



Resettlement Newsletter

Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

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Increase resettlement of refugees to the EU Member States

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CCME is pleased to launch its sixth edition of the Resettlement Newsletter. As the whole project "Understanding resettlement in practice: capacity building for action!" is getting to an end this is going to be the last Newsletter in the framework of the above mentioned project. Nevertheless we do hope to be able to continue circulating regularly the Resettlement Newsletter as a tool of advocacy and awareness raising for Resettlement in Europe.

This edition of the Newsletter will be focused on the study visit to Kenya which took place in June 2006. The visit looked at the very first steps of the resettlement process: identification and processing of cases. The visiting delegation went to Dadaab refugees camp in Northeast Kenya about 80 km from the Somali border, where 130.000 refugees are hosted. Also in this edition you will read an interesting article dedicated to a new NGO, Mapendo International, which works with refugees in Nairobi, its director explains to us the reasons why he started this work and the aims of the organization.

In this issue of the Resettlement Newsletter you will find also a report on the final conference of Refugee Resettlement project held in Brussels from the 3rd to the 5th of July 2006. Thirty participants took part in the final conference, which was an important step to get together all the stakeholders involved in the resettlement project and all those who participated in the study visits to Finland, North America and Kenya. Representative of UNHCR Brussels and Geneva offices attended the conference. The Finnish Ministry of Labour sent a representative which, in view of the Finnish Presidency, which has started the 1st of July, was an important sign for the importance of resettlement on the EU political agenda.

While refugee resettlement is regarded more and more of an option among EU Member States, the numbers of refugees resettled to Europe are actually very small and the common knowledge about resettlement remains limited. This is one of the reason why advocacy on resettlement is still so important and this is the reason why we would like to go on with Newsletter. CCME is thankful for the support and for the positive feedbacks on the usefulness of the Newsletter.

Once again take your time and let the Newsletter speak for itself. Enjoy the reading!

Best wishes,

Alessia Passarelli

"For I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."

Matthew
25:35b



Meeting in Nairobi. The visiting delegation met Sasha Chanoff, director of Mapendo International.

Refugees' Voices: Ira (Bosnian refugee resettled to Baltimore)

"Well, I had a neighbour that used to live next to me when I first came to the United States, and I think that she is the most positive thing that happened to my family. She took us to the mall. She took us grocery shopping. She bought stuff for our home. Yeah, I think that's the most positive thing. But, also my teacher at school that taught me English. Like, she helped me get used to the community. And also the positive thing is when I got in to the Institute of Notre Dame, and got a four year scholarship. That's a really big thing for me."

In <http://www.theirc.org/photoessays/index.cfm?essayID=11&thisstartrow=1>

Resettlement is a transfer of refugees from a country of first asylum where they cannot stay to a third one

CAPACITY BUILDING VISIT TO KENYA: NAIROBI AND DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP

by Patricia Coelho

From 8-12 June 2006 a CCME delegation of six persons from Europe visited Kenya to find out more about the. We all came away much better informed about the first stages of the resettlement process (identifying and processing refugees) and also more aware of the complexities of the role of resettlement in the international protection system.

The delegation visited Nairobi first and met with several organisations assisting refugees in Kenya: UNHCR, IOM, representatives from resettlement countries and a number of NGOs. Our first meetings with UNHCR staff gave us a crucial understanding of the protection context and UNHCR's work in Kenya. As Kenya borders with many countries which have or are experiencing conflict situations, Kenya hosts a large number of refugees from countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. While Kenya is a signatory country to the 1951 Refugee Convention, its Protocol and the African Refugee Convention, there is no national asylum law and the government's policies towards refugees have become more restrictive in recent years. Examples of this are the requirement for refugees to live in camp settings and the withdrawal of the right to work. The situation is one where there is a complete lack of local integration possibilities for refugees in Kenya. One of the consequences is that while officially there are no refugees in urban settings, in reality there are somewhere between 50,000 and 150,000 refugees living in Nairobi illegally, in precarious conditions and at constant risk of arrest.

