

# *all you need for a* **REFUGEE ASSEMBLY**

What do Albert Einstein and Jerry Springer have in common? Einstein was a refugee and Springer the child of one! With over 12 million refugees in the world there are more now than at any other time in history – and most are living in African and Asian Countries. Relatively few settle in Britain, but those who have make a tremendous contribution to the society they have been forced to join. Public opinion on refugees and asylum seekers is strongly influenced by negative images and reporting in the media – this pack challenges the myths and stereotypes which promote prejudice.

It aims to enable students and their teachers to:

- find out more about refugee and asylum issues – the current situation as well as past events
- develop empathy towards refugees and asylum seekers - personal stories are included to help participants understand and empathise with the human side of the issues
- explore concepts such as human rights, justice, leaving home and being a newcomer
- develop a commitment to justice, through exploring ways in which individuals and communities can take action to support refugees and asylum seekers.

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# using the pack

As a resource for assemblies this can be used with limited preparation, but it offers a wide range of areas to develop & explore with pupils. Although appropriate to different Key Stages each assembly is intended to be flexible and adaptable for different age groups. The lessons alongside each assembly could be used either as a lead in or as a follow up – or be used independently with other resources (see Further information p34).

## guidance for teachers

Being sensitive to the needs of refugee/asylum seeker children in the school before introducing any discussion of refugee/asylum issues, is essential. If you know that one or more of your pupils are in this situation it's important to talk to them in advance of any assembly or classroom discussion. Explain to them what the session will be about and give them the opportunity not to be there – as well as the opportunity to talk about their experience, or about their home country, if they would like to.

Guidance from the Refugee Council reminds us that refugee children may have experienced great trauma in their home country or during their escape. They may have seen members of their family injured, killed or arrested – such horrific events cannot easily be discussed in classrooms – and the children may now be facing much uncertainty. Refugee children may not want to talk about their home country or family circumstances because they might feel it could jeopardise their chances of staying in Britain or because they do not want to feel different from other children. They may feel embarrassed about the media images of their own country and the popular misconceptions people have about refugees and where they come from – this can affect the refugee children's self-esteem, and prevent non-refugee children from empathising with them.

Making sure refugee children feel secure, while raising awareness of the circumstances which have brought them to Britain is vital. Popular misconceptions and prejudices about refugees must be challenged to enable all the children to develop as positive Global Citizens.

## resources

Before you begin, finding answers to the following questions may be useful for discussion:

- 1 Are there any refugees/asylum seekers locally?  
If there are none locally, where is the nearest town/city with a refugee population?  
If there are refugees locally, how many are children?  
Are there any unaccompanied children?
- 2 What contributions have refugees/asylum seekers made locally and in Britain as a whole?  
The local CRE, Refugee Support Group and local museums may be able to provide information (see Further information, p34)

# what's a refugee? who's a refugee?

ks2/3

## aims

- To develop pupils' understanding of the issues.
- To encourage empathy with people who become refugees and asylum seekers.

## assembly 1

### activities

### resources

#### introduction

- ▶ Start by asking the audience to raise a hand if...
- Someone in your family, a friend or neighbour has come from another country.
- Someone in your family, a friend or neighbour lives in another country.
- You have moved home – to or from another country yourself
- ▶ Alternatively start with everyone standing up and ask them to sit down if... see how few are left standing.
- ▶ Some of us have lived in another country ourselves, most/ many of us know people who live, or used to live, in another country.

Some people move from one country to another because they want to, but some people move because they have to – they are forced to leave the country they live in and find another country where they can live safely.

- ▶ This is an assembly about some of these people – ordinary people like us – but people who've lived through an extraordinary time.

#### who am i?

- ▶ Explain that the audience now needs to identify some famous people from their descriptions – individual pupils could be asked to read out the clues, enlarged onto card, with the famous person's identity concealed.
  - ▶ Answers/guesses could be invited from the audience before the identity of each famous person is revealed (in words or pictures).
  - ▶ Famous refugees... choose some or all: Sitting Bull, the Dalai Lama, Marlene Deitrich, Jesus, Albert Einstein, Michael Marks, Gloria Estefan, Lomana Lua Lua, Ann Frank. Look out for more contemporary examples, eg music or sports personalities, some of those listed may soon date).
  - ▶ What do these people all have in common? They were/are all refugees.
- clues for each famous refugee, p4-5
  - picture of each famous refugee, p5-7

## what is a refugee?

- ▶ Many people are forced to flee from their own country because they are afraid for their lives. When they arrive in a new country the government there must decide whether or not to let them stay. If they are allowed to stay they are called refugees. While they are waiting for the government to decide if they can stay, they are called asylum seekers.

- Key terms 'Refugees' & 'Asylum Seekers' written on signs or OHTs

## why do people become refugees/asylum seekers?

- ▶ People might have been forced to leave their homes because of their religion, their political beliefs, their way of life, or because they belong to a minority ethnic group – this means a group of people who share a culture and language, which is different from most of the other people in the country

## what would you take?

- ▶ Ask audience to imagine what belongings they would take if they had to grab a bag and leave their home at very short notice.
- ▶ Ask for some suggestions. Unpack your own bag to show what you might choose (about 10 items) and lay them out on a table.
- ▶ Show audience all the objects, then ask them to indicate which 5 they would have chosen – by raising their hands as you hold up each item.
- ▶ Extend this by telling audience about what you couldn't take, eg a favourite place in your house, something too big/heavy to carry, a pet... and ask them to think for a moment about what they would have to leave behind...

- bag of belongings to be unpacked, eg warm jacket, mobile phone, passport/ID, gold necklace, scissors/pen knife, torch, matches, old family treasure book, packet of sweets, walking boots...

## stories

- ▶ Read 1 or 2 refugee children's stories – suggest audience try to imagine themselves in that situation while listening.

- Fortesa's and Chol's stories, p9-10

## resources for assembly 1

### Clues for famous refugees, past and present

- A singer who fled from Germany in the 1930s and went to Hollywood where she became a famous film star. She had a colourful personal life full of romance! **Marlene Dietrich**
- A footballer from the Democratic Republic of Congo (a country in Central Africa) who was transferred from Newcastle to Portsmouth for £2million. **Lomana Tresor Lua Lua**
- Tibet's spiritual leader, who fled into India 50 years ago, when Chinese soldiers invaded Tibet. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. **The Dalai Lama**
- In 1933, when Hitler took control of Germany, this famous scientist fled to America. He is most famous for his theory of relativity. **Albert Einstein**
- A Native American chief of the Sioux tribe. He fought the US army when they invaded his people's lands. In 1877 he led his people into Canada. **Tatanka Iyotake, 'Sitting Bull'**
- As a baby, this famous person had to flee to Egypt with his parents because King Herod was after him. He had ordered that all baby boys should be killed. This happened about 2000 years ago – and the baby's birth is celebrated by many people around the world every Christmas. **Jesus Christ**

- This teenage girl tried to escape from the Nazis during the Second World War. She and her family hid for over two years in Amsterdam before they were arrested and deported. While she was in hiding she wrote a diary which has now been translated into 67 languages – it's one of the most widely read books in the world. **Anne Frank**
- This man was Polish and had to move to England in the 1870s. He spoke no English when he arrived. He opened a market stall in Leeds, where everything sold for 1penny... it was very successful so he opened more market stalls... then he took on a partner called Tom Spencer. They soon began opening shops all over the country. **Michael Marks**

### key terms

An **asylum seeker** is someone who has asked to be allowed to stay in another country because they have had to flee from danger in their own country.

