

Activity 9

Refugees

– they came because they had to

Aim: To encourage children to learn about and understand the situation of refugees and the right to seek asylum through a quiz, story and role-play. **Time:** 1-2 hours. **Age:** 9+. Some children in your class may be refugees themselves, or know family members who have been through similar experiences. Please conduct this activity sensitively. **What you need:** Refugee PowerPoint (on the CD); flipchart paper and felt tip pens (per group); *Uncle Ali's family worksheet* (on the CD, one per group); *Uncle Ali's House story* (on the CD, one copy for the teacher); *Uncle Ali's death threat PowerPoint* (on the CD).

What to do

Using the accompanying Refugee PowerPoint, show the list of famous names (1 and 2 below). What do all these people have in common? What single experience have they all shared?

Explain that all of them (and millions and millions of other people) had to leave their countries as refugees.

Ask the children for the names of anyone who they can think of, perhaps in their own family, who was a refugee.

Definitions

Now ask the class to write down their own definitions of:

- persecution;
- refugee;
- asylum seeker (see below, 3).

Share, discuss and compare definitions – record answers on the board, adding any necessary words to bring out key elements.

Now show slides (below, numbered 4-6) and talk about the definitions.

PERSECUTION means continually treating others in a cruel way because of their race, religion, politics or

some other difference. In school, bullying is a form of persecution.

A REFUGEE is somebody who a government has agreed has fled from their home country for fear they would be persecuted for their beliefs or thoughts, for their background or because of the group they belong to. They are given the right to stay in their new country for as long as necessary.

REFUGEE is itself a refugee word. It came from the French word *réfugier* (meaning 'to flee').

An ASYLUM SEEKER is somebody who has fled from their home country in fear of persecution, who has asked the government of another country to recognise them as a refugee.

Refugees in the world

Q Ask the class how many refugees there are in the world.

A **Some 15.2 million – they have had to flee persecution in their own country to seek safety somewhere else.**

1 Starter discussion

- Judith Kerr, writer of *The Tiger who Came to Tea*
- Albert Einstein, scientist
- The Dalai Lama
- Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
- Chief Sitting Bull, Sioux leader



2 Starter discussion

- Lucio Brio, inventor of the Biro pen
- MIA, rap artist
- Mario Stanić, footballer
- Alec Issigonis, designer of the Mini car



3

Persecution Refugee Asylum seeker

4 Persecution DEFINITION

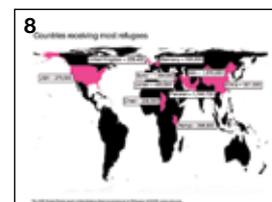
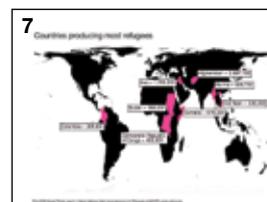
- Means continually treating others in a cruel way because of race, religion, politics or some other difference. In school, bullying is a form of persecution.

5 Refugee DEFINITION

- Somebody who a government has agreed has fled from their home country for fear they would be persecuted for their beliefs or thoughts, for their background or because of the group they belong to. They are given the right to stay in their new country for as long as necessary.

6 Asylum seeker DEFINITION

- Somebody who has fled from their home country in fear of persecution, who has asked the government of another country to recognise them as a refugee.



Activity 9

Refugees continued

see CD
RESOURCES
for
Uncle Ali's story

Show the first map (7, below) that shows some of the main countries that refugees have fled from in recent years: Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Viet Nam, Somalia and Colombia.

Q What percentage of refugees are in the UK?
A Less than 2%

Show the second map (8, left) that lists the countries receiving the most refugees. It shows most refugees flee from one poor country to seek safety in another poor country nearby.

Uncle Ali's House

Read *Uncle Ali's House*, an interactive story about one family's experiences (on the CD). The children will be invited to step into the family's shoes as they face mounting danger and persecution, decide whether to flee, undertake the risky journey to the border and apply for asylum in another country. It's a made-up story but, in many ways, it is also a true story – 15 million times over.

Divide the class into groups of five, and hand out sheets

of flipchart paper, felt tip pens and copies of Uncle Ali's family worksheet.

Read the story, pausing at relevant points as directed, so the groups can complete the two tasks:

1. Who should go?
2. What should they take with them?

At the end of the story, return to why you said this made-up story was true 15 million times over. There are over 15 million refugees in the world, many who will have survived similar experiences.

Discussion

- What did it feel like to be in a refugee's shoes?
- Did they think their treatment at the border was fair?
- Has it changed their perception of asylum seekers in this country?

Extension/homework

- Children can express their feelings about this activity in a poem or a picture.



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Source: All statistics are from the most recent annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees *2009 Global Trends*.
www.unhcr.org