

## **PART 1: THE GENERAL BACKGROUND**

## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

This is a study about support systems for people living as political refugees in Southern Africa with specific reference to Botswana.

Over the last decade, the number of refugees globally has increased. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2001:3, 2001:7), from 1980 to 1985, the number of refugees increased from an estimated number of 8.5 million to 10 million. At the end of 1992, there were an estimated number of 18.5 million refugees globally. In 1992, Africa had an estimated 6.7 million refugees, which was almost 36 per cent of global refugees, the highest number of any continent. Basic causes and motives for forced migration, according to Mayotte (1992:7), include systematic human rights violation and persecution due to political ideas, religious belief and ethnic origin.

Coping with refugees is made doubly complicated by the difficulty of defining the term, "Who is a refugee?" The technical question of who is and who is not a refugee has enormous significance for displaced people themselves. The answer determines the degree of support and protection the individuals receive as well as the long-term resolution of their plight.

The refugee situation in the Southern part of Africa has changed since 1990 for the better due to the democratic change in South Africa and other countries in the region. This has led to a drastic reduction in conflict, which had been the major contributing factor to coerced population movements in the region in the recent past. However, the bloody and protracted civil war in Angola continued to generate refugees in the region. It was estimated that there were about 255,000 refugees from Angola living in different parts of the world. Angola is among the six leading refugee-producing countries in Africa (Refugees 1999:11). Conflicts in other regions also generate involuntary population movements to some of the

countries in Southern Africa. According to UNHCR Southern Africa Regional Office (1999: 23), Zambia was a host to about 150,000 refugees originating from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Angola. Botswana was a host to over 4000 refugees originating mainly from Namibia, Angola and Somalia.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM**

Much discussion and compromise remains in the future if more appropriate responses are to be developed to help people in the “refugee archipelago”. Support for new ideas and promising efforts is needed at this point to encourage the process of devising more appropriate responses. The outlines of the global refugee issues will emerge from this review of the problems of definition, the overview of the numbers and location of refugees and the sketch of the history of international attempts to deal with refugees and their needs.

Inherent in the situation of a refugee is the experience of a loss. Loss of any kind that has importance for the person has an immense effect on his feelings, thinking and behaviour. Loss, in its extreme manifestations, as is the case for victims of war, hurts the essence of our being. There are many different losses in a refugee situation: loss of loved ones, loss of home, loss of community, loss of work, money and material possessions (Kane 1995:26). There are also psychological losses, such as the loss of status, loss of belief in oneself, loss of trust in others and very importantly, loss of power. A refugee does not have the power to solve his problems in a new country as he thinks best (Donders & Smith 1985:4, Kho'i 1987:5 and Mupedziswa 1993:53-66).

Loss of home is a trauma to refugees. It takes away the important social symbols that confirm the identity, and status of a person. Pictures, certificates about the person's identity, clothes and books represent what the person is. According to McCallin and Fozzard (1990: 28-29), Mozambican refugees often mentioned all the curving they had had at their home and regretted their loss. When home is lost, fundamental security is lost too, at least for a period. Mourning for a lost home is often suppressed because of the feeling that one should not complain

once one has survived. Destruction of home by fire in war is particularly traumatising; it brings archaic images of total destruction and punishment from God (Tsele 1987:13).

Loss of community creates a collective trauma because it presents the loss of the feeling of belonging. Very often there emerges an idealisation of the earlier community and a scene that now all is gone and nothing can replace the old. A sense of disorientation and "belonging nowhere" can be pervasive (Mayotte 1992:16). If the refugees do not strive to create new "homes" and new "communities" in their new settlements, they seem to lose the spirit of community and living (Billard 1989:29).

All the above losses are accompanied by a loss of self-esteem and trust in the world and other people. If the refugees' attempt to make a home in a new environment is hindered or not successful, they may be filled with disillusionment (UNHCR 1990:10). Social support from others is very important in this period. Refugees need care, consolation, practical help and social support to bear their emotional pain and social problems. Listening to the bereaved person's feelings, memories about the past and descriptions of his or her past life and assuring him or her of security helps him or her to grieve and gradually accept the loss (Brooks 1988:2). Support from family members is particularly helpful, especially if these have experienced the same traumas.

The dominant feelings connected with loss are helplessness and despair. Activity and involvement in helping others are helpful in fighting despair. Helping people to express their feelings in quantities that do not overwhelm them is psychotherapeutic. Expressing sorrow, longing, anger and crying in a supportive and permissive environment also helps the person to gradually gain a sense of hope for the future and regain the meaning of life. In the first period the person may feel that life is finished but the will for life wins all in most cases, while the hope for something better leads to the fight for survival (Harrell-Bond 1986:60).

My interest in the study of this topic came about when I started providing psychosocial support to refugees with different social problems, including those

who had been sexually abused and those who came from war situations. At the same time refugees in Botswana were moving from one humanitarian organisation to another requesting for almost all types of support. Within the same period there was information in the Government daily news about refugees striking at the Dukwi Camp and two reported cases of suicide as well as many attempts of suicide at the refugee camp by refugees. UNHCR (2000:23) indicates that in between 1999 and 2000, ten refugees committed suicide. Being in contact with other psychotherapists who are within the support systems for refugees in the Southern Region of Africa, my interest led me to talk to them about the problems facing refugees in Botswana. The informal indication was that the existing support for refugees could not be adequate.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

A refugee in Southern Africa, especially Botswana is surrounded by experiences of trauma and loss. Loss of any kind that has importance for the person has an immense effect on his feelings, thinking and behaviour. There are many different losses as direct consequences of the flight; loss of loved ones, loss of homes, loss of community, loss of work, money and material possessions. There are also psychological losses, such as the loss of status, loss of belief in one's capacity, loss of trust in others, loss of hope for the future, loss of personal invulnerability, loss of trust in protection from others and, very importantly, loss of power and dignity. This study seeks to establish how these losses are attended to in Botswana by posing the below questions.

What are the psychosocial needs of the refugees and what attention is given by the support systems in relation to these needs in Southern Africa? What are the needs of refugees in Botswana? Who provides for the needs of refugees in Botswana? These are the questions that I shall try to address from the available literature and the views of refugees and refugee workers in Botswana.

## **1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study then is to determine the needs and experiences of the

refugees and the refugee workers and the degree of support provided to refugees in Southern Africa, with specific reference to Botswana. It arose out of a concern with critical problems facing the hundreds of thousands of people of different national background and from different parts of Africa and elsewhere who have sought asylum in different countries in the Southern Africa region, especially Botswana. Unlike most studies, which analyse the causes of contemporary flows of refugees, the focus in this study is more on analysing the existing support systems for these refugees and to determine what support should be provided or which specific areas need attention.

#### **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aims and objectives of the study is to:

- Present on how protection and support for refugees developed and an historical overview of causes for refugees in Africa.
- Assess the needs of refugees and their families by interviewing refugees and listening to their views about their felt and unmet needs.
- Assess the provision of services to refugees
- Identify the existing support systems for refugees in Southern Africa with specific reference to Botswana
- Present an overview of refugee support in Botswana thereby arousing further interest in the study of some of the specific aspects.

#### **1.5 VALUE OF THE STUDY**

For many years reports of refugees in Botswana, especially at the Dukwi refugee camp having committed suicide or attempted suicide, as has been mentioned have been common. Many concerned organisations have been asking questions

such as: What are the forces that make refugees develop suicidal ideation? What is the real reason that it becomes necessary for refugees to take their lives?

This research endeavour probes a refugee world of sufferings, of loss due to different reasons, including, trauma, identity, sense of belonging and even poverty. Here for the first time are documented stories of refugees in Botswana and how they feel about life in their “new” environment. This is a path-breaking study on refugee experiences and needs in Botswana. It is a contribution that can stimulate new directions in social work and refugee research, refugee related policies and practice in Botswana. Additional value of the study is that it is the first comprehensive research in social work to identify the need for social workers to work with refugees.

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The main limitation was the political sensitivity around refugee issues in Botswana. To carry out research on refugees in Botswana, one is expected to have a research permit issued by the office of the President. The permit is not considered sufficient to authorise the researcher to enter the refugee camp. Another authorisation from the Security Intelligence Services (SIS) has to be obtained. This process takes long and in some cases the SIS can deny a researcher the permission without providing the reasons. The researcher waited for over one year before he could be allowed to enter the Dukwi refugee camp. The United High Commissioner for Refugees Botswana office played a great role in acquiring the permission. The researcher would have desired to live in the camp for a longer period and to interview more respondents, especially that there were very many refugees who were very ready to be interviewed but the security sensitivity would not allow for more time. Many researchers have experienced frustrating bureaucratic red tape and myriads of hindrances in conducting research on refugees in Botswana.

All the respondents were cooperative, although many would speak only if they were promised that their names would not appear in print. A brief word is in order

about the names of respondents that appear in chapter seven. All their names and the names of their countries have been changed to protect their identities.

## **1.7. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS**

The most important concepts that are used in this study are defined below.

### **1.7.1 Refugee**

In this study, the term “refugee” shall mean every person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. The term “refugee” shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country, is compelled to leave his place of domicile in order to seek refuge in another country outside his country.

### **1.7.2 Support system**

For the purpose of this study, “support system” is a set of network of interconnected relationships among a group of people who provide help to refugees in coping with the demands of daily living. The members of the support network may include, friends, volunteers, professionals in different organisations and other institutions including churches.

### **1.7.3 Psychosocial well-being**

In this study, the term “psychosocial well-being” is used to reflect the intricate relationship between psychological and social factors of well-being.

### **1.7.4 Psychosocial support**

In this study, “psychosocial support” is used to mean the protection and promotion of psychosocial well-being of refugees. It involves as a preventative

measure, enhancing all those factors that promote the well-being of refugees. Secondly, it includes providing the special remedial assistance necessary to ensure that refugees who have been harmed or have special needs are provided assistance to ensure a full recovery.

## **1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is divided into four parts. Part one contains an introduction and a brief global refugee update, the global development of refugee protection and support, and African perspective of refugee movements (Chapters 1 to 3). Part two covers refugee experience and support in Southern Africa and refugee movements and support in Botswana (Chapters 4 to 5). Part three sets up the methodological framework of the study and covers the various aspects of respondents' views of the support system and interpretations of the findings (chapters 6 to 8). Part four provides conclusions and recommendations (Chapter 9).

The thesis has nine chapters. Each chapter is, to an extent, self-contained, and as such the thesis can be read in parts. However, it is important to follow the sequence to appreciate the linkage in order to see the synthesis, which appears in the final chapter.

**Chapter one** is a general introduction to the global refugee situation, tragic experiences, loss and trauma that surrounds it. It also covers description and explanation of the purposes and scope of the study and the circumstances that led to its formulation.

**Chapter two** presents an in-depth history of refugee protection and support. It also provides the theoretical framework on which the study is based. It defines the main concepts used in the analysis, identifies the different types of refugees and different types of support structures.

**Chapter three** presents a general overview of an African perspective of refugee movements in the African continent. It attempts to explain the causes of refugee movements in Africa, lending the reader with a basic understanding of refugee history in Africa.

**Chapter four** provides refugee experiences and support in Southern African. It also identifies the typologies of refugee needs and presents the different operational partners of UNHCR in the region.

**Chapter Five** discusses refugee movements in Botswana providing the reader with an understanding of the historical support Botswana has provided to many refugees originating in and out of the Southern Africa region. It also discusses the refugee support structures in Botswana.

**Chapter six** provides the methodological framework. It describes the means and methods by which the research was pursued in practice, including the organisation and administration. It also fully and systematically describes the steps taken to accumulate the necessary evidence to examine and resolve the research question.

**Chapter seven** presents the data and information gathered from the interviews and focus group discussions analysed in organised themes.

**Chapter eight** provides a synthetic interpretation of the above, providing the reader with an integrated view of the existing support system in relation to the needs of refugees in Botswana.

**Chapter nine** brings together some of the highlights of the study: It contains a summary of the conclusions and recommendations in this thesis. .

The basic theme of this study is "refugee support" in Southern Africa, with Botswana being the specific area of focus. But it goes without saying that a meaningful discussion of the subject is not possible unless a review of the history of refugee support is made. The next chapter will provide the history of refugee support, it will in many ways, contribute to the inception of the support itself.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFUGEE PROTECTION AND SUPPORT 1914-2000

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a conceptual framework for the analysis of the problem at hand, to define the central concepts regarding refugees, and to clarify some of the operational terminologies employed in the ensuing chapters of this study.

The number of refugees in the world has roughly doubled in the last five decades and has risen some six-fold in the last two decades since 1980. "Today, an average of some 2,700 people a day run away from their homes to escape war, "a growth of human suffering on a truly mind-numbing scale", lamented the former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadaka Ogata (Ogata 1999:26).

When the Office of the UNHCR was established in 1951-primarily to ensure treatment of people fleeing persecution and displacement after the Second World War, there were some 1.5 million refugees. By the end of 1970, according to UNHCR estimates, there were 2.5 million refugees. Ten years later this had soared to some 8.2 million. According to Vieira de Mello (1999: 10) the numbers have kept on raising; current estimates from UNHCR put the figure at around 22 million (UNHCR 2000:14).

These figures account for only that category of people who qualify as refugees under the definition of the United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees adopted in 1951 (The 1951 UN Convention) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects Of Refugee Problems in Africa adopted in 1969 (The 1969 OAU Convention).

## **2.1 DESCRIBING THE CATEGORIES OF THE “UPROOTED”**

To understand what causes people to leave their home for other countries, it is important to look not only at the different classifications of “departees”, but also at the commonalities – the shared roots of departure. Whether they are considered “official” refugees, internally displaced peoples, “outees”, illegal or legal migrants, many people were actually torn away from their homes by intersecting problems. These include land scarcities, out-of-control population growth, ethnic disputes, and political manipulation, among others (Tomasi 1993:3-10 and Okure 1993:12).

For example Joshi (1996:57) examining the historical background of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, argues that the immediate cause of departure for refugees may be war or poverty, but war and poverty themselves invariably grow out of years of mounting pressures that finally combine in a mixture that propels people over the edge. In a sense, migrants and refugees are the same people, subjected to varying intensities and manifestations of the same problems at the point of departure. The major difference is that as much as the immigrant is free to return to his or her country of origin whenever he or she desires, a refugee is not at liberty to do so. A refugee can only go home when the circumstances that made him or her to leave his or her country have changed for the better.

Involuntary population movements have accounted for more than half of all international migrations since the early decades of the twentieth century and constitute an increasing share of current flows. Kane (1995:10) states that the migration situation is analogous to the spread of a disease, where the causes of infection are often complex and obscure. He explains that there are many reasons why people leave their homes involuntarily. The table below shows the different categories of the uprooted.

**Table 2.1 Categories of the Uprooted**

| <b>Immediate Cause of Departure</b> | <b>Observation /Description</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Persecution                         | Causes people to leave countries when they are able. Qualifies people for official refugees status and aid abroad if the persecution was on race, religion, nationality, or political opinion.  |
| Warfare                             | Causes both international and internal displacement by force. Many of these people qualify as official refugees abroad. Within their own countries, though, assistance may not be able to reach them.   |
| Lack of jobs                        | Causes both international and internal migration, but these individuals do not qualify as refugees because the cause of their moving was economic. Includes both legal and illegal migrants who moved voluntarily.  |
| Environmental Degradation           | Sometimes directly causes departure, but usually joins with other stresses in a cocktail of problems that force people out. They do not qualify as refugees, and often do not cross national borders.   |
| Redrawing of Borders                | Causes many people to move out of newly created countries and into others where they feel more secure or more at home. Creates migrants out of people who formerly were at home. They become voluntary migrants who leave for political or economic reasons. They do not qualify for assistance unless they were persecuted.  |
| Forced Settlement                   | Moves people against their will, usually to make way for infrastructure like roads and power plants, but also sometimes to change the ethnic or political balance of a region, or for other reasons. These people usually remain within their home country and sometimes receive compensation from the governments or organizations that moved them.  |
| Famine                              | Forces people to look for food in other regions. Caused by the interplay of several factors, especially land scarcities and environmental degradation, wars that prevent farmers from producing, inequalities of ownership, and inefficiencies of production. People who flee famine sometimes receive humanitarian assistance, but not refugee assistance unless they prove that they were persecuted. |
| Poverty                             | Requires people to look elsewhere for livelihoods and the means to take care of their families. Even many people who have jobs lack the buying power and resources to survive or prosper. They become economic migrants when they look for adequate opportunities elsewhere.  |
| Political Disempowerment            | Forces people to leave if they cannot protect themselves or provide for their families. People unable to vote or participate in public life or business have little ability to take care of their needs. Unless they can demonstrate in court that they or a group they belong to was singled out for persecution, they receive no assistance when they leave.  |

Source: Slightly adapted from Kane (1995) The Hour of Departure. World Watch. Paper No. 125.

This study is concerned with people who meet the concept of refugee as laid down in the 1951 UN Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention which will be discussed in the next section.

## **2.2 DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR REFUGEES**

The concern of the international community with the plight of refugees commenced after the First World War (1914-1918) when millions of people were thrown into chaos of political collapse, revolutionary violence and economic ruin (Keely and Attwell 1981:11). Convulsions in Eastern Europe resulting from the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, events in southern Europe and the Middle East; as well as the collapse of the Ottoman Empire created millions of refugees and displaced people. Following the Russian Revolution, one and a half million refugees flooded different countries which were ready to receive them. The international community got concerned with this problem (Anand 1993: 1).

In February 1921, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS) called a joint conference on the European refugee crisis in order to define the international status of refugees. The intention of the meeting was to secure their repatriation to their countries of origin or resettlement to other countries, and to coordinate measures for material assistance.

The joint conference requested the League of Nations to appoint an administrator of the refugee project who was to be called the High Commissioner. In 1931, the Nansen office, named after the first Commissioner for refugees was formed; it was based in the League Secretariat. The office was set up as an autonomous material assistance body with a governing board. It pioneered the creation of administrative procedures, solved operational problems, and negotiated the status of refugees in international law (Goodwin-Gill 1991:24-37).

During the Second World War (1938-1945), the German government forcibly removed millions of people, mainly the Jews to concentration camps and forced labour factories. Others were physically tortured in various regions under Nazi hegemony, including children. After the war the survivors were scattered throughout the region, calling for survival and orderly repatriation or resettlement.

Some of the orphaned children were taken to South Africa on an adoption programmes.

The major international agency set up between 1938 and 1945 to deal with the plight of the survivors of the Nazi years of horror was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) with its headquarters in Washington D.C. It was made responsible for the material and administrative assistance to refugees under the auspices of the Allies in Europe and the organisation of refugee voluntary repatriation to Germany. Approximately six million people were successfully repatriated back to Germany in 1946, while 1.5 million formed Europe's first post-war population of political refugees, swelling to 2.5 million, the total number of refugees in Europe (Holborn 1975:10).

The newly formed United Nations (UN) tackled the problem of refugees outside Europe. The General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution in February 1946 directing governments, the UN Secretariat, and agencies already involved in the question of displacement, to protect the rights of refugees and displaced persons, and to set up machinery to deal with their situations. The Special Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons (SCRDP) was formed by the UN, which then wrote the constitution of the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), which was approved by the General Assembly on December 15, 1946.

The IRO superseded the UNRRA and Inter-Governmental Committee on refugees (IGCR) and succeeded the League High Commissioner's Office. It began working immediately to administer refugee camps, cover legal identification and census operations and to effect resettlement as well as repatriation. When tension mounted in the Middle and Far East in 1938, the SCRDP evacuated Jewish and European refugees from China and also involved itself in the difficulties of resettlement in Palestine. Hathaway (1991:38-44) explains that SCRDP had to deal with one million more refugees as a result of Post-War upheavals and revolutions in Eastern Europe, placing them in camps in Western Europe. It ceased operation in February 1952.

Simultaneously, efforts were being made to solve the refugee problem in Europe. The fruit of deliberations over the issue led to the establishment of the office of the UNHCR. The duties of the High Commissioner were to give formal protection to all legitimate refugees, to coordinate international action on their behalf and to cooperate with and through voluntary agencies and Governments. Because many states had enacted national laws denying refugees their basic rights, a truly international instrument was needed to improve the legal status of refugees in all states and overcome the shortcomings of the Pre-World War II scheme. Zarjevski (1988:5) explains that the UN Economic and Social Council appointed a committee to draft such an instrument, and on July 28, 1951 a UN Conference consisting of people with full power to act on behalf of their governments (Plenipotentiaries) adopted the 1951 UN Convention

Article 1 of the 1951 UN Convention defines a refugee as a person who,

*“As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”*

Events occurring before 1 January 1951 are further defined as either events occurring in Europe before that date or events occurring in Europe and elsewhere at that time. As already noted above, the intention of the framers of the Convention was to establish a regime that would apply to persons who became refugees after the Second World. The Minority Rights Group (MRG) writing on the refugee dilemma argues that the fact that allowance was made for it to apply to people who became refugees as a result of events elsewhere was probably a little concession to the few non-Western European countries that attended the Conference (The Minority Group Rights 1985:7).

According to Mayotte (1992:4), the test set out in the 1951 UN Convention is a very stringent one and it can only be satisfied by what are commonly known as

political refugees. The definition, even after the adoption of the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1967 (the 1967 refugee protocol), was still too narrow to encompass the general African refugee situation. This is therefore one area where the OAU proceeded to develop the 1969 OAU Convention included as (Appendix 7), with an expanded definition. The final result was to add clauses (OAU Convention Article 1), which state that

*“the term refugee shall also apply to every person who owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality”.*

There are several elements in this definition that cover the several categories of African refugees. It covers people who have been displaced as a result of wars of liberation and internal upheavals in independent countries.

The first part of the definition, which was adopted from the 1951 Convention, does of course cover the rest, who are the conventional political refugees. It needs to be mentioned that the OAU definition is so broad that virtually everyone who has been displaced qualifies as a refugee (Keely and Attwell 1981:7).

Experts like Newland (1981:11) and Aiboni (1978:5) view the definition in the 1969 OAU Convention as an improvement and very useful not only for African efforts to improve the status of refugees but for international efforts as well. Indeed Neville (1974: 305) states that the UNHCR had been using some of the criteria in extending its good offices even before the OAU embodied such criteria in the 1969 OAU Convention.

### **2.3 THE 1951 UN CONVENTION AND RIGHTS OF REFUGEES**

According to the 1951 UN Convention (Article 1: c-f), a person loses his/her refugee status if he/she voluntarily re-avails himself or herself with the protection of the country of his/her nationality by returning to it; by voluntarily re-acquiring his/her nationality; if he/she acquires a new nationality and enjoys the protection

of the country of his/her new nationality; and if the circumstances in connection with which he/she has been recognised as a refugee have ceased. The Convention does not apply to persons who are receiving protection and assistance from organs or agencies of the United Nations. These include Palestinian refugees who are looked after by the United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees Organisations (UNRPRO) and European asylum seekers who fall under the mandate of the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration. Furthermore, the Convention has no application to the following categories of persons:

- A person who has committed a crime against peace, crime against humanity;
- A person who has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his admission to that country as a refugee;
- A person who has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

### **2.3.1 Rights of refugees**

The correlative of a right is a duty. Duties are imposed on states to apply the provisions of the 1951 UN Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin (Article 3).

States must accord to refugees within their territories treatment at least as favourable as that accorded to nationals with respect to freedom as regards the religious education of their children (Article 4). Refugees must be accorded the same treatment as any other immigrants. They enjoy rights as regards the acquisition and possession of movable and immovable property, (Article 13), freedom of association, (Article 15), engaging in wage-earning employment, (Article 17), practicing liberal professions, (Article 19) and the provision of housing (Article 21).

Since most refugees are to be found in poor developing countries, these requirements – particularly as they relate to social and economic activities, are obviously very difficult to fulfil. Many of the host countries suffer from land shortage; in some, unemployment is rampant; in most, educational facilities are overstretched; others are bedevilled by an acute shortage of accommodation (Hossain 1997: 78).

A refugee must have the same protection as a national with respect to the protection of industrial property such as inventions, designs or models, trademarks, trade names; and of rights in literary, artistic or scientific works with very few exceptions in the African context, where most refugees come from rural areas (Kiapi 1996: 133). A refugee's right of access to the courts of the host country as nationals (Article 16) is practicable. Article 20 is superfluous as far as the majority of African refugees are concerned. It provides that where a rationing system exists in the distribution of commodities in short supply, refugees are to be given the same treatment as nationals. Rationing does not exist in all host countries, including Botswana but it is an important provision in the event the need arises.

Article 24 provides that states also are under obligation to apply labour legislation equally to refugees and nationals alike and allow freedom of movement to refugees as enjoyed by aliens. Contemporary refugees often enter the country in several hundreds or even in thousands.

However, many countries, including Botswana, tend to differ with the provision of Article 24; they argue that control of refugee movements will be impossible if they are allowed to move freely. Friction is likely to develop because of the negative social realities facing most African countries as already discussed above. An example is Botswana where refugees were seen as competing with locals in hawking businesses in the city of Francistown. The Francistown City Council decided to withdraw all the hawkers' licenses given to refugees with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001, (The Botswana Daily News, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2001).

Other observers including Chambers (1993: 9) have suggested the differential

effect of the refugee presence on the different classes and strata within the host population. A large refugee labour force, which is available when needed, is more reliable, cheaper, and enables rich landowners to cultivate larger areas and increase profits. However, it reduces employment, lowers wages and raises food prices and rents for the labouring classes of the host society. The impact of refugee influx into Botswana will be discussed later in chapter five.

### **2.3.2 Concept of asylum seeker**

The term “asylum seeker” refers to a person who requests refugee status in another state, normally on the grounds that he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution in his or her country of origin, or because his or her life and liberty is threatened by armed conflict and violence (UNHCR 1997: 183).

The terms “arrivals” and “applicants” are closely associated with asylum seeking and are frequently used synonymously, although they should actually be differentiated. In many situations, people submit claims for refugee status in countries where they are already residents, whether as a student, businessperson, tourist, migrant worker or illegal immigrant, hence they qualify to be associated with “applicants” as opposed to “arrivals”. As Liebaut (1999:54) noted, the category of “asylum seeker” is a somewhat ambiguous one, in the sense that it includes some individuals whose claims will be rejected, and others who will be given some kind of residence permit, even if they are not formally granted refugee status. Liebaut concludes that until these claims have been examined, all asylum seekers must be considered as “presumptive refugees”. These asylum seekers are consequently protected by the principle of non-refoulement, which forbids states from returning people to countries where they might be at risk of persecution. However, Lambsdoff (1997: 212) argues that those asylum seekers, whose claims have been definitively rejected, become subject to the normal immigration regulations of the state concerned.

The category of asylum seeker is also ambiguous in the sense that people who may automatically be considered as refugees, if they moved to a neighbouring state, might be regarded as asylum seekers when they travel further field and

seek admission to a country with individual asylum procedures. Thus the 750,000 Liberians who crossed the border, in 1990 into Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea were all granted refugee status on a prima facie basis. But of the 20,347 Liberians who applied for asylum in fifteen Western European states between 1991 and 1995, only 214 were accorded refugee status (Liebaut 1999:42).

In some situations, changes in official admissions policy may convert what was once considered to be a refugee flow into a movement of asylum seekers. Throughout the first half of the 1980s, for examples, the countries of South-East Asia automatically granted refugee status to the Vietnamese boat people arriving on their territory. In the second half of the decade, however, those countries introduced 'screening' procedures, requiring new Vietnamese arrivals to prove that they had a well-founded fear of persecution in their homeland (UNHCR 1997:184).

### **2.3.3 Mandate refugees**

Mandate refugees are asylum-seekers whose application for refugee status is accepted only by the UNHCR and rejected by a contracting state. In pursuance of its mandate under Chapter 1 Article 8 of the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 Refugee Protocol, UNHCR may accept applicants whom it considers as persons falling within its competence to protect. In such cases, UNHCR requests the contracting state to allow such refugees to remain in the country only until they are resettled to other countries.

The treatment of rejected cases is undoubtedly problematic, even in situations where asylum seekers have had their cases examined in a fair and thorough manner, and where it is evident that they have no compelling reason to remain in their intended country of refuge. According to Soguk (1999:102), up to 80 per cent of rejected asylum seekers in the industrialised states stay on after the rejection of their claims, often because the authorities consider that it is too costly or difficult to apprehend and deport them. Without legal status or legitimate

means of livelihood, some of these people cannot help but be propelled into the underworld of illegal employment and crime.

The treatment of rejected cases is thus another dimension of the asylum issue in which state practice varies considerably from country to country. Wherever the truth lies in this matter, the treatment of rejected cases is an important factor in establishing the legitimacy of refugee determination procedures. If such individuals are allowed to remain in the country where their application has been turned down, public confidence will inevitably be undermined. As a result, bona fide claimants may suffer. In cases where the return of rejected cases is warranted, UNHCR (1997:4) suggests that the procedure employed to remove them should evidently be as safe, humane and transparent as possible. The argument provided by UNHCR is that an unsuccessful asylum seeker has no fewer human rights than any other person, and no less an entitlement to be treated in a dignified manner.

## **2.4 TYPES OF REFUGEES**

As a result of the images projected to the public by humanitarian organisations and the international media, the popular notion of a refugee is someone of a poor, rural background living alongside thousands of other destitute people in a densely packed camp. While such images certainly reflect the reality of refugee life in certain parts of the world, they fail to take account of the many refugees who live in other circumstances, most notably those who are commonly referred to as 'urban refugees'. UNHCR (1997:123) categorises refugees in two main types, namely urban refugees and rural refugees.

### **2.4.1 Urban refugees**

According to Mayotte (1992:243-278), the urban refugee concept is commonly used to describe at least three different groups of people with the following characteristics:

- Refugees with an urban, non-agricultural background and usually with higher education qualifications, who take up residence in towns or cities so that they can live in a familiar environment, maximize their social and economic opportunities, or apply for resettlement in another, more developed country;
- Refugees of a rural, agricultural and uneducated background who initially take up residence in a camp, but who subsequently move to a town or city in search of work, trading or income generating, if they are allowed to leave the camp.
- Individual and small groups of asylum seekers who arrive independently in the capital cities of low-income countries and who submit a claim for refugee status to the UNHCR and the national authorities.

Recent studies by the UNHCR (2001:6) show that up 200,000 people around the world can be considered to be urban refugees which is less than two per cent of the global refugee population. While urban refugees are to be found in almost every capital city in the world, the largest groups registered with UNHCR are to be found in locations such Cairo, Islamabad, New Delhi and Rio de Janeiro and South Africa. These countries do not have refugee settlements and camps. Refugees are allowed to mix freely with the rest of the society.

In view of the various meanings given to the concept of urban refugees, it is difficult to generalise about their socio-economic profile. Accurate statistics on urban refugees are also difficult to collect, as relatively few receive material assistance from or are registered with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations. Moreover, in the many countries where refugees are officially confined to rural settlement areas and where they are not welcomed in the main towns, urban exiles have a strong incentive to maintain as low a profile as possible (Ferris 1993:52).

Holt (1996:147) argues that in many cases, it would appear, urban refugees originate from groups who have a long history of trade-related migration and who therefore possess the skills required to cope with the difficulties of life in an unfamiliar city. The presence of Somalis throughout east and southern Africa and the presence of Afghans in much of South-West Asia and the Middle East, provide two examples of this phenomenon. Inevitably, the mobility and adaptability of such refugees have led to frequent suggestions that they are actually economic migrants. Similarly, some commentators including, Ilunga (2001), have suggested that educated men and women in certain low-income countries become refugees with the primary purpose of seeking resettlement in one of the industrialised states.

Superficially, as Richmond (1999:108) suggests, these measures appear to be having their intended effect as the total number of asylum applications submitted in the wealthier regions of the world has diminished quite significantly in the past few years, even though the global scale of forced displacement has continued to grow. But this outcome has been achieved at considerable financial cost, including a decline in the standard of protection available to refugees, the diversion of the asylum flow to other parts of the world; and a substantial increase in the scale of human trafficking.

There is an evident tension between the right of people to seek and to enjoy asylum in another country and the right of States to regulate the arrival and admission of foreign nationals. While that tension is not easily resolved, it could at least be mitigated. Chatty (1999:337-339) identifies some of the ways in which states and other actors could address the asylum dilemma, focusing particularly on the notion of temporary protection. Chatty's analysis stresses the need for initiative in this area to be consistent with humanitarian standards. The human rights of asylum seekers, as argued earlier on by UNHCR, must always be respected, whatever the validity of their claim to refugee status.

## 2.4.2 Rural refugees

Statistics from the UNHCR and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) show that in 1998, rural refugees constituted the major groups of refugees in Africa and are a component of most refugee situations on the continent. This is not surprising, as the majority of the African population is still rural (UNFLPA 1998:70).

Generally, rural refugees move in groups as compared to urban refugees who are more likely to move as individuals and who sometimes move through several countries before finding a country of asylum. Holt (1996:146) provides a description of a rural refugee as a person who comes from a village environment and is actively engaged in an agricultural occupation or a directly related service occupation (e.g. carpenter) in a village environment. Rural refugees, in most instances, move across the relatively open borders of African countries and receive asylum in these countries adjacent to the countries or territories from which they came. These are of course generalisations, as one can cite specific instances where the pattern of movement was different, such as the rural refugees from Rwanda who were resettled in Tanzania at the Mwese settlement after having spent the first period of their exile from 1962 to 1964 in neighbouring Zaire (Betts 1993:15).

Frequently, rural situations have resulted in permanent solutions through settlement schemes, whereas for urban refugees, subsistence aid and successive scholarship assistance has often proved to be the only method of assistance (UNHCR 2001:2).

It is common to find that rural refugees who cross borders to seek asylum find themselves within tribal kinship across a border. For them, this has eased the trauma of being a refugee. (Kibreab 1983:5).

In other instances, Chambers (1993:29-43) explains that the spontaneous acceptance by kinsmen in a country of asylum means that the economic and sociological impacts of a refugee situation is not felt by the country as a whole for quite some time, sometimes extending over years. However this changes when

the hospitality capacity of the host society in the border area is exhausted. The refugees, (kinsmen), become a strain on the economy during adverse seasons or where relatives who arrived as refugees have children who seek to marry, and create pressure on the available land for distribution to successive generations. It is abundantly clear that host countries and their populations are affected by a large influx of refugees. Large numbers of refugees place additional burden on economies and social infrastructures as well as government administration. It was also argued earlier that the full burden of caring for refugees rests on the host governments. The next section of the chapter is going to discuss the general contemporary support systems for refugees as can be found in different countries of Africa.

## **2.5 SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR REFUGEES**

Payne (1997:72) defines a system as a whole, a unit, composed of people and their interactions, including their relationships. Each person in the system is related to at least some others in the system in a more or less stable way within a particular period of time and space. For the purpose of this study, “support system” is a set of network of interconnected relationships among a group of people who provide help to refugees in coping with the demands of daily living. The members of the support network may include friends, volunteers, professionals in different organisations and other institutions, including churches.

The term “support system” as used here, parallels the conceptualisation of social network by Garbarino and Kostelny (1992:455-64). It refers social network as consisting of people and relationships; it is relatively invisible, though it is a real structure in which an individual, family, or group is embedded.

Refugee network can be based on kinship, friendship, employment, recreation, education, politics, ethnicity, religion, or whatever interests or elements individuals find in common. The content of exchanges can also be varied. Although the informal network is important, it cannot provide all the needs. Formal support from local and international agencies is more likely to be utilised. Social support network with refugees therefore is an approach to service delivery

that involves significant individuals in the amelioration of identified psychosocial problems. It takes into consideration both formal and informal systems that are involved in the life of the individual concerned.

Closely linked to the social network system are the ecological interventionists, particularly the work of Jack (1997:109-20). The ecological intervention approach adopts a system framework to understanding the ways in which personal functioning is affected. It focuses on mutual interaction between individuals, communities and the wider society. Social work assessment within this approach considers the balance between stressors and support, or risks and protective factors. There is an emphasis on people's subjective experience in this approach because many health and welfare outcomes have been found to depend upon an individual's interpretation of their circumstances relative to other members of their society (Davies and Barton 2000:105).

Davis and Barton (2000:328) have attempted to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework, which could be applied to the study of support system for refugees. They state "support system may be of a continuing nature, intermittent or short-term in the event of an acute need or crisis." In addition, they explain that both enduring and short-term supports, Davies and Barton (2000:239), are likely to consist of three elements:

- The significant others help the individual mobilise his or her psychosocial resources and master his her emotional burdens;
- They share his or her tasks; and
- They provide him or her with extra supplies of money, materials, tools, skills and cognitive guidance to improve the handling of his situation.

Drawing on the works of Jack (1997), Garbarino and Kostelny (1992) and Mupedziswa (1993), support systems for refugees are divided into three

categories, namely, government systems, United nations organisations (UNO) and Non governmental organisations (NGOs).

Each of the above categories shall be briefly discussed.

### **2.5.1 Government support systems**

The task of protecting refugees is ultimately the responsibility of governments. Commenting in UNHCR (1999:14-15), the late Julius Nyerere, and former President of Tanzania, explains that when refugee situations occur, individual governments, especially neighbouring governments, are expected to work together to resolve the cause of the refugee flow and to share the responsibility of protecting refugees as well as help restore peace and security within the conflicted country. He argues that refugee protection should be seen as a humanitarian and moral responsibility and not a process of creating enmity.

Of course, UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations have an important role to play in this area, including acting as advocates for the refugee cause, monitoring the situation of refugee populations, providing them with material assistance, or ensuring that they are able to repatriate to their country of origin on a voluntary basis.

However, there is a severe limit to what such organisations can do in situations where refugees are prevented from crossing a border, where they are subjected to armed attacks; and where they are expelled from their country of asylum. Article 35 of the 1951 UN Convention calls upon states “to cooperate with the Office of the UNHCR in the exercise of its functions”.

#### **2.5.1.1 Specific roles of a hosting government**

Governments that have signed the 1951 UN Convention are legally obligated to protect refugees according to the terms set out in the Convention. They are required to apply these terms without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin, and to respect fundamental protection principles, such as non-

refoulement and non-expulsion (which non-signatories to the Convention are also obliged to respect). In the process of upholding the fundamental principles laid down in the 1951 UN Convention, Anand (1993:3) explains that the hosting state undertakes the following roles,

- Enacting refugee laws and policies regarding refugees in the country.
- Granting refugee status to refugees.
- Issuing residence permits to allow refugees remain in the country.
- Establishing refugee settlements and appointing settlement commandants to take charge of them. The commandants are responsible for the organisation, safety, discipline and administration of such settlements;

### **2.5.2 The United Nations Organisation**

The UNHCR, a non-political, humanitarian agency, was created by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1950 and began operations on 1 January 1951. Its mandate is to provide international protection to refugees and promote durable solutions to their problems. It does so by working with governments and, subject to approval of the governments concerned, with private organisations (Ogata 1992:XIII)

Chapter 1 of the UNHCR Statute lays down the function of the UNHCR as to provide, under the auspices of the UN, protection to the refugees who fall within the scope of the Statute. It is also enjoined to seek permanent solutions to the problem of refugees by assisting governments; and subject to the governments concerned, to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees or their assimilation within new national communities. The work of the High Commissioner is entirely non-political, humanitarian and social in character (Kiapi 1996:138).

The Statute of UNHCR, also calls on the High Commissioner for Refugees to provide for the protection of refugees by, among other activities, establishing contact with “private organisations” (now known as non-governmental organisations) in dealing with refugee questions and to help coordinate the efforts of private organisations concerned with the welfare of refugees (The UNHCR Statutes Chapter 2, No.8, section H and I).

When the UNHCR was founded, in the aftermath of World War II, it operated primarily in Europe, where governments that had granted asylum mainly provided material assistance.

Subsequently, as many of the world’s refugee problems began to arise in developing countries, the UNHCR, with the support of the international community, was called upon to provide material assistance to other refugees as well. Providing assistance often enables governments to accept refugees, since it relieves the States of some of the financial burden of hosting them. While assistance, in many cases, has helped ensure protection, it can be argued that the UNHCR’s cardinal mandate is one of protection, to ensure the basic rights of refugees are respected and to find durable solutions to the problems of refugees.

The UNHCR’s protection specific activities include the following: (UNHCR 1999:12).

- Promoting access to; and implementation of refugee conventions and law.
- Ensuring that refugees are treated in accordance with recognized international standards of law;
- Ensuring that refugees are granted asylum and that when they are not granted the refugee status, they are not forcibly returned to the countries from which they fled;
- Promoting appropriate procedures to determine whether or not a person is a refugee according to the 1951 UN Convention definition and to definitions found in regional conventions;

- Assisting refugees in finding solutions to their problem, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement in a third country; and
- Helping reintegrate returnees when they go home; and providing protection and assistance, when asked to do so, to internally displaced persons.

While the UNHCR is the only UN organization devoted solely to the protection of refugees, Gordenker (1991:15) states that several intergovernmental organisations have charges related to refugees in various ways and often work in partnership with the UNHCR. They include, among others, the World Food Programme (WFP), which is the principal supplier of relief food aid; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which helps governments with programmes that focus on children's health, nutrition, education, training and social services. UNICEF also plays an important role in protecting unaccompanied minors and in reuniting families that may have been separated during flight from their country of origin (Bellamy 1997:2), while the World Health Organisation (WHO), acts as a directing and coordinating authority regarding international health work, and is active in, among other things, immunisation and AIDS campaigns.

The United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP), which coordinates all development activities undertaken by the UN system, oversees long-term development plans after the emergency phase is over. Brown (1997:4) states that the organisation also plays an important role in integration and re-integration programmes. Robinson (2000:66) explains that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), which plays the lead role in human rights issues and emphasises the importance of human rights at the international and national levels, coordinates action for human rights through the UN system. It also responds to severe violations of human rights also works closely with the UNHCR.

