

War-affected Children and Schooling in Montreal



Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal

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FOREWARD

In the context of intercultural education, the Conseil scolaire is committed to supporting school boards in their mission to harmoniously integrate young immigrants within their schools. With the study titled “War-affected children and schooling in Montreal,” which it is placing at the disposal of various players in the academic sector, the Conseil scolaire focuses particular attention on the suffering of these children.

Schools face the on-going challenge of adapting to the many internal and external factors influencing their local, regional, and international environments. They must also employ a variety of direct and indirect approaches to relieving the emotional pain of refugee children and promoting their healthy development while continuing to offer all students a program that is both relevant and rigorous. Support must be diversified, be based on the strengths of the individual children, and give them hope for the future.

How can we rise to this challenge? This study suggests activities, strategies, and ways to provide school support to children affected by war.

The Conseil scolaire de l’île de Montréal is grateful to Ms. Jackie Kirk of McGill University, author of the report, as well as her many collaborators from schools, hospitals, and universities.

INTRODUCTION

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

It is estimated that nearly 100 million people around the world are caught up in situations of organized violence and conflict, and 50 million of them are forced to leave their homes. Children, unfortunately, do not escape the atrocities of war and conflict, and may be affected in many different ways, including being wounded themselves, becoming child soldiers, or street children, getting involved in child labour or sexual exploitation. Many more experience the psychological trauma of death and injury in their families and communities, and/or of fleeing their homes. Over half of the world's 'official' refugees are children, and in 1997, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported providing protection and care to over 6 million refugee children.

Facts and Figures

- In the past 10 years, about 2 million children have been killed and 4-5 million have been disabled as a result of wars and armed conflict.
- War and armed conflict have left one million children orphaned and about 12 million homeless.
- About 300,000 children under 18 are currently taking part in hostilities around the world.
- Of the 23 million refugees worldwide, 50 percent are children.
- About 800 children are killed or maimed by land mines every month.
- The number of child refugees increases by about 5,000 per day.
- Most child soldiers are between the ages of 15 and 18, but it is common for children as young as 10 to be actively recruited.
- Worldwide military spending was roughly US \$740 billion in 1997.

September 2000
(<http://www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca/>)

Canadians have been at the forefront of recent international-level work to meet the complex needs of war-affected children, especially those in countries of the developing world. The International Conference on War-Affected Children, held in Winnipeg in September 2000 (<http://www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca/>) was a significant international event, at which government representatives, NGOs, academics and young people came together to address the vulnerability of many thousands of children around the world

living in, or fleeing from, societies torn apart by war and conflict. They committed themselves to working with and for these children, and to develop a statement of objectives for future research and programming. The Canadian government has shown commitment to this issue and has added its voice to those of other governments and agencies who have spoken out for the rights of such children, and for promoting increased attention and especially financial aid from donor countries.

Graça Machel's (1996) report, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, and the follow-up Review Document entitled the *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children: Four Years Later* (September 2000) have been significant in the raising of international awareness of the needs of war-affected children. Her husband, Nelson Mandela, has now joined with her to create a Global Movement for Children, a movement which has gained impetus, despite the postponement of the United Nations Special Sessions on Children from September 2001 to May 2002. The very special needs of war-affected children around the world will be addressed at that meeting, and commitments made by government and non-governmental delegates from many countries. Recent international education policy has also recognized the importance of education in healing and reconciliation processes for children affected by war and conflict. The Dakar Framework for Action (2000)¹ and the Halifax Statement² issued by the Commonwealth Ministers of Education in November 2000, both made specific reference to the rights to education of such children and to ensuring attention, financing and commitment at local, national and international levels.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), whose Basic Education Action Plan is soon to be published, also makes reference in its draft document (2000) to the educational needs of war-affected children. The CIDA Child Protection Action Plan pays particular attention to children, who, because of the diverse impacts of armed conflict and organized violence, have special protection needs; a fourfold increase in funding for child protection is also promised. NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in Canada, such as World Vision, CARE Canada, Oxfam and UNICEF, are all committed to supporting the needs of children in and from different areas of conflict around the world. A working group on children and armed conflict that links these, and other organizations, academics and practitioners, is co-ordinated by the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (<http://www.cpcc.ottawa.on.ca/index.html>).

LOCAL CONTEXTS

In the local context, child refugees from war-torn countries and regions are known to be already present in many of Montreal's inner-city schools, with new students arriving regularly. However, it appears that very little is known about these children and that in the educational sector at least, little specific attention is given to their experiences, needs and perspectives. Teachers seem to lack any special materials, information or guidelines

¹ World Education Forum/UNESCO (2000) *Dakar Framework for Action*. Paris: UNESCO.

² 14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (2000) *Education for Our Common Future: The Halifax Statement on Education in the Commonwealth*. Halifax: Commonwealth Secretariat.

to work with their students who, even several years after having fled the areas of conflict, may still require support in coming to terms with the traumatic experiences of their past, and that of their family. This initial research project, therefore, was developed at the request of the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal, with the aim of finding out more about the situations and the needs of war-affected children living and attending school on the Island of Montreal, about the needs of schools and teachers working with these children, and about the resources currently available to them. This project is very timely, not least with respect to the ongoing Curriculum Reform in Quebec, where emphasis is placed on inclusive and personalized learning programs for all children, and more holistic approaches to teaching, learning and evaluating.

This document therefore comprises the following sections:

Part 1: Overview of the Montreal context for war-affected children, including statistical information, but also some important comments on differences in definitions and in interpretations.

Part 2: Experiences

Thinking about the psycho-social needs of war-affected children in Montreal in relation to the sorts of experiences they may have had in their home country, during flight, possible waiting in refugee camps, and arrival in Canada. Attention is also paid to current experiences of resettlement and readjustment.

Part 3: Understanding and Interventions

In light of discussions, meetings and literature reviews, guidelines and key messages are proposed for schools and teachers working with refugee and war-affected children.

Examples of school-based projects and programs that have been developed in Canada and elsewhere are also described.

Executive Summary

Appendix

Bibliography:

List of related and relevant documents, including academic journal papers, background information, and teaching materials and resources, many of which have been used in the preparation of the document.

Resource List:

Organizations and individuals, resource suppliers and others who may be of support to Montreal-based schools and teachers working with war-affected children.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The timing of this research, in the fall and winter of 2001-2002, has certainly been significant; the attacks on the US, and the ensuing crisis in Afghanistan have drawn attention to the needs of those living in war-affected areas of the world, and brought the needs of children to the fore. However, whilst attention is focused on the plight of people living in distant countries, in some cases more local needs may have been overlooked (across Canada locally based charities, for example, have reported significant drops in donations). Furthermore, the uncertainties and anxieties stirred up by international terrorism, and ensuing discourses of war, of ‘crusades’, and military attacks against terrorism, have added to an already difficult context for many immigrants and refugees, especially Muslims, in Canada and other western countries. This situation is reflected in our local schools, some of which have also reported increased tensions, ‘incidents’ and particularly difficult inter-student relations (but many of which have also engaged in fund-raising and other activities in support of the Americans affected by the attacks in New York and Washington, and for Afghanis caught up in the fighting, too). Therefore, the focus on seeking out information and resource material for schools from a variety of sources, within schools and outside, was highly appropriate for an initial study. A variety of secondary data was used, and informal interviews and meetings were held with teachers and others working with children and families from war-affected areas. The study is therefore inevitably limited in scope, and in perspective, but seeks to provide food for thought and action for schools and individuals, and to pave the way for follow-up work.

The research process has involved a number of different aspects, including identifying, locating and reviewing related documents and literature, and holding a number of school visits and discussions with teachers and administrators, with school board and Ministry of Education personnel, and a number of organizations and individuals working in and with schools with significant populations of war-affected children in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. It has been an iterative process, whereby the perceptions, concerns and interests of those consulted have shaped the document, hopefully initiating awareness-raising and professional development at the school and School Board level, and will be followed up through future initiatives supported by different partners. Explicit interest in war-affected children appears to be as yet relatively unarticulated in most school settings in Montreal, and requests for information, insight and ideas sometimes drew a blank. Most often, however, individual experience, personal anecdote and information on informal ‘ways of doing things’ were most informative. Official information on refugee children, such as that collected by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, by the Quebec Ministry of Citizen

Relations, and by the school boards is also partial, and aggregated to make analysis by gender, age, school level, etc., impossible. However, estimates can be made and individual insights, stories and understandings are highly significant. The latter are therefore interwoven into the main text along with relevant literature. The strategies used, suggested and recommended by individuals and teams in schools and in the community, are integrated with those made by other experts, scholars and writers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study reflects shifts in thinking in local and international contexts away from a narrow bio-medical model of war-affected children; such a model emphasizes difficulties and problems stemming from traumatic experiences of violence, and recommends ‘treatments’, targeted individual interventions, and in particular, therapy and counseling. In comparison, a ‘community-based’ intervention model seeks to support the child in a more holistic way, to build on her capabilities and strengths, and to draw on her own coping mechanisms, strategies and resources, and those of her family and community. As explained by Boyden (2002), protection and advocacy for children affected by war have in the past largely been based on normative ideas of childhood and child development emanating from western models and understandings. This has led to a series of assumptions that are now challenged by increasing sensitivity to diverse cultural contexts, to social and economic factors at play, and to the complexity of patterns and interactions between individual biological and psychological functioning, and social and cultural contexts. Boyden refutes four major assumptions: a) that children who experience horrific circumstances are inordinately at risk of developmental delay, emotional and/or psychological impairment and poor social functioning support, b) that children exposed to political and organized violence are helpless victims, requiring adult intervention, c) that children’s responses to traumatic experience are uniform and universal, and d) that children’s best interests are necessarily served within the context of the family. The diversity of childhood is recognized, with emphasis placed on the relational aspects of child development as an intensely social process. Understanding that childhood is largely socially constructed implies that the different ways in which experience is lived, interpreted and represented may vary considerably between cultures, as well as between individual children. Power relations between children, and amongst siblings, for example, may impact considerably not only the nature of the risk, but also the child’s reaction to it.³

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm) is significant in its setting of a global agenda for children’s rights, and in its shaping of ‘rights-based’ planning and interventions with war-affected children. Article 28 establishes the right of all children, without discrimination, to education. Other articles establish the rights of girls and boys to protection from all economic and sexual

³ Older siblings may, for example, be more at risk of recruitment into armed groups than younger siblings, but because of their position in the family, older siblings may have had more opportunities than younger family members to develop independence and survival strategies needed for security in conflict situations (Boyden, 2002).

exploitation, violence, armed conflict and discrimination based on disability, religion, ethnicity or gender. An important implication of a rights-based approach, is that children are seen as ‘protagonists’ and ‘agents of social transformation’ rather than victims and objects of compassion or pity. Children and their parents have responsibilities, and are significant stakeholders in the development, implementation and evaluation of initiatives that concern them. The Convention, signed by Canada, and by all other countries apart from the US and Somalia, is of relevance to all those working with children in whatever country and/or context. It provides a holistic, overarching framework for thinking, and for program development. In the case of refugee, migrant and other displaced children, such an international Convention may provide important coherency between support mechanisms and systems in countries of origin and transit, as well as in countries of settlement.

Rather than a narrow focus on the needs of the child, a rights-based, community-based approach shapes multi-faceted programs, which aim to enable all children to realize all their rights in the fullest ways possible. Such an approach, therefore, appears highly appropriate in the context of schools, where different partners (teachers, administrators, parents, community organizations, support workers and others) seek to create the most supportive environment in which special attention is given to enabling refugee and war-affected children to participate actively, to think and solve problems for themselves, and to enjoy a child-oriented model of quality education. Furthermore, the community-based approach seeks the active involvement, not only of expert mental health specialists, but insists on the collaboration of the multiple partners involved in the creation of school environments (parents, teachers, governing board members, school boards, ministry and governments) in the support of war-affected children.

PART 1: WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN LIVING IN MONTREAL

A NOTE ON DEFINITIONS

In a complex and inter-related world, where different terms are used in many different contexts to mean different things to different people, processes of definition that attempt to create fixed meanings become very problematic. In using the term 'war-affected children' this report conforms to the most widely used term to describe young people who in a variety of different ways and to very different extents have experienced some sort of war, armed conflict or organized violence. In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the term 'child' is used to refer to all young people under the age of 18.

It must be understood, however, that such children cannot be defined only by a particular nationality or ethnic background, as other factors in the country of origin, such as regional location, class, gender and age may make significant differences. In the Ugandan capital Kampala, and in many other areas, life is relatively peaceful, school is regular, and the civil war and armed conflict part of the past. In the northern areas, however, conflict continues and child soldiers, including girls, are recruited and held by gangs of armed fighters. Notions of 'war-torn regions' and 'post-conflict situations' are also problematic, as processes of war and violence continue long after official cease-fires have been agreed and peace declared. Children may have been born and raised in a time of relative peace, yet the processes of growing up, and being part of families and societies that have experienced war may cause considerable trauma. Although there is much yet to be researched, and much more to be learned on the subject, there are indicators of complex processes of intergenerational transmission of trauma, indicating the need to pay attention not only to first-generation refugee children, but also to children born in Canada of parents who have escaped from conflict and violence.

There are currently numerous conflicts raging around the world at different levels of intensity. "High intensity" or "total" wars have affected and continue to affect populations in countries such as Afghanistan, Chechnya, Congo and Angola, through shelling, bombing and other attacks on civilians. In other situations, such as Burundi and Colombia, small arms such as AK47s may be used by military forces and guerrillas. As Wessells (1998) points out, the nature of armed conflict around the world has changed considerably in recent years, giving rise to much more frequent intra-state wars than inter-state, and as a result, a heavier toll on civilian populations. In conflicts such as the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Guatemala, Somalia and Rwanda, rather than occurring in well-defined battlefields, fighting occurs in and around communities, involving more personal acts of violence, rape and other atrocities. For children and their communities, the accumulative, long-term impact of such stress presents a psychological risk that may be more serious than that of a more 'traditional' style warfare we might initially envisage. Protracted conflict may devastate infrastructure, amplify already severe poverty and injustice, and create situations of hopelessness (Wessells, 2001). Furthermore, it is

important to remember that around the world violent conflicts are happening, that never, or only occasionally, make our news. Such conflicts may have profound effects on children coming into our schools in Canada, of which we know very little.

