

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children



ANNUAL REPORT 2006



CONTENTS

Displaced Children and Youth	4
Protecting the Safety and Well-being of Refugee Women and Girls	6
Detention and Asylum	8
Reproductive Health	10
Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict	12
Legislative Update	14
Media	15
Events	16
How You Can Help	18
Donors	20
Staff and Board	21
Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2006	22

WOMEN'S
COMMISSION
for refugee women & children



Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

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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 youth.

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 policymakers based on rigorous research and information gathered on fact-finding missions.

We join with refugee women, children and youth 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.

VISION STATEMENT

A world in which refugee* women, youth and children:

- live in safety and dignity;
- have access to the services and resources they need to improve their health, well-being and self-sufficiency;
- participate in the decisions that affect their lives, both during displacement and when displacement ends; and
- are advocates and activists themselves, providing continuous monitoring of the policies and practices that affect them.

** The term refugee here includes refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and asylum seekers.*

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children was established in 1989 to address the particular needs of refugee and displaced women and children. The Women's Commission is legally part of the International Rescue Committee, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Women's Commission receives no direct financial support from the IRC.

www.womenscommission.org



DEAR FRIENDS OF THE WOMEN'S COMMISSION:

In 2006, Women's Commission staff visited places of hope and renewal—such as Liberia and South Sudan—as well as places of conflict and appalling suffering—such as Chad and Darfur. In Chad and Darfur we saw the urgent need for programs to prevent violence against and exploitation of women and girls, including the rape of women and girls who go out to collect firewood. Everywhere, we saw refugees and returnees struggling to earn a living to protect and provide for their families, and to get their children educated. And everywhere we went we saw the exceptional vulnerability of adolescents and young people—the hope for the future, but often the most neglected age group and the most at risk of exploitation and abuse. In Liberia and South Sudan we also saw the difficulties faced by governments trying to rebuild their countries, whose citizens had been displaced for years without access to education and without opportunities to develop the skills needed to earn a living and contribute to the rebuilding of their communities. In the United States, we continue to be concerned at the way people seeking asylum are treated, often detained in inappropriate conditions. Our programs aim to address these problems, as described in the pages that follow.

The Women's Commission is part of a major new inter-organizational initiative, the Comprehensive Reproductive Health in Crises Settings (CRHC) Program. A 2005 evaluation showed that reproductive health services are now part of standard practice in refugee settings, but are still lacking in situations of internal displacement. The CRHC program will fill this gap over the next five years.

We were the first organization to undertake in-depth research into the various methods that people have used to reduce the dangers women and girls face when they collect firewood. These range from ways to conserve fuel (including solar cookers, mud-brick stoves and food preparation that shortens cooking time) to methods, such as patrols, that offer direct physical protection to women and girls. We are now working with UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations to make sure such interventions are implemented in all humanitarian settings.

We have launched a major new initiative to assess and improve livelihood programs, which aims to help refugees earn a living. We will work with humanitarian organizations to find out what kinds of livelihood intervention work and don't work, and will develop a "how-to" manual that will include information on the most promising practices we find in the field, together with "tools" that will help organizations design, monitor and evaluate livelihood programs.

To address the vulnerabilities of youth, we have begun a major new initiative to address the needs of displaced adolescents and young people who are not in school. This follows our work to promote education for all children and youth displaced by armed conflict.

Our detention and asylum program is undertaking a new round of visits to assess conditions at detention centers and facilities that house families and unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the United States. We will disseminate our findings—to highlight improvements in conditions where we find them, and to press for change where we uncover shortcomings, for example, in humane treatment, health services or educational provisions for children and families.

Please read our report to find out more about our accomplishments in 2006. We thank you for your support of the Women's Commission and of refugee women and children the world over on whose behalf we work.

Carolyn Makinson
Executive Director

Glenda Burkhardt Regina Peruggi
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

Displaced Children and Youth

Giving Young People a Chance

Driving through Kalma camp in South Darfur, home to 91,000 displaced people, we see groups of young boys and girls everywhere. Like teenagers around the world, they hang out in small groups—laughing and playing with their peers. Most of the similarities end there, however.

Youth in Kalma have very few opportunities to learn. Secondary school is non-existent. It is seen as a luxury in camps where there isn't even enough funding for basic primary school. The only chance young people here have to attend school is if they can get to the nearest town; once there, they must still pay school fees, which few can afford.

Without access to secondary school or vocational training, thousands of displaced teens sit idle all day long. These young people are a wasted potential resource, deprived of a chance to play a constructive role in their community. With growing frustration and little hope for the future, they may become a source of violence and insecurity. They are vulnerable to exploitation and may become involved in delinquent activities, such as stealing, glue-sniffing and fighting.

