STARTTS

The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation for Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) helps refugees deal with their past experiences and build a new life in Australia. Our services include counselling, group therapy, group activities and outings, camps for children and young people, English classes and physiotherapy. We also work with other organisations and individuals to help them work more effectively with refugees. Opened in 1988, STARTTS is one of Australia's leading organisations for the treatment of torture and trauma survivors.

REFUGEETRANSITIONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE NSW SERVICE FOR THE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA SURVIVORS

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ISSUE 23 SUMMER 2009

EX-SOVIET REPUBLICS | THE ECONOMICS OF SMUGGLING PEOPLE | THE QUEST FOR PEACE IN ISRAEL | BREAKING THE SILENCE
TEN YEARS OF REFUGEE HEALTH | A KINGDOM LOST THE STORY BEHIND THE TAMIL BOATS

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The balance between direct service provision and primary prevention is always an animated topic of discussion in health. On the one hand, there is always more need for direct services than can be met. On the other hand, the best way to deal with any health issue is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Putting this maxim into practice is often complex, and never more so that in the case of torture and trauma rehabilitation services.

Services like STARTTS and our sister services in Australia and elsewhere in the world have been primarily set up to assist people that have been tortured and traumatized overcome the impact of their traumatic experiences and regain control of their lives. This is the bulk of our work, and it is essential, challenging, and extremely rewarding work. It is a task that we have learnt to tackle in ways that have become more varied and increasingly sophisticated and effective over time, and where Australian services are arguably at the leading edge. Yet, there is always this other facet of our work that is almost inescapable if we apply to our work the same principles that we would apply to any other health issue; that of primary prevention. Although eminently connected to our organizational values, this is not an area where we have focused much of our attention and resources.

Admittedly there are good reasons for this. Firstly, there are many organizations at local and international level that already do this work exceedingly well, identifying and denouncing human rights violations and advocating for change through local, national and international structures. Secondly, torture (and the array of other human rights violations in the context of organized violence that result in the many trauma related problems that affect our clients) is not a disease in the orthodox sense. Our clients' experiences are linked to complex geopolitical, socio-cultural and socio-economic factors.

Arguably, while this makes the problem complex and at times almost intractable, it doesn't make it any less amenable to change, just more challenging and more needful of concerted action worldwide involving different players and perspectives. At a time when the use of torture worldwide is changing, yet it remains as prevalent as ever this kind of action is sorely needed. Torture and trauma rehabilitation centres can play an important supporting role in this ongoing struggle because of their privileged connection with survivors.

Documentation of human right violations and their effects on survivors is one of the obvious areas where torture & trauma services can make an important contribution. Even more relevant for services like STARTTS, is the area of ongoing community education and awareness raising on the basis of the knowledge gained first hand from our clients about the horrors and long-term effects of torture. It is only through increasingly aware and enlightened communities internationally that support and demand effective action from their governments that real, sustainable inroads can be made in the fight to eradicate torture.

At STARTTS, our very own "Refugee Transitions", with its articles highlighting a range of human rights issues and forgotten conflicts, makes a small but significant contribution in this regard. Activities such as the UN day of torture and trauma survivors (26 June) events, the refugee film festival sponsored by Friends (FOS) of STARTTS and Triumphant! and the refugee week art exhibition make further small yet growing contributions; these are drops in the ocean that count. These initiatives have been complemented lately by enhanced participation in the activities and governance of international umbrella bodies such as the International Society for Health and Human Rights (ISHHR) and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). Together with stronger partnerships at the local level, with organizations such Amnesty International, the Refugee Council of Australia and many others, we hope to increase our capacity to make a difference in the fight against torture, without departing from our primary role as service providers for those who have survived this ordeal.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Refugee Transitions

Jorge Aroche

PS: Thank you so much to all of you who attended and supported FOS-STARTTS Refugee ball at Darling Harbour on the 4th of November. It was a memorable night, that contributed much needed funds for several community projects, and one we are looking forward to repeat and improve on next year! Hope to see you there!

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Refugee Transitions exists to report on a wide range of refugee and human rights issues of relevance to the work of STARTTS; to focus attention on the impact of organised violence and human rights abuses on health; to provide ideas on intervention models to address the health and social needs of refugees; to debate and campaign for changes necessary to assist, empower and strengthen refugee communities in their settlement process and ultimately bring together a vehicle for cultural and personal expression.

Refugee Transitions is published quarterly by the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)

Address. PO Box 203, Fairfield NSW 2165

Telephone. 02 9794 1900

ISSN 1441 6247

Editor. Olga Yoldi (ojo45016@bigpond.net.au)

Sub-editors. Mark Symonds & Dr Arwen Sutton

Contributing Authors. Rebecca Hinchey, Daniela Aroche, Vince Sicari, Elizabeth Ban, Sarah Scroope, Marisa Salem, Dr Mitchell Smith, Jasna Zecevic, Dr Khalid Koser, Rosemary Signorelli, Narmatha Thillainathan, Kathryn Knight.

Art Direction. Nick Rudenno & Miguel Sicari for Design is Kinky Studio.

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THE FORGOTTEN CORNERS OF EUROPE AND ASIA
THE EX-SOVIET REPUBLICS

Almost two decades after independence, many former Soviet republics are shattered by poverty, corruption, unresolved conflicts and human rights abuses. *OLGA YOLDI* writes.

Virtually overnight in 1991, the planet's geopolitical order was turned on its head. As the world watched in amazement, the Soviet Union disintegrated into 15 separate countries. Its collapse was described by the west as a victory for freedom, the triumph of democracy over totalitarianism.

The breakup transformed the world order, leading to a complete reformulation of alliances and power. And for the 15 former Soviet republics the future was far from certain.

Faced with the chaotic void left by the collapse, they had two years to reform their institutions, reorganize their political systems and develop their economies. Since then the 16 years of independence have produced mixed results.

A few former republics are now modern democracies, but many are still burdened with the Soviet legacy, struggling with corruption and authoritarian rule or embroiled in bitter territorial disputes.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed in December 1924 and with the incorporation of the Baltic states in 1940, it became the largest country in the world with a population of 293 million.

It included 200 ethnic groups and many languages, spread throughout its 15 republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Russia.

Much has been written about the causes of the dissolution. Economic stagnation and social unrest, as well as the decentralisation and democratisation reforms during the era of Perestroika and Glasnost overseen by Mikhail Gorbachev must have reached a point of no return.

Gorbachev has always said that his aim had been to fix the regime, not to be the instrument of its downfall. "I am a resolute opponent of the breakup of the Union. Personally, as a politician, I lost," he was quoted as saying. "But the idea that I conveyed – and the project that I carried out – played a huge role in the world and the country."

Dismantling communism brought about political and economic chaos. It saw the breakdown of the centrally planned economy, withdrawal of subsidies and the disruption of previously guaranteed markets.

The extinction of Marxism-Leninism as the official ideology created a vacuum that was soon filled with state nationalism, regional mafias and warlords. To make matters worse, the former republics had inherited from the Soviet Union, shoddy infrastructure, obsolete industrial plants, depleted farmland and environmental damage which made the transition to a market-oriented economy even more difficult.

Many republics followed Russia's radical market-oriented reforms, which consisted of liberalization, stabilization and privatization programs designed by Yeltsin's deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, a young economist, keen on radical reform and an advocate of "shock therapy". If "shock therapy" had been successfully applied to kick start the West German economy in the 1940s, it was hoped it would help to shake off the economic lethargy of the communist era.

Yeltsin ordered the liberalization of foreign trade, prices and currency. In an attempt to break the power of state-owned local monopolies. He removed Soviet era prices and all legal barriers to private trade and manufacture, cut subsidies to state farms and industries, while at the same time allowing foreign imports into the Russian markets.

This worsened inflation, which resulted in the near bankruptcy of much of Russian industry. In order to curb inflation, microeconomic stabilization policies were enacted, which meant more harsh measures in the form of structural adjustment, tight monetary and fiscal policies, high interest

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rates, more taxes, and cuts to government subsidies and welfare.

The process of liberalization would inevitably create winners and losers. Some benefited from open competition but many more suffered. Among the winners were the new oligarchy established as a result of privatization and the new class of entrepreneurs and black marketeers that had emerged during the Perestroika era. However the majority lost.

Communism however oppressive had provided education, health services, state subsidies, peace and security to millions of people who had no recollection of anything better. The void left was devastating, life expectancy fell, the provision of health care and social services declined, the GDP was halved and poverty increased more than tenfold.

FINDING THEIR FEET

While the Baltic republics emerged from the ashes of the Soviet Union by building successful market economies and democracies, others appeared reluctant to shed their Soviet skin. Belarus falls into this category. Its leader, former apparatchik Alexander Lukashenka, retains a firm hold on power.

Yevgeny Bendersky in *Eurasia Insight* writes: "While Lukashenka himself was elected to office democratically in the first years of post-1991 political freedoms, he has since done everything possible to not allow real democratic reforms and principles to take root."

"Much can be said about a country where the security apparatus is still called the KGB, as it was during the Soviet days, and where opposition is silenced through physical intimidation," he adds.

Recently Belarusians voted Lukashenka in for a third consecutive term, following a change in the constitution that had only allowed two terms. Described as "the last dictator in Europe" by the former US Bush Administration, Lukashenka has described himself as "having an authoritarian ruling style". He warned that anyone joining an opposition protest would be treated as a "terrorist". "We will wring their necks as one might a duck," he said.

Like Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan call themselves democracies but their leaders continue to retain a firm hold on power. In 2003 in a controversial move Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliyev appointed his son as the party's sole presidential candidate. Ilham Aliyev is still in power. "This type of regime change can hardly be characterized as democratic and yet Azerbaijan is considered a multi-party democracy," Bendersky writes.

A country that rarely features on the world radar is Moldova. Moldova was also run by a former apparatchik, President Vladimir Voronin, a former baker and Soviet era interior minister, from 2001 until last July when he was forced out of office following violent street protests about allegations of fraud after the April elections. Centre-right opposition parties won in the second election, forging a governing alliance. But political analysts say that the communists still remain a formidable political force.

It will be interesting to see if the new government, headed by Marian Lupu, succeeds in building a real democracy and developing the depressed economy. Rated as the poorest country in Europe, Moldova is notorious for its trafficking of arms, drugs, cigarettes and sex slaves.

Yet at independence, it boasted the fourth most successful economy of the 15 former Soviet republics. According to journalist William Kole, following the dissolution, Moldova's economy shrank about two thirds and by 2001 it had plummeted to second bottom. Moldova's entire national wealth was grabbed by just 5 percent of the population.

Voronin's son Oleg is one of the richest men in Moldova with a fortune that exceeds US$2 billion, yet the average monthly wage is only $270, so the majority of the population relies heavily on the foreign remittances of many nationals working abroad.

According to journalists William Kole and Corneliu Rusnac, officially, 620,000 of Moldova's 4.1 million people work outside the nation. "Unofficially the real number may be twice that. And many are young women working in the sex trade – some willingly, others enticed and then entrapped."

The new leader will need to settle a territorial dispute as Moldova remains split between the separatist, Russian-speaking Trans-Dniester region and the rest of the country. Trans-Dniester, a sliver of land to the east, populated mainly by Russian speakers broke away in 1990 and the two sides fought a secessionist civil war in 1992.

Tensions erupted when the Russians felt threatened by a proposed language policy that made Rumanian the official language of Moldova (as opposed to Russian). They feared the new government would interfere with industry and the life the Russians had made for themselves in the region so separatists took up arms.

Moldova's armed forces suffered several defeats. It took four months and the deaths of an estimated 700 to 1000 people before a ceasefire agreement was reached. Trans-Dniester declared itself independent from Moldova but all Moldova is willing to give is autonomy.

The Russian army stationed in the region is a crucial source of support for the new government of Trans-Dniester. The dispute has now stalled yet its resolution is crucial as the area holds much of Moldova's industry and power stations, which are vital for the development of the economy.

Like Trans-Dniester, other geopolitical black holes created by the dissolution of the Soviet Union are Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two breakaway regions within Georgia also supported by Moscow.

CIVIL WARS

"If there is one post-Soviet state where real democracy has a chance of limited success, that is Georgia," Bendersky writes. Described as Russia's wild west, Georgia has a long and violent history. The collapse of the Soviet Union quickly led to chaos and ethnic cleansing.

"With more than 100,000 dead and a quarter of a million refugees, no other region of the Soviet Union equalled the Caucasus in demonstrating how bloody and messy the death of an empire can be," writes journalist Robert D Kaplan.

According to Kaplan, author of *Eastward and Tartary*; *Travels in the Balkans*, *the Middle East* and *the Caucasus*, it was Georgia, not Europe or Russia, that was the real historical birthplace of mass-movement socialism, with support not just from intellectuals and workers but from peasants too.

Also, Kaplan writes that it was there that the Soviet empire began to crumble. "It was in the Caucasus not Eastern Europe that anti-Soviet protests got started in unstoppable earnest."

Stalin was born in these mountains.

Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashivili, better known as Joseph Stalin, studied to become a priest of the Eastern Orthodox Church in one of Georgia's seminaries. According to journalist Jeffrey Tayler, "Stalin drew the multiethnic Soviet Union's administrative boundaries in accordance with a policy of 'divide-and conquer' joining peoples with longstanding enmities into various 'republics' and 'autonomous zones' that would inevitably quarrel among themselves and therefore look to the Kremlin to keep the peace."

And quarrel they did. In the 1990s, when the west watched in horror the devastation caused by the Balkan wars, it ignored similar conflicts in the

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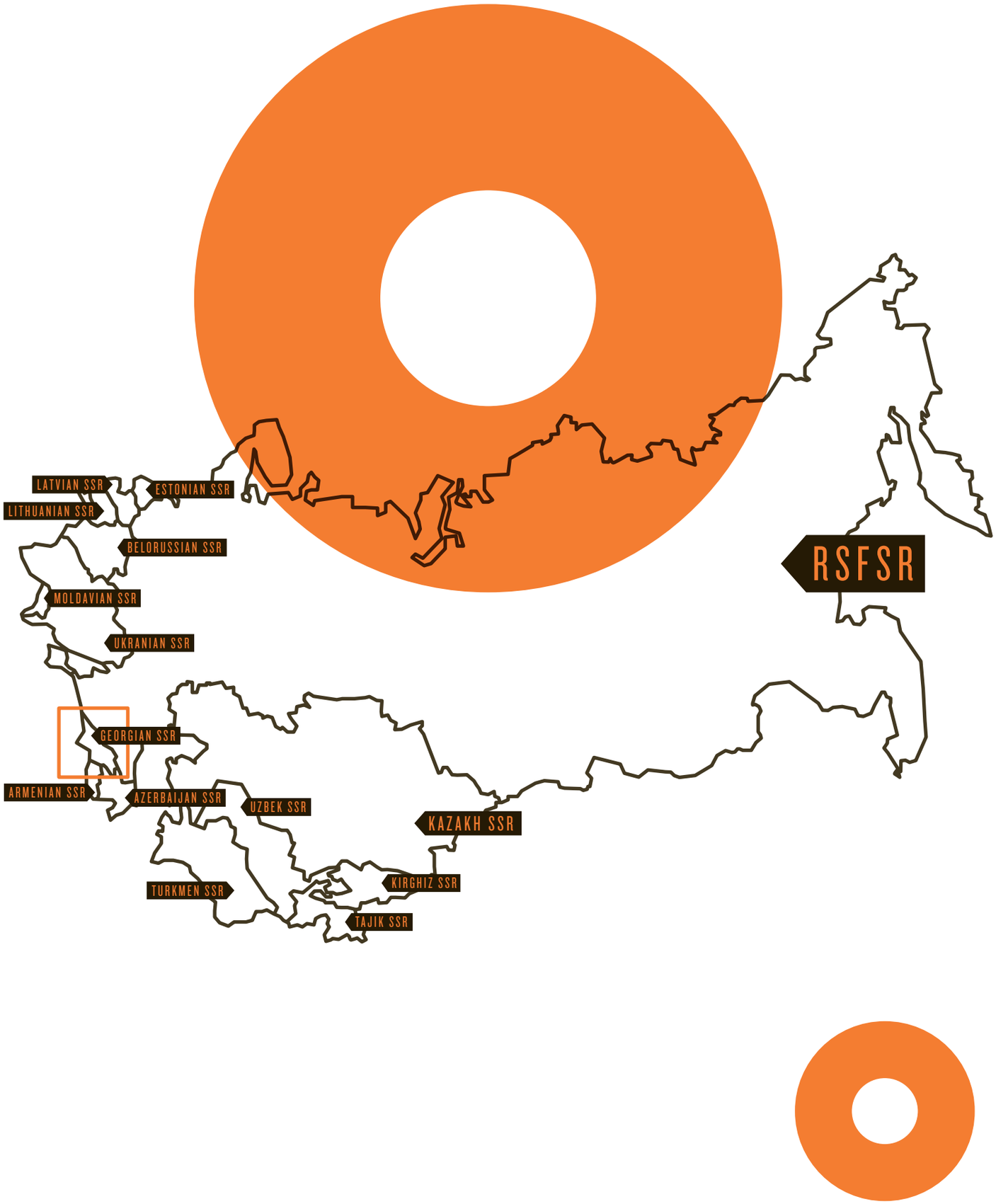
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UZBEK SSR
KAZAKH SSR
KIRGHIZ SSR
TURKMEN SSR
TAJIK SSR

Caucasian regions of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The trouble started as soon as Communist-era dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia rose to power in 1990. A few months after his election, Georgia was engulfed in a civil war that destroyed the economy and made internal travel impossible. A year later he was ousted in a bloody coup d'etat instigated by the National Guard and paramilitaries and he fled to Chechnya. Kaplan writes that the civil war was not about ideas but "a battle between rival mafias for territory and for legitimate political control".

