



IN SEARCH OF SAFETY

CHILDREN AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN EUROPE

A TEACHING RESOURCE

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Accompanying this resource

The full resource is also available at [unicef.uk/refugee-resource](https://www.unicef.uk/refugee-resource)

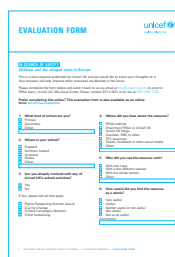
A **factsheet** about the crisis for children and young people is also available at:

bit.ly/refugees-factsheet-children



Please tell us what you think. An **evaluation form** is available at:

bit.ly/rrsa-evaluation



INTRODUCTION

“We cannot turn our faces away from the tragedy of so many innocent young lives and futures lost – or fail to address the dangers so many more children are facing. We may not have the ability now to end the desperation that causes so many people to try to cross the sea, but countries can and must cooperate to make such dangerous journeys safer. No one puts a child in a boat if a safer option is available.”

**ANTHONY LAKE,
UNICEF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

We are in the midst of a refugee and migrant crisis. This scale of human movement has not been witnessed since World War 2 (1939–45). Millions of people are fleeing their homes so they can stay alive, the most fundamental of all human rights. By the end of 2015, the number of people displaced by war, persecution and other human rights abuses such as torture, violence and extreme poverty, was nearly 60 million.

Children are affected directly and indirectly.

Around 51 per cent of the world’s refugees are children.¹ In 2015, more than one million people came to Europe, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, for protection and safety; one in four of these were children.² They live the crisis every minute of every day.

More than 8 million Syrian children are in urgent need of humanitarian aid.³ One Syrian child in every three has grown

up knowing only a life shaped by violent conflict. These are the estimated 3.7 million children born since the war began in March 2011.⁴ What we are seeing today, in Syria and its neighbouring countries, and across Europe, is an unprecedented crisis for children.

Thousands of children who have experienced the traumas of war in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, and other countries in conflict, have now settled in the UK. They are part of our school communities.⁵

Then there are children who are not themselves affected by war and persecution, but are aware of other people’s suffering. They watch the news, listen to adults’ conversations and see stories and photographs online. They have become friends with children from other countries. Children feel deep concern and confusion. They seek reassurance from the adults around them.

Cover image:
Families arrive at a
reception centre for
refugees in Idomeni,
on the Greek-
Macedonian border

© Unicef/UN011184/Georgiev

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource aims to allow teachers to help their students – primary (age seven upwards) and secondary – make sense of the current refugee and migrant crisis in Europe, within a children’s rights framework. It provides an historical overview of migration, contextualising the challenges we face today with a reminder of what has gone before (page 10). Guidance is provided to help you prepare for potentially difficult conversations and situations, and to enable you to be ready to access help for any child that needs it (page 25). A glossary of terms and an appendix provides additional information to assist you in your teaching of this subject (pages 57-67).

At the heart of the resource is a collection of 20 activities to help children explore and understand the crisis (page 27). These range from stand-alone tasks to more detailed, longer projects. The resource also includes ideas for extra activities by curriculum area, and suggestions for whole-school activities. A selection of films, images and information is provided and sign-posted to help you bring these activities to life.

There is also a factsheet for children with this resource that explains the crisis in terms that children and young people can understand. Download the factsheet at bit.ly/refugees-factsheet-children

The background reading and activities provided in this resource give plenty of scope for learning within and across curriculum subjects. Schools may decide to dedicate a particular term to linked activities on the refugee and migrant crisis, perhaps engaging parents and the local community in a final event. Alternatively, teachers may choose to integrate activities and material contained in this resource into their regular curriculum planning and delivery.

Above all, we hope this resource will inspire you to positively promote the rights of refugee children, along with the rights of all others, within your school community.

Finally, please tell us what you think of this resource by completing the evaluation form at bit.ly/rrsa-evaluation

Disclaimer

This resource was written in early 2016. The information and all the statistics are accurate at the time of writing.

This resource was developed by Unicef UK and written by Carolyne Willow. We’d like to thank a number of Unicef UK Rights Respecting Schools for their feedback and input, in particular Hambrough Primary, Southall; Cherry Grove Primary, Cheshire; Clydebank High, West Dunbartonshire; and Whitchurch Primary School, Cardiff.

A selection of films, images and information is provided to help you explore this topic with children and to bring the activities in this resource to life. The icons below will help you to see at a glance what is available and where background reading is useful.



UNCRRC



BACKGROUND READING



GLOSSARY



INFORMATION SHEETS



IMAGES



FILMS



POWERPOINTS



ABOUT UNICEF

Unicef is the world's leading organisation for children, promoting the rights and well-being of every child, in everything we do.

Unicef ensures more of the world's children are fed, vaccinated, educated and protected than any other organisation. We work in over 190 countries around the world. We have done more to influence laws, policies and customs to help protect children than anyone else in history.

When an emergency hits, Unicef is there to protect, promote and uphold children's rights to survival, development, protection, education and participation. We deliver life-saving food, medicine and water to children in danger. We keep them safe from the chaos of war and disaster and we help children to continue their education during a humanitarian crisis. We protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation and we provide safe spaces for children to play, socialise and be children again.

In the UK we work with hospitals, schools and local authorities to put children at the heart of what they do. And we campaign to keep children safe around the world.

As a registered charity, Unicef UK is funded entirely by voluntary contributions. We receive no funding from the UN.

Find out more at [unicef.org.uk](https://www.unicef.org.uk)

ABOUT THE RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD

The Rights Respecting Schools Award is a Unicef UK programme that aims to put children's rights at the heart of schools in the UK. We work with thousands of schools across the country to embed children's rights in their ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential.

A Rights Respecting School is a community where children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected, protected and promoted. Children, young people and adults learn about children's rights by putting them into practice every day. Schools work with us on a journey to become fully rights-respecting.

The Award recognises a school's achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into practice within the school and beyond. It is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. Schools already involved in the Award have reported its positive impact on relationships and well-being, leading to improved engagement in learning, positive attitudes throughout the school and less bullying.

Find out more at [unicef.org.uk/rrsa](https://www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa)

190+

UNICEF WORKS
IN OVER 190
COUNTRIES
AROUND THE
WORLD

THE CONTEXT



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Introduction

In 1989, governments across the world adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the UNCRC, or the Convention), recognising that all children are entitled to be treated with dignity and fairness, to be protected, to develop to their full potential and to have their views respected and given due weight, regardless of who they are, or where they are from. The UNCRC contains 54 articles that set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that everyone under 18 is entitled to. The UK ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, which means we made a legal agreement to implement its obligations. To date, 196 countries have ratified the UNCRC, making it the most widely ratified human rights treaty of all. Only the United States has yet to ratify the treaty.

All human rights treaties are international agreements that apply equally to children and adults. What is different about the UNCRC is that it provides specific, additional rights for children. Like other treaties, the UNCRC explains what governments must do at national and local level to make sure its rights are understood, promoted, protected and realised. Governments have the lead responsibility for the realisation of children's rights and all adults – including teachers, social workers, doctors and parents – have a responsibility to respect these rights and to help children experience their rights.

The UNCRC is the basis of all of Unicef's work. Unicef is the only organisation (other than the UN itself) whose name appears in the text of the Convention and we are called upon to assist governments with implementing the UNCRC in their countries. We are a champion of the Convention and we work with governments, at national and local level, to promote the rights of every child.

Above: Children are among a group of refugees arriving in Gevgelija, Macedonia, near the border with Greece



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children's rights and crisis situations

War and children's rights are inextricably linked. The death, maiming, hunger, displacement, bereavement and trauma suffered by millions of children during the two world wars, 1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945, triggered the development of international children's rights agreements. Understanding of children's heightened vulnerability to the devastating effects of war, coupled with the promise of always protecting them first, are cornerstones of the children's rights movement. Unicef itself was established by the United Nations after World War 2 (1939–45) to provide food, clothing and health care to children.

Many aspects of the UNCRC protect children from the effects of armed conflict. Article 38 states that no child below the age of 15 should be involved directly in hostilities (a later optional protocol extended this protection to age 18) and it requires countries to "take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict". Article 35 imposes obligations to prevent child trafficking, and Article

39 entitles children who have suffered violations of their rights (including through war and trafficking) to recover in environments where their health and dignity are nurtured. The right to enter or leave a country for the purposes of family reunification is protected in Article 10. Article 22 gives additional rights to refugee children; entitling them to "appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance" so they can enjoy all of their other rights in the Convention (page 8).

All of the articles of the Convention continue to apply whatever crisis situation children may be facing, including in times of humanitarian emergencies caused by war and disaster. During these crises children retain, for instance, their right to education, to play, to optimum health and to an adequate standard of living. The four general principles of the Convention remain pertinent too: a child's right to enjoy all of their rights without any form of discrimination (Article 2); the requirement that a child's best interests is a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect them (Article 3); a child's right to life, survival and maximum development (Article 6); and the child's right to express their views in all matters affecting them, and to have these views given due weight (Article 12).

 FIND OUT MORE



FIND A CHILD-FRIENDLY SUMMARY OF THE UNCRC
FOR UNDER 11S AT:
bit.ly/CRC-under11s
AND FOR OVER 11S AT:
bit.ly/CRC-over11

Above; Three Syrian children play in a refugee camp in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley

ARTICLE 22

Refugee children, Convention on the Rights of the Child

(text of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee ... shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance ...
2. For this purpose, States Parties shall [work with the UN and others] to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

Other international agreements, in addition to the UNCRC, protect children in conflict and crisis. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (and its 1967 Protocol) remains today the principal treaty governing international protection for refugees. Article 1 defines a refugee, adult or child, as:

“[A person who] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”



**READ MORE
ABOUT THE
REFUGEE
CONVENTION IN
THE GLOSSARY
ON PAGE 59**

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children arriving into the UK

Refugee and migrant children arrive into the UK for a variety of reasons. They may be fleeing war and persecution, or other serious threats to their survival and development. They may arrive on their own or with their families. They may also move to the UK because one or both of their parents are taking up employment or starting a period of study. They are part of our communities and go to school in the UK.

Children are sometimes trafficked into the UK. Unicef estimates that at least 10 children are trafficked every week in the UK and face abuse, exploitation and violence.⁶

Refugee children who enter the UK with their families do not have to make a separate asylum application: their claim is dealt with alongside their parents. If children come into the country unaccompanied or separated from family members, they must make their own asylum claim and need international protection. In 2015, 3,043 unaccompanied and separated children made asylum applications in the UK.⁷ This constituted 9 per cent of all main applications for asylum that year in the UK.

At the end of January 2016, the UK government announced it had asked the UN Refugee Agency (called the UN High Commissioner for Refugees or UNHCR), to identify unaccompanied and separated children from conflict regions (including Syria) in whose best interests it would be to come to the

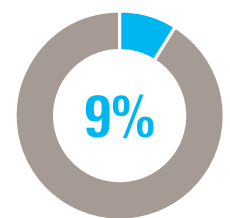
UK for protection.⁸ See page 22 for more information about the UK's refugee resettlement programme.

In 2009, the UK Parliament passed important legislation that requires all people involved in immigration, asylum and nationality decision-making to undertake their roles, "having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in the United Kingdom".⁹ This legislation remains a vital protection for refugee and migrant children, because it requires decision-makers to give weight to their welfare. The best interests of all children in need in the UK are similarly protected by a number of domestic laws, including the Children Act 1989.

There have been some efforts across the UK to guarantee the right for all unaccompanied and separated children to a guardian.¹⁰ Unicef UK and other organisations have been calling on the government to ensure all separated children have access to a guardian, backed up by legislation. The 2015 Modern Slavery Act guarantees that all trafficked children will be provided with an advocate with legal powers to protect and support them (an issue Unicef UK campaigned on).¹¹ The UK has also ratified European and international agreements which seek to prevent child trafficking happening in the first place, and grant the right to protection to those who have been trafficked.

3,043

UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN MADE ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN THE UK IN 2015



THIS CONSTITUTED 9 PER CENT OF ALL MAIN APPLICATIONS FOR ASYLUM THAT YEAR IN THE UK

MIGRATION THROUGH HISTORY

Human migration has occurred throughout human history. People have moved by choice, and by force and compulsion, for a variety of complex and often inter-related reasons, among them advancement, exploration, family reunification, survival, poverty, persecution and exploitation. Migration can be a positive choice, including for the thousands of UK citizens who start new lives abroad each year. It can also be borne out of hardship, with 'free choice' being constrained or meaningless in the circumstances.

Some of the large movements of people throughout history include:

- Age of Discovery, colonialisation and the slave trade (1400s through to 1800s centuries)
- Industrialisation period (movement within Britain and out of Britain in 1800s)
- The Clearances in Scotland and the Highland Potato Famine (1700s and 1800s)
- Penal transportation and child migration to Australia, Canada and other countries (in the 1700s and 1800s)
- Irish Potato Famine (1845-1855)
- Russian Revolution and Nansen's passport (early 1900s)
- World War 2 and the post-war period (1939-1960)
- Partition of India (1947)
- Britain's post-war reliance on migrants (1950-60s)
- Vietnamese 'boat people' (1975-95)

THE SITUATION TODAY

Around the world

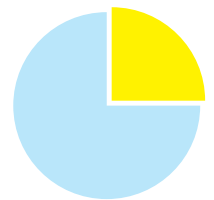
Globally, the number of people displaced by war, persecution and other human rights abuses, such as forced displacement, extreme poverty and violence, reached 60 million in 2015. Among these, more than 15 million people are refugees^{12,13}, and around 51 per cent of the world's refugees are children.^{14,15} Among the 60 million displaced people around the globe, over 38 million are internally displaced while nearly 2 million are asylum seekers.¹⁶

By mid-2015, the three countries providing sanctuary to the greatest number of refugees across the world were Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon.¹⁷ Turkey provided sanctuary to nearly 2 million refugees in June 2015; Pakistan was home to 1.5 million refugees, mostly from Afghanistan; and Lebanon had given refuge to nearly 1.2 million people.¹⁸ They have respective host populations of 73 million¹⁹, 180 million²⁰ and 4.6 million.²¹ In other words, one person in four in Lebanon is now a refugee.

Overall, the UN Refugee Agency estimates that 86 per cent of the world's refugees are sheltered in poorer countries.²² Millions of refugees live in camps, while more than half of them live in urban environments – often in slums or in cheap, shared and rented accommodation.