McKinley (2000:41) explains that the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), an intergovernmental body, helps with the transfer of refugees, displaced

persons and others in need of internal or international migration services, also cooperates with the UNHCR. The UNHCR also works with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), an independent agency that acts to help all victims of war and international violence, and attempts to ensure implementation of humanitarian rules restricting armed violence.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) also works with the UNHCR. Through its national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, it provides humanitarian relief to people affected by emergencies and promotes international humanitarian law, (Fisher 1999:64).

### **2.5.3 The Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

The NGOs are not specifically mandated through international conventions to offer protection to refugees. Through their work, however, many NGO's operate under mission statements that commit them to providing protection. In doing so, they perform an urgent and valuable service that can make a critical difference in the effective protection of refugees.

The NGOs vary greatly in their size, scope of programmes, source of funds and style of operation. Some are international, others are national, but have international activities. Some are solely nationally or locally based. Most NGO's working with displaced persons provide material assistance or assist in the establishment and maintenance of camps and report on rights violations that may occur in the camps or settlements (UNHCR 1999:57).

By carefully planning their assistance with sensitivity to refugees' protection needs, NGO's can also help with the practical protection of refugees. For example, when protection matters are being considered when designing refugee camps, water points, clinics and even identifying firewood collection areas, the opinions of NGOs are always very important. This is because most of the time, their service delivery approaches are community based.

In respect of NGOs, reference is made to two main groups, namely; Non-Church related organisations and Church–related organisations.

### **2.5.3.1 Non-Church related organisations**

Newland (1981:20-23) explains that these are organisations whose mission statement is to mobilise and work closely with other humanitarian partners to refine international humanitarian principles and norms, and to promote their adoption and application within each emergency or disaster. Brief mention shall be made of some of these organisations, namely, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, commonly known as “OXFAM”, the ICRC and Medecins Sans Frontieres often called “MSF” or “Doctors Without Borders”.

#### **A Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM)**

Oxfam, founded in 1942, is a development, relief and campaigning organisation dedicated to finding solutions to poverty and suffering around the world. It is based on the belief that every human being is entitled to a life of dignity and opportunity. The organisation works with poor communities, including refugees, international partners like UNHCR, volunteers and supporters to make their mission become a reality (Toole 1999:22-23).

In its mission statement, Oxfam holds certain beliefs; among these is that the lives of human beings are of equal value. They also argue that in a world rich in resources, poverty is an injustice, which must be overcome. They view poverty as a factor that makes people more vulnerable to conflict and natural calamity. Much of this suffering, they argue, could be prevented and must be relieved. They also believe that by working together, individuals can build a just and safer world, in which people take control over their own lives and enjoy their basic rights. Lastly, they conclude in their mission statement that to overcome poverty and suffering involves changing unjust policies and practices, nationally and internationally, as well as working closely with people in poverty. Oxfam has operated in many African countries including Benin, Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo. They provide mainly material support to refugees. They

promote and support income-generating activities in different refugee camps (UNHCR 1995:40-53).

#### **B The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

The ICRC, established in 1863 is an impartial, neutral and independent organisation whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. Veuthey (1999:119) states that it directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Fisher (1999:64) explains that the ICRC has different roles when working with refugees, including the identification of dislocated individuals due to forced migration, care for family tracing and reuniting of children with families during crises. He cites the role played by ICRC in Rwanda after 1994 genocide where ICRC reunited over 60,000 children either with their families or settled them with new ones, both through spontaneous adoption directly by Rwandans themselves and/or through other international humanitarian organisations.

#### **C The Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)**

The genesis of the MSF indicates that it emanated from two groups of frustrated international relief doctors. Independently, both groups had reached the conclusion that deference to the will of individual nations obstructed efforts to provide medical relief quickly and effectively. The first group of doctors had become known and recognised for its work in Biafra, a region of Nigeria which was torn apart by a brutal civil war, where it operated from 1968 to 1970 on behalf of the French Red Cross (Tanguy 1999:227).

The second group had become known for having volunteered, in 1970, to treat the victims of tidal waves in eastern Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Independently, these groups discovered the first during a war, the second during the aftermath of a natural disaster the shortcomings of international aid as it was then configured.

This configuration provided too little medical assistance and was not effective in crisis situations. MSF was founded on December 20, 1971, when these two groups of doctors joined forces. By forming MSF, this core group of doctors intended to change the way humanitarian aid was delivered by providing more medical assistance more rapidly and by being less deterred by national borders at times of crises.

MSF provides medical assistance to different refugee camps in Africa. By 1995 they were in different parts of Africa including, Liberia, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Angola and Mozambique (UNHCR 1995:102-124).

### **2.5.3.2 Church Related Organisations**

According to Finucane (1999:246) early church welfare organisations were driven by a Western and Christian philosophy of caring for the needy. Among these are the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and a variety of Roman Catholic organisations like Caritas International. Other refugee church organisations that originate from overseas but operate through local ecclesiastical institutions are the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Lutheran World Service, Church World Service, Catholic Relief Service and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

In September 1995, the Central Committee of the WCC unanimously adopted a comprehensive statement on uprooted people entitled: "A moment to choose: risking to be with uprooted people" (WCC 1996:5).

The statement was intended to emphasize the concern of the Council's member churches worldwide for refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, and to encourage active church response to the dilemmas facing uprooted people. The statement also identifies the multiple causes and human consequences of the forced displacement of people and makes specific recommendations for action (WCC 1996:8-9).

Reference is made to AACC and LWF as one of the widely recognised church organisations that provide mainly material and technical support to refugees in Africa (Brett 1996:214).

#### **A The All Africa Conference of Churches (ACC)**

The AACC, with the support of the WCC, has been one of the major and most active organisations spearheading assistance programmes to refugees in Africa (Christian Aid 1978:45). In 1965, launching its programme known as the Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action in Africa, the AACC began to take seriously the problems of refugees in terms of providing them, initially, with shelter, food, clothing and medical care, and, eventually, assisting the local churches in villages, towns, and cities to provide guidance, pastoral counselling, education and training and other services to help refugees to help themselves. The programme aims also to orientate and integrate refugees in the new society in their country of asylum. The AACC continues to provide financial assistance to the local churches to enable them to carry out these responsibilities. Based on a survey of the refugee situation in Africa, the AACC assisted by the WCC launched and continues to operate this programme (Simon-Thomas 1972:1).

Similarly, through its ongoing internal research and studies, the AACC became convinced that the refugee programme of the churches and all non-governmental organisations needed the support of African governments, if assistance offered to refugees was to be effective (WCC 1996:7).

#### **B The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)**

As mentioned before, LWF is one of the many church organisations, which have specialised in, and performs an invaluable service to refugees especially in refugee camps in different African countries. It operates individual country programmes under names such as the Tanzania Christian Refugee Service and Zambia Christian Refugee Service. These services are operated on behalf of the WCC and in consultation with the Christian council of churches of the countries where the service is to be rendered and in co-operation with the governments concerned.

Currently, LWF operates in many African countries including, Kenya, Liberia, Swaziland, Mozambique and Zambia. They provide refugees with food, domestic needs and household support (UNHCR 1995:102-124).

### **2.5.3.3 Specific roles of non-governmental organisations**

Because of their independent status and locally based, NGO's are often the first agencies to arrive and provide assistance during an emergency. The UN Humanitarian Report (1997:54) shows that NGOs use their presence and direct involvement with individuals to help protect refugees by carrying out the following activities:

- Reporting protection concerns, to government and UNHCR,
- Alerting the public and the media to those concerns
- Promoting international standards among government and local officials;
- Offering legal and social advice, education and training programmes
- Monitoring human rights both within the country of origin and within the country of asylum.

Experience has shown, as explained by Hamm (2000:8-9) that NGO's perform these invaluable services no matter what kind of assistance they usually provide. All relief workers, whether their specialty is medicine, education, skills training, religion or law, help protect refugees by being alert to protection problems and reporting them as they occur.

## **2.6 SUMMARY**

This chapter started by asserting the reasonableness of beginning a discussion of refugees by concentrating on a definition. The definitional issue seems to be the core of the complexity of the international response to refugees. The multilateral organisations, UN, intergovernmental organisations, individual nations, and national and international voluntary organisations have been and remain involved in the efforts of defining a refugee.

This historical overview of the development of refugee protection and support has shown that refugee protection and support have been evolving with time and each stage has had its experiences that demanded certain actions.

A recurrent theme of international attempts to deal with refugees has been that each effort was considered to be temporary in terms of application. Refugee flows are seen as temporary dislocations, almost in their causes and requiring individualised solutions. The political context for refugee movements lends credence to this individualised approach and the perception of temporary crisis. Without denying the unique qualities of every flow, there are some kinds of regularities. This is leading to a conclusion by many analysts – academic, government and agency – related that refugee movement is endemic to the world as it is known. Specific movements may be temporary – although many have an exceedingly long life – but refugee movements themselves are permanent facts of contemporary life. The more an understanding of the conditions that generate refugees is encouraged, the better they can be anticipated.

Several different social support agencies are identified in the literature, the most significant of which are the UN organisations, the governments and the NGOs. These different aspects of social support organs are associated with a wide range of potential psychological and physiological support that are of benefit to refugees, including recovery from physical illness, protection from depression and the enhancement of the ability to cope with stressful life events that go with the refugee situation.

As can be inferred from this chapter, the legal instruments for protecting refugees have gone through different stages of development, including the adoption of the 1969 OAU Convention to meet the specific needs of the African refugee situation. It will be interesting to find out in the next chapter why Africa had a peculiar situation that demanded an addition to the 1951 UN Convention to suit its uniqueness.

## CHAPTER 3

### REFUGEE MOVEMENTS: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

We have to speak together and see what to do about protracted refugee situations in Africa and how we can improve the protection regime in the absence of voluntary return home, refugees still deserve to live meaningful lives--we have to increase local opportunities, on top of what we are already doing, so that refugees become self-sufficient and are empowered with sufficient skills to become useful members of local communities--we therefore have to re-emphasise the importance of education and other self-reliance strategies (Ruud Lubbers 2001).

#### Introduction

The conceptual framework forwarded in the previous chapter, provides a general framework for understanding and considering the issues underlying refugee movement in general. This chapter will be concerned with the refugee situation in Africa, providing historical major refugee events in Africa as well as the major contributing factors to refugee movements in Africa. It will also provide briefly the current refugee situation in the continent of Africa.

Refugee movement in Africa cannot be divorced from the socio-economic, cultural and political environment. If Africa is not visualised in its entirety and some holistic frame of reliance established, it may be difficult to appreciate the relevance of certain issues that may appear in this study. It is therefore, essential to have, in the first instance a brief panoramic view of the nature of problems and challenges with which Africa is faced.

#### 3.1 AFRICA PANORAMA

Africa is a continent of diversity; language, culture, religion, history, climate and natural resources. The author shares the views as some writers on Africa (Harrison 1990:63-76, Martin and O'Meara, 1995:39), who have acknowledged the tremendous difficulty in writing about, and indeed the risk involved in making sweeping generalisations on this vast complex and diversified continent.

However, despite the fact that making generalisations about Africa may be difficult and even misleading, it is imperative to identify common denominators upon which to base these generalisations. But let us first examine the diversities.

Africa is the second largest continent stretching across two hemispheres and latitudes 37° North and 35° South of the equator. The new Encyclopaedia Britannica (1990: 131-135) shows that the continent has an area of approximately 11.7 million square miles, which entails about 20% of the earth's land surface. It has an estimated population (1998) of 800 million people. Of the total land area, 25% is forested or wooded; 25% range land and pastures; only 6% arable land; and the rest occupied by deserts, lakes and mountains. The Sahara desert alone, covering more than 25% of the whole continent, creeps four miles southwards each year, adding to the shortage of arable land. In fact, it has been noted that a lack of decent land is a growing problem for the rapidly expanding populations of countries like Nigeria and Kenya, where nearly three-quarters of the population depends on agriculture (Sandbrook, 1985:15).

Gorgeous mountains like Kilimanjaro and Ras Dashan, impressive lakes such as Victoria, Tanganyika and Tana; and the amazing variety of wild-life form part of Africa's scenic beauty and its immense potential for tourist industry.

Africa's climate varies widely from temperate in the high plateaus, to tropical along the coastal plains, and very hot in the deserts. As the climatic conditions vary, the production of food crops and hence the consumption patterns and the style of life of the people, are bound to differ.

### **3.1.1 Cultural Diversity**

In terms of ethnography, language, religion and culture, Africa shows a wide variation not only from country to country, but also within countries, and even communities. Martin and O'Meara (1995:4) explain that it is believed that there are more than 1,000 different ethnic groups, each with its own language, custom and way of life. Some countries (e.g. Zaire), now the Democratic Republic of

Congo are said to have more than 200 tribes speaking different languages or dialects. In addition to the half-a dozen 'imported' European languages, there are over one thousand tribal tongues, which make Africa 'the most linguistically complex continent in the world' (Lamb 1984:14). According to Lamb, 'the language barrier is one of the biggest obstacles preventing the development of a true sense of national unity in African countries (Lamb1984: 9), and he mentions only three countries in black Africa (Somalia, Lesotho and Swaziland) which are blessed with ethnic uniformity.

Despite the enormous problems caused by the multiplicity of tribal languages, many African governments do encourage the development and use of local languages (at least the major ones) through cultural programmes (Botswana is a case in point). But there is a limit to what governments can do, given the political, economic and logistic problems associated with the development of local languages. The question of which of the local languages should be used as the 'national' language is also a contentious issue, because as has already been experienced in some countries, it could be expected that 'many people would object to seeing any language other than their own becoming the sole national language of their country' (Macdonald's Encyclopaedia, 1976 p.7).

The issue as seen from a tribal point of view may run contrary to the concept of national unity. It is therefore no surprise that 18 African countries continue to use English, 23 use French, and five use Portuguese as their official languages. Arabic is used in North Africa, and Swahili is also used, together with English, as the official language in East Africa. It is understandable that most African countries still use European languages as their 'official' languages as a means of overcoming the inter-tribal language barrier, as well as a 'contact' language with the outside world. However, language is not just a medium of communication; it is also a powerful means of transferring cultures, attitudes and values. Perhaps one possible way of getting round the problem is, as some countries including Botswana are already doing, to have one local and one international language as the official languages. But, of course, this may only solve the problem at the higher level of government administration (Yiman 1990:5) At the local level,

where different languages/dialect are spoken, the problem of communication is perennial. This problem is of special significance to refugee agencies, which prepare front-line workers. The knowledge of local language could greatly determine the impact of services delivery by the workers in communities where refugees are.

The more diverse the communities, the more difficult it becomes to prepare grass-roots workers for them. Whilst the medium of casework with refugees is mostly in a foreign language, the workers are sometimes required to use vernaculars (sometimes assisted by interpreters) for their day-to-day activities in the community. The problem of translating theories, ideas and concepts, for grass-roots workers who have been advised to be cautious and sensitive to refugee issues and situations, in order to win their confidence, may fail to do so as a result of the language barrier.

Africa has not only many tribes and languages, but also many religions. Although Christianity and Islam are the most dominant religions, Africa is said to have more than one thousand 'ethnic religions' termed as 'Animism' involving a belief in 'spirits' which inhabit inanimate objects and other natural phenomena (Schmidt 1995:421). The vastness of the continent, the multiplicity of ethnic groups, and the diversity of languages and religion pose a major obstacle to the understanding of the true situation in Africa. Real issues affecting people's lives in communities may be misinterpreted, misunderstood, distorted, even by-passed as a result of the complex socio-cultural and religious factors. If each and every small community were to be studied in detail, it is possible that too many interesting and unique features could be revealed. But for various reasons (political, economic or technical), there is a tendency to play down the unique features and concentrate upon common issues. As Imasogie (1985:8) wrote:

*"In an attempt to talk about the African religion, the scholar is tempted to ignore the glaring difference and write as if all Africans have the same culture, speak the same language and live in one community with identical experience".*

This observation could also be valid for scholars in other areas. Mazrui (1992:135) argues that most writers have confused Africa ecumenical culture to

mean oneness in faith, yet the most underlining strength with the African society is Africa's culture of tolerance. It is beyond the scope of this study to indulge in detailed discussion on African religions. The idea here is to indicate that the existence of so many religions is in itself a serious problem as it can have a negative effect upon the lives of the refugee communities; because, often there may be hatred and rivalry between one religious group and another. Naturally, this tends to divide rather than unite the communities. For example, a day care teacher in UNHCR (2000:29) explains how in Dukwi refugee camp in Botswana, it is most likely to find a member from Somali community belonging to the Islamic faith, while a member from Angolan community belonging to the Christian faith. Here again, the role of the frontline-workers as agents of change can be hampered. They may have to spend most of their time in reconciling rival factions within the refugee community as opposed to delivery of direct services. A day care teacher in Dukwi refugee camp complains:

*“These Somali refugee parents do not want their children to join in the assembly morning prayers, they say that they do not want their children to become Christians, hence, we do not have morning prayers (UNHCR 2002)”.*

In general, religion in Africa can be a dominant factor in the lives of the people in communities, as it usually governs marriage and family relationship, inheritance laws, property rights, and even determines the role of the sexes. In this respect, the impact of religious practices in facilitating or inhibiting genuine development programmes in refugee communities can be a matter of serious concern. To a refugee worker, this is certainly of special significance, as he or she has to deal with the various groups in the community, regardless of their ethnic and religious differences. It may be in recognition of this fact that social work training in Africa has included such subjects as Sociology, Ethno-sociology, General Culture, Social Institutions and Organisations in their training curricula.

### **3.1.2 Natural resources**

Africa is endowed with immense natural resources: water and forest resources; cash crops; minerals; and new and renewable sources such as solar, wind-

biogas and geothermal energy. Statistics show that Africa has 35-40% of the world's potential hydroelectric supply (Schmidt 1995:421). 25% of Africa is forested, but 90% of the wood cut is used as fuel wood. Its relative position in annual production of minerals stands at 75% for chrome ore, 37% for manganese ore, 30% for uranium, 25% for crude phosphate, 20% for copper ore, 15% for bauxite, 11% for crude petroleum, 8% for iron ore, and 7.5% for coal. In terms of cash crops, Africa produces 65% of the world's cocoa, 27% of the coffee, 20% of the tea, 20% of the groundnuts, 10 % of the tobacco, 32% of the palm oil and 72% of the sisal (Saul 1995: 1990-204). Ali Mazrui (1986), in his documentary, **The African: A Triple Heritage** says:

*“They say that when you push your fingers in the ground in Zaire, they will grow----in some parts of Africa, the land is so fertile that crops do not need any artificial nurturing”.*

In view of such resource potentials, Lamb (1984:20) was right to remark that there is not another continent blessed with such abundance and diversity. He explains that Africa is like a closet millionaire; it hides the riches that future generations on distant continents will need to prosper, produce, and even survive. Perhaps a cautionary remark is appropriate here, that is, not all resources are fairly distributed, and resources alone are no guarantee of development and prosperity. Efficient management and peace is crucial.

Despite the fact that Africa is potentially prosperous, its economy is the least developed in the world. Most African countries have an export-oriented production system based mainly on a single commodity (mineral or cash crop), and have failed to pay sufficient attention to the diversification of the economy as a whole (Wisner 1988:62). Food production has not received the priority it deserves, and remains the major responsibility of small subsistence farmers. With all the immense resources it has, Africa has not been able to feed its population. Africa is now a major importer of food. The money that is earned from the export of minerals and cash crops is not even adequate for food import. As a result, Africa is a major recipient of food aid. There are certainly plenty of

resources (available and latent), and there is also mass poverty. It is 'poverty amidst plenty'. What a paradox!

### 3.2 AFRICA REFUGEE TRENDS

Much of Africa's migration today illustrates similar connections between stresses but in the past, ironically, the main explanatory factor for this trend has been claimed to be the increase in the number of independent states (UN, 1982:84). This claim does not only come from the United Nations, P'Bitek (1973:61) has this to say:

*"After two decades of independence, little if anything seems to have been added to the majority of the people in most African countries, and judging by the wide spread occurrence of famines, economic stagnation, rampant inflation, political instability, coups d'etat and refugee syndrome in much of the continent, one can rightly say that even the little that the people once had has been taken away. The Matunda ya uhuru-- the fruits of independence—have taken so long to appear in so many places, let alone ripen, that the revolution of rising expectation for very many has turned into a counterrevolution of rising frustration".*

The first major movement of refugees in modern African history took place during Algeria's war of independence in the 1950's. Several hundred thousand people fled to neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco and the majority of them spent several years in exile. UNHCR established its first African office in Cairo to help these civilians. In this first continental crisis and through subsequent decades, women and children became the main victims (Aiboni 1978:6). Crises moved steadily south from Algeria in the following years and by the 1960s many people were fleeing from wars of independence in Southern Africa and from ethnic violence in the Central African states of Burundi and Rwanda. These Rwandans fled to Uganda where they were eventually permanently settled. Following this refugee tide, UNHCR opened its first Sub-Saharan Office in Burundi in 1962 (Kibreab 1983:50).

Newly emerging states formed the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in the early 1960s and in 1969, 34 countries approved the OAU Refugee Convention, a generous document which in the next 30 years would contribute toward helping

millions of African refugees in every area of the continent (Kiapi 1996: 137-38). The Horn of Africa was devastated starting in the late 1970s, first by war between Ethiopia and Somalia and then by the great Ethiopian famine in the early 1980s. Hundreds of thousands of people died and several million fled in one of the worst catastrophes of the twentieth century. Amidst all the chaos and suffering, there were major successes. Millions of Africans were given sanctuary in neighbouring countries until they could return home (UNHCR 1999: 16-17).

The United Nations brokered a political settlement to end South Africa's occupation of Namibia and 45,000 Namibians, returned home. Many played a prominent role in helping quickly rebuild the country. On the other side of the continent in Mozambique, a peace agreement was signed between the government and rebel RENAMO forces in 1992, ending many years of strife in that country. An estimated 1.7 million people returned from neighbouring countries where they were living as refugees and were quickly reintegrated in what has been hailed since as one of the most successful refugee return and reintegration programs since World War II (UNHCR 1999:17)

### **3.3 MAJOR CAUSES OF AFRICA'S REFUGEE MOVEMENT**

In order to find a durable solution to the refugee problem in Africa, it is essential to identify the underlying causes behind the displacement of millions of individuals. However, one thing is clear, "the causes of exodus vary from one country to another, but all have one common denominator – flagrant violation of fundamental human rights" (Yimam, 1990:303).

It is indeed difficult to identify one single factor in the African context which has created the refugee problem; it is often rather a complex combination of, inter alia, political, economic, historical, ethnic, religious and environmental consideration. But for the purpose of this present discussion it is appropriate to try to isolate some of the above factors.

In order to make some sort of a resume of some of the major arguments about the causes of Africa's refugee problem, endeavour shall be made to examine the

issues under two broad categories, the exogenous and the endogenous factors. Although Africa is diverse in many ways, as cited earlier, there are a number of features, which are common at least to most, if not all, countries. The experience of colonial rule; perennial social and economic hardships; the fragile nature of their political situation; the 'dualism' of their economies; the 'neopaternalistic' style of their leadership; the desire for 'unity in diversity'; and their common aims and aspirations for national and collective self reliance, are some of the main ones. It is against this background that the two broad categories of factors causing forced migration will be considered.

### **3.3.1 Exogenous factors**

These factors originate, in one form or another, from outside Africa. On the basis of how certain problems are described by various people/writers including, Kibreab (1983: 13-17) and Wallerstein (1965:151), attempts have been made to look at the problems along the following lines:

- Colonial inheritance and slave trade
- Colonialism and displacement
- Post-colonial wars
- Super-power conflict
- Wars of national liberation

#### **3.3.1.1 Colonial inheritance and slave trade**

Colonialism as one of the major causes of Africa's refugee problem has been widely mentioned by writers like (Aiboni 1978:11) and (Polhemus, 1985:31).

Various arguments have been advanced to prove the case. The arguments vary from unsubstantiated political statements, to seemingly convincing presentations aided by statistical evidence. Whatever the argument, its validity or otherwise needs to be ascertained in relation to the specific situation that existed in a particular country, at a particular time, and against the background of other interacting factors. Who has said what may not be so important, but what is

important is the fact that colonialism is allegedly taken as one of the possible factors that has made a contribution to Africa's refugee problem. How genuine is such an assertion?

Some writers have been quite outspoken about colonialism in Africa. The message Rodney wanted to transmit is so clear, even from the title of his book **How Europe Underdeveloped Africa**, he looked at the problems of colonialism within a broader (Third World) context, argued that millions of Africans were hunted down and transported by force to those colonies. He adds that the slave trade caused not only involuntary movements to other continents but also spurred flight within the African continent itself, as several small nations and ethnic groups abandoned their traditional homes and moved to new regions to avoid the raids and wars that the slave hunters conducted throughout the continent over a long period of time (Rodney, 1972:89-96)

### **3.3.1.2 Colonialism and displacement**

Discussing colonialism and Africa refugee movement, Kibreab (1983: 13-17) explains how mercantilism was replaced by colonialism as a major factor in population displacement, that colonialism caused refugee flows of varying size at various phases in its history. First the conquest and partition of the continent among the colonial powers in itself led to population displacements, as well as to the fragmentation of social and ethnic structures. Ethnic groups were split and fell under various rulers. In the early period, conflicts between the colonial armies and the Africans caused refugee flows in many parts of the continent (Aiboni 1978:11).

In the same line of thought, Wallerstein (1965:151) discusses that once their control over their subjects was consolidated, the European settlers also started to use forced labour for the production of commercial crops and minerals. In addition, heavy taxation was levied on Africans as a means of enforcing the recruitment of labour to the mines and plantations. Resistance to forced labour and heavy taxation was often expressed by flight into remote regions within the colonies, or from one territory to another. But flight was not the sole response to

repression and colonial exploitation; there were numerous uprisings in which Africans showed their resentment and their desires to be rid of alien domination. Resistance to forced labour and taxation was met with brutality by the colonial establishments, causing internal displacement as well as flight across colonial borders (Polhemus 1985:31).

### **3.3.1.3 Post – colonial wars**

The African refugee population began to increase steadily in the 1950s and became acute in the 1960s, coinciding with the rising of the struggle for independence across the vast continent. The conflict between French colonialism and Algerian freedom fighters caused the flight of 200,000 Algerians to Tunisia and Morocco between 1954 and 1962. The war that was conducted by Portugal in its former colonies of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique against liberation forces caused very large population displacements during the 1960s and 1970s. More than 400,000 Angolans sought refuge in neighbouring countries between 1961 and 1972. About one-tenth of the population of Guinea-Bissau (81,000 persons) were in Senegal in 1972. Tanzania hosted 56,000 Mozambicans during the same period. Zimbabwe had the same experience during the years of struggle against the regime of Ian Smith, with about half a million of her population displaced (Holborn 1975: 963).

The interplay of internal and external forces and a combination of socio-political, economic and natural factors were responsible for this mass displacement of people. New countries, which were created at the end of the colonial rule, were entangled in the process of “nation” building, and in many cases this process has brought a fray of conflicts into play and released older hostilities, thus creating mass displacements. The Biafran conflict in the 1960s and the confrontations in Rwanda and Burundi are some examples of such circumstances. McGowan and Johnson (1986:539-546) argue that the moral and psychological consequences of the slave trade and colonialism for the African people have yet to be investigated in depth. These phenomena had devastating consequence for economic, as well as social and political, development; they affected the African

society's ability to continue with the degree of sense of community and sense of belonging they had before colonialism.

Writers on social development like Fieldhouse (1986: 671-685), Tangri (1985: 50) and Menon (1980:18) state that Colonialism has drastically altered the basic parameters for the future development of many African societies; it has stunted socio-economic development. For a century or more, aliens who used systems and structures, which few among the indigenous population understood ruled most Africans. When colonialism ended, there was an institutional vacuum. The economic and political systems instituted by colonialism were not adapted to the new situation either due to a lack of people who could make them work or simply because the systems were incompatible with the conditions that evolved after independence.

Because colonial rule was essentially authoritarian and oppressive, the colonial legacy to African political development was undemocratic practices and intolerance of dissident views. In other words, there were no viable political institutions that allowed democratic participation by the majority. Consequently, political and economic crises are common features of most of the post-colonial societies in Africa. Civilian-style politics, with regular elections and peaceful governmental changes, have not been the norm in post-colonial Africa. Rather, military-led coups *d'état* represent the typical way in which regimes are changed, and rule by the military is as widespread as that by civilians. All these military changes of governments have always generated refugees. This is just to indicate how critically Holborn (1975: 963-976) sees the issue of colonialism; otherwise their arguments go far beyond what is cited here.

#### **3.3.1.4 Superpower conflict**

Like their Third World counterparts, African countries have had a declared policy of neutrality and non-alignment. But from time to time Africans found themselves falling victim to, or voluntarily submitting themselves to play a part in the superpower conflict by having to side with one superpower against the other. In

most cases, the choice was made for economic and political expediency. From the 1960s, the African continent seemed to have been divided into two groups of states – one side calling itself the ‘radical’ or ‘progressive’ state, with an inclination towards the Socialist block; and the other group labelling itself the ‘moderate’ or ‘conservative’ state with more of a tendency towards Western capitalism, (Keller 1995: 166). Such division brought about a conflict of interest between the two groups, and opened up an avenue for superpower intervention. As Young (Young 1986:220) rightly said:

*“... the African state system is placed at continuing risk by the polarising effects of recurrent great-power conflict. The competitive recruitment of friends and allies, and the continuing impact of their global competitions upon American and Soviet approaches to Africa, exacerbate some tensions within Africa and artificially introduce others”.*

The alignment with the superpowers, often a result of imposed ideology or generous development aid, was bound to weaken individual states and increase the vulnerability of the region as a whole to external control and machination. Hackett (1985:23-43) describes how the superpower conflict led to wars in many African countries, including, Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. All these wars have been doubly destructive, shattering lives and societies and also forcing relocation of populations in and outside Africa as refugees.

### **3.3.1.5 Wars of national liberation**

Wars of liberation have created many refugees in Africa. The Algerian liberation struggle against the French ended in 1962 after an extremely brutal war. That war created many refugees in neighbouring countries (Aiboni 1978:2). In the mid 1970s the Portuguese colonies of Guinea Bissau, Angola and Mozambique fought their independence struggles, although nearly thirty years later internal and external destabilisation, particularly in Angola, has not brought peace to this country (UNHCR 1997: 16). Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) achieved independence in 1980 after a long and protracted war with a white minority

government, which resulted in the creation of 750,000 refugees inside the country. Namibia (formerly South African-controlled South-West Africa) achieved independence in March 1990, again after a long and bitter struggle with South African forces. Because of the involvement of the United Nations and the amicable agreements reached by the belligerents, in both the Zimbabwean and Namibian cases, refugees generated through these liberation conflicts were quickly and effectively repatriated and integrated into their respective societies (UNHCR 1999:17).

More recently, Eritrea achieved independence following a 30-year liberation struggle with Ethiopia and a national referendum in April 1993 where nearly 99 per cent of voting Eritreans (both inside and outside the country) voted for independence. Eritrea's present population is estimated at 3.5 million with an additional one million (nearly 30 per cent of the total population) living outside the country as refugees (Horn of Africa Bulletin, 1993:4). Of these, 500,000 people fled to Sudan, although 70,000 have already been repatriated to Eritrea. The repatriation of the remaining 430,000 refugees from Sudan presents a daunting task. The Eritrean economy has been physically shattered by years of armed conflict and economic activity is at a low level, with unemployment a particular problem. Consequently, the question that must be raised is how will so many refugees be absorbed into a severely under-functioning economy? Assets that many of these refugees do possess, however, particularly those in the Middle East, Europe and North America are skills and capital, which could be used in the reconstruction effort.

The only territory in the whole of the African continent, which is still struggling for national liberation, is Western Sahara (formerly Spanish Sahara). Morocco claims historical rights to the territory, prior to Spanish colonisation, whilst the Sahwari population claims the right to self-determination. While a United Nations-sponsored referendum should have been conducted in 1992, Morocco has consistently obstructed the peace and independence process by delaying tactics. Meanwhile many Sahwaris are refugees in Algeria, housed in four main camps around Tindouf (Akakpo 1993: 1668-1669). Hopefully, the problem of

Western Sahara and its refugees can be resolved peacefully through a referendum, if the Moroccans can be persuaded to accept the fact that the vote would most probably be in favour everyone, since families have been disintegrated and sufferings are felt by both side.

### **3.3.2 Endogenous factors**

In the preceding discussion, supportive arguments have been advanced on the relationship between colonialism and the refugee problem in Africa. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to place all the blame for current African refugee problems at the door of the former colonial powers. The process of nation building in itself accounts for a significant part of the problem. Moreover, many African leaders are not free of blame. As David Lamb (1984: 57) rightly commented that some of the African heads of states in their insecurity have closed the safety valve of public expression, turned the media into their own vehicles of propaganda and have killed, jailed or sent into exile dissidents and creative thinkers. Indeed wrong priorities have characterised the development policies of many African states and scarce public resources are either exhausted on a few prestigious projects or on the expansion of military forces, which are often used against political opposition. Such policies have contributed enormously to poverty and refugee problems in several countries, not least in Uganda (Ayittey 1999: 73).

Some of Africa's socio-cultural problems have already been discussed. But some of the major problems, which are to be raised here, are mostly related to the political and administrative set-up of African countries, and are presented as follows:

- Issues related to history
- Ethnic persecution and population pressure
- Leadership crises and political instability
- Civil war and violation human rights

### 3.3.2.1 Issues related to history

The historical background of Africa is a rather intricate issue because the past has not been properly recorded. As Lamb (1984:8) noted that the history of ancient Africa was passed from generation to generation by the spoken, not written history, hence, the origins of the old civilisation remain clouded in mystery. This means that there was no accurately defined 'benchmark' when Africa could have started the process of modernisation. The unrecorded and unsystematic nature of its civilisation, followed by colonial rule, together with the prevailing ethnic and linguistic barriers, have made it difficult for African countries to develop a genuine, forward-looking and integrated political economy that could lead to national unity and effective citizen participation in all walks of life. As Jackson and Rosenberg (1984:158) wrote:

*“Before 1880, Africa was a world apart and was organised in accordance with political tradition that were fundamentally different from those of the modern state system of European origin. Indeed, as a political entity, Africa did not exist and had no common political traditions. The political entities that did exist were various kinds of traditional politics ranging from large-scale empire to small-scale extended-kinship groups and were not part of any larger pan-African political world”.*

Most African countries got their independence only some thirty-five years ago. But during this period, the rate of change in the world as a whole has been so fast and dramatic that emerging African states could not possibly keep up with it. Africa is in fact forced, by accident of history and by the dynamics of rapid global change, to by-pass the various stages of gradual development and try to adjust itself to present day situations. The exercise has, of course, proved to be a futile one. As Lamb (1984:6) remarked, 'Africa is by and large still a hoe and sickle enterprise, more primitive than any in the world'.

Development is a complex and multi-dimensional process, requiring sufficient organisation, efficient bureaucracy and dynamic leadership. It has been recorded by Sandbrook that in Western Europe, the transition from patrimonial administration to bureaucracy has taken two to three centuries (Sandbrook 1985:

116). These countries are said to have applied Weber's 'Theory of Bureaucracy' in order 'to provide modern capitalism with what it required – efficient, specialised, rational (i.e. non-arbitrary) administration' (Sandbrook 1985: 115). Furthermore, their administrative offices were gradually separated from the royal households, and personal considerations in administration were replaced by impersonal, universalistic criteria (Sandbrook 1985: 38).

Two things need to be observed here: the first is the time factor. If European countries have taken two or three centuries to reach the developmental level they have attained, it would be unthinkable that African countries could do it in a quarter of a century. Secondly, not all African countries have chosen to follow the capitalist path, and even those that did have not had the opportunity for gradual adaptation of their administrative system according to the European model. As they are still in a 'pre-mature bureaucratisation' stage, it may take them many years before they are able to apply efficient and rational procedures. Although development is a gradual process, African problems are too pressing, hence, some sort of a 'short cut' has to be devised, taking into account such available resources as manpower capacities in each country. As Fieldhouse (1986:101) remarked:

*"...It will be assumed that all African states started with and had to take into account certain inherited advantages and handicaps. Their later performance must be assessed in relation to where they began".*

### **3.3.2.2 Ethnic persecution and population pressure**

Ever since Thomas Robert Malthus propounded his theory of population growth in 1798, population issues have been on the world agenda. Malthus in Odetola et al (1983: 142) believed that population tends to increase at a much faster rate ('geometric progression') than does the food supply ('arithmetic progression') needed to sustain such a growing population. He argues that 'the effort to realise the perfect human society would always founder on the tendency of population to outrun food supply, unless the excessive growth is checked in some way. Samuelson (1985: 26-35), explains that although Malthus believed that the

ultimate check to overpopulation is limited food supply (famine), he also saw two other possible checks, the 'positive checks' brought about by wars, epidemics and other plagues, which increase the death rate; and the 'negative checks' brought about by moral restraints and delayed marriages, and which decrease the birth rate. Malthus had followers as well as opponents, but there is no division on the fact that he has been credited for initiating the study of the science of demography. Other reasons why people have fled in fear for their lives from their home countries are as a result of ethnic repression and population pressure (in some cases amounting to genocide) and intolerance of religious diversity. Ethnic repression has taken many forms in Africa and it is beyond the scope of this presentation to detail these here. However, the case of Rwanda provides examples, par excellence, of where one ethnic group has oppressed the other because of ethnicity.

In Rwanda before 1959, the ethnic composition of the population was about 15 % Tutsi and 84 % Hutu, yet the Tutsi's were the ruling class. Many writers, including Kibreab (1983:50) argue that the dissatisfaction on the part of the majority Hutu led to an inter-tribal rivalry, a crisis that created tens of thousands of refugees fleeing to the neighbouring countries including Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo, the then Zaire. Population pressure is not one of the endogenous problems widely talked about by 'experts' from within and outside Africa but it is a reality argues (Kane 1995:6). However, the argument being advanced here is quite simple. Africa, which was 'previously self-sufficient in foodstuffs, saw its population growth outstrip food production between 1960 and 1980 (Saul 1995:191). According to the Economic Commission for Africa (1983:9), of the whole decade of the 1970s when the African population was expanding at an average rate of around 2.8%, total food production in the region as a whole was rising by no more than 1.5%, this trend has continued to-date.

As the population continues to increase annually, while food production continues to drop, the shortage of food and the pressure on other resources, health services, the education system, social services, ecological challenges and even employment continue to mount. The fierce competition for the limited resources by an ever-growing population has been quite obvious in many African countries.

Joshi (1996:57) writing on the root causes of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda blends very well the relationship between population pressure, ethnic divide and scarce resources. Indeed the international community has simplified and labelled the Rwanda case as “ethnic violence” and “old-age tribal enmity” (The Economist, 19 October 1996: 45). Such views do not conform to prevailing political realities. In order to appreciate the relationship between forced migration and the problems of population pressure vis-à-vis social stability, again the case of Rwanda before the 1994 genocide can be used. Presented below is the extent of genocide propaganda which was clearly demonstrated in a lengthy statement called “ The Hutu Ten Commandments” in Kangura, Published on December 10, 1990. The text is self-explanatory of the attitude of the framers.

- Every Muhutu should know that a Mututsi woman, wherever she is working, it is for the interest of her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider any Muhutu a traitor who:
  - marries a Tutsi woman
  - befriends a Tutsi woman
  - employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or a concubine
  
- Every Muhutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as woman, wife and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?
  
- Bahutu women, be vigilant and try to bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to reason.
  
- Every Muhutu should know that every Tutsi is dishonest in business. His only aim is the supremacy of his ethnic group. As a result, any Muhutu who does the following is a traitor:
  - makes a partnership with Batutsi in business;
  - invest money or the government’s money in a Tutsi enterprise;

- lends or borrows money from a Mututsi;
  - gives favours to Batutsi in business (obtaining import licenses, bank loans, construction sites, public markets, etc.)
  - All strategic positions: political, administrative, economic, military and security should be entrusted to Bahutu.
- The education sector (students and teachers) must be majority Hutu.
  - The Rwandese Armed Forces should be exclusively Hutu. The experience of the October [1990] war has taught us a lesson. No member of the military shall marry a Tutsi.
  - The Bahutu should stop having mercy on the Batutsi.
  - The Bahutu, wherever they are, must have unity and solidarity, and be concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers:
    - The Bahutu inside and outside Rwanda must constantly look for friends and allies for the Hutu cause, starting with their Bahutu brothers;
    - They must constantly counteract Tutsi propaganda;
    - The Bahutu must be firm and vigilant against their common Tutsi enemy.
  - The social Revolution of 1959, the Referendum of 1961 and the Hutu ideology must be taught to every Muhutu at every level. Every Hutu must spread this ideology widely. Any Muhutu who persecutes his brother (and sister) Muhutu for having read, spread and taught this ideology is a traitor (Joshi 1996: 74-75).

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1990: 266-267) shows that with an area of 10,169 square miles (26,338 square kilometers), in 1985, Rwanda had an estimated population of 6.1 million people. This statistics show the serious implication, which the fast-growing population had for the available mere resources and services. Considering the above, the propaganda message provides a strong correlation between population pressure and social conflict based on scarce resources. However, other academics argue against the correlation. Tetteh (1987) says:

*“We have to mobilise the manpower and energy which is the blessing of countries of large populations. Population is not a handicap if properly used. I do not buy the idea that population is growing ahead of food production. The problem is that whilst we are manufacturing children, we are not manufacturing systems that will keep the children—the solution to the problem is to make facilities available to the floating population which is an asset to us (Dr. Mathews Nash Tetteh, as quoted in **Africa Concord**, No. 160, October 1987)”.*

The above quotation leads us to the next issue of management and governance in Africa.