In his absence, fighting continued in western Georgia between the troops of the new military council and Gamsakhurdia's supporters but these were soon defeated. Former apparatchik Eduard Shevardnadze was brought from Russia and elected as the new president.

In 1991 Gamsakhurdia had abolished South Ossetia's autonomous status, which triggered the beginning of a war between separatist militias and Georgian forces that claimed the lives of 1000 people and the displacement of many others.

Yeltsin brought a ceasefire in 1992, under which Russia stationed troops in South Ossetia to keep peace. The ceasefire left South Ossetia divided into areas controlled by Georgia and others controlled by the unrecognised government of South Ossetia.

To the west of South Ossetia lies the Republic of Abkhazia on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, annexed by Russia in 1810, but joined to Georgia by Stalin. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Abkhaz separatists, aided by Russia, expelled Georgian troops. This marked the beginning of a conflict that would turn out to be one of the bloodiest in the post-Soviet era, with 15,000 deaths and 250,000 ethnic Georgians displaced.

Many died of starvation while trying to cross the mountains. According to human rights reports, gross human rights violations were committed on both sides and high levels of criminality -looting, pillaging, murders, and hostage-taking as well as other violations of humanitarian law.

This happened in 1992 while the world was preoccupied with Bosnia. Georgian forces suffered many losses. Abkhazia became a de facto independent territory. The conflict escalated in July 2008.

After a decade of corruption, civil wars and declining living standards, Georgians gave the Shevardnadze government a strong vote of no confidence at the end of 2003 following mass non-violent protests. They peacefully forced Shevardnadze out of office in what came to be known as the Rose Revolution.

Initially it looked like the beginning of a new era for Georgia. The new, charismatic, pro-American, 45-year-old leader Mikheil Saakashvili promised change and reforms aimed at reaching the state's full economic, political and social potential.

He implemented what many viewed as a pro-US foreign policy. He was described by former US President George Bush as "a beacon of liberty" and pledged to recover South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Ironically he would lead the country to another war.

Instead of initiating negotiations, in July 2008 after a week of clashes between Georgian troops and separatist forces, Georgia launched an air and ground attack on South Ossetia, gaining control of Tskhinvali, its capital.

Russia said Georgia had violated the 1992 ceasefire agreement and responded with the largest military assault by land and sea since the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. After five days of heavy fighting Georgia lost both, South Ossetia and Abkhazia to Russia, which occupied the Georgian cities of Poti and Gori. At least 2000 Georgians died and some 118,000 others fled their homes. Georgia suffered a humiliating defeat.

Saakashvili had pleaded for help but no country came to his rescue. "All we got so far are just words, statements, moral support and humanitarian aid," he said. No country appeared to be willing to confront Russia.

The war was halted by a European Union (EU) brokered ceasefire and Russia's troops are still stationed there under bilateral agreements with the corresponding governments.

A EU sponsored report says that the war was not justified by international law. The report stated that while Russia's initial actions in fighting back against attacks on its personnel in South Ossetia were justified, its subsequent actions in pushing far into Georgia proper "went far beyond the reasonable limits of defense" and was in violation with international law. Neither was the aggression following the cease fire justified.

"The lessons that emerged from the Russia-Georgia war are clear," writes Jeffrey Tayler. "Russia is back, the West fears Russia as much as it needs it, and those who act on other assumptions are in for a rude, perhaps violent, awakening."

Lately, following street protests, the Georgian opposition has asked for Saakashvili's resignation. The opposition has levied charges against him for corruption and murder. Human rights groups have accused him of excessive use of force in suppressing demonstrations and restricting freedoms of the press, assembly and political representation.

Saakashvili has been trying to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the EU for some time. So far he has not been successful. Membership to these organisations may damage Russia's relations with the West.

Although Georgia has no significant oil and gas reserves of its own, it is part of the important Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline transit route that will supply Western and Central Europe oil (one million barrels of oil per day) from Azerbaijan's Azeri-Chiray-Guneshli oil field allowing the West to reduce its reliance on Middle Eastern oil while bypassing Russia and Iran. Analysts say this has been a key factor for the US support of Georgia.

Georgia and the vast majority of the international community still views South Ossetia and Abkhazia as part of Georgia and the EU report's author said Russia's recognition "must be considered as being not valid in the context of international law and as violations of Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty."

During a visit to Tbilisi last July, US Vice President Joe Biden told Georgian officials that there could be no military solution to the conflict around both regions. The best way to bring Abkhazia and South Ossetia back into the fold, Biden said, was to build a stable prosperous and democratic Georgia that would be more attractive to the two breakaway regions.

Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not the only separatist rebellions in the Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Armenia have been warring over Nagorno-Karabakh for most of the past 20 years. A six- year conflict killed about 30,000 people and displaced one million before a truce was reached in 1994.

Nagorno-Karabakh is an Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan. Its inhabitants are Armenians and want to be part of Armenia. They argued that the leaders of Azerbaijan neglected the province and did not invest in the area while draining its resources for the rest of the country. They also argue that they are routinely discriminated against by the Azerbaijani government.

Fighting sometimes breaks out sporadically. To this day the dispute has not been settled.

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RUSSIA
ABKHAZIA
NORTH OSSETIA
SOUTH OSSETIA
GEORGIA

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are headed by the men who were in charge of these republics in Soviet times. Having changed their titles from the first secretary of the Communist Party to prime minister/ president was largely the extent of democracy in these states.

Yevgeny Bendersky

CENTRAL ASIA

While Central Asia had clearly been inhabited for centuries no nation-state with firm borders had ever existed. There was no Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan or Kyrgyzstan before 1924. The region was brought into the Soviet Union and carved up into five countries.

According to historian Ashley Streat-Bartlett, when the demarcation took place it was done with no regard for the ethnicities involved and without any consultation with the people who inhabited these areas.

Central Asia contains a complex mosaic of ethnicities and, according to Streat-Bartlett, Soviet policies destroyed the problematic ethnic cohesion, the economy and the environment. The borders also split ethnic groups. Today major concentrations of ethnic minorities are spread in more than one country. For example large pockets of ethnic Uzbeks live in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and a concentration of ethnic Kyrgyz live in Uzbekistan.

At independence none of the five republics had any experience of nationhood. Kyrgyzstan was the quickest to embrace democratic reform but Tajikistan was engulfed in a vicious civil war between 1992 and 1993 and reignited in 1996-97.

Carved out of Uzbekistan, 93 percent of the nation is mountainous with little arable land or natural resources. Today it rates as one of the poorest countries in the world. The war delayed all political and economic development, but it is now ruled by a democratic government.

"Only two out of five states have elected a new head-of-state after 1991," writes Yevgeny Bendersky in EurasiaNet. "Two of them, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, are headed by the men who were in charge of these republics in Soviet times. Having changed their titles from the first secretary of the Communist Party to prime minister/president was largely the extent of democracy in these states." Turkmenistan followed the same pattern until Saparmurat Niyazov died in 2006.

The majority of the republics possess abundant natural resources, including large reserves of fossil fuels. According to the Institute of Afghan Studies, Turkmenistan alone has oil and gas reserves with an estimated value of three trillion dollars. Yet there is widespread poverty.

In fact the problems confronting Central Asia are overwhelming. Among them are high levels of unemployment, exploding birth rates, political instability and drug smuggling. Because of its closeness to Afghanistan, Central Asia serves as transit point through which Afghan heroin makes its way to the European and Russian markets.

According to historian Andrew J Bacevich, Turkmenistan's former president-for-life, Saparmurat Niyazov, was himself reputed to be a major trafficker.

Journalist Ahmed Rashid, who has covered the area for 20 years and is the author of Jihad, writes that the Soviet Union still looms large – politically, economically and militarily – over the five countries. Moscow, writes Rashid, has abused Central Asia for generations, installing puppet governments, manipulating its natural resources and treating religious leaders with cruelty and contempt.

The area became a breeding ground for Islamic extremists. The vacuum left by the breakup of the Soviet Union was soon filled with radical groups like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), The Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) and Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, run by mysterious men who went to Afghanistan for training, indoctrination, refuge and arms. According to Rashid some of the leaders became confidantes of Bin Laden.

Most political analysts have said that Islamism fueled the vicious war in Tajikistan, and caused terrorist acts in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Central Asian governments have responded to Islamist threats with an indiscriminate crackdown on any religious practice lacking government consent. Freedom of religion does not exist, but then neither do most other freedoms.

According to Rashid all three movements are different. For instance Hizb ut Tahrir al-Islami advocates a unification of the greater Muslim world under a caliphate that would impose sharia law. Doing this, Hizb ut Tahrir al-Islami insists, will resolve all the problems of the Muslim world, including in Central Asia. Rashid reports that this movement has become increasingly popular in Central Asia.

Human rights groups have accused Uzbek President Islam Karimov of carrying out unchecked repression, intended to target extremists. The government's policies have repressed innocents as well as resulted in an accelerating growth of extremism. Karimov's government hasn't delivered. He seems unwilling to carry out the necessary democratic and economic reforms preferring instead to maintain the status quo through repression and blaming Islamic radicalism for it.

In February 1999, Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital, suffered a series of car-bomb attacks that left 16 people dead and 100 injured. One of the bombs was detonated in a large square shortly before the arrival of Karimov.

Then the IMU moved to Kyrgyzstan, along the Tajikistan border, and took 13 hostages. After two months of combat operations the militants escaped to Tajikistan. Rebels announced the goal of replacing a secular government with an Islamic state. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan expelled the militants who then retreated to the mountain border areas from where they launched more attacks.

Rashid argues that it is repression and poverty that are the root causes of rebellion in Central Asia: "Whilst poverty and unemployment increase – and economic opportunities decrease – Central Asia's debt-ridden societies are ripe for any organisation or party that offers hope for a better life. Attempting to militarily defeat these Islamic revolutionary movements, then, will not eliminate the true causes. Only development and democratization will."

According to analysts threats emanating from the area are still present today. Wahhabism is still growing, and there is no sign that the war in Afghanistan will end soon.

There is no doubt that the breakup of the Soviet Union caused a shift in geopolitical power. The US built bases in Central Asia, an area traditionally seen as being part of Russia. The Baltic states are now part of NATO and the EU. Ukraine and Georgia are keen to follow their steps.

Frustration by the slow progress of reforms, the EU has recently launched the Eastern Partnership that will give Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia an opportunity to gain from trade benefits which are shared by EU member states, if they work towards harmonizing their laws with EU standards and developing a civil society and rule of law infrastructure. The EU has also promised to ease visa restrictions. According to Reuters, 600 million Euros have been allocated for the project over the next four years.

Russia has eyed these plans with mistrust seeing it as yet another way to intrude into its traditional sphere of influence.

It is yet unclear how the future development of post-Soviet states will unfold in years to come. Only time will tell. But as Gorbachev recently said: "We are seeing ourselves that there is still a lot to be done by us to achieve democracy, and so I say to Americans – you want us to be like you, but I can tell you it took you 200 years to build democracy, yet you want us to do the same in 200 days..."

THE ECONOMICS OF SMUGGLING PEOPLE

DR KHALID KOSER is a geographer and leading authority on forced migration. He has an interest in asylum policies and practice, refugee repatriation and migrant smuggling. He is Director of the New Issues in Security Course at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and chairman of the Independent Advisory Group on Country Information which advises the UK Home Office on the situation in countries from which asylum seekers have fled. This is an edited version of his talk at the Adelaide Festival of Ideas. Dr Koser looks at the myths of people smuggling and how in reality it is a business in which almost everyone makes money.

I would like to speak to you about some studies I did in Pakistan and Afghanistan where I spoke to people who were planning to migrate, as well as those who migrated but were unsuccessful and sent back, their families and the smugglers who were surprisingly accessible.

Those who were about to migrate were heading for various destinations around the world. Not just Australia but also North America and Europe through a variety of methods.

It is important to put Australia's debate about boats and boat arrivals in the larger context. Firstly boat arrivals in Australia comprise a small proportion of the so-called irregular migrants. More people arrive by plane each year than by boats.

However boats seem to attract the attention. Many of the so-called irregular migrants in this country are actually people that overstayed their visas, who arrived legally and overstayed illegally. There is an obsession with boat arrivals even though they are a small proportion of a much wider concept of irregular migration.

The second point I would like to make is that on a global scale Australia has got it pretty good. There are millions of people each year moving around the world in an illegal fashion, with smugglers being paid billions of dollars. So Australia hasn't got it bad compared to many other countries in the world including Europe and North America.

The final point of the introduction is that most irregular migrants in this country seek political asylum and I understand most of them get it. Most irregular migrants in the world are moving for economic reasons. There is a mixture of people arriving for political reasons to flee persecution and for economic reasons to improve their lives.

By the way, I don't think that this is bad at all. I think it is a noble thing to improve your life and if you have to move to do it, then so be it.

Of course, the answer to the question 'why is smuggling worthwhile?' differs if you are a refugee fleeing political persecution or an economic migrant seeking to improve your life. If you are a refugee smuggling pays because it takes you to safety. If you are an economic migrant, smuggling largely pays because it will allow you to pay your costs later and expand your income pretty quickly, surprisingly quickly.

Given the degree to which migrant smuggling has become ingrained in the public conscience, it seems to me that we know very little about it. There are assumptions being made, but many people don't know much about people smuggling, and this includes policy makers.

I think policy makers around the world are really beginning to run out of innovative ideas in terms of how to respond to the issue. So in the next twenty minutes I will adopt a radically different and alternative approach to the one normally adopted and I will look at smuggling as a business, as an industry, and in particular, what I will do is follow the money through this business.

I want to try to answer the following questions. How much do the smugglers charge? We will see the answer varies according to the route, destination and methods. How do migrants and their families raise the money to pay those charges? How are smugglers paid by migrants and their families? What do smugglers do with the money? How do they disperse it to make sure smuggling actually works? How much money do migrants send home once they have arrived at their destinations? And, what happens to the money that they send home?

Basically smuggling pays for everyone involved. And I think we need to start understanding that smuggling is an economic process where everybody profits, from migrants, their families, smugglers, to even the societies and economies of the countries they go to. If you understand

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this as a process whereby everybody seems to profit, then we need to think about radically different alternative approaches to make it stop, if that is what we think we should do.

My economic approach is by no means intended to underestimate the human cost of migrant smuggling. Something like 2,000 people each year die when they try to cross from North Africa to Southern Europe across the Mediterranean Sea in boats. Also 600 people die each year trying to cross from Mexico to the USA. So there are significant numbers of deaths of people trying to move around the world.

I don't want to underestimate either the conditions many people experience when they arrive in detention facilities, which I think are a disgrace, or the exploitation they encounter when they find work.

