

Responding to migrants



Thousands of people have fled conflict in the north of Uganda.

As a result of attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (a rebel group which has been fighting against the Government of Uganda for the last 20 years) over 3,000 people fled from the north of Uganda. Many fled to a town called Soroti in the centre of the country, but some continued their journey to Akoboi, a small village 25 kilometres further on. After walking for more than four days, they arrived with very little money and no food. The community leaders of Akoboi contacted the pastor of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) church, and asked him to help the migrants in whatever way the church could.

The main PAG church in Akoboi had been through Church and Community Mobilisation Process training over the previous three years. The training prepared them to think creatively about how they could respond to the needs of the community. This meant they were able to respond quickly and efficiently when the migrants arrived in their village. Five local PAG congregations were also motivated

to contribute to the response, led by the pastor of the main church.

Response

When the migrants arrived, the church leaders gathered to discuss what to do. They decided that the main church would care for the majority of the people, but that each local congregation would look after

at least one family. They also decided to provide the following:

SHELTER

In the grounds of the main church, church members worked with the migrants to build 15 huts. These housed 15 of the families. The other ten families were taken into the homes of church members.

FOOD AND FIREWOOD

Food and firewood were given to the migrant families until they could earn money and collect firewood for themselves.

WATER

A local NGO heard about the migrants taking refuge in Akoboi, so they dug a well on the church premises to provide safe drinking water.

PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP

Throughout the year, church members made friends with the migrants and prayed with them. The migrants were also invited to attend church services.

The local churches received no external funding for their work with the migrants. People from the church and the community gave their time, food and materials to support the needs of the migrants.

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Footsteps is a quarterly paper, linking health and development workers worldwide. Tearfund, publisher of *Footsteps*, hopes that it will provide the stimulus of new ideas and enthusiasm. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in our communities.

Footsteps is free of charge to individuals working to promote health and development. It is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Donations are welcomed.

Readers are invited to contribute views, articles, letters and photos.

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David Evans

Church members were trained to think creatively about the needs of their community.

Challenges

Three of the main challenges faced by the church and community during the year were:

- Community members were poor and had limited resources. While caring for the migrants, many of the community members ran short of food themselves in the weeks before the harvest.
- The migrants did not always have the same values as the church members which caused tension on occasions.
- An NGO came to the village asking the migrants questions about their situation, which raised expectations. Unfortunately the NGO never returned and the migrants frequently asked the pastor to find out more when visiting Soroti.

Lessons learnt

The pastor and church members have said that if they were to repeat the work, they would do the following things differently:

- They would encourage more people from the community to respond, and not leave the church members to do most of the work.
- A committee would be set up to oversee the care of the migrants, so that the response is not managed

informally by the pastor who has other responsibilities.

- Community leaders would be part of this committee from the beginning of any response.

The future

The church will build up resources to use in the event of something similar happening again. To raise funds, church members are planting citrus and other trees so that they can sell the produce.

Results

The migrants stayed in Akoboi for about one year before it was safe enough to return to their homes in the north of Uganda. As a result of the response of the PAG church in Akoboi, 66 migrants were helped during this time. The migrants were very grateful for the help given. They expressed this by giving the community a celebration meal before returning home

The community now sees the church as a valuable group of people who help those in need

What is the Church and Community Mobilisation Process?

This is a series of workshops, discussions and Bible studies which are used to help church members understand that they have a responsibility to address poverty and injustice. The church works with the community in assessing and prioritising needs, and in assessing the resources that God has given them to tackle these issues. They then take practical steps to make a positive difference to their situation.

For more information visit the Churches page on www.tearfund.org/tilz

and by naming their newborn babies after the pastor and members of the church. They also invited the pastor and others to visit them in their village once they had settled back.

Before this response, community members viewed the church as a place where people 'clap their hands and shout'. As a result of the church's response, the community now sees the church as a valuable group of people who help those in need. The pastor attends community council meetings and his opinion is valued. The members of the church have confidence and a new sense of purpose.

The church also realises now that it is better to give than to receive and that God

has honoured their faithfulness. They see the well on the church premises, which will be a source of safe water for years to come, as a gift from God for all they have done in helping others in need.

This article is based on a longer case study by Andrew Bulmer. He is an independent consultant who specialises in church and community mobilisation.

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Migration and HIV

The AIDS pandemic is a cause of migration. For example, people living with HIV might move to avoid stigma by their community or return to rural homes for support when they become sick. People also often migrate after the death of their partner and orphaned children might move to be with family or to find work.

Increased vulnerability

Migrants are often particularly vulnerable to HIV. For example:

- Migrant workers such as mine workers, truck drivers and construction workers are usually young men who are separated from regular partners for long periods of time. Loneliness, isolation and living in a mainly male environment can mean that male migrants have sex with male partners or with sex workers, placing them at higher risk of HIV infection.

- Migrant women are vulnerable to rape or may be forced to sell sex for survival. They may not be able to insist on using a condom. Their risk of HIV infection is also increased by high levels of sexual violence.

Migrants living with HIV

Migrants often lack access to healthcare services and may be missed out of national HIV responses. Migrants who are already on antiretroviral (ARV) treatment may face particular challenges. ARV medicines need to be taken every day, along with safe water and good nutrition, if they are to be effective. Treatment may be disrupted for those forced to flee their homes because of conflict or a natural disaster.

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EDITORIAL



*Rebecca Dennis
Sub Editor*

Migration is not a modern concept. People have migrated for thousands of years. For some people, migration is a way of life as they search for pasture or other livelihood interests. Others may be moving to escape from problems, or to find a better livelihood for themselves and their children.

