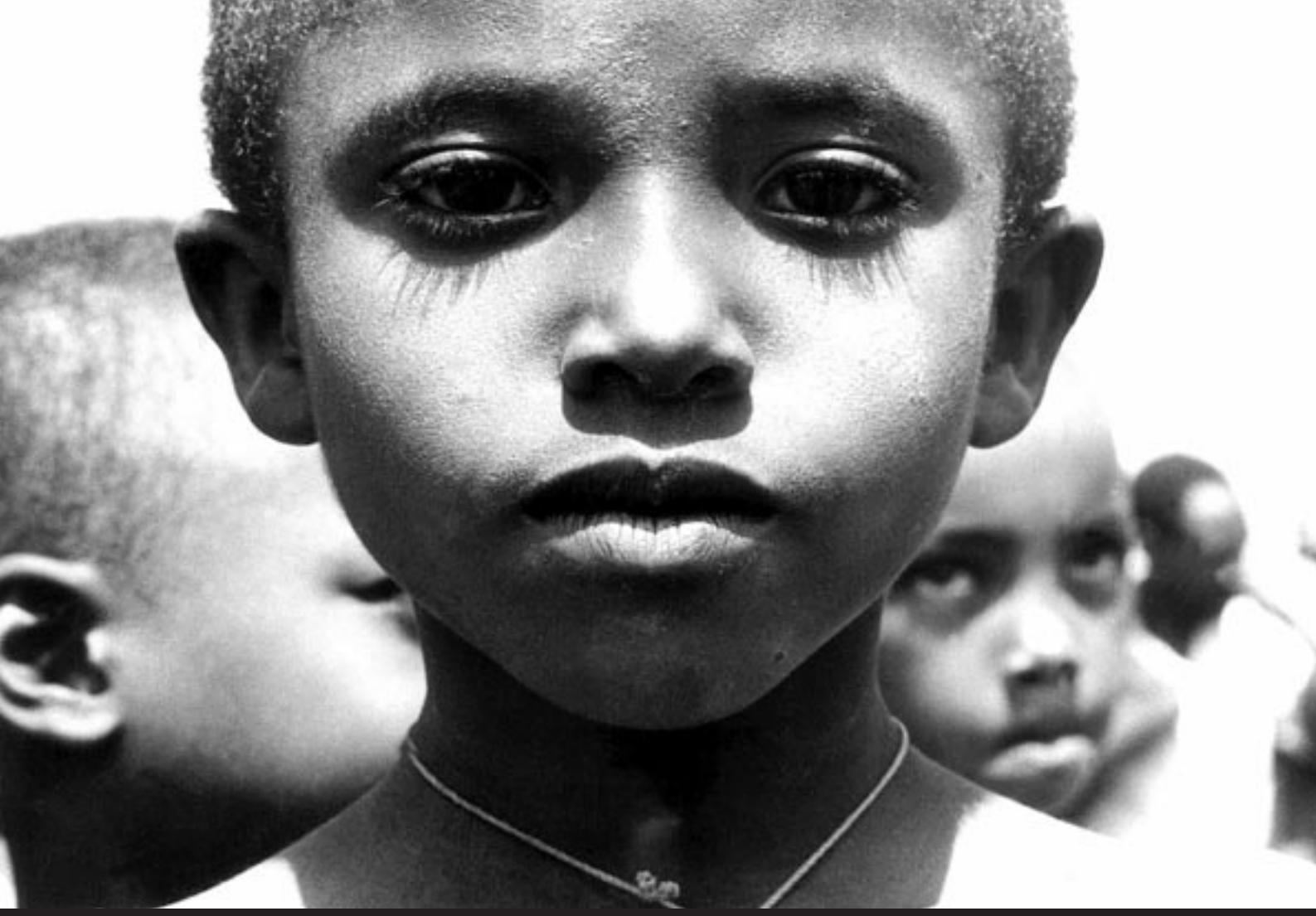

Not Seen or Heard: The Lives of Separated Refugee Children in Dar es Salaam

By Gillian Mann

Save the Children

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Contents

Executive Summary

The purpose of this case study was to learn from boys and girls, their siblings, peers, parents, guardians and others about children's networks of support and the joys and challenges of their daily lives. It was felt that the situation of separated refugee children needed to be considered alongside that of refugee children who live with their parents: to date, nearly all research with separated children has been done in isolation from the issues of broader relevance to refugee children in general. This study thus aimed to place the needs, circumstances and perspectives of separated Congolese boys and girls in the context of that of their urban refugee peers. Participant observation and child-focused participatory methods were used throughout the research process. Both collective and individual research methods were employed.

The separated children who participated in this study are boys and girls of all ages. Nearly all came to Dar es Salaam directly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) or from another Tanzanian town; very few had ever been to a refugee camp. The large majority of children have come to the city since 1996 as a result of the escalation of conflict in eastern DRC. These boys and girls have made their way to Dar es Salaam in a number of different ways and there they live in a variety of different living situations. Some live with related families, others with unrelated individuals or households, still others live alone or with siblings. The boys and girls who participated in this research asserted that separation from their parents was rarely intentional and the decision to seek refuge was never entirely their own. Aside from those children who had become orphaned in the Congo or in flight (and were aware of their parents' death), most did not know where their parents were. All of the children in these circumstances expressed a desire to know the status of their parents and other family members, and to be reunited with them, if at all possible.

This research revealed that, on the whole, Congolese refugee boys and girls in Dar es Salaam face many of the same problems, regardless of whether or not they are separated from their parents. Many of these problems stem from the fact that their presence is illegal and they live in constant fear of discovery and forcible removal to refugee camps. The difference is that, in many cases, the situation of separated children is more severe than that of refugee children more generally. While most refugee boys and girls in this context suffer from material deprivation and are denied the right of access to basic social services, such as health care and education, separated children are more likely to be so affected. Nearly all refugee children describe their life in urban Tanzania as one of social exclusion, discrimination and harassment. These feelings are common for separated children in a variety of circumstances as well as those who live with their parents. This research found that refugee children in general experience high levels of discrimination and harassment at the community level, but that separated children living with relatives and unrelated guardians are particularly vulnerable to prejudice and unequal treatment within the household. Levels of discrimination and abuse appear to be linked to a child's relationship to the guardian, with biolog-

ical children receiving better treatment than related children, who in turn are better off than unrelated children. Separated children are at particular risk of excessive work and girls are exposed to an enhanced risk of commercial sexual exploitation.

In general, refugee children in Dar es Salaam, and separated children in particular, are highly distrustful of the UN and Tanzanian authorities, as well as Tanzanian citizens, and often, other refugees. The illegal status of these children (and the families with whom they may live) means that they need to exercise extreme caution in their efforts to access services from government or NGO sources for fear of disclosing their presence in the city. As a result, for many of the refugee adults and children who participated in this research, life in Dar es Salaam is characterised by isolation and a lack of social support. Children learn from a very young age to be suspicious of others, and this lack of trust impacts on their abilities to form relationships with peers and adults. They have few opportunities for social interaction beyond the household level, and are effectively denied the right to leisure, recreation and to cultural activities. Many boys and girls spend long periods "doing nothing", by which they mean being confined to the household and not interacting with their peers. This reality is especially common for separated children, who are more likely to spend their days within the domestic sphere, less likely to go to school and whose significant workload tends to limit opportunities for play. The child development implications of this isolation are considerable.

Because of their widespread fear and suspicion, many children and families have very small social networks: for children living apart from their own families, especially those in situations characterised by discrimination or abuse, there may be no external monitoring of their well-being. They are effectively beyond the reach of UN agencies, government services and other informal sources of support. Frequently, there are no alternative duty bearers to protect and safeguard their rights.

A significant finding from this research is the predominance of a powerful and widespread fear and loathing of the refugee camps among Congolese refugees in Dar es Salaam. These sentiments are equally common among adults and children, but separated boys and girls are especially reluctant to live in the camps because they associate life there with agency-initiated foster care. This finding was especially interesting given that virtually none of the children involved in the study had actually ever lived within the camps. The result is that separated children prefer to live in the city, despite its significant restraints, restrictions and privations. In making this choice, separated children are effectively cutting themselves off from the kind of services which might enable them to improve their lives. Most notable among these are family tracing services, which children in Dar es Salaam are unable to access because of their status as illegal urban refugees. Although most see the DRC as "home", most have no home or family to return to.

List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CPSC	Care and Protection of Separated Children in Emergencies Project
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

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This research could not have been conducted without the generous financial, logistical and moral support of a number of different people and institutions. While it is not possible to mention everyone here, thanks in particular go to the Refugee Studies Centre of Oxford University, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Save the Children Alliance for the funding they provided to the study. Both Jo Boyden and David Tolfree provided invaluable commentary, ideas and moral support throughout the research process.

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Final thanks go to the countless adults and children from the DRC who took time to share with me their ideas and experiences and who trusted me enough to invite me into their homes, their families and their lives. Their support was instrumental in every aspect of the research and their friendship has enriched my life in countless ways. I am particularly appreciative of the work of the boys and girls who participated in the research Advisory Group, whose thoughtful questions and enthusiasm for the study were a constant motivator and whose gentle and kind approach to others was an inspiration to me. I wish I could put your names in print.

Definitions and Understandings

Terms such as "child", "separated child", "unaccompanied child", and "fostering" are subject to a variety of different meanings.

This document uses the terms and definitions employed throughout the research process. The term "child" is used to refer to a boy or a girl under the age of 18. The terms "young people" and "youth" are used interchangeably to refer to males and females between the ages of 15–25. Since definitions of childhood and youth vary across communities and contexts, these definitions were determined in consultation with the children, young people, and adults who participated in this research.

For the purposes of this study, "separated children" can be defined as those boys and girls "separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may therefore include children accompanied by other adult family members"[1]. The term describes those children who have become separated accidentally or voluntarily from their families, as well as those who have been orphaned, abandoned, abducted or conscripted into armies. "Separated children" may or may not live with adults. It is possible for a separated child to be "accompanied" by adult family members, neighbours, friends and/or strangers. For the purposes of clarification, the term "unaccompanied" child is used throughout this document to refer to those children who are both separated from their families and not being cared for by an adult.

This paper uses the term "fostering" to refer to "situations where children are cared for in a household outside their extended family". "Agency fostering" is used to refer to the placement of a child in foster care which results from the intervention of government, or a Community Based Organisation (CBO) or Non Governmental Organisation (NGO). The term "spontaneous fostering" is used to refer to those families who choose to take in an unrelated child without the intervention of a third party. These definitions have been used in other CPSC studies.

1 Inter-agency Group on Separated Children (2001)

1. Introduction

This case study is one of a number commissioned by the Save the Children Alliance as part of the Care and Protection of Separated Children in Emergencies project (CPSC). Globally, there is growing evidence that many separated refugee children are not embraced within programmes providing care and protection or family tracing. In many contexts, there are large numbers of boys and girls who have become separated from their families and have never come into contact with agencies or interventions to assist them. These children may be living within their extended family network, or with others who fall outside their traditional system of care, such as unrelated families, groups of peers or siblings, or on their own. Some may be living, for example, as street children within their own countries or in the cities of neighbouring states. Others may provide domestic service for strangers, in exchange for food or shelter, or work as farm labourers in areas bordering refugee camps.

