



ANNUAL REPORT

2003-2004



Australian National Committee on Refugee Women (ANCORW)

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to all ANCORW members & supporters for their contributions to this report. In particular, we express our thanks for permission to use the various photographs used on the cover of the report, and in the body of the report.

The cover photograph shows Kiri Hata, Human Rights Court Consultant and Member of ANCORW at the 19th Court of Women held in Sydney in June 2004.

ANCORW is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID, formerly ACFOA) and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The Code requires members to meet high standards of corporate governance, public accountability and financial management.

More information about the ACFID Code of Conduct can be obtained from ANCORW and from ACFID at:

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ANCORW'S MISSION STATEMENT

ANCORW is a lobbying, advocacy and research group which works with and for refugee women and their families in order to bring about change in the refugee system and to enhance their ability to rebuild their lives.

ANCORW regards refugee issues as human rights issues. Empowerment and the full achievement of all human rights for refugee women and their children are equally as important as protection.

At the national level, ANCORW, lobbies for changes in domestic law, social policy and for improved service provision.

At an International level, ANCORW lobbies at the United Nations for changes in International law, United Nations Declarations.

ANCORW is committed to undertaking research into issues which adversely affect the lives of refugee women and their dependant children and to use this research to lobby for change.

ANCORW is committed to empower refugee women to have control over their own lives and to advocate on their own behalf through the provision of advocacy training and by providing opportunities for refugee women to participate in national and international forums.

ANCORW BOARD MEMBERS

NAME / POSITION	QUALIFICATION/ EXPERIENCE
Juliana Nkrumah; Chairperson	Coordinator NSW Female Genital Mutilation Education Program; work with many African community groups on settlement issues.
Olivia Wellesley-Cole; Treasurer	Manager & trainer. Works in community refugee support scheme and leader in the Sierra Leone community in Australia. Project Coordinator (Domestic Violence) Centre for Refugee Research.
Julie Smith; Secretary	Provides input to board, from her experience with a community legal centre.
Linda Bartolomei (co-opted) Public Officer	Senior Researcher, The Centre for Refugee Research and ANCORW; Trainer & Lecturer, Masters International Social Development.
Carole Shaw	Researcher and trainer with women in post-conflict situations, B+10 coordinator and educational support for refugee students in schools.
Beatriz Leoncini	Community management and training specialist; multi-sectoral consultant on refugee settlement services.
Eileen Pittaway (co-opted)	Director, The Centre for Refugee Research; Lecturer University of New South Wales; Co-chair, Asian Women's Human Rights Council.
Claudia Graham	Social Worker. Member of Friends of Refugees Northwest and Bennelong Friends of Refugees. Both groups aim to raise awareness about the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia and lobby the government to make changes.
Elenie Poulos	Minister of religion, Uniting Church; Leader, ANCORW Research Ethics Committee.
Eloise Finlay	Social Worker; Researcher Refugees, Women & Disabilities

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

This year's annual report belies the size of the ANCORW Board and the unfunded status of the organisation.

The ANCORW Board is made up a few extremely busy and extremely hard working women. I am constantly baffled at how much they all work, often beyond their call of duty, and extremely effectively in the local, national regional and international spheres.

I will highlight a few things as most have been covered in the report itself:

- The expertise ANCORW has gathered over the years in the Beijing process propelled ANCORW and CRR to fill the very gaping gap in once again leading the Australian NGO process for Beijing +10. ANCORW was very active in planning and hosting the Women's Human Rights Court, and with CRR, in supporting the Caravans and the conference. ANCORW was a proud sponsor of 30 refugee women from both Southern Sudan and Sierra Leone to attend the Human Rights Court. Carla Tongun, an ANCORW Board member in South Australia brought another 10 women with her to attend the court and the conference.
- ANCORW's continual participation in ARRA saw Eileen, Linda, Elenie, Diana, Olivia and Juliana attending the UNHCR ExCom in September 2003. The networks and negotiations have been of great benefit to the Women-at-Risk Project. As a major partner ANCORW has provided in kind support in this manner.
- ANCORW has ensured that refugee women's issues continue to feature on the national, regional and international agenda for women. 4 Board members: Eileen, Linda, Carole and Juliana as well as one member: Colleen Bartolomei went to attend the Asia Pacific Forum in Bangkok carrying the banner of refugee women to this forum.
- On the local scene, ANCORW has supported the initiation and development of the relationship between the Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary and the Sierra Leone Refugee community. The initial meeting for this process took place between Linda, Carla and Juliana.

A personal principle of mine is: *"If you can afford to, do not keep quiet when an opportunity presents itself for making gains for refugee women."* At that meeting, these 3 women did not spare their advocacy skills, nor did other ANCORW Board members in other meetings that followed that.

We are proud that this partnership is proving beneficial to the newly arrived humanitarian entrants from Sierra Leone and others from Sudan, and has well and truly enhanced the status of the Northern Beaches Refugee Sanctuary.

Thank you to:

- The refugee women in Australia and the refugee camps that are a focus of the Women At Risk project
- Partner organisations who have worked with us this year
- HREOC and all the organisations and individuals who worked with us in the caravans, Women's Human Rights Court and Conference.
- Organisations that have assisted our ability to work on the international scene including AWHRC, ICVA, UNHCR, ACFID, and others.
- Centre for Refugee Research, which deserves a special mention.
- All the Board members for achieving such incredible work in spite of your extremely busy schedules. WELL DONE GIRLS!!

It is time for me to exit this position and I commend ANCORW to another great year.

Juliana Nkrumah
6th December 2004

ANCORW'S YEAR AT A GLANCE (2003-2004)

July

- ANCORW members participated in ARRA fundraiser at Diana Goldrick's Home to raise funds for refugee woman (Juliana) to join the ARRA team as part of its forthcoming lobbying efforts in Geneva in September.

August

- ANCORW reps attended and contributed to 2 days of training for the ARRA team.
- Eileen and Linda visited Canberra for meetings with the Office of the Status of Women regarding the "Beijing+10" project, and the Department of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) regarding the Women-At-Risk project.

September

- Five ANCORW representatives took part in the annual meetings between the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs from all round the world, in Geneva.
- ANCORW participated in the ACFFOA council meeting and AGM which was held in Canberra.
- ANCORW representatives on the ARRA project went to Canberra for the media Launch of ARRA.

October

- During Refugee Week (20th – 26th October) Eileen Pittway was interviewed on the Breakfast show on Radio National about refugee women in Asia and Africa.
- The booklet "Seeking Hope Seeking Safety: Refugee Women at Risk" was launched by Ellen Hansen (UNHCR) at the ANCORW AGM. ANCORW is a major partner in this Women-at-Risk project.

