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Being Unaccompanied: A Search for Meaning

by

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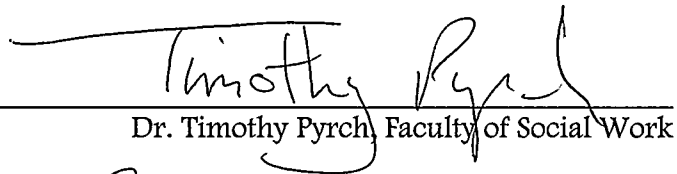FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

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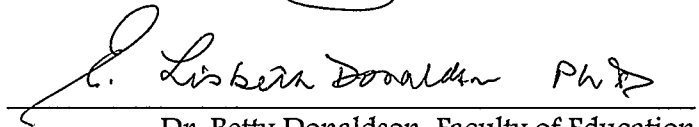UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Being Unaccompanied: A Search for Meaning" submitted by Christine Michelle Antle in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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Abstract

This research project set out to examine the lived experiences of unaccompanied refugee youth in Nduta Refugee Camp in an effort to contribute to the current literature on the well-being of refugee children and adolescents. The pseudonyms that the research participants' chose for themselves served as catalysts for identifying the following themes: (1) life as a harsh reality; (2) an awareness of privilege; (3) a search for identity; and (4) a faith in God. The researcher also enriches the discussion by sharing her own personal struggles to find meaning in her research activities and concludes with some suggestions on how the profession of social work can contribute to local, national, and international efforts to address the global refugee crisis.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my daughter Maya ~ may your life be full of possibility

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of research participants

Table 2: Overview of data collection interviews

Table 3: Summary of observation visits in the camp

List of Abbreviations

DRA – Dutch Relief & Rehabilitation Agency

IRC – International Rescue Committee

JRS – Jesuit Refugee Service

MSW – Master of Social Work

OAU – Organization for African Unity

SAEU – Southern Africa Extension Unit

Tz – Tanzania

UAMs – unaccompanied minors

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WFP – World Food Programme

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> When curiosity turns to serious matters, it's called research
> ~ Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

Welcome!

The idea behind this project first came to me over five years ago. The journey that has

taken place between that moment and today has certainly been an unpredictable one –

at times arduous, at times buoyant, always interesting. The person that sits here writing

these words today is no longer the same, naïve undergraduate student who first

ventured into Nduta Refugee Camp back in the summer of 1999. I have gained new

clarity into my own life, into what brings me joy and a sense of fulfilment, and will

happily be leaving my academic life behind once this paper is submitted. I openly

share this with you because what follows is a story that can only be appreciated in its

proper context. It is not simply a story of unaccompanied youth living in a refugee

camp, but also of a young, unaccompanied researcher trying to act responsibly amidst

the rules and expectations of everyone around her.

My original intention was to explore the experiences of unaccompanied youth living in

Nduta Refugee Camp, a camp for Burundian refugees located in northwestern

Tanzania. It was my hope that, through this research, I would gain an understanding

of what it means to refugee youth to be unaccompanied and that I could then share this

new understanding as part of a larger discussion on refugee well-being. I feel that I

have achieved this goal to varying degrees, but certainly not to the extent that I had first

hoped. I explore the reasons for this in more detail in the "methodology" section of this

paper; however, one of my main struggles throughout this journey has been with the

ethics involved in doing research with this population. At several times, I was ready to walk away from this project completely. But I did not. And what I share with you is in the spirit of that original goal of achieving a new understanding – of refugee issues, of unaccompanied youth, and of what it means to do qualitative research as a foreigner in a refugee camp. As you continue reading (which I hope you will do!), I encourage you to enter into your own dialogue with this text (as strange as that may sound at this point) and to engage those around you in meaningful conversation about ideas or statements that catch your attention. One of my fears in doing this research was that it would simply end up on a shelf somewhere collecting dust – that the stories contained within these pages would remain unheard. It will be up to you, and to every other reader, to ensure in your own small way that that does not happen. The final outcome of this project has yet to be determined and, with your participation, will be a shared success.

Assumptions

Before we even begin delving into the research itself, I feel that it is important to clearly state some of my assumptions, as everything presented here is guided or influenced by them.

1) I assume that if something is important enough to be said (or written!), it should also be important enough to be understood. While I cannot control the different levels of understanding that readers will bring to this paper, I can control the language I choose to use and the style in which I choose to present information or share ideas. Therefore, I have tried to write in an open and accessible manner.

2) I assume that my own experiences, biases, and preferences have influenced my research as well as the writing of this report. I believe that the human

experience is a subjective one and that, while we can try to minimize the influence of our own subjectivity, it will always be present. As part of this assumption, I also expect that each reader will come to their own understanding of issues presented within these pages based on their own experiences, biases, and preferences. That is the beauty of dialogue!

3) I assume that the report I am writing today is simply one possible version of what could have been written. It is the best that is in me to write today – but had I written it a few years ago, or even if I had waited until later to begin, I expect that it would have been different. How, I cannot know for sure. But my assumption is that as I continue to grow in my learning (whether academic or experiential), I become altered. As a result, I see the world through new eyes, even if only in small ways. This paper is no exception.

How I arrived at my question

In 1999, I was fortunate enough to be selected to participate in a UNHCR Youth Programme called Camp Sadako, which included spending 6 weeks visiting refugee camps in Tanzania to learn first-hand about the refugee programme in that country. I was sent to Kibondo, a small hub of international aid agencies and their local counterparts, which was surrounded by 4 refugee camps (a 5th camp was opened later that year). For logistical reasons, I ended up spending most of my time in Nduta Refugee Camp with the staff of the Dutch Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (DRA), the community service agency in the camp. Through them and their activities, I was able to learn about all aspects of community service programming in the camp, from educational and cultural activities to micro-projects and peace-building initiatives. I learned that all children under 18 years of age who arrive in the camp without their parents or natural guardians are called "unaccompanied minors", or UAMs, and that

they are entitled to extra assistance because of their unique vulnerability. I learned that most of these children are placed with "foster families" in the camp to ensure that they are properly taken care of. However, I also learned that there were some adolescents living in the camp on their own who did not want to stay with foster families. This is where my curiosity set in. How were they doing? Was anyone following up with them to make sure they were ok? How many were living in this kind of situation? What kind of support or assistance were they receiving? At the time, no one could provide me with any clear answers to these questions and I was left with the impression that these youth might very well be falling through the cracks of an imperfect system of care and support. As a way of pursuing the issue further, I returned to Tanzania the following summer to explore whether or not a formal exploration into the experiences of unaccompanied youth in Nduta Refugee Camp would be both feasible and useful. I spent 3 months talking with members of the community, including youth themselves, and came away believing that a formal study would be both appropriate and welcomed by the community if the research participants were given enough space to give voice to their own experiences. By this time, I had already been accepted into the Master of Social Work program at the University of Calgary and now I felt I had a clear topic for my thesis. The next few months were spent writing proposals for funding and ethics clearance and in preparation for my return back to Kibondo and Nduta.

Overview of the Research Project

I returned to Kibondo in June 2001 to begin my formal research while also fulfilling my MSW field placement requirements as an intern with the UNHCR Sub-Office in Kibondo as a Community Services Assistant. From my arrival until the end of that year, I made numerous trips to the camp to re-familiarize myself with current realities, reconnect with key community members, and conduct interviews. During the course

of those 7 months, 10 youth participated in semi-structured interviews to talk about their life and experiences in the camp. Woven throughout all of their stories, 4 main themes emerged: (1) life as a harsh reality; (2) an awareness of privilege; (3) a search for identity; and (4) a faith in God. What I learned from the participants was also complemented by what I learned from the research process itself, namely that achieving a sense of completion was largely determined by the extent to which I was able to make peace with the various compromises I was required to make along the way.

Historical Context

In order to help add context to this research, I believe it is helpful to first examine why there are Burundian refugees living in camps in Tanzania. It is also helpful to understand how Nduta Refugee Camp is a community that has evolved over time. With this in mind, I share the following sections with you: (1) the history of conflict in Burundi; and (2) the history of Nduta Refugee Camp.

History of Conflict in Burundi

> *Simply stated, the conflict in Burundi involves Hutu against Tutsi. Beyond this elementary truth are violent disagreements among participants and observers alike about almost every other dimension of the conflict, including the nature of Hutu and Tutsi identities, the cause of their antagonisms, the scale of the human losses suffered by each side, and how best to achieve a measure of social harmony between them. Some might even question the existence of a Hutu-Tutsi problem (Lemarchand, 1995, p.17).*

It has been stated that the difficulties involved in separating historical fact from fiction are nowhere more daunting than in Burundi (Lemarchand, 1995, p.34). My own efforts to understand the history of conflict in this country have led me to believe this statement to be true. What follows is by necessity a brief and painfully incomplete

overview of the major events in Burundi's recent history. I offer it to you in an attempt

to highlight how it came to be that so many thousands of Burundian refugees have

sought asylum in neighbouring Tanzania. For more detailed information, as well as a

more critical examination of the major issues surrounding this conflict, I recommend

Lemarchand's 1995 book entitled *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide.*

Burundi is one of the smallest countries in Africa. Originally a kingdom, the governing

power in the land was originally in the hands of the king and princes (*mwami* and

ganwa). Burundi has also been home to 2 major ethnic groups for close to 700 years:

the Hutu and the Tutsi. The Hutu, who are traditionally agriculturalists of Bantu origin,

comprise approximately 85% of the population. It is estimated that they first arrived in

the region now called Burundi between the 5th century BC to the 11th century AD. The

Tutsi, who are traditionally pastoralists of Hamitic origin, arrived much later, between

the 14th and 18th century, and comprise approximately 14% of the population. A third

group, the Twa, make up approximately 1% of the population and are considered to be

the original inhabitants of the area (Weinstein, 1976)[1]. If these names are familiar, it is

likely because of the horror that gripped the world in 1994: the genocide in Rwanda.

The history of Rwanda and Burundi has been closely linked. They were singularly

referred to as Ruanda-Urundi from 1885-1916 under German colonial rule (Melady,

1974). In 1916, the area was taken over by Belgium. Prior to colonial invasion,

princely chiefs ruled a complex, but relatively peaceful, feudal system in Burundi

which subordinated the Hutu population in relation to the Tutsi (Lemarchand, 1993).

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[1] Although Burundi's population is routinely categorized in this way, Lemarchand has pointed out the inappropriateness of this reductionistic view. "Though often treated as dogma", he states, "such statistics involve serious distortions. They not only leave out of the picture an undetermined number of people of princely origin...whose identity is distinct from that of both Hutu and Tutsi, as well as the Swahili-speaking and other immigrant communities, but also fail to take into account a substantial number of individuals of mixed origins" (Lemarchand, 1995, p.6).

It wasn't until colonial "indirect rule" that ethnic identities were politicized and tension grew between them. This came partly as a result of the preference of German colonial powers to allocate positions of authority only to Tutsis. The Hutu continued to be further marginalized under Belgian occupation so that by the end of colonial rule in 1962 (1960 in Rwanda), ethnic identity was the most significant social division (Weinstein, 1976).

With Burundi's independence in 1962 came a new chapter in interethnic relations. Initially, the struggle for power was limited to the royal elite. Prince Rwagasore, a largely popular figure among both Hutu and Tutsi, was elected prime minister in 1961. However, as what was to become the first of many political assassinations in the country, a Greek gunman hired by the opposition shot him dead one month later and a new prime minister was appointed who had close affiliations to the Tutsi elite. Hutu leaders attempted to overthrow the monarchy in October 1965, but it was unsuccessful. In retaliation for this action, an estimated 2500 to 5000 Hutus were killed (Melady, 1974). However, this unsuccessful coup did serve to instigate a formal overthrow of the monarchy in November 1966, which ushered in what became known as the First Republic under Tutsi leadership (Lemarchand, 1993). This marked the beginning of 30 years of Tutsi hegemony in the country. Another Hutu-led coup d'etat was attempted in April 1972, which also failed. This time, retaliation was swift and severe with an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 Hutu being killed by the all-Tutsi army (Lemarchand, 1995; Weinstein & Schrire, 1976). By the end of the bloodbath, almost every educated Hutu was either dead or in exile (Lemarchand, 1995). "The staggering number of Hutu killed reflected the intensity of the insecurity experienced by the ruling Tutsi during the revolt" (Weinstein & Schrire, 1976, p.19). This insecurity can be best understood in relation to events happening on the other side of the border where, in

Rwanda, the Hutu were in control and the Tutsi were struggling for their survival. "No other event did more to sharpen the edges of ethnic hatreds in Burundi than the Hutu revolution in neighbouring Rwanda" (Lemarchand, 1995, p.60). This revolution led to the killing and uprooting of thousands of Rwandans of Tutsi origin who sought refuge across the border in Burundi; therefore, the Tutsi-led government in Burundi was well aware of the potential implications of losing their power over the majority. The 1972 genocide in Burundi essentially reduced the Hutu as a group to a powerless underclass who were prevented from participating in the army, the civil service, or the university (Lemarchand, 1995, p.103). Another consequence of the genocide was the exodus of approximately 150,000 refugees to neighbouring countries, including Tanzania.

The years that followed saw several Tutsi leaders coming into and falling out of power as well as a convergence of interests between extremists among both Hutu and Tutsi elite. This convergence led to another outbreak of violence that left between 15,000 and 30,000 dead in 1988 (Lemarchand, 1993). Unlike the genocide in 1972, this finally caught the attention of the international community. Human rights organizations such as Amnesty International denounced the brutality of the repressive regime and foreign governments put pressure on Burundi's leader, Pierre Buyoya, to initiate an impartial inquiry into the causes behind the outbreaks of this violence. This later led to a major reshuffling of his cabinet, an increase in the number of Hutu ministers, and the appointment of a Hutu as his prime minister (Lemarchand, 1995). Despite these superficial advances, Hutu opposition to Buyoya's regime was carefully kept in check and thousands of Hutu were again arrested and killed after yet another abortive uprising in 1991 (Lemarchand, 1995). "According to the UNHCR, by 1991 the Hutu refugee population had reached an estimated 240,000, principally distributed

in Tanzania (179,000), Rwanda (20,000), Zaire (10,000), and Europe (10,000)"
(Lemarchand, 1995, p.172).