The term 'refugee' is widely used, and understood, and is legally defined at the international level by the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 UN Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, now signed by 137 states, as someone who has fled from his or her home country or is unable to return to it 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.' Whilst persecution may take many different forms, the majority of the world's refugees have fled from war and armed conflict. However, legal refugee status in different countries is also particularly contested, and whilst it is important to consider the particular experiences and needs of refugee children as different from those of immigrant children (Bell, 2000), it is also important to remember that immigrant children in schools and living with other status (such as temporary permits, or permanent residency), may in fact be 'de facto refugees' with considerable experience of war and conflict. Whilst in the past, immigration has often been economic in motivation, new immigrants are more likely to be moving for political reasons. Unofficial estimates suggest that around 40% of *all* immigrants (i.e. not only refugees) to Quebec have experienced organized violence, and around 20% of families have experienced personal persecution. It is relatively common for children from war-affected countries to arrive in Montreal, already sponsored by a family member who has settled here, and therefore making an immigration application, rather than a refugee claim. People fleeing from Kosovo, for example, were given Quebec residency before leaving their place of origin. Other individuals and families may have obtained papers for Quebec residency processed in a country of transit, whilst in a refugee camp, for example. Other refugee claimants, such as many families from China, may be seeking asylum in Canada because of more targeted, religious and/or political persecution, and not organized violence or armed conflict on a large scale. Therefore, although the legal status of a child may make considerable difference to their experiences of settlement and integration, awareness of the child's country of origin, language and ethnicity is also important. Particular attention should therefore be given to children from what may be termed 'refugee producing countries'.

FACTS, FIGURES AND STATISTICS

Statistics used in the education sector may make note of the country of origin of child and other refugees entering Canada, and school records may also include such information. However, national groups are in no way homogeneous, and different ethnic populations within war-torn countries may have very different experiences of the conflict, and may have come to Canada under very different circumstances. Individual schools may be able to link ethnic identity to first languages reported by the students at registration, and therefore have some idea of the extent of persecution from which the child may have escaped. However, in more global statistical analyses, such as that provided by the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal, languages spoken at home are not correlated with

country of origin. It is important to acknowledge that an ethnic and/or linguistic majority in one country may be a persecuted minority in another. Urban and rural populations may too have had very different experiences of war and conflict, and socio-economic factors such as the class and status of a family also have a major impact on war experience. Any statistical information, therefore, is very partial, and we can only approximate numbers of affected children, but some background figures may help to contextualize the issue.

In 1999, for example, just over 29,000 people immigrated to Quebec. By far the largest age group is that of 24-44 year olds, but over 6,700 (23%) were aged under 15; this percentage level of child immigrants has remained quite constant since 1995, meaning that of the total number of immigrants arriving between 1995 and 1999, (over 140,000), over 33,000 were aged under 15. Whilst almost 50% of immigrants arrived independently, approximately 25% of all immigrants were refugees. The major countries of origin are France, China, Algeria, Morocco, Ex-URSS, Haiti, Ex-Yugoslavia, and Rumania (<http://www.immq.gouv.qc.ca/francais/index.html>).

In 2001, 42,746 refugee claims were made in Canada, and whilst the most common country of origin was Hungary, (3,812 claims made), significant numbers of claims were made from war-affected regions such as Sri Lanka (2,789), Colombia (1,627), Congo (1,217) and Somalia (709) (www.cic.gc.ca). Claimants from other countries such as Hungary (3,812), Mexico (1,660), and Turkey (1,606) may, however, be escaping equally violent, if smaller scale persecution, based on ethnic identity, which may equally impact on children as on their parents. Of these claims, however, only approximately 50% may finally be accepted, meaning that settlement figures are considerably smaller. In the year 2000, approximately 8,000 refugees were accepted into Quebec, around 2,000 of whom had made their claim from outside of the country. Of the total 8,000 claims, 28.7% (the largest percentage) were children aged under 14 (Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration). Despite the efforts of the government to encourage settlement in other areas of the Province, around 70% settle in the city of Montreal. Cross-referencing of the statistics according to country of origin, age and gender, is not done by the Ministry of Citizen Relations and Immigration, giving only a very limited picture of the situation. Furthermore, the nature of the refugee experience itself means that much remains unrecorded; whatever the facts and statistics show, the 'official story' may differ from insider realities; much has to be learned through individual experience and anecdotal evidence.

Of particular interest to this study, however, is information collected on an annual basis by the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal. Each school year, information is gathered on the country of origin of students born outside of Canada and registered in all public primary and secondary schools of the five school boards on the Island. Also relevant may be the country of origin of the parents of children born in Quebec, and the language spoken by students at home.

A brief overview shows that of the total student population for 2000-2001, (199,416), 16.58% of students were born outside Canada (33,069). This figure is little changed from the 16.76% found for the previous year. Whilst 50.66% of students speak French at

home, and 26.49% speak English, 22.85% of students speak a different language. Of the total number of students born in Quebec, 37.38% were born to parents who were born outside of Canada.

195 different countries are listed as the birthplaces of children born outside Canada, with considerable numbers of students born in: Haiti (3,225, or 1.6% of the total school population), Algeria (1,991 or approx 1%), China (1,371 or 0.7%) and Lebanon (1,292, or 0.65%). The table below shows the main countries of origin, accounting for 20,315 students, or just over 10% of the total school population.

Country of Origin	The three French-language school boards Number of students (Position in country of origin ranking for students born outside of Canada)	The two English-language school boards Number of students (Position in country of origin ranking, for students born outside of Canada)	Total number of students (Position in country of origin ranking, for students born outside of Canada)
Haiti	3,221 (1)	4 (87)	3,225 (1)
Algeria	1,991 (2)	0	1,991 (2)
China	1,230 (4)	141 (4)	1,371 (3)
Lebanon	1,274 (3)	18 (40)	1,292 (4)
USA	793 (9)	388 (1)	1,181 (5)
France	1,092 (5)	30 (22)	1,122 (6)
Pakistan	919 (6)	137 (5)	1,056 (7)
Sri Lanka	746 (10)	298 (2)	1,044 (8)
Morocco	851 (7)	10 (58)	861 (9)
Romania	795 (8)	53 (10)	848 (10)
Bangladesh	681 (13)	135 (6)	816 (11)
Philippines	719 (12)	28 (24)	747 (12)
Zaire	735 (11)	2 (111)	737 (13)
Russian Federation	668 (15)	58 (9)	726 (14)
Peru	680 (14)	11 (53)	691 (15)

The relatively large numbers of students coming from Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Congo (Zaire) are almost certain to have direct experience of armed conflict, as may the smaller numbers of students coming from countries such as Guatemala (400), Afghanistan (297), Colombia (245), Congo (176), Iraq (118), Somalia (114), Burundi (82), Angola (73), Palestine (14), and Sudan (11). As is clear, however, the possible experiences of war and conflict of these children is in no way uniform, nor are the ways in which they as individuals will respond to trauma, either in the short or long term. This will be described in more detail in Part 2.

As mentioned above, there is growing acknowledgement of, and research interest in, the intergenerational transmission of trauma, and the effects of trauma on parenting capacities. Bearing this in mind, statistics relating to the country of origin of second-generation immigrant students in Montreal schools also become significant, revealing, for example, that of the 162,063 students in Montreal schools born in Quebec, 60,574 (37.38%) were born to parents from outside Canada. For example, 8,248 students have a parent from Haiti, 2,477 students, a parent from Vietnam, 1,931 students, a parent from

Lebanon, and 1,866 students, a parent from El Salvador. A considerable number of Quebec-born children have parents from countries such as Cambodia (over 1,300) Guatemala (over 800), Colombia (more than 300). The parenting skills of families whose countries of origin have been ravaged by violent conflict of different types, may well be limited by ongoing effects of trauma. These parents may find it particularly difficult to support their children in processes of learning and growing up. Even with no direct experience themselves, a family memory and history of war and of loss and destruction may impact heavily on a child's social and intellectual development.

This data provides a clear but static overall picture of the situation for Montreal schools, but in order to gain a sense of newly arriving children, information on the numbers of students registered in the Programme d'Accueil et de Soutien à l'Apprentissage du Français (program to welcome and offer support to French-language learning) is helpful. Although assumptions cannot be made about individual children's experience based only on their country of origin, the following table gives an indication of the numbers of students newly arriving from major refugee-producing countries:

PROGRAMME D'ACCUEIL ET DE SOUTIEN À L'APPRENTISSAGE DU FRANÇAIS

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF NEW STUDENTS REGISTERED IN WELCOME CLASSES
ISLAND OF MONTREAL SCHOOL BOARDS
2000-2001 Academic Year**

Country of Origin	Commission scolaire de La Pointe-de-l'Île-	Commission scolaire de Montréal	Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys	Total
HAITI	131	138	7	276
ALGERIA	88	143	35	266
SRI LANKA	3	146	32	181
COLOMBIA	31	29	17	77
ZAIRE	10	28	20	58
LEBANON	10	21	22	53
AFGHANISTAN	8	19	22	49
ANGOLA	1	37	4	42
CONGO	7	24	2	33
RWANDA	6	15	1	22
SOMALIA	2	13	5	20
BURUNDI	1	8	1	10
ETHIOPIA		5	2	7
CAMBODIA		5	2	7
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	2	1	2	5
PALESTINE			3	3
SIERRA LEONE		1	1	2

Students entering schools in Montreal from other countries, such as Peru, Mexico, and Iran, however, may also have experienced violent repression and persecution of family, friends and community in their home country, and may too have endured long, complicated and dangerous journeys to places of relative safety. At the Commission Scolaire de Montréal, the school board with the largest number of students registered in Accueil (currently over 3,300), over 400 come from China, over 320 from Pakistan and over 180 from Algeria. Political persecution and violence may certainly have influenced the immigration of many of these students (and others too—78 students come from Mexico, 71 from the Philippines, 63 from Turkey, and 56 from Iran, for example).

The information and statistics above do provide a useful overview of the numbers of children in Montreal schools whose possible previous experiences of war and conflict in diverse countries of origin will be of influence in their integration into schools and communities, and in their future development. However, definitions, statistics, facts and figures can never tell the whole story. Furthermore, although sensitivity to the issues is of importance for schools, teachers and other support services working with these children, also important is an awareness that the experience of war and violence, rather than inevitably creating a predisposition to mental health and other problems, may actually build strengths and skills in young people in ways we might never have imagined. War-affected children cannot be labelled, diagnosed or necessarily singled out for particular attention, and so, as will be discussed in the following sections, the challenge for schools is to build environments in which all students have access to the best possible resources and opportunities for learning and development.

PART 2: EXPERIENCES

EXPERIENCES OF WAR AND CONFLICT

Children in Canadian schools who have escaped war and conflict in their countries of origin will bring with them a wide range of different experiences and perceptions. War affects different people in different ways. Different communities and different groups, girls and boys, for example, may have very different experiences. Some may have been kidnapped and tortured, or may have seen the murder of parents, other relatives, friends and others; some may have been separated from their families, spending long periods of time in refugee camps. Teachers talked to for this study reported children in their classes who had witnessed, for example, their parents' beheading, or the mutilated body of a beloved grandmother. Other experiences, such as the murder of a pet, the spoiling and stealing of food from families and communities by invading armed gangs, the death of cattle upon which the community depended, have appeared in children's drawings; although at first sight these may not appear as dramatic, or as traumatic, but may be equally, if not more disturbing for children. Children from Congo, have talked about having to keep absolutely still, hiding in trees and elsewhere, to avoid violent attack; such memories may stay with them for many years after the event. Many children living in war-torn areas become directly caught up in the warfare, which, as described above, now more often takes place in and around homes. Other children may be watching it on the television, hearing about it all around them, and may be living in constant fear that they, their family, their town or village, will be the next victims. The length of time of consistent trauma and stress is also a factor to consider; in general, the longer the duration, the longer and harder the healing process tends to be. However, it may be the meaning made of the incident by the child which is the most important factor in determining its impact; studies tend to indicate that acts of random violence, such as the sudden arrival of soldiers in a relatively peaceful village, or the inexplicable murder of innocent individuals can be much harder to come to terms with than more consistent violence organized on political, religious or ethnic grounds (Wessells, 2001).

There may be little correlation between the precise nature of war and violence experience, and the meanings and interpretations made by communities and individuals and the responses formed to it. However, a number of studies have attempted to investigate the exact nature of children's experiences and war trauma: Maksoud's (1992) study of 2,200 Lebanese children aged between 3-16, living in Greater Beirut, for example, found that: 90.3% had been exposed to shelling or combat, 68.4% had been forcibly displaced from home, 54.5% had experienced grave shortages of food, water and other necessities, 50.5% had witnessed violent acts such as murder, 26% had lost family and/or friends, 21.3% had become separated from their families, 5.9% had been injured, 3.5% were the victims of violent acts such as arrest, torture and detention and 0.2% was forced to join the militia.

In Maksoud's study, as in others, factors such as children's age and class made significant differences to their experience. It has been reported that as many as 70% of refugee children from Angola have witnessed a murder, and almost half the children in Sarajevo had been shot at during the Bosnian war. Landmines too pose a sinister threat to children in many different parts of the world; UNICEF estimates that hundreds of thousands of children have been killed or maimed by them. Not only do children's activities such as herding animals, planting crops or just playing, take them into potentially dangerous areas, but children's young bodies are also particularly vulnerable to the impact of a landmine explosion.