A **refugee** is someone who has got permission to stay in another country because, if they return to their home country, they will be in great danger

### information for teachers

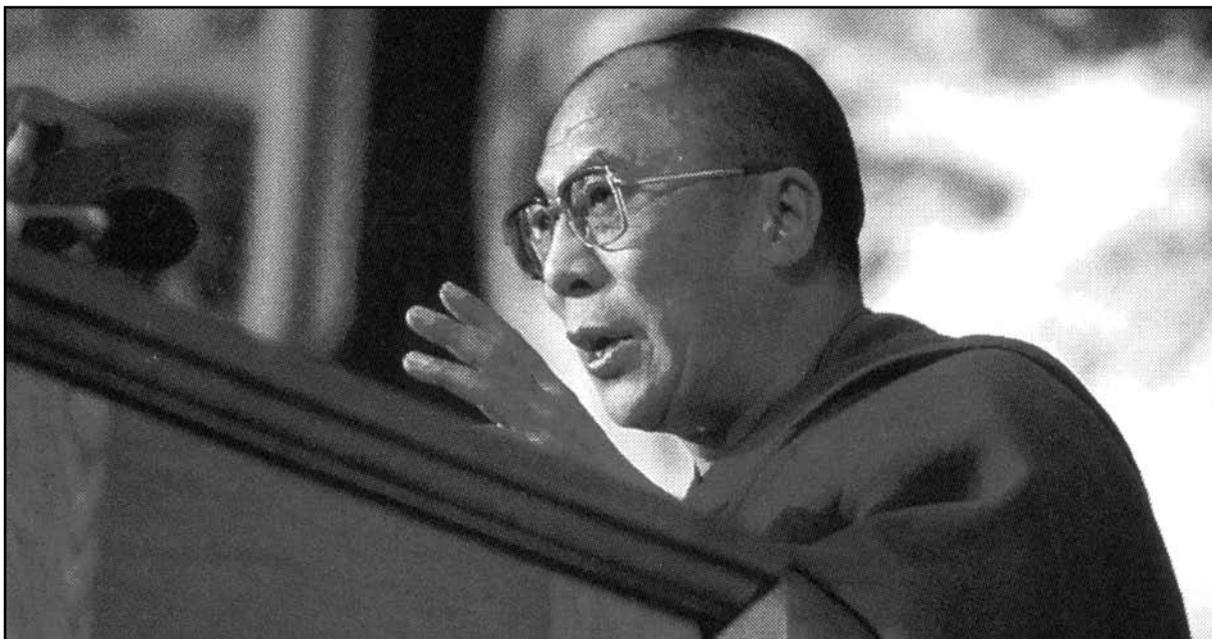
Under international law, the word 'refugee' has a very precise meaning, as set out in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to Refugees. In the Convention, a refugee is defined as someone who:

- has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion
- is outside the country they belong to or normally reside in
- is unable or unwilling to return home for fear of persecution.

The Convention was drafted in the context of the millions of refugees in post-war Europe, and only applied to European nationals. In 1967, a UN protocol extended the convention to cover any person, anywhere in the world, at any time. The UK, along with over 130 other countries, is a signatory to the Convention and its protocol. These two documents remain the foundation of refugee law today, committing signatories to certain obligations. However the interpretation of these international instruments varies from country to country.

Whilst someone is waiting for their application to be considered by the Government, they are known as an 'asylum seeker'.

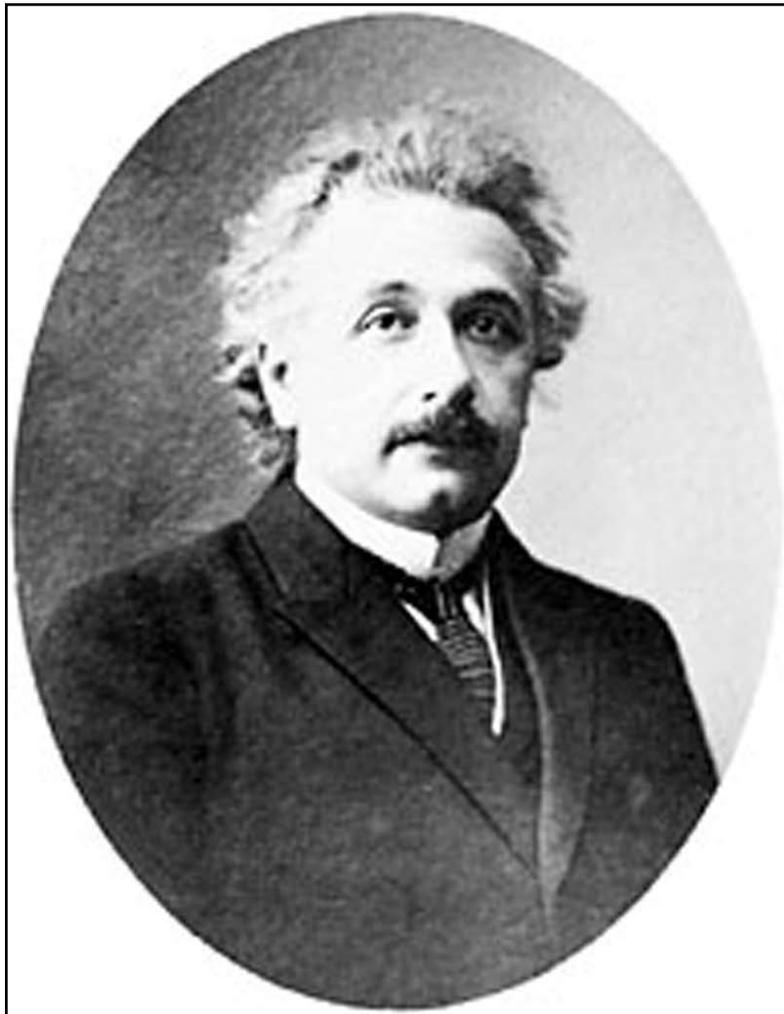
Sending asylum seekers back to persecution violates international human rights standards. Article 33 of the 1951 UN Convention for Refugees prohibits the UK expelling or returning a refugee until their case is heard.



