

## Afghan Refugee Children Surviving on the Streets in Pakistan

**M**asood left Afghanistan five years ago, when he was twelve. After his father lost his job, he was sent to Pakistan to earn money to send back home to his father and two younger sisters. His mother had died when he was young. Masood lives in Peshawar, Pakistan, and has not been in communication with his family since he left home. He works in a bakery by day, and sleeps there at night, as the night watchman. His meager earnings keep him alive, but he cannot send anything home.

Masood is one of the thousands of “invisible” Afghan refugee children living on the streets or in marginal conditions in Pakistani cities.

Afghan refugees in urban areas have traditionally received less official attention from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other groups than those living in camps. UNHCR has long believed itself to be prohibited from providing services to refugees in urban areas, and has relied heavily on local and international NGOs, whose efforts have been far from complete or coordinated in Pakistan.

Because they are not receiving assistance or protection  
*(continued on page 5)*

## Afghan Women's Fund Responds to Critical Needs

**T**he Afghan Women's Fund, which was launched by the Women's Commission in October, has raised more than \$115,000 to date. The Fund was created to support Afghan women's groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan as they respond to the critical humanitarian needs of Afghan refugee women. The Women's Commission is distributing grants according to a set of criteria and provides technical assistance to the groups to ensure coordination and monitoring of projects.

The Church of the Redeemer in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, gave over \$10,000, raised through its Christmas offering. The Rector of the church wrote: “The terrible events of 2001 in particular drew our attention to the needs of those far away whose situation demands help from any and all compassionate people. ... Our gift gives substance to our heartfelt compassion. ... May 2002 be a year of change from fury and bloodshed to one of healing and understanding.”

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## Robbed of Everything: Colombia's Displaced Struggle to Survive



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Displaced children in Colombia are often deprived of education, health care and even food.

**A**t a time when United States attention is riveted on the war in Afghanistan, a political and humanitarian crisis of massive dimensions is at hand in our own hemisphere. Just three hours southwest of Miami, Colombia has been ripped apart for decades by unchecked violence.

Over two million Colombians (of a total population of 40 million) have been forcibly displaced from rural communities as the Colombian armed forces wage war against large, narcotrade-financed guerrilla forces. Added into this lethal mix are brutal terror campaigns perpetrated by narcotrade-financed paramilitary forces, which claim that their scorched-earth atrocities are necessary to defend the state. Little has been done for the victims of war and terrorism either within Colombian society or by the international community.

The displaced, who once led productive lives, have been robbed of everything, often fleeing violence as their villages burn and the bodies of their husbands and brothers are hacked to pieces. Girls and women, who are routinely abducted and exploited, must fend for themselves. The displaced struggle for a meager exist-

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## Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

An independent organization formed with the assistance of the International Rescue Committee to advocate for the solution of problems affecting refugee women and children.

122 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10168-1289

tel. 212. 551. 3111 or 3088  
fax. 212. 551. 3180

wcrwc@womenscommission.org  
www.womenscommission.org

Mary Diaz  
*Executive Director*

Maha Muna  
*Deputy Director*

Ellen Jorgensen  
*Director of Development*

Sandra Krause  
*Director, Reproductive Health Project*

Jane Lowicki  
*Senior Coordinator,  
Children and Adolescents Project*

Diana Quick  
*Director of Communications*

Wendy Young  
*Director of Government Relations and  
US Programs*



## Jamila

“We remember a time when women were doctors, lawyers and judges,” Jamila, director of the Pakistani-based Afghan Women’s Welfare Department (AWWD), told a UN Security Council meeting in October.

“Tap our networks that reach and assist women and their families. Women must be included in any peace building efforts to ensure peace and lasting security,” she continued.

Since 1994, Jamila has turned cash donations from the World Food Program (WFP) and other contributors into literacy, health and income generation projects. Those projects still operate in several Pakistani refugee camps, including the Nasir Bagh and New Shamshatoo camps.