I am not underestimating the human cost but I think it is useful to focus on the economics of this to see if we can uncover some realities and think differently about policies.

So let's try to follow the money through this complex industry. The first question is how much do smugglers charge? Again, based on research in Afghanistan and Pakistan, costs vary significantly according to the destination.

The USA and Canada are the most expensive destinations and Western Europe and Australia cost roughly the same amount. Costs also vary depending on modes of transport. For example let's say Afghanistan to Australia. At the moment, to fly between Afghanistan and Pakistan to Australia illegally with a smuggler will cost something between US$12,000 and $15,000. These are significant sums of money. To travel by a combination of flight and boat from Indonesia will cost you between US$5,000 and US$8,000.

Let me make two observations about costs. Firstly smuggling is a business. Smugglers will deliver a service that suits the depth of your pocket. If you cannot afford to go to the USA, they will take you to Australia. If you cannot afford to fly, which is the safest way of travelling, they will make it cheaper and will do a combination of flight and boat. This is a business. You are a customer and they will find a way to get your money.

If you are poor don't worry, they will find a way to make it work. If you are richer you can fly. Let's fly to the USA and things will be straightforward.

I think given the amounts of money we are talking about, smuggling does not involve the poorest of the poor. Irregular migrants are people that are able to raise loans, perhaps sell property. They have a way to raise the money to pay these rather large and exorbitant fees.

On the other hand we shouldn't underestimate, particularly in the Australian context, that many people are still coming from very poor and underprivileged backgrounds. I take that point. But my argument is that given the costs involved, these are not the most desperately poor people in the world. These are not peasants.

How do families raise the money to pay the fees? In almost all the cases of people I spoke to, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it was families, not migrants themselves who raised the money. Very few migrants have the money in savings or were able to raise the money themselves and they relied on families and family networks.

This is an investment by families and their children, just as you might invest to send your children to school and university. By getting their children to another part of the world, these families invest in their children either to get them out of harm's way if they are fleeing persecution, or help them to achieve a better life or better standard of living.

Again, I think of it as an investment, as a business. Some people draw on savings; others sell property, jewellery, or land. Many take on debt and borrow money from money lenders.

Let me go back to the jewellery. Those that know the Islamic culture will know that selling jewellery is a significant thing to do. This is not something you do lightly. These are wedding gifts and so on. So yes families make significant investments. Some even take on risky loans from unscrupulous money lenders. This is a business and you expect a return on your investment. It is not something that you take lightly in these countries.

How do smugglers get paid? This is one of the most interesting of the findings. Anyone in this room who has used eBay will be aware that it involves an escrow service. An escrow service is a company that holds the buyer's money until the buyer is satisfied with the goods that have been delivered. So on eBay you deposit your money with a third party or escrow service. Once you are satisfied with the goods you have bought the money is then released to the person that is selling you the item.

Exactly the same system exists today in smuggling in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Migrant families don't pay the money directly to smugglers, they pay the money to a third party, usually a money handler, normally in one of the main bazaars in either Peshawar or Kabul.

The money is only released by that third party to the smuggler once the migrant has arrived safely in his or her country of destination. So think about this, there is a money–back guarantee on smuggling. If you don't make it to your destination safely the smuggler gets nothing. The money taken from the third party, from the money handler, goes back to the family and the whole deal is called off.

This is how it works in Afghanistan and Pakistan. You will get slightly different systems in Africa and South America.

It is interesting to look at how payments have evolved in this setting.

Firstly smuggling is a business. Smugglers will deliver a service that suits the depth of your pocket. If you cannot afford to go to the US, they will take you to Australia.

About five or ten years ago the method of payment was different. Then all of the money was paid up-front to the smuggler. So if you wanted to move to Australia you would go to the smuggler, give the money up-front and hope he was trustworthy. If he wasn't he would run off with the money and you would have lost your $10,000. Customers complained and the method of payment soon changed.

In the next stage you would pay a proportion of the money up-front. You give the smuggler say fifty percent of the money and you pay the balance upon confirmation that your son has arrived safely to his destination.

The problem with this process was that it opened up the possibility for exploitation because when you arrive in Australia as an illegal migrant you still owe money to the migrant smuggler back at home. That debt means you can be exploited, forced into prostitution or into exploitative situations. This is where the concepts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking blur into one another.

That is why the money-back guarantee system has evolved, to protect the customers.

Let's look briefly at how smugglers themselves spend the money. When we talk about smuggling I think it is really important to move away from the assumption that somehow smugglers are always part of an organized crime network. This might be the case in some instances but in most cases smugglers who move people from Mexico to the USA for example are based on small family enterprises.

In Afghanistan and Pakistan smugglers are normally people who have completely legitimate jobs and are making a bit of money on the side. The normal contact is a travel agent who will close the door at 5 pm on his business and take you downstairs and to discuss it over the table. He will then work through a network of people to make smuggling happen.

We also need to get away from the idea that smugglers are always evil. In some cases and in some circumstances, smugglers are people who are helping others to get out of harm's way. Oskar Schindler was a smuggler. We need a more sophisticated idea of what smuggling is and who smugglers are.

Once the initial contact is made, the travel agent normally receives the money, or rather the third party does. Once the pledge has been made and the money has been deposited with the third party, then he has to spend a large proportion of it to make smuggling work. He needs to find a supplier of stolen or forged passport, who can forge a visa. He has to pay truck drivers, bribe immigration officials, customs officials and so forth.

Anyone who flies internationally will have to show their passport three times. When you check in and deposit your bag, as you go through the departure lounge and just before you go to the airplane. This means three people will need bribing to make sure you get through the system and onto the airplane.

About 50 percent of the money is dispersed round the network of people who are involved in making smuggling work before the smugglers receive any money themselves. The greatest economic risk in this entire process is for the smuggler. He needs to pay $7,000 up-front and only when the smuggling works, does he get the remaining 50 percent, or $7,000. That is quite an interesting observation and there are policy implications around this.

Let's continue to follow the money and skip the traumas of the journey. I found that eighty-five percent of families I spoke to in Pakistan and Afghanistan who paid to have a son, normally the eldest son, smuggled abroad, had received money from him in the form of remittances. So, irregular migrants do find work when they arrive at their destinations.

When we look at migrant smuggling and irregular migration we tend to focus on the supply side, not on the demand side. We tend to think of desperate people living in poor countries, perhaps victims of oppression and persecution that need to get out of harm's way or who are trying to improve their lives and pay smugglers to do so.

Irregular migration would not exist if there weren't also a demand for their labour. There are something like 40 million irregular migrants in the world. Today one third of them, 12 million, are in the USA alone. They work and prop up the US economy in certain sectors. Powerful economies depend on the labour of irregular migration.

One part of the equation is to get rid of the supply, to make sure that people are safe in their own countries and can earn money at home, but the other is to make sure that we don't have a demand for their labour in the destination countries. I believe we need to look at both sides.

Most people in my sample, who found work relatively easily in their countries of destination, were sending home significant sums of money. The annual remittances – the money sent by migrants whose families I spoke to, was an average of US$3,750 a year.

Irregular migrants often find themselves under enormous pressure to send money home and it may well be that if they are sending $3,750 home, that this is actually depriving them of a normal life in the country in which they are living. Migrants often deprive themselves very significantly in order to meet family obligations back at home. There is a debate to be had around that.

What happens to the money they send home? On average the remittances were about fiftypercent of the money paid to the smuggler. So within two years the smuggler's fee will have been paid off. After that, on average, remittances from irregular migrants double household incomes in Pakistan and Afghanistan. And this is what I mean by a sensible investment. It makes sense financially.

It is said that migrant smuggling undermines low-income local workers, that it puts them out of work. Largely the evidence shows that this is not the case and the reason is because even in times of recession there are certain jobs, the dirty jobs, the dangerous jobs, that we rely on migrants to do. We won't do these jobs whatever the situation is, even if we are unemployed. So migrant smuggling works as we need their labour because of the segmented economies that have developed around the world.

My conclusion regarding migrant smuggling as an economic process is that the greatest risk is taken by the smuggler. The smuggler is spending $7,000 to facilitate your migration and only when the smuggling has succeeded and you have got to your destination does the smuggler get his $14,000. He is taking the risk.

And that is why smuggling works, because smugglers cannot afford for it not to work. They have many mechanisms and methods to make sure that they get their money back including choosing destinations where they are certain they can get you safely, including for example working with multiple clients.

For example if you have to bribe someone who works night shift at Heathrow airport and pay £ 1,000 to get an irregular migrant through the airport he will do the job in his four-hour shift, so, you might as well move 20 people through rather than just one person because it will save money; so smugglers increasingly move many people at a time as opposed to one, to make sure they recuperate their costs.

What implications this economic approach might have for policy making and how states might adapt their policies to try to respond to what I think is a very successful type of business, is something that needs further debate.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS

All counselling and supervision has cultural aspects. These aspects shape the core assumptions, attitudes and values of the people involved, and can enhance or jeopardise counsellors' effectiveness. STARTTS' clinicians Gordana Hol-Radicic, Robin Bowles, Marc Chaussivert, Hassan Saleh, Nooria Mehraby, Franka Bosnjak, Cecilia Carranza, Mariano Coello, Jorge Aroche and Andrea Pritchard discuss the role of cultural factors in supervision.

Olga Yoldi: Supervision is a space where those involved, in this case the counsellors, can talk openly about cases. As supervisors you are responsible for ensuring cultural issues are considered. What are the most difficult challenges?

GHR: First of all I would like to explain why supervision is such an important practice at STARTTS. It serves several purposes: It provides support to counsellors through the process of treatment. It helps us to achieve Best Practice and implement our Continuous Improvement Strategy and it ensures quality in our service. I must also say that we supervise counsellors both at STARTTS and at external organisations that work with refugees. Supervision is a confidential process. We discuss cases. We don't name clients. Evidently, during supervision, issues related to culture, language and religion will arise at some stage. These are huge issues particularly for survivors of torture and trauma and we need to deal with these as well.

MC: We deal with culture but also gender and power issues because they impact on relationships. It is interesting to see that the same dynamics that are created between counsellors and clients tend to recreate themselves between supervisors and supervisees.

NM: Yes, I noticed cross-cultural issues in supervision are similar in counselling. That is why it is so important for us to be aware of them. Of course we cannot generalise. Each culture is different, at the same time each culture is divided into subcultures. Yet each person has his or her own unique cultural identity.

GHR: Indeed, I think culture is a unique aspect of the self. Culture is what defines a nation, or even a religion. But as Nooria said not all people from a culture are the same. Each person only represents his or her own self. On the other hand the diversity that exists within one country is amazing. For instance let's look at Iraq. There are Muslim, Chaldean, Mandaean, Assyrian and Kurdish cultures there, as well as other minority groups. When you get to know them you realise that they are all so different. They all have a different outlook on life, and on issues to do with family, education, child rearing, etc. We need to highlight these differences to others, examine them individually and work through them in the supervision sessions. As supervisors we need to respect what the supervisees bring to the sessions. We must not be judgemental.

CC: Yes, but we should also challenge some myths about culture. Sometimes some counsellors use culture as an excuse. For instance, if a counsellor is confronted by a case of domestic violence or child abuse they cannot simply ignore it. He or she must report it because we have legal obligations and we must abide by the law. As supervisors we must ensure everyone complies. There are also certain standards, guidelines, policies and procedures and a code of ethics we must comply with and there is no negotiation around that. Someone who says "In my culture this is acceptable" must be challenged.

FB: As a bi-cultural counsellor, setting the boundaries with clients is important but also difficult. I find that it is so easy to transgress the boundaries. When we work with clients from our own community it is particularly difficult to stick with what is appropriate. Of course supervision does help. It is easier if we have clear guidelines and well defined therapeutic goals.

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MCh: I think it can also happen with clients from other cultures as well. When counsellors idealise a culture, or label it as 'exotic' because it is so different from theirs they could experience boundary difficulties. I mean when clients are not treated as equal there could be a certain level of collusion and as result counsellors could avoid confronting certain issues.

OY: I guess most clients at STARTTS experience common issues such as trauma, displacement, and resettlement in another culture. To what extent does culture determine the way people overcome these issues?

RB: It is difficult to say because each person is different. I think culture is a fascinating dimension because it intersects with all facets of life, with how people feel inside. Culture plays a role in how we relate to others and manifests itself in all kinds of subtle ways, in our identity (collective or individual) and in all variations of that, in how we relate politically and in the way we think. There are cultural dimensions in everything. Culture is fluid, dynamic. It keeps developing over time and within the supervisory relationship the culture of that relationship also changes and develops. From that point of view, working at STARTTS with clients from so many cultures, is fascinating, even tantalising. But yes there is something very mysterious about the differences that exist between all of us, but also in the process of finding our common humanity. We are so similar and so different. This is a mystery and you can never get to the bottom of it.

CC: I think supervision does involve preparation, doing some research, exploring issues, and being sensitive and honest with the supervisee. The first meeting is vital in starting a good and lasting relationship. It is also most important to clarify the values, the standards and the expectations at the very beginning.

MC: I still think that the best attitude is to be open to the supervisee. While it may be important to investigate and research, the best information comes from the actual supervisee. Another principle of counselling, mirrored in supervision, is that you need to gain a good understanding of the other person's experiences, and not to try to change him or her because if you do that you are imposing your own values. Listening to what the other person is saying is crucial. That is when you also gain a good understanding of his or her culture.

GHR: Sometimes counsellors discuss issues with clients that trigger strong emotional reactions in the counsellors. For instance if the counsellor comes from the same country as the client where there is war and the client is concerned about family left behind. Also in cases where the client is grieving the loss of a family member, or cannot make contact with family or friends left behind. If counsellors have gone through similar experiences, their client's pain can resonate in the counsellor. Feelings need to be openly discussed in the supervision sessions. Even counsellors who have not been through those experiences could be affected similarly because they could in fact be experiencing vicarious trauma, if the feelings are not discussed and issues addressed.

OY: Is it appropriate to have counsellors working with clients from the same culture?

GHR: In some cases clients will say to the counsellor: "You will never be able to understand my pain because you have never experienced it." I guess having a refugee background could be seen as an advantage. The downside of bi-lingual counsellors who have experienced traumatic events is that they are more prone to secondary traumatisation as painful emotions could easily be triggered by the counsellors' traumatic stories. Supervision plays a crucial role in addressing these issues.

OY: When do you decide a counsellor is too burdened by his or her own traumatic experiences to be of any assistance to clients?

MCh: We monitor that constantly. Supervision provides this space to assess, discuss and deal with the feelings, with the problems and issues presented. I personally don't agree with the notion that a counsellor who has experienced trauma has an advantage over others who haven't. I guess I am saying this because trauma is not a homogenous category. So to believe that someone's experiences enables him or her to understand another person's experience is a huge assumption and we need to be very cautious.

MC: I agree, having a counsellor from the same cultural background as the client does not guarantee a better understanding of the client's experiences or knowledge of the culture, because there are many subcultures. As was said before, culture is dynamic. Migrants and refugees who have arrived in Australia at different times of their nation's history find their community to be different from them. A good example is the Chileans who arrived in Australia in the early 1970s before Pinochet and those who arrived after. Both groups are rather different.

While we work with clients from different cultures, we also come from different cultures ourselves and live in a culture, which is not our original culture. We also work in a setting that has its own political and cultural context that is prescriptive through its policies, legislation, procedures and standards. A supervisor cannot be listening to a counsellor with a totally open and tolerant attitude and ignore issues related to child abuse or domestic violence. The counsellor will need to know that there are cultural constraints and supervisors will be guided by these norms and those values that we have to assume are common to us all.

Some clients have very strong ideas about suicide for instance. They feel suicide is not a bad idea. These issues have come up during supervision. A counsellor may find out that the client has decided to end his or her life and might be shocked by that. So, what do you do in those cases? It is obvious that there are cultural norms that say suicide is not okay and there are also certain tools that guide our work that are not as prescriptive, like our ability and judgement. On the other hand, prejudices about gender, family composition and relationships, and the experience of grief in other cultures often arise during supervision. Parents' expectations of their children's future are often culturally determined. For instance (although not common) the issue of arranged marriages is a difficult issue to deal with in this culture. Often a counsellor doesn't respond well to that concept, and doesn't provide a space to discuss assumptions with the client. Counselling offers a good opportunity to expand on these issues. Perhaps children are happy to fulfil their parents' wishes and marry someone their parents have chosen for them, but perhaps they are not, because this is a different culture and the expectations are different. Even though the marriage breakdown in arranged marriages is lower. So there are obviously tensions in relation to these issues and supervisors must provide some sense of balance.