November

- Eileen, Linda and Carole travelled to Thailand to undertake research and training with Women's League of Burma for Women-at-Risk and Beijing+10 projects.

December

- Elenie Poulos was the guest of honour at a ChilOut meeting in North Sydney, where she spoke of her experiences at the UNHCR ExCom meeting in Geneva in September.
- The ANCORW "shop" went on the road, with Eloise having a stall at city Law firm, and Julie and Linda taking up a stall at Rozelle Markets. In both cases, silk scarves were the big sellers!

January

- Eileen and Linda went to Kenya for Women-at-Risk work, staying into February.

February

- Carole Shaw attended a meeting with Sisters of Mercy in Lewisham, giving a talk about ANCORW and the B+10 project.
- Olivia Wellesley-Cole was invited to talk at a group meeting of Optus engineers, who wished to know about working with resettled refugees in Sydney.

March

- Olivia attended a meeting with the Social Justice Group at Sacred Heart Parish, Mona Vale, talking about ANCORW's activities in Africa, and with resettled African refugees in Sydney.
- The ANCORW fundraising African Dinner was held at Chester St Uniting Church, Epping, Sydney with over 50 members and guests. We were treated to wonderful food from African Feeling Café, and talks on the Women at Risk project, and other activities.
- ANCORW members in Melbourne held a fundraising bus tour of the Mornington Peninsula, including wine tasting. This proved to be a very popular event, and we are considering holding similar events in other states.
- Juliana (chairperson) attends meeting with CRR as the official representative of ANCORW; ANCORW is one of CRR's five industry partner organisations in the Women-at-Risk project.
- Linda (with support from ANCORW/CRR interns) assisted Karen Women (of Burma) to produce "Shattering Silences" (a booklet which was subsequently launched at the Human Rights Commission Geneva in April)

April

- ANCORW co hosted an AWHRC speaking event with Immigrant Women Speakout.

June

ANCORW organised a Court and Conference, as part of the Beijing+10 project.

DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

ANCORW's Involvement in the Beijing+10 Review: The Human Rights Court and Workshop

Introduction

2004 is an important period for three of the most significant women's human rights instruments for Australia:

- *Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), and the outcome of the document of its five year review (BPFA+5):*
Preparation for the ten-year review of the BPFA being held in 2005;
- *Australian Sex Discrimination Act, 1984:*
Marking its twentieth anniversary;
- *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):*
Preparation for the CEDAW Committee's review of Australia's combined fourth and fifth reports, scheduled for 2005.

Australia is a signatory to both BPFA/BPFA+5 and CEDAW, and the Sex Discrimination Act is an important instrument which seeks to entrench women's equality in Australian law. The Office of Status of Women developed an action plan for 2001-2005 for implementing its commitments under BPFA/BPFA+5.

The plan focused on establishing social coalitions and to work in partnership with stakeholders across all sectors, to disseminate information to women on government services and raise awareness of gender inequality, and to ensure all strategies address the diverse needs of different groups of women.

Women's groups can use these critical review points to advance the status of women's rights in Australia's laws, policies, programmes and in Australian communities.

Process

To mark this important review point, the Australian National Committee on Refugee Women (ANCORW) in partnership with:

- the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR), and
- the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)

and supported by:

- Immigrant Women's Speakout Association
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
- People with Disability Australia
- Aboriginal Studies & Aboriginal Support Centre, UNSW
- Soroptimist International South West Pacific
- Ethnic Communities Council NSW, and
- National Council of Women NSW

coordinated a series of Australian events.

Over a period of 4 months more than 2,140 women from across Australia and the Pacific (mainly Bougainville) participated in these events at the local, State / Territory and National level. In some cases, supplementary Reports were also received to feed into this process.

The events were coordinated across the local, national and regional levels and included the following events:

(1) Caravans, March - May 2004

At Local/State/Territory Level

A caravan is another name for a 'consultation'. The Caravans gave women throughout Australia a chance to have their say on what issues they are currently facing in their lives and what they think should be done to improve their lives and realise their human rights. Fifty one caravans were organised by women's groups in States and Territories around Australia and in Bougainville in the Pacific.

The caravans ranged from small community group gatherings to larger state wide consultations, surveys and 16 individual feedback forms. They were held in cities, rural towns, homes and community centres. The caravans enabled many women who can not participate in the big national events, to be a part of the process at the local level.

A Caravan Kit was developed and distributed to assist women with the organisation of caravans. The Kit contained background information on BPFA/+5, CEDAW and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, guidelines on how to organise a caravan, overheads and materials for presentations and a participant's kit. Information on the caravans and their outcomes is contained in Part II of this document.

The generosity, commitment and support of those who organised the caravans and reported on the process is strongly acknowledged and appreciated.

(2) Women's Human Rights Court, Sydney, (15-16 June 2004) and Women Taking Action Locally & Globally Workshop (17-19 June 2004)

At National Level

Over 300 women from all over Australia and from parts of the Pacific (Bougainville, Solomon Islands, New Zealand and Fiji) participated in these two events.

a) Women's Human Rights Court (Courts of Women)

***"We need new stories for our times:
Even new storytellers...."***
(Corinne Kumar, El Taller)

The Courts of Women were established by the Asian Women's Human Rights Council, and several other women's human rights groups. There have been 18 Courts of Women held since the first Court in 1992. These Courts have been held in all regions including the Asia Pacific, Africa, Arab world, Central America and the Mediterranean.

This was the nineteenth Court of Women, and the second Women's Human Rights Court held in Australia.

The Courts of Women are sacred spaces where women are given the opportunity to tell their stories of injustices and grief, but also of strength and courage. The term court is used in a symbolic way as no one is judged in these public hearings. Instead individuals are invited to listen to the stories of women, and in doing so, have the

opportunity to really connect with these women by being open and feeling the stories they are sharing.

The medium chosen to tell their stories varies according to which method the women believe best conveys their issues for example through personal testimony, song, poetry, artwork, dance or ceremony.

"The Courts of Women challenge the existing human rights discourse and seek to extend it in order to include knowledge and perspectives relevant to women."

(Corinne Kumar, El taller)

Program of 19th Court of Women, Australia

There were three Court sessions held over two days. Each of the sessions explored issues of survival, strength, discrimination and oppression experienced by women in Australia and the Pacific, as well as their hopes for the future. Community Elders (representatives of the various communities in the Court) were present during the testimonies to provide support to testifiers.