AWWD is one of many nongovernmental organizations in Pakistan serving Afghan refugee women and children who have fled Afghanistan’s rugged, mine-infested landscape into Pakistan. As women and children refugees poured across the border, AWWD continued to absorb women into computer courses, English language classes, income generation programs (candle and soap making) and public health programs.

Today, Jamila is highly optimistic that UN peacekeeping forces will allow many NGOs, including her own, to open first-time and shuttered offices in Kabul.

“We hope peace will come,” she said.

AWWD is pursuing donors to open and support literacy programs and income generating programs in Kabul and surrounding rural areas.

Jamila also serves on the executive committee of the Afghan Women’s Network (AWN), a loose network of about 300 Afghan organizations and professional women living around the globe. Much of any new money would be slated to fund small-scale agricultural programs that stimulate self-sufficiency and trade.

“Most people have farms, and we can provide them with poultry and cows,” she said, adding that refugees are not “accepted” in Pakistan and need a promising life to return to in Afghanistan.

Jamila was well educated before the Soviet invasion disrupted schooling and Taliban laws put an end to education for girls and women. The World Bank estimates 78.1 percent of Afghan women and 48.1 percent of Afghan men are illiterate. With those figures hanging heavy over her—Jamila holds a degree in mathematics from the University of Kabul—she must decide when it would be best for her to return to Afghanistan to foster more literacy programs.

“If peace comes, and life is protected, I think I will be the first to go back to Afghanistan,” Jamila said. “But the Mujahadeen are the same as the Taliban, and I don’t feel secure.”

Reports from the Pakistani government suggest that fleeing Taliban combatants have settled in its northwestern territories, making it a less than perfect resettlement choice for a woman known for her work with refugee women. But Jamila returned to Peshawar, Pakistan several weeks ago to see her family and continue her work.

“I want to see my family, I miss them,” she said before leaving.

## Sadoozi Panah



Sadoozi Panah's most prominent memory of the Pakistani refugee camps and life inside Afghanistan is of women trading blood to buy flour. In Kabul, women can make anywhere from 400,000 to 500,000 afghani—enough money to buy one sack of flour—by selling their blood.

“Women went through all this pain just to provide food to their families,” Sadoozi said. “I have a pain in my head when I see this.”

Today, Sadoozi's mission is to empower women by providing them with more options.

“I had great hopes for my future as a girl,” she said. “But then my life was shattered when I was 15 years old.”

In the beginning stages of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan three rockets hit Sadoozi's house in one day. “I did not think I would live to see another day,” she said.

However, she remained in Kabul and graduated from Kabul Polytechnic Institute, where she taught civil engineering for three years.

In 1995, with help from the WFP, Sadoozi hung out a shingle for the Women's Development Program for Afghanistan (WDPA) in Kabul.

But as the Taliban gathered power in urban areas, Sadoozi was faced with increasing difficulties.

“The Taliban came and said ‘Why you work with man in office?’ I had to leave or risk my life.”

Several days later the Taliban closed Sadoozi's offices and she fled to Pakistan where she re-opened offices in Peshawar, Pakistan.

Since then, about 1,600 women in Pakistan's Chitral refugee camp have benefited from income generation projects (carpet weaving, kilim weaving), health care education, and literacy and handicraft projects, under Sadoozi's direction and funded in part by the

International Rescue Committee (IRC). Today, WDPA is partnering with the IRC to continue these projects.

“In the past there wasn't any work done for the women,” Sadoozi said, adding that frequent visits from government administrators to the Chitral camp, and help from the IRC, have created a secure atmosphere for women.

In 2001, under Sadoozi's direction, the WDPA opened eight all-women staffed bakeries in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Money from the WFP was used to train women in six-month cycles, rotating them back into their homes and communities with equipment to continue baking. There were additional benefits as well.

“After women finish work they study the alphabet of their own languages,” Sadoozi said.

The proceeds from the sale of the bread cycles back into the project, which still operates in Jalalabad today.