1M

MORE THAN
1 MILLION
PEOPLE CROSSED
LAND AND
SEA TO ENTER
EUROPE IN 2015



A QUARTER
OF THEM WERE
CHILDREN

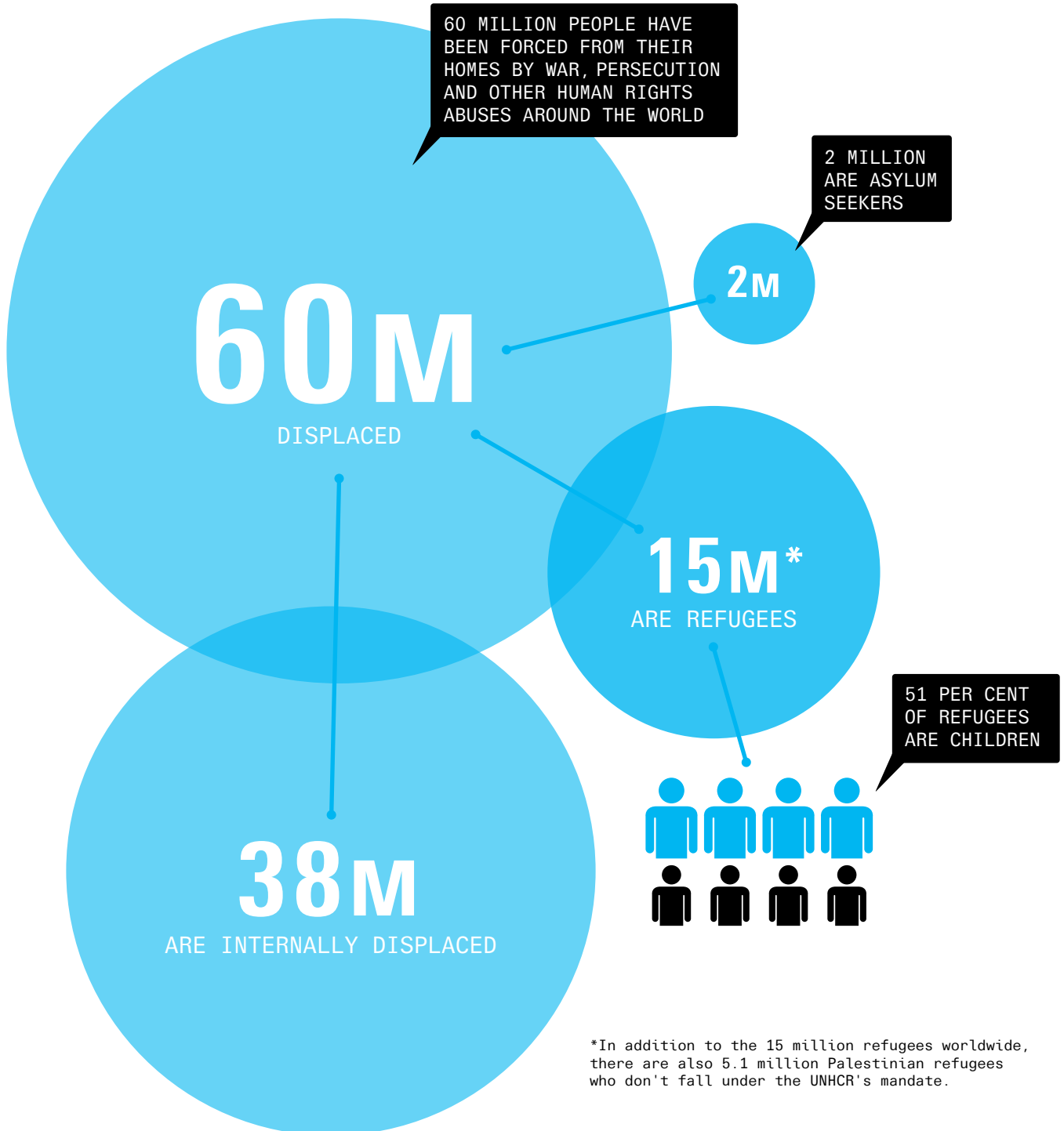


YOU WILL FIND
DEFINITIONS
OF THE TERMS
REFUGEE,
MIGRANT AND
MORE IN THE
GLOSSARY ON
PAGE 57



FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON MIGRATION
THROUGH HISTORY,
SEE APPENDIX
PAGE 60

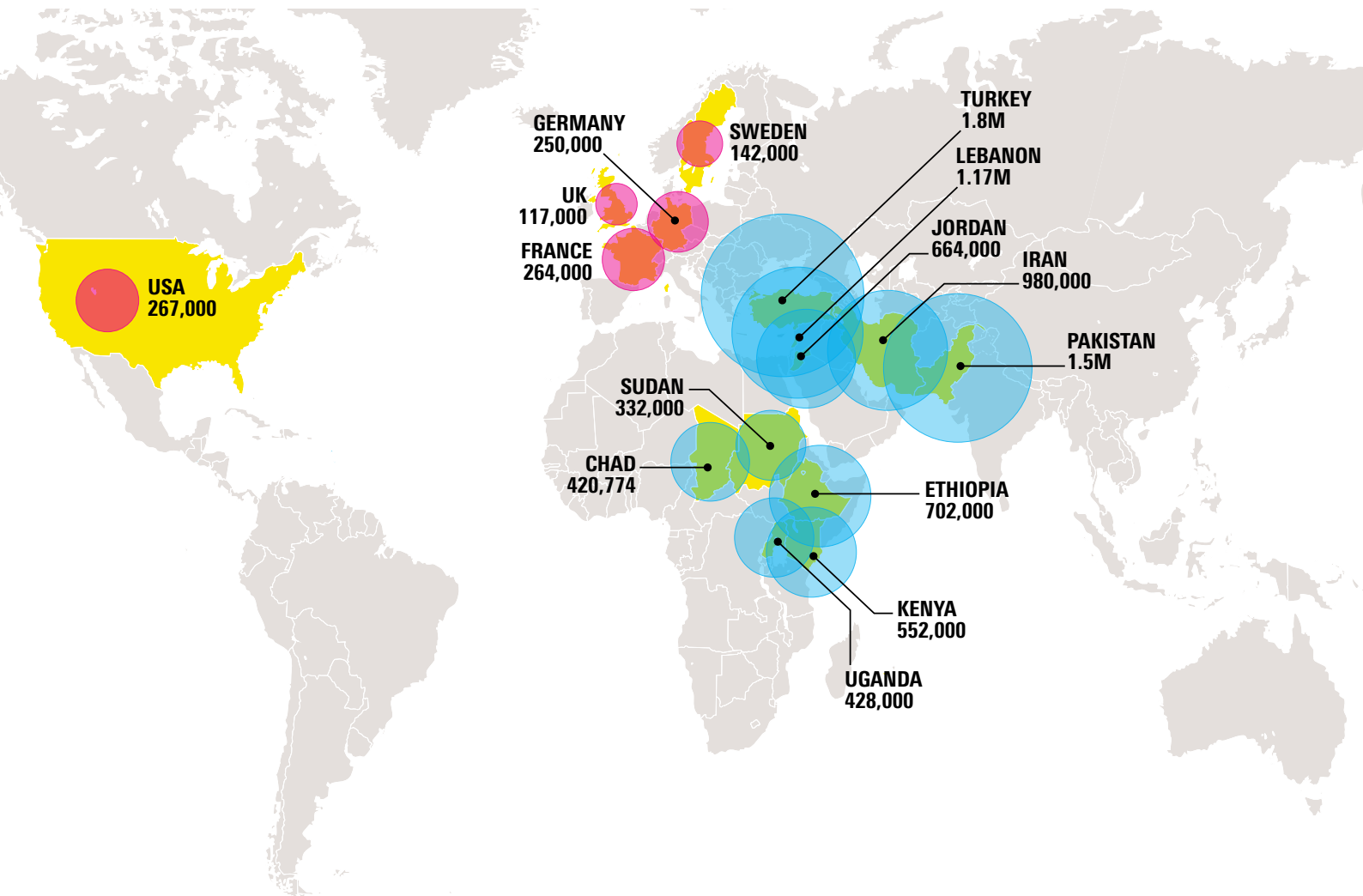
THE CONTEXT



THE CONTEXT

REFUGEE HOST COUNTRIES

This map shows the 10 countries hosting the most refugees globally, as well as the number of refugees hosted by five richer countries.



Note: these numbers are from June 2015. As of March 2016, Turkey is now estimated to host just over 3 million refugees, most of whom are Syrian.

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/turkey_syrian_crisis_en.pdf



© Unicef/HQ 15-2619/Gilbertson V

THE SITUATION TODAY

Europe

Europe is currently experiencing its greatest influx of refugees and migrants – and the largest movement of people – since after World War 2. Some of these people are seeking a better life and come from extremely difficult (but not deadly) situations at home; but refugees have fled because their lives are in danger.

Europe is no stranger to refugees and migrants. For many years, people have been making their way to its shores in search of safety and security – from Somalia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and more. In recent years, however, the numbers have increased dramatically. In late 2015, a milestone was reached in the number of people arriving into Europe: more than 1 million people had crossed land and sea to enter the continent that year and a quarter of them were children.²³

We have heard distressing accounts of refugees’ and migrants’ journeys attempting to reach Europe. Thousands have died or are reported missing after crossings to Europe by boat. It has become a European crisis, partly because the countries most affected – such as Greece and Italy – are struggling to provide the necessary care and protection

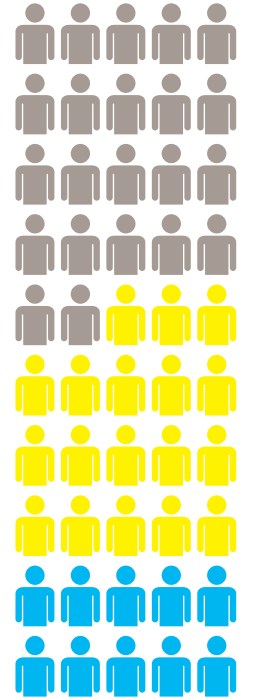
and to process the huge number of asylum claims. The enormity of the catastrophes endured by refugees entering Europe was brought home to the public in September 2015 by the image of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old boy who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea after the small dinghy carrying him and his family, and 12 others, capsized (page 22).

Since September 2015, the proportion of women and children arriving in Europe has increased. In early 2016, it was estimated that more than 50 per cent of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe were women and children, with over a third of them children.²⁴ These children require access to special protection, rest, counselling and care while on the move and once they have arrived at their destination.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, there were 82,636 arrivals by sea in the first month and a half of 2016, with 403 people reported dead or missing during this short period, including children.²⁵ Unicef, with the UN Refugee Agency and the International Organisation for Migration, estimates that two children drown each day in the Mediterranean on their way to Europe.²⁶

In early 2016, the EU’s criminal intelligence agency, Europol, estimated that at least 10,000 children have disappeared since arriving in Europe.

MORE THAN HALF OF REFUGEES ARRIVING IN EUROPE ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.



8 icons 44% MEN
 12 icons 36% CHILDREN
 8 icons 20% WOMEN

Based on arrivals between 1 January 2016 and 16 February 2016



UNICEF AND EMERGENCIES

Right now, children's lives are at risk from sudden disasters, long running and overlooked emergencies around the world.

Nearly 250 million children – one in nine of the world's children – now live in countries affected by violent conflict. In 2014, some 50 million children were affected by natural disasters. A huge number of children are further at risk as the devastating impact of climate change is felt across the world.

When an emergency strikes, it is children who are the most vulnerable. Children's worlds are turned upside down. Many lose their families, their homes, their schools, even their lives. Wars and disasters place children at greater risk of violence, exploitation and abuse.

For 70 years, Unicef has been a leader for children in emergencies.

Unicef was founded to help children in Europe at the end of World War 2, and today we respond to around 300 humanitarian emergencies a year. Many of these emergencies don't make the headlines, yet children's lives are at stake.

Unicef works for children in more than 190 countries – so when an emergency strikes, we are already on the ground, helping families, communities and governments. Because of our reach, experience and knowledge, Unicef is trusted to deliver what children need to survive in any emergency.

We provide life-saving food, medicine and water. We also help children to get back to normal by protecting them, providing psychological support and helping them to continue their education. After an emergency, Unicef remains to help children, families and communities thrive and rebuild their lives, resilient to future challenges.

IN 2014 UNICEF RESPONDED TO

294

EMERGENCIES IN

98

COUNTRIES

 FIND OUT MORE

unicef.uk/emergencies



WHY ARE REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS COMING TO EUROPE?

Why are so many people risking their lives crossing seas in overcrowded and unsafe boats, with their only possessions stuffed in backpacks? What is driving around 5,000 men, women and children to endure appalling conditions in camps in Calais and Dunkirk in France, before attempting to enter the UK illegally?

We know that over 15 million people across the world are refugees, and over half of them are children. This is an increase of around 45 per cent in the last four years. One of the main contributing factors to this has been the war in Syria.²⁷ But many people are coming from other countries where people are experiencing conflict, violence, persecution, terrorism, extreme poverty and other hardships. Many parts of the world today are perilous. With many conflicts unresolved in different states and regions, people who have fled as refugees still cannot go back home. In 2015, the UN Refugee Agency was

able to help just 124,000 refugees return to their home – this is nearly 10 times fewer than in 2005 when 1 million refugees went back home because conflicts had ended.²⁸

STARTING POINT

The top 10 countries of origin of those travelling to Europe on boats across the Mediterranean²⁹

Country	% of arrivals
1. Syrian Arab Republic	48
2. Afghanistan	21
3. Iraq	9
4. Eritrea	4
5. Pakistan	2
6. Nigeria	2
7. Somalia	2
8. Sudan	1
9. The Gambia	1
10. Mali	1

“For an age of unprecedented mass displacement, we need an unprecedented humanitarian response and a renewed global commitment to tolerance and protection for people fleeing conflict and persecution.”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES,
FORMER UN HIGH
COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES



FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON THE
SITUATION
IN THESE 10
COUNTRIES
SEE APPENDIX
PAGE 60

THE SITUATION IN SYRIA

Almost half (48 per cent) of people arriving into Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Syria.

Inside Syria, many children and families are facing a country in turmoil. The country has been besieged by civil war since government forces opened fire on demonstrators demanding democratic reforms in March 2011. More than 250,000 people have been killed³⁰ and over 11 million people displaced in the bitter conflict between government forces and opposition fighters; 5.2 million of whom are children. Many families have been forced to flee their homes and live as internally displaced people (IDPs) within Syria; millions have left the country while others are living under siege, unable to access essential services.

In 2014, Daesh (known in the UK as 'IS' or ISIS or 'Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham'), an armed group in the region, seized large areas of Syria and Iraq, compounding an already severe situation.