Few nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are responding to this growing challenge. A handful of international agencies is working with young people to provide vocational training in activities such as welding, carpentry, tailoring and food processing. In addition to building young people's capacity and ability to earn an income, the training gives them a chance to interact with their peers from different villages in Darfur. This experience could help with relations among villages when the displaced community returns home.

A few youth centers have been started in the camps, which provide an outlet for much-needed recreational activities, such as drama, art, volleyball and football. As 12-year-old Ishmael* told the Women's Commission at a youth center in Secali camp in South Darfur, "The centers are a friendly, safe space for us." He hopes to become a doctor or teacher one day so he can help his community.

Amal, 17, told us how her village didn't have any schools. In the months that she has been coming to the youth center in Secali, she has learned Arabic, elementary math skills and basic English. "Coming here and learning makes me feel very good," she said. "I hope that the center will continue so that I can encourage others to come and learn."

Young people must be given skills and opportunities so that they have hope for their future and that of Darfur. Given the proper tools and support, young women and men can play important roles in achieving peace, development and prosperity for their communities.

* Names have been changed to protect the identity of young people.

By Jenny Perlman Robinson, Protection Program Officer, Children and Youth



"Education is very important in developing a country or a human being. If you develop a human being, you develop a nation.

Education is essential for us as women because we are facing many constraints, many problems, and we are living in a society where men are dominant. We feel that as we are human beings, we should contribute in the development of our country and our lives. So that's why we think education is a very essential and very important tool in changing any society."

Member of a local teachers' consortium, Khartoum

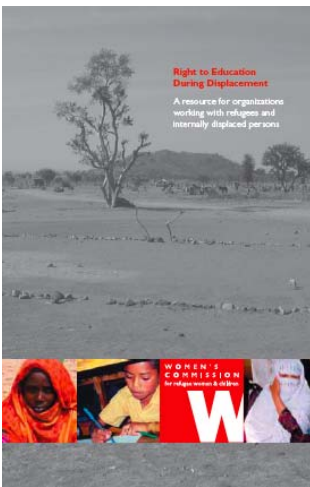


Children and youth make up at least 50 percent of the world's refugee and internally displaced populations. That is almost 20 million young people who have limited or no access to education or jobs, or are at risk of being recruited into fighting forces or abused and exploited.



Program Highlights

- Launched a new initiative on out-of-school youth. This initiative will build on our groundbreaking research with youth groups in conflict settings. Working with displaced young people, we will identify and highlight needs and service gaps, and develop guidelines and program strategies that promote holistic approaches, including education, employment training and life skills. We will press for more targeted funding and appropriate programming for young people.
- Produced an innovative, user-friendly human rights tool to help educators and organizations working with refugees to advocate for the right to education. *The Right to Education During Displacement* is now being widely used by international aid agencies.
- Continued to advocate for more and better education programming for children and youth in Darfur, resulting in intensified media attention on the issue and the adoption of our recommendations by the largest global network on education in emergencies, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies.
- Identified ways forward on the difficult issue of teacher compensation in settings of conflict and displacement. In these situations, teachers are often underpaid or not paid at all, which has a direct impact on the quality and continuity of education for displaced children and youth. The Women's Commission is working in collaboration with several agencies to develop guidance on addressing teacher compensation.
- Trained U.S. State Department officials on how to ensure their education programs in crisis zones are up to international standards—marking the first time a session on education has been included in the Department's annual training on monitoring and evaluating the programs they fund overseas.



For more information on the Women's Commission's work with children and young people, please visit <http://womenscommission.org/projects/children/index.php>

Protecting the Safety and Well-being of Refugee Women and Girls

Trying to Stay Alive: Looking for Long-term Solutions to Benefit Women and Girls

Near Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, November 2005—We sit in a simple bamboo hut on flimsy wood benches. It's hot, sticky. Sweat drips from my forehead, runs down my neck. Ten young, ethnic Rohingya girls, refugees from neighboring Burma, sit before me in this hellish refugee camp. This has been their home for the last 15 years, living in shelters made from plastic sheeting. We, an interpreter and I, are asking them what their major concerns are regarding their safety, and what they think should be done. One by one or, at times, simultaneously, they tell me their stories—about the local villagers who come into the camp at night and demand that their fathers hand them over for sexual services; how when their fathers resist, they are arrested and detained; how many of them have become pregnant; about their fear and their shame. They ask—beg—for protection. One sums up the discussion, saying, "It [the sexual exploitation] isn't even the worst of our problems, we're just trying to stay alive."

The conversation took place during my participation in the rollout of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR's) age, gender and diversity mainstreaming initiative project in Southeast Asia. The initiative attempts to enhance the protection and well-being of all refugees—particularly those most often excluded, women and girls. It undertakes assessments, followed by a thorough analysis of the findings, and then feeds those findings and refugee priorities into UNHCR's annual program plan and budget. The findings in this particular case have led to high-level meetings and follow-up with UNHCR senior management staff who are now more urgently seeking long-term solutions for Rohingya living in camps.

