

A M E R I C A S



ARGENTINA, BRAZIL and SOUTHERN LATIN AMERICA

In **Argentina**, a 60-seconds **TV spot** featuring Uruguayan-born actor Osvaldo Laport was launched. The spot was produced free of charge by Young & Rubicam Argentina. It was broadcast over 750 times on public network and cable channels through mid-September.

The Institute of International Relations of the University of La Plata organized a **seminar** on refugees in Southern Latin America. A young woman, who arrived in Argentina as a baby with her parents, who went on to earn a degree in food engineering and who has risen in the ranks of a corporation in Argentina, shared her experiences and words of encouragement with many students.

The Catholic Commission, UNHCR's partner in Argentina, organised a "**kermesse**" with cultural performances and entertainment for refugee adults and children. Refugees involved in **micro-credit projects** were also able to show and discuss their work.

10,000 **postcards** were distributed in Buenos Aires in approximately 100 bars, restaurants, cultural centres, etc. The **World Refugee Day TV spot** produced by the Barcelona Forum was also broadcast, mostly by cable channels.

In **Bolivia**, UNHCR's partner, the Pastoral of Human Mobility, organised a series of events including two **seminars on human rights and refugees** in which a number of government and non-governmental organisation representatives gave **talks**. Seven TV channels also broadcast a special **Mass** for refugees.

In **Brazil**, a number of World Refugee Day commemorative events were held in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia from 17 to 21 June, with the participation of government representatives, NGOs, businessmen and other representatives of civil society.

About 250 people gathered in SESC São Paulo (an important centre with different services for workers in the commercial sector, and which has included refugees in its services) to participate in an event organized by UNHCR's partner Caritas Arquidiocesana SP. The Archbishop and President of Caritas SP, the Mayor of São Paulo, the President of the national refugee committee CONARE and the UNHCR Representative gave **speeches** on the refugees' reality and called for further integration and acceptance by society. **New projects** for refugees were presented, such as the House for Refugee Women and access to popular housing plans by the Mayor's Office. The event ended with a presentation by the musical group "**Songs of Peace**" which brings together refugees in São Paulo.

Also in São Paulo, a Brazilian company led by actor and Carlos Moreno, staged the **play**, "Tourists & Refugees", which deals with the theme of being uprooted in its different forms. The play is based on the acclaimed Off-Broadway play by the Winter Project, directed by Joseph Chaikin in 1980.

In Rio de Janeiro, a **health fair for refugees** was held on 21 June to raise refugees' awareness on issues related to health care. There were several interactive stands to raise awareness on blood pressure, cholesterol control, breast cancer prevention, HIV/AIDS orientation and many others. The event was sponsored by Caritas Rio de Janeiro in association with the Brazilian Dentistry Association, the Military Police and other institutions.

A **conference** was held at the University of Brasilia, where a refugee was invited to present her story and her expectations of a new life in Brazil. The President of the national Refugee Committee gave a talk, as did the representatives of several important national NGOs. A **seminar** was also held on 22 June with presentations on asylum and resettlement and the role of UNHCR, the Government and civil society in the reception of refugees in Brazil.

In **Chile**, UNHCR's partner, the Vicariate of Social Pastoral, organized a **cultural event** with refugees at an important cultural centre in downtown Santiago. During the event, which was attended by government representatives, parliamentarians, and members of civil society, refugees were able to share **food** and **traditional performances** from their countries, in addition to products acquired under **micro-credit schemes** supported by UNHCR. Refugee children were treated to a **puppet show**.

Forty **public billboards** about 1x1.5 metres, were exhibited between 18 and 20 June in Santiago. There were World Refugee Day mentions and interviews on six radio channels. The **World Refugee Day TV spot** produced by the Barcelona Forum was played on three TV channels.

In **Paraguay**, UNHCR's partner, CIPAE, organised its annual get-together between journalists and refugees.

In Montevideo, **Uruguay**, UNDP, UNHCR and its NGO partner, SEDHU, organised an event attended by 500 people including former Uruguayan refugees. Special recognition was given to institutions which support refugees and to a former UNHCR staff member who helped to save the lives of a number of Latin Americans in the 1970s-1980s. Thirty public billboards were put up between 14 and 20 June in Montevideo.

There was **wide media coverage in all countries of the region** in spite of World Refugee Day coinciding with Father's Day. Total coverage included over 300 media appearances.

CANADA

For World Refugee Day, UNHCR's activities focused on Canada's resettlement and integration programmes in keeping with the theme "A place to call home".

At the Canadian Council for Refugees' conference in Montreal, UNHCR launched the French version of the *International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration*. It also launched the *Canadian Refugee Chronicle: 25 Years of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program* at a World Refugee Day event organized by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina on 19 June. Under this special project, four books are currently travelling to different communities across Canada where resettled refugees and their Canadian sponsors can record their personal experiences with the Private Sponsorship Program. All four books will be collected and bound into a single book to be delivered to Library and Archives Canada.

