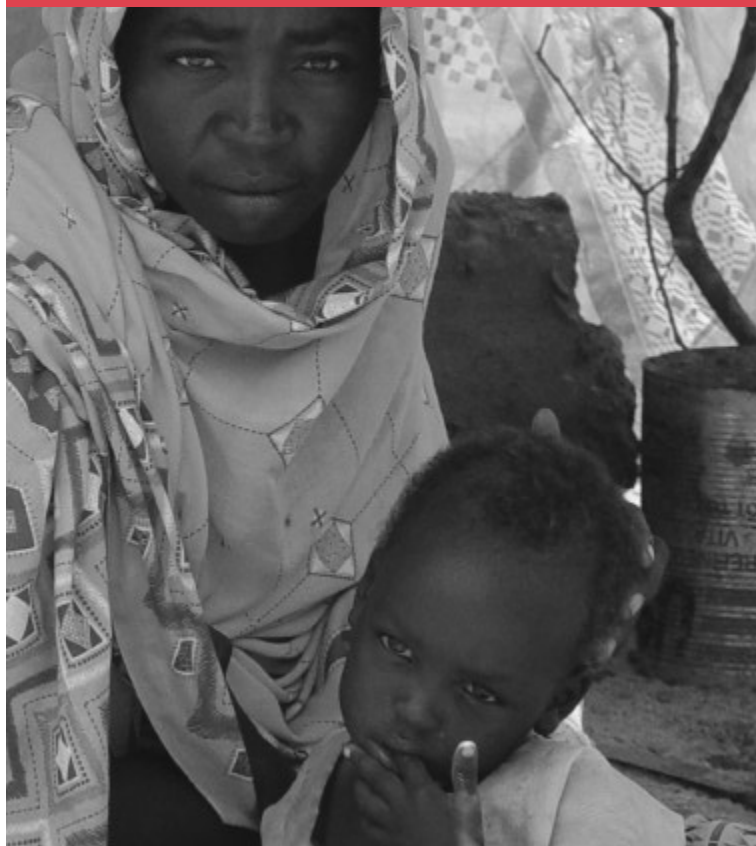


Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children



ANNUAL REPORT 2004

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WOMEN'S
COMMISSION
for refugee women & children



Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

International Rescue Committee
122 East 42nd Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10168-1289
Tel. 212. 551. 3088/3111 Fax. 212. 551. 3180
wcrwc@womenscommission.org
www.womenscommission.org

MISSION STATEMENT

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children works to improve the lives and defend the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and adolescents.

We advocate for their inclusion and participation in programs of humanitarian assistance and protection.

We provide technical expertise and policy advice to donors and organizations that work with refugees and the displaced.

We make recommendations to policy makers based on rigorous research and information gathered on fact-finding missions.

We join with refugee women, children and adolescents to ensure that their voices are heard from the community level to the highest councils of governments and international organizations.

We do this in the conviction that their empowerment is the surest route to the greater well-being of all forcibly displaced people.

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children is an independent affiliate of the International Rescue Committee. The Commission was founded in 1989.





DEAR FRIENDS:

The year 2004 brought with it constant reminders of the importance of the mission of the Women's Commission as reports reached the newspapers of the widespread suffering of women and children in regions characterized by conflict and displacement, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In the Darfur region of Sudan, women and young girls have been attacked and raped in their villages—and even in camps that appeared to offer the prospect of international protection. In northern Uganda, children continue to be kidnapped and abused by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Faced yearly with the same crises that merely shift their geographic location, it would be easy to abandon hope for change. Yet experience has demonstrated that the work of the Women's Commission does make a difference, both at the level of individual cases and at the level of far-reaching policy change. We rejoiced this year with two refugees with whom we have worked for years: Angelina Atyam, who was reunited with her daughter—kidnapped by the LRA 8 years ago—and with two grandchildren whom she embraced for the first time after they escaped from the rebels; and Immaculee Harushimana, a refugee from Burundi, whose sons were finally allowed to join their mother who gained asylum in the United States in 1996.

At the policy and programmatic level, 2004 brought positive change. Despite rapidly shifting priorities in the U.S. Congress, advocacy led by the Women's Commission resulted in bipartisan support for four pieces of legislation to address the complex protection needs of displaced women and children in the United States as well as overseas. This legislation made significant progress in the 108th Congress, thus paving the way for enactment in the congressional session starting in 2005. Our work among Darfuri women in Sudan and Chad is demonstrating the feasibility of delivering services that address HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence, including rape, during the earliest stages of a crisis; we are working with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to evaluate in at least 10 field sites the degree to which its staffing, policies and procedures ensure the participation and protection of refugee women and children; and we plan to use the Women's Commission's *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies* to advocate, in partnership with other like-minded agencies, for the fulfillment of the right of all children to basic education, including children and adolescents displaced from their homes.

We accomplish our mission in a variety of ways—by assembling data that provide a sound empirical basis for our advocacy campaigns, by drafting wording for Congressional legislation, by developing guidelines and training manuals that enable humanitarian workers to offer new services and approaches and by building coalitions that ensure a critical mass demanding change.

In all that we do, we seek to listen to the views of refugee women and children themselves, and to ensure that their voices are heard in the venues where decisions are made.

Thank you for being part of our effort.

Carolyn Makinson
Executive Director

Kathleen Newland
Chair, Board of Directors

Asylum and Detention

Every year, thousands of women and children come to the United States to escape persecution in their homelands. Many are detained while their asylum cases are being considered, often for months or even years, frequently in harsh conditions in jails or detention centers. Many more are sent back to their country of origin without due consideration of their case. The Women's Commission's asylum and detention program advocates for changes in U.S. law, policy and practice to ensure that women and children asylum seekers are treated with dignity and afforded the protection they need. This year the Women's Commission continued to press the Department of Homeland Security to seek viable alternatives to detention for women and to improve conditions of confinement for those who remain in federal custody.