> *Supervision provides this space to assess, discuss and deal with the feelings, with the problems and issues presented.*

FB: All cultures share an equal stigma to mental health problems. We have to reassure clients by providing psycho-education and explaining to them that what they are experiencing is the result of trauma, not madness.

RB: In supervision on the one hand you are trying to get an insight into the other counsellor's mind and empathise with him or her, while observing in very fine detail the way they are presenting to you. At the same time, you are trying to assess and process the information provided in a more critical way comparing it with what you think and know already. So it is dual process. You need to keep your own mind going. If you totally become merged with the other person then the process of supervision is broken down. On the other hand, if you are too much in your own mind, the trust does not build and the supervisee does not feel understood. From the point of view of culture, perhaps you could think about it as trying to understand the culture of the supervisee while also thinking about your own and in the process, both develop.

A counsellor told me that after a counselling session she went out and vomited because a client had described how a loved one had been decapitated. That reminded the counsellor of a personal traumatic experience she had had and triggered a violent reaction in her. It struck me how difficult this work can be for counsellors and how deeply it can affect them

CC: Supervision has many components: we also assess the education and training needs of counsellors and their capacity to be effective in the type of clinical interventions they must provide. Other components are support, particularly when counsellors experience counter transference and they find it difficult to deal with it. As we said before, compliance with legislation and procedures is another component, as well as mediation. The mediation function assists communication up and down. This involves ensuring that the supervisee is informed about organisational changes and negotiations made on behalf of the supervisee. I work for the Early Intervention Program and sometimes I have to advocate on behalf of the counsellors so that they can get more time to achieve their therapeutic goals.

RB: To me one of the most important things is developing trust in the relationship with the counsellor or supervisee. Supervision is the space to talk about cultural issues, and ethical boundary violations. This can only occur in a trusting relationship when you feel it is okay to bring the worst of your work to the supervisor and talk to her or him about what went wrong and of course explore the cultural dimensions of all that.

FB: At the end of the day it is all about the quality of the work we do. STARTTS invests much time and money in supervision as well as training which is very positive. Not all organisations working with people do that.

NM: Many people that come to STARTTS don't know what therapy or counselling is. Some of the new counsellors are not all that familiar with the concept of supervision either. They didn't have such intense supervision in the previous organisations where they worked.

MC: Some of the work we do here at STARTTS is not, culturally speaking, universal. I still believe that most clients engage with us at a level dependent on their cultural understanding of what we do. Many people

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don't understand what counselling is and will never understand it, so they will never really engage with us at that level and need other types of interventions. Others share more or less the same values and ideas as us and have no problems engaging in long-term psychotherapy.
In terms of family relationships I would say that Western notions of the self are not necessarily shared by other cultures. For many, the self is in fact diluted in family relationships. The place one holds within the family is fundamental to their identity and who they are.
Part of what we do is to help people find meaning from their own experiences and help them find ways to heal themselves, tap into their own inner resources and do so in a culturally appropriate way.

MCh: I think culture is an ambiguous concept. We are not terribly conscious of the way we do things or think about issues unless we engage in a process of reflection about how we think and feel about certain things and how different these ways of doing things are from the way others might do them. In my opinion that is one of the reasons why culture doesn't often come up during the supervision sessions. Some of it is uncomfortable to deal with. It is not always easy to explore. Nor is it easy for the counsellor to take a step back from the client to address those issues and express them.

MC: Gender and power also have a bearing in the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. Yes, many aspects of culture, as Marc mentioned, are such an integral part of ourselves that we don't even realise it. Sometimes this comes up in supervision. I sometimes spot it by pure luck and then talk about it. Culture manifests itself in the most subtle ways. Prejudice is something that we need to deal with as well. At times counsellors express prejudice when describing a particular reaction, or particular behaviour of clients.

I think culture in counselling manifests itself clearly in three areas: grief, gender and family relationships. For instance in the Middle East it is common for people to express grief in particular ways. They carry photographs of the deceased. Sometimes these have been mutilated, disfigured or tortured. It is not uncommon for clients to show these photographs to the counsellors, particularly when they ask them to advocate on their behalf to obtain housing or ask them other favours. Some counsellors find this to be rather shocking and there is a tendency to interpret this as emotional blackmail, rather than as an expression of loss and pain. Some people rely on their grief to feel welcome, accepted.

OY: Or perhaps this is a cultural expression. People relate to power differently in different cultures.

JA: Another aspect of culture that has not been mentioned is the culture of violence that many refugees have been exposed to over years of war, conflict and displacement. They have developed systems within that culture that have enabled them to survive it. If you get two different groups from the same culture and say, one has lived a culture of violence and the other one hasn't, you will find they are different. In the case of the first group violence will have affected the way they see the world, the way they see their communities, themselves, their values and relationships. That is the reason sometimes we see cultural clashes within the same cultural group in Australia. The second group will not understand the first one even though the parent culture and language are still the same.

AP: That is why refugees find it very difficult to associate with more established groups in their own community. They feel they are not accepted and are socially isolated.

MC: A good example is Afghanistan. After 31 years of war, a culture of living under violence has developed that has changed with time. This culture has evolved with the conflict. So it will depend at what stage someone escaped from that country. Someone leaving Afghanistan today will be rather different from someone else who left 10 years ago. Both will have lived different experiences of the same conflict and will have different perspectives of it. Afghanistan as a country is not the same as it was 10 years ago even though there was war then. Also the refugees from Iraq who came recently are not the same as the ones that came before or immediately after 2003. The newly arrived refugees present different issues.

JA: Many people ask us what is the best way to work with other cultures. I say to them there is no magic recipe to work cross-culturally effectively. Yes, there are a lot of micro-skills that need to be mastered in order to be effective, but acquiring these is only part of the story. Culture will remain a challenge and a source of personal development and growth that parallels closely and can be greatly assisted by sound, culturally aware clinical supervision.

THE QUEST FOR PEACE

Pro-peace movements in Israel rarely get media coverage. Yet they provide a voice for many Israelis and Palestinians who cannot identify with extremism or war. Most of them seek Jewish-Arab rapprochement, cultural and religious pluralism, democratic values and peace in the Middle East. *ELIZABETH BAN* spoke to members of an interfaith group.

Last September an inspirational message was brought to Australia by the Jerusalem-based Inter-Religious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI), the largest inter-religious non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Israel. The council is using religion and interfaith dialogue to break down negative stereotypes and promote peace between embattled religious communities in Israel.

The three-member delegation reflected clearly the complex nature of Israeli society. It was made up of a US-born Jewish educator, Dr Debbie Weissman, an Israeli Muslim Arab educator, Issa Jaber, and a Christian Palestinian, East-Jerusalem resident, Rula Shubeita, who has refused Israeli citizenship. They spoke about initiatives to promote peace and dialogue.

"The goal of ICCI is to learn to coexist, to learn to live together in peace, even if we are not in peace right now. In other words, dialogue is not the goal, it's the means," says ICCI director Dr Ron Kronish, from his office in Jerusalem.

"ICCI is called 'Preaching Beyond the Choir' – for people who haven't met the other – rabbis who have never met a Palestinian or an Imam and vice versa. We want them to learn to encounter the other; to learn about the other person's religious traditions and discuss issues and the conflict they have in common and then take some action together," he says.

"Doing it together" and addressing difficult issues at the grassroots level is the principal modus operandi of the ICCI, which was established in 1991, during the First Intifada – the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule on the West Bank and Gaza, that lasted from 1987 to 1993 resulting in much suffering on all sides.

"All of our programs serve the same overarching goal," Dr Kronish says "which is our mission statement, that is, we recruit people who will want to go through a process of transformation, so that they can become forces for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence in their communities."

The sad reality is that in Israel today, many Jews, Christians and Muslims, who revere the same religious ancestor, Abraham, know very little about each other. Communities of different faith may flourish side by side, but remain separated by fear and prejudice resulting from the political mayhem around them, which affects everyone. The ICCI programs are aimed, first and foremost, at breaking down these barriers.

Dr Kronish says there are two aspects to the peace process in Israel, what he calls "peace-making" and "peace-building". Peace-making is the political arena, where lawyers and politicians hammer out their vision of "peace", he explains. Peace-building is where the ICCI comes in.

"We try to make peaceful relations between people which involves an educational, spiritual and religious long-term process. So the message is: peace is possible in our generation and the method is that we have to engage people in dialogue to learn to live together in peace, if not now then in the future," he adds.

The ICCI projects target all levels of society: the religious leaders, men, women, children, youth, the educated and the disadvantaged.

One of its projects is called KEDEM: Voices of Religious Reconciliation. The purpose is to bring together Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Druze religious leaders, who would otherwise never meet, in order to study and undertake projects together that they can later take to their communities.

Originally planned to run for three years, Dr Kronish says that once they started the participants did not want to stop, which is why it was extended for another two years and ran from 2002-2007.

According to Dr Kronish, one of the major discoveries for participants was to realize that the three monotheistic religions share some very

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The sad reality is that in Israel today, many Jews, Christians and Muslims, who revere the same religious ancestor, Abraham, know very little about each other.

basic common values.

"For example, all of them talk about the importance of peace in their traditions. Perhaps the most dramatic thing was learning about each other's basic religious values in ways that changed their perception, particularly about Judaism and Islam. The rabbis and the imams discovered how, in many ways, Judaism and Islam are very close to one another."

When KEDEM came to an end, a similar program started in Northern Israel, where rabbis and imams wanted to work together. Dr Kronish adds that the ICCI feels free to call on any of its former participants as needed for speaking abroad or joining in new projects.

A similar initiative is the Jerusalem Women's Dialogue Group, of which Rula Shubeita is a graduate. She says that she joined in 2001 because of her interest in religion, and since she had a feeling it would be a good opportunity to meet others and engage in a dialogue that would contribute to a better understanding of each other and promote life with coexistence, harmony and peace.

Eighteen professional Jewish, Christian and Muslim women met every three weeks for three-and-a-half years. The dialogue began at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, which is located between East and West Jerusalem, and was originally established by the Vatican in 1971 to facilitate dialogue between Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other Christian denominations.

To avoid language difficulties, the meetings were held in English. Later, the women hosted each other in their homes. Initially, the discussions centered on politics, but that didn't work, Rula recalls, so the women decided to leave politics to the politicians and get to know each other through discussing their families, culture and religion. She says they had a shared vision of living together in Jerusalem in "harmony and reconciliation", even after a Palestinian state has been established and recognized by Israel.

Despite good intentions, politics disrupted the group many times, but the women managed to handle each situation and stay together. How they did it and reflections on their experiences are outlined in their book "Women of the Book, a Jerusalem Collage", which was published at the end of the project.

One of the difficult moments, Rula Shubeita told several Australian groups, occurred in 2004, when Sheik Yassin, the founder and spiritual leader of Hamas was killed in a targeted Israeli air strike. The Muslim woman at whose house the meeting was scheduled said she couldn't host it as she was in mourning. The Jewish women were horrified and said: "You are in mourning for a terrorist?" The Muslim woman responded: "to you he may have been a terrorist, but to me he was a spiritual leader."

The group didn't meet for a month. But when they met again they spent the whole evening talking about this question. In the end they did not agree. The Jewish women still felt that he was a terrorist and the Muslim women still felt that he was a spiritual leader, but by the end of the evening, Rula says, they understood each other.

"I think it's a beautiful story," Debbie Weissman says, "because it shows that a crisis has to be dealt with and you don't have to necessarily agree, but you have to keep on talking."

Insisting on pursuing honest discussion of difficult issues is one of the unique features of the ICCI methodology, says Dr Kronish. "We believe in being honest and sincere and talking about the real issues of the conflict and not sweeping things under the table, so people feel that it is an honest discussion when they can share what is on their minds."

What about the children and the young people who are caught up in the conflict? ICCI is in continuing partnership with the Auburn Theological Seminary's Centre for Multifaith Education in New York and its highly successful program called Face to Face/Faith to Faith.

This is a year-long dialogue and leadership program that brings together fifty 16-18 year olds from the US, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and South Africa at a facility in upstate New York. Teenagers attend classes and workshops on multi-faith education, dialogue and communication skills and get a chance to meet with artists and storytellers. This gives the Israeli teenagers a chance to learn how other post-war societies learned to live in peace together.

ICCI is the umbrella organization for more than 70 Christian, Palestinian/Muslim and Jewish institutions and serves as the Israeli Chapter of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP). It is also one of the Israeli members of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ). Many of the member organizations began in response to a specific event that happened in a community. One example is the Association for Arab-Jewish Coexistence in the Judean Hills (AAJCJH), which was co-founded by Issa Jaber in 1990, during the first Intifada.

As Issa Jaber told the story, the inciting incident was the case of two brothers who lived in his town of Abu Ghosh. One of them was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber. When the other rushed to see what happened, the traumatized Jews attacked and almost killed him because "he looked Arab" and they thought he was one of the terrorists. "It is really a good example of how violence is very terrible," Issa Jaber says and adds that "violence and terror have no nationality, no religion and no race. They can kill anybody: an innocent man, without being aware of his wrongness, his religion or colour."

The way he saw it, he says was that there were only two choices: "Either we die together or live together. If we live together, we have to talk." But talk is not enough, he cautions. People have to work together on projects that benefit all.

One of the first AAJCJH projects was a classical music festival in one of the historic Catholic Churches of Abu Ghosh, which has become a biannual event attracting 20,000 visitors. The 36th Abu Ghosh Music Festival is being held this October. The unusual feature of these events, Issa Jaber points out, is that they are hosted by a Muslim town, with performances in the Catholic churches, and the visitors are mostly Jewish.

Another highly successful project was one for school children. It was called: "In the Footsteps of Abraham", funded by the Abraham Foundation. It lasted four years, in which Jewish and Muslim children created art projects about Abraham as they envisioned him, from what they had been taught by their own traditions, from their parents and their schools. At the end of the project, Issa Jaber says the program assessors were surprised to discover that "both Jewish and Muslim kids share the same traditions and the same ideas concerning the personality of our father Abraham".

One of the recurrent questions the visitors from Israel were repeatedly asked was related to the usefulness of interfaith dialogue. "Isn't it just talking to the converted and a waste of time?" someone asked. Debbie Weissman gave a three-fold answer:

"First of all, the people who do it need support, and one of the ways is to support each other. Number two: You can widen the circle by having each person who is involved bring a friend, and then have the friends bring a friend, and that way you can reach out to people who are less likely to be as open and tolerant. And number three: We've actually structured a dialogue group for clergy, who aren't necessarily that open and tolerant. For example, the rabbis in the group are all orthodox, including some settlers from the settlements."

Although the message is encouraging, it has not been easy, the visitors explain, but they are not game to give up. "Politics impacts badly on whatever we do," says Issa Jaber, "but we have no other alternative ... And since we are living together, we should have what's called open dialogues in order to promote our daily lives for the benefit of both sides – the Arabs and the Jews, because we work together and we live close to each other, and we have no other alternative."

ICCI has many future plans, including the establishment of an Institute for Jewish Muslim Dialogue. "I often say it's a bumpy road." Dr Kronish says. "We are going to have a two-state solution sooner or later and then the rest of us who are not politicians figure ok, how are we going to learn to live together as part of the world? And that's where religion and education kicks in. So, I think we are on the slow boat to peace... Our role is to help people to learn to live in peace together. That's a big challenge. And I think that the kind of work we do will be needed for a long time to come."

*For more information about ICCI's work and the projects mentioned in this article, please check the following links:

ICCI
www.wcrp.org

World Conference of Religions for Peace
www.wcrp.org

International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ)
www.iccj.org

KEDEM: Voices of Religious Reconciliation
www.jcrelations.net

Women of the book, a Jerusalem Collage
www.wcrp.org/resources/toolkits/collage

Face to Face/Faith to Faith
www.faithtofaith-facetoface.com

THE MESSENGERS

DR DEBORAH WEISSMAN

Even when she smiles, Debbie Weissman has a no-nonsense air about her. She tells it like it is – neither embellishing, nor simplifying her responses to hard questions. Perhaps that's a throwback to her New York origins, from where she immigrated to Jerusalem in 1972.

