Strengthening the Congolese Community: Background, Resettlement, and Treatment

presented by
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LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Democratic Republic of Congo

Presented by Dr. Thomas Turner
Fishing in Congo

Don’t push, there’s enough for everyone
HALTE AU FÉMICIDE AU KIVU
40 femmes violées par jour ...
Murder of human rights defender

Pascal Kabungulu of Héritiers de la Justice and the Ligue des Droits de l’Homme dans la région des Grands Lacs (LDGL) was murdered at his house in Bukavu in 2004. Despite a farcical trial, most observers believe this crime remains unpunished.
Rwanda-Kivu (Rwandan version)
Rwanda-Kivu (Free State map)
Situation 2008-2012

Dark brown = CNDP area of control/influence, mid-2006
Grey = CNDP area, end of 2008
Tan = M23 area of control/influence October 2012
Congo Free State (1885-1908)
Colonie belge
Lumumba speech
Martyrdom of Lumumba
Police violence
Rebel candidate
North Kivu (1)

• Masisi — pre-colonial, majority = Hunde
  – also, some Tutsi/Gogwe pastoralists, living without Hutu

• 1930s, “Mission d’Immigration des Banyarwanda” — bring in “useful” labor for European farms (Hutu)— agreement signed by Mwami of Rwanda and Mwami of Hunde chiefdom
  – Rwanda king tries to send in lots of Tutsi (with cows)
  – Belgians intervene to make sure more Hutu come (but they are placed under a Tutsi chief, sent from Rwanda)
  – by end of colonial period, when Chefferie Gishari dissolved, Rwandophones outnumber Hunde in Hunde homeland

• — 1959 and thereafter, refugees from Rwanda, mainly Tutsi
North Kivu (2)

- Rutshuru — Hunde (in Bwito Chefferie, west of the park)
  - majority Rwandophones, mainly Hutu.
  - Tutsi esp. in former Jomba chefferie. Consider themselves “Banyanduga” (people of core of Rwanda, around Nyanza) as opposed to “Gogwe”.

- Banyabwisha, mainly Hutu; Ndeze, first chief of small chefferie, supposedly a cook for the Europeans. Story told esp. by Tutsi, to stress that he was a “commoner” and not really entitled to be Mwami.

- Recently, new Mwami Ndeze crowned. His brother, who had been interim chief, showed up in the M23 delegation in Uganda, perhaps to show Hutu support for the rebels.

- City of Goma, majority Rwandophone.
South Kivu (1)

• a) Banyamulenge

• — name adopted in 1960s, to distinguish themselves from refugees of 1959 and thereafter

• — core of Banyamulenge = Tutsi pastoralists, most of whom trace origins back to Rwanda
• — minority trace origins back to Burundi

• “Kinyamulenge” = dialect of Kinyarwanda, with some words from Kirundi and Kibembe (Kinyarwanda-Kirundi-Kiha = one language, with 3 standardized versions)

• — “Banyavyura” apparent extension of the Banyamulenge, who have moved south along the high plateau to northern Katanga. Some of them fled to Tanzania, following attacks by neighbors. Attempts to resettle them in Katanga met with hostile reception.
b) Others, found especially in towns (Uvira, Bukavu, Minova) and on Ijwi Island

— most of these came in 1959 or thereafter
— no distinctive name covers these others

NB Banyamulenge all claim to be Tutsi, “others” may include Hutu as well.
Working with Refugees from the DRC: Insights for Preparation
Overview of Presentation

• Resettlement of Congolese in the US: where are they from? where are they going?
• Relevant demographics/background
• Areas of concern from current refugee resettlement service providers
• Promising practices / recommendations
Some background

• Request for RCUSA to prepare a White Paper
  – Survey responses from 43 local offices
  – RSC Africa data
  – Interviews with UNHCR & NGOs in Rwanda
  – Input from other RCUSA members
  – Findings shared Feb 2013 with PRM, ORR and resettlement agencies

• PRM and ORR convened new Working Group in March 2013; meetings Sept 2013, Jan 2014
White Paper Recommendations to Resettlement Agencies

• Increase capacity for mental health screenings and referrals
• Expand community orientation sections on home hygiene, job readiness and financial literacy
• School enrichment programs for children and youth
• Collaborate with EBCOs and MAAs where appropriate
• Keep local government partners informed about refugee arrivals, and share lessons relevant to assisting Congolese refugees
DRC Refugee Arrivals to U.S.