WDPA also works with the IRC to provide emergency relief and literacy projects with the Pakistan-based Kuram Agency, Akhora Khatak camp and New Shamshatoo camp.

But WDPA's work across the border in Afghanistan remains tenuous. The unstable situation, warring factions and the psychosocial effects of the United States' ongoing retaliation against the Taliban and Al Qaeda network, are of concern.

Sadoozi also fears returning to Pakistan to continue her work in the refugee camps. She is staying with friends here in the United States, without an income.

But going without money is nothing new to Sadoozi. For most of her tenure she voluntarily refused a teaching income in Afghanistan and several Pakistani universities.

“My salary was given to students to buy notebooks, books and pens,” Sadoozi said. ❖

## Afghan Women's Fund

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The Open Society Institute matched its employees' donations 5:1, for a total of over \$40,000. The American Friends Service Committee gave \$20,000, and students at Brooklyn New School/Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies and Grace Church School, both in New York, also made contributions. The rest is from individuals, with gifts small and large (ranging from \$18 to \$6,000).

The Fund is supporting five projects to date, which are providing literacy training, supporting urban refugees, setting up sewing centers and rehabilitating a hospital to cater to poor Afghan women and children.

The needs of Afghan women and their families remain huge. “When I visited Bajur camp, families of up to eight people were living in tents that were 10' x 20',” says Maha Muna, Women's Commission deputy director, who visited Pakistan in December. “Ten thousand new refugees have arrived in the camp since September 11. In Old Bagzai camp, the people are so poor they don't even have kettles to make tea or skillets to make bread. Some of the women and children are extremely malnourished.”

The Fund is still accepting contributions—you can give online at [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org), or contact Ramina Johal at 212.551.3029, [ramina@womenscommission.org](mailto:ramina@womenscommission.org). ❖

“I have often heard that Afghan women are not political. That peace and security is man’s work,” Jamila told Security Council Ambassadors. “I am here to challenge that illusion. For the last 20 years of my life, the leadership of men has only brought war and suffering. I am a woman fighting for education. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, that is politics.”

Jamila, head of one of many Afghan women’s organizations active in providing refugee aid in Peshawar, Pakistan, was one of three refugee women who testified before the United Nations Security Council on October 30, 2001 about how war has shattered women’s lives. She, along with women from Kosovo and East Timor, called for an active role for women in the UN’s primary mandate of bringing peace and security to conflict areas.

In what will, we hope, become an annual event, Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 (2000), was celebrated, but also put to the test by women around the world. The Women’s Commission, as part of the NGO Working Group on Women, International Peace and Security, advocated for passage of SCR 1325 in October 2000 and monitored implementation of the resolution over the past year. The NGO statement, read by Women’s Commission deputy director Maha Muna, highlights some important milestones that have occurred one year on:

- The United Kingdom Department for International Development and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have developed gender awareness guidelines and training materials. Member states, especially troop contributing countries and international organizations, should make use of these resources, which will be on line at [www.genderandpeacekeeping.org](http://www.genderandpeacekeeping.org).
- In East Timor, the UN gender unit has achieved groundbreaking results and is a model for all future gender units in peacekeeping operations. These field units would ideally be supported by a gender unit in the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations. One of the results of the UN Transition Authority in East Timor is that women are now represented in the East Timor Public Administration at unprecedented levels.
- In mission visits to Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone, the Security Council met with women’s organizations and reported their findings to the UN Secretary-General.

Today, as women in Afghanistan fight for their rightful role in a post-war society, SCR 1325 is being put to the test. Similarly, the resolution applies to Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other conflict-torn countries, which are outside the media limelight, but

where women struggle daily against the violence of war.

The resolution broke new ground by tying issues of human rights and refugee protection with the essential, yet neglected imperative that women actively inform and participate in decisions that affect their lives and at all levels of peace building. The resolution calls for full participation of women in peace negotiations, enhanced protection for women and girls during war, for greater gender awareness by peace-keeping forces and for gender equity within the UN system.

