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Stressors and Supports That Affect Refugee Fathers' Parenting and Their Children's Development

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Abstract

Last year, the United States resettled 22,419 refugees across the country (Refugee Processing Center, 2019). Many of these refugees experience post-migration stress, which can impact their family relationships and overall wellbeing. Although there is current research involving refugees, the role of refugee fathers has been overlooked (Este & Tachble, 2009). Even though fathers typically play a secondary caretaker role in the family, they significantly influence their children's development. We are interested in studying how both the stressors and supports of Congolese fathers impact their parenting and how this influences their children's educational opportunities and social-emotional development. This is a qualitative and quantitative study using previously collected data and a new survey. Participation in this study allows refugee fathers an opportunity to voice their strengths and motivations as a father. Additionally, findings will provide new insight about existing and needed resources that are tailored to the needs of the fathers.

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Introduction

- Last year, the United States resettled 22,419 refugees across the country (Refugee Processing Center, 2019).
- Many of these refugees come with experiences of trauma, which can impact their family relationships.
- The role of refugee fathers has been overlooked in research involving refugees (Este & Tachble, 2009).
- Even though fathers typically play a secondary caretaker role in the family, they significantly influence their children's development.

The Current Study

- This study has two overarching goals:
 1. To identify the stressors and supports of Congolese fathers that impact their parenting styles.
 2. To understand how these influence their children's educational opportunities and social-emotional development.

Motivation

Fathers play an essential role in the development of their children and the wellbeing of the family yet remain an untapped resource in most cases (Engle & Breaux, 1998).

This study will:

- give fathers an opportunity to have their voices heard.
- help us identify what resources and motivators help them in their childbearing responsibilities.
- provide new insight into how these issues influence their children's educational opportunities and social-emotional development.
- add to the current minimal literature on understanding fathering in the refugee context.

Method

- This will be a qualitative and quantitative study using previously collected data and a new survey.
 - 10–20 fathers will complete self-report questionnaires
 - Data collection options: paper survey, paper survey with a translator, and Web-based survey.
- Questions on survey
 - Stressors and challenges
 - Strengths and supports
 - Father involvement
 - Aspirations for children
 - Resources for fathers

Limitations

Our relatively small sample size limits statistical power. The sample consists of fathers mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and cannot be generalized to all refugee populations.

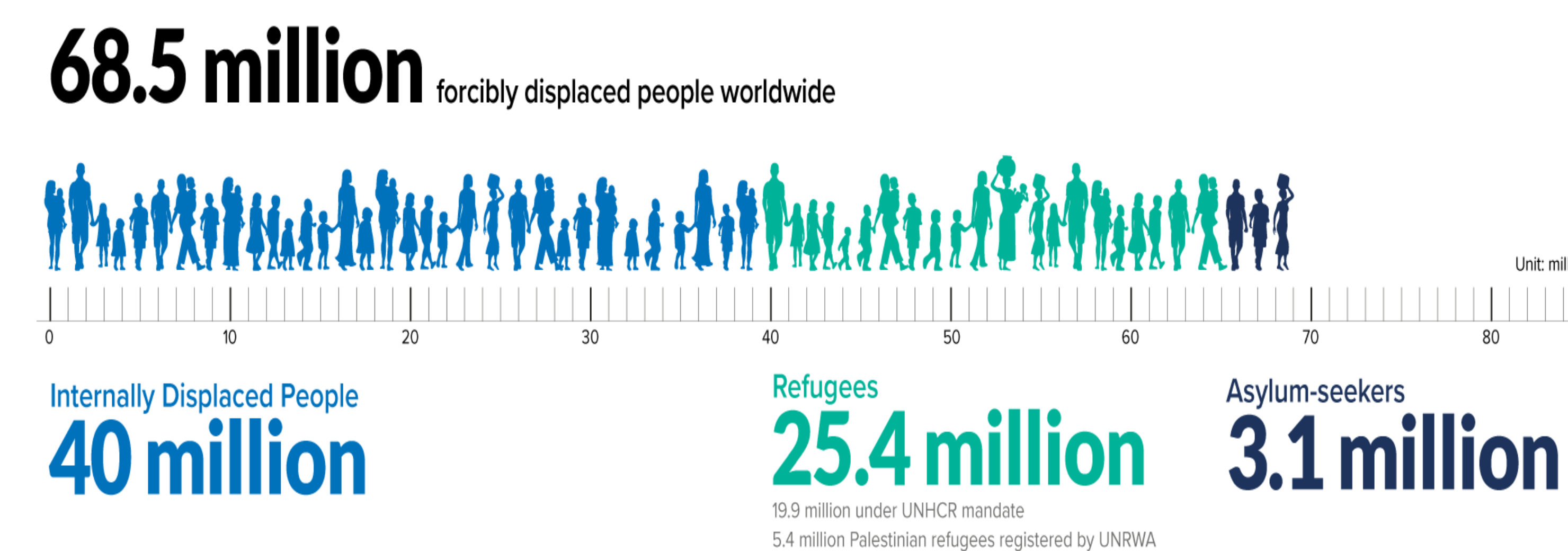
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Research Questions

- What are the stressors and challenges that affect fathers' parenting of their adolescent child?
- What are the strengths and supports that affect fathers' parenting of their adolescent child?
- How does father involvement impact children's development?
- What aspirations do fathers have for their children's future?
- What resources do fathers need to be successful?