On June 1, 1993 Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, was voted in as Burundi's first democratically elected president and "there finally emerged on the horizon the promise of a civil society free of ethnic violence, where citizenship would no longer be held hostage by ethnic identity" (Lemarchand, 1995, p.xiii). However, less then 5 months later, he was assassinated by the army. Buyoya resumed leadership of the country. It was this event that led to a decade-long civil war in Burundi and the exodus of more refugees into neighbouring countries, the majority of whom sought refuge in Tanzania. The late Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, began hosting peace negotiations between warring factions in 1996 in an attempt to bring the conflict to a peaceful resolution. After his death in 1999, the role of mediator was taken over by the former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. Progress was steady but slow-moving. It wasn't until August 28, 2000 that a peace agreement was signed in Arusha by the majority of parties concerned. However, negotiations for the implementation of the peace accord continued. On July 23, 2001, it was agreed that President Buyoya would lead the first 18 months of a 3-year transitional government starting on November 1, 2001 with Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu, as Vice-President. On April 30, 2003, Ndayizeye took over the leadership during the second 18 months of the transitional government, with a Tutsi Vice-President at his side. Although much progress was made towards building peace and stability during this transitional period, parliament approved an extension in October 2004 for an additional year in order to ensure the necessary systems were in place to guarantee free and fair general elections in 2005. As one important step in this process, a popular referendum was held in February 2005 that ratified a new constitution setting ethnic quotas for government positions.

On August 26, 2005 the transitional period in Burundi formally came to an end with the swearing in of its first democratically elected leader since 1993. Pierre Nkurunziza, the former leader of the Hutu rebel group CNDD-FDD (which officially became a political party in November 2003) and Minister for Good Governance in the second transitional government, was elected to a 5-year term by parliament with 91% of votes. He is now faced with the challenge of bringing stability and development to one of the poorest countries in Africa. His challenges are many: there continues to be one last rebel group terrorizing some northern provinces; the economy is in crisis; and hundreds of thousands of Burundians who have been displaced during 12 years of civil war will need to be reintegrated into society. For more information, or to follow the latest news, I recommend visiting www.irinnews.org, the website for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

History of Nduta Refugee Camp[2]

Nduta Refugee Camp was established on December 12, 1996 to accommodate the continued influx of Burundian refugees into Tanzania that began in 1993. As of the end of July 2001 (the time when this project took place), Nduta was home to 54,148 refugees, more than half of whom were children under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 1999). Although the majority of the camp's inhabitants were Burundian Hutus from an agro-pastoralist background, not everyone fell neatly into this category. There were also the highly educated, the political leaders, and those from an urban background who were used to living with the luxuries of running water and electricity. Without question, Nduta's refugee community represented a diverse cross-section of Burundi's own population.

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[2] Please note that information presented in this section comes from unpublished material presented to me during my internship with the UNHCR Sub-Office in Kibondo as well as through conversations with Field Staff. You are invited to read it with this context in mind.

Since its inception, Nduta was "closed" and "re-opened" several times. What this means is that once full capacity was reached, it became closed to new arrivals who were instead sent to other locations (Nduta was the 4th camp to be opened in Kibondo District; a 5th and final camp was opened in late 1999). Once no new land was being allocated by the Government of Tanzania for new camps to be opened, it became necessary to re-open the older camps once again to new arrivals despite already being stretched beyond capacity (Nduta was originally designed to accommodate 35,000 individuals). This means that those people living in Nduta, for example, arrived over the course of 4 years and were at different stages of settling into camp life during the time of this research project.

One of the more interesting cases of incorporating "new arrivals" into the camp came in 1997 when "old caseload" refugees were rounded up from surrounding villages and forced to relocate to the camp. "Old caseload" is the term used to refer to those individuals who fled Burundi during the genocide of 1972, at a time when the Government of Tanzania welcomed the idea of local integration. These are people who, for almost 30 years, had been living side-by-side with their Tanzanian neighbours, who were completely self-sufficient, and who had already established their own families (often with Tanzanian spouses). Swahili had become their language. Children were born who knew nothing of life in Burundi. And yet they suddenly found themselves prisoners in their own adopted country, living in a refugee camp alongside strangers.

Context of Time and Place

There were several notable events that took place during my time in the camp that strongly influenced the environment in which my research took place: a national refugee re-registration exercise; the September 11th attacks in the United States; and

rumours of forced repatriation. As they undoubtedly influenced the outcome of my research, I share them with you here in order to help you understand the context within which I was working.

National Refugee Re-Registration Exercise

Most years in Tanzania, a national refugee re-registration exercise takes place in order to verify the actual number of refugees living in each camp. These numbers are then used to better coordinate food distribution with the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN agency responsible for providing food to the camps' residents. The way it works is that each family is given a "ration card" upon their arrival indicating the number of members in their household. Every two weeks, one person from each household collects food from a distribution centre. The amount of food they are given is determined by the number of people included on their ration card. During my time in Tanzania, food rations were consistently less than the minimum standard set by the WFP due to an ongoing food shortage in the region.[3] People were hungry, and desperate to obtain as much food as possible. The most effective method was to try to hide a decrease in household members (i.e. due to death, marriage, departure from the camp, etc.) in order to continue receiving their food. But this only worked as long as the original number remained on their ration card.

Every year, the re-registration exercise was carefully planned in order to minimize successful attempts at cheating the system. It was a two-day event that involved

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[3] The reason for this food shortage was never clearly stated to me. As with many things within the refugee operation, there was an "official" answer (they were experiencing pipeline issues, i.e. red tape, in getting food to the region) and an "unofficial" explanation believed to be true by most staff I spoke with – food had been diverted to operations in other countries where there was a stronger international spotlight. The Burundian refugees in Tanzania were not an international priority. Regardless of the reason, the reality is that the refugees in Tanzania were just not receiving adequate amounts of food to survive.

"banding" everyone in the camp one day and then counting everyone the next day and issuing them new ration cards. Because it all related back to food, a basic need for survival, it reminded me of a classic "power over" situation: the UN officials and their counterparts had complete power over access to that food, a resource that everyone desperately needed. Naturally, as a result of a few holding power over many, there was corruption within that system, but that is an issue above and beyond the scope of this paper. What I do want to highlight is that as a UNHCR intern, I was called on to be part of this exercise. Painfully aware of how this would affect my relationships within the camp, I requested that I be sent to a camp other than Nduta, which I was. But in many ways, the outcome was the same: camp residents were reminded of the inherent power differences between them and the staff working with them. Conversations became more guarded. And, as a researcher and an outsider, I was viewed with more suspicion.

9/11

The September 11th attacks in the United States took place while I was in Kibondo, well into my research. By now we know how this event was felt around the world, and how the status quo has changed as a result. But how did this event affect my research? I had a brother living in New York City at the time, and was anxious to receive news of his safety and well-being. I was living in a community where the comment "they had it coming" was uttered in an almost celebratory tone. And, once again, the world's attention was focused a world away from the little pocket of Tanzania I was temporarily calling home. Many people I spoke with in the refugee community felt a sense of despair, believing that they would now be completely forgotten by the international community. And yet, life in the camp continued as usual – babies were born, others

died, food rations were distributed, and my research continued. But beyond the routine, there was a sense that life had been undeniably altered.

Rumours of Forced Repatriation

One of the most fundamental principles that governs the international protection of refugees is the principle that no government shall force the involuntary return of refugees to a country where they face persecution. This principle of *non-refoulement* has always been respected by Tanzania, a country with a long history of welcoming asylum seekers into its fold. But as the years passed and Tanzania was left to bear the burden of hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees with insufficient international assistance, this sense of hospitality began to wane. Government officials began to cite reasons of environmental damage and increased insecurity in the region as justification for ensuring the speedy return of refugees to Burundi. The refugees themselves, at least the ones I spoke with, took this as a sure sign that a forced return would soon be upon them.

What led to much speculation was the fact that talks were, in fact, underway between UNHCR officials and government representatives from both Tanzania and Burundi. Under a tripartite agreement, these three bodies would oversee and facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to Burundi once conditions were appropriate to do so. While I was in Kibondo, UNHCR officials held fast that there was still too much insecurity in Burundi to facilitate any form of repatriation – but they did begin to collect the names of those refugees who were ready and willing to return as soon as conditions improved. It is possible that this is one area of misunderstanding where the rumours began, despite efforts to keep the camps' residents informed of all issues related to their safety and well-being. Regardless of where or why these rumours

began, they resulted in a sense of apprehension and distrust in the community. Again, as an outsider, I was often confronted by camp residents who believed that I knew more than I was telling them – and this served to strengthen the sense of suspicion that surrounded my presence in the camp.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Refugee Crisis

As of the beginning of 2005, there were 19.1 million refugees and other persons of concern worldwide who fell under the protection mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2006). This represents a 13% increase from 2004, which held the lowest recorded number of persons of concern in almost 25 years after 4 consecutive years of declining numbers (UNHCR, 2005). Although these numbers help to portray an overall picture of global displacement, they must be viewed with caution for 3 main reason: (1) it is difficult to accurately survey refugee populations; (2) not all governments follow the same definitions used in refugee-determination; and (3) some governments and organizations have been known to either intentionally exaggerate or underestimate numbers for their own political reasons (Leopold & Harrell-Bond, 1994). Despite this caution, however, several authors have noted with concern the increasing levels of generalized violence that appear to be causing people to flee from their homes (Boothby, 1994; Jablensky et al, 1994; Loescher, 1999). From a humanitarian perspective, the term "refugee" has become an important sociological and legal category (Hadjiyanni, 2002) as a consequence of global refugee crises unparalleled in size, scope, and consequence during the past several decades (Marsella et al, 1994). "Never before in history has the forcible uprooting of so many people been accompanied by the additional trauma of direct experiences of violence...As the number of wars has increased, so too have the numbers of individuals personally affected by war...as targets of a deliberate strategy to terrorize and displace civilian populations (Boothby, 1994, p.239).

Despite the global nature of the refugee crisis, most refugees are from developing countries and are forced to seek asylum in neighbouring countries that are ill-equipped to provide ongoing material and financial assistance (Jablensky et al, 1994). Although the UNHCR has been mandated to oversee the protection of these individuals, they are being required to do so with fewer and fewer resources (Brody, 1994). In addition, the wealthier nations of the world are becoming less welcoming to asylum seekers, showing considerable self-interest in their responses to the refugee problem despite their ability to offer concrete and immediate assistance (Jablensky et al, 1994; Leopold & Harrell-Bond, 1994). For example, Canada received 25, 800 asylum applications in 2004 from 5 main countries of origin (Colombia, Mexico, China, Sri Lanka, and India), none of which were among the top-ten refugee-producing countries that year (UNHCR, 2005). Only 10,521 individuals were actually resettled in Canada in 2004 while, by comparison, Tanzania was host to approximately 500,000 refugees who were facing severe food shortages (UNHCR, 2006; UNHCR, 2005). Ironically, a substantial amount of refugee research has focussed on the well-being of refugees who have resettled in Western nations despite their proportionally small numbers (Hadjiyanni, 2002).

In contrast to the lack of political will displayed by the world's wealthiest nations, many individuals and organizations have participated in relief, treatment, and rehabilitation efforts "motivated solely by humanitarian impulses" (Jablensky et al, 1994, p.334). Unfortunately, many of these efforts have often had the unanticipated effect of conditioning refugees for dependency by either overlooking or dismissing their own coping capacities (von Buchwald, 1994). "Many people have an ambivalent view of refugees' ability to cope with trauma. On the one hand, refugees are seen as victims, vulnerable groups requiring help. On the other hand, they are known to be survivors, those who managed to reach safety" (Brody, 1994, p.71). According to Jablensky et al

(1994), this ambiguity has served to create the following disparities: short-term versus long-term solutions; services to refugees versus support of host country population; paternalistic care and authoritarian control versus refugee empowering strategies; competition among refugee service organizations; and failure to link disciplines.

"Social work has a critical role to play in providing services that will enhance the welfare of refugees throughout the world" (Mupedziswa, 1997, p.111). At the local level, social workers are well-positioned to provide counselling services and connect individuals to appropriate resources (Richman, 1998). At the national level, social workers can actively promote economic and social justice policies (Hokenstad & Midgley, 1997). At the international level, social workers can actively fight against human rights violations (Hokenstad & Midgley, 1997), work within refugee camps to ensure continued care and protection (Brody, 1994), and be involved in supporting refugee communities as they endeavour to enhance their own well-being (Williamson & Moser, 1988). Although a few international NGOs have a strong social work presence, most currently do not in spite of the social work-related functions they perform (Hokenstad & Midgley, 1997). "Social work practice aims at social change… The foundation of professional practice is built on humanitarian and egalitarian ideals, the right to social justice, and the elimination of oppression and exploitation in society" (Heinonen & Spearman, 2001, p.1). These ideals are, in fact, enshrined in the CASW Code of Ethics which states in its preamble that "the profession of social work is founded on humanitarian and egalitarian ideals." Recognizing that social work with individuals at the local level is increasingly influenced by problems of global scope, and that more and more social workers around the world are working with refugees from either their own or other countries, "it is becoming increasingly important for social

workers to have an international perspective and understanding to be effective practitioners in today's world" (Hokenstad & Midgley, 1997, p.4).

Refugee Children & Unaccompanied Minors

Children and adolescents under the age of eighteen consistently make up half of the world's refugee population (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Miller, 1998; Sourander, 1998; Westermeyer, 1991). "Typically, they are members of civilian populations that have been targeted by military actions seeking to create fear and social instability" (Ahearn et al, 1999, p.215). They face a broad range of challenges to their development and survival (Ahearn et al, 1999) making them not only a vulnerable subgroup among the world's children, but also a vulnerable subgroup among refugees (Kaprielian-Churchill & Churchill, 1994). For this reason, in 1994, the UNHCR released guidelines on the protection and care of refugee children based on the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child that highlight appropriate responses and actions based on their vulnerability, dependency, and stage of development. Adolescents have also been included in these guidelines in recognition that, despite the fact that they are often treated as adults (Williamson & Moser, 1988), adolescents are still developing their identities and learning essential skills that can make them possible targets of exploitation (UNHCR, 1994).