People hold various views about whether migration is good or bad, and often they disagree about a particular situation. Sometimes migration has a positive impact for the people who migrate and on the area they leave or move to. At other times migration has negative consequences.

Regardless of whether we think migration is good or bad in a particular situation, the Bible teaches us to care for the poor, the orphan, the widow and the migrant, and to love our neighbour. This is explored in more depth in the Bible study on page 7.

On the centre pages there is an overview of the topic of migration, looking at the causes and consequences. There are articles about how the local church can respond to migration in different contexts on pages 6 and 13. The article on page 10 looks at the relationship between migration and the environment. On the back page we look at the importance of good communication.

Future issues of *Footsteps* will focus on managing everyday risk, and micro-enterprise.

Rebecca

Advocacy on employment rights

by Pichai Biangla

There are between two and three million Burmese migrants and refugees currently living in Thailand. In Myanmar (Burma) many people are faced with a wide range of human rights abuses and a poor economy. For them the option of earning a relatively stable wage in Thailand, and being in a position to support families and relatives back at home, is very appealing.

Although Thailand is seen as country of opportunity, migrant workers arriving with no money, no job, and nowhere to stay find that the reality is often very different. The Mekong Minority Foundation (MMF) has been supporting Grace Church in Chiang Rai, to help migrant labour workers from Myanmar gain access to the rights to

which they are entitled, as well as helping them to meet their basic needs. Nee Nee*, is a 37-year-old woman who has migrated from Mandalay in Myanmar. Here is her story.

Background

In 2000, Nee Nee decided to leave Myanmar and go to Thailand to try to earn more money for her family. She took her youngest child with her and left the older two children with her parents. Nee Nee paid 1,200 *baht* (around US\$57) to an agent who took her and her daughter to Chiang Rai. At that time there was no official process for migrants to apply for a Thai work permit. Nee Nee found a job as a manual labourer and was quickly able to earn money.

Nee Nee worked in Chiang Rai for several years and was able to put her daughter

For migrants, the option of earning a relatively stable wage in Thailand is very appealing

in a private nursery. In 2004, the laws changed and she obtained a work permit that allowed her to work legally. The work permit was linked to her place of employment, so that the government knew where she was working. This made changing jobs very difficult. Nee Nee also had to pay 2,000 *baht* as a deposit to her employer in case she damaged any property while she was working. Her employer promised to pay this money back when she left.

Nee Nee's daughter became very sick and Nee Nee had to miss work to care for her. The employer was not happy with this and was very rude to her. Nee Nee wanted to leave and find work in another place, but the company would not agree to complete the necessary paperwork and return her work permit. Despite this, Nee Nee found a different job about one hour away in another town. When she left, her deposit was not returned to her. The company also did not pay for her last 10 days of work as they said she had not given 15 days' notice that she wanted to leave. In her new job, she was working illegally because her work permit was still registered at her previous place of employment. Nee Nee wanted to be working legally, so she asked her previous employer for her work permit so that she could transfer it to her new employer. However, they would not release the papers.

Gaining support from MMF

Nee Nee had a friend who was a member of Grace Church in Chiang Rai. Nee Nee



Many people cross the border from Myanmar to Thailand to find work.

Rachel Stevens

* Her name has been changed to protect her identity.

learnt that she could receive legal help through Grace Church. The MMF legal advisor who works with the Grace Church staff provided support to Nee Nee as she tried to gain access to her employment rights.

Work permit

The legal advisor went with Nee Nee to visit the company where she used to work. They refused to hand over the work permit, and they were very rude to her and the legal advisor. Nee Nee and the legal advisor went to the office for migrant workers in the government's labour department. They explained the issue and the officers understood Nee Nee's situation. They changed her work permit details so she could work legally for her new employer.

Wages and deposit

Next, Nee Nee and the MMF legal advisor returned to her previous employer to ask for the deposit and wages that they owed her. The company denied this request again because they said she had left without giving 15 days' notice. So, she and the MMF legal advisor went to the government's Labour Protection and Welfare Office. The officers there asked many questions and recorded all the details. They promised to deal with the situation.

After two weeks the officers contacted Nee Nee and said that the company had agreed to give her the money that was

Discussion questions

- What issues do migrants face in your country when they are trying to find work? Consider issues such as needing a place to live, a work permit, a bank account.
- What legal help is available for migrants so they can gain the rights to which they are entitled?
- What advocacy work can be done to make employers aware of the rights and needs of migrants?
- What advocacy work needs to be done to change labour laws so that migrants can legally find work? How could legal processes be made easier?



Joanna Watson Tearfund

Chiang Rai is seen as a town of opportunity by Burmese migrants.

owed. Nee Nee and the MMF legal advisor returned to the company expecting to receive cash as this was the usual method of payment. However, they received a cheque that was marked 'for deposit only.' As Nee Nee did not have a bank account, they deposited the cheque into the legal advisor's personal account. Several days later, after the bank cleared the cheque, Nee Nee received her cash.

Working together

In spite of the money spent on travel, and the time and effort required, the Grace Church committee, the MMF legal advisor and Nee Nee felt that the process was worthwhile. This is because it teaches Thai companies that they should treat people fairly. Also, the migrant workers are learning that help is available and they are learning to trust their Christian friends and work together with them.

Supporting migrant workers

The story of Nee Nee is a common one. Many of the migrant workers from Myanmar have no-one to help them understand the Thai labour laws. Grace Church has specifically been established to minister to Burmese-speaking people, and they have opened their doors to help

people like Nee Nee. They have organised activities such as language classes and daily child care to help migrants to adjust to a new society. The church also helps migrants find jobs and access the rights to which they are entitled. MMF staff have encouraged and worked alongside Grace Church members to do this work.

