



Refugee Children & Youth Backgrounders

International Rescue Committee

www.theIRC.org

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Dear Teacher:

You are receiving this packet because one of the students in your class is a refugee. The purpose of these materials is aimed at facilitating your efforts to ensure that your student successfully adapts to and thrives in the U.S. school system.

Since you face numerous time constraints and a wide array of demands as a teacher, the information presented in these materials is simply a brief overview of your student's cultural background and refugee experience, as well as some practical tips for consideration and web resources.

Materials included in this packet include:

- 1) Introduction to refugees in the U.S.
- 2) Background information on your student's home country
- 3) Tips for engaging refugee youth and parents
- 4) Web resources concerning education, language, and culture

Thank you for your consideration. We hope that these materials are useful to you.

If you have any questions, concerns or requests for additional information, please feel free to contact:

Sincerely,



An Introduction to Refugees in the United States

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is a person who has left his or her country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to return to that country due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based upon race, religion, nationality, membership in a specific social group, or political group.¹

At the end of 2005, the worldwide refugee population was 13 million, the lowest rate in 26 years.² An estimated 80% of the world's refugees are women and children, with children and youth constituting approximately half of the worldwide refugee population.³

Resettlement to the U.S.

For more than two decades, the United States has offered assistance to refugees of special concern through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. Each year, U.S. Congress decides how many refugees can be admitted into the U.S. During fiscal year 2006, the U.S. government admitted a total of 41,277 refugees into the U.S. Approximately 47% of the 41,277 refugees – or 19,500 -- admitted to the U.S. fell below 21 years of age.

For fiscal year 2007, Congress has decided to allow a maximum of 70,000 refugees into the U.S., including 22,000 refugees from Africa, 11,000 from East Asia, 6,500 from Europe and Central Asia, 5,500 from the Near East/South Asia, and 5,000 from Latin America/Caribbean. The remaining 20,000 allocations are reserved for additional cases that exceed regional quotas.⁴

Once refugees have been approved for admission to the U.S., refugee resettlement agencies in the U.S. secure housing for refugees and meet them at the airport. Following arrival, these agencies provide basic assistance with community orientation, English language instruction, school orientation, medical screening, and employment services.⁵

Adjustment to Life in the U.S.

Countless refugee families have survived traumatic life events including years of political conflict, exposure to war-related violence and deprivation, and chaos in refugee camps.⁶ Potential risk factors encountered by refugee children and youth include separation from

¹ Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 101(a)42A

² USDOS, DHS and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.

³ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, "Women's Commission Fact Sheet," April 2006, <http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/fctsht06.pdf>.

⁴ USDOS, PRM Refugee Admissions, FY2006.

⁵ US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, www.refugees.org/article.aspx?id=1082&subm=40&ssm=47&area=Investigate.

⁶ Department of Education, www.doe.state.in.us/lmmp/pdf/refugee_students_in_american_classrooms.pdf.



family members, lack of access to education and health care, recruitment into armed forces, sexual exploitation, the loss of home, and exposure to war-related trauma.⁷

Adolescent girl refugees are often at particularly high risk due to their vulnerability to sexual violence, early or forced marriage, exposure to HIV/AIDS, and recruitment into armed forces as servants or sex slaves.⁸ High rates of stress and trauma are prevalent for both refugee adults and children.⁹

Once resettled to the U.S., refugee families often experience anxiety over family members who have been left behind. They are faced with the challenge of adapting to a new environment while coping with the loss of home, family members, friends, belongings, and community. Parents and caregivers must learn to support their families financially, at times without specific job experience or language capabilities. All of these stressors can affect parents' capacity to help their children adjust to life in the U.S.¹⁰

Refugee youth in the U.S. face further challenges, including academic difficulties, language acquisition, social isolation and alienation, social adjustment with peers, negative peer pressure, grief and bereavement, discrimination, cultural misunderstanding, and adjustment to a new educational system. Associated psychosocial stress can hinder refugee children's ability to learn English, perform adequately in school, and develop peer support networks.¹¹

Adjustment to schools in the U.S. can present significant challenges for refugee children and youth, particularly for those with minimal or no previous education. Refugee children who have lived their entire lives in refugee camps may have never attended school or received any formal language training, and may not be literate in any language. Refugee children may experience difficulty understanding what is expected of them in the school environment regarding school rules, routines, behavioral norms, and academic standards. Refugee children may also lack peers at school who share similar life experiences, or be singled out for their differences. Schools can be an isolating and confusing experience for refugee children and youth without sufficient social and academic support.¹² Teachers, agencies, and community members in the U.S. can play a critical role in helping refugee children thrive in the U.S. school system.

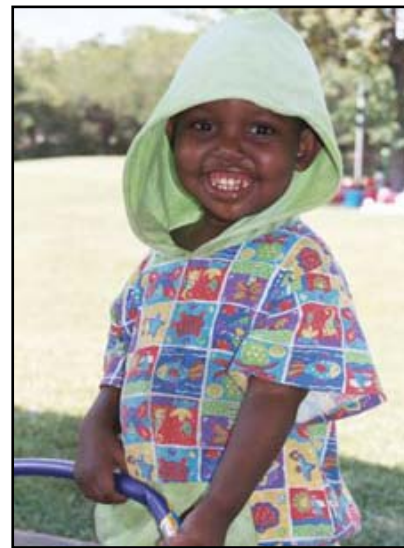


Photo: IRC

⁷ UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2006*, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/fullreport/chapters.php>

⁸ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, www.womenscommission.org/pdf/AdolGirls.pdf.

⁹ Heptinstall, E., Sethna, V. & Taylor, E. (2004). PTSD and Depression in Refugee Children. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 13, 373-380.

¹⁰ McBrien, J.L. (2005). Educational Needs and Barriers for Refugee Children in the United States: A Review of the Literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 329-264.

¹¹ Department of Education, www.doe.state.in.us/lmmp/pdf/refugee_students_in_american_classrooms.pdf.

¹² Department of Education, www.doe.state.in.us/lmmp/pdf/refugee_students_in_american_classrooms.pdf.



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Helping Refugee Children Transition to American Schools

The experience of displacement from one's home country is often a significant trauma and loss for refugees of all ages. Refugee children must leave behind all they have ever known, including friends, communities, schools, homes, and family members. Many refugee children suffer from post-traumatic stress and depression due to war-related trauma and the pressures associated with migrating to another country¹. Disruption in schooling, exposure to violence, and extensive deprivation can also impact the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development of refugee children².

Refugee children who come to the U.S. must make quick adjustments to a completely new way of life and a new school system. Some refugee children have never had the benefit of attending school. Others have not attended school in years. They may be riding buses, eating in cafeterias, using lockers, and changing classrooms for the first time – in a new language.

This document will provide you with some brief tips on how to assist refugee children in your classroom, and how to proactively engage parents in their children's educational progress.

Working with Refugee Families

Many factors affect the involvement of refugee parents and other guardians in their children's education in the U.S., including language, expectations for parental involvement, expectations for teachers, isolation, and trauma. Refugee parents must also adjust to unfamiliar cultural values and behavioral patterns that they see their children adopting in a new school environment, some of which may be considered disrespectful in their culture³.

Despite these difficulties, involving refugee parents/guardians in their children's education is critical for the success of refugee children in U.S. schools. Children whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to excel in school⁴, to attend school regularly, and to continue with higher education⁵. For refugee children, parental involvement is particularly critical considering the numerous obstacles refugee children face in adapting to a new school system.

The following chart highlights some common barriers in engaging refugee parents/guardians, and provides concrete suggestions for addressing these areas of concern:

¹ Heptinstall, E., Sethna, V. & Taylor, E. (2004). PTSD and Depression in Refugee Children: Associations with Pre-Migration Trauma and Post-Migration Stress. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 13(6), 373-380.

² Bureau of Refugee and Immigration Affairs, New York State of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), "Welcome to Our Schools Kit Introduction."

³ Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS), "Strengthening Services for Refugee Parents: Guidelines and Resources," http://brycs.org/documents/parenting_manual.pdf#search=%22refugee%20parent%20coordinate%22

⁴ Baker, A.J.L. & Soden, L. (1998). The challenge of parental involvement research. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education*, 134.

⁵ Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement," 2002, www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/fam33.html.



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Helping Refugee Children Transition to American Schools

| PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ⁶ | SUGGESTIONS |
|---|--|
| 1) Refugee parents/guardians may be hesitant to participate in parent-teacher conferences or other school events because they do not understand English, and/or because they are uncomfortable with or intimidated by the American school system. | 1a) Coordinate with local refugee resettlement agencies and community-based organizations in assessing parents' needs and misunderstandings about the school system. 1b) Invite parents to school for a day visit. Encourage parents to bring younger siblings. |
| 2) Parents/guardians may not understand what services are available to their children. | 2) Offer orientation sessions for new families at the beginning of the school year (if possible in different languages). Instead of offering all information at once, it might be beneficial to offer several sessions throughout the year. |
| 3) Parents/guardians may be unaware of American expectations regarding parental involvement. | 3) Welcome videos can be helpful in introducing the US educational system. Some videos are already available through the web (see web resources for teachers sheet to determine whether a video is available in your student's language). |
| 4) Refugee parents/guardians may not be able to come to school for activities scheduled during business hours. | 4) Change the time of day in which parent activities are scheduled, to accommodate variable work schedules for parents. |
| 5) For many parents/guardians, regular school attendance may be a new concept. | 5) Stress in initial orientation sessions and in translated written materials that regular school attendance is obligatory in the U.S. |
| 6) Parents/guardians may not be aware of their children's homework assignments. | 6a) Provide translated form letters for parents informing them of their children's homework assignments. 6b) Provide children with written descriptions of homework assignments, as they may not comprehend oral instructions. |
| LANGUAGE ⁷ | SUGGESTIONS |
| 1) Parents/guardians may be unable to understand reports from the school regarding the child's performance or illness at school, and may be unaware of school events. | 1a) Translate written materials from the school whenever possible. 1b) Develop translated form letters to distribute to parents regarding major school |

⁶ Illinois State Board of Education, "Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in their Children's Schools: Barriers, Challenges, and Successful Strategies." 2003.