As awareness has grown of the complex and varied effects of war and forced migration on families and boys and girls, so too has an appreciation for the mounting population of children in these situations, many of whom are not receiving adequate care and protection – not least because they are largely invisible to external agencies, including governments. What is less clear, however, is how and why these children have become separated and how they manage their lives without parental support and guidance. Little is known about the content and condition of their daily lives, their social relationships and the strategies they use to survive. As a result, the needs and circumstances of separated boys and girls in this context have been largely unrecognised and despite their large numbers, programmatic and advocacy work has so far failed to address their significant and wide-ranging concerns. The research described in this report was designed to address this knowledge gap and to explore these questions from the perspectives of children themselves.

According to Government and UNHCR statistics, Tanzania is currently host to approximately one million refugees[2]. The large majority of these displaced people have fled the ongoing civil conflicts in Burundi and the Congo (DRC), and to a lesser extent, Rwanda and Somalia. While Tanzanian government policy currently requires all refugees to live in camps, or settlements, a very small number of people are granted permission to live in Dar es Salaam, a city of approximately 3 million on the Indian Ocean coast. Permits to live in the city are usually granted only on a short term basis, as a result of educational, medical or security needs. In part to contain the refugee population in the western part of the country, and to discourage refugees from settling in the city, the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs does not grant refugees the right to work, save in very exceptional circumstances. While some individuals and families with permits are given financial assistance from UNHCR, the large majority of refugees in Dar es Salaam are left to fend for themselves in an environment whose tolerance and

2 www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/africa/tanzania.htm

generosity towards "foreigners" has diminished in recent years. Once renowned for its compassionate acceptance of refugees (and still impressive by most standards), the people of Tanzania have grown weary as a result of the nearly continuous influx of people from the Great Lakes region over the past three decades.

As a result of this and other policies, Tanzania has been largely successful in confining its refugee population to the western border regions. However, given the magnitude of their numbers, it is difficult for the government to monitor the movements of refugees once they enter Tanzania. Because the city is seen to offer improved opportunities for security, employment, education and personal freedom, many refugees choose to travel to Dar es Salaam to live illegally. Some come directly from their home country, without passing through the official registration procedures. Others leave the refugee camps and make their way to the city, where they may hope to connect with family or friends, or to continue on a longer journey to other destinations, such as South Africa. Still others come with permission to remain for a specified period, but choose to stay after their permit has expired and to live clandestinely. The majority of these urban refugees appear to be men between the ages of 25 to 40. However, there are also women who migrate to the city on their own, as well as significant numbers of single- and two-parent families who come with biological, related and unrelated children. Some boys and girls also journey to Dar es Salaam without adults, sometimes in the company of siblings or peers, and at other times entirely on their own.

These "separated" children are boys and girls of all ages. They make their way to the city in a number of different ways and live in a variety of different situations once they arrive. Some have become separated from their parents or orphaned before they left their country of origin. In these cases, they may have come to Dar es Salaam alone or in the company of siblings, relatives, friends or neighbours. Sometimes children in these circumstances leave home without adults, but are taken in by adult refugees who they meet along the way. At other times, boys and girls may lose contact with their parents in the process of flight and then continue the journey alone. Additionally, some children come to Dar es Salaam with their families, but once settled, their parents may die or leave the city in search of opportunities elsewhere in Tanzania, Southern or East Africa, or Europe. Children in these circumstances are often left on their own to look after themselves and their younger siblings.

I have spent the last ten months getting to know many of the families and separated children who have come to Dar es Salaam as refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Some of these families have permission to live in the city while others do not. Regardless of their legal status, many families live in fear of the Tanzanian authorities, Tanzanian citizens and in some cases, other refugees. As a result, the population of refugees in Dar es Salaam is dispersed throughout the city and many keep their national identity concealed. Some live as "Tanzanians", telling others that they come from Kigoma, a District of Tanzania that borders the DRC and Burundi. Others simply restrict their interactions with strangers as much as possible. The fact that Tanzania does not require its residents to carry identity cards, as is common in other countries of the

region, means that the true nature of people's citizenship can remain largely hidden. Nevertheless, despite these factors, at least several times a year there are police round-ups of refugees without permits, and those apprehended are sent to prison (usually temporarily) or to the camps.

The clandestine and often illegal nature of their urban existence means that the needs and experiences of Congolese refugees in Dar es Salaam have been largely invisible to government, NGOs and researchers. This is especially true of the circumstances of refugee boys and girls, and particularly those who are separated from their parents.

2. Methodology

This research with Congolese separated children in Dar es Salaam was conducted as part of a larger research project with Congolese refugee children and families living in urban Tanzania. Tanzania was chosen as an ideal site in which to explore the varying contexts in which these "invisible" separated children live, in part because of its long history of hosting refugees from the neighbouring Great Lakes region and other areas, and in part because of its official policy of requiring refugees to live in camps, or settlements. Anecdotal evidence of large numbers of displaced people from the DRC living illegally in Dar es Salaam provided the impetus for an investigation into the situation of refugee children in general, and separated children in particular, in urban Tanzania.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study was to learn from boys and girls, their siblings, peers, parents, guardians and others about children's networks of support and the joys and challenges of their daily lives. It was felt that the situation of separated refugee children needed to be considered alongside those of refugee children who live with their parents. To date, nearly all research with separated children has been done in isolation from the issues of broader relevance to refugee children in general. Understanding the meaning and impact of separation on boys and girls requires contextual knowledge of the circumstances of all refugee children in order to make comparisons at the inter- and intra-household level. For these reasons, this study has a dual focus – on refugee children generally and on separated refugee children specifically.

Principal Research Questions

The following questions guided the research:

1. What factors have prompted separated refugee children to come to Dar es Salaam and what factors have prompted children who came with their parents to become separated subsequently?
2. How and why do children become separated from their families/caregivers? What is the age and gender profile of children who become separated? Over what periods of time do the separations endure?
3. What are some of the "push" factors for life in the refugee camps and the "pull" factors for life in the city?
4. What was the decision-making process that led to separation? What roles do children themselves play in these decisions? What criteria do they use? Are their expectations subsequently met?
5. What does "separation" mean for children? Does the meaning differ for children who have become separated in different ways (e.g. accidental versus by choice)?

6. What are the different care arrangements that exist for separated children in Dar es Salaam? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each?
7. What is the role of peers, siblings, extended family and non-parental adults in the lives of separated children? Who provides them with support, and of what sort? How are these relationships different from those they experience before separation? In what ways are these relationships different from those of refugee children who live with their families?
8. What are the differences between the daily lives and social relationships of separated children and those of refugee children who live with their families? How significant are these differences from the perspective of the children themselves?
9. What are some of the strategies children employ to manage their lives without parental support or supervision? How do they access the support and services that they need?
10. What threats to their safety and well-being do separated children face, and what response from government, UN and non-governmental agencies do they receive? What kind of response do they need?

The intention of this research was to explore these questions with boys and girls in a variety of different circumstances and living arrangements.

Research Process and Methodology

Given the illegal and clandestine existence of most urban refugees in Tanzania, issues of trust were paramount to this research. Relationships with children and families were formed slowly, over a period of approximately ten months. "Snowball" and opportunistic sampling methods were employed, in which refugee adults and children were continually introducing me to others. Over the course of this time, I came into contact with more than 75 adults and 100 children. Of the approximately 50 boys and girls whom I came to know on an individual basis, 20 were separated from their families. The often extremely difficult circumstances in which these children live meant that it took a great deal of time to gain their trust and that of their guardians and other adults and children in their lives.

Careful attention had to be paid to the real and perceived threats to security of refugees in this context. In carrying out my research and in writing this report, I have deliberately chosen to withhold information that might jeopardise the situation of the families and children who I know in Dar es Salaam. The irony is that people's consent to their involvement in the research is principally a result of their desire to inform the rest of the world of their situation.

The research methodology and strategy were designed to accommodate the sensitive and time-intensive nature of the study. The aim of the research was not to enumerate separated children living in Dar es Salaam, nor to conduct an assessment of the impact of different care-taking arrangements on children in a quantifiable way. So little is known about the population of urban refugees in

Tanzania in general, and that of separated children in particular, that it was not appropriate or feasible to collect a representative sample whose findings could be generalised to the population level. Rather, the research was designed to collect in-depth qualitative data from a small number of boys and girls, guardians and others in order to provide a window into the experiences of children in this context. It is hoped that the study will not only reveal new insights into the needs and circumstances of Congolese and other separated refugee children in Dar es Salaam, but it will encourage local agencies and the government to work with this population to support them in a way which meets their rights under international laws and satisfies their basic material, emotional and social requirements. The findings are thus designed to speak to practitioners, policy-makers and others at the local, national and international level.

Participant observation and child-focused participatory methods were used throughout the research process. Both collective and individual research methods were employed. In addition, individual and sibling-group interviews were conducted with several separated boys and girls, including those who live with guardians and extended or unrelated families, and those who live without adults. Tools included games, drawing, role play, mapping, story telling, singing, and ranking exercises. Sometimes research activities involved only separated children, and at other times groups included children who were living with their parents as well as those who were not. Whenever possible, efforts were made to work with all children in a household, and to observe the relationships between related and unrelated boys and girls. Interviews and informal discussions were also held with guardians and other non-parental adults in a variety of different circumstances. Staff of refugee and child-serving organisations were also interviewed. Few verbatim quotes are used in this report, as it was often difficult or inappropriate to take notes in the course of interviews. Instead, it was necessary to write notes immediately following informal and formal research activities.

At the beginning of the research process, an Advisory Group of 5 children was established in order to guide the design and implementation of the study. 3 boys and 2 girls between the ages of 13 and 16, with representation from the Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda, came together once every two weeks to explore research questions, to discuss and modify research tools, to verify information already collected and to plan their own data collection activities. The team worked together to design their own methods for working with children between the ages of 6-9 years old; after piloting, they conducted research with other refugee children who had recently arrived in Dar es Salaam. Some of these children were with their families, and others were not. I also worked closely with the research team to design, implement and analyse two day-long workshops with refugee children from across Dar es Salaam.

At the end of the data collection period, a feedback workshop was held for Government, UN agencies and international and national NGOs concerned with the situation of refugees in Tanzania. Preliminary research findings were presented and discussed, and participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which the findings supported or contradicted their previous experience. On the whole, it was agreed that the research substantiated a number of issues not yet

formally documented. In addition to acting as an awareness-raising and network-building exercise, the workshop provided an added opportunity for data verification.[3]

3 Since this workshop, a small group of international and national NGOs has been formed to discuss ways of supporting refugee children and families in Dar es Salaam, including those without documents. An informal meeting was arranged between agencies and undocumented refugees for early September 2002 – the first of its kind ever to take place in Dar es Salaam.

3. Separated Refugee Children in Dar es Salaam

3.1 Circumstances of Separation and Exile

Congolese refugee children in Dar es Salaam are not homogeneous in terms of how they have become separated from their families or the length of time that they have lived apart from them. The majority of boys and girls who participated in this study had become separated or orphaned before they left the DRC. Some children's parents had been killed in political violence when the family was living together; other boys and girls had become separated when one or both of their parents were forced to flee and to leave them behind.[4] In other cases, parents may have died when the family was still at home, either of treatable illnesses such as tuberculosis, malaria and typhoid, or sometimes of AIDS. The war in eastern Congo has meant that many people are either unable to earn the cash required to purchase medical care, or are powerless to access adequate services because of transportation problems and security concerns. Furthermore, preventive work such as that associated with HIV has become virtually non-existent in conflict-affected areas, since already meagre government funds have been directed towards fighting the war, and the activities of NGOs have been curbed out of fear for the personal safety of staff. In addition, many adults and young people see such public health campaigns to be irrelevant because living in prolonged conflict has led them to view their survival as a day-to-day concern: consideration of the long-term consequences of risky behaviour may seem futile and unrealistic to many. As a result, the adult and child mortality is reportedly very high in eastern DRC, and many children are becoming orphaned as a result of parental illness, the effects of which are exacerbated by war. Not only are these boys and girls responsible for caring for dying parents in the midst of political violence and insecurity, but they may then be left on their own to grieve in a context where war has almost entirely eliminated the (albeit strained) social support system which would normally have been in place to provide them with support.