Advocacy on Behalf of Haitian Refugees

As a result of political upheaval and natural disasters, human rights conditions in Haiti have continued to deteriorate. The Women's Commission played a leading role in advocating for enhanced protection for Haitian refugees both in the United States and the Caribbean region. Staff continued to advocate for Temporary Protected Status for Haitians already in the United States, improved treatment for Haitians who are intercepted at sea by Coast Guard cutters and discontinuation of harsh policies aimed at detention of all Haitian asylum seekers. Staff met with the Chargé d'Affaires from Haiti, the National Security Council, Department of State, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and congressional offices to advocate for these changes.

Lives of Children in Immigration Proceedings Improve

Women's Commission staff were instrumental in the decision by the Executive Office for Immigration Review's (EOIR) to transfer children's immigration hearings in Miami from the Krome Processing Center to the downtown Miami immigration courts. Krome Processing Center is a maximum security adult prison which houses criminals and is located on a federal shooting range. Children have reported that the environment at Krome made them nervous and fearful. The downtown courts will provide a more child-friendly atmosphere.

In response to encouragement by the Women's Commission, EOIR has created draft "Guidelines for Immigration Court Cases Involving Unaccompanied Alien Children." The Guidelines encourage immigration judges to employ child-sensitive practices and procedures in their courtrooms to facilitate the hearings for unaccompanied minors in proceedings. The guidelines are a critical step toward recognizing the unique vulnerabilities of children.

The Women's Commission worked with key members of Congress to reintroduce legislation that would ensure the provision of counsel and guardians *ad litem* (child advocates) to unaccompanied chil-

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
ADVOCACY GETS RESULTS





dren seeking asylum in the United States. The legislation, introduced by Zoe Lofgren (D, Cal) in the House of Representatives and Dianne Feinstein (D, Cal) in the Senate, would require the development of standards for the care of unaccompanied minors, and establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure their safe return to their homelands if denied asylum. The Unaccompanied Alien Child Protection Act of 2004 passed through the Senate by unanimous consent. This passage lays the ground for the bill to pass expeditiously through the 109th Congress.

Due primarily to efforts by the Women's Commission, Congress transferred care and custody of unaccompanied minors from the Department of Homeland Security to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the Department of Health and Human Services. ORR has successfully moved away from using county lock-down secure detention facilities and has identified more progressive secure facilities. ORR has reduced the number of children placed in secure detention centers to less than 2 percent, from almost 35 percent under INS.

ORR has made an effort to ensure its shelters and other facilities provide a high quality of care to unaccompanied alien children and has focused on enhancing education, health care, socialization/recreation, mental health services, family reunification, access to legal services and case management.

The Women's Commission has also partnered with the Carr Center at Harvard University to assess children's perspectives of their treatment and understanding of the process during their asylum proceedings.

Investigating the Link Between Trafficking and Displaced Populations

The U.S. government estimates that approximately 800,000 to 900,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. The Women's Commission has started a project to examine the links between refugee protection and human trafficking. Staff traveled to Thailand and the United Kingdom to assess the vulnerability of displaced women and children to trafficking. In Thailand, trafficked women and children from Burma may end up in a range of abusive situations, including children forced to beg on the streets in urban areas, and women and girls working in the sex industry or in substandard and dangerous labor conditions in textile factories or other industrial settings. Trafficked persons apprehended in Thailand are typically deported back to Burma. In the United Kingdom, where trafficked women and children from many countries are working in exploitative conditions, staff found inadequate mechanisms to address their protection needs.

The Women's Commission is working with UNHCR, the U.S. government and other policymakers to identify and close the protection gaps that put refugees at risk of trafficking.

REFUGEES AT RISK OF
BEING TRAFFICKED FOR
SEX OR WORK



Reproductive Health

When refugees and internally displaced persons are uprooted from their homes, their health, including their reproductive health, is severely compromised. They are exposed to violence as they flee and in the camps or communities where they seek safety. Health care is often lacking or inadequate. Lack of reproductive health care is a leading cause of death and disease among displaced women of reproductive age. The Women's Commission works to improve services in the four primary areas of reproductive health care: safe motherhood; family planning, including emergency obstetrics; gender-based violence; and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. The Women's Commission continues to coordinate the Reproductive Health Response in Conflict (RHRC) Consortium, a group of seven international organizations working to improve access to reproductive health services for conflict-affected populations.



Global Evaluation Measures Advances in Reproductive Health for Refugees

Ten years ago the Women's Commission documented the severe lack of attention to reproductive health in conflict-affected settings in its landmark report *Refugee Women and Reproductive Health Care: Reassessing Priorities*. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) established reproductive health as a right and extended this right to displaced populations. Over the past two years, the Women's Commission has collaborated with the Inter-agency Working Group (IAWG) on Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations to determine the current state of reproductive health in conflict settings and produce the report *Inter-agency Global Evaluation of Reproductive Health for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*. While significant progress has been made in raising awareness and advancing reproductive health for conflict-affected populations in all areas of RH programming and technical support, the gains are threatened by a particularly difficult political and economic climate. At the field level, findings show that reproductive health services in stable refugee settings have increased and are generally well established, although some areas, such as gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV/AIDS services, are weaker and critical gaps remain in safe motherhood, family planning and sexually transmitted infections. Furthermore, specific programming to ensure youth-friendly services and male involvement is needed. Reproductive health services for internally displaced persons (IDPs) are severely lacking and in need of urgent attention. The Women's Commission developed a synopsis of the IAWG findings for wide distribution and reported these findings at the ICPD +10 meeting in September 2004 and an inter-agency meeting of UN agencies and NGOs in Geneva.