⁷ Illinois State Board of Education, "Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in their Children's Schools: Barriers, Challenges, and Successful Strategies." 2003.



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

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| | events: holidays, parent-teacher conferences, etc. Some of these forms can be downloaded in various languages from the Department of Education website. |
|---|---|
| 2) Parents/guardians may not understand homework assignments. | 2a) Ensure that refugee children have access to needed tutoring through school or community-based organizations. 2b) Provide on-site adult ESL classes. |
| 3) Parents/guardians may be hesitant to participate in school events due to language barriers. | 3a) Coordinate with community-based agencies or others to ensure that translators are available during conferences and at major school events. 3b) Coordinate with school administrators regarding school policies to provide equal access to English language learning parents. |
| ROLE OF TEACHERS⁸ | SUGGESTIONS |
| 1) Depending upon the family's country of origin, refugee parents/guardians and children may not expect American teachers to value student and parent participation in the educational process. | 1) Confirm in written documents and parent-teacher conferences that teachers both welcome and expect parental involvement. Provide parents with concrete suggestions, such as talking to their children regularly about school, volunteering at school events, participating in teacher conferences, monitoring their children's performance, and ensuring that homework is completed each evening. |
| 2) Many parents and students may view teachers as experts, and may not know that teachers benefit from direct communications regarding the needs of their children | 2) Invite parental feedback on how they believe their child is doing, and affirm that you are interested in working with them on helping their child to thrive in school. |
| ISOLATION⁹ | SUGGESTIONS |
| 1) Lack of access to sufficient public transportation can be a barrier to active involvement in school activities. | 1) Maintain open communication with parents/guardians regarding any transportation barriers. Coordinate with a community-based organization on arranging transportation services for parent meetings and events at school. |
| 2) Limited English language skills and | 2a) Host social events (such as potlucks, |

⁸ Illinois State Board of Education, "Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in their Children's Schools: Barriers, Challenges, and Successful Strategies." 2003.

⁹ Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS), "Strengthening Services for Refugee Parents: Guidelines and Resources," http://brycs.org/documents/parenting_manual.pdf#search=%22refugee%20parent%20coordinate%22



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

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unfamiliarity with a new environment can lead many refugee parents to feel isolated in a new country.

picnics) to help in developing relationships with refugee parents/ guardians.

2b) Draw on the skills of refugee parents/guardians, and invite them to volunteer at school events in capacities that do not require substantial English language skills.



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Helping Refugee Children Transition to American Schools

It is easy to assume that refugee children have basic knowledge about school customs and the English language when in fact they are constantly being exposed to new concepts and new words. Here are some common assumptions to watch out for¹⁰:

| 1. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT | 2. TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTIONS |
|---|--|
| <p>Do not assume that refugee children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what they are supposed to do with crayons, scissors, glue, pencils, or paintbrushes. • Understand everyday words used in schools, like “recess,” “homework,” “on-time” or “coloring.” • Have experience sitting at desks all day. • Have used public rest rooms with separate stalls. • Have ever seen a playground, or are familiar with sports equipment. | <p>Do not assume that refugee children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what the teacher is saying just because they are smiling and nodding. • Are accustomed to adults talking to them individually. • Believe that teachers are available to help them. • Know that they can express their opinions without being reprimanded. |
| 3. SAFETY | 4. DAILY LIFE |
| <p>Do not assume that refugee children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think that they are safe at school. • Know that when they get on a bus, they will be able to return home. • Believe that teachers will be helpful and kind to them, and will not hurt them. • Trust coaches, police officers, or other people in uniforms. | <p>Do not assume that refugee children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat breakfast and lunch every day. • Are living with people they know. • Can talk to their parents about school. • Are comfortable in American clothing, or are familiar with American hygiene habits. |

¹⁰ Bureau of Refugee and Immigration Affairs, New York State of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), “Welcome to Our Schools Kit Introduction.”



Refugee Backgrounders



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Burmese Karen Refugees

Burma, also known as Myanmar, is a Southeast Asian country that is bordered by India, Bangladesh, China, Laos, and Thailand.

Background Information

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1948, Burma has experienced extensive civil unrest between the central military government and numerous ethnic minority groups. In 1962, a military regime seized power over the country. Under this regime, ethnic minority residents of Burma have experienced numerous abuses, including forced labor, forced relocation, torture, arbitrary executions, confiscation of goods and property, rape and other forms of sexual violence.²³ Children, who comprise an estimated 40% of the population, are particularly vulnerable. Common abuses against children include forced conscription into the military, and trafficking for the purpose of prostitution.²⁴

Due to these abuses, over 600,000 members of ethnic minority groups have been displaced from their homes in Burma.²⁵ More than 140,000 refugees from Burma live in nine Thai-administered refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border.²⁶ Refugees living in the nine camps along the Thai-Burma border have access to basic security, food, water, shelter, sanitation, and health care, but often live in overcrowded quarters and lack access to adequate education.²⁷

Approximately 68% percent of the country is ethnically Burman. Ethnic minority groups, including the Karen, Shan, Mon, and Rakhine, comprise the remaining 32%.²⁸ The ruling military regime has designated the official religion of Burma to be Buddhism, and the official language to be Burman. However, ethnic minority residents of Burma also practice other religions (Christianity, Islam, and Animism), and may prefer to speak their indigenous languages, including Karen, Shan, Mon, Kachin, and Chin. The Karen comprise 7% of the population, and primarily speak Karen.²⁹



Photo: CIA World Factbook

As a result of longstanding conflict with the Burman regime, many ethnic minority groups in Burma have fought for autonomy from the ruling government.³⁰

²³ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Thai-Burma Border Reproductive Health Assessment, April 2006.

²⁴ USDOS, Human Rights Report – Burma, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61603.htm>.

²⁵ IRC, http://www.theirc.org/where/the_irc_in_thailand.html.

²⁶ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.

²⁷ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Thai-Burma Border Reproductive Health Assessment, April 2006.

²⁸ USDOS, Background Note: Burma, August 2005.

²⁹ Wikipedia, Myanmar Demographics, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma#Language>.

³⁰ USDOS, Background Note: Burma, August 2005.



Flight to Tham Hin Camp

In early 1997, the Burmese military launched a major attack upon a predominantly Karen region of Burma, and took control of the area. As a result, thousands of Karen fled into Thailand within the following months. Thai authorities proceeded to grant temporary asylum to this group, and the Tham Hin refugee camp was established in 1997 to accommodate these refugees. Of the 9,325 persons registered at the Tham Hin refugee camp,³¹ the U.S. Government anticipates that 3,000 will be resettled to the U.S. in 2007.³²

Nongovernmental organizations have established nursery, primary, and secondary schools within Tham Hin Camp.³³ In early 2006, a total of 2,954 of the estimated 4,942 children in Tham Hin Camp were enrolled in schools within the camp. In December 2005, Thailand's Ministry of Education also decided to provide Thai, English, and vocational training to refugees in the nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border.³⁴ The Royal Thai Government has committed to begin providing teachers with educational materials, such as textbooks and computers, in 2006.³⁵

When children are given an opportunity to attend school in Thai-Burma border refugee camps, they are most likely taught while sitting on the ground in huts, as opposed to learning in a formal classroom. Tables and desks will likely be unfamiliar for students who are accustomed to a more informal, experiential style of learning.

IRC, OPE Thailand: Tham Hin Camp, www.refugeecouncilusa.org/ms-thamhin-ircfctsht.pdf

Karen is the primary language for 94% of the adults residing in Tham Hin Camp.³⁶ Schools within Tham Hin Camp, however, emphasize Thai language learning for children.³⁷

U.S. Resettlement

A total of 1,612 ethnic Karen refugees from Burma were admitted to the U.S. during fiscal year 2006.³⁸ The U.S. Government estimates that an additional 3,000 refugees will be resettled to the U.S. in the 2007 fiscal year.³⁹ Also under consideration are the Burmese and Burmese Chin in other camps throughout Thailand, Malaysia, and India. Burmese Karen refugees are less likely than other refugee groups to have established family networks in the U.S.



Photo: IRC

³¹ IRC, OPE: Tham Hin Camp, <http://www.refugeecouncilusa.org/ms-thamhin-ircfctsht.pdf>.

³² USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.

³³ Burma Border Consortium, <http://www.tbcc.org/camps/sangklaburi.html#tamhin>.

³⁴ USCRI, Thailand to Educate Refugees, www.refugees.org/article.aspx?id=1498&rid=1179#Thailand.

³⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, Burmese Community Profile, www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/community-profiles.htm.

³⁶ IRC, OPE: Tham Hin Camp, <http://www.refugeecouncilusa.org/ms-thamhin-ircfctsht.pdf>.

³⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, Burmese Community Profile, www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/community-profiles.htm.

³⁸ USDOS, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration – FY 2006, September 29, 2006.