Some children also become separated from their parents in the process of flight. This unintentional parting appears to happen to families when they are still in the DRC and also once they have entered Tanzania. However, contrary to popular assumption, separation during flight was the least common explanation for how children in Dar es Salaam came to live apart from their parents. While I am not aware of any studies to confirm this, it is interesting that anecdotal evidence from NGOs and UN staff working in the refugee camps in the western part of Tanzania suggests that separation during flight is the most common way for children and families to become separated. This apparently significant difference warrants further exploration.

4 The Life Story of Deogratias in the Appendix illustrates this: he travelled to Dar es Salaam alone to seek his grandparents

3.2 Circumstances and Arrangements for Flight

Separated refugee children come to Dar es Salaam in a number of different ways, under a variety of different arrangements. Those children who have become separated from their families while still living at home in the DRC do not necessarily travel to Tanzania immediately. Some may be taken in by related or unrelated individuals while still in their home community. Others may stay on their own until their family resources have been depleted or until the security or economic situation leads them to feel that there is no option but to flee.

Many children who participated in this research came to Dar es Salaam with relatives who had taken them in after they had become orphaned or had lost contact with their parents. In these cases, boys and girls crossed the border from the DRC into Tanzania in the company of their extended family, usually via an extensive network of connections by road, water and rail. It is not uncommon for entire families to hide in the back of trucks in order to reach Kigoma, a large town in Tanzania on the shores of Lake Tanganika. Once there, many will seek out family and friends and remain for varying lengths of time, from a few days or several weeks to many years. If the family is able to find money, either through work or through the generosity of friends and others, they may then purchase tickets to travel to Dar es Salaam by train. In general, people do not choose to take the bus or small cars because doing so requires transiting through Uganda and Kenya (in order to avoid the very poor roads of Western Tanzania), thus increasing the possibility of discovery by border officials in three countries. Sometimes one adult family member, usually a male, will go ahead to Dar es Salaam, while others remain in Kigoma or its surrounding areas until there is enough money to travel further. In these cases, the separated child will usually continue to live with the family, but he or she will not necessarily be treated as equal to the biological children in the household. The burden of work is often greater on such children, but a sense of uprootedness and loss of routine is shared by most refugees in this context, and children's roles and responsibilities may have been in a state of flux for quite some time. Changes in household relationships and task distribution are often felt to be a part of this process of upheaval, by both adults and children, separated and not.

Some of the separated children who participated in this research were taken in by unrelated families while still in their home area of the DRC. Often these individuals were previously known to the child, either as a neighbour, or as a friend or colleague of their parents. Sometimes, however, the child did not know the family that took them in. This practice of being looked after by strangers appears to occur much less frequently, but it nevertheless does take place. Individuals often choose to take in an unrelated child because they feel pity for him/her, or because they intend to provide food and shelter for the child in exchange for domestic service or child care. Separated children in these unrelated families tend to pursue the same travel routes and strategies as those who are living with extended family members.

Among those separated children who participated in this research who came to Dar es Salaam without any adult accompaniment, the most common means of crossing the border into Tanzania from the DRC was by hiding in the back

of a transport truck, such as those which carry fish, timber or other goods from one country to the other. In all cases, prior arrangements had been made with the drivers of these vehicles, usually by adults known to the children. Sometimes an orphaned or separated child would approach a caring neighbour, clergy member, or friend of their parents to ask for assistance in leaving the country. At other times, these individuals themselves might suggest to the children that it was time to flee. These adults would then seek out a compassionate truck driver or strike a deal with one who was keen to make a bit of extra money. Occasionally, drivers would provide the children with food and water while they hid in the back of the truck, but it was not uncommon for the children involved in this research to have travelled for days at a time without anything to eat and very little to drink.

Adolescent refugee girls appear to be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation when travelling over the border with the DRC and across Tanzania in transport trucks. Many girls and women reported that females above the age of 13 are often expected to have sex with the driver for the duration of the trip, in exchange for the lift provided. When these girls and young women are accompanied by their younger siblings, this arrangement is particularly difficult, as they may be forced to leave their brothers and sisters alone in the truck in the evening while they stay with the driver, an extremely frightening undertaking for those children who have already lost or become separated from other family members. In addition, because of the shame associated with these activities, many girls do not want their siblings to know what is happening, and often try to keep the truth from them. This lack of openness with one another can lead to tensions and misunderstanding between children at a time when all they have is one another to rely on. These problems can be particularly acute if the girl is in the company of an older, teenage brother who may be aware of what is happening but may feel powerless to change the situation; he may also be frustrated at having to rely on his younger sister for the safekeeping of the family, a role that would normally have been his to play. These altered sibling dynamics can affect the cohesion of the sibling group and may exacerbate an already profound sense of loss and displacement. While the boys who participated in this study would openly share these stories, it was rare for the girls involved to speak of these experiences in the first person. Instead, most chose to talk about what "some" girls have to do to make their way to Dar es Salaam. However, in a discussion about such occurrences, one 14-year-old girl spoke frankly when she said,

> *We have no choice – we have to leave the country and we have to do what is necessary to get out. God will forgive us, I hope*

Many children over the age of 10 reported not knowing where they were going when they climbed into the truck, aside from the fact that they were leaving the DRC. Some thought that they were going to Uganda or Zambia. Others knew that they were heading to Tanzania but often did not know that their destination was Dar es Salaam until they arrived in the city a week or so later. Young children often did not know that they were leaving at all. Most boys and girls had been warned by the adults who had made the arrangements for them to com-

municate as little as possible with the driver, both for their own safety and in order to "help him forget" that he had stowaways in the back of the truck. It was felt that by being as unobtrusive as possible, the driver would feel encouraged to take the children the entire length of their journey. Likewise, children rarely asked the adults known to them the route they would be taking or their final destination. In the chaos of flight, often there was not an appropriate moment to ask these questions. In addition, cultural norms regarding intergenerational interactions often mean that boys and girls do not make requests for information from adults, rather they listen to the details provided to them and substantiate these through discussions with their peers. But this latter step is often not possible for children in these circumstances.

Before beginning this research, it seemed likely that some of the separated refugee children in Dar es Salaam would have come to the city directly from the refugee camps in the western region of Tanzania. However, in the course of data collection, I did not meet any children who had left behind parents, relatives or foster families in the camps to come to Dar es Salaam on their own (I did meet children who came with adults, but none without). Nearly all the children who were involved in this study had never been to a refugee camp, and had either come directly to the city from the DRC or had come via Kigoma. While in reality, there may be children who leave the camps and travel alone to Dar es Salaam, I did not come into contact with them in the course of this research. It may be that among those separated children in the city who live entirely without contact with other Congolese, such as street children, there are some boys and girls who have run away from the camps. This gap is an important area for future research.

Likewise, none of the separated children who participated in this research knew where their parents were. Either the children had been orphaned, and they knew of the death of their parents, or it had not been their choice to become separated from them. While some parents may have intentionally left their children behind in the DRC in order to seek safety, none of the children had chosen (with or without the support of their parents) to leave the DRC and their families behind. In short, from children's perspectives, their separation from their parents was accidental; the boys and girls involved in this research often stressed that they had played no part in the decision-making to live apart from their families and that their parents had not chosen to send them away. This finding is interesting in the light of research with separated children, especially boys, from other refugee groups, such as the Somali, who sometimes choose to send their male children away to get work, or to apply for resettlement in a second country of asylum and later claim family reunification.[5] For boys in these circumstances, separation was not accidental; rather it was planned and agreed upon between themselves and their parents. It is clear that the decisions that families and children make in times of stress differ greatly across cultures. These differences need to be accounted for in our assumptions about the needs and circumstances of separated children, which tend to be general in nature and geared largely towards the generic child for whom family reunification is viewed to be the ultimate goal.

5 Rousseau et al. 1998

3.3 Living Arrangements in Dar es Salaam

The diversity apparent in boys' and girls' experience of separation and flight is similarly present in their living arrangements, once they reach Dar es Salaam. Some separated children live on their own or with siblings in the households of extended family or unrelated carers. These households range in size from those with many members, including elderly people, several adult men and women and children of different ages, to those with only one adult and few children. Separated children in these circumstances may live with extended family members, notably grandparent(s), parents' siblings or adult brothers and sisters. Others still stay with unrelated Congolese families, either as the family's "own" child, or as a domestic worker or temporary visitor. In a few rare cases, a child may live with a Tanzanian family, an arrangement that usually results from a long-standing friendship with the child's deceased or absent parents. Sometimes these latter two arrangements were made in the DRC and the orphaned or separated child in this context has entered Tanzania in the company of, or assisted by, these parties. At other times, those Congolese refugee boys and girls who come to the city illegally and without adult accompaniment may seek out a past neighbour or distant relative who they know to be living in Dar es Salaam. Others may approach concerned Congolese adults, often a Minister or members of the congregations of a local Pentecostal Church[6], to feed and house them out of sympathy or in exchange for contribution to the labour needs of the household.

There is also evidence to suggest that some separated boys and girls in Dar es Salaam live as street children (boys) and others as sex workers (girls). In general, the vast majority of these children never disclose their refugee identity in order that they may benefit from the services of Tanzanian child-serving NGOs, and to avoid being sent to the refugee camps.[7] Others go underground, disconnecting themselves entirely from their war-affected past, sleeping on their own or with their Tanzanian peers in hostels or in the courtyard of a sympathetic businessperson or individual. Most of these children appear to be boys above the age of 13 but there are also adolescent girls amongst this population. The greater visibility of separated boys may reflect the social construction of gender roles in the cultures of the region, where girls are more likely than boys to remain in the private, domestic sphere. In this way, involvement in activities like the sex trade or domestic service may render girls less visible and therefore create the impression that there are fewer of them amongst the population of separated refugee children in the city.

Given the dispersed and extremely secretive nature of this population, I have had only minimal contact with boys and girls in these circumstances, largely because of the difficulties in locating them and ethical concerns about the emotional, social, economic and political price they might pay for their participation in the research. Some random experiences speaking French with 14 and 15 year old boys in the fish market (this would not be possible with Tanzanian out-of-school children) and conversations with Tanzanian sex workers who describe

6 See, for example, the Life Story of Deogratias in the Appendix

7 Tanzanian and international NGOs are obliged to inform UNHCR and/or the Government of Tanzania in the event that they come into contact with an unaccompanied or separated refugee child

having many Congolese girls as colleagues, point to the existence of this population of young people living on their own. To date, however, its size is not known. Research of this nature is bound up in serious ethical concerns about exposing a group of people who do not want to be noticed. Questions must be asked about the motivations of such research and who will ultimately benefit from it. Because I was unsatisfied with my answers to these questions, I did not seek out or pursue children in these circumstances.