It is in this context that UNHCR undertakes RSD for the government

and also runs two refugee camps (together with partners) in Kakuma near the Sudanese border and in Dadaab (near the Somali border). As well as undertaking their key protection role, UNHCR Nairobi Branch Office is involved in identifying and

and corruption had been one of the priorities in recent years. While UNHCR undertakes identification activities it also receives referrals from external sources such as embassies, NGOs, family members etc. It also works with NGOs and others in the preparation of cases for submission. The difficulties UNHCR faced due to the lack of financial and human resources was emphasised.

We met with representatives of the embassies of the USA, Canada, Australia, Belgium and Finland. In talking about their resettlement systems, the three big resettlement countries highlighted security and fraud as some of the challenges they faced. We discussed the issue of 'integration potential' as a criteria and interestingly Australia told us they no longer pursue assimilation and Canada stated: " *We don't like refusing on settlement criteria but sometimes we have to*". Depressingly, all the embassy representatives agreed that as voluntary return was not yet an option for the majority of refugees in Kenya, talks on local integration were also no on the cards.



submitting thousands of applications for resettlement of refugees in Kenya to third countries every year. The Branch Office also works closely with the Regional Support Hub which provides them and other Branch Offices in 26 countries in East Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and South Africa with training support, coordination and monitors the efficiency of the resettlement process. In fact the Branch Offices now refer resettlement cases for European countries to the Regional Hub instead of UNHCR's HQ as previously. In explaining the different layers of the resettlement process to us, it was clear that the implementation of tools and procedures to address the risks of fraud

Our meeting with the Joint Voluntary Action was invaluable in terms of explaining the many layers of the US resettlement process. The JVA basically acts as an operational partner for the US government's Immigration Service. Nairobi is the US's largest Overseas Operating Entity (OPE) and JVA is run by the Church World Services with 130 staff, covering 22 countries in the region. This means it coordinates the submissions and interviewing and pre-departure checks of all refugees being resettled to the US from these countries and also works with the 11 resettlement agencies that are going to receive them in the US.

We learnt about the role IOM plays in undertaking medical checks, pre-departure cultural orientation and the actual transportation of refugees from Kenya to their new country of residence. IOM as several clinics around Kenya and is involved in ensuring that all refugees being resettled have any treatment they need before undertaking their journey and they also have a role to monitor health conditions in the camps. Cultural Orientation courses comprise 15 hours of classes over 3 days, most of which are adapted according to which country people are going to. We had the chance to sit in on such classes, one at the Transit Centre in Nairobi and another at Dadaab camp and this gave us a good opportunity to find out from refugees how they were feeling about going and what fears they had. Most seem excited. I think many members of the delegation also saw refugees leaving from Nairobi airport being accompanied by IOM up to the departure gate!

There was a common thread running through our meetings with NGO partners in Nairobi: their concern to reach those refugees who were being forgotten, were falling through the cracks: those most vulnerable. We were impressed by their work to help the 'hard to reach' groups. At HIAS we were warmly welcomed by Estelle Striziak and many of her staff. They explained how they provide protection and psychosocial assistance to refu-

gees in Nairobi referred to them by their 18 partner organisations and how, through this work, they also sometimes refers persons in need of resettlement to states.

We were equally impressed by Mapendo's newly opened clinic in Nairobi. Sasha Chanoff founded Mapendo along with Dr. John Burton in 2002 with the aim of creating a safety net for people in Africa fleeing violence, whose lives are at risk and who have no access to humanitarian aid. In Nairobi that often means no UNHCR assistance or medical care. One of their first activities has been to put together a plan for the resettlement of the Congolese Tutsi who survived a massacre in a UNCHR camp and have no other solution.

We were also received by Father John Guiney, head of JRS's Regional East African Office. JRS work through their parishes in the slum areas of Nairobi where they can best reach the urban refugee communities in need. JRS considers education a key component of protection and runs 30 education projects, some focused on empowering girls and women. It provides counselling, medical help, shelter and pastoral support to refugees, does advocacy at the national and international levels, and media work to combat discrimination



Dadaab camp

against refugees in Kenya. The delegation were extremely grateful for the valuable insights Father John gave us, from his many years of experience in the region.