³⁹ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Congolese Refugees

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly known as Zaire, is located in Central Africa. The D.R.C. is the third largest country in Africa, and is approximately the size of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River.⁴⁰

Background Information

The 1998-2004 war in the DRC has been deemed the world's deadliest conflict since World War II.⁴¹ The current crisis began in 1996 in the midst of discord with war-torn Rwanda, following the Rwandan genocide in 1994. In 1998, this conflict escalated into a devastating war between the DRC's government military and rebel groups from the DRC, Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda. The war resulted in 3.9 million deaths, and forced an estimated 3.6 million people to leave their homes. Nearly half of the deaths involved children younger than 5 years of age. An estimated 38,000 people continue to die each month as a result of the conflict, largely due to disease.⁴²



The DRC is an ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse country. Approximately 700 local languages and dialects are spoken in the DRC, and as many as 250 ethnic groups have been identified.⁴³ The four largest tribes -- the Mongo, Luba, Kongo, and Mangbetu-Azande -- account for an estimated 45% of the population. Tribal affiliation is often more important for Congolese refugees than national affiliation, and tribal names are a significant marker of religious identity and social status.⁴⁴ Though language usage varies widely according to ethnicity, the official language for education, trade, and government is French. A person's social status and level of education is often judged by fluency in French.⁴⁵ The primary religious affiliations of the DRC include Roman Catholicism (50%), Protestantism (20%), Islam (10%), traditional beliefs (10%), and a branch of Christianity called Kimbanguism (10%). Religious beliefs also vary widely among ethnic groups.⁴⁶

Gender roles also vary among tribes. In general, women are primarily responsible for caring for the family, feeding the family, and maintaining the household. In some rural areas, girls must stay at home until they marry, and married women are expected to request permission from husbands before traveling, or seeking employment. Men are generally regarded as the principal income earners and protectors of the household, and women are commonly expected to obey decisions made by men in their families.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ USDOS, Background Note – Democratic Republic of Congo, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm.

⁴¹ Coghlan, B. et al (2006). Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A nationwide survey. *The Lancet*, 367, 44-51.

⁴² IRC, 3.9 Million Have Died: 38,000 Die Per Month, Jan 2006.

⁴³ USDOS, Background Note – Democratic Republic of Congo, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm.

⁴⁴ Refugee Council, A guide to Congolese cultural and social norms, Dec 2004.

⁴⁵ Refugee Council, A guide to Congolese cultural and social norms, Dec 2004.

⁴⁶ USDOS, Background Note: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sept 2006.

⁴⁷ Refugee Council, A guide to Congolese Cultural and Social Norms, Dec 2004.

The number of Congolese who attain higher levels of education remains low, with 41.7% of the population never having attended school. As of 2003, the DRC was one of the top five countries in the world with the largest number of children out of school, with the majority of absentees being girls. Males significantly outnumber females at all levels of education.⁴⁸ Some obstacles impeding access to education include insufficient funding, community violence, child soldier recruitment, and the destruction of school buildings during the recent conflict.⁴⁹

In DR Congo, children begin formal education between the ages of 6-7, and typically study in the mornings Monday through Saturday. One teacher will generally teach all subject matters, and classrooms involve students of mixed ages. Congolese refugee children who attended school in a camp in Uganda will have had greater exposure to English in the Ugandan educational system.⁵⁰

Refugee Flight

Numerous Congolese refugees fled to numerous countries to escape the conflict in the DR Congo. Primary host countries include: Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda, Burundi, Central African Republic, and the Republic of the Congo.⁵¹ By 2005, 381,000 Congolese refugees were dispersed throughout refugee camps in Central African Republic, Zambia, Republic of Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Angola.⁵² The UNHCR anticipates that more than 100,000 of these refugees will return to DR Congo in 2006.⁵³



Photo: Jiro Ose for the IRC

U.S. Resettlement

A total of 405 Congolese refugees were admitted to the U.S. during fiscal year 2006.⁵⁴ During fiscal year 2007, the U.S. Government expects to process an estimated 500 Congolese refugees from Gabon. Admissions of Congolese refugees to the U.S. during the 2007 fiscal year are expected to be lower than other refugee groups from Africa, in part due to increasing numbers of Congolese refugees returning to the DR Congo.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ USDOS, Background Note: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sept 2006.

⁴⁹ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, *Struggling to Survive: Children in Armed Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, April 2006.

⁵⁰ Refugee Council, *A guide to Congolese cultural and social norms*, Dec 2004.

⁵¹ UNHCR, Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from the DR Congo, 2000, www.unhcr.org/publ/RSDCOI/3ae6a6574.pdf

⁵² UNHCR, 2005, [www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Af.nsf/luFullMap/CFE9FB98FADEF86C8525705E004D44B7/\\$File/unhcr_IDP1_cod010205.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Af.nsf/luFullMap/CFE9FB98FADEF86C8525705E004D44B7/$File/unhcr_IDP1_cod010205.pdf?OpenElement)

⁵³ UNHCR, Global Appeal 2006, www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d17c11.pdf

⁵⁴ USDOS, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration – FY 2006, September 29, 2006.

⁵⁵ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Eritrean Refugees

Eritrea is a country in East Africa that is approximately the size of the state of Pennsylvania.⁵⁶ It borders Sudan, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.

Background Information

In 1962, Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea as a province initiated a 30-year struggle between the two countries over Eritrea's independence. In 1991, Eritrean rebels defeated governmental forces, and in 1993 Eritrea ultimately gained independence from Ethiopia.⁵⁷ Between 1998-2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia engaged in a bloody border war that caused massive internal displacement in both countries as civilians fled war zones. During this period, Eritrea also suffered from decades of drought.⁵⁸ More than 2 million people in Eritrea have been affected by the conflict with Ethiopia and drought conditions in Eritrea.⁵⁹ Currently more than one million refugees and internally displaced people in Eritrea require humanitarian assistance to survive.⁶⁰ Tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea remain high.⁶¹

Map Source: CIA World Fact Book



Eritrea is home to nine primary ethnic groups, each of which has its own language. These groups include the Tigrinya, Tigre, Saho, Afar, Beja, Bilen, Kunama, Nara, and Rashaida. The largest group is the Tigrinya, accounting for approximately 50% of the population. Comprising roughly 2% of the total population,⁶² the Kunama are pastoral and reside primarily along the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea.⁶³

English, Tigrinya, and Arabic are the languages most widely used in official communication.⁶⁴ Approximately 50% the Eritrean population is Christian, most of whom are Orthodox. Muslims make up an estimated 48% of the population, and indigenous beliefs account for another 2%. Christians and Muslims generally live in different regions of the country.⁶⁵ Though the Kunama were originally animist, many Kunama have adopted either the Christian or Islam faith in recent history.⁶⁶

⁵⁶ USDOS, Background Note: Eritrea, October 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm>.

⁵⁷ CIA World Fact Book, Eritrea, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/er.html>.

⁵⁸ Wikipedia, Eritrean-Ethiopian War, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eritrean-Ethiopian_War.

⁵⁹ USAID, Eritrea Disaster Assistance, www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/eritrea/dr_index.html

⁶⁰ IRC, The IRC in Eritrea, <http://www.theirc.org/where/the-irc-in-eritrea.html>

⁶¹ USDOS, Background Note: Eritrea, October 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm>.

⁶² USDOS, Background Note: Eritrea, October 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm>.

⁶³ Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA). 2003. "The Kunama of Eritrea," by Sr. Christian Molitor. [Internet] URL: <http://www.cnewa.org/cne27-2-pp06-11.htm> (Accessed 20 March 2003).

⁶⁴ Wikipedia, Languages of Eritrea, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Eritrea.

⁶⁵ USDOS, Background Note: Eritrea, October 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm>.

⁶⁶ Yohannes, Okbazghi. 1991. *Eritrea: Pawn in World Politics*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press.



In Eritrean families, men are generally responsible for family decisions, particularly those relating to external affairs. Older men within the community traditionally settle disputes. In many families, women cook family meals and care for the house. Traditionally, girls are raised to share responsibility for household tasks, but increasingly boys are beginning to help more with household duties.⁶⁷ Eritrean refugee families moving to the U.S. may experience family conflict as traditional gender roles change in response to new customs.⁶⁸

Though education in Eritrea is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 13, school enrollment rates remain low. Estimates for primary school enrollment vary from 39 to 57%. Only 21% of youth attend secondary school. Illiteracy estimates for Eritrea range from 40% to as high as 70%.⁶⁹ Eritrean schools significantly differ from U.S. schools. In Eritrea, student-teacher ratios are very high, with an average of 63 students per classroom at the elementary level, and 97 students per classroom at the secondary level. Students often attend school for less than four hours per day.⁷⁰

Refugee Flight

Eritrean refugees have sought asylum in several countries, including Sudan and Ethiopia.⁷¹ In January 2006, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated providing assistance to 113,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan,⁷² and approximately 10,500 Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia. Access to adequate nutrition for refugees in Ethiopian camps has been adversely affected by reductions of food rations, delays in distribution of rations, and lack of funds to procure essential non-food items, such as stoves.⁷³ The return of Eritrean refugees to Eritrea has been impeded by ongoing political tensions and difficult economic conditions in Eritrea as a result of drought.⁷⁴

US Resettlement

In fiscal year 2006, the U.S. Government admitted 18,174 refugees from Africa into the U.S. Within this group, 539 of these refugees were Eritrean.⁷⁵

During fiscal year 2007, the U.S. Government has authorized the admission of 22,000 African refugees to the U.S. Within this group, the U.S. government anticipates processing Eritrean refugees subject to severe violations of religious freedom, as well as some 2,500 Eritrean Kunama refugees who have fled to Ethiopia as a result of conflict along the Eritrea-Ethiopia border.⁷⁶



Photo: IRC – Ann-Kristin

⁶⁷ Ethnomed, Eritrean Cultural Profile, http://ethnomed.org/cultures/eritrean/eritrean_cp.html.