**Dalai Lama**



**Marlene Dietrich**



**Albert Einstein**



**Tatanka Iyotake, 'Sitting Bull'**



**Anne Frank**



**Lomana Tresor LuaLua**

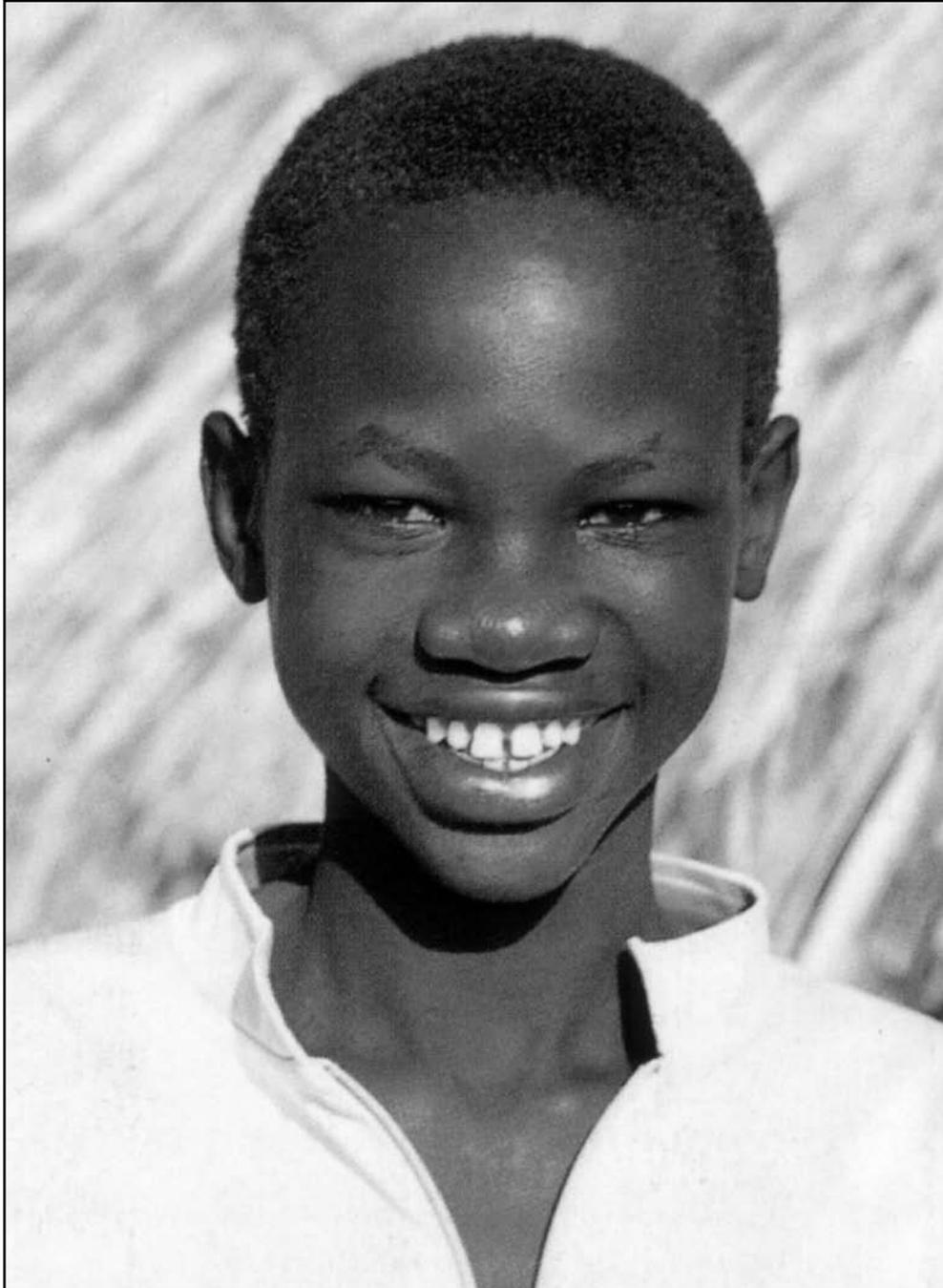


**Michael Marks**



**Jesus Christ**

# chol's story



“

It was something like an accident when I ran away from my village. We were playing at about 5 o'clock when these people, the soldiers, came. We just ran. We didn't know where we were going to, we just ran. The soldiers divided into two groups; one for the village, one for our herds of cattle. My brother helped me to run. We didn't know where our mother and father were, we didn't say goodbye. When there is shooting, when you hear BANG! BANG! BANG! you don't think about your friend or your mother, you just run to save your life.

I didn't see the soldiers, I just heard the shooting, the screaming and the bombing that went DUM, DUM, DUM, DUM like this and killed many people. It all just happened like an accident, and we ran without anything – nothing – no food, no clothes, nothing.

”

*from: Sybella Wilkes One day we had to run Evans Brothers, UNHCR & Save the Children 2000*

# fortesa's story



Fortesa is 9 years old. She was born in Prishtina, the capital of Kosova, where she lived in a flat with her mum and dad.

“

We left Kosova in 1995. I was really sad to leave all my friends, but we had to do it – I was only 5 years old so I didn't really understand why we had to go. I only knew it was because of the war. When I started school in London it was hard for me because I didn't know any English – but there were lots of children from different parts of the world in my school and we helped each other. At first I cried a lot at school because I remembered the people we had left behind in Kosova. I missed my grandparents a lot. When we heard more fighting had started in Kosova everyone at home was very worried. I started crying again.

After the war stopped my parents decided we would go home – even though we had a nice flat, they found being a refugee very hard. They decided it would be better to go home to Kosova even though there are many problems there.

”

*from: Howard Davies & Jill Rutter Kosovan Journeys – Refugee children tell their stories*

# lesson 1

time	activity	resources
15 mins	<b>introduction</b> Refugees/asylum seekers are ordinary people – but people who've lived through an extraordinary time.	
30 mins	<b>a refugee's story</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Read Wali's story</li><li>▶ Students then fill in the short questionnaire about Wali's life and discuss the last question.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wali's story, p14</li><li>• questionnaire sheet for Wali, p12</li></ul>
15 mins	<b>main activity</b> <b>Issues refugees &amp; asylum seekers face</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Ask pupils to suggest what feelings/issues they would have on arriving in a different country with very few possessions and a lack of information. List their ideas.</li><li>▶ In small groups, students read through the cards which show the issues Wali might have to face on leaving Afghanistan, making the long journey &amp; finally arriving in Britain.</li><li>▶ How do these compare with the students' own list? They can add to either their own list or the cards.</li><li>▶ Students can then 'diamond rank' the cards to show what they think is the most important issue for Wali at the top, the least important at the bottom.</li><li>▶ Ask the groups to feed back their ideas and extend the activity to consider:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The importance of different issues at different times, eg on departure, during the journey and on arrival</li><li>• What changes Wali's mother and elderly grandfather would make to the ranking of the cards – how do different issues effect different generations?</li><li>• The family's immediate and longer term needs as they begin their new life in Britain (cards could be sorted into two groups).</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sets of Issue cards for each group, p13</li></ul>
	<b>conclusion</b> <b>Thinking about school as a welcoming place and taking responsibility.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What makes you feel you belong in a place?</li><li>▶ What makes you feel welcome?</li><li>▶ Think about the people involved and the fabric of the place itself. Discuss our role in welcoming new comers.</li><li>▶ Ask for suggestions of what individuals/the class/the school/the whole community can do.</li><li>▶ Draw up a list of 10 key ways to help newcomers feel at home. This could be produced as a collaborative class booklet or poster for future reference.</li></ul>	

# refugee questionnaire

Imagine that you are able to ask Wali about what's happened to him – use the information he gives to fill in this questionnaire.

