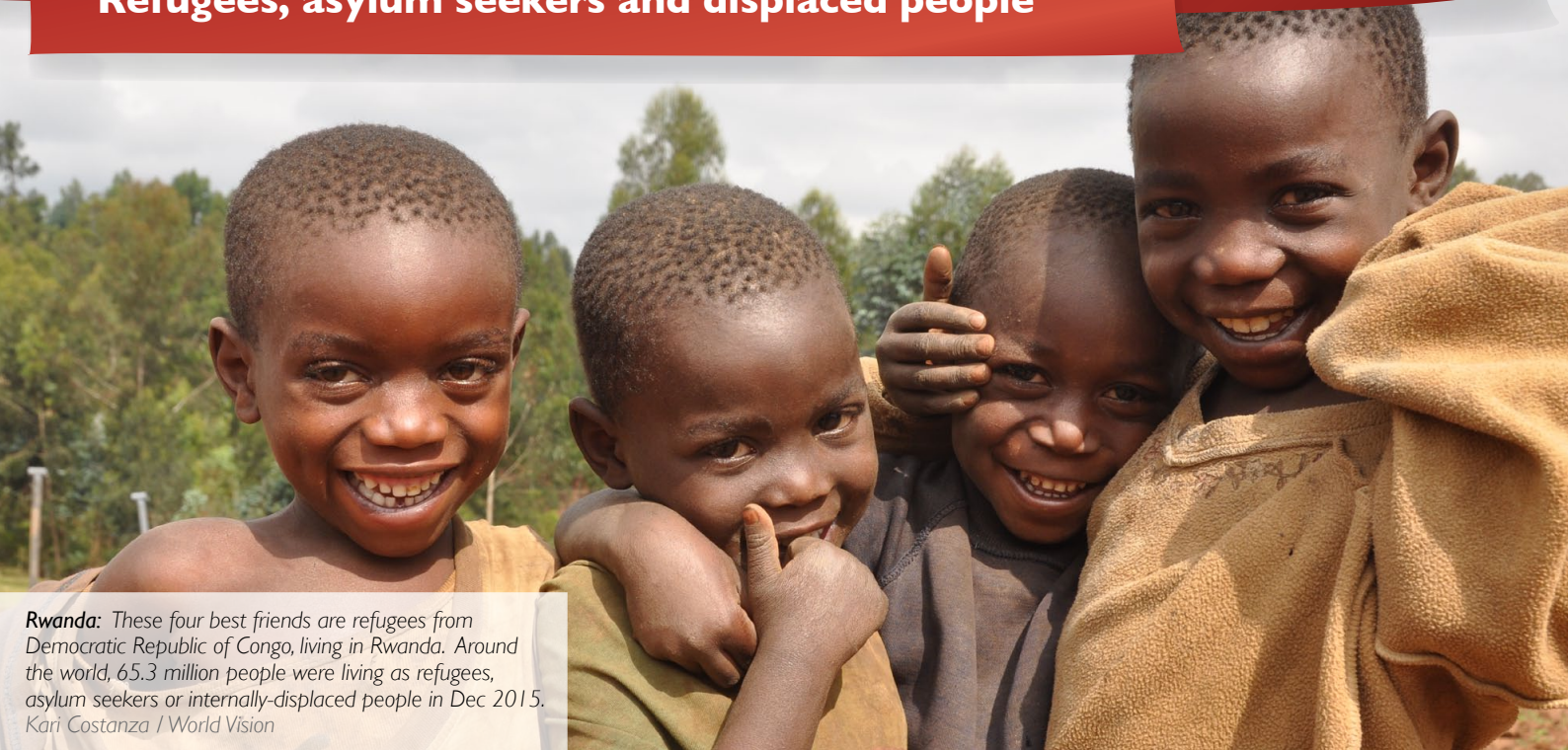


## Refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people



*Rwanda: These four best friends are refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo, living in Rwanda. Around the world, 65.3 million people were living as refugees, asylum seekers or internally-displaced people in Dec 2015. Kari Costanza / World Vision*

All over the world conflict and persecution have forced people to leave their homes and their everyday lives. In 2015, 12.4 million people were forced to leave their homes due to conflict or persecution, which is equal to 34,000 people every day.

World Refugee Day is held on 20 June each year.  
See [www.unhcr.org/refugeeday](http://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday)

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# Who are refugees and internally-displaced people?

**Refugees:** 16.1 million people live as refugees. A refugee is a person outside their country of nationality who is unable to return due to fear of persecution. The *United Nations Refugee Convention* says a refugee is a person who: "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [or herself] of the protection of that country."

