



BEYOND BORDERS

a toolkit of creative and participatory
approaches for exploring refuge and migration
issues in secondary school classrooms

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galwayowc.org





"We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome...all, all, all.

We all belong to this family, this human family ... and all of us are given the task of trying to make this world a little more hospitable to these beautiful things."

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Painting: Gaza Children's Dance (2019) by Palestinian artist, Malak Mattar

Galway One World Centre has been designing and delivering workshops and educational materials for schools, youth and community groups for almost 30 years. Our work addresses a range of global justice issues, including root causes of global inequality, refuge and migration, human rights, debt, trade and tax justice and anti-racism perspectives.

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INTRODUCTION

This resource has been written in the context of a profound humanitarian crisis. In June 2018, the UNHCR released figures showing an increase of 2.9 million people who had been forced to flee their country to find safety – the biggest rise in a single year in the history of the organisation. The report also revealed that while the vast majority have taken refuge in neighbouring states, like Uganda, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Bangladesh, only 100,000 were resettled in wealthier countries of the Global North, a drop of 40%. How do we, as educators, respond to this?

This pack aims to provide a range of creative and active learning methodologies for teachers wishing to explore some of the complex and heartrending issues around refuge and forced migration with students. We acknowledge that these issues are difficult and may be contentious, and that sensitivity is required when using them in the classroom, or in any educational context. However, we are also working from a sense of urgency and solidarity, and a belief that ignorance and silence are not valid options in the face of such a crisis.

The pack contains some background information and a selection of activities that reflect our commitment to the use of participatory and creative approaches to help engage young people with these complex and sensitive subjects.

We have attempted to provide a balanced range of activities to explore these questions from *Head, Heart and Hand* perspectives, providing information to help combat myths and stereotypes and to deepen our understanding of the issues, as well as opportunities to explore some of the feelings and emotions that arise, and, crucially, to consider some solidarity actions that have been undertaken by students.

It's hoped that this resource will be useful for teachers new to Education for Global Citizenship/ Development Education, as well as those already deeply engaged with the issues.

Irish Aid defines development education as, “an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation by enabling learners to recognise the interconnected nature of their lives and the lives of people in the developing world.”

[Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017 – 2023]

Galway One World Centre defines Global Justice Education/Development Education as a process that

- Addresses the **root causes** of global poverty, inequality, conflict, and sustainability issues
- Assumes a level of **interconnectedness** – and therefore involves an analysis of **power**
- Builds **critical awareness**, recognising and learning from **diverse voices and forms of knowledge**
- Encourages **informed solidarity action**

Dealing with “Sensitive Issues”

Reflections and suggestions for educators:

Virtually every teaching resource produced on the theme of refuge and asylum contains a line that urges educators to show ‘sensitivity’ in approaching these issues, particularly if there are children and young people from refugee backgrounds in the class. However, it can be difficult to find elaboration on what this actually means in practice. Of course, there is no definitive answer to this, but we offer some reflections here as part of an ongoing dialogue and learning process.

- In general, it is advised to maintain a focus on narratives within the broader society, rather than asking young people to state and defend their personal views on controversial issues (or those they might hear at home), and to focus on what we can learn about structural issues, and the potential for structural changes.
- We suggest rooting the activities in a values-based context, such a human rights framework. Some foundational work, such as the development of a class charter, can help to build trust in the compassion, empathy and sensitivity of the students themselves. Awareness and acknowledgment of universal human rights provides support, structure, and a lens to discuss issues characterised by profound inequalities.
- Building safety with distance: Issues around the ‘refugee crisis’ can initially be approached at a distance from contemporary realities. Creating temporal distance by looking at previous waves of forced migration and the responses to them [see the activities on Nora’s Case, or the Evian Conference, for example] allows students to clarify and anchor their shared values, before addressing the current crisis.
- When addressing contemporary situations, teachers should aim to externalise the stories and experiences, so that the focus is *never* placed on an individual child in the class to share their personal experiences (unless they freely choose to.)

Caoimhe Butterly is an educator, trauma therapist in training, and a life-long peace and justice activist. She is involved in refugee, undocumented and migrant support initiatives in Ireland, Greece, Lebanon and France. She offers the following observations and suggestions:

These conversations may bring us into territory that is new to us, and to the students. ‘Dealing sensitively’ means creating conditions of empowerment where conversations can be honest (and mediated if they need to be.) If we build a culture of trust, dialogue, and horizontal communication in the classroom, students will have a language to express and deal with issues of real importance in their lives and in society.

Focus on strengths, rather than victimhood. Do not define young people by their trauma. In our concern around sensitivity, we may lose sight of the fact that oftentimes children have survived a lot more than we perhaps understand, and that they are typically very resilient and very resourceful people, deserving of acknowledgment of their strength, as well as vulnerabilities.

More broadly, ensure that the stories we explore include young people’s narratives of resilience, courage, and survival, and importantly, that we extend those stories beyond survival, to take in the contribution they make to their new homes and communities.

As part of their journeys, some children end up functioning as translators or interpreters for their parents and family members. Educators should be mindful not to position children as intermediaries between school or services, social supports or protection systems, and parents. Instead, if needs be, schools should advocate for social care workers to be assigned to families to do that work (instead of leaving it to the child.)

Find ways to inform ourselves and to develop more nuanced, in-depth awareness of the diversity and complexity of the geographical and political contexts the children and young people in our schools are originating from. Avoid essentialist or homogenised notions of ‘culture’. There is a myriad of cultures in every classroom, and a rich diversity of contexts children come from.

Hold a space for cultural sensitivity along with a recognition that children and families will almost certainly practice their faith or express their culture in their own unique fashion. Some families may find their practices change in their new home, and may feel differently about this. Hold space for the diversity of expressions that exists in daily life, even amongst people who are of the same cultural or religious background, and from the same geographical space. We can learn to broaden our lenses to recognise the multiple cultures that exist in any community - we are already familiar with diversity in Ireland, even from county to county. Remember that whatever we learn about ‘a culture’ is secondary to the kaleidoscope of individual, family, and community experiences and forms of expression.

Families and young people may feel and deal differently with discussions relating to refuge and migration in the school. Donnah Vuma founded the group *Every Child Is Your Child* to support families and children in Direct Provision, and facilitated young people living in DP to communicate their experiences at MASI’s conference, *Towards A More Humane Asylum Process*, in October 2019. She sets out some suggestions for educators:

- Before undertaking an activity about Direct Provision, if possible, have a quick discussion with parents and the child to find out if they are comfortable with the discussion, and if not, offer an alternative space for them for that class. If a child is exposed to particularly negative or conservative opinions it can have an impact on them, and their relationships, and can change the way they view their peers.
- If there is a child in class who is living in Direct Provision, the issues should be generalised as much as possible. [Never ask children to inform or educate others about their experiences of Direct Provision.]
- Highlight aspects that are not linked to personal details - such as the length of time people are forced to spend in DP, or the remote locations that make it difficult to engage in activities and the life of the local community, rather than dwelling on personal details such as teenagers often being forced to share bedrooms with parents or siblings.
- Have a structural analysis and build a sense of solidarity: Make connections between Direct Provision and other issues that affect the wider population. People experiencing homelessness face very similar issues to people living in Direct Provision and Emergency Accommodation. The discrimination, segregation and stereotypes faced by members of the Traveller community are familiar to people in the asylum system.

For further information:

Guidance On Working With Refugee Children Struggling With Stress and Trauma.
UNHCR (2019) <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/59d346de4>

Teaching Controversial Issues Through Human Rights.
Council of Europe (2016) <https://rm.coe.int/16806948b6>

Subject and Curriculum Links:

The activities and links in this toolkit are ideally suited to a range of Junior Cycle subjects, particularly English, RE, CSPE, Geography, Art and History, as well as Transition Year units. The activities may also be suitable for Senior Cycle classes using more in-depth questions and analysis.

While the activities in this pack may be used in a wide variety of educational contexts, the activities align closely to the Junior Cycle Key Skills and Statements of Learning (SOL) and the CSPE Short Course on Global Citizenship, in particular SOL 5 – 10:

SOL 5: The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision-making.

SOL 6: The student appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives.

SOL 7: The student values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts.

SOL 8: The student values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change.

SOL 9: The student understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him (SOL 9).

SOL 10: The student has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably.

Source: Department of Education and Skills (DES)

Teachers may also find the activities helpful in the journey to fulfil their WorldWise Global Schools Passport. More information on the work of WWGS and the range of supports available for teachers and schools who wish to begin or deepen their engagement with Education for Global Citizenship can be found at www.worldwiseschools.ie



Photo: Moria Camp, Greece. The camp has capacity for 3,000 people, but over 19,000 are stranded there living in tents and shipping containers.



DEVELOPING A SUPPORTIVE SPACE: Creating a Human Rights class charter

Activity: Creating a Human Rights Charter for the Class

This plan was developed by secondary school teacher and poet, Elaine Feeney to provide a foundation for work on the issues addressed in this pack.

Aim: To build an agreed charter of Class Rights and Responsibilities.

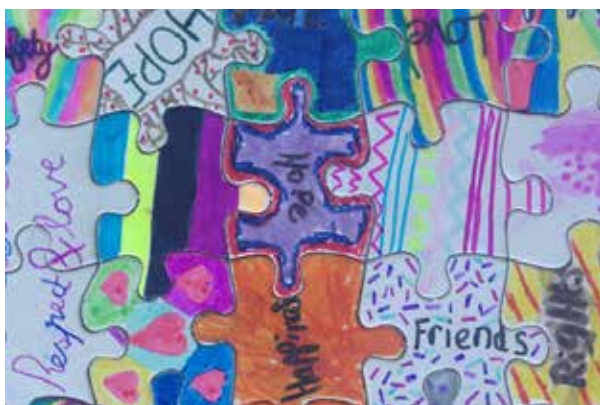
Learning Outcomes:

- Establish boundaries and make the classroom a safer space for discussion and exploration of migration issues, encompassing diverse viewpoints.
- Demonstrate and experience how democratic processes work.
- Provide experience of agreement on fundamental values, whilst acknowledging diversity and difference.
- To engage with and learn about equality frameworks such as the Equal Status Act and UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Time: 120 minutes

Preparation / Warm-Ups

- Pre-teach main tenets of Equal Status Act and the nine grounds for protection from discrimination and/or the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Use the Human Rights matching cards in this pack or find examples at www.un.org
- Spread out a selection of photographs, postcards, or a development education photopack. Invite each student to select an image that represents something to them about the theme of *Inclusion, Equality, Human Rights, Dignity* or *Diversity*. In small groups, each student explains their selection.



Developing a Human Rights Charter:

1. Working individually, provide sheets of paper for each student to write about what they think is a very positive aspect to the classroom as it currently stands.
2. Take feedback, noting all ideas on the board, and take a photo of it for later use.
3. Next, give time for students to consider and write down what is not working in the class at present. Prompt questions could include:
 - Have you ever felt unsafe or silenced?
 - Do you feel valued?
 - Are there words used that you find offensive (to you, or to other students) and why?
 - Are there words you would ban from the classroom?
 - What is the very basic standard of respect that your classroom should reflect?
4. Feedback from this second reflective activity should be anonymous. End the lesson here. Take the feedback and type up for the following session.

In the next lesson, display both positive and negative feedback, ensuring that the individual submissions are anonymous.

- Working in groups of four, discuss each point. Encourage the students to consider the points from the perspective of someone from a different background.
- Ask the groups to sum up by writing down what they consider fundamental to a safe, welcoming and inclusive classroom, and take feedback from each of the groups.
- Facilitate the class to prioritise the points - this could be done by writing individual points on pieces of A4 card and ranking them as a group. Use these to draw up your charter for the class.
- Create and display an illustrated poster (using collage, drawing, computer graphics, or whatever approach is favoured by the group) and display in the class.
- Refer back to the charter regularly for review.

Teachers Notes: “This is a very worthwhile activity and can be challenging. I would approach it after a ‘settling in’ period early in the year. Areas around sexuality and culture can be challenging in class conversation, so these will need to be well managed by the teacher, without judgment, almost as an observer or chair, whilst also being mindful of hate speech.

I have always found dialogue to be the best practice. It is important that all students feel included, and it is also important to include in the process of developing your class charter, time and safety for robust and honest dialogue. So much of what we experience in the classroom, (like name-calling, discrimination etc.) comes from fear. When it is recognised, people can move forward.” (Feeney, 2018)



WORDS COUNT: Understanding language and terminology

The terminology associated with refuge and migration can be complex, and sometimes confusing. We've attempted to provide simple definitions below, to begin a deeper conversation about the power to impose labels, and the dehumanising impact they can sometimes have.

Around the world, over 70.7 million people have been displaced from their villages, towns, cities and even their countries by war, conflict, and persecution. For every one of these people, it was a life-changing event. In daily life, we may hear some terms to describe forced displacement being used interchangeably (such as 'refugee' and 'migrant') but these definitions are significant in terms of the legal and human rights (or lack of rights) that go with them.

"Under international law it is not an option to assist refugees, it is an obligation."

- UN High Commission for Refugees

Aim: To clarify language and terminology used to describe migration and displacement. To consider the significance and impact of different terms, and the power dynamics behind labels.

Materials: Copies of the definitions sheet, one per group

Time: 40 minutes

Subjects: Geography, English, RE, CSPE, TY

Process: Working in small groups each group takes a definition sheet.

Share out the terms and take turns to read them out, and to figure out the corresponding definition.

Words Count: Definition Sheet

This is a collection of terms often used to describe the journeys people undertake for safety. Match each term to the correct definition.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Persecution | 6. Internally Displaced Person |
| 2. Refugee | 7. Unaccompanied Child |
| 3. Migration | 8. Undocumented |
| 4. Asylum Seeker | 9. Fortress Europe |
| 5. Direct Provision | |

- a.** An expression describing the physical borders and the legal barriers that people - especially people from the 'Developing World'/Global South - may face trying to enter this region. Over 22,000 people lost their lives trying to enter this region between 2000-2014.
- b.** A general term usually used to describe movement to another place or country for a variety of reasons (e.g. employment, studies, a relationship, new opportunities...) Usually associated with choosing to move, rather than being forced to.
- c.** Harassment, harm, or oppression that is aimed at an individual or group because of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, political opinion, membership of a trade union or other social group.
- d.** A person who is forced to leave their home country and to seek safety in another country because of persecution.
- e.** This term refers to a child (a person under the age of 18) who is seeking safety in another country and is without their parents or caregivers. More than half the world's refugees are children.
- f.** Relates to a person who lacks the required visas or permits to work, study, or reside in a country, or whose documents may have expired. People in this situation are sometimes referred to as 'irregular' migrants or 'illegal' migrants - however this term is resisted by migrant rights campaigners who point out that no human being is 'illegal'.
- g.** A person who has been forced to flee from their home country to find safety and has made an official application in another country asking the government to grant them protection.
- h.** A person who is forced to leave home and to move to another part of their country because of war, conflict, persecution, environmental disasters, famine, food shortages, or other reasons.
- i.** The system put in place by the Irish government to house people seeking asylum. The system provides basic accommodation and meals and a small weekly allowance. People's right to work and education may be limited or denied while they are in this system.

ANSWERS: 1-c 2-d 3-b 4-b 5-i 6-h 7-e 8-f 9-a

Take feedback from the groups to see if they agree on the definition of the terms,

- Who decides who will, or won't, be defined as a 'refugee'? Is the definition fixed, or can it change?
- When does someone who came to a new country to seek safety cease to be labelled as a refugee?
- Seeking asylum is a legal process. In law, the principle of 'innocent until proven guilty' usually applies. Do you think that this is assumed for people in the asylum system?

The term *asylum* comes from the Greek word for 'home'. *Refugee* comes from the French word *réfugier*, meaning 'to flee'.

Key distinctions in terminology:

People become **displaced** for a variety of reasons, and they seek safety in a variety of ways.

If we move within our country to seek safety, we are referred to as "**Internally Displaced People**" (IDPs). If we cross an international border to find safety in another country because we are not safe at home, we become "**refugees.**" If we apply to the government of the host country for recognition of our rights as refugees, we are referred to as "**asylum seekers**".

These are technical terms that say little about the individual crises, trauma, and challenges that people encounter along their journeys, but they are significant in terms of the rights - or lack of - attached to them.

To be a refugee is a legal status. Refugees come under the protection of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), while Internally Displaced Persons do not gain any additional rights, as they are still under the jurisdiction of their own governments.

"The overwhelming majority of internally displaced persons are women and children who are especially at risk of abuse of their basic rights. More often than refugees, internally displaced persons tend to remain close to, or become trapped in, zones of conflict, caught in the crossfire and at risk of being used as pawns, targets or human shields by the belligerents."

- *ohchr.org*

Further Information:

People have been forced to seek refuge since time immemorial, and the definition of what it means to be a refugee is not fixed but is constantly evolving. The modern legal definition of a refugee began to be formed in the 19th Century, and following the Second World War the international community introduced legal protection for refugees in the wake of the horrors of the Holocaust – where Jewish and other groups facing persecution by the Nazis struggled to find countries that would allow them to enter.

The United Nations (UN) Refugee Convention of 1951 was initially only intended to protect Europeans, and only for the years after WWII when there were about 40 million people displaced. Later these rights and protections were extended universally (to protect all people) and the Convention has now been signed by over 150 countries.

Today, the Convention guarantees all of us the right to see safety from persecution in another country, if we need to. This law defines a refugee as someone at risk of a “well-founded fear of persecution” on the grounds of their ethnicity, religion, nationality, political opinions, or membership of a particular group.

A person seeking asylum must demonstrate that they faced persecution for one of these reasons and were not protected from this harm in their own country. This can be very difficult to prove. Despite the fact that all asylum decisions rest on this, there is no internationally agreed definition of what “persecution” actually means. The term is therefore subject to a variety of interpretations and inconsistencies.

The notion of ‘persecution’ is evolving, and with it the definition of refuge changes too. Growing awareness of gender-based violence, and of the oppression faced by LGBT people in some countries has also led to a shift in understanding of who faces persecution and has led to great recognition of people’s rights to asylum on those grounds. Some argue that ‘climate refugees’ should be recognised, when they are displaced by catastrophic changes to their environment for which they have no responsibility.

In Ireland, people are usually housed in Direct Provision while their application for asylum is assessed. Ireland refuses a large number of applications at first instance, and this requires people to go through a lengthy appeals process, sometimes taking years to have their claim for asylum recognised. If a person is not recognised as a refugee (the legal parameters are very narrow) they may still be granted subsidiary protection, or the right to remain on humanitarian grounds.

Up till 2016 Ireland had one of the highest level of refusals for asylum seekers in the EU, turning down more than 90 percent of those who arrived here seeking refuge.

www.independent.ie/irish-news/ireland-refuses-asylum-to-90pc-of-applicants-35229842.html

All of us are descended from migrants.

**Even if you live today in the Rift Valley, in Africa,
mother continent to us all, on the site of the earliest
discovered remains of our species, your ancestors too
moved - they left, changed, and intermingled before
returning to the place you live now.**

-Moshin Hamid

www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2019/08/we-all-are-migrants-in-the-21st-century/



BELONGING: Exploring our sense of home and identity

Activity: So, Where Are You From?

Time: 20 minutes +

Aim: To open discussion and raise awareness of diverse identities and experiences.

People often expect a simple answer to the question, “Where do you come from?” but the answer may be complex. Our response may depend on who’s asking, and why? How comfortable we feel and how likely our answers are to be accepted? Is it a question on an official form that may determine our future? Or is it being asked by a potential friend? And even then, our answers may not meet with some people’s expectations...

Approach: Working individually, consider how you answer these questions, and how your answers might change depending on who is asking, and why?

Where are you from? Is it about your...

- County of birth?
- Where you grew up?
- The country you live in?
- Passport, if you have one?
- Citizenship?
- Ethnicity?
- Language(s) you speak?
- Your parent’s nationality/nationalities?
- Where you feel you belong?
- Something else?

Reflect on how your answers might change in different circumstances:

- If the person asking wants to be friends - or is looking for a reason to exclude.
- At passport control, or if stopped by the police.
- If the person is sitting behind a desk considering your application for a job, or a visa.
- Or deciding if you qualify for a place in college.
- Or treatment in hospital.

How do you answer the question when you feel safe and secure?

Share your thoughts in small groups and then with the class.

Activity: The Look of the Irish

Aim: To challenge assumptions and prejudice and open a discussion on how we think about Irish identity.

Materials: Video projector, and poster-making materials

Time: 30 minutes

What is 'Irishness'? And what do you think it looks like?

Watch "*What Does 'Irishness' Look Like?*", a six-minute video directed by Ola Macedonia, based on personal stories from 15 Irish people who are often questioned about their identity. www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqWKR7eq-CQ

Discussion prompts:

- The young people in the video suggest there is no one way to 'look Irish'. What do you think? Who gets to decide?
- On Curiosity: The first speaker says, "Is Eireanach mé...One of the first things they'll ask me is where I'm from. And the second thing they'll ask me is where I'm *really* from." This is a familiar experience for many people who do not fit the stereotype of what 'Irish' looks like. How do you think it might feel to encounter that question so frequently? Often people defend the, 'but where are you *really* from' question by saying it's just an expression of 'curiosity'. This is probably true in many cases, but is it still 'curiosity' if the questioner refuses to believe the answer they're given, and continues to push and repeat the question? Are they perhaps demanding the answer they *expect*, rather than respecting the answer being offered to them? What's the underlying message?

**"Where are you from?" starts to sound like,
"where are you supposed to be instead?"**

- Make note of one or two points that stand out for you and discuss them in small groups.
- Create a poster, using words and images to note your 3 key points of learning or questions from your discussion for the class.
- Share the posters in a World Café format, making time for questions, responses and reflections.

End the session by watching this UNHCR video featuring a number of people who have made their home in Ireland: "Ireland Is More Home Than Any Place In the World" (UNHCR Ireland, 2019) www.facebook.com/UNHCRireland/videos/278433286393612

Activity: No Place Like Home

Materials: Post-its (or pieces of scrap paper and blutack), markers

Subjects: English, RE, Wellbeing, TY.

Time: 40 minutes



This activity builds on the themes of home and belonging, going beyond the idea of a geographical space, and provides the opportunity for sharing different perspectives on this key aspect of personal identity and wellbeing. It aims to:

- Reflect on the meaning of home and belonging, personally and for others.
- Build empathy for people displaced from home and recognise the courage and resilience required to move and rebuild a sense of belonging.
- Consider how everyone can contribute to making the school and community more welcoming and supportive.

This topic requires sensitivity as it may raise personal issues for young people in the class.

**“If I could be anywhere I would be home.
The trouble is home doesn’t even know I exist”**

- Ade Nouk, Sudanese poet

Visual Arts/Photography Activity

Materials:

Post-its (or pieces of scrap paper and blutack) and markers.

Collection/basket of random objects (at least one per person) for selection by participants. (Useful items could include: lego, some wool/yarn, thread, buttons, scraps of fabric, magazines for cutting up, pen, crayons, eraser, birthday candles, pasta pieces, small jar of lentils, phone charger, some toys, torch, clock, radio, paintbrush, book, clothes pegs, a map, spoon, postcard, stamps, coins, a small plant, flowers, sticks, leaves, shells, stones, decorations (e.g. a star), a feather, bus ticket. Literally anything)

Subjects: English, Wellbeing, RE.

Time: 80 minutes

Distribute post-its/pieces of paper and markers (if needed).

Opening Discussion

Write the word 'Home' on the board or on a large sheet. Explain that we want to explore the notion of 'home'. Encourage creative thinking and ask if it is just a physical place, or if 'home' means more than that?

Working individually at first, ask the students to reflect and record their ideas on the post-its.

Invite creative responses: they can use single words, a sentence, an image, symbol, line from a song. They might mention objects, memories, an emotion, a taste, smell or sound... Everyone will have their own ideas and perception of Home, and their own way of conveying it.

- Form small groups to share and discuss ideas (as they feel comfortable). Write each word on a post-it.
- Then collect the post-its and read them out as you place their ideas around the word 'Home'.
- Invite observations from the whole group before moving on to a creative response.

Creative Response Option 1: Found Object Fonts



Found-Object Font created by 3rd years: "We think of home as being about...family traditions, the people you celebrate with, our connection to the land, nature, the food that reminds you of your family, and a patchwork made of different patterns."

Working in groups of 4, ask the groups to create the word 'Home' or 'Belong,' or any related word of their choice (or, perhaps in another language) using found objects to create each of the letters.

Take photographs of the finished work and make time for each group to explain how each letter relates to the overall theme.

- Are there any common elements, symbols, or concepts that emerge?
- Are there any that particularly resonate with you?
- Can you see connections between the objects you chose and your understanding of home, or belonging?

Activity: Belonging Together

Materials:

Post-its (or pieces of scrap paper and blutack) and markers.
Blank jigsaws (optional)

Subjects: English, Wellbeing, RE.

Time: 40 minutes

There are many situations that can affect our sense of belonging. Seek examples from the group (for example, starting at a new school, moving home, changes in our families, or coming to a new country).

How do people build, or rebuild, the feeling of *belonging* in a new place or new home?

- Create a line on the wall, with the word 'Belonging' at one end and 'Not Belonging' at the other end.
- Begin by expanding what each term means, using word association for each. Add these to each card. (For example: Belonging - feeling safe, connected, accepted. Not Belonging - alone, ignored, rejected.)
- Working individually, invite the students to write thoughts and ideas about what makes a person feel like they Belong or Don't Belong in a place, school, or community. Use a separate post-it or sheet for each idea and aim to create at least two for each category.
- Invite the students to place their words on the line, positioning their ideas along the line, according to whether they strongly influence a sense of belonging/not belonging (placed at either end of the line), or are more neutral (in the middle).

Encourage the students to look at others' ideas as they add their own. Note that some ideas might be repeated but positioned at different places on the line. Discuss these differences in perspective.

When the line is completed read out some of the contributions, starting at those that give us a strong sense of belonging and working down to those that give the strongest sense of not belonging, at the opposite end of the line.

Staying at the 'Not Belong' end of the line ask students if they can think of things they could do (actions, responses, support etc.) to turn some of those 'Not Belong' feelings into a greater sense of connection, and move them further up the line.

- Explore ideas together about how to deepen our sense of belonging. Acknowledge that a person in a new place might have a range of feelings from curiosity and openness, to vulnerability and loneliness. Invite thoughts on what might influence a person's capacity to deal with new situations.
- Do another round, asking students to think of ways they could personally help someone to feel closer to 'Belonging'. Note that most of the ideas are easy to do, and cost nothing (smiling at someone, including them, reaching out...). Are there any 'big ideas' that could help people to feel connected, and do we have power to help make those changes happen?

Close with a Jigsaw activity.

Visual Art Activity: Jigsaws

Materials: Blank jigsaw pieces (one each), markers/colouring pencils.

Time: 10 minutes + feedback

- Giving each student a square from a blank jigsaw and invite them to write down their favourite idea for helping everyone to enjoy a sense of belonging (and decorate it if there's time.)
- Go around the class to hear each person's suggestion and add each piece to form the jigsaw.
- Finish by asking if the jigsaw itself has meaning for them about belonging, and how we create welcoming spaces.



Creative Writing Activity: Flash Fiction / Poem

Materials: Pens and paper

Time: 40 – 80 minutes

Share an *I Am From...* poem with the class (see examples below) and invite the students to create a similar piece based on personal reflections and contributions.

Building on the group activities about 'home' and 'belonging', invite the class to make personal mind maps about what makes up the elements of their 'home'. They could be guided by (but not limited to) the headings below:

- Familiar experiences or rituals from everyday life with your family or school.
- A typical day in your life / in your home.
- Favourite childhood games or toys or activities.
- Favourite foods, these can be 'ordinary' meals, or treats.
- Features, landmarks or small details from your area and community.
- Proverbs or family sayings that you've heard, repeated.
- Loved ones, family, friends, trusted people.
- Pet names and nicknames for grandparents or other family members and friends.
- Other significant influences on your life – writers, musicians, actors, activists etc.
- The everyday details of sports, or faith, or any other important part of your life.
- Any tiny details that no-one else might notice but mean 'home' to you.

Remind the students to consider how they will make their audience see, hear, and taste their sense of home and to build texture and depth in their writing by exploring their senses, and using names and rich detail of places and people. Encourage them to take risks with their writing rather than remaining in a rut of the familiar.

George Ella Lyons' poem, "I Am From" has been the inspiration for numerous student projects. Her work in turn, was inspired by Jo Carson and her collection of 'People Pieces': *Stories I Ain't Told Nobody Yet* (Orchard Books, 1989; Theatre Communications Group, 1991). Carson bases each of the pieces, "on things folks actually said," and addresses questions like, "I want to know when you get to be from a place, if you're one of those people, "that doesn't have roots like tree."

This guide describes a set of activities based on the poem "Where I'm From," written by George Ella Lyon in 1993. <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>. Full instructions for a similar project can be found at: https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/I_Am_From_Faculty_Guide.pdf

Using the mind-maps as a starting point, ask the students to focus on 3 or 4 elements and make sentences from them, beginning, "I am from..."

Invite students to volunteer to display or read their work, or to have it read aloud to the group.

- What strikes you about the contributions. Do any lines stand out for you?
- Do you notice any similarities or differences? What details feel familiar, or new and different to yours?
- How did you find the experience of writing your individual sentences and reading them?
- Has your perception of home or belonging changed or developed? Have you learned anything new through the process of writing, and of hearing other's ideas?

Collaborative Poem Carousel:

The next step is to build a collaborative poem, drawing on some of the lines that emerged in the previous section.

- Form small groups. See if there are any common themes that could be grouped or amalgamated into one line. Pick one or two lines, or segment of a line, from each person to create a short first draft of your contribution to the "We Are From" class poem. Join and weave the sentences, so that "I am from..." becomes, "We are from..."
- Try to retain the essence of each individual's contribution, even if it is changed, shortened or amalgamated with another sentence. Try to ensure that you capture the differences as well as the similarities in your experiences – it doesn't matter if some of the sentences appear contradictory. Think how to bring more texture to the writing, enhancing descriptions with specific detail and images from your senses.
- When each group has completed their segment, invite them to read aloud one after another, for an impromptu performance. Alternatively, develop the work further by asking each group to join with another to create a longer segment from their two draft pieces, amalgamating their work in the same way as before.
- Now, take a reading from each of these groups to hear how the final collaborative poem sounds. Share suggestions about how to refine the piece further. Look, for example, at ways of enhancing the imagery, or the pacing of the piece. If necessary, the teacher can take time to edit the final piece and present it again to the group in the next session, or inviting the students to read it aloud.
- Reflect on the process of combining the individual lines and experiences to create a collective piece. Can you still find the essence of your original words, images, and ideas in the collective version? Does it reflect the diversity of your community?

Read an example of a collaborative poem such as *My City*, co-created by a group of young adults who came unaccompanied to the UK and have used reflective writing as a way of exploring their feelings and experiences (as part of the Becoming Adult Project). Reflect on the elements these young people chose to include to evoke a sense of belonging in a new place and new, often very difficult, circumstances. What does the poem tell you about what 'home' means to them, and the challenges and supports they encounter?

**My city is
Full of my dreams
City is not a city
when there is not enough peace and freedom
My city is fighting against hate
My city is
Loving my family
You're my brother
You're my family
My community
My city is my home
Where I live
This is my home**

Acknowledge that the line between choosing to move, and being forced, is not clear cut. Peoples' choices can be diminished by events beyond their control, such as a down-turn in the economy leading to unemployment.

Invite the group to contribute lines to form a group poem.

Extension Activities:

Digital Media: Create videos of the poems using students' photographs of the locality, or still-life images. Think about the framing of the images (e.g. experiment with close-ups of everyday objects, for example.)

Poetry: Explore examples of poems that address the question of home and, '*Where I Come From*', in the context of forced migration, like this one by Syrian poet Amir Darwish, or Wang Ping, below.

**From the womb of the Mediterranean I come
From a mental scar
From closed borders
From a camp with a thousand tents...**

www.orient-news.net/en/news_show/118333/0/Where-I-come-from-A-poem-on-refugees-by-Syrian-poet-Amir-Darwish

Things We Carry On The Sea, by Wang Ping.