Populations from Central American countries such as Mexico, El Salvador and Colombia may have fled from political and ethnic persecution by corrupt and unstable government regimes and systemic violence exacerbated by extreme poverty. Close family members may have 'disappeared', been murdered, imprisoned and tortured, and those who survive are under constant fear of being watched, arrested, tortured or executed. In such circumstances, schooling is a low priority, and many children have to work on the streets in order for them and their families to survive. Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka are fleeing the chronic civil war between the government army and the Tamil Tiger fighters, and virtually all arriving in schools have witnessed the bombings and burning of property, or its confiscation from them. Family members too have been arrested, drafted into the war, attacked, tortured or killed.

It is also important to consider the different ways in which boys and girls are implicated in violent conflict; boys may, for example, be more directly involved in direct warfare than girls, but girls, for example, may have experienced rape or sexual abuse, or have witnessed or sensed that of their mother and/ or other female friends. In Kosovo, for example, young girls have been forced by their parents into early marriage as a way of firstly protecting them from rape, and secondly, of ensuring that if they are raped, they will not be socially stigmatized and become 'unmarriageable'.

EXPERIENCES OF FLIGHT

Although this study concentrates on refugees coming to Canada, and draws on experiences of other Western countries such as the US and Britain, it is nonetheless important to remember that most of the world's refugees actually flee to other developing countries (often neighbouring states) and/or spend long periods of time as internally displaced people (known as IDPs) in their own country. Children in Canada may have experienced a rather long and broken journey from their country of origin, having to stop in different places for different lengths of time. Students entering Montreal schools from Central America, for example, have often come through the US, arriving there after long and arduous journeys, sometimes on foot. One child told of "hiding at night and moving secretly at night". Flight is always a stressful time, wherever it is to, whether it is planned or not, and however long it might be. Leaving friends and family and pets without saying goodbye, for example, may be particularly hard for children, and for younger children who may have been protected from a build-up in military activity and tension, the

apparent sudden departure from home, from friends and relatives and the uncertainty of whether they will every return, can be very unsettling. The actual journey or journeys are also often very dangerous, as desperate people make perilous sea journeys in unsafe boats, cross inhospitable terrain to walk long distances, or cram themselves into overfull trucks to escape the horrors of war and persecution. For many Tamils, flight from the civil war in Sri Lanka is assured through the paying of a private agent, or by private sponsorship by a family member who is already resettled elsewhere, and so may be less physically harrowing. Nonetheless, the enormous financial cost adds another stressful factor, in addition to the uncertainty, to the long periods of waiting for legal processing that might happen in a transit country such as India, sometime in refugee camps there, or even in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, before leaving the country.

EXPERIENCES OF TRANSIT AND REFUGEE CAMPS

Although arrival at refugee camps may provide at least some relief from the danger of the open road or sea, and the promise of food and other aid and assistance, the conditions in many camps are overcrowded, very stressful and often unsafe. Families from El Salvador, for example, may live in camps in Honduras for relatively long periods of time, Burundians may have spent time in Tanzania, and Afghans refugees in Pakistan. Rwandans may have fled their country to camps in Kenya. Many Kosovar and Bosnian students have also spent time in refugee camps before coming to Canada, whereas others, sometimes Somalis, Eritreans, and Ethiopians, have spent time in urban settings in European transit countries such as Greece, Italy and Germany.

Whilst the camp may provide some security, and for children, some schooling opportunities, this may be a very disrupted experience, and may be complicated by needing to learn a new language and adapt to a culture in which one is not fully integrated. Existence may be a sort of life in limbo, and especially so in a camp, where refugees are segregated from local populations, have little input into decision-making processes and limited opportunity to practice or acquire skills, and have little access to educational and recreational activities. For many women and girls, the risk of sexual harassment and violence (including rape) is considerably higher inside the confines of the camp, and in such stressful conditions, domestic conflict and violence are prevalent. Given the overcrowding, food, clean water, medical care and private space may be very limited. For people who have been used to living independently, feeling in control of their self-sufficient lives, the dependence created by the camp conditions, and the uncertainty about when and how they will leave the camp, can lead to serious mental consequences. Children too are very sensitive to these conditions.

EXPERIENCES OF ARRIVAL AND RESETTLEMENT

Arrival in Canada may be very welcome relief from danger and shortages, and herald the start of a new life far away from the trauma of war, but arrival and resettlement may also be a very stressful and traumatic experience. Depending on different factors such as linguistic skills, for the first few weeks at least, newly arrived families remain very dependent on front line services offered by different governmental and non-governmental organizations to organize accommodation, food and clothing, to process paperwork, and for example, to register children in schools. Whilst the average wait time is approximately a month, it can take much longer for a family to make their refugee claim, obtain an appointment with Quebec Immigration, and then to receive their first welfare cheque, depending on how and where the claim is made (the claim may be made immediately on arrival at Dorval airport, but most claimants actually enter the country with other documents, and submit their claim later to the Immigration offices in downtown Montreal). Registering at school cannot be done until a permanent address has been secured, and this again may take some time. Young children may have little to do to keep them busy, and their parents are preoccupied with the daily realities of surviving and settling in a foreign environment. Current welfare amounts to \$940 per month for a family with 2 or more children. With this amount, housing choices are mainly determined by cost; a rent of under about \$500 has to be found. Especially for families who may have known relatively comfortable conditions and respectable community status in their country of origin, the reality of dependency, and a very low welfare income may be very difficult to cope with. If official refugee status is gained, high levels and long periods of unemployment and under-employment may contribute to considerable stress on family relations and on individual mental well being (Krahn et al, 2000). Although 39% of the refugees in this study had worked in managerial and professional fields prior to arrival in Canada, only 16% had equivalent work after arrival. Most Tamil parents, for example, have left professional positions with status in Sri Lanka, and yet find the opportunities to take up the same career in Montreal very difficult. Many, and especially fathers, speak good English, and yet the need to learn and become fluent in French in Montreal is a difficulty to be added to those of the non-recognition of professional status, the lack of contacts, and the entrenched racism and discrimination which may hamper their searching for more appropriate work. As the alternatives are so limited and need for money so extreme, many resort to underpaid work in garment factories, fast-food restaurants or other menial jobs. The long hours that parents may need to work can mean that at a time when children may most need the presence of trusted adults, they are often left 'home alone' in unfamiliar environments (Yau, 1995).

In the best of conditions, arrival at a new school, with an array of new faces, rules, and systems is daunting for any child, but may be particularly difficult for refugee children. Children may be with their whole family, engaging together in processes of integration, yet a small number may well be alone, (Ayotte's study (2001) shows that Canada received approximately 1,099 separated children in 2000) or with one parent, or other members of the extended family. Separation, the uncertainty of the location and security of any family and friends remaining in the country of origin, as well as a sense of guilt at

having had the possibility to leave when so many others have remained, may add to the stress factors of this period. Furthermore, teachers have mentioned the difficulties for children of re-establishing relationships with parents, and sometimes establishing new relationships with step-parents. This may happen when the children have remained in the country of origin with other family members, whilst the parent, often the father, leaves first, and settles here.

A climate of heightened media awareness of clandestine refugee entry to Canada, and of the ongoing threat of terrorist activity, may make settling into schools and communities even more difficult for sensitive and especially vulnerable young people. Inability to understand and to express oneself in the language of the school may be very frustrating, as may placement in grades lower than their age warrants. Although with the Mesures d'Accueil in Quebec, the system is somewhat different. A study of 15 to 18 year-old refugees (Wilkinson, 2001) found that over 20% felt that they had been placed in grades that were too low or too easy for them. Only 10% felt that the grade was too high or too difficult for them. These, and other negative school experiences may contribute to high dropout rates. For parents too, the processes of settling their children into school may be bewildering; the array of paperwork to be filled in is daunting for anyone, but may be especially so for those whose legal status is still precarious, or for whom documentation is missing or inaccurate. A birthdate of a child may well have been altered in order to protect the child from military service, or to ensure their entitlement to other services. Culturally, school, and other institutions may well appear quite alien to immigrant parents and their children, but the alienation may be intensified for refugees and others fleeing from states where official institutions may have represented repression, harsh treatment and a less than welcoming environment. The police, who in Montreal may be involved in school and or other community events, may have been a force to be feared and avoided at all costs in countries of origin.

Gaining the trust and the confidence of families and children escaping repressive regimes is a significant challenge for schools and other institutions, and may require time and considerable effort, openness and understanding. Differences in attitudes towards corporal punishment in schools and at home, is of concern in numerous schools. Schools may be working to create more peaceful learning contexts, to reduce the amount of violence their students experience, and may see this as a particularly important aspect of their support for war-affected children. However, parents' experiences and understandings of school and of discipline for children may be quite different. They may expect and even ask the school to punish their children physically, and may themselves use corporal punishment in their own home. This may seem incomprehensible to an outsider who assumes that flight from a regime of violence would imply a rejection of violence wherever possible. However, long-term, insidious and institutional violence and militarization are known to impact on interpersonal relationships, and the stress, frustrations and uncertainties of refugee life are acknowledged as significant triggers for violent behaviour and reaction within families and close social groups. This can be especially so for fathers who have been denied traditional roles as breadwinner and protector of family by war and civil strife.

A refugee or other immigrant who is sponsored and supported by family in the host community will most likely be assisted and guided through not only the official resettlement processes, but also those of social and cultural adaptation. There will be someone to help talk them through the challenges, difficulties, worries and misunderstandings, there will be trustworthy people to turn to, and to a certain extent, the future is more certain. Resettlement, however, may be a much more traumatic process for unaided refugees who lack the same support system and whose future hangs in the balance whilst waiting for official decisions to be made on pending applications for refugee status (on average around 50% of claims made are accepted). The threat of deportation may be very real, and the uncertainty of the situation very stressful, especially when the claimant may have little overall understanding of the complicated legal procedures, structures and mechanisms with which they have to work. As Meyers (1993) writes:

“... The personal, psychosocial responses that each refugee child develops to their particular memories and experiences do not disappear upon their arrival at the door of the school. This emotional and social baggage is carried with them and educators must consider these issues as we learn to deal more effectively with all their needs.” (p4)

KEY MESSAGES

In the ways in which they provide welcome and support, schools should acknowledge that:

- Refugee and war-affected children come from many different countries and even within one national group they may have different class backgrounds or come from different ethnic and linguistic groups or from families with very different religious observances and political affiliations. They will also have diverse educational experiences, and different experiences of war, violence, flight and arrival in Canada.
- Resettlement is a time of significant stress, anxiety and uncertainty, for children as well as their families, and is a long-term process.

Many refugee children may:

- Have had horrific and disturbing experiences in their home country, during flight and in arrival and resettlement.
- Have an interrupted educational history in their country of origin, in a transit country, and whilst awaiting official registration in Montreal.
- Be experiencing a significant drop in their standard of living and status in society.

- Be experiencing different and possibly changing care arrangements.
- Live with parents who are experiencing emotional and other difficulties and are uncertain of their status, position and rights, and of the services available to them.
- Be experiencing isolation, bullying or other social problems that may be difficult to talk about.
- Have particular health and nutrition problems resulting from food shortages, deprivation of exercise etc. Girls in particular may be at risk from sexually transmitted diseases and have other menstrual or sexual health concerns.

PART 3: UNDERSTANDINGS AND INTERVENTIONS

STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE IN WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

Although it is important to acknowledge the sorts of situations and experiences described, it is equally important for teachers and others working with war-affected children to recognize that such experiences do not necessarily predispose children to emotional, behavioural or academic problems. Nor are refugee or war-affected children a homogeneous group with a neat set of particular social and educational needs. In fact a number of studies point to quite the opposite, and psychiatrists such as Dr Cécile Rousseau and the team at the Transcultural Psychiatry Clinic at the Montreal Children's Hospital encourage us to think about war, organized violence, flight and refugee settlement as part of a metamorphosis process for the child, in which different factors may create both difficulties and strengths. Van der Veer (1998), for example, writes about the three different phases of refugee experience, as described above: first phase (pre-flight in country of origin), second phase (flight from home) and third phase (arrival and settlement in new home). Rather than distinct and separate, however, experiences during each phase are interconnected and inter-related.

Much has been written about the nature of both risk and protection factors present at different stages in the children's experiences, which shape the metamorphosis process and the identity construction that is integral to it. Rousseau (1995) fits these risk and preventive factors into three broad categories: cultural, situational and developmental. Cultural variables include characteristics of the home culture, and particularly the family environment but also the way in which this culture interacts with that of the host country. Situational variables relate to the different disruptive effects of migration and its associated losses. Developmental variables include the child's age and stage of development. Some studies show that rather than a direct indicator of mental and other problems, the experiences of war-affected children may actually strengthen and resource them in ways which contribute to emotional well-being and stability, and to academic success that compares well with that of their peers in the host country (e.g. Maksoud & Aber, 1996; Rousseau et al, 1999). For some refugee students in some communities, the high expectations held by parents of the new generation to make good the problems of the past may represent a significant support and protective factor in their development once in Canada. For others, however, the pressure of high expectations, the fear of failure and the frustration of not being able to live up to their own or others' expectations, may be a weighty psychological burden. The complex and dynamic interplay of different factors appears to be very individual as well as culturally specific. This implies the need for more mental health research, but most importantly, for schools and other support services, the need for an approach which acknowledges certain general conditions and situations, but which avoids labelling. Assumptions made should be questioned, and war-affected children allowed to be supported as individuals with special strengths and special needs, rather than as members of a particular homogeneous group.

PROMOTING PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING IN SCHOOLS

When interviewed about the sorts of things they liked about school, a group of Eritrean refugee children expressed appreciation for:

- Schools which invited in members of refugee community organizations;
- Teachers who recognized that refugee children had different educational needs and expectations, and made adjustments in their own teaching strategies;
- Teachers with clear and high expectations;
- Teachers who showed interest and asked them about themselves;
- Teachers who made an effort to include aspects of their refugee experience in the curriculum;
- Teachers who took racism seriously;
- Teachers who attended special events held by the refugee community organizations.

(In Malezak & Warner, 1992. Cited in Rutter, 2001)

Such responses are a simple indication of the many ways in which schools may adapt and develop their attitudes, procedures and systems and in order to best support children who have experienced the trauma of war. However, they also attest to the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the challenge, where the domains of home, school and community are implicitly interconnected.

Mesmin (1993) suggests that rather than trying to split themselves between these often parallel and sometimes incompatible worlds, schools and the services they offer, should be oriented towards mediating between the home and host cultures, and helping children to move easily backwards and forwards between the two. Whilst relevant for all immigrant students, this imperative to seek coherence and connection between home and school, between Quebec and the country of origin, may be particularly important for children who have experienced the trauma of violent conflict and expedited departure. As many teachers and administrators have pointed out, however, it is not easy to find a balance between respecting the importance of the home culture, and especially the first language of the child, and fulfilling the responsibility of the school and of individual teachers, to integrate newcomers into Quebec society, and to assist them in their learning of French. The degree of openness to first language support for children in school is very different in different schools, and even in different classrooms. Most schools acknowledge the importance of building on first language skills in immigrant children's development, but the extent of the school's involvement in this process differs considerably. Some schools, especially secondary schools, reported an official policy of

'French only' and prohibit the use of other languages at all times in order for students to develop their skills in French. Others, both officially and unofficially, do use other students, and/or other adults in the school who speak the same first language as a support system. Other schools make a point of introducing a new student to a child or adult who speaks their language, in order to reassure them; others allow such connections to happen informally. One elementary school regularly sends home weekly vocabulary sheets in French with the pictures, and where possible, the home language translations, and encourages parents to discuss the vocabulary, and the concepts that connect them, in their own language with their children. The concurrent development of first language skills is widely acknowledged as important, not only in the intellectual development of multi-lingual children, but also in their personal and social development. For war-affected children, whose self-confidence and esteem may be understandably fragile, first language development may be an important factor in processes of healing and confidence rebuilding. Furthermore, it may maintain an important connection with a country of origin that holds dear as well as painful memories.

Although the language issue is an important one, as the Canadian School Trustees Association (CSTA) points out in its report (1989):

“The issue is broader for school boards than the provision of second-language programs. The influx of refugee children has, for the first time, many boards dealing, for the first time, with the serious social, physical and behavioural problems that result from life in refugee camps or in countries where there is war and conflict.”

As explained, this study reflects shifts in thinking in local and international contexts away from a narrow bio-medical model of war-affected children that emphasizes difficulties and problems stemming from traumatic experiences of violence. As one teacher said, “There is no one recipe.” Alternative models seek to support the child in more holistic ways, to build on her capabilities and strengths, and to draw on her own coping mechanisms, strategies and resources, and those of her family and community. The resilience and adaptability of young children is remarkable, and in practice, only a small percentage of war-affected children require any specialist treatment. Factors such as a stable and loving family, having people to confide in, having access to required information, problem-solving capacities and a positive outlook on life, as well as a range of different interests and enjoyed activities can make significant differences in individual processes of coping and healing. As Van der Veer (1998) points out, studies seem to indicate that the settlement phase is crucial in making a difference in the long-term well-being of war-affected children, whatever their other experiences. In supporting the children and adolescents, in this phase Van der Veer suggests there are three particularly important factors to consider:

- 1) providing conditions for optimal development;
- 2) stimulating development through support;
- 3) removing obstacles to development.

Conditions for optimal development include basic material conditions such as a safe and healthy living environment, clothing, education and recreation but also a) safety and stability and b) stimulating social contacts, such as social networks, with their own community and with other supportive adults (such as teachers, counsellors) and c) opportunities to develop other talents such as sport and music. Adolescence may be a particularly challenging time for war-affected children, and it is significant that Van der Veer makes particular reference to the support they may need in, for example, working through questions and issues of sexual development; information on cultural attitudes and norms of the new country may be needed. Refugee adolescents are particularly in need of support in imagining and then building an independent future and in developing a future perspective.

The school is an important place that provides stability, normalcy, and a safe space in which to come to terms with the past. It is also a place to learn and think about other things, and most especially, about a positive future. It is a place where children learn not only the formal curriculum, but also gain a wealth of ideas and information about what it means to be a young person in Canada today. As these ideas may contradict and conflict with ideas brought from home cultures, the mediating role of the school and of the people working in it becomes very important for the child. Children should have opportunities in school to raise tricky questions, to learn that not all questions have answers, that uncertainty, ambivalence, and contradictory feelings and actions are very normal. Dr Cécile Rousseau suggests that as ‘lieux de pensée complexe’ (places of complex thought), schools can provide a very important element to the well being of war-affected children. The ability to express and reflect on these tensions, on the impossibility of either/or choices, of right or wrong, good or evil, is seen as an important protective factor for children coming to terms with traumatic experiences.

Clear and trusting communication is vital to development of positive relations between school, child and family, and yet as Richman (1998) points out, it is not just about learning another language or finding a good interpreter. “It is also about understanding cultural norms and how others see the world. It is about acknowledging and accepting differences in ways of life, expressing feelings, dealing with distress, and bringing up children. ...[it] depends on being curious, interested in other people and their differences, in spite of the effort required, especially when there are different ethnic groups.”

COMMUNICATION

Establishing this sort of communication with refugee children and families may, however, be particularly challenging. It is understandably difficult for newly arrived children and families to ascertain who is to be trusted, especially when they have escaped situations of fear and danger, oppression and injustice, and the uncertainties of who might

betray or who might be a collaborator. In such circumstances, parents may encourage their children not to talk to anyone (Malezak, 1992). Legal and administrative processes of immigration and resettlement may also encourage refugees and refugee applicants to hide the truth about various issues. Furthermore, the family may remain fearful that potentially incriminating information about them will be returned to their own countries and may put themselves or their friends, colleagues and relatives at further risk. Some topics about which the school seeks information may be particularly painful for children and/or parents to talk about, and may also conflict with cultural norms of family honour, privacy and parent-child relationships.

Time, openness, and sensitivity are certainly required to ease such communication challenges; regular and ongoing contact with children and their parents is important in order to establish trust, and should occur as often as possible in the context of sharing enjoyable activities, such as cultural activities. Teachers and other school personnel may need to show that they understand that families might distrust or be wary of them; where possible, offering practical information and advice may be a way of demonstrating the school's sincerity in its concern for the all-around well-being of its students and their families. Attempts to get to know more about the language, history, and culture of the country of origin may also help reassure parents and children about the intentions of the school with regard to the well being of the family. Teachers and administrators recognize the need for universities to address the issue of refugee and war-affected children in their training courses for pre-service teachers, to prepare those coming to teach in Montreal schools to work with students from fluctuating and changing populations of children and families whose life experiences are so often traumatic and so different to their own. Whilst avoiding a pathological model of the traumatized child, ready to 'flip' at any time, teachers should nonetheless be sensitive to the sorts of sudden, unexpected and unprepared-for events that may—or may not—trigger an emotional and possibly violent outburst in particular children. Fire alarms, planes flying overhead, even the arrival of a uniformed police officer in the classroom may represent fearful situations and evoke painful memories for children who have experienced armed conflict, and teachers should be sensitive to these possibilities. In the event of any panic attack or outburst, children are given time and space to talk or remain quiet, draw or read, to be with peers or withdraw, as they prefer.

Sensitivity and background information, in addition to clear guidelines and strategies, are needed particularly in the schools and communities of Montreal. Students of different ethnic groups who, in countries of origin, may be in conflict with each other, or are ideologically opposed, are thrown together and expected to live and learn together in busy classrooms and playgrounds. Derogatory remarks, behaviours and attitudes between children of different ethnic groups are of concern to teachers, and have in some cases, led to violent incidents in which the police have had to intervene. Clear anti-racist and anti-bullying policies, and effective implementation plans are important for schools to reassure those who may be on the receiving end of verbal and physical assaults, and to provide clear guidelines for teachers' interventions. Whilst some teachers were concerned by the increase in palpable tension between students following the events of September 11th, and some schools reported a marked increase in verbal and physical attacks between

students, concern was also expressed that the striking media images of war and conflict, and of refugee populations fleeing from danger zones and flooding into under-resourced refugee camps may re-evolve painful memories for other children having lived similarly traumatic experiences, perhaps in other parts of the world. Fears too for distant family members may increase and create further stress for young people and their families.

Whilst it is an ongoing challenge for schools to respond to the multiple internal and external factors that affect local, regional and global contexts, there are many different and often indirect ways in which schools may relieve the distress of refugee children and foster their healthy development whilst continuing to provide a very relevant and rigorous program for all other students. Support should be multi-faceted, building on the children's strengths and giving them hope for the future. The most common response from teachers questioned about their strategies for supporting war-affected children were along the lines of "We just do what we think seems right", "We don't have any specific program, but ..."

INTERVENTIONS

Specific activities, strategies and approaches for schools mentioned by teachers, school board personnel, community organizations, and suggested by other studies for supporting war-affected children in schools include:

On Arrival

An induction process that involves:

Getting to know the child, parent/s or guardian/s and establishing open and trusting lines of communication.

- Some schools, especially elementary schools, insist on the parent or guardian coming with the child to school on the first day.
- Interviewing parents in order to gain a fuller picture as possible of the child's educational and other needs, and of the parents' capacities and expectations. (See Appendix).
- Introducing the parents to the teachers and other significant adults who will be working with their child in school.
- Giving children and their parents a guided tour of the school so they see the whole building and have a chance to see as much as possible of what is going on, and who works within it.

- A map of the school may help orient students and families, and give them confidence when moving about within it.
- The presence of the principal and/ or other senior staff members in a ‘welcome party’ on the child’s first day may be an important indication of the importance of the child within the school.
- Such procedures may involve working with interpreters and translators. Richman (1998), however, draws attention to the problematic aspects of doing so, as did a number of teachers in schools. Awareness is raised of difficulties arising when, for example, the interpreter belongs to a group distrusted by the family, has limited linguistic ability in either language, lacks sensitivity, is unpracticed at interpreting and approximates questions and replies, makes up answers, becomes too involved in the conversation, and has conflicting loyalties which may affect confidentiality. Teachers suggested that school boards develop a large bank of translators for each language from which schools can pick people they know and trust. Richman suggests that the school talks through issues with the interpreter beforehand, ensures that the interpreter is acceptable to the family, stresses to all the issue of confidentiality, and allows time for introductions, for establishing trust, and to discuss any extra issues at the end.
- Maintaining ongoing dialogue and frequent communication with parents, and not only when things ‘go wrong’.
- Having an identified contact person at the school available to children and parents to talk to on any matters of concern.
- Providing clear explanations of how the school works, of the importance of parental involvement, and documentation on curriculum, policies, rules, and on other aspects of the particular school and of the general education system in Quebec.
- A board with staff members’ names and photos may help new children and parents feel more confident about who is who in an otherwise unfamiliar setting.
- A ‘Welcome Pack’ for the child including, for example, stationary items and welcome notes from other students can make them feel part of the school, and enable them to join in immediately with class activities.
- ‘Buddies’ may be assigned, or other befriending and partnering systems that provide a companion for the new child, at least for the initial settling in period. Where possible, this may be a child who speaks the same language. (Such a ‘buddy’ system may be equally beneficial to both partners, as the ‘already-

settled' child's self confidence and self-esteem develop through an opportunity to offer support to others, and to share their knowledge).

- The drawing up of an individualized learning plan for the child with in-built procedures for monitoring progress and the scheduling of regular reviews.
- An information evening for parents where local community organizations are brought together to talk about their work, to offer their services and to create links and build trust for newly arrived and needy families.
- Language classes offered to parents which focus on the language of school, and using school materials such as the child's school agenda and textbooks may help parents to work with their children and feel involved in their educational experience.

Settling In

At the school level

- Regular monitoring of academic and social development for children.
- Clear codes of conduct and effective anti-bullying and anti-racist policies and programs.
- Specific attention is paid to children's rights, and to global issues of peace and social justice, through assemblies, events and activities. Related resources are made available and visitors are invited into school.
- Comfortable playground environments in which games and spaces are provided in which all feel secure and included.
- Cultural activities involving refugee and immigrant community and parent groups.

At the classroom level

- As far as possible, regular routines are maintained in which students are confident and feel in control. Students are warned ahead of time about disruptions and changes, and are reassured during sudden noises or interruptions such as fire alarms and overhead planes which may otherwise cause them to panic.

- Opportunities are provided for students to read about their own and others' countries, cultures, histories and lives (e.g. through the range of books on offer in the school library and classroom, or discussing topics chosen for individual, group and class projects).
- Peace education and peaceful conflict resolution are at the heart of a curriculum that inspires and equips all students to be informed and active citizens, globally and locally.
- 'Safe spaces' and opportunities are created for students to think, talk, draw, and write about their own experiences, in their own time. "Doors must be opened for students and parents to talk when they are ready", without ever feeling forced or under pressure to do so.
- A range of creative activities is on offer, such as drama, photo work, music, dance, art, and poetry, through which positive as well as traumatic experience may be mediated.
- Opportunities for outdoor and nature-based work are provided (such as school gardening, educational visits out of the city, ecology, biology and geography projects). Children from more rural environments may especially experience an acute and painful missing of green spaces, of nature and of interaction with the earth and its resources.
- Access is given to a range of sports and other physical activities.
- Different kinds of language support are offered such as homework groups and clubs, or one-to-one teaching. The difficulties of providing this sort of support are however acknowledged; college students may be unreliable, or may lack classroom management techniques, and the inconvenient hours and low pay may deter quality candidates. Solutions suggested include employing lunchtime helpers to work with the students after school. These adults, mostly women, are already in the school, know the children and the system, and may appreciate the opportunity to work with students in a different context. Pre-service teaching students at local universities may also find such work stimulating, and professionally relevant.
- Opportunities to develop and practice first-language skills are offered to students, such as PELO classes or Saturday schools.
- Opportunities are provided for students to meet with other members of refugee and immigrant communities.