Over 200 women from all over Australia and from parts of the Pacific (Bougainville, Solomon Islands, New Zealand and Fiji) participated in this event. Representatives from each of the caravans attended over the two days of the court and presented their caravan reports to the Court.



Court Audience

After a traditional Pacific calling into the auditorium, Aunty Sylvia (Aboriginal elder) gave the Welcome to Country and the candles commemorating those who could not be with us were lit.

The Court was officially opened by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales. A welcoming speech was delivered by Professor Lillian Holt of Melbourne University. A presentation on intersectionality was given by Dr Eileen Pittaway, Australian Representative of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council.



Kiri Hata

Master of Ceremonies over the three sessions of the Court was shared by Juliana Nkrumah, Chair of the Australian National Committee of Refugee Women (ANCORW) and Kiri Hata, Human Rights Court Consultant and member of ANCORW.

In the Court, 30 women reflecting many different social identities shared their testimonies. The court was an opportunity for women to tell their story, without interrogation or questions, and to have others listen and attest to their life story.

Testifiers spoke about their personal experiences that related to the 12 critical areas of the BPFA/BPFA+5 and the stories gave life to what the BPFA/BPFA+5, CEDAW and the Sex Discrimination Act has meant in reality for women in Australia. Critically, the Court created a safe space that enabled women to connect in the sharing of and the listening to difficulties faced by women today.

“So much pain and so much strength...we need to examine our own prejudices in our roles and responsibilities....reflect on the injustices that make us angry and act”

(Eileen Pittaway, Human Rights Commentator at the Court)

Human Rights Commentators responded to the testimonies and examined them in light of documents such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Beijing +5 Outcomes Document, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Human Rights Commentators over the two days of the Court were:

- Professor Lillian Holt, University of Melbourne Fellow
- Faye Druett, People with Disability Australia Incorporated
- Dr Eileen Pittaway, Australian Representative of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council
- Suzette Mitchell, International Women's Development Agency
- Carla Tongan, Australian National Committee on Refugee Women (South Australia)
- Sally Moyle, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission



Sally Moyle with AUSLAN interpreter

We would like to thank the AUSLAN sign language interpreters - Rosemary Lipman, Amanda Lyons, Linda Funucane, Sandra Carroll, Rebecca Cramp, Marleen Blake and Gerry Smith who worked hard and solidly throughout the Court as well as the Workshop interpreting stories and information that were often emotionally distressing.

At the end of the Court a Ceremony of Reflection and Hope was facilitated by Rev. Elenie Poulos, National Director of Uniting Justice, Australia and ANCORW Board member.



Rev. Elenie Poulos with AUSLAN interpreter

The testimonies and commentaries were interspersed by performance and we gratefully thank the performers who supported this event and brought their solidarity and support to the women of courage who testified.

Those who brought solidarity and support to the Court were:

- Newtown Theatre Players who gave a moving performance of SPOT
- Sierra Leone Wan Word Singers
- Romaine Moreton, Indigenous Poet
- Himali Wettasinghe, Poet
- Solidarity Choir
- Bosnian Women's Choir



Bosnian Women's Choir

Artwork by artist Louise Cox, entitled 'Out of Place', was displayed outside the building. The work invited contemplation, "to view our present through histories, to see shadows cast, to listen to stories, to reflect on spaces between and to suggest the possibility of change" (Louise Cox, Artist).

Louise Cox also designed the message net which was prominent at the entrance to the hall. This message net caught the messages, thoughts and comments of witnesses to the Court.



Solidarity Choir

Artwork for the Court program was provided by Marilyn Havini. The Court logo was provided by Lilette de Lara / Isis International-Manila.

A special display of Girls Go Global: Global Feminism Through Popular Culture was provided for display by International Women's Development Agency. Thanks to Suzette Mitchell and Anne Stone for their transportation and display of this multimedia depiction of feminism with a global connection.

A wall of shame was also developed which showed negative images of women in the media. The wall was developed and displayed by Jackie Kerr and Ivana Krsticevic

The Women in Black, who have traditionally been supportive of the Courts of Women, stood in solidarity and healing, with the women from the Court at the end of the Court.



Women in Black

Testifiers and Supporters

Creating a safe space is crucial to the Courts of Women. It is important that both those who testify and those who witness the testimonies feel that they are comfortable and secure in the environment. It is not an easy task to share part of one's life in an open auditorium and every effort was made to support testifiers.



The Stage of the Court – Lillian Holt in foreground

Media and photography (other than Centre for Refugee Research Photography) was banned in the hall. A record of the Court was made in video and audio tape.

Comprehensive notes were prepared for the testifiers and their supporters, and visits were made to all testifiers before they decided to testify. Confidentiality agreements were signed between testifiers and the Centre for Refugee Research that allowed the testifier to decide the level of confidentiality that they wanted. Some chose to change their names and not appear in the list of testifiers, and some did not want photographic or audio phonic evidence of their testimony. This was for the testifier to decide.

For some groups however, the fear of discussing their situation in open forum was still too great and they withdrew either before the event or on the day they were to testify.

We acknowledge and thank all of the women who testified in this Court. We also thank all those who supported and participated in the Court and contributed their talent, time and financial support.

Issues covered in the Court

A range of issues were covered in the Court, including:

- The developed world's responsibility in armed conflict with a specific focus on the children who are still suffering the effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam.
- Refugee resettlement for women with disability (caused through armed conflict).
- The impact on carers of adult children who have brain injury
- The strength of women in post-conflict situations in rebuilding their lives and communities and the need to recognise and support women in such situations.
- Resettlement challenges for newly arrived refugee women and their families.
- Issues of discrimination in the workplace due to disability
- Youth and temporary protection visas: – lives on hold and in limbo.
- Domestic and family violence
- Incest and child abuse
- Discrimination against Indigenous women
- Discrimination against women with disability
- Sexuality and discrimination of lesbian women
- Transgender and the issues faced with being a transgender person in Australia today
- Stolen children in the 1960's and the subsequent problems faced by parents and children of those who were stolen.
- Disability and discrimination in the Pacific region
- Living with HIV/AIDs
- Challenges for Jewish mothers and the education of their children in Australia today
- Resettlement issues and fear of retribution to families in the homeland
- Issues for women in Iran & Aceh
- Trafficking of women and young girls
- Sex workers and the law

The key issues raised within the testimonies were carried through to the Workshop and input into the final statements from the Workshop.

Our special thanks go to all those who made this Court possible through their support.

The key issues raised within the testimonies were carried through to the Workshop and input into the final statements from the Workshop.