**We carry soil in small bags: may home never fade in our hearts
We carry names, stories, memories of our villages, fields, boats...**

**“We are from a small town with a big heart.
From Granny, Nana, Uma’s hugs on a sunny morning.
We are from fights over who gets to sit in the front seat, fights over the remote, fights over anything.
We are from a place where cars stop in the middle of the road for a chat.
From every kind of music playing in the house, every day that we can remember.
Fiddle, violin, cello, guitar, drums, accordion, and our own voices.
We are from freezing legs on a Saturday morning in the middle of winter, waiting for the final whistle.
We are from football training, and swimming, and camogie, and basketball, and hurling,
And from no sports at all, but we’ll cheer from the side-lines.
We are from summers at the beach, building castles and channels to the sea.
Jumping from the pier and shivering all the way home.
Gathering shells, stones, small treasures in a blue plastic bucket.
We are from the city that our parents thought was too big and busy to bring up a family.
We are from the roots we put down.
We are from the tiny flowers that grow between cracks in the stones.
From speaking one language in our dreams, and another at school.
One language with our mum, and another with our dad, and skipping between them.
We are from not knowing where we fit in, but always looking.
We are from somewhere safe.”**

Collaborative poem by TY Students, County Galway



INVISIBLE LINES: Mapping boundaries and borders

These activities open a discussion about the concept and role of boundaries, walls, and borders, and looks at the impact they have locally and globally.

Fortress Europe: In the 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, 1000 km of borders have been erected and fortified, in 10 of the 28 EU states.

Activity: Mapping Our Communities

Aim: To begin exploring concepts of boundaries in our communities.

Subjects: Geography, Art, English

Materials: Paper, drawing or collage materials, or a selection of empty boxes and materials such as newspaper/magazines, wool or fabric.

Time: 90 minutes

This is a creative approach to begin exploring the concepts of *borders*, *home*, *community*, *exclusion* and *belonging*. It can also be a rich source of dialogue and exchange for diverse groups that may include newcomers to the community.

Using large sheets of paper and markers (or the scrap/collage materials to create a more fluid map), invite the groups to draw/create maps of the local community. Ask what features are typically indicated on maps. Then encourage the students to include places of interest and features that have relevance to their own lives.

Allow time to add more details to the map. Encourage the class to move beyond mapping traditional physical features, and to consider some of the following:

- What places do you go most frequently?
- Where do you feel safe, welcome and secure?
- Where might you feel less comfortable?
- Are there places or areas you avoid?
- Are there things (e.g. facilities, types of spaces) you would like to see added to, or taken away from, your community?
- What kind of boundaries do you notice in the community? Some will be obvious, like county boundaries, or town boundaries, but some may be less obvious.
- Why are boundaries important? What makes a boundary positive or negative, in your opinion?

For example:

- boundaries between public and private spaces.
 - some spaces that might be welcoming or unwelcoming to certain groups.
 - areas and spaces that are accessible, or inaccessible to some.
 - places that change depending on the context, or even the time of day? (Places that would be avoided after dark, for example).
-
- Would everyone feel the same way about the community? Why? Could someone's age, ethnicity, skin colour, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability affect the places they can safely go, and feel included?
 - Who should have the power to decide who can come or go, or feel safe and welcome in the community?
 - Are there any borders that could also be marked on your map? For example, are you aware of how the national border determines who can come and go in your community, or freely come into the country or into Europe?

Think of 3 things that would make the community a safer and more inclusive place for everyone, and mark these on your map.

Allow time for the groups to see each other's maps, and to share their key observations.

Take note of all the suggestions for building a more inclusive community. Invite the group to identify the most important proposals, and to consider actions they could take to support these ideas.

Creative Writing Activity:

Time: 40 minutes

Subjects: English, RE, TY.

Pick a place on the map that is significant to you in some way – that holds a strong memory, or you have a strong association with. On a post-it, write about it in a couple of lines, maybe beginning with the words like, “This is where...”, “This place reminds me of...”, or, “What this place means to me is...” Fold the paper and attach it to the spot on your map.

Exchange maps with another group, and take some time looking at their representation of the community and taking turns to read their written pieces aloud to your small group.

- What strikes you about this map?
- Is there something you'd like to ask the mapmakers and learn more about?

- Have you learned something new about your community from looking at their map?
- Have you heard any new ideas that you'd also like to see happen in your community?
- What actions could the group take to support the realisation of those ideas?

Follow up / Extension Activities:

Creative Writing: Select and combine some of the most striking 'This is where...' statements to create a slide show, or a group piece, to accompany the visual map work.

Photography: Take some photographs, or find images online, of boundaries or borders in your community. Ask each person to submit two for slide show – one visible boundary, and one invisible. Invite reflections on the process of making the images.

Digital Storytelling: Combine two activities above, blending images/photographs with 'This is where...' lines to create a short narrated/captioned video about the diversity of the community.

“Why are there so many straight lines in Africa?”

-1st year student

Mapping the Impact of Separation Walls and Borders: Research Project

How are borders formed between nations? Invite the group to think of examples of 'natural' borders – such as mountains, rivers, oceans, forests, and deserts. The boundary between France and Spain, for example, traces the crest of the Pyrenees.

Look at a map of the world and compare the borders of countries in Africa and Europe. Do you notice any differences? Many of the countries that we see on today's maps are relatively recent creations, whose borders were drawn by colonial rulers in their own interests, and with little regard for the people and communities living there. The partition of Ireland and of India are just two examples where borders created, or contributed to, long-running conflicts. More recently, since the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, 1000 km of borders have been erected and fortified, in 10 of the 28 EU states.

Activity: Borders and Walls Research project

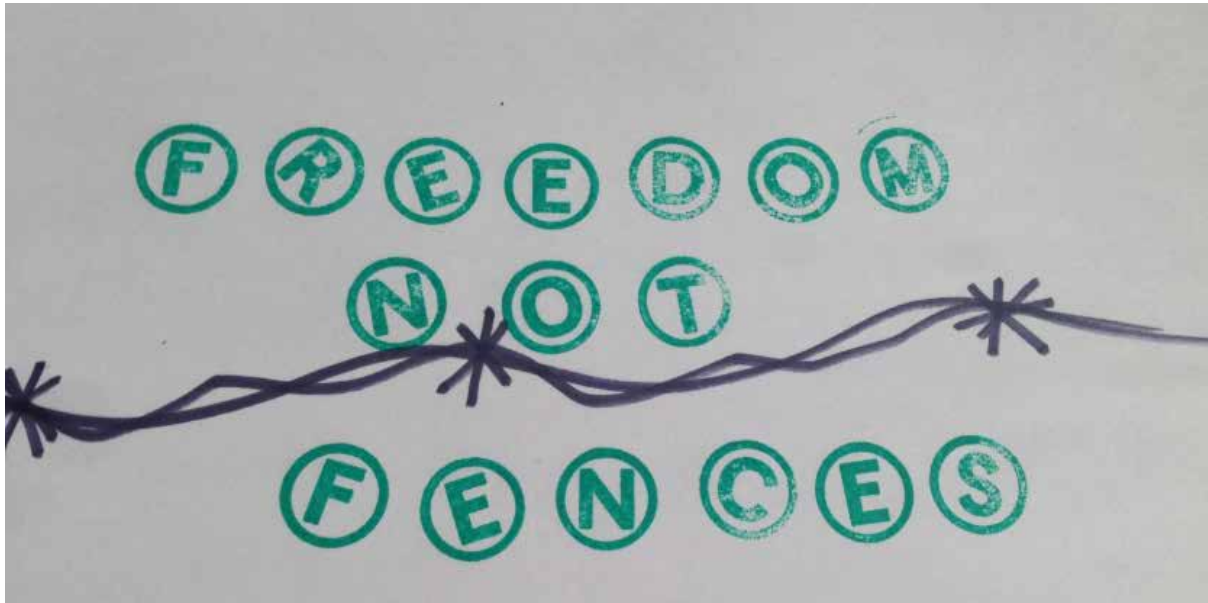
Materials: Paper, markers, and stamps for printing (optional).

Subjects: History, Geography.

In pairs or small groups, ask the class to research and make simple posters about the origins of particular borders and separation walls, and the impact they have on the groups and communities they bisect.

- Draw a line of barbed wired across each page so that when they're connected, they form a continuous line. Allocate a wall or border to each group and give each of them a page to create their poster.
- In the next class take feedback from each group, noting the effect on communities, and the long-term impact of arbitrary borders, and separation walls.

- Invite the groups to carry out the extension activity below - write/print their thoughts, single words, or a slogan relating to separation walls/fences/borders on their sheet - and add these to the posters to create a display.



- In 1884, at a conference in Berlin, Africa was famously ‘carved up’ by 13 European nations and the United States of America, leaving 44% of Africa’s borders as straight lines and splitting over 177 ethnic groups into separate countries. There were no African representatives at the conference.
- The ‘Durand Line’ is named after the British civil servant who partitioned Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1893.
- The ‘Mc Mahon Line’ (1914) was drawn by Sir Henry McMahon, the foreign secretary of the British-Indian government and the chief negotiator in the Shimla conference between Britain, China and Tibet. The line was negotiated without Chinese participation or agreement.
- In May 1914, maps for the Irish border were drawn by civil servants to create an internal boundary and ‘exclusion zone’. With the advent of the Irish Free State in 1922 this became an international border.
- The ‘Sykes-Picot Line’ (1916) was drawn by Sir Mark Sykes and Francois-Edouard Picot, whose task was to divide the Middle East according to British and French interests. The line created new nation states with little regard for existing structures, communities and traditions.
- Sir Cyril Radcliffe had never been to India, but in 1947 he was given just weeks to divide India - and 88 million people - along religious lines. The ‘Radcliffe Line’ created fear and chaos, led to the displacement of 14 million people, and contributed to 3 wars between India & Pakistan.



Graffiti on the separation wall in Bethlehem. The wall cuts through the West Bank, cutting off many Palestinians from their families and their land. Photo: Eoghan Rice / www.trocaire.org

- Currently, Europe's most fortified border is actually in Africa. The Melilla border fence was constructed by Spanish authorities around the North African territory it claims, and forms part of the border with Morocco.
- US President Trump's infamous pre-election promise/threat was to 'build a wall'. In fact, there is already a 1,200 km wall along the US-Mexican border.
- Israel built and continues to construct 'separation' walls on Palestinian land in Gaza and the West Bank, despite these being declared illegal by the International Court of Justice.
- Western Sahara - a disputed territory in North Africa - is sealed by a wall, barbed wire, and landmines.
- The Northern Irish peace process helped to dismantle visible signs of customs or security operations along the border, allowing for free movement of people and goods. Even so, Belfast and Derry still have more than 100 'peace walls' separating Protestant and Catholic communities. Because of the threat that a hard border could pose to peace, Brexit negotiators are supposed to ensure that any deal maintains an open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Extension for Irish Class

Watch and respond to segments from Síle Nic Chonaonaigh's TG4 documentary *An Balla*, which explores four of the world's most iconic walls and borders.



Mural in Derry's Bogside community (2018)

Extension Visual Art Activity: Poster Making/Display

Materials: Paper, markers, collage or stamps for printing (optional).

Each group takes a sheet of paper and draws a length of barbed wire across each page. Invite each group to write/print a slogan or word relating to separation walls, fences, or borders on their sheet. Join the sheets together to create a display.



Creative Activity: Video Montage

Create an animation or video montage of borders, separation walls, maps with examples of murals and graffiti that have been created in response to that separation. Search for artists' responses, such as the pieces created by street artist JR, along the Mexican-US Border. Add your own thoughts or quotes/statements/poetry about borders, and experiment with soundtracks to support different responses to the images and messages you select.

Some examples of soundtracks to consider:

Young singer songwriter, Ruth Mundy's song, *Don't Swim Between the Flags*. The lyrics incorporate lines from Warsan Shire's poem *Home* and take a caustic look at the excuses and fake news behind the refusal to address the humanitarian needs behind this crisis.

Naia Alkhouri's song, *Just Want Home*, was written in 2013 when she was 10 years old. It addresses both the war in Syria, and her longing to see her grandmother in Aleppo. Naia's parents co-founded the Make Foundation, using the arts to raise awareness and empathy in schools in New Zealand, and to raise funds for arts projects with Syrian refugee children.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrBQx9oY2RY

A recording of Rhianna's *Stay*, performed by a global choir of women detained in the notorious Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), can be found at Music in Detention.

www.musicindetention.org.uk/projects/yarls-wood-singing-group/

Or, try Nancy Griffin's *From a Distance* / Susan Quirke's *Home* / Gospel singer Liz Vice's *Refugee King*, which tells the nativity story as a tale of displaced family.

**"It's easier to keep up the pretence
That the way to stop displacement
Is to build another fence."**

- Ruth Mundy



WHY WE LEFT: Learning about the causes and impact of displacement

Activities to explore the diverse contexts and the varied and complex factors that force people to leave their homes.

Aim: To consider people's varied and complex reasons for leaving home.
To engage with first-hand accounts of people's reasons for leaving.
To distinguish between choosing to leave home and being forced to leave.

Materials: Photocopies of 'Why We Left' extracts; paper and markers

Time: 80 minutes

Subjects: Geography, English; History, RE, TY.

Begin by asking what might make someone *choose* to leave home and move to a different place or country. Answers may include: moving for a new job; to study; to be with a loved one; to volunteer; to learn a language; for retirement; or, for the experience of travelling and living abroad. Discuss what might make this an easy or difficult decision.

Then ask what might *force* someone from their home. Answers might include war and conflict; corruption; hunger and famine; the impact of natural disasters; domestic violence; climate-change; grinding poverty; intimidation and threats; persecution, and more.

Acknowledge that the line between choosing to move, and being forced, is not clear cut. Peoples' choices can be diminished by events beyond their control. Can you think of examples?

Invite the class to work in small groups to explore the stories of individuals who were forced to leave home. Pass out the extracts to the groups and ask them to read and create a mind map of the person's story.

Use the process of mind-mapping to look deeper at the person's life; how it was before and after the disruption. Look carefully at the extract to see if you can find clues to give a better understanding of the person's life. Consider questions that you might ask this person to discover more, such as:

- Where were you living and what was your life like before? What were your reason(s) for leaving home? How old were you when you left home? Did you get time to plan your departure, or did you have to leave suddenly? Did you travel alone, or with others? Where did you go, and what was it like there? Did you settle in that place, or did your journey continue? What were your hopes and your fears? How were you treated in your new home? Do you wish to return?

Drama Activity:

Seek a volunteer from each group to share a summary of their story in the first-person. Using a 'hot seat' technique, briefly interview each of them in character, and invite questions from the wider group to draw out their story. (Some of the mind-map questions may be helpful).

Debrief the volunteers by asking how they felt in this role. Ask the whole group to reflect and give feedback on their learning and any surprises. Conclude with a summary of the reasons people were forced to leave home.



Alejandra, originally from Guatemala.

I was in the final year of my nurse training program. I was spending the Christmas holidays with my family when I saw my uncle being shot in his front yard while he strung up party lights. He had refused to pay extortion money to a local criminal gang run by active and former police officers. The next day I received threatening messages on Facebook. I really didn't want to leave the country, so to be safer I moved in with a friend in another town and tried to hide. But a few weeks later, the gang sent a kid with a handgun to kill me, and I only escaped by throwing myself from my motorbike. That's when I decided to give up my career and flee Guatemala.

Yacob (10) and his mother Noorkin fled their home in Myanmar and are Rohingya refugees currently living in a large refugee camp in Bangladesh

"Back in Myanmar my father was a farmer and he also went fishing. I used to attend school, but it all came to an end the day our house got burnt. The houses in our village were on fire. We couldn't run to the jungle because it was on fire too. We fled to another village, but it was also attacked. We fled again and hid for two days with no food. We made it across the border and now we live here in the camps. I am a good boy and a quick learner. I also make other children laugh. I want to learn more and more because I want to become a teacher when I grow up."

Rafael Domingo, a father and farmer from Mozambique.

"At first, we woke up to the sound of the wind and right after that the water came streaming into our house. We only managed to grab our children and run away to an area which lies on higher ground. Our crops of corn, rice, and sweet potato were wiped out by the cyclone and flooding. It's the planting season now and we don't have seeds. Soon we will all be hungry."

The Mozambican National Institute for Disaster Management estimates that 240,000 homes were totally or partially destroyed, and 715,000 hectares of farmland were affected by Cyclone Idai, one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to affect Africa. 1.8 million people were affected overall.

Daria, originally from Ukraine.

"Our daughter was finishing secondary school when the armed conflict broke out in our region. The city was shelled several times, sometimes so heavily that we had to hide in shelters in the centre of the city. Thousands of people attended rallies in our city. The demonstrators were attacked, and many were wounded. One was killed. The university where I worked relocated, and my husband lost his job as their premises were occupied and robbed by armed locals. We had to make a tough decision - to stay in the conflict zone or to move. Some of our acquaintance's homes were badly damaged. They lost all their property and possessions and they had to escape. Some moved to government-controlled areas where their relatives were, and some families eventually [left for] other countries such as China, Germany, Russia, and Israel."

Elizabeth Thomas Mniko (17), Tanzania.

Apaisaria Kiwori is the head matron of a safe house in the Serengeti area of north-western Tanzania, that takes in young girls escaping child marriage, domestic abuse, sexual assault, and female genital mutilation (FGM): "Many girls flee their homes with nothing more than the clothes they were wearing.

Elizabeth Thomas Mniko (17) has been living at the safe house for three years and is preparing for her exams. Unable to change her father's mind about the practice of FGM, she sought refuge at the safe house. "It takes great courage to leave your entire world behind. Some of the younger girls here didn't even know that it would be the last time they see their friends and families. [One girl] walked for days and hitchhiked with strangers to get here. She's not even 12, but she knew it was safer to run than stay in her village...I want to become a lawyer and defend the rights of all survivors of gender-based violence".

Brendan Ciarán Browne.

“The lives of my dad and his family changed dramatically on January 13, 1973. Their house - located in a Protestant area of East Belfast - was attacked and set alight... Luckily, they escaped physical harm, but in the blink of an eye - the striking of a match - they went from homeowners to homeless.

So began the hunt to find a new place to live, in an area perceived to be “safer”. They eventually settled in a Catholic neighbourhood, in Andersonstown, West Belfast, and attempted to return to life as normal. Regrettably, their story is not unique. As a result of the... “Troubles” some 45,000-60,000 [people were] “burnt out”. This was the largest movement of civilians in Europe since the outbreak of World War II. Those forced to leave their homes either crossed the border and became refugees, or stayed in Northern Ireland and became what we would now consider as “internally displaced persons”.

Violent and forced displacement of individuals and families...continues in the present day.” In 2017 almost 500 people were driven from their homes by paramilitary intimidation. Sectarianism, racism, and homophobic harassment led to dozens of other cases of displacement.

Achan (75) Now living and caring for her grandchildren in Uganda.

I had eight children. Seven died during the war that is ongoing in my home country, South Sudan. I am a widow and my grandchildren are orphans, and I take care of them by myself. Before the war I was a farmer; I took care of the farm and grew food to sustain my family. But when the war came, we had to run to save our lives. We had to leave our crops, and our belongings, and everything behind us. I am living here in the camp with my grandchildren, in Lamwo District, Uganda. I don't know when we'll be able to return home. I want to go, but I have heard that my house was destroyed by rebels.

Azhar (18) Syria, now living in Greece

“We left Syria exactly 29 months, 19 days, and 4 hours ago. Back home, in Kobani, I had almost finished school when it was shut down due to fighting. With my mother's blessing, I travelled to Aleppo for the end of year exams. I studied in the daytime and listened to bombs at night. I was on a bus going home when the vehicle was stopped by ISIS fighters. Girls were permitted to continue their journey, but boys were removed and kidnapped. I never heard what happened to them.

We wanted to go to Germany, where we have close relatives. But when we arrived in Greece there was a new EU agreement and we could no longer continue our journey. Sometimes I feel trapped. But in my books, my studies, I can feel freedom. I've lost so much time. There is so much I want to do, but I can't do it here. I wake up in the camp every morning, I see six people in our tiny room, and I think: ‘I need to make this situation better...every day I fight to improve. In the camp, I've started working with volunteers to teach Arabic, mathematics and English to five-year olds. The sense of being needed gives me purpose and hope. It gives me a way to forget about our situation.”

Danny Ramadan, LGBTQ Advocate and author.

“I went back to Syria when I was 28...I noticed a need for a space for the LGBT community, a space to feel safe...part of a community. With the support of a lesbian friend of mine, I turned my apartment into a makeshift, illegal, centre for gay and lesbian folks...We started to invite folks. We used to have game nights, movie nights, and sharing circles...it was beautiful. Despite our best efforts somebody reported us to the police, and I ended up being arrested. My friends came together [and got me out of jail.] Overnight I was forced to leave the country, to Lebanon. I lived in Lebanon for a couple of years but I started to see that it wasn't a solution for me, so I started to seek a life in Canada...I think a lot of people don't understand that refugees are forced out of their own countries which they love... I love Syria. I love my own country... I'm connected to it, and I wouldn't have left it unless I had to.”

Story sources can be found below. Some names have been changed.

Alejandra: <https://theconversation.com/migrants-stories-why-they-flee-114725>

Noorkin and Yacob / Achan / Alia / Azhar: <https://medium.com/globalgoodness/12-powerful-refugee-stories-from-around-the-world-5c0a54d2e2ed>

Daria, Ukraine: www.refugeesintowns.org/pokrovsk

Achan: <https://medium.com/globalgoodness/achan-c3f06bedec0b>

Brendan Ciarán Browne: theconversation.com/the-troubles-tens-of-thousands-of-people-were-violently-displaced-in-northern-ireland-111764

www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/exclusive-2000-households-forced-out-of-their-homes-paramilitaries-blamed-for-73-of-cases-37676384.html

Rafael Domingo, Mozambique: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/chcPmZ08PC0Ry/>

Elizabeth Thomas Mniko: www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/11/feature-tanzania--women-and-girls-seek-refugee-from-female-genital-mutilation

Danny Ramadan: www.salzburgglobal.org/news/latest-news/article/fleeing-home-lgbt-refugees-stories.html



REFUGE AND MIGRATION: Developing a Human Rights perspective

Much of the coverage of the 'refugee crisis' frames the issue in terms of the numbers of people coming, 'push and pull' factors, or the economic and social or political implications for host countries. Whilst economic, social, and political issues are a part of the story, it is important to remain focussed on the fact that refuge is fundamentally a human rights issue.

"Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

- Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

These activities will increase students' awareness and understanding of the human rights dimensions to the refugee crisis, as well as the principles underpinning the UN Declaration.

The Human Rights Matching Cards used in this activity are an excellent tool for exploring a complex document in an active and engaging way. Through very simple matching, discussion and drama activities students quickly become fluent in the articles of the UNDHR.

The cards are reprinted here with the kind permission of the Curriculum Development Unit (CDETb).

If making multiple sets for small group work, we suggest printing on different coloured card, or numbering them on the back, to make it easier to sort them at the end of the class.

**Freedom from
arbitrary arrest
(Justice)**



**Right to meet
with others
(Assemble)**



**Right to
employment
(Work)**



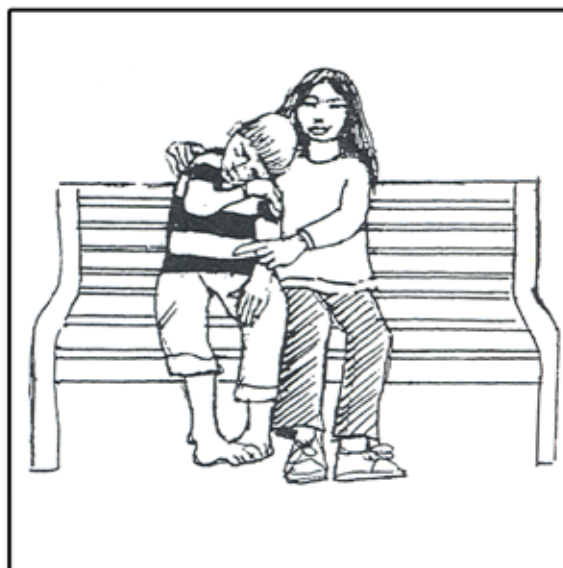
**Right to say
what you think
(Opinion)**



**Right to use
reason and
conscience
(Conscience)**



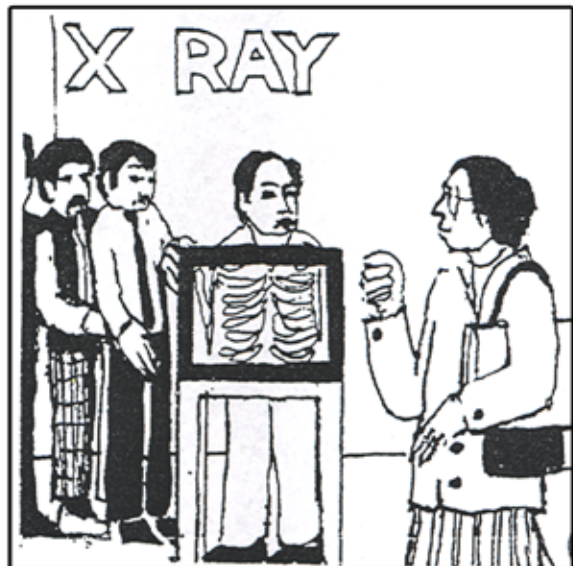
**No one has the
right to hurt you
(Kindness)**



**Right to go to
school
(School)**



**Right to security
and health
(X-ray)**



**Right to
participate in
electing your
leaders
(Government)**



**Right to marry
(Marriage)**



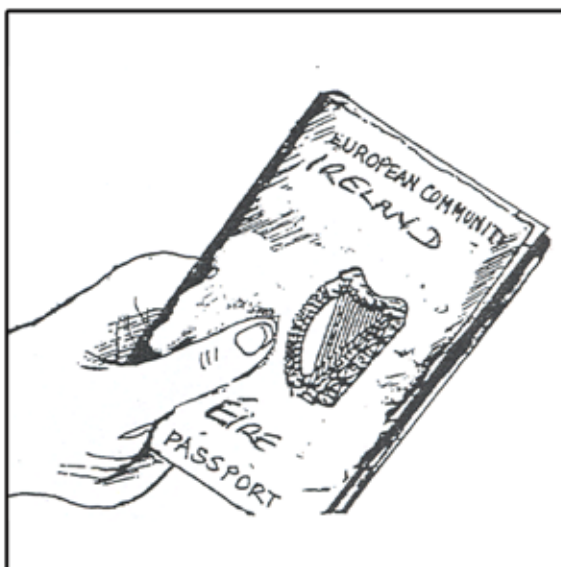
**Right to own
things
(Possessions)**



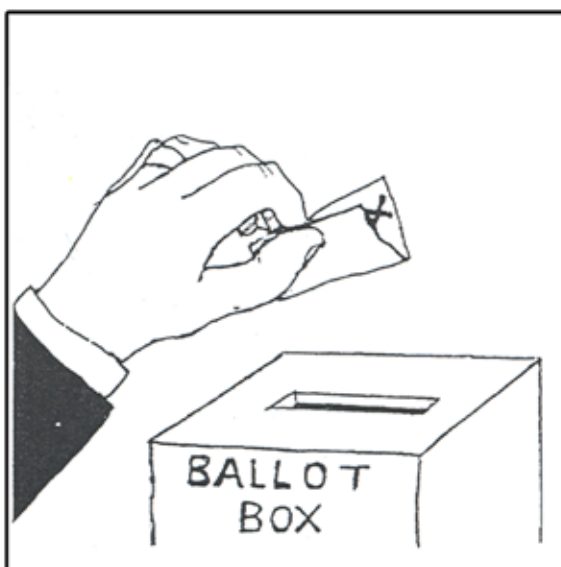
**Right to query
those in
authority
(Question)**



**Right to belong
to a country
(Nationality)**



**Right to
participation in
free elections
(Vote)**



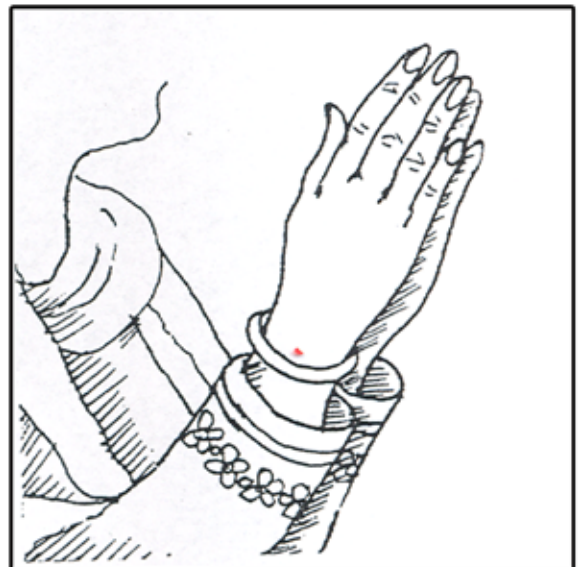
**Right to
education
(Schools)**



**Right to
movement
(Travel)**



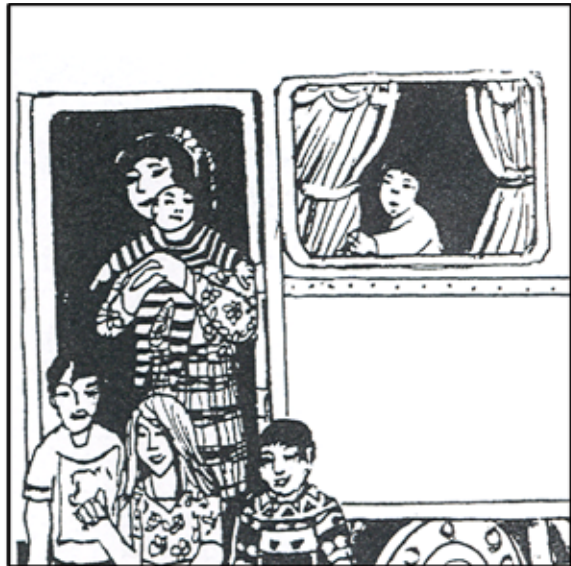
**Freedom
of belief,
conscience or
worship
(Religion)**



**Right to rest
and leisure
(Zzzz, rest
and leisure)**



**Right to
own property
(Home)**



**Everyone is
equal despite
differences
(Difference)**



Exploring the UN Declaration of Human Rights

Aim:

To help students become familiar with the UN Declaration of Human Rights.
To learn about Human Rights principles.
To provide a Human Rights framework for exploring refuge and migration issues.

Materials: Appropriate number of sets of Human Rights Matching cards.

Time: 40 minutes +

Subjects: CSPE, English, History, Geography, RE, Wellbeing (with extension activities in Art).



Matching Activity:

Working in fours or fives, provide a set of matching cards for each group. The students spread the cards out and attempt to match each the text of each picture card to its corresponding right.

There may be some discussion about which pictures represent each of the articles.

When the groups have finished ask them to consider if they were already aware of these rights. Are there any rights they weren't aware of, or that surprise them?

Ask each student to select two rights that are particularly important to them, or that they consider particularly relevant to their lives, and discuss them in their group.

Why do these rights stand out for you? What makes them important in your life, or in your society?

Drama Activity: Charades

Each group selects two of the rights they discussed and get ready to represent it in a tableau or freeze-frame for the other groups to guess.

Visual Arts Activity: Human Rights Illustrated

Materials: A4 or A5 coloured card. Markers/Crayons/Paints.

Collage materials if using that method – scissors, glue and old magazines and newspapers.

Blank jigsaws, if using.

Time: 80 minutes

- Working in pairs or individually, illustrate one of the Rights from the UN Declaration.
- Use collage to work on A4 or A5 coloured card, or decorate blank jigsaw pieces.
- Create a walking gallery for students to view and respond to each other's work.
- Consider possibilities for display in the school or community, or as a slideshow for sharing on social media.



Visual/Digital Art Activity: Human Rights collage/stop-motion video

Materials: Human Rights Principles. Adapted from *Human Rights Principles*, UNFPA (2005)

Collage materials – newspapers, magazines, scissors and glue, or magnetic/scrabble letters.

Stop motion app, if using.

Time: 40 minutes

Human rights are said to be

- Universal
- Inalienable
- Indivisible
- Interdependent
- Interrelated

What do these terms mean to you?