GIVING BIRTH DURING FLIGHT



The stench of dead animals permeates the air. Donkeys, cattle and sheep have slowly died from lack of food and water. The sun beats down upon a sandy, rocky landscape on the border town of Tine, Chad. Here, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children met a 36-year-old refugee woman from Karnoi, Sudan, who had fled attacks by the Janjaweed and the Sudanese military when she was nine months pregnant. Three days into her journey she gave birth under trees on the side of the road without any supplies to make her delivery safe—no soap, clean razor, cord or plastic sheet to keep her and her newborn baby clean. Luckily, she had no complications and her eighth baby was born healthy. Afraid to be caught by the Janjaweed and the Sudanese military, she continued to walk—for eight more days. During the flight, her 14-year-old son was injured in a bombing. She is less worried about her son's physical injuries than about the long-term psychological effects of the attack. At night she has to tie his arms or give him medicines to make sure he doesn't hurt himself and is able to sleep. He never had these problems before the crisis, she says.

Crisis in Sudan: Emergency Reproductive Health Services Absent

PROVIDING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE IN NEW EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

A priority objective of the Women's Commission's reproductive health program is to advocate to governments, donors, humanitarian actors and others to standardize a Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) response in all new emergency settings. The MISP is a coordinated set of reproductive health priority activities and services that aims to prevent and manage the consequences of sexual violence, reduce HIV transmission, prevent excess neonatal and maternal morbidity and mortality, ensure coordination of activities and plan for the provision of comprehensive reproductive health services once a crisis situation stabilizes.



As part of the IAWG global evaluation (see page 6), the Women's Commission, in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), conducted an assessment of the MISP for reproductive health in Chad in April 2004. The assessment team found that priority reproductive health activities were not available to the 110,000 refugees who had fled attacks in Darfur, Sudan. Survivors of rape did not have access to urgently needed clinical services, pregnant women were not provided with the materials needed for a clean and safe delivery and condoms were not made available to the population to prevent HIV transmission. The assessment team called on UNHCR and the U.S. State Department for an immediate and significant increase in donor support to address the escalating emergency, which led to increased UN technical support in the field and higher levels of State Department funding in Chad. The Women's Commission also appealed to organizations working in the field to focus on priority reproductive health activities and to deploy a reproductive health

Increasing RH Knowledge for Adolescents

An estimated 100,000 migrant workers from Burma are living in Tak Province, Thailand. Lack of recognition by the Thai government forces most migrants to remain unregistered, live in unstable situations, subject to deportation and harassment, and do without health services. Young people are an especially vulnerable population as many work and live in factories unaccompanied, resulting in a lack of social support and supervision from their families and communities.

The Women's Commission supported Social Action for Women, a local NGO, with a grant to increase knowledge of and access to adolescent reproductive health services for young migrants working in factories on the border.

At the end of the project, 124 adolescent reproductive health group education sessions had been held for more than 1,100 young people; peer educators (PEs) had provided adolescent reproductive health information to 760 young people through one-on-one health education sessions; PEs had sold 569 oral contraceptive pill cycles and 843 condoms, and had discussed with and referred 62 factory workers for post-abortion care, STI treatment, antenatal care and other health problems. Overall, SAW reached more than 2,160 youth with reproductive health information and services.

coordinator in each area. The Women's Commission secured funding to support the placement of a reproductive health coordinator on the Chad border to organize reproductive health activities.

Responding to the Special Reproductive Health Needs of Adolescents

Adolescent reproductive health is neglected in many conflict settings. The Women's Commission continues to advocate for adolescent reproductive health services, and has tested and endorsed a network model for delivering these services. A network model supports the coordinated activities of local organizations based in the same region to avoid overlap and to share training, resources and experiences to enhance each agency's effectiveness.

Currently, the Women's Commission supports the Adolescent Reproductive Health Network (ARHN) on the Thai-Burma border which comprises eight community-based organizations that share information, develop training curriculums jointly, carry out group trainings and host learning exchange visits among members. The Women's Commission has had a long relationship with many of the group's members, including the Social Action for Women (SAW). See box at left for a case study on the results of SAW's project.

Addressing Lack of Reproductive Health Knowledge in the Field

Through numerous reproductive health assessments in conflict settings, the Women's Commission has identified a lack of knowledge and skills among humanitarian workers in particular reproductive health areas. These include a lack of awareness about the critical need for emergency contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancies, many of which result from rape or gender-based violence; poor adherence to guidelines on the treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs); and weak programming to address gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. To support advocacy in these areas, the Women's Commission, on behalf of the Reproductive Health Response in Conflict (RHRC) Consortium, has produced three new publications and supported the development of a fourth to address these gaps.

- ☆ *Emergency Contraception for Conflicted-affected Settings: A Distance Learning Module*
- ☆ *Guidelines for the Care of Sexually Transmitted Infections in Conflict-affected Settings*
- ☆ *HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control: A Short Course for Humanitarian Workers*
- ☆ *Gender-based Violence Tools Manual: For Assessment, Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict-affected Settings*

The Women's Commission conducted pilot training courses and field testing using these materials and is working to widely disseminate them and to ensure that resources are available to community-based groups as well as international organizations in a variety of languages and formats.

Working to Avert Maternal Death and Disability

The RHRC Consortium's emergency obstetric care (EmOC) technical adviser supported and evaluated pilot projects previously funded by Columbia University as part of its Averting Maternal Death and Disability (AMDD) Project. The adviser also supported EmOC activities within RHRC Consortium members' primary health care projects worldwide and conducted EmOC assessments for new programs. A report documenting the assessments conducted for the pilot projects, *Emergency Obstetric Care: Critical Need Among Refugee Populations*, was published and disseminated to key partners.