The **Governor General of Canada** presided over a **Canada Day citizenship ceremony** at the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa where she swore in 50 new Canadians from 20 countries, many of whom were former refugees from Algeria, Rwanda, Congo, China and Iran. Altogether, there were over half a dozen separate **community events** across Canada to mark World Refugee Day.

CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES

In **El Salvador**, an **ecumenical celebration** was held at Cuscatlán Park, which is dedicated to the civil victims of human rights violations. A special **World Refugee Day stamp** was issued by the Salvadoran Post Office.

In **Guatemala**, UNHCR's implementing partner organised a **refugee meeting** to welcome refugees who have **completed the local integration process** in Guatemala. This meeting encouraged refugees to share their experiences with each other.

COLOMBIA

The **commemoration** of World Refugee Day at Bogotá's National Museum was organised with the participation of the diplomatic community, an Ombudsman, government officials, NGOs,

representatives of the internally displaced population, artists and business leaders. A UNHCR official spoke about the country's response to internal displacement. **Posters** showing Colombian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were exhibited during the celebration.

A **concert** was performed by the "Sounds of Resistance" orchestra. Pop singer Fonseca also participated in the event.

A **press conference** was held in Bogotá on 16 June. At the heart of the discussions was the evolution of the country's response to the challenges of preventing internal displacement and helping IDPs exercise their rights.

A **rally** was organised by UNHCR to sensitise the city's population about displacement. Thirteen teams participated in the event.

A UNHCR **photo exhibition** "Through the eyes of Colombian refugees" was on display at Apartado's Public Library until 22 June to raise public awareness about Colombian IDPs and refugees.

COSTA RICA

UNHCR, in coordination with its implementing partner ACAI and the University for Peace, produced a **documentary** on the situation of refugees in Costa Rica, which included an interview with seven refugees who narrated their stories. The documentary also included interviews with Costa Rican officials. On 21 June, the video was broadcast on a TV programme.

On 11 June, UNHCR inaugurated a **photo exhibition**, "*Arrancados de Raíz*", comprising 25 pictures portraying faces of Colombian refugees and internally displaced persons taken by UNHCR staff in Venezuela, Panama, Ecuador and Colombia. The exhibition took place at the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, San Jose.

World Refugee Day itself was celebrated on 19 June in the Metropolitan Sabana Park, San José, with numerous activities for children, such as a **magician**, a **story teller** and a **drawing workshop**, as well as music, dance and songs from Cuban, Colombian and Costa Rican groups for the general public. Pursuing Costa Rica's passion for soccer, a **tournament** between teams made up of international organisation staff and refugees was organised.

A **Mass** dedicated to refugees and their difficult situation world-wide was celebrated on 20 June in the Metropolitan Cathedral in San Jose (and covered by the media) and in many other Catholic churches around the country. Caritas and the Church's Social Pastoral contributed to the organization of this activity.

A two-week film festival was inaugurated on 21 June during which a **selection of five films** dealing with refugee and refugee-like situations was shown in three screening rooms of an independent movie theatre, *El Semaforo*, in San Jose.

The **play** "*La Casa de atrás*", an awareness activity aimed at young students and based on *Anne Frank's Diary*, was inaugurated in August and will play until year-end. Supported by UNHCR, the National University, the Embassy of the Netherlands and the Dutch Cooperation Agency *Hivos*, the play will be performed in San Jose and in the province of Alajuela.

ECUADOR

Supported by the director of Comité Pro Refugiados (CPR) and her team, this year's events in Quito were held on CPR premises. After a moment of prayer, based on this year's World Refugee Day theme, children and adults alike were treated to a **puppet show** by a Colombian troupe, Kaluna, which explained the culture of Colombia coffee plantations. The puppet show was followed by a lively **music show** performed by the group Constelación Vallenata. Band members

were all refugees recently granted refugee status by Ecuador. Adults and children danced to the tropical sounds of traditional Colombian rhythms. **T-shirts with the WRD logo** and bottles of shampoo (donated by a cosmetics company) were given out.

In the evening, UNHCR organized a **private viewing of the movie “Beyond Borders”**, starring UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie. 120 people attended the screening and funds raised were donated to CPR, which will use the money to furnish a room where refugee children can play under the supervision of a social worker while their parents are interviewed.

In Ibarra, two hours south of the Colombian border, around 200 people celebrated World Refugee Day. Local staff put on a **puppet show** about the rights and duties of refugees. A group of young refugee and Ecuadorian men and women presented **choreographies** prepared for the event. There were also **contests and giveaways** of T-shirts and other items. The event was organized with help from the Jesuit Refugee Service and Pastoral Migratoria.