Vital, however, to all the above strategies, teachers stress the importance of individual attitude, sensitivity and interest of teachers and other adults in supporting war-affected children. This sort of attitude means individual teachers take on the responsibility to:

- Learn as much as they can about the areas of conflict from which their students may be coming, to better understand the roots of the conflict, the impacts it may have, and something of the culture of the students coming into their class.
- Support other colleagues, especially new and less experienced ones, who may feel challenged by the behaviours of affected children, and less aware of the resources available to them.
- Reach out as far as possible to meet children and their families who may, for many different reasons, feel distanced, alienated, afraid and incapacitated.

It is important, however, to recognize the considerable emotional impact that this sort of work may have on teachers and other support staff, in addition to the everyday stresses of teaching in busy schools and classrooms. Informal support offered to each other was mentioned by teachers as being so important in their schools, and is crucial in the building of safe and supportive learning environments for all. For its own staff working with war-affected populations, UNHCR (1995) recommends formalized debriefings for staff after crises, and the development of systems such as ‘buddy relationships’; these strategies, along with the more ‘common sense’ ones suggested, such as ensuring good nutrition and sleep, developing relaxation techniques and taking regular rest and physical activity periods, may be equally relevant for teachers in school. Also important to recognize is that an array of information and a range of services exist, if not within the school, then easily accessible from it.

The bibliography and resource list of this document provide some starting points.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Banian Project

Dr Cécile Rousseau and her team developed a pilot intervention project in three Montreal elementary schools in which story-telling formed a safe, comfortable and even empowering medium through which refugee children from war-torn regions and their classmates were able to engage in activities that had important individual and collective meaning. The project was based on the findings of a number of studies, and their understanding of the importance for refugee children of establishing continuity between the past, present and future, and of connecting

family and community. Story and myth provided a vehicle for young storytellers to both approach and distance themselves from particular traumatic experiences, as they developed, recounted and illustrated stories of characters of their own choice. Their stories, sometimes gruesome, sometimes fantastical, were proudly shared with class members, weaving in and out of individual and collective reality and myth; these processes allowed for the class as a collective to develop shared meanings of experiences of war, upheaval, flight and resettlement.

The project took place over a period of 12 weeks with a weekly two-hour session facilitated by the clinical team, but also involving the class teachers. Over the different sessions, children were told different myths, and developed their own. Each story had four different stages: the past, a journey, arrival in a new country and the future. Whilst the project was seen as a very successful educational experience for all members of the classes, the drawings were of particular interest to the clinical team, allowing them to make some connections between the ability of children to represent a coherent past and imagine a positive future and the supportive presence of family and friends.

(Also described in Rousseau, C.; Lacroix, L.; Bagilishya, D. & Heusch, N., (1999) *Ateliers d'expression créatrice en milieu scolaire pour les enfants immigrants et réfugiés; Rapport aux écoles*)

Parenting Workshops in Montreal North

In response to the acknowledged difficulties some parents may face in finding alternatives to physically disciplining their children, École Saint-Vincent-Marie refers parents to a local community organization, le Centre Mariebourg. In collaboration with La Maison d'Haiti, Haitian community workers approach local families, inviting them to attend 4 Friday evening sessions at which they are taught a series of tools and strategies as more positive alternatives to corporal punishment. The approach is very open and non-judgmental, necessarily culturally sensitive and conducted in Creole. Children are invited to join in the final session of the series. The results have been very positive, with very few subsequent problems reported.

Play for Peace, Play for Space

Play for Peace, Play for Space is a creative art/play program for children living in high-risk communities, especially immigrant and refugee children coming from regions of conflict. It is based on suggestions made and experiences described by the children in focus groups and during previous projects. The program, recently expanded into two Ottawa schools, works with whole classes through a progression of ideas starting with "Peace around the Child". This involves

exploration of issues in the child's immediate and present environments such as violence and bullying. The second theme is that of "Peace within the Child", focusing on the child's inner resources to cope with the issues. The final theme is that of "Peace as the Way of Life" and here children explore ways of changing and transforming their immediate environment through the strategies discussed and the insights gained. Creative activities such as drawing, clay creation, story telling, theatre and dance are used to create a safe context of freedom. Creativity is developed as a lifelong skill for the children, and an expression of resilience, tolerance and adaptability.

The program, financed through a community support program of the Ministry of Justice, has been developed by family physician, Dr Alison Eyre, and play therapist, Chitra Sekar. They hope to be able to expand to more schools in the future, and to develop a training manual and a training program for other groups.

Settlement and Education Partnerships in Toronto (SEPT)

The SEPT project is a partnership between the Toronto District School Board and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and a number of local community agencies providing settlement services to newcomers. The SEPT program assists newcomer families to settle successfully into our schools and community by providing the information they need as newly arrived immigrants, and connecting them with school resources and social services in the community. SEPT workers are assigned to schools and clusters of schools with a relatively high proportion of families that have been in Canada for less than three years.

In those schools that are included in the SEPT project, newcomer families can now access community support at their local school. A SEPT worker meets with the family at the school to discuss the particular information or settlement needs of the family, and then helps the family by providing information, advice or referral to the appropriate Board resources or community social services.

Building Bridges Program

Through an extensive process of consultation, focus groups and pilot work, the International Children's Institute (ICI) developed this project to "build bridges" among families, schools and community caregivers, in order to support children's adjustment and well-being. The program helps displaced, immigrant and refugee children in Canadian schools from war-torn countries to develop their coping skills and resilience through creative self-expression activities such as art, story telling and story-writing. Aimed at elementary level students, the program is now being used in approximately 25 schools in the Toronto area, 10 in the city and 15 in the surrounding area. It represents a partnership between specialists in mental

health, health, settlement services and education. Manuals have been developed for school principals, families and community caregivers, including background information and activities. For principals, tools are included for developing a comprehensive, long-term, whole-school approach to supporting children's emotional well being. School self-assessment activities are suggested, steps for creating partnerships, and calendars to plot out the development of the project, in addition to a variety of activities and ideas for schools to undertake. Rather than a rigid model for intervention, the program is designed to fit into normal classroom practices, and to integrate into the curriculum of each grade level. As Dr. Ester Cole, a Toronto psychologist who has pioneered the project, says, "We needed to make it user-friendly and capitalize on best practices that teachers do anyway." The ICI have developed a train-the-trainer approach, whereby a number of retired principals support new schools taking on the program.

A video is available showing the project in progress and talking with teachers and others involved in pilot Toronto schools. The Building Bridges program has also been taken up in schools in Croatia, Bosnia, Albania and Kosovo to help children remaining in their countries to come to terms with the memories and histories of war. (For further details of international implementation, see Sally Armstrong's Special Report: Out of the Ashes, in *Chatelaine Magazine*, February 2002)

Salisbury Primary School and Salisbury World

Salisbury is a large elementary school in London, UK, with 12-15% of its 600 pupils being either refugees or asylum-seekers. Children from different countries such as Iraq, Somalia and Kosovo live in a range of accommodations in the area, including bed and breakfast hotels; some move on within a few weeks, but others stay for up to two years. Bearing in mind the needs of most refugee children and the specific needs of a small number of particularly needy children, the school has developed a range of strategies such as:

- Welcome packs are given to all newly arrived children including pens and pencils to help them take part immediately in school lessons and activities.
- New children are greeted and shown around by peers, who also translate for them if needed.
- Refugee parents also often come into the school to help out, sometimes as interpreters, in the classrooms.
- The playground has been redesigned to include quiet sitting areas which are less intimidating and more comfortable for new children.
- Issues such as human rights, migration and the welcome of newcomers are addressed in lessons and assemblies in the school.

- A local education authority team has placed a Somali and an Arabic-speaking teacher in the school.

The school subsequently set up a charitable organization, Salusbury World, to extend its work with refugee children and families. A program has developed that includes:

- A disused room in the school being refurbished as a drop-in center for refugee children and their caregivers.
- The provision of bilingual books.
- An after-school and homework program to which refugee children can also invite their friends.
- Advocacy and advice for parents provided by a project coordinator who also visits hotels and hostels in the area to make contact.
- A holiday program that involves creative projects such as photography.

Also described in Rutter, J. (2001)

WHEN TO SEEK SPECIALIST HELP?

Although the activities and strategies described above have been developed for and with schools as particularly appropriate and helpful ways of supporting not only refugee children, but also their immigrant and native born peers, they do not represent any attempt at specialist mental health intervention. Although most refugee children will not require any particular specialist attention beyond the sort of caring and supportive school environment fostered through the above suggestions, it is important for schools and teachers to be aware of the different specialist services that are available to children and their families, and to be aware of the different signs which may indicate that the child is suffering undue difficulties and that specialist help could assist.

As health, mental and social services are generally under-used by immigrant and refugee populations, teachers have a particularly important role to play in assuring that children who need specialist attention receive it. At the same time, there is also a need for sensitivity and an understanding that in some cultures mental health and academic difficulties may be very difficult to admit to, or that in contexts where even basic health care and education is limited, any psychological or remedial attention is a 'luxury' that parents and children are unaccustomed to. Schools in Montreal, however, often have psychologists and other professionals working in the schools, who are connected with CLSCs and other outside services and so are well positioned to set up and support children and families in more specialized programs of therapy and adaptation.

Observed over a consistent period of time, or as a sudden change, the following behaviours may well signal the need for special attention, and possibly outside support to a child and/or their family.

If the child, for example:

- Is learning only slowly, and not making expected progress;
- Is attending school irregularly and missing classes;
- Has social problems interacting with peers; maybe is isolated, with no friends;
- Is clearly not receiving adequate care from home (e.g. inappropriate clothes, insufficient food);
- Shows behavioural difficulties such as aggression, disobedience, and is disruptive;
- Is restless and finds it difficult to concentrate, is overactive;
- Suddenly withdraws from others;
- Complains of physical problems, such as aches and pains;
- Suffers from nightmares or other recurring disturbing images;
- Is wetting or soiling;
- Is not eating and appears to be losing weight;
- Is sleepy, tired and lethargic during the day;
- Shows undue nervousness and anxiety.

Therefore, drawing from the above examples, strategies and intervention measures, the messages for schools in thinking about their work with war-affected children are:

- Multi-agency planning and interventions (e.g. between schools and CLSCs, community organizations) create supportive networks for children and their families. Within the school, team approaches, drawing on the input of different members of staff, of volunteers, peers, parents and other specialists, are important.

- Creating the optimum learning and development environments for war-affected children implies attention to every facet of the schooling experience, including arrival and settling into school, curriculum, classroom management, codes of conduct, discipline and other policies, parental and community liaison, extra-curricular spaces and activities.
- Most often children who have experienced the multiple traumas of armed conflict, flight and resettlement have strong enough internal, family and community resources and capacities, so that when supported by understanding and caring people, they can develop healthily and fulfill their full potential. Some, however, will require specialist support. Schools are not alone, and as shown in the resource section, a range of services exists locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, in addition to a wealth of documentation and information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This timely study raises awareness of the particular experiences and perspectives of war-affected children in Montreal schools. It draws on a range of school and teacher experiences, on community perceptions, possible intervention strategies, and on a number of significant conceptual studies, to suggest a community-based, whole-school response. Whilst the horrific nature of war and violence and its negative impact on children can never be denied, the study nonetheless promotes a positive view of the child as a resourceful, resilient, and capable agent both in her own academic, personal and social development, and that of those around her. Whilst explicit awareness of war-affected children appears to be as yet relatively unarticulated in most school settings in Montreal, there is nonetheless a genuine interest and concern, and a desire for more information and support material. The study therefore provides appropriate examples, suggestions and references. Successful intervention activities in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto are highlighted, and a series of key messages articulated for teachers, school administrators and others.

The issue is first set in international and national contexts, before focusing specifically on Montreal. A series of facts and figures relating to immigration, to refugee status and to the numbers of children from refugee-producing countries are included in order to contextualize the issue. It is highlighted that, of the almost 200,000 children registered in Montreal schools in 2000-2001 who were born outside of Quebec, significant numbers were born in countries affected by war and organized violence, such as Haiti (3,225, or 1.6% of the total school population), Algeria (1,991 or approx 1%), and Lebanon (1,292, or 0.65%). The relatively large numbers of students from Sri Lanka (1,044) and Congo (Zaire) (737) are almost certain to have direct experience of armed conflict, as may the smaller numbers of students from countries such as Guatemala (400), Afghanistan (297), Colombia (245), Congo (176), Iraq (118), Somalia (114), Burundi (82), Angola (73), Palestine (14), and Sudan (11). Students from other countries, such as Peru, Mexico, and Iran, however, may also have experienced violent repression and persecution of family, friends and community in their home country, and may too have endured long, complicated and dangerous journeys to places of relative safety. Arrival and resettlement in Canada may also create additional stress factors for children and their families. Furthermore, there is growing acknowledgement of the intergenerational transmission of trauma, and the effects of trauma on parenting capacities, making the country of origin and the possible experiences of war and violence of parents, a significant element in thinking about, and supporting war-affected children.

However, definitions, statistics, facts and figures can never tell the whole story. Although information and sensitivity to the issues is important for schools, teachers and other support services working with these children, also of importance is an awareness that the experience of war and violence, rather than inevitably creating a predisposition to mental health and other problems, may actually build strengths and skills in young people in ways we might never have imagined. War-affected children cannot be labeled and diagnosed as such, nor necessarily singled out for particular attention. The challenge for

schools is to build environments in which all students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to learn and develop.

Key messages are:

- Multi-agency planning and interventions (e.g. between schools and CLSCs, community organizations) create supportive networks for children and their families. Within schools, team approaches, drawing on the input of different members of staff, of volunteers, peers, parents and other specialists, are important.
- Creating optimum learning and development environments for war-affected children implies attention to every facet of the schooling experience, including arrival and settling into school, curriculum, classroom management, codes of conduct, discipline and other policies, parental and community liaison, extra-curricular spaces and activities.
- Most often, children who have experienced the multiple traumas of armed conflict, flight and resettlement have strong enough internal, family and community resources and capacities, so that when supported by understanding and caring people, they can develop healthily and fulfill their potential. However, some will require specialist support. Schools are not alone, and a range of services exists locally, regionally, nationally and internationally in addition to a wealth of documentation and information.

