

and are doing to assist refugee women. She also provides a list of international organisations that are involved in work with refugees.

Throughout the book the author stresses the need for refugees to participate actively in decision-making in all matters that affect their lives and she sees their participation as a tool which can empower refugee women to sustain development. She manages to capture the lives of refugee women vividly and highlights the common, but untalked about problems that refugees experience, such as sexual harassment and rape. However, because the author addresses many issues she does not go into a lot of detail on these. Her ability to suggest solutions to some of the problems makes her book very useful to anyone interested in work with refugee women. The book is written simply and her case studies enable the reader to conceptualise and appreciate the problems that women face. I view it as an eye-opener and hope that anyone involved in development work will have a chance to read the book which covers the gap that was existing in as far as literature on refugee women is concerned.

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**Homeless Children: The Watchers and the Waiters**, Nancy A Boxill (ed), The Haworth Press, New York, 1990, pp 156. (ISBN: 0-86656-789-5). No price listed.

This book is a unique collection of eight articles about homeless children in the United States of America. The relevance of this book cannot be overstated as homelessness is a growing problem in all societies; developed, developing and underdeveloped. It is more so in the latter two where resources are usually meagre. The authors have viewed homelessness and its impact on children from several perspectives. Each author presents a professional discourse of the phenomenon of homelessness and caps this with recommendations on policy and practical intervention. Thus, this book is ideal for use by field workers and policy makers tackling the issue of homelessness and in particular homeless children.

In the first chapter Leanne G Rivlin sets the tone of the book by presenting an analysis of the impacts of various forms of homelessness on children and the meaning of personal space and personal place in the lives of children. Rivlin outlines the significance of the environment to children's social, emotional and cognitive development. The author takes the reader into a discussion of the powerful and enduring impacts that environmental experiences have on children, considering implications of shelters, welfare hostels and street environments to children's welfare and lives. The author offers the concept of attachment to place and underlines the direct functions of attachments, stabilising children's lives and rationalising their stimulation and preventing alienation.

The second chapter explores the specific psychological effects of growing up in shelters and welfare hostels and discusses various coping strategies that homeless children have developed to adapt to the stress of homelessness. The authors present quantitative and qualitative data resulting from psychological measures and assessments conducted on homeless children in Massachusetts. They make an interesting conclusion that emergency sheltering facilities exacerbate the children's existing problems and create new ones. This should provide food for thought to emergency relief agencies who provide shelters to *deslocado* communities in the Zimbabwean context.

In the third chapter, the reader is taken through the experiences of children on the move, a transient group of children and their families or friends who are moving across the country and are not yet living in shelters. This group of homeless children live in vehicles, buses or train stations and is highly mobile, changing location more often than the sun's daily changes in horizontal position. The authors, Hall and Moza, conclude their article outlining intervention strategies and implications for policy, public education and short and long-term solutions that address the economic, social and psychological needs of the homeless.

In the fourth chapter, Boxill and Beaty challenge the reader to reconsider conceptions of mother-child relationships among homeless women and their children. The authors describe how the delicate and important dyad of mother and child is affected and distorted by shelter-living, volunteer and "professional" intervention. This brings to fore the critical usefulness of the concept of popular participation in programme planning and implementation. Boxill and Beaty conclude their article with concrete recommendations based on data obtained through participant observation and phenomenological inquiry.

The fifth chapter by Wright takes the reader away from psychosocial issues to the physical health problems of homeless children, youth and women seen in the National Health Care for the Homeless Programme (HCH) during the Programme's first year. Homeless people stand out as being more ill and children suffer from chronic physical disorders at about twice the rate of occurrence among similar ambulatory patient populations. Wright attributes the health problems directly to the conditions of a homeless existence.

The sixth chapter by Rosenman and Stein focus the reader on concrete programme problems and public policy failures. The authors describe the great hardships and inadequacies created by under-funded, less coordinated and politically unpopular programmes for homeless children. The authors highlight the various social service needs of homeless children and they present recommendations for effective intervention. They emphasise the need for a national policy to address the problem of homelessness.

In the seventh chapter, Battle explores poverty in the context of homeless women and children and how national policy has affected the lives of families in the United States. The author takes the reader on a journey tracing social welfare policy from Elizabethan Poor Laws through the New Deal, the War on Poverty and up to Reaganomics. Battle notes that national social welfare policy has over the years either succeeded or failed to alleviate the plight of the poor because of socio-political factors in the United States at different points in history. This brings to fore how powerful interests may water down policies and programmes with noble intentions.

The eighth and final chapter by Connolly caps the volume by looking at the life style of street children in two of South America's cities. The author offers a moving discussion of a comparison of street children in Bogota, Colombia and Guatemala City. Connolly concludes the chapter by suggesting a national policy review to avoid a similar scenario in the United States. The chapter provokes serious thoughts and raises critical comparative analysis. The reader is forced to consider how Zimbabwe is different from the Latin American countries that Connolly writes about. In Zimbabwe there are already indications that street children are a growing phenomenon and the critical question is and will be: what is our response to street children?

The volume raises moral questions about societal responses to homelessness, distribution of resources and national policy formulation. It offers concrete solutions to how and why we should respond to homelessness. However we must all agree that children are not "watchers and waiters". Children are active participants in the biggest game called *life*. We need to appreciate the role children play in influencing the final outcome of the "game".

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