Members of ANCORW strongly supported the Women's Human Rights Court and many volunteered at the ANCORW Information Stall.

b) "Women Taking Action Locally and Globally" Workshop

In the Workshop, plenary sessions and smaller workshops were held addressing issues for all 12 critical areas, within the context of the three overarching themes of:

- Poverty & Globalisation
- Conflict, Militarisation and Violence Against Women; and
- Participation and Decision-making

The aim of the workshops was to provide space for women from the community as well as women and men working on women's issues to raise their concerns. Representatives from the Court and the Caravans also inputted their issues into the discussions held in the workshop.

Critically, representatives from the Pacific Islands were also invited to participate to share common issues and develop networks. In addition to identifying key achievements, gaps, emerging issues and recommendations, specific groups including women with disability, women from the Pacific, and young women developed distinct statements.

The critical issues and recommendations identified by women from across Australia and parts of the Pacific Islands through these events, combined with the findings of the caravan reports, and the issues raised at the Women's Human Rights Court were collated and endorsed at the Women Taking Action Locally and Globally Workshop. ANCORW members Dr Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei helped run this crucial session.

The endorsed issues and recommendations from this session are then carried forward to the Asia Pacific NGO Forum in Bangkok in July, 2004

Intersectionality

Throughout all the events there has been a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion. The importance for this has emerged from

the experiences of addressing “intersectional discrimination” faced by women. “Intersectional discrimination” refers to the compounded discrimination women face as a result of a combination of factors such as age, disability, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, caste, class etc.

To address the impact of multiple forms of discrimination and their simultaneous effect on women, it is important to address the distinct and diverse manifestations of discrimination experienced by different women. There fore, it has been important to ensure that women from different backgrounds (i.e. migrant and refugee women, rural women, homeless women, lesbians, single mothers, women with disability, Indigenous women, young women, older women, among others) are able to effectively participate and raise their concerns in all the forums.

The diversity in issues will also be reflected in the common platform of recommendations identified in this report.

Information Dissemination and Networks

The website (www.beijingplus10.org) was a critical source for information sharing. The website contained information and registration forms for the events, as well as background information on the BPFA/+5, CEDAW and the *Sex Discrimination Act* and links to additional resources. The website was supplemented by information distributed through email networks, by mail, fax, phonecalls and visits to community groups and high schools.

Funding

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission generously provided funding to support the Women’s Human Rights Court and Workshop.

However, it is notable that less funding was made available from government sources in 2004, than in previous processes held in 1995 and 2000.

The generosity, commitment and support of the following departments and organisations who did provide funding is appreciated:

- Department of Women, New South Wales
- Office for Women’s Policy, Western Australia

- Office for Women & Premier's Council for Women Secretariat, South Australia
- Women Tasmania, Department of Premier and Cabinet

In addition, individual scholarship funding and support for participants was generously supported by:

- Fairfield Council, Department of Community Services
- Global Fund for Women, Asia & Oceania
- Australian National Committee on Refugee Women (ANCORW)
- YWCA, Victoria

Outcome Reports

Reports were produced from each part of this process. These reports identified contemporary issues and recommendations under the 12 critical areas of the BPFA. (*The full Australian "Women Taking Action Locally & Globally" Report can be downloaded from the www.beijingplusten.org website. Alternatively a copy of the report on CD Rom can be purchased for \$5.00 from ANCORW/CRR.*)

Testimonies from the court will be reproduced in a separate report that can be used for education and training purposes in schools and communities (*at this stage there is no funding to complete this*).

The steps taking us forward...

The outcomes and reports of the Beijing+10 events in Australia will be:

- Shared with the **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission** to feed into their discussions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984.
- Shared with the Women's Report Card Project, organised by the Women's Action Rights Network Australia, to **contribute to the NGO Shadow report for the CEDAW Committee's review** of Australia in 2005
- Shared at the **Asia-Pacific Regional NGO Forum, 1-3 July 2004, Bangkok**, Thailand. At this meeting women from all over the Asia Pacific will share their national issues. Women will also identify their common recommendations for regional and international meetings for the ten year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. The recommendations from this forum will be

collated as a lobbying booklet called the "Purple Book". The forum and lobbying book are being organised by Asia Pacific Women's Watch.

- Shared at the **Asia Pacific NGO Parallel Forum, 6-9 September 2004, / Asia Pacific inter-governmental meeting Bangkok, Thailand.** Women's organisations will join together to lobby governments of the Asia Pacific on the issues and recommendations identified at the Asia Pacific Regional NGO Forum.
- Used to lobby governments at the **UN Commission on Status of Women (CSW) Session, March 2005, New York.** At the CSW Session, governments will meet to review the progress on the implementation of commitments made under the Beijing Platform for Action.

Critically, the Beijing+10 process has been an opportunity for women in Australia and the Pacific to assess for themselves the status of women rights in their home, communities and nations. It has been an opportunity for women to identify the obstacles they face and the policies, programmes and strategies that are needed to realise and fulfil women's rights. In this respect all the reports can also be used for advocacy in policies and programmes at the community level and local, State and Federal government levels.

For further information on the Asia Pacific NGO Forum, or the High Level Government Meeting please check the website www.beijingplus10.org

The full Australian "Women Taking Action Locally & Globally" Report can be downloaded from the www.beijingplusten.org website. Alternatively a copy of the report on CD Rom can be purchased for \$5.00 from ANCORW / CRR.

Carole Shaw

ANCORW Board Member and coordinator of the Beijing+10 process

ACFOA COUNCIL MEETING & AGM

I attended the ACFOA Council meeting in 2003 in Canberra. ACFOA provides us with a clear set of guidelines on how to run ANCORW in an ethical and professional manner, with an obligation on us to meet the high quality standards set for reporting to members and donors / supporters.

There was a focus on the refugee situation world wide and in particular the response of the Australian Government. The ARRA report and planned lobbying at the UNHCR Excom meeting in Geneva was particularly well received by fellow members.

The ACFOA policy on internally displaced people has not yet been clearly articulated, and there was some confusion around trying to fit this matter into a broadened Refugee Convention - a stance that ANCORW would not support.

Kiri Hata

14 Oct 2003

Mornington Peninsula Day Tour A fundraiser on behalf of ANCORW

In February this year I received a letter from my daughter, Linda, who was working in Kenya. She began by saying that this was "a cry for help" and gave specific details of pressing needs among the refugee women with whom she was in contact there. Spurred by a desire to answer this cry my other daughter, Deborah, who is a tour guide and coach captain with Gray Line, begged the loan of a coach (with a full petrol tank!) and organised a fantastic day tour to raise some funds.