Human rights are **universal** because they apply to everyone equally. We are all born with and possess the same rights, regardless of where we live, our gender or race, or our religious, cultural or ethnic background.

Human rights are **inalienable** because people's rights can never be taken away, except in specific circumstances following a fair legal process.

Human rights are **interdependent** because all rights – political, civil, social, cultural and economic – rely on each other and cannot be fully enjoyed without the others.

Human rights are **indivisible** because denial of one right leads to denial of others, and the realisation or improvement of one right enhances the realisation of the others.

Human rights are **interrelated** because each one contributes to the realisation of a person's full human dignity through her developmental, physical, psychological and spiritual needs.



The class works in small groups, each one taking one of the Human Rights Principles

- Look up definitions if needed and describe the meanings in your own words.
- Create a simple illustrated definition/infographic.
- Each group presents and explains their principle.
- The illustrated definitions can be combined with the human rights artwork from the previous activity and added to the slideshow or display for the school.



Diary Activity: Applying a Human Rights Framework:

Materials: Diary extracts of refugee journeys [Omhran, Mareh and Khaled’s diary entries are available in the Beyond Borders section at galwayowc.org]

Time: 40 minutes +

Background: The journey for refugees is made all the more dangerous and difficult because of harsh border controls, and unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable. In 2016, it is estimated that 10,000 children went missing in Europe. (The Guardian 13th July, 2017)

Break into groups to read and discuss the diaries of Mahan, Omran and Khaled.

- Use the cards to identify moments in the persons story when human rights are particularly relevant, either negatively or positively.
- Thinking back to the discussion on the principles of human rights, can you see where the denial of one right led to the denial of others? Can you find any examples in the diary where the realisation of one right supported the realisation of other rights? Which principles would you apply to these examples?
- Can you find examples of where Mahan, Omran or Khaled acted to protect their human rights, or the rights of others?

See also:

Zlata’s Diary by Zlata Filipovic (1993) about life in Sarajevo in 1992. Zlata now lives in Dublin where she works as a film maker.

Journal entries by Sania Mehmood, Kendra, Bukan Sibiya, and Sara Althobhaney, teenagers who reflect on the impact of Direct Provision on their lives. MASI Journal No.1 (Autumn 2019), www.masi.ie.

Khaled's Diary - from Syria to Ireland.

This piece is based on an article, 'People Aren't Fleeing For No Reason, They Are Forced To Leave - Forced By Killing' (18th March 2018). The article was published by thejournal.ie and was supported by the Mary Raftery Journalism Fund and the Tony Ryan Trust. The name Khaled is a pseudonym.

"It's difficult to make the decision to leave your country, to leave everything. You have a life, you have property, a house, friends, relatives, sisters, brothers, parents, kids. It's not really a decision at all.

In 2013, people in my town of Khirbet Ghazaleh in southern Syria were forced to leave. After that, my family decided to go to Jordan. We ended up at the Zaatari refugee camp. Life is very, very difficult there.

It's a very crowded place, with a lot of problems. It's not really suitable for human life. We understand, from the other side of the story, that Jordan was already struggling before the current crisis. A lot of other refugees are coming from different countries.

In Zaatari my young son got sick – that was very bad. Luckily, he recovered.

It was forbidden to leave the camp, but we escaped. In October 2013, I left Jordan. I went to Turkey. I stayed there for a little while but wasn't able to get my family to join me, so I left for Greece.

We kept hearing about people drowning as they tried to get to Greece, including on the same night we left. You know that you could drown and you still make that decision to go. I can't even say it's a decision because you don't really have a choice. You are pushed, pushed, pushed, and you just try to survive.

After a couple of weeks in Greece I was told I was going to Ireland. I didn't choose to come here, the smuggler told me this is where he was sending me.

When I arrived in Ireland I was told I might be deported. They sent me to a reception centre for refugees and asylum seekers in Baleskin, Dublin. I stayed there for a few months until I got my refugee status.

I was struggling with life for many reasons. Everything was new to me: language, life, culture. I started to teach myself English on YouTube, then went to classes while I was trying to settle in. It was also very difficult to be apart from my family.

My wife and children came to Ireland in December 2014, about 10 months after I arrived. My parents came a year later, in December 2015. Two of my sisters and their families went to England through a resettlement programme, but I can't get a visa to visit them.

Irish people are lovely, but they can be reluctant to speak to you. I've had one or two experiences of people saying racist things to me but that's OK. Once an older man asked me if I was in ISIS. I told him I wasn't, and he said I should go back to where I was from. Most people aren't like this though and I've started to make friends.

Migrants and refugees often tend to stay in their own groups when they move to a new country, that's natural. Many people are afraid when they arrive here and it's important to help them integrate.

In general, people live inside their own bubble. People who move to a new country, especially refugees and asylum seekers, are forced to leave this bubble. This can make them feel very anxious, very traumatised - like a fish leaving water.

I was a maths teacher in Syria. I wanted to continue my career as a teacher but, due to the language barrier and my qualification not being recognised here, I wasn't able to. I had to change my career and moved into IT. I recently completed a master's in data analytics. In general, I got good marks. I thought I might be able to get a job once I passed the course but that wasn't the case...I'm still looking for a job, but I have a lot of ideas. I am already developing an app and have written a book - it's a children's book about a Syrian child's life before the war.

I understand that some people are upset about refugees and migrants coming to Ireland. They think we will take their place in accommodation or in a job. Culturally in Syria we don't really think like that. A lot of refugees came to our country before the war – people from Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt. Each one will come and create their own opportunity.

People aren't fleeing their home countries for no reason; it isn't a decision. We are forced to leave, forced by killing. We don't have choices. We are just trying to survive. It reminds me of people fleeing Ireland during the Famine in the 1840s. They were forced to go to a different country looking for new opportunities for them, for their children. They went to Canada, America, England, Australia, Europe.

I'm not the type of person who likes to move around a lot. I had a lot of plans in Syria. In five years, I did a lot: I bought my flat, I had a farm. I was expecting that I'd have a stable income the following year. But suddenly everything was gone. I don't think I could go back. Even if the war ended - something I sadly don't think will happen any time soon - it would take a long time to make the country safe again. Ireland is my home now.

I didn't want to talk about my story but I'm sharing it because a lot of people want to understand what's going on, why Syrian people are coming to places like Ireland. I'm here today not just to talk about my personal story. I'm one story of thousands and thousands."

Small Group Discussion prompts:

- What most strikes you about Khaled's story?
- One new thing you learned.
- What does he say about the 'decision' to flee from his home?
- What does Khaled mean when he says that, "in general people live in a bubble?" Is it important to look and learn about life outside of our 'bubbles'? Is there anything in the diary that helped you to view things from a different perspective?

Invite the small groups to give a brief summary of their discussion, with one or two key observations.

Full Group Discussion:

Khaled says Irish people are "lovely", but he has also experienced racism here.

- What do you think motivates the positive and the negative responses?
- Is there anything that could help the negative commentators to see the situation, or Khaled, or themselves, differently?

Creative Writing Activity:

Write a short diary entry about someone who witnesses a racist encounter, like the one described above, and takes some action to support the person being targeted. Decide on the location and context of situation. It could be on the bus coming from work. It could be at school, or in a shop. Anywhere. Create an identity for your character and write the entry from their perspective describing how they felt and what they did when they witnessed someone being told to, “go back where he came from.”

In the diary, your character might reflect on their own motivation to offer support, as well as wider values about solidarity and equality. Your character might also reflect on what motivates someone to be hostile. What lies behind the prejudice, and what might persuade them to look differently at people coming to seek safety and build a life in Ireland?



Photo: Abdulazez Dukhan, *Through Refugee Eyes*. Greek Refugee Camp, Softex

Omran's Diary

Omran is a 16-year-old Afghani boy. This is an extract from his diary about leaving his home country, and his efforts to re-join his sister and find safety in the UK. The piece is based on an interview with journalist Amelia Gentleman for The Guardian newspaper. www.guardian.com (10/12/16)
www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/dec/10/diary-16-year-old-afghan-refugee

Distribute Omran's diary extract to small groups, along with the human rights matching cards, or a list of human rights.

Consider the following questions:

- Something that you learned, and something that surprised or struck you.
- A part of the story that made you feel empathy.
- A question you'd like to ask Omran and something you'd like to learn more about.
- Using the Human Rights Matching Cards or list, see if you can identify moments in the passage where Omran's human rights are being denied, and moments when his rights are being recognised.
- Where can you see examples of Omran's courage and resilience, and where can you see people taking action to support him?

Follow up by finding out about the rights and challenges of unaccompanied children in Ireland.

Research the story of Lord Dubs, and the campaign to support unaccompanied children in the UK. How has this issue been treated during Brexit debates?

Leaving Afghanistan:

"I was 15 when I left Afghanistan. I still felt like a child, but I tried to act like an adult. The situation there was very difficult for me and my family; it's a long story, but I left home because of the civil war and a family dispute. It took two months to get to France: walking, in cars and lorries, on a boat. We walked 15 hours through the mountains to cross the Iranian border into Turkey."

"My 16th birthday came and went without me even realising. I was living in a tent in the refugee camp in Calais [in a large refugee camp northern France]. I had a phone, but the connection was very bad, and it was hard to charge it. On that day my family didn't call. I didn't celebrate my birthday much in Afghanistan, either: I'm one of seven children, and we faced problems from all sides; we didn't think much about birthdays."

"I was in Calais [in a large refugee encampment in Northern France] for seven months. For the first two, I spent most nights trying to get to the UK. I got on a lorry so many times, but every time I was taken off by the police; they hit my legs with truncheons. One time, I jumped from a lorry and broke my hand. It was very painful, but I didn't go to hospital. I found a doctor in the camp who bandaged it. Then I met lawyers from the charity Safe Passage who told me there was a legal way to join my sister in the UK. After that, I stopped trying to get on lorries and waited for a decision to be made."

“There was a school in the Calais camp, but when you don’t feel relaxed you can’t take in the words. I was very depressed, and hungry. At first, there was only one meal a day; later there were two, but you had to be quick to get breakfast. Usually, I didn’t sleep at night – there was no law, no police in the camp. It was the same as Afghanistan: very scary and violent.”

“After I got to London, it took weeks to get used to sleeping in a normal, comfortable bed. My sister and brother-in-law met me at the station, and we took a taxi to their home. There were so many people, so many nationalities. The men looked the same as they do in Afghanistan; the girls looked different. In Afghanistan, [women cover their heads], but it’s different here.

Now I’m studying at college, focusing on English and maths. My English is getting better, but sometimes I find it hard to understand British people. . . Here, the teachers are nice. There are people from all over the world at the college – a few from Afghanistan, but most from eastern European countries.

When I had days off school in Afghanistan, I’d play football and see friends, but my family wouldn’t let me go anywhere central, because there were so many Taliban attacks. It feels safe here. Sometimes, when I see the British police, I am reminded of the French and Afghan police, and feel scared, although I know they are different.

On Saturdays, I play football or go to my auntie’s. My brother-in-law has a wholesale business. We live in a house and I have my own room. The rooms are smaller than in Afghanistan, but I like it. Two weeks ago, my sister had her first baby, a boy. I still miss my country and my old friends. Sometimes I feel lonely, because I don’t have my family, my mother and father.

I’d like to be a politician, an accountant or a web designer. A few weeks after I arrived, I was invited to talk about my experiences to MPs in the Houses of Parliament. There was no translator, so I had to speak English. Slowly, as I spoke, it got easier. Later, I spoke in front of 500 people at the National Theatre; it was the first time I’d spoken in front of so many people. That’s when I thought I’d like to be a politician. I want to serve the country I live in. I want to make myself here, to grow my talents, and go back to Afghanistan at some point.

If I was a politician, I’d focus on trying to stop the conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan. The UK is a world power; they can do something. If there was peace there, people would not need to flee here. I don’t know if they would accept me as a politician in the UK, because I’m foreign, but that’s what I’d like to do.

I feel awful for the boys I was with in Calais: most of them are still in France and in a bad situation - some have been waiting for eight months, a year, two years. One boy arrived in Calais at the same time as me. After seven months, his hair began to turn grey from the stress.



I have a great opportunity here, but my worries are not over. I don’t know how long I will be able to stay. I’m waiting for my visa; the [UK] government says the case is delayed. Maybe they will give me a visa to stay for ever, but perhaps they will send me back.”

Photo: Abdulazez Dukhan, *Through Refugee Eyes* (2016)

Marah: My Syrian Diary

Marah was 15 years old when the uprising in Syria began. In 2014, at the suggestion of a youth support worker, she began to keep a diary as a way of dealing with the trauma of conflict. Marah's diary describes her hopes and fears, as well as offering a window into the incredible efforts people and communities make to maintain everyday life, even under horrendous conditions. The full collection of over 70 entries follows Marah's family from Ghouta to Damascus, and finally over land and sea to find safety in Switzerland. It is made available by Syria Deeply at newsdeeply.com. We have included some edited extracts below.

In small groups read a section of Marah's diary.

- Make connections between your existing understanding of conflict and migration, and any new learning from the extract.
- Identify two questions that you'd like to ask Marah, and two questions you'd like to research to help expand your understanding of the impact of conflict and forced migration.

Consider themes like:

- The dilemma faced by Marah's family about whether to stay or leave their home country.
- Education and its importance to Marah and her family, before and after the onset of conflict.
- Mental health and resilience: where does Marah draw her strength from? Find and discuss examples of courage, resilience and resourcefulness in her story.
- Stereotypes, and the treatment of people seeking refuge, by police and authorities.
- Safe Passage: The regular passenger ferry crossing from Turkey to Greece costs about €22 per person. One extract details the horrors of the trip that Marah and her family took after paying thousands to smugglers. Why couldn't they take the cheaper, and far safer option? What are your feelings about why they could not make the trip safely?
- Marah's hopes for the future and the process of integration: What kind of challenges does she face in her new home? Do you see integration as a one-way process, or something mutual? How could this be achieved?

Ask each group to feed back to the class, inviting each one to explain their diary entry in a couple of lines, and to share something they learned, or surprised them.

Finally, close the session by inviting each student to sum up their response to the diary extracts in a single word - this can be something that stood out for them, or a word to describe how they feel after reading the extracts.

Art Activity: In pairs, choose one line from Marah's diary extracts that you think speaks powerfully about home, human rights, displacement, or resilience. Illustrate the quote using materials of your choice. Create a slideshow or social media posts to share the collection of work.

Marah's Diary: 23rd April 2014

I grew up in a family that appreciated education...School was fantastic. I had friends and I loved my teachers...My parents never hesitated to provide for my school; their goal was that I obtain the best education.

One year after the beginning of the revolution, the conditions in my city worsened and the missiles intensified...The schools were all destroyed, and after a while they turned basements into classrooms so we would be protected from the missiles. These new schools were dark with dim lights similar to candles and were smelly and had very poor ventilation. They were hardly real "schools." My father refused to send us to such dungeons, but my mom insisted that we should go.

Now I am trying to prepare for the high school tests, but I don't know whether I will pass or whether my score will be officially recognised. Will I take the tests in my city, or somewhere else? Will my mom agree to let me go? So many questions stop me from focusing on my studies. My mom refuses to send me out to any other neighbourhood because she fears checkpoints and the risks that a young lady like me might face. I've come to hate the fact that I am a girl. Can you imagine that my mom, the one who always believed in the importance of education and planted that belief in me, has suddenly changed? Her excuse comes down to one sentence: "I worry for you."

I desire to live. I desire what's beautiful. I miss my teachers and my friends. They have all left the city... When I was little, I liked dreaming big, but now my dreams are fading away. I do not want to lose my dreams. Help!

Marah's Diary: 15th September 2015

Damascus is a city to love. But the almost-five-year war has damaged her – all we are thinking of now is how to leave her. [The death of my father] and the pain that we experience every day exhausts us. Even my mother, the wise and strong woman who has overcome so much, is becoming weak. She recently decided that my brother should immigrate to Europe as a refugee with one of our relatives, so that he might one day apply for family reunion papers to help us get out of this hell. She knew how hard and dangerous the journey was, and she knew that he was still a 12-year-old boy, but she had run out of options. She got him a passport and started planning his trip, but she backed out at the very last moment...Many families are sending their kids into the unknown with the hope that they might one day help the rest of the family get out.

I cannot achieve anything here...There is only one thing left: my family. They are my strength when I am surrounded by nothing but darkness.

I want to leave so that I can help my family, but my mother rejects the idea unless I go to Switzerland, where my aunt lives. I don't want to proceed with my plans without my mom's approval, because if I leave, I don't know if I will ever see her again...I am lost and scattered. I cannot make a decision that might lead to me losing my family. I don't know what to do.

Marah's Diary: Entry 55. The Journey Across Land and Sea

“Death Journey” is what I call our passage from Syria to Switzerland because of the misery, humiliation and danger we faced. I do not even have words to describe it. We paid a smuggler a large amount of money to reserve places on a boat that would take us from Turkey to Greece...The boat was designed to carry a maximum of 35 people, but there were 60 men, women and children on it. We were really scared that it might sink, but it was our only hope to get out, and there was no way we could change our minds... [From Greece we went to] Croatia and then to Slovenia. Each refugee camp we stayed at was worse than the last one. They all lacked organisation and hygiene and, honestly, none of them was suitable for human beings...We were treated like criminals and fugitives. When we left the car in Croatia, some officers sprayed pesticides inside the car to prevent diseases; that was by far the most humiliating and hurtful moment of our trip. I felt that I was very small. I felt that I had no value and that I was no more than a germ. However, some feelings of determination were emerging in me - I would prove to all these people that Syrians were much better than what they thought.

We went from Austria to Germany. We walked for a long time, until we reached the train station, where we boarded a train [to Switzerland]. Every country we passed through treated us like stray dogs. They gave us food, but they forgot that we were human beings and that we needed love and support. We had just left a war-torn country and all we needed was someone to be humane. I will do everything I can to prove that Syrians deserve respect. I want to live with dignity, and I hope that Switzerland is the beginning of a new journey.

Marah's Diary: 4th May / 8th June 2016. Switzerland

Apparently, the Syrian crisis could not destroy us, and perhaps it has even strengthened us...My mother kept us strong. She gathered us around her and provided us with the support we needed...She risked everything to allow us to live normal lives in a place free of daily violence...I sometimes wonder whether it was only because of my mother that we managed to survive, or whether it was the love, the strength and the principles on which we were raised that sustained us. My father was a part of that as well. He provided us with the tools we needed to overcome the challenges we faced - he surrounded us with love and stability...

In order to live here and truly integrate in my new society, I'm sure I will have to change a little. I will have to adopt some of this country's customs. But I refuse to do away with my identity...Yes, I do have a Swiss ID card, but that does not mean that I will throw away my Syrian identity. I am honestly worried that I might become adrift and get lost in European society. I have to find a solution, but how? There must be a way to preserve my identity. I am not discriminating here. I know very well that there are great things in the West, but there are also things that I do not like - things that go against my principles. The East, similarly, has many traditions that I reject and consider dated...Perhaps it's possible to bring the two together. To find a happy medium...with the best of the two cultures.



NORA'S CASE: Considering displacement and refuge from a historical perspective

Activity: Nora's Suitcase

Aim: To explore some issues surrounding forced migration, beginning with an historical context. To clarify and anchor our values in relation to protection for people fleeing danger.

Subjects: History, English, CSPE, RE, Drama, TY.

Materials: Suitcase. Printout of evacuation background information [optional]. Writing materials.

Time: 60 - 80 minutes

'Nora's Case' is a resource kit, including an original evacuation suitcase and other wartime items such as ration books, identity cards and vouchers, available on loan from Galway One World Centre. If you don't have a suitcase use slides or printouts of the materials. Our suitcase originally belonged to Nora, who was 8 years old at the outbreak of World War 2. It was very kindly given to us by Nora's daughter, Sheila for use in schools.



Introduction:

Begin by showing the suitcase [or photo] to the group – pass it around the group so that each person can briefly hold/examine it.

Invite the group to:

Think of five words to describe the case - encourage rich language.

- Who might have owned it?
- What might it have been used for?

If the group doesn't guess the use, explain the background to the suitcase and how it would have been used for a child's evacuation journey from the city to a safer area during WWII.

Understanding the Evacuation:

Give some brief background details to Britain's evacuation operation. Slides can be found at www.galwayowc.org under the Beyond Borders tab.

Operation Pied Piper: Over a single weekend in September 1939, about 1.5 million children and vulnerable people were evacuated from their homes in British cities. They were hosted by families in the countryside, mostly in England and Wales, though some were sent to Canada, Australia and USA. There were 2 more waves of evacuation, in 1940, and the last one came in 1944, when 1 million children and vulnerable adults were evacuated from London alone. Some children returned home after a few weeks. Others stayed in the countryside for the remainder of the war. In total about 3.5 million British children experienced evacuation. Evacuations also took place in other countries, including Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Finland, in an attempt to keep children and other vulnerable people safe.

Activity: Packing to Leave:

- Invite the group to consider what items might be important to a child leaving their family, and home, and everything familiar to them, and why? Would these things still be important today?
- Ask for ideas about what today's children would want to pack. Are the lists similar? Mobile phones are likely to be mentioned, and this is a good moment to discuss how much more difficult it was to stay in touch with family and friends then, when home phones were unaffordable for most families.

Look at photographs of evacuee children waiting to board trains to their host-families. Note the labels seen hanging on some of the younger children's coats and ask if the students know what was written on them, or why? The labels gave the child's name and address. In most cases, families did not know where their children would be sent, and had to wait for their child or the host family to provide an address so that they could write to each other.

Note the resourcefulness of families, who invented creative ways to communicate, even under these very difficult circumstances.

Terrence was 7 and his brother Jack was 11 when they were evacuated from London in June 1940:

“When you get there,’ our mum said, ‘you find out your new address and you write it on the card. Then you post it at once. Now, the code. Our secret code ... You know how to write a kiss? Well, put one kiss if it’s horrible and I’ll come straight there and bring you back home. You put two kisses if it’s all right. And three kisses if it’s really nice. D’you see? Then I’ll know’ ”

We sent a postcard covered in kisses.

- From: *Kisses on A Postcard*, by Terrence Frisby (2010)

Evacuation was not mandatory, and some families found the prospect of separation, and of sending their children to total strangers during a time of conflict too difficult to bear. The following activity explores that dilemma:

Drama Activity: Stay or Leave?

Work in pairs to explore the decision faced by Bernie and Sylvia, two neighbours living in the city in wartime. Their children Ben and Sarah have been best friends since they were toddlers. There are posters everywhere urging families to evacuate their children to a safer place in the countryside. Sylvia has already decided to send Sarah away for her own safety. Berni is still unsure about Ben. Her husband, Frank, doesn’t like the idea of their son going to stay with strangers, so they’re leaning towards keeping him at home.

Sylvia, as a single parent, you realise that if anything happens to you, your daughter Sarah will be left alone in a dangerous situation. It worries you that you don’t know where your daughter will be sent, or how long she’ll be away. You’d hate to see her go, but you think it’s for the best. She’ll have fresh air, and better food. If anything happened to her in an air raid, you’d never forgive yourself.

Berni, you are very conflicted. Of course, you and your husband Frank want what’s best for your son Ben, but what if something happened to him while he was away? You’d never forgive yourself. People are saying it will all be over by Christmas, but you realise that if the war goes on longer Frank is likely to be conscripted into the army, leaving you alone.

- Evacuation is two days away, so a decision must be made soon. In pairs, take up the discussion in character, with Sylvia asking Berni, “So, have you decided yet?”

Give time for the pairs to develop a dialogue between the two friends. Then ‘thought-track’ the pairs to get a sense of the arguments for and against.

Drama Activity - Conscience Alley:

Evacuation day is tomorrow! Invite one of the 'Bernis' to further explore the dilemma of whether to send her son away or to keep him at home. [You can also opt to have two 'Bernis', or include her husband Frank, if it makes the activity less daunting to have two students in the role.]

Ask the whole class to form two lines, facing each other. Explain that these two lines will function as Berni's conscience, reminding her of the arguments for and against sending their child away. One line will give reasons for keeping Ben at home, and the other line will give reasons to send him to the countryside with the others. Give the class a moment for each person to think of a sentence, or even a word, to say to Berni to convince her of their side. Then invite her to walk very slowly down 'Conscience Alley', pausing to hear the two contrasting points from each side as she gradually makes her way down the line.

At the end pause and ask Berni how she's feeling. Then invite her to walk back up the line again. This time each member of Conscience Alley will repeat their phrase continuously, so that all of the statements are heard simultaneously. The group keeps repeating their words and phrases together, while Berni walks the whole way back along Conscience Alley. As she/he approaches the end of the line, signal for the group to bring the 'volume' down and finally fall silent.

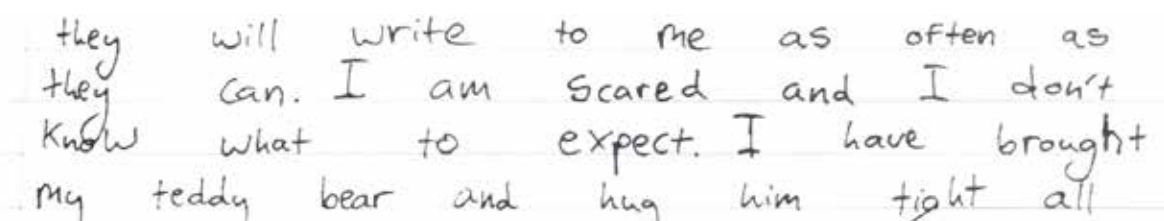
Ask Berni if she heard anything from either side that had a particular impact?

Throw the discussion open to the whole group – were any of the points made during the activity particularly striking? Would anyone be influenced by something they heard in Conscience Alley?

Finally ask Berni what the decision is going to be: send Ben away or keep him at home?

Reflection:

- How difficult do you think it would be to make such a decision about the safety of someone you love so much? What factor would make it most difficult for you? What would be your deciding factor?
- Did the activity spark any insights into the current day situation for people facing the prospect of having to flee for safety? What feelings does the activity evoke towards families facing the same dilemma as a result of persecution, conflict or poverty?



they will write to me as often as
they can. I am scared and I don't
know what to expect. I have brought
my teddy bear and hug him tight all

Activity: Creative Writing

Imagine now that you are an eight-year-old child, like Nora. Your parents have made their decision, and you are leaving for the countryside in the morning. Neither you, nor your parents know where you'll be going. You don't know when you'll be back, nor what will happen while you're away. All you know is that your parents say it's for your own good.

- Write a diary entry describing your hopes and your fears for the trip ahead. This is a piece of creative writing, so don't worry about spelling or paragraphs. Just write.

Give the group 5 minutes to write. Then come together as a group, ideally sitting in a circle. Explain that you are not asking anyone to read their full diary entry. Instead ask everyone to contribute just one line from their piece. (If they are very shy it can be just one word, but try to ensure that everyone makes a contribution.) Allow silence to fall before starting, and then go around the circle with each student reading their line in turn. Encourage the students to speak slowly, and clearly, and loud enough for all to hear.

Afterwards invite comments on words, phrases or images that stood out or moved the students. How did it feel to write the piece, to read it, and to hear the whole group's work?

The writing produced in this activity can be very powerful and the class might want to consider displaying or recording their individual or collective diary entries.

"We knew it was dangerous, but when you have a lion at your back and the sea in front, you take the sea."

- A teenager from Gambia interviewed in Italy [unicef.org]

Group Reflections:

During the Second World War, the families of over 3.5 million children in Britain faced the difficult decision of whether to send them away to a safer place. The children's experiences were mixed: some managed to stay with siblings, some became separated. Some were well looked after, while others had miserable experiences. For many children it was their first time out of the city, full of new sights, sounds, and tastes. Some pined for home, while for others the bonds formed with their host families lasted a lifetime.

- What did you learn about the decisions that people facing war, conflict or persecution might be forced to make?
- Today half the world's refugees are children. Do you see any connections, similarities, or differences between the story of children like Nora in WWII, and the current situation for children and young people forced to leave their homes for safety?

Suggestions for follow up with the following activities:

- "Yes But: The History of Four Excuses", for discussion on contemporaneous evacuations, and attempts to flee Nazi occupied territory.
- Human Rights Matching Cards.
- If the World Was 30 People, for a look at the contemporary situation regarding refuge and forced migration.



“YES, BUT...”: The History of Four Excuses for Exclusion

Drama, art, and discussion-based activities to explore the response of the international community to the refugee crisis in the run up to WWII, and to consider what parallels and lessons can be drawn for today’s crisis.

Background:

Following the First World War the world entered a period of economic recession. Businesses struggled, and unemployment was high. In Germany, people suffered severe hardship as a result of the imposition of crippling war debts. Pointing the finger of blame at Jews helped to boost Nazi popularity and played a role in bringing Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist party to power in 1933. Once in government the Nazis set out to ‘ethnically cleanse’ Germany by making life so intolerable for Jewish people that they would be forced to leave. Jewish businesses were boycotted, Nazi propaganda demonised the community, and dozens of anti-Semitic laws and regulations were enacted excluding Jewish people from public education, professions, and positions, and finally stripping them of citizenship altogether. Communists, trade unionists, the Roma community, LGBT people, People of Colour, people with disabilities, and others were also systematically targeted. By 1938 the impact of these policies, and the mounting violence of the Nazis, had driven 150,000 Jewish people - a quarter of the population - to neighbouring countries, and beyond.

Class Discussion/Key Question:

Until 1941 escape from Nazi control was possible for Jewish people, and in some cases even encouraged - as long as they left anything of value behind. ***What, then, was the obstacle for many Jewish people seeking safety?***

Allow time for the students to address this question. Of course, the decision to flee one’s home, family members, studies, work, and community would be difficult under any circumstances, as well as being beyond the financial means of some, and this may be acknowledged as part of the discussion here.

The key point, for this activity, is to note that the ***biggest difficulty for people attempting to flee Nazi persecution was finding countries that would allow refugees to enter.***

The failure of the international community to act demonstrated that refugees could not rely on the ‘good will’ of countries to admit them, even under the most threatening circumstances. One outcome of this collective refusal to protect people in need, was the move to articulate and enshrine the right to seek refuge in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1951 Refugee Convention.

A full module of classroom activities and background materials dealing with these issues can be found at www.facinghistory.org/topics

The Evian Conference, 1938

The ‘refugee issue’ became such a pressing concern that in May 1938 an international conference was called by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt. (Though it has been argued that this step was taken to deflect attention from inaction by the US administration). Delegates from 32 countries spent a week at the conference, held in Evian, France, and it was widely covered by the world’s press.

Despite evidence of mounting Nazi persecution, delegates from almost all countries lined up to affirm their nation’s reputation for hospitality and humanitarianism, and to offer sympathy for the Jewish community’s plight, but few were willing to offer refuge. The outcome of the conference was seen as a propaganda coup by the Nazis, allowing the regime to state that it was “astonishing” that the nations most critical of German anti-Semitism refused to open their doors to the Jewish community, “when the opportunity offer[ed].”

The Washington Post headlined one report from the conference, “YES, BUT—.”

The correspondent wrote, “It has been a disappointment, if not altogether a surprise... that delegates take the floor to say, ‘We feel sorry for the refugees... but—.’”

Drama Activity: “Yes, But...”

Aim: Explore the rationale given for refusing entry to people attempting to flee from Nazi persecution (the ‘4 excuses’).

For students to consider the moral and ethical validity of those ‘4 excuses’.

Assess the ‘4 Excuses’ against the actions and inaction of contemporary governments.

Time: 80 minutes

Subjects: History, English, TY.

Give the background to the Evian conference and note that the nations represented had 4 main ‘buts...’, or excuses, for their unwillingness to take action to save lives. Explain that the following activity sets out to explore and evaluate those excuses.

Ask the students to form six small groups of two or three.

- Groups 1 – 4 are conference delegates of various countries, giving some of their excuses for blocking the entry of Jewish refugees.
- Group 5 will be the Irish delegation, along with the Irish Ambassador to Germany, Charles Bewley.
- Group 6 will represent humanitarian groups, who also attended the conference, as well as concerned individuals. The perspective given from this group is that of the Irish writer Herbert Butler.
- Group 7 - the remaining class members - are journalists from around the world whose job is to assess the delegate’s statements and to report about the conference.

Country Delegate Roles:

Allocate one 'But'/excuse to each of the four delegate groups. We have included examples from just one country for each of the points below but bear in mind that each of these excuses for inaction was repeated by numerous delegates.