After completing her PhD in Jewish Education at the Hebrew University xxxxxxx, ??This is an old 'xxxxx' so I'm not sure why it is here....Mark??xxxxx Debbie became a leading light in Jewish education in Israel and immersed herself in interfaith dialogue, which led her to specialize in teaching about Judaism to Christians.

As well, Debbie was one of the founders of Kehillat Yedidya in Bak'a, a modern Orthodox synagogue that has excellent neighbourly relations with its Reform and Conservative neighbors and hosts visiting multi-faith groups from around the world.

She is a religious feminist and is currently co-chair of the Inter-Religious Coordinating Council in Israel, as well as president of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

ISSA JABER

In contrast to Debbie's exuberance, Issa Jaber is a quiet, self-contained presence and wherever the group appears, his smiling eyes welcome the stranger to engage in discussion. Like Debbie, Issa Jaber is a professional educator, a veteran interfaith activist, co-founder of the Association for Arab Jewish Coexistence in the Judean Hills and co-chair of ICCI.

Issa Jaber was born an Israeli citizen in the historic Muslim town of Abu Ghosh, situated in the Judean Hills some 10 kilometres west of Jerusalem on the way to Tel Aviv. The town has historic significance for Christians and Jews, but in the interfaith context its major significance is that it chose to stay neutral in the 1948 War of Independence and, in the interim, has enjoyed good relations with its Jewish neighbours.

After finishing his schooling in Israel, he studied in Turkey for nine years and has an MA in Political Science & Public Administration from Ankara University and a Certificate in Education from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was principal of Abu Ghosh High School and has served as a facilitator for Education for Arab-Jewish Coexistence in the Knesset. He is currently Director of Education in the town of Abu Ghosh.

RULA SHUBEITA

Rula Shubeita does not appear comfortable in the company of strangers, but once she begins to relate her stories of pain, struggle and hope, she is mesmerizing. She is an Arab Orthodox Christian Palestinian. A theology graduate, she works as a tourist guide for Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land, with whom she travels throughout Israel. In addition to telling them the history of the places dear to Christian tradition, she also talks to them about the Jewish and Palestinian people who currently live there and the three religions they profess: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Rula lives in East Jerusalem and holds Israeli residency, but is not a citizen. It's not that she can't, but she chooses not to, because she expects and hopes to live one day in her own country: Palestine. She is a graduate and fervent promoter of ICCI's Jerusalem Women's Dialogue Group. She even got her sister involved. She is one of the ICCI speakers who speak to inter-religious delegations visiting Israel.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

A rehabilitation centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not only helping traumatized war victims, but is also contributing to building a lasting peace, the centre's director *JASNA ZECEVIC* told participants at the International Conference on Health and Human Rights in Peru.

Women concerned about safety and trauma founded Vive Zene, a centre for therapy and rehabilitation in Tuzla. In 1994 two women's groups, from Tuzla and Dormund in Germany, combined their efforts to establish a centre that would provide a safe haven for women and children – the most vulnerable victims of the devastating war that raged unabated from 1992 to 1995.

Since then, the centre has been transformed. Today Vive Zene continues to provide psychosocial treatment to women and children, who suffer from trauma as a result of physical and sexual torture. It has also extended its services to men and raises awareness about psychosocial issues in the community. Recently a new research section has been established and advancements have also been made in the monitoring and evaluation of treatment.

The centre has adopted a multidisciplinary approach whereby patients are offered psychosocial help, medical assistance and legal counselling. Vive Zene's goal is to minimize the effects of trauma and related disorders for victims that have been tortured, raped or abused, and help them with their emotional healing. The psychosocial model is based on the understanding that the healing of trauma is a multidimensional, long-term process that involves working on the individual, fostering the support of the local community as well as working with the broader society.

Vive Zene services are client-oriented. The psychosocial protection program is implemented by a multidisciplinary team that consists of psychologists, social workers, nursery school teachers, social workers, teachers, a doctor, a nurse, a physiotherapist and a lawyer.

Following assessment and admission to the centre or outpatient facility, the multidisciplinary team decides what kind of assistance or treatment is needed and then creates an individual's 'recovery plan' and appoints a staff member to be responsible for each case.

As well as connecting disciplines that function both within the team and externally, we assess the connection between the social and cultural background of a client and the kind of treatment services a client needs. After a client is admitted to a program and before a care plan is made, the client's entire background is analysed: family ties, education and place of residence, for the purpose of adapting the support plan to the client's needs. It is very important for us to take into account the environment from where a client comes. In some cases it was not possible for us to start psychotherapy or counselling before the client could understand the basic principles and the meaning of psychosocial assistance and support.

Psychosocial treatment also includes post-care. The team will continue to monitor the client after the treatment and will assess whether the level of emotional stability achieved will be sustained in the environment to which the client returns. Post-care is very important in our work because it supplements what we call psychosocial community care.

The psychosocial model includes an analysis of the environment a client comes from, the adaptations that will need to take place, the implementation of the recovery plan, and finally the constant monitoring of the client.

The therapeutic work was focused on what we call 'stationary work', that is, when victims stay for a minimum of six months at the centre. Now stationary treatment is only limited to emergency situations and does not exceed two months. Ambulatory treatment is offered on a broader scale. The therapeutic work is also linked to community activities. Some patients need stationary treatment but not as a replacement of normal life. Thus shorter stays are important and make the return to society much easier. Our work involves a combination of protecting the victim,

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The psychosocial model is based on the understanding that the healing of trauma is a multidimensional, long-term process that involves working on the individual, fostering the support of the local community as well as working with the broader society.

> *Health professionals working with torture victims are concerned about the conspiracy of silence that exists in Bosnia today.*

dealing with his or her family, and accompanying the victim for a long time after he or she has left the centre. At some point, staff at the centre will work with family members, normally with the husband and children of the victim and deal with the connection between past traumatisation and current problems.

For some time now Vive Zene has also engaged in community work. We operate with a belief that efforts made towards the reconstruction of a safe, democratic, and economically viable society will benefit individuals struggling with their healing processes. Therefore three levels of intervention have been integrated into this psychosocial model. Each requires specific objectives, activities and outcomes.

The first level involves assisting rape and torture victims to heal their inner wounds. This is implemented through the psychosocial program. The second level is about rebuilding trust and social connectedness within local communities and it is achieved by working within the camps for internally displaced as well as in local communities. This is followed by rebuilding society through advocacy, documentation, education and research.

Assisting victims and their families to face the past and overcome it isn't quite as challenging as working with the community. To get torture victims recognized by the community or respected as victims of rape is very difficult. As a result, victims live their lives in a shadow because they carry 'the sin' on their shoulders. In other words, after years of silence, family, friends and other people who are close to them, blame the victims for the aggression and humiliation inflicted on them by the perpetrators. Some women then start to wonder: "Maybe it is true and in some ways I may be guilty ... I should not have been on that spot at that moment..."

Over the years the centre has had a beneficial impact on the lives of thousands of people who have confirmed to us there is a great need for a public and open dialogue about the country's past.

Breaking the silence in a society engulfed in so many problems may not be an easy task. However it may be a decisive turning point if we are to put an end to the vicious circle in which Bosnia-Herzegovina society seems to be trapped. This is due mainly to the slow pace of government reforms that are necessary if we are to meet the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups and politicians' indifference to these groups and society's inability to make its own decisions. All these factors contribute to keeping the country in a state of on-going crisis that has lasted for almost a decade.

While discussions about the consequences of torture from the war are held among health professionals, they are not taking place among the politicians responsible for rebuilding and developing the country. According to the experience in other conflict zones and research undertaken worldwide, it is well known that ignoring what happened during the war could lead to renewed violence.

Health professionals working with torture victims are concerned about the conspiracy of silence that exists in Bosnia today. As a result, Vive Zene is facilitating public discussion and roundtable debates about the effects of torture. It is also conducting research and producing documentation in an effort to break the silence and to educate people about how to deal with the past. Through our educational work at a community level, the centre is contributing to the prevention of future conflicts.

Over the years Vive Zene became gradually involved in community development activities with the most neglected communities in Bosnia -- those who live in camps for displaced persons. Initially staff members went to the camps to identify needs. They provided medical assistance,

worked with children and facilitated therapeutic groups. Although these services were always welcomed we soon realized they didn't necessarily empower people. It became clear to us our activities needed to focus more on the empowerment of communities to equip them to solve their own problems and gradually become self-sufficient.

This has been a challenging task because traditionally people were not used to taking their own problems into their own hands. Quite the contrary, they are used to having the state providing services and the structures for public order.

Deprived of permanent safety, displaced people have been marginalized in the camps for quite some time. Theoretically residents have a right to go back home. Some of them can go back. Others can't because the political situation is not safe enough or because their homes have been destroyed. Many have been living in this provisional space for over 15 years. They are now exiles in their own country. They neither belong to where they came from nor are they integrated into their new living spaces. Vive Zene has been trying to help these people develop perspectives on their own lives and on their future so that they can start facing their own problems.

Our work in the camps started out with small activities like setting up a football club, a men's group, or helping people paint their own houses. It has continued through group work to empower people to make decisions, whether they stay or return. Visits to Srebrenica have been organized and some collective reconstruction has begun. All this has not changed the basic misery faced by the internally displaced, but it has offered a starting point. Community development work involves reconciliation, counselling, confidence building and reconstruction; by building on internal and external support structures and closing the ethnic gaps.

Similar work has been done with other local communities and the focus has gradually developed from offering psychosocial services to developing processes for self-empowerment and facilitating social spaces for reconciliation. Now Bosnia has teams like Vive Zene that integrate psychological and community activities into a single approach. Vive Zene has taken the leadership in training other professionals and coaching other institutions doing similar work. In that sense it is also contributing to building peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In some instances Vive Zene has filled the gap left by the state, which is incapable or unwilling to address the needs of disadvantaged people. Lasting peace will only be possible if the silence is broken, if victims are recognized and the voices of the marginalized are heard. Staff members at Vive Zene have been listening to these voices for so many years.

Dealing with the past is not only a question of having the legal, political or economic institutions and structures in place, but also about the way a state deals with the most vulnerable members of its society and about acknowledging and listening to people's emotions and experiences.

TEN YEARS OF REFUGEE HEALTH

Promoting and protecting the health of refugees settling in Australia is the main aim of the NSW Refugee Health Service. Deputy Director *MARISA SALEM* reflects on 10 years of achievements.

When the NSW Refugee Health Service was established in 1999, the refugee landscape was different. There was no public debate about queue jumpers, boat people, or detainees. Little did we know then that we were about to embark on a journey that would prove to be a wonderful roller coaster ride, bringing more successes than we could have hoped for and a few challenges along the way.

I remember very clearly the week leading up to the Safe Haven, when thousands of Kosovar refugees arrived in Australia and were housed at the East Hills Safe Haven. I still remember that fateful call from the Department of Health that propelled our yet to be housed service into an unimaginable level of activity. Our director, Dr. Mitchell Smith, was appointed Medical Coordinator of the Safe Haven under the local Disaster Plan, and very quickly, the Area Health Service discovered our existence, as did the Department of Immigration, the Army and others. Equally quickly we discovered how flexible our service could be.

Our refugee nurses spent their first year at East Hills working with the Kosovars and then with the East Timorese refugees. Gradually, the Kosovars were sent home, as were the East Timorese, except for a small number who were unfit to travel. I remember the wonderful friendship that was formed between a very sick young lady with major cardiac problems and no support and one of our nurses. Since then it has been enormously humbling to have had many patients and clients referring to our staff as 'friends'.

Our Health Promotion Program served to introduce refugees to the Australian health system, and since then it has become one of the many health information sessions offered to newly arrived refugees as part of our Community Education Program (CEP). In fact as many as 2500 sessions have been conducted by the bilingual community educators in the last 10 years, mainly with the Adult Migrant English Program centres, using a specially designed health services information booklet, originally developed in six languages, now available in 17 languages. As Lida Sestakova, CEP coordinator says: the refugees often like to acknowledge that they learned many things from her, "but I know how much they have contributed to what I am today, how much I have learnt from each of them".

The role of these educators has also evolved with time. They now help with research and provide information about a broad variety of health topics, from immunisation to nutrition and women's health and will soon incorporate oral health and domestic violence into their program. The community educators show real empathy to our clients. They share with them a culture, and more often than not the refugee experience. Ex patient Debbie Davis remembers seeking assistance at the Refugee Health Service: "I found it to be one of the few places that I would go that I didn't feel like an outsider. And I did not feel we were imposing on the people as you did when dealing with some other organizations. The staff went out of their way to make the kids welcome."

Anyone with any awareness of the refugee experience will know how it has impacted on the refugees' ability to access adequate nutrition. Our early consultations, as well as much anecdotal evidence, supported growing national concerns about refugee nutrition. The Fairfield Refugee Nutrition Project, commenced in 2006, which included research into the nutrition needs of refugee families, and investigated four aspects of household food security: availability, access, utilisation and vulnerability/stability. The findings were startling: Eight out of ten refugees within some communities were food insecure. Among the factors contributing to poor food security was the long distance from shops, the lack of

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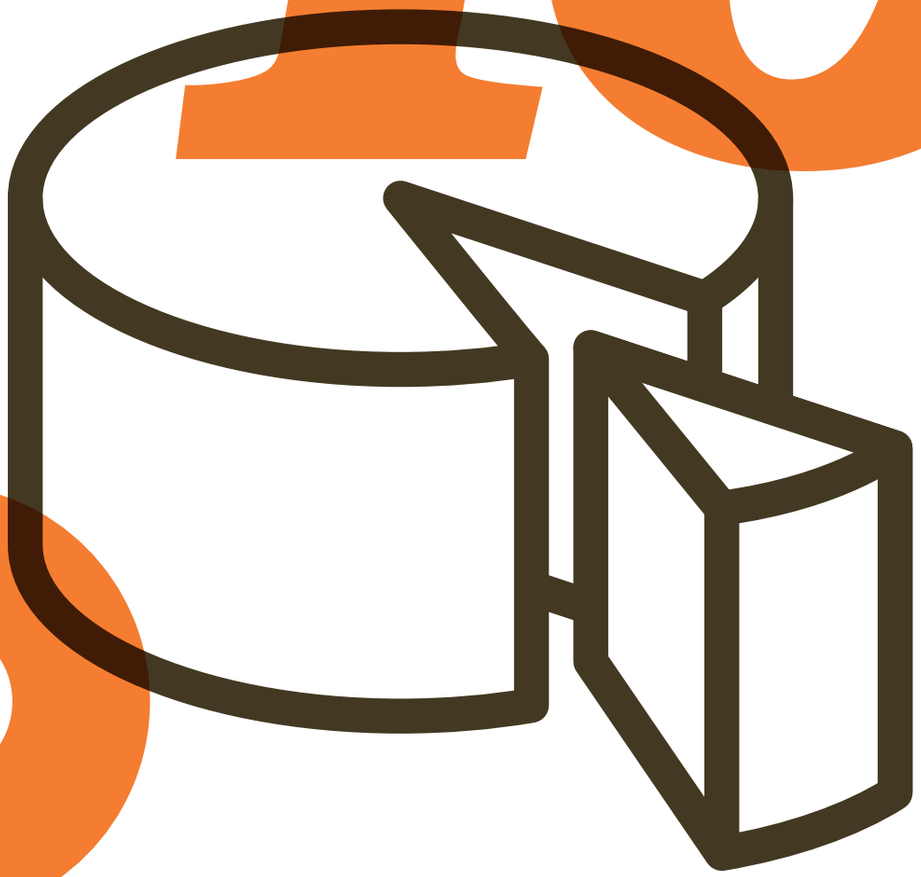

I found it to be one of the few places that I would go that I didn't feel like an outsider...

access to affordable transport; and for some groups, the unavailability of culturally preferred food. As a result, community education sessions were provided on nutrition.

Not all projects that we've conducted were as successful. Unfortunately we too have sometimes applied for project funding just because it happened to be available. It has always been a dilemma for us whether to apply for it or not when we know it is usually short-term and potentially not sustainable.