On the last day we visited Dadaab Refugee Camp in northeast Kenya, 80Km from the Somali border. I think it's fair to say that this was an unforgettable day for all of us, and we warmly thank UNHCR for organising and hosting this visit. We also thank our guide Kevin Allen, Senior Resettlement Officer at the UNHCR Dadaab Sub Office for the time he gave us to share his expertise. We got to look around the Ifo camp (one of 3 separate camps comprising Dadaab which hosts 130,000 refugees) and saw the conditions people live in. We also learnt about the services provided to them by the organisations running the camp: UNHCR, GTZ and CARE Canada. 97.5% of refugees in Dadaab are Somali and there were significant numbers arriving when we were there as a result of renewed violence in Somalia in June. We also heard stories of people who had been in the camp for over 12 years. More positive was seeing young people attending a school in their uniforms, but we also learnt that once they graduate they can do nothing with their education as they are not allowed to go to leave the camp and there is no work. We saw the resettlement process in practice and were able to see exactly what UNHCR field staff do in terms of identification and case preparation. We were told help was needed from NGOs in this and other camp-based activities. The request from both refugees and UNHCR staff that we don't forget the majority of refugees who do not get the opportunity to get resettled and remain in the camps in our work resonated with us all.



Dadaab camp. Somalis attending IOM cultural orientation Programme. The group will be soon resettled to the USA. When the CCME delegation arrived, the class was working on their expectation and fear about USA.

„GREAT LOVE“ a new NGO working for refugees Mapendo International

by *Sasha Chanoff*

Mapendo International is a US-based NGO, with regional offices in Kenya, working to identify, protect and care for refugees in Africa whose lives are in extreme danger and who fall outside existing aid efforts. The organization provides home-based medical care and works to improve access to services and to find lasting solutions for victims of massacre and terror and for those with HIV/AIDS and other medical problems -- widows, orphans, rape victims, torture survivors and targets of genocide whose struggle to survive goes unnoticed and unattended.

Mapendo means "great love" in Swahili. It is also the name of a truly courageous woman, Rose Mapendo, a Congolese Tutsi, who was imprisoned in the Congo in August 1998 with her husband and seven young children when war broke out with Rwanda. Soldiers hunted down, jailed and tortured Congolese Tutsis across the country. They executed Rose's husband immediately, and soon after Rose discovered that she was pregnant. Eight months later, suffering from severe malnutrition, Rose gave birth to premature twins on a prison floor and managed to keep these twins and her seven other children alive for sixteen months while others died or were executed around them. When a US-funded rescue team arrived in Kinshasa and met Rose, they found that she did not appear on the list of those eligible for the flight out to safety due to complications with the Congolese government. With Rose's children near death, the rescue team decided to include the family, despite explicit instructions not to include anyone new. The team got Rose and her family out and resettled to Phoenix, Arizona, where they will become US citizens in 2006.

Mapendo's co-founders Sasha Chanoff, who was part of that rescue mission, and Dr. Wagacha, a Kenyan physician,

worked together for many years at the International Organization for Migration during which they noticed other refugees across Africa who were in danger with no access to help. They saw many people die of disease in Nairobi, or disappear, captured or killed by extremists from their home countries. With their joint experience (Dr. Burton has also worked as the country medical coordinator for UNHCR's largest medical implementing partner in Kenya, and Sasha as a consultant for UNHCR), they built a medical clinic in Nairobi and began taking care of 150 HIV positive refugees, who were dying at the rate of one a month. As Mapendo's personalized style of home-care has taken root and shown results (no one has died since Mapendo began), UNHCR and Jesuit Refugee Services, among others, have started referring Nairobi's most at-risk refugees to Mapendo for assistance.