### **3.3.2.3 Leadership crisis and political instability**

There has been, from outside Africa, a lot of agreement (and indeed there appears to be a consensus) about the fact that one of the most crucial internal problems facing African governments is quite critical and sometimes very blunt. African problems are too many and too complicated; some are genuine, and others are caused by human failures. As Fieldhouse (1986: 90) argues:

*“It is because African governments as at presently constituted are unable, unwilling, or both, to carry out satisfactorily the function prescribed for them by development economists, and indeed by their own plans”.*

In the same line of thought Makau Wa Mutua, a Kenyan lawyer and Project Director of Harvard University law school’s Human Rights programme, states:

*“African governments have never, despite protestations, been primarily concerned with economic growth, but rather with maintenance of political power and the distribution of wealth to themselves and their supporters (The Washington Post, 9 September 1999, A20)”.*

Ayittey (1999:23) commenting on the governance style in Africa is no less critical. He attributes the African refugee problem to a ‘leadership crisis,’ and explains that neither consistency nor efficiency characterises the public sector of most African countries. He adds that in fact, most regimes actively discourage the mobilisation and productive investment of resources. Tangri (1985: 46) also argues that the power elite in much of Africa has exploited its tenure of political office to its own personal advantage leading to frustration and conflict amongst the population. Meanwhile, another dimension of the crisis, says Sandbrook (1985:2), is political decay, evident in widespread corruption, bureaucratic immobilisation, political violence and instability. Hence, the deterioration of the state signifies, among other things, a diminished capacity to rescue ailing national economies and people’s frustration.

The disorderliness of African political mismanagement can also be associated with what Achebe (1985:3) says about Nigeria:

*“The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to ... the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership.... We have lost the twentieth century; are we bent on seeing that our children also lose the twenty-first? God forbid!”*

Certainly, there may be some leaders who are less sensitive to the problems of the average person and who promote their own self-interest. But it would be unfair to generalise that all African leaders and governments are contributors to the crisis in their own countries. Some are making genuine attempts, despite serious constraints. We should also note, as Derman and Whiteford did (1985:1), that despite many of the growing problems, people throughout the world continue

to see the 'government as the mechanism for bringing about development'. This is especially true in Africa.

What the preceding paragraphs have shown is that Africa has very serious political, economic, social and cultural problems. Some of these problems are internal, and others are man-made. All of them cause serious constraints leading to refugees at the end of the day. It is against such a background that social development policies, programmes, services and Human Rights have to be considered in order to prevent refugee situations in Africa.

#### **3.3.2.4 Violation of Human Rights**

Few African governments openly acknowledge that they violate human rights. To do so could be self-destructive and dangerous to the "interests" of the state. Protection of human rights is espoused in every African state as a national duty in which the interest of the regime forms the axis around which human rights issues spin. Alex De Wall, Coordinator of the Human Rights Organisation, Africa Rights, argues that on assuming power, most regimes make political capital out of the excesses of their predecessors in government. Thus, whereas policy-makers and state persons loudly advocate the protection of human rights, the sad reality is that significant abuse of human rights occurs. In some instances such abuse takes place on a massive scale (Africa Report, March/April 1996:10).

The problems facing the individual and the community in the protection of individual and communal rights are immense. Not only have the people of Africa lived under dictatorial regimes but the devastating effects of civil wars including refugee situations also afflict them. Apart from these internal problems that operate in concert, Africa also faces external factors, which in the past worked – and continue to work – against the development of a culture of human rights observance. When combined, these factors lock and all-too-familiar grip on many parts of the continent and account for some of the most fundamental causes of human rights abuse.

### 3.4 THE UNHCR IN AFRICA

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001, there were 5.3 million people of concern to UNHCR in Africa out of an estimated 21.1 million worldwide. The Africa figure includes 3.6 million refugees, 1.3 million internally displaced people and 300,000 former refugees who have recently returned home. In comparison, in January 2000, the global number of people of concern to UNHCR was 22.3 million, of whom 6.2 million were in Africa. Of these, some 3.5 million were refugees (UNHCR 2001:1). Table 3.1 shows the population of concern to the UNHCR as at the end of the year 2000.

**Table 3.1: Population of Concern to UNHCR as at January 2000**

| Sub-Region                        | Refugee          | Asylum-seekers   | Returned Refugees | Internally Displaced | Others of Concern |                  | Total population of Concern |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                   |                  |                  |                   |                      | Returned IDPs     | Various          |                             |
| Great Lakes                       | 1,003,800        | 15,000           | 242,100           | 50,000               | 676,100           | 10,600           | 1,997,600                   |
| West and Central Africa           | 971,030          | 11,210           | 539,830           | 721,900              | 265,000           | 0                | 2,499,970                   |
| East and Horn of Africa           | 1,117,030        | 8,390            | 101,350           | 0                    | 0                 | 0                | 1,226,770                   |
| Southern Africa                   | 247,320          | 21,520           | 42,500            | 0                    | 0                 | 0                | 311,340                     |
| North Africa                      | 177,270          | 270              | 7,000             | 0                    | 0                 | 26,400           | 210,940                     |
| The Middle East                   | 218,230          | 18,600           | 32,700            | 0                    | 0                 | 149,200          | 418,730                     |
| South-West Asia                   | 3,037,700        | 470              | 359,800           | 2,058,600            | 10,000            | 0                | 3,666,570                   |
| Central Asia                      | 49,600           | 3,460            | 34,800            | 5,600                | 0                 | 0                | 93,460                      |
| South Asia                        | 330,120          | 50               | 14,760            | 612,500              | 0                 | 0                | 957,430                     |
| East Asia and the Pacific         | 691,270          | 1,000            | 182,760           | 0                    | 0                 | 40               | 875,070                     |
| Eastern Europe                    | 606,070          | 33,280           | 1,800             | 1,346,500            | 65,100            | 1,265,410        | 3,318,160                   |
| South-East Europe                 | 619,800          | 100              | 950,200           | 1,094,700            | 312,200           | 0                | 2,977,000                   |
| Central Europe & the Baltic State | 96,880           | 17,270           | 730               | 0                    | 0                 | 13,600           | 120,480                     |
| Western Europe                    | 1,820,820        | 487,680          | 390               | 0                    | 0                 | 0                | 2,308,890                   |
| North America & the Caribbean     | 615,340          | 605,620          | 0                 | 0                    | 0                 | 0                | 1,256,960                   |
| Central America                   | 51,030           | 50               | 5,970             | 0                    | 0                 | 20,000           | 77,050                      |
| South America                     | 8,310            | 1,460            | 0                 | 0                    | 0                 | 1,200            | 10,970                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>1,697,620</b> | <b>1,225,430</b> | <b>2,516,690</b>  | <b>4,080,800</b>     | <b>1,328,400</b>  | <b>1,486,450</b> | <b>22,335,390</b>           |

Source: UNHCR, Global Appeal 2000:15

Table 3.2 below shows the UNHCR expenditure in Africa in 1998. Southern Africa expenditure was the lowest in the continent. This could be associated with the return of refugees to their home in Mozambique.

**Table 3.2: UNHCR Expenditure in 1998, in Africa**

| By Region and Headquarters                        | 1998 EXPENDITURE |                        |                  |           |
|---|------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------|
|   | Operations       | Administrative support | TOTAL            |           |
| (1)   | (2)              | (3)                    | (4)              | %         |
| <b>WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA</b>                    |                  |                        |                  |           |
| General Programmes                                | 51,892.2         | 2,245.3                | 54,137.5         |           |
| Special Programmes                                | 37,293.3         | 1,083.9                | 38,377.2         |           |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                                  | <b>89,185.5</b>  | <b>3,329.2</b>         | <b>92,514.7</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>SOUTHERN AFRICA</b>                            |                  |                        |                  |           |
| General Programmes                                | 10,835.5         | 1,271.3                | 12,106.8         |           |
| Special Programmes                                | 9,331.8          | 1,220.5                | 10,552.3         |           |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                                  | <b>20,167.3</b>  | <b>2,491.8</b>         | <b>22,659.1</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>THE GREAT LAKES, EAST &amp; HORN OF AFRICA</b> |                  |                        |                  |           |
| General Programmes                                | 79,402.9         | 4,334.8                | 83,737.7         |           |
| Special Programmes                                | 123,259.8        | 4,856.6                | 128,116.4        |           |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                                  | <b>202,662.7</b> | <b>9,191.4</b>         | <b>211,854.1</b> | <b>25</b> |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL AFRICA</b>                           |                  |                        |                  |           |
| General Programmes                                | 142,130.6        | 7,851.4                | 149,982.0        |           |
| Special Programmes                                | 169,884.9        | 7,161.0                | 177,042.9        |           |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                                  | <b>312,015.5</b> | <b>15,012.4</b>        | <b>327,027</b>   |           |

Source: Report of the UNHCR 1999. General Assembly Annual Programme Budget 2000: Fiftieth Session NO. A/AC.96/916 New York.

The African region continues to be the main source for resettlement to third countries. During 2000, a total of 18,188 refugees from Africa (46 percent of global resettlement total) were resettled outside the African continent. Below, table 3.3 shows the number of refugees by country who have been resettled outside the Africa continent.

**Table 3.3 Number of African Refugees Resettled in the Year 2000**

| NATION       | NUMBER | NATION             | NUMBER |
|--------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| Eritrea      | 68,000 | Dem. Rep. Of Congo | 14,800 |
| Somalia      | 53,900 | Angola             | 8,800  |
| Liberia      | 42,400 | Burundi            | 6,800  |
| Sierra Leone | 40,900 | Congo              | 5,600  |
| Rwanda       | 26,300 | Kenya              | 4,900  |

Source: UNHCR Africa Fact Sheet-July 2001

During 2000, more than 445,000 new refugees sought asylum in various countries in Africa. During the same period, 278,800 refugees returned home, mainly to Eritrea, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. This return figure represents 35 percent of global refugee returns in 2000 (UNHCR 2001:3). Below, table 3.4 shows the first top ten countries in Africa that generated refugees in the year 2000.

**Table 3.4 Top Ten African refugee countries of origin at the beginning of 2001.**

| NATION       | NUMBER  | NATION             | NUMBER  |
|--------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| Burundi      | 567,000 | Eritrea            | 337,100 |
| Sudan        | 485,000 | Dem. Rep. Of Congo | 36,500  |
| Somalia      | 441,600 | Liberia            | 273,200 |
| Angola       | 421,200 | Rwanda             | 114,000 |
| Sierra Leone | 401,800 | Ethiopia           | 43,600  |

Source: UNHCR Africa Fact Sheet-July 2001

As of July 2001, there were still 195,895 Sierra Leone refugees in various countries, mainly in West and Central Africa.

These returns occurred over a short period of time and have put pressure on local communities and infrastructure. In Sierra Leon, UNHCR is helping with the reintegration of returnees. Communities north of Freetown and in the south of the country have received over 20,000 returnees, while some 10,500 others are being assisted in temporary resettlement camps. Freetown's transit centres have been overcrowded since September 2000.

Despite encouraging signs, including the evolution of the peace process and the deployment of UN peace-keeping troops in areas previously held by rebels, present conditions, do not allow UNHCR to promote repatriation to Sierra Leone. Many refugees come from areas that remain inaccessible to humanitarian workers. The Office is, however, exploring ways of facilitating returns from new camps in Guinea via Conakry to Freetown for those who require it.

During the first quarter of 2001, a government “clean-up” campaign against rebels in northern Liberia also caused large population movements, particularly from Lofa country. Thousands of Sierra Leone refugees returned home in Liberia, often in difficult conditions. The general instability also caused displacement within Liberia and provoked an influx of Liberians into Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone, while the border with Guinea remained closed. In May 2001, scores of Liberians asylum-seekers who tried to enter southern Guinea were returned away (UNHCR 2001:3).

In 1997, security conditions improved in Liberia and UNHCR began to promote repatriation. Since then, UNHCR has assisted 159,000 Liberian refugees out of total of 367,000 who have returned home. As of June 2001, there were still 221,246 Liberian refugees in different countries, mainly in West Central Africa.

Meanwhile fresh fighting which erupted in mid-May 2001 in Senegal’s Casamance province caused some 3,500 refugees to flee to the Gambia. Although most of them had returned by July 2001, there were signs that new arrivals could occur as talks again threatened to stall. The province has been torn by low-key civil unrest since 1982, between the separatist rebel movement MFDC (Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance) and Senegalese forces.

Since 1997, an improvement in security conditions in southern Chad has led to the voluntary return of close to 20,000 Chadian refugees from Central Africa Republic (CAR), Cameroon and Niger. Camp-based assistance to these refugees was terminated in the CAR this 2001. Similar steps may also be taken in Cameroon. Cameroon is host to 41,600 Chadian refugees, most of whom are

integrated in urban centres, but 1,000 are candidates for return to Chad. Chad has 17,700 refugees; UNHCR is assisting some 13,000 Sudanese refugees who have been pushed out by the continuing conflict in Sudan. The refugees live in villages in Chad's eastern region. They are being encouraged to integrate locally but UNHCR could eventually facilitate repatriation should they express the wish to return.

In July 2000, UNHCR started a programme for internally displaced people (IDP) in Angola to address the needs of some 250,000 displaced in Luanda, Uige and Zaire provinces. The situation in Angola remains one of the most preoccupying in Africa. The country has been torn by civil war since its independence in 1975, following 14 years of fighting against the country's Portuguese colonial rulers. Fighting flared up again in 1998 after the collapse of a 1994 peace accord. The rebel movement, UNITA, increased attacks on a number of fronts, causing more victims, more refugees and displacement. The rate of displacement is the highest in Africa, affecting 3.8 million people, or nearly a third of the country's population of 12 million. Refugees from Angola total 414,118 persons, and are scattered in various countries of the Southern Africa region as well as in the DRC (UNHCR 2000:125).

UNHCR in Angola also assists some 12,000 Congolese refugees from the DRC. Some 2,000 of them have expressed the wish to be repatriated. Many, however, remain reluctant because of insecurity in some parts of the DRC. Angola remains one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Estimates from various de-mining actors range from five to twelve million mines. This situation makes any humanitarian assistance heavily dependent upon access and security.

In June 2001, the heads of states of Angola, Namibia and Zambia met in Lusaka and renewed their condemnation of UNITA rebel leader Dr. Jonas Savimbi for intensifying the war. They expressed concern for Angolan refugees and IDP. In January 2001, Angola also became the first country in Africa to officially adopt IDP principles in line with the UN Guiding Principles on assistance to IDPs, a move that contributed to facilitating UNHCR's protection of IDP in the country (UNHCR 2001:4).

Incessant conflicts between UNITA and the Angolan government in various parts of the country caused a steady number of refugee arrivals in neighbouring countries. In the early months of 2001, the Angolan refugee population in Zambia had reached 200,000. The flow of refugees from Angola to Zambia continued at an average rate of 1,000 refugees per month until April when it started to subside. UNHCR and the government of Zambia had to address the needs of a large number of ex-combatants who laid down their arms and sought asylum in that country. A camp was established in eastern Zambia and now hosts about 1,000 ex-UNITA fighters (UNHCR 2001:21).

Fighting in the Katanga province of the DRC at the end of the year 2000 also prompted the outflow of Congolese refugees into northern Zambia. There was a continuous trickle throughout to a refugee camp, while 5,000 settled spontaneously along the border, bringing the number of DRC Congolese refugees in Zambia to 50,000 (UNHCR 2001:26). Cautious optimism with regard to political developments within the DRC has led UNHCR to start planning for a possible repatriation of Congolese refugees from different countries in the region.

However, with the death of the UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in March 2002 and the current ceasefire between the government of Angola and UNITA, one hopes that the situation will improve.

Meanwhile in South Africa, UNHCR is assisting the government in dealing with thousands of asylum applications. By April 2001, the government had received 64,341 asylum seekers. The refugee situation in South Africa will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, when refugee experiences, needs and support in southern Africa will be examined.

**Sudanese refugees:** Attempts to find solution to problems in the various countries in the region have borne limited fruit. The Sudan Peace Process had made inadequate progress despite efforts by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to broker peace between the government of Sudan and the Sudan's People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Meanwhile, the civil war in the

Sudan has shown little sign of abating and has continued to drive out thousands of Sudanese refugees into neighbouring countries. During 2000, for example, some 30,000 new Sudanese refugees fled to Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia – which together already host some 340,000 refugees from Sudan (UNHCR 2001:7).

The need for an alternative solution to the protracted Sudanese refugee situation has grown more acute. The civil war continues and opportunities for local integration in countries of asylum remain extremely limited. In 1999, the United States (US) government agreed to resettle more than 3,400 unaccompanied Sudanese youths. The vast majority of the youths widely referred to as “the Lost Boys” were in Camps in Kenya. In November 2000, the first group of “Boys” departed Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya, for the United States. Most of the boys arrived in the US in a series of flights. In addition to the resettlement of Sudanese refugees from Kenya, some 900 other Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia were also resettled to third countries.

**Somali Refugees:** UNHCR’s search for durable solutions also included Somali refugees in the region. During 2000, UNHCR was able to secure resettlement places in third countries for 6,373 Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa. Somali refugees constituted the largest resettled group of refugees. However, by the end of June 2001, more than 264,000 Somali refugees were still in the Horn of Africa. The Arta Agreement reached in Djibouti in May 2000 by Somali leaders, has not resulted in the anticipated establishment of a broadly accepted government that would be capable of restoring law and order and, eventually, creating a conducive climate for a return of hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa. UNHCR has however, maintained a policy of promoting the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees to areas of relative peace and stability while facilitating voluntary repatriation to crisis areas only upon the specific request of refugees who do so on an informed bases. During 2000, some 54,000 Somali refugees, mainly from camps in Ethiopia, but also from Kenya and Djibouti, returned to northwest Somalia. Another 8,026 Ethiopian nationals who had mingled with refugees and were residing in the refugee camps

were dispersed back into their communities. By the end of June 2001, an additional 22,516 Somali refugees in Ethiopia had also returned to north-west Somalia in an operation that was expected to result in the closure of three of the eight Somali camps in Ethiopia by the end of the year 2001 (UNHCR 2001:53).

Despite its own internal conflicts, which have displaced 310,000 Congolese into neighbouring countries, the DRC continued to receive refugees. At the beginning of the year, there were more than 330,000 refugees in the country, mainly from Angola, Burundi, Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Sudan. In addition, the UN estimates that 1.8 million people have been displaced inside the DRC (UNHCR 2001:54).

### **3.5 SUMMARY**

Over the last three and a half decades, things have been changing rapidly in Africa – at least in the political sense. But these changes have not brought about the desired social and economic revolution that is so essential for the betterment of the average person; so much that some writers have tended to believe that the average African was no better off after independence. However, we need to appreciate the fact that the social, economic and political problems with which Africa is confronted are so diverse and too complicated that it does not seem to be fair to pin down the root cause to a single factor, or to lay the blame on one particular group of actors. However, the political instability in African countries over the last three decades has produced a large number of military, quasi-military and one-part states. There is no clear indication that the situation will change soon – in fact, as long as there are social tensions and economic problems there is always a possibility that a disenchanted or highly motivated group (civilian or military) will trigger a revolution. As most of the things that the ‘revolutionary’ leaders promise to achieve cannot easily be achieved, public confidence soon wanes and the situation becomes ripe for another revolution. Sometimes the local situation is aggravated by other external interference as already discussed.

As a result of this recurrent instability, governments waste a lot of resources for security and propaganda purposes. Because social tensions and economic

insecurity persist, a large number of people flee the countries. Governments may not openly admit it, but political instability is one of the factors that can be associated with the existence of refugees in Africa. It is also due to political instability that civil wars emerged over the past couple of decades, devastating certain countries, including Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda and Angola. The resulting casualties of these wars number in the hundreds of thousands since the mid-1970s, but that is only part of the cost. Much social life, economic activity, and the bases for future political trust and cooperation have been undermined or disrupted.

The process of decision-making is another factor that could be attributed to political instability in Africa. National leaders, politicians, administrators, professionals and trade unions, often without proper consultation and coordination, make decisions affecting national interests at various levels. Critical decisions may be made purely on consideration of local issues and interests, or they can be much influenced by external factors. Decision makers may be under great pressure (internal or external, or both) to make a certain decision, even if they know fully well that the decision might lead to undesirable consequences. Some decision makers may have good intentions, but with wrong approaches; others may be competent, but may have hidden ulterior motives. Whatever the cause may be, decision-making, being a result of many variables (some unpredictable), it will not be easy to pass the verdict on a single person or to hold a group of persons wholly responsible for current refugee problems in Africa; nor can we characterise a single event as having led to the unhappy scene in some African countries.

It could therefore be assumed that too many people who, intentionally or unintentionally, did not play their role properly; too many small errors committed daily by human failures; disastrous situations caused by natural phenomena; and the unfavourable conditions exerted by external pressure, have all contributed their share to Africa's current problems. At any rate, it is neither the intention, nor within the scope of this study, to give an exhaustive list of problems and find a 'scapegoat' for them. Instead, the interest lies in the attempt to make a

'synthesis' of the prevailing broad and fundamental arguments advanced by academics, politicians and experts concerned with the problems of Africa's refugees. The assumption here is that, by diagnosing the African problems in a global way, it should be possible to make an objective assessment of the magnitude and complexity of the refugee problems, and establish a logical approach to the alleviation of those problems.

Accordingly, this chapter has attempted to analyse problems of refugees in Africa with a view to providing the reader with a basic understanding of some of the practical and theoretical issues involved, thereby equipping him or her to make informed judgments when seeking for solutions to address the African refugee problem. In the next chapter, attempts will be to discuss refugee experiences and support in the Southern African region.

**PART 2**

**REFUGEE SUPPORT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **REFUGEE EXPERIENCES, NEEDS AND SUPPORT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

South Africa like the rest of the world has experienced its share of population movements. As in the rest of the world the population movement or migration phenomenon has been in process for many years and is not a new manifestation. (P. Maduna, former deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Republic of South Africa 1995).

### **Introduction**

Some countries in Southern Africa have both generated and hosted refugees. In chapter two, we examined the refugee trends in Africa, the role-played by colonialism and post-colonial governments. This chapter will attempt to discuss refugee experiences, needs and support with specific reference to southern Africa. Attempts will also be made briefly to cover protection programmes and other activities in different countries for which the Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) is responsible, namely: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

### **4.1 REFUGEE EXPERIENCES**

The refugees covered in this chapter are mainly civilians that fled their homes because of the war that has been taking place in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Although each refugee or displaced family has its own unique story of assault, flight, arrival and settlement in Botswana, Namibia and Zambia, they all share, as dislocated survivors, common core experiences that make them equal in their fundamental humanity. They have all experienced the worst dislocation stress for a human being – dislocation because of war and devastation of the homeland. They have faced death and survived. They may have experienced invasion, bombardment, shelling, capture and torture. They witnessed the suffering and death of family members and other people. They seek in anguish for family members and friends whose fate is unknown. As

members of ethnic groups that were persecuted and subjected to discrimination, they are traumatically shaken in their fundamental existential security and doubt if they will ever have a secure place in this world. Their fear for political persecution continues to exist even during their settlement in host countries.

Many refugees from Angola and the DRC are settled in temporary, poor housing or crowded collective centres like Osire Refugee Camp in Namibia or Dukwi Refugee Camp in Botswana, in new, strange and possibly hostile places, new culture and new society. Once in a new location, there begins the struggle for survival, both physical (food, clothing, good health and safety) and psychosocial (overcoming the traumatic experiences and restoring basic human dignity). For Angolans and Congolese, their fight for survival is burdened by the fact that there is still a threat of war in Angola and an ongoing war in the DRC, which exacerbates their psychological trauma and delays social adaptation.

#### **4.1.1 Dealing with deaths**

Explaining about his experience in dealing with refugees and the way they respond to unknown deaths, David Nthengwe, a UNHCR Worker in Namibia, states that the loss of loved ones during war takes place usually under tragic and terrible conditions. They may have died away from home in far and unknown places, separated from their family. Within this period, refugees oscillate between hope and despair. Such conditions are extremely stressful. If the waiting period is prolonged, many refugees may gradually accept the possibility of death, while others keep waiting and never giving up hope even when every realistic judgment indicates that the missing person is dead. Where the death is confirmed through a third party but without the possibility to see the body, it is difficult for the person to integrate the confirmation of death into everyday reality and thus adjust to the loss. Because there was no opportunity to say good-bye or for funeral rituals, the reality of death becomes abstract. The refugee is tormented by questions on how the missing person died. Questions like, did he or she suffer; was he or she alone or did he or she get help from somebody; who witness his or her death? Such persons may develop fantasies about a terrible death and need to be

helped to say farewell to the loved one and, if possible, to see the body. Usually people who saw the dead body of their loved ones do not ever regret the experience. (UNHCR 2000:4)

#### **4.1.2 Dealing with dislocation**

The attachment of people to their homes and their towns is usually so strong that people leave only when the threat to their lives is very imminent; often they leave their homes much later than it was wise to do so. Paulo Haikali an Administrator at Osire refugee camp in Namibia states that it is a well-known phenomenon from all wars that people postpone their evacuation, fearing dislocation and the poverty that accompanies it. (UNHCR 2000:22-23)

Emphasizing on the suffering that goes with social dislocation, Lima (1990:46) explains how war brings dislocation, either brief or prolonged. The refugees leave everything they have lived and worked for and that constituted their social network. Their homes may be destroyed and their villages left in the hands of their enemies. In the same line of thought, experts like McCallin (1990:68) confirms that during flight, some refugees may have experiences of extreme violence and deaths of their beloved ones. Apart from everything terrible they might have experienced, the dislocation itself bears many additional material and social problems. She continues explain how a great deal of research on dislocated people shows that the sources of stress in dislocation are many not to mention disruption of social network and disruption of services.

#### **4.1.3 Loss of power to determine ones destiny**

Arriving in a strange country or a strange place with only the minimum of personal belongings makes the refugee dependent on the help of other people, mostly humanitarian organisations or private persons, for material survival and accommodation. UNHCR (2001:2) states that, in the case of Somali Muslim refugees in Botswana, the Muslim Women Aid group in Botswana (Almuslima) will help the refugees only on condition that they attended prayers at the mosque

and that women wear scarves, a custom unfamiliar to some Kenyan Somali Muslims. This dependency creates the feeling of humiliation and shame. Formerly an independent adult that used to provide for oneself now depends on others for the most basic of needs. This creates frustration and anger. In most cases the refugee has to hide his or her anger and show gratitude to the donors although he or she bitterly resents both their generosity and his or her need for it. Waiting in lines for food or other goods, running from one humanitarian organisation to another to ensure a package of food or clothes, asking for things that one could provide for himself or herself before, gives a sense of helplessness and degradation. The lack of habitual behaviour of everyday life, which usually supports personal identity and social role, increases the feeling of being lost (Murugan 2001:12).

#### **4.1.4 Coming to terms with poor sheltering**

A project Coordinator with Jesuits Refugee Services in South Africa argues that people usually forget how dependent we are in a home that is properly functioning. Refugees in temporary settlements experience all the difficulties connected with the temporary and hastily created housing. Toilets do not function, heating is inadequate and presents hazard to the health of children and adults. They sleep in a confined space with many other persons, most of them strangers, there are quarrels between family members, and the cooking facilities are poor. All these conditions become causes of complaint, not only because of the difficulties that they create but also because of the symbolic meaning of being delivered to such conditions by force and contrary to their own will. Some refugee workers have accused refugees of being lazy and dirty (UNHCR 2001:12). Experts including, Callamard (1999:196-214) has challenged such accusations he argues that it takes time for the refugees to feel the strange place acceptable and safe. Punamaki (1987:32) explains that refugees are always uncertain of how long they are going to stay in the camps, constantly hoping for something better or to returning home; they are unwilling to attach themselves to a place they are going to lose soon again. He concludes that, being dislocated includes also the feeling of being disengaged from one's physical environment.

#### **4.1.5 Disruption of social network**

War splits families. Difficulties in communication systems disrupt normal social behaviour and create uncertainty and agony over the fate of other family members who are either back in the conflict areas or away as emigrants in other countries. This is the case with the Congolese refugees in Zambia. A UNHCR worker in Zambia states:

*“There is no family here that does not have a member back in Congo living in dangerous conditions or, even worse, whose fate is unknown because of lack of normal communication channels”.*

The disruption of social networks and loss of bread-earners increases economic hardships and alters family roles of all members. However, UNHCR reports show that the Congolese refugees in Zambia managed to create new social networks, which provided them with emotional, practical and informational support (UNHCR 1999:15).

#### **4.1.6 Interference with the host country’s services**

Settlement of refugees often causes a strain on the resources of the host country. Breakdowns in communication systems, scarce food supplies, lack of qualified health and mental health care, inadequate or nonexistent education for the children and overcrowded sheltering create agony, frustration and irritability in the refugee population. Taopopi in UNHCR (2000:9-10) states that, government bodies are not always fast to access, respond to and monitor the needs of the refugee population. There may emerge conflicts about who is going to pay for the costs of the refugees. Conflicts about the costs may lead to slow or reluctant functioning of the institutions, causing despair to the victim. Khuwe (2001:5) states that representatives of the refugees are rarely involved in the administration of humanitarian aid or support, thus inducing additional helplessness and apathy in the refugee population. Commenting on the situation of the Barakwena refugees in Botswana, Letlhogile (2000:25) indicated that another problem faced by refugees is the lack of information about their rights in the host country. There may be governmental information systems that the

refugees can use but many of them can perhaps not use them because of the lack of information on their existence or because of their poor education.

#### **4.1.7 Uncertainty about the duration of the dislocation**

During dislocation and relocation, victims of war experience a great deal of uncertainty explain Tata Arcel et al (1995:30). "How long are we going to stay here?" "What will happen to us?" "What about the education of our children?", "Will the war in our country ever stop?", "What is happening to my parents, brother, husbands and children in Angola, Mozambique?" "Was it the right thing for me to leave home? Am I a coward to leave the others in hell and flee to security?", "Should I have done things differently and if so how?", "How will the others receive me if and when I go back home?" These and other questions torment refugees; their mood and the will for life is tightly connected to the answers for these questions (Barudy 1990:41).

#### **4.1.8 Family tensions**

Multiple life-changes, including lack of work, schooling and other normal life activities create tension in a refugee family. Living in crowded quarters increases friction and quarrels between spouses, parents and children and among children themselves. Ferris (1990:90) found that because of the dislocation of the usual family network, conflicts become more difficult to solve because of the lack of privacy and space for physical activities in many refugee camps. Irritability and anxiety does not make things better. Constant thinking about the past and the experienced traumas makes pleasures and enjoyment difficult even when there is opportunity for them. All parents worry about their children's health, education and the uncertainty of their future. The usual support systems of the family are impaired and the resources of the parents strained.

However, research on refugees at Ukwimi refugee camp in Zambia shows that most families manage to keep close together and stand up to the situation. Most vulnerable are the families that had problems before the dislocation. These families may be dissolved under the unbearable stress (Fozzard and Tembo 1990:130).

## 4.2 REFUGEE NEEDS

Vernez (1991: 627-631) explains that, refugees face problems as a result of their displacement. They face physical dangers in flight from their community, stress in adapting to a new cultural environment, questions about their identities, and guilt and worry for those left behind. As mentioned earlier, refugees face uncertainty about their long-term future and about their survival in the immediate camp situation. Refugees of both sexes and different ages face difficulties as a consequence of their uprooting. Adding to the tragedy of this situation is the fact that presently statistics from the world refugee agency show that half of the world's refugees are children under the age of 18 years, (UNHCR 2001:16).

A growing body of resource documents including, Ahearn and Athey (1991: 42) show that refugees develop psychosocial problems like post trauma stress disorder due to crisis induced migration and refugee status. Because of the usual uncertain length of time that refugees spend in countries of their first asylum, it becomes very important for refugee workers and other concerned agencies to identify the unique needs of these people in especially difficult circumstances.

The below core list of needs provided in Galtung (1980: 55-126) and Carr-Hill (1978:7-8), may help provoke discussion on priorities of refugee needs:

- Security needs: avoidance of violence such as war, assault, torture;
- Welfare needs: avoidance of misery because of lack of food, water, and protection from the climate, etc.
- Identity needs: avoidance of alienation through self-expression, affection, and understanding of the world around one, sense of purpose.
- Freedom needs: avoidance of repression through choice in receiving and expressing information, choice of occupation, choice of confrontations, choice of spouse, choice of place to live, etc.

- Health needs: without a minimal level of health one cannot biologically survive, hence health is basic;
- Education needs: the essence of humanity is knowledge so that without learning there is no real human existence, hence education is basic;
- Employment as a need: (Wo)man is defined by what s/he does, hence the essential nature of a person depends upon the characteristics of their employment and the quality of (their) working life;
- Recreational needs: (Wo)man is defined by her/his creativity so that the way in which s/he spends time and the types of leisure available are basic to the definition of existence;
- Economic needs: an income and economic security are the prerequisite of satisfying material needs so that livelihood depends on one's personal economic situation;
- Physical needs: a physical shelter and hospitable environment are essential for warmth, food and water, hence the physical environment is basic;
- Social network as a need: the social relationships within which our daily life is enmeshed defines our personality, hence the nature of personality depends on the social environment;
- Safety needs: (Wo)men's life is nasty, brutish and short without mutual protection (both from each other and from the state) so that personal safety and the (correct) administration of justice is fundamental;

Some experts on refugees like McCallin (1990), Baker and Zetter (1995) and Fozzard (1995) clearly state that like any other person, refugees have needs including the following: personal liberty and security, basic material needs, health

and nutrition, psychosocial well-being, education and cultural/social activities. Attempts will be made to discuss some of these needs briefly.

#### **4.2.1 Personal liberty and security**

UNHCR (1994:79) explains how refugees need to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent, maltreatment or exploitations, including sexual abuse.

Refugees are sometimes victims of military and armed attacks, recruited into armed forces or groups, used as forced labour, abducted, irregularly adopted, physically or sexually abused including through torture, exploited, discriminated against, abandoned, neglected and subjected to arbitrary and inhumane detention (Fozzard 1995:68-70).

Threats to the physical security of refugees are often aggravated by lack of protection by their host governments, their lack of personal identity documentation and the disruption of traditional family, clan and community structures. Threats to personal security may come from a variety of agents (both from within and outside the country of asylum) including bandits, military or irregular forces, police, border guards, elements of the local population and other refugees. The personal security of refugees, particularly of women and children, is an essential element of international protection (UNHCR 1994:81).

Discussions with refugee workers suggest that assuring physical protection is often extremely difficult. Sometimes threatened refugee populations live in remote areas, are victims of banditry or suffer from reprisals when bandits allegedly hide in camps. UNHCR has in recent years been faced with extremely difficult challenges where it has been called to assist populations living amidst conflict. The case of Rwandese refugees of mainly Hutu origin who camped together with armed former soldiers in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo can be used as a clear example where many civilians, women and children were subjected to live together with armed people in the same camp (UNHCR 1999:10).

Clearly, a basic level of security for refugees is a necessity as a humanitarian action. As indicated before, not infrequently, refugee populations suffer violence as a result of abuse of power by military, police, guards and other government personnel of the country of refuge itself. In some cases, rigorous enforcement of "closed camp" policies has led to violent abuses on the perimeters and inhumane conditions and violence within. Some cross-border raids have involved abduction of refugee children for military recruitment. Stories from Angolan refugees in Namibia indicate how Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) soldiers used to cross the border to kill or torture refugees in camps in Namibia. (UNHCR 2000:7).

The Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign (RBX) which was launched in 1998 by a partnership between the South African Human Rights Commission, the UNHCR and the National Consortium on Refugees in South Africa was based on the ground that refugees in some places, including South Africa, are subject to xenophobic attacks on foreigners and resentment by the local population (UNHCR 2001: 9).

Refugee Hand Book for Emergencies recognizes that the government of the country of asylum or refuge has the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of refugees residing within that country. UNHCR has an obligation to intervene with governments to ensure that they define the safety and liberty of refugees and to facilitate such action on behalf of states as necessary and appropriate (UNHCR 2001: 60-67).

#### **4.2.2 Water, sanitation, shelter and clothing**

Intervention is always necessary in refugee situations to ensure that basic material needs are available to sustain life with dignity. Without adequate attention, the environment of refugee settings often creates particular health hazards to refugees. Over-crowding, inadequate nutrition and poor sanitation and water can result in outbreaks of measles, malaria, respiratory illness and diarrhoea diseases, which are major killers of children. Exposure (lack of appropriate shelter, blankets and clothes) can further increase the likelihood of

illness. Deprivation creates risks to humans in general, especially children's immediate well-being as well as to their longer-term development. The adequacy or inadequacy of the provisions for basic material needs to refugees has a profound impact on the requirements for other services, particularly health services (Baker and Zetter 1995:37).

### **4.2.3 Health and Nutrition**

Providing refugees with food alone may not keep them alive. Typically, it is not simply lack of food that kills refugees, but a complicated interaction between hunger and disease. Disease prevention and treatment has a critical role to play. In fact, simple health initiatives can save more lives than high-tech medical treatments – in part because they focus on prevention and in part because they can reach much larger numbers. Keen (1992:20) explains that oral dehydration salts can help prevent death from diarrhoea. The lack of prompt immunisation of children in Sudan in 1985 led to a major epidemic, with the death rate from measles in one camp as high as one in every three cases diagnosed (Toole 1991:42).

Effective preventive care requires information. Another important basic health measure is monitoring refugee populations (and not just those coming to clinics for care) for diseases that commonly lead to death. Reliable diagnosis is an essential part in this process and some observers have noted a pressing need for improvements in the training of expatriate medical staff, especially in the health problems affecting areas where they are being sent. During her work among refugees in Swaziland, JoAnn McGregor, of the Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford, observed that expatriate nurses were misdiagnosing seasonal pellagra as psoriasis or eczema, despite the fact that pellagra is endemic to Southern Africa. It was not until there was contact with local nurses that expatriate staff began to make correct diagnoses (Keen 1992:21).

'Training' should be a two-way process; it should not simply be a question of foreigners conveying knowledge to local people but also of tapping the knowledge of those same people. For example, the knowledge of traditional

healers both from within refugee communities and from host countries might be useful sources. At the same time, there is a need to offer proper training in western medical techniques to refugees themselves, whether as nurses, midwives or other careers. In an age where most families in Africa are affected and infected by the ravages of HIV and Aids, the potential of refugees in improving on the level of health within their communities should not be overlooked (Okello-wengi 2001:6).

#### **4.2.4 Psychosocial well-being**

There is a common assumption that may be deduced from the American psychologist Maslow's "ladder of basic needs" that when people are hungry, their other needs become relatively unimportant. Making provision for the mental health of people who face starvation may even seem somewhat of a luxury. But while keeping people alive is obviously a legitimate priority for relief organisations, it is nevertheless important to recognise that refugees habitually suffer severe mental anguish arising from the upheaval they have been through. To lose one's home is to lose part of one's identity and sense of control. When the loss is accompanied by violence, the emotional injury can be profound (Nguye 1987:42-51).

In the face of this refugee catastrophe, retaining some elements of traditional customs and values may be of immense importance. Many refugees have witnessed the murder of family members; in some circumstances the dead may even take precedence over the living. A study in the early 1980s of Ugandan refugees who had fled north to the Sudan revealed that these refugees placed great importance on facilities for the burial of the dead: in some cases providing resources for burials was given higher priority than providing resources to sustain the living (Harrell Bond 1986:168).

Behnia (1997:45) explains that it is all too easy to suppose that refugees are somehow transposed from the normalcy of village life to the squalor of a refugee camp, because phenomenon like 'war' or 'famine' so often accompanies this transposition. Trauma in refugees knows no geographical boundaries.

This is how one refugee, Khoa Duong in Mayotte (1992:45) described the flight from Vietnam in 1980 of a group of 300 boat people on a craft measuring just 30 by 8 metres.

*“It was like being in a small, crowded, hot room... By the next morning we had run out of water again and several people had died. Every hour more and more died and we threw their bodies into the sea. There was one terrible night when about twenty people died. We heard crying and shouting. One mother lost her two children and threw herself into the sea. Around me were four corpses but we were too weak and tired to throw them overboard. Many now drank seawater and even urine”.*

Eventually, an American ship picked up this group of refugees. Forty people had not survived the trip. Across the other side of the world, Boothby (1990:179) writes about Carlos, a nine-year-old boy from El Salvador, who had been a refugee in Costa Rica for six months when he told his story in 1982:

*“One night, when we were asleep.... Someone knocked very hard on the door. We felt afraid and my two cousins and I hid underneath the bed. My uncle went to open the door with the baby in his arms. When he opened the door, we heard the sound of machine gun fire and the screams of my uncle and the baby. They had been killed. My grandfather ran out to protect them but they threw him on the bed where we were hidden. They took out their machetes and, in spite of his screams, cut him up in little pieces, just like that. We stayed very, very still because we were terrified. Finally, a voice said, ‘if there is anyone left in this house when we get back, they’ll have the same fate as the others.... every night when I try to sleep, I feel the same fear I had in El Salvador. Most of the time I don’t sleep well and it’s hard for me to pay attention in school... In El Salvador, when I went to school, we had other books that were more interesting than these”.*

In Malawi, a Mozambican refugee in his fifties told researchers in August 1990 that back home he had witnessed the murder of his wife’s nieces and nephew by Renamo bandits, who bayoneted them, then took axes and split their skulls. Anyone who screamed or cried would receive the same treatment, the bandits had warned (McCallin and Fozzard 1990:26-27).

Consequently, protecting and promoting the psychosocial well-being of refugees has two main thrusts. First, it involves, as a preventive measure, enhancing all

those factors, which promote the well-being of refugees. Second, it includes providing the special remedial assistance necessary to ensure that refugees who have been harmed or have special needs are provided with assistance to ensure a full recovery.