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Although Nee Nee was able to access a legal advisor, most migrants do not have this option. This should not stop them from claiming their rights.

Advocacy can be done without the help of a professional. Anyone can speak out and claim what they are entitled to. They just need to know where to find useful information and how to act on it. A good source of information is www.migrantwatch.org



Photos Marco Chumacera

The church and migrant children

by Inés Caballero

The population of Bolivia consists of many ethnic groups and cultures. Inequality is common, resulting in poverty and lack of opportunities. In the rural mountain areas, agricultural activities are suffering due to unpredictable weather patterns and continuous periods of drought. Many people are therefore migrating to cities such as Oruro and Potosí. Unfortunately, these migrants are rarely able to find good employment because their low level of education and training does not meet the requirements of workers in the city.

Rural to urban migration

Entire families migrate from rural areas to the city, expecting to improve their lives.

Men look for work that will provide enough income for their families to survive in the city, taking any jobs that match their skills. These jobs include construction, loading and unloading produce in the markets, selling and cleaning cars, and working in the mines.

Women become involved in informal trade, such as selling low-value products in the streets. They also look for work cleaning

houses or washing cars. In many cases, when they are unable to find work they become beggars, along with their children, on the city's streets.

Children also play a major role in the family economy, and their economic contribution is estimated to be 30 per cent of the household's income. They start working in similar jobs as their parents at a young age, which means they stop going to school.

Mining is the main source of employment in the cities of Oruro and Potosí. Many mining companies do not take issues such as safety for workers into account. Mining also poses a high risk to the health of families in the city.

Families that have migrated from rural areas to the cities often become victims of human rights abuses and suffer mistreatment. They also suffer when they realise it is difficult to continue with their usual customs and habits.

The areas on the edge of the cities contain the highest number of rural migrants. They often lack social security support,

basic sanitation and support in raising their children. Disappointment can lead to problems such as domestic violence and alcoholism.

Working with migrant children

Viva Juntos por la Niñez (Viva Network – Together for Children) is a programme that responds to poverty in Oruro and Potosí. With the support of Tearfund in Potosí, and of Toybox in Oruro, two projects have been developed, aimed at caring for children and adolescents in at-risk situations and preventing children from becoming at risk. These could be:

- migrant children
- working children, such as those working in the mines
- children living on the streets.

In Oruro, the aim of the *Proyecto Encuentro Temprano* (Early Encounter Project) is to reduce the number of children living on the streets, including those who have migrated from rural areas. As part of this project, preventive care centres are created in the local churches that are located in the areas of greatest need. These identify and work with the children in need before they become at risk.

The aim of the *Red de Desarrollo Integral Familiar* (Network for the holistic development of families) project in Potosí is to work with children who live on the edge of the city. The project provides

Churches can reach children and families whose dreams of a better life have been shattered

opportunities for them to fully develop their skills, and gives their families training and education through support centres.

Both projects work through local churches. These churches open their doors to serve these people in an holistic way. Support centres and preventive care centres have been created and are managed by local churches in strategic areas of the cities. These are the areas in each city where children are most vulnerable. In both cities, around 1,000 children are benefiting from the programme.

The children go to the churches three times a week. They receive training, education and support in different areas:

- health
- education
- counselling
- nutrition
- personal growth
- development of interests and skills
- spiritual development.

Work is also being carried out with the children's families. For example, schools are being created for mothers and fathers. Family pastors in each church are working alongside the families. This work strengthens the family structure so that the family remains united.

Working together

The *Viva Juntos por la Niñez* programme works with churches and local authorities. We believe that by working together, families, organisations, churches and authorities can reduce the number of children on the streets and the risks that migrant children are exposed to.

We encourage networking between churches so that they can share about the activities they carry out as they address the problems of the children and their families.

Viva Juntos por la Niñez considers the family and the church to be the fundamental pillars that enable children

Families that have migrated from rural areas to the cities often become victims of human rights abuses and suffer mistreatment

and adolescents to achieve God's perfect plan for their lives. Churches can reach children and families, whose dreams of a better life have been shattered, with a message of transformation and hope, serving as an effective voice for the promotion of justice for children at risk.

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BIBLE STUDY Migration

We live in a day and age where millions of people wander the earth in search of a better livelihood and hope. The Bible recognises this reality. It contains stories of war and triumph, displacement and pain, frustration and hope. Through it all we can see that God cares for migrants.

MIGRANTS IN THE BIBLE

The story of God's chosen people, Israel, is a story of wandering in many places. Joseph is sent into slavery in a strange land (Genesis 37-46). Moses flees to Midian and finds shelter in the house of a Priest (Exodus 2:15-22). Ruth accompanies Naomi to a foreign land and finds favour in the eyes of Boaz (Ruth 2). Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt with Jesus as a baby. Later on, Jesus and his disciples travelled to many different towns during three years of ministry.

GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MIGRANTS

In the Bible we find God's concern for the well-being of migrants. Repeatedly, the people of Israel are instructed to remember the strangers among them and treat them with love, compassion and justice. God commands the Israelites not to ill-treat them (Exodus 22:21) and not to take advantage of them (Deuteronomy 24:14). God is concerned and cares for powerless and vulnerable people. Strangers are to be cared for (Leviticus 19:9-10), they are to be treated as fellow citizens (Leviticus 19:34) and given a share from the tithe (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). In the New Testament, Jesus gives a new command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39).

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO MIGRANTS

Acceptance The body of Christ should accept strangers with open arms (Romans 15:7-9) and treat them as equals (Colossians 3:11).