We set off at 9am on a glorious morning and sped to Arthur's Seat, a great lookout point on the peninsula. Freshly baked muffins (donated by a well-wisher unable to attend) and hot tea/coffee were enjoyed as we chatted. Then it was off to the wineries! We visited three different wineries and each of them waived the tasting fee and gave us talks and tours. One allowed us to use their BBQ facilities - Deborah and her husband, Simon, cooked us a gourmet lunch (ingredients donated) which included salmon steaks with a variety of salads, fruit platters and cheese cake.

After lunch there was a visit to Cape Schank and a breezy walk along the cliff top. A wild chase in the gardens and maze nearby left us ready for afternoon tea. More coffee and cake! Final stop on the way home was at a Farmers Market where we stocked up on fresh produce. The market also donated a basket of beautiful fruits which we raffled in the bus to raise some extra funds.

Although only 25 people could make it on the day many others were involved in some way and we all had a wonderful day which resulted in a contribution to ANCORW of \$1,088. A video, made by Linda and Eileen on an earlier visit, of Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya brought a sombre note to the last leg of the journey but all were glad to gain some background information on the plight of refugees there.

Colleen Bartolomei

ACFOA's CEO Forum

On 30 October, 2003 I attended the ACFOA Member CEO's Forum at the National Council of Churches as the ANCORW representative in Juliana's absence. ACFOA is the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, and ANCORW has been a member for the last 2 years.

The focus of the first half of the meeting was to bring the CEO's up to date with Aid Industry issues. The second half of the meeting was used to discuss strategies to enable the ACFOA code of conduct to be a more useful instrument for the Aid sector and public accountability.

Issues discussed were:

There have been some changes to the definition of what constitutes an Australian charitable organisation. This will be reflected in the Charities Act and will result in changes to legislation. ACFOA have surrendered a submission to the Board of Taxation on the new Draft Charities Bill. Response on this is due in December, 2003 with legislation expected to come into effect by July, 2004.

ACFOA have instigated a media watch. It was recognised that articles from the media often prompt debate on the radio and television. Several articles were discussed which noted:

- The increasing use of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a measure for success. Useful comment of what Aid is trying to achieve in development aid.
- In Foreign Policy there is a move towards more hands on involvement – this signals a willingness to look at pragmatic results rather than the niceties of diplomacy. Foreign policy appears to be looking more at the results from aid and less at the means to achieve this.
- The National Security Agenda which describes Australia as secure, competitive and compassionate – it will be interesting to track the use of the term compassionate over the next few months.
- The way in which NGO activity is curtailed through government policy.
- Federal budget – ACFOA have brought their budget submission forward by 2 – 3 months – the essence of the budget is the same as last year.

Sector wide campaign – ACFOA seeks sector wide support for the MDGs in order to send a unified message to the government re: the seriousness of poverty. ACFOA will be contacting members soon.

AusAID update – there has been a changed ratio of funding to base agencies to a 3-1 match. This has been approved from 1/7/04. AusAID rounds of funding will continue to occur twice a year. In future there will be penalties for late and inaccurate Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE) submissions. There will be a 1 third penalty, i.e. 0 funding will be received for 1 of the 3 years submitted for.

AusAID In-Country program funding. There is a new process in operation and the commend was that while the process for the Africa submissions was found to be more transparent, the lack of feed-back on strengths and weaknesses of submissions, and the size of submissions were found to be unrealistic. ACFOA asked to be informed of concerns with the AusAID funding procedure in order to monitor this process.

ACFOA will be changing its name in March 2004 to Australian Council For International Development (ACFID). The new name will be launched sometime in March, 2004

Discussions around the ACFOA Code of Conduct (CoC) were in 3 broad areas:

1. The nature and structure of the CoC – i.e. voluntary self regulation, complaints based and compliance driven. Voluntary self regulated codes are not highly regulated. The CoC was wanted to be a living document and the outcome from the discussion around this was that the desire was not to police the code, but to utilise it in a way that was useful and supportive to all members.
2. The independence of the CoC
3. The ownership of the CoC – it has been recognised that ACFOA members do not take ownership of the code. The current accountability to the code is through the Annual Report. Code compliance is often viewed as the financial officer's job – there is a need to embed the code into the actions and thoughts of all members of the NGO.

One issue which arose during the course of these discussions was the fact that ACFOA members should display the code on their website, and refer to it in their PR and funding applications.

In comparing NGO CoCs to Industry CoCs – overall NGO CoCs come out on top. However there is a lack of NGO's placing reports onto websites. On a positive note, Asia Pacific wide the ACFOA CoC is highly regarded and recognised.

Carole Shaw
30th October 2003

“African Dinner”
A fundraiser on behalf of ANCORW

ANCORW hosted a fundraising “African Dinner” on Saturday 20th March 2004. Held at Chester Street Uniting Church, some 60 people attended to eat African food and buy African artworks. The project supported by the dinner was ANCORW's participation in the Australian Refugee Rights Alliance (ARRA) project, whereby ANCORW attends meetings at the UN refugee agency in Geneva (UNHCR) in September / October. (For a report of the activities this year, see the ExCom report under “International Activities”.)

As reported in *The African* newspaper (May 2004) the dinner "attracted people from all walks of life, genuinely interested in the plight of refugees settling in Australia, and those still in refugee camps around the world". It was also a great opportunity to invite friends to hear more about ANCORW's activities, including those in Africa (specifically Kakuma camp in Kenya).

"Comments from friends were "It was really nice to meet all these amazing people and to hear how much ANCORW does in the environment of a social event. Good food and great people."

The food was provided by a Sydney-based African restaurant (African Feeling), and the hall was provided free of charge by the members of the church in Epping. The Centre for Refugee Research and AMES Employment were sponsors of the event.

Olivia Wellesley-Cole

<p style="text-align: center;">National Meeting of the Sisters' of Mercy Justice Group</p>

On Valentines day 2004, I talked at the National Meeting of the Sisters of Mercy Justice Group. The group consisted of 25 Justice Group leaders from all around Australia.

The focus of the 2 hour session was Women's Rights and the Beijing Platform for Action + 10 process currently underway in Australia.

The group were enthusiastic and interested in the topic, a few had been part of the B+5 process and one had attended the Indigenous and Refugee Human Rights and Workshop. Many were keen to become involved in the B+10 Women Taking Action Locally and Globally process and following the meeting were to discuss ways in which they could each (either individually or as a group) could participate and enable others to participate.