3.4 Length of Residence in Dar es Salaam

The Congolese separated refugee children I have encountered in Dar es Salaam have lived in the city for varying lengths of time. The large majority have come since 1996, most often as a result of the conflicts in the Kivu area of Eastern DRC, associated with the fallout from the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the demise of the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko. Some of these children were born in Tanzania to refugee parents who later died of any number of illnesses, including AIDS. Despite having been born in Dar es Salaam, these children are nevertheless still considered to be refugees because the Tanzanian government classifies a child born to refugee parents to be a refugee as well, even if he or she was born in Tanzania.

For those children who come to Tanzania with memories of the Congo, the landscape, their home, their friends and their families, these recollections serve as a basis upon which to compare and judge the condition of their lives in Dar es Salaam. As is common for many children of refugees born abroad, children of Congolese refugees born in Tanzania are firmly grounded in their Congolese identity, and are taught from a young age to see Tanzania as a foreign place, and their life there as one of exile[8]. When asked to draw "home", many of the children who I know depict the imagined homeland of the DRC. A number of these boys and girls have never been outside of Dar es Salaam, yet their drawings nevertheless contain pictures of Lake Kivu or what they imagine to be the flora and fauna of eastern DRC. Despite their length of residence in Tanzania, the Congo is still "home" for many Congolese refugee children, even for those who have never been there. Few see their stay in Tanzania as permanent; nearly all speak of "returning" when peace has been restored to "their country". This tendency is true for both separated children and those who live with their biological parents. However, for separated boys and girls, especially those who live with unrelated guardians, the idea of returning home is tied up with difficult questions about who they would live with in the Congo. Because many children in these circumstances feel that they are "guests" in the houses of their guardians, some fear that they will be abandoned by their foster family when and if repatriation were to take place. But because they are in Dar es Salaam illegally they have no access to family tracing services.

Despite the importance of "home" and of being Congolese, many of the Congolese children who were born in Tanzania or are too young to remember their

8 See for example, Hart (2002) with reference to the experience of Palestinian refugee children in Jordan

lives in the DRC, are often not told of their refugee status until they have reached the age of 6 or 7. Parents and guardians consciously withhold this information in an effort to protect the child from harassment but also to avoid the consequences of a young child's unintentional disclosure. Once the child has reached "the age of understanding", he or she will be told the truth about the family's status and counselled not to reveal their true identity to anyone. If the parents of a refugee child die when the child is still very young, it is the decision of the guardian when to share this information with the child. Interestingly, while most of the parents and guardians I know say that they made a conscious choice to tell their child once they felt he or she was old enough to understand the implications of the information, many boys and girls say that they have always known that they were Congolese, that they did not belong, and that they should not confide this fact to others. Separated children living with relatives and unrelated families are especially aware of feeling "different" not only because they have to conceal so many aspects of their emerging sense of identity, but because in the words of a 12 year old boy:

We never feel free to be ourselves, not even in the place where we are living

4. The Main Issues to Emerge in the Research

This research revealed that, on the whole, Congolese boys and girls in Dar es Salaam face many of the same problems, regardless of whether or not they are separated from their parents. The difference is that, in many cases, the situation of separated children is more severe than that of refugee children generally. There are, of course, some issues which pertain specifically to children who live without their parents, but these too need to be examined in a larger framework. The following discussion will attempt to place the situation of separated children in this broader context.

In general, Congolese refugee children in Dar es Salaam see themselves as extremely disadvantaged vis à vis Tanzanian girls and boys. This view holds true for both separated children and those who live with their parents. While poverty and social exclusion affect many Tanzanian children, these social ills, coupled with the need to conceal their true identity, are a reality for nearly all refugee children in Tanzania, regardless of their national origin. These problems are particularly acute for separated children, many of whom live as "guests" in the homes of extended and unrelated families. For children in this context, there is often no one to turn to for emotional and material assistance, aside from their guardian(s), whose own biological children are usually treated more favourably and accorded the lion's share of scarce family resources. Separated boys and girls in such situations can rarely reveal to other children (and especially adults) the fact that they are not Tanzanian, let alone that they are refugees and that the people they live with may be treating them poorly or abusively. The child protection implications of such situations are significant and to date have been largely ignored by multi-lateral agencies such as UNHCR, who argue that "illegal" refugees do not fall within their mandate.

4.1 Access to Basic Needs and Services

Congolese refugee boys and girls in Dar es Salaam suffer from material deprivation and are denied the right of access to basic social services, such as health care and education. When young children are asked what life is like in the city, many answer:

We are always hungry,

There is never enough food

We are very poor, poorer than before

We don't go to school

It is not easy to get school fees

We are always sick

When we are sick, we have nowhere to go

Water is too expensive

We don't have a decent place to sleep

We have no clothes

I have no shoes

We cannot get help for our problems

The majority of families eat only once, or sometimes twice, a day. Many of the children who participated in this research suffer from intestinal parasites, and varying levels of malnutrition. Most families live in cramped conditions, and it is common for up to 8 or more people to share one small room. Boys and girls and men and women of different ages may be required to sleep in the same space, a practice that Congolese adults would frown upon in any other context.

These difficult conditions are shared by both separated children and those who are living with their parents: material poverty is a reality for nearly all refugee families in Dar es Salaam, who struggle on a daily basis to meet their requirements for food and shelter. However, the extent of this deprivation appears to be felt more strongly by separated children, who may be provided with less food than the small amount provided to other children in the household, or less "good" food, such as meat or vegetables. When food is available, many households feed the adult men first, and, if there is any food remaining, the women and children are then provided with the leftovers. The amount allocated to a separated child in such a situation depends on a number of factors, including their age, the number of people living in the household, their level of acceptance as the guardian's "own child", and the allocation of household tasks. For example, if it is the responsibility of the separated child to prepare and cook the food, he or she may not be in a position to eat alongside other household members. When their chores are completed, there may be no food remaining for them to eat. I regularly spent time in one household where a 13-year-old orphaned boy who lives with his deceased brother's wife was responsible for cooking and serving food to his guardian, and afterwards, to his foster siblings. If, following these activities, there was no longer any food remaining, it was expected that he would go until the next meal without eating. This boy's survival strategy was to use his cook's privileges to remove and hide a small bit of food before he served the others so that he could furtively eat it when it came time to wash the dishes. He was always careful, however, to take the least desirable parts of the meal so that his actions would not be noticed.

Such inequalities in the provision of food are apparent in the distribution of other basic needs and services available to refugee children and families. Health care, for instance, is prohibitively expensive and many refugee parents say that

they cannot access care without bribing service providers (many Tanzanians make the same claim). The inaccessibility of basic health services affects all members of a refugee household, including both adults and children. Rarely do families have the resources required to pay for transport to a clinic, consultation fees and the costs of prescription drugs or hospital care. However, there is often an unspoken hierarchy of care within the family and separated children are usually at the bottom of this ladder. This lower status emerges most clearly in the case of serious illness or accident-related harm, because their illegal status and material poverty means that it is only in these potentially life and death situations that most refugees would choose to seek medical care. At these times, guardians may decide not to spend their meagre resources on accessing help for "someone else's" child, or he or she might choose lower-quality care than they would for their own biological children. These choices do not appear to be conscious: most guardians who participated in this study said that they treat all children in their household equally. But in the opinion of the separated children themselves, guardians nevertheless do make such choices: one 12-year-old boy, for example, recounted how his guardian took her daughter to the clinic for stomach pains but was unwilling to take him to see a doctor when his eye was infected and he was unable to see. The financial, emotional and psychological stresses on many refugee families means that guardians feel that separated children under their care should be grateful for being looked after, and should not complain about any discrepancies they see in terms of the treatment or care that they receive. Boys and girls learn from a very young age not to comment on these differences.

The right of access to education is also denied to many Congolese refugee children living in Dar es Salaam. For those boys and girls who do go to school, enrolment is often interrupted because of fluctuating family finances. Children may attend school for one year, and then withdraw for several months or years because of an inability to pay the fees, transport costs or to purchase school materials such as paper and pens. Others' enrolment may fluctuate on a weekly or monthly basis, depending on the ability of the family to meet these costs. When a household receives money from a family member overseas, for example, an adult may choose to allocate this money towards the education of the children under his/her care. But if a family member later falls ill, the money that was allocated for school fees or bus fare may have to be spent elsewhere. In general, it is those boys and girls who live with relatives and unrelated families whose educational participation is most interrupted. This lack of continuity in school enrolment makes academic progress difficult and further reduces children's already limited opportunities to develop friendships and extend their networks of support.

Some refugee children do not go to school at all because their parents or guardians consider the costs – direct or opportunity – to be too great. This is more often the case for separated children, whose contribution to the domestic economy is usually greater than that of the biological children in the household. After the age of 12 or so, girls may be expected to stay at home to look after their younger siblings and to do the laundry and cooking for the family. One 13-year-

old girl I know regularly begins her day at 5 am, while her foster siblings sleep in order to be well-rested for school. She busies herself with chores throughout the day while her foster brothers and sisters attend classes and play with their friends. Another 12-year-old boy I know left school at the end of last year because his guardian wanted him to help her carry her wares for her door-to-door business selling cloth and towels. His 16-year-old sister has not attended school at all since she arrived in Dar es Salaam 3 years ago. She spends her days collecting water at the local tap and selling it in another neighbourhood where water sources are less accessible. Decisions made in support of the household economy may not always be in the best interests of foster children: every two weeks, the guardian in this instance spends on her hair the same amount of money required to send one child to school for two months.[9]

Some refugee children do not attend school because of the perceived social costs associated with participation in the Tanzanian education system. Parents and guardians sometimes fear that a child will betray the family's refugee identity to teachers or principals, who in turn may report them to the authorities or use the knowledge for blackmail. Even those refugees who have permission to live in the city share these concerns because they fear that their legal status can be revoked at any time and therefore any interactions with the Tanzanian authorities or UNHCR are seen as potentially dangerous. In this situation, separated children are no worse off than refugee children who live with their parents, as fear of the authorities is the same in both cases. Moreover, some refugee parents choose not to send their children to school because they see the family's residence in Dar es Salaam as being temporary, or because they believe their child should be educated in French, according to the Congolese national curriculum. There is an underground school in Dar es Salaam for children from the Great Lakes region, but the cost of tuition is too expensive for most refugee families in this context.

4.2 Children's Daily Activities

Those refugee children who do not attend school tend to spend their days engaged in a variety of domestic and income-generating activities. There appears to be a marked division in the activities of boys and girls in these circumstances, although the allocation of responsibilities depends to a large extent on the birth order of the child and the number of children in the household. In general, from the age of 6 or 7, girls take on increasing levels of responsibility for child care, cooking, cleaning, collecting water, and other household chores, such as caring for an elderly grandparent. By the age of 11 or 12, a girl may be almost exclusively responsible for these tasks, especially if she is the eldest female child and her parent(s) or guardian(s) are out of the house for long periods in search of employment or assistance. She may also contribute money to the household

9 When this issue was discussed with the guardian, she explained that it is important for her to dress nicely and have fashionable hair because an attractive and stylish appearance is necessary in order for her not to be seen as a "poor refugee" and therefore to be admitted into the office buildings where she sells her goods.

through braiding hair, sewing or involvement with Sugar Daddies[10], among other activities. School-going girls are also involved in these domestic and income-generating tasks, although the duration of their participation and the amount of their responsibility is not usually as great. Boys, too, contribute to the household economy by running errands, collecting water and contributing to childcare tasks when required. However, most boys' responsibilities start in earnest around the age of 11 or 12, when they begin to assist their parents or guardians in petty trading, such as through selling peanuts and other roadside items, used clothing and *vitenge*[11]. Others work on their own, providing laundry service to neighbours, hauling sand for local contractors, or selling sweets outside schoolyards. Despite spending days filled with chores, some non-school going boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 13 often speak of doing "nothing" all day long. Days spent with these children have helped me to understand that by this statement, most mean that for financial or security reasons, they were unable to leave home, to see friends or to visit family members elsewhere in the city.