⁶⁸ http://www3.baylor.edu/~Charles_Kemp/ethiopian_refugees.htm.

⁶⁹ Wikipedia, Education in Eritrea, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Eritrea.

⁷⁰ Wikipedia, Education in Eritrea, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Eritrea.

⁷¹ UNHCR, 2004 Eritrea Statistical Yearbook, www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/44e5c75b0.pdf.

⁷² UNHCR, Global Appeal 2006 – Sudan, www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d1a33f.pdf

⁷³ UNHCR, Global Appeal 2006 – Ethiopia, www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d1810.pdf.

⁷⁴ UNHCR, Global Appeal 2006 – Ethiopia, www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d1810.pdf.

⁷⁵ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, www.cal.org/co/refugees/statistics/index.html#africa.

⁷⁶ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Ethiopian Oromo Refugees

Ethiopia, the second most populated country in Africa, is situated in the Horn of Africa, bordering Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, and Sudan.

Background Information

Natural disasters, political unrest, war, drought, and famine have forced millions of Ethiopians from their homes in recent decades.⁷⁷ Between 1998-2000, Ethiopia and Eritrea fought a bloody border war resulting in tens of thousands of deaths, and the displacement of over 600,000 people from the border areas.⁷⁸ Though a peace agreement was signed in 2005, tensions between these two countries still remain high.⁷⁹ Internal conflict between the Ethiopian government and an armed resistance group, the Oromo Liberation Front, has also been a source of internal conflict in Ethiopia.⁸⁰ Historically, Ethiopia has been vulnerable to periodic drought and famine, and is currently facing significant food shortages.⁸¹



The population of Ethiopia is extremely diverse, with more than 77 different ethnic groups with their own distinct languages within Ethiopia. Some of the smaller ethnic groups have as few as 10,000 members. The official language of Ethiopia is Amharic, but other commonly spoken languages include Arabic, Tigrinya, English, and Somali.⁸² Ethiopia is also a religiously diverse country. Ethiopian Orthodox Christians make up 40% of the population. Sunni Muslims make up 45-50%, Protestants 5%, and the remainder follows indigenous beliefs called “Waagaa.”⁸³ The Oromo, who comprise 40% of the population of Ethiopia,⁸⁴ speak Oromifa, the third most widely spoken language in Africa.⁸⁵ Religious affiliation of the Oromo follows country trends.⁸⁶

Elementary school attendance is estimated to be approximately 57% in Ethiopia.⁸⁷ School attendance is particularly low for girls due to financial constraints, expectations for daughters to help at home, less value placed on educating girls, and a general preference for the early marriage of daughters.⁸⁸

Children who have the opportunity to attend school often meet unfavorable school conditions. Student-teacher ratios often exceed 100:1, sometimes with as many as 200

⁷⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, Ethiopian Community Profile, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/community-profiles.htm>

⁷⁸ IRC, www.theirc.org/where/the_irc_in_ethiopia.html.

⁷⁹ USDOS, Background Note Ethiopia, September 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm>

⁸⁰ Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromo_Liberation_Front.

⁸¹ Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_famine.

⁸² USDOS, Background Note Ethiopia, September 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm>

⁸³ USDOS, Background Note Ethiopia, September 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm>

⁸⁴ USDOS, Background Note Ethiopia, September 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm>

⁸⁵ Oromo Community of Minnesota, <http://www.oromocommunitymn.com/html/aboutoromo1.html>.

⁸⁶ Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromo#Religion>.

⁸⁷ USDOS, Background Note Ethiopia, September 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm>

⁸⁸ UNICEF, Girls Education in Ethiopia, June 2004, www.unicef.org/girlseducation/Ethiopia16_june.doc.



children crowded into a dirt floor classroom. Classrooms are often constructed of sticks and mud, and made with little light or ventilation. Classrooms regularly lack desks, chairs, textbooks, and other learning materials. Metal roof sheets produce heat in the sunshine and loud noise in the rain. Often potable water and latrines are not available.⁸⁹

In Ethiopia, men are primarily responsible for family decisions, particularly those relating to external affairs. Older men within the community are traditionally expected to settle community disputes. Changes in traditional gender roles can become a source of familial conflict for Ethiopian refugees when exposed to new gender roles in the U.S.⁹⁰

Refugee Flight

To escape war and internal conflict, Ethiopian refugees have fled to various countries, including Kenya, Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen, Somalia, and South Africa. In early 2006, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) identified an estimated 14,600 Ethiopian refugees in Sudan,⁹¹ 13,300 Ethiopian refugees in Kenya,⁹² and 2,000 Ethiopian refugees in Yemen.⁹³ Such camps are often overcrowded, and the provision of schooling is dependent upon capacity and resources. Numerous Ethiopian refugees have resided in camps for more than 20 years, and refugee children born in camps will not have experienced any other way of living.⁹⁴

US Resettlement

Since 1980, over 39,000 Ethiopian refugees have been admitted to the United States for permanent resettlement,⁹⁵ including the admission of 5,079 Ethiopian refugees between 2003 and 2005.⁹⁶ During fiscal year 2006, Ethiopia was one of the primary source countries for African refugee admissions to the U.S., along with Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan. During fiscal year 2007, the U.S. Government has authorized the admission of 22,000 African refugees to the U.S.



Photo: IRC, Courtesy of Aaron Snipe

Approximately 6,000 of these refugees have already been approved for admission, including Ethiopian refugees from South Africa.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ World Learning for International Development, www.worldlearning.org/wlid/news/ethiopia_education_story.html

⁹⁰ http://www3.baylor.edu/~Charles_Kemp/ethiopian_refugees.htm.

⁹¹ UNHCR, Sudan Global Appeal 2006, <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d1a33f.pdf>

⁹² UNHCR, Kenya Global Appeal 2006 <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d18ad.pdf>

⁹³ UNHCR, Yemen Global Appeal 2006, <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d1ab11.pdf>

⁹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, Ethiopian Community Profile, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/community-profiles.htm>

⁹⁵ USDOS, Refugee Admissions Program for Africa, <http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/fs/44168.htm>.

⁹⁶ USCIS, Annual Flow Report, 2005, www.uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/publications/Refugee_Asylee_5.pdf.

⁹⁷ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Liberian Refugees

Liberia is a country in West Africa that borders Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. Liberia is slightly bigger than the state of Ohio, and has a total population of 3.4 million people.⁹⁸

Background Information

In 1980, a military coup in Liberia triggered the beginning of a decade of authoritarian rule and civil unrest. Between 1989 and 1996, Liberia was involved in one of Africa's bloodiest civil wars, which resulted in the death of more than 200,000 Liberians and the displacement of a million others into refugee camps in neighboring countries.⁹⁹ The impact of this conflict is particularly devastating when viewed in comparison to the total population of 3.4 million people. In 2003, fourteen years of intermittent fighting ended when a peace agreement was signed. However, the security situation in Liberia has remained unstable as the social and economic structure of the country continues to be rebuilt.¹⁰⁰



Map: CIA World Factbook

Liberia is an ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse country. The four predominant ethnic groups in Liberia are the Kpelle (20%), Bassa (16%), Gio (8%), and Kru (7%). The remaining 49% is primarily comprised of 12 ethnic groups, including the Mandinka and Fulani. Though each of these ethnic groups speak their own indigenous languages, the Liberian government has designated English to be the official language of the country.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, many Liberian refugees who have lived in refugee camps for more than a decade speak little or no English.¹⁰² The predominant religions of Liberia include Christianity (40%), animism (40%), and Islam (20%).¹⁰³ The Mandinka generally practice a combination of Islam and their own traditional beliefs,¹⁰⁴ and the Fulani are largely Sunni Muslims.¹⁰⁵

Marriage and the family are generally viewed as the most basic social institutions in Liberia. Liberian families are largely patriarchal, and women have strong influence in disciplining children. Firm discipline is often exercised to instill respect for elders in children, and it is generally acceptable for those outside the family to discipline children.¹⁰⁶ Polygamy is accepted and most widely practiced among the Mandinka.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁸ USDOS, Background Note – Republic of Liberia, September 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm.

⁹⁹ USDOS, Background Note – Republic of Liberia, September 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm.

¹⁰⁰ CIA World Fact Book, Liberia, www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/li.html

¹⁰¹ USDOS, Background Note – Republic of Liberia, September 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm.

¹⁰² Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Liberian Cultural Profile, www.cal.org/co/liberians/liberian_050406_1.pdf

¹⁰³ USDOS, Background Note – Republic of Liberia, September 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm.

