



With you

News of the help that together we're bringing to refugees

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Children on the Run

Recent UNHCR report finds alarming trends



It's a troubling new trend – and it's happening close to home.

Since 2009, UNHCR has been registering an increasing number of children and adult asylum-seekers, notably from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala – countries where crime and violence have escalated dramatically in recent years.

With the rising numbers of registrants come concerns of having inadequate international protection, which is vital for these children and adults. What's more, a vast number of Mexican children have been arriving at the southern US border.

After a day or two being held in US custody, most children were promptly returned to Mexico. Their needs remain virtually

invisible to social and legal services providers because they never had the chance to meet the children to begin with.

UNHCR Washington undertook an extensive study to examine the reasons why these four Latin American countries are producing such high numbers of displaced children. Researchers interviewed 404 children who arrived to the United States, during or after October 2011 and analyzed their responses to answer the following two questions: *Why are these children leaving their countries of origin? Are any of these children in need of international protection?*

At least 58% of the children interviewed were forcibly displaced. They suffered or faced very legitimate harms, indicating a need for international protection. Two patterns of harm emerged: violence by organized armed criminals, and violence in the home.

One of the children expressed how he managed to flee. *"They (the gangs) wanted to kill me and some other people. They wanted me to give them money. Then they tied me and my cousin up for three hours, but we helped each other untie the ropes. We heard gun shots and we ran. They kept looking for us but we escaped."*

This frightening recollection – and other compelling testimonials collected – demonstrates

unequivocally that many of these displaced children face grave danger, if they remain in their countries of origin.

**At least 58%
of the children
interviewed were
forcibly displaced.**

With your help, UNHCR will persevere in its work to ensure these children are carefully screened and provided the necessary protection. To learn more about the report's findings, please go to <http://unhcr.ca/news/2014-03-12a.htm>

A War They Cannot Forget

"It's like someone has stabbed me with a knife..."

They have witnessed unspeakable horror.

Most Syrian refugee children will struggle for the rest of their lives with the atrocities they have witnessed.

During registration interviews in Tyre, Lebanon, two UNHCR registration assistants, Tatiana Nassar and Therese Sarkis, invite children to draw. Both women have backgrounds in psychology. Every day, they see at least one or two children they can identify with acute distress or depression.

Children as young as four and five draw graphic images of guns and bloodshed, revealing horrible memories that cannot be suppressed.

While some Syrian children have endured physical injury, very few have escaped the psychological wounds that come from living in the midst of a war.

Over the past nine months, Sheeraz Mukhaimer, who works with one of our partners, International Medical Corps (IMC) in Jordan, has worked with more than 90 Syrian refugee children. She recounts that a number of children have not only seen their family members killed before their own eyes, but they have then helped to move and bury them.

"This is impossible to forget," says 15-year-old Taha, who saw seven corpses lying on the ground near his home in Damascus, Syria. *"It is like someone has stabbed me with a knife when I remember."*

UN agencies and partners provide psychosocial support to refugee children in Jordan and Lebanon, such as individual and family counselling and recreational activities at registration centres.

There is a serious gap in the availability of state-run mental health services and the thousands of children who need help rebuilding their lives.

It is said that *"time heals all wounds."* For these children of war – forced from their homes and victims of unspeakable loss – time alone will not be enough to heal their trauma.

With your support to UNHCR, we can provide more time and space in safe and controlled environments. **Please help these children of war begin the healing process.**



We asked Syrian refugee children in Za'atari refugee camp, Jordan, to draw two pictures: life in Syria and life now as a refugee. Watch the video online at www.unhcr.ca/syria/video



An 11-year-old girl drew this picture while she and her family were registering with UNHCR at the registration centre in Tyre, Lebanon. It portrays an attack on her neighbourhood in Syria in which she lost many friends and neighbours. The text says "Shame, shame, people are killing with tanks." The arrow from the woman in purple points to the word "blood."

Secondary Education: “The Ticket to Leadership”

The Morneau Shepell Secondary School for Girls, Kakuma Refugee Camp*



© UNHCR

The dream is finally a reality.

This past January, one of the largest refugee camps in Africa became home to the Morneau Shepell Secondary School for Girls — envisioned and funded by one of Canada’s leading human resources consulting firms.

Since 2011, UNHCR has been partnering with Morneau Shepell to respond to the high demand for girls’ secondary education in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya.

Thanks to Morneau Shepell and the generosity of its employees across the organization, the school has come to fruition with 170 girls currently enrolled.

Refugee enrollment in primary school is approximately 76% in Kakuma, but the numbers get worse at the secondary level, where it drops to about 36%. Very few of the secondary students are female.