The study reflects shifts in thinking in local and international contexts away from a narrow bio-medical model of war-affected children; this traditional model emphasizes difficulties and problems stemming from traumatic experiences of violence. It recommends ‘treatments’, targeted individual interventions, and in particular, therapy and counseling. In comparison, a community-based intervention model seeks to support the child in a more holistic way, to build on her capabilities and strengths, and to draw on her own coping mechanisms, strategies and resources, and those of her family and community. Rather than a narrow focus on the needs of the child, a community-based approach, oriented to children’s rights, may shape multi-faceted programs, which aim to enable *all* children to realize their rights, and fulfill their potentials. Such an approach, therefore, appears highly appropriate in the context of schools, where different partners (teachers, administrators, parents, community organizations, support workers and others) seek to create the most supportive environment in which special attention is given to enabling refugee and war-affected children to participate actively, to think and solve problems for themselves, and to enjoy a child-oriented model of quality education. Furthermore, a community-based approach seeks the active involvement, not only of expert mental health specialists, but insists on the collaboration of the multiple partners involved in the creation of school environments (parents, teachers, administrators, school governing board members, school boards, ministry and governments) in the support of war-affected children.

APPENDIX

Suggested Information Required for a Social Assessment of Refugee Children Entering School (adapted from *In the Midst of a Whirlwind*)

Who does the child live with?

Where is the rest of the family?

What is the immigration/refugee status of the child and of other members of the family?

What is the housing situation of the family?

Where are other siblings placed?

Does the child have any health problems or concerns?

Is the child adequately vaccinated?

Is the family registered with a doctor?

Does the child and family have particular religious affiliations?

Does this imply any particular dietary or other special requirements?

Do the parents or caregivers have any specific concerns for the child?

What are the sorts of expectations the family has of the school and of the child?

Suggested Information Required for Educational Assessment of Refugee Children Entering Class (adapted from *In the Midst of a Whirlwind*)

What language is spoken at home?

What is the child's level of ability in this language? Orally, read and written?

Does the child speak or understand any other languages?

What are the child's current abilities in French and English?

What is the child's previous educational history?

What are the family's current abilities in French and English?

What is the educational level of the parents?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TEACHING AND RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS WORKING WITH WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

**Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (1995) *War is Not a Game*. Toronto: CCVT
Version française : RIVO, Montreal.**

This 32-minute video includes personal accounts of war and conflict told by young people from Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Cambodia, now settled in Canada. Interviews with teachers, mental health and other experts provide insight into the ways these children are being supported in schools and in the community.

Canadian School Trustees Association (CSTA) (1989) *Scholastic adaptation and cost effectiveness of programs for immigrant/refugee children in Canadian schools*.

Canadian Teachers' Federation (1990) *Responding to the Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Children*. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation.

A short report highlighting some of the major issues facing schools and teachers in working with immigrant and refugee students.

CERIS & Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2000) *Strangers Becoming Us. Teachers Resource Kit*.

(see www.classroom-connections.com/e/programs_00-01/strangers.html)

This classroom resource kit comprises CDs of radio show style interviews and commentary, with transcripts, and sets of 'classroom ready' student activities for Grades 4-8 and 10-11. The resource pack is supported by further online material, and aims to address issues of immigration in Canadian history and society. It is set very much within the context of Canadian citizenship and multiculturalism.

Coelho, E. (1998) *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools*.

Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters (available from University of Toronto Press).

Hyder, T. & Rutter, J. (1998) *Refugee Children in the Early Years: Issues for Policy-makers and providers*.

This report addresses the unequal access to early-year provision among refugees.

Hyder, T. & Rutter, J. (2001) *In Safe Hands*. London: Save the Children & Refugee Council.

This video training pack provides information, overheads and activities for training teachers and other early years practitioners who work with refugee children. It includes:

- Information and guidance on how schools can support refugee children
- Information and guidance on how to provide emotional support to children who have experienced violent conflict
- Information and guidance on how to use play and play therapy as a means of dealing with traumatic experiences
- Guidance on the use of anti-racist practice as a means of raising self-esteem.
- Activities to support language development
- Video case studies of two schools with considerable experience of working with refugee children

International Children's Institute (1999) *Building Bridges Program*. Montreal: International Children's Institute.

A series of four Building Bridges Guidebooks, developed by and for teachers, principals, mental health professionals, community caregivers and families, are designed to help implement the Building Bridges Program. Each guide offers specific strategies, valuable information, and insights, as well as a range of activities and initiatives to support children, their families and the whole school community.

Kaprielian-Churchill, I. & Churchill, S. (1994) *The Pulse of the World: Refugees in Our Schools*. Toronto: OISE Press.

Maksoud, M. (2000) *Helping Children Cope with the Stresses of War: a Manual for Parents and Teachers*. New York: UNICEF.

Minority Rights Group, *Forging New Identities: Young Refugees and Minority Students Tell Their Stories. Views from London and Amsterdam*.

This document is a collection of writings by refugee and minority children in London (England) and Amsterdam (the Netherlands). Students who contributed to these narratives were in the process of learning a new language, beginning life in a new country, and coping with a new culture and with racism after having left family and friends behind. Notes for teachers are included with some activities for discussions and student worksheets.

Richman, N. (1991) *Helping Children in Distress: A Teacher's Manual*. London: Save the Children.

This manual helps those who work in situations of violence to recognize and understand the effects of war and social conflict on children's feelings and development. On the basis of practical experience in Mozambique, the author provides a step-by-step guide on how to support children who have been affected by their experiences of violence, with a special emphasis on the role of teachers.

Richman, N. (1998) *In the Midst of a Whirlwind: A Manual for Helping Refugee Children*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Designed specifically for teachers, social workers and health workers, this manual offers practical guidance on all aspects of provision and responses to the situations and needs of the growing number of displaced children and their families. It also describes what various agencies can do to help, stressing the importance of communication and creative activities.

Richman, N. (2000) *Communicating with Children: Helping Children in Distress*. London: Save the Children.

This book aims to help those working in conflict situations and emergencies to develop their listening and communication skills, in order to identify and help children with special needs. It deals, among other things, with the importance of understanding different cultural ways of communicating and dealing with stress, with overcoming blocks in communication, giving comfort, talking to families, preventing 'burn-out', and vulnerable children. Using case histories to illustrate the problems facing children, this manual suggests ways of resolving difficulties. Practical exercises and details of how to run workshops allow readers to develop the ideas outlined.

Rousseau, C., Lacroix, L., Bagilishya, D. & Heusch, N. (1999) *Ateliers d'expression créatrice en milieu scolaire pour les enfants immigrants et réfugiés; Rapport aux écoles*.

Rutter, J. & Candappa, M. (Eds) (1998) *Why Do They Have to Fight?* London: The Refugee Council.

This appealing resource book for primary students and teachers features individual stories from refugee children forced to flee. The book is accompanied by maps, photos and other information. It also includes basic facts and figures about refugees, a short dictionary of key words and phrases, and a resource list.

Rutter, J. (1994) *Refugee Children in the Classroom*. Stoke-on-Trent, England: Trentham Books.

Rutter, J. (1996) *Refugees: We Left Because We Had To*. London: Refugee Council.

This resource book for secondary schools on refugees is now in its second edition. It includes historical background to refugee settlement in the UK, looks at the reasons for migration, and contains numerous activities for students.

Rutter, J. (1998) *Refugees: A Resource Book for Primary Schools*. London: The Refugee Council.

This book, written from the perspective that children should be helped to understand how different opinions are formed, provides numerous activities for children to explore different opinions, and feelings about refugees and immigrants. It explores themes such as human rights, justice and identity, to help children gain a greater understanding of the flight of refugees and their needs in a new society, to help children see that they are linked to other nations through migration, to develop greater empathy for refugees, locally, nationally and internationally, and to help them act on this.

Rutter, J. (2001) *Supporting Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain: a Compendium of Essential Information*. Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

This authoritative handbook, written from twelve years of experience working with schools, education authorities, refugees, students and teachers, provides background information on the legal rights and entitlements of asylum-seekers and refugees, early years provision, working with 14-19 year olds, health care, emotional and psychological issues, expressive arts with young people, and family literacy.

Rutter, J. (2001) *Supporting Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain: a Compendium of Essential Information*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Rutter, J. & Jones, C. (1998) *Refugee Education: Mapping the Field*. Stoke-on-Trent, England: Trentham Books.

UNHCR *To Be a Refugee*.

This [video](#), aimed at children aged 9-12, is accompanied by a short teaching guide of classroom activities. It tells the stories of 5 children who are forced to leave their homes in different parts of the world and spend time in refugee camps and centres before being resettled in new places.

UNHCR (1998) *To Feel at Home: The Integration of Refugees in Europe*. London: UNHCR.

This 50-minute [video](#) is accompanied by a [booklet](#) of further information, activities and resource lists, and is aimed at teachers and others working with students aged 14-18. Although it may be relevant to a number of different formal curriculum areas, such as geography, moral and religious education, it may also be useful in more informal settings such as youth groups, clubs, etc. The pack seeks to raise awareness about the settlement of refugees in Europe, but the issues it discusses, such as human rights, responsibilities and justice, apply equally to the Canadian context. Furthermore, it encourages students to think about their own relationships towards refugees, and to consider how they can help make them 'feel at home' in their communities.

UNHCR (1998) *Human Rights, Refugees and UNHCR*. Geneva: UNHCR.

This pack aims to support teachers of students aged 9 through 18 in the discussion of the relationships between refugees and human rights. A series of posters use Lego figures to pose provocative questions about how it feels to be excluded, discriminated against and challenge students to 'Spot the Refugee' or 'Notice the Difference'. A series of articles are included as discussion-starters for older students.

Yau, M. (1995) *Refugee Students In Toronto Schools: An Exploratory Study*. No 211. Research Services, Toronto Board of Education: Toronto.**YWCA Toronto. *Playing with Rainbows: A National Play-Program for At-Risk Refugee Children*. Toronto: YWCA (Available in French or English)**

This manual outlines a 12-session model, involving play, designed to facilitate healing in children who have been traumatized by the experiences of war and migration. While the manual was written for use in a group program, it would also be of interest to those working with children or adults in a wide range of settings.

STORY BOOKS FOR CHILDREN
Laird, E. (1991) *Kiss the Dust*. Heinemann.

Based on the real experiences in the mid-80s of Iraqi Kurds now living in England, Laird's story portrays the journey of a Kurdish refugee family that has to flee Iraq. Thirteen year-old Tara Hawrami and her family must flee their home for a refugee camp. Escaping the police as they leave their home city in northern Iraq, they take a taxi to their primitive vacation home in the mountains. For Tara, the return to village ways is almost as much of a shock as the bombs that eventually drive the family over the border into Iran, to a refugee camp. Eventually, contact with relatives in Teheran is made and the family negotiates its escape to London.

Ellis D. (2000) *The Breadwinner*. Toronto: Groundwood.

Set in the early years of the Taliban regime, this novel explores the harsh realities of life for girls and women in modern-day Afghanistan. Ellis bases *The Breadwinner* on the true-life stories of women in Afghan refugee camps, writing of 11-year-old Parvana's experiences growing up in Kabul. She rarely goes outside, cannot attend school, shop at the market, or play in the streets. This changes, however, when her father is seized by the Taliban, and Parvana realizes that it's up to her to become the "breadwinner" and disguise herself as a boy to support her mother, two sisters, and baby brother.

Filipovic, Z. (1994) *Zlata's Diary*. New York: Scholastic.

Zlata Filipovic of Sarajevo began keeping her diary in 1991, just before her eleventh birthday. In this powerful and moving document, she describes her life in the city as tension rises and war develops. Zlata records all her activities from school to piano lessons, skiing, parties, and watching her favourite TV shows, before the chaos and terror of war shatter her world. Schools close, socializing becomes too risky, and her once comfortable home becomes a fragile shelter with neither electricity nor water. Despite what is going on, Zlata keeps up her diary entries, writing of the claustrophobia, boredom, resignation, anger, despair, and fear that war brings.

Hampton, M.-J. *The Cat from Kosovo: The True Story of How a Refugee Cat Found a Haven and a Home in Nova Scotia*. Nimbus.

The moving story for younger children tells the story of a cat that flees the bombing in Pristina, Kosovo with her owners, Olsa and Bashkim. They are forced to travel first to Macedonia and then to a new home in Canada. Some of the proceeds of this book go to the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association.

Naidoo, B. (2000) *The Other Side of Truth*. London: Puffin Books.

Sade, the 12-year-old protagonist of *The Other Side Of Truth* must flee her native Nigeria with her younger brother after their mother is killed in a shooting; their journalist father is in trouble with the military government. Sade and 10-year-old brother Femi soon find themselves stranded in London, abandoned by the woman paid to smuggle them into the country, and looked after by foreign government agencies, foster families and teachers. The narrative is written from Sade's viewpoint, whether she's remembering what she left behind, trying to care for her nearly silent brother, or coping with the bullies at her new school. Set against the larger, social and political contexts, Sade's flashbacks, letters, and memories of her mother's sayings add poignant individual detail.

Munsch, R., & Askar, S. (Contributor), (1995) *From Far Away*. Canada: Annick Press.

Written from her own point of view, this simple story tells of the frightening experiences of Saoussan when she first started in her new Canadian school, having left the war-torn city of Beirut. At first she speaks no English, cannot understand her teacher, and at Halloween is terrified by a skeleton. Gradually, however, she begins to feel happier and more comfortable. Munsch wrote the story in collaboration with Saoussan, after she wrote inviting him to her school.

