



Refugee Integration: Global contexts
11th - 12th June, 2009

Abstracts

Mofe Eju, The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CEPACS), University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Title: "A Case Study of the Liberian Refugees Integration in Nigeria"

Following the two civil wars in Liberia which span between 1989 and 2003, most of the neighbouring countries in the West African sub-region played host to refugees from that country. Nigeria, which is the biggest economy in the sub-region, hosted about 6,000 refugees. The refugees were accommodated in one camp during the period of the war. However, 5 years after the end of the second civil war in 2003, the Nigerian government introduced the "cessation policy" which led to the closure of the refugee camp. The main thrusts of the new policy were: (1) encouraged the voluntary repatriation of the refugees back to Liberia and (2) integrate those refugees who opt to remain in Nigeria. So far, over 2,000 of the refugees have been repatriated voluntarily while some 3,000 have been integrated to various local communities in Nigeria. This paper outlines the challenges and success of this integration program in Nigeria as case study of the subject of "Refugee Integration".

Kirsten McAllister, Simon Fraser University, Canada.

Title: "Art and the Politics of Inclusion: Refugees Claimants and Changing Canada's Views on Public Life?"

In Canada, in contrast to asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, "refugee claimants" are relatively invisible, whether in the media, policy debates or in the everyday life of our cities and rural communities. This does not mean that Canada welcomes them. As non-profit organizations like the Canadian Council for Refugees and scholars like Anna Pratt and Peter Nyers have argued, with new global security regimes and the regressive policies of the federal government, rather than offering protection to refugee claimants, Canada is increasingly treating them as threats to national security.

This presentation discusses the role that politically engaged art projects can have in increasing public awareness about refugee claimants, not simply as "charity cases" but as recognized members of our societies in an increasingly transnational world. The presentation draws on case studies in Canada, and in particular the vital role that art projects have played for Indigenous people, and generations of Asian, Black and Middle Eastern Canadians, seeking to create more inclusive, diverse understandings of public life in Canada. The presentation will critically explore the role of the arts in relation to the "integration" of refugee claimants. While the arts can have a significant pedagogical role in informing other Canadians who know little about refugee claimants, as I will outline, art projects can also radically transform definitions of what constitutes a region's definition of "the public" and give insights into exclusionary power relations.

Bruce Newbold, McMaster University, Canada.

Title: **“Journey to Health: Investigating the Health Needs of Refugees to Canada”**

Refugees account for a significant group within the Canadian population, however, detailed information on their health needs and health care practices are notably missing within the literature. We know this group has specific health needs shaped by the refugee experience, experiences prior to arrival in Canada, and the impact of the resettlement process. This paper will provide a brief overview of Canadian refugee policy before turning to the investigation of the health gaps/needs and barriers experienced by refugee communities.

Ninetta Santoro, Charles Sturt University, Australia.

Title: **“Refugee Resettlement and Education Provision in Australia”**

Australia is frequently cited as having one of the best humanitarian programs in the world. In this paper I provide an overview of Australian refugee resettlement services and the provision of education to refugees and asylum seekers. I argue that while there are aspects of Australia's humanitarian program that are well resourced and forward-thinking, in general, it is discriminatory. Policies that differentiate between on-shore and off-shore applications for refugee status serve to perpetuate what has always been Australia's historical 'right' to decide who comes to Australia and under what circumstances. The provision of education that is piecemeal serves to silence the needs of refugees, particularly Sudanese young people who are some of the most marginalised members of the Australian community.

Natalija Vrecer, Institute of Adult Education, Slovenia.

Title: **“Integration as a Human Right: Refugee Integration in Slovenia.**

This paper will focus mostly on Bosnian refugees as they are the most numerous in Slovenia. The paper will discuss the comprehensive approach to integration theory, settlement of refugees and focus on political, economic, psychological and sociocultural integration discussing education, health and religious aspects of integration.

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