Involvement in these daily activities does not depend on whether or not a child is separated from his or her family. Refugee children who live with their parents and do not attend school are equally likely to do these tasks. However, because separated children are more likely than others to be out of school, their level of responsibility and participation in the domestic economy is usually greater. It is also more likely that they will be assigned the most unpleasant and difficult tasks. Another level of distinction can be made between the nature of the involvement of separated children in different circumstances. Boys and girls who live with relatives and unrelated carers may play significant roles in the functioning of the household. But those separated children who live without adults have even greater levels of responsibility because they have no one to share these tasks with, no matter how minimal this support may be. Most children in these circumstances do not even have the potential for assistance with things such as school fees or medical bills. Their monetary and labour contribution to the household is all that there is – when they are sick, for example, they often do not eat because they cannot earn the money required to purchase food. For those children who care for their younger siblings in such situations, their inability to work and perform household tasks such as cooking and cleaning means that others suffer as well. The pressure on boys and girls in this context is extreme.

One family of children who participated in this research includes a 15-year-old boy, his 12 year old sister and his 4-year-old niece. These three children live together in a small room in a high-density area of the city. Each day, the boy tries to find money to feed his sisters and pay the rent. He sometimes manages to get piecework on a construction site or to earn a small amount by guarding the car of a local taxi driver. While he is out, his sister looks after their young niece.

10 A Sugar Daddy is a man, often in his 40s or 50s, who, in exchange for sex and (sometimes) companionship, will pay a girl's school fees, buy her clothes, food or other material items. Sugar Daddies tend to seek out girls between the ages of 12–15 (and sometimes younger) for numerous reasons, but in part because they are suspected to be virgins and therefore believed to be uninfected by HIV.

11 Vitenge is the brightly coloured Congolese cloth much admired among Tanzanians

Because he is very frightened that the Tanzanian government or UNHCR are going to find them and force them to go to a refugee camp, he does not allow his younger sister and niece to leave the courtyard around the house, unless it is absolutely necessary. As a result, both girls are entirely dependent on their brother for social, emotional and financial support. This situation is nearly unbearable in the eyes of the boy:

> *What choice do I have? I am 15 years old. I do not know how to raise these girls. I do not know how to look after them. I can take care of myself but I cannot take care of them. Sometimes I do not know what to do. Without me, they would have no food to eat, no place to sleep. But what can I do?*

4.3 Social Exclusion, Discrimination and Harassment

At the Community Level

Congolese refugee children describe their life in urban Tanzania as one of social exclusion, discrimination and harassment. These feelings are common for separated children in a variety of circumstances as well as those who live with their parents. It is not unusual for the children I know to walk down the street and have a Tanzanian adult or child call out to them, *"Wakimbizi! Wakimbizi!!"*. This Kiswahili term for refugees is widely considered to be derogatory, and in the opinion of one child:

> *Even a poor man or a thief is better than a Wakimbizi*

Despite their near-constant efforts to conceal their identity, numerous refugee children in Dar es Salaam are often not successful in doing so (with the notable exception of street boys). Many endure mockery and insults on the bus, in the schoolyard and in their neighbourhood. These children describe being reduced to tears on a regular basis and say their lives are "miserable" because they can "never feel at ease". In a workshop with 8–10 year olds, one girl told me

> *People insult and make fun of us because we fled our country. They tell us to go home, that it is not their fault that we want to kill each other*

Another boy noted

> *People tell me I am an idiot because I am a refugee*

This harassment is equally felt by separated children and those who live with their parents. Not only is it uncommon for those who are insulting the children to know whether or not they are the biological offspring of their guardian, but it is unlikely to matter to them anyway.

Sometimes Congolese refugee children respond to this harassment by verbally abusing or physically fighting with the Tanzanian children who have insulted

them. While retaliation may offer a child the momentary satisfaction that defending oneself can bring, fighting back has its costs. Because of their clandestine, or at least unobtrusive, urban existence, many refugee families try to have minimal interaction with unknown Tanzanians in an effort to reduce their perceived chances of being reported to the authorities. In this respect, refugees recognise the power of Tanzanian citizens to destabilise their already fragile existence. Consequently, when a refugee child has a conflict with a Tanzanian peer, refugee parents and guardians see this occurrence as a grave threat to the safety and security of their family. Despite the adults' view on the legitimacy of the child's actions, the child will often be punished in order to emphasise the potentially disastrous consequences to the family should the Tanzanian child tell their parents that they were in a fight with a refugee. The result is that the child is often angry and resentful of the perceived injustice of being punished for defending an identity they have been raised to be proud of. These sentiments are often coupled with a sense of disillusionment with parents and guardians for failing to support them in doing so.

This sense of being unfairly treated is further exacerbated by the choice of punishment the child receives: parents and guardians frequently respond to such incidents by restricting the already limited mobility of the children in the household (this issue is discussed further in Section 4.5 below). This action is taken in an effort to minimise future (and potentially negative) interactions with Tanzanian children. Punishment might include not being allowed to leave the house, or only being allowed to leave the house in the company of an adult household member. It might also mean being refused the ability to go to school and being forced to remain at home all day. These measures are often more severe for separated children, whose membership of the household may be more tenuous. Guardians may be particularly harsh with boys and girls in this situation because actions which jeopardise the safety of the family may be seen not only as careless but as an affront to their generosity, and an indication of a lack of gratitude on the part of the child.

At the Household Level

This research found that refugee children in general experience equal levels of discrimination and harassment at the community level, but that separated children living with relatives and unrelated guardians are particularly vulnerable to prejudice and unequal treatment within the household. Levels of discrimination and abuse appear to be linked to a child's relationship to their guardian, with biological children receiving better treatment than related children, who in turn are better off than unrelated children. Because these issues are in many ways context-related and have different manifestations for different children in different circumstances, they are explored throughout this discussion of the main themes which emerged from the research.

4.4 Trust

Another issue central to the lives of refugee adults and children in Dar es Salaam is the matter of trust. Many Congolese boys and girls in urban Tanzania are taught from a very young age, or say they have learned from experience, not to trust those beyond their household and/or family. The reality of this worldview struck me one day when I was with a 10-year-old girl and her 8-year-old sister near the city centre. Together with the girls, I asked a stranger on the street for directions to the place we were looking for. When his instructions turned out to be incorrect, the 10-year-old turned to me and said:

You must never believe Tanzanians

This young girl, like many of her peers, had come to feel that Tanzanians could not be relied upon for help, even for something as simple as directions.

This lack of trust of others does not apply only to Tanzanians, but to other refugees as well. The complex and multi-faceted nature of the conflict in the DRC has meant that those who have fled the war are not always fleeing the same source of persecution. As a result, some of the refugees in Dar es Salaam are seen to be allied with particular political factions and tensions and mistrust between these individuals and others is not unusual. Furthermore, competition between refugees is common in Dar es Salaam, perhaps as a result of the scarcity of resources available to them. Despite the fact that refugees from the Great Lakes region are dispersed throughout the city, and many people are not in regular contact with others from their home country, word travels fast when someone has had good or bad luck. Rumours fly around about who has been forcibly sent to a refugee camp, who has bribed which Government official, and who has had a resettlement interview organised by UNCHR (and whom they had to bribe or sleep with in order for that to happen). People are variously accused of spying for their home government, working as an informant for the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs, and giving false and damning information about another refugee in order to "eliminate" the competition for monetary assistance from UNHCR and eventual resettlement in North America or Europe.

All these conversations take place behind the backs of those whose behaviour is being discussed. But because nearly everyone participates in these discussions and contributes to their content, most refugees are very careful about what information they choose to share with others, regardless of whether or not they are considered to be "friends". For example, one Congolese family that I came to know was granted resettlement to a European country several months after we had met. I had been introduced to this family through a young male refugee who had spent a lot of time with them over their 2-year acquaintance in Dar es Salaam. But when the family was finally granted resettlement and provided with plane tickets and a departure date, they requested that I not disclose to anyone the fact that they would be leaving. They specifically asked me not to tell any refugees whatsoever, including their "friend", because they feared that jealousy might drive others to concoct a story for UNHCR which would result in the rescinding of their offer and the freeing up of the place for another refugee (and

hopefully the one who made the report). A month or so after the family had left Tanzania; the young man approached me to ask if I had heard any news from them. At this point he told me that he was not surprised that they had left without telling him because he, too, would have kept this information to himself, had he been in their position.

This profound sense of suspicion and lack of trust, which underlies the relationships between many refugees and Tanzanians and between many refugees themselves, is not restricted to adults only. Children know about and respond to these tensions by learning early on to keep secrets and not to trust others. One afternoon a Congolese woman recounted to me the events of that morning, when her 6-year-old daughter was waiting for her outside a building near a big city market. A man in his mid-30s came and sat down beside the young girl, and asked her to tell him her name. She told him it was "Mary" (although it is "Marie"). He asked her what she was doing and she replied that she was waiting for her mother. He then asked her what her mother's name was and she told him it was "Virginia" (although it is "Virginie"). The man went on to ask her where she was from, at which point she withdrew a little, stopped speaking and looked closely at him for a moment, before asking him if he were a police officer. Surprised, he laughed and told her no, that he had heard her and her mother speaking "Congolese Swahili" and that he had understood their conversation, because he was from the Congo. The young girl then proudly told him that she was "Zairoise", and that her home was in Uvira. When the girl's mother returned a few moments later, the man shared the story with her and told her how her daughter had not only asked him if he were a police officer, but she had anglicised her own and her mother's name. Both adults were surprised that a girl so young had already learned such subtle strategies for self-protection. But throughout this research, I observed children decline to speak to ostensibly friendly, inquiring adults, and listened as others instructed their siblings in the art of evading strangers' simple questions. In a culture where children speak when spoken to, these small acts of resistance are symptomatic not only of the fierce desire for self-protection, but also of deeply ingrained suspicion and fear.

That refugee children mistrust many of those around them is not surprising given the circumstances they have fled and the environment in which they live in Dar es Salaam. However, for those boys and girls who live with their parents and those separated children under the care of related and unrelated guardians, adults tend to play an important role in the vetting of new acquaintances, and in so doing, perform an important protective role for the children under their care. But for separated boys and girls who live without adults, it is sometimes difficult to know whom to trust. This is especially the case if the children have recently arrived in Dar es Salaam and are receiving assistance from UNHCR or from a family member abroad. In both these situations, children may be approached by concerned adult refugees who want to help them to adjust to the massive changes that have taken place. While these individuals may be guided by the best of intentions, the children who participated in this research said that they feared such people were trying to take their money from them. Boys with younger, adolescent sisters commented that offers of assistance from adult males

were particularly suspect. Most children seemed torn between wanting to reach out to have the advice and emotional support of an adult, while at the same time fearing that they would be taken advantage of.

