

Teaching Refugee and Asylum Seeker Pupils

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Many pupils learning English as an additional language come from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds. Some student teachers will meet learners from asylum-seeker and refugee backgrounds during their first teaching practice. An asylum-seeker is someone who has fled from his or her own country and is seeking refugee status in another country. In the UK, asylum-seekers are people who have requested asylum and are awaiting a Home Office decision as to whether they can remain. A person is recognised as a refugee (refugee status) if the Home Office decides that they meet the definition of a refugee in the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees. A person with refugee status is protected from being returned to their country of origin. In Britain, a person with refugee status is usually granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

“Newspapers and politicians say we should go home. Do you think that if our home was safe we would want to come here? No. We would be in our home. One day I hope to go home and build a place where homeless people can go.” Lindica, 14.

“ My message to the government is – take care of young people and help them and support them in their education; it’s very difficult without your family.” Bilal, 16

“ We want to get the message around – we don’t want to forget where we’re from – our background and tradition. We want to show other people about our traditions – our culture is not well known. We are part of something.” Hamida, 11

(LB. Newham Children’s Fund. (2002) *Dreams, Struggles and Survivors: Messages from Young Refugees*)

The National Curriculum is clear that teachers should plan for the diverse learning needs of pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, including refugees and asylum-seekers. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on all schools to promote equality of opportunity, tackle racial discrimination and promote good relations between different communities. Ofsted inspections have a focus on the inclusivity of schools and how they meet the needs of individual pupils, including those with an asylum-seeker or refugee background. In order to meet the QTS standards (TDA, 2007) tutors are asked to consider whether student teachers *‘successfully identify and address the needs of different learners, for examplethose for whom English is an additional language, and those from diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds (Q25)*. They are also required to show that they are *‘aware of the whole-school ethos and the policies, procedures and approaches relating to the range of factors that can affect learning and well-being’(Q18)*

It is likely that all student teachers will encounter refugee pupils at some point in their teaching career. They will therefore face certain challenges. These pupils may arrive during the school year and have to move again after a short time. They will have diverse backgrounds and needs, which will often include being new to schooling in the UK and needing to learn English. They and their families may also have complex needs related to immigration, housing and health that can also impact on their well-being and progress.

In this section, teacher educators will find guidance which highlights the key issues, good practice points, frequently asked questions and answers, and further readings

Section Editors and Authors

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Key Readings

Bolloten, B. (Ed.) (2004) *Home from Home: a guidance and resource pack for the welcome and inclusion of refugee children and families in school*. London : Salusbury WORLD/Save the Children.

DfES (2004) *Aiming High: Guidance on Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children*. London : DfES. Retrieved on 24th September, 2005, from:
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/links_and_publications/AH_Gdnc_AS_RFG_Apr04/asylumguidance.pdf

- A booklet from the DfES to support teachers in their work with asylum seeking and refugee children. It contains information ranging from the role of LEAs through to advice on supporting individual communities.

Hamilton, R. & Moore, D. (2004) *Educational Interventions for Refugee Children*. London : Routledge Falmer

National Union of Teachers (2002) *Relearning to Learn*. London : National Union of Teachers
 - This publication has been produced as part of the National Union of Teachers' Professional Development Programme. It offers advice to teachers new to teaching children from refugee and asylum-seeking families.

Ofsted (2003) *The education of asylum-seeker pupils*. London : Ofsted. Retrieved on 24th September, 2005 from:
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=3418>

- Ofsted report on their evaluation of the impact on schools of the arrival of asylum-seeker pupils.

QCA (2004) Pathways to learning for new arrivals
http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_7526.aspx

- An informative QCA site for teachers of international new arrivals including children from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. The site aims to help teachers respond to the needs of children newly arrived from overseas. It provides:

- background information on migration, countries of origin and children's rights and entitlements
- guidance for schools and teachers on promoting the educational achievement of newly arrived pupils
- case studies of good practice.

Rutter, J. (2003) *Supporting Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain - a compendium of essential information*. Stoke-on-Trent : Trentham Books

Online Resources

<http://www.asylumpolicy.info/>

Asylumpolicy.info is a free and indispensable source of up-to-date news and essential reading for all researchers and practitioners with an interest in asylum policy.

http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/Refugees_in_Britain/

The Guardian. An online archive of Guardian newspaper articles on refugees and asylum.

<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/>

Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate. Up-to-date information on asylum statistics and changes to asylum policy.

<http://www.icar.org.uk/>

Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK. ICAR is the only independent centre set up to collect, record, compile and disseminate up to date, comprehensive and academically credible information about refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. It aims to raise the level of public debate and to promote better understanding of the issues.

<http://www.irr.org.uk/asylum/index.html>

Institute of Race Relations. Reports and commentary on refugee and asylum issues from the Institute of Race Relations.

<http://www.scfuk.org.uk>

Save the Children UK

<http://www.teachers.tv>

Teachers TV hosts many programmes relating to refugees and asylum seekers. In particular Managing Inclusion Secondary - 'Removing Barriers to Learning'

<http://www.teachers.tv/video/2758> and 'Including Refugee Children'

<http://www.teachers.tv/video/2757>

<http://www.torturecare.org.uk>

Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture provides care and rehabilitation to survivors of torture and other forms of organised violence.

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>

The Refugee Council is the largest organisation in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees.

http://www.continyou.org.uk/what_we_do/children_and_young_people/supplementary_education

National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education The NRC has developed out of the Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother Tongue Schools. It provides training, consultancy, advice and support to supplementary schools and works to encourage constructive relationships between supplementary schools and the state education sector.

<http://www.unhcr.org.uk/index.html>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Website of the UN Refugee Agency

References and Further Readings

DfES (2003) *Working together: Connexions supporting young asylum seekers and refugees*. London : DfES / Save The Children UK. Retrieved on 24th September, 2005 from:

[http://www.connexions.gov.uk/partnerships/publications/uploads/cp/Asylum%20Seekers%20\(For%20Web\).pdf](http://www.connexions.gov.uk/partnerships/publications/uploads/cp/Asylum%20Seekers%20(For%20Web).pdf)

Kahin, M. (1997) *Educating Somali Children in Britain*. Stoke-on-Trent : Trentham Books

Rutter, J. & Jones, C. (Eds.) (1998) *Refugee Education: Mapping the Field*. Stoke-on-Trent : Trentham Books

Save the Children Scotland and Glasgow City Council Education Services (2002) *Starting Again - Young Asylum Seekers' Views on Life in Glasgow*. Glasgow : Save the Children Scotland.

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