In August 2011, the UN Human Rights Council established the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. Although Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has refused its members entry to Syria, the Commission has obtained and published evidence of death and destruction on all sides. Its latest report, published in August 2015, summarises: "Civilians, Syrians of all backgrounds, have been the

subject of crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as other serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross violations of their human rights. These transgressions are massive in extent and scope."

Over 4.8 million people from Syria are registered as refugees. The majority of them are in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.³¹ At the time of writing, more than 2.4 million of these are children.³² For five years the war in Syria has been driving people from their homes and across borders in search of safety.

The UN Refugee Agency reports that more than 50,000 Syrian children have been born in exile in neighbouring countries since the civil war started in 2011. That's one Syrian child born as a refugee every two hours. Syrian law only permits the transmission of nationality from father to child, and with many Syrian families being fatherless because of the war, thousands of children are now stateless. This means they don't have citizenship of any country.

Nearly 80,000 Syrians are living in temporary shelter in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, more than a quarter of them children.³³ The camp, now the fifth largest 'city' in Jordan, occupies three square miles of desert land and conditions are extremely cramped.³⁴

Many Syrians, not seeing a safe and sustainable future for their families in the present situation, decide to risk the journey to Europe in the hope of rebuilding their lives.

OVER

11M

SYRIAN PEOPLE
HAVE BEEN
DISPLACED BY
THE CONFLICT

5.2M

OF THESE ARE
CHILDREN

50,000

SYRIAN CHILDREN
HAVE BEEN BORN
IN EXILE SINCE
2011

UNICEF'S WORK IN SYRIA

Children and families in and around Syria face severe water shortages as well as restricted access to basic food and health care. Children of all ages need safe places to learn and play. Unicef is one of few agencies working inside Syria; as well as being present for refugee families in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. We are also working to protect, promote and uphold the rights of Syrian children who have made the perilous journey to Europe in search of a better future.

Different contexts require different actions – Unicef is there for Syrian children, doing what is needed to protect children in danger, and support their survival and long-term development.

We provide child friendly spaces which, as well as providing safe

space to play, offer support and specialist psychological care. By providing school materials and developing innovative ways to continue learning through the conflict, we are also working to ensure a generation of children is not lost to a childhood with no education.

Our teams are working around the clock to ensure that those affected by the conflict have access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. We also continue to screen children across the region for malnutrition, and provide emergency life-saving food where it is needed.

We are also supporting and delivering vaccination campaigns for millions of children across the region. Over the winter months, we are on the ground providing blankets, boots, gloves, hats, thermals and other warm clothing for children to stay safe and warm.



**1 IN 3 SYRIAN
CHILDREN HAVE
GROWN UP KNOWING
ONLY CRISIS AND
CONFLICT**

childrenofsyria.info



THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

21 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Afghanistan.

Before the war in Syria forced millions of Syrians to become refugees, Afghanistan was considered by the UN Refugee Agency as having “the world’s largest protracted refugee population”, with 2.6 million refugees living in 92 countries after three decades of conflict.

The country has seen civil unrest for decades. More than 30 years of war, tension, and insurgent violence have had a heavy toll on Afghanistan’s institutions and the way of life for people there.

Pakistan and Iran have provided the most sanctuary for individuals and families fleeing Afghanistan over the past 36 years; at times refugee numbers exceeded 6 million. One million people remain displaced within the country. At the same time, over 5.8 million Afghans have returned to their home country since 2002.

However, fierce fighting between the Taliban and government forces continues, and the situation has greatly deteriorated, with Daesh (known in the UK as ISIS) moving into the country in 2015. Civilian casualties have increased in recent years and human rights groups and journalists report grave human rights abuses by government security forces.

The conflict in Afghanistan is severely affecting children’s access to education, and access to nutritious food and health care. Many other serious human rights abuses also endanger children’s safety and well-being.

THE SITUATION IN IRAQ

9 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Iraq.

The UN Refugee Agency reports there were 377,747 Iraqi refugees in June 2015. A further 141,913 were claiming asylum. A massive 4 million people, from a population of 33 million, were officially recognised as internally displaced.

Children and families in Iraq have been in need of emergency assistance in one way or another for more than 10 years.

United States-led forces removed Saddam Hussein, Iraq’s President since 1969, from power in 2003. Democratic elections were held for the first time in 50 years in 2004, resulting in a Shia-led coalition government. This has not stemmed the violence and repression. Millions of Iraqi people have been uprooted from their homes and placed in need of urgent humanitarian aid.

In addition, in 2012/13 the conflict in Syria brought 250,000 refugees to the Kurdistan region in the north of the country.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION IN THESE COUNTRIES SEE APPENDIX, PAGE 60

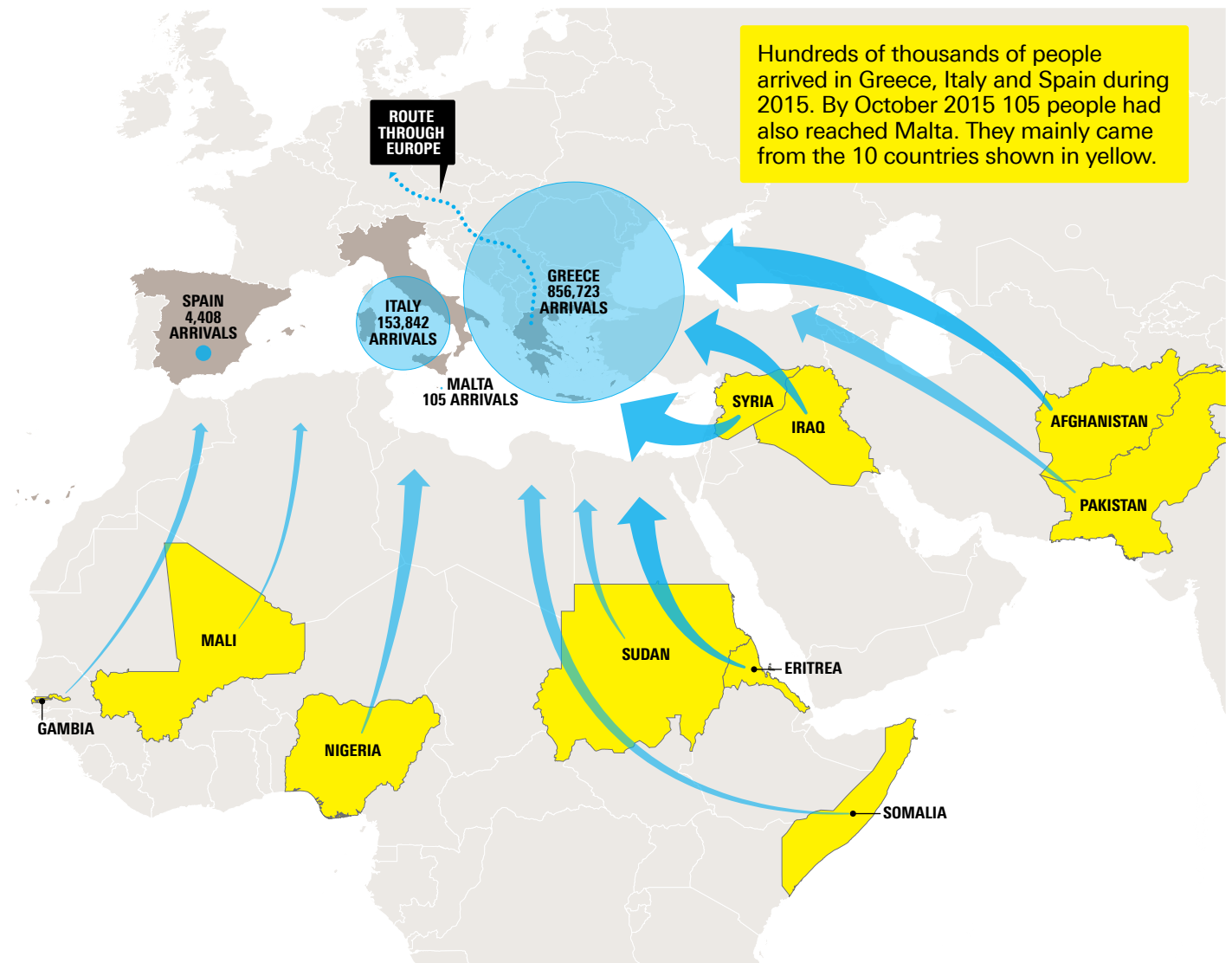
THE CONTEXT

COUNTRIES OF ARRIVAL

In 2015, over 1 million people arrived in Europe,³⁵ as shown on the map below. Refugees and migrants are arriving by sea via three main countries – Greece, Italy and Spain. UN Refugee Agency figures show hundreds of thousands of people arrived in Greece, Italy and Spain during 2015. By October 2015 105 people had also reached Malta.³⁶



Above: on arrival in Messina, Sicily, a group of young female migrants from Eritrea queue for health checks



COUNTRIES OF ARRIVAL

European asylum law provides that the first country in which an asylum seeker arrived is responsible for his or her asylum claim – unless there are protection or family reasons for claims to be accepted elsewhere. The Dublin Regulation, for example, provides for protection of unaccompanied children in countries where they have any relative, irrespective of where they first made a claim – this means their asylum case can be transferred to the country where they have family members. However, in practice, this process is very slow and family reunification rarely happens swiftly.

Given the scale of the crisis, and the inability of countries like Greece to cope with such high numbers of refugees and migrants, other countries have stepped in to help. This is not to suggest an overwhelmingly positive picture. Countries have erected high barriers, such as electrified fences, to keep people from entering. Police officers and soldiers guard makeshift borders. The movement of people has also called into question the EU's Schengen agreement, which allows passport-free movement across much of the area's internal borders. For example, Sweden set up identity checks at its border with Denmark in early 2016.³⁷ At the end of January 2016, the Danish Parliament passed the Migrants Assets Bill, which permits the confiscation of money and valuables belonging to asylum seekers entering the country. Government officials say individuals will be allowed to keep watches, mobile phones and wedding rings. Other countries looked like they may pass similar bills. In the UK, an Immigration Bill passing through Parliament seeks to diminish

the social protection offered to young people leaving care who do not have leave to remain in the UK.

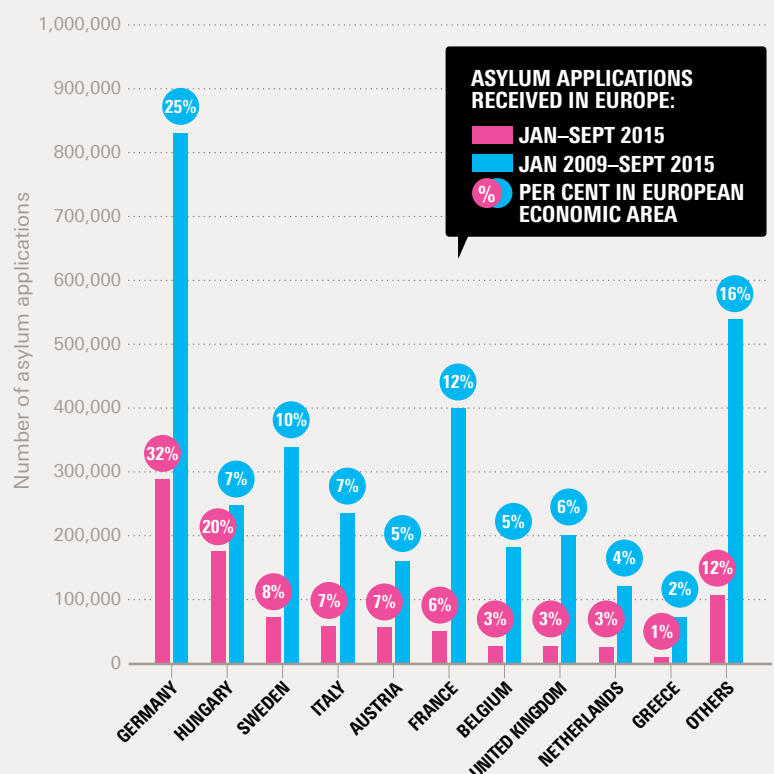
Germany stands out as offering international protection to the greatest number of people. By October 2015, it had received 32 per cent of all asylum applications across the European Economic Area that year; across the almost seven years before that, it had opened its country to a quarter of all asylum seekers in Europe.

More than 3.3 million asylum applications were received in 31 European countries – with a combined population of around 508 million – across the past six years and nine months (to September 2015). To put this into some perspective, Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon – with a combined population of 258 million people – accepted 5.3 million refugees.⁴⁰



READ MORE ABOUT THE DUBLIN REGULATION IN THE GLOSSARY ON PAGE 57

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS RECEIVED IN EUROPE^{38,39}



UNICEF'S WORK IN EUROPE

Unicef's mandate in Europe is to support governments to uphold their commitments to children and to the UNCRC. We are working with national governments in Europe to ensure that the best interests of the child guides all decision-making on registration processes and policy-making on this increased influx of refugees and migrants. Where capacity within the country is needed, we are also providing essential services, such as offering child friendly spaces and clean water and sanitation facilities for children held up at border crossings, and distributing winter supplies including clothing and blankets.

Unicef is also working with the UN Refugee Agency (the UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross to set up Child and Family Support Hubs (known as 'Blue Dots') along the most frequently used migration routes through Europe,

including in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. These hubs aim to step up protection for the growing numbers of children and mothers arriving in Europe. They provide a safe space, vital services, play areas, protection and counselling for children and their families who are on the move. Among other functions they also aim to identify and protect children and young people travelling alone – at risk of sickness, trauma, violence, exploitation and trafficking – and reunite them with family wherever possible, depending on their best interests.

At the European and global level, Unicef is urging substantive action from States to protect unaccompanied children, and children in families, from violence, abuse and exploitation. It is also working with national authorities in some European countries to monitor and strengthen child protection systems in the face of the unprecedented pressure they face.



UNICEF HAS HELPED TO SET UP 20 'BLUE DOT' CENTRES ACROSS EUROPE, PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

 [FIND OUT MORE](https://bit.ly/unicef-bluedot)
bit.ly/unicef-bluedot



Left: children rest in a 'blue dot' family support hub

UK RESPONSE

There is continuing pressure on UK politicians to increase our country's contribution to protecting refugees and asylum seekers who have reached Europe.