**Asylum seekers:** 3.2 million people are seeking asylum. An asylum seeker is a person who has left their own country and applied for, but not yet been granted, refugee status.

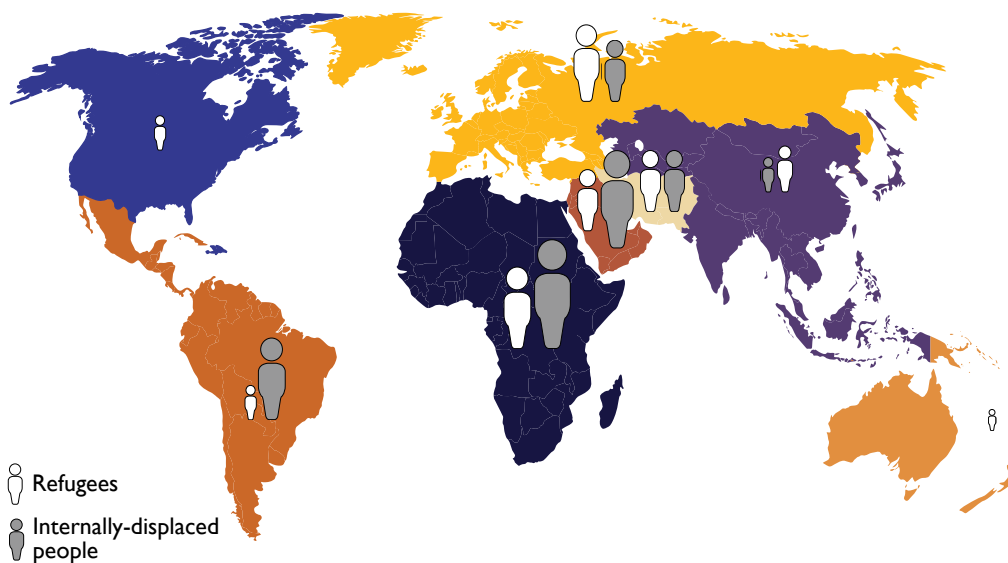
**Internally-displaced people:** 40.8 million people are internally displaced. An internally-displaced person is a someone who has had to flee to another part of their country but has not crossed an international border.

Source: United Nations Refugee Agency (Dec 2015)  
[www.unhcr.org/global-trends-2015.html](http://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-2015.html)



*Pakistan: Another family arrives at a camp for internally-displaced people, located in a safer part of their country.*  
 Jeff Hall / World Vision

## Where do people seek refuge?



<b>North America</b>	<b>Latin America and Caribbean</b>
409,000 (most in USA and Canada)	338,000
	7.1 million (all in Colombia)
<b>Africa</b>	<b>Europe</b>
4.8 million	4.5 million
11.2 million	1.9 million (most in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine & Serbia)
<b>Middle East</b>	<b>Southwest Asia</b>
2.3 million	2.8 million
13.5 million	2.3 million
<b>Asia</b>	<b>Oceania</b>
1 million	48,000 (37,000 in Australia, 9,500 in PNG, 1,337 in NZ, 506 in Nauru)
560,000	

Source: United Nations Refugee Agency (Dec 2015)

## Why do people seek refuge?

People seek refuge because they fear for their lives and their futures. The decision to leave home could happen suddenly or take a long time after months or even years of the situation getting worse. The main reasons people leave their homes are:

**Conflict:** Armies fighting for control may try to weaken the other side by threatening lives of civilians, kidnapping children, raping women, burning crops and forests, destroying houses, schools and health clinics, polluting wells and laying landmines. People flee in fear to escape further pain and loss.

**Oppression:** The ruling power may not respect human rights by imposing harsh treatment, especially on people it suspects of disagreeing with or opposing it. This means people flee in fear for their safety.

**Hatred:** Hostility, retaliation and injustice between ethnicities, religious or other groups can threaten people's lives. As a result, people flee in fear for their lives.

**Environmental issues:** Natural disasters and climate change also cause people to flee. Despite the difficulties they face, they are not protected by international refugee laws. In some cases environmental issues cause resource shortages that lead to conflict, creating refugees.



## How do people travel?

Having left their homes, families are at great risk. They might be attacked, or lack food, water and shelter. They can get lost, separated or not know where they're going. The conflict may have already disrupted the usual travel routes making the journey take weeks or months. When they arrive at the border to a new country they could still be turned away.

People use various means of transport. Those with cars drive as far as the petrol goes. Those with money hire taxis, or take a bus or train if they are operating. Rivers and seas mean making dangerous crossings in unsafe boats or paying large sums of money with no guarantee of arriving safely. When they run out of money and transport, some stow away while many others walk for long distances.