- *What is your attitude to migrants? Do you accept them or reject them?*
- *What are some of the practical ways you can show love to migrants?*

Hospitality The church is told to welcome and offer hospitality to people in need (Romans 12:13).

- *How could you show hospitality to people in need?*

Care Churches should care for and speak out on behalf of migrants and refugees (Proverbs 31:8-9). Such ministries are often challenging, but they can be an effective approach for transformation.

- *Are there migrants or refugees in your area that you could reach out to?*
- *What action could your local church take to 'speak out' on behalf of migrants and refugees?*

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What is migration?

MIGRATION is the movement of people from one place to another. Migration can be international (movement between different countries) or internal (movement within a country, often from rural to urban areas). In this article we consider the impacts of migration on the individual, the place left behind by the migrant and the place hosting the migrant. We also consider the push and pull factors of migration.

More people are migrating today than at any other point in human history. Migrants travel in many different ways and for many different reasons. People move in order to improve their standard of living, to give their children better opportunities, or to escape from poverty, conflict and famine. Today, with modern transportation and communications, more people are motivated and able to move.

Article compiled by Rebecca Dennis

Photo Geoff Crawford Tearfund

PUSH FACTORS

These are factors which push people to migrate, such as drought, famine, lack of jobs, over-population, civil war, persecution.



The impact on the place left behind by the migrant

ADVANTAGES

- ✓ Migration relieves population pressure and reduces unemployment, which reduces stress on the local or national economy. It also reduces the demand on natural resources.
- ✓ Families left behind will benefit from the money that migrants send. Most families will spend the money on food, other household essentials and education. International migrants send home billions of dollars in remittances each year. For some countries, this money has a huge benefit for the national economy.

DISADVANTAGES

- ✗ They lose some of the people who have had the most invested in them, such as nurses and accountants. This is sometimes known as the 'brain-drain'.

- ✗ The majority of migrants are young men, many of whom are married. Their wives remain at home, but carry a much heavier burden than before as they maintain the household alone.
- ✗ Where migration is common, human trafficking can increase as traffickers see a financial opportunity. Parents who are poor may be encouraged to sell their children in exchange for a small payment.
- ✗ A significant proportion of migrants attempt to return home after several years. Returning migrants are often wealthier than the people around them and they often behave differently, which can cause friction within communities.
- ✗ There can be an increase in HIV infection as migrants bring HIV home with them.

The impact on the individual

ADVANTAGES

- ✓ Migrants may be able to earn more money if they migrate.
- ✓ If the individual is escaping conflict or persecution, they might migrate to another country for safety, although the asylum process can be long and complicated.
- ✓ Migrants can be reunited with family members who have already moved.
- ✓ Migrants may have access to better health care and other welfare services in the place to which they migrate.
- ✓ They may have access to a better education for their children.

DISADVANTAGES

- ✗ The work that is available may be temporary, unpredictable, dangerous or illegal.



Why do people migrate?

People migrate for many different reasons. These reasons can be **economic**, **social**, **political** or **environmental**.

ECONOMIC MIGRATION This involves moving to find work or follow a particular career path.

SOCIAL MIGRATION This involves moving somewhere for a better quality of life or to be closer to family or friends.

POLITICAL MIGRATION This involves moving to escape political, religious or ethnic persecution, or conflict.

ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION Causes of this type of migration include natural disasters such as flooding or drought.

PULL FACTORS

These are factors which pull people towards a certain place, such as job opportunities, better education, freedom, family links.

Individual

- ✗ Despite earning more money, the migrant will often earn little compared to the standard of living in the new place. They may not achieve the high standard of living that is often described in the media.
- ✗ Migration means leaving behind support networks of friends and family, and a culture that they are used to, and moving to a new, different and sometimes hostile place.
- ✗ Migrants face stigma if the community to which they move does not understand them or mistrusts them.
- ✗ Children, who are either left behind or sent away by parents, are more vulnerable to abuse.
- ✗ International migrants may not have legal status and, therefore, do not have access to support such as health care or social services.

The impact on the place hosting the migrant

ADVANTAGES

- ✓ Migrants frequently go to places that do not have enough local people with the skills to do the jobs that are available. The gaps that migrants fill are focused in either highly skilled jobs, such as doctors, or manual jobs, such as construction workers. This helps to support the economy.
- ✓ Migrants are often more willing to fill job vacancies that local people are unwilling to fill. These include roles such as fruit-picking, child care and cleaning services.
- ✓ The integration of migrants into the culture of the area or country hosting them can lead to cultural diversity in areas such as food and music.

DISADVANTAGES

- ✗ Migrants often experience racial abuse and discrimination which divides communities and can increase crime.
- ✗ Migrants often live in neighbourhoods where there are others from the same area. A large migrant community may put extra pressure on local services (such as schools and health services).
- ✗ Countries that receive migrants often have to respond to the sudden arrival of a large number of illegal immigrants, many of whom have risked their lives by travelling in lorries and boats.
- ✗ Migrants can bring illnesses such as tuberculosis and HIV with them.

Migration and the environment

by Osvaldo Munguía

The most common causes of migration in the Mesoamerican countries (the region stretching from southern Mexico to Costa Rica) are conflict and the degradation of the natural environment. In this article we consider both situations and the effect on the region of La Mosquitia in north-east Honduras.



Non-sustainable practices have led to degradation of the land and local ecosystems.

Migration caused by conflict in the region

Civil wars in the 1970s and 1980s in the countries bordering Honduras, such as Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, forced the migration of several people groups into Honduras. The refugees who crossed the border from Nicaragua into the region of La Mosquitia belonged to the indigenous Miskito and Sumu Mayangna peoples. These people groups share cultural, ethnic and historical links with both countries. As a result, the refugees were initially welcomed into the communities and homes of the Honduran Miskitos. Soon, however, the number of refugees was so large that the Honduran Miskitos could no longer continue to take care of them.