The findings of this meeting and other research led the Women's Commission to produce a ground-breaking report, *Displaced Women and Girls at Risk: Risk Factors, Protection Solutions and Resource Tools* (<http://womenscommission.org/pdf/WomRisk.pdf>). We also spearheaded efforts that led to the adoption of a UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion on Women at Risk in October 2006 (<http://www.unhcr.org/excom/EXCOM/45339d922.html>). The Conclusion serves as global guidance on how the issues of women at risk are to be addressed by the international community in the years ahead. We will now advocate for monitoring and reporting mechanisms on the Conclusion's implementation.

By Dale Buscher, Director, Protection Program



"According to one women's rights activist in Puerto Asis at Mocoa, Colombia, the military operate and live in a girls' school. Many girls and women live with paramilitaries in the community who use their positions to threaten other girls and their families. They live in a climate of fear. For some girls, initiating sex with the paramilitary is at first an honor, but girls are often abandoned afterwards. Paramilitaries have also gone to the families of girls in Puerto Asis requesting their daughters to go with them for a weekend as a 'community service.' The consequence of refusal can be murder. Some girls are kidnapped for cooking and cleaning and are systematically raped by paramilitaries."

From *Displaced and Desperate: Assessment of Reproductive Health for Colombia's Internally Displaced Persons*, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children



Women and girls face many risks when they become refugees, including sexual exploitation, domestic violence and lack of access to humanitarian assistance and work opportunities. They are often marginalized and not asked about their problems. Their ideas for solutions are usually not solicited. Women and girls need to be given opportunities to fully participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Program Highlights

- Launched a new initiative on promoting economic opportunities (livelihoods) for displaced women and young people. We worked with nongovernmental organizations in three countries to start pilot livelihood programs to benefit refugee and returnee women and youth. We provided Assistant Secretary of State Ellen Sauerbrey with a copy of our report *We Want to Work: Providing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees in Thailand* before she went to Thailand to meet with government officials about refugee issues.
- Trained 140 UN staff and humanitarian workers from eight countries in Africa and Asia on enhancing the protection of refugee women and girls. The trainings have led to modifications in existing programs and services, with much more attention paid to the particular protection concerns of refugee women and girls.
- Published reports on various UN agencies' (UNHCR in Turkey, the World Food Program and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations) approaches to gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming means ensuring that the impact on women, girls, boys and men is considered in planning, implementing and evaluating all policies and programs. UNHCR has integrated some of our recommendations into its global age, gender and diversity mainstreaming initiative.
- Conducted an evaluation of the Building Safer Organizations Project. This international project aimed to help humanitarian agencies better respond to and investigate allegations of sexual misconduct by agency personnel towards refugees. The evaluation has led to agencies increasing their involvement in the project and to continued funding.
- Conducted an assessment of the Nike-funded "Together for Girls" program in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya in partnership with the Population Council to further guide and shape UNHCR's Nine Million Campaign. The campaign promotes education, sports and opportunities for refugee children worldwide, including Somali refugee girls in Dadaab.

For more information on our work to protect the rights and ensure the participation of women and girls, please visit <http://womenscommission.org/projects/protection/index.php>

Detention and Asylum

Video Helps Children Navigate Immigration Court

"When I was 15 years old, I was forced to leave everything behind in Honduras," says J.P. "I was searching for safety from my parents who abandoned and abused me over many years since I was a little child. When I reached America, instead of finding safety, I found a jail cell in a juvenile jail. I was really scared the first time I went to immigration court. I wish I had seen this video before, but unfortunately it did not exist. The video is an excellent way to engage youth to feel confident in immigration court and become great citizens."

J.P. is one of the thousands of unaccompanied children detained by the United States immigration authorities every year for coming to this country without the correct papers (more than 7,000 in 2006). Fleeing human rights abuses or other forms of persecution, these children come here seeking safety. But instead of being treated with care, they are put into prisons or shelters, and often left to work their way through the complex asylum process on their own.

More than half of all detained children, including those as young as 18 months, appear alone before immigration judges without the benefit of a lawyer, with little understanding of the asylum process and no real ability to adequately represent themselves. In addition, these children are not assigned guardians to advocate for their best interests, a protection in place for virtually all other children involved in legal proceedings in the United States.

With the support of Hollywood director and producer Doug Liman, the Women's Commission worked with filmmaker Kim Berner, who created and produced, pro bono, a video, "What Happens When I Go To Immigration Court?" The video is designed to lessen children's fears by providing basic information on what to expect in court. The Justice Department has distributed the video to its 56 immigration courts, and copies were provided to several hundred pro bono lawyers and children's advocates across the country. It is available in five languages. A user's guide provides tips to professionals on how best to use the video with children.

