



PROGRAM ON FORCED MIGRATION AND HEALTH

HEILBRUNN DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION AND FAMILY HEALTH

The Program on Forced Migration and Health is committed to professionalizing the field of humanitarian response. The Program pursues its mission by training the next generation of public health and humanitarian response workers, leading innovative research, training, and advocacy initiatives, and by offering technical assistance to international organizations.

In the real world

CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN (CPC) IN CONFLICT

Today's armed conflicts and natural disasters displace communities and result in child exposure to violence, insecurity, and splintering of group solidarity. Humanitarian responses to crises have moved beyond meeting the physical and material needs of communities to also address care and protection concerns. However, limited evidence exists to support the efficacy of care and protection initiatives. The Program in Forced Migration and Health is currently engaged in a three-year initiative to develop better consensus on interventions to improve the care and protection of children affected by armed conflict and natural disasters.

- **Methods Advisory Group Meeting, November 10-11, 2006**

Thirteen experts came together in mid November 2006 to advise the CPC program on issues of methodology, particularly with respect to study design, development of indicators, data collection methods, training and quality assurance issues. These members of the Methods Advisory Group helped to develop draft protocols for the planned field studies including issues of sampling/selection, design, measures and analysis. Topics included assessing the effectiveness of a gender-based violence intervention in Northern Uganda, measuring livelihoods programming, enabling youth participation in research and broad advice on "best practice" in field-based documentation of programs.

- **Measuring the Impact of a Gender Based Violence Program in Lira District**

Although Uganda is engaged in a peace process, the country continues to struggle with remnants of the systematic violence of war and displacement. Gender violence presents an ongoing hindrance to the peace process and is as an important piece of societal reconstruction for peace. Yet, the magnitude and scope of the problem has remained unknown. Using a multi-modal approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods, Columbia University has been supporting Christian Children's Fund (CCF) to measure and assess experiences of domestic violence and rape in IDP camps in Lira District, Northern Uganda. **Alastair Ager, Mike Wessells, and Lindsay Stark** ('06) traveled to Lira in November- December to provide technical support and guidance to CCF in collecting baseline data for an impact evaluation of the program. High rates of gender based violence have been identified through PRA focus group activities and a method targeting women's knowledge of their neighbors.



Photo Courtesy: A. Ager, 2006

IMPROVING CAPACITY TO MEASURE CHILD PROTECTION VIOLATIONS

Commonly used methods to identify child protection concerns grossly underreport child rights violations. The international community's data on child protection and welfare concerns reflect only cases that have been reported to and verified by designated UN and NGO agencies. Although critical for human rights actions, these reported incident figures represent a small portion of the actual incidences that are taking place

at any given time. Demographic and population-based approaches for primary data collection offer a starting point for a more reliable estimation of the total number of rights violations. More accurate estimates of child protection violations are crucial for programmatic, advocacy and policy needs related to humanitarian interventions. In December, **Neil Boothby**, **Alastair Ager** and **Trina Vithayathil** led a half-day session, “Improving Capacity to Measure the Extent of Child Protection Violations in Complex Emergencies,” at the Inter-Agency Work Planning Consultations on Child Protection in Emergencies in Geneva. With the participation of 35 protection experts from UN agencies and international NGOs, the session helped to identify the child protection concerns that might benefit from incidence data collection and the challenges and sensitivities to collecting child protection data in emergencies.

Preparing the next generation of public health professionals

Second Annual Forced Migration Student Photo Exhibit



Photo Courtesy: E. Sung, 2006

On December 6, 2006, second-year Forced Migration and Health students exhibited photos they took during their summer practicum placements with international and non-governmental organizations. The exhibit was held at Hess Commons, in the Allan Rosenfield Building and attended by students and faculty from many departments and schools. The exhibit featured photos from Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Student Practicum Presentations

During the fall semester, 14 second-year students presented their practicum experiences at the Forced Migration Practicum seminar. Students reported on experiences from nine different countries and on issues such as nutrition, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and water and sanitation. The students used the professional presentations to demonstrate their knowledge and skills gained in their classes and from their experiences working in the field.