## in normal times

name of country

name of city

parents' jobs

*circle your answer*

went to school yes/no

liked school yes/no

friends yes/no

happy yes/no

outside play yes/no

family income rich/not rich or poor/poor

## in extraordinary times

saw sudden violence yes/no

lost a parent yes/no

lived in fear yes/no

went to school yes/no

friends yes/no

outside play yes/no

lost home yes/no

Explain how Wali was an ordinary person who lived through an extraordinary time.  
(use the other side of this sheet)

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name of country

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Explain how Wali was an ordinary person who lived through an extraordinary time.  
(use the other side of this sheet)

# issues cards

**staying  
safe**

**staying healthy**

**being  
lonely**

**having enough to  
eat**

**being able  
to speak the  
language**

**missing school**

**having somewhere  
to sleep**

**bullying**

**worrying about  
those left behind**

**washing &  
keeping clean**

**paper work/  
passports/  
applying for  
asylum**

**money**

# wali's story



Wali is 10 years old. He's a refugee from Afghanistan. He now lives in London

“

I was born in Afghanistan, in Kabul. Kabul is the capital city of Afghanistan. We were not poor but we were not rich. My father worked at the civic centre and my mother was a housewife. When I was small I was quite happy. Life was not hard and people were always kind to me. I went to school and I was in Class Six. I liked my teacher, I always did my homework and I had many friends. After school we would go for a walk and play football together.

Fighting started in Afghanistan. One night some men came to our house and took my father away and he was shot. After that, our life became very hard. I was woken up by a noise one morning at about four or five. My mother and my family went into the corridors where there were no windows and watched the rockets. They came four at a time. We stayed in the corridor for about an hour. Then it was a little bit quiet so we came inside and my mother started to cook.

After this there were lots of soldiers walking about. Sometimes there were bad soldiers who went into houses and took things. All the schools were shut. I couldn't go to see my friends because it wasn't safe to go outside. The only time my mother went outside was to get food. After living like this for a week, my family decided we had to leave.

”

*from: Refugee Council Schools Information Pack 2002*

## aims

- To challenge stereotypes relating to refugees and asylum seekers
- To present audience with facts to raise awareness and dispel myths

# assembly 2

## activities

## resources

### introduction

- ▶ Show refugee child's drawing of refugees leaving home – they are hoping to be allowed to stay as refugees in a neighbouring country.
  - ▶ Remind audience of definitions of asylum seeker and refugee.
- painting *One day we had to run!* on OHT or poster size, p20
  - definitions on OHT, p4

### what do we know about refugees & asylum seekers?

- ▶ Ask audience to raise a hand if they think each refugee/asylum seeker statement is true – these could be shown on the OHP, or held up by volunteers.
  - ▶ Choose all or some of the statements. Use the additional information about each statement to support it. If volunteers are taking part, those holding up false statements could sit down, leaving only the true statements standing.
- statements about refugees & asylum seekers, p16

### which countries do refugees & asylum seekers come from?

- ▶ At the end of 2003 the top 10 countries were Somalia, China, Iran, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These could be marked on the map beforehand.
  - ▶ Explain that you have volunteers who are going to take the role of 6 asylum seekers fleeing from danger and coming to Britain to be safe. They are all going to ask if they can stay in Britain as refugees.
  - ▶ Ask the volunteers to come up one at a time, with their country card and response. 'Introduce' each one.
  - ▶ As they stick their country card to the map read out the information about them. The volunteer then reads out their response.
  - ▶ Stress that less than 2% of the world's refugees come to Britain – it's very difficult for them to get refugee status – and of those who do, many want to return home as soon as they can.
- world map (Eckert or Peter's projections give a more accurate impression of size), p21
  - 6 volunteers and statements about refugees, country cards to stick on map, and responses for volunteers to read out, p16-19

### why are there so many myths about refugees & asylum seekers?

- ▶ If appropriate, ask the audience for their ideas on this.
- ▶ Explain how newspaper and television reports can exaggerate the negative – if possible use a current example, which audience will be familiar with, to illustrate this.

- ▶ Alternatively use an OHT of one of the headlines provided.
  - ▶ Explain that for many people things that are unfamiliar, that they don't know very much about, can be worrying/frightening – so people react against them. It's very important to ask questions, find out the facts and understand what is true – not just believe what other people say
- newspaper headlines about refugees, p22

## statements about refugees/asylum seekers

- 1 There are about 12,000,000 refugees in the world.  
**True**
- 2 Most refugees come to rich countries like Britain.  
**False:** 80% are in African and Asian countries – they often flee from their own country to a neighbouring country – so how many travel further?
- 3 Fewer than 2% of the world's refugees come to Britain.  
**True:** Only 1.8% come to Britain.
- 4 Asylum seekers are not allowed to get jobs when they arrive in Britain.  
**True:** Asylum seekers can't work until they get refugee status – even though many want to.
- 5 Most asylum seekers are terrorists.  
**False:** It's very unlikely any terrorist would use the asylum system because it would bring them to the attention of the police – all asylum seekers are finger-printed, given ID cards and are security checked.
- 6 Asylum seekers are ordinary people who have lived through extraordinary times.  
**True:** They are people like any others – the difference is they have had to flee from danger and have come here, or to any other country to be safe.

## statements & responses

### sami

- Sami is from Turkey. He is a farmer in a very poor part of the country.
- He is one of the Kurdish people – until recently they weren't even allowed to speak their own Kurdish language in Turkey, and people discriminated against them because they were Kurds.
- There has been fighting between the Turkish army and some of the Kurds – many innocent people have been killed.
- Sami's family have been harassed by the Turkish army – they have arrested his brother and taken him away.
- Sami believes he is in danger.

## **augustina**

- Augustina is from the Democratic Republic of Congo, a huge country in Africa.
- She was a university student there.
- She and her friends wanted there to be elections in Democratic Republic of Congo, like we have in Britain. They protested against the government.
- They were arrested and taken into the forest where they were locked up in a detention centre for several weeks.
- They were beaten and Augustina's parents paid a bribe to get her released.
- She escaped across the border to Zambia, then flew to London.

## **siva**

- Siva is from Sri Lanka. He is a Tamil – the Tamils are a minority group in Sri Lanka.
- For over 50 years they have suffered from discrimination – it has been difficult for them to enter university or get good jobs. Now the Tamils are fighting the Sri Lankan army.
- The Tamils have very little food, electricity or medicines in Siva's area – they are getting desperate. Siva's father has used up all his savings to pay for Siva to escape.
- He left in a small boat for India and then bought a plane ticket to London.
- It isn't always safe for refugees to stay in the first country they reach, they may be sent back to danger.

## **hassan**

- Hassan is from Somalia. He finished university and started working for the government.
- Then there was war – his home town was bombed and thousands of people were killed or injured.
- Hassan escaped to Ethiopia and lived in a refugee camp. Life was very hard there was not enough food or clean water.
- He travelled to the capital city and telephoned his uncle in London. His uncle was able to lend him enough money to fly to London.

## **amira**

- Amira is from Bosnia. She is a Muslim and she is married to a Serb.
- They were both teachers in a secondary school.
- When the war started they were threatened and told people in mixed marriages had to get out.
- They left their home and moved in with Amira's sister. It was very crowded in her tiny flat.
- As Amira and her husband are both English teachers they decided to come to Britain.