Allow a few minutes for the delegates to prepare their speeches: remember to praise your country's grand tradition of hospitality, and to express your sympathy for the Jewish people... "but."

Excuse Number 1: Too Many People.

Many countries stated that they had already accommodated enough refugees/immigrants from Central Europe. The French delegate, for example stated that France had reached, "the extreme point of saturation as regards admission of refugees."

Excuse Number 2: Money.

This was also a concern of several countries. Canada, for example, cited the economy, saying that unemployment at home was already at a high level, and the country could not afford to take on additional costs.

Excuse Number 3: Terrorism.

Some countries said they were sympathetic to Jewish refugees, but blocked entry on security grounds, in case Nazi terrorists would take advantage of the crisis and pose as refugees to gain access to their countries. The US State Department promoted the idea that the public should be warned that, "disguised as refugees, Nazi agents have penetrated all over the world." This was part of the reason that many of the US places that were made available to assist people fleeing from Nazi persecution were left unfilled between 1933 and 1945.

Excuse Number 4: Religious differences.

Some countries voiced fears of a clash between Jewish and Christian values and practices, and claimed that religious or 'racial' differences would create tensions in their countries. Anti-Semitism was on full display at the Evian conference. The Australian delegate, for example, said that his country had no "racial problems," and did not want to create any by bringing in Jewish refugees. Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King stated that he wished to, "keep this part of the Continent free from unrest and from too great an intermixture of foreign strains of blood."

Group 5: The Irish Delegation and Official Irish Attitudes

Francis T. Creamins spoke on behalf of the Irish government, saying they were, “happy to...demonstrate their sympathy, even though...they are not, to their great regret, in a position to make any substantial contribution to the solution.” Amongst the reasons given were the economic situation, unemployment, and a concern about being overwhelmed with more people.

Charles Bewley, the notoriously anti-Semitic Irish Ambassador in Berlin from 1932 – 39, advised that Ireland should be protected from the ‘contamination’ that would come from granting visas to Jewish refugees and resulted in practically all applications being refused.

The government appointed the *Irish Co-ordinating Committee for the Relief of Christian Refugees* to deal with the issue, which ruled that Jewish people would only be allowed to settle in Ireland if they converted to Christianity. Under these limited conditions it is estimated that fewer than 100 people were able to find safety in Ireland during WWII, including Nobel-prize winner Erwin Schrödinger who was invited to Ireland by Éamon de Valera in 1939 to be the first director of theoretical physics at Trinity College Dublin.

Group 6: Humanitarian Groups and Concerned Individuals

Irish writer Herbert Butler attended the conference and was appalled by the attitude of the international community, particularly the Irish delegation. Butler travelled to Vienna with his wife, Peggie Guthrie, where they attempted to support Jewish people to escape. The couple worked with Irish Quakers and others to secure exit visas for dozens of people, bringing them to Ireland and helping them onwards to the US (as they did not have permission to remain in Ireland).

Group 7: The rest of the class are journalists who can work in pairs to question the delegates, and assess their decisions, and the justifications for them.

- Note each of the arguments against accepting refugees. What are the four main arguments against providing refuge?
- Do these arguments seem reasonable? If not, how would you counter each of them?
- Do they seem ethical, considering the threats faced by the refugees?
- Note instances when you detect underlying anti-Semitism in the excuses.
- Write headlines for your dispatches from the conference and sketch them out on your sheets of paper.

Sources:

Facing History and Ourselves / www.facinghistory.org

www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/how-ireland-failed-refugees-from-nazi-germany-1.2961062

www.irishtimes.com/news/we-never-let-them-in-1.153649

www.difp.ie/docs/1938/Evians-les-Bains-Refugee-Conference/2346.htm

Visual Arts Resource: Search for watercolours from the diary of Elisabeth Kaufmann, a visual chronicle of persecution and displacement of thousands of Jewish people in France.

Consequences of International Inaction:

When the Evian conference was first announced, Hitler goaded the attending nations by offering to send Jewish people to their countries, “even on luxury ships.” Less than a year later, in May 1939, 900 Jewish people attempted to make their own escape from Nazi persecution on an ocean liner, the SS St. Louis. The refugees made it across the Atlantic, but were turned away by Cuba, Canada, and the United States and were eventually forced to return to Europe. Close to a third of the group were subsequently murdered in Nazi concentration camps.

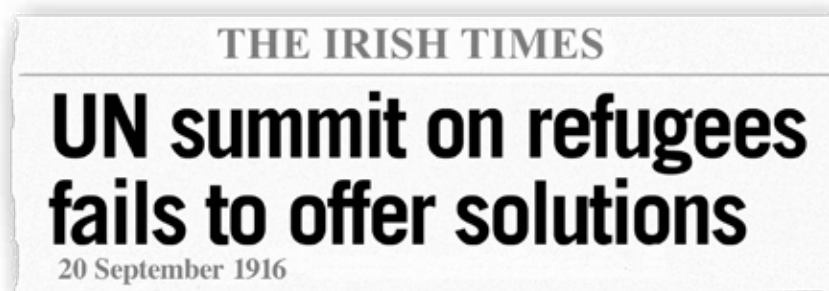
Video: Gerald Granston was six years old when he sailed on the SS St. Louis with his father. His memories of the increasingly frantic efforts to find permission to dock are recalled in a 4 minute short film, available at www.bbc.com/news/av/magazine-39857056/the-jewish-refugees-the-us-turned-away

Group Discussion: Bringing It All Back Home

Aim: Debrief the groups and hear brief feedback on the roleplay.

Explore any contemporary connections with the issues that emerged.

- How do the 4 Excuses from the Evian conference sound in hindsight?
- Do any of these excuses sound familiar today? Do you see any parallels with the international response to the crisis for refugees today? Are the ‘4 Excuses’ still in use?
- In 2016 the largest Global Leaders’ Summit on Refuge and Mass Migration took place at the UN, attended by 52 countries. Research the outcome of the conference. How do you think history will judge the actions and inactions of this generation of leaders?
- Following the Global Leader’s Summit, the EU struck a deal with Turkey in March 2016 to police migration routes in order to keep refugees from entering Europe. Have the class research conditions for refugees in Moira camp in Lesbos, Greece, where 19,000 people are held in an area equipped for 3,000. In the USA, similar arrangements have been made with the Mexican government, and draconian measures have been enacted in the United States, separating parents and children, and incarcerating them in conditions that have been condemned around the world.
- If leaders are failing to take adequate action, what can citizens do in recognition and support of refugee rights?
- If the right to seek refuge is protected under international human rights law, how can leaders and decision makers be held accountable when those rights are thwarted or denied?



Professor Alexander Betts, Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. “These events should have been the reform moment when the world came together to update a broken refugee system...What will it do to confront systematic non-compliance with refugee law in Europe or Australia, or to shape a response to the millions of people who will be displaced by factors such as climate change that fall outside the existing refugee framework?”

The summits have largely bypassed the biggest and most urgent questions... There is widespread acknowledgement that the system is broken and yet no appetite to fix it.”



DEALING WITH STEREOTYPES

Activity: Drawing out Stereotypes

Aim: To explore the dynamics and impact of stereotypes

Materials: Pens, paper, or clay.

Time: 40 minutes +

Opening Question: What does 'stereotype' mean? Where does the word come from?

The word *stereotype* comes from 18th Century French and was a term used in printing, referring to a metal printing plate that was an identical copy of the original type. The word *cliché* has similar origins.

What connections can you see between the origins of the word, and the meaning that developed later related to a fixed, over-simplified view of a social group?

Activity: Ask the group to consider how they would explain or represent 'Irish culture' to someone who'd never been here?

In pairs or small groups, draw or sculpt (if using clay) 4 things or symbols to represent and help explain 'Irishness', to someone who's never been to Ireland or met Irish people. The pictures don't have to be literal – you can think creatively (using symbols or metaphors) about what represents *Irishness* to you.

Give time to look at each group's work and to ask questions about the things that are represented.

- What was it like to try to represent Irish culture in this way? Did you feel limited?
- Looking at the collection of images, are there any common, or repeated images?
- Which items or symbols do you feel most successfully represent Irish culture (if any)?
- Does the selection of symbols on display do justice to the diversity and complexity of culture in Ireland? If not, what, or whose culture, is left out? Is there anything you'd like to add?
- Are there any that you object to, or make you uncomfortable? Are there any you might choose to remove?
- Are any of them false or misleading? For example, images of pints and whiskey often appear in this activity, but is this association with alcohol outdated? Since 2005, Ireland fell from 8th place to 18th in European consumption rates, behind France, UK and Germany, while teenager's alcohol use is down almost 50% since 1995 (ESPAD 2015).
- What gets left out or lost when we try to reduce something as rich, complex, and varied as culture to a handful of symbols?

- Looking beyond Ireland, what kind of images do we have of other nationalities or cultures. In particular, what are the dominant images of cultures from the Global South or from the Middle East?
 - Are they similarly limited?
 - Where do those images come from?
 - What is the impact of these images, on how we see each other, and ourselves?
 - How might it feel to have your culture consistently portrayed in simplistic, limited, or negative terms?
 - How can we widen our perspective?

Poetry Activity: "The World Can Be Looked At Another Way"

Explore, discuss, and perform 'Refugees' by Brian Bilston.

Aim: Engaging with forced migration issues through creative medium of poetry. Addressing fears, stereotypes and scapegoating in a constructive context. Using poetry to share a social justice message with a wider audience. Nurturing visions of hope.

Materials: Print out of 'Refugees' by Brian Bilston. For the group performance you will need forward and reverse A4 line-by-line versions. These can be downloaded for printing at galwayowc.org under the Beyond Borders tab.

Time: 40 - 80 minutes

Subjects: English, RE, CSPE, TY.

Background:

Brian Bilston wrote this poem in 2016 as a response to stereotypes and negative comments that he saw appearing on news sites and social media with increasing frequency. The original poem can be found at brianbilston.com/2016/03/23/refugees/



REFUGEES

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)

- Brian Bilston

Approach:

Do not reveal that this is a reverse-poem until the students have time to discuss the first reading.

Briefly explain the background to the poem. Either read the poem to the group, or pass out the 'Forward' version, giving one line each to a group of 13 volunteers to read aloud.

Give the volunteers a moment to familiarise themselves with their line, and then read slowly and clearly aloud as a group.

When they reach the end, make time for reflection on the poem.

- How does it feel to read, and to hear these words?
- Are these attitudes familiar? Are these widely held views?
- How do you think it might feel to be described in this way, or to meet these attitudes in school, in your community, or on the street?
- Is it important to challenge attitudes like this? Can an alternative view be shared? If so, how?

It is unfair to label an entire group, and hurtful to those on the receiving end. If stereotypes become rampant, there is an increased risk of prejudice, discrimination and even violence.

The World Can Be Looked At Another Way:

Explain that the poet is one of many people who believes in an alternative to the attitudes and policies described in the first reading. After the last lines of the poem, he leaves instructions for his readers: 'Now read from bottom to top.'

Pass around the Reverse version of the poem, again giving one line to each of the performers, and invite them to do a second reading.

- What is your response to the second vision of society?
- Does it feel different to read and perform?
- Which society (Version 1, or Version 2) would you prefer to live in?
- Does the reverse reading (Version 2) of the poem depict a realistic prospect for the future?
- Who would benefit if society moved closer to Version 2?
- What would need to change, and how can we help to contribute to building that future?

The reality is that *anyone* could become a refugee, if the circumstances dictated, and everyone deserves to live in a society that respects our dignity and recognises our human rights.

Activity: Iceberg Analysis – What's Under The Surface?

Materials: paper/large post-its and markers

Time: 25 minutes

Draw an iceberg on the board and write 'Stereotypes about Migrations' on the top.

- Where do attitudes and beliefs like the ones in Version 1 of Brian Bilston's poem come from? Might they be fueled, in part, by myths and misinformation of the kind examined elsewhere in this pack? (For example, *If The World Was 30 People* activity).
- What kind of beliefs, feelings or attitudes might lie behind views of this kind?
- What kind of actions or behavior are likely to follow from those beliefs and feelings?

- Who benefits and who loses when views like these go unquestioned and become widespread?
- Is there a way of looking at these issues differently?

If the idea of “looking after our own [first]” comes up, explore the question of who should have the power to decide who belongs, or not?

More Equal Societies are Better For Everyone: Research confirms that higher levels of equality create better outcomes for the whole society. Equality is linked to longer and healthier lives, lower levels of violence, obesity, imprisonment and addiction, as well as lower levels of waste and a gentler impact on the earth’s resources.

Source: *The Spirit Level: Why More Equality Makes Societies Stronger*. Richard G. Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009)

Creative Activism Case Study: Digital Media Mapping Project

Activists Karoline Schwarz and Lutz Helm created hoaxmap.org, a mapping tool to debunk false rumours, stories and ‘fake news’ that is sometimes spread with the intention of stirring up hostility and bigotry against migrants. Their online map notes the date, locations and a brief summary of supposed incidents or crimes that are said to have been committed by people seeking refuge in Germany and Austria. It then provides a link to a subsequent credible news report in which the claims have been investigated and found to be false.

The hoax stories range from rumours of preferential treatment of refugees to accusations of serious crime which frequently ‘go viral’ on social media, while the refutations are rarely publicised in the same way. Some stories are misunderstandings, or based on information taken out of context, but others are deliberately misleading. Within two years there were almost 500 debunked hoaxes marked on the map, which Karoline hopes will go some way to challenging misinformation and stereotypes about refugees coming to the area.



German Map Fights Migrant Myths. bbc.com (10 February 2016)

Creative Activity: Digital Rumour Map / Anti-Rumour Memes

Galway One World Centre facilitators have noted a widespread and recurring rumour that feeds the myth of ‘asylum seekers’ enjoying excessive welfare payments and preferential supports. The tellers usually insist that the following events were witnessed by a friend-of-a-friend, or by a close relation. Strangely, no matter where the story has been heard around the country, it goes the same way:

“A refugee is seen waiting at a bus stop. She has several bags of shopping, and a baby in a buggy [the pram or buggy is often described as ‘top of the range’]. When the bus arrives it is already quite full, so the driver tells the woman that she’ll have to fold the buggy to take it aboard. The woman responds by saying that she can’t be bothered to go to all that trouble, and she boards the bus with her baby and shopping in her arms, leaving the buggy behind on the street by the bus stop, proclaiming that it doesn’t matter because “social welfare” will give her a new one the next day.”

Since 2000, we’ve heard this story in counties Carlow, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Limerick, Kerry, and Kildare, and multiple times in Dublin and Galway.



“Map of Abandoned Buggies.”
Satirical piece by TY Students, County Galway

Discussion: How would you gauge the credibility of a rumour like this?

Do any of the details raise questions for you?

- How can the ‘witness’ tell that the woman with the baby and buggy is a refugee?
- How probable is it that someone would choose to leave a buggy behind and carry their baby, and shopping instead? (A seven-month old baby weighs about 8 kg and requires two hands to carry safely for even a short distance. A single bag of mixed groceries can weigh between 2 – 4kg)
- How long do you think it takes to process social welfare claims? Social welfare staff insists that no such provision would be made to replace a buggy in this way. Do you think it’s likely that people are given new equipment whenever they ask for it?
- How can we explain the same scenario (allegedly) occurring in so many different parts of the country?
- Overall, do you consider it likely that this story is true, or a myth? What is your reasoning?

- If you think that it has been made up, what do you think is the intention of inventing and/or spreading the story? Psychologists suggest that people may find rumours and myths appealing because they appear to validate and reinforce their existing beliefs. The stories provide ‘proof’ that their biases and fears are genuine.
- Who loses and who benefits from the spread of stories like the one above?
- What can people do when they hear or see a story like this being shared?

Research from Stanford University (2014) suggests that when people see a rumour debunked with a credible source it slows down how much it is shared.

When a social media post receives a comment with a link debunking a false rumour, this comment increases the likelihood that a reshare of a rumour will be deleted.

Creative Activity: Cartoons/Memes



Limerick based Doras Luimní created the *Dispelling the Myths* project to counteract the proliferation of bias and rumours in Ireland. A resource pack is available at: <https://doras.org/anti-rumours-campaign/>

Try creating memes to debunk some of the myths contained in the pack. See the section on Cartoons and Memes for Social Justice for tips on planning and creating your artwork.



MIGRATION MYTHS

Tackling misinformation about refuge and migration

Debates on refuge and migration issues can be emotive and are often characterised by misinformation and stereotypes. Misconceptions can multiply because of fear or ignorance, but in some cases, these myths are spread to cause division and hostility.

This section can be used as an activity to explore some of the most common arguments put forward against welcoming people seeking refuge, to assess whether they are based on fact or myths, and to explore the human rights dimension to the issue.

Alternatively, it is offered here to provide background information to draw on if needed.

Aim: To explore and challenge misinformation and stereotypes relating to refuge and migration.

Materials: A set of 'Some People Say' statements and corresponding responses, enough to provide at least one for each small group.

Large sheets of paper, markers/pens

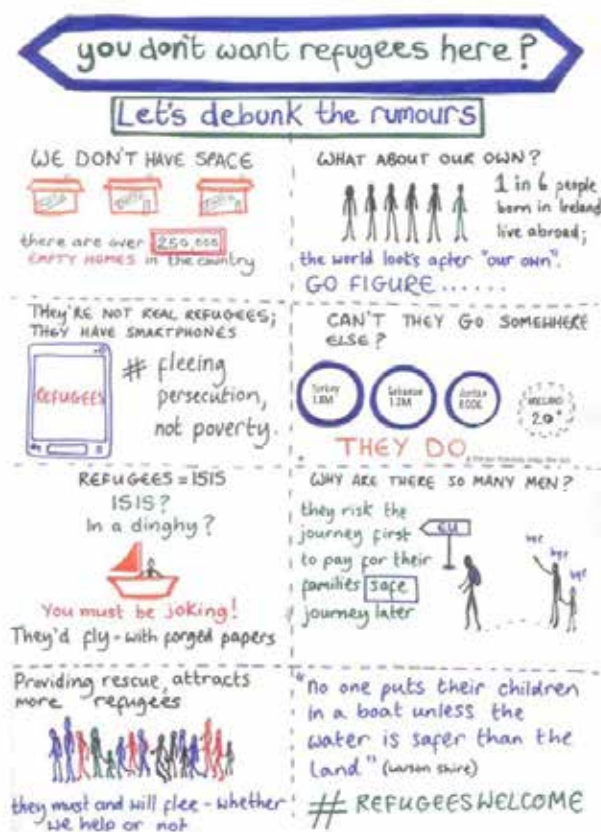
Time: 80 minutes

Firstly, ensure that the whole group is aware that while some of the questions we'll be addressing involve economic arguments, if we are talking about people seeking refuge, it's a *human rights issue*, not an economic one. Each of us has the right to seek asylum in a new country, if we are not protected in our own. More broadly, migration is a natural human experience, but one that is restricted or denied to many in deeply uneven and unjust ways.

Secondly, note that many objections to refuge and migration are based on an underlying assumption that people coming into a new country or community is negative. This perception is worth questioning. The arrival of new people to a community comes with great potential, for both parties. However, when misinformation and negative stereotypes are allowed to go unchallenged the results are increased discrimination, harassment, and harm. Arson attacks on hotels being proposed as Direct Provision centres are examples of this.

Process: Working in small groups, invite each group to consider one of the Migration statements (below). You don't have to share your own opinion on the statement, but do begin by discussing your responses to the questions below before looking at the statistics provided to see if they offer any new information, or a different perspective.

- Are these statements familiar?
- Reflect on what the person making each statement might be thinking (where did they get their information?)
- What might they be feeling, and how are they likely to act or behave, based on their feelings and beliefs?
- What is the outcome if ideas like these become widespread?
- How might someone respond to statements like these, from a human rights perspective, based on evidence and/or based on values (for example, from a human rights perspective),?
- If you were going to reword the Migration statement to reflect your discussion, and the information you looked at, what would it say?



This infographic from Refugee and Migrants Solidarity Ireland [RAMSI] is a great example of how some common myths and stereotypes about refugee and migration can be addressed effectively and make a strong impact with few words.

Poster Making: Share the learning from your exploration and discussion on your Migration statement by creating a poster to summarise and visualise the main points with a simple infographic or drawing. Give it a heading and add any additional information, statistics or perspectives you think are relevant. Keep it clear and simple.

Gallery Walk: Ask for half the group to stay with their poster to answer questions and explain the main points, while the other half of the group has time to take a walk around the room to see the other posters. Then swap around so that the everyone has a turn to see all the statements and ask questions.

Return to the larger group to discuss responses to the original statements, and the posters.

- Did you learn anything new?
- Did anything surprise you?
- It is often said that 'ignorance' drives fear and stereotypes. What do you think is the impact of misinformation about refuge and migration?
- Do you think that access to reliable information is enough to change people's minds on human rights issues? If not, what do you think is required to strengthen respect for human rights?

Creative Action Follow Up:

Take photographs of the posters and consider creating a larger display for the school or the wider community.

Rehearse and perform the Brian Bilston poem to an audience in the school, or the wider community.

Invite those attending to engage in a discussion about confronting myths and fears based on misinformation and dehumanising narratives.



Poster by Aoibhín Twomey, Gort Community School

'Some People Say'

Critical Thinking About Migration Narratives

Some people say: "MIDDLE EASTERN STATES DON'T HELP, SO WHY SHOULD WE?"

Neighbouring countries do by far the most to host refugees from conflict-torn states in the Middle East - as is the case with conflicts around the world. Turkey hosts more than 3.5 million people from Syria, while about a quarter of Lebanon's population is made up of refugees from neighbouring countries. There are well over 1 million seeking safety in Iran, and over 250,000 Syrians in Iraq. Pakistan hosts 1.4 million people. Jordan, with a population of 6 million, hosts over 600,000 refugees.

The UNHCR estimates that there are between 100,000 and 500,000 Syrian refugees in Saudi Arabia, with the right to work, education and healthcare. However, because these countries have not signed up to UN agreements on asylum, the people seeking safety there are not officially recognised as refugees and are not included in official global figures. While there is valid criticism of many countries, including the Gulf States (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and UAE) for not doing more, according to the World Bank the number of Syrians living in the Gulf States increased from 241,000 to more than 1.3 million between 2013 and 2015.

www.huffpost.com/entry/europes-crisis-refugees_b_8175924

www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-migration-six-myths-about-immigration-debunked-as-latest-figures-show-fall-in-non-eu-arrivals-a6895341.html

Some people say: "IT'S ONLY YOUNG MEN COMING AS REFUGEES – THE REALLY VULNERABLE GET LEFT AT HOME."

"Look at what's happening all over Europe...When you look at that migration, you see so many young, strong men. Does anyone notice that? Am I the only one? Young, strong men. And you're almost like, 'Why aren't they fighting?' You don't see that many women and children."

- Donald Trump, campaign rally, April 28, 2016

In January and February of 2016, shortly before Donald Trump made the above speech, the UN estimated that two thirds of all refugees entering Europe were women or children, so his statement does not reflect reality.

However, in the early stages of a conflict or political crisis it is not uncommon for men and boys to outnumber women on the journey to safety. There are two main reasons:

Young men are at the most serious risk of conscription into the army or being coerced into paramilitary groups. Many are appalled at the prospect of being forced to use weapons against their fellow country men and women. Families are often desperate to send boys and young men away from the conflict in order to protect them.

The journey may be considered too dangerous for women and children to undertake, or too expensive for the whole family, and so men may go ahead in the hope of reaching a safe country, and then applying for their family to join them by a safer route.

www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/politics-policy-people/gendering-refugee-experiences

www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/05/world-afraid-young-refugee-men-160530110614219.html

Some people say: “REFUGEES ARE SAFE ONCE THEY REACH EUROPE”

There are numerous examples of people facing inhumane treatment and living in dangerous and degrading conditions after coming to Europe. The EU’s long-term policy has been to block people from entering and seeking asylum, using physical deterrents as well as legal and bureaucratic obstacles. In 2016 and 2017, the EU made controversial deals with Turkey and Libya, which were roundly condemned by human rights groups. These deals have exposed refugees to increased violence and risk, and left thousands of people stranded in deplorable conditions in camps in Libya, Greece, France, and elsewhere. Moira camp on the Greek island of Lesbos was intended to provide temporary basic shelter for about 3,000 people but there are now well over 19,000 people in an overcrowded, unsanitary, and dangerous situation, with woefully inadequate provisions.

Amnesty International has condemned the EU for striking a deal with the Croatian government to deter entry to refugees despite reports of people being forcibly expelled to camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina and denied the right to have their asylum claims considered. By March 2019, this left over 5,500 women, men, and children corralled in disused factories over the border, without adequate food, water, shelter, or medical care. In other parts of Europe there are reports of refugees enduring brutal treatment at the hands of the police, even against children, and of police failing to protect refugees when attacked by right-wing groups.

Meanwhile, several European governments have pushed for harsh penalties for volunteers and NGOs who attempt to assist people caught in critical, and even life-threatening situations. In 2019, 104 people were arrested for helping refugees - more than in any other year on record. In just one example of this clamp-down young Cork man Sean Binder, and Syrian volunteer Sara Mardini were arrested and imprisoned along with two others, whilst volunteering with a Greek NGO. They face up to 25 years in prison.

“You have people who are dying and living in a four-metre tent with seven relatives. They have limited access to water. Hygiene is zero. Privacy is zero. Security: zero. Children’s rights: zero. Human rights: zero.”

- Sara Yardini, describing conditions in Moira Camp, Greece.

In 2018, 2,300 people drowned attempting to cross the Mediterranean to seek safety. The Irish Navy was an important partner in the team that patrolled the area, saving over 45,000 lives and leading to the arrest of 150 smugglers between 2015 - 2019. Yet in 2019 the EU called off its naval rescue patrols in the Mediterranean, putting thousands of lives at risk. Voluntary sea rescue missions like Pro Activa Open Arms, Sea Watch, SOS Méditerranée, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and others have also been prevented from carrying out rescue patrols. They have been blocked from entering ports, barred from allowing people who were rescued at sea to disembark, and had ships seized. Crews have had human trafficking laws used against them, and many face criminal prosecution for attempting to save lives. In 2019 captain of the rescue ship *Iuventa*, Pia Klemp, was arrested with nine others. Between 2016 and 2017 the *Iuventa* was involved in the rescue of over 14,000 lives at sea. “[We now face] up to twenty years in prison [and enormous fines] for having rescued those people and brought them to Europe. We are not alone. The criminalisation of solidarity across Europe, at sea and on land, has demonstrated the lengths to which the European Union will go to make migrants’ lives expendable.”

www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/eu-ends-migrant-rescue-mission-in-mediterranean-1.3840827

www.amnesty.ie/croatia-eu-complicit-in-violence-and-abuse-by-police-against-refugees-and-migrants/

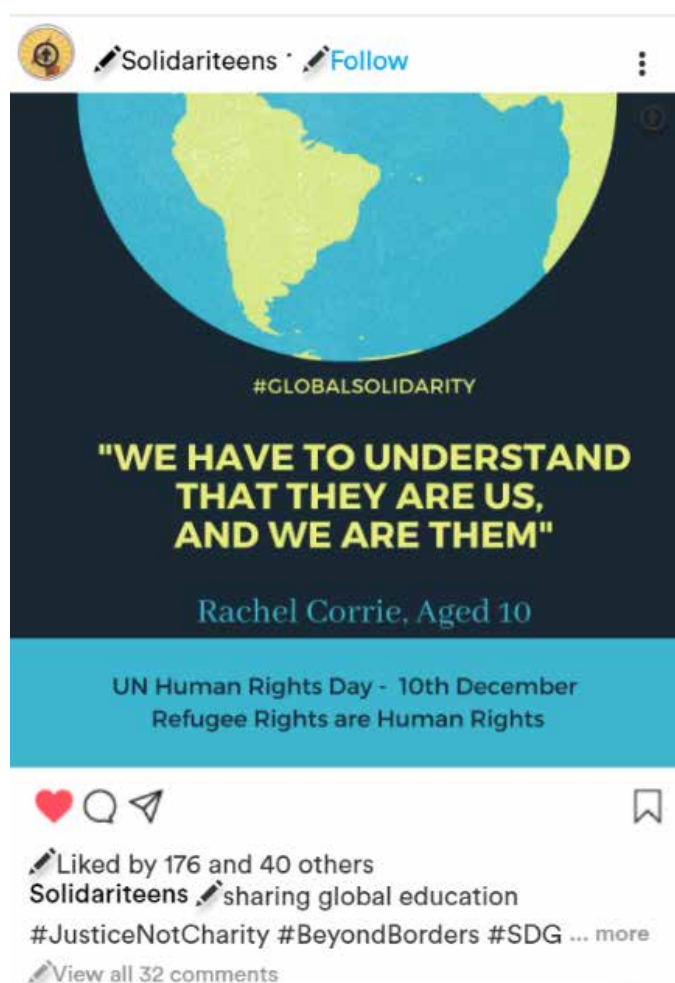
In August 2019, the Mayor of Paris awarded Captain Pia Klemp and Captain Carola Rackete with the prestigious Médaille Grand Vermeil. They refused to accept the honour. Pia explained her reason for declining the medal:

“I’m not a humanitarian. I am not there to ‘aid’. I stand with you in solidarity. We do not need medals. We do not need authorities deciding about who is a ‘hero’ and who is ‘illegal’. In fact, they are in no position to make this call, because we are all equal. What we need are freedom and rights. It is time we call out hypocritical honourings and fill the void with social justice...”

Activity

- Watch this short video and search online to learn more about Sara Yardini and her sister Yusra's journey from Syria, and their subsequent work to protect refugee rights:
www.unhcr.org/ph/16798-october-e-newsletter-yusramardini.html
- Consider the meaning of solidarity - and if you see it differently from charity - as you watch Pia Klemp's talk about why she fights for human rights, and read her powerful statement about why she refused to accept a medal from the Mayor of Paris in honour of her 'humanitarian work'.
www.ted.com/talks/pia_klemp_why_i_fight_for_solidarity
www.facebook.com/pia.klemp/posts/10156318059491611
- In her Ted Talk, Pia Klemp says that as an activist she has been inspired by the words of environmentalist Bruno Manser: "Those who have understood and do not act have not understood after all." What kind of understanding do you think moves people to act in solidarity? Is it a deeper kind of understanding or realisation, that goes beyond gaining information and learning facts? What helps, and what hinders, the development of this kind of deep understanding?

Chose a quote that speaks to you about solidarity and illustrate it for display or sharing online.



Some people say: “EUROPE HAS TAKEN ENOUGH PEOPLE.”

By 2019 the UN estimated that over 70.7 million people had been forced to flee their homes to seek safety. The vast majority of these are in the Global South: 41 million are ‘internally displaced’ within their own countries and 80% of the 25.9 million people fled to a neighbouring country. Only a small minority seek refuge in Europe or North America. (UNHCR, 2019)

The 1.5 million people entering the EU in 2015 at the height of the ‘crisis’ corresponded to 0.3% of EU inhabitants.

The number of people coming to Europe almost halved in the last two years. Yet, the rejection rate for asylum requests in Europe has almost doubled in three years, from 37% in 2016 to 64% in 2019 (Eurostat, 2019). In Italy, rejections were at 80% at the start of 2019, up from 60% the previous year. Backlogs in processing applications have been building, in part because of pressure and criticism from right-wing parties, and because an increase in rejections leads to lengthier appeals.

Some people say: “WE CAN’T AFFORD TO TAKE IN MORE PEOPLE.”

Europe spends lots of money on this issue – but on keeping people out rather than protecting their lives and rights. In 6 years (2007 - 2013) the EU spent nearly €2 billion enforcing its external borders, and in 2016 pledged to give another €6 billion to Turkey to keep refugees from crossing the sea into Europe. Deals with Libya and Croatia add to these costs.

Similarly, the Australian government spent \$4.06bn on ‘border protection’ in 2017, and it has been estimated that an additional \$400,000 per person was spent, per year, to detain 785 adults and 115 children in notorious island detention centres like Nauru.

It’s true that Ireland was badly hit in the financial crash of 2008, but it is still a very wealthy country in global terms. Even during the economic boom (the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ period), when this was considered one of the richest countries in the world, fewer than 1.5% of applications for asylum were accepted at first instance - the lowest rate in the EU at the time.