D.R. Congo Arrivals by Fiscal Year

![Graph showing DRC Refugee Arrivals by Fiscal Year](image-url)
Geographical Distribution in US

Refugees

- Texas: 1,200
- Kentucky: 500
- Arizona: 400
- New York: 300
- Colorado: 200
- Georgia: 150
- Idaho: 100
- Michigan: 80
- North Carolina: 60
- California: 40
Geographic Distribution by City

Refugees

- Houston
- Phoenix
- Lexington
- Denver
- Boise
- Fort Worth
- Grand Rapids
- Buffalo
- San Antonio
- Portland, OR

The chart shows the distribution of refugees by city, with Houston having the highest number, followed by Phoenix, Lexington, and so on.
Map of DRC
Map of Rwanda
Languages Spoken & Religion

- Common languages in current pipeline,
  - Kinyarwanda 42%
  - Kiswahili 34%
  - Lingala and French 4%
  - Other 20%

- Christian 90%
  - Seventh Day Adventist 25%
  - Pentecostals 22%
  - Catholics 14%

- Muslim 3%
Education

- 27% in overseas pipeline have some competency in spoken English
- Around 30-35% of recent arrivals have completed secondary school
- Only 18% of current Congolese applicants have completed secondary school
Housing

• Key issues raised by affiliates in the survey:
  – Large family sizes & finding accommodations
  – Home hygiene
  – Managing housing expenses

Shelter in Kiziba Camp, Rwanda
Physical Health

• FY 08-FY 12: 20-26% of arrivals were medical cases
  – Current pipeline: 32% (includes first 1,000 P2 cases)

• 38 of 43 affiliates noted health issues, such as:
  – Arthritis
  – Gynecological problems, including from FGM
  – Dental
  – Vision
  – HIV
Mental Health

• “Trauma”, “Rape” or “Violence” mentioned by 35 of affiliate responses

• Extremely limited access to mental health care for refugees overseas

• Needs for developing early/quick assessments, and for linking clients to services
Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence

- Conflict in DRC notorious for high levels of SGBV
- Women and Girls are increasing as percentage of arrivals: from 39% in FY 08 to 51% in FY 12

Members of women’s group in Kigeme Camp, Rwanda
Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence

• Risks faced in refugee camps
  – Abusive or coercive relationships
  – Travel outside camps for work, firewood

Collecting Firewood in Kiziba camp, Rwanda
Children and Youth

54% of overseas pipeline are 17 years old or younger; additional 17% between 18-25 years old

- Limited access to education in refugee camps, particularly secondary school
  - Education gaps for arriving school-age children
  - Employable-age youth with hopes to complete school
School Buildings in Kiziba camp, Rwanda
Serving a Young Population

Observation

• Behavior issues such as stealing, hording items, biting, teenage bedwetting, gang involvement, bullying, teenage girls involved with older men.
• Malnutrition, disabilities affecting mobility

Implication

• Increased psycho-social support needed in public schools
• Youth programs such as soccer leagues
• Need for Parenting classes
• Need for Employment and ESL programs for parents
Promising Practices

• Developed capacity for Swahili and Kinyarwanda interpretation
• Close coordination with local resettlement agency
• Early rapid mental health assessment for timely referral
• Therapies tailored for survivors of SGBV
• Alternatives to talk therapy
• Mobilization around schools/youth
• Additional social supports for single women
• Others?
Questions?

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“Rien n’est facile, mais tout est possible.”

Psychological Treatment with Congolese Survivors of Torture

Hawthorne E. Smith, Ph.D.
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture
Extreme Challenges Experienced by Congolese Survivors and Refugees

• Multiple losses

• Ongoing effects of recurrent/reinforcing trauma

  • Social dislocation; war; trauma; torture; internally displaced in home country; flight and relocation in neighboring country; refugee camps; immigration processing; resettlement in USA

• Individuals will respond to these stressors in different ways
Common Reactions to Torture and Refugee Trauma

Cognitive

Physical

Emotional

Behavioral
Spheres of Marginalization

- Educational Functioning
- Social Service Provision (logistical/financial)
- Legal Advocacy
- Vocational/Professional
- Social Functioning
Trauma-Informed Approach to Service Provision

• Safety

• Empowerment

“It does not have to be therapy to be therapeutic.”
Culturally Syntonic Interventions

Tangible benefits – to facilitate engagement

Interdisciplinary approach

The importance of “family”
The Learning Curve Continues...

- Utilizing the experiences and insights of our clients
- Learning from the successes and challenges of other programs’ interventions

Wisdom, Courage, Hope
For more technical assistance information, please contact:

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In partnership with Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma (HPRT) and the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture, National Partnership for Community Training (NPCT), is a program of Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services.