“Girls are at a particular disadvantage,” says Bill Morneau, Executive Chairman. “Where the Kakuma

camp is located, only 5 girls are enrolled in school for every 10 boys.”

Thus, the new high school will bridge this gender gap, while providing quality education for girls and a sense of integration in the host community.

On a recent visit to Kakuma in February, Mr. Morneau addressed the students at the indoor ceremony to commemorate the secondary school’s opening, referring to the number of Canadian women working at his firm (more than 50%) and in leadership roles, as examples of how education can be “the ticket to leadership” in the community.



© UNHCR

Morneau Shepell secondary students on their way to class.

“I have a lot of respect for these girls,” says UNHCR fundraiser Tara Graham, “because they’re the leaders of the future – even though some of them may not realize it at the moment. Equipping them with secondary education will build confidence and increase their potential to lead by example, in whichever capacity they choose.”

As the Morneau Shepell partnership continues with UNHCR, the secondary school in 2015 will run at full capacity to accommodate 250 girls.

UNHCR is grateful to Morneau Shepell for its vision and outstanding commitment to education in Kakuma. They are a prime example of how Canada’s business community can make a difference on an international scale.



© UNHCR

Morneau Shepell’s Executive Chairman, Bill Morneau (far left) speaking with one of the students attending the Morneau Shepell Secondary School for Girls.

*With an estimated 140,000 refugees, Kakuma refugee camp comprises of 18 nationalities. Somali and South Sudanese refugees account for more than 76% of the total camp population.

If you teach them, they will paint!

A success story of Bhutanese refugees in Canada

Moving from a refugee camp to a new country has its challenges, including finding a place to live.

UNHCR recently partnered with the Canadian government, as well as a number of organizations across the country to alleviate the problem. The pilot project, *"A Path to Home,"* is currently overseen by the YMCA Greater Toronto and helps vulnerable newcomers, who are often overwhelmed by the difficult task of finding a home.

Families chosen to participate are ones who are really struggling. They face language barriers, have no Canadian work experience and cannot afford rent. Since the project launch, organizations in Edmonton, Toronto and Fredericton have implemented the program with positive results – and some surprising developments.

With the support of UNHCR and Home Depot, the Multicultural Association of Fredericton took the initial concept one step further and organized workshops for the newcomers – in home maintenance and painting.

Although the workshops were never meant as employment training sessions, the skills acquired impressed the community. Nari, a 21-year-old, who spent 16 years in a refugee camp in Nepal, proved



(December 2013) – Painting workshop delivered by Home Depot for newcomers to Canada at the Multicultural Association of Fredericton.

herself an adept painter and was hired locally, immediately after the workshop.

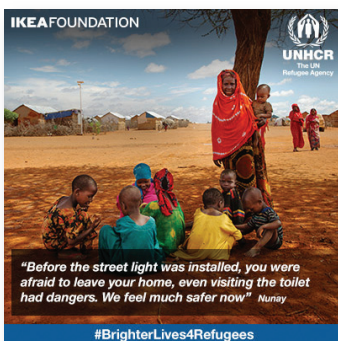
"I never expected it," she says. "Please come to my house and paint they said. I was like, are you sure? I was so happy. I am so happy."

Since its inception, *"A Path to Home"* has surpassed all expectations. In Fredericton, the workshops have led to employment for some. All ten participating refugee families have found a place to call home.

Based on the recent success of the pilot project in all three cities, the Canadian government has decided to extend funding for *"A Path to Home"* for one more year. Your generosity to UNHCR, in collaboration with our partners, will help make a positive difference for other newcomers to Canada who want to lead independent and productive lives.

IKEA and UNHCR Partner to Create

#BrighterLives4Refugees



On February 3, IKEA and the IKEA Foundation launched its "Brighter Lives for Refugees" campaign in 43 countries, including Canada. Campaign goals were to raise awareness about UNHCR by engaging IKEA customers, co-workers

and the general public about the importance of having light and energy for everyday living and in refugee camps.

For every LED light bulb sold globally between the start of the campaign to March 29, the IKEA Foundation will donate \$1.50 to UNHCR. Funds raised will help improve light and energy sources, as well as help provide access to primary education in

refugee camps in Ethiopia, Chad, Bangladesh and Jordan.

The absence or lack of light after sunset can have a devastating effect on safety and security for refugees. Simple activities, such as visiting the toilet, collecting water or returning to the shelter from elsewhere, can become difficult and dangerous, particularly for women and girls.

If you recently purchased an LED light bulb from IKEA, we thank you!



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