



We are pleased to share with you, our friends and supporters, the **Women's Commission's 2007 key achievements**, which were made possible by your generous contributions of time, financial support and belief in our mission.



To protect refugee women and girls from rape and violence, and promote access to reproductive health care, we:

- Investigated the lack of health care services for Iraqi women and girl refugees in Jordan. Inside Iraq, women and girls have been targeted for kidnapping and rape. As refugees, they are at risk for exploitation and abuse. We are working to raise awareness of their extremely vulnerable situation and ensure that they get the help they need.
- Spearheaded the creation of the first United Nations Task Force dedicated to developing concrete strategies to protect refugee women and girls from rape and murder when they leave camps to collect firewood for cooking.
- Engaged men and boys as active participants in the fight against gender-based violence—our work has led the UN to promote male refugee involvement as an essential tool in the prevention of violence against women and girls.
- Assessed the reproductive health needs of women and girls in northern Uganda. We are urging the U.S. government and humanitarian agencies to invest in programs that prevent maternal and infant mortality.



“We need a doctor, we need to get medicine. We need help. No one is helping us.”
45-year-old Iraqi refugee widow



To protect children and young people displaced by conflict, and help them reach their full potential, we:

- Mobilized a critical new global initiative to improve educational and job training programs for young men and women. Refugee youth are extremely vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. Yet, despite their difficult situation, they are the key to building stable societies in the future.
- Promoted access to education for all children and youth in Darfur by pressing the international community to increase funding for programs, recruit more teachers and ensure adequate pay for teachers.
- Participated in the 2007 Clinton Global Initiative's (CGI) newly launched program on education. CGI is a



summit of leaders working together to create solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges—we are pushing for increased funding for youth in conflict areas.

- Conducted studies with youth in Sierra Leone and northern Uganda to develop strategies to ensure that young people's voices are heard by decision-makers. Our findings were included in the official UN report to the General Assembly on children in armed conflict.



Photo by Gerald Martone/theIRC

“Three generations of southern Sudanese didn't have an opportunity for proper education. The girls have suffered the most.”

Dr. Michael Hussein, Minister of Education, Science and Technology

To ensure that women, children and families seeking asylum in our country are treated with justice and compassion, we:

- Released a groundbreaking report on the treatment of immigrant families in U.S. government family detention centers. We found that families—many with small children—are being kept in prison-like conditions. The report's release generated a media firestorm and formed the basis of an ACLU lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The lawsuit was settled out of court, thereby requiring DHS to follow a number of our recommendations.
- Advocated for policies to protect trafficked children and ensure that they have access to appropriate services and protection, including the appointment of a guardian to protect their best interests.
- Launched a project with law firm Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP to assess the living conditions of detention facilities housing immigrant children who arrive in the U.S. alone—without a parent or guardian. This project builds on our past success in persuading Congress to require that unaccompanied children are transferred to child-friendly shelters within 72 hours of entering the country.
- Continued to secure much-needed congressional funding to identify and implement detention alternatives for asylum seekers as they wait for their cases to be resolved.

To help refugees earn a living, and develop the skills and resources they need to rebuild their communities, we:

- Launched pilot projects in Thailand, northern Uganda, southern Sudan, Colombia and Burundi to test innovative programs that help refugees earn a living and provide for their families.
- Conducted studies in southern Sudan and Liberia to evaluate programs designed to help refugees who are returning to communities ravaged by war. We are advocating for increased investment in education, job training and income-generation programs that *work* by taking into account factors such as local market demands and labor supply.



- Continued to play a leadership role in an international coalition of agencies dedicated to strengthening economic security for refugees around the world.
- Assessed the economic opportunities available to refugees who have made a new home in San Diego, CA. We also asked refugees about the education and job training services available to them in refugee camps. Their experiences will provide important lessons for helping refugees during displacement and as they resettle into new communities.