Unaccompanied minors usually make up 2-5% of the total population in any given refugee situation (UNHCR, 1996; UNHCR, 1994). Defined as children who have been separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible to do so (UNHCR, 1994), these children are potent symbols of the dramatic impact of humanitarian crises on individual lives (ICRC, 2004). There are a

number of reasons why children become separated from their families: some are sent away to safety or to avoid conscription; some become accidentally separated during flight; some are orphaned; and some are abandoned to the care of others in the hope they will be better cared for (ICRC, 2004; Richman, 1998). Regardless of the reason for separation, all unaccompanied minors are persons of concern to the UNHCR and are categorized as 'vulnerable' and in need of special protection (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Sourander, 1998). Although there has been some concern raised about the concept of vulnerability and of the consequences of targeting 'vulnerable' groups for assistance within a larger refugee population (Sommers, 1998; Lobo & Mayadas, 1997), the consequences of this approach to the provision of care and assistance has not yet been studied.

For adolescents, the lack of continuity and meaning due to cultural and family losses is of particular significance when they are establishing an adult identity and looking for a place to belong (Aldous, 1999; Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Jones, 1998; Miller 1998). Forced migration typically disrupts socialization through such structures as school and places of worship (Ahearn et al, 1999), but reconnection to school, religion and ritual activities can assist greatly in re-creating a sense of normalcy (UNHCR, 1994). In emergencies where there are large numbers of separated children, the care of older children may not be seen as a priority as they are regarded as being better able to look after themselves (Uppard et al, 1998). However, recognizing that adolescence is a key period for learning and consolidating health-related values, attitudes, self-concepts, behaviours, and life-styles (Hurrelmann & Losel, 1990), the provision of appropriate assistance to this specific population is crucial. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to acquire a better understanding of the informal systems of support that exist for the

care and protection of children and adolescents within the refugee community (Uppard et al, 1998; UNHCR, 1994).

Unaccompanied minors have a right to care and protection. Aside from basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter they also have social and developmental needs that must be met (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Sourander, 1998; Uppard et al, 1998; Lobo & Mayadas, 1997; Ajdukovic et al, 1993). Supportive factors that help refugee children maintain or re-create a sense of normality in their lives include having permanent care-givers that provide adequate care and affection, having the opportunity to interact with adults and children who are friendly and understanding, receiving an education that meets their needs, and having opportunities to play and participate in activities that promote self-esteem (Richman, 1998). There have been many studies into the psychological well-being of refugee children and adolescents (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Sourander, 1998; Martic-Biocina et al, 1996; Ajdukovic et al, 1993, Ressler et al, 1988). Much of the literature points to the importance of the child's social environment as an essential source of support in dealing effectively with stress and trauma, often referring to the importance of remaining with their families as much as possible (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Miller, 1998; Sourander, 1998; Martic-Biocina et al, 1996; Ajdukovic et al, 1993). But unaccompanied minors, by their very definition, have been separated from their families and there is a paucity of information regarding their well-being and the extent to which unaccompanied refugee children are supported by their social environments (Jones, 1998; Sourander, 1998).

Little is known about the long-term effects on children of living for an extended period of time in a refugee camp (Ahearn et al, 1999). However, it has been discussed that the emotional development of children may be adversely affected by remaining for years in

the artificial environment of a refugee camp where normal life activities are impossible, their freedom of movement is restricted, and they grow up in poor living conditions dependent on care and maintenance support (UNHCR, 1994; Williamson & Moser, 1988). In addition, living in a camp setting can exacerbate feelings of loss, uncertainty, distrust, scepticism, helplessness, vulnerability, powerlessness, and over-dependency (Jablensky et al, 1994; Leopold & Harrell-Bond, 1994; Marsella et al, 1994; von Buchwald, 1994). "Uprooted children living within uprooted social groups are often forced to alter their existing world views in order to make sense out of their new realities" (Boothby, 1994, p.255). In many ways, the refugee experience can be compared to the situation of grieving as many forms of losses occur (Bryant & Ahearn, 1999; Jones, 1998; Lobo & Mayadas, 1997; Ajdukovic et al, 1993; Ressler et al, 1988). The effects of these losses on the individual may be compounded by the various stresses of flight and encampment, but these individual experiences must also be set in the context of the collective losses of the whole community (Jones, 1998; Eisenbruch, 1990). Recognizing that it can be more helpful to address the collective experience of loss rather than focusing on the impact of trauma on the individual (Jones, 1998), mental health care initiatives need to mobilize available resources to support community efforts to create a more positive social reality for children (Boothby, 1994; Richman, 1998).

In light of the above information, it was the intention of this author to contribute to the growing body of knowledge related to refugee well-being by focussing specifically on the lived experiences of unaccompanied and separated youth living in a refugee camp in Africa.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

> A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.
> ~ Lao-Tsu

Theory & approaches that informed my research

This research project represents my most significant attempt to bridge the worlds of theory and practice. A qualitative research course that I took shortly before venturing into the field was instrumental in helping me identify which theoretical approaches best fit with my own personal worldview. What follows is an overview of the theoretical approaches that informed my research: qualitative research & feminist theory; hermeneutic phenomenology; and my own personal beliefs.

<u>Qualitative research & feminist theory</u>

Qualitative research methods have been identified as being well-suited to examining issues centred on human experience, how it is created, and how it gives meaning to human life (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). For this reason, I chose to use qualitative research techniques for this study. In the tradition of qualitative research, I allowed this study to be guided by the following principles: (1) a belief in multiple realities; (2) a commitment to the participant's viewpoint; (3) a desire to conduct the study in a way that would limit disruption of the environment; (4) an acknowledgment that I would be an active participant in the research; and (5) an attempt to share my own understanding of what I learned in a literary style rich with participant commentaries

(Streubert & Carpenter, 1999)[4]. It was also rooted in my own belief that rich descriptions of the social world are valuable and that by studying things in their natural settings, it is possible to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

These above-named characteristics of qualitative research situate it well within a feminist paradigm. In recognition of the fundamental conditions that have been identified by Streubert & Carpenter (1999) as being necessary for feminist research to take place, this study adhered to the following conditions: (1) the research was focused on the experiences of the participants, their perceptions, and their truths; (2) history and concurrent events were considered when planning, conducting, analyzing, and interpreting findings; (3) I considered the questions I asked to be as important as the answers I received; (4) I tried to ensure that the research was not hierarchical; (5) I recognized that my own assumptions, biases, and presuppositions were part of the research process; and (6) I regarded the research participants as partners in the process. I attempted to adhere to these conditions in the spirit of "liberating the study participants and making their voices heard" (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.11).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Data collection and analysis for this study followed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The purpose of phenomenology is to explore the lived experience of individuals and to develop an understanding of those experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Therefore, this particular approach to

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[4] Although this was my original intention, the reality of working through an interpreter limited the nature of participant commentaries I was able to share in this paper.

data collection and analysis was chosen for this study in order to generate new understanding of the phenomenon of being unaccompanied for refugee youth. Although there are diverse schools of phenomenological thought, phenomenology, in general, focuses on revealing meaning rather than on arguing a point or developing abstract theory (van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000). It focuses on exploring the concrete world of human experience and on revealing the nature of these experiences rather than on developing theory (Baron, 1985; van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000).

> Knowledge, resulting from phenomenological inquiry, becomes practically relevant in its possibilities of changing the manner in which a professional communicates with and acts towards another individual in the very next situation he/she may encounter. Phenomenological knowledge reforms understanding, does something to us; it affects us, and leads to more thoughtful action (Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000, p.213).

Hermeneutics has come to mean both a method of interpretation and a philosophy (Walsh, 1996). It is a process used to make sense of lived experiences where understanding is produced between both the researcher and the participants (Schwandt, 2000; Walters, 1995). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have stated that all research is interpretive; it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Therefore, interpretation and understanding become one in the same (Schwandt, 2000).

"Hermeneutic phenomenology is a special kind of phenomenological interpretation, designed to unveil otherwise concealed meanings in the phenomena" (Spiegelberg, 1975, as quoted in Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.54). Martin Heidegger is one of the main philosophers to whom hermeneutic phenomenology is attributed. A student of Husserl's, Heidegger veered away from the descriptive phenomenology of his mentor to take a more interpretive approach to his work. According to Heidegger, an understanding of the person cannot occur in isolation from the person's world; there is

an indissoluble unity between the two (Koch, 1995; Walters, 1995). He would also maintain that there is no such thing as an uninterpreted fact and that reaching an understanding requires the engagement of one's biases and prejudgments rather than trying to put them aside as it is only possible to interpret something according to one's own lived experience (Schwandt, 2000; Walsh, 1996; Walters, 1995).

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1999) further elaborated this concept of understanding:

> Understanding is not, in fact, understanding better, either in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production. It is enough to say that we understand in a *different* way, *if we understand at all.* (p.296)

According to Gadamer, arriving at a different understanding of a given subject can be compared to broadening our horizon of understanding where our horizon is "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (1999, p.302). The process of arriving at this new understanding involves a constant movement from the whole to the part and back to the whole again. This circular relationship is known as the "hermeneutic circle" (ibid, p.291) and represents the important relationship between questioning and understanding. "Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject" (*ibid,* p.375).

Personal beliefs

I believe that the way we see the world around us is influenced by our own biases and life experiences. I also believe that as human beings we are ever evolving and, therefore, that our perceptions of reality also evolve. For example, the person I was when I began this research project is not the same as the person I am today sitting down writing this report. Years of intense personal and professional experience have

passed in between, and my perception of the world has been modified as a result. I have lost much of my naivety. My motivation to complete this thesis stems both from a sense of duty to the participants and a desire to move on with my life. Therefore, I believe that this report will reflect not only the results of the research itself, but also the time and place of its writing.

I cannot presume to present myself as an expert in the lives or experiences of unaccompanied refugee youth. Through this report, I am simply offering my own interpretations of what I have learned. I believe that each participant in this project would have written a different report had they had the opportunity to do so.

Selection of the research site

I chose to conduct this research project in Nduta Refugee Camp in Tanzania for a few important reasons: (1) Nduta was a camp I was already familiar with; (2) I had already been able to establish positive relations with members of the community; (3) this camp had a relatively long and stable history which had allowed for a rich mix of people to make their home within its borders; and (4) there was a high enough level of security in both that particular camp as well as in the general area that I felt comfortable working there (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). As one of five Burundian refugee camps in Tanzania's northwestern Kibondo District, Nduta Refugee Camp was established on December 12, 1996. As of the end of July 2001, when this study began, there were 54,142 Burundian refugees confined within the 12 km² area of this camp (UNHCR, 1999b)[5]. At the time this study was conducted, approximately 3% of Nduta's total population consisted of children under the age of 18 who were in the camp without

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[5] Between my departure from the field and the writing of this report, a programme of voluntary repatriation was implemented. As a result, I do not know what the current status of Nduta is in terms of its population or stability.

their parents or natural guardians (UNHCR, 2000). My previous informal exploration into the main issues and concerns regarding this vulnerable population revealed several interesting phenomena, including: (1) conflict between foster parents and fostered youth; (2) voluntary separation from parents due to lack of appropriate care; and (3) minimal opportunity for participation in social, recreational, and/or educational activities (Antle, 2000). With all this in mind, it was my belief that Nduta Refugee Camp would provide a dynamic setting for the implementation of this project.

Selection of the research participants

Going into this project, I wanted to have the chance to meet with and interview as many youth in the camp as possible. However, my supervisor helped me to realize that I needed to have a clear and manageable number in mind before jumping in too far. We agreed that I should aim for a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 participants. At this point, those figures seem quite arbitrary but that small goal did keep me on track in terms of time management while I was in the field. I relied on 2 main sources within the camp for identifying potential participants: Martin, the refugee supervisor for unaccompanied minors working in the camp with the Southern Africa Extension Unit (SAEU); and Fr. Deo, a Tanzanian priest working in the camp with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) who, among other activities, facilitated a youth group in his church. Although I had approached several individuals working with different agencies and shared with them the purpose of my research, these were the only 2 individuals who came forward with either ideas for or actual names of potential participants.

Sampling methods used

In academic terms, I used both purposeful and convenience sampling to identify my participants. Purposeful sampling, which is commonly used in phenomenological

research, involves selecting research participants "based on their particular knowledge of a phenomenon for the purpose of sharing that knowledge" (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.58). This was complemented with convenience sampling, which relies on participants who are available to participate in the study (Gabor & Ing, 1997). I had also planned on using snowball sampling as a technique in identifying potential participants, which included asking participants if they knew of anyone else who would also like the opportunity to participate; however, no new participants were identified in this way. This combination of non-probability sampling techniques was used to ensure the participation of information-rich individuals suitable for providing an insider's perspective to the experience being studied (Franklin & Jordan, 1997). "There [was] no need to randomly select individuals, because manipulation, control, and generalization of findings [were] not the intent of the inquiry" (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.22).

Definitions used to guide participant selection

Research participants consisted of unaccompanied refugee youth living in Nduta Refugee Camp in northwestern Tanzania. For the sake of clarity, the following definitions were used to help guide the identification of potential participants:

Refugee: According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as well as the subsequent 1967 Protocol, a refugee is defined as any person who:

> owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
> (section A(2) of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

The Organization for African Unity (OAU), while accepting the above definition of refugees, adopted their own broader definition to encompass the mass character of refugee problems in Africa. This OAU definition is more relevant in relation to the Burundian caseload in Tanzania. According to Article 1.2 of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa:

> The term "refugee" shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.
> (taken from http://www.oneworld.org/afronet/links/Refugees_rules.htm)

Unaccompanied minor. According to the definition put forward by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an unaccompanied minor is any individual under the age of eighteen "who [is] separated from both parents and [is] not being cared for by an adult who, by law or culture, is responsible to do so" (UNHCR, 1994, p.121).[6]

Unaccompanied youth. The term "unaccompanied youth" should be taken as predominantly including, but not being restricted to, unaccompanied adolescents who are defined by the community service implementing agency in Nduta as unaccompanied minors between the ages of 13-18. For purposes of this research, this age restriction was extended so as not to exclude potentially rich informants above the

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[6] A UNHCR memo dated November 22, 2001 states that "experience, notably in the Great Lakes region of Africa, has highlighted that even in emergency situations, not all children are found to be unaccompanied as defined above, even though many have been separated from their previous legal or customary caregiver. Such children, although living with extended family members, may face risks similar to those encountered by unaccompanied refugee children. Consequently, the term 'separated child' is now widely used to draw attention to the potential protection needs of this group. 'Separated children' are defined as children 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 (ICRC, 2004).

age of 18. An example of such a participant is someone who was an 'unaccompanied minor' upon arrival in the camp but who has now surpassed the age of 18.