The Nicaraguan refugees later received support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) through the work of an organisation called World Relief. The refugees were gathered together in an assembly and distribution centre in the village of Mocolon. The population of the village grew from 200 to 30,000 people. UNHCR and World Relief provided support in the form of food, housing, water, sanitation and various types of technical assistance.

The refugees were free to live and farm as they wanted. Sadly, this had a severe environmental impact. The refugees began to use the natural resources without considering sustainability or good farming practices. Hundreds of hectares of forest were cut down. Many species of animals,

Land degradation has increased poverty and forced people to look for other ways of life

birds and fish started to disappear as a result of over-hunting and the loss of their natural habitat.

The civil war in Nicaragua ended in 1990 and the Nicaraguan refugees began to return to their country. Over the following years, the forest grew back in the areas that had been deforested and then abandoned by the refugees. Animals, birds and fish returned to the area.

Migration caused by degradation of the natural environment

Another major cause of migration in Mesoamerica is the degradation of ecosystems and a reduction in the fertility of the land. The National Geographic Society has compared vegetation cover in Mesoamerica between 1950 and 2000. The areas of forest have been greatly reduced over this period. In the country of Honduras itself, around 50 per cent of the forest has been lost over the same period.

Much rainforest has been cut down so that the land can be used for agriculture. For example, large areas of forest have been converted into land for grazing cattle. According to a recent satellite analysis by MOPAWI, the conversion of forests into land for grazing cattle has nearly tripled between 2000 and 2007 (see diagram). Forest resources have also been exploited. Trees have been cut down, mainly by wealthy companies, to sell as timber. Land has been cleared, usually illegally, in order to build roads to transport the timber. The non-sustainable practices used have led to degradation of the land and local ecosystems. This has increased poverty and forced people to look for other ways of life.

One of the main destinations for migrants is the tropical rainforest in the region of La Mosquitia. Unfortunately, the migrant families bring with them the

Geoff Crawford Tearfund

non-sustainable environmental practices that originally caused them to move. The Mosquitia region itself has therefore suffered from degradation of the land and local ecosystems in recent years.

Migration to other areas

Environmental degradation has also encouraged migration to urban areas, and towards the United States of America. Many people go in search of the 'American Dream': employment, better educational opportunities and better access to health services for their children. However, migrants often end up living on the edges of towns which have limited or non-existent basic public health services such as water and sanitation, and energy supplies.

Migration over land towards the United States of America from Honduras means crossing the borders of Guatemala and Mexico. These crossings are very dangerous, with high risk to life due to the conditions in which the migrants are transported. Hundreds of road accidents have been recorded, which have left people, mainly men, with no arms or legs. There have also been frequent deaths due to falls from trains or suffocation when hiding in vehicles.

Responding to the situation

MOPAWI have identified three key ways of reducing environmental degradation and, at the same time, providing people with a sustainable livelihood.

- **Growing cocoa for markets** This provides families with an income as



Geoff Crawford Tearfund

Much rainforest has been cut down so that the land can be used for agriculture.

cocoa is in high demand. Parents are able to send their children to school. Growing cocoa also helps agroforestry as cocoa plants require shade from other trees and plants.

- **Export of cosmetics using local tree products** The export of these products has strengthened the traditions of the indigenous people to maintain the forests and the biodiversity found within them.
- **Crop rotation** Farmers plant the fast-growing Guama fruit plants. These are nitrogen-fixing plants and they improve the soil quality. This has improved the growth of other crops such as maize, kidney beans and pineapple.

A major cause of migration is the degradation of ecosystems and a reduction in the fertility of the land

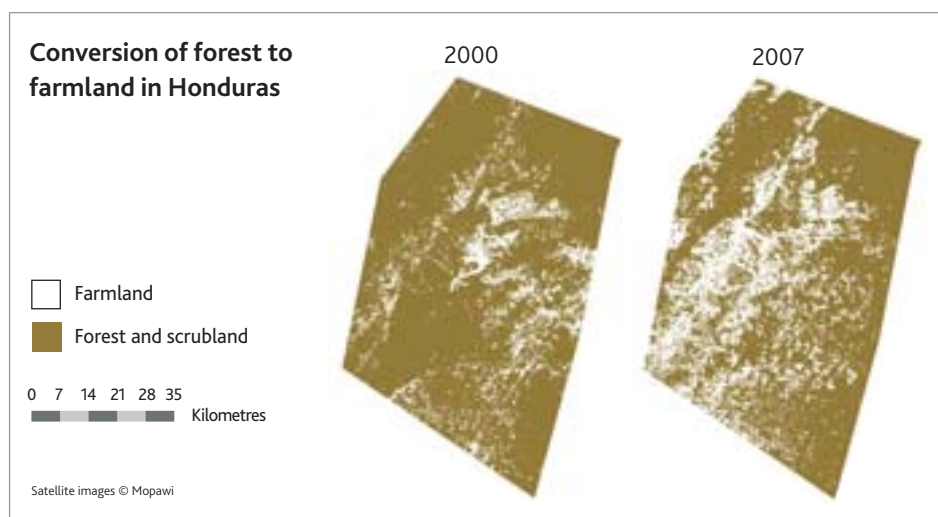
Conclusion

There is a link between migration and environmental deterioration. Where migration is caused by conflict, the number of people living in a particular area increases very rapidly, and they are dependent on the natural resources available to them. Where migration occurs because environmental resources have been damaged or used up, people migrate to forested land and often take with them harmful practices regarding the use of resources, which affects the environmental sustainability of this new area. Although migration and environmental deterioration are linked, it is important to remember that there are ways of reducing the impact on the environment.