Fortunately funding was found to subsidise a women's health project which has contributed to some amazing results over the years. The BreastScreen program for instance showed that refugee women will access services if they understand what the service has to offer, feel welcomed and understood as clients.

Advocacy on behalf of refugees has been one of the many strategies of the Refugee Health Service, as has been building the capacity of Area Health Services in NSW to equip them to better care for refugees living within their boundaries. It has also supported the development of a range of refugee health clinics, mostly set up and funded by Area Health Services, where refugees live including: three paediatric clinics in the Sydney metropolitan area; services in the Hunter and Illawarra, and a youth health clinic that is due to open soon. All services are locally based and run. In addition most staff and our training officer regularly provide training sessions to a range of health services.

In 2007, Telehealth, a refugee health training and support initiative was trialed to enhance the delivery of health services in rural and remote areas through video-conferencing. Six lectures were provided through this medium by health professionals on general issues, some of these were delivered by experts in particular subject areas, followed by time for questions from participants. Eleven sites participated, between 30 and 70 people attended per session. In addition, the project allowed a small number of networking sessions for refugee health nurses in rural and remote areas. This nurses' network continues by phone-conferencing on a bi-monthly basis.

Our clinic staff constantly advocate on behalf of refugee patients for appropriate access to care, and significant staff time is devoted to asylum seekers living in the community without Medicare access, yet in need of health care. Staff members also provide support to other workers and refugees. Dr Winston Lo says that working at the Refugee Health Service has broadened his eyes on the world we live in without having to leave the confines of the consultation room. "Their resilience in overcoming multiple obstacles to attain a new life in Sydney is truly inspirational."

We've been very busy over the past 10 years. Our clinical activities are not limited to the Refugee Health Service's patients. At different times we have had requests from Department of Immigration and NSW Health, and have assisted with screening of newly arrived refugees from three large charter flights from Liberia and Burundi. The service geared up its own clinic operations and collaborated with the local Public Health and the General Practitioners (GPs) units to help ensure effective health screening of these groups. On another occasion we were instrumental in coordinating follow-up polio immunisation for refugees due to an outbreak from a refugee camp in Nairobi.

Training GPs has also been fundamental. The work with GPs initially started with the development of a number of fact sheets, and continued with the promotion of a range of resources to relevant GPs. As well as conducting many continuing medical information sessions, our GP liaison officer has also developed and maintained GP databases with the aim of linking clients with appropriate GPs and health workers. Training Coordinator Cathy Preston-Thomas, says that: "one of the most rewarding aspects about training others in the health sector is that it challenges people's assumptions about refugees. It can be a little bit fun unpacking some stereotypes on the spot while smiling.

Even after 10 years the service still feels new. That's not to say that we haven't climbed walls, and became frustrated by bureaucracies and the inflexibilities of other services. Finding a place in a particular service is never easy, but this journey has been an extremely rewarding experience. I'm very proud that I have worked at RHS, and am especially proud of our wonderful dedicated colleagues.

More information is available on our website;
www.refugeehealth.org.au

REFLECTIONS OF LONG-SERVING DIRECTOR

So, ten years old... Refugee Health Service is still a young child really, lots still to learn, liaisons to make, risks to take. If it's anything like my own son, there'll be more injuries and broken bones along the way, or, if like my daughter, tears and tantrums.

But that's all part of the journey of life, and so it is for our small service. It was humble beginnings, Marisa and I sharing a desk, one phone, two chairs, and a service plan. Our growth since then has been slow but steady, always constrained by that ever-present bogie known as 'funding'. There's always been more we've wanted to do than been able to do; occasionally bitten off more than we could chew, but learnt lessons from that.

And our achievements have been many, a source of quiet pride amongst us all. And the team has been remarkably stable over those years – two retirements, an occasional shift to greener pastures or closer to home, and temporary project staff moving on, many of whom wished they could have stayed. Plus, countless students passing through, bright and willing to be inspired – hopefully we have planted a kernel of inspiration to at least some of those budding doctors, nurses and others. Working for the Refugee Health Service has been, and remains, a true privilege.

- Mitchell Smith

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A KINGDOM LOST
THE STORY BEHIND THE TAMIL BOATS

Driving the boat journeys of Sri Lankan Tamils trying to reach Australia is the story of a forgotten people and a kingdom lost, writes STARTTS counsellor *NARMATHA THILLAINATHAN*.

The trans-migration of Tamil Sri Lankans is certainly not a new one. It's the continuation of a journey taken by many Tamil civilians over the last 30 years. The Tamils, a minority in a majority Sinhalese county, have lived in Sri Lanka for thousands of years. I am one of those many Tamils who have left the shores of my homeland in search of safety and a more equitable way of life. This is my story.

My memory of Sri Lanka as a five-year-old girl growing up in our hometown of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka is one of innocence and fear. The fear, which I can still clearly recall today, derived from witnessing various dark events in my homeland. The innocence came from the fact that I was too young to understand what was happening. Yet I still followed without question all the strict directions given by my mum and dad, fondly referred to in the Tamil language as my 'Amma' and 'Appa'.

Amma and Appa never uttered a word; they never explained the situation we lived in. I recall when we heard 'loud' noises my elder sister, brother and I would be terrified and run to hide in the bunker - a space under the chimney at the rear of our house - for a feeling of safety. I was too young to understand what a mortar shell was or what damage it could do, but the terror in my older sisters' eyes told me that I should hide too.

Thinking back, the violence that surrounded us shaped the way we lived and thought. I now understand why, when little five-year old girls in other parts of the world played with dolls, my most precious possession was a toy machine gun, which I would take with me whilst hiding under the bunker. I still remember my favourite gun.

Our family home was situated in the central part of the city, near Jaffna hospital, the heart of the Tamils and a popular target for aerial bombings and mortar attacks. Though I was too young to have memories of the 1983 riots I still experienced the brutality and destruction of the civil conflict.

My favourite cousin, whom I am ever so indebted to for saving my life, one day, came to visit our home. He jumped on an old bicycle and informed us we were going for a ride. My sister was seated on the back of the bike and I was on the handlebars. It was no ordinary ride, my cousin cycled with all his might to a far away town called, Thinnaveli. After many days, when we returned home to Jaffna, I recall seeing a massive hole in our living room and the roof. No one explained to me what had happened.

I rushed to its doors to see if any damage had occurred to the many framed pictures of Hindu deities which adorned the surfaces of our prayer room. Miraculously, not one single picture frame was damaged. It's a moment I'll never forget. I made sure no-one was watching and slowly closed the prayer room doors for privacy. I shut my eyes and bowed in gratitude with my hands together to the gods. Then I cried and cried.

As a little girl I didn't really know who the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE/Tigers) were or why they had been formed. I did know that if the Tigers visited we had to be prepared. In response to their demands my mother had to hand over some of the jewellery she owned (one of our biggest forms of wealth) and my father whatever money we had. If we didn't, we would have been branded government sympathisers, harassed by the Tigers and perhaps even killed. And yet in most quarters, that support came freely, as the Tigers put their lives on the line constantly repelling the Government attacks in the North.

It was through defence of the Tamil population in the north that many, including myself, are alive today. It is for this reason that the Tamil tigers are supported by many in the Tamil diaspora even after their defeat and their own culpable acts.

Still, as a naive child, I used to wonder why my mother had to give away her jewellery. Was giving up your economic freedom worth the gaining

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> *It was through defence of the Tamil population in the north that many, including myself, are alive today. It is for this reason that the Tamil tigers are supported by many in the Tamil diaspora even after their defeat and their own culpable acts.*

> *As time passed by the situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated and our lives were increasingly at risk. Many Tamils were seeking to leave Sri Lanka. With the little money he had left my father sought an expatriate opportunity in Zambia.*

of some limited personal freedoms? The answer came the year following the bombing of our house, when we moved to Colombo. Our home was often, 'inspected' by the Sri Lankan military. I was told that young Tamil men often disappeared during the 'inspections' never to be seen again, while girls and women were raped.

As time passed by the situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated and our lives were increasingly at risk. Many Tamils were seeking to leave Sri Lanka. With the little money he had left my father sought an expatriate opportunity in Zambia. Although he was a qualified civil engineer, intelligent, brave and highly respected the thought of leaving his home and family was terrifying. Not knowing when he would see us again was an immense sacrifice and a courageous act. My uncle paid for my father's air ticket to Zambia. I still recall my father telling me that he borrowed money from my uncle (again not knowing how and when he would repay the debt). He lived penny-by-penny until his perseverance was rewarded with a job as a Civil Engineer for the Ministry of Water Board in neighbouring Zimbabwe.

During that time, I have fond memories of days with my mother. She struggled to find a teaching position. Opportunities for Tamils were restricted then as they are today. I still recall the song she sang to me – "Que sera sera, whatever will be, will be". It was so vivid in its sense of helplessness. Thankfully for us the "whatever will be" was that after many months my father saved enough to pay for our travel. In 1987 we started a peaceful life in Zimbabwe

Our hopes in Zimbabwe were fleeting. Under the stewardship of Robert Mugabe the political situation became unstable and after a few short years yet again we had to consider where our next home would lie. The situation in Sri Lanka was not looking promising so that was not an option. As a teenager it felt as though I had no home to return to, no sense of belonging to this world.

My parents successfully lodged an application to migrate to New Zealand where my new life began. Today, having lived in Australia for almost seven years, I reflect on my nomadic refugee-like experience. It is this struggle that has led the little girl with a toy gun to become a psychologist, passionate to help other survivors of torture and trauma.

I am extremely proud to be an Australian and given my history would never take for granted the human rights that are central to our existence in this amazing country. And yet, I do sometimes wonder what it would be like to return to Sri Lanka. I still pray for peace, if only to keep the faith of that five year old girl alive.

FACTS ABOUT SRI LANKA

Area (sq km)	65,610
Population	2006 19,886,0001
GDP per capita (2006)	(US$) 4,300
Life expectancy	male (years) 68.82
Life expectancy	female (years) 76.32
Adult literacy rate	(2000-2005) 91.3%
Ethnic/religious groups	Sinhalese 74% Tamils 18% Muslims 7%
Languages	Sinhalese speak Sinhala; Tamils and most Muslims speak Tamil
Religions	70% Buddhist, 15% Hindu, 7% Muslim and 7% Christian

MUSIC THERAPY HELPS REFUGEES

By *SARAH SCROOPE* and *ROSEMARY SIGNORELLI.* Music is used all over the world to express emotions, to join up with others and to celebrate family and community experiences. Music therapy, provided by a qualified music therapist, is the planned use of elements of music and creative music-making using specific therapeutic goals. There is growing interest in the application of music therapy to help refugees who are affected by war, violence, dispossession and loss.

Unlike musical education or entertainment, music therapy is the combination of listening, playing, writing, recording, movement and dance designed to address a client's needs. Participants do not need to have any prior music training as the process of making music is more important than performance. Music therapists work with individuals or groups or jointly with other professionals, such as counsellors, other creative arts therapists and educational and/or allied health professionals.

At STARTTS there are two music therapy programs currently serving members of the Mandaean and Assyrian communities. One is a women's group run jointly by a counsellor and music therapist which brings together the three modalities of psychoeducation, music therapy and group psychotherapy. The other is an early childhood group for parents with babies, toddlers or pre-school children that uses music, movement and literacy activities to enhance the child's development.

The participants in the women's group all arrived in Australia from Iraq within the last 18 months. Despite their different backgrounds, ages and journeys, they share common experiences as refugees from a war-torn country. In addition to their individual counselling, the women came together for a 10-week period to share their experiences and to learn how to use music to gain additional coping skills.

At some of the sessions the women brought popular and traditional music from Iraq to sing along to. This exercise empowered them to use their individual voices, and deepened their sense of a shared cultural identity. Across cultures singing has physical, emotional and social benefits. Singing as part of a group allows people to overcome shyness and nervous reactions. The action of singing strengthens the lungs, improves posture and oxygen flow to the blood stream and brain. Energetic singing releases endorphins which can help reduce feelings of depression and anxiety. Singing can also make people feel uplifted and at times euphoric. On the other hand, slow rhythmic singing can relax people, slow down breathing and heartbeat. Understanding the power of singing and music and its connection to our emotional well-being and relationships with others is one of the keys to successful music therapy.

At times the women took turns to lead the group in singing or improvising different styles of music and playing. Being the 'conductor' reinforced their capacity to lead and be in control as well as being able to participate in the group's creativity. Their combination of different rhythms, harmonies and instruments was an expression of mutual support based on respect for their differences as well as their common experiences.

For many of us the trauma that these women experienced in Iraq and during their journey to Australia is unimaginable. The women's harrowing experiences will undoubtedly stay with them for a long time as they learn to process their traumas and gain coping skills. In all forms of group therapy it is crucial to establish an environment where clients feel safe and supported. This can be achieved through music by encouraging group members to sing or play instruments of their choosing. The music therapist can also provide a calming and holding structure for the group by using the pentatonic scale along with steady rhythmic and melodic figures.

When a particular rhythm or piece of music triggers strong emotional memories the music therapist and counsellor are able to assist the women to process these memories within the safety of the group. The counsellor can also demonstrate the connection between the memories and stress responses. The women learn to recognize the physical symptoms of trauma such as irregular or fast heart beat, rapid or shallow breathing,

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Understanding the connection between music and well-being was an awakening for many of these women. They identified what types of melodies, tunes and lyrics cheered them up, made them feel tense, or feel peaceful and relaxed. Armed with this understanding the women agreed to write the lyrics to a song that they felt best described the coping mechanisms and emotions of the group.

sweating, tightness in the chest and tense muscles. They are then able to observe how their bodies react to stress and how to modify breathing, singing and playing techniques to reduce anxiety.

Understanding the connection between music and well-being was an awakening for many of these women. They identified what types of melodies, tunes and lyrics cheered them up, made them feel tense, or feel peaceful and relaxed. Armed with this understanding the women agreed to write the lyrics to a song that they felt best described the coping mechanisms and emotions of the group. Song writing is often used in music therapy as it is a powerful form of self expression. It is an effective way to structure the thoughts of traumatic experiences, tell a life story or articulate future goals.

The combined music-therapy, psychoeducational and group-therapy approach worked well for this particular group of refugees. Registered music therapists might explore other forms of music therapy to suit particular individuals or groups. Music therapists may also choose to work with other modalities such as psychodynamic, gestalt, narrative, person-centered or existentialist approaches to ensure that the client's goals and needs are adequately addressed.

In contrast to the women's group, the early childhood group for Mandaean parents and 0-4 year olds is based on attachment and child development theories and approaches[2]. Within this group, parents and children are supported as they sing, move and dance together. As well as singing and listening to Iraqi children's songs and lullabies, the parents and children are learning Australian songs that the children will experience at pre-school and kindergarten. Listening to and singing Iraqi and Australian songs has created a bridge between the parent's traditional culture, their childhood and their new life in Australia.

For many of these women and other refugees, the experience of arriving in a new and unfamiliar environment causes much stress. While the women now live in relative safety they are confronted with an unfamiliar language, systems, lifestyle and culture. Using music to establish a bridge to 'typically Australian' children's songs reduces their social isolation and that of their child. Learning and singing Australian songs helps the parent and child engage with the wider community and provides familiarity and connection to other children.

The music therapist also uses illustrated song books to engage the parents and children in basic literary activities. The songs and activities enhance all areas of the child's development including gross motor, fine motor, language, cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social development skills. Equally as importantly, the music therapy sessions are an opportunity for the parent and child to have fun together, enjoy each others company, and meet other children and parents. All of the parents in the group are working through their traumas and losses and these sessions contribute to their healing journey by strengthening their bond with their child, their community and Australian culture.

Clearly there are many ways that music therapists can use musical elements to engage with clients. The strength of music therapy is its flexibility as it can be adapted and combined with other types of therapy to meet different objectives. The members of the Mandaean and Assyrian communities attending the sessions have come to value and understand how they can use musical elements to help themselves cope with their refugee experience. In this case music therapy has empowered and enhanced the skills of the individual, family and wider community.

LYRICS TO THE IRAQI WOMEN'S GROUP SONG (2009)

When sadness takes a hold of me, I will dance
or sing a lullaby.
Lift me up in rhythms strong,
Or soothe my heart with peace and calm.

