

A world in motion

Refugees and resources

by Robin Paynter

With millions of people around the world forced to flee their homes due to war, civil strife, persecution, or famine, refugee populations have grown immensely in the last years. These populations are living in conditions that are not only marginal in terms of health and safety, but are also lacking in the social structure and services that build and hold communities together.

The global refugee crisis poses specific challenges to libraries and the values of librarianship here in North America where freedom of information access and promotion are a basis for democratic institutions, intellectual freedom, and diversity of opinion. To that end, the ACRL Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Section (AAMES) sponsored (in conjunction with the Women's Studies Section) a program entitled "A World in Motion: Refugees and Resources" at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

The focus of the program was to elicit from panelists the perspectives and information needs of refugee service providers relating to library collections. As a continuation of that program, the following Web resources were selectively culled from a large number of Web pages devoted to the issues of refugees and forced migration. The chosen sites represent a mix of academic and practitioner/primary source sites to serve an audience with a wide breadth of interests.

General starting points

Following are several good overall Web sites to provide an easy entrée into Web informa-

tion on refugees. Search engines such as Altavista, Hotbot, Lycos, etc. are also valuable tools for finding refugee Internet sites.

- **Human Rights Web.** A broad range of sources can be found at this Web site, such as "sites containing information and materials about refugees and aid agencies, human rights treaties, declarations, and other instruments, United Nations documents, foreign law, country information, and international law documents." Access: <http://www.bein.com/9/ten/rightslink.html>.

- **Refugee Research Network (REFWORLD).** A section within the larger United Nations High Commissioner for Refu-



gees, this directory of Web pages indexes Web sites of the leading academic, research, governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations, etc. Access: <http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/refworld/refpub/entry.htm>.

- **The World-Wide Web Virtual Library: Migration and Ethnic Relations.** A com-

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pendium of a wide range of migration and ethnic Web sites. To easily find refugee-related sites, type "refugee" in search box. *Access:* <http://www.ercomer.org/wwwvl/index.html>.

Academic research centers

- **Centre for Refugee Studies.** This Web page from York University provides information about the center, its publications, academic programs, as well as related conferences and a listing of refugee and human rights Web resources. *Access:* <http://www.yorku.ca/research/crs/>.

- **Refugee Studies Center.** This University of Minnesota Web page includes links to an archive collection on refugee issues, program and faculty information, and center activities and publications. *Access:* <http://www.isp.acad.umn.edu/RSC/rsc.html>.

- **Refugee Studies Programme.** This Web page is part of the University of Oxford's International Development Centre at Queen Elizabeth House. Similar to the other academic centers, this Web page includes information on the center, associated programs, faculty, conferences, publications, and a list of related Web sites. The Programme also undertook an ambitious digital library project of refugee materials. *Access:* <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/>.

United States governmental sites

- **Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.** The Bureau advises on the formulation of U.S. policies on population, refugees, and migration and administers U.S. refugee assistance and refugee admissions programs. The Web site contains links to issues in the news, key policy documents, press statements, testimony/briefings, fact sheets, and related Web sites. *Access:* <http://www.state.gov/www/global/prm/index.html>.

- **Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).** The service's Web page provides access to INS forms, laws and regulations, public affairs information, statistics, employer information, and naturalization information. *Access:* <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/>.

- **Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).** A domestic refugee resettlement program to provide services to refugees resettling in the United States, this site indexes ORR regulations, funding opportunities, statistical reports, and links to other federal and state refugee agencies. *Access:* <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr/index.html>.

- **United States Agency for International Development (USAID).** This Web site features links to USAID's humanitarian activities, publications, development projects, news, and related topical links such as democracy, environment, population, and health. *Access:* <http://www.info.usaid.gov/>.

International governmental organization sites

Many international governmental organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Organization of African States (OAS), have refugee aid programs, though many do not include much relevant information on the Web sites regarding such programs. Thus the



following Web sites have been chosen because of their primary focus on refugees.

- **International Organization for Migration (IOM).** Documents, experts, conferences, data, legislation, etc. are featured on this well-designed multilingual Web site. *Access:* <http://www.iom.ch/welcome.htm>.

- **ReliefWeb.** A Web site created by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with the purpose of disseminating current reliable information to the international humanitarian relief community. Much of the information focuses on current humanitarian emergencies, with considerable resources on past disasters, maps, country background information, complex emergencies, and a Bulletin. *Access:* <http://www.notes.reliefweb.int/>.

• **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** This premiere site for refugee information features current news, resettlement, WITNESS (documentary series), funding and donor relations, the world (map- and text-based access to country-specific information about refugees), images, issues (links to feature articles written on prominent refugee issues), teacher information and materials, publications, maps, and REF WORLD. The latter is a rich research source providing access to United Nations Official Documents, news from around the world, listings of research organizations, country information, legal information, bibliographic information, and reference materials. *Access:* <http://www.unhcr.ch/>.

Non-governmental organization sites

• **American Refugee Committee Worldwide.** This Web site includes history and program links, a section on the global refugee crisis, ARC field offices, and a photo gallery. *Access:* <http://www.archq.org/>.

• **Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program.** This well-organized Web site features organizational history, news features (on current issues such as landmines), information on worldwide projects, resource/publication information, and links to other organizations. *Access:* <http://bruno.nccusa.org/cws/immigration.html>.

• **Doctors without Borders USA.** The well-known volunteer group's Web page provides organizational information, updates on its activities, and press releases. *Access:* <http://www.dwb.org/index.htm>.

• **InterAction: American Council for Voluntary International Action.** InterAction provides a structure for voluntary agencies engaged in development and humanitarian relief activities. Its well designed Web page features links to InterAction 98 Forum (current hot topics), its publications, and information on development, refugees, disasters, and advocacy. *Access:* <http://www.interaction.org/index.html>.