Advocates of refugee children point out that many influences contribute to the state of psychosocial well-being of refugee children. First and foremost, the emotional well-being of refugees is influenced by the protection and care they receive from their host country and communities. Adults often suffer greatly in refugee situations; this can influence their ability to provide for their children. Sometimes parental distress results in child abuse, abandonment, family strife and other forms of family disintegration (Ahearn and Athey 1991:62).

The uprooting, disruption and insecurity inherent in refugee situations can harm children's physical, intellectual, psychological, cultural and social development. These factors are severely compounded when; in addition, children suffer or witness the torture or murder of family members or other forms of abuse or violence. Barnes (2001: 141-9) points out that for refugee children who, before their exodus, suffered psychological dysfunctions or mental retardation, the refugee situation can increase their risk for further mal-development. The threat to emotional well-being is significantly increased when lengthy or permanent disruptions occur between child and primary care-giver, or child and family, the loss of the mother, or substitute mother figure, particularly at an early age, places a child at a higher psychosocial and developmental risk. Arranging for valid substitute family care or immediate family reunion is critical.

Meanwhile Mollica (2002:158-166) explains that an extended stay in an artificial environment like refugee centre or camp where normal life activities are impossible, may adversely affect the emotional and intellectual development of children. Children in such circumstances suffer from the negative effects of extended family members and the destructive effects on the family unit. Effects on adolescents, particularly those without accompanying family members, range from depression, apathy, delinquent behaviour or aggressive acts to situational mental disturbances, drug abuse and suicide. In many cases, Mollica (2002:158-166) adds that suicide is not only the result of individual distress but is also a

reflection of the high level of anxiety and despair within the refugee community as a whole.

Other scholars have warned that it is important to be aware that emotional disturbances among refugees may be reactive. They may be a result of past traumatic experiences and, while the indicators can be similar to those of severe mental illnesses, the prospects for recovery may be quite different. The delayed effects of severe trauma require special attention from those caring for refugee children and adolescents. Problems have arisen regarding recovery and durable solutions when refugees have been inappropriately diagnosed and inadequately cared for by mental health professionals without the situational stress reactions or sufficient cross-cultural skills and understanding (Andre 1998:719).

The need to provide refugees with mental health, or psychosocial support, is as important as aiding their physical health. The term "psychosocial well-being" is used to reflect the intimate relationship between psychological and social factors in well-being. (UNHCR 1994:37).

#### **4.2.5 Education**

Dynamic approach to the question of employment of refugees in the host countries can be realised by providing refugees with opportunities for quality education. Education should be seen as the ideal precursor for self-reliance. Provision and expansion of assistance in the area of education, including the utilisation of non-formal educational programmes and distance techniques can promote greater self-reliance.

Refugees have a right to education. UNHCR explains that primary education is to be compulsory and free to all. Different forms of secondary education are to be made accessible to every child and higher education is to be made available on the basis of capacity (UNHCR 1994:109).

Education is so important to the development of children that it is recognised as a universal human right. Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out this right, as have other human rights instruments in international law,

and binds signatories to the Convention to fulfil their obligation to provide it. Uprooting does not annul a child's right to education nor a government's responsibility to provide it. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees Article 22 reaffirms the responsibility of the government of the country of asylum to provide educational services for refugees.

The UNHCR's Executive Committee reaffirmed the right of refugee children to basic education as early as 1966. The fact remains that the majority of refugee children do not have access to basic education. Some estimates put the number of refugee children receiving education at no more than 30 percent. The absence of basic education violates their rights and sets in motion a lifelong handicap. Participating in school provides one of the few experiences of stability, continuity and a sense of meaning for children, and thereby, contributes enormously to children's well-being. For these reasons, education is a priority protection and assistance activity (UNHCR 1994:118).

#### **4.2.6 Cultural and social needs**

Conserving a cultural heritage is always difficult in refugee situations. In refugee camps, because of inadequate institutional capabilities and lack of appropriate resources, there is a lack of awareness to the value of cultural heritage conservation. Marc (1992:255) is of the opinion that involving people in cultural heritage conservation increases its efficiency and raises awareness of the importance of the past for people like refugees who face rapid changes in their environment.

Refugees have a right to maintain and express their personal, family, cultural and religious identities. The conservation of culture and the right to take part in a cultural life are recognised as human rights. Article 1 of the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation, proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation at its fourteenth session, on 4 November 1966 provide as follows:

- Each culture has a dignity and value, which must be respected and preserved.

- Every group of people has the right and the duty to develop its culture.
- In their rich variety and diversity, and in the reciprocal influences they exert on one another, all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind.

Culture provides identity and continuity for children. Together with religious teaching, culture conveys the beliefs and values necessary to integrate in one's society or ethnic group. Each group of people has their own unique learned knowledge, reflected in social and religious beliefs, values, explanations, ways of viewing and interpreting experience.

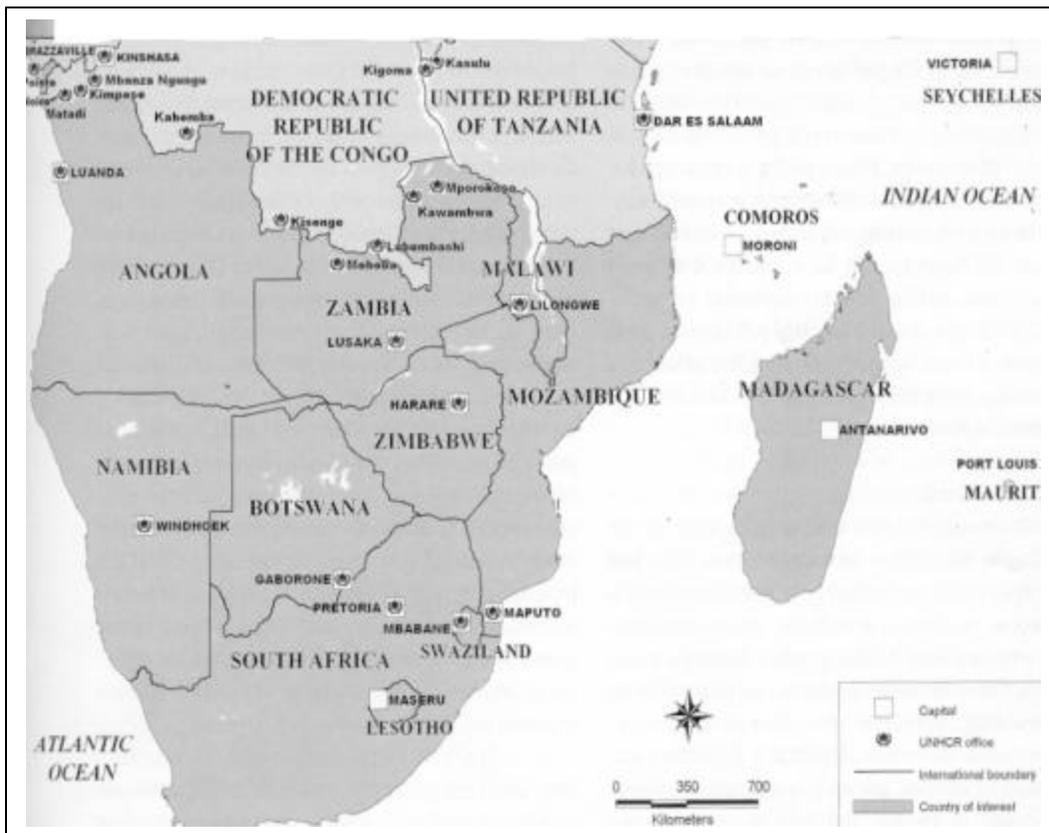
Refugee children face two kinds of difficulties regarding culture. Not only are the opportunities for refugee children to learn and maintain their own culture severely limited, but they must also learn to function within the culture of the asylum country. Significant changes can occur in parental attitudes and values, and in children's social behaviour due to their uprooting and their need to adapt to the host culture. Both parents and children may experience culture shock in which the new environment has little or a distorted meaning, and anxiety and depression result. Preserving the cultural, social and religious values of children is integral to protecting the right guaranteed by in Articles 5, 13 and 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31 guarantees the rights of children to participate in cultural activities.

Keller and McDade (1997:63-78) explain that social upheavals of refugee situations, patterns of living and long standing rules of behaviour can be shattered. When rural people, for example are displaced from their land and from cultivation they lose not only a source of livelihood but also a pattern of living. In this disruption and change the shared knowledge of a people can be lost. The consequences for children, in particular, can be serious. In the loss of a society's guiding and regulating mechanisms relationships often suffer. This is commonly reflected in the anxiety of refugee mothers and fathers about the difficulties of raising children in the milieu of a refugee situation where so often their

perspectives on how they believe families should function and children should be raised are trampled. Against this background planners for refugee programmes should take culture into account when discussing developments that are meant to enhance refugee life.

#### 4.3 AN OVERVIEW OF REFUGEE SUPPORT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

**Map 1. UNHCR offices in Southern Africa region**



Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001

UNHCR (2001:12) estimates that there are nearly 300,000 refugees in the countries (refer to Table 4.1 on page 117) covered by the Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA). The caseload consists mainly of refugees with rural backgrounds residing in villages and settlements, of which the largest single group is composed of Angolans, located mainly in Zambia (150, 000). The civil conflicts raging in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo are the most important regional developments influencing the strategies of the refugee authorities both now and for the year 2003.

For many countries, the single most critical issue of refugee policy and management is the large number of urban asylum-seekers and refugees spread throughout the region. The phenomenon of urban refugees, especially where mixed with issues relating to irregularly moving asylum-seekers, illegal immigration and cross border criminality, is a major concern. There are increasingly restrictive policy and legal shifts taking place in the region, which along with spiralling foreigner intolerance and xenophobia, have produced serious security, legal, social and economic problems for refugees.

Above all, there is an inability to integrate meaningfully in asylum countries and an overall mood of uncertainty and anxiety.

The current peace negotiations between the Angolan Government and the UNITA may bring hope of going back home for the Angolan refugees. Voluntary repatriation has started for Namibian refugees from the Caprivi region who are based in Botswana. International protection is being provided to urban asylum-seekers and refugees, and UNHCR facilitates and encourages the creation of an environment conducive to the local integration of refugees with an urban background. Across the spectrum of UNHCR activities, particular attention is being given to the three main programme policy priorities: women, children/ adolescents and the environment, (UNHCR 2001: 119).

Registration, access to primary education, and specific protection concerns (e.g., minor soldiers, unaccompanied minors) remain areas of particular concern with respect to children/ adolescents. Specific programmes continue to target women in the fields of reproductive health, start up of small businesses and literacy classes.

An essential facet of UNHCR's work in the Southern Africa region in the pursuance of the above objective is the cooperation with regional bodies Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC), African Union (AU), local Governments, NGOs, and sister United Nations agencies, especially in promoting the institution of asylum and building emergency preparedness in the region. Through its capacity-building activities, UNHCR has enhanced the ability of

Governmental and NGO partners to play a greater and more effective role in addressing refugee problems.

The year 2001 saw the Regional Directorate for southern Africa fully operational and having at its disposal the resources and means to manage, effectively and efficiently, functions that have been decentralised during the present institutional restructuring (UNHCR 2001:122)

**Table 4.1: Number of refugees in Southern Africa by country of asylum as at May 2001.**

| Country      | Refugees | Asylum seekers/Mandate Refugees | Total population |
|--------------|----------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Angola       | 10, 638  | 253                             | 10,891           |
| Botswana     | 2,950    | 1050                            | 4000             |
| Lesotho      | 27       | 27                              | 54               |
| Malawi       | 440      | 2860                            | 3300             |
| Mozambique   | 50       | 1500                            | 2000             |
| Namibia      | 3500     | 500                             | 4000             |
| South Africa | 8,450    | 53,400                          | 61,850           |
| Swaziland    | 590      | 10                              | 600              |
| Zambia       | 174,000  | -                               | 174,000          |
| Zimbabwe     | 820      | 170                             | 2500             |
| Comoros      |          | 1                               | 1                |
| Madagascar   |          | 60                              | 60               |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

### **4.3.1 A brief overview of refugee programmes in southern Africa.**

This section will briefly cover the different programmes in the different countries in southern Africa.

#### **4.3.1.1 Angola**

At the end of May 1999, there were 10, 638 refugees in Angola. The main components of this caseload were as follows: 10,421 Congolese (DRC) and 180 Rwandese. Refugees, numbering 5,000 of the total refugee population live in camps in Bengo and Luanda Province (Boa Esperanca and Viana). The urban caseload, which consisted of mainly working class refugees and those who were registered students with tertiary education institutions, was intermingled with the

local population in the capital, Luanda. The demographic breakdown of the group provided asylum was 51.2 percent female and 48.8 percent male (UNHCR 2000:106)

UNHCR (2000: 106) indicates that from January 1999, there was almost a tenfold increase in the number of requests for asylum. The Branch Office received four hundred and eighty three applications from asylum seekers, compared to fifty-six registered during the same period of 1998.

The prevailing instability in the DRC since the fall of the Congolese President Mobutu in 1996 up to date has also been an impediment to the planned facilitation of the voluntary repatriation of the Congolese from the DRC. (UNHCR 2001:107)

**Figure 4.1: Refugee operational partners in Angola**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Offices</b>   |
| Luanda   |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>   |
| Ministry of Home Affairs   |
| <b>NGOs</b>  |
| Lutheran World Federation Switzerland<br>Accao Angola para o desenvolvimento (AAD)<br>Forum das organizacoes nos Governmentias Angolanos (FONGA) |
| <b>Other</b>   |
| Medicins San Fronteres Spain   |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### **4.3.1.2. Lesotho**

ROSA continues to monitor the local integration of 27 recognized refugees and also continues to put limited resources at the disposal of UNDP to meet the urgent needs of refugees and any new asylum seekers. Given staff rotation, training of refugee management, staff and immigration officials was to continue to be scheduled for well into 2003.

**Figure 4.2: Refugee operational partners in Lesotho**

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| <b>Offices</b>             |
| Maseru                     |
| <b>Government Agencies</b> |
| UNDP                       |
| <b>NGOs</b>                |
|                            |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### **4.3.1.3 Madagascar**

UNHCR's presence in Madagascar has, over the past five years, been limited to the provision of care and maintenance assistance to some 60-mandate refugees. In the absence of established refugee policy, resettlement to a third country has been determined as the only viable durable solution for this group. Fifty-four Ethiopian mandate refugees were resettled in the course of 1998. It was expected that the remaining caseloads, including 13 mandated refugees from Burundi, Sudan and Rwanda, would be submitted for resettlement during 2002; and by the end of 2003 all mandated refugees in Madagascar would have been resettled. By that time, it was also expected that Madagascar would accede to all refugee instruments and set up a refugee asylum determination process (UNHCR 2001:107)

#### **4.3.1.4 Malawi**

Increasing numbers of asylum-seekers from the Great Lakes region arrived in Malawi in 2002. There are at present 3,300 refugees in the country. The processing of applications by asylum-seekers is likely to constitute much of the work of the refugee authorities in Malawi, which also ensures that refugees receive basic assistance and services (including shelter, food, water, relief items, education and health care). UNHCR continues to work with its partners and other UN agencies to implement projects for women, children and adolescents, and protection of the environment. It also participates in efforts to combat poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Activities to build up the expertise and resources of the Government and implementing partners in working with refugees continued (UNHCR 2001:107).

**Figure 4.3: Refugee operational partners in Malawi**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Offices</b>                                 |
| Lilongwe                                       |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>                     |
| Ministry of Home Affairs                       |
| <b>NGOs</b>                                    |
| Association of pre-school play group in Malawi |
| Christian Council of Malawi                    |
| Malawi Redcross Society                        |
| <b>Other</b>                                   |
| International service volunteers service Italy |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### 4.3.1.5 Mozambique

In Mozambique, UNHCR's presence as from 1999 has been mainly geared towards the provision of basic needs to 720 refugees. This has entailed the support of local to support local settlement activities through the establishment of small-scale business ventures; vocational skills and academic training. There has also been need to build the capacity of the Government counterparts and related institutions to promote national commitment and capacities to deal with asylum seekers and refugees in a manner consistent with international law and principles. Due to the long process of status determination, active support in all areas was still necessary because potential refugees are unable to become economically active without refugee status (UNHCR 1999:130).

Mozambique remains a country of transit for asylum seekers on their way to South Africa, where, even as asylum seekers, the asylum seeker's residence permit issued to them gives them the right to work. The beneficiaries consist mostly of young families or single men from the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Angola and Somalia. The development of the capacity to process refugee applications, coupled with information sharing with South Africa on irregular movement of refugees by the end of 2002 was being planned. UNHCR also fully participates in the process to ensure that Mozambique's former refugees who are now termed returnees are integrated within the country's long-term development strategy and reintegration process.

**Figure 4.4: Refugee operational partners in Mozambique**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Offices</b>  |
| Maputo  |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>  |
| Ministry of Home Affairs  |
| <b>NGOs</b>   |
| International rescue committee, USA- cermid<br>Episcopal Commission for Migrants<br>Africare, USA<br>Mozambique Christian Council |
| <b>Other</b>  |
| American Refugee Committee USA  |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### 4.3.1.6 Namibia

Refugee support by different agencies in Namibia is mainly to provide care and maintenance assistance to approximately 3,803 camp based refugees at Osire, the majority of whom are from Angola. Local integration was determined to be the only viable durable solution for this group in the foreseeable future, but in view of the current political negotiation between UNITA and the government of Angola, if it turns out fruitful, UNHCR was to endeavour to work with the government of Namibia so that by the end of 2003 those Angolan refugees who would wish to repatriate would be assisted to do so.

Although national refugee legislation has undergone the first hearing by parliament, refugees face certain limitations in exercising their socio economic rights, for example, the right to work and freedom of movement. UNHCR activities from 1999 has been to ensure that the refugee act was enacted and that the proposed improvements would be the right to appeal, the issuance of identity cards and permission for the refugees to work (UNHCR 2002:4).

**Figure 4.5: Refugee operational partners in Namibia**

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| <b>Offices</b>              |
| Windhoek                    |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>  |
| Ministry of Home Affairs    |
| <b>NGOs</b>                 |
| Namibia Council of Churches |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### 4.3.1.7 Republic of South Africa

Different agencies working with refugees in South Africa have focused on activities geared towards the promotion of durable solutions which include activities such as: advocacy of refugee rights through legal and institutional capacity building, promotion of UNHCR's mandate, public awareness and sensitisation campaigns; local capacity building in service delivery; training of Government and NGO counterparts in refugee law and programme management issues; providing needy refugees with skills and language training, income-generation projects, and job placement; and addressing the special needs of women and children (UNHCR 2000:108).

It was anticipated that by the end of 2002 every person given refugee status would have been issued with identity cards, thus enabling them to enjoy their economic and social rights. In South Africa, one must have an identity document to gain access to both formal and informal sectors, including banks.

By the end of 2002 UNHCR also anticipated a fair, expeditious eligibility process would be in place and fully functioning and that the backlog of cases would have been cleared.

**Figure 4.6: Refugee operational partners in the Republic of South Africa**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Offices</b>  |
| <b>Pretoria</b>   |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>  |
| Department of Education<br>Department of Foreign Affairs<br>Department of Health and Welfare<br>Department of Home Affairs<br>Department of Justice   |
| <b>NGOs</b>   |
| Cape Town Refugee Forum<br>Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation<br>Durban Refugee Forum<br>Jesuit Refugee Service<br>Lawyers for Human Rights<br>Margaret Sanger Center International (South Africa)<br>National Consortium for Refugee Affairs<br>Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa<br>South African Human Rights Commission<br>University of Cape Town Legal Aid Clinic<br>University of Witwatersrand Law Clinic |
| <b>Other</b>  |
| International Organisation for migration  |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### 4.3.1.8 Comoros

UNHCR provides care and maintenance assistance to one mandate refugee from the Republic of Congo and his family, pending resettlement. National capacity to deal with refugee applications, coupled with the government's failure to accede to all refugee international instruments, was to be followed up throughout 2002 and 2003 (UNHCR 2001:124)

#### 4.3.1.9 Swaziland

Refugee authorities in Swaziland provide basic assistance to 1000 needy refugees of various nationalities with an urban socio economic background. Assistance provided also includes counselling, small-scale business activities, basic education and vocational skills training. The draft refugee bill in Swaziland has been pending since 1995. The treatment and reception of refugees in Swaziland is outdated. In 1998, the Government and UNHCR jointly reviewed and amended the existing draft. The treatment and reception of refugees in Swaziland was control-oriented and based on the 1978 Refugee Control order, which puts a refugee in a situation like that of a prisoner. It was anticipated that by the end of 2002 the draft Refugee Bill would be enacted by parliament and the legal status and rights of refugees clarified (UNHCR 2001:124).

**Figure 4.7: Refugee Operational Partners in Swaziland**

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| <b>Offices</b>                   |
| Mbabane                          |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>       |
| Ministry of Home Affairs         |
| <b>NGOs</b>                      |
| Lutheran world federation        |
| Caritas Swaziland                |
| World University Service, Canada |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### 4.3.2.0. Zambia

Zambia witnessed an influx of refugees from the DRC that began in early 1999 and continued throughout 2000. The refugees, fleeing the continuing civil war in their country and non-implementation of the July 1999 Lusaka cease-fire agreement, streamed into northern Zambia at an average rate of 1,000 per month during most of 2000, bringing the total of new arrivals to over 25,000 at the time of writing. To cater for the refugees from the DRC, UNHCR was obliged to open a new camp—Kala in Kawambwa district in August 2001, after Mwangwe camp in Mporokoso reached its full capacity. The new refugees were transported from the border to Kala camp and are now being provided with food and non-food items.

Towards the end of 1999, Angolan refugees also started entering Zambia's North western and Western provinces fleeing Angolan Government offensive to take UNITA strongholds. To meet the needs of the first wave of new arrivals, UNHCR opened a camp in Nangweshi in South-West Zambia in January 2000 and continued to transfer new arrivals away from insecure border areas to more secure existing settlements (Mayukwayukwa and Meheba). The influx of Angolan refugees picked up sharply in mid-September 2000, prompted by military clashes and bombing raids by the Angolan Armed Forces aimed at taking the UNITA strongholds in Moxico and Cuando Cubango provinces, particularly areas surrounding the towns of Cazombo and Lumbala N'Guimbo. By mid-October, well over 10,000 new refugees had entered the country, bringing the total for the year 2000 to some 33,000. Smaller numbers of Rwandan and Burundi refugees also arrived in 2000 (UNHCR 2001:128-131)

The year 2000 also witnessed a breakdown in the WFP food pipeline, which affected food rations in all refugee camps and settlements in Zambia and raised concern about the risk of malnutrition for the tens of thousands of refugees dependent on food aid for survival. Food shortages and the presence of former combatants amongst the refugees also led to a rise in the number of security incidents and raised concerns for the safety of the refugees, as well as UNHCR and implementing partner staff, (UNHCR 2001: 129).

**Figure 4.8: Refugee Operational Partners in Zambia**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Offices</b>   |
| Lusaka<br>Kawambwa<br>Mporokoso<br>Maheba  |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>   |
| Ministry of Home Affairs   |
| <b>NGOs</b>  |
| Adventist Development and Relief Agency<br>AFRICARE<br>CARE<br>Lutheran World Federation<br>OXFAM<br>World Vision International<br>YMCA<br>Zambian Red Cross Society |
| <b>Other</b>   |
| United Nations Volunteers  |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### 4.3.2.1 Zimbabwe

UNHCR continues to ensure that asylum-seekers as well as some 2,500 refugees in Zimbabwe receive protection and assistance in accordance with international standards. The Office assists the Zimbabwe Refugees Committee (ZRC) to carry out its responsibilities with regard to refugee status determination and work to enhance the knowledge and application of international refugee law by providing training to ZRC staff. In line with its overall objective of searching for lasting solutions, UNHCR continues to work with the Government on the local settlement of refugees. To encourage self-reliance, the office supports income-generating activities and vocational skills training for refugees and offer advice on how to run small businesses. Refugees, particularly women, receive help with language training and advice on employment possibilities and further education. UNHCR strengthens its emergency preparedness and response capacity through contingency planning, while activities to reinforce the expertise and resources of the Government and implementing partners in dealing with refugees continued (UNHCR 2001:104).

**Figure 4.9: Refugee Operational Partners in Zimbabwe**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Offices</b>  |
| Harare<br>Bulawayo  |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>  |
| Ministry of Home Affairs  |
| <b>NGOs</b>   |
| Fuel wood Consortium, Zimbabwe<br>Inter-Country People's Aid, Zimbabwe      |
| <b>Other</b>  |
| Save the Children Federation, USA<br>Lutheran World Federation, Switzerland |

Source: UNHCR Global Appeal 2001: 121

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

As illustrated by the refugee experiences, needs and support in this chapter, the benefits of collaboration between those concerned with provision of direct services to refugees and those whose interests lie with refugee policy development have tremendous policy implication for planners in respective refugee fields.

Proper planning and programming can contribute significantly to the improvements in living standards of refugees. Programmes are needed that aim to reduce the powerlessness created by negative events in the lives of the refugees. Skills that will enable the refugee population to become more independent and self-sufficient such as literacy and English proficiency need to be provided.

UNHCR's mandate, although important in responsibility terms, is by no means sufficient to solve the diverse problems and meet the many different needs of refugees. It is therefore important that UNHCR and States develop a multidisciplinary approach to deal with refugee issues. This demands that refugee authorities work in close collaboration with each other, the community, and humanitarian agencies both national and international including churches.

There is a need to continue utilising those strategies, which have proven effective “among” them, supportive counselling, case management and aggressive advocacy.

War is an example of psychosocial situation, which bears risk of upsetting the individual dynamic bio-psycho-social balance to the extent that a large number of psychic disturbances, as well as normal reactive to abnormal experience can be expected. The contributions made by psychiatrists in working with refugees and displaced persons to recognise and treat psychological disorder need to be appreciated. The part played by clinical psychologists to help individuals, couples or groups with psychological burden expressed through personality or behaviour, needs to be supported. The important role a General medical Practitioner (GP) as he/she becomes family physician to the many refugees needs to be encouraged. The role of non-professionals working with refugees, who usually take over the work of social workers and psychotherapists, should be recognised. The issues and observations presented in this chapter are meant as sources for potential intervention pathways for provision of services to refugees. History and cultural determinants are important considerations when working with refugees. Despite of acculturation pressures, cultural legacies and traditional values still retain powerful influences on refugees. Recognition of their importance can help develop qualitative tools for supporting refugees.

This chapter has provided general information on refugee support in southern Africa. The next chapter will be the setting of this study; it will discuss in depth protection and support in Botswana.

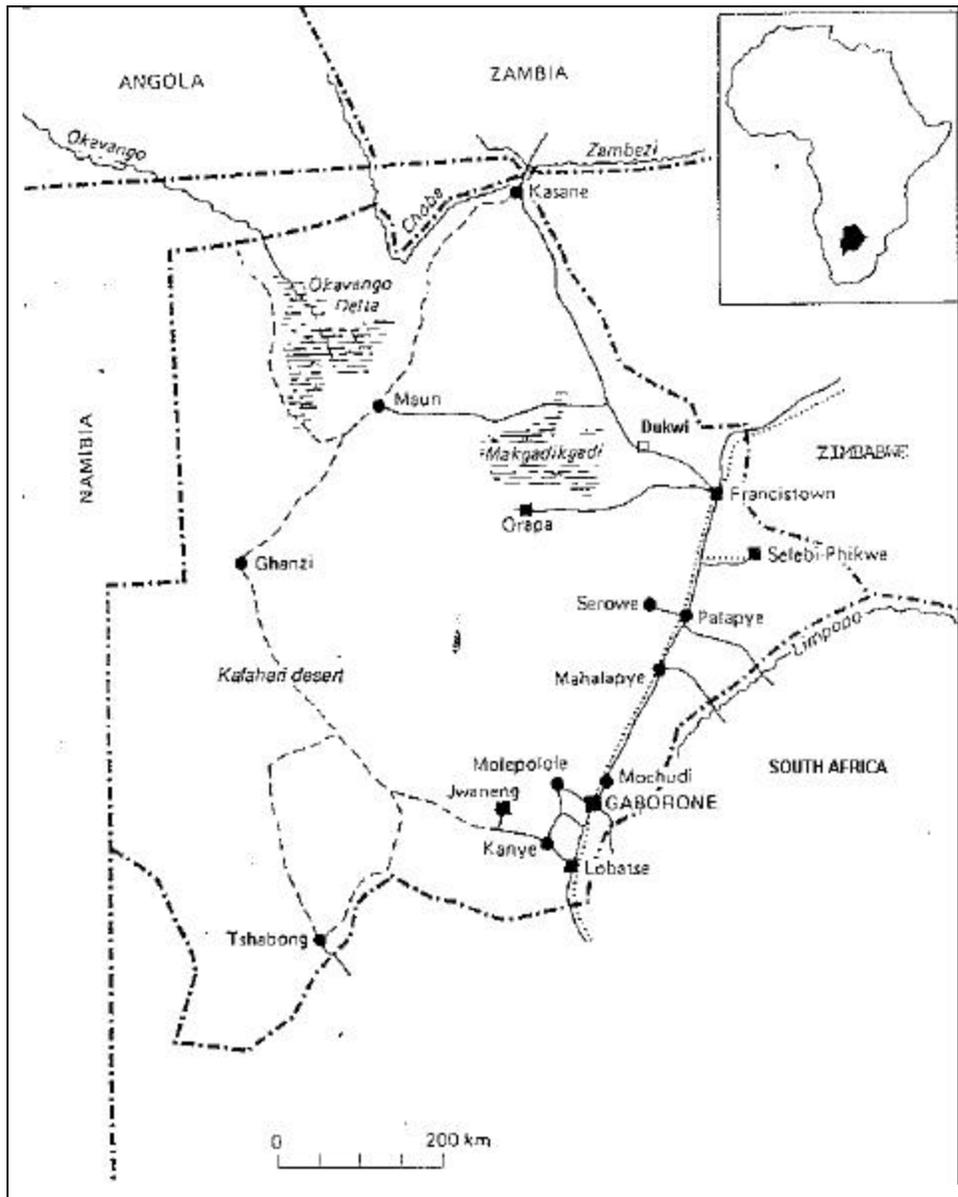
## CHAPTER 5

### REFUGEE MOVEMENTS AND SUPPORT IN BOTSWANA

Botswana recognises a responsibility to those victims of political circumstances, and we are trying to discharge that responsibility as well as our resources permit (Sir Seretse Khama 1978).

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter endeavoured to outline the needs, experiences and an overview of support for refugees in southern Africa. The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. In the first section, a presentation is being made on Botswana: the land and the people. The second section is devoted to explaining in a concise form, the history of refugee movements in Botswana from the earlier years of colonialism up to post-independence period. The third section presents the Botswana response to refugee plight, explaining the legal status of refugees under the Botswana law, cataloguing the different types of refugees in Botswana and briefly describing the role of different UNHCR implementing partners.

**Map 2. Republic of Botswana**

Adapted from Anders Johnson, *Landanalysis Botswana*, 1982

## 5.1 BOTSWANA: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Botswana, officially Republic of Botswana, formerly Bechuanaland is a landlocked country in southern Africa, covering an area of 224,607 square miles (581,730 square km). The capital is Gaborone. Consisting mostly of the Kalahari (desert), the country has a maximum length from north to south of about 600 miles (965km) and a maximum width from east to west of about the same; it is

bordered on the south and southeast by South Africa, on the west and northwest by Namibia, on the north by Zambia, and on the northeast and east by Zimbabwe. The population in 2001 was estimated at 1,600,000 (Botswana review 2001: 12).

**The people:** More than three-fourths of the people of Botswana belong to eight principal Bantu-speaking ethnic groups, which are historically and culturally related to the western Sotho people; they are the Tswana people, or Batswana, whose name the country bears. These groups are Kwena, Ngwaketse, Ngwato, Kgatla, Maletse, Rolong, and Tlokwa. Each group occupies its own separate territory with its own traditional chiefs (for example, the Kwena and Ngwaketse live in the southeast, near Gaborone) and retains an inalienable communal ownership over its tribal lands. The nomadic San (Bushmen of Kalahari, who according to Britannica Encyclopaedia (1990: 412 – 413) are Botswana's original inhabitants, and the few thousand whites of European origin (mainly by way of South Africa) are not included in this traditional system. The San, known locally as the Sarwa, or Mosarwa, now make up only a small proportion of the population and still follow a nomadic way of life in the Kalahari, where they move seasonally across the Namibia border. The two official languages are Tswana (Setswana, Siswana) and English (Botswana review 2000: 7).

Much of the country has a subtropical climate, though it is subject to continental extremes. The summer (October-March) temperatures rise to 100° F (38° C), and winter (April-September) temperatures fall to below 32° F (0° C). Average annual precipitation (most falling from December to April) is about 18 inches (460 mm), varying from 25 inches (635 mm) in the north to 15 inches (380 mm) in the east, and to 5 inches (127 mm) or less in the southwest. Rainfall is highly variable and severe droughts and famines, often lasting several years, are frequent (Botswana review 2000:12).

Botswana's full mineral resources remain unknown, but it has begun to exploit its diamond, nickel-copper, and coal deposits. The diamond mines of Orapa, Lethakane, and Jwaneng together make up one of the largest reserves of diamonds in the world (Botswana review 2001: 59). Large reserves of coal are

located near Morupule and Serowe in the east, and deposits of salts, soda ash, and potash exist in the Makgadikgadi salt pans in the northeast. There are also deposits of plutonium, chromite, and platinum (Botswana review 2001: 15).

The majority of the people are nominal Christians, with a large mixture of those holding African traditional beliefs. About 30 percent are practicing Christians. The majority of these are Anglicans, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians; these four groups have united in Botswana. There are other smaller Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in the country. There are about 3000 members in the Islam communities. The Botswana Muslim Association (BMA) in conjunction with the Islamic Council of Botswana coordinates the affairs of all Muslims in Botswana. The BMA was formed in 1920 (Amanze 1994: 237).

The country is sparsely populated because of the shortage of water. The southeast is the most densely populated area of Botswana, whereas the west-central and southwest are the least populous and some places, are virtually uninhabited.

Life expectancy is 46.2 years. The birth rate is among the highest in Africa. The urban population accounts for only about one-fifth of the total population. Almost half of Botswana's people are under 15 years of age (Botswana review 2000: 7).

### **5.1.1 The economic situation.**

Botswana has a developing mixed economy in which both the public and private sectors participate. The economy is dependent on the raising of livestock and the mining of diamonds, copper, and nickel and has been heavily subsidised by South Africa, the European Union (EU), and various international agencies. Manufacturing industries are little developed. The Gross National Product (GNP) has grown much more rapidly than the population. The GNP per capita of 3175\$ is one of the highest in southern Africa, though still low by world standards (Botswana review 2000: 12).

Although agriculture accounts for only a small percentage of the GNP, it employs as much as three-fourths of the work force. The raising of cattle is the chief agricultural activity and is dominated by a small number of households who own more than half of all of the cattle in Botswana. Most cattle are sold to the Botswana Meat Commission at Lobatse. Exports of meat to the EU are favoured by the Lomé Conventions, but were imperilled by outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease until 1981, when the country became free of the disease through vaccination and the building of a system of cordon fences. Production of drought-resistant sorghum, vegetables and melons, corn (maize), millet, and beans, which are the chief staples, is largely by subsistence level cultivation and frequently falls short of domestic demand as a result of unpredictable rainfall and poor soils. Cash crops include cotton, peanuts (groundnuts), and sunflower seeds. Mining accounts for more than two-fifths of the GNP, but it employs only a small percentage of the labour force. Mineral industries are dominated by the production and export of diamonds, copper, and nickel; the export of diamonds is the major source of foreign exchange and public revenue.

The Government and De Beers Consolidated Mines of South Africa jointly mine diamonds. The Government also owns an interest in the production of copper and nickel. Coal is mined and used domestically to generate electricity. There is a shortage of skilled labour as thousands of workers from Botswana are employed in South African mines.

Principal trading partners are members of the South African Customs Union, who supply most of Botswana's imports, and of the EU, which accepts most of the country's exports. Manufactured goods and foodstuffs are the major imports.

### **5.1.2 The Government and social conditions.**

Botswana is a multiparty republic with a parliamentary government. Its 1966 constitution vests legislative authority in the unicameral National Assembly, consisting of 34 directly elected members, four specially elected members and the attorney general. Members serve a five-year term. The House of Chiefs, as elected by a body representing the principal tribes of Botswana, serves as an

advisory body to the Government; legislation affecting tribal affairs must be referred to the House of Chiefs before passage in the National Assembly. Executive power is vested in the president, who is directly elected to a five-year term. The president governs with the assistance a Cabinet he appoints, which is responsible to the National Assembly. The Botswana Democratic Party has been the dominant party since the country achieved independence from Britain in 1966 (Botswana review 2000: 12).

## **5.2 HISTORY OF REFUGEE MOVEMENTS INTO BOTSWANA**

The refugee population in Botswana has decreased in recent years. The total refugee population in Botswana in 2002 was three thousand four hundred and nine (3409), with about eighty-two percent (82%) of these living in a refugee camp (UNHCR 2002:1).

Historically, Botswana has played host to refugees from its neighbouring countries, particularly Zimbabwe and Namibia, before they gained independence in 1980 and 1990 respectively, as well as to South Africa, Lesotho and Angola before general elections were held. As part of an historical over view, this section will mainly examine the case of the South African, Angolan and Zimbabwean refugees. The argument for focusing on these three groups is that by challenging existing practices, they compelled the government of Botswana to reconsider a new and realistic approach to administering refugee matters.

However, the chapter will also cover refugees from different parts of the African continent and else where.

### **5.2.1 South African refugees**

South African refugees entered Botswana as early as the institution of apartheid was conceived in 1948. Legislation such as the Native Land Act of 1913, which denied Blacks the right to acquire land, was a clear manifestation of racial discrimination, precipitating protests and demonstrations against the system that led to violence.

The Sharpeville massacre of 1960 was one major incident, which drew the attention of the world to the horrors of apartheid. The subsequent decision by the state not only to end demonstrations but to stifle political activity by banning liberation movements was met with strong resistance. In 1976, another disaster struck – the Soweto uprising, where over five hundred (500) school children were shot dead by security officers while protesting the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools. The banning of liberation movements forced their members to flee South Africa. Botswana, like other countries in the region, became host to South African refugees fleeing persecution. Since there was no refugee camp until 1977, they were allowed to find their own accommodation (Mogwe 1994: 10).

Some of the political parties rented houses which they used for their members as guesthouses or transit centres before they transferred to other countries. This trend was brought to an end after the political changes in South Africa, which began in 1992.

The policy to allow refugees to find their own accommodation was challenged in 1985 when South African commandos invaded Botswana and killed South African refugees whom the South African Government argued were ‘terrorists’ responsible for the ‘armed struggle’ attacks in South Africa. These incursions and acts of sabotage carried out by the white minority apartheid government posed a security risk and a decision was made that the police should take over the responsibility of refugee status determination. As a result of these developments, the Botswana Government decided to keep refugees in the Dukwi Refugee Camp which is approximately one hundred and thirty (130) kilometers North-west of Francistown and far from the South African border (Mogwe 1994: 11).

### **5.2.2 Zimbabwean refugees**

The Zimbabwean refugees fled into Botswana during the liberation war for independence in 1977 and 1978. As the struggle intensified, there was a mass influx into Botswana and according to Mogwe (1994:11), there were

approximately thirty thousand (30 000) Zimbabwean Refugees in Botswana by 1979. The Zimbabwean influx was important because it challenged Botswana's Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act, which used individual case-by-case refugee determination. The influx meant that the Refugee Advisory Committees, established under the aforesaid Act, could not, for practical purposes, be used because of the great numbers involved. For this reason the committees were suspended in the early 1980s. Many refugees were accepted on prima facie evidence of being part of the large group-claiming asylum. The two transit centres which were established in Selebi-Phikwe and Francistown, could not support such a huge population, hence the establishment of Dukwi Refugee Camp (Zetterqvist 1990: 22).

Following Zimbabwean independence in 1980, many refugees repatriated and the few who remained, applied for Botswana citizenship. In 1989 the cessation clause was applied to all Zimbabwean refugees in Botswana. This was provided for in Article 1 (5) of the UN Convention of 1951 relating to the status of refugees. It states that it shall not be applicable to any person who:

*... "can no longer because the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality".*

### **5.2.3 Angolan refugees**

Angola attained independence from Portugal in 1975 but even before then refugees from this country were already in Botswana. Their flight into Botswana was to escape oppressive Portuguese colonial rule. However, after independence, civil war began between the Patriotic Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government, the opposition Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the Front for the National Liberation of Angola (FNLA). The general elections held under the supervision of the United Nations in 1992 failed to bring lasting peace to the country because UNITA rejected the results. The conflict in Angola continued and refugees are still coming to Botswana (Mogwe 1994: 12 and UNHCR 2002: 14).

## **5.2.4 Impacts of refugee influx into Botswana**

Refugee influxes give rise to problems of a very complex nature: For the refugee the problem concerns personal survival and making the best of the conditions encountered in the new environment. For the world community, if at all, the problem is a humanitarian issue to be forgotten as soon as the acute needs are partially satisfied. For the host country, there are a complex series of problems. The impact of the refugee influx has affected the small population of Botswana in positive and negative ways.