Oswaldo Munguia is the Executive Director of MOPAWI.

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Strategies for Hope



The Strategies for Hope Trust has published two new training materials about HIV and AIDS as part of the Called to Care toolkit, which is designed for church leaders, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

No 4 *Pastoral Action on HIV and AIDS* contains guidelines for training church leaders in addressing the pastoral challenges of the HIV epidemic. <http://www.stratshope.org/b-cc-04-pastoral.htm>

No 5 *Community Action on HIV and AIDS* is designed to help church leaders to deal with social, cultural and economic issues related to the HIV epidemic at community level. It looks at topics such as sexual abuse of children, domestic violence, widow inheritance and the taking of property by relatives – issues which have been made worse in many African

Glossary of words used in this issue

Asylum seeker A person who is applying to the government of their host country for protection

Human trafficking The illegal trade in human life, for forced marriages, sex work and labour

Migrant A person who has moved from one country, region or place to another

Refugee A person who moves away from their own country because they feel unsafe there due to race, religion, political opinion or being a member of a particular social group

Remittances Money sent from a migrant to family members in their home country

Useful website

www.aidworkers.net 'Tired of reinventing the wheel? We are ...'

Aid Workers Network was set up in 2001 to help aid workers around the world to connect with each other in an online setting. This enables experienced and less experienced aid and development workers discuss the issues that they face, as well as sharing useful insights, tips and other resources through an online forum. There are also various blogs about aid and development. There are currently over 17,000 members.

To find out more, to join in discussions and to receive the monthly newsletter follow the link above.

countries by the HIV epidemic. <http://www.stratshope.org/b-cc-05-community.htm>

Both books contain role plays, discussion guidelines, biblical references, case studies and illustrations. The case studies in both books are from churches in Kenya and Uganda, but they are relevant to churches throughout sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

To order:

(organisations in Kenya)
OAIC, Junction of Riara/Kingara Roads
PO Box 21736, Nairobi 00505, Kenya

Email: hiv@oaic.org
Website: www.oaic.org

(organisations outside Kenya)
TALC, PO Box 49, St Albans, AL1 5TX, UK
Email: info@talcuk.org
Website: www.talcuk.org

PILLARS Seeking justice for all

This PILLARS Guide presents a number of common situations of injustice based on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It seeks to help people to learn about their human rights and to discuss ways of promoting them in different local situations. Each topic includes Bible references that help us to understand God's compassion and passion for justice. This Guide helps readers understand how to challenge unjust laws, to become familiar with their rights and to promote and defend the rights of others.



This PILLARS Guide can be downloaded free at: www.tearfund.org/tilz in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

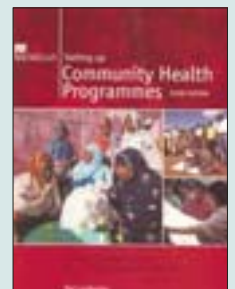
Free printed copies are available from:
Tearfund Resources Development
100 Church Road, Teddington
TW11 8QE, UK
Email: pillars@tearfund.org

Setting Up Community Health Programmes: a practical manual for use in developing countries

The third edition of this practical manual emphasises the need to involve the local community in the planning, running and monitoring of health programmes rather than simply receiving injections, medicines and advice from health workers. It also looks at working with partners in the community, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation. The management of immunisation, tuberculosis, AIDS, maternity, family planning, and malnutrition programmes is covered, with plenty of practical tips.

The book costs £5.50.

To order, contact:
TALC, PO Box 49, St Albans, AL1 5TX, UK
Email: info@talcuk.org
Website: www.talcuk.org



Befriending asylum seekers

by Ros Holland

A refugee is a person who moves away from their own country because they feel unsafe there due to race, religion, political opinion or being a member of a particular social group. Someone who wants to be recognised as a refugee is an asylum seeker.

Hamed's story

'I was a cattle herder. In 2003, I was arrested by the police as they thought I was in opposition to the Government. A number of times I was tied to a tree and beaten repeatedly. My village was attacked by the militia. All my friends and my whole family were killed. I ran away and eventually reached a port.

I had some money and an agent put me into a goods container on a boat. After four weeks the container was opened. I was in Liverpool, in England. I could barely move and I was afraid. They took me to the government's Home Office where I was questioned.

When I went to the asylum court I did not understand anything. Three weeks later I received a letter saying I was refused asylum and that I was to return to my country, because it was safe there. Some people from the government came to the house I was living in, carried me outside and left me on the street.

I slept outside for a week. One day a man gave me the address of the Red Cross and some money so I could catch a bus. There I met staff from the Boaz Trust. They found me a space in one of their houses with other refused asylum seekers from my country. Now I volunteer at the drop-in centre and I also go to college where I am learning English.'

Hamed has recently found a new solicitor and his case is being considered again by the government in the UK.

When a person arrives in the United Kingdom (UK), looking for asylum, they must register with the government while their legal case is considered. If their case is approved, they are allowed to stay in the UK. If their case is rejected, the government will not provide any more support and they must leave the country. People who are refused asylum may try to find new evidence to reapply. This can take years and during this time it can be almost impossible to find somewhere to stay or any other means of support.

The Boaz Trust

Manchester is a large city in the UK with a population of over 2 million people. There are around 2,000 refused asylum seekers living in the city. The Boaz Trust is a Christian organisation that was set up to meet the needs of people who have been refused asylum in Manchester. It works

with local churches, the Red Cross and other groups to provide this support.