## **ramon**

- Ramon is from Colombia. He is a lawyer.
- During the day he worked for a law firm, in his spare time he worked for an organization which supports human rights in Colombia.
- He had threatening telephone calls telling him to stop his human rights work, then a letter saying he would be killed.
- He decided it was too dangerous to stay in Colombia, and decided to come to Britain.

# refugee responses

## **Sami's response**

“  
I came to Britain; they wouldn't let me become a refugee – but I am allowed to stay a bit longer.  
”

## **Augustina's response**

“  
I was asked to give more information about where I was in the forest, before I could be allowed to stay in Britain. I couldn't give the information. I will have to leave.  
”

## **Siva's response**

“  
I was refused refugee status in Britain – they told me I should have stayed in India. My lawyers have made an appeal and I'm waiting to hear the result.  
”

## **Hassan's response**

“  
I was given refugee status – I am allowed to stay.  
”

## **Amira's response**

“  
I am still waiting to hear if I have refugee status – I have been waiting for 2 years.  
”

## **Ramon's response**

“  
I'm not allowed to stay. I have to leave. I cannot go back to Colombia.  
”

country cards

**Turkey**

**Colombia**

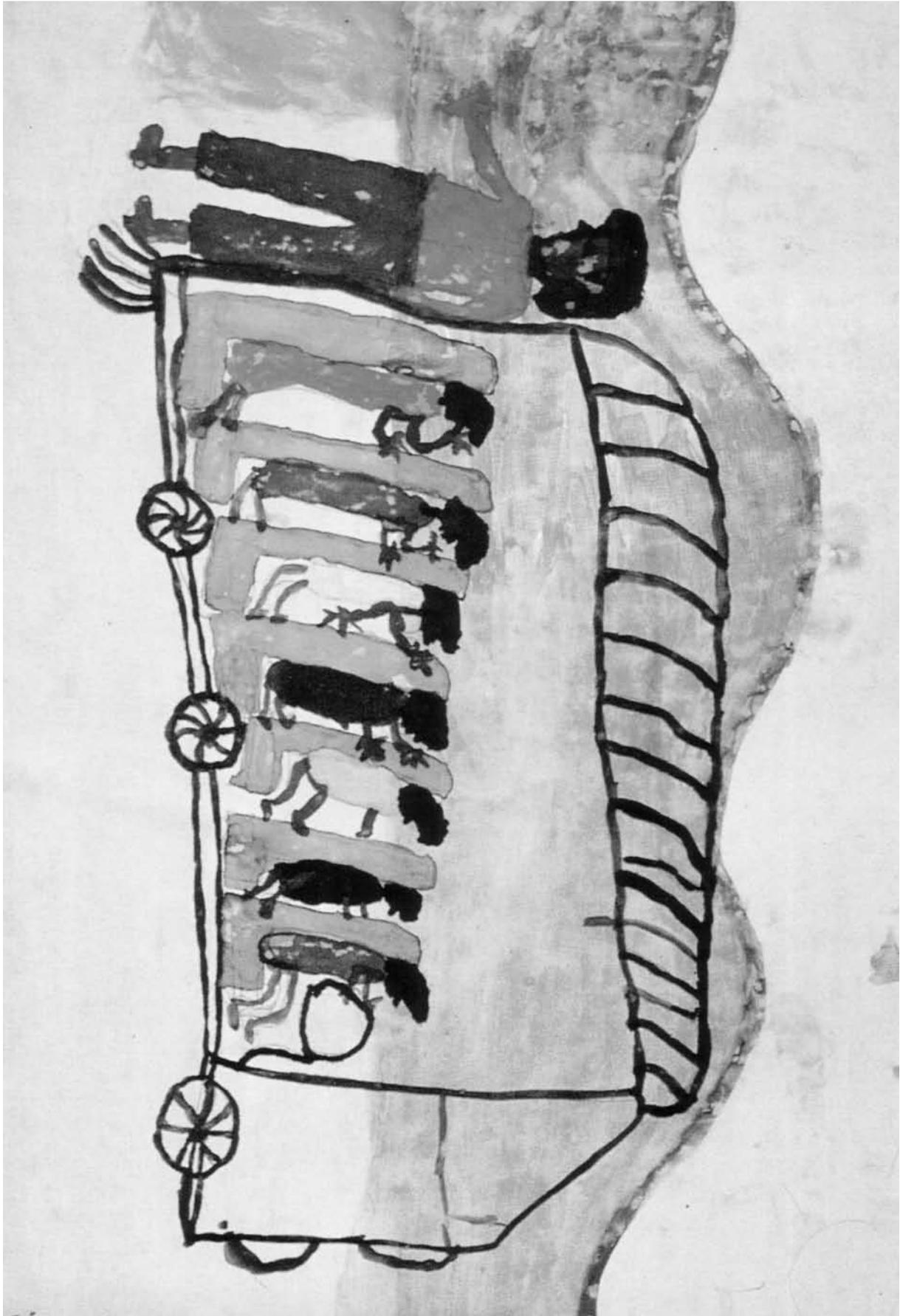
**Somalia**

**Sri Lanka**

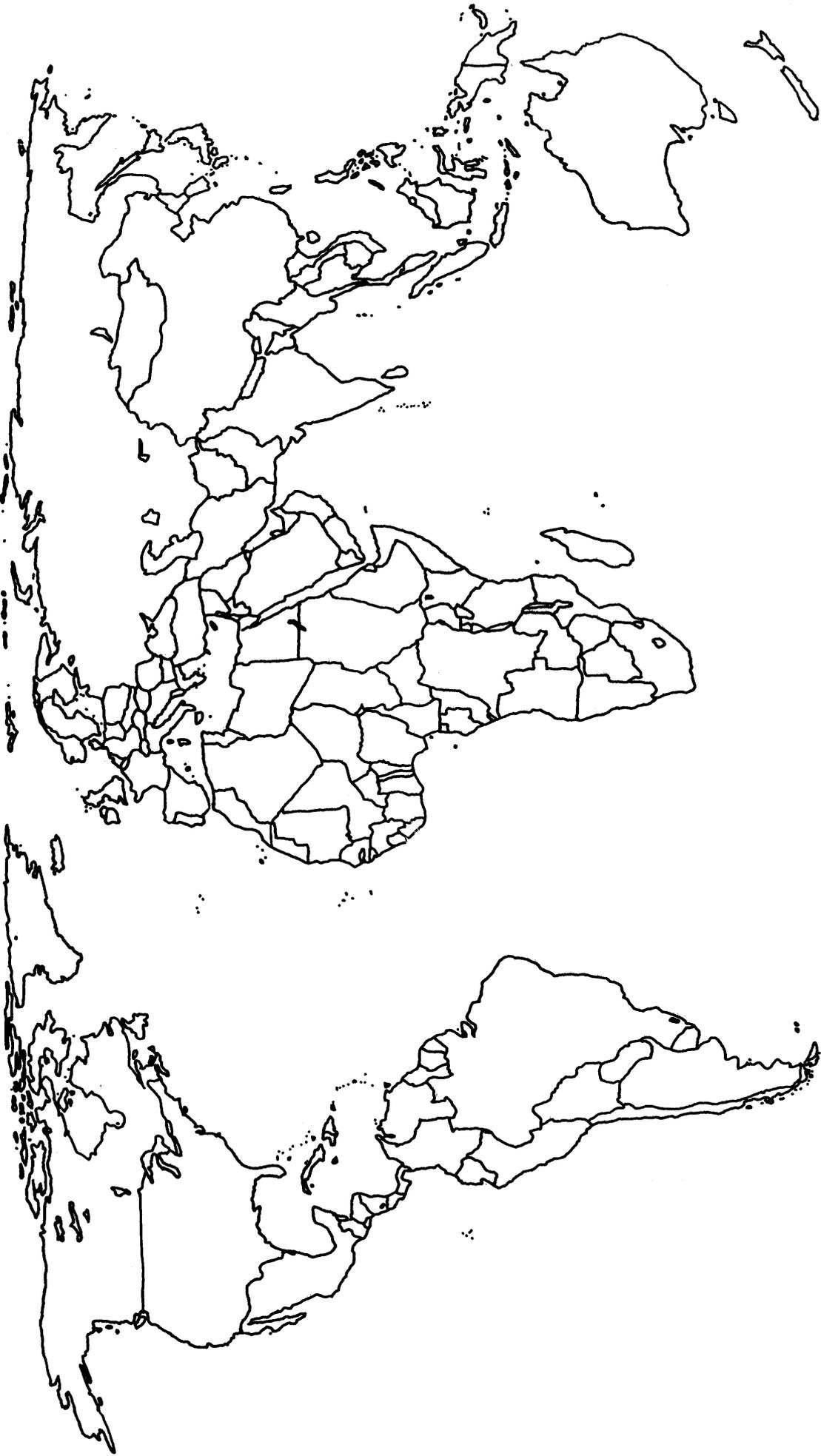
**Bosnia**

**Democratic  
Republic  
of Congo**

one day we had to run!



*Travelling to the refugee camp by Binti Aden Denle, 12 year old Ethiopian refugee  
from: One day we had to run!*



Eckert IV projection

# headlines about refugees/asylum seekers

**... illegals  
flooding into  
UK ...**

Daily Star 31/10/2001

*Our town's too nice for  
refugees ... they will try  
to escape, rapists and  
thieves will terrorise us*

Daily Express 23/3/2002

**Asylum cheats are a  
threat to our future**

Mail on Sunday 4/3/2001

**Bogus refugees  
treated better  
than UK citizens**

The Sun 18/2/2002

**Refugees are flooding  
into UK 'like ants'**

Daily Express 7/11/2001

**Britain is top  
asylum haven**

Daily Mail 2/2/2002

*... we resent the  
scroungers, beggars and  
crooks who are prepared  
to cross every country in  
Europe to reach our  
generous benefits system*

The Sun 7/3/2001

**Around 80 per cent  
of those who claim  
refugee status are  
eventually judged  
to be bogus**

Mail on Sunday 14/10/2001

# lesson 2

time	activity	resources
5 mins	<b>introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Start by revisiting the true/false statements used in the assembly. Ask the class which they found most surprising and why.</li><li>▶ If you haven't used the assembly first, the true/false activity will work just as well as an introduction to the lesson.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• statements from assembly 2, p16</li></ul>
20 mins	<b>refugee quiz</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ This is designed to challenge perceptions pupils may have. They could work in groups, pairs, or individually then compare their answers before you go over them.</li><li>▶ Allow enough time to explore the questions they have written down in response to question 10.</li><li>▶ You may not know the answers to these – stress this to the class, so they understand it's an opportunity to find out together</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• refugee quiz sheet &amp; answers, p24-25</li></ul>