There is much work to be done to realize the full potential of SCR 1325. The President of the Security Council, the Foreign Minister of Ireland, acknowledged one shortfall. In a press release after the Security Council briefing, he said, “There [are] still no women appointed as special representatives or special envoys of the Secretary-General to peace missions.” The NGO Working Group brought other concerns to the council’s attention:

- NGOs are not satisfied that Secretary-General’s reports received by the Security Council contain adequate information on the situation of women in the field or gender-disaggregated data, as called for by 1325.
- In the context of the Secretary-General’s report on Conflict Prevention common gender-based indicators for early warning and response procedures must be developed.
- Peacekeepers continue to violate human rights. The Secretary-General should establish uniform procedures and disciplinary measures for these violations.
- There are increasing numbers of NGOs in the field at risk, and women on their staff are more at risk of rape and sexual violence. Peacekeeping operations must be mandated to do a better job of ensuring their safety.

The briefing was well attended by Security Council members who were clearly engaged and demonstrated their commitment to the resolution in insightful questions and comments after the briefing.

“My dream is peace throughout the world,” 14-year-old Kosovar refugee Haxhere Veseli told the council during her testimony. Speaking about the horrors of war that so many adolescent girls endure, she made a heartfelt plea that left few dry eyes in the room, “I do not want the next generation of youth in the world to ever experience the fear and inequality so many in Kosovo did. I just want teenagers to be able to be teenagers, without so many worries. They should be able to feel free—to go to school, to have no one to fight against, to laugh and be happy.” Security Council Resolution 1325 holds that promise, a promise that the UN has an obligation to uphold. ❖

# ASSESSMENT OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH FOR REFUGEES IN ZAMBIA

Zambia is host to more than 260,000 refugees. Almost three-quarters come from Angola, another quarter from the Democratic Republic of Congo and the remainder from other African countries such as Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia. Zambia continues to accept more refugees as conflicts persist in bordering nations.

In September 2001 the Women's Commission sent a delegation to Zambia to assess the reproductive health of refugees. The assessment team looked at four areas of reproductive health: safe motherhood, including emergency obstetric care; family planning; sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS; and gender-based violence. It also looked at the adolescent population specifically.

The delegation found that the reproductive health of refugees is being addressed in Zambia as evidenced by the wide-ranging efforts of United Nations organizations and numerous local and international nongovernmental organizations in the country. Most refugees—with the exception of the urban/peri-urban refugee population, which suffers from transportation and communication barriers—have good access to safe motherhood services.

Community health workers play an active role in most camps to educate refugees about their family planning options, but the lack of community-based distribution of supplies hinders refugees' access. Also, refugees are reluctant to use family planning methods due to the losses their communities have suffered from the conflicts in their countries.

Generally, there appears to be a good level of awareness concerning the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. However, although there are numerous suspected HIV/AIDS cases, there are few diagnosed patients and there is still a persistent skepticism about the existence of the disease. Other concerns include untreated sexually transmitted infections causing sterility, male circumcision practices and lack of proper treatment of infections.

Most people are reluctant to discuss gender-based violence. Domestic violence, exacerbated by alcohol and drug use, is reported to be the most common form of violence. Most health facilities lack protocols to manage the consequences of rape. Victim support units are in place at some camp police stations but it is not clear that the units' staff are adequately trained to care for victims of violence. The international NGO CARE is initiating gender-based violence prevention projects in two camps, and other organizations have expressed interest in pursuing such programming.

Reproductive health services for adolescents are limited and ad hoc at best. There are nascent efforts by NGOs to establish youth-friendly centers, youth

anti-AIDS clubs and use of peer educators to target the adolescent population. However, adolescents are clearly a sexually active population and are particularly vulnerable, given the lack of comprehensive services targeting their needs.