BACKGROUND READING FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL INCLUDING JOURNAL ARTICLES AND OTHER SPECIALIZED STUDIES

Abu-Laban, B.; Derwing, T.; Mulder, M. & Northcott, H. (2001) *Lessons Learned: An Evaluation of Northern Alberta's Experience with Kosovar Refugees*. Prairie Centre for Research on Immigration and Integration and Population Research Laboratory: Alberta.

Ahearn, F.; Loughry, M.; & Ager, A. (1999) *The Experiences of Refugee Children*. In A.Ager (ed) *Refugees: Perspectives on the Experience of Forced Migration*. London: Pinter.

Alhearn, F. L., Jr & Athey, J. L. (Eds) (1991) *Refugee Children: Theory, Research and Services*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Originating with The Conference on Refugee Children Traumatized by War and Violence, which was held in Washington, DC, September 1988, this volume explores typical experiences that identify the special physical, social, and mental health needs of refugee children, particularly those who have fled countries in which war or other forms of violence are widespread.

Apfel, R. J, & Simon, B. (Eds) (1996) *Minefields in their Hearts: The Mental Health of Children in War and Communal Violence*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

The contributions to this collection, by mental health professionals who have worked with children exposed to war and violence, address such topics as the ethical issues involved in working with children in war zones, children's development under violent circumstances, stress reactions, "survivor guilt," interventions and treatments, and the emotional health of caretakers.

Ayotte, W. (2001) *Separated Children Seeking Asylum in Canada*. UNHCR.

Beiser, M. (1999) *Strangers at the Gate – The Boat People's First Ten Years in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Beiser, M. (1999) *New Canadian Children and Youth Study: Literature Review*. Health Canada.

Available on CERIS Website.

Beiser, M. (1995) Migration and Health. The Mental Health of Southeast Asian Refugees Resettling in Canada. In *Migration World Magazine*. 23 (5), Pp 34-36.

This study compiles data from 1981, 1983 and 1991 to 1993 to prepare an analysis of the changes in stress, social resources, coping, mental health, employment, English proficiency, dealing with violence, family reunification, consumer practices, and traditional and Canadian customs over the first decade of resettlement for Southeast Asian refugees in Canada.

Benjamin, M. & Morgan, P. (1989) *Refugee Children Traumatized by War and Violence: The Challenge Offered to the Service Delivery System*.

This document provides information and knowledge about the experiences of refugee children who have been traumatized by war and violence and suggests some innovative approaches for delivering services to refugee children and their families in the United States.

Berman H. (1999). Stories of Growing up Amid Violence by Refugee Children of War and Children of Battered Women living in Canada. *Image - the Journal of Nursing Scholarship*. 31(1), Pp 57-63.

This study explores how two groups of children who grew up amid violence "make sense" of their experience. Although considerable research has been conducted with children who are abused or neglected, the needs of those who witness violence have been largely overlooked. Despite a common perception that children are unable to talk about deeply troubling experiences, this research demonstrates that children not only want to discuss their experience, but also welcome the opportunity to do so.

Boyden, J. (2002) *Social Healing in War-affected and Displaced Children*. Paper presented at Working with Children in Armed Conflict, a Skills-Building Workshop. Ottawa, January 2002.

Bush, K. & Saltarelli, D. (Eds) (2000) *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict challenges a widely held assumption that education is inevitably a force for good. While stressing the many stabilizing and positive features of quality education, Bush and Salterelli show how education can be manipulated to drive a wedge between people, rather than drawing them closer together. After analyzing the importance of ethnicity in contemporary conflicts, this Innocenti Insight outlines the negative and positive faces of education in situations of tension or violence, including the denial of education as a weapon of war (negative) and the cultivation of inclusive citizenship (positive). It emphasizes the need for peacebuilding education that goes further than the 'add good education and stir' approach, aiming to transform the very foundations of intolerance.

Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees (1988) *Review of the Literature on Migrant Mental Health & After the Door has been Opened*. Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada Supply and Services.

The Task Force reviewed over 1000 publications as well as unpublished reports and concluded that migration itself does not predict mental disorder, rather there a number of factors that may be associated with the migration experience which may increase vulnerability. These factors include a drop in socio-economic status following migration, language difficulties in the host country, separation from family, unfriendly welcome in the new community, isolation from others with a similar cultural background, traumatic experiences or prolonged stress during migration.

Cole, E. E.; Oliva M. & Rothblum, E. D. (1992) *Refugee Women and their Mental Health: Shattered Societies, Shattered Lives*. London, New York & Norwood, Aus.: Harrington Park Press.

Cole, E. (1998) Immigrant and Refugee Children: Challenges and Opportunities for Education and Mental Health Services. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*. 14 (1). Pp 36-50

Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal (2001) *Répartition des élèves des 5 commissions scolaires de l'île de Montréal selon leur origine, celle de leurs parents, leur langue maternelle et celle parlée à la maison 1999-2000 et 2000-2001*. Montréal: Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal.

Daud-M, R.; Kassem, M.; Al-Shaykh, U.A.; Abu-Shelleyh, A.; Balkis, W.; Al-Ahmad, W.; Shaaban, S.; Zaaroura, I.; Attiyeh, K.; Abdullah, S.; Merhi, M.; Merhi, M. & Ghammam, M. (1999) Through Children's Eyes: Children's Rights in Shatila Camp. *Journal of Palestinian Studies*. 29 (1). Pp50-7.

This article comprises testimonies of 17 children living in the camp aged between 12 and 15 that address how they see their rights being denied or compromised. They were written as part of an ongoing NGO education program with Palestinian children, leading to the setting up of a children's library in the camp and email contacts with other children in other camps.

Israelite, N. K.; Herman, A.; Ahmed A. F.; Abdullai M. H. & Khan, Y. (1999) *Settlement Experiences of Somali Refugee Women in Toronto*. Paper prepared for the 7th International Congress of Somali Studies, York University, Toronto.

Available on CERIS Website.

Jiwani, Y. (1998) *Violence Against Marginalized Girls: A Review of the Current Literature*. Vancouver, BC: FREDA.

Available on FREDA Website.

Jiwani, Y., Normandeau, S.; Berman, H., Gorkoff, K. & Vardy-Dell, G. (2000) *Violence Prevention and the Girl Child, Final Report*. Ottawa, ON: Health Canada, Violence Prevention Division.

Available on FREDA Website.

Kell, R. (1995) Immigrant and Refugee Children in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. 40 (6). Pp 360-

Krahn, H.; Derwing, T.; Mulder, M. & Wilkinson, L. (2000) Educated and Underemployed: Refugee Integration into the Canadian Labour Market. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. 1 (1) Pp 59-84.

Maksoud, M. (1992) Assessing War Trauma in Children: a Case Study of Lebanese Children. In *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 5 (1).

Maksoud, M.S. & Aber, J.L. (1996) *The War Experiences and Psychosocial Development of Children in Lebanon*. *Child Development*. 67, Pp70-88.

Malezak, S. & Warner, R. (1992) *Integrating Refugee Children in Schools*. London: Minority Rights Group.

Man, N. (2000) *Children, Torture and Power: The Torture of Children by States and Armed Opposition Groups*. London: Save the Children.

Drawing on documentary evidence from the UN inter-governmental bodies and a wide range of NGOs, this report identifies the different factors that increase a child's vulnerability to torture and ill treatment. It also considers the international definition of torture and problems in its application to children; the effects of torture on children; the mechanisms that exist to protect children from torture. It sets out a series of concrete recommendations for government, inter-governmental agencies, NGOs and donors.

Matas, D., with Simon, I. (1989) *Closing the Doors: The Failure of Refugee Protection*. Toronto: Summerhill Press.

Mesmin, C. (1993) *Les Enfants de migrants à l'école: Réussite, échec*. Paris: La Pensée Sauvage.

Meyers, M. (1993) *What's the Difference? Refugee Children in Our Schools*. Unpublished Manuscript, quoted in Yau, M. (1995).

Mojab, S.; McDonald, S. & Hojabri, A. (1999) *Thanks for Asking us: A Public Legal Education Project for Immigrant Women in Domestic Violence Situations*.

Available on CERIS Website.

Montgomery, E. (1998) Refugee Children from the Middle East- Preface. *Scandinavian Journal of Social Medicine*. 54, Pp 1-152.

This study aims to map the prevalence of torture victims among parents in asylum-seeking Middle Eastern families and to map the occurrence of experiences of organized violence among their children, and the prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems amongst those children. The study concludes that many of these children had experienced organized violence, and frequently reacted with anxiety and other symptoms of emotional vulnerability.

Moussa, H. (1993) *Storm and Sanctuary: The Journey of Ethiopian and Eritrean Women Refugees*. Ontario: Artemis Enterprises.

Through the life stories and personal interpretations of 16 Eritrean and Ethiopian women refugees in Canada, Moussa presents a detailed picture of the culturally engendered nature of refugee experiences. According to Moussa, the term 'refugee' falsely homogenizes the very different ways in which men and women of different classes, ethnic groups and religions may experience forced emigration and resettlement, and implies a unitary identity based entirely on dominant perceptions of refugee experience.

Offord, D. R. (1995) The Mental Health of Immigrant and Refugee Children. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. 40 (2), Pp 57-8.

Opoku-Dapaah, E. (1995) *Somali Refugees in Toronto: a Profile*. North York, Ontario: York Lanes Press.

Osofsky, Joy D. (Ed) (1997) *Children in a Violent Society*. New York & London: The Guildford Press.

Children In A Violent Society surveys issues of inner-city violence and proposals to help at-risk children. Although the work focuses on major US cities, the implications for children growing up in other violent environments are clear. Emphasis is placed on early intervention and prevention.

Raymond, A. & Raymond, S. (2000) *Children in War*. New York: TV Books.

Rousseau, C. (1995) The Mental Health of Refugee Children. In *Transcultural Psychiatry Research Review*. 32, Pp 299-331.

Rousseau, C. (2000) Les réfugiés à notre porte : Violence organisée et souffrance sociale. In *Criminologie*. 33 (1).

Rousseau, C. *The Mental Health of Refugee Children: A Longitudinal Study*. McGill University Division of Social & Transcultural Psychiatry: Culture & Mental Health Research Unit.

This research in progress extends work already completed on risk and protective factors among refugee children in primary schools in Montreal.

Rousseau, C.; Bagilishya, D.; Heusch, N. & Lacroix, L. (1999) Jouer en classe autour d'une histoire : Ateliers d'expression créatrice pour les enfants immigrants exposés à la violence sociale. In *La Revue Prisme*. 28, Pp 88-103.

Rousseau, C.; Drapeau, A. & Platt, R. (1999) Family Trauma and its Association with Emotional and Behavioural Problems and Social Adjustment in Adolescent Cambodian Refugees. In *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 23 (12), Pp 1263-1273. This longitudinal study of 67 young Cambodian refugees in Montreal suggests that a broader range of posttraumatic responses to war and situations should be investigated, and that trauma's dual nature as both protection and risk, should be examined in more depth.

Rousseau, C.; Drapeau, A. & Platt, R. (1999) Family Trauma and its Association with Emotional and Behavioural Problems and Social Adjustment in Adolescent Cambodian Refugees. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 23 (12). Pp 1263-1273.

Rousseau, C.; Drapeau, A. & Corin, E. (2000) School Performance and Emotional Problems in Refugee Children. In *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 66 (2), Pp 239-251.

Rousseau, C.; Drapeau, A. & Corin, E. (1998) Risk and Protective Factors in Central and Southeast Asian Refugee Children. In *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 11 (1), Pp 20-37.

Rousseau, C.; Drapeau, A. & Platt, R. (2000) Living Conditions and Emotional profiles of Cambodian, Central American and Quebecois Youth. In *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. 45, Pp 905-911.

Rousseau, C.; Morales, M. & Foxen, P. (2001) Going Home: Giving Voice to Memory Strategies of Young Mayan Refugees who Returned to Guatemala as a Community. In *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 25. Pp 135-168.

Rousseau, C., Said, T. M., Gagne, M-J. & Bibeau, G. (1998) Between Myth and Madness: The Premigration Dream of Leaving among Young Somali Refugees. In *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*. 22. Pp 385-411.

Rousseau, C.; Said, T. M.; Gagne, M-J. & Bibeau, G. (1998) Resilience in Unaccompanied Minors from the North of Somalia. In *Psychoanalytical Review*. 85 (4).

Rousseau, C. & Drapeau, A. (2000) Scholastic Achievement of Adolescent Refugees from C243-258. Cambodia and Central America. In *Adolescence*. 35 (138).

Rousseau, C. & Heusch, N. (2000) The Trip; A Creative Expression Project for Refugee and Immigrant Children. In *Art Therapy*. 17 (1), Pp 31-40.

UNHCR (1995) *Sexual Violence Against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response*. Geneva: UNHCR.

Spasojevic, J.; Heffner, R. & Snyder, D. (2000) Effects of Posttraumatic Stress and Acculturation on Marital Functioning in Bosnian Refugee Couples. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. 13 (2), Pp 205-17.

The findings of this study of forty Bosnian refugee couples living in the United States suggest several implications for mental health professionals dealing with refugees, issues of conjugal violence, and other traumatized populations.

Stein, B.; Comer, D.; Gardner, W. & Kelleher, K. (1999) Prospective Study of Displaced Children's Symptoms in Wartime Bosnia. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. 34 (9), Pp 464-469.

This study of 147 displaced children in Bosnia suggests that gender is an important factor in the natural course of trauma-related symptoms among war-traumatized children, as over time, symptoms of posttraumatic stress, anxiety and depression showed a greater decrease in boys relative to girls.

Van der Veer, G. (1998) *Counselling and Therapy with Refugees and Victims of Trauma: Psychological Problems of Victims of War, Torture and Repression*. Second Edition. Chichester: Wiley.