*Serbia: This Afghan refugee family used the last of their money to pay smugglers to take them to Hungary. When they reached the border to Hungary, they found it closed.*  
Laura Reinhardt / World Vision

## Where do people set up temporary homes?

People mainly seek refuge elsewhere in their own country or in neighbouring countries. Families set up homes wherever they can, in places like formal refugee camps, rented accommodation, temporary shelters or even out in the open.

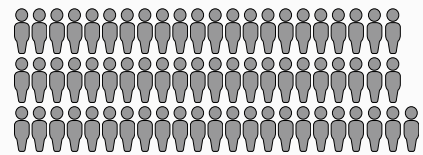
Increasingly people are seeking refuge in cities – 60 per cent of refugees now live in cities. In busy urban environments, people seek refuge among the populations of slums and shanty towns, earn money through the informal sector and remain hidden from national authorities and refugee support services. Like local slum dwellers, they lack access to health services and education.

Source: United Nations Refugee Agency [www.unhcr.org/4b1cda0e9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4b1cda0e9.html) and [www.unhcr.org/pages/4b0e4c6a6.html](http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4b0e4c6a6.html)



*Lebanon: Families from Syria rent land in the Bekaa Valley where they build houses from tarpaulins.*  
Jon Warren / World Vision

## What kinds of accommodation do refugees stay in?



### INDIVIDUAL ACCOMMODATION 67%

people arrange their own accommodation, generally renting or staying with relatives



### PLANNED/MANAGED CAMPS 25.4%

formal refugee camps in an enclosed area with managed resources and assistance



### SELF-SETTLED OR INFORMAL CAMPS 3.9%

people set up camp-like accommodation with little outside help or resources



### COLLECTIVE CENTRES 2.3%

people live together in an unoccupied or unfinished building



### RECEPTION OR TRANSIT CAMPS 1.5%

formal processing centres for refugees who have arrived in a new country

Source: United Nations Refugee Agency (Dec 2015)  
[www.unhcr.org/global-trends-2015.html](http://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-2015.html)

## What is the impact on host communities?

When large numbers of people suddenly arrive, host communities face numerous challenges as they support more people than government services have planned for. However history shows that refugees make positive contributions to their new communities.



**South Sudan:** New boreholes, like this one constructed by World Vision, provide safe water for internally-displaced people who live here. Jon Warren / World Vision

### Challenges

People need places to live. Sanitation systems and medical facilities need to quickly be expanded or established to prevent diseases from spreading. Increased demand for food and accommodation and pressure on farmland increase prices. There may be little understanding of cultural differences and people may feel fearful or resentful. Conflict may spread across the border which also increases the danger for local people and may force them to leave their homes too.

### Benefits

As refugees settle into their new communities, everyone benefits from increased diversity and greater cultural understanding. Because of their experiences, many refugees value education and work hard to set up a new life. Some refugees go on to make a real difference for their new countries.

For information about refugees who have made a difference, see <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/info-centre/famous-refugees>

## What are the long-term possibilities for refugees?

Some refugees stay for a few months before they can return home or resettle in another country. Others may live in a country or refugee camp for many years and it can become the only home that their children know.

### 1. Repatriation – returning home

When it is safe, or if conditions have improved, many displaced people and refugees go back to their old homes. They may need to rebuild destroyed houses, farms, schools and businesses. Internally-displaced people may not receive as much help as refugees returning from another country.

During 2015, only 201,400 refugees returned to their countries, 83 per cent of these returned to Afghanistan (61,400), Sudan (39,500), Somalia (32,300), the Central African Republic (21,600), and Cote d'Ivoire (12,200).

### 2. Local integration – resettling in the country of refuge

This can mean living on land nobody wants or staying in a refugee camp with poor conditions and little land. The people who already live in this area must make room for these new residents.

In 2014, Tanzania granted citizenship to 162,160 Burundi refugees who fled their country in 1972.

### 3. Resettlement – in a third country

Some refugees get a chance to go to another country. Every country controls the number and types of refugees they allow to enter. Living conditions there are usually much better but it can be difficult to adjust.

During 2015, 107,100 refugees were resettled in 23 countries. Refugees of 65 nationalities found new homes through resettlement, including refugees from Myanmar (19,500), Syria (13,800), the Democratic Republic of Congo (10,700) and Somalia (8,400).

Source: United Nations Refugee Agency (Dec 2015)

<http://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-2015.html> and <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html>

## Who is responsible for protecting refugees?

In 1950, shortly after the United Nations was formed, it created the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (known as UN Refugee Agency or UNHCR). The next year the United Nations adopted the 1951 *Convention relating to the status of Refugees* – the legal framework for protecting refugees.

