

## Episode 8: Fostering Dialogue about Violence against Refugee Women

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*[ANNOUNCER, MUSIC UNDER]*

*“This program is a production of Rutgers Global.”*

*[MUSIC UP FULL]*

*[OPEN MONTAGE OF SOTS FROM TV SHOW, MUSIC UNDER]*

*“Rutgers’ vision//globalized world//international learning//unique opportunities//global health//study abroad//impact on human lives//expand my horizons.”*

*[MUSIC UP FULL]*

*[HOST JAYNE CHACKO, MUSIC UNDER]*

*“This is... Rutgers Around the World— a finger on the pulse of all things global at Rutgers.”*

*[MUSIC STINGS]*

**HOST:** Hi I’m Jayne Chacko, Rutgers junior and host of the podcast, Rutgers Around the World.

It’s a reality of the migration crisis unfolding across the world. Women and children are fleeing home and taking an uncertain journey in the hope of finding safety in a new place. Some are escaping from war and human rights abuses while others are fleeing other forms of violence. And for those women and children who escape, there may be increased vulnerabilities in their new home.

The Center on Violence Against Women and Children at the Rutgers School of Social Work recognizes the importance of taking a closer look at Gender Based violence in refugee and displaced populations. And, with funding from Rutgers Global, they have organized a series of interdisciplinary workshops to bridge the gap between research and practice on the issue.

I am joined by two doctoral candidates at the School of Social Work who have been closely involved with this issue, Jordan Steiner and Catie Buttner. Jordan helped organize the interdisciplinary workshops and Catie is a community engagement coordinator at the Center on Violence Against Women and Children.

Welcome on Rutgers Around the World. Thank you for joining us!

**JORDAN STEINER:** Thanks for having us.

**CATIE BUTTNER:** Thank you for having us.

**HOST:** Catie, what is the mission of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children at Rutgers?

**CATIE BUTTNER:** So the Center was formed in 2007 and since that we’ve been working to eliminate all forms of physical, sexual, and other types of violence against women and children and those power imbalances that permit them. And, we try to do that through our work in research, education, through a certificate program for students here on campus, and then also through our community engagement work.

**HOST:** And Jordan, what makes Gender Based Violence or GBV in refugee populations a pressing issue at this time?

**JORDAN STEINER:** Women are fleeing as a result of increased vulnerabilities within war contexts and refugee contexts. So we thought it was a good idea to be looking at gender based violence within refugee contexts. And I first want to say that we'll be talking about different stages of displacement. So within refugee contexts we are talking about those who are internally displaced, so those who may not have crossed country borders, but may be a victim of war, civil conflict, human rights abuses related to Gender Based Violence. Within refugee contexts, where somebody may have crossed borders and are fleeing as a result of race, religion, nationality, political belief or a particular social group. As well as those who because of their increased vulnerabilities are resettled in a third country.

**HOST:** Catie, which UN sustainable goals address the issue of GBV among the refugee population?

**CATTIE BUTTNER:** We've sort of identified three of the UN Sustainable Development Goals that would address Gender Based Violence or GBV. One of those being good health and well-being. The other being about peace and justice. So sort of having peaceful institutions and institutions that promote elements of justice. And then also, sort of the health and well-being for women. There is a particular sustainable development goal that focuses on both reproductive health and women's health in general and sort of removing violence against women in particular which is in an essence a lot of what we are talking about with Gender Based Violence.

**HOST:** And Jordan, why and how was the GBV Working Group created? And, can you tell us a little bit about the expertise of some of its members?

**JORDAN STEINER:** This Working Group came together following up on events and discussions that happened several years ago focused on Gender Based Violence within the international context. But last year, several students from different disciplines as well as faculty got together to discuss the more current issues, international issues, and the intersection with Gender Based Violence. And, through these meetings it was decided that looking at the migration crisis and thinking about those three stages of displacement was of pressing concern. There's so many amazing faculty and students here at Rutgers that are focusing on different dynamics related to Gender Based Violence as well as international issues and some with that intersection. So we wanted to capitalize on that and really be able to collaborate and brainstorm and incubate about moving forward and taking kind of a research advocacy stance on this issue.