¹⁰⁴ The Africa Guide, Mandinka, www.africaguide.com/culture/tribes/mandinka.htm

¹⁰⁵ Wikipedia, Fula people, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulani>

¹⁰⁶ Refugee Council Online, Liberian Cultural Norms, www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/367AB8B8-0695-4463-9889-B4F12017C220/0/liberian_cult_feb04.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Liberian Cultural Profile, www.cal.org/co/liberians/liberian_050406_1.pdf



Though universal education has been promoted in Liberia since the mid-1800s, levels of educational attainment and literacy continue to be low in comparison to other African countries.¹⁰⁸ In 2003, the literacy rate of Liberia was 20%.¹⁰⁹ Only 10% of the Mandinka are literate, and the Mandinka rely heavily on oral traditions to convey history and tradition.¹¹⁰ Some of the barriers to accessing education in Liberia include: limited availability of schools in rural areas; expenses associated with migrating to an urban center for school; school fees; demands for female agricultural labor; strains between formal education and rural ways of life; and a belief among some parents that Western-influenced education will adversely impact their children's adherence to traditional values. As a result, some parents send their children to traditional schools, or "bush schools," where they learn traditional crafts, agriculture, religion, politics, and the art of warfare.¹¹¹

Refugee Flight

In the 1990s, the number of Liberian refugees grew to roughly 700,000 with the largest numbers residing in Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone.¹¹² By 2004, Liberia was the ninth largest source country for refugee populations in the world. However, as repatriations to Liberia have continued, the numbers of Liberian refugees remaining in refugee camps has decreased significantly. In August 2006, an estimated 183,000 Liberian refugees remained, including 51,000 Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone, 34,000 refugees in Ivory Coast, 39,000 refugees in Ghana, and 59,000 refugees in Guinea.¹¹³ Disease, malnutrition, and limited access to health services, education, and employment opportunities are common in refugee camps housing Liberian refugees.¹¹⁴ In addition to adverse conditions in refugee camps, many Liberian refugees have also experienced the looting and burning of property, sexual assault, rape, and the torture and murder of family members and friends.¹¹⁵

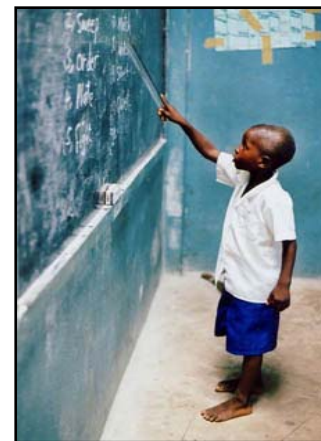


Photo: Kate Holt for the IRC

U.S. Resettlement

During fiscal year 2006, 2,402 Liberian refugees were admitted to the U.S., accounting for approximately 13% of all U.S. refugee admissions from Africa.¹¹⁶ For fiscal year 2007, the U.S. government has authorized the admission of 22,000 refugees from Africa. Ongoing resettlement of Liberian refugees to the U.S. will slow in 2007 due to ongoing plans to repatriate Liberian refugees to Liberia. Nonetheless, the U.S. government still anticipates that Liberian refugees will account for approximately half of the arrivals from West Africa during the upcoming fiscal year.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Liberian Cultural Profile, www.cal.org/co/liberians/liberian_050406_1.pdf

¹⁰⁹ USDOS, Background Note – Republic of Liberia, September 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm

¹¹⁰ The Africa Guide, Mandinka, www.africaguide.com/culture/tribes/mandinka.htm

¹¹¹ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Liberian Cultural Profile, www.cal.org/co/liberians/liberian_050406_1.pdf

¹¹² Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Liberian Cultural Profile, www.cal.org/co/liberians/liberian_050406_1.pdf

¹¹³ Commonwealth of Australia, Liberian Community Profile, www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/_pdf/community-profile-liberia.pdf

¹¹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, Liberian Community Profile, www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/_pdf/community-profile-liberia.pdf

¹¹⁵ Refugee Council Online, Liberian Cultural Norms, www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/367AB8B8-0695-4463-9889-B4F12017C220/0/liberian_cult_feb04.pdf

¹¹⁶ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, www.cal.org/co/refugee/statistics/index.html#africa.

¹¹⁷ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Meskhetian Turk Refugees

Background Information

The Meskhetian Turks are an ethnically Turkish group originally from the Meskhetia region of Georgia. In 1944, Josef Stalin passed an order calling for the deportation of Meskhetian Turks from Georgia in the midst of widespread deportations of minority groups from the Soviet Union. During the course of three days, Soviet troops forcibly removed 100,000 Meskhetians from the region by cattle car, and relocated them in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.¹

In 1989, vicious inter-ethnic violence sprung up between Meskhetians exiled to Uzbekistan and Uzbeks in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan. Approximately 100 Meskhetians were killed during two weeks of fighting. The Soviet Army then proceeded to quickly relocate Meskhetian Turks from the Ferghana region to Russia. Displaced Meskhetians were not allowed to adequately prepare for departure, and many were displaced without appropriate documentation.²

Once Meskhetians were relocated to Russia, many of them settled in Krasnodar Krai, a Southwest region of Russia approximately the size of Pennsylvania.³ Upon arrival, Meskhetians faced hostility from administrative authorities and paramilitary Cossacks in Krasnodar Krai. The regional government denied their rights to citizenship, thereby stripping Meskhetians of their basic civil and human rights including rights to employment, social and medical benefits, property ownership, higher education, and legal marriage.⁴ In some cases, Meskhetian children also faced segregation in school.⁵ Other abuses reported include harassment, theft, and physical assaults.⁶



Map: IRC

Meskhetian Turks are a largely homogenous group that speaks an eastern dialect of Turkish similar to both Azerbaijani and standard Turkish. Most Meskhetian Turks who are being resettled to the U.S. not only speak their dialect of Turkish, but can also speak Russian and the language of the country in which they resided before moving to Krasnodar. In recent years, increased contact with Turkish language programs has also enhanced Meskhetians' familiarity with standard Turkish. Most Meskhetian Turks are Sunni Muslims. The majority

¹ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Meskhetian Turks, www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html

² Church World Service, Meskhetian Turk resettlement, www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/docs/MeskhetianTurks.doc

³ Church World Service, Meskhetian Turk resettlement, www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/docs/MeskhetianTurks.doc

⁴ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Meskhetian Turks, www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html

⁵ Church World Service, Meskhetian Turk resettlement, www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/docs/MeskhetianTurks.doc

⁶ UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/44b64acb2.pdf



are, however, not strictly observant, largely due to the Soviet Union's policy of discouraging religious practice.¹²⁴

Social organization for Meskhetian Turks is often arranged according to a family's village of origin in Georgia, and according to kinship groups. Some Meskhetians believe that it is best to marry within one's village group, or within a nearby village group. Meskhetian families generally operate as large extended families that include two to three generations on both the father and the mother's sides. Mixed marriages are generally discouraged as they are deemed a threat to the continuation of the Meskhetian culture and community.¹²⁵

Meskhetian Turks are generally well educated. Meskhetian children and youth widely attended Soviet schools where they studied in Russian. However, in Krasnodar Krai, some Meskhetian children were forced to attend segregated schools in which they were generally given inferior instruction.¹²⁶ Meskhetian youth were also widely discouraged from completing the last two years of schooling in Russia, thereby preventing them from continuing to college.¹²⁷ Many Meskhetians who moved to Krasnodar as adults were directly barred from attending institutions of higher education. Older family members are, however, more likely to have attended college in Uzbekistan before they were relocated to Krasnodar Krai.¹²⁸

U.S. Resettlement

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration has designated Meskhetian Turks as a group of special humanitarian concern.¹²⁹ In February 2004, a refugee resettlement program was established to enable Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodar Krai to be resettled to the U.S.¹³⁰ Accelerated processing of Meskhetian Turk resettlement cases began in 2005.¹³¹

By mid-June 2006, roughly 9,000 Meskhetian refugees had been resettled to the U.S. in a total of 33 states and in Washington D.C. States hosting the largest numbers of Meskhetian refugees as of mid-2006 included Pennsylvania (785), Georgia (623), Washington (590), Illinois (508), Kentucky (499), and Arizona (497).¹³²



P. Photo: John Lok for the IRC

¹²⁴ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Meskhetian Turks, www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html

¹²⁵ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Meskhetian Turks, www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html

¹²⁶ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Meskhetian Turks, www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html

¹²⁷ Church World Service, Meskhetian Turk resettlement, www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/docs/MeskhetianTurks.doc

¹²⁸ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Meskhetian Turks, www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html

¹²⁹ US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2005 Statistical Issue,

[http://refugees.org/uploadedFiles/Investigate/Publications_and_Archives/Refugee_Reports/StatsIssue2006\(1\).pdf](http://refugees.org/uploadedFiles/Investigate/Publications_and_Archives/Refugee_Reports/StatsIssue2006(1).pdf)

¹³⁰ UNHCR, Country Operations Plan 2006 – Russian Federation, www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/43439a4a2.pdf

¹³¹ US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2005 Statistical Issue,

[http://refugees.org/uploadedFiles/Investigate/Publications_and_Archives/Refugee_Reports/StatsIssue2006\(1\).pdf](http://refugees.org/uploadedFiles/Investigate/Publications_and_Archives/Refugee_Reports/StatsIssue2006(1).pdf)

¹³² Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Meskhetian Turks, www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html



During the 2007 fiscal year, the U.S. government has allowed a total of 6,500 refugees from Europe and Central Asia to be resettled to the U.S. The proposed 2007 allocation of refugees will include Meskhetian Turks from Krasnodar Krai whose cases were not processed in 2006.¹³³

¹³³ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Somali Bantu Refugees

Somalia is located on the east coast of Africa in the Horn of Africa. Somalia borders Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya.