Figures like these raise questions about whether lack of money is the issue.

<https://euobserver.com/migration/145872>

www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jan/05/australias-border-protection-policies-cost-taxpayers-4bn-last-year

Some people say: “IRELAND TAKES A LOT OF REFUGEES ALREADY”

Everyone has the right to seek refuge in another country, if they face persecution in their own country, and countries are obliged to protect the rights of people in need of asylum.

Between 2015 – 2017 there were 8,400 asylum applications in Ireland, equivalent to 0.17% of the population. For comparison, Lebanon, a country a quarter of the size of Ireland, with a population of about 4.5 million, was host to an additional 1.5 million people fleeing conflict in Syria, as well as Palestinian refugees, and others. (2016)

The numbers of people seeking asylum in Ireland increased in 2019, but this still places us in 14th position in the EU, per capita. (Eurostat, 2019)

<https://notesonthefront.typepad.com/politicaconomy/2019/01/the-far-rights-problem-with-immigration-facts.html>
www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/number-of-new-asylum-seekers-up-26-911311.html

Some people say: “IRELAND HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF IMMIGRATION IN EUROPE.”

Some claim that Ireland has an unusually high number of “foreign-born” people living here. Indeed, figures from the last Census (CSO, 2016) show that 17.3% of all residents are born outside the state (that’s 800,000 people) - the second-highest rate in the EU. But these figures are misleading: over 300,000 (almost 40%) are Irish nationals who were born abroad. When we discount this, the number of ‘foreign-

born’ Irish residents is about 10.7% - close to the OECD average [a club of mostly high-income countries.] The number of people born to Irish parents while living abroad went up substantially since 2011 as more and more people migrated from Ireland to look for work and better opportunities following the economic crash and recession of the past decade. In 2014, 17.5% of Irish-born people lived abroad – the highest per capita rate in the world (OECD, 2015).

Overall, immigration to Ireland is declining - between April 2018 – 2019 it fell by 1.9% (CSO, April 2019). But it is worth asking why people sharing their lives and contributing their skills and experiences to Irish society would be presented, by some, as a bad thing?

<https://notesonthefront.typepad.com/politiceconomy/2019/01/follow-up-to-the-far-rights-problems-with-immigration-data.html>
<https://data.oecd.org/migration/foreign-born-population.htm#indicator-chart>
https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2017/Chapter_5_Diversity.pdf

Some people say: “PEOPLE ARE COMING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS”

Accusations of people “sponging” on the welfare system is an old trope that has been used against a whole range of Irish groups in the past but has recently been rehashed to stir up resentment and hostility to people coming to Ireland.

Statistics from Ireland show that migrants are more likely to be working and less likely to claim the dole than Irish people are. Research from the UK and elsewhere shows something similar.

For almost 20 years Government policy was to forbid people in Direct Provision the right to work while their claim was being processed (which could take years). For most people seeking safety in a new country, their priority is to get their lives back on track, including employment, and education for their children. The Right To Work campaign has been led by MASI - the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland - and the ban on work was finally overturned because of a legal challenge by a former asylum seeker. The Irish government went to court to defend the ban. Finally, in 2018, the Irish Supreme court unanimously ruled that the ban on work was unconstitutional, forcing the government to change the law. However, restrictions mean that many are still denied the right to work.

www.thejournal.ie/factcheck-varadkar-immigrants-4273981-Oct2018/
www.masi.ie/2018/07/27/masi-statement-27-07-2018-roadblocks-on-the-right-to-work/
www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/supreme-court-strikes-down-ban-preventing-asylum-seekers-working-1.3386417

Some people say: “MIGRATION HARMS THE ECONOMY”

Firstly, if we are talking about people seeking refuge, it's a human rights issue, not an economic one. Each of us has the right to seek safety from persecution in a new country, if we are not protected in our own. More broadly, migration is a natural human experience, but one that is restricted or denied to many. But, even if someone wishes to focus on the economic impact of migration, we can see that it does not harm the economy - in fact, it helps.

Dr Declan Jordan, senior lecturer in economics at Cork University Business School, points out that one of the most frequent objections to immigration is the idea that migrants take jobs from locals: “This only makes sense if you think that an economy has a fixed number of jobs to be shared around: if an immigrant gets one of those precious jobs, then a local must lose out. Economies don't work like that...The number of jobs is not fixed. Far from taking jobs, the evidence indicates that immigrants create jobs.”

When people come to a new place, they bring a whole range of skills, knowledge, experiences and resources with them. They contribute new energy, and capacity to the society they live in, as well as paying taxes towards services in the community. People who migrate from abroad, “are not just workers but are also consumers. They buy goods and services with the wages they earn, and that consumption creates jobs for others, including local workers. Immigrants also set up new businesses.”

There are costs associated with providing services for people seeking asylum while their claims are being assessed (and this has proved very profitable for the owners of Direct Provision centres.) However, an in-depth study of 15 Western countries from 1985 – 2015 demonstrated that after this initial investment, economies in the host countries also benefit, in the same way as outlined above.

The Direct Provision system has inflicted harm on people who are denied the right to work, as well as depriving the wider society of the contribution people want to make. While the Irish economy was booming in the 2000s, the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) warned the government that an additional 200,000 workers would be needed to sustain economic growth. Even then, the government went on a recruitment drive abroad, while people in Direct Provision were forbidden to work. Today IBEC points out that an additional 80,000 – 110,000 workers are still needed in the construction industry alone.

www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2014/nov/positive-economic-impact-uk-immigration-european-union-new-evidence

www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05507-0

www.irishtimes.com/business/construction/additional-80-000-workers-required-to-satisfy-housing-demand-say-ibec-1.3534598

Some people say: “MIGRATION LEADS TO CRIME”

Research indicates that there is no difference between arrest rates between migrants and the general population, and immigration creates no increase in violent crime. In fact, a UK study found that crime fell significantly in areas that had received the largest number of migrants, with rates of burglary, vandalism and car theft down since 2004. When Donald Trump tweeted that crime in Germany had risen by over 10% as a result of refugees, fact-checkers responded that overall crime had actually fallen by a tenth since 2016, to its lowest level since 1992. Crime also fell by 25% in Italy between 2007 and 2016, while immigration went up.

www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-01-07/connection-between-rising-crime-and-refugees-doesn-t-exist

www.economist.com/europe/2018/06/30/confusion-over-immigration-and-crime-is-roiling-european-politics

Bell, Brian and Machin, Stephen and Fasani, Francesco (2010) *Crime and immigration: evidence from large immigrant waves*. CEP Discussion Paper, 984. Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28732/>

Some people say: “REFUGEES CAUSE HOMELESSNESS IN IRELAND”

Some figures to consider:

- As of August 2019, there were 10,338 people homeless, 3,848 of whom were children.
- In the last census (2016) Ireland had 245,460 vacant homes.
- By August 2019, people in Direct Provision, or Emergency Accommodation, and others rebuilding their lives here as part of ‘settlement programmes’ accounted for 0.19% of the population.

The root causes of the homeless crisis were addressed by the UN Rapporteur (spokesperson) on Housing, when they wrote to the Irish government to warn that accommodation in Ireland had become “unaffordable.” (March 2019). The key causes they identified were:

- The policy of giving tax breaks to private companies (including so-called Vulture Funds) to encourage them to buy up large numbers of properties in Ireland.
- Low level of regulation to control landlords’ activities.
- Allowing property developers to ‘hoard’ vacant land, in order to restrict the supply of potential construction sites and drive up the price for greater profit, at a time when it was desperately needed for building.

The UN warned that Irish housing policy was contrary to our international human rights obligations, and that some, “Landlords have become faceless corporations wreaking havoc with tenants,” and that some of these companies, “have openly discussed... introducing the highest rents possible in order to increase returns for shareholders”.

www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/government-rebuts-un-assertion-that-housing-in-ireland-is-moderately-unaffordable-931449.html

Some people say: “WE SHOULD LOOK AFTER OUR OWN”

Some figures to consider:

- By August 2019, people in Direct Provision, or Emergency Accommodation, and others rebuilding their lives here as part of ‘settlement programmes’ accounted for 0.19% of the population in total.
- Members of the Traveller community are roughly 1% of the overall population but make up at least 8% of homeless adults staying in emergency accommodation, and 12% of homeless children.

What is the impact of dividing society along the lines of ‘us and them’? How does this kind of division compare to a human rights approach? By law, local councils should take “reasonable steps” to provide Traveller-specific accommodation. Councils can access funding to help improve living conditions and build new accommodation but in the last ten years, 16 of Ireland’s 31 city and county councils did not build any new Traveller accommodation schemes even though funding was approved. In 2018, 10 councils spent 0% of the money they were allocated for Traveller accommodation, and another 14 of them left part of their allocation unspent.

www.rte.ie/news/investigations-unit/2018/1217/1017612-travellers-in-local-authorities-data/
www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/councils-under-fire-as-just-18-of-traveller-accommodation-cash-drawn-down-936062.html

Follow up discussion:

One of the most common statements in opposition to refugee rights is that, “We should look after ‘our own’ before others.” This is a matter of values and attitudes and cannot be confirmed or refuted with facts, but the assumptions underpinning this position can and should be questioned.

- Who are ‘our own’? Who decides who belongs and who does not?
- What kind of society do we want?
- How would Irish people be affected if people around the world adopted the attitude that they should “look after their own” before anyone else?

For generations, Irish people have migrated all over the globe in search of a better life and continue to do so in significant numbers to this day. In 2014 one in eight Irish-born people was living abroad. For the most part, they do their best to make a living and to contribute to society - just like people who come to Ireland, if they are allowed to.

Many people are still haunted by memories of anti-Irish discrimination. John Griffin from County Galway recalls: “It was 1969 and I was a young man walking along a road in Croydon with my Dad looking for digs. We lived the other side of London and we were doing building work for a school, and the journey was taking 3 hours. I spotted a small piece of paper at the bottom of the window of the boarding house: “NO IRISH.” I can’t explain how I felt. I didn’t say anything. Nor did my Dad.

Present day *Céad Míle Fáilte* Ireland: I am so ashamed that that is being done to people escaping oppression and coming to Ireland..”

- How would it feel if Irish migrants were viewed as taking resources or services that should, according to some, be kept for ‘their own’?

After generations of high emigration, the Irish diaspora is one of the biggest in the world, per capita. What would happen if all the countries Irish people settled in decided that they should only look after ‘their own’ and pushed people to ‘go back where they came from’? An estimated 750,000 Irish-born people who currently live abroad would be heading back to Ireland.

- Who decided that a society should pit two highly vulnerable groups against each other, instead of looking for other solutions to meeting our common needs and rights?

To take just one example, while arguments about ‘looking after our own’ go on, the Irish government is assisting Apple - one of the wealthiest corporations in the world - in its legal battle against an EU ruling that the company must repay Ireland €13 billion in underpaid taxes. The cost of providing the promised target of building 47,000 social housing units within 5 years would cost less than half of this amount.

www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/1000-new-social-homes-delivered-in-first-six-months-of-2019-951623.html

www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/apple-denies-jobs-lay-behind-sweetheart-irish-tax-deal-1.4021441

file:///C:/Users/educa/Downloads/Rebuilding_Ireland_Action_Plan.pdf [Page 6]

Digital Arts Extension Activities:

- Create memes or posters based on your wider understanding of homelessness as a contrast to 'scapegoat' explanations for social problems.
- Imagine if social media existed during the Famine, during the Troubles, or during more recent periods of large-scale immigration from Ireland. Use a generator to create social media posts that people in Britain might have written about Irish migrants back then, if they held the same kind of stereotypical views explored in Brian Bilston's poem.
- See notes on use of satire in Graphic Art and Comics chapter.

At the end of 2014 there were 5,000 homeless people in Ireland, while 230,056 houses and apartments lay vacant.



But yeah, sure, homelessness is caused by refugees.

The example at left comes from work with TY students in County Galway.



Andy Worthy
@andyworth

Follow

The problem with the Irish is that they don't respect our culture, and don't want to integrate. Wherever they go they set up separate clubs, music groups, Irish pubs, and Catholic churches.

No more [#gaelicghettos](#)
[#ProtectBritishCulture](#)

11:00 AM - 12 Jul 1983



Alice
@wonderland



Follow

Why get in a leaky boat and sail half way round the world? If they were really refugees fleeing famine and political troubles, they'd go to the nearest safe place - Wales. [#protectborders](#)

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)

10:05 PM - 19 Apr 1846 · [Embed this Tweet](#)



Alex Greene
@greengable

Following

Some of my best friends are Irish, but I feel sorry for their women. Their religion teaches them that they're second class citizens. Asked my friend Una why Catholic women can't be priests, or become pope, but she just accepts it.

4:49 PM - 28 Oct 1971





BEYOND STATISTICS: Visualising data about migration

The number of people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes is now at a record high. By 2019 the UN estimated that over 70.7 million people had been forced to flee their village, town, or their country to seek safety. 41 million were ‘internally displaced people’ (IDPs), who moved within their own countries, and 25.9 million people had fled to another country in a bid to find refuge.

With 6.7 million people seeking safety abroad, Syrians make up the largest group of refugees in the world, followed by Afghanistan (2.7m), South Sudan (2.3m), Myanmar (1.1m), Somalia (900,000) and Sudan (725,000). [All figures from unhcr.org]



3.7 MILLION PEOPLE

For the fifth consecutive year, Turkey hosted the largest number of refugees worldwide, with 3.7 million people. The main countries of asylum for refugees were:

- Turkey (3.7 million)
- Pakistan (1.4 million)
- Uganda (1.2 million)
- Sudan (1.1 million)
- Germany (1.1 million)

Over 80% of the world’s refugees are hosted in ‘developing countries’, and the ‘least developed’ countries are hosting a growing proportion. In addition to this, the vast majority of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are also in the ‘developing world.’ However, this reality is very much at odds with the dominant narrative that assumes, incorrectly, that the majority seek safety in Europe or North America.

In the face of this growing crisis the numbers of refugees accepted in the USA halved to 22,491 in 2018 and was only a quarter of the figure for 2016. This is well below the Trump administration's cap for the year of 45,000. The administration proposes to lower this cap by a further 33% to 30,000 in 2019.

In 2015, Chancellor Angela Merkel responded to the crisis by allowing more than 1 million people to seek asylum in Germany. Now Germany, along with other countries, is facing a backlash from conservative leaders who want to reduce numbers.

In Ireland's case, the Irish navy patrols in the Mediterranean have rescued over 18,000 people since 2015, until the EU's Operation Sophia search and rescue mission was terminated in 2019, and the ships returned to port. At home, the Government's commitment in 2015 to provide safety for 4,000 people is still 1,445 short, four years later. It has been estimated that Ireland would need to provide refuge to an additional 1,500 people a year to meet UN Resettlement targets.

1/2

CHILDREN

Children below 18 years of age constituted about half of the refugee population in 2018, up from 41 per cent in 2009 but similar to the previous few years

Overall, numbers of people reaching Europe have declined. An EU agreement with Turkey has seen a reduction of 90 per cent in the number of people travelling from Turkey to Greece since the peak year 2015. However, this arrangement is condemned as contrary to human rights law, and thousands of people remain stranded in overcrowded and squalid 'reception centres' in Greece. Italy is similarly condemned for its financial and training arrangements with the Libyan coastguard, which aim to block refugees at the Libyan coast and send them instead to detention centres, despite reports of brutal abuse.

Ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Syria, and a rise in tensions in Ethiopia, Cameroon and Nigeria's Middle Belt region triggered most of the 10.8 million new displacements in 2018. Many of the internally displaced people who tried to return to their homes in Iraq, Nigeria and Syria during the year found their property destroyed, infrastructure damaged and basic services non-existent.

Sources:

www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/downloads/press_releases/2019-grid-pressrelease-global-en.pdf
www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/eu-ends-migrant-rescue-mission-in-mediterranean-1.3840827
www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/ireland-should-accept-extra-1-500-refugees-a-year-say-ngos-1.4017556

Activity: If The World Was Thirty People

Aim: To challenge misperceptions and gain accurate information about where the majority of the world's displaced people and refugees are hosted.

To contextualise this situation with additional information about global wealth distribution.

To reflect critically on the impact of widespread misinformation and stereotypes.

Subjects: Geography, RE, TY, CSPE, TY.

Time: 40 minutes +

Materials: Print out of "If the World Was 30 People" continent cards. Templates are available at galwayowc.org in the Beyond Border folder.

2 sets of 30 'people cards' printed on two different colours of card – blue and red, for example. (Print these from the template, or have the students make their own. 12 cards per A4 sheet.)

1 set of 30 'wealth' cards, on yellow card. 12 cards per A4 sheet.

Setting: In order to facilitate active and engaged participation, this activity works best in an open space. Ideally, the group can sit or stand in a circle with the materials laid out in the middle in front of them, so if you can, push desks to the side of the room, or else work at a large table.

- For the full breakdown of figures, there is a table at the end of this document with a full breakdown of population and wealth figures laid out in one page.



Step 1: Ask the group how many people there are in the world. [7.7 billion people as of June 2019 / check for updated figures] Spread the continent cards out on the floor and share out the first set of 30 'people' cards between the students. Explain that they represent the whole population of the world, and that the game is to try to figure out how many live in each region around the world.

Invite them to work as a group to distribute the people cards to make the most accurate picture of population distribution they can. Acknowledge that it's a difficult task and encourage 'best guesses'. Encourage discussion about their distribution of the cards and ask if they'd like to make any adjustments before looking at the answers.

Then adjust the cards as necessary to reflect the figures from the chart.

Step 2: Critical Reflection: Any surprises? Take time to note that the activity is not a geography quiz; instead we are creating a picture of how we understand the world to be and asking what makes us see the world in this way, and what the impact of this worldview is. Acknowledge that sometimes our ‘common sense’ view can be inaccurate and encourage discussion and reflection by asking critical questions about the *reasons* for this. Also note that most groups, regardless of the age or background, hold very similar misconceptions about how the world looks. The most common ones that we see reflected in the activity are:

- Most groups overestimate the populations of Africa and North America.
- Virtually all groups underestimate the population of Asia by a large margin (even when ‘nudging questions’ are given about the first and second most populous countries in the world)
- Most groups considerably overestimate South and Central America (but we’ve only seen this happen since 2016.)

What do we think drives these misconceptions? Are the reasons different in each case? Where do these perceptions come from? What kind of images and messages create distortions like this? What is the impact?

Regarding the large overestimates of the Latin American population that we began to see in 2016, students tend to give two reasons for this shift in perception:

- Some students suggest that coverage of the Rio Olympics might be a factor, as it put a spotlight on Latin America. That might well be the case. However, having used the activity for over two decades, we hadn’t previously noted such a shift in perceptions in response to other international events, such as the Beijing Olympics or South African World Cup.
- Other students note the timing of the US presidential campaign, and President Trump’s pre-election promise/threat to “build a wall.” Do they think this may have influenced their perception, and if so, why? Regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with this policy, does the group think that the widespread coverage of this story could influence our perception of that region of the world? What does this tell us?

Step 3 (Optional if time is short): Share out the wealth cards and ask them to distribute them in the same way and adjust as necessary. Allow time for feedback and reflection, reflecting on any surprises.

Note that this part of the activity is helpful for showing inequality *between* regions but tells us nothing about how wealth is shared *within* regions. For example, USA is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, whilst over 13% of the population lives below the poverty line, and a third of the population is estimated to live ‘near poverty’.

Step 4: Introduce Set 2 of the people cards (printed on red paper) and explain that this time the 30 cards represent 25.9 million people - the number of refugees in the world, according to the UNHCR (2019). As before, invite the students to position the cards to show where these 25.9 million people went for safety.

“These 30 cards represent all the people who have been forced to leave their home because of war, conflict, or persecution, and to seek refuge in a new country. That’s 25.9 million people. The question this time is: where did they go for safety?”

Again, give the group a chance to make adjustments until they arrive at an agreed distribution of cards. Before you show the answers, ask the group what kind of information they were drawing from to complete the task? (News reports, documentaries, social media, conversations with family and friends?)

Rearrange the cards to reflect the actual distribution and seek feedback. In this round the students are likely to be surprised by the answers, as most group place the majority of the cards in Europe and North America. (“They’ are all coming here,” is a phrase often heard during the earlier phase of this activity.)

The activity clearly shows that the majority of displaced people are seeking safety in the Global South, and not in Europe and North America, as is usually assumed. Where does this (mis)information come from? Ask critical questions to help the group to make sense of the corrected figures.

Worldwide, the UNHCR (2019) estimates that 70.7 million people have been forced to leave their homes because of war, conflict or persecution.

The majority - about 60% - remain in their own countries (and are categorised as ‘Internally Displaced Persons’). About 80% of the people who are seeking safety in another country (‘Refugees’) are in a neighbouring one. Ask the students to consider why this might be.

- Ask the group to imagine how they might respond if conflict broke out locally. Would they immediately flee to another country, or first try to seek safety in another part of this country? At what point might they decide to move to another country? Would it be a difficult decision, and why? What would they be leaving behind? Take time to consider this question and allow several answers to emerge to build understanding of the magnitude of this decision, and how, in reality, it may be less a matter of ‘making a decision’ to leave, and more a question of survival.
- What is the impact of these kinds of widespread misperceptions and myths about where the majority of people go to seek safety? How might communities in Europe, for example, react to the idea that, “they are all coming here”? Would it make a difference to have a more accurate and balanced picture?
- Are students aware that each of us has the right, to seek safety in another country if we face persecution in our own, and that under international law, states have an obligation to protect us by not returning us to a dangerous place? Are they aware of the historical context of that right which stemmed from the horrors of the Holocaust?
- When the current situation for refugees is referred to as ‘Europe’s crisis’ whose crisis is it, really?
- Does the dominant narrative also assume that the arrival of people seeking refuge will have a negative impact on the host country? Is this true? Can the situation be seen differently?
- What might it be like to have to seek safety in a place where these myths and stereotypes were widespread?
- What can be done to counteract this misinformation, and build a more respectful, rights-based narrative about migration? Explore ideas for action with the group.

Extension Activity: Wages of War

There is an option to unpack the activity further by looking deeper at some of the reasons people are forced to leave their homes in the first place.

Critical questioning involves exploring dynamics of power. This activity teaches us something about *victims* of war, conflict and persecution, but does the group think that anyone *benefits* from this situation?

This question is often met with blank looks, and may need to be rephrased with a question like, ‘who profits from war?’ One answer is, weapon producers. Ask the group for information, or guesses, about which countries profit most from the arms trade.

- USA is the world’s largest arms exporter, with 34% of overall sales (2018). Its biggest client is Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been accused of targeting civilians in Yemen, where the ongoing conflict has displaced 4.3 million people, and left over half the population facing starvation (UNHCR, 2019).
- Arms sales to the Middle East doubled between 2014-2018, compared to the previous 5 year period. (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute).

Extension Activity: Taking Responsibility for Climate Change

The UNHCR’s estimate of the number of displaced people in the world, does not take account of those forced to leave their homes because of storms, floods and other extreme weather events, which are becoming more frequent and severe.

Oxfam (2019) www.oxfam.org/en/research/forced-home-climate-fuelled-displacement

In 2018, worldwide, the UN estimated that extreme weather events affected close to 62 million people and displaced more than 20 million. Over 5,000 people died and 29 million needed humanitarian aid.

Source: UN World Meteorological Organization’s (WMO) Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2018.

An interactive map of the year’s events charts the impact on people, wildlife, and the environment in every continent is available at theguardian.com under ‘Deadly Weather: The Human Cost Of 2018’s Climate Disasters – Visual Guide 2018’

www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2018/dec/21/deadly-weather-the-human-cost-of-2018s-climate-disasters-visual-guide

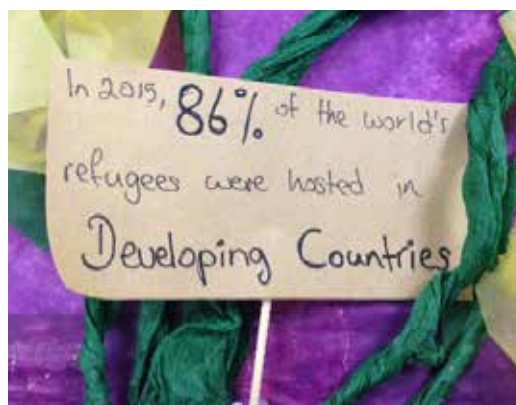
GLOBAL TOTAL POPULATION: 7,700 million				
TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES: 25.9 million	Full Population	Wealth	Refugees	tCO2 per person
Population by region/% of global total / Number of displaced people	Cards (of 30)	Cards (of 30)	Cards (of 30)	
Africa 1.3billion / 16.9% global total	5	.5	7.75	1.1
Asia [Including Turkey and Middle East] 4,6 billion / 59.5% global total	18	10 China/Japan/South Korea/Hong Kong: 8 Rest of Asia: 2	18.25	4.0 [China: 7 Syria 1.5 Palestine .5]
North America [USA & Canada] 365 million / 4.8% global total	1.5	10	0.5	13
Latin America & Caribbean [South & Central America, including Mexico] 643 million / 8.5 % global total	2.5	.75	0.25	Central Am: 2 South Am: 2.7
Europe [Including Russian Federation.] 747million / 9.8 % global total	3	8	3.25	7 [Ireland 8.3]
Oceania 42 million / 0.5% global total	No card placed – would be 0.15% of a card	.75	No card placed – would be 0.08% of a card	17
Top 6 global arms exporters (2013 – 2017)	US (34%) Russia (22%) France (6%) Germany (5.5%) China (5.7%) UK (4.8%)			
<p>Population Figures: IMF (2018) http://www.worldometers.info/and World Population Review (2018) http://worldpopulationreview.com Displaced People: UNHCR (2019) www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/ World Bank (2019) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.REFG Global Wealth Figures: Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report 2018 https://www.credit-suisse.com/about-us/en/reports-research/global-wealth-report.html GDP Figures IMF (2018) :www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPDPC@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO_WORLD Carbon emissions: www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions Arms Sales: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: Trends In International Arms Transfers (2018)</p>				

Arts Activity: Visualising Data

Many people find that activities like the one above make a stronger impact than a conventional presentation of statistics. In small groups, invite the students to think of creative ways to visually represent data relating to refuge and asylum, using collage, memes, freeze-frames, found objects, apps like worldmapper.org, or any other creative approach.

Work in groups to creatively visualise the following statistics:

- 80% of displaced people are hosted in the Developing World.
- 37,000 people are forced to flee their homes every day because of conflict and persecution.
- Globally, 1 person is forcibly displaced every 2 seconds.
- Over half the world's 25.9 million refugees are children.
- 1 in every 100 people is now a displaced person.
- Perspective: Ireland, is one of the richest countries in the world (top 10%) – it has 2.5% of global wealth, for 0.06% of global population, is one of the top greenhouse gas emitters in the EU and hosts 0.07% of world's displaced people.
- The number of people seeking asylum in Ireland, or part of any refugee resettlement programme, accounts for 0.19% of the overall population. (August, 2019)



Data Visualisation: In 2015 86% of the world's refugees were hosted in Developing Countries, and 14% in Developed Countries. (UNHCR, 2016). Collage made by students at CIT Creativity and Change programme.

“We decided to use the image of flowers growing in two pots. We made the size of the pots proportional to highlight the vast difference in the numbers of people being hosted in the Global South and the Global North. The flowers emphasise the vibrance of a diverse society and counteract negative stereotypes of migration. They also address issues of being uprooted, and having a chance to put down roots and blossom again.”



UNPACKING THE MIGRATION KNAPSACK: Developing empathy, and an understanding of inequality

Aim: Consider issues of power and discrimination in everyday life.
Build understanding and empathy.

Materials: A copy of the quiz for each pair of students.

Time: 30 minutes, including discussion time.

This quiz asks us to consider the experiences of some diverse groups in Ireland and may help to build understanding of some of the subtle, and not-so-subtle, ways that discrimination can operate. This understanding may help to inform how we can work together in solidarity to build equality in our schools and communities.

The point of the activity is not to make anyone feel guilty, nor to suggest that any group 'has it easy'. What this activity does offer, is a chance to consider how rights and freedoms can be denied for people who have moved to another country in ways that may not always be obvious.

This activity is adapted from 'Unpacking the White Knapsack' by Peggy McIntosh.

"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," by Peggy McIntosh first appeared in Peace and Freedom Magazine, July/August, 1989, pp. 10-12, a publication of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Philadelphia, PA. The full article can be found here: www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf

"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems."

- Peggy McIntosh

Please consider the following questions and answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’, based on your own experiences of culture, “race”, nationality or ethnicity.

1. I have a passport, and I can renew it easily when I need to.
2. If I want to travel abroad, I usually don’t need a visa, but if I do, I expect to get one without any great difficulty or delay.
3. If my family relocates to a new area I feel fairly confident that our new neighbours will take the time to get to know us before making any judgements.
4. If I use my smart phone in public I don’t have to worry that people might think that I don’t deserve it, or even suspect that I stole it.
5. If the economy goes down, my family and I assume that we have the option of moving abroad for work or further study.
6. I am never made to feel like I’m under suspicion because of crimes carried out by others who happen to be from the same country, continent, or religion as me.
7. If I campaign to improve conditions for refugees here, I do not worry that I’ll be told that I should feel lucky to be in this country.
8. My parents and older siblings are free to apply for any job they are qualified to do.
9. If I want to, I can look forward to making plans for college, along with my other classmates.
10. When I have an exam coming up, I can usually find a quiet place to study.
11. I can invite friends home after school, if I choose.
12. If there’s a non-uniform day, or some other fundraiser at school, I don’t usually have to worry about being able to afford the donation.
13. At mealtime my family usually makes choices about what, and when we eat.
14. When I go shopping, I don’t expect to be followed or harassed by security staff.
15. If I choose not to go to university, it will not be seen as a sign that people of my culture, “don’t value education”.
16. If my debit card is declined in a shop, I don’t have to worry that the cashier thinks I’m trying to scam him.
17. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my ethnicity, or summarise “our culture”, or give “our perspective” - as if there is just one version.
18. I can criticize the government without being told to, “go back where I came from”.
19. If I tell people that I am Irish, they don’t follow up with the question, “... but where are you really from?”
20. My little sister or brother can have a tantrum at the supermarket, without this being seen as an example of poor discipline or child-rearing practices of my culture.
21. I can choose bandages in “flesh” colour, or make-up in “neutral” tones, and have them more less match my skin.
22. I can go to college without having to pay €10,000 or more in annual fees.

Discussion Prompts:

- Read the quiz together and give your own responses to the questions.
- Which questions strike you the most? Are there any that confuse you?
- Which questions might relate to experiences of Direct Provision?
- Are there any things you see differently now after doing the quiz?
- Chose 3 words to describe how you feel after the activity.

“Some people say they understand what’s going on with Direct Provision in Ireland, and some choose to ignore it. I think the way asylum seekers have been portrayed in the media has caused people to react to what they hear about these people and not to who they actually are...These are unfair assumptions.”

Ellie Kisyombe, co-founder of the Our Table initiative. She has been living in Direct Provision with her children for over 9 years

“The whole system is designed to remove one of the core human needs — imagination, the ability to dream. But I have a strong feeling that Irish people will realise soon that Direct Provision is not just about us, it’s also about them. It’s about what kind of Irish Republic they want to see.”

Evgeny Shtorn, LGBT activist



NO PLACE LIKE HOME: Learning about the Direct Provision system

The Direct Provision system was set up in 1999 to accommodate people while their claims for asylum were being processed. In response to criticisms of the restrictive nature of the system, the government gave assurance that claims would be processed within 6 months, ensuring that people would not be forced to remain in the system for an unreasonable amount of time. In reality, people face several years in Direct Provision, with some children living their entire lives in what has been described by some residents as an 'open prison'.

By the end of 2018, 5,928 people were living in Direct Provision in 36 centres around the country and the system was operating at almost full capacity. By August 2019 there were 1,100 people being housed in Emergency Accommodation, some staying in operational hotels or B&Bs, with even fewer facilities or services than in Direct Provision.

Direct Provision has been criticised by a range of groups, activists and bodies, including MASI (the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland), the Ombudsman for Children, FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres) and former High Court judge, Justice Catherine McGuinness, who compared the system to Magdalene Laundries.