Mapendo is also acting on a regional scale to address some of the most critical refugee problems. In 2004, in the wake of the Gatumba camp massacre, where Hutu extremists



Rose, the twins and most of the family in Phoenix, Arizona, November, 2002. (MI Copy rights)

killed Congolese Tutsi refugees, Mapendo's director traveled to Burundi and, with the logistical support of UNHCR, put together a report analyzing the ongoing protection challenges in Burundi, the history of violence against this ethnic minority in the Congo and recommending a rescue resettlement mission to bring the survivors to the US. UNHCR and the US State Department have used this report as a launching pad for a group resettlement, with the survivors projected to arrive in the US in 2007. Mapendo is building a relationship with UNHCR to identify other refugee populations in Africa in need of durable solutions and is preparing additional reports for UNHCR and governments that highlight the plight of distinct refugee groups.

Mapendo has also started a documentary programs initiative using video and photography to raise awareness for refugees as they arrive in the US. Actor Danny Glover's narration of Mapendo's Somali Bantu video, which gives a short synopsis of Somali Bantu refugee life before arrival in the US, has received widespread attention. More videos are planned, as well as expansion of the medical and identification programs.

With Rose Mapendo's story as its emblem of the desperation and danger unassisted refugees face and the positive change that can occur, Mapendo is securing an important name for itself. Echoing Green, a US foundation that identifies and assists social entrepreneurs, has named Mapendo one of the 12 best emerging initiatives in the world, and the Waldzell Meeting 2006 at the Melk Abby in Austria has invited the director to speak to world leaders in science, medicine, the arts, technology and business as part of its "Architects of the Future" program. Mapendo is starting to make a difference.

To learn more, please go to www.mapendo.org

Resettlement is not an alternative to the spontaneous asylum seeking

"Understanding Resettlement in practice: capacity building for action!" Concluding Conference

By Flavio Di Giacomo

On the 3rd and 5th of July the concluding conference of the CCME's project "Understanding Resettlement in practice: capacity building for action!" took place in Brussels. It was the occasion for all the people involved in the project in the last months to meet and to share their experiences. Participants of the conference were: Representatives of UNHCR, of the European Commission, of the British and the Canadian Governments, of the Finnish Government (which now holds the presidency of EU) of the main organisations involved in Refugee issues and which took part in the Project.

The first session of the conference was "Lessons Learnt": the aim was to talk about the missions which took place in 2006 in Finland, in North America and in Kenya. Participants to the missions explained how the trips were organised and what were the main findings. These visits were extremely useful because they gave the chance to study different approaches to Resettlement. The delegation which went to Finland could discover a model deeply influenced by the northern European "welfare state" oriented approach: Refugees are economically supported in every single aspect of their lives and they are required to learn Finnish language before start working in the country. This approach has both positive and negative aspects: it actually helps refugees to survive in a foreign environment but at the same time it appears a little bit difficult for them to integrate in a short period of time.

Delegation to North America was divided in two: the Canadian and the US Delegation. These two countries have very different resettlement approaches. The Canadian system is quite close to the north European one:

it does not put pressure on refugees and help them throughout a long period of time. Canadian use of sponsorships in the integration programme makes the system quite unique and a very interesting source of inspiration for other programmes. In US things appear to be



Attending the Final Conference of the Refugees' Resettlement project

quite different: a very big quota is received every year, but refugees are required to become self sufficient and to work as soon as they can, even before learning the language. NGO's role in this program is crucial, both in the selection and in the integration phase.

The three models are quite different and Europe could probably learn from all of them: from the Finnish approach, from the Canadians sponsorship, from the US self sufficiency philosophy and NGO's role.

The most important thing is to transfer what is possible, but taking into consideration that every country has differences and not all the approaches could work everywhere.

The visit to Kenya has been a very interesting part of the conference, since the delegation could actually see what happens in the selection programmes and in the pre-orientation classes: phases which are mostly in the hands of UNHCR and IOM. The mission gave the possibility to see what a refugee camp really looks like and to understand the huge work that has to be done in the first steps of the resettlement process.