Overall, the UK received a total of 38,878 asylum applications in 2015 (including children and other dependents).⁴¹ In September 2015, the UK government pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees from the region in the UK by 2020. At the end of 2015, the UK had offered refuge to over 1,000 Syrians, as part of the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.⁴² The scheme gives priority to those who have been subject to torture and other violence, and to vulnerable women and children. Individuals are given five years leave to remain in the UK. In addition, more than 5,400 Syrian people were accepted as refugees in the UK between 2012 and September 2015 under normal asylum rules.⁴³ In January 2016, the UK government announced it would take in unaccompanied refugee children from conflict regions, including from Syria.

The UK has provided significant financial support for the humanitarian response in Syria and the region, to fund activities such as food distributions, health care, shelter, protection, and education. The UK has already invested £1.12bn in international aid for Syria and the region, making it the world's second largest donor. In February 2016, it doubled that and pledged an additional £1.2bn for the region over the next four years.⁴⁴

THE SHORT LIFE OF ALAN KURDI

Three-year-old Alan Kurdi was travelling with his parents and five-year-old brother, Galip, on a dinghy from Bodrum, in Turkey, to the Greek island of Kos. The boat was designed for eight people but there were 16 passengers on board. It capsized within five minutes of departure. Alan's body was one of those washed up on shore. A Turkish photographer captured the image of him lying face down on the sand; soon this little boy's tragic death was broadcast all over the world.

Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said she had been reduced to tears on watching that evening's television news and promised Scottish people "stand ready to help offer sanctuary to refugees who need our help".⁴⁵

Northern Ireland's Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, announced, "I spoke to David Cameron today and made a direct appeal to him to permit entry to more refugees and to enable regions such as our own to welcome these people".⁴⁶

In an emergency Parliamentary debate a few days later, UK Prime Minister David Cameron reported: "The whole country has been deeply moved by the heart-breaking images that we have seen over the past few days". He announced 20,000 Syrians would be offered refuge in the UK.⁴⁷



THE UK HAS
COMMITTED TO
RESETTLE

20,000

SYRIAN
REFUGEES
BY

2020



UK RESPONSE

By early February 2016, nearly 450,000 people had signed an online petition calling for the UK to accept more asylum seekers and to increase support for refugees and migrants.⁴⁸ That same month, the #REFUGEESWELCOME campaign, established by Citizens UK at the end of 2015, reported that 1.4 million people backed the initiative.⁴⁹

Migrants and the UK

In addition to offering international protection, the UK allows individuals to enter the country for work, to study or to join family members. In the year ending September 2015, 617,000

people had migrated to the UK and 294,000 had left the country.⁵⁰ London has the greatest number of migrants in any part of the UK, and Northern Ireland has the least.⁵¹

Latest data published by the Office of National Statistics shows that 13 per cent of UK residents in 2014 were born abroad. This figure was 9 per cent a decade ago.⁵² The 10 most common countries in which people living in the UK in 2014 were born (if not in the UK) were: India, Poland, Pakistan, Republic of Ireland, Germany, Bangladesh, South Africa, China, the United States of America and Nigeria.⁵³

Above: in London's Trafalgar Square, a crowd demonstrates their support for refugees coming to the UK

UNICEF'S WORK IN THE UK

Unicef UK is calling on the UK Government to:

- **Create safe legal routes to the UK for children in urgent need of safety**, for example through resettlement schemes, through more possibilities for children with family members in the UK to be reunified with them, and through applying for humanitarian visas from UK embassies in the children's countries and regions of origin.
- **Ensure the child's best interests are a primary consideration in all decisions, including immigration, for all children seeking refuge in the UK.**

Under the current system, unaccompanied children can be returned to their country of origin when they turn 18 without proper consideration of whether this is in the child's best interests. For many children, the uncertainty about what will happen when they turn 18 can condemn them to a childhood in limbo, where they are unable to exercise their rights, receive adequate support from their local authority, feel a sense of belonging or plan for their future.

- **Widen the eligibility criteria of the UK family reunion rules and apply them more flexibly to enable extended family members to sponsor children in their family to come to the UK.**

- **Ensure that the reforms to the Dublin III Regulation – which are supposed to enable families to reunite once they have reached Europe – function as intended.**

Currently very few unaccompanied children have their asylum cases transferred to the UK under this Regulation even when the children have family members in the UK.

- **Provide protection to unaccompanied refugee and migrant children already in Europe.**

These children are among those at greatest risk of all of the refugees and migrants who have arrived in Europe; living and travelling alone without family support, they are in danger of abuse and exploitation.

- **Prevent further deaths by continuing and reinforcing search and rescue operations.**
- **Ensure all migrant and refugee children received in the EU and neighbouring territories are granted protection and access to services, quickly, consistently and in their best interests.**

Safe, child-friendly reception facilities are needed as children arrive, with access to health care, psychosocial support, recreation and schooling, with adequate numbers of trained child welfare specialists.

- **Tackle the root causes of displacement and migration** through development, humanitarian and diplomatic support in conflict-affected countries and countries of origin.



**USE THE
FACTSHEET
FOR CHILDREN
PROVIDED WITH
THIS RESOURCE
TO GIVE YOUR
CLASS SOME
BACKGROUND
INFORMATION ON
THE CRISIS**

bit.ly/refugees-factsheet-children

HANDLING SENSITIVE ISSUES



War and persecution are incredibly difficult subjects for people of any age. The gravity and scale of suffering can leave many lost for words. Working with children to try and untangle complicated thoughts and feelings is not easy. However, safe spaces in which to gently explore disturbing world events, as well as difficulties closer to home, can provide huge reassurance to children and young people, and prompt them to seek help when they need it.

Some schools will have significant numbers of child refugees and migrants. Kent County Council, for example, was looking after 1,000 unaccompanied children

in November 2015, 300 of whom had been placed in other local authority areas.⁵⁴ In most UK schools, however, it's likely that very few, if any, pupils will have personal experience of bombs, guns and natural disasters driving them from their homes. But a sizeable proportion will know what it feels like to be afraid, and some may have experienced fleeing their homes in an emergency, through domestic violence or eviction, for example. You will have children in your class who have suffered a bereavement or other profound loss. Others may have parents and carers who have voiced opinions that have left them unsettled.

Above: two boys look out of the window of a train carrying refugees to the Macedonian border with Serbia

Here we offer some pointers for teachers and classroom assistants preparing to discuss these sensitive and complex issues with children, together with advice on creating and maintaining a positive learning environment for all.

- Does your class already have 'ground rules' for working together respectfully, or do you need to agree some especially for this work? Paired discussions are a democratic means of developing ground rules.
- If any of the children and young people in your class or school have refugee status or are seeking asylum, talk to them privately ahead of the activities and decide together how to approach the activities in the classroom.
- Before each activity, consider the possibilities of difficult and inappropriate comments or questions being raised, and the likely places this may happen. Decide in advance how you will respond to such comments or questions. For example, you could pre-empt misconceived associations of a belief in Islam with extremist groups (like Daesh/ISIS) by highlighting that the vast majority of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims⁵⁵ live peaceful lives and do not support extremism or terrorism.⁵⁶
- Review your school's safeguarding procedures, so you feel confident about concerns whenever necessary.
- Have an open dialogue with your pupils. Actively encourage them to share their own perspectives and ideas. Be receptive to verbal and non-verbal cues that show children have been moved emotionally: we anticipate the activities provided in this resource will increase children's knowledge and understanding, but also generate considerable empathy.
- Don't put students 'on the spot' by asking them publicly to share their experiences. If you believe individual children have particular experiences to share, ask them privately if they would be happy to do so publicly and how they would like to do that.
- Make time at the start and close of each activity to stress that you understand pupils may be upset and confused when thinking about the refugee and migrant crisis, and remind them of the people and places offering support to children within and outside of their school.
- Maintain an historical perspective, so that children understand that migration is part of the human story, and they understand that human beings have coped with tremendous challenges and upheavals throughout history.
- Be aware of your school's legal duty to avoid one-sided presentation of political views, and therefore avoid communicating political opinions as facts and offer opposing viewpoints and ideas.⁵⁷ (Political opinions relate to political parties and legal and policy change. You should not fear expressing views in support of democracy and human rights, or be reticent about condemning armed groups or aspects of history like the Holocaust or the transatlantic slave trade).
- Underline the fact that the UNCRC states the best interests of the child must always be a primary consideration, and the world has a longstanding commitment to put children first. All children must receive the care, respect and protection to which they are entitled, no matter who they are and where they are from.
- Consistently emphasise that human rights are a collective promise made by all countries of the world, including those currently in conflict. This promise can be summarised as everyone being able to enjoy a safe, happy and fulfilling life, where their dignity and worth is equally valued. You can also emphasise that the international system of refugee protection is founded on the principle of every country helping fellow human beings in times of need. It is a mutual system.
- Finally, we encourage teachers to proactively assert the human dignity, strengths and capabilities of refugees and migrants. These are not children and adults reliant on pity and charity, but holders of rights like everyone else.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



INTRODUCTION

These learning activities are adaptable to different school subjects and age groups (from seven upwards). When choosing which activities to use, there are a few points to bear in mind.

- Most activities can be extended or shortened: the time indicator is simply illustrative.
- There are a number of activities provided, exploring topics from different angles. We do not expect you to deliver every activity included in this pack, but to pick and choose the ones that are most appropriate for your school and class.
- You can adapt the activities suggested according to your school and your own classroom – you know your pupils so you are best placed to decide how to adapt the content for them.

- The age guidance is simply a suggestion; primary teachers might want to adapt secondary activities and vice versa.
- We have included a number of videos in the activities below. Please watch these videos before using them in your classroom to ensure you are happy that the content is appropriate for your class.
- Use your own judgement to decide which facts to share with children and young people so as not to worry, shock or unduly alarm them.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



Throughout the activities, we have indicated which article(s) of the UNCRC is most relevant for the particular learning activity. However, do keep in mind that all the articles of the Convention are relevant and important at all times, for all children. Throughout the lessons and discussions, it is worth reminding children and young people of the other rights in the Convention and to make links between the rights as much as possible.

Child-friendly summaries of the UNCRC are available to view and download:

- For under-11s: bit.ly/CRC-under11s
- For over-11s: bit.ly/CRC-over11

A note about videos



Please watch the videos recommended in the activities before showing them to your pupils. There are a number of other useful videos available that you may decide to use. For example:

- The Syrian crisis in numbers: Professor Hans Rosling analyses the statistics of population displacement in war-torn Syria and where Syrian refugees are today: bit.ly/syria-rosling-fb or here bit.ly/syria-rosling-yt
- CBBC's Newsround produces regular video content on the refugee and migrant crisis: bit.ly/newsround-refugees
- 'What is happening in Syria?' – potentially suitable for older pupils: bit.ly/newsround-syria1
- 'Why is there a migrant crisis in Europe?' - a useful overview of the crisis: bit.ly/newsround-why crisis

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: AT A GLANCE

Activity	Objective	Background reading	Primary	Secondary	Time
Where in the world? Page 32	Children learn about the number of displaced people in the world, and how many refugees there are globally and in Europe. They find out that eight out of 10 asylum seekers in Europe are from just three countries – Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq – and consider the journeys of people who have fled their homes.	Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Pages 15-18 Appendix: Page 64	✓	✓	50 minutes
Word Power Page 34	Children learn about the differences between refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, as well as the 1951 Refugee Convention.	Glossary. Page 57		✓	30 minutes
Amal's story Page 35	Children have insight into why millions have been fleeing Syria, and what life is like in a refugee camp. This activity uses a video.	The situation in Syria. Page 16 Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Page 64	✓	✓	30 minutes
Teba's story Page 36	Children empathise with a child in Syria, and consider the similarities and differences between their own life and hers.	The situation in Syria. Page 16 Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Page 64	✓		20 minutes
Where do you stand? Page 38	Children consider their own and others' views about offering help to people in need using a range of statements they can agree or disagree with and then discuss.		✓	✓	30 minutes
Leave now Page 39	Children are able to imagine what it is like to be a child or an adult who has left their home in an emergency. They can identify with the difficult choices people are forced to make in these circumstances. This activity uses a video.	The situation in Iraq. Page 18 Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Page 64	✓	✓	40 minutes
Let me introduce Page 40	Children value their own and other people's identity by discussing with other pupils what makes them unique and what they have in common and reflecting on the discussions.		✓	✓	Around 20 minutes

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: AT A GLANCE

Activity	Objective	Background reading	Primary	Secondary	Time
All together now Page 41	Children value their own and other people's contribution to their school community and are encouraged to consider how new children coming to their school could be made to feel welcomed.		✓		15 minutes
Home is... Page 42	Children understand what home means for them and for other people. This enables them to see that 'home' can mean different things for different people and the richness that comes with that. This can lead to a sense of empathy and mutual respect.		✓	✓	15 minutes
Let me in Page 43	Through play and story-telling, children experience being displaced from their homes and offering sanctuary.	Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Pages 15-18 and Appendix pages 64-67	✓		40 minutes
Moving people Page 44	Children know that people have always moved throughout history and understand the reasons for this can be varied and complex. They use their own family and community history to make connections and empathise with those affected directly by today's conflicts.	Appendix: Migration through history. Page 60	✓	✓	15 minutes preparation, research in students' own time
Our school, our world Page 46	Children celebrate the diversity of their school community, and appreciate the connections we all have to the wider world. This activity requires children to undertake research in their own time.	Appendix: Migration through history. Page 60	✓	✓	30 minutes
In Navid's shoes Page 47	Children find out about one boy's journey to the UK from Iran, and consider what helped him and why. Engenders a sense of empathy and understanding. This activity uses a video.	You may want to do some research about Iran online, for example: bit.ly/bbc-iran-bg		✓	30 minutes
Best friends – Hamid's story Page 48	Children value their own and other people's identity by discussing with other pupils what makes them unique and what they have in common and reflecting on the discussions.	Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Eritrea Page 65	✓		20 minutes

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: AT A GLANCE

Activity	Objective	Background reading	Primary	Secondary	Time
Settling in a new country Page 49	Through role play activities, children begin to understand the needs of refugees arriving into a new country and how governments and others can make sure their rights are upheld.		✓	✓	50 minutes
It's all so different Page 50	Children consider their own questions and concerns about moving to a new country, and then empathise with child refugees who have come to the UK. This activity uses a video (TBC).		✓	✓	30 minutes
Welcome pack Page 51	Children demonstrate kindness and compassion to child refugees by designing a 'welcome pack' for a child who is joining their school after leaving their home country.		✓	✓	40 minutes
Message to Malak Page 52	Children recognise the upheavals that war brings, and connect this with changes in their own lives by listening to Malak's story, a Syrian girl who travelled to Greece by sea.	The situation in Syria. Page 16 Countries of arrival: Page 20 Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Page 64	✓	✓	30 minutes
Make a broadcast Page 53	Children share their learning about the refugee and migrant crisis, and communicate positive messages about the human rights of those fleeing war and persecution, and those who come to the UK for a better life.		✓	✓	40 minutes
This House believes... Page 54	Children debate media stories about the refugee crisis, which makes them more able to critically assess information they hear and read in future.			✓	40 minutes

1. WHERE IN THE WORLD?



TIME:
50 minutes



MATERIALS:

- Two large maps for primary activity: world and UK
- PowerPoint: Where in the world?
Primary: bit.ly/activity1_primary_pres
Secondary: bit.ly/activity1_secondary_pres



UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 19, 20, 22, 24, 27



BACKGROUND READING:
Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe?
Pages 15-18
Appendix: Page 64

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children learn about the number of displaced people in the world, and how many refugees there are globally and in Europe. They find out that eight out of 10 asylum seekers in Europe are from just three countries – Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq – and consider the journeys of people who have fled their homes.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Give the children some basic facts about the number of people who have lost their homes, have been forced to flee their homes, or have fled to another country as an asylum seeker or refugee.