A concise handbook for the specialist and non-specialist counsellor/ therapist. Van der Veer gives a broad overview of the different experiences refugees may have had before settling in a new country. Numerous vignettes give concrete examples of experiences, and illustrate the theoretical concepts and therapy approaches described. The refugee experience is described as an ongoing process of traumatization, rather than one specific period of trauma. Such a process usually has three phases: first phase (pre-flight in country of origin), second phase (flight from home) and third phase (arrival and settlement in new home). Rather than distinct and separate, experiences during each phase are interconnected and interrelated. Studies seem to indicate, however, that the settlement phase is crucial in making a difference to long-term well-being, whatever the other experiences. A specific chapter on children and refugees describes some of the sorts of traumatic experiences they may have had before and during flight (e.g. leaving friends, family and pets without saying goodbye) and may be having in the settlement (third) phase of the refugee experience.

Vincent, C. and Warren, S. *Responding to Diversity? Refugee Families and Schools*. ERIC ED 434971.

The research study reports on a small-scale, qualitative project conducted in the United Kingdom that focuses on links between refugee families and the schools their children attend. Findings show that the social, political, and economic context in which refugee families exist is enormously disabling. Solutions include emphasis on the flexibility and permeability of home-school boundaries to help address the concerns refugee parents have over the educational futures of their children.

Wessells, M.G. (1998) The Changing Nature of Armed Conflict and Its Implications for Children: The Graça Machel/U.N. Study. *Peace & Conflict; Journal of Peace Psychology*, 4 (4). Pp 321-334.

Wessells, M.G. & Monteiro, C. (2002) *Healing, Mobilization and Social Integration: Community-Based Assistance for War Affected Angolan Children*. Paper presented at Working with Children in Armed Conflict, a Skills-Building Workshop. Ottawa, January 2002.

Wilkinson, L. (2001) *The Integration of Refugee Youth in Canada*. Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Zivcic, I. (1993) Emotional Reactions of Children to War Stress in Croatia. *In Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. 32 (4), Pp 709-713.

This study of 480 children found that different levels of war stress had a negative impact on the functioning of all children, especially refugees. Of special concern, was the low correlation between the children's self reports of mood, and the perceptions of their parents and teachers, suggesting that attention is given to working with parents and teachers, not just with children.

RESOURCE LIST

ORGANIZATIONS IN MONTREAL FOR LOCAL SUPPORT TO CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

The Transcultural Child Psychiatry Consultation & Treatment Clinic of the Montreal Children's Hospital

Montreal Children's Hospital

4018 Ste Catherine W.

Westmount, Québec H3Z 1P2

Phone (514) 412-4449

Fax: (514) 934-4337

Website: <http://ww2.mcgill.ca/Psychiatry/transcultural/tcchild.html>

The Transcultural Clinic of the Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH) has the triple mandate of training a diverse group of professionals from different disciplines (psychiatrists, physicians, psychologists, art therapists), clinical consultation and treatment, and ongoing research to rethink and renew clinical theory and practice through a critical examination of some of the implicit assumptions of conventional mental health care.

The Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry, McGill University

1033 Pine Avenue West

Montreal, Quebec H3A 1A1

Phone: (514) 398-4176

Fax: (514) 398-4370

Website: <http://ww2.mcgill.ca/Psychiatry/transcultural/>

The Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry is a network of scholars and clinicians within the Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University, devoted to promoting research, training and consultation in social and cultural psychiatry.

Réseau d'intervention auprès des personnes ayant subi la violence organisée (RIVO)

(Intervention Network for People Having Been Subjected to Organized Violence (RIVO))

120, rue Duluth Est,

Montreal, Québec

H2W 1H1

Phone: (514) 282-0661

Fax: (514) 282-0661

Website: <http://www.cam.org/~rivo>

Cultural Consultation Clinic, Jewish General Hospital

Sir Mortimer B. Davis Jewish General Hospital

3755 Cote Ste. Catherine Road

Montreal, Quebec, H3T 1E2

Phone: (514) 340-8222

Fax: (514) 340-7510

<http://www.jgh.mcgill.ca/>

Transcultural Clinic (TC), Hôpital Jean-Talon

1385, rue Jean-Talon Est

Montréal (Québec)

H2E 1S6

Phone: (514) 495-6767

<http://www.hopitaljean-talon.qc.ca>

The Transcultural Clinic (TC) at Hôpital Jean-Talon Hospital was created in 1993 to respond to the needs of the large immigrant population in the hospital's catchment area. The clinic offers two types of outpatient service: (i) cultural consultations for professionals needing assistance in assessment and treatment planning; and (ii) time-limited treatment offered directly to patients of different cultural backgrounds. The clinic also provides training and community prevention and mental health promotion programs.

CLSC Côte des Neiges

5700, chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges

Montréal, H3T 2A8

Phone: (514) 731-8531

<http://www.clscote-des-neiges.qc.ca/cdn/english.htm>

This CLSC, situated in an ethnically diverse area of the city, with many newly arrived refugees and other immigrants, offers a wide range of services to individuals, families, and local organizations.

The mandate of the refugee assistance service is to make social services available to refugees and to other newcomers to the Montreal area (<http://www.clscote-des-neiges.qc.ca/cdn/aideau.htm>). The clients who use this service are mainly refugee claimants, de facto refugees, temporary residents experiencing grave difficulties, and people whose status is precarious. The service also targets specific types of clients as provided by contracts between the CLSC and various government authorities, such as the Commission de l'immigration et du statut de réfugié, le ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, and the Service social international.

CESAME (Consultation en santé mentale et en ethnothérapie)

CLSC St-Michel

7950, boul. St-Michel

Montréal, H1Z 3E1

Phone: (514) 374-9180

Action Réfugiés Montréal

Tel: 935-7799

Contact person: Glynis Williams

Centre social d'aide aux immigrants

4285, boul. de Maisonneuve Ouest, Montréal

Telephone: 932-2953

<http://vitrine-sur-montreal.qc.ca/csai/messages/1.html>

The main purpose of the Centre social d'aide aux immigrants is to welcome newcomers, whether they are refugees within the meaning of the Convention, refugee claimants, people admitted on humanitarian grounds, or independent immigrants in difficulty. Armed with this mandate, the Centre is a frontline organization that helps its clients settle, adapt and integrate into Quebec society. The services offered include employment integration, learning French, intercultural partnering, and intercultural activities.

Centre des femmes de Montréal

3585, rue Saint-Urbain

Montréal

H2X 2N6

Phone: (514) 842-4780 / (514) 842-6652

Fax: (514) 842-1067

Email: cfmwcm@cedep.net

Web site: <http://www.centredesfemmesdemtl.org>

Services offered: reception, information, referral, interpretation, translation, accompaniment, clothing, and partnering with new immigrants and Quebecers.

Other services: legal clinics, kaffeeklatsches, self-help and support groups, legal information, psychosocial counseling, women's advocacy, technical assistance, mediation.

Clients targeted: Women and their families

Languages spoken by permanent staff: Arabic, Creole, Spanish and Portuguese

Languages spoken by temporary staff: Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian

Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

1035, rue Rachel Est, 3e étage

Montréal

H2J 2J5

Phone: (514) 528-8812

Fax: (514) 528-0896

Email: sawcc@cum.org

Services offered: reception, information, referral, interpretation, translation, accompaniment, housing search, food bank, clothing, help for families. Clients targeted:

Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Iranian and others. Languages spoken by regular staff: Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil Languages spoken by temporary staff: Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Singhalese, Tamil.

For other local community support services, consult the répertoire of the Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et Immigration:

http://www.immq.gouv.qc.ca/anglais/services/community_organization..html

OTHER CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture <http://www.icomm.ca/ccvt/>

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture aids survivors to overcome the lasting effects of torture and war. The website contains considerable documentation and information on violence, torture and war, with particular attention to women.

Amnistie Internationale (section francophone) <http://www.amnistie.qc.ca>

Amnesty International (English Canada Section) <http://www.amnesty.ca>

Comité inter-églises pour les réfugiés <http://www.web.net/~iccr>

Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture

Action des Chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture (ACAT)

2000, boul. Saint-Joseph est

Montréal, Québec H2H 1E4

Tel.: (514) 890-6169 / Fax: (514) 890-6484

Email: acatcan@cam.org

Centre for Refugee Studies, York University <http://www.yorku.ca/crs>

The Center for Victims of Torture <http://www.cvt.org/>

Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)

<http://www.ceris.metropolis.net>

CERIS is a consortium of Toronto-area universities and community partners. It is one of four such research centres across Canada. The website contains a large amount of relevant documentation and information, including a number of studies and references for downloading.

Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés /Canadian Council for Refugees

<http://www.web.net/~ccr/>

The Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.

FREDA www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda

The FREDA Centre is one of five violence research centres across the country that were established in 1992 through a five-year grant from Health Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Research reports produced by the FREDA Centre, and available on the website, are diverse and include several related to organized and family violence against girls and women.

METRAC Metro Action Committee on Violence against Women and Children
<http://www.metroac.org/>

METRAC is a community organization that promotes the rights of women and children to live free from violence and the threats of violence.

LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution

<http://www.yorku.ca/lamarsh/>

The LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution, based in the Faculty of Arts at York University, conducts research on all issues relating to violence and conflict resolution especially in schools and families.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, NETWORKS AND RESOURCES**Amnesty International** <http://www.web.amnesty.org/web/aboutai.nsf>

Amnesty International is a worldwide campaigning movement that works to promote all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards.

Children of the Storm www.cotstorm.demon.co.uk

Children of the Storm supports refugees under the age of 21, directly and indirectly, through awareness-raising, funding, training, support and advocacy projects.

Georgetown University Child Development Center (CDC)

<http://www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/document.html#child>

The CDC serves both to improve the quality of life for all vulnerable children and their families, as well as influence local, national, and international programs and policy.

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

Human Rights Watch is the largest human rights organization based in the United States. In addition to country-specific information, global issues of concern to HRW include women's rights and refugees, children's rights and child soldiers.

International Bureau of Children's Rights http://www.ibcr.org/index_fr.shtml

The mission of the International Bureau of Children's Rights is to protect, defend and promote the rights and well-being of every child in the world. Posted on the Web site is the Report of the First Hearings on the Protection of War-affected Children, an event that was held in Colchester, U.K., in April 2000.

International Catholic Migration Commission <http://www.icmc.net/docs/en>

International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) is an organization that works in the area of forced migration, and serves uprooted people.

International Children's Institute (ICI) <http://www.icichildren.com>

The International Children's Institute (ICI) is a humanitarian organization established in 1992 to work with communities to develop psychosocial and psychoeducational programs to support children's well-being. Working with teams of experts in education, health, communications and cultural adaptation—and with children and parents—the Institute develops community, school-based, refugee camp and curriculum development programs focused on children's adaptation including developing their coping and communication skills.

International Rescue Committee (IRC) <http://www.theirc.org/index.cfm>

The IRC helps people fleeing racial, religious and ethnic persecution, as well as those uprooted by war and violence.

International Psychological Assistance

International Psychological Assistance (IPA) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that offers psychosocial support to any person or population in a state of crisis or trauma.

Minority Rights Group (MRG) <http://www.minorityrights.org>

Minority Rights Group (MRG) works across groups to build links and to raise awareness of minority rights within a clear framework of international standards in a non-partisan way. Resource material for schools and teachers is available on and through the website.

Refugee Council <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

The Refugee Council is the largest organization in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. The website contains a wealth of background information on refugees in Britain, much of which is relevant to the Canadian context, too. The 'What Can Schools Do?' section provides ideas and resources for teachers, and some of the publications may also be of interest.

Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford University, UK <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/>

The Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) has three major objectives: to carry out multidisciplinary research and teaching on the causes and consequences of forced migration, to disseminate the results of its research to academics, policy makers and practitioners in the field of forced migration, to understand the experience of forced migration from the point of view of forced migrants themselves.

Refugee Women's Alliance (REWA) <http://www.rewa.org>

Refugee Women's Alliance (REWA) is a non-profit, multi-ethnic organization that provides responsive, culturally appropriate education, advocacy, and support services for refugee and immigrant women. Certain programs are linked to the school system and help inform teachers about how to design and implement classroom activities that support the experiences of refugee children.

Save the Children www.savethechildren.org.uk

Save the Children is the leading UK charity working to create a better world for children, working in 70 countries helping children in the world's most impoverished communities. Save the Children publishes a number of very useful reports, manuals and guidebooks on a wide range of issues affecting children and their families.

UNICEF <http://www.unicef.org/french/>**US Committee for Refugees/ Immigration and Refugee Services of America (IRSA)** <http://www.refugees.org/>

IRSA acts to defend human rights, build communities, foster education, promote self-sufficiency, and forge partnerships through an array of programs, such as education and assistance, which help refugees resettle in the U.S.

World Vision International <http://www.wvi.org/home.shtml>

World Vision is one of the largest Christian relief and development organizations in the world, focusing particularly on children. The website includes resource material on war-affected children, and especially child soldiers.

OTHER RELEVANT WEBSITES

www.cic.gc.ca

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

www.irb.gc.ca

The Immigration and Refugee Board

<http://www.immq.gouv.qc.ca/francais/index.html>

Government of Quebec, Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et Immigration

www.unhcr.ch

United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The website contains a wealth of background information on refugees around the world. The “For Teachers” section contains detailed lesson plans for students from 9 through 18, organized by different curriculum subjects.

<http://www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca/>

Website of International Conference on War-affected Children, Winnipeg, September 2000.

<http://www.cfp-pec.gc.ca/NationalForum/elementary/francais/index.html>

Web-based resource center for teachers and students on war-affected children, hosted by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development.

<http://www.droitsenfant.com/convention1.htm>

Website devoted to the rights of children with texts, activities and resources for teachers.

<http://www.swil.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/warandchildren/links.htm>

(teaching material on war-affected children)

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/index.html>

Oxfam Website for teachers wanting to address global issues, such as war and refugee crises in the classroom.

www.refaid.org.uk

Website of UK charity RefAid. Interesting links and information for teachers, too.