Background Information

In 1991, armed opposition forces overthrew the government of Somalia, and removed the president from power. Since that time, Somalia has lacked a central government, and much of the country has been embroiled in severe civil strife. A new prime minister was selected in 2004 and a cabinet was established in 2005. However, the government was again dissolved in August 2006. As of November 2006, no political or legal system is functioning in Somalia.¹³⁴

Political chaos, inter-clan fighting, and widespread death from civil strife and starvation have plagued the country since 1991. At the height of the conflict in the early 1990s, nearly half of the 7.5 million residents of Somalia were displaced from their homes.¹³⁵ Additionally, in 2005 drought and severe flooding caused extensive destruction of crops and livestock, resulting in further impoverishment of an estimated 700,000 Somalis.¹³⁶ As of January 2006, approximately 400,000 Somalis were still internally displaced from their homes within Somalia, and approximately 350,000 Somalis continued to be displaced in neighboring countries.¹³⁷ Due to longstanding discrimination against the Bantu in Somalia, Somali Bantus have been particularly vulnerable to violence and displacement during this ongoing conflict.¹³⁸



Map: CIA World Factbook

Ethnic Somalis constitute the predominant ethnic group in Somalia. Bantu agricultural workers, Arab, Indian and Pakistani groups are the most significant ethnic minority groups.¹³⁹ Bantu is a general term that incorporates over 400 ethnic groups in Africa.¹⁴⁰ The Somali Bantu are a diverse group in reference to tribal affiliation and language spoken. Some of the languages commonly spoken by Somali Bantu refugees include Swahili, Maay Maay, Mahaa, and Zigua.¹⁴¹ Nearly all inhabitants of Somalia also speak Somali. Somali is the official language of the country, and is used in the educational system. Other commonly spoken languages include Arabic, Italian, and English.¹⁴² Despite linguistic and ethnic diversity, Somalia is a religiously homogenous country. Approximately 99.9% of the population is Muslim.¹⁴³

¹³⁴ DOS, Background Note – Somalia, October 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm.

¹³⁵ UNHCR, 2006 Country Operations Plan – Somalia, www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/43219fcc2.pdf

¹³⁶ UNHCR, Global Appeal 2006 – Somalia, www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d1a70.pdf

¹³⁷ UNHCR, Global Appeal 2006 – Somalia, www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4371d1a70.pdf

¹³⁸ BRYCS, Somali Bantu Refugees, <http://www.brycs.org/documents/SBantu%20Service%20Considerations.pdf>

¹³⁹ DOS, Background Note – Somalia, October 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm.

¹⁴⁰ Wikipedia, Bantu, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantu>.

¹⁴¹ National Somali Bantu Project, <http://www.bantusupport.pdx.edu/languages/index.php>.

¹⁴² DOS, Background Note – Somalia, October 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm.

¹⁴³ DOS, Background Note – Somalia, October 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm.



The Somali Bantu family structure is patriarchal, with the oldest male in the family given the greatest respect. Following marriage, couples generally live with the husband's family until they can financially support themselves. Fathers are largely viewed as disciplinarians within the family, and mothers tend to take responsibility in nurturing the children, managing the household, and performing agricultural work. Boys and girls are generally expected to follow traditional gender roles and assist in taking care of the family. Many Somali Bantu practice polygamy, and large families are viewed as desirable. Extended family members are often involved in raising children.¹⁴⁴

Approximately 37.8% of the population of Somalia is literate, including 49.7% of men and 25.8% of women.¹⁴⁵ Due to longstanding discrimination and restrictions, Somali Bantus have had limited access to education.¹⁴⁶

Refugee Flight

In the early 1990s, tens of thousands of Somali refugees fled to refugee camps in Kenya along the Indian Ocean coastline, and in a village called Dadaab. Dadaab eventually grew to incorporate three separate refugee camps housing 120,000 refugees from Somalia,¹⁴⁷ including over 12,000 Somali Bantu refugees.¹⁴⁸ Thousands of refugees from Somalia were transferred from Dadaab to the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, one of the oldest and largest refugee camps in the world.¹⁴⁹ Inhabitants of the Kakuma camp have widely suffered prevalent gender-based violence, crime, and recurring food shortages.¹⁵⁰ Significant numbers of Somali refugees have also sought refugee in Yemen. As of November 2006, Yemen hosted approximately 84,000 Somali refugees.¹⁵¹ The successful return of Somali refugees to their homes has been impeded by devastating drought, floods, hailstorms, and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.¹⁵²

U.S. Resettlement

During fiscal year 2006, the U.S. government admitted 10,356 Somali refugees into the U.S., which accounted for 25% of overall refugee admissions to the U.S.¹⁵³ For fiscal year 2007, the U.S. government has authorized the admission of 22,000 refugees from Africa. A total of 6,000 of these admissions have already been approved, including Somali refugee from Kenya, South Africa, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.¹⁵⁴



Photo: Roberto Guerra for IRC

¹⁴⁴ BRYCS, Somali Bantu Refugees, <http://www.brycs.org/documents/SBantu%20Service%20Considerations.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ DOS, Background Note – Somalia, October 2006, www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm.

¹⁴⁶ BRYCS, Somali Bantu Refugees, <http://www.brycs.org/documents/SBantu%20Service%20Considerations.pdf>

¹⁴⁷ UNHCR, American Here We Come, www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/openssl.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=3d9ac1b24

¹⁴⁸ Immigration and Refugee Services of America, www.refugees.org/data/refugee_reports/archives/2002/nov.pdf

¹⁴⁹ Ethno Med, Somali Bantu Refugees, http://ethnomed.org/cultures/somali/somali_bantu.html

¹⁵⁰ InterAction, Kakuma: A Troubled Refugee Camp in Kenya, www.interaction.org/newswire/detail.php?id=2229

¹⁵¹ UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/4513b48f4.html

¹⁵² UNHCR, 2006 Country Operations Plan – Somalia, www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/43219fcc2.pdf

¹⁵³ Cultural Orientation Resource Center, www.cal.org/co/refugees/statistics/index.html#africa.

¹⁵⁴ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



REFUGEE BACKGROUNDER

Sudanese Dinka Refugees

Sudan, Africa's largest country and the largest Arab country in the world, is situated in Northern Africa. The population of Sudan is 40.2 million people.¹⁵⁵



Background Information

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1956, two protracted civil wars have caused significant devastation in Sudan. Both civil wars have been rooted in conflict between primarily Islamic Arab rebel groups and largely non-Muslim, non-Arab groups living in South Sudan and in border areas. Armed and supported by the Sudanese Government, rebel groups have killed non-Arab citizens, razed villages, and committed acts of violence against women.¹⁵⁶ Since the beginning of the most recent conflict in 1983, over 2 million people have been killed, and more than 4 million people have been displaced.¹⁵⁷

Sudan is one of the most diverse countries in Africa. The two major cultures, Arab/Muslim groups in the North and black African/Christian groups primarily in the south, encompass hundreds of ethnic and tribal subdivisions and language groups. Successful collaboration among these groups is a major political challenge. The Dinka, whose population is estimated at more than 1 million, is the largest of the numerous black African tribes of the Sudan. The Dinka live in south Sudan and are primarily a pastoral people.¹⁵⁸

The official languages of Sudan are Arabic and English. A number of different tribal languages are also spoken throughout the country, particularly in Southern Sudan. The official religion of Sudan is Islam. Sudan is, however, also home to numerous Christian and animist black African communities.¹⁵⁹ Along with other tribes in Southern Sudan, the Dinka predominantly practice animism and primarily speak Dinka.¹⁶⁰



Photo: Gerald Martone, IRC

In Sudan, women are mainly responsible for maintaining the household and caring for the family. The degree of freedom and rights enjoyed by women varies by tribe. Many Sudanese women require their husband's permission to socialize, or to leave the house alone. Domestic violence is prevalent, and domestic disputes are often resolved within the family.¹⁶¹ Western notions of a nuclear family do not exist in Sudan. Traditions are instead linked to the

¹⁵⁵ USDOS, Background Note: Sudan, January 2006.

¹⁵⁶ USDOS, Country Human Rights Report – Sudan, March 2006, www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrprt/2005/61594.htm

¹⁵⁷ CIA World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/su.html>.

¹⁵⁸ USDOS, Background Note: Sudan, January 2006.

¹⁵⁹ USDOS, Background Note: Sudan, January 2006.

¹⁶⁰ Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dinka>

¹⁶¹ Refugee Council, A Guide to Sudanese Cultural and Social Norms, March 2005.



extended family. Family values, such as generosity, discipline, loyalty, family honor, respect, and contribution to the welfare of the family, are central. The average number of children ranges from 5 to 8 children per family.¹⁶²

The school attendance rate in Sudan is between 35%-40%, and the literacy rate of the country is 61%.¹⁶³ Organization of the classroom is primarily based upon students' abilities and the availability of school resources, as opposed to age. Age-differentiated classrooms may be an adjustment for Sudanese children in the U.S. Sudanese children are also likely accustomed to inadequate school facilities and extremely limited supplies and resources. Teachers are highly respected in Sudan, and students may be accustomed to depending upon their teachers for considerable guidance and support.¹⁶⁴

Refugee Flight

To escape the ongoing conflict, Sudanese refugees have fled primarily to five main countries: Uganda, Chad, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya.¹⁶⁵ The protection of Sudanese refugees is at times compromised by connections between the Sudanese military and opposition groups within neighboring countries, such as Chad.¹⁶⁶ Sudanese refugees are often unable to venture outside of the camps due to continued insecurity, and the threat of rape and physical violence. Women and girls who venture outside the camps to collect firewood are at particular risk of sexual violence and abduction. Overcrowding and lack of adequate water sources also remain significant problems within camps.¹⁶⁷

In the late 1980s, approximately 26,000 Dinka and Nuer boys were forced to leave their homes in southern Sudan, fleeing death and induction into the northern army.¹⁶⁸ These boys walked thousands of miles, and many of them died along their journey to a Kenyan refugee camp. Nearly 4,000 of these "Lost Boys" have been resettled in the U.S.¹⁶⁹

U.S. Resettlement

Along with Liberia, Somalia, and Ethiopia, Sudan was one of the primary source countries for African refugee admissions to the U.S. during fiscal year 2006. For fiscal year 2007, the US Government has authorized the admission of 22,000 African refugees. Approximately 6,000 of these refugees have already been approved for admission, including Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia and Egypt.¹⁷⁰

One Day I Had to Run: The Story of John Deng Langbany

Read John Deng Langbany's story - his flight from Sudan at the age of five, his life in refugee camps, and his pursuit of education in the United States.

http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/lostboysofsudan/special_oneday.html

¹⁶² Refugee Council, A Guide to Sudanese Cultural and Social Norms, March 2005.