Carole Shaw
14th February 2004

The ANCORW Shop

The ANCORW Shop was yet another fundraising venture for ANCORW this year. The shop sells products from countries that we work in, with the products often being made by refugee women as a way to maintain their self-sufficiency. This year, the shop has sold

- Silk Scarves (Thailand)
- 100% Cotton Jackets (long- and short-sleeved, from Thailand)
- African carvings and figurines
- Beads (from Kakuma camp)
- Purses
- "NGO" bags

One stall was set-up at the Human Rights Court and Workshop, by Claudia Graham (Board Member), which contributed greatly to ANCORW's coffers over the 4 days of the event.

STUDENT FIELDWORK PLACEMENTS

Beijing+10

Yvonne Solomou and Ivana Krsticevic, 2nd year Social Work students from the University of New South Wales worked on the Beijing + 10 process as a joint placement with ANCORW and the Centre for Refugee Research. Their input and support was extremely valuable across such a large process.

Yvonne worked mainly with the ANCORW team on the Women's Human Rights Court and Ivana worked mainly on the caravans. Ivana also coordinated the 'Wall of Shame' which was part of the Court and Workshop.

They have now left the office and are continuing with their studies. We thank them for their input and wish them luck for the future.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Women At Risk Project Year One
Summary Partner Report**

In partnership with UNHCR, the Refugee Consortium of Kenya, the Jesuit Refugee Service in Kenya and Thailand, Asian Women's Human Rights Council and Public Health Association of Australia and ANCORW, the Centre for Refugee Research is engaged in a major three year research project which aims to understand how the Women at Risk Program could be better implemented off shore and in Australia. This important research project involves substantial field research in refugee camps in Kenya and Thailand.

ANCORW is a financial partner in this important project and has committed to raise between \$20,000 and \$24,000 each year towards the project costs. Caritas Australia have generously agreed to assist ANCORW's fundraising efforts by providing \$10,000 each year. The Sisters of Mercy have also been regular contributors to this project.

The project officially commenced in February 2003 and has thus far involved two research visits to each of the overseas project sites. In each of the overseas locations the research team has conducted extensive interviews with refugee women and their families, with service providers, government officials and UNHCR. This report details the project activities and the key achievements of the first year of this research project. This covers the period from February 2003 to June 2004.

Key Project activities

During 2003/2004 the research team visited and conducted fieldwork in Thailand, Kenya, Geneva and in a number of urban and regional sites in Australia.

Key Outcomes to date:

Kenya

- Mapping service delivery and systems failure in Kakuma Camp and Nairobi
- Identifying:
 - the compounding effect of multiple and serial instances of violence, torture and trauma on many refugee women and girls.
 - the need for a set of guidelines to establish “extreme and unacceptable risk”
 - the notion that the greatest risk experienced by many women is the absence of adequate international protection measures in refugee sites
 - the lack of co-ordinated case-work practice to address the needs of women and girls who face extreme and unacceptable risk
- Building a network of supportive NGOs who are committed to changing the system
- Conducting Gender and Human Rights Training for Don Bosco Staff, Kakuma, and Advanced Counselling Training for refugee staff employed by JRS Kakuma.
- Mapping Health services in Kakuma

Thailand

- The establishment of a new model of ethics for working with refugee women
- Editing and assisting in the production of the book “Shattering Silences” for the Karen Women’s Organisation
- Mapping service delivery and service gaps on the Thai Burma Border
- Building a network of supportive NGOs who will work with us to identify systems to address the needs of refugee women at risk as resettlement becomes a viable option for refugees on the Thai Burma border.
- Conducting Human Rights Documentation and Gender Training for Burmese Refugees.
- Visiting and assessing health care facilities for refugees on the Thai Burma border

Australia

A series of interviews in three states which have identified serious problems with the adequacy of settlement services to address the needs of WaR.

Joint Outcomes

- The production of Draft Guidelines for the identification of Women at Extreme and Unacceptable Risk
- A model of Human Rights Documentation for use with WaR
- A two stage proposal to UNHCR and DIMIA to address the needs of WaR both pre and post arrival in countries of resettlement. This includes details of the above.

THAILAND

February Scoping Visit

The research team visited Thailand twice in 2003. The first visit in February provided Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei with the opportunity to meet with the formal and informal project partners in Thailand, in order to put in place appropriate systems and working methodologies.

This included meetings with UNHCR in Bangkok and Mae Hong Son, the Jesuit Refugee Service in Bangkok and Mae Hong Son and with the International Rescue Committee. In addition to these formal meetings, informal meetings were held with a number of the local Burmese women's groups including the Women's League of Burma (WLB) and with a number of other grassroots NGOs.

During these meetings we discussed the aims of the project and outlined the action research based methodology of the project. Representatives from WLB and the local NGOs expressed a range of concerns about the amount of previous research which had been done along the border which had either produced no tangible outcomes for the refugees from Burma or had in some cases contributed to the level of risk they face.

Each of these groups advocated an approach which would ensure that in addition to working for long term change that our research also provided some direct benefits to the refugee women from Burma. These groups indicated that our assistance in the form of

lobby and human rights training as well as some assistance for their income generation projects would be most welcome.

November Fieldwork and Training

During our second visit to Thailand in addition to conducting an extensive number of interviews and agency visits with team members Anthony Zwi and Anna Whelan, we ran a series of training courses in Mae Sot, Mae Hong Son and Chiangmai.

Introduction to the Ethics of Human Rights Documentation

We conducted two 1 day introductory courses in Mae Sot which addressed the ethics of human rights documentation. These courses were provided at the request of the Karen Women's Organisation (KWO), WEAVE and the Backpack Medic Team at Mae Tao Clinic.

Introduction to Human Rights and Gender

We conducted a four day Introduction to Human Rights and Gender training course in Camp 1 in Mae Hong Son. This was arranged at the request of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and was attended by over 120 participants. The participants were drawn from the JRS teachers college in the camp, the Leadership Training Program, the Post secondary students and the Karenni Education Committee.

Human Rights Documentation

We conducted a five day Human Rights training course in Chiangmai at the request of the Women's League of Burma (WLB). This was attended by 20 women representing the different women's groups who have come together under the WLB umbrella.

Key Training Outcomes

- The increased trust with our formal and informal project partners, as a result of our willingness to respond directly to some of their identified capacity building needs.
- The development and signing of formal agreements with the WLB and the women's groups to share their stories with the project team.
This involved the development of a confidentiality agreement which is owned by WLB and the women's groups rather than by the researchers.

- The successful piloting of a story board technique for the identification of human rights violations and of strategies to respond to them.
This technique was used in the Human Rights and Gender Training conducted in the Karenni camp in Mae Hong Son. Over 120 students participated in this activity and produced a dozen different story boards which highlight the particular issues of risk facing these groups. The storyboards have provided us with background and context data which is essential to the research project.
- An agreement to assist both WLB and KWO with the drafting and editing of their human rights documentation.