These missions and the related reports could clarify what happens in different Resettlement countries: what is currently missing indeed at international level is to know how the other countries work, which are their approaches, their problems and their achievements in resettling refugees.

The conference, and the project as a whole, could contribute in sharing experiences and getting to know different

resettlement programmes.

In the following session, "Policies and Initiatives" Sean Henderson of the Resettlement Section of UNHCR explained how the High Commission is working in order to further develop its Resettlement Policies and what happened in the Annual Tripartite Consultation which took place last June in Geneva.

Zeta Georgiadou of the European Commission explained then what is now happening at EU level on Resettlement. At the moment it was decided to use Resettlement in the Regional Protection Programmes, which are now starting to work, but the Commission's aim is to continue to check with member states what could be done in order to start a future European Resettlement Scheme. That is why the European Commission supports all the countries showing an interest in starting their own Resettlement Programmes.

The third session, "From learning to action: Broadening the basis for Resettlement", was directly linked to this issue.

Catriona Laing of the British Home office told to participants how the new UK Resettlement Programme (called GPP Gateway Protection Programme) is working and what were the achievements and the problems. The main problem that came up in the programme was the difficulty in finding municipalities ready to receive refugees. The first year, 2003-2004, they could only cooperate with two Municipalities: Bolton and Sheffield, with the result that the government could not reach the quota fixed in advanced. However, now things are going much better and the GPP appears to be a success.

Reyes Castillo of Accem explained what is happening in Spain. The government is now working on a new asylum law, which will contain an article on Resettlement. It seems the Zapatero's Government would like to start such a programme, but at the moment nobody knows how it will work. ACCEM, together with other Spanish organisations, prepared a Feasibility Study for a Resettlement Programme in Spain and this will be one of the documents which hopefully

will be used as an inspiration for the actual Programme

Flavio Di Giacomo of the Italian Council for Refugees (CIR) announced that the Italian Ministry of the Interior, with CIR as operational partner, has just finished a Feasibility Study for an Italian Resettlement Programme, co-financed by the European Commission. The study, which was prepared by CIR, and which could also include the CCME's mission to USA in its findings (thanks to the Cooperation with FCEI), proposes a quite detailed programme for Italy, which hopefully will be studied by the Italian Government, and which should be called Dante Refugee Programme. The way for an Italian Programme is

still long, and it is also linked to the new law on asylum which will be discussed by the Italian Parliament and will include a long article on Resettlement.



Berhanu Yeteshaw and Thomson Jessie at CCME Final conference

The Conference then ended with a look to the future. The project which is now ending gave the possibility to deeply increase participants knowledge on Resettlement, to share experiences and to create a group of people coming from different European countries ready to work at a national and international level in order to convince institutions, Public Opinion and Media to increase their interest in Resettlement.

"Understanding Resettlement in practice: capacity building for action!" was a huge success and a very important step towards a European Resettlement Programme: other steps will follow, and the road appears now to be a little bit shorter.

An EU-wide refugee resettlement scheme A view from the European Parliament

By *Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert*

Several years ago, the European Commission made proposals for a new EU approach to the international protection regime. Regional Protection Programmes should be brought forward with the intention of enhancing the protection capacity of the regions involved and better protecting the refugee population, thereby providing durable solutions. These three solutions are: (1) repatriation, (2) local integration or (3) resettlement in a third country if (1) and (2) are not possible.

Consequently, the European Commission also made proposals for the setting up of an EU-wide resettlement scheme to deliver protection to a greater number of refugees and to ensure a more orderly and managed entry into the EU. An EU-wide resettlement scheme, to be participated in by all Member States, would be beneficial in terms of economy, scale and political weight. The resettlement of refugees to EU Member States is furthermore a crucial factor in demonstrating the partnership element to the third countries involved. The Commission's approach was (and still is) fully supported by the European Parliament.

