



WOMEN'S COMMISSION FACT SHEET

WHY WE'RE HERE

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children was founded in 1989 to address the problems faced by refugees and internally displaced people.

- Four out of five of the world's 35 million refugees are women, children and young people.
- Children and young people make up approximately 50 percent of all refugees.
- Women and adolescent girls in refugee settings are especially vulnerable to exploitation, rape and abuse.
- Children and young people often miss out on years of education. They are the targets of abuse, military recruitment and abduction.
- Women, children and young people who flee persecution and human rights abuses by seeking asylum in the U.S. are often imprisoned, subjected to inhumane conditions and denied access to legal representation.

WHAT WE DO

We work in consultation with refugee women, children and young people to ensure that their voices are heard. We seek solutions to seemingly intractable problems by:

- Assessing and monitoring the situation of refugee women, children and young people through research, field visits and consultation;
- Identifying and documenting the widely overlooked problems and issues that affect refugee women, children and young people;
- Developing and promoting policies and practices that will lead to real on-the-ground change by advocating to policy makers, key organizations, donors and the public to ensure their implementation.

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Our work contributes to long-term solutions for this vulnerable population of refugee women, children and young people. For example:

- After gaining unprecedented access to U.S. detention centers where families seeking asylum are held, we issued a report in 2007 on the appalling conditions at a former prison in Texas. The Department of Homeland Security has implemented many of our recommended changes.
- We were the first organization to undertake an in-depth investigation into the dangers of rape and other sexual violence that refugee women and girls face when they collect firewood.
- Our groundbreaking 2004 *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies* made the compelling case for uninterrupted education for children and young people in conflict and emergency situations. In 2007 we released an innovative human rights booklet, *The Right to Education During Displacement*, to help refugees advocate for the right to education.

WHO WE ARE

- The Women's Commission has a staff of 30. Our staff and board include former refugees.
- We are supported by private donations from individuals and grants from foundations, corporations, the United Nations and governments.
- The Women's Commission is affiliated with and is legally part of the International Rescue Committee, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, but does not receive direct financial support from the IRC.