Despite decades of promises to reform the asylum system in Ireland, over 40% of people in Direct Provision remain stranded in the system for two or more years, over 12% for up to 4 years, and some for 7 years or more. At least a quarter of people living in Direct Provision are children.

The total number of people living in Direct Provision or Emergency Accommodation in Ireland as part of a Refugee Protection programme in August 2019 accounted for less than 0.19% of the population.

Activity

Aim: To learn more about the system of Direct Provision and its impact.

Materials: A set of 'Think About Direct Provision' cards for each group.

Time: 40 minutes

Subjects: CSPE, Geography, English, TY.

This activity can be paired with an exploration of Asylum Archive, in the Photography section. Break into small groups giving each group a set of 'Think About' cards. Invite the students to think about issues that might arise for a person living within the Direct Provision Centre: a child, a teenager, a parent, an LGBT person, someone with a disability (or others).

Invite each group to give feedback on their perceptions.

For example: Challenges identified by young children and their parents in some Centres include:

- Lack of space to play, explore, and make noise.
- Not being able to have friend round/not being able to have a party.
- Lack of transport or money to take part in activities.
- Difficulties with food – not having choices, trying to find healthy food, or appropriate food.
- No possibility of normal family life when living in one room, with no cooking facilities.

Share some quotes from young people living in the Direct Provision system, and invite the students to prepare for the next session by researching other experiences (see links to sources below).

- Select readings from the MASI Journal which features children's posters, as well as writing and artworks by adults, young people and children living in Direct Provision. (Available from MASI.ie)
- Irish Examiner, Living In Direct Provision, (2nd January 2019)
- www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/specialreports/living-in-direct-provision-you-begin-to-see-yourself-as-someone-who-is-not-accepted-by-society-895059.html
- Irish Times, Lives In Limbo series (2014) www.irishtimes.com/news/lives-in-limbo

Take feedback in the next session, asking people to note something that stands out or strikes them, something they learned from the article, as well as one question they wish to explore further.

Follow up with a video, such as Leaving Limbo (2019), a documentary following two teenage best friends, Natasha Maimba and Minahil Sarfraz, as they prepare to sit their Leaving Certificate. The girls met whilst growing up in Direct Provision and spent 4 and 10 years respectively in cramped conditions in Athlone. "Audiences will be inspired by the determination of these two young women to not only overcome the obstacles of their past, but to also change the world through their work as UNICEF ambassadors." Directed by Maurice O'Brien and Cara Holmes for RTE. www.rte.ie/player/movie/leaving-limbo/120138280034

The Outsiders: Our Teenage Life Behind Barriers is a teaching pack, based on a radio documentary, and includes 7 hours of lesson plans on Direct Provision and refugee rights. developmenteducation.ie/resource/the-outsiders-children-living-in-dp-in-ireland/



Passive and Aggressive
@MT9466



Lovely rooms with 10, 8 or 6 people at a time, you might say "yes people share room in hostels for an overnight or a weekend stay all the time." But in #MountTrenchard you would usually spend around 5+ years and yes the transfer to another centre is usually denied. #EndDP



Tweet from a resident at the Mount Trenchard Direct Provision Centre @ MT9466, November 2018.

Visual Arts Activity:

Materials: Old newspapers and magazines. Scissors. Glue. Sheet of poster-sized paper per group. Markers/Crayons/Paint.

Time: 80 minutes

Working in small groups, invite students to spend 15 minutes cutting out as many words and phrases they consider related to Direct Provision, or the experience of seeking asylum.

As a group, consider how the words could be shaped into an image that relates to refuge, asylum, safety, home, or human rights. If time is short, create an image using an app like WordArt.com

Share the images and reflections on the process with the larger group.

Sources:

Individual contributions

Report on consultations with Children and Young People Living in Direct Provision (2017) https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/law/childlawclinic/Report_of_DCYA_consultations_with_children_and_young_people_living_in_Direct_Provision.pdf

Irish Times (2014) Lives In Limbo www.irishtimes.com/news/lives-in-limbo

www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/specialreports/living-in-direct-provision-you-begin-to-see-yourself-as-someone-who-is-not-accepted-by-society-895059.html

Envisioning Alternatives:



Prior to the introduction of Direct Provision in 1999, people were free to live in the community while their claim for asylum was being considered.

Discuss alternatives to Direct Provision, based on human rights values.

Research proposals from self-organising groups, such as MASI (see image) and create infographics and visuals to illustrate these ideas.

Think About Direct Provision Cards

Until 2018 it was illegal for people in the asylum system to do paid work. Since then, following a legal challenge by a former asylum seeker, restrictions have been eased, but many people still do not have the right to work.

In some DP centres families live in just one or two rooms, and single people may have a bed in a dorm with several others.

Mealtimes and menus are restricted.

People in many DP centres do not have access to a kitchen to prepare their own food.

Young people leaving school have limited options for education and may face fees of up to €15,000 if they wish to go on to further study in university.

Long waits for decisions on appeals can lead to enormous stress - many people live in fear of the arrival of a letter with a negative decision every day.

Many Direct Provision Centres are in remote areas and may not be well served by public transport.

Some people are afraid to raise concerns, or make complaints, or protest about the situation in DP in case they are punished – for example by being moved to another centre.

Many people are dealing with the aftermath of traumatic experiences, and Direct Provision can make it difficult to take care of their mental and physical health, and difficult to access supports.

Many DP centres are in former hotels or hostels and are not designed for the needs of families.

Because of shortage of spaces in DP, some people are placed in operational hotels, which lack basic services (such as laundry facilities) and place even greater restrictions on residents.

Some LGBT people face discrimination and intimidation in DP centres, and Trans people have been placed in inappropriate accommodation, but have no option to leave.

Finding money for any extra expenses, transport, or activities is very difficult with an allowance of €38.80 per week.

Residents in most Direct Provision Centres cannot have visitors in their rooms.

Accessing medical care, legal support or translation services can be very difficult when people are housed in remote locations or lack the funds to access transport.

Voices of young people and children in Direct Provision:

Children and Teenagers living in Direct Provision have spoken about living in an “amazing community”, with many “nice people” and close friendships in the Centres, but also struggled with accommodation that was described as “dirty” and “over-crowded”, with “horrible”, “tasteless” food.

www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/law/childlawclinic/Report_of_DCYA_consultations_with_children_and_young_people_living_in_Direct_Provision.pdf with an “amazing community”

These are quotes from children:

“People have been here for 9 years or 8 years, and it’s not fair.”

“We can’t have a pet.”

“The fact that people stay so long in the system is not fair. There are other little children born in this system. Their whole lives are based on four walls, one room. They don’t know what the outside world looks like.”

Teenager living in Direct Provision

“We have an amazing community.”

“I find it very hard to do my homework, because I can’t concentrate at all. When you close the door, you can still hear my brother and sisters crying. You can hear [my mother] crying at night. It’s very hard for me to sleep.”

12-year-old boy living in Direct Provision for 8 years

“I feel I can’t tell my friends where I live. Even if they come over, they’re not allowed come to my room. I’ve nowhere to play...

“I’m ashamed that if [school friends] see where I live, I’ll get bullied.”

12-year-old girl

“We can’t go to parties because there are no busses at night.”

“I just did my Junior Certificate. It was really hard for me because I wasn’t able to study properly – because my brothers are fighting and disturbing me all the time.”

14-year-old boy, sharing a hotel room with his parents and two brothers.

“You develop close friendships.”



GRAPHIC ART, COMICS, ANIMATION: Building awareness and developing critical literacy through visual culture

Graphic novels or comic strips may not seem like the most obvious medium for addressing a humanitarian crisis, but in fact they may open possibilities for engagement with these issues well beyond the reach of more conventional journalistic or educational forms. Some students are overwhelmed by the scale and complexity of conflicts such as those in Syria, Afghanistan or Eritrea and graphic novels may also offer a more approachable point of engagement.

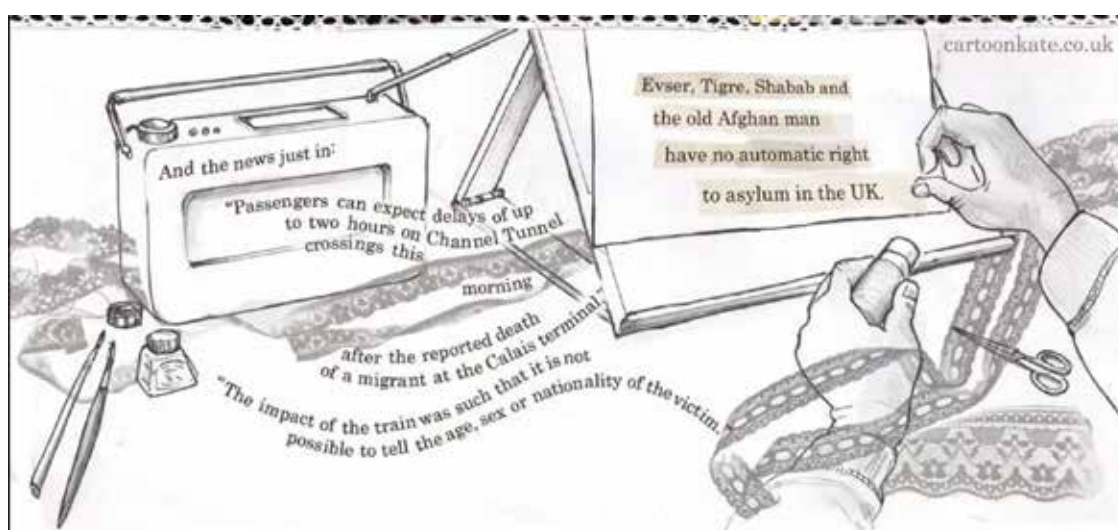
War and persecution turn every aspect of life upside down. People fleeing traumatic events may not tell their story in a straightforward, linear, chronological way. This medium is virtually limitless in its capacity to capture shifts in place, time, voice, perspective, and the physical and psychological aspects of displacement. The comic book medium embraces the subjectivity of human experience and is free to create a mosaic from fragments of memory, emotion and everyday details, through image, thought, speech and text.

For those whose stories are being depicted, anonymity may be important for personal and political reasons. First-hand accounts are important for understanding the human impact of conflict, but in telling their stories many people fear repercussions for themselves, or for their families at home, as well as suffering loss of personal privacy. Artist Lena Merhej states that, “because comics combine words and images, and images allow you to insinuate a lot of things, the medium is very appropriate. Instead of directly saying “I was hurt”, you can show this in an image and the reader then has to do a lot of work to take [signs of trauma] out. This allows you to talk about things which otherwise would have been censored.”

The comic/graphic novel form also allows for the synthesis of a number of people’s experiences, without losing authenticity. For readers, graphic novels may open a window into peoples’ thoughts and feelings as well as their external realities, building the possibility of a more personal connection with the ‘characters’.

Comic book artist Marjane Satrapi addresses war, conflict, and displacement through this medium precisely because it dispenses with the notion of objectivity associated with photojournalism. “Violence today has become something so normal, so banal- that is to say that everybody thinks it’s normal. But it’s not normal...[we] reduce it by making it realistic.”

Graphic artist Dalibor Talajic tackles issues of conflict and displacement in order to, “try to have the reader notice that we are distant...it is [presented as] just an abstract war, far away and nobody knows anything about...This might get someone to care.” His work on Marvel’s *Madaya Mom* is featured below. Artist and activist Kate Evans has produced a graphic diary of her time volunteering with displaced people in a refugee camp in Calais, France (known as The Jungle). In her talk, *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis* - Kate Evans, she describes her motivation, and some of the challenges, and artistic decisions and processes involved in producing creative work about a humanitarian crisis. (Available on the Verso Books youtube channel.) www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcqXdGQmET8



Below are some examples of graphic novels and comic strips that address aspects of refuge, displacement, documentation and migration, followed by some ideas for discussion and creative activities.

Madaya Mom:

This comic strip produced in 2016, based on the real-life experiences of one mother and her family of five children. The family had been under siege for over a year, trapped inside the Syria town of Madaya, a mountain town on the border between Lebanon and Syria, since June 2015. Journalists and news crews were unable to access the area, and the residents were unable to leave. The real ‘Madaya Mom’ communicated her daily experiences of the siege with journalist Rym Momtaz via text messages and these messages formed the basis of what would become a Marvel project to illustrate her story.

The project is a collaboration between Marvel and ABC News, and the artwork was led by artist, Dalibor Talajic. Growing up in the former Yugoslavia, he was 18 years old in the early 1990s when his country broke up and the region descended into war. “Knowing that my own country went through war, I felt like there was a connection, that I would know what to draw, that I wouldn’t randomly invent endless explosions and everything, but really try to capture the depression of it.”

The panels he drew for ‘Madaya Mom’ portray civilian experiences of the conflict in Syria. Most of his illustrations are set inside the home and revolve around what were once mundane daily domestic tasks rendered almost impossible by the siege. Schools closed. She and her husband often went without food so that they could give what they had to their children. Even simple daily tasks such as washing clothes ran the risk of hypothermia in the freezing winter months.

Violence is never shown directly – the reader never sees gunfire or explosions, only the aftermath, and even soldiers are given very little attention. “Madaya Mom” maintains its focus on the citizens who are left picking up the pieces of their once prosperous town.

The full digital comic can be found by searching ‘Madaya Mom’ at abcnews.go.com/International/deepdive/madaya-mom-mother-struggle-survival-syria-civil-war-42362213

A Teachers Guide and Discussion Plan, and is available at abcnews.go.com/images/Site/Madaya_Mom.pdf

Discussion prompts: Here are some sample questions to explore with the class after looking at the comic online, or using printouts of the story:

Marvel is associated with the exploits of superheroes. Do you find the superhero comic book form appropriate and effective in telling this kind of story?

“Superheroes are not defined by their powers or their physique. Superhero is in the heart. Madaya Mom fits within this category because she finds strength to be human and unhardened,”

- Dalibor Talajic

The Impact of Conflict on Civilians: Madaya Mom’s texts, and the artist’s depictions of her life, speak about the everyday experiences in a conflict zone. Violence is often alluded to rather than directly shown through more typical tanks and shelling.

- Where do you see the most direct references to violent conflict? Where do you see indirect signs?
- What do you see as the impact on the community?
- What challenges do you see, and what kinds of solutions do people find to meet their everyday needs during the siege?

- Does the artist's decision to depict the everyday life, rather than a more conventional focus on the bigger picture of war, influence how we perceive violence? Would you count a siege as an example of 'violence?' What is the imposition of blockades that cut off supplies of medicine or vital resources. (Students could research the impact of US and UK-backed financial and trade embargos on Iraq from 1990 – 2003.)
- The deliberate starvation of civilians, as in a siege is recognised as a war crime under International Humanitarian Law. Is this what you think is happening in Syrian cities such as Madaya and Aleppo? Should leaders and officers who use this tactic be tried as war criminals?

The artist and journalists involved in the making of 'Madaya Mom' hoped to put a personal face and voice on a story that was being ignored. Do you think the comic helps to establish a personal connection?

- Lead a classroom discussion asking students to consider other big issues that tend to be ignored when there's no personal connection — homelessness, poverty, oppression — and ask them to think of ways to address the issues by making them less impersonal and more connected, without compromising the privacy and dignity of people facing those issues.

For ideas and discussion prompts on the issue of the ethics of representation go to Dochas.ie for an Illustrative Guide to the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

https://dochas.ie/sites/default/files/Illustrative_Guide_to_the_Dochas_Code_of_Conduct_on_Images_and_Messages.pdf

Syria's Climate Conflict:

Syria's Climate Conflict, by Audrey Quinn and Jackie Roach. An excellent resource exploring the connections between climate change, long-running drought, the displacement of rural families, and the conflict in Syria. Search for 'Syria's Climate-Fueled Conflict' at motherjones.com

www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/05/syria-climate-years-living-dangerously-symbolia/

Rocket Man:

Majid Adin is an Iranian animator who was driven to seek asylum in the UK via the Calais refugee camp known as the 'Jungle', and to make some terrifying attempts to stow away on fast moving lorries. In Calais he encountered the Good Change Theatre group which provided encouragement to enter a competition to reinterpret the music videos for some of Elton John's most famous songs. Majid went on to win with his reimagining of *Rocket Man* as the story of a refugee's migration journey, based in part on his own ordeal. Following this success, he went on to make *The Journey* for Help Refugees and the Choose Love campaign which raises awareness of unaccompanied children who have been separated from their families. 'The Journey' follows a young Syrian boy separated from his family during an aerial attack on his home, the young boy embarks on a long, dangerous journey to be reunited with his parents. Adin shares his watercolour and mixed media work on Instagram @majid_adin_ma



- Watch the video once through, and then watch again paying attention to lyrics that you find particularly relevant to the refugee experience.

- Note places in the video that evoke the experience of displacement most powerfully for you.
- “I’m not the man they think I am at home.” What might this line mean to someone seeking refuge in Europe?
- Create images of your own to illustrate a word or line from the song that you find most evocative.

Positive Negatives:

Positive Negatives combine personal stories, journalism, advocacy, and research with the arts to produce comics, short animations and podcasts about contemporary social and humanitarian issues. The group has a superb range of online comics and animations, some with educational resources, addressing refuge, forced migration, issues for undocumented children and adults, through the stories of characters such as these below: <https://positivenegatives.org/comics-animations/>

Dear Habib: Rezaie arrived in the UK at the age of 16 after making the long journey from Afghanistan. It took the UK authorities 7 years to make a decision on his application for asylum.

“By telling my stories, I wanted to give a voice to people who experienced similar circumstances. I believe stories can be very healing... Resilience is strengthened by recognizing that we are all experts in our own lives and we all have something to share with others.”

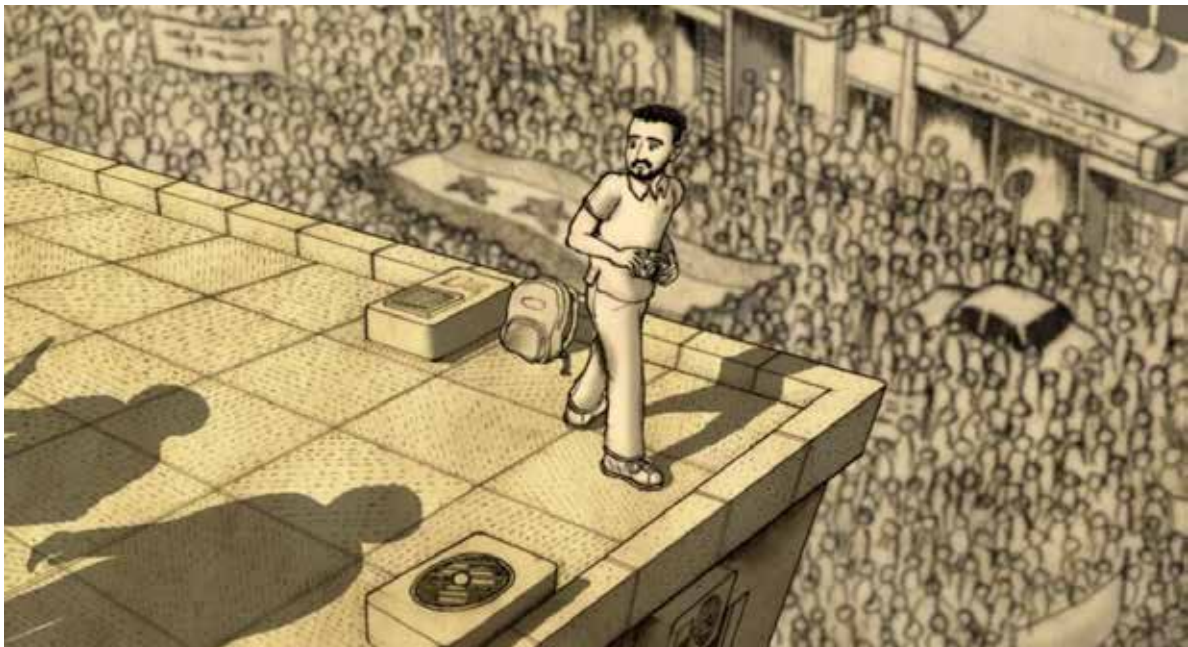


The themes of ‘Home and Belonging’ are centrally addressed in this film. The activities in section 3 are suggested for use with this video, based on lessons by Positive Negatives.

A Perilous Journey is a trilogy based on testimonies from Syrian refugees, Khalid, Mohammad, and Hasko, who were seeking asylum in Scandinavia in July 2015. All three now have protection, thankfully, but these graphics tell part of the stories of their dangerous journeys to safety.

Animation by Wael Toubaji and illustration by Lindsay Pollock.





Sample Drama Activity:

- Select some frames from a story, such as these from Mohammad and Kahlid's journey.
- Working in small groups, discuss what you think is happening in the frame?
- Work as a group to create a tableau of the image. It doesn't have to be a direct reproduction but should provide an opportunity to take up a number of different roles, including protesters, soldiers, bystanders. The group may also choose to include roles not visible in the frame, including the Viewer/Reader. Remind students that people are not one-dimensional, and may occupy complex or conflicted roles.
- The Teacher 'thought-tracks' the members of the tableau [tapping the shoulder of each student to elicit a 'snapshot' of their thoughts in role] and invites the wider group to give feedback.

Almaz represents the story of thousands of African and Asian migrant workers trapped in abusive and exploitative situations. Through the true story of one woman, readers gain insights into an experience that far too many domestic workers endure. [Content warning: brief reference to sexual abuse]

An Empty Promise is a 5-minute film made by the Danish Refugee Council, telling the story of Mary, a young Nigerian woman, and her desperate journey to a better life in Italy. [Contains some distressing details and language]. <https://vimeo.com/250313433>

Daria – A Roma woman’s journey: This animation and cartoon highlights some of the issues facing Roma women in Europe.

<http://positivenegatives.org/comics-animations/daria-a-roma-womans-journey/comic/>



The Roma and Sinti communities in Europe are 10-12 million strong. The short animated video, **Gypsies, Roma, Travellers: An Animated History**, was produced by Open Foundation Societies to tell a 1,000+ year-old story of diversity, creativity, and survival.

Roma Holocaust Memorial Day (August 2) commemorates the murders of hundreds of thousands of Romani by the Nazis during World War II.

It is estimated that between 220,000 and 500,000 Romani and Sinti were murdered, accounting for up to half their total population at the time. The memorial day recalls August 2 1944, when 3,000 Romani adults and children were murdered in a gas chamber at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi concentration camp. German authorities refused to officially acknowledge that their persecution was “racially motivated” until 1979.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6wSLfGBVGY

Watch with the class and ask students to note:

- 3 Things they learned whilst watching.
- 2 Questions, or things they would like to learn more about.
- 1 Thing they enjoyed or appreciated about the video.
- 1 Action they feel motivated to take.

Creative Activities:

Produce collages and posters, podcasts or slideshows in celebration of International Roma Day (8 April), a day to celebrate Roma culture and Roma contributions to European societies, and the cultural diversity of Europe.

In Our Own Hands: A UN Women comic telling the story of Nora, an Iraqi woman who is forced to flee to Kirkuk with her remaining family members when her city is taken by Isis. The comic addresses forced migration, gender, and a family's efforts to deal positively with the challenges of displacement.

The comic is available at positivenegatives.org and a 5 minute animated version is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=17&v=2eFzYs0raG0



In Our Own Hands, like the following resource collection, *Migrants on the Margins*, are also valuable because they deal with internal displacement, rather than focussing on journeys to Europe or North America, as most educational resources do (despite the fact that, globally, the vast majority of displaced people remain in their own countries, or seek refuge in a neighbouring country in the Global South.)

Migrants on the Margins: These comics illustrate the everyday life and life histories of families who took part in a research project with the Royal Geographical Society. Their stories provide some insights into the dynamics of rural displacement, and the experiences of millions of people that leave their homes to seek a life in the margins of cities such as Harare (Zimbabwe), Hargeisa (Somaliland), Colombo (Sri Lanka) & Dhaka (Bangladesh).

I Think We Will Be Calmer in the Next War: In this beautiful work Lena Merhej uses simple black and white line drawings to explore the psychological and physical impact of war and displacement on her family with disarming honesty and humour. Each of Lena's siblings and her parents deal differently with the seemingly impossible challenges of everyday life, when war makes everyday life impossible.

Sample discussion question:

The artist has said that she favours this artform because, “comics combine words and images, and images allow you to insinuate a lot of things, the medium is very appropriate. Instead of directly saying “I was hurt”, you can show this in an image and the reader then has to do a lot of work to take [indications of trauma] out.”

Find places where the artist has depicted these ‘indirect’ signs of trauma. How is it conveyed? What does the artist have to say about how people cope, and the various ways that people deal with the trauma of war and displacement? Where do you see signs of resilience? Do you think that exploring trauma through art, and finding a way to say, directly or indirectly, “I was hurt,” can be a way of coping, healing, and building resilience?



Graphic Novels:

Persepolis (2000)



Marjane Satrapi’s graphic novel (and subsequent animated film) shares the story of her childhood in Iran, before and during the 1979 revolution, and the eventual necessity of leaving home for reasons of safety. In her introduction she explains that the book is a response to her frustration at the West’s stereotypical portrayal of her home country - “this old and great civilisation” - as a place of, “fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism...As an Iranian who has lived more than half my life in Iran, I know that this image is far from the truth. That is why writing Persepolis was so important to me. I believe that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrongdoings of a few extremists.”

The novel and film address issues of belonging, refuge, gender and home, with humour and incision, and a determination to resist dehumanising stereotypes.

Sample themes for Discussion:

Gender and Religion: Work in small groups to explore themes like gender or religion in the book/film. How do you see the influence of religion on the lives of women and girls in Persepolis?

For context and comparison, encourage reflection on gender equality and religious influences on women's rights in Irish life during the same period. (For examples, search 'Ten Things Irish Women Could Not Do in the 1970s' on irishcentral.com)

<https://www.irishcentral.com/news/how-things-have-changed-ten-things-that-irish-women-could-not-do-in-1970s-183526621-237593131>

Childhood: "I wanted people in other countries to read *Persepolis*, to see that I grew up just as other children do." Marjane Satrapi.

- Invite the group to note similarities and differences between Marjane's childhood and that of a young person growing up in Ireland. What feels familiar, and what's less familiar? (For example, the world of imagination, relationships with parents and grandparents, teenage years, rules and rebellion, education.)
- For more critical discussion bring in questions on Author and Reader perspectives (see below).

The Impact of War and Conflict on Daily Life: Through the story of Marjane's family, we see the story of conflict and repression unfolding. In *Persepolis* traumatic events are often immediately followed by 'normal' everyday life, or even cheerful sequences.

- What does the author convey with these seamless transitions from the horror of conflict and repression, to the small matters of everyday life? Compare with Lena Merhej's frames depicting, "Children in plastic bags" alongside "Other children playing in school yards." What might the authors be saying about the impact of these simultaneous realities on citizens? What might she be saying with the side-by-side presentation of children, some of whom are involved in war, while some are enjoying a party in the city? (pg. 102) Is she drawing attention to differences, or similarities between the children, or both?
- Consider how individuals, families, and communities cope with the physical and psychological challenges of carrying on with everyday life, with strength and resilience. Do you notice any parts of the story where people resist being dehumanised by conflict? Discuss examples from Lena Merhej's *I think We Will Be Calmer in the Next War*, and *Madaya Mom*.

Displacement:

- How would you describe the emotions of Marjane and her family when it is decided that she should would be safer in Europe?
- Note moments that Marjane faces bias or discrimination in her new home.
- Share your thoughts on Marjane's attempts to find a way to fit in, or to resist the pressure to conform, both in Iran and in Europe. What barriers did she face, and what helped?
- In her introduction the author explains that writing *Persepolis* was, in part, about honouring the memory of the dead:
- "I also don't want those Iranians who lost their lives in prisons defending freedom, who died in the war against Iraq, who struggled under various repressive regimes, or who were forced to leave their families and flee their homeland to be forgotten. One can forgive but one should never forget." (Strapi, 2002)
- What kinds of 'forgetting' do you think the author is trying to protect refugees from?
- Do you think that news reports about today's refugee crisis create a sense of 'Otherness' about people seeking refuge – how does that happen? Through an emphasis on numbers of people? Through reports *about* 'migrants', rather than speaking for themselves, from their unique perspective? Presenting stories about statistics, rather than human beings?

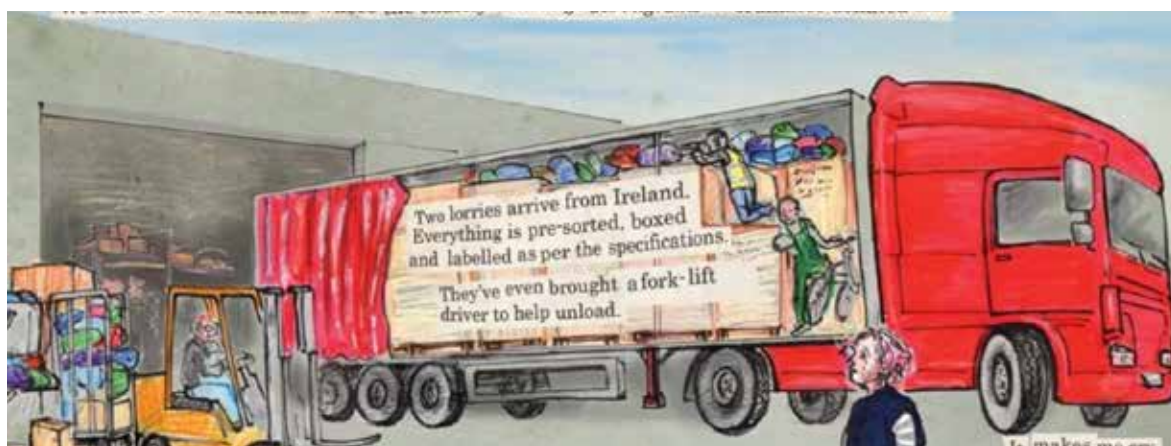
Critical Literacy - Author and Reader Perspectives:

Though it has been published and printed in numerous countries and translated into 24 languages, *Persepolis* has never officially been published in Farsi (the main language of Iran).

- What kind of reader and audience do you think the author is trying to engage? Do you think the book has particular appeal for Western readers, and if so, why?
- Did you find elements of your own culture and ‘norms’ reflected in Marjane’s middle class, liberal, secular background? What impact did this have on your ability to relate to her character?
- Do you think the book and film would have been as popular with Western audiences if the character had been written as coming from a different class, religious or cultural background? Why?
- The author says that the book is an attempt to reach “people in other countries...to see that I grew up just as other children do.” Who, or where, do you think are the ‘other children’ she wishes to compare her childhood with? How does Marji’s childhood compare with the lives of ‘other children’ in Iran. (For example, the lives of child soldiers.)?

Threads (2008) Dairy from a Calais Camp:

Artist Kate Evans draws some of her experiences of volunteering at the ‘Jungle’ refugee camp in Calais, Northern France. Her cartoons give a flavour of the courage, resourcefulness and tenacity of people who’ve fled war and poverty, only to face hostility and violence in Europe. Her beautiful drawings also depict examples of refugee solidarity activism (including an example of solidarity from Ireland). The full graphic novel, *Threads* (2018) is available from Verso Books. An extended extract from the comic can be found on the artist’s website, along with shorter segments like, “A visit to Alaz and Hoshyar’s home.”



www.cartoonkate.co.uk/threads-the-calais-cartoon/

The Best We Could Do (2017): Thi Bui’s memoir about her family’s move from Vietnam to the U.S. during the Vietnam War. In addition to showing the immediate impact of conflict on the family, the book also explores the longer-term aftereffects of displacement on generations of the family. An Interactive Reading of the text with Thi Bui can be found online at <https://www.thibui.com/>

The Kite Runner (2003): Some English classes may be reading Khaled Hosseini’s novel about best friends Amir and Hassan in 1970s Afghanistan. A graphic version is also available, illustrated by Fabio Celoni and Mirka Andolfo.

Palestine (2003) / Safe Area: Gorazde (2001): Award winning cartoon journalist Joe Sacco's graphic novels address complex issues relating to displacement relating to the Bosnian War, and the experiences of one of the largest refugee communities in the world - displaced Palestinians. These are long but rewarding reads, and segments of the books are worth considering for discussion.