35 mins	<b>options</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1 Research</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Spend the rest of the lesson researching the questions they have suggested – using books and websites.</li><li>▶ Come back together at the end to report on the answers.</li></ul></li><li><b>2 From facts to fiction</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Choose a story from the resource list, or one of the refugee poems.</li><li>▶ Ask the children to sit in a circle. Read the story/poem aloud and through questioning and discussion use it to explore the way people treat each other and the concept of responsibility.</li></ul></li><li><b>3 Artwork</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Individuals or pairs could devise a visual way to represent one of the true statements from Assembly 2.</li></ul></li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• access to internet, books/info, see websites, p34</li><li>• refugee story or poem, p26-27, 32, 34</li></ul>
	<b>it's a wrap</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ If a poem hasn't been used so far try ending with one.</li><li>▶ Then ask the children to go round the circle each saying what they have learnt or now know about refugees/asylum seekers.</li></ul>	



# refugee quiz answers

**1** How many refugees are there in the world today?

**12 million**

**2** Which countries do most refugees flee from because they are in danger?

Currently, Somalia, China, Iran, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It's very important to note that this list does change as situations in some countries improve and worsen in others, and for other reasons.

In particular Sri Lanka and the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia and Montenegro), have consistently provided large numbers of asylum seekers coming to the UK, although they are currently not in the top ten.

**3** What % of the world's refugees come to Britain?

Fewer than 2% - in fact 1.8%

**4** Why do refugees flee from their home country?

For example, war, hunger, religious or political oppression...

**5** Which continent do you think has the most refugees?

Asia, which has about 4.5 million refugees.

8 out of 10 refugees actually flee one poor country to go to another.

Nearly two-thirds of the world's refugees live in Africa or the Middle East.

**6** Which country in Europe do you think has the highest number of refugees?

Austria, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland... UK ranked 8th in 2002.

**7** What do you think are the biggest problems refugees face when they leave their country?

For example, staying safe, staying healthy, being lonely, missing school, lack of money, passports/visas, bullying, learning a new language.

**8** Name 2 famous refugees

Tatanka Iyotake 'Sitting Bull', Dalai Lama, Marlene Deitrich, Jesus, Albert Einstein, Michael Marks, Gloria Estefan, Tresor Lomana Lua Lua, Anne Frank...

# refugee poems

## Feelings of a Refugee

*I feel petrified.  
I am like a picnic with no  
food.  
I feel scared.  
I am like a head with  
no hair.  
I feel shocked.  
I am like a pencil in  
the wrong pot.  
I feel frightened.  
I am like a person in the wrong world.*

**Leiba Emeche**  
**St Paul's Primary School**

## Refugee

*So I have a new name, refugee  
Strange that a name should take away from  
me  
My past, my personality and hope.  
Strange refuge this.  
So many seem to share this name, refugee,  
Yet we share so many differences.  
I find no comfort in my new name.  
I long to share my past, restore my pride,  
To show I too, in time, will offer more than I  
have borrowed  
For now the comfort that I seek  
Resides in the old yet new name  
I would choose.  
Friend.*

**Ruvimbo Bungwe**

## Leaving

*Leaving our country is very sad  
Ever since the war  
And going across the sea  
Village I'll never see again.  
Imagine what it feels like  
Nervous I will be caught  
Grateful to get away*