The project supported a team of trainers (a medical doctor, midwife and anesthetist) to attend a training of EmOC trainers conducted by JHPIEGO, a not-for-profit international public health organization affiliated with Johns Hopkins University, in Francophone Africa. This was the first group of trainers within the Consortium to be trained in EmOC. The team will continue to receive technical support from JHPIEGO in Guinea as it implements EmOC activities in an area heavily affected by the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Reproductive Health from Disaster to Development

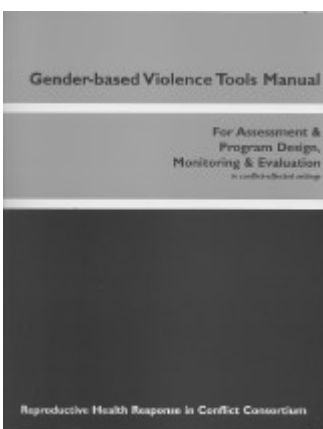
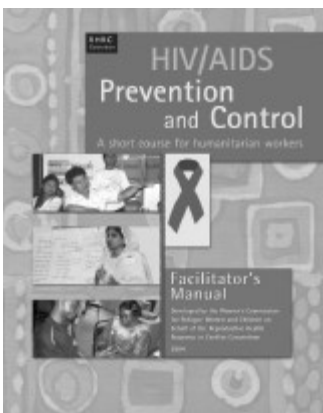
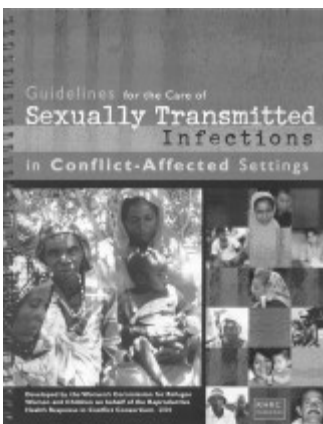
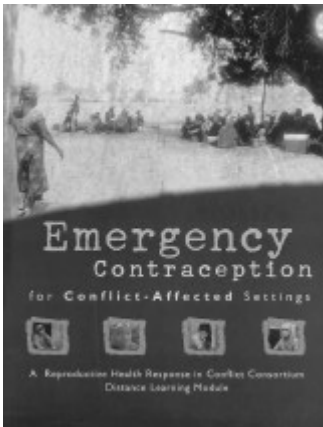
The Women's Commission was a lead RHRC Consortium agency to organize RHRC Consortium Conference 2003: Reproductive Health from Disaster to Development held in October 2003 in Brussels, Belgium. The conference attracted more than 150 people from 36 countries representing 70 organizations, who shared program findings and research on conflict-affected populations around the world. The conference was a great success in sharing information, strategies and ideas among practitioners from north and south, forwarding the research and development activities necessary to improve the reproductive health of conflict-affected populations. The Women's Commission published conference proceedings that highlighted meeting activities and research findings.

The proceedings and more on RHRC Consortium activities can be found at www.rhrc.org

The Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury Fund for Reproductive Health Care and Rights for Adolescent Refugees

The Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury Fund for Reproductive Health Care and Rights for Adolescent Refugees (EBP Fund) was established in June 2000 in honor of Philip and Henry Pillsburys' mother. It was the first-ever ongoing fund to specifically focus on the unique reproductive health needs of conflict-affected adolescents.

Through the EBP Fund, the Women's Commission has provided small grants to local and international field-based organizations working with conflict-affected adolescents in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. The EBP Fund has supported adolescent reproductive health by providing \$215,000 through 40 grants to 35 local and international partner organizations in 21 countries.



Grantmaking from the EBP Fund has now ended; however, remaining projects will receive technical assistance and resource materials from the Women's Commission through 2005 and the Women's Commission will continue information-sharing activities with past grantees.

The Women's Commission would like to express its appreciation to the Pillsbury family for its tireless efforts to expand the resource base for adolescent reproductive health in conflict settings. Based on the experience of the EBP Fund, the Women's Commission has developed a strategy for increasing efficiency and coordination in supporting the reproductive health of conflict-affected adolescents and gained essential anecdotal and quantitative information from the field to inform its advocacy efforts on behalf of young people impacted by conflict.

More information about the positive impact of supporting adolescent reproductive health programming and lessons learned from the experience of the EBP Fund is available in the report: *Partnering with Local Organizations to Support the Reproductive Health of Adolescent Refugees: A Three-year Analysis* — http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/EBP_Final.pdf.

More information on the work of the Women's Commission and copies of reports are available at www.womenscommission.org



**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION
IMPROVES LIVES**



Refugee Women as Partners in Protection

Other than the essentials of life, such as food, water, shelter and health care, refugees' most vital need most is protection. Protection ensures refugees' physical, legal and material safety, and it is essential that women, adolescents and children are covered by programs that provide protection. Various international instruments encode and explain refugee protection, including the 1951 Convention on the Rights of Refugees and the UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women and Guidelines on the Care and Protection of Refugee Children.

When women participate in planning and implementing programs and are encouraged to take on leadership roles, the lives of the women, as well as their families, improve.

The Women's Commission's Participation and Protection Program works to improve refugee women's protection in war-affected areas overseas and to increase their participation in planning and managing assistance programs.

Making UNHCR's 5 Commitments a Reality in Pakistan and Afghanistan

In collaboration with the Afghan Women's Network and the Afghan Women's Resource Center (AWRC), the Women's Commission co-sponsored a workshop in Pakistan in June 2004, *Advancing UNHCR's Five Commitments to Refugee Women and the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* (see box next page). Representatives from local women's groups, UNHCR and the government of Pakistan came together to better understand these instruments and to suggest concrete actions to take collectively, as well as individually.

The Women's Commission informally shared selected recommendations from the workshop with the United Nations Development Program, the lead UN agency responsible for the MDGs, and with UNHCR's offices in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The

WOMEN'S COMMISSION WORKSHOP LEADS TO CONCRETE RESULTS

Thank you very much for the report on the meeting and for the concrete suggestions that you have made to us on actions that we could take not only to further the implementation of the 5 commitments but also to gather greater support from the Afghan women's groups working in North-West Frontier Province.

Apart from the actions at Sub-Office Peshawar, I have shared your report with colleagues in Quetta and Branch Office for review and discussion at our next country-wide protection meeting.