Visual Arts Activity: Draw it Out

The stories represented in the novels and comics are complex, and our responses to them can be too. Think of three emotional responses you have to the story under consideration. Sketch a cartoon strip and draw a face/emoji to represent each of them, and then see what happens if you add a thought bubble.

Share them with a partner and discuss your responses.

- Can the responses be classified as positive or negative, or mixed?
- What kind of values and beliefs underpin each of these emotions? (For example, the values of fairness, equality, empathy, and solidarity, or a belief that human rights are universal)
- Will any of the emotions lead you to take action? Why?

Sometimes stories of injustice can evoke feelings that are usually considered to be negative, like anger. Can you see any positive side to these emotions? Could they, for example, prompt us to act to help change the situation?

If none of the three emotions feel very constructive, can you think of a fourth possibility? What kind of response would motivate you to believe that you could take action or help to bring about change (however small)?

"...Hope is not something that you have. Hope is something that you create, with your actions. Hope is something you have to manifest into the world, and once one person has hope, it can be contagious. Other people start acting in a way that has more hope."

- Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

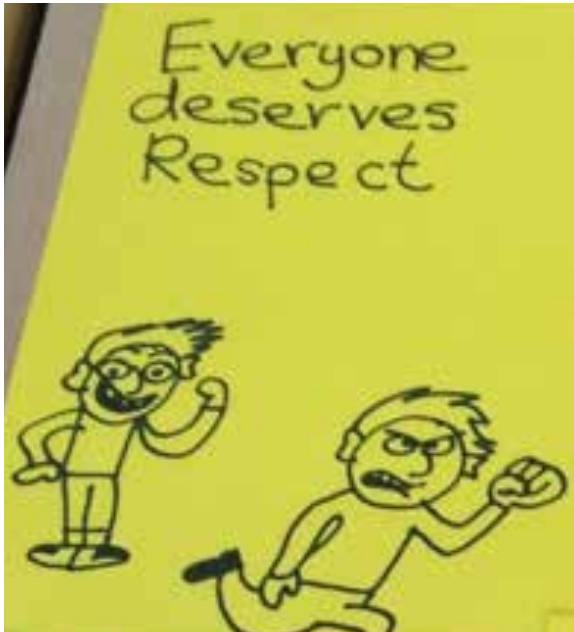
Activity: Make a Short Comic

Working in pairs or small groups, use a template, or a web-based comic generator invite the students to create a comic strip addressing an issue relating to refugee rights.

<https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/create-comix-demo/>

- Dealing with stereotypes and bigotry – the comic could portray how a young person might respond to hearing their friends tell racist jokes, or misinformation about refugees. Use the frames to explore their thoughts, and words, and how they handle the situation. Solutions don't have to be based on reality – the character's imagination has free reign in this medium.

- Inclusion of a young refugee - explore some challenges they might face in moving to a new country (perhaps a different language, unfamiliar food, climate, fitting in at school, unfamiliar systems, dealing with stereotypes etc.) Use the frames to look at ways they might deal with these challenges, and ideas for solidarity.



Cartoons from Refugee Rights workshop by students at St. Josephs' Secondary School, Tulla

Cartoons and Memes for Social Justice

Discussion Activity: Printouts of a range of cartoons and memes on refuge and migration themes.

Time: 30 minutes +

Subject: General

Materials: Printouts of a range of cartoons and memes on refuge and migration themes (selection available from education@galwayowc.org).

Spread out the cartoons and memes and invite the students to work in pairs or small groups to view them. Ask each student to pick one, and to discuss it in their group. (Or ask the small groups to select one, if there aren't enough cartoons to pick one each.)

- What is the overall message of the piece?
- How effective has the artist or writer been in conveying the message?
- What tools or tactics have they used to get the message across?

There is no formula for a great cartoon, but there are some key ingredients that many great cartoonists use. Help students to determine the elements used by the artists in the cartoons to deliver their message. Cartoonists obviously use **images**, in which all sorts of limits can be overcome to create a pithy comment about a person, event or issue.

Symbols are also useful, as shorthand to express an idea, or to **juxtapose** different ideas.

- Think of some familiar symbols for war. [bombs/tanks...]
- Think of some symbols for 'stop' [traffic sign / a hand...]
- What kind of message could you convey by putting them together?



Artist Declan Pierce made this drawing in response to the death of 39 people in a lorry container. What is he saying with this juxtaposition between coffin ships and trucks?

Some cartoons rely only on images, but many make creative use of **language**, playing on words, using puns, using or altering expressions, sayings, and idioms to make a point.

What famous quote is employed in this cartoon about Brexit and borders?

[The White Queen speaking to Alice in Wonderland explains that when she was younger, she could “believe six impossible things before breakfast.”]



Image: Sergei. With kind permission of the artist.

Caricature is sometimes used by cartoonists, for humorous effect or as a way to make figures identifiable (Think of the characteristics cartoonists use to identify Donald Trump, for example.)

Caricature has also been used to stereotype, vilify groups, or reinforce racist tropes.

A Note On Satire and Freedom of Speech:

Cartoonists may also use **irony** or **satire** to comment on, or to draw attention to contradictions or hypocrisy. The important point with satire is that it should, as Doonsbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau (2014) puts it, “comfort the afflicted while afflicting the comfortable. Satire punches up, against authority of all kinds, the little guy against the powerful... punching downward, by attacking a powerless, disenfranchised minority with crude, vulgar drawings... [is in] the realm of hate speech. In other words, if cartoonists claim to be using satire when they are in fact attacking an already vulnerable group it’s not actually satire, it’s just mean.”

A full article, *The Abuse of Satire* by Garry Trudeau on freedom of speech was published online in The Atlantic on 11th April, 2015 following the ‘Charlie Hebdo’ attacks in which the office of the French satirical weekly newspaper was attacked by armed raiders. They killed 12 people and injured 11 others.

www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/04/the-abuse-of-satire/390312/

Visual Arts Activity: Cartoon and Meme Making

Bearing in mind the ingredients listed above - images, symbols, word play, juxtaposition, satire and irony - generate ideas in one or two of these categories, and then apply your favourite idea to create a meme or cartoon on the theme of refugee rights or migration.

Your meme might address misperceptions, urge decision-makers to take action, challenge hypocrisy, or highlight the positives of diversity, or something else altogether.

The framework for parts of the activity above is adapted from Teaching Tolerance’s 14-part lesson plan on teaching Social Justice through Cartoons, available at: www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/using-editorial-cartoons-to-teach-social-justice



'NAMING THE UNNAMEABLE': Poetry and Creative Writing for Social Justice

This section is an expanded version of an article published by developmenteducation.ie

The experiences of people seeking refuge, or systematically denied their human rights to seek safety, are near impossible to understand for those whose lives have never been disrupted so cruelly. Who do we turn to then, in order to try to make sense of displacement on this scale? Salman Rushdie suggests that it is, "A poet's work ... to name the unnameable," and so here are some suggestions of work that may help to delve deeper, beyond the headlines and the stereotypes, as well as pieces that pose questions about how we can respond to the crisis, as individuals and collectively.

In contrast to the widespread use of the neutral term 'migration' to describe death-defying journeys across land and sea, poet Warsan Shire teaches us that the decision to flee is not a really a decision at all, she makes clear in the opening lines of her poem, *Home*:

**no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well**

**your neighbours running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.**

Later in the poem she states:

**you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat**

**unless the water is safer than the land
no one burns their palms
under trains
beneath carriages
no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck
feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled
means something more than journey.**

Numerous readings of the poem can be found online, including a version by Shire herself. Please note that references to sexual violence later in the poem may not be suitable for all groups.

While the current crises engulf millions of people worldwide, war, conflict, persecution and displacement are nothing new. Written at the outbreak of World War II, WH Auden captured the insidious rise and impact of violent anti-Semitism in *Refugee Blues*; sentiments that are still current.

The poem addresses the dispossession and dehumanisation of forced migration, using everyday language that students will find accessible. It addresses the shameful history of country after country closing its doors on people attempting to flee Nazi terror, and ultimately, genocide. (For more detail on the Evian Conference and its consequences see the activity, “Yes, But...”: A History of Four Excuses.)

**In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew:
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.
The consul banged the table and said, "If you've got no passport you're officially dead":
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.**

Auden's words could also apply to the millions of people worldwide rendered stateless by occupation, conflict and political upheaval, including over 5 million Palestinians who remain stateless under international law. Writer John Berger describes the Palestinian response to such ongoing oppression and dispossession as, '*undefeated despair*.'

Khaled Juma's *poem, Children of Gaza*, read here by Sorcha Fox at an event to honour the 506 young lives taken during 2014's 50 day bombardment of Gaza, is a bare and heart-breaking response to that ongoing loss.

www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/artists-pay-tribute-to-the-lost-children-of-gaza-1.2277699

**Oh rascal children of Gaza,
You who constantly disturbed me with your screams under my window,
You who filled every morning with rush and chaos,
You who broke my vase and stole the lonely flower on my balcony,
Come back –
And scream as you want,
And break all the vases,
Steal all the flowers,
Come back,
Just come back...**

- Research life for children in Gaza, where the poem is set.
- Consider the poets use of language in this short poem: disturbed / screams / rush and chaos / broke / lonely / stole. Can you find multiple ways to interpret these words?

The Gathering, by Dave Donovan, also suggests that history and its lessons are never far away, making stark connections between a burnt-out home intended for a Traveller family, with more distant atrocities. In the interview cited at the beginning of the poem, the local politician stated that he did not support the housing of a Traveller family in an area otherwise populated by settled people and advocated creating, “an isolated community of them some place.”

On hearing Cllr. Mc Eniff (FF) interviewed on Morning Ireland 12/2/2013 about the arson attack on a house in Ballyshannon allocated to a Traveller family

**It sounds neutral on the radio
Clear condemnation of arson
Reasoned tone of the panjandrum
Masking the segregationist
Quietly sidestepping
Sharpeville, Selma, Soweto, Bloody Sunday
We have been here before
Cockroaches, zipperheads, useless eaters
To the singing swish of sharpened machetes
The click, click, click of flaming *Zippos*
Welcome home
It's Kristallnacht in Donegal**

The poem evokes scenes of massacres, all of which were heralded by processes of discrimination, dehumanising labels, and segregation. The list of slurs each has its own terrible context and history of violence - by invasion, colonial segregation, and genocide.

- Look into the meanings and associations with the word ‘panjandrum’ and explore the possible connection made in the poem between warfare and the words of politicians.
- What else does the poet’s use of this anachronistic term suggest about political views of this kind?

Critics of Direct Provision argue that the system also functions to isolate and segregate asylum seekers. Experiences of Direct Provision are dealt with by Melatu Uch Okorie (2018) in her collection *This Hostel Life*. An interview with the author and an extract from *Under the Awning* can be found in the Irish Times [‘We as migrants are used to being spoken for, yet these are our experiences,’ 31st July 2018]

www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/we-as-migrants-are-used-to-being-spoken-for-yet-these-are-our-experiences-1.3580819

Exploring the same system through a different form, *Oppression* is a rap created by ACTIVIST, featuring Liselotte Westermann, and Ras Tinney of Revolution Sound, which powerfully expresses experiences of Direct Provision and the threat of deportations. [search for ‘*Oppression* by Activist ft Liselotte & Ras Tinny’]

www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1LpwZ4sUms&fbclid=IwAR1In8m7XAiIaAI9_r9eJxVODIJ03Gznjq5UNNKcnKCbT-oXE-KIXKn15DA&app=desktop

**It's really hard to explain how we survive
In this part of a life journey as asylum seekers
This is not the way we choose to live
The life we live
But we have to keep going with fear and hope
That things will soon get better
Most asylum seekers are fleeing
extreme dangerous life threatening
and inhuman situations**

**Once a group is stigmatized
Marginalized and segregated
Regarded as not having any rights
Family been separated as father been
Deported
It's easy to be blamed for homelessness
And unemployment
The contribution we could make in Irish
Society is immense
But the fucken government is stifling this
Possibility by incarcerating in centres
Denying us a right to work
And a right of third level education
Up to 15 years
No dreams no ambitions
Nine to Ten years
Inside direct provision
This institutionalization
Have led many vulnerable children
Single men
Single woman
Into poor mental health and psychiatric care
Who cares the pain that we bear
Our closest friends are in despair and suffer
Depression
The time is right now where
Every asylum seeker
Men
Woman and children to be afforded
The dignity of roof of our own
The fucken fair system of justice and society
That will celebrate our contribution**

Rap artist and educator Akala reflects on diversity, resistance to racism, and building solidarity in *Find No Enemy* and *Fire In the Booth*.

Wang Ping is a poet and fiction writer, “whose work often speaks to the interweaving of two cultures.” *Things We Carry On The Sea* can be read as a witness to the structural violence that drives people from their homes, and a hymn to the full humanity of people forced to undertake desperate journeys. In contrast to stereotypes that so often dominate discussions about migration, the poem acknowledges the courage and resilience of people seeking refuge and mounts a refusal to be dismissed, dehumanised or reduced to a statistic. She affirms the wealth that people carry with them, even when they have lost everything. poets.org/poem/things-we-carry-sea.

- What causes of displacement can be found in the poem?

We carry tears in our eyes: good-bye father, good-bye mother
 We carry soil in small bags: may home never fade in our hearts
 We carry names, stories, memories of our villages, fields, boats
 We carry scars from proxy wars of greed
 We carry carnage of mining, droughts, floods, genocides
 We carry dust of our families and neighbours incinerated in mushroom clouds
 We carry our islands sinking under the sea
 We carry our hands, feet, bones, hearts and best minds for a new life
 We carry diplomas: medicine, engineer, nurse, education, math, poetry, even if they mean nothing to the other shore
 We carry railroads, plantations, laundromats, bodegas, taco trucks, farms, factories, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, temples...built on our ancestors' backs
 We carry old homes along the spine, new dreams in our chests
 We carry yesterday, today and tomorrow
 We're orphans of the wars forced upon us
 We're refugees of the sea rising from industrial wastes
 And we carry our mother tongues
 爱(ai), حب (hubb), ליבע (libe), amor, love
 平安 (ping'an), سلام (salaam), shalom, paz, peace
 希望 (xi'wang), أمل ('amal), hofenung, esperanza, hope, hope, hope

'Most countries send out oil or iron, steel or gold, or some other crop, but Ireland has had only one export and that is its people.'

- John F. Kennedy on his presidential visit to Ireland, June 1963

Irish history contains countless stories of forced migration. In addition to the million who perished during the Great Famine, an additional 1.5 million were displaced around the globe. In total, 10 million people have left these shores since 1800.

However, it is rarely acknowledged that the Troubles displaced thousands of people on this island, forcing at least 10,000 Catholic nationalists to seek safety in the Republic. Many of these refugees were housed in unheated army huts with only the most basic of facilities. Following an initially sympathetic reception, rumours soon circulated of 'terrorists' hiding amongst them, and talk of families coming 'on holidays' rather than recognising the need to seek respite from death threats, bomb scares, threats of internment, and routine harassment by Security Forces and paramilitaries.

English teacher Ruth Morrissey suggests Eavan Boland's *Child of Our Time* as a way of connecting today's crisis to these experiences of violence and displacement, and to renew the challenges posed by Boland:

**Yesterday I knew no lullaby
 But you have taught me overnight to order
 This song, which takes from your final cry
 Its tune, from your unreasoned end its reason;
 Its rhythm from the discord of your murder,
 Its motive from the fact you cannot listen.**

Sarah Clancy's poem *Explaining Borders To Your Children* pitches peaceful domesticity against the simultaneous reality of almost unimaginable, and unnecessary, suffering of families seeking refuge.

Explaining Borders to Your Children

When the last of the homework is done and all that's left of dinner is condensation on the winter evening windows and the mildew smell of cooking, when the dog is fed but still hopefully hovering, when Rosin is already gone up and sleeping under the glow-in-the-dark stars you stuck on the ceiling to distract her from crying when she was teething, when your two boys are red faced and beginning to squabble - a sure sign that they're past it: that it is incontrovertibly BEDTIME! When your partner has gone to get their pyjamas so they can change by the fire and not, for god's sake, wake up their sister.

When the television in the corner is drifting towards the nine o'clock news which as usual won't recount the most common feature of all human history the fact that most of us, most of the time, have peacefully coexisted, would this be a good time to explain to your children that tonight, under real stars and in all kinds of weather, some families are walking across Europe looking for shelter and that some people are braving the seas in rickety boats just to get here, but because of something called borders, we can call some humans 'migrants' and let their children drown?

- What does the poem suggest about the power, and the impact of language and labels?
- Does the poem have something to say to a society that sees itself as distant or indifferent to the struggles of people seeking refuge?

In *Tsunami Chant*, Wang Ping also addresses the role of those who witness the crisis, and draws connections between the need to speak out and protect the life and rights of others, and protection of one's own humanity. In a climate where protest is dismissed as pointless, by some, what is the poet saying about those who stand up for equality?

**I'm not a worshiper, but please
accept my faith in those
who refuse to believe in painted lies
refuse to join this chorus of supreme hypocrisy,
refuse to sell out, to let their conscience sleep,
wither, die.**

Addressing questions of power, and who gains and who loses in a system that is hostile to migrants, Hollie McNish performs her poem, *British National Breakfast*. In the context of an increasingly globalised world, she asks why 'foreign' food, money and goods are treated so very differently to foreign people and families; "*those foreigners ruining their lives...*"

This contrast is pertinent for Ireland too. During the period of economic boom in the 2000s, Ireland positioned itself as an attractive destination for foreign financial institutions and hedge funds. Thanks to 'light touch' regulation and low corporate tax rates, Ireland became the "Wild West of European finance", according to the New York Times. Yet, during the same period, Ireland also had the lowest acceptance rate for refugees in the EU, with fewer than 1.5% of applications being accepted at first instance.

Suppose

Sheila Harbourne

I suppose I just expected more.
The way we go on about coffin ships and rack rents
As if the Famine happened to us.
As if we could recall the agony of wrapping up our own precious children
And lifting them aboard a leaky boat,
Destination: survival.

I suppose I imagined some common cause
Some recognition of the choices we might make
If we found ourselves out of choices.

I suppose I thought that the bodies of toddlers
Washing up on our southern shores
Might jump start our flatlined hearts.
Provoke something,
Anything
But razor-wire fences
And mouldering direct provision centres.

That eventually we'd choke on the hypocrisy.
You know - exporting our young ones
To bedsits in foreign cities,
All the while making our capital
A haven for offshore profits,
And our airport a place for troops
To rest and refuel
On their way to illegal wars.
Welcome Lads,
Take the weight off your feet and your conscience,
And don't forget to stock up at the duty-free.

I suppose I believed all that talk about Human Rights
Universal
Inalienable
Indivisible
Would eventually come true.
That hearts and borders would finally open
To people whose only crime
Is their refusal
To stay put
And die.

And I suppose we still could,
In a heartbeat,
Fall in love again with the revolutionary truth
That there is enough
For each and every one of us.
That we could still
Wade in,
Reach out,
Haul our loved ones from the water,
And save ourselves.

Elsewhere, McNish's poem, *Mathematics*, also deals head on with the callous logic of casual racism, and the increasingly virulent myths on the rise across Europe. This poem supports some of the myths explored in the Stereotypes activity in the pack.

**Man
I'm sick of crappy mathematics
Cos I love a bit of sums
I spent three years into economics
And I geek out over calculus
And when I meet these paper claims
That one of every new that came
Takes away ones daily wage
I desperately want to scream
"Your maths is stuck in primary"
Cos one who comes here also spends
And one who comes here also lends
And some who comes here also tend
To set up work which employs them
And all your balance sheets and trends
Work with numbers not with men**

Palestinian poet Rafeef Ziadah's stunning spoken word poem *We Teach Life Sir*, also urges us to look beyond the headlines that reduce communities and peoples' lives and losses to caricatures and statistics.

**Hand me over your dead and give me the list of their names
In one thousand two hundred-word limits.**

She challenges the obligation placed on people facing oppression to justify their right to existence in logical and easily digestible soundbites, and above all, the demand that they be "balanced," and strip their own story of its history and political reality.

**We just want to tell people about you and your people so give us a human story.
Don't mention that word 'apartheid' and 'occupation'.
This is not political.
You have to help me as a journalist to help you to tell your story which is not a political story...**

See also Ziadah's poem, *Passport*, where she addresses the complex and ambiguous feelings around exile and citizenship, and those considered 'suspect' being condemned to endless waiting in queues and searches at airports, while immigration officers scan, "*my illegal skin, my illegal bones.*"

Live readings of these works, and more, can be found at www.rafeefziadah.net/videos/

**If you are lucky...
Home is somewhere you will run to
Never away from...**

Seeking asylum is a human right, regardless of the reception a person receives in the Host county. The response from communities in Ireland has varied from warmth and welcome to protests and even arson attacks on proposed centres. Palestinian-American poet Naomi Shihab Nye's work is gives voice to the potential for mutual care and reciprocity, in *Red Brocade*.

**The Arabs used to say,
When a stranger appears at your door,
feed him for three days
before asking who he is,
where he's come from,
where he's headed.
That way, he'll have strength
enough to answer.
Or, by then you'll be
such good friends
you don't care.**

Writer and educator JJ Bola fled his native Congo for the UK with his parents at the age of seven. In addition to writing, he works to raise awareness about human rights issues in Congo. A number of recordings of his readings can be found online, and at TedxExeter, you can find a collection of readings under the title, *Reaching For A Place To Call Home*.

Watch Bola perform the poem *Refuge* and take note of repeated phrases and striking imagery.

- What does the repetition of images like the '*familiar faces*', '*the girl next door*', and the '*fruit seller at the market*' suggest about integration into a new home? Does the poet suggest that it comes with a cost?
- What kind of "monsters" do people face before, and after, they flee? What kinds of "monsters" do you think "wear suits and ties"? What kind of "monsters" are lurking in the dark beyond, "*our house at the bottom of the street*."? Does this cast a shadow on the preceding images of belonging: the "familiar faces", "the girl next door"?

The poet concludes on a note that is echoed elsewhere in his work – the reality that, if the circumstances insisted on it, any one of us could be forced to flee our homes:

**A refugee is simply someone who is trying to make a home
So next time when you go home
Tuck your children in and kiss your families good night
Be glad that the monsters never came for you, in their suits and ties
Never came for you
In the newspapers where the media lies
Never came for you
That you are not despised
And know that deep inside the hearts of each and every one of us
We are all, always reaching for a place
That we can call home.**

See also:

- *The Stigma of Living As A Refugee*, by Sudanese poet Abraham Nouk, now an award-winning performance poet in Australia.
- Naomi Shihab Nye reading her poem, *For Mohammed Zeid of Gaza, Age 15*
- Jackie Kay's exploration of racism and identity in *Someone Else*, from her collection *Off Colour*.
- The editors of Warscapes have chosen poems that reflect on home, exile, journeys, war and humanity in light of the current refugee crisis. The site offers work by Chickasaw writer and environmentalist Linda Hogan; Film maker and novelist Georges Perec, Palestinian Poets Mahmoud Darwish and Jehan Beseiso; Yannis Ritsos; Hahm Dong-Seon; and film maker and novelist Warsan Shire brilliant, *Home*. www.warscapes.com/poetry/refugees-some-poems.

Finally, Maya Angelou's *I Rise* is an anthem to those who face "fear, pain, loss, disappointment", and yet still carry on. Her words celebrate courage and resilience in the face of oppression, and the poem stands in proud defiance of any attempt to paint survivors as helpless victims.

**You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.**

Poetry and Creative Writing Activities:

Write a Dialogue Poem:

Dialogue poems offer a creative way to explore contrasting perspectives. As an example, read the poem *Two Women*, said to have been written by a Chilean woman following the violent US-sponsored coup in 1973 that killed President Salvador Allende, and replaced his democratically elected socialist government with military dictatorship of General Pinochet.

Thousands of people were tortured, murdered and disappeared in the aftermath of the coup and up to one million people were displaced by persecution and political instability. At the time, Ireland and Luxembourg were the only members of the EEC that had not accepted any Chilean refugees but lobbying by an Irish solidarity group led to an offer to host up to 100 families.

The poem addresses the period of decolonisation across the Global South, when attempts by newly elected leaders to reduce inequalities were frequently hampered by collusion between middle and upper-class interests, and US or former colonial powers. From Ghana to Guatemala, and Iran to Indonesia, dictatorships were supported, armed, trained and funded to ensure the continuity of western interests, even at the expense of brutal suppression of civilians. Read about some examples at www.salon.com: *35 Countries Where The US Has Supported Fascists, Druglords and Terrorists*.

Please note that the poem contains a reference to rape, and so may not be suitable for all groups.

The full version of the poem can be found at:
msalbasclass.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/DialoguePoemSample.Pdf

I am a woman.

I am a woman.

I am a woman born of a woman whose man owned a factory.

I am a woman born of a woman whose man laboured in a factory.

I am a woman whose man wore silk suits, who constantly watched his weight.

I am a woman whose man wore tattered clothing, whose heart was constantly strangled by hunger.

I am a woman who watched two babies grow into beautiful children.

I am a woman who watched two babies die because there was no milk.

I am a woman who watched twins grow into popular college students with summers abroad.

I am a woman who watched three children grow, but with bellies stretched from no food.

But then there was a man;

But then there was a man;

And he talked about the peasants getting richer by my family getting poorer.

And he told me of days that would be better, and he made the days better.

We had to eat rice.

We had rice.

We had to eat beans!

We had beans.

My children were no longer given summer visas to Europe.

My children no longer cried themselves to sleep.

And I felt like a peasant.

And I felt like a woman.

A peasant with a dull, hard, unexciting life.

Like a woman with a life that sometimes allowed a song.

And I saw a man.

And I saw a man.

And together we began to plot with the hope of the return to freedom.

I saw his heart begin to beat with hope of freedom, at last.

Someday, the return to freedom.

Someday freedom.

And then,

But then,

One day,

One day,

There were planes overhead and guns firing close by.

There were planes overhead and guns firing in the distance.

I gathered my children and went home.

I gathered my children and ran.

And the guns moved farther and farther away.

But the guns moved closer and closer.

And then, they announced that freedom had been restored!

And then they came, young boys really.

They came into my home along with my man.

They came and found my man.

Those men whose money was almost gone —

They found all of the men whose lives were almost their own.

And we all had drinks to celebrate.

And they shot them all.

The most wonderful martinis.

They shot my man.

And then they asked us to dance.

And then they came for me...

It was magnificent to be free again!

It was hardly a relief to have survived.

Art/English Activity: Illustrated Poetry

Select a poem and assign a line or number of lines to each student.

Take or find photos in response to each line, and convert the photo to a line drawing using an app, or your own drawing skills.

Compile the drawings to create an illustrated book or display as a frieze.

What A Bomb Hits

Sarah Clancy

Feel the dead heat of the quietening street,
see the early evening houses and the shutters
on the shops. Look at the row of highrise balconies
with their Aloe Vera plants.
See this door and behind it the tile-floored hallway?
Look at the outdoor shoes abandoned carelessly
by going-about-their-business feet?
Look in here and see shelves full of books
and the loose skinned hands
that choose one, thumb it and put it back?
Hear the sigh as someone older sits down
and now the tell-tale evenness of breath
that tells you sleep is near. Shhh now, come in here-
see the saucepans, turmeric, ginger, onions
and the glistening guts of something?
See the strong backed person cooking?
Her flush blood-orange cheeks?
Over here- see the empty good room?
With photos of the girl's first day at school
her plump-armed prize for maths,
see her seven year-old gappedtooth grin?
And now in the bathroom this very minute
see her neck nape exposed and older
as she kneels beside the bath,
see the henna swirl maroonish in the water
then disappear, see the soles of her bare feet,
see her calf muscles curve and how her skirt
is caught in behind her knees?
From the street below, listen to the overheating engine
of her teenage brother's car as he tries to park it
see his sinewy biceps strain while he reverses inexpertly
his slim thighs pressed against the seat, see
on his unlined forehead the freshness
of glistening beads of sweat, now watch him slam the car door
and turn this way while the lazy street cat looks
at him unimpressed before settling back to lick itself,
then freeze all this and think of it
blown to smithereens
this,
all this,
is what a bomb hits.

Shhh now, come in here-
see the saucepans, turmeric, ginger, onions
and the glistening guts of something?



See the strong backed person cooking?
Her flush blood-orange cheeks?

Unskilled

Sarah Clancy

I lack the ability to vaporise across borders
I lack the capacity for disappearance
I don't know how to step the surface lightly
and not have my details recorded
I have no idea how I'd begin to learn it
I don't know how to build a network
or to cooperate with strangers
across a dozen languages,
I have never had to shed
my previous existence
and leave it like a crab's exoskeleton
on some distant shoreline
I have never burned my passport
or decided which child to bring with me,
I am unfamiliar with western union
and have never been approached to sell my organs
I have never landed in a country
I didn't know the name of
I have never stowed away in anything
or had my skin burned from petrol
I have never had to associate with traffickers
and wonder which one could be trusted
I have never suffocated in a fridge truck
or abandoned my loved ones
for their own safety,
I have never had to select a protector
from amongst the people
who wanted to molest me,
I have never been refused rescue
while my boat was sinking
I have never been in a camp in Libya
and wouldn't have survived it,
I have never washed up in Ireland
and found myself entangled
in bureaucracy with my nostrils full
of other people's odours
from living up close and personal
in six bed dormitories where
I have never had to queue for cheap shampoo and loo roll,
where I have never had to wait for years
for someone in a comfortable office
who doesn't have the skills for any of this
to decide something about me
and my eligibility.

Activity: Poetry Slam

With thanks to teacher Elaine Feeney

Objectives: Engagement with the spoken word, expression, and performance.
To build understanding and empathy.

Time: 120 – 200 minutes

Subjects: Junior Certificate English Poetry Curriculum, and Oral Presentation. TY.

A poetry slam is a competition of spoken word poetry. Poetry slams began in Chicago in 1984, to move poetry recitals from academia to a more popular audiences and open-mic settings. The performances at a slam are assessed by a panel of judges, or sometimes judged by audience response.

Slam focuses on the I – the first person, to allow students to engage with their own experience and to share that with the class.

1. Pre-teach what a Poetry Slam is, use resources listed above to find poetry that engages with refugee and migrant experiences, as well as work like Shane Koyzan's *To This Day*, which deals with the impact of name-calling and bullying in a broader context.
2. Generate ideas of what personal experiences the class could write about. Slam is deeply personal and usually takes the form of first-person narrative. For any student uncomfortable with that, allow freedom to write whatever they wish.
3. Rhyme is good in Slam, so for reluctant writers, use rhyming resources.
4. Make the classroom a safe space, free from judgement, to allow confidence in expression.
5. Write the poem.
6. Practise poems in pairs.
7. Allow practise at home if desirable.
8. Have your SLAM!
9. Invite judges/feedback panel (Should be older students, maybe student council, consider ancillary staff also, if they have time, as they are so rarely in the classroom.

Notes: “For very reluctant students, you can accept the written poem and perhaps allow them on Feedback panel instead. However, from experience, my students have always reacted positively to their own participations.

If the judges are providing scores (scoring cards can be found online) I would suggest only calling top three students and not releasing marks to any other student as this can be unfair, and also, subjective. If you so wish, remove the competitive element entirely, and invite an audience instead.”



PHOTOGRAPHY: Seeing the world 'Through Refugee Eyes'

Through Refugee Eyes is an activist photography project developed by young Syrian photographers, Abdulazez Dukhan and Hassan Alhomse. Having fled his home city of Homs in 2014 at the age of 15, Abdulazez made the dangerous journey to Turkey and then across the Mediterranean to Greece. He now lives in Belgium, where he is studying and continuing to use his artwork to raise awareness about the refugee crisis: “No one in the outside world had an inkling as to what was happening inside, except through the media. I had other ideas. The camera came at a perfect time. I wanted to document from the inside.”



“I left my house in the city of Homs after 6 months of the revolution, I left a lot of friends behind me. Since then half of them died and I lived in the Syrian countryside for 3 years. I was in school but there was a lot of things I could not do there because of the situation. Every day I was afraid that maybe I’ll die and no one will even remember who I am. We sold everything, we borrowed money and we headed to Europe, for life, for studying, and for leaving behind the racism and the war. This is all we wanted.