Ask the children to recall a long journey they have made before. They might have been going on holiday, visiting family or they might have once lived in a different country. Ask them to draw a picture or write about how they felt during their journey, and the ways in which they travelled – did they walk or travel by car, boat or aeroplane, for example. Were they excited, bored or tired? The pictures and writing can be displayed together, and children invited to look at each other's work.

Then ask the children how their own journeys might have differed from those of children travelling to Europe from Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq. Ask the children in your class what rights children and their families are trying to protect by travelling to Europe?

Use the two large display maps, one of the world and the other of the UK, to show children's journeys, and to point out Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as other countries that children talk about.

→ continued overleaf

1. WHERE IN THE WORLD?



SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Give students some basic facts about the number of people who have lost their homes, have been forced to flee their homes, or have fled to another country as an asylum seeker or refugee.

Explain to the students that the large majority of people who have come to Europe as asylum seekers and refugees are from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Brief students about the conflicts in those countries. Ask the students, in small groups, to reflect upon the practical obstacles people from these three countries face in reaching mainland Europe, using the following seven headings:

- dangers within their home country;
- methods of travel;
- food and shelter;
- language differences;
- weather;
- border controls; and
- caring for sick and vulnerable family members, including children.

Ask the groups to list the children's rights that are under threat, and to make suggestions for how they may be protected.

2. WORD POWER



TIME:
30 minutes



MATERIALS:

- PowerPoint: Word Power bit.ly/activity2-pres
- Film: Why the Refugee Convention is important: bit.ly/refugee-convention



UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 39



BACKGROUND READING:
Glossary.
Page 57

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children learn about the differences between refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, as well as the 1951 Refugee Convention.

SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Explain to students that 145 countries, including the UK, have agreed to follow the 1951 Refugee Convention, a legal promise that those who need safety will be given it. A person who has been accepted as a refugee in a country is allowed to legally stay there. A person who is waiting for a decision by the government is called an asylum seeker. People who move to other countries, but who are not in danger in their own country, are called migrants.

The Refugee Convention defines a refugee in 51 words. In pairs, ask students to come up with their own definition of a refugee, using no more than 51 words. Their challenge is to ensure that their definition of a refugee will protect all those who need assistance in future. Once the definitions have been drafted, ask students to compare their own choice of words with each other's, and with the actual text of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The text of the Refugee Convention defines a refugee in 51 words as a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

Discuss with the class which rights from the UNCRF they think are particularly relevant for children seeking refuge. Are there any rights refugee children are not enjoying? Are there rights in the Convention that particularly apply to them?

3. AMAL'S STORY



TIME:
30 minutes



MATERIALS:

- Draw My Life – Amal's Story:
bit.ly/Amal-story
- You could also show this CBBC Newsround video about refugee children from Syria:
bit.ly/newsround-syria-school



**UNCRC ARTICLES
OF MOST
RELEVANCE:**
2, 3, 6, 12, 28



**BACKGROUND
READING:**
Syria: Page 16
Appendix: Why
are refugees and
migrants coming to
Europe? Page 64

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children have insight into why millions have been fleeing Syria, and what life is like in a refugee camp.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Explain to students that more than half (51 per cent) of the world's refugees are children. Many refugees choose to return to their home country when it is safe to do so. Others, like Amal, hope to return one day. Show students the film and then ask them to imagine living in a refugee camp in a different part of the world, and to consider what they would most miss from home. Ask them to make a list of 10 precious people, possessions and places they would miss the most.

Then hold a group discussion about which rights are compromised and protected when a person lives in a refugee camp. To extend the activity you might focus on a particular right in more detail. For example, you could look at Article 28, the right to education: how will children enjoy finding out new things and develop their talents in their childhood, and be supported to reach their dreams as adults, when their right to an education is being denied, and what can be done to overcome this?

REMEMBER

Watch the video before using it in your classroom to make sure it is appropriate for your pupils

4. TEBA'S STORY



TIME:
20 minutes



MATERIALS:
■ Teba's story (see page 37)
■ A map showing the location of Syria



UNCRF ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 38



BACKGROUND READING:
Syria: Page 16
Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe?
Page 64

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children empathise with a child in Syria, and consider the similarities and differences between their own life and hers.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Introduce the children to Teba.

Ask the children to stand in the middle of the room. Call out some questions and ask the children to move around the room and form groups depending on what their answer is. For example, if you ask 'Have you moved house since you were a baby?', everyone who says 'yes' should stand together, and everyone who says 'no' or 'I don't know' should stand together.

Ask the children questions related to Teba, for example:

- Who lives in a flat?
- Who wants to be a doctor when they grow up?
- Who has ever visited or lived in Syria?
- Who has a hat and scarf like Teba?
- Who has been forced to leave their house in an emergency?
- Who has a coat with a zip?
- Who has moved house six times?
- Who has brothers and sisters like Teba?
- Who thinks Teba is brave?

In the large group, discuss what life might be like for Teba in an area where there is so much fighting and danger.



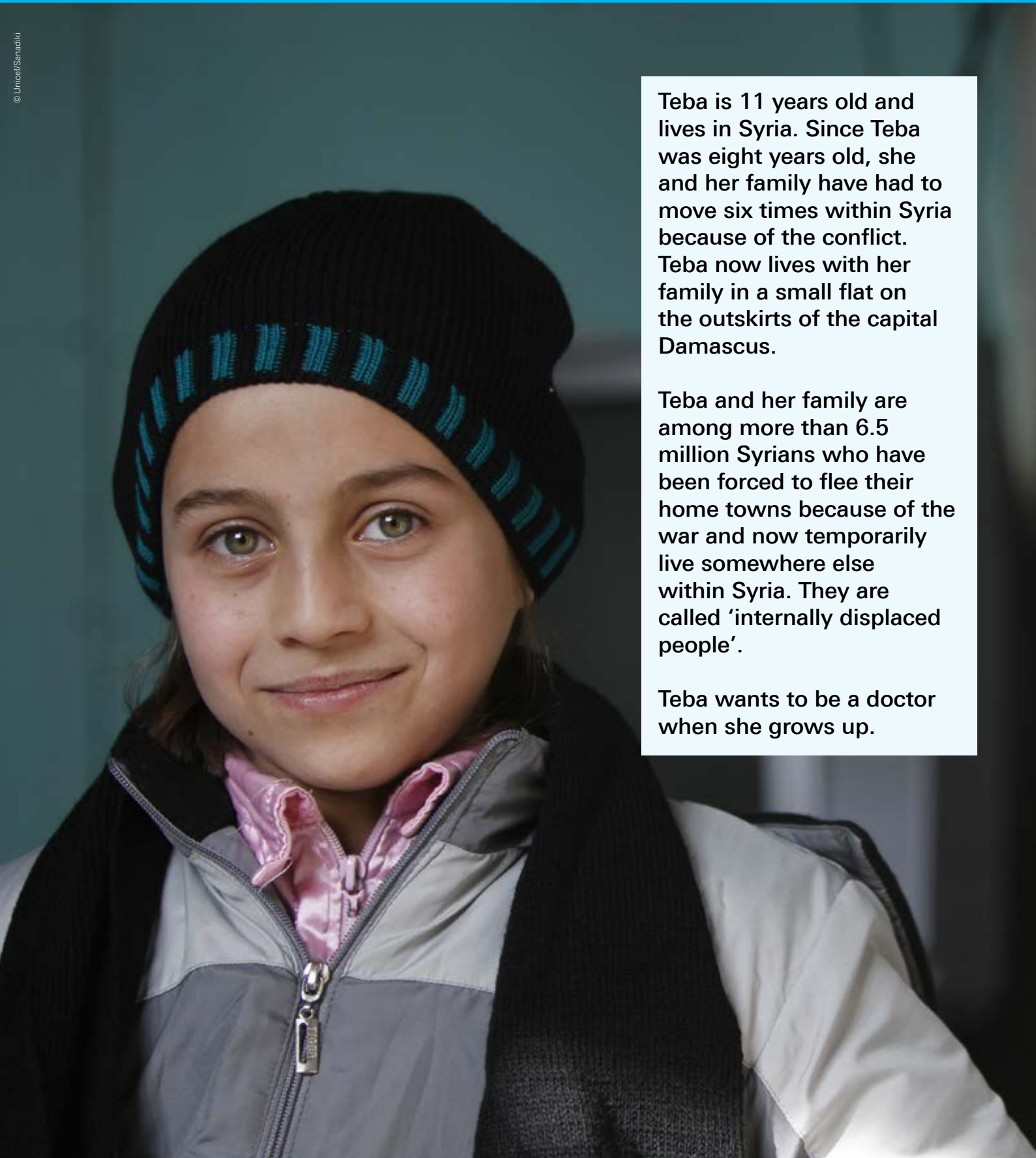
Teba, 11, lives in Syria.
Read her story on page 37

TIP

If children in your class are themselves refugees, adapt the questions accordingly.

→ continued overleaf

TEBA'S STORY



Teba is 11 years old and lives in Syria. Since Teba was eight years old, she and her family have had to move six times within Syria because of the conflict. Teba now lives with her family in a small flat on the outskirts of the capital Damascus.

Teba and her family are among more than 6.5 million Syrians who have been forced to flee their home towns because of the war and now temporarily live somewhere else within Syria. They are called 'internally displaced people'.

Teba wants to be a doctor when she grows up.

5. WHERE DO YOU STAND?



TIME:
30 minutes



MATERIALS:
None required

UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12

BACKGROUND READING:
None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

This activity enables children to consider their own and others' views about offering help to people in need.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Prepare a number of questions/statements that have no single answer, such as:

- People should be able to live in whatever country they want
- Everyone in the world has the same rights
- Children should always get top priority in times of war
- It's worse having to leave your home because of war, than for any other reason
- If I was living in danger, I'd want others to help me and my family
- People who come to England/Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland for safety are always treated well
- Each country should look after its own people
- If you go to live in another country, you should learn the language
- Europe is taking its fair share of refugees
- Those who arrive in Europe by boat are the most desperate
- Living in a refugee camp would be really exciting
- Most people prefer to stay in their own countries than go somewhere else to live
- We don't have space for any more people in our country
- People who come to this country for a better life always work hard
- Rich countries should offer refuge to more people than poor countries

Ask children to stand in the middle of the room. Explain that the left hand side of the room is for 'YES', the right-hand side is for 'NO', and the middle is for 'I'M NOT SURE'. Stress that everyone is entitled to their own views. Read out a statement and ask the children to move to the place in the room that represents their answer or initial reaction to the statement. After children have moved to their positions, ask them why they chose to stand there, encouraging debate and reflection. Encourage pupils to change positions if they want, as they hear other people's views.

Statements should be tailored to the age and level of understanding of the pupils and should not have an obvious right or wrong answer, to create space for real debate and learning.

6. LEAVE NOW



TIME:
40 minutes



MATERIALS:

- Imithan's story: bit.ly/Imithan-story
- Children could also be asked to bring a bag for this activity (or empty the ones they use for school) and use their own coat pockets



UNCR ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 19, 38, 39



BACKGROUND READING:
Iraq: Page 18
Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Page 64

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children are able to imagine what it is like to be a child or an adult who has left their home in an emergency. They can identify with the difficult choices people are forced to make in these circumstances.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Ask students to imagine they are affected by an emergency and have to leave their home or community. This emergency could be floods, an earthquake, conflict (but be sensitive to children's real life experiences) or another disaster. They don't know whether they will ever be able to return or, if they do return, whether their home will be intact. They must decide what they will take in their bag or rucksack. They must think about each room in their house, and decide what, if anything, they will take. Encourage discussion in small groups and then widen out discussion to the full group. Then ask the children to now consider what they would choose if they could only place items in their coat pockets.

Finish by showing the students the short film of Imithan talking about how she and her family fled their home in northern Iraq. Reflection afterwards can include whether any children remembered their passports, which was one of the few items (ID documents) taken by Imithan and her family.



7. LET ME INTRODUCE...

**TIME:**

Depends on size of group, with 15 children this activity can be completed in 20 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

- Pens and paper
- Posters or other materials about the UNCRC would be useful

**UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:**

2, 8, 12, 14, 29, 31

BACKGROUND READING:

None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children value their own and other people's identity.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Invite students to get into pairs and interview each other about what they have in common with others in their class, and what makes them unique. This can embrace a variety of characteristics and experiences, such as hair colour, religion, where they live, who they live with and their favourite hobbies. Each 'interviewer' should find out two things about the other person – one example of how he or she is similar to others in the class; and one thing that makes them unique. They must try to find the most interesting aspects of the other person's life or background. The interviewers then take turns to introduce their partner to the rest of the group.

Now ask the group to imagine doing this activity with children who had come to their school from another country. How would they find out about their new classmates without encroaching on their privacy? What would they expect the children to have in common with them, and what might make them unique? If you have links with a partner school in another country you could collect their views, or even try to link up with them to do this exercise together. One child in each pair (in both schools) could role play as a refugee child in the other country.

TIP

You could consider the British Council's Connecting Classrooms programme to link up with a school in another country:

bit.ly/british-council-cc

8. ALL TOGETHER NOW



TIME:
15 minutes



MATERIALS:
Paper of different colours (for the 'bricks'), CD player and upbeat music



UNCRF ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 6, 12

BACKGROUND READING:
None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children value their own and other people's contribution to their school community.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

This activity is musical statues with a difference! Ask children to think about all the human qualities, skills, characteristics and attitudes that would build a great community. Draw or write these on different coloured 'bricks' (paper) then bring them together and build up a wall of all the qualities.