• **International Council of Voluntary Agencies.** ICVA is the international counterpart to InterAction, providing "a permanent international liaison structure for voluntary agency consultation and cooperation." Their

Web site includes information on the organization, its history, member agencies, publications, emergency updates, and NGO standards. *Access:* <http://www.icva.ch/>.

• **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.** An excellent Web site containing news releases, situation reports, organization information, a directory of national societies, publications, and the minutes of their "issue forum" on current humanitarian issues. *Access:* <http://www.ifrc.org/home.htm>.

• **International Rescue Committee, Resettlement Program.** This Web site provides links to fact sheets, news, their overseas programs, health programs, and emergency preparedness, and response information. *Access:* <http://www.intrescom.org/resettle.html>.

• **Migration & Refugee Services: National Council of Catholic Bishops.** Links to organizational information, features on current issues in the United States and worldwide, and news. *Access:* <http://www.nccbuscc.org/mrs/index.htm>.

• **Refugees International.** This Web site provides information about the organization, its mission and history, annual reports, and extensive feature articles on refugee issues and news. *Access:* <http://www.refintl.org/>.

• **U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR).** Links to news and updates, organizational information, worldwide refugee information, USCR in the field, and publications. *Access:* <http://www.refugees.org/>.

Electronic journals/newsletters

• **Forced Migration Monitor.** "The Forced Migration Monitor is an eight-page, bimonthly publication of the Forced Migration Projects. Articles in the *Monitor* focus on issues surrounding forced migration, displacement, and refugees. While the *Monitor* covers global issues, the geographic emphasis is on the countries of the former Soviet Union, the former Yugoslavia, and the Americas" (description from the Web site). *Access:* <http://www.soros.org/fmp2/html/may98.htm>.

• **International Journal of Refugee Law.** One of the leading academic journals on refugee issues, published by Oxford University Press. General information on journal, subscription information, and article ab-

stracts (not full text) is available. *Access:* <http://www.oup.co.uk/reflaw/>.

- **Journal of Refugee Studies.** One of the leading academic journals on refugee issues, published by Oxford University Press. General information on journal, subscription information, and article abstracts (not full text) is available. *Access:* <http://www.oup.co.uk/jnls/list/refuge/>.

- **The PRM Quarterly.** "After each quarter in the year, PRM (population, refugees, and migration) Assistant Secretary Taft sends out a letter to various Friends of PRM—humanitarian representatives, think tank executives, academics, etc. The letter provides highlights and summarizes activities of PRM during the previous quarter" (description from Web site). *Access:* http://www.state.gov/www/global/prm/letters_index.html.

- **Refugee Participation Network.** "Newsletter published three times a year in English and Spanish; each issue focuses on a different theme with articles written by a wide range of individuals, plus conference reports, book reviews, news of publications and information about the Refugee Studies Programme" (description from Web site). *Access:* <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/rpn.htm>.

- **Refugee Survey Quarterly.** One of the leading academic journals on refugee issues, published by Oxford University Press. General information on journal, subscription information, and article abstracts (not full text). *Access:* <http://www.oup.co.uk/refqtl/>.

- **Refugees.** A publication of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, it is "a quarterly magazine that describes refugee events and issues, as well as UNHCR's efforts to assist those in need." *Access:* <http://www.unhcr.ch/pubs/pubs.htm>.

Discussion lists

- **ASYLUM-L.** According to the listowner, ASYLUM-L is a "discussion list on the legal aspects of asylum and refugee status: interpretation of the Geneva Refugee Convention, procedural aspects, evidence, eligibility, access to the procedure, human rights and persecution, free movement of asylum seekers, etc." ASYLUM_L is an open, unmoderated list. *Subscribe:* majordomo@ufsia.ac.be.

- **EUNET-L.** The listowner says, "The purpose of EUNET-L is to provide a platform

for mutual discussion for researchers (academic and nonacademic) and policy makers on issues related to early warning. This includes the exchange of research, ideas, information etc. on Early Warning. Early Warning here is very broadly defined as the Early Warning of humanitarian disasters, which includes ethnic/communal conflict, genocides/politicides, wars, refugee migrations etc. We hope to link as many people together into this worldwide network in order to create a community of Early Warning scholars and strengthen ties between the research and policy community. Currently there are 100+ individuals and organizations signed up on EUNET-L and we are growing. EUNET-L is a closed list in order to avoid commercial abuse of the list. *Subscribe:* you need to be added manually by the list-manager. In order apply send a message to ewnet@yorku.ca to get application details."

- **CCRLIST.** "Together the Resettlement Unit at the Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS) and the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) have launched an electronic mailing list for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) [that] focus on protection and resettlement issues. The purpose of this mailing list (to date there are nearly 200 NGO subscribers involved in the protection and resettlement of refugees and the settlement of refugees and immigrants), is to promote collaboration, information sharing and community spirit . . ."

This mailing list is closed to government and the media. *Subscribe:* send a message to lydias@yorku.ca saying you want to subscribe to CCRLIST and please mention your affiliation.

Current information sources

- **Clari.news.refugees** and **clari.news.immigration.** These Clarinet newsgroups have up-to-date newswire articles on refugee situations throughout the world. Because of the interlinked nature of refugees and immigration, often both newsgroups will post the same articles.

- **Refugee News.** A Web site of news about refugees and asylum-seekers' issues, including sections on latest news, recent news, an archive, and links to other refugee and humanitarian Web sites. *Access:* <http://members.tripod.com/~refugeenews/index.html>. ■



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