¹⁶³ USDOS, Background Note: Sudan, January 2006.

¹⁶⁴ Refugee Council, A Guide to Sudanese Cultural and Social Norms, March 2005.

¹⁶⁵ UNHCR, Sudan 2003 Statistical Yearbook, www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/41d2c19a0.pdf.

¹⁶⁶ UNHCR, Sudan Crying Out for Safety, www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=4538de994

¹⁶⁷ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Don't Forget Us, www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Td_ed2.pdf

¹⁶⁸ American Red Cross, The Lost Boys of Sudan Part One, www.redcross.org/news/in/africa/010814lostboys_a.html

¹⁶⁹ Lost Boys of Sudan, www.lostboysofsudan.com.

¹⁷⁰ USDOS, US Department of Homeland Security, and HHS, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY2007.



Web Resources for Teachers of Refugees



International Rescue Committee
Rev. November 2006

GENERAL REFUGEE RESOURCES

Education

Center for Multicultural Human Services

Children of War - Video for educators working with refugee children

www.cmhsweb.org/about/store/video-cow.html

Center for Victims of Torture

Classroom resources on refugee and war experiences

www.cvt.org/file.php?ID=3592

Classroom management strategies with refugee children

www.cvt.org/main.php/classroommanagementstrategies

Illinois Resource Center

ESL and bilingual teachers' toolkit

www.thecenterlibrary.org/cwis/index.php

Lee & Low Books

Teacher resources for multicultural books and classroom guides

www.leeandlow.com/teachers/index.html

Refugee Council Online

Publications and resources for schools teaching refugee children

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/schools/

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Teaching Tools

Lesson plans, books, educational kits, games, posters, brochures, and teachers corner

www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/help?id=407ff13



Psychosocial

Association of Volunteers in International Service

Handbook for teachers working with children affected by war

<http://www.forcedmigration.org/psychosocial/papers/WiderPapers/Handbook%20for%20Teachers.pdf>

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network Centers working with refugee children

<http://www.brycs.org/documents/NCTSN%20ctrs%20serving%20refugees%208-051.pdf>

Center for Victims of Torture

Resources for school staff responding to disclosure by traumatized children

www.cvt.org/main.php/schoolstaffrespondingtodisclosurebytraumatizedchildren

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Effect of trauma on schools and learning

www.nctsn.net/nctsn/nav.do?pid=ctr_aud_schl_effects

Review of child and adolescent refugee mental health

www.nctsn.net/nctsn_assets/pdfs/reports/refugeereview.pdf

Mental health interventions for refugee youth in resettlement

www.nctsn.net/nctsn_assets/pdfs/promising_practices/MH_Interventions_for_Refugee_Children.pdf



Refugee Resettlement

InterAction

Alliance of U.S.-based international development and humanitarian nongovernmental organizations

www.interaction.org

International Rescue Committee

IRC refugee resettlement programs

www.theirc.org

Refugee Council USA

Coalition of US nongovernmental organizations working on refugee protection

www.refugeecouncilusa.org

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Refugee relief and resettlement worldwide

www.unhcr.org

Office of Refugee Resettlement

U.S. resettlement information

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr

US Refugee Admissions

Proposed refugee admissions for 2007

www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/rpt/2006/73619.htm



Photo by Kate Holt/IRC

BURMESE KAREN

Education

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Resources for practitioners concerning Southeast Asian refugees

www.brycs.org/brycs_topics.htm#multilingual

Drum Publications

Catalogue of learning materials in Karen, Burmese and English

www.drumpublications.org/

Engaging Refugee Families

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andornot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth

www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinnewcountry-web.pdf

Culture

Commonwealth of Australia

Burmese cultural profile

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/pdf/community-profile-burma.pdf

International Rescue Committee

Tham Hin Camp Profile

www.churchworldservice.org/pdf_files/IRP/Burmesefs.pdf



Language

Drum Publications

English-Karen student dictionary

www.drum.fastmail.fm/download/englishkarendictionary.pdf

School of Oriental and African Studies

Burmese language resources

www.soas.ac.uk/departments/departmentinfo.cfm?navid=689

Country Conditions

Burma Campaign UK

Campaigning for human rights and democracy in Burma

<http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/>

CIA World Factbook

Burma background information

<http://sportsforum.ws/sd/factbook/geos/bm.html#Intro>

Human Rights Education Institute of Burma

Child soldiers in Burma

<http://206.225.87.154:8080/childsoldier.pdf>

Human Rights Watch

Current reports on situation in Burma

<http://hrw.org/doc/?t=asia&c=burma>

Karen History and Cultural Preservation Society

Karen history and articles

www.ibiblio.org/obl/docskaren/Karen%20Heritage%20Web/aboutus.html

Karen Human Rights Group

Situation of children in Burma

www.ibiblio.org/freeburma/humanrights/khrg/archive/khrg96/596child.html

Karen People Development Fund

Database of resources on the Karen in Thailand and Burma

www.karenpeople.org

US Department of State

Burma background note

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35910.htm>

US Department of State

Burma human rights report

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61603.htm>

Current Events

Alert Net

News reports on displacement from Burma

http://www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/MY_DIS.htm

BBC News

Recent articles on Burma

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1300003.stm

Burma Net News

News and opinions on Burma around the world

www.burmanet.org/news/

The Irrawaddy

News on Burma and the Southeast Asian region

www.irrawaddy.org/

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Education

Africa Access

Tools for building a children's library on Africa

www.africaaccessreview.org

Center for African Studies

Resources for K-12 educators on teaching about Africa

www.afrst.uiuc.edu/OutreachKids.html



Engaging Refugee Families

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andornot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinnewcountry-web.pdf

Culture

Commonwealth of Australia

Congolese Community Profile

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/_pdf/community-profile-congo.pdf

Refugee Council Online

Guide to Congolese Cultural Norms

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/asylum/cultural_norms.htm

Language

Kamusi Project: Internet Living Swahili Dictionary

English-Swahili children’s books and ESL resources

www.yale.edu/swahili/

Swahili Children’s Materials

Swahili children’s books

www.worldlanguage.com/Languages/Swahili.htm

WorldLanguage.com

Products in the languages of the DR Congo

www.worldlanguage.com/Countries/CongoDemocraticRepublicof.htm

Country Conditions

CIA World Factbook

DR Congo Background Information

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html>

Human Rights Watch

Current reports on situation in DR Congo

<http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=congo>

UNICEF

Issues facing children in the DR Congo

<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/drcongo.html>

US Department of State

DR Congo background report

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2823.htm

DR Congo human rights report



www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61563.htm

Watchlist on Children in Armed Conflict

Children in armed conflict in the DR Congo

www.watchlist.org/reports/dr_congo.php

Impact of armed conflict on children in the DR Congo

www.womenscommission.org/pdf/wl_drc.pdf

Current Events

Alert Net

News reports on the conflict in DR Congo

www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/ZR_CON.htm

BBC News

Recent articles on the DR Congo

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1076399.stm

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Latest news from DR Congo

www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Great_Lakes&SelectCountry=DRC



ERITREA

Education

Africa Access

Tools for building a children's library on Africa

www.africaaccessreview.org

Center for African Studies

Resources for K-12 educators on teaching about Africa

www.afrst.uiuc.edu/OutreachKids.html



Engaging Refugee Families

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Meeting the needs of refugee children and their families from Eritrea

www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/SP86.asp

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andornot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinnewcountry-web.pdf

Culture

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Annotated bibliography for people working with Eritrean refugees

http://brycs.andornot.com/dbtw-wpd/exec/dbtwpub.dll?bu=http://brycs.andornot.com/brycs_search.htm&qb0=and&qf0=administrative+notes&qj0=P-2Er&mr=30&tn=brycs_collection&df=full+record&rf=bibliography&dl=0&rl=0&np=1&ac=qbe_query

Commonwealth of Australia

Eritrean Community Profile

http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/_pdf/community-profile-eritrea.pdf

Ethno Med

Eritrean Cultural Profile

http://ethnomed.org/cultures/eritrea/eritrea_cp.html

Language

African Language.Com

Tigrinya Language Tutorial Programs

http://www.africanlanguage.com/shop/index.html?target=dept_2.html&lang=en-us

Country Conditions

CIA World Factbook

Eritrea Background Information

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/er.html>

Human Rights Watch

Current reports on situation in Eritrea

<http://hrw.org/doc/?t=africa&c=eritre>

UNICEF

Issues facing children in Eritrea

www.unicef.org/infobycountry/eritrea_1451.html

US Department of State

Eritrea background report

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm

Eritrea human rights report

www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61568.htm

Current Events

Alert Net

News reports on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict

www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/EE_BOR.htm

BBC News

Recent articles about Eritrea

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1070813.stm

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Latest news from Eritrea

www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=Eritrea

ETHIOPIA

Education

Africa Access

Tools for building a children's library on Africa

www.africaaccessreview.org

Center for African Studies

Resources for K-12 educators on teaching about Africa

www.afrst.uiuc.edu/OutreachKids.html

Help Me Read

Amharic-English children's books

<http://helpmeread.org/childrensbooks/bilingual-books-amharic.php>

Engaging Refugee Families

Center for Victims of Torture

Finding and keeping a job - in Oromifaa

www.cvt.org/main.php/ResourceCenter/CVTPublications

Minnesota's Bookstore

Video for parents entitled "You can talk to your child's school" – Amharic

www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/viewbook.asp?BookID=5288&stocknum=4-4