Next ask the children to stand in pairs. Play the music and ask the children to move around together in their pairs until it stops. Tell them that when the music stops you will call out one of the qualities and that they should form a statue to act out the quality that you say.

Call out a variety of positive descriptions, such as:

- A person being kind
- Playing together
- A big adventure
- New friends

Then ask two pairs to join together, so there are four people in each small group. They must now create statues together. Suggested call-outs include:

- Sharing
- Do you need some help?
- Join us
- Learning a new language

At the end, congratulate children on being so kind and friendly to one another, and invite them to consider how new children coming into their school could be made to feel welcome and valued for who they are.

9. HOME IS...



TIME:
15 minutes



MATERIALS:
Bashir's story:
bit.ly/Bashir-story



UNCRF ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 24, 27, 39

BACKGROUND READING:
None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children understand what home means for them and for other people. This enables them to see that 'home' can mean different things for different people and the richness that comes with that. All of this can lead to a sense of empathy and mutual respect.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Ask children to use their five senses (touch, taste, smell, hear, sight) to describe in a short written piece what is so special about their home. Help to structure the piece by suggesting sentences such as; 'My favourite tastes at home are...'; 'This smell reminds me of home...'; 'When I hear ... I know I am home' and so on.

Once individual reflections are completed, children can discuss together the importance of home, and how it would feel to have to live somewhere different, for example in a refugee camp. Would some aspects of home stay the same, and others change?

SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Split the students into small groups and ask them to create a short drama performance inspired by the words: 'Home is...'

After they have performed their pieces to each other, ask students to return to their small groups and imagine they are living in a refugee camp. Invite them to create another short piece, again inspired by 'Home is...'

Once all of the groups have performed their second pieces, facilitate a discussion on the similarities and differences between the performances.



Bashir explains what it is like to call Za'atari refugee camp home.

10. LET ME IN

**TIME:**

40 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

The story of The Three Little Pigs. Paper and crayons, pencils or colouring pens. The activity can be adapted so children use boxes and newspapers, and other recycled material

**UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:**

2, 3, 6, 12, 19, 22, 39

BACKGROUND READING:

Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Pages 15-18 and 64-67

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Through play and story-telling, children experience being displaced from their homes and offering sanctuary.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Briefly tell or remind children of the story of the The Three Little Pigs. Then ask them to pretend to be in the story, but instead of three little pigs there will be three little children! Divide the group into three smaller groups: the houses made of straw; the houses made of sticks; and the houses made of bricks. Ask each child to draw a picture of their house, which is made of either straw, sticks or bricks.

Ask them to stand together in their groups and adapt the classic tale, so it becomes The Three Little Children. When the wolf blows down the straw house, take away the children's drawings and tell them they have nowhere to live. Their houses have been destroyed. Ask the stick houses group if the children can come and live with them (they may need some encouragement!). When they agree, the straw house children move across the room to join the stick house children, leaving their own drawings behind. The same process happens when the wolf has destroyed the stick houses and they must live with the brick house children. All of the children will now be huddled together in one space, sharing the brick houses.

Now ask each group to come up with an imaginative solution for protecting their homes from the pesky wolf. Once the story has reached its conclusion, ask the children how they felt being forced out of their homes (some had to move twice), and ask those who took others in how that felt, too. Would children who were 'rescued' have helped those living in brick houses if the wolf had destroyed their homes first?

Some other helpful stories for younger children include:

- *Something Else* by Kathryn Cave and Chris Riddell
- *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan
- *A Colour of his Own* by Leo Lionni
- *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi
- *Tusk Tusk* by David McKee
- *War and Peas* by Michael Foreman
- *A Child's Garden: A Story of Hope* by Michael Foreman

11. MOVING PEOPLE

**TIME:**

15 minute preparation, then students undertake research in their own time

MATERIALS:

None required

**UNCRF ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:**

2, 3, 6, 12, 27, 28

**BACKGROUND READING:**

Appendix: Migration through history. Page 60

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children know that people have always moved throughout history and understand the reasons for this can be varied and complex. They use their own family and community history to make connections and empathise with those affected directly by today's conflicts.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Invite children to research a hero or heroine who is a migrant and then depict their journey in writing and drawings on a large sheet of paper. This person can be a historical figure or be alive today; they must be well-known, and could be from the worlds of arts, science, music, sports or politics. Why did they move to another country? How far did they travel, and what route did they take? What helped and what was difficult. Do they ever miss their home country?

Some examples of people children could research include:

- Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, was born in Scotland and migrated to Canada as a young adult
- Scientist Albert Einstein, who fled Nazi Germany in 1932 to the United States
- Supermodel Iman left Somalia as a refugee in 1972
- Singer and actress Rita Ora and her family left Yugoslavia (present-day Kosovo) and came to the UK as refugees
- Francesca Simon, author of the Horrid Henry stories, grew up in the United States and travelled to the UK to study, where she has remained
- Singer-songwriter Regina Spektor and her family left Russia in 1989 and were admitted as refugees to the US
- World champion athlete Mo Farah came to the UK from Somalia at the age of eight

→ continued overleaf

11. MOVING PEOPLE



SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Brief students about different periods in the UK's recent history (1930s onwards) when we received large numbers of migrants and refugees. Provide them with information about recent UK population figures (for example, 13 per cent of UK residents in 2014 were born abroad) and discuss whether they know people who were not born in this country.

Ask them to do some research within their family or the wider community (for example, focusing on a particular street or area), to see whether they can identify any significant migration. In addition to seeking case studies of migration to and from the UK, they could consider movement within England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland – they might, for example, have an older relative who was evacuated during World War 2 (1939-45). Alternatively, they can choose to research someone famous who is a migrant. Ask students to identify one person or a group of people they want to talk about and ask them to write a pen picture of their chosen person, family member or group of people, which explains: why they moved; where they moved from and to; the challenges they faced; and how life in their new country worked out. As a follow-on to this activity, you could work with students to organise a school exhibition about the various stories they have researched and written about, perhaps inviting guests from local refugee and migrant support groups.

12. OUR SCHOOL, OUR WORLD



TIME:

30 minutes (plus children's preparation at home)



MATERIALS:

Requires children to undertake research in their own time and to bring in their photographs and five facts. Photographs may need to be photocopied if they are originals and no other copies exist



UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST

RELEVANCE:

2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 24, 27, 28, 39



BACKGROUND READING:

Appendix: Migration through history. Page 60

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children celebrate the diversity of their school community, and appreciate the connections we all have to the wider world.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Invite pupils to bring in two photographs of a person in their family or neighbourhood who was not born in this country, or whose parents were not born in this country. This can be an adult or a child. One photograph should be of the person when they were much younger and the other should be of them now. Ask students to find out five facts about the person:

- name
- country of birth
- the age at which they moved to this country
- how they travelled to this country
- how many languages they can speak

Within the classroom, ask each child to create a wall display of their person. These displays can then be combined to create a vibrant exhibition.

This activity has lots of potential for project work around continents and countries, languages, methods of travel, and so on.

TIP

This activity may be easier to do in some schools than others so do consider your community's demographics and whether this is feasible before launching the activity with children and young people.

13. IN NAVID'S SHOES



TIME:
30 minutes



- MATERIALS:**
- Map showing distance between Iran and UK
 - Film about Navid: bit.ly/bbc-navid
 - You could also show the video about Ali's journey from Afghanistan: bit.ly/bbc-ali



UNCRF ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 39



BACKGROUND READING:
You may want to do some research about Iran online, for example: bit.ly/bbc-iran-bg

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children find out about one boy's journey to the UK, and consider what helped him and why. The activity engenders a sense of empathy and understanding.

SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Show the students the short film about Navid's journey from Iran to the UK. Ask them to make notes as they watch the film, identifying the difficulties Navid faced, and what helped him during his journey and through his first weeks and months in the UK. Afterwards, facilitate a group discussion of students' observations. Ask students to put themselves in Navid's shoes and imagine they must travel from the UK to another country in similar circumstances. What would they find most difficult; what would help them?

REMEMBER

Watch the video before using it in your classroom to make sure it is appropriate for your pupils

14. BEST FRIENDS – HAMID’S STORY



TIME:
20 minutes



MATERIALS:

- Map showing distance between Eritrea and UK
- Film about Hamid: bit.ly/bbc-hamid

Children may react to some scenes at the start of the film, such as the flies on food. Remind pupils that what they see in this film doesn't necessarily reflect the whole of Eritrea as a country, or Africa as a continent



**UNCR
ARTICLES
OF MOST
RELEVANCE:**
2, 3, 6, 12,
22, 28, 29,
39



**BACKGROUND
READING:**
Appendix: Why
are refugees and
migrants coming
to Europe?
Eritrea. Page 65

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children find out about one boy's journey to the UK, and reflect on the importance of friendship, courage, justice and equality.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Show the children the short film about why Hamid and his mother were forced to leave their home (and Hamid's father) in Eritrea. They will learn that Hamid formed a very important and enduring friendship in his new school.

After they have watched the film, facilitate a group discussion about the value of friendship. Why are friends so important? How does it feel to be in a new situation, with new people, and a completely different language? How can friends help? What can they say and do to make adjusting to a new life easier?

REMEMBER

Watch the video before using it in your classroom to make sure it is appropriate for your pupils

15. SETTLING IN A NEW COUNTRY

**TIME:**

50 minutes

MATERIALS:

- A table and chairs, arranged in a formal set up if possible

**UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:**

2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 39

BACKGROUND READING:

None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children begin to understand the needs of refugees arriving into a new country and how governments and others can make sure their rights are upheld.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Invite students to role play a big meeting, which has been organised by the government or local council. Experts in different fields must decide how best to support refugees, both to settle into their new homes and to return to their country if this is what they want and it is safe to do so. Ask children to identify the different types of assistance that refugees may need, such as:

- money and financial support;
- housing;
- finding their families back home;
- school places;
- health care; and
- help with learning a new language.

Prompt them by asking what help they and their families might need if they went to a completely new country, where English is not spoken and they know nothing about how things work and the local traditions. Once you have a list of the different types of support, ask children to work in pairs or small groups to choose a specialist area. Each pair or group should then consider what can be done to support refugees in their particular field (education, housing, financial support and so on). Then convene a meeting of the 'experts' to agree a strategy to protect the rights of refugees.

16. IT'S ALL SO DIFFERENT



TIME:
30 minutes



MATERIALS:

- World map for each pair
- You may want to show Manar's story, a girl who has arrived in the UK from Syria with her family, covered by CBBC's Newsround in this short video: bit.ly/newsround-manar



**UNCRF
ARTICLES
OF MOST
RELEVANCE:**
2, 3, 6, 12

**BACKGROUND
READING:**
None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children consider their own questions and concerns about moving to a new country, and then empathise with child refugees who have come to the UK.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Working in pairs, invite students to choose a country that they know nothing about, preferably outside of Europe. Ask them to imagine they are going to that country this evening, on an aeroplane. They have had no preparation, it's a complete surprise. They must decide their top five questions about the country, and their new life there. How might they find answers to these questions? Who or what could help them? Now ask them to consider the questions that children coming to this country might have? What might they find strange and unusual?

Encourage children to reflect on the possible similarities and differences in their concerns and questions.

REMEMBER

Watch the video before using it in your classroom to make sure it is appropriate for your pupils

17. WELCOME PACK



TIME:
40 minutes



MATERIALS:
Selection of art materials



UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12

BACKGROUND READING:
None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children demonstrate kindness and compassion to child refugees.



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Ask students to design a welcome pack for a child who is joining their school, after leaving their home country (for whatever reason). They should choose five objects they would definitely include in the pack, and say why these items are so important. They should also give five top tips for settling into their school. Then they could make a welcome card or, in the case of older students, devise a welcome message or poster that can be displayed in their classroom. At the end of the session, ask children how their creative work today is connected to children's rights. Emphasise that international protection of refugees and displaced people is managed by governments but individual people, including children, can make a massive positive difference to how well refugees and migrants settle in their new homes.

18. MESSAGE TO MALAK



TIME:
30 minutes



MATERIALS:
Malak's story:
bit.ly/Malak-story



UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 28, 29, 39



BACKGROUND READING:
Syria: Page 16
Countries of arrival: Page 20
Appendix: Why are refugees and migrants coming to Europe? Page 64

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children recognise the upheavals that war brings, and connect this with changes in their own lives.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

Show students the short film of seven-year-old Malak describing her journey from Syria to the Greek Island of Lesbos.

Explain that you are going to explore Malak's experiences together, asking WHY, WHY, WHY? There are no right or wrong answers; the important thing is that students try to understand Malak's predicament. To start with, bring in Malak's statement at the end of the film, and ask, 'Why does Malak want things back to how they were?' When a child gives an answer, immediately ask WHY, and so on. When the process comes to its natural end, ask children if they have ever experienced big changes in their own life, like moving home, changing school or important people moving into or out of their family. Were these changes similar or different to Malak's experiences? If they could send one positive message to Malak, what would this be?



Malak describes her journey to Greece by boat.

REMEMBER

Watch the video before using it in your classroom to make sure it is appropriate for your pupils

19. MAKE A BROADCAST



TIME:
40 minutes



- MATERIALS:**
- The factsheet provided with this resource: bit.ly/refugees-factsheet-children
 - A child-friendly version of the UNCRC for under 11s: bit.ly/CRC-under11s
 - A child-friendly version of the UNCRC for over 11s: bit.ly/CRC-over11



UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 38, 39

BACKGROUND READING:
None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children share their learning about the refugee and migrant crisis, and communicate positive messages about the human rights of those fleeing war and persecution, and those who come to the UK for a better life.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTIVITY

This activity should be carried out towards the end of the work about refugees. Ask children to imagine they are making a short programme, which is to be broadcast on television news. They have three minutes to tell people about the refugee crisis in Europe, to explain how it is affecting children and to explain the rights that these children have. They should work in small groups and their programme must include at least one interview, facts and figures and a child's perspective. Its aim is to help viewers understand why so many people are fleeing their countries, and to encourage them to support the international system of refugee protection, which requires governments and people across the world to offer protection to those fleeing war or persecution.

20. THIS HOUSE BELIEVES...



TIME:
40 minutes

MATERIALS:
Tables and chairs, ground rules agreed in advance (e.g. respect each other's contributions, no personal comments or insults, no interruptions)



UNCRC ARTICLES OF MOST RELEVANCE:
2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 38, 39

BACKGROUND READING:
None required

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children debate stories and opinions that have appeared in the media about the refugee crisis, which develops their ability to critically assess information they hear and read in future.

SECONDARY ACTIVITY

This activity should be carried out towards the end of your students' learning about the lives of, and challenges facing, refugees and migrants.