One of the main aims of the Boaz Trust is to provide accommodation for refused asylum seekers who have nowhere to live. This is done in one of three ways:

- A **hosting programme** where they can stay with a local family who have a spare room available.
- Eight **Boaz Houses**. These are loaned to or rented by the Boaz Trust to provide a home for homeless asylum seekers.
- A winter **night shelter** project. Along with a team of Christians from five local churches the Boaz Trust provides transport, a hot meal, a bed for the night and breakfast in the morning, during the cold months of the year.

Supporting asylum seekers

We believe that some of the activities we carry out can be used anywhere in the world, wherever there are people seeking safety.

CARING FOR THE WHOLE PERSON

As an organisation, we seek to work holistically, caring for and serving asylum seekers as whole persons. We are



Eating meals together can break down cultural barriers.

convinced that everyone is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). For this reason all people deserve respect and care. In response to the needs expressed by asylum seekers in our community, the Boaz Trust has developed the 'Meaningful Lives' project. This involves:

- **Days out** to enjoy each other's company and visit different places, such as the countryside or museums.
- **Classes** to help asylum seekers develop skills, such as learning English or computer skills.
- **Craft projects**, such as making greetings cards, bracelets, bowls, pots, and cushion covers.

These provide asylum seekers with opportunities to talk, learn and share as they spend time together.

SOMEWHERE TO STAY AND SOMETHING TO EAT

At a very basic level, asylum seekers need shelter and food.

- **Housing** Do people seeking asylum in your community have shelter? Are there any local families who have a room in which they could stay? Could your church or another community building be used as a night shelter?

Christians are called to 'speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute'

- **Food** Could you share resources to provide for people in your community who have nothing to eat?

SOMETHING TO DO

In many places, it might not be possible for asylum seekers to find work due to the law (as in the UK) or discrimination. Perhaps your church could offer:

- language, cooking or computer classes
- craft or sports activities
- a shared garden for growing fruit or vegetables
- social groups aimed at women or men, parents or young people, children or older people.

SPEAKING UP

Some people hold negative views about those who move into an area from other countries. As Christians, we are called to 'speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves, for the rights of all who

Practical ideas

Be a friendly church community!

It is important that Christians show Jesus' love in everything we do and say, to everyone we meet. Could you open up your church building for a 'drop in' once a week? For example, on one day each week one local church provides a simple lunch, second-hand clothes, support and advice to anyone who needs it.

Share food and fellowship.

Eating meals together can break down barriers. Could you ask some of the asylum seekers to cook a traditional meal? It is an easy way to learn about other cultures and make friends.

Learn about the situation in your local area.

Where do migrants come from and why? Are there other groups you could work with in the community?

Ask new people in your community how you can support them.

For example, they may want help finding a doctor, using the buses, or opening a bank account.

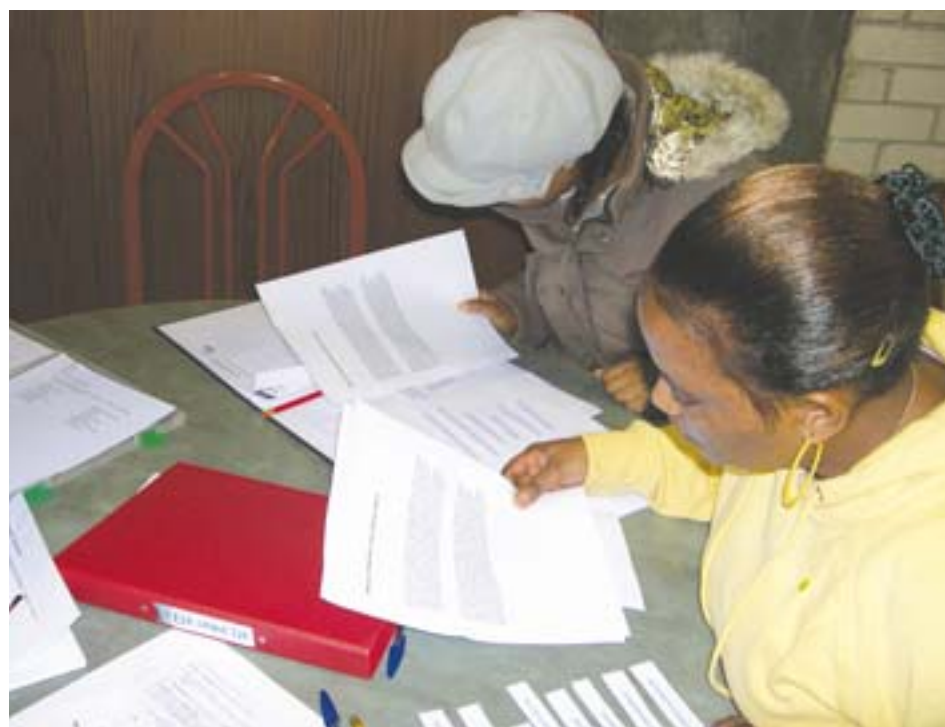
are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly ...' (Proverbs 31:8-9).

- We can challenge local people when they say things about asylum seekers that are untrue.
- It is important to speak up, with and for, a person who we believe has been mistreated. We can organise petitions to show the government that many people care about the injustice that has happened. Although some newspapers may have very negative views, we can try to encourage them to share stories of people who have been denied a safe place to stay.
- Sometimes it is very difficult to know what to do when we see people treated unfairly. Christians can pray and can know that God hears their prayers.

Ros Holland is the Office and Communications Manager for the Boaz Trust.

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English classes provide asylum seekers with something to do and develop their skills at the same time.