**HOST:** And, the Working Group has designed a series of events on GBV. Describe how the events were structured, how topics were selected, and how speakers were chosen.

**JORDAN STEINER:** We decided to put on an event in the fall, focused on more displacement issues, internal displacement and refugee contexts or refugees in country of first asylum. For example, a Syrian woman in Syria who is displaced within her own country or a Syrian woman in Jordan or in Turkey. And for those speakers, I don't just mean just social work. We're talking about public health. We're talking about psychology. So we got experts from research to basically practice to come in and engage on these topics. We wanted to be able to provide an expert perspective, but also have the participants be able to discuss and reflect on what the experts were discussing related to this topic as well as think of ideas on

collaboration related to research, related to practice. And, we are having a spring event that focuses on resettlement.

**HOST:** And how is Rutgers Global involved?

**CATIE BUTTNER:** Initially when this idea sort of first came about, we were responding to a call for funding that Rutgers Global puts out that allows offices and students to apply for dollars to do some of this very cross-disciplinary work and so it seemed like sort of the perfect mesh for us, for us to be able get all those people in the room and have space and just have the resources to put on these two events and really start those conversations.

**JORDAN STEINER:** Yah, Rutgers Global has put together some meetings for people across Rutgers who are focusing on migration issues not necessarily Gender Based Violence and migration, but migration generally. So it's been great to be part of those conversations as this seems to be such an important issue.

**HOST:** What was the outcome of the first event? And, what would you like to see come out of the series as a whole?

**CATIE BUTTNER:** I think for us a really key focus was not just bringing people together, but also saying, "How do we build a resource community?" But then also, "How do we consider next steps?" So in this process, people who have volunteered their time to come help make these events a reality have formed also working groups that include things that make the event happen, but also start to consider what happens after the event. Like are we as communities applying for grants with the partners that have come out?

**JORDAN STEINER:** Exactly. And, as Catie alluded to, we have like a resource kind of manual online that we provide to everybody who attends the event so they can have continued learning. Again, it's really that bridging of research and practice which is often in silo and so we are really trying to bring that together.

**HOST:** The next event is on April 6. What is it called? What topics will be addressed? And who are some of the speakers?

**JORDAN STEINER:** The name of the event is Displaced Lives: Gender Based Violence, Refugees, and Resettlement. We're going to be having different speakers and we have people from the International Rescue Committee. We have professors outside of Rutgers who have tons of the experience in the field, but are also looking at this research from an academic level. And, we have refugee women themselves who have gone through this experience as well as are current practitioners in the field. And, we are, just like the fall event, planning to have breakout sessions where participants, researchers, and practitioners are reflecting on the speakers. We hope that the discourse is multiple perspectives, that's what we are encouraging. I mean, at least from the fall event, I was blown away actually by the critical reflection that a lot of our participants had on the topic. It's really a conversation we hope that continues into the spring.

**HOST:** It sounds like you have a really engaging event planned around a very important issue. Jordan and Catie, thank you so much for joining us and good luck!

**JORDAN STEINER AND CATIE BUTTNER:** Thank you.

**HOST:** That was Jordan Steiner and Catie Buttner, doctoral candidates at the Rutgers School of Social Work.

Catie and Jordan are part of a team that has planned a series of workshops on gender based violence in refugee and displaced populations. The next event is on April 6. You can find out more about the event and how YOU can participate by visiting our website at [global.rutgers.edu](http://global.rutgers.edu).

That's all for this episode of Rutgers Around the World. Join us next time as we discuss all things global with members of the Rutgers community. Thanks for listening!

*[MUSIC STINGS]*