Key Project Outcomes, Thailand

Following the Human Rights Documentation Training, and at the invitation of the Karen Women's Organisation, the research team, led by Linda Bartolomei, assisted the KWO to produce a book of their documented stories of rape and sexual abuse at the hands of the Burmese Military. It is called "Shattering Silences".

This was launched at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in March 2004 and has already attracted international attention. It can be accessed on <http://www.womenofburma.org> .

A new model of ethics approval for researcher working with refugees was developed with the women from the Women's League of Burma. This model gives the power over the ethics process to those being interviewed, rather than leaving it in the hands of the researchers. It is now being developed into a formal model to be used in a range of academic settings.

The book would not have been produced if the women concerned had not first been active partners in developing the model. They have had such negative experiences at the hands of researchers in the past that they were unwilling to trust academics or journalists with their stories and personal information.

Funding for the Training Courses

The costs of developing and running these training courses were all covered by the Centre for Refugee Research. This included the design and printing of all materials and for the course held in Chiangmai for WLB included the travel, hotel and food costs for the 20 participants. The majority of these funds were raised and

donated to the centre by a small group of UNSW Social Work students who held a "rave" party in mid 2003 to raise funds for this purpose. In addition to covering the training costs, part of the money raised was provided to the Karenni Women's Organisation in Mae Hong Son to assist them to purchase and additional weaving loom and sewing machines for their income generation projects.

KENYA

Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei visited Kenya in June 2003. This was their second visit to Kenya but the first formal visit as part of the Women at Risk Research project.

Field Trip Aims

- To formalise the project methods and research protocols with each of the Kenyan based partners.
- To further develop our understandings of the key protection issues facing refugee women at risk.
- To identify the key risk factors including the key health risks for refugee women at risk in Kakuma and amongst the urban population in Nairobi.

Key Outcomes

Meetings

Formal meetings were held with each of our project partners in Nairobi and Kakuma. Most of our partners emphasised the importance of the research and also the importance of us looking at the situation of women in Dadaab camp and in the urban areas in Nairobi as well as in Kakuma.

The importance of including other vulnerable groups of refugee women outside Kakuma camp was emphasised. This includes women who are internally displaced in Sudan, refugee women in settlements in Uganda and women in Dadaab camp in Kenya.

Strategies designed to ensure that the research project did not have any negative impacts on members of the refugee communities and project staff were also discussed. These included ensuring that the research team was never larger than two members for any field visits to either the camps or urban areas, as well as ensuring that the presence of the researchers did not create any false expectations in particular relating to resettlement assistance among members of refugee communities.

The notion of reciprocity was also discussed and a number of training and capacity building courses which could be provided by the researchers to staff and clients were outlined. These included short courses in Human Rights and Gender training, Early Childhood and Parenting skills and training in the production of craft items. The researchers also agreed to explore the possibility of providing University Level Certificate courses or distance courses to some members of the refugee communities.

A detailed Field report from this visit to Kenya is available.

SWITZERLAND

Dr Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei visited Geneva in 2003, participating in UNHCR EXCOM related meetings in September / October.

EXCOM September/October 2003

Working with ARRA, Linda Bartolomei and Eileen Pittaway took an active role in the Pre ExCom and ExCom meetings. A full report is available from the Centre for Refugee research. The extract below details a major achievement for the WaR project:

"The Women at Risk Booklet Launch

The launch of the Women at Risk booklet Seeking Hope, Seeking Safety: Refugee Women at Risk on the second day of the ExCom was an outstanding success! The booklet was produced by the Centre for Refugee Research (CRR) in conjunction with the Australian National Committee on Refugee Women (ANCORW). It contains a series of case studies of women at risk in a range of refugee situations around the world. Erika Feller, Director of the Department of International Protection at UNHCR, graciously accepted the invitation to launch the booklet. This was a very prestigious honour for the Centre for Refugee Research and reflected the value that the UNHCR places on the Centre's research. Erika praised the booklet as a "very valuable piece of research" and extended an invitation to the Centre and its project partners to work more closely with UNHCR in seeking to develop effective solutions. ARRA members actively supported and promoted this event".

AUSTRALIA

Research into Resettlement Service delivery and effectiveness

In Australia extensive interviews have been conducted with resettlement service providers in Sydney with a limited number being conducted with providers from the other capital cities and regional areas in New South Wales and Queensland. Interviews have also been conducted with refugee women who have either arrived under the Women at Risk Program (Visa 204) or have been identified by Service Providers as meeting the profile of a Woman at Risk.

The women interviewed were drawn from a range of ethnic groups and included in particular women from Sudan, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. An extensive report detailing the key outcomes of these interviews will be completed by July 2004. This report is being compiled with the assistance of project research assistant Rebecca Eckert.

Rebecca was attached to the project during 2003 as a Masters research student. Her assistance with arranging and conducting interviews and focus groups has been invaluable. The research team drew on some of the key findings from this research in their recent IHSS submission to DIMIA. A copy of this submission is available.

Linda Bartolomei / Eileen Pittaway

EXCOM & RELATED MEETINGS

TRIP TO GENEVA 23rd September – 3rd October 2003

Summary

Once again I was the official ANCORW representative on the Australian Refugee Rights Alliance (ARRA) at the ExCom related meeting held in Geneva over the two-week period starting in the last week of September.

ARRA was formed in 2002, for the primary purpose of providing a broad NGO spotlight on Australia's treatment of Refugees and Asylum Seekers at the annual meeting with the UNHCR – the peak

international body with responsibility for protecting Refugees and Asylum Seekers. ANCORW was one of the member organizations of this delegation.

ExCom is the name of the key meeting between UNHCR and its sponsors – the Executive Committee.

Team

The ARRA team consisted of some 15 Australians who formed a loose alliance which is active in the weeks leading up to and following on from ExCom. This year's ARRA delegation was much the same size as last year's, though some of the members had changed. In particular, whereas last year two of ANCORW board members attended the meetings, this year there were five of us, in various capacities! The 15 ARRA members who travelled consisted of church representatives, students, NGO representatives and university lecturers.

Meetings

1. ExCom

The members of ExCom are about 60 countries which provide advice to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This Executive Committee meets with UNHCR each year in the first week in October to finalise their conclusions on the directions of UNHCR for the year to come.

The conclusions of ExCom are regarded as soft law for protection of refugees, and hence this annual meeting is a very important one. While only 3-4 conclusions are passed each year, the whole collection of conclusions over the years is a major source in international consensus.