For a copy of the report, including recommendations, see [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org) or [www.rhrc.org](http://www.rhrc.org), or contact Julia Matthews, [juliam@womenscommission.org](mailto:juliam@womenscommission.org), 212.551.3112. ❖

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## Street Children

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tion, many thousands of young people have been forced to work to help their families earn enough to survive. Many of these young people, often called “street children” although the vast majority do not live on the streets 24 hours a day and instead return to family at night, “pick garbage,” rummaging for whatever food or other recyclables they can find to bring some additional income to their families. In the process, they are exposed to diseases and physical and verbal abuse from people on the street. Others may sell fruits or other wares and still others might find other types of materials to “recycle,” including medical supplies, exposing them to deadly diseases. Some children are simply sent out by their families to beg, sometimes riding buses and asking customers for money. Others are employed in cottage industries, such as carpet weaving, where the work is long and hard and wages are extremely low.

In all of these scenarios, young people are exposed to risks of becoming involved in drug use or smuggling and may be the victims of sexual abuse by shopkeepers or others who take advantage of them. While some girls also beg on the streets and participate in garbage picking, girls who work often do housework in Pakistani homes. There, too, they may be exposed to sexual and other abuse.

Afghan refugees have often had to sacrifice schooling inside Pakistan, mainly due to financial constraints but also due to limited access for urban refugee Afghan young people to schools at all levels.

There are no clear numbers of urban refugees or the children and adolescents among them. Nor are there clear numbers on “unaccompanied minors or separated children.” The number of children and adolescents living as refugees inside Pakistan without family or other substantial connections is believed to be low due to traditions in Afghan culture where extended family networks provide care. Despite this strong protective factor, many of the young people working on the streets of Pakistan do so because their family connection is rather weak, and the

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## Colombia

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tence in the slums of major cities. Despite the horror of their histories, the displaced receive minimal assistance from the state. The Colombian government has promulgated laws and regulations that stipulate an assistance program for the internally displaced, but the programs are woefully underfinanced and frequently disregarded. Bureaucratic regulations, as well as fear of registering with the government for official “displaced status,” deny these powerless citizens access to basic social services.

Education is unattainable. Displaced children are often denied primary education. Instead, they must rely on informal “community schools.” Some displaced children are growing up without any schooling whatsoever. Without options, girls turn to prostitution to help their families. Adolescent pregnancy is skyrocketing.

Chronic malnutrition is widespread and severe malnutrition has been reported among some displaced children.

Decent health care is impossible to access. The state refuses to reimburse hospitals for services for the displaced. Reproductive health care, including emergency care, is often not available to women, who suffer and die as a result.

Jobs for the displaced are non-existent. The worsening state of the Colombian economy has made employment difficult to obtain at all levels of society. The displaced face discrimination and hostility from society at large. Often, they lack the skills needed to obtain work in urban areas.

Two years ago, the United States signed on to “Plan Colombia,” and announced a commitment of \$1.3 billion to fight both the narcotrade and guerrilla insurgencies in Colombia. Of this funding, about \$30 million was appropriated for humanitarian relief work in 2001. This does not begin to address the crisis of forced displacement. Furthermore, the scale of “Plan Colombia” has escalated the war effort and caused greater dislocation and violence within the country.

The United States has chosen to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to fund the war in Colombia. It must also commit to substantial funding to strengthen civil society.

In November 2001, the Women’s Commission sent a delegation to Colombia to assess the conditions facing children and adolescents uprooted by war and violence, as well as reproductive health. The delegation was a follow-up to the Commission’s 1998 assessment. A report is available at [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org). ❖

*By Holly Myers, a Commissioner of the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children.*

## Colombian Government Abdicates Its Responsibility on Reproductive Health

**S**exual violence against girls and women in Colombia is a tactic of war. As with so much of the violence in Colombia, sexual violence is invisible and uncounted. Its victims and their families are afraid to complain and the government does not pursue violators.

Rape is widespread. Women in poor areas are at great risk, and armed groups kidnap girls to force them to cook and clean and then systematically rape them. Victims are often murdered following rape. Domestic violence rates are also high among displaced people, and women and children are the primary victims.