I believe that social responsibility calls for attention to diversity when selecting research participants (Robley, 1995); therefore, care was taken to prevent the exclusion of any potential participant due to gender, language or literacy skills, status in the community, regional differences, prior socio-economic status, and/or current level of health. Through the assistance of Martin and Fr. Deo, and using the techniques mentioned above, 10 participants were identified (please see Table 1 for a summary of the individuals who participated). However, 2 of these individuals ("Pius Gerard" and "Philosophy") did not fall within the participant-selection guidelines due to their current age as well as the fact that they were already above the age of 18 when they arrived in the camp. This is in contrast to "Lisuba", aged 23, who arrived in the camp when he was 18 and therefore had the experience of being labelled an "unaccompanied minor". Although I had originally intended not to consider the interviews with "Pius Gerard" and "Philosophy" during my data analysis, the information and stories that they shared with me during our time together helped to enrich my understanding of life in the camp and their experiences helped to add context to those of the other participants as well. As a result, I do refer to them in the "Results" section of this paper. I would like to say that 'saturation' was determined by the depth and quality of information shared by the participants (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999); however, in the end, the number of participants chosen and interviews conducted came down to how long I was able to stay in the field as well as the availability of the participants themselves. Given the constraints under which I was working, part of me doubts that a feeling of saturation would have ever been achieved.

TABLE 1: Summary of research participants

#	Pseudonym	GENDER	AGE	TIME IN NDUTA	EDUCATION	FAMILY AND/OR SOCIAL SUPPORT
1	"Jeanne"	F	17	2 yrs	Form 3	Living with 3rd foster family; no relatives in Tz or Burundi
2	"Sophie"	F	14	2 yrs	Has had 2 yrs	Living with brother (16) and sisters (8,6,4); uncle in the camp but no interaction; no relatives in Burundi
3	"Niyongele"	F	14	5 yrs	Grade 4	Living with foster family; has been with same family since she was a child; no known relatives
4	"Pajero"	M	15	I yr	Grade 5	Living alone; no relatives in Tz or Burundi
5	"Pius Gerard"	M	28	4 yrs	Hasn't had any formal education	Arrived and is living alone but has distant relatives in the camp
6	"Kwizera"	F	14	5 yrs	Grade 4	Was living with other children; has been alone for 3 months
7	"Philosophy"	M	25	4 yrs	Grade 6	Living alone
8	"Lisuba"	M	23	5 yrs	Grade 5	Living alone
9	"Bigirimana Emmanuel"	M	14	5 yrs	Grade 3	Living with a man who was coming from the same village in Burundi; no relatives in the camp
10	"Niyoyitungira"	M	15	5 yrs	Grade 5	Living alone

Data collection

Data was collected in Nduta Refugee Camp from August 2001 until January 2002 primarily through the use of semi-structured / open-ended interviews with 10 participants. These individual interviews were conducted through the assistance of an interpreter. Although it had been my intention to encourage participants to select the time and location of the interviews as a way of balancing the inherent power imbalance between us, the question of location quickly dictated itself. It was impossible for me to walk within the camp without large crowds of on-lookers gathering around me. If I visited someone's home, everybody knew. If I visited the community centre, everybody knew. The only location that afforded any degree of privacy was the UNHCR office located at the edge of the camp. So, for the sake of protecting the confidentiality of the participants, this is where all of the interviews took place. The participants did, however, decide upon when and for how long we would meet. Although I would have liked the option of conducting follow-up interviews, they were not deemed necessary (or sometimes even possible) by any of the participants. Please see Table 2 for an overview of the interviews that took place.

Participant observation was also used throughout the study to complement the interviews. This data collection technique is described below. Later sections (i.e. trustworthiness, ethics) elaborate the care with which I interacted with community members, established trustworthiness and rapport, and ensured an ethical data collection process. Table 3 provides an overview of my visits to the camp, during which my observations were made.

TABLE 2: Overview of data collection interviews

Date	Participant	Length of interview
Sept. 7 / 01	"Jeanne"	2 hours 10 mins
Oct. 12 / 01	"Sophie"	1 hour 15 mins
Oct. 30 / 01	"Niyongele"	0 hours 55 mins
Nov. 1 / 01	"Pajero"	0 hours 45 mins
Jan. 3 / 02	"Pius Gerard"	1 hour 0 mins
Jan. 3 / 02	"Kwizera"	1 hour 15 mins
Jan. 8 / 02	"Philosophy"	1 hour 10 mins
Jan. 8 / 02	"Lisuba"	1 hour 30 mins
Jan. 15 / 02	"Bigirimana Emmanuel"	0 hours 55 mins
Jan. 15 / 02	"Niyoyitungira"	0 hours 45 mins

TABLE 3: Summary of observation visits in the camp

Year	Month	Dates	Duration of visit
2001	July	~	
	August	14	5 hours 30 mins
		15	6 hours 0 mins
		21	7 hours 15 mins
		30	3 hours 30 mins
	September	6	1 hour 45 mins
		7	4 hours 0 mins (est)
	October	5	5 hours 10 mins
		9	3 hours 45 mins
		12	3 hours 0 mins (est)
		29	0 hours 30 mins
		30	5 hours 30 mins (est)
	November	1	6 hours 0 mins
		6	6 hours 45 mins
	December	28	1 hour 50 mins
2002	January	2	0 hours 40 mins
		3	3 hours 0 mins (est)
		8	7 hours 10 mins
		15	2 hours 30 mins (est)
	TOTAL	**18 days**	**73 hours 50 mins**

<u>Semi-structured / open-ended interviews</u>

I relied on the use of a semi-structured / open-ended interviewing process in order to gain insight into what it means to be unaccompanied for youth in Nduta Refugee Camp. Before the research began, I anticipated asking any or all of the following questions: (1) age of participant; (2) how long they had been in the camp; (3) what region of Burundi they were from originally; (4) their level of education; and (5) their current level of familial and/or social support. I then intended that discussion would focus on the following 2 questions: (1) what is life like for you in the camp?; and (2) what does being unaccompanied mean to you? After arriving in the field, I quickly decided not to ask any questions regarding which region of Burundi they had come from in order to avoid the inherent politics associated with that question. The conflict in Burundi was quite often a regional one, and I did not want to create harm by forcing participants to discuss their regional identities. The discussion questions also quickly evolved with each interview bringing new insight into how better to understand the experiences of the participants. The question "what does being unaccompanied mean to you" was difficult to translate, which lead to confusion rather than to understanding, and so was eliminated after the first couple of interviews. The interview schedule, as it evolved, is presented in Appendix D.

Each participant was interviewed only once, with each interview lasting between 45 minutes to 2 hours long. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data in this study in recognition of the fact that interviewing is "one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.645). They are an excellent way of producing richly qualitative data while establishing a relationship with the participants that can lead to a deeper understanding of their experiences (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Rogers & Bouey, 1997;

Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). This understanding is increased with the use of open-ended questions. Therefore, open-ended questions were used throughout the interviews so that participants were able to share their stories in their own words while also minimizing the status differences that existed between myself and the research participants (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999).

Fontana & Frey (2000) have recommended that interviews be viewed as "practical productions", whereby meaning is mutually created by both the interviewer and the respondent. Therefore, I did not regard myself as a neutral party in the research process but rather as an active participant in the process of reaching understanding. "Interviews [must be] seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.663). This concept agrees well with Heidegger's previously stated view of the "indissoluble unity between the person and the world" (Koch, 1995, p.831).

Participant Observation

As the use of different data gathering methods creates the potential for a fuller understanding of the phenomena being studied (Rogers & Bouey, 1997), participant observation was also used in this study as a complement to interviewing. Participant observation has been identified as an excellent way to reach an understanding of how other people see or interpret their experiences within the contexts and environments in which these events occur (Rogers & Bouey, 1997) and is particularly useful in the following four situations: (1) when little is known about our research participants; (2) when there are important differences between outsider and insider views, as in the case of diverse cultures; (3) when the phenomenon is usually obscured from outsiders; and

(4) when the phenomenon is intentionally hidden from public view (Franklin & Jordan, 1997). With this in mind, I regarded participant observation as an appropriate method of collecting data for this particular project, which took place with a population about which little is known (i.e. unaccompanied refugee youth) in a context few "outsiders" have the privilege of witnessing firsthand (i.e. a refugee camp).

Due to strict security measures, I was not able to live in the camp; therefore, my involvement with the community and my opportunities for observation were limited to occasional visits. I had hoped to be able to visit the camp on a daily basis but this, also, was not possible due to difficulties in arranging transport to the camp. This is one of the main reasons why, in the end, my research felt compromised. I did, however, keep a written record of my observations during those days that I was able to spend time in Nduta and those observations did help to "broaden my horizon" of understanding. This observation partly took place during the interviewing process but also extended to include observations of the physical and social characteristics of the camp itself. This active form of observation was used to help place the interviews, and therefore the data generated from these interviews, within the wider context of the refugee camp itself (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000; Fontana & Frey, 2000).

Working with an interpreter

In order to be able to work around a language barrier, I relied on the assistance of an interpreter throughout this study. His role was to find the best and clearest way of conveying questions and responses between the research participants and myself (Turner, 1999) as well as to explain aspects of communication that may not have been understood by either the participants or myself due to cultural differences.

In order to ensure that an appropriate interpreter was selected, I followed these guidelines, as recommended by Baker (1981): (1) the linguistic skills of the potential interpreter were assessed; (2) his personal attributes were examined; and (3) I spent as much time as possible with him before beginning interviews with research participants in order to become aware of any potential issues that may have arisen once interviews began. I discussed my expectations regarding our respective roles (Turner, 1999) and spent time debriefing with him after each interview to allow for clarification and deeper understanding of content and/or behaviour (Freed, 1988). Care was also taken to establish and maintain a positive working relationship with him to help ensure that the quality of interpretation remained high throughout the study (i.e. providing constructive feedback, looking for signs of fatigue, thanking him for his efforts). This was considered an important aspect of the research process as several authors (Baker, 1981; Durst, 1994; Freed, 1988; and Turner, 1999) have identified potential difficulties in relation to interviewing through an interpreter, including: 1) a potential screening of the information flowing between researcher and participant to protect either of them from unwanted information; (2) an over-identification with either the researcher or the participant, thereby influencing the flow of information; (3) an unwillingness to divulge certain information that s/he feels may show his/her community in an unfavourable light; and (4) a desire to transmit the 'right' answers because of cultural mandates of politeness. Care was also taken to ensure that the interpreter and research participants felt as comfortable with each other as possible to reduce any sense of intimidation that may have affected the flow of information. This was mainly accomplished by sharing some refreshments (which I provided) over light conversation before officially beginning the interview.

As elaborated in Appendices A, B and C the interpreter and each participant was assured that participation in the study would have no effect on the delivery of services. Nor would the content from the interviews influence the interpreter's future behaviour toward the participant or toward anyone associated with him/her. In addition, the interpreter was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement before interviewing began (see Appendix C).

Selecting an interpreter

Three potential interpreters with strong linguistic and interpersonal skills were identified before returning to the field to begin the study. Two of these individuals were members of the refugee community while the third was a Tanzanian community services officer working with the Southern Africa Extension Unit (SAEU) in the camp. However, upon arrival in the field and with further thought, none of these individuals were chosen for this role. The Tanzanian national had left the field to pursue his studies and was therefore no longer available whereas I recognized an internal discomfort in selecting either member of the refugee community due to the dual relationships that would have existed between them and the participants. This came from the fact that one of them was the Headmaster of the only post-primary school in the camp while the other was a community social worker who was directly involved in the provision of services to the community. Due to past experience with both of them, I also had reason to become concerned about potential interference in the flow of information between the participants and myself, as well as in being able to maintain confidentiality. Therefore, instead of potentially jeopardizing the research process, I decided to search for another alternative.

A solution was found in the man who is now my husband. At the time of beginning my study, we were already engaged to be married and he had recently become unemployed; therefore, he had time available to dedicate himself to the process. He is from Tanzania, he can communicate fluently in both English and Kirundi, and he had already had two years of work experience in the camp through the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Therefore, he was already familiar with the camp environment and possessed the necessary language skills to take on this role.

Advantages and limitations of using selected interpreter

As mentioned above, the selected interpreter was able to communicate in Kirundi, he had previous work experience in the camp, and he had the time available to dedicate himself to the process. Beyond this, however, there was no one in the country with whom I had better communication and understanding. I could trust implicitly that there would be no intentional interference in the flow of information and he prided himself on being able to interact easily with a wide range of individuals regardless of age, gender or status. He was excited about the opportunity to be my interpreter as it afforded him the chance to better understand the work in which I was involved. I also knew that our collaboration could extend well beyond the interviews themselves in terms of briefing / debriefing ourselves.

Our collaboration began with the translation of the participant consent form (see Appendix A for the English version and Appendix B for the Kirundi version). Once the interviews began, we would review our respective roles and responsibilities the night before each interview and spend at least half-an-hour debriefing together after each interview before continuing on with any other activity.

In my opinion, the main limitation that arose during the interviews came from the style of interpretation that was adopted. Despite my requests that information be shared frequently during the interviews (i.e. not allowing too much time to pass before relaying information to the person concerned), my interpreter would often listen intently for a long period of time and then pass on a summary of what had been said. I became frustrated with this style because I had been hoping to come away with direct quotes from the participants that could be infused into the final report, thereby bringing their voices more directly to the readers. However, he firmly believed that only in summarizing could he capture and relay the meaning of what was being said. Otherwise it would have become a literal translation where the nuances of the words spoken would have been lost.