In addition, some separated children in Dar es Salaam who live without adults do not trust other refugees to provide them with correct information about basic issues such as how to find the UNHCR building or descriptions of the conditions of the refugee camps. On several occasions, I witnessed children asking others or myself to confirm directions and details given to them by another adult. When I asked one 14-year-old girl why she needed directions if she already had them, she told me it was because she was not sure that the refugee who assisted her had in fact given her the correct information. He might, she said, have wanted to send her the wrong way so that she would miss the office hours of the UNHCR Protection Officer and would therefore have to wait another week before requesting assistance. Children in this context are equally wary of the accounts of other refugees of life in the camps. Most were surprised when I described the conditions and services that I was aware of, either because my accounts confirmed what they had already heard, or because they differed. In either case, it is often extremely difficult for separated children who live without adults to judge the motives and behaviours of others. Consequently, most children are extremely suspicious and distrustful of adults, both refugee and Tanzanian.

Trust is also an issue for those separated children who live with related and unrelated carers. For those boys and girls who are experiencing high levels of discrimination and harsh treatment within their guardians' household, it is often very difficult to know who to turn to for help and support. Some children fear that by "complaining" to others about their living situation, this information will make its way back to their guardian, who will either treat them more cruelly or expel them from the household. Most children in such circumstances have nowhere else to go and the considerable risks associated with confiding in others are usually outweighed by the fear of being all alone. Most would never consider approaching UNHCR because of their illegal status and the profound fear that they will be forced to go to the refugee camps (this latter point is discussed further in Section 4.7 below).

This lack of trust impacts on refugee children's abilities to form relationships with peers and adults. Many of the boys and girls who participated in this research had very little experience of making friends and often lacked confidence in their interactions with other children and adults. Unlike their Tanzanian peers, many refugee boys and girls in Dar es Salaam, especially separated children, have few opportunities – or feel unable to take advantage of those that are available – to engage with children outside their family or household. As a result, they have limited chances to play with others, to share experiences, to feel empathy, to agree and disagree, to negotiate with one another and to support one another in the achievement of shared tasks. The inability to practise and therefore develop these crucial life skills affects children's ability to thrive. Many boys and girls are thus denied the basic right to develop to their full potential.

4.5 Isolation and Support Networks

For many of the refugee adults and children who participated in this research, life in Dar es Salaam is characterised by a lack of social support, or at least a greatly reduced network of family, friends, acquaintances and others. In the DRC, people describe their support systems as having been broad enough to enable them to access financial assistance, emotional support, advice on a wide range of issues, and help with everyday activities such as home maintenance, child care and cooking. However, life as a refugee in Dar es Salaam is for most, a life of isolation – a life in which the right to freedom of association is severely curtailed, for, regardless of their legal status, most refugees live a low profile and often clandestine existence. The lack of trust between refugees themselves and between refugees and Tanzanians means that people, young and old, cannot reach out for support in the way that they may previously have done. As a result, many families turn inward and relationships within the household become intensified. The result is often the imposition of new and difficult challenges to previous intergenerational relationships.

Adults' lack of social supports affects their relationships with the children they care for. The extremely difficult financial situation in which many urban refugees find themselves led some adults to do things that they would never before have imagined, such as begging for money or food, selling sex and sending their young children out "to find money". The ramifications of retaliation against harassment and abuse are perceived to be so severe that many adults suppress their anger and remain quiet in the face of insulting treatment from neighbours, strangers or people in positions of authority. One 11-year-old girl recounted an incident in which an angry neighbour began shouting at her mother because she had partially obstructed the entrance to the neighbour's home. In a very loud voice, the man repeatedly accused the girl's mother of being a "useless Wakimbizi" who should "go back to where she came from". Throughout his tirade, the mother stood nearby, while silently crying and burying her head in her hands. After listening to this attack for several minutes from inside the house, the girl poked her head out the door and reminded her mother of the potential danger of such a public conversation by saying several times, "Maman – immigration! … Maman – immigration!". Finally, in the midst of the man's attack, she went outside and led her mother back into the house, where the woman continued to cry for a very long time.

Such incidents and others like them are not unusual for many refugees in Dar es Salaam and their impact on parent-child relationships is significant. From the perspective of Congolese refugee boys and girls, protecting and advising their parents is a major consequence of being a refugee child in urban Tanzania. Some of the boys and girls involved in this study were resentful of their parents or guardians for imposing their problems on their children. Furthermore, several spoke of feeling frustrated and angry when they witnessed or heard about incidents in which their parents had not defended themselves in the face of insulting and degrading treatment. In some cases, including that of the woman who was being insulted by her neighbour, children argued that they had lost respect for their parents because life in Dar es Salaam had made them "weak", and

"unmotivated", and "unable to stand up for themselves and their family". These views were strongly articulated by a 15-year-old boy whose parents, since arriving in Dar es Salaam, have tended to stay at home all day while their 4 oldest children moved about the city in search of piecework or money or both. The lack of motivation on the part of his parents poses an adjustment problem for this boy because in the DRC his mother and father had both been employed in high-status positions. At home, he said, they would never have allowed him to work instead of going to school, let alone have forced him to drop out entirely. He told me that recently he had grown very tired of his parents' inaction and that most of the time he is so infuriated with them that he contemplates running away and setting up a home of his own. But he tempered these comments with an assertion that he would never leave his family, "because that is all I have".

Indeed, refugee boys and girls in Dar es Salaam appear to have a small network of support outside their families and households.[12] Nearly all children who participated in this research who were able to remember their lives in the Congo commented that they have fewer friends in Dar es Salaam than they did at home, and that their relationships with peers in Tanzania are less intimate. The reasons for these differences are manifold, but can be attributed in large part to the strict restrictions on children's mobility imposed on them by their parents and guardians. The fear of some adults that children will disclose their refugee identity is so powerful that they attempt to control their children's interactions with others. One strategy frequently employed is the confinement of children to the home or the yard around the home. Some children are more affected by this practice than are others, as it is easier for parents to monitor the activities of those children who do not need to travel to and from school every day. Since separated children are more likely than other refugee children to be out of school, it is these boys and girls who are often the most isolated because their opportunities for interactions with other children are that much more severely constrained. These children's rights to freedom of association are very severely curtailed.

When parents and guardians feel that the security of the family is particularly at risk, all children in the household may be required to stay at home. In the course of this research, I met several children as old as 12 years of age who had gone several months, and in one case 2 years, without leaving the small part of the neighbourhood in which they lived. I met one 10-year-old boy who, in two years, had gone no further from his home than the kiosk that was 50 metres across the road. Congolese refugee boys and girls describe this isolation as one of the worst parts of their lives in Dar es Salaam, because, despite the sometimes cruel treatment of peers and others, it is the activities of playing with friends and going to school that provide children with what they see to be the few pleasant distractions in their life of exile[13]. The absence of these happy events compounds their discontent and dissatisfaction, not only with life in general, but also more specifically with what they see to be a lack of good judgment on the part of those

12 Some adult Congolese refugees in Dar es Salaam have additional adult siblings living in the city, but not within the same household. Relationships within households are very intense, as are most relationships with family members who live elsewhere in the city.

13 The Life Story of Emanuel in the Appendix illustrates how, for some children, life consists of household chores and "doing nothing"

who care for them. These negative sentiments are again aggravated by the feeling many children (especially boys) have that education is the only way to escape their current circumstances, and that by denying them the right to attend school, their parents or guardians are condemning them to a life of misery. While adults view their actions in such situations as the only means of preserving the security and stability of their families, these measures may inadvertently undermine intergenerational relationships, thereby reducing the familial strength and sense of collective unity they had originally sought to maintain.

As a consequence of these and other actions, Congolese refugee boys and girls in Dar es Salaam have few opportunities for social interaction beyond the household level. They are effectively denied the right to leisure, recreation and to cultural activities, and to freedom of association. The child development implications of this isolation are considerable. The lack of intellectual stimulation provided through schooling and extra-curricular activities, if not provided elsewhere, can affect a child's developing cognitive capacities. The inability to explore and discover the world around them may delay the development of context-related problem-solving skills. Furthermore, their lack of opportunities to play and interact with a variety of people of all ages may inhibit their ability to make future relationships. These are skills which require practice; they are competences that are learned through good and bad experiences, through perseverance and through making mistakes. For refugee children, they are skills which are particularly important because displacement has meant, in some cases, the complete disconnection and loss of long-term relationships and support systems. For separated children, and especially for those whose parents have died, the re-establishment of relationships with peers and supportive adults are essential to the dismantling of the isolation and loneliness expressed by many boys and girls in this context.

The child protection implications of the seclusion of many refugee children are equally significant because it is extremely difficult to become aware of the needs and circumstances of those boys and girls who live in such situations. Monitoring and care for children's needs becomes the sole responsibility of those people with whom the child lives. Yet all families, regardless of their circumstances, need the support of friends and others to meet the needs of the children under their care. Furthermore, assistance may be impossible to provide to those children who may be in abusive situations. Moreover, the vulnerability of such children may be augmented by their lack of skills and confidence necessary to form stable and trusting relationships with those who might be able to assist them.

The result of these small networks of extra-household support is that many children come to rely on their parents for assistance that, under different circumstances, they might have sought elsewhere – from friends, teachers, aunts and uncles, neighbours, etc. Similarly, refugee life leads many adults to rely on their children for new and different levels of support as well. The nature of this assistance can take many forms.

Many parents and guardians are aware of these changes in the nature and content of their relationships with their children. Some spoke of feeling uncom-

fortable with their reliance on their children, including the mother of the girl mentioned above who said she often feels incompetent in the face of the challenges of life in Dar es Salaam. Such feelings of inadequacy on the part of parents and guardians are not unusual and can often lead to great frustration and stress on their part. As parents and guardians struggle to assert their power and influence over those they feel reliant upon – their children – household tensions tend to increase. One 16-year-old girl spoke of the dread she feels whenever she hears that her father is going to visit UNHCR to find out the status of his family's refugee claim. She said that these visits are so frustrating for her father that when he returns home he is inevitably extremely angry, and that this anger is usually taken out on his children:

> *Anything we say or do makes him furious and he will yell at us and tell us that we are always behaving badly and that we are making the family's situation worse and causing our parents to suffer. He might beat us for a small thing that he would usually not care about*

The rage directed towards separated boys and girls in this context can be particularly acute. Children living with related and unrelated households often bear the brunt of their guardians' frustration. Accusations that such children are "more trouble than they are worth" and that they are aggravating the family's poverty are not uncommon. One 13-year-old boy said that when angry and discouraged, the wife of his older brother would often tell him that it was because of him that the family is in such a terrible situation: if he were not with them, she would angrily comment, then their documentation would be much more straightforward and they would have no problem getting assistance from the government and refugee-serving NGOs. She would tell him,

> *It is all your fault, you do nothing to fix the problem! You just stay at home and eat our food and ask for school fees and money for sweets*

This boy reported that beatings were common under these circumstances and said that he would try to stay as far away as possible from his sister-in-law whenever he sensed that she was in a dark mood.

4.6 The "Good" Child

This strategy of trying to be the "good child" is regularly employed by nearly all of the refugee children who participated in this research. One of the ways that children try to minimise the impact of their parent's or guardian's stress is by causing as little trouble as possible. While many refugee children use this approach, it is employed especially by separated boys and girls, who describe the need to be as "good" as they can be in order to avoid being verbally attacked or beaten by their guardians. "Being good," they say, means trying never to complain, never to misbehave, never to ask for anything, never to do things without permission or parental consent and to try to be as unobtrusive as possible. It also

means being cheerful and helpful and doing household tasks without having to be asked. When children do not follow these guidelines, parents and guardians may become enraged because they perceive the child's misbehaviour as an additional burden that they do not have the energy to deal with. In those instances where the child's misconduct involved or was apparent to those outside the household, adults may also feel that the child has threatened the safety and security of the family. Most separated children living with related and unrelated guardians and some refugee children living with their parents described the discipline they receive under such circumstances to be very harsh and "too much".