### **5.2.4.1 The positive impacts of refugee influx into Botswana**

Refugees have been a source of development for Botswana in many ways. Before the government of Botswana and the UNHCR established the Dukwi refugee camp, Dukwi village was a rural settlement with a population of less than 200 people, with no major source of income and the majority of the population were basically relying on handouts from the government social services. The developments in the refugee camp brought with it the creation of jobs, uplifting of social amenities at the camp and at the village. Schools were built mainly for refugees but children from the villages were allowed to enrol, roads were built and where they existed, they were improved. The village now has an estimated population of 20,000 people and it has now been designated a village by the Ministry of local government. It has a chief and other local authorities offices (UNHCR 2002).

Informal consultation with Ndaba former refugee from Zimbabwe and Nefolovhodwe from Republic of South Africa, indicate that the current Botswana defence force barracks in Francistown and certain sections of Selebi-phikwe town were built by UNHCR as refugee camps in 1976. They were handed over to the Botswana government in 1982 by UNHCR after Zimbabwe had got their independence and the refugees had been repatriated to Zimbabwe. They also indicated that a large refugee labour that was available when needed, the labour was more reliable, cheaper, and enabled rich landowners to cultivate larger areas

of land, and increase profits. They also indicated that the majority of teachers in Botswana during the period, 1970 and 1980 at primary schools and secondary schools were refugees. However, they said, this was perceived differently by certain sectors of the Botswana population. Some citizens argue that the refugee labour force reduce employment, lowered wages and raised food prices and rent for the labouring classes of the Botswana society.

#### **5.2.4.2 Negative impacts of refugee influx into Botswana**

The refugee presence is said to have put severe pressure on social services including the infrastructure. Refugee children, it is argued, burden the secondary school system and vocational training centres in Tutume Sub-district where the concentration of the refugee population is the heaviest (UNHCR 2000:23) Water consumption by refugees was estimated to be high (UNHCR, 2000:26). This has exacerbated the inadequacy of the water supply, particularly in Dukwi village.

The refugee presence is also considered to have negative healthcare effects. The danger of spreading new diseases to the local population is one concern among Botswana health workers. Besides, and more pressing, is the problem caused by the pressure of the influx on the existing health services (UNHCR 2001: 12).

There are also observers who are of the opinion that the negative effects of the refugee presence are exaggerated. Okello-wengi (2001:3) states, while one should admit the burden that refugees may put on services, the validity of blaming them for the decline in standards of living and increase in crime rate especially around Francistown city is unfounded. He wrote,

*“Refugees are a convenient scapegoat because the economic decline and their arrival are coincidental. Indeed should the government remove obstacles to freedom of movement and professional employment, the refugee community could play a much bigger part in the national development and economic growth”.*

Whatever the case may be, the presence of such a large number of refugees,

with some who live scattered among the local population, constitutes a burden on Botswana society. Refugees are mainly young and seek education in a system marked by a high rate of youth unemployment amongst Botswana youth. They put pressure on a job market that is already characterised by unemployment. Obviously, refugees represent an economic potential, which could be of significant value to the economy of Botswana. But this is not yet imaginatively and effectively tapped (Okello-wengi 2001:12),

**Table 5.1 Population of refugees in Botswana by 2002**

| Population of concern to UNHCR in Botswana:<br>Demographic characteristics and location by the year 2002 |      |          |            |            |            |             |             |            |            |             |             |             |                 |
|--|------|----------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Name   | Type | Origin   | Female     |            |            |             |             | Male       |            |             |             |             | Grand Total (b) |
|  |      |          | 0-4        | 5-17       | 18-59      | 60 and over | Total (b)   | 0-4        | 5-17       | 18-59       | 60 and over | Total (b)   |                 |
| Dukwi  | ref  | Angola   | 43         | 107        | 154        | 11          | 315         | 42         | 121        | 224         | 30          | 417         | 732             |
|  | ref  | Burundi  |            |            |            |             | -           |            | 1          | 33          |             | 34          | 34              |
|  | ref  | Comoros  |            |            |            |             | -           |            |            | 1           |             | 1           | 1               |
|  | ref  | DRC      |            |            | 2          |             | 2           |            |            | 5           |             | 5           | 7               |
|  | ref  | Eritrea  |            |            |            |             | -           |            |            | 2           |             | 2           | 2               |
|  | ref  | Ethiopia |            |            | 7          |             | 7           |            |            | 6           |             | 6           | 13              |
|  | ref  | Kenya    | 1          |            | 1          |             | 2           |            |            | 2           |             | 2           | 4               |
|  | ref  | Namibia  | 107        | 235        | 320        | 37          | 699         | 112        | 245        | 891         | 34          | 1282        | 1981            |
|  | ref  | Rwanda   | 1          |            | 3          |             | 4           |            | -          | 3           |             | 3           | 7               |
|  | ref  | S. Leon  |            |            |            |             | -           |            |            | 3           |             | 3           | 3               |
|  | ref  | Somalia  | 64         | 75         | 104        | 1           | 244         | 68         | 72         | 129         | 6           | 275         | 519             |
|  | ref  | Sudan    |            | 1          | 1          |             | 2           |            | 4          | 5           |             | 9           | 11              |
|  | ref  | Tanzania |            |            |            |             | -           |            |            | 1           |             | 1           | 1               |
|  | ref  | Uganda   | 1          | 3          | 2          |             | 6           | 1          | 7          |             |             | 8           | 14              |
|  | ref  | Zambia   |            |            |            |             |             |            |            | 1           |             | 1           | 1               |
|  |      | Zimbabwe |            |            | 1          |             | 1           |            |            | 5           |             | 5           | 6               |
| <b>Total camps</b>   |      |          | <b>217</b> | <b>421</b> | <b>595</b> | <b>49</b>   | <b>1282</b> | <b>223</b> | <b>450</b> | <b>1311</b> | <b>70</b>   | <b>2054</b> | <b>3336</b>     |
| Urban  | ref  | Angola   |            | 2          | 2          |             | 4           |            | 1          | 5           |             | 6           | 10              |
|  | ref  | Burundi  |            |            |            |             | -           |            |            | 1           |             | 1           | 1               |
|  | ref  | DRC      |            |            |            |             | -           |            |            | 3           |             | 3           | 3               |
|  | ref  | Kenya    |            |            |            |             | -           |            |            | 1           |             | 1           | 1               |
|  | ref  | Namibia  | 1          | 2          | 7          |             | 10          |            | 9          | 13          |             | 22          | 32              |
|  | ref  | Somalia  |            | 1          | 1          |             | 2           |            | 1          |             |             | 1           | 3               |
|  | ref  | Uganda   |            |            |            |             | 8           |            |            |             |             | 15          | 23              |
| <b>Total urban</b>   |      |          | <b>1</b>   | <b>5</b>   | <b>10</b>  | <b>-</b>    | <b>24</b>   | <b>-</b>   | <b>11</b>  | <b>23</b>   | <b>-</b>    | <b>49</b>   | <b>73</b>       |
| <b>Total rural/dispersed/other</b>   |      |          | <b>-</b>   | <b>-</b>   | <b>-</b>   | <b>-</b>    | <b>-</b>    | <b>-</b>   | <b>-</b>   | <b>-</b>    | <b>-</b>    | <b>-</b>    | <b>-</b>        |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>   |      |          | <b>218</b> | <b>426</b> | <b>605</b> | <b>49</b>   | <b>1306</b> | <b>223</b> | <b>461</b> | <b>1334</b> | <b>70</b>   | <b>2103</b> | <b>3409</b>     |

Source: Annual statistic report, UNHCR Botswana, December, 2002.

**Table 5.2 UNHCR, Botswana Refugee budget and Activities 2002**

| Activities                                 | Budget UNHCR 2002 |                 |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|
|  | (Pula)            | (Us dollar)     |
| Security                                   |                   |                 |
| Transportation                             | 598,980           | 99,830          |
| Provision of tents                         |                   |                 |
| Processing refugee status                  |                   |                 |
| Processing residence permits               |                   |                 |
| Providing water                            |                   |                 |
| Provision of food                          | 1,403,420         | 23,390          |
| Counselling services                       |                   |                 |
| Processing work permits                    |                   |                 |
| Providing income generating funds          |                   |                 |
| General legal assistance                   |                   |                 |
| Education and education counselling        | 1,707,000         | 284,500         |
| Provision of shelter                       | 1,300,000         | 216,666,66      |
| Specialised psychosocial support           | 50,000            | 8,333           |
| Health and Sanitation services             | 300,200           | 50,033          |
| Quality control services to refugees       |                   |                 |
| Advise the government                      | 1,756,600         | 292,766         |
| Financial support to implementing agencies |                   |                 |
| <b>Totals</b>                              | <b>6,517,220</b>  | <b>1,86,203</b> |

Source: UNHCR Botswana Project budget and Activities symbol:03/AB/BOT/CM/2002

### 5.3 BOTSWANA'S RESPONSE TO REFUGEE INFLUX

Botswana is a signatory of international conventions like the 1951 UN Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention. Some of the spirit and main principles of these conventions are embodied in the Refugees Recognition and Control Act of Botswana promulgated in 1967. The Act is included as (Appendix 8) defines the eligibility procedure and authority responsible for granting of Asylum. The status of refugees in Botswana,

therefore, is upheld through the above Act, which is directly administered by the office of the President. The Act defines a refugee as:

*“A person who owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protections of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”.*

According to Education for Kagisano (1977:24) the Government of Botswana argues that the economic constraints and geographical position of Botswana affects the Government’s ability to apply and effect all the provisions of the 1951 UN Convention. Certain Articles of the 1951 UN Convention were withheld because the country is landlocked and it was subject to major uncertainties arising from the then white-minority government of South Africa. The following articles of the 1951 UN Convention have not been applicable:

- ARTICLE 17: which confers upon refugees the most favourable treatment in regard to wage employment;
- ARTICLE 26: which provides total freedom of movement of refugees within the country;
- ARTICLE 31: which prohibits the imposition of penalties for refugees unlawfully entering the country;
- ARTICLE 32: which prohibits the expulsion of refugees on the grounds of the national security and public order;
- ARTICLE 34: which obligates the country to facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees;

According Education for Kagisano (1977:25), Botswana’s position on these articles conforms to many other countries which are signatories to the UN

Convention hence the policy adhered to by the country attempts to minimize the anticipated economic and political impact.

### **5.3.1 Legal status of refugees under Botswana law**

As mentioned before, the Refugees Recognition and Control Act of 1967 defines the eligibility procedures and authority responsible for granting of asylum. The most unfortunate aspect of it is that unlike refugee instruments in other countries like Uganda and the Sudan which go further to explain the responsibility for the welfare of those that have been granted asylum, it is very silent on the role of different parties as regards the provision of welfare to refugees Bulcha (1988: 29) and (Kiapi 1996: 141). However, in 1985 the Government of Botswana contracted a private consultancy firm, Tsa Badiri (PTY) LTD to prepare A guide for refugees in Botswana. This booklet explains the socio-economic privileges of refugees in Botswana.

### **5.3.2 Botswana's international relations effort on refugees**

Apart from providing care and maintenance assistance to refugees Botswana has made efforts at different times to communicate with different countries of origin for different refugees living in Botswana. In 1988, Botswana worked together with the UNHCR office to contact the Zimbabwean government on the plight of the 20 000 Zimbabwean citizens who were living in Botswana as refugees. This effort made possible the repatriation of over 15000 Zimbabweans to Zimbabwe in 1989 (Mogwe 1994).

Botswana government and UNHCR were also involved in activities geared towards the promotion of voluntary repatriation of Namibian refugees in line with the Tripartite Communiqué signed between the two governments and UNHCR on 25 May 1998. In August 2003, the Presidents of Botswana and Angola met in Gaborone, Botswana and part of their communiqué was the repatriation of Angolans living in Botswana as refugees (Botswana Daily News, 25 August 2003).

Botswana has always been on the receiving end of refugee movement. As a

country, Botswana does not have any of its nationals living outside the country as refugees. This can be associated with its style of governance and political stability, which is democratic in nature. In most conferences regarding refugees, Botswana delegates have always called upon African governments to consider making official public declarations of amnesty to their respective nationals living outside as refugees so as to encourage their voluntary repatriation (Southern African Regional Conference Report, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2000).

### **5.3.3 Botswana's challenges in providing refugees with services**

Refugee issues have been a source of political tension between the ruling Botswana Democratic Party and the opposition parties. Most opposition parties view refugees as strangers who should not be trusted, people who have come to pollute Botswana with bad practises and will negatively affect Botswana.

During the celebration of the Refugee Day, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2001, one of the members of parliament who was a guest speaker made a remark that was covered by the Botswana television and shown to the whole nation as follows:

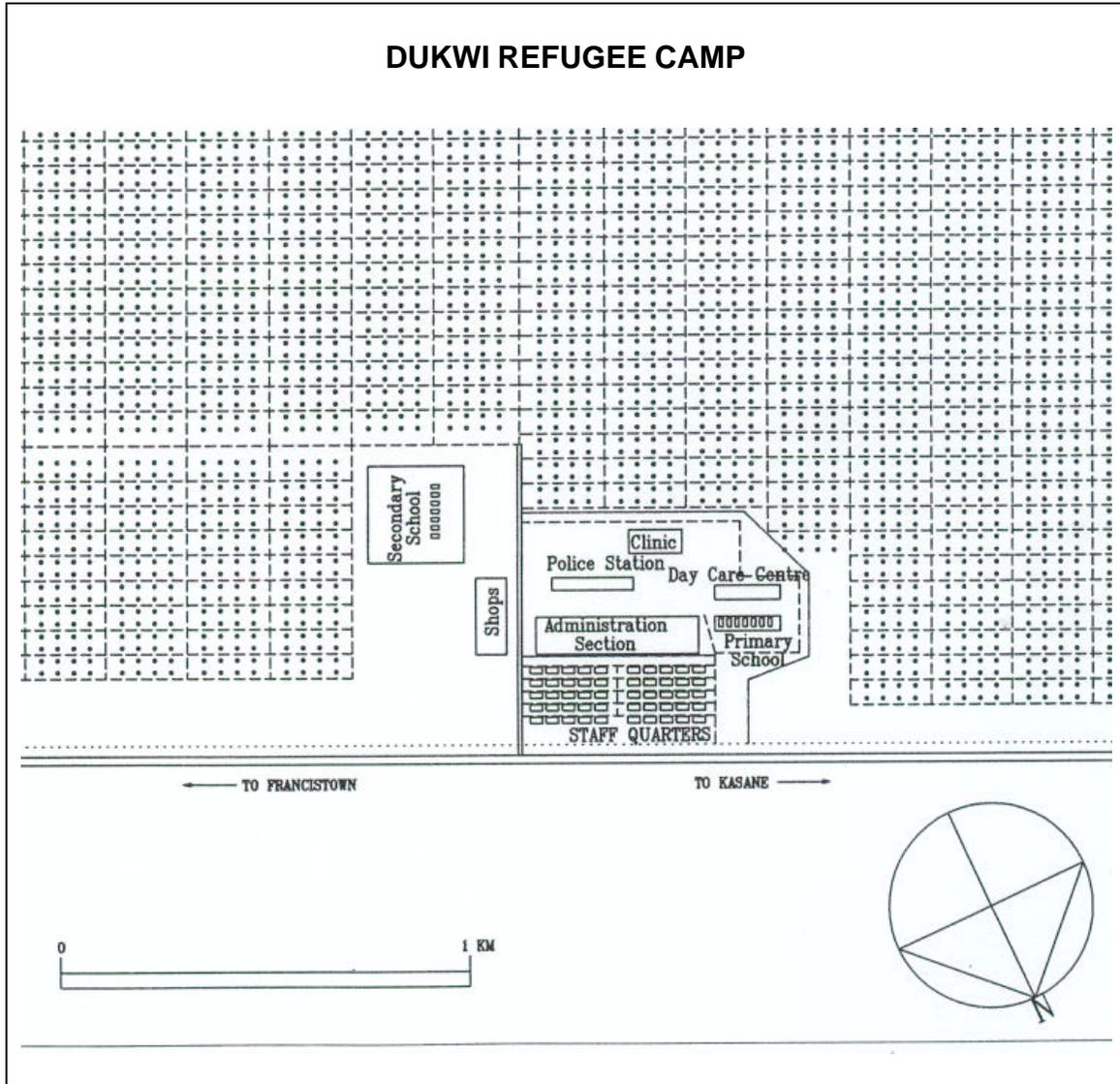
*“These refugees have turned us into refugees in our own country and they are the citizens of Botswana. They do not obey our laws, they are even hostile to our people”.*

This attitude by some of the political leaders on refugees has created anxieties in the government. These anxieties have now made the government to come up with a policy of social marginality, which is evident in the refugee camp. The inhabitants of the camp lack external social cohesion, hence, social strife is frequent. Hostility and suspicions rather than cooperation and solidarity mark the social relations. The refugee camp is isolated from the large society and refugees feel segregated.

The government of Botswana is caught between meeting its international obligations and responding to the views and feelings of her citizens and political spokespersons.



### Map 3 Dukwi refugee camp



Source: Okello-wengi 2002.

#### 5.3.1.1 Refugee residence in Botswana

In the process of upholding the fundamental principles laid down in the 1951 UN Convention, Botswana established a refugee camp. The vast majority of refugees in Botswana reside at the Dukwi Refugee Camp, and a refugee will need special permission to live outside the Camp. According to Tsa Badiri (1985: 7) the Botswana Government's intention in encouraging all refugees to live at Dukwi is to enable the Government to more effectively assist refugees to support themselves and provide the necessary security.

Dukwi is a predominantly agricultural settlement with land set aside for refugees to establish for themselves small farms and agricultural related projects. In addition to establishing commercial vegetable and poultry projects, a number of refugees have already started small scale building firms, furniture manufacturing, leather work and handicrafts and these are prospering as viable commercial enterprises providing the refugees concerned with an increasing higher standard of living. Some of the refugees sell their products in different towns around the country, including the cities of Francistown and Gaborone.

Refugees at Dukwi are expected to construct their own shelters after a short stay in tents. Through the UNHCR, monthly basic food rations are issued to supplement food grown at the settlement by refugees. Essential living items are available from the Settlement shop; there is also a day care center for children between two to five years, primary school, secondary school, police station and a modern Health Centre at the Settlement.

#### **5.3.1.2 Settlement Administration**

A Camp Commandant appointed by the Botswana Government administers Dukwi. There are also staff from different NGOs, which, under an agreement between the Botswana Government and the UNHCR have become the implementing agencies for assisting refugees at the Settlement to become self sufficient. Interagency coordination will be discussed in depth in the next section. For many refugees from rural areas, life at Dukwi is not dissimilar from their way of life at home. However, refugees from urban areas, and young adults may find living in Dukwi rather difficult to adjust to. An education resource centre, however, has been established to assist young adults with further education and cultural activities, and there is an ongoing establishment of a small library.

#### **5.3.1.3 Living Outside Dukwi**

Refugees must obtain special permission to reside outside Dukwi – either to be exempted from going to Dukwi on first arrival, or from moving from the Camp at any time.

If a refugee wants to leave the Camp temporarily, he or she must apply for permission to the Camp Commandant, who will look into the reasons for wanting to leave, and has the authority to grant a temporary exit permit. Such permission will not normally be withheld but one must comply with the conditions attached to the permit.

Reasons for leaving Dukwi temporarily, may include going for job interviews, attending at a hospital, looking for places at educational institutions, or making arrangements for travel to other countries. The Social Workers usually assist in making application to leave the Camp temporarily, and arrange for transport and a small travel allowance if the visit is approved.

At any time a refugee may seek permission to be exempted from living at Dukwi. This may be granted under the following circumstances:

- If one has obtained a place at an educational institution for full time study.
- If one has obtained full time employment, and has been granted a work permit.
- If one is establishing a viable business and has been granted a self-employment work permit.
- If one will be living with a close family member who will vouch for them and support them.
- If one will be accommodated and supported by a friend who will vouch for them.

All applications to be exempted from living at Dukwi – either on first arrival, or from Dukwi itself, must be made in writing to the Permanent Secretary, Office of the President in Gaborone. The application must contain full reasons for wanting to live outside Dukwi, and be supported by documentary evidence that one has

obtained a place at an educational institution, has obtained the necessary work permits, or has been given a firm offer of a job, or a letter from the person they will be living with confirming that they will both accommodate and support them.

If one's application is approved, the Office of the President will issue written permission to reside outside Dukwi. This can sometimes take time and one should not expect permission to be granted automatically. Once refugees have been granted permission, they must take the letter to the Police Headquarters in Gaborone who will issue them with a special form to take to the Immigration Department Head Office.

It is very important to appreciate that the letter of permission in itself is not sufficient for one to lawfully reside in Botswana outside Dukwi. For this a refugee needs a Special Residence Permit issued by the Immigration Authorities. This will be granted automatically once they have obtained the necessary authority from the Office of the President and the Botswana Police.

The Special Residence Permit is normally valid for a two-year period and must be renewed. Applications for renewal should be made to the Immigration Department Head Office in Gaborone.

Once in possession of a Special Residence Permit, one is free to live anywhere in the country without restriction.

Although refugees are not legally required to report to the Police at regular intervals, while exempted from living at Dukwi, they would be advised to do so for their own security. In particular, if they are changing places of residence, they are expected to notify the Police in the area where they have been living that they are moving, and when they take up a new place of residence they should also notify the Police of their presence (UNHCR 2002: 5).

#### **5.3.1.4 Employment opportunities**

Unless a refugee has specialist skills, employment opportunities in Botswana are limited, and priority in employment is given to citizens of Botswana. In terms of the Employment of Non-citizens Act under which all non-citizens must have a

work permit prior to being employed, or engaging in self-employment, refugees do not have any special status.

#### **5.3.1.5 Self Employment opportunities**

There are self-employment opportunities in a wide range of trades and industries for the small-scale businesspersons, and refugees are welcome to establish their own businesses. However, this may prove to be extremely difficult unless they have capital of their own, or they are going into business with someone who has already established their own company. But where refugees have succeeded in setting up businesses, they are given permission to sell their produce outside the camp.

At Dukwi, land and financial assistance is available for refugees to start their own business and they would not have to apply for a work permit as long as the business is at the Settlement. Elsewhere, a refugee will require both a special residence permit and a work permit.

#### **5.3.1.6 Applying for a Work Permit**

In order to apply for a work permit a refugee must be in possession of a firm job offer and a special residence permit; or in the case of self employment, permission to establish the business by way of an exemption from living at Dukwi from the Office of the President and possession of a Special Residence Permit.

Once one has been issued with a Work Permit, which is normally valid for the same length of time as their Special Residence Permit, they may not change employers without first having obtained the permission of the Commissioner of Labour. The Permits are normally issued for two years.

#### **5.3.1.7 Travelling around the country**

Refugees who have been exempted from living at Dukwi and are in possession of a Special Permit face no restriction on travel in Botswana. Residents of Dukwi,

however, must obtain permission from the Camp Commandant to leave Camp and travel to elsewhere in the country.

#### **5.3.1.8 Travel Outside Botswana**

Refugees who arrive in the country with valid travel documents are advised not to use the documents for travel outside the country. Firstly, this may be construed as amounting to loss of refugee status. Secondly, their validity may have been withdrawn by one's own government and thirdly, should one get into difficulties while outside the country, he or she will not be entitled to any assistance from Botswana Diplomatic Missions, or from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees representative.

If one wishes to travel outside Botswana, therefore either for a short visit, or permanently to another country they must apply for the United Nations Refugee Travel Document.

If a refugee's stay outside the country is temporary, and they intend to return to Botswana, they must have the travel document endorsed with a return clause assuring them right to return and remain in Botswana. In their application, they must state the reasons why they are leaving the country, where they are going, and the expected length of their absence. They may also require a visa from the country they are visiting.

If refugees are leaving Botswana to further their education but intend to return to the country, they must ensure that they re-apply for a special residence permit when their current permit expires. The validity of the travel document will normally coincide with the validity of the special residence permit. Once these expire, they technically no longer have refugee status in Botswana, and should they subsequently return, they will have to apply all over again for refugee status (Tsa Badiri 1985: 13).

## **5.4 CATEGORIES OF REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA**

Historically, Botswana has had different categories of refugees, beginning with Revolutionary activists, coup makers and targets of coups, opponents of change and the displaced masses. Attempt will be made to discuss each of these categories briefly.

### **5.4.1 Revolutionary activists**

Revolutionary activists were those men and women who had the conviction and “purpose” to overthrow an existing regime. They may have been steered by a progressive (as is often the case) or conservative social theory and ideology. Typically, they believed that the majority shared their political convictions (Kunz, 1973:125-146 and Bulcha, 1988: 82). But there were also those political activists who believed that their social ideology was indispensable for mass liberation and, whether supported by the majority or not, chose exile in order to carry out their plans. The South African refugees who constituted the core of the liberation movements since the 1940s and the Zimbabwean exile groups were examples of this category.

The decision to leave was usually made not because of the immediacy of danger but because of anticipation of danger. The departure was well planned and often orderly; the country of destination, Botswana was deliberately chosen and contacts were established before departure. The flight of this category of forced political migrants was occurring in trickles. The individuals and small groups left first to be joined later by compatriots and family members. This group are usually cared for, above the support from Botswana and UNHCR, by different organisations that support their mission.

### **5.4.2 The coup makers and targets of coups.**

The second category of forced political migrants consists of those who flee because of their involvement in coups or revolutions. The coup or revolution may have been abortive or successful turning the coup makers, the revolutionaries or

the members of the fallen government into exiles. The Namibian refugees who came from the Caprivi area, who were fighting for secession are a good example. This group is still in Botswana with some of their leaders resettled in Europe (UNHCR 2000).

#### **5.4.3 Opponents of change.**

Thirdly, there are those persons who left their homes because they were not prepared to accept political conditions and changes that have occurred due to a revolution or political change. They tend to have a conservative social ideology and are willing to give up the advantages and comforts of familiar ways for what they hope to be a greater freedom. In Botswana, they tend to be eager to assimilate but that may not mean easy absorption into the host society irrespective of their political and ideological orientations. Most refugees who are from countries like Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi fall in this category.

#### **5.4.4 Displaced masses**

The fourth and last category consists of the majority of people in flight in Botswana. These are those unfortunate people whom Rose (1981: 8-15) called “the human flotsam and jetsam which are caught in the cross currents of conflicts which are not of their direct concern” These are people who are uprooted and displaced by the generalised insecurity produced by conflicts mainly in Angola and Somalia, although they are not partners in them or may not be their direct targets. These displaced persons constitute sixty percent of the total population of refugees in Botswana.

### **5.5 REFUGEE OPERATIONAL PARTNERS IN BOTSWANA**

In January 2002, the UNHCR restructured her operation in Botswana with the view to improving quality services provision to refugees in Botswana. The strategy adopted was an “interagency approach”, with responsibilities allocated within various organisations. These include, the Government of Botswana

(GOB), Botswana Council for refugees (BCR), Botswana Christian Council (BCC), Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS), Bana Consultancy (BANACO) and Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI). In this arrangement, UNHCR remained the donor of refugee activities, providing all the above organisations with financial support to carry out their refugee roles. Attempts will be made to discuss these organisations briefly.

### **5.5.1 The Government of Botswana (GOB)**

The GOB has placed the responsibilities of caring for refugees under the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, which is housed in the President's Office. There is a special Desk Officer dealing with refugee issues. A Senior Government Official, commenting on the role of the Government in the refugee welfare, explains in the Botswana Guardian (2000: 3) that as a signatory of the 1951 UN Convention, Botswana has recognized that she has the responsibility to ensure that the following are done:

- The immediate suffering and hardship (physical pains and mental anguish) of refugees are minimized.
- Refugees are provided with essential necessities of life-shelter, food, medicine and clothing by calling upon international agencies and other governments for assistance to supplement what it is able to provide from within its own resources.
- The entry of refugees into the country does not unduly disrupt the normal life of citizens.
- Proper arrangements are made to settle the refugees at reasonably safe places.

Although the UNHCR provides most of the funds for the support of refugees, the GOB provides different types of services, including the provision of security and medical care. The value of such services is not normally easily monetarised.

### **5.5.2 The Botswana Council for refugees (BCR)**

Botswana Council for Refugees is a non-governmental coordinating agency for assistance to refugees in Botswana. Members of different churches, mainly the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Lutheran Church and Botswana Government, formed it in 1977. BCR provides refugees with different social support (Tsa Badiri 1985: 23). In an interview with Mmegi Weekly (2002:2), the acting Director of BCR listed the support the Organisation provides to refugees as follows:

- Counselling services
- Provision of food assistance to refugees living in Dukwi refugee camp
- Provision of food assistance to refugees in transit in Shakawe and Maun.
- Ensuring timely and efficient food delivery
- Proper record keeping and warehouse management
- Mainstreaming of the project objectives in relation to the programming standards and policies on gender, refugee women, children and the environment in order to improve the delivery of protection and program assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Botswana.
- Assisting refugees to adapt to their new situation through support of cultural and recreational activities, in particular women's activities
- Ensuring that refugees actively and continuously participate in the recreational activities in the camp.
- Ensuring that the relationship with the neighbouring communities is improved through cultural exchanges.

### **5.5.3 The Botswana Christian Council (BCC)**

The BCC is an umbrella body of about 35 churches and organisations founded in 1966. The membership covers all historical churches present in Botswana, several African Instituted Churches and few churches belonging to the Pentecostal or Evangelical traditions.

The general programme priorities of BCC include, supporting activities that are geared towards uniting churches, providing counselling services, promoting ecumenical spirituality and advocating for the marginalized and oppressed group. (Amanze 1994: 37).

BCC took up the responsibility for coordinating and implementing refugee education programme with financial support mainly from UNHCR. UNHCR (2000: 4) shows the responsibilities of BCC to include to,

- Provide scholarships to needy refugee students for academic studies mainly within Botswana.
- Monitor and report to UNHCR about the refugee students' progress.
- Provide educational counselling to refugee students.
- Provide general welfare needs to refugee students.

### **5.5.4 The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS)**

The BRCS was started in 1948 as a branch of the British Red Cross Society. On the 1st of March 1968 an Act of Parliament of the Republic of Botswana established the Society as an Independent National Society.

The ICRC recognised the BRCS in February 1970. It was admitted as a member of the league of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society in 1971. Like any other Red Cross and Red Crescent society throughout the world, the society runs its humanitarian activities with the guidance of the seven principles of the

movement: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality (Botswana Red Cross Society 2002:6)

The BRCS undertakes activities in the sanitation, health and community services sectors. They address the physical and emotional needs of refugees in Dukwi Refugee Camp. Refugees are encouraged to actively participate in the health services provided in the Camp. The programme gives special attention to the vulnerable groups, specifically focusing on the following activities:

- General health assistance
- Home based care
- Therapeutic feeding
- Support for women groups
- HIV/AIDS awareness through peer educators
- Clean up campaign
- Psychological support

### **5.5.5 The Bana Consultancy**

The BANACO, established in 1998, registered company number 97/2144, provides a range of therapeutic treatment to different types of clients. A number of therapeutic models combine to constitute their therapeutic approach. Main themes are recovery (the belief that the psyche can heal itself given the right condition), permissiveness (the belief that disturbed behaviour should be tolerated) and reality confrontation (the belief that everyone in any society should take responsibility for, and be accountable to others for their behaviour). Central to their practice are, person-centred approach and person-in-environment also known as “ecological perspective”(Bana Consultancy 2000:2-3).

The BANACO has been working with UNHCR office since 2000. Their main responsibility has been outlined by UNHCR (2000: 6) as to:

- Identify some of the symptoms of distress manifested by those refugees who have experienced violence or have been seriously disoriented by refugee experience.
- Develop awareness within the refugee community including the personnel of the nature of the experiences suffered by many of the refugees, the trauma of being exiled from their country and how this affects daily living.
- Work appropriately with personnel at different levels to sensitise them to the importance of psychosocial issues in the day-to-day lives of refugees and in the development of creative and fully functioning communities in Gaborone.
- Identify institutions and facilities that could be utilised in the treatment of victims of trauma.

#### **5.5.6 The Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI)**

The HFHI, Botswana, is a country programme carrying out the goals and objectives of Habitat for Humanity International HFHI, a non-profit ecumenical Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world, and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action.

Habitat invites people of all backgrounds, races and religion to build houses together in partnership with families in need.

Habitat has built more than 125,000 houses around the world, providing more than 625,000 people in more than 3,000 communities with safe, decent, affordable shelter. According to Fuller (1977: 26), Millard Fuller founded HFHI in 1976 along with his wife Linda. UNHCR (2000:18) shows that in the year 2000, HFHI, Botswana built 200 four by six meters, iron roofed houses at the Dukwi refugee camp. Habitat for humanity international oversees the construction of shelter for refugees including drainage facilities and pit latrines. Under this arrangement, Habitat only provides technical support to refugees. Individual

refugees as well as families are expected to provide mandatory labour for them to realize a good shelter and environment.

Habitat has identified an officer with construction background to assist in the execution of this project. He is expected to:

- Mobilise the refugee community to participate in the construction of their own houses
- Supervise the pre-positioning of building materials in the form of river sand, pit sand and concrete stones to be delivered by Government of Botswana vehicles
- Identify and supervise 40 masons in the day-to-day construction of the housing units by ensuring provision of hand tools and distribution of responsibilities.
- Ensure that all construction materials are accounted for and
- Submit weekly reports on the progress of the project to UNHCR.

Table 5.3 below summarises the roles and responsibilities of different implementing partners in Botswana. It also provides the budget estimates for the different partners for the year 2002. UNHCR and the government of Botswana are the major donors to all refugee-implementing partners in Botswana.

**Table 5.3 Implementing agencies, their responsibilities and budget**

| Agency          | Responsibility                             | Budget UNHCR 2002 |                 |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|-----------------|
|                 |  | (Pula)            | (Us dollar)     |
| The GOB         | Security                                   | 598,980           | 99,830          |
|                 | Transportation                             |                   |                 |
|                 | Provision of tents                         |                   |                 |
|                 | Processing refugee status                  |                   |                 |
|                 | Processing residence permits               |                   |                 |
| The BCR         | Providing water                            | 1,403,420         | 23,390          |
|                 | Provision of food                          |                   |                 |
|                 | Counselling services                       |                   |                 |
|                 | Processing work permits                    |                   |                 |
|                 | Providing income generating funds          |                   |                 |
|                 | General legal assistance                   |                   |                 |
| The BCC         | Education and education counselling        | 1,707,000         | 284,500         |
| HFHI (Botswana) | Provision of shelter                       | 1,300,000         | 216,666,66      |
| The BANACO      | Specialized psychosocial support           | 50,000            | 8,333           |
| The BRCS        | Health and Sanitation services             | 300,200           | 50,033          |
| The UNHCR       | Quality control services to refugees       | 1,756,600         | 292,766         |
|                 | Advise the government                      |                   |                 |
|                 | Financial support to implementing agencies |                   |                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |  | <b>6,517,220</b>  | <b>1,86,203</b> |

Source: UNHCR Botswana Project budget symbol:03/AB/BOT/CM/2002

## 5.6 SUMMARY

What is clear from this chapter is that there is a practical approach to the refugee welfare provision in Botswana. However, there are a number of things to be noted. Firstly, it can be noted that some significant actions have been taken in the best interests of refugees. In particular, Botswana has signed the 1951 UN Convention, adopted the 1967 Protocol and also signed the 1969 OAU Convention. All these have been done to better the protection of refugees.

It can also be noted that Botswana has further improved its position on refugees by embodying the provision of the international refugee instruments in the domestic legislature by having the Refugees Recognition and Control Act of 1967. However, Botswana has made reservations on some of the provisions of the 1951 UN Convention, particularly on fundamental provisions of the socio-economic rights. There is need for Botswana to re-examine her position on these provisions, especially since the situation associated with the reasons given for the reservations no longer exists.

Discussions with the former refugees in Botswana indicate that although the laws in Botswana do not seem generous to the refugees, what happens in practice is quite another. The borders of Botswana are open to all who have reason to fear for their lives. Such an “open door” policy does not end with the provision of asylum but also involves responsibility for the welfare of those that are given free haven. Refugees are still able to enjoy the privileges in those Articles withheld. The requirement that refugees should reside in the camp is applicable mostly to spontaneous large influx of refugees. Refugees are usually integrated into Botswana society: they are offered employment, including joining the civil service.

However, it is important to mention that the reservations made on the socio-economic rights of refugees stand as the legal practice, if it is not removed, can be utilised by xenophobic governments or capricious officials to negate the otherwise positive attitude of the successive regimes to the situation of refugees in Botswana.

This chapter has focused on what is on paper as regards refugees in Botswana. The next chapter will deal with the methodological process of the study. It remains to be seen, what refugees feel about what has been said in this chapter, in the next following chapters.

**PART 3**

**METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

## **CHAPTER 6:**

# **THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods used in the data collection, collation and analysis. The study is based on a descriptive research design. In descriptive research the researcher collects data in order to answer questions about current status of the subject or topic of study and uses formal instruments to study preferences, attitudes, practices, concerns, or interest of a sample. According to Davies (2000:273) “diagnostic or descriptive design has as its aim the assessment of the characteristics of a population or situation”. According to Gay and Airasian (2000:275) the two most commonly types of descriptive research designs are, observation and survey method of data collection.

This study is based on observation method of data collection. This is a primary method of collecting data by human, mechanical, electrical or electronic means. The researcher may or may not have direct contact or communication with people whose behaviour is being recorded. Observation techniques can be part of qualitative research as well as quantitative research techniques.

The intensive literature search and the research questions—“What are the needs of refugees in Botswana? “What are the support systems for refugees in Botswana?” —lend themselves to a qualitative study. In this study, qualitative research techniques have been used. Through qualitative methods we learn about people as we hear them speak about themselves and their experiences and we view the world from their points of view.

Lofland and Lofland (1984:71-92) state that the emphasis in qualitative research is on obtaining narratives or accounts in the person’s own terms. Sherman and Reid (1994:48) entertain the same idea by reminding the researcher to be sensitive to the feelings expressed by informants and to follow the threads of meaning as they lead to diverse topics.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:6-32) declare that qualitative methodologies allow us to know people personally as they are developing their own definitions of the world and that esoteric concepts can be studied as they are defined and experienced by real people in their everyday lives. This methodology directs itself at settings and the individuals in those settings holistically and allows us to empathise with their experiences in their daily struggles.

It is these experiences, these evolving definitions that are central to a phenomenological perspective of refugees and refugee workers. I see my task as describing the everyday interaction from the refugees' and refugee workers' point of view, bringing up to consciousness taken-for-granted rules and interpretations of daily life, and finding patterns in their daily life processes.

This study included ethnographic interviews (to be described in more detail later in this chapter) with thirty refugees and focus group discussion with twenty-six refugee workers. The goal of ethnography, according to Van Maanen (1979:17-25), is to describe the ways of living of a social group. The ethnographer must describe the culture of the group being studied and identify specific cultural patterns and regularities within the process of both continuity and change. Generally, ethnography is a descriptive study of a particular human society or a process of making such a study. Contemporary ethnography is based almost entirely on fieldwork and requires the complete immersion of the researcher in the culture and everyday life of the people who are the subjects of the study.

The number of refugees interviewed may at first glance seem small to the reader, but Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:12) state that, by its nature, ethnography focuses on a single case or at most on a limited number. They also state that ethnographers feel that an in-depth study that gives accurate knowledge of one setting is not markedly dissimilar from other relevant settings. What Glaser and Strauss (1976:56) call "theoretic saturation;" that is, as the information from the interviews formed a coherent pattern and no new or substantially different understandings emerged, that determined the actual numbers of interviews. The interviews are then terminated. Wolcott (1992:3-52) also suggests limiting the number of informants although for a different reason. His concern was one of

data management; many interviews would create an immense amount of material to be analysed and could become unwieldy.

## **6.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study is based on data obtained from primary and secondary sources. The techniques used to gather information are literature study, individual interviews, and focus group discussions. The main body of information was collected through interviews conducted with thirty randomly selected refugees mostly based in the Dukwi refugee camp, few urban-based refugees and focus group discussion with twenty-six refugee workers.

### **6.1.1 Research instruments**

An interview schedule to guide was prepared in July 2001. It was pre-tested in Gaborone with a few urban refugees in December 2001 and some minor changes were made before the major interviews started. The Interview schedule, see (Appendix 3), was designed to generate data mainly on the experiences of refugees, support being received, knowledge of the available support systems, legal status in the country and plans for the future.

Focus group discussion was held with all refugee workers who had come together to attend an operational evaluation workshop on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2001 at Makgadikgadi Lodge, Sua Town. Questions were designed to generate information on experiences of the refugee workers, positive and negative factors in the provision of services to refugees in Botswana. The focus group discussion guiding questions is provided in (Appendix 4).

Secondary data was gathered from various sources. The UNHCR branch office in Gaborone and archives of various voluntary organisations were the major sources of such information. Most of the available reports on the refugee problem and other related areas were examined and useful data was obtained.

One of the central aims of this study is to find out the experiences of refugees and refugee workers to determine the extent refugees understand and appreciate the existing support structures in Botswana. In order to delineate the interconnections of the support provided by the different organisations and to get a holistic view of refugees' understanding organisations' functions, refugees were asked to stipulate their experience of refugee life and the type of support they get from the different implementing partners.

During the fieldwork, the researcher lived among refugees for a period of three months and was able to make a close observation of daily life and conditions in the refugee Camp. The information obtained through observation was found to be very useful in supplementing the data obtained from the interviews and other sources.

## **6.2 ESTABLISHING CONTACTS WITH THE RESEARCH SETTING**

The fieldwork for this study was conducted in two stages, and the researcher undertook two separate field trips to the refugee camp. The first field trip took place in July 2001 and its purpose was to become familiar with the refugee problem and the research setting. During this 5-day trip, the necessary contacts with key organisations and institutions dealing with the refugee-problem in the camp were made, this included officials from Botswana Council for Refugees. The aim of the study was explained to them. A preliminary draft of the research design had already been presented to some key officials in the UNHCR office in Gaborone and their comments and suggestions were obtained.