You will be happy to know that the translations of the Tripartite Agreement and of the Memorandum

on the Five Commitments are now available for distribution. Further, a Network of Protection Partners has re-started its monthly meeting. Our previous referral form (limited to SGBV [sexual and gender-based violence] cases) has been replaced by a new form for all types of protection referrals. Finally, we have begun the planning of our second workshop on Pashtoonwali [code of honor], which we hope will materialize towards the end of November.

Letter from UNHCR representative, Pakistan to the Women's Commission



Women's Commission also broadly disseminated a workshop summary report with findings and recommendations to UN agencies, the government of Pakistan, NGOs and donors to support ongoing activities to advance these instruments.

Reaction to the workshop was extremely positive and AWRC, with support from the Women's Commission, will hold similar workshops in Afghanistan to encourage more strategic collaboration between Afghan returnee and displaced women and the international community, and to focus on the MDG process as a vehicle to improve the situation of Afghan women, particularly returnees and IDPs.

Colombia

The Women's Commission's protection partner in Colombia, Colectivo María María, held a series of workshops with displaced Colombian women to develop concrete recommendations to address protection concerns. The first set of workshops focused on

The Five Commitments and the Millennium Development Goals

The Five Commitments to Refugee Women

In June 2001, UNHCR High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers met with 50 refugee women in Geneva who had come from around the world in order to discuss their concerns. This dialogue was the final step in a series of refugee women's dialogues, co-organized by the Women's Commission and UNHCR, in which more than 500 refugee women had participated in more than 20 local and regional consultations. Senior UNHCR managers were able to learn first-hand about the challenges and priorities of refugee women. Their response was the creation of five commitments geared towards improving legal and material protection and assistance for refugee women.

The Five Commitments to Refugee Women are:

1. All offices will continue training and other on-going activities to encourage the active participation of women in all management and leadership committees of refugees in urban, rural and camp settings, including return areas. Where it is not already the case, the aim is to accelerate progress towards ensuring that 50 percent of representatives are women.
2. UNHCR commits to the individual registration of all refugee men and women and to provide them with relevant documentation ensuring their individual security, freedom of movement and access to essential services.
3. Recognizing that sexual and gender-based violence continues to be a severe impediment to the advancement of women and the enjoyment of their rights, UNHCR commits to developing integrated country-level strategies to address it.
4. To the extent possible, UNHCR will continue to ensure that refugee women participate directly and indirectly in the management and distribution of food and non-food items.
5. The provision of sanitary materials to all women and girls of concern will become standard practice in all UNHCR assistance programs.

The Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs were announced by the UN Secretary General at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. The goals are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development



the Colombian government's resettlement policies for internally displaced women. The workshops highlighted challenges internally displaced women face while in the process of resettlement, such as insufficient government assistance to meet the needs of women and their families; the absence of income-generating activities making it difficult to pay for land titles; a lack of psycho-social services; precarious living conditions; and the inability of children to attend school due to prohibitive costs. The workshop made a series of recommendations to the Colombian government, donors and the UN system.

In September 2004, with Women's Commission support, Colectivo María María held a workshop in Ecuador with refugee women and Ecuadorian NGOs. During the workshop, Colectivo María María shared information on human rights, including UNHCR's Five Commitments to Refugee Women and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and participants developed an action plan to better address Colombian refugee women's needs. Based on the workshop and Colectivo María María's subsequent meetings with UNHCR staff in Ecuador, discussions are underway to explore creating women's committees within the existing refugee associations and organizing a national-level meeting for refugee women living in Ecuador.

Women, peace and security

Since the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in October 2000, the Women's Commission has been active in the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which is trying to ensure that the resolution is implemented. The Women's Commission, as acting coordinator of the working group, co-sponsored two UN Security Council roundtables with the permanent missions to the United Nations of Canada, Chile and the United Kingdom. The January roundtable brought together 13 current and five outgoing Council members from senior posts, including ambassadors, as well as representatives from select UN agencies and civil society. They discussed how to strengthen the Council's work in conflict prevention, the participation of women and children in peace and security, and the protection of civilians. This conceptual framework, known as "the three P's," was developed by the NGO working group. In an unprecedented and well-received format, participants sat "elbow to elbow" as equal partners in breakout groups, citing successes, challenges and brainstorming on next steps. The July follow-up event, Peace Support Operations: Consolidating Progress and Closing Gaps in the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325, expanded on recommendations developed at the first roundtable. Participants included representatives from Security Council member states, non-Security Council member states, UN agencies and civil society. Using the framework of the "3 Ps," the roundtable aimed to develop a tool for Security Council members to systematically consider a gender perspective in their work. The roundtable was also a forum for launching a discussion at the Security Council level on the impact and next steps for implementing resolution 1325 in advance of the October 2004 fourth anniversary of the resolution.

SECURITY COUNCIL
ROUNDTABLES CONSIDER
THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN
PEACE AND SECURITY





CHALLENGES FOR
WOMEN AND GIRLS AS
PEACE TAKES HOLD IN
LIBERIA



Working in Washington to Protect Women and Children

The Women's Commission worked with Congress to reintroduce legislation that would enhance opportunities for women and children at risk of harm because of their gender or age to be relocated from refugee camps to the United States. The Widow and Orphans Act of 2004 provides this protection to widows and young girls who are subjected to gender-based violence, including rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution and forced marriage. It also provides protection for orphans from sexual exploitation and recruitment as child soldiers. This act has gained strong bipartisan support.

Board Delegation Visits Liberia

A Women's Commission delegation spent 10 days investigating the situation of internally displaced and returnee women, adolescents and children in post-conflict Liberia. The team focused on prevention and response to the high level of gender-based violence, access to education and the inclusion of girls and women in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) process.

