

Acknowledgments

In 1996 after eleven years of academic administration, I had the opportunity to take a sabbatical leave in order to refresh and revitalize my interest in research, especially the study of refugees. This desire led me to the Refugee Studies Programme (RSP) at the University of Oxford where I was able to immerse myself in the nature of global displacement, human rights and refugee law, the social and psychological consequences of leaving one's home and country, and conflict resolution and the issues of peace-making. It was here where I met Alastair Ager and Derek Summerfield in a course of the psychological aspects of being a refugee. They encouraged me to revisit an area that had so intrigued me for years. At the same time, I met Barbara Harrell-Bond who immediately asked that I take on a dozen or so projects. She always had that many "balls in the air" at one time and, as I found out later, she was the sort of person who welcomed collaboration, assistance, and pure toil.

I accepted several memorable assignments from Dr. Harrell-Bond that I found exciting and rewarding. First, she asked if I would design a training program for the many volunteer visitors of Campsfield Prison, the local detention center of asylees and illegal immigrants. Another project involved facilitating a research design for a psychosocial evaluation in refugee camps in Uganda and Kenya. However, the most propitious offer from Dr. Harrell-Bond was to plan and moderate the weekly RSP lecture series. I agreed on one condition: that I could put together a series about the psychosocial wellness of refugees and that I could develop it into a book. She readily agreed and was of great support. For the opportunity and her assistance, I am most grateful.

I am thankful to the authors who contributed to the original lecture series and later to the book. They offered many suggestions on how to organize the task, and I leaned much from them. All are well-known researchers in the area of the psychological and social

aspects of displacement. I asked each of them to discuss the topic of refugee “psychosocial wellness,” how he/she approached the study of the topic, and what were the strengths and limitations of his/her research methodology. As you read this volume, you will surely see the richness of their contribution to the field of refugee studies.

While in Oxford, I had the opportunity to reside at Campion Hall, a residence for Jesuit scholars and a few others like me. I tried out many of my ideas at meal table with my Campion colleagues, some of whom were quite expert in refugee studies. They were helpful and encouraging. Also at the RSP, I met numerous staff, visitors, and students who probably became bored with my talking about this project. The result, however, was considerable interest, comments, and critique. Among those who always listened were: Belinda Allen, Maryanne Loughry, the new Director David Turton, Sean Loughna, Adalaida Reyes, and Matt Gibney. Balgit Soroya of Ruskin College escorted me to a number of Oxford’s famous pubs while we shared our common interest in the psychosocial aspects of refugees.

The faculty at the Catholic University of America, especially Dean Ann Patrick Conrad and my colleague, John Noble, were of immense help. The Dean encouraged and approved the original sabbatical request and Dr. Noble became a sounding board for ideas, interpretations, and approaches dealing with refugee displacement.

Finally, special thanks is due my family who permitted me to absorb myself for the past months while I worked on this project. They provided me with the strength, encouragement, and love, the ingredients for reaching my goal of orchestrating the completion of this book.

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