The second and major fieldwork phase was conducted from December 2001 to March 2002. Before leaving Gaborone for the field, the researcher obtained the necessary permits from the Office of the President with great help of the UNHCR office in Botswana.

### 6.2.1 Criteria for selection of refugees

Thirty individuals who met the following criteria at the time of the interview participated in this study:

- The person: was currently living in Botswana as a refugee, is between the ages of fifteen and sixty years and has lived in Botswana as a refugee or asylum seeker for at least two years.
- Based on the guide by Spradley (1979:55) that an informant must be currently involved in a cultural scene in order to give first-hand and current information about her/his situation, I decided to select refugees who were presently leading refugee life. I was not seeking a retrospective account of their flight, but a current, on-going account of their style of living.

I included refugee mothers, fathers, single parents, never married adults and adolescents who were studying both within the camp and outside the camp. The literature showed that refugees of different ages and status have different problems and perceptions of refugee life (Fozzard 1995:32).

- Spradley also states that an informant should have at least a year of full-time involvement in a cultural scene, that the more thoroughly acculturated an informant is, the better. Studies on refugee families point out that it took at least two years after family disruption for re-equilibrium to occur (Fozzard 1995:17). Only individuals who had lived as refugees in Botswana for at least two years have been included in this study.
- The fourth criterion was that only people previously unknown to me were interviewed, thus eliminating friends and professional contacts. The initial lack of rapport between the informant and me was, to the best of my knowledge, counteracted by a lack of bias.

### **6.2.2 Recruiting the subjects (Refugees)**

The refugee workers referred only thirty persons who met the aforementioned criteria to me mainly from the UNHCR office. As I received the referrals, I met each individual to determine whether he or she was interested and if he or she met the research criteria. All of them did.

During the initial contracting meeting, I explained the purpose of my study as stated in the consent letter (Appendix 5). I also revealed that I was once a refugee for a period of thirteen years and established an interview time and place that was convenient for us both. We arranged for an uninterrupted time period of an hour and a half. Interviews were scheduled at the office, which the refugee authorities provided me with at Dukwi Camp.

### **6.3 INTERVIEW PROCEDURE**

A focus interview was employed to capture the informant's frame of reference and experience. The interview was structured and guided in order to get the impressions of the informant as a part of his or her experiences. Because the emphasis was on obtaining narratives in the person's own terms, I probed the respondent to speak freely about his or her experiences, using phrases such as "You mentioned-----Could you tell me more about that?" Questions, when needed, were open-ended (as recommended by Huberman 1994:8); "Tell me about your life; what kinds of experience do you have in your daily life?" I realised that interviewing refugees meant relying on what those individuals were willing to share with me. However, I do believe that they provided rich insights in any case.

Although the informant was in charge of as much of the interview as possible, there were certain areas, which I wanted to see, addressed during our time together. These included the following:

- Significant experiences in his or her life as a refugee.
- Issues on his or her psychosocial well-being.
- His or her different needs and how these needs are met.

- Networks of support, if any

These points were listed on the interview schedule as a guide (which Lofland, 1984, recommended as a backup) for my own use during the interview.

### **6.3.1 Interviews.**

Each interview, which occurred between December 2001 and March 2002, began with a description of the study again. I explained my motives in doing this research: analysing the support systems for refugees in southern Africa, with specific reference to Botswana and that presenting refugees' experiences to others would lead to a degree of understanding refugee needs in southern Africa. I assured the informants that they would be asked only about their own experiences and that their anonymity would be preserved. In return for their participation, I offered to send to them my analysis of their experiences at the completion of the study.

The subjects signed the consent letter included as (Appendix 4) and we proceeded with the interviews, with each interview lasting from 1- 2 hours. A tape recorder was used to record the proceedings of the sessions. As explained by Folch-Lyon and Trost (1981:443-449), Shearer (1981:407-408), Knodel and Pramultratana (1987:106) and Wolf et al (1991:213), this technique of data collection has increasingly gained credibility in social science research.

All interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the respondent. As Lofland (1984:126) suggests, I also took notes, writing significant words.

The interviews were open-ended with set questions and set sequence. In general, I began with the request that the person describe her or his experiences as a refugee in her own way, without waiting for questions from me. This broad inquiry allowed each refugee to respond in many different topic areas, which I could then pursue if necessary. Following the interview, I had each informant complete a Bio-data sheet, which is included as (Appendix 2). I waited until the

end of the interview to do this so as not to establish too much control over the process at the outset. The language used during the interviews was mainly English. I did not use a translator, seven of the Angolans interviewed were fluent in English and so were the seven Namibians. The respondents from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Somalia all spoke some good English and where they had problems they spoke Kiswahili. I read, write and speak Kiswahili fluently.

### **6.3.2 Focus group discussions**

Several Studies have indicated the importance of focus group discussions in investigating refugee issues including Magaia (1982:46), Miserez (1988:124) and McCallin and Fozzard (1990:37). This technique pools respondents who could be men or women, old or young, skilled or unskilled into an individual discussion group or groups to give a spectrum of view points on a specific topic of interest. Briefly, the merits of this technique are:

- It allows for a wide range of points of views within a short space of time;
- Respondents can correct or invalidate each other's points and supplement each other's information on the issue being discussed.
- It permits openness that is not always there at the level of individual interviews.

During the course of this research, two focus group discussion sessions were conducted. One with 26 refugee workers on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2001 at Makgadikgadi Lodge, Sua Town and with ten refugees on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2002 at the Dukwi Refugee Camp. All refugee workers had come together for a two operational evaluation workshop.

### **6.3.2.1 Focus group discussions with refugee workers**

During this focus group discussion participants were drawn from Botswana Council of Refugees (BCR), UNHCR, Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS), Office of the President (OP) and the Chief of Dukwi village. All the participants spoke and wrote English language; hence, English was used as a medium of communication. The main focus of the discussion was on the following topics:

- General experiences of being a refugee worker
- Degree of effective service delivery to refugees
- Militating factors if any in the provision of service refugees.

Each of the above areas was discussed to bring out constraints experienced by refugee organisations and professionals, activities that should be undertaken to improve protection of refugee and support required by various stakeholders to improve the overall status of refugees in Botswana.

Participants were divided into groups of five, one group had six individuals, and they were to reflect on the above areas in their respective work and learning environment. Each group was asked to select a leader who was to report the group's discussions and recommendations to the rest of the participants. A list of participants in the focus group discussions is provided in (Appendix 6)

### **6.3.2.2 Focus group discussions with refugees**

During the focus group discussion session with the refugees, a tape recorder was again used to record the proceedings of the session. The main focus was on the following:

General refugee experiences

Degree of effective service delivery by the refugee service providers

Cooperation with refugee service providers

The purpose of the discussions was to present a qualitative view on how refugees in a group rate the support services provided to them. I began that session by stating that meeting together might stimulate dialogue that could bring to the surface thoughts, which had not been articulated during the individual interviews. Discussion commenced easily and continued for 2½ hours. After the session, most of the respondents indicated that talking about their situation during the focus group discussion relieved some of their emotional pains.

## **6.4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

The analysis of the data consisted of different stages including, review of the interviews and data from the focus group discussions, organisation of the materials, process of analysis and presentation of the findings.

### **6.4.1 Reviewing the interview materials**

Following each interview, I checked over my notes, adding as much as I could remember. I also made notes in the margins in the form of headings. Subsequently, I maintained a journal of my observations and feelings along with possible interpretations to be compared with each of the other interviews.

**Editing tapes and notes:** As soon as possible after each interview, I listened to all the tapes in their entirety and transcribed those passages I felt might be important. I did not change the grammatical form but transcribed them verbatim. I had the first two tapes transcribed by a professional typist; however, that was not only very expensive but did not provide me with any more information or insights than I had acquired by doing the transcribing myself. Therefore, only I transcribed the other fourteen tapes.

#### **6.4.1.1 Organising the material**

Upon reviewing my notes, journal entries and transcriptions, I established two files, as recommended by Lofland (1984:129). The first, the mundane file, consisted of the most obvious and factual information; i.e., name of the respondent, age, occupation, income, education, number of years married and or

divorced, etc. This essentially came from the demographic data sheets and was kept in chart form, which was easy to refer to.

The second file, the analytic file, was one in which a given piece of information fit into one or more categories. I put the respondents' quotes on separate 5x8 index cards, colour-coded for each respondent. The source of the quote and the topic heading were noted at the top of each card. When a quote applied to more than one topic, it was written on two (or more) separate cards with separate headings noted for each.

#### **6.4.1.2 Process of analysis**

Using Glaser and Straus (1976:34-67) constant comparative method of qualitative analysis, I focused my approach on deriving as many themes from the materials as possible. The constant comparative method is not designed to guarantee that two analysts working independently with the same information will achieve the same results. Rather, the authors feel it is designed to allow for some of the vagueness and flexibility that aid the creative generation of theory. I began to sort the index cards by themes and initially derived at major themes with many sub-themes. I then reviewed them and compared each sub-theme with each other in the same and different themes. After noting the relationships that existed, I began to eliminate the non-relevant properties, combine and integrate the relevant ones and reduce the interrelated categories to four major themes.

#### **6.4.2 Data processing and analysis for focus group**

A matrix was developed to deal with the three main topics of the discussions and other themes that emerged from the discussions. For each group a running tally was formed to capture the recurrence of certain issues. A summary of emerging issues was compiled for each group. From the running tally, notes of the various groups and the major issues raised were grouped under the three themes of (1) general experiences of being a refugee worker (2) general experiences of being a refugee (3) degree of effective service delivery to refugees (4) militating factors if

any in the provision of services to refugees in Botswana (5) cooperation between refugees and refugee workers.

The above procedures represent a broad view of the myriad steps involved. The whole process was actually very time consuming and tedious.

### **6.4.3 Presentation of the findings**

Upon deriving the prevalent themes in the identification of what has been analysed as the support systems for refugees in Botswana I then present in chapter seven, the experiences and views of refugees and refugee workers on what they see as the needs and support system for refugees in Botswana

Chapter eight then will provide a synthetic interpretation of the above, offering the reader with an integrated view of the varied support provided to refugees and some guidelines for future improvement on service delivery to refugees.

### **6.4.5 Limitations of the methodology**

Because of the sensitivity and the security concerns by the Botswana government as mentioned in chapter one (1.6), this study will not provide qualitative data on a large number of people and will not produce statistically verifiable conclusions. However, experiences of refugees and refugee workers are vital to this study, the purpose of which is to evaluate the extent to which these experiences influence the planning of the service delivery. Another limitation was that more detailed discussion was needed on a topic of sensitive nature like provision of support to refugees, hence, some of the recommendations from the focus group are somehow superficial because refugee workers did not have enough time to consult other colleagues in their organisations.

Because of the expanse of topics to cover and with the limited time at the researcher's disposal, it has been essential to make a selection of areas upon which to focus special attention. Hence, the analysis will be mainly of the basic

and pertinent support, rather than an in depth need-tailored by the different experiences of refugees and refugee workers. In following this approach, there is likelihood that particular issues may be omitted.

Lastly, refugee population in Botswana is as diverse as the African continent itself. Refugee problems themselves are diverse as are the different reasons that are associated with the dislocation. For example, there are unaccompanied children, whose needs are unique; there are widows and widowers, who have specific needs that require specific attention. These differences in reason for flight, experiences and expectations are bound to produce discrepancies in the information process thus making generalisation somewhere open to question.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter we described the methods used in the data collection, collation and analysis. The focus of this chapter is the presentation of the data and information gathered from the interviews with refugees and focus group discussion with refugee workers. Some of the problems encountered by refugees and refugee workers in Botswana and how these problems affect their daily living and performance are described.

The discussion will begin with issues raised by refugees. Towards the end of the chapter, emerging issues from the focus group discussion with refugee workers will be provided.

I interviewed thirty refugees individually. I found all the thirty refugees to be articulate, eager to talk and seemingly relaxed. I have grouped the interview findings into four major categories, which were derived from the thematic analysis described in the previous chapter. These categories are as follows:

- Major experiences of refugees
- Understanding of the refugee support systems
- Struggles to survive as refugees
- A look to the future

Major sub-themes were identified within each category and are discussed throughout. I have cited direct quotes from the recorded interviews as illustrations of the issues, while using fictitious first names to preserve the anonymity of each respondent. Preceding the actual discussion of the findings of the study is a review of some of the characteristics of the refugees who participated in this study.

## 7.1 THE RESPONDENTS

This section provides the profile of the respondents in this study. The profile will include their country of origin; age, gender and their occupation both before and after become refugees. The section will also provide some basic information on the refugee workers who participated in the focus group discussion. This will include the organisations they work for and their occupation.

### 7.1.1 Refugee respondents

A general picture of these thirty refugees evolved are as follows: This was a semi-educated and literate group whose educational level ranged from non-formal education at the Islamic school, primary education, secondary education to university.

**Table: 7.1 Respondents by nationality and sex**

| <b>Country</b>               | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> | <b>Sub-Total</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|------------|
| Angola                       | 4           | 3             | 7                | 23         |
| Burundi                      | 1           | 1             | 2                | 8          |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 2           | 2             | 4                | 13         |
| Namibia                      | 3           | 4             | 7                | 23         |
| Rwanda                       | 1           | 2             | 3                | 10         |
| Somalia                      | 4           | 3             | 7                | 23         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>           | <b>15</b>   | <b>15</b>     | <b>30</b>        | <b>100</b> |

The respondents were of different nationalities as shown in Table 7.1. All of these refugees have been living in Botswana for a period between two to fifteen years. Seventy percent (70%) of them live in the refugee camp at Dukwi.

**Table: 7.2 Number of respondents by length of stay in Botswana**

| Years              | Gaborone | Dukwi     | Sub-Total | %          |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 15                 | 0        | 1         | 1         | 3          |
| 14                 | 0        | 1         | 1         | 3          |
| 11                 | 0        | 1         | 1         | 3          |
| 10                 | 0        | 1         | 1         | 3          |
| 9                  | 0        | 1         | 1         | 3          |
| 7                  | 0        | 1         | 1         | 3          |
| 5                  | 0        | 2         | 2         | 8          |
| 4                  | 5        | 5         | 10        | 33         |
| 3                  | 2        | 6         | 8         | 28         |
| 2                  | 2        | 2         | 4         | 13         |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 7.2 clearly demonstrates that many refugees have lived in Botswana for a length of three to four years. This can be associated with the political conflict which began in 1998 in Namibia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Table: 7.3 Education background by place of residence in Botswana**

| Education                  | Gaborone | Dukwi     | Sub-Total | %          |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| University                 | 4        | 3         | 7         | 23         |
| Secondary School           | 2        | 8         | 10        | 34         |
| Primary School             | 1        | 6         | 7         | 23         |
| Islamic School<br>Maderasa | 2        | 4         | 6         | 20         |
| No School                  | 0        | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>         | <b>9</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b> |

Education is one of the most important variables influencing self-reliance in a refugee situation. As shown in Table 7.3, nearly 50% of the respondents had some primary schooling and Maderasa, the Muslim prayer school, where individuals are taught how to read the Holy Koran. The low level of education among the study population reflects the literacy rate in the general refugee population in Botswana.

**Table: 7.4 Age of respondents by sex**

| Age                | Male      | Female    | Sub-Total | %   |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----|
| 0 – 20             | 3         | 2         | 5         | 17  |
| 21 – 30            | 9         | 5         | 14        | 47  |
| 31 – 40            | 2         | 5         | 7         | 23  |
| 41 – 50            | 1         | 1         | 2         | 7   |
| 51 – 60            | 1         | 0         | 1         | 3   |
| 60 +               | 0         | 1         | 1         | 3   |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>30</b> | 100 |

Table 7.4 shows that in this study the respondents were mainly young adults. Most likely explanation for this is the “sorting out” effect of flight movement, whereby the old members of the community of origin are left behind because of their lack of physical fitness. It is also possible that the older people are reluctant to uproot themselves even when a situation is threatening. According to my findings almost 70% of the respondents were in the age range of 21-40. Only 3% were above 60.

**Table: 7.5 Distribution of respondents by marital status and sex**

| Marital status     | Male      | Female    | Sub-Total | %          |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Single             | 8         | 5         | 13        | 43         |
| Married            | 5         | 5         | 10        | 33         |
| Widowed            | 1         | 4         | 5         | 17         |
| Spouse Missing     | 1         | 1         | 2         | 7          |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b> |

In this study the researcher was very gender sensitive to the extent that there was equal representation by both sexes. Table 7.5 indicates that 43% of the respondents were having single status. Thirty three percent (33%) were married, 17% were widowed and 7% were married but their spouses were missing. There are significant variations in the marital status of respondents from the two sexes. There were more widows than widowers and also there were more single adult males than females.

**Table 7.6 Distribution of respondents by number of children and place of residence**

| <b>No. Of children</b> | <b>Gaborone</b> | <b>Dukwi</b> | <b>Sub-Total</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|------------|
| None                   | 6               | 6            | 12               | 40         |
| 1 – 2                  | 0               | 7            | 7                | 23         |
| 3 – 4                  | 1               | 5            | 6                | 20         |
| 5+                     | 2               | 3            | 5                | 17         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>     | <b>9</b>        | <b>21</b>    | <b>30</b>        | <b>100</b> |

One of the common assumptions of many international humanitarian organisations and journalistic circles is that sex ratio are grossly disproportionate in most African refugee populations. This assertion is that women and small children are in large majority and that men account for only a very small percentage of the influxes (Bulcha 1988:150). This assumption is erroneous in the case of Botswana. Although 50% of the respondents were women, 15% of them were childless.

Table 7.6 shows that 40% of the respondents were childless, 23% had one to two children, 20% had three to four children and only 17% had over five children.

**Table: 7.7 Occupational status of the respondents before and after the flight**

| Respondent No. | Sex | Age | Previous Occupation | Present Occupation |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1.             | F   | 30  | Housewife           | None               |
| 2.             | M   | 36  | Teacher             | Teacher            |
| 3.             | F   | 31  | Shopkeeper          | Cleaner            |
| 4.             | F   | 23  | Shopkeeper          | None               |
| 5.             | M   | 27  | Soldier             | None               |
| 6.             | F   | 40  | Shopkeeper          | None               |
| 7.             | M   | 18  | Student             | Student            |
| 8.             | F   | 20  | Student             | Student            |
| 9.             | F   | 25  | Student             | Saleswoman         |
| 10.            | F   | 36  | Student             | Teacher            |
| 11.            | M   | 56  | Soldier             | Bricklayer         |
| 12.            | M   | 40  | Soldier             | Cleaner            |
| 13.            | M   | 30  | Soldier             | Carpenter          |
| 14.            | M   | 28  | None                | Mechanic           |
| 15.            | M   | 19  | Student             | Student            |
| 16.            | M   | 30  | Soldier             | None               |
| 17.            | M   | 50  | Teacher             | Teacher            |
| 18.            | F   | 32  | Housewife           | Student            |
| 19.            | F   | 61  | Housewife           | Housewife          |
| 20.            | M   | 26  | Student             | Student            |
| 21.            | F   | 28  | Housewife           | None               |
| 22.            | F   | 27  | Housewife           | Student            |
| 23.            | M   | 29  | Fishman             | Painter            |
| 24.            | F   | 42  | Teacher             | None               |
| 25.            | M   | 30  | Builder             | None               |
| 26.            | F   | 17  | Student             | Student            |
| 27.            | F   | 37  | Housewife           | Housewife          |
| 28.            | F   | 40  | Secretary           | Housewife          |
| 29.            | M   | 20  | Student             | Student            |
| 30.            | M   | 26  | Student             | Student            |

Although the reason for involuntary movement for refugees to Botswana was not to look for jobs, being employed and earning is a means of survival. The type of jobs refugees perform can improve their well-being to some extent and also serve as an indicator of their absorption into the economic and social main stream of the Botswana society.

Table 7.7 gives a picture of the occupational structure of the study population. As depicted in the table, most of the refugees' present jobs do not match their previous occupational background except for some teachers and students. The findings were that refugees in Botswana are forced by circumstances to undertake the worst paid and socially undesirable jobs, and often employed in marginal and seasonal occupations and menial work.

### 7.1.2 Focus group discussion with refugee workers

One focus group discussion involving 26 participants was organised at Makgadikgadi Lodge, Sua Town on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2001. The selections targeted different professions and organisations, including participants from the United Nations personnel in Gaborone, schools and the Village Chief of Dukwi as indicated in Table 7.8 below. As explained earlier in (6.3.2), these were all the refugee workers who had come together for an annual operational evaluation workshop.

**Table: 7.8: Focus group participants by organisation and gender**

| Organisation | Male Participants | Female Participants | Total number of Participants | %          |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| BCR          | 8                 | 8                   | 16                           | 62         |
| UNHCR        | 2                 | 2                   | 4                            | 15         |
| BRCS         | 0                 | 3                   | 3                            | 11         |
| OP           | 2                 | 0                   | 2                            | 8          |
| Chief        | 1                 | 0                   | 1                            | 4          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>13</b>         | <b>13</b>           | <b>26</b>                    | <b>100</b> |

In general, refugee workers from BCR made a significant proportion of the participants in the focus group discussion. As shown in Table 7.8, 62% of the participants were from BCR. The difference can be associated with the fact that it was BCR, which was the main implementing agency for UNHCR in Botswana.

**.Table: 7.9 Focus group participants by position and gender**

| Position                                | Male Participants | Female Participants | Total Number of Participants | %          |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Teachers                                | 5                 | 5                   | 10                           | 38         |
| Secretary                               | 0                 | 1                   | 1                            | 4          |
| Programme Officer                       | 0                 | 1                   | 1                            | 4          |
| Protection Officer                      | 1                 | 0                   | 1                            | 4          |
| Liaison Officer                         | 1                 | 0                   | 1                            | 4          |
| Project Coordinators                    | 1                 | 1                   | 2                            | 8          |
| Camp Doctor                             | 0                 | 1                   | 1                            | 4          |
| Camp Commandant                         | 2                 | 0                   | 2                            | 8          |
| Chiefs                                  | 1                 | 0                   | 1                            | 4          |
| Social and Community Services Officers. | 2                 | 3                   | 5                            | 18         |
| Volunteer                               | 0                 | 1                   | 1                            | 4          |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>13</b>         | <b>13</b>           | <b>26</b>                    | <b>100</b> |

Individuals occupying different positions in different refugee organisations attended the focused group discussion. This included; teachers, programme officers and social service officers. Table 7.9 above shows number of participants, their position and gender. Majority of the participants 38%, were teachers, followed by 18% of Social Welfare Officers. This can be attributed to the nature of activities found in refugee camps, which is mainly to provide welfare and improving refugees' knowledge about their environment and life in general. Table 7.9 also shows that with a refugee population of over 3000 people, there are only five counsellors, comprising of 18% of the refugee workers in Botswana, who are supposed to provide psychosocial support to refugees both in the camp and in the Head Office at Gaborone. Out of the five Counsellors only two are trained social workers, the rest only had in-house-counselling training courses.

As these individuals talked about their experiences of being refugees and refugee workers, they tended to emphasize certain themes again and again. For refugees, the first encompassed the difficult period following their flight to Botswana. How they felt about their situation and how the disruption of their life affected their lives and that of their family. For refugee workers, it encompassed the challenges posed by refugee work and qualities needed to be a good refugee worker. All these are discussed in the following sections.

## **7.2 MAJOR EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES AND REFUGEE WORKERS**

This section will provide some of the major challenges and experiences of both refugees and refugee workers. The discussion will begin with the experiences of refugees.

### **7.2.1 Major experiences of refugees**

Many of the refugees had experienced traumatic or life-threatening events, which would undoubtedly have serious mental health consequences. The information from the research activities does in fact indicate a cumulative and pervasive impact on the refugees' psychosocial well-being due to, not only the experience of trauma, but also to current life events and living conditions.

**Table 7.10 Breakdown of percentage for victims of traumatic events**

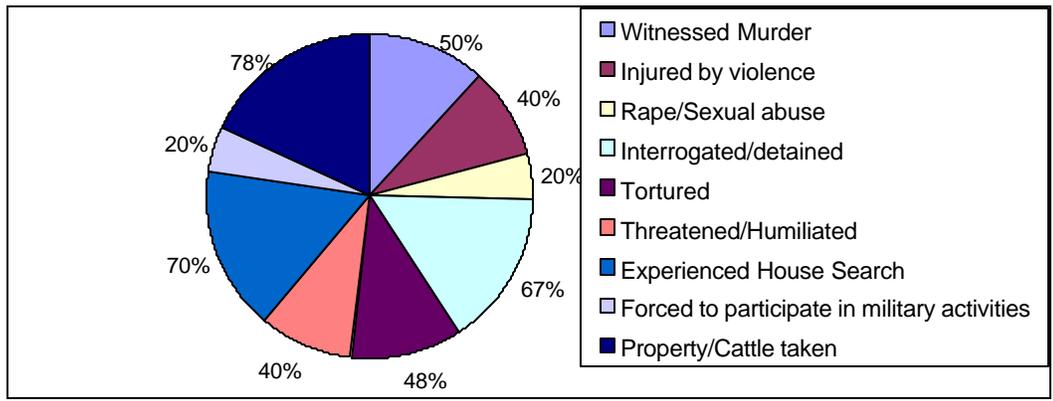
| Traumatic events                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | %  |    |    |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|  | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M  |    |    |    |
| Witnessed murder                           | X |   | X |   | X |   | X |   | X |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  | 50 |    |
| Injured by Violence                        |   |   | X |   | X |   |   |   |   |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    |    |    |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    |    |    | 40 |    |
| Raped/sexual Abuse                         |   |   | X |   | X |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    |    |    | 20 |    |    |
| Interrogated or detained                   |   | X | X |   | X |   |   |   | X |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  | 67 |    |
| Tortured                                   | X |   | X |   | X |   |   |   |   | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    |    |    | 48 |    |
| Threatened/humiliated                      |   |   | X |   |   | X |   |   |   |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  | 40 |    |
| Experienced a house Search                 |   | X | X |   | X |   | X |   |   | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  | 70 |
| Forced to participate In military activity |   |   |   |   | X |   | X |   |   |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    | X  |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    | 20 |    |
| Property or cattle taken                   | X |   | X |   | X |   | X |   |   | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  | 78 |

F: Female  
M: Male

Based upon interviews and discussions with the refugees, a number of traumatic events were described. For each event, the refugees were asked whether they had been victims directly of the events. Table 7.10 details the percentages that had been direct victims of a traumatic event.

Table 7.10 clearly demonstrates that the average refugee experienced at least four traumatic events, some of them experienced up to eight events. Of the refugees interviewed, all reported trauma – a total of 144 events in all. As shown in Pie chart 1, fifty percent (50%) of the respondent had witnessed murder, 40% were injured by violence and 48% were tortured.

**Pie chart 1 Summary of victims of traumatic events in percentages**



### 7.2.1.1 Experiences from rape victims

Some of the refugees narrated very painful unique situations. For example, Amina was a 55 year-old Muslim woman from Baidowa, Somalia, a businesswoman by occupation. On April 12, 1998, she was arrested in her hometown, together with her son (aged 9) and daughter (aged 12), by the militia and taken to a detention camp because of the claim that her family was communicating with other warlords in a different town. She was imprisoned with a group of five women and their children. Amina was interrogated many times on the whereabouts of her husband, who had fled to Kenya. She was beaten, humiliated and tortured by burning her thighs with hot iron, which left large scars. Together with other women, she was repeatedly raped several times every day. The rapes were performed by a group of young and old militias. She was also present when other women were raped. Once she witnessed the death of an 11 year-old girl after multiple rapes and torture. Amina and her children were released after 15 days, only after a relative paid (\$1500 United States dollars).

In the beginning, she felt fine but with time she developed several choking attacks, contractions, chest pains, palpitations, and increased blood pressure. During the interview, she said that her life had been very frustrating before she got some psychological help:

*“I could not relax, my mood oscillated between indifference, depression and excitation in a single day. I was very irritable, particularly by the tragic testimonies of the young refugee women who used to come to me for a mother figure”.*

Amina revealed that she made over ten suicide attempts since she became a refugee. Her greatest worry is the future of her children who were not performing well in school.

Talking about her traumatic experience Proscovia a 34 year old Burundian from Kalemi village narrated how Tutsi dominated forces occupied her village; they started with physical and psychological maltreatment of the local people. They took their crops and cattle, restricted their movements and finally took men to the Bunjumbira detention camp. Proscovia’s father was also taken there, as well as

all male members of the wider family, including adolescents. Some were killed. Proscovia is the oldest child in the family and has two younger sisters and two younger brothers. As she was the oldest, her mother sent her to pay some obligatory taxes in local commune offices. When she got there, two soldiers grabbed her and called a third soldier. All three of them raped her on the premises. They let her go then, but she did not dare tell her mother anything. After some time she realized that she was pregnant and concealed this with large clothes. She could not eat or sleep and lost 15 kg. She was depressed and had suicidal thoughts, she felt guilty and was too ashamed to tell anyone about her troubles. The whole family fled to Tanzania. The aunt helped her to get professional medical help and she gave birth to a child in Kigoma, one of the Tanzanian Refugee Camps. Talking about her attitude towards her child, she said,

*“When one of the camp psychiatrists found me there and talked to me I did not want to see the child, and my major concern was how to get back to my family because the family considered my pregnancy as a sin. However, psychiatrists talked to my parents and prepared them for my return....the problem with Botswana is that they do not have psychologists in the camp, it would help many people”*

#### **7.2.1.2. Experience of trauma leading to revenge attitude**

Another disturbing experience is that of a 17 year-old refugee student called Kwesele from Bunia in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He was arrested together with his brother during the attack on their village by Rwanda and Uganda forces and taken with other adult men to a detention camp. He spent five months there, during which they witnessed the torture of others and themselves, beaten and psychologically maltreated. They were released through the help of the International Red Cross, after which they went to Goma, where their mother and grandmother were settled. The father had been reported missing. The brother's aggressive behaviour became the problem of the whole township; he did not get only in verbal arguments but physically attacked people even for a trifle. He concluded the interview by saying,

*“During a meeting with some elders my brother described the horrors he had seen and experienced himself and threatened that he would do them himself. One day he disappeared, and I have received unconfirmed information that he was somewhere on the battlefield in Ituri forest and is famous for his fanatic bravery”.*

### **7.2.2 Experience of refugee workers**

During the focus group discussions, refugee workers identified emotional stress as one of the challenges of working with refugees. This could be associated with the enormous trauma refugees have in their lives and the overload on the few Psychosocial Counsellors as shown in (Table 7.9). Refugee workers indicated that some of them manifest burnout through feelings of hostility. These feelings affect their judgement to the extent that they begin to believe that all refugees are bad, and undeserving of life-sustaining goods.

One group reported that although they, refugee workers, get tired and develop feelings of hopelessness, the reality of the situation is that refugees are human beings faced with enormous obstacles to survival of themselves and their families, and they behave as most humans would when they find themselves in the same situation. One of the refugee workers said:

*“There is no reason to punish or distrust refugees; refugee workers must realise that they should always distribute necessary goods regardless of their personal feelings towards refugees. They should also recognise that these feelings may be caused by their personal emotional situation, and that they must address their own psychological needs.”*

The refugee workers explained that burnout affects their behaviour in five different areas.

- First, they often experience physical effects of burnout, including fatigue, insomnia, headaches, and gastrointestinal disorders.
- Secondly, they also display emotional symptoms, such as irritability, anxiety, depression, and guilt.
- Third, they manifest behaviour characteristics of burnout, including aggression, callousness, pessimism, defensiveness, cynicism, and in the

worst cases, substances abuse (i.e. abuse of caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and other drugs).

- Fourthly, they also exhibit symptoms of burnout at work, ranging from quitting their jobs to decrease effectiveness at work, absenteeism, tardiness, and even theft.
- Finally, they display interpersonal effects of burnout, including, inability to concentrate on what others are telling them and withdrawal from clients. They indicated that these external effects of burnout are damaging to both refugees worker and them.

One of the Project Coordinators stated that the rate at which refugee workers resign is high and the reason could be associated with burnout. He said,

*“Refugee workers come and go; sometimes they do not even complete their probation period. The cumulative impact of working with many refugees over time effects the refugee worker’s world-view or spirituality----  
---I define spirituality in a broad sense, not limited to organised religion but instead as a balance between good and evil in the world. If untreated, burnout can destroy the worker’s sense of balance. He or she will become helpless and hopeless, and come to believe that there is far more evil in the world than good”.*

One of the medical workers indicated as follow;

*“Because of the work overload, some of the refugee workers who have themselves suffered trauma, and who have perhaps personally recovered from their trauma, are finding that the psychosocial manifestations of the trauma resurface”.*

During the discussion, she advised that it was particularly important that people who have undergone personal trauma focus on preventing burnout. She also cautioned that refugee workers who fail to address their symptoms of burnout might experience PTSD on an ongoing basis.

One teacher was very emphatic about teaching refugees; she stated:

*“Refugees need special extra knowledge above and on the teaching training one has had---- one need to be careful with them, they need special attention most of the time and when they realise that you are not paying attention to their special needs, they think you are undermining them because they are refugees.”*

It seems that there are many misunderstandings between refugee workers and refugees that results in hostilities and mistrust. A volunteer explained how she feels that most of the refugee workers; especially those who are not social workers need urgent training. She added:

*“Over time, we are faced with repeatedly traumatic situations and we do not treat this psychosocial condition, our burnout may become vicarious trauma”.*

### **7.3 REFUGEE AWARENESS OF THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES**

Many of the refugees indicated that there are different NGOs working on refugee issues both at administrative level at the headquarters and at the frontline level in the camp. However, a number of the respondents indicated that the agencies have rarely been systematically monitored. They explain that NGOs face considerable problems of lack of coordination, both within themselves and with refugees.

#### **7.3.1 Emerging issues from the refugee focus group discussion**

During the interviews, the following key issues emerged on the degree of knowledge and understanding of the refugee support structures:

- Lack of standards and operational guidelines
- Lack of open communication between staff and refugees and low degree of refugee participation in decision-making processes
- Lack of skills to deal with cross-cultural issues among refugees
- Unmet needs and support.

### 7.3.1.1 Lack of standards and operational guidelines

Many refugees do not seem to understand the role of refugee agencies, their policies, programmes and services as well as the conventions and laws that govern them. They requested that refugee management should orientate refugees to enable them to understand the context of their rights and freedom. This lack of knowledge has even made some refugees to believe that they can continue their political missions from within the host country. Claude from Rwanda suggested as follows,

*“There is a need for oral orientation for newly arrived refugees and pamphlets that contain information about refugee programmes and services provided by the partner agencies”*

There does not seem to be a clear understanding of the functions of each partner-agency resulting in overlaps and sometimes duplication of efforts and services. Some refugees are known to get similar services from different partner-agencies due to lack of effective linkages between the agencies. Augusto, a secondary school student explains,

*“Double rations by certain refugees have created a notion of discrimination and favouritism in the camp, we are refugees because of discrimination”.*

Commenting on the issue of favouritism, Pito an asthmatic patient emphasised the concern that some practitioners are inconsistent when helping refugees resulting in perceptions that some refugees are favoured over others may be true. He added,

*“When some of my friends who get asthmatic attacks like me want to go for treatment at the main hospital in Gaborone, the nurses refer them to BCR to get transport money to travel to Gaborone, when I request for the same referral, I am told that my treatment can be got at the camp clinic, when I ask them to treat me, they tell me to go to UNHCR. When I went to UNHCR they told me that BCC would provide education, Red Cross would provide health support and BCR would provide social services. Why should I go back to UNHCR? The Management should ensure that there is transparency in service delivery”.*

### **7.3.1.2 Lack of open communication between staff and refugees and the low degree of refugee participation in decision-making processes**

According to the refugees, the refugee workers do not promote refugee participation. The refugees expressed a desire to contribute towards efforts to improve their well being through voluntary participation in self-help and other development projects.

The respondents observed that for refugee participation to be realised, there must be a commitment from both management and refugees to create structures for information exchange and consultation on matters that affect refugees. Such structures should take account of the existing natural community leaders within refugees from the same country, but that also other task-focused committees are established for development projects.

Antonio from Angola emphasised that the purpose of participation was not to encourage negative militancy or political agendas in the Camp but rather to create a forum for bridging the gap between management and the refugees. He added,

*“both refugees and management need to change negative attitudes towards each other that have accumulated over the years in order for a new vision of participation to be achieved. I emphasised the need for trust and transparency when working with each other. As refugees we need to play a more active role in identifying the needs of other refugees, and assisting management to create a favourable environment for refugees within the socio-economic constraints of the partner agencies”*

The idea of teamwork was emphasised. Respondents argue that elected and natural leaders need to resolve to work together both within themselves and the refugee workers in the identification and resolution of social issues within their community. An example was given by Ramani, a Sudanese refugee, of some refugees from Namibia who were reluctant to use health services due to perceptions and rumours circulating in the community that the medical doctor was an agent of the Namibian government. When asked about what should be done with such a case, he replied as follows:

*“Natural leaders within the Namibians need to identify this issue. Another issue which require teamwork involved love affairs across cultures and religions where it is now not a secret that relationships between Somali women and non-Somali men lead to violence against the Somali women involved...the truth is, the refugee workers need a lot of training to understand refugee thinking and feeling”.*

The respondents acknowledged that it is through organised efforts that they could improve their situation, influence change in the community, address their needs, and earn respect and recognition for their contributions.

There are respondents who stated that a formal refugee participation structure should be developed outlining organisational relationships between the refugee community and management. They emphasised the importance of recognising both natural leaders and elected leaders within the different nationalities in the Camp. Jessica, a refugee single mother from Burundi said:

*“I want to emphasise the importance of effective and accurate communication between management and us refugees to minimise mistrust and suspicion caused by lack of information or misinformation. We receive contradictory information from different officers in the Camp resulting in unnecessary tensions between management and us”.*

### **7.3.1.3 Need to Provide cross-cultural orientation to field staff**

All the respondents shared case scenarios indicating that practitioners generally were not able to respond appropriately to diverse cultural issues among refugees. For example;

Zena an 18-year-old refugee girl from Mogaditshu in Somalia lived in a refugee camp with her mother and brother. The father had been reported killed in Somalia. She finished secondary school and started working in a shop in Mogaditshu. War and exile broke off her previous way of life, work, prayers and friends. She tried to find a job in the refugee camp, but without success. The atmosphere in the refugee camp she experienced as “unbearable”, and the conflict with the mother begun. The girl spent more and more time out of the camp using the excuse of looking for a job, went to night-bars with other non-

Muslim refugee girls and started to drink alcohol and prostitute herself. In one of her crises, the mother went to report her to the Camp Social Workers but she was told that there was nothing they could do; she was an adult so she could only be counselled. The mother left the office and broke down crying:

*“We are Muslims, this is wrong, why should I lose everything, I have lost my husband, now I am losing my daughter as well, please take me and my children to live in an Arab country”.*

Expressing his views in a very angry way, Kamanda, a refugee from the DRC stated,

*“These refugee workers do not know us, we are different from them, they are even not ready to learn from us. Training on cross-cultural practice should be provided urgently to enable practitioners to be sensitive to our culture and feelings. This will make them promote cultural diversity of refugees. I beg refugee management to promote multi-culturalism, tolerance, peaceful existence of people from diverse backgrounds, and social harmony in this camp. Otherwise, we are going to kill each other here”.*

He was expressing the need for an understanding from refugee workers to refugees and also among refugee workers themselves.

#### **7.3.1.4 Expressed need and support for refugees**

Adequate nutritious food, safe surrounding, valued emotional attachments, lasting supportive interpersonal relationships and opportunities for education, creativity, and recreation are among the prerequisites for the health of members in any society. In many refugee situations, these needs are not adequately met.

**Table 7.11: Refugees satisfaction rate with the different services provided by UNHCR and its partners**

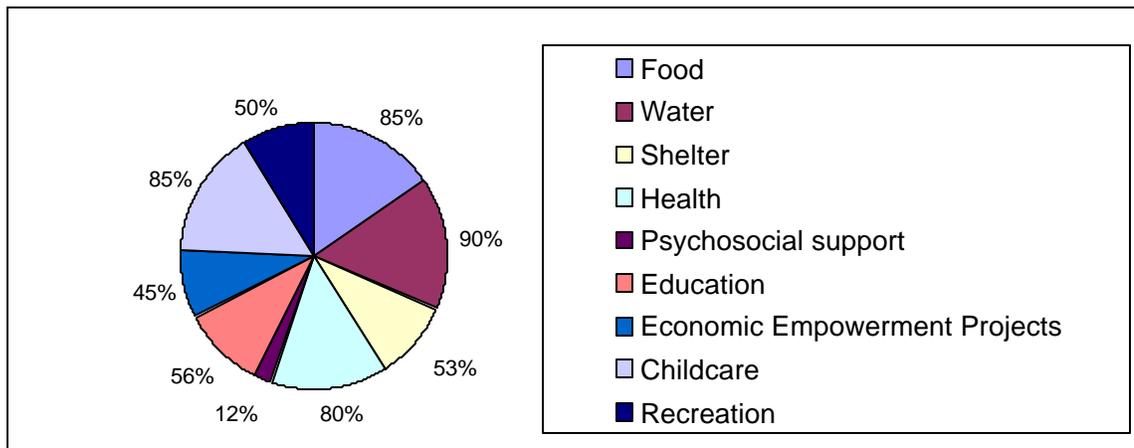
| Types services                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | % |    |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|
|                               | F | M | F | F | M | M | F | F | F | M  | M  | M  | M  | M  | M  | M  | F  | F  | M  | F  | F  | M  | M  | F  | F  | F  | F  | M  | M  |    |   |    |
| Food                          | N | Y | N | Y | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y | 85 |
| Water                         | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y | 90 |
| Shelter                       | N | N | N | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y | 53 |
| Health                        | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y | 80 |
| Psychosocial Support          | N | N | N | N | Y | N | N | Y | N | N  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | N  | N  | Y  | N | 12 |
| Education                     | Y | Y | N | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | N | 56 |
| Economic Empowerment Projects | N | Y | N | N | Y | N | Y | Y | N | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | Y | 45 |
| Childcare                     | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | N  | N | 85 |
| Recreation                    | Y | N | N | Y | N | Y | Y | N | Y | N  | N  | Y  | N  | N  | Y  | N  | N  | N  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | N  | Y  | N | 50 |

F-Female  
M-Male

Table 7.11 shows the breakdown of percentage degree of satisfaction with services provided by different UNHCR partners as expressed by the respondents.