“Noreen, an asylum seeker who has been released from Hutto [detention center], recounted an incident in which a 6-year-old child cried when he was not allowed to take a picture he had colored into his room. When the guard shouted at the child for crying, the child’s father intervened. Noreen does not know exactly what happened next, but says that the family—child, mother and father—were separated into different pods for three days after the incident.”
Excerpt from *Locking Up Family Values* report

To mobilize for change in U.S. policy, we:

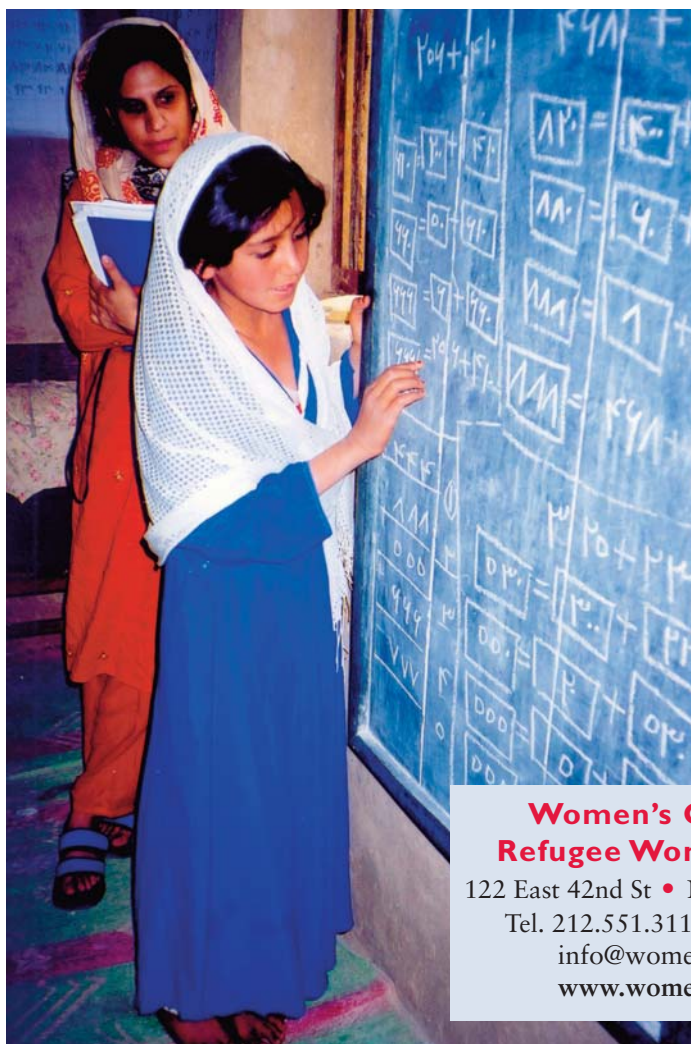
- Fought for critical U.S. funding to address the desperate living conditions of over 4 million displaced Iraqis—the fastest-growing refugee crisis in the world.
- Partnered with the International Rescue Committee to secure more than 50,000 signatures for a petition urging Congress to make additional funding available for the prevention and treatment of rape and violence against women and girls. The petition will help build congressional support for new legislation, the *International Violence Against Women Act*.
- Helped secure congressional approval of an additional \$350 million for U.S. agencies working to provide lifesaving assistance to refugees in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
- Increased congressional awareness and oversight of refugee children who arrive on U.S. shores alone and are held in detention facilities. Thanks in part to the Women's Commission, Congress has urged federal agencies to make much-needed improvements to ensure that unaccompanied children have access to the services they need.



To increase awareness of the needs of refugee women, children and youth, and inspire others to get involved, we:

- Improved our Web site, www.womenscommission.org, which receives over 6,000 hits a day and features new reports, videos, audio clips and photos from the field. More than 3,500 "Take Action" letters were sent by supporters to decision-makers in Congress about issues affecting women, children and youth refugees.
- Honored three refugee rights activists from Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Philippines at our annual *Voices of Courage Awards Luncheon* for their innovative work to help fellow refugees earn a living and achieve self-sufficiency. The luncheon was a sold-out event and raised over \$500,000 to support our programs—we awarded a \$5,000 grant to each honoree's organization and introduced them to other US-based donors.
- Secured extensive media coverage in world-renowned news outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and The Associated Press, and on CNN International World News and National Public Radio, as well as in professional journals.

- Produced reports, briefs and manuals based on our findings from field visits to advocate with donors, policy makers and humanitarian workers on the needs of refugee women, children and youth. Our materials have become more user-friendly—for the first time, we wrote reports specifically for refugees we meet in the field so we can share the lessons we learned and be held accountable.



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