Another concern I had in the beginning was that due to the intimate nature of our relationship, there was the potential for outside issues between us to surface during the interviews themselves. For example, if we had had a disagreement about a personal matter, or if we felt irritated with each other (as couples sometimes experience), that negativity could have been carried into the interview. However, such a situation did not arise and our interactions were nothing but positive throughout the research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in hermeneutic phenomenology requires the researcher to dwell in a "hermeneutic circle" to come to new interpretations and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. "The hermeneutical circle of interpretation moves forward and backward, starting at the present. It is never closed or final" (Allen & Jenson, 1990, as quoted in Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.55). According to Walsh (1996), dwelling in a hermeneutic circle allows understanding to take place against a backdrop of pre-

understanding where subject-object distinctions disappear. "We move from part to whole and back again in order to expand our horizon of understanding" (Walsh, 1996, p.236). Therefore, by reading and re-reading interview transcripts and personal reflections, moving from words, to sentences or paragraphs, to the whole document and back again in an ongoing process of interpretation, I was able to engage in a dialogue with the text to ensure a two-way interaction between data collection and analysis. Because these attempts at understanding often passed with months in between, I was often looking at the same information with fresh eyes and new energy, further expanding my horizon of understanding.

Establishing trustworthiness

Qualitative research is said to be 'trustworthy' when it accurately represents the experiences of the study participants (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). There are numerous concepts that apply to establishing the trustworthiness of any qualitative research project, including credibility, confirmability, and transferability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). These terms are explained below in relation to how they served to reinforce the trustworthiness of the findings of this study.

Credibility

Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with the research participants, the broader community, and the topic under study (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). This was achieved by spending five months collecting data through interviews and observation following two previous trips to the same site. The time taken to transcribe and analyze the interviews also served to lengthen my engagement with the subject matter. The entire process was documented through field notes and reflective journal writing. Although I had originally planned on using member-checking to

ensure the research participants could recognize their own experiences in the findings, there were 2 main issues that prevented this from happening: (1) the findings were not clarified until years after leaving the field when contact with the participants was no longer possible; and (2) even if I had been able to track down the participants all these years later, the language barrier between us would have required for the findings to be translated, which would have again altered them. However, since I am simply presenting my own interpretations of what I have learned, the act of member-checking was not deemed to be necessary.

Confirmability

The confirmability of the findings of this study have been documented through an audit trail. The audit trail is a record of my activities and thought processes that helped lead me to the conclusions I reached (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). In order to strengthen the trustworthiness of this study, confirmability has also been established by carefully storing all field notes, personal journals, tape recordings, transcripts, documents, and photographs used throughout the research process. This material will be stored for 6 years and will be made available, upon request.

Transferability

"Transferability refers to the probability that the study findings have meaning to others in similar situations" (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.29). This study was limited in place and time to Nduta Refugee Camp during the months taken to complete the project. However, it is my hope that this report presents a rich enough description of place, time, and research process to help readers determine the transferability of the findings to their own situations and/or interests. As Lincoln & Guba (1985) have noted, it is not the researcher's responsibility to provide an "index of transferability";

rather, it is her responsibility to provide the data base that makes judgment of potential transferability possible on the part of the readers themselves (as quoted in Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.29).

Ethics

Several precautionary measures were taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the research participants throughout this study. These measures were related to informed consent and confidentiality, which are described below.

Informed consent

Informed consent was sought from each participant before they were interviewed. "Informed consent means that participants have adequate information regarding the research; are capable of comprehending the information; and have the power of free choice, enabling them to consent voluntarily to participate in the research or decline participation" (Polit & Hungler, 1997, as quoted in Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p.34). Each participant was informed that their participation would involve sharing their knowledge and insight about being 'unaccompanied' with the researcher through one or more interviews and that they would also have the opportunity to share their ideas about how the findings of the study should be shared and/or reported. They were informed that there were no known risks associated with participating in this study and that the only costs to them would be the time taken to conduct the interview(s). Potential participants were assured that neither participating in nor withdrawing from the study would have any bearing on any services received within the camp. They were informed of their rights as participants, which included being able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, choosing when they would like the interview(s) to take place, and choosing their own 'secret name' to be used in all reporting as a way

of ensuring their anonymity. They were also asked to sign a consent form that was translated for them into Kirundi, their national language, which included the above information (see Appendix A for the English version and Appendix B for the Kirundi version of the consent form). Each participant had the chance to read the consent form on their own and together with the interpreter before signing. The interpreter explained what was written on the consent form in anticipation that some participants may not have been able to read but may have felt shy to say so.

For those participants under 18 years of age, their 'guardian' was also asked to provide written consent. As unaccompanied youth are, by definition, in the camp without parents or guardians, either the UNHCR representative for the camp or the participant's social worker was asked to fill this role, depending on who was available, to ensure the well-being of each participant was maintained.

As there are no telephones in the refugee camp, the ordinary protocol of including a contact name and phone number on the consent form was not a practical way of addressing any questions that might have arisen. Therefore, participants were instead requested to contact me through the UNHCR Field Assistant in the camp should any questions arise. For those days that I was not present in the camp and the participants were unable to speak with me directly, the UNHCR Field Assistant was in a position to pass on their messages to me.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality was maintained, the research data has been used in such a way that no one other than the interpreter and myself knows the original source (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Recognizing that "confidentiality is an unfamiliar

concept in many cultures" (Caple et al., 1995, p.166), special care was taken to explain this concept to the participants and to explore how we could work together to ensure that confidentiality was maintained. As previously mentioned, the UNHCR camp office was chosen as the location for conducting interviews due to the privacy it afforded us. Also, in order to increase the likelihood that confidentiality be maintained, each participant was asked to choose a pseudonym that could then be used for the reporting of all data. This activity was something new for all participants concerned and usually brought a smile to their faces once they understood what I was asking them to do – in fact, they were very creative in choosing their new names! At all times, common sense was used in regards to the inclusion/omission of names, dates, locations, and /or activities that may have compromised the anonymity of the participants.

Politics

"The interpretive practice of making sense of one's findings is both artistic and political" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.23). The political nature of this research project cannot be overlooked. The population being studied exists as a consequence of war. The 'care and maintenance' of this population is overseen by a body of the United Nations which receives its funding from governments and private donors around the world. The research site itself is a government-controlled location that only people with special permission can enter into. As such, extreme care was taken to report the findings of this study in a balanced and respectful manner that would not compromise the integrity of the refugee operation, upon which hundreds of thousands of refugees in Tanzania and around the world are dependent. There are ethics involved in "writing research in the interest of social justice" (Fine et al., 2000, p.125). My commitment to social justice as a social worker motivated this project. Ensuring that others were told about the study's findings was seen as an ethical commitment (Williams et al., 1997). "Social inquiry is

a practice, not simply a way of knowing. Understanding what others are doing or saying and transforming that knowledge into public form involves moral-political commitments" (Schwandt, 2000, p.203). The issue of politics is further explored in the "Results" section of this paper.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

> Knowledge comes from taking things apart: analysis. But wisdom
> comes by putting things together
> ~ John A. Morrison

What I learned from the participants

This is where I got stuck. It has literally taken me years to sort through and clarify my thoughts and experiences around this project in an effort to find any meaning. I was able to leave some immediate feedback behind in the field with the colleagues I had worked with all those months – but they were the easy answers. In my opinion, anyone who spent any amount of time in the camp would have observed the following, as I did: (1) there were large discrepancies in assistance being provided to different "categories" of children and youth; (2) the community, in general, was not as involved in caring for the separated children and youth as I had expected they would be; (3) the separated youth I had the chance to meet were, in general, too busy with the daily chores of living to have time to participate more fully in the project; and (4) the most pressing issue for many youth was their education. There seemed to be an unspoken understanding that, not only was education their right, it was also their only hope for a brighter future. Based on these observations, if I were asked to answer the question, "what does being unaccompanied mean?" at the time I would have said that it means being "othered", being forced into adult roles while still a child, being forced to choose between education and immediate survival, and being too focussed on survival to have time for anything else. There was nothing original about these observations. I was looking for something more meaningful, something not so obvious. So I spent years trying to fit my thoughts and observations into categories that would classify as both original and academically sound. There were several times I thought I was close. But it always felt

forced. And I always got stuck. What words could be used to describe a situation that felt indescribable? It would usually take me months to revisit my thoughts after each previous failed attempt to find order among what felt like chaos. But I have now learned that that chaos was my own — and that the answers were in front of me the whole time. And it was the participants themselves who had given them to me.

The day I finally saw their words clearly was the day that the weight of the world was finally lifted from my shoulders. I'll never forget it. It was a Sunday, and I had received one of those rare moments of inspiration to revisit my paper to see if it was at all salvageable. I began by reading over some thoughts that I had written down years ago about each of my participants — and for the first time, it was their names that caught my attention instead of the words of memory beside them. As mentioned earlier, whenever I met with a participant for the first time, I asked him/her to choose a pretend name to be known by as a way of protecting their confidentiality. And there, in their names, was the answer I had been looking for. It had been there all along, staring me in the face. Through the names they had chosen for themselves, they had given me what I needed to know — what we all need to know ~ about their lives and their experience of life in the camp. Through their names, I could finally see the following 4 themes woven throughout their stories: (1) life as a harsh reality; (2) an awareness of privilege; (3) a search for identity; and (4) a faith in God. I gladly share the details of these themes with you below.

Life as a harsh reality

Niyongele, when translated, means "this is the way it goes". I remember feeling so surprised after my interview with her. In essence, she shared with us that she saw no difference between her life in the camp and her life back home in Burundi:

"I am living nicely... I am living with the same family I grew up with...They have been taking care of me since I was a child. I don't know my father or mother."
- Niyongele, 14-year-old female, living with foster family

Niyongele had a more stable family situation than any of the other participants I met with, but her chosen name still leant meaning to the experiences of the other participants. This theme of life simply being what it was kept surfacing throughout the interviews. Life was a harsh reality, but a reality nonetheless. And they were trying to keep life going as close to normal as possible *despite* the harsh reality of living in a refugee camp:

"I'm schooling, but I miss school some days if there's work to do at home, like going to fetch water or firewood. When it rains, I also have to miss school. The tarp that makes my roof is finished – ragged. So when it rains, the roof leaks a lot and I have to move my few things to a neighbour's house and wait for the rain to end."
- Kwizera, 14-year-old female, living alone

"Sometimes I'm going to church, sometimes I'm going to the village to find work to do...otherwise I'm just fetching water and cooking."
- Sophie, 14-year-old female, head-of-household

"Home is home."
- Pius Gerard, 28-year-old male, living alone

"So long as we're here in the camp, this is where we need help – this is where our life is."
- Bigirimana Emmanuel, 14-year-old male, living with foster family

Part of the reality of life in the camp relates to the necessity of finding employment to be able to afford basic necessities. But employment of any kind is hard to come by. Several participants shared their frustrations about unemployment with us:

"I have applied to work within the camp, but I haven't received any job so life continues to be difficult. I've been struggling to find a way of assisting myself. I'm missing things like soap to wash my clothes. My friends help me out sometimes – we help out each other whenever we can."
- Philosophy, 25-year-old male, living alone

"At home you can do so many things, even if you don't have employment you can work on your farm, you can try to find some means of living. But here in the camp, there is nothing. I had to borrow these clothes that I'm wearing so that I'd appear nice to come to meet you."
- Pius Gerard, 28-year-old male, living alone

"I can't find time any other day (for a second interview) - today is the only day I am available. I have to go into the village to find work. I go with my brother to find money so we can buy food and clothes."
- Sophie, 14-year-old female, head-of-household

For many of our participants, part of their reality was that no matter how difficult their

life in the camp was, there was no other life to return to in Burundi. They had no

family waiting for them, no house to return to:

"Even if there is peace in Burundi, I have no reason to go back. I have no family there. Here in the camp is where my life is – even if it is a hard one."
- Bigirimana Emmanuel, 14-year-old male, living with foster family

"I am losing hope of finding family at home. I don't know how to reach them."
- Philosophy, 25-year-old male, living alone

"I don't have anyone. We all ran from home, but I was the only one to make it to the camp. That was five years ago."
- Lisuba, 23-year-old male, living alone

All they had waiting was an uncertain future. All they could do was take life day by

day and focus on surviving:

"Life is tough if you are just alone, you don't have parents, you don't have a job – you have nothing to hold on to. Things are very tough."
- Pius Gerard, 28-year-old male, living alone

"Life is very hard – the food we are given is not enough to last until the next ration day. You have to be very careful with your food or you run out of stock until the next distribution day."
- Lisuba, 23-year-old male, living alone

"I have a lot of thoughts in my head. Sometimes I don't sleep at night. Life just doesn't feel available anymore. Even if I lose my life at any time, I don't care."
- Jeanne, 17-year-old female, living with foster family

"I have been living alone since I arrived here. I used to live with my brother, but he is dead. The clothes I have worn today are the only clothes I have, and I am missing soap to wash myself and my clothes."
- Pajero, 15-year-old male, living alone

When I invited Niyoyitungira to share whatever he wanted people outside of the camp

to know, he grabbed the opportunity to make a heartfelt plea:

"I would like people to know that we are not able to sustain life here. If there is any way of helping us, please do something. We need you to help bring peace to Burundi so that we can go back home."
- Niyoyitungira, 15-year-old male, living alone

When I first arrived in the camp in 1999, I was struck by the contrast of what I was

expecting to see compared to what I actually witnessed. My only exposure to life in a

refugee camp up until that point had been based on what I saw on television –

desperation, disease, overcrowded tent cities. The reality of Nduta, and of the other

camps in the area, was so different from that that I was completely taken off-guard. I

was amazed at the number of programs operating within the camp – income-

generating programs, youth programs, school-based initiatives, peace programming.

In hindsight, I can see how the surprise of this vibrant activity helped me to focus on a

sense of hope and possibility during that first trip. Even upon my return again in 2001,

my initial observations focussed on the serene beauty of the camp:

"A beautiful camp nestled in the forest; lots of vegetation, ground cover and shade.
More home gardens than before. More structures built with mud bricks instead of just
mud and sticks – more of a sense of permanence and pride, less transitory than before."