Graduating Students

Four students have completed their coursework and will be graduating in February. **Timothy Choi**, **Rachel Goldstein**, **Owen Ryan**, and **Mihoko Tanabe** have successfully completed the MPH requirements. The latter three will also be conferred the Master of International Affairs degree from SIPA. Congratulations!

International Emergency Medicine Fellows

The International Emergency Medicine Fellows Program began this year with its first two students, **Hillary Cohen** and **Deepti Thomas-Paulose**. Both work at the NewYork-Presbyterian Department of Emergency Medicine and are completing an MPH in the forced migration track. In November, Cohen and Thomas-Paulose made a trip to India to attend an emergency medicine disaster relief conference held in Delhi and to participate in a “train-the-trainers” program in Gujarat. During the time in Gujarat, the fellows, along with several other doctors, formed a team of instructors who taught the principles of emergency medicine including basic life support and advanced cardiac life support to a group of physicians who practice in the rural regions of Gujarat and have limited access to continuing medical education.

RELIEFSIM

Ron Waldman, in conjunction with the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning, tested a prototype version of RELIEFSIM in the Health Consequences of Forced Migration class in Fall 2006. The interactive teaching tool is currently being designed to train humanitarian workers to more effectively respond to complex emergencies. During the interactive simulation, participants prioritize and make decisions regarding the allocation and utilization of limited resources to address the evolving public health situation. To download the prototype version visit: http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/reliefsim/pilot_res.html

Interactive Module

Kurt Burja and **Bree Akesson** ('06) are working with the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning to develop case study-based curricula for **Neil Boothby's** course, "Working With Women and Children in War Zones". The case studies in the interactive module focus on core protection issues in three emergencies: Cambodia and the refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border in the 1980s, Rwanda and the refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the early 1990s, and the current crisis in Darfur.

APPOINTMENTS AND AWARDS

Angela Veale joined the Program in December as a Fulbright Scholar and will be with the Program until May. Veale joins us from University College in Cork, Ireland where she holds a full-time appointment as a College Lecturer in Developmental Psychology and is Deputy Director of the Child Studies Unit. Veale is also a qualified child and adolescent psychoanalytic psychotherapist. Her current research is entitled "What constitutes efficacious child protection programs for children in post-conflict contexts? – Psychosocial interventions, a justice and rights framework and outcome criteria." She has written extensively on the topics of child rights, children affected by war and violence, refugees and psychosocial interventions.

Moazzem Hossain will be joining the Program in the second half of the Spring 2007 semester to teach the Food and Nutrition course. Hossain currently works full time with UNICEF in the Nutrition and Child Survival Unit. He received a Bachelors of Medicine and a Bachelors of Surgery from Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka in 1991, Bangladesh and his MPH from the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerpen, Belgium in 2000. He has published widely on issues including health and nutrition policy, community development and health, maternal and child health, and nutrition in emergencies.

Les Roberts a familiar face in the Program over the past few years was appointed Associate Clinical Professor in Population and Family Health in Fall 2006. Roberts was also recently chosen to serve as one of the first 25 Ambassadors for the Paul G. Rogers Society for Global Health Research. As an ambassador, Dr. Roberts will have the opportunity to meet with national and local level opinion leaders and decision makers, publish editorials, and make presentations to non-scientist audiences in order to impact the status of global health research in the United States.

Therese McGinn is Principal Investigator and Director of the Comprehensive Reproductive Health in Crises Programme. The CRHC Programme is a new initiative that aims to catalyze change in how reproductive health is addressed within relief organizations, field services and global decision-making. Developed in conjunction with Marie Stopes International, the Programme will ensure that the full range of reproductive health needs are addressed in refugee and internally displaced persons situations, through advocacy, technical advising to partners, clinical training, research, documentation and dissemination, and managing an emergency fund.