When I miss the ones I love, I live to see the
distance dissolve.
When I feel their warm embrace,
My heart will flow with joy and love and peace.

When fear touches painful memories, I tremble,
freeze or bury them within me.
If I face the source of fear,
I use my breath to send it far from here.

When anger strikes my mind and body, then I
fight or challenge my enemy,
Smoke or hide, or scream, or talk,
Or change my thoughts, or run or walk.

When my friends and companions join with me,
When we hold each other safely,
In the song I find my voice,
Hands held high with freedom and choice.

[2]The early childhood group was run by Music Therapist Rosemary Signorelli, with input from Dance Educator Angela Hill and interpreting and community liaison by Yassmen Yahya.

ENTERPRISE FACILITATION GIVES BIRTH TO EMBROIDERY BABY

By *SARAH SCROOPE.*

Every Monday afternoon a group of Hazara women from Afghanistan meet in Auburn, Sydney, to design and embroider baby shoes. What started out as a casual sewing group is now on its way to becoming a well-functioning, financially sound and creative business venture known as Embroidery Baby. These women are an example of what Enterprise Facilitation© can achieve and an inspiration to other local refugees wanting to start their own business.

Zenia Davis, a teacher in the Adult Migrant English Program, brought these women together as a social sewing group. She initiated the group as a way for the women to practise their English, make friends and reconnect with their Hazara culture while trying to cope with the trauma of their refugee experience. The women did not come together with the idea of mass producing baby booties for the Australian market, but as their confidence increased so did their creativity.

During these weekly get-togethers the women told Zenia of their desire to use their talents and sell their handicraft to earn a small income.

This was a foreign concept to the Hazara womenand they were faced with the challenge of not knowing where to begin.

Zenia contacted STARTTS and explained that while the women's knowledge of and commitment to their product was genuine, they needed financial and business management assistance to turn their idea into a business. STARTTS Enterprise Facilitator Felix Ryan was eager and able to assist. Felix worked with Zenia and the women to help them develop their business idea, to be clear about what their product was, who they were aiming to market their product to and how they were going to manage their finances. None of this was easy for the women who come from a background with a radically different business culture and where it is unusual for women to run a business.

At the core of the Enterprise Facilitation program is the belief that it is possible to transform a person's passion into a sustainable project. Enterprise Facilitation differs from other forms of business mentoring in two significant ways. Firstly it offers a simple but effective management-coaching approach that encourages entrepreneurs to form competent management teams before they invest their life savings or seek finance. Secondly, Enterprise Facilitation brings together the best and brightest leaders in the community to pool their knowledge and networks to enable the entrepreneur to find the right people to help them build their business team and plan.

By becoming part of the Enterprise Facilitation program at STARTTS the Hazara women have access to the Resource Board. Its members have knowledge and skills in useful areas such as graphic design, taxation, accounting, law and finance or they may have access to networks of a wide range of people who can help provide advice and support. Through this network of people the Hazara women have found help with marketing, meeting strategies and attendance and a variety of practical issues. Skills and advice are provided pro bono is come cases, at discounted rates on occasion and sometimes at full rates.

As a result of this support and mentoring, the women have started to develop a business plan, management structure, and are registering as a business entity. They are in the process of setting up a website with pictures of their products, a very unfamiliar yet effective medium for them to market themselves.

Through the sewing group the women, who had not met before arriving in Australia, have been brought together in a space where they can express their individuality, support each other during their resettlement experience and hopefully one day earn an income independent from their

husbands. Embroidery Baby is a link to Afghanistan, a reminder of their traditions and a symbol of home. Yet it also represents their new life in Australia.

As the women swap colour-matching ideas and cut more patterns they discuss what they would like to do with their business and with their profits. Some have recently received their learner's driving licence and would like to save money to buy a car – the first one for the family. Upon realising that none of them are actually able to drive, they agree to start saving for driving lessons first.

To contact Embroidery Baby and/or place an order, please email:
embroiderybaby@gmail.com

THE ENTERPRISE FACILITATION© MODEL

Enterprise Facilitation is a model of community development that promotes economic growth within the community by supporting local entrepreneurs. This people-centred approach to development is the brainchild of Dr. Ernest Sirolli of the Sirolli Institute, an international not-for-profit organisation that has helped numerous communities gain financial independence.

Dr Sirolli is passionate about nurturing the talents, skills and passion of community members and has worked with people all over the world to create sustainable and profitable grassroots businesses. He believes that would-be entrepreneurs need three key competencies; a product, marketing skills and financial management skills. In his experience it is rare to find one person with all three skills so Dr Sirolli draws on the expertise within the community to fill these knowledge/skill gaps.

Enterprise Facilitation can be applied to any community or individual. STARTTS believes that it is particularly relevant to their clients as many refugees are extremely keen to work and are passionate about their business ideas and starting their own business. However, re-settling in an unfamiliar environment presents challenges that can lead to poor business planning and decision making. Enterprise Facilitation contributes to reducing these risks by linking people to networks of support.

GETTING SERVICES RIGHT FOR OLDER SURVIVORS

By *KATHRYN KNIGHT*, STARTTS Project Officer,
Working with HACC clients from refugee-like backgrounds

Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds who have experienced torture and trauma are one of the most vulnerable groups in Australian society. Faced with the combined effects of ageing and the lifelong biopsychosocial consequences of their refugee experience and often living in poverty, they experience compounded social disadvantage. Those working with older survivors require understanding, strategies and skills to enable them to meet the complex needs of these clients.

The Working with HACC clients from refugee-like backgrounds project, which STARTTS undertook in 2008 was designed to assist providers of Home and Community Care (HACC) services to improve service access and service effectiveness for refugees and people with refugee-like experience. The project was funded by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) and funded under the Home and Community Care (HACC) program.

The need for specialised training for Home and Community Care (HACC) staff emerged in community consultations conducted by DADHC Metro North Region in 2005. 'Service providers reported that they were ill equipped to identify or provide an appropriate service response to clients with complex needs who had been subjected to torture and trauma.' a DADHC spokesperson explained. 'For example, they noticed that people from Vietnam and Chile, many of whom had arrived as refugees in the 1970s, were now ageing and needing access to HACC services.'

The project took place in Western Sydney, home to a large number of newly emerging refugee communities, as well as many people from refugee and refugee-like backgrounds who have settled in Australia over past decades. 'It was funded with state-wide funding because the project experience gained in this area would be transferable across NSW, wherever there are populations with similar experiences and support needs.' the DADHC spokesperson said.

Over 90 staff of non-government service providers attended six training sessions in Blacktown, Parramatta, Merrylands, Castle Hill and Penrith in September and October 2008. The project targeted those who have a high level of ongoing interpersonal contact with their clients – direct care workers, case managers, volunteers and service coordinators.

The training outlined the common elements of organised violence that people have endured as part of their refugee experience. The effects of torture and trauma on the individual and how these impacts may be compounded for those who are ageing and/or have disability were discussed. Models of recovery were introduced and participants discussed the critical importance of creating safety and building trust when working with survivor clients.

Participating organisations also received a project Resource Kit. The Kit contains information about Australia's humanitarian program, and statistics on refugee settlement in Western Sydney. It includes 'Survival and beyond' stories about the experiences of people from some of our main refugee communities. Further information about the particular impacts on ageing survivors complements training content. The Kit contains two sets of service delivery guidelines, for service coordinators and for direct care workers. The guidelines for service coordinators provide strategies, for example for handling assessments sensitively, working with family members, and supporting workers. The guidelines for care workers include tips for dealing with trauma responses, communicating well, and self-care for workers. The Kit also contains 16 case studies that provide examples based on the true experiences of HACC workers and their clients.

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A10-person Steering Committee was set up to advise the project, consisting of representatives from refugee health, migrant resource centres, multicultural disability advocacy, HACC service providers, multicultural access project coordinators, and specialist DADHC staff. Information for the project was compiled from a variety of sources, including interviews with STARTTS bi-cultural counsellors and discussions with HACC workers.

In recognition of its success the project will be extended to Northern Sydney in 2009-2010 and the Department is also considering rolling it out across the whole state in the near future.

THE HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HACC) PROGRAM

The Home and Community Care (HACC) program is an Australiawide program funded jointly by the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments. In NSW it is administered by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC).

The aim of HACC is to provide services that will assist frail aged people and people with disability to remain in their own homes, and includes support for carers. Services include personal care, domestic assistance, home modifications and maintenance, respite, day care, transport and meals. Case management and dementia support services are also available.

In NSW HACC services are provided by Home Care (run by DADHC) as well as by a number of nongovernment organisations committed to the provision of community care (including local-government-auspiced services and a number of community and church -based organisations).

In general people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have a low uptake of aged care services, mainly because older people from these communities have high expectations, which are not always able to be met, about being cared for by family members in their own homes. The HACC program is particularly appropriate for these clients who are unwilling to access residential care. But it is important for service providers to understand these issues so that they can develop strategies for increasing access to these critical services. For clients who have lived under oppressive regimes there are also issues around trust of government-provided services that need to be addressed.

CHALLENGES FOR SURVIVORS WHO ARE AGEING

Many refugees spend years busily rebuilding their lives and supporting their families, keen to put the traumas of the past behind them. Retirement comes as a period of slowing down and can often be accompanied by increased social isolation and reduced physical mobility. At this stage, with more time on their hands, the older person may face a process of delayed mourning for past losses. If the person has lost family members, this mourning may include survivor guilt, and accompanying feelings of helplessness, worthlessness and depression.

A person may also grieve the loss of a culturally valuable experience of ageing in which they would be afforded dignity and respect as a community elder with traditional models of care available to them. As a result family relationships may be stressed as these expectations cannot always be met in the new society. Family members who are carers may experience feelings of conflict and guilt.

Example:

Mrs Santiago came to Australia from Chile as a humanitarian entrant in the late 1970s. She had lost her husband and two sons in the conflict and came with her daughter Marta. When she settled in Western Sydney Mrs Santiago remained closely part of the South American community. She learnt very little English and her daughter helped her with paperwork and acted as interpreter when necessary. Mrs Santiagois now ageing and requires domestic assistance to help her stay in her own flat. Marta who is now married with a family of her own attends the HACC assessment interview. The HACC coordinator reports that Marta often answers the questions herself and the coordinator finds it difficult to find out what services Mrs Santiagoreally needs.

The domestic assistance role is assigned to Carla who speaks Spanish and is able to communicate well with Mrs SantiagoAfter several weeks Carla tells the coordinator that she is having trouble doing her work at Mrs Santiago's home. Marta is there every time she goes there and she criticises everything that Carla does saying that she has no understanding of how her mother likes things to be done.

For older survivors who are affected, the onset of dementia and associated cognitive decline can have particularly severe impacts. A decline in short term memory function can lead to the resurfacing of painful memories and increased symptoms of unresolved post traumatic stress disorder. Environmental triggers can set off flashbacks - intensely real and painful re-experiences of past traumas. These triggers are highly individual but examples of triggers that are shared by many people who have experienced torture in the past include being questioned (particularly if notes are taken), uniforms and figures of authority, confined spaces, bright lights, loud noises, certain smells, and activities such as showering or bathing, or being ushered into vehicles.

Example:

Mrs Dove, a woman in her late 70s, regularly attends a HACC-funded aged day care centre. Mrs Dove has a Russian background and was interned in a prisoner of war camp in Germany for several years during World War II.

Mrs Dove was always very placid when she was at the centre. She did not mix easily with other people but she seemed to enjoy her weekly outing.

One day, as a special activity, a 'Pets as Therapy' dog attended the centre with a trainer. The dog was a beautiful golden Labrador. As soon as Mrs Dove saw the dog enter the room she became hysterical. Staff had to remove her and then attempt to calm her down.

Other symptoms of unresolved trauma include behaviour such as the hiding and hoarding of food, linked to hunger and severe deprivation during the person's refugee experience. It is critical for service providers to understand these issues and have strategies in place for responding to their clients' needs.

Example:

Mrs Pace's village in Bosnia was destroyed in the 1990s conflict. Her husband and most of the men in the village were killed. She witnessed many atrocities at that time and she suffered starvation, illness and injury as she fled with her teenage son to a refugee camp.

Mrs Pace and her son settled in Australia in 1995. Five years ago she experienced another loss when her son died from a cerebral aneurism. Now aged 68 Mrs Pace lives alone in Western Sydney. Fearful of leaving her home and suffering from arthritis she is socially isolated, without friends or family to assist with her care.

Mrs Pace was referred for Home and Community Care (HACC) services by her GP. The HACC service coordinator visited her home for an

assessment and noted that the house was stocked with food items. The bathroom, including the bath, was stacked with biscuits; the bedroom was filled from floor to ceiling with boxes of canned food; the kitchen benches were laden with food, some of it perishable.

Sarah, a HACC worker, provides Mrs Pace with domestic assistance, including help with shopping and paying her bills. When Sarah takes her shopping, Mrs Pace still insists on buying large quantities of food, even those items that she already has a large stock of at home.

Another consequence is that the person may lose second language (i.e. English) competence. This can lead to increased social isolation. Service providers need to understand how to access and use interpreters appropriately.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Evaluations from training participants were very positive.

Typical comments were:

'Highly relevant to people working with this client group'

'I have better understanding/more awareness/am more informed about the needs of this group'.

'I think all service providers should attend this training'

According to the DADHC spokesperson 'DADHC has not conducted a follow-up study about the outcomes of the training but we would expect a number of ongoing benefits from the training'

Benefits identified by the DADHC spokesperson include:

- helping service providers to identify applicants and clients who may have experience of torture and trauma
- helping service providers to more accurately assess the support needs of applicants who have past experience of torture and trauma and tailor services to their individual needs much more effectively
- encouraging the use of interpreters during assessment, and more effective use of interpreters in general
- helping to sustain service provision for some clients when post traumatic stress results in misunderstandings between the client and direct care staff
- enhancing the ability of service managers to supervise and support staff who are providing direct care to clients in the target group
- having a valuable resource available for ongoing reference, through the Resource Kit.
- encouraging networking between HACC service providers in geographic areas where there are likely to be more refugees.

'In general' according to the HACC spokesperson, 'the project contributes to increased access to HACC services for people from CALD backgrounds generally, and refugees with torture and trauma experience in particular.'

TO VIEW THE RESOURCE KIT

The project Resource Kit is available in PDF from the STARTTS website, at **www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=355**

COMPLEMENTARY PROTECTION:
THE CHANGING FACE OF A REFUGEE

By *SARAH SCROOPE.*

In September the Migration Amendment (Complementary Protection) Bill 2009 was introduced to the Australian parliament proposing to widen the definition of a refugee. If passed, Complementary Protection will extend protection rights to include those who cannot live in their country for real fear of human rights abuses, torture and/or death.

The need to revisit the description of a refugee is timely as our current laws are based on a 50-year-old definition contained in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (and its 1967 Protocol). The Convention, developed by UNHCR, defines a refugee as a person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Owing to such fear, the person is unwilling or unable to avail themselves of the protection of their own country.

Australia is signatory to this Convention and adopted this definition into the Australian Migrant Act 1958.

Since that time the nature of armed conflict and violence has changed. The world has experienced the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Conflict between Israel and Palestine has intensified. Terrorism is shaping international and domestic politics and there has been an increase in civil unrest in many African countries. As global citizens, we are becoming more aware of what life is like for people in other countries and of international human rights issues. This proposed amendment to the Act would protect those facing persecution on grounds which fall outside the Refugee Convention but are included in other human rights treaties.

In 2008-09, the Australian government granted 13,507 Refugee and Humanitarian visas. The 10 leading source countries for offshore Refugee and Humanitarian visas were: Iraq (2,874); Burma (2,412); Afghanistan (847); Sudan (631); Bhutan (616); Ethiopia (478); Democratic Republic of Congo (463); Somalia (456); Liberia (387); and Sierra Leone (363).

While there may be similarities in the nature of the trauma suffered by these people, they have all arrived in Australia under different circumstances and are learning to deal with their personal refugee journey. Not all people seeking protection in Australia are escaping refugee camps on the other side of the world. Some have fled personal persecution and were in fear for their lives, others have been deemed stateless and are unable to go home while others are facing what can be described as the cruelest case of human rights abuse - as described below.