Former girl combatants reported that they were victims of sexual violence by their superiors, resulting in extremely high levels of sexually transmitted infections. The girls have reported that armed groups subjected them to forced contraception and abortions.

Displacement leads to dramatic changes in behavior among IDP adolescents in sexual behavior. Girls as young as 12 are having babies; in some instances adolescent girls have two or three children. The UN Senior Inter-Agency Network reported that 30 percent of all displaced adolescent girls are mothers.

Women and girls displaced by armed conflict are much less likely to receive prenatal care than those from poor areas. Women suffering from complications of pregnancy and childbirth are turned away from hospitals and critical life-saving care.

The need for family planning services is critical. IDP adolescents have limited access to family planning information but are eager for information about reproductive health. Family planning knowledge in general was limited, which puts women at risk.

HIV/AIDS is described as a time bomb waiting to go off. However, government policies show little recognition of the risks presented by HIV/AIDS and STIs to displaced adolescents.

“The Colombian government has abdicated its responsibility to provide sexual and reproductive health care to IDPs,” says Sandra Krause, director of the reproductive health project at the Women’s Commission. The Women’s Commission believes the government, international and national organizations should meet minimum standards in humanitarian response for reproductive health services to IDPs. “This includes ensuring the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) of reproductive health supplies and staff training on the MISP activities are provided to hospitals, health centers and through mobile outreach to IDPs,” says Ms. Krause. “These actions are designed to prevent and manage the consequences of sexual violence and to prevent infant and maternal death and the transmission of HIV/AIDS. Comprehensive reproductive health services with a focus on adolescents should be put in place as soon as possible.” ❖

**H**enry Pillsbury was compelled to establish a fund that supported the reproductive rights of adolescent refugees by a desire to educate young people about reproductive health issues.

“The image of young girls, in particular, being empowered at the exact time that they have next to nothing is a big motivation for us,” Henry told the Women’s Commission in a recent interview. “Money that is used to encourage boys to respect girls and to offer girls some control of their reproductive destiny is very important.”

The Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury Fund (EBP) is administered by the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children and, as Henry puts it, involves, “little red tape and is a direct source of money.”

Henry, an actor and the former director of the American Center in Paris, his brother Philip, and his wife Barbara have, in Philip’s words, “pulled their rolodexes together” to educate associates and friends about the EBP Fund and the Women’s Commission. Trying to reach their ambitious goal of raising \$150,000 by June 2003, they write and mail hundreds of letters—in English and French—to those they think might be sensitive to the catastrophe threatening teenage refugee girls if they have no access to reproductive health services.

Henry credits his mother, Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury, with his woman-centric point of view. Both brothers recall their mother’s tireless work as President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America in the 1950’s. Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury also served as Vice-President of the International Federation of Planned Parenthood, where she succeeded in bringing American medical knowledge and wealth to increase reproductive health services around the world.

“Mother worked with Margaret

Sanger and agreed that women have the right to control or have a voice in the size of their families,” said Philip, in a phone call from his home in Washington, DC.

Beside their involvement in the EBP Fund, Henry and Barbara operate King’s Fountain, a Paris-based non-profit production-counseling firm for artistic and humanitarian projects.

Barbara Pillsbury also devotes time to volunteering with the American Cathedral in Paris’s Mission Outreach, a program that works with mentally and physically challenged people. In addition to donating to the EBP Fund, Mission Outreach sends money to Haitian and Burmese organizations that run educational empowerment projects for women.

In addition to his work with the EBP Fund, Philip serves on several boards, including the Hotchkiss School, the National Trust for the Humanities and the Blair House (the President’s official guesthouse) Restoration Fund.

Philip spent his career as a cultural attaché, serving abroad with the United States Information Service. The mission of USIS was to create greater understanding of the United States through information programs, libraries and student-and-leader exchange programs.

Today, part of the allure of working with the Women’s Commission, for Philip, is funding small projects that are culturally relevant to a population.