Despite their situations, refugees like any other human beings need to be provided with both physical and psychosocial support. We found that refugees are more satisfied with the provision of food, water, medical support and childcare support. Table 7.11 and pie chart 2 show that 85% are satisfied with food provision, 90% with the availability of clean water and 85% are happy with degree of childcare provision. However, we found that refugees were totally disappointed that little psychosocial support was being offered. Only 12% indicated that they are satisfied with psychosocial provision.

**Pie chart 2: Summary degree of satisfaction with services provided by different UNHCR partners**



Indeed the majority of the respondents are satisfied with the provision of basic needs; however, there are indications that they do not get enough psychosocial support. Henry from Rwanda stated:

*“Food, water, shelter and health care have always been obvious needs if people are to survive. What we need are preventive measures to limit the psychological impact of war, violence, and camp life, on us. These are of equally important but have often been neglected. We did not run because of lack of food, we needed peace more than anything else. You cannot believe, in the passed three months, two people have committed suicide in the camp”.*

Most of the parents interviewed expressed the view that young children cope well with the stress of social disasters such as war, if parents can sustain a strong attachment to their children and project stability, permanence and competence. Therefore, children need adult support given by the parents, or someone else standing in as a parent. This includes, close loving care in a stable, healthy community. However, refugee mothers argue that to be supportive, parents have to be in psychological and physical condition to respond to the needs of the child. If the parents have unmet needs of their own, their ability to respond well to their children will be reduced. The child will not get the attention and affection it needs to grow and develop and deal with past experiences. Jamila, 38 years old from Angola, a widow, mother to four children explains,

*“Just as children need care and attention, so too do parents need support. Many different kinds of support are needed. Emotional support, for example, from family or friends with whom experiences, grief and sorrows can be shared. It may also be practical support, meaning that somebody helps in taking care of the children or helps in building a shelter. Every individual is part of a social system linking us all. Strong and supportive links between people give strength and security”*

Sophia, 34 years from the DRC, states that the experiences of war and violence, daily worries of camp life and absences of psychosocial support are overwhelming. She adds,

*“A mother may become ‘psychologically unavailable’ to the child. This does not mean that the depressed mother is uncaring and that*

*any blame should be attached to her. On the contrary, a depressed mother is in special need of support”.*

Most of the male parents stated that indeed the provision of psychosocial support in the refugee camp is very inadequate. The refugees’ feeling of hopelessness, which affects the way family members act towards one another, is natural. It is the refugee situation itself, which is unnatural. The vicious circle of hopelessness has to be replaced by hope in the refugee camp. John a father of two children suggests that

*“One of the best ways to support a refugee child and mother is to strengthen the mother’s social network. For example, by increasing her participation in community. Involvement of women in all aspects of children’s and mother’s activities is not just important.... it is essential...I think these workers need training”.*

### **7.3.2 Lack of standards: Refugee workers’ views**

During the focus group discussions, refugee workers indicated that the provision of services to refugees needed attention. Besides lack of standard and operational guidelines, lack of open communication between staff and refugees and lack of skills to deal with cross-cultural issues among refugees which have been stated by refugees earlier, they provide three areas that needed urgent attention, these are; the promotion of teamwork approach, time management and improvement on record keeping.

#### **7.3.2.1 Lack of a teamwork approach**

Refugee workers acknowledged that there was a lack of team spirit in participating agencies resulting in some practitioners being overwhelmed with work while others who could otherwise come to their aid, sit back because the work is not in their respective agencies. They urged the management to ensure that a team spirit is developed and sustained in the different partner agencies. This will also lessen the confusion amongst the refugees.

### **7.3.2.2 Time management**

Refugee workers identified that poor time management style is a militating factor to the service delivery process. One of the Project Coordinators stated:

*“We should encourage each other to manage our time efficiently to ensure that refugees receive assistance on time. Good time management would minimise agitation on the side of both refugees and we the workers---workers need to set specific time frames within which services would be provided”.*

Most of the Refugee workers agreed that some of their colleagues do not view time management as a crucial part of management in an emergency operation like that of providing services to refugees. They urged all the colleagues to provide services to refugees within the expected time frame.

### **7.3.2.3 Record keeping**

It was acknowledged by the participants that poor record keeping leads to some refugees getting more services than others. This, they said leads to perceptions among refugees that some refugee workers favour certain individuals. Refugee workers agreed that there is a need for an effective and efficient record keeping system to enable good service delivery and inter-agency collaboration.

### **7.3.2.4 Refugee workers’ attitude towards refugees.**

Because some refugee workers feel that refugees are poor and suffering, that they must rescue them from their suffering, there is a tendency to think in terms of providing for them, protecting them and even thinking for them. The problem with these attitudes, as we shall see later, is that refugee workers fail to get an understanding of the persona behind different refugees. Refugees are unique, though they find themselves in one situation. Refugees do not even respond to refugee situations in the same way, but most refugee workers think that there is something called “standard refugee behaviour”.

During the focus group discussions with refugee workers, one of the refugee workers indicated that one of the factors affecting good practice with refugees is the attitude that some of the refugee workers have about refugees. She stressed that the people usually called refugees seem to have the very opposite of the character from that which many of the refugee workers think. In conclusion she said:

*“Some refugee workers want to help refugee, others ignore them or think of them as a social nuisance. Others see them as follows:*

- *they are starving;*
- *they are thieves;*
- *For females, they have no choice but to be prostitutes;*
- *they are uncontrollably violent;*
- *they have lost all ability to feel emotions such as love*
- *they have no morals;*
- *they are drug addicts;*
- *they have AIDS”.*

From this study, one can associate such strong negative views as resulting from the difficulties experienced by refugee workers, especially those who have not had the relevant training to work with refugees. This could be one way of trying to come to terms with the fact that the “work challenges” they are confronted with are beyond their professional capacity.

## **7.4 STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE AS REFUGEES**

Dealing with the struggles that go with forced migration has not been easy for many of the respondents. Adam continued, “ we are people who are suffering, lost and gambling with life, it is not easy but I look forward to a better tomorrow although the past always stands before us.”

### **7.4.1 Refugee life surrounded by stress**

In the course of the research study, identification was made on the daily life events and living conditions of refugees. Many of the refugees reported that past experience of traumatic events creates considerable stress for them, as

memories of their experiences intrude frequently upon their thoughts. Their capacity to cope with their present situation is severely affected by their previous experiences. Mary, 36 years old Angolan refugee, expressed as follows:

*“I do not simply remember that an event occurred, but re-live it, with all the emotions of fear, horror and personal vulnerability that I experienced at the time”.*

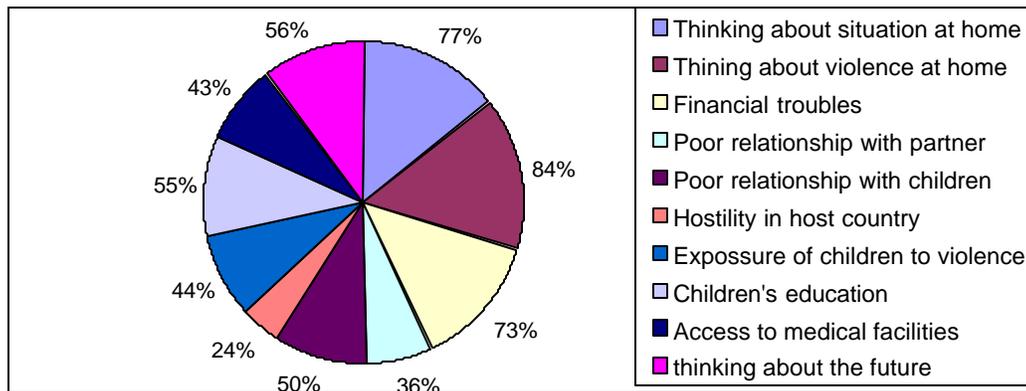
Ten daily life situations were described. As in the interview schedule, the refugees were asked to what extent do they associate each situation strain or stress.

**Table 7.12: Percentages for stress associated with daily life events**

| EVENTS                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | %  |    |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|                                      | F | M | F | F | M | F | M | F | F | F  | M  | M  | M  | M  | M  | M  | M  | F  | F  | M  | F  | F  | M  | F  | F  | F  | F  | F  | M  | M  |    |    |
| Thinking about the situation at home | X |   | X |   | X | X | X |   | X | X  |    | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    | X  | X  |    | X  | X  | X  | X  |    | X  | X  |    | X  | X  | 77 |    |
| Thinking about the violence at home  | X | X | X | X | X | X |   | X | X |    | X  | X  | X  | X  |    | X  | X  |    | X  | X  | X  |    | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  | 84 |    |
| Financial troubles                   | X | X |   | X |   |   | X | X | X | X  |    | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    | X  | X  |    | X  |    |    | X  | X  | X  |    | X  | 73 |    |
| Poor relationship with the partner   |   | X | X |   | X |   |   | X |   | X  |    |    | X  |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    | X  |    |    | X  |    |    | X  | 36 |
| Poor Relationship with children      | X | X |   | X |   |   | X |   | X | X  | X  |    | X  | X  | X  |    | X  |    |    |    | X  | X  |    | X  |    |    | X  |    |    | X  | 50 |    |
| Hostility in host country            | X |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |   |    | X  |    |    |    | X  |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    | X  | 24 |    |
| Exposure of children to violence     |   | X | X | X |   |   | X |   | X |    |    | X  | X  | X  |    |    | X  |    | X  | X  |    |    | X  |    | X  | X  |    |    |    |    | 44 |    |
| Children’s education                 |   | X |   | X |   | X |   |   | X | X  |    | X  |    | X  | X  | X  |    |    |    | X  | X  |    | X  |    |    | X  | X  | X  |    | X  | 55 |    |
| Access to medical facilities         | X | X | X |   | X |   | X |   |   |    | X  |    | X  |    |    | X  |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    | X  |    | X  | 43 |    |
| Thinking about the future            | X |   | X | X |   | X |   | X |   |    | X  |    |    | X  |    | X  |    | X  | X  |    | X  | X  | X  |    | X  |    | X  | X  |    | X  | 56 |    |

F-Female  
M-Male

Table 7.12 and Pie chart 3 details the percentage of refugees reporting stress associated with each situation. The questions were intended to reflect daily personal concerns of the refugees, taking into account the situation from which they had fled, and the stress that could arise as a result of the abrupt change in their circumstances.

**Pie Chart 3 Summary for Stress Associated with Daily Life Events**

The situation in their home country caused the refugees great concern, 77% indicated that they think about the situation at home. Given their own experiences, it is not surprising that the 84% of them think about and are affected on a daily basis by the on-going violence at their home country. Certain of the situations described, e.g. concerns about money, health, education, family relationships, also occupy them a great deal. These concerns are not surprising for people in an impoverished and uncertain environment. Over-laying them, however, and certainly compounding their effect are the worries about their families, and the events occurring in the host countries, which were reported by the majority of refugees.

## 7.5 A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Aside from the on-going process of everyday living, where did these refugees see themselves in the future? What goals did they have for themselves? What expectations did they have for their family and possibly country?

**Table 7.13: The different responses by refugees on what they would like to do in their post refugee life**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Back in my country, bringing up my children and developing my community | 25% |
| 2. Back at home helping with peace building                                | 35% |
| 3. After resettlement to America or Australia, going back to school        | 20% |
| 4. Going back home to join politics  | 15% |
| 5. Acquiring Botswana citizenship and developing my family                 | 5%  |

Table 7.13 provides the different responses by refugees on what they would like to do in their post refugee life. It was very clear from the responses provided that some refugees were more focused and had a vision of what they would desire in the future. Meanwhile, other refugees were not certain of what the future held for them.

According to our findings most of the refugees want to go home and very few would like to resettle outside Botswana. Table 7.13 shows that only 5% of the respondents would like to acquire Botswana citizenship and 25% would like go for resettlement elsewhere. Indeed the majority, 75% would like to go back to their country of origin.

### **7.5.1 Female respondents**

Most of the women respondents expressed their goals in terms of their children and/or daily living situations. Alima said, “Day-to-day living takes up my time. I don’t know if I have long-range goals. They get lost in the shuffle of daily living.” Monna added, “I have not given much thought to the future; but if UNHCR can help me get the children grown and educated first, I will muddle along till they are out, even if we get peace in Angola now I would like to see my children finish basic education”.

Most of the women seem to have the same idea of wanting the best for their children. Jamila stressed the point that refugee children whose fathers have been killed or are missing have only education as security for the future. She states:

*“Our main goal right now as refugee widows is to get our children to have the best education they can and learn how to apply it to their lives tomorrow when they go back to our countries----our children have seen violence, they will one time be peace makers and keepers in the whole Africa”.*

In this study we found that refugee women tend to care more about their children than their male counter part.

### 7.5.2 Male respondents

For these men, most of them were either not sure of their long-range goals or were just beginning to think about them. James spoke of his future:

*“For me, I don’t know. I’m living in this camp but I do not know what the future has for me. I have been given refugee status, I am not working and you can see I have bullet wounds, I cannot do any manual work, what am I going to do, I need to be resettled to another country where my knowledge as an engineer can be utilised”*

Mohamed revealed:

*“I think I have had enough. Back in my country, I had dreams of what I wanted life to be at a particular time. Here I am confused, some people, without my say, decide the type of food I eat. I had traditional goals to raise my children but now I cannot give them all that I would love them to get. I have no job, have no money, what type of a father can I be”?*

### 7.5.3 Mandate refugees

About 27% of the respondents were mandate refugees, see (Appendix 1). By Botswana laws, they cannot look for work in the country or even get education opportunities. This was a major source of frustration to many of the respondents. Throughout the interviews the relationship between mandate status and social economic existence continued coming up. Jane stated:

*“The problem of being a mandate refugee is that one cannot plan any future. We are at the mercy of the Government of Botswana. For my children, it is even more hopeless; their future is even bleaker than mine. They need love, they cannot get it in totality because, as a mother, I am busy worrying about tomorrow. I do not know when resettlement will come. I need a future”.*

### 7.5.4 Expectations from post refugee life

All the respondents responded positively to the question of post refugee life. They all indicated that they believe that at the end, their life will change for the better.

One respondent cited different personalities who were refugees but have made it to help themselves and the world to a greater extent. Jean from Burundi stressed:

*“Sir, I have read in many books that millions of people did successfully rebuild their lives, after terrible dislocations. Famous people became refugees. Others became famous after they fled. When I was studying psychology at school I discovered that Sigmund Freud was a refugee, I am told Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright were refugees. These people made it we are also going to make it”.*

Pedro from Angola was very clear about what he wants to do with his life when he goes back home. He says:

*“What we need is peace, our country Angola is rich and we are hard working people. I want to go and join in building Angola. We have suffered enough and it is better we build a better place for our children. I do not hate having been a refugee, I used to hate myself, I have cooled down, I got counselling and I can now forgive all the people who have hurt me”.*

Josephine expressed her goals for her future when she goes back to Rwanda:

*“In Africa refugee life has become a process of graduation to a political life. One comes to learn a lot about politics and all that goes with it. My current President was brought up a refugee in Uganda. One can count many without a number who were refugees and are now presidents or leaders in one way or the other. For me, I want to go home to develop my political career. This is why I studied political science and now I am studying Gender and Development. I will not go for resettlement or take Botswana citizenship my country needs me”.*

How any of these refugees and their children will fare remains to be seen. It is clear to me that so far they have persevered while adjusting to the new life, which may not be comfortable but safe and productive for some. The findings from the thirty interviews and the focus group discussions have been presented in this chapter in such a way as to illustrate the experiences of refugees and refugee workers while noting a variety of needs. The themes, as presented, were common to both refugees and refugee workers while revealing the unique concerns of each individual refugee. An interpretation of these themes will be discussed in the following chapter.

## 7.6 RELATIONSHIP OF FINDINGS TO THE LITERATURE

I found the findings consistent with the literature reviewed in chapter two, three, four and five as follows. There were 30 percent of the refugees interviewed who were on mandate status and they were very uncertain about their future as noted by UNHCR (1997: 184) and Soguk (1999: 102). These refugees had lived in the camp for over two years. They had not made application for resettlement and they had all put up an appeal for status with the Government of Botswana but their appeals were rejected because of different reasons. They could not look for work, benefit from tertiary education or be allowed to live outside the refugee camp. However, their children could attend schools within the camp.

The idea of not allowing refugees the freedom of movement and not given favourable treatment in regard to wage employment in Botswana is in line with the literature Kagisano (1977:24) where it is explained how Botswana has withheld certain Articles of the 1951 UN Convention that deals with the socio-economic rights of refugees. This limits the capacity of refugees to develop, social and economically. Most of the refugees spoke about the many losses that had surrounded their lives; lost homes, identity, property and even some spoke of loss of a future. As mentioned by UNHCR (2000: 22 – 23), Murugan (2001:12) and Callamard (1999:196-214), these refugees felt their lives were full of traumatic events and they were not in control of their future completely.

The refugees expressed on the long-term negative events of dislocation as reported in the literature by Barudy (1990:41), Fozzard and Tembo (1990: 130) and Punamaki (1987:32). They were uncertain about the welfare and future of their children. There were family tensions and different needs were not met. They also spoke of their lives as faced more with questions than answers.

The refugee support structures in Botswana are in line with information in the literature, UNHCR (1999: 14 – 15), Anand (1993:3), Ogata (1992: 13) The support systems for refugees in Botswana consists of the Government of Botswana, United Nations Organisations and Non-Government Organisations.

On major causes of involuntary movements and population pressure, the refugees spoke of ethnic persecution as noted in the literature by Kibreab (1983:50), Kane (1995:6) and Joshi (1996:57). Some of the refugees associated their flight to leadership crisis and general political instability in their countries as mentioned in the literature by Fieldhouse (1986:90), Washington Post (1999:A20), Tangri (1985: 46) and Achebe (1985: 3). Some refugees associated the cause of their dislocation with violation of Human Rights as noted by the Africa Report (1996: 10).

The argument in the findings channelled by different refugees and refugee workers on the need to increase psychosocial support to refugees in the camp is in line with the literature. Nguye (1987: 42 – 51) and Behnia (1997: 45) argued on the need to treat psychosocial support to refugees as a priority as it is done with other basic necessities.

The findings in this study support that which was noted by the literature, Keen (1992: 21) on the importance of community participation as a means of allowing refugees to take charge of their destiny. In the same breath, the findings on refugees' desire for participation in the daily management of their lives agrees with the literature where Marc (1992:255) suggests that cultural needs can only be provided by involving refugees in the management of their lives.

I felt that there were two critical areas of difference between findings and the literature. First, in UNHCR (1991: 12), assisting refugees in finding a solution to their problems, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement in a third country was outlined as one of the specific protection activities UNHCR undertakes. Most of the refugees in this study disagree with that notion. They felt that they had better relationship with Government Officials than UNHCR Officials and that they are better listened to by Government Officials than officials from UNHCR.

The second difference revolved around how well the NGOs were performing their task as stated by UNHCR (1999:57). The findings are that some of the refugees disagree with the NGOs involved with them, who plan refugee assistance activities without sensitivity to their needs. These refugees felt the NGOs think they know refugees' needs better than refugees themselves, hence refugees need to sit and wait to be provided with what is thought is best for them.

## **CHAPTER 8:**

### **INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

Given the methodological underpinnings of this study, I will devote most of this chapter to describing what I interpret to be the support system for refugees in Botswana. Because this study was based on interviews with refugees and focus group discussion with refugee workers, my interpretations are based on what the refugees expressed about their lives and what they perceived about the support they were given at the time of the interviews and what the refugee workers perceived about the support they were providing at the time of the focus discussion. As refugees and refugee workers felt their lives were generally surrounded by traumatic events, loss and trials, the support systems discussed are associated with their experiences.

I will discuss the relationship of my findings to the literature and will outline some of my observations of these refugees and refugee workers as well as implications for the refugee regime at large. I will also share some of the personal meaning I derived from this study. Finally, I will present my recommendations for future actions and research

#### **8.1 EXISTING SUPPORT NETWORK FOR REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA**

While the purpose of UNHCR Botswana's (Programme Review, 2000) was to improve quality of service provision to refugees and to ensure that their maintenance is in a secure and supportive environment, I found that there was indeed a well thought out structure for providing the different services to refugees. However, both refugees and refugee workers indicated that although there are different NGOs involved in the refugee activities in and outside the camp, they feel that there seem to be a poor service delivery system because of a general lack of administrative and programming arrangements essential to effective implementation activities required to protect and promote well being of refugees.

Refugee workers seem to agree with refugees that there are some management and administrative problems. Development of a performance monitoring system for all staff seems to be the best way forward. My understanding of refugee services is that the refugee workers need periodic evaluation of service delivery system. Refugee management need to develop a mechanism for periodic evaluation of programmes and services for refugees with a view to enhancing quality of services delivery. This might involve weekly briefing sessions of refugee workers. In this type of briefing meetings, refugee workers could hold case conferences, which could also help them in sharing stress.

## **8.2 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES.**

In his book, (Keen, 1992) provided the different needs of refugees and stated that many times the emotional needs of refugees are undervalued. It is true that many times, when television news reports of refugee emergency relief operations, they are mostly accompanied by pictures of starving people, sacks of grains, lorries loaded with grains, bowls held up for grain rations. These images have strengthened the belief in many donor countries that refugees starve and all they need is food. My interpretation in this study is that it is not as simple as it is perceived. It is true that there is a strong relationship between malnutrition and death but for refugees, their needs are more complicated than they are usually assumed. I found that refugees in Botswana need basic necessities including food, clean water, varied diet, adequate sanitation, health services and shelter. However, because of situations that make them refugees, and considering the traumatic and stressful events indicated by refugees in this study as shown in (Tables 7.10 and 7.12), they have overwhelming emotional needs.

Many of the refugees require psychosocial support to combat mental anguish arising from the dislocation and the violence that has frequently accompanied it. This study has found that such needs exist within the refugee population in Botswana yet they have been all too frequently neglected by the support agencies. The results for refugees themselves have been very grave, to the extent that since 1999, there have been at least two suicide cases reported each year with at least ten attempted suicide cases recorded each year. The

information on suicide cases in the Refugee Camp is treated as classified information. The refugee workers who release “bits and pieces” of information, do it on anonymity. The real suicide statistics is not known but according to the refugee workers it is believed to be high.

Although refugees find themselves bundled as one group, I found that the experiences of refugees in Botswana varied. Refugee life was not stagnant and not the same for these thirty refugees. Instead, there seemed to be an integration of many factors, many experiences, and many feelings. This process of integration was on going and caused emotional conflict for the refugees. Their attempts to resolve their conflicts and to bring together their experiences into a balance created a continuous state of struggle for them. It is this, which I interpreted to be the major need for psychosocial support for these thirty refugees. Refugees have had different types of losses, are traumatised, powerless and they need enabling environment to allow for the rediscover of their potentials.

### **8.3 DISLOCATION AND THE PROCESS OF EMOTIONAL REINTEGRATION**

The change from a national of a particular country to a refugee was reported by the respondents to be significant no matter the cause: It resulted in loss of sense of belonging, good shelter, social network, loss of status, loss of power to resolve one’s problems and other losses. These thirty refugees evidenced the struggle that resulted from these losses in their efforts to overcome their initial tumultuous pre-flight stage. It was increasingly clear to me that refugees in this study had experienced feelings of anger, despair, shock and relief. For some, this meant a quasi-perfect stage, which included a frenzy of activities, a leaving behind of “old” interests and friends, and an exploration of new interests and people. For others, it meant the beginning of acceptances of refugee life and along with that, the gradual learning to cope with the facts of involuntary separation.

Dislocation itself was no longer a burning issue; rather, new sets of problems occurred, priorities changed. Although the level of tension had diminished, by no means were these refugees free from exerting much effort to work through daily life dilemmas and to do what was best to make each day as it comes to a better one. For refugee parents in Botswana, the attempt to achieve a balance for the family as a whole brought on an obvious conflict for them as there were no usual extended family members who were vitally interested in the well-being of the family to rely on for support. As an ever-present theme, then, struggle incorporated a variety of compromises to be made by refugees to keep their daily functioning with what they considered to be a reasonable quality of life.

The group which seemed completely lost were the eight mandate refugees; they did not know how long they would be in Botswana and what the future had for them. These are people whose life I saw was full of questions. "How long are we going to stay here?" "What will happen to us?" "What about the education of our children?" "Was it the right thing for me to leave home?". They however, remained hopeful that one day they would either go back to their country when it became safe to do so or they would be resettled in another country

#### **8.4 CONDITIONS FOR REFUGEE PARTICIPATION**

Finding out what in fact refugees see as essential needs and how to address those needs can be enormously aided by giving refugees themselves a say in the type and extent of assistance. However, active participation does not just happen; participation means having dialogue, creating conducive atmosphere of trust in which refugees can speak freely. Dialogue is based on people sharing their views of a problem, listening to each other and offering opinions and ideas, and having the opportunity to make decisions or recommendations. I found that refugees in Botswana were even concerned about the level of communication between them and the refugee workers.

While refugees did appreciate the support provided by refugee workers, they felt that they were not recognised and respected. It seemed clear that refugees felt

that refugee workers were not urging, motivating and assisting in developing the refugees' own system of leadership. Refugees felt they are not being given real responsibility to reorganise their lives. They need to be allowed to organise themselves with the view to supporting each other as they struggle with dislocation.

#### **8.4.1. Today's refugees, tomorrow's leaders**

An interesting aspect of some of the refugees' desire concerning how they would like to live and what they would like to be in the post-refugee life was an emphasis on becoming peace builders and leaders in their home countries. My interpretation is that citations of current African Presidents who were once refugees is indicative of the fact that these refugees believe that they have the potential to be leaders in different capacities or even national leaders in their countries. Another interpretation in my view is that refugees believe they represent potential human resource that should not be ignored by aid agencies. They believe they can contribute to their own well being in addition to that of their host communities while in exile.

### **8.5 PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF REFUGEE WORKERS IN BOTSWANA**

A desire to assist refugees is a good base for a field refugee worker. The refugees seemed to doubt the ability of most of the field refugee workers. They doubted their professional and personal qualities, attitudes and characteristics as well as social skills. They also doubted the knowledge of the refugee workers and their desire to know about the different cultures and traditions within the refugee community. These seem to be in line with what the refugee workers indicated earlier in (7.2.2 and 7.3.2).

Refugees exhibited a desire to see refugee workers acquire basic knowledge about the different cultures within the refugee community that would make them see beyond their refugee situation and to understand how as a people they lived previously. What were their habits then and what are they now? How was their community organised back home and how do they organise in the camp? What

social support system did they have and what is it like now? How do they solve problems? How are women and children protected? What does religion mean to them? Do refugee workers represent something refugees will accept? Will the refugee workers impose new ideas that provoke existing cultural structures?

Although the refugees did not expect all the refugee workers in Botswana to have the same level of competency, they felt deep dissatisfaction with the social background, experience and education level of some of the refugee workers. My interpretation is that the refugees felt that some of the refugee workers did not have much knowledge about human beings and especially children's needs; lacked knowledge about possible reactions and effects of war, violence and flight both in adults and children; had no knowledge to identify social problems, needs and resources and were not knowledgeable about how to mobilise community resources and how to promote community participation.

### **8.5.1 Social worker and refugee support**

The interpretation, which comprises Chapters 6 to 8, has shown the enormous needs of refugees. It has also outlined the available support structures and the policies available. From the analysis of the last three chapters, especially considering the traumatic experiences of refugees as shown in (Table 7.10 and 7.12) it is abundantly clear that psychosocial support for refugees is as critical to their well-being as the material support, and that one cannot be successfully provided without the other.

It stands then that refugee support implies provision of both psychosocial and physiological needs, this demands response to social conditions such as: education, health, psychotherapy, housing, food and even employment. Since there are direct and powerful connections between the various needs of refugees, their living conditions and general welfare are likely to improve only when there are well trained social workers and other community workers on the ground.

Considering the traumatic experiences shown in chapter seven, social work with refugees must involve the provision of a range of services to a group of people who, because of internal and or external threats, have been forced to flee their

homes to seek safety in another country. Such work should entail the consideration and identification of some key areas of practitioner competence including the following:

- An understanding of how the experience of being a refugee manifests itself, including an appreciation of the political, social, and cultural contexts that created the geographical dislocation.
- The acquisition of enhanced skills of working with people who may be both physical and emotionally vulnerable
- The adoption of models of social work intervention sensitive to the cultural needs of refugees, including the subtle nuances of inter-and intra-cultural relations
- The use of an integrated approach to service provision that can offer swift, practical solutions to daily living problems, give appropriate help for psychological distress and promote the educational development of refugee children.

## **8.6 PARENTING IN REFUGEE LIFE**

Refugee parents in Botswana exhibited a deep desire to do the best for their children while demonstrating and articulating their strong commitment to them. Their desire to be good parents, to spend quality and pleasurable time with their children, and to be sensitive to their children's emotional and physical needs became major concerns of parenting in the refugee situation. Although frustrated and overwhelmed in their parenting roles at times, and as stressed as they were in their attempts to balance their children's and their own needs, it was my understanding that these refugee parents felt that support for their children was crucial for a better future.

The refugee parents felt a deep pride in their parenting, wanting to take advantage of the existing support and facilities at the camp. They encouraged their children to be independent based on those same perceptions. They

imparted to their children a knowledge and appreciation of struggle in one's life. They supported their children through their own times of struggle.

While struggling with dislocation and their relationships with their children, the refugee parents were simultaneously dealing with another component of their conflict, their financial situation, which could best be described as bleak.

## **8.7 ECONOMIC DILEMMA**

Most of the refugees in this study struggled with the financial conditions imposed on them by dislocation. Anger was prevalent because they were often "broke and poor but not beggars" because they perceived themselves as people who are supposed to be in the work force, making money and not depending on someone else to lift their standard of living. There was unmistakable pride in their overcoming hardships, yet that was shadowed by the seemingly, never-ending need for money. Any financial balance, they felt, could not be easy because there was no one else to look to for support. The humanitarian organisations could only provide the material support not the needed money for the many needs in life.

Although standards of living inevitably declined in Botswana as a result of dislocation for most of the refugees, they were determined to look for the money, in some instances doing manual labour to pay for their families' necessities and more, if possible. In the process of surviving in the face of financial obstacles, most of the refugees came to appreciate the struggle process as it enabled them to recognise what determination and power they did have in creating a coping environment.

## **8.8 OBSERVATION OF REFUGEES AND REFUGEE WORKERS WITHIN THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES**

The presentation of the observations is given on the impression got on refugees' and refugee workers' general coping strategies, their well-being and my personal interpretation of the study.

### **8.8.1 Impression on refugees coping style**

My impressions of the thirty refugees I dealt with include the overall patterns previously discussed in this chapter as well as their unique natures. Overall, I was impressed with the refugees' perseverance as I noted that they were willing to make changes, take risks, set up their lives though not to their own satisfaction, and eager to do their best. This perseverance could only have contributed to the well-being that was so evident to me in most of these refugees.

They recognised that their strengths and struggle had not eliminated the painful turbulence caused by their dislocation but had enabled them to make a healthy readjustment to their new lives. Specifically for refugee parents, I feel that in their efforts to take control of their lives, they allowed their children to view their weaknesses as well as their strengths, with appreciation for the little they could provide in the new environment.

Another aspect of what seemed healthy was the extent of communication within refugees, as reported by the respondents. It was open and honest; dialogue seemed valued. It was a major component of the larger sphere of refugee community relationships, which seemed close and appreciating of differences and experiences to a certain extent.

### **8.8.2 Personal Qualities of a refugee worker**

A great deal of knowledge about one's own personal qualities will help and enhance the ability to relate to other people, to refugee as well as colleagues. Experiences related by refugee workers earlier in (7.2.2) demand that a refugee worker should have some social work training. Above the training, it is good to be a warm-hearted person with the ability to ignore one's own needs but there is a parallel risk of becoming overprotective, sentimental and vulnerable to burn out.

It is good to be self-confident, determined and self-demanding but there is a parallel risk of becoming dominating and egoistic, which may cause conflict with

refugees. It is also good to be enthusiastic, idealistic and creative but parallel risk of becoming unrealistic in the type of decision one makes may make the efforts counter-productive.

It is good to be analytic, logical and reflective but avoid becoming bureaucratic, slow and too formal. Lastly, the refugee worker needs to be sensitive to other persons, to listen carefully, to have the ability to deeply understand other's feelings (empathy) and respect them. These are important characteristics. To some extent these entire characteristics can be learned and developed but only if the refugee worker has a sincere interest in other people, really value people, respect people and believes in their strength and capacity to solve their own problems.

### **8.8.3 Personal tips to refugee workers in communities**

To be a refugee worker is very much a balancing act. This study has shown that refugee workers in Botswana face different challenges, some are within their control, some are beyond their control, whatsoever the case, they are expected to provide services to refugees. Refugee workers, especially those working directly with refugees in the Dukwi Camp might consider the following guidelines for their professional survival:

- Be active and efficient but do not take command and become a leader.
- Identify resourceful persons within the camp but do not create a privileged elite.
- Identify the most vulnerable ones but do not make them special individuals.
- Become involved but do not take over and make the whole refugee problem your own.

- Try to understand the needs of the whole community but be realistic and plan for what can be achieved.
- Be aware of your own professional and personal limitations.
- Find good counterparts with whom you can discuss professional as well as personal problems.
- Make sure to find some time every day when you can relax and do things you enjoy.

## **8.9 SUMMARY**

The results from this study reveal the overwhelming impact on the emotional well being of refugees in Botswana who are mainly from situations of armed conflict. There is undoubtedly a need for interventions to address the psychosocial issues identified by the study. To focus only on the 'mental health' aspects of their situation, however, does not truly address the extent to which both past events and current conditions in the Dukwi refugee camp have affected all aspects of the refugees' lives

An approach, which recognises psychosocial needs as a community issue, as well as an individual one, offers the possibility of addressing the concerns within existing community structures. Primary Health Care, Educational Services and Social groups like Women Groups, Youth Group, for example, provide a vehicle whereby the impact of the events they have experienced can be explained to the refugees, and they can be supported and encouraged to develop strategies and to participate in activities that will be of benefit both physically and psychosocially.

Whilst the researcher is aware that exposure to trauma can lead to serious mental health implications, particularly if there is a delay in responding to the needs of affected individuals, the starting point is not to see the people as 'ill'. Rather, it should be conceptualised as the effects of the refugees' experiences as within the range of normal human reactions to extreme stress. Any individual or community would be affected by exposure to the sorts of events that refugees in Botswana have experienced. Their emotional well-being are not affected by the traumatic events they have experienced alone but the changed circumstances of their lives also compounds this effect, creating a cumulative impact upon their ability to cope.

The researcher considers it important, therefore that refugee supporting agencies in Botswana should address mental health needs within the broader framework of psychosocial needs, and to set them in the context not only of the refugees' past experiences, but also the present conditions under which they are living and trying to cope.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter concludes the discussion on the major findings of the literature study and the qualitative research discussed in the previous chapters, and highlights the major issues that emerged from the study. Recommendations on the following aspects will be made:

- Administration of support for refugees in Botswana
- Refugee participation in decision making process
- Psychosocial needs and support of refugees and refugee workers in Botswana
- Social work and refugees
- Further research

#### 9.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine the degree of support provided to refugees in Southern Africa, with specific reference to Botswana. The focus was specific on the existing support systems for refugees in Botswana and to determine what support should be provided or which specific areas need attention.

The specific objectives of the present study were to:

- Present how protection and support for refugees developed and an historical overview of causes for refugees in Africa and
- assess the needs of refugees and their families
- identify the existing support systems for refugees in Southern Africa with specific reference to Botswana

- assess the provision of services to refugees by holding focus group discussions with refugee workers.
- present an overview of refugee support in Botswana thereby arousing further interest in the study of some of the specific aspects.

The conclusions of the study will now be discussed in terms of each of the objectives listed above.

## **9.2 CONCLUSIONS**

### **9.2.1 Presentation on how protection and support for refugees developed and an historical overview of causes for refugees in Africa.**

The study reviewed the historical development of refugee support beginning with the plight of refugees of the (1914-1918) First World War when millions of people were thrown into chaos of political collapse, revolutionary violence and economic collapse. It was found that the joint conference called in February 1921 by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS) on the European refugee crisis was the foundation of defining the current international status of refugees. It was out of this conference that the joint conference requested the League of Nations to appoint an administrator of the refugee project who was to be called the High Commissioner and whose duties were to give formal protection to all legitimate refugees, to coordinate international action on their behalf and to cooperate with voluntary agencies and Governments. This was found to be the infancy stage of the formation of the now office of the UNHCR, a position that has remained to date.

On the causes of African refugee problems, the study reviewed works by a number of writers on African affairs. They give various explanations as to why Africa has big numbers of refugees compared to other continents of the world. Their arguments are focused on their area of interest: history, economics, politics,

education and general administrative development. Most of them agree on the complexity of Africa's problems but differ in their analysis of the problems. Some are optimistic and others are pessimistic about the future. However, these different writers almost unanimously agreed that leadership crisis, political instability and violation of human rights are the major causes of African refugee problems.

### **9.2.2 Assessment of the needs of refugees and their families**

It was found that refugees in Botswana have different types of needs, including;

- the need to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence; injury or abuse; neglect or negligent; maltreatment or exploitations; (including sexual abuse);
- need for basic materials like water, sanitation, shelter and clothing;
- need for health and nutritional support;
- need to experience psychosocial well-being;
- need for education;
- need for cultural and recreational activities; and need for freedom of movement.

### **9.2.3 Identification of the existing support systems for refugees in southern Africa with specific reference to Botswana**

This study has identified that the refugee support systems in Botswana comprise of, the Government of Botswana, UNHCR, Botswana Council for refugees, Botswana Christian Council, Botswana Red Cross Society, Bana Consultancy and Habitat for Humanity International. The UNHCR and the Government of

Botswana were identified as the major donors of refugee activities, providing all the other mentioned organisations with financial support to carry out their refugee roles.

The study found that the government of Botswana has the responsibility to ensure that refugees are safe and are provided with the essential necessities of life. The government of Botswana was also found to be responsible for the provision of the necessary legal documents like residence permit and in conjunction with the UNHCR, determining the status of refugees.

The study found that the Botswana Council for Refugees is responsible for the provision of basic necessities to refugees, Botswana Christian Council is responsible for the provision of education scholarships and educational counselling to refugees, the Botswana Red Cross Society is responsible for the health needs of refugees, Bana Consultancy was found to be providing psychosocial support to mainly urban refugees and Habitat for Humanity International was found to be responsible for providing refugees with shelter.

The UNHCR was found to be more of a quality controller than an implementer.

#### **9.2.4 Assessment of the provision of services to refugees by holding focus group discussions with refugee workers.**

This study assessed the services provided by different refugee agencies and also identified some of the obstacles to quality provision of services to refugees by the refugee workers. The study found that refugee workers experience a lot of burnout as a result of dealing with the different needs of refugees. The study further identified that refugee workers are affected by the burnout in many ways, including; it's effects on their response to daily events, they lose their sense of balance between good practice and unprofessional behaviour. This can be associated with the work overload. Secondly, the refugee workers have difficulties with their capacity or ability to manage their emotions. Thirdly, the burnout was found to be affecting refugee workers' ego resources, which are their interpersonal skills or ability to interact with others. This study also found out that the refugee workers' psychosocial needs and cognitive scheme is also

interrupted because of burnout. This includes effects on basic human emotions such as safety, esteem, trust and intimacy. Finally the study found that burnout affects the refugee workers' behaviour towards their clients (refugees) by failing to apply empathy as a principle for helping, to their situation.

On operational level, the study found that refugee workers do not have standards and operational guidelines, which are very important for the provision of variety of services to refugees. Low degree of teamwork and harmonious communication among practitioners were also found to be lacking. The study also found that there was non-involvement of refugees in decision-making process and lack of open communication between refugee workers and refugees. Lastly the study found that refugee workers lacked relevant skills to deal with cross-cultural issues among refugees and also that there were shortage of skilled social work trained staff on the ground in the Dukwi refugee camp. As noted earlier that there are only five Welfare Officers to cater for over three thousand refugees, of whom only two are qualified social workers. This situation is a recipe for burn out, considering that each Welfare Officer deals with approximately a caseload of 700.

### **9.2.5 Overview presentation of refugee support in Botswana**

This study analysed the support systems for the refugees in Botswana. The results show that the structures and resources for helping refugees are available but refugees are not receiving adequate support both materially and psychosocially. The refugees are not given relevant information they need to know about assistance and services available.

Refugee participation in decision-making process was found to be lacking but the desire to do so was widespread among the refugee population. The causes of these desires were several and differed from person to person. Many refugees felt that as individual human beings they have dignity and value and hence the right to influence their own situation. Some refugees felt that the camp environment is not enabling them to regain the temporarily lost control over their lives.