Minnesota's Bookstore

Video for parents entitled "You can help your child in school" – Amharic

www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/viewbook.asp?BookID=5281&stocknum=4-31

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andnot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth



www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinaneucountry-web.pdf

Psychosocial

Journal of Adolescent Health

Trauma and coping in Somali and Oromo refugee youth

[www.utoronto.ca/ethiopia/Ethiopia%20articles%20for%20web%20page/Halcon.J%20Adolesc%20Health.2004.35\(1\).17.pdf.pdf](http://www.utoronto.ca/ethiopia/Ethiopia%20articles%20for%20web%20page/Halcon.J%20Adolesc%20Health.2004.35(1).17.pdf.pdf)

Culture

Center for Victims of Torture

Oromo cultural profile

www.cvt.org/file.php?ID=3959#search=%22%22oromo%20culture%22%22

Commonwealth of Australia

Ethiopian community profile

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/_pdf/community-profile-ethiopia.pdf

Cultural Orientation Resource Center

Cultural Profiles

www.cal.org/co/publications/profiles.html

Ethno Med

Ethiopian cultural profile

http://ethnomed.org/ethnomed/cultures/ethiop/ethiop_cp.html

Language

African Language.Com

Amharic Language Tutorial Programs

www.africanlanguage.com/shop/index.html?target=dept_1.html&lang=en-us

Amharic Language Online Resources

Amharic Translation Services

www.amhariconline.com/am_trans/am_trans.html

Country Conditions

CIA World Factbook

Ethiopia Background Information

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/et.html>

Human Rights Watch

Current reports on situation in Ethiopia

<http://hrw.org/doc/?t=africa&c=ethiop>

UNICEF

Issues facing children in Ethiopia

www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ethiopia_12162.html

Early years, primary school years, and adolescence in Ethiopia

www.unicef.org/ethiopia/children.html

US Department of State

Ethiopia Background Report

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2859.htm

Ethiopia human rights report

www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61569.htm

Current Events

Alert Net

News reports on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict

www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/EE_BOR.htm

BBC News

Recent articles on Ethiopia

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1072164.stm

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Latest news from Ethiopia

www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=Ethiopia

LIBERIA

Education

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Center for African Studies

Resources for K-12 educators on teaching about Africa

www.afrst.uiuc.edu/OutreachKids.html



Engaging Refugee Families

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Resources for practitioners concerning Liberian refugees

www.brycs.org/brycs_topics.htm#multilingual

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andornot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinnewcountry-web.pdf

Culture

Africa Guide

Introduction to Mandinkan culture

www.africaguide.com/culture/tribes/mandinka.htm

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Liberian cultural considerations

www.brycs.org/documents/Liberian_Cultural_Considerations.pdf

Commonwealth of Australia

Liberian Community Profile

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/_pdf/community-profile-liberia.pdf

Cultural Orientation Resource Center

Liberian Cultural Profile

www.cal.org/co/publications/profiles.html

Jamtan Fulani

Introduction to Fulani culture

www.jamtan.com/

Refugee Council Online

Guide to Liberian Cultural Norms

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/asylum/cultural_norms.htm

Wikipedia

Introduction to Fulani culture

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fula_people

Language

Pular Resources

Learner's guide to Pular (Fulani refugees)

www.ibamba.net/pular/

Wolof and Mandinka Resources

Mandinka online dictionary and grammar manual

www.africanculture.dk/gambia/langabot.htm

Country Conditions

CIA World Factbook

Liberia Background Information

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/li.html>

Human Rights Watch

Current reports on situation in Liberia

<http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=liberi>

UNICEF

Issues facing children in Liberia

www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia.html

US Department of State

Liberia background report

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm

Liberia human rights report

www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61577.htm

Watchlist on Armed Conflict

Armed conflict and Liberia's children

www.womenscommission.org/pdf/wl_li.pdf

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

Education in post-conflict Liberia

http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/lr_ed.pdf

Current Events

Alert Net

News reports on Liberian reconstruction

www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/LR_CRI.htm

BBC News

Recent articles on Liberia

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1043500.stm

UN Mission in Liberia News Center

Links to current articles related to Liberia

www.un.org/apps/news/searchFull.asp

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Latest news from Liberia

www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=West_Africa&SelectCountry=Liberia

MESKHETIAN TURKS

Engaging Refugee Families

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Resources for practitioners concerning Meskhetian Turk refugees

http://www.brycs.org/brycs_topics.htm#multilingual

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andornot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth

www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinnewcountry-web.pdf



Culture

Church World Service

Meskhetian Turks background profile

www.churchworldservice.org/pdf_files/IRP/MeskhetianTurks.pdf

Cultural Orientation Resource Center

Meskhetian Turks cultural profile

www.cal.org/co/publications/cultures/MTurks.html

Language

Language Lizard

Children's books in Turkish

www.language lizard.com/Turkish_s/2743.htm

Children's books in Russian

www.language lizard.com/Russian_s/2738.htm

Tulumba

Children's books in Turkish

www.tulumba.com/storeitems.asp?tag=80.10

World Language.Com

Russian children's books and resources

www.worldlanguage.com/Products/Russian/Kids/Page1.htm

Turkish children's books and resources

www.worldlanguage.com/Languages/Turkish.htm

Country Conditions

CIA World Factbook

Russia background information

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rs.html>

US Department of State

Russia background report

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3183.htm

Russia human rights report

www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61671.htm

Current Events

BBC News

News from Russia

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1102275.stm

Moscow Times

Current news from Russia

www.themoscowtimes.com/indexes/01.html

Russia Today

News from Krasnodar region of Russia

www.einnews.com/russia/newsfeed-krasnodar

S O M A L I B A N T U

Education

Africa Access

Tools for building a children's library on Africa

www.africaaccessreview.org

Center for African Studies

Resources for K-12 educators on teaching about Africa

www.afrst.uiuc.edu/OutreachKids.html



Engaging Refugee Families

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www.brycs.org/brycs_topics.htm#multilingual

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andornot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinnewcountry-web.pdf

Center for Victims of Torture

Finding and keeping a job - in Somali

www.cvt.org/main.php/ResourceCenter/CVTPublications

Minnesota's Bookstore

Video for parents entitled "You can help your child in school" – Somali

www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/viewbook.asp?BookID=5262&stocknum=4-14

Culture

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Resources for practitioners concerning Somali Bantu refugees

www.brycs.org/brycs_topics.htm#multilingual

Somali Bantu refugees and cultural considerations for social service providers
www.brycs.org/documents/SBantu%20Service%20Considerations.pdf

Cultural Orientation Resource Center

Somali Bantu history and culture
www.cal.org/co/bantu/somali_bantu.pdf

Office of Refugee Resettlement

Somali Bantu background and orientation to the U.S.
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/policy/03-23Attachment.doc

Somali Bantu Project

Project designed to increase knowledge and awareness of Somali Bantu culture in the U.S.
<http://www.bantusupport.pdx.edu/>

Language

African Language.Com

Somali Language Tutorial Program
www.africanlanguage.com/shop/index.html?target=dept_1.html&lang=en-us

Cultural Orientation Resource Center

Somali-English language phrasebooks
www.cal.org/co/publications/phrasebooks.html

WorldLanguage.com

Somali-English children's books
www.worldlanguage.com/Products/Somali/Kids|ChildrenBooks/Page1.htm

Psychosocial

Journal of Adolescent Health

Trauma and coping in Somali and Oromo refugee youth
www.utoronto.ca/ethiopia/Ethiopia%20articles%20for%20web%20page/Halcon.

[J%20Adolesc%20Health.2004.35\(1\).17.pdf.pdf](#)

Country Conditions

CIA World Factbook

Somalia Background Information

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>

Human Rights Watch

Current reports on situation in Somalia

<http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=somali>

UNICEF

Issues facing children in Somalia

www.unicef.org/infobycountry/somalia_865.html

US Department of State

Somalia background report

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm

Somalia human rights report

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61592.htm>

Current Events

Alert Net

News reports on recent conflict in Somalia

www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/SO_PEA.htm

BBC News

Recent articles on Somalia

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1072592.stm

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Latest news from Somalia www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=Somalia

SUDAN

Education

Africa Access

Tools for building a children's library on Africa

www.africaaccessreview.org

Center for African Studies

Resources for K-12 educators on teaching about Africa

www.afrst.uiuc.edu/OutreachKids.html



Culture

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children Services)

Resources for practitioners concerning Sudanese refugees

www.brycs.org/brycs_topics.htm#multilingual

Toolkit for working with refugee parents - raising children in a new country

http://brycs.andornot.com/documents/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf

Positive youth development toolkit for working with refugee youth

www.brycs.org/documents/growingupinnewcountry-web.pdf

Refugee Council Online

Guide to Sudanese Cultural Norms

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/asylum/cultural_norms.htm

Country Conditions

CIA World Factbook

Sudan Background Information

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/su.html>

Human Rights Watch

Web Resources for Teachers

Current reports on situation in Sudan
<http://hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=sudan>

UNICEF

Issues facing children in Sudan
www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sudan_background.html

US Department of State

Sudan background report
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm>
Sudan human rights report
www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61594.htm

Watchlist on Armed Conflict

Children in armed conflict in Sudan
www.womenscommission.org/pdf/wl_sd.pdf

Current Events

Alert Net

News reports on the conflict in Sudan
www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/SD_CON.htm

BBC News

Recent articles on Sudan
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/820864.stm

South Sudan Net

Top stories from Sudan
www.southsudan.net/index1.html

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Latest news from Sudan
www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=East_Africa&SelectCountry=Sudan