Many, if not most of the 1.6 million children in Liberia have missed out on years of education. Schools have been looted and destroyed, and internally displaced children in particular cannot access education.

Thousands of women and girls were abducted by fighting forces to serve as sex slaves, porters and cooks. In an important precedent, these women and girls "associated with the fighting forces" are eligible for the DDRR process, without having to produce a weapon. In practice, however, the delegation found that the policy was not clearly understood. Liberian women's and youth groups are eager to undertake the challenge of communicating this critical information to the population, but need support to travel to remote rural areas and to produce radio programs.

Violence against women and girls continues. Rape is prevalent throughout the country, especially in the internally displaced camps where protection is minimal. Survivors of violence have difficulty accessing medical care, counseling, HIV/AIDS testing and treatment. Even when a victim chooses to report a rape, there is no effective system of redress.

Members of the delegation held a press briefing in Monrovia, reported their findings to UN officials and held meetings on Capitol Hill upon their return.

More information on these projects can be read at www.womenscommission.org

Children and Adolescents



Children and adolescents make up at least 50 percent of refugee and displaced populations. While they show tremendous resilience and ability to survive, they are also vulnerable and in need of protection and assistance. Many adolescents assume adult responsibilities before they should have to, as heads of household, principal wage earners and teen parents. Few experience a true childhood.

The rights of younger children have received substantial attention for some time, and emergency interventions for those under five have become standard. However, the rights of older children—adolescents—have only recently begun to be acknowledged and supported, due in significant part to the research and advocacy of the Women's Commission.

Millions of Children Missing Out on Education

More than 27 million children and youth affected by armed conflict are not in school, according to a 2004 Women's Commission report, *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies*. Over 90 percent of these children are living in their own country. Communities and international and local organizations are making great efforts to offer education to war-affected children and youth, yet education in emergencies is critically underfunded.



Most children and youth who are in school are in the early primary grades; only 6 percent of all refugee students are enrolled at the secondary level. Youth who have not completed primary education require a range of formal and non-formal education options, to provide them with a bridge back to the formal system or with the basic skills needed to be healthy and productive members of society.



Teachers in emergencies also face difficulties: overcrowded classrooms often with 50 or more students; multigrade, multi-age classrooms; and threats to their own safety, as teachers are often targeted during conflict. Many teachers have little training or education themselves. In most emergency situations, the majority of teachers are men, which can lead to lower enrollment of girls.

Although much can be done to improve and increase the provision of education in emergencies, the money is sorely lacking. In 2002, of the \$46 million requested through the UN, only \$17 million was actually pledged and contributed. Funding for education for the internally displaced is particularly dire.

The *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies* is the first comprehensive collection of data to examine education in situations of armed conflict around the world. As well as general background information and case studies from 11 countries, the survey contains information on education in emergencies programs that NGOs and UN agencies are undertaking around the world.

Voices out of Conflict Conference

The Women’s Commission was a co-organizer of the Voices out of Conflict conference, held near London in March. The conference, which was planned as part of an ongoing process of dialogue and learning about the protection of adolescents and youths in situations of war and displacement, allowed young refugees to put their experiences and solutions directly to funders, UN and NGO agencies and academics.

The youth participants, as well as event organizers, challenged adult participants to return to their organizations and find real ways to involve youth in their child protection strategies. Youth were challenged to explore how they can increase their inter-generational dialogue so that they can also learn from adults.

Many participants committed themselves to continued dialogue and cooperation on issues of young people’s protection, including plans for a follow-up conference in which youth themselves will be the key audience, as well as the key organizers and implementers.

The other organizers of the conference were the International Rescue Committee UK, Refugee Studies Center at Oxford University, Save the Children UK and Cumberland Lodge.

Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge

Three young people from conflict areas—Kosovo, Sierra Leone and northern Uganda—attended the annual Global Health Conference, Youth and Health: Generation on the Edge. The Women’s Commission organized a panel on which the three young people discussed HIV and gender-based violence. Their presentations highlighted the effectiveness and necessity of peer-to-peer approaches. They provided recommendations to GHC participants on how adults can further involve and engage young people in addressing IDP and refugee youth health concerns. The conference was attended by world health leaders and some 2,000 participants from more than 85 countries.

The youth participants also met with members of the U.S. State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, the media and various NGOs on the top health concerns of refugee and IDP youth in the three conflict areas.

Night Commuters Seek Safety in Northern Uganda

Thousands of children and adolescents travel long distances every night to sleep in ad hoc shelters in the Gulu and Kitgum regions of northern Uganda. They are forced to leave camps and small villages to avoid abduction by the rebel group the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), which has abducted more than 25,000 children over the course of the 18-year civil war in northern Uganda. The Women’s Commission documented the situation of night commuters and made recommendations to NGOs, UN agencies and donors.



SEEKING SAFETY AT NIGHT

"I [go to] Kitgum Town College, and I live in Labuje IDP camp near town. I am an orphan. I have come to St. Joseph's Hospital three to four times per week to sleep for the past three months. I usually arrive by 8:00 p.m. There is a problem near Kitgum Boys School. I see the same boys, a group of about five of them, bothering me and other girls at the same place every night. Girls need to leave earlier, in daylight, to increase our security. I also think police should patrol schools where abuses take place.

"Other girls and I often walk alone for several reasons. Many times our parents remain behind, and those who are orphans like me have no one to accompany us. I lost both parents, and earlier this year, I also lost my elder brother when he was killed by the LRA. As an orphan, I receive help to continue my education, although most young people at Labuje are unable to attend school. After school, I must prepare my dinner, which takes a lot of time, and I cook for others.

"I normally sleep on a piece of ground just in front of a covered veranda where others sleep. When it rains others and I stand under the veranda, and we do not rest well. As the day breaks, I walk alongside others and head home."

Lizzy, a 15-year-old night commuter from Pamoro living in Labuje IDP camp.



Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict

The Watchlist is an NGO network, based at the Women's Commission, which monitors, reports and seeks follow-up action in response to violations against the security and rights of children in specific armed conflict situations. Watchlist's 2004 reports on Colombia, *Colombia's War on Children*, and Liberia, *Nothing Left to Lose: The Legacy of Armed Conflict and Liberia's Children*, received international attention and press coverage.

Colombia's War On Children was widely disseminated in Colombia, as well as at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Watchlist partnered with a national NGO partner organization in Colombia for these activities. The 2004 Colombian constitutional court ruling that ratified the Legal Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the participation of children in armed conflict referenced the Watchlist report in its explanation of its decision. In June 2004, Watchlist shared advance copies of *Nothing Left to Lose* with members of the UN Security Council as they embarked on a trip to Liberia and other West African nations. Watchlist is also working with a child-produced radio program in Liberia to produce and broadcast six months of radio programs highlighting issues from the Watchlist Liberia report.

In April 2004, the Security Council unanimously adopted a new Resolution on Children and Armed Conflict (Res. 1539). This resolution reflected a number of key issues identified in Watchlist's January 2004 paper, *Protecting Children in Armed Conflict: Blueprints for Compliance*, including the urgent need for the UN to establish a systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting system on violations against children in conflicts and the need for a more expansive understanding of the full spectrum of abuses against children in conflict.

Media

The Women’s Commission received extensive media coverage, including on issues such as the United States’ discriminatory policies toward Haitians seeking asylum, the plight of children in northern Uganda, the lack of reproductive healthcare available for refugees from Darfur, U.S. detention and asylum policies for unaccompanied children, Afghan women’s groups and gender-based violence in Liberia.

Women’s Commission staff were quoted in publications and wire services, including *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Miami Herald*, *The New York Daily News*, *The Arizona Republic*, *Reuters*, *Agence-France Presse*, *Marie Claire* magazine and the *American Bar Association Journal*.

Op-eds by Women’s Commission staff appeared in *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Miami Herald*, *New York Newsday* and *The Minnesota Star Tribune*. Letters to the editor were published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. *Monday Developments* and *Forced Migration Review* published articles written by Women’s Commission staff.

The Leonard Lopate Show and the Joan Hamburg Show, both in New York, each aired radio interviews with our Afghan partner, Partawmina Hashemee.

Mom’s Secret Recipe File Provides Funds for Women’s Commission

Often, the only things that refugee women carry in flight, besides the clothes on their backs and children at their sides, are their cooking pots—and the tenacious will to hold their families together. The center of life for refugees—in tents, in fields, under tarps—remains the hearth, where mothers and daughters do their best to prepare familiar foods and recreate a sense of home. Hyperion books published *Mom’s Secret Recipe File: More than 125 Treasured Recipes from the Mothers of our Great Chefs* to benefit the Women’s Commission. The cookbook features recipes and cooking secrets from the mothers of some of today’s most popular chefs, as well as pictures and stories behind the recipes. The Women’s Commission has received \$50,000 from sales of the book.

Events

Women’s Commission Celebrates 15 Years of Advocacy

The Women’s Commission marked its 15th anniversary on May 13, with its annual Voices of Courage awards luncheon. More than 500 people attended the sold-out event, which was held at the new Mandarin Oriental hotel in Manhattan. The luncheon raised more than \$430,000.

The Commission honored 15 people—eight refugees and seven other individuals and institutions—and bestowed posthumous





awards to Arthur Helton and Sergio Vieira de Mello, who lost their lives in the bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad. Featured honoree speakers were Stella Umutoni of Rwanda, now resettled in New York; Partawmina Hashemee, director of the Afghan Women’s Resource Center in Peshawar, Pakistan; Maggy Barankitse, who has organized five “villages” for Hutu and Tutsi children orphaned by the war in Burundi; and Dina Dublon of JPMorgan Chase. Other honorees were Sen. Sam Brownback (R, Kan), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D, Mass), Leonora Castaño Cano of Colombia, Julia Kharashvili of the Republic of Georgia, the Kosovar Youth Council, Ochora Emmanuel Lagedo of Uganda, Carolyn Makinson of MIT’s Center for International Studies, formerly of the Mellon Foundation and subsequently hired as executive director of the Women’s Commission, Joyce Mends-Cole, former UNHCR senior coordinator for refugee women/gender equality, the Nightingale-Bamford School, Hazel Reitz of the U.S. State Department/Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, and Dr. Win Myint Than of Burma.

Nicholas Kristof of *The New York Times* gave the keynote speech, and spoke of his recent experiences in eastern Chad and Cambodia. Lesley Stahl of CBS 60 Minutes was host. A short film tribute to Mary Diaz was shown, which also launched the Women’s Commission’s Mary Diaz Campaign for Refugee Girls.

Mary Diaz: A Decade of Leadership

The Women’s Commission hosted a sold-out benefit dinner in October 2003 to honor executive director Mary Diaz. Catherine O’Neill, founding chair of the Women’s Commission, emceed the event, which included speeches by Women’s Commission and International Rescue Committee board members, Women’s Commission staff, Joyce Mends-Cole of UNHCR and Mary’s family and friends. The dinner honored Mary for her decade of leadership as executive director. In her remarks, Mary said, “I know [this evening] is a gift to me, but it’s also a gift to the Women’s Commission, and to refugee women and girls throughout the world, and to our new Campaign for Refugee Girls.”

Musicians for Peace

In October 2003 the Women’s Commission was the beneficiary of a “Musicians for Peace” concert. Hosts Allison Whiting and Fred Schroeder welcomed 50 friends into their home for a buffet dinner, and the Colorado String Quartet, who volunteered their time and talent to support the Women’s Commission.

After the performance, acting director Ellen Jorgensen and reproductive health program director Sandra Krause spoke about the Women’s Commission’s programs, particularly reproductive health for refugees. Guests, inspired by the music and the cause, donated more than \$5,000 for the Women’s Commission’s general programs.



Mary Diaz Remembered

On February 12, 2004, the world lost one of its most dedicated and effective advocates for refugee women and children.

Mary Diaz was an eloquent, devoted and tireless advocate for the protection and empowerment of women, adolescents and children affected by war and persecution. As executive director of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children since 1994, she touched the lives of tens of thousands of vulnerable refugee women and children, as well as those who worked with her at the United Nations, government offices and international and local nongovernmental organizations.

Mary had visited refugees and displaced women, children and adolescents in refugee settings around the globe, including in Angola, Tanzania, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Haiti and the Balkans. Under her leadership, the Women's Commission grew from an organization with four staff and a budget of \$450,000 to an organization with more than 20 staff and a budget of over \$4 million. Mary, who was 43, enjoyed the respect, admiration and affection of everyone who had the good fortune to work closely with her.

Prior to working at the Women's Commission, Mary was director of refugee and immigration services at Catholic Charities in Boston, and had previously worked in the production department at a television news station in Philadelphia. She held a BA in International Relations from Brown University and an MA in International Education from Harvard.

Following Mary's death, hundreds of tributes poured into the Women's Commission, and obituaries appeared in major newspapers around the country, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Boston Globe*. They are available at www.womenscommission.org.



In memoriam

In 2004 the Women's Commission lost two friends — Denise Froelich, board member, and Judy Corman, commissioner. Both will be missed for their work to improve the lives of refugees.

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Afghan Women's Resource Center
Afghanistan

Colectivo María María
Colombia

The Women's Commission would like to thank the many volunteers, interns and consultants who worked with it in 2002.

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* Deceased

ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

The following is a summary of the financial operations of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children for fiscal year 2004 (October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004). This summary is based upon figures from the accounts and records prepared by the International Rescue Committee, which is classified as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is thus qualified for charitable contribution deductions. An independent audit of IRC's accounts, including those of the Women's Commission, is available upon request.

Revenues	2003	2004	
Foundations	1,499,147	832,684	
Individual Contributions	1,088,723	747,790	(1)
United Nations Grants	433,840	260,727	
Government Grants	290,968	307,861	
Special Events	340,938	339,551	
Total Revenue	3,653,616	2,488,614	
Expenses			
Afghan Women Campaign	176,820	175,139	
Asylum & Detention Program	160,228	162,225	
Board of Directors Project	45,098	61,871	
Children & Adolescents Program	320,542	279,245	
Fundraising Project	230,973	287,798	
General Advocacy Project	310,930	268,056	
Protection & Participation Program	238,798	144,464	
Public Education Project	152,175	145,909	
Reproductive Health Program	1,372,170	1,346,971	(2)
Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict	82,020	192,798	
UNHCR Assessment & Refugee Girls Project	0	10,940	
Total Expenses	3,096,760	3,075,416	
Excess of revenue over expenses	556,856	(586,802)	
Beginning fund balance	2,135,397	2,692,253	
Ending fund balance	2,692,253	2,105,451	(3)

Notes:

(1) Total individual contributions (\$747,791) for FY2003 consists of all individual contributions including the Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury Fund and the Afghan Women's Fund. Total revenue and expenses from Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury Fund for the fiscal year amounted to \$8,275 and \$36,653 respectively.

(2) A total of \$609,900 of the reproductive health expenses were in subgrants to Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium members and local nongovernmental organizations.

(3) The ending fund balance for fiscal year 2004 includes a total of \$186,922 from the Founder's (Endowment) Fund, \$1,005,383 from individual donations and special events and \$732,283 from various foundations and private grants. These balances are designated for specific projects' use in future years.

DONORS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004 (\$500 and up)

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children is grateful to all the people and organizations who donated in FY2004, and would like to thank in particular the following foundations and institutional donors who gave more than \$500.

Advance Magazine Group	Irell & Manella LLP
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American Jewish World Service	Jewish Coalition for Sudan Relief
American Refugee Committee	The J.M. Kaplan Fund, Inc.
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	Joukowsky Family Foundation
Anonymous (3)	JPMorgan Chase
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Kramer Spellman, L.P.
Blue Oak Foundation	Latham & Watkins LLP
Brooklyn New School/Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies	The McGinn Group
Brune & Richard LLP	Milestone Capital Management
Canadian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade	NGO Members of the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict Steering Committee
Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church	Oak Foundation
Columbia University, Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health at the Mailman School of Public Health	Open Society Institute
Compton Foundation, Inc.	Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
Connemara Fund	Patricia Evert Productions
The David and Lucille Packard Foundation	Peace Tales
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The Dye-Knopf Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation	The Pincus Charitable Fund
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The Faye and Mike Richardson Charitable Trust	Richards, Spears, Kibbe & Orbe LLP
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Institute of International Education	Working Assets Grantmaking Fund of Tides Foundation
International Catholic Migration Commission	World Vision

How you can help

The plight of the world's 34 million refugees is overwhelming. The numbers are impossible to grasp. But through your support of the **Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children**, you have shown the world that refugees are not anonymous victims — that they are resilient, courageous and determined.

Your contribution to the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children will help us fund our programs to improve the lives of uprooted women, children and adolescents around the world.

Individual Contributions

For information on making individual donations, including stock gifts, please contact Ellen Jorgensen, deputy executive director, at 212. 551. 3115 or ellen@womenscommission.org. You can also visit our website at www.womenscommission.org

Send your tax-deductible contributions to:
Women's Commission for
Refugee Women and Children
122 East 42nd Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10168-1289

Planned Gifts

Providing for the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children in your estate will enhance our ability to provide a voice for refugee women and children for years to come.

You can remember the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children in your will.

Or you can name the Women's Commission as a beneficiary of your life insurance, living trust or qualified retirement plan. The legal designation is Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children/International Rescue Committee, Inc., a New York charitable corporation located at 122 East 42nd Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10168-1289.

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