The study also found that the refugee structures in Botswana are providing more material support to refugees than they respond to the psychosocial needs irrespective of the available resources at their disposal. Indeed, if the primary concern of UNHCR and its partners is to heal and develop refugees, a holistic approach to refugee must be adopted. They ought to address the needs of the refugee, both material and non-material, as they find them. Refugee support must be viewed as a holistic process with individual and social dimensions that unfolds over an entire lifetime. Thus, the promotion of “People-Oriented Planning” may be helpful for refugee support.

Lastly, the study found that Botswana withheld certain articles of the 1951 UN refugee Convention, which deals with the socio-economic rights of refugees. The following Articles of the 1951 UN Convention are not applicable in Botswana: Article 17, which confers upon refugees the most favourable treatment in regard to wage employment, Article 26, which provides total freedom of movement of refugees within the country, Article 31, which prohibits the imposition of penalties for refugees unlawfully entering the country, Article 32, which prohibits the expulsion of refugees on the grounds of national security and public order and Article 34, which obligates the country to facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. Because the government of Botswana withheld these articles, refugees’ capacity to demand their socio-economic rights in Botswana is very limited.

### **9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below are the recommendations for the support of refugees in Botswana.

#### **9.3.1 Administration of support for refugees in Botswana**

Forced migration disrupts or alters normal patterns of family and community functioning. Refugees have needs and expectations based upon traditional values and beliefs and desires. It should be recognised that there is an intrinsic

link between protection and assistance activities, no absolute distinction can be made between the two. In essence, all UNHCR, Botswana Government and other implementing agencies' actions have a protection component, whether it consists of determining the status of refugees, helping them pursue durable solutions or meeting their immediate needs. The provision of assistance and the manner in which it is provided are protection concerns that often affect the personal security of refugees, particularly those who are especially vulnerable.

It is therefore very important that priority is given to the establishment of a coherent set of standards, policies and operational guidelines specific to the Botswana situation to guide action. Food assistance, health services, education, protection and security measures and assistance are all likely to require local policies, procedures and guidelines adaptable to Botswana circumstances. They should be consistent with the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. This calls for the following recommendation:

#### **9.3.1.1 Policy reform**

The protection and care of refugees require attention to a variety of welfare concerns for which there must be clear policies and operational guidelines. Some of the needed policies and guidelines will be operation-specific. It is recommended that UNHCR, Botswana Government and other implementing agencies should ensure that appropriate national standards and policies are formulated and approved. The development of such standards, policies and guidelines is essential for refugee well being and for good management.

The withholding of articles as mentioned in paragraph (9.2.4) that deals with socio-economic rights of refugees by the Botswana government, defeats the purpose of Botswana accepting refugees in the country. It is recommended that the Botswana government should consider acceding to all the Articles in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, especially those on socio-economic rights.

Many refugees do not seem to understand the role of refugee agencies, their policies, programmes and services as well as the conventions and laws that govern them. It is recommended that the refugee management should orientate refugees to enable them to understand the context of their rights, freedom over obligations. There should be oral orientation for newly arrived refugees and pamphlets that contain information about refugee programmes and services provided by the partner agencies in Botswana.

### **9.3.1.2 Training specialised and sufficient personnel**

A number of case scenarios were stated which indicated that Refugee Workers generally were not able to respond appropriately to diverse cultural issues among refugees. It is important that staff levels and training must be sufficient to achieve refugee regime's goals and objectives concerning the protection and care of refugee and to ensure adherence to the guidelines regarding refugees as define in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the 1967 Refugee Protocol. UNHCR, Botswana Government and other implementing agencies should assign personnel with skills in refugee welfare in the Dukwi Refugee Camp.

Whereas personnel selected to work with refugees may have welfare background, people selected to work on refugee concerns should be aware of issues specific to refugees, people selected to work with refugee should speak their languages. In many circumstances, Refugee management can secure needed expertise through relevant government ministries, other UN agencies, NGOs or consultants.

Considering the above, it is recommended that training on cross-cultural practice should be provided urgently to enable Refugee Workers in Botswana to be sensitive to and promote cultural diversity of refugees. It is further recommended that considering the nature and experiences of refugees, it would be advisable for refugee management to consider providing psychological evaluation for refugee workers to enable them to deal with certain behaviours of refugees including

anger, mistrust, suspicion, mood swings and their own personal unresolved issues.

It is recommended that special training modules should be developed for camp refugee workers to enable them to address a wide range of psychosocial issues affecting refugees. The training should target specific population categories (e.g. Children, women, etc.) within the refugee community. The modules, which should be spread out over time, will provide practical counselling skills in diverse situations based on case studies from the practitioners' experiences. Counselling is a complex technical process that needs in-depth training and adequate time and it must be viewed in that aspect.

### **9.3.1.3 Assessment and monitoring**

This study has shown that both refugees and refugee workers are not very happy with the services provided. It is important to assertively investigate the situation of refugees and coping capacity of refugee workers. Abuses of refugees' rights, including the failure to provide for their welfare, may go undetected. Where problems are not obvious, there is often a tendency to assume that no problem exists. Because refugees are less able than citizens to demand their rights, especially considering that Botswana withheld articles as mentioned in paragraph (9.2.4) that deals with socio-economic rights, it is essential that UNHCR, Botswana Government officials, other UN agencies and NGOs know the needs and rights of refugees and make active efforts to investigate, assess and monitor the situation of refugee population. It is recommended they should initiate periodic assessments to gain a composite picture of the state of refugee for programme planning and protection development. A multi-disciplinary assessment at the beginning of a refugee situation can provide invaluable guidance in planning and programming, and is important for the establishment of baseline data. The use of qualified and experienced refugee welfare personnel in the assessment process is important; involvement of community leaders is also very essential.

It is further recommended that there should be an ongoing, community-based monitoring mechanisms established and maintained. The staff involved should monitor, individually evaluate and respond to day-to-day refugee welfare issues. Refugees experience needs at the individual and family levels; such needs should, so far as possible, be assessed individually. For example, family circumstance and support, as well as, personality, health and culture are important factors in the identification of both needs and appropriate solutions.

#### **9.3.1.4 Establishing a clear system of service delivery**

This study has found that there does not seem to be a clear understanding of the functions of each partner agency resulting in overlaps and sometimes duplication of efforts and services. Some refugees are known to get similar services from different partner-agencies due to lack of affective linkages between the agencies. UNHCR, Botswana Government officials, other implementing agencies should develop an organisation structure, which ensures close supervision and proper implementation of services, as well as follow-up activities. Implementing agencies should urgently meet to agree on their boundaries, to specify their programmes and services, and establish monitoring mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts.

#### **9.3.1.5 Service providers should increase degree of staff consultation**

In chapter (7.3.2.1) refugee workers indicated that there is very little teamwork spirit and consultation between staff in partner-agencies, between management and staff within agencies and between colleagues. It is recommended that partner-agencies should develop effective consultation processes for efficient services delivery and communicate them to their staff. Collegiality should also be encouraged between practitioners. Each practitioner should take the initiative to reach-out to his or her colleagues. Have an annual retreat for refugee staff to evaluate work performed during the year, plan for the next year and discuss in-house matters and staff welfare issues.

### **9.3.2 Refugee participation in decision-making process**

In view of the findings in Chapter seven that refugee participation is lacking, expanding training for refugee community leaders in the skills of community participation would be very helpful. Such participation can significantly increase the effectiveness of the assessments and monitoring, and can stimulate and expedite remedial responses. In some situations, a system of “dialogue” through community workshops has been found constructive. The workshops have provided opportunities for refugees, men and women, young and old, to identify and begin to examine matters of community concern related to refugee welfare. This would also provide opportunities for furthering participatory decision-making.

Refugees should be treated as comprising communities that have elders and structure of resolving personal and community problems. While some individuals will require professional help, others need social support that may be provided through informal means. Financially, refugees should be encouraged to venture into income generating projects or seek employment opportunities that will reduce too much dependence on refugee programmes.

It is recommended that commitment to refugee participation by all partner agencies should be encourage and promoted within the different operational activities. It is important for each agency to embrace the notion of refugee participation.

It is further recommended that Refugee agencies should adopt a proactive approach to refugee community needs by disseminating information to educate refugees about their services. This could be achieved by holding regular community consultation meetings with different nationalities within the Refugee Camp. This process will also bridge the gap between refugees and refugee workers, which would enrich participation, unity, ownership and sustainability of projects.

### **9.3.3 Psychosocial needs of refugees and refugee workers**

Considering the findings in Chapter seven, (Table 7.10) that most of the refugees interviewed had experienced multiple traumatic events and the views of refugee worker in chapter (7.2.2) that they experience a lot of burnout as a result of working with refugees, psychosocial needs must be recognised in the development of any programme with refugees during flight, reception, settlement, and resettlement or repatriation.

#### **9.3.3.1 Inclusion of psychosocial support in every programme**

It is recommended that psychosocial components should be integrated into every aspect of the refugee programme in Botswana. It should not be identified as special programmes. Any programme that targets traumatised refugees in isolation has the potential to marginalize and identify a sickness model of care. This should be avoided.

#### **9.3.3.2 Psychosocial support for refugee workers**

In order to solve the psychological aspects of secondary trauma on refugee workers, refugee management need to help the refugee workers counteract secondary trauma by creating a “holding environment,” or an environment of nurturing, closeness, and warmth. Refugee workers should be provided with psychosocial support within their surroundings.

Refugee workers should always debrief without violating confidentiality with their co-workers as soon as possible after hearing the stories of traumatised refugees, and should ensure that they discuss their emotional experience in addition to the facts of the case. They should hold regular meetings in their offices to discuss the emotional effects of their work on them. It is recommended that where the self-help support groups are not adequate to heal the refugee worker suffering from secondary trauma, refugee management should help the worker seek individual private psychological therapy outside the camp.

### **9.3.4 Social work with refugees, need for innovation**

In most conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, Social Workers find themselves on the receiving end, being called upon to provide the victims and survivors with both material and psychosocial support. Social work with refugees must recognise that the enforced movement of people will continue to have a major impact on the global community and there is a need to be more proactive than reactive. Social Workers need to get involved in conflict prevention and resolution in communities that they serve. Against this background, it is recommended that social work with refugees should improve on the calibre of professionals by:

- Providing specific training that includes within its curriculum leadership and management skills, human rights and politics, anthropology and psychology. Trauma counselling should be offered to Social Work Students.
- Providing Social Workers that are already on the ground working with refugees with in-service training on basic analytical skills in social, economic and political issues. This will enable them to detect situations that create conflict and deal with them before they explode.
- Creating environmental awareness and stewardship for Social work Students, especially on global politics as a point of linkage between social service provision and political issues in order to prepare the professionals to respond proactively to issues of conflict both at community and international level.
- Deliberately training Social Workers in role- play, mediation and other alternative communication methodology as part of the overall strategy for communication development. Social Workers should be able to understand and articulate the feelings of the refugees on the ground.

### **9.3.5 Recommendation for further research**

The research questions, “What are the needs of refugees in Botswana?” and “Who provides for needs of refugees in Botswana?” have been addressed from the available literature and the views of refugees and refugee workers themselves in Botswana. However, there is an urgent need for a research that should focus on improving the service provision to refugees in Botswana with a view to finding out how the available resources for refugees in Botswana can be used in their best interest and to transform their life from the effect caused by the dislocation. Upon completing this study it would be important for a research to be undertaken to establish ways of addressing issues of implementation of refugee programme in Botswana. Focusing on the characteristics of people suitable for refugee work should be done. The researcher should give priority to distinguishing characteristics as the type of behavioural deficit, personality and social class, past experiences, age and gender.

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## **B. PERSONAL DISCUSSIONS**

Mr. S. Nefolovhodwe, former South African refugee, personal discussion on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

Mr. J. Ndaba, former Zimbabwean refugee, personal discussion on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2002.

Mrs. J. Moalutsi, Day Care teacher, Dukwi Refugee Camp on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2002



## APPENDIX 2:

### BIO-DATA QUESTIONS FOR THE RESPONDENTS

1. Respondent Code: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Identification No.: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex:            M            F
4. Accommodation: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Permanent address: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Profession before flight: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Current occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
10. No. of school years finished: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Number of children \_\_\_\_\_
13. Length of stay in Botswana \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



4. Are you satisfied with the services provided? Yes No

5. If the answer to above is No, what do you think are the obstacles to adequate service provision?

6. What can be done to improve the service provision to refugees in Botswana?

7. Are you satisfied with the way the following services are provided?

|                                 |     |    |
|---------------------------------|-----|----|
| ▪ Food                          | Yes | No |
| ▪ Water                         | Yes | No |
| ▪ Shelter                       | Yes | No |
| ▪ Health                        | Yes | No |
| ▪ Psychological Support         | Yes | No |
| ▪ Education                     | Yes | No |
| ▪ Economic Empowerment Projects | Yes | No |
| ▪ Childcare                     | Yes | No |
| ▪ Recreation                    | Yes | No |

8. Does your past experiences affect the way you live now?  
Yes No

9. Do you feel stressed? Yes No

9. (a) Do you associate any of the following events with your stress?

| EVENTS                               | YES | NO |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Thinking about the situation at home |     |    |
| Thinking about the violence at home  |     |    |
| Financial troubles                   |     |    |
| Poor relationship with the partner   |     |    |
| Poor Relationship with children      |     |    |
| Hostility in host country            |     |    |
| Exposure of children to violence     |     |    |
| Children's education                 |     |    |
| Access to medical facilities         |     |    |
| Thinking about the future            |     |    |

10. If the answer to above is Yes, what can you associate it with?

11. Has refugee life affected the way you relate in and with your family?  
Yes No

12. What would you like to be when you cease to be a refugee?  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you have refugee status in Botswana? Yes No

14. What is your general view about the future?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. What are your experiences as refugee workers?
  
2. Do you think the needs of refugees are met in Botswana?
  
3. Are there factors that affect your ability to provide quality services to refugees?
  
4. Do refugees understand the available services to them in Botswana?
  
5. What improvements are needed on our service provision to refugees in Botswana?

## APPENDIX 5

### CONSENT LETTER FOR THE INTERVIEWS

To:

From: Sebastian Okello-Wengi  
Social Work student  
University of South Africa

Purpose of study:

I am conducting a study on the support system for refugees in Southern Africa, with specific reference to Botswana as a requirement for a Doctoral degree in Social Work from the University of South Africa. I plan to examine the views of some refugees on the type of support they get in Botswana.

Your Participation:

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to be interviewed by me for approximately 1½ hours. You are assured of your anonymity and confidentiality. You are free to ask any question about the study or withdraw at anytime.

In return for your participation in this study I will provide a summary of the results and my analysis if you so desire. You may request the above by writing to me at:

Private Bag BO 287  
Gaborone  
Botswana  
Tel 3161580 (w)  
3912600 (h)  
72166455(mob)

If you agree to your participation in the study, please sign below indicating that you have read this statement and understood the procedures.

Signed:

Date:

## APPENDIX 6

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. F. Musonda – ERC Principal, BCR
2. O. Ndebele – ERC Senior Teacher, BCR
3. L. Cousin – ERC Teacher, BCR
4. M. Nziuluzi, ERC Teacher, BCR
5. V. Mahoto – ERC Teacher, BCR
6. A. Musonda – ERC Teacher, BCR
7. N. Nyoni – ERC Teacher, BCR
8. K. Kawana – ERC Teacher, BCR
9. L. Thomas – ERC Teacher, BCR
10. K. C. Ditlhoholo – Nursery School Teacher, BCR
11. Lillian Kgabanyane – Secretary/Finance, UNHCR
12. Galefele Beleme – Assistant Programme Officer, UNHCR
13. Guinness Ohazuruike – Assistant Protection Officer, UNHCR
14. Cosmas Chanda – Liaison Officer, UNHCR
15. Oreneile Kristensen – Project Coordinator, BRCS
16. Callista Peter Sugo – Dukwi Clinic Medical Doctor, BRCS
17. Molly Mulife – Family Welfare Educator, BRCS
18. Mpho Thedi – Deputy Commandant, Officer of the President
19. O. M. Gabonewe – Camp Commandant, Office of the President
20. Rupert Hambira – Director, BCR
21. Hlanganiso Roy – Social Services Officer, BCR
22. Kealeboga Motlogelwa – Volunteer (Social Services), BCR
23. Thatayaone Khuwe – Projector Coordinator, BCR
24. Jacqueline Mphinyane – Social Service Officer, BCR
25. Kerebotswe Matsietsa – Community Development Officer, BCR
26. Kgosi Mosweu – Deputy Chief Dukwi

## APPENDIX 7

### OAU CONVENTION GOVERNING THE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF REFUGEE PROBLEM IN AFRICA

Adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its sixth ordinary session  
(Addis Ababa, September 1969)

We, the Heads of State and Government assembled in the city of Addis Ababa, from 6-10 September 1969.

1. Noting with concern the constantly increasing numbers of refugees in Africa and desirous of finding ways and means of alleviating their misery and suffering as well as providing them with a better life and future,
2. Recognising the need for an essentially humanitarian approach towards solving the problems of refugees,
3. Aware, however, that refugee problems are a source of friction among many Member States, and desirous of eliminating the source of such discord,
4. Anxious to make a distinction between a refugee who seeks a peaceful and normal life and a person fleeing his country for the sole purpose of fomenting subversion from outside,
5. Determined that the activities of such subversive elements should be discouraged, in accordance with the Declaration on the Problem of Subversion and Resolution on the Problem of Refugees adopted at Accra in 1965,
6. Bearing in mind that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have affirmed the principle that human beings shall enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms,
7. Recalling Resolution 2312 (XXII) of 14 December 1967 of the United Nations General Assembly, relating to the Declaration on Territorial Asylum,
8. Convinced that all the problems of our continent must be solved in the spirit of the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity and the African context,
9. Recognising that the United Nations Convention of 28 July 1951, as modified by the Protocol of 31 January 1967, constitute the basic and universal instrument relating to the status of refugees and reflects the deep concern of States for refugees and their desire to establish common standards for their treatment,
10. Recalling Resolutions 26 and 104 of the OAU Assemblies of Head of State and Government, calling upon Member States of the Organisation had not already done so to accede to the United Nations Convention of 1951 and to the Protocol of 1967 relating to the Status of Refugees, and meanwhile to apply their provision to refugees in Africa,

11. Convinced that the efficiency of the measures recommended by the present Convention to solve the problem of refugees in Africa necessitates close and continuous collaboration between the Organisation of African Unity and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Have agreed as follows:

## **ARTICLE 1**

### **DEFINITION OF THE TERM “REFUGEE”**

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term “refugee” shall mean every person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
2. The term “refugee” shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country or origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.
3. In the case of a person who has several nationalities, the term “a country of which he is a national” shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of which he is a national if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.
4. This Convention shall cease to apply to any refugee if:
  - a) he has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality, or,
  - b) having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily reacquired it or,
  - c) he has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality, or,
  - d) he has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which he left or outside which he remained owing to fear of persecution, or
  - e) he can no longer, because the circumstances in connection with which he was recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist, continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality, or,
  - f) he has committed a serious non-political crime outside his country of refuge after his admission to that country as a refugee, or,
  - g) he has seriously infringed the purposes and objectives of this convention.
5. The provisions of this Convention shall not apply to any person with respect to whom the country of asylum has serious reasons for considering that:

- a) he has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity, as defined in the international instruments drawn up to make provision in respect of such crime;
  - b) he committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to this admission to that country as a refugee;
  - c) he has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the Organization of African Unity;
  - d) he has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.
6. For the purpose of this Convention, the Contracting State of Asylum shall determine whether an applicant is a refugee.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **ASYLUM**

1. Member States of the OAU shall use their best endeavours consistent with their respective legislations to receive refugees and to secure the settlement of those refugees who, for well-founded reasons, are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin or nationality.
2. The grant of asylum to refugees is a peaceful and humanitarian act and shall not be regarded as an unfriendly act by any Member State.
3. No person shall be subjected by a Member State to measures such as rejection at the frontier, return or expulsion, which would compel him to return to or remain in a territory where his life, physical integrity or liberty would be threatened for the reasons set out in Article 1 paragraphs 1 and 2/
4. Where a Member State finds difficulty in continuing to grant asylum to refugees, such Member State may appeal directly to other Member States and through the OAU, and such other member states shall in the spirit of African solidarity and international co-operation take appropriate measures to lighten the burden of the Member State granting asylum.
5. Where a refugee has not received the right to reside in any country of asylum, he may be granted temporary residence in any country of asylum in which he first presented himself as a refugee pending arrangement for this resettlement in accordance with the preceding paragraph.
6. For reasons of security, countries of asylum shall, as far as possible, settle refugees at a reasonable distance from the frontier of their country of origin.

**ARTICLE III****PROHIBITION OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES**

1. Every refugee has duties to the country in which he finds himself, which require in particular that he conforms with its laws and regulations as well as with measures taken for the maintenance of public order. He shall also abstain from any subversive activities against any Member State of the OAU.
2. Signatory States undertake to prohibit refugees residing in their respective territories from attacking any State Member of the OAU, by any activity likely to cause tension between Member States, and in particular by use of arms, through the press, or by radio,

**ARTICLE IV****NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Member States undertake to apply the provisions of this Convention to all refugees without discrimination as to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions.

**ARTICLE V****VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION**

1. The essentially voluntary character of repatriation shall be respected in all cases and no refugee shall be repatriated against his will.
2. The country of asylum, in collaboration with the country of origin, shall make adequate arrangements for the safe return of refugees who request repatriation.
3. The country of origin, on receiving back refugees, shall facilitate their resettlement and grant them the full rights and privileges of nationals of the country, and subject them to the same obligations.
4. Refugees who voluntarily return to their country shall in no way be penalized for having left it for any of the reasons giving rise to refugee situation. Whenever necessary, an appeal shall be made through national information media and through the Administrative Secretary-General of the OAU, inviting refugees to return home and giving assurance that the new circumstances prevailing in their country of origin will enable them to return without risk and take up a normal and peaceful life without fear of being disturbed or punished, and that the text of such appeal should be given to refugees and clearly explained to them by their country of asylum.
5. Refugees who freely decide to return to their homeland, as a result of such assurances or on their own initiative, shall be given every possible assistance by the country of asylum, the country of origin, voluntary agencies and international and intergovernmental organisations, to facilitate their return.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

1. Subject to Article III, Member States shall issue to refugees lawfully staying in their territories travel documents in accordance with the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Schedule and Annex thereto, for the purpose of travel outside their territory, unless compelling reasons of national security or public order otherwise require, Member States may issue such a travel document to any other refugee in their territory.
2. Where an African country of second asylum accepts a refugee from a country of first asylum, the country of first asylum may be dispensed from issuing a document with a return clause.
3. Travel documents issued to refugee under previous international agreements by States Parties thereto shall be recognised and treated by Member States in the same way as if they have been issued to refugees pursuant to this Article.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **CO-OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES WITH THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY**

In order to enable the Administrative Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity to make reports to the competent organs of the Organisation of African Unity, Member States undertake to provide the Secretariat in the appropriate form with information and statistical data requested concerning:

- a) the condition of refugee;
- b) the implementation of this Convention, and
- c) laws, regulations and decrees which are, or may here-after be, in force relating to refugees.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **CO-OPERATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES**

1. Member States shall co-operate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee.
2. The present Convention shall be the effective regional complement in Africa of the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugee.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES**

Any dispute between States signatories to this Convention relating to its interpretation or application, which cannot be settled by other means, shall be referred to the Commission

for Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration of the Organisation of African Unity, at the request of any one of the Parties to the dispute.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION**

1. This Convention is open for signature and accession by all Member States of the Organisation of African Unity and shall be ratified by signatory States in accordance with their respective constitutional process. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Administrative Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity.
2. The original instrument, done if possible in African languages, and in English and French, all texts being equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Administrative Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity.
3. Any independent African State, Member of the Organisation of African Unity, may at any time notify the Administrative Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity of its accession to this Convention.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **ENTRY INTO FORCE**

This Convention shall come into force upon deposit of instruments of ratification by one-third of the Member States of the Organisation of African Unity.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **AMENDMENT**

This Convention may be amended or revised if any Member State makes a written request to the Administrative Secretary-General to that effect, provided however that the proposed amendment shall not be submitted to the Assembly of Heads of States and Government for consideration until all Member States have been duly notified of it and a period of one year has elapsed. Such an amendment shall not be effective unless approved by at least two-thirds of the Member States Parties to the present Convention.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **DENUNCIATION**

1. Any Member State Party to this Convention may denounce its provisions by a written notification to the Administrative Secretary-General.
2. At the end of one year from the date of such notification, if not withdrawn, the Convention shall cease to apply with respect to the denouncing State.

**ARTICLE XIV**

Upon entry into force of the Convention, the Administrative Secretary-General of the OAU shall register it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in Accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

**ARTICLE XV****NOTIFICATION BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY**

The Administrative Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity shall inform all Member of the Organisation:

- a) of signatures, ratifications and accession in accordance with article X;
- b) of entry into force, the accordance with Article xi;
- c) of requests for amendments submitted under the terms of Article XII;
- d) of denunciation, in accordance with Article XIII.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF WE**, the Heads of African State and Government, have signed this Convention.

|                             |    |                             |
|-----------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1. Algeria                  | 21 | Ivory Coast                 |
| 2. Botswana                 | 22 | Kenya                       |
| 3. Burundi                  | 23 | Lesotho                     |
| 4. Cameroon                 | 24 | Liberia                     |
| 5. Central African Republic | 25 | Libya                       |
| 6. Chad                     | 26 | Madagascar                  |
| 7. Congo (Brazzaville)      | 27 | Malawi                      |
| 8. Congo (Kinshasa)         | 28 | Mali                        |
| 9. Dahomey                  | 29 | Mauritania                  |
| 10. Equatorial Guinea       | 30 | Mauritius                   |
| 11. Ethiopia                | 31 | Morocco                     |
| 12. Gabon                   | 32 | Niger                       |
| 13. Gambia                  | 33 | Guinea                      |
| 14. Ghana                   | 34 | Uganda                      |
| 15. Nigeria                 | 35 | Somalia                     |
| 16. Rwanda                  | 36 | United Arab Republic        |
| 17. Togo                    | 37 | Sudan                       |
| 18. Senegal                 | 38 | United Republic of Tanzania |
| 19. Tunisia                 | 39 | Swaziland                   |
| 20. Sierra Leone            | 40 | Zambia                      |
|                             | 41 | Upper Volta                 |

Done in the City of Addis Ababa this 10<sup>th</sup> day of September

## APPENDIX 8

### BOTSWANA REFUGEE (RECOGNITION AND CONTROL ACT 1967)

#### CHAPTER 25:01

#### ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

##### Part I Preliminary

##### SECTION

1. Short title
2. Interpretation
3. Establishment of Refugee Advisory Committees

##### Part II Refugees

4. Inquiry by Committee
5. Powers and procedure of Committee
6. Restriction on removal immigrant who may be a refugee
7. Right of detained immigrant to leave Botswana
8. Recognition of immigrant as political refugee
9. Restriction on removal and control of refugee
10. Departure of refugee from Botswana
11. Review of case of recognised refugee
12. Recognisance
13. Residence of refugee not ordinary residence
14. Regulations
15. Prosecutions of political refugees under Immigration Act to require consent of the Attorney-General

##### Schedule

An Act to make provision for the recognition and control of certain political refugee; to prevent in certain circumstances their removal from Botswana under the Immigration Act and to make provision incidental thereto or connected therewith

[Date of Commencement: 5<sup>th</sup> April 1968] Act 8,1967

Act 8,1967  
Act 8,1967  
Act 8,1967  
Act 8,1967

## Part I Preliminary

1. This Act may be cited as the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act.
2. (I) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires “Committee” means a Refugee Advisory Committee established under section 3;

“Convention” means the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee of the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1951, as amended from time to time by any international agreement; but does not include any provisions thereof not binding under public international law upon the Republic;

“immigrant” means any person in Botswana other than a citizen of Botswana;

“political refugee” has the meaning assigned thereto in the schedule;

“recognized refugee” means an immigrant whom the Minister has declared in terms of section 8 (1) that he recognizes as a political refugee;

“removed from Botswana” does not include deportation in terms of section 25 of the Immigration Act.

- (2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (1), and unless the context otherwise requires, any word or expression defined in the Immigration Act shall bear the same meaning in this Act as in the Immigration Act.
3. (1) The Minister may, by order published in the Gazette, establish one or more Refugee Advisory Committees to carry out the functions conferred on such Committees by or under this Act.
  - (2) A Committee shall consist of a chairman and not less than two, nor more than four, other members.

## Part II Refugees

4. (1) Unless the Minister otherwise directs, a Committee shall hold an inquiry into the case of any immigrant who on presenting himself to an immigration officer in terms of section 4 of the Immigration Act claims to be a political refugee.
  - (2) A Committee shall also hold an inquiry into the case of any other immigrant who in the opinion of the Minister is in Botswana in such circumstances as indicate that he may be a political refugee.
  - (3) After holding an inquiry in terms of this section the Committee shall report thereon to the Minister.
5. (1) For the purpose of conducting an inquiry in terms of section 4, a Committee shall have power
  - a) by notice under the hand of its secretary or chairman, to summon before it any person in respect of whom the inquiry is to be held;
  - b) by notice under the hand of its secretary or chairman, to summon before it any person who may be able to give information which will assist the Committee, or call upon him to submit such information in writing;
  - c) to examine any person appearing before it on oath or otherwise;
  - d) to call upon any person to furnish the Committee with such information as it considers will assist it in the exercise of its functions whether in the form of a statutory declaration in writing, orally or otherwise and to produce to the

Committee any documents which are in his possession or under his control and which the Committee considers may be relevant to the inquiry.

- (2) The proceedings of a Committee shall be in private and shall be conducted in such manner as the Committee may determine;

Provided that the immigrant who is the subject of the inquiry shall be notified thereof and be given the opportunity of appearing before the Committee and of making representations concerning his case to

- (3) Any person who –
- a) refuses or fails without sufficient reason to appear before a Committee at the time and place specified in a notice given under subsection (1) (a) or (b);
  - b) gives false evidence or information to a Committee or who attempts to mislead the Committee;
  - c) fails to comply with a notice given under subsection 1 (d),
  - d) shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding P500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both.

6. Where an immigrant who is liable to be removed from Botswana under the provisions of the Immigration Act is summoned to appear before a Committee under section 5(1) (a) –

- (a) he shall not be so removed pending a determination by the Minister in accordance with section 8; and
- (b) pending such determination he may be detained by an immigration officer for a period not exceeding 28 days and if he is so detained the provision of section 14(2) and (3) of the Immigration Act shall apply in relation to him as if he were being detained under subsection (1) of that section.

6. Notwithstanding section 6(b), any person detained in pursuance of that section shall, unless liable to detention under some other enactment, be allowed to depart from Botswana for the purpose of entering some other country if he satisfies an immigration officer that it is lawful for him to enter such other country without his possessing a right of re-entry to Botswana and that he possesses the means and in fact intends to enter that country.

8. (1) When the Minister receives a report of an inquiry held under section 4 he may –
- (c) subject to paragraph (b), if he is of the opinion that the person who has been the subject of the inquiry is a political refugee, declare that he recognizes such person as a political refugee;
  - (d) if he is of the opinion that the person who has been the subject of the inquiry is not a political refugee or if he considers that there is no, or, insufficient, reason to treat him as a political refugee, declare that he does not recognize such person as a political refugee; or
  - (e) direct the Commitment to reopen the inquiry or to make a further report on the matter.
- (2). Where, under subsection (1), the minister declares that he does not recognize a person as a political refugee such person shall, if liable to be removed from Botswana under the Immigration Act, be so removed and shall, whether so liable or not, be subject in all respects to the provisions of that Act.

(3). Except where this Act otherwise provides, a person who is recognized as a political refugee shall be subject to the provisions of the Immigration Act in all respects as if the declaration of recognition had not been made.

9. (1) Subject to section 10, recognised refugee shall not be removed from Botswana under the provisions of the Immigration Act except to a country approved by the Minister, being a country in which, in the opinion of the Minister, the life or freedom of the refugee will not be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political opinion:

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall prevent the removal, under the provisions of any law, of a recognised refugee to any country whatsoever where, in the opinion of the Minister, such removal is desirable on the grounds of national security or of public order or where the recognized refugee has been convicted by a final judgment of any court of serious crime which, in the opinion of the Minister, indicates that the recognised refugee constitutes a danger to the community.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), a recognized refugee who is liable to be removed from Botswana under the Immigration Act may be detained by an immigration officer pending such removal, and if he is so detained the provisions of section 14(2) and (3) of the Immigration Act shall apply in relation to him as if he were being detained under subsection (1) of that section:

Provided that where in the opinion of the Minister delay is likely to occur before such removal may be effected the Minister may, in his sole and absolute discretion, direct that the refugee shall not be detained under this subsection but shall while he remains in Botswana be subject to all or any of the following conditions, namely, that he shall

- (i) reside at a place or within an area specified by the Minister;
- (ii) not depart such place or area or only depart there from subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Minister;
- (iii) give recognisance for his good behaviour in such form and subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Minister;
- (iv) report to the police or such other authority as may be specified by the Minister in such manner as he may determine;
- (v) not take an active part in the politics of Botswana or of any other country in Africa or not take part in such activities, being activities of a political nature, as may be specified by the Minister;
- (vi) comply with such ancillary or additional conditions as may appear to the Minister to be necessary or desirable in the circumstances of the case.

(3) The Minister may at any time withdraw or modify a direction under the proviso to subsection (2).

(4) Any recognised refugee, who having been released from detention in terms of the proviso to subsection (2), fails to comply with any condition of such release shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding P500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both.

10. (1) A recognised refugee who is not detained under section 9(2) or any other enactment may leave Botswana at any time.

(2) A recognised refugee shall on his departure from Botswana cease to be a recognised refugee.

(3) Notwithstanding section 9(1) any recognised refugee who is detained under section 9(2) shall, unless he is liable to detention under some enactment, be allowed to depart from Botswana for the purpose of entering some country other than a country approved by the Minister in terms of section 9(1) if he certifies in writing that he wishes to enter that other country and satisfies an immigration officer that it is lawful for him to enter that country without his possessing a right of re-entry to Botswana and that he possesses the means to do so.

**11.** (1). Not more than six months after the recognition of a refugee under section 8, and thereafter at intervals of not more than six months, the case of that refugee shall be reviewed by a Committee, who shall advise the Minister –

- (a) Whether to exercise any of his powers under this Act or the Immigration Act in relation to that refugee;
- (b) As to the moral and economic welfare of that refugee, and what steps should be taken to secure the same.

(2). On receiving the report of a review held under subsection (1) the Minister may -

- (a) if he considers that there is no, or, insufficient, reason to continue treating the refugee as a political refugee declare that he no longer recognises him as a political refugee;
- (b) direct the Committee to reopen the review or to make a further report on the matter;
- (c) take such alternative or additional steps open to him under this Act or otherwise in relation to the refugee as may appear to him most proper.

(3) The provisions of section 5 shall have effect for the purpose of a review under subsection (1) as they have for the purpose of an inquiry under section 4.

**12.** Where under the proviso to section 9(2) a recognized refugee is required to give recognizance's and such recognisances include the entering into a bond for an amount of money to be forfeited if the conditions of the bond are broken, the Chief Immigration Officer may, upon breach of any condition of the bond, make application to a court of competent jurisdiction which may give judgment against the refugee or his sureties in accordance with the conditions of the bond.

**13.** For the purpose of any other written law, other than a taxation law, any period during which an immigrant has resided in Botswana as a recognised refugee shall not, unless a Minister in writing otherwise directs, be regarded as a period during which he has been ordinarily resident in Botswana.

**14.** The Minister may make regulation –

- (a) providing for the custody of the property of any political refugee who is detained;
- (b) prescribing the form of any notice which may be given under this Act;
- (c) prescribing the allowances payable to members of a Committee and fees payable to persons giving evidence before it; and
- (d) generally for the better carrying out of the provisions of this Act.

15. No prosecution for a contravention of the Immigration Act shall be instituted or continued against –
- (a) an immigrant who is summoned to appear before a Committee under section 5(1) (a), pending the decision of
  - (b) a recognised refugee, without the written consent of the Attorney-General, and in giving or withholding such consent the Attorney-General shall have regard to the provisions of the Convention.

### **SCHEDULE (section 2)**

#### **DEFINITION OF THE TERM “POLITICAL REFUGEE”**

1. Subject to this Schedule, “political refugee” means a person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of this nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
2. In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term “the country of his nationality” means each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.

## **REFUGEE (RECOGNITION AND CONTROL) REGULATIONS**

*(under section 14)*

*(5<sup>th</sup> April 1968)*

### **ARRANGEMENT OF REGULATIONS**

#### **REGULATION**

1. Citation
2. Interpretation
3. Quorum of Committee
4. Witness fees
5. Prescribed forms

#### **Schedule**

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Regulations.
2. In these Regulations “form” means a form prescribed in the Schedule.
3. The quorum of a Refugee Advisory Committee shall be the Chairman and two members.
4. A witness who is summoned before a Refugee Advisory Committee under section 5 (1) of the Act shall be entitled to witness fees at the rate prescribed for witnesses appearing in criminal prosecutions before a magistrate’s court.
5. (1) A notice for the purpose of section 5(1)(a) of the Act shall be Form A  
(2) A notice for the purpose of section 5(1)(b) of the Act shall be Form B  
(3) A notice for the purpose of section 5(1)(d) of the Act shall be Form C  
(4) A warrant for the purpose of section 6(b) of the Act shall be in Form D.  
(5) A direction by the Minister under section 9(2) of the Act shall be in Form E

**SCHEDULE**

**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**SUMMONS TO APPEAR BEFORE A REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*(Section 5(1)(a) of the refugees (Recognition and Control) Act (Cap. 25:01))*

To:.....

of: .....

You are notified that you are hereby required and directed to appear before the Refugee Advisory Committee at: .....on the .....day of .....at.....for the purpose of assisting the said Refugee Advisory Committee in making inquiry under the provisions of section 4 of the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act.

In accordance with the provisions of section 5 of the said Act your are hereby further notified that a such inquiry you are entitled to appear before the Committee and make representations concerning your case to it.

GIVEN under my hand this ..... day of .....19.....

.....  
Chairman \*/Secretary\*

\*Delete whichever is inapplicable

**NOTE:** Failure to comply with this summons is a criminal offence for which the offender is liable to a fine not exceeding P500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both.

**Form B**

**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**SUMMONS TO APPEAR AS A WITNESS BEFORE A REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TO PRODUCE SPECIFIED DOCUMENTS**

*(Section 5(1)(b) of the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act  
(Cap. 25:01))*

To: .....

of:.....

.....

You are notified that you are hereby required and directed to appear before the Refugee Advisory Committee at .....On the.....day of ..... At .....for the purpose of assisting the said Refugee Advisory Committee in making inquiry under the provisions of section 4 of the Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act into the case of .....

GIVEN under my hand this ..... day of .....19.....

.....

Chairman\*/Secretary\*

\*Delete whichever is inapplicable

**NOTE:** Failure to comply with this summons is a criminal offence for which the offender is liable to a fine not exceeding P500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

NOTICE CALLING UPON A PERSON TO GIVE WRITTEN EVIDENCE OR PRODUCE DOCUMENTS TO A REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(Section 5(1)(d) of the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act (Cap. 25:01))

To:.....

of:.....

I am directed by the .....Refugee Advisory Committee to require you to furnish to the Committee at ..... on or before the .....

the following information touching the case of .....

such information shall be in the form of a statutory declaration\*/in writing.\*

you are further directed to produce to the said Committee at ..... On or before the .....

..... the following documents which the said Committee believe to be in your possession or under your control and which, in the opinion of the said Committee, may be relevant at the inquiry

for and on behalf of the .....  
Refugee Advisory Committee

.....  
Chairman\*/Secretary\*

\*Delete whichever is inapplicable

**NOTE:** Failure to comply with this notice is a criminal offence for which the offender is liable to a fine not exceeding P500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both.

**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**WARRANT OF DETENTION UNDER SECTION 6 OF THE REFUGEE  
(RECOGNITION AND CONTROL) ACT**

(Cap 25:01)

To:..... (Officer-in-Charge of prison or other  
..... place of detention)  
.....  
.....

**WHEREAS:** .....  
Being and immigrant as defined in section 2 of the Refugees (Recognition and Control)  
Act, was summoned on the ..... Day of ... 19..... to appear before the  
..... Refugee Advisory Committee; **NOW, THEREFORE**, this is to  
authorize you by virtue of the powers vested in me by section 6 of the said Act to take  
into our custody the said .....and to detain him for a period of 28 days from  
the date of such summons unless sooner required to be released by me.

Dated at.....this .....day.....of.....19.....

**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**DIRECTION OF THE MINISTER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISION OF SECTION 9(2) OF THE REFUGEES (RECOGNITION AND CONTROL) ACT**

(Cap. 25:01)

**NAME**.....

**Photograph/and/or Thumbprint**



**WHEREAS** you have been declared to be a political refugee under the provision of section 8 of the Refugees (Recognition and Control) Act; **AND WHEREAS** you are liable to removal from Botswana under the provisions of the Immigration Act;

**AND WHEREAS** the Minister is of the opinion that delay is likely to occur before such removal may be effected;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, you are hereby given notice that the Minister has directed in accordance with the provisions of section 9(2) of the Act, that you shall not be detained pending your removal in accordance with the provisions of that section but that you shall, while you remain in Botswana, be subject to the following condition -

.....

Date of issue of the direction.....

**NOTE:** This direction may be withdrawn or modified at any time. In accordance with the provisions of section 11 of the Act, the case of a recognized political refugee is subject to revision every six months.