“We have a fund that is small in resources, but one with which a field worker can do a terrific job making posters or a video locally so that the essence of the message is intact and meaningful,” Philip said.

The Fund’s one-on-one strategy is designed to achieve many outcomes, including an exchange of information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, and post-pregnancy care. The strategy

also includes the formulation of requests for adequate contraception, prevention and management of sexual violence and teaching boys to respect and understand the particular challenges facing girls.

“The project’s strong point is peer counseling, having young girls and boys counseling among themselves—particularly older teenage girls (often already mothers of unplanned children) talking common sense to younger girls in a language which both of them understand,” Henry said. “The EBP Fund fights for such teenage exchange at a time when adults still can’t speak about teens and sex in the same breath in most countries with refugee populations.”

So far, 185 donors have made contributions to the EBP Fund totaling \$118,000; 12 projects have been set up for adolescent refugees in Angola, Eritrea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda and Zambia.

In Angola, for example, the Fund was used to carry out four health fairs in the markets of Luanda on STI/HIV/AIDS prevention. Two workshops were also held where 46 community activists were trained on prevention, forms of transmission and STI/HIV/AIDS counseling techniques.

The Commission is weighing four new projects in Sudan and Zambia. It also expects to identify a local NGO in Pakistan to bring the EBP Fund to teenage Afghan refugees.

“A child who comes into the world would do well to be wanted,” Henry said. “Relatively few people concentrate on adolescents; two years ago apparently almost no one was concentrating on adolescent refugee sexuality, which is a central piece of the refugee dilemma. We have been told you didn’t even talk about reproductive rights [on an international scale] and the teenage

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## Street Children

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family they are connected to is very poor.

Young refugees who recently fled the US bombing may have particular education, health and psychological assistance needs to be addressed in the urban areas, as well as in the camps. New refugees, in particular, may require psychosocial interventions to help them cope with their recent experiences fleeing war in Afghanistan—from the loss of parents, to experiencing combat.

Increased legal services are needed to free refugee young people held under horrific conditions in Pakistani jails. Conditions in prisons are notoriously bad, with inmates, particularly children, being subjected to torture, sexual abuse, malnourishment and more. UNHCR and other legal aid groups have participated in the release of adolescent refugees held in prison, but there is little funding for this work and much more needs to be done.

Jane Lowicki, senior coordinator of the children and adolescents project, visited Pakistan in January to investigate the situation of Afghan refugee street children. ❖

## WOMEN'S COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Working Assets

We are pleased to announce that the Women's Commission has been selected as one of 50 nonprofit groups to receive support from Working Assets in 2002. Last year, Working Assets, a company that provides long distance, credit card, Internet access, wireless and online services, donated \$5 million to charities chosen by its customers! If you are a Working Assets customer, please remember to vote for the Women's Commission at year end. ([www.workingassets.com](http://www.workingassets.com))

### Staff updates

The Women's Commission welcomes **Sabrina Kassam-Jan** as field representative in Pakistan/Afghanistan and **Connie Lee** as reproductive health program specialist. We bid farewell to **Rachel Watson**, media liaison and **Sippi Azerbaijani-Moghaddam**, technical advisor. We congratulate Rachel on the birth of her son, Thomas, and thank **Christine Gordon** for filling in for Rachel.

## Eleanor Bellows Pillsbury

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aspect of it was occluded—you just didn't discuss it."

In the future, Henry said, either teenage refugee reproductive health must become a central issue for major refugee relief groups, or, possi-

bly but much less practically, the EBP Fund might evolve its own nonprofit standing.

"You can't run a Fund for a critical need year after year shaking a tin cup," he said.

"What the issue will be is to sit back and think 'how can we most effectively continue to drill on the

subject of teenagers and reproductive health, knowing that this is still so unpopular in many parts of the world?'"

For more information on the EBP Fund or to make a contribution, visit [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org), or contact **Ellen Jorgensen**, [ellen@womenscommission.org](mailto:ellen@womenscommission.org), 212.551.3115. ❖



### Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

122 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10168-1289

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