GRACE** (22)

Where are you from?
Kenya.

When did you arrive in Australia?
I came to Sydney last year on a tourist visa but immediately lodged an application for a protection visa so I could stay in Australia as a refugee.

Why and how did you get here?
I came to Sydney for World Youth Day in 2008 but I am too scared to return home to Kenya because I know that when I do I will be circumcised (genitally mutilated). I do not want this to happen but I know that I cannot fight it. My mother was killed because she refused and my life will be threatened if I do the same.

BEN* (29)

Where are you from?
The Democratic Republic of Congo.

When did you arrive in Australia?
Seven years ago.

Why and how did you get here?
I left Congo in 1988 and spent some time in neighboring Burundi then Kenya. In 1996, while I was studying in Kenya, war broke out in DRC and the government stated that my tribe was no longer considered part of Congo. I became stateless, lost my passport, identity and citizenship. I could not return home, yet I could not stay in Kenya as I had no valid paperwork. I spent three years in a refugee camp in Kenya waiting for UNHCR to investigate my case. I was eventually granted refugee status and was told that I was going to New Zealand. Due to some mix up I was granted a visa to Australia. Even though the war did not find me in Congo, it found me in another country and I became a refugee.

What did you leave behind?
Family, friends, connection to my tribe and a lot of history.

ALI* (32)

Where are you from?
I was born in Afghanistan, but my family moved to Pakistan when I was two years old to escape the war. My family was quite wealthy so it was easy to move and I liked growing up in Pakistan.

When did you arrive in Australia?
I came to Sydney four years ago on a refugee visa.

Why and how did you get here?
There was trouble for my family in Pakistan and we were personally targeted by local 'terrorists'. My wife and child were killed by these people so my older brother and I fled to South Africa. We stayed there for a while until the people after us in Pakistan found us again. From South Africa I applied for a refugee visa to enter Australia. It was a long journey.

What did you leave behind?
My mother. I have not seen her for four years and I am waiting until I get my Australian citizenship so I can go back and see her, although I am a little bit scared of returning. She is old and is not able to travel to Australia to see me. I also left behind my identity. I no longer use my real name, I changed it when I left Pakistan to make it harder for the people to find me.

* Names have been changed
** Adapted from an interview published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 22/09/09

FAR TO HERE:
SHINING A LIGHT ON DARFUR'S DISPLACED

ALL PHOTOS BY KABIR DHANJI

FAR TO HERE: SHINING A LIGHT ON DARFUR'S DISPLACED

How do refugees from Darfur bridge the divide between memories of conflict and loss, knowledge of ongoing violence and their homeland, and beginning a new life in Australia? How has the journey from Africa to Australia affected them? And what do they think of their new home? Far to Here is a photographic exhibition that attempts to answer some of these questions. In part one of the exhibition Kabir Dhanji documents the lives of Darfuri people who fled the conflict in Sudan and are now residing in Australia. In part two Darfuri youth capture their own experiences, photographing their day-to-day surroundings. The result is a suite of images that spans the chasms between continents, cultures and generations. *DANIELA AROCHE met the people behind the initiative, aiming to bring the Darfur conflict and its affected people out of the shadows and into the line of sight of the Australian community.

As I sit and read the Saturday edition of the Sydney Morning Herald on a sunny morning in August, lazily perusing the week's headlines, a certain statement in the World News section catches my eye – 'War is over, says Commander of Darfur mission'.

"What?" I ask. "How can this be? Over? Impossible." It was only three days ago that I attended the opening of an exhibition to highlight the plight of Darfur and its displaced people due to the war.

And yet, this is what I read: "As of today I would not say there is a war going on in Darfur." The perplexing comment comes from General Martin Luther Agwai, the outgoing military commander of the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force in the region; but his alarming statement is met by rightful resistance by JEM spokesman, Tahir el-Faki, who fires back: "I don't know how they can consider that war is over in Darfur. The war is not over. The war is over when there is a comprehensive peace agreement. They [General Agwai and Mr Adada] have taken into consideration numerical data about the number of people who died directly from violence [but] they have not taken into consideration the [internally displaced people], the refugees, the people who want to go back home."

Whatever the technical truth about the war (or lack of one) el-Faki's comments bring to light perhaps one of the most important and often overlooked aspects of the unrest in Darfur – its 2.7 million displaced citizens, some of whom have found sanctuary in Australia after having suffered unspeakable hardship and traumatic events.

According to Melissa McCullough, coordinator for the Darfur Australia Network (DAN), the situation for the people of Darfur is uncertain to say the least and the political situation in Darfur remains tenuous.

"Since the expulsion of 13 key international aid agencies from the area in March, the humanitarian situation has continued to rapidly deteriorate on the ground," she says.

"The UN has reported that these agencies were responsible for delivering up to 50% of the life-line aid in the conflict-affected parts of Darfur, and subsequently their removal has had a huge impact on the health and security of the people."

To make matters worse, the current round of peace talks in Qatar has stalled due to infighting between rebel groups and an apparent reluctance by the Sudanese Government to bring an end to the years of deadly conflict in Darfur.

The aforementioned exhibition which I recently attended is a combined effort by the Darfur Australia Network (DAN), photojournalist Kabir Dhanji and the Blender Gallery in Paddington NSW, to raise awareness of Darfur's plight and that of its innocent citizens by documenting their experiences as refugees and giving them a voice. Perhaps more importantly it reveals to the Australian people the faces and identities behind the crisis encouraging support to end the Darfur crisis.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE, FRAME BY FRAME

It's a common saying that an image speaks a thousand words and after attending this exhibition those words once again ring true.

The photos taken by Dhanji are up-close, personal and moving. The photos taken by the Darfur children themselves during a series of photography workshops organised by DAN in both Sydney and Melbourne are even more so.

The project, was conceived by Abdelhadi Matar, President of the Darfur Community Association of Australia and founder of the DAN and photographer Kabir Dhanji. It materialized from small beginnings with big intentions and an overall desire by both parties to empower the Darfur community here in Australia and garner support for the cause.

"There was a feeling that the community needed a greater exposure" says Dhanji.

The Blender Gallery has also played a part in making the exhibition possible, providing a space for the exhibition. A small printed book is also available for sale at the exhibition – a collection of the children's photographs and anecdotes from the initiative titled 'Photo-stories from young Australians'.

One of the first things I read when I opened the small book of photo-stories was the introduction written on the left-hand page which recounts the reaction to the 'Far to Here' exhibition from one of the Darfur community elders. It reads:

"Recently we were sitting with Saif, an elder in the Darfur community, when he said he couldn't understand why the 'Far to Here' exhibition focused on photographs taken in Australia – "we should go back to Darfur and take photographs of what is happening there. That is where the crisis is, not here," he said, with a hint of exasperation in his voice".

This is actually one of the first things I notice when I arrive at the exhibition. The room is filled with photographs of people who have survived and escaped the tragedy, destruction and bloodshed of the Darfur conflict, but there are no photos depicting tragedy, bloodshed or destruction such as those often seen in the media these days.

Instead the exhibition portrays the Darfur conflict from a different

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ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Kabir Dhanji, the Far to Here project co-founder is a Kenyan-born freelance photojournalist. He has worked in Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya. He has worked for the BBC (East Africa Bureau), San Francisco Chronicle, the Los Angeles Times, Le Monde, and CARE International. He has also worked on private commissions, most notably to photograph 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai, and Australia's world renowned swimming coach Forbes Carlile.

angle, displaying emotive photographs of individuals who are now refugees living in Australia.Beside each photograph stands an excerpt from a detailed interview about the subject's own personal ordeal during the conflict and how it has affected them and their families, and their experiences on the long journey to Australia and thereafter.

The reason for this, as the photo-story book explains, is that "Australians are bombarded nightly with images and words depicting death, destruction and tragedy. Too often the situation in one crisis becomes more protracted and as evidence of its complexity emerges, the pictures begin to fade from the media altogether. Darfur is a case in point. Some estimates claim that 2008 was actually the most violent year in Darfur since the international community was shocked by reports of horrific attacks in 2003. Yet media coverage and political interest has remained lukewarm."

Dhanji agrees and says that the world has become saturated with images of torture, death and destruction in Darfur and all over the world. It seems there is a shortage of real, heartfelt stories and experiences putting faces to the destruction, but these photos give the Darfur people, who have been affected by this warfare, an identity and a voice – a way to be empowered – which is exactly the motivation behind Dhanji's photographs.

"The aim of the project was to move away from the traditional images of war and conflict, to try to portray a more human and Australian element, to do something different," he says.

"It would have been all too easy to include or use photographs of war and conflict. We wanted to tell stories of hope, and of new beginnings in an attempt to establish the Darfuri community as a part of the Australian community."

However, McCullough admits that it took a lot of hard work from both DAN and their dedicated volunteers and the artist (Kabir Dhanji) to bring this project to fruition.

"It was a lot of hard work. There were constant consultations with the Darfur communities regarding the direction and scope of the project. I think that's what gave Far To Here a certain authenticity as an empowering project for Australia's Darfuris to tell their own stories of survival, journey, loss and now resilience and hope' she says.

"The creative phase entailed taking the actual portraits and conducting the one-on-one interviews with the participants to document their stories. Then the exhibition had to be printed and mounted, drafted and edited and all the promotional material had to be printed. We had to execute a marketing strategy, set up the website and conceptualise and organise the different types of opening events across Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney. Of course, the powerful images of the exhibition had to be complemented with an advocacy campaign."

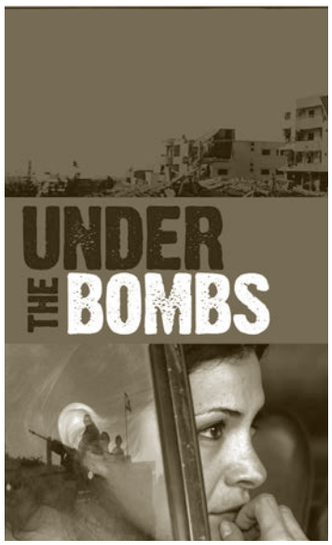
The event's aim of raising awareness of the Darfur conflict and voicing the experiences of its affected people was a success judging by the crowd which spilled onto the Paddington sidewalk outside the Blender Gallery by the end of the launch night, but there is still much work to be done.

This is DAN's second art-based awareness-raising project (the first was called "The forgotten peoples' project" and was launched in late 2007). Now that 'Far To Here' has come to a triumphant close DAN is focusing on strengthening its research and advocacy campaigns, finalising the organisation's high school education programme and ensuring more projects are in the pipeline to draw attention to the conflict in Darfur and assist refugees here in Australia.

"At all times, DAN works in partnership with the Darfuri communities of Melbourne and Sydney and so community consultations, meetings and general discussions on the political situation in Darfur are a major focus and ongoing activity for our organisation" says McCullough.

"Before the end of the year we are also looking at setting up a community soccer team to complement the other community programmes we already have running, like the Friday Women's Group in Sydney and the cooking and swimming classes in Melbourne. We will also be working towards more lobby trips to Canberra and we will continue to mark and celebrate International Refugee Day and to use this auspicious date to keep the conflict in Darfur on the media's agenda."

*Excerpt taken from the Far to Here website. To view photos from the exhibition and learn more go to: **www.fartohere.com**



FILM REVIEW: UNDER THE BOMBS

By *VINCE SICARI*

It is often the innocent who die in war. It is the children whose lives are blighted by it. In July 2006, when Israel invaded Lebanon, it was the 20-year-old Israeli soldier, Uri Grossman who died in a war that should never have happened. Not many people would remember Uri, except that his father, Israeli author David Grossman, was such a vocal anti-war campaigner.

The 2006 Israeli-Lebanese war polarised world opinion. In the eyes of many, the war was a disproportional response by Israel to the Hezbollah's attacks. As a result of a border skirmish with Hezbollah, thousands of lives were lost or diminished. Over a million Lebanese civilians and well over half a million Israelis were displaced by this futile conflict. It is estimated that up to 22 percent of Lebanon's GDP was lost in the damage to the infrastructure that resulted from the bombing. Many roads, bridges, port facilities, Beirut airport and a major power station were damaged during the war. An unknown number of houses and other buildings were also destroyed or damaged.

The film Under the Bombs is not only about that war. It is more than that. It is about a love story. It is the story about the way people's lives are disrupted by the tragedy of human conflict. But in dealing with this love story, director Philip Aractingi presents us with so many other tragic lives. What is different about this movie is that many of the actors are not actors at all. They are real people caught in real situations. Aractingi skilfully stitches their plights into the fictional story of love.

The story is real enough. Many were the women who searched for lost children or relatives. The film is about Zeina, played beautifully by Nada Obou Farhat, who we see searching for her lost, beloved son. It is the apparently cynical, taxi driver, Tony, played by Georges Kabbaz, who takes her, and us, on her tragic journey of discovery. On this journey we meet the real people who were caught in a real war. We meet those who paid the price of a war declared by politicians bent on enhancing their positions with their electors. These are the people we saw in the snippets of news during that terrible July. These are the mothers without sons, fathers without daughters; these are the children without parents.

For me, it was the initial real-life footage of the bombing of a Lebanese village that brought to life the monster that is war. The modern technology used in war was brutally apparent in the pictures of a village dwarfed by the massive explosions, caused by modern military hardware. We are next presented by footage of the chaos that follows such explosions: elderly men, women and children running in fear, but not knowing where to hide, children in panic crying and parents with hollow eyes screaming.

Zeina is not one of these fleeing, terrified people. The viewpoint she presents us with is one that is all too common in war. It is one that we can easily identify with. She is a well-off, well-dressed modern woman. She lands in Beirut from Abu Dhabi. She is looking for her son that was left in the care of sister. We accompany her in her terrifying journey through war-torn southern Lebanon. Tony, the taxi driver who takes her on this journey, initially appears to be a hardened campaigner, but slowly we start to see the humanity in him. He is also a casualty of war.

The landscapes they journey through are horrific reminders of the destructive power of modern weaponry: roads and bridges collapsed by the pin-pointed accuracy of guided missiles; housing complexes turned into heaps of smouldering rubble. For Zeina this is both, a physical journey and an inner journey. Who is this woman who lands in Lebanon from Abu Dhabi? In her case too we see how the horror of what she is presented with slowly changes her.

Aractingi, subtly reflects her inner change with her changing appearance. Zeina goes from a well-dressed, modern woman to a tormented, even tortured, soul, dressed in black to reflect the suffering of the world she finds herself in.

In many ways this war will be remembered as the war that should never have happened and that could not be stopped. It seemed to me that everyone was crying out for a halt in hostilities. Diplomats travelled to Israel and Lebanon. Important meetings were held, all to no avail. Something or someone wanted the conflict to continue regardless of the suffering. Some sinister purpose seemed to be served. Some more human sacrifice was needed by the greedy monster of war.

In the end, the casualties were counted in their thousands, Lebanese and Israeli alike. But we are victims too. I grieved at the loss of so many lives; we grieved at so much wanton destruction. The children of Lebanon are my children too. In a way it was my son who died when Uri died.

EVENT:
REFUGEE BALL

In early November, Friends of STARTTS held the inaugural Refugee Ball at the Dockside Balcony Room in Darling Harbour. Two-hundred and thirty guests from refugee community leaders to politicians and advocates enjoyed a variety of speeches and entertainment on the evening.

Speakers included Amnesty International's Graham Thom (AIA); the Refugee Council's Paul Power; volunteer, court registrar and humanitarian award winner Dinh Tran; and the Hon. Laurie Ferguson, Parliamentary Secretary for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.

Entertainment was provided by the mixed African gospel a cappella group Pambazuka, Capoeira Angola expert Mestre Roxinho and his group, and Samba Mundi.

STARTTS and Friends of STARTTS thank all the volunteers and sponsors who helped make the evening possible particularly ACL, ALIV, GCL Migration, Hardys, the NSW Police Force, Rambutan and Wow Limousines. Final funds raised on the evening are still being tallied.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A publication of the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS).

Refugee Transitions exists to report on a wide range of refugee and human rights issues of relevance to the work of STARTTS. It aims to:

- Focus attention on the impact of organised violence and human rights abuses on health.
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