Some children learn to be "good" when their parents or guardians are nearby and to take their frustrations and anger out when adult household members are not present. Such strategies were described to me by a young Congolese woman who provided me with her insights and experiences throughout the research process. As the eldest of 7 siblings, including one young cousin, she commented that she had come to believe that children are very "wise": when their parents are there, she said, the children behave well and do not react to the insults or degrading treatment of others, especially neighbours. But, when the parents are away from the home, sometimes her siblings are very aggressive with those who have insulted them. They may yell or spit at the perpetrators, or they may hit them or threaten them with physical violence. Some of the other children I know also behaved in similar ways. For example, one 13-year-old girl frequently told me of the physical fights she had to break up between her 10-year-old sister and other children in the neighbourhood. Another 10-year-old separated girl would often have brawls with her 11-year-old cousin whom she lived with. In all of these cases, the children involved would keep these activities entirely secret from their parents and guardians because of the known consequences of their actions. While it is particularly important for separated children to be "good", biological children are also expected to cause as little trouble as possible. It was rarely in the interests of the biological child, therefore, to report such incidents to his or her parents because of the perceived importance of never adding to their stress.

For those Congolese separated boys and girls in Dar es Salaam who do not live with any adults, it is also important to be a "good" child. Like their peers who live in households with adults, such children commented that they needed to make themselves as unobtrusive as possible so that people in their neighbourhood would take little or no notice of them. These children described trying to minimise their interactions with strangers, especially Tanzanians, so that their situation did not become apparent to those who might take advantage of them or turn them into the authorities. This perceived inability to reach out for support while having none to rely on in the first place is an enormous challenge for all of the children in such circumstances who participated in this research, especially because interaction with others is necessary in order to acquire the money they need to survive. Moreover, supportive relationships are what they desire yet they feel it is too risky to establish them. The isolation these children feel is thus continually augmented and reinforced.

4.7 Fear of Refugee Camps

As was mentioned earlier, the majority of Congolese refugees who I met in Dar es Salaam have never lived in the refugee camps in the western part of the country. Nearly all of the adults, children and families who participated in this research had come directly from the DRC to the city, or had lived for varying lengths of time in other Tanzanian towns, or in Zambia, Uganda or Kenya before coming to Dar es Salaam. Nevertheless, despite their lack of first hand knowledge of life in the camps, refugees of all ages were almost unanimous in their dislike and fear of these places. The popular view among refugees of all nationalities in Dar es Salaam is that the camps are horrible, unsafe, unsanitary places where individuals have no personal freedom to come and go as they like, where they are prohibited from earning a living, and where they are reduced to wards of an institution over which they feel they have no control. They describe the camps as "prisons" and often comment that they would rather stay in the DRC than be forced to live under these conditions. At least in the DRC, they argued, they could be a "prisoner" in their own country.

Accounts of the "difficult life" in the refugee camps appear to be widespread not only in Dar es Salaam, but also in the DRC. Most refugees say that they learned of the conditions of the camps while they were still in their home country. Reports, they say, are widespread of the lack of adequate food and shelter and the persistent insecurity and violence in the camps. These stories make their way over the border and help to influence people's decision to avoid the "prisons" at all costs. Those preparing or contemplating flight plan their travel routes according to the best chance of avoiding detection and being sent to the camps. Such resolutions are made by both adults and children alike.

It is often adults who assist those unaccompanied boys and girls who have become separated from their families while in the DRC to flee the country. The children who participated in this research said that these adults continually warned them of the dangers of life in the camps and strongly advised them against any interaction with Tanzanian authorities and citizens, as well as any staff of humanitarian organisations and multi-lateral agencies. It was felt that these individuals could not be trusted because their main aim is to send refugees to the camps, and because, in the words of one young woman,

They don't live there, they have no idea what those "prisons" are like

One sibling group of 3 separated children who arrived in Dar es Salaam directly from Bukavu said that the man who had helped them to leave the DRC had planned a circuitous route for them into Tanzania and had told them, if apprehended, to refuse to go to the camps because they would die there before ever seeing their parents again. Such warnings confirmed the children's worst fears and as a result they live in constant terror of this possibility. These fears are compounded by the constant comments of other adult refugees in Dar es Salaam who have been telling the children that if they go to the camps UNHCR will forget all about them and will never pursue family reunification efforts on their behalf. For those separated children without adult accompaniment who live in Dar es

Salaam, the fear of being sent to the camps is all-pervasive. Paradoxically, this fear effectively results in depriving them of the right to services such as family tracing and other child protection services which are not made available to illegal refugees.

4.8 Fear of Fostering

For many separated refugee children in urban Tanzania, fear of the camps is related to a profound fear of fostering. All of the unaccompanied separated children who participated in this research said that one of the main reasons that they did not want to go to the camps was because if they did, they would be forced to live in a foster family. Not only did they worry that they would be separated from their siblings in such an arrangement, but they believed that they would also be mistreated by the guardian. Many children questioned the motivation of foster parents in these circumstances, and commented that it was almost certain that such a person would be driven by hidden motives, which might include using the child for domestic work or augmenting the allowable household rations. Two boys from different families said that they feared their younger sisters would be forced to have sex with the foster father or to sell sex to contribute to the household income. All of the children involved in this study felt certain that they would be mistreated if they were made to live in this way, not only because they were not the biological children of the foster parents, but because ethnic and regional tensions between Congolese people would make it "impossible" to live with people whose origins were different from theirs.

Some unaccompanied refugee children in Dar es Salaam have had previous experiences of being fostered. These experiences, they said, were so negative that they have since decided never to become involved in such an arrangement again. One 15-year-old girl[14] and her 8-year-old sister who participated in this research had been fostered by an unrelated family when they were still in the DRC. When their mother disappeared, these two girls were taken in by a family who lived nearby. The eldest girl described this experience as intolerable:

> *The woman did not love us. I was not allowed to go to school and I was made to work every day from the early morning until late evening while the other children went to school and played and rested*

Every time I was with these two girls, the eldest would assert her refusal to go to the camps on the basis of her insistence that she would never allow herself or her sister to be fostered again.

For those separated refugee children in Dar es Salaam who live with related and unrelated families, the institution of fostering is not regarded with as much trepidation and scepticism. That is not to say that all boys and girls in these circumstances are happy with their living arrangements. On the contrary, while some children felt that they were being treated in a reasonable manner, several

14 See Life Story "Marie" in the Appendix

expressed a desire to leave the situations in which they are living but felt trapped because they had nowhere else to go. An important difference to note is that all of the separated children who participated in this research in Dar es Salaam who were living with relatives and unrelated guardians had been spontaneously fostered. These children had been taken in by relatives, neighbours and strangers whom they had known in the DRC, or whom they had met along the way, or once they arrived in the city. These boys and girls expressed the same fear of organised, formal or "agency" fostering as was common amongst the unaccompanied separated children who were involved in this study.

5. Conclusions

The boys and girls whose lives have been explored by this study are a group of children who, until actively searched for, are largely invisible – to the Tanzanian Government, to UNHCR and to other agencies whose mandates include child-care and protection. They can only access supportive and protective services by claiming their status as refugees, yet in most cases they choose not to do so for fear of being sent to the refugee camps in western Tanzania. The profound unwillingness of separated children, and urban refugee children in general, to live in the camps leads them to hide from the Tanzanian and UN authorities and in some cases, other refugees. Such a strategy requires that they be highly protective of themselves and those they care about. Many boys and girls are deeply suspicious of others, and this coping strategy affects their ability to reach out for social and material support. Moreover, the clandestine nature of the refugee population in Dar es Salaam makes it extremely difficult to estimate the numbers of separated refugee children living in this context. Certainly there are several hundred, possibly thousands. The needs and rights of these boys and girls are being denied on a massive scale.

The children who participated in this study had a wide variety of experiences which led them to become separated from their families and to live in an urban area of a neighbouring country. Some had fled the direct effects of war in their country of origin, while others had become separated for other reasons, including parental death prior to fleeing the DRC. Interestingly, few children had become separated during flight. Some came to Dar es Salaam with other adults, often relatives, but sometimes with unrelated individuals or strangers. Others came alone or with siblings. All of the children who participated in this study asserted that the decision to seek refuge was never entirely their own.

The problems experienced by separated refugee children living in Dar es Salaam can be viewed on various levels. On one level, they experience problems which are common to children in Tanzania more generally, including widespread poverty and lack of access to education and other basic social services. On a second level, they experience many of the additional challenges which are common to refugee children living with their families. These problems stem essentially from their illegal status in the city, including extreme poverty, limited mobility, difficulties in accessing educational opportunities and the family stresses which result from fear of exposure of their status as refugees. Finally, separated children experience additional problems which stem from the fact that they are not under the care and protection of their own families. Those living in substitute families usually receive less food, often of a lesser quality, than other children in the household. They are less likely to receive medical attention and to be able to attend school and they often have to shoulder a burden of work in excess of that of other child members of the household. At best, these children live at the bottom of the unspoken hierarchy which exists in most families. At worst, they experience physical neglect, abuse and exploitation.[15] Such children

15 See, for example, the Life Stories of Deogratias, Marie and Emanuel in the Appendix

have no access to external sources of support. Similarly, those separated boys and girls who are living entirely without adults are often extremely isolated because they fear exposure and lack the trust needed to develop supportive relationships with others.

In these respects, Congolese separated children in Dar es Salaam have experiences which appear broadly similar to those of separated children in other contexts. However, what makes the situation of these children particularly worrying is the complex interplay of issues which stem from the illegal and therefore tenuous existence of refugee families in this context. First, the severely restricted mobility of refugee children generally and the lack of interaction with other people mean that they have virtually no social networks which, in other contexts, might provide a measure of protection for children, both by discouraging the worst excesses of discriminatory treatment, and by providing children with access to others outside of the family to whom they could turn for support. Furthermore, because separated children in Dar es Salaam are less likely to attend school, they are often denied the potential for support from teachers and other children.

Second, the endemic suspicion and lack of trust in others, which is a result of their illegal status and which affects many refugee children, places a further limitation on separated children's access to other people outside of the family who could potentially be supportive. Third, because of the constant fear that the family will be identified as a refugee family, and because of the separated child's lack of security of tenure within the household, the repercussions of behaviour, which might draw attention to the family, are particularly severe. Finally, the tensions within many refugee families, which are often taken out on children, are likely to have a disproportionate effect on separated children, who sometimes receive excessive punishment and have to remain silent if experiencing tension with other children in the family. All these factors add to their sense of insecurity within the family, feelings which are difficult to overcome because they have no access to emotional support. For most separated boys and girls in this context, the only possible exit strategy is to leave the family and attempt to survive on their own on the streets or within another household, yet such options often place them further at risk of abuse, sexual exploitation and a host of other threats to their health and well-being. This study revealed no evidence of children leaving these very difficult circumstances because their fear of being on their own is so great. Although many separated children live in households with numerous members, the majority of boys and girls feel very much alone.

The risks to child development and the threats to child rights in such circumstances are profound – indeed it would be difficult to identify a group of children anywhere whose rights are not more comprehensively violated. The majority lack access to adequate nutrition and health care. Many of these children are living in tense family situations, often facing abuse and exploitation and almost always experiencing discrimination. Their opportunities for education are extremely limited, many are denied the stimulation of recreational, leisure and cultural activities because they are confined to the house and yard, and they are denied the right of freedom of association with both other adults and children.