**Azra Ahmed**  
**Cheetwood Primary School**

## War and Peace

*War is like a man-eating worm,  
Eating all the men.  
Taking them from the love of others,  
But not from memories.  
War is like a thunderstorm,  
Causing havoc in the world.  
Separating families,  
And also life long friends.  
War is but a school fight,  
Just gone a little too far,  
Involving whole countries,  
Instead of just a few boys.  
Peace is like a budding flower,  
On a leafless tree.  
The doves that are a sign of peace.  
May fly again, free.  
Peace is like a gentle breeze.  
Not a raging storm,  
It cools down hot, flushed cheeks.  
And lets a baby smile.*

**Laura Gouk**  
**Charlton Park Primary School**

## Refugee Alone

*Silence,  
Rest at last.  
The air was hot and still.  
It sounds like an aeroplane  
In the sky.  
Silence again then,  
BOMB!  
Then my mum and dad  
Came bursting into my room  
With my sisters.  
They told me to quickly  
Get dressed and to go outside.  
I got dressed and ran outside,  
With all my family  
And then I saw it.  
From the end of our street,  
Up to the middle there was a fire  
And it was still spreading.  
We all started to run.  
We ran so much,  
That we were near the train station.  
We came nearer,  
Nearer, nearer,  
And then we were there.  
We quickly got on the train.  
From then on we lived in the USA. When I first  
came here  
Everybody treated me wonderfully.  
At school everyone helped me.  
I didn't know anybody,  
And I didn't know English,  
I don't think I'll ever  
Forget how everybody helped me  
And I'll never forget that night...  
Never in my life.*

**Ayşe Nur Soykan**

**St Chrysostom's Primary School**

## Imagine

*Imagine having to move to another country  
Because of a war  
That other people started.  
It's not your fault.  
In fact it has nothing  
To do with you.  
You leave your friends and relatives behind.  
You arrive and you don't know anyone.  
And nobody knows you.  
You're alone and scared.  
You have to make new friends,  
And get used to the place.  
You have to learn a totally new language  
You go to school  
And everyone stares at you like  
You're different.  
You feel that you are.  
But inside you're the same  
As everyone else.  
I'm glad I wasn't  
Put in that situation  
Aren't you?*

**Abdul J Choudhury  
Burnage High School**

## aims

- To present audience with facts to raise awareness and dispel myths.
- To challenge stereotypes relating to refugees and asylum seekers.
- To provide opportunities for participants to develop their understanding of the issues.
- To explore ways in which individuals and communities can take action to support refugees and asylum seekers.

# assembly 3

## activities

## resources

### introduction

- ▶ Start by telling the audience that you'd like to share some views about young people.
  - ▶ Read out, or use OHTs to show the newspaper headlines.
  - ▶ Ask audience to raise a hand if they think these headlines present a fair and accurate picture of young people (like them) – assume they won't raise their hands!
  - ▶ Show second set of newspaper headlines - ask audience to raise a hand if they think these headlines present a fair and accurate picture of refugees/asylum seekers.
- newspaper headlines about young people, p30
  - newspaper headlines about refugees/ asylum seekers, p22

### what do we know about refugees & asylum seekers?

- ▶ Explain that it's important to question information that is presented as facts.
  - ▶ Ask them to raise a hand if they think each refugee/asylum seeker statement is true – these could be shown on the OHP, (or held up by volunteers).
  - ▶ Use the additional information about each statement to explain why it is true/false. If volunteers are taking part, those holding up false statements could sit down, leaving only the true statements standing.
- statements about refugees/asylum seekers, p29

### which countries do refugees & asylum seekers come from?

- ▶ Show picture of Fortesa and her mother. Use it to challenge the stereotype of refugees coming to Britain to stay indefinitely. Fortesa and her family came to England from Kosovo in 1995. This picture show them returning to Kosovo after the war.
  - ▶ At the end of 2003, the top 10 countries where refugees/ asylum seekers in Britain originated were Somalia, China, Iran, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic on Congo.
  - ▶ Ask volunteers to come up and read statements about refugees – as they read, mark where they come from on the map.
  - ▶ Stress that less than 2% of the world's refugees come to Britain – and of those many return home as soon as they can.
- picture of Fortesa, p10
  - statements about refugees, p16-17
  - world map (Eckert or Peter's projections give a more accurate impression of size), p21

## why are there myths about refugees & asylum seekers?

- ▶ If appropriate, ask the audience for their ideas on this.
- ▶ Explain how newspaper and television reports can exaggerate the negative – if possible use a current example, which audience will be familiar with, to illustrate this.
- ▶ Or show one of the headlines provided and explain how misleading it is by referring to the true statements used at the start.
- ▶ Explain that for many people things that are unfamiliar, that they don't know very much about, can be worrying/frightening – so people react against them. It's very important to ask questions, find out the facts and understand what is true – not just believe what the media and other people say.

## statements about refugees/asylum seekers

- 1 There are about 12,000,000 refugees in the world.  
**True** There are also over 20 million internally displaced people (people who have been forced to flee from their homes, but have not crossed an international border).
- 2 Most refugees come to rich countries like Britain.  
**False:** 80% are in African and Asian countries – they often flee from their own country to a neighbouring country – so how many travel further?
- 3 Fewer than 2% of the world's refugees come to Britain.  
**True:** Only 1.8% come to Britain.
- 4 An asylum seeker is an illegal immigrant.  
**False:** Asylum seekers have the right to stay in Britain until a final decision on their application has been made. UN Convention on Refugees (1951) stated that anyone has the right to apply for asylum in any country. Britain signed up to this agreement.
- 5 Asylum seekers are not allowed to get jobs when they arrive in Britain.  
**True:** Asylum seekers can't work until they get refugee status – even though many want to.
- 6 Asylum seekers are crooks – they commit more crimes than anyone else.  
**False:** They are no more likely to commit crimes than anyone else. They are people trying to escape danger in their own country, but sadly they are often the victims of crime here – there have been many attacks on asylum seekers.
- 7 An asylum seeker family receives 30% less income support than other families in this country.  
**True:** Asylum seeker families have less to live on and are not allowed to claim welfare benefits for disability, free milk and vitamins for new mothers.
- 8 Most asylum seekers are terrorists.  
**False:** It's very unlikely any terrorist would use the asylum system because it would bring them to the attention of the police – all asylum seekers are finger-printed, given ID cards and are security checked.
- 9 Asylum seekers cost British taxpayers a lot of money.  
**False:** Migrants contribute £2.5 billion to income tax each year, so there is a huge gain from people from other countries once they are allowed to work.
- 10 Asylum seekers are ordinary people who have lived through extraordinary times.  
**True:** They are people like any others – the difference is they have had to flee from danger and have come here, or to any other country to be safe.

# headlines about young people

**New law to help  
oust violent pupils**

Daily Mail 9/7/2001

... made up the story  
to get out of a lesson,  
but the prank  
backfired when police  
were alerted ...