The video and user's guide can be accessed from the Women's Commission Web site www.womenscommission.org and streamed from the Web site of Holland & Knight LLP <http://www.hklaw.com/CST/WomensCommission.asp>



"Many are vulnerable children who have suffered traumatic circumstances and are then forced to struggle through a legal system designed primarily for adults."

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D, Cal.) at the launch of the Children's video.



Every year, thousands of asylum seekers are detained by the U.S. government—for anywhere from a few days to more than two years. Many are women and children. Sometimes the children are alone, and too often, they do not receive help to make their case for asylum. Detained women asylum seekers are vulnerable to abuse in detention.

Program Highlights

- Successfully advocated, with partners, to Congress for additional funding to allow asylum seekers to remain in the community rather than being put in detention while they wait for their cases to be decided. The Women's Commission has also been concerned about reports of terribly deficient health care in certain detention facilities. In response to concerns raised by the Women's Commission and others, a key congressional committee directed the Department of Homeland Security to report on what it is doing to ensure that asylum seekers are treated humanely in compliance with standards.
- Joined a number of NGOs as a founding member of the International Coalition on the Detention of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants. The Coalition now includes more than 100 human rights groups in 36 countries dedicated to promoting greater protection and respect for the human rights of asylum seekers who are held in detention around the world.
- Helped secure continued congressional funding for a vital legal orientation program run by the Executive Office for Immigration Review. This program helps asylum seekers and other vulnerable populations understand the protections to which they are entitled and to obtain a pro bono attorney where possible. The program has also been expanded to include children's facilities and presentations that address the particular needs of women.

For more information on issues affecting asylum seekers, please visit <http://womenscommission.org/projects/detention/index.php>



Reproductive Health

Risking Rape in the Search for Fuel

Bumpy sand paths are the only routes for vehicles to travel in or out of the many camps scattered throughout the arid scrubland of north Darfur. Driving along these paths, it is impossible not to notice the hundreds of holes dug seemingly randomly into the hard clay soil. These holes have been dug by any of the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced women and girls who now call these camps home—dug as part of the desperate search for something combustible to use as cooking fuel. In this case, they are digging—by hand—for roots of long-dead trees. The living trees vanished years ago, the fragile ecosystem unable to support the new arrivals in the region, driven out of their homes by the Sudan government-backed janjaweed militia.

On top of the sheer physical challenge of wandering for miles in harsh desert conditions in search of firewood, displaced women and girls in Darfur are at further risk of physical and sexual assault by any number of armed men who attack them with total impunity, knowing there will be no punishment for their actions. As firewood becomes increasingly scarce, these women and girls have little choice but to travel ever farther outside the confines of the camps, fully aware of the risks. It is the only way they can cook for their families. And if men or boys go instead, they are likely to be killed.

The Women's Commission's fuel and firewood initiative, begun in late 2005, is promoting ways to reduce the risks to displaced women and girls during firewood collection, including direct provision of fuel; physical protection strategies such as firewood patrols; promotion of fuel-efficient technologies, rations and cooking techniques; and development and use of alternative fuels and fuel technologies, such as solar cookers. The problems associated with firewood collection in conflict settings extend well beyond gender-based violence, and include environmental degradation, lack of alternative ways to earn an income and health and nutrition concerns, among others.

The Women's Commission has brought together partners experienced in economic opportunities development, environmental protection, renewable energies and energy technology, health and nutrition and others to ensure that the issue is addressed in the holistic and coordinated manner it requires, including at the highest levels of the UN humanitarian system. United Nations agencies and NGOs, working in collaboration with displaced women and girls, can bring about a sustainable solution to the cross-cutting problems associated with cooking fuel.



Cooking fuel is much more than just a way to cook food. It lies at the heart of all effective protection and assistance efforts.

Women and girls must have a legal means of earning income other than the collection and sale of firewood.

From *BEYOND FIREWOOD: Fuel Alternatives and Protection Strategies for Displaced Women and Girls* synopsis.



When refugees and internally displaced persons are uprooted from their homes, their health, including their reproductive health, is severely compromised. Health care is often missing or inadequate in camps or communities where they seek safety. Lack of reproductive health care is a leading cause of death and disease among displaced women and girls of reproductive age.

Program Highlights

- Conducted groundbreaking, in-depth field research on fuel and firewood in Darfur, Sudan, and in the Bhutanese refugee camps of eastern Nepal. The three reports detailing the findings of our research included information on promising practices and recommendations for the humanitarian community, UN agencies and donors. We secured the support of UN agencies and additional funding to ensure ongoing attention to this issue.
- Successfully advocated to make critical reproductive health care a standard practice at the onset of all new emergencies.
- Successfully advocated, with colleagues in the Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium, for significant new funding over the next five years for reproductive health for internally displaced persons globally.
- Supported a training on the female condom among Burmese refugee youth in Thailand. The female condom is the only new prevention technology invented and approved since the start of the HIV epidemic and, significantly, is the only barrier method that protects both against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections that women can initiate and control themselves. The Women's Commission's goal is to ensure that female condoms are available to all refugee and internally displaced women and girls.
- Developed a user-friendly distance learning module for humanitarian actors on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP). The MISP is a set of priority reproductive health services that save lives and prevent illness, especially among women and girls, when implemented in the early days of an emergency. The distance learning module raises awareness about and provides guidance on implementing the MISP.
- Provided funding for two refugee women to participate in the Global Health Council Conference in Washington, D.C. The Women's Commission presented on a panel, A Research and Advocacy Success Story: Reproductive Health and the Humanitarian Agenda, which also included Dr. Cynthia Maung, a Burmese refugee who founded the Mae Tao Clinic in Thailand and was a 2005 Nobel Peace Prize nominee.



For more on the work of the Reproductive Health Program, visit <http://womenscommission.org/projects/rh/index.php>

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict



Using Cell Phones to Protect Children in the Jungle

In the past, when villagers in Uvira Territory in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) wanted to report on violations of children's rights, they set off on foot or by bicycle, sometimes traveling for days on washed-out or all-but-non-existent roads. Once they reached the town of Uvira, they would report to Ajedi-Ka, a local NGO, on violations against children, such as their recruitment and use as soldiers, killing and abductions. Such violations have been widespread during long years of armed conflict in DRC. However, the delays villagers faced in traveling to Uvira hampered timely efforts to verify and report incidents to local authorities and provide crucial assistance to children.

In 2005, the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict initiated a project in partnership with Ajedi-Ka to establish Village Committees for Child Protection (VCCPs) and to equip the VCCPs with cellular phones. Additionally, small, portable solar panels were purchased so that each phone could be charged independently. By establishing and equipping these formal committees, Ajedi-Ka/Watchlist was able to enhance the villages' capacity to monitor and report on violations of children's rights.

As the project has developed, Ajedi-Ka has standardized the information the VCCPs collect every time a case is reported, thereby ensuring accuracy and consistency in the information.

Due to the success of the pilot project, Watchlist has been funded by various donors to support Ajedi-Ka in the expansion of this project, including hiring a focal point person within Ajedi-Ka and supporting technology training, human/child rights training and other activities.

Watchlist and its partners will continue to identify ways to harness innovations in technology to improve human rights monitoring and reporting in conflict zones around the world, even in the most remote areas.



The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. As a global network of local, national and international nongovernmental organizations, Watchlist collects and disseminates information on violations against children in conflicts in order to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children. Watchlist is housed at the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

Program Highlights

- **Published reports**, including *Struggling to Survive: Children in Armed Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, an update to its 2003 report on the situation of children affected by armed conflict in the DRC, and *The Power of Partnership: Guiding Principles for Partnerships to End Violations Against Children During Armed Conflict*, a policy paper calling for the development of sustainable and strong partnerships between the UN and civil society organizations.
- **Co-organized**, with the Government of Canada, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children in Armed Conflict and UNICEF, a **full-day symposium on implementing Security Council (SC) Resolution 1612 on children in armed conflict**. Watchlist partners from Nepal, Colombia and DRC presented on a "case study" panel, discussing the progress and challenges of implementing resolution 1612 in their countries.
- **Spoke on behalf of civil society organizations at the Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict**. UN SC Resolution 1698 on DRC reflected suggested actions outlined in the Watchlist's report on DRC, in that for the first time the resolution placed sanctions on political and military leaders recruiting or using children in armed conflict in DRC.
- **Helped the RAEN Child Protection Network in DRC** develop its ability to carry out monitoring and reporting of violations of children's human rights in North Kivu. In Nepal, the project "Partnerships for Protecting Children in Armed Conflict (PPCC)" strengthened the capacity of local civil society organizations and field offices of international NGOs to carry out monitoring, reporting and response activities related to child rights violations. Due in large part to the work of PPCC, the protection of educational facilities was included in the May ceasefire agreement between the government of Nepal, the Maoist rebels and the major political parties.

For more about Watchlist, visit <http://watchlist.org/>





Legislative Advocacy

Through its legislative advocacy program, the Women's Commission makes recommendations to members of Congress on how to improve assistance to refugee women and children. We do this through meetings and briefings with lawmakers and their staffs and through web-based advocacy efforts that help connect our supporters with their members of Congress.

Congressional Action on Unaccompanied Children

Thanks to previous advocacy by the Women's Commission, unaccompanied alien children who enter the United States must be transferred within three to five days from the custody of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR tries to reunite children with their families when feasible and appropriate. It operates special facilities for the children, and can arrange foster care in some cases. Unfortunately, there is strong evidence that these transfers are not occurring in a timely fashion, and children are being held in unacceptable conditions in border patrol stations or jail-like facilities. The Women's Commission has continually urged Congress and the Administration to address this issue. This year, during deliberations on the DHS funding bill for 2007, Congress expressed its concern about these reported delays and directed DHS to ensure that unaccompanied children are transferred within 72 hours of their apprehension.

Senate Passes Legislation to Help Women and Children at Special Risk

In 2006, the Senate passed bipartisan legislation introduced by Senator Brownback of Kansas to help certain women and children whose immediate risk of harm is so great in their home country or in refugee and other settings that they need a special, expedited way to reach safety in the U.S. Although the bill did not become law in 2006, we will push for its passage in the new Congress.

Women's Commission Web-based Advocacy Reaps Results

The Women's Commission's Take Action section of the Web site goes from strength to strength. In 2006, our friends and supporters sent several thousand messages to policymakers on issues ranging from increasing funding for refugee assistance programs, to improving security in Darfur, to providing better access to education for refugee children. Our supporters also sent messages to Congress urging them to protect the rights of asylum seekers during consideration of immigration reform legislation.

The Women's Commission also joined with other humanitarian organizations in a successful effort to secure additional 2006 funding from Congress for urgent needs in several African



countries. This included additional assistance for internally displaced people in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

For opportunities to "take action" on legislative issues affecting refugee women and children, visit <http://capwiz.com/wc/home/>

Media

The Women's Commission had an exciting year with a variety of media coverage, which is important in advancing our advocacy agenda. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Newsday* ran letters to the editor written by Women's Commission staff and *The Baltimore Sun* ran an op-ed. *The Item*, a New Jersey news journal, ran a special feature on a Women's Commission board member.

Women's Commission staff were interviewed on numerous radio stations, such as Voice of America, UN Radio, Free Speech News Radio, Greenstone Media, XM Satellite Radio, WBAI Radio and on the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network's show, "Dialogue from Coast to Coast."

Staff were featured on CNN International World News. The work of the Women's Commission was also highlighted on the Spanish language television network, Univision.

Staff members published three articles in *Monday Developments* and two in *Forced Migration Review*, both leading journals in the humanitarian field. Articles by staff were also published in the journals *EQUALS* and *Global Public Health*.

The *Albuquerque Tribune*, *Amnesty USA News*, *Immigration Daily*, *Eldis*, Brennan Center Legal Services E-News and InterPress News Service ran articles featuring the Women's Commission, while AlertNet ran an article by a Women's Commission board member.

Visit the Women's Commission's "Newsroom" at <http://womenscommission.org/newsroom>



Events

Honoring Champions of Education for Children Affected by Conflict

The Women's Commission's 2006 *Voices of Courage Awards* luncheon in May honored individuals and organizations working to ensure that children in emergency situations receive a quality, uninterrupted education.

Aziza Ishaqzai, an Afghan refugee who runs a school for girls in Pakistan, was unable to attend the luncheon due to security reasons, so Women's Commission staff member Shogufa Alpar, a former Afghan refugee herself, accepted the award on Ms. Ishaqzai's behalf. "Through education, women...are better equipped and informed to actively and effectively participate in the development of their societies. Educated Afghan women can also contribute to the peace process in our country," she said, reading Ms. Ishaqzai's acceptance speech.

Christiana Thorpe, the Founding Chairperson of the Sierra Leone Chapter of the Forum of African Women Educationalists and a former Minister of Education, has not only improved education in her native country, but also worked to ensure that Sierra Leonean students continued to receive an education when they were displaced in neighboring Guinea during their country's civil war. Ms. Thorpe delivered the keynote speech, warning, "Education is definitely about academics, but it is even more so about economics. Whenever education is neglected for whatever reason, the resulting costs become very high."

Other recipients of the Voices of Courage award were the **Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies**, a global network of organizations and individuals working to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction, and **Microsoft Corporation** for its work to promote technology education worldwide.

Lesley Stahl hosted the sold-out event at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York, and Caroline Kennedy presented the awards.

The luncheon broke a fundraising record, garnering more than \$550,000 for the Women's Commission's work. Top donors included Microsoft Corporation; Miranda Kaiser; Orrick, Herrington and Sutcliffe LLP; and David Spears.





To pay tribute to Mary Anne Schwalbe, the Women's Commission's Founding Director Emerita, two anonymous donors offered to match up to \$50,000 in individual contributions this year. The response to the challenge, which was launched at the 2006 Voices of Courage luncheon, was quick and generous—fitting for any effort to honor Mary Anne's many years of dedication to the Women's Commission. With your help, we raised over \$116,000, surpassing our goal of \$100,000. The contributions will help build the Women's Commission's Founders Fund, which Mary Anne and her husband Douglas established at the Women's Commission's 10th anniversary in 1999. The fund helps the Commission build long-term financial security and continue our mission of improving the lives and protecting the rights of displaced women, children and young people around the world.



How You Can Help

The plight of the world's 34 million refugees is overwhelming. The length of displacement now tops 17 years on average. Approximately 10.2 million refugees are young people between the ages of 10 and 24. Homes and communities are destroyed. Women are raped routinely. Children miss out on years of education. Generations of families live out their lives—births, marriages and deaths—in refugee camps without jobs, homes or income. The situation is almost impossible to grasp.

Each year, the Women's Commission is responsible for raising its operating budget of roughly \$5 million for our programs, which promote long-term solutions to problems affecting the world's refugees. We rely on the support of generous individuals who believe in our mission.

Your contribution to the Women's Commission will directly support our programs and help refugees gain access to the services and resources they need to survive and prosper even under the most desperate circumstances.

There are many ways you can help:

Making a Contribution

For information on making a donation of cash or stock, please contact Lucy Roche, Development Officer, at 212. 551. 3009 or lucyr@womenscommission.org.

You may send your tax-deductible contribution to:
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
122 East 42nd Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10168-1289

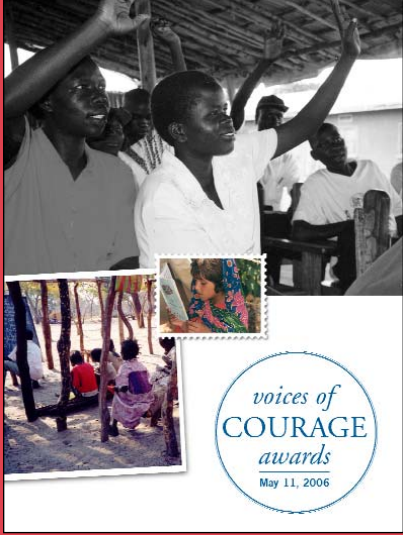
You can also visit www.womenscommission.org to make a secure donation, honor someone special with a tribute gift or browse through our special gift ideas, including books and CDs that support the Women's Commission.

Planned Gifts

Including the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children in your estate plans can provide you with important financial benefits and enhance our ability to advocate 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, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10168-1289. For more information, please contact Lucy Roche, Development Officer, at 212. 551. 3009 or lucyr@womenscommission.org.





Supporting Our Annual Voices of Courage Awards Luncheon

Every year, the Women's Commission holds an annual event and fundraiser, the Voices of Courage Awards Luncheon. The luncheon is a special event at which we honor refugees who are doing remarkable humanitarian work under difficult circumstances. Often these are individuals who have survived conflict, violence and severe trauma, and are now giving back to their communities, dedicating their lives to ending displacement or improving conditions for refugees. The luncheon is not only an opportunity to honor those we strive to serve, but is also a critical vehicle for raising support for the Women's Commission's programs—approximately \$500,000 each year. The luncheon is held in early May—we'll send you a Save the Date in early 2008.

Thank you for your interest and support!!



DONORS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006 (\$500 and up)

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children is grateful to all of the generous individuals and organizations who supported our work in 2006. Foundations, corporations, governments, and other institutions that supported our work for this year include:

85 Broads	First Congregational Church of Old Lyme	MacArthur Foundation	Sculpture House Casting
American Jewish World Service	Ford Foundation	Margaret Mathews Fund	Segal Savad Design
Anonymous (4)	Franke Family Charitable Foundation	Maureen Monaco Designs	Starfish Group
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Fund for Nonviolence	McCarthy and Trinkka, Inc.	Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation
Bloomberg	Furman Foundation	McGinn Group	Stephen & Myrna Greenberg Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Communal Fund
Blue Oak Foundation	Goldberg/Nash Family Foundation	Microsoft Inc.	Step toe and Johnson LLP
Brooklyn New School/ Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies	Grace Jones Richardson Trust	Miles To Go	Strachan and Vivian Donnelly Foundation
Browde Communications	Hess Foundation	Miriam and Peter Haas Fund	Susan A. and Donald P. Babson Foundation
C/S Group	Hogan and Hartson LLP	Moriah Fund	Susan Sarandon Family Foundation
Canadian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade	Holland and Knight LLP	North Fork Foundation	Tamra Gould and Howard Amster II Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland
Canadian International Development Agency	Howe Family Fund	Open Society Institute	Teagle Foundation
Cashin Family Fund	Hypnotic	Orrick, Herrington and Sutcliffe LLP	Thomas Glasser Foundation
Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York	I Do Foundation	Pasanella and Sons Vintners	UK Department for International Development
Compton Foundation, Inc.	Irell and Manella LLP	Patricof Family Foundation	UNICEF
Connemara Fund	Jacquelyn and Gregory Zehner Foundation	Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler	US Agency for International Development
Corcoran Group Real Estate	Jewish Coalition for Sudan Relief	Paul and Harriett Weissman Family Foundation	US Department of State, Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration
Custom Publishing Group	JM Kaplan Fund	Peace Tales	West End Collegiate Church
Danya International, Inc.	Johnson and Johnson/Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceuticals	Pearson plc	Whitehead Foundation
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Deloitte	Joseph P. Kennedy Enterprise	PepsiCo Foundation	World Bank
Dune Hanson Foundation	JP Morgan Chase Foundation	Pfizer Inc.	Zients Family Foundation
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We apologize for any errors or omissions.



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The Women's Commission
would like to thank the
many volunteers, interns
and consultants who
worked with us in 2006.

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

The following is a summary of the financial operations of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children for fiscal year 2006 (October 1, 2005 - September 30, 2006). 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	2006	2005
Foundations	1,812,588	1,088,286
Individual Contributions	631,208	673,567
United Nations Grants	0	10,000
Government Grants	533,162	504,524
Special Events	555,132	450,743
Donated Goods and Services*	762,876	0
Total Revenue	4,294,966	2,727,120

Expenses

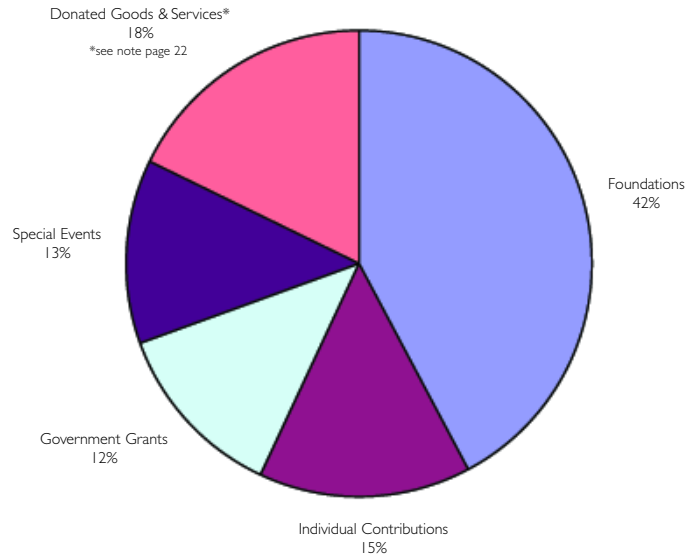
Asylum & Detention Program	318,054	173,729
Board of Directors Project	122,051	105,571
Fundraising Project	389,240	323,666
General Advocacy Project	580,140	595,170
Protection Program—Children & Youth	290,877	181,695
Protection Program—Livelihoods	716,048	471,000
Public Education Project	360,304	159,841
Reproductive Health Program	699,800	613,085
Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict	375,766	226,435
Total Expenses	3,852,280	2,850,192

Summary of Fund Balance Analysis

TYPE OF FUND	Balance End of FY2006	Balance End of FY2005	Change in Fund Balance
Endowment—Founders' Fund	432,308	231,869	200,439
General Unrestricted Funds	600,196	681,424	(81,228)
Memorial Funds	317,667	309,579	8,088
Temp. Restricted Funds	963,794	648,406	315,388
TOTAL	2,313,965	1,871,278	442,687

* FY06 is the first year that donated goods and services (pro bono legal and professional expertise, editing, design, etc.) have been recognized in our financial reports. The corresponding expenses have been recognized and are included in the program expenses.

FY 2006 Revenue



FY 2006 Expenses

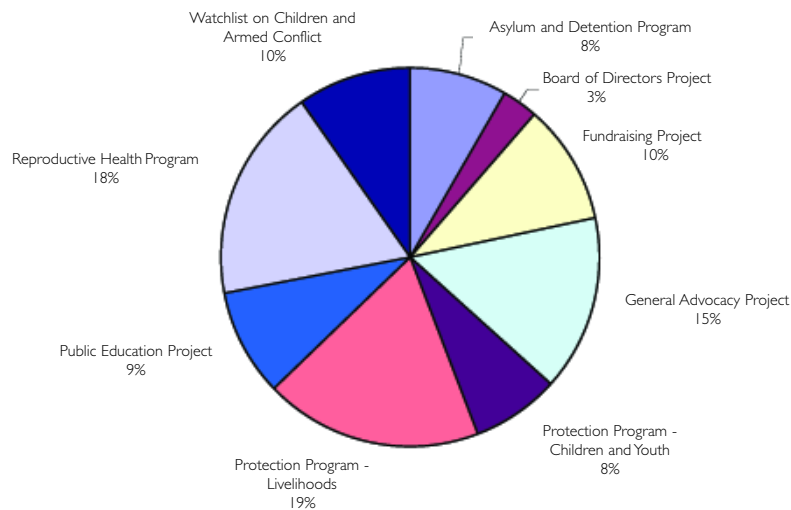


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WOMEN'S
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for refugee women & children



**Women's Commission
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