We arrived in the tent city of Idomeni [in Greece, near the border with Republic of Macedonia] after facing a lot of difficulties. The border was closed and the situation was very bad. Some nights I couldn’t sleep...I was in a tent in the mud. After a three-day rainstorm in Idomeni, our small tent was finished, water everywhere! We had nothing. I was standing, looking, breathing and asking myself, ‘Would dying quickly be better than dying slowly?’ We left from Idomeni with broken hearts.

[Still in Greece], we came to Eko station camp. I found a new spot, a new small tent, new people. Here I started volunteering. I started to make art again! I showed people the photographs, the reality, not from the media. I couldn’t just watch without doing anything, so I captured the stories unfolding around me.

I was able to start my own page as a voice of refugees, called ‘Through Refugee Eyes.’ The work can be followed at www.facebook.com/throughrefugeeyes

My message to Europe, to the whole world, is that we are not terrorists. We didn’t come from nothing. We came forcibly. No one chooses to leave his home. We just want to live! We have everything you have, mind, body and feelings! Open your mind. Try to get the truth before you judge anyone. I’m here today because of the war, but if tomorrow my country will be safe, I’ll be there again. After more than 6 years of war, let’s stand for Syria and let the whole world know the truth, let’s move and try to act this time, not just talk.”



Photo of Abudlazez, taken Eko station refugee camp in Greece by Maddie Kaufman.

Video: While living in a camp in Greece, Abulaazez wrote an open letter to President Donald Trump on his election. It has been shared thousands of times.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLtX-PfzcBc

Discussion Activity:

Materials: Slideshow or prints from Through Refugee Eyes.

With kind permission of the artists, a set of A2 prints is available on loan from www.galwayowc.org for educational use and for exhibitions.

- What do you think the photographer is saying with these photos?
- Using post-its, write down the thoughts and feelings the images elicit. Do you think the photos provide a way to communicate about the human situation people seeking refuge face, beyond headlines and statistics, as Abdulazez hopes?

Creative Action:

Using images from Through Refugee Eyes, or Asylum Archive create a video addressing your concerns to decision makers.

Host an exhibition and discussion in your school or community, with an invited speaker to address the crisis for people trying to find safety around the world, and how people can take action for refugee rights.





The Passport

Photographer Thana Faroq is originally from Yemen and now living and working in the Netherlands. *The Passport* is an ongoing project addressing, “the struggle to leave a country where violence and war are prevalent, through portraits, images of daily life, personal reflections and handwritten testimonies.”

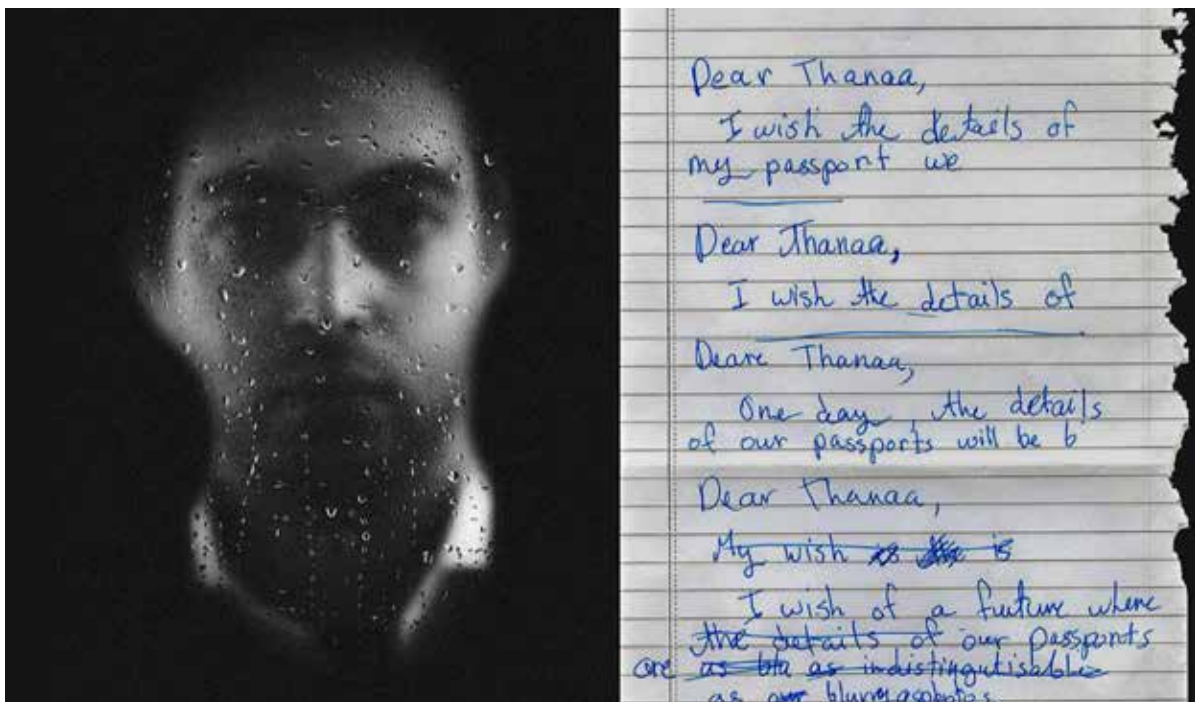
“We live in a divided world that’s been even further hacked up by arbitrary borders and walls... Ultimately the passport becomes the tool of a system that enables and perpetuates racism...”

Henley & Partners Visa Restriction Index ranks passports according to the number of countries to which their holders are afforded visa-free access. What does it mean if you come from Yemen, and your country is number 98 on that list? Out of 104 ranked countries, what does it mean if your passport comes from number 101, Syria? Or what if you come from the last ranked country, number 104, Afghanistan? What does it mean and what does it look like?

On 6 November [2017], Yemen’s borders via land, air and sea were closed, imprisoning its people with no choice but to remain in the country and die slowly from starvation, cholera and many other things. Perhaps you can imagine what it looks like for Yemen to be 98 on the list at the moment.

Using the index as a point of departure, I attempted to address the struggle of those who come from the countries that occupy the bottom of this international list through ‘The Passport’, a project that... is about the people who are banned from entering countries; asylum seekers and stateless individuals who cross oceans and land masses to obtain a passport that will guarantee them a higher value in life. It is about me, and everyone who were not born within the “lucky” borders.”

Selected works from the exhibition can be found at <http://thepassport.nl/> and more examples can be seen at <http://thanafaroq.com/>





“Being photographed behind blurry glass represented the reality of me as the “Unknown”

But, I shall rebel...by writing my thoughts on an old newspaper rather than clean cut white paper.

Similarly, I shall rebel with dignity to become the “known”

Discussion and Reflection:

What kind of images are typically shown of displaced people? Read the quote above and discuss how the artist, and the subjects she portrays, are doing to challenge these stereotypes.

We sometimes hear about the concept of ‘structural violence’, but it can be hard to explain. Does Thana Faruq’s project offer a way of thinking about this?

- The closure of borders, entrapping people in a conflict that left 8.4 million people at risk of starvation, and 22.2 million people - 75% of the population - in need of humanitarian assistance.
- ‘Ranking’ passports and denying entry to people from a country such as Yemen or Syria, in the context of conflict and humanitarian disasters.
- The death of 25,000 per day from hunger, in a world where there is enough food discarded in the ‘Developing World’ to feed every hungry person three times over (Concern 2018)
- Average life expectancy in Ireland is over 81 years. For Traveller men, it is just over 60, while homeless people have an average life span of 42 years.

Is this violence?

- What is the impact of defining ‘violence’ only in terms of direct harm? Who benefits and who loses from this limited interpretation of violence?
- Many campaigns focus on the impact of structural violence. What kind of actions would be needed to address the root causes?

Photography: Asylum Archive



Asylum Archive: Athlone

Asylum Archive is the work of visual artist and activist, Vukasin Nedeljkovic. Originally from Serbia, Vukasin spent three years in Direct Provision in Mayo and Roscommon. He now lives with his family in Dublin where he teaches photography and campaigns against Direct Provision and deportations.

“From April 2007 to November 2009, I was housed in a Direct Provision Centre while seeking asylum in Ireland... As a coping mechanism I decided to take photos of my room in Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo and its surrounds - the canteen, the playground or, the no playground. I took them from 2008, from when I arrived in Direct Provision... These are pivotal photos which started the Asylum Archive.

I kept myself intact by capturing and communicating with the environment through photographs and videos. Direct Provision is the continuation of coercive confinement in Ireland. The last Magdalene laundry closed in November 1996 and the first Direct Provision centre opened in 1999. We had Mother and Baby Homes, Industrial Schools and ‘lunatic asylums’ and we have very little visual information about those situations.

There are 6,000 photos in the Asylum Archive that show the architecture of confinement... and I created a book of photos during my MA in IADT... It shows former hotels, B&Bs, holiday homes and former army barracks. People are incarcerated for indefinite periods of time.

I will never forget the brothers and sisters who are still incarcerated.”



Asylum Archive, Waterford (2012)

Invisible Walls: Photography Activity

Aim:

- To develop empathy and increase understanding of some issues facing people living in Direct Provision.
- To consider society's responsibility to recognise the full human rights of people in the asylum system.
- To begin to break the barriers inherent in a segregated system, by engaging in creative dialogue with a body of work.

Materials:

Slides or prints from Asylum Archive.
Posts-its and pens/markers.

Time: 40 – 80 minutes

Classes: English, Art, RE, CSPE, TY.



Galway One World Centre has a collection of selected A2 prints from Asylum Archive available on loan for educational use, or for exhibition, with the kind permission of the artist.

Go to <http://www.asylumarchive.com/> to order the Asylum Archive book and to view additional photographs, along with essays and videos.

Discussion:

Many charities, aid agencies and some campaign groups use images of human suffering (or gratitude) to try to raise awareness of issues such as poverty or homelessness. Vukasin Nedeljkovic makes a deliberate decision not to photograph people in Direct Provision, but instead selects images that bear witness to the *system*. We are challenged to pay attention not only to the things the photographer has captured in the frame, but also to register the absences, and in those stark images to recognise what's missing from these environments.

- What do you think of as an image from a traditional aid agency advertisement? Do they usually focus on people? If so, how would you describe the people typically seen in these kinds of images? What kind of emotions or feelings is a photograph like that designed to evoke? And what kind of action do you think it hopes to provoke?
- In contrast, what kind of feelings or emotions does Asylum Archive evoke? Do you think the photographer wants the viewer to take action, and if so, what?
- Do you see differences in these approaches? What kind of impact do you think these two approaches have – on the people directly affected, and for those viewing the pictures?



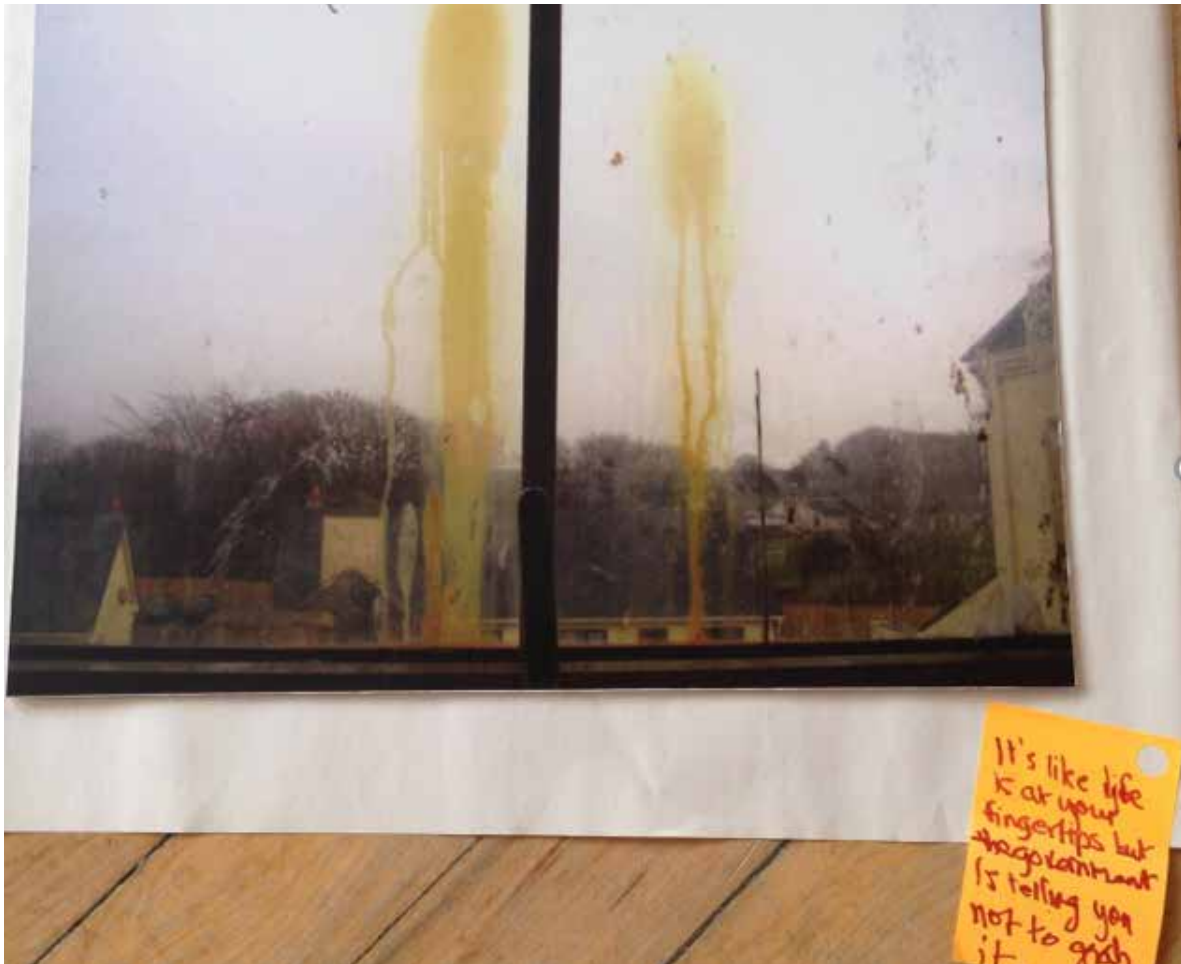
Activity:

Display a selection of images from the Archive and give people time to look at them in silence.

Form small groups to discuss what they've seen, and to find one or two words each to respond to or to describe each image.

Invite the group to select one photograph of their choice, and spend time considering what the photographer has conveyed through the image.

- Write a short response to the photographer, addressing him in the first person, explaining what you see in the image, and any questions you would like to ask him.
- Then imagine you are meeting the person, or institution, that designed this system. What would you say, and what questions would you ask?
- Finally, write a message to society at large. What would you say, and what would you ask about the Direct Provision system? Do you think a change is needed, and if so, what? How could this change be achieved?



Responses from 3rd Year Students to a photograph Vukasin took of his bedroom window in the dormitory at Ballyhaunis DP centre:

“It looks like you are stuck. You can look out, but everything looks dirty and bleak, and you don’t have the power to change it yourself because the stain is on the outside blocking your view of the world.”

“It’s like life is at your fingertips, but the government is telling you not to grab it.”

Taking a *Head, Hand, Heart* approach, conclude by inviting the groups to consider the following questions, and share their responses with the class.

- Something you’ve learned from looking at the Asylum Archive, or something they’ve made you think more about.
- Something they make you feel, or the values they relate to.
- What you think needs to be done, and something you can do to contribute to that.

Creative Activity: Photography

Working individually or in your small groups, take photographs that illustrate or address the themes of *inclusion* and *exclusion*. Make conscious decisions about the content and framing of your pictures.

Share and discuss the images in the class as part of a slideshow.

Follow on: Create a display of the student images for the school or wider community.

Consider hosting an exhibition of Asylum Archive photographs in school or the local community and invite a speaker to open the event, to provide further perspectives on refugee rights. (See Ideas for Creative Action section)



FLAGS BEYOND BORDERS: Visual Arts/Design activity

In 2016, 10 athletes competed in the Olympics as part of the Refugee Nation Team. Each of them had been forced to flee their home countries of Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Syria.

Yara Said is a young Syrian artist who fled shortly after graduating in 2014. It took almost a year, crossing 9 countries and the sea, to arrive in The Netherlands. There she got involved in the task of designing a flag to honour the Refugee Nation Olympic team.

“The flag is a statement. We are here, we are strong, we are human, and we’re going to go on.”

- Yara Said, designer of the 2016 Refugee Nation Olympic team flag

“Black and orange is a symbol of solidarity with all those brave souls that had have to wear life vests to cross the sea to look for safety in a new country. Since I had to wear one, I have a personal engagement with these life vests and these two colours.”

Yara wanted the design to be simple, universal and inclusive. “It had to be international...and it had to leave an impression.”

A video about Yara Said and her flag can be found at www.therefugeenation.com/#OurFlagFilm



Image: The Refugee Nation

Visual Arts/Design Activity:

Aim:

- To reflect on our common humanity, common needs, values, and aspirations
- To consider symbols for these collective qualities.
- To recognise and celebrate resilience in the face of adversity.

Materials: Paper and markers/crayons/paint. Or, fabric scraps, glue and scissors.

Class: Art, RE, Wellbeing.

Time: 80 minutes

- Your turn to design a flag that transcends borders and represents a broader vision of humanity.
- In small groups think the symbolism of colour, shape, design, and any motifs you wish to include. Think of Yara Said's advice and find a design that is "simple, universal and inclusive."
- Display the flags and invite each group to hear what others read into their design before taking questions explaining the symbols they employed.



Members of the Refugee Nation Olympic team in Rio, 2016. Source: Refugee Olympic Team/facebook



TAKING ACTION, MAKING CHANGE: Examples and ideas for student-led solidarity action

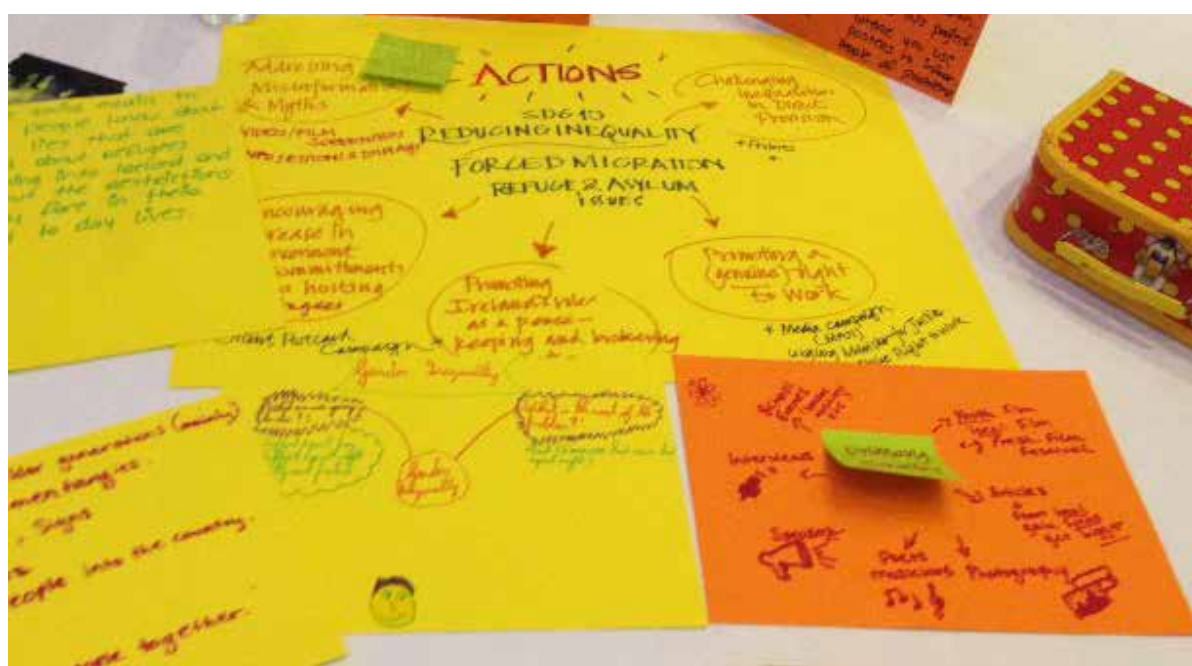
An integral part of Global Education is to consider how we can all take informed solidarity action towards a just and equal world.

As educators, working within the confines of limited timetables and the enormous demands of the curriculum, it is worth taking time to reflect on how, really, to foster a deep sense of commitment to,

“being the change we want to see in the world.” There is no set prescription for this of course, but some of the questions below have been considered by educators participating in the *Beyond Borders* and *Global Teachers Award* programmes, to reflect on the values and attitudes that underpin our support for student-led actions:

- Do we foster a sense of solidarity and respect? Do we recognise that the people with the best understanding of the issues are those most affected? Do we listen and take our lead from them?
- Do we share stories of resistance and change - especially ones where oppressed groups take a leading role - so that students are bolstered by evidence that meaningful change can happen, and are clear about who drives that change?
- Are we alert to the tendency to portray people forced to seek refuge as victims, or as stereotypes, and mindful to foreground examples of resilience, courage, and people’s full humanity?
- Do we explore how injustice is imbedded in systems, rather than (solely) in what Philomena Essed describes as, “individual acts of meanness”? In addition to actions focussed on creating welcoming and inclusive communities, do we consider ways that we can have an impact on those unjust systems?
- Do we recognise that people within systems such as Direct Provision may want to speak out - or may fear doing so because of possible repercussions? Do we navigate these tensions sensitively and respectfully, whilst recognising our own opportunities, and responsibility, to speak out and take action in solidarity and partnership?
- Do we recognise that inequality is damaging to all, and support students to find their own motivation to envision and co-create the kind of society they wish to live in?
- Do we campaign for recognition and realisation of full human rights for all, mindful not to promote anything that falls short of this?
- Do we evaluate and celebrate our actions, and share them (along with the lessons we learned) widely?

Finally, Rodolfo Walsh cautioned that the history of change is passed on to each new generation with the most useful lessons left out. In this way, young people are fed stories of progress being made through the actions of exceptional individuals, rather than learning that change is most often driven by people working collectively, through planned strategic actions. Nor is it often mentioned that justice campaigns take time and are often very unpopular, at least at the beginning. As educators, reclaiming these stories of how important social developments actually happened is vital. Otherwise students may miss out on learning about the difference that ‘ordinary people’ made in the past, and can again.

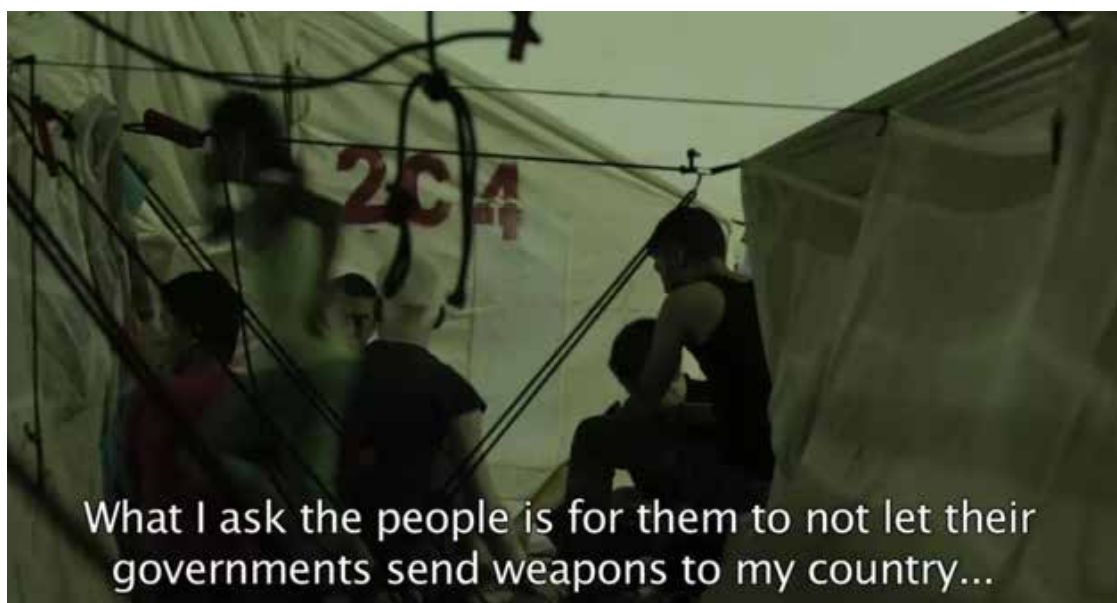


IDEAS FOR ACTION:

From Fair Trade to Climate Action, young people in schools, youth groups, and colleges all around the country are engaged in an impressive range of creative actions for global justice. See WorldWise Global Schools for some inspiring examples: www.worldwiseschools.ie/taking-action/

Some ideas for school-based actions:

- **Invite a speaker** to your school to build your understanding of specific issues, or to learn more about solidarity actions that members of the community are taking. For example, you could invite a speaker from MASI to talk about campaigns on ending Direct Provision or the right to work, or listen to the experiences of people engaged in direct support, or in campaigns for refugee rights for people stranded in camps in France and Greece, or in Direct Provision Centres in Ireland.
- **Record a piece for community radio.** Speakers at the school can be interviewed so that their message can be shared with the wider community. Short pieces can be recorded to spread awareness of relevant issues.
- **Run a poster/digital campaign** in your school or community, or online using social media to share memes or short videos, to positively highlight the benefits of diversity in society, provide information about rights, draw attention to campaigns, or make connections with global initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Screen a documentary or film** to raise awareness about refugee and migration issues.



Caoimhe Butterly's series of short films shot in camps in France and in Greece feature the voices of several young people on their experiences, and their analysis of Fortress Europe. Other films feature Donnah Vuma speaking about Direct Provision, and 16-year-old Gabi speaking from the perspective of a solidarity volunteer in Greece. <https://vimeo.com/user49847365/videos>

Exodus: Our Journey To Europe (2015) is a BBC series that features migration stories of incredible danger and courage, much of which is filmed by people on their phones and speaking directly about the experience of having their lives put at risk while seeking their human right to refuge. The series features, Hassan Akkad, an English teacher from Syria; Sadiq fleeing conflict in Afghanistan; Alaigie on his journey through the Sahara, and his ordeal of kidnapping by smugglers in Libya; and 11 year old Isra'a and her parents, Nisreen and Tarek, who were forced to pay a trafficker €12,000 to take the family on a journey

that would have cost €22 each if they had been allowed to travel safely by ferry. A shorter talk, describing one journey in the face of inhumane obstacles can be found at “*Hassan Akkad: My Journey To Europe at Being the Story.*”

Please note that some of these films may not be appropriate to show if there are students in the class who have endured dangerous crossings of the kind depicted on screen.

- **Host a photography exhibition.** Asylum Archive was created by photographer and activist Vukasin Nedeljkovic, and meticulously documents conditions in Direct Provision. The work of young Syrian photographers Abdulazez Dukhan and Hassan Alhomse show part of their journey to Europe, as well as edited photos that convey powerful messages about the trauma of war and the need for refuge. All three artists have very kindly given their permission for schools to access their work as part of this project. Full exhibition sets can be borrowed, or downloaded, from the Galway One World Centre by contacting education@galwayowc.org.



Following workshops on refuge and asylum issues, TY Students at Seamount College in County Galway held an exhibition of these works at a local gallery, inviting the local community to a launch by LGBT activist, and MASI member Evgeny Shtorn to hear first-hand about Direct Provision and the wider context of International Protection. The students then held guided tours of the exhibition for the other classes in the school and rounded off by giving a presentation about the project at the WorldWise Global Schools student conference.

- **Perform a play:** *Éire, Land of a Hundred Thousand Welcomes* is a piece of drama about Direct Provision and the refugee crisis that students at Mount Temple co-wrote with their teacher, Laura Doak. It has since been performed at a drama festival in Malta, where they won an award for creativity and originality, and at DCU and Trinity College Dublin.
- **Hold a creative writing/poetry reading:** Showcase the work of poets writing about refuge and migration issues, or do a reading or work produced by students.
- **Hold an art exhibition** of work addressing refugee rights and social justice issues. See examples below of student work from *We Make The Road By Walking: A Journey Through Development Education*.
- **Banner Making.** Look at examples of banners advocating for human rights and equality. Consider a mini banner-making session and display.

Secondary School Visual Art Projects:



GOWC facilitated workshops on global justice issues, focussing on refuge, migration and structural inequality as part of a project with student art teachers led by Dr. Gertrude Cotter and Dr. Stephen O'Brien at UCC. Work with secondary school students on global justice issues was exhibited at the Glucksman Museum, Cork, as part of the *We Make The Road By Walking* exhibition in May 2018. The collection provided stunning examples of socially engaged work by the young artists, and their power to address refuge and migration issues in profound and moving ways.

Positive Mental Health: A Global and Local Right.

2nd year students at Choláiste an Spiorad Naiomh, Bishopstown, Cork, sculpted 3D self-portraits reflecting on mental health as it related firstly to themselves, and later to the mental health challenges that may face young people living in Direct Provision in Ireland.



Ms. Park Ji Eun supported Transition Year students at Scoil Mhuire to consider the work of socially engaged artists. The students went on to produce powerful work addressing war, displacement, homelessness and stereotyping of Muslim women, amongst other themes.

In Oriental Vase, the young artist explains that she depicted an oriental vase with a peacock in the centre, and symbols of war in place of the usual peaceful scene: "Traditionally, in India, its cry is a warning signal for other animals when predators are approaching. In my piece the peacock is about to step on a landmine, symbolising the destruction of the protectors. A Voltaire quote wraps itself around the piece – "It is forbidden to kill, therefore all murderers are punished, unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets."



Another student explains that her work entitled *Absurd and Ridiculous* was motivated by her shock at the treatment of Muslim women in Ireland, after her time spent living in the Middle East.



“I was shocked to see how women were subjected to harassment solely because of their religion, but worse, how innocent Muslim people were classed in the same area as terrorists, simply because they shared the same religion. In this project I wanted to highlight this issue by showing how people’s views of a person change with something as basic as a change of clothes.”

Tent: Symbol of the Genocide of the Yazidis People

5th year students at Nagle Rice Secondary School, Doneraile, County Cork worked with teacher Ms. Karen O’Shea to respond to the story of Mr. Aziz Alias Mhe, a Yazidi man who was forced, along with thousands of others, to flee his home in Northern Iraq. The students built a replica of the tent that Aziz shared with 10 of his family members in a camp for displaced people.

One student described the connection between the creative process, developing awareness, and action: “There was something about making the tent...it was a very physical and emotional experience you cannot feel if you are just reading online. We want action.”



In addition to awareness raising, some students have adopted campaigns calling on decision makers to make changes to policies and procedures on the basis of human rights concerns. Some campaigns have emerged from deportation threats to students at their school.



Student-led Campaigns:

In this example, the Irish Second Level Students Union (ISSU) used social media to raise awareness about inequalities in the experiences of children in Ireland.

Tullamore students nominated for humanitarian award after #SaveNonso campaign

Students at Tullamore College were nominated for an Irish Red Cross award when the students and teachers at the school successfully rallied around their classmate whose family had been issued with a deportation order after living in Ireland for 12 years. The students conducted a viral social media campaign which was carried by all local and national media outlets, and they also secured over 22,000 signatures on a petition, which they presented to the Minister for Justice outside Leinster House.

Boycotts and Divestment Campaigns

Using drama, visual arts, banners, and film-making to highlight the issue, students around the country ran campaigns to end the connection between their universities and Aramark, a catering provider which also supplies food to Direct Provision centres (as well as to some private prisons in the US, prompting similar campaigns by students at New York University.)

Elsewhere, as part of divestment campaigns coordinated by Trócaire and others, third-level and secondary school students underlined the connection between the exploitation of fossil fuels, and the potential displacement of millions of people due to climate change.

The painting at the beginning of this chapter is by Palestinian artist and student, Malak Mattar. *The Last Scene Before Flying With the Dove to Paradise* is dedicated to 6-year-old Tariq Zabyne, who was killed on the 18th July 2019, and to all children whose lives have been taken by war and occupation.



it's raining bullets
on God's green pillow

it's raining fear and steel
on seeds of hope
and freedom

but these seeds will grow

- *Ketty Nivyabandi*

@kettynivyabandi

26th April, 2015

Painting by Palestinian artist, Malak Mattar (2019)

Notes:

Notes:



galwayowc.org