That is what I wrote in my journal on August 14, 2001. But appearances can be deceiving. Over the course of this research project, I came to experience the instability that was always lying in wait just beneath the surface. There were some days we were forbidden from entering the camp due to insecurity. Stashes of hand grenades were found in the camp. 170 children were recruited from the camps between August and October of that year to fight in the Congo. Women of all ages were being assaulted in and around the camp, creating the need for programming focussed on sexual and gender-based violence. The food rations being distributed fell far short of minimal standards for survival. And, as mentioned above by several participants, there was a desperate shortage of soap to be distributed to the camp's residents. During the time of this project, bars of soap were distributed once every few months. This one bar of all-purpose soap was meant to be used for bathing, washing clothes and washing dishes. Lack of soap was the most common complaint I heard, and it was relentless. I wonder if you can imagine how a lack of soap might affect your life? Especially in a land covered in fine red dust – a dust that permeated all corners and recesses of bodies and buildings. Personally, it is something I had never thought about before. Although I never did have to experience life without soap, I did experience the reality of life with rationed amounts of water. I share the following passage from my journal with you, written on July 19, 2001, to offer you a glimpse into what that felt like for me:

"This morning there was no water at home. No single drop, despite asking more than twice last night to ensure there was enough water to have a bath in the morning... I started my period yesterday, and the thought of having to go to work today without bathing was unbearable. Inside, I could feel that I was panicking. No water! The issue was eventually resolved, but my mood has been ruined for the day – it wasn't a relaxing way to start the day. I'm trying to imagine trying to live day-to-day by rations – for food, for water, for soap. Basics that we all need. The frustration of not being able to access them as required, but rather based on external factors beyond your control. The mental fatigue of trying to stretch each drop until the next supply. This kind of living can really wear you down. Day after day, year after year – how do they do it? While trying to preserve / raise / nurture a family? It's really beyond my comprehension. Even though I have lived without running water, at least for the most part I have been

able to fill my buckets as much as I've wished. The strength, mentally and physically, of these people living in the camps is truly more than I've seen anywhere else."

An awareness of privilege

Philosophy was one of the few participants who wore shoes, and the only one who wore a watch. This became very symbolic to me. By the time I met him, I had already become painfully aware that my carefully thought out interview questions were far too philosophical in nature to have any meaning for my participants, which led me to view philosophical inquiry as a luxury for those who did not have to struggle with day-to-day survival. So somehow his watch and his name matched perfectly – they both symbolized luxury and privilege. Once I was able to get past this surface observation, I was able to see how often the issue of privilege came up in conversation with my participants. For Lisuba, it was the issue of living alone versus the privilege of living with someone else:

"Someone with a family can go to seek work in the nearby village – they can leave someone to look after the house. But for me, if I go, I come back to find everything has been stolen, there is nobody to look after the house. People who distribute things don't give anything to you unless you bribe them. You have to ask for everything to be helped. That's why I was so happy to come talk to you. Others don't take time to listen to us. They just kick you back."
- Lisuba, 23-year-old male, living alone

Some participants brought up examples of missing out on items that were distributed to others in the community:

"There are people who came to write down our names – we didn't know why. Then we saw our neighbours being given jerry cans, but we didn't get any. We were the only ones not to get them. When I asked why, I was told it was because we had gone to fetch water when they were distributed. But it's not possible that we were all out of the house at the same time."
- Sophie, 14-year-old female, head-of-household

"The people who distribute things don't give to you unless you bribe them. You have to ask for everything to be helped… I don't have any way of approaching those who can help me – I'm chased away, I can even be beaten. Most of the people who get a job, they bribe to get the job, which I cannot do because I have nothing… Life in Burundi was good compared to here… Here we don't have anything. We just sit and wait for the distribution day."
~ Lisuba, 23-year-old male, living alone

For others, the main issue was being deprived of the privilege of going to school:

"I am schooling, but I miss school on days when there's work to do at home." Through tears she added, *"I'm missing a lot of opportunity to go to school. I feel bad to see that others are going while I can't get that opportunity. When I do get the chance to go, I've missed a lot and I can't properly answer the teacher's questions. When I don't know the answers, I am beaten."*
~ Kwizera, 14-year-old female, living alone

"I am not equal to others my age. Those with parents are able to go to school every day. But sometimes for me it's difficult if there's something to do. Like on distribution days, I sometimes wait the whole day to be given food, so I can't go to school."
~ Pajero, 15-year-old male, living alone

For Bigirimana Emmanuel, the privilege of being able to attend school came at its own

cost:

"I had to stop going to school because when I would return home I would find that the family I am living with would have already eaten without me. When I would request some flour to make my own food, they would refuse. So I thought it was best to stop going to school so that I could also get the chance to eat."
~ Bigirimana Emmanuel, 14-year-old male, living with foster family

A similar feeling of deprivation was expressed by other participants in relation to their

own experiences:

"I cannot do what I want to do. I'm being directed what to do. Sometimes I need time for my studies, but my foster family cannot allow me because there's this and that work to do at home."
~ Jeanne, 17-year-old female, living with foster family

"My life here is bad compared to others. They are given jobs – they are lucky. But I have no one to help me with that."
~ Pius Gerard, 28-year-old male, living alone

"An orphan usually has a bad life because there are no parents to support life. You don't have money to buy soap, or money to buy clothes. The life we are living is a very hard one. Maybe people like you can assist us."
~ Niyoyitungira, 15-year-old male, living alone

"From the time I came I haven't accepted that I am living here. In Burundi we were living well – we had television. When I first came here it was very difficult to imagine that I'd be living here. There is a feeling of poverty with how we are living here."
~ Philosophy, 25-year-old male, living alone

Regardless of the specific issue, everyone touched on something that made them feel like they did not have access to the privileges enjoyed by others. In reality, there was much disparity within the camp, a disparity that I had also witnessed. During one of my meetings with a camp social worker, I was informed that there were simply too many separated children and youth in the camp to be properly looked after, so they focussed on those categorized as unaccompanied minors. At the time there were 82 unaccompanied minors in the camp, children like Pajero who were completely alone in the camp. But this number also included children like Niyongele who, despite living with the only family she could remember, was considered "unaccompanied" because she wasn't living with a birth parent or blood relative. They both had regular visits from camp social workers who would check in on them and would both receive extra material assistance whenever it was available. This was certainly in stark contrast to Sophie who, at the tender age of 14, was acting as a head-of-household and taking care of her 3 younger sisters and an older brother without any extra assistance. They were categorized as "attached minors" because they had an uncle in the camp. It did not matter that they were not in contact with him ~ "he doesn't even care to say hello." They were among the 1300 attached minors in the camp, making them part of a statistic that far outweighed available resources.

Other than disparities in assistance due to different categories of vulnerability, there was a strong suspicion among UNHCR field staff that misallocation of material assistance was also occurring. One of my journal entries from September 6, 2001 highlights this fact:

"I had an interesting conversation with James today. He mentioned that all of the social workers in the camp are from the same place in Burundi, which is also the same place as the supervisor. He has a suspicion that they are not distributing aid / assistance equally. There was one example where he asked them to gather the names of all vulnerable women in the camp as he had some khangas available to distribute. When he verified the list he was given, he discovered that it consisted mostly of their wives and friends. Because of this, he's very interested to hear what will come out of this research, to hear what needs the UAMs identify for themselves and comments they have regarding how they are surviving and the assistance (or lack of assistance) they are receiving."

A search for identity

This is an interesting one. Most of the participants found great pleasure in selecting pretend names for themselves – and were very creative in the process. For example, "Pajero" is a popular type of luxury car. But some refused to do so, wanting to be called by their own names. It was not until I had that moment of clarity and understood the significance of the names the participants had chosen for themselves that I could also see the significance of refusing to choose another name – they wanted to be seen as themselves. How did I interpret this? To me this meant that, after years of feeling anonymous, they finally had a chance to be heard – and they were not about to mask their words, or their identity, by a fake name.

Many participants revealed a struggle for personal identity in their stories, often describing themselves in relation to others. Jeanne, who has lived with several different foster families, had this to share:

"Those who are living with their families, their families, of course, treat them as students…but I'm kept at home to help with the chores. People look at me as if I have no value. It's as if I'm an object to be used. The first family I lived with said I should quit school and get married. They wanted the bride price. When I refused, they threw me away… To be unaccompanied means you don't have any relatives with you, you know no one, and all this brings a lot of problems. Those who are living with their families are treated like students. To be alone means you won't be having people to help you."
- Jeanne, 17-year-old female, living with foster family

For some participants, their struggle with identity centered around being orphans, and

what this new reality meant to both them and others:

"People tease me because I am a person who doesn't have parents – an orphan. Just because I'm an orphan I am treated badly. Though I am an orphan, I am also a kid and should be treated like other kids."
- Bigirimana Emmanuel, 14-year-old male, living with foster family

"Before my mother passed away, things used to be better. She used to do many things to help me – she loved me. Sometimes I have friends to talk to, to play with. But not all the time. If there are none, then I'm alone."
- Kwizera, 14-year-old female, living alone.

"An orphan usually has a bad life because there are no parents to support life… a person like me who doesn't have anybody, always things are difficult."
- Niyoyitungira, 15-year-old male, living alone

Other participants viewed themselves in relation to expectations and interests they held

for themselves:

"Life is not good. I was supposed to be having a wife, but I don't have one because of the problems I have."
- Philosophy, 25-year-old male, living alone

"I have offered myself to be of service to other people – neighbours. I like to help people, but I have not enough ability to do so."
- Lisuba, 23-year-old male, living alone

"I like football. I like volleyball and football. And I play both of them with other children. But we are not equal. There is a difference between us because those with parents are able to go to school."
- Pajero, 15-year-old male, living alone

For Sophie, who at the young age of 14 was suddenly responsible for looking after her siblings there was no time to focus on her own identity – she was simply too busy trying to be the parent, the responsible adult, and the income-earner:

"The ones with parents...they don't have to look for jobs. The parents can buy the clothes, can buy the food. We are surviving on the money I can find in the village."
- Sophie, 14-year-old female, head-of-household

For Jeanne, the identity imposed upon her because of her mixed ethnic background served as a constant reminder of her own personal struggles to fit in:

"My father was a Tutsi, my mother a Hutu. So I'm 'mixed-up'. But I lie and say that I'm Hutu so I won't be seen as the enemy... But people, they know. There are features they look for. And because of the hatred between the tribes, I'm taken as an enemy."
- Jeanne, 17-year-old female, living with foster family

From a camp staff perspective everyone, regardless of status, was referred to as an IC – an individual case. It would be easy to assume that this implied an individual approach to care and assistance. Ironically, the term IC was instead used in a way that replaced the word "person." For example, "20 ICs were waiting for me at the office today" or "I have to go see an IC later today" were common statements to be heard. This label created a sense of detachment from those they were entrusted to assist – nameless individuals whose fragile identities were quickly erased.

<u>A faith in God</u>

Several of the participants' names referred to God's presence in their life ("Bigirimana Emmanuel"), their faith that God was watching over them ("Niyoyitungira"), and their sense of hope for a better future ("Kwizera"). Most participants mentioned going to church as one of their weekly activities, regardless of age or living situation - even when they could not find time for going to school. For some, it was only mentioned in passing while talking about something else:

"On Saturdays I go to fetch firewood...also on Sundays when I come back from church, if I don't have enough, I'll go to look for some more firewood."
- Pajero, 15-year-old male, living alone

"Tomorrow I'll be going to church."
- Sophie, 14-year-old female, head-of-household

Others shared how being active in their church gave them something meaningful to do with their time, providing a sense of connection to the community:

"When I heard there was a youth group meeting at the church to be fighting against AIDS, I decided to join it so that at least I'd have something to do once a week."
- Lisuba, 23-year-old male, living alone

"I'm part of a youth group at church."
- Philosophy, 25-year-old male, living alone

For others, a faith in God seemed intimately connected to a desire for a better future:

"Maybe God can do something miraculous – now or in days to come."
- Pius Gerard, 28-year-old male, living alone

In hindsight, I wish I could have further explored the significance of church in all of the participants' lives, as it was an unexpected common thread that connected all of the

participants to each other despite their differences. But I was only able to see this connection after time and distance had separated us. As noted in the literature review, it has been suggested that maintaining a connection to education and religious practice can help add a sense of stability into the lives of children who have been denied the continuity of family care. Several of the participants spoke of the difficulty they faced in attending school on a regular basis, if at all (as discussed earlier within the context of other themes). But no one mentioned a difficulty in finding time to attend church once a week. It is possible that church services have proven to be one of the stable resources that children and youth within the camp can access regardless of differing living situations. It would be interesting to follow-up this point with further research.

What I learned from the process

I would never have believed it would take me five years to reach this point – *five years!!* Granted, a lot of that time felt like it just flew by – but it was still 5 years no matter how you count it. If someone had warned me way back in the beginning that this was going to be such a long and complicated journey, I would definitely have thought twice about jumping in to doing a thesis. I have included this section in my results because I learned so much more along the way than simply what the participants taught me – aspects of the process of completing this project that no one ever warned me of. Maybe they were not in a position to do so at the time, but I guess I feel a sense of responsibility to pass on what my own experience was like to anyone who may be seeking such information (or validation, or insight). The main learnings I personally took from this project were as follows: (1) limitations are descriptors; (2) burnout is real; and (3) research is political. I share more on each of these points below.

Limitations are descriptors

On November 28, 2001 I wrote the following passage in my personal journal:

"I am beginning to feel that it will be impossible to finish my research – or at least to conduct it as I had originally planned / envisioned. Maybe that was destined to be the case, but it's frustrating. To what extent do I keep pushing?"

There were many limitations that influenced the outcome of this research project. For me, a large part of being able make peace with the outcome of this project came in acknowledging and embracing the reality of the following limitations: (1) the limited amount of time I was able to spend in the camp; (2) the limited amount of time available for building relationships with members of the refugee community; (3) the lack of opportunity to build relationships with my participants before interviewing them; (4) the language barrier that forced me to use an interpreter while conducting my interviews; (5) my reluctance to probe deeper into the participants' lives and experiences; and (6) my own naivety and inexperience as a researcher. For a long time, these limitations were a source of shame that made me feel deeply apologetic. They caused me to view my research with scorn because the process and results felt so compromised. I wish I had more substantive quotes and observations to back up the four themes discussed above but I do not, in large part due to these, and likely other, limitations. However, in the process of trying to find value for what I *had* accomplished during this project, instead of focussing solely on what I had *not* accomplished, I came to see these limitations as simply descriptors that were an integral part of understanding the context of the research. I now realize that this research did not take place despite these limitations, but rather because of them.