NGOs (with appropriate accreditation) are permitted to attend the ExCom meetings, with observer status.

2. Pre-ExCom

As part of the lead-up to ExCom, the officials of UNHCR meet with NGOs in the week prior to ExCom. This meeting, which has now become known as Pre-ExCom, was organised this year so that we NGOs could meet with other NGOs from other parts of the world with similar concerns, or with the specific UNHCR officials that have responsibility for our geographic regions. This meant that we Australians were invited to a

meeting with the Asia Pacific Bureau of UNHCR, to put any concerns that we had regarding activities in our region on the table.

This year, the NGOs were invited to provide input to each of the ExCom conclusions, so activities during the Pre-ExCom week were geared to an understanding of the issues that were the topics of the conclusions.

3. ECRE

On the weekend between Pre-ExCom and ExCom, the European Council for Refugees and Exiles held their bi-annual meeting. Our Chairperson, Juliana Nkrumah, represented ANCORW at this series of meetings.

ExCom Conclusions 2003

The topics for the 5 planned conclusions of ExCom were as follows:

1. New modes of operation within UNHCR – known as 2004 process
2. International protection
3. Return of persons not found to be in need of international protection (ie rejected asylum seekers)
4. Safeguards in interception measures
5. Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation

ARRA prepared positions relating to the first 4 of the above conclusions; the fifth one was a topic specifically relating to the operations of UNHCR and its partner organisation particularly in refugee camp or urban refugee environments, and therefore we did not provide input on this topic.

Once again, the Australian's were offered a key role in preparing the NGO input to the conclusions; Eileen Pittaway, representing Asia Women's Human Rights Council, was invited onto the drafting committee for one of the conclusions, and was further requested to read out the NGO statement on "Oversight Activities" in the full plenary session of ExCom.

The NGO statement on "International Protection" named Australia as a country denying potential refugees asylum through the practice of interception. This statement also referred to the Edmund Rice Centre research finding about rejected asylum seekers returned to countries where they have only short-term visa and no legal protection.

ARRA Successes

ARRA had some notable successes this year, including the following:

- Eileen Pittaway was invited to moderate one of the Pre-ExCom panel sessions, entitled "Refugee camp security and the civilian character of asylum"
- Eileen Pittaway and James Thomson (National Council of Churches, Australia) were invited by Canadian NGO delegates to address a workshop on "Interception" that the Canadian Council for Refugees had organised
- James Thomson was invited to present on Arbitrary Detention at a roundtable discussion on "Human Rights and Protection of Refugees"
- Elenie Poulos (Uniting Church of Australia) and Eileen Pittaway were successful in asking 2 of the 5 tabled questions in the Pre-ExCom session with Erika Feller, Director, Department of International Protection, UNHCR
- The Head of the UNHCR Bureau for Asia and the Pacific actively sought out ARRA members on the first day, to arrange a meeting on the Friday afternoon to discuss issues of concern to us that occurred in the Asia-Pacific region
- After Minister Ruddock's address to the ExCom assembly, Diana Goldrick (ANCORW) and Elenie Poulos were interviewed by the Inter Press Agency, to provide an NGO viewpoint on the address
- ANCORW / CRR work in Africa, particularly Kenya, was commended by various delegates, including the Africans, at both Pre-ExCom and ExCom (see below)
- A one-hour briefing by ARRA updated ExCom delegates on the current plight of refugees in Australia. Approximately 16 representatives from Botswana, Sierra Leone, Namibia, UNICEF, Human Rights Watch, the European Commission and the Australian government attended the briefing, this keeping the Australian situation on the international stage.

ANCORW's work in Kenya

While in Geneva, we took the opportunity to meet with as many people who could be beneficial in the projects that ANCORW is working on. In particular, we had some notable successes with the Women at Risk (WaR) project.

WaR is a research project being undertaken by the CRR, with ANCORW as the main industry partner in Australia, who is providing funding towards this project. This project required field trips to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, and refugee camps on the

Thai/Burma border. At ExCom we met Eva and Judith, two representatives from another partner organization, the Refugee Consortium of Kenya, which provides on the ground support to our researchers in Nairobi, Kenya.

We were also very fortunate in having Erica Fellers, head of the Department of International Protection, UNHCR, launch a booklet of the project "Seeking Hope, seeking Safety" during the ExCom week. This launch was facilitated by Joyce Mends-Cole, snr Co-ordinator for Refugee Women / Gender at UNHCR, and a number of government representatives and other national and international NGOs were in attendance, thus further promoting this significant work. Both Erica and Joyce were contacts whom we had met at our first foray to ExCom last year, and they proved to be contacts that it was beneficial to keep in touch with since then.

Erica indicated that both the Kakuma video (which was used to introduce the project) and the booklet would be useful training tools for UNHCR staff and governments in the search for solutions to the to the urgent protection needs of refugee women and children. She extended an invitation to CRR and its project partners to work more closely with UNHCR in seeking to develop effective solutions.

Furthermore, an opportunity came up during a session on Africa, to outline the difficulties that young women in Kakuma face without sufficient sanitary towels, and the assistance that Australians have provided, by means of the ANCORW "GET a Life" project. This project was very much appreciated by other NGOs from Kenya, who were present at that session.

Conclusions

In a meeting between ARRA and Mexican government delegates, the point was made that increasingly '[we] governments are investing more in protecting ourselves from refugees than in protecting refugees themselves.'

As long as ARRA is helping people to recognise this and then to take steps to redress this, then I believe this work in going to Geneva is worthwhile.

Olivia Wellesley-Cole
19th November 2003

TREASURER'S REPORT

Audited financial accounts for ANCORW CO-OPERATIVE LTD for the 12 months ended 30 June 2004 are included in this report and reveal a consolidated account net asset position of \$21,732.73 as compared to net assets of \$29,312.20 at the commencement of the period.

Donations received for the various projects totalled \$16,941.15 and we wish to acknowledge the generous support of all our donors in raising these funds.

Consolidated income and expenditure reveals a loss of \$7,489.47 for the year to 30/6/04 as against a profit of \$6,322.51 in the preceding year.

Consolidated figures include the following accounts:

Ancorw Co-operative Ltd

Ancorw Co-operative Ltd- Fundraising Account

Ancorw Co-operative Ltd- Children's Day Program

Ancorw Co-operative Ltd- ARRA Account (formerly Sub-regional conference Account)

Individual audited financial details have been provided for each of these accounts.

Olivia Wellesley-Cole

Treasurer

SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

This summary report meets the requirements of the ACFOA Code of Conduct.

FULL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