Like most refugees, they have learned not to trust other people, with serious implications for their capacity to form and sustain relationships. As separated children they benefit neither from the right to contact with their families nor to family tracing programmes. Some live without the protection of any family and have to fend for themselves and care for younger siblings or relatives. Most serious of all, many boys and girls have no access to support outside of the family, and often receive none within it.

Not only are the rights of these children being infringed, but boys and girls in these circumstances are effectively beyond the reach of the duty bearers who might afford them a degree of protection. Denied the protection of their own families, they are also beyond the reach of UNHCR and other refugee-serving agencies and fall outside of the scope of the Tanzanian government's social services (such as they are) because of their illegal status within the country. Their fear of refugee camp life, whatever the veracity of the information on which it is based, means that they choose to remain in this situation because they fear that the alternatives are even worse.

The two most obvious groups to assist these children are refugee-serving and child-focused organisations. However, because government policy states that refugees must live in camps, and officially there are no (or very few) refugees in the city, nearly all organisations working with refugees in Tanzania do not provide programmes and services to those living in Dar es Salaam, for fear of antagonising the government and jeopardising support for existing activities. Furthermore, child-focused organisations in urban Tanzania do not recognise refugee children as a group in need of specific attention or support. Among those few agencies that do acknowledge the presence of refugees in the city, most believe the numbers are too small to warrant attention on a programmatic or policy level. Moreover, it is widely believed that the significant needs of Tanzanian boys and girls must be addressed before those of children who come from other countries. The consequence of these choices and priorities is the extreme vulnerability of large numbers of children and families from the war-torn regions of eastern DRC – not to mention Rwanda, Burundi and other countries – whose illegality leads not only to their invisibility and but also to a lack of desire to assist them. The situation is particularly risky for those children who live without adults or in difficult or abusive living arrangements: in these circumstances, separated boys and girls living illegally in Dar es Salaam have no organisational or state support because no agency sees itself as responsible for their care or protection.

Countless conventions and international declarations make explicit the responsibility and the obligation of the international community to respect the rights of refugees, both adults and children. In Tanzania it is illegal for refugees to live outside the camps, but there are legitimate and significant reasons why many adults and children refuse to live in these places. Multi-lateral agencies such as UNHCR are making efforts to engage with the government of Tanzania because currently their mandate is to work within the bounds of national legislation. But if these children are to have their rights restored to them, then these rights should not be dependent on the convenience of the legislation of the host

government. Refugees in Tanzania, including those in Dar es Salaam, need to have their concerns taken seriously and multi-lateral agencies need to support them through effective advocacy and other interventions.

Appendix: Life Stories of Separated Refugee Children

1. Deogratias

Deogratias, 15, was born in Bukavu, in what is now called the Democratic Republic of Congo. When Deo was 6 years old, his mother died of malaria. His younger brother later passed away as a result of typhoid, when Deo was 9 years old. Finally, the only remaining member of his immediate family and household, his father, died of AIDS when Deo was 11. This was 1997, in the midst of the war in the Kivu area of Eastern Congo. Deo then dropped out of school. He lived alone for several weeks and survived by eating food in the nearby rubbish piles before he received a message from a friend of his late father's, telling him to go to Dar es Salaam to find his paternal grandparents.

Deo came on his own to Dar es Salaam when he was 11 years old. He crossed the border while hiding alone in the back of a truck carrying timber from the DRC to Tanzania. Once in Kigoma, a town on the Tanzanian side of Lake Tanganika, Deo boarded the train for Dar es Salaam. He purchased a ticket with money given to him by his father's friend.

When Deo arrived in Dar es Salaam, he had no money to travel across the city to find his grandparents at the address given to him. Instead, he remained in and around the train station for a few days, until his grandfather came to see if he was there. Once reunited with his grandparents, Deo began attending primary school in the high-density urban neighbourhood where the three family members lived together in a small room. At that time, Deo's grandfather was working as a night guard for a Tanzanian family and was able to pay school fees for his grandson and to buy a small amount of basic food for the family. Deo contributed to the household income by selling peanuts outside a nearby stadium during concerts, Pentecostal revivals, and other events.

Deo attended the Tanzanian school until 1999, when he completed Standard 7. At that time, a small school was established by various Congolese refugees to educate Congolese children in Dar es Salaam, using the curriculum from the DRC and French as the language of instruction. Deo attended this school regularly until his grandfather fell sick in early 2000, and was unable to pay the fees. As a result, Deo dropped out of school to care for his grandfather and worked selling mobile phone covers until his grandfather died later that year. Because he was a promising student, in 2001, the school agreed to allow him to enrol again, in exchange for cleaning the building and the yard. While he says that this arrangement worked for him because he was able to continue studying, Deo says that

> *They worked me very hard and I had no time to help my grandmother. A lot of times, there was so much work to do that I had to sleep at the school in order to get it all done. When I was all alone there at night I began to feel very*

sad and then I eventually felt so bad that I became sick. I just couldn't work and study and I had to stop

When Deo was working at the school, his elderly grandmother was invited to live with a minister of a local Tanzanian Pentecostal Church. As a result, when he was forced to stop working at the school, Deo had nowhere to go. After a few weeks of sleeping outside a church, he was invited to stay with another of his father's friends, who was living illegally in Dar es Salaam with his wife, his sister, his mother and 10 children. Deo says that

(This arrangement is) good because I have a place to rest my head, and I thank God for that. (But) there is often not enough to eat and I always eat last. Most days there is nothing for me to eat there. No one talks to me and I feel very lonely. I have to do everything for myself, such as washing my clothes. I am allowed to stay but I am not welcome there

Deo was "born again" last year and the church and its Congolese preacher have become the centre of his life. He now spends his days at the church, listening to one of the many evangelical radio stations on a small radio, reading the bible, and praying, often up to 5 or 6 hours a day. He sells sweets at a nearby bus stop in the evening in order to pay for his daily meal of ugali[16] and vegetables. He says that he has learned "to put God first". The preacher has shown him how "to see what God wants". He says he no longer has any friends besides the preacher because "they do not know God and all they like to talk about is their youth". Deo says that when he has a problem, he prays because

No one else can do anything for me. If I need money, I have no one to ask. If I need food, I have no one to ask. The only person who can help me is God

2. Marie

Marie, 16, came to Dar es Salaam in October 2001, with Veronique, her 8-year-old sister. The girls spent two weeks hidden in the back of a fish truck as it made its way from eastern Congo, over the border, and across Tanzania. Marie spent the days with Veronique and the nights with the driver. This arrangement, she says, was necessary in order to obtain a "free" lift.

Marie and Veronique have different fathers, and the only parent each has known is their mother, who fled their home in Bukavu in 1999. The girls do not know where she is living, or if she is alive. After their mother left, they were taken in by an unrelated family who lived nearby. In this household, they were treated poorly and were

Made to work much harder and do more work than the other children

16 Ugali is a type of corn porridge

Marie says that the other children were treated much better than she and Veronique and that

> *We suffered a lot in that place – we were beaten and yelled at, not given good food to eat and we were always hungry. If we complained, we were told that we were causing problems for the family. We were not loved*

A friend of Marie's father's saw the situation in which the girls were living and suggested that Marie take her sister to Tanzania to find her father. Marie agreed that this was a good idea, as she felt their living situation was becoming intolerable. It was this same friend who arranged for the girls to take a lift from one of the many truck drivers in the city.

The journey to Dar es Salaam was very frightening for both Marie and Veronique, who did not know where they were going in Tanzania, and only realised that they were in Dar es Salaam when the driver stopped in the city centre and told them to get out. He gave them the name of a nearby guesthouse and a small amount of money to stay there for a few days while they looked for Marie's father. At the guesthouse, the girls met several other refugees, none of whom knew the man they were looking for. Soon, the money that the driver had given them ran out. The owner of the guesthouse took pity on them and told Marie that they could stay there for a short period. Others helped by giving the girls food to eat.

However, after a month or so, Marie was told to find money to pay for her room, or to leave the premises. At that point, she approached a nearby Tanzanian family whose daughter she had come to know over the past few weeks. The family said that she and Veronique could sleep on the floor of the house in exchange for 1,000 Tanzanian shillings per day[17]. Marie began earning small amounts of money braiding hair and washing clothes for neighbours. When she could not earn enough money in this way to pay the rent and buy food, she began going to a local bar in the evenings to sell sex to male patrons. Now, the girls eat and dress well.

Neither Marie nor Veronique has ever gone to school, and neither is able to read or write. Marie describes her life in Dar es Salaam as one of suffering and of waiting. To date, she has not found her father, and does not know where to go to pursue the matter further. She is frightened to go to UNHCR because she believes they will send her and her sister to a refugee camp, where they will be forced to live with a foster family. After their previous experience living with unrelated people in Bukavu, Marie refuses to be fostered ever again:

> *Life is difficult there and it is not safe. We have no mother, no father, no relatives to protect us – there is no one to look after us. We will be treated badly and we will suffer too much*

As a result, both girls continue to live in Dar es Salaam, no longer actively looking for their father, but nevertheless waiting for him to find them.

17 Equivalent to about US$1: this amount is a little less than that earned through casual day labour, such as in construction

3. Emanuel

Emanuel, 12, came to Dar es Salaam in 1998, when he was 8 years old. Together with his mother and her younger brother, he fled Uvira, in eastern DRC, where the family had lived together until Emanuel's father died of AIDS in 1997. They travelled to Tanzania via Lumbumbashi, through Zambia and into the southern part of Tanzania, taking lifts from various transport trucks along the way. The journey took several weeks and was very difficult for Emanuel, whose mother was made to sit in the front of the trucks, while he and his uncle remained hidden in the hot and stuffy rear containers.

Once in Dar es Salaam, the family located close friends from home who had come to the city a year previously. Initially, both families lived together, until Emanuel's mother was able to earn enough money by selling *vitenge*[18] to rent a small room nearby. However, because of their illegal status as undocumented refugees, Emanuel spent most of his time at home, doing chores and in his words, "doing nothing". He did not attend school because his mother feared he would inadvertently disclose his refugee identity to others. His uncle earned a small income selling charcoal outside the house, but otherwise, Emanuel spent his days almost entirely alone.

In 1999, Emanuel's mother fell ill, and in early 2000, she died of AIDS. Shortly after, his uncle left Dar es Salaam to return to the DRC, convinced that life there could be no worse than it was in Tanzania. In accordance with his mother's wishes, Emanuel went to live with the friends with whom they had stayed upon arrival in Dar es Salaam. He became the fifth child in a single-parent household, and the only one who is not a relative. He says that at first this arrangement was very good because "they knew my mother and how she treated me". He was allowed to go to school, and to play with friends in the neighbourhood. But recently, his mother's friend has grown tired of supporting him and he no longer feels welcome:

> *She insults me and tells me that I am making the family poor, that I am lazy and that I should work harder*

Despite being the same age as two of the other children in the household, he is no longer allowed to attend school. He has been told, "to earn his keep" and so spends his days at home, frying chapati for himself and his guardian to sell from a small stand in the neighbourhood. He cannot read or write, but listens to the radio and has learned some English words which he hopes will prepare him to get a job in the future. While he says that he is treated differently from the other children in the household, he is stoic about it:

> *It is not fair that the others are allowed to study, and I am not. But I cannot help it. What can I do? I have no one to go to for help with school fees. I have to work and be good so that I can continue to stay here. I have nowhere else to go*

18 See footnote 11 on page 25

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