Sipitiawe Moyo

Bee-keeping

I am a community development worker in the north-west of Benin, and I would like to develop bee-keeping in the region. How can I go about this? How can traditional and modern knowledge be combined?

I would like to hear from any readers who can share experiences, ideas, techniques, training, advice or books.

Nicodème M Moutouama
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Tanguiéta
Benin
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School children and HIV

Collège Saint Boniface is a school which belongs to our organisation, l'Association Communautaire pour le Développement Intégral (Community Association for Integral Development – ACDIN). In June 2008, they organised culture days under the title of 'AIDS, make sure you pass me by'. The activities took place over five days across five different locations in the east of Kinshasa. Through performing arts (theatre, concerts and poetry), awareness was raised among more than 6,000 children between eight and 14 years of age about how HIV is transmitted, and advice was given about voluntary testing and prevention. We believe that increasing the awareness of children about HIV could reduce its impact on young people, who are the future of the country. We would like to continue the same activities in other places.

If other readers of *Footsteps* are involved in this area of work, we would be more than happy to share our experiences with them.

Jean Robert Muyense
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or
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How do you get down from a yak?

Several years ago I wrote a letter to *Footsteps* asking for 'problems' or techno-

logical challenges that I could give to my undergraduate engineering students to solve as part of their studies.

Some examples of problems that we have tackled include: designing a device to seal plastic bags without electricity (see article in *Footsteps* 57), building a bread oven, designing a simple briquetting machine and improving cassava processing. Issues that we are currently tackling include improving cooking stoves in India, removing fluoride from water in Ethiopia, designing a wheelchair suitable for Kenya and investigating renewable energy use in Nigeria.



Mark Lidgett

I am always looking for challenges for my students, so if you have any engineering 'problems' or questions that you want an answer for, please contact me. The latest email I received was from a lady in Nepal, asking 'how to get down from a yak'. Any advice would be gratefully received!

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A model for livelihoods

I have worked as a Pastoral Field Officer in the Ukwuani Local Council Area of Delta State, Nigeria for ten months. Many people work hard and enjoy farming.

Questions and answers

Do you have a question you need an answer for? Do you have information that you think others will find useful? If your answer to either of these questions is 'yes', then we would like to hear from you!

Please send any letters to:

The Editor
Footsteps
100 Church Road
Teddington
TW11 8QE
UK

or email:
footsteps@tearfund.org

Most of the villagers have other sources of income such as trading, teaching, fishing and making crafts. Most people will spend three hours on their farm every day. The villagers make money from their farming activities and they would like to learn to save money. If you are able to provide us with information or support, please contact Mr Ezekiel EB who is an administrator with RCCG, our non-profit organisation.

Box 62
RCCG Camp Post Office
Ogun State
Nigeria
Email: eniolaey@yahoo.ca

Increasing income

I am a member of the League of Voting Women of Brazil, and we want to develop projects that work with needy communities. We want to teach them to avoid the waste of foodstuffs and other household products. We would like to hear from anyone who has any studies designed to increase the household income of needy families by using discarded materials, including household refuse.

Regina Branco
League of Voting Women of Brazil
São Paulo
Brazil
Email: recabranco@hotmail.com

Keeping in touch

by Simon Batchelor

One of the saddest things in life is to lose contact with friends and family members. In the world today there are ever increasing numbers of migrants. Some have migrated for economic gain, others are forced migrations. As technology has improved and spread across the world, communication between loved ones has become both increasingly possible and more affordable. It can also link poor people to a flow of resources that would otherwise be lost.

International communication

Economic migrants moving internationally to a neighbouring country, to Europe or the United States of America can now keep in touch using new technologies, such as 'Voice-Over Internet Protocol' (VOIP). VOIP is the ability to turn a voice (the phone call) into data, to send it over the internet and then convert it back into voice. One example of VOIP is Skype. VOIP means that in many situations a long-distance call can be made for free or for a small cost. Some governments in the South are resisting VOIP in order to protect the profits of large telecommunication companies. In some countries VOIP calls from internet cafés have been made illegal. In most cases, however, international migrants can communicate with home for a fraction of the cost that it used to be.

Internal communication

Local mobile phone systems are making life easier too. Rural families may not have their own phone, but they have increasing access to phones through friends and neighbours.

Benefits of maintaining communication

Communication between migrants and their family and friends is not just about love and friendship. They also need to know that each other is healthy and well. People remain in contact to keep their 'social capital'. Social capital is the network of

people who are there to help, support and encourage an individual.

People also keep in touch to maintain their 'economic capital'. International migrants currently send home billions of dollars through the formal banking and money transfer system. The money that migrants send home is called *remittances*. In some countries, remittances can account for over ten per cent of the total 'income' of the country.



Mobile phones have improved communication between family members and friends.

Mobile phones allow those who migrate to the city to keep in touch with their family

Internal migrants also often send money home to their families. Accurate figures are not available, but surveys tend to suggest that about 15 to 20 per cent of poor people in urban areas send money home to their rural families. This flow is increasing because mobile phones have enabled people to do the following:

- make 'chaser' phone calls from the rural families, such as 'school fees are due. Could you please send something'.
- transfer money through mobile phones. In Kenya, a system called MPesa was launched by Safaricom in 2007, with support from international agencies. Many people who do not have a full bank account now have a way to transfer and manage money. A migrant can deposit cash with a local agent and is given a code. They pass the code on to the person to whom they want to transfer the money, who can convert the code into cash with their local agent.

New communication technologies are providing international and internal migrants with a way of maintaining love and concern for their families – in hearing that friendly voice, learning about and praying for various troubles, and for sending money both regularly and at times of crisis.

Simon Batchelor is an independent consultant.

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