Lago Agrio, the second largest reception town of Colombian refugees and asylum seekers, and a neighbouring town to the Colombian Putumayo region organized an event with more than 250 participants. Throughout the morning there were **soccer games, dance contests, facial painting for children** and **arts and crafts exhibitions**. The day ended with T-shirt giveaways and medal awarding ceremonies for the winners.

World Refugee Day captured the attention of the media nationwide. A **newspaper insert** was distributed in select regions with *El Comercio*, Ecuador's largest distributed newspaper (21,000 issues and more than 100,000 potential readers). Several radio stations also presented **interviews** and aired **radio spots** produced by refugee and Ecuadorian teenagers.

In all, close to 800 refugees and asylum seekers, as well as many international organisations, participated in World Refugee Day events in Ecuador.

MEXICO

On 20 June, the second World Refugee Day **festival** took place at the Refugee Park in Mexico City, organised by UNHCR, Amnesty International Mexico, UNHCR's implementing partner *Sin Fronteras*, the Secretary of Culture and the Government of Mexico City. It included **musical performances** by refugees and former refugees, the **sale of arts and crafts**, and **food** produced by the refugees. Activities for children included **puzzles** and **bingo games**, specially designed to stress the celebration of World Refugee Day and promote respect of human rights. A **poster drawing contest** was organised for young students. Their drawings were exhibited during the festival and the best one was used as the official poster of the festival. Some 500 persons, including refugees from Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador and Bangladesh, attended the event and enjoyed the celebration which was widely covered by the media.

The National Autonomous University of Mexico, through its University Museum of Science and Arts, organised a series of activities, including a **conference** on UNHCR's work, **musical performances, round tables** and **film screenings**. About 300 people participated. UNHCR's **photographic exhibition** on Colombian refugees and internally displaced persons, “*Arrancados de raíz*”, was displayed at the entrance of the Museum for three weeks. Some 5,000 people saw it.

On 25 June, the **photographic exhibition** “The others are us”, by Guatemalan photographer Ricardo Ramirez Arriola, was opened at the National Arts Centre by UNHCR with the Human Rights National Commission and the National Council for Culture and Arts. Approximately 100 people attended the opening. The exhibition was on display for one month.

UNITED STATES of AMERICA

On 16 June, **UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie** launched World Refugee Day celebrations with **US Secretary of State Colin Powell**, at the National Geographic Society in Washington, DC. In the National Geographic Museum's Explorers Hall, the three winners of the fourth **annual World Refugee Day poster contest** received their awards. The posters were displayed at the museum throughout the World Refugee Day events.

On the same day, Walden Media and UNHCR held an **advance screening** of the major **motion picture** "I am David", at the National Geographic Museum's Explorers Hall. A **panel of speakers**, including a refugee teenager resettled in the US, the writer/director of the film, the lead actor and the UNHCR Representative, also addressed the audience.

From 18 to 20 June, UNHCR, in partnership with Fête de la Musique, organised **musical and dance performances** in the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, which included performances by Ethiopian, Salvadoran and Sudanese groups. Music and dance performances were also organized at National Geographic with 12 groups representing several regions of the world.

World-renowned photographer **Zalmai**, a former Afghan refugee, **exhibited his photos** at the National Geographic Museum's Explorers Hall and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Approximately 6,000 people attended these World Refugee Day events. Moreover, the number of people reached indirectly was large. The National Geographic Museum sees some 19,000 visitors monthly during the summer, while the Kennedy Center receives over 25,000 weekly. The poster contest and the Zalmai exhibits were located in key, heavily-trafficked areas at both facilities. In addition, media coverage was extensive – both traditional (CNN, BBC, NPR, newspapers and TV programmes) and non-traditional (People Magazine, entertainment TV programmes) media covered the events. The various website campaigns received unprecedented numbers of hits.

For more information, a detailed report on World Refugee Day 2004 events in the United States is available from R.O. Washington. Please visit <http://www.usaforunhcr.org/worldrefday>

VENEZUELA

Venezuela's World Refugee Day celebrations were officially kicked-off in the border states of Táchira and Zulia with two **outdoor, music concerts** held in the cities of San Cristóbal and Maracaibo. Over 1,000 people learned about refugee rights and UNHCR's mandate while enjoying the sounds of local folk musicians and taking in **UNHCR placards** strung around the town plazas.

Integration and solidarity between the local and asylum seeker population was also promoted in the refugee hosting community of Urena, Táchira, with a series of **free medical check-ups** organized in conjunction with the Venezuelan Red Cross. The local and national media also contributed to the campaign by disseminating information about refugee rights and asylum application procedures throughout the month of June.

In Caracas, World Refugee Day was commemorated amongst law students at the Catholic University with a **forum entitled "The Protection of Refugee Rights"**. The forum gave UNHCR the opportunity to explain Venezuela's advances in international protection and introduce students to the Declaration of Cartagena, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in November 2004. The forum was complemented by the **"Looking Towards the Future" photography exhibit**, which was widely attended and extremely well received by the students.