NEW COURSES

• Gender-based Violence in Complex Emergencies: Issues and Interventions

Heidi Lehmann from the International Rescue Committee taught a seven-week course on gender-based violence in complex emergencies. This new course introduced students to the conceptual framework for preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and the practical framework for developing such programming. Students were also given the opportunity to design an intervention to address gender-based

violence in different phases of a complex emergency that reflected a three-tiered approach to prevention and response: service delivery at the operative level; capacity and institution building at the systemic level; and legislative/policy change at the structural level.

- **Epidemiology of Human Rights**

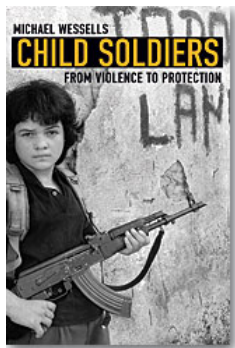
Les Roberts will offer a new tutorial on the epidemiology of human rights this spring semester.

Publications

Iraq Mortality Study

The October 11, 2006 edition of the prestigious British medical journal, *The Lancet*, includes an article co-authored by **Les Roberts** on the increase in mortality in Iraq after the 2003 invasion. Entitled, “Mortality after the 2003 invasion of Iraq: A cross-sectional cluster sample survey,” the study has found that the death rate during the 40 months following the 2003 invasion was more than three times that for the 14 months preceding the invasion. Moreover, approximately 650,000 excess people have been estimated to have died as a result of the invasion, with over 90% of the deaths due to violence. The study has received vast global media coverage and high accolades from both the academic and professional communities for its rigor and accomplishment. The article is co-authored by Gilbert Burnham, Riyadh Lafta, and Shannon Doocy, and is an update of the Iraq mortality study published in October 2004. In December 2006, Roberts presented at a US Congressional Briefing to discuss mortality in Iraq after the 2003 invasion and advocate for a revision of government estimates.

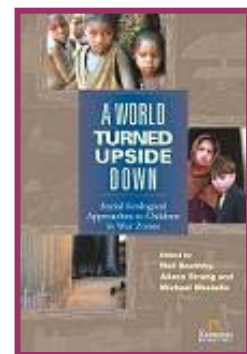
Stopping the Theft of Childhood



Published by Harvard University Press, **Mike Wessells**'s most recent book *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection* reveals the lives of the 300,000 child soldiers around the world, challenging stereotypes of them as predators or as a “lost generation”. Based primarily on participatory research and interviews with former child soldiers worldwide, Wessells reveals the enormous complexity of the children’s experiences and situations, including those of girls who face particular hardships and challenges such as pregnancy, childbirth complications, and rejection. Wessells argues that despite the social, moral, and psychological wounds of war, a surprising number of former child soldiers enter civilian life, with the help of healing, livelihood, education, reconciliation, family integration, protection, and cultural supports.

A World Turned Upside Down

Edited by **Neil Boothby**, Alison Strang of Queen Margaret's University College, and **Mike Wessells**, the newly released book *A World Turned Upside Down: Social Ecological Approaches to Children in War Zone*, looks at the experiences of children in war from a psychological and social ecological perspective. The book dispels myths about what results when children grow up in conflict settings, and in contrast to individualized approaches, offers a deeper conceptualization of the socially mediated impacts of war. With case studies from different conflict situations, each author provides a holistic understanding of children’s experiences, and helps identify ways to nurture the social connections that can liberate children from the pathologies of war. **Boothby**, **Wessells** and **Alastair Ager** also authored chapters of the book, as did **Catherine Chen** ('05), an alumna of the Program.



Articles in *Disability and Rehabilitation*

In the March 2006 issue of *Disability and Rehabilitation* **Alastair Ager** along with Jo Armstrong published “Physiotherapy in Afghanistan: an analysis of current challenges”. The aim of the analysis, done through interviews and clinical accompaniments, was to identify the training needs and issues affecting Afghan physiotherapists. From the analysis five themes emerged: low professional profile, difficult working conditions, difficulty in identifying personal training needs, difficulty with clinical reasoning at undergraduate level, and variable levels of clinical competence. These challenges are not unique to Afghanistan but the lack of government recognition of the profession and war have exacerbated the difficulties of the profession. This has contributed to the difficulties therapists’ experience with current clinical reasoning and accessing new practice developments. Culture also influences attitudes towards training and has restricted female travel and access to education. Conclusions of the study emphasize the need for training in disability sensitization, reflective practice and clinical reasoning, as well as, a need for updating the physiotherapy curriculum and links to new research need to be established.