Discuss the suggested motions below and, with the students, choose one to debate. Invite two students to propose and two to oppose the motion, emphasising that this does not have to reflect their own views. Give the students a small amount of time to research and form their arguments before the motion is debated. While this is happening, others in the class can consider the questions they might put to either 'side'. Each proposer and opposer is given one or two minutes to deliver their speech, then there are questions from the floor (the audience), followed by questions to and from either side. Each student then gives a summing up point.

Suggested motions:

This House believes...

- 'We have too many people in our country'
- 'Unaccompanied children living in the UK should return to their home countries once they become adults.'
- 'All children living without their parents in refugee camps should be allowed to settle in the UK'
- 'Our country is very welcoming towards refugees'
- 'People coming to this country for work should not be allowed any benefits'
- 'The UK has a proud history of providing refuge to those fleeing war and persecution'
- 'The right to be safe is the most important right of all'

Ask students to propose their own motions, emphasising that this does not have to reflect their own views.

OTHER CLASSROOM IDEAS

SIMPLE CLASSROOM IDEAS BY CURRICULUM AREA

There are many other activities that could be developed from the ideas above. For example:

English:

- Creative writing projects (diaries, poetry, short stories) about the impact of the crisis on a young person's life.
- A project on children's books that cover the themes of change, displacement and loss.
- Exploring the language used by the media in relation to the crisis – how language shifted from migrants to refugees and so on.
- Comparing different newspaper articles, headlines, coverage and online reports. How might this shape people's opinions?

Maths: examining key aspects of the refugee crisis through numbers.

Science: researching explorers and inventors from across the world.

History:

- Learning how the UK has, for hundreds of years, benefited from migrants coming to England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.
- A project on the Kindertransport scheme and why the 1944 Guardianship (Refugee Children) Act was passed.

Religious studies:

- Examining themes in different faiths and religions about the treatment of 'strangers'/ new arrivals.
- Pupils selecting stories or extracts from sacred texts that resonate with today's refugee crisis.
- Examining the different 'religious wars' throughout history, and why strongly held beliefs (religious and otherwise) can cause so much conflict.

Art:

- Using art to illustrate and empathise with the impact of the crisis on children.
- Discovering famous artists, writers and performers who migrated or were displaced.

PSHE:

- Exploring case studies in more detail and reflecting on what it would be like to have your world turned upside down by an emergency.
- Finding out what support is available to refugees locally.

Drama: students could write a short script about an aspect of the crisis and perform this to their class or give an assembly

Geography:

- Design a card sequencing activity for students to use that mirrors the journey that child refugees have made, and how these journeys were made.
- Highlight significant aspects about the different countries involved in the refugee crisis (population and demography, climate, distribution of resources, areas of conflict).
- Conduct a project on the three countries that have given sanctuary to the greatest number of refugees in the current crisis (Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon).

Using ICT & digital media:

- Children interview migrants in their own families and community.
- Investigating how social media allows refugees and migrants to tell their own stories.

Music: learning traditional songs and anthems of different countries reflected in the school community.

WHOLE-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



By taking part in **Day for Change** schools can fundraise to help Unicef keep Syrian children safe. Teaching resources that support and complement this resource are also provided for primary and secondary classes, to help pupils understand how children are affected by the conflict in Syria. In 2016 Day for Change is bigger and better than ever, because the UK government will double every penny your school raises, helping reach Unicef to reach even more children in danger.

Your school can get involved any time until 22 July 2016. Find out more at unicef.uk/dayforchange



- Children could get involved in fundraising activities or local schemes and campaigns. They might contribute winter clothes, toys and other items to appeals by local charities.
- Children could deliver an assembly on what they have learned about the rights of child refugees.
- Children could organise an exhibition or festival within the school or local community, linked to key dates and anniversaries. Traditional clothing and food could be among the activities.
- Your local Assembly Member or Member of Parliament could be invited to come and talk to your class or school, about how the government is responding to the refugee crisis and what he or she is doing to promote and protect the rights of child refugees.
- If your school is not already involved in the Rights Respecting Schools Award, you could consider joining this Unicef UK programme, which supports schools to embed children's rights in their culture. Find out more at unicef.org.uk/rrsa

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Asylum seeker – an asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum in a country and is awaiting a decision as to whether or not this will be granted. A person – adult or child – who is granted asylum becomes a refugee. In the UK, UK Visas and Immigration (part of the Home Office) deals with asylum applications. Most asylum seekers arriving into the UK are not allowed to work; those who are destitute are offered free housing and some financial support.

Best interests – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires governments and others to treat the child's best interests as a primary consideration in all matters affecting the child. Determining what is in a child's best interests requires an examination of how best to secure all of his or her rights in the Convention. The child's best interests has long been part of UK law in relation to decision-making about individual children's welfare. The UK Parliament passed legislation in 2009, which brought the best interests of children into immigration and asylum decision-making.⁵⁸

Boko Haram – an armed group in Nigeria, using death and destruction to try and overthrow the government and establish an Islamic state. Loosely translated into English, Boko Haram means 'Western education is forbidden'.⁵⁹

Children – human beings below the age of 18.

Convention on the Rights of the Child – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international human rights treaty that sets out the rights of all children, everywhere. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989. It contains 54 articles that encompass the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children are entitled to as well as what countries must do to ensure children can enjoy their rights. The Convention is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. The UK ratified it in 1991, thereby taking on its legal obligations.

Daesh – acronym in Arabic for the armed group also known in the UK as 'Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham', IS or ISIS.

Discretionary leave to remain – if a person's asylum application in the UK has failed, and they are not granted humanitarian protection, they may be given discretionary leave to remain. In the case of unaccompanied and separated children, discretionary leave is granted for three years, or until the child turns 17½, whichever period is the shorter.

Dublin Regulation – a legal agreement which sets out which of 32 countries in Europe (including the UK) should deal with an individual's application for refugee status. It

provides for applications to be considered by a country where a child (or adult) has a family member, rather than the country in which they first made an application. The Regulation also states that, in the case of an unaccompanied child, a country in which he or she has a relative should accept the application. More broadly, the agreement allows the 32 countries to transfer applications (and people) between one another. The original agreement was made in Dublin, Ireland, in 1990 (hence the name); the most recent (Dublin III) came into effect in January 2014.

EU countries – members of the European Union, 28 in all: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

European Economic Area (EEA) – EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Guardian – an individual who has been granted all of the legal powers and responsibilities in respect of a child ordinarily held by a parent or carer.

Humanitarian protection

– protection given to those who have not been granted refugee status, on the grounds that they face a serious risk to life or person arising from the death penalty, unlawful killing, or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Human rights – universally agreed entitlements aimed at everyone enjoying a safe, dignified and fulfilling life, without any discrimination and unnecessary impositions on their freedom. Different treaties define and protect different human rights, which are broadly separated into economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights, but they are all inter-related. In the UK, successive governments have ratified international treaties such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (in 1991) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in 2009). The UK's Human Rights Act 1998 protects all of the rights in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which was agreed after the 1939-1945 War. The Human Rights Act enables UK residents to protect their rights through UK courts (instead of going to the European Court of Human Rights in France). The Act also requires public authorities, including schools, to act in accordance with the rights in the ECHR.

Human trafficking – the movement of a person from

one place to another into conditions of exploitation. In England and Wales, legislation states a person is exploited if one or more of the following occur: they are held in slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour; they are sexually exploited; they are encouraged, required or expected to donate one or more of their organs; or they are subject to force, threats or deception so they will provide services or other benefits to the exploiter.⁶⁰

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) - according to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (presented to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1998), internally displaced persons are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised border”. The UN Refugee Agency explains: “Even if they have fled for similar reasons as refugees (armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations), IDPs legally remain under the protection of their own government – even though that government might be the cause of their flight.”

International law – legal rules that set out the obligations of states to people within and outside their country. The UNCRC is an example of international law. International humanitarian law regulates the conduct of hostilities (armed conflict) and the protection of civilians during such conflict.

International protection – the mutual system of protection offered to those fleeing persecution. It is international in scope, because all 145 countries that have ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention (see below) have agreed to offer protection to human beings escaping persecution from whatever part of the world, should this ever be necessary.

Leave to remain – a person who is accepted as a refugee in the UK is usually given five years' leave to remain, during which time they can access welfare benefits and services, and seek employment. After five years, they can apply for indefinite leave to remain (permanent settlement).

Migrant – the United Nations defines a migrant worker as “a person who is to be engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national”.⁶¹ The OECD defines a long-term migrant as “a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country

of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence".⁶² It is generally recognised that migration occurs for a variety of reasons, including employment, education and family reunification, with many people making a positive decision to build a new life in a new country, and others feeling compelled to do so for a variety of reasons, including poverty, climate change, displacement and other severe hardships. In this context, a migrant is distinguished from a refugee – a refugee is someone who flees their country because of risk of persecution and terror.

Optional Protocol – a treaty linked to an existing treaty, which countries sign and ratify separately. Protocols contain additional provisions and often amend definitions and obligations specified in the original treaty (for example the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict).

Refugee – the legal definition of a refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (Article 1, 1951 Convention Relating to the

Status of Refugees). Put simply, a refugee is a person who has been granted refuge, or protection, from persecution in a country that is not the one in which they were born. Refugees move to escape persecution and they have no protection from their own state (often it is their own government that threatens to persecute them).

Refugee Convention – the 1951 Refugee Convention is the primary international agreement governing the protection of people fleeing persecution. Denmark was the first country to ratify the Convention in 1952 and since, it has been ratified by 145 states. One of the main rules in the Convention is that people should never be returned to their country "where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (Article 33). Such action would intrinsically breach the principles and requirements of the treaty. One of the principles included in the 1951 Refugee Convention is that governments should take "necessary measures" to protect the families of refugees and give priority to "The protection of refugees who are minors, in particular unaccompanied children and girls, with special reference to guardianship and adoption".

Separated child – a child who arrives into the UK without any parent or guardian; also known

as an unaccompanied child (see 'Unaccompanied child' below).

Schengen (Schengen Agreement) – this allows passport-free movement within 26 countries of Europe – the 'Schengen Area'. It gets its name from the town of Schengen, in Luxembourg, where the first such agreement was made by five countries in 1985. The UK has never been part of this agreement.

Smuggled – being taken illegally into a country. The smuggler will have obtained financial or other material benefit by their actions.

Taliban – an armed group which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. Characterised by public executions, brutal punishments and other severe human rights violations. The organisation is currently at war with Daesh in Afghanistan. The United Nations reports that the Taliban was responsible for 4,039 civilian casualties (adults and children) in Afghanistan in 2015.⁶³

UK Visas and Immigration – the part of the UK Home Office that deals with immigration, asylum and nationality applications. Formerly called UK Border Agency.

Unaccompanied child – a child who arrives into the UK without any parent or guardian; also known as a separated child (see 'Separated child').

APPENDIX

MIGRATION THROUGH HISTORY

120,000 years of travel

The discovery of 47 human teeth in Daoxian, south China, added thousands of years to the history of modern human migration. Until then, it was widely believed that Homo sapiens (Latin meaning, 'knowing man') had first migrated from the continent of Africa to Asia 50-60,000 years ago. The science journal Nature reported in October 2015 that the 47 teeth, belonging to at least 13 modern humans, had been found by a team of scientists in the Hunan province of China. The teeth were assessed as being between 80,000 and 120,000 years old.⁶⁴ This means migration from Africa to Asia could have occurred as long ago as 120,000 years. Other fossil finds indicate the first modern humans migrated from Africa to Europe around 45,000 years ago, long after they entered India and Australia. Our modern ancestors probably embarked on their journeys in small numbers, in groups of 100 or so. They were motivated by survival.⁶⁵

Age of Discovery, colonialisation and the slave trade

Fast forwarding through history, with the knowledge that the intervening periods witnessed inordinate travel in all directions, we arrive in the Age of Discovery

(1400-1600s). Maritime explorers from Portugal, Spain, Britain, France and the Netherlands forged trade routes to Africa, the Americas and India. Colonialism followed, with European settlers seizing indigenous peoples' land and autonomy. The transatlantic slave trade cost the lives of millions of African people. Millions more were subject to compulsory migration. European slave traders forcibly transported 12-15 million African people to the Americas and some European countries. Here they were subject to great cruelty and indignity. The transatlantic slave trade remains the largest forced migration in history. By the early 1700s, Britain was the world's leading slave trader, and was responsible for forcibly transporting at least 2-3 million African people during that century.⁶⁶

Industrialisation and the search for a better life

Migration was a dominant feature of Victorian Britain. Industrialisation led to the mass internal movement of people in search of work, from rural areas to the industrial cities. In 1841, 22 per cent of Britain's working population was concentrated in agriculture and fishing; by 1901, this had reduced to 9 per cent. Migrants from across the world settled in Britain, including thousands of Jews escaping poverty and persecution in Europe and Russia. Hostility towards Jewish people led to

the first British immigration legislation, the Aliens Act 1905. This entitled the government to prevent certain categories of "undesirable" people from entering Britain – individuals unable to support themselves financially; mentally ill and disabled people who relied upon the support of others; and those convicted of crimes. Provision was made, however, for those requiring asylum: "But in the case of an immigrant who proves that he is seeking admission to this country solely to avoid persecution or punishment on religious or political grounds ... leave to land shall not be refused on the ground merely of want of means or the probability of his becoming a charge on the rates."⁶⁷



Two men, descendants of Welsh migrants, stand outside their home in Patagonia (see overleaf)

The Victorian era was further characterised by great movement out of Britain, with nearly 17 million people emigrating during the 1800s, the majority to North America. In 1865 one group of around 150 Welsh people left their homes and sailed from Liverpool on an 8,000 mile journey that would last eight weeks, to establish a settlement in Patagonia, South America. They created a colony where their own culture, language and religion could be preserved.⁶⁸

The Clearances in Scotland and the Highland Potato Famine

In the 18th and 19th centuries thousands of crofters in the Scottish Highland left their farms during the time of the Clearances. Farmers were 'cleared' off estates from about 1780, when landowners moved from arable and mixed farming to sheep-farming. Some moved to towns and cities; others emigrated to America, Canada and Australia.