Birmingham Evening Mail 27/5/2002

**Teen gang banned  
from McDonalds**

Daily Mail 9/5/2002

*... neighbours are  
driven to misery  
by teenagers who  
create mayhem  
late at night*

Birmingham Post 29/4/2002

**Put unruly teenagers in  
the stocks ... "This is a  
democratic punishment.  
In the old days if ... a  
person's crime was serious  
and anti-social they  
were pelted."**

Daily Telegraph 7/6/2002

... complaints of youths  
hanging around in large  
groups, criminal damage  
to shops, broken windows,  
vandalism and graffiti

Birmingham Post 10/4/2002

*Children aged over  
five will have to pay to  
spend a penny ... in a  
bid to stop groups of  
youngsters vandalising  
the (toilets)*

Shropshire Star 9/5/2002

# lesson 3

time	activity	resources
5 mins	<b>introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Start by revisiting the true/false statements used in the assembly. Ask the class which they found most surprising and why.</li><li>▶ If you haven't used the assembly first, the true/false activity will work just as well as an introduction to the lesson.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• statements from assembly 3, p29</li></ul>
15 mins	<b>refugee quiz</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ This is designed to challenge perceptions pupils may have. They could work in groups, pairs, or individually then compare their answers before you go over them.</li><li>▶ Allow enough time to explore the questions they have written down in response to question 10.</li><li>▶ You may not know the answers to these. Stress this to the class – it's an opportunity to find out together</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• refugee quiz sheet &amp; answers, p24-35</li></ul>
35 mins	<b>options</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1 Research</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Spend the rest of the lesson researching the questions they have suggested – using books and websites.</li><li>▶ Come back together at the end to report on the answers.</li></ul></li><li><b>2 Artwork</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Individuals or pairs could devise a visual way to represent one of the true statements from Assembly 3.</li></ul></li><li><b>3 Refugee rap</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Play CD of <i>This is my World</i> rap by Keinaan. Students can follow the lyrics as they listen. Points to discuss:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which refugee issues does the rap raise?</li><li>• What message is Keinaan giving to his audience?</li><li>• How effective is this?</li><li>• Do they agree with the message?</li><li>• Do they think music can inspire action, and bring about positive change?</li><li>• What other musicians sing about topical issues?</li></ul></li><li>▶ In small groups, students could write and perform their own rap to raise awareness of refugee issues. If they find this hard, suggest the format of short sentences that rhyme every other line.<p>More time may be needed for this option – for more information see the activity pack 'Worlds behind the Music' – info on page *.</p></li></ul></li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• access to internet, books/info</li><li>• CD player and CD of Refugee Voices <i>Building Bridges</i> (available on loan from RISC)</li><li>• lyrics of <i>This is my World</i> by Keinaan, p32</li></ul>
5mins	<b>it's a wrap</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ End with one of the poems written by young refugees. Ask the students to each say what they have learnt, or what they now know about refugees/asylum seekers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• poems, p26-27</li></ul>

# this is my world

Keinaan, now an international rap star, is a Somali refugee in Canada. His name means ‘traveller’. His songs tell of experiences in Somalia and of the hardships of being a refugee. He was lucky to escape Somalia – against all odds, his mother managed to get visas from an embassy after selling the families house and possessions. They got on one of the last flights out of the country.

*I'm a drifter, without a thing to call my own,  
War and hunger the causes I leave my home.  
I seek asylum, a burden to my destination,  
Neglected, I feel like an AIDS patient.  
Education, instinct and natural innovation,  
I'm not wasting a minute  
I'm community hope adjacent, working labour,  
Your friendly peaceful networking neighbour,  
I'm teased about my accent  
But my language will be greater,  
I'm your doctor; I'm authorized to treat your pains,  
How come you trust me,  
When I operate in your bleeding veins,  
Couldn't you see it,  
When you asked when I would be leaving,  
Did you think my activities could only be refugeeing?*

*Chorus:*

*I'm your daughter, cause war isn't really my fault,  
I'm your son, hunger isn't really my fault,  
We're your children, we know that politics fall,  
We forgive you, we won't hold grudges at all,  
And this is my world, this is my world,  
This is my world, this is my world...*

*I'm a cleaner, a humble beginning for a natural leader,  
My son is caught up,  
He's doing crimes of misdemeanours, and  
I'm a judge, a former refugee myself,  
I don't condone law breaking  
But I know what's at stake, and  
I'm a poet; I offer you a piece of mind,  
I clear obstacles with my optimal beats and rhymes,  
I'm an athlete; I absolutely have the fastest feet,  
I'm worth millions,  
A fired bullet couldn't match my speed,  
I'm an attorney; my journey has been most severe,*

*But the human who's attacked  
Will adapt and persevere,  
And those who'd rather wait,  
Tell me how you validate,  
When our lives seem to waste  
Behind the gates you barricade*

*Chorus*

*I'm African, and my arrival is no accident,  
From colonization to mis-education,  
My track is bent, so I'm here,  
Like my brother who got chained to a board,  
Imagine if he and I meet,  
Detained and chained for court,  
OK I'm white, yeah I said it, u' hum that's right,  
I'm the reason why refugee agencies began their fight,  
I'm a man-made problem I didn't appear overnight,  
And while I exist in this world  
You too will behold the plight,  
I'm Latino, see me no speak good English,  
But if immigration give me papers I do big business,  
I'm Asian, I'm here with an overwhelming population,  
I can't be defined by creed, race,  
Let alone occupation*

*Chorus*



*Walking to Kenya, by Ahmed Mohin, 14 year old Somali refugee from One day we had to run!*

# further information

## recommended books

### primary

Howard Davies & Jill Rutter *Kosovan Journeys – Refugee children tell their stories*

Max Velthuis *Frog and the Stranger* Milet 1993

### secondary

Jill Rutter *Refugees, we left because we had to* Refugee Council 2004

Benjamin Zephaniah *Refugee Boy* Bloomsbury 2001

### primary & secondary

Beverley Naidoo *Making It Home: real life stories from children forced to flee* Puffin 2004

Sybella Wilkes *One day we had to run* Evans Brothers, UNHCR & Save the Children 2000

## useful websites

Action for Children in Conflict

[www.actionchildren.org](http://www.actionchildren.org)

Amnesty International

[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

Asylum Aid

[www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk)

Commission for Racial Equality

[www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)

Home Office

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Human Rights Watch

[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

Independent Race and Refugee News Network

[www.irr.org.uk](http://www.irr.org.uk)

Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

[www.ippr.org](http://www.ippr.org)

Oxfam

[www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet)

Refugee Action

[www.refugee-action.org](http://www.refugee-action.org)

Refugee Council

[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

Refugee Week

[www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

Student Action For Refugees

[www.star-network.org.uk](http://www.star-network.org.uk)

United Nations Refugee Agency

[www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch)



Illustration: Peter Hay/One World Week

# about risc



## Reading International Solidarity Centre

### what does RISC do?

Our activities include:

- developing an urban roof garden for local & global education
- organising a programme of events & exhibitions on global issues & speakers from the 'South' (poor countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America)
- providing training for teachers & youth workers on development education resources
- producing resources such as teaching packs, AV aids & exhibitions for use by schools, &/or youth & community groups
- selling books & development education resources; fiction & non-fiction for children & adults on global issues
- promoting campaigns on local & international issues
- providing a loan service of artefacts & education packs for schools & youth workers
- selling Fair Trade, organic & environmentally friendly products, and world music CDs
- giving work experience opportunities for volunteers.

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