Articles in *Global Public Health*



Therese McGinn published two articles in the October 2006 issue of *Global Public Health*. The first, “Improving refugees’ reproductive health through literacy in Guinea” written with Katherine Allen from the Community Coalition for Teens in Massachusetts, examines the health impact of literacy programs linked to public health programs in Guinea for refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia. The results of the closed-ended interviews and written test of literacy skills showed that the Reproductive Health Literacy program had measurable positive effects on the reproductive health and knowledge of women who participated in the program. The second article, “Changes in HIV/AIDS/STI knowledge, attitudes and behaviors among the youth in Port Loko, Sierra Leone” - written with Sara Casey and Mandi Larsen, from the Mailman School of Public Health, and M. Sartie, M. Dauda, and P.

Lahai, from ARC International - examines the impact of HIV/STI interventions on the population in Port Loko. The authors discover that even with the challenges of a post-conflict setting, the AIDS prevention program has been successful in increasing the knowledge and behaviors around HIV/STI prevention.

Articles in *Intervention*

Both **Neil Boothby** and Program alumna **Lindsay Stark** ('06), who now manages the Program’s Care and Protection of Children Initiative, have published articles in the most recent edition (Vol. 4, Issue 3) of “*Intervention*,” a journal for psychosocial issues. Dr. Boothby’s article, “What happens when child soldiers grow up?: The Mozambique case study” reports findings from his 16-year longitudinal study of life outcomes for former child soldiers. The data show that while many still experience psychosocial distress, the vast majority of the former child soldiers have become productive, capable and caring adults. The study also identifies specific interventions that have enabled substantial recovery and reintegration. Stark’s article entitled “Cleansing the wounds of war: an examination of traditional healing, psychosocial health and reintegration in Sierra Leone” describes the results of her practicum study on the effects of traditional cleansing ceremonies for girl soldiers who are survivors of rape. The study addresses how such purification rituals contributed to the psychosocial healing and reintegration of girls, through noting their significance as a symbolic gesture of community reconciliation, and as a means of enabling spiritual transformation. **Alastair Ager** and **Mike Wessells** have also contributed an article to a previous edition (Vol. 4, Issue 1) of *Intervention*. Co-written with Alison Strang, “Integrating psychosocial issues in humanitarian and development assistance: a response to Williamson and Robinson,” is a response to John Williamson and Malia Robinson’s article on “Psychosocial interventions, or integrated programming for well-being?” published in the same edition.

Articles in the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*

In the December 2006 volume of the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines* an article “The impact of structured activities among Palestinian children in a time of conflict” was published which was written by Maryanne Loughry, **Alastair Ager**, Eirini Flouri, Vivian Khamis, Abdel Hamid Afana and Samir Qouta. The study examined the impact of child-focused interventions in the West Bank and Gaza. The focus of the programs evaluated were participation in recreational, cultural and other non-formal activities supporting the development of resilience. The study included 400 children from 6 to 17, 250 from the West Bank and 150 from Gaza, who were assessed using the Child Behavior Checklist, the Parental Support Scale and the Hopefulness Scale: Youth Version. The study found that children involved in the structured activities had better emotional and behavioral well being but that the activities did not affect hopefulness.

Upcoming Events

Security Training

Training hosted by RedR will be held on February 23-25 for first year students of the Program in preparation for the summer practicum.

Refugee Issues Seminars

Mark your calendars the seminars are scheduled for 2/16, 3/9, 3/30, and 4/20.

EpiInfo Training

Training on EpiInfo is scheduled for April 16 and 17. Make sure to sign up!

Program on Forced Migration and Health

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