The Highland Potato Famine, which lasted a decade to 1856, caused widespread starvation and the forced migration of a third of the population of the Highlands.⁶⁹

Penal transportation and child migration

More than 160,000 British

convicts (8,000 of them from Scotland) were transported to Australia in the years 1787 to 1868⁷⁰; before then, America had been the destination of penal transportation. The first 11 ships to land in New South Wales, in January 1788, carried 750 convicts – 543 men, 189 women and 18 children⁷¹ – and 252 marines and their families.⁷²

During the 18th and 19th centuries, an estimated 150,000 impoverished British children were sent to Canada, Australia and other colonies. Between 1868 and 1925, around 80,000 children were dispatched to Canada to work on farms and as domestic servants. Migrants were as young as three years old, and many suffered brutality and deceit, often being told they were orphans when their parents were, in fact, alive. At the end of the 1990s, a UK Parliamentary select committee conducted an inquiry on child migrants, concluding: "What we have heard from former child migrants, and the accounts they have given us in writing, leave us in no doubt that hardship and emotional deprivation were the common lot of child migrants, and that cases of criminal abuse were not infrequent."⁷³

Irish Potato Famine

The Irish Potato Famine forced two million Irish people to leave their homeland in the

space of a decade, between 1845 and 1855. They were fleeing starvation and travelled to mainland Britain or North America on 'coffin ships', so named because of severe overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. Thousands of people died at sea during the crossing or at arrival.



A memorial to victims of the Irish Potato Famine in County Mayo depicts a 'coffin ship'

Russian Revolution and the Nansen passport

The Nansen passport was the first international system of refugee protection developed after the Russian Revolution, which displaced about two million people. The League of Nations appointed the Norwegian explorer and humanitarian Fridtjof Nansen as High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921. As one of the League's first Council members, Nansen had already helped to repatriate about half a million prisoners of war after World War 1. In his new role as High Commissioner for Refugees, Nansen introduced a document, accepted by 50 countries, which enabled

stateless people to cross borders legally. This became known as the Nansen passport.

World War 2 (1939–45 War)

The largest population movements in Europe occurred during and after World War 2. By the outbreak of war, in September 1939, around half of the 500,000 Jewish population of Germany had fled persecution. Many others were forced to leave Austria and the regions of Czechoslovakia occupied by Germany. About 10,000 mostly Jewish children were brought to Britain from Nazi-occupied territories between December 1938 and September 1939 under the Kindertransport scheme. The majority of children were sponsored by family members who promised to meet their re-emigration costs after the war; the Refugee Children's Movement charity pledged to meet the costs of other children. As the end of the war neared, it became clear that the children who had come to Britain for temporary refuge would not be reunited with their families. Parliament therefore passed the Guardianship (Refugee Children) Act 1944, which ensured the Kindertransport children, and other child refugees entering Britain since the end of 1936, would be supported up to the age

of 21.⁷⁴ Legislation passed in 1946 extended this protection to the following year, so that children brought to Britain from the Nazi concentration camps could be given guardians.⁷⁵

There was considerable movement within the UK at the outset of World War 2: 1.5 million women and children were evacuated under the British government's official scheme, though plans had actually been made for 3.5 million to move.⁷⁶

More than 40 million people in all were displaced during World War 2. Afterwards, at least 10 million German people living in Eastern European countries before the war were forcibly moved to Germany and Austria. About two million Polish people were forced from their homes in the east of their country, which was now annexed to the Soviet Union. The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 led to around 750,000 Palestinian people being expelled or forced to flee from areas under Jewish control.⁷⁷ About 900,000 European refugees were living in west European countries by 1959. But many others remained in displaced persons camps, which first appeared before the war. The United Nations established 'World Refugee Year' in 1959, and all of the camps in Europe were closed by the end of 1960.⁷⁸

Partition of India

The partition of India in 1947 led to the largest mass migration in human history. The British divided the country into Muslim-majority Pakistan and Hindu-majority India, resulting in more than 18 million people moving in accordance with their religion. A further 1 million people lost their lives during the violence that ensued.⁷⁹

Britain's post-war reliance on migrants

As part of Britain's reconstruction after World War 2, the government enticed people of 'good stock' from Commonwealth countries to relocate.⁸⁰ The British Nationality Act 1948, receiving Royal Assent just three weeks after the creation of the National Health Service, introduced a new 'citizen of the UK and colonies' legal status, which permitted entry to Britain for those living in former colonies. Although Britain had relied upon doctors and nurses from abroad long before the NHS was born, recruitment campaigns proliferated in the 1950s and 1960s. By the end of 1965, there were up to 5,000 Jamaican nurses working in British hospitals, and by 1971, nearly one-third of all doctors working in the NHS were born and qualified overseas.⁸¹ Many decades would pass

before the realities of housing shortages, racism and discrimination were widely acknowledged. One official response to accommodation scarcity was to open up the air-raid shelter under Clapham Common, which housed around 230 new arrivals from the Caribbean.⁸²

Vietnamese 'boat people'

The current refugee crisis is evocative of the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese people who fled their country in boats during the decades that followed the war in Vietnam. The UN Refugee Agency (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or UNHCR) reports that 796,310 'boat people' claimed asylum in south-east Asian countries between 1975 and 1995, the vast majority in Malaysia (accounting for 32 per cent).⁸³ Britain gave refuge to 19,000 people, many of whom first claimed asylum in Hong Kong and had been detained in camps there (the country was then under UK control). The men, women and children fleeing their country withstood exhausting sea crossings in cramped, unsafe boats, as well as the threat of piracy attacks. In 1981, for example, 452 boats arrived in Thailand from Vietnam. Of these, 349 (77 per cent) had each been attacked by pirates an average of three

times. Hundreds of women had been raped. Of the 15,479 people that set out from Vietnam, 881 were dead or missing when the boats reached Thailand.⁸⁴ An international conference held in Geneva in July 1979 resulted in western countries agreeing to provide sanctuary to hundreds of thousands: in addition to the 19,000 offered asylum in Britain, the United States accepted 823,000 refugees, Australia and Canada 137,000 each and France 96,000 people.⁸⁵

APPENDIX

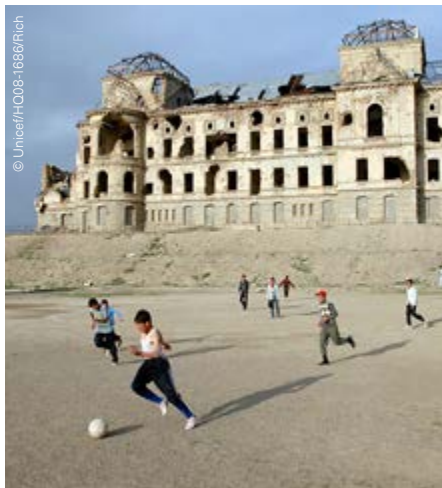
WHY ARE REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS COMING TO EUROPE?

You can find out about Unicef's work in many of the countries listed below by visiting www.unicef.org/appeals

Syrian Arab Republic

Almost half (48 per cent) of arrivals into Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 came from Syria. For more information on the situation in Syria see page 16.

Afghanistan



21 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Afghanistan.

Before the war in Syria forced millions of Syrians to become refugees, Afghanistan was considered by the UN Refugee Agency as having "the world's largest protracted refugee

population", with 2.6 million refugees living in 92 countries after three decades of conflict.⁸⁶ More than a quarter (27 per cent) of Afghans are undernourished, meaning they have not had enough food to meet their daily energy requirements for 12 months or more.⁸⁷

The country has seen civil unrest for decades. More than 30 years of war, tension, and insurgent violence have had a heavy toll on Afghanistan's institutions and the way of life for people there.

Pakistan and Iran have provided the most sanctuary for individuals and families fleeing Afghanistan over the past 36 years; at times refugee numbers exceeded 6 million. One million people remain displaced within the country. At the same time, over 5.8 million Afghans have returned to their home country since 2002.⁸⁸

In January 1980, the UN General Assembly held emergency discussions on Afghanistan and expressed "profound concern" at the "large outflow" of refugees fleeing the country.⁸⁹ The Soviet Union had seized control of the capital city, Kabul, the previous year and was not to leave until 1989. The Taliban took charge of the country in 1996, and remained in power for five years. Following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre, in 2001 the United States engaged in military action in Afghanistan, and US, British and NATO armed combat continued until 2014. Most troops were

withdrawn after the national unity government was formed that year.⁹⁰ However, 2014 was declared the most violent since 2001. Fierce fighting between the Taliban and government forces continues, and the situation has greatly deteriorated, with Daesh (known in the UK as ISIS) moving into the country in 2015. Civilian casualties have increased in recent years and human rights groups and journalists report grave human rights abuses by government security forces.⁹¹

The conflict in Afghanistan is severely affecting children's access to education, and access to nutritious food and health care. Many other serious human rights abuses also endanger children's safety and well-being.

Iraq

9 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Iraq.

The UN Refugee Agency reports there were 377,747 Iraqi refugees in June 2015. A further 141,913 were claiming asylum. A massive 4 million people, from a population of 33 million⁹², were officially recognised as internally displaced.⁹³

Children and families in Iraq have been in need of emergency assistance in one way or another for more than 10 years.

United States-led forces removed Saddam Hussein, Iraq's President since 1969,

from power in 2003. He was later sentenced to death by an Iraqi court for crimes against humanity. Democratic elections were held for the first time in 50 years in 2004, resulting in a Shia-led coalition government. This has not stemmed the violence and repression. Sunni groups, including army officers and others who supported the Saddam regime, have been in constant, bitter conflict with Shia-militants. By 2014, Daesh was leading Sunni rebels in the takeover of key regions. In December 2015, the UN Human Rights Committee condemned the “grave crimes” committed by Daesh, including “killings, abductions, enslavement, rape, torture, recruitment of children and forced marriage”.⁹⁴ The report contained allegations of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Human Rights Council also expressed concerns about human rights violations said to have been committed by the Iraqi security forces.

In addition, in 2012/13 the conflict in Syria brought 250,000 refugees to the Kurdistan region in the north of the country.

Eritrea

4 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Eritrea.

In June 2015, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea described the country as a



totalitarian state where its citizens are ruled by fear, not law. The Commission reported: “The enjoyment of rights and freedoms are severely curtailed in an overall context of a total lack of rule of law [and] the violations in the areas of extrajudicial executions, torture (including sexual torture), national service and forced labour may constitute crimes against humanity”.⁹⁵ Both adults and children are recruited as spies for state agencies. Family members, including children, risk incarceration if they enquire about their ‘disappeared’ loved ones.⁹⁶ Government departments, the police and army were included in the list of bodies responsible for the human rights abuses.

Eritrea is also characterised by arid and semi-arid

conditions. In 2015, the country experienced an even shorter than usual rainfall season. This has led to high levels of malnutrition among children under five, especially in the lowlands. Furthermore, over 650,000 people currently live in areas impacted by landmines and explosive remnants of war, which significantly affect both their safety and livelihoods. Seventy per cent of reported casualties from landmines and explosive remnants of war are children, primarily boys.⁹⁷

Pakistan

2 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Pakistan.

Taliban militants have been operating in Pakistan since the mid-1990s.⁹⁸ The gravity of their crimes achieved global coverage, after a young girl called Malala was shot in the head by a masked gunman for going to school. Malala Yousafzai had refused to follow the Taliban edict that girls should not be educated. She wrote of her experiences on a BBC blog and spoke publicly in defence of girls’ right to education.⁹⁹ Then, in October 2010, at the age of 14, she was shot in the head on her school bus; two other children were injured. She survived and is now one of the world’s best-known campaigners for education rights.

In addition to having 1.6 million internally displaced people, Pakistan is host to 1.5 million refugees from Afghanistan.¹⁰⁰ The Foreign and Commonwealth Office warns UK travellers: “There is a high threat from terrorism, kidnap and sectarian violence throughout Pakistan.”¹⁰¹

Nigeria

2 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Nigeria.

Violent conflict between Boko Haram and government forces has killed 20,000 people in the past six years. Around 2.3 million have been internally displaced in Nigeria. Approximately 92 per cent of the internally displaced persons identified are being accommodated in host communities and the remaining 8 per cent are living in camps. Children account for 57 per cent of the internally displaced population, with 28 per cent under the age of five. Boko Haram stands for ‘Western education is forbidden’. The kidnap of 276 girls from a secondary school in Chibok, in 2014, brought global awareness and condemnation. Most recently, the armed group was responsible for burning to death 86 people, including children, in their villages at the beginning of February 2016.¹⁰²



Somalia

2 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Somalia.

Over 1 million Somali people are internally displaced and a million more are refugees in other countries.¹⁰³ Civil war in the 1980s, and the collapse of the national government in January 1991, has caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands. A famine in 2010–12 caused the deaths by starvation of around 260,000 people. Elections were held in 2012, and many former exiles have returned to their country. However, the country remains under attack by the armed group, Al-Shabab (meaning ‘The Youth’ in Arabic). In January 2016, Al-Shabab

was reported to have taken control of an African Union military base in a small town in southern Somalia. Sixty Kenyan soldiers were killed. They were serving in the African Union army, which is part of a UN-backed programme to overpower Al-Shabab.¹⁰⁴ In Somalia about 1.7 million children are out of school; one in every seven children under five is acutely malnourished; and 44,000 children are severely malnourished. The prevalence of wasting and stunting in Somalia is among the highest in the region and in the world.

Sudan

1 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Sudan.

Around 1.5 million people

have lost their lives in bitter civil wars, and 2.3 million are internally displaced (from a population of 39 million). Although 640,919 Sudanese people had been accepted as refugees elsewhere by June 2015, the country also provided sanctuary to 356,191 refugees from other countries.¹⁰⁵

In 2009 and 2010 the International Criminal Court, in The Hague, issued an arrest warrant for President Omar Bashir on charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.¹⁰⁶ President Bashir first came to power in 1989.

The Gambia

1 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from The Gambia.

President Yahya Jammeh has ruled the country since 1994, and has been widely condemned for grave human rights violations, including against gay people. UN inspectors have been denied entry to detention centres where torture is perpetrated. In recent years, laws have been introduced imposing severe penalties on individuals appearing to defy public officials. Anyone convicted of giving false

information to a public servant can be imprisoned for five years. 'Aggravated homosexuality' carries the penalty of life imprisonment.¹⁰⁷

Mali

1 per cent of people arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 were from Mali.

More than half of the population of Mali lives in severe poverty,¹⁰⁸ with average life expectancy just 51 years for men and 53 years for women.¹⁰⁹ Civil war between armed groups in the north and south of the country erupted in January 2012 and has caused around 62,000 people to be internally displaced and forced another 139,000 to become refugees in neighbouring countries.¹¹⁰

An independent expert report for the UN Human Rights Council in January 2016 catalogued the severe threats and destruction inflicted by "armed and extremist groups" in the north of the country, including, "violations of the right to life, abductions, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, unlawful detention, the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, asymmetrical attacks and looting".¹¹¹

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