<u>Burnout is real</u>

This kind of research is not a process one should go through alone. I desperately

needed guidance and support while in the field, and a chance to debrief upon my

return from the field, but did not know to ask for help at that time. Instead of actively

processing my experiences, I shoved them deep into the recesses of my mind – and

burnt out as a result. The process of doing this research completely broke me –

emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. I wrote the following passage in my journal on

June 13, 2005:

"Despite my best efforts to move on and put this project behind me, it has stayed with
me. Inside me, tucked in behind my heart. It feels heavy. Like a weight deep in my
chest. Pulling me down. And I'm feeling so tired. And I desperately want my spirit
back – but I don't know where to find it."

How many development workers head overseas with their hearts in their hands,

wanting desperately to make the world a better place – only to leave feeling broken?

And who is back home to help them put the pieces back together again? I often

received comments about how courageous and selfless I was to dedicate my time and

energy to working overseas, to making this world a better place. While I know these

comments were meant to bolster me up, they had quite the opposite effect. Instead, I

felt like a fraud for not doing, or achieving, more. The reality of my experience did not

fit with the image portrayed onto me, and very few people wanted to hear the truth as I

experienced it, namely the frustration I experienced in trying to implement the project,

the sense of outrage I felt after each interview at so much injustice in the lives of

innocent children, and the sense of helplessness I felt at not being able to do more – or

anything, really – to positively impact the lives of the children and youth in the camp.

So I ended up keeping it to myself, burying it all deep inside. I felt the weight of guilt

pushing down on my shoulders, preventing me from fully enjoying anything else in

life. Completing this thesis has in essence been a process of healing for me, and I share this with you because burn out was as much a result of this project as any of the "themes" pulled from the participants. For those who still carry romantic visions of development work in their heads, I feel it is important to be warned that the reality is much harsher than can be imagined.

Research is political

Basically, this entire project for me felt like a political one. From securing enough funding for the project to actually happen, to obtaining all the necessary permits in Tanzania, to connecting with members of the refugee community and the research participants themselves, I had to quickly learn the language of diplomacy – something they forgot to teach me in class! There were times early on when I felt like I was being pulled in so many different directions that it hardly seemed worth the effort. There were simply too many players trying to control what I could – or should – do. In hindsight, learning to navigate through those rigorous demands and expectations was probably the best introduction to life beyond studenthood that I could have asked for. But while in the midst of it, it was often hard to see beyond each individual struggle. Before even reaching the camp, I had to manoeuvre the bureaucratic system responsible for issuing all of the necessary permits to allow me to do research in the country. For example, I needed a residence permit in order to obtain a research permit, but I could not get a residence permit until I could prove I had a valid reason for being in the country (i.e. research permit). I also needed a special government permit to enter into the camps – but could not get access to the right person without the help of a local UNHCR employee who requested "special favours" in exchange for his assistance. It took me more than a month after arriving in the country just to get these 3 pieces of paper (without losing my dignity or giving out any favours!) – and that was after

communicating with each department concerned for almost a year prior to my arrival! Once I arrived in Kibondo, my biggest surprise was the challenge I faced in arranging transportation to the camp. I needed special permission from the Head of the UNHCR office in Kibondo to ride in their vehicles – which was not a problem since I was there as their intern. But such was not the case for my interpreter. The Head of the office did not approve of our relationship and refused to let him ride in any of their vehicles. Thankfully, there were other people in town who were a bit more open-minded and were happy to help us out – but the headache of working for one agency while trying to coordinate transportation with another was one that lasted the entire length of the project. My ability to go to or leave the camp was dictated by schedules beyond my control and I had to learn to make due with what little time I was given.

Maybe it should have been common sense, but no one told me that my original research plan was based on wishful thinking! I learned that the research proposal that I had submitted and was carefully trying to follow was simply a best-case scenario. A scenario that, in the end, was not possible to achieve. That was the most devastating lesson for me. It has taken me this long to be able to see the value in what I was able to accomplish instead of seeing only what I failed to do:

"In the end, I left feeling as if I had only just arrived, that I still had so much more to learn, and that I had failed in my intentions. This sense of failure is still with me."

That is what I wrote in my journal in July 2002 after my return to Calgary. This sense of failure was my biggest obstacle to completing my thesis. I did not feel worthy of that achievement. What I do not know is how many others before me have struggled with that same sense of not having achieved what they originally set out to do. But now that

it is almost over I cannot help but suspect that it was likely a natural part of the roller-coaster ride that is called a thesis.

When I first began this project I was young, carefree and single. I sit today typing these words as a wife and mother – a mother who experienced the agony of losing a child before knowing the overwhelming joy of receiving one. Working on this paper – and dwelling in memories of the children I had met in the camp – became unbearable after losing my own child. As I already mentioned, the process of completing this work essentially became a process of personal healing. And that is the reason, more than any other, that I was not able to see the good of this project – and to see something worth sharing – until today. But thankfully I now know that I did the best I could given the limitations I had to work with and that despite the tears, heartache and frustration that have accompanied me along the way...it was all worth it. The time taken to complete this journey has enabled its completion and allowed for a natural cycle of understanding to take place. It has enriched the final product, not limited it. I will view my thesis defence as a right of passage and I will stand on that convocation stage to accept my diploma knowing that I have earned it.

I would like to leave you with a poem that I wrote after one of the most chaotic days I experienced in the camp. At the time, the words flowed through me without intention or judgement – and without expectation of ever being shared. But I choose to share them with you now knowing that they may connect with you in a way the rest of this paper might not have been able to do...

"But how can a parent abandon their child like that?"

He asked me with such incredulity
A puzzled look on his face
Mixed with anger
Anger that this small child had been left
Alone
Trembling among a crowd of strangers
Who stood aside
No one stepping forward to help
Because they would have done the same.
But how can a parent abandon their child like that?
She was too young to tell us her story
And her tears choked back the words she knew.
Confusion.
Despair.
Panic – her eyes searching for him in the crowd.
But he was gone.
And he left her behind
As she stood hugging herself for comfort.
But how can a parent abandon their child like that?
They had already reached safety
The war tucked safely behind the border
No more reason to fear.
No more reason to fear?
What could he offer her now?
Was it desperation that forced him to leave her there
Alone
Trembling among a crowd of strangers
Hugging herself for comfort?
But how can a parent abandon their child like that?

There he is!
Is this your child?
Yes.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

> The voyage of discovery lies not in finding new landscapes,
> but in having new eyes
> ~Marcel Proust

This research uniquely contributes to social work scholarship by focussing on a

vulnerable and marginalized population (i.e. refugee youth) whose experiences have

not yet been well-documented in a field setting (i.e. refugee camp). The results of this

research touched on a number of important points. First of all, the participants offered

us a glimpse into their lives by revealing 4 important themes through the names they

chose and the stories they shared. It has already been well-documented in the

literature that refugee children and youth face a number of challenges in life and the

participants themselves confirmed that they are living a harsh reality. The literature

also highlights a number of factors that can affect self-identity among refugees,

especially among adolescents, which was again brought into discussion by the

participants. However, there were some new areas worth further exploration that were

also brought to light: an awareness of privilege and a faith in God.

The participants in this research project were keenly aware of the discrepancies that

existed in the camp in relation to access to assistance and opportunities. Several of the

participants mentioned that it made them "feel badly" to see others getting or having

things that they had no access to. It would be worthwhile exploring to what extent this

experience is common among vulnerable populations within UNHCR operations

focussed on "care and maintenance" versus those that are more focussed on refugee

self-reliance. At the time of my internship, I was asked to chair a regional committee

on refugee self-reliance, which caused quite a stir among the community – a stir of

excitement within the refugee and NGO community, and a stir of apprehension throughout the offices of local governing officials. Self-reliance suggested an air of permanence that simply was not welcome by Tanzanian authorities. After returning to Canada, I came to know through the IRIN news service that Tanzania had later imposed even more severe restrictions on the refugee population and had banned all self-reliance initiatives. Obviously, in situations such as these where refugees are prohibited from providing for themselves, the refugee community must continue to be provided for to ensure protection and survival. The question then becomes how can the community best be supported in providing for itself and in taking care of its own despite government-imposed restrictions in an effort to prevent this sense of inequity brought to light by my participants?

Church attendance was another unexpected theme that arose through this research. It was the one common denominator that linked the participants together, despite their differences. If I could go back and change one thing, it would be to further explore this point to more fully understand its significance. Is it a meaningful activity because it is something familiar? Does attending church help the youth feel more connected to the larger community? Does prayer help give them strength, or hope, or clarity? The literature suggests that staying connected to religious and ritual activity can be helpful during times of upheaval, especially for children and youth who have lost contact with their families. There has certainly been plenty of research on the physical well-being of refugees and, to a lesser extent, their psychosocial well-being as well. But this question of spiritual well-being, and its importance in re-establishing a sense of normalcy within a refugee context, has not yet been a focus of attention. This could very well be a potentially new and exciting area of research with direct implications for community care initiatives.

So what are the implications for social work practice that come out of this research? As the literature alluded to, there are a number of roles that social workers can take on as change agents. Locally, social workers can be involved in providing counselling and referral services to resettled refugees, and enhancing a sense of belonging through community development initiatives. Nationally, social workers can monitor changes in immigration law to ensure that refugee rights are protected, advocate for increases in international aid to assist in the care and protection of displaced populations, and encourage awareness of and action in response to refugee-causing situations. Internationally, social workers should be involved with international NGOs and UN bodies in both hands-on and advisory capacities, using their strength-based perspective to help shift perceptions of refugees from victims to survivors, from burdens to assets. In essence, we should be using our skills and experience in service of the world's refugees with the same passion and dedication that we do with other vulnerable populations.

In terms of what I learned through the process of doing this research, I think there are a few important points worth paying attention to. I do not think there is a need to dwell further on what I felt were the limitations of this project – they have been identified and, in truth, there is nothing I can do at this point to change them. All I can do is learn from them and offer them as examples of the kinds of challenges that should be anticipated by others hoping to do similar work. However, I was asked to think about the question "if I had to do it all over again, what would I change?" What comes to mind is that I wish I had had my own source of transportation and unlimited access to the camp, I wish I had been fluent in Kirundi so that I would not have lost so much through translation, I wish I had had more time to simply *be present* for relationship-building and true conversations with open dialogue, and I wish I would have had more

experience – and *confidence* – going into this project so that I could have more effectively manoeuvred around the challenges I faced. I would have changed the fact that I shared a house with six other people while I was living in Kibondo, which limited my opportunities for quiet reflection during the project. And, perhaps most importantly, I would have built in more time for self-care as a means of preventing the debilitating burn-out that I later experienced.

One area that I would really like to encourage further exploration of is this issue of burn-out in relation to implications for social work education. I would like to encourage social work educators to examine the kind of supports that are, or are not, in place to ensure that social work students who venture out into the field for practicum placements or research receive the proper support to be able to process their experiences in a healthy way. Are students receiving skilled and ample debriefing upon their return? To what extent is the reality of doing international social work brought into classroom discussion alongside discussions of theory? As a profession, if we are going to contribute in a meaningful way to local and global work with refugees, we need to ensure that we are doing all we can to prepare ourselves for the reality of this kind of work.

On July 3, 2002 I wrote the following entry in my personal journal:

"My desire is to honour those individuals who shared their stories with me, as well as those who were not able to do so. I can no longer share this report with them, because the community no longer exists. Their worst fears have come true – repatriation has now started, and I'm not sure to what extent it is voluntary. I no longer trust what is officially reported – there have been too many discrepancies to ignore. All I know is that it's Tanzania's intention to send all of the refugees home. So that's that. I will likely never know what will happen to any of the youth who shared their stories with me – for the most part I don't even know their names. The only certainty is that they will all be once again dispersed. And I feel a sense of responsibility to honour the brief time we shared – however surreal it is now feeling – to acknowledge that that community actually did exist, and that there were voices within it striving to be heard.

I know I can never truly represent their voices or experiences – I can only share my own. In so doing, I hope the experience will not be lost – that what I have learned can provide guidance, or comfort, to others. That some may become inspired to search out similar opportunities to connect across the tallest barriers."

The participants who shared their time and thoughts with me were a diverse and impressive group of youth. They live alone, with others, in fear and in hope. They are both children and parents, students and leaders. They are trying their best to make do with what little life has given them while being keenly aware of what they are missing. They deserve to be respected for their achievements. They deserve to be honoured for their courage. And they deserve a life full of love, security and possibility - as all children do.

Now that the project is over, why does all this matter? It matters because there are large populations of people all over the world who have been displaced by war and conflict – and among them are innocent children whose childhoods and futures are being denied. They are voiceless. And they deserve to be acknowledged. That is something we can all play a role in. It is time for me to pass on the torch. Your involvement can be as simple as sharing with someone else what you have just read, or as involved as campaigning to protect children against the ravages of war. That will be up to you. But if you have been touched by even a single passage in this paper, I encourage you to honour that feeling in whatever way feels right for you. The only words of wisdom that I feel qualified to offer are as follows: follow your passion wherever it may lead you, keeping in mind that the journey may end up being more important that the outcome. As I mentioned in the beginning, the final outcome of this project has yet to be determined and, with your participation, will be a shared success. Thank you for the time you have given me and best wishes as you continue on with your own journey.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Research Project Title:	The Nduta Refugee Camp Unaccompanied Youth Project
Investigator:	(Tina) Christine Antle, BSW (MSW Student)
Funding Agency:	University of Calgary, Canada, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please ask. Please take time to read this form carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this research is to understand what being "unaccompanied" means for youth in Nduta Refugee Camp. As a participant in this research project, you will be asked to share your knowledge and insight about being 'unaccompanied' with the researcher through one or more interviews. You will also have the opportunity to share your ideas about how the findings of the study should be shared and/or reported. The initial interview will likely last between 1 ½ ~ 3 hours. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

There are several things you should know before you agree to participate in this study:
1. Tina will be asking you about what it means to you to be unaccompanied. If, at any time, you start to feel uncomfortable you have the right to stop the interview. It will be up to you if you would like to continue the interview at a later time or if you would like to withdraw completely from the study. You may choose to withdraw from this study at any time. You may also choose not to answer all questions. Your decision to participate or not to participate in this study will in no way influence the services and/or support you are currently receiving.
2. You can choose where and when you would like the interview(s) to take place.
3. Tina will be using an interpreter during the interview(s) to help with communication. The interpreter will keep your participation confidential. In no way will any aspect of the interview influence the interpreter's future behaviour with you. Nor will your decision to participate/not participate in the interview, or the content of the interview, have any influence on services to you, family members, or any party to whom you refer.
4. Tina will be recording each interview with a small audiotape recorder so that she can talk to you without stopping to take notes. Once the study is complete, the tapes will be destroyed. If you do not want your interview(s) to be recorded, please tell her so.
5. Depending on time, Tina may be asking to interview you more than once. If you would like to be interviewed more than once and she has not contacted you for a second interview, please let her know so that another interview can be arranged.