The European Commission, however, has many interests to consider – notably that of the Member States. Over recent decades most Member States have developed very restrictive asylum and migration policies; these are still frequently major issues in national elections. Therefore Member States tend to be reluctant to participate in such an EU-wide resettlement scheme. The idea of a *joint* resettlement programme is simply considered as a step too far. The Member States made it perfectly clear that possible participation in such a programme should be on a voluntary basis only, thereby undermining so-called 'shared responsibility' as well as effectiveness in terms of economy, scale and political weight.

Whilst recognising the fact that the best solution for those seeking protection is to invest in the resolution of long-term conflicts and conflict prevention, the importance of resettling persons in need of immediate and urgent international protection should not be denied. Presently, only a few Member States operate any type of resettlement scheme. Most Member States do not operate a resettlement scheme at all. And it is striking to see that, in comparison

with for example America, Canada and Australia, the number of 'invited' refugees in the EU member states that do operate a resettlement scheme is still very limited.

Resettlement is an indispensable and essential part of the international protection system. The EU Member States must therefore act now. An EU-wide resettlement scheme, with full participation by all Member States and in close co-operation with the UNHCR, would have a significant impact.

Janine Hennis-Plasschaert is the Dutch Liberal MEP. She is member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and she is the committee's rapporteur on Regional Protection Programmes.



Dadaab refugees camp at sunset



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...but the work on refugees' resettlement does not end here...

The promotion of European resettlement activities is currently a priority for the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). It is one of the policy themes comprising ECRE's Agenda for Change entitled: Europe's role in the global refugee protection system - The Way Forward, which is ECRE's strategic policy and advocacy framework for the coming years (available at www.ecre.org). ECRE has therefore established a CORE Group on Resettlement. This working group will help shape and lead ECRE's advocacy strategy and activities in relation to resettlement. One of its first activities will be a ECRE-UNHCR meeting on the 29th Sept in Geneva on "Enhancing the role of European NGOs in resettlement".

The previous issues of the *CCME Resettlement Newsletter* are available at:

<http://www.ccme.be> and
<http://www.cec-kek.org/content/ccme.shtml>

1) What is CCME?

CCME is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, refugees and asylum, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. The aim of CCME is to develop in the churches throughout Europe a due sense of responsibility towards the situation of migrants, refugees and minority ethnic people.

Founded in 1964, CCME is an organization of churches and ecumenical councils as well as churches related agencies; its members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches, diocesan agencies and Councils of Churches in presently 16 European countries. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.

CCME is active in the Platform of NGOs on Migration and Asylum hosted by UNHCR in Brussels.

CCME promotes awareness-raising on issue of racism and xenophobia within the churches and in society, it conducts studies of the situation of migrants, refugees and minority ethnic people at local, national and international level.

2) What is "Resettlement in practice"?

The project "Resettlement in practice" takes up the conclusions of the study process and consultation "Make Resettlement Work" which CCME organized in 2003-2004 and enhances/improves the network created between governmental institutions, UNHCR, Churches and NGOs. Reactions and discussions during that study process indicated that among many relevant actors in the field of refugee protection there was no clear understanding of what resettlement should entail.

3) What is Refugee Resettlement?

It's one of the 3 traditional durable solutions for refugees, along with the local integration in the country of asylum and repatriation. Basically, it's a transfer of refugees from their country of first asylum to a third country that has agreed to admit them with a long term or permanent resident status. Resettlement provides protection for refugees whose safety is immediately at risk and it is a tool of international protection in a context of burden sharing among states.

4) What Resettlement is not...

Resettlement is not the same as seeking refugee status through the asylum system, nor is it a more legal process for accessing asylum rights and can never substitute a spontaneous request of asylum.

Resettlement is not synonymous with "Temporary protection" classifications.

Resettlement cannot become a system of profiling refugees in accordance to their nationality or religion in order to create more or less valuable categories of refugees. Resettlement is based exclusively on the protection needs of the refugees.

5) Which are the Resettlement countries?

The countries that actually host resettlement programs are the following: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. Those countries are called the "traditional ones", but next to them there are also new partners such as Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Iceland, Ireland, Spain and UK.

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The views expressed and information provided by the project and partners involved do not necessarily reflect the point of view of and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission.