

Editorial

This issue of the Journal has as its major theme the situation of Mozambican refugees within Southern Africa. This is timely as the conflict in the sub-region appears to be heading towards resolution: repatriation is the catchword and concerned agencies, both governmental and non-governmental are now working with the large displaced and refugee populations with this goal in mind. Comprehensive repatriation is however a future goal; at the present time large numbers of refugees are still confined within refugee camps in countries bordering on Mozambique. Social workers and other NGO personnel need to be aware of the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the context of these camps - women who continue to remain marginalised, children, the single-headed households, the disabled and frail elderly, among others. An awareness of their needs must extend also to consideration of the assistance they will require once repatriation commences in earnest.

This *Refugees* issue has been developed in the context of a major cooperative project involving a consortium of three institutions: Save the Children Federation (USA), the School of Social Work in Zimbabwe and Duke University, North Carolina, USA. This is an interesting project (termed the Southern Africa Training and Research Initiative, or SATARI), funded by the US State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs, which seeks to enhance the development of programmes and policies that are more responsive to the needs of refugees/displaced persons in southern Africa. SATARI has formed a consultative group involving government personnel from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, and representatives from UNHCR and NGOs, developed field-based workshops to examine the situation of vulnerable groups - in particular children - in the camps and in the context of repatriation, and is developing a Documentation Centre based at the School of Social Work, among other initiatives. This issue of the Journal is a product to some extent of SATARI: two of the papers published here were specifically commissioned by SATARI, and the Refugees theme for the Journal was identified as appropriate given the timing with regard to repatriation in the region, and the School's involvement in this project. All the papers published in this issue are by persons who have some connection with, or knowledge about SATARI.

Neil Boothby considers the situation faced by unaccompanied children in Mozambique and argues for sensitive, community-based programmes that build on traditional community networks. Initial efforts of the Mozambican government to develop foster care services proved excessively bureaucratic and overly-centralised. However, following a combined initiative which included government and NGOs (termed the "Languene Initiative", more inclusive and district-level

strategies were employed. The success of these strategies indicated that if government and NGOs worked together and, crucially, involved local people and refugees themselves in these efforts, then significant numbers of unaccompanied children could be documented and family members located who could provide care for them.

The emphasis given by Boothby to the active involvement of refugees and displaced persons is continued in the article by Madzokere on the situation of rural Mozambican women at Mazowe River Bridge Camp in Zimbabwe. Madzokere provides a critical analysis of the continuing subordinate role of women in the camps and their lack of involvement in decision-making and in any meaningful participation in the administration of the camp. Following her study of the role and status of these women, Madzokere recommends several strategies which, if adopted by the existing governmental and NGOs actively working with refugees, could significantly impact on their position.

Gillian Straker extends the theme of this Refugees issue by examining the after-effects of violent situations and consequent trauma that ensues. Writing from the experience of the South African conflict, Straker's particular interest is to examine the effect that working with "survivors" of trauma has on those in the helping professions. She points out that workers' reactions to trauma mirror those of the survivors (eg a sense of powerlessness, anger, anxiety and burnout) and creates a "secondary traumatisation". Those in the helping professions need to recognise this transference and work on ameliorating its effects. To this end Straker recommends several practical exercises which should assist them to do so.

While trauma is one consequence of violent situations, another is the serious social dislocation that is an inevitable by-product of conflict. In this context Muchini examines the phenomenon of unaccompanied Mozambican children in Zimbabwe, who are to be found in refugee camps, towns and cities, commercial farms, communal areas and institutions. Many become street children, working for a living by vending and taking on other jobs in the informal sector. Through detailed case examples, Muchini introduces us to the lives of some of the children - Jose's experience in the communal areas, in Harare, arrest by the Police, placement in a children's institution, followed by a refugee camp and finally a fostering situation. The stories of Mosses and Mario, abducted by the MNR, and Eduardo orphaned in Mozambique, provide further graphic and personal accounts of how children are affected by war.

Muchini concludes that while the experience of these children has been masked by the trauma of loss and separation, they still demonstrate a range of coping capacities and resilience. He suggests that agencies should provide a higher level of support to them through improving systems of documentation, tracing and assessment, and through making quick (but informed) decisions about child placement, foster care and the need for intensive casework.

Korstad extends the concept of documentation to include projects involving refugee and displaced children. He points out that documentary projects drawing upon African traditions can assist Mozambican children to regain a sense of identity with their past. He relates this to documentary projects carried out by children from impoverished communities in the United States, which helped them to communicate their sense of the world. Projects could include a variety of formats - oral history, photographic, autobiographical, use of video and role play. Documentary projects not only help the children develop better communication and learning skills, but also provide a source of information to the community itself, the nation and the outside world.

Phiri and Duncan also focus on the needs of the unaccompanied refugee child and examine the value of good substitute family placements in restoring a sense of belonging, and providing support and guidance to children. Problems in organising and arranging these placements are considered and the authors suggest the necessity of developing a set of guidelines to monitor the appropriateness of placements. Case examples are provided - the stories of Rosa and Carlos demonstrate some of the problems and difficulties of these placements, while Jose's story indicates a reasonable successful placement. Further training, policy review, involvement of the community and a greater sensitivity to cultural issues are suggested as aspects which will enhance substitute family placements.

The review article by Lent and the book reviews all focus on refugee-related publications, or are concerned with children in difficult circumstances, enhancing the thematic nature of this issue.

The **Journal of Social Development in Africa** is pleased to be able to publish articles directly related to current political and social realities in the Continent. It is hoped that this Refugees issue will provide useful information and will help to provoke readers into thinking through some of the issues relating to the needs of refugees and displaced persons in southern Africa.

If readers wish to know more about SATARI and its objectives, the following publications will be sent free of charge if requested from the editor of this Journal:

- SCF (USA) (1992) "Not Making Matters Worse: Recognizing and Enhancing Strengths of Displaced Children and Their Families", Summary Report Chimanimani Workshop Dec 1-6, 1991 and Follow-up Symposium, April 29, 1992, Save the Children Federation, USA, Harare.
- SATARI (1993) "Repatriation of Vulnerable Groups: Field-Based Planning and Coordination Workshops: Summary Workshop Report (Chiredzi, Zimbabwe & Mwanza, Malawi), Harare.