6. Tina and the interpreter will be keeping your identity private. To help her do this, she will be asking you to choose an imaginary name that she can use in all of her record keeping.

7. There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. The only costs to you will be the time taken to conduct the interview(s). At all times, your care and safety as a participant will be Tina's primary concern. There will be no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

8. The benefit of participating in this study is that you will have the opportunity to have your voice heard by sharing your comments and concerns. This will help to raise awareness of what life is like for unaccompanied refugee youth.

9. Tina will be discussing her research with her supervisors on an on-going basis. She will also be presenting her findings to her thesis committee, and in an MSW thesis that will circulate publicly. Parts or all of her research may be reported in journal articles and/or presentations as a way of sharing what she has learned. At no time will your true identity be revealed.

10. If you are less than 18 years of age a legal guardian must also agree with this study and sign this consent. In most cases, this will be a UNHCR representative.

11. At your request, Tina will provide you with a copy of her interview notes for you to review.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project, and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waiver your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact Tina Antle directly or through your UNHCR Field Assistant.

_____

Participant's DOB

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____

Researcher's Signature   Date

_____   _____

Guardian's Signature (as necessary)   Date

APPENDIX B

IKETE DYU KWEMERA

Izina dyi londero: Abhasole na bhakobwa bhali bhene nyene muli Nduta
Umurondezi: (Tina) Christine Antle, MSW Candidate
Sponsor: University of Calgary, Canada, and the Canadian International
Development Agency

Idyi kete dyu kwemera ni tanguro dyi ilondero. Lili kukumenyesha ilondero ni dyi ki nivyo ushakwa utarakwinjira mwidyi londero. Ukabha ushaka kumenya ikintu chandiswe chanke kitakwandiswe mwidyi kete wo bhaza. Usome neza cho chandiswe ukimenye neza.

Igombero dyili londero nu gushaka kumenya "ukubha wewe musa" kumenyekana gute mula bhasole na bhakobwa muli Nduta. Ukabhamwo muli ilondero wo shakwa kuvuga vyu menya "ukubha wewe musa" vimenyekana gute. Uli kuyaga nu murondezi kukusangira insalizo zo muronse chanke ko mwo zivuga mu bhandi. Mugutangura amabhazano yo tora insa 1 ½ - 3. Ukubhamwo kwawe mwidyi londero nu rukundo rwawe.

Haliho ibhintu bhigomba ubhimenye mukutangura utalakwemera kubhamo mwili londero:

1. Tina alikukubhaza ibhituze vyu'menya kwiko wiyunva k'uli ulu-umwe. Muli akanya kokose ukatangura kwiyumva nabhi wo hagaza amabhazano. Ulokwitegura kushaka; kwiko wo teri mbere muli akanya chanke ukwikura muli londero. Wo teri mbere ukwikura muli ili londero akanya kokose. Wo kwishobhoza wo kora ibhibhazo bhitali vyose. Ukubhamwo ama ukutobhamwo muli ili londero ntikukorana ni bhifasho vy'u habwa kwaya mango.

2. Wo kwishobhoza ahu shaka ibhazanyo libhe kulu amango wo shaka.

3. Tina ali kubha nu muntu avugi 'kirundi ni *anglais* ku kanya ki bhazano. Uwo muntu alotunga ubhubhamwo bwawe kuli ilondero, kandi ntiyovuga vyu vuze ahandi. Kandi, ubhubhamwo bwawe mwi londero chanke kutobhamwo ntikukukora wewe, inshuti na bhagenzi bhawe kutofata vyo muhabwa.

4. Tina alikubha *aenregistrer* amabhazo yose na gatepu gato. Ilondero ligahera ikaseti zose za mabhazo zili kwonwonwa. Ukabha ushaka amabhazo yawe ntiyinjire muli *magnetophone* umubhalile.

5. Muli akanya, Tina yo shaka kukubhaza isumbo limwe ukashaka ibhazo ndyindi umubhalile umusi wu guhura.

6. Tina na muganvyi wage bharotunga izina dyawe ntirimenyekane. Mukugira ntyo uli kutola izina ndyindi dyo wo hamagagwa mu kanya kose ki bhazano, chanke Tina yo tumila idyo zina mugutunga inyandiso.

7. Nta vyaha bhimenyekana kukorana nili londero. Cho wo tanga nu mwanya wu kwichala mu kuvuga/mabhazano gusa. Nta mahera yo wo habwa mu kubhamwo mwili londero.

8. Ifasho dyu kubhamo muli ilondero nu kuronka akanya ku kunvikana. Abhantu bhali kumenya mwichala gute mu nkambi.

9. Tina alikubha avuga na bhakulu bhage ko bhigenda muli ilondero. Chanke alikubha atwara cho alonse muli ilondero ku *MSW Committee*, bhene bhalo ishila habhona. Ilondero ndyose chanke igihimba dyo kwandikwa mu kagazeti, kuli ntyo alosangira insalizo zage zo yazigishije iwawe. Muli kanya kose nti wo vugwa wewe uli nde.

10. Ukabha utaragera imyaka 18 uwu-kulabha aloshakwa ukwemera ili londero, alikushira *signature* yu kwemera kwage. Umulabhi wawe nu uya ahagaliswe na UNHCR.

11. Ukamusabha, Tina yo guha ikopi yi mabhazano yo yandise uyalabhe kabhili.

Signature yawe kwili kete imenyesha kwiko wamenyese neza ayo yandiswe kukukorana ni londero, chanke imenyesha kwiko wakwemeye ukubhamwo mwi londero. Ukwemera kwawe kubhamwo mwi londero ntikutwara ihaki zawe. Wo kwikura mwi londero umwanya wowose wu shaka. Wo bhaza chochose chu shaka kumenya mwili londero. Ukabha ni kibhazo uli kumubhaza Tina, akabha ataliho wo mubhaza uguhita kuli bhakora ni UNHCR.

_____
itarehe yu kuvuka kwawe

_____   _____
signature yawe   itarehe

_____   _____
signature yu murondezi   itarehe

_____   _____
signature yu mulabhi   itarehe

APPENDIX C

Confidentiality Agreement for Interpreter

Before I, Tina Antle, can hire you, _Mr Stanley Ruheza_ , to act as an interpreter in the Nduta Refugee Camp Unaccompanied Youth Project I must obtain your explicit consent not to reveal any of the contents of the interviews, nor to reveal the identities of the participants (i.e. the unaccompanied youth who will be interviewed). Likewise, in no way will the content of any of the interviews be allowed to influence any future interaction you might have with the respondents, or with any other party to whom they refer. If you are a staff member of any agency in the camp, in no way will any aspect of the interview be allowed to influence any service delivery towards any participant or person to whom they refer. Also, if you are a member of any participant's extended family, you must agree to inform me at the earliest opportunity so that alternate arrangements can be made. If you agree to these conditions, please sign below.

_____   _____
signature   date

_____   _____
witness (Tina Antle)   date

APPENDIX D

Interview Schedule
"The Nduta Refugee Camp Unaccompanied Youth Project"

Participant's Name: _____"Pseudonym"_____
Date of Interview: _____ (first / additional)

SECTION A:

1. Age: _____

2. How long have you been living in Nduta? _____
   (i.e. when did you arrive in Nduta?)

3. Educational status: _____

4. Current level of familial and/or social support (i.e. living with siblings, foster
   family, alone, etc.; home visits from community social workers, etc.)

SECTION B:

1. What is life like for you in the camp?

2. What does being 'unaccompanied' mean to you?

3. Describe what a typical day is like for you.

4. How do you see that your life is different from others your age who are here with
   their parents or families?

5. How do you see that your life is different here in the camp compared to what it was
   like at home in Burundi?

APPENDIX E

TANZANIA COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(COSTECH)

Telegrams: COSTECH
Telephones: (255 - 51) 75155 - 6, 700745-6
Director General: (255 - 51) 700750 & 75315
Fax: (255 - 51) 75313
Telex: 41177 UTAFITI
E-M: Rclearance@hotmail.com
In reply please quote:

Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road
P.O. Box 4302
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

RESEARCH PERMIT

1.   File No.: **RCA 2001- 96**

Date:**25th June, 2001**

2.   Permit No.: **2001 - 180**

3.   Name: **Christine M. Antle**

4.   Nationality: **Canadian**

5. Title: **"The Nduta Refugee Camp unaccompanied Youth Project"**

6. Research shall be confined to the following region(s): **Kigoma.**

7. Permit validity: **25th June, 2001 to 24th June, 2002**

8. Local contact/collaborator: **Dr. C.J. Comoro, Department of Sociology, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam.**

9. Researcher is required to submit progress report on quarterly basis and submit all publications made after research.

H.P. Gideon
for: DIRECTOR GENERAL

TANZANIA COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(COSTECH)

Telegrams: COSTECH
Telephones: (255 - 51) 75155 - 6, 700745-6
Director General: (255 - 51) 700750 & 75315
Fax: (255 - 51) 75313
Telex: 41177 UTAFITI
E-M: Rclearance@hotmail.com25th

Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road
P.O. Box 4302
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

In reply please quote: **CST/RCA 2000/48/1457/2001**

25th June, 2001

Director of Immigration Services
Ministry of Home Affairs
P.O. Box 512
DAR ES SALAAM

Dear Sir/Madam,

RESEARCH PERMIT

We wish to introduce to you **Christine M. Antle** from **Canada** who has been granted a research permit No. **2001 –180** dated **25th June, 2001**

The permit allows him/her to do research in the country entitled **"The Nduta Refugee Camp Unaccompanied Youth Project."**

We would like to support the application of the researcher(s) for the appropriate immigration status to enable the scholar(s) begin research as soon as possible.

By copy of this letter, we are requesting regional authorities and other relevant institutions to accord the researcher(s) all the necessary assistance. Similarly the designated local contact is requested to assist the researcher(s).

Yours faithfully,

H.P. Gideon
for: DIRECTOR GENERAL
CC: 1. Regional Administrative Secretary: **Kigoma** Region(s)
2. Local Contact: **Dr. C.J. Comoro, Department of Sociology, University of Dar es Salam, Dar es Salaam.**

APPENDIX F

IMM 100/189 v..... FG

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA   TIF 4B

The Immigration Act, 1995
(Section 20)

RESIDENCE PERMIT CLASS C   No. 021104

Mr./Mrs./Miss ..... CHRISTINE MICHELLE ANTLE .....

is hereby authorized to enter Tanzania and to remain therein for a period of ..... ONE YEAR ..... for specific employment with ..... COTECH .....

and subject to the provisions of the Immigration Act, 1995 and to the following conditions:-

(a) (i) Place of work ..... KILIMA .....
     (ii) Place of residence ..... KILIMA .....

*(b) the holder shall not engage in any employment, trade, business or profession other then ..... STUDENT .....

*(c) wife and children whose names have been endorsed on this permit are not allowed to engage in Employment .....

*(d) (other specific conditions) ..... NO CHANGE OF IMMIGRATION TATUS .....

Description of Passport:-
   Country of issue ..... CANADA ..... No. UR 199095
   Date of issue ..... 23 = 01 = ... 20. 1998

Fees: US $ ..... 120 ..... received *vide* E.R. No. ..... 4273772 ..... of 03=07=200
       issued at ..... DIM TTD .....

Director of Immigration Services

All persons entitled to enter the United Republic under this permit must on entering the United Republic report to an Immigration Officer without undue delay (Reg. 18).

(Section 25)

Full Name	Relationship to Holder	Age
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	

Date .... 20.........   _Director of Immigration Services_

NPC-SPD

*Delete if not applicable

APPENDIX G

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Telegrams "Usalama".
Telephone 27291,
In reply please quote:

Ref. No. US.R.30/51/130

P.O. Box 9223,
DAR ES SALAAM.

24/07/2001

THE ZONAL CO ORDINATOR,
KIGOMA.

RE: PERMISSION TO VISIT KIBONDO REFUGEE CAMPS
MS. CHRISTINE ANTLE.

Permission is herby, granted to the above UNHCR Visitor from Canada to visit/enter Nduta Refugee Camp to conduct a research under a project known as "The Nduta Refugee Camp unaccompained Youth project".

This permit is valid from the 2nd August 2001 to the 31st January, 2002.

Yours Sincerely,

F.S. Ngajile
For: DIRECTOR REFUGEE DEPARTMENT.

Copy: Ivana Unluova,
        External Relations Officer.

APPENDIX H

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

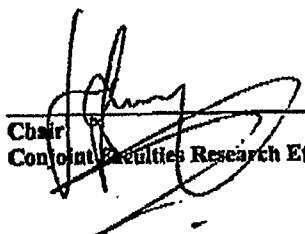## CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW

This is to certify that the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary has examined the following research proposal and found the proposed research involving human subjects to be in accordance with University of Calgary Guidelines and the Tri-Council Policy Statement on *Ethical Conduct in Research Using Human Subjects*:

Applicant(s):	Christine Antle
Department/Faculty:	Faculty of Social Work
Project Title:	The Nduta Refugee Camp Unaccompanied Youth Project
Sponsor (if applicable):	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) The University of Calgary International Fellowship

Restrictions:

This Certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the project and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modifications to the authorized protocol must be submitted to the Chair, Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for approval
3. A progress report must be submitted 12 months from the date of this Certification, and should provide the expected completion date for the project.
4. Written notification must be sent to the Board when the project is complete or terminated

_____
Chair
Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board

JUNE 20/01
Date:

Distribution: (1) Applicant, (2) Supervisor (if applicable), (3) Chair, Department/Faculty Research Ethics Committee, (4) Sponsor, (5) Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (6) Research Services '

09/00

2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4   •   www.ucalgary.ca