Although internally-displaced people are officially under the protection of their own government, the UN Refugee Agency has offered protection and assistance to millions of internally-displaced people.

The UN Refugee Agency leads and co-ordinates international action for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee situations. It works in partnership with governments, regional organisations, international and non-governmental organisations.

See [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

## How does New Zealand help protect refugees?

New Zealand has welcomed refugees since the 1870s. New Zealand accepts an annual quota of 750 refugees as a signatory of the 1951 *Refugee Convention*, which will increase to 1000 in 2018. In addition to this, immigration policy allows some refugees' relatives to join them.

New Zealand provided new homes for 7200 refugees and 1900 family members between 2006 and 2016. Three-quarters of these are from Myanmar, Bhutan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Colombia.

In 2016, the New Zealand government contributed US\$4,008,016 to the UN Refugee Agency, as well as to other emergency appeals for humanitarian crises.

The New Zealand government's aid priority is to improve governments, security and conditions for peace, particularly in the Pacific. Better government means more security and stability, and less likelihood of people being forced to become refugees or displaced people.

## What is World Vision doing?

WorldVision partners with United Nations agencies to help refugees and internally-displaced people with food, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, basic household needs, education, child protection and income generation.

Fifty-one per cent of refugees are under the age of 18 years. WorldVision prioritises setting up child-friendly spaces to give these children and young people a sense of safety and continuity. For children who are out of school, child-friendly spaces provide education. They keep children away from danger and protect them from exploitation or abuse. Trained staff help children who need counselling or medical care.

## How does World Vision help?

### Helping children in refugee and host communities

Due to war, Syrian children now living as refugees in Jordan face many difficulties. Children from Jordan are also at risk because of the changes in their communities.

To help Syrian and Jordanian children, World Vision is working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) running Makani (My Space) centres. The centres aim to provide alternative education, life-skills training, counselling and opportunities for friendship.

Child-friendly spaces such as Makani centres are important for helping children to cope, according to World Vision child protection expert Heather MacLeod from New Zealand.

"Children are the most vulnerable group during conflict and in the aftermath of a disaster, both emotionally and physically," says Heather, "and we know the long-term impact of their exposure to devastating events can be huge if not addressed."

It's important for children to "remember what it's like to be a child again," says Heather. "The [child-friendly] spaces

provide young people with a safe place to play, participate in activities, learn about their rights to health and protection, and experience healing from any trauma they've experienced. They also allow children to return to healthy routines and experience a sense of normalcy again."



*Jordan: Syrian and Jordanian children play games to help them recover from their experiences.  
Elias Abu Ata / World Vision*



## Constructing safe roads in Jordan

Za'atari Refugee Camp spreads over a massive area of desert and is home to around 80,000 refugees, making it equivalent to the fourth largest city in Jordan. However, the roads and infrastructure weren't designed to support such a large population.

Without proper roads, ambulances and other emergency vehicles struggled to reach people, water tankers couldn't deliver water and children found getting to school difficult. Winter storms and melting snow damaged roads, created mud and flooded homes.

Alia, a Syrian mother, moved to the camp nearly two years ago. "Our tent flooded... and there was mud everywhere. It was a really hard time... You have to move from your house to a tent, in a place you don't know, and then it floods and everything is wet and the children are crying. [It makes] you wonder how you're going to cope with it all."

With funding from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), World Vision built roads to connect housing areas to the main ring road around the camp. World Vision sealed and graded the roads and installed speed bumps and traffic signs to keep children safe. Drainage trenches connected to the waste water system prevent flooding.

The new roads have made a real difference. "The camp is now getting better and better. This drainage has made a big difference, even if to some people it might seem like a small thing," said Alia.



*Jordan: A water tanker drives along a new road.  
Theodore Sam / World Vision*



*Tanzania: Refugee camp workers cross check lists of names as they prepare to distribute food rations.  
World Vision*

## Distributing food in Tanzania

Monthly food rations are the key to survival for refugee families who have fled Burundi for Tanzania.

Burundi has experienced political instability and conflict between Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups since its independence in 1962. Over the years, thousands of people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. In April 2015, a difficult political situation caused civil unrest resulting in thousands of people fleeing, afraid for their safety.

Three camps in north-west Tanzania were reopened during 2015 to provide safe homes for 150,000 recently arrived refugees. World Vision is working with the United Nations World Food Programme to provide food rations for these residents. The World Food Programme donates food while World Vision stores it and runs the food distributions.

Everyone who registers with the UN Refugee Agency is issued with a ration card which gives them access to monthly rations equivalent to 2,100 kilo calories per person. The food rations are made up from cereals, pulses, oil and salt and a protein supplement.

For refugee families who